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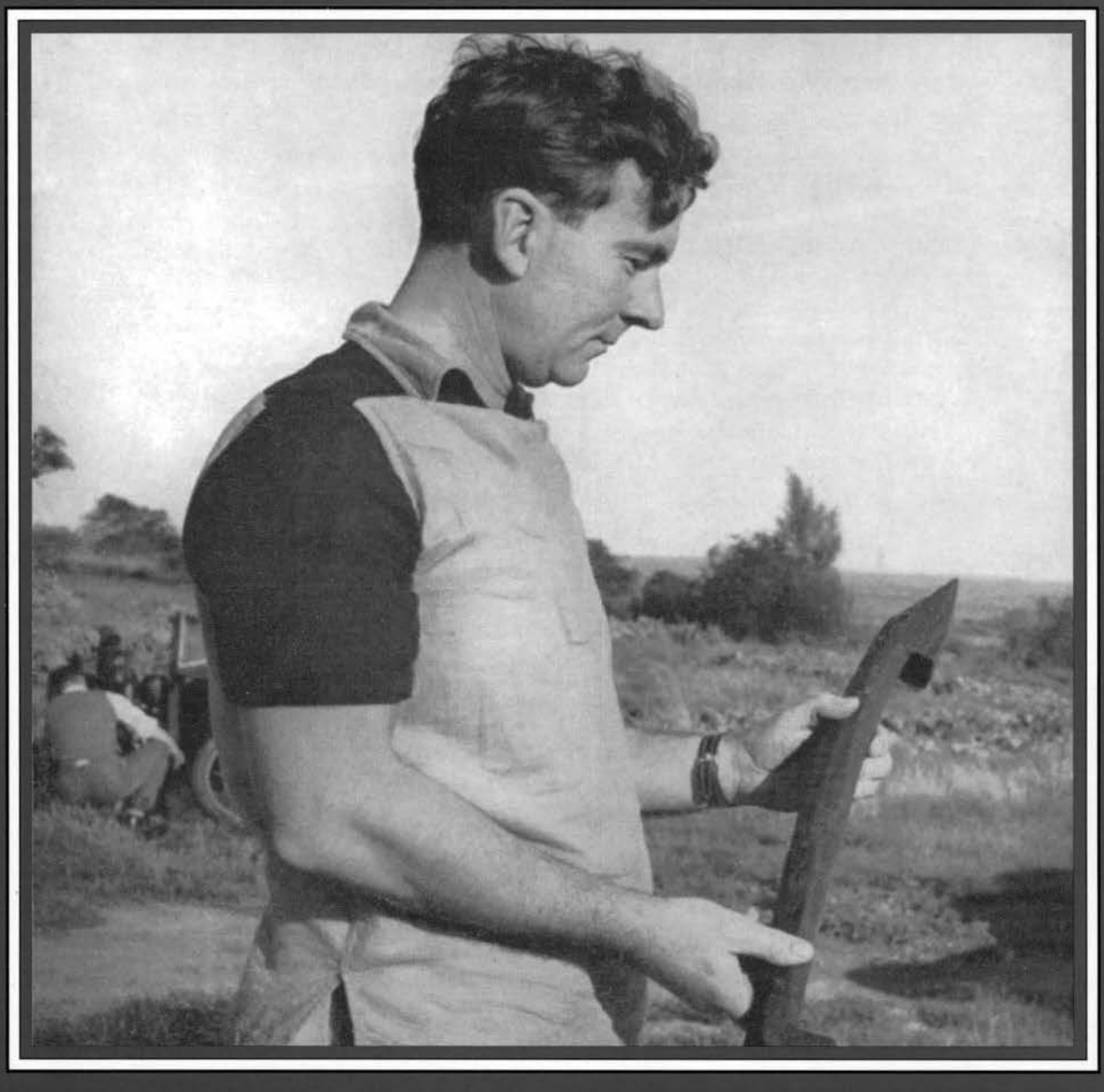

EXCAVATIONS AT LITTLE OAKLEY, ESSEX, 1951–78: Roman Villa and Saxon Settlement

East Anglian Archaeology

Heritage Conservation, Essex County Council 2002

EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Frontispiece
Copy of a coin of Hadrian, Britannia reverse, no. 6 in coin report, 23.5mm diameter

in memory of R.H. Farrands
(1916–1985)

Excavations at Little Oakley, Essex, 1951–78: Roman Villa and Saxon Settlement

by P.M. Barford

with a report on his excavations by
M.J. Corbishley,

and contributions from
J. Bayley, M. Charles, I.W. Cornwall,
K. Dobney, C.J. Going, B. Hartley,
B. Meddens, P.R. Sealey, T. Williams

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Cover photo
R.H. Farrands on Site I with one of the oak handles (small find W1) in his hands.
Cover of *Archaeological Newsletter* VII(8) April 1962. Photographer: not known.

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Preface

This report is the result of a series of investigations on the site of a Roman villa at Little Oakley, Essex, in the north-east corner of Tendring Hundred, 22km north-east of Colchester (Fig. 1). These excavations took place intermittently between 1951 and 1975 (Sites I–VI) under the direction of the late Commander R.H. Farrands, and between 1975 and 1978 (Sites A–D) by Mr M.J. Corbishley for Essex County Council. Part of the site lay under an estate of 'prefabricated' (prefab) houses and associated gardens and allotments erected in 1947; the remainder was and still is beneath arable farmland. It was the redevelopment of the housing estate by Tendring Rural District Council which led to the 1975–8 excavations in advance of the various phases of the redevelopment. Funds for these later operations were provided by the Department of the Environment, Essex County Council and Tendring District Council. This volume is the final report on both series of excavations.

The excavations of 1951–75 were conducted entirely at the expense of Commander Farrands, and were carried out in his spare time. At first the operations were confined to the allotments south of the prefabs and then spread to surrounding areas. Although he fully intended to publish the site in detail, this was prevented firstly by insufficient time to process the large quantity of data accumulated, and latterly by his ill-health. Consequently no report was prepared and, upon the death of the excavator in January 1985, his finds and records passed *en masse* to Colchester and Essex Museum (COLEM Acc. No. 57.1985). Some of the Saxon pottery and other finds had already been donated to the museum (COLEM Acc. 173–6, 1975).

By 1985, post-excavation work on the results of the 1975–8 operations was nearly complete. During the course of this both the author and Mr Corbishley had discussed the results of the previous excavations with Farrands, and tentative plans for a joint publication had been suggested. Upon the accession of the Farrands material by Colchester Museum, the present writer began work on the records and finds, in order to prepare a report in which the results of both excavations would be incorporated. This initial processing took over ten weeks of full-time work in May 1985 and was partly financed by an Essex County Council grant.

Subsequent unpaid work continued over four years (1985–89) and the writer became involved in other projects. During this time the Archaeology Section of Essex County Council rendered invaluable help with word processing and producing publication drawings. The completion of the draft of this report was made possible by a further grant from Tendring District Council in autumn 1989.

During the course of this work it became apparent that the results of neither excavation would have been meaningful without the other. This in itself is justification enough for the present form of the report, in which the two series of investigations are treated as an integrated whole as far as possible. An attempt has been made to present the archaeological information from each portion of the site separately from the interpretation, even though (in the case of Farrands' site) the two are closely linked. The site (or sites) proved to be quite complex with many problems. The sequence and interpretations set out in this report are those which seemed most likely to the writer following analysis of all the records. However, the interpretations of the structures, site sequence and dating may require re-examination, if and when adjacent areas are excavated. Indeed the site clearly has further potential for answering a number of important questions, and areas must be excavated if ever they are threatened by building work or other disturbance.

The various parts of the site are described and assessed period by period. The Farrands sites were divided by the writer into six separate areas, Sites I–VI which are detailed separately. The four Corbishley open-area excavations (Sites A–D) are considered together by period.

On the Corbishley sites the context numbers are preceded by the letters A, B, C, D — referring to the site (trench) designation. The piecemeal nature of the earlier excavations and the way the layers were referred to in the original recording system dictated the necessity of renumbering the layers. A separate numbering system within the four main sites was created, context numbers on Site I being referred to by numbers preceded by an 'F', on Site II by 'K', on Site III by 'P' and the discrete features of Site IV by 'ditch' or 'pit'.

It should be noted that the forms of the Belgic and Roman pottery used throughout this report are those of the Colchester type-series — Hawkes and Hull 1947; Hull 1963, which at the time of writing was still the standard for the Colchester area, as the pottery from the more recent excavations at Colchester was unpublished. This has subsequently been published (Symonds and Wade 1999).

The primary aim of both series of excavations had been to recover details of the Roman villa (Farrands 1958; Corbishley 1975a and b). It was hoped that the development, the economy of the villa, and its relationship with Roman Colchester could be established. Under the villa 'Iron Age C' (*sic*) occupation (Farrands 1958, 43) had been discovered, suggesting that the origin and early development of the villa could be determined. Equally important was the end of the villa. Early Saxon pottery was found on the site (Myres 1969, 226; Farrands 1976) and it was hoped that the relationship between the users of this pottery and the latest inhabitants of the villa could be determined.

The aim of this report is to present in full the integrated results of both series of excavations and place them in context. A full report on excavated material, as well as a summary discussion, is also included.

The report consists of several parts with different completion dates; the finds reports of the 1975–8 sites were finished by 1986, although the Roman pottery report had been completed in 1982. The text of the report on the 1952–73 excavations and the finds (excepting the Site C tiles) were complete by mid 1986; interim reports were published (Corbishley 1975b; 1977a) and Corbishley's section on the 1975–8 excavations was completed in 1987, and the accompanying plans in 1989; the redrawing of the site plans and finds drawings were not completed until October 1990. Access to the plans of the 1975–8 excavations entailed some alterations to the text in 1990, by which time it was found that the majority of Farrands' photographic negatives had been separated from the Little Oakley Archive in COLEM. The plates reproduced here

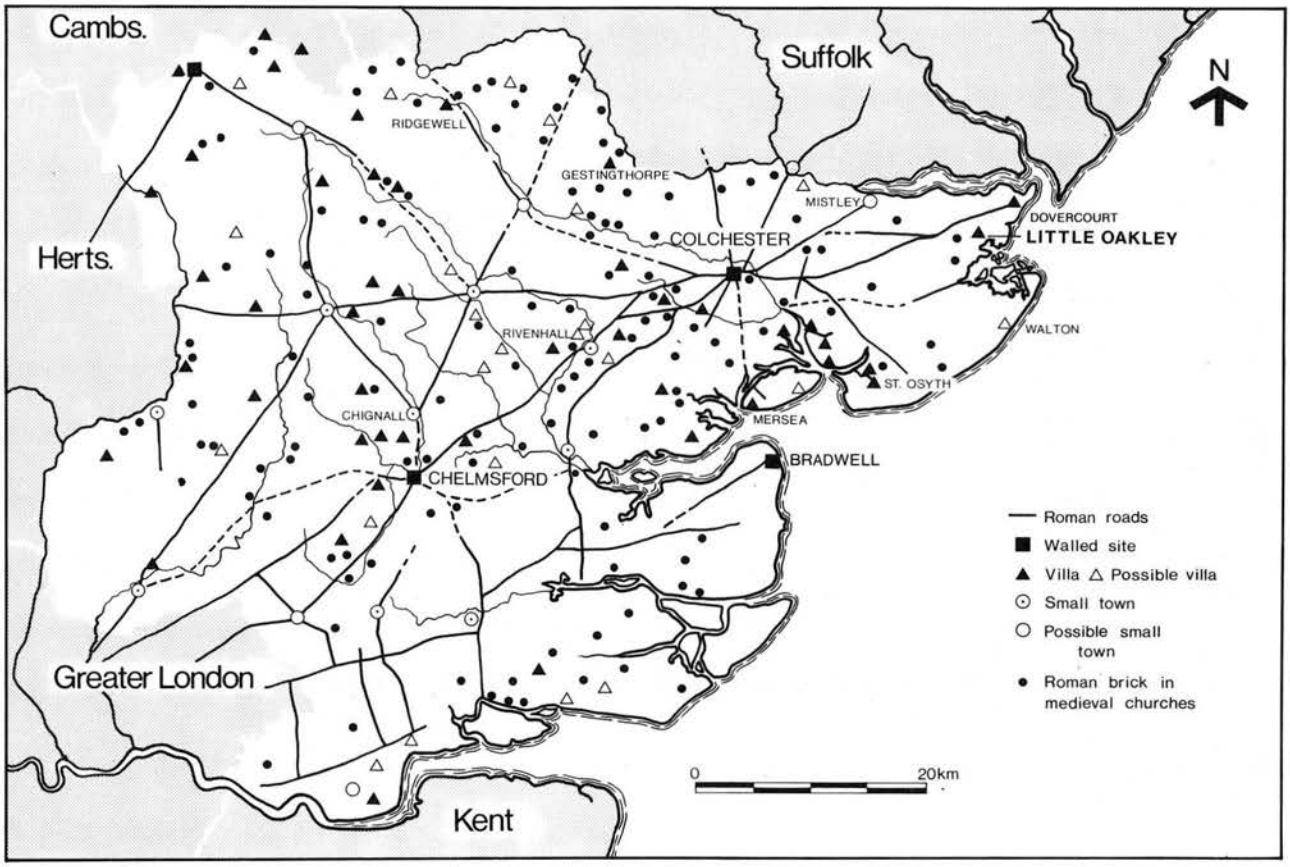


Figure 1 Location of Little Oakley and other sites mentioned in text, triangles mark known or suspected villas (*cf.* Rodwell 1978, fig. 1)

are made from duplicate prints previously in the possession of the writer. Revision of the text following readers' comments (received 1996) was hindered by the writer's emigration, and the process continued until 1999. In general, and for several reasons, it has not been possible to incorporate information from literature published after 1986.

Parts of the report and some ancillary discussion have been reproduced in microfiche (see back pocket). The contents are listed above. Limited numbers of printouts of individual portions of these will be made available at cost price as photocopies (obtainable from Essex County Council Archaeology Section, Planning Department, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LF).

Summary

This report describes the results of two series of excavations on a Roman villa site at Little Oakley in north-east Essex. The site has produced traces of prehistoric occupation, including Early Neolithic flint-work and a large assemblage of later prehistoric pottery. The nature of the Belgic occupation of the site is ambiguous.

In the Flavian period a large timber building (Building 2) was erected (although finds indicate previous Claudio-Neronian occupation nearby). This building overlay a Roman sunken-floored structure interpreted as an agricultural building. A deep feature to the south is interpreted as a large fishpond, and field ditches, much recut throughout the life of the villa, were located to the east and south of the buildings. A nearby masonry building (Building 1) although not excavated, was probably contemporary with the timber buildings.

In the 2nd century, Building 2 was replaced by a 'corridor villa' (Building 3) with masonry foundations. This building was altered at least once in the mid 3rd century and a bath block inserted. To the south and west additional timber buildings were also constructed. The main structure was a dwelling of some architectural pretensions and justifies the use of the term villa, but it is clear that only a part of the whole range of buildings has so far been explored. The fish pond was infilled, the deposits here forming a substantial depth of vertical stratigraphy.

At some date in the 4th or 5th century the villa building was dismantled and the rubble was used to make platforms, probably for timber buildings on its site and to the south and east. These rubble rafts contained handmade grass-tempered body sherds. Several large pits were also dug in the villa site. Elsewhere on the site, Anglo-Saxon occupation of the 5th century is demonstrated by pits and other features containing pottery (and a small-long brooch found nearby). An inhumation was also made on the villa site. Middle or Late Saxon handmade pottery was also found, but apart from a Saxo-Norman pit, the site appears to have been marginal. Ploughing probably began in the 16th century.

The report summarises the results of the excavation of this site and includes a catalogue of the principal classes of artefacts found. It also includes a detailed consideration of the evidence for the Roman villa estate of which the excavated structures were the focus. The evolution of the villa estate into the Domesday manors and medieval parishes is also considered.

Résumé

Ce rapport décrit les résultats de deux séries de fouilles qui se sont déroulées sur le site d'une villa romaine à Little Oakley au nord-est de l'Essex. Ce site contient les traces d'une occupation préhistorique, comme le montre un travail du silex de la première période néolithique, et un grand nombre de poteries d'une période néolithique plus tardive. La nature de l'occupation belge est ambigué.

Un grand bâtiment en bois fut construit à l'époque de Flavius (bâtiment 2). Il existe toutefois des traces d'une occupation de l'époque de Claudius Néron à proximité. Ce bâtiment recouvre une structure romaine avec soubassement qui pourrait être un bâtiment agricole. Une profonde dépression, située dans la partie sud du site, semble correspondre à un grand étang à poissons, et à l'est et au sud des bâtiments, se trouvent des fossés dont le tracé a souvent été modifié à l'époque où la villa était occupée. Un bâtiment en maçonnerie situé à proximité (bâtiment 1) a probablement été construit à la même époque. Il n'a toutefois pas été fouillé.

Au deuxième siècle, le bâtiment 2 a été remplacé par une 'villa galerie' (bâtiment 3) avec des fondations en maçonnerie. Ce bâtiment a été modifié au moins une fois au milieu du troisième siècle, et une partie réservée au bain a été intégrée. D'autres bâtiments en bois furent également construits au sud et à l'ouest. La partie centrale correspondait à l'habitation et elle affichait quelques prétentions sur le plan architectural qui justifient l'emploi du terme de villa, mais il est clair que l'ensemble des bâtiments n'a été que partiellement exploré jusqu'à présent. L'étang à poissons était rempli, et on y trouve des dépôts qui forment une couche très profonde.

Au cours du quatrième ou du cinquième siècle, la villa fut démantelée et les décombres furent probablement utilisés pour fabriquer des estrades, sans doute pour des bâtiments en bois situés sur le site ainsi qu'au sud et à l'est. Ces tas de décombres contenaient des tessons provenant du corps de poteries façonnées à la main et trempées avec de l'herbe. Plusieurs grandes fosses furent également creusées sur le site de la villa. A d'autres emplacements du site, on a découvert en particulier dans des fosses, des poteries (ainsi qu'une broche petite et longue), qui prouvent l'existence d'une occupation anglo-saxonne au cinquième siècle. On trouve également la trace d'une inhumation sur le site de la villa. Des poteries faites à la main pendant les périodes saxonnes moyenne et tardive ont également été découvertes, mais en dehors d'une fosse saxon-normande, le site semble avoir été marginal. Le labourage des terres a probablement commencé au seizième siècle.

Le rapport contient le résultat des fouilles réalisées sur le site, ainsi qu'un catalogue des principaux types d'artefacts découverts. Il contient également une analyse approfondie des traces découvertes sur le site de la villa romaine qui a concentré l'essentiel des fouilles entreprises. Le domaine de la villa a ensuite évolué vers les manoirs qui sont recensés dans le livre de Domesday et vers les paroisses du Moyen Âge, et cette évolution fait l'objet d'une analyse dans le rapport.
(Traduction: Didier Don)

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Bericht enthält die Ergebnisse von zwei Ausgrabungsreihen an der Stätte eines römerzeitlichen Gutshofs in Little Oakley in Nordost-Essex. Zu den gefundenen prähistorischen Besiedlungsspuren zählen Feuersteinreste aus der frühen Jungsteinzeit und eine umfangreiche Keramiksammlung aus einer späteren vorgeschichtlichen Epoche. Die Art der Besiedlung während der Belger-Zeit ist uneindeutig.

In der flavischen Zeit wurde ein großes Holzhaus (Gebäude 2) errichtet (auch wenn einige Funde auf eine nahe gelegene vormalige Besiedlung in claudisch-neronischer Zeit hindeuten.) Dieses Gebäude überlagerte ein aus der Römerzeit stammendes eingetieftes Objekt, das als landwirtschaftliches Gebäude interpretiert wurde. Eine südlich davon gelegene Vertiefung wird als Fischteich interpretiert, dazu wurden östlich und südlich der Gebäude landwirtschaftliche Gräben geortet, die während der Nutzung des Guts mehrfach bearbeitet wurden. Ein nahe gelegenes Steinhaus (Gebäude 1), das nicht ausgegraben wurde, stammt wahrscheinlich aus der gleichen Zeit wie die Holzgebäude.

Im 2. Jahrhundert wurde Gebäude 2 durch eine auf Steinfundamenten erbaute 'Korridorvilla' (Gebäude 3) ersetzt. Dieses Gebäude wurde in der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts wenigstens einmal durch Einfügen eines Bäderkomplexes verändert. Dazu wurden in südlicher und westlicher Richtung weitere Holzgebäude errichtet. Das Hauptgebäude, ein architektonisch anspruchsvolles Wohnhaus, rechtfertigt die Beschreibung als Villa, auch wenn bisher nur ein Teil aller Gebäude erforscht wurde. Der Fischteich wurde verfüllt, wobei die Ablagerungen eine beachtliche Schichtentiefe zeigen.

Irgendwann im 4. oder 5. Jahrhundert wurde die Villa niedergelegt und die Abbruchreste zum Aufbau von Plattformen, wahrscheinlich für Holzgebäude benutzt, die anstelle der Villa sowie südlich und östlich von ihr errichtet wurden. Diese Plattformen wiesen handgefertigte, durch Gras gemagerte Wandscherben auf. Dazu wurden am Ort der Villa mehrere große Gruben ausgehoben. An anderen Stellen der Grabungsstätte wurde anhand von Gruben und anderen Merkmalen, die Keramikreste enthielten (sowie einer in der Nähe sicher gestellten kleinen, länglichen Spange), eine angelsächsische Siedlung aus dem 5. Jahrhundert nachgewiesen. Auf dem römerzeitlichen Gutshof fanden sich auch Spuren einer Erdbestattung. Zu den weiteren Funden zählen handgefertigte Keramikobjekte aus der Mittel- und Spätphase der angelsächsischen Zeit. Allerdings scheint es sich hierbei, von einer sächsisch-normannischen Grube abgesehen, um eine eher marginale Stätte gehandelt zu haben. Die ersten Pflugarbeiten begannen wahrscheinlich im 16. Jahrhundert.

Der Bericht bietet einen Überblick über die Grabungsergebnisse. Er enthält außerdem eine Liste der Hauptklassen der gefundenen Objekte sowie eine detaillierte Betrachtung der Hinweise auf einen römerzeitlichen Gutshof, der den Mittelpunkt der freigelegten Strukturen bildet. Darüber hinaus wird die Entwicklung des Guts zu den im Domesday Book verzeichneten Herrenhäusern und mittelalterlichen Gemeinden beleuchtet.

(Übersetzung: Gerlinde Krug)

The Site Sequence

The site history can be divided into eight main periods which in some cases can be divided by their artefact content into phases.

Period 1 Mesolithic to early 1st century AD: 'buried soil' pits and gullies.

Period 2 Early Roman. Phase 2(i), Claudio-Neronian occupation. Phase 2(ii), timber buildings, ditches, fishpond; Flavian to 2nd century.

Period 3 Masonry buildings, ditches; 2nd to 4th centuries. Phase 3(i), Building 3A; Building 3B; 2nd to mid 3rd century AD. Phase 3(ii), Building 3B refurbished; Mid 3rd to mid 4th century AD.

Period 4 Demolition of Building 3, rubble spreads, robber trenches; late 4th/5th centuries. Phases 4(i) to 4(iv) not closely datable.

Period 5 Post-Roman inhumation burial and occupation: 5th to 6th centuries.

Period 6 Slight Middle Saxon to early medieval activity; 6th to 12th centuries.

Period 7 Ploughing; medieval and post-medieval.

Period 8 Construction of sewer 1939 (Phase 8(i)) and prefabs 1947 (Phase 8(ii)); features connected with this and later occupation. Much damage to surviving archaeology.

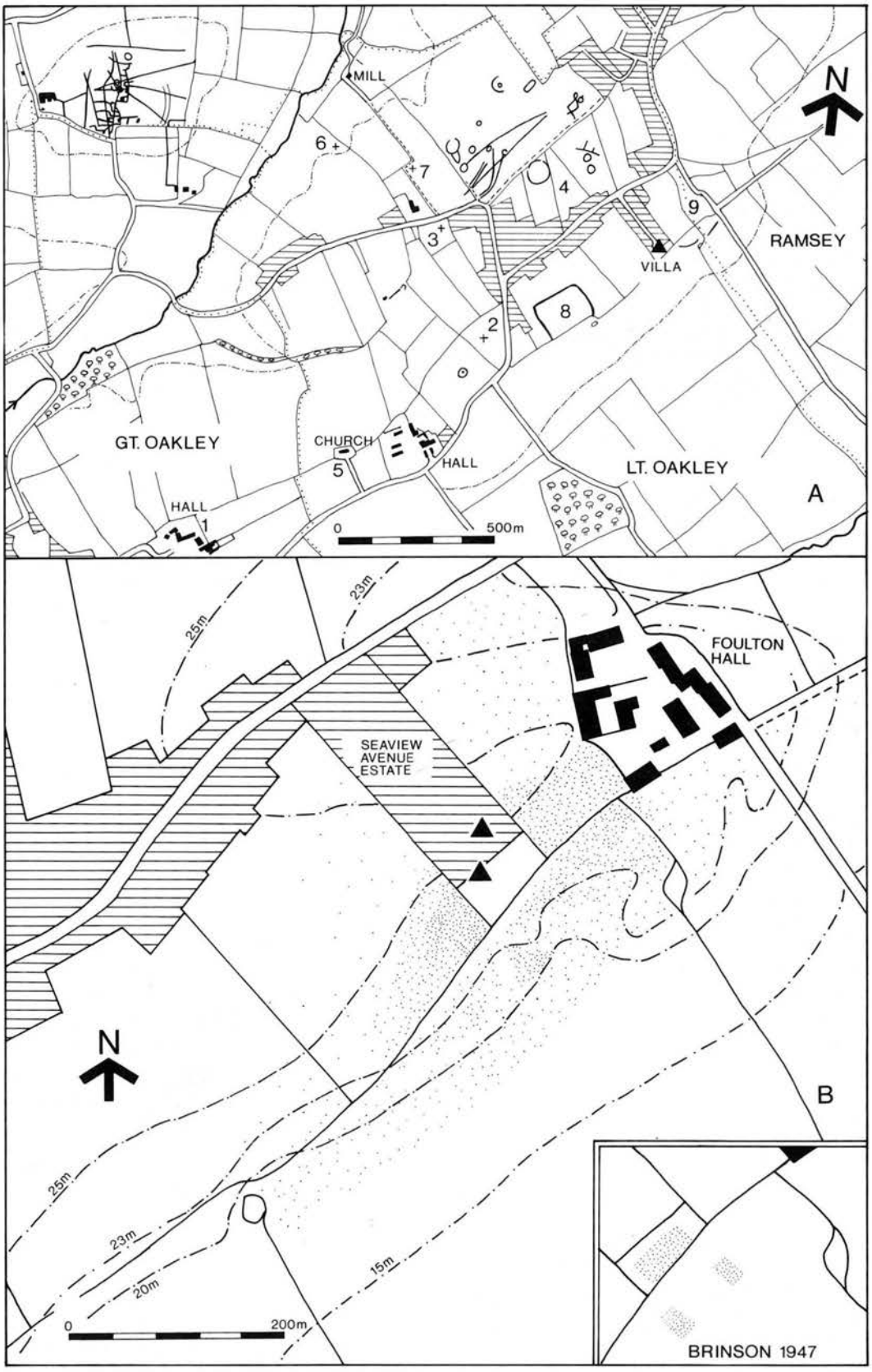


Figure 2A The north part of Little Oakley parish, showing the villa site, main cropmarks and other finds. The parish boundary is shown as a dotted line.

1. Great Oakley Hall, 2. Roman cremation, 3. findspot of Roman glass beads, 4. cropmarks, 5. Little Oakley church and Hall, 6–7. sherds of Roman pottery, 8. cropmark enclosure, 9. Foulton Hall

(From the Ordnance survey map with the sanction of the Controller of HM Stationery Office)

Figure 2B Plan of the immediate vicinity of the excavations. Stipple indicates schematically the scatter of pottery in the topsoil along the crest of the slope. Inset shows the finds scatter according to Brinson 1947

Chapter 1. Introduction

by P.M. Barford

I. General Background

The site (TM 2225 2916) lies on the 75 foot (22.9m) contour to the east of the present village of Little Oakley. A few hundred metres to the east lies the parish boundary with the hamlet of Foulton in the parish of Ramsey (Fig. 2). To the north of the site, the ground flattens out and then drops down to Ramsey Creek, to the south the ground slopes gradually down to the extensive marshes below the site. The positioning of seven Red Hills below the site (Figs 121–2 and see below) demonstrates conclusively that most of this marsh alluvium had accumulated before the early Roman period.

The geology of the excavated area and its environs is fairly complex. The soils are generally light on the top and upper slopes of the ridge. The hill is capped with glacial sands, silty loams and gravels overlying Red Crag (Pleistocene beds of comminuted marine shell)[1] which outcrops on the south slope. Just to the north of the villa a Cromerian channel deposit (Warren 1946, 9–11) is visible as a shallow depression. These two latter deposits have an abundant fossil fauna (which also occurs redeposited in deposits of more recent origin). All of these deposits lie uncomformably on the London Clay which outcrops on the south slope just below the site. At the foot of this slope is the alluvium of the Roman marshes. The older geological deposits were often masked in the area of the site by later variable thin mixed Pleistocene deposits, including patches of brickearth.

Negative features on the upper slopes of the site (*i.e.* to the north) had a fill of sandy, silty or shelly loam of varying colour, ranging from light orange-brown to very dark brown. On the lower slopes (*e.g.* Sites III and IV) the feature fills were often more clayey. Most of these deposits seemed to be natural silting of the open features, though some had the characteristics of backfill.

The site itself was overlain by a variable depth of ploughsoil. On Site I this varied from 0.25 to 0.35m, on Sites II and IV from 0.15 to 0.2m. On Site III it was slightly deeper (owing to this having been a depression in antiquity). Since Farrands' excavation, continued and deeper ploughing has probably caused the depth of ploughsoil to increase on Sites II–IV, at the expense of the archaeological remains. No floors survived on Site I because of the ploughing as well as erosion on the crest of the hill. On Corbishley's Site A the topsoil was of a more complex nature (below, p. 82), but on his Sites B–D the site had been bulldozed in 1947 (below, p. 83).

Although ploughing had removed much of the upper parts of stratigraphical sequences, on some parts of the site vertical stratigraphic sequences had survived. This was most prevalent of course in the fills of negative features, but on Sites I and II, for example, there was considerable survival of horizontal layers truncated by ploughing. Some of these layers were anthropogenic in origin, others derived from accumulation due to erosion of adjacent deposits.

It is clear that the layers of the Little Oakley site had been affected by a number of post-depositional processes which have to be taken into account, especially when interpreting some of the contained artefact assemblages. One of the most important is apparent downward movement of artefacts within the stratigraphic sequence. On a base-rich soil as at Little Oakley, earthworms (Darwin 1881; Atkinson 1957) are a prime suspect as the agents of this movement, although ants can produce the same effect. Indeed the evidence presented throughout this report leads one to suspect that the humble earthworm and ant had an effect on the formation of the site almost as considerable as the hand of man. The mechanism of this process is (or should be) well enough known not to require explanation here. It is worth emphasising that downward movement on this scale of finds (presumably) dropped on the ground surface is gradual and would require some time, and furthermore would not occur on a site which was being continually turned-over by ploughing. Thus we can expect these phases of what might be termed 'worm-induced sinkage' to correspond to phases when the site was unploughed. Examples include Period 1 (or parts of it) on Site I and the phases following the deposition of the rubble spreads on Site I in Period 4. There is no doubt that, in addition to the material in these subsoil layers, similar activity has led to intrusive material being present in some other features on the site. Other factors may also have contributed to sinkage of material, but on a smaller and more localised scale in other parts of the site. Burrowing animals such as rodents and rabbits (bones of which were found in the Saxo-Norman pit on Site IV) may have been responsible for the introduction of medieval sherds into the rubble spread on Site II (p. 36) and Farrands specifically noted that layer F35 on Site I was disturbed by rabbits. Root-action from trees or bushes (and concomitant faunal and human activity) may also be responsible for some disturbance of these deposits, but again (like the worms) may be expected to occur only in unploughed areas.

II. Documentary Sources

The parishes of Great and Little Oakley were distinct estates by the time of the *Domesday Survey* (if, as seems likely, *Adeia* was a scribal error for *Acleia*) (*VCH* I, 1903, 395–6). There are no Saxon charters for either parish, but the name (*Ac* – oak, *leah* – field) is clearly of Saxon origin. It will be suggested below that, after some medieval cultivation, the site itself was probably marginal land under pasture until the 16th century when finds suggest ploughing began again. Despite this there are no surviving estate maps, and few documentary references before the surveyor's plans drawn at two inches to the mile for the 1799–1800 first edition of the Ordnance Survey maps (in ERO). This plan uses Chapman and André's (1777) map

as a base, with field outlines roughly sketched-on, one suspects from the vantage-point of a carriage roof. They bear only a passing resemblance in the Little Oakley area to those shown on the 1839 tithe map. The surveyor's drawing incorrectly shows the south boundary of the allotments (the bank sectioned by trench Z, Fig. 52) which the archaeological evidence suggests should have come into existence by this time. At any rate, it is shown on the 1839 tithe map (ERO D/CT 259A); the boundaries of the prefab estate on the south-west and south-east are shown, and the area formerly formed part of a field called 'Further Eight Acres' (no. 83).

There are no antiquarian notes on the villa, and the existence of the site was unknown prior to the construction of a new sewer in 1939.

III. Other Sites in the Parish

The villa of course did not stand alone in an unpopulated landscape, and a brief consideration of previous chance finds in the parish of Little Oakley is included here. It had been intended to fieldwalk the area round the villa as an accompaniment to the 1975–8 excavations, but various considerations have prevented this survey from progressing beyond the field to the north-east of the site (TM 2228 2925), as reported below.

The parish has a relatively good record (Fig. 2A) of cropmarks (almost totally derived from photos taken by Commander Farrands). Few of these features can be dated: the ring-ditches may be prehistoric; the field systems of various dates, including Roman. Some of those sites to the north of the present village have since been built over (unfortunately not preceded by any investigations). The nearby cropmark enclosure (8 on Fig. 2A) is also undated.

Prehistoric finds include three 'urns' and a Neolithic axehead from a gravel pit on Great Oakley Hall Farm (Site 1 on Fig. 2A). The diary (now in COLEM) of the 19th century Colchester antiquary, William Wire, in an entry dated 15/6/1848 reports the finding of the second urn 'on Mr. Bull's land'. This is probably the rusticated beaker vessel (COLEM Acc. No. 137.93) figured in *VCH* I (1903, fig. 16; Clarke 1970, II, 481 corpus 452, fig. 1043). A Late Bronze Age hoard was uncovered during the levelling of a bank. Wire (diary 2/4/1850) records 'The Reverend Professor Marsden of Great Oakley informs me that seventeen metal celts have been found in a ridge of earth at Little Oakley, and most probably the ridge was a continuation of that in the former parish, where two ancient British vessels were found near the Hall as previously noted. They were broken, but some of the fragments were presented to me'. (The urns may have been found at *c.* TM 207 282, the hoard at *c.* TM 211 294.) Colchester Museum (Acc. No. 40.89) has the cutting edge of a socketed axe 'found in an earth bank between two fields on the Glebe lands at Little Oakley before 1889, given by the Rev. G. Burnes'. Sealey (1991, 10–11, fig. 4.26) places this second find at TM 2135 2935. These two discoveries are probably not the same.

There are a number of Roman finds from the area around the villa buildings and related features which are the principal subject of this report.

Scattered finds of Roman pottery have been made around Little Oakley Hall and the adjacent church (Site 5 on Fig. 2A); a few sherds were found to the north-east, and some to the south. In 1975 Mr M. Baker of Little Oakley observed the digging of drainage trenches in the field to the south-east of the church (Couchman 1976, 155–6). No features were seen, but several pieces of pottery were recovered. Later fieldwalking discovered a scatter of septaria and tile (including flue tile) and several sherds of pottery, including East Gaulish samian, and red colour-coat, as well as late medieval and post-medieval pottery.

There is a scatter of Roman material in the ploughsoil to the west and south-west of the villa site (Site VI) which seems to represent some form of settlement activity (Fig. 2B).

Between Little Oakley Hall and the Little Oakley villa (TM 2168 2884), a cremation burial containing two pottery vessels was found in about 1898 (Fig. 2A, Site 2). The material from this find was donated to Colchester Museum by Mr S. Stock (*CMR* 1903, 12; *VCH* III 1963, 164). The greyware urn could not be restored, but contained a colour-coat beaker of Colchester form 291 (May 1930, pl. XLII, form 147) which begins in the early to mid 2nd century. The cremation might be an indicator of a small cemetery in this area.

Some 400m to the north of this findspot, another group of finds suggests another burial (Fig. 2A, Site 3). At TM 2154 2925 the writer's father Mr K.R. Barford had an allotment on Rectory Road, Little Oakley, and from *c.* 1960–64 during the cultivation of this allotment (second on the east) a number of Roman glass beads was recovered. Sixty-five beads were found in one area of the plot (but not in adjacent areas). They were probably scattered from a single necklace (perhaps from a grave rather than a chance loss). It is of interest, but perhaps not significant that the land on which these finds were made is now owned by the church as Glebe lands, but no effort has been made to trace this ownership back in time. Only forty-seven beads retained by the finder are now available for study from this group. The other eighteen were donated to Colchester Museum (CMR 1963–4, 13; Acc. No. 655.1963) and are now lost. The beads are unassociated but there is no reason to doubt that they are Roman, despite the lack of special forms and the rather bright colours of some. Sporadic visits to the site since 1964 have failed to find any more beads. No other ancient material is visible on the allotment surface.[2]

Another characteristic element of the Roman landscape of the area of the Little Oakley villa are the Red Hills (Farrands 1959, 26) which lie immediately below it (Figs 121–2). Red Hills are mounds of reddened earth containing charcoal and fragments of vegetable-tempered fired clay objects; this briquetage is believed to be the ceramic equipment associated with salt manufacture. These sites are considered in more detail elsewhere (Barford forthcoming c). They occur round most of the Essex coast and date from the later Iron Age and early Roman periods. Farrands carried out extensive fieldwork on the marshes in north-east Essex and discovered several unknown sites, including the group below Little Oakley (Farrands 1958), see also de Brisay and Evans 1975; de Brisay 1978; Rodwell 1979; and Fawn *et al.* 1990 for general details on Red Hills.

The Little Oakley group consists of seven Red Hills clustered round a former creek on the marsh directly below the Roman villa. No other sites are recognisable in the vicinity, and these examples seem to form a discrete cluster. It is fairly clear that these sites are contemporary

with the villa, and were probably operated from it and formed part of the resources exploited by the villa estate (*cf.* Rodwell 1979, 161). The sites were listed by Farrands 1958, 26, and renumbered by Evans and Macmaster in their revised gazetteer (in Fawn *et al.* 1990). They are as follows:

Evans and Macmaster 2	TM 2381 2808 (Farrands No. 1) levelled before 1958
Evans and Macmaster 3	TM 2348 2848 (Farrands No. 2) levelled before 1958
Evans and Macmaster 4	TM 2337 2849 (Farrands No. 3) levelled before 1958
Evans and Macmaster 5	TM 2308 2830 (Farrands No. 5) levelled before 1958
Evans and Macmaster 6	TM 2309 2840 (Farrands No. 4) levelled before 1958
Evans and Macmaster 7	TM 2315 2795 (Farrands No. 6) levelled before 1958
Evans and Macmaster 10	TM 2325 2769 (Farrands No. 9) levelled 1978

The sites numbered by Farrands as 6–8 (and thus 7–9 in Evans and Macmaster's gazetteer) are considered by the present writer to be a trilobed soil mark left after the levelling of a single Red Hill (numbered 7 here). Site No. 10 (TM 2325 2769; Farrands No. 9) was, until levelled in 1978, a mound 30 × 50m and 2m high. The site had been trenched at the north-west end by a Mr Westgate who worked in the hospital at Dovercourt but no report was ever published. The trenches remained open until the site was levelled. This was one of the few upstanding mounds in the whole area and would, if excavated, have produced useful comparative data for the other Red Hill briquetage assemblages known only from surface collection of material after ploughing. The remains of Red Hill No. 10 now form a trilobed spread in the field to the south and east of the former site of the mound. On the south edge was a deposit of septaria rubble and Roman tile, which seems, however, to be a later addition. Briquetage and pottery collected from several of these sites is reported elsewhere (Barford forthcoming c).

The Church of St Mary (RCHM III 1922, 172–3; Rodwell and Rodwell 1977, 61–2; Corbishley 1984) contains septaria and Roman tile. Just to the south of the church (TM 2119 2832: Site 5 on Fig. 2A) a scatter of Roman tile and septaria with a little 2nd-century pottery is recorded (Couchman 1976, 155–6). Other sherds of Roman pottery have been found at TM 213 295, 214 267 and 211 295 (Sites 6 and 7 on Fig. 2A; notes in Essex SMR).

There is no Roman material known from the adjacent portions of Ramsey parish or Foulton. The nearest Roman villas are at Dovercourt (see below and Barford forthcoming d) some 3.7km to the north-east, and at Brightlingsea and St Osyth, some 20km to the south-west, though Roman building materials occur in a number of churches (shown as circles on Fig. 1). These may in many cases mark the sites of nearby Roman masonry buildings not yet located.

Anglo-Saxon sites in north-east Essex are scarce, but (apart from at Little Oakley villa) have been found at Dovercourt (Barford forthcoming d) and Colchester. It is hoped that the medieval pottery found by Farrands in fieldwalking the marshes in the parish will be published in due course.

IV. Discovery and Early Investigations of the Little Oakley Villa

During the construction of a new sewer in summer 1939 down to the new sewage works on Great Oakley Marsh below the site, the indefatigable Essex antiquarian and naturalist Hazzeldine Warren observed:

> 'considerable foundations, largely made of septaria from the London Clay, associated with Romano-British sherds, many oyster-shells, and also bones of domestic animals. I found no tesserae, wall-plaster or coins' (quoted after Hull's draft typescript of *VCH* III in COLEM).

These observations were made during the digging of the sewer trench and time was limited. No report on this observation was published by Warren[3] (he was more interested in the Cromerian Channel deposit; Warren 1946, 9–11) and no correspondence survives in the museum. The pottery collected was seen by M.R. Hull who dated it to the early 2nd century AD. Among the Farrands papers is a letter (dated 9/6/53) and annotated plan by Warren, from which one can, however, gain a certain amount of information about the 1939 investigation.

From these documents it transpires that Warren probably visited Farrands at Little Oakley in 1953 and annotated a sketch map which is reproduced here (Fig. 3).[4] The small fine lettering is by Farrands, the larger bold lettering is in Warren's hand. In his letter to Farrands Warren says:

> 'The Cromerian deposit was such a surprising discovery that I did not do much about the R.B. site, as time was limited. I am interested in your prehistoric ditch [*sic*: Ditch 1 on Site IV is being discussed here, PMB] — the main sewer trench cut through a ditch but I imagined that this was related to the R.B. site. From memory, I should think this was a little further down the slope than your ditch'.

The two ovals that Warren drew on the plan suggest that two separate discoveries are being indicated. The first over the sewer trench (presumably an open trench dug by hand instead of the 'headed' section seen near Site D) was presumably the recorded noting of substantial foundations of septaria, pottery, many oystershells and bone in 1939. The second oval may indicate pottery disturbed during bulldozing preceding construction of the prefabs in 1946–7 (see annotation on Fig. 3 and below). It is worth noting that in the draft typescript of *VCH* III (written *c.* 1955), Hull specifically notes that these foundations (here termed Building 1) were not the same as those then being uncovered by Farrands, but this comment was cut out of the published text, which mentions 'an extensive building or buildings'.

The main point to be noted is that the findspots marked on this map do not correlate with the building found by Farrands and later excavated. This building was already clearly marked on the plan which Farrands sent Warren. Warren, despite his age (81 in 1953) was not losing his memory or intelligence, as his letter to Farrands demonstrated. Warren had observed these remains only fourteen years before his letter and clearly remembered the site, and his positioning of the findspot, well away from Farrands' Site I, must indicate that a further masonry building existed under the later road and prefabs (though by now extensively disturbed by bulldozing and sewer

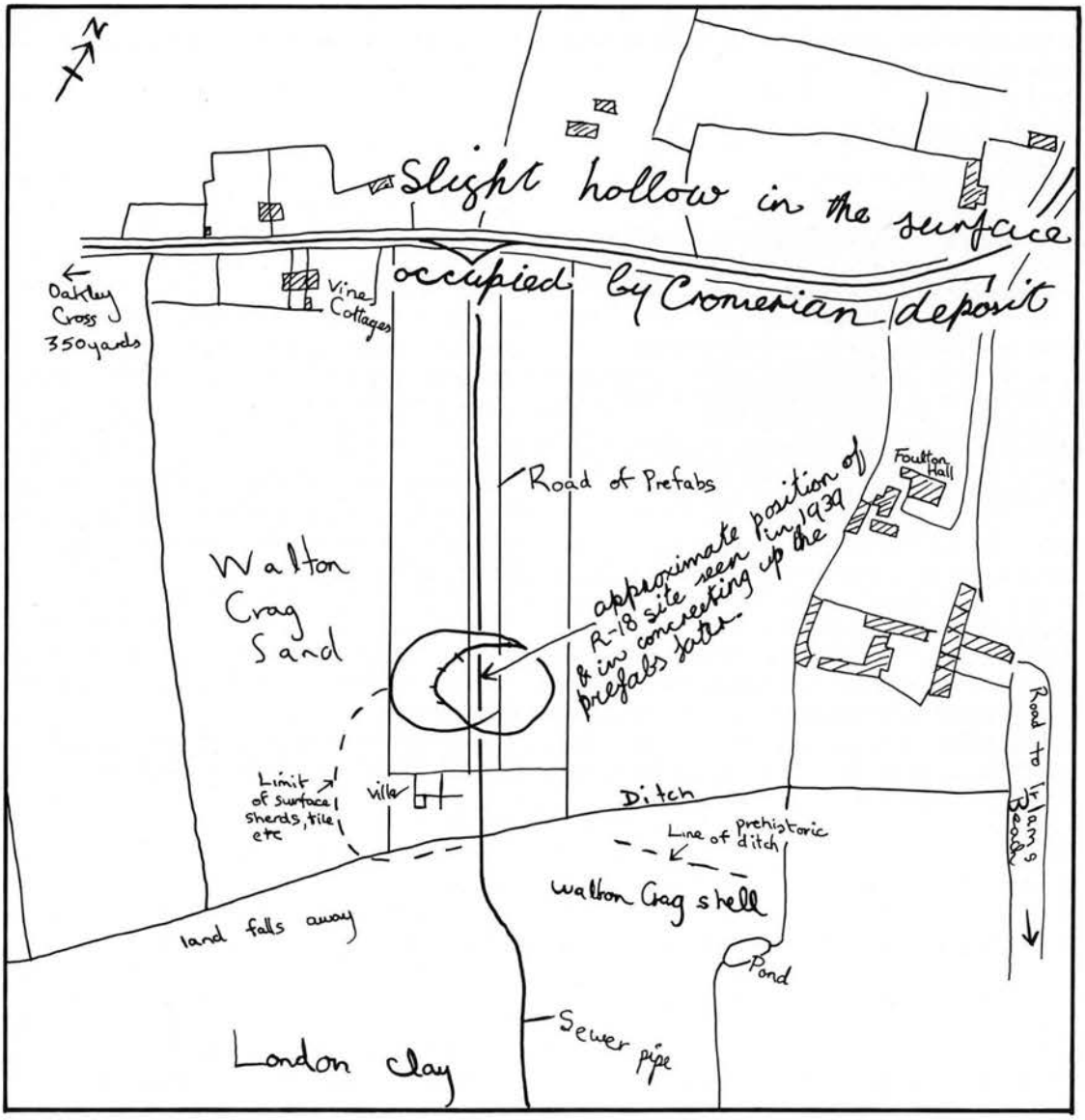


Figure 3 Warren's annotations to Farrands' sketch plan of the site

trenches). Unfortunately, Farrands did not communicate this fact to Mr Corbishley and the chance to investigate this part of the site was missed. The letter and map which constitute the main source of our knowledge on the existence of this structure only came to light after Farrands' death in 1985.

Despite this, the existence of this structure, referred to as Building 1, must be borne in mind in any subsequent discussion of the villa. Warren's description of the foundations as 'substantial' may indicate not only that this may have been the main villa building, or perhaps a detached bath-house, but also that fragments may yet survive beneath the modern houses. Pit C21, excavated in 1976, was near this building and may include pottery derived from layers associated with it (see below p. 189), but apart from these potential derived finds, nothing else is known about Building 1, and it is unfortunate that it was not relocated in subsequent investigations of the site.

The villa site was disturbed again after the Second World War. In 1946–7 the prefab estate was built to accommodate 'displaced persons' and the operations were again visited by Warren, who observed a spread of debris (see Fig. 3) (probably in the vicinity of the pits on Site C if not Building 1). M.R. Hull and also Major J.G.S. Brinson visited the site during the work, the latter apparently to consider the possibility of carrying out an excavation with the Roman Essex Society in advance of building. In the event neither the museum nor Brinson were able to carry out any work on the threatened area. This is extremely unfortunate since the 1975–8 excavations showed that parts of the site had been very badly damaged during these building operations.

Brinson deposited a plan of the scatters of material in the topsoil, and possibly accompanying notes, in the Museum. Any notes made at the time are now lost. A brief account appears in *Journal of Roman Studies* (Vol. 38 (1948), 92).[5] Brinson also reported the site to the Ordnance Survey (OS Records TM 22 NW3) in 1947, giving the grid reference as TM 2225 2914 and 2229 2413 (the latter subsequently deleted). He notes roof and flue tiles and also a quantity of tesserae. His dot distribution (Fig. 2B inset) of material in the topsoil suggests a courtyard villa facing south, with the main block under the allotments and the smaller subsidiary blocks in the field to the south-east. The writer has been unable to confirm this pattern which seems to be partly a case of wishful thinking. Hull stated in his

scrapbook he also could not trace the plan of the building from the topsoil scatter.

V. Trial Investigation in 1951 by R.H. Farrands

In 1951 when Farrands moved to the area from Sussex he was introduced to a Mr Lawrence, a dentist in Harwich who was interested in archaeology. 'When I went in his surgery', he said, 'he opened a cupboard door and, instead of an array of dentures etc., a shower of pottery fell out .... He told me that while workmen were building the prefabs (at Little Oakley) they dug through Roman foundations. In fact his secretary's sister had organised some housewives at the time and dug up a lot of pottery from a Roman refuse pit'. (Farrands n.d., 4). The writer has not been able to trace Mr Lawrence or the pottery recovered in 1946–7.

Farrands was by this time a keen amateur archaeologist and subsequently carried out much fieldwork in the area (see Barford 1986), and his curiosity was moved by this Roman site, temptingly near his house in Dovercourt. He visited the site (Farrands n.d., 4) and said 'the area was easy to find when I went along to have a look, and Roman brick, tile, tesserae, and pottery were very conspicuous on the surface of the prefab gardens and in the allotments at the south end. A Mr Wrycraft, who lived in the prefabs and who had an allotment there, showed me plaster and mortar under the topsoil. He very kindly allowed me to excavate a trench through his allotment one winter.' This trench produced fragments of wall plaster, small tesserae and flue tiles as well as pottery and tile, indicating to Farrands that the site was a Roman villa. The site of this allotment cannot be certainly identified, though it was probably one of the three on the west side of the south end of Seaview Avenue. It was probably not the centre one (which was vacant when Farrands rented it for the purpose of excavation next year). It may have been one to the east, where Farrands later dug a few more trenches. No other records survive of this trial trench, which may have been small and shallow.

Plate I Aerial view of site in 1961 looking north-east showing prefab estate, Site I is near the bottom left corner. Site III under excavation. Cropmarks to east. Site slopes down to marshes on left (photo: R.H. Farrands)

Plate II Aerial view of site in 1961 looking south, Sites I and III in right foreground, Site IV and cropmarks in centre (photo: R.H. Farrands)

Chapter 2. The Excavations By R.H. Farrands, 1952–73

by P.M. Barford

I. Introduction

In 1952 Commander Farrands rented one of the vacant allotments at Little Oakley and received permission from the owners, Tendring Rural District Council, to excavate this area (Site I). Most of the work took place between 1952–1963, with subsequent minor work in 1973. It had been proposed to build garages on the allotments, but this was annually postponed by the Council (and the proposal was finally dropped in 1962). Thus Farrands' work on Site I was to begin with essentially a 'rescue' excavation.

Farrands also examined areas in adjacent fields. Sites II, IV and V were investigated when deeper ploughing began to bring fresh archaeological material to the surface. Site III yielded deep stratification directly related to that on Site I to the north. By excavating these additional areas, Farrands was thus attempting to understand the site as a whole by sampling rather than concentrating on the villa building itself.

Commander Farrands was a Trinity House pilot and his plans and sections exhibit an accuracy and attention to detail to be expected from someone in such a profession. It is remarkable that he achieved so much in the field, not only in committing an enormous amount of time to these excavations, but also because Farrands was largely self-taught. Apart from two afternoons digging with Sheppard Frere in Sussex in 1950 and attendance at the Great Casterton training excavation in 1956, Farrands had no formal training in excavation technique. Despite this his recording was reasonably adequate, especially judged by the standards of contemporary work. By 1954 he had also evolved an efficient bag-list record which has greatly facilitated this account of his work. This work was also helped by the considerable number of photographs, some of which are of excellent quality even though they were taken under very poor light conditions.

Interim reports were published in *J. Roman Studies* 50 (1960) 229; and Farrands 1958; Farrands 1976. Some of the 1952–5 small finds were displayed in his study as a small private museum. Unfortunately, over the course of the years some of the objects became separated from their labels and thus appear as unprovenanced in the present report. (When Farrands died, this study was cleared rapidly by the museum and no note was made of associations of finds loose on tables, which might have thrown light on some of the problems.)

It would be easy retrospectively to criticise Farrands' methods of work and particularly for his failure to publish a proper account, but this view is not endorsed here. During the years 1949–60 very little archaeological work was being carried out in Essex, either on a professional or an amateur basis. It is in the context of this period of stagnation that Farrands' work must be viewed. The failure to publish may be seen as a result of Farrands' own circumstances, leading as he did a full and active professional life. In the years following the excavations at Oakley much of his free time was taken up by the organisation of the United Kingdom and European Maritime Pilots Association and his aerial photographic activities (see the obituaries in *Colchester Archaeol. Group Bulletin* 27 and the *Harwich and Dovercourt Standard* 4/1/85, 10). Commander Farrands anticipated that his retirement would allow more free time to write the Little Oakley report, a hope that was not fulfilled due to other commitments and his ill-health. Having completed this report, the writer appreciates the considerable amount of time that this work would have taken. On a complex site such as this it was not something that could be accomplished piecemeal, a fact which it seems Farrands appreciated only too well.

The writer became involved with Little Oakley in 1975, both as a result of working on the Corbishley sites and following discussions with Commander Farrands. This was followed by fieldwork in the area, particularly on the Red Hills to the south. In 1978 some of the finds were generously loaned by Farrands to the writer for incorporation with the material recovered from the 1975–8 excavations, the finds report on which was then nearing completion. At this time the writer discussed the result of the earlier excavations in detail with Farrands, and provisional plans were made to produce a joint report. These plans were curtailed due to other commitments on both sides and Farrands' long period of illness.

The problems which had to be overcome in writing this report can only be appreciated by someone who has had to write up somebody else's site. Not only had a great deal of information gone to the grave with Farrands, but as the material and finds were worked through, conceptions of the site altered in a way not applicable to sites where the records are one's own. Throughout this work a number of internal inconsistencies were detected in the first drafting of the report, and resolving these and refining interpretation required expenditure of much time and effort — probably as much time, if not more, than the production of the first draft report. In some cases resolution has not been possible, and some inconsistencies remain. The work was also entirely reliant on the written and drawn record, which could, however, be approached with a minimum of preconceptions.

II. Excavation and Recording Methods

The site excavated between 1952 and 1975 divides into six main areas (Fig. 4). Site I was under the allotments noted above (and was divided from Corbishley's Site C only by a recent wire fence). Site II lay to the west and consisted of a number of trenches in a ploughed field. Sites III and IV lay in a field to the south and were much more extensive investigations. Site V was sampled, and the area called here Site VI was not investigated.

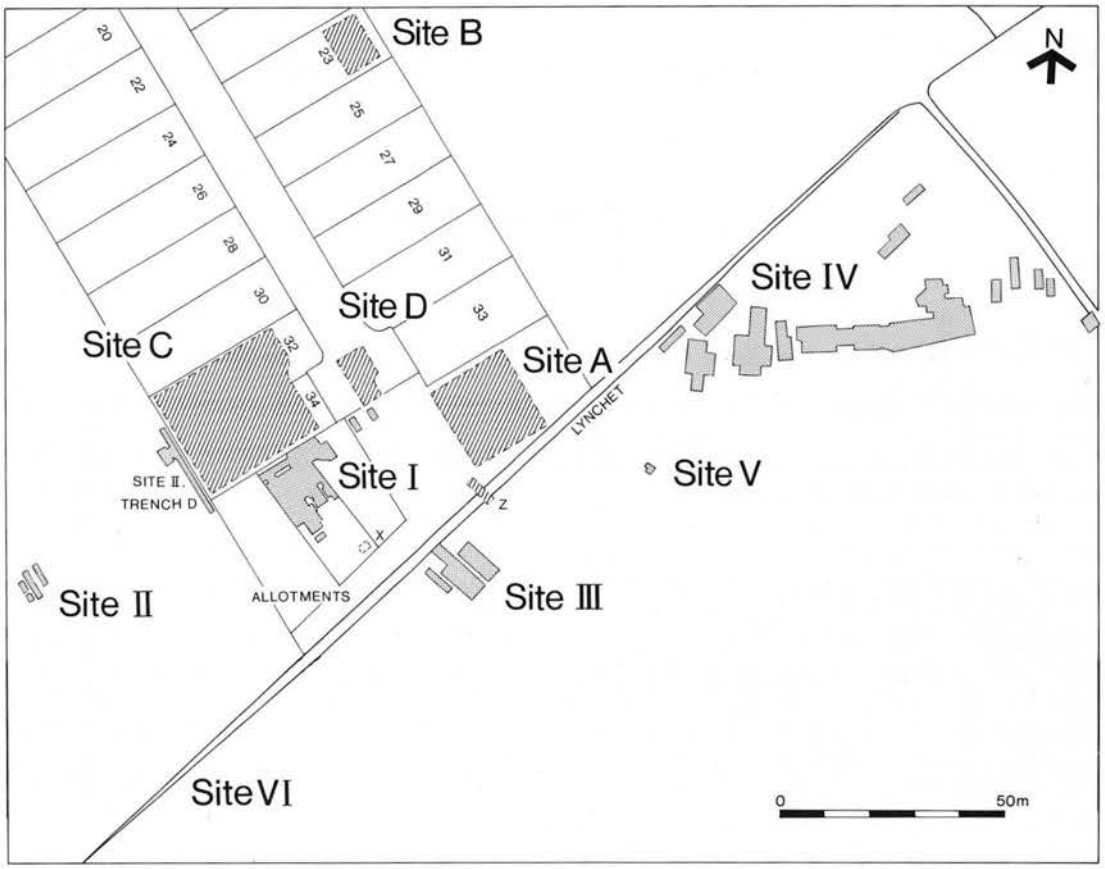


Figure 4 The areas of the excavations, 1951–73 Sites I–IV; 1975–8 Sites A–D. Plot numbers refer to the 'prefabs' existing until the construction of the housing estate built in the 1970s. Compare Figure 53

Site I was concerned principally with Buildings 2 and 3. It encompasses only a small portion of these structures, but in a surprisingly informative area. Site II (dug in 1958) explored a rubble raft, probably the site of a building to the west of the villa. Site III (dug 1959–1961) investigated a small portion of a complex series of layers and features. These seem mostly to be dumped layers filling in a large feature interpreted here as a fishpond; the site also had Saxon occupation features. Site IV (dug 1952–1975) consisted of a number of trenches investigating a complex of prehistoric and Roman field ditches. The site also produced evidence of Saxon and medieval occupation. Site V produced an inhumation burial, probably Roman. (Figure 4 also shows Corbishley Areas A, B, C and D and the trench Z in relation to Farrands' excavations.)

All of Commander Farrands' work was carried out as a number of intersecting small trenches (*i.e.* without baulks; the exception to this is Site III). These trenches were dug by volunteer labour — including schoolboys from Harwich County High School (Site IV). In 1973 the site was also used for an educational experiment, with pupils from Chase Lane (Dovercourt) primary school assisting with the work. Most of the time, however, the workforce consisted of only three or four people, while Farrands himself apparently single-handedly excavated many areas. The work was often carried out in very inclement weather. Since the ground was found to dry out in summer and was too hard for trowelling, much of the digging was done in the winter. Farrands did most of the recording and surveying himself, but mention should also be made of the work of Mrs Doris Smith who lived on the prefab estate and was present on site most of the time after 1955 and made some of the notes. In later years Mr P. Curtis also did much work on site and began some work on the pottery from Sites III and IV.

Most of the excavation was by trowel only and the excavators kept 'everything, down to the smallest pot sherd' (Farrands *in litt.* to J. Hedges). Excepting Site III, for which no catalogue exists, all of these finds were examined and listed in the bag-list. Both the mechanical 'spit' and stratigraphical methods of excavation were in use. Frequent sections were drawn, and these are discussed further below. Most of the field notes were in diary form and include much extraneous data. Interpretation was made more difficult by the disorganisation of these notes and the dispersal of loose pages (since re-attached by the writer); also it became apparent that at least one notebook had been lost since 1955. From 1957, other losses of data occurred on site through vandalism by the children of local residents.

Sites II, IV and V seem relatively straightforward (see below) but Site III was complex, because of its deep stratigraphy and lack of systematic recording or cataloguing. Nevertheless the broad outlines of the sequence seem clear. Site I was equally complex: the layout of trenches and their approximate order of excavation can be seen on Figure 5, which explains the irregular outline of the site plan. The shaded trenches were dug after 1958 and were primarily concerned with filling-in between areas and checking various points. It has proved impossible to show features of all periods on Site 1 meaningfully on the same plan. The published plans of Site I are based on a tracing by Christine Couchman of Essex County Council in March 1975 of an original

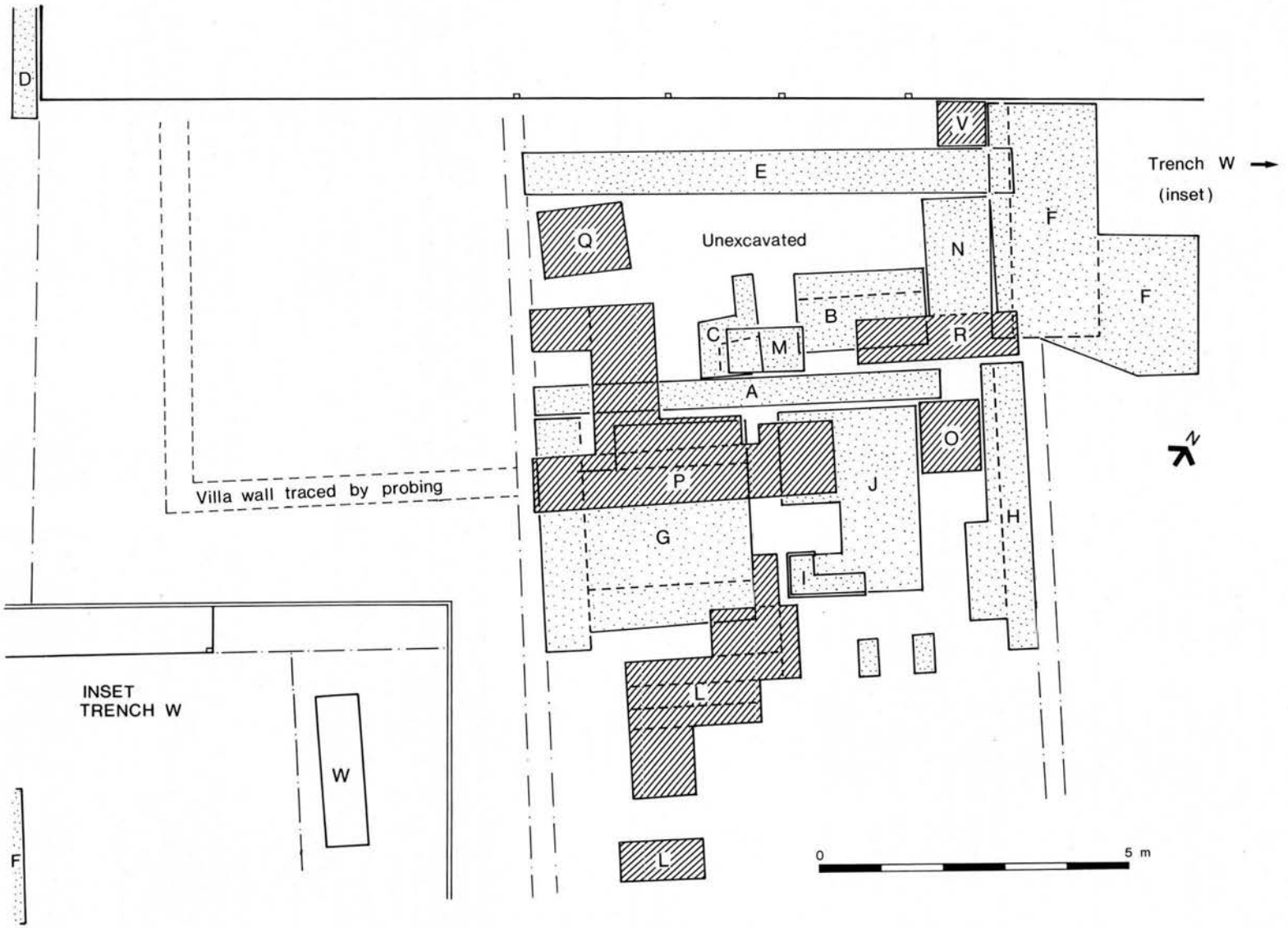


Figure 5 Site I, layout of the trenches (trenches dug after 1958 shaded). Inset: Trench W. Note also position of trench D of Site II to the west

composite plan by Farrands, now lost. This is supplemented by additional data derived from sections, notebooks and photos of the excavated area. The site plan may be accepted as generally accurate, despite its compilation from such small trenches.

Figure 5 shows the small size of many of the trenches. This reflects the small workforce and limited space for spoil storage. Many trenches had to be backfilled before a new one was begun, and it was not generally possible to expose large areas at one time. Such a method of work could not easily be interpreted, either at the time of excavation or subsequently.

Mention must also be made of an unusual method of work which has led to problems. The villa, like many others, was robbed; but Farrands treated the robber trench fills as walls and left them upstanding as earth baulks. This not only caused problems in interpretation, but also may be the cause of some contamination (of the Period 2 deposits at least, p. 19). A logical extension of this technique was the lowering of the ground around the stoney fill of the grave F50 (Pl. XI).

In this report Farrands' original trench and layer numbers have been replaced by a consecutive series of context numbers (concordance in the archive). On Site I these are preceded by 'F' (on Site II by 'K' and Site III by 'P'). Also it should be noted that the numbering of sites and trenches used in this report differs from those used by Farrands, as his scheme was not found consistent enough. For convenience of location, Farrands' trenches have been retrospectively localised with reference to the 10m site grid established in 1975.

Although an attempt has been made to keep 'fact' separate from interpretation throughout this part of the report, it must be pointed out that the 'factual' content is of course an interpretation of Farrands' records by the writer. These records were themselves an interpretation of what he thought he saw (or failed to see); in some cases Farrands clearly missed or misinterpreted layers. The main aim of this report is to give a consistent account of the site, while remaining true to the excavated evidence. Where an interpretation is involved it has not been made lightly, and these interpretations should be clear as such in the text. Throughout this part of the report the writer has tried to show what Farrands thought of the site as he dug it even if, in the end, weighing up the evidence, his opinion has been rejected or modified here. Anyone seeking a totally objective account is invited to use the full archive lodged with the finds in Colchester Museum, where Farrands' notes, plans and sections, as well as a series of rough notes by the writer will be found. Some of the original plans and notes have been annotated in red or green by the writer (and the additions initialled) to allow these to be compared with this report.

All of the sections of Site I have been redrawn interpretatively for publication, and in certain cases additional data have been added from the notes and photos. The original section drawings are included in the microfiche for comparison, and any major changes noted in the text. To retain the sections as originally drawn would have introduced major inconsistencies into the account of the site (because, as noted above, Farrands apparently did not see all the layers or interfaces that must have existed), and explaining these differences in detail in the text would have taken much space. Those who regard this as reprehensible are invited to ignore the published sections and use the microfiche. The reasons for most changes will be self-apparent or discernible from the writer's notes.

Despite this, it must be made clear that Farrands himself would probably not have approved of such action. In a letter to John Hedges dated 20 March 1975 he says:

> The layers in [section] E–E [S.1 on Fig. 22 here] are left hanging in the air, as [I] was unable at the time to determine their continuity; I don't believe in fudging things. M.R. Hull came over twice to look at this section but was defeated in its interpretation. This section took a long time, as all work at Little Oakley has been done using the trowel only; the luxury of time was no object....

This precise and uncritical approach to the record perhaps inspires confidence in its suitability for re-interpretation in this manner.

Farrands' layer descriptions were rarely as full as would be required today. This of course was not uncommon in excavations of the period (*cf.* Wheeler 1954, 55). The writer has attempted to remedy this (*e.g.* from his own experience digging on the site in 1975–8, and a careful examination of the photos). Certain terms were used rather loosely (as 'Rubble' and 'Crag') and this has been corrected, as has the use of the term 'Earth', for which 'loam' has invariably been substituted. Farrands also sketched rubble in by eye on sections and a comparison with the photos shows that (in common with many present excavation volunteers) he tended to 'round-off' the corners of rubble and to draw the individual pieces too small. Thus the disposition of rubble in the sections is diagrammatic (compare with some of the plans, Figs 26, 32 and 35 which were properly recorded).

All measurements were in imperial, and plans and sections were drawn at a variety of imperial scales (most often 1:12). Measurements quoted here in metric are conversions of accuracy appropriate to the situation, but occasionally some measurements are quoted in feet and inches as measured, followed by a metric equivalent in brackets. 'Site north', in this text is taken by the writer to be parallel with Seaview Avenue, but true north has been shown on all relevant plans. (Farrands, in whose professional life bearings were important, invariably quoted true north in his site notes and interim reports.)

As mentioned above, a number of photographs survive from the Farrands excavations, particularly those of Site I. Not all of them are accompanied by negatives, and some of the prints (presumably done locally in the chemist's shop) are rather small and not of the highest quality. Only a selection of these has been made for publication, mainly to illustrate the methods of excavation and recording used and the type of deposits met, but also the complications of the stratigraphy on Site I (Pls I–XIII).

In the following text the terms 'Early Roman pottery', 'Late Roman pottery' and 'Latest Roman pottery' have specific meanings at Little Oakley. They are specific ranges of fabric types. While some of the Early Roman coarsewares may extend chronologically into the later period, the Late Roman fabrics (most notably fabric 18) tend not to occur at Little Oakley before the mid 3rd century AD. Latest Roman ceramics are especially distinctive, and appear around the mid 4th century at Little Oakley. For definitions see pp. 150–1. Where Oxford mortaria or colour-coat products are mentioned they are classified by Young's (1977) scheme. Other form numbers quoted for coarse wares are those of Hawkes and

Hull (1947) and Hull (1958 and 1963) (see p. 133), for samian the usual Dragendorff (etc.) forms are quoted ('Drag form...'), and amphoras are described by quoting the Dressel numbers. 'LBA' means Late Bronze Age, 'EIA' is Early Iron Age; the term 'Belgic' is used in its accepted general chronological sense and has no ethnic connotations. In the description of features, reference is made to the most important finds, small finds have catalogue numbers preceded by a code (CN = coin, FIB = brooch; CU = copper alloy, FE = iron, PB = lead, MD = metalworking debris, FC = fired clay, FT = flint, ST = stone objects, BN = bone objects, W = wooden objects, GL = glass, T = tile, MT= mortar).

III. Site I

The features encountered on Site I are described and briefly discussed below. All are shown on the various figures (and also their sequence on the matrices). Lists of contents (and concordances with Farrands' numbering) will be found in the archive, along with other details and the original section drawings. Figures 6, 13 and 19 are all at the same scale; the shaded area represents areas destroyed by later negative features.

Deposits of Periods 1 and 2
(Figs 6–9)
The deposits of these two periods are quite complex. The main deposit was a 'buried soil' which will be discussed below; cut into this were a number of features, all of them clearly pre-dating the masonry foundations. Not all of these were adequately recorded by Farrands. Indeed he clearly missed some which appear in his sections in this area, and much of Figures 6 to 8 is based on these and the rather scrappy notes. Fortunately most of the trenches were fairly small (and the sections correspondingly closely spaced and comparatively well-recorded), but the plans of this phase should perhaps be treated with some caution.

The whole area produced a scatter of flints and prehistoric pottery. Only a few features (principally three short lengths of ditch and a few pits) produced prehistoric pottery only. These constitute Period 1. The dating is discussed in the finds report.

The features of Period 2 are more difficult. Few can be dated by contained finds, either because there were none, or the deposits were removed unintentionally with later deposits and the finds mixed. Such are the beam slots F45, F46 and F124. Likewise the sequence of pit 1 with the underlying ditch was not seen until a late stage of its excavation. (The dating evidence of the Period 2 buildings is also discussed below.)

The 'buried soil'
Most areas of the Corbishley and Farrands sites on the top of the slope were underlain by a series of deposits between 70 and 250mm thick which Farrands invariably termed the 'Iron Age Sand'. The nature of this layer is crucial to the understanding of the whole site and will be considered here in some detail.

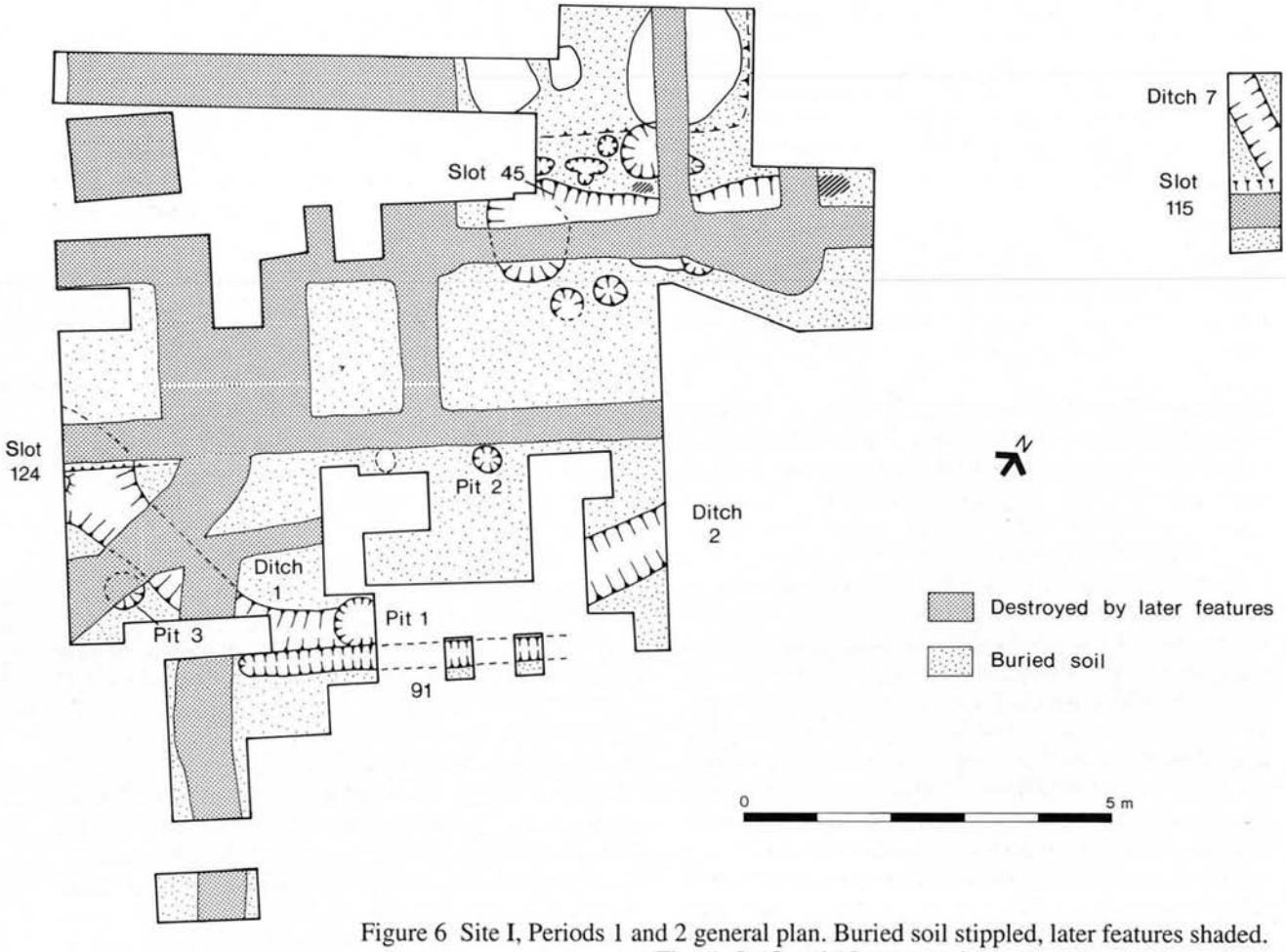


Figure 6 Site I, Periods 1 and 2 general plan. Buried soil stippled, later features shaded. (Figs 4, 5, 12 and 18 same scale)

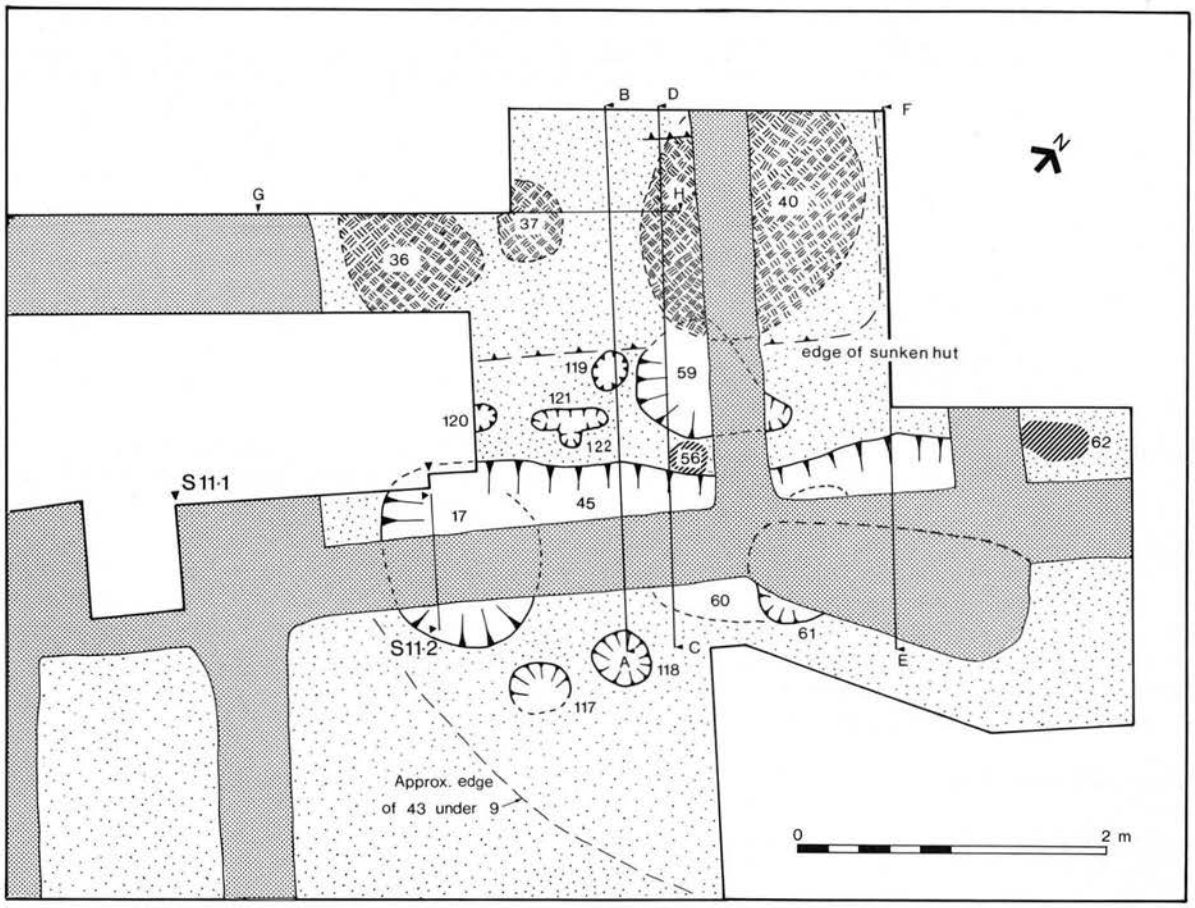


Figure 7 Site I, detail of north-east part of site. Section lines refer to Figure 10

Farrands clearly regarded this layer as a buried soil. This mistake was repeated in the 1975–8 excavations, but post-excavation work on both sites has revealed the fallacy of this interpretation. The various sections through it indicate that this group of light-coloured sandy loam layers was not a true buried soil but was a truncated soil profile. The layers which survived were only the subsoil of an ancient soil profile which had subsequently been truncated. The contents of the original topsoil are now mixed in the present ploughsoil (and allotment topsoil). There is no evidence of a build-up of soil layers, and throughout this report it will be assumed that ancient ground level was about the same as (or, in the light of evidence of plough-erosion to be discussed later, perhaps slightly higher than) present ground level. All feature depths quoted below are from present ground level.

Alternative explanations of the 'subsoil' layers on Site I as buried soils (*e.g.* burial by collapsed daub or 'make-up') would involve the total removal of all soil layers from the site and the subsequent (immediate) deposition of the sandy loams. While it is true that the Period 3 building would have been terraced into the slope, the southern frontage (as excavated on Site I) would most likely have been built up, rather than the whole area being cut down below ground level. Furthermore it is quite clear that the foundations of this building lie within these deposits rather than beginning below them.

The reason for suspecting that these layers were buried soils (*i.e.* ground surfaces) in the first place was their artefactual content. Most of this was of pre-Roman pottery and finds, although later sherds also occurred. Since the spread of this material was fairly uniform, and did not relate to later disturbance, and furthermore there was no humic material present (*i.e.* the deposit was not disturbed by ploughing), it must be assumed that the finds reached their present position by natural downward movement from above by worm, ant, rodent or root action in a period when the site was lying undisturbed.

These soil layers occurred over the whole of Site I, except where removed by later disturbance. Over most of this area they were numbered F9 inside the building, and F73 south of the line of wall 8. (The number F44 was used for sandy loam layers of this type which may have been subsequently disturbed (see Fig. 10).) On the east side of Site I these deposits became more complex with a layer of discoloured sand (F43) about 70mm thick underlying F9. The approximate limit of this layer is shown by the dashed line on Figure 7. This sand may have been in the early stages of pan formation (*i.e.* the soil was an incipient podsol) but the layer was apparently not present elsewhere on the site. In trench A (Fig. 22) the subsoil contained pebble bands (F10 and F56) which were probably due to 'worm-induced sinkage'.

These loam layers on Site I contained 8.69kg of prehistoric pottery (mostly Early Iron Age but some Middle Iron Age). Also 0.5kg of Belgic and Early Roman[6] pottery were recovered, but a few Roman sherds were later. Most of this material came from F73. The deposit also contained quite a lot of bone and a number of scraps of fired clay including fragments of spindle-whorls and triangular loomweights. Farrands (1958, 43) noted that the density of finds increased to the north.

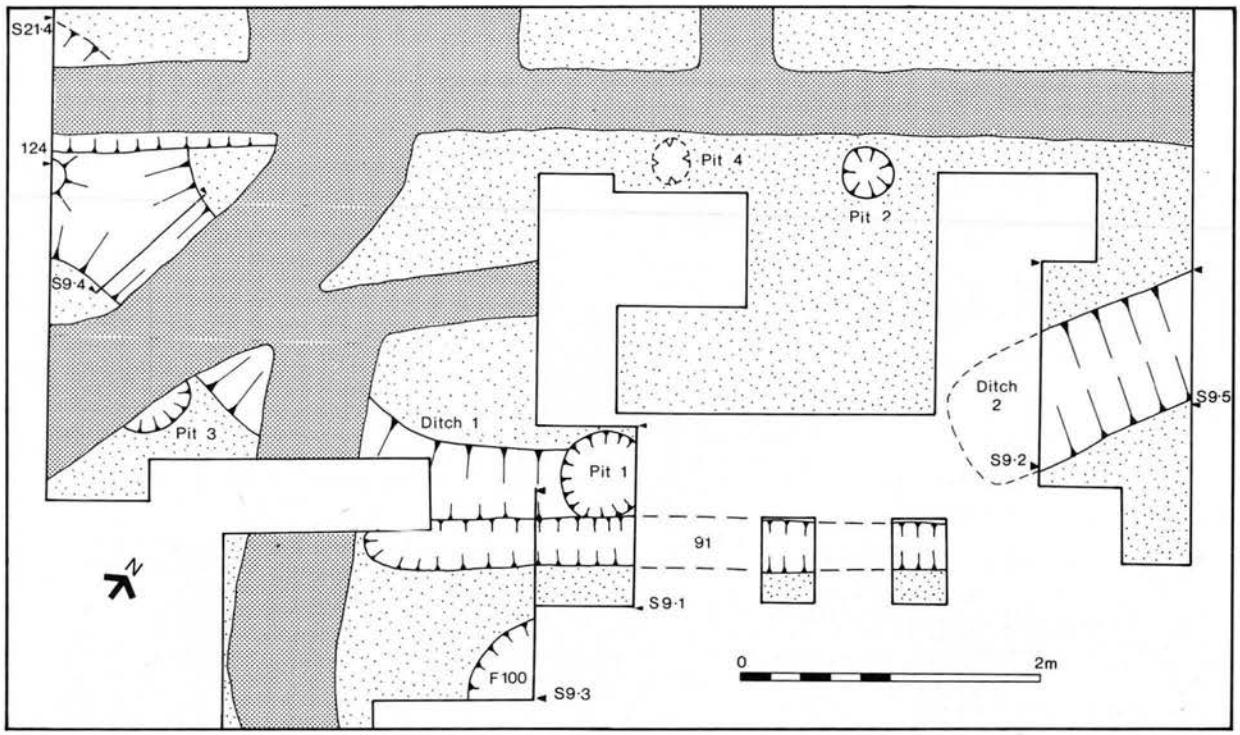


Figure 8 Site I, detail of south part of site

Period 1 features
(Figs 6, 8, 9)

Ditch 1 (Fig. 6)
This feature has an irregular plan (but is not considered to have been part of a circular gully). At the west end during excavation the feature was confused with the Period 2 slot F124; a second gully also joined the ditch in this area (the two were not separated by Farrands — but the second gully seems to have been Period 1 also). At the east end, finds (bag 279) from the ditch were mixed with those from a Belgic pit (pit 1, below) but this was sorted out when the base of the pit was reached.

The ditch has a number of fills (Fig. 9). The primary fill was dirty sandy silt (F79), the fill above (F78) was a dark clayey silt, with a sandy lens on the ditch side in trench L. The upper fill (F77) was similar, but with a shelly layer (F95) on top in the south east portion. The fills of the ditch produced 3.97kg of Iron Age pottery (with intrusive Belgic and Early Roman sherds in the areas noted). This pottery (described on p. 121 below) seems to be Middle Iron Age, although redeposited material was also present as in ditch 7. Quite a lot of bone, small pieces of iron slag, and a fragment of fired clay triangular loomweight were also found.

Ditch 2 (Figs 6 and 8–9).
Only a short length of this feature was excavated in trench H. It is not certain whether or not the ditch ended in a butt end to the west (the feature was not detected in trench J), neither is it certain whether ditches 1 and 2 were separate features, though it seems that they were.

The ditch had a lower sandy fill (F81) with no finds. The upper, shelly, fill (F80) contained a little Early Iron Age pottery and some bone, and also some Early Roman pottery, but the shell in this fill, and the Roman sherds may be intrusive (due to worm action).

Ditch 7 (Fig. 6)
Ditch 7 was found in a small trench (W) dug to locate the robber trenches of the Period 3 villa. The ditch fill (F114) was sandy and contained a lens of fired clay and charcoal fragments. The 2.23kg of pottery recovered was probably LBA (p. 121 below); some grass-tempered sherds seem to be prehistoric and not Saxon. Note that the line of ditch 7 is at right-angles to that of ditch 2. Some Belgic pottery in this ditch may result from an unrecognised intrusive feature, F115 (see below).

Pit 1 (Figs 8–9)
This feature cut the fill of ditch 1 (and was apparently cut by the slot F91 on its south edge). The feature had a lower sandy fill (F98) lapping up the sides and a clay 'lining' (F97) at the bottom. The fill of the pit (F96) was sandy. (It is not clear whether or not F92 and F95 overlay the pit as reconstructed on the section.) F96 contained 400g of Belgic grog-tempered pottery including fragments of storage jars and other jars. The pottery is not closely datable, and this feature may even belong to Phase 2(i).

Pit 2 (Fig. 8).
This feature was 0.45m across and 0.85m deep. The lower fill (F84) was black and charcoally, the upper (F83) was sandy. Both fills contained a few scraps of Early Iron Age pottery and bone, but also a few sherds of a fabric 47 jar which may be Middle Iron Age. Sherds from F83 and F84 join. Two copper alloy pin fragments (FIB5 and CU4) may be intrusive Roman, or this feature might be Period 2 or 3.

Pit 3 (Fig. 8)
This was apparently cut by the Period 3 drain trench. The pit fill (F71, not described) may have contained sherds of Early Iron Age pottery (not seen by the writer).

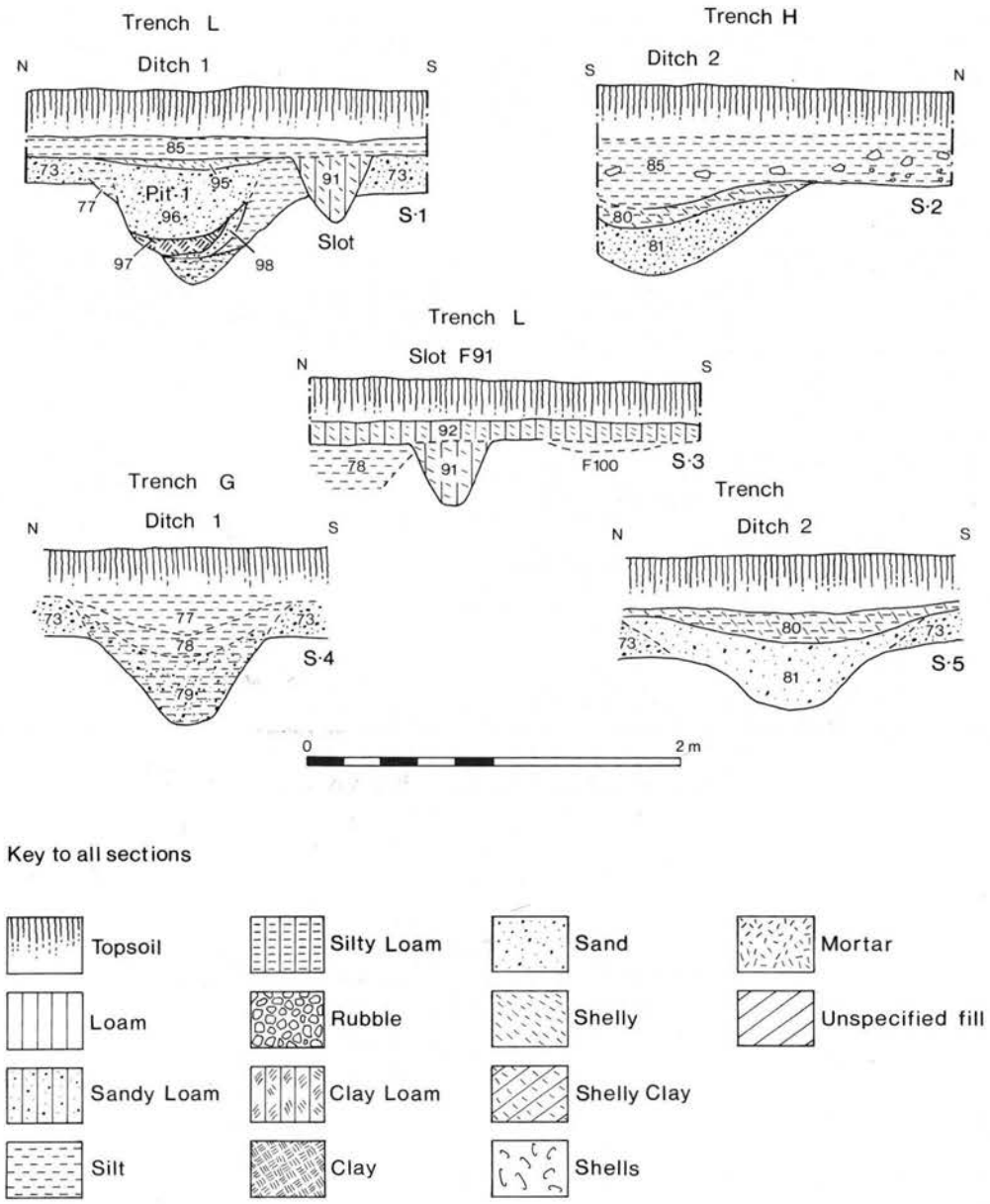


Figure 9 Site I, sections of Period 1 and 2 features. Key to conventions on all sections

Period 1 deposits: discussion

It is not intended to discuss Period 1 deposits on Site I here in any detail, as the evidence for this period is so fragmentary that it will be best to consider all of the sites together. In summary, the site produced three segments of ditch, probably Early or Middle Iron Age in date, and a few pits and post-holes. Only one of these, pit 1, is worthy of note. Clay-lined pits are a feature of some Iron Age sites (*e.g.* Mucking, where they were often associated with potter's waste).

Period 2: features

This period seems to have related to a series of timber buildings. The first four features (F45, F91, F115 and F124) are interpreted below as the trenches for sleeper beams of a large timber building (Building 2).

Slot F45 (Figs 6–7 and 10)

This feature seems to have been missed by Farrands, but can be traced in consecutive sections across Area F (Fig. 10) and is cut away by a later robber trench. The feature was traced for 3.4m, and was wide and shallow in profile; the fill (F56) was charcoally loam with mortar/plaster, fired clay fragments, a little bone and oystershell and charcoal. There was a little redeposited Iron Age pottery and a few sherds of Early Roman pottery including a comb-stabbed form 108 sherd.

Slot F91 (Figs 6, 8 and 9)

This was quite deep and steep-sided, with a flat bottom and filled with a shelly soil (similar to F92 in texture). The fill contained a few scraps of grog-tempered pottery and the rim of a storage jar. The feature also contained a few pieces of bone and oystershell, as well as three small pieces of white shelly wall plaster with flat rough surfaces painted white.

Feature 'F115' (Fig. 6)

This feature was probably responsible for the intrusion of a quantity of grog-tempered pottery ostensibly from the fill of ditch 7, but only present in the portion of the ditch adjacent to the later wall; it may have been a slot like the others. The feature was not spotted by Farrands, and no

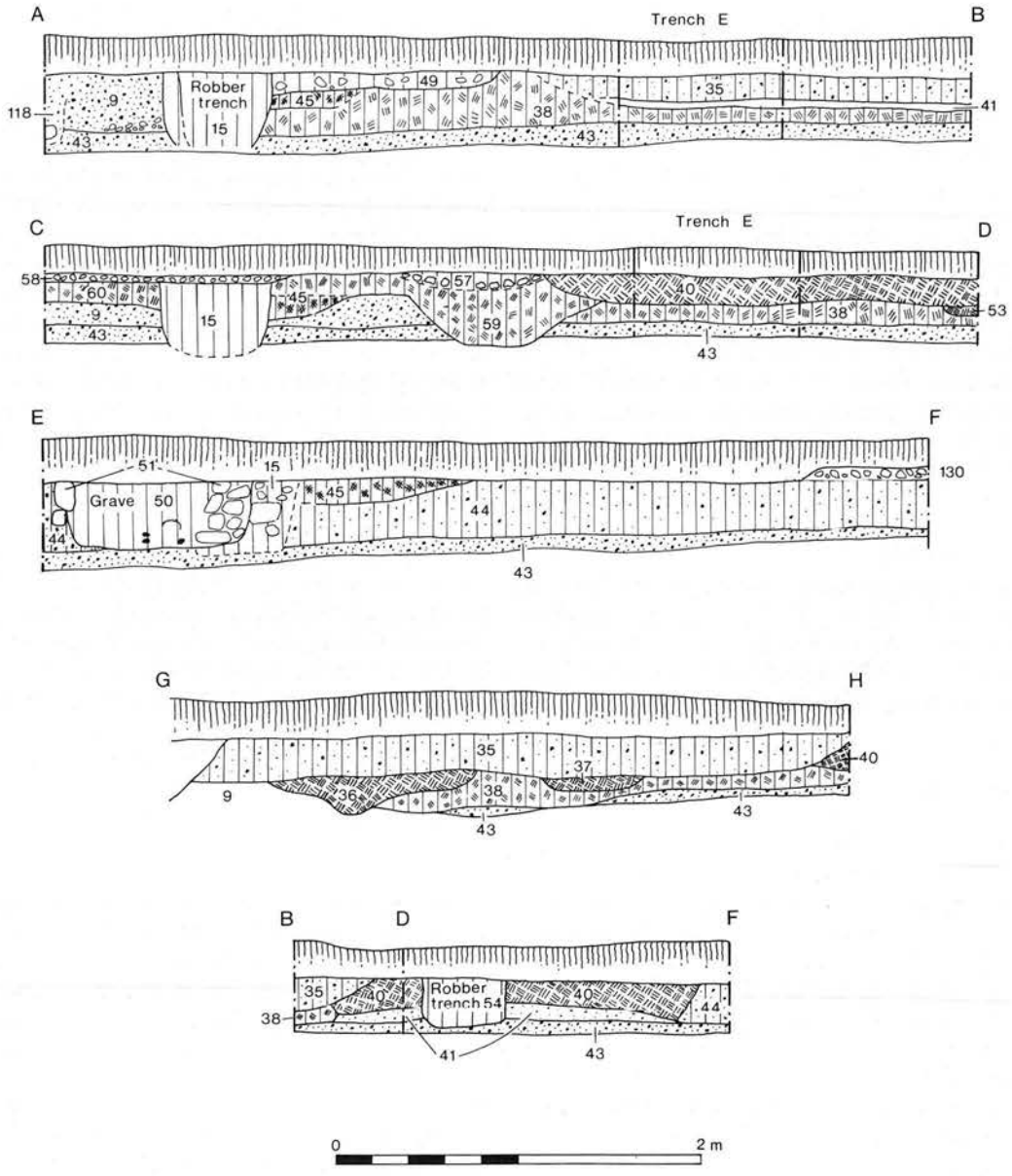


Figure 10 Site I, sections of Area F; for position of section lines see Figure 7

section was drawn. Perhaps it was part of the same feature as F45. The feature may also be the source of a few Roman sherds recorded in the site notes from the upper fill of ditch 7. If it is not a slot, a pit may have cut the ditch at this point.

Slot F124 (Figs 6 and 8)
This was nearly destroyed by the robber trench F63 and was not noticed by Farrands, but appears on one of his sections (Fig. 21) as well as in a photo. The fill was dark-coloured. This slot, like the others, underlay the later wall and presumably ran along its line. The bags of the finds from the segments of ditch 1 in this area contained intrusive Belgic grog-tempered sherds, presumably derived from this feature.

Scoop F17 (Figs 7 and 11)
The relationship between this and F45 was not established. The feature was a shallow, flat-bottomed scoop filled with blackish loam with oystershell (F17). It contained sherds of Early Roman pottery including pieces of West Stow-type ware with decoration similar to those from

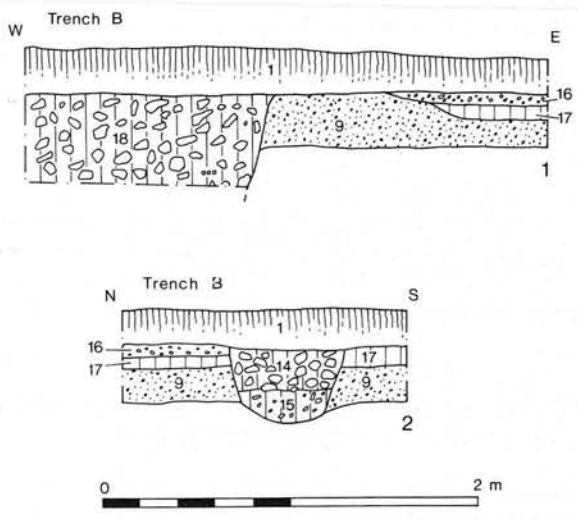


Figure 11 Site I, sections of trench B, top north face; lower, east face

Flavian-Hadrianic deposits on Site IV (p. 144). The upper fill of the scoop was a pebbly layer which may have derived from metalling. The feature supplies a *terminus post quem* for the Period 3 building, since it seems to have been sealed beneath its floors.

Scoop F56 (Fig. 7)
A small spread of dark soil and charcoal adjacent to F59; no details recorded, no finds.

Pit F59 (Figs 7 and 10)
This feature was deeper, and with steeper sides, than F17. The fill contained sherds of Early Roman pottery (one fabric 18 sherd was probably intrusive) and a small sherd of Pompeian Red Ware was found. The nature of the fill is not noted, but it contained oyster and winkle shells and some small pieces of bone. F59 underlies F40 (Fig. 10).

Pit F60 (Figs. 7 and 10)
This was 0.8m deep and filled with a reddish loam; it seems to have been cut by F61. The feature contained redeposited Early Iron Age pottery and a little Early Roman pottery, including a sherd of Claudio-Neronian South Gaulish samian (TS19 below).

Scoop F61 (Fig. 7)
This contained much Early Roman pottery and sherds of Flavian samian. It also contained a small piece of Oxford white mortarium and a dark colour-coated white/buff beaker sherd with coarse 'rouletting'. These two sherds are later and may indicate that this feature is later than Period 2, or they could be intrusive from either the robber trench or grave (F50), both of which cut this feature. The nature of the fill is not recorded. The feature may have extended beyond the north edge of the robber trench F15.

Scoop F62 (Fig. 7)
This was shallow and filled with black loam and contained a little Early Roman pottery.

Scoop 117 (Fig. 7)
Scoop 117 was shallow and contained 1.6kg of redeposited Early Iron Age sherds but a few Belgic and Early Roman sherds as well as briquetage and a piece of triangular loomweight

Pit 118 (Fig. 7)
This was 0.3m deep with upper shelly fill containing a few Roman sherds and a samian rim (not seen by the writer). This overlay F119, a greenish lower fill with no finds.

A bag labelled 'Trench 0, Corridor (Scoop M)' contains Early Roman pottery (only) and a sherd of briquetage. This material may have come from a feature like F117 or F118. Scoop F120 (Fig. 7) had a shallow reddish fill containing fired clay (not seen by the writer).

Scoop F121 (Fig. 7)
This had a shallow reddish fill, from which came a fragment of South Gaulish samian form Drag. 27.

Post-hole F122 (Fig. 7)
This had a reddish fill, with no finds.

Features 117–21 were found in trench N in 1961. They had previously been missed by trench F in the same area.

The 'Hut Floor' (Figs 7 and 10)
On the north side of trench F was a roughly rectangular area of complex stratigraphy. The subsoil had been dug out to a depth of 0.65m, and a series of sandy and clay layers subsequently deposited. These layers contained about 1.5kg of redeposited Early Iron Age sherds and a little Early Roman pottery. The area was not planned in detail by Farrands; the plan here has been reconstructed from the sections. The layer (F38) of clay and discoloured sand at the base of the feature is probably 'trample' or disturbed natural and suggests that the base of the feature had been walked upon. The layer contained a little Early Roman pottery, and a little iron slag. Cut into F38 were two shallow clay-filled features (F36 and F37). Also overlying F38 was F41, a hard greenish clay loam with charcoal and a little Early Roman pottery. A dump of fired clay fragments (F53) lay in a slight hollow in the top of F38 (Fig. 9.C–D).

Lying over F41 and F53 was a large mounded dump of clay and fragments of fired clay (F40). The fired clay had flat 'white' surfaces and could be burnt daub, or perhaps kiln/oven debris. A fragment of fired clay block (Fig. 71.12) came from this deposit. This layer contained a small quantity of Early Roman pottery including the rim of a poppyhead beaker. The pottery also included a few sherds of fabric 18 (form 268) which it is suggested are intrusive.

F40 was overlain by F35, a dump of yellowish sandy loam, containing a little grog-tempered and Early Roman pottery, and a little iron slag.

The position of this feature in the stratigraphic sequence of the site is fixed by the relationship between its fill and several features associated with or cut by the Period 3 building (*e.g.*, F59, see Fig. 10.C–D). It seems to be a Period 2 structure, although it may be noted that it has a central position in the Period 3 building.

Period 2: dating
The small quantity of finds from features of Period 2 on Site 1 needs no further emphasis: close dating is accordingly difficult. Only a little of the pottery is datable. Some features contained grog-tempered pottery, others contained Early Roman greywares, and while the latter began in the mid 1st century AD, they continued in use into the 3rd century at least (see pottery report). The grog-tempered sherds and samian suggest that a date somewhere in or after the late 1st century AD would be more appropriate. Flagon sherds were scarce. Form 108 is locally a relatively common type, but is especially common in Flavian to Hadrianic deposits at Little Oakley (it is possible that further work on the vessel type and typology of fabrics at Colchester might prove useful). A similar date would apply to the vessel from F17. The samian is mostly in the form of small sherds of relatively common plain forms.

Farrands always referred to these features as 'Flavian' (pers. comm. and unpublished notes; *cf.* 1958, 44). It is possible that this dating was arrived at as a result of the examination of the samian, not all of which now survives; maybe some of this material was in the collection of sherds examined by B.R. Hartley (below). The features of Period 2 will therefore be regarded as Flavian to early 2nd century but this should be regarded with some caution. Certainly the quantity of grog-tempered pottery in the fill of slots F45, F91, F124 (and possibly F115) alongside the Early

Plate III Site I, Area G 1955, view along fully excavated box drain looking south-west. Robbed south wall of villa in foreground, Pit 3 in background (photo: R.H. Farrands)

Plate IV Site I, Area G 1955, view westwards along robbed south wall of villa (wall 5), Room 11 fill on right (photo: R.H. Farrands)

Plate V Site I, Area G 1955, close-up of part of Room 11 fill and partially excavated box drain looking south-west. Note upstanding robber trench fill on right (also notebook in foreground now lost) (photo: R.H. Farrands)

Plate VI Site I, Area G 1955, box drain looking south-west with central fill removed. Ranging pole standing in Pit 3 (photo: R.H. Farrands)

Plate VIII Site I, 1958, northern edge of trench P, fill of pit F3 visible in section, fill of F7 has been removed, upstanding portion of fill of Room 11 in centre between edge of F3 and section line S22.3 (photo: R.H. Farrands)

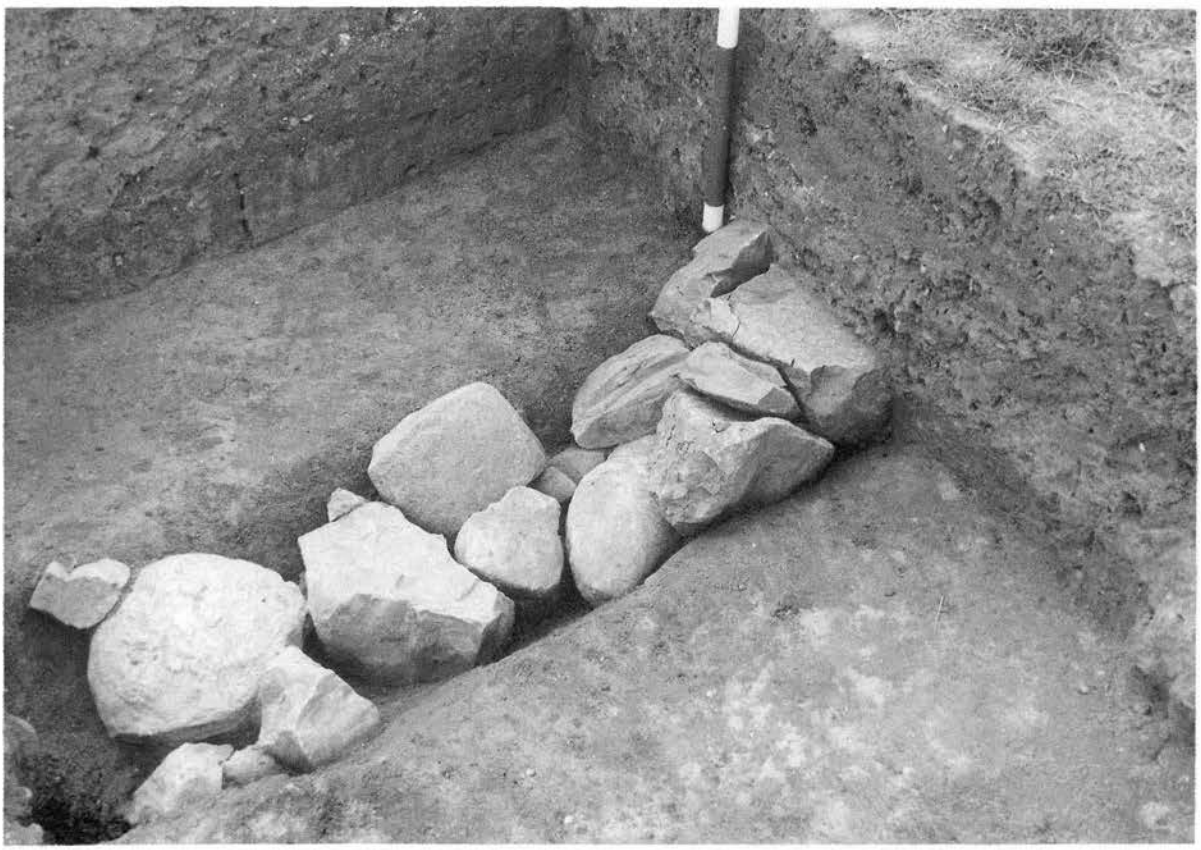


Plate VII Site I, Area P 1958, rubble in robber trench looking south-west (photo: R.H. Farrands)

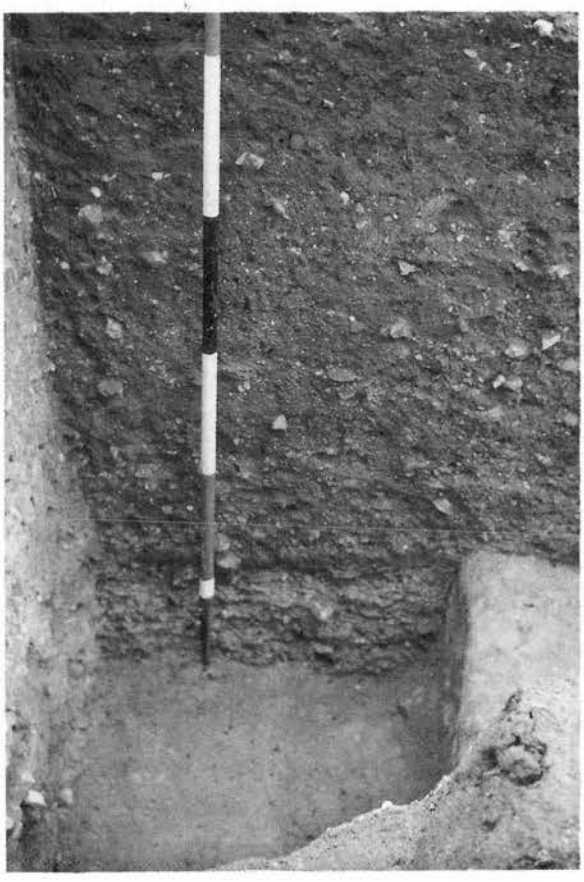


Plate IX Site I, 1958, trench P, east face, close-up of black loam filling F3, base of Room 11 on right (photo: R.H . Farrands)

Plate X Site I, trench E 1955, looking west, pit 8 fill in foreground, pit 6 fill in centre, layers 34 and 32 removed at far end (photo: R.H . Farrands)

Roman fabrics would fit a pre-Flavian or Flavian date (see the pottery sequence in the fill of the fishpond on Site III). The few fabric 18 sherds apparently from features of this phase should be discussed. The general trend of the greyware sequence at Little Oakley indicates that this fabric did not become common on the site until the mid–late 3rd century. Features F59 and F40 contained fabric 18 (while F61 also contained late pottery). All three of these features were cut by the robber trenches and other late features. It will be remembered that the robber trenches were excavated in a curious manner (see above) and this may have resulted in some contamination. The evidential value of these later sherds is thus reduced and they will be discounted here.

Period 2: interpretation

As noted above, there are several problems with some of the features attributed to Period 2. Indeed the paucity of finds from some (*e.g.* F118, F120, F121 and F122) suggests that they need not have been man-made, or were perhaps holes left by the grubbing-out of trees or bushes prior to agriculture or building. Many of these scoops cannot be linked with the other structural evidence of this (or any later) period in any sensible plan. Some may be connected with the Period 3 reconstruction.

It seems best to consider first the feature interpreted as a 'hut floor' above. Because of the layer of 'trample' (layer F38) in its base, this is not considered to be a hollow below a sprung wooden floor within Building 2. Neither is it likely (because of the correspondence between Building 2 and the Period 3 building) that the 'sunken-floored hut' post-dates Building 2. Therefore it is considered here that it was an earlier feature, possibly part of a structure.

The 'sunken-floored hut' if such it was, is not without parallels. Similar Belgic features were found at Canterbury (Frere *et al.* 1987, 50–2, figs 16–18) and close Roman parallels have been found at Gorhambury and King Harry Lane, St Albans, Herts (Neal 1978, 48, fig. 15). The hut can only have been rectangular for although Farrands did not trace the edges properly, a consideration of the plan and sections demonstrates this. It did not extend far northwards, since it was not found by Corbishley on his Site C; the resultant elongated rectangular form is very similar to that from Gorhambury; Neal (*loc. cit.*) suggests these features may have been animal pens or similar agricultural buildings rather than a domestic dwelling. The feature was backfilled with redeposited natural and a dump (F40) of material derived from the destruction of a kiln or oven, or perhaps from a partly burnt daub building: note the black soil filling the slots (F45 and F124). The nature of the superstructure (if any) of this feature is uncertain, but it may have been of sleeper-beam construction since no post-holes could be linked with it.

The trenches or slots F45, F91, F115 and F124 were parallel and spaced *c.* 3.52m apart lying at a slight angle to the Period 3 foundations, the two northern slots lying under the wall-lines of this building. It is not thought that they were the construction trenches of this later structure since (a) they lie at an angle to that line, (b) similar trenches were not found under the north–south walls and (c) slot

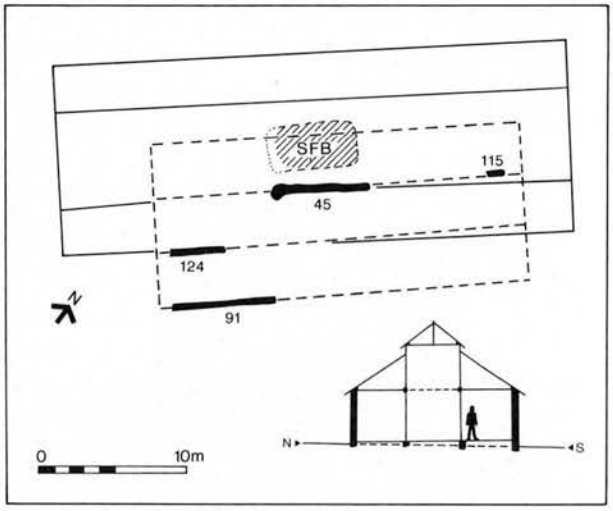


Figure 12 Reconstructed plan (broken line) and schematic section of Building 2 in relationship to Building 3 (solid line) and sunken-floored building (SFB)

F91, which seems to be part of the same system, lies outside the villa building (the angle between the two making it unlikely that F91 was for a Period 3 timber verandah).

Farrands mentions several times in the notes for 1955–8 a 'shelly Roman Crag Layer' (*e.g.* F92 and F95). This was found all over the area to the south of the Period 3 building. The Red Crag outcrops further down the slope from Site I, so this material must have been brought to the site deliberately. The fill of F91 was of a similar nature to these layers, and it is suggested that the Crag was brought to the site for metalling a yard or a floor, and when the Period 2 building was demolished, the shell became incorporated in the fill of F91. The other shelly layers consisted of loam mixed with Crag shell; this, it is suggested, was again due to the action of earthworms. Formation of these layers continued in Period 3, and will be discussed below (p. 25).

If the area was metalled, the possibility that the slots were boundaries between narrow strip-fields may be discounted. The gravel in the upper fill of F16, which probably also derived from metalling or flooring, lends further support to this suggestion. It is therefore assumed that these three slots were from a timber building (Building 2) on the site of the Period 3 masonry building. If a fourth slot had existed to the north, it would have fallen between the Farrands and Corbishley sites if the spacing was the same as the other three. For the reasons noted above, this putative building is thought to have been later than the sunken-floored hut.

The two wide shallow slots (F45 and F124) were suitable for a sleeper-beam into which the uprights were morticed, the depth and profile of F91 were also suitable for such a technique (but could for example have held a wall of post-in-trench construction). It is not considered likely that the latter was for a free-standing fence, and its spacing seems to demonstrate that it was part of the same structure as the other slots. Figure 12 shows the position of the excavated portions of beam-slot and the broken line shows the reconstructed outline of the timber structure superimposed on that of the sunken-floored hut. The solid line shows the outline of the Period 3 building. The section represents a possible reconstruction of the superstructure (and also indicates why F91 may have been deeper). The short lengths of beam-slots recovered and degree of later disturbance make any attempt at detailed reconstruction of Building 2 hazardous. It has been reconstructed in Figure 12 as a simple rectangular structure, with a length not greatly exceeding the extent of the excavated remains (though may have been longer). The figure shows slots 91, 124 and 45 with its presumed extension F115 in their spatial relationships with the sunken-floored building and the lines of the masonry foundations of the Period 3 building (Feature D13 on the Corbishley site would seem not to be a part of this structure). While slots F45 and F124 may have been for a continuous wall, they could equally have been ground-beams inside an aisled structure. Building 2 is thus provisionally interpreted as an aisled or corridor building with the internal divisions morticed into a longitudinal ground-beam.

The function of the building and its parallels will be discussed later (p. 189) but the date of demolition must be considered. None of the pottery in the sleeper-beam trenches was in the form of large unabraded or joining sherds and may be presumed to be material which was lying around the building (*i.e.* presumably broadly contemporary with its use) which fell into the open trenches after the wood had rotted or been extracted, or even that it was material which had been in the original packing of the trench and was replaced when these were backfilled. It is assumed here that the similarity in siting and positioning of the foundations of the Period 3 Building 3A, immediately on top of the Building 2, indicates that little time elapsed after the demolition of this before Building 3A was erected. If this is so, then all of the timber would probably have been extracted from those portions of the sleeper-trenches underlying the masonry foundations, to prevent subsidence as the timber rotted. The dark fills of the slots seem to have accumulated after the timbers were removed; possibly the charcoal in these deposits derives from clearance of debris before Building 3 was erected.

Unfortunately, neither the demolition of Building 2 nor the original construction of the Period 3 building can be dated closely or with any confidence. If the construction of Building 2 can be taken as being 'Flavian', it cannot have stood for an indefinite period. The life of a timber building with earth-fast external timbers depends on a number of factors, and a life within the bracket of about 25–75 years would probably be a fair guess. A mid 2nd century date may be suggested for the construction of the Period 3 building (below).

There is some doubt about the date of F61. The pottery suggests it may be of Period 2 with intrusive sherds, or may be of Period 3 or later. Since it appears to have straddled the wall-line it probably should be dated earlier than the wall. It cannot be ruled out, however, that it was a feature cutting the robber trench.

Period 3 features

(Figs 13–15)

In this period, probably some time in the mid to late 2nd century AD, a substantial structure (Building 3) with masonry foundations was erected on the site of Building 2. No floor surfaces survived, and very little of the wall remained. A number of contemporary features was also present to the south of the villa, including trenches of a wooden pipe and a timber drain. There may have been

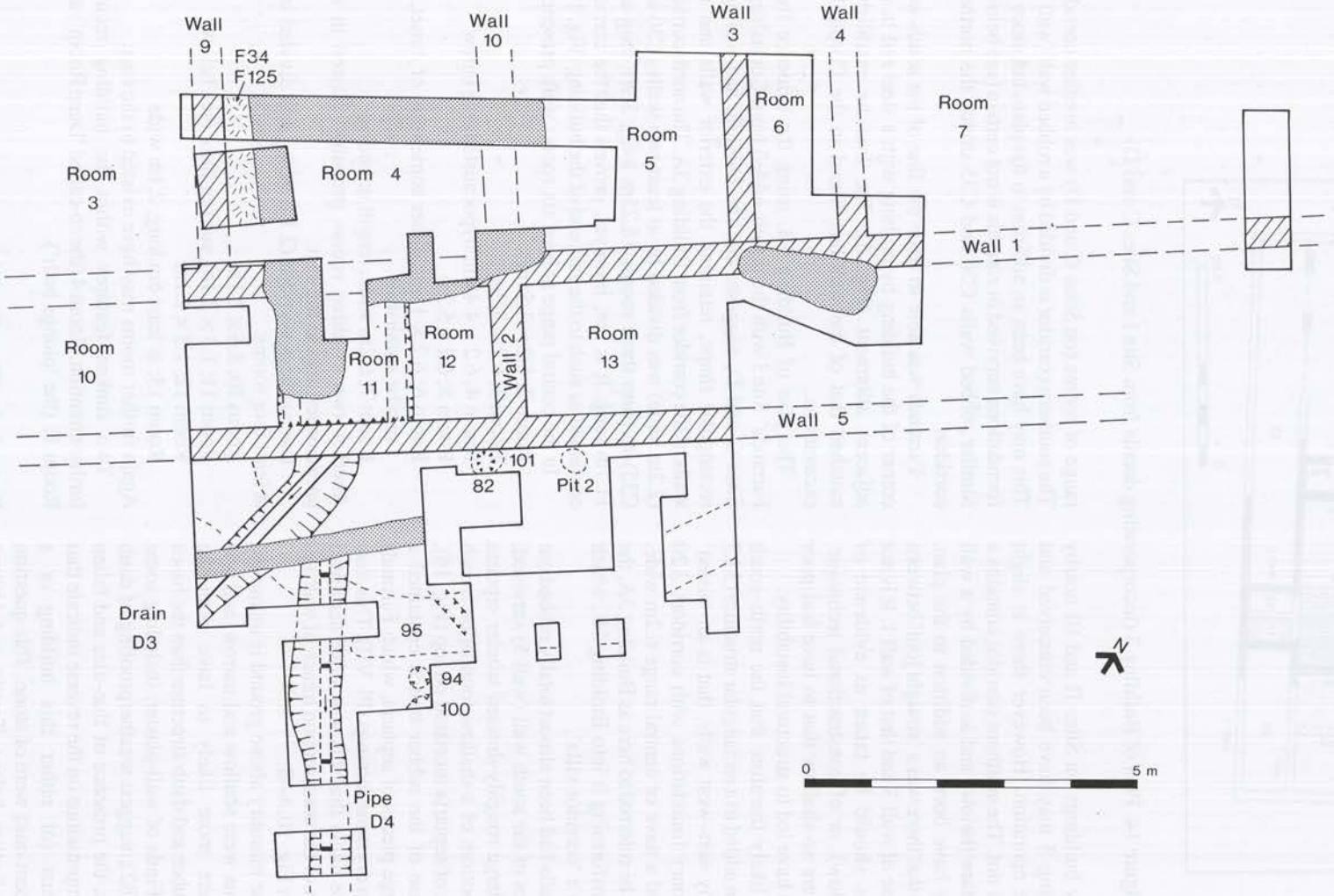


Figure 13 Site I, plan of Period 3 features, later features shaded (robber trenches omitted)

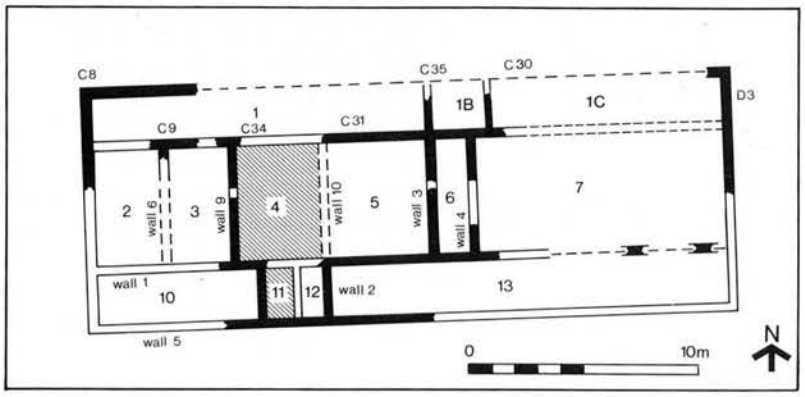


Figure 14 Plan of Building 3 (incorporating details from Site I and Sites C and D)

other contemporary buildings on Sites II and III nearby (see below). Building 3 may have been conceived and constructed in one operation. However there is slight evidence that it was not. The southern corridor contains a sunken-floored feature (below) and is divided by a wall (wall 2). This may have been an addition to the plan. Farrands also noted that there was a 'straight join' between the mortar at the base of wall 3 and that of wall 1. It is not clear whether this should be taken as evidence of alterations (see below), or of constructional technique. The foundations were so shallow that to have had poor bonding here could have led to structural instability.

It seems quite likely therefore that the north–south walls may have been added to a rectangular structure (33.7 × 12.7m) divided by east–west walls, that is an 'aisled' building with masonry foundations with corridors 2.20 and 2.10m wide and a nave or central range 6.2m wide. The first phase will be referred to here as Building 3A, the later alterations transforming it into Building 3B, which seems to have been a 'corridor villa'.

Although the walls had been almost totally robbed out in Period 4, portions of the south wall (wall 5) survived; these consisted of large roughly-dressed tabular septaria blocks laid in the bottom of a shallow foundation trench with smaller pieces of septaria mortared on top (Fig. 16). To the east the base of the robber trench contained a number of loose large pieces of septaria, which Farrands considered had been drystone footings (Pl. VII). This may be so, but it is more likely that this was stone discarded during robbing. Part of the construction trench of wall 1 is visible in section on Fig. 10.A–B.

The height of the masonry above ground is unknown. The wall foundations were shallow and narrow, and it is felt that these were more likely to have been the dwarf-walls of a timber and daub structure than the bases of masonry walls. Finds of wall-plaster, including some fallen externally (F82), suggest weatherproofing of daub walls. Nevertheless, the presence of flue-tiles and fallen plaster with stone impressions on the reverse indicate that some walls at least (of either this building or a contemporary adjacent one) were of stone. This question will be discussed further below. Tegula and imbrex fragments suggest a tiled roof, and fragments of window glass, elaborate painted plaster, marble veneer and mosaic tesserae hint that Building 3B was a residential structure of some architectural pretensions.

The plan of Building 3B (Fig. 14) seems to have been of a corridor villa with a block of rooms fronted (or backed) by a southern corridor; to the north of the central range of rooms (on Sites C and D) was another corridor. The southern corridor is divided by a robbed wall (wall 2). This may have been an addition to the plan, but since no foundations survived *in situ* this is not certain (see below). Similar robbed walls C30 and C35 divide the northern corridor.

Farrands was able to trace the line of the south-west corner of the building by probing with a steel rod in the adjacent allotment (Fig. 5). The line he established matched that of the wall-line found in the Corbishley excavations.

The plan of Building 3B, using the evidence from Farrands' Site I with the details added from Corbishley's Sites C and D, suggests that the building had a simple rectangular shape, retaining the exterior walls and the walls of the corridor from Building 3A. The north corridor (2.2m wide) was divided by at least two walls (C30 and C35) to form three rooms 18.25m long, 3.9m long and 11.7m long. It is not, however, proven that the corridor continued as such to the east end of the building (Fig. 14).

In the central range at least six rooms were present:

Room 2; 6.2 × 3.55m
Room 3; 6.2 × 3.2m
Room 4; 6.2 × 4.45m; hypocausted, see below
Room 5; 6.2 × 5.3m
Room 6; 6.2 × 1.6m; either some form of closet, or maybe a stairwell
Room 7; 6.2m wide, length unknown

Another two or three rooms probably existed in the unexcavated area to the east.

The southern corridor (2.1m wide) was divided into at least four rooms:

Room 10; 8.6 × 2.1m
Room 11; 1.3 × 2.1m, sunken floor (see below)
Room 12; 1.3 × 2.1m
Room 13; at least 6m long, 2.1m wide

Again further rooms may have existed to the east.

Two sunken features within the building require further attention, Room 4 (the so-called 'Deep Room') and Room 11 (the 'plunge bath').

Room 4: the 'Deep Room'

This was probably designated as such as a result of the interim publication of the famous 'deep room' at Lullingstone, Kent (*J. Roman Studies* 41 (1951), 137; the idea may initially have come from M.R. Hull). Farrands considered that the deep rectangular hole in the north-west corner of his Site I was a sunken room with a rough rubble floor (F33) from which the walls had been robbed. Matters

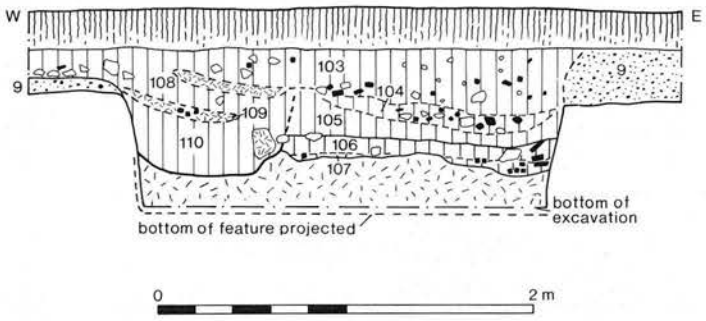


Figure 15 Site 1, section of Room 11 showing layers of Periods 3 and 4, tesserae shaded black

do not seem as simple as this, for no walls, or traces of walls, were found, and it is doubtful whether this hypothesis can be sustained. The fill of this feature had an artefact content which seems to belong to Period 4.

Although Farrands' notes are difficult to interpret, there is no evidence from them, or from any other records of the site, for the former presence of 'walls' along the sides of this room; instead wall 9 lies 0.5m to the west of the edge of the hole. Neither do the foundations of wall 1 (though deeper than of walls 2 or 9 for example: see Fig. 22) continue down to the base of the sunken area. The latter is an important consideration, for if the proposed Deep Room was an integral part of the original building, the foundations would surely have been carried down to its base, not left poised precariously on its brink. Similarly, had the Deep Room been a later insertion to the standing structure, the foundations would have had to be underpinned.

It seems more likely that this feature is a deep pit or series of pits of unknown function belonging to Period 4, and there is no evidence that it was a sunken room of Period 3. Although the feature seems too deep for a robbed hypocaust as the excavator originally thought (Farrands n.d., 5), there is evidence that before this feature or features had been dug through its floor, this room had originally been hypocausted. There is an enigmatic layer (F34, Figs 13 and 22) which is cut by the robber trench F32 (but was originally recorded by Farrands as part of F112, the upper fill of the Period 4 pit 7 — the section (shown in Fig. 22) has been redrawn by the writer using the evidence of the photographs). The brown mortar layer (F125) at the base of F34 lies at some depth from the surface and seems to have been lying exposed in Period 3 (since the overlying layer F34 contained a Late Roman form 268 sherd (Fig. 22), which would probably not have been the case had F125 been a layer of Period 2). In another later section (trench Q) the record is more complete and F125 is recorded as 'pink mortar'. This sounds very much like *opus signinum* and it is suggested that this was the base of a hypocaust in Room 4. The mortar layer is however quite thin if it was supposed to support the *pilae* of a hypocaust. It is notable that F125 is at about the same level as the top of the rubble floor foundation F8 in Room 11 (below), but it is well above that of the base of wall 1. The feature to the south considered by the excavator to be a sunken plunge bath must now be examined.

Room 11: the 'Sunken Bath' (Figs 13, 15, 21, 22)

This feature consists of a square hole 2.1 × 2.1m and 0.6m deep dug into the natural sand. The floor foundation seems to have been intact, consisting of several layers (totalling 0.3m) of rubble and mortar. Farrands thought he could see traces of walls on the east and west sides. No clear record survives, but it does appear that these so-called 'traces' were found quite high up in the backfill of the feature and therefore may be discounted. Farrands also regarded layer F107 of loose mortar and tesserae as a floor, but on the contrary this seems to have been rubble from the robbing.

The first layer of the floor foundation (Fig. 22) was of large septaria rubble (F13) overlain by a layer (F8) of smaller pieces of septaria, tile, and a few pieces of iron slag, in soft brown shelly mortar (*i.e.* mortar mixed with Red Crag as well as, or instead of sand, this type of mortar was a common material used on the site). Over this was a brown mortar bedding (F127) with patches of *opus signinum* on top. The latter was presumably for water-proofing — either to prevent damp entering the structure, or as a waterproof lining to hold water. A clay patch (F24) in trench C, cut by pit 7 and the robber trench, may have had a similar function. The section (Fig. 22) shows that the floor foundations extend well below the level of wall 9 and to the level of the base of wall 5, but that the *opus signinum* floor was well above the level of the base). The massive foundations of the floor of this feature presumably served as underpinning of the adjacent walls. The way that this was done (rather than simply deepening the foundations) and the profile of the base of F13 suggest very strongly that this feature was inserted into the standing building.

The fill above F8 in Room 11 was a thin layer of jumbled tesserae, septaria and *opus signinum* (F106) underlying two layers (F104 and F105) of shelly earth with septaria and tile and a few pieces of iron slag (the 'shelly fill' of Farrands' notes). At the top these become confused with layers F108 and F109 overlying the fill of Phase 4(ii) pit 7. Layers 104–6 may be Period 4, but pre-date the robber trench of wall 5 (Fig. 22). They could therefore conceivably be late Phase 3(ii).

Two features, a wooden pipeline and a timber-lined drain, seem to head for the south wall of this room, though neither of them cuts it at the level where this wall is preserved. The precise levels of the base of these features at this point (and in respect of the fills of Room 11) were not recorded.

Period 3 features outside the villa
(Figs 16–17)

To the south of the villa were a number of Period 3 features, the first two of which may have been directly connected with Room 11. These were a timber box drain (feature D3) and a pipeline (feature D4) which clearly relate to the outer wall of the Period 3 building, not the

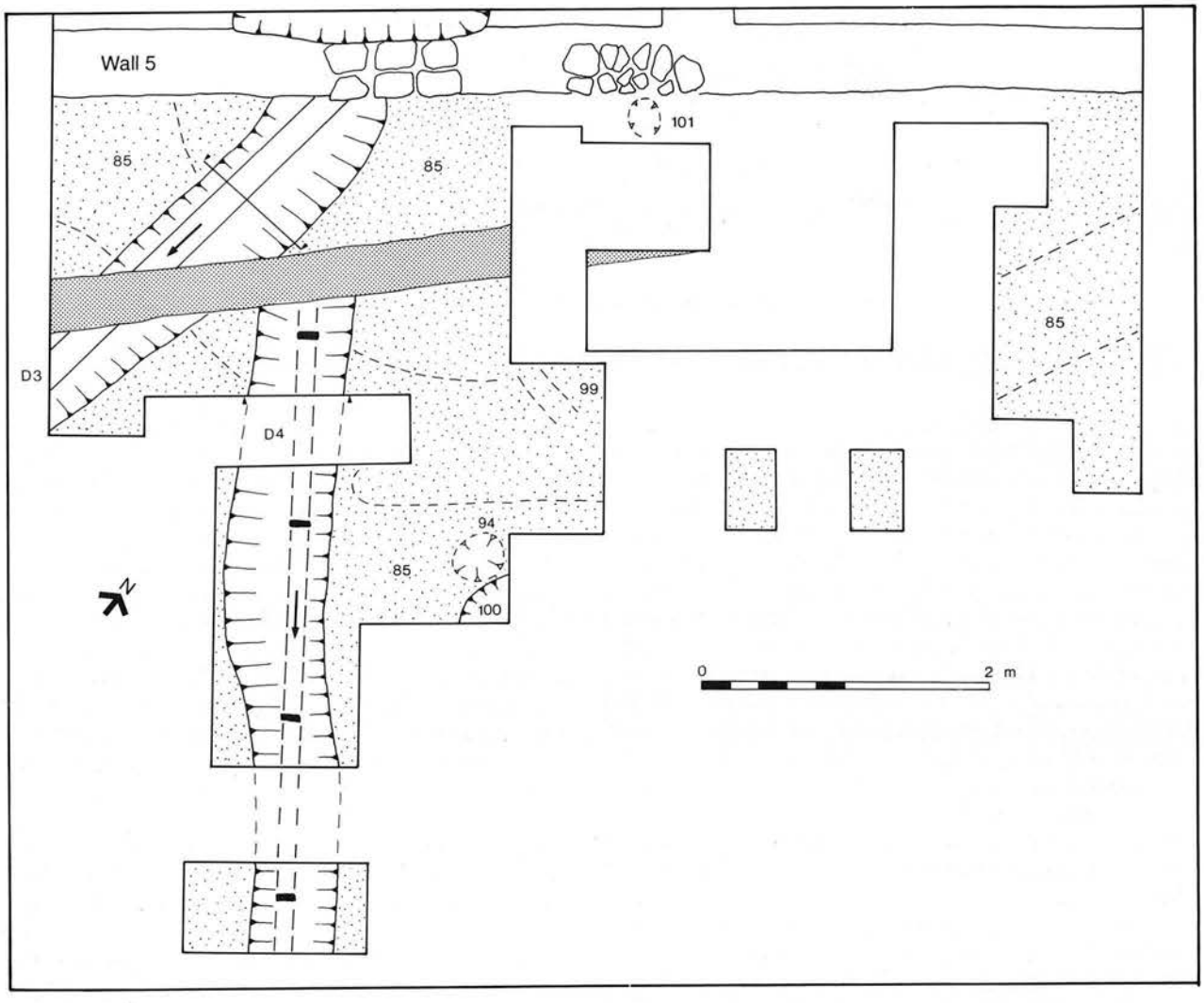


Figure 16 Site I, plan of Period 3 features south of Building 3, yard metalling layers stippled

Period 2 structure. These are described below and discussed in the next section.

The pipe was of a relatively well-known type, of hollowed baulks of timber joined with iron pipe collars. Four of these were found, upright and in place, indicating that the pipe had rotted *in situ*. The distance between the collars was recorded as six feet (1.9m). The base of the trench rose slowly as it approached the building (and at its north end was later ploughed away) and, although its base was not precisely levelled, measurements suggest its fall away from the building may have been between 1:9 and 1:11 (this pipe would thus cut the inside of the south wall at about 0.1m above present ground level). The trench had two fills (Fig. 17, top), F70 a shelly fill with a dark linear stain down the middle in places, and a shelly upper fill, F90.

The box drain also leads away from the Period 3 building, but in a different direction. The two did not overlap but appear to be heading for adjacent spots on the south wall of the building, the drain being at a lower level. It is not certain whether or not they were exactly contemporary, but this is likely. The drain trench had three fills (Fig.17, below). The lowest fill was F75, a light brown pebbly loam (containing many nails, pottery, bone, and a quantity of painted wall plaster). This had vertical edges 8" (203mm) apart and a flat base; at the interface was a brownish stain which seemed to be the remains of timber. The area behind the brown stain was packed with F76, a shelly fill containing a tessera (made of Dressel 20 amphora) and plaster. The upper dark shelly fill (F74) was overlain by a thin pebbly layer (F72).

The pipe and drain trenches were later cut across by a slot (F69) which is here assigned to Period 4 for reasons discussed below.

There was quite a lot (1.640kg) of pottery from the fills of both the pipe and drain trenches, essentially very similar, but not capable of close dating. Most of it was clearly redeposited (Early Iron Age and small sherds of Early Roman greywares) and, in the case of the drain, included some obviously intrusive sherds (a piece of stoneware and a possible Saxo-Norman rim). Fragments of unusual non-local painted beaker or flagon (Fig. 102.32) and Central Gaulish samian suggest a 2nd century or later date for the construction of these features. The presence of tesserae and painted plaster in the fills suggests that the drain at least dates to a phase of alteration of the Period 3 building. Two sherds from the upper fill (F90) of the pipe were later, one form 268 in fabric 18 and a flanged bowl sherd, form 305, suggest a date after the mid 3rd century for the accumulation of this fill, but it is not clear whether these sherds are securely stratified in the upper fill or intrusive. It is, however, notable that the

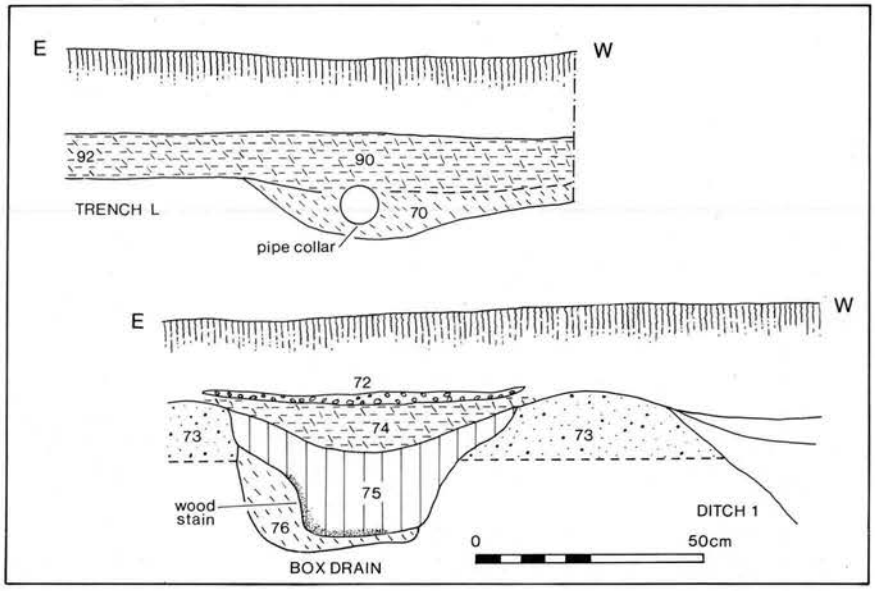


Figure 17 Site I, sections of Period 3 features south of Building 3

pottery from these features as a whole finds some parallels in the pit group C21 (dating to probably just before the mid 3rd century) on the Corbishley site. This is important, because the drain and the pipe fills contain the largest group of Period 3 pottery from Site I.

Three nearby shallow scoops, F89 (not on Fig. 16) F94 and F100 contained rubble and a little pottery, including Late Roman greyware and a roughcast Colchester colour-coat beaker sherd from F89, and F94 had many oystershells in the fill. F99 was a shallow groove not noted by Farrands, but just visible on a photo of pit 1. F101 was an undated post-hole with no finds, underlying F82 of Period 4.

The whole area of trenches G and L and parts of H outside the building had a shelly deposit F85 and F92 immediately under the topsoil. The upper fill of the drain had a pebbly layer F72 in it. These seem to have been 'worm-sorted' layers formed from material laid down on the original ground surface as metalling over the whole area. These deposits contained 2.27kg of pottery of all periods up to the 3rd century AD; little of this is worthy of comment (save an eggshell ware body sherd). The layers also contained grey and white painted shelly plaster (as in F75) and a few white tesserae. It will be noted that these deposits appear as overlapping the period of functioning of the Period 2 and Period 3 buildings on the matrix of the main features of Periods 1–3 (Fig. 18), once for Period 2 and once for Period 3, since they were not static archaeological deposits (*cf.* Atkinson 1957) but layers gradually formed (during Periods 2 to 6?) by worm-sorting of debris brought to the site in Periods 2 and 3. It must be stressed that Red Crag does not outcrop under this part of the site and the shelly filling in features of these two periods suggests that Crag had been imported and used as metalling, probably in both Periods 2 and 3.

Period 3 dating and interpretation

The date of the pottery from the pipe and drain has been noted above, and in fact this is the main dating evidence for the whole period on Site I. To summarise, Building 3A with masonry foundations was probably erected some time after the Flavian to Hadrianic pottery was deposited in F17, and it was then (while standing) altered to form Building 3B, most likely in the late 2nd or early 3rd century.

The features discussed above are shown on the simplified matrix (Fig. 18) which presents all the demonstrable stratigraphic links in this complex area.

A certain amount of discussion and interpretation has already necessarily been involved in the description of the excavated features. It will suffice to emphasise certain points; firstly that the architectural pretensions of the building (see also below), apart from other considerations, fully justify the use of the term 'villa' for this complex of buildings. Secondly, Building 3 had at some time a hypocaust system, and (it will be argued below) a bath suite which was built or re-organised during the life of the building. In Roman buildings of this type these rooms were often (though not invariably) at the rear of the block. This is one of the main reasons why it is suggested here that the front of this building faced north-west and that Farrands was excavating the rear of the building and a yard area behind it.

The presence of the pipe and the drain must be discussed briefly. A drain simply to remove storm-water is an uncommon feature of Romano-British villas (especially on a porous subsoil as here), but taken with the evidence of the pipe implies a source of running water. The pipe is of a well-known type usually used in water-mains (*e.g.* at London, Colchester, Wroxeter, *Verulamium* and Fishbourne) but in no case do these pipes seem to have been used as drains. Indeed (unless this was surplus material obtained by the contractor from the nearby *colonia*) the laborious method of manufacture probably mitigates against this.

It is more likely that clean flowing water was running from the Period 3 building on Site I, under the yard at the back of the villa (and a shallowly buried wooden water-main would prove more robust than one of lead or ceramic pipes if cattle or wagons etc. were to be driven over it). The destination of the water is unknown (but see Fig. 54 and Site III); it may have been another structure or a watering-trough for livestock.

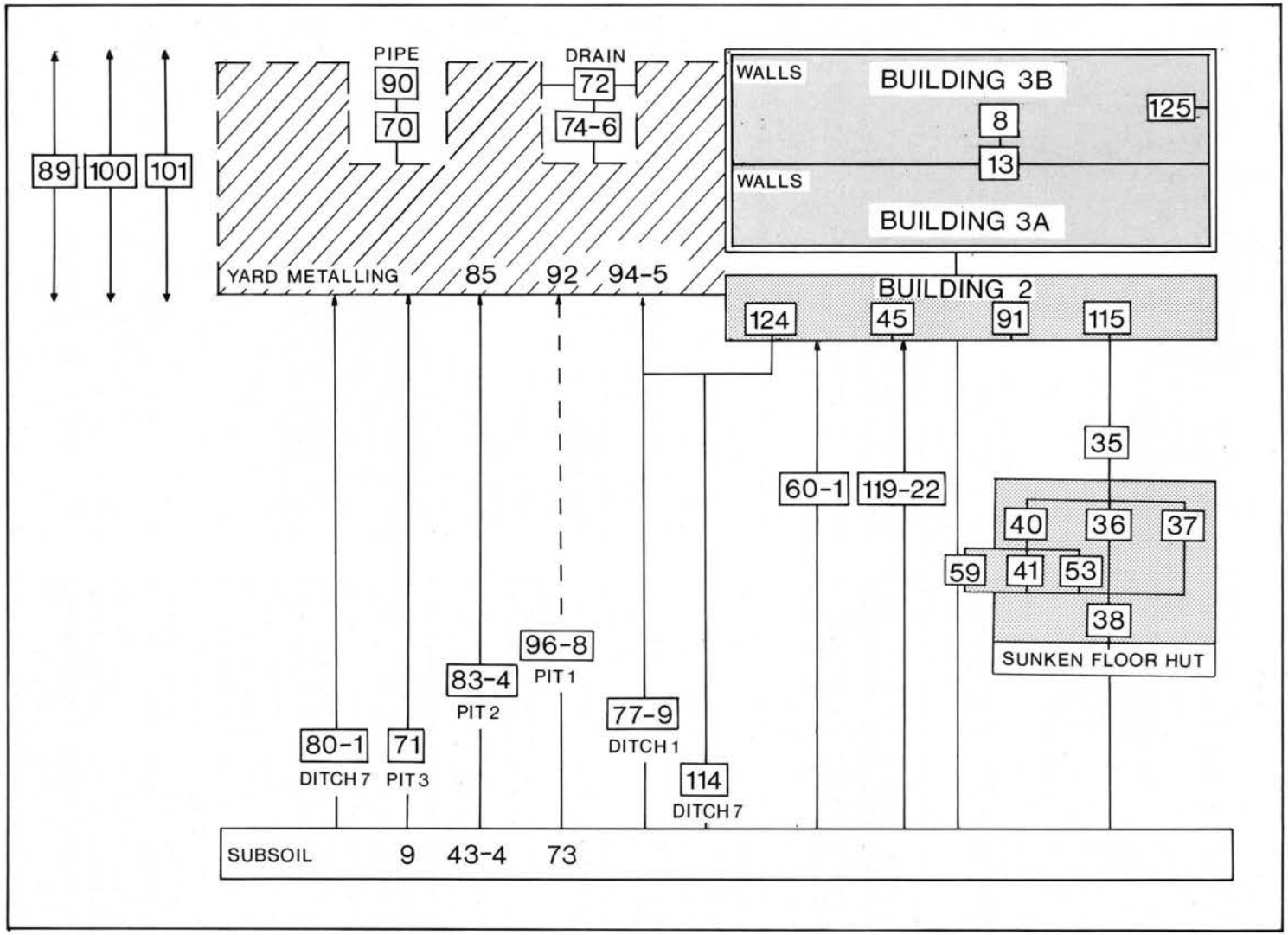


Figure 18 Site I, matrix of main features, Periods 1–3

If the destination is uncertain, the origin of the water is only slightly less of a problem. The villa lies at the end of a narrow ridge. Virtually all the ponds in the area lie below the 23m contour line and therefore lower than the Period 3 building, excepting a group 700m to the north-east near South Hall (TM 2220 3015). The villa could have been supplied with water directly from a stream, such as the springs supplying the ponds near Foulton Hall or near the rectory. It would be possible (though not easy) to have brought water by pipes or long leats to the villa from these sources, but these did not cross any of the excavated areas. Two other alternative water sources are possible; the water might have been collected as rainwater from the roof in tanks but there is no evidence of such rainwater collection or storage, or the water could have been pumped-up from a sump below the spring-line near Site III. The Site III feature itself (below) had already been infilled by the time this pipe was laid, but a similar feature might lie undiscovered nearby. A pump in Room 11 could have raised water for redistribution within Building 3.

There are four alternative interpretations of Room 11: (a) a robbed hypocaust, (b) a plunge bath, (c) a cement-lined vat for an industrial process and (d) a *praefurnium* of a hypocaust. The first proposal may be dismissed. This was not itself a hypocaust unless part of a larger system with Room 4, since there is no place for its *praefurnium* except to the north, and the central range of rooms or northern corridor would be an unusual location for such a feature. The second and third suggestions are supported by the presence of a pipe and drain running away from it to the south (see below). The fill also contained much *opus signinum*. A plunge bath would be expected to be adjacent to a hypocausted room such as Room 4. There was no evidence however that the area served an industrial purpose.

At first sight the pipe and drain might appear to simplify the situation over the 'bath suite'. It would be easy to see Room 11 as a plunge bath, supplied with fresh water by a pipeline, the Site I pipe either being for a pumped supply from the south or for redistribution of excess, while the outflow and overflow was taken care of by the box-drain. Matters seem not to have been quite so simple since, unless something quite complicated happened inside the building, the level of the end of the pipe would seem to ensure that the water-level in the supposed 'plunge bath' was only 0.45m deep at the most.

The fourth suggestion requires consideration. If Room 4 had been hypocausted (before this was dug away in Period 4) it is possible that this sunken area was its *praefurnium*. It is possible that the pipe supplied a boiler in a *praefurnium* (note that the projected line of the pipe would cut right across the middle of Room 11). It would, however, be rather senseless for water to be heated in a boiler and then the hot water piped outside the building in a shallowly buried wooden pipe (though the latter may provide better insulation than a metal one, substantial heat-loss would still occur). The full evidence which is required to solve the hydrological problems raised by these features has not yet been found, and here discussion must rest for the present.

Room 4 was very probably hypocausted; the mortar base on which the *pilae* probably stood was below contemporary ground-level. Room 11 also had a sunken floor, but its function is uncertain. It may have been a *praefurnium* or a cold plunge-bath attached to a heated room (as at the *mansio* baths at Chelmsford) but for this to be part of a complete bath-suite, one would expect a *tepidarium*, *frigidarium* and probably a cold bath attached to the *frigidarium*. These features were not identified in Building 3B either on Site I or Site C.

The date of the end of Period 3 on Site I is not certain, since no pits etc. were dug on this side of the villa. The dating of the end of the occupation of the villa must depend on the nature and dating of pit C26 on the Corbishley sites. This appears to have contained debris resulting from further alterations to a building and seems to date from some time after the mid 3rd to the mid 4th centuries. There is a possibility, however, that this deposit represents burial of demolition debris. It is not clear whether this debris should be connected with Building 3B, or Building 1, or even a further undetected structure. It is with this uncertainty that Period 4 begins.

Period 4 features

(Figs 19–22)

In the next period the villa building on Site 1 was demolished. Four phases in the destruction and post-villa occupation can be distinguished. The first can be treated separately, but the sequence of the succeeding three phases was more complex, and will have to be considered together. The position of the slot F69 in this sequence is uncertain, and will be treated as a Phase 4(iii) feature.

Phase 4(i)

In this phase all of the walls on Site I were robbed (robber trenches (RT) F12, F14, F15, F32, F54, F55, F63) to the base of the foundations, and virtually all of the stone was removed. It was not possible to establish the sequence of robbing, and it is assumed that all the trenches were contemporary. In only one place (wall 5) did the foundations survive (see above) but the 'drystone foundations' seen in other parts of these trenches seem to be stone left behind for one reason or another (Pl. VII, see p. 22 above). In most cases a discontinuous brown mortar skim on the base of the robber trench was all that survived of the walls, *e.g.* the skim of mortar F126 left in the base of F54. The fill of these trenches does not seem to have contained much tile or wall plaster. Indeed these deposits contain very few finds at all, most of the pottery and other material coming from F63, the robber trench of wall 5. The general lack of structural fittings of iron (*cf.* Cleere 1958) and other re-usable materials from the villa, and the presence of iron smithing slag in these features suggest that the villa was systematically dismantled and some of the materials were taken away for re-use. A selection of the sections of the robber trenches is given in Figure 21, and the demolition debris dumped in Room 11 is shown on Figs 15 and 22.

The robbing of Room 11 and subsequent disturbance has produced a fairly complex sequence of deposits, and in one case an anomaly whereby a photo apparently shows in one corner part of trench P rubble layers similar to F8 and F13 overlying the fill of Phase 4(ii) pit 6. It is suggested, however, that these rubble layers were in fact in the base of pit 7 (see below). The floor of Room 11 was badly damaged, probably by the demolition of the side walls, rather than during use, although the clay patch F24 could be a repair. Over this were layers F106 and F107 consisting of mortar and tesserae, underlying a black loam

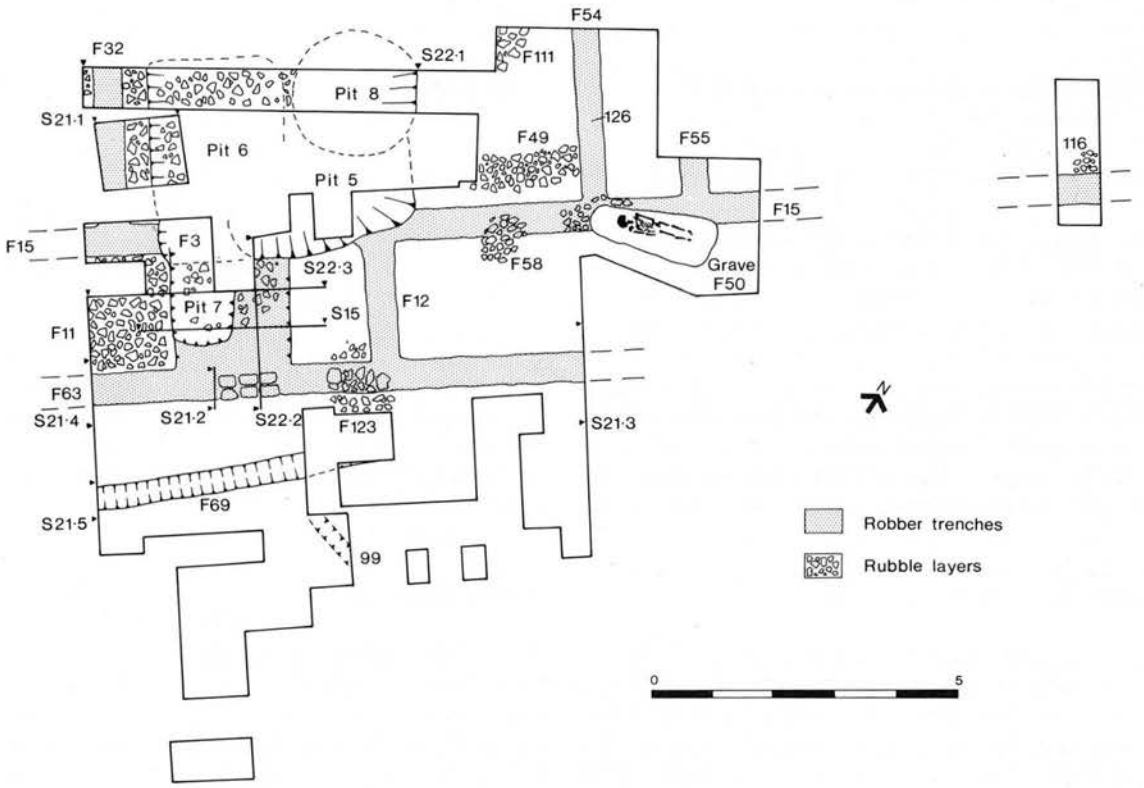


Figure 19 Site I, plan of Period 4 and Period 5 features

deposit F105. Over the top of this was F104, a rubble layer containing many tesserae. Farrands thought that F104 was the same as F108, but this does not seem likely given the rest of the sequence; they have been drawn separately on Figs 15 and 22. It is difficult to be sure, but it appears from one of Farrands' sections that layers 104–6 were cut by the robber trench F15, and the same may apply to the other robber trench F63, so that the demolition and backfilling of Room 11 must have been one of the first operations in the destruction of the building. F15 was apparently cut by pit 5, though Farrands recorded its fill as part of the fill of pit 5.

The dating evidence is not very good. The pottery from the robber trenches is mostly redeposited Early Roman greywares, coming mainly from the south robber trench, presumably deriving from the yard surfaces outside the building. In all, less than 500g of Roman pottery was recovered and this includes Late Roman greywares (including a bowl with burnished bands in fabric 18) as well as a sherd of East Gaulish samian with a graffito on the base (Fig. 109.164). Two later sherds were also present, a grass-tempered bodysherd, and a rim in Saxon fabric both from F63. They may suggest that the robbing took place in the 5th century, since both are relatively large and unabraded, indicating that they are less likely to be intrusive as a result of worm-action at least. (For the dating of the grass-tempered pottery at Little Oakley see below.)

A small spread of white-painted plaster in the yard outside the wall (F82) which overlay post-hole 101 and a scatter of tesserae could belong in Period 3 or in Period 4 as part of the Phase 4(iii) rubble spread F123 described below.

Phases 4(ii)–4(iv)

The matrix (Fig. 20) belies the true complexity of disentangling the sequence of these deposits. The two-dimensional recording system adopted by Farrands (*i.e.* recording of relationships solely by drawing sections) utterly failed to cope with the subtleties of these layers. Not enough sections were drawn in enough directions, and no attempt had been made to relate the various layers in the field (to be fair to the excavator it must be pointed out that such a situation was not unique at this time and the nature of the deposits was extremely difficult to cope with). The majority of these deposits were black loams containing varying quantities of rubble and it appears that even M.R. Hull (a relatively experienced excavator) was misled by them (see above), but to judge Hull's attitude to black loam layers, see his description (1958, 171) of the black loam overlying the south wing of the Colchester temple complex (Drury 1982, 385). Farrands also clearly believed that he was dealing with a single deposit filling his 'Deep Room' which has made interpretation of his notes difficult. The confusion is increased by the fact that these features cut the fill of Room 11.

The writer, upon beginning work on the records, soon began to have doubts about the contemporaneity of these layers. The disposition of the layers in some sections (*e.g.* the original E–E, see microfiche) and photos, as well as some puzzling references in the notes, led to suspicions that the situation was considerably more complex than Farrands originally thought. Not only were the 'demolition rubble' layers that the excavator hurried through to get to the 'real archaeology' difficult to accept solely as such, but part of the site was clearly riddled with large pits filled with black loam. It seems that it was these that made up the illusory 'Deep Room'.

The sequence of events proposed here is the best that the writer could do with the available records. There is little doubt that the broad outlines (pits, rubble layers, further pits) are correct. The exact sequences, however, particularly in Phase 4(ii), may be open to slight

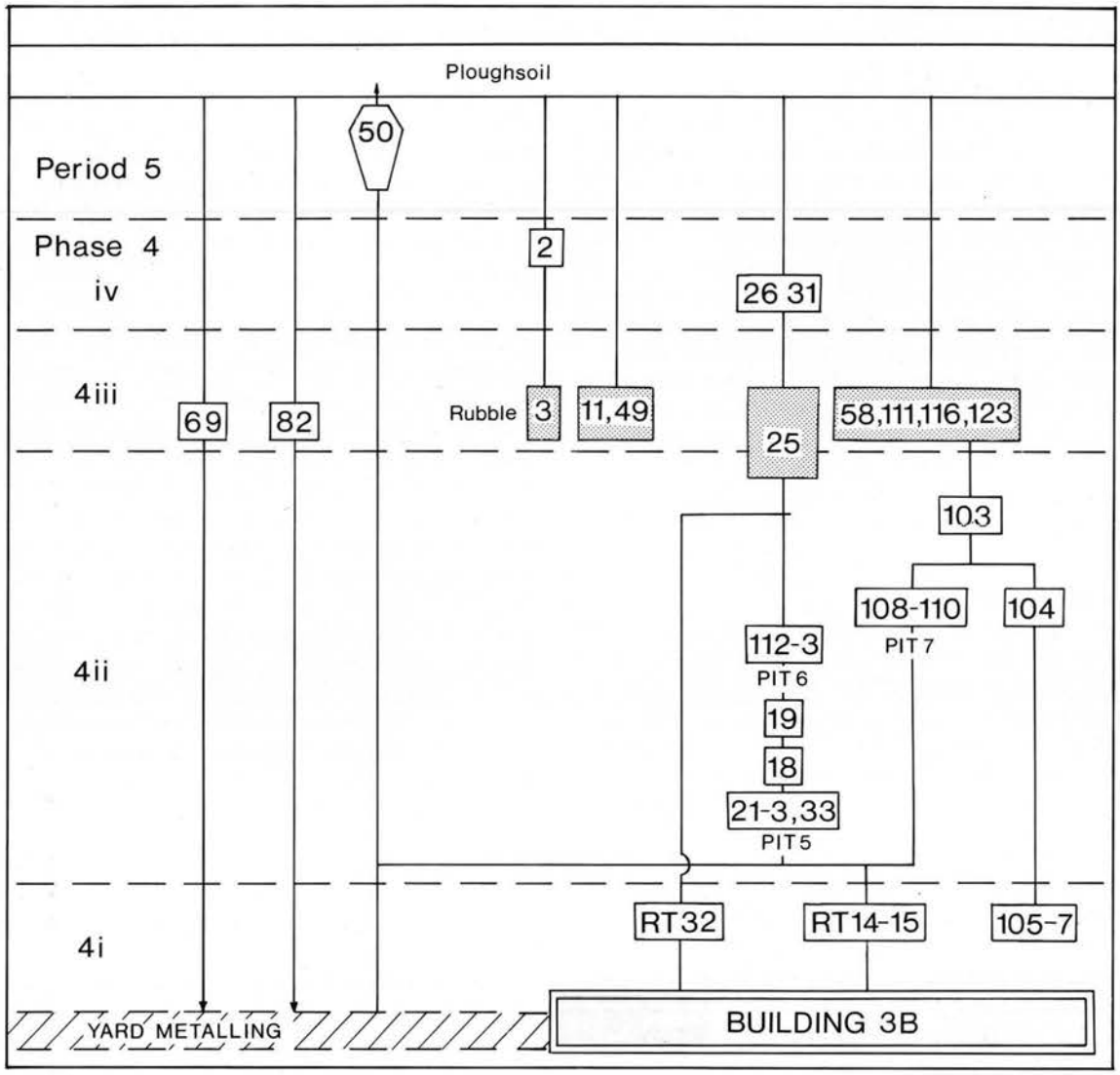


Figure 20 Site I, matrix of Period 4 and Period 5 features

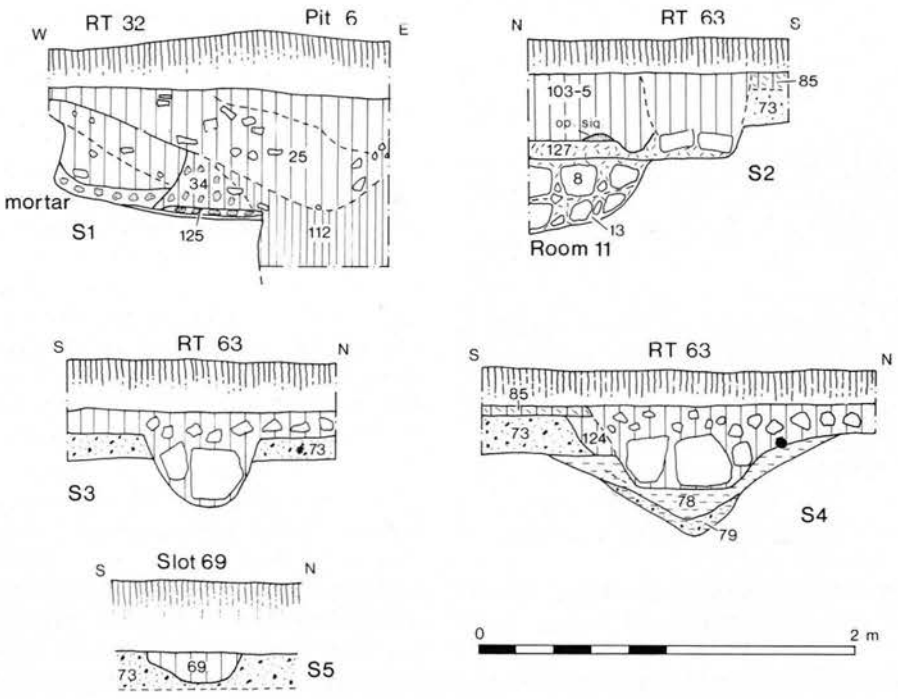


Figure 21 Site I, sections of Period 4 deposits: RT32 and 63 all trench P, Slot 69, trench G

re-interpretation, should the remaining portions of these features be re-examined at some future date. It goes without saying that, because Farrands thought this was a homogeneous deposit, few of the finds could be allocated precise places within these phases, but this hardly matters at this stage, because the vast majority were clearly redeposited.

Phase 4(ii) consists of the digging and filling of at least three large rectangular pits. Their function and the derivation of the fill are unknown. Phase 4(iii) was characterised by the deposition of a series of rubble spreads overlying the pits. Again the derivation is uncertain (since they post-date the total robbing of the walls) but it is suggested they functioned as foundations for timber buildings (see below). The slot F69 may belong to this phase. The fourth phase is represented by the excavation and filling of a large circular pit (pit 8) which apparently cut through one of the rubble layers.

Phase 4(ii) deposits

Pit 5 was a massive feature at least 4.1 × 5.8m and 1.5m deep. Its exact shape is uncertain, and it may even have been a conflation of several other pits. The fill is best seen in the section of trench E, but compared with that of trench C (Fig. 22). The lowest fill, F23 (and F33 — a thick mortar dump on the western edge) contained septaria flakes and crushed mortar. Overlying this was F22, a black loam with various lenses of crushed mortar (F21), above which were a series of black rubbly layers (F18, 19 and 20). The layer F20 contained a Constantinian coin (CN12, *c.* 340–346). The southern edge of pit 5 appears to cut the robber trench F15.

Cutting through the rubbly layers in the top of pit 5 was a second rectangular pit, pit 6. This was 3.1 × 4.3m and 1.3m deep and contained two fills: F113, a black loam containing lenses of crushed mortar (derived from F33), above which was F112, another black loam layer with mortar flecks and lenses like the upper fill of pit 5, overlain by the Phase 4(iii) layer F25. The pit clearly cuts F19 in the top of pit 5, so the sequence seems fairly secure. Pit 6 seems to be the same feature as Corbishley's C27 (Fig. 56).

Pit 7 cannot be tied into the above sequence very securely. It clearly post-dates the robbing in Room 11 and an anomaly in the section of trench Q suggests that it cuts the lower fill of pit 6. Pit 7 was smaller than the others, being about 1.0m wide and 1.0m deep. The exact position of the north edge (and to some extent the south side) is uncertain. There were three fills: F110, undescribed, but probably black loam; F109, a mortary layer containing tesserae; and F108, a layer of loam and rubble containing tesserae. This fill contained a sherd of Oxford mortarium (Young's form M19?). These fills were overlain by F103, a black loam layer with small rubble and tesserae filling the sunken area of Room 11. There is a conflict between Farrands' recording of these layers (Fig. 22) and the site matrix (Fig. 20) which cannot be resolved, for reasons already described (see pp. 27–8). While part of this layer might be of Phase 4ii, the bulk of it may have been formed in the subsequent phase.

Most of the material in these pits was redeposited early Roman material. The distribution of Late Roman sherds in the fills of pits 5 and 6 is shown in Figure 22. The general scarcity of pottery and finds generally (apart from building materials) in these deposits — especially if compared with the fill of the robber trench F32 and the later pit 8 fills — is enigmatic, and highlights the problem of the origin of the black loam (see pp. 32 and 196).

Layer 7 (equivalent to layer F110) deep down in pit 7 in trench A produced a small scrap of grass-tempered pottery. This seems unlikely to be intrusive in such a position, and supports the presence of grass-tempered sherds in F63, suggesting that much of the activity in Period 4 post-dates the introduction of this fabric type to the site.

Phase 4(iii) deposits

The three pits described above have rubbly upper fills, but they were also apparently in part overlain by discontinuous rubble spreads, containing redeposited pottery, bone and a little iron slag. These form the main type of deposit formed in Phase 4(iii). In the central block of the villa an apparent rubble spread F25 and F25E[8] lying over the fills of pits 5 and 6 is noted in the field notes, but it also appears to have overlain the robber trench fill F32 (Fig. 22). Further to the west were two further smaller spreads F49 and F111. It is notable that no other rubble spreads occurred in area F, despite the number of sections cut here. In trench W was a further small spread F116. To the south of F25 was a second relatively thick spread F11. This overlay the subsoil in Room 10 and continued as F3, sinking into the upper fill of Room 11 as noted above. To the south-east lay another thin spread (F123).

It is not clear whether F108 in the upper fill of pit 7 should be regarded as part of Phase 4(iii). It seems that it was not a continuation of F3, and it is probable that it was a continuation of the deposits forming in the two preceding phases.

Although the rubble was laid down in this phase on the ground surface, the subsequent formation of the layers that were actually excavated was by worm-induced sinkage at a later date. For proof of this, note the section of trench A (Fig. 22) where the rubble layer 11 has sunk down to the subsoil to the west, but in the loamy upper fill of Room 11 it has sunk further with a dark loam (F103) forming above it. During processing the rubble layers were noted in the field notes, sections and photos and their minimum distribution is shown on Fig. 19. It seems fairly clear, however, that particular areas did not have these rubble layers under the topsoil. Unfortunately Farrands paid very little attention to these rubble spreads, dismissing them as 'destruction debris', and thus in no case on Site I did he draw a plan or record the composition of any given spread.

These rubble spreads fall into two groups. The first is the series for which there is no stratigraphic or pottery dating evidence. These are the small spreads (F58, F111, 116 and 123). The second group consists of those with stratigraphic (F11, F25) and also pottery evidence of a late date (F3 and F49).

F3 contains 'latest' Roman pottery (including Oxford Colour-Coated and Oxford mortaria) as well as a grass-tempered sherd. The layer above it (F2) also contains 'latest' Roman pottery (including a form 305 flanged bowl in a late fabric, a sherd of Late Roman shell-tempered pottery, and two sherds of grass-tempered pottery, see below) and the rubble spread F49 also contained a form 305 bowl and a grass-tempered sherd (although the latter is the most suspect fabric 14 sherd from Site I). As in the fills of the Phase 4(ii) pits, pottery was scarce in these deposits.

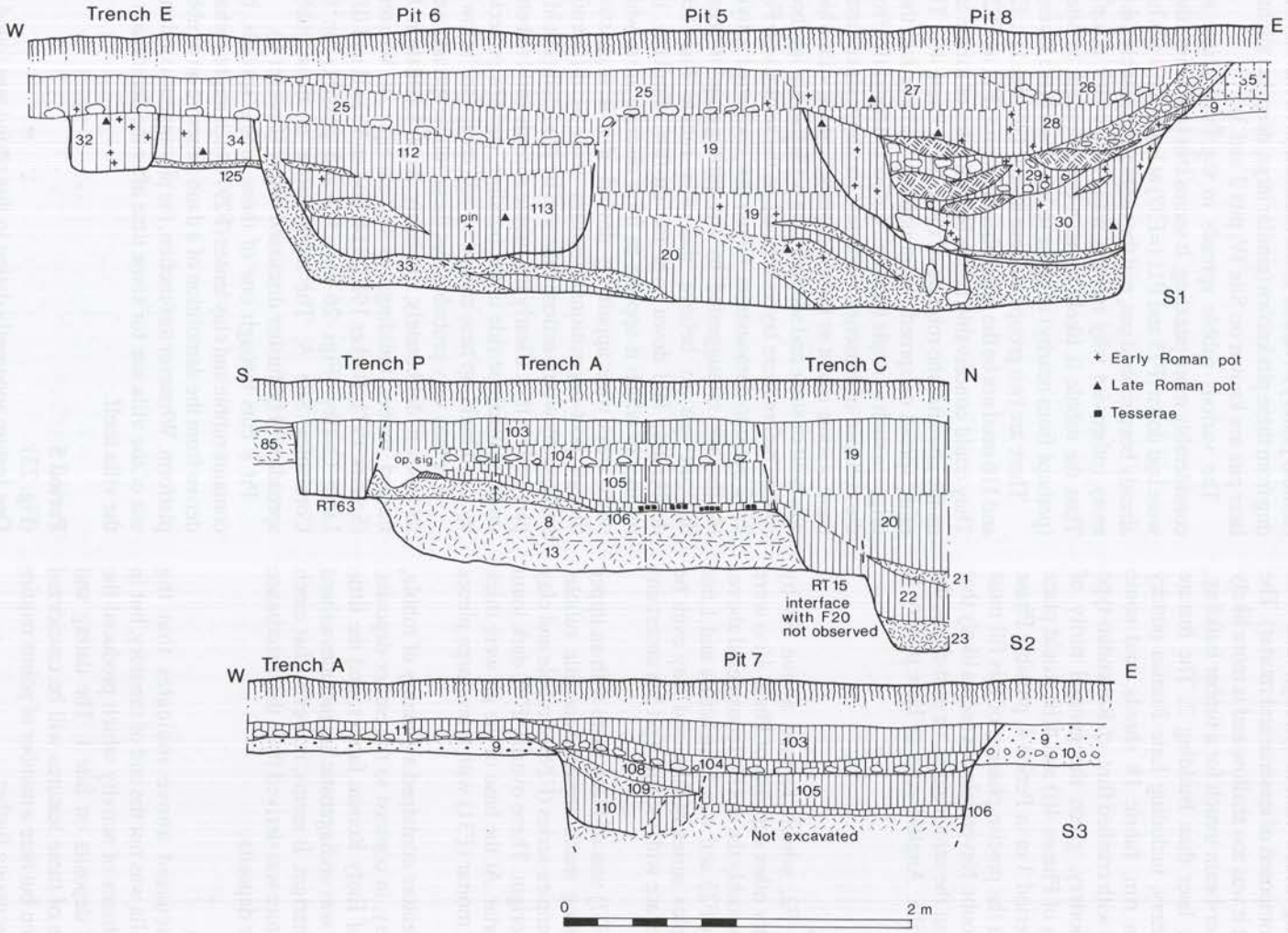


Figure 22 Site I, sections across the period 4 pits, trenches A and E, position of middle section shown on Figure 20

Timber slot (F69)

One further feature may also have belonged to this phase of Period 4, the slot (F69). It was of uncertain date, but was post-Period 3 because it contained rubble and cut through the pipeline. It lies at an angle to Building 3 and so does not appear likely to have been a timber adjunct to that building. Farrands thought that it was a robber trench for a wall, on account of its flat-bottomed profile and loam fill (F69) containing much rubble (though this was apparently largely composed of tesserae and mortar). The writer considers that it was too shallow and is more likely to have been a sleeper-beam trench for a timber building, but was undeniably later than Building 2. The feature contained much pottery, including Late Roman pottery (notably a Hadham rim, fabric 18 sherds, and some greywares tempered with crushed flint, *cf.* Rettendon-type wares). The late pottery, given the general rarity of ceramics in contexts of Phases 4(i) and 4(ii) would place this feature late in Period 3 or in Period 4, possibly Phase 4(iii) or (iv), though the precise phasing of this fill must remain a matter of doubt. Nevertheless it seems likely that this feature is of about the same date as, or post-dates, the demolition of the villa. Anglo-Saxon or later pottery is lacking.

Phase 4(iv) deposits

Apart from layer F2, which formed above F3 by worm-action, the only other deposits of Phase 4(iv) were the fills of pit 8 and possibly the slot F69 considered above. The pit cut the layer F25 and was 2.5m across and 1.6m deep. It had a complex series of fills, and may even be recut, (the exact interface with the fill of pit 5 is uncertain) (Fig. 22).

The upper fill (F27) was of black loam with an upper layer (F26) containing much septaria and tile rubble. Below this was a complex series (F29) of rubble and clay lenses of uncertain origin. These overlay F30, dark loam with rubble and mortar. At the base of the pit were thick deposits of crushed mortar (F31) with a few large pieces of septaria rubble.

The fill of this feature contained a quantity of rubble, but especially pottery, in contrast to the earlier deposits. Much of this was of Early Roman fabrics, and the little Late Roman pottery was undiagnostic but includes a sherd of Nene Valley mortarium. It seems, however, that much of the fill of this feature was derived from the disturbance of earlier features or deposits.

Period 4 discussion

The evidence discussed above indicates that the demolition of the villa was not the end of the story, but in fact preceded the phases of activity which produced the greatest volume of deposits on Site I. The dating and general significance of these features will be considered in the final discussion but here a number of points require emphasising and discussing further.

The almost total robbing of this part of the villa took place at a time after hand-made grass-tempered pottery had come into use. This, it will be suggested below, was at the earliest the last decades of the 4th century, but probably some time in the early 5th century. The destination of the building materials thus invites further consideration.

The second phase is marked by the digging of a number of successive pits in the same area of the site. The near absence of pottery and bone in these pit fills, suggest quite strongly that Site I was not the focus of any Phase 4(ii) occupation. The reasons for this pit digging and the function of these features is uncertain (there is no evidence that any were grubenhauser or rubbish pits). Almost as mysterious is the nature of the fills, which consisted in the main of black loams with little admixture of soil derived from the earlier deposits (to judge by the scarcity of residual pottery). Neither is the destination of the material dug from these pits known (similar large, deep, but slightly later pits are known on Site IV, pits 2 and 3).

The various rubble spreads in the third phase are considerably more puzzling. It seems that by the time they were laid down (F25 and F11 (=F3?) at least) the walls had already been robbed out, and the rubble presumably taken away (otherwise why rob the walls in the first place?). Thus the rubble is likely to have been brought to Site I (perhaps from nearby) in order to lay down these layers.

There are two groups of these layers. F49, 58, 111, 123 and 116 need not be the same phenomenon as F11 and F25. They could conceivably be the base of piles of rubble left on the site after the robbing of the villa in Phase 4(i). The other spread or spreads seem unlikely to have had their origin in such a simple manner. Neither did they arise from the collapse of masonry walls left standing, since firstly there is some doubt as to the proportion of the villa which was built of stone and secondly the walls had already been robbed before these layers formed, as the sections on Figs 21–2 seem to demonstrate. Given that continued activity on the site is suggested by the pit-digging, it seems difficult not to believe that this rubble had been deliberately laid down over the pit-fills. Similarly, the manner in which it appears to form discrete areas while other areas were apparently devoid of it is suggestive, though post-depositional features such as differential sinkage (by worm-action) followed by ploughing could in part explain this. Clearly the rubble spreads survive better on the downslope side of the building, perhaps protected by a soil build-up here caused by soil creep (see below).

It is thus very probable that these rubble spreads were laid down deliberately, probably as a foundation for framed timber buildings as for example at Wroxeter (Selkirk 1971; Barker 1985, 114) and on Sites II and III at Little Oakley (Figs 26 and 32) and possibly on the Corbishley Site A. The significance of these rubble spreads will be further discussed below (Chapter 6).

Pit 8 cuts through one of these rubble spreads, but contains rubble and clay lenses (F29) which might perhaps derive from the demolition of a daub structure on a rubble platform. Whatever its function, the pit suggests continued use of the villa site for some time after the demolition of the villa itself.

Period 5

(Fig. 23)

One feature apparently dating to this period was found on Site I — an inhumation (F50) cut through the robber trench F15. There were no grave goods, but a sherd of grass-tempered pottery was found in the fill of the grave. The burial was east–west with the head to the west, and the arms across the pelvis.

Farrands entertained a number of misapprehensions about this burial. He noted (1958, 44) that certain bones in the pelvic and vertebral area were 'missing' and suggested that they had been unwittingly disturbed during

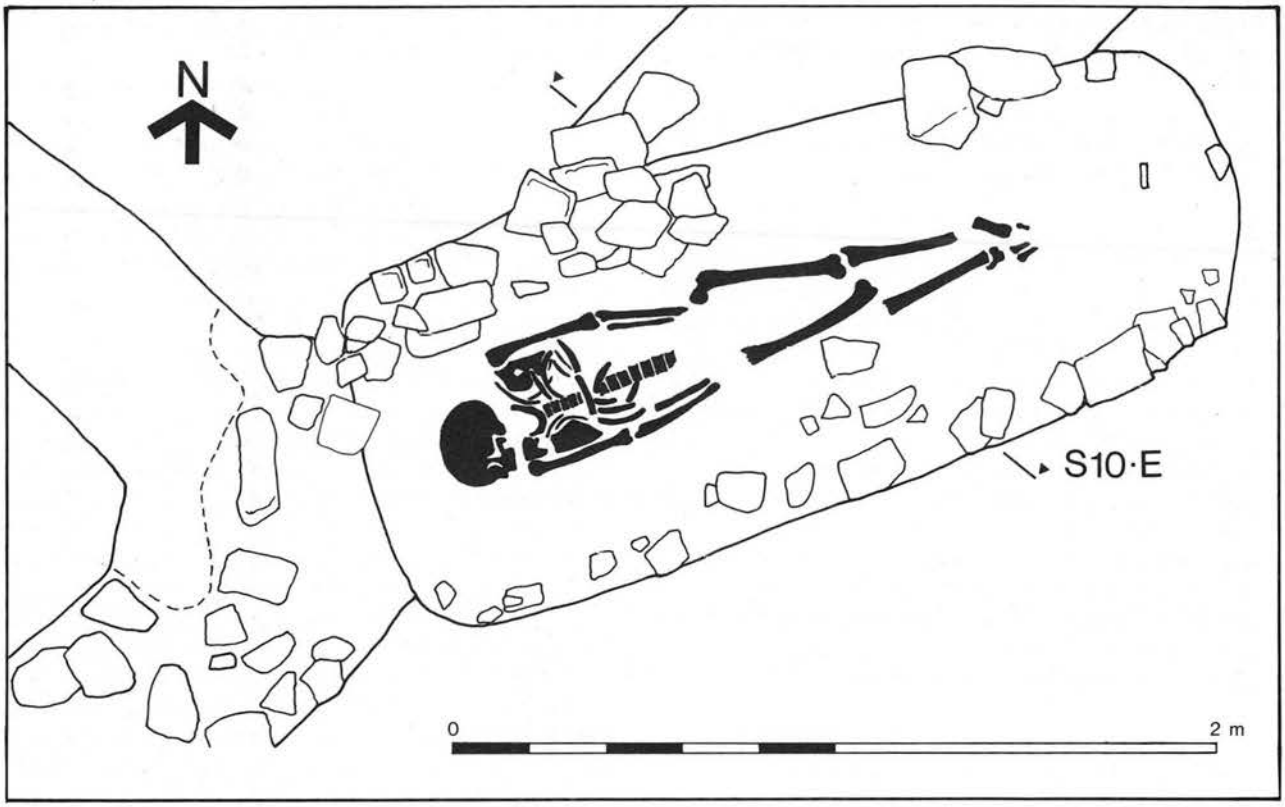


Figure 23 Site I, plan of grave F50

Plate XI Site I, trench F 1954, looking west, showing Saxon inhumation (note upstanding robber trench fill in foreground and background), F9 removed to right and left (photo: R.H. Farrands)

stone robbing. He also thought that the grave had a stone lining (F51). As Plate XI shows, he excavated the grave accordingly, in the same manner as he tackled the robbed 'walls'. Unfortunately a glance at this photo shows that he was probably mistaken in this view; although a little rubble was present around the upper fringes of the feature, lower down there was only a small pile of stones at the north-west corner. The oblique section (Fig. 10.E–F) shows that some of them are above and incline towards the body and apparently would have toppled if not supported by the backfill of the grave. Perhaps the lower part of this stone deposit in the north-west corner was revetment for the loose robber trench fill, but the upper portion must have been introduced with the filling of the feature. The fringe of stones around the top may be accidental (or perhaps derive from a kerb of stones around the grave affected by settlement of the fill and worm-action). The straight edge of the lower stones in the north-west corner, however, may be due to their being packed against a wooden coffin, a suggestion also supported by the scattered position of the ribs and skull which could not happen so easily in a backfilled grave as in a void. No coffin nails were found, so any coffin would have been pegged or monoxylous.

The disappearance of certain of the bones from the grave cannot be blamed on grave-robbers or stone robbers, since neither the femurs nor the forearm bones were disturbed, and the missing bones were not found in the adjacent areas of robber trench. Since these bones are the most porous, it seems more likely that the bones dissolved (perhaps due to localised soil conditions). The skeleton remains *in situ* and cannot now be examined.

The burial cannot be dated closely. It seems to have been 5th century or later and presumably pre-dates the beginning of churchyard burial. An early Saxon date

would seem appropriate. Although it is not impossible stratigraphically, a date for this feature in Phase 4ii–iv is not so likely.

A few scraps of possibly Anglo-Saxon pottery (resembling fabrics 22–26) were found in the upper layers of the Site I black loams.

Periods 6 to 7

After the inhumation in grave 50, nothing of significance seems to have happened on Site I. The area was probably abandoned, and became overgrown for a long enough time to allow the stones of the Phase 4(iii) rubble spreads to sink the 250mm or so necessary to take them below later ploughsoil. This may have taken a few years, or perhaps many centuries.

Medieval material is lacking from the topsoil of this area. It is suggested that Site I at least was not ploughed (or at least seldom manured) before the 15th or 16th centuries as a few sherds of this date came from the topsoil on Site C. Ploughing then continued until the layout of the prefab estate in 1946. Layer 130 of brick rubble in trench F (Fig. 10.E–F) was probably a recent (Period 8) path; note how much it has sunk by worm-action.

General discussion of the evidence from Site I

Although a small area, Site I was in some ways the most complex area at Little Oakley. In retrospect it was also a microcosm of the whole site, and thus a key area in understanding the site as a whole. There are here almost all of the themes that will be developed later in the report, including the prehistoric settlement and the problem of continuity of 'Belgic' to 'Roman' (whatever this may be taken to mean). Following this were the three phases of Roman buildings (Buildings 2, 3A and 3B), then the demolition, robbing out potential evidence of continued occupation, in Periods 4 and 5, and the Anglo-Saxon evidence. This was then followed by a period of disuse.

The difficulties of digging such a small area of a larger site and interpreting the results will be apparent, and were apparent to Farrands who dug Sites II–V to add to the total of evidence from the site. As has been noted, the problems on Site I were compounded by the method of excavation employed.

It is apparent from what has been described above, that the dating evidence for the dating of specific features and phases on Site I is not good. There are in fact no closely datable deposits on Site I, particularly when a more cautious attitude is taken towards the dating evidence. If, however, it is accepted that events on Site I may be linked to the phasing of other features in other excavated areas, then the sequence seems to accord with the pattern established there. In summary, although there are problems with the dating on Site I itself, the following sequence is suggested:

Period 2: Building 2, large timber structure follows earlier sunken-floored agricultural building. Building 2 is perhaps Flavian in date.

Phase 3(i): Building 3A aisled structure, with masonry foundations, replaces Building 2. Probably built some time in mid to late 2nd century AD.

Phases 3(i) and (ii): Building 3B, 'corridor villa block' adapted from Building 3A. Its construction seems to pre-date the change from Early to Late Roman pottery assemblages on the site, but the building seems likely to have remained in use in Phase 3(ii).

Phase 4(i): Robbing of the bases of the walls of Building 3B following systematic demolition. Latest Roman pottery phase, possibly early 5th century, or very late 4th century.

Phase 4(ii): Pit digging on the site of Building 3B; uncertain purpose. Date unclear; lack of finds indicates occupation may have shifted elsewhere.

Phase 4(iii): Rubble spreads, possibly representing timber buildings on the site of Building 3B. Probably early to middle 5th century.

Phase 4(iv): Pit 8 dug. Date uncertain.

Period 5: Inhumation F50. Date uncertain.

Periods 6–8: Site abandoned then cultivated (see above).

Minor excavations near Site I

Mention should be made here of the limited excavation in 1958 of shallow trenches in the topsoil of the back garden of the 'prefab', No. 34 Seaview Avenue, by permission of the occupier Mr Baldrey (the garden covered the southern half of the 1976 Site C). These operations were unsuccessful in locating any features, but some pottery was found. No clear traces of Farrands' excavations were found during Corbishley's excavations in the area of No. 34 and it seems they were restricted to the topsoil. Also a very worn sestertius of Lucius Verus (CN8 below) was recovered *c.*1957 from the surface of this topsoil in the back garden of No. 24, some 65m north of Site I. It was in between the two 'prefabs' to the south of this point that Warren had apparently observed pottery during bulldozing in 1947 (see above).

Trench X

In March 1963 a trench about a metre wide was dug in an unspecified location in the south-west corner of Farrands' allotment (Fig. 4; traces were seen on the surface in 1975, but are not now visible). This trench found a further spread of rubble, well away from the villa (F128). The rubble contained Roman pottery (including an amphora sherd) and bone, and directly overlay the subsoil (F129). It is possible that F128 belongs to the same series of deposits as those found elsewhere on Site I (but see Sites II and III below).

IV. Site II

Introduction

This portion of the excavations lay in the field to the west of Site I. It comprised two areas: trench D dug on the edge of the field near Site I in Spring 1952, and trenches K dug further out in the field in January and February 1958 by kind permission of the farmer, Mr H. Stock. These two series of trenches are considered together here, and all context numbers assigned by the writer are prefixed by the letter 'K'.

The excavated features

Trench D

(Figs 24, 25)

Trench D was dug to see if any of the villa features extended to the west. It was parallel with, and 0.15m west of, the western boundary fence of the prefab estate. The south end of the trench was 1' 2" (0.37m) south of the line of the north fence of the allotments. The ploughsoil (K1) was (in 1952) 0.2–0.25m deep; below which was a yellow

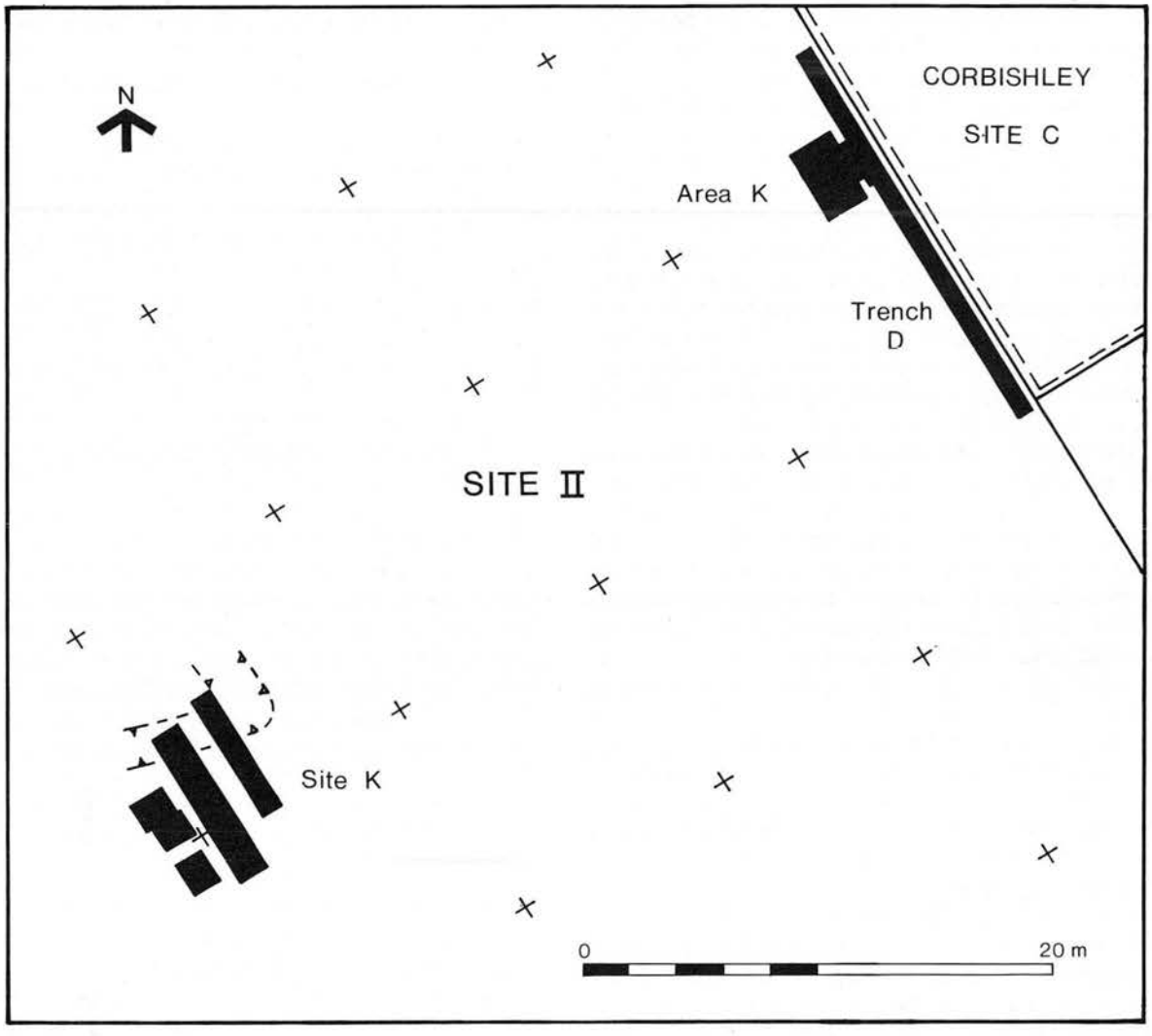


Figure 24 Site II, site plan showing trenches D and K in relationship to the 10m grid of Site C

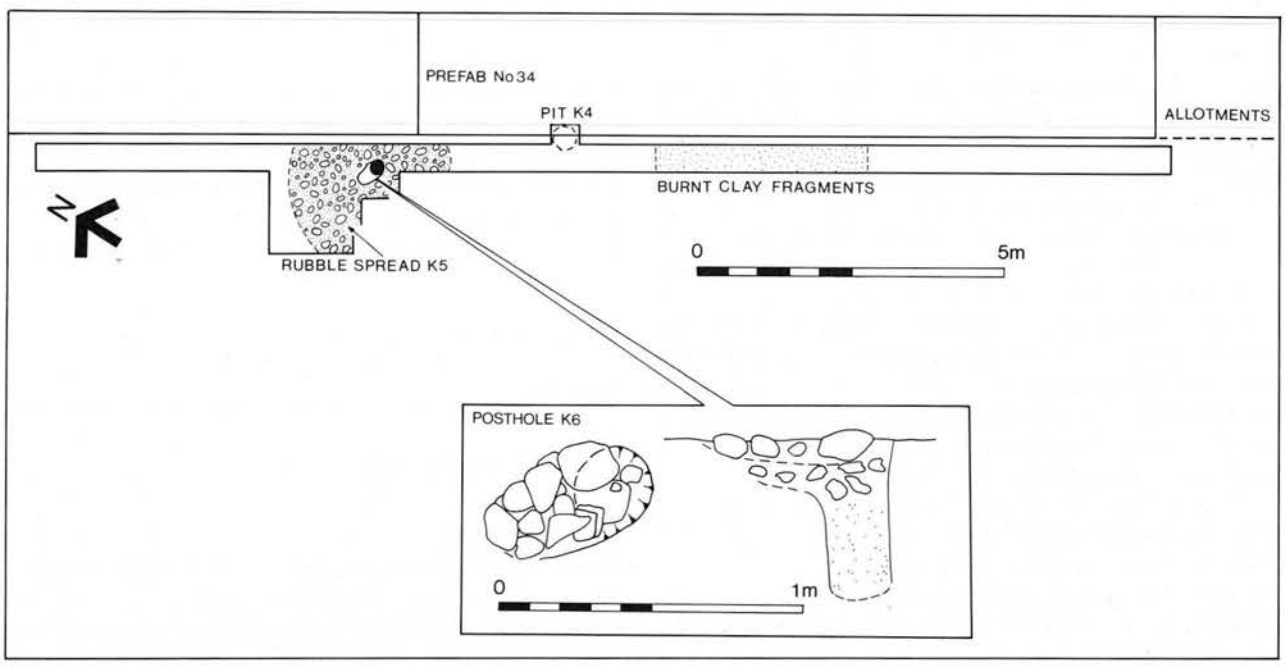


Figure 25 Site II, plan of trench D and plan and section of post-hole K6

sandy loam K2 (equivalent to F9) of variable depth. The upper surface of K2 was uneven and, like F9, contained many artefacts. Only four features were recognised. At 16ft (4.88m) north of the south end of the trench was a spread (K3) of charcoal flecks in a yellowish loam which extended to a depth of 0.4m, but no definite edges were found. Between here and a point 26ft (8m) from the southern end was a thin spread of small pieces of 'burnt daub'. It is possible that these were the worm-sorted remains of a burnt structure but there was no dating evidence. A complete copper alloy hairpin (CU3) was found lying in the upper part of K2. A shallow pit (K4) partly under the fence contained a few fragmentary sheep bones, a few sherds of undatable Roman pottery and a red tessera. The exact edges were not defined.

Further north was a deposit (K5) of broken tile, mostly tegulae and a few flue tile fragments, and septaria rubble in a shallow, roughly circular, depression (Fig. 25). This deposit was only 0.15m deep below the base of the ploughsoil, and contained pottery and bone as well as other debris. Near the middle of this rubble spread was a post-hole (K6) 0.23m in diameter and 0.8m deep below the ploughsoil. This had a sandy lower fill, but the upper fill, which spread out to the north-east, contained copious rubble.

The latter may have been the base of a post-pit, dug either during erection or removal of the post. The pottery in K5, although clearly not a sealed group, was 2nd to late 3rd century in date. It is not clear whether Farrands stripped much of this area to check for underlying features, and plans suggest that he stripped topsoil from an area slightly larger and more regular in outline than was subsequently excavated. Sherds and other Roman material were present throughout the length of the trench, both in the ploughsoil as well as in the subsoil. Material is also spread in the ploughsoil to the west for a considerable area (Fig. 2B).

Site II, trench K
(Fig. 26)
In 1958 a coin of Gallienus (CN9 below) was found on the surface of the field to the west of trench D and at about the same time rubble 'from a wall' was reported to Farrands by Mr M. Baker. Accordingly, Farrands subsequently excavated a series of trenches (Site II K) 37m to the west of the south end of trench D (Figs 24 and 26). Again, it has not been possible to resolve recording discrepancies between the plan and section here (see p. 7).

Below the ploughsoil was a discontinuous thin layer of sandy earth (K7) containing two coins (CN5 Trajan, CN11 radiate copy), much pottery (over 5kg) and bone, with some tile and septaria rubble. The layer also contained many iron nails and iron fragments. The pottery in K7 included a number of Oxford Colour-Coat and mortarium sherds as well as Hadham Ware, but also a little redeposited Early Roman pottery (but very few Early Iron Age sherds — see below). The Oxford Colour-Coat sherds would signify a late 4th century *terminus post quem* for K7 (see pottery report below).

Below this was K8, a rubble spread similar to those on Site I. In this case Farrands planned the layer stone-by-stone (Fig. 26), which must be a very early use of this technique in British archaeology.[9] The spread seems to have consisted largely of tile fragments. Several features cut K8 and the layers below, all with sandy fills, but dimensions were not often recorded: K9 post-hole, but could be rabbit burrow; K10, K11, K12 post-holes; K13 a post-hole with rubble packing, and K23 post-hole. Only K9, K11 and K12 produced finds, all nondescript greyware sherds and a few bones. Post-hole K22 was outside the main rubble spread, but had a sandy loam fill with rubble packing, and seems likely to have been of the same phase. The feature contained a small group of sherds including East Gaulish samian and a Nene Valley Colour-Coat beaker sherd. The latter would date the feature to after the mid 3rd century, and probably later. The post-hole also contained a fragment of a pipeclay Venus figurine (FC29).

The majority of the moderate quantity of small sherds from K8 were fairly nondescript, but included sherds of Nene Valley Colour-Coat. The deposit also contained little bone and a few nails, but also two coins, Trajan and M. Aurelius (CN4 and 7, asterisks on Fig. 26).

One early medieval sandy greyware sherd was conspicuous by its size. Ostensibly it was from K8, but since two further sherds of the same vessel were found in the bags of finds from the underlying layer in the same cutting, it seems that Farrands may have missed at least one intrusive medieval feature. In view of the quantity and condition of Roman finds, it seems less likely that K8 and K24 were medieval.

The layer of dark sandy soil below K8 (K24) was a subsoil layer (like K2); the layer was pebbly (K15) in places. It too contained a great quantity of material of various types. The bone from this layer was in noticeably poor condition (unlike the bone from elsewhere at Little Oakley) and it is difficult to account for this. Also a considerable amount of Early Iron Age pottery (fabric 3) was found. Even though the sherds were small, the material seemed to have come from a limited number of vessels, and this deposit may indicate the proximity of an occupational area, rather than, as elsewhere, debris scattered from one. In addition there were a small number of Early and Late Roman greyware sherds, presumably intrusive. Cutting layer K15, but apparently sealed by K8, were a number of features filled with sandy loam: ditch K16, gully K17, post-holes K14, K19, and K21, pit K20, gully K18.

These features contained few finds, except post-hole K21 which contained eight body sherds of Roman pottery and a grass-tempered body sherd. If the latter is not prehistoric or intrusive, this seems to provide a *terminus post quem* for the whole sequence discussed so far, since the post-hole is apparently sealed by K8. The evidence of one sherd should be treated with some caution, however, since apart from the Oxford and Nene Valley Colour-Coat sherds there is no other hint from the pottery from K7 or K8 for such a late date.

The ditch fill K16 contained few sherds, considering its volume. It produced only two prehistoric sherds, in fabric 2. Post-hole K20 contained six small prehistoric sherds of fabrics 1 and 3. Three oxidised fabric 6 sherds came from post-hole K18, while the gully K17 contained a few Roman sherds, including Colchester Colour-Coat and a sherd of storage jar form 271. The relationship of K16 and K17 was not adequately recorded, but the latter would seem from the pottery content to be later.

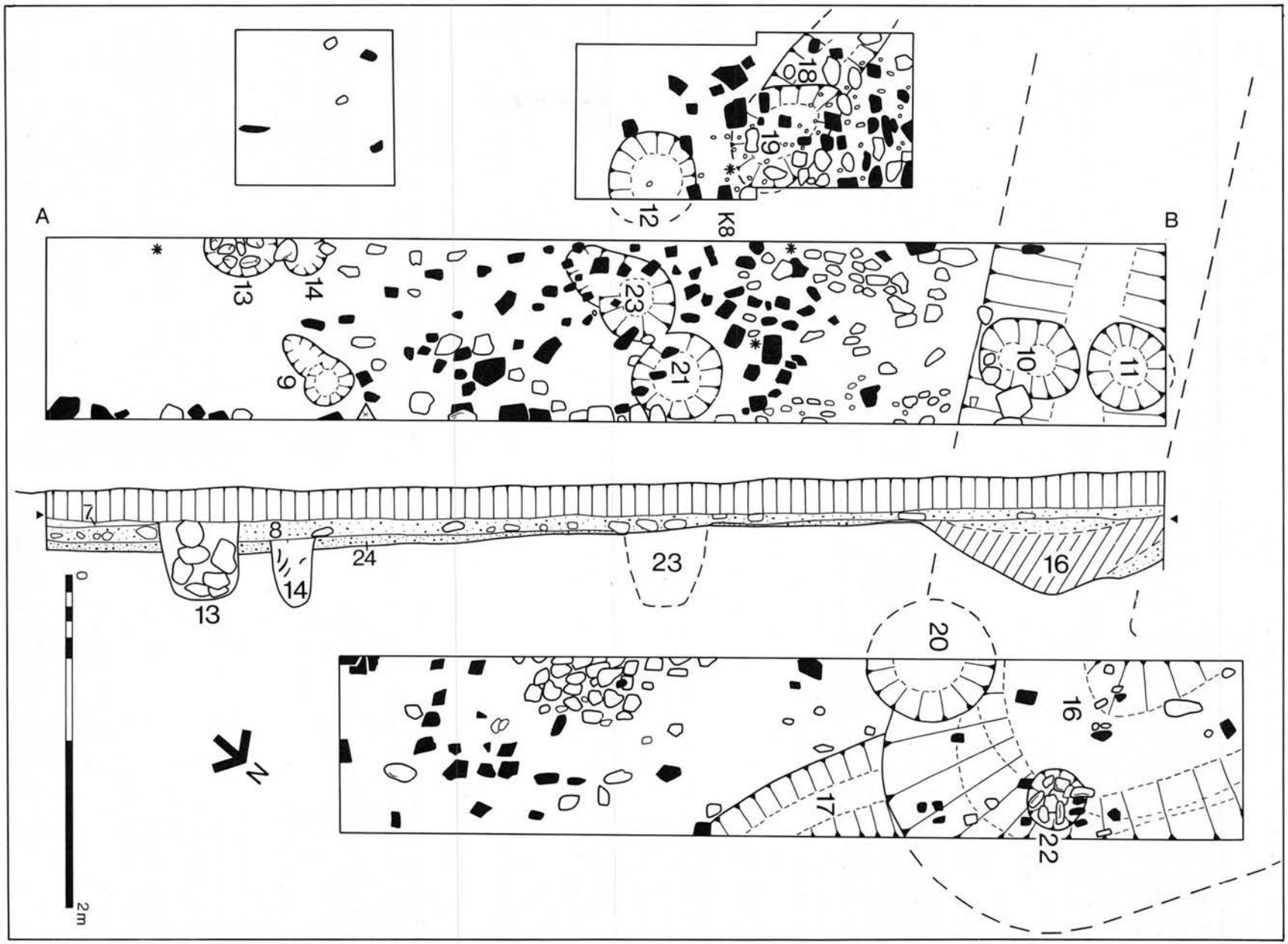


Figure 26 Site II, plan of Site K, asterisks mark coin finds. Rubble spread K8 and other features. Between the trenches, south-west section of centre trench

General discussion of the evidence from Site II

This shallow site in a ploughed field yielded several features of interest. There was probably prehistoric occupation (of which K16 may be a part) followed by Belgic early Roman activity (K18). The main series of features seems to be late Roman or early post-Roman and seems to comprise a rubble spread and a series of post-holes. At least two phases seem likely to be represented. The post-holes K (12?), 23, 21, 20 and 22 seem to form a line and a structure may be indicated. Little can be made of the plan of these features and the rubble spread K8 because of the small area exposed and the probability that it was disturbed by ploughing before 1958. Clearly it is extremely unlikely that much of this layer has survived continuous ploughing of the area since then with heavier machinery, including deep ploughing in 1976 at least.

Correlation of the Site II rubble spreads with those on Site I is rather difficult. K5 cannot be closely dated, but it is probably post mid 3rd century and may relate to the Site C pits (below). K8 includes Nene Valley Colour-Coat sherds, which probably indicate a date contemporary with the latest Roman pottery assemblage at Little Oakley. A grass-tempered sherd from K22 apparently sealed by the rubble would seem to advance its date into the 5th century (see below).

V. Site III

Introduction

(Figs 27, 28)

This site lay in the field 35m to the south-east of Site I and below its level by at least 1.4m. See Figs 4, 53–4 for its position relative to other excavated areas.[10] Site III seems to have been dug to explore an area of the field where Anglo-Saxon pottery had been ploughed up. This was in part carried out with the help of sixth formers from Harwich County High School led by their teacher and esteemed local historian, L.T. Weaver. The excavations here were of particular importance as there was a considerable depth of surviving stratigraphy (almost 2.5m). The first deposits encountered were late Roman and Saxon features overlying a rubble spread, below which were a series of dumped layers dating from the late 1st to late 2nd centuries. These filled a broad deep ditch draining what was clearly a marshy hollow in the late 1st century, the cause of which was apparently an earlier deep pond or similar feature dug into the London clay. The fill of this large feature comprised a sequence of organic muds and silts containing much waterlogged debris.

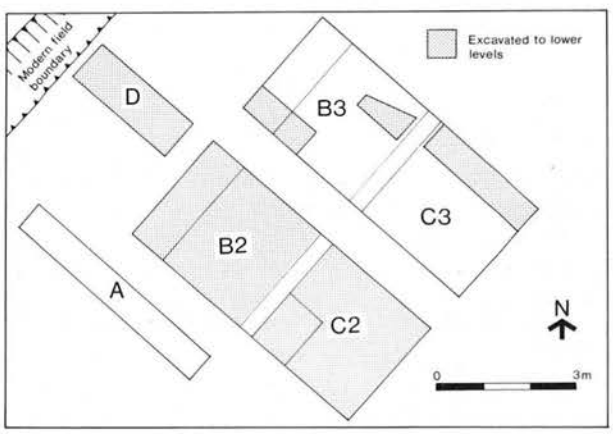


Figure 27 Site III, plan of trenches, showing deeply excavated portions (tone)

The site was excavated between October 1958 to July 1961 as four large rectangular trenches (B2, B3, C2 and C3) and two narrow trenches A and D (Fig. 27). These trenches were excavated at different times and rates, and to different extents. Probably the original excavator could have made more sense of the surviving records and material. The notes and plans are not as consistent as could be hoped, although one must take into account the apparent loss of at least two section drawings and a notebook and plans which did not reach COLEM. Not all of the photographs can be matched with any certainty with the features described here. Since the quantity of material recovered was of quite massive proportions and the trenches (although among Farrands' largest) were too small to elucidate much of the detail of the area, the site is treated summarily here. All records and finds bags have been examined by the writer[11] and a selection of the finds are illustrated and described. It is thought that nothing significant has been missed. To have documented and reported this site more fully would have taken a considerable amount of time, and this section is presented as a sensible compromise.

Few details survive of the layers seen in trench A, and the records of D are incomplete and confusing — but in both trenches the sequence seems to have been largely as observed in the main square (trenches B and C) discussed below. These main trenches had transverse baulks which appear to have been removed periodically as 'cumulative sections' were drawn. The north-west side of the square (trenches B3 and C3) was not explored below the Phase E deposits (see below for phasing) so the extent of earlier features is uncertain, except as the result of the excavation of a few ill-recorded holes dug in the trench bottoms. Trenches B2 and C2 were dug down to the base of the stratigraphy. Trench A does not seem to have been dug down below deposits of Phase H or F. Trench D was dug down to Phase A/B deposits.

Figure 29 shows the section through the sequence of deposits on this site. The illustration is based on (top) the drawn sections of the east faces of trenches B2 and C2 and (bottom) the west faces of the same trenches (reversed). The layer numbers on the section are those used below, though it should be noted that not all layers appeared in the surviving sections, and thus their only record was often the notes scribbled on the finds bags. Discrete features have been given numbers (1–9), layer numbers are prefaced by 'P' (Farrands had called Site III 'Piccadilly (Circus)' as he had found the intersection of a number of complex features).

The matrix (Fig. 28) sets out the stratigraphic links of the numbered deposits. A comparison with the section will demonstrate that these context numbers have only been assigned to major layers. To number all lenses of material making up this complex sequence would be laborious, and not all of these minor layers shown in the sections can be identified in other records, or linked with finds bags with any certainty. The matrix is thus intended as a skeleton sequence; in other words, a summary of the stratigraphy.

The sequence of deposits can be divided into nine groups or phases lettered and summarised below. The table also relates these to the periods of Site I; it can be

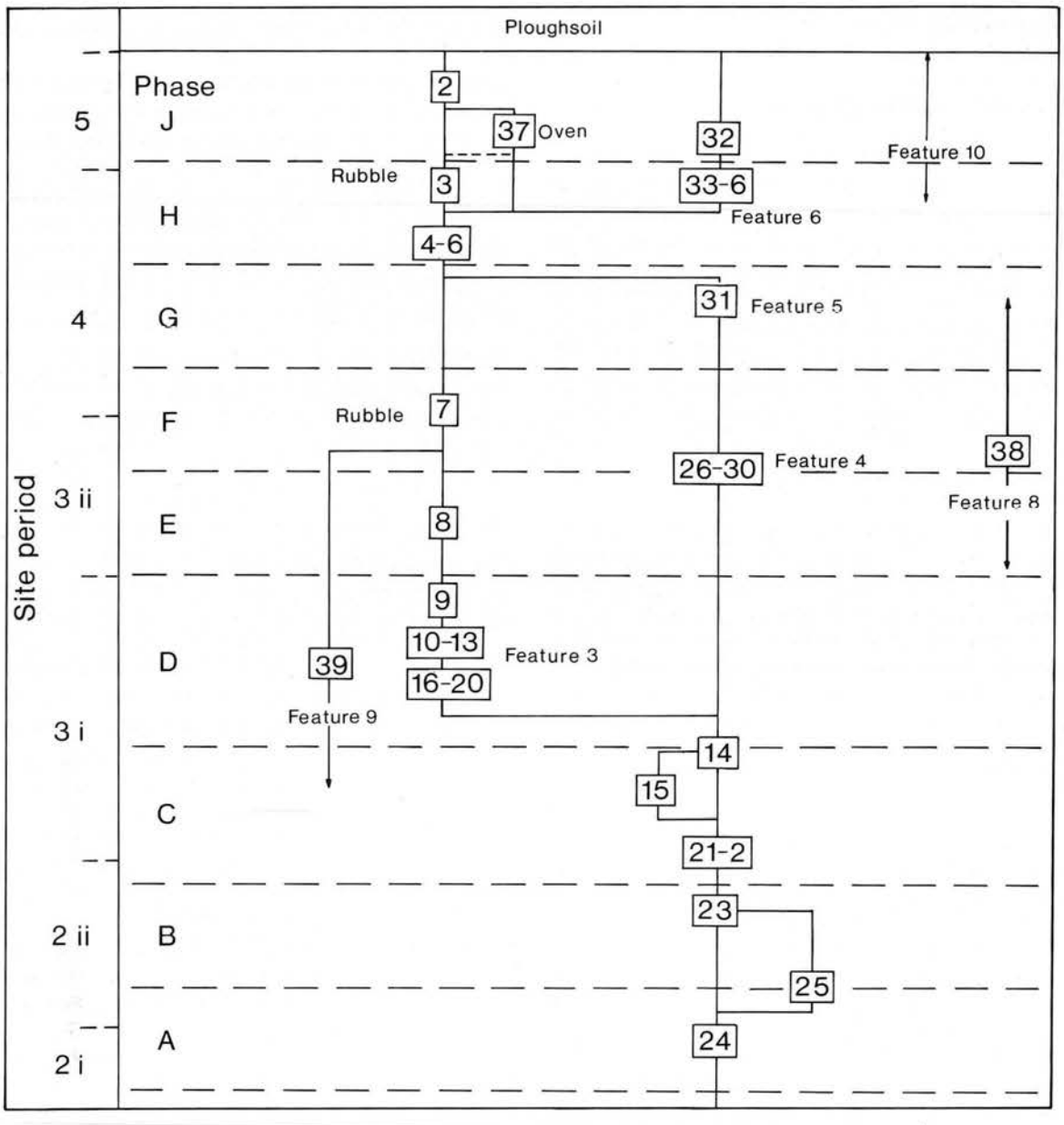


Figure 28 Site III matrix

seen that the phasing on Site III is more complex and does not necessarily relate directly to that on Site I. It seems best to retain this double phase system, rather than trying to force the Site III evidence to fit these deposits into periods more clearly definable elsewhere.

The Phase A and B deposits on Site III were below the modern water table, and the organic muds preserved much perishable material including wood and leather, of which unfortunately not one single scrap survives. This was not entirely Farrands fault, and he seems to have kept this material damp while he attempted to get it conserved. This was beyond the scope of the limited facilities in Colchester Museum at the time, and the British Museum was approached (Feb. 1961) but refused to deal with the material, even though it was pointed out at the time that the door handles (W1 below) were unique. Clearly should more work take place at Little Oakley, further excavation of Site III (on a sufficiently large scale to resolve outstanding problems) should be given priority, because the sealed deposits potentially contain abundant environmental evidence which should be very informative.

Many of the finds are noted below where they allow dating of the groups of deposits, or where variations in quantity (see Fig. 38) are of interest. The groups of pottery from the Phase A and B pond fills are discussed more fully below in the pottery report and selected sherds from later deposits are also described.

Site III phasing		*Site I period*
Phase A deposits	pond	Phases 2(i)–2(ii)
Phase B deposits	pond	Phase 2(ii)
Phase C deposits	infill	Phases 2(ii)–3(i)
Phase D deposits	drainage ditch	Phase 3(i)
Phase E deposits	continued infilling	Phase 3(ii)
Phase F deposits	rubble spread	Phases 3(ii)/4
Phase G deposits	feature 5	Period 4
Phase H deposits	rubble spread and pit	Period 4/5
Phase J deposits	oven and loam	Period 5

The excavated features
(Figs 29–37)

Phase A deposits (Phases 2(i)–2(ii))
The first feature on Site III was feature 1, a large hole dug into the natural (Red Crag over London Clay) near the spring-line. It was over 20ft (6.1m) long and about 7ft (2.1m) deep below present (and probably contemporary) ground surface. This hole had been dug below the water table (and probably the spring-line) at the junction between London Clay and overlying layers. This seems an unlikely place for a quarry for either Red Crag or clay, and the nature of the fill and the later developments, as well as the position, suggest very strongly that the feature was a pond, perhaps for watering livestock; the irregular profile of the edge (Fig. 29) supports this. The extent of this feature is unknown; it does not appear on aerial photographs seen to date.

The feature contained two fills. At the base was a waterlogged layer, P24, of grey and black clay with shelly lenses but few finds except twigs. This material gives the impression of being natural silting, in contrast to the dumped layers above. Layer P25 was shelly material lying up the sides of the feature. However, some of this may have been backfill behind the revetment of the Phase B 'pond'. Layer P24 is unlikely to have been a deliberate clay lining, but, since the feature itself was cut into impervious clay, a more likely interpretation is that this was silted material and clay disturbed by the wallowing of animals. The original depth of water in this feature is uncertain, as the water is now drained away by the later ditch, feature 3.

The pottery from these deposits is Claudio-Neronian to Flavian in date (see Chapter 4.III). The fill also contained quite a lot of bone, particularly of cattle, as well as a quantity of oyster and particularly mussel shells. One cockle shell and several shells of the terrestrial mollusc *Cepaea hortensis* were also found.

Phase B deposits (Phase 2(ii))
This phase is represented by the fill of a steep-sided deep hole (feature 2) which is interpreted here as a fishpond. The fill (Figs 29 and 30) was a waterlogged black mud (layer P23) mixed with shelly Crag layers. This contained a considerable quantity of waterlogged wood, both worked and (mainly) unworked pieces; twigs, branches, bark and even what appeared to have been a fallen tree.

The interface between fills P23 and P25 was vertical, demonstrating that these Phase B organic muds were the fill of a feature cut into the earlier pond, feature 1. The nature of the deposits suggest very strongly that the later feature 2 was also a pond. Furthermore, the vertical interface implies that the pond had been revetted in some

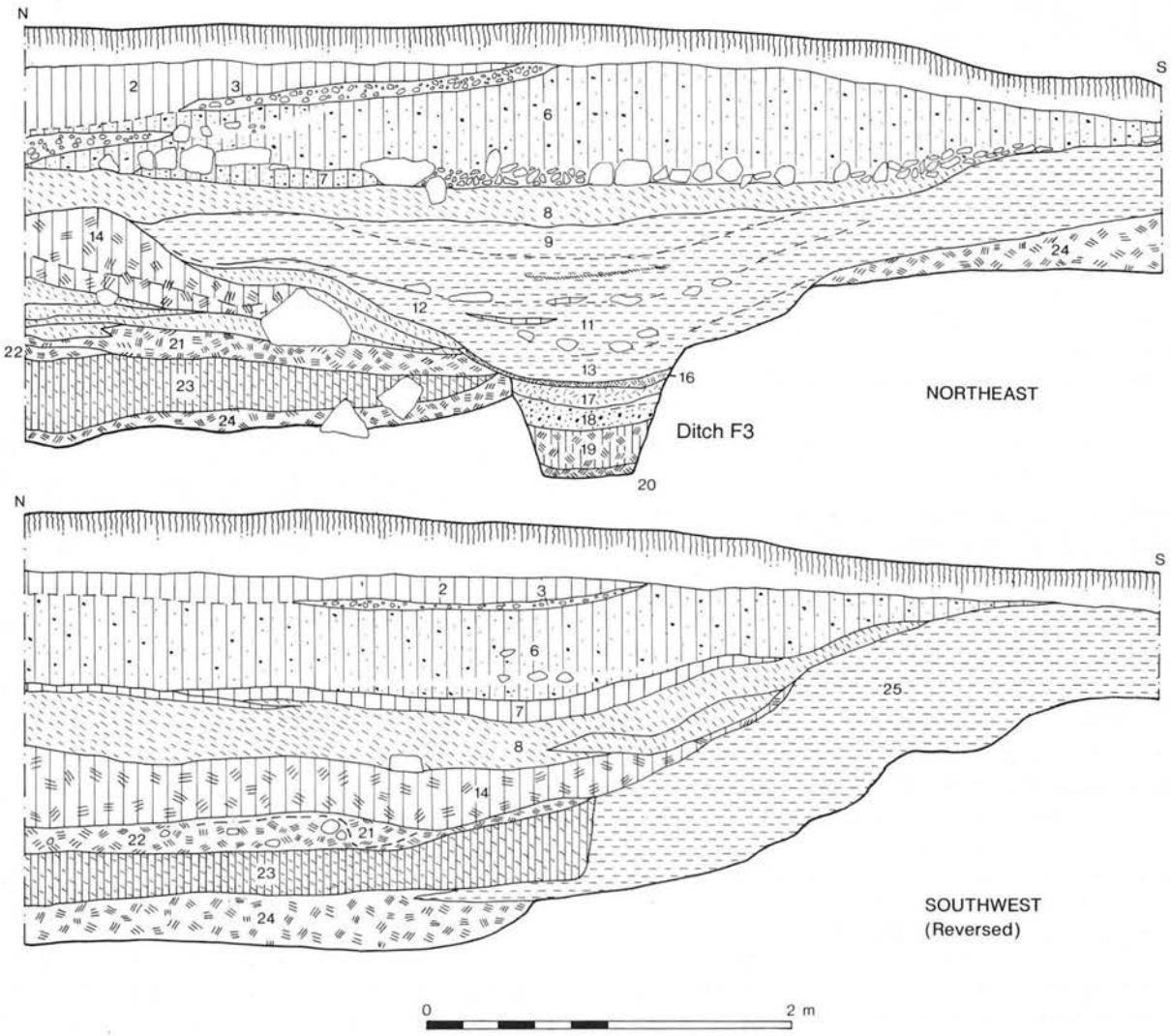


Figure 29 Site III, section of trenches B2 and C2, north-west (top) and south-west (reversed)

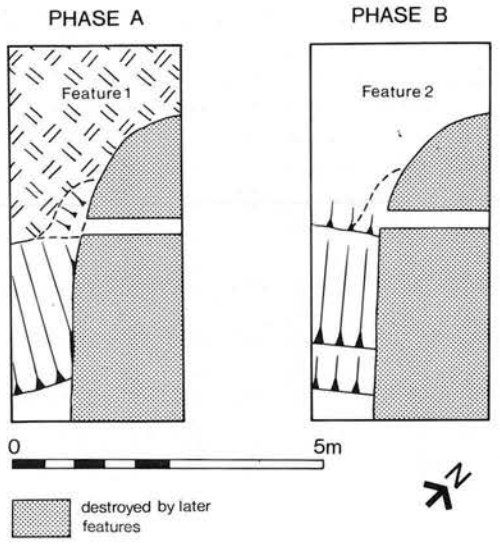


Figure 30 Site III, trenches B2 and C2, Phases A–C

fashion. In the silt were found a number of planks and at least one vertical stake or post. Unfortunately no plan survives of the position of these items, but it seems that none were *in situ* as part of the revetment. The middle part of this fill was composed of a matted mass of waterlogged material, possibly matted reeds, and twigs. This was interpreted by Farrands as being 'stable refuse' but no record survives of animal dung being noted. Over this was a black shelly layer. The pottery from the Phase B deposits (see Chapter 4.III) consisted of large freshly broken sherds of many pots, and had the appearance of dumped rubbish rather than an incidental accumulation of scattered debris like many of the subsequent assemblages on Site III. The quantities of large pieces of animal bone seemingly also reflect this process.

Phase C deposits (Phases 2(ii)–3(i))

In this phase a series of layers were dumped over the silting of the fishpond. It is clear from the notes that other layers were also present not shown or numbered on the sections, for Farrands notes also a 'shelly silt' over an 'oyster layer', under which was a 'blackish silt' (Layers 14, 15 and 21 22).

The lowest layers were mostly of black clay and tended to merge with the Phase B deposits below them. The layers are probably those numbered P21 and P22 on Figure 29. It is probable that these layers were slumped, or more likely dumped, debris deposited late in the life of the feature. These deposits contained large lenses of yellow and brown clay. All these layers were waterlogged (with iron pan deposition) and contained small pieces of wood, twigs and bark, as well as a little rubble, including mortar and tile (but no plaster). The deposits contained a small quantity of heavily fragmented bone and a few oystershells. The pottery included a quantity of redeposited Early Iron Age material, but also sherds of a number of jars in grog-tempered fabrics which appears to be the latest occurrence of this fabric (used for vessels other than storage jars) in this sequence. One sherd of white Gallo-Belgic butt beaker and a sherd of platter form 21 in greyware were also present, as was a sherd of early Central Gaulish form 18/31 samian, which would date these deposits to the late 1st or early 2nd century.

Above this was an 'oystershell layer' which contained quite a bit of pottery and some fragmented ovicaprid bones, as well as fragments of plain white plaster. The pottery included Early Roman fabrics (including forms 108, 266 and 218 with wide latticed cordons) as well as a gritty white ware, which was probably a product of the Brockley Hill/*Verulamium* region, and also a white-slipped red ware flagon sherd. Among the greywares were a number of sherds in 'metallic' fabrics like those from Phase B deposits (see p. 140). These seem mainly to have been form 108 or related beakers. Among the iron objects, consisting mainly of nail fragments, was a badly flaked iron stylus (FE5). The layers above the oystershell layer contained a little redeposited Early Iron Age pottery and some Early Roman pottery, and a small amount of bone, including a 'sheep' mandible with an abcess in one of the molar roots. The pottery included quite a lot of white 'Colchester' fabric flagon sherds (which may have contained wine or beer). The Early Roman greywares included forms 266 and 278 and the bowl forms suggest a pre-Hadrianic date. South Gaulish Samian Drag. form 27 and an Early Central Gaulish Curle 11 rim also occurred, dating to the late 1st and early 2nd century.

Layer 14 is noted as 'clayey loam'. Layer 15 is coloured yellow on a section drawing, probably indicating Crag.

Phase D deposits (Period 3)

This phase consists of a large ditch (feature 3) dug southwards from the pond and cutting the Phase C infilling (Figs 29 and 31). The edge weathered back considerably and the feature gradually became silted up, but was not subsequently recut. The lower fills of the ditch (Fig. 29) consist of layers P20, grey clay; P19, black organic mud; P18, orange sand; P17, a mortar spread, and P16, grey clay. Above these lie a series of layers (P9 to P11 and P13), which are not described but shown as yellow spots on the section. This may have been shelly Red Crag sand. Layer P12 was probably also Crag. Towards the base, these layers were waterlogged and had iron pan deposition in them.

The fill of feature 3 contained quite a lot of pottery, most of it from the middle fills (*i.e.* layer P13 and below). The pottery from the lower fills was undatable Early Roman; that from the upper shelly fills is mid to late 2nd century. The feature also contained a small quantity of heavily fragmented ovicaprid and cattle bone. The lower fill contained rubble and multicoloured fine-surfaced painted plaster and a fragment of fired clay, probably of burnt daub.

The pottery from the lower and middle fills contained small sherds of Early Roman greywares, forms 108B and 218 jars, including larger form 218 jars with latticed cordons. Also present were several sherds of white and pink-buff 'Colchester' fabric flagons (some in a very micaceous pink fabric).

From the upper fill came a similar assemblage of Early Roman pottery including large form 218 jars with latticed cordons, and a few form 266 or 221 with burnished bands inside the rim (this being the earliest occurrence of this important fabric and form at Little Oakley). The jars included a number of form 266 jars with undercut rims. Also present was a grog-tempered storage jar sherd, a colander base, a small piece of Drag. form 27 samian cup and a solid spike of an amphora of uncertain type similar

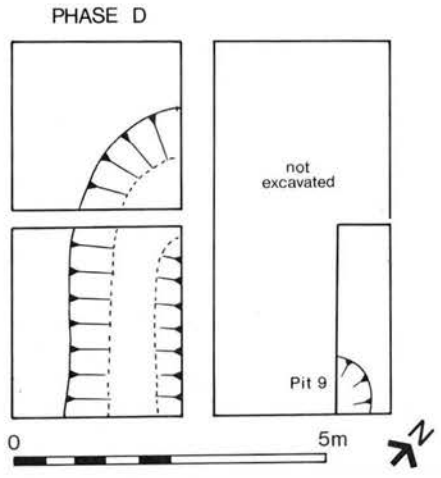


Figure 31 Site III, Phase D, ditch 3, and pit 9

to Dressel Dr 2/5. A sherd of Colchester white mortarium and sherds of a considerable number of white and buff-white 'Colchester' flagons were also present. The latter included a white-slipped red ware form 361–2 or 366, probably late 2nd century.

Also present was a dubious briquetage vessel sherd, FC26, and the base of a greyware jar (Fig. 102.35) with a circular hole punched in it.

Phase E deposits (Phase 3ii)

This phase consists of the levelling-up of the site over the Phase D ditch by the dumping of a series of thin layers (P8, 8A and 8B), the nature of which is not recorded. This material also contained lenses of clay and rubble. Very little material could be assigned to deposits of this phase, but included an abraded rim of a Colchester mortarium of form 497 of the late 2nd century.

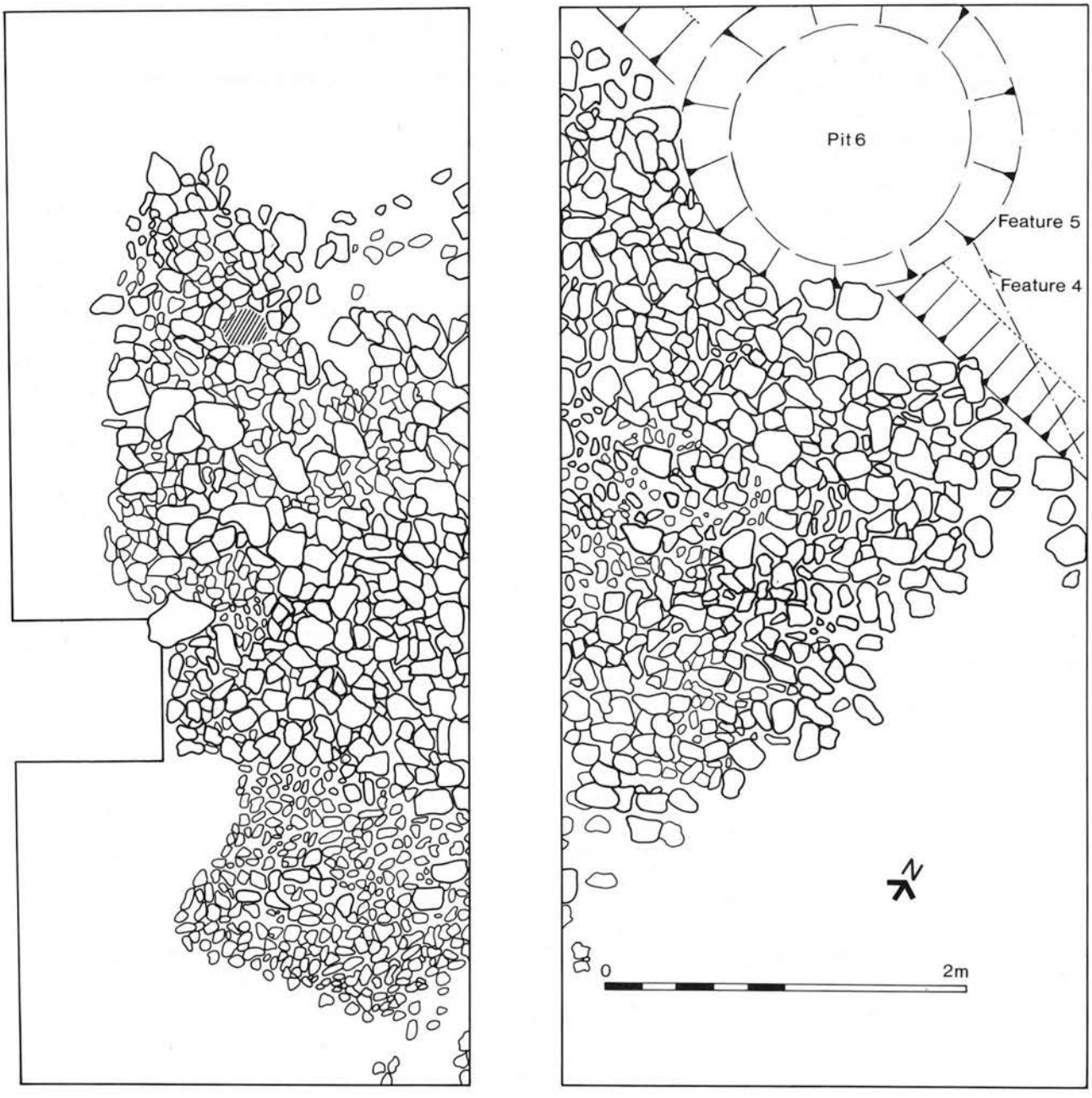


Figure 32 Site III, Phase F rubble spread cut by feature 5 and Phase H pit 6

Phase E was the lowest series of deposits that were explored fully by trenches B3 and C3. Two small sondages were put down in trenches B3 and C3 into underlying areas through the Phase E material, one in the west corner of B3 which found 'brown clay' and a series of unrecorded layers below it. The second was in the east corner of C3. This found a deep depression (pit 9) with a shelly fill containing brick fragments, charcoal and a little Early Roman pottery. This feature is cut into the natural and is unphased (see Fig. 31). A third small section was cut in the east corner of B3 adjacent to feature 4 and detected the edge of a feature, but it is not clear whether this was of the Phase A/B pond or the Phase D ditch and it is omitted from the phase plans.

Phase F deposits (Phase 3ii/Period 4)

This complex of features was excavated in May 1959, and is notable for the stone-by-stone plan of the rubble spread (Fig. 32). The relationship between the edge of this rubble and that of feature 5 suggests that the latter cuts the rubble, but this is not certain. Unfortunately Feature 5 has removed any relationships between the rubble spread and the drain (feature 4). The latter is described below as if it belonged to this phase, but it could have been earlier (*i.e.* of Phases D to E, perhaps more likely the latter).

The rubble spread (layer P7; Fig. 32) seems to have consisted mainly of septaria rubble thrown down on top of the Phase E infill. It is suggested that this formed the raft of a timber building. The east side was straightish, but the others were somewhat irregular; the north edge was cut away by feature 5. The disposition and graduation of the rubble seem to be consistent with a sub-rectangular building 3.36 × 3.66m (at least) on sill-beams resting on the rubble. The rubble varied in size across the spread, and became smaller to the south-west (which may be a layer of metalling in a doorway). The post-hole with dark fill on the west edge may mark a doorway, or be secondary to the main structure. It contained Early Roman pottery, but no other details are recorded. The rubble spread had subsided into the fill of feature 3, as a result of later worm activity, and does not reflect the original contours of the surface.

The rubble of layer 7 contained flue tile fragments (all diamond-scored), and wall plaster (some fine red-painted). The pottery included sherds of BB2 form 37 with both round and triangular sectional rims. The feature also

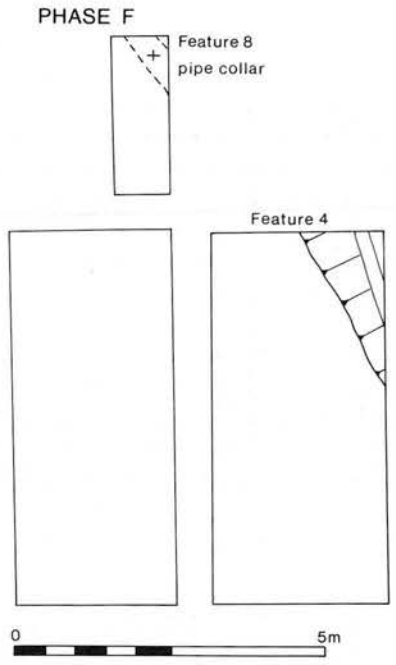


Figure 33 Site III, Phase F drain, features 4 and 8

contained the rim of an Oxford mortarium (Young 1977, M22) which would date to no earlier than the mid 3rd century, though of course the deposition of the rubble may have been of a later date.

The drain (Figs 32, 33 and 34) had originally been dug as a V-shaped trench, into which a wooden box-drain (feature 4) was later inserted.[12] This survived as a soft black layer of deteriorated wood (P28) at the base, and stone and shelly (P29A) packing around the edges. The fill (P29) was very dark clay loam. Above this was a layer (P30B) of twigs and Crag shell, possibly in the base of a later recut (as a ditch). This was covered by layers of rubble (P30A) and shelly Crag (P30). Two progressively shallower recuts are suggested by the interface of the shell Crag layers, P26 and P27. The fills, unlike other features discussed from Phases G, H, and J were notable for not containing much redeposited Early Iron Age (EIA) pottery. The fall of this drain was not measured but it would seem likely to have been draining southwards. The edge is shown in plan on Fig. 33 and on Fig. 32, under the edge of feature 5.Feature 4 cuts Phase C layers, but feature

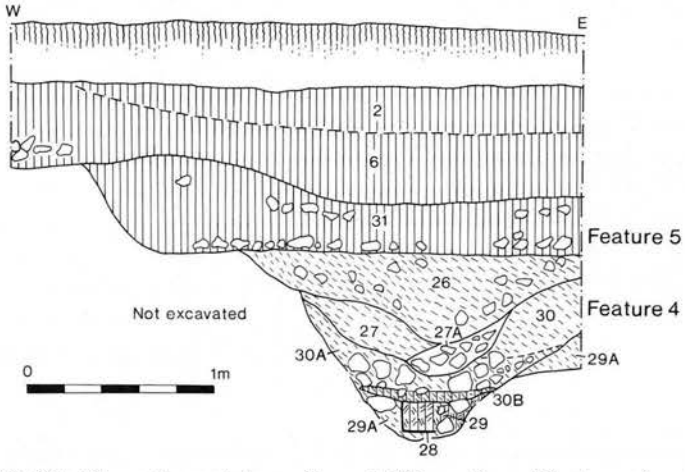


Figure 34 Site III, north-west face of trench B3, section of features 4 and 5

5 has destroyed the relationship between this and features of Phases E and F. The fills did not produce much datable material, but contained septaria rubble, tesserae and Early Roman pottery. Window glass and Central Gaulish samian were present in the recuts, as well as the bones of a dog. The lower fill contained a quantity of bone, principally large pieces of cow and sheep, but no pig.

A pipe trench (feature 8) in trench D is discussed below and seems to be of Phase F.

Phase G deposits (Period 4)

The only feature of this phase was feature 5, of which one east-west edge was found (Fig. 32). This seems to have cut the rubble spread layer 7, and certainly also cut the upper fill of Feature 4 (Fig. 34). It is not thought likely that Feature 5 was simply a recut of Feature 4, since the base was much higher than the original drain, and the edge was on a different alignment. The loam fill (layer P31) contained much rubble, and redeposited EIA pottery, but also a little Late Roman pottery including Late Roman greywares and a form 305B rim (which must be post mid-3rd century).

The section is very oblique (Fig. 34) but the feature has a curious profile with a flat base. Farrands suggested that this was the edge of a large pit or even a grubenhaus, and it is possible that this was so (though no Saxon pottery was present in the fill).

Phase H deposits (Period 4/5)

In this phase a scatter of rubble, layer P3 (Fig. 35) and a pit (feature 6) (Figs 32 and 35) may be grouped. The brown sandy loam layers (P4–6) underlying the rubble thickened to the south and contained rubble, wall plaster, shell and clay. The finds include tesserae, plain wall plaster and some Early Roman pottery. Layer P6 (dark brown sandy loam) overlies the lower fill of feature 5 (Fig. 34).

The rubbly layer P3 (Fig. 35) formed a sloping triangular spread, with one edge parallel to the edge of the erosion forming the upper fill of feature 5 (but the slope does not seem steep enough for the erosion to be the cause of this edge). The spread consisted mainly of septaria but included a little tile. Farrands interpreted this deposit as the footings and demolition debris from a wall (1958, 44). Fortunately he drew a stone-by-stone plan of this layer (Fig. 32) and there seems little justification for this view. No wall stood at this point though the rubble must have been brought to Site III for some purpose, but it is difficult to explain its presence (unless perhaps the southern and western sides are seen as the edges of a possible building raft).

The layer contained 4.7kg of pottery, mostly abraded sherds of Early Iron Age and Early Roman fabrics including six sherds from two Dressel 20 amphorae but including a Colchester mortarium sherd and greyware sherds of Late Roman fabric (form 268). Seven oxidised sherds may be an unusual Roman coarseware or, more likely, intrusive early medieval.

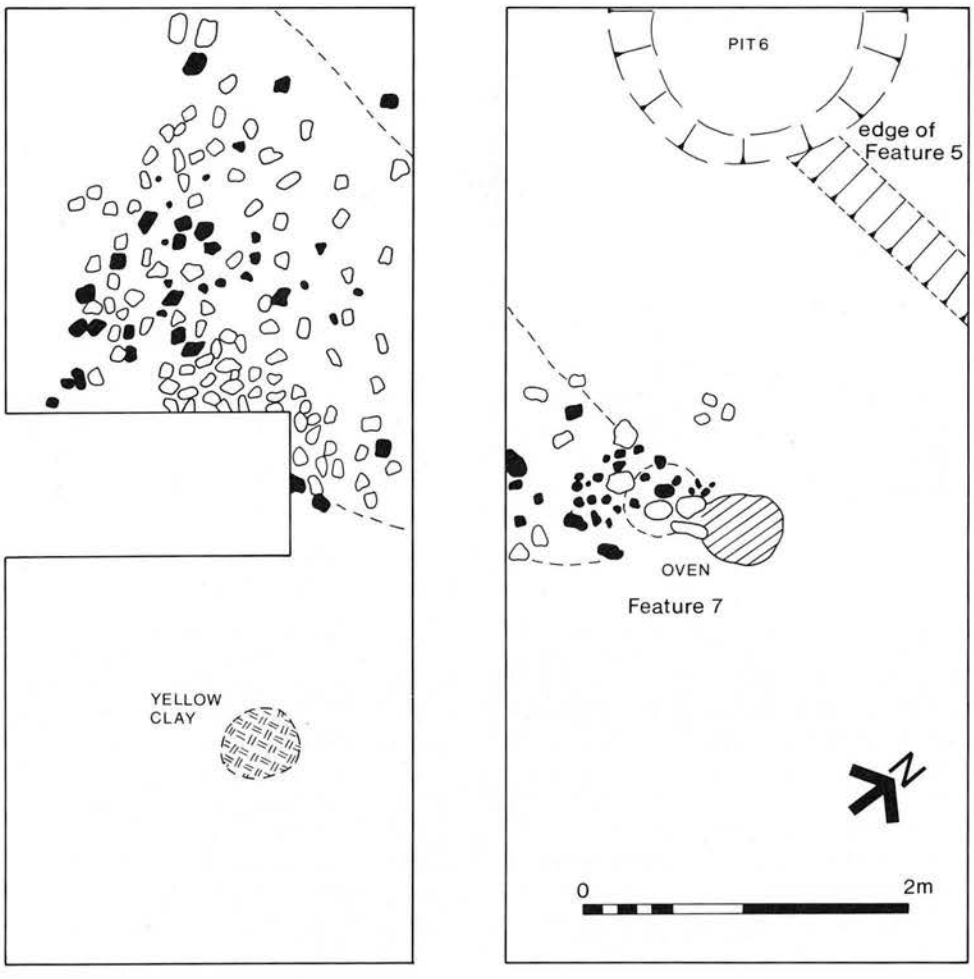


Figure 35 Site III, Phase H rubble spread, oven (feature 7). Pit 6 is appearing on the north-west side of trench B2, which was smaller in the earlier phase of the excavation

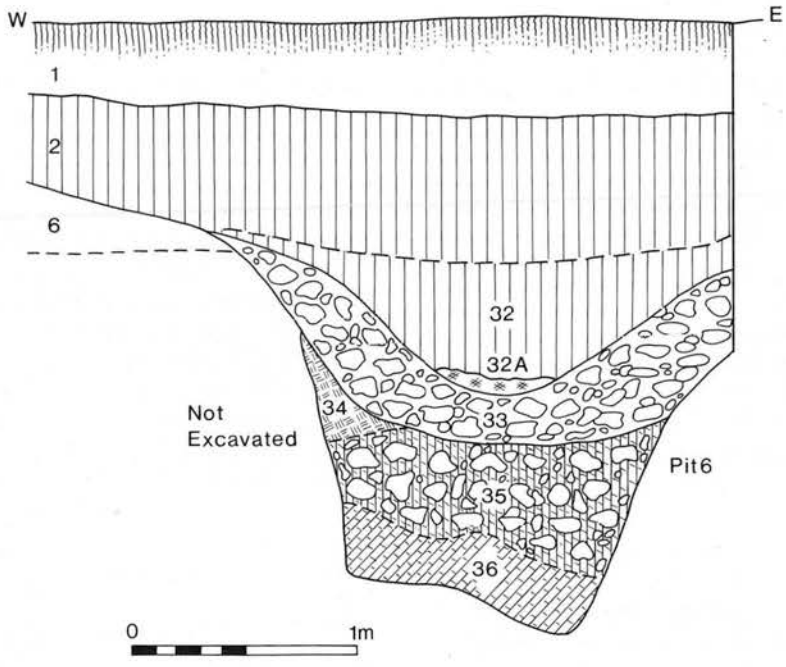


Figure 36 Site III, section of pit, feature 6

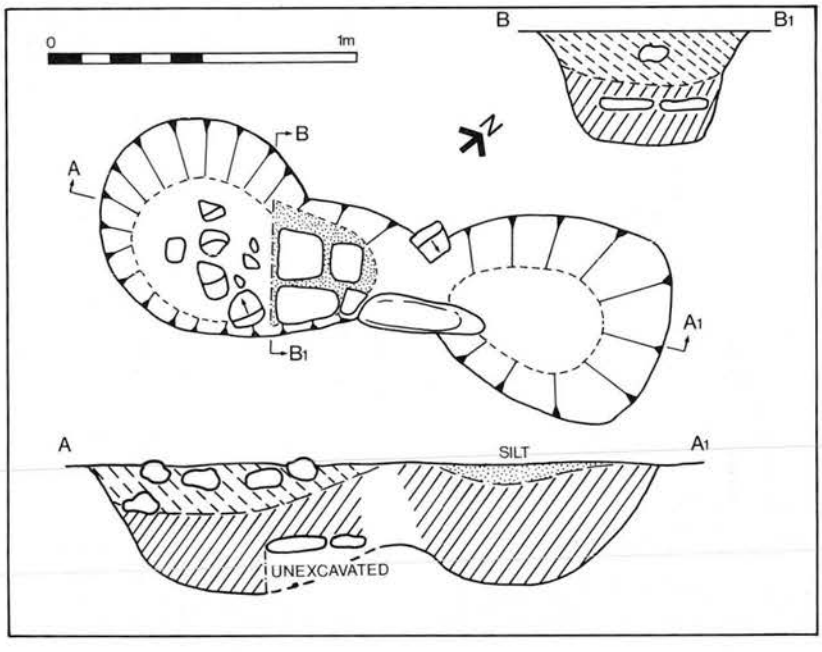


Figure 37 Site III, Saxon oven, feature 7 plan and sections

The large pit, feature 6 (Figs 32 and 35–6), cut through layer 6 and the finds seem derived from the latter. The pit was 1.92m deep and 1.2m diameter. The fills (Fig. 36) were as follows: P36 black shelly clay with rubble primary silt, P35 dark shelly loam with rubble, P34 sandy clay, P33 rubble. The base of the 'subsidence hollow' contained a quantity of burnt material (P32A) interpreted by Farrands as a hearth. The uppermost fill (P32) was of dark loam of Phase J (see below). The pottery included much abraded Early Iron Age and Early Roman pottery, a large sherd of Dressel 20 amphora and a sherd of Hadham Ware. The feature also contained a quantity of bone. Possibly the feature had been dug as a well, but it penetrated only as far as the clay base of the earliest fishpond. The fill contained much rubble and seems deliberate backfill.

Phase J deposits (Period 5)

Two deposits contained Saxon pottery: layer P2 and feature 7, an oven. These lay immediately below the ploughsoil. The pottery from these deposits is further discussed below.

Layer P2 was a deposit of dark loam in squares B2 and B3 (Figs 29, 34 and 36), deepening towards the northern corner (*i.e.* the late fills of features 5 and 6); the southern edge overlay the edge of layer P3. The nature of the deposit P2 is uncertain, whether dumped soil or natural silting in the subsidence hollow of the earlier ponds. The Saxon pottery mostly consisted of very small and abraded sherds.

The 'oven' (feature 7) is one of very few Anglo-Saxon ovens known. Unfortunately, the recording of the Little Oakley structure leaves much to be desired (Fig. 37). At

the west end was the oven chamber, which had been floored with rubble and tile fragments set into a charcoally loam. The upper fill was rubbly (P37C). The stokehole had a charcoal fill with a silty upper fill (P37 A and B). In the stokehole arch was a vertical slab of stone. It would seem that this oven was stone-built, but the nature of the superstructure is uncertain. The feature contained a small group of Late Roman and Early Saxon pottery which is apparently 5th century (see pp. 161–2). The relationship between the oven and rubble layer P3 is uncertain. Farrands seems to have felt that the rubble overlay the oven, but since the oven had a rubbly upper fill this cannot be regarded as certain. The rubble spread contained no Saxon pottery however. The whole sequence was overlain by PI, the present ploughsoil. It is not clear when ploughing commenced. It possibly follows a period of abandonment.

Trench IIID November 1961

This trench has been omitted from the description of the Site III deposits above, since the plans and sections are now lost, and the precise position of the trench is not certain, though its approximate position is shown on Figs 27 and 33. The sequence may, however, be briefly discussed, and most of the finds are similar to those found in the other trenches on Site III.

Below the ploughsoil was a Saxon loam layer containing many bones, but little pottery. This overlay what appears to be a continuation of layer 3 which was cut by a pit (feature 10) on the east side. Below the rubble was the pipe trench (feature 8) containing a pipe collar. This feature seems to have been of Phase F, but its exact position is not known (the feature is recorded as cutting trench IIID in a south-easterly direction, 5" from the north end, and 8" deep with a shelly fill). This was not part of the Site I pipeline, but possibly feature 8 relates in some way to feature 4 although its course across Site III is not known. There was also a lower rubble scatter probably corresponding to layer 7. This contained Early Roman pottery and some fine red-painted plaster with a polished surface. Below this was a sequence of shelly layers, one of which (3' 8" down, possibly equating with Phase C layer P15) contained an 'AVCISSA' brooch FIB1 below). Below this sequence was an oystershell layer overlying the Phase B dark silts of the pond (beginning at a depth of 4ft). These overlay three shelly fills over natural grey clay.

General discussion of the evidence from Site III

(Fig. 38)

The site sequence may be summarised as follows. In the pre-Flavian period a large irregular 'pond' was dug below the springline; it probably served as a watering hole for livestock (Phase A). At some later date the feature was lined with wood, and may have been for some other purpose connected with the emerging villa estate, such as a fishpond (see below) (Phase B). In the Flavian period the pond was allowed to silt up and the sides collapsed. Perhaps some of the wood rotted, the rest may have been

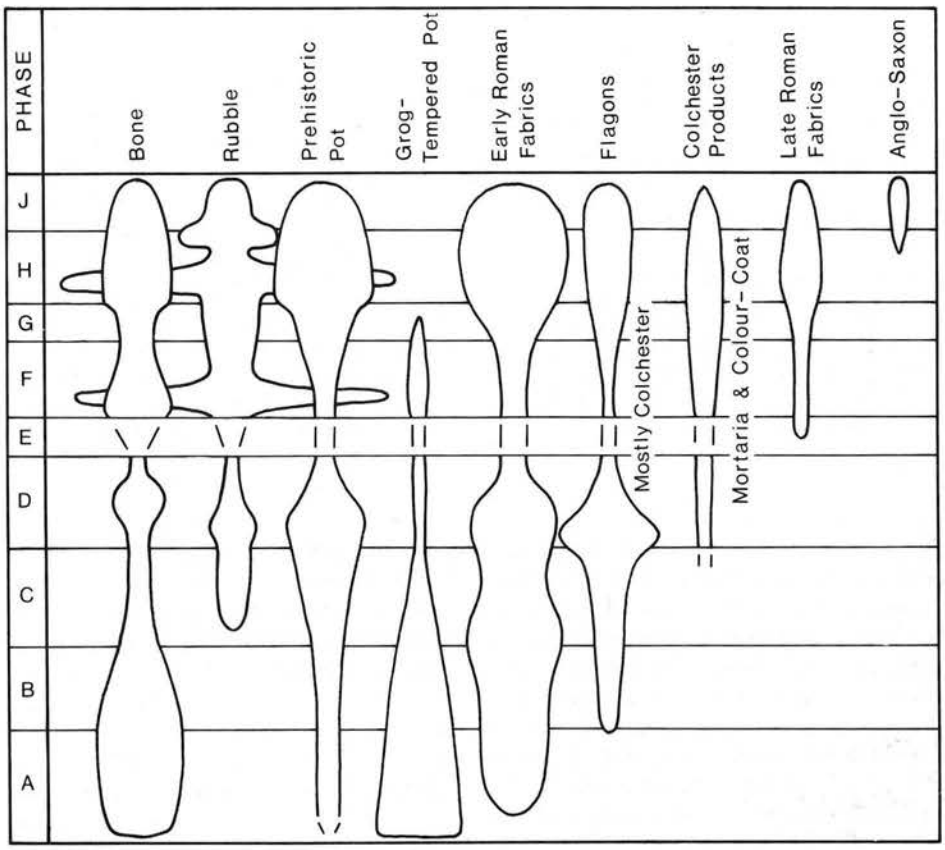


Figure 38 Site III, patterns of deposition and redeposition: distribution of finds in deposits of the various phases (schematic)

removed. The pond became overgrown and dead wood, including a fallen tree, began to accumulate in the sludge at the bottom. The feature was also used as a rubbish dump.

At the beginning of Period 3 the derelict pond was infilled with a series of deposits of dumped debris (Phase C), but the area seems to have remained as a damp hollow for some time. In the early to mid 2nd century, an attempt to drain the area was made by digging a ditch (feature 3) southwards (Phase D). This feature soon silted up, and was not recut. The wide weathering cone may result from the seepage of water from the sides and perhaps from animals disturbing the ground as they drank from the ditch.

In the mid to late 2nd century a further attempt to fill the hollow was made (Phase E). A series of thin layers were dumped into the depression. This time these efforts met with some success, for a timber building was erected, (represented by layer 7, Phase F rubble spread). The function of this structure is unknown. At about this time a drain (feature 4) was dug through the feature and may be linked with a pipeline to the north. The drain became choked with soil washed into it from the spring and was subsequently replaced by several recuts of an open ditch. By some time after the mid 3rd century this ditch had filled up.

A large pit, feature 5, was cut into the top of the silted drain (Phase G). Over this, and the foundations of the Phase F timber structure, were deposited a series of sandy loam layers, the uppermost containing rubble, possibly (though not certainly) a second building raft. Subsequently, pit 6 was dug down through these deposits (Phase H).

On top of these features was deposited a layer of black loam containing 5th century Saxon pottery. Habitation in the immediate vicinity is demonstrated by an oven cutting through the rubble spread layer 3 (Phase J).

As pointed out above, the full quantifications of the finds from Site III could not be attempted but, during processing, distinct trends in the quantitative distribution of finds of different types were noticed. Figure 38 attempts to show this graphically, though not to scale. It is especially noticeable that certain find types occur abundantly in deposits of late date, although there they are wholly redeposited (EIA pottery, most of the Early Roman fabrics, most of the flagons and (probably) the Colchester mortaria and Colour-Coat). This is probably an indicator of the origin of the material making-up the deposits of Phases H–J (Periods 4–5) in this area. Late Roman pottery is not in fact a predominant feature of the finds assemblages from these deposits.

The rubble only occurs from Phase C (lowest fills) onwards. The material in Phase C may have been construction debris from Building 3 (or 1), and the Phases F and H rubble spreads may relate in some way to those on Sites I and II. Phase F on Site III is however 'floating' chronologically, though Phase H with its Hadham sherd from pit 6 is probably Late Roman (*i.e.* Phase 3(ii) or later). There is no way of knowing, however, if the rubble used to form these building platforms (on Site III or Site II) came from Buildings 1 or 3 and their alterations. The rubble may have come from any other buildings anywhere in the vicinity.

The buildings on Sites II and III were presumably outbuildings of the Roman villa, and quite clearly the spread of material (including tile) along the terrace (Fig. 2B) indicates that there were probably several more such structures in the unexcavated areas (Site VI). Others may have been removed by post-Roman ploughing.

We now move away from the villa buildings to the areas further to the east, to Sites IV and V.

VI. Site IV

Introduction

(Fig. 39)

This site lay in the same field as Site III, but to the east of the villa buildings and some distance from it (Fig. 4). The nature of the deposits and the distance from Site III and the buildings make it necessary to consider the site separately. The first trenches were dug in 1952 after oystershell had been ploughed up; excavation continued by kind permission of the farmers, Mr E.W. Strachan and Mr R. Strachan of Little Oakley Hall. The work took place in two phases in 1952–61 and 1972–5, the scale of the operation becoming larger as time went on. At first small trenches were dug after harvest and quickly backfilled. Later on, larger trenches were dug and the farmer kindly allowed the trenches to remain open for longer periods of time. He even discontinued using this corner of the field for a year to allow excavations to continue, and provided a bulldozer to fill in the site (Farrands n.d., 6).

The first trenches located the middle section of ditch 1 (roughly the areas covered by Figures 42 and 43). The eastern portion of this area was excavated in 1953–4 as a series of abutting small trenches (Fig. 43). Between 1954 and 1958 the area covered by Figure 42 was excavated as a series of larger trenches. Trenches 5 and 6 were dug in 1957. Two trenches, trench 13 and trench 'C2/D2', now numbered trench 21 (not to be confused with C2 and C3 on Site III) were dug on the projected line of the ditch in 1957, but the ditch was absent totally from trench 13, and in the other was found to be deviating from the line, as the extension to trench D2 of trench 21 demonstrated. In 1972–3, trench 18 was dug to locate ditches 1 and 2. These three large trenches revealed other, later, features. The area between the 1952–4 and 1954–8 areas was infilled by trench 15, dug in September 1970 as an educational exercise for a number of pupils aged 8 to 11 years from Chase Lane Primary School, Dovercourt. The excavation was accompanied by a number of classroom visits by Farrands, and work by the pupils on the excavated material. Indeed it was these drawings and essays (now held with the excavation archive) that first gave a clue to the identity of a group of sherds marked simply 'C.L' (confirmation of which was given by small splashes of blue poster-paint on the sherds). The children's essays give a useful insight into the considerable educational value of the exercise.

As the excavation progressed the complexities of the area revealed themselves and it became clear that many other features occurred outside the trenched area, as is shown very clearly by the cropmark photos which Farrands took in later years (Pls I–II; Fig. 39). As Farrands himself (n.d., 6) noted it 'would need years of work' to investigate Site IV properly by excavating small trenches.

Like Site III, this portion of the excavation is reported summarily here, as the records and surviving finds were not always amenable to more detailed work by any other than the original excavator. Varying lengths of ditches had been dug on Site IV by trenches of varying size and orientation, not all of which were recorded very

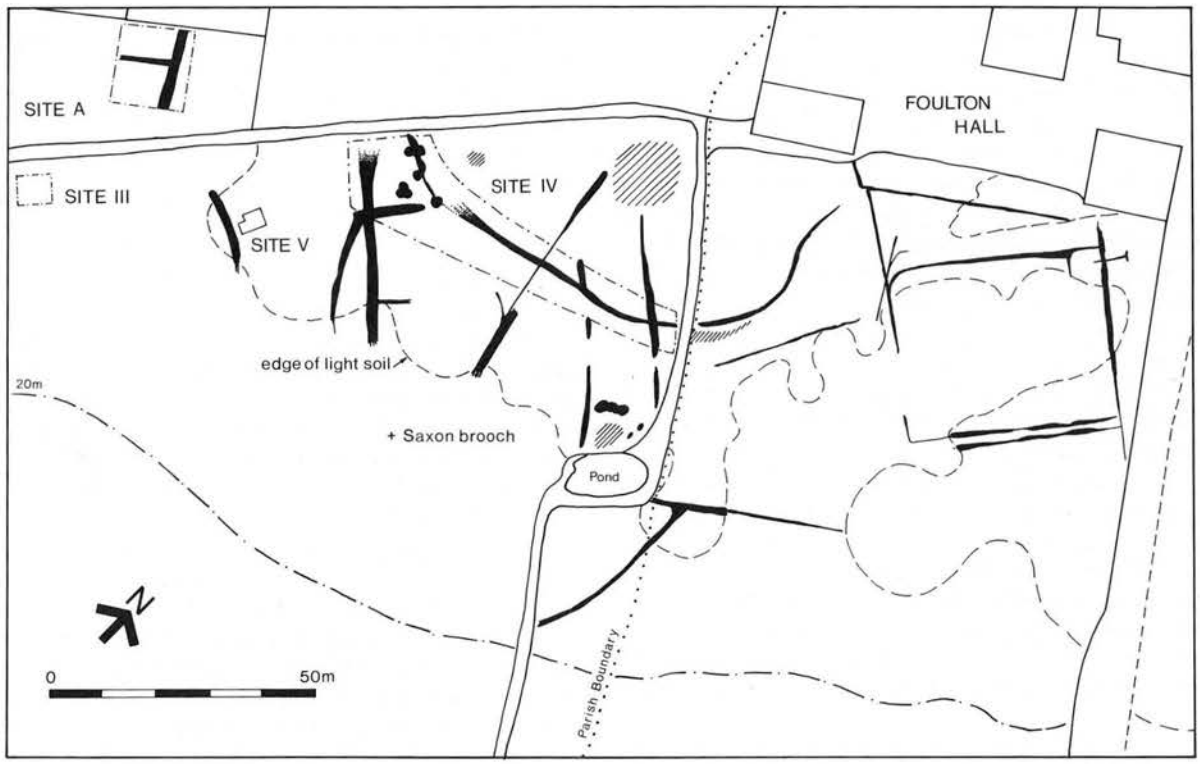


Figure 39 Site IV and adjacent areas, plan of cropmarks, compare Figure 40; cropmarks of small pits east of prefab 33 not shown — see Plate I. Cropmarks of ditches shown black, dark soil areas are shaded, dashed line indicates excavated portion of Site IV

thoroughly (or even triangulated onto a surviving overall plan, though it is believed that Figure 40 shows most of them). All of the relevant material has been examined by the writer, but not all of it is reported here. There exist a multitude of sections and plans for ditches on this site, but not all can now confidently be linked with specific parts of specific features. A selection is illustrated here (Figs 44–5).

It should be noted that the numbering of the ditches used here differs slightly from that used by Farrands in the field (which changed in *c.* 1958 anyway). The correlation can be made using Figure 40 and the original field plan on which it was based, now in Colchester Museum. The present numbering and position of the ditches may be briefly summarised.

Period 1:

Ditch 4	Trench 20 (formerly 'Section 11') Fig. 40
Ditch 5	Trenches (formerly 'Sections' 5 and 6) Fig. 40
Ditch 7	Trench 18 (Fig. 41)
Ditch 9	Trench 18 (Fig. 41)
Ditch 10	Trench 18 (Fig. 41)
Ditch 11	Trench 18 (Fig. 41)
Pit 6	Trench 18 (Fig. 41)

Summary of excavated deposits on Site IV by period in general site sequence:

Period 1:	Ditches 4, 5, 7, 9–11, and Pit 6
Period 2:	Ditch 2 (Phase 2(i)) and pit 1, possibly pit 5
Period 2/3:	Ditch 1, pit 7
Period 3/4:	Ditch 6, ditch 3
Period 5:	Pits 2 and 3
Period 6	Pit 4

Roman; Periods 2–4

Ditch 1	Period 2/3, various trenches (Figs 40–3)
Ditch 2	Phase 2(i), various trenches (Figs 40–3)
Ditch 3	Period 3/4, various trenches (Fig. 43 and trench 6)
Ditch 6	Period 3/4, Trenches 13 and 19 (Figs 40 and 41)
Pit 1	Period 2, Trench 21 (formerly 'C2/D2') (Fig. 41)
Pit 5	possibly Period 2, Fig. 42; sections 2–3
Pit 7	Period 2/3 (Fig. 43; sections 9–10)

Post-Roman; Periods 5–6

Saxon pit 2	Period 5, Trench 21 (formerly 'Trench 2, C2/D2') (Fig. 41)
Saxon pit 3	Period 5, Trench 13 (Fig. 41)
Pit 4	Period 6, Trench 18 (Fig. 41)

Undated

Ditch 12	unexcavated (Figs 39–40)
Ditch 13	unexcavated, present field boundary (Figs 39–40, 52)
Ditch 14	unexcavated (Figs 39–40)
Ditch 15	unexcavated (Figs 39–40)

A comparison between Figures 39 and 40 will show that only a small proportion of the ditch systems of this area has been examined so far. Most of the effort was directed towards two Roman ditches (ditches 1 and 2) running diagonally across the corner of the field, but also to an area at the west end of these ditches, where a number of large pits was encountered. A scatter of Early Iron Age features was found in trenches dug to investigate later features.

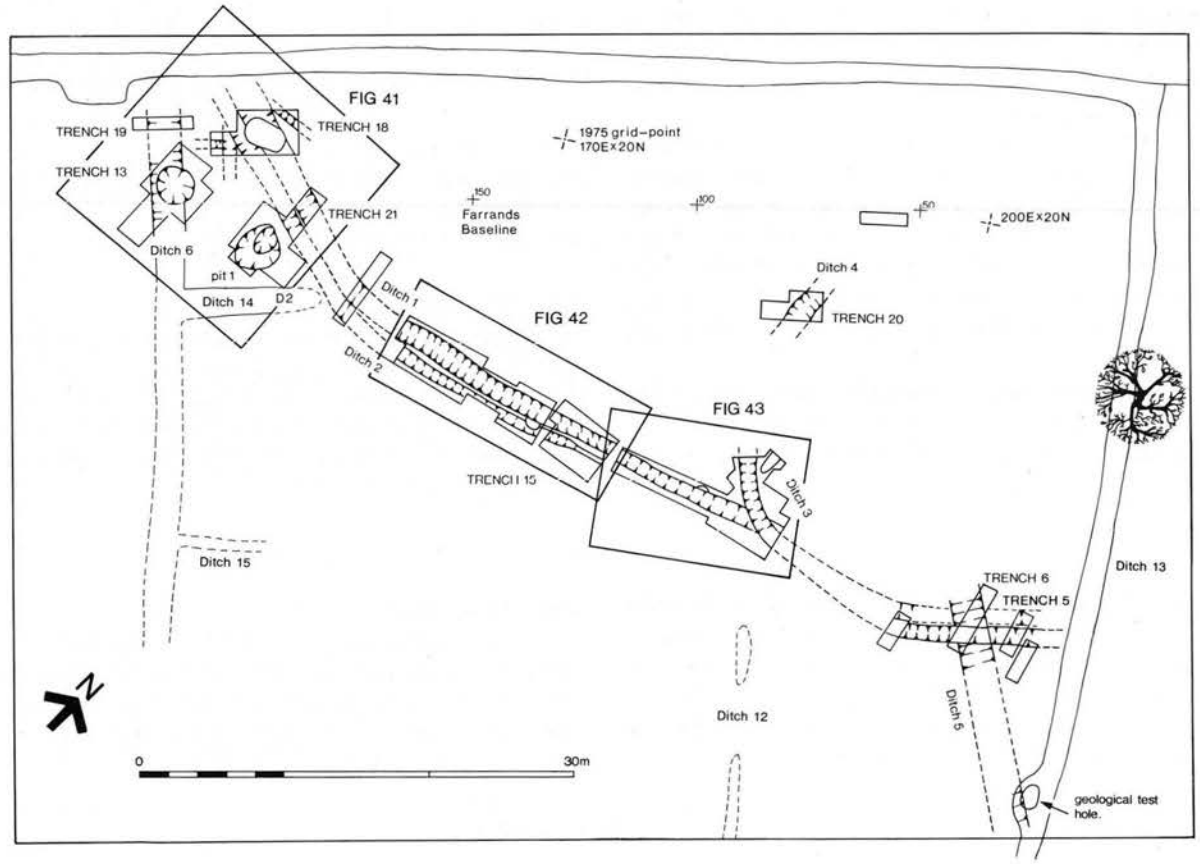


Figure 40 Site IV, general plan showing areas of Figs 41, 42 and 43

The area is clearly of some importance and the investigations show that prehistoric settlement, particularly in the Early Iron Age, covered a considerable area and produced a large quantity of pottery. The Roman ditches are interesting in their own right, and also contained quantities of artefacts, but the Saxon features are of paramount importance, since they clearly belong to a much more extensive settlement. The nature and full extent of this is uncertain, but further excavations would be potentially very informative. The pottery from the upper fills of pits 2 and 3 comprises one of the largest assemblages from a settlement context in the area (a letter in the correspondence file indicates that these pits also produced a large quantity of bone, which may be represented by several bags without their labels). Site IV is thus potentially a particularly informative area and should it ever be threatened further, investigation may be expected to yield important results. In 1956 the farmer proposed to bulldoze the top off Site IV to fill in a pond to the south. Fortunately this was not carried out. The area is clearly being heavily damaged by recent ploughing.

The excavated features
(Figs 40–8)

Prehistoric settlement
All features on Site IV produced a few struck flakes scattered throughout their fills, but no pottery earlier than the Early Iron Age.

Ditch 4 (trench 20, Fig. 40)
Only a short length of this feature was excavated. It may form part of the north–south ditch visible as cropmarks on Figure 39. If so, it would have cut the line of ditch 1 in an area excavated by extremely small trenches (Fig. 43) and was not detected. No plan or section is now recognisable but where excavated it was 'six feet deep' (Farrands n.d., 6). The feature had a lower and upper fill, the latter containing most of the finds. This trench (Trench 20, formerly 'section 11') was of interest on account of the quantity (over 5kg) of Iron Age pottery it produced. Four small Roman sherds in the upper fill are deemed intrusive. The pottery from lower and upper fills seemed similar and is described in the pottery report below (Chapter 4.III). Some of it was in large sherds and it seems to be EIA/MIA in date. Triangular loomweight fragments came from the upper ditch fill and a bone pin made from a pig fibula (BN6) was also found.

Ditch 5
This was located in trench 6 dug across ditches 1 and 3. Only a small segment was examined, between January and March 1957. It produced a little Iron Age pottery. The feature was also encountered in a test pit, to the south-west on the edge of the field, dug by a local geologist to examine the stratigraphy of the Red Crag (see Figs 4 and 40). It also was 'six feet deep' (Farrands n.d., 6).

The upper fill was of dirty shelly clay and contained most of the pottery, which was of fabrics 3A and 4, and a few small fragments of triangular loomweight. None of the pottery is worth illustrating but seems to be similar to that in ditch 4. The lower fill of the ditch was a shelly sandy silt, over which was a charcoal layer underlying a middle fill of clay. None of these layers produced much pottery. A few sherds from two trenches seem to be 'Anglo-Saxon' grass-tempered ware (rather than Iron Age vegetable-tempered fabrics). Farrands noted these sherds and suggested that there had been an undetected intrusive

feature in the upper fill of ditch 5. This casts doubt on the origin of two small sherds of 'Essex Red Hill' briquetage vessel (FC27) for it seems that they are otherwise in an unusually early context.

Figure 45 shows the sections of these trenches (recorded April 1957). Ditches 1 and 3 are described below (note that ditch 1 is here unusually narrow and deep, and may have been only the first or second recut). Trench 6 shows ditch 5, 1.08m deep and 1.8m across and V-shaped. The lower fill was of sandy silt. This was recut at least twice before the upper fill of shelly silt accumulated.

The oblique aerial photographs show a ditch which seems to lie in a position which suggests that it is a continuation of the excavated portion of Ditch 5 (Figs 39 and 40).

Ditch 7 (trench 18)
This was a small shallow feature 0.6m across and 0.6m deep (Fig. 44). The fill was not recorded, but contained a small group of LBA/EIA sherds, including a 'haematite-coated' sherd and a piece of iron tap-slag. The topsoil over this feature contained a few flint flakes and retouched blades of Mesolithic aspect.

Ditch 9 (trench 18)
No details are recorded (Fig. 41), but it was possibly cut by ditch 10. It contained a little Early Iron Age pottery.

Ditch 10 (trench 18)
No details are recorded (but see Figs 41 and 44). This had a shelly silt lower fill and a loamy upper fill. The feature contained a few Early Iron Age sherds.

Ditch 11 (trench 21, C2)
A small pit (Pit 6) in trench C2 adjacent to Saxon pit 2 contained ten Early Iron Age sherds and four flint flakes. The feature is cut by a small gully (ditch 11) which contained two Early Iron Age sherds. No other details are noted and the features do not appear on any plans. See Figure 41 for general position.

Roman field systems (Fig. 40)

Ditch 2 (Figs 40–2)
Ditch 2 was not properly identified as such until 1955–6, and was not fully excavated along its length. The fill is not recorded, but seems to be shelly. It contained relatively little pottery, much of it redeposited prehistoric material (Early Iron Age pottery fabrics 3A and 4 and two rims of

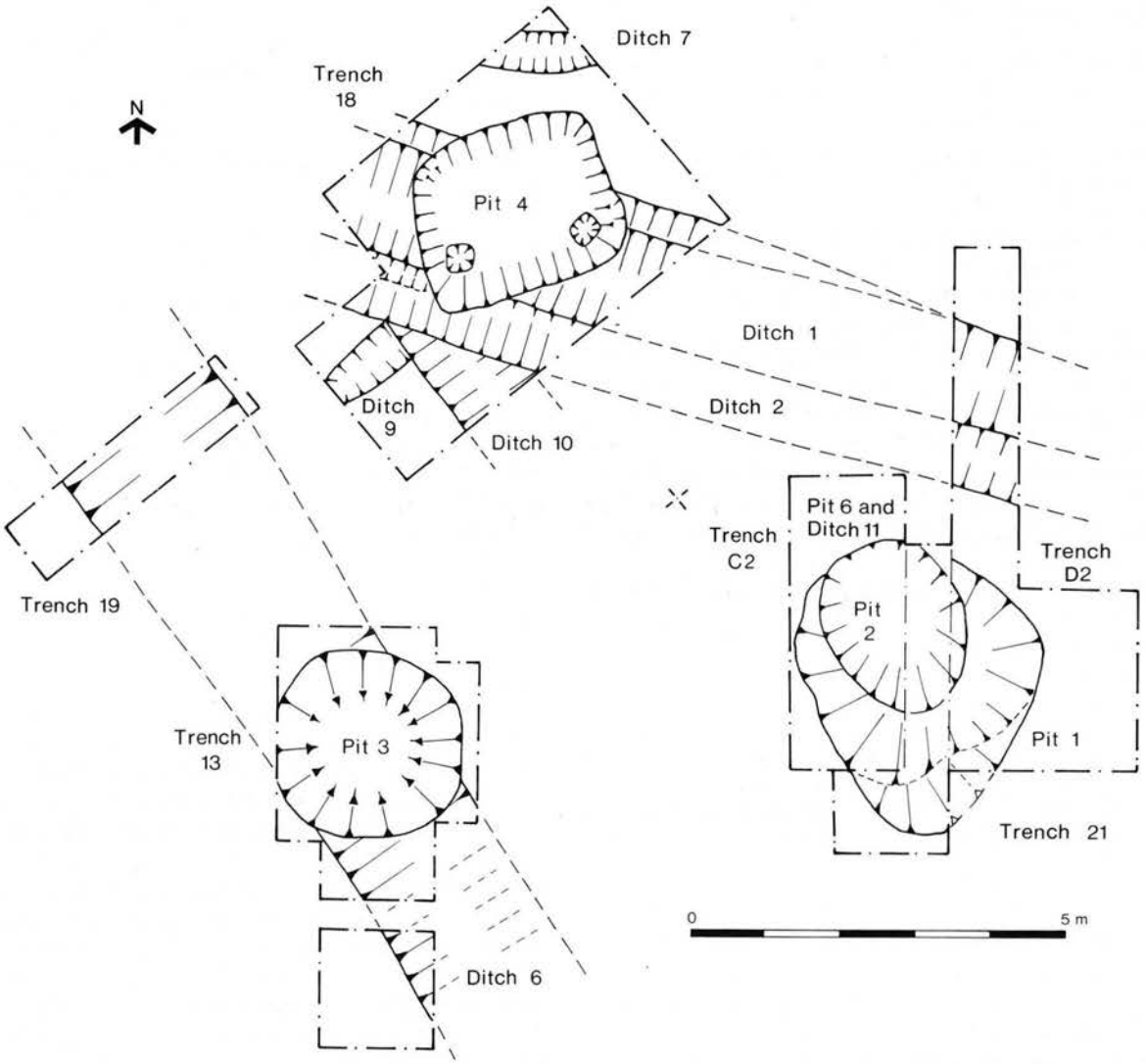


Figure 41 Site IV, detail of trenches 13, 18, 19 and 21

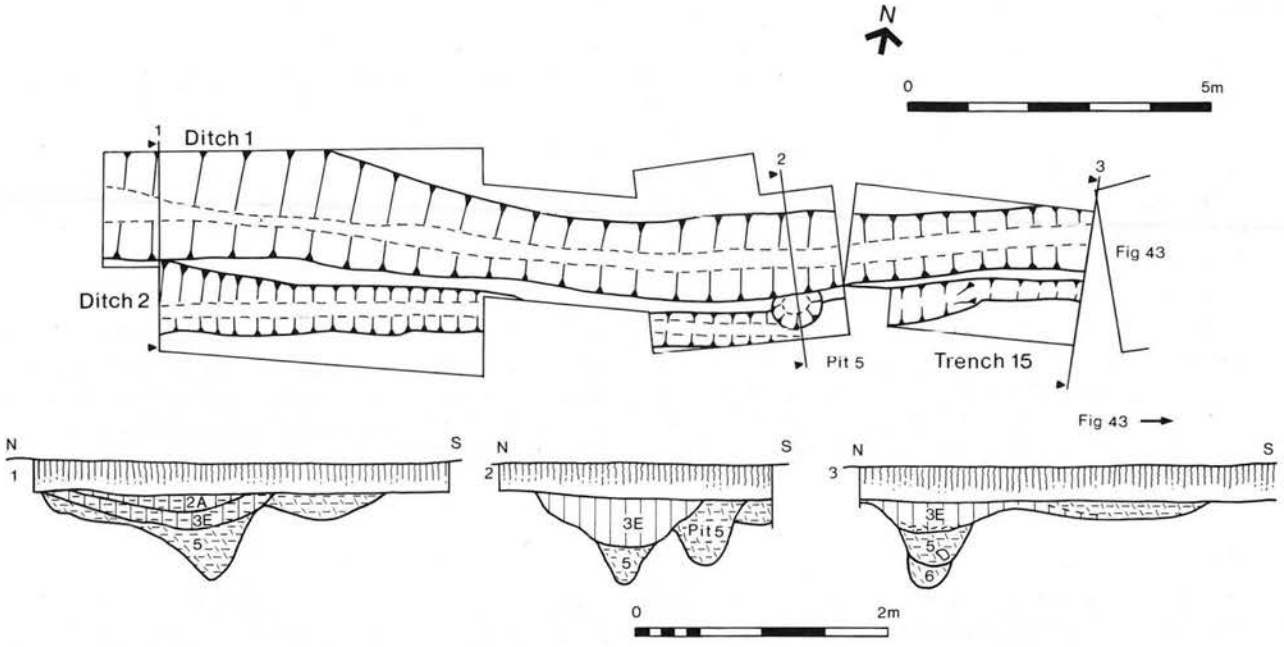


Figure 42 Site IV, plan and sections of ditch 1, west end

Middle Iron Age form in a black sandy fabric like Little Waltham fabric A (Drury 1978, 56), mainly in the lower fill. The fill also contained a few sherds of grog-tempered and Gallo-Belgic pottery (trench D2). A few Early Roman greywares were present in the fill, which seems to suggest the feature is post-Conquest, but the grog-tempered sherds probably indicate a pre- Flavian date (see below). In trench 15 the fill contained a few sherds of fabrics 36-38. In trench 21 the fill of ditch 2 contained Early Iron Age and Gallo-Belgic pottery, but also a few flints (of Mesolithic type?) and a diseased dog molar.

The feature was usually shallow but varied in depth, even over quite short distances, for example in trench 15 (where it varied from 0.4m below ploughsoil base at the west to 0.05m at the east end). It was certainly earlier than ditch 1, which followed its line fairly precisely, often cutting away the northern side.

The dating and relationship between ditches 1 and 2 recall ditches A16 and A5 on the Corbishley sites, so much so that they may well have been parts of the same system. On the other hand, A16 and A5 are dated much earlier (on the basis of their contained artefacts) than ditches 1 and 2, so this may be illusory.

Pit 5 (Fig. 42)

This feature was a steep-sided pit 0.7m deep and 0.7m diameter. The nature of the fill is not recorded, but it cuts ditch 2 and is in turn cut by the weathering cone of the recut of ditch 1. The feature contained the complete skeleton of a yearling sheep (reported by I.W. Cornwall *in litt.* 1958: see bone report; Chapter 4.IV).

Pit 1 (fills 9–24; Fig. 46)

This feature was located in 1956 in trenches C2 and D2. Later trench C3 was opened to the south to extend the area (the whole of which is now numbered Trench 21). The main feature explored was a large oval conical pit 1.92m deep and 4.2m long. Adjacent to it in trench C3 was a small oval layer of burnt clay containing Early Roman pottery, which Farrands interpreted as a hearth (not shown on any plans).

The pit was dug to the south of ditch 1 but close to its edge, at the junction of the Red Crag and the London Clay. The fill was asymmetric, partly natural silting (layers 9–19 described below). It seems most probable that this feature had originally been dug as a quarry for clay, or possibly for daub.

		Farrands' numbering	
Pit 1		C2	D2
9	dark loam with charcoal	5B	2
10	shelly clay	8	–
11	Red Crag	8A	3
12	shelly clay and dark earth	9	4
13	Crag	–	5
14	shelly clay	–	5
15	Crag	–	5
16	Crag	–	–
17	Crag	–	–
18	Crag	–	–
19	Crag	–	–
20	grey sandy loam	–	6
21	Crag	–	–
22	(loam?)	–	7
23	sandy silt	–	8
24	silty loam	–	9

The fill contained very little pottery (relative to its volume). Most of this material (2080g) was redeposited Early Iron Age pottery, but a few sherds of Early Roman pottery came from the lower fill, and 210g of similar material came from layer 9 (including a rim of form 244). This material suggests a Period 3 date for the infilling of this feature. Particularly notable was the general paucity of bone, and also the presence of a large quantity of light-coloured fuel ash slag and a crucible sherd (MD1), possibly indicative of metalworking activity (see Chapter 4.I, p. 92).

The upper fills of this pit were later partly removed by the digging of Saxon pit 2 in Period 5 (see below).

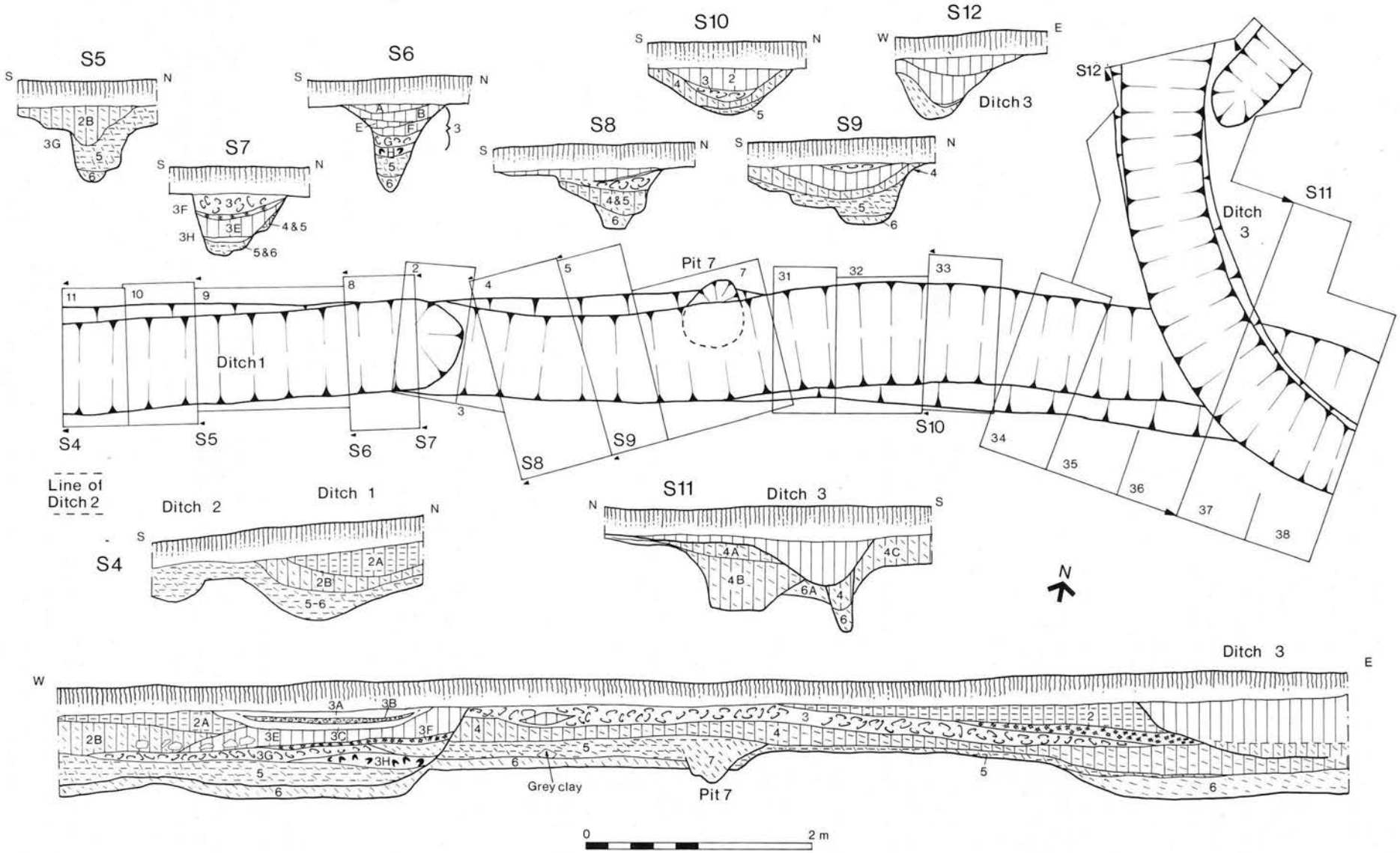


Figure 43 Site IV, plan and section of ditch 1, east end

Ditch 1 (Figs 40–3)

Ditch 1 was almost fully excavated for a length of almost 30m in the middle section, with various trenches to the east and west. A fairly full record survives in the form of drawn plans and sections, but few notes. Most of the finds can be linked to the excavated layers, which were numbered consistently from one trench to the next along the length of the ditch, which had the potential of easing problems of correlation. Unfortunately this potential was not realised, because Farrands failed to note the complexity of these fills, and the number of recuts present. Of course the restrictions imposed by having small trenches open at different times made it impossible to observe the ditch, or to follow the various interfaces along the whole length of the feature. For this reason, the layers will be referred to as being between various drawn sections numbered consecutively from west to east (on Figs 42–3 only). The sections have been renumbered here for convenience. The trench and layer numbers have not been changed, to allow finds bags to be linked with this report in the future.

The ditch varied in profile and content of fills which prompted Farrands to draw not only transverse sections, but also a longitudinal section (Fig. 43) which is an early example (1952–4) of a useful technique still to find a wider use on British excavations. It can be seen from the various sections that ditch 1 had been recut at least five times.

The sequence of fills in ditch 1 (Figs 43 and 49)

All of the fills of this feature are Phase 3(i), the first cuts at the very beginning of the period. The complex nature of the various fills of the five or more recuts of this feature render it necessary to consider the detail of the various phases of filling, and these are described below in chronological order. It should be noted that a minimal view has been taken of the number of phases, also that some (*e.g.* the third) are represented by only short lengths of fill accidentally left *in situ*, having been removed in antiquity elsewhere along the ditch (if the recutting of the ditches had been done properly, no trace at all would be left of the previous phase of silting).

First cut The earliest cut was a 1.1m deep narrow slot adjacent to and following the line of ditch 2 fairly closely. The lower fill is all that survives (but is sometimes totally removed by the second cut) and was of loose shelly Crag (sections 1–11, layer 6). The slot became shallower for a 5m stretch between sections 7 and 11, but it is not clear whether this is because the rest of the ditch was recut, excepting this area.

Second cut This recut was slightly to the north of, but on the same line as, the first cut. It was slightly shallower, but also of a steep narrow profile. The fill (sections 1–11, layer 5) was of shelly silt, the upper fill was only present in sections 8–11 (layer 4) and consisted of brown shelly loam. This recut seems to be the only fill represented in trench 21 but there it contained few finds.

The ditch was cut by a shallow pit (pit 7; between sections 9 and 10; Fig. 43 layer 7), about which few details are recorded, except that it had a shelly fill. The pit was truncated by the next recut. Either this or the previous cut is probably represented by the feature on the north side of the section of trench 5 (Fig. 45 top).

Third cut This recut was almost totally removed by the fourth and fifth cuts along most of the length of the feature, but is represented by a small patch of fill clinging to the north edge in section 7 (and perhaps represented by the broadening to the south on section 8). This fill was of shelly silt.

The pottery from these three repeated cuttings of the ditch was fairly plentiful and is reported below. It included much Early Roman material, for which a late 1st or early 2nd century date seems appropriate. Both groups of layers produced only a little redeposited Early Iron Age pottery and a few fragments of iron slag.

Fourth cut Between sections 8–11 a distinctive group of deposits (layers 2 and 3 and probably some of 4) fills a shallow scoop in the top of the ditch. This may be a shallow recut (about 0.3–0.5m deep, but becoming deeper to the east) in the top of the second and third cuts. (It does not correlate to the third cut noted above, because the fills differ.[13]) Sections 9 and 10 suggest that the ditch was dug out before this material was deposited (*i.e.* this is not simply a 'late fill'). The upper fill (layer 2) was a dark brown silty loam; under this was a layer of profuse oystershells (layer 3) containing pottery and bones (reported below). The distribution of finds along this layer varied, more material coming from trenches to the east. These overlay a shelly layer (layer 4, not differentiated during excavation from the lower fills of cuts 2 and 3).

Layer 3 is of considerable interest, because of the masses of pottery that it contained. Most of this material consisted of large fresh sherds of vessels, some of which appeared to have been shattered *in situ*. Farrands was able to join many of these sherds to restore several vessels. (This pottery is considered in detail below.) The group contains Flavian vessels, but the bulk of the material seems a little later and a Trajanic/Hadrianic date would be appropriate for this deposit. Late Roman greyware and bead-rim pie dishes were absent (see Chapter 4.III).

Farrands interpreted these layers as the debris from a nearby 'field kitchen'. The pottery and bone were fragmented, but Farrands noted that the pieces became larger 'towards the end' (presumably the east). Whatever its precise origin, the material can be regarded as a dump of rubbish from food preparation and probably accumulated over a relatively short period.

The final recut The fifth cut of this ditch (sections 1–7, layers 2A, 2B, and 3A–H) varied in profile along its length, from 0.6m deep by 2m wide in section 1, becoming deeper, then shallower in sections 2 and 3 and then shallow (0.5m) and irregular in sections 5–7. The feature ends in a butt-end between sections 7 and 8. Note that this recut did not keep to the line of the earlier ditch very accurately. The fills also varied considerably, containing a wide variety of debris, almost certainly some of it deliberately dumped.

In trench 15 the fill (3E) was of loam containing pottery, tile and fired clay (as in 3B, see below) with an oystershell layer at the west end. No useful information about the fills at the west (sections 1–2) is available, but to the east the layers were well recorded. These deposits included brown loams (Farrands' 'occupation debris', but perhaps eroded ploughsoil) in contrast with some of the earlier fills. At the base of the fill was a lens (3G) of oystershell, probably redeposited from the fill of the third cut which this feature cuts through. At the east end was a deposit of whelk and mussel shells (layer 3H). A charcoal lens (3F) lay above the oystershell, above which were deposits of loam and shelly loam (layers 2A and 2B).

Cut into the top of these layers was a shallow oval scoop (1.9 × 0.8m, 0.4m deep) with a complex sequence of small lenses of fill (layers 3A, 3B, 3C). The lowest fill (3C) was of grey loam. The next layer (3B) was also of loam containing fired clay fragments and blobs of unfired yellow clay (brickearth?) thickening to the north. The upper fill (3A) was of loam. The pottery in this, the final feature in this sequence, was very similar to that from the third cut, and this shallow scoop was probably infilled in the 2nd century. Farrands interpreted, in the writer's opinion quite rightly, layer 3B as collapsed oven debris, and it is legitimate to regard this feature as the base of the stokehole of an oven built in the upper fill of a ditch.

The pottery in layer 3 of sections 6 and 7 (fifth cut) was inadvertently mixed with that from the other 'layer 3' in sections 8–10 (of the fourth cut). It is possible to differentiate the material from these layers, since the sherds were marked with trench numbers, but in fact when this was attempted very little difference was seen between these two groups. Sherds from similar pots were found in both layers; some may have been from the same vessel, although pieces did not join. Most of the pottery came from the oystershell layer in the fourth cut. It seems likely that much of the pottery (like the oystershell) in the fill of the fifth cut is redeposited material derived from the fill of the fourth cut. Nothing in the fill of the fifth cut need be later than Hadrianic, so this sequence of infilling may well have been complete by the mid 2nd century.

The fill of ditch 1 was reputed to contain a few sherds of medieval pottery. The writer has found none. The cupped-lug of Fig. 103.41 was formerly thought to be early medieval by Farrands and it may be that Farrands was mistaken in his recognition of other sherds.

Description of fills of ditch 1 (Figs 42–3)

Layer 1	topsoil
2	'earthy silt', upper fill (silty loam)
2A	silty loam (upper fill)
2B	shelly Crag loam (upper fill)
3	profuse oystershell layer
3A	'earth'
3B	earth containing fired clay fragments
3C	grey loam
3D	grey loam with fired clay
3E	'earth'
3F	charcoal layer
3G	oystershell layer
3H	layer of whelk and mussel shells
4	shelly loam
4A	earthy Crag loam
4B	shelly Crag loam
4C	dark loam with Crag
5	shelly silt
6	loose shell, rapid silt
6A	loose shell and Crag sand
7	pit fill shelly Crag
8	dark loam fill of ditch 3
9	loamy Crag fill of ditch 3

Ditch 3 (Figs 40 and 43)

Ditch 3 was shallow (0.5m deep) and 0.6m wide. It cut across the later fills of ditch 1 and seems to have been a recut of its line to the east.

Ditch 3 itself had been recut at least once. The lower loose shelly fill was sterile, and the base of the recut contained a thin charcoal layer. The fill of the recut was of brown loam with charcoal flecks containing septaria and tile rubble and a little pottery including Late Roman greyware sherds. Some of these sherds may have been inadvertently collected by Farrands with the material from ditch 1 in trenches 35–38 and in trench 6, since it was apparently not recognised during excavation that ditch 1 had been recut (the recut has been interpreted on Fig. 43 from the sections). It should be noted that the short excavated portion of the northern part of ditch 3 turns to run parallel with ditch 6 (below).

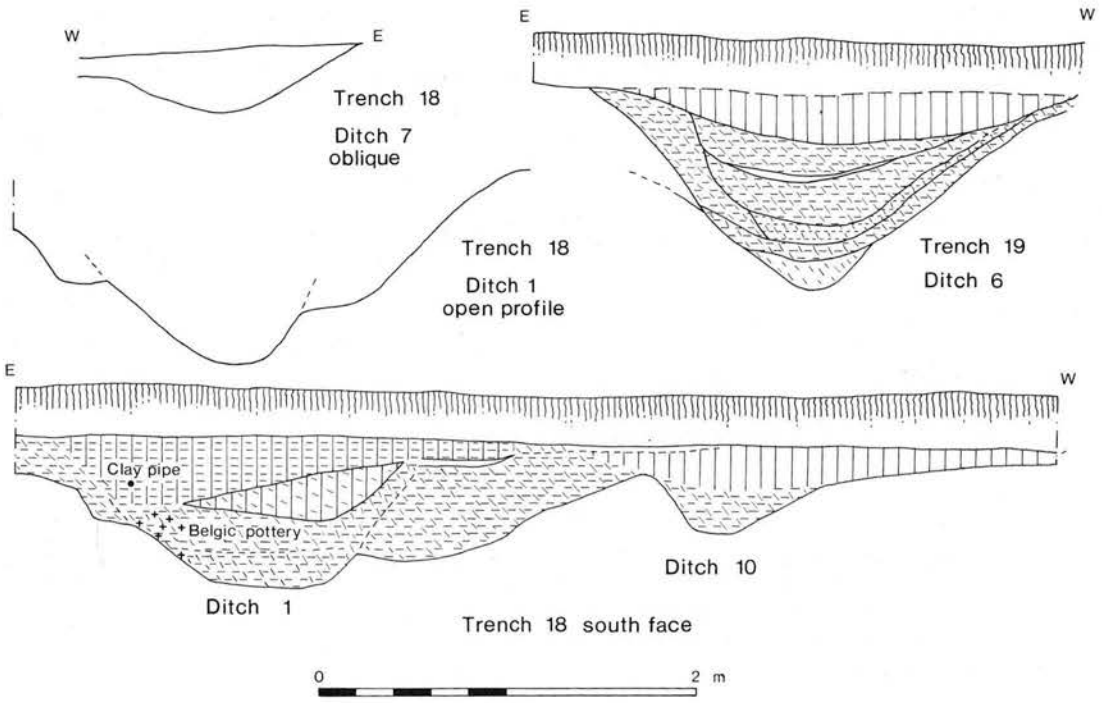


Figure 44 Site IV, sections of trenches 18 and 19

The nature of the feature adjacent to the northern part of ditch 3 on Figure 43 is unknown; it could have been a ditch butt end or a small pit. It is not otherwise recorded.

Ditch 3 passed through trenches 5 and 6. In trench 5 it had a lower fill of 'greenish loam' with 'hard greenish loam' below it. In trench 6 the middle fill was of loam with mussel shell fragments, under which was a thin spread of charcoal overlying a clay silt at the base.

Ditch 6 (trenches 13 and 19)

This feature seems to have been part of a late Roman ditch system. It was located by trench 13, but little of it was explored there. Trench 19 was dug in 1973 to check its line and to investigate it further (Figs 41 and 44). The ditch had an asymmetric recut containing a shelly silt with Early Iron Age pottery, but also sherds of Late Roman greywares. The upper fill was loamy and contained animal bone, rubble and Latest Roman pottery including a form 305 rim, a Late Roman shell-tempered rim sherd (Fig. 108.151), sherds of Nene Valley and Oxford Colour-Coat (Young form C51) and an Oxford mortarium (M23). Also small sherds of a white flagon with red-painted design were found, possibly an Oxford product. The upper fill of the ditch also contained five Saxon body sherds, possibly intrusive from nearby occupation, and also a Republican coin (CN1). In trench 13, the ditch is cut by Saxon pit 3.

Miscellaneous ditch sections (Fig. 45)

As noted above not all of the drawn ditch sections are included here, but two of those not assigned to particular trenches are published (Fig. 45) to show the variations present. They may perhaps have been of ditches 1 and 2; if so, these sections demonstrate that the sequences elsewhere along these ditches may be more complex than the areas reported here (Figs 42 and 43) have suggested. All of these unidentified trenches were dug between 1952–7, and the loss of the 1955 notebook may be the reason for the confusion which has ensued.

The main problem stems from the duplication of trench and section numbers over a number of years — for example there were at least three 'sections' (trenches) numbered '11'. Probably Farrands himself knew which

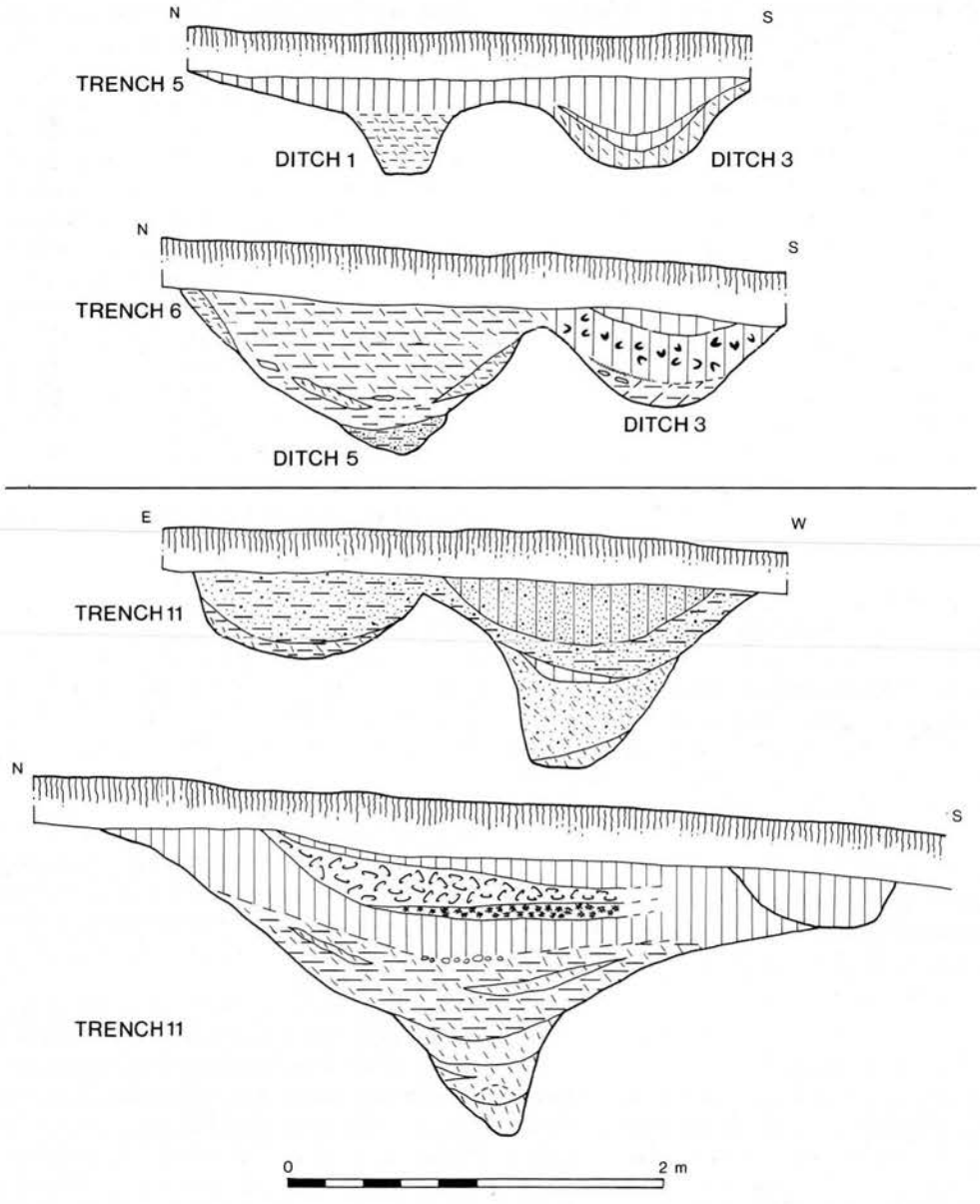


Figure 45 Site IV, sections of trenches 5, 6 and 11

was which, but left nothing to indicate this to posterity. Indeed not all trenches (in fact the minority) are represented by both plans and sections, and few trenches have co-ordinates or indications of their position on the site. Often the main thing which links groups or sections of plans together is the date on which they were dug or, if this is not present, the type of graph paper they were drawn on and the type of pencil mark they are drawn with. Fortunately both changed with time. It should be noted however that only where the writer is fairly certain that these techniques can be relied on to link sections with plans or other evidence has this information been used here. In some cases no such reliance could be placed on these associations and these sections have all been examined and are filed in COLEM with the rest of the primary archive. No finds can be linked with these sections.

The two sections illustrated on the lower half of Figure 45 are both labelled 'section 11'; the two ditches are clearly not the same, and these are just two of the duplicated sections. The ditch on the left (east) of the top 'Trench 11' section has a sandy silt upper fill with iron panning, and a lower shelly silt. The adjacent ditch has a dark grey sandy loam upper fill over a sandy silt with iron panning. There would appear to be a recut, cutting through a previous upper fill of grey sandy loam above a lower fill of sand and Crag shell and at the bottom Crag shell in a steep-sided early cut. It is possible that this is a section near trenches 5 and 6 of ditches 1 and 3.

The lower 'trench 11' section is quite clearly not even the same trench. It had a loamy upper fill with layers of oystershell and charcoal in it. These overlay shelly silts in a wide weathering-cone. The lower fills are of Crag shell. The upper fill is cut by a second shallow ditch. The large ditch is unidentified. It is not ditch 3, 5 or 6. It could possibly be Ditch 1, but is much too wide and deep. Neither of these sections seems to refer to ditch 4, which was the third 'trench 11' (renumbered here trench 20).

It should also be noted that the precise position of section 4 on Figure 43 is uncertain. It may have been a little further to the west.

Saxon occupation

A fragment of a small-long brooch (FIB6) was found by Farrands in the ploughsoil 55m to the south-east of pits 2 and 3 (the findspot is indicated on Fig. 39). It is not known if this was a settlement loss or had come from a disturbed burial. Anglo-Saxon and grass-tempered pottery has come from a number of features on Site IV, from pits 2 and 3 (Fig. 41) but also from a feature in trenches 5 and 6 (below) and the upper fill of ditch 6 (see above).

Trenches 5 and 6

As already mentioned, a few body sherds of Anglo-Saxon grass-tempered pottery were found in trenches 5 and 6 where they sectioned ditch 5. These probably came from an intrusive feature here.

Trench 21 pit 2, layers 1–8 (Fig. 46)

This pit, excavated in 1956–7 (Farrands 1976, 7), was 1.56m deep and was initially vertical-sided and seems to have silted up naturally at first, but other fills (*e.g.* layer 4) seem to be backfill. The pit was dug through the Crag to the top of the London Clay. The upper fills seem to be in a shallow oval scoop dug out of the top of the pits, at the bottom of which is a deposit of burnt material called 'Hearth 1' by the excavator, but the details are not particularly well recorded. The section shows two layers; the lower is horizontally hatched and may have been ashy silt, the upper is coloured pink with red spots, and could represent fragmentary fired clay. Adjacent to the pit in the baulk was a further feature ('Hearth 2') consisting of a spread of fired clay at the base of the ploughsoil. This was only seen upon the collapse of the baulk and its relationship with pit 2 is uncertain.

The lower fills contained only a little material (mostly redeposited) but including quite a lot of bone and also a little Early Anglo-Saxon pottery (see Chapter 4.III). Layer 8 contained a small thin copper alloy boss, now in fragments (CU8), layer 6 contained Roman tile and a small fragment of Mayen lava quern, layer 4 produced much Roman tile and a small fragment of Nene Valley Colour-Coat pottery.

Layer 3 contained a little redeposited EIA material but also a moderate quantity of Saxon pottery. The layer contained some 'slagged hearth lining' and fuel ash slag, but this is thought to be redeposited (see above, pit 1). The layer also contained quite a lot of bone (including artefact BN7) and two iron rings (FE8). The layer (and that above) also contained a small group of sherds of Latest Roman pottery fabrics. These were generally abraded and were similar to the material in the upper fill of the adjacent ditch 6. It is probable that this material was redeposited, like the Early Iron Age and Early Roman material in the same layers. Layer 2 contained a considerable quantity of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery which seems to date to the beginning of the 5th century (see Chapter 4 below). Much of this consisted of relatively large sherds, and must indicate occupation nearby. The layer contained a number of other finds, including several bone objects (BN10 and 15–16), a lava quern fragment, a lead spill and a copper alloy offcut. The 'hearth' in layer 3 contained a small scrap of briquetage in a prehistoric fabric (FC17). (Note that in this description of Pit 2 Farrands' layer numbers have been altered. A correlation of the numbering used here with that of Farrands' will be found in the layer list. Note also that trench 21 was formerly numbered 'Trench 2 C2/D2'.)

Pit 3 (Fig. 47; Pl. XII)

This feature was found in 1957 in trench 13 (Farrands 1976, 7–9) and was cut through the later fill of ditch 6, penetrating to the top of the London Clay. The feature was cylindrical in the upper half, 2.4m diameter with a ledge 1.4m down; the lower part of the pit narrows below this ledge to a cylindrical base 1.4m diameter with a flat base 2.34m below the surface. This profile is problematic. The ledge may result from the junction between London Clay and Red Crag (the position of which is not recorded in the drawn sections) or a harder band of Crag, or the upper half may be a recut (see, for example, the interface between layers 14 and 15).

The distribution of finds in the fill of the pit is fairly informative. The lower fills (layers 15–18) were almost sterile, apart from a few scraps of prehistoric pottery and a complete pot (Fig. 115.28) lying on the bottom of the pit. This pot was thought by Farrands (1976, 7, fig. 3F) to be Early Anglo-Saxon, but the fabric cannot now be checked, as the pot was donated by him to Colchester Museum in 1975, and can no longer be found. These layers seem to be natural silting and, apart from the charcoal lens (layer

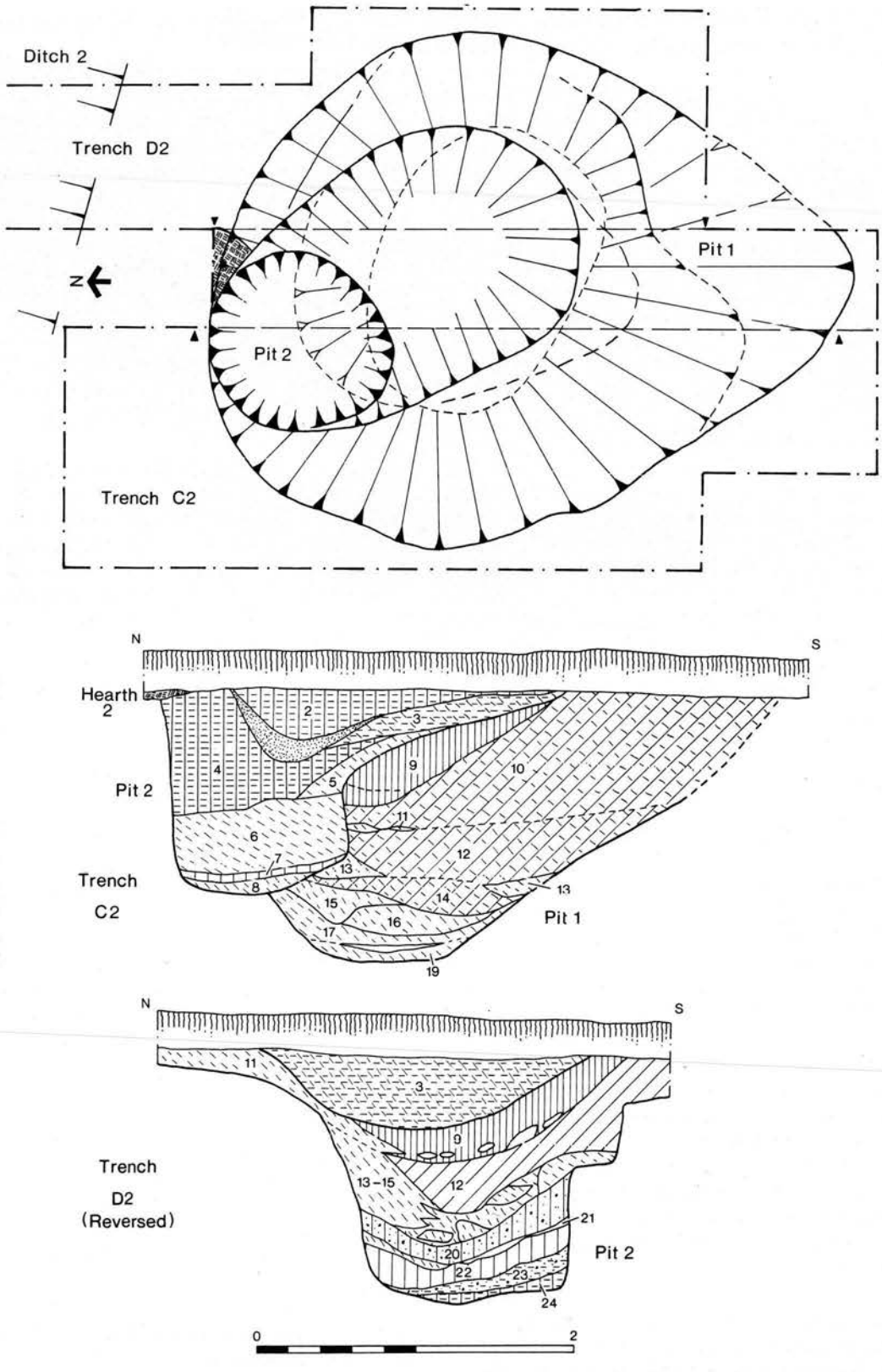


Figure 46 Site IV, trench 21, plan and sections of pits 1 and 2

Plate XII Site IV, trench 13 1957, pit 3 after excavation showing ditch 6 on right. The dark feature on the left is a natural frost-crack. Note variable nature of Red Crag (photo: R.H. Farrands)

17A) and the complete pot, produced little evidence of Period 5 occupation nearby. The pit may have originally been dug as a well or perhaps a clay quarry.

Fill 14 is the lowest deposit in the upper part of the pit, and contained a little (400g) EIA and Early Roman pottery. Layer 13 contained a little more of the same material (650g) but also including Late Roman greyware fabrics. These layers probably include material derived from the fill of ditch 6. Layer 11 contained 900g of similar material (including a Hadham Ware sherd and a large form 305 rim) while layers 5, and 7 to 10, also contained a little Late Roman pottery, as well as a few 5th century Saxon sherds, particularly in layer 5. Layer 5 also contained a lead offcut and an iron awl FE10; layer 7 produced an unidentified iron object now lost. These layers seem likely to be either natural silting or collapse of upcast. Their curved profile is probably the result of settlement of the pit contents (a process which is demonstrated very clearly on Fig. 47).

The settlement of the pit fill left a hollow in the top, within which accumulated a dark brown loamy fill containing rubble (layer 2). This contained a considerable quantity of 5th century Anglo-Saxon pottery as well as much Roman pottery, some of it late (including Oxford Colour-Coat); like that in Pit 2, this material is believed to be redeposited. Other finds included a jet bead (ST18), part of an iron knife blade (FE9), a coin of Gallienus (CN10), a shaped boar's tusk (now lost) and the articulated forelimb of a bovid as well as a quantity of bones.

A possible post-hole was found in the base of layer 2 which contained a scrap of lead. Around the sides of the hollow was found a scatter of septaria and tile. This was interpreted by Farrands as part of a hut, of which the hollow was the sunken floor, but this interpretation is not particularly convincing.

Saxon layers in pits 1 and 2 (Fig. 46)

Pit 2		*Farrands numbering*	
		C2	*D2*
2	earthy silt	1	–
3	shelly silt ('clayey'?)	5A	1
4	fine silty loam	4	–
5	Crag shell	5C	–
6	shelly Crag	6	–
7	loam	7	–
8	shelly Crag	9	–

Description of pit 3 layers (Fig. 47)

1	topsoil
2	earthy silt with rubble, much Anglo-Saxon pottery
5	grey clay
7	shelly fill, charcoal lens at base (9A)
8	shelly earth with charcoal
9	shelly fill
10	charcoal layer and yellow clay
11	dark clayey silt
12	(shelly fill?)
13	compact silt
13A	greenish-grey clay
14	red sand with shell (Red Crag)
15	shelly sand
16	dark earthy loam
17	shelly silt, charcoal lens at base (17A)
18	shelly silt

Layers 3, 4 and 6 are fills of the Roman ditch (ditch 6).

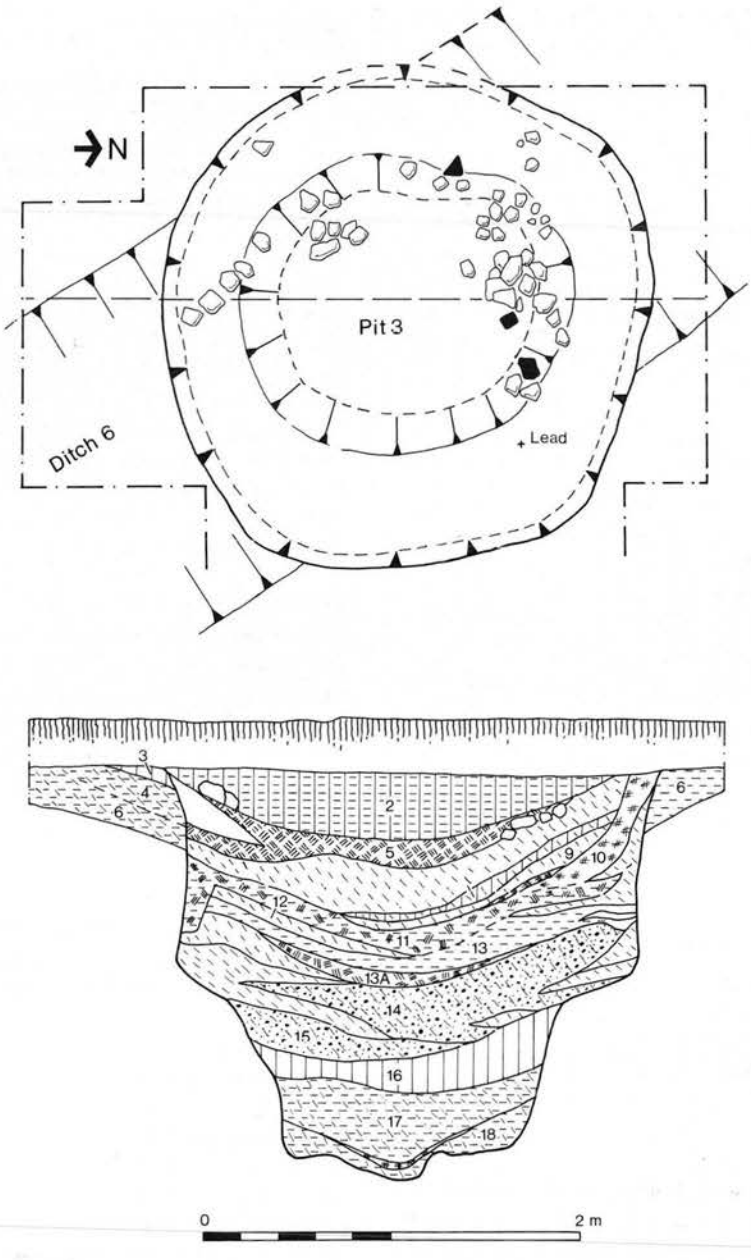


Figure 47 Site IV, trench 13, plan and section of pit 3, with rubble layer in upper fills

Undated, medieval and later features

Saxo-Norman pit (pit 4, Fig. 41)
This feature was located in trench 18 in 1972, and was the only Saxo-Norman feature encountered on the whole site. The feature was fairly regular and rectangular, 2.3 × 1.7 × 0.95m deep with vertical sides. In the south part two square post-holes had been dug into the base of the pit at either end into the natural red shelly clay. The lowest fill of the pit was of white clay which lapped up the sides in a manner which suggests a clay lining. Lying on top of this on the base of the pit was a layer of white 'ash', above which was a dark fill containing much charcoal and ash as well as bone, disintegrated oyster and mussel shell and much redeposited Roman and Saxon pottery. The upper fill was of shelly loam, containing more redeposited EIA and Roman pottery (the three fills together contained 3300g of redeposited pottery). Much Saxo-Norman pottery was found in all three fills, 200g in the white clay, 330g in the charcoal and 210g in the upper fill). A piece of deteriorated wood was found in the charcoally fill, apparently a round-sectioned stake 2" (50mm) in diameter (Fig. 48).

The interpretation of this feature is difficult, and its function is unclear. The two post-holes suggest some sort of structure stood over the pit. Farrands thought this might have been a small grubenhaus but the posts are off-centre and the feature seems rather small. One possible alternative would be that the pit was a latrine. The clay-lined pit could have had a wooden seat above. When the pit became redundant or noisome it was backfilled with rubbish. Unfortunately the presence of sherds of the same vessel in both 'backfill' and 'clay lining' tend to render this interpretation less likely. It seems that the white clay is part of the backfill and not a lining. Perhaps it too was intended to seal the pit contents. The pottery is discussed below (Chapter 4.III) and an 11th-century date seems likely.

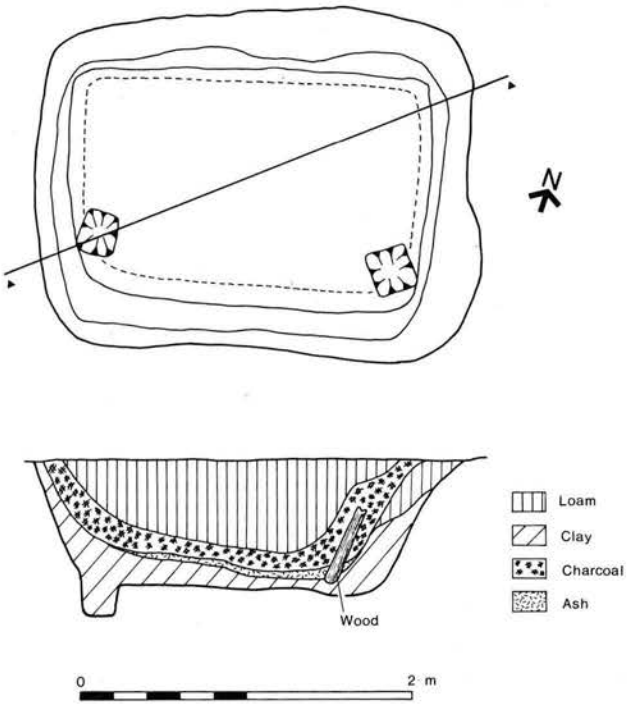


Figure 48 Site IV, trench 18, plan and section of pit 4

Ditch 12 (Figs 39 and 49)
This ditch was not excavated, but appears on Farrands' aerial photographs running parallel to ditch 5. It appears as an interrupted line continuing from ditch 3 where the latter turns. It heads down the slope towards the pond, where it joins the present field boundary (Ditch 13) at a point where the latter makes a sharp turn. Ditch 12 cannot be dated, though its line strongly suggests that it formed part of a field system with the original line of part of Ditch 13 and/or with ditch 3 (and/or ditch 5).

Ditch 13 (Figs 39, 40 and 52)
This is the present eastern boundary of the field. The present ditch is quite slight with only a low bank on the west. In the vicinity of Site IV, the field surface is about 0.2–0.25m lower on the eastern side. This ditch joins the lynchet discussed below (this chapter, section IX) at its northern end (Figs 39, 40 and 52), and at its southern end it merges with the cropmark line of ditch 5, before entering the 'pond'. The parish boundary follows the line of this section of the ditch, before continuing southwards maintaining the same line, but there is at present no ditch along this line south of the 'pond' (though the boundary follows the alignment of a cropmark visible in the field to the north-west).

Ditch 14 (Fig. 39)
This cropmark feature is shown schematically on Figure 40 since its precise position cannot be accurately fixed from the oblique aerial photographs. The feature in question is a straight length of ditch some 13m long which crosses (or is crossed by) ditch 10 at right-angles just to the south of pit 1. The date of this feature is uncertain. It is perhaps significant that it has a butt-end corresponding to the bend in ditches 1 and 2. It is unclear whether the curved cropmark feature ('Ditch 14A') leading from the west end of ditch 14 is the same feature or is quite unrelated.

Ditch 15 (Fig. 39)
This is a short length of cropmark (some 8m long) parallel to ditch 14, about 17m south of its line and apparently butting with ditch 6.

Another cropmark ditch (ditch 16) is visible (Fig. 39) on the aerial photos to the west of Site V and at right-angles to the line of the inhumation there (see below).

The pond (Fig. 39)
The pond, like the Site III features 1 and 2, was dug at the junction of the light soil and clays of the hill slope. Just to the south, a low rise about 0.3m high is probably a natural feature, or upcast from this feature. Its date and original function are uncertain. It might have a Roman origin, or it may be early medieval, related to the nearby Foulton Hall. It had been dug in the corner of two intersecting boundaries, one forming the present field boundary, and one visible as a cropmark.

The Parish boundary
The boundary between Ramsey (Foulton) and Little Oakley parishes runs along the field boundary (ditch 13) east of Site IV, but south of the pond it leaves the present field boundary and runs parallel to it across one of the modern fields, part of which is thus presently in one parish, and part in the adjacent one. The cropmarks north of the pond (Fig. 39) suggest that there may have been strip-fields in this area of unknown antiquity (but note that they are parallel with the later field system represented by ditch 6 on Site IV). These seem to be shown by the Tithe Map. To the north, the parish boundary cuts across the grounds of Foulton Hall, suggesting that on the west they are a later (*i.e.* post-medieval) encroachment on Little Oakley parish.

General discussion of the evidence from Site IV
(Fig. 49)
The various prehistoric features have been noted above (ditches 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11). Only small portions of what appears to be a complex of settlement features were examined, and little useful can be said about them. The distribution of redeposited pottery in later features (Figs 49 and 96) shows the extent of this occupation.

Ditch 2 was dug probably some time in the middle of the 1st century AD. Its line follows the boundary of the Red Crag and the heavier soils to the south. The fill contained only a little pottery. If this shallow gully was a field boundary, it was probably accompanied by a thick hedge.

Pit 1 was dug outside(?) this ditch and contains few finds (*cf.* ditch 1). It was possibly a clay quarry. Ditch 1 was dug towards the end of the 1st century AD. The first cut was of a type which might be termed a 'palisade trench'. While some deep narrow slots of this nature may have held upright timbers, there is no evidence that this was the case at Little Oakley. It seems that this was just a deep narrow ditch. The line of this feature followed that of ditch 2 very closely, which cannot be coincidental. Ditch 2 was so shallow that it is unlikely to have left much of a mark on the surface when silted up, and it must be concluded that ditch 1 was following some secondary feature such as a hedge. Ditch 1 had a history of recuts of varying depth and profile and at least five phases can be recognised, probably taking place within a century. The last phase was the infilling of part of ditch 1, the cutting

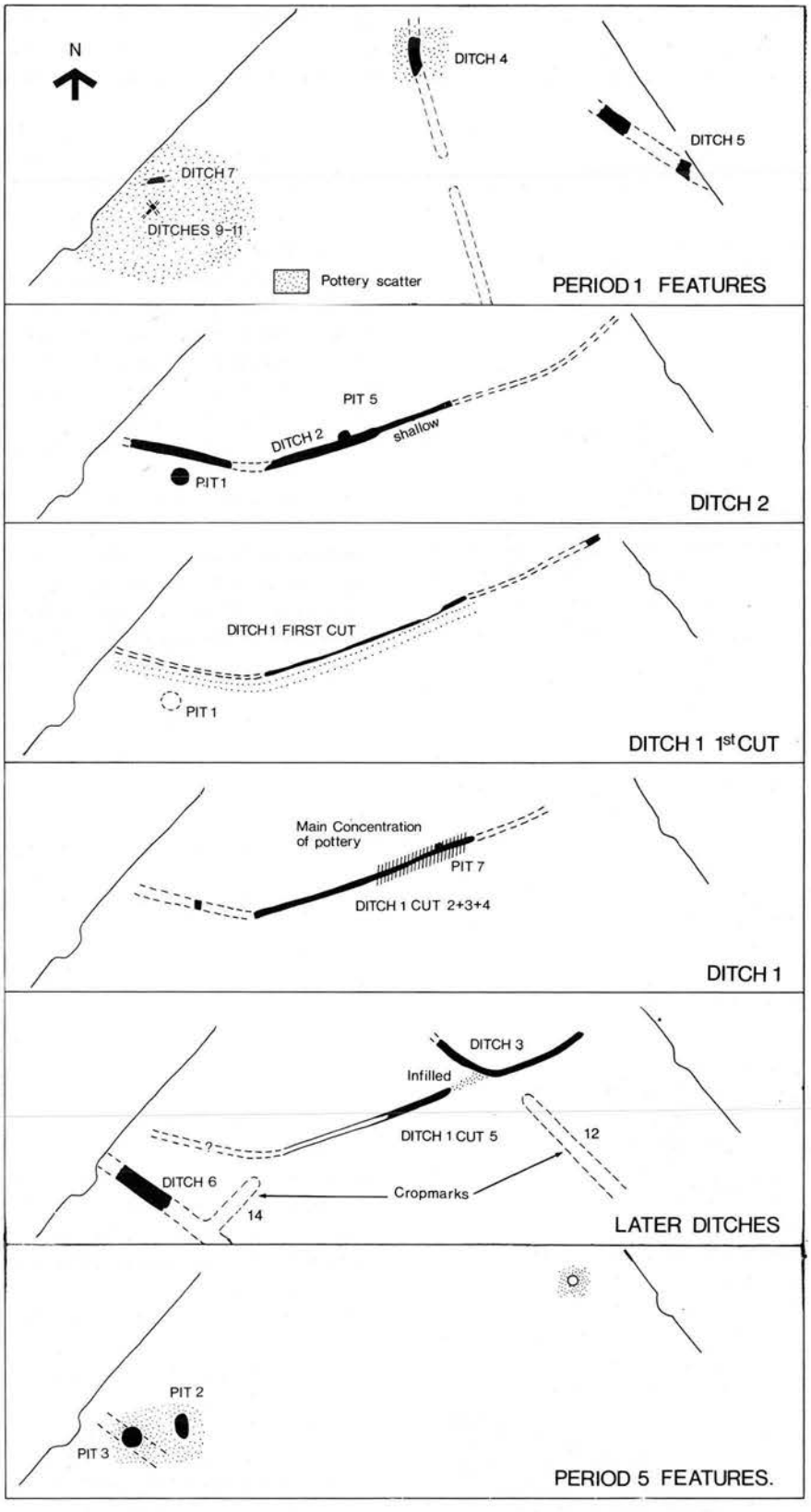


Figure 49 Site IV, phasing of major features

of ditch 3, and the recutting of a portion of ditch 1 to the west, possibly forming a gateway. Whether the fifth recut extended far west is known. Finally ditch 1 (but not ditch 3) was infilled before the currency of Late Roman greyware fabrics.

The system was then altered by the addition of new ditches, of which ditch 6 is one. Ditch 6 was recut at least once, and the upper fill contained late 4th or early 5th century pottery. Ditch 6 is parallel to part of ditch 3, and forms part of a more extensive system of cropmarks (Fig. 39).

Ditch 6 was silted up by the time pit 3 was dug into it. Pit 2 nearby was probably of a similar date. Both had lower fills containing few finds, suggesting they were peripheral to an occupation area, but the later fills contained copious

material indicating nearby occupation. Unfortunately the nature of the occupation is uncertain and no definite structures were found mostly, one suspects, owing to the limited areas excavated.

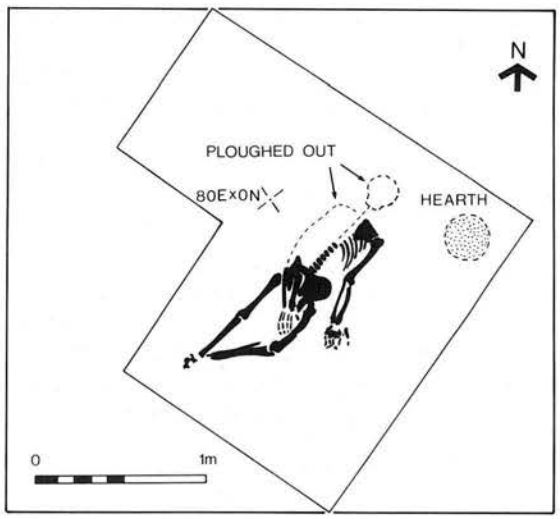
Some time in the 6th century the area of Site IV seems to have been abandoned, though occupation may have continued nearby. One later feature (pit 4), probably 11th century, was found. There was no clear evidence when ploughing began in this area; as yet, no medieval pottery has been recovered from the ploughsoil.

VII. Site V

The burial

(Fig. 50)

This small area between Sites III and IV was excavated in April 1961 following the ploughing-up of fragments of human skull at this point. Immediately below the ploughsoil (at 0.3m depth) was found a disturbed human skeleton, but no grave cut was recognised. The body lay north-east/south-west, with the head at the northern end. The only other feature identified in the trench was a heavily burnt area 0.6–1.0m across containing animal bone, fired clay fragments and Early Roman pottery. This 'hearth' was at a lower level than the skeleton. Both overlay a yellowish loam layer (like F9 and F73 on Site I) containing fragments of animal bone, flint, fired clay fragments and Early Iron Age pottery. The position of the body in the grave (Fig. 50B) is unusual. It was a supine extended inhumation with the arms and legs extended but not neatly arranged in the grave. The legs were crossed at the ankles and slightly flexed. The skull fragments which had been disturbed by ploughing were found in the subsoil overlying the skeleton. No coffin fittings or grave goods were found, and the position of the body argues against it being a coffined burial. It seems to have been an unaccompanied burial in a shallow grave.



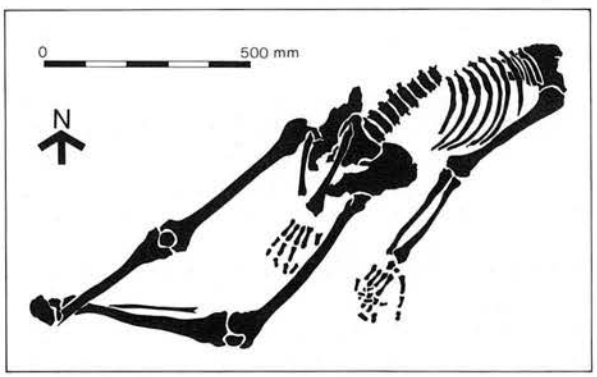


Figure 50 Site V, plan of trench (A), and plan of burial (B)

The skeleton was planned, but could not be examined properly *in situ* because the burial was summarily dug up and removed by the police. Farrands had left the site after he had covered the burial, and had duly and promptly reported the skeleton find to the local police at Ramsey who accepted Farrands' assessment of the antiquity of the burial. They in turn, however, notified their headquarters at Clacton who sent a team out to investigate. The bones were dug up in the evening apparently with no record being made and without the consent of the landowner or the request of the coroner. The first Farrands knew of this was when they were handed to him a short while later at his front door loose in a cardboard box (after the bones had been pronounced 'ancient' by the police surgeon). This promoted an exchange of letters between Farrands and the police force, which survive in the excavation archive.

The loose bones were examined for Farrands by the late Dr J. Levy and the teeth by Mr J.R. Dickenson BDS LDS of Dovercourt. They reported that the skeleton was of an adult male (probably at least 50 years of age) and gave an estimated stature of 1.754m. The dentition indicated an advanced periodontal condition such as pyorrhoea and most of the incisors and back teeth had been lost and the sockets overgrown by new bony matter. The occlusal surfaces showed gross attrition consistent with a granular or fibrous diet. There was also some pitting of the calvarium, but this may have been post-depositional. Radiography disclosed a healed compression fracture of the 4th lumbar vertebra (possibly due to tuberculosis) and associated arthritic changes. The cause of death was not apparent.

Pottery possibly from graves

(Fig. 51)

At least three shattered complete 1st-century pots were ploughed up in Strachan's field to the south-east of the villa between 1952 and 1958. It is suggested that these might have derived from shallow ploughed-out graves in the area of Sites IV and V.

1. Complete omphalos-based platter of soft fine pinkish fabric with dark red painted stripes on interior; exterior has white coating of uncertain nature. Probably not a Colchester product, may be London region, late Claudian-Flavian type (ploughsoil near Site IV).
2. Complete small samian cup Drag. form 33 Central Gaulish stamped RELINICVSF (Fig. 110, SS2) (base of topsoil of ditch 1 on Site IV, west end).
3. Complete small greyware jar, form 218 (base of topsoil of ditch 1 Site IV east). This vessel contrasts with the condition of other pottery from this layer, which was very fragmentary.

A human longbone fragment came from the topsoil over the 1952–4 excavations on Site IV. Also a human jawbone was found in the mid-2nd century fill of the fifth cut of ditch 1 on the same site (see I. Cornwall's report in Chapter 4.IV).

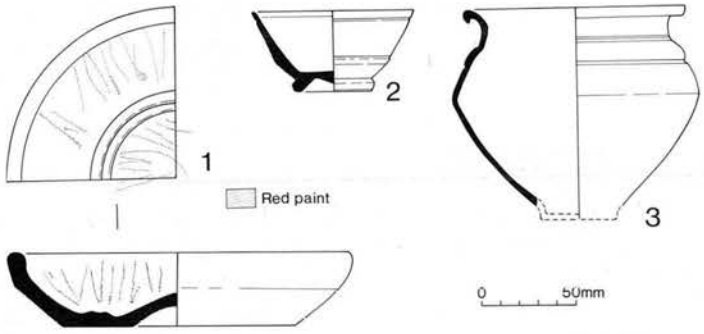


Figure 51 Site IV, pottery from probable cemetery. Scale 1:4

General discussion of the evidence from Site V

The inhumation on Site V can only be dated by its position and orientation, both of which are unsatisfactory methods. The orientation, lying along the contours and at right-angles to the direction of the latest phase of Roman ditches on Site IV, suggests contemporaneity with the latter. Possibly an east–west burial with head to the east was intended. The suggested lack of a coffin may imply a late 4th-century date or later (see Clarke 1979, 341).

The Site V inhumation, if of Roman date, is probably from a more extensive cemetery close to and connected with the villa. Post-Roman burials are, however, frequent finds on villa sites, so the burial is possibly post-Roman, although the position is consistent with some early Anglo-Saxon graves (S. West, pers. comm.). Several complete pots and human bones in the area may also have been from Roman graves.

VIII. Site VI

(Fig. 52)

A scatter of Roman material along the ridge to the south-west of the villa buildings (Fig. 2B) is continuous from the eastern edge of Site IV (though apparently not far beyond) and extends westwards some 350m to the bend in the field boundary by the site of a former pond (TM 2205 2892). The most dense scatter is over Sites III and IV, but the portion to the west ('Site VI') still produces noticeable quantities of tile, septaria, Roman pottery and oystershell. Originally it was intended to fieldwalk this area, but for various reasons this did not take place. The distribution of material in the topsoil, however, would seem likely to have been the result of ploughing. On the south side of the present field boundary running south-west/north-east across the area a negative lynchet has formed, and it seems likely that some down-slope movement of finds has taken place. On the north side there is a considerable depth of soil build-up as a positive lynchet, thus burying any Roman surfaces (but protecting them from recent plough damage). It is therefore unlikely that the distribution of archaeological material in the present ploughsoil will give an accurate picture of the original size and shape of this spread of material.

For what it is worth, the densest part of this spread at the west end is about 20m wide south of the lynchet, and very little material occurs on the north side. Towards the middle, just west of Site III the spread is some 30m wide and material is present in the field on the northern side well beyond the edge of Site II. At the east end (over Site IV) the topsoil spread extends about as far south as the pond to the south-east of Site IV (Fig. 39) where the edge of the topsoil scatter of material seems quite abrupt (coinciding with the exposure of clay subsoil). The distribution of material north of Site IV was plotted in 1976 by Corbishley's fieldwalking (see below).

Unsystematic collection of material from the topsoil to the west of Site III by the writer (1975–91) has produced some flint flakes and prehistoric sherds, both 'early' and 'late' greyware fabrics, a base sherd of Nene Valley Colour-Coat dish, and the flange of an Oxford Colour-Coat flanged bowl (Young 1977 form C52). A late medieval grey ware jug rim was also found. Farrands also collected similar material here between 1952 and 1973.

There are two 'ponds' visible in the present surface relief of the site (Fig. 52). The western one is still wet, and overgrown by a small copse of elm and willow. The eastern one has been ploughed-out or bulldozed. Both are dug in clay. They seem likely to be watering-holes, though the clay from them may have been used elsewhere for building (there is no upcast around them). Their date is unknown (see the discussion of the Site IV pond on p. 60 above).

IX. The Lynchet

(Fig. 52)

The lynchet running north-west of Sites III–VI has been noted several times above, and its nature is of some considerable importance to the interpretation of the site. It is an earthwork running north-east to south-west for about 400m cutting across the contours obliquely (Fig. 2B). Over most of its length its height is about 1.2m with a shallow ditch on the south side. It is one of the most substantial lynchets in the area (the Oakley and Ramsey parishes have several more along other ancient boundaries). The ground on the north-east side is higher, from about 24m OD at the northern end to 22m OD at the southern end.

The lynchet is part of a long sinuous boundary which links with others to form an alignment which can be traced intermittently from the seafront at Dovercourt to beyond Great Oakley Hall (Figs 122–3). The boundary alignment has other smaller lynchets on it, all facing the same way. The Sites III–VI lynchet and ditch curve round a sunken feature at its southern end and the lynchet then becomes much smaller in scale. It may not be coincidence that this point coincides with the eastern boundary ditch of an undated cropmark enclosure (no. 8 on Fig. 2A) known from Farrands' aerial photography. The recovery of a few Roman sherds from the ploughsoil over this enclosure by the writer in 1984 cannot be used as dating evidence, given

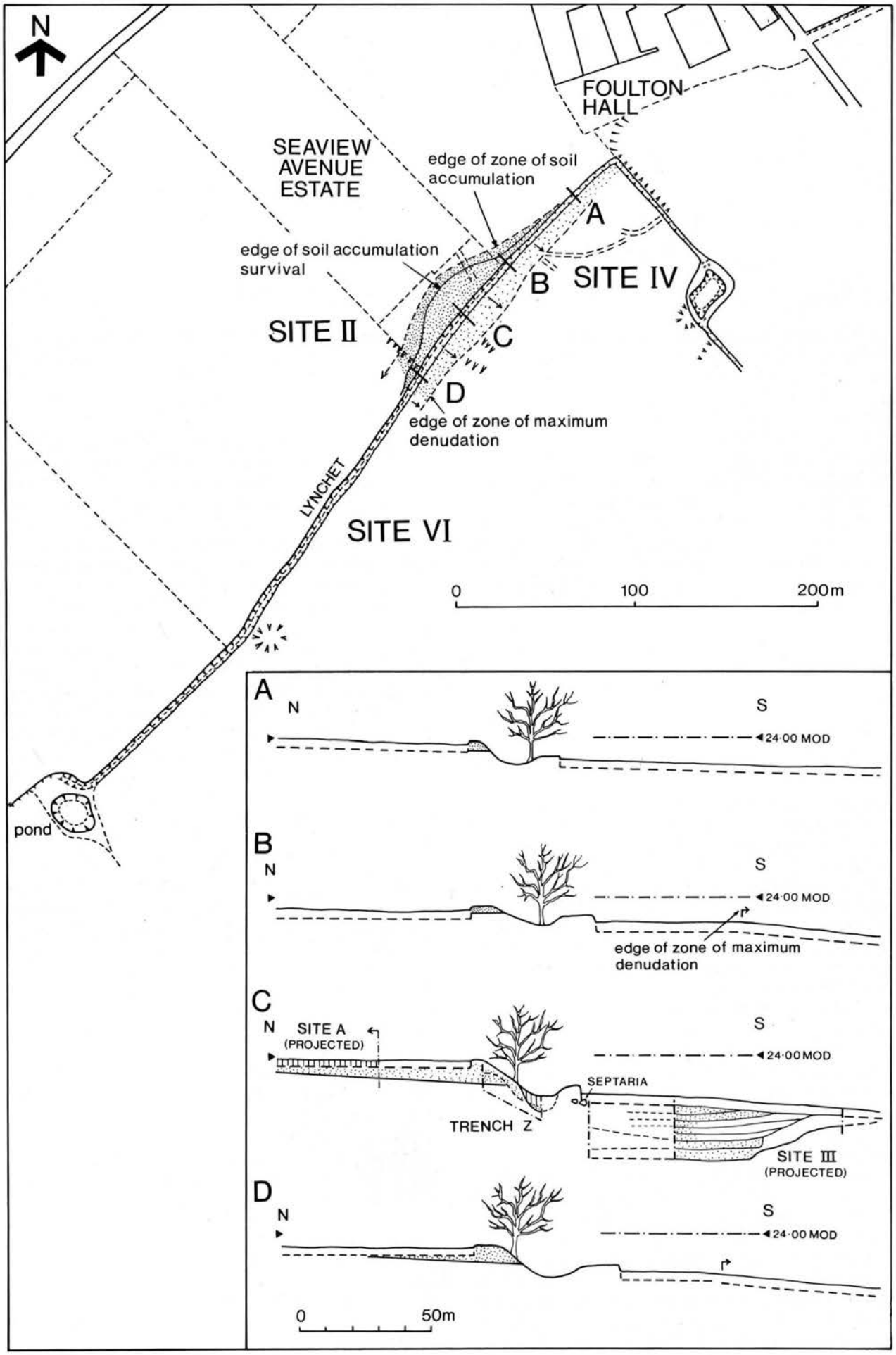


Figure 52 Lynchet north of Sites III–VI, compare Figure 4. Section C marks the position of trench Z

the general scatter of such material along the crest of the slope (Fig. 2B). At the northern end the lynchet has been ploughed-out (or bulldozed) in the vicinity of the hall. The line is picked-up by a trackway (with lynchet) to the east of the Hall.

To the south of the lynchet is a ditch which the 1975 trench Z section (see Chapter 3 below) showed to be much recut. This ditch continues along the base of the lynchet to the north-west of Site IV before turning towards the south-east (as ditch 13), passing through the Site IV pond (see above). On the south-east side of the ditch in front of the lynchet is a narrow unploughed baulk. An extension of the ploughed area northwards by a few tens of centimetres near the point marked as Section B on Figure 52 produced freshly ploughed-up septaria lumps, possibly from a deposit equivalent to that in the upper part of Site III. Just to the south-east of this is a zone (from 5 to 6.5m wide from the edge of the ditch) where the ploughsoil has a flat surface before dipping down to the level of the marshes below the site. This is clearly a negative lynchet, and is termed here the 'zone of maximum denudation' (but see below for an alternative explanation). The ploughsoil in this field seems to have a depth of about 0.32m.

On the north-western side of the lynchet is a 'positive' build-up of soil. This is of uneven depth, being rather slight north-east of Site A (Fig. 52, Sections A–B), but in the area of Sites A and I it is much thicker (Fig. 52, sections C–D). Further to the south-west the positive lynchet maintains its height and profile, seemingly also due to soil build-up, coupled with negative lynchet formation. The depth of modern ploughing cutting into the tops of these deposits is from 0.25–0.28m (Site I and Site A) to 0.32m (Site II and field to the north-east of Site A).

On the bank is a hedge consisting mainly of small trees up to 3m tall. It contains at present three species (elm — now all dead — hawthorn, and sloe), with the addition of a few willow trees. It has, however, the appearance of having had quite a lot of brushwood removed in recent decades. The present line of the hedge is curious. At the northern end it is growing mainly on the south-eastern lip of the ditch, by Section B it moves closer to the lynchet and is growing in the bottom of the ditch, by Section C it is growing half-way up the lynchet (and many of the trees lean over to the south-east giving the impression that they are sliding down the slope). Near Section D the trees are growing on the top of the lynchet, a situation which is continued to its southern end.

It seems premature to discuss the lynchet in the area to the south of Site II; comments will thus be restricted to the area south-east of Sites I and A. Here we have the evidence from Sites I and III with A and Z (below) to supplement the profiles surveyed across the lynchet in 1991 (Fig. 52). It seems from these that to the north-east of Site A the build-up of soil is only about 0.3–0.4m thick in a zone only a few metres wide (most of which has subsequently been in continuous cultivation until the present ploughsoil, disturbed annually). Opposite Sites I and A however this soil accumulation is deeper (0.9m) and forms a wider zone (up to 8m wide). On Site A the lower parts of the thicker south-eastern part of this soil was formed into ridge and furrow (see below), overlain by a later accumulation of ploughsoil. This soil accumulation seems not solely to be dumped layers, and is probably explicable in terms of soil creep intensified by ploughing from the crest of the slope.

It is not clear whether this width of accumulated soil continues further along the lynchet; certainly it is quite deep up to 250m further south-west. Equally, it is not clear why this soil accumulation is absent to the north of Site A. Certainly, however, this deepening of the topsoil to the south-east has contributed to the better survival of evidence on Sites I and A than on Sites C and D.

Another enigmatic feature is the flattened surface of the ploughsoil over a zone extending some 5 to 6.5m south-east from the edge of ditch fronting the lynchet and running parallel to it over an area south of Site A and into Site IV. While this flattening of the slope may simply be a feature of recent ploughing, it is difficult to account for the break in the slope visible at its edge. Possibly this break in the slope is a ploughed-out slight headland or negative lynchet, perhaps marking the line of an old trackway south-east of the main lynchet. If a trackway had run here in the Roman period, it cannot have run across Site III in Phases A and B (but the line may have swung round to the north of this area, as seems to be the case by the 'pond' at the southern end). Alternatively this putative trackway could be early medieval date (perhaps providing a context for pit 4 on Site IV).

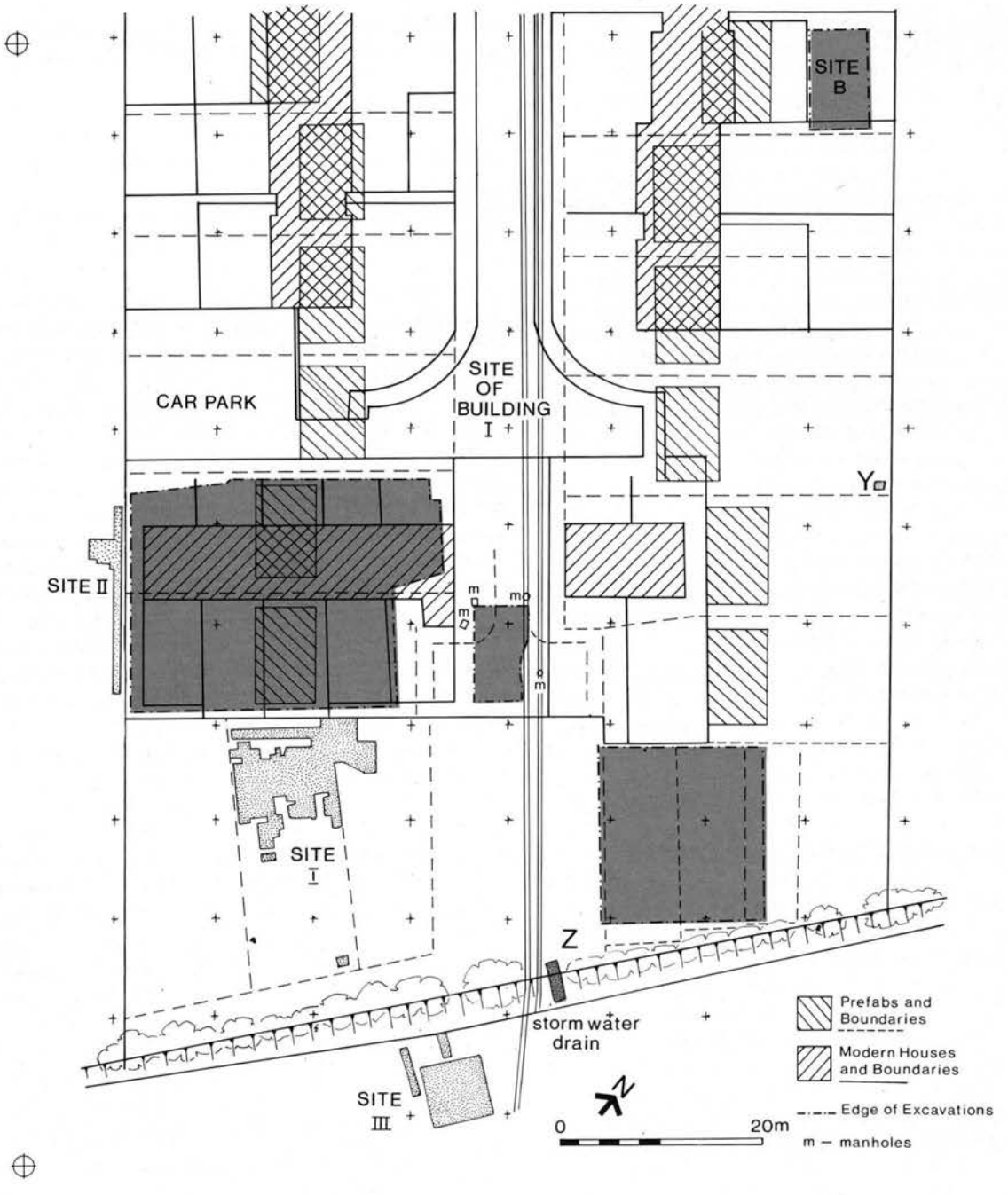


Figure 53 1975–8 excavation trenches (outlines) in relation to prefab estate and present buildings (shaded). Site 10m grid superimposed (for grid numbering see Figs 55–57)

Chapter 3. The Excavations By M.J. Corbishley, 1975–8

by M.J. Corbishley

I. Introduction

In 1975 Tendring District Council decided to demolish the prefab estate at Seaview Avenue, Little Oakley, and replace it with modern houses (Fig. 53). The writer negotiated with Tendring District Council for permission to carry out rescue excavations in advance of development and was given a grant from the Department of the Environment (as it was then) through the Archaeology Section of Essex County Council. A report (Corbishley 1975a) outlined the plan for archaeological work proposed by the writer on behalf of the newly-formed Tendring Rescue Archaeology Group. The development was scheduled to take place in three phases from 1975–9.

It was decided to begin excavation on the eastern allotments (called Site A) which were not in use in 1975 (Fig. 4). This area was not under threat from the new development, but there were proposals to make it a children's playground or (eventually) to plant trees there. The writer also wanted to retrieve archaeological evidence before the main rescue work began, as previously there had only been an interim note published on the earlier excavations (Farrands 1958) and the writer did not have access to the excavation records of previous work.

Site B was chosen for excavation as the plot of prefab no. 23 became vacant and the writer wanted to test this part of the site for the extent of occupation. The only features found here were of Period 8, however, and it seemed that prehistoric and Roman occupation did not extend this far north.

Site C was the area over the known site of Building 3 and that most threatened by development.

Site D gave an opportunity to test the eastern end of Building 3. It was not scheduled for damage from rebuilding but the archaeology would certainly have been lost as a result of constant driving of machinery and lorries during the building operations.

During excavation and fieldwork a number of interim reports were issued and published (Corbishley 1975b; 1977a; 1977b; 1979). Before excavation took place some recording was carried out on the prefabs themselves; Tendring District Council made detailed plans of the concrete bases of the houses and the sheds, the garden plots and the road. The writer made a photographic record of some of the prefabs and of the estate in general, and investigated the archive records for the site itself.

II. Excavation and Recording Methods

Open area excavation, directed by the writer, was carried out on all the sites at Seaview Avenue . Each site chosen or available was discrete and was given its own code letter: thus, Sites A, B, C and D. In addition two smaller excavations described below were lettered Y and Z (Fig. 54). Each context (called features for the purpose of this published report) was assigned a unique number: thus, A3, C37 etc. The site code was LO followed by the year of excavation. Normal modern numbering and lettering systems were used and are explained in detail in the excavation archive.

Individual features were recorded on special pre-printed context sheets, now in common use. These are deposited with the excavation records. Planning was generally 1:20 for features in plan and 1:10 in section on the basis of a 10m grid. The photographic record contains black and white film, colour slides and vertical stereoscopic prints (at 1:20 scale).

Normal finds recording was used and record cards are deposited with the finds. Finds were marked or tagged with the site code, year, feature number and grid. In addition all finds were recorded to a 2.5m grid, which proved especially useful in analysing topsoil or disturbed soil spreads.

Excavation procedure

Site A was stripped using a tractor and shovel, then cleared by hand. All features were fully excavated, by hand, apart from parts of the ditch A23. The site was backfilled by machine. Site B (spring 1976) was stripped by JCB, then hand dug and backfilled by machine. Site C was stripped in two parts by a JCB and a crawler-excavator. The first area to become available was the back gardens of prefabs nos 32 and 34 (Site C — see Fig. 4 for prefab numbers). After the prefabs and their concrete bases had been removed the rest of the two plots were stripped, hand dug and backfilled by machine. Because of the shortage of time allowed on site some features were only sectioned. Much of Site C was dug during the winter months of 1976. Site D (1978) was stripped by JCB and then hand dug. All features were fully excavated. The site was backfilled by machine.

III. The Excavated Features

(Figs 55–7; Pls XII–XVIII)

Period 1

The excavated features

There were a number of 'buried subsoil' contexts (like F9 and F73 discussed above). These (A6, D8, D11, D15 and D17) contained comparable finds to those on Site 1, principally prehistoric and a little Early Roman pottery. There was also fired clay in D11 and D15 and a utilised pebble (ST17).

Ditches and gullies

On Site A, 13m of an east–west ditch (A16) was fully excavated. It was 0.8m across and 0.25m deep. Its

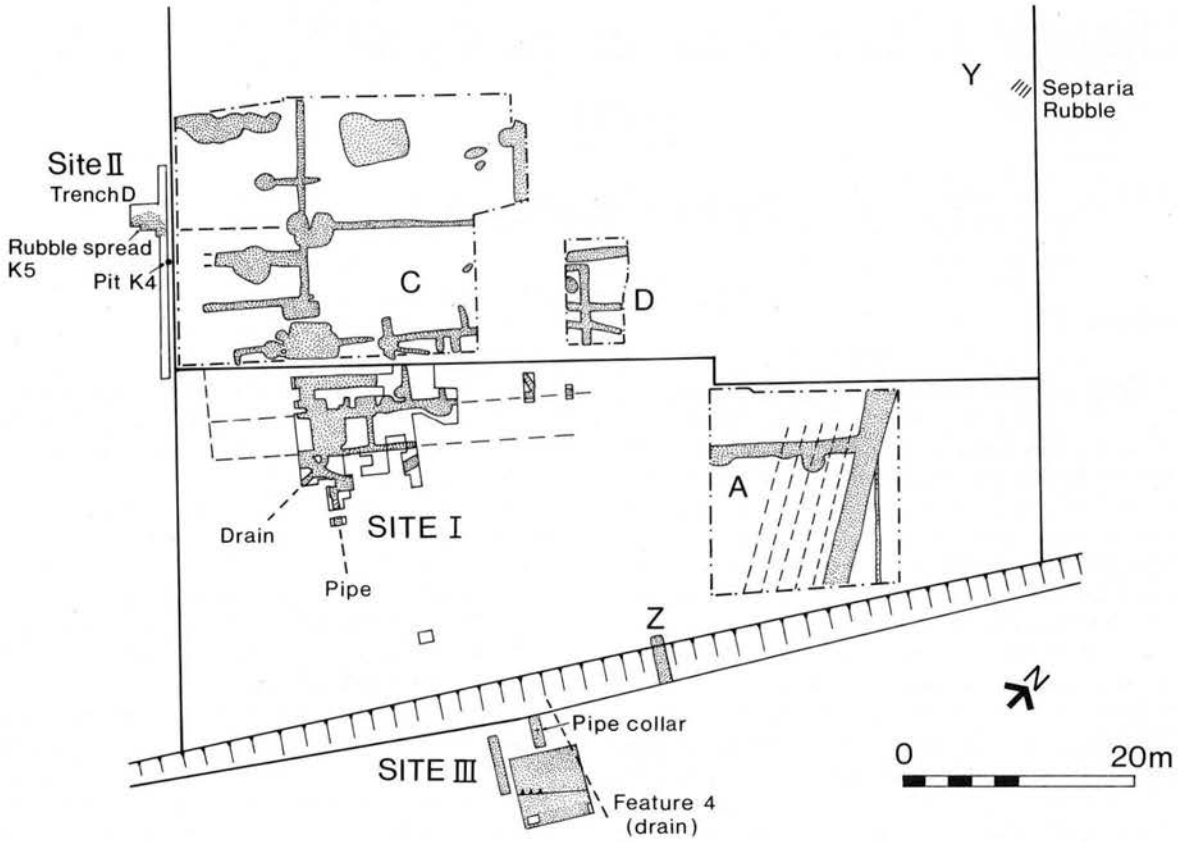


Figure 54 1975 excavation trenches, features of all periods shown in relation to previously excavated areas of Sites I, II (part only), and III

compacted silty soil contained much prehistoric pottery. There were also a few pieces of Early Roman pottery and Roman tile fragments — all considered to be intrusive. The dating is further discussed below. Also running east–west and parallel to A16 was another ditch, C37, on Site C. Only a short section (5m) of this ditch could be excavated. It was about 1m wide at subsoil level and 0.35m deep but had been recut. It contained a little prehistoric pottery.

Most of the prehistoric features were found on Site D. D9 and D10 were lengths of the same gully (cut by the robber trench D3). This gully was 0.4–0.6m wide and 0.25m deep. Its compacted silty soil contained Late Bronze Age pottery but also fired clay, considered to be oven debris (FC14). The presence of a fragment of sandstone saddle quern (ST8) should also be noted. Another gully was excavated on Site D. D13 was 0.75m wide at subsoil level and 0.43m deep. This feature contained much Early Iron Age pottery (some of it vessels which had apparently been smashed nearby) in its compacted silty fill. It also contained flints (scrapers FT3 and 6) and fired clay similar to that found in D10. There was also some Roman material considered to be intrusive.

Discussion

It was clear from both the excavated features and the discovery of redeposited prehistoric pottery in the later features that there was prehistoric activity on these parts of the site. Sites A and C showed east–west ditches; one (C37) ran parallel to the north wall of the villa but the other (A16) did not. The gully (D9 and D10) and ditch (D13) clearly have no relationship to the later villa Building 3, nor to any other prehistoric ditches excavated at Little Oakley. Without more excavations we will not begin to understand what these ditches were actually for.

Period 2

The excavated features

There were no 'Belgic' or Phase 2(i) features on the 1975–8 sites. The features considered to be of Phase 2(ii) are described below.

Ditch A5 (Figs 55, 58; Pl. XIII)

This ditch cuts the earlier ditch A16 along the same alignment. The ditch (0.9m wide and 0.20m deep) was of a similar size and fill to A16, though slightly lighter in colour (A5 – 10YR 4/2; A16 – 10YR 4/3). It contained a considerable quantity of prehistoric pottery, some early Roman pottery (see nos 1–8 in the pottery report), a little iron slag, a little briquetage and two quern fragments (ST2 lava, ST7 Millstone Grit). There was also a little bone and oystershell. The feature turned north or terminated at the point where it is cut by A23; it did not continue to the east. The material from this feature was collected by 2.5m grid squares and it was noted by the pottery specialist that the distribution of redeposited prehistoric sherds along A5 was similar to that in A16. This suggests that the fill of A5 was largely derived from upcast dug from A16 since it contains little imported backfill; only at the western end was there considerably more EIA pottery in ditch A5 than ditch A16.

Post-holes

Three post-holes (A12, A19 and A20), between 0.40m and 0.80m in diameter) cut into the fill of the ditch A5 (Figs 55 and 58). They were spaced at about 3.5m intervals in

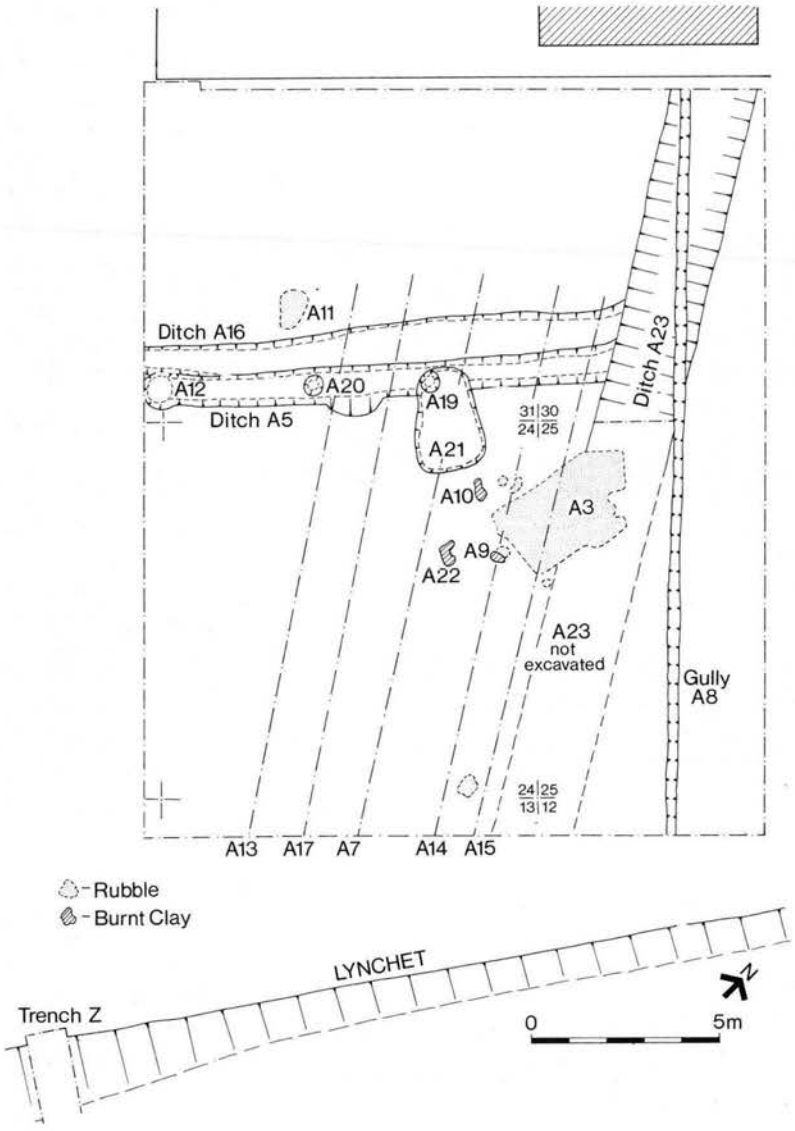


Figure 55 1975–8 excavations, general plan of Site A, and Z, showing features of all periods

the centre of ditch A5. Their depths varied — A12 was 0.3m, A19 was 0.65m and A20 was 0.39m. However, these are the depths cut into the subsoil below the base of ditch A5. In addition post-hole A19 was cut by the later pit A21 (see Phase 4(iii) below). The post-holes contained few finds.

?Furnace

Also considered to be of this (or the next) period is the possible furnace or oven C11 in the north corridor of Building 3 (Figs 58 and 60). It had been disturbed by modern features but was oval in shape and partly lined with fired clay at the north end (1m long by 0.35m wide and 0.12m deep). Its light silty soil contained charcoal flecks, small pieces of charcoal, a complete iron spadeshoe (FE14) lying flat in the bottom of the fill, and a few Early Roman sherds. It was sealed by an undated oystershell spread (C17) which contained a single Early Roman sherd. The features may however be of Period 3, or even 4 (see features C28, C36 and D12).

Discussion

It seems likely that the line of ditch A16 from Period 1 was re-used and the ditch recut as A5. Later, this line was 'reinforced' by a series of posts, perhaps representing a fence. The variety of finds, in particular the intrusive Roman finds in A16, suggest a hedge and ditch line marking out a boundary or field.

No evidence was found on Site C of the timber phase of the villa (Building 2). The supposed northern line of this building coincided with the hedge line between Site C in the garden plot of prefab no. 34 and the allotments (Site 1). During excavations in 1975–8 this hedge was not removed.

C11 contained no slag in its fill nor was any found nearby. However, the feature certainly had a fired clay wall lining partly preserved, and the presence of an iron spadeshoe in it suggests that it could have been in the process of being repaired in either a specially made smithing hearth or an existing oven.

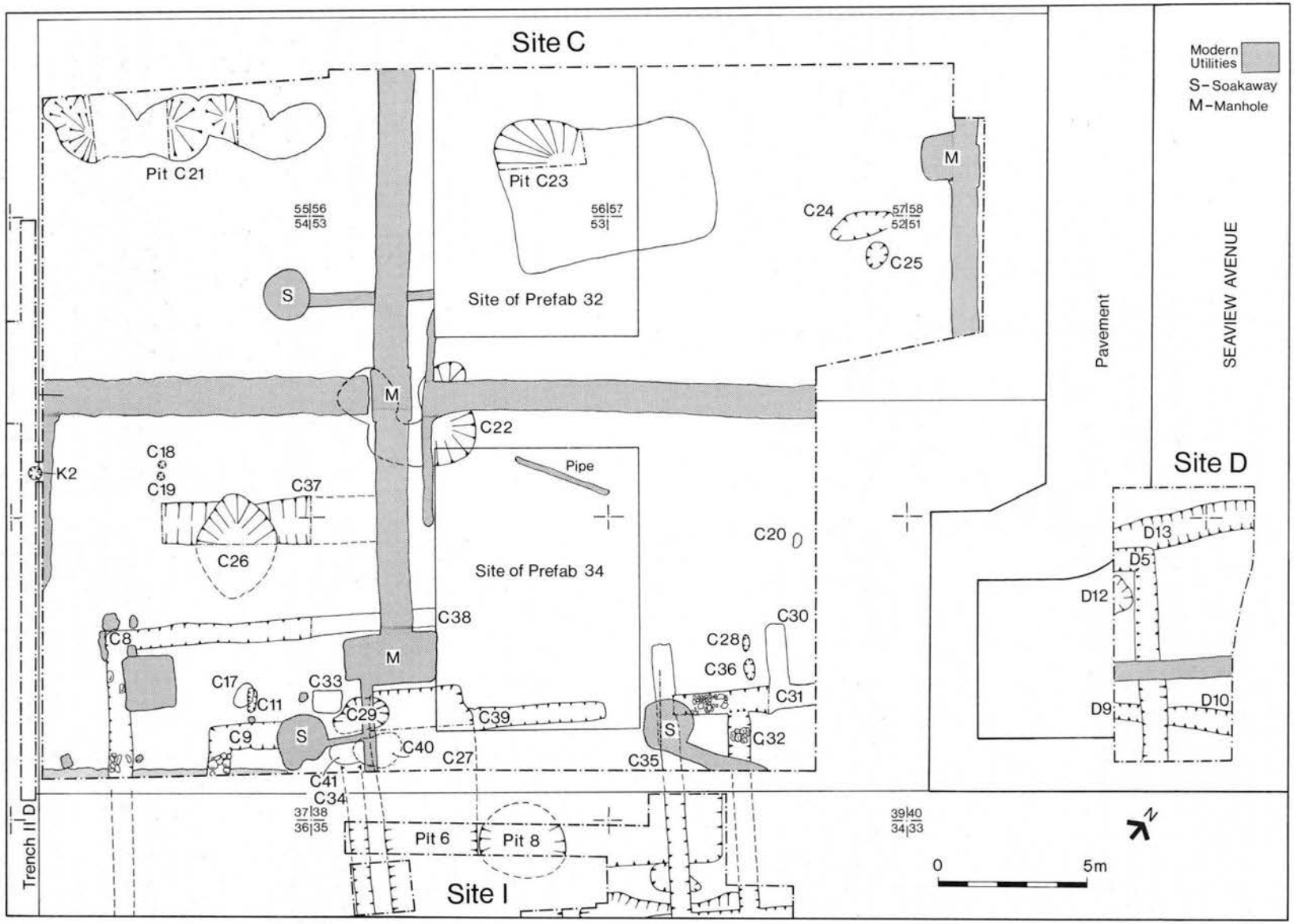


Figure 56 1975-8 excavations, general plan of Site C and adjacent areas

Phase 3(i)

The excavated features

Ditch (Figs 55, 58)
In this period a large V-shaped ditch, A23 (2m across at subsoil level and 1.5m deep), cutting ditches A5 and A16 ran north–south across the site perpendicular to the contours. The ditch fill (compacted, clayey loam) contained only a little pottery, mostly Early Roman (see nos 27–30 in the pottery report), but including Colchester Colour-Coat, a little bone, a quantity of iron smithing slag and some Roman tile fragments. A lower fill of dirty redeposited natural (clay loam), A23-1, was probably a primary silt.

Walls
The walls of Building 3 (Figs 14, 56–7, 60–61) were recorded on Sites C and D and were numbered with a zero in front of the context number for the appropriate robber trench (as C8 — robber trench, C08 — wall).

The line of most of the walls was discovered by robber trenches (see Period 4 below). The construction trench for the outside wall of the villa (C08) was 0.70m wide, while those for the inside walls were between 0.40m and 0.60m wide. No stone walls survived in the robber or construction trenches. At the eastern end of the outside wall of Building 3 and the northern ends of C30 and C35 on Site C not even the lowest levels of the robber/construction trench survived the bulldozing prior to the building of the prefabs (see Period 8 below). The outside wall of Building 3 is assumed to have run eastwards until it reached the point where it was found during the excavation of Site D (see robber trench D5).

Floors
No floor levels survived in Building 3. The surface surviving below the plough and bulldozer level (see Period 7 below) was often at the lowest levels of the wall foundations, and below in places.

Post-packing (Fig. 56)
Two features (C18 and C19) were found to the north of the villa. They were both 0.25m in diameter with small pieces of septaria forming a circle. Only the base of these features, which may have been post-holes, survived. No pottery or any other dating material was found in these two features (see below for discussion of period).

Discussion
The villa may have been bounded by ditches of which A23 to the east of Building 3 was partly excavated. The size of this ditch suggests a boundary rather than a field ditch. It may however be connected with the Phase D drainage of Site III to the south.

A masonry building with foundation trenches for mortared septaria and tile walls was excavated. The part of the building discovered in Site C showed a corridor (2.20m wide) on the north which was divided by at least two walls (C35 and C30). Excavation on Site D suggests the length of the building, and it is probable that the north corridor probably ran the full length east–west. No evidence was found during the excavation of Sites C or D of villa reconstruction (*i.e.* Building 3A to Building 3B). This is hardly significant since all the walls had been robbed to the base of the foundation trenches.

It is difficult to assign features C18 and C19 to a particular period with any certainty. They contained no dating material, nor did they form any understandable pattern or link with other features. They have been placed in this period as they are carefully constructed with stone packing but they could perhaps belong in Phase 3(ii) or later features.

Phase 3(ii)

The excavated features
This period produced most of the finds from the 1975–8 excavations from a number of features, the majority of which were pits. Not all the features for this period were fully excavated, due to lack of time.

Pit C21 (Figs 56, 59; Pl. XV)
This was an elongated feature 9.6m long and consisted of four round/oval pits (between 1.4m and 2m wide) joined together. Excavation showed that the fill of these four features could however be regarded as one deposit. At its deepest it was 0.55m. The fill was a stiff clayey loam which contained copious tile (mainly roof tile), shaped mortar from a roof, lumps of chalk, *opus signinum*, painted plaster (including a 'plaster eye', p. 112 below), small fragments of two mosaics, a large number of red tile tesserae, septaria pieces and window glass. There was a great quantity of Early Roman pottery (especially samian) and much bone. Most of the pottery was redeposited, and ranged in date from Phase 2(i) to 3(i). Small finds include a fragment of copper alloy wire (CU21), an iron masonry clamp (FE16), many nails (including large ones) and sherds of glass (bottle GL1 and a beaker GL4). The feature also contained a contemporary copy of a Claudian coin (CN2).

Pit C22 (Figs 56, 59)
This was a large irregular pit (4.6m by 3.2m and 0.35m deep). It had been very badly damaged by modern sewer pipes, a manhole and gas pipelines. It had two fills, one of which (C22-1) was clayey loam with about 5% painted plaster. The lower fill, C22-3, was also clayey loam but contained much tile (especially flue tiles), septaria fragments and painted plaster, 'Egyptian Blue' frit, much Roman pottery, a few bones and oystershells. Small finds include copper alloy pin (CU15), vessel fragment (CU18), rod (CU21), spill (CU31), an iron masonry clamp (FE16), three bone pins (BN2, BN3 and BN8) and two pieces of glass bottles (GL2 and GL3).

Pit C23 (Figs 56, 59)
This was a large subrectangular pit (7.2m by 4.6m and 0.7m deep) with a flattish bottom. It contained a similar range of materials to pit C22, but although they are approximately contemporary (pit C23 being slightly later), there are some differences in the material present. It had four fills, all stiff clayey loam. C23-1 contained about 10% painted plaster with some oystershell and a few fragments of tile and some shaped mortar (perhaps from walls). C23-2 contained a few fragments of plaster and tile and a little charcoal, while C23-4 contained some burnt daub, oystershell and a few tesserae and some 'Egyptian Blue' frit. The pottery was mostly mid–late 3rd century Roman and contained fragments of vessels present in pit C22. There were also a few bones and many oystershells especially in the top fill (unlike pit C22). Small finds

include: a Hadrianic coin (CN6), copper alloy ligula (CU16), pin (CU17), ring (CU18), stud (CU20), an iron latch-lifter (FE12), ring (FE18), nails (including large ones), two lead objects (a lead sheet PB1, and the vessel PB2), some iron slag, a bone pin (BN9) and fragments of the glass bottle (GL2) found in pit C22.

Pit C26 (Figs 56, 59–60; Pl. XVI)
This was a deep (2.1m), roughly circular (3.2m in diameter) rubbish pit. It had four fills, mostly of compact silty loam. C26-1 contained mostly bone, tile fragments and septaria, C26-2 contained a quantity of tile (chiefly flue tile fragments), and a quantity of burnt tile pieces shaped mortar from a roof (but few roof tiles), shaped mortar from a window or door splay, septaria pieces, tesserae of red tile and fragments of the Purbeck marble sheathing of a wall. This fill also contained much painted plaster from a redecorated room matching some material in robber trenches C34 and C36. C26-3 contained much less material than C26-2 (though similar types were represented but there was no plaster). Its rather pointed shape might indicate that the whole of this layer may have been the fill of a separate feature, perhaps wooden, which the lower fill C26-4 formed around. C26-4 was more silty than the upper layers and contained only a few fragments of tile, septaria and oystershell but no plaster.

The pottery in C26 was late 3rd century or early 4th century. Bone was present and a few oystershells. Small finds include: copper alloy ring (CU19), a knife (FE15), nails (including large ones) mainly from the upper and middle fills. Iron slag was present and may have been from smelting rather than smithing.

Pit C33 (Figs 56, 60)
This was a roughly square pit (1.4m and 0.4m deep). The fill of compacted silty loam contained a little painted plaster like that in robber trench C34, chalk lumps and a little iron slag.

Pit C25 (Fig. 56)
This was a roughly circular pit (0.65m and 0.3m deep). The fill of clayey loam contained some pottery.

Area of burning C24 (Fig. 56)
This was an elongated oval shape (1.9m long, 0.8m wide and 0.12m deep). The fill of loosely packed clayey loam contained some burnt clay, a few pieces of tile and some tesserae of red tile. Its shape and the quantities of charcoal and other burnt deposits suggest a hearth of some kind.

Burnt daub or fired clay was recovered from C28 and C36 (Figs 56, 61) near the north–south cross wall (C030) of the northern corridor. These were small oval-shaped deposits (0.6m long and 30–40mm deep). They contained a little Early and Late Roman pottery. C36 contained some iron slag and painted plaster matching material from C26, and C28 contained an iron ring (FE17).

Hearth or furnace D12 (Figs 57, 58)
This was truncated by the western edge of the excavation. The excavated part was an oval U-sectioned pit (0.5m wide and 0.25m deep) which had been lined (both the sides and bottom) with Roman tile fragments. Apart from the tile, charcoal fragments and flecks of ash, lumps of burnt clay and soil were found. Other finds included a number of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints but no pottery.

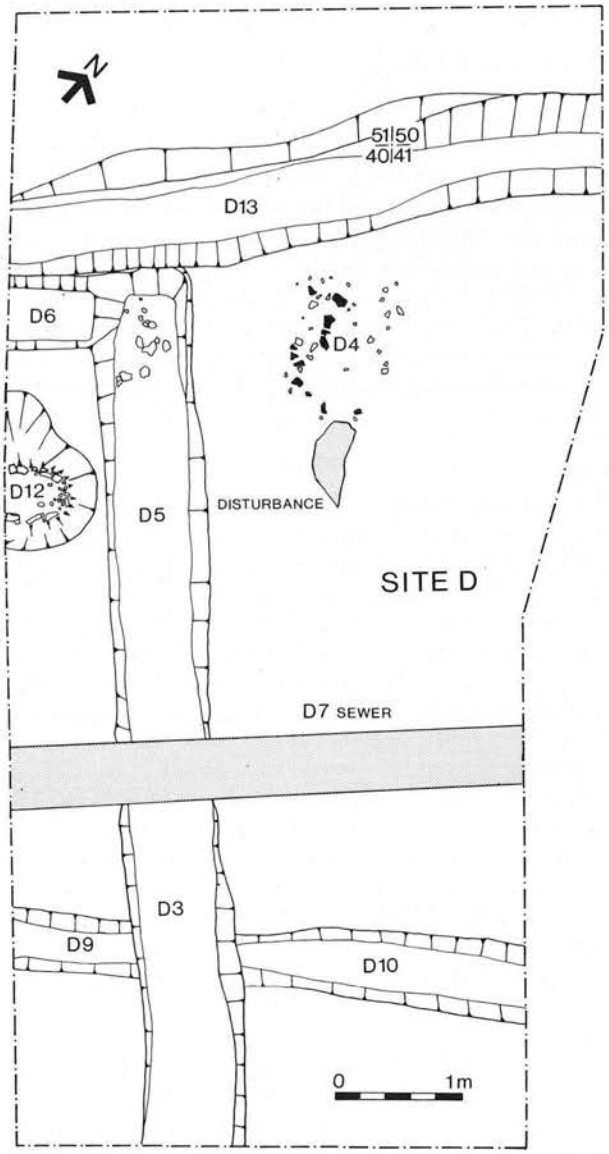


Figure 57 1975–8 excavations, general plan of Site D

Discussion
A considerable amount of building material was being deposited in both rubbish and specially dug pits (C21) to the north of Building 3, apparently while it was still in use. This suggests that debris from reconstruction and major repair was being cleared and buried. However, it is clear that the pits were also being used as rubbish pits. Finds from the largest pits suggest a sequence of filling from the earliest C21, then C22, C23 and the latest C26. The original function of pit C26 is unknown. It does not penetrate the water-table and is thus unlikely to have been a well.

The burnt daub or fired clay deposits and hearths, although the dating evidence is not good, are considered to be of this period and they seem to represent either burning of some structure *in situ* or redeposition from a short distance away. C26 contained painted plaster which matches some found in the robber trench C34, and in C26, which seems to provide a link between these features.

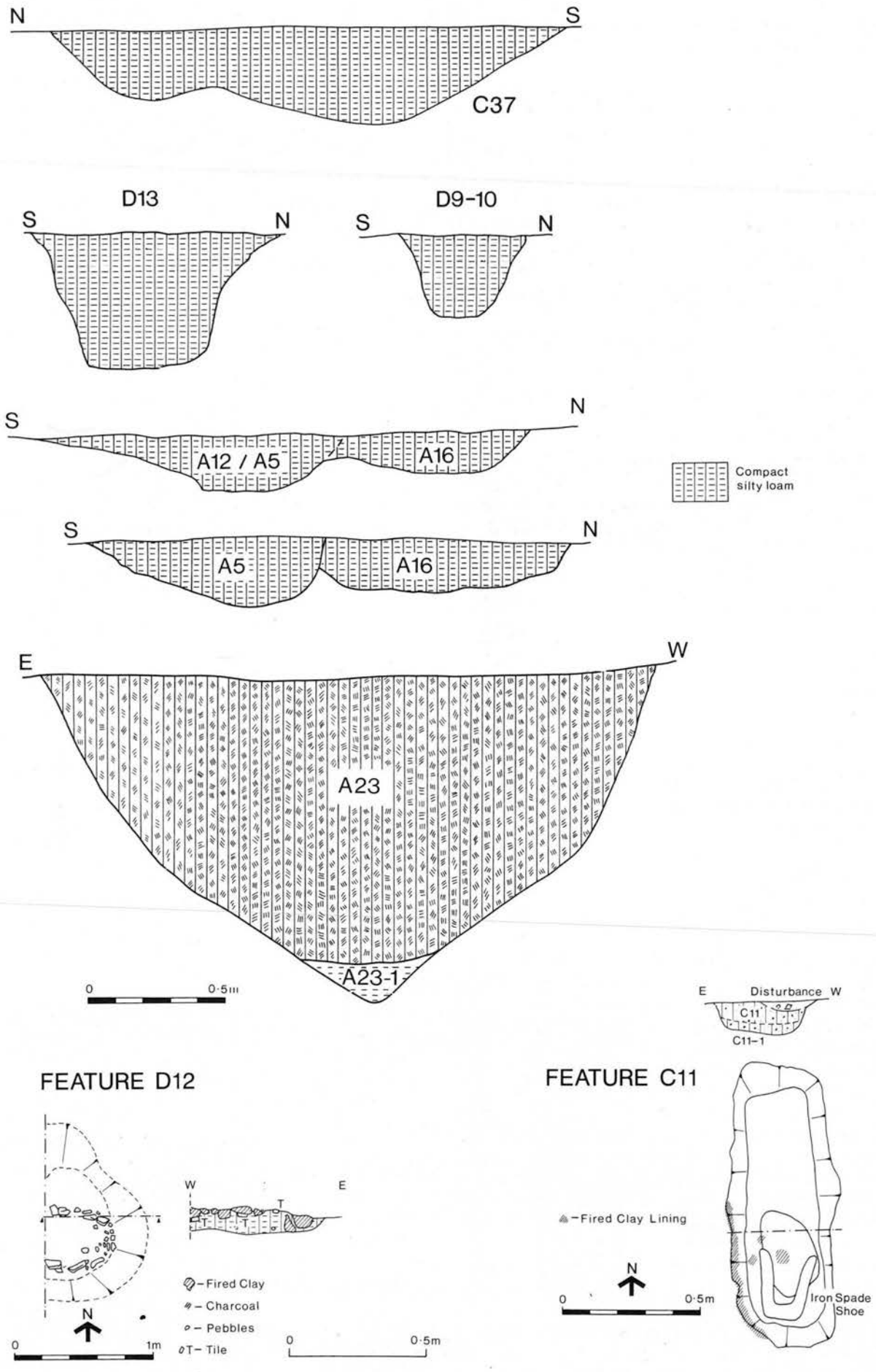


Figure 58 1975–8 excavations, detail plans and section of features of Periods 1–3; C37 (D9 and D13), A23, C11, D12, A5 and A16

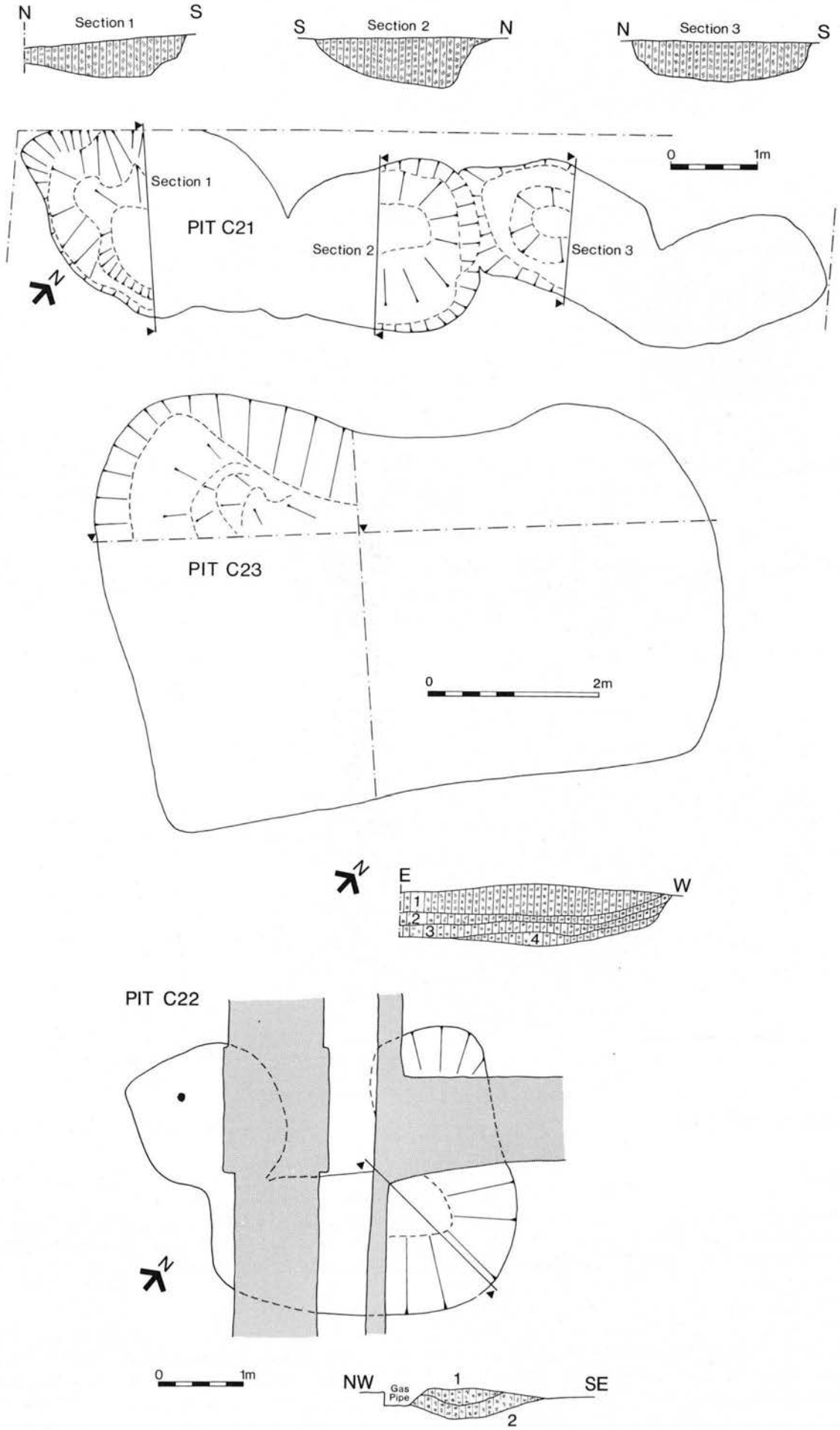


Figure 59 1975–8 excavations, detail plans and sections of Period 3 pits on Site C (C21, C22, C23, C26)

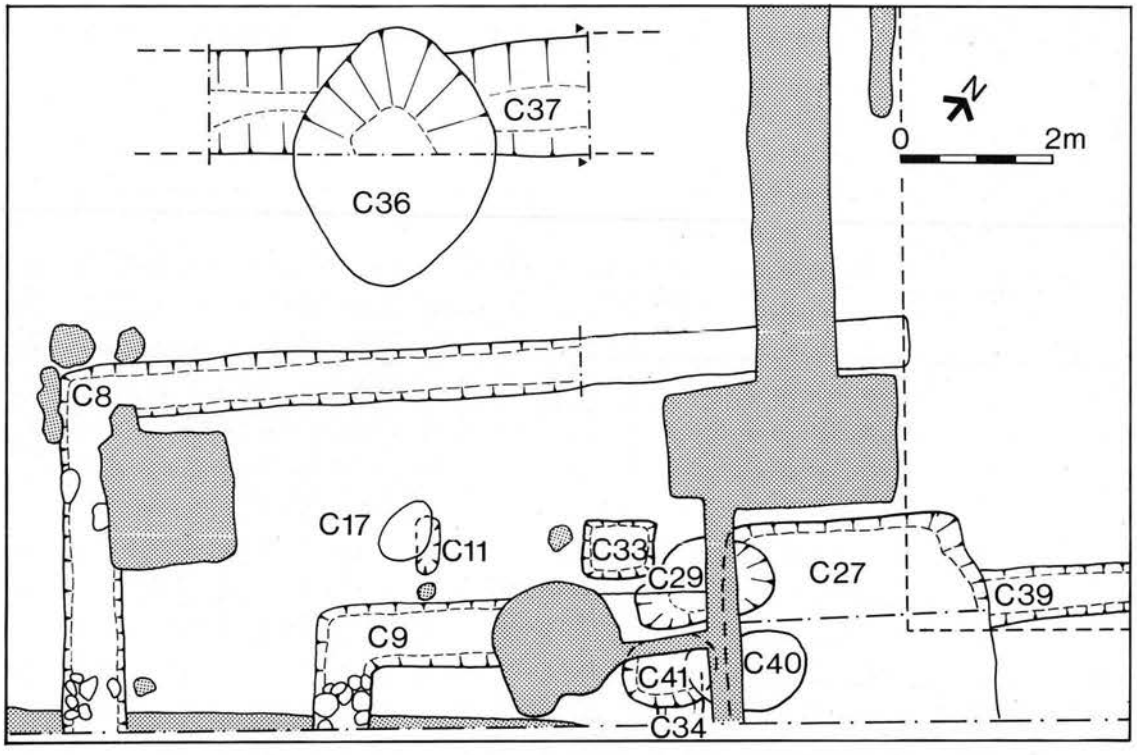


Figure 60 1975–8 excavations, detail plan of south edge of Site C (recent disturbances shown in tone)

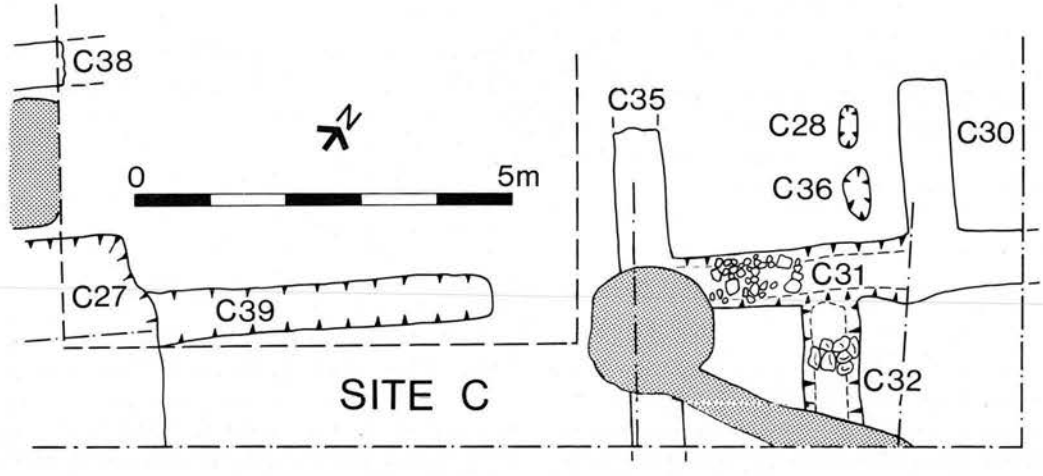


Figure 61 1975–8 excavations, detail plan of south-east corner of Site C (recent disturbances shown in tone)

Phase 4(i)

The excavated features

Robber trenches were numbered as C8, C9, C30, C31, C32, C34, C35, C38, C39, D3, D5 and D6 (Figs 56, 57, 60–1; Pls XVII and XVIII). The loose clayey silt of the trenches contained very little material apart from septaria fragments, tile, mortar and plaster. In two cases on Site C (in C31 and C32) quantities of septaria rubble were left in the bottom of the trenches. The trenches were otherwise smooth sided with a flat or U-shaped bottom. C31 was slightly deeper than C32 (Fig. 61). Very little other material was found in the robber trenches. The Roman pottery is discussed elsewhere, but there was also some later material included in the fill of the robber trenches: C8 had a modern teapot sherd, D6 (= D5) a medieval sherd and D3 (=D5) a handmade sherd, possibly Early Saxon (see Discussion below). One or two large fragments of bone were recovered from C32 and C34.

Discussion

It is clear from the excavated evidence on Sites C and D that the masonry of Building 3 was thoroughly robbed out. The evidence suggests that the walls were followed and all, or at least the great majority, of stone and tile removed. The wall robbers appear to have dug out to the full depth of the construction trenches. The usual debris to be found in robber trenches was recovered (*i.e.* material from the

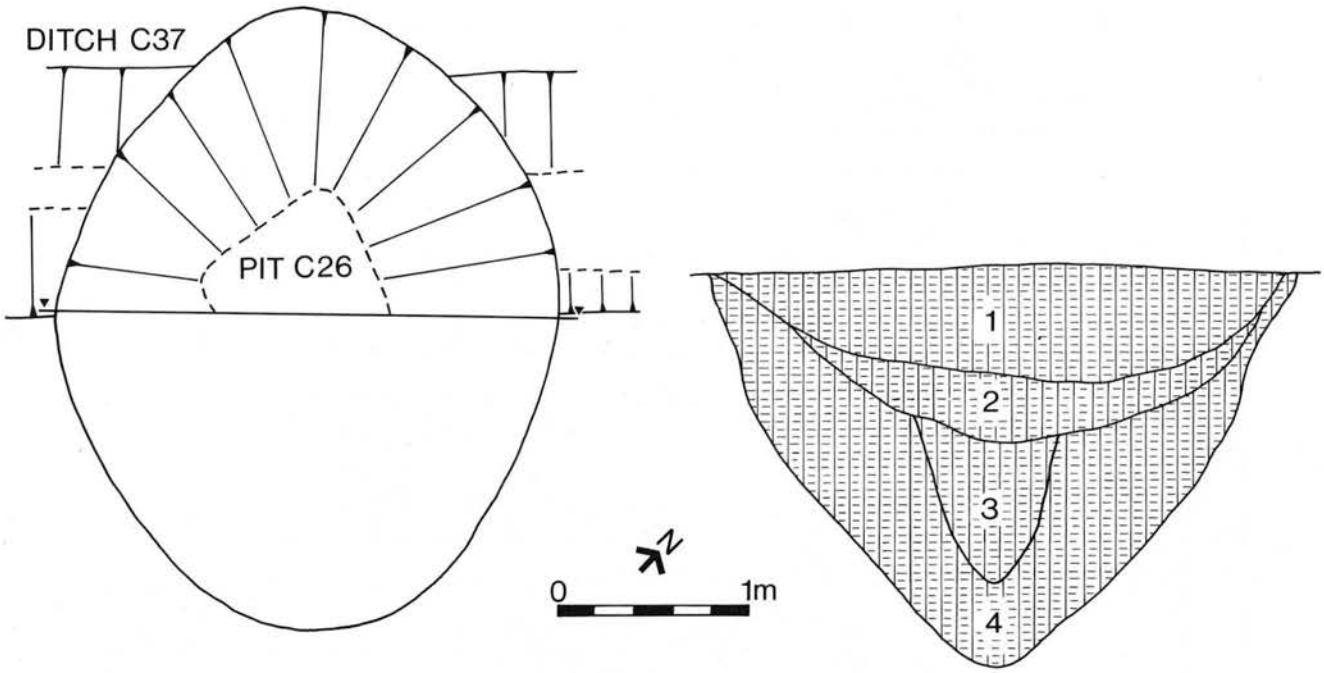


Figure 62 (above and facing) 1975–8 excavations, plan and section of Phase 3(ii) pit C26, and Phase 4(ii) features, pit C29 plan and section, pit C27 section (for plan of this feature see Figure 60)

walls of the buildings itself, such as plaster, daub, mortar) but the features also contained a certain amount of 'domestic' rubbish. It is difficult to say how much of this 'domestic' rubbish was residual; there were certainly a number of rubbish pits nearby. While the piece of modern teapot in C8 may be dismissed as intrusive from the prefab occupation (Period 8) the presence of a possible Early Saxon and medieval sherd may suggest that the villa was not robbed out in one operation, but that some walls were left standing into the post-Roman period.

Phase 4(ii)

The excavated features

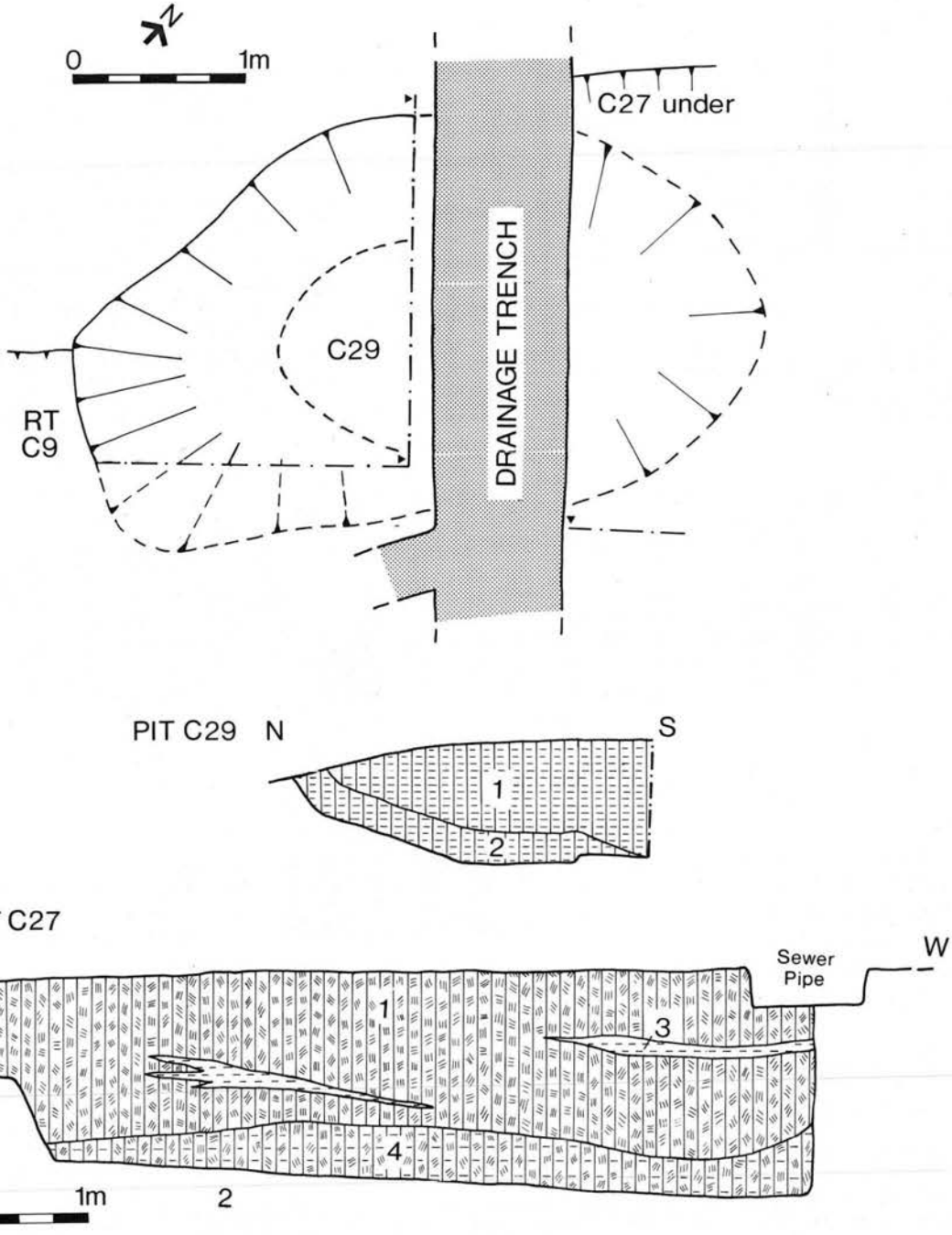
Pit C27
This was a large pit (cutting robber trench C39) partially examined on Site C (Figs 56, 60, 62). It was truncated by the hedge dividing Site C from Site 1 and its southern edge is presumed to lie in Site 1. C27 was 3.5m (east–west) by 2.5m (north–south) and 1.25m deep with a flattish bottom. It had four fills. C27-1 was compact clayey loam and contained a considerable quantity of tile (see Tile report by T. Williams), tesserae of red tile, chalk lumps, septaria pieces, mortar, a little plaster, oystershell and iron slag. The section drawn shows two lenses, C27-2 and C27-3, both within C27-1. Both were similar, being silty and containing only a few small fragments of plaster and mortar. C27-4 was the lowest fill covering the flat bottom of the feature. This fill contained fragments of tile, plaster and mortar. The dating evidence for C27 is ambiguous. The small quantity of pottery recovered includes Late Roman greywares and one sherd of Late Roman shell-tempered and one of fabric 15. It also contained redeposited Early Roman and prehistoric pottery. The feature had to be excavated hurriedly beyond the end of the excavation, when developers were already on site, and was badly damaged by later features.

Pit C29
This was a pit which cut both pit C27 and robber trench C9 (Figs 56, 60, 62). It was oval (1.7m × 1m and no more than 0.7m deep). It contained tile, mortar, tesserae of red tile, wall plaster similar to that in the lower fills of pit C22, a few oystershells, a crucible sherd (MD4) and an unusual Roman or post-Roman rim (Fig. 109.161). Possibly a Phase 4(iii) feature.

Pit C41 (Figs 56, 60)
This was a roughly circular pit (1m in diameter and 0.45m deep) with a flattish bottom. It cut the robber trench C34 and probably cut pit C27 and was sealed by a thin deposit of building rubble (see C40 below). It contained a substantial amount of ash and charcoal deposits. It also contained a small group of Late Roman pottery including a sherd of wheel-made brown pottery which had a knife-trimmed exterior rather like a sherd in A3, and this feature may be of Phase 4(iii).

Rubble C40
This was a thin (0.05m) deposit (1.5m × 1m) of building rubble which sealed both C27 and C41 (Figs 56, 60). It is possibly a Phase 4(iii) feature.

Discussion
The pits and deposit C40 were within the area of Building 3. They are later than the robbing of the walls of this part of the villa and must represent further robbing, perhaps of other parts of Building 3. Pottery from pits C29 and C41 may suggest that these features belong to Phase 4(iii) rather than this one.



Phase 4(iii)
Site A produced the only clear evidence for this period.

Rubble spread A3 (Figs 55, 63; Pl. XIV)
This measured 4.5m × 4.5m and consisted of an irregular spread of building rubble overlying ditch A23 (Phase 3(i) see above) and directly underlying the post-Roman ploughsoil. The rubble was mainly septaria pieces and fragments (including some trimmed blocks), tile, tesserae of red tile, plaster, mortar, chalk and iron slag. Most of the material in A3 seems to have been burnt at some time. There was a little bone but a significant amount of Latest Roman pottery, including 'grass-tempered' ware. The iron slag was a small but interesting group (see slag report). Small finds included: copper alloy bracelet fragment (CU12) and two quernstone fragments (ST5 — burnt, and ST6).

Hearths (Fig. 63)
Lying on top of, but part of, A3 were two patches of fired clay. A9 was 0.4m by 0.45m and A10 was 0.85m by 0.4m. Both were between 0.015m and 0.20m deep. In addition another patch of similar material was found close to A3; A22 was 0.35m by 0.35m and was a similar depth to A9 and A10. These clay areas appeared to have been laid then burnt *in situ*. The areas immediately surrounding them were also very heavily burnt. There was some plough damage to these hearths.

Pit A21 (Figs 55, 63)
This was an oval-shaped pit (2.8m long, 1.7m wide, vertical-sided, flat bottomed and 0.35m deep). It lay on the north-western edge of A3. Its homogeneous silty loam contained a little Latest Roman pottery with grass-tempered and hand-made sherds, some iron slag and building material (septaria, tile, tesserae, mortar and chalk).

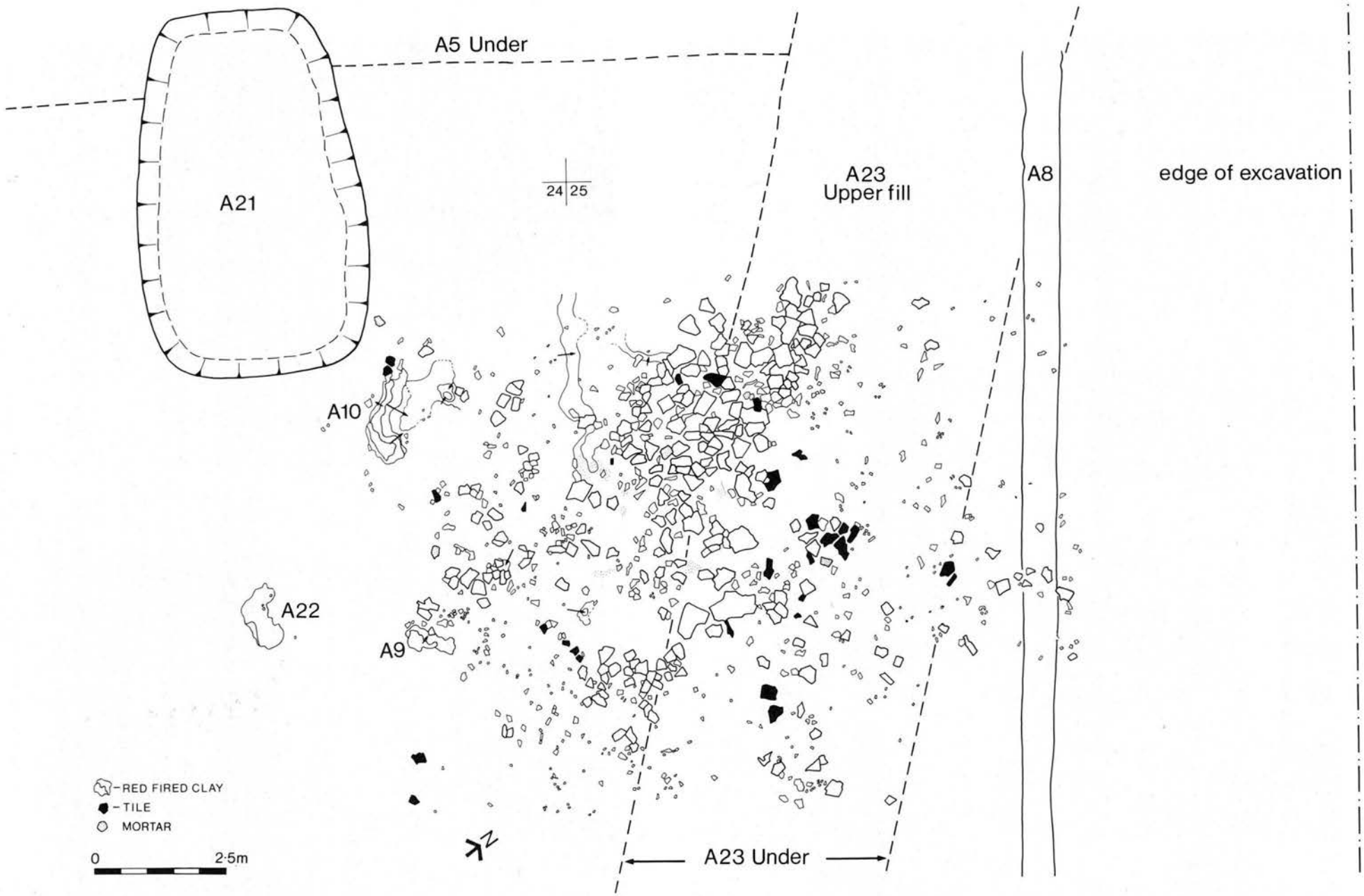


Figure 63 1975–8 excavations, Phase 4(iii) rubble spread A3 with adjacent patches of red fired clay (A9–10 and A22)

Plate XIII Site A ditches A5 and A16

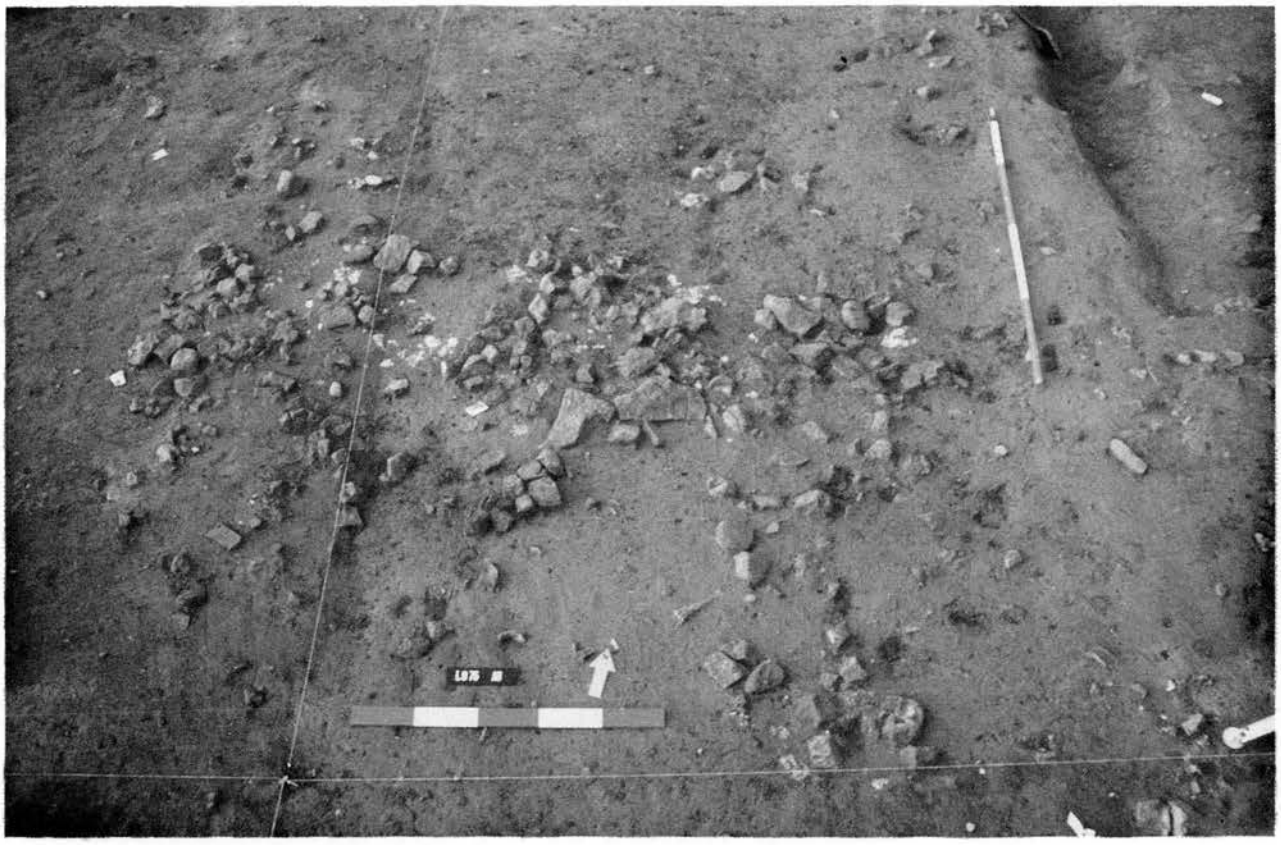


Plate XIV Site A rubble spread A3 oblique

Plate XV Site C pit C21

Plate XVI Site C pit C26

Plate XVII General view of west part of Site C showing walls C8 and C9, and pit C26

Plate XVIII Site D, general view facing north, showing excavated robber trenches of villa walls D3 and D5

Discussion
It seems evident from the finds that these features are late in the sequence of occupation of the site. At this time there is clearly a certain amount of building rubble left either from Building 3 itself or from other masonry buildings not yet discovered (either being robbed or the debris coming from earlier robbing). A3 is laid over the silted fill of boundary ditch A23 and appears to be a deliberate attempt to provide a flat, hardwearing, surface. This surface was clearly plough-damaged (shown by the hearth surfaces and perhaps by the irregular shape of A3). There are no signs of a structure on the rubble spread but evidence from other sites (Barker 1985) suggests that a timber-framed building could have stood on A3. However, the evidence of a certain amount of iron smithing slag suggests that this might have been an area of iron working after Building 3 had become unoccupied and robbed out. The surviving evidence of A3 and its associated hearths may suggest a timber, perhaps open sided, building erected over a small iron working area.

It seems appropriate to link rubble spread A3 with those on Site 1. Also the relative quantity of finds from A3 and A21 contrasts with their lack in deposits of Phase 4(ii) on Site 1.

Period 5
There were no features which could firmly be assigned to this period, but note the Early Saxon sherd from the robber trench D3 (=D5).

Period 6

The excavated features
Site A produced evidence of ploughing immediately above the Roman deposits.

Furrows
Five furrows (A7, A13, A14, A15 and A17) were found running north–south across the site parallel with the line of the earlier ditch A23. They were visible in the south section, between 0.6m and 0.7m wide and between 0.22m at the north end, and 1.22m deep below present ground surface at the south end. Between the furrows, the buried soil was raised into slight ridges 0.1–0.2m high. The furrows were filled with topsoil which in A7 contained a Middle Saxon sherd.

Sheep burial C20 (Fig. 56)
This consisted of most of the skeleton of a young sheep and a few fragments of a second. No pit containing the burial was recognised but this was probably due to Period 8 damage to Site C from bulldozing. A sherd of hand-made, possibly Saxon, pottery came from this deposit, which also contained Early Roman pottery, a Hadham oxidised sherd, mortar, tile, septaria and chalk.

Discussion
The excavated evidence for ridge and furrow seems firm enough (later cross-ploughing cutting through it was easily identified on Site A). There were also a few sherds of pottery which suggest that the site was ploughed (with midden spreading) in the medieval period — D6 (robber trench) contained a sherd of possibly intrusive medieval pottery, a few sherds of Middle Saxon pottery were found in the ploughsoil of Site D, and a similar sherd came from A7 itself.

In addition, the depth of the buried furrows suggests that, by this time, a depth of soil had been accumulating against an east-west boundary to the south. This is further discussed below. C20 is probably no more than the shallow burial of a dead sheep in the field. Its date is unknown, but it could be Period 7.

Period 7

The excavated features
The archaeological evidence suggests ploughing, though not necessarily continuous, since the early medieval period (see pp. 1–2 for discussion of field boundaries). From at least the early 19th century a made boundary running east–west south of Sites A and I has allowed a build up of soil on the southern boundary of the field, *i.e.* the southern boundary of the allotments (Fig. 52). This evidence was clear from the excavation of Site A, in particular in the section cut by the eastern edge of the excavation (but see also trench Z below). Most of Site A showed clear signs of cross-ploughing with damage to features on the northern side of the site. A few 15/16th-century sherds were found unstratified on Site C (in C1 and C2), and presumably derive from Period 7 ploughsoil.

Trench Z (Figs 52–5)
This was dug to check on the build up of soil discussed above. The trench was cut through the field boundary to the south of Site A. The present hedge was growing halfway down the bank. About 0.5m of soil had apparently accumulated against it forming a new bank altogether. The line of the earlier bank was established by this excavation.

Discussion
The accumulation of soil up to this made boundary to the south of Site A and Site 1 can perhaps be explained by soil creep on the slope. There could have been a boundary or headland here in the medieval period. The slope of the land here in the 19th century was of the order of 2:1. The phenomenon of soil creep has been studied and is well documented (Small 1970). Pitty (1971, 216–19) remarks that 'on slopes, soilflow or earthflow depend less on water content of the mineral material and more on gravity as the major factor, and are common on declivities between 5 and 30 degrees'. In particular some research work in the Pennines (Young 1960, 120–2) has shown that downslope creep was in the order of 0.5 to 2mm per year in the topmost organic layer and 0.25 to 1mm per year in the upper 100mm of soil and that the creep on a 7° slope was only slightly less than on a 26° slope. Sparks (1960, 43–6) notes that a number of processes may combine to cause soil creep but in particular ploughing causes 'appreciable downhill movement of materials'.

Period 8
Proven 20th century features fall into distinct periods:

Phase 8(i)
A mains sewer was dug, in 1939, across the field in which the site lay. It was observed by Warren (see Introduction above) when, presumably, there was a sewer trench to peer down into. By the time the sewer pipe reaches Site D it

was being dug as a 'headed' pipe (that is, tunnelled). The sewer pipe thus does not cut ditches D13 or D9+D10 but goes beneath them. There was, however, clear evidence on Site D for disturbance at subsoil level from the sewer. Presumably a strip (at least as wide as Site D — 5 metres) of topsoil was removed to allow both trench digging and heading to take place. After the pipe was laid, this part of the field probably reverted to farmland. The prefabs were later connected to this sewer.

Phase 8(ii)
Something has already been written about the damage to the site by the building of the prefabs in 1947. It is not proposed to discuss all the modern features here. Because of lack of time, they were not all fully explored or recorded.

The excavated features

Site clearance 1947
It became clear from the excavations on Site C that the archaeological remains had been severely damaged. A lot of time was spent carefully excavating and recording amorphous spreads of soil containing prehistoric and Roman pottery, bone and Roman building debris, some in quite large pieces (C2). It was only with the (late) discovery of a stratified cardboard box of wood screws within this material that it became apparent that the ploughsoil had been bulldozed in 1947. The concrete rafts were laid, and the topsoil pushed back around them. The tyre tracks of the bulldozer could still be detected in places on the surface below C2. Plotting of finds in C2 seemed to show, however, that the soil had not been moved far from its original position, as more finds came from the 2.5m grids overlying Building 3.

Services
Under the prefabs themselves and around them were disturbances for the usual services — water, sewage, gas and electricity. In addition to these trenches, a number of soakaways for prefab roof water were excavated. One, for example, was a perfectly round hole 1.5m in diameter and 1m deep (Fig. 56). Most of the pit was filled with broken bricks. These were capped by a thin layer of clinker and the top sealed by about 0.25m of clay and clayey soil. There were numerous disturbances from mains sewer pipe trenches and manholes in the area of Building 3. In particular, damage was done to the pits C27, C29 and C41 and to some of the robber trenches (Figs 56, 60). Site D was also badly damaged when a sewer trench (D7) was cut. A small spread of tile and *opus signinum* (D4; Fig. 57) probably derives from this activity.

Garden boundaries
Boundaries to the gardens of the prefabs nos 32 and 34 disturbed the archaeological evidence. In particular, the boundary dividing these two properties (running east–west across the site) disturbed the soil below by root damage from the hedge. The hedge between Site C and Site I both damaged the evidence, and also prevented excavation up to the fence line which might have connected features which ran across both sites. In the garden of prefab no. 34 a number of other disturbances were discovered. Shallow pits were dug to bury chicken bones and general rubbish. The construction of garden sheds or chicken runs had also disturbed the ground.

Field boundary
A ditch (A8) with upright sides 0.4m wide and 0.25m deep crossed Site A from north to south (Fig. 55). It contained a great deal of residual Roman material as well as modern material (for example, a fragment of a London Brick Company brick). It was presumed to be the eastern limits of the allotments (to the south of the prefabs) which had become redundant by the mid 1970s.

IV. Minor Excavations

Site B
A small area was excavated in the back garden of prefab no. 23 (Fig. 53). This produced no archaeology earlier than Period 7, except a little (redeposited) prehistoric and Roman pottery. There was a tortoise burial (complete with painted inscription on the shell — 'Timmy 23 Seaview Ave') and on the north-east side a dump of buried old sealed petrol cans and other rubbish.

Trench Y, 29 Seaview Avenue
The occupier of no. 29 told the excavator in 1975 that he had found stone foundations in his back garden. He had dug a hole about 0.6m by 0.45m and 0.45m deep in the south-east corner of his back garden (Fig. 53). The excavator recorded a large septaria block (0.2m by 0.3m) in the bottom of this hole with several smaller pieces of septaria. It could not be ascertained whether it was *in situ* or not, and no further excavation was carried out as it was in an area not scheduled for the actual building of the new houses.

Trench Z
This has been described above (p. 82).

V. Fieldwalking Adjacent to 1975–8 Excavations

by M.J. Corbishley (incorporating a report on finds by P.M. Barford)

The area around the villa is strewn with archaeological finds, and the detailed plotting of the surface distribution of this material should be an aim of any further work on the site. A start on this was made during 1976 when it was decided to organise the fieldwalking of the field between Seaview Avenue and Foulton Hall to complement the excavations in progress. This field was chosen because it was the only one adjacent to the known Roman buildings which had never had any trenches dug in it and had the potential of revealing the extent of occupation of all periods to the north and east. A 10m grid system was used to collect all finds from the surface of the ploughed field. The operation took place over three consecutive days and no attempt was made to retrieve any finds below the surface. A system of recording similar to those used on the excavation sites was made. The grid system was numbered 0–24 (south–north) and A–Q (west–east), missing out O. Thus the squares were numbered A10, L17 and so on.

Figure 64 shows the results of this work. Each dot represents a single find, larger dots in the post-medieval finds plot indicate several sherds in one grid square. The details are recorded in the archive but may be summarised as follows.

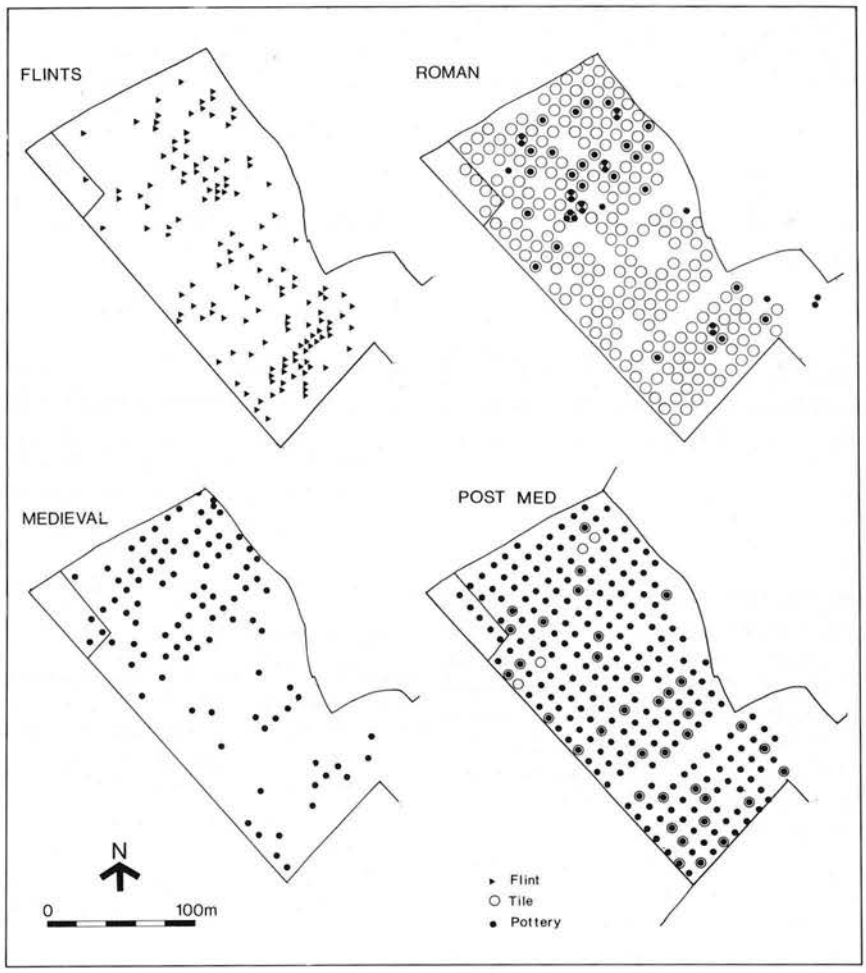


Figure 64 Fieldwalking 1976, distribution of various materials, site in 10m grids A) Flints, B) Roman tile and pottery, C) Medieval tile and pottery

Prehistoric

A few scraps of prehistoric pottery and a number of flints were recovered across the field. A high concentration was found on the southern part of the field, coinciding with the majority of Roman pottery finds. A smaller concentration of flints was recovered towards the northern part of the field, about 60m from the present main road. The material recovered was very similar to the range from the excavations of 1975–8. It showed the same range of flake shape and size (though a few were longer than 40mm). Similar flint types and patination were present, mostly dark brown or black mottled flint. There was no apparent distinction between that preferred for broad or long flakes. Cores were uncommon, and a lack of recognisable tools was also apparent. A number of edge-retouched flakes were found, as in the excavated assemblage, and a few scrapers. The distribution of broad and narrow flakes is uneven across the field, perhaps representing several phases of occupation, but numbers are too small to make anything of the pattern.

Roman

There were fragments of Roman tile in virtually every square in the field. However, the Roman pottery recovered came mainly from two scatters, one in the north, the other along the southern edge of the field, perhaps showing that the Roman occupation in this area stretched in an easterly direction from Building 3. Much of the pottery was uninformative, consisting of small abraded Roman greyware body sherds. No samian was found, and the only fineware was a sherd of Colchester Colour-Coat beaker. A wound glass bead (GL13, Fig. 81) of translucent pale bottle-green glass with a bluish iridescence may be Roman, but equally could be later (from square G22).

Saxon

Two single grass-tempered sherds were found (from squares F8 and H11). No Ipswich or Thetford ware was recognised.

Medieval

Most of the medieval pottery and tile came from the first nine 10m squares nearest to the main road on the northern edge of the field. The pottery was mostly early medieval sandy coarse wares including some with flat-topped angular rims of the late 13th and early 14th centuries (Cunningham 1982, 363). Some of these sherds were from sagging-based jars. Later material was represented by 15th and 16th-century red wares, some possibly of Colchester manufacture.

Post-medieval

There was post-medieval pottery, glass and tile in nearly all the squares on the field. There was a high concentration of post-Second World War material in a 20m strip on the western edge of the field (that is, nearest the back gardens of the prefabs).

Chapter 4. The Excavated Material

by P.M. Barford

(with contributions by Justine Bayley, M. Charles, I.W. Cornwall, Claire Dean, K. Dobney, Chris Going, B. Hartley, F. Jenkins, Bev Meddens, P.R. Sealey and T. Williams)

The finds from both serUies of excavations are included in this section. The 'small finds' are considered here first, followed by a section on the pottery; the building materials and faunal remains are also considered. Some of these sections have a microfiche supplement. All of the relevant material has been studied, and all the surviving small finds are catalogued here. All material is now in COLEM (Acc. Nos 173–6.1975 and 57.1985).

The finds from the 1952–73 and 1975–78 excavations have been included together where possible, but in the pottery and animal bone reports this was not entirely possible. The finds from the later excavations were processed first, which provided a framework into which the 1952–73 finds could be fitted. (Claire Dean had previously compiled a preliminary catalogue of some of the 1975–8 iron, copper alloy, and bone 'small finds' in 1978.) 'Small finds' are treated here in a number of separate sections, largely divided by the material from which they were made, and each section has a separate numbering series. In most cases all of the relevant surviving material in each category, if not all of it, has been noted in this report.

The material from the 1952–73 sites can be distinguished by the site numbering (Sites I–V as above), while the 1975–8 excavations used a context number system preceded by the site letter (A–D and Z as above). The recording of the latter finds included a reference to the 10m grid, but these have been omitted in the present report.

It had originally been intended to include here information on the phasing of the deposits from which each object came in order to help the user of the report. This was omitted to reduce space taken by the provenances of the objects (as were small find numbers of unstratified objects). It seemed many, if not most, objects were either unstratified or redeposited ('residual') in much later contexts, and such an exercise would thus be of dubious worth. Most finds came from a limited number of deposits and most of the significant ones are detailed in the description of individual features in the above text. A concordance of all layers on Sites I to III and A–D are given in the microfiche (archive 1–6). Site IV is indexed in the text above.

I. The Small Finds

The coins

The site produced very few coins, and most were of large size. This suggests (given the 4th century activity evidenced by the pottery) that smaller coins may have been missed during the excavation; the general lack of Constantinian coins may perhaps be explained thus. Identifications of Farrands' coins were by J.P.C. Kent and E. Beazely of the British Museum (no. 1), and by the writer for those of the 1975–8 excavations (nos 2, 6 and 14–15); coins Nos 12 and 13 were missing from the Farrands collection on receipt. All coins are of copper alloy.

CN1 Republican quadrans of the 2nd century BC, very badly worn (Site IV uppermost fill of ditch 6, trench 19).

CN2 Close copy of Claudian 'Minerva' issue (*RIC* 66) on a flan 25mm diameter. The close copies are generally thought to be the earliest of this series of copies which continue in Britain until late in Nero's reign (pit C21-1, SF17).

CN3 Dupondius of Vespasian. Very worn (*RIC* 744, SECURITAS AUGUSTI). (Surface find 200m south of villa.)

CN4 Sestertius of Trajan, very worn, probably late in reign (Site II, rubble layer K8).

CN5 Similar coin also very worn (Site II K7, layer above rubble).

CN6 Contemporary cast forgery of an As of Hadrian (*RIC* 5779) 23.5mm diameter. Obv poorly cast with laureate bust right and no inscription. Reverse, Britannia seated off centre (....) POT COS III, S.C.; (...) TANN (...) in exergue. There is a casting flaw at the top of the spear. The piece appears worn. The reverse is illustrated on the title page of this volume (pit C23).

CN7 Sestertius of M. Aurelius (*c.* 175–7) very worn (Site II rubble layer K8, with coins nos 4 and 5 above; this may be part of a scattered hoard).

CN8 Sestertius of Lucius Verus, AD 166–8 issue, worn (topsoil of the garden of the prefab no. 24 Seaview Avenue).

CN9 'Antoninianus' of Gallienus, *RIC* 181 DIANAE CONS AUG (surface find, 300m east of Site I).

CN10 A second example, *RIC* 107, IOVI CONS AUG, goat (Site IV Saxon pit 3, layer 3).

CN11 'Barbarous radiate' copying 'PIETAS' type of Tetricus, *e.g.* *RIC* 258 (Site II, K7, layer above rubble).

CN12 Constantine II GLORIA EXERCITVS copy (one standard type, probably *c.* 341–6; Carson *et al.* 1960, 1, 126) good condition (Site I, fill of Phase 4(iii) pits, F20).

CN13 Charles I (1625–1648) farthing (topsoil over Site I).

CN14 Illegible 18th century halfpenny token 28mm diameter (topsoil, Site C, SF4).

CN15 Very worn George II halfpenny, 1737 (topsoil, Site A).

There seems little point in discussing this brief coin series in detail. Few of these coins date the contexts which contained them, save as a *terminus post quem*, while the probable presence of coins of a potential scattered hoard, nos 4, 5 and 7, adds a further complication. The lack of 4th century coins is both puzzling and frustrating. The Republican quadrans is of note, but probably came to this country after the Roman Conquest (P.R. Sealey, pers. comm.).

The brooches

(Fig. 65)

Six bow brooches of copper alloy were found, see also CU6 below.

FIB1 'Aucissa' brooch, iron hinge pin. Pin missing (Site IIID, Phase C shell layer above organic mud).

FIB2 'Aucissa' brooch, an almost exact match for the previous item. Rounded profile, hinge plate rolled outwards, foot knob brazed on. Punched decoration on edge of bow. Perforations on head plate surrounded by incised circle. No inscription on head plate (Site A, topsoil).

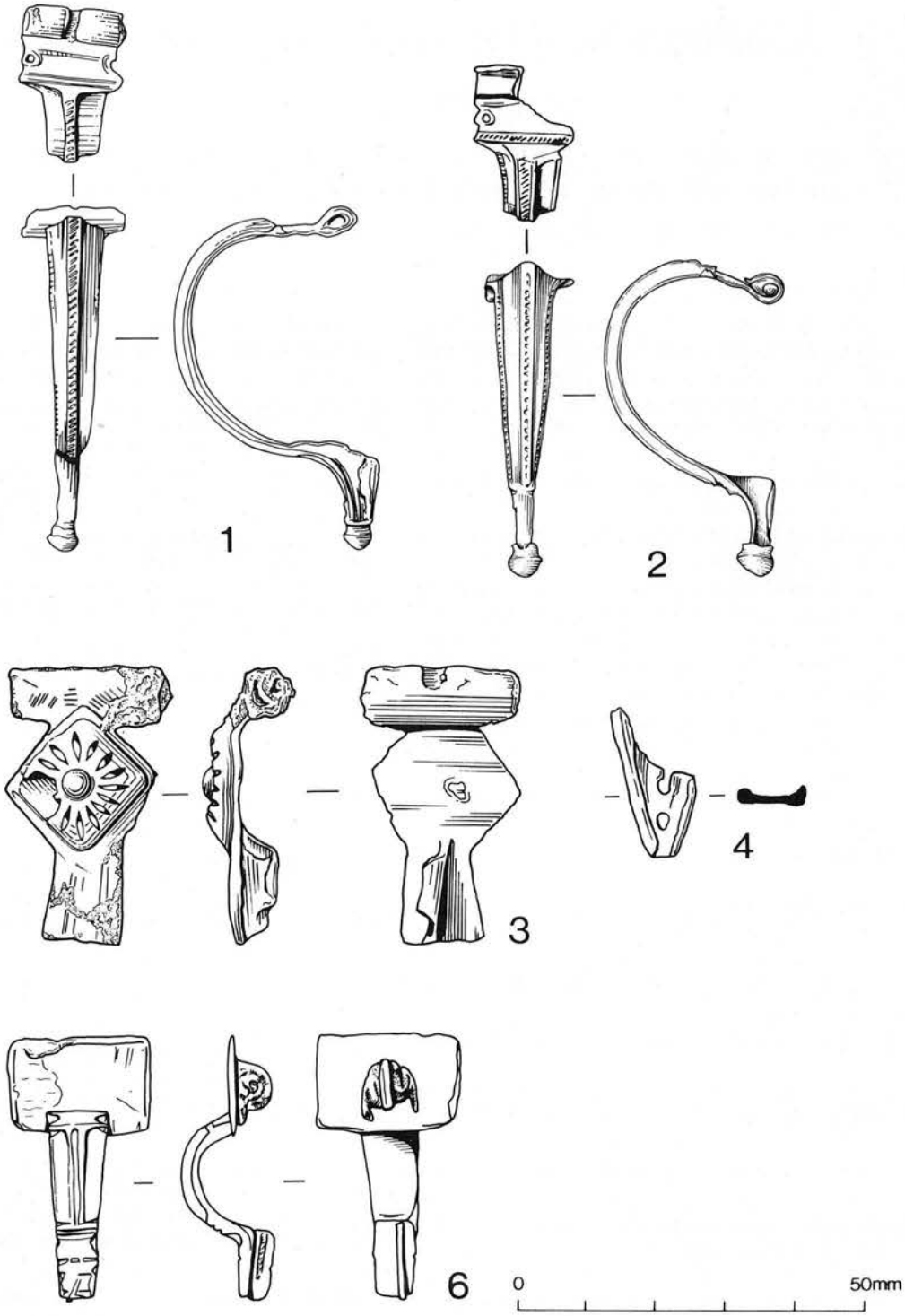


Figure 65 Brooches, copper alloy, scale 1:1

These brooches are relatively common, and were probably of Gaulish manufacture, where they are Augustan to Neronian. In Britain they tend to be Claudian to Neronian.

FIB3 Complete 'rosette' brooch made of hinged plate with internally-sprung pin in cylindrical head applied central rosette of thin repoussé plate. Copper alloy stud in centre, tracer decoration on catchplate. Iron hinge pin, pin missing. (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull 1947, 316, pl. XLIV, 81–4 type XI, Claudio-Neronian). (Site IV, trench 15, stratification uncertain.)

FIB4 Catchplate of fibula (Site I, unstratified).

FIB5 'Pin of fibula' (Site I, trench J, context 83, Period 1–3 pit 2, object lost, not illustrated) (see also CU4 below).

FIB6 Fragment of plain Anglo-Saxon small-long brooch with a square head-plate and a long narrow bow with midrib. Bow has filed facets and lines dividing it from the foot. Part of catchplate present; pin (originally of iron) missing (topsoil Site IV, '60 yards to the south-east of the Anglo-Saxon pits'; TM 2234 2918) (COLEM 176.1975). The type is not particularly diagnostic (see Leeds 1945), but the midribbing and facetting on the long highly arched bow are fairly conventional. The brooch may be quite early, perhaps 5th century and possibly even of continental Saxon manufacture. I am grateful to the late Sonia Hawkes for her comments on this brooch.

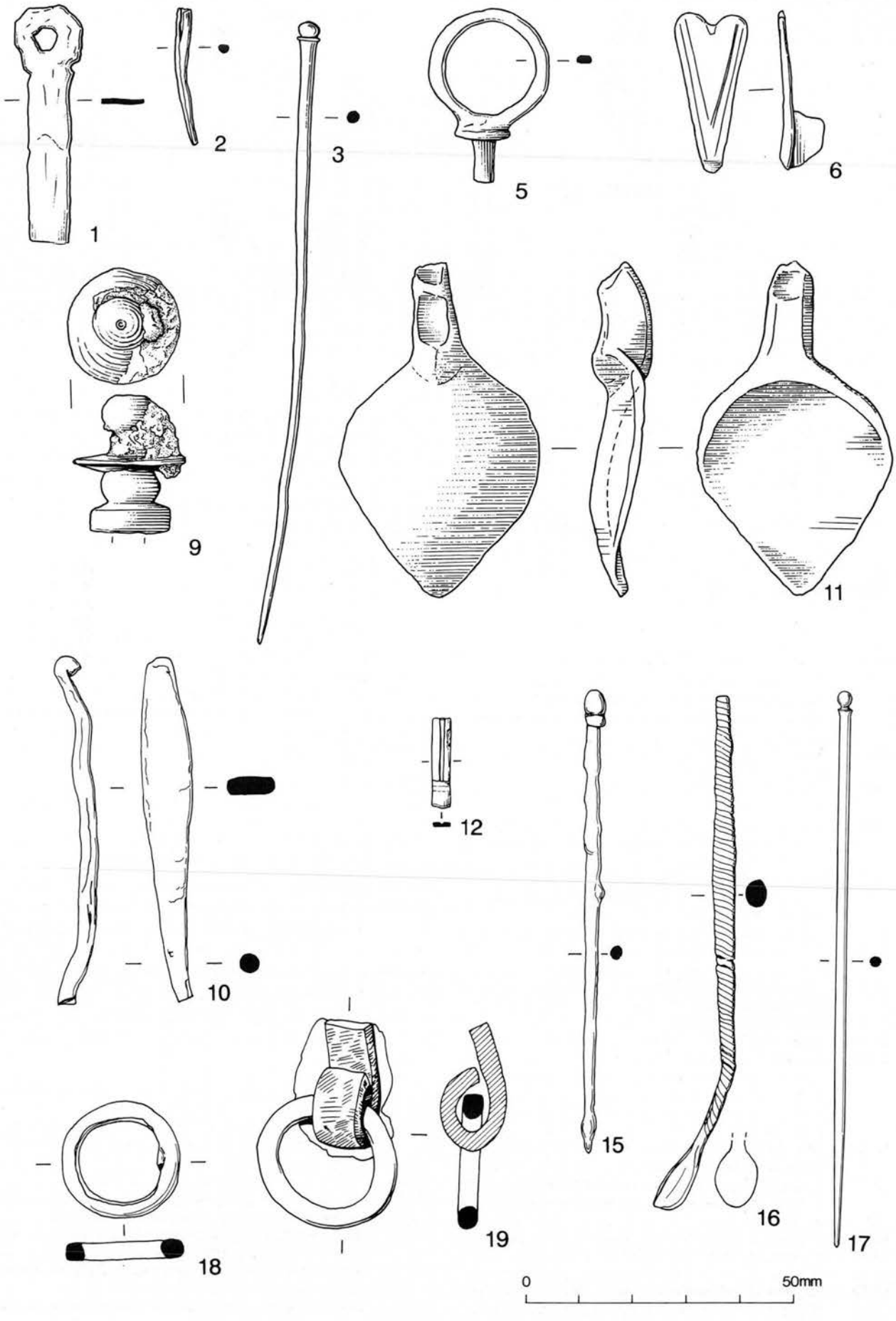


Figure 66 Copper alloy objects, scale 1:1

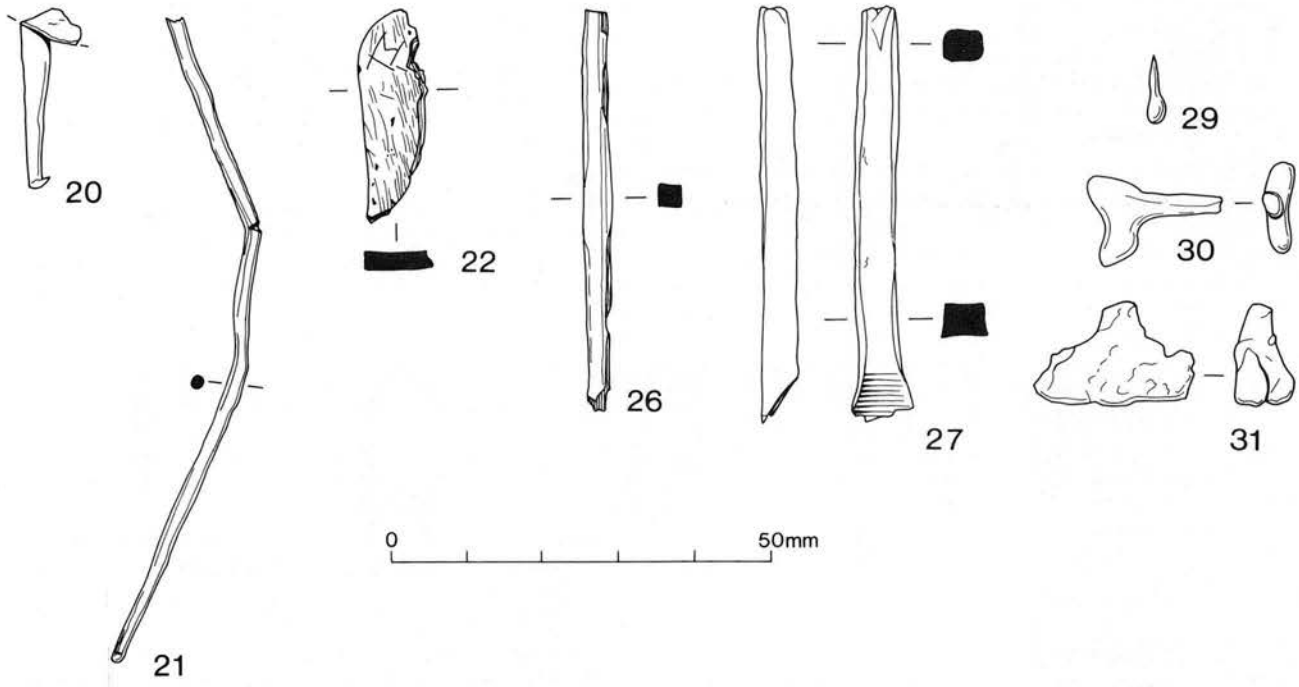


Figure 67 Copper alloy objects, scale 1:1

Objects of copper alloy

(Figs 66–7)

CU1 Fragment of strip bracelet (Site I, unstratified).

CU2 Lace tag (Site I, unstratified).

CU3 Complete hairpin, 116mm long (*cf.* Crummy 1983b, 28–9 types 2 and 5; and Neal 1974, 145, fig. 64 nos 217–23; also Kenyon 1948, 262, fig. 81.1). Crummy dates both types to the second century in Colchester. (Site II, trench D, junction of ploughsoil and subsoil.)

CU4 Fragment of featureless hairpin shank (Site I, F83 Period 1–3 pit upper fill, not illustrated).

CU5 Complete eyelet on shank, uncertain function (Site I, buried subsoil F9).

CU6 Insect-shaped plate with single lug on back. A similar item from Brancaster (Hinchliffe and Green 1985, 209, fig. 88.35) has two lugs and is described as a 'mount'. It is possible that this item is an unfinished brooch (of the type figured by R.A. Smith 1911, 348, fig. 17 and refs). (Site I, layer F8 foundation of floor in Room 11.)

CU7 Copper alloy stud (Site I, buried suboil F9, not illustrated).

CU8 Thin domed sheet fragment, probably the head of a boss or stud (Site IV, Saxon pit 2 layer 8, not illustrated).

CU9 Cast and lathe-turned knob on iron shank, from a piece of furniture *e.g.* stool (*cf.* Liversidge 1955, fig. a) or drawer handle (Site I, unstratified).

CU10 Fragment of ?toilet implement (Site C, topsoil).

CU11 Base of vessel handle. Cast, rectangular section 6 7mm. Leaf-shaped plain attachment is concave to fit a globular body *c.* 80mm diameter. Badly corroded, no trace of solder on interior. Probably from a jug (Site II, rubble spread K8, near coins CN4 and CN7).

CU12 Small fragment of bracelet 17mm long (Period 4, rubble spread A3, SF6).

CU13 Fragment of two-strand twisted wire bracelet, 65 mm diameter, sub-rectangular section 2mm across (topsoil Site C, not illustrated).

CU14 Fragments of pin shank (Site C, topsoil, not illustrated).

CU15 Complete pin 85mm long similar to no. 3 above (pit C22-2, SF3).

CU16 Fragment of ligula with shaft spirally wound with two strands of copper alloy wire, brazed at end (pit C23-4, SF12).

CU17 Complete pin with small globular head and thin shaft similar to no. 3, 103.5mm long (pit C23, SF1).

CU18 Cast ring 22mm diameter, square in section shows 'casting fault', no signs of wear (pit C22-1, SF6).

CU19 Complete cast ring 27mm diameter with sub-triangular section. Embedded in a mass of iron corrosion products which proved upon radiography to be an iron split-loop spike (pit C26-2). (I am grateful to Anne-Marie Bojko of COLEM for arranging the radiography of this and several other items). Some of these cast rings may be related to those attached to late Roman belts, *e.g.* at Lankhills grave 443 (Clarke 1979, 265, fig. 100), but the Little Oakley example would seem to be from a casket (see those in some Colchester Roman cremations, particularly the woman's cremation Joslin 81 (May 1930, pl. LXXXV).

CU20 Shank of stud (pit C23, SF9).

CU21 Length of thin rod or wire 1.5–2.0mm diameter 84mm long, broken at one end, cut at the other (pit C21-1, SF15).

CU22 Fragment of thick cast sheet of dense copper alloy with curved filed edge, faces coarsely filed (Site C, topsoil).

A few other pieces of copper alloy scrap were found, including offcuts. Most of these came from the topsoil of Site C, but also a number of other fragments were found which seem to be indicative of copper alloy casting on the site (see also the crucible and fuel ash slag from pit 1 on Site IV). It should be noted that many of the copper alloy objects noted above are fragmentary, and may have been broken-up deliberately to fit into a crucible for re-use of the metal.

CU23 Three solidified spills (Site III, Phase C fishpond fill, not illustrated).

CU24 Three solidified spills found with a piece of fired clay 'hearth lining' attached (Site IIIB, shelly silt in upper fill of pipe trench feature 4, not illustrated).

CU25 Solidified spill (Site III, unstratified, not illustrated).

CU26 Length of roughly facetted square-sectioned rod (cold worked and thus split), one end possibly cut (Site C, topsoil).

CU27 Billet of worked dense (?leaded) copper alloy flattened at one end (54mm long). Resembles a small tool but is probably more likely to have been a piece of scrap metal flattened at one end (Site C, topsoil).

CU28 Strip of copper alloy with rivet (Site I, F85, shelly yard-metalling, not illustrated).

CU29 Solidified driblet (Site C, topsoil).

CU30 Solidified driblet (Site A, topsoil).

CU31 Solidified spill (pit C22, SF2).

Objects of iron

(Figs 68–9)

The field notes on the Farrands sites mention a number of iron objects, few are now recognisable or labelled. It is notable, however, that few structural fittings were found on Site I, even allowing for the possibility that some may have disintegrated or been lost subsequent to discovery.

Smithing waste

FE1 Several irregular lumps may be fragments of partially worked bloom (Site I, unstratified; and Site II K7 and 8, not illustrated).

FE2 A partially worked billet of iron (Site II, K7 and 8).

Both these are potential smithing waste and indicate (as the slag also demonstrates) that the villa estate probably had a resident smith. The presence and origin of 'shapeless fragments' of iron on archaeological sites is often ignored in the published reports, and yet every fragment of iron on a site must be there due to a human process or activity. In many cases small flattish, rod-like (prismatic) or sub-triangular 'iron lumps' may well have been smithing waste, as postulated here; they may thus be potentially useful evidence (see Barford 1985a).

Structural fittings

FE3 Four cylindrical pipe collars with midribs, much fragmented, 95mm diameter and 25mm long (Site I, Period 3 pipe trench, not illustrated).

FE4 Pipe collar fragments no midrib *c.* 95mm diameter 30mm long (Site III, Phase D, unstratified, not illustrated) (see also 'Nails' below).

Other objects

FE5 Stylus fragment (Manning 1976, 34 type I) badly flaked (Site III, fishpond, Phase C fill, oyster layer, not illustrated).

FE6 Oval buckle loop (Site I, unstratified).

FE7 Iron ring (Site I, layer F85, yard metalling, not illustrated, similar to FE8).

FE8 Iron ring (Site IV, Saxon pit 2, layer 3). A second similar one from this context is not illustrated.

FE9 Knife blade (Site IV, Saxon pit 3, layer 2, object disintegrated, not illustrated).

FE10 Awl 54mm long, no wood replacement. Probably a leather-worker's or carpenter's tool (Site IV, Saxon pit 3, layer 5).

FE11 Two 'iron objects' (Site III, Saxon silt layer 2, objects missing, not illustrated).

FE12 Large portion of latch-lifter (pit C23, SF11).

FE13 Large portion of a latch-lifter; for discussion of the type see Manning 1972, 182, and Manning 1974, 166. The probable method of use is suggested by Ward (1911b, 238–40 and fig. 68). A fragment of iron (FE13a) found with the object may have been a ring through the loop of the handle, or it may be a curled-up nail (Site C, topsoil).

FE14 Complete spade shoe of Manning's (1970, 22) type 2A (*ibid.* for cited parallels and references). See also Corder (1943, fig. 1.2) for a very similar example from *Verulamium*. The differing shapes of Roman spade shoes are probably of functional rather than chronological significance (pit C11, Period 2 or 3 industrial feature, SF2).

FE15 Complete small knife 90mm long of Manning (1976, 37) type II (pit C26-2, SF17).

FE16 Fragment of clamp (for masonry?) (pit C21 1, SF21).

FE17 Complete iron ring 43mm diameter (Phase 3(ii), burnt daub spread C28, SF1).

FE18 Complete iron ring 38mm diameter (pit C23, SF6).

FE19 Hobnail, one of only a few found (A8 Period 8 plough-furrow).

There were also a number of small iron fragments of uncertain origin, which deserve little comment.

Nails

As on most Romano-British sites, iron nails were particularly common at Little Oakley. Few now survive from the Farrands excavations and little can be made of their occurrence and typology. In general, few nails (or structural fittings of any type) came from Site I, excepting the upper fills of the Period 4 pits in Room 4 and the fill of the wooden box-drain. Site II produce many nails from layers K7 and K8, Sites III and IV seem to have produced very few nails, but a Manning (1972, 186) type II nail from Site III was the only example of this type from the whole villa site.

On the Corbishley sites, all stratified nails were kept, and have been examined by the writer. They were all of Manning type I; most (more than 85%) were of the middle size range (IB) as defined elsewhere by the writer (1985b, 182). The remaining were large nails (Barford 1985b, 182, type IC) but those came from pits C21, 23 and 26 only. Most of these nails came from late Roman deposits (*i.e.* of Period 4), reflecting the alterations and demolition of the

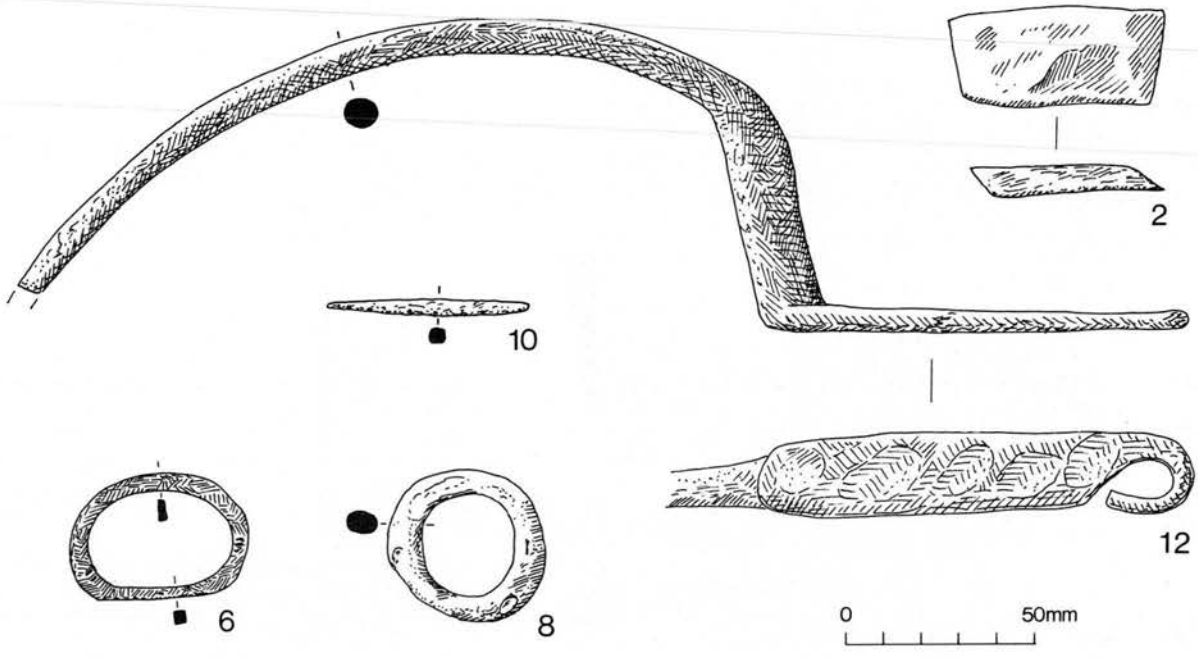


Figure 68 Objects of iron, scale 1:2

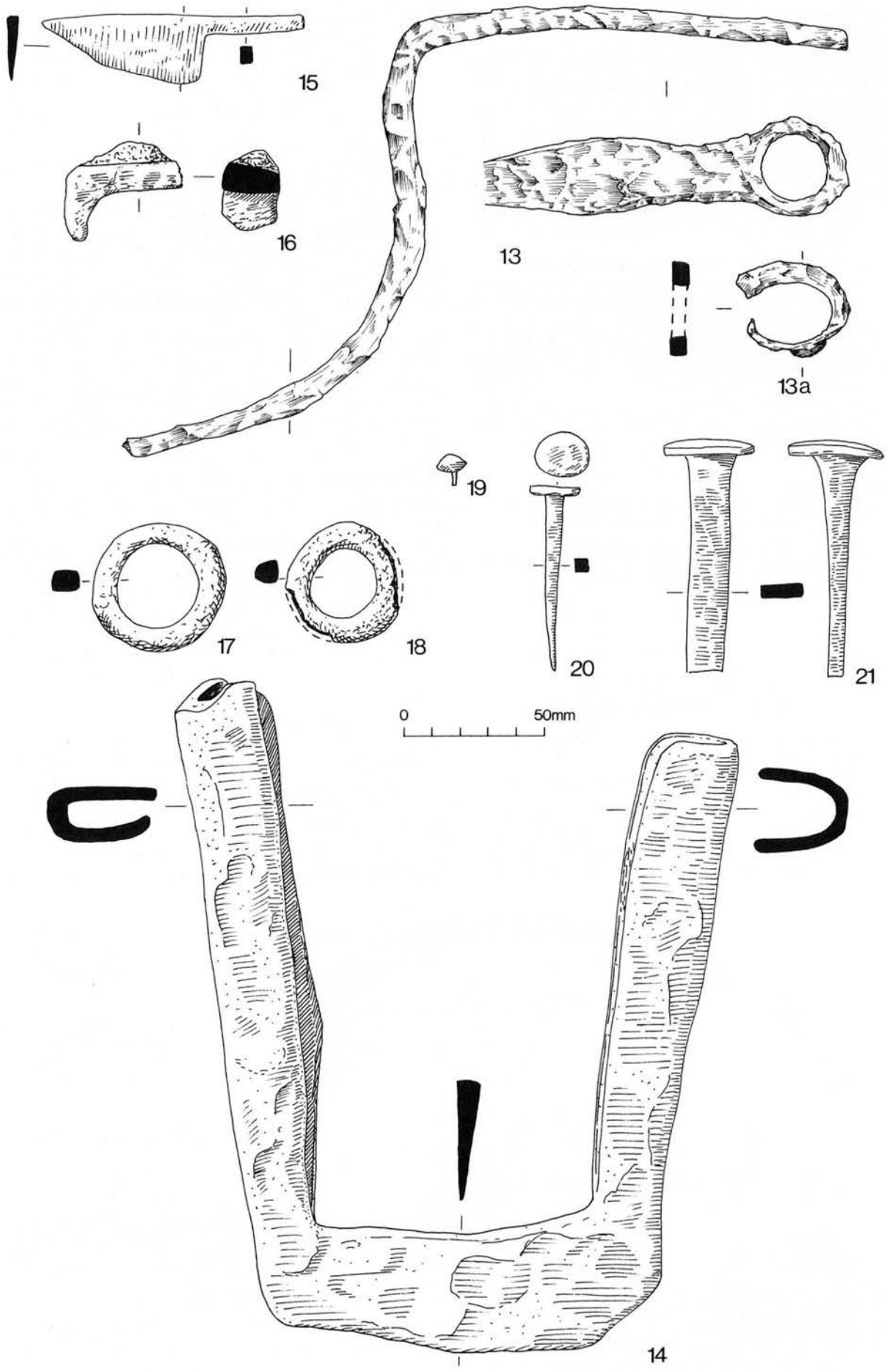


Figure 69 Objects of iron, scale 1:2

villa building. They had the same breakage pattern as those discussed by the writer elsewhere (1985b). Pit C21 contained 85 fragments mainly of IB nails, a few IC; pit C22 contained 16 fragments of IB nails, scattered throughout the fill; pit C23 12 fragments IB and IC nails scattered throughout the fill. C26 contained 12 fragments of IC nails, mainly from the middle and upper fill. A3 contained only one IB nail fragment. Figure 69, FE20, illustrates a typical 'type IB' nail. FE21 is a spike from D15 buried subsoil.

Objects of lead alloy

(Fig. 70)

In several places Farrands' notes make reference to objects of lead or pewter being found, though few appear to survive. Most of these seem to have been solidified spills of molten lead. Some scraps or offcuts were found in the upper fills of the two Saxon pits on Site IV. Similar fragments were also found on the Corbishley site.

The only objects of note are illustrated on Figure 70.

PB1 An irregular piece of lead sheet with a number of nail holes in it, purpose uncertain (pit C23-2).

PB2 A fragment of the side of a thin pewter bowl (pit C23). The vessel had been torn apart and the fragment screwed up. The metal was brittle but could be straightened out enough for the figure to be drawn. The pewter was thin (*c.* 1.25mm) and the everted rim has a frilled edge (*cf.* Henig 1985, 41, fig. 19.150). The upper body was near-vertical (perhaps slightly more convex than drawn). The sharp shoulder divides it from the nearly flat base (the exact orientation of which is uncertain). The manner in which the lower edge has been ripped suggests that a footring has been pulled off.

The late Tony Gregory examined drawings of the lead alloy vessel and commented that without an applied footring and vertical sides it would be a typical pewter dish, like those from the hoard at Hockwold-cum-Wilton, Norfolk, and Weeting, Norfolk. The present writer feels that there is a strong suspicion that a footring was originally present, in which case the affinities are with one or both of two groups of copper alloy bowls. These are the carinated Helmsdale/Burwell type (Gregory 1977, fig. 5.13), and/or the possibly related angular *bassins à bord godronné* (*e.g.* Kennet 1971, Abb. 2.2). These are not precisely dated, but a general 3rd to 4th century date is probable.

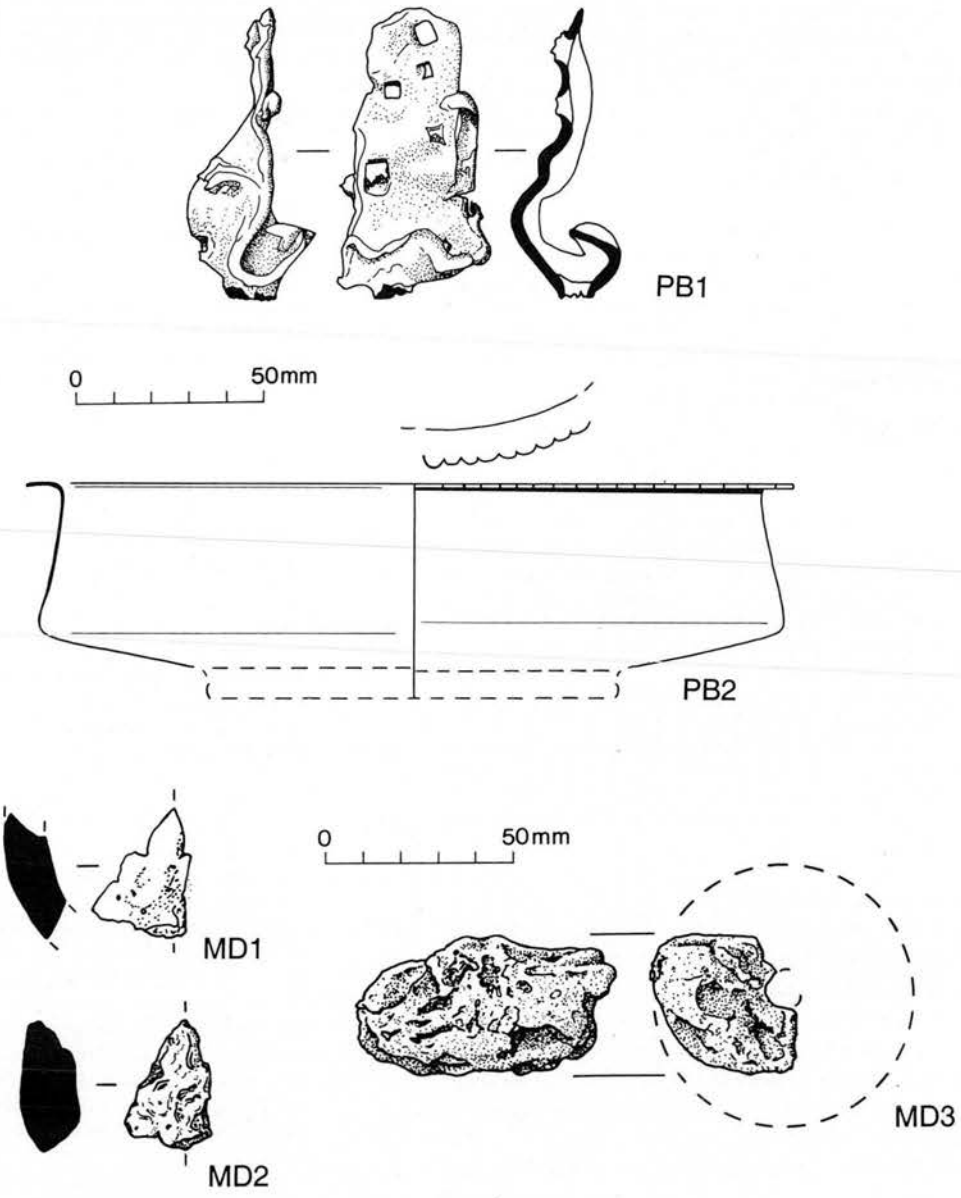


Figure 70 Objects of lead alloy and metalworking debris, scale 1:2

Metalworking debris

Copper alloy objects broken up for scrap, and solidified spills have been noted above, as has iron smithing-waste and the solidified molten lead.

Ceramic metalworking debris

(Fig. 70)

MD1 Crucible sherd of baggy circular vessel, whitish vitreous deposit on exterior (Site IV, pit 1, layer 24). This feature also produced fuel ash slag (see below).

MD2 Crucible sherd of baggy circular vessel, greenish vitreous deposit on exterior (Site IV, Saxon pit 2, lower fill layer 9, probably redeposited from the fill of pit 1 which this feature cuts).

MD3 Possible tuyère fragment, sandy clay with fluxed surfaces and perforation (Site I, fill of Period 5 grave F50).

MD4 Probable crucible sherd (Phase 4(ii), pit C29, not illustrated).

MD5 Crucible sherd, baggy circular vessel, slight vitreous deposit on exterior (Period 1/2 ditch A16, see Fig. 92.57, prehistoric pottery report no. 57).

Slagged hearth lining (iron rich slag) was noted (from Site IV, Saxon pit 2 (six pieces); Period 4 rubble spread A3 (quite a lot); Period 3 pits C23-B; and C33). A piece of fired clay (MD6 – not illustrated) with a vitreous yellow deposit on the surface was recovered from the topsoil on Site C. This was submitted to Justine Bayley of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory whose report is given below.

MD6 The yellow material is a vitreous deposit on the surface of some fired clay which has cracked, allowing the glass to run into it in veins. There are sharp divisions between the glass and ceramic, unlike the gradual changes visible in such things as hearth lining. The vitreous surface to the piece was analysed qualitatively by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) and strong signals for lead were detected as well as weaker ones for tin and iron. The iron is only a contaminant, being present mainly in the adhering soil. The deposit is a lead glass and its opaque yellow colour is due to the presence of lead-tin oxides.

It is easy enough to identify the elements present in this sample and to describe its various components, but the difficult questions are those which relate to its origin and function. Is it the result of deliberate manufacture or did it form accidentally and, if the latter, is the whole thing accidental, or only the location of the glass?

Lead-tin opacified yellow glass is known from Iron Age times onwards (Biek and Bayley 1979); it was used to make glass beads and also as enamel on metal objects. This piece could therefore be interpreted as a fragment from a crucible used to melt or make this glass, but I do not think it is from a crucible as all the definite ones I have seen (from Buckden, Hants, Catsgore, Somerset and ?Flaxengate, Lincoln) have been oxidised fired, while this is mainly reduced. It could be that the glass was deliberately made but was then spilt on a ?clay floor, locally firing it. The final possibility is that the glass formed accidentally; if solder or pewter melted and was heated in oxidising conditions a mixture of lead and tin oxides would form and these could react with a silicate material to produce a lead glass coloured by lead-tin oxide.

The yellow material is definitely a glass coloured by lead-tin yellow; but with so little material, and that not from a good archaeological context, I am not prepared to commit myself as to which of the possibilities outlined above is the most likely.

Slag and similar materials

Iron 'smithing slag' came from a number of deposits mostly Periods 3 and 4 on the Farrands site, in the main as small assemblages of small pieces: Site I: rubble spreads, F20 (seven fragments, 120g), F108 (thirteen fragments); Site III upper phases (a little), Site IV; ditch I, Saxon pit 2, Saxon pit 3. Pieces of possible dense iron slag, perhaps tap slag, came from Site IV from the upper fill of ditch 1, also from ditch 7, trench 18.

The Corbishley sites produced 1.3kg of smithing slag from the topsoil, and a scatter of slag from a number of features mostly fairly late (*cf.* nails). Ditches A16 and A5 produced four scraps, A23 twelve fragments (proportionally high compared with other features, *cf.* the low quantity of pottery from A23), Period 4 pit C27 four fragments, A3 and C26 produced considerable assemblages, discussed below, Period 4 pit A21 one fragment.

Fuel ash slag (defined Bayley 1985, 41) came from a number of contexts, sometimes in association with other types of metalworking debris, including a quantity of small pieces of iron rich fuel ash slag from A3 and several lumps of green vitreous fuel ash slag from Site IV, early Roman pit 1, layer 20.

Context A3 (Period 4 rubble spread) produced 0.8kg of slag, mostly iron-rich fuel ash slag (thirty-two fragments) and iron 'smithing slags' (four fragments). Some of the fuel ash slag has fired clay hearth lining adhering to it. The contemporary pit A21 produced one fragment of iron smithing slag. The A3 slag may have been from activity in the vicinity, or may have formed part of the rubble used to make this deposit.

Pit C26 (Period 3) produced ten fragments of iron 'smithing slag' from the upper fill only. Two of these fragments were comparatively large, and seem not to be hearth bottoms. They may be from a furnace and may be indicative of smelting in the vicinity of the site.

Objects of fired clay

(Figs 71, 72)

Loomweights

FC1–6 Fragments of triangular loomweights were found in a number of Iron Age and Roman contexts on the site, as well as in certain unstratified contexts. Pieces came from Site I; F9 buried subsoil, grave F50 and F77 ditch 1 fill; Site IV, trench 20 (ditch 4, layer 2), and sections 5 and 6 across ditch 5 (Fig. 71.5–6 only are illustrated; unprovenanced).

Spindle-whorls

FC7 Complete oxidised fired clay biconical whorl (Site I, F73 buried subsoil).

FC8 Fragment of similar whorl, flint-gritted fired clay (Site I, F9 buried subsoil).

FC9 Sherd whorl cut from sherd of Belgic grog-tempered ware (Site I topsoil, trench W).

Other objects

FC10 'Oven debris'. Farrands noted in Site IV ditch 1 a layer (3B) containing much fired and yellow unfired clay. He interpreted this as collapsed oven debris — he also noted fragments of 'oven brick' from this deposit (not illustrated).

FC11 Fragment of perforated block of uncertain function, paralleled at Mucking in Belgic/Early Roman contexts (Barford forthcoming a). (Site III, Phase A fishpond fill, layer 25).

FC12 Corner of a block (*e.g.* firebar or rectangular loomweight) (Site I, F35 SF14).

FC13 Fired clay with flat 'white' faces from Site I F35 (not illustrated)

FC14 Gully D10 produced a quantity of small abraded fragments of hard-fired but friable fired clay with copious quartz sand temper. There were twelve fragments in this feature, and six abraded fragments in contexts D11, D13 and D15. The surface bears predominantly flat impressions, but on only a few pieces does this have an edge (Fig. 72.14g–h). This material was at first considered as potential metalmould, but the writer feels that these are fragments of oven-lining, as found at Mucking, which have prominent trowel and finger marks on the interior surface.

FC15 Fragment of 'Belgic brick' (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 178–81). Probably not a briquetage vessel sherd. (Site IV, ditch 1, layer 4 second or fourth cut) (Not illustrated).

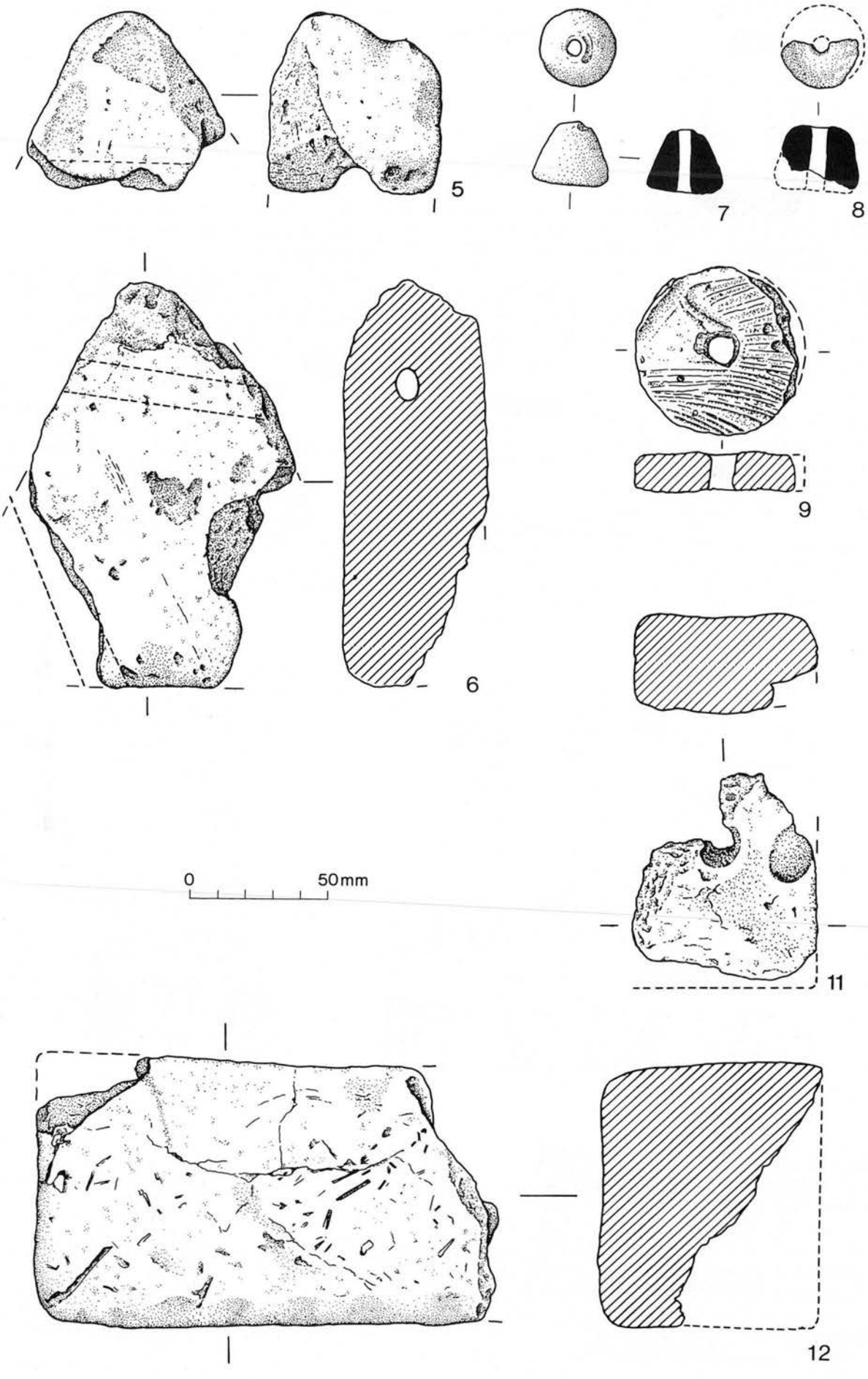


Figure 71 Objects of fired clay, scale 1:2

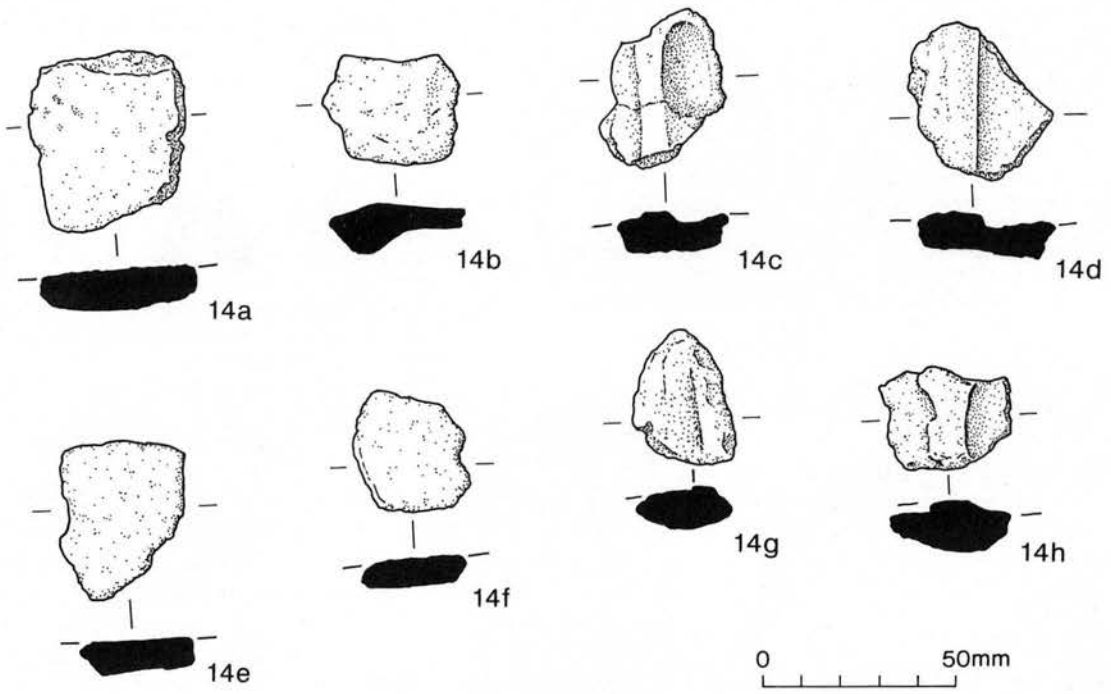


Figure 72 Objects of fired clay, scale 1:2

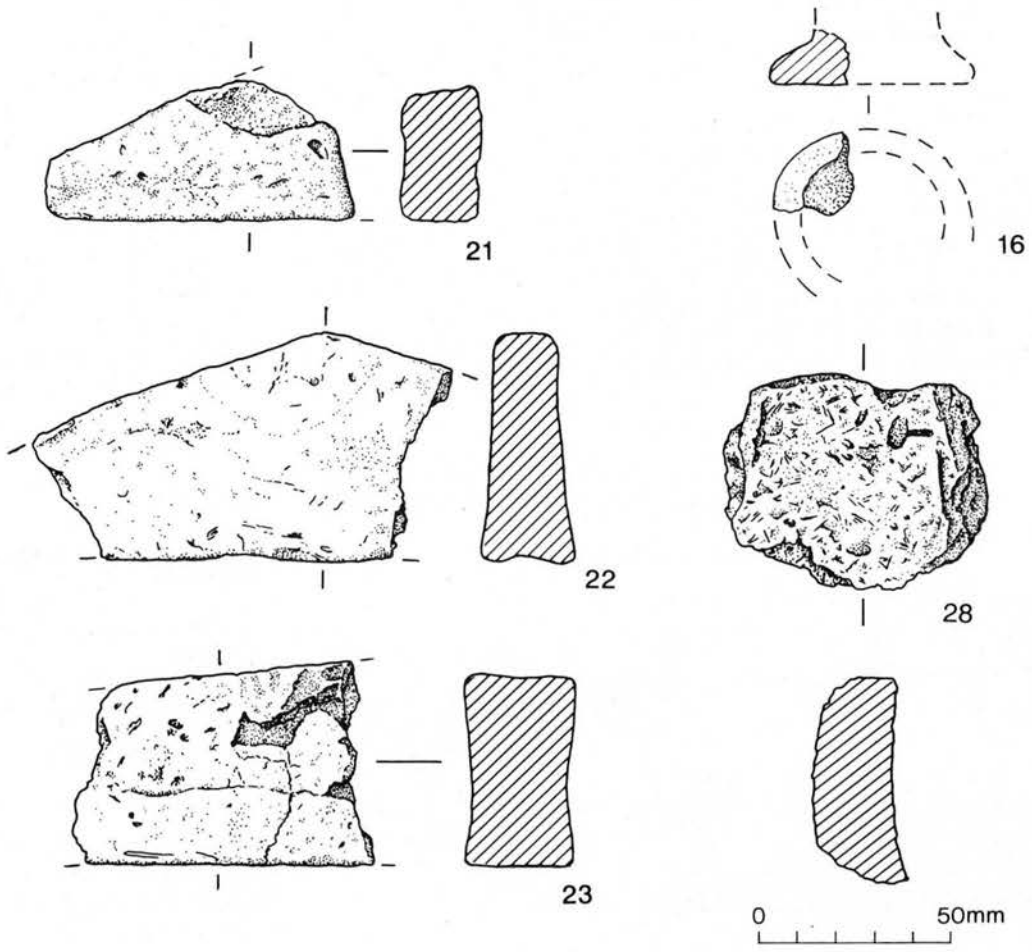


Figure 73 Briquetage, scale 1:2

Briquetage
(Fig. 73)

FC16 Base of thin pedestal in a different fabric from the Roman briquetage, and indeed from all of the other fired clay on the site. It is the base of a small pedestal in an oxidised ('brickearth texture') fabric with a thick white surface. The core is coloured purple-pink. The shape of the pedestal (and the fabric) is very similar to the small salt pedestals from Corringham (Barford 1984–5, 140) and the South and North Rings, Mucking, Essex (Barford 1988, 39–41). and it seems quite likely that this fragment may be Later Bronze Age (Site C, topsoil).

FC17 Small fragment of briquetage in similar fabric (Site IV, Saxon pit 2, upper fill, 1 hearth, not illustrated).

Essex Red Hill type briquetage

Little Oakley is one of an increasing number of inland sites from which briquetage has been recovered (see Rodwell 1979). The writer has argued elsewhere (Thompson and Barford 1986, 169–70) that this material may have been used for salt-licks for livestock. Briquetage and the Little Oakley Red Hills are discussed elsewhere in this volume.

FC18 Two small abraded scraps of vessel sherds (Period 2 ditch A5, not illustrated).

FC19 Briquetage scraps (Site I, F117 fill of Period 2 pit, not illustrated).

FC20 Vessel sherd (Site I, trench 0, ?Period 2 scoop M in corridor floor, not illustrated).

FC21 End of firebar (Site I, unstratified).

FC22 Middle of firebar (Site I, 'gully cut by villa walls').

FC23 Fragment of (?Red Hill) firebar (Site I, F49 rubble layer).

FC24 Two vessel sherds (Site III, Phase A, layer 24, not illustrated).

FC25 Three scraps of vessel (Site III, Phase B layer 23, not illustrated).

FC26 Dubious vessel sherd (Site III, Phase D ditch, not illustrated).

FC27 Two vessel sherds (Site IV, trenches 5 and 6, Period 1 ditch 5, not illustrated).

FC28 Dubious vessel sherd (Site IV, ditch 1, layer 4).

Fired clay scraps

Scraps and small lumps of fired clay were found in a number of features especially subsoil F9 on Site I and several pits and robber trenches on Site C: pit/oven C11, C14, pit C22-4, pit C28, robber trench C32, robber trench C34, pit C36 and robber trench C38 (in contexts C11 and 14, 28, 31, 34, 36 and 38 in a similar fabric). The material from C28 and C36 was very similar. It consisted of many kilogrammes of various sized lumps of sandy fired clay. Some had flat surfaces, but no wattle impressions. This could be burnt daub or oven debris.

Pipeclay figurine
(Fig.74)

FC29 Feet of a broken free-standing figurine in fine white pipeclay. This is a portion of a Venus figurine showing the naked goddess in the pose of Venus Anadyomene. The statuette was produced in a two-part clay mould, and then luted to the hollow base while the clay was still plastic; the surface has been carefully burnished and is very smooth to the touch. As is usual, the feet are roughly modelled and the toes hardly indicated, this being due to the joining of the component parts.

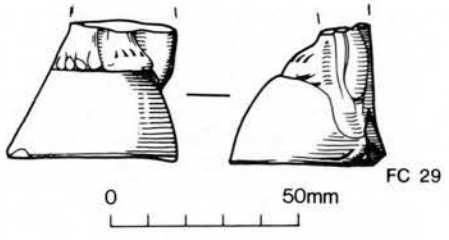


Figure 74 Pipe clay figurine fragment, scale 1:2

Visual examination indicates that this figurine most probably was a product of the workshops at Moulins-sur-Allier in Central Gaul which were in operation in the early to mid 2nd century.

This type of clay statuette is frequently found at Romano-Celtic temple sites in Gaul, and was also used for offerings to the dead and in domestic shrines. For its possible religious significance see Jenkins (1959). This was one of the most popular of the Venus figurines found in Britain and has a widespread distribution, especially in the south-east, though dating evidence is scarce. It appears that the type was first brought to Britain *c.* AD 120/30, with trade peaking in the middle of the century and finishing perhaps about 170. I am grateful to Dr Frank Jenkins for his comments on a drawing of this item, on which the above note was based (Site II, late Roman post-hole K22).

Flints

Several hundred flint flakes were found during the excavations. Only the material from the Corbishley excavations has been catalogued, but the writer has also examined each of the pieces from the Farrands sites, and they seem essentially to be very similar. Virtually all of it was from contexts of Period 2 and later, thus only a small selection is illustrated.

About 173 flakes were catalogued from the 1975–8 excavations, most were small blade-like primary and secondary flakes. Only three small irregular cores and eighteen retouched or utilised pieces were found. None of the latter were of specific or chronologically useful types and the material is essentially undatable. Indeed it seems that several phases may be represented. The smaller narrower blades tended to be in a patinated matt light grey or light brown glossy flint, and may be Mesolithic or early Neolithic in date. The remainder (less than 10%) were broader flakes in a glossy dark grey or brown flint, which was rarely patinated and were possibly later in date. The few implements included small scrapers (Fig. 75.3 and 6), several utilised blades, a backed blade and a denticulated blade (Fig. 75.4). The flint was clearly derived from many different nodules (the grey and black flint possibly derived from the chalk and washed round the coast from the north, the brown flint from nearby gravel deposits). Some of the flakes may derive from preliminary trimming of nodules before they were taken elsewhere to be made into tools.

Illustrated items
(Fig. 75)

FT1 Blade, light brownish flint, platform removed (Site C, topsoil).

FT2 Retouched and damaged blade segment, glossy dark brown flint, possibly a gun-flint? (Site A, topsoil).

FT3 Thumbnail scraper, honey-brown flint, (possibly partly pressure-flaked?) butt damaged (D13 Period 1 gully).

FT4 Denticulated blade, thinned butt, light brownish grey flint (Site C, topsoil).

FT5 Elongated spall, retouch on one side, dark brown flint (Site C, topsoil).

FT6 Round scraper in patinated light brown flint, made on a thick cortical flake (D13 Period 1 gully).

The flints indicate prehistoric occupation of the site, but the apparent lack of contemporary pottery and the extent of the damage to some of the flakes may suggest that a prehistoric site had existed on the top of the hillslope here, but upon ploughing in pre-Roman times, most of the contemporary features were destroyed, and the pottery weathered away. Roman features were later dug through the topsoil containing the scattered flints.

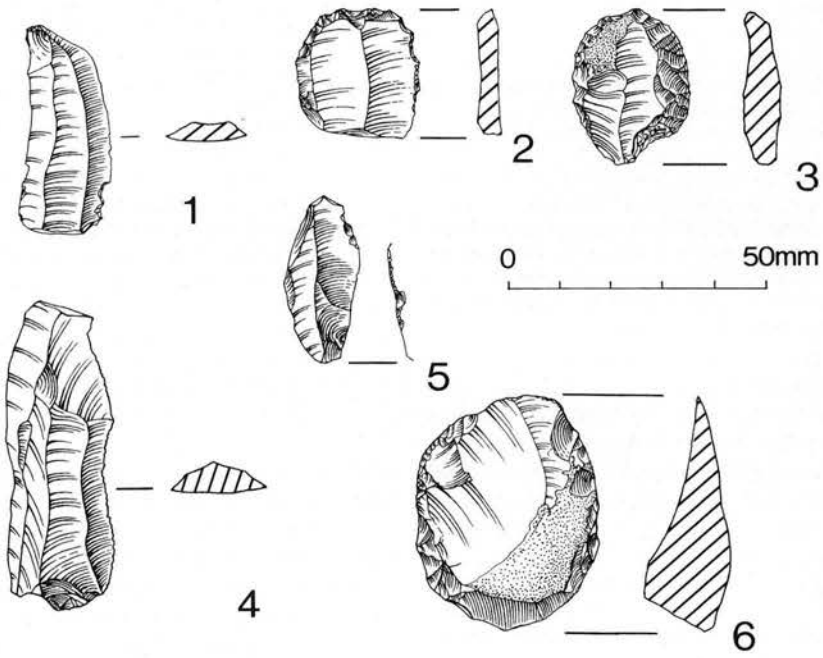


Figure 75 Flint objects, scale 2:3

Objects of stone
(Figs 76–7)

Querns
A number of quern fragments and a millstone fragment were found at Little Oakley. These were of a number of types of stone, none local. In most cases less than 10% of the quernstone survives, and no fragments show handle or rhynd slots.

Lava
Small fragments of grey lava were found in a number of contexts on Sites III and IV (mostly from late contexts) and in contexts A1, A3, A5 and A7. These presumably derive from lava querns; at least six querns are probably represented, possibly more.

ST1 Fragment upper stone (Farrands, unprovenanced).
ST2 Small fragment (Period 2 ditch A5, not illustrated).
ST3 Fragments. Lower stone, edge vertically tooled, radial tooling on lower surface; grinding face (illustrated) has 'harp' tooling shown restored here where stone is damaged (Site A, topsoil).

Other materials
ST4 Fragment. Upper stone, Puddingstone, small pebbles with dark margins (Site IV, trenches 18 or 19).
ST5 Battered and burnt fragment of Puddingstone quern, flat grinding surface, small pebbles (Period 4 rubble spread A3).
ST6 Abraded fragment of lower millstone *c.* 0.8m diameter, lower surface tooled, upper surface worn, Millstone Grit (rubble spread A3).
ST7 Shapeless fragment Millstone Grit (Period 2 ditch A5, not illustrated).
ST8 Portion of pale quartzite ('Sarsen') with flat surface, possibly part of a saddle quern (D10, not illustrated).
ST9 Fragment. Upper stone of coarse Millstone Grit quern. Lower surface radially grooved (not worn), edge roughly tooled, upper (illustrated) surface 'harp' tooled 0.44m diameter (Site III, rubble layer, layer 6).

There is nothing especially remarkable about the Little Oakley quernstone fragments, but the millstone fragment (ST6) is notable. Lava querns were imported from the continent through east coast ports such as London and Colchester in some quantity, especially in the early Roman period (Buckley and Major 1983, 75–6). Three other querns were of Millstone Grit from an unknown (but necessarily distant source). It is notable that Millstone Grit querns are uncommon in Roman Colchester (Buckley and Major 1983, 76). Likewise Puddingstone querns (probably from a Hertfordshire source?) are uncommon in Colchester and its hinterland (Buckley and Major 1983, 76). The two fragments from Little Oakley are thus of some interest.

Honestones
(Fig. 77)

ST10 Sarsen/sandstone hone (Site IV, early Roman pit 1, layer 13, not illustrated).
ST11 Sandstone hone fragment (Site IV, Saxon pit 2 upper fill, not illustrated.)
ST12 Dark schist honestone (Site III, above Phase F rubble spread). Schist honestones tend to be post-Roman, but this could have been made locally from a glacial erratic.
ST13 Whetstone of rectangular pebble of grey quartzite (trench Z, topsoil).
ST14 Two flat beach pebbles with polished faces (Site I, F9 buried subsoil, not illustrated).
ST15 Irregular sarsen pebble with polished face (Site II, trench D subsoil, not illustrated).
ST16 Similar pebble (Site I, layer F85, yard metalling, not illustrated).
ST17 Portion of utilised pink quartzite (Sarsen) pebble, possibly sharpening stone (D15 buried subsoil, not illustrated).

Stone objects
(Fig. 77)

ST18 Fragment of disc-shaped jet spacer bead perforated tangentially. Probably redeposited prehistoric or, more likely, late Roman (See Lawson 1976, 244–7, nos 6–9, 4th century; also Wheeler and Wheeler 1932, fig. 18.76; and Lloyd-Morgan 1985, fig. 35.418). (Site IV, Saxon pit 3 layer 3).
ST19 Fragment of stone bead or whorl (possibly Carrara or similar white marble?) diameter 30mm, 14mm high. Perforation near centre is small (Site C, topsoil). Possibly not Roman.
ST20 Cubic object of basalt of uncertain use. The surfaces are polished, and the edges are rounded (Site I, unspecified 'gully cut by villa walls'). Possibly some kind of rubber or burnishing tool — alternatively, perhaps a touchstone?
ST21 Fragment of grey slate pencil, post-medieval (Site C, topsoil).

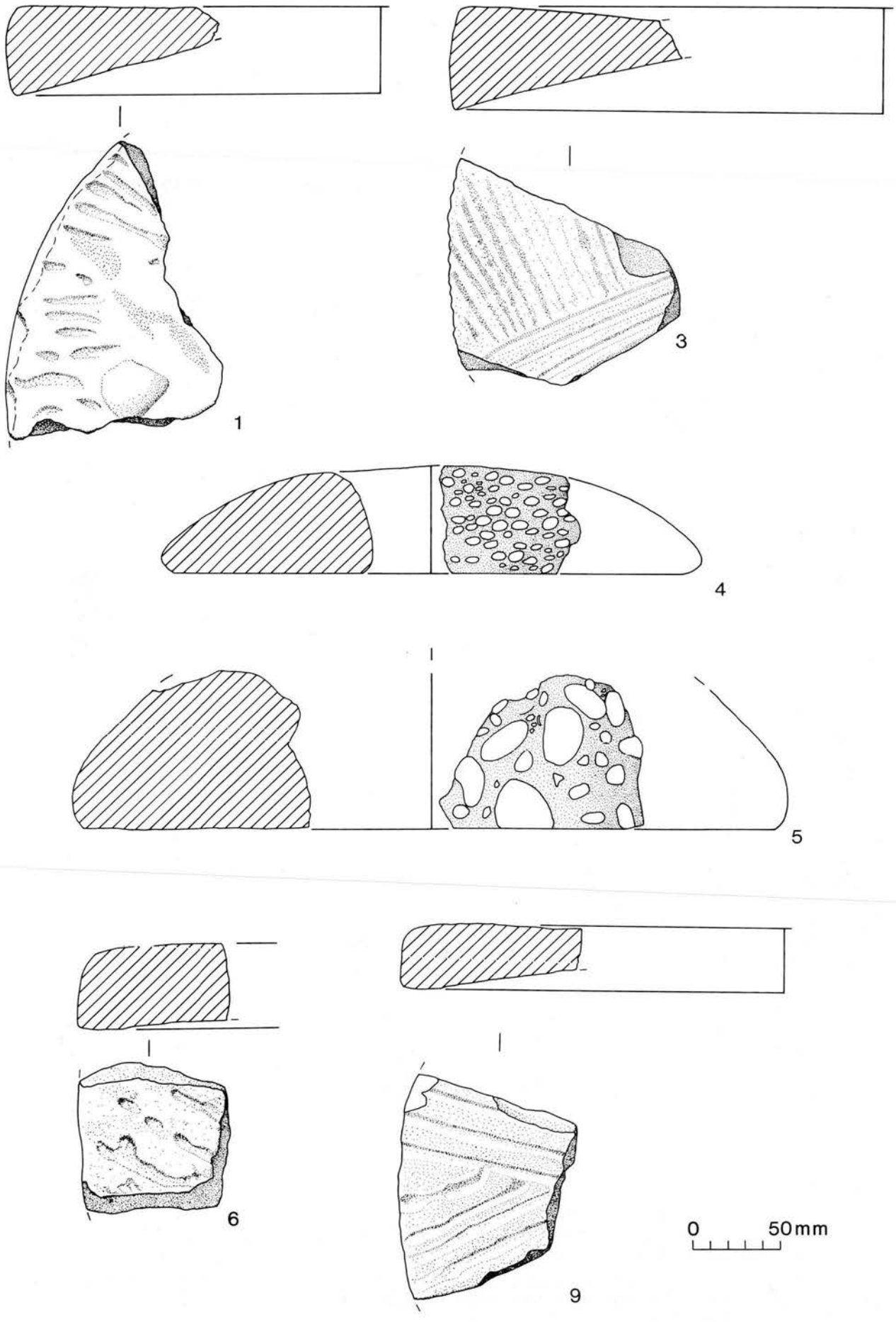


Figure 76 Quernstones and millstone fragment, scale 1:3

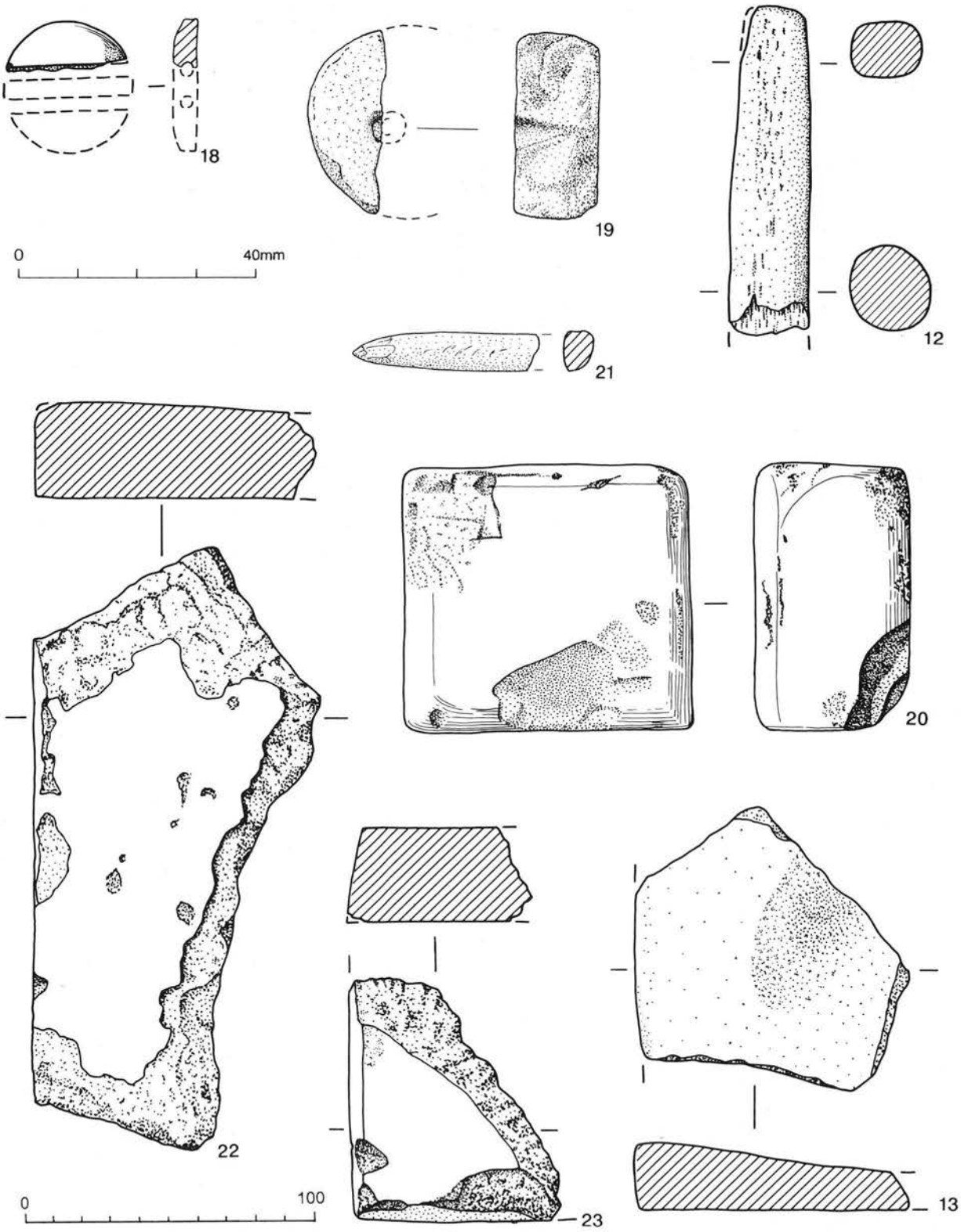


Figure 77 Stone objects. Scales: nos 18, 19, 20, 21 1:1; nos. 12, 13, 22, 23 1:2

Miscellaneous stone

A number of pieces of Purbeck Marble slabs were found in layers 2 and 3 of pit C26 (as well as an abraded fragment in the topsoil of Site A). One corner fragment showed that the sheet was rectangular or square. Purbeck marble occurs in probable Flavian and pre-Flavian deposits at a number of villa sites in south-east England, *e.g.* Rivenhall, Park Street, Fishbourne, Fingringhoe II. Here it was probably used as opulent wall-sheathing or flooring.

ST22–3 Largest fragments of Purbeck Marble veneer (pit C26-3).

Lumps of chalk were found in C21 and C33, and calcined flints occurred in many contexts. While some of the latter may have been prehistoric 'pot-boilers', some may have been imported to the site as impurities in lime used in the Roman building and discarded on site.

A lump of decayed granite came from the topsoil on Site A. A piece of burnt sandstone came from A5.

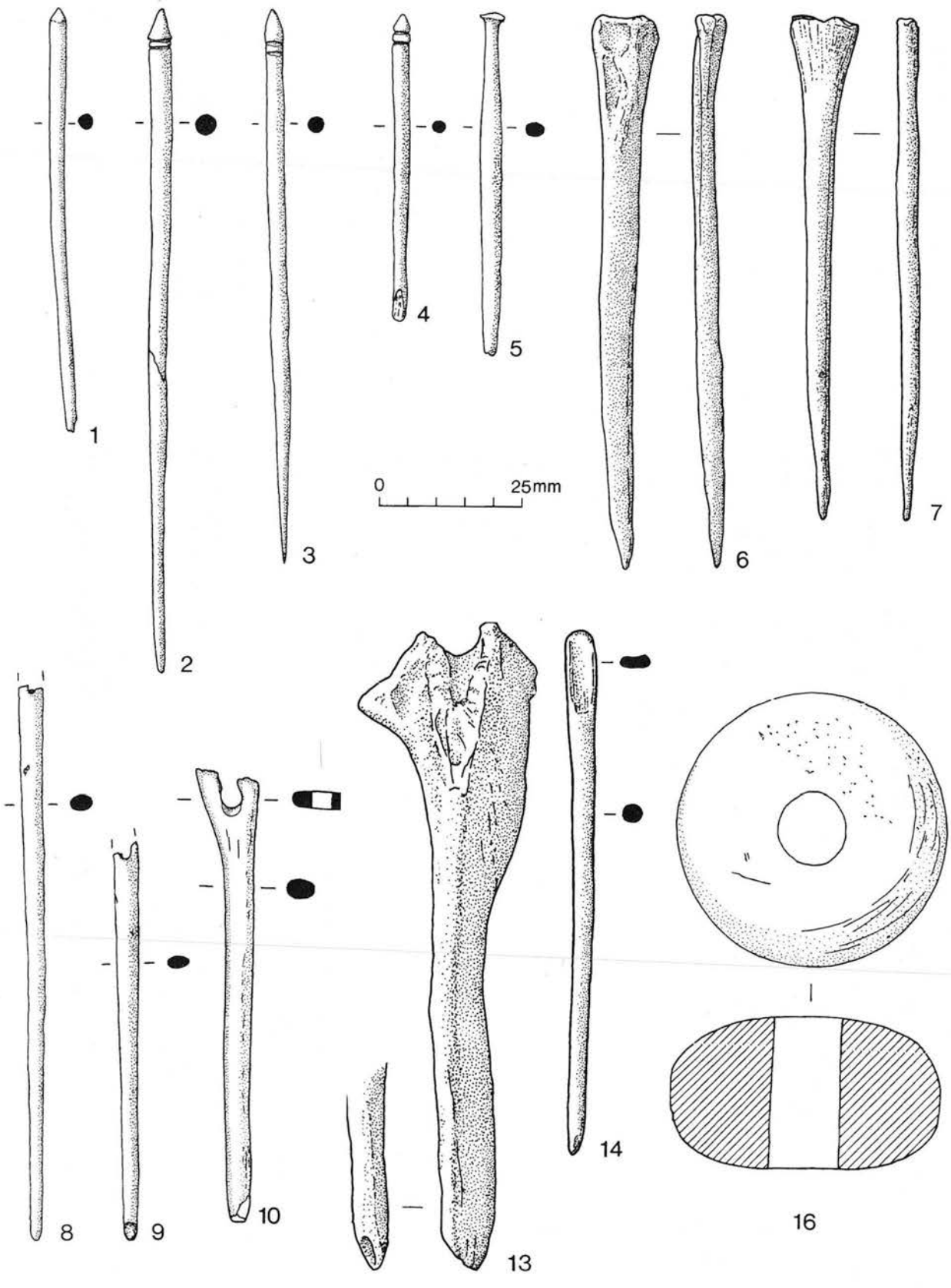


Figure 78 Objects of bone, scale 1:1

Coal was apparently not used on the site, as only one small fragment (from A5) was noted. This was presumably intrusive.

Objects of bone

(Figs 78–9)

BN1 Pin fragment, 73mm long, of Crummy's (1983b, 20) type 1, which she dates from the Flavian period until the early-mid 3rd century. Unevenly stained green, probably by copper corrosion products, although MacGregor (1978, 35, fig. 19.266) discusses an example from York, and draws attention to two other green-stained pins from York (in the Bateman Collection, Sheffield Museum). Harrison (1972, 155) notes three plain pins from Rochester which had also been coloured green (see also Crummy 1983, 20–1 and 65 for green-stained pins) (Site C, topsoil).

BN2 Complete pin (in two fragments when found) of Crummy's (1983b, 21) type 2 (which has a similar date range to type 1). Well made. Length 118mm (pit C22-2, SF5).

BN3 Complete pin also of Crummy's type 2, but the head is crudely made. 96mm long (pit C22-2, SF7).

BN4 Fragment of bone pin of Crummy's type 2 (Site III, Phase F, rubble spread).

BN5 Fragment of bone pin of Crummy's (1983b, 24–5) type 6 (*cf.* her no. 423) broken tip has been rounded-off for reuse (Site I, unstratified).

BN6 Complete pin made from pig fibula, bone somewhat mineralised (Site IV, trench 20, Period 1, ditch 4, layer 3).

BN7 Similar pin (Site IV, Saxon pit 2, layer 3).

BN8 Almost complete bone bodkin (see Crummy 1983b, 65–6) with a blunt point. Broken at the eye, 96mm long (pit C22, SF4).

BN9 Similar bodkin fragment, 69mm long, point possibly broken and reshaped (pit C23, SF2).

BN10 'Bone needle' (Site IV Saxon pit 2, layer 2.

BN11 'Bone needle' (Site III, trench C3, Phase J deposits, missing not illustrated).

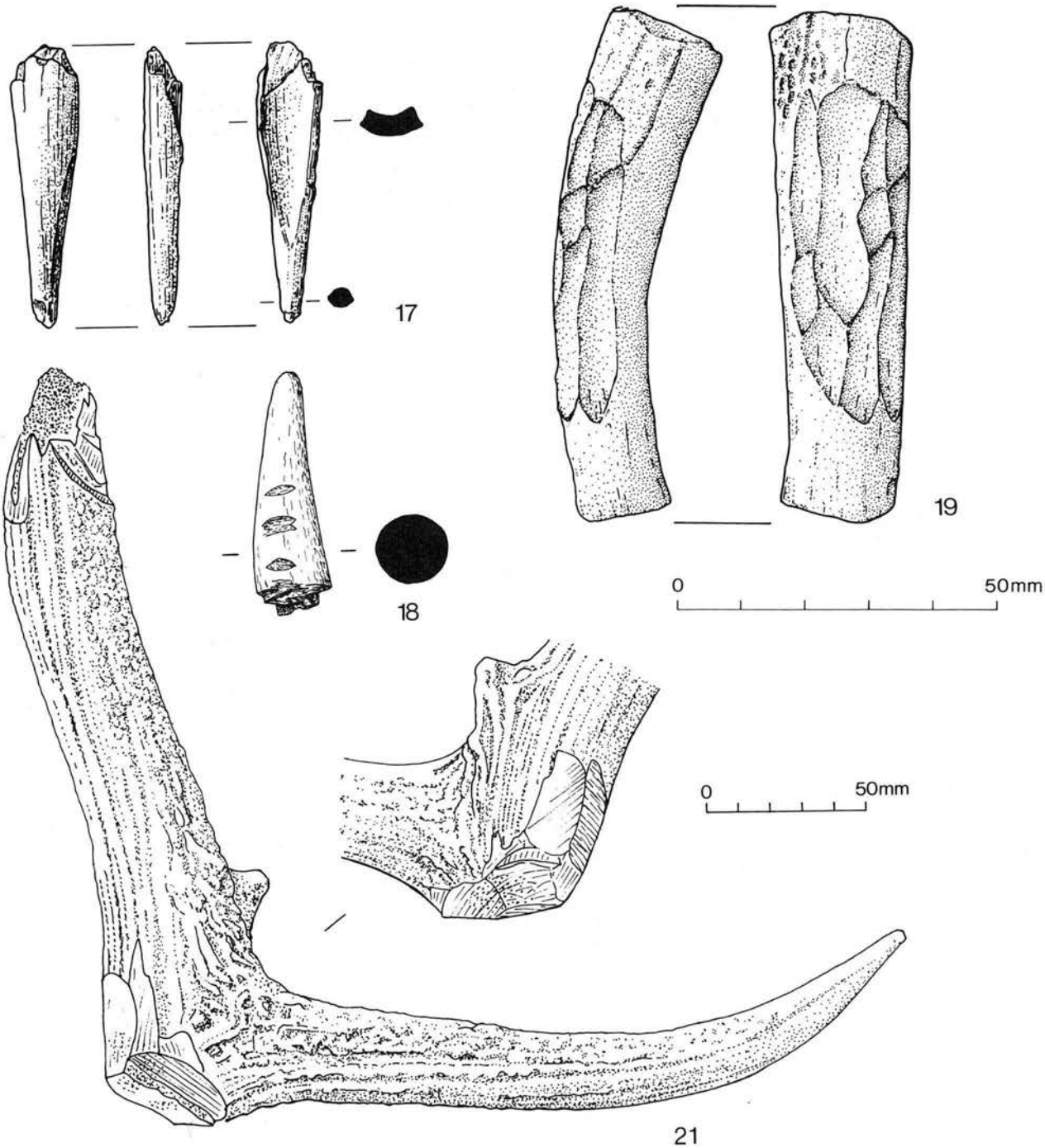


Figure 79 Objects of antler, scale 1:1 (except no. 21, 1:2)

BN12 'Bone needle' (Site IIID, Phase J deposits, missing, not illustrated).

BN13 Spatulate tool made from pig ulna with end ground down and worn. Bone is somewhat mineralised. (Site I, F9 buried subsoil, SF8).

BN14 Spatulate tool (Site I, unstratified).

BN15 Spatulate tool (Site IV, Saxon pit 2, layer 2 'hearth'). COLEM Acc. No. 175.1975. Missing not illustrated.

BN16 Bone flattened globular spindle-whorl, lathe-turned from longbone end, drilled hole (Site IV, Saxon, pit 2, layer 2). COLEM 175.1975.

BN17 Fragment of end of pointed object of longbone, pared down at one end. Probably pin-making waste (Site I, F9, buried subsoil).

BN18 Offcut of antler tine, showing saw marks. The tine had been cut around the circumference and broken off. 40mm long (Site C, topsoil).

BN19 Tine of red deer antler with knife-trimmed surfaces, possibly the blank for manufacture of an object (Site II, layer K7).

BN20 Shaped boar's tusk (Site IV, Saxon pit 3, layer 2, missing, not illustrated).

BN21 Fragment of red deer antler with the burr chopped off and the beam chopped and broken 240mm above it. The direction of these cuts in relation to the curved brow tine shows that the workman was left-handed. Only a slight burr is visible in the position of the bez tine (pit C26-1).

BN22 Bone pin made of pig fibula (Site III, Period 5 layer 2, not illustrated).

Objects of wood and leather

(Fig. 80)

Wood

All of the wood came from Site III, from the lower fills of the fishponds. None of this wood survives and it has been drawn from sketches: the arrows indicate direction of grain.

W1 Handle of door (possibly one of two similar) found in the first cut of the fishpond (drawn from photo, see cover).

W2 Wedge-shaped offcut or valve flap (one of several) from the first cut of the fishpond.

W3 Plank. A number of other planks were noted as having been found. Few were sketched or photographed. Some measurements were noted:

W4 9 × 2 × 3/16 inches (not illustrated).

W5 9 × 2 × 3/16 inches (not illustrated).

W6 5 × 1¼ inches (not illustrated).

W7 'Wooden stake with groove' ('stable refuse layer', Phase B fishpond fill, not illustrated).

Leather

Part of a leather 'boot' was apparently found in the first cut of the fishpond. The object does not now survive.

Vessel glass and glass beads

(Fig. 81)

The site produced a number of fragments of vessel glass, though not a particularly large group. Most of these pieces were very small and featureless, as is usual on an occupied site, which one suspects would have been kept fairly clear of sherds of broken glass (to avoid injury to people and livestock). Most of the vessel sherds were of bottles. Forms are those of Isings (1957).

Isings forms 50 and 90 bottles

Fragments of these square bottles are commonly encountered on Roman sites and the Little Oakley villa is no exception. Five sherds came from Site I (unstratified), four from Site III from Phase D onwards, but only one sherd from the Corbishley sites.

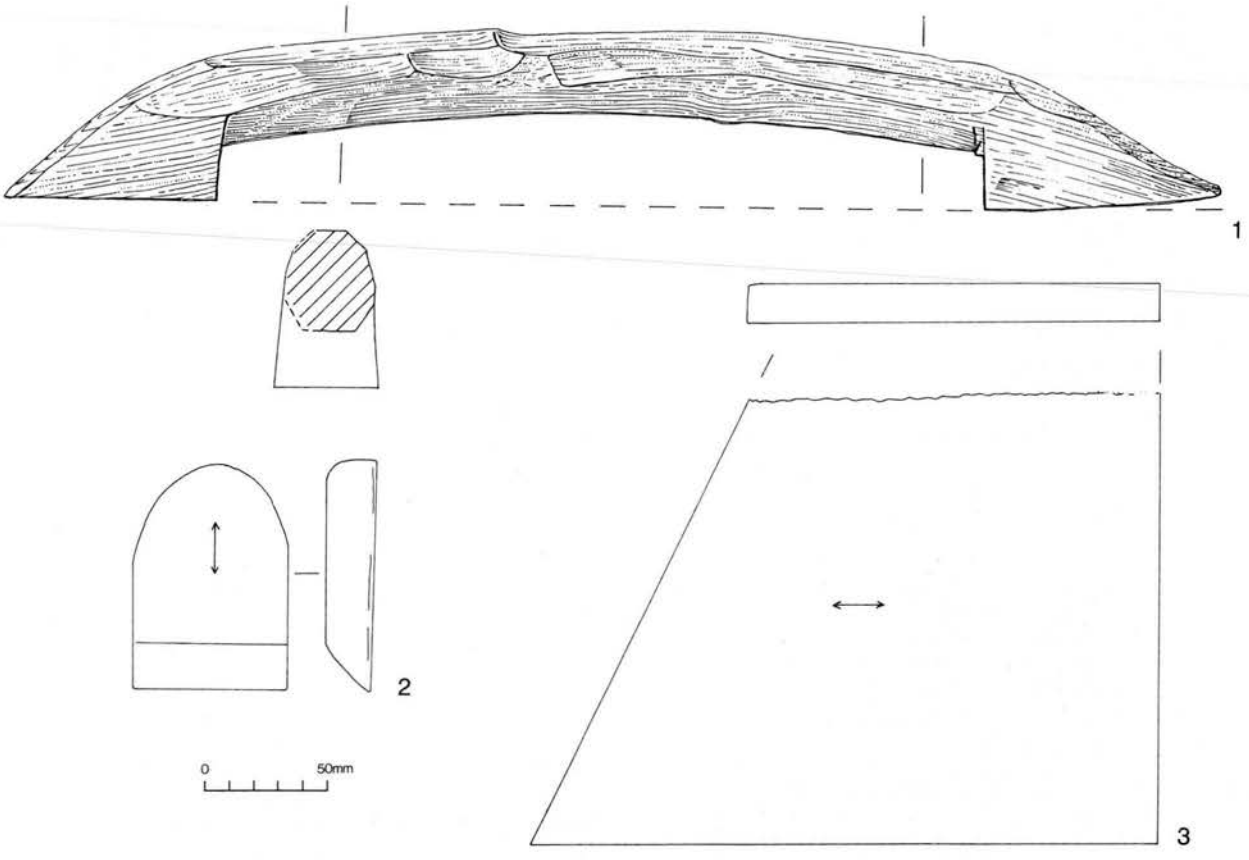


Figure 80 Objects of wood, scale 1:3 (drawn from photographs and sketches)

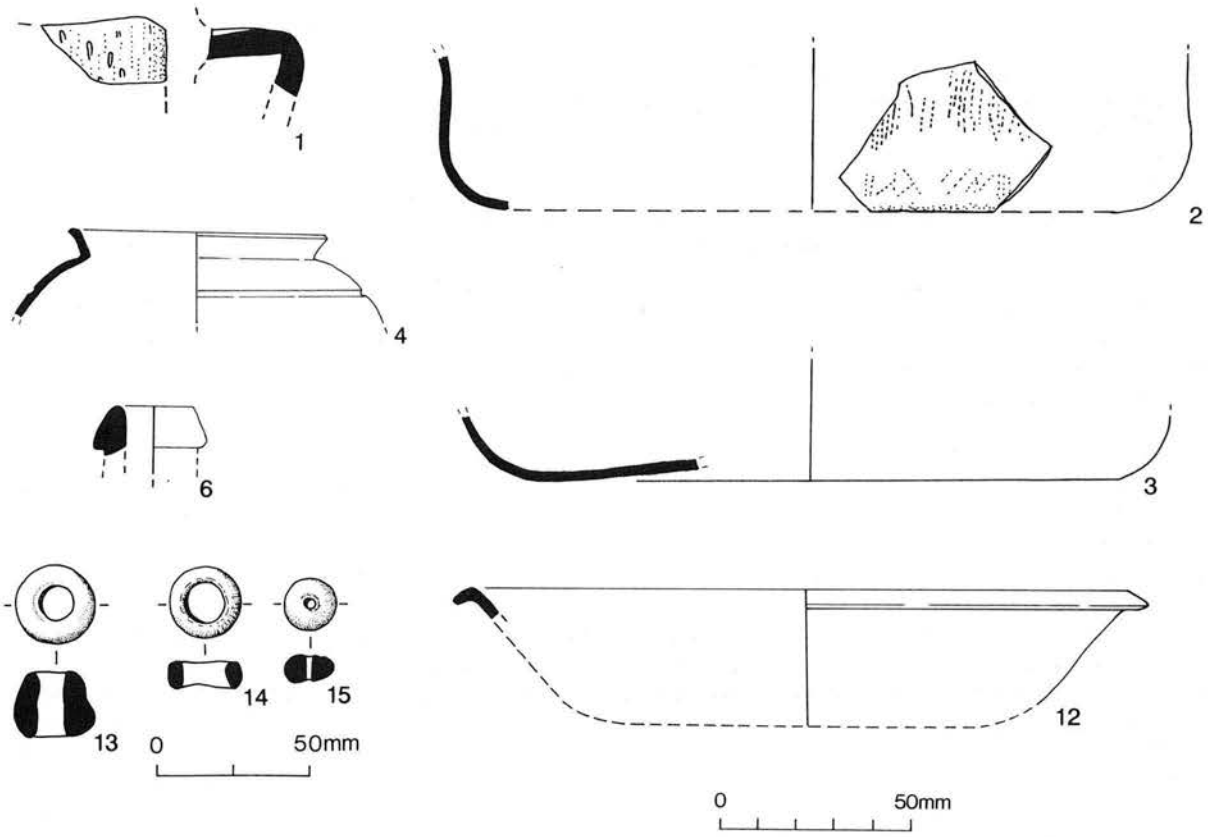


Figure 81 Objects of glass, scale: nos 1–12 1:2; nos. 13–15 1:1

GL1 Portion of slightly-ribbed handle of Isings form 50 bottle in pale bubbly green glass (pit C21-1).

Other bottles

GL2 Base of squat cylindrical bottle in clear pale greenish glass of diameter 170mm of Isings form 50 A/B (or form 62?). The base of the vessel was represented by eleven sherds scattered throughout the fills of pits C22 and C23. The vessel was heavily abraded on the exterior, apparently from use in a crate with others.

GL3 Base of second, similar vessel (also from C22) but base is horizontally striated as though the bottle had been repeatedly dragged in the same direction across a stone or tile floor or shelf by one handle.

Other vessels

GL4 Rim of blown globular beaker in clear colourless glass, with slightly everted rim and wheel-cut groove on shoulder. The vessel is unusual, and the form is unparalleled (perhaps related to Isings form 30?, *cf.* also Hull's Colchester pottery form 108). Probably 1st century (pit C21-1).

GL5 Very small body sherd of very clear colourless glass vessel with thin diagonal thread, possibly part of late Roman conical beaker (Site C topsoil, not illustrated).

GL6 Three sherds from Site III, probably of the same flask or bottle. Opaque dark blue glass. Body sherd (Site III Lowest organic mud in Phase B fishpond. The rim was unstratified, as was a second body sherd).

GL7 Fragment of yellow glass (Site III, P24, Phase A, fishpond; fragment missing, not illustrated).

Four other blown vessel sherds were seen, but the forms were indeterminate.

GL8 Thin-walled pale greenish glass (Site C topsoil, not illustrated).

GL9 Rim of glass bowl (Site III, unstratified, not illustrated).

GL10 Base sherd of glass beaker or cup in very bubbly glass (Site III, lower fill of Phase D, not illustrated).

GL11 Thin-walled vessel (Site I, Period 3 drain trench, not illustrated).

GL12 The rim of a mould-made platter of Isings form 5 (late 1st century) in a brownish colourless glass (Site III, P23 or P24 lower fishpond fills, Period 2).

Beads

GL13 Cylindrical wound bead of unusually opalescent bluish glass. Probably Roman (fieldwalking to north-east of Site A, Grid G22).

GL14 Annular wound bead of dark opaque blue glass, diameter 9mm (Site C topsoil).

GL15 Glass wound bead of pale green ('bottle') glass with slightly off-centre small perforation. Diameter 7mm (Site A topsoil).

Window glass is considered below under 'Building Materials'.

II. The Building Materials

It is still uncommon to find reports of excavations of Roman buildings in which the techniques and materials of construction have been treated in a comprehensive fashion. An attempt has been made here to consider the latter subject at least insofar as the survival of the evidence permits. Farrands kept some samples of building materials, but Corbishley attempted a more systematic approach and commissioned a report on a sample of the Roman brick and tile which is included below.

Stone

The quantities of septaria rubble on the site leave no doubt that this was the principal material used for the masonry of the walls of Building 3. Septaria is most likely to have been collected from foreshores around the coast where it had been eroded out of the London Clay. At the present day the best places for limited collection in the vicinity of the site are at Harwich (Beacon Hill) and at Wrabness. Vast quantities of septaria were also consumed in the Roman

buildings of Colchester (*e.g.* Temple of Claudius and town walls) and later in the medieval churches of the area. It is difficult to see now where all the Roman material came from.

Apart from the Purbeck marble veneer discussed above, very little dressed stone was noted in the rubble spreads. A piece of pink (burnt?) dressed stone came from the topsoil of trench W on Site I (not kept). The septaria was roughly hammer-dressed to squarish blocks for use but no definite ashlar or architectural fragments were noted.

While most of the masonry appears to have formed dwarf walls, the evidence from wall plaster and flue tiles (below) suggests some walls at least of Building 3 were of masonry to a greater height.

Daub, timber and nails

It is likely that some at least of the superstructure of the villa buildings consisted of clay block or daub infilling of a framed timber structure. Any daub was weathered away leaving little trace and no clay layers were found overlying the buildings (though weathered daub turned to topsoil may have formed a slight mound over their sites, protecting them from subsequent ploughing). No definite burnt daub was found, though the lumps of fired clay in C28 and C36 may have been from a structure. Any clay used structurally was probably from a local source, perhaps from large pits in the clay to the south of the villa.

The structural timber may also have been cut locally. Perhaps only fully seasoned wood would have been used (Dunnett 1975, 122) though unseasoned timber (oak) is easier to work and the slight warping as it dries out locks the building together. As in other Roman buildings investigated by the writer where large nails are generally absent in destruction debris, the joints must have been pegged, not nailed. Of course vast quantities of timber would have been required for Buildings 2 and 3.

Building 3 would also have required many thousands of nails for the roof laths if nothing else, and when doors, shutters, and perhaps floorboards and ceilings are added, the present poor showing of nails from the whole site is remarkable. Other iron structural fittings were equally scarce. This suggests either that they were not used in the structure, or that they were subsequently taken away for re-use. The writer believes that the latter is the more acceptable explanation. The state of the surviving ironwork does not allow the possibility that they had all corroded away.

Brick and tile

No brick or tile was found *in situ* in the excavated footings of Building 3, but bonding tile must have been used in the walls. The quantity of fragments of tegulae and imbrices hints very strongly at the form of the roof of the Period 3 building, while many flue tile and some possible voussoir fragments indicate not only the presence of hypocausted rooms, but also the fact that some walls must have been of masonry up to the eaves.

The tile from one of the Corbishley sites is considered by Mr T. Williams in the report below (received too late for full integration into the text); that from the Farrands site is considered here. Farrands clearly was not able to keep all of the tile even had he wished to, but appears to have made an effort to save significant and representative pieces. The present writer studied the tile from the Farrands site independently of Mr Williams' work. Suffice to note that clearly large quantities of tile had been found on Sites I and II from Period 4 contexts, but little appears to have been found in the robber trenches themselves. It is notable that on Farrands' Site I, very little tile came from Period 2 contexts, and Building 2 may have been roofed with thatch or shingles. Tile was however found low down in the Phase C fills on Site III.

The tegulae and bonding tiles all seem to have fallen into the fabric and form range seen by the writer on the 1975–8 sites. The tegulae were in a variety of fabrics and have a variety of flange profiles and proportions (see Fig. 82.1–3), mostly tending to be relatively large and thick. These tiles tended to be 17–20mm thick, but no other complete dimensions survive.

A particularly noticeable feature of the Little Oakley tile assemblage is that a number of roof tiles (and apparently only roof tiles) had, while wet, been walked on by a number of animals *e.g.* Fig. 84.15–22. Two imbrices (from Site I Period 4 rubble spread F49, and Period 3 box drain fill F75) had been fired buff, probably intentionally; the former at least had been used in the roof, as it had mortar adhering.

The bonding tiles were mostly 25 to 35mm thick, but most fragments were unremarkable. One piece from pit fill F20 was overfired (purple-red) and had a 10mm thick coating of vitrified sandy fired clay adhering to one surface. The tile had perhaps been used in a hearth or hypocaust flue, or could have been a waster. (A bonding tile fragment from A2 was similarly overfired, and one from rubble spread A3 was underfired, and both may also be wasters.) One bonding tile fragment from the 'shelly fill of the plunge bath' (= F8?) has a diagonal line of combing across its upper face. No other dimensions were recoverable from the Farrands bonding tiles.

The 'patterns' (mortar keying) on the flue tiles were also examined. Most of these were small fragments in several fabrics. Eight fragments were diagonally scored (Fig. 83.6–7) (Period 4 pit fills F18 and 20, grave F50, F89 and Period 3–4 contexts on Site III; one from F50 matched one from C26). Five fragments were diagonally combed (both 45° and acute diagonals, Fig. 83.5, 8) (F18 and F20). A variety of combs were used. Five other tiles (from F18 and 20 and 'shelly fill' of the plunge bath) were combed with wavy lines of varying amplitude (Fig. 83.11–14). No definite voussoir (with the possible exceptions of Fig. 83.9–10) or other specialised forms were recognised.

Ceramic building materials from Site C

by Tim Williams (written in 1983)

Introduction

The ceramic building material from Site C was processed while the 1976 excavations were proceeding.[14]

A simple catalogue of fabric types and decorative patterns exists as a supplement to this report and has been deposited in COLEM with the finds. The form and fragmentation were recorded; these basic data are given in Table 1.

The wide variety of forms of ceramic building material recovered from the site would seem to indicate that it might be used to provide some indication of features present within the original structures on the site.[15] The material may, therefore, provide some indications of original architectural/functional features within the villa, despite the generally residual contexts from which it was derived.

Fragmentation							*Typology*							
Contexts	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*T*	*I*	*bo*	*F*	*in*	*te*	*bu*	*Other*
C2	132	195	68	31	4	0	25	14	1	8	5	3	2	0
C2-1	80	58	38	10	1	0	12	6	0	2	3	1	0	0
C2-2 (55L)	12	15	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
C14	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C15	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
C21(55C)	39	37	12	8	4	0	10	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
C21(55L)	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0
C21-1	199	293	170	95	14	0	124	67	26	5	8	3	0	1
C22-1	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C22-2	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C22-A	5	16	24	22	10	0	2	1	2	26	20	1	9	0
C23	7	7	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
C23-1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C23-1	2	6	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
C23-2	12	9	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
C23-3	6	6	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
C23-4	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C23-B	12	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
C24	8	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C26-1	0	0	2	5	7	1	2	2	2	6	3	0	2	0
C26-2	1	4	11	23	24	0	5	3	1	44	0	0	19	0
C26-3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C26-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C27	7	35	24	6	0	0	0	4	0	18	6	2	0	0
C27-1	0	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C29	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
C31	4	4	0	2	1	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
C33	3	7	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
C34	2	7	3	3	1	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
C35	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
C36	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C37	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
C38	2	6	3	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
C4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

KEY:

Size of fragments in sq. mm.
1 = <90mm
2 = <350mm
3 = <640mm
4 = <1200mm
5 = <complete
6 = complete

T = Tegulae (36.9% of fragments)
I = Imbrex (23.2% of fragments)
bo = Bonding tile (5.4% of fragments)
F = Box-flue tiles (23.9% of fragments)
in = incised (7.5% of fragments)
te = Tesserae (2.7% of fragments)
bu = Burnt

Table 1 Fragment size and typology of tile from Site C

Roofing

The presence of substantial quantities of both tegulae and imbrices suggests that the roof of at least one of the villa buildings was, partly or possibly wholly, tiled. The roughly equal quantities of the two forms suggests that the roof was of 'conventional' construction, based upon rows of tegulae with the junction between these being covered by the imbrices (as opposed to the use of inverted tegulae in this role). These forms of tile have been noted in non-roofing roles, but usually in a re-used form, and there is no reason to suppose, especially given the absence of mortar on the broken edges of the tiles, that they were used here as anything other than roofing tiles.

Heating

The quantity of box-flue tiles within the assemblage, combined with most of the incised tiles (although not positively assigned to any form of tile, these were probably also box-flues), suggests the presence of heated rooms within the villa complex. Once again, the re-use of the tiles in a residual context is not impossible, but the quantity of soot on the interior surfaces of the tiles suggest that they had, at least at some stage, been used in a wall-jacketing or wall flue. This, coupled with the absence of traces of secondary mortar, argues strongly for their use within a heating system, and the presence of such a feature within the complex. The absence of *pilae* tiles does not detract from this argument, as the use of stone to provide the under-floor supports, noted on other sites, *e.g.* Silchester (Boon 1974, 123–30, fig. 17 and pl. 37), would provide a logical explanation for their absence. Alternatively since we are clearly dealing with secondary deposits (below), these tiles may have been preferentially removed.

Flooring

The presence of tesserae, albeit in relatively small quantities (Table 1) supports the other evidence for tessellated pavements within the villa complex. However, the small quantities recovered place a discussion of their use, extent or complexity beyond the scope of the evidence, and the possibility that the tesserae were also used in a small-scale decorative form (Perring 1981), should be borne in mind.

Large flat tiles of substantial thickness were also present, although, once again, in relatively small quantities. Their use in flooring, or as bonding courses within wall construction, would seem to offer a possible explanation for their presence, but in five cases the tiles showed signs of burning, possibly as a result of their use within hearths, or even within the hypocaust system. The bonding tiles were primarily found in pit C21-1 (74% of the total), a context which also contained the largest assemblage of roofing tiles. Interestingly, no burnt 'floor' tiles were present within this group, whereas, of the nine tiles found outside of this assemblage, five were scorched (C2, C23-3, C26-1, C33 and C34). This strongly suggests that the large flat tiles in C21-1 were derived from a different source to the burnt tiles.

The distribution of the building material by context

It is evident that the majority of the ceramic building material assemblage comes from a restricted number of contexts, mainly C2, C2-1 (the topsoil and Period 8 bulldozed layers), and the pit fills, C21 C21-1, C22-A, C26-2 and C27. The rest of the contexts on site produced small quantities of debris, presumably of a highly residual nature. In addition, these assemblages exhibited a high degree of fragmentation (Table 2), with a preponderance of small fragments, which would appear to reinforce this interpretation.

Even the material from contexts that produced the bulk of the assemblage also exhibit varying degrees of fragmentation (Table 2). Only the material collected from C22 and C26-2 had more large fragments than small, and even C21-1, which produced the majority of the material recovered from the site, included a large body of material less than 0.35m square. This would suggest that all of the assemblages had undergone some re-working and are, as such, unlikely to constitute uncontaminated destruction horizons.

	% *<0.09*	% *<0.35*	% *<0.64*	% *<1.20*	% *<complete*	% *complete*	% total *frags*
C2	34.4	41.0	17.2	6.6	0.8	–	614
C21	27.3	37.9	20.9	11.8	2.1	0.3	871
C22	17.7	21.9	27.1	22.9	10.4	–	96
C23	41.2	38.2	15.7	3.9	0.9	–	102
C26	1.3	5.2	16.7	35.9	29.7	1.3	78
C27	8.5	51.2	31.7	8.5	–	–	82

Table 2 Fragmentation of tile in selected assemblages

Nevertheless, the contexts do present some groupings, which may reflect the primary source of at least the major part of the material:

A) Contexts in which roofing tiles are predominant (tegulae and imbrices) C2, 74% and C2-1, 78%; C21, 68% and C21-1, 83%;

B) Contexts in which flue-tiles are predominant (box-flue and incised). C22-A, 92%, C26-2, 83%, C27, 86%

These groupings suggest that the assemblages in these contexts were derived from different sources, although it is not clear how the derivation of this material may be related to its spatial distribution.

Fabrics

At present, the lack of comparative local/regional material has dissuaded the author from any detailed study of the tile fabrics present at Little Oakley. Samples have been taken and broadly classified, but it is not possible to say, for example, whether the fabrics may have been derived from a Colchester tile works, or more local production, without a more detailed study of the distribution of fabrics in the area as a whole being available. It is hoped, however, that further work in the area, combined with the collection of samples during other excavations, will lead to this material being placed in a wider context at a future date.

Markings

A large variety of markings were recognised in the assemblage, the majority being comb impressions on the box-flue tiles. Examples of all the forms have been kept and some of the identifiable patterns have been drawn here (Fig. 83). No attempt has been made to identify comb signatures, once again, due to the lack of comparative material.

In addition to the comb impressed tiles, there were a number of simply scratched marks or patterns, which have been recorded in the same manner as the comb impressions (Fig. 83). No roller-stamp patterns were identified.

Summary

The ceramic building material from Site C was recovered wholly from secondary contexts. Nevertheless, it has been possible to suggest the presence of certain features within the parts of the original villa complex from which this material was derived. First, it seems that at least part of the roof was tiled, in a conventional tegula and imbrex form. Secondly, some heated rooms existed within the complex. Thirdly, the presence of bonding tiles may suggest their use in wall construction and, where scorched, in hearths. Lastly, a few tesserae suggest some decorative work.

The place and date of manufacture of this building material are unknown, given the lack of comparative material from the region.

Note: Mr Williams' report was accompanied by a number of computer-generated charts based on the data in Table 1. These have been omitted here (and may be consulted in the archive). Unfortunately we cannot be sure that, under rescue conditions, fragment recovery from each context was strictly comparable, especially in the smaller size range. It is also notable that typical contexts are also small samples. Should the Little Oakley site be re-excavated, more attention could profitably be paid to the fabric and typology of the Roman tiles.

Descriptions of illustrated tile

(Figs 82–84)

T1 Almost complete tegula, mould made and wire-cut (Rook 1979, fig. 16.3) finger-groove in angle of flange and finger marks near one edge. Sanded outside and knife-trimmed. Cut-out as T2. Curved across and along tile (pit C26-2).

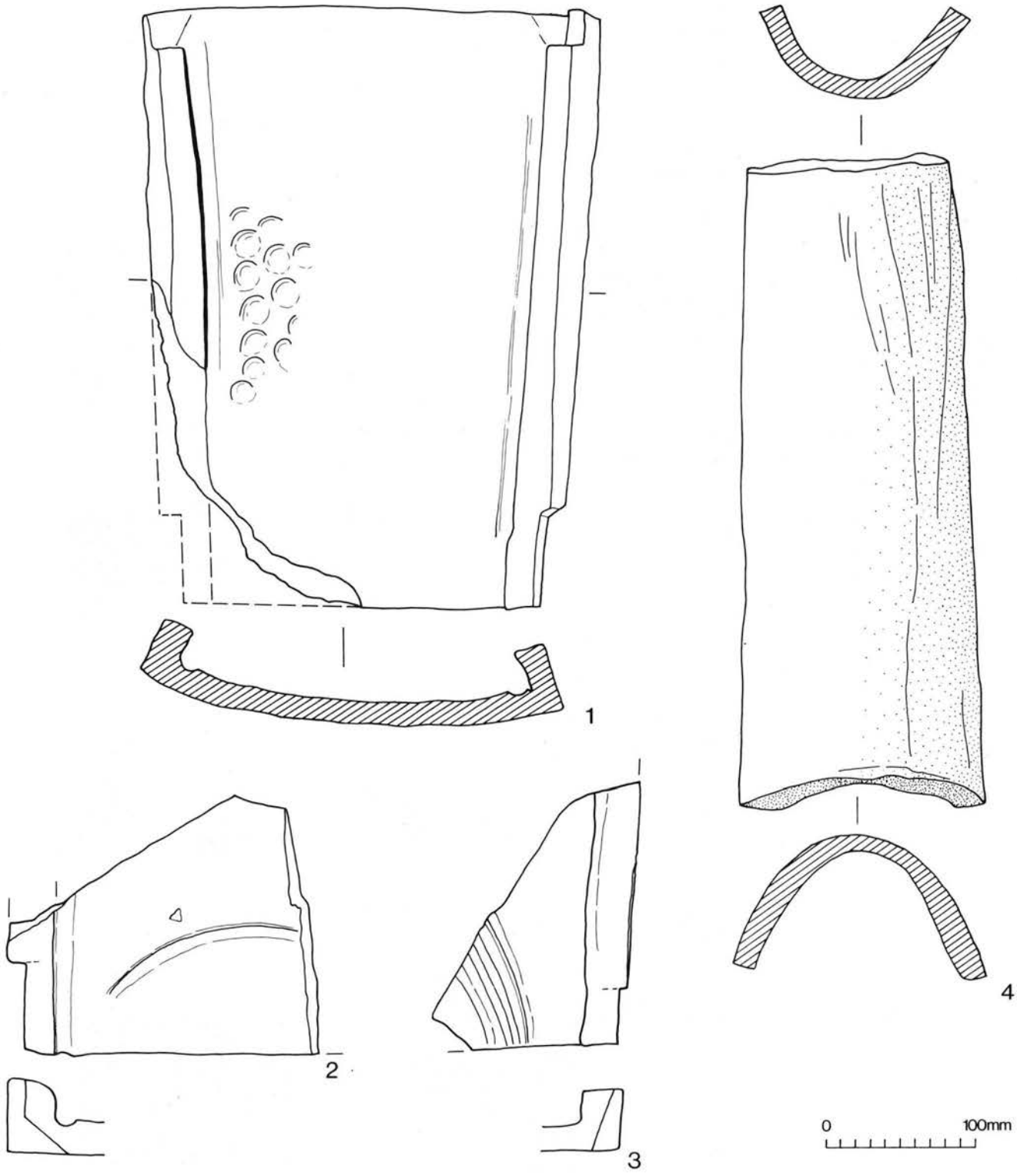


Figure 82 Roof tiles, scale 1:4

T2 Fragment of tegula, finger groove in angle of flange. Shallow finger-wiped 'signature' (pit C21).

T3 Fragment of tegula, no finger groove, different form of cut-out. Shallow finger-wiped signature (A3, Period 4 rubble spread).

T4 Complete imbrex made on a sand former, longitudinal finger-marks on exterior. Ends battered (pit C26).

T5 Fragments of flue tile made on a wooden former wrapped in textile. Rectangular cut-outs made with a knife after former removed. Face lattice-scored with knife (pit C26).

T6 Fragment of similar flue tile (or perhaps '*tegula sine marginibus*') moulded over sanded wooden former, sides and edge of face knife-trimmed (Site I, fill F50 of Period 5 inhumation).

T7 Fragment of incised flue tile with lattice-scored face (Site I, unstratified).

T8 Fragment of incised flue tile with lattice-scored face (Site I; F18 Phase 4(ii) pit fill).

T9 Fragment of flue tile or voussoir with circular cut-out and mortar on side, combed face (Site I, unstratified).

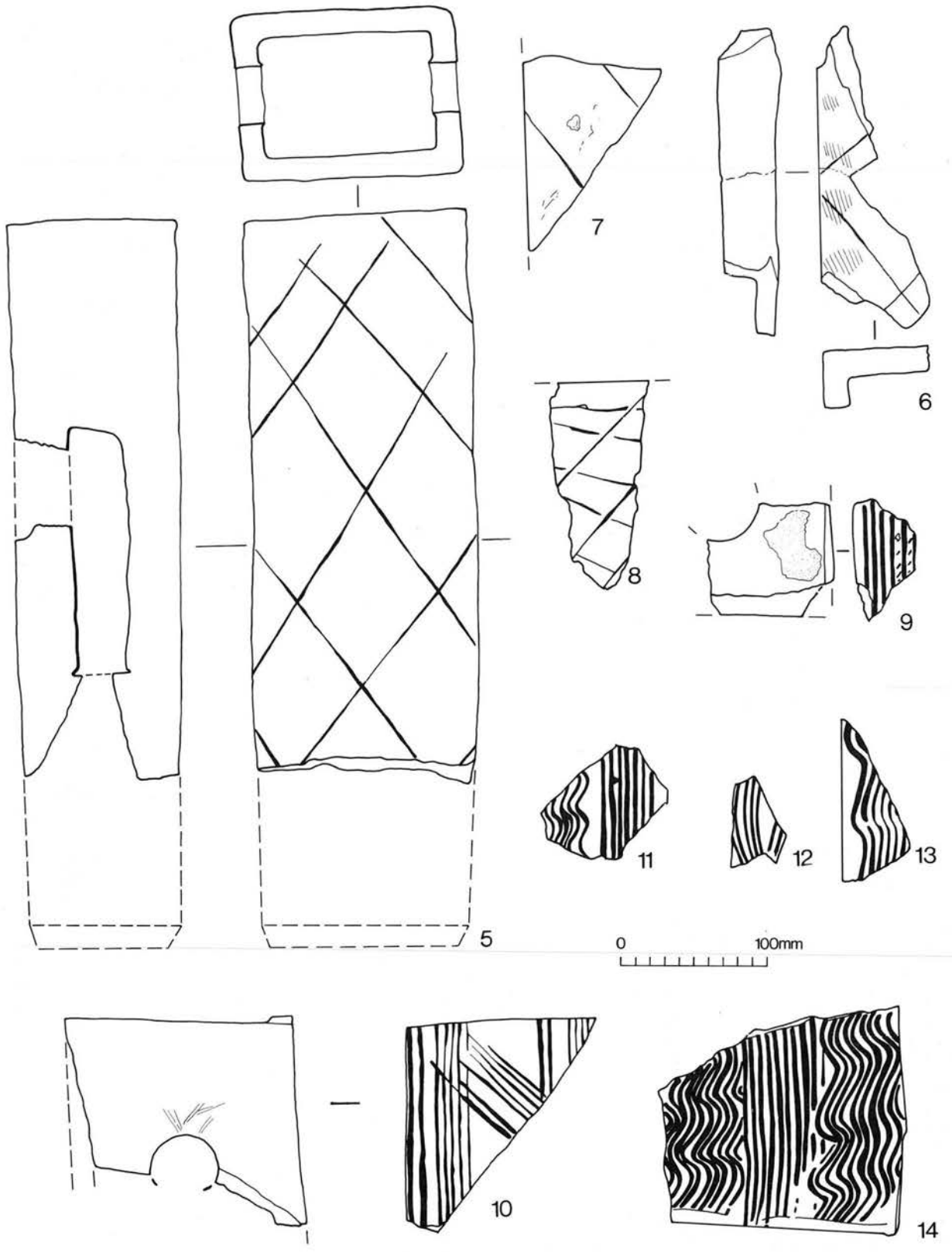


Figure 83 Flue tiles, scale 1:4

T10 Fragment of flue tile or voussoir with smudged lattice combed faces (NB comb had broken tooth). The top of the tile is cut at a slight angle to the face (pit C26).

T11 Fragment of flue tile with combed wavy line on the face (Site I; F20 fill of Phase 4(ii) pit).

T12 Fragment of flue tile with combed keying (Site I, 'shelly fill' of Room 11

T13 As T12 (Site I; F20 fill of Phase 4(ii) pit.

T14 Fragment of flue tile with combed keying. The bottom edge is chamfered and is cut at an angle to the sides. Possibly a voussoir (pit C26-2).

T15 Fragment of tegula like no. 2 (but apparent 'signature' higher up the tile) with pebble in the flange and a footprint of a small dog (pit C21-1).

T16 Fragment of imbrex with deep footprint of a medium-sized dog which has depressed the wet tile into its sand former (Period 4 rubble spread A3).

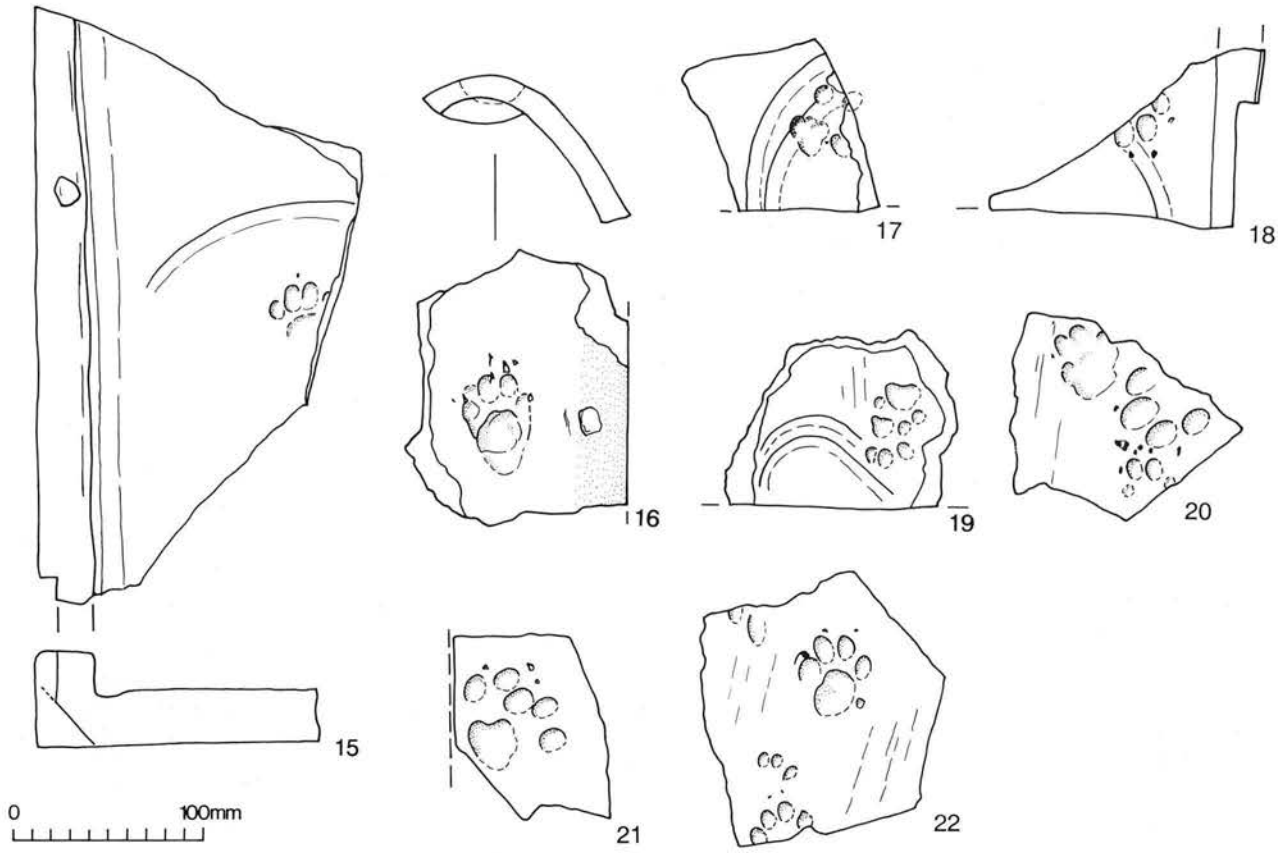


Figure 84 Various tile with animal footprints showing their position, scale 1:4

T17 Fragment of tegula with large cat footprint (Site A, topsoil).
T18 Fragment of tegula with 'signature', and footprint of a small dog (Topsoil, Site C).
T19 Fragment of tile 30mm thick with signature, and the footprints of a small cat, right hind foot over another (Site C, topsoil).
T20 Fragment of tegula with the prints of a small dog and the shallower footprints of a larger dog (obviously made later) (Site I, unstratified).
T21 Fragment of underfired tegula with blurred footprints of a medium dog (Site I, unstratified).
T22 Fragment of tegula with the front and hind prints of a small dog and the shallower prints of a small cat (Site I, unstratified).

These figures are intended to illustrate the position of these marks, the footprints themselves are also treated below in the faunal remains report.

Mortar and shaped mortar

Mortar

Although Farrands took a number of mortar samples from the footings of Building 3, these have not been examined here in detail. Little shaped mortar survives from Sites I–V, in comparison with the considerable quantities from the 1975–8 excavations. Most of the mortar was found in three groups of contexts; the pits on Site C, the robber trenches (a little only; to which perhaps could be added the material from the fills of Room 11 and the fills of the Period 4 pits on Site I, but none of this material now survives). Also a little mortar came from the various rubble spreads (but again little now survives).

The mortar used in the Roman buildings seems to have been of a variety of 'fabrics' but resolves into three groups: that mixed with sand; and two larger groups of mortar mixed with comminuted shell (in varying quantities) and that mixed with crushed tile (of varying quantities and degrees of coarseness). Some of this *opus signinum* came from Room 11, other fragments came from C26. The quartz sand used in the mortar and plaster may have been beach sand, or more likely came from nearby Pleistocene glacial outwash deposits, which underlay parts of the site and cap the ridge on which it stands. The comminuted shell is probably derived from the Red Crag deposits from the upper terrace slopes.

The lime in the mortar was presumably manufactured from chalk (see above) but other sources may also have been utilised. Two non-local calcareous fossil brachiopods were found on the site with fused white vitreous surfaces. These almost certainly would have been brought to the site as impurities in lime and discarded when the latter was slaked. Both were terebratulids; one was unidentified, but the other was probably *Sphaeroidothyris* sp. (or perhaps *Obovothyris* sp.) found in the Inferior Oolite and Cornbrash respectively. The nearest sources of these rocks are in the Bedford region.

Shaped mortar

Pit C21 produced a number of fragments of freshly broken pieces of shaped mortar mostly from the ridge capping, and the fixing of roof tiles. This material is considered in detail below. The feature also contained a large quantity of roof tile (see above). In addition to these, the pit contained a few lumps of soft, coarse *opus signinum* (in several fabrics, one with a finished edge at right-angles to the face). Some flat pieces of mortar had probably come from the faces of flue tiles.

Pit C23 produced a few pieces of flat mortar 10mm thick with slurried face, probably skimming over a daub wall (or plaster).[16] Pit C26 contained quite a lot of shaped

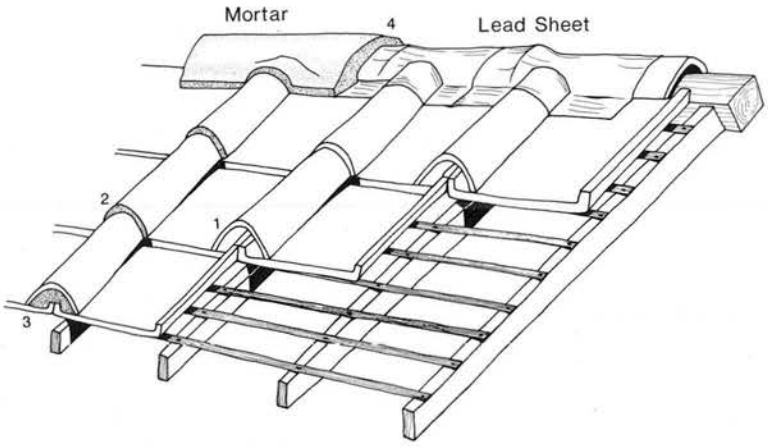


Figure 85 Schematic reconstruction of roof of Roman buildings based on surviving tiles and shaped mortar

mortar fragments, including mortar imbrex fill (Fig. 86.2 and see below) and a piece with a rounded edge (but a skimmed surface, and therefore not imbrex fill). This was probably a window or door splay which would have originally been plastered over.

Mortar from roofs

Roman tile roofs were massive constructions, the tiles weighed several kilogrammes each, and the walls and timbers required to support them would have had to be correspondingly strong. In addition, there is evidence that the tiles were often mortared in place, at least in parts of the roof. This mortar is fairly commonly found on Roman sites (*e.g.* Ward 1911a, 263; Crummy 1981, 1–2) but is seldom considered in detail. This is unfortunate, since information on Romano-British roofing is generally scarce, and the construction of the roofs has been little considered in the past (see Ward 1911a, 262–5; and Boon 1974, 202–3 for exceptions). The mortar from the large assemblage in pit C21 is thus considered in detail below.

It is not clear precisely what function the mortar in Roman roofs served, whether to fix the tiles in place or simply to provide a weatherproof 'torching'. The roof at Little Oakley seems to have been of a low pitch, as there is no evidence of tiles being nailed in place, and there is no clear evidence from the site that the tegulae themselves were mortared together or set upon mortar 'pads' on the roof (and the question of how the lower tegulae were retained in position here must remain open). The mortaring of the imbrices may have been used to stabilise the tiles at the lower edge of the roof only and need not necessarily have continued along the whole length of the imbrex row.

The first class of material to be considered here is the infill of imbrices. This falls into four main types:

Type 1 'Channelled' pieces with broken ends, from the interior of an imbrex with the impression of the tegula flanges (Fig. 85.1).

Type 2 Curved pieces of shaped mortar from the overlap of the ends of two imbrices (Fig. 85.2).

Type 3 Pieces like type 1 with finished vertical ends, presumably from the eaves of the roof (Fig. 85.3). No certain examples were noted from Little Oakley but have been encountered by the writer on other sites.

Type 4 As type 2, but with rough end where mortaring finished.

A number of fragments are illustrated on Fig. 86, all from C21-1 except no. 2 (all pieces illustrated by section only are of constant section).

MT1 Fragment 80mm long, not a piece of stucco, but from the finger-groove on the interior of a tegula flange (hard white, shelly mortar).

MT2 Type 1, 165mm long (soft brownish shelly mortar, different from the fabric of the material in C21; also a different size tile is inferred). The piece has two layers, suggesting that mortar was slapped into the tile before it was affixed on a mortar layer on the roof tiles (C26-2).

MT3 Type 1, 176mm long (hard white shelly mortar). The tegula flanges were high, and the tiles badly warped, leading to the flanges diverging, but this did not prevent their being used on this roof.

MT4 Type 1, 150mm long (hard white shelly mortar) As no. 3.

MT5–6 Type 2, hard white shelly mortar.

Ridge capping

The assemblage in C21 also contained three fragments of mortar apparently from a roof, but differing in form from

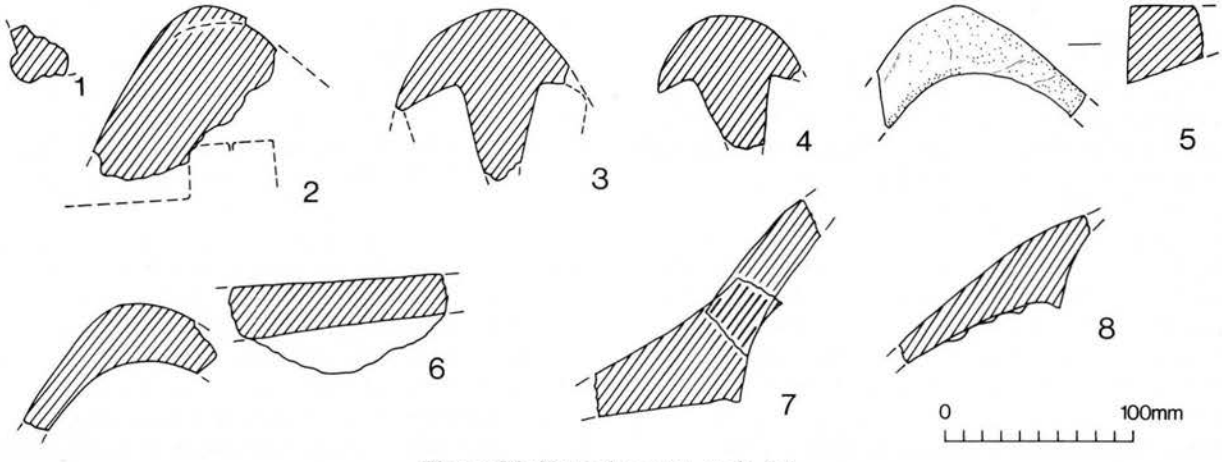


Figure 86 Shaped mortar, scale 1:4

the material discussed above; the fragments were all in the same hard white shelly fabric. It appears that this material was mortar capping over an imbrex used as a ridge-capping on a roof, the junction between the imbrex and the adjacent tiles of each side of the roof being covered by a lead flashing.

MT7 Ridge-capping, 190mm long, section drawn from two non-joining fragments (imbrex section tapers, so two fragments do not exactly coincide). The undersurface is flat, and is not a tile impression; the curved interior face is the impression of the outer face of an imbrex. The junction of the flat and curved interior surfaces exhibits the impression of a wrinkle in what seems to have been a lead sheet. The exterior surface of the mortar is weathered. A consideration of the orientation of the imbrex impression suggests that the roof was of a very low pitch indeed (*c.* 20°).

MT8 Ridge-capping, 100mm long, but underside exhibits impressions of three dents, which are almost certainly hammer-marks in the lead sheet. Again there is a wrinkle in the lead sheet.

The imbrex clearly covered the ends of tegulae at the apex of the roof, the waterproof junction being effected by a lead sheet. This sheet would probably have been carried over the vertical imbrex rows and ends of the flanges also (Fig. 85.4). The function of the imbrex row along the ridge and the mortar was clearly to provide a neat ridge along the top of the roof. Note that the imbrices along the ridge did not cover the ends of the tegulae, hence the wrinkle. Other more complex shapes may be expected to be found where the mortar butted the vertical imbrex rows, and perhaps from the infilling of the imbrex ridge-capping, but none of these were found.

Discussion

A consideration of the evidence for the structure of Roman tiled roofs is long overdue. For example, although much mortar like that discussed above has been found on many sites, the writer believes this is one of the few detailed published accounts of this sort of material. It is unfortunate that not all of the relevant material was kept from either series of excavations here, and clearly only close study of similar assemblages from other sites can resolve a number of outstanding problems. It would be of great use for large good groups of this type of material to be quantified in future. The proportions of the various types may help decide if the mortar was only used in the lower courses, as suggested in Fig. 85 (on the evidence of pieces of the form seen by the writer from Canterbury and Wroxeter and classified here as type 4).

Painted plaster

(Fig. 87)

A considerable quantity of this material was found, all of which seemed to be wall plaster; no definite ceiling plaster was recognised. This is detailed in the archive (Appendix 3). The following section attempts to interpret this catalogue in terms of the main decorative schemes present.

The plaster is of three main fabrics: A, mixed with shell; B, mixed with sand; and C, mixed with fine crushed tile. Of these the first was the most common, accounting for some 90% of the material. Sometimes the plaster contained small (0.5–2mm) pieces of crushed calcined flint. The first coat applied to most walls was usually a layer of mortar between 10 and 50mm thick, over which was applied the (10–20mm thick) plaster layer. The surface of this was sometimes painted directly (usually in white), or a very thin fine pure white lime plaster 'skim' was applied, and painted when dry. Most of the pigments used were natural 'earth' colours (Biek 1981) but blue frit was used for some of the plaster (see below). Farrands (n.d., 5) thought the paint was applied while the plaster was still wet, and although brushmarks on the plaster and slight blurring may support this, there was no evidence for true fresco.

Most pieces recovered were small non-joining fragments. None were found *in situ* and the largest groups came from the pits on Site C (C21, C22, C26 and also some from C23). This material could not all be linked to a particular room or even building, except material in pit C26.

The material in pit C21 (Fig. 87.1) came from a room with white plaster with panels of yellow ochre and pink splashed with dark red (in imitation of porphyry or marble) and pink splashed with yellow ochre. Other panels of dark red and dark grey-blue were also present, though the former was most likely the dado. The yellow ochre panels were edged with broad red stripes, separating them from the white background, on which were thin black and a few pale yellow ochre stripes. The plaster (fabric A) had come from masonry walls, some from the faces of flue tiles. Some white plaster had pastel shades of red or green. This could be faded or weathered plaster, or a subtle effect.

The lower fill of pit C22 (Fig. 87.2) contained predominantly white plaster (fabric A) with panels of pink wash and diagonal latticed red stripes (*cf.* Liversidge 1974, 200 fig. 89a). Again a dark red panel or dado abuts white plaster. A few pieces of malachite green may have been from this scheme. Some pieces of white had pastel shades of black, yellow and green. The back of this plaster was totally flat. This may indicate that it had been applied over a previously existing layer of plaster (or, less likely, daub). Although similar, this material is not a close match to the material in C21.

The upper fill of pit C22 produced a large but different assemblage of material (Fig. 87.3 and 7), of fabric A painted with panels of yellow ochre with red and yellow stripes at the edge, or with black stripes at the edge. Some panels were of yellow ochre, but the predominant colour present was white; sometimes splashed with red, black, grey or yellow ochre (Fig. 87.7). One of the fragments (Fig. 87.7a) is of the corner of the room, which had a broad ochre stripe picked out with narrow red and black stripes against the white. While fairly similar to the material in C21, this plaster was not a close match.

Pit C23 contained a small group of fragments from at least two decorative schemes. Most of this material was in the lower fill of the pit. The first group (of fabric A) was white with dark red panels and stripes. The second group (fabric B) was white with dark red panels and stripes and had flat backs (Fig. 87.6). In this second group were also pieces of pink panels with dark red splashes (Fig. 87.9). One fragment was of fabric C with a dark red painted surface.

Pit C26 produced a complex group of fragments of painted plaster, all of it from the upper fill. Similar material came from deposits in the central block of Building 3, suggesting the origin of the plaster in this pit. This represented two decorative schemes, one applied over the other. The first (Fig. 87.4) was a thick layer of shelly plaster applied over flue tiles. This had white painted surfaces with dark red panels and broad red and thin dark grey stripes. A splash of yellow ochre occurs on one piece.

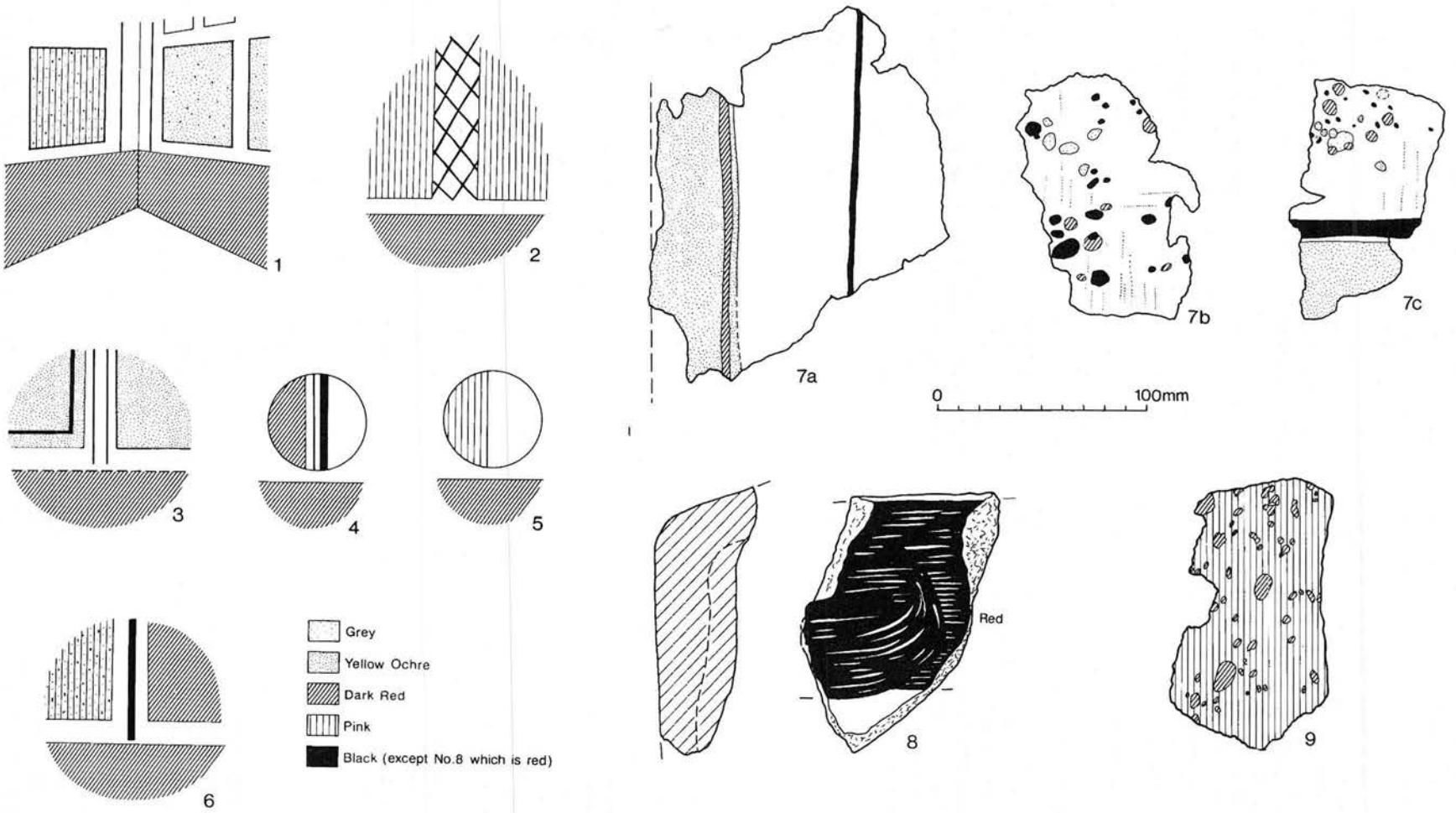


Figure 87 Wall plaster, nos 1–6 diagrammatic representation of main decorative schemes (not to scale); 7–9 painted plaster fragments, scale 1:3

A similar decorative scheme was also applied to some fabric C pieces in this pit. Several pieces of true *opus signinum* with painted surfaces were also present, one with a curved edge with a broad red stripe adjacent to a white panel (Fig. 87.8). This may have been a (horizontal?) window-splay.[17] Flue tile impressions were seen on the backs of some of the wall plaster fragments. Both wavy combed and diagonal-scored flue tiles were used in the same wall (but were not precisely aligned and the painted face was not parallel with the face of the flue tiles, indicating that they were not lying flat on the wall).

Over the top of this first scheme was a second (Fig. 87.5) of fabric B plaster with off-white surfaces with pink panels and greyish-green stripes.

The fill of the Period 4 pit C27 produced only a little plaster in a variety of fabrics, which could not be linked with other groups. The same applies to layers F18 and 20 on Site I. C29 contained two pieces of coarse white plaster very similar to that in the lower fill of C22, and may be from the same decorative scheme (though not the same wall, as the two pits are of different date), while material from C34 and C36 matched plaster from C26. The derivation of the plaster in pits C21, C23, C33 and the upper fill of C22 could not certainly be identified. It may have been from unexcavated portion of Building 3 or perhaps another building.

A fragment from the Period 4 fill of Room 11 (white-painted fabric B) had the impression of what appeared to be a soldered lead sheet on the back, and may have come from above a lead-lined tank or cistern.

Some fragments from pit C22 (lower and upper fills) had curved lines appearing to be roughly incised on the face, but they seem not to have been graffiti or part of a decorative scheme. It is possible that these pieces were the weathered junctions of different applications of plaster.

Plaster 'Eye'
(Fig. 88.3)
This object was found in the debris filling pit C21-1. It is of the same material as the rest of the plaster in the pit, but is distinguished by being rounded and having a rough central pecked dot, and the back has been rounded-off.

Pieces of plaster with these characteristics have been recognised and categorised from late Roman contexts during the 1968–85 excavations on the basilica site at Wroxeter, Shropshire (Barker *et al.* 1997, 212–16). It has been suggested that some of these were made as votive eyes in connection with some cult in the vicinity of the basilica.[18] Similar items have also been found at the Llantwit Major villa, Glamorgan (Nash-Williams 1953, 153, pl. XV, 21–2).

There is little doubt that some of these items were deliberately made, and indeed Barker's interpretation of these items may well be correct. At Wroxeter they grade into poorly made examples and dubious examples, and it is possible that some are of accidental or natural formation. It is probably to this latter category that the Little Oakley fragment should be assigned, though it might have been deliberately manufactured.

Plaster with graffiti
(Fig. 88.1–2)
Two pieces of plaster from C21 had boldly incised fine lines forming part of an indecipherable drawing or lattice pattern, but these seem to be graffiti rather than decoration (in an interim report this was said to represent a roof — like the famous example from Hucklecote, Glos., *BM Guide to the Antiquities of Roman Britain* 1951, 58, fig. 27.2). Graffiti is sometimes found on Roman wall plaster and either reflects a casual attitude to the interior decorative scheme, or perhaps vandalism. Perhaps the graffiti on this wall plaster indicates that the building from which this plaster was taken had stood vacant for some time.

Egyptian Blue pigment (not illustrated)
Several small rounded lumps (*c.* 10–15mm diameter) of granular friable blue material were found in the fills of pits C22-2 and C23-4. These lumps were of frit (*i.e.* 'Egyptian Blue') intended for use as pigment. Several decorative schemes in the Little Oakley villa involved the use of this pigment. For a discussion of this pigment see Atkins (1971, 56–8). Mr E. Black has suggested (pers. comm.) that maybe the owners of houses being redecorated paid for specified quantities of materials for the wall-painters to use, and if any was left over, they retained this. This may explain why it has been found at several villa sites.

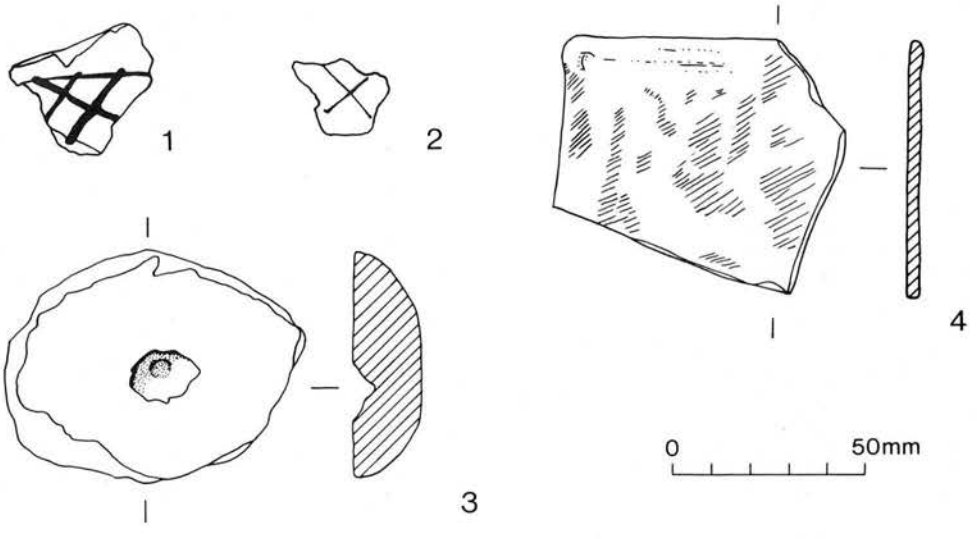


Figure 88 Wall plaster with graffiti (nos 1–2), 'plaster eye' (no. 3), and window glass (no. 4); scale 1:2

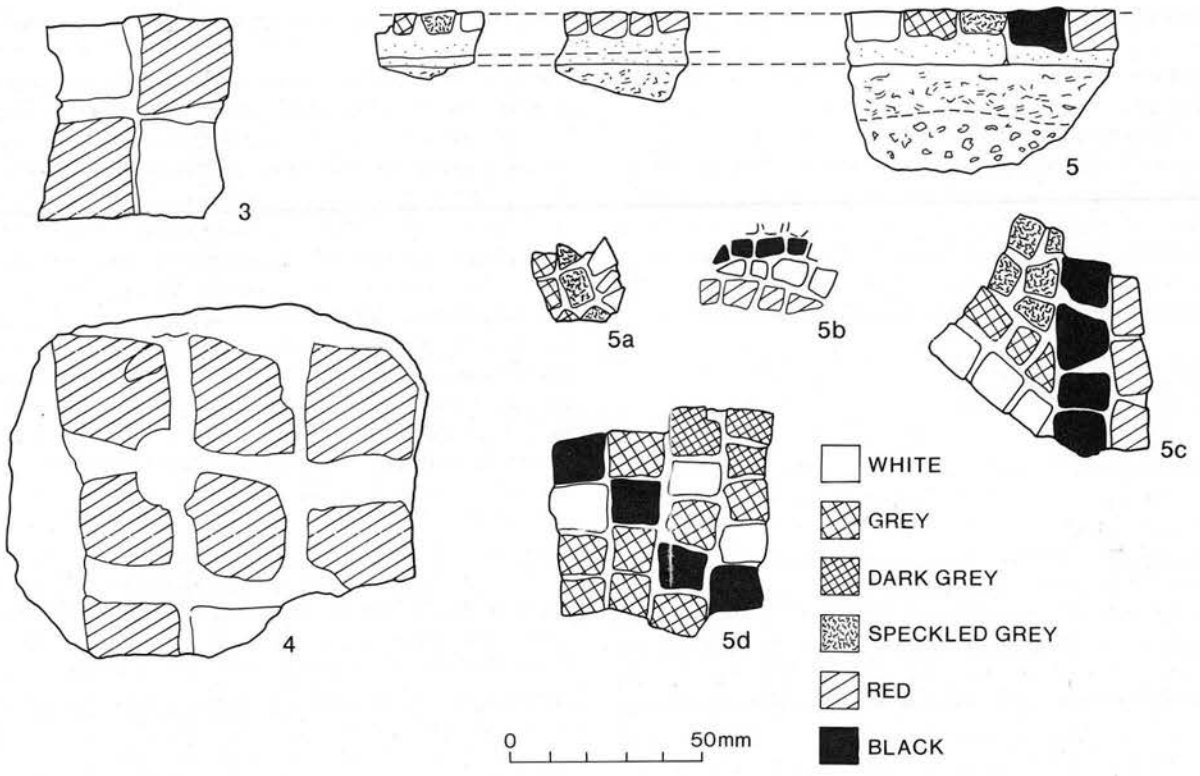


Figure 89 Mosaic fragments, scale 1:2

Mosaic fragments

(Fig. 89)

No mosaic was found *in situ*, but small fragments of at least five mosaics were found scattered across the site, much of it in the form of loose tesserae and small fragments on Site I (see also the tile report for loose brick tesserae from Site C). All the mosaics probably came from floors; there was no evidence of wall-mosaics.

Mosaic 1 coarsely-cut brick tesserae (30–50mm across) set in pink mortar overlying a thick *opus signinum* base (Site I in fill of Room 11, and the robber trenches of the south corridor). (Not illustrated)

Mosaic 2 Black and white (geometric?) mosaic: tesserae 11–12mm across and fairly regularly-cut. Set into variable pink mortar on a hard white mortar base containing crushed tile and small flint fragments (Site I, trenches B (F18), and E, fill of Period 4 pits). (Not illustrated)

Some red brick tesserae, both coarse and fine, were found in the Period 4 pit fills and may have been associated with one or both of these mosaics. The robber trench F63 contained 38 (1kg) medium red tile tesserae, 8 coarse red tile, 2 buff medium coarse and 27 black tesserae, mostly septaria, but some of reduced tile.

Mosaic 3 A single fragment of coarse mosaic (perhaps the border of mosaic no. 2?). Red and white tesserae and a dark red (reduced tile) on a hard white mortar with pink mortar grouting (Site C topsoil). Fig. 89.3.

Mosaic 4 Coarse red tesselated floor, coarsely cut tile tesserae set into a hard white base at least 30mm thick (dissimilar to that of mosaic 5). The top 3mm of the joints had been raked-out and a 'skim' of soft pink mortar applied. Some of this stands proud of the surface of the floor and had for some reason not been subsequently worn away (pit C21-1). Fig. 89.4.

Mosaic 5 By far the most technically accomplished mosaic on the site, matching the best in Colchester for quality. Represented by four fragments (in pit C21-1) linked by common use of materials and nature of the bedding layers. This was a well made polychrome mosaic with finely-polished surface, border of well-cut (12–15mm across) tesserae, black, grey and white. Border was decorated with linear and diagonal motifs. The central panel had much smaller tesserae (up to 10mm) also of black, grey, red and white forming a curvilinear pattern (the materials used were: black, septaria; red, tile; white, chalk, white lias, or similar limestone; light grey, grey lias; light grey, speckled, non-local limestone; dark grey, septaria).

The bedding of the whole mosaic was of soft brownish shelly mortar (containing a few tile chips) 15mm thick, overlying a layer of coarse *opus signinum*. The tesserae were set into a soft white plaster-like lime mortar. On the border (fragment C) an interface is clearly visible between the work of different days. The mortar to the right (as illustrated) was slightly coarser than the white mortar to the left of the interface. On fragment A, the soft white mortar overlies a thin skim of brownish fine shelly mortar, and a similar layer may be present on the interface of fragment B (but not on fragments C or D). It is possible that the panel represented by fragments A and B was set up in a workshop and the slab containing the tesserae was mortared in place on site and the borders laid around it.

Discussion

The mosaics used in the Little Oakley villa were of variable quality, and ranged from the competent (Mosaic 5) to the downright shoddy (Mosaics 1 and 4). It is unfortunate that none were found *in situ* so the full significance of this variation cannot be assessed. It is worthy of note that the room(s) from which the material in pit C21 was taken were fairly opulently decorated. The early date of the mosaic (pre-mid 3rd century) is notable, since few British villas seem to have had mosaics before the 4th century (Frere 1967, 270).

Window glass

About fifty sherds of 'matt-glossy' Roman window-glass were found, about half of them coming from pit C21.

Eight sherds were of thin, clear slightly brownish glass, four sherds were fairly thin slightly greenish-blue 'matt-glossy' glass, and the remainder were of thick slightly greenish-blue 'matt-glossy' glass. No substantial portions of any pane could be joined, and it seems that the surviving fragments represent a large number of individual panes (the rest of the broken glass having been

cleared away from the inhabited buildings and stockyards for safety and/or re-use as scrap). It thus seems that glazed windows were present in some quantity in the villa buildings.

The assemblage from pit C21 consisted of twenty-one sherds of at least six panes, fragments of which (including joining pieces) were scattered throughout the pit fill both vertically and longitudinally. One pane was represented by at least nine sherds, and the corner of this pane is illustrated (Fig. 88.4). It shows the method by which the molten metal was laid in the mould and pulled out.

III. The Pottery

by P.M. Barford

Introduction

The 1951–73 and 1975–8 excavations at Little Oakley produced considerable quantities of pottery, the majority of it Roman. Most of this comes from Sites III and IV, and Sites A and C. The material from the 1975–8 investigations was examined first, and the whole of the 41kg of stratified material was quantified by form and fabric. A level III archive was prepared, and a level IV report written in 1982. Subsequently the 1951–73 material became available. Considerations of available time made it impossible for this material to be quantified in the same manner.

Fortunately the Farrands material complements the material from the later excavations. Thus it is the latter pottery which will be discussed in the most detail, and selected groups of the Farrands finds will be related to this. The exception to this is the Saxon pottery; it is clear that the material of Periods 4–5 on the Corbishley sites could never have been understood properly had not Commander Farrands in 1978 lent the writer the Saxon finds from his site. In this way an integrated report has been created using the original work on the 1975–8 pottery as a starting-point. All of the pottery (whether stratified or not) has been seen by the writer.

The material is studied here in three groups: prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman, although there is inevitably some overlap between these categories; for each a fabric and form type-series has been created. Fabrics 1–6 (and some of 12 and 14) are prehistoric (though some 'Roman' fabrics may have begun in the decades just before the Conquest). Fabrics 22–26 and the rest of fabrics 12–14 are post-Roman. The remainder of the fabric groups are Roman. Very little post-medieval pottery was found. It is not always appropriate to study each group in exactly the same way, and the prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon pottery both have different problems from the Roman pottery, which thus merit a slightly different approach. Unfortunately it did not prove possible to carry out any petrological work on the various fabrics identified. This might have proved valuable sorting out the clay sources, particularly for the prehistoric and Saxon pottery.

Initial comments

The stratified material from the 1975–8 sites was fully quantified by fabric and type by sherd counts and weighing.[19] Sherd size was also documented. Most of the groups of sherds were small, and only a group of pits on Site C produced bigger assemblages of material, in larger sherds than elsewhere on the site.

Only in the case of some of the material from the Roman pits C21–23 and C26, does it seem that we are dealing with deliberately buried rubbish, including broken ceramic vessels. Most of the Little Oakley pottery came from the fills of negative features and consisted of small, abraded (some very abraded), sherds. Joining sherds or even sherds from the same vessel were rare. It is clear that breakage of the vessels took place before (and probably at some distance from) the deposition of the contexts in which the sherds were found. These sherds had presumably been lying on the ground surface or within deposits on that surface, and later became accidentally incorporated into the fill of negative features cut through these surfaces. The original surfaces and any layers on them were later destroyed by ploughing. The composition of the sherd 'sample' within the feature will thus have depended partly on the composition of the sherd assemblages of the layers it cuts through. Thus the inclusion or exclusion of a particular sherd in a deposit is almost a chance occurrence, dependent not only on the nature or date of the feature but also on the nature of the layers (now destroyed) which it disturbed. There seems to be good sense in regarding every sherd as redeposited ('residual') unless there is good reason to believe otherwise. Difficulties in using this material to date deposits, and in any other type of analysis, will be apparent.

The reverse is also true since intrusive material seems to be present in small quantities. While the normal laws of *terminus post quem* should be applied to the dating of some features, these may sometimes have contained sherds which might not belong there. The site is shallow and badly disturbed, both in the past and recently. Rodent, worm and plant root action over the centuries have probably contributed to the contamination of some deposits. The single small scrap of post-medieval stoneware in C21 is easily recognised as such, but what about the medieval sherd from D6? Context A16 similarly contained a few greyware sherds. Are these to be used to date this feature (which contains a considerable quantity of prehistoric material which seems unlikely to be redeposited)? Possibly these greyware sherds are intrusive, displaced from the fill of A5 by root or animal action (these two ditches may mark a hedge line) or even by an unrecognised recut of A16.

In some contexts intrusive material is suspected; in other cases it may be imposible to detect intrusive sherds. During the writing of this report a healthy scepticism was maintained about the integrity of some of the assemblages involved; sherds deemed to be intrusive are always noted in this text.

Prehistoric pottery

Virtually all of the excavated features contained at least a few small abraded sherds of prehistoric pottery, clearly identifiable by the distinctive fabrics as well as the range of forms present. Only a few features were of Period I, however, and the majority of the sherds came from later deposits. All the stratified material has been examined, and a representative selection is illustrated and discussed. The stratified material (even if redeposited) from the 1975–8 excavations has been fully catalogued, because to date the Little Oakely prehistoric pottery comprises the largest assemblage of material from this area, and gives a useful cross section of ceramic typology for this period in

north-east Essex. The following discussion is based largely on this catalogue maintained in the site archive in COLEM. Until the present, most of the modern research on the prehistoric (pre-Belgic) pottery of Essex has been concentrated on Thames-side sites like Mucking, Orsett, Gun Hill, Chadwell St Mary etc. Fortunately, although there are differences, Little Oakley seems to be on the edge of the same coastal cultural province as much of this south Essex material. This allows parallels to be drawn (with due caution) from sites there for some features of the Little Oakley pottery.

The sherds were catalogued by fabric and (where determinable) by form, the fabric numbers being contiguous with that used for the Roman and post-Roman pottery, the prehistoric forms being lettered.

Earlier prehistoric pottery

(Fig. 90)

As noted above, definite early prehistoric pottery is generally absent from the Little Oakley assemblage. One sherd of a large vertical-sided vessel (Fig. 90) in an oxidised flint-gritted prehistoric fabric may be worth consideration as possibly Middle Bronze Age or earlier. All-over finger tip rustication occurs on the Ardleigh urns (Erith and Longworth 1960, figs 2 and 3) some of which occur in flint-tempered fabrics. All-over finger tip rustication also occurred, however, with LBA/EIA pottery at Linton Cambridgeshire (Fell 1953, 42; fig. 5, no. 34) and at Lofts Farm, Heybridge (N. Brown pers. comm.). In the latter case, at least, this material appears not to be redeposited.

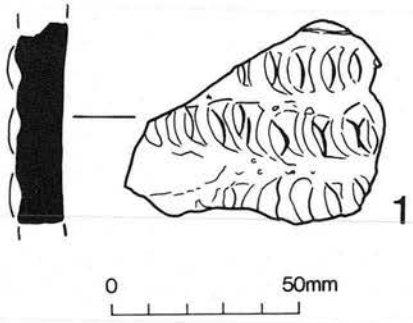


Figure 90 Early prehistoric pottery, scale 1:2

1 Rusticated body sherd, possibly of Deverel-Rimbury bucket urn, fabric 3 (context A5).

See also sherds 125 and 127 below, which may also be Deverel-Rimbury type vessel sherds. These may be linked with the 19th century finds of urns and a LBA hoard further to the west (see introduction to this volume).

The prehistoric flintwork noted above is singularly devoid of accompanying pottery. A few of the flint-tempered scraps may have been abraded Neolithic sherds, but the only convincing potential Neolithic vessels are five sherds (see below) from two contexts, the Iron Age ditches A16 and D13. That from D13 (sherd no. 36). was of a flint-tempered fabric and has a vertical neck with a bead rim and diagonal combing on the upper body. While there is no objection to this being an Iron Age open bowl, there are potential Neolithic parallels (*e.g.* Kinnes 1978, figs 34.79, 35.84). Likewise the sherds (nos 55, 65, 66 and especially 54) from context A16 would not be out of place in an Iron Age context; indeed the fine fabric of Nos 65 and 66 are unlike the coarse tempering found in most Essex Neolithic pottery. Sherd No. 54, from a globular jar, is unusual in two respects; firstly its apparent large size, and secondly the faint cabling on the inside of the rim. Both features can be paralleled by a vessel from the Orsett causewayed camp (Kinnes 1978, 274, figs 35.84 and 31.42).

There are no cogent reasons for regarding these vessels as either definitely Iron Age or definitely Neolithic. The fabrics are no help, being of local clay and tempering. If earlier prehistoric, these sherds would fit into the 'Mildenhall' style of the Early Neolithic.

Later prehistoric pottery

Fabric groups

All of the vessels are hand made, medium to soft fired (oxidised and reduced on the same sherd) unless otherwise noted. The variations in mica content noted below may indicate that different clay sources were utilised. Although no petrological work has been undertaken, it seems that all of these fabrics can be supplied by local sources of clay and temper. The site has a variety of clay sources within a kilometre radius (London Clay, 'Head', alluvium, brickearth), and the sands, flint and shell temper are also within easy reach.

Fabric 1 Fine fabrics, tempered with moderately fine to coarse but generally well-sorted crushed calcined flint. Generally no mica in matrix. Oxidised or reduced.

Fabric 2 Similar to fabric 1, but hard fired and generally reduced. Nearly always thin-walled vessels with both surfaces burnished. Micaceous matrix with fine-medium crushed calcined flint temper.

Fabric 3 A large group, similar to fabric 1, but with copious ill-sorted crushed calcined flint temper (fine predominating) and only a little mica. Usually oxidised.

Fabric 3A Similar to fabric 3, but contains sparse very fine well sorted crushed calcined flint temper, larger pieces of flint were only occasionally present (see below p. 121).

Fabric 4 Hard-fired fine fabric containing abundant fine sand temper but no mica. Usually fired in reducing conditions.

Fabric 5 Fine 'grog-tempered' ware ('soapy' feel), no mica. Oxidised or reduced.

Fabric 6 Hard-fired vessels, some probably wheel-made with miscellaneous temper, mainly 'grog' with sand; some sherds have voids suggestive of dissolved shell; no mica. Oxidised or reduced.

Fabric 12 Fine fabric containing copious voids of dissolved crushed (bivalve) shell; some mica. Usually oxidised.

Fabric 14 Moderately hard fired, generally reduced, fine sandy fabric with variable quantities of voids from burnt out vegetable temper (see below). Difficult to distinguish from Anglo-Saxon pottery in some cases, especially in the small abraded sherds which usually represented this fabric type at Little Oakley.

Note: It was sometimes difficult to distinguish shapeless scraps of fabrics 12 and 14 from later pottery with the same tempering agents, hence the same fabric numbers are retained for these later fabrics also. Only relatively certain examples of prehistoric fabrics 12 and 14 are included in the Table 3 totals. Fabric 3A is included in the fabric 3 totals from the 1975–8 sites (see p. 121).

Forms

Nineteen basic form groups were recognised during processing (lettered A to Z). Several forms were however later amalgamated in the course of this work. Table 3 shows the relationship (by minimum vessel number) between these forms and the prehistoric fabrics (shapeless body sherds are not included, except in the sherd total). On the basis of the table it can be seen that certain fabrics

are specific to certain groups of forms, and it seems likely (bearing in mind the parallels of these forms) that these differences are chronological. The first group (fabrics 1–3; forms A to J) seems to be Later Bronze Age to Early Iron Age (LBA to EIA) while the second group seems to have Early to Middle Iron Age (EIA to MIA) parallels (fabric 4 and forms K to R), although as noted above some of these sherds may be assigned an earlier date.

The third group (fabrics 5 to 6 and forms S to Z) is more problematic and will be considered as a separate case. The group would seem to be 1st century AD in date.

	Fabric Groups							
Forms	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*Other*	*Total*
A	–	6	2	–	–	–	–	8
B	–	15	3	–	–	–	–	18
C	3	–	16	–	–	–	–	19
D	1	2	3	1	–	–	–	7
E	2	–	12	–	–	–	–	14
F	2	–	6	–	–	–	–	8
G	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	3
H	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	3
J	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
KLM	–	–	1	7	–	–	–	8
N	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
P	–	–	–	11	–	–	–	11
Q	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	2
R	–	–	1	3	–	–	1	5
S	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
TV	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	4
W	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
XY	–	–	–	1	5	4	–	10
Z	–	–	–	–	3	1	–	4
Other	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	8	23	51	25	13	6	2	128*
Sherd total of each fabric (stratified contexts)								
	129	85	678	124	41	20	5	1082#

* vessels assignable to forms
\# total no. of sherds

Table 3 Prehistoric pottery form and fabric correlated by minimum vessel numbers (1975–8 excavations only)

Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery from the 1975–8 excavations

First group (forms A to J, fabrics 1–3)

Most of the prehistoric pottery from the 1975–8 excavations seemed, from the forms present, to be of this date. A minimum number of eighty vessels fall into this group, and many more body sherds probably came from other vessels. Only sixty sherds came from features D8, D9 and D10 while 196 sherds came from D13. The ditches A5 and A16 (below) also contained a large quantity of (redeposited) pottery of fabrics 1 to 4. The remainder of the sherds came from later deposits.

Ten vessel forms in three main fabrics fall into this group:

Form A A small biconical bowl in fabric 2 with burnished surfaces, often plain but sometimes decorated with incised lines. Similar to some vessels from the fill of the LBA South Rings at Mucking (Barrett forthcoming) and Linford (Barton 1962, fig. 1.5), but not present at Orsett in the EIA assemblage there (Barrett 1978). See also Minnis Bay (Harding 1974, fig. 37.E). *Cf.* vessels from Linton (Fell 1953, fig. 4.25), and West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953, fig. 15).

Form B A small plain, thin-walled jar also of fabric 2 with burnished surfaces and probably complementary to form A. Difficult to parallel (but see Cunliffe 1968, fig. 2 no. 23, from Darmsden, Suffolk; and from Staple Howe, Brewster 1963, fig. 42.7).

Form C A series of large, coarse, wide, squat bowls often in fabric 3. Some are decorated with incised horizontal lines on the shoulder, neck and outside of the rim. An example comes from Staple Howe (Brewster 1963, fig. 35 no. 4, also perhaps fig. 36.4; see also Clark and Fell 1953, fig. 13.33; and Barrett 1978, 282, fig. 41.48).

Form D A group of squat plain bowls distinguished from form A by the thicker walls and more open profile. This form is similar to the series of bowls from Darmsden (Cunliffe 1968, fig. 2). Form D1 bowls are squat and open, form D2 (e.g. Fig. 92.35) are taller tending towards a jar-like form (*cf.* Orsett, Barrett 1978, fig. 41.48–50 and 41.74).

Form E A group of plain narrow jars with upright or slightly everted rims. Similar forms occur at Staple Howe (Brewster 1963, fig. 37 no. 2) and West Harling, (Clark and Fell 1953, fig. 16 no. 94), but also at Orsett (Barrett 1978, fig. 42.98).

Form F A large biconical high-shouldered jar, plain except for some vertical wiping or scoring on some sherds. A common LBA/EIA type, *e.g.* Mucking South Rings, Linford (Barton 1962, fig. 1.1), West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953, figs 11 no. 14, 16 no. 101, 17 no. 104 etc.), but on these site more often decorated on the shoulder and rim than those found at Little Oakley (*cf.* Fell 1953, fig. 3.3–7).

Form G A small squat plain biconical jar or bowl with burnished or wiped surfaces probably related to form D2 (see Fig. 93.74).

Form H Bowl-jar (see Figs 94.88 and 94.100, 97.131) considered below.

Form J A single unique rim sherd, for which no close parallel has been found. *Cf.* form D1, possibly LBA/EIA. See however Figs 92.37 and 99.161.

The twelve form groups are shown in Fig. 91.2–13 selected from a variety of contexts. These drawings are idealised, and the sherds themselves are also drawn Figs 91–3. This is followed by a discussion of the assemblages. All of the illustratable material from a selection of contexts is drawn (Figs 91–2) followed by a selection of redeposited sherds from other features (Fig. 93). In the following series of pottery descriptions the form letter will be given followed by the fabric. This will be followed by the description of surface treatment followed by the context number in brackets.

Description of illustrated items — the form series
(Fig. 91)

2 Form A, fabric 2 burnished surface, (composite drawing, rim from context A5, shoulder context A23).
3 Form B, fabric 2, burnished surfaces (A16 Fig. 92.49).
4 Form C, fabric 3 (D13) (see Fig. 92.29 and 92.34).
5 Form D, fabric 3 (D13, Fig. 92.33).
6 Form D2, fabric 3 (D13, Fig. 92.35).
7 Form F, fabric 3 (A5)
8 Form E, fabric 3 (D13) (see Fig. 92.25).
9 Form J, fabric 3 burnished surfaces (D15).

Second group (forms KLM to Q, fabric 4)

The pottery of the second group (forms G to Q) is slightly more problematic. At least twenty-two vessels were present, virtually all in sandy fabrics (fabric 4) which were not particularly common on the 1975–8 sites. Some of the forms represented are similar to those of the first group, others are more difficult to parallel precisely. The relationship between these vessels and the first group will be discussed below.

Form KLM A small series of vertical-sided jars or bowls with various rim forms and surface finishes (*cf.* Little Waltham forms 7, 10 and 15B, Drury 1978, figs 37–8). K has a bead-rim, L a simple rounded rim, and M a slightly everted bead-rim. These forms have been amalgamated here. Some of these vessels might even be Neolithic (see above).

Form N A jar, similar to Little Waltham form 3 or 11 (Drury 1978, 54).

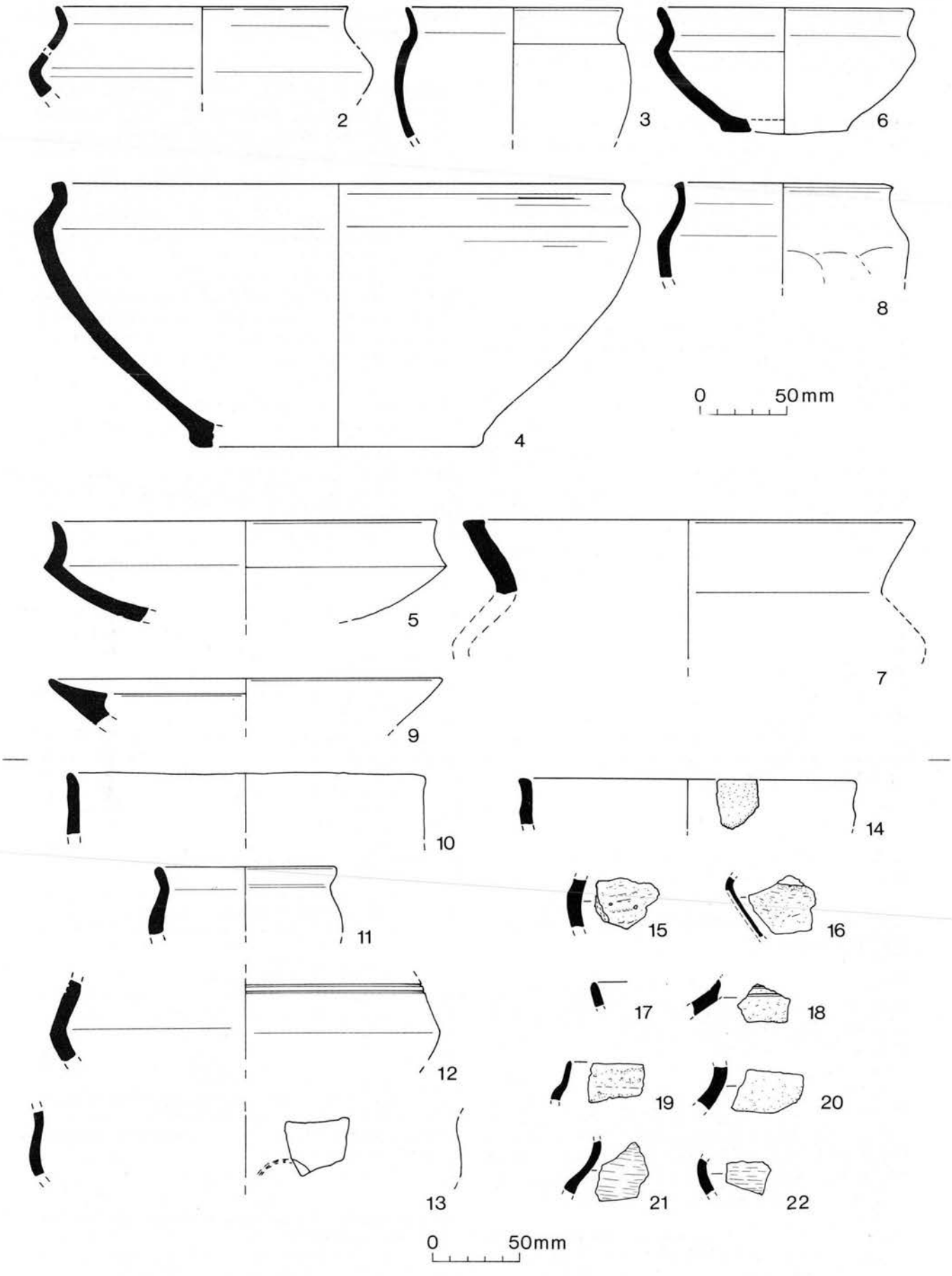


Figure 91 Prehistoric pottery (nos 1–13, type series), scale 1:3

Form P Burnished biconical bowls with horizontal incised lines, very similar to the form D vessels discussed above and indeed may not belong to this second group at all.

Form Q Burnished jars with slight shoulders are difficult to parallel (but *cf.* again several Little Waltham forms).

Description of illustrated items — the form series
(Fig. 91)

10 Form KLM fabric 4 (A16 Fig. 92.65).
11 Form N fabric 4 (A5).
12 Form P fabric 4 (D13 Fig. 92.40).
13 Form Q fabric 4 burnished inside and outside, external dimple on one sherd (D13 Fig. 92.46)

The third group (forms R to Z and fabrics 5–7,12) is discussed further below.

The assemblages

Only a few stratified pottery groups of Period I were found on the 1975–8 excavations, and even these were contaminated by material which seemed to be intrusive (the content and nature of the earlier pottery was such that this was more likely than considering the prehistoric material as redeposited). The contents of the four main deposits are detailed below by fabric, and these groups are also illustrated in full (Figs 91–4). The material from ditches A16 and D13 was collected from separate 2.5m grids (details available in archive); selected sherds are also illustrated.

The composition of the material (157 sherds, total wt. 1722g) from Ditch A16 was as follows: Fab. 1 — 28 sherds, Fab. 2 — 14 sherds, Fab. 3+3A — 62 sherds, Fab. 4 — 29 sherds, Fab. 5 — 12 sherds, Fab. 6 — 1 sherd, Romano-British — 11 sherds). This assemblage was fairly consistent, and this ditch was potentially Period 1, despite the high proportion of possibly intrusive Belgic and Roman sherds (see Fig. 97, nos 138–40). If, however, this feature is to be equated with the Period 2 ditch 2 on Site IV, it must be regarded as of Period 2, but with a fairly comprehensive sample of redeposited EIA pottery, and relatively little Period 2 material.

	Gully D9 (80g)	*Gully D10 (113g)*	*Ditch D13 (1395g)*
Fabric 1	1	–	–
Fabric 2	5	3	1
Fabric 3+3A	11	13	195
Fabric 4	5	–	–
Fabric 6	–	1	1
Fabric 12	–	1	1
RB			10

Table 4 Composition of assemblages of prehistoric pottery from ditches D9, D10 and D13

The two gullies D9 and D10 were probably contemporary and contained a similar range of pottery (Fig. 91.14–22) to which a Late Bronze Age date may be applied. The Roman sherds from ditch D13 may have been intrusive and the group seems to reflect an Early Iron Age origin. The very high proportion of fabric 3 is notable, and about half of these sherds in D13 could be assigned to seven distinctive vessels:

Vessel a: Oxidised fabric 3, 'footring' base (not illustrated).
Vessel b: Wide bowl, reduced finely gritted fabric 3A, possibly more than one vessel (Fig. 92.34, also possibly Fig. 92.32).
Vessel c: Large jar, two body sherds (not illustrated) fine oxidised micaceous fabric 3A wiped surfaces.
Vessel d: Large jar, soft fabric 3A. Little flint (Fig. 92.29).
Vessel e: Large jar, fabric as D. Sooty deposit inside base and body sherds only (not ill.).
Vessel f: Large jar, soft fabric 3, copious flint grit on base (Fig. 92.31).
Vessel g: Form D2 bowl (perhaps more than one) (Fig. 92.35).
Vessel h: Form D1 bowl (Fig. 92.33).

Only a short length of Ditch C37 was excavated: it produced nine small (unillustratable) prehistoric body sherds, six of fabric 3, two of fabric 2, but one grass-tempered sherd (fabric 14), and also a fabric 10 Roman sherd. The dating is problematic. The grass-tempered sherd could very well be prehistoric, or (less likely in this case, since C27 is cut by C26) Latest Roman/ Anglo-Saxon. C37 cannot therefore be closely dated using the pottery in its fill.

Other grass-tempered sherds which seem to be prehistoric were found from a number of contexts (including A5). Their reliable separation from Anglo-Saxon pottery can prove problematic, especially on a site known to have much redeposited or intrusive material, as here.

Stratified groups, descriptions of illustrated items
(Figs 91–2)

Contexts D8–10 gully and associated layers

14 Form E fabric 4 (D9).
15 Form E fabric 3, surface horizontally wiped (D9).
16 Form A fabric 2, outer surface spalled (D9).
17 Fabric 2 (D9).
18 Shell-tempered fabric 12, horizontal incised lines (D10) (see nos 149–50).
19 Form B fabric 1 (D8, buried subsoil).
20 Fabric 3 (D8, buried subsoil).
21 Fabric 2 (D8, buried subsoil).
22 Fabric 2, burnished inside and outside (D8, buried subsoil).

Context D13, gully
(Fig. 92)

23 Form A fabric 2, burnished inside and outside, horizontal burnished decoration.
24 Form B fabric 2.
25 Form E fabric 3, knife-trimmed on shoulder.
26 Fabric 1, form uncertain.
27 Form L fabric 3.
28 Form C or E/F fabric 3.
29 Form C fabric 3. Burnished exterior. (Joining sherds from grid 41D and 40C.) Note that rim profile differs in these sherds.
30 Form B(?) fabric 3. Burnished exterior. Orientation uncertain.
31 Fabric 3. Copious flint grit on outside underneath base, a technique noted elsewhere (*e.g.* Mucking). Form uncertain.
32 Form C fabric 3.
33 Form D1 fabric 3. Burnished upper exterior; two sherds probably the same vessel, it is not clear if this vessel had an omphalos base.
34 Form C fabric 3.
35 Form D2 fabric 3, surfaced wiped.
36 Form KLM fabric 3, combed decoration; possibly Neolithic.
37 Rim or footring fabric 3, burnished exterior (*cf.* form J).
38 Reduced fabric 3. Form uncertain, edge of dimple inside.
39 Fabric 3.
40 Burnt (oxidised/reduced), very fine sandy fabric 4 burnished outside and inside. Form uncertain.
41 Form A fabric 4, burnished outside and inside, fabric as No. 40.
42 Form D(?) fabric 4, burnished outside.
43 Form D(?) fabric 4, rough surface with knuckle impressions inside.
44 Base, fabric 4, perforations drilled after firing.
45 Fabric 4, burnished inside and outside. Form uncertain, diameter about 300mm.
46 Fabric 4, burnished inside and outside. Form uncertain, dimple on shoulder, diameter about 250mm (see also Fig. 91, nos 4–6 and 8 and 12–13 above in type series)

Context A16, ditch

47 Form C fabric 1, surfaces smoothed.
48 Form C fabric 1, horizontally combed, burnished above carination.
49 Form B fabric 2, burnished inside and outside.

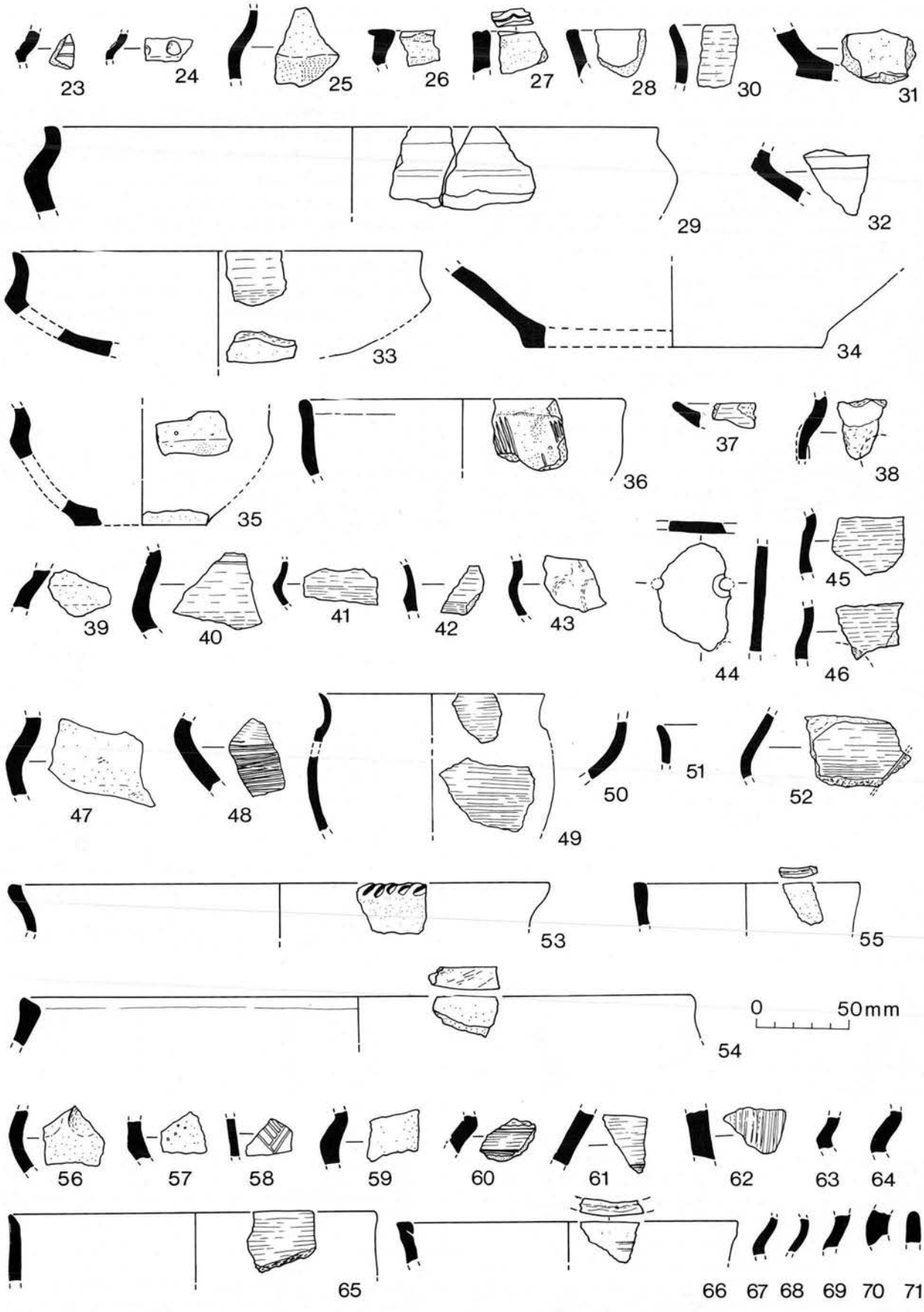


Figure 92 Prehistoric pottery, scale 1:3

50 Fabric 2, Form and orientation uncertain.
51 Form A or B fabric 2, orientation uncertain.
52 Form C, ungrouped sandy fabric, burnished outer surface with shallow incised line.
53 Form C fabric 3, fingernail decoration on rim.
54 Ungrouped form, fabric 3 decorated inside rim decorated with faint 'cabling'. Possibly Neolithic.
55 Ungrouped form (KLM?), fabric 3, possibly Neolithic?
56 Fabric 3, grouped shallow dimples on shoulder, uncertain form.
57 Crucible sherd, slight vitreous deposit on exterior (see metalworking debris report; MD5).
58 Sherd of fabric 2 with incised linear decoration. (Context A5, redeposited from A16?).
59 Form D/E fabric 3.
60 Form C(?) fabric 3, burnished lines and exterior, incised line.
61 Form C(?) fabric 3, burnished lines and exterior, incised line.
62 Form E/F fabric 3, shallow vertical combing.
63 Form D(?) fabric 3.
64 Form D(?) fabric 3.
65 Form M fabric 4, burnished inside and outside. Possibly Neolithic?
66 Form L fabric 4, top of rim is grooved. Two grooves on outside of sherd may be accidental. Possibly Neolithic?
67 Form P(?) fabric 4.
68 Form P(?) fabric 4.
69 Form P(?) fabric 4.
70 Form uncertain. Fabric 4.
71 Form L, fabric 4.
(See also sherds 138–40 (Fig. 97) which may be intrusive).

Miscellaneous sherds from the 1973–8 sites
(Fig. 93)
72 Form C fabric 3 (A3, rubble spread).
73 Form A or D fabric 3, decorated with shallow incisions (A3, rubble spread).
74 Form G fabric 3 (A3, rubble spread).
75 Form E fabric 3 (A23, ditch).
76 Form F fabric 1, combed decoration on rim (A5, ditch).
77 Form C(?) fabric 1 (A5, ditch).
78 Sherd of straight-sided vessel, fabric 3 with smudged 'cabled' finger-tip decoration on the top of the rim. (D11, buried subsoil). Rectangular pottery vessels may be more common in later prehistoric pottery assemblages than is generally supposed. The writer has seen 'flat' body sherds from Mucking, Essex, and from nearby Corringham (Barford 1984–5, 140). A base of a rectangular flint-gritted vessel has come from excavations at Highstead, Kent, by Canterbury Archaeological Trust (N. Macpherson-Grant and P. Couldrey, pers. comm.).
79 Globular jar sherd fabric 3; ring-stamp below two burnished lines (A21, pit).
80 Form B or D/E fabric 3 (D15 buried subsoil).
81 Form B or D/E fabric 3 (D15).
82 Form N(?) or B fabric 4 (D15).

Dating of the assemblages

The pottery in D9 and D10 is small in quantity, but a Later Bronze Age date would probably fit most of it, with the exception of sherd 18 which is more likely to belong with the shell-tempered pottery discussed below (p. 128). It is unclear whether or not this sherd is intrusive in ditch D10, which thus might be Late Iron Age, but if so, it is difficult to account for the absence of other pottery of this date.

Ditch D13 likewise contained a fabric 12 sherd, but in this case alongside small abraded Roman sherds: all are thought to be intrusive. The presence of the dumps of sherds from the same vessels in adjacent areas of the ditch almost certainly indicates that these sherds were not redeposited, and thus date the ditch. Some of the other pottery (*e.g.* sherd 23) may be redeposited earlier material, but vessels a, b, d, g and h clearly are not. These indicate an Early Iron Age group of the nature of the later assemblage from Orsett discussed by Barrett (1978, 280–7), which is assigned a 5th or 4th century BC date. The group would fit into Cunliffe's (1968) 'Darmsden-Linton Group' ('fifth to third centuries BC'). Vessel no. 29 has LBA antecedents (see above) and note the narrow rounded form of the D2 bowl no. 35 (see below p. 125). Ditch A16 is problematic, as it is not entirely certain that it is Period 1. Many of the vessels are represented by single small sherds, which could all be redeposited. There is also a mixture of types: sherds 52, 53 and 58 could be matched against LBA vessels from Mucking, Staple Howe or West Harling for example; the dating of form B jars like sherd 49 is unclear, as also is that of the bead-rimmed jars or bowls 36, 54, 55 and 65. However, they could be Iron Age (but equally, they could be Neolithic see above). A globular jar like these came from Orsett in an assemblage dated by Barrett (1978, 278, fig. 39.4) to the 6th century BC, and this Later Early Iron Age assemblage also contains some curvaceous vessels in sandier fabrics (like our 3A?). Parallels in the Little Waltham series (Drury 1978) could suggest a slightly later date for the A16 pottery.

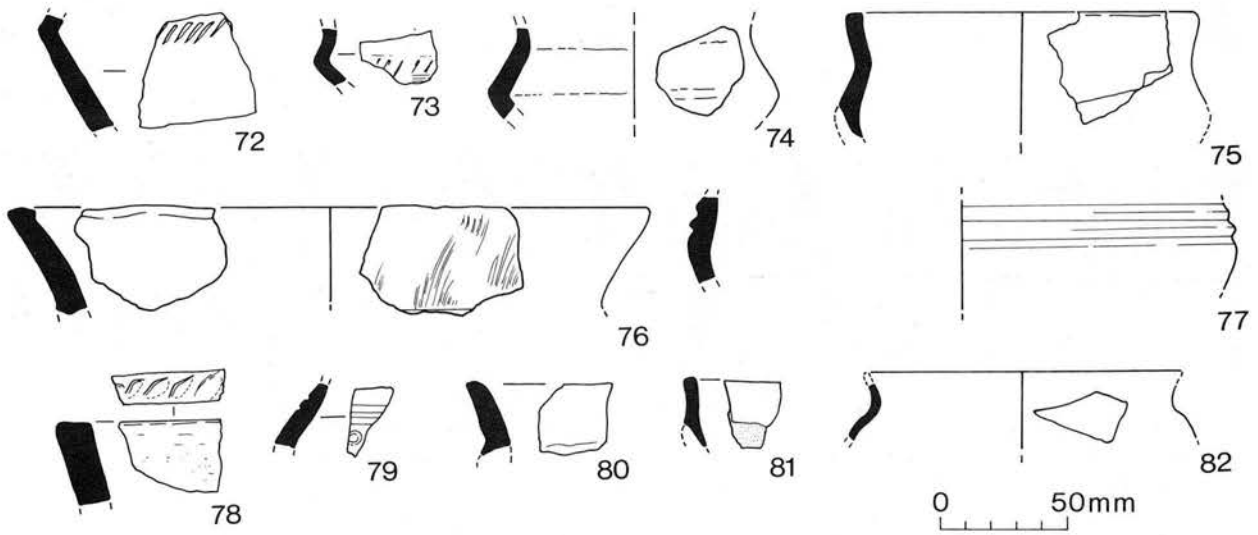


Figure 93 Prehistoric pottery, scale 1:3

Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery from the Farrands sites

(Figs 94–9)

This material was of the same fabric and form range as the material from the 1975–8 excavations discussed above and was present in nearly all excavated features. In general the Farrands pottery repeats and complements the pattern seen previously, thus selected sherds and groups only will be illustrated and discussed in this section.

One exception to this general rule is that, in the work on the Farrands material subsequent to the cataloguing of the 1975–8 finds, the wide range of textures called 'fabric 3' was sub-divided. Some sherds from Farrands' Site I differed from the 1975–8 material in the fineness of the fabric and rather limited range of textures. These groups did overlap, and no justification was seen for creating a new fabric, so this new textural division was termed 'fabric 3A' (defined in the fabric descriptions above). Had the Farrands material been available to the writer before the 1975–8 material was processed, more attention would have been paid to variations in fabric 3. In retrospect, it could be seen that fabric 3A was present in small quantities amongst the 1975–8 material, but it was much more common on the parts of the site excavated by Farrands. The forms represented by this fabric were jars of Early Iron Age form, though a few sherds were clearly from bowls burnished internally.

As noted above, it was not possible to quantify the prehistoric pottery from the Farrands site fully, or to illustrate more than a selection. Nevertheless the most important groups and individual sherds have been described here. Note: the figures were compiled before this text was completed, hence the lack of agreement regarding their sequence.

The pottery from Site I

Ditch 1

The feature contained a few intrusive Belgic sherds and the upper fill contained a few, presumably intrusive, small Roman sherds, but once these had been extracted, the remaining sherds were mostly EIA/MIA.

The fabrics and forms do not vary throughout the fills of this ditch: 870g came from the primary fill, 1180g from the middle fills and 480g from the upper fills (which also contained a little Middle Iron Age pottery deemed intrusive). Most of the pottery is reduced and of a restricted range of fabrics: Fabric 1 × 29 (4%); Fabric 2 × 21 (3%); Fabric 3 × 84 (9%); Fabric 3A × 485 (64%); Fabric 4 × 151 (20%); Fabric 14 × 2 (1%). One large bag (bag no. 279 from the middle fill) was taken as a representative sample of the whole:

a) Sherds of many small (to medium?) jars, Form E; 100 sherds (640g) mostly fabric 3, 3A and 4.
b) Sherds of at least three large form F jars, one vertically wiped, fabric 3; 6 sherds (180g).
c) Sherds of at least five bowls, one form D, polished oxidised, the others of form A in fabric 2; 28 sherds (100g).
d) Fabric 1 × 2 sherds (10g),
   Fabric 2 × 10 sherds (15g) of bowls,
   Fabric 3 × 55 sherds (310g) at least 9 other medium jars,
   Fabric 4 × 23 sherds (200g) at least 5 other medium jars (illustrated sherds: Fig. 95.112, 113, 124, 127).

Fabric 3A was fairly variable in texture, often hard reduced with smoothed surfaces and rarely burnished, mostly from jars and bowls. A few of the fabric 3 sherds were of deep red polished ('haematite') bowls. At least one form F jar with vertical combing was present. Two sherds of burnished sandy ware were found, very like fabric A at Little Waltham (Drury 1978, 56)

Ditch D7

Apart from a few intrusive Belgic sherds from near the wall (F115), the pottery in this ditch fill was of a similar nature throughout. The sherds were a little larger, and fabric 3A was a little more prominent than in ditch 1. The ditch fill itself (F114) produced 900g of sherds, while a deposit of burnt material in the fill produced a further 1.150kg of sherds in fabrics 3 and 3A. Some sherds in these fabrics were of form C bowls (no. 105), but most were of small to medium jars with a few large jars (illustrated sherds Fig. 95.105, 106, 111, 116, 117, 118 and 120).

Buried subsoil F9 and F73

The nature of these deposits has already been discussed; the prehistoric pottery from them was often in the form of small abraded sherds, and it was difficult to say much about the forms present. Sherds of biconical jars and form A bowls (*e.g.* Fig. 94.98) stood out. Fabric 1 was scarce; fabric 2 (oxidised and reduced) relatively common; fabric 3 and 3A very common; fabric 4 relatively common. Most of this pottery was LBA/EIA, but the quantity of diagnostically LBA material was low (Fig. 94.102 is form C). A little Middle Iron Age pottery was also present (*e.g.* Fig. 94.101 and Fig. 95.108).

A few larger sherds of fabrics 5 and 6 were present; the size and lack of abrasion imply that they may have had a different origin from the smaller earlier sherds. Roman pottery was also present (illustrated prehistoric sherds; Fig. 94.97, 98, 101, 102, 103, Fig. 95.107, 108, 110, 114, 122, 126, 128, also Fig. 99.160, 161 and 163–5).

Sites II and III

Most of the material from these sites consisted of abraded featureless body sherds of fabric 3 and 3A; little of this was worthy of illustration (sherds Fig. 95.115, 122).

Site IV

This area of the site produced quite a bit of redeposited pottery, but two contexts produced pottery apparently *in situ* in Period 1 contexts. The remainder of the material on this site seemed similar to the material discussed below, and is not further noted here. Suffice to note that the distribution of the prehistoric pottery is uneven across the area (Fig. 96) and that we are clearly on the edge of the area producing LBA-type pottery.

Trench 18

The fill of ditch 7 produced a small but homogeneous group of EIA pottery.

a) 1 × 'haematite coated bowl' sherd, fabric 3A.
b) 10 × sherds large/medium coarseware jars fabric 3A.
c) 2 × sherds small jars fabric 3A.
d) 3 × burnished oxidised bowls fabric 3.
e) 8 × burnished oxidised form A bowls fabric 2.
f) 10 × other sherds burnished reduced fabrics 2 or 4.
   (Illustrated sherds: Fig. 94.93–5).

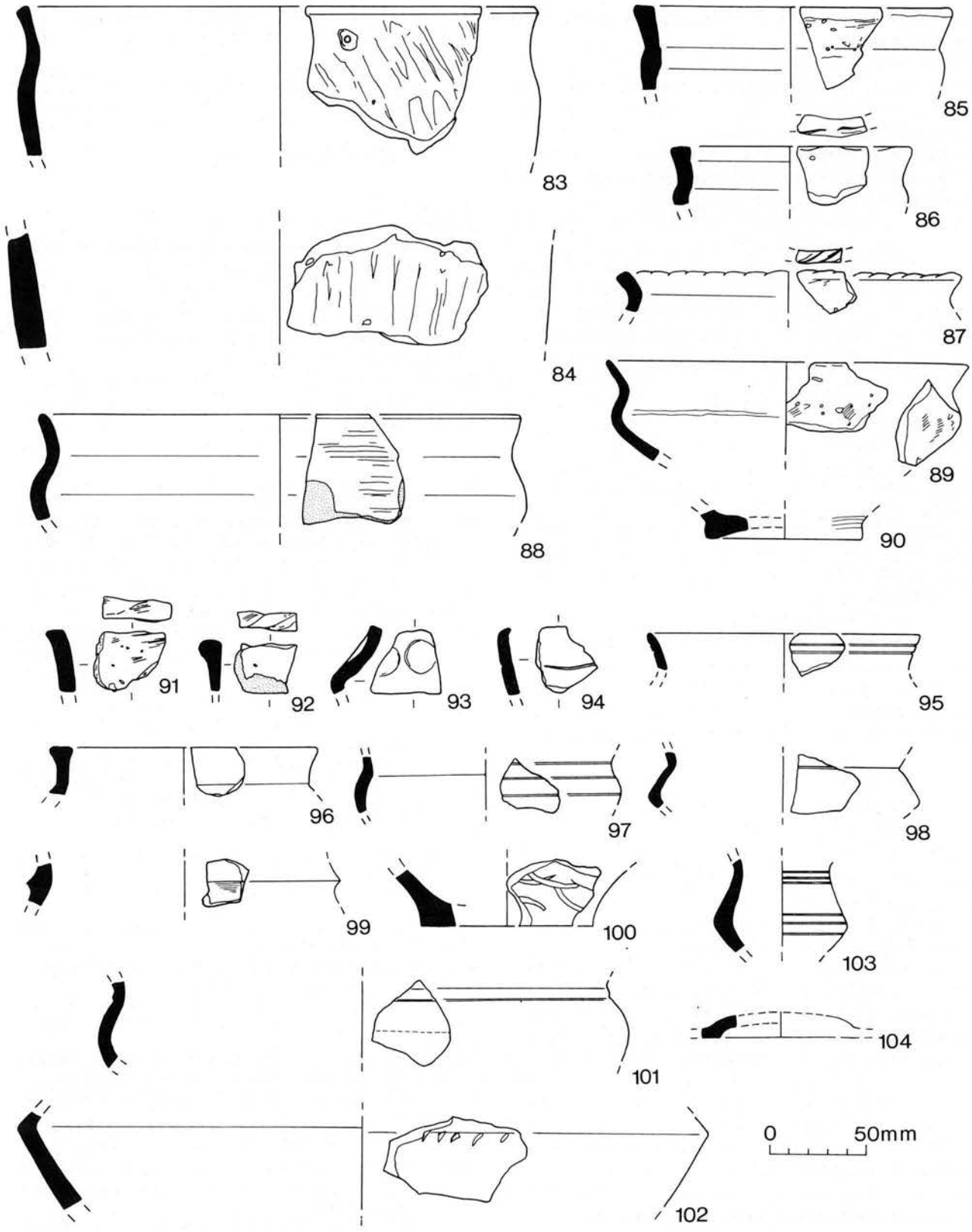


Figure 94 Prehistoric pottery, scale 1:3

Trench 20

This trench was of exceptional interest, because of the large quantity of pottery it produced from the fill of a length of ditch (ditch 4). This was all EIA (except for four small sherds of Early Roman pottery in the upper fill, considered to have been intrusive).

The pottery from the lower fills of ditch 4 (54 sherds, 480g) was very similar to that in the upper fill, although the sample is too small for meaningful comparison (Fig. 94.91).

The upper fill (layer 2) produced 4.89kg of pottery, which forms a homogeneous group of Early to Middle Iron Age aspect. Most of the pottery comprised featureless body sherds of fabric 3A, with a few of fabrics 3 and 4 (fabrics 1, 2, 5 and 6 were completely absent). Most of the vessel forms were jars as follows:

a) Large thick-walled jars (walls 10–13mm thick). Soft oxidised fabric 3, commonly with extremely rough or vertically wiped surfaces but no other form of decoration (Fig. 94.83–4), only a few rims or shoulders present. 41 sherds (1.08kg) of at least five vessels. Rim diameters up to 300mm.

b) Medium-sized jars (walls 8–10mm thick). Harder reduced fabrics 3 and 3A (mostly the latter). Plain smoothed exteriors, some with vertical wiping. Gently rounded shoulders, flat bases with only slight splaying. Flat topped rims sometimes with finger-tip 'cabling' round the top (Fig. 94.85 and 87). 95 sherds (1.31kg) of at least ten vessels. Rim diameters 130–160mm.

c) Small jars (walls 5–7mm thick). Similar forms to above, reduced fabric 3A, finer finish than larger jars. 34 sherds (340g) of at least ten vessels. Rim diameters 100–130mm.

d) Miscellaneous jars 203 small abraded sherds (1.01kg) of very many (mostly medium-sized) coarseware jars, as above. Some of these are probably redeposited, because of the number of vessels apparently represented by single sherds, and need not relate to the main group of pottery.

e) The remainder of the contents of this feature consists of sherds of a number of vessels of fabric 4, or fabrics similar to fabric 4 (some of which include occasional flint grits and may grade into fabric 3A). Most of these vessels were black or reduced in colour. Many of these small abraded sherds are clearly redeposited, but include pieces of at least six small bowls and at least two small plain jars (as above). Some of these vessels are burnished, and most had smooth surfaces. Some of these latter sherds had a little fine vegetable temper (but differ from grass-tempered Saxon pottery). Few forms could be illustrated. 276 sherds (1150g).

Illustrated pottery from Site IV trench 20, ditch 4 upper fill
(Fig. 94)

83 Large jar, fabric 3 reduced on exterior oxidised interior, diagonally wiped. Perforated after firing by pecking.

84 One of several similar large jar sherds, fabric 3 oxidised, vertically wiped.

85 Medium jar, form E, fabric 3 reduced, smoothed exterior.

86 Small jar, form E, fabric 3A, oxidised, surfaces smoothed, cabled rim.

87 Rim of medium jar, form E/F, reduced fabric 3A smoothed surface, cabled rim, sooted on exterior.

88 Bowl form H, fine sandy fabric with some sparse very fine crushed flint temper. Surfaces oxidised/reduced burnished surfaces. Middle Iron Age form?

89 Bowl form D2, two non-joining sherds of the same vessel, well smoothed surface, reduced fabric 3. Some slight dents or facets on the carination may be deliberate.

90 Base of similar vessel in fabric 3A, slight footring. Reduced burnished surfaces, including underside of base. (see also sherds 91 and 125). This assemblage of material has features which place it somewhere between the Early Iron Age and the 'Little Waltham' type of Middle Iron Age assemblage. The dating is further discussed below.

Miscellaneous prehistoric pottery from the Farrands site
(Figs 94–5)

91 Rim of form E/F jar with cabled rim, reduced fabric 3 (Site IV; trench 20, Period 1, ditch 4 lower fill).

92 Rim of form E/F jar with cabled rim, reduced fabric 3A (Site IV; trenches 5, Periods 3 and 6, ditch 1).

93 Shoulder of vessel (Form F) in oxidised/reduced fabric 3A, with dimples on shoulder (Site IV; trench 18, Period 1, ditch 7).

94 Rim of form L bowl oxidised/reduced fabric 3A with smoothed exterior, with horizontal scored line (Site IV; trench 18, ditch 7).

95 Rim of small jar form B oxidised/burnt? fabric 2, burnished surfaces (Site IV; trench 18, ditches 7–11, 'fill of gully at east end').

96 Rim of form E jar, reduced fabric 3A, burnished exterior (Site I; F76, Period 3 pipe trench).

97 Bowl sherd reduced fabric 3A, smoothed surfaces with irregular horizontal incised lines (Site I; F73, buried subsoil).

98 Bowl sherd (form A?) reduced fabric 2, burnished surfaces (Site I; F35, buried subsoil).

99 Cordon from jar or bowl neck, oxidised fabric 3 burnished exterior (Site I; trench W, topsoil).

100 Base of jar form H oxidised fine fabric 4 (though visually rather like Little Waltham fabric A, Drury 1978, 56) burnished lines on exterior (Site IV; Period 3, ditch 1, primary fill layer 6).

101 Shoulder of bowl (form H?) reduced fabric 3 burnished inside and on upper body (Site I; F35, buried subsoil).

102 Bowl form C, oxidised fabric 3A, smoothed surface, shallow 'nicks' on carination (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

103 Small form G biconical bowl reduced fabric 2 with finely finished surfaces (Site I; F35, buried subsoil).

104 Omphalos base, reduced fabric 2 smoothed surfaces (Site I; F85, yard metalling).

105 Form C oxidised fabric 3A, smoothed surface (Site I; F114, Period I, ditch 7 fill).

106 Rim of bowl or jar, reduced fabric 3A, smoothed surface (Site I; F114, ditch 7 fill).

107 Rim of small jar oxidised fabric 3A, smoothed surfaces (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

108 Rim of small jar, reduced fabric 4, smoothed surfaces (Site I; F73, buried subsoil).

109 Rim of jar or bowl, reduced fabric with sparse very coarse sand temper. Irregular surfaces (Site IV; trench 18, Period 3, ditch 1 top fill).

110 Rim of bowl or jar, oxidised fabric 3A, smoothed surfaces (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

111 Rim of bowl or jar, reduced fabric 3A, smoothed surface (Site I; F114, ditch 7 fill).

112 Rim of large jar, reduced fabric 3A, horizontally wiped on shoulder (Site I; F77 and F78, Period 1, ditch 1 fills).

113 Rim of jar or bowl with cordon on neck in reduced smoothed, almost 'soapy' fabric (*cf.* fabric 5). (Site I; F78, ditch 1 apparent lower fill, bag 279).

114 Rim of bowl (diam. 230mm) with near vertical or splayed shoulderless walls, and bead rim, oxidised and smoothed exterior, reduced burnished interior, fabric 2 (Site I; F35, buried subsoil).

115 Rim of medium jar (diam. 170mm) reduced fabric 3A, smoothed surfaces with deep horizontal 'scarring' on shoulder. Food 'char' deposit inside, just under rim (Site III; Phase A clay layer, P24).

116 Rim of medium jar, fabric 3A oxidised exterior, reduced interior, smoothed surfaces (Site I, F114, ditch 7 fill).

117 Sherd of form C bowl, fabric 3, oxidised smoothed exterior, reduced burnished interior (Site I; F114, ditch 7 fill).

118 Rim of bowl or large jar, oxidised fabric 1, smoothed surfaces (Site I; F114, ditch 7 fill).

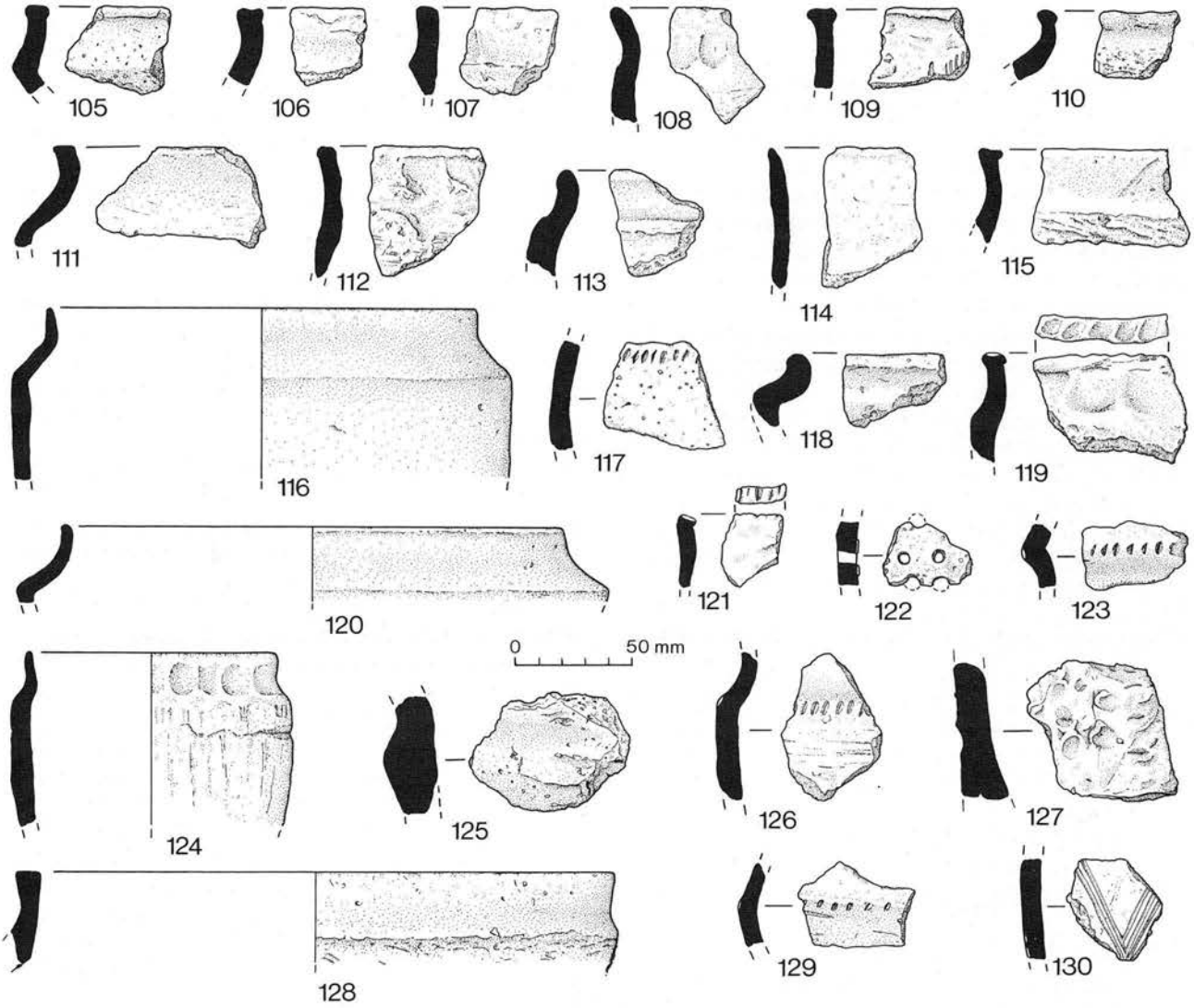


Figure 95 Prehistoric pottery, scale 1:3

119 Rim of medium jar (diam. 380mm) reduced exterior, oxidised interior, fabric 3A, irregular surfaces (Site IV; surface find).

120 Rim of bowl reduced fabric 3A, smoothed surfaces (Site I; F114, ditch 7).

121 Rim of small jar, oxidised fabric 4 (Site I; unstratified).

122 Base (of bowl?) pierced before firing, reduced fabric 1 (Site II; K9, buried subsoil).

123 Sherd of bowl (drawn upside down) oxidised burnished exterior, reduced interior, fabric 14 (Site I; F40, Period 2 clay dump).

124 Joining sherds of small jar, reduced fabric 3A, slight vertical wiping on body. (Site I; F78, ditch 1 lower fill).

125 Sherd of large thick-walled jar with shallow cordon or shoulder. This seems to be of a large diameter bucket-shaped vessel and since the fabric (soft oxidised fabric 3A) is unlike that of most LBA/EIA pottery from the site, this sherd could be Early Bronze Age or perhaps Deverel-Rimbury. (Site IV; trench 20, Period 1, ditch 4 upper fill).

126 Jar sherd, oxidised fabric 4 reduced inside. Decorated on shoulder, horizontally wiped (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

127 Sherd of large thick-walled jar with rusticated surface oxidised/reduced very sandy fabric with sparse flint grits. Possibly, like no. 125 above, this may be Deverel-Rimbury (Site I; F88, ditch 1 lower fill)

128 Sherd of bowl, oxidised fabric 3 slurried surfaces, with scar where the applied neck has separated from the body (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

129 Bowl sherd oxidised/reduced fabric 3A burnished surfaces decorated on shoulder (unlocated surface find).

130 Sherd of decorated bowl or jar, oxidised/reduced sandy fabric as no. 109. Burnished exterior with shallow burnished pendant triangles (Site I; F73, buried soil).

Dating of the Farrands' assemblages

The material from the buried subsoil is so mixed that it does not constitute an assemblage at all, and the pottery it contains is very similar to that in the stratified assemblages.

The pottery from Site IV ditch 4 will be considered first. This is from the upper fill of the ditch which (by its nature) probably accumulated by a different means from the lower fill. Ditch upper fills are notoriously bad for containing mixed assemblages, as the fourth category 'miscellaneous jars' in the list above emphasises. This therefore casts some doubt as to whether the 'slack S profile' bowl no. 88 really should be associated with the remainder of the vessels. It would appear at first sight to be out of place here, as the closest parallels would appear to be Middle Iron Age (*e.g.* Little Waltham form 13; Drury 1978, 54, fig. 38). The fabric of no. 88 is, however, not unlike those present in the rest of the assemblage, and this vessel will be discussed further below.

The remainder of the vessels in the feature formed a fairly coherent group. The preponderance of jars is notable. The type of bowl (Form D2) represented by sherds 77 and 78 is rare (unlike some of the other assemblages discussed above, where proportionately bowls were more common). In the ditch 4 bowls, the angular flaring form and footring are well represented.

The jars were plain, with decoration confined to occasional 'cabling' on the rim. It is apparent that this material is Early Iron Age and broadly similar to the material in ditch D13 (above). In D13, however, are vessels such as the bowl (no. 29) and the D1 bowl (no. 33) which have antecedents in the LBA. Neither form is represented in the relatively large group of pottery from ditch 4. Although there could be a functional explanation for this, it is more likely to be due to a difference in date, and the ditch 4 assemblage is probably later than that from D13. D13 is thus transitional between LBA and EIA ceramics; this gives ditch 4 a conventional lower date of the 5th century BC. An upper date is provided by the almost complete absence of vessels of the types represented in Little Oakley ditch 4 at Little Waltham.[20] The Little Waltham jars are of a different form from those in ditch 4. The dating of the Little Waltham settlement is discussed by Drury (1978, 126–8) and he concludes that it began in the 3rd century BC, but that the 'Little Waltham pottery style' had matured elsewhere at an earlier date. A compromise date of around the 4th century BC may provisionally be suggested for the ditch 4 assemblage. (The place of sherd 88 will be further considered below.) This appears to be a 'post Darmsden-Linton style' assemblage, but 'pre-Little Waltham'.

The dating of Site I ditch 7 is based on only a few sherds, but these point to a LBA date for the feature, particularly the form C bowl (no. 105) and the decorated jar sherd (no. 117, *cf.* Barrett 1978, fig. 39.1 and 2 and the LBA pottery of Mucking). The tall jar, no. 116, is paralleled at West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953, fig. 13.32).

Ditch 1 on Site I contained more pottery. The upper fill differed from the lower two fills. The pottery from the lower fills however was difficult to date. It contained some redeposited LBA material, but taken as a whole, it was similar to the material in Site IV ditch 4 (*cf.* the jar no. 8 from the upper fill with vessel 83). Sandy fabrics such as 4 and 3A were as common here, as in ditch 4, and the forms were similar. The jar no. 124 is not like any in ditch 4, and is a large sherd, so it is unfortunate that it cannot easily be paralleled. The nearest vessels are those of Little Waltham form 8/9 (for example Drury 1978, fig. 51.275 and fig. 53.317) but most of these have more everted rims. The vessel represented by sherd 113 apparently from the lower fill cannot be earlier than the Middle Iron Age, so would appear to provide a Middle Iron Age date for the material as a whole, but similarities between some of the pottery in this ditch (not illustrated) and that in the adjacent ditch 7 indicates that there was quite a lot of redeposited material present also. The shell-tempered rim no. 169 is of interest and will be referred to below.

Ditch 7 on Site IV is difficult to date; the dimpled sherd no. 93, is difficult to parallel and the open bowl no. 94 undatable. Only the small jar in fabric 2 is likely to be datable: it is in fabric B, which is an early fabric at Little Oakley, and form B also seems to have been an early form. The presence of 'haematite' slips has been noted on LBA and EIA pottery from Mucking, and this is the date to which ditch 7 is tentatively assigned.

Discussion of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age assemblages

It seems inappropriate to discuss in detail the precise composition of assemblages or the function of the vessels from which the sherds found at Little Oakley came, since quite clearly the material is made up of a mixture of assemblages covering a lengthy period, with no guarantee of continuity of occupation. The bulk of the sherds came from jars, and although some had sooting or occasionally food char deposits, it seems that these vessels could have served a number of purposes. Large jars (such as no. 83) are less likely to have been cooking vessels (due to their inherent fragility) and are likely to have been for storage (a jar of this size shattered in a pit at Mucking was found to contain carbonised grain). Bowl sherds were more characteristic and recognisable (and have perhaps been over-emphasised here in the selection for illustration), but their use can only be guessed. They were generally better finished than the jars. See also the discussion of the function of the Anglo-Saxon pottery forms below.

Very little of the pottery at Little Oakley was stratified in reliable closed assemblages. Nevertheless, since the site had been occupied in Period 1 (perhaps quite intensively) but few Period 1 features survived later activity, the redeposited sherds in Roman features gain some significance. This material is of course derived from material originally deposited on and in topsoil layers no longer extant, thus the Roman features have 'sampled' these deposits. If this is so, then the study of the redeposited material is potentially informative.

A number of the vessels, principally of form A, seem to be paralleled only in LBA contexts and are apparently absent from EIA assemblages. Small fineware biconical bowls in reduced burnished fabrics occur in 'Decorated' LBA pottery assemblages (Barrett 1980) in the Thames Estuary area and it is probably with these that the Little Oakley vessels may be linked (see the parallels cited above). Wide decorated bowls like form C are uncommon and seem to be restricted to LBA sites (see references cited above).

There is some evidence, therefore, suggesting that the Little Oakley site was occupied during the LBA. This is based on two distinctive ceramic types. Some of the other coarsewares are less easy to date; for example some of the jars. The carinated angular jar, form F has LBA parallels, but the Little Oakley vessels are less decorated than the LBA vessels. Some of these vessels may be contemporary with forms A and C, some probably were not. (It is not possible to divide up the coarseware jars of fabrics 3 and 3A with any precision at this stage in our knowledge of the Little Oakley pottery sequence.) The general range of forms and fabrics is similar however to the material found with LBA metalwork during the 1930–9 excavations at Sheepen (in COLEM and C.F.C. Hawkes, pers. comm.).

Other vessels are quite clearly not LBA. Again it is the finer bowls which can be used to suggest a date. The bowl forms D1 and D2 with their clear links with the Darmsden pottery (Cunliffe 1968), and possibly with the Orsett Iron Age group (Barrett 1978) are probably EIA although *cf.* those from Minnis Bay (Harding 1974, fig. 37E) and West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953, fig. 15). Nevertheless the majority of the Little Oakley prehistoric pottery is probably Early Iron Age. It is not possible from the evidence at our disposal to say much about the relationship between this pottery and the LBA material, nor whether there was a gap or 'continuous' occupation .

The dating of the sandy fabrics (fabric 4) is less clear: they could be contemporary with the use of fabric 3 or could be later. The variant fabric 3A could also be related

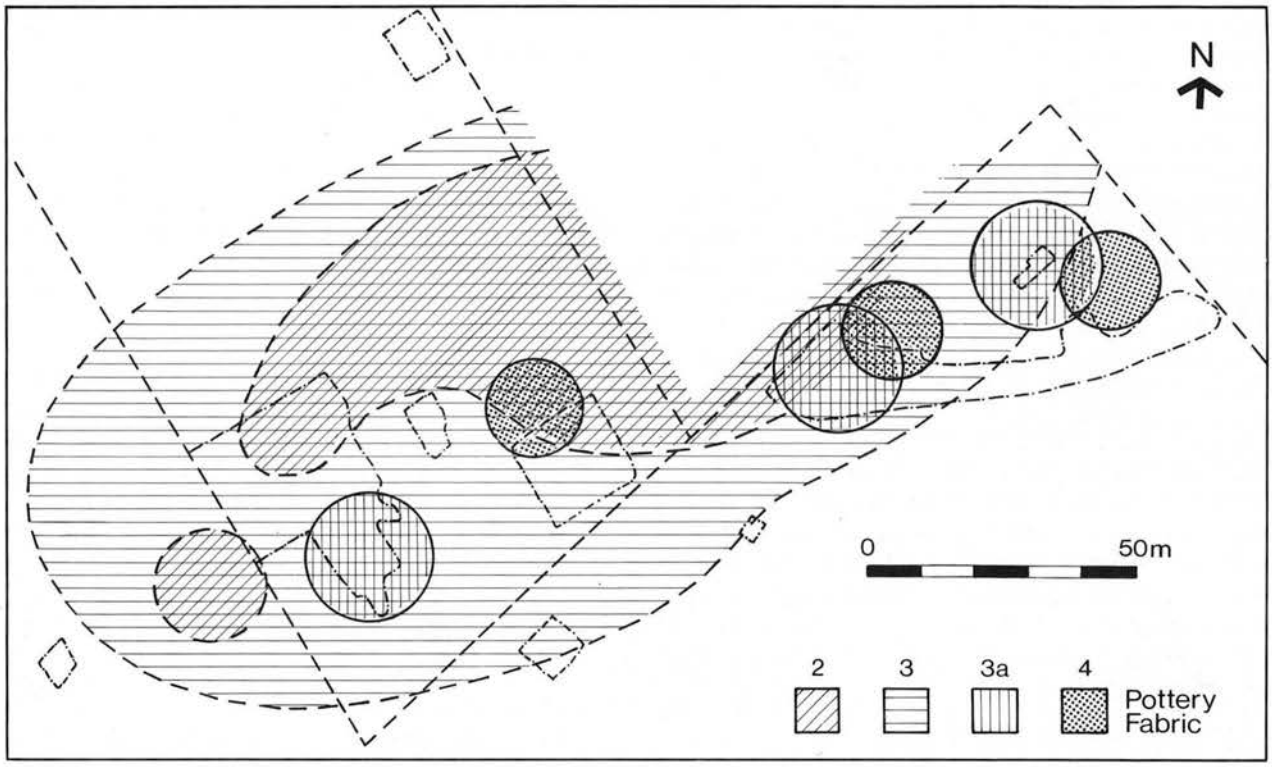


Figure 96 Prehistoric pottery, distribution of fabrics (schematic)

to the use of fabric 4. Sandy fabrics tend to become more common in the EIA in the south-east and seem to predominate in Middle Iron Age groups. It is not clear to which phase these vessels belong.

The distribution of material on the site is shown in Fig. 96. In this figure the main distribution of prehistoric pottery in the present ploughsoil and as redeposited sherds in Roman and later features has been shown schematically. Four groups of pottery have been shown: all fabric 3, fabric 2 bowls, fabric 3A and fabric 4 vessels. Fabric 2 vessels tend to occur in a discrete area of the site, perhaps demonstrating the extent of LBA occupation. Fabrics 3A and 4 tend to occur together, reinforcing the possibility that they are related.

Middle Iron Age pottery

(Fig. 97.131)

Three vessels (from Ditches A5 and A7) were large jars ('form H') with a footring and curved shoulders; they were not burnished, and although the fabric is flint-tempered (similar to fabric group 3), the form is almost certainly not related to those discussed above. The tall jar with 'slack-S' profile is a Middle Iron Age form: see for example the vessels from Little Waltham, Chadwell St Mary (Drury 1978, fig. 38; Manning 1962, fig. 4 no. 1) and Mucking (Jones and Jones 1975, fig. 48.9). Although the latter is in a fabric similar to Little Waltham fabric A (Drury 1978, 56) several flint-tempered examples also occur at Mucking (and are thought to be domestic copies of the imported fabric A vessels, M.U. Jones pers. comm.). Flint-tempered fabrics occurred at Little Waltham, alongside fabrics tempered with other material, including sand (Drury 1978, 56–7).

The illustrated sherds (Fig. 97.131) are both from Ditch A5. The rim is irregularly finished, the base rather better made, though it is not clear if they were the same vessel or not. The sherd from A7 (not ill.) is from the shoulder of a similar vessel with a groove at the base of the neck.

Some of the other pottery from the Farrands site seems likely to have been Middle Iron Age. The most obvious example is sherd 88 from Site IV ditch 4 (Fig. 94.88). Other likely Middle Iron Age vessels include sherds shown on Fig. 91.11, Fig. 94.93, 94, 100, Fig. 95.108, 124 and possibly 113.

Although Form H can be paralleled in the Little Waltham pottery assemblage, other characteristic Little Waltham forms are absent. Thus it seems that at Little Oakley we do not have a fully developed Little Waltham type pottery assemblage though at this stage in our knowledge it is difficult to determine whether the difference between these two assemblages is cultural or chronological.

There are two Period 1 assemblages, (Site I ditch I, and Site IV ditch 4), which could be of this phase. Ditch 1 contains a contaminated assemblage with redeposited LBA pottery and intrusive material. Site IV ditch 4, however, contains a much more coherent group, where an apparent transition can be seen between an assemblage of Early Iron Age aspect and one of the Middle Iron Age. It may be that the Little Oakley ditch 4 assemblage comes from a very late phase of the Early Iron Age, or an early one of the Middle Iron Age.

It seems likely that any later Middle Iron Age occupation was of limited duration, or away from the excavated sites, since so little diagnostic Middle Iron Age pottery was found. It is possible, however, that some of the other coarseware jars discussed above may have been contemporary with form H (*i.e.* conservative potting traditions produced the same vessel forms and fabrics over a number of centuries), and since these form such a large

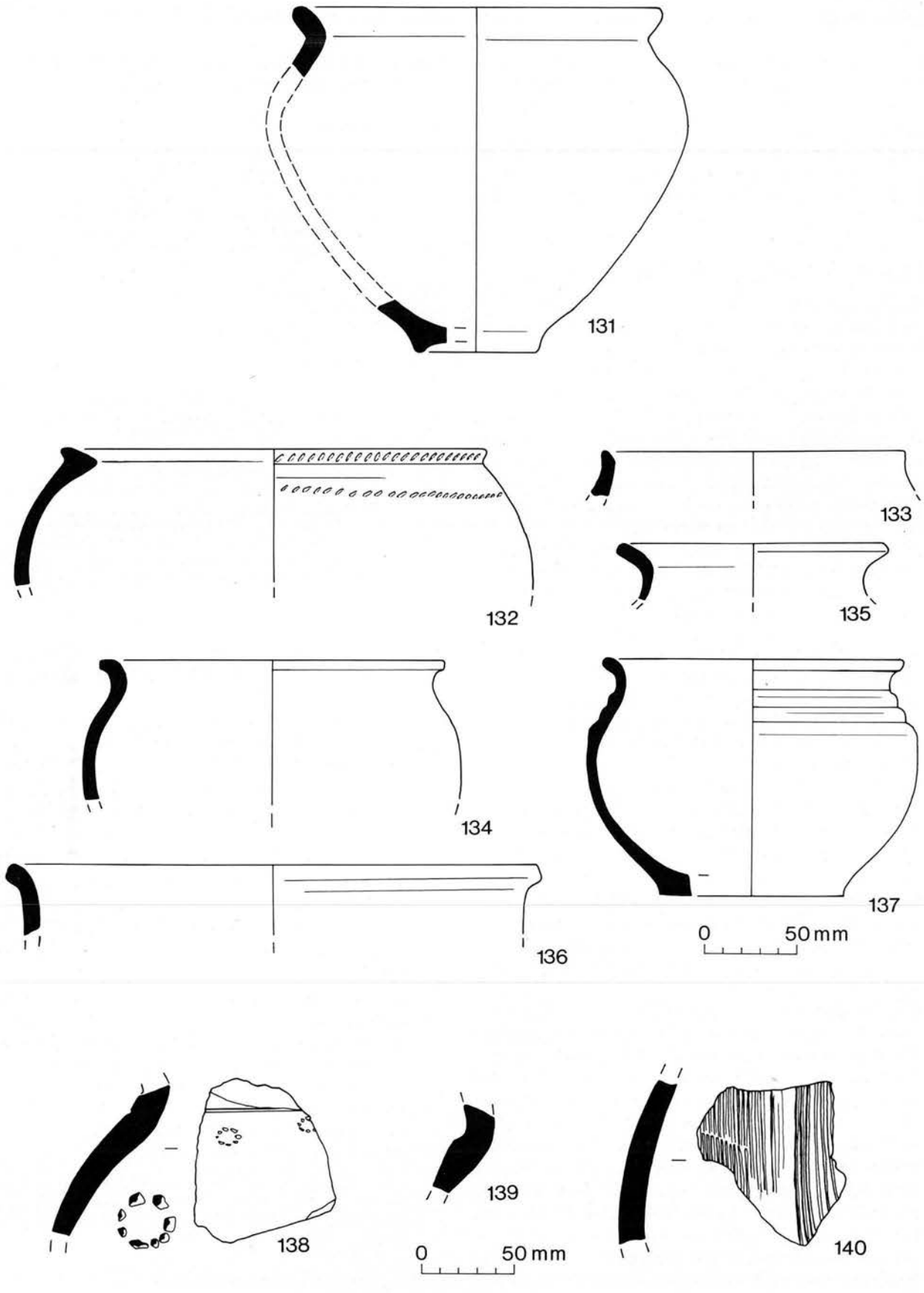


Figure 97 Prehistoric pottery, Middle Iron Age (131) and Later Iron Age (132–40), scale 1:3

part of the ditch 4 assemblage, any occupation of this date using pottery of this type could be difficult to detect.

A few sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery in fabrics visually like that of Little Waltham fabric A (Drury 1978, 56) were found (from A5, and on Site IV), but otherwise sherds of distinctive Little Waltham types were absent. As yet we know very little of the MIA pottery of the area, so it is difficult to know if an assemblage fairly closely comparable to that at Little Waltham is to be expected or not.

'Belgic' and Late Iron Age pottery

1975–8 excavations

A moderate quantity of wheel-thrown body sherds of grog-tempered and related fabrics (fabrics 5 and 6) were found, mostly redeposited in later features, and these constitute the bulk of the pottery of this phase. Feature A5 may perhaps be contemporary with the end of the use of this pottery, but more likely post-dates it, since it also contains a considerable portion of at least six form 218 vessels in greyware fabric 10 (see below). A5 may be responsible however for the 'intrusion' of the grog-tempered storage jar sherds (Fig. 97.138–40) in the fill of A16, or alternatively these may be the only material indicative of the true date of A16. Most of the pottery of fabrics 5 and 6 came from Site I, with a little from the south side of Site C and a little from Site D.

Form R is an anomaly. It is usually present at Little Oakley in a sandy fabric (like fabric group 4), but the vessels are Middle to Late Iron Age forms. One vessel is in a shell-tempered fabric. It is possible that these vessels are transitional between sandy Middle Iron Age fabrics and the grog- and shell-tempered pottery current in the Late Iron Age.

Forms S to W are all jars and are not described here. A selection of rims is illustrated (Fig. 97): all are plain or burnished. Form XY is a jar with a corrugated neck (Hawkes and Hull 1947, forms 220 and 229) in grog-tempered and related fabrics; form Z are storage jars in similar fabrics (Hawkes and Hull 1947, forms 270–271). A number of featureless sherds of fabric 12 (not on Table 3) also probably belong to this group.

A certain amount of the shell-tempered pottery (fabric 12) seems to be of this period. It differs from the Late Roman Shell-Tempered (LRSHT) at Little Oakley in having a soapy feel to the fabric (though LRSHT elsewhere in Essex can feel soapy; C. Turner pers. comm.). Some of this material was formless body sherds, and separation from other shell-tempered fabrics was difficult. Most of the sherds were brownish in colour or oxidised and where this could be determined were probably hand-made. The tempering may be local Crag shell, or derived from a more distant source. Single sherds were found in A16, D10 (Fig. 98), D11, D13 and D15, while two sherds came from D9.

Two rims (from C21, and the topsoil of Site II) were similar to examples from Sheepen, Colchester (form 257, Thompson 1982, 213 from C1-1). This material may be later than the sherds noted above and may be termed Early Roman Shell-Tempered pottery (ERSHT) and is further briefly discussed below in the section on Roman fabrics. Several other sherds of this fabric were found in the lower fill (phase B) of the fishpond on Site III. These shell-tempered jars are pre-Flavian at Little Oakley as elsewhere in the Colchester area (see VCH 1963, 183; forms 254–60). The fabric was uncommon at Little Oakley, and may have been redeposited from a Claudio-Neronian occupation of the site.

Description of illustrated types

(Fig. 97)

132 Form R, fabric 4 (D15) see above.
133 Form S, fabric 6 (Period 2, ditch A5).
134 Form T, fabric 5 (A5).
135 Form V, fabric 5 (Period 4 rubble spread, A3).
136 Form W, fabric 5 (A5).
137 Form XY, fabric 5 (Period 3, ditch A23).

Miscellaneous grog-tempered pottery

(Figs 97–8)

Sherds 138–40 (intrusive in A16?)

138 Form Z diam. 48cm, fabric 5 with decoration of impressed stamp (stamp shown at 1:2).
139 Form Z fabric 5.
140 Form Z diam. 27cm, fabric 5 with vertical combing.
141 Rim, fabric 6, burnished exterior (Period 4 rubble spread, A3).
142 Form S or T, fabric 5 (Period 2, ditch A5).
143 Form Y, fabric 5 (ditch A5).
144 Form X, fabric 5 (Period 8, ditch A8).
145 Fabric 6, smoothed surface with curvilinear decoration (Period 6/7, sheep burial C20).
146 Storage jar, fabric 5, combed panels (ditch A5).
147 Storage jar, fabric 5, combed decoration (context A14).
148 Storage jar, fabric 6 (grog and sand, with a little flint grit) white deposit inside to within 55mm from top of rim (Period 3, ditch A23).

Belgic and Early Roman Shell-Tempered

(Fig. 98)

149 Storage jar, ungrouped (soapy) shelly fabric, hand made, clamp-fired (Period 3, pit C21).
150 Rim of jar, fabric 12 (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull 1947, form 156) (pit C21).
151 Rim of jar, fabric 12 (Period 2, post-hole A12).
152 Neck of jar, fabric 12 (intrusive in Period 1, gully D10) (see sherd 18).
153 Neck of jar, fabric 12 (buried subsoil D11). (See also sherds 166, 167, 169 and possibly 164.

Only a little Gallo-Belgic ware was found, probably all post-Conquest, and is accordingly discussed in the Roman pottery report below.

A sherd of amphora (not illustrated), although found in a Period 2 context (ditch A5) must also be considered in this section. Dr P.R. Sealey has contributed the following report:

> Body sherd from the wall of an amphora. It is some 28mm thick with an external diameter of 340mm. The fabric is light pink (Munsell 5YR 7/4) with abundant inclusions. Many are light brown and grey, but the most conspicuous element in the fabric are the black grains. There is a light yellow slip (5Y 8/2). This sherd is in Peacock's (1971) fabric 2 which was produced at Pompeii and Herculaneum. The sturdy wall establishes that we are dealing with Dressel 1 (and not Dressel 2/4). New wine was apparently not bottled in Dressel I after *c.* 10 BC (Sealey 1985, 25–6).

Belgic pottery from the Farrands sites

A little similar material was found on the Farrands sites, principally Site I, where the Period 1 or 2 clay-lined pit 1 and the Period 2 timber building produced a number of grog-tempered sherds, some of which are described below. The lower fill of the fishpond on Site III (also Period 2) also contained grog-tempered vessels which are discussed in the Roman pottery section. Ditch 2 on Site IV (trench

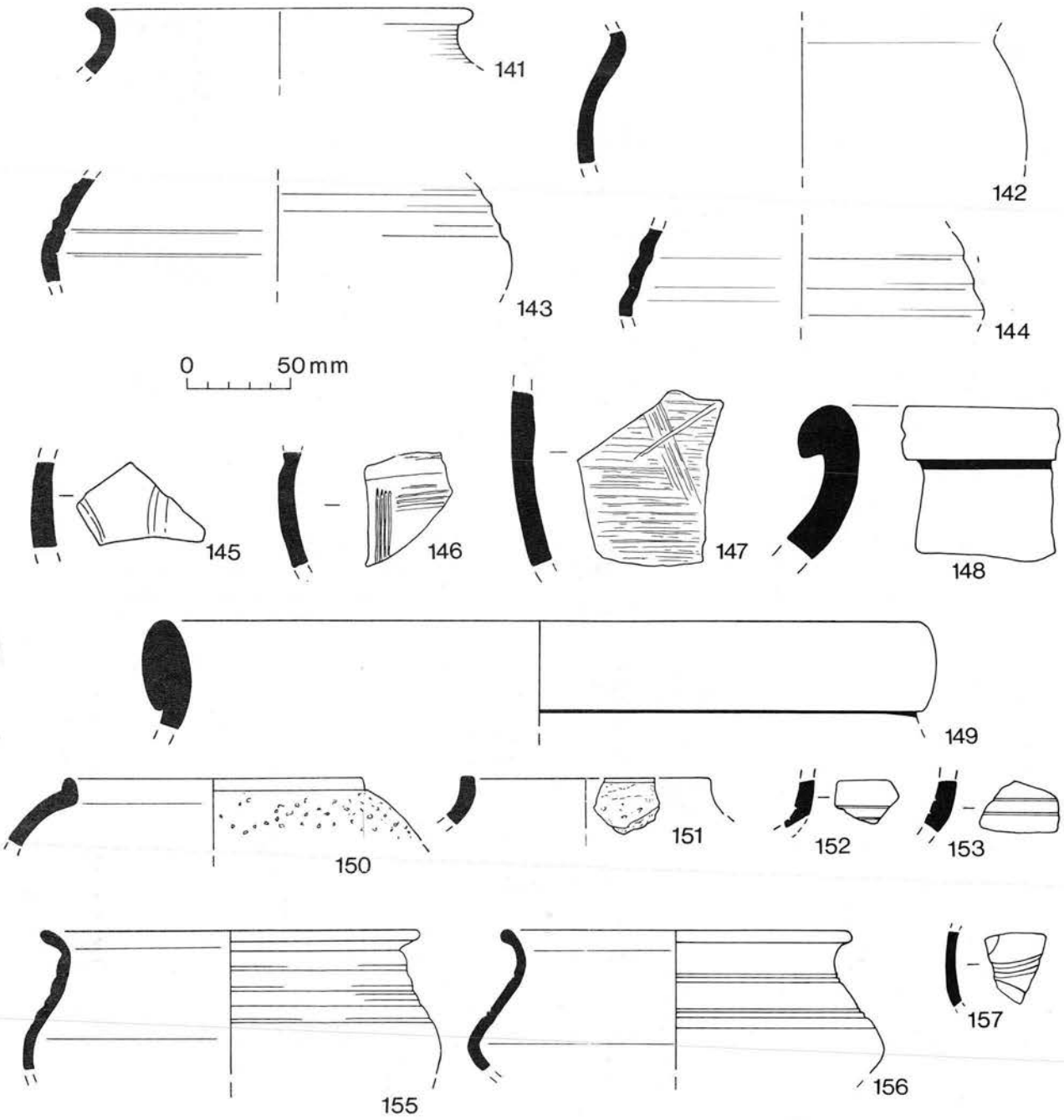


Figure 98 Prehistoric pottery, scale 1:3

18) produced a little grog-tempered pottery, but also a sherd of *Terra Rubra* and a small sherd of a Gallo-Belgic butt beaker, form 113.

Site I: pit 1
(Fig. 98)
Contained 400g of grog-tempered pottery, mostly body sherds of jars and storage jars.

154 Form 218 fabric 5, reduced (Site I, pit 1).

Site I; 'Feature 115'
(Fig. 98)
Contained 22 sherds of grog-tempered pottery (see above pp. 14–15 for context), mostly of jars including storage jar form 2 (not illustrated).

155 Several sherds of jar form Y, fabric 6 with some fine vegetable temper.

156 Biconical jar, form 218, reduced fabric 5.

157 Hard fired fine ungrouped fabric with a little fine flint grit. Smoothed surface, curvilinear decoration. (See sherd 171 for fabric).

158 Sherd of (form 113?) beaker in white fabric (not illustrated). (see also sherd 167)

Miscellaneous pottery from the Farrands sites
(Figs 98–99)

159 Form 218, reduced fabric 6 (Site I, buried subsoil F9).

160 Jar, apparently wheel-thrown of hard sandy reduced fabric (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull's form 249F) (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

161 Unassignable sherd, possibly a footring or rim of a lid? (see Form J). fabric 3A reduced. Burnished surfaces (Site I; F76, box drain trench fill).

162 Jar sherd in oxidised/reduced sandy fabric (Site I; F76, Period 3, box drain trench fill).

163 Abraded sherd as No. 2, possibly a footring (may be drawn upside down) oxidised (haematite-like) slip. Fine sandy fabric with sparse flint grit (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

164 Portion of shallow carinated bowl, reduced fabric with copious very fine shell temper. Burnished interior and exterior (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

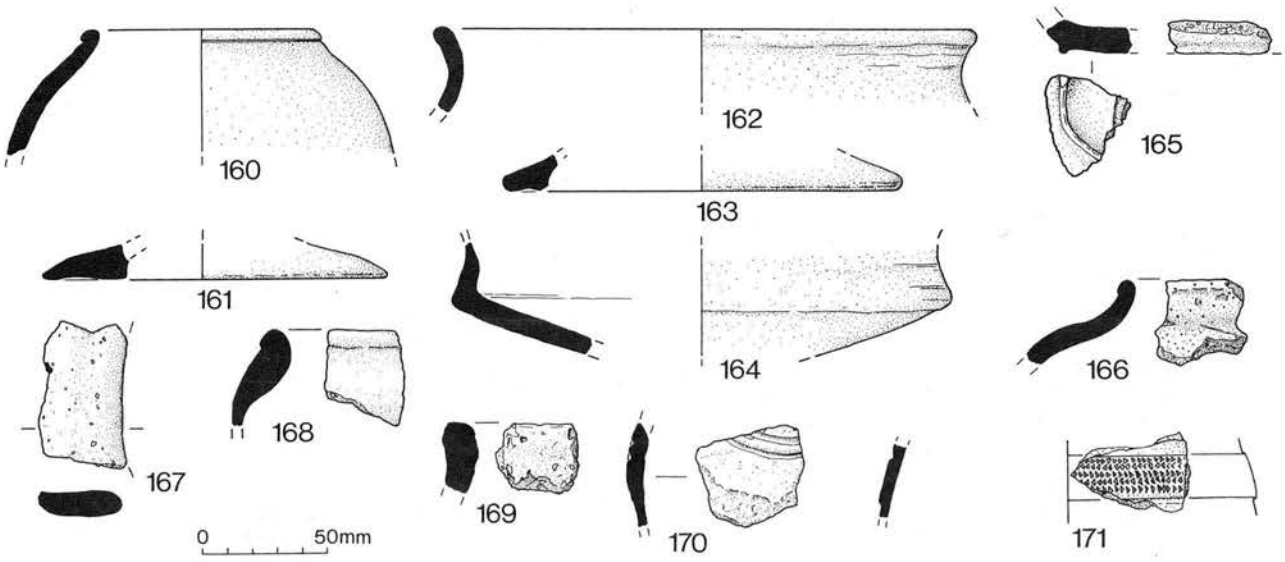


Figure 99 Prehistoric pottery, 'Belgic' pottery, scale 1:3

165 Base of vessel with slight footring, reduced fabric 4 with sparse fine flint grit and burnished exterior (Site I; F9, buried subsoil).

166 Rim of globular jar, oxidised exterior, reduced interior, surfaces burnished, copious very fine shell temper (surface find, west of Site III).

167 Flat sherd with curved edge in similar reduced shelly fabric, but with some coarse sand, smoothed surfaces. Possibly the spill-plate of a strainer-bowl? (Site I; F115, Period 2 feature). For possible Roman strainer bowls, see below.

168 Bead-rimmed jar in reduced fabric 5 with burnished surfaces (Site I; F60, Period 2 depression).

169 Bead-rimmed jar reduced with copious coarse shell temper (apparently Crag shell) (Site I; F79, lower fill of Period 1, ditch 1).

170 Sherd of globular jar, oxidised exterior, reduced interior, fabric not dissimilar to no. 160 above, burnished exterior with shallow burnished curvilinear decoration (Site IV; topsoil of trench 20 over Saxon pit 2).

171 Cordon from jar or beaker with shallow impressed triangular decoration carefully applied in lines to produce 'herringbone' effect. Fabric is reduced with burnished surfaces, rather like fabric 2. The date of this sherd is uncertain, but its similarities with sherds of Belgic butt or girth-beakers are suggestive, despite the fabric (Site III, Phase B/C fill of fishpond, dark layer).

Discussion

Form R has been noted above as a potential early precursor of Late Iron Age pottery, but see Thompson (1982, 217–18) form C1-2 (or 1982, 225 form C1-4) to which she assigns an early date, beginning perhaps in the late 1st century BC, although continuing later in grog-tempered ware. There is a substantial gap in our knowledge of what happens between the Little Waltham type assemblages of MIA pottery and the Sheepen-type assemblages of Belgic pottery in Essex. It is possible that there was occupation at Little Oakley in this period, and that form R dates from this phase. Another pointer to probable occupation some time in the 1st century BC is the sherd of Dressel 1 amphora.

The position of the shell-tempered vessels in this sequence is uncertain. A sherd (no. 169) in the fill of the Middle Iron Age ditch 1 on Site I does, however, perhaps suggest that this fabric had an early origin in the area, a point emphasised by the form of some vessels of this type, for example the type-figure of form 254 at Sheepen (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 267–8, pl. LXXXII.254). Possibly some of the fabric 12 vessels fall into the 1st century BC gap in the pottery sequence indicated by the Dressel I amphora (and the writer would argue that some of the shell-tempered jars in the Sheepen assemblage might also be of similar date, *cf.* Sealey 1985, 101–8).

The remainder of the coarse wares were grog-tempered, and none of the forms were necessarily particularly early types (see Thompson 1982). It is probable that this material should be dated to around the middle of the 1st century AD, but it is not easy to determine whether or not these vessels were pre-Conquest. The use of grog-tempered vessels can be shown, on Site III (if not in ditch A5), to have continued for several decades after the Conquest and into the Flavian period, when they were gradually replaced by greywares (though grog tempering seems to have persisted for storage-jar fabrics a bit longer).

The dating of the grog-tempered forms (S to Z) must be considered. The form 218 vessels (*e.g.* sherds 153–4 and 159) are considered in the Roman pottery report below and seem to be 1st century AD in date. (Those from F115 and pit 1 on Site I in grog-tempered ware may be early, because the form 218 vessels in the Period 2 fills of Site A were all in Roman greyware).

Form Z storage jars may next be considered. Basically the form cannot be closely dated. Thompson (1982, 256–67) points out that though regional variations occur, the forms and fabrics did not change markedly during their long life. They occur first in contexts as early as Little Waltham Period IV (Drury 1978, 85, fig. 53.326) and continue into the 1st century AD, though acquiring a hook rim (as sherd 148 here, Camulodunum form 271). That they did not always serve only as storage jars is suggested by the white deposit inside sherd 148.

Forms T and V are so indeterminate, and represented by such small sherds, that it would be unsafe to try to categorise them further (see Thompson 1982, 87, group B1-1). Likewise the vertical neck and simple rim of form S (though perhaps it was influenced by Middle Iron Age forms). Form W is equally difficult to match.

The corrugated vessels of forms X and Y have the opposite problem. There are many forms of Belgic pottery with corrugated shoulders. Form X was intended for taller jars (Thompson 1982, 117–18 form B2-1). These start in the 1st century BC and continue into the post-Conquest period. The wider bowl form (form Y) is represented by

Thompson's forms D2-4, which have a similar date range. Unfortunately there appears to be no (Essex) evidence on which a closer dating can be based.

The curvilinear decoration on the sherds 145, 157 and 170 links sherds of three separate fabrics. The dating and affinities of this curvilinear decorated pottery are still uncertain (Drury and Rodwell 1973, 93–4; Elsdon 1975; Thompson 1982, 563). Sherd 145 is in grog-tempered ware, and the other two are in different fabrics. The contexts of the Little Oakley sherds do not help with the dating.

One anomalous vessel remains to be discussed — the biconical bowl no. 164. It seems to be a portion of the base of a tazza (Thompson 1982, 420–39, forms F3-2 and F3-4, Cam forms 210 to 211). Unfortunately it is not clear if the Little Oakley vessel had a pedestal base. These begin in the 1st century BC and last until about the Conquest period. The black fine shelly fabric at Little Oakley is unusual.

The Roman Pottery

Introduction

Both series of excavations on the site produced considerable quantities of Roman pottery. As noted above, the stratified 1975–8 material was fully catalogued by context and the catalogue and fabric type series are deposited with the finds in Colchester Museum. Most of the 1975–8 pottery, however, came from disturbed contexts (A2 etc., C1-2 and D1-2) and was looked through, but not fully catalogued.

There was much more material from the Farrands sites and, in accordance with the principle outlined above, this was all examined, and a selection is published here. Again the material from the earlier excavations complements that from the 1975–8 work, since it provides a beginning to the sequence of pottery to which the 1975–8 excavation had produced an end. The two sites seem together to provide a local pottery sequence spanning the entire Roman period which is at present the only such assemblage from the area, outside of Colchester itself. An attempt has been made to compare this material with the comparatively well-known Colchester pottery and the similarities and differences are noted below. Since this report was written, the Chelmsford pottery report (Going 1987) has been published, and since it clearly represents a major advance in the study of Roman pottery in Essex, an attempt has been made to correlate some of the information there with the data presented here.[21]

The Roman pottery sequence at Little Oakley has four main stages (ceramic phases):

1 The earliest pottery (from Phase 2(i) contexts on Site I and III)
2 Early Roman pottery: a distinct group of fabrics and forms which runs from the Flavian period to some time in the 3rd century (Phase 2(ii) to 3(i) contexts).
3 Late Roman pottery: a distinctive series of fabrics and forms which slightly overlapped with the end of the previous group and carried on until the 5th century (Phase 3(ii) to Period 4 contexts).
4 'Latest Roman pottery': This assemblage contains material of the previous group, but also including certain fabrics such as Oxford and Nene Valley Colour-Coats which seem to come into the area only in the last third of the 4th century. The assemblages also contain grass-tempered pottery which is further discussed in a separate section below.

Most of the pottery was of wheel-made hard-fired reduced fabrics with variable sand tempering (greywares), and only a little of the coarse pottery was oxidised. It was notable that well over 85% of these vessels were jars. Other fabrics tended to be of other forms (*e.g.* colour-coat, almost invariably beakers, or *terra sigillata* — bowls and platters, white wares — flagons and mortaria).

Apart from some ambiguous evidence from the fired clay objects (described above), there was little evidence for pottery manufacture on or near the site until perhaps the last phase, when hand-made ceramics appear again after an absence of almost three centuries.

As noted above the pottery assemblages from both sites complement each other. The Corbishley sites produced redeposited Claudio-Neronian pottery from the pits on Site C to the north of the building and to the north of Site A (did this material originate from building 1?). There was then a chronological hiatus until the main deposits of the 3rd century pit groups and this was followed by the Phase 4(iii) material from A3. The Farrands sites produced more of the latter type of material, but also a number of useful groups of 1st and 2nd century pottery, which were absent from the material from the 1975–8 excavations.

Most of the pottery was in the form of small isolated (often abraded) sherds. This suggests that they were accidental inclusions in the deposits in which they were found. The large quantity of redeposited prehistoric material in most Roman deposits suggests that much of the Roman pottery in the same assemblages was also redeposited. This is readily noticeable in the case of characteristic fineware, such as the *terra sigillata*, but less easily detectable in some of the greyware forms and fabrics.

Fabrics, coarsewares

Greywares

Since these constituted a major part of the ceramic assemblages, the greywares were accorded much attention, with interesting results. Many pottery reports tend to dismiss unsourced greywares as a group, assuming that they were of local manufacture and of little interest compared with more widely traded wares.

The Little Oakley greywares were clearly of a wide variety of textures and it seemed worthwhile attempting to catalogue these variations. Since there was potentially an infinite variety of textures and fabric colours and hardness, it was decided to define fabric groups (rather than narrower divisions) and, to keep to a minimum the number of groups represented by only a few sherds each, to attempt to assign only about 60% of the sherds in any assemblage to a fabric group. In the event, rather more sherds than that (about 80%) could be assigned to the main fabric groups. During processing some of the initial divisions were abandoned, and some of the other groups were so small that no pattern could be discerned in their occurrence. Other fabric groups seemed ubiquitous.

Several fabric groups, however, did have either a chronological significance (see below) or were related to specific vessel forms. It is this latter group that will be referred to below. Only the main groups are described here; further details and fabric samples are retained in the archive.

Fabric 7: hard coarse greyware with sparse medium to coarse vegetable temper. Mostly jars (form 266/8 or 271).[22] An early fabric, thick-walled vessels, usually light grey or brownish.

Fabric 8: black-surfaced hard sandy greyware with characteristic fine 'pimply' surface.

Fabric 9: very hard, fine, with fine sand and a smooth feel. Mostly the 'tall decorated ovoid' jar, and 'Chelmsford E5.4' bowl forms discussed below (pp. 133–5). A late fabric, thick-walled vessels, usually dark grey.

Fabric 10: very hard (metallic), very fine, sand, smooth feel, mainly forms 218, 266, 268 and a variety of other forms. An early fabric. Thin-walled vessels, usually light grey.

Fabric 11: very similar to 8, but very smooth surface, smooth feel, often burnished.

Fabric 12 and 15: Fabric 12 is shell tempered, and can occur in three categories; pre-Roman, Early Roman, and Late(st) Roman (see the appropriate sections of the report). Fabric 15 is a Latest Roman hand-made ware, see below.

Fabric 18: very distinctive gritty greyware. Very hard-fired with copious coarse and very coarse (predominantly white) angular sand grains. Harsh feel. A late fabric, usually (but not invariably) form 268, usually medium to dark grey.

Fabric 20: very fine hard-fired (metallic, with few visible inclusions). Smooth feel, often burnished mainly form 218. An early fabric, usually brownish or medium grey.

Fabric 21: very hard fine sandy fabric with harsh feel. Thin-walled and thick-walled vessels. A later variant of fabric 10, darker in colour.

Fabric 36–38: termed 'Black-on-Red-ware' in processing. Oxidised soft fabrics with varying sand content but deliberately produced smooth fine very black surfaces. This surface 'layer' was usually very thin (and in some cases worn away). The fabric were apparently deliberately produced and are not 'failed' greywares. These were at first thought to be native (i.e. early) fabrics but appear to be absent from Sheepen.[23] The fabrics also occur in features C21–C23 which may suggest that they may be relatively late, although the sherds could be redeposited. These fabrics occur in a variety of forms.

BBW: (Black Burnished Ware; BB1 and BB2, Farrar 1973; Going 1987, 8–9 fabrics 40–42). This name is used for a group of reduced (light grey and black) hard sandy fabrics with burnished surfaces (forms 37–40, 305 and 278). At Little Oakley this tends to be a late fabric, but occurs in some earlier features *e.g.* C21. Most of the recognisable material was BB2, but BB1 may have been present as smaller abraded sherds. A large group of BB2 was found in C21; within this group were several distinct fabrics. There is no clear evidence (*contra* Williams 1977, 195–6) for BBW production at Colchester itself and the fabric may have been produced in the Thames-mouth area of Essex and Kent (Going 1987, 8). The typical products were also imitated in a number of greyware fabrics (some of them very close imitations) at Little Oakley.

Alice Holt-type greywares: Some sherds of this may have been represented by some of the fabric 9 sherds (see Lyne and Jefferies 1979 and Going 1987, 9, fabric 43).

Hadham-type greywares: (Going 1987, 8, fabric 36). Hadham[24] greywares have a specific range of textures and seem to be present at Little Oakley. However, other more local greywares may have matched these textures, and so without petrological analysis, it is difficult to be certain how common the fabric was. The fabric is late here and is further discussed with other Latest Roman coarsewares below.

Comparisons between the fabrics of the pottery from Little Oakley and in the type series of the pottery from the 1930–9 excavations at Sheepen (in Colchester and Essex Museum) failed to detect many similarities between the greyware fabrics of the two sites, only 24km apart.[25] Clearly Sheepen and Little Oakley were not supplied with greywares from the same kilns (compare with the traded wares). Detailed comparison of the greyware fabrics from both sites with those from the Ardleigh Kilns (VCH III 1963, 28) in COLEM would be instructive, but at the time of writing this material was unavailable for study.

Other coarsewares

Grog and miscellaneous temper

The sequence in the fishpond fills demonstrates that grog-tempered pottery was in use until the Flavian period at Little Oakley, after which time it went out of use to be replaced by grey wares (except for storage jars). Storage jars (forms 270B and 271) in miscellaneous tempered fabrics (mostly of native tradition in Hawkes and Hull's (1947) terminology) occur sporadically in Early Roman deposits at Little Oakley. Their last appearance in quantity is in pit C21 but in this context they were probably redeposited. These jars seem more characteristic of Period 2 rather than Period 3.

Early Roman Shell-Tempered Ware (ERSHT)

This fabric has been noted above, and seems to have been a continuation of pre-Conquest traditions. The fabric seems to end in the Flavian period (that in C21 is believed to be redeposited) and no shell-tempered vessels were used at Little Oakley after this and before the appearance of (imported) Late Roman Shell-Tempered jars discussed below. This ERSHT equates to Going's (1987, 10, fabric 50 '?South Essex shell-tempered') but a south Essex source for the Little Oakley material is unlikely.

Flint-tempered jars

(Rettendon-type ware) see discussion of Latest Roman pottery below.

Oxidised coarsewares

These were uncommon, comprising less than 5% of the assemblages, but seem to occur sporadically throughout the sequence. The fabrics and sometimes the forms, were similar to the greywares, but oxidised. Most of these oxidised coarse wares were probably local products. Buff

		1	*2*	*3*	*4*
Fabric	*Belgic*	*Earliest Roman*	*Early Roman*	*Late Roman*	*Latest Roman*
Grog 5	××	?			
Grog 6	××	×	×		
Shell '12'	×				
Shell ERSHT		××	?		
Greyware 7		×	?		
Greyware 8		×			
Greyware 10		×	××	?	
Greyware 11			×		
Greyware 20		××	××		
Greyware 21			××		
Greyware 36-8		×	××	?	
Greyware 9				××	?
Greyware 18				××	×
BBW			×	×	×
LRSHT					××
Hadham grey				?	×
Flint-tempered					×
Hand-made 15					×
Grass-tempered 14					×

Key: ×× — present in some quantity, × — present, ? — uncertain

Table 5 Relationship of coarseware fabrics to Roman ceramic phasing

and white wares are considered separately, as are the imported fine ware fabrics (Gallo-Belgic, amphoras, flagons, mortaria, *terra sigillata*, various colour-coats, Hadham oxidised etc.).

The Belgic fabrics (5, 6 and '12') have been discussed above. The fabrics of Roman pottery Phases 1–3 are described in this section, those of Phase 4 (Latest Roman) in a separate section below (pp. 150–3).

The vessel forms, coarsewares

The forms of the greywares (and Colchester-produced finewares) from Little Oakley have been classified here according to the typology devised by M.R. Hull for the Colchester pottery (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 202–86, pls XLIX–LXXXV; Hull 1958, 279–92, figs 118–23; Hull 1963, 178–91, figs 102–7 and *passim*). While this system has drawbacks and obviously requires revision, it is still a very useful tool when used for local sites. Publication of the pottery from Little Oakley with reference to this well-established system will allow comparison to be made with other sites using the same system. At the time of writing, no new form type series has been published by Colchester Archaeological Trust to replace Hull's typology. The type series from Chelmsford (Going 1987, 13–36, figs 1–19) is useful, but refers to the pottery of central Essex (which differs from that of the Colchester region), and was published too late for much account of it to be taken here. Going's text provides an up-to-date assessment of the dating of some north Essex forms; see also his sections headed 'Assemblage Composition' (1987, 106–17). All form numbers in the Little Oakley Roman pottery report refer to Hull's scheme unless otherwise noted.

As may be expected, most of the Little Oakley pottery can be paralleled in Hull's Colchester form type-series. Indeed in some cases the material on both sites is so similar it may have come from the same kilns. Two new forms were identified, which it is proposed to term 'Chelmsford E5.4 bowls' and 'Tall decorated ovoid jars' until the forms can be defined in more detail elsewhere.

For economy, only a small selection of the large quantity of pottery from Little Oakley has been illustrated here (a larger number of pencil working drawings accompanies the 1975–8 level III archive). Few assemblages were worth illustrating in total and drawings of vessels have been selected to show the range of forms present and the more noteworthy sherds. Wherever possible the material is treated in assemblages which are regarded by period.

Form/fabric correlations of greywares at Little Oakley (1975–8 pottery only)

Nearly six hundred stratified vessels from the 1975–8 excavations could be classified by form. The results are set out in the archive housed with the finds, but may be summarised here (Table 6). Minimum vessel numbers are also given for groups of forms. The fabrics of the Little Oakley pottery were also compared with those of the type series of pottery from the 1930–9 excavations at Sheepen, Colchester, in Colchester Museum.

Platters (forms 1–36): the range of platters was not extensive, (forms 13, 21 and 24 predominate). There was little Gallo-Belgic ware except one micaceous *Terra Nigra* (TN) platter rim (pit C21). The rest of the platters occur in a number of fine greywares with well-finished surfaces. The fabrics were similar to those used at Sheepen for forms 12–14 and 21–33. An oxidised platter sherd form 17 (but not of Terra Rubra (TR) or Pompeian Redware) was from pit C11. The rest of the platters were from pits C21, C22 and C23, where some at least were redeposited. Although some of the 'platters' could perhaps have been lids, it is notable that few bowls occurred in similar fabrics (min. no. 19).

Dishes (forms 37–40): these occurred in several fabrics, mostly BB2 and fabrics 37–8. Few were made in greywares. Form 37 (min. no. 23) was commonest, particularly in Phase 3(ii) contexts on Site C. The form starts in the early 2nd century. The rims tend to be triangular-sectioned and the sides latticed. Later dishes (form 38) have rounded rims and plain sides. (min. no. 13). Form 40 (min. no. 8) was found in similar contexts of Phase 3(ii) and later, particularly on Site C. Pit C21 contained a range of dishes of forms 37–40 (see Going 1987, 14, forms B1 to B4, for more detailed discussion of these types).

Deep dishes or flanged bowls (forms 304–5): three form 304 bowls in ungrouped greywares were found, a minimum number of 15 form 305 vessels were also found in a variety of fabrics including BB2 and Hadham-type greywares. It is chronologically a useful form, developing in the mid 3rd century. At Little Oakley it occurs in late deposits only (A3, D3, D4, C26, and C29). At first (C26 and C29) it occurs in greywares only but in later groups (A3) it occurs in LRSHT fabric also (see Going 1987, 14–15, forms B4 to B6).

Carinated bowls (forms 242–8): were relatively common at Little Oakley in fabrics 10, 18 and 21. At Sheepen they only occur in fabrics like fabric 10 (min. no. 12).

Cups and bowls (forms 41–81): there were few of these vessels in greywares (min. no. 6, all from Site C). Most were varieties of form 53.

Beakers (forms 81–107): these globular vessels (min. no.8) were difficult to distinguish when represented by small sherds. They occur in a number of fabrics. Form 92 (three, C22 and C26) and form 96 (two, A3 and A16) were present, as was a fragment of a Flavian ring-and-dot beaker (C23).

Beakers (form 108): this was a fairly common form in early contexts, most commonly decorated with comb-stabbing and combed wavy lines. They tended to occur in a specific variety of greywares not seen at Sheepen (min. no. 12). The form seemed proportionally more common in assemblages on the Farrands sites. Although this was studied without success here, it is possible that some typological change may be observable in these vessels with time (Going 1987, 28, form H1).

Carinated beaker (form 120): at Sheepen these occur in TN fabrics; at Little Oakley as in the *colonia* at Colchester (26) these occur in ungrouped fine greywares (min. no. 4).

Poppy beakers (forms 122–3): the ungrouped fine greywares of the Little Oakley vessels are similar to vessels from Colchester grave groups. One sherd (from the topsoil on Site D) was texturally very like a product of the Upchurch (Kent) kiln group (R. Pollard pers. comm.) and may have been produced there (min. no. 14).

Deep bowls/squat jars: this series of vessels (forms 209–230) was grouped by Hull as 'bowls'. The most common of these forms at Little Oakley, form 218, however, has much more in common with the forms grouped as 'jars' and thus these vessels should perhaps be grouped with both vessel classes.

Form 218: this was the most common 'Early' form (min. no. 68), and was found in a variety of contexts, particularly of Period 2–3(i). On Site A they were commonly of fabric 10,[27] while in the Site C pits they were of fabric 21. A few were in fabric 20. At Sheepen, by contrast, most were of fabric 20, a few of fabric 10 and other greywares. At Little Oakley a few form 218 jars were in fabric 6. Thompson's (1982, 139–42) form B3–1 may perhaps be an ancestral form, but the main development is 1st century AD (Thompson 1982, 319 Types D2–1 to D2–3) including those at Prae Wood which seem to date from AD 30–50. The typology is slightly variable (*e.g.* latticed cordons and extra grooves), but apparently with little chronological significance (Going 1987, 24, form G17).

Forms 219–25: these vessels were similar, and probably related, to form 218. These were in a variety of greyware fabrics and in fabric 6 (as at Sheepen). One greyware sherd was of a vessel of form 226–8. At Sheepen these are in fabric 10 (min. no. 16).

Chelmsford E5.4 bowls: this form is not covered in Hull's typology, but is probably related to his forms 229 or 221–2. The vessels in question occur in fabric 9 and related greywares in deposits of Phase 3(ii) and later. They are low, wide-mouthed bowls with external horizontal zones of burnishing and burnished lines (both horizontal and wavy lines). No complete profile was found, but at Little Oakley the form is characteristically burnished inside the rim.

The form is not common at Colchester, but may develop from the form 299 bowls there (*e.g.* Kiln 32; Hull 1963, 172, fig. 98, 11–12, mid

	fabric														
Form	*7*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*16*	*18*	*20*	*21*	*36*	*37*	*38*	*BB2*	*GW*	*Total*
platters 1–36											1			19	20
dish 37									2		1	6	19		28
dish 38									1		3	1	3		8
dish 39-40											5		2	4	11
cups 53-65														4	4
beakers 81–108			13	1		3		1	2	1	3	1		8	23
beaker 120	1									6	1				8
'poppy' 122–3			13					7						4	14
jar 218		1	13	2				41	5		2			4	68
jar 219–228	2				2			1	1	5	1			4	16
jar 268		2	6		2		30	3	18					5	66
storage jars	2													2	4
jar 242–8			2				4		10					4	20
jar 265–7		1	9			1	3	1	2		3			3	23
jar 278–9	7					1	1		2		1		2		14
jar 328			4					1		1				2	8
tall ovoid jars		18	2				1		1					2	8
bowls 303–5		1			2				7		1	1	1	5	18
Chelmsford E5.4		4	5			1	3	2	2					5	22
flasks 281–2, 296–7						1					1			4	6
lids		1					1		3			2		4	11
unspec. jars	9	11	16	7	11	5	10	2	5	2	7				85
flagons						white wares									47
mortaria						white wares									28
amphoras															13
colour-coat beakers															38
TS bowls															22
Total vessels															624

Table 6 Relationship between main forms and fabrics by minimum vessel number (1975–8 sites only)

3rd century) but a variant of the form was found in Kiln 24 (Hull 1963, 154, fig. 86.23). Similar vessels were found in the 'Mithraeum' (Hull 1958, 138, fig. 66.77; but most, *e.g.* nos 74–6, were plain).

Similar vessels were made at Mucking (Group K, Jones and Rodwell 1973, 26–7, fig. 7.56–62) and at Orsett (Rodwell 1974, 27, fig. 7.42). The form was also made in kilns at Chelmsford (Going 1987, 77, fig. 35.8–8). Possibly a south Essex type.

The form is Chelmsford form E5.4 though not particularly common there (Going 1987, 22, fig. 6; *cf.* his form E6.1), which Going (1987, 120) has identified as diagnostically 3rd century. The type occurs sporadically in London (*e.g.* Orton 1977, 37 and 48, fig. 9.235, late 4th century). Min. no. 22 vessels; Fig. 107.114; no complete profiles could be illustrated.

Form 306 bowls: no definite examples of this diagnostic 3rd century form (Going 1987, 119–20) were identified, which is surprising in the light of the claim (Green 1980, 73) that Colchester was the likeliest source of vessels in group Z at Billingsgate. Going (1987, 119–20) discusses these vessels and provides a way out of this apparent dilemma. It is conceivable that body sherds or base sherds were missed, but the form is nevertheless uncommon at Little Oakley.

Jars: most of the body sherds recovered during the 1975–8 excavations were from jars. Many of these sherds could not be assigned to a specific form, but where the form could be determined, these jars fell into a relatively limited range of forms.

Form 266: developed from form Y in grog-tempered fabrics (above, see Colchester form 265) and is the commonest early jar form at Little Oakley (min. no. 22). At Sheepen these vessels occurred in a number of fabrics (including Little Oakley fabrics 5, 6, and 7). At Little Oakley they were mostly of greywares (fabrics 8–10). It occurs first in A5, but is common in Period 2 and Phase 3(i) deposits.[28] The bases are often turned and burnished on the exterior (Going 1987, 25 form G23).

Form 268: one of the commonest forms on the site but does not occur earlier than deposits of Phase 3(ii). The base is often poorly finished with string marks in contrast to form 266. There are two rim forms (268A and B), which occur in varying proportions in the same deposits and it seems that the exact form has little chronological significance. While other fabrics are present, the overwhelming majority of these vessels at Little Oakley is in fabric 18, particularly of rim form 268A (min. no. 66). The form probably developed into the jars made in LRSHT. The greyware forms may stop in the 4th century (Going 1987, 25 forms G24–5 and p. 119).

Latticed Jar form 278–9: this ovoid jar with everted rim and burnished latticing on the body (min. no. 23) is in imitation of BBW jar forms, but at Little Oakley greywares predominate, particularly fabric 10 (BBW versions occur in C8 and C23). Small form 328 jars in fabric 10 were also relatively common (Going 1987, 23, form G9).

Storage jars (forms 270–75): these were made in a variety of grog-tempered and 'grog- and miscellaneous-temper' fabrics, one is in fabric 7 (min. no. 4 vessels). They occur only in early contexts on both sites. Greyware storage jars are uncommon, excepting the form described immediately below.

Tall decorated ovoid narrow jars: these large jars (min. no. 25) are a form not adequately covered in Hull's typology, but similar to his form 280. They had bodies decorated with horizontal burnished zones and straight and wavy lines with occasional 'frilled' rims or bases (Fig. 105.74, Fig 108.118). Nearly all of them are in fabric 9 and were relatively common in later Phase 3(ii) deposits (pits C22–6). It seems that the incidence of horizontal burnished bands drops with time, but was replaced by poorly executed all-over burnish. Also the rim diameter seems to get smaller. Although sherds of these large vessels are readily recognisable at Little Oakley, no complete profile was reconstructed. The vessel form can be paralleled at Colchester (COLEM 396.35, unpublished Lexden Road cremation; and 1973.32 from the 'Union' site). Compare also Type 'N' at Mucking (Jones and Rodwell 1973, 28–31, fig. 8–9); and the vessel No. 37 at Icklingham (Plouviez 1976, 96, fig. 42); and no. 914 at *Verulamium* (Wilson 1972, 330, fig. 126). The latter is mid 2nd century but the Mucking and Icklingham vessels are dated to the 3rd and 4th century. Both are dates which would accord with their occurrence at Little Oakley, as they are found in pits C21–26. This is not, however, the buff-ware form 207 (Hull 1963, 128–30). See also Chelmsford forms G35–39 (Going 1987, 26–7, fig. 12, fig. 35.16). *Cf.* Lyne and Jefferies (1979, 40) Class IC jars with which small body sherds could be confused.

Narrow-necked jars and flasks (forms 231–5, 281–5): most were of form 231–2 (min. no. 6), form 281 occurs in C23. At Sheepen form 231 is usually grog-tempered, at Little Oakley it was in greyware.

Lids: most were similar to those from Sheepen (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 273, pl. LXXXV, nos 8–10 and 17). They occur at Little Oakley in a variety of greywares and fabrics 36–8 (min. no. 11). It is uncertain which vessels these lids go with. They occur in both early and late contexts.

Miscellaneous vessels (single examples)

a) Hemispherical bowl form 310–11, fabric 37 (pit C23).
b) Colander form 298 greyware (pit C23). Fig. 106.103.
c) Grey ware beaker copying colour-coat forms (pit C26).
d) Ring-and-dot beaker, fine micaceous black greyware (pit C23). Fig. 106.102.
e) Strainer bowls, vessels. Fig. 103.48 and Fig. 104.69 may have been pieces of spouted strainer bowls (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull 1947, fig. 57.12 for type).These may have functioned like Belgic and Early Roman 'teapots' for infused drinks, but current research suggests they were not for wine (P.R. Sealey, pers. comm.).

Relationship of fabric to form

Approaching the data in Table 6 from a different viewpoint, we find a considerable variety in the correlation of fabric to form. This is difficult to interpret as we do not know whether each greyware 'fabric' corresponds to a discrete production centre, or merely reflects a production process common to several centres. Thus we find certain fabrics which occur in several vessel classes (fabrics 10, 20, 21, 37), and some which are much more specific in the range of products represented (fabrics 9, 11, 12, 38, BB2), while others fall between these extremes (fabrics 18, 36). Other fabrics are poorly represented (fabrics 7, 11, 16 etc.). Little can be made of these data at present.

Potting technology

Some of the Roman pottery was hand-built using coiling or strip-building or some such method. These vessels occurred primarily in Flavian and earlier contexts or ceramic phase 4. Hand-made vessels do not occur on the site or in the Colchester area after the demise of Phase 2(i) ceramic styles. The exception to this could be some imported BB1 sherds if they could be demonstrated to be present at Little Oakley (*cf.* Peacock 1982, 80–89 for a discussion of Roman hand-made pottery).

All of the other vessels considered here, unless otherwise noted, were wheel-thrown. Some of the ERSHT and 'grog-and-miscellaneous temper' wares may have been hand built and wheel finished, as may some fabric 7 jars. Many jar bases had been string-cut from the wheel-head, while many of the finer vessels (and form 266 jars) had turned bases. Surface finish and decoration is noted in the text below. The most common surface finish was burnishing, while the dark surface of fabrics 36–8 was a deliberate effect of the firing technique.

Most of the coarse wares were fired very well to high temperatures in a reducing atmosphere.

Function of coarseware vessels

The function of the vessels, sherds of which were found scattered all over the site, is worth brief consideration. An attempt will be made to assess the evidence available for determining the use of the more common types of coarse ware vessels found at Little Oakley. In general the functions of the fineware vessels are more self-evident.

The platters were relatively few in number. They are generally pre-Flavian at Colchester and nearly all were redeposited at Little Oakley. Since no bowls of the same fabric were found it is concluded that these vessels were not lids. None showed signs of cut-marks or other damage consistent with use as plates to eat from. It is probable that their prime function was to serve food on; the fabrics are usually fine so they seem unlikely to have been used for cooking. However, dishes (forms 37–40) occurred in heavily sand-tempered fabrics (*e.g.* BB2) and may have been heat-resistant; the well-burnished surfaces may have rendered the vessels 'non-stick'. It is difficult to escape the interpretation that these were cooking vessels for baking or roasting.

BBW may have had special properties which rendered the restricted range of vessels in this fabric particularly suitable for its purpose. This may explain the apparent success of this coarseware and also the production of close copies (BB2) and imitations. The writer recently learnt that a very similar reduced heavily tempered hand-made ware with burnished surfaces in oval dish forms like form 40 was produced until about thirty years ago by small workshops in Augustow, north-east Poland. These vessels were much sought after for cooking and still may be found in farmhouse kitchens in the area today.

Deeper dishes and bowls (forms 304–5) were of similar fabrics and finishes and probably were put to similar use. The function of the flange is uncertain. It might be suggested that dishes of forms 38–40 could have been inverted over them as lids, but these vessels seem relatively uncommon in the deposits producing flanged bowls, and it is probable that the latter forms replaced the bead rim dishes (note that the latter form was never made in LRSHT). The flange may simply be for ease of handling hot vessels. The function of the carinated bowls (forms 246–8) is uncertain; some had sooted rims suggesting a use for cooking.

There were few open cups. Most of the vessels which have been called 'globular beakers' are in fact of a form (81–108 and 120) which is very impractical for such a purpose, as practical experiment demonstrates. The precise function of these vessels is uncertain. Butt beakers of form 113 are likewise a difficult form to drink from. The form is characterised by an internal step which hints very strongly at an internal lid or bung. Perhaps the vessels were used to trade a product (*e.g.* honey?) capped with a solid plug of a substance like beeswax.

The squat jars (form 218) were one of the most common forms in Period 2 and Phase 3(i) assemblages but their function is uncertain. A few (*e.g.*, from A5, Fig. 100.2) had 'char' deposits suggesting that these at least were for cooking. Those in fabric 20 seem too fine for this and the burnished and cordoned decoration suggest a less utilitarian use (perhaps for storage of small quantities of food?). It will be argued in the report on Anglo-Saxon pottery below that certain Anglo-Saxon bowl forms were used for serving sloppy food, such as stews. Roman coarseware 'dinner services' lacked not only plates but bowls. Perhaps metal or wooden plates and bowls filled this gap, but the small form 218 bowls could also have been used to eat from. Those from A5 are a tempting size and shape. Wooden vessels, however, may have been much more common than the surviving remains would indicate (see Curle 1911, 310–11), and may also account for the apparent 'aceramic' character of Period 4 occupation.

This brings us to the question of the function of jars as a whole. The early form 266 had burnished bases. It is not clear why this should have been done. None of the jars of

forms 266 or 268 was decorated in any way other than simple incised lines on the neck or upper shoulder.

A number of vessels had soot or 'char' deposits (not yet analysed), usually on the exterior. Of these the majority were of form 266 and 268 jars. Some vessels had white calcareous deposits on the inside; the overwhelming majority were in fabric 18, most of which were of form 268. These were not natural (post-depositional) deposits, and seem to be due to the use of these pots for boiling water.

It seems from this that the jars of form 266 and 268 were mainly used for cooking. Perhaps these were the vessels used to boil the fragmented bone, and they probably served other purposes as well.

Storage jars (forms 270–5) were so large that they can only have been used to put things in and left *in situ*. The fabrics concerned were not strong, so it is unlikely that material was transported in them. The fabrics were invariably porous, so liquids are unlikely to have been stored in these vessels. Whether or not the tall ovoid jars were so used is uncertain.

Evidence of repair

Evidence for the repair of broken pottery vessels was rare. In antiquity the absence of good non-soluble adhesives (*cf. Ecclesiasticus* 22.7) meant that the only way of achieving a repair was to rivet the pot. Rivetted samian is occasionally found, though seldom at Little Oakley (a form 18/31 from the topsoil on Site C and a fragment from pit C23), but the frequency of rivetting on other vessels was examined. In all four cases (form 305 in A3 and D3, a Hadham sherd in Site II trench D, and an intrusive late mortarium sherd from Site IV in ditch 1 — illustrated sherd 150), the contexts concerned were late. This seems to be a feature of other sites in the area (C.J. Going, pers. comm.) and probably relates to the drying up of pottery supplies. In all but one of the cases noted above only the holes were found; no pot rivets were found on the site excepting a piece of lead attached to one of the samian sherds.

Miniature vessel

Figure 103.49 shows the single example of a miniature vessel from the site (it is not thought to be part of a triple vase, *e.g.* form 494–5). Miniature pottery is not particularly common, but examples were found at Mucking (Jones *et al.* 1973, fig. 10.116–19). Rodwell (*ibid.* 1973, 34–5) discusses the type, but confuses his miniature pots with a distinctive group of vessels (like Wilson 1972, fig. 117.636–40) which possibly had a number of uses, including as crucibles (*ibid.* fig. 141.8 and 15–16). The Little Oakley and Mucking miniature pots are probably quite distinct from these vessels. There is no clear evidence to regard them as ritual in function, and it is extremely likely, in the writer's opinion, that they were used as toys by children.

Traded wares

This term is used here to denote any Romano-British fabric which is not a greyware or oxidised coarseware (though it may be noted that some of these were imports). It should be remembered that some vessels may have been traded for their contents rather than the vessels themselves. Black Burnished Ware has been dealt with above under greyware fabrics (see also the fired clay report above for briquetage vessels and an imported Gaulish pipeclay figurine).

	1975–8 sites	*Farrands*
Amphorae	11	××
Flagons (local)	47	××
Flagons (Verulamium Region)	2	×
Mortaria (Gallic)	–	×
Mortaria (Colchester)	28	××
Mortaria (Oxford)	6	×
Mortaria (Nene Valley)	1	×
Gallo-Belgic ware (copies)	2	×
Terra sigillata	28	××
Colchester colour coat (red)	20	××
Colchester colour coat (white)	10	×
Nene Valley colour coat	2	×
Oxford colour coat	7	×
Hadham (oxidised)	10	××
Mica dusted wares	2	×
Lead-glazed	1	–
Argonne(?)	1	–
Red Slip(?)	1	–
Eggshell	–	×
'Pompeian Red'	–	×
'West Stow'	2	×
North Kent	1	×
Rhenish CC	–	×

(×× — present in some quantity; × — present; – — absent)

Table 7 Proportions of Roman traded wares

The material from the 1975–8 excavations is described below (and see Table 7). To this is added brief notes on the material from the earlier excavations. The quantification of the 'imported' fine wares is given below, by minimum vessel number on the 1975–8 sites only. It was not possible to quantify all the traded wares from the Farrands sites, but the proportions seem to have been similar. Presence/absence can, however, be indicated.

It is instructive to compare the Little Oakley imports with those of other Essex sites, especially from Colchester (Sealey, pers. comm.) and Chelmsford (Going 1987, 3–7).

Amphorae

1975–8: Dr P.R. Sealey has examined all of the sherds (min. no. 11 vessels). The overwhelming majority were probably of Dressel's (1899) form 20 from contexts of Period 3 and later. The vessels (min. no. 7) were used for the transport of olive oil from Baetica, south Spain. A Dressel I sherd has been noted above. The topsoil of Site A produced two sherds of uncertain type. One may have been a Pélichet (1946) form 47, a post-Conquest South Gaulish form.

Farrands: A further eleven Dressel 20 vessels[29] were represented by sherds, mostly from Sites I and III, in deposits of Period 2 onwards. A spike from an amphora of unknown type was found in the dark silt in the phase D ditch on Site III. A fragment of Pélichet 47 (South Gaulish wine) amphora came from the upper fill of ditch 1 on Site IV.

Dressel 20 is found in pre-Conquest deposits and is the commonest form found in most Romano-British contexts from the Conquest period through to the mid 3rd century, when it ceased to be made. It is of note that most sherds at

Little Oakley were found in deposits of Phase 3(ii) and later. This may however reflect no more than the robustness of these sherds and the great amounts of redeposited pottery in these deposits. Few formally diagnostic sherds were seen.

Other buff and white wares

Apart from the imports (such as *Verulamium*-region flagons and Oxfordshire mortaria) the bulk of the white wares were of local origin. Most comprised local flagons (probably Colchester products) and Colchester mortaria. It has been suggested (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 238) that the butt beaker form 113 was made at Sheepen, where it is extremely common. This may be so, but it should be noted that no pipeclay source is known in the vicinity of Colchester. All the clay sources are iron-rich, thus the clay used for these butt beakers flagons and mortaria may have been treated in some way to reduce this iron content and thus the colour.

Buff wares first occur in quantity in the Little Oakley pottery sequence in the Phase C fills of Site III and in the earliest fills of ditch 1 on Site IV. Both these groups would date to the late 1st/early 2nd century AD (see Going 1987, 7). These fabrics tend to be commoner in Early Roman deposits but their quantities fall off rapidly in Phase 3(i) (see pit C21 pottery).

Flagons (buff and white wares)

1975–8: There were a quantity of sherds of flagons (min. no. of vessels 47) mostly from Site C. These were in seven different hard-fired fine white, buff, or pink fabrics. Forms were not often recognisable. All of the fabrics could be paralleled by material from the Colchester kilns (*e.g.* Kilns 23 and 26) and are thus presumably Colchester products. Both ring-necked and collared forms were present. The vessels were probably used to transport and store small quantities of liquids such as oil or wine).

A tazza sherd was in a fabric like that of the flagons (pit C23). A 'cheese press' fragment of unsourced white ware came from the topsoil on Site C.

Farrands: The 1951–73 sites produced a number of similar flagons, particularly from Phase 3(i) deposits on Sites III and IV. Indeed so many sherds were recovered from these deposits[30] that consumption of large quantities of liquid seems implied. Flagons were produced in large quantities at Colchester and probably used there for the distribution of liquid commodities and for splitting them into smaller portions.

Verulamium region white ware (Going 1987, 6, fabric 26)

Two sherds of this fabric came from the 1975–8 sites. The sherd from C29 (Fig. 109.157) is of unusual fabric, similar to the *Verulamium* region fabric but of uncertain source. From the earlier excavations a few sherds of this fabric were found in the phase C deposits on Site III and in the upper fill of ditch 1 on Site IV. All sherds found were derived from medium-sized flagons of indeterminate form.

Mortaria (buff and white wares)

1975–8: Most of the mortaria were of Colchester manufacture (min. no. 28 vessels, forms 496, 497 and 504). Six Oxford mortaria (Young 1977 forms M21 and M22; Going 1987, 6, fabric 26) were identified, mostly from 4th century contexts, but including one from C21. A sherd of a Nene Valley mortarium (Going 1987, 6, fabric 24) came from the topsoil of Site D.

Farrands: The mortaria in the early phases of Site III included sherds of three imported (Gallic?) mortaria (identified by C.J. Going, see Going 1987, 7 fabric 28), with Colchester mortaria appearing higher up in the fill. Most of the mortaria on Sites I and IV were of Colchester origin with a few Oxford mortaria (M19, M21 and M22) from late contexts on Sites I and IV. A Nene Valley mortarium came from F30, fill of pit 8 on Site I.

Gallo-Belgic wares

Probably most of this material was post-Conquest. Only a little true or probable Gallo-Belgic ware was found (Site III Phases A–C Fig. 101.10 and Site IV ditch 1; Fig. 103.42, and 2, Fig. 102.26). Good imitations were found in pits C21 (Fig. 105.81) and C22 (Fig. 106.107), while other imitations were also present (Figs 101–5, nos 11, 44, 66 and 81).

Terra sigillata

(Fig. 111)

1975–8: Most of the samian was South Gaulish (SG), a little early South Gaulish (28 sherds from Dragendorff forms 18/31, 27 and 37), but nine sherds of Central Gaulish (CG) and two of East Gaulish (EG) fabrics also occurred (min. no. of vessels 26). Most of the vessels were bowls, platters and cups forming a low proportion (2 vessels each) of the assemblage.

Farrands: The samian from the earlier excavations is partly missing. The surviving material seems similar to that noted above. Most was South Gaulish, with a little Central Gaulish and one sherd of East Gaulish. Form 18/31, 27 and 33 seem to have been predominant. Again the commonest forms were bowls, but cups were much more common than from the 1975–8 excavations.

The samian from Sites I and IV from 1952–4 was submitted to B.R. Hartley who reported (*in litt.* 15/2/54) as follows:

a) Form 27, late S.G.; Form 27, ECG.
b) Form Ludowici Tx Central Gaulish, probably Antonine or later.
c) Possibly form 44.
d) The majority of fragments were of form 31 or 18/31 mostly Antoninc CG one possibly EG Hadrianic-Antonine.
e) Fragment of decorated form 37 bowl with large vine scroll probably of Paternus of Lezoux *c.* 150–180.
f) Two fragments of late SG form 37 probably of Mercato (*c.* AD 85–100) ovolo with trident tongue. Dog (0.1925), Victoria (0.814), Bull (0.1884), 'Bestiarius' (0.1088).

None of this material except the last can be assigned a context, as the key to the letters used by Hartley is lost; only the latter vessel can be identified amongst the surviving material (Fig. 111.1–6) and came from layers 2 and 3 of ditch 1 on Site IV. The cup from the top fill of the same ditch has been noted above as possibly from a burial. No Colchester samian was found from either series of excavations.

Colchester Colour-Coat

1975–8: Several varieties of slipped ware (colour-coat) beakers were present, mostly as small abraded sherds. Most of the colour-coat beakers were from the Colchester

kilns (min. no. *c.* 20 vessels). A variety of surface finishes were present but sherds were generally too small to determine form. A smaller quantity (min. no. 10 vessels), of fine white bodied colour-coat beakers, possibly also local (Rodwell 1982, 53), were present. The chronological span of both these fabrics was mainly in Phase 3(i).

Farrands: A number of sherds of Colchester Colour-Coat beakers were also noted on the Farrands sites, again mainly in Period 3 contexts. Not surprisingly, these fabrics were among the commonest colour-coats on the site.

Nene Valley Colour-Coat

Two sherds of late Nene Valley Colour-Coat came from the topsoil of Site A, one from a large platter, the other from a 'Castor box'. Two Nene Valley beaker sherds came from Site IV, Saxon pit 2 layer 4; and K8 and K22 on Site II, all late contexts, probably 4th century. Nene Valley Ware occurs on other sites in Essex mainly in late 4th century contexts (Going 1987, 3).

Oxford Colour-Coat

1975–8: Seven sherds of Oxford Colour-Coat (Young 1977 123–84) occurred in the topsoil of Site A. The only form identifiable is Young form C59 with a rosette stamp.

Farrands: Only a little Oxford Colour-Coat was found, most of it coming from Site IV in Period 4 deposits or later (form C51 predominating).

A sherd of Oxford red-painted white ware flagon was also found in Site IV pit 3. Oxford Colour-Coat is a useful chronological indicator, as it apparently does not appear in central or north Essex until after the mid 4th century (Going 1987, 3). The date assigned in Chelmsford is post AD 360–70 on coin evidence. The fabric appears to occur in Kent a little earlier.

Unidentified

An unidentified red slipped red bodied sherd came from the topsoil of Site C. It is very small, but compares well in the hand with museum specimens of African Red Slip Ware, but its true identification is uncertain.[31] (See Bird 1977.)

Argonne

One small rouletted sherd from A8 might possibly be North Gaulish Argonne Ware (Chenet 1941) but it is too small and abraded to be certain. It could be Oxford Colour-Coat.

Rhenish Colour-Coat

A few abraded bodysherds from Site IV, Saxon pit 2.

Hadham Ware

1975–8: Several vessels (min. no. 10) of oxidised Hadham Ware (Going 1987, 3, fabric 4) were present in deposits of Phase 3(ii) date or later. Several of these late vessels were flagons, but there was also a face pot (Fig. 109.154). See also above for Hadham greywares. Oxidised Hadham Ware appears in north-east Essex quite late, although it appears *c.* AD 260–300 at Braintree (Drury and Pratt 1976, 44) and is also found in the Colchester 'Mithraeum' (Green 1978b, 172, but see Going 1987, 119). Two other similar fabrics were present which were not Hadham or Oxford products (see Rodwell 1982, 57). This Hadham type ware may be related to Green's (1981) Streak-Burnished ware.

Fabric		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
	'Belgic'	*Earliest Roman*	*Early Roman*	*Late Roman*	*Latest Roman*
AMPHORA					
Dressel 1	(×)				
Dressel 20		?	××		
S. Gaulish wine		×	×		
FLAGONS ETC.					
Colchester	?	(?)	××	(?)	
Ver. Region			×		
MORTARIA					
Colchester		(?)	××	?	
Gallic		×			
Oxford				×	××
Nene Valley					×
COLOUR-COAT BEAKERS ETC.					
Colchester		?	××	×	
Hadham				×	××
Oxford					××
Nene Valley					×
?Argonne					(?)
TERRA SIGILLATA					
South Gaulish		××	×		
Central Gaulish			××	(?)	
East Gaulish			×	?	
MISCELLANEOUS					
Gallo-Belgic	?	×	×		
Micaceous	?	×	×		
Pompeian		×			
West Stow		×	×		
N. Kent?			?		
Lead glazed			×		

KEY: ×× — present in some quantity, × — present, ? — uncertain, entries in brackets = typologically earlier material in later contexts.

Table 8 Relationship of main ceramic finewares with ceramic phases

Mica-dusted and micaceous ware

Only a little of the pottery at Little Oakley was mica-dusted. Two sherds were found in 1975–8. The first was the base of a beaker from pit C21, the second was a bossed sherd from pit C26 (Fig. 107.109). The fabric of both was like the fabric of some of the local flagons. A mica-dusted *Terra Nigra* (TN) sherd is noted below.

A number of sherds of, possibly imported, micaceous platters were found. These were of a Flavian-Trajanic date and came from the lowest fills of Site III (see Going 1987, 5, fabrics 11 and 12).

Eggshell ware

One body sherd from Site I F85 (not illustrated).

Pompeian Red Ware

A small scrap of Pompeian Red was found in the Period 2 scoop F59 on Site I. The form is indeterminate. A few form 17 platters elsewhere on the site were not of this fabric.

West Stow-type ware

Although strictly a fine greyware, this fabric will be considered here, especially since it is the main dating evidence for the start of Period 3 on Site I.

Several pieces of dark grey-black fine greyware fabric (similar to fabric 20) were found, usually in form 68/320 with impressed decoration. One similar sherd came from the 1975–8 excavations (pit C21 vessel no. 79), while the majority of pieces came from Sites I and IV of the earlier excavations. A group of sherds from ditch 1 on Site IV is illustrated and discussed below (Fig. 103.47).

From Site 1, scoop F17, came a footring from a bowl of this type (very similar to those in the fill of ditch I). This sherd is one of the few datable fragments from a Period 2 context and a Flavian to Trajanic/Hadrianic date would probably be appropriate for this vessel. A couple of small sherds of a similar stamped bowl, but of a different fabric, were found in pit C21.

These vessels were of a type discussed by Rodwell and it is clear that these fall into his (1978a, 248–65) West Stow/North Essex group, probably produced in a group of kilns of which West Stow (Corder 1941, 296; West 1955) was one. No stamped pottery of Rodwell's London-Essex types was found (see Going 1987, 6).

A ring-and-dot beaker sherd from the fill of C23 was of a similar fabric to the West Stow ware noted above (Fig. 101.20) as were the globular beakers nos. 40–46.

North Kent greyware

One or two sherds were in a fine greyware which seemed closely similar to North Kentish products (R.J. Pollard, pers. comm.). Notable is the poppyhead beaker from Site D (above) (see Going 1987, 7, fabric 32).

Lead-glazed ware

A small sherd of the base of a lead-glazed vessel, probably a south eastern product (Arthur 1978, 300), from the upper fill of pit C21.

The pottery assemblages

Sufficient pottery detail to date most deposits is given in the excavation report above. In some cases these rely on comparisons with other dated sites (particularly when the finewares are used). In other cases they rely on the internal sequence of the site. A number of large, relatively sealed, assemblages is detailed below in order that this pottery sequence can be demonstrated. They are described as far as is possible in chronological order.

Phase 2(i) Claudio-Neronian pottery

It has been suggested above that Building 2 was Flavian. Site I produced a few earlier sherds, including the Hermet 11 from F60. One or two other sherds scattered across the site may also be pre-Flavian, the largest concentration coming from the north side of Site A and the Site C pits, especially C21. It seems probable that there was some form of occupation of the site in the pre-Flavian period, represented by this material (principally imports). If so, this occupation would pre-date Building 2. The distribution of this material suggests it was coming from an area to the north of the site, probably where Warren reported Building 1. This redeposited pottery is the main evidence for the Phase 2(i). Few excavated assemblages consist entirely of Phase 2(i) material, excepting ditch 2 on Site IV, perhaps the lowest fishpond fills of Site III and pit 1 on Site I, all considered in the next section.

Deposits of Phase 2(ii)

This material came mainly from Site I, and especially the lower fill of the fishpond on Site III. A few other groups contain pottery of this date. Unfortunately, the construction of Building 3 over its predecessor is not accompanied on the site by a readily recognisable change in the pottery — so some deposits can only be described as Period 2–Phase 3(i). Such are some of the deposits forming the Phase C fishpond fills.

The dating of ditch A5 (and A16)

Context A5 contained a large quantity of pottery (3.97kg) much of it redeposited EIA material. Both A5 and A16 also contained Belgic and Roman sherds in varying quantities. It was noted that the few Belgic sherds were present mainly in the 2.5m grid squares which contained Roman pottery. It is probable that both groups of sherds were intrusive in A16 — which was probably of Period 1 (and, although this was not noted during the excavation,

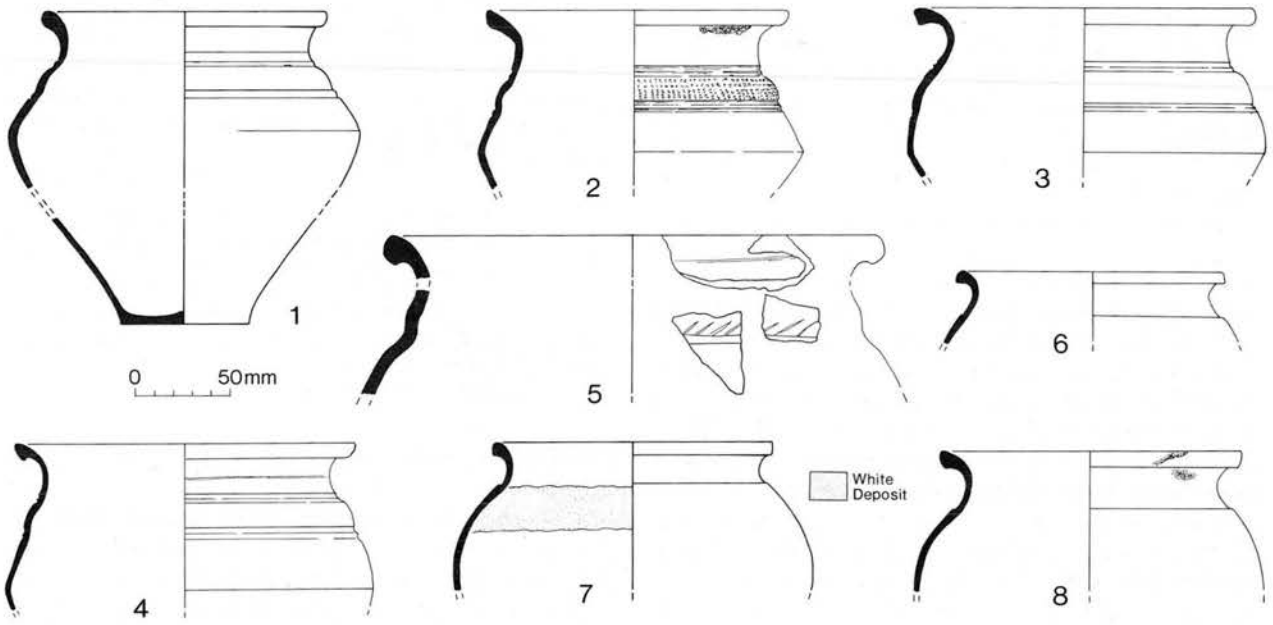


Figure 100 Roman pottery Period 2, scale 1:4

may have come from the upper fill and junction of ditches A5 and A16). The distribution of Roman sherds in A5 reflects that in A16 (or vice versa). The fill of Ditch A5 contained 214 sherds of EIA pottery and 69 sherds of Early Roman pottery, mostly larger sherds than those in Site IV Ditch 1. The most obvious vessels were 55 sherds of at least six form 218 vessels in fabric 10, sherds of the same vessel being spread along the excavated portion of the ditch. The fill also contained a few sherds of fabrics 6 and 7. Although the form 218 vessels in A5 are similar to those in the Phase 3(i) fill of ditch 1 on Site IV, it is felt more likely that ditch A5 is of Phase 2(ii). The range of vessels is shown on Figure 100.1–8.

The feature also contained a few intrusive later sherds. It has already been suggested that the line of A16 was preserved by a hedge. If such a hedge survived into Phase 3(ii) or later, it (and consequent faunal activity) could have been responsible for these intrusions.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 100)
All vessels are wheel made unless otherwise noted; the surface finish is indicated on the drawings. The extent of burnished zones is shown by dotted and dashed lines and mentioned in the text. Sherds 1 to 8 represent large portions of seven vessels in greyware found in ditch A5.

1 Form 218 fabric 10, two vessels.
2 Form 218 fabric 10, rouletted cordon between burnished lines. Black 'char' deposit under rim shown as stippled shading.
3 Form 218 fabric 10.
4 Form 218 fabric 10, one of two similar vessels.
5 Form 218 or 221 in fabric 7. Burnished oblique lines on cordon with burnished line under it.
6 Form 266 fabric 8.
7 Form 266 fabric 8, white deposit (limescale?) shown as stippled area inside (A5/16 interface).
8 Form 266 fabric 10, black 'char' deposit shown as stipple on rim.

Pottery from Period 2 contexts on Site I
The dating of the Period 2 building relies on only a few sherds of pottery from a number of features inside the structure (but truncated by ploughing). These have been assigned to Period 2 because it is not felt likely that such features had been cut down through the floors of the Period 3 building, though this is not of course impossible. They could pre-date the construction of Building 2, or be contemporary with its life, or its disuse.
Scoop F17: produced 170g of Early Roman pottery, including a form 108 sherd and a piece of a bowl of West Stow/North Essex Ware (Flavian to Trajanic/Hadrianic) very similar to the vessels in ditch 1 on Site IV, see below. The feature contained other pottery, including the bowl form 246 and a sherd of 'Colchester white' flagon.
Scoop F59: contained 80g of Early Roman pottery sherds including form 108 and a sherd of probable 'Pompeian Red' platter (1st century).
Scoop F60: contained 110g of Early Roman sherds including a lid sherd and one sherd of South Gaulish samian, Hermet 11 (Claudio-Neronian) (Fig. 111.19).
Slot F91: contained a little grog-tempered pottery (110g) and the rim of a storage jar in fabric 7.
Scoop F61: contained much Early Roman pottery forms 266, 268 and jar, and Flavian samian sherds, including form 27 and a form 37 bowl with an ovolo with a rosette. A body sherd of oxidised colour-coat vessel with large crude rouletting on the body (Fig. 102.31), from an unidentified source, may be later than the rest of the pottery. Such rouletting occurs on mid 2nd century vessels at Colchester and Chelmsford (C.J. Going, pers. comm.). The dating evidence of this sherd is, however, dubious until its source can be identified. It may be intrusive, as may a sherd of Oxford mortarium also said to have come from this feature.
Layer F40: A small quantity (108g) of Early Roman pottery form 266 in fabric 10 and a storage jar in fabric 7; also a rim sherd of a (possibly imported?) poppyhead beaker of fine greyware (Flavian to early 2nd century) (not illustrated).

As noted above, Building 2 is provisionally assigned a Flavian date, on the basis of the pottery probably associated with it, while grog-tempered wares predominate among the sherds in the fills of the beam-slots. Some of the Site I pottery assigned a Period 2 date can be as late as the early 2nd century, but whether this material dates the construction, or use/disuse, of Building 2 cannot confidently be stated.

Site III: The pottery from the first cut of the fishpond
Layer 25: this deposit produced a moderate quantity (420g) of pottery, with grog-tempered material predominating. The sherds are mainly small and abraded. Forms 218 and 266 were present.
Layer 24: contained 1,850g of pottery about 60% of it being grog tempered (30% greywares). Most sherds are reduced, the only oxidised sherds are large storage jars. The grog-tempered jars include form 266.

The feature also contained a *Terra Nigra* (TN) platter rim, a piece of *Terra Rubra* (TR) girth beaker and a neck of a greyware flagon. Early Roman-shell tempered pottery was present, as were beakers of form 108. A large sherd of the top of a Dressel 20 amphora was also found. A large rim sherd was of a Flavian imported mortarium (Hartley 1977). The group as a whole is probably Flavian.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 101)

9 Large rim sherd of imported mortarium (possibly Gallic?) Flavian.
10 Small TN rim sherd of form 2 platter.
11 Sherd of fine greyware cup form 68 (probably not of a girth beaker, which at Colchester were mostly in TR). Comb-stabbed decoration.

Sherds 12 to 14 were of a hard metallic fine greyware with a graphite-like dark grey surface. Only a few sherds like this were found elsewhere.

12 Form 218, burnished zone from rim to cordon and a burnished band on lower body.
13 Sherds of vessel, comb-stabbing on shoulder. It could be form 108.
14 Rim belonging to the above vessel(?), burnished band inside rim and on neck outside (between dashed lines on Fig. 101).
15 Sherd of form 218(?) wide flat latticed (burnish) cordons, fine greyware with a little very fine vegetable temper.
16 Rim of form 266 jar, hard dark greyware like sherds 12–14 but sandier. Rim distorted before (or during) firing. Possibly a 'waster'.
17 Base of form 166 fabric 36, burnished lower body.

Site III: The pottery from the lower fill (Phase B) of the fishpond
Organic mud and shelly fills. These deposits produced 2,800g of pottery. Much of this consisted of Early Roman greywares. There were a few sherds of ERSHT pottery and grog-tempered jar (form 257) sherds. A cupped rim (possibly of form 250) was of grog-tempered ware. Two platters, one of fine TN (Claudio-Neronian) and one of a

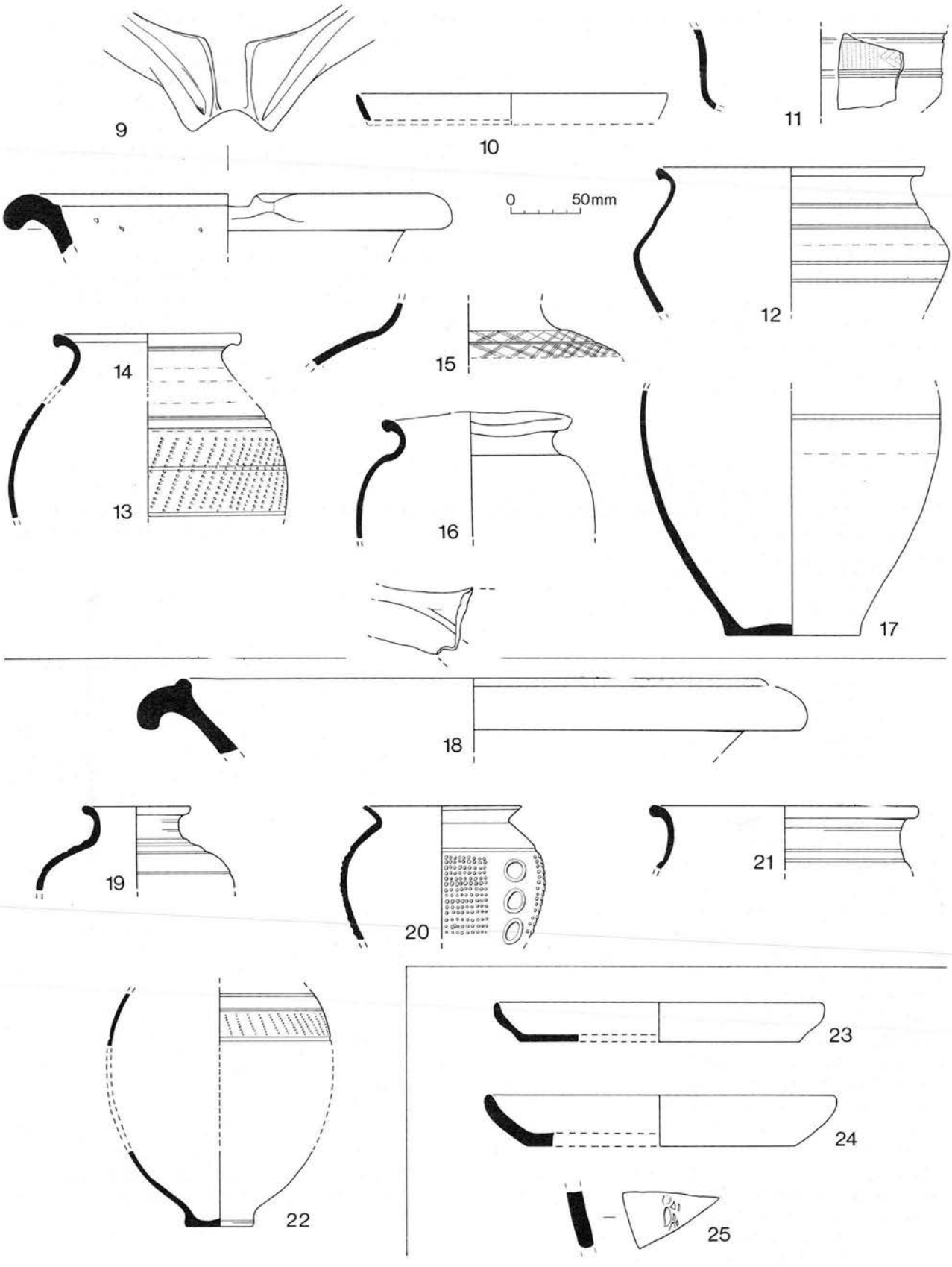


Figure 101 Roman pottery Period 2, scale 1:4

sandy 'native' fabric, were also present. A TN beaker or bowl was also present.

The greywares consisted mainly of sherds of forms 218[32] and 266; some form 108 beakers and several other forms were present, including a ring-and-dot beaker. Much of this pottery was smashed *in situ* and is illustrated below as a group. The fabrics differed from the layers below. The deposit also produced sherds of a *Verulamium* Region Whiteware flagon and two sherds of burnt samian Drag. forms 27 (and 37?).

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 101)

18 Rim of imported mortarium (see No. 9).
19 Rim of narrow-necked jar form 231–2 fabric as 12–14.
20 Ring-and-dot beaker in fine micaceous greyware (*cf.* Green 1978a, fig. 5.1 no. 1 and fig. 5.2 no. 9 but not of the same fabrics). Four panels of dots and barbotine rings.
21 Rim of form 218, fabric as vessels 12–14. Burnished lines on neck.
22 Beaker (form 108?) fine black ware. Comb-stabbing on upper shoulder.

Site III: The Phase C fills of the fishpond

This material probably falls between Period 2 and Phase 3(i), and is of Flavian to Hadrianic date. Early material includes South Gaulish samian (Drag. form 27) and a cup form 27, stamped MII0...., also an Early Central Gaulish Curle 11 rim and a Gallo-Belgic TN platter rim. The deposits also contain a sherd of Flavian mortarium and sherds of two similar mica-dusted dishes (Fig. 101.23–4) probably Flavian to Trajanic imports of uncertain origin. Dishes (forms 37–40) were uncommon; only one (form 38/Gillam 313) was found, suggesting a pre-Hadrianic date for lower fills of this phase. A number of flagon sherds (pink buff, not necessarily of Colchester origin) were also present. The pottery was similar to that in layer 3 in ditch 1 on Site IV (see below).

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 101)

23 Three sherds of thin-walled platter of soft orange fabric with copious sand and occasional flecks of mica, slight mica coating.
24 Sherd of thicker walled platter (plus one other, unstratified Site III). Hard orange brown sandy fabric with sparse mica coating, surfaces burnished horizontally.
25 Body sherd of vessel of uncertain form but large diameter. Soft orange brown sandy fabric with white flecks and mica flecks. Similar to fabric of platter no. 24. Vertical line of fingernail decoration on exterior.

Site IV: The pottery from ditch 2

There was little pottery from this feature. Much of it consisted of grog-tempered and other Early Roman fabrics. There was a notable proportion of Gallo-Belgic pottery (mainly TN and butt beakers of form 113). A little TR (butt beaker?) and two scraps of Pompeian Red Ware (not illustrated) were also present, as was a scrap of early South Gaulish *Terra Sigillata*.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 102)

26 Rim of white-buff Gallo Belgic butt beaker, form 113; burnished all over exterior and inside rim (probably not the local product, but an import).

Deposits of Phase 3(i)

As noted above, no clear division in the ceramic sequence marks the beginning of Period 3 at Little Oakley. On the Corbishley sites only a few features seem to be Phase 3(i). Pit C21 is described in the next section; ditch A23 contained so little material that its date is uncertain. The dating evidence for the construction of Building 3 is discussed, then the material in the fill of ditch 1 on Site IV is described.

The only fabric which appears mainly in Phase 3(i) contexts is Colchester Colour-Coat. This is quite common in pit C21, and is also present in pits C22–3 and ditch A23. Single sherds occurred in a number of later deposits.

Ditch A23

This feature cut A5 and the short length which was excavated contained a small amount of pottery including early greywares (forms 99, 109, 221, and 266) and a piece of Early South Gaulish samian form Drag. 27. The feature is dated by a sherd of Colchester Colour-Coat beaker which cannot be earlier than Phase 3(i).

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 102)

27 Vessel similar to the form 218 jars in A5, fabric 11. Burnished lines, separate cordons.
28 Form 266 fabric 11.
29 Form 108 in a greyware, burnished zone above shoulder (8-tooth) comb stabbing on shoulder.
30 Fabric similar to 37, burnished lines on shoulder and burnished zone near base, form 310?

Period 3 features on Site I

The dating of the deposits of this period on Site I is problematic. No layers are associated with the masonry foundations, apart from the 'metalling' layers to the south and the drain and pipe trenches. The former are totally unsealed and are not reliable, the latter are almost equally unreliable. The pottery from the drain and pipe is similar but very mixed and mostly small sherds (in fact the redeposited Iron Age pottery often occurred as larger sherds in these deposits): the features also contained intrusive material, including a probable medieval sherd and a stoneware sherd. Much of the Roman pottery is probably redeposited.

The pottery is similar to the C21 assemblage in some respects. The fine wares include samian of Curle 11 and a sherd of Central Gaulish inkwell (Ritterling form 13). These features also contained a few sherds probably of the same vessel (other sherds were found in F85 and an adjacent robber trench). This vessel (Fig. 102.32) was a thick-walled globular flagon, beaker or jar. It was not reconstructable, but was probably a product of East Anglian kilns such as Pakenham or Grimston, though a Colchester source is not excluded. The vessel was decorated with thin painted lines of white and dark brown slip and the scheme seems to be vertical panels. The vessel is probably 2nd century. (For a similar vessel from Brampton, Norfolk, see Green 1977, 73, fig. 32.116.)

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 102)

31 Colour-coated sherd (F61 see p. 140).
32 Flagon reconstructed from sherds from a number of contexts, the neck from a piece of similar flagon (not the same vessel) from layer 3 ditch 1 Site IV. The other sherds were from Period 3 and later contexts on Site 1 (see above).
33 Form 231–2 soft black surfaced oxidised fabric with 'miscellaneous' temper (pipe trench fill, possibly redeposited).

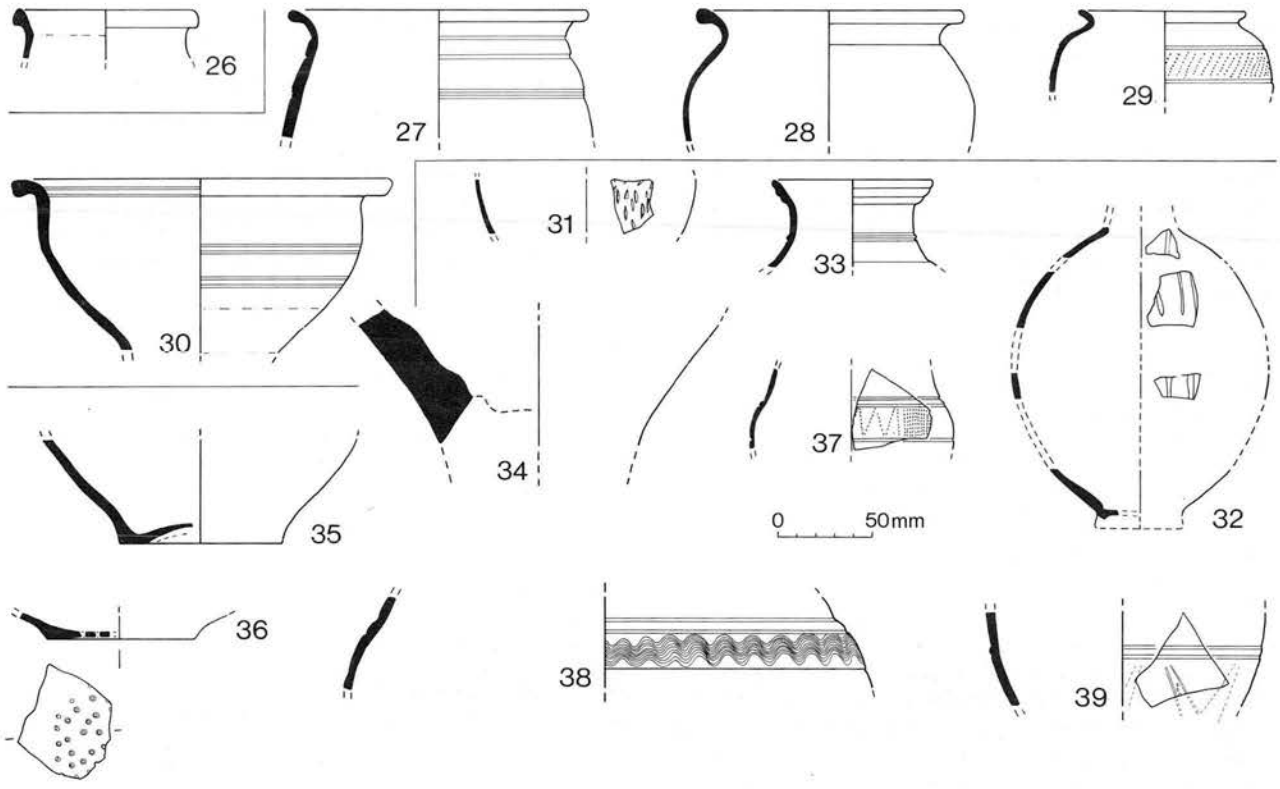


Figure 102 Roman pottery Period 3, scale 1:4

Site III: Phase 3(i)–3(ii) deposits

The Phase D and E fills of Site III are probably Phases 3(i) to (ii). In this phase of the Little Oakley pottery sequence, form 278 vessels (in greyware) begin to appear, as do other BBW vessel types in greyware, Black-on-Red ware (fabrics 36–8) and occasionally BB2. The pottery from this group of deposits is similar to (the later component of) that in pit C21.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 102)

34 Amphora base of a type with a spike. Coarse sandy laminated pink fabric with creamy-white extension surface, contains white flecks (possibly S. Spanish). Dr Sealey has been unable to identify the type precisely. ('Dark silt under mortar spread' — layer 19.)

35 Base of form 266 of 'grog and miscellaneous temper' greyware, exterior of base burnished. Base perforated after firing from inside (forcing a spall off the exterior), diameter 13mm. Possibly a flower-pot, though several similar vessels were found in the fill of the Shakenoak fishponds and interpreted as refuges for baby fish or breeding chambers (Brodribb *et al.* 1978, 18). (Site III, lower fill of ditch 3 Phase D).

36 Colander base, fabric 20. (Site III, 'Dark silt under mortar spread' — layer 19.)

37 Butt beaker(?) sherd in soft 'miscellaneous temper' greyware with light coloured core and some fine vegetable temper. Similar to fabrics lower down in fill and probably redeposited. Decorated with shallow triangular marks probably made with the edge of a comb. (Site III, trench C2, high level?)

38 Large vessel with combed decoration, hard greyware like that in Phase A and B fills, probably redeposited (*cf.* nos 100–1). (Site III, layer 2.)

39 Sherd of vessel in fabric 20. Lightly incised decoration with small round shallow impressed dots. C.J. Going has examined this sherd and suggests that it is part of a hemispherical bowl with a V-shaped decorative scheme. He suggests a Flavian to Trajanic date. (Site III, unstratified.)

Site IV: Earlier cuts of ditch 1

The lowest fills of ditch 1 produced a little EIA pottery and Early Roman pottery. These included a number of sherds of several buff flagons of form 155B, most of a form 266 jar and several other form 266 and 218 jars (the latter like those in ditch A5 on the Corbishley site); form 246 was also present. Fine wares included a South Gaulish Drag. form 27 cup (with an illegible stamp) and a TR beaker sherd (forms 83–6 or 91). Fabric 38 was also present. It seems from the marking on the pots that at least one sherd of the globular spiral decorated beaker (Fig. 103.40) came from this lower group of deposits.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 103)

40 Many sherds of globular beaker decorated with lightly scribed (or burnished) concentric circles, possibly spirals, in zones. The sherds were found scattered in several layers of the ditch in the 1972 excavation (trench 15) but including the lower fill. Fine black surfaced slightly micaceous greyware. These vessels are probably Trajanic/Hadrianic. See McKenny Hughes (1903) for examples from Cherry Hinton, Cambs., and Rogerson (1977, 192, fig. 81.190) for a late 2nd century parallel from Scole, Norfolk. The example from the 'Mithraeum' at Colchester (Hull 1958, 137, fig. 65.64) is almost certainly of the same type, and is redeposited.

41 Applied swallow's nest lug of 'hanging bowl' of hard light grey sandy greyware like fabric 10, sooted exterior. These early Roman vessels are uncommon, but an example was found with spouted strainer bowls at Ardleigh (Erith and Holbert 1974, 14, fig. 7.35). The fabrics are similar (ditch I 'between Areas I and III, layer 3 below oyster').

Site IV: The pottery from layer 3 of ditch 1

Layer 3 of the fourth recut of ditch 1 on Site IV produced a considerable quantity of pottery, some of it smashed *in situ* and the material forms a good group.

The ditch is dated by the absence of forms 37 and 38 (suggesting a date pre *c.* AD 120/125) and, apart from the

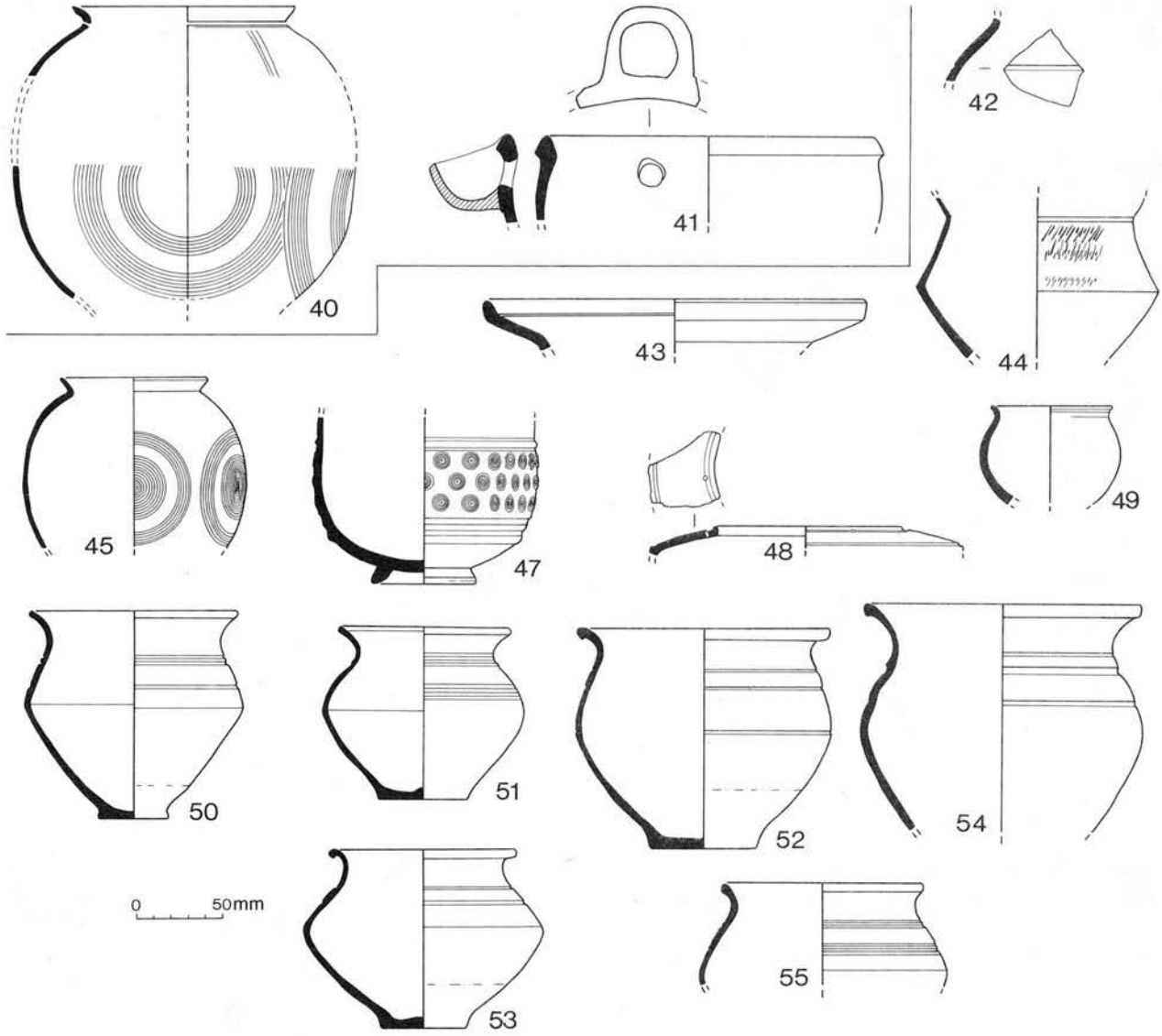


Figure 103 Roman pottery Period 3, scale 1:4

coarseware forms, by the presence of a substantial number of fragments of an early samian Drag. form 37 bowl by the potter Mercato dated by Hartley to *c.* AD 80–100 (see p. 137 above). All the samian in this fill was South Gaulish, except one possible early Central Gaulish sherd with a high gloss.

The other fine wares include TR beaker sherds (form 91), a buff pedestal beaker, a form 14 platter and a greyware platter or lid, like those in pit C21. Other fine fabrics included two West Stow/North Essex bowls and a globular beaker decorated with spirals. One sherd (Fig. 103.48) may have been the top of a spouted strainer bowl.

The coarsewares consisted mainly of Early Roman greywares (*e.g.* fabric 10) and included a group (of at least five substantially complete) form 218 bowls like those from A5. Forms 266 and 109 are common. Bead rim bowls and fabric 18 were absent.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 103)

42 Terra Rubra beaker sherd.

43 Rim of platter or lid, fine micaceous greyware.

44 Pedestal beaker of hard orange buff fabric. Light rouletting on concave upper body (*cf.* form 78).

45 Many sherds of a globular beaker with spiral burnished lines (4 spirals?) like no. 40 and in similar fabric, many sherds of this vessel also came from the upper fill of the ditch.

46 Fragments of West Stow/North Essex stamped bowl, fine black slightly micaceous fabric like no. 45. Some sherds (not illustrated) came also from the upper fill.

47 Fragment of similar bowl, harder greyer fabric (stamp Fig. 110).

48 Small fragment of vessel of hard fine slightly micaceous greyware (*cf.* fabric 20). Small perforation near rim, burnished externally. Form uncertain (possibly the spill-plate of a spouted strainer bowl, *cf.* Hawkes and Hull 1947, fig. 57.12; Erith and Holbert 1974; fig. 6.23).

49 Miniature vessel in softish black sandy greyware.

Sherds 50 to 55 are all similar form 218 vessels in fabric 10, burnished all over or on the lower body, and compare closely with those from A5. Many of these vessels were represented by substantial portions. Sherds 56–7 come from the upper fill of the fourth cut.

Site IV: The fifth recut of ditch 1 Site IV

Most of the moderate quantity (several kg) of pottery from these layers was similar to that in lower fills. It was mostly badly shattered. One notable addition to the fabric range was a number of sherds of *Verulamium* Region Whiteware flagons, a few sherds of plain bag-shaped Colchester beakers (form 392) and a few sherds of Central Gaulish

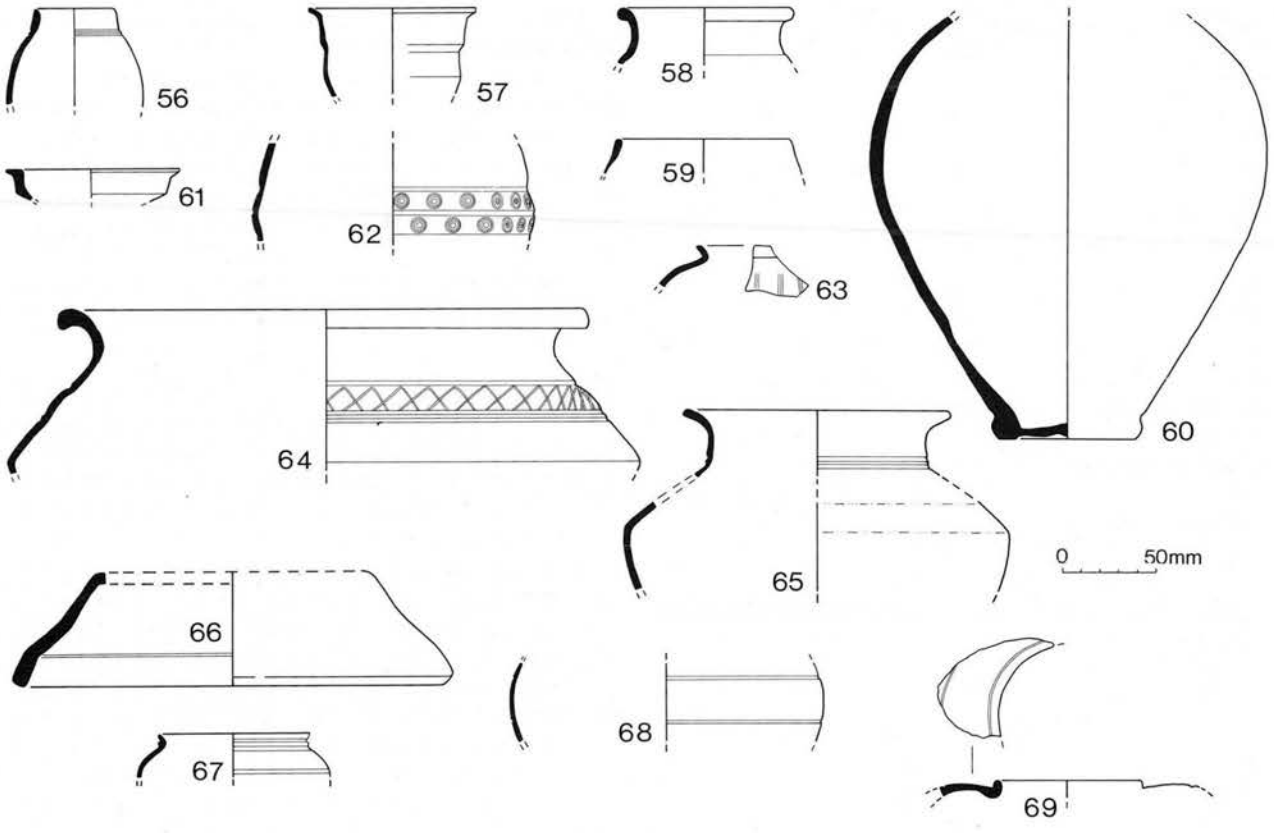


Figure 104 Roman pottery Phase 3(ii), scale 1:4

samian. The spiral decorated beakers and West Stow Ware were also present but may have been redeposited. Much of a buff flagon body was present and parts of a second. One sherd (Fig. 104.69) may have been a strainer bowl rim. A rim of a Dressel 20 amphora and sherds of a pink-buff Pélichet 47 amphora were also present.

Trench 15 (all levels) produced a small group of sherds, mostly small and abraded. It included sherds of grog-tempered storage jars, redeposited flagon (no. 61) and butt beaker sherds as well as other early forms (nos 64–9), all probably redeposited from nearby early occupation.

From trench 15 came a greyware mortarium rim with a rivet hole and an Oxford Colour-Coat vessel base. These both probably came from an unrecognised intrusive feature. The topsoil over the ditch contained a Colchester fabric mortarium sherd and an oxidised Hadham sherd.

Two vessels (Fig. 51.2 and 3) have already been discussed in the context of Site V (p. 62); they were both from the topsoil over ditch 1.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 104)

56 Globular beaker in soft self-coloured buff ware (no colour-coat) probably a Flavian product of the Colchester kilns (layers 2 and 3, trenches 31–2).

57 Small beaker in hard self-coloured buff ware (*cf.* form 85) probably pre-Flavian and a Colchester product (layer 2, junction of ditches 1 and 2).

58 Small jar, fabric as 56 (layer 1, trench 34).

59 Small sherd of red slipped beaker, oxidised orange red fabric, uncertain source (layer 1, trench 6).

60 Many sherds of a local buff flagon body slightly rilled, not shown on figure (layer 3, ditch 1 near pit 3).

61 Rim of vessel in white ware, possibly form 168?

62 Part of globular beaker of a fine sandy brownish fabric with black surfaces. Possibly a West Stow/North Essex product (stamp Fig. 110), fabric unlike other vessels of this ware at Little Oakley (section 1 all layers). See West 1989, fig. 58.206 for a parallel (I am grateful to S. West for drawing my attention to this reference).

63 Fragment of a third beaker, fabric like nos 40 and 45. Grouped vertical lines (section 1, all layers).

64–65 Form 218 in fabric 10, burnished from rim to shoulder, but cordon left unburnished (trench 15).

66 Platter or lid, fine greyware (as no. 81 in C21, below) burnished all over exterior and inside rim (trench 15).

67 Form 108, fabric as nos 12–14 (trench 15).

68 Form 108 in fine greyware, burnished on exterior except area between incised lines (trench 15).

69 Fragment of vessel like no. 48, fine greyware, burnished surface (layer 2, ditch 1 adjacent to pit 1).

Deposits of Phase 3(ii)

This phase is defined by minor changes in the fabrics and forms present on the site. Late fabrics (such as 18) become more predominant. Oxford mortaria first appear, flanged bowls form 305 appear, Colchester Colour-Coat becomes scarce.

The pits on Site C

Four pits (C21, C22, C23 and C26) produced between them 20kg of pottery. It was clear that not only could they be arranged in a chronological sequence, but that the presence of datable imports might provide some fixed points within this seriation. The earliest pit C21 (9.8kg of pottery) contained a large group of joining sherds with fresh breaks. This was at first felt to be an early group, but the presence of about half of a Colchester form 497 mortarium in six joining sherds in the lower fill and the rim of an Oxford mortarium (Young 1977, form M21) in the upper fill suggested a date for the filling of the pit in the early to middle 3rd century. The pit contained a large

Fabric	*C21*	*C22*	*C23*	*C26*
7	26	–	–	–
9	33	46	9	106
10	310	135	46	3
18	54	24	31	11
20	100	82	38	5
21	51	37	13	9
36	75	3	3	–
37	65	76	40	12
38	48	22	3	5
BBW	76	–	4	6
Unsp. GW	212	123	82	52
White wares (flagon)	138	14	16	3
Colchester mortaria	6	7	7	–
Oxford mortaria M21	1	1	–	–
Colchester Colour-Coat	46	4	5	–
Samian	30	18	6	–
Hadham	–	–	–	1
Total	1271	592	303	213

Table 9 Occurrence of various fabrics in Site C pits (sherd counts)

Form	*C21*	*C22*	*C23*	*C26*
platters	12	*4	*2	1
37	12	1	4	1
38	6	–	–	–
40	4	–	–	1
305	–	–	–	4
246	8	3	5	1
53	–	5	1	–
92	–	2	1	2
108	3	*4	*2	1
120	Many	1	–	–
122–3	3	*8	*1	–
218	13	19	8	–
219–30	Many	–	–	–
'Chelmsford E5'	(6?)	1	5	5
266	2	1	5	–
268	27	19	7	5
278–9	4	1	3	–
328	5	2	1	–
270–5	several	–	–	1
Tall ovoid jars	5	3	4	5
Flasks	1	2	2	–
Lids	4	3	–	1
Misc. forms	6	11	17	21
Total	121+	90	68	49

* = the vessels in C22 and C23 are probably partially the same pots

Table 10 Forms present in Site C pits (min. vessel nos)

quantity of redeposited (residual) material, some of it of Phase 2(i).

Pits C22 (5.7kg) and C23 (2.1kg) seemed to be later than pit C21, but they were approximately contemporary with each other. There were fragments of the same vessels in each. It appears though from the pottery (and its vertical seriation), that C22 was slightly later, and its fill dated to a phase when pit C23 was almost filled up.

Pit C26 (2.4kg) was clearly the latest of the four pits. It contained form 305 and an oxidised Hadham sherd (both of which were absent from the other three pits), but no Oxford Colour-Coat. It is probable that C26 should be dated to the late 3rd, or perhaps the earlier 4th, century.

These four pits, besides containing large groups of pottery, included a considerable amount of building debris (see p. 72 above). The four pits will be considered together below.

Pit C21 contained a flanged bowl, but this seemed to be form 304 rather than form 305.

Pit C21

This should perhaps be dated to Phase 3(i) on account of its content of BBW and Colchester Colour-Coat, as well as the Colchester and Oxford mortaria. It would be late in this phase, and will, however, be considered here as part of the sequence of four pits.

As noted above much (if not most) of the pottery in this feature fill[33] is redeposited. Notable amongst this material are the platters which should be Claudio-Neronian. Also the form 120 vessels (Claudian-Hadrianic) are more prevalent in this feature than the others. Some, if not most, of the form 218 bowls are probably also redeposited, although the form continued into the mid 2nd century. (The variety of vessels of forms 219–30 may also be redeposited, but not all can be closely dated from external evidence.) Likewise the form 108 vessels and storage jars are probably mainly redeposited here, as these types tend to occur frequently in earlier contexts but apparently not in post-Antonine groups. The poppyhead beakers and form 246 bowls are a little more difficult to interpret. The feature contains quite a lot of Colchester colour coat. This may indicate that the deposit from which the redeposited pottery is derived was open during the *floruit* of this fabric *c.* AD 150–200 (Rodwell 1982, 53) or perhaps that the life of the fabric type may be extended to at least *c.* AD 240–50 close to the factories.

The late fabrics 9, 18 and 21 were in use at the time pit C21 was infilled, the quantities increased (proportionally to the total pit contents) in the later features (C22, C23 and C26) . The relatively high proportions of fabrics 7, 10 and 20 in pit C21 must in part be due to the quantities of earlier (redeposited) material present (but see below). A similar explanation must apply to some at least of fabrics 36–8.

One of the most notable fabric types present is that of the BB2 vessels. These are mostly dishes of forms 37–40; the concomitant jar forms were local copies in fabric 10. Platters of form 37 predominated. Six vessels (Fig. 105.80) are of the same fabric and type (form 37/Gillam 311 or 313). These have thin curved walls, triangular rims, usually plain sided, but one has wavy line decoration. Three other vessels (of form 37/Gillam 222) are large deep bowls with thick rolled rims decorated with vertical lines. Four other vessels are all in a mottled silvery-grey BB2 with copious fine sand temper, often thick walled vessels. Sometimes other colours occur, such as pink, but some of these sherds may have been burnt. Three other vessels are present in a black-surfaced BB2, harder and slightly micaceous. These vessels have thinner walls and a metallic burnish. (The forms approximate to Gillam forms 222/310, 238 and 319.) The source of these two groups of vessels is uncertain.

Some jars of form 278 (and 328/378 var.) are also present (Fig. 105.70–2), all in fabric 10; some had been

burnt and were pink in colour. The jar forms include forms 218, 266 but mostly form 268 in fabric 18 (the form accounts for most of this fabric in this feature). Large decorated ovoid jars (of Ver. 914 type) in fabric 9 (Fig. 105.74) are also present. The 'Chelmsford E5' bowls are not present in quantity, but wide-mouthed bowls in fabrics 9 and 21 do occur (*e.g.* Fig. 105.75) and these have been classified here as forms 221–2. These are without the burnished zones on the exterior.

Flagon sherds are particularly common in C21 and all the flagon fabrics are present always in a higher quantity than in the fills of the later pits. Unfortunately in few cases could the forms be determined.

The samian included a number of fragments of redeposited South Gaulish fabric (Drag. forms 37 and 33 and a platter). Eighteen sherds of Central Gaulish fabric (Drag. forms 18/31 and 38) and one sherd of East Gaulish fabric were present.

Illustrated pottery, C21
(Fig. 105)
Sherds 70–83 come from the large group of pottery from pit C21 (see above). Only an, unrepresentative, selection is illustrated here, see Tables 9–10.

70 Large portion of a form 278 jar in fabric 10. Burnished inside rim and on upper body.
71 Form 278–9 fabric 10. Carelessly made. Burnished zones on upper and lower body.
72 Sherd of similar jar, with oval area on shoulder ground flat deliberately.
73 Form 328 variety in fabric 10 burnished upper body, with grouped vertical burnished lines. (One other smaller, not illustrated.)
74 Large sherds of several large jars of barrel shaped profile with horizontal burnished bands and burnished wavy line and lattice decoration, always in fabric 9. Several body sherds and a base were, however, felt to belong to the same vessel and have been numbered accordingly in the figure where no. 74 occurs twice.
75 Form 221–2 in fabric 21 possibly the precursor to the 'Chelmsford E5' bowl form.
76 Form 227 in an ungrouped reduced fabric. Burnished all over exterior.
77 Form 225 in fabric 36. Burnished all over exterior.
78 Rim of cylindrical vessel form 320 with shallow vertical lines, fine brown fabric.
79 Form 320 in similar fabric with stamped impressions (Fig. 110) diameter of stamp 11mm. This is probably not a West Stow/North Essex product, but is similar in style.
80 One of a large selection of BB2 dishes of forms 37–40 in the fill of C21 (form 38/Gillam form 313). Burnished all over interior and exterior, except basal facet.
81 Platter in fine greyware (*cf.* form 24) with herringbone illiterate stamp (Fig. 110) in centre of foot inside within two concentric grooves. May have had a footring.
82 Lid in fabric 36.
83 Flagon form 155–5 fabric 29.

Pits C22 and C23[34]

These pits contained a considerable quantity of redeposited pottery, especially in the upper fills, but the assemblages differed from that in the adjacent pit C21. The assemblages are so similar that they may be treated here together. They contained fewer platters, but did contain other Claudio-Neronian forms such as the cups (form 35) and beakers (form 92). The forms 108–218 and 120 vessels could be redeposited, as a fragment of a ring-and-dot beaker in C23 almost certainly was. The status of the form 146 and the poppyhead beakers in these features is again uncertain. Probably the form 266 jars were also redeposited (it is notable that pit C23 contains a slightly higher proportion of jars than C22). The pits contained little Colchester Colour Coat (but did contain Colchester mortarium sherds). Probably the deposits from which the redeposited pottery derived were closed before the *floruit* of the fabric (see above). Colchester Colour-Coat vessels appear not to have been in frequent use during Phase 3(ii) at Little Oakley. Fabrics 10 and BBW were much less common in these deposits than in pit C21; fabric 20 was also less common.

The status of fabrics 36–38 is unclear. They occur in pits C21 to C23 in a variety of forms, many of them pre-Flavian types. It is probable that most of these sherds are redeposited in these pits.

Dishes of form 37 were present in small quantities in BBW, but apart from one from C23 (Gillam form 222 with triangular rim and curved wall) were not comparable to those from C21. It is notable that no form 38 or 39/40 vessels were present in this or later groups, (except a sherd of form 40 in BB1 in C26). It seems possible that production of these forms in BB2 ceased before that of form 37 in the factories supplying Little Oakley. A sherd of a form 278 jar in BB2 was present in C23. These forms also occurred in fabric 10.

Other jar forms include forms 218, 266 but mostly 268, the latter predominantly in fabric 18 (again the form accounting for most of the fabric in these features). Large ovoid jars of Ver. 914 type are again present, as were 'Chelmsford E5.4 bowls'. Three separate vessel bases have an inscribed post-firing graffito 'X' (Fig. 106.84–6).

Flagons were poorly represented in C22–3 and the forms were not recognisable. Fig. 106.108 is form 153/5; Fig. 106.99 is a flagon or perhaps pedestalled jar form 207 decorated with red paint. The use of red paint on buff ware was known at Colchester in the late 2nd century (Hull 1963, 183).

The samian in pit C22 was all South Gaulish and presumably mostly redeposited (Drag. forms 18/31 37, 36 and Curle 11). The material in pit C23 included a Central Gaulish sherd with a rivet hole. Several of the South Gaulish sherds joined pieces in the fill of C22 (the Curle 11 and a form 37). A portion of Dressel 20 amphora had been shattered into a number of pieces and then burnt. Many of the pieces found their way into pit C23, but only one sherd was lying around by the time pit C22 filled up (fill C22–2). A small possible Oxford Colour-Coat sherd, which may be intrusive, was found in the upper fill of C23.

Within these features could be seen in miniature the main fabric trends on the whole site. Fabric 18 became more prevalent higher up in the fills, while fabrics 20 and 37–8 decreased in quantity.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 106)

84–6 Bases of three vessels (of form 268?) in a brown fabric similar to 20, all three vessels have an 'X' inscribed near the base, perhaps an ownership mark or to indicate quantity of content, or perhaps a sun-symbol or similar magico-religious sign (upper fill of C22).
87 Rim of vessel (probably like no. 74) fabric 9.
88 Form 268A fabric 18. This vessel represents several from pits C21 and C22–C23. The greyware is distinctively gritty and these vessels frequently have white (limescale?) deposits inside and black soot/'char' on the outside (the rim shown on Fig. 106 is from pit C21).
89 Form 268B fabric 21, several vessels from these pits (occasionally in fabric 18). (The base of the pot figured is from pit C21).
90 Form 92 fabric 20.
91 Form 328 fabric 10. Burnished zones above and below lattice.

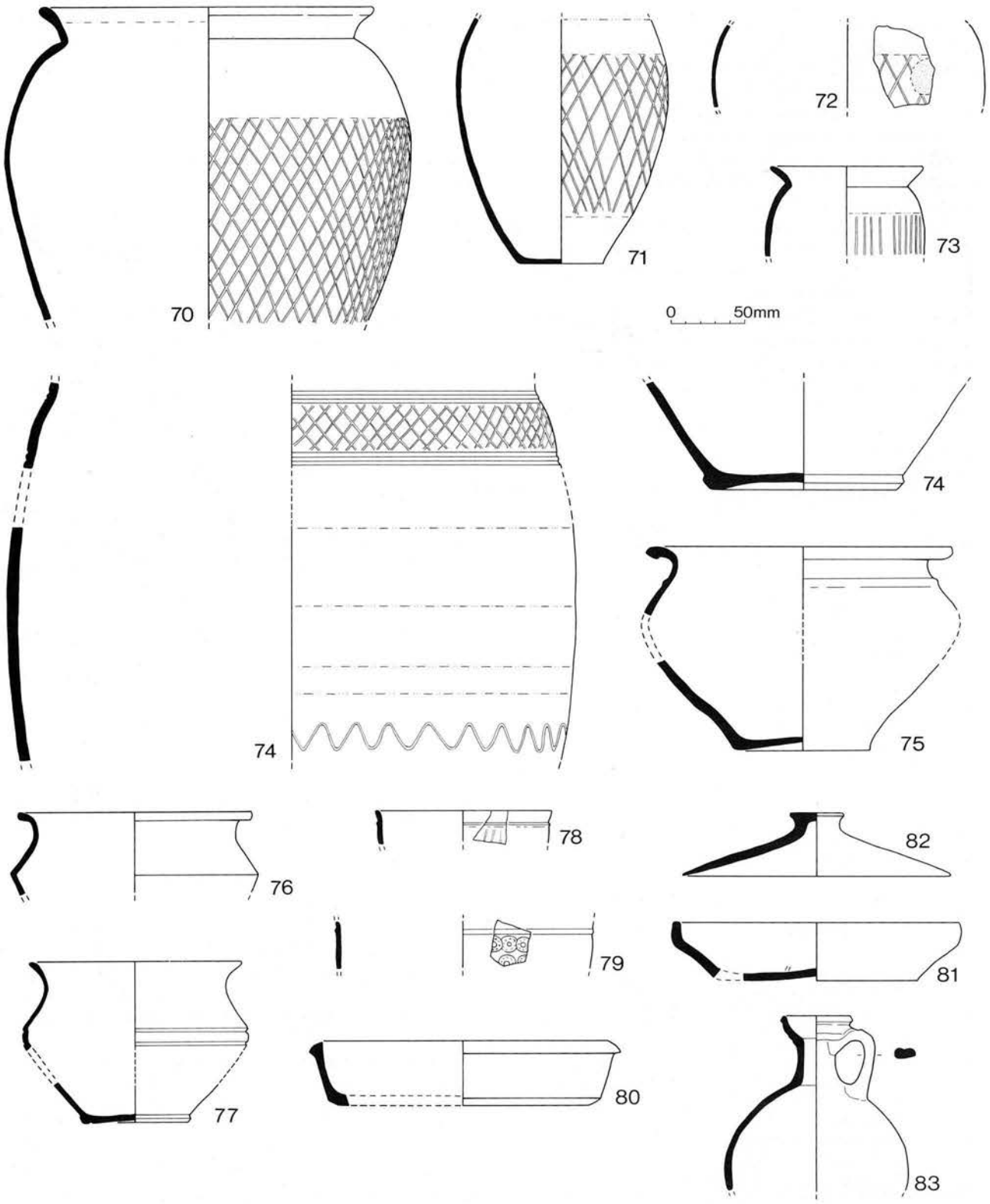


Figure 105 Roman pottery Phase 3(ii), scale 1:4

92 Form 92 fabric 38.
93 Form 227 fabric 37.
94 Form 246 var. oxidised sandy coarseware.
95 One of several 'poppy beakers' with panels of barbotine dots over burnished surface, fabric 20.
96 Similar beaker, but in an ungrouped fabric with burnished surface, possibly North Kentish.
97–8 Two flasks in ungrouped greyware; no. 97 burnished on upper shoulder.
99 Flagon in ungrouped buff pink fabric with spiral of red-brown paint.
100 Form 92/108 with burnished band above zone with combed wavy line, and comb-stabbed zone below. Ungrouped greyware.
101 Form 92/108 with burnished zone on upper body, burnished cordons, and combed wavy line, fabric 10.
102 Fragment of ring-and-dot beaker in a hard fine micaceous black fabric like no. 20.
103 Fragment of colander base, form 298 fabric 20.
104 Body sherd of large vessel with 'roller-stamped' ornament. The stamp (Fig. 110) was 7mm wide (*cf.* Hull 1959, fig. 63.55; Hull 1963, fig. 94, 41–2; Going 1987, 100, fig. 48.14).

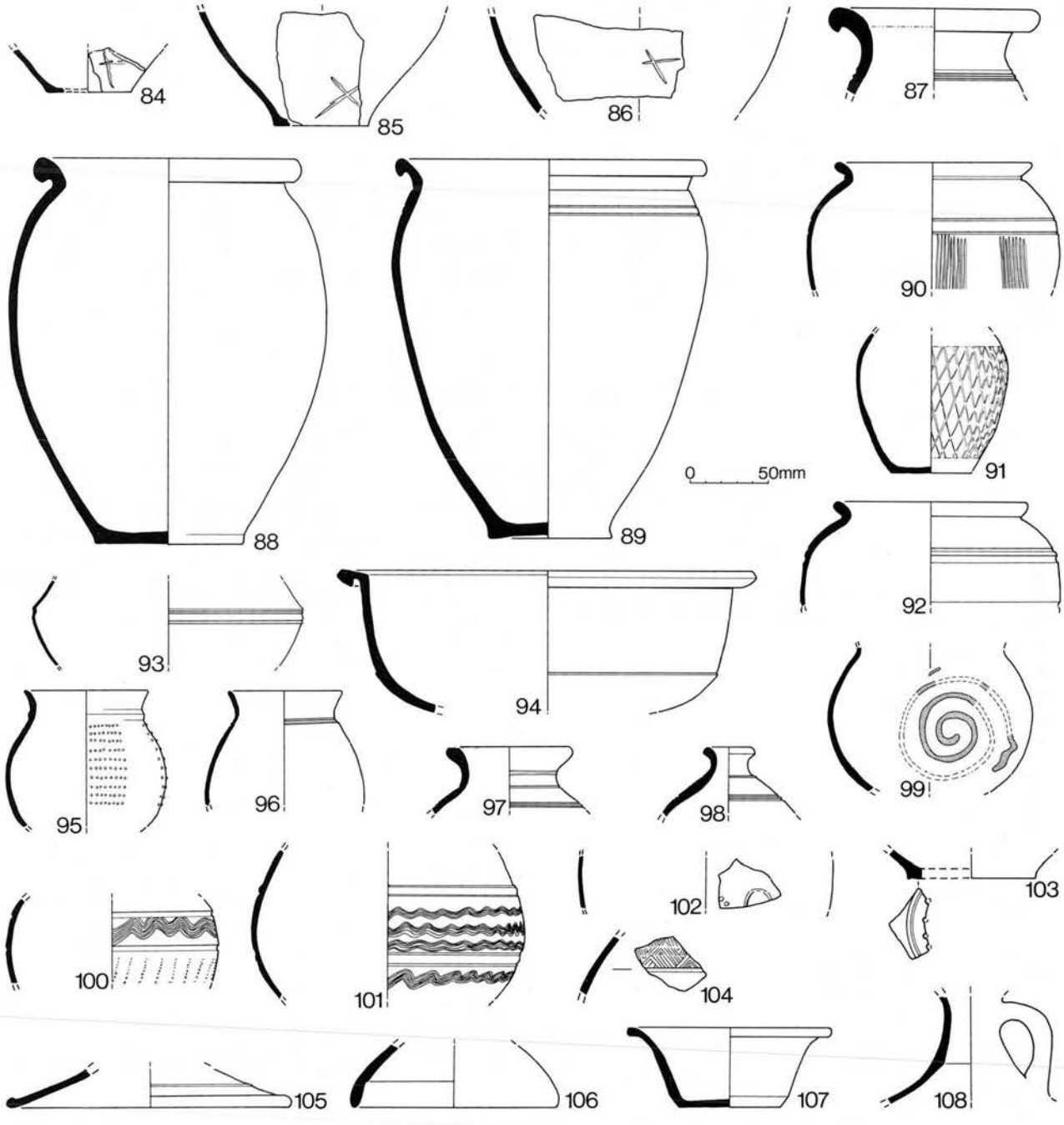


Figure 106 Roman pottery Phase 3(ii), scale 1:4

105 Lid, fabric 21.
106 Lid, ungrouped soft sandy brown fabric, burnished inside.
107 Almost complete cup (*cf.* forms 53 and 54) in ungrouped and fine greyware with burnished silvery grey surface. Illiterate stamp (Fig. 110) inside in centre. No footring. Fabric similar to TN.
108 Flagon, fabric 27.

Pit C26

This is one of the latest features of Phase 3(ii) on the site, and is a useful assemblage as it contains very little obviously redeposited early material (platters and forms 53, 92, 108, 120, 122–3, 218 and 219–30 and 266 are absent or very uncommon). This makes analysis of its contents of great interest. Dishes form 37 and 40 (the latter in BB1) occur, as do a number of form 305 dishes. A deep dish like form 40 (Fig. 107.112) in a fine greyware is also notable.

A group of 'Chelmsford E5 bowls' is present, as are a number of form 268 jars in fabric 18. There are also fragments of large ovoid jars of Ver. 914 type with burnished decoration. These were similar to those in the other three pits.

One vessel, probably a large jar, had roller-stamped decoration on its side. Roller-stamping tends to be a feature of the late 2nd to early 3rd century in the Colchester kilns (as on form 207; Hull 1963, fig. 71.6 and 7). The feature also produced a cornice rim of a vertical walled Hadham bowl (Fig. 107.113) but no samian. A mica-dusted bossed sherd (Fig. 107.109) was probably residual; a similar vessel occurred at Gadebridge (Wilson 1972, 276, fig. 10.128; Neal 1974, 219, fig. 97.73), in pre-Flavian to late Antonine deposits.

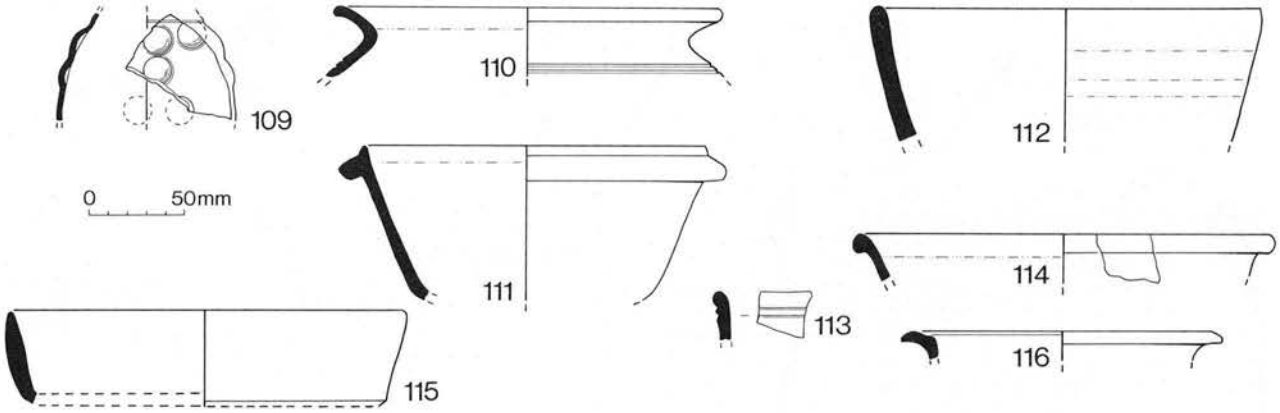


Figure 107 Roman pottery Phase 3(ii), scale 1:4

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 107)

109 Sherd of mica-dusted beaker sherd, soft buff fabric; diameter difficult to determine, but apparently reasonably correct in figure.
110 Jar fabric 18. Burnished inside rim.
111 Form 305, greyware (fabric like 9). Burnished all over exterior and inside, except zone near rim.
112 Deep dish in a similar fabric, burnished inside and on outer rim, thin burnished zone on exterior.
113 Rim of oxidised Hadham Ware bowl. Burnished surfaces.
114 'Chelmsford E5 bowl' burnished inside rim, fabric 9.
115 Form 40 silvery grey burnished greyware.
116 Form 304 ungrouped greyware.

The Latest Roman assemblages; Periods 4 to 5

Some time shortly after the mid 4th century, pottery assemblages in Essex changed after the introduction of new fabric types. These fabrics are present at Little Oakley in the latest Roman deposits and these distinctive assemblages may be briefly considered here.

It should be noted that all of these assemblages are small, the sherds themselves are also usually small (a point emphasised in the drawings here), and the bulk of them consists of fabrics present in earlier contexts. While in some cases it could be demonstrated that some of the material in these assemblages was certainly redeposited, in other cases it was not always possible to recognise and distinguish redeposited material from those fabrics in contemporary use with the new fabric types. Particularly problematic are sherds of fabrics 9 and 18, forms 280, 368 and 305 which may still have been in use.

The new fabrics are often finewares; the following fabrics are represented: Late Greywares, fabric 14, fabric 15, grog-tempered, Late Roman Shell-Tempered, flint-gritted greywares (Rettendon-type), Hadham-type greywares, Hadham ware and Hadham-type ware (these are not exclusively Latest Roman), Oxford Colour-Coat, Nene Valley Colour-Coat, grass-tempered. Hadham and Hadham-type wares are discussed above under 'Traded Wares', as are Oxford and Nene Valley Colour-Coat.

Late Greywares: A number of fine, light grey, hard greywares (similar to fabrics 9 and 21) but only represented by a few sherds of each fabric type.

Fabric 14: Fairly fine matrix, slightly sandy and micaceous, always soft- to medium-fired reduced, distinct from fabric 24. The fabric contains a moderate amount of fine vegetable matter, mostly 'grass-like'. This was probably added to the clay in the form of animal dung. There is sometimes a distinct difference between this Late Roman fabric and prehistoric fabric 14 sherds (the tactile difference is hard to define verbally). Other sherds are difficult to assign, the problems compounded by the small abraded sherds usually found. See also the report on Early Saxon pottery below. The grass (or more likely dung) was probably a treatment to improve the working qualities of the clay by its acidity as it decayed or matured, rather than being a temper to aid its firing properties.

Fabric 15: Soft fine friable brown fabric heavily tempered with copious angular ill-sorted multicoloured fine to coarse quartz. This fabric was unlike any of the Roman, prehistoric or Saxon fabrics on the site. Most of the sherds were small but seem to have been from hand-made vessels. The fabric (total 7 sherds) only occurred in two features (contexts A3 and A21). It is not BB1 or Anglo-Saxon fabric 25, and it must be concluded that this was of Latest Roman hand-made pottery. No forms were recognisable or could be illustrated. A similar fabric has also been noted by the writer among the pottery at Bradwell-on-Sea from the Roman Shore Fort (Barford forthcoming b).

Grog-tempered: A sherd of hand-made grog-tempered pottery was found in F20 on Site I. This was unlike the pre-Roman fabrics 5 or 6 and could have been a Late Roman hand-made grog-tempered ware (as in Kent); not illustrated.

Late Roman Shell-Tempered (LRSHT) Pottery: (Going 1987, 10, fabric 10) A distinctive group of shell-tempered pottery was identified. The vessel forms present were jars (form 277; Sanders 1973, form 3) and bowls (form 305; Sanders 1973, form 5). They were fired brownish in colour, but were not evenly-coloured, suggesting poor kiln control or clamp-firing. The vessels had been wheel-thrown where this could be determined, and was only found in small quantities (min. no. 15 vessels on the 1975–8 sites). It is possible that the shell temper implies local production, though the texture differs from the earlier and later shell-tempered pottery at Little Oakley. Late Roman Shell-Tempered Ware is regarded as an import on other Essex and East Anglian sites. Visually this material is similar to products of the Harold, Bedfordshire, or Lakenheath, Suffolk, kilns (C.J. Going, pers. comm.).

The fabric occurs in contexts of Period 4 at Little Oakley, but no earlier. In North Essex the origin of this fabric type seems to be about 360/70 (Drury and Pratt 1976, 45). In Hertfordshire the material may have had a slightly earlier beginning as at *Verulamium* (Wilson 1972). There is no apparent connection at Little Oakley with the Early Roman Shell-Tempered pottery (see above).

Hadham Grey wares (Going 1987, 8, fabric 36): The Hadham kilns are best known for their oxidised products and other fine wares which were widely traded. They also produced a series of greywares which had a predominantly local distribution. In the 4th century the area supplied by these greywares became wider, appearing for example at Bradwell (Going in Barford forthcoming b) and in Period 4 at Little Oakley.

A few sherds of probable Hadham greyware were found in contexts A3 and A21 at Little Oakley. The fabric is often recognisable by its fine textured (often silky) light grey surfaces, with noticeable horizontal burnish lines. The forms present were jars, and (mostly?) form 305. Visually these sherds are comparable to the Bradwell material (see nos 124–6 and 147–8; also perhaps nos 111–12, 115–16 and 140–2 may be related). Like Hadham oxidised wares, this fabric may have been coming into the area before the Latest Roman pottery phase.

Flint-tempered jars: Greyware jars tempered with fine crushed flint are known from east-central Essex and date to the 4th century. Kilns are known from Rettendon, Chelmsford and Sandon (Drury and Pratt 1976, 45 and 13; Going 1987, 10, fabric 48 and 89–90). A few sherds of this fabric group[35] came from Period 4 contexts on Sites I, III and IV. It is

clear though that the site is right on the edge of this fabric tradition, the place of Rettendon-type ware at Little Oakley probably being taken by another coarse greyware, fabric 18.

Rubble Spread A3 (2,680g): contained 93 sherds of prehistoric pot, 102 sherds of Roman pot, and 10 sherds of grass-tempered and fabric 15. The Roman pottery included seven sherds of large narrow necked greyware jars (Ver. 914 type), eleven sherds of Late Roman Shell-Tempered jars and bowls form 305, as well as a number of Late Greyware and Hadham greyware form 305 bowls (thirteen sherds) and jars form 268. One Oxford mortarium (Young M22) rim was represented by six joining sherds, and there were also two sherds of Nene Valley Colour-Coat, one oxidised Hadham sherd and one Hadham-type sherd. Also present was a sherd of hand-made globular pot in thick soapy fabric with some sparse vegetable temper which has a food 'char' (as yet unanalysed) inside. The pottery from the hearths A9 and A10 was all ungrouped greyware.

Pit A21 (500g): the pottery assemblage from this feature comprised 25 sherds of prehistoric, 47 sherds of Roman, and 8 sherds of grass-tempered and fabric 15. The Roman sherds include a large narrow necked jar, five sherds of Late Roman Shell-Tempered jar, a form 305 bowl in Late Greyware like that in A3 and no finewares. A small fabric 15 sherd was a rim of an upright-sided vessel (not illustrated). The hand made sherds include one sherd with a 'Schlikung' surface finish. A red and white painted Oxford Colour-Coat beaker sherd was also found.

The robber trenches: Sites C and D produced 83 sherds of Roman pottery, including much that was clearly redeposited (but including some Late Greywares including form 305), a grass-tempered sherd, and four of Late Roman Shell-Tempered pottery. Context D6 also produced a sandy early medieval base sherd.[36]

C20: contained 39 sherds of pottery, mostly of Early Roman types, but including one Hadham oxidised sherd and a single sherd of hand made sandy pottery which may have been post-Roman.

C27: contained 28 sherds including Late Roman fabrics and a sherd of Late Roman Shell-Tempered pottery.

C41: burnt deposit contained 38 sherds and a possible sandy post-Roman sherd.

A hand-made sherd from pit C29 could have been of post-Roman date, or could be prehistoric (see also sherd no. 161 of uncertain origin and date).

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 108)

117 Jar, fabric 20 burnished exterior and inside rim, probably redeposited (pit A21).
118 Rilled rim or footring of a vessel like 74, greyware similar to fabric 9 (rubble spread A3).
119 Rim of similar vessel, greyware fabric 13 (A21).
120 Rim of similar vessel, fabric 16, burnished inside rim and exterior (A3).
121 Late Roman Shell-Tempered jar, hand-made fabric 12. Shell dissolved inside, but not on outside. Horizontal rilling on shoulder (A3).
122 Base of same vessel? (A3).
123 Centre of base of another LRSHT vessel showing it is wheel-thrown (A21).
124 Form 305 in an ungrouped greyware (A3).
125 Deep dish in an ungrouped greyware. Burnished all over (A21).
126 Form 305 in an ungrouped greyware (A21).

F18 and F20 (Phase 4(ii) pit)

F18 produced 23 sherds of Roman pottery (100g), nearly all of it small abraded scraps and nothing diagnostic. One grass-tempered sherd was also present. F20 contained a larger group of material (770g) but this was still small compared with the volume of the deposit. Most of this pottery was redeposited Early Roman material.

The deposit also produced Central Gaulish samian, two sherds of Late Roman Shell-Tempered pottery, and a flanged bowl sherd (Fig. 108.133). Also present were three grass-tempered sherds, a grog-tempered sherd, and a Colchester Colour-Coat beaker rim.

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 108)

The pottery from F20 and F30 was in such small sherds that forms could not always be determined with certainty. The sherd outline has been drawn in these figures to emphasise this point.

127 Jar, soft sandy greyware (F20).
128 Jar hard light grey coarse sandy greyware, horizontally rilled on exterior (F20).
129 Narrow necked jar, fabric 18 (F20).
130 Jar form 268, soft sandy greyware (F20).
131 Jar, fabric as 130 (F20).
132 Form 305 burnt BB2, mortar on breaks (F20).
133 Hard white-surfaced coarse buff fabric probably not a Mayen rim, but a flanged bowl sherd of uncertain origin. Mortar on breaks (F20).

F30 (Phase 4(iii) pit fill)

This feature contained more pottery than other parts of the trench E section (see Fig. 22). The material consisted almost entirely of small abraded scraps of greyware (no rim was more than 10% of the circumference), most of which was undoubtedly redeposited, but the group is illustrated here to show the range of forms present in this very late group. The feature also produced a small scrap of Drag 18/31 stamped samian (SS7).

Illustrated pottery
(Fig. 108)

134 Mortarium, black grits, probably a Nene Valley product.
135 Rim of ?bowl. White-slipped oxidised sandy fabric. Slip on rim and interior worn off. Uncertain source.
136 Body of large jug or flagon with stub of handle, in very similar fabric (rim 135 may perhaps belong to this vessel). White slip on exterior only. Also (not illustrated) a third body sherd in this fabric.
137–8 Rims of 'Chelmsford E5 bowls' in fabric 9, burnished inside rim.
139 Jar rim, ungrouped greyware, rim sooted outside.
140 Form 38 bowl, greyware, burnished surfaces.
141 Base of similar dish, burnished surfaces.
142 Form 305 bowl in similar fabric.
143 Form 305 BBW (possibly BB1), burnished surfaces (layer F2 over Room 3).

The robber trenches on Site I produced little pottery, most of which was redeposited.

Robber trench F69: produced a Hadham oxidised rim sherd, a sherd of Colchester Colour-Coat and a fragment of Late Roman flint-tempered ledge-rim jar.

Robber trench F63: Sherd of East Gaulish samian of late 2nd/early 3rd century, form uncertain. Has a graffito 'N' on lower body (Fig. 109.164).

A small amount of Latest Roman pottery also came from Period 4 assemblages on Sites II–IV. This material is described below and illustrated sherds are shown on Fig. 108.

Site II produced a little Latest Roman pottery. Only one sherd is worthy of special note:

144 Sherd of burnished Hadham oxidised ware bowl with rivet hole (buried subsoil trench D). A sherd like 144 came from the topsoil of trench D (not illustrated).

Site III contained much redeposited Early Roman pottery in the upper fills and only a little of the pottery was definitely late Roman.

145 Sherd of Oxford mortarium (Young 1977 form M21) (rubble spread, layer P7. One similar from layer 3 not illustrated).
146 Large sherd of Oxford Colour-Coat (Young 1977 form C51). Since it is so large and relatively unabraded it could possibly have survived and been in use alongside the Saxon pottery (layer 2).

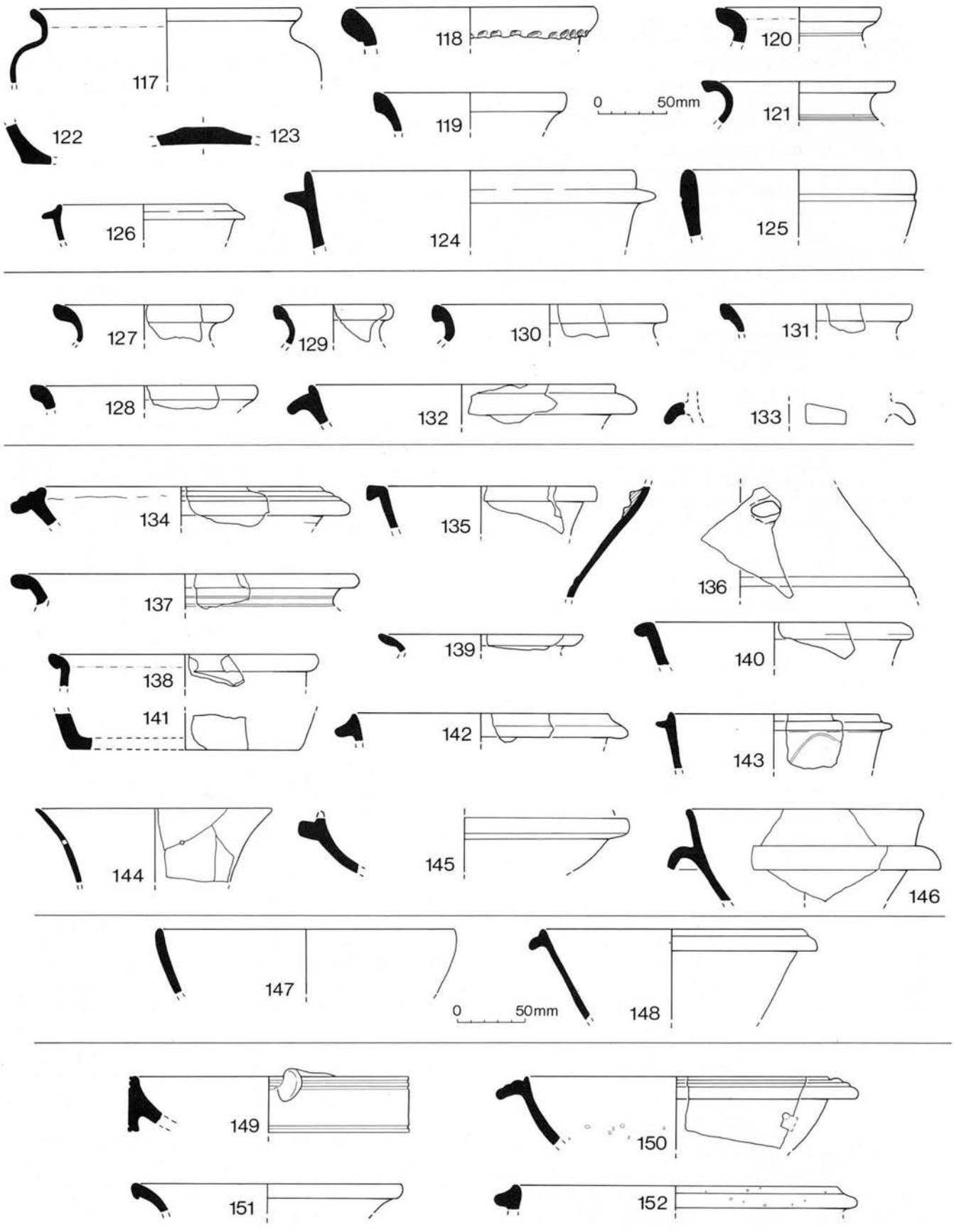


Figure 108 Roman pottery Period 4, scale 1:4

Site IV produced quite a lot of Latest Roman pottery from the two Saxon pits (pits 2 and 3) and the fill of ditch 6 in trench 19. Pit 2 contained a number of small abraded sherds of pottery (six of Oxford Colour-Coat (form Young C51), two of Hadham Ware, and of Rhenish Colour-Coat, one of Nene Valley and one of another colour-coat, some of late Roman greywares, but no Late Roman Shell-Tempered). None of this is worth illustrating, and the sherds were very weathered and abraded.

Pit 3 produced a number of sherds of Latest Roman pottery mainly from the top fill; a sherd of Oxford mortarium (Young M23), a large piece of Oxford Colour-Coat (Young C51), a sherd of (Oxford?) flagon with red-painted decoration and also:

147 Large sherd of form 40 dish in greyware fabric like No. 111, fresh breaks, white deposit inside.

148 Form 305 bowl, two joining fragments (from layers 11 and 2) fabric as 147. Fresh breaks.

Adjacent parts of the Site IV ditches also included (intrusive?) material of this date in the uppermost fills *e.g.*:

149 Late Colchester mortarium (3rd century) No trituration grits inside (Site IV, ditch 1, trench 18 layer 2).

150 Greyware mortarium, hard sandy greyware, sparse white quartz grits, probably a late form (see form 503). When first broken the mortarium had been repaired with a rivet, the square perforation formed by drilling four holes and filing away the area between (?intrusive in Site IV, trench 15, ditch 1).

151 Late Roman Shell-Tempered jar rim (trench 19, ditch 6, upper fill).

152 Form 305 convex sided, Late Roman Shell-Tempered ware (trench 18, ditch 1, layer 2).

Miscellaneous illustrated Roman pottery

(Fig. 109)

153 Unusual jar, in an ungrouped greyware (not BBW), burnished upper body and base (Site C, pit C29).

154 Face pot of oxidised Hadham Ware (Site A topsoil).

155–7 Sherds of oxidised Hadham Ware (Sites A and C topsoil) (see also no. 113).

158 Platter base in soft gritty greyware probably form 14, literate ?stamp in centre of base inside (Fig. 110). (Site C, bone deposit, C20).

159 Platter or lid rim, fine greyware very like TN (Site II, trench D topsoil).

160 Rim of Early Roman Shell-Tempered pottery (form 254–9) (Site II, trench D topsoil).

161 Rim of vessel of unusual form of hard fine pink/buff fabric, possibly a Brockley Hill product or perhaps a Continental import? (Site C, pit C20). Could be post-Roman, bearing in mind the late context.

162 Body sherd of bowl (form 320?) fabric 20 (Site C, unstratified). Stamp Fig. 110.

163 Oxford Colour-Coat vessel (Young 1977 form C66?) (Site A topsoil). Stamp Fig. 110.

164 Sherd of East Gaulish Drag. form 18/31 with graffito 'N' on underside of base. (Site I, robber trench F63).

165 Sherd of South Gaulish Drag. form 18 with graffito cross on underside. (Topsoil, Site A).

Decorated samian and stamps (Fig. 110)

To facilitate comparison with stamped pottery from other sites, all of the stamps on the Little Oakley pottery are illustrated here at 1:1. The numbers on the illustrations are those of the vessels in the catalogues above (nos 81, 107 and 158 are TN copies; nos 47, 62, 79 and 162 are Early Roman finewares; no. 163 is Oxford Colour-Coat). One other avenue of research (not explored here) might be to record and compare comb impressions on form 108 beakers. The roller stamp of vessel 104 is illustrated in Fig. 106 (for discussion see Going 1987, 100).

Only samian with significant amounts of a design present is illustrated here, at 1:2. All examples are of Dragendorff form 37 unless otherwise noted.

Samian stamps

(Fig. 110)

SS1 CINNAMVI Central Gaulish, form 27, Cinnamus of Lezoux, Antonine (Site A topsoil).

SS2 RELINICVS F complete form 33 cup, ?Belinicus — Trajanic potter at Les Martres-de-Veyre (Site IV ditch 1, upper fill).

SS3 M?/AR/VCIVS FCentral Gaulish form 18/13 (Site C topsoil).

SS4 OIIMO South Gaulish form 27 (Site C topsoil).

SS5 IV–NVMI (topsoil 'Strachan's field', Sites III–VI)

SS6 (?) T. RV/ /.M (Rufus?) form uncertain Central or E. Gaulish (D13).

SS7 G.E./Central Gaulish form 18/31 (Site I, F30).

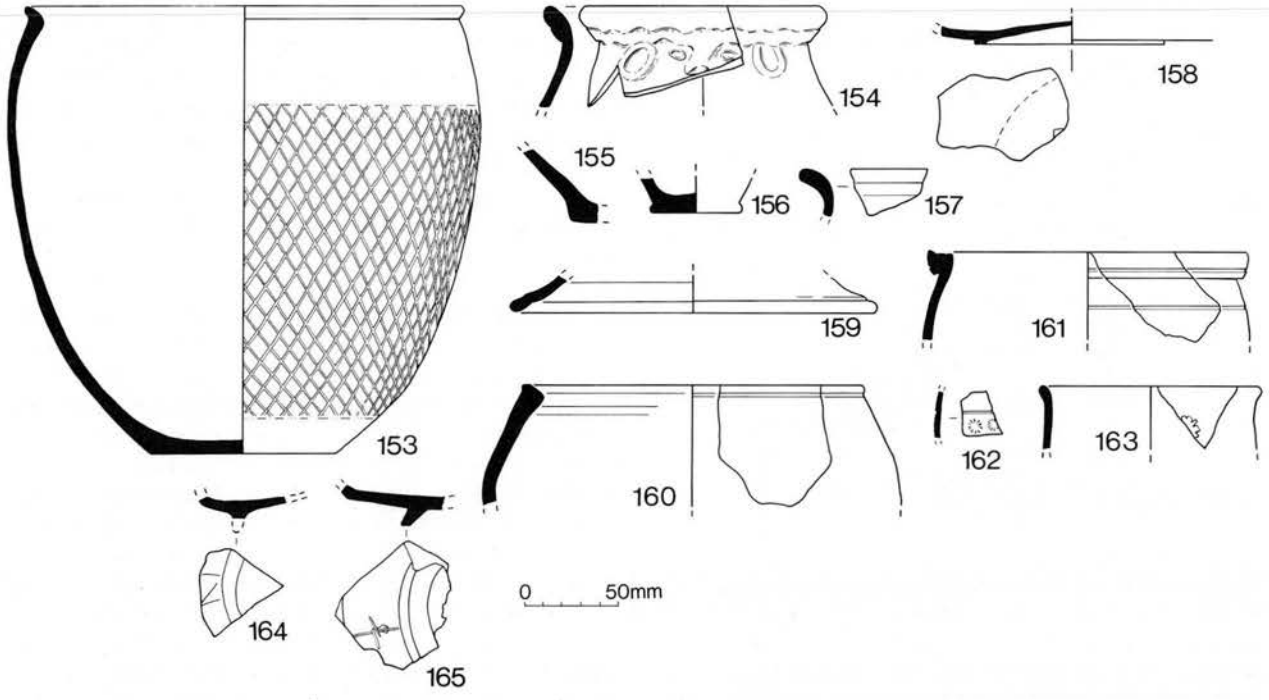


Figure 109 Miscellaneous Roman pottery, scale 1:4

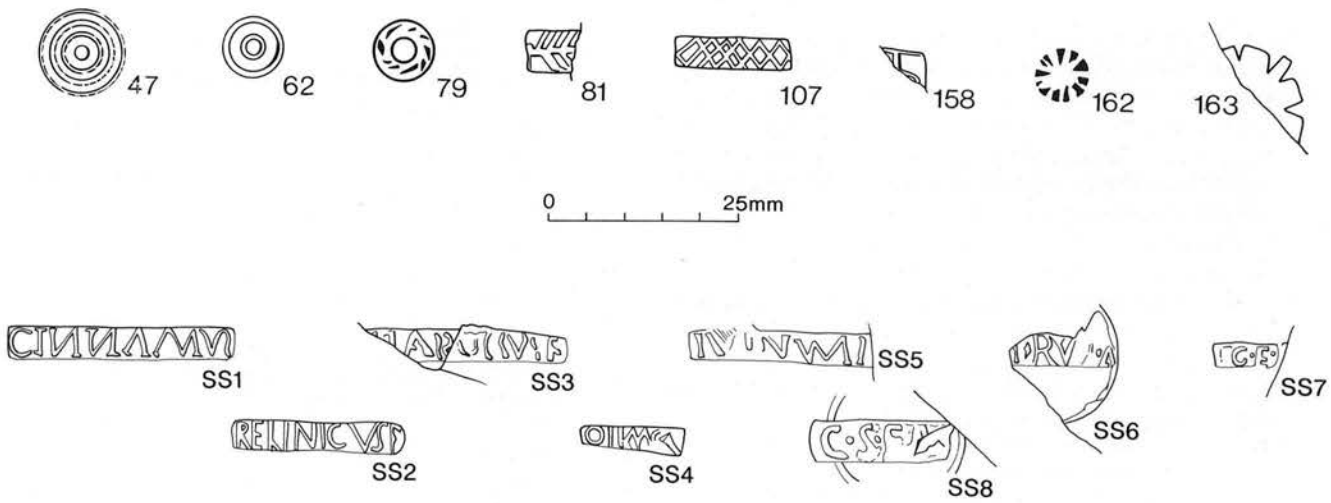


Figure 110 Stamps on Roman pottery, and samian potters' name stamps, scale 1:1

SS8 C.SEN (Senigo of La Graufesenque?) S. Gaulish form 18/31 or 18 (C23).
SS9 /F MODEST Modestus of La Graufesenque, pre-Flavian (C28).
SS10 MII0/(Mommo?) South Gaulish form 27 (Site III, phase C fill)
SS11 SA/Central Gaulish form 18/13 (Site C topsoil).
SS12 VA./South Gaulish form 27 cup (Site IV ditch 1 upper fill).
SS13 /--A Central Gaulish possibly form 33? (Site C unstratified).

Stamps SS4 and SS5 may well be illiterate, SS9 and 11 seem not to have been among the material received by COLEM and could not be drawn.

Decorated samian
(Fig. 111)

TS1 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) Mercato bowl, gladiator (TS2–6 same bowl)
TS2 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) two fragments of ovolo.
TS3 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) Mercato bowl, bull and victory.
TS4 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) Mercato bowl, running hound.
TS5 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) Mercato bowl, winged figure (?)
TS6 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) Mercato bowl, tail of second bull.
TS7 SG (Site IV ditch I layer 3) not same vessel, running hound, double impression on mould.
TS8 SG two fragments, perhaps form 29? or 37 (pit C23-3), hare in medallion, incisions indicating tufty grass, with flower.
TS9 CG (topsoil Site A), ?comic figure in medallion in vine scroll.
TS10 CG (topsoil Site IV), small rosettes in place of ovolo.
TS11 CG, the large piece came from pit C22. The smaller fragment joining it came from pit C23. Panelled decoration, hinds running left under swags with birds, alternating with panels containing birds in wreaths over geometric decoration.
TS12 CG (pit C21-1), ?animal limbs, or feet of figure, *e.g.* Venus.
TS13 CG (pit C21-1), gladiator in medallion, trident divider in ovolo. Worn mould.
TS14 CG, burnt (Site C topsoil). Vine leaf scroll.
TS15 CG, burnt black, same bowl as TS14 (pit C21-1), one of two fragments, the other unburnt.
TS16 CG (pit C21-1). Overlapping ovolo. Same bowl as TS16–17?
TS17 CG (pit C21-1). Open wreath and palmettes.
TS18 CG (pit C21-1), boar.
TS19 SG Hermet II bowl (Site I, F60).
TS20 CG (Site C topsoil), running hound.
TS21 CG (Site D topsoil), floral scroll in panels.
TS22 CG (Site IV ditch I layer 3), abraded fragment of vine scroll.
TS23 Fragment of bowl with vine-scroll of Paternus of Lezoux from Site I or IV, seen by B. Hartley but now lost (not illustrated, see above).

The graffiti on pottery

Five post-firing graffiti were found on pot sherds, and have all been illustrated and noted above. Three are the jars from pit C22 with 'X' cut near the base (Fig. 106.84–6). Another 'X' comes from the early samian base found unstratified on Site A (Fig. 109.165). These were probably non-literate ownership marks (Going 1987, 102) although a sun-symbol or other religious or apotropaic signs cannot be ruled out. One sherd (Fig. 109.164) has what appears to be 'N' — presumably part of a literate inscription. Onwership inscriptions on cooking pots may imply some kind of communal living (C. Woodfield, pers. comm.).

General discussion of Roman pottery

The extensive work that the Roman pottery report has involved provided a great deal of information which is held in the archive and summarised above. Many of the main points have already been made, but the method of description of the assemblages may have obscured some of the chronological variations; these will be outlined briefly below.

The Roman pottery divides into four main phases and the chronological distribution of the various fabrics is shown in schematic form in two tables (Table 5 — coarsewares, and Table 8 — finewares). The following discussion will be based on the data summarised in these.

There was a Belgic phase on the site, which is considered in the section dealing with prehistoric pottery, but the pottery from this phase forms an interesting contrast to that from the first Roman phase. Basically the Belgic pottery consists of several grog-tempered fabrics, shell-tempered pottery and a few imports, notable amongst which is the Dressel I amphora which once contained fine Italian wine (Sealey 1985).

The Earliest Roman phases (pre-Flavian, Phase 2(i) and Flavian to Hadrianic, Phase 2(ii)) open with a wide range of coarseware fabrics, some of which develop from the Belgic fabrics, but also including a variety of greywares. Fine wares of Period 2 include imported Gallic mortaria, South Gaulish *Terra Sigillata,* Pompeian Red Ware, a variety of Gallo-Belgic copies, but also West Stow vessels and a variety of early Colchester products, particularly flagons. In the second Roman pottery phase (Early Roman; Phase 3(i), Hadrianic/Antonine to mid 3rd century) the range of pottery fabrics is at its widest. Many of the greyware fabrics are similar to those in use in the last part of the preceding ceramic phase, with the addition of a few more. Black-burnished ware makes an appearance, as do a number of traded fine wares. One of the most noticeable is a number of Dressel 20 amphorae. About 15 vessels are represented by sherds, each of which had a capacity of about 40 litres of Baetican olive oil (P.R. Sealey pers. comm.). Two Pélichet 47 South Gaulish wine

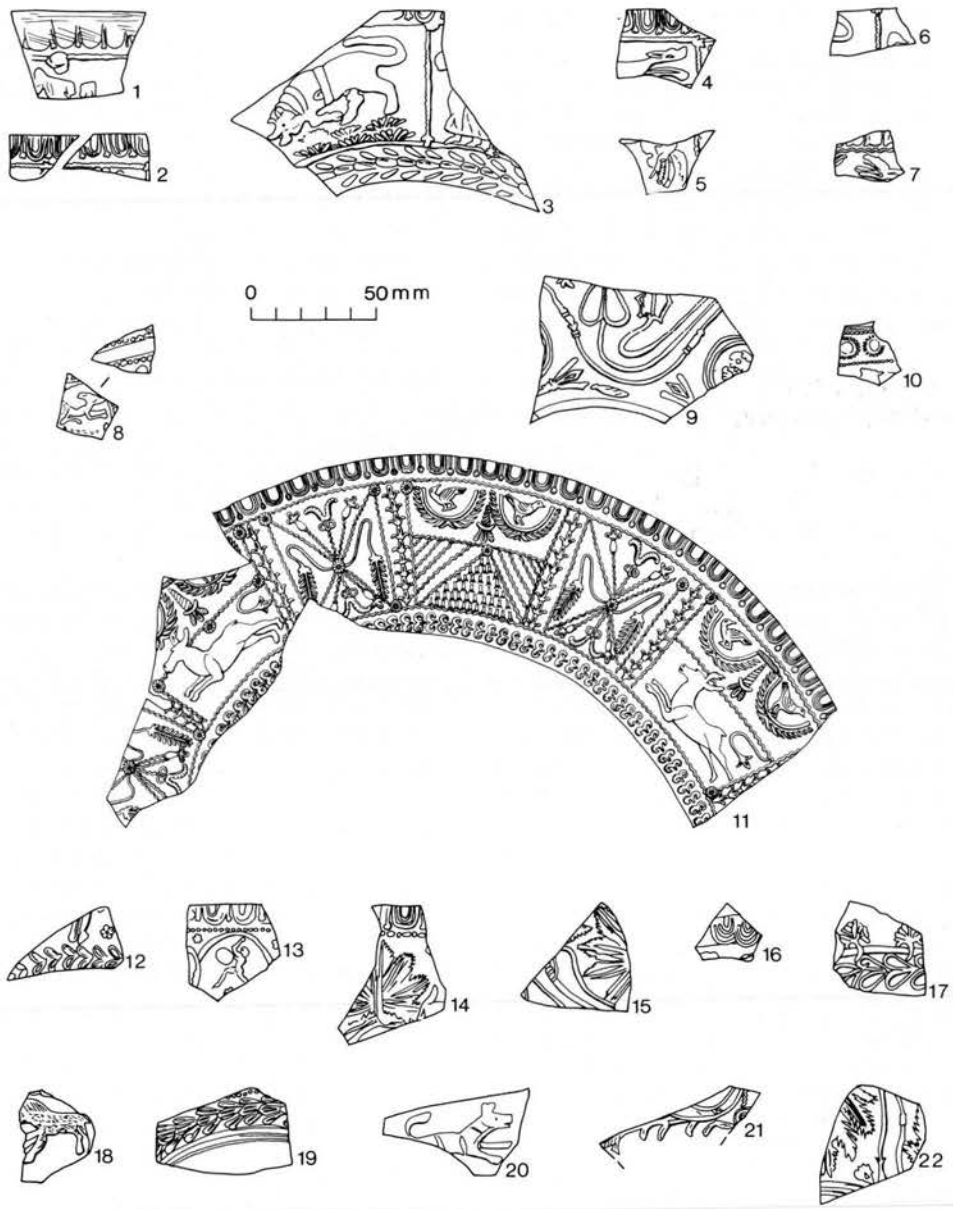


Figure 111 Decorated samian, scale 1:2

amphorae probably also belong to this period. Many flagons from Colchester and also a few from *Verulamium*/Brockley Hill are also present. The expanded factories at Colchester from the mid 2nd century were also the main source of the mortaria of this period, and also of the colour-coated vessels, mostly beakers (Rodwell 1982, 44–55). The *Terra Sigillata* of the period comes mainly from Central Gaul, with some South Gaulish fabrics, and later on from Eastern Gaul (these factory areas were ceasing production at about the end of this ceramic phase at Little Oakley). Gallo-Belgic ware and its imitations were perhaps still in use at the beginning of the period, as was the West Stow ware and probably the ?North Kent vessels and the lead-glazed pot.

The next phase (Late Roman; Phase 3(ii), mid 3d–mid 4th century) marks a clear break in the ceramic sequence. This break appears to take place about the mid 3rd century. New coarseware fabrics appear, notably fabrics 9 and 18, as well as new forms (forms 268, 305 and 'Chelmsford E5.4'). An interesting event seems to have taken place near the end of the previous phase — the large-scale production of finewares and mortaria at Colchester sharply declined at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries (Rodwell 1982, 54; Going 1987, 117). Production did continue however at some Colchester kilns (*e.g.* kilns 7, 25, 32 and 33) and since these kilns are not too distant, it is not surprising that some Colchester products do appear in small numbers in contexts of Phase 3(ii) at Little Oakley. On the whole, however, the range of fabrics on the site in this phase is reduced. There are three main greyware fabrics, and only a few imports, apart from the trickle of Colchester products. Oxford white mortaria and oxidised Hadham ware make their first appearance, to become more important later on. *Terra Sigillata* was becoming scarcer and a sherd in pit C23 had been rivetted. This seems to be a general trend in the area, and one need not imply from the pottery evidence that the inhabitants of the villa had necessarily become paupers (C.J. Going, pers. comm.; and Going 1987, 113, phase 5).

In the Latest Roman phase (mid to late 4th century) there is also a clear break in the ceramic supply, so much so that this pottery is discussed here in a separate section.

Most of the coarse wares are indeed very coarse (LRSHT, flint-tempered, grass-tempered, and fabric 15 etc.), while fabric 18 and probably 9 continued. Fine wares also occur, but surprisingly from distant sources (Oxford and Nene Valley (mortaria and colour-coated), Hadham and possibly Argonne). The significance of these changes in this latest period is discussed elsewhere.

Chris Going (1987, 106–19) has considered in detail the fluctuations of pottery supply to Chelmsford, based on large reliably dated groups. As yet no comparable report has emerged from current research at Colchester, but when it does the information should complement that from sites around it, of which Little Oakley is one. Only then will it be profitable to discuss in more detail the variations seen here.

One point about Roman trade patterns must be made however. At first sight the continental material may suggest that the Little Oakley villa had very widespread contacts. This is of course a fallacy. Little Oakley was almost certainly drawing most of its pottery supply from the nearest urban or market centre, almost certainly Colchester. The imports present at Little Oakley simply reflect what was available in Colchester. The Dressel 20 and Pélichet 47 amphorae probably came through the Mediterranean to Marseille, up the Rhone and thence via the Rhine to the east coast port (Peacock 1978, fig. 44). South Gaulish *Terra Sigillata* may have travelled by the same route or northwards and out of the Seine river system and along the Channel coast (Marsh 1981). One puzzling feature is that Rhenish wares are apparently very uncommon (or undetectable) at Little Oakley, despite a search. Rhenish ware was coming into Colchester (R. Symonds pers. comm.) but it may be conjectured that locally made products were considered by our villa inhabitants to be just as good as, and cheaper than, the imported vessels, also necessarily acquired in Colchester, where the local product would be on sale beside the imports.

Post-Roman pottery

Early Saxon pottery

Some 540 sherds of Early Saxon pottery were recognised, 80% of it coming from the upper fills of the two Saxon pits on Site IV. The remainder came from various other features and layers over all parts of the site, indicating that activity in this period was apparently fairly widespread. The pottery was usually fairly distinctive, but some problems were experienced distinguishing some of this material in the form of single small and formless abraded sherds from some prehistoric sherds in similar condition. This problem is not unique to Little Oakley (*e.g.* Barton 1962, 95; Jones 1980, 85), and can only be resolved when there is enough material available for secure evaluation.

The pottery was quantified by fabric and form within individual layers where possible. This process revealed apparent relationships between fabric and context and form and context, but the sample sizes were small. These differences seem likely to have had some chronological significance.

Most of the Saxon pottery came from the Farrands sites, and processing of that from the 1975–8 excavations was greatly helped by the generous loan of this material by R.H. Farrands in 1978. Some of this material had previously been noted in print by Myres (1969, 104, fig. 36; and 1977, 226, fig. 172) and Farrands (1958, 44; and 1976). Four pots were given to COLEM in 1975 (Acc. No. 173.1975). Unlike the methodology used to study the prehistoric and Roman pottery, the Farrands Saxon pottery has been fully quantified.

The material is considered below in five groups:

1 The grass-tempered pottery (fabric 14).
2 The pottery from pit 2, Site IV.
3 The pottery from pit 3, Site IV.
4 The pottery from Site III.
5 Pottery from other parts of the site.

More detail about individual assemblages will be found in the excavation archive.

The fabrics

Unless otherwise noted in the text all vessels were hand-made and usually reduced and soft- or medium-hard fired. Surfaces were generally smoothed.

Fabric 4: A small number of sherds in Period 5 contexts were in a fine sandy reduced fabric rather like fabric 4. Few of these were of identifiable forms, but it seems some were Saxon (23 sherds).

Fabric 14: Grass-tempered pottery, fine fabrics, slightly micaceous, with moderate to copious fine (*c.* 3mm long) vegetable temper ('grass' leaves and seed husks) (15 sherds).

Fabric 22: Sandy with some grog and sparse fine vegetable temper, micaceous (365 sherds).

Fabric 23: Very fine shell temper sometimes with fine grog, slightly micaceous (59 sherds)

Fabric 24: Vegetable tempered with some sand, with a soapy feel, slightly micaceous: see fabric 14 (21 sherds).

Fabric 25: Similar to 22 but with mica and copious coarse sand which gives a speckly appearance, occasional rounded grit (27 sherds).

This fabric is similar to Mucking fabric 6 (J. Lee, pers. comm.) though Hamerow (1993, 28 and fn. 7 on p. 58) ignores Fabric 6 in her report.

Fabric 26: Very fine, little visible temper, soapy feel, little or no mica (33 sherds).

All of these fabrics were probably local products, the possible exceptions being fabrics 22 and 25 which have large plates of mica not seen by the writer in any of the local clay sources examined. The fine vegetable temper in fabrics 14 and 24 is in fact probably dung,[37] the shell in fabric 23 is probably crushed, sifted Red Crag, though this cannot easily be proven.

The forms

(Fig. 113)

In few cases was a complete profile recovered, but the majority of the identifiable sherds seem to have come from one of seven main forms. The number of forms has been kept to a minimum deliberately. Form 7, for example, includes rims of several different profiles, but it was not thought desirable to subdivide them any further.

Form 1 Biconical bowls with sharp carination, often decorated (*e.g.* facetted, Fig. 116.54). Base of uncertain form.

Form 2 Carinated bowls with rounded base. Forms 1 and 2 would fall into Wickenden's (1982, 13) type B50.

Form 3 Bowls with rounded shoulders and rounded bases. Form 4 Squat small globular jars, rounded or flat bases.

Form 5 Similar jars with pronounced neck and more prominent shoulder.

Form 6 Taller jars of small diameter with tall necks.

Form 7 Large rounded jars; five rim forms present: a) upright thickened, prominent shoulder; b) and c) upright rim, shallow

shoulder; d) as (c) but different angle of shoulder; e) upright rim, prominent shoulder.
Although relatively common, few sherds were definitely assignable to a subdivision of this form.

In most cases bases could not be assigned to a form. All of the decorated sherds have been drawn, while a large selection of the plain sherds has been drawn to illustrate the range of forms (Figs 112–16). The only decorated sherds not illustrated were a couple of dozen small body sherds with multiple horizontal incised lines above a carination. All were probably from bowls; few were worth drawing.

Manufacture and decoration

All the vessels were hand-made and the surfaces in the majority of cases were well finished; in a number of cases they were also burnished. The vessels were mostly reduced, though some have oxidised patches on the exterior, probably due to bonfire firing. Most of the vessels were plain, while less than 3% were decorated, with horizontal lines on and above the shoulder and facetting on the carination. A few sherds were of rusticated large jars of uncertain form. Three sherds had 'schlikung' (a gritted slip to produce a rough-cast effect, noted on both sides of the North Sea, Hamerow (1993, 35) calls this 'coarse-slipping'). Three sherds were stamped, the stamps forming parts of a linear decorative scheme.

Lady Teresa Briscoe has examined drawings of these stamps and compared them with the Archive of Anglo-Saxon pottery stamps. The stamps fall into her (1984) groups A4ai (pot 5), A4aii (pot 55), and A5a (pot 56). These are among the most common types and thus difficult to assign to a specific source. Probably, however, the simple dies used were locally made and used for a limited number of pots. The stamp of pot 56 is unusually small however, and has only six segments, which is atypical. The cross-shapes and rosettes probably had a solar symbolism, and may even have had some protective value. (I am grateful to Lady Briscoe for her comments on these stamps which are incorporated here.)

Function of the vessels

The function of this pottery is problematic. Both plain and 'decorated' vessels occur in association, the latter being in the minority (although over-represented in the illustrated pottery here). Over half of the identifiable sherds came from vessels of form 7, and (since sherds of bowl forms 1–3 are more recognisable) the proportion of this form must have originally been higher. Other jars were less common.

Some form 7 jars had sooted exteriors and seem likely to have been cooking-pots. They occur principally in the sandy fabric 22 which would tend to be more refractory. Some vessels were however in grass-tempered or shell-tempered ware, and it is not known whether these had the same use as those in fabric 22. No vessels had the white deposit found in some of the Roman greyware jars. These capacious vessels with their wide mouths and rounded bodies would however make very useful cooking pots.

The original function of the bowl forms 1–3 is less easy to determine. None has sooting or a 'char' deposit, and the careful surface finish of some is quite unlike that which sufficed for the jars of form 7. Probably these vessels were not used for cooking. They occur in domestic contexts, *e.g.* at Heybridge (Wickenden 1982) and Mucking (Hamerow 1993), but also as accessory vessels in graves. While those from cremation cemeteries such as those in East Anglia (*e.g.* St Johns, Cambridge) are not particularly informative, those placed in early 5th century inhumations in the Thames Valley as in Mucking grave 989 (Evison 1981, fig. 4) and Mitcham (Myres 1975) are more suggestive. It may be suspected that, however attractive those responsible for the burial thought the pot, it was unlikely to have been placed in the grave in its own right, but as a container, and it may be suggested that it continued in death its function in life. An obvious conclusion is that these vessels contained food or drink. Like the Roman vessels called 'beakers' (above) these bowls do not seem to be a sensible shape for drinking from, and it is probable that they were for food. They could have been for food storage in small quantities, but it is by no means inconceivable that they were for eating from. Unlike the Roman pottery 'dinner service' discussed above, Saxon pottery assemblages generally lack any vessels which appear to be plates or bowls, but some types of food must have been eaten from such receptacles. While wooden bowls themselves are not found in Early Saxon contexts (but *cf.* those from York, MacGregor 1982, 145–6, fig. 75), the copper alloy binding strips which were sometimes used to repair them have often been found in Anglo-Saxon graves, as at Mucking (unpublished) and Holywell Row (Lethbridge 1931, fig. 13.E and F). These are rarely found in Roman contexts (but see Crummy 1983b, 138 fig. 204 No. 4655; and Wedlake 1982, 207 fig. 86.23).

It may be that closed bowls of forms 1–3 were used both to serve food and to eat from. This would explain their small size, their form and the careful surface finish inside and out. The bowls would be especially suitable for serving soups or stews. The closed neck could be to prevent spillage if the food was being served out in one place, such as from a communal cauldron, and then carried to another.

The assemblages

Grass-tempered pottery in Period 4 contexts

This material was initially treated with some scepticism (since there is a little potentially prehistoric pottery which could be confused with it) but the quantity and associations suggest very strongly that the bulk of the material is late in date. In particular, it often came from contexts which had very little redeposited prehistoric pottery (such as Period 4 contexts on Site I and to a lesser extent Site A).

All of the material was from reduced hand-made vessels, but most of it was in the form of fairly small, often abraded sherds, since the fabric was fairly soft and friable. A number of both thick and thin-walled vessels were represented. The illustration (Fig. 112) includes all the pieces that could be drawn. No context contained more than a handful of sherds, and most contained single pieces. It should be noted that grass-tempered pottery constitutes about 3% of the total assemblage of Anglo-Saxon pottery from Little Oakley.

Grass-tempered pottery was not particularly common in the fills of the Site IV Early Saxon pits (discussed below) but was the predominant post-Roman fabric in a number of other contexts, principally Period 4 and later contexts on Sites I and A (contexts F2, F3, F7, F18 and

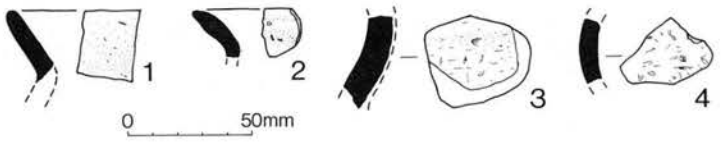


Figure 112 Grass-tempered sherds from Period 4 contexts, scale 1:3

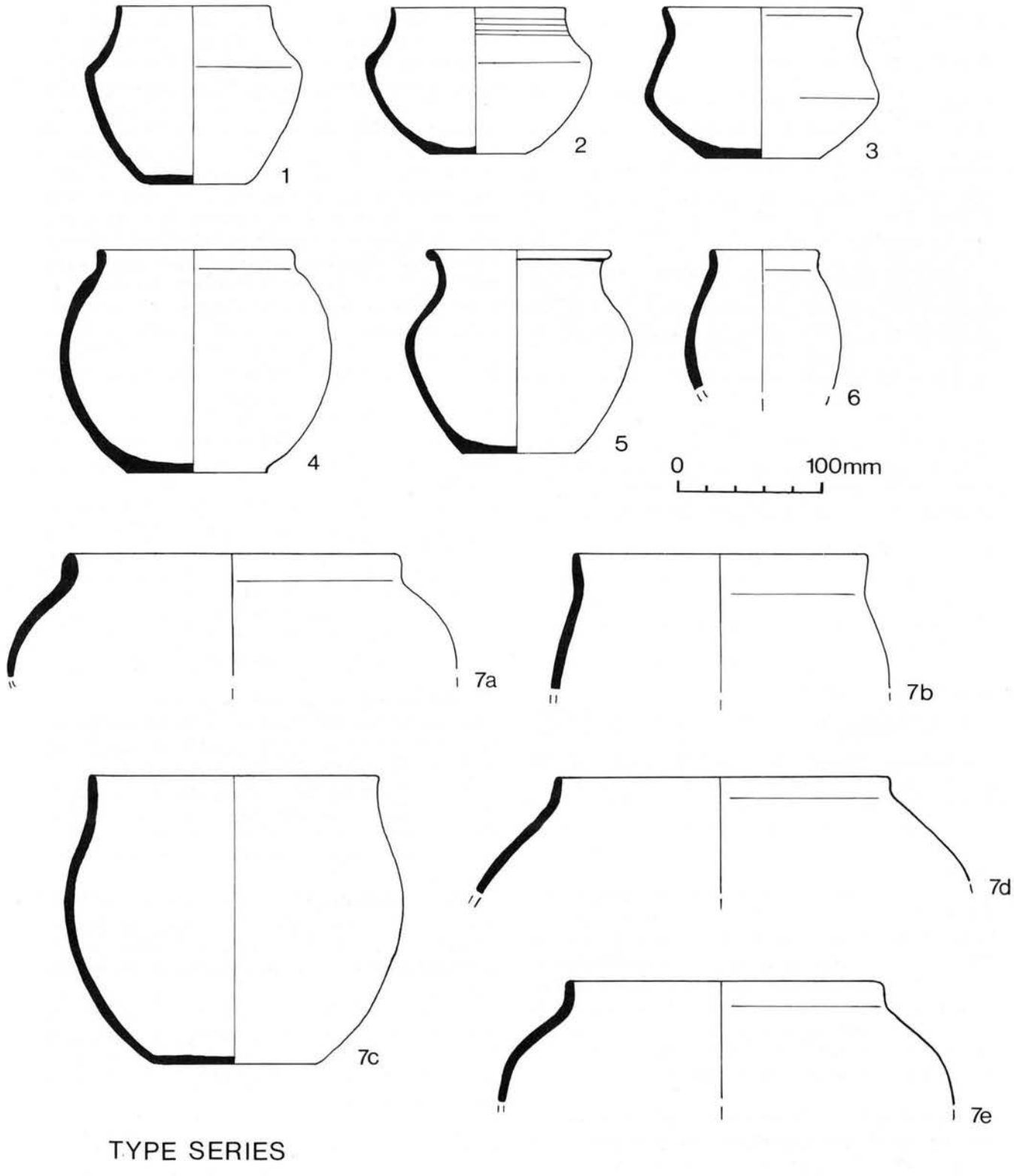


Figure 113 Early Saxon pottery type series, scale 1:4

F20 (Period 4) and F50 (Period 5); it was found in post-hole K22 on Site II, and also A3, A21, C38 and C41 (Period 4) and A7 and C15 (Period 6)). The fabric was also found in the Saxon silt (context P2) on Site III, but was not common there.

The main problem with the material concerns the dating, which is discussed below.

Illustrated grass-tempered pottery
(Fig. 112)
Various grass-tempered sherds from Period 4 and 5 contexts.

1 Rim, exact diameter uncertain (Site I, robber trench F63).
2 Rim, burnished inside and outside, exact angle uncertain (Site I, Period 4 pit fill F20).
3 Body sherd, burnished outside, spalled interior (Period 4 pit A21).
4 Body sherd, burnished inside (Site I, fill of inhumation grave F50).

The pottery from Saxon pit 2 Site IV

This feature contained a considerable quantity of Saxon pottery, most of it from the upper fill (layer 2). The fill also contained a quantity of a variety of residual sherds, some derived from pit 1 which contained no Saxon pottery.

The pottery is tabulated first by fabric (Table 11), then by form (Table 12). Most of the larger sherds assignable to form came from the upper fill; those from the lower fill were smaller and generally shapeless, but were of fabrics and forms present in the upper fill, and this material is treated below as a single pit group.

	Layer							
	2	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*Total*
Fabric 4	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	6
Fabric 22	84	16	–	–	3	–	–	103
Fabric 23	85	–	–	1	1	–	–	87
Fabric 24	7	1	1	–	–	2	–	11
Fabric 25	62	3	–	–	–	–	–	65
Fabric 26	18	–	–	–	–	–	–	18
Other*	5	1	–	–	–	–	–	6
								296

(* = items in COLEM, not at present available for study; probably they were fabric 25)

Table 11 Fabrics of pottery in Saxon pit 2 (sherd count)

	Pit 2	*Pit 3*
Form 1	–	13%
Form 2	20%	17%
Form 3	5%	17%
Form 4	5%	–
Form 5	10%	–
Form 6	2%	–
Form 7	50%	49%

(In both pits, a further 10% of vessels were unidentifiable sherds, mostly from bowls of forms 1–3).

Table 12 Comparison of vessel forms in Saxon pits 2 and 3

It can be seen that the top two fills of this pit contained the majority of the sherds. It was notable that layers 2–4 also contained most of the bone as well as copious redeposited pottery (prehistoric to Late Roman). The most common fabrics were 22, 23 and 25 (note that grass-tempered pottery is present in the lower fills, but proportionally it is uncommon in the upper fill).

Figure 113 shows a type series of the main vessel forms present in the Saxon pot assemblages from Farrands' Sites III and IV. Table 12 tabulates and compares the forms present in pits 2 and 3 where determinable from rims and body sherds. These are represented as percentages to facilitate comparison, but no statistical validity is claimed for the small assemblages studied.

These results are based on a relatively small sample, mainly from the upper fills of both features. It can be seen, however, that the most common forms were the large round bodied jars (overall average 62% — the bowl forms 1–3 accounting for 38%), but beyond that the two assemblages differ. Whether this is solely due to the small sample size, or whether these pits contained sherds of pots of different functions or dates cannot be determined.

The relationship between form and fabric is worth exploring briefly. In pit 2 fine bowls of forms 1–3 were made of fabrics 22 and 23, with a few of fabric 25. Vessels of forms 4–6 were only of fabrics 22 and 23, vessels of form 7 were mostly made of fabrics 22 and 23, with a few of fabric 25. Too few sherds of fabrics 24 and 26 were found to be able to place much reliance on the vessel forms made in them.

Since they were the commonest vessels recognisable, the form 7 jars were subdivided into a number of groups 7A–7E), but the numbers in each group were so small that no pattern could be detected. Forms 7D and 7B were most common. Many sherds could however be assigned only to form 7 as they were so small.

Pit 2 selected sherds (Fig. 114)

5 Sherd of part of a form 1/2 bowl. Light grey fabric 23 decorated with stamps (drawn at 2:3) and curvilinear decoration (*cf.* Myres 1969, 226, fig. 172 no. 1467; Farrands 1976, fig. 4d) (layer 2).
6 Portion of the carination of a form 1 bowl with vertical incised lines forming panelled decoration (*cf.* Wickenden 1982, 18, fig. 7.38, group 4; Jones and Jones 1975, fig. 53.10). Fabric 25 (layer 2).
7 Rim sherd, oxidised fabric 26, with hole drilled after firing, repair? (Layer 2).
8 Rusticated sherd, fabric 25 (layer 2).
9 Uncertain form (?2), fabric 25 (layer 2).
10 Uncertain form (?6), fabric 25 (layer 2).
11 Horizontal lug, fabric 23 (layer 2).
12 Form 2 fabric 22, incised lines above carination (*cf.* Wickenden 1982, 18, group 4) (layer 2).
13 Form 4, fabric 22 (layer 2).
14 Form uncertain, fabric 22 (layer 2).
15 Two sherds with 'schlikung' decoration, fabric 23 and 25 (not illustrated) (layer 2).

Nos 16–21 were apparently in the batch of pottery previously sent to Colchester Museum and cannot now be located and are therefore unavailable for fabric comparison. Most seem from Farrands' description (1976) to have been fabric 25. Drawings are by R.H. Farrands.

16 Form 2 'dark sand gritted ware' (Farrands 1976, fig. 3b) (layer 2).
17 Form 4 'dark grey gritted ware' (Farrands 1976, fig. 3c) (layer 3).
18 Form 5 'dark grey gritted ware' (Farrands 1976, fig. 3e) (layer 2).
19 Form 7 'dark grey sand gritted ware' (Farrands 1976, fig. 3g) (layer 2).
20 Form 7 'dark brown, burnished surface' (Farrands 1976, fig. 3h) (layer 2).
21 Form 7, fabric 23 (Farrands 1976, fig. 3i) (layer 2).
22 Form 7, oxidised fabric 23, burnished surfaces (layer 1).
23 Form 7, fabric 22, roughly wiped surfaces (layer 2).
24 Form 5(?), fabric 23, burnished inside (layer 2).

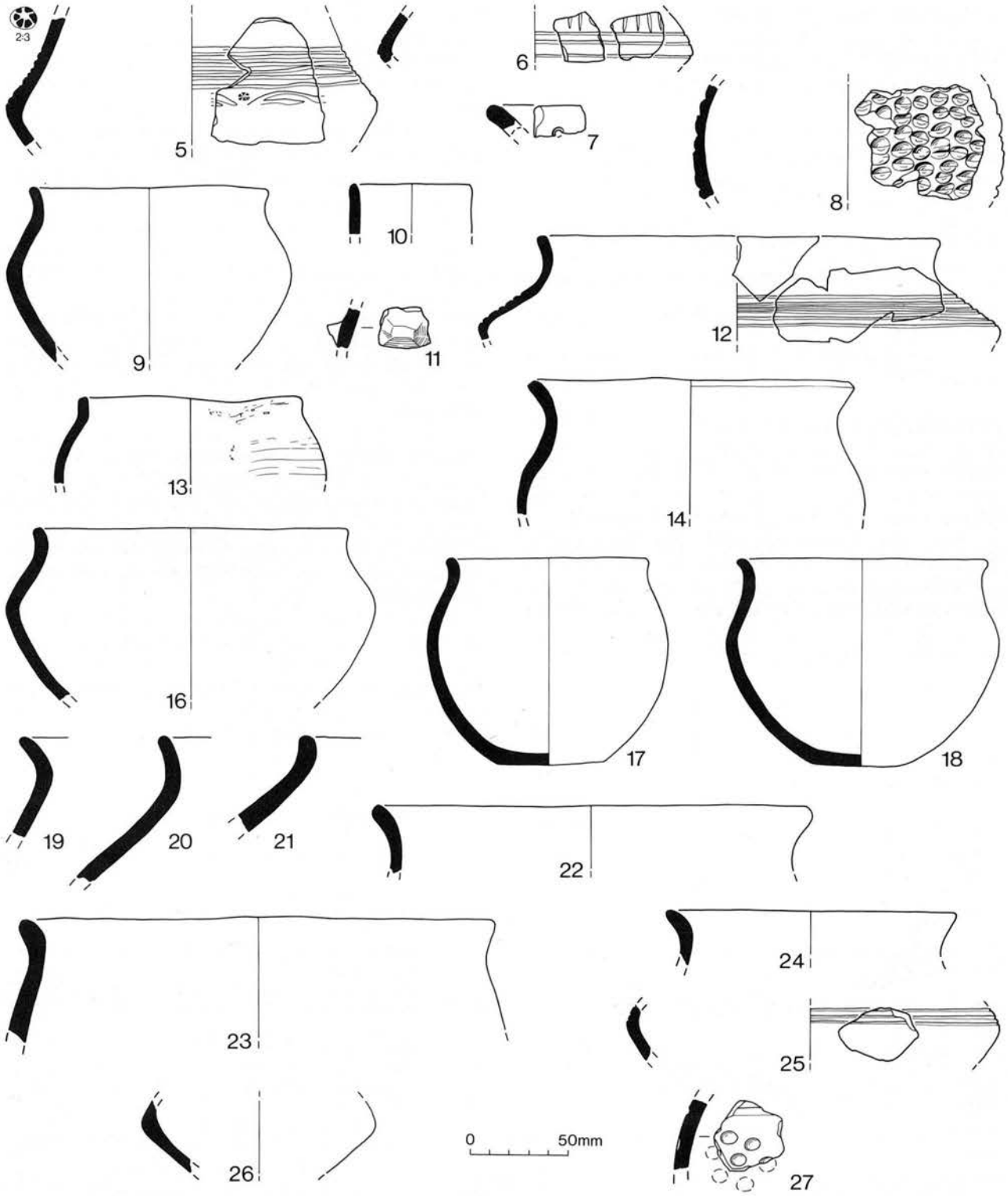


Figure 114 Early Saxon pottery pit 2, Site IV, scale 1:3

25 Form 1 or 2, fabric 23 burnished surfaces (layer 2).
26 Form 2, fabric 23, burnished surfaces (layer 2).
27 Sherd of globular jar with rounded shoulder and 'rosette' of shallow impressed dots, fabric 23 oxidised (topsoil over pit 2).

The pottery from Saxon pit 3 Site IV

Pit 3 contained a considerable quantity of Saxon pottery (Table 13), most of it from the upper fill (layer 2). The fill also contains a quantity of redeposited prehistoric and Roman pottery, nearly all of it from layer 2; again the larger Saxon sherds came only from this layer.

It can be seen from Table 13 that most of this pottery came from the top two fills of the pit. If the proportions are compared with those from pit 2 it can be seen that fabric 22 is again most common followed by 25, but fabric 23 is less common, while fabric 24 is more common.

The sample is smaller than that in pit 2 but the relationship between fabric and form is interesting. The bowl forms 1–3 are in a variety of fabrics, principally fabric 22. No vessels of forms 4–6 occurred, the vessels of form 7 were mostly of fabric 22, with a few of 23.

	Layer								
	2	*5*	*7*	*8*	*9–10*	*11*	*12–17*	*18*	*Total*
Fabric 4	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Fabric 22	70	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	72
Fabric 23	8	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	13
Fabric 24	14	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	15
Fabric 25	17	1	1	–	1	–	–	–	20
Fabric 26	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
Other*	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2
									127

(* = complete vessels in COLEM now unavailable for examination)

Table 13 Pottery in Saxon pit 3 (sherd count)

Pit 3 selected sherds
(Fig. 115)

28 Complete vessel from base of pit (Farrands 1976, fig. 3f). This pot and nos 29–32 are not available for examination. (Layers 17–18).
29 Complete pot (Farrands 1976, fig. 3a) (layer 2).
30 Form 2 (Farrands 1976, fig. 4a) (layer 2).
31 Biconical bowl form 1 or 2 surfaces burnished with dimples on shoulder fabric 23/25 (Farrands 1976, fig. 3d) (layer 11).
32 Round shouldered vessel with incised decoration, oxidised sandy fabric, could be prehistoric (Farrands 1976, fig. 4b) (layer 11).
33 Rusticated sherd, oxidised fabric 22 (layer 2).
34 Sherd with 'schlikung' decoration, fabric 22 (not illustrated) (layer 2).
35 Form 1, fabric 22, burnished surfaces (layer 2).
36 Form 3(?), fabric 22, burnished exterior (layer 11).
37 Form 1, fabric 25, burnished surfaces (layer 2).
38 Form 7, fabric 22, oxidised roughly made (layer 2).
39 Form 7, fabric 22, oxidised roughly made (not the same pot) (layer 2).
40 Form 5, fabric 22, burnished exterior (layer 2).
41 Small bowl or jar with inturned simple rim, sandy fabric like fabric 4 or 22. Prehistoric or Saxon (layer 2).

The Saxon pottery from Site III

103 sherds of Early Pottery were found on Site III, all from squares B2 and B3.

Fabric 4 6 sherds
Fabric 22 28
Fabric 23 44
Fabric 24 8
Fabric 25 17
Fabric 26 –

The material came from two groups of deposits, the material over the 'top septaria layer' (layer 2) and from the oven. The pottery from the former group was mostly fairly small, plain shapeless fragments.

Illustrated sherds
(Fig. 116)

42 Form 5, fabric 25, burnished exterior (layer 2).
43 Form 3(?), fabric 25, grey burnished exterior (layer 2).
44 Form 3, fabric 22, burnished inside and outside (layer 2).
45 Form 1, fabric 22, burnished inside and outside (layer 2).
46 Corrugated jar sherd, fabric 23, burnished outside (layer 2).
47 Form 2, fabric 23, burnished outside (layer 2).
48 Body sherd, fabric 22, burnished inside and outside, shallow burnished lines (layer 2).
49 Very large jar oxidised, fabric 25 or sand-tempered ware, possibly prehistoric (layer 2).
50 Small body sherd with 'schlikung' (not illustrated) (layer 2).
51 Rusticated sherd, fabric 22 (not illustrated) (layer 2).
52 Sherd of bowl of form 1 with facetted carination, fabric 23 (Saxon oven fill).
53 Sherd (of bowl form 1?) with vertical boss with impressed dimples, fabric 23 (Saxon oven fill).

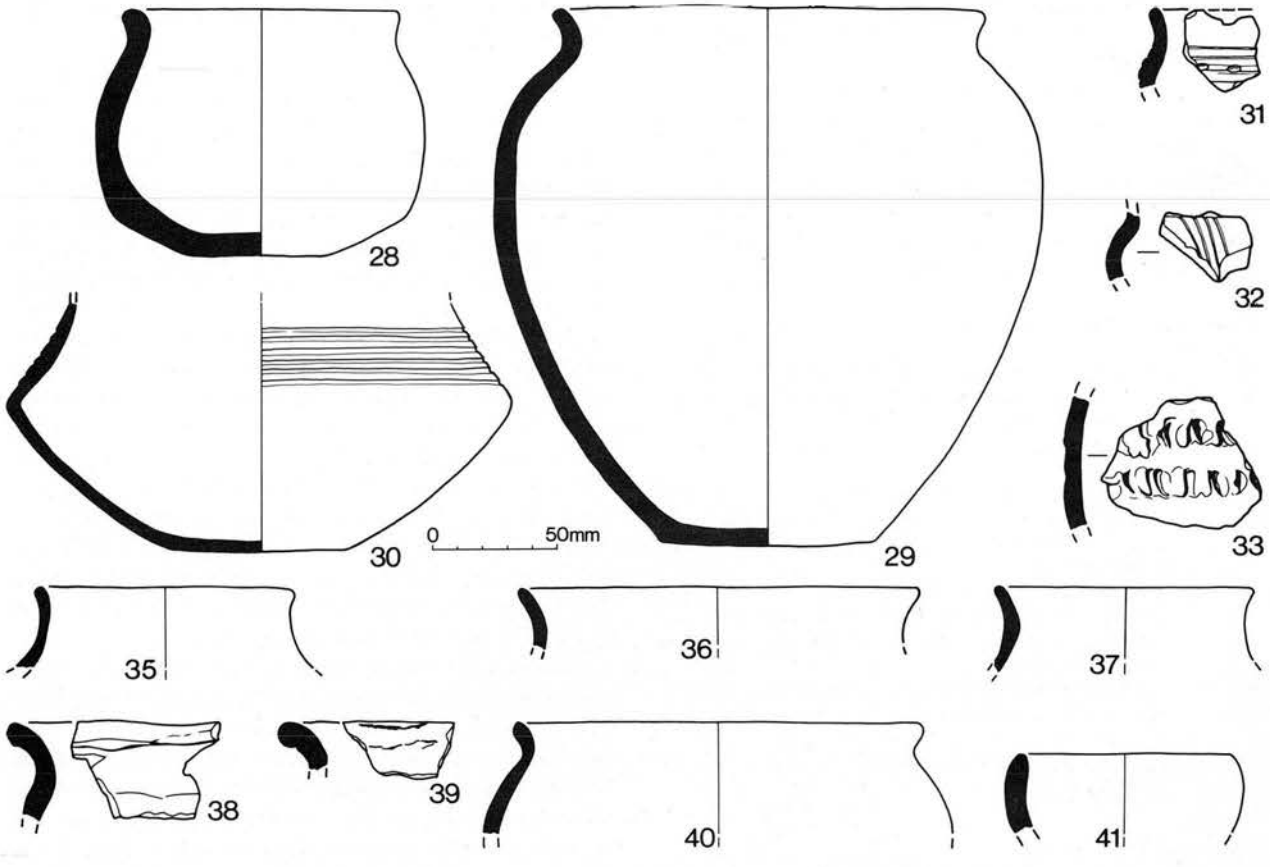


Figure 115 Early Saxon pottery pit 3, Site IV, scale 1:3

No. 53 joins another sherd from a group marked 'B3' but not otherwise provenanced. These sherds may also have been from the oven. The sherds have been illustrated here together. The vessel was form 1, almost certainly with a pedestal base, the bosses are similar to those of the early forms of bossed vessel discussed by Evison and Myres (1969).

The pottery from the oven was an interesting small group containing small unburnt sherds of fabrics 4, 22, 24 (2) with a few more, slightly larger, sherds of fabric 25. The bulk of the assemblage consisted of 22 sherds of fabric 23. One of these was a facetted carination (Fig. 116.52), another was of a bossed carinated bowl (Fig. 116.53) while the rim of a third bowl (form 3) was found. The other identified sherd was a rim of form 7A jar. The identifiable forms seem to be (early) 5th century (see below).

Other Saxon pottery

Apart from the large groups noted above, several other contexts noted below produced small groups of Anglo-Saxon pottery; most of it was shapeless body sherds, but a few decorated sherds described below were also found.

The 1975–8 excavations: The grass-tempered pottery from this part of the site has been noted above. It remains to list the Saxon pottery from the other features: none was found in the topsoil.

Three contexts, Period 4 pit A21, D3 and Period 6/7 sheep burial C20, produced hand-made sandy sherds of a fabric unlike that found in prehistoric contexts, and these may have been post-Roman. Also a sherd of fabric 22 was found in Period 4 rubble spread A3 and one of fabric 24 in D15. Two Saxon sherds (fabrics 22 and 26) in D9 may be intrusive.

If it were not for the grass-tempered pottery in the rubble spreads, it would be concluded from the 1975–8 excavations taken alone that post-Roman occupation in the area was sparse. The quantities of sherds produced by this latter occupation were apparently considerably smaller than that produced in the Roman period.

The Farrands excavations: Saxon sherds were found in the topsoil over section 10 on Site IV (Farrands 1975, fig. 4c) as well as a sherd from the topsoil 'near Foulton Hall' (Fig. 116.57). This is an unusual fabric and may be prehistoric. A facetted-carination sherd (Fig. 116.54) came from the topsoil over Site II. Two stamped sherds (Fig. 116.56) have no provenance. Ditch 6 on Site IV produced five body sherds of Saxon pottery (2 × fabric 22, 1 × fabric 24, 2 × fabric 25). Note that the Farrands' sites produced all of the decorated Saxon pottery from Little Oakley.

Illustrated miscellaneous Saxon sherds
(Fig. 116)

54 Facetted carination, fabric 23 (Site II, topsoil).

55 Sherd of bowl with row of cruciform stamps above horizontal lines, fabric 22 (Site IV, topsoil).

56 Small stamped sherd of fabric 25 (Farrands' site, no provenance).

57 Decorated and burnished jar sherd in unusual fabric with slight cordons decorated with impressed dots and shallow tooled decoration. Fabric 23? (Marked 'Topsoil Foulton Hall'). Possibly prehistoric.

58 Body sherd of globular jar with tooled decoration, sandy fabric, probably prehistoric (Site IV, pit 2; *cf.* no. 32).

59 Rim, fabric 23, Early Saxon or Middle Saxon (Site IV, Saxon-Norman pit 4).

60 Sherd of bowl with impressed dots, fabric 23 (Site IV, pit 4).

61 Horizontal lug from globular pot (diam. 130mm); orientation and inclination uncertain. Reduced sandy fabric, could be Saxon (*cf.* fabric 22), smoothed surface. (Site I, trench F, unstratified).

Dating and discussion

The dating of the grass-tempered pottery in the Period 4 rubble spreads will be deferred until the larger assemblages from Site IV have been discussed. It should firstly be emphasised that the latter are only two 'pit groups' from what is clearly a much more extensive settlement. Furthermore, these are not primary deposits of rubbish, but material which collected, perhaps over a period of time, in the hollows at the top of the large pits. These hollows could have acted as traps for artefacts lying on the ground surface, and perhaps should be expected to yield a cross-section of this material. It is thus of some interest that, though there are some similarities, the assemblages in the tops of the two adjacent pits do differ. It is possible that this could be due to some chronological difference.

Independent dating evidence is not present at Little Oakley, and it is the pottery itself which must date the occupation on the site. There are difficulties however. The first point which needs making is that the bulk of the material comes from forms which are essentially undatable, such as the jars of form 7. The main source of evidence is the series of round-based carinated bowls forms 1–3, which form only 38% of the total assemblage.

Some of these bowls are similar to those discussed by Wickenden (1982, 18–20) which appear to begin in the early 5th century. The facetted carinations (Fig. 114.5–116.52 & 54) are particularly obvious pointers to a potentially early date for the Little Oakley material. Pit 2 contains a number of sherds of several different bowls of these '5th century' types (as at Heybridge) and it seems quite likely that this pottery is indeed of this date. Pit 3 contained carinated bowls with lines above the shoulder (Fig. 115.30, 45, 48) and another facetted carinated bowl (Fig. 115.31). Again a 5th century date is probably apposite, perhaps earlier than pit 2. The small facetted sherd (Fig. 116.52) from the oven on Site III may also date the oven to the same period. The bossed vessel no. 53 is probably of a similar date (Evison and Myres 1969, 158–60, fig. 2.1, Gr 33).

Conversely there is little in any of these groups to suggest a later date. Stamped sherds are uncommon, and while form 6 jars occur in 7th century contexts, similar tall-necked vessels occur in earlier contexts (*e.g.* Wickenden 1982, fig. 6.22–3). The apparent 6th century parallel for vessel 31 (Evison and Myres 1969, fig. 4.1) may be illusory. It is therefore suggested that the 5th century date originally proposed by Myres (1969, 226), on the basis of a single sherd, is in fact the date of these pits and the material on Site III. It remains to decide where in the 5th century to place this material. As noted above no pedestal bases were found, so it cannot be decided if bowls of the 'Mitcham type' (Myres 1975) were present here (*cf.* Barton 1962, fig. V.2; Myres 1968, fig. 5.5–6). The round-based variant (Wickenden 1982, 18–20, group 5) occurs at Mucking in what appears to be an early 5th century female grave (989; Evison 1981, 138–9 figs 4–5).[38] Vessels like no. 6 occur at Great Chesterford in contexts dated by both Myres and Evison to the early 5th century (Evison and Myres 1969, 164 and 169, fig. 3.1).

The end of the use of these carinated bowl forms seems to be around the middle of the 5th century but could be later (Wickenden 1982, 20). This dating will need checking when new evidence becomes available[39] although the final publication of the large assemblages spanning the 5th to 7th centuries from Mucking has provided some information (Hamerow 1993). This largely unpublished material will clearly extend our knowledge of Saxon pottery, in southern Essex at least.

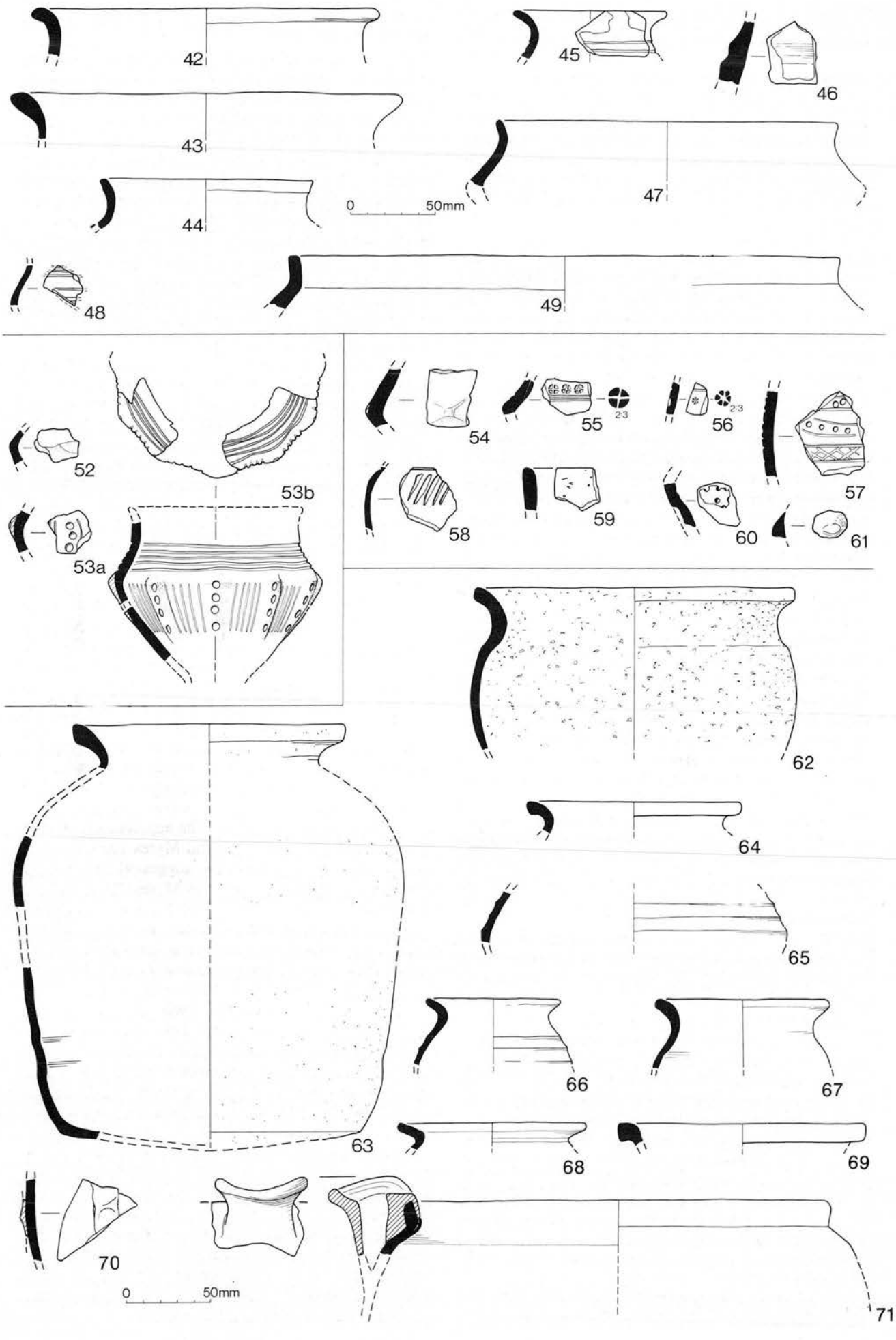


Figure 116 Early Saxon pottery various contexts, Middle Saxon pottery, Saxo-Norman pottery, scale 1:3

There was no clear evidence for the contemporary use of late Roman pottery alongside this Saxon pottery at Little Oakley (*cf.* Wickenden 1982, 20–3) even though the evidence was sought. While late Roman pottery did occur in these features (particularly pit 2) the quantities were small compared to the total of Early Iron Age and Early Roman sherds redeposited there, and the proportions of all three groups are very similar throughout the fills of the pits. The material is also similar to that in the late fills of the adjacent Roman ditches and must be considered as redeposited.

The Period 4 contexts

The dating of the grass-tempered pottery in the Period 4 contexts on Site I and Site A must now be considered. The forms are not identifiable, and only the relationship between this pottery and that in the pit fills discussed above and the Late Roman pottery in these assemblages can be used to attempt to give a date to this material.

Before the material from Site I became available, the writer was inclined to view the small quantities of small abraded sherds of grass-tempered pottery (originally interpreted as 'Anglo-Saxon') from A21 and particularly A3 with some suspicion (*i.e.* as potentially prehistoric). A3 had produced a very convincing Latest Roman pottery assemblage of relatively large sherds. The material found in the Phase 4(ii) rubble spreads on Site I prompted a reconsideration of this material. It now seems likely to fall somewhere between the Latest Roman assemblages, and the early 5th century groups on Site IV. Although the assemblages are small, it seems that in this period the grass-tempered sherds may have been in use alongside the Latest Roman ceramics (*cf.* Drury and Wickenden 1982, 20–5).

The dating of this material is largely a matter of inference, since no independent evidence can be adduced. Apart from clearly redeposited Roman sherds, the main fabric present in these Period 4 features is grass-tempered. The latter is, however, considerably less common in the fills of the pits on Site IV. It is likely that these pits post-date the rubble spreads. Thus we have an approximate upper limit to the dating of the Period 4 features. They must pre-date the mid to late 5th century (see above). Similarly the types of Late Roman pottery present must indicate a date of around *c.* 360 AD as the earliest possible dating for these assemblages. We thus have a date span of a little over a century within which to fit Period 4. There are Latest Roman assemblages on the site (not to mention elsewhere in Essex) from which hand-made and especially hand-made grass-tempered pottery is entirely lacking (Going 1987, 118), so it follows that an undefined period of time probably elapsed between *c.* AD 360 and the first use of grass-tempered pottery. It should be emphasised that clear evidence of the use of organic tempering in Roman pottery at Essex is lacking after the demise of such 'native' wares as fabric 7. This use of grass-tempering is thus apparently not the result of continuity of native potting techniques through the Roman period. It is not possible to establish the mechanism by which this technique came to the site.

Grass-tempered pottery is generally thought[40] to have been an Anglo-Saxon innovation in this country (Brown 1976, 191) and occurs first in early 5th century assemblages, for example at Heybridge (Wickenden 1982, 13; fabrics IA and IC — 11.5% of the total) and at Mucking (M.U. Jones pers. comm; *pace* Brown 1976, 192). The fabric occurs on the continent in contemporary deposits from the coastal areas of Holland to Denmark (Brown 1976, 192). The introduction of this fabric type to Little Oakley, in the last decades of the 4th century or the first decades of the 5th, may reflect some kind of continental influence, potentially the movement of people. This is not to say that the people using grass-tempered pottery at Little Oakley (in Period 4) were themselves necessarily immigrants from the continent, since there is evidence that they were also using Late Romano-British ceramics. The tempering agents in the pottery used on a site need not necessarily indicate ethnic origins, and the interpretation of this pottery must depend on the particular standpoint taken in the continuing debate about the nature of the relationship between the Saxon settlers and the native Romano-British populations. Little Oakley has a tentative contribution to make to this debate, but this will be deferred to the general discussion below.

In summary, there appears to be a sequence of pottery types in use at Little Oakley following the Latest Roman ceramic assemblages. The first stage involved the continued use of this Latest Roman pottery (though whether as continually replaced items, or as heirlooms cannot be said) alongside hand-made grass-tempered pottery. This is followed by a phase during which the Latest Roman material ceased to be used and grass-tempered pottery continued alongside other hand-made fabrics, but as time went on the grass-tempered fabrics became less important. Two fabric groups which began to be used at this time in the early 5th century were fabrics 22 and 25, possibly imports (they apparently also appear at Mucking: source unknown). The Early Saxon pottery sequence at Little Oakley seems to end in the mid to late 5th century.

Middle Saxon pottery

A small quantity of hand-made pottery came from the topsoil of Site D in the 1975–8 excavations. The fabric was soft-fired, brown, with copious coarse shell temper and copious dark coloured coarse sand inclusions. This fabric was unlike the textures of any other shell-tempered fabrics on the site and may even be from a non-local clay source.

The form of the vessels (Fig. 116.62) is also unlike any Roman shell-tempered vessels, and this globular jar with everted rim is almost certainly post-Roman though probably not Early Saxon. The material does not occur in Late Saxon or Saxo-Norman pottery assemblages at Colchester (Crummy 1981, 32–40) or in the assemblage from Little Oakley discussed below. This pottery is probably Middle Saxon (I owe this suggestion initially to C.J. Going).

A rim sherd of similar shell-tempered ware, of a very similar form, came from the Period 6 plough furrow A7.

The date of this pottery is uncertain, as pottery is scarce in Essex between the 7th and 10th centuries (Drury and Rodwell 1978, 137–8). Coarse hand-made shell-tempered pottery like this has been found in Essex at Wicken Bonhunt (Wade 1980, 98), Waltham Abbey (Huggins 1976, 101–8) and in London (Rhodes 1975; 1980). An 8th or 9th-century date seems most likely. It is notable that Ipswich-type ware is absent from the site.

Saxo-Norman pottery

Pit 4 on Site IV contained a small quantity of Saxo-Norman pottery, most (33 sherds) coming from one vessel, unabraded sherds of which were scattered throughout the fill of the feature.

This vessel (Fig. 116.63) was a shell-tempered cooking pot with a slightly convex base and a single everted rim. The fabric is oxidised, fairly soft-fired with little sand (soapy feel), and is St Neot's-type ware, current in Essex from the mid 9th to the late 11th centuries. It may date to nearer the end of this span, for a precisely similar fabric was found on one of Farrands' other sites (Beaumont- cum-Moze, Lower Barn Farm) associated with other pottery, the group as a whole probably dating to the early 11th century.

Other vessels (Fig. 116) were of a wheel thrown greyware with rilling on the upper shoulder. The fabrics are similar to Thetford-type ware but often very hard. The rim forms are not typical of Thetford Ware either. At least eight small Thetford-type ware pots are represented by twenty-nine sherds.

A sherd from the topsoil on Site IV (Fig. 116.70) is the spout from a pitcher in a hard-fired (oxidised and reduced) fine sandy fabric a little like Thetford-type ware. The spout had been applied to the exterior of a ?wheel-turned vessel and the clay drawn around the rim as shown in the figure. No further pieces of this vessel were found. The sherd is presumably pre-12th century (*cf.* West 1963, 202, fig. 47.11).

Several of Farrands' other sites produced variants of Thetford-type ware. It is possible that several local kiln sites may be responsible for these fabric variations. One possible site is the area investigated by Farrands at Beaumont, mentioned above. The proximity of this Saxo-Norman material to Foulton Hall, some 120m to the north-east, is suggestive, and discussed below.

Illustrated Middle to Late Saxon pottery
(Fig. 116)

62 Middle Saxon shell-tempered jar (Site D, topsoil).
63 Saxo-Norman shell-tempered jar (Site IV, pit 4).
64–70 Jars of Thetford-type ware, all hard fired (Nos 64, 66–7 and 69 light grey, the rest dark). No. 69 could be Thetford-type ware, or Roman. No. 70, large jar body sherd with a thumbed applied strip (Site IV, pit 4).
71 Spout of pitcher in hard greyware, diameter uncertain (surface find in Strachan's field in area of Sites III and IV).

Medieval and post-medieval pottery

Very little medieval pottery came from Farrands' excavations; the total number of sherds found between 1951 and 1978 was six.

A knife trimmed base of early medieval reduced sandy fabric was found in the robber trench D6, where it was presumably intrusive; one sherd of late medieval imported stoneware was found in the topsoil on Site A. The rest of the latest pottery consisted of twenty-six sherds of a range of post-medieval fabrics, mostly from the topsoil but including two small pieces intrusive in contexts C8 and C21 (upper fill).

A rim of a Colchester Ware jug (as Cunningham 1982, fig. 30.53) came from the topsoil of the lynchet 100m south-west of Site II.

IV. The Faunal Remains

The faunal remains from the site will be considered in a number of separate groups. It did not prove possible to study the material from the Farrands sites in as much detail as had been hoped (see below).

The large assemblage of bone from the 1975–8 excavations should have been fully studied and a level III archive prepared, but (due to the lack of funding) the bone specialists approached felt unable to attempt this. A selection of the groups was therefore made (by the excavator), and sent to Mr K Dobney, then of the Institute of Archaeology in London, whose report appears below. This is followed by an account by the writer of the other bone, the shellfish and other marine fauna encountered.

It was unfortunate that limitations of time and funding did not allow the animal bone evidence to be studied in more depth, for few local sites have produced good reported faunal assemblages. However, it appears that most of the Little Oakley material came from groups which were relatively small samples (of the presumed original assemblages) or were probably contaminated with much redeposited bone from earlier periods. This prompts caution in their interpretation. If the site is to be re-excavated at some time in the future, the location and study of large bone assemblages must be given priority.

Most of the animal bone was well preserved, though badly fragmented, and few bones were found articulated. Because of this, little more has been attempted here other than identification of species and the discussion of the relationship of the recovered fragments to the nature of the excavated deposits. It was not possible to discuss the sex and age-structure of the herds. The ways in which the meat was cooked, and what then happened to the waste, particularly its disposal, will be touched on in the discussion.

On both sites the bone was recovered by hand during excavation, and sieving was not undertaken to recover smaller bones and bone fragments. Thus small mammal, fish and bird remains are likely to be under-represented, as are the number of smaller (but largely unidentifiable) splinters of bones of larger animals (see Payne 1975).[41]

The report below comprises five main sections; animal bone from the Farrands sites, the bone from the Corbishley sites, shellfish and other marine resources, a brief discussion of other environmental evidence, and a section on the animal footprints on tiles.

Animal bone from the Farrands sites

(with contributions by I.W. Cornwall and Bev Meddens)

The bone from these sites was well preserved and retained in all cases (though some material subsequently lost its labelling); the spread of fragment size indicates that collection was good. Although in aggregate quite a lot of material survives, when separated by context, the samples are relatively small. The bone had not been separated by the excavator from other materials in previous processing, and as this would have taken a considerable amount of time (and finds bags) to complete in order to have it examined by a specialist, this was not thought to be cost-effective.

For these reasons the present report has been written by the above named writer, who (while having a keen amateur interest and competency in identification of skeletal material) is nevertheless not a bone specialist. This report is presented as a summary and preliminary discussion of the bone evidence based on general impressions gained from going through all the bags of finds, but mainly on closer study of selected groups of material.

The Period 1 bone is summarised first, followed by a report on the bone of Periods 2–4 (the sample sizes did not

allow this time-span to be split up) which includes a report on a single relatively large assemblage written in 1954 by I.W. Cornwall (then at the Institute of Archaeology). This has been left as written. It is followed by brief notes on the small groups of material from post-Roman contexts .

Human, bird and dog bones were separated out during processing, but it is assumed that the majority of the rest of the bones was debris from food preparation or consumption. Most of this food debris from contexts of all periods was badly fragmented, often rendering precise identification impossible, but it was nevertheless possible to identify a sufficient proportion of the bone from many contexts to allow a certain amount of confidence in the validity of the results. The larger assemblages of bone from the site have been studied in more detail here, but few of these produced more than a kilogramme of bone each (most other deposits yielded less than 0.4kg of bone).

Period 1 deposits

Pre-Roman deposits were relatively few in number, and did not produce much bone evidence, and, like that in Roman deposits, most of this was badly shattered. (The following account is based on 5.7kg of material mainly from the prehistoric ditches on Sites I and IV, and also a little material from the 'buried subsoils' F9 and F73; the latter added with caution.) Most of these bones are Iron Age or Late Iron Age, and are discussed here mainly for comparison with the Roman material. The proportions of the main species present in these selected deposits are set out in Table 14.

	No. of fragments identifiable	*Min. no. of animals**
Cattle	78 (50%)	12 (40%)
'Sheep'	61 (40%)	12 (40%)
Pig	10 (6%)	5 (16%)
Horse	(4) (3%)	1 (2%)
Fowl	2 (1%)	1 (2%)
	155 fragments	33 animals

* The apparently high value for MIN is due to the amalgamation for the sake of this table of information from smaller groups (samples) of bones which are widely spatially separated, thus reducing the likelihood that the same individual is represented in two different deposits. The minimum number of cattle may be higher.

Table 14 Animal remains of Period 1 (1952–75 data)

The small size of the sample needs no emphasis. The pattern of fragmentation of the bone was very much like that of the Roman bone, so only the main points will be touched on below.

Cattle. Where this could be determined, these were fairly young animals (under *c.* 3–4 years). About half the bone fragments were splintered longbones, and a quarter were cranial bones and jaws, though ribs, and footbones were also fairly common.

'Sheep'. (No definite goats were recognised).[42] These were nearly all slender-legged small sheep, about the size of a Soay, but two large animals (though not as large as most modern sheep breeds) were also present. No horned skulls were found. Where the age could be determined, they were all young animals (under *c.* 3–3.5 years). Over half of the bones were splintered longbone fragments, about 10% were cranial bones and jaws, but ribs, footbones and recognisable large pieces of tibia were relatively common.

Pig. These were all domestic, no wild boar bones were recognised (though some jaws had large third molars in the region of 30+mm). The bones found were principally cranial fragments, particularly mandibles. Both small and large adult animals were represented. Some animals were old, with pronounced tooth wear, while another animal was young (with unfused humerus). Horse was represented by four loose teeth only.

Dog was not present, but two bird bones proved to be of duck and crow (below)

Butchery and cooking

Only one bone had obvious butchery marks, a sheep tibia shaft from F73. The majority of the bones were badly shattered, as if they had been smashed up in order that they could be boiled to extract the marrow for stock — this model is further discussed below. (This debris was not the sort of damage caused by trampling, or by large dogs gnawing on the bones for example, and seems a deliberate artificial action.) Some bones from K15 were very eroded, in contrast to other bone on Site II. This may be due to cooking methods (*e.g.* vigorous boiling) rather than soil conditions (eroded bone was also found in K20). All the rest of the splintered bones had apparently been only lightly boiled, to judge by their condition.

Discussion

Some of the points made below in connection with the Roman bones may also be applicable to the bone from Period 1 deposits. Although a small group, enough bone was recovered to suggest that the animals kept and the treatment of their remains did not differ markedly from the succeeding periods.

The Roman bone (Periods 2–4)

The articulated skeleton of a yearling sheep (identified by I.W. Cornwall) was found on Site II in Period 2/Phase 3(i), pit 5, but the rest of the material consisted of complete and shattered bones as above. Again it was difficult to select more than a few deposits of Periods 2–4 which both individually and taken together produced a large enough sample for study. The evidence used here came from 7.2kg of bone (mainly from the lower fishpond fills on Site III, the yard surfaces and drain fills on Site I, the drain trench (feature 4) on Site III, and F20 and K7 on Sites I and II respectively). The deposit in ditch 1 on Site IV is detailed separately by I.W. Cornwall below. While it is not intended to look in detail at trends within the period, it is possible that sheep were more common in Period 2 (especially in the fishpond fills) and became less common in Period 4. Likewise pig (while never common) seems to increase slightly in Phase 3(i) but then also virtually disappears in Period 4. Certainly some contexts of Phase 3(ii) and Period 4 produced no pig bones at all, though the other species are present. Cattle remained predominant. Fragments occurred in most excavated deposits throughout the period, as the frequency of sheep and pig drops, cattle bone fragments become more common.

Table 15 sets out, as before, the proportions of animals represented by the bone fragments from selected deposits of this period.

Again the small sample size needs no emphasis. Most of the bones were badly fragmented as before, with the majority of pieces under 70mm and many under 50mm long. Many of the unidentified scraps were splintered long

bone fragments of indeterminate species. The patterns of survival of fragments of both sheep and cattle were similar to each other, and are shown graphically in Fig. 117A and B. That of pig differed and is discussed below.

	No. of fragments identifiable	*Min. no. of animals*
Cattle	178 (59%)	31 (48%)
'Sheep'	81 (27%)	14 (22%)
Pig	33 (11%)	13 (20%)
Horse	2 (1%)	2 (3%)
Fowl	5 (2%)	3 (3%)
Dog	2 (1%)	2 (3%)
	301	65 animals

Table 15 Animal remains of Periods 2–4 (1952–75 data)

Cattle. Where this could be determined, these animals were of a variety of ages though many were mature. Both shorthorn and longhorn horncores were present. Some animals were of a relatively large size, while others were small slender-legged beasts.

The diagram (Fig. 117A) of the percentage of numbers of fragments of each portion of the skeleton of cattle is self-explanatory. Over half of the fragments were of longbones (posing the question where the rest of the carcass had gone?). Of these longbones most had been shattered, excepting a number of the tibia fragments. Butchery marks are also shown.

'Sheep'. No definite goats were recognised from the Roman deposits on the Farrands site. The 'sheep' were all apparently hornless; most were small animals with slender limbs, though one or two were larger and more robust. Most, where this can be determined, were killed when young (under *c.* 3 to 3.5 years).

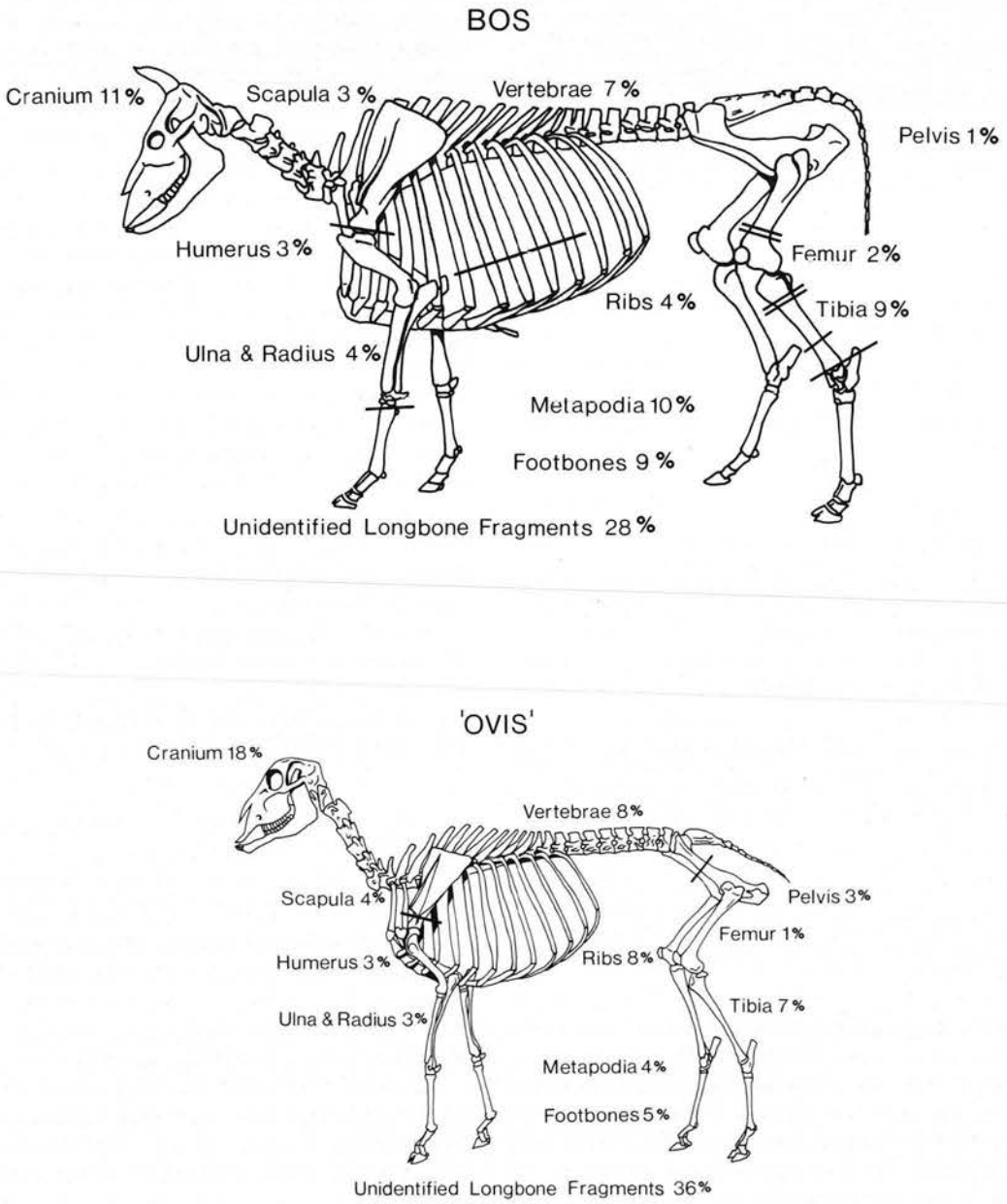


Figure 117 A: Diagram of cow butchery, B: Diagram of 'sheep' butchery

The diagram (Fig. 117B) is similar to that for cattle: note that the proportions of the different parts of the skeleton are very similar to those of cattle, including the treatment of tibiae. It appears that sheep and cattle carcasses were treated in the same fashion.

It was noted that although shattered cattle and sheep bones were fairly ubiquitous in varying quantities in the Roman deposits, the proportions of rib, vertebrae and cranial fragments (excepting mandibular fragments or loose teeth) varied greatly; in the majority of cases they were absent or uncommon. Metapodials tended to be broken up like the longbones, while foot bones, though often found complete, were more common in some deposits than others. These variations seem to be due not only to differential preservation, but seem to reflect butchery and cooking methods and disposal of the waste (see below).

Pig. As noted above, fragments of pig bones declined in number throughout Phase 3(ii) and Period 4. They were killed at a variety of ages. One from the Period 3 yard on Site I was very young; others were very old when they died, to judge by the tooth eruption and wear patterns. The tooth eruption sequence differs from that given by Silver (1963, 298–9), with M3 sometimes emerging earlier than some premolars, and PM4 emerging early in some pigs. There was clearly some variation within the Roman pigs at Little Oakley; however, most whose third molars were measurable were 20–30mm long. In a sample of eight jaws, three were apparently less than 2 years old, though none were very young, two were probably 2–3 years old. The remainder were older than this, some with extensive wear of the teeth including the third molar. Both a large short-legged breed and a long-legged breed were present.

Well over half of the number of surviving bone fragments were of cranial bones, principally mandibles, while 28% were of assorted longbones. This pattern differs from that given for cattle and sheep and an explanation is attempted below.

A few large tusk fragments may be either from wild boar or a tusked breed of domestic pigs.

Horse. This was represented by one loose tooth, but also a complete slender tibia. There is no clear reason to regard horse as a component of the diet at Little Oakley in the Roman or any other period. Indeed the completeness of the tibia tends to argue against this, if the argument about marrow extraction cited below is accepted.

Deer. Two antler fragments from Site II, may have been collected from elsewhere as raw material (see 'objects of bone', no. BN19); one piece from K7 was a fragment of young red deer or ?fallow deer antler. An unprovenanced fragment of an ulna of a medium-sized deer would however imply that deer was occasionally eaten at Oakley, probably in the Roman period. An unworked red deer antler tine fragment came from the Period 4 pit fill F19/20 on Site I.

Fowl and Dog. A few bird and dog bones were recovered from Roman deposits and are described below.

Rabbit. Four bones of a rabbit were found in the Period 4 pit fill F20, but were of a different state of preservation from the rest of the bone in this deposit. They are almost certainly intrusive.

In 1952–4 Farrands excavated a large deposit of bones and oystershell in the upper fill of the fourth cut of the Phase 3(i) ditch 1 on Site IV. Many of these bones were represented by relatively large fragments. He sent a sample of the bones to I.W. Cornwall who submitted the following report in 1954.

The bone from ditch 1 on Site IV
by I.W. Cornwall

A sample of the bone from the oystershell layer 3 in ditch 1 was examined by the writer; the identifiable fragments are noted below:

Cattle. 2 horncores, 1 longhorn, 1 celtic ox type; 2 scapulae; many frags skull and mandible; mandibles, 1 large with loose teeth, 1 small immature (less than 2 years); distal frag. of tibia (large); entire tibia (less proximal epiphysis) with fitting distal epiphysis and astragalus; another small astragalus; metacarpal cannon-bone (small but adult); proximal fragment of a radius (small).

The skull, horncore, maxilla and mandible fragments, with some loose teeth may well belong to the same individual, of a size comparable with modern breeds. Another individual, smaller, and (from the dentition) under 2 years of age, is certainly represented by the tibia and fitting astragalus. There may well be several others. There is, for example, a downturned, shorthorn-type horncore, which looks like that of an adult Celtic ox, suggesting that two different races of cattle were kept.

Sheep. 4 fragments of mandibles with milk teeth; 2 maxilla fragments (adult); fragments of adult skull with horn-core broken off: A few fragmentary longbones (mostly young).

These are generally indistinguishable from remains of goat, but in the present case there is a fragment of an undoubted sheep skull, though the horncore is unfortunately missing. A high proportion of the remains belonged to lambs or young yearlings — 4 mandible fragments with milk teeth still in function. 2 fragments of the maxilla, with teeth, were of a certain age and perhaps belonged to the individual owning the skull. The few longbones were also predominantly immature.

Pig. Two halves of mandibles of young individuals; 3 other mandible frags (1 old, 2 young adults); 2 maxilla frags (young adult); frag. of right parietal bone of skull; frag. of *os innominatum.*

At least 4, perhaps more individuals were represented. Of jaw-fragments with teeth, 1 was elderly, with a well-worn third molar, 1 a young adult and 1 immature. The humerus of a very young individual probably represents a sucking pig. Other long bones were lacking.

Horse. 1 scapula; 1 metatarsal fragment.

From the dimensions of the remains, a beast of pony size. There was no direct evidence that it was a food animal, but the occurrence of loose bones of horse in among those of the regular food animals may suggest this.

Dog. 1 half mandible (elderly animal, middle-sized); 2 half-mandibles (young adult animals, smaller); 2 maxilla fragments, perhaps belonging to the first dog above, with last cheek-teeth *in situ*; loose canine tooth, perhaps of the larger dog; loose upper molar, perhaps of the larger dog.

At least 2 individuals are represented. The larger, of the size of an Irish terrier, was aged, with very worn teeth. The smaller type, represented by two half-mandibles may well belong to a single individual of the stature of a fox terrier. The remains were young adult in age. The dog remains have been retained in the Institute of Archaeology reference collection.

Human. Fragment of right side of mandible with last 2 molars *in situ*. The third molar was in function but scarcely worn, while the second molar was already well-used. This suggests an age in the early 20s. (Sex perhaps male, everted gonial angle.) [from 'green' layer (2B?) in trench 11 from fifth cut of ditch 1, abraded, unlike the rest of the bone in this deposit PMB].

No bones showed dog tooth-marks, but the mandible of the larger ox had evidently been deliberately smashed in antiquity. No other evidence of butchery or working of bone was seen.

Even in such a comparatively small collection of bones, the absence of major fragments, even, of longbones was notable, apart from the two tibiae mentioned. This looks rather unusual, seeing that the shafts, at least, of longbones are more readily preserved than vertebrae and skull-fragments. The consideration applies to all the species represented.

Butchery and cooking methods

There was no evidence of the means of killing the animals, but butchery marks were visible on some of the bones, though not a high proportion. Once again the cattle and sheep long bones were deliberately broken up and the extraction of the marrow seems to have been practised.

The cattle bones show frequent transverse chopping marks on the ribs, which were cut across to make cutlets. One scapula was chopped across the neck from the inside (*i.e.* the fore limb had been detached from the carcass before cutting up). The hind limb was dismembered by chopping across the distal end of the femur. Also the distal end of the tibia was cut across in a similar fashion and in one case the shaft had been chopped through at the middle.

Fewer butchery marks were visible on the sheep and pig bones. The pelvis and scapula of some sheep showed cuts from meat removal, perhaps after cooking. One pig pelvis was chopped across the neck of the illium.

A sheep tibia was burnt, possibly during a process such as spit-roasting or perhaps after the meat had been removed. Such burnt bones were very uncommon, perhaps suggesting that meat was not often roasted.

The distinctive shapes and textures of pig bones (particularly the longbones) ought to have been readily recognisable even if splintered, but were in fact fairly uncommon. Skull and mandible fragments were, however, relatively frequent; these bones are of course fairly robust. Three explanations may explain the absence of the rest of the skeleton: most of the animals may have been very immature and the bones were soft, they may have been weakened when the meat was cooked (pig bones soften readily upon boiling), or the meat may have been cured (salted or smoked) and exported. In both of the latter cases it would seem that the same treatment was not accorded the heads (which do produce some meat, but not much, *cf.* pig's head brawn). Foot bones also seem to have been relatively common, probably for similar reasons. Few immature pig bones were found.

Very few bones were noticeably gnawed by dogs or rodents. These included a cattle metapodial from the Site I yard surfaces, and several sheep longbone fragments.

Pathology

Generally, pathological indications were absent from the Little Oakley bones. The only exception to this was a sheep mandible with an abscess from Phase C of Site III, and a dog molar from Period 2 ditch 2 in trench 21 on Site IV. This had abnormal root growth and a defect in the enamel.

Discussion of the Roman bone

The cattle, sheep and pig bones may derive largely from animals consumed as meat on site. The relative proportions of 'animal carcasses' (as represented by numbers of bone fragments) give some idea of the relative proportions of animals. Even when carcass weight is also taken into account (Luff 1985, 145) it can clearly be seen that most of the meat derived from cattle. Sheep and pigs made a smaller (but still fairly substantial) contribution to the diet. Horse need not have been eaten, and wild animals such as deer made a small contribution.

Meat was not the only product of the domestic livestock of the villa estate. The cattle may have been kept primarily for milk production, the females surviving to a greater age, the male animals being killed young. This has been demonstrated at other sites (*e.g.* Luff 1985, 145–7), and although the sex of the animals at Little Oakley was not determined, the age structure noted above may suggest this was happening. Cattle probably also provided hides (Luff 1985, 146). Some animals may have been kept for traction power. Sheep may have been kept for both meat and perhaps wool (though there is little clear evidence for textile production on the site itself). Most sheep were killed while young, suggesting meat production was the primary aim. Sheep and goat milk may possibly also have also contributed to the diet though few pottery 'cheese presses' were found (but see the Roman pottery colander, Fig. 102.36).

It has been suggested above that the uneven survival of the remains of pigs may be due to the carcasses being divided up and some of the meat traded away from the site. Possibly the meat was salted (pork, being a fatty meat, was more suitable for this than beef or mutton). The evidence for salt production on the villa estate (below) should here be remembered.

It may be presumed that the animals were kept not only to provide for the inhabitants of the villa but also as an exportable surplus, and clearly this must affect the nature of the remaining evidence. It is not possible to say what animals or animal products were exported in what quantities, or where to. It would also complicate matters enormously if it were proposed that some joints of meat or animal products may even have been brought to the site from animals raised on some other establishment (it is too easy to assume this traffic occurred only in one direction). Nevertheless it is likely that cattle, sheep and pig were all kept on the Little Oakley villa estate, but the bone evidence cannot reliably tell us exactly in what proportions. The bone fragments found on the site seem to consist, however, almost entirely of food debris (below), and the material can probably tell us about one component of the diet of the villa inhabitants.

If the animals were butchered on site, as seems likely, the aggregate samples should provide us with debris from all stages of the preparation of animal carcasses for consumption, and interpretation of the bones should be informative. Figure 117 demonstrates, however, that the bones of sheep and cattle survive differentially; this requires explanation. The fragments of all parts seemed to be about the same size, and all the bones seem to have been smashed up deliberately. Why then do longbone fragments

apparently survive more readily than others? The answer is not clear. Longbones are more robust than some bones which are uncommonly preserved; vertebrae and pelvis fragments particularly would be prone to dissolution, as they would soften markedly on boiling as suggested above. It is thus easy to account for the low percentages of vertebral and pelvic bones from these assemblages (especially if the model is accepted involving the boiling of bones for stock after a meal). This cannot be used to explain the low incidence of ribs which, although fairly fragile, have sufficient hard bone in parts to remain recognisable even after boiling; perhaps the bones from cuts of meat with ribs were boiled more vigorously. Likewise metapodials and footbones, which were usually found complete; footbones are fairly robust, but again (given the number of bones in a foot) are poorly represented. Were they too boiled down (*e.g.* for glue)? Skull fragments might be expected to have been more common (loose teeth were omitted in these counts). The skull is a large object and would tend to shatter when broken into a large number of fairly robust small pieces, and yet they are poorly represented, most of the surviving pieces being fairly complete halves of mandibles.

Turning to the longbone figures, we find again a discrepancy. In both sheep and cattle, longbone fragments comprise just over 50% of the identified fragments. Of these 47% of sheep fragments and 38% of the cattle bones were pieces of unspecified longbones. The remainder were identifiable. The pelvic girdle and scapula were poorly represented, as were the upper limb bones (1–3%). The lower fore-limb bones were likewise uncommonly found in recognisable pieces (3–4%) but the lower bones of the hind-limb in both sheep and cattle were more commonly in pieces which were recognisable. This clearly reflects the way in which the carcass was dismembered and the butchery marks suggest that one common joint, of beef at least (Fig. 117A) eaten at Roman Little Oakley was made by severing the top of the leg through the distal end of the femur and cutting the tibia at the middle or towards the proximal end. This would produce a joint rather like our modern 'leg of beef'. The frequent survival of recognisable pieces of tibia may suggest that for some reason it was not considered worthwhile smashing these bones up and boiling them for marrow. Leg of beef contains a lot of bone and is mainly suitable for stewing or soups, in which case the stock will have previously been extracted anyway.

The case of the 'vanished' pig bones has been noted above. If a pig skeleton were boiled in the same way as sheep and cattle it is likely that the skull and a few robust longbones would survive better than the rest, which is in fact what was found (see above). This does not necessarily invalidate the 'salted pork' model.

It can be seen that there are considerable reasons to believe that at the Roman villa at Little Oakley, virtually all the bones from a carcass were broken up (after the meat had been taken off) and the marrow extracted, either eaten whole (*cf.* Italian *osso buco*) or, more likely, by boiling, since not only marrow bones had been treated in some way. Such a treatment of the skeletal remains of meals may introduce a bias into the record, since in the absence of many mandibles, the only way of studying the ages at death of these animals would be to look at epiphyses, but suppose different treatments were accorded to meat of animals killed at different ages? The non-specific longbone fragments and the bones which may be presumed to have been present (but now do not survive due to their treatment in antiquity), are sufficient in number to induce some disquiet.

The presence of dogs on the site introduces another bias into the record, as they would be quite capable of destroying any bones given to (or found by) them. It would be interesting to know if there had been a pattern in this (for example the ribs may have been eaten by dogs).

The disposal of the remains of meals may briefly be considered. In no cases were deposits of what could be termed 'butchery waste' (*e.g.* cranial bones, mandibles, tails or feet) found. This implies either that butchery was carried out elsewhere (though such deposits are apparently rare in Roman Britain) or that all parts of the animals went into the stock-pot. Once boiled, the bones would not be as prone to rapid decay, and there would be no compelling reason to bury them immediately. Indeed no rubbish deposits as such were encountered on the whole site, with the possible exception of the bone layer in the fill of the fourth cut of ditch 1 on Site IV noted above, and it is noteworthy that many of these bones had not been smashed up as much as others on the site. It seems that many of the bone fragments found in excavated deposits had not been deliberately dumped there, but were accumulations of materials lying around the inhabited area as was clearly the case with the pottery. This need not necessarily imply a deliberate state of filthy squalor around the villa, but could represent material scattered by scavenging animals etc. from nearby middens or compost heaps. The pattern of bone survival at Little Oakley is very similar to bone fragments collected by the writer from his own back garden. All meat is brought home as whole or half carcasses, frozen. After cooking the bones are always boiled for stock and then discarded on a compost heap which is then spread on the vegetable garden. (These bones have been collected and studied, and these data have been compared with the lists kept of all meat bought over a period of years; Elsworth 1987.)

The Little Oakley cattle, sheep and pig were probably raised somewhere on the villa estate. Cattle and sheep probably grazed pasture or light scrub, though not necessarily particularly close to the villa building. In all probability they also grazed on the marshes below the site, particularly in the summer. In the winter the herds may have been brought up to the better-drained inland pastures on top of the hill, and briquetage may have been brought up as salt-licks (see discussion). Several breeds of cattle and sheep were kept during this period, though not necessarily contemporaneously. From the limited evidence available, the herds were well-managed with most sheep being killed young for mutton, but some cows were kept for several years, probably for hide or milk production.

Pigs were different. Although the animals were all 'domestic', it seems very likely that they were feral, and that interbreeding was possible with animals that were closer to the wild pig. This may account for the extreme variation noted, as well as for the age achieved by some of the animals. Except for breeding purposes, there would be little to be gained by keeping the pigs for long after they had reached maturity (indeed the meat of younger animals is better). The old age of some animals may indicate that not only was little feeding required, as (if allowed to run free) they would have fended for themselves, but perhaps

also that it was difficult to round up the animals to kill particular animals at a specific time. The older pigs in this collection may represent the least tame, wider roaming (and faster-running!) animals. These feral pigs presumably roamed outfield areas. Their presence, taken with that of deer, may also imply the existence of woodland in the vicinity of the site (*cf.* the Saxon place name).

Bones from post-Roman contexts

Period 5
The only group of bone to survive is that from the fill of Saxon pit 2 on Site IV. This produced 1.55kg of small fragments of bone with few larger pieces. There were 49 identifiable fragments (below) and 69 unidentifiable fragments. For what it is worth, the assemblage is listed below without further comment, in the absence of other published Saxon bone assemblages in the area.

Cattle. Cranial × 8 (including sawn parietal); vertebral × 3, ribs × 7; scapula × 1, footbones × 2; unident. longbone × 10+; humerus distal × 1; femur × 1 (shaft chopped across deltoid ridge); tibia distal × 1.

Sheep. Cranial × 3; ribs × 1, footbones × 1; 1 × large pelvic fragment, chopped across pubis; ulna shaft 2 (small, slender animals)

Pig. Cranial = mandibles × 4 (old 'domestic' animals); phalange × 1; no butchery marks.

Dog. Abraded (probably redeposited) jaw, no teeth remaining in sockets

Pit 3 seems to have contained quite a lot of bone most of which is now lost (or has lost its labelling). The only surviving piece is the articulated humerus, ulna and radius of a small but heavily built cow.

Saxo-Norman pit
The bone from this pit fill contained much that was clearly redeposited earlier material, in particular a high proportion of the cattle longbone splinters were abraded. Sheep and pig were very well represented, sheep mainly by longbones, pig by mandible and cranial fragments. In both cases, tooth eruption and wear suggest animals of varying ages. The length of M3 in pig was only 22mm, showing that the animals were different from their Roman predecessors. Bones of horse, small fowl and rabbit were also present (it is impossible to say whether or not the latter was intrusive). No butchery marks were noted.

The smaller mammals and birds
based on the report by Bev Meddens, Ancient Monuments Laboratory

A selection of bones (made by PMB) from the Farrands site was examined, and a full catalogue with measurements is included in the archive. This is summarised below.

Dog (*Canis* sp. *(familiaris))*
Eleven bones from four contexts were of dogs (one or two were difficult to distinguish from fox bones). Most came from Site III from the Phase F fill of the pipe trench (feature 4) in B3: these consisted of part of an adult skeleton (two parts of the maxilla with worn teeth, right humerus and ulna/radius, two cervical and two thoracic vertebrae). An abraded dog/fox mandible (with no teeth now remaining) was found in the layer (layer 2) overlying Saxon pit 2 on Site IV, and was probably redeposited. A dog humerus came from Site IV in the top fill of the last recut of Ditch 1. A dog maxilla came from layer 2 in Room 3 of the Site I building. Most of these animals were similar in size (or a little smaller) and shape to those of a collie in the collection of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory but this by no means signifies that the dogs in question belonged to this breed.

Cat (*Felis* sp.)
A single cat bone (right humerus) of a relatively large cat came from Site I (F78 lower fill of Ditch 1). It is not impossible that this was from a wild cat.

Domestic duck/Mallard (*Anas* sp.)
Two bones from different contexts were of ducks (or perhaps small geese). These came from Site I (F9 subsoil); Site II (K11, post-hole) (K11, post-hole) ?domestic.

Domestic fowl (*Gallus* sp.)
Eight bones were found in three contexts. Period 4 plaster spread F82 on Site I contained the right femur and tibiotarsus and left humerus of a small fowl, Period 4 pit fills F19/20 on the same site contained a left femur, left tibiotarsus and left tarsometatarsus of an adult bird, and a tibiotarsus of an immature bird, probably another fowl. (There was no spur on the mature tarsometatarsus, so it was probably from a female bird). The fill of the Period 5 grave F50 on Site I contained the radius of a fowl.

Crows (*Corvidae* spp.)
Two bones were found: Site I F77 (upper fill of Period 1 ditch 1) contained a right femur, and Site IV Saxon pit 3 layers 9 and 10, contained a left tarsometatarsus. Both were from birds about the size of modern carrion crows.

Toad (*Bufo bufo*)
The femur, tibia, *os coxae*, and urostyle of an immature individual (probably the same one) were found in layer 7 of the fill of Saxon pit 3 on Site IV.

Fish (unidentifiable sp.)
A single vertebra of an unidentified large fish (centrum 15.5mm diam.) came from the fill of Site I grave F50.

Discussion
Although all of the likely looking bones were submitted to Mrs Meddens, the sample is not very large and it is thought not to be particularly reliable. Nevertheless, they do allow us to picture the smaller inhabitants of the immediate area of the villa complex. Most of the bones were from domestic animals, but a few wild creatures are also represented.

The dogs may simply have been pets, or perhaps working dogs (although Mrs Meddens specifically did not want to stress the resemblance to collies, their use as sheepdogs may perhaps be possible). The evidence from the cat bone for the size of the animal compares well with that from some of the tile footprints below): the animal represented by both was large, a real 'farmyard cat', perhaps wholly or partly feral. (It is also worth noting that the tile footprints represent a similar ratio of cat to dog as the bones.)

Although the chicken bones came from Period 4 or 5 contexts, the evidence from Sheepen, Colchester, points to their presence in the area at an earlier date (Luff 1985, 148). We may perhaps imagine the farmyard populated with 'free-range' chickens (*cf.* Caesar *De Bello Ballico* XII, 16). If so it is not easy to distinguish food debris from accidental deaths, leaving bodies to became incorporated in deposits. Their bones were found in small groups unlike those of ducks and crows. The ducks could not be closely identified: one would prefer to know if they were farmyard animals or the results of wildfowling. The (carrion?) crows were presumably scavengers in the farmyard debris, it is notable that the (nowadays almost ubiquitous) sea gull perhaps may not have fulfilled this role even here at this period (see also Bate 1947, 354; Luff 1985, 148). Seabirds generally are absent, unless represented by some of the ducks.

The single fish bone hints at a resource of the villa not otherwise represented. The toad bones presumably came from an individual accidentally incorporated in the deposits.

These small bones add little to the faunal and other environmental evidence.

Human bone
by P.M. Barford

Three groups of human bone were found at Little Oakley. The first was the skeleton from grave F50 on Site I; this was not lifted or examined, so little can be said about it. The second burial was that on Site V discussed above. The third find was the single fragment of human mandible found in ditch 1 on Site IV (see I.W. Cornwall's report above). A human longbone fragment came from the topsoil on Site IV, 1962–4 excavations. These both presumably derive from the disturbance of an inhumation cemetery.

The animal bone from the 1975–8 excavations

The bone from pit C21
by Keith Dobney

A sample of animal bones from one context of the Little Oakley excavation was examined, totalling 113 fragments in all. All the fragments recovered were in a relatively good state of preservation, having suffered little from post- depositional erosion.

The resultant species list (cattle, sheep, pig, domestic duck and one other unidentified mammal) contains the standard domestic livestock that would be expected, although the small sample size allows only the most basic quantitative asessment.

Identifiable fragments

1 *Cattle:* Cattle bones are by far the most numerous recovered constituting 62% of the total (see Table 16). Most elements of the skeleton are present, those from the extremities and jaw being well represented. These fragments are the normal constituents of butchery waste and may well derive from domestic or kitchen refuse. The most frequent element to appear is the mandible, on the basis of which a minimum number of 4 individuals was calculated.

Element	*Cattle*	*Sheep*	*Pig*
Horncore		1	
Mandible	5	2	3
Hyoid		1	1
Scapula			
Humerus	1	2	
Radius	1	1	
Ulna	1		1
Metacarpal	1		
1st phalange	2	1	
Pelvis	1		
Femur			
Tibia	1	1	
Astragalus			
Metatarsal	2		
Total no. of fragments	15	9	5

Table 16 Representation of skeletal elements in pit C21

2 *Sheep/Goat:* Only 5 caprine fragments were identified, most being longbone fragments from the fore-limbs. A minimum numbers count of 2 was calculated.
3 *Pig:* Of the 5 pig fragments recovered, 3 derived from the lower jaw. These consisted of left and right mandible fragments and an isolated mandibular canine. On the basis of the mandible fragments a minimum numbers count of 2 was calculated.
4 *Duck:* Four bird bones were identified: one was domestic duck.

Unidentifiable fragments

As reflected in the identifiable fraction, the majority of unidentifiable fragments were classified as cattle sized. These were rib, vertebrae, skull and longbone shaft fragments; 41 fragments were cow sized and 28 fragments were classified as sheep sized. The remaining unidentifiable fragments fell between the size range 17–70mm. The lack of small fragments can perhaps be directly related to the absence of sieving.

Ageing information

Cattle: All but one of the identifiable epiphyseal ends from the cattle bones were fully fused, *i.e.* the fusion line being completely obliterated. Thus all these fragments indicate that the animals had at least fully matured when slaughtered. The fusion line is still visible on one right distal metatarsal fragment, suggesting an age of 2–2½ years at death.

Where tooth wear could be considered (*i.e.* in three cases) two mandibles supported the postcranial evidence by showing moderately advanced tooth wear on the permanent dentition while the third suggested a less mature individual, aged approximately 3 years since the permanent 4th premolar was in the process of erupting.

Sheep/Goat: What little ageing evidence was available for the caprine postcranial fragments all suggested the individuals were fully mature when slaughtered. These fragments included a distal tibia and a complete proximal phalange with all epiphyseal fusion complete. One mandible had moderate tooth wear: the second fragment was from a young animal with little wear on the permanent dentition.

Pig: Similarly the one mandible fragment with dentition present and the distal metacarpal fragment indicate mature individuals. However the bones of immature individuals are less robust and thus more easily damaged by post-depositional processes.

Butchery

Evidence of butchery is present on many of the fragments examined. Of the identifiable fragments all are from cattle bones. Most consist of single chop marks and are situated on the shaft regions of a radius and ulna, on the lateral neck region of a scapula and on the buccal and lingual surfaces of a mandible ramus fragment.

Five cow-sized rib fragments also showed small repeated knife marks on both the medial and lateral surfaces as did only one sheep sized rib fragment.

One cow metacarpal showed evidence of burning on the lower region of the shaft, and two other cattle sized fragments were also burnt, while two cow-sized shaft fragments had been gnawed by carnivores.

Pathology

Few pathological conditions were recorded in the Little Oakley pit C21 sample:

1 An isolated cow incisor, quite heavily worn, showed hypercementosis of the root possibly as a result of compensatory cementum growth, due to periodontal disease.
2 Aberrant wear affecting the 1st and 2nd molars was noted from the only pig dentition examined.
3 The burnt cow proximal metacarpal fragment already mentioned showed signs of the calcification of muscle insertions on its volar surface.
Associated with this was the slightly lipped appearance of the articular surface. This may suggest a particularly aged individual, or that excessive forces acted on this particular region of the forelimb during life. Animals used for draught purposes frequently develop arthropathies of the joints.
4 A sheep-sized rib had a bony growth perhaps the result of an injury.

Animal bone from other contexts

P.M. Barford with contributions by Bev Meddens

Pit C22 contained 26 bone fragments of varying sizes. Both cattle and sheep were represented, including a long slender sheep metatarsal, a sheep rib cut into a 55mm long length, a pig canine and the mandible and part of the skull of a very young piglet. A number of bird bones were also found. These were identified by Bev Meddens as: 1 domestic fowl femur; 1 immature bird longbone; 3 immature bones, possibly from one individual; scapula, radius, coracoid, all possibly from the pigeon family *Columbidae*.

Pit C23 contained 40 fragments of bone, mainly of cattle, but including a few small sheep fragments. The largest fragments were pieces of the pelvis and scapula of a large cow, while a substantially complete humerus with butchery marks was from a smaller (but mature) animal. Two cattle metapodials probably came from a third animal. A pig canine was present, as was a pig mandible with a large 3rd molar and abcess. Small mammal and bird bones were also present. These were identified by Bev Meddens.

Dog, all possibly from one small individual — a lumbar vertebra, caudal and cranial epiphyses fused — 10 ribs with proximal articulations fused, 3 ribs shaft fragments; bird — 1 unidentified shaft fragment; 1 duck (possibly mallard) femur but neither end is present so identification is difficult; 1 bird radius unidentified. The collection at AML is insufficient to identify this, but it is certainly a wild species.

Pit C26 contained 15 fragments of bone, most of it cattle, including large pieces of the scapula, mandible and skull of at least two animals, one of which had abnormally asymmetric but deep tooth wear on the right 3rd maxillary molar. Four bones of a large fowl were present, as was a chopped antler (above, BN21).

These four Period 3 pits were conspicuous because of the quantities of finds they produced, so it is interesting to look at the weights of bone from each compared with the weights of sherds (Table 17).

Feature	*Bone*	*Pottery*	*Approx. excavated volume*
C21	2.75kg	9.80kg	40% (11 cu.m)
C22	0.30kg	5.70kg	30% (2.5 cu.m)
C23	1.90kg	2.10kg	20% (4 cu.m.)
C26	1.85kg	2.40kg	50% (10 cu.m)

Table 17 Comparison of bone and pottery weights from Site C pits

It can be seen that the proportions vary greatly, and this must represent different depositional processes and origin of material in these features.

Context A5 produced twenty-one fragments (0.20kg; pottery 3.97kg) mostly of cattle metacarpals and ribs with butchery marks, but also including a few longbone fragments, and one of pig. Context A3 contained 11 small fragments (0.34kg; pottery 2.89kg), virtually all cattle where identifiable (astragalus, pelvis 3, scapula 2, rib 1, metacarpal). The robber trenches on Site C produced nineteen fragments of bone, the largest being a cattle jaw with severe calculus on the molars from C32, and a cattle scapula from C34. Sheep were also represented (0.63kg; pottery 0.65kg). Robber trench D3 produced a radius of a duck (domestic/mallard or large wild duck) identified by B. Meddens.

Context C20 was a deposit of bones, consisting of a large proportion of the skeleton of a small slender-limbed sheep aged about 3 years (fusion of proximal femur and proximal humerus epiphyses). Parts of most areas of the skeleton were present, but some of the ribs and scapulae were missing. Parts of the mandible and pelvis of a second, smaller sheep were also present. This bone deposit seems to be a scattered post-Roman sheep burial.

Context C5 contained the mandible and scapula of a brown rat, *Rattus norwegicus*. These appear to be a post-medieval introduction to this country (see Armitage *et al.* 1984, for identification and discussion). It is presumably intrusive or the context is of a late date.

Other contexts produced a little bone (A7, A8, A15, A18, C14, C15, C36, C41, D11, D14 and D15 (0.4kg)). With the exception of the latter context, all the bone was less than 200g and all in small fragments. These are not detailed further here. The bone from the topsoil has all been looked through, but is also not detailed here, as it has little evidence to add. It was interesting to note, however, the very high proportion of chicken bones from the topsoil

of Site C (21 groups at least) mostly from the backgardens of the prefabs (grids 37, 54, and 55). None were found in the excavated topsoil layers on Site A.

Discussion

Again butchery marks were present on many bones: the cattle scapulae in pits C23 and C26 had the spine cut off. The substantial piece of cow humerus from pit C23 had clearly formed part of a large joint of meat; the proximal end was chopped off and there were deep cut or chop marks at the distal end also. Pathology was rare, and limited to the examples noted above.

The other evidence from the 1975–8 bones corresponds closely with that from the Farrands excavations. The cattle showed that many animals survived a lengthy time. These were probably females kept for breeding and their milk yield, though the pathology of the cow metacarpal noted above may indicate use for ploughing or as draught animals. Defects in the dentition were noticeable in a few animals. The sheep from pit C21 were fully mature when killed, and may have been ewes kept for breeding or milk production until tooth wear or loss of incisors, or a disease of the udder (all of which sheep are prone to) necessitated their slaughter, though skeletal pathology was rare. Most of the sheep seem to have been killed as they reached maturity and meat production seems the most likely aim. The pigs were mostly fairly old, but an immature animal was present in pit C22, and may indicate that sucking-pig meat was appreciated. The bones of such animals are soft and easily destroyed, and there may have been a lot of animals killed in youth, but this still does not explain the differential survival of the skeletons of the considerable number of animals which reached maturity. Again a number of defects in the dentition were noted, perhaps indicating a feral state. Once more horse remains were very uncommon (and lack evidence of butchery and thus seem not to have been eaten though it is difficult otherwise to account for their dispersal on the site), and deer was rare, represented by an antler in the topsoil of Site C, and one from C26, chopped above the burr (suggesting a hunted animal taken between June and March, and not a shed antler).

The relative proportions of animal bone and pottery within the three pits on Site C are interesting. C21 contains large quantities of both bone and pottery (weight ratio 1:3), but C22 contains very little bone compared to the pottery recovered (ratio 1:18). C23 and C26 contained approximately equal proportions of bone and pottery. These differences must clearly represent different origins for the material forming the pit fills. The bone in pit C22 was so meagre that its distribution is not significant, that in C21 to C23 was spread throughout the fills, but in C23 the larger pieces tended to be in the upper fill. Pit C26 contained only one piece of cow maxilla in the lower fills, virtually all of the rest of the bone coming from the upper fill.

Similar records of bone/pottery ratios from other features might be revealing, as Bradley *et al.* (1978, 37–8) have shown at Dorchester. Feature A5 for example contains a surprising quantity of pottery but little bone. Feature A16, on the other hand, contains 1.72kg of pottery, but no bone, and this may be due to depositional conditions. However, as most of the pottery (2.32kg) in A5 is (presumably redeposited) prehistoric pottery (like that in A16) but most of the prehistoric pottery which was incorporated into these two features was not, for some reason, accompanied by bone (perhaps due to soil acidity or some similar agency), and the bone in A5 belongs with the early Roman pottery there. Likewise the small quantity of bone in the Period 4 rubble spread A3 may represent small pieces trampled with the occasional potsherd into the floor which already contained quite a lot of residual pottery, but again little bone. Certainly there is no clear evidence (as at Dorchester) for an increase in the proportion of bone making up finds assemblages corresponding to a decrease in the use of Roman pottery (Bradley *et al.* 1978, 37–8). The Site C robber trenches show almost equal weights of bone and pottery, but given the total volume of these deposits, the amounts are so small that it is tempting to suggest temporary abandonment of the area of the site, the bone evidence supporting the pottery.

Shellfish and other marine resources

P.M. Barford

Quantities of oystershell were recovered from the sites, which indicate that from Periods 2 to 3, and possibly 4, oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) were part of the diet of the inhabitants of the villa. Very little survives from the large quanties found on the Farrands sites, and apart from the pits on Site C, little was found on the Corbishley sites; all of this latter material was, however, kept and has been examined by the writer.

Oystershell is present in small quantites in Period 2 contexts (*e.g.* on Sites I and II and also in the ditches A5 and A16, the latter probably Period 1), but much larger quantities came from Period 3 deposits, including an 'oyster shell layer' (3) in the upper fill of the fourth and fifth recuts of ditch 1 on Site IV (exact quantity of shell unknown) and one in the Phase C fills of Site III.

The Site C pit group assemblages consisted of:

Pit C21 54 medium to small oysters (1–3 years), 3 large oysters (4–6 years). The oysters were well grown with no crowding and well spaced growth-lines. Little infestation of marine growths such as *Pomatoceros* sp. or bryzoa.

Pit C22 16 medium to small, 19 large (4–6 years). Some crowded growth rings, grown in overcrowded conditions. Very bad infestation of some valves.

Pit C23 80 medium to small, 73 large. These oysters were clearly cultivated, only two were less than two years old, most were evenly growth, infestation rare. Some were a bit crowded.

Pit C26 17 valves small to large, two heavily infested.

Period 4 deposits produced small quantities of oystershell, but it is not clear how much of this is redeposited. Period 5 contexts produced virtually none.

Oystershell is a relatively neglected subject of study, but a useful advance has been made by Winder (1980) on which the present study is based. The 1975–8 sites produced a small but useful assemblage of material which was divided into age groups. In total 183 valves were of oysters aged 2–3 years, 96 were of oysters aged 3–6 years (mostly 3–4), (if pits C21 and C23 were omitted from this total, 84 valves fitted into the younger age group, 7 in the older). The significance of this is that the oysters of 2–3 years old are currently considered as best for eating, while older animals would today be regarded as fit only for oyster stews or similar dishes. It is virtually certain that

these oysters were cultivated (at least in Period 3) and the source may be presumed to be that which supplied Roman Colchester in such quantity from the 1st century AD onwards, but a more local source need not be ruled out. Indeed it is not impossible that the Little Oakley villa itself was involved in oyster culture. The oyster shell layers noted above may thus represent discarded shells of oysters packed in barrels etc., not quantities of oysters consumed (otherwise why are such large quantities present on Site IV in the one deposit in ditch 1 without other intermixed material)?

Other shellfish were also consumed in small quantities. Whelk (*Buccinum undatum*) and marine mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) shells were present in Period 2 deposits on Site III (Phase A fishpond fill) as well as in Period 3 contexts on Site I. It appears that considerable quantities of mussel and to a lesser extent whelk were present in some layers (fifth recut, layer 3H) in ditch 1 on Site IV. Deposits A19, C21, C22, C23 and C26 each produced one or two mussel shells (total 6), while C29, C21, C22, C23 produced between one and six whelk shells (total 13). A winkle shell was found in robber-trench D3, and a cockle in Phase A of Site III.

The mussels were usually 35mm long; while the whelks varied in length, most were 35–40mm long. Both species occur locally in a number of habitats, and may both be found today for example in oyster beds. It is not clear whether they were accidentally included with dredged oysters or whether they were sought as a foodstuff in their own right.

Few fish bones were recovered from either series of excavations. There is however little doubt that a concerted programme of soil sieving would have recovered fish remains which would complement the data from shellfish.

Other environmental evidence

No environmental samples as such were taken by Farrands and only a few molluscan shells and samples of charcoal were retained.

The terrestrial molluscan remains consisted entirely of a few complete shells of *Cepaea hortensis* from the fill of the first cut of the fishpond on Site III and the fill of the Period 4 pits on Site I. These snails are fairly non-specific in habitat in this area, and are found today in grassy or generally overgrown areas. Their occurrence is thus not particularly informative. Farrands also retained other gastropod shells; but the majority were fossil *Nucella* sp. shells from the Red Crag.

The charcoal consisted of a few large pieces, probably oak, bagged with the pottery etc. Since this was such a random assortment, no further work on this material is contemplated. The presence of oak is not very informative as it is generally the most common charcoal found in archaeological deposits. No link with the modern place-name should be inferred. Unfortunately none of the waterlogged wood from the fishpond survives.

Plant remains

M. Charles

A large number of soil samples were taken in the 1975–8 excavations. These were wet-seived and floated, and examined for carbonised seeds and other plant remains. Particular attention was paid to deposits of burnt material, or containing charcoal flecks. Unfortunately the samples produced only a few fragments of cereal grain, but these were not further identifiable.

We are grateful to Mr Charles for his work on these samples, undertaken at short notice. A number of the less

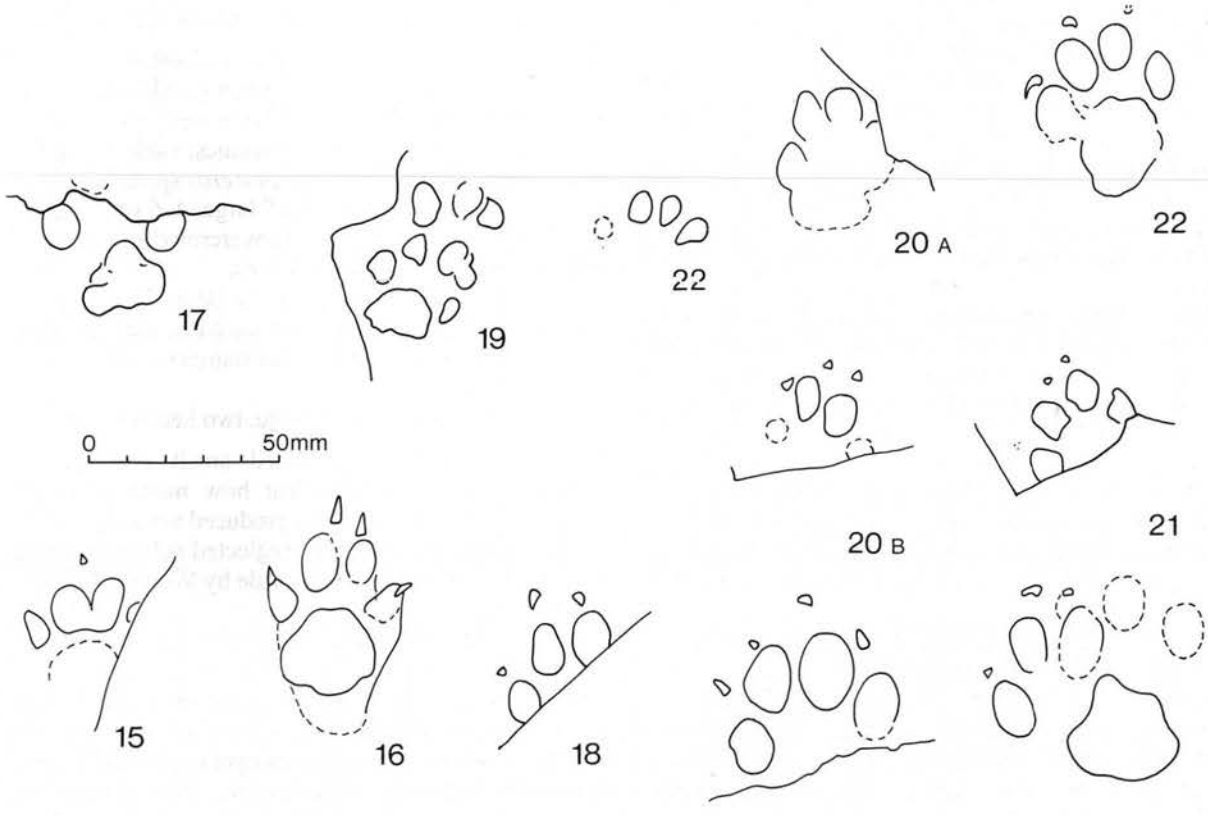


Figure 118 Animal footprints on tile (see also Figure 84). Three cat footprints (T17, 19 and 22) are shown in the top left-hand corner; all others are dog footprints. The numbers are those in the tile catalogue

promising bulk soil samples were not examined further, due to the amount of time and work involved in examining these fully.

Animal footprints on Roman tiles

In the tile report above the animal footprints found on a number of tile fragments were mentioned, here the evidence of the prints themselves will be discussed (they are presented in a 'tidied up' form in Fig. 118). Three cats and seven dogs were represented. This is typical of this sort of evidence (Cram and Fulford 1979), birds (wild or domestic) and other creatures are for some reason seldom noted. Of course this series of prints tells us nothing about the animals inhabiting the villa site itself, since the tiles were presumably not made there (the nearest known tile-kilns are at Colchester).

Cats

T17 Fragmentary print (left hind?), 37mm wide.

T19 Right hind superimposed on fore print, hind 27mm wide, 29mm long.

T22 Fragmentary print *c.* 29mm wide.

These prints came from two sizes of cat, T17 from a large animal, though not as large as some Roman cats from Silchester, where print widths of 44mm were recorded (Cram and Fulford 1979). The T19 cat was quite small, and falls into the Silchester range.

Dogs

T15 Fragmentary, left foot, width *c. 36mm originally.*

T16 Left hind superimposed on a (fore) foot print (removed from the figure for clarity). Width 36mm, length 43mm.

T18 Fragmentary, right foot.

T20(A) Two left footprints, top (fore?) 32mm wide, 39mm long; lower (hind?) 29 mm wide.

T20(B) Right print of larger dog, width 45mm.

T21 Distorted prints (as adjacent to tegula flange) two superimposed prints, the later (hind?) 53mm long.

T22 Two prints, top (left) had slipped sideways, but was 37mm wide, 45mm long, the lower (right) was 32mm wide.

Like the cats, the dogs were a range of sizes, but most were either young, or small. The dogs on T15, T16, 18 and 20A and 22 all fall below the mean for the Silchester dog prints, but the remaining two seem about the same size as the average print from Silchester. Most of the prints were from dogs with worn (short) claws.

Chapter 5. The Roman Villa Estate

I. Introduction

In this section we move away from the excavated evidence from Sites I–V to consider the potential evidence for the size and shape of the villa estate administered from the buildings investigated by Warren, Farrands and Corbishley. The important point to keep in mind is not to treat the villa buildings as an isolated phenomenon but as the focal point of a working agricultural estate. Some of the evidence used here is interpretation of the topographic data and some of the argument following may thus appear somewhat hypothetical and subjective. Nevertheless, any attempt at definition of Romano-British villa estates has to use similar evidence and arguments, which does not necessarily detract from the validity of the exercise. In fact, there are good grounds for believing that the Little Oakley villa estate can to a large degree of probability be defined, as this landblock seems to have survived fairly intact into succeeding landscapes. Not only this, there seem to be other elements of the modern landscape which are a reflection of boundaries and routes established in the distant past, some of them in the Roman period. The grounds for this belief are set out below.

The starting-point for this investigation must be the eastern boundary. In Dovercourt, just a few kilometres to the east, there is growing evidence for a Roman villa (Morant 1768, I, 499; Hull 1963, 144; Barford forthcoming d). Its precise location remains unknown, but the 18th century antiquarian notes (Morant 1768, I, 499) seems to place at least one of its buildings at TM 248 314 in Upper Dovercourt; another structure might underlie the Norman church (Barford forthcoming d). A line midway between the Little Oakley villa and either of these centres would fall somewhere between South Hall and Gravelhill House (TM 231 301 and TM 235 303). We may legitimately assume that a mutual estate boundary would run across the contours. In fact, it is precisely between these points and in this direction that the medieval parish boundary between Ramsey (Foulton) and Dovercourt runs. We will return to the possible significance of this point below.

A second possible pointer to the estate size is the distribution of the Red Hills in the area. These seem to be marshland sites for the evaporation of brine to produce sea-salt (Fawn *et al.* 1990). This was one of the natural resources exploited by these villa estates and we find a cluster 1150m below the Little Oakley villa (Farrands 1959). To the north-east, Red Hill 1 in Dovercourt parish (Fawn *et al.* 1990, 53; Barford forthcoming c) may be an outlier of a similar cluster below the Dovercourt villa (the remainder destroyed by coastal erosion). To the south-west is an apparent gap before the Red Hills of the Beaumont, Moze and Thorpe area (Farrands 1959; Fawn *et al.* 1990, 53). This therefore suggests the likelihood of the western villa estate boundary falling somewhere between these two areas.

II. Roman Estate to Medieval Parish?

(Figs 119, 120)

The medieval parish of Little Oakley is markedly rectangular in shape. The east and west boundaries cut across the contours, while the north and south sides are bounded by waterways (on the south, an ancient creek). The question of the continuity of the Roman villa estate and the medieval parishes must thus be considered on topographical grounds. There is nothing novel in such an idea (*e.g.*, Dopsch 1937). On the face of it, it is very tempting, given the evidence noted above for continuity of use of the villa site itself into the early Saxon period at least. The parish name Oakley (*Ac Leah*) is of course Anglo-Saxon (but of uncertain date) but other than that reported here no Saxon material has yet been found in either parish. In the absence of a proper field survey of this area, it is unwise to speculate further on the distribution of occupation in the parish in the Saxon period

Little Oakley is evidently however a medieval subdivision of a large elongate medieval parish (Fig. 119.D). The Domesday Book records that the Gernons, Lords of Great Oakley Hall, held land in Little Oakley in 1086, though seemingly differentiates between *Accleiam* and [*Aclem*] which may represent two separate estates corresponding to the later parishes. The date of the subdivision of the parish is uncertain. Both the churches of Great and Little Oakley contain early portions, which may go back to the 12th century, and Little Oakley church at least had a timber predecessor (Corbishley 1984). The distinction between Great and Little Oakley does not explicitly appear before 1256 (Reaney 1935, 345).

The villa site lies on the edge of the medieval parish of Little Oakley (Figs 2A and 120), and the cropmarks demonstrate that its attached fields lie both sides of the parish boundary. If we consider the position of the villa within the united parishes of Great and Little Oakley (Fig. 120) its peripheral position suggests that it is very unlikely that the Roman villa estate was simply transformed into the medieval (Domesday) parish.

Close examination of the map however reveals a more complex history, which it seems can be inferred by a process of what may be termed retrospective topographical analysis. Valuable potential evidence about the manner of formation of the medieval parishes in this area seems to be offered by the anomalous pattern of the boundaries of Great Oakley. The course of this parish boundary defines a row of three separate blocks of land with narrow necks in between (Figs 119, 120). It is also notable that these landblocks each contain an early manor. It is therefore tempting to see these as a reflection of early estates pre-dating the formation of the parish, and that the parish of Great Oakley was formed from the amalgamation of these estates. The establishment of the parish boundaries of Ramsey, and Little and Great Oakley, should probably be dated to the 12th century, as this is the date of a number of large masonry churches in the area

which surely cannot all, at this period in their architectural development, be private estate churches and must be parochial. With the establishment of the parishes, settlement structure would seem to have stabilised, though the focus of habitation shifted around over the course of time.

The 'Great Oakley Hall estate', the most easterly of these landblocks (Fig. 119.GO), has the hall slightly off-centre of a relatively large area. It lies on a landscape alignment (route?) running longitudinally through the area (which links it with Little Oakley Hall). This alignment is of great importance in the following discussion and will be referred to here as the 'Oakleys axial alignment'. The boundaries of the area are arbitrarily defined cross-contour lines, and the land falls both sides of a river valley. To the east is an area (marked '+' on Fig. 119) where the medieval parishes of Wix and Beaumont both intrude deeply into the boundaries of Oakley parish reducing it to a narrow neck at this point. It is possible that '+' was originally an early estate which later fragmented and pieces were absorbed into the adjacent estates, the effect of which was fossilised when the parishes were established. It is notable that it is on the northern edge of this area that the early medieval church (All Saints) is sited (well away from the site of Great Oakley Hall, although it is near the centre of this very long parish). The church has 12th century work in the nave (including a re-used Norman ornamented voussoir) which seems relatively large. The church stands on an anomalous mounded landform within an unusually large churchyard. There have been no investigations of the fabric of Great Oakley church, so we lack any information about any earlier predecessor of the standing structure or the form of the 12th century chancel (RCHM 1922, III,128–9; Rodwell and Rodwell 1976, 115).

The other two landblocks forming Great Oakley parish (Fig. 119.S and 119.B) are slightly smaller than the Great Oakley landblock. The first, Blunts (or Blounts) Hall is a Domesday manor, but lies off-centre. The road system of this area differs in character from the two areas previously discussed. It may be a radial pattern about the approximate centre of the landblock, near the site of the (later) Houbridge Hall, or the winding road leading through the landblock may have been made to join Houbridge Hall with the area to the west and the church to the east. A radiating road layout is of course the most efficient for an estate centre — but predisposes replanning of a landscape to suit that centre and taking no account of an earlier layout. The northern boundary of the landblock is marked by the river and the rather rounded shape seems to suggest irregular expansion of clearing from a centre.

The most westerly landblock (Fig. 119.S) has two manorial centres, Stone Hall and Skighaugh. Both of these names are of interest. Stone Hall would suggest an opulent medieval building (maybe even a Roman villa) were it not for the name of Stones Green adjacent. This is probably a personal name. 'Skighaugh' is one of few Scandinavian type names in the area (no trace of the 'Howe' (mound) of the place-name has ever been recorded and there is no trace of such a mound in the modern landscape). Skighaugh Hall is situated on the periphery of the landblock. This is important potential dating evidence. If the foundation of this marginal manorial centre dates from the period of

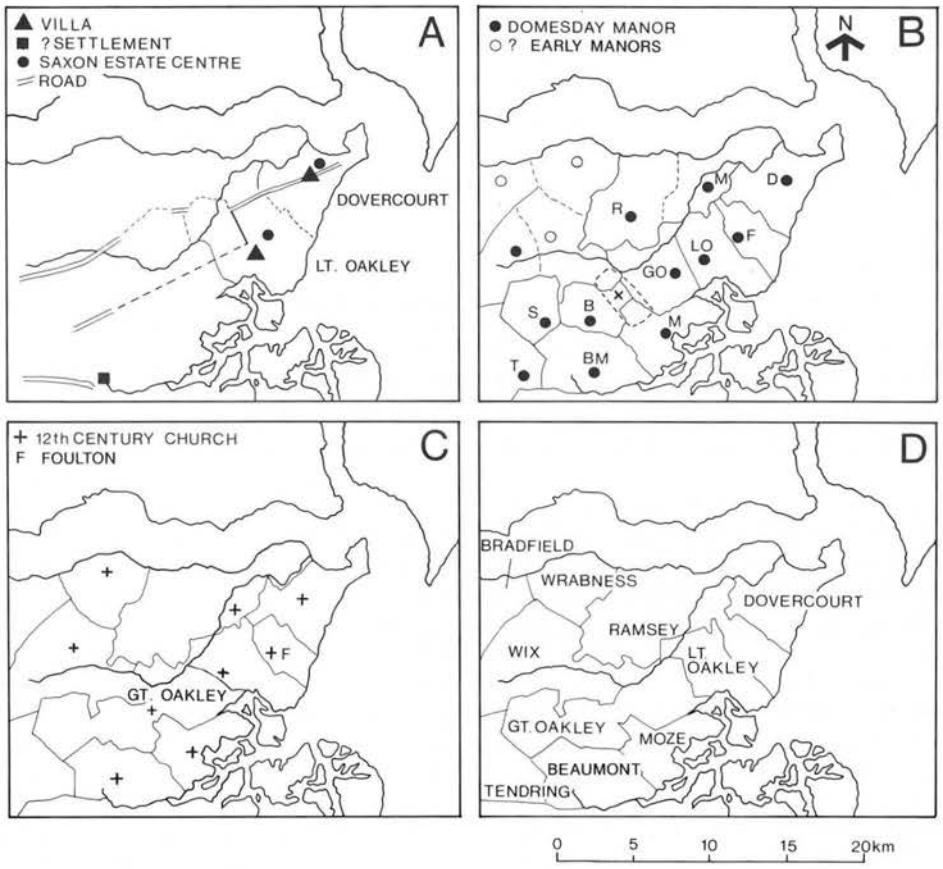


Figure 119 The probable evolution of the medieval parishes

Scandinavian settlements in the area, was this a peripheral holding in an estate of earlier origin? If so the original manorial centre of this estate is unknown, but it should be noted that the internal road system here is markedly radial around TM 160 270, lying in the centre of the landblock. The landblock differs from Blunts Hall in that its boundaries are straight or sinuous lines.

In addition to the four landblocks discussed, the later medieval parish of Little Oakley to the east (Fig. 119.LO) forms a similar unit, only slightly larger than the rest (though now containing a substantial expanse of marsh). The boundaries of the area are arbitrarily defined cross-contour lines, though the northern boundary runs along the river valley bottom. Little Oakley Hall is off-centre within the landblock and lies on the 'Oakleys axial alignment' running to Foulton and Great Oakley. Although Little Oakley Hall is a Domesday manor and appears in medieval records, the present structure is post-medieval. The church of St Mary (RCHM 1922 III, 172–3; Rodwell and Rodwell 1977, 61–2; Corbishley 1984) is isolated and stands well outside the present site of the village, on the west edge of the parish to the west of the hall. The standing structure was built of stone in the early 12th century on the site of a timber predecessor, perhaps an estate church for the 11th-century Little Oakley Hall estate. This timber building stood on an earth 'platform' about a metre high (Corbishley 1984, 21, figs 12, 14–15). This contained Saxo-Norman pottery, probably 11th–12th century (Cunningham 1984, 24 and 60–1). There was no Roman pot among the material, though the church walls contain septaria and Roman tile. There is Roman material near the church.

Further to the east of this is a similar landblock formed by the Domesday manor of Foulton (Fuletuna 'foul-tun'). The boundaries of the area are arbitrarily defined cross-contour lines. The manor was later owned by the the Filyolls of Little Oakley, but by the early 15th century had been incorporated (as an almost detached portion joined by only a narrow neck of land) into Ramsey parish. Until 1549 the hamlet of Foulton retained an independent chapel, the site of which is now unknown (Morant 1768, I, 469). Perhaps, however, it was near the hall. The relationship of this landblock to the villa is suggestive. Could the two be connected? If this possibility is accepted, Foulton has a key place in the development of the parish(es). It may be recalled that excavation on the villa site produced Middle Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery which may be related to occupation at Foulton some 200m to the north west. At some post-Roman date the site of Building 3 was used for burial. Although Foulton Hall figures in medieval records, the present structure is post-medieval. Like Little Oakley Hall, Foulton Hall was on the edge of the parish and indeed the parish boundary runs through the middle of its grounds (Fig. 2). The results of Corbishley's 1976 fieldwalking (Fig. 64) suggest that there is no Roman site under the hall, although there was a general scatter of material in the field system to the east of the villa. The marginal position of the hall in the parish is perhaps explicable in terms of settlement shift from the villa site itself. South Hall (Fig. 120) was founded at some subsequent date in the same general area. Foulton later became depopulated (Chapman and André (1777) show only South Hall, Foulton Hall and two other houses).

The question of whether parts of the Domesday manor of Michaelstowe (Fig. 119.M), now in Ramsey parish, had once formed part of the Foulton estate is not easy to answer. Certainly the Domesday manor with its 83 (formerly 150) sheep (compared to Foulton's twenty) included Ramsey Ray, and the latter would seem geographically more likely to have formed part of the Dovercourt Roman villa's resource-base than Little Oakley's. Michaelstowe was the site of the major Norman stone church (St Michael) built in the early 12th century (RCHM 1922, III 191–3) on the top of the hill.

The facts presented above support the hypothesis that both *Fultun* and [Little] *Aclei* were Middle or Late Saxon estates derived from the estate of the Little Oakley villa. In this scenario, the villa estate would have been split into two, but with its boundaries surviving relatively intact. At a later date still these two blocks of land were absorbed into different parishes. It must be emphasised that this is hypothesis based on topographical arguments only, and until disproven by further investigation would seem to be the best explanation of the known facts.

An examination of the topography of some of the adjacent parishes suggests that they too may have been formed from the amalgamation of blocks of land about 2.5 to 4km^2. If they do represent Middle or Late Saxon estates, their origin is worth considering. While some manorial sites in the area such as Beaumont (Hull 1963, 47), and perhaps Dovercourt (Barford 1986, 10–11, and forthcoming d), have produced Roman pottery, the majority have not (but again this is something which could be investigated further). There is as yet no good reason to suggest that many of these estates had an origin in Roman landholdings, and certainly none of them in this area demonstrably stands on or near the site of a Roman villa (though scattered material found in some parishes could represent small tenant farms). Indeed, as we s see below, in areas adjacent to the villa, the post Roman estate layout seemingly ignores earlier lines.

III. Relict Landscapes

(Figs 121 and 122)

In the Little Oakley area, and in Tendring Hundred in general, the modern landscape has a markedly rectilinear character and there are several axial alignments of property boundaries and roads. This seems to be an example of the phenomenon of 'relict landscapes' which have been much discussed in Essex archaeology (*e.g.*, Rodwell 1978b; Williamson 1986). No 'relict landscape' has previously been claimed by Rodwell, Drury or other workers for this area, but using methods similar to those used elsewhere in the county a very similar pattern can be produced (Fig. 121). This rectilinear pattern seems to be real and requires explanation. The evidence which is discussed below seems to suggest a considerable degree of continuity of the arrangement of the landscape in the area of the Oakleys. This pattern extends across the latter boundaries in a fashion which suggests that it is in part earlier than they are (the proposed estate and parish boundaries conform to this pattern in places confirming its priority). It is possible that this is evidence for the survival of certain elements of the ancient landscape 'fossilised' in the form of boundary and road alignments.

Figures 120 and 121 were compiled in two stages. The first involved picking all boundaries which ran straight for 400m or more, especially if two or more boundaries coincided along the same line. In the second stage a

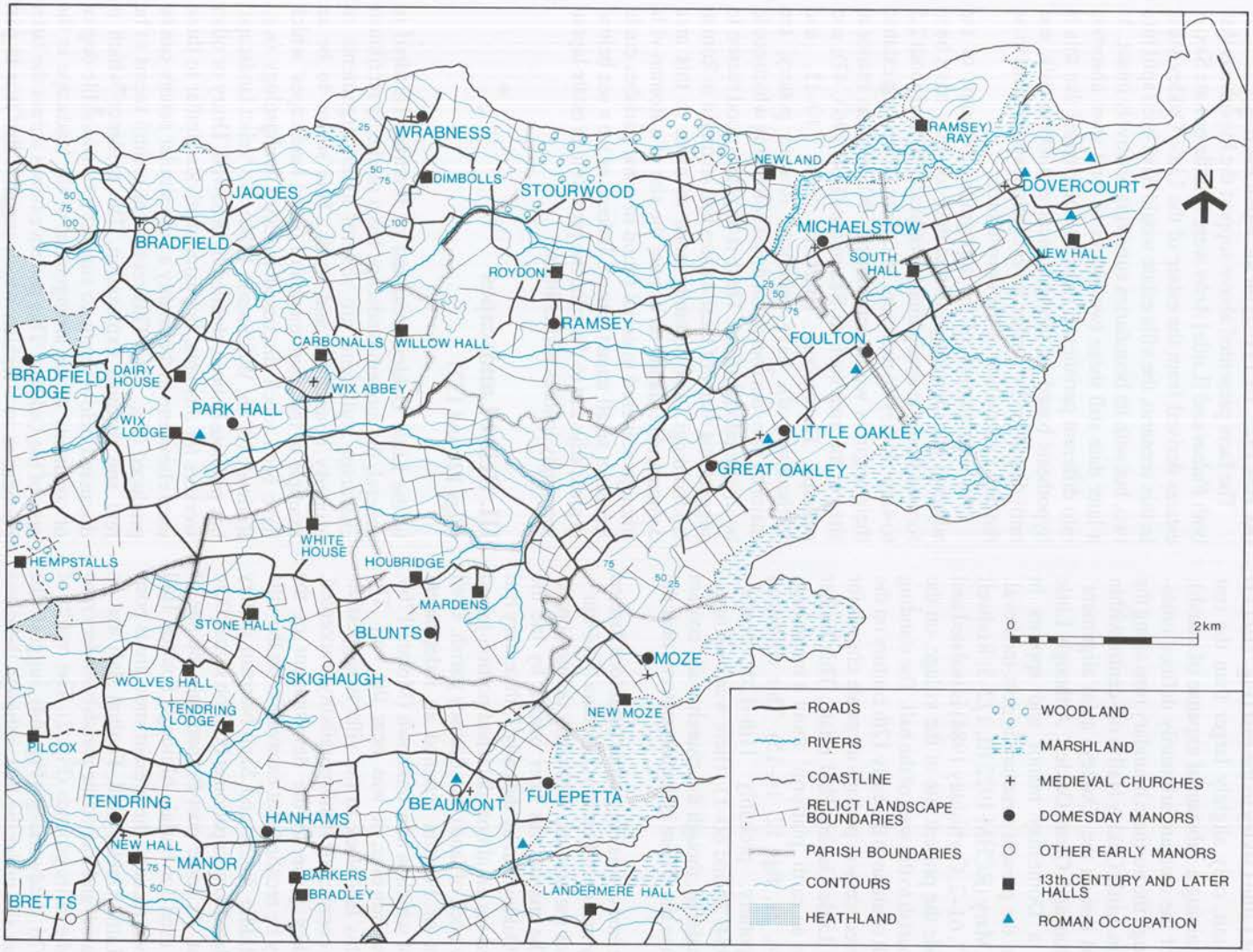


Figure 120 Parish boundaries, significant property boundary alignments, roads and manors of Little Oakley and adjacent areas

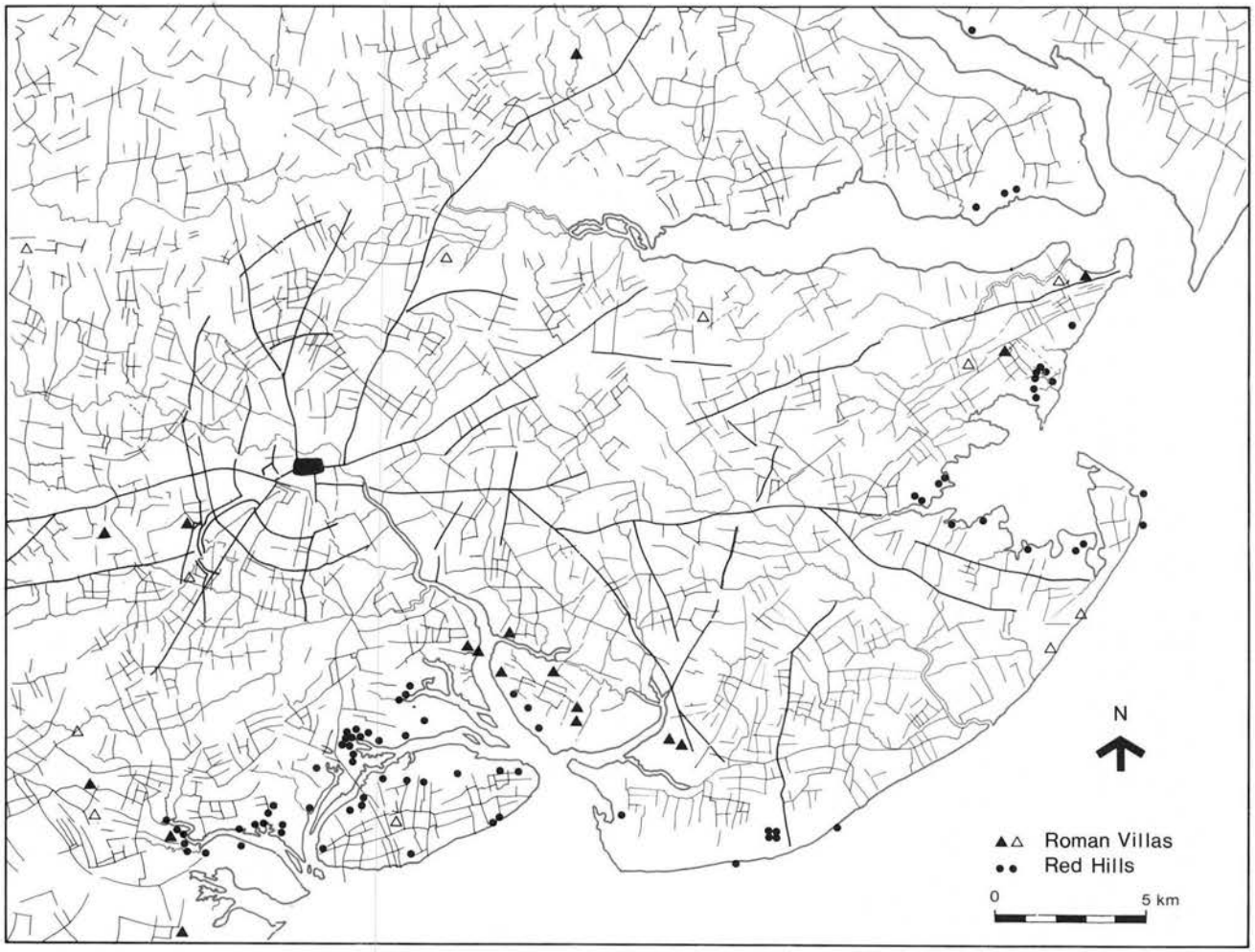


Figure 121 Relict landscapes in north-east Essex

selection from these boundaries formed the pattern in the figure. Where this can be checked from old maps (which was not possible in all cases) these boundaries seem ancient. The pattern often breaks up in the vicinity of the medieval villages. It is not claimed unreservedly that the pattern of Figures 120 and 121 represents division of the ancient landscape but it is suggestive that blocks of rectilinear land division may be perceived in the vicinity of, and running both perpendicular and at an angle to, known and suspected Roman roads. These roads are shown by thicker lines in Fig. 121 (not all of them survive in the modern landscape, some — such as the road to Mistley discovered by R.H. Farrands — are partly plotted on the basis of cropmark evidence amalgamated with that of surviving alignments). Also shown are the Colchester Dykes, and it can be seen that the pattern on Fig. 121 has a more ambiguous relationship to these.

The analysis and interpretation of this pattern requires caution. It is tempting to be lulled into thinking that simply by drawing a few lines on a modern map, one can virtually reconstruct an ancient landscape. There has also been a lack of detailed discussion of precisely what is meant by 'continuity' in the landscape (continuity of line or alignment?) and the factors which affect this. The writer believes that, although such techniques have a certain interest, the method has not (despite the claims of some workers) yet been fully proven by excavation. The cases cited by Rodwell (1978b, 90) do not, in the writer's opinion, prove his case (Barford forthcoming b; see also now Rippon 1991). The true significance of the pattern of boundaries discernible in the modern landscape shown on Figures 120 and 121 must await elucidation by further work, especially by fieldwork and the excavation of sections across these boundaries in the vicinity of occupation sites, and also the investigations of related cropmark complexes.

We may note that the distribution of these hypothetically early boundaries is uneven across the area (Fig. 121). In the west (in Lexden Hundred) and in parts of Suffolk (north of the middle reaches of the Stour), large areas of very convincing patterns exist. In much of Tendring Hundred the pattern breaks up (as it does in other areas of the southern part of Suffolk, visible on the figure). Apart from long sinuous lines which may be ancient tracks or roads (and in many cases survive in part as such today), there are two main regions of Tendring Hundred where extensive rectilinear patterns exist. The first is in the vicinity of Dovercourt and the Little Oakley villa, the second is in the large late Saxon estate of Cicc, the area now known as St Osyth and Clacton. The latter is a very large and ancient estate (Hart 1957, 30–1), possibly royal and/or monastic but certainly containing at least two Roman villas. This pattern thus would seem to have potential relevance to the question of the possibilities of the survival of the Little Oakley villa estate.

The layout of the 'relict landscape' pattern in the landblocks making up the Oakley parish is of considerable interest, it too is of uneven distribution (Fig. 120). The landblocks making up Great Oakley parish are strung-out along the 'Oakleys axial alignment', running from the villa site and passing Little Oakley and Great Oakley Halls and running to Tendring Brook near Skighaugh (TM 1590 2545). This route seems from its relationship to other features to be ancient (Figs 120, 121–3).

The 'Great Oakley Hall estate', the most easterly of these landblocks, has a well-developed 'relict rectilinear landscape' pattern (see below) within it. The rectilinear landscape pattern is very marked also in much of the later medieval parish of Little Oakley (Fig. 120). One of the axial lines of the relict landscape system (probably the 'Oakleys axial alignment') is clearly earlier than the (pre-early 12th century) medieval church and churchyard which cut across its line. In a similar manner there is a clear rectilinear pattern in the landscape of Foulton and Dovercourt further to the east. In these cases the relationship of the churches there to this line suggests strongly that the axial route was pre-Norman. This line is proposed (see below) as a Roman road from Tendring to Dovercourt, see Figs 1 and 121. The line is lost to the west of Ramsey church and only picks up again in Wix, and we may note that in this 'gap', there is a different rectilinear landscape pattern). The area of the manor of Michaelstowe has very little 'rectilinear landscape' pattern and would seem therefore to have lain waste at some period since the establishment of the pattern.

The nature of the landscape around Little Oakley Hall and church has a field-pattern which is not congruent with the 'relict landscape' pattern (area hatched in Fig. 122). There is a major alignment running through the area, but the fields around it are irregular. Is this a case of the abandonment of the area around the hall leading to the loss of the field pattern (*e.g.* in the creation of a 'Park' around the hall)? Alternatively, are the fields in this area earlier than the 'relict landscape' pattern? It seems most likely that the first option is the most likely. The hall is on the edge of the parish/estate and may have been founded subsequently in a newly cleared area.

The narrow neck between the Great Oakley Hall and Blunts Hall landblocks (marked '+' on Fig. 119) has a T-junction where the 'Oakleys axial alignment' ends abruptly and is crossed by an axial route running precisely through its centre. This runs from Wix Green (TM 180 282) down towards Old Moze Hall where it is perpetuated by a parish boundary (TM 198 265). It runs at right-angles to the 'Oakleys axial alignment' and also seems likely to be ancient. The 'Oakleys axial alignment' and the rectilinear layout are preserved to the east of the Wix-Moze axial route, but lost to the west. It should also be noted that the church is not sited with regard to these features, but on a sinuous back-road which abuts the Wix-Moze route.

Further to the west, the other two landblocks forming Great Oakley parish differ in character from the two areas previously discussed. In the Blunts Hall landblock the rectilinear landscape and through route (excepting a vestige south of Brooklands Farm) are almost totally lost. The sinuous road system is either a degraded radial layout, or the winding road leading through the area was made to join Houbridge Hall with the area to the west and the church to the east. The impression created by the layout of this estate is that it was carved out of virgin forest or scrub post-dating the rectilinear layout which continues beyond it to the west (see below). Unfortunately, this event cannot be dated.

Beyond this to the west is the Skighaugh/Stone Hall landblock (Fig. 120). This has an unusual form, as the parish boundary has straight or sinuous alignments around four of its five sides, and the fifth has a regular layout too. On the south-east side, the alignment is a continuation of

the 'Oakleys axial alignment' (Fig. 120). Skighaugh Hall, situated on the periphery of the landblock, stands almost on the line of the 'Oakleys axial alignment'. On the south-west the area is bounded by a straightish line continued in two parish boundaries (perhaps a straight route on the line between Beaumont and Mistley, though both ends of this line are lost in Beaumont, Tendring and Wix parishes). At the southern tip of the parish, these two routes join. Despite the regularity of its boundaries, the interior of this landblock does not contain a single rectilinear landscape layout and most of it seems to be 'secondary' (and many of the alignments are discontinuous at the parish boundary). The significance of the radial road system (centring around TM 160 270, lying in the centre of the landblock) has already been noted, it may signify the position of the original estate centre, but also that the layout of the whole landblock — if it had originally a rectilinear layout perpendicular to the 'Oakleys axial alignment' — had been at some time been replanned.

These arguments lead us to suspect that the present road system in the Oakleys does not seem to be Roman in origin but relates to the needs of the 'proto parish estates', but were nevertheless influenced by the rectilinear system which underlies them (see below). Few of the Domesday manorial centres lie on these roads, suggesting that the latter were not laid out merely to connect these (and perhaps thus many of these roads pre-date these manorial sites). The boundaries of the 'proto-parish estates' often follow the roads (or vice versa).

In the vicinity of the Little Oakley and Dovercourt villas (Figs 120 and 122) we can discern that the rectilinear landscape pattern forms a consistent and logical pattern. While to the south-east of the 'Oakleys axial alignment' the rectilinear arrangement of boundaries could have been dictated solely by them running perpendicular to the contours, it is notable that the same alignments are carried over to the north of that line, where the ground is far more irregular and some alignments run at angles to the contours. This is suggestive of some kind of planning (perhaps in a landscape already largely cleared) rather than boundaries resulting from random assarting. It will be suggested below that the north–south (north-west/south-east) boundaries were created between roughly parallel axes running along the peninsula.

It is extremely plausible that one of these alignments (the one passing through Ramsey by the church Fig. 122.A?, M–D) is a Roman road. The line of this road, while not accurately straight, is very direct, and is a continuation of a series of similar ancient boundary and road alignments forming a reasonably direct line running towards Elmstead Market (which — despite the relative lack of finds — seems to have been an important road junction, see Figs 1 and 121). The line however has not been perpetuated in the modern landscape along its entire length (and one of the areas where it is lost is in Ramsey Parish). At the eastern end was a Roman site at Dovercourt, the precise nature of which is uncertain (Barford forthcoming d) and at least one (substantial?) villa. This line is clearly visible in Figure 122, and in both Ramsey and Dovercourt the Norman churches seem to lie conformably on the route running through them (though Ramsey churchyard seems to have expanded a few metres southward over an earlier fieldbank visible in the meadows just to the east). At the west end the line is diverted on the slope of a steep hill at the point before it crosses the river (which old maps make clear was in the past a much wider obstacle than it is today). Presumably these factors contributed to a divergence from the intended line (either in the Roman period, or later). If we accept that this is a Roman road, attention is drawn to a straight line running perpendicular to this which runs up the hill from a point (Fig. 122.Z) to the west of Ramsey church and leads directly to the Little Oakley villa. Along part of its length it is followed by a footpath and the parish boundary, and the landblock to the east of it is divided between Ramsey and Little Oakley in a relatively complex fashion. Is this boundary a reflection of the original access route to the villa perpetuated into the later landscape?

One of the most important of the axes in the area is that running through the villa site (V–F–N–P on Fig. 122). Its extension eastwards carries it into Dovercourt parish another kilometre, to the west the line is lost just off the edge of the figure. The west end of the line is uncertain; either it ran through to 'K' or to 'T' on Figure 122. The nature of this line and the fact that both the Roman settlement by Little Oakley church (Fig. 2A.5 and Fig. 121) and the villa lie on its line might suggest that this alignment also perpetuates a road or track in existence in antiquity, possibly in the Roman period. There is however a difficulty with this interpretation, since this 'road' runs right through the villa complex and field systems, which run at an angle to its present line (see below).

Either side of this major alignment are a series of perpendicular alignments, and to the north-west a series of roughly parallel lines (A?–M–D, B–C, E–F, H–J, K–LO (–H?) on Fig. 122).

The topographical evidence from the area of Little Oakley village suggests that the primary element in this system of land-division were the east–west (north-east/south-west) lines. The road running from Oakley Cross (Fig. 122.H) towards Foulton Hall (Fig. 122.F) runs parallel to the major alignments of the relict landscape system, and would itself appear to be one of these alignments. The line is however lost at both ends. At the east, the line curves in the form of a road and cuts right across the alignments to join another one (Fig. 122.B–C) in Upper Dovercourt. This curving line apparently predates the establishment of South Hall and the Dovercourt Parish boundary which follows it. At the west the line is lost at Oakley Cross, where the alignments are cut across by a diagonal road running north–south which clearly is later than the relict landscape alignments. At its southern continuation, the road follows the major southern line for 200m, before swerving off in the vicinity of Little Oakley Hall. At its north end the road becomes a back lane running in a fairly direct line (but not conforming in precise alignment with the 'relict landscape' pattern in Little Oakley, but perhaps a continuation of alignments in Great Oakley to the west), along the crest of the hill before curving down the hill to cross Ramsey Creek at Saltwater Bridge (TM 206 290, 'E' on Fig. 122). To the north of Oakley Cross, the whole land block between the 'cross' and Burnthouse Farm has been replanned (shaded area in Fig. 122), the boundaries running parallel with the new road alignments. It is possible that this anomalous land division pattern was an attempt to create a radial access pattern within the Little Oakley estate from a focus near the medieval hall within the bounds of a previously existing rectilinear landscape. On Chapman and André's

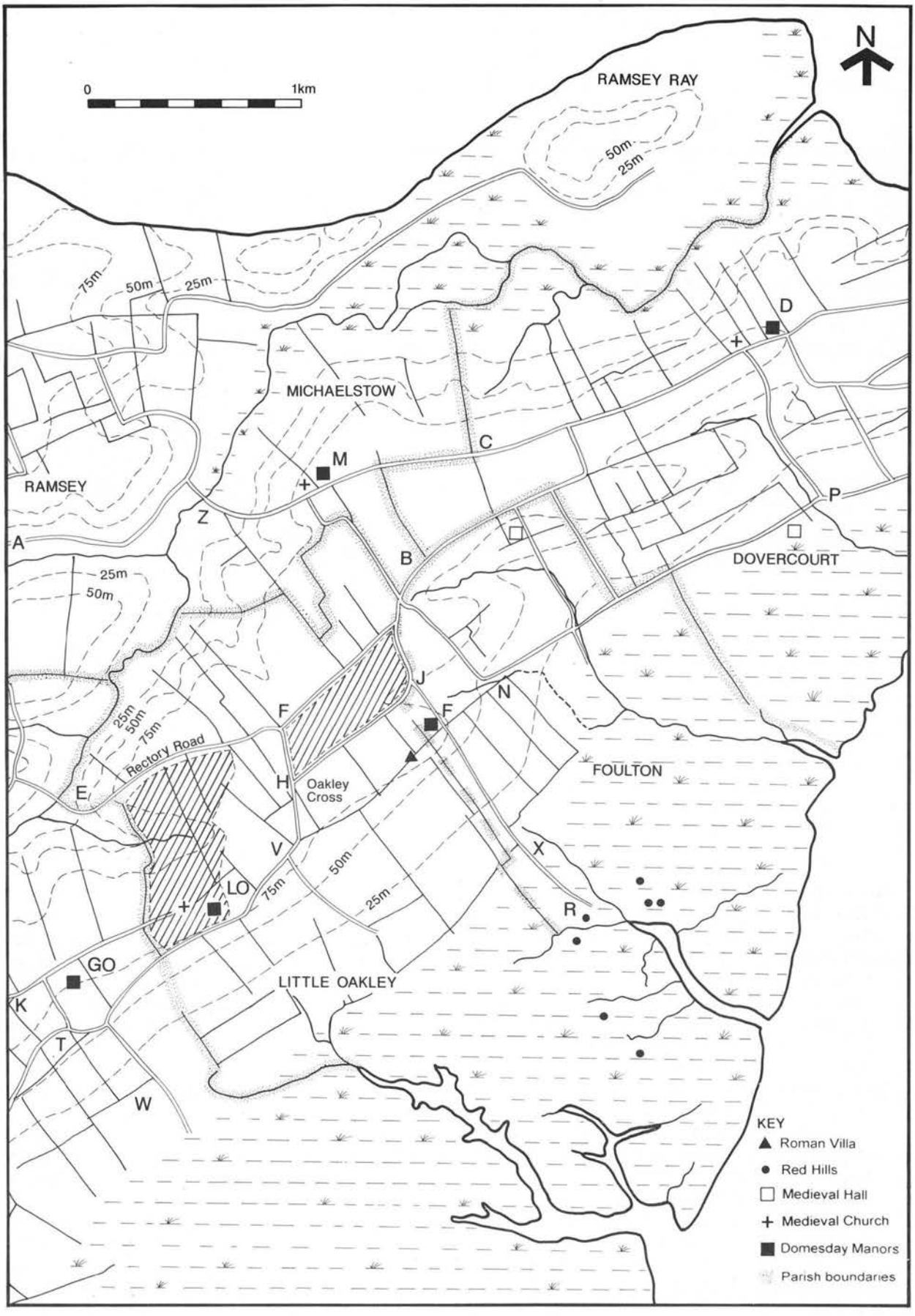


Figure 122 Relict landscapes in the area of the Little Oakley villa

map (1777, pl. IX) Little Oakley appears as a diffuse scatter of houses along Rectory Road (Fig. 122.E–F) and around Oakley Cross. The ribbon development along Oakley Road (Fig. 122.H–J) back towards Foulton Hall is clearly later.

The interpretation of the land division to the west of Oakley Cross is somewhat unclear. To the north of the hall and church the field system seems incongruous to the overall pattern and seems likely to be a later replanning, (though taking as a base-line the 'Oakleys axial alignment'). There is a sinuous line of boundaries (now a lynchet) running between a point just south of Oakley Cross and running along the crest of the hill to Little Oakley Hall and church. At a point just north of the hall, this line turns and runs to point K on Figure 122. If we examine Figure 122 it is difficult to decide whether the line K–LO is a continuation of line V–N–P diverted at some later date by the sinuous boundary referred to above, or whether the alignment V–N–P is continued by the road T–V.

Foulton lies on the major alignment V–N–P on Figure 122, just where it crosses an access route to the marshes (J–R on Fig. 122), which it is suggested may be of some antiquity, and at its south-eastern end is the cluster of Red Hills below the villa (Great Oakley Hall has a similar access route running through point 'W' on Figure 122, and a similar boundary running from Little Oakley Hall may be another such route). The estate centred on Foulton would have had other routes through it and connecting with other estate centres. As noted above, the ideal plan would be radial from the estate centre, but here this ideal was adapted to fit pre-existing landscape divisions. This may be the origin of the curving route J–B–C on Figure 122 cutting across earlier alignments at the edge of the estate.

The dating of the origin of this relict landscape system based on these parallel alignments is a difficult question, and one made more difficult by the fact that this pattern was not a phenomenon created once and fixed for all time, but a concept of land division which was perpetuated in an evolutionary development of later landscapes which either ignored or conformed to the earlier pattern. Some elements which seem to be part of the pattern could thus be later (secondary) areas of land division patterned on that of adjacent areas and thus merely a secondary extension of the pre-existing pattern.

Fortunately one of the main elements of the system is the 'Oakleys axial alignment' which has at least two points where it can be dated by 'horizontal' stratigraphy:

a) There is no doubt that the alignment K–LO on Fig. 122 was established prior to the 'earth platform' on which the Norman church at Little Oakley stands. While this alignment is part of the whole system, however, its precise relationship with the rest of the pattern (particularly line V–N–P) is unclear.
b) The evidence from the villa site seems to suggest that the alignment was not (at this point) a particularly obvious nor visible feature of the landscape when the villa buildings and field system were laid out.

The evidence from the excavations however allows us to expand on this latter point. The alignment of the lynchet north of Sites III–VI runs through the villa complex, though the latter was not in its earlier phases precisely aligned on it. The villa Buildings 2 and 3 and ditches A5 and A16 share an alignment with each other (along the contours) and seemingly the Site III pond. Various features such as Ditch A23 run at angles to these alignments. Ditches 2 and 3 and the field system on Site IV likewise do not follow these alignments. If the 'Oakleys axial alignment' follows the line of a minor road or track, it would be strange that it runs through the centre of the villa infield very close to the (rear of the) villa buildings, and runs dangerously close to the Site III early Roman 'fishpond' (see Fig. 52). It is therefore tempting to suggest that the lynchet's line was established after the villa had gone through several centuries of development. Additional support for this idea may be seen in the alignment of the Late Roman ditch 6 on Site IV, which runs perpendicular to the lynchet. Slot F69 on Site I also runs roughly parallel to this alignment. A complicating factor in this simple picture derived from the fragmentary evidence is, however, the alignment of the small ditches pre-dating ditch 3 in trench 18 on Site IV, as well as ditch 5 on Site IV. These run perpendicular to the line of the lynchet, which may suggest that a line might have been established in Period 1. It is notable that the phase D ditch on Site III also runs perpendicular to this line.

One interpretation is therefore that the alignment perpetuated in the lynchet is 4th century, another is that it is an alignment of greater antiquity which was ignored by the villa's planners who imposed the new structure over it (and the line was later re-established by projection from outside). A third option is to consider the alignments of ditches 5 and 6 on Site IV etc. as coincidence, and to see this lynchet as a much later feature post-dating the abandonment of the villa complex. The evidence is ambiguous, but it should be noted that the behaviour of this boundary in the vicinity of the villa cannot be used as evidence of non-continuity, as the evidence of the plan of the immediate surroundings of the villa buildings is still so fragmentary. Neither, however, can the data be used to prove that the boundary is Roman in origin.

IV. A Reconstruction of the Roman Estate

(Fig. 123)

It has been suggested above that the approximate boundaries of the estate of the Little Oakley villa may have survived into the modern landscape in the form of two estates into which it had at some time been split, which later became parts of two adjacent parishes. The boundaries of these estates can be discerned in the lines later fixed in the form of the medieval parish boundaries. We have also discussed the evidence for the possible survival of other elements of the ancient landscape in the form of boundary and road alignments.

The two landblocks defined by the parish boundaries of Little Oakley and Foulton form a sizeable area of land (about 7km^2) bounded on the north by Ramsey Creek, and to the south by marsh, with the Little Oakley villa lying near the centre. This can, it is argued, be taken with some degree of probability as the approximate extent of the villa estate. The area has a cross-section of a variety of soil and landscape types (mirroring that of the hypothetical Dovercourt villa estate), from saltmarsh in the south, the clay terrace slopes, and the lighter soils of the hilltop (Fig. 123). There were several springs on the estate, and on the north a large stream, the valley of which was dammed in the 18th century to drive a water-mill (Chapman and André 1777, pl. IX).

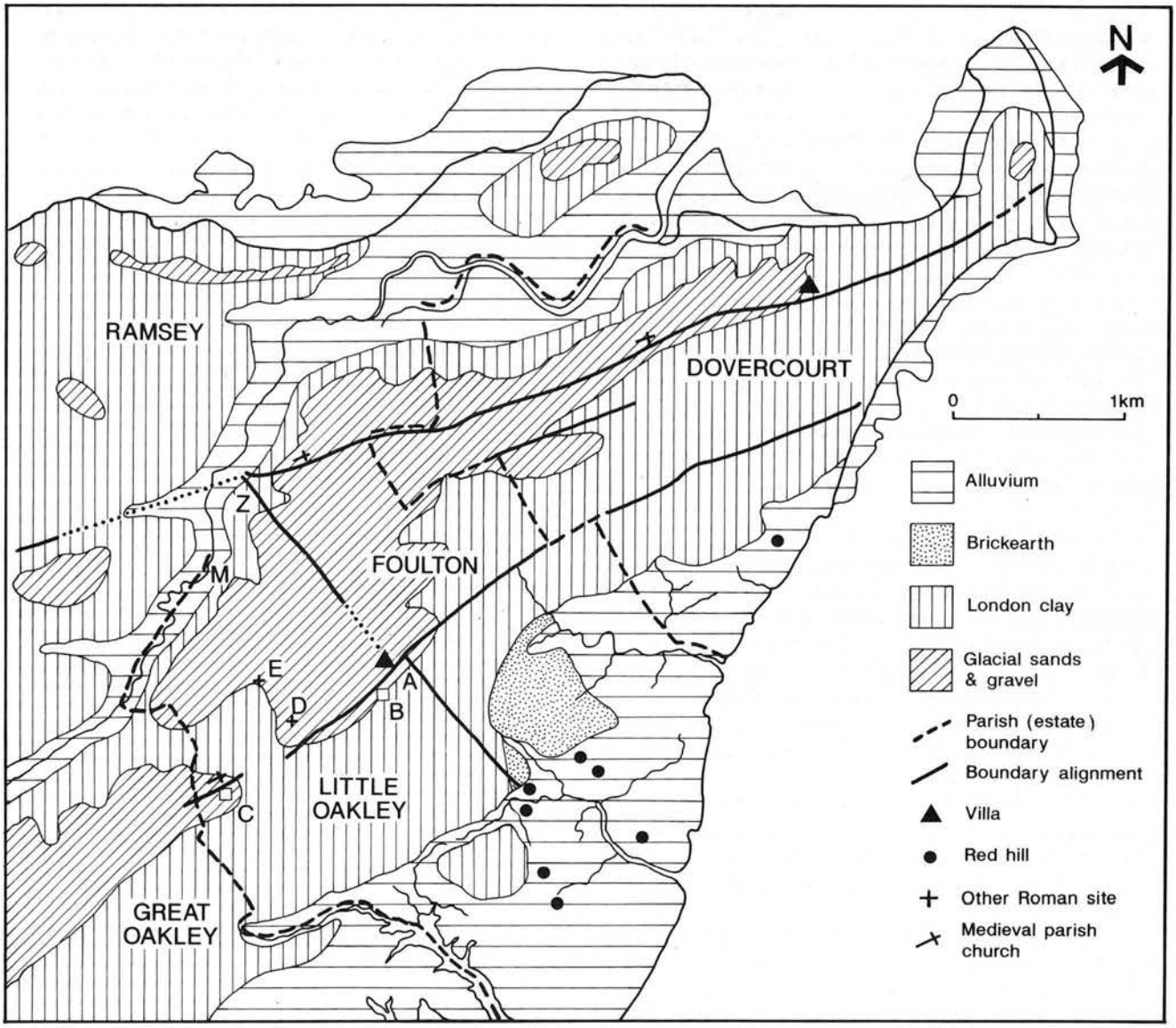


Figure 123 The Little Oakley villa estate reconstructed

The western boundary of the reconstructed villa estate runs across the contours in the region of South Hall and runs north-west to Ramsey Creek. The eastern boundary runs approximately parallel to this across the contours down to the marsh. These seem quite logical in their layout, defining a landblock about 2.3km across. There is a greater deal of uncertainty about the position of the reconstructed estate boundary on the northern (north-west) side of the landblock. The medieval parish boundaries run some 300–400m south of the present road from Wix and Ramsey to Dovercourt (the A604). It seems probable that this road is in part of Roman origin (Figs 1 and 121). Possibly the Roman estate boundaries ran up this road line or even to Ramsey Creek, but perhaps in later centuries the boundaries of Saxon and early medieval estates (forerunners of Michaelstowe and South Hall) deflected them southwards.

Within this area there are a number of Roman sites known (Fig. 2, Fig. 123). Apart from the villa buildings investigated by Warren, Farrands and Corbishley and the attached field system (Fig. 123.A), there are traces of wooden buildings recognised by Farrands on Sites II and III. There is also a spread of material in the ploughsoil to the west and south west (Site VI) which seems to represent remains of further buildings (Fig. 123.B).

Further afield there is a similar concentration of material around Little Oakley Hall (Fig. 123.C). We have seen that there was a 2nd century or later cremation burial found in about 1898 in the area between Little Oakley Hall and the Little Oakley villa (TM 2168 2884; Fig. 2A. Site 2; Fig. 123.D). The glass beads found together in the allotments 400m away might indicate another burial (Fig. 2A, Site 3; Fig. 123.E).

We have discussed the possible evidence for the Roman roads within this landblock, the Elmstead–Dovercourt route, and that running up the hill from point 'Z' to the villa. The main axial routes are marked on Figure 123. The point 'M' marks the site of the post-medieval mill, one of several possible sitings for the Roman watermill.

Another characteristic element of the Roman landscape of the area of the Little Oakley villa are the Red Hills which lie clustered around the ancient creek directly below the villa site (Fig. 123). These sites, all of which are now levelled and marked by scatters of red soil and briquetage fragments in the ploughsoil, are considered in

more detail elsewhere (Barford forthcoming c). This cluster of sites is discrete, and no other sites are recognisable in the vicinity. Their position and distribution make it extremely likely that these Red Hills are in some way connected with the villa. The pottery from two of the Red Hills at least is contemporary with the villa, while briquetage probably from these sites has been found in features around the site of the Period 2 buildings (see above). These Red Hills would thus seem to have been part of the potential economic base of the Period 2 and 3 villa estate.

These chance finds and the cropmarks suggest that it is likely that intensive fieldwalking of the Little Oakley area would reveal other scatters of Roman material in the topsoil in other areas of the parish. Unfortunately, for logistic reasons, the project of fieldwalking started by the Tendring Rescue Archaeology Group could not be continued. This may well be a valuable research aim in the future as it would increase our knowledge of the spatial arrangement of the activities within the area around the villa and associated with its estate.

Chapter 6. Discussion, Summary and Interpretation of the Sites

In this report, 'fact' and interpretation have been separated as far as is possible. The preceding text has concentrated largely on minutiae, although drawn from a broad range of potential evidence. In this final chapter an attempt is made to set the described material in its wider context, and to extract some significance from it to create a justifiable narrative, but also to provide a framework for some controlled speculation about where the archaeological evidence seems to be leading us. An effort is made to picture the villa complex itself as an entity which functioned and changed. A truly holistic view based on the archaeological evidence is impossible due to the influence of depositional and post-depositional factors on the surviving record. An additional problem is the small-scale nature of our sample and the impossibility of knowing what lies just beyond the edges of the investigated portions of the site which would be capable of linking the fragmentary evidence known from the excavations discussed here into a greater whole. Inevitably further excavation and further understanding of material already recovered is capable of changing this picture. This will be a task for future work on this important site.

The Period 1 occupation of the site has yielded an interesting assemblage of material. As yet too little of the various phases of occupation of this period has been investigated to say much about the economy or other aspects of the site. It does, however, lie on light, well drained soil, on a south-facing (if exposed) slope at the junction of two soil types and overlooking the marsh to the south with the river valley to the north: it was thus an attractive area for settlement.

The vicinity of the site appears to have been occupied several times, in the Mesolithic, Neolithic and perhaps Early Bronze Age — to judge by the flints and possible early prehistoric pottery found. There was more evidence surviving of occupation in the Late Bronze Age and Early to Middle Iron Age, consisting of pottery scatters and a few features. There is evidence that after some of these periods of occupation the site was ploughed and occupation deposits scattered or destroyed.

Belgic pottery is present, but cannot be dated closely. Most of this was redeposited in later features, but two features (pit 1 on Site I, and possibly the unrecognised feature comprising part of the 'F115' complex in the same area) seem to be of this date. The Belgic pottery is all grog-tempered (form 218A and forms X/Y) which cannot be dated very closely, but both could as easily date from the later decades of the 1st century BC as the first years of the 1st century AD. The Dressel I amphora sherd almost certainly implies 1st century BC occupation of the site and it is to this that the grog-tempered pottery from Site I should perhaps be linked. Other grog-tempered pottery and some other imports probably arrived on the site after the Roman Conquest, perhaps connected with the beginning of Building 1.

I. The Roman villa

Origin of the villa

Rodwell (1978c, 11–21) has already discussed the possible origins of the villas around Colchester of which Little Oakley is one. However, the situation may have been more complex than he allows; despite extensive excavation in the town itself, little is known in detail about the relationship between Colchester and the surrounding countryside, though a close connection may be suspected.

At Little Oakley the 1st century AD material cannot be proven to have belonged to the decades before the Roman conquest and thus continuity of occupation before and after the Roman conquest cannot be determined with certainty, neither can the question of ownership (*cf.* Dunnett 1975, 118; Rodwell 1978c, 19).

There is some Claudio-Neronian material from the site, comprising Phase 2(i), but little of it is from stratified contexts. Certainly some time by the later 1st century AD a villa[44] was built on a site which had been occupied some time earlier. This earlier occupation, probably centred around the site of Building 1, was not extensively explored and, although it included a few possible imports, there is no reason to claim that this was originally the home of one of Rodwell's 'native land-owning aristocracy'. Equally, while the inception of the villa estate may be related to the rise of the *colonia* of Colchester nearby, there is no clear evidence which will lead us to see this as the rural estate of an immigrant Roman official. Although in the circumstances the latter is perhaps more likely, we simply do not know who the first occupants were, or when and how they made their money.

The siting of the Little Oakley villa is worthy of note. The distribution of villas in Essex has been mapped on a number of occasions (Hull 1963, fig. 4; Dunnett 1975, fig. 25; Rodwell 1975, fig. 6; Rodwell 1978c, fig. 1; Drury and Rodwell 1980, fig. 22). If the position of medieval buildings containing Roman tile is also mapped (as potential indicators of the proximity of hitherto undiscovered Roman masonry buildings (Hull 1963, fig. 4 and Fig. 1 here) a striking pattern emerges. Remains of certain and probable Roman buildings are relatively common on the higher ground in the north and west of the modern county, but are largely absent from a wide curving band stretching from the Lea and Roding valleys, south of Chelmsford and Colchester into Tendring Hundred. In these areas villas are apparently scarce or absent. This is unlikely to be due entirely to lack of fieldwork. The distribution pattern corresponds particularly closely with that of the London Clay (Dunnett 1975, 99–100; Rodwell 1975, 96 fig. 6). These areas were not devoid of settlements, and still provide evidence of occupation, but clearly this did not consist of farms of the 'villa' type (though Roman brick is used in medieval churches in the area, suggesting that substantial buildings occurred in or near some of these settlements). Whether or not a different

economy, *e.g.* stock-raising, was practised in these areas is not clear, and the nature of settlement there still has to be elucidated by further work. Where villas do occur in these areas, as at Little Oakley and the other Tendring sites, they are on islands of sand or gravel capping the London Clay.

The Phase 2(ii) structures and features discussed below clearly form part of the nucleus of a villa estate. Whether or not this can be projected back to the first part of this period is at present unclear.

Building 1, to the north of the excavated area, was unfortunately not excavated, but it, or a timber predecessor, may have been the source of scattered Claudio-Neronian pottery found in the adjacent north-east part of Site C and elsewhere; it appears that the site of Building 2 was not occupied at this time. Little more can be said about Building 1. Clearly without the exploration of a wider area around the excavated sites (including the remains of Building 1) we will know little about the beginning of this villa estate.

To the south of Building 1 on Site III was a large waterhole which may be connected with livestock (the bone evidence from Site III suggesting cattle perhaps). At the beginning of Phase 2(ii) it was recut and probably revetted to form what has been interpreted as a fishpond, which is further discussed below.

On Site I a sunken-floored feature appears to be an agricultural building. The interpretation and parallels have been discussed above. It is likely that this pre-dates the Phase 2(ii) Building 2 constructed over it. Its fill contained a kiln firebar.

The Phase 2(ii) villa

The dating of the construction of Building 2 is discussed above. The Flavian date given to the earliest villa occupation by Farrands is provisionally assigned to Building 2 — at any rate it seems to be pre-early/mid 2nd century. Several other Essex villas seem also to have had a late 1st century origin as establishments (though not necessarily as masonry buildings); *e.g.* Rivenhall (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986), possibly Ridgewell (VCH III, 171), Fingringhoe II (*ibid.*, 131) and Alresford (*ibid.*, 37–8),[45] the connection seen by Rodwell (1978c, 18) between the statement by Tacitus (*Agricola* XXI) and the archaeological evidence here may be apposite. At Little Oakley however, the earliest excavated structure (*i.e.* Building 2), may not necessarily have been the first building on the site.

Building 2, despite its timber construction, was quite elaborate and in a classical style and finish (as evidenced by the white plaster in the sleeper-beam trench fills). A considerable amount of materials, *e.g.* seasoned wood (Dunnett 1975, 122) and labour was involved in its construction; its function is nevertheless uncertain. Since there is no evidence of transverse division of the central area, the building is not a corridor building in the strict sense of the term. The excavated features seem to suggest some form of aisled structure. Aisled 'houses' occur at Llantwit Major for example (Nash Williams 1953; see also Liversidge 1968, fig. 103). Aisled agricultural buildings occur at Lullingstone (Meates 1979, 111–18, fig. 27) and Winterton (Goodburn 1978, 96, fig. 31, Buildings A, M, P and Q), while other aisled 'halls' may have had various functions, as at Gorhambury (*Current Archaeol.* 87, 119–21). See Hadman (1978) for aisled buildings generally. In the case of Building 2, the white plaster (unless it was an external weatherproofing layer) perhaps makes it less likely this building was purely agricultural in function.

Building 2 lay to the south-west of the position of the unexcavated Building 1, and together these buildings would seem to have formed an L-shaped complex on the hill crest, apparently facing north and east. There is no evidence from fieldwalking of any structures closing the sides of the open area in the fields to the west, and it seems unlikely that there was one on the north, especially regarding the negative evidence from Site B. Building 1 may have been a dwelling at this period, if not the main dwelling. Leading from the east end of Building 2 was a ditch A5, which seems to follow the line of an earlier ditch A16, perhaps along the front of a hedge. A5 contains pottery which seems to be Period 2. Further to the east are the field ditches (2 on Site IV) with similar dating to the ditch A5, and probably part of the same system. The first three recuts of ditch 1 on Site IV contained pottery which seems to belong to the last decades of the 1st century and thus to Period 2. The line of this series of ditches coincides with the boundary between the light soil on the top of the hill and the heavier soils of the slopes. It thus seems probable that these ditches mark the infield-outfield boundary of this estate.

Outside the line of these ditches was the deep steep-sided water-filled feature (feature 6) on Site III. There is some evidence that it lay open for some time and probably had revetted sides; it does not therefore appear to have been simply a quarry for clay (as its predecessor may originally have been). It is suggested that this feature was a fishpond. Fishponds were features of classical farms as described by Varro (*Rerum Rustica* III xvii, 2) and Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* IX, 80–2) but it is perhaps not unexpected that they should also have been in use in this country. There was no doubt profit to be made from fish as from any other livestock, as the references in Pliny demonstrate. Clearly this feature with its steep sides was not suitable as a watering-place for livestock, and seems too deep for a manure or retting pit (*Columella* I vi, 22), and too wet for the former. Its situation implies that it was meant to be water-filled, and a pond for breeding and keeping fish seems to be the most likely explanation for this feature. The dimensions, while clearly substantial, are uncertain. It was almost 2m deep (though the original depth of water is uncertain) but its length and breadth are unknown. There may even have been other similar features filled by the outflow of this one downslope on the clay outside the excavated area.

Ornamental pools could have formed part of formally designed gardens, but the Little Oakley pond was apparently at the back of the villa and outside the outfield boundary. This would seem to disqualify it unless, as Cunliffe (1971, 132–4) suggests for Fishbourne, one envisages a park-like landscape on the slopes leading down to the water. It is more likely from the other evidence of the use of this area at this time that the Little Oakley pond had a more prosaic use.

Artificial ponds are not particularly common on Romano-British villa estates. Ponds have been found at villas at Shakenoak (Brodribb *et al.* 1978, 15–19), Eccles (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986, 41 and 32) and Gadebridge (Neal 1974, 68–75) though the latter is best interpreted as a swimming pool attached to a bath-suite. Another pond

was found at Braintree (Drury 1976, 104) and at Bancroft Villa (*Britannia* 1986; 1987; and E. Black, pers. comm.); see also Rivenhall (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986, 59). The Shakenoak and Braintree ponds were shallower than that at Little Oakley, but the sequence of filling seems similar.

It is unclear whether the Little Oakley pond was constructed to raise fish purely for consumption on the villa estate (bearing in mind it is on the coast anyway), or whether the fish were exported (either 'fresh' or cured). No tools or other structures which could be associated with the breeding of fish were found, excepting perhaps the pierced pot (Fig. 102.35) which, if the analogy with Shakenoak is accepted, may have been breeding chambers or a refuge for baby fish.

Another possible function for this pond could be for the temporary storage of shellfish, particularly oysters, caught in the estuaries around the coast. The oystershell layer in the Phase C fills of Site III or the fill of ditch 1 on Site IV may be debris from the processing of this product, but these layers were much later than the use of the fishpond.

Other features of the economy of this villa probably differed only slightly from the economy of the Period 3 villa discussed below. The estate was presumably self-supporting in most things, but probably also produced an agricultural surplus to support the growing *colonia* at Colchester. It is to the origins and growth of this town that the fortunes of this villa estate may be linked.

Apart from its agricultural production, the villa was also involved in other manufacturing processes. Attention should be drawn to the fired clay object FC11. 'Belgic bricks' seem to have been some kind of kiln furniture (Barford forthcoming a), and it seems that they date to the decades around the Conquest. This fragment may indicate pottery production on the site in the Late Iron Age or Early Roman period, (see also FC12 and FC13).

The fired clay briquetage of Essex Red Hill type found on the site also seems mostly to belong to Period 2. The Red Hills below the site (Chapter 5) seem, from the pottery recovered from them, to have been run by the Period 2 villa and indicate the manufacture of salt from sea water on some scale (see also Barford forthcoming c). The earliest pottery from Red Hill 10 is Flavian (or even pre-Flavian) and this site and some of the adjacent ones may be contemporary with the Period 2 villa, but seem to have continued in operation into its Period 3 at least. The clustering of the Red Hill sites below the Little Oakley villa (and possibly the presence of briquetage from the villa site itself — see The Fired Clay artefact report) suggest a close connection between the villa and these salt-production sites. It is suggestive that the creek on which these sites were situated was in the centre of the marshland included in the zone exploited by the villa. While this is not the place for further general discussion of Red Hills, Rodwell's (1979, 161) suggestion that salt production sites were abandoned in this area in the mid 1st century AD at the behest of Roman immigrants is surely a bit far-fetched. The north east Essex villas were probably not solely 'holiday retreats', but working establishments like most other Roman villas. Salt was undoubtedly one of the local natural resources to be exploited. Red Hills Nos. 7 and 10 at least were in operation during Period 2 and Phase 3(i) of the villa's history. They were clearly part of the economic base of the villa estate, and could have produced yearly a considerable amount of salt (see Rodwell 1979, 159 for a very approximate idea of the scale of this industry). Whether a large proportion of this salt was used on the estate (*e.g.* for curing meat or fish) or alternatively exported for use elsewhere is open to discussion. The clustering of the sites below the Little Oakley villa suggests that other villa estates may await discovery at similar locations where there are such clusters (for example at Beaumont or Bradwell on Sea), though as yet no concentrations of inland Roman occupation are known to account for the Langenhoe–Peldon–Goldhanger Red Hills. It remains to be seen if this is due to lack of fieldwork, or whether the industry was organised on a different basis in these areas.

The Period 3 villa

Building 1 may have remained in use through the early part of the period at least. The precise nature of its occupation is uncertain, but it seems to have been a structure with substantial masonry foundations, according to Warren. It is unlikely that these foundations belong to the Phase 2(i) structure, as pre-Flavian masonry is extremely rare in the countryside of the south-east. Building 1 may have been rebuilt in masonry at the same time as Building 3. If, as has been suggested was the case with the pottery, the other debris in C21 came from Building 1, there is potential evidence that part of Building 1 was rebuilt in the middle of the 3rd century (see below). The debris from these alterations demonstrates the opulence of the original building, and the foundations observed by Warren indicate that the building may have been (in its later phases at least) probably quite substantial.

Building 3A was constructed, probably in the mid to late 2nd century, over the demolished timber building (Building 2). It is not known if the latter was in a state of disrepair or not (if not, the date of construction of Building 3A could be earlier). In the early to mid 2nd century, several other Essex and East Anglian villas were also either constructed or refurbished, *e.g.* Alresford, Ridgewell (relief-patterned flue-tiles), Rivenhall, in Essex, as well as Ipswich (Castle Hill), Exning, Pakenham, Stanton Chair in Suffolk and others (Moore 1988, 47–51; C.J. Going and E. Black, pers. comm.). It seems Little Oakley could be a late example of this phenomenon. Before passing judgement, however, one would have to understand more fully what happened to Building 1 at this time.

Building 3 was on the same alignment, and in roughly the same position as Building 2. However, it was probably much larger and more substantial. Farrands noted a straight-join in the foundations of walls 3 and 9. While this may be due to the order of construction of two contemporary walls, although it is difficult to be certain[46] it seems more likely that the north–south walls may be an addition to a former simple aisled or corridor structure (Building 3A). The dating of this subdivision (the subdivided phase termed Building 3B) is difficult since there are no associated layers. The small sherds of Central Gaulish samian and flagon (Fig. 102.32) only provide a 2nd century *terminus post quem* for the pipe and drain trench on Site 1, which seem to relate to Building 3B. Possibly a mid 3rd century date is implied, before the late 3rd century refurbishments represented by pits C22 and C23.

Building 3B was a strip-house with a corridor back and front. There was a central block of rooms, which at the

west end had apparently been converted to a bath suite, the back corridor being divided and forming Rooms 10–12. The front corridor was also divided at some stage. It is not clear if the front corridor formed a verandah in Building 3B or not: the alterations to the back corridor would have precluded this at the west end at least. The central block may even have been two-storey. The shallowness of the foundations need not, as Rodwell and Rodwell (1986, 34 and 45) remind us, indicate a flimsy single-storey structure. Indeed, Room 12 may have held a staircase.

Most of the remains recovered (from Sites C, D and Site I) relate to Building 3B, and not to 3A. It is thus difficult to say anything about the earlier structure, beyond the obvious fact that it had masonry foundations. Building 3B had some walls (to judge from the impressions on the back of the plaster in the fill of pit C26) of masonry with flue-tile jacketing and plaster fragments from pit C22 had flat back surfaces, possibly from daub walls. The roof was tiled, and some rooms were decorated with painted wall plaster. At least one room had a hypocaust, and some of the other features on Site I seem to suggest a bath suite here. If so, since most bath suites in Romano-British villas seem to be at the 'back' of a villa block, this perhaps confirms that Building 3B faced north and east. The Purbeck marble sheet fragments in pit C26 probably also came from Building 3B (though it may have been re-used there from Building 1). In its later phase at least Building 3 was thus quite a comfortable habitation.

The evidence from the four pits on Site C (C21, C22-3 and C26) needs to be assessed. The fills differed considerably in their finds content, but most contained varying amounts of building debris. This seems not to be demolition debris but (reworked) material from alterations to the various masonry buildings. The four pits together produced a very large proportion of the finds from the site.

Pit C23 was anomalous, and is discussed first. It contained equal quantities of bone and pottery, very little tile, and a little painted wall plaster. The pottery was very similar to that in C22. The pottery suggests that the two pits were open at the same time, or at least contain pottery derived from the same source. The material in the upper fill of C23 was probably contemporary with the material of the lower fill of C22, thus establishing the sequence. This suggests that as C23 was being filled the plastered interior of a room in Building 1 or 2 was being redecorated, but at a later period the wall-flues of a hypocaust were removed or replaced, as the tile assemblage in C22 was mostly of flue tiles. The link between the plaster in C23 and C33 suggests that this material comes from the north range of Building 3, and the pottery suggests a date of mid to late 3rd century for these alterations. C22 has a low bone to pottery ratio, but contains unusually large amounts of pottery.

Pit C21 had large pottery assemblage which contained much Phase 2(i) material mixed with it, but the deposit dates to the mid 3rd century and marks the transition between Phases 3(i) and 3(ii). The feature contained much painted wall plaster, some fragments of window-glass and mosaic, and much tile and shaped mortar, nearly all of it from a roof. The pit had a low bone to pottery ratio, perhaps indicating a low content of occupation debris. It has been suggested that the Phase 2(i) pottery derives from disturbed deposits elsewhere on the site, perhaps north of Site C, and thus associated with the unexcavated Building 1 which Warren's notes clearly place in this area. The debris in this pit indicates the rebuilding of a hypocausted room, with replacement of not only the roof and part of the wall-jacketing, but also the floor. The low proportion of flue tiles probably indicate that they were re-used. If so, this may suggest that the debris in Pit C21 came also from Building 1.

Pit C26 contained much tile, mainly flue tiles, and contained shaped mortar from a roof (though few roof tiles). The tile fragments were quite large and many were burnt (type unspecified in tile report). The feature had a low bone and pottery content. The pottery dated to the late 3rd or early 4th century. The painted wall plaster was a complex mixture of six groups, but mostly (like the tile) came from the upper fill (C26-2). The plaster matched some from two features (C34, C36) in the middle block of Building 3, indicating that the hypocausted room from which the plaster tile had come probably lay somewhere here. The fill also contained pieces of Purbeck marble wall sheathing.

The rubble on Sites II and III and scattered in the ploughsoil around them may, to some extent, derive from the same activities as that in the Site C pits, but some of the material on Site III comes from deposits which are earlier than these pits, and the Period 4 rubble spreads are clearly later.

It is suggested that three phases of building alterations in the 3rd century are represented by the Site C pits, and the debris clearly represents substantial structural alterations. The debris in the fill of pit C21 which included the demolition material of a roof, which together with graffiti on some of the plaster, possibly implies that the building from which it came (Building 1?) had been vacant for a while before it was refurbished.

Some time after this pit C23 was filled with debris from an unknown source (perhaps also Building 1?). Pit C22 was then infilled, first with material from the northern corridor of Building 3, and then with some other material, presumably also derived from Building 3. The presence of 'Egyptian Blue' pigment in these pits suggests this debris comes from redecoration and not demolition. A while after this, the central block of Building 3 was also altered and the debris dumped in the upper part of pit C26. The presence of Purbeck marble veneer in this feature may imply its use in Building 3. However, most other instances of use of this material in the south-west seem to be Flavian or earlier and it occurs in early contexts in the *colonia* at Colchester (Crummy 1984, 29). The mosaic fragments from pit C21 and Site I are of interest. Mosaics in Colchester date from after AD 150–200 (E. Black, pers. comm.). Few Essex villas had mosaic (as opposed to tesselated) floors and the fineness of mosaic 5 hints at a high degree of opulence in one building at least. The slight remains surviving of Building 3 belie the true scale of the decorative skill lavished on the complex as a whole.[47] Indeed it seems likely that the Little Oakley villa was occupied by a family of quite considerable wealth in Period 3.

It is not possible to do more than speculate whether or not it was the same family owning the villa estate in this as in the preceding period. The only possible pointer is that the villa cemetery may have continued in use from the (probable) 1st century cremations represented by the whole pots on Site IV to the undated but probably later inhumation on Site V. These burials may indicate a larger cemetery in this area. The scattering of the probable

cremation accessory vessels and human bones on Site IV may, however, imply ploughing or desecration of the cemetery at some stage which may imply a change in ownership.

If the pits on Site C have been interpreted correctly, it would seem that Building 1 was vacant for some time. It is not clear whether or not Building 3 was also vacated. In the absence of further evidence, it will be assumed here that occupation of the site as a whole was continuous. It is possible that prior to this Building 1 was the main residential block and that Building 3A was subsidiary to it, perhaps an aisled hall for the estate workers. Building 1 was perhaps subsequently abandoned and it may be that the postulated conversion of the aisled hall into a residential block took place at this time, perhaps for the occupancy of an estate bailiff, or the original owners in much reduced circumstances.

In the mid 3rd century it is suggested that Building 1 was either demolished, or more likely (since certain types of building debris are absent) refurbished, and the debris buried in an open pit, possibly a quarry or borrow-pit (C21) near the villa (see also spread K5 on Site II). A few decades after this the decorative scheme of Building 3B was renewed in several stages (pits C22 and C23 and C26). These renewals were taking place probably some time in the late 3rd or 4th century, but the villa buildings were (on the evidence of A3) being demolished at least by the early 5th century.

Perhaps one can see in the various changes apparently occurring in the status of Buildings 1 and 3 the changing circumstances of the villa occupants. It is possible that the people living in Building 1 and initially associated with the construction of Buildings 2 and 3A were the villa owners, and not an estate bailiff or overseer. At some stage it may be suggested that Building 1 was vacated, the owners living elsewhere (perhaps Colchester or another estate) and the farm was run by a bailiff — who may have lived not in the original owner's dwelling, but in Building 3A.[48] At some stage the aisled Building 3A was apparently converted to a dwelling (Building 3B). Later on the estate perhaps changed hands and Building 1 was re-occupied, after some modifications. Building 3B however seems also to have been inhabited, and was also altered. Perhaps this is an example of a joint proprietorship (Smith 1978, 150–4) in this later period.

Outside Building 3 to the south was a Crag-metalled yard, but there was no surviving evidence of metalling on the north and west sides. In the first part of Phase 3(i) the infield-outfield boundary represented by ditch A5 was probably still visible. In the outfield to the south the Period 2 fishpond was a marshy hollow, which was infilled and later drained (Phases C to D on Site III). Possibly connected with this drainage system in some way was the deep ditch A23 which cut across the earlier infield/outfield boundary. Pit 1 was dug on Site IV outside the boundary, probably as a quarry. In this area Ditch 1 was cut and recut, following the line of the earlier ditch 2. It is not known which other of the ditches known only from cropmarks were of this period.

Phase 3(ii) has been discussed above. In this phase Building 3B apparently had a piped water supply, to which a number of pipes and drains on Sites I and III were probably connected. The possible sources of this water and the significance of the water pipes have already been discussed. Apart from Buildings 1 and 3B, to the south (and on a slightly different alignment) was the timber building represented by the rubble raft of Site III Phase F. The field systems to the south-east of the villa buildings were also re-organised (ditch 3 and ditch 6). The latter at least cut across the earlier alignment. It is not clear whether the lynchet and putative trackway in front of it (Chapter 2.IX) were laid out at this time, or whether they are features of later origin

Economy of the site

The general distribution of pottery and tile in the ploughsoil around the villa is shown in Figure 2B. We already know that some of this may derive from timber structures along the crest of the slope, but much of it probably also derives from the manuring of arable land by farmyard midden material. The sharp drop-off at the boundary of the heavier soil is particularly suggestive, as is the relationship between the pottery scatter and the general line of the proposed infield-outfield boundary.

The clay land to the south of this boundary is relatively fertile and, being on a slope, is not as inclined to waterlogging as it would be elsewhere, but it seems that it was not used for arable. With so much lighter soil around the villa and given the evidence for a mixed economy (below) it is perhaps not surprising that the heavy soil was apparently not ploughed. Probably this land was used for pasture, although some of the slope may have been wooded and used for pannage for the pigs.

The marsh below the site was also utilised, not only for salt production, but also probably for summer grazing. The briquetage found on the hilltop in early Roman contexts may have been taken there as salt licks for livestock wintering nearer to the villa, as access to the marsh would be restricted in winter. Although most of the pottery from the Red Hills seems to be Period 2, some of it is clearly Period 3, and these sites presumably continued production.

The types and proportions of livestock kept on the estate have already been discussed above. During the period of occupation of the villa, the proportions of sheep, cattle and pig altered slightly. There may have been an increase in sheep farming at the beginning of Period 2, but after that the proportions of sheep decline, and cattle remains become more prevalent. Pig remains are well represented throughout the period. The bone remains show a range of domestic animals (including pets). Sea fishing and oyster culture may also have been practised (Dunnett 1975, 123–4). It is unfortunate that there were few remains preserved of the plants cultivated on this estate in what was clearly a mixed economy. While few remains of legumes or other vegetables need be expected, there was evidence for cereal farming in the form of some carbonised grains, as well as the straw and chaff preserved in the briquetage (both from the villa site as well as from the Red Hills to the south).

Quern fragments were not, however, particularly common, given the volume of deposits excavated, and the millstone (ST6) hints at one possible reason. Much of the cereal could have been processed away from the villa site, perhaps even at a water-powered mill on Ramsey Creek. If such a mill existed on the Little Oakley villa estate it would probably have lain somewhere near *c.* TM 212299, the site of a watermill of a later date. However, the mill could equally have been powered by animals.

The evidence from fieldwork and topographical analysis gathered in Chapter 5 concerning the surroundings of the Little Oakley villa allow a relatively full interpretation of the landscape and its development, though it is only with the formation of the villa estate that we may begin to discern a pattern, reflected in features surviving into later landscapes. The possible boundaries of the villa estate are discussed above. It is not known if these boundaries may refer to the earliest villa or are a reflection of its later development. The Roman villa estate which can be hypothetically reconstructed by retrogressive topographical analysis is a rectangular landblock 2.7 × 3km in dimensions, with the villa buildings in the centre. To a large extent the shape of the landblock is defined by the natural topography, the creek on the south edge, the stream on the north, and the two sides of the estate run perpendicularly across the contours between the stream valley and the sea. The area defined by these boundaries contains about 268 hectares (604 acres) of arable land and about the same quantity of marsh. Applebaum (1978, 192) discussed the presumed manning requirements of an estate of a given area, using figures derived from Columella (II.12.7) and several 18th and 19th century sources. These give figures of between six and eight people for 120 acres of agricultural land. Thus the Little Oakley estate would probably have required about 30 workers[49] to operate it, and while these figures are unreliable in detail, they give an idea of the sort of workforce required. In the case of Little Oakley, there may have been more than fifteen to twenty family units of workers attached to the estate. These people cannot all have lived in Buildings 1 and 3B (though Building 3A may have accommodated a number of people) and other buildings may be postulated. Indeed the timber structures such as that on Site II and Phase F on Site III may indicate the sort of buildings which were inhabited by these estate workers and their families. The scatter of pottery, tile and other rubbish along the crest of the slope running westwards from the villa hint at other buildings in the vicinity of Building 3, possibly the dwellings of estate workers. The evidence of pottery and burials from elsewhere in the parish hints at other buildings to the west near the church. Their relationship to the villa estate is uncertain (*cf.* Dunnett 1975, 105–8). Perhaps the Little Oakley Hall site was a tenant farm on the estate.

The territory of the villa estate contained a variety of land types. Good arable was available over much of the area inland, while pasture and pannage for pigs may also have been available there. The area of arable, pasturage and woodland in this area cannot be determined (in any case the changing ratios of bones from the villa excavations suggest that these proportions may not have been static during the period of functioning of the villa). Much of the marshland would have been suitable for pasture, and the siting of the Red Hills demonstrate that (unlike much of Essex coastal marshland) the alluvium below the villa had already accumulated prior to the early Roman period. The Red Hills also seem to be well sited with respect to the modern access-routes to the marsh, and it is possible that these also may be of some antiquity. Over much of the area of the estate, and also beyond it, are a series of 'relict aligned landscape' features. The major alignments seem pre-Norman, and it has been argued above that they may be late Roman in origin, if not earlier. If this is so, it suggests that virtually the whole area of the late Roman estate was organised in this fashion.

From the evidence of the excavations and fieldwork, Little Oakley has every appearance of a prosperous agricultural establishment. It is reasonable to assume that one (or the main) source of income was the export of surplus produce; Colchester is the obvious destination, but the entirely coastal distribution of the known villas in Tendring Hundred (*cf.* Dunnett 1975, 123–5) hints at water transport of commodities, perhaps to even more distant locations (and here we recall the Kentish pottery found at Little Oakley). It is with Colchester though that the fortunes of our villa-owner were probably most closely linked. The rebuilding of the aisled structure seems to coincide with the clear increase in prosperity in the *colonia* in the early to mid 2nd century, with the beginning of its large-scale pottery industry, stone houses and the town wall (Crummy 1984, 11–25). Perhaps the two are not unrelated. It must be remembered that Building 1 was perhaps quite opulent before this however.[50]

The small finds show a relatively high standard of living. The range of small finds is comparable to that of most similar establishments in the region, the relatively small quantities may be accounted for the small portion of the site that was excavated, and the choice of areas beyond the immediate area of the buildings (the writer also has reservations about accepting the coin series, especially the lack of the smaller issues of the 4th century, as representing a true random sample of the original assemblage). The early 1st century brooches are of note, but must belong with the Period 2 villa. It appears that the occupants of the Period 3 and Period 4 villas generally wore costume (both male and female) which may not have required brooches to fasten it. Many of the other copper alloy objects seem likely to belong to the occupants of the Period 3 villa and may be termed 'objects for personal adornment'; most appear to have belonged to the women of the establishment. There is a range of bracelet and hairpin fragments, cast rings from (cosmetic or jewellery?) caskets, and a ligula (hinting at the use of cosmetics). A similar range of items predominates among the bone items. Other objects for personal adornment include the glass beads, and a jet bead (ST18) which is presumably redeposited in its Saxon context. Jet beads are relatively common in Roman Colchester and the Little Oakley example seems from its parallels to be 4th century. The stylus (FE5) hints not only at literacy which, if they are ownership marks, may be doubted from the 'X' on the pots in pit C22 (see also the graffiti scratched on the plaster), but also accounting on wax or wooden tablets. The small finds can thus tell us a little about the inhabitants of the villa. The iron tools (such as they are) reveal a little of their working life (see below), while the pipeclay Venus perhaps a little of their religious beliefs, although we should be careful here, as such a thing could easily be a wedding gift or charm in slightly dubious taste.

The plan and structure of the villa have been discussed above, as well as the materials used in its construction. The copper alloy objects include a number of studs and bosses as well as a knob (CU9) which presumably come from the furniture of the villa. The painted wall plaster and mosaics are additional evidence that the villa was luxuriously decorated along classical lines, with imitation and real marble panelling. The lack of iron structural fittings from

the villa buildings may represent the activities of the Period 4 demolition men.

The internal furnishings of the villa included a variety of pottery, glass and metal vessels. The pottery has been discussed above (Chapter 4). The paucity of glass is disappointing. Most common were bottles (of Isings form 50, and GL2–3). The latter vessels seem to have been re-used a number of times perhaps for wine or oil or a similar substance purchased from a middle-man splitting up the contents of an amphora or barrel (pottery flagons may have had a similar use). The small range of glass beakers, small flasks and platters also complements the pottery series. A metal jug is represented by the rather crude handle (CU11) — possibly a repair, and the occupants of the villa also had at least one pewter vessel (PB2). This pewter vessel is one of only a few from the area, pewter being more common in the Fenland and Breckland (and of course in the south-west). The Little Oakley vessel is in an early context, most British pewter from hoards is 4th century.

There seems to be some evidence that large metal objects were reprocessed as scrap (this was presumably the fate for example of the rest of the copper alloy jug and pewter bowl noted above). Of this process only the broken pieces of objects which somehow escaped the crucible and the offcuts and solidified spills survive. Indeed it is seldom considered in small find reports exactly why most Roman copper alloy and iron objects from settlement sites are usually found in such small pieces (see the items illustrated by Neal and Butcher 1974 for example). Objects do not normally break in this way by themselves, and a deliberate process seems involved (see Barford 1985b). Again the same applies to the lead alloy found. Re-use of, or collection of, broken glass for re-use, if not purely for safety, is also a possibility. The metalworking debris is noted above. Most of it is redeposited, with the possible exception of some of the iron slag from late Roman contexts. Some of this material may be from smelting (pit C26), and it may be asked what were the factors which led to the smelting and probable re-use of the ironwork from the demolition of the buildings being economical later in Phase 3(ii) and Period 4 (briefly considered below). There is evidence (albeit sparse) of metalworking on the site throughout the occupation of the villa including the material in pit 1 on Site IV, and the tentative identification of C11 as a feature connected with ironworking. The yellow vitreous material reported by Justine Bayley from Site C is clearly from some industrial process, and while enamelling is one possibility, the evidence is not sufficient to determine this with any certainty. On the subject of craft activities, the sawn and pared bone and antler is indicative of bone-working on the site. The fired clay and bone spindle-whorls indicate that spinning was taking place in the environs of the villa, though whether textiles were produced on site cannot be determined on present evidence. The 'oven debris' (FC10) in ditch 1 on Site IV may be from a domestic cooking oven or some other type of feature (but probably not a kiln). It has been mentioned that most of the briquetage of Essex Red Hill type was from Period 2 contexts, and its rarer occurrence in later deposits may or may not be accidental. Its absence does not of course necessarily mean that salt production on the marshes ceased, as other production techniques may have been used, or there were reasons why this material was no longer brought inland.

All the evidence taken together seems to imply a moderately prosperous establishment, making full use of the resources of its environs, exporting the surplus and using the profits to increase the standard of living of the occupants of the villa itself (if not the workers). Some goods and materials (*e.g.* non-ferrous metals and pottery) were imported. Evidence of craft activities on site implies, however, that the estate was not reliant on the outside world for all of its manufactured goods.

Phase 3(ii) to Period 4: a villa in decline?

In the light of what subsequently happened to the site of Building 3B, we must next examine the evidence for the 'end' of the villa. It seems however that it can be argued that there was no 'end' as such, only changed circumstances.

Towards the middle decades of the 3rd century there seems to have been increased concern with coastal defence in East Anglia and Kent, culminating in the construction of the Forts of the Saxon Shore. The Little Oakley site lies in between two of these, at Walton, Felixstowe (Suffolk) and Bradwell (Essex). Of these Bradwell (Othona), if not Walton, seems to have been built about 260-270 AD (Barford forthcoming b). It could be argued that this was in response to a very real threat to the security of the Empire. Whether or not there had been actual landings of sea-borne pirates in Essex is unknown. No evidence has been claimed to represent destruction of this date (Rodwell's (1975, 93) 'Late Antonine fires' are much earlier, probably unconnected and apparently did not affect Little Oakley).

Although the fill of pit C21 was originally claimed by its excavator (though dated wrongly) to represent destruction by fire of the villa (Corbishley 1977b) this debris is not itself burnt, and neither are any of the other finds, and it seems that the debris in pits C21, C22, C23 and C26 merely represent clearing-up operations after rebuilding, with charcoal in the pit fills perhaps deriving from burnt rotten joists and rafters and unusable wood. The burnt daub spreads C28 and C36 are undated and of uncertain origin. There is no evidence for attacks on or destruction of any part of the villa in the late 3rd century. Crummy (1984, 16–19) suggests that there is evidence that Colchester thought itself under risk of attack from about AD 300, but to counter this it must be noted that of the many known villas in Suffolk and Essex, none is known (or even thought) to have been attacked and destroyed in the late 3rd or 4th centuries, and while there is still a paucity of excavated evidence, coin series from the better-known sites tend to go on well past the troubled years around 367 when it is recorded that Nectaridus, the Count of the Saxon Shore was himself killed in the raids (Frere 1967, 351). If the enclosure noted by Morant (1768, I 499) near the Dovercourt villa (at Harwich), was — as that writer thought — Roman, it may have been connected with the Shore Fort system and afforded some protection to the Little Oakley villa. On the other hand, there is some reason to believe (Barford forthcoming d) that the earthwork was post-Roman.

Despite the political and military upheavals of the 3rd and 4th centuries, the occupants of the villa seem only to have been affected by the economic problems of the later 4th century. There is little doubt that after the middle of the 4th century, widespread and irreversible economic changes were taking place within Britain as a whole which

gradually led to the decline and ultimate collapse of the economic system on which the Roman provinces there were organised (see for example Arnold 1984, esp. pp. 84–120).

Thus the archaeological record at Little Oakley seems to show a decline in living standards, but relative to what was happening elsewhere in the south-east, this 'decline' can be seen to have been due to factors outside the control of the villa inhabitants. Certainly changes were occurring in the economy of the villa itself. Cattle remains are apparently more prevalent in the archaeological record, but the relationship between livestock and arable farming is unknown at this date. The apparent lack of 4th century coins from both sites may be due to excavation technique and need not imply that such coins were not used in the late Roman villa (although it is possible that for many day-to-day transactions practised locally, coins were not used as frequently as one might have thought). Diagnostic late glass is absent, but in fact (if the COLEM collections are anything to judge by) such glass is apparently uncommon in Colchester or its cemeteries also. No late Roman 'military-style' belt fittings were found at the villa (one cannot count the cast rings (CU18–19) in this category).

It is, however, the pottery and metalworking debris at Little Oakley in conjunction with evidence from other sites, which shows most clearly what is happening. From the decade 350–360 a number of changes seem to take place in Roman ceramic assemblages in (eastern) Essex. The appearance of Late Roman Shell-Tempered pottery, Hadham, Oxford and Nene Valley wares are the most obvious manifestations of these changes, and whatever the historical or economic models employed to explain these changes (see Going 1987, 115–19 for example) the significance for us is the economic effect of the long distance travelled by some of these pots. In order for these long journeys to be economic, even if they formed parts of mixed cargoes, surely the 'price' of these pots should have increased. While it is perhaps possible to detect a fall in quantity of pots in Period 4 contexts (which contain large amounts of what can only be redeposited pottery), the pots were still being acquired by the occupants of the villa. The villa occupants clearly still had a certain amount of 'purchasing power'. The difficulties of getting pottery, made at such distant factories, probably led to the partial adoption of the extremely poor quality 'sub-Roman' pottery fabrics 15 and (ultimately) 14. These were apparently in use alongside late Roman finewares in some contexts (*e.g.* they occur together in A3). The exact dating of the beginning of the use of these fabric types is unclear (see above) as is the origin of the techniques. The grass-tempered pottery is unlikely to have been made by ordinary Romano-Britons (unless someone taught them how) as domestic pottery production seems to have become an almost forgotten tradition in the area by the 2nd century at the latest (*cf.* Peacock 1982, 87–9). It is notable that the industries producing relatively low-quality handmade wares (*e.g.* Late Roman Shell-Tempered and Kentish Grog-Tempered pottery) used coarse tempering agents, and fabric 15 could fall into that technological tradition.[51] Grass-tempered pottery is a different technique, which, apart from its use in wall-daub, seems to have been forgotten by Romano-British potters. It is suggested that the use of this clay preparation technique in a household industry (Peacock 1982, 17–24) may indicate influence from an area where this technique was in current use. The obvious answer is to look to Germanic areas of the continent, (but note the apparent presence of grass-tempered pottery in 'sub-Roman' but 'pre-Saxon' contexts in Somerset (Rahtz 1974, 98–9), although these could be (*ibid.*, 108–9) as late as 6th century). On the whole, it is best provisionally to accept that the Little Oakley grass-tempered pottery may reflect Germanic influence, but cannot prove the presence of a Germanic potter (or poor farmer with a sideline, Peacock 1982, 23), still less that the pots were used at Little Oakley by immigrant Germans in Period 4.

The evidence from the iron slag may be briefly considered: throughout most of the Roman period in Britain large ironworks, (such as those of the Weald, Northamptonshire and The Forest of Dean, to name the largest) were in production, and probably supplied most of the needs of the province. Although iron ore is relatively widespread, small-scale production apparently could not compete with the larger, more organised, industries, and evidence (in the form of smelting slag) is not particularly common in Roman contexts in the south-east. Little Oakley is not an exception to this, since most of the iron slag from Roman contexts probably relates only to smithing of iron (though not in enough of a concentration to imply a smithy on the excavated part of the site). In the later contexts however the quantity of slag present noticeably increases. Not only is smithing-slag more common in Phase 3(ii) and Period 4 deposits, but probable smelting-slag occurs in the fill of pit C26. Thus smithing probably relates in part to the demolition of the villa buildings and re-use of the iron from these structures. The smelting debris could either have been an accidental inclusion in bloom brought from elsewhere or, more likely, from small-scale smelting in the vicinity of the site. The evidence from Little Oakley reinforces the clear impression from other sites that it was not only the large-scale pottery industries which were in economic difficulties, but probably the highly organised metal-production centres also suffered in the decades around the middle of the 4th century (see also Clarke 1979, 341).

The evidence of what happened in Period 4 not only implies continued occupation of the area around Building 3, but could imply more than continuity of location. The Phase 4(iii) rubble spreads, if interpreted as the foundations of timber-framed buildings (especially if this is seen as primarily a Romano-British building technique, as at Wroxeter), imply that the site of Building 3B was being used for the construction of a timber replacement of the villa building itself. It will be seen that this use of this technique need not actually represent a complete break with the past, since Building 2 was entirely of timber, and even Building 3B probably had some timber-framed daub walls.

Period 4 demolition

To summarise, the villa remained in occupation in the late 4th century, but at some stage Building 3B was pulled down or perhaps fell down. This need not be attributed to a raid or similar event, as by this time the shallow foundations were about three centuries old, and the building might have been beyond economic repair. After the building was pulled down, the foundations were grubbed out fairly thoroughly, and the site was cleared. It seems that most of the re-usable ironwork (including a lot

of the nails) and perhaps the window glass were taken away and, like the stone, recycled. It seems that most of the rubble was taken away, since the rubble of the Phase 4(iii) deposits was mostly fairly small and may represent the remnants after the re-usable material had been removed. This raises the question who was building what (and where) in masonry after the last decades of the 4th century or early years of the 5th (for similar evidence from Chelmsford see Drury 1972, 24). It is not clear if the total volume of rubble used in the various Period 4 rubble spreads (below) could account for all of the debris from Building 3 or not.

The robber trenches contain little occupation material, either bone or pottery, and what there is seems to be redeposited. It is thus suggested that the demolition of Building 3B was total (affecting not only the area in Sites I and C) and that the site was subsequently unoccupied for an unknown length of time.

Building 1 may have had a different history in this period. Warren seems to have seen actual foundations *in situ* in 1939 (above) and therefore it seems that Building 1 was not as extensively robbed as Building 2. The reasons for this are not clear, but raise the possibility that Building 1 may have been standing during Phase 4(i). Alternatively it may have been demolished to its foundations at the end of Period 3 and thus escaped stone robbing. The subsequent history of Building 1 is totally unknown.

Phase 4(ii) pits

The nature of the fills of these pits is very strange. They are filled with black loam with an admixture of fine rubble. It is clear that by the time these layers were forming there were not vast quantities of building debris lying around the site to fall into the open features. The reasons for digging these large pits are obscure (unless some were for robbing a hypocaust). We may however be concerned here with a specific phenomenon, similar engimatic pits with black loam fills were encountered by Hull in his 1954 excavation on the Colchester 'Mithraeum' (unpublished, but see *Colchester Museum Annual Report* 1954–1956, 10–11). Equally obscure is the derivation of the black loam filling. This is similar to the black loam deposits which occur in Roman towns such as Canterbury, London, and Colchester (Crummy 1984, 92). These are usually interpreted as organic soil formed from vegetation growing on sparsely inhabited sites, or perhaps nearby cultivation. This may be the origin of the black soil in these pits, or perhaps we should seek another origin for these deposits.

The fills of these features contain only a little weathered and abraded pottery, a little bone and (weathered?) mortar debris. The gap between the final occupation of Building 3B and the filling of these pits is of uncertain length, but the assemblages of Roman greywares are similar to that in the rubble spread of Context A3 (except there are less finewares and a larger proportion of redeposited pottery in the Site I pit fills) with the addition of handmade grass-tempered sherds. This indicates that we are still in the period before the currency of the Saxon pottery assemblages on Site IV, that is the early to mid 5th century. Nevertheless the small quantity of contemporary pottery is either indicative of aceramic occupation, or of the focus of the settlement shifting elsewhere. The small quantity of bone (Bradley *et. al.* 1978, 37–8) argues perhaps in favour of the latter alternative. There is no evidence of the length of time Phase 4(ii) lasted.

Period 4 rubble spreads

The rubble spreads which overlie the robber trenches on Site I, and occur on Sites II, III and Site A in Period 4 contexts seem unlikely to be simple collapse and demolition debris. On Site I the walls appear to have been totally removed before the layers formed; on the other three sites no previous masonry structures are evidenced. Likewise, these rubble spreads are not part of a general rubbly layer across the site caused by the scattering of demolition debris; the widespread occurrence and localisation of debris within these spreads argues against this.

On Site II the rubble spread K8 (and possibly K5) was associated with post-holes, and it is possible that the rubble formed part of a foundation for a timber building. The plan of the Phase F rubble spread on Site III is more convincing as the raft for a framed timber structure,[52] the Phase H rubble layer above it is less convincing. The plough-damaged spread A3 on the site to the east of Building 3 has already been discussed. The various layers of rubble on Site I are more problematic. Several are recorded in the field notes, but not all appear on sections or can be recognised in the photographs of sections (see microfiche appendix 2). The rubble layer in Room 10 certainly existed and is shown in photographs. There is little doubt that Farrands perceived something as he dug down through these layers. It is suggested that these rubble layers on Site I, like those discussed above, were probably the foundation 'rafts' for framed timber buildings, in this case of 5th century date. The rubble on Site I did not come directly from Building 3B which had already been robbed-out (but might conceivably have come from Building 1).

Framed timber buildings on rubble rafts or similar foundations are found in Britain in Roman contexts, for example at Dorchester, Oxon (Frere 1962), Wanborough, Wilts (Wacher 1975, pl. XVII), Wroxeter, Salop (Selkirk 1971; Barker 1985, 114–16) and Braintree, Essex (Drury and Pratt 1976, 6–11). Rubble spreads have been found on the villa site at Beddington, Surrey (Adkins and Adkins 1986, 79) dating to the late 2nd century. They have also been found in later post-Roman contexts, *e.g.* Waltham Abbey (Huggins 1976) and perhaps Great Dunmow (Drury, pers. comm.). While to a certain extent due to excavation technique, continental excavators have yet to demonstrate that fully framed ground level sill-beam structures were a common form of building on the continent in the Migration period, though the construction technique has occasionally been identified (*e.g.* at the terp site at Ezinge, Holland; Van Giffen 1936). Indeed on British sites of this period, the poor state of preservation hinders identification of structures of this type on most sites. For example the absence of post-built 'halls' at the south-west end of the Mucking settlement (where most of the early Saxon material comes from) may be due to this building technique; certainly their ancillary buildings (grubenhauser) are present there (Jones 1978, Abb. 4). Even if it is primarily a Romano-British building technique, Dixon (1982) has suggested that some other Anglo-Saxon building techniques were in fact derived from Romano-British traditions of building in timber.

There is evidence that occupation in Period 4 at Little Oakley included several buildings of this type, and if it is accepted that the latest deposits on Site I included evidence of timber buildings on rubble rafts overlying Building 3B then Little Oakley has produced important, if controversial, evidence of the nature of the 'Roman-Saxon' transition.

There are two alternative scenarios which may be applied to the evidence. The first is that of the 'traditional' interpretation following the narrative of Gildas and Nennius. It is possible that, following the collapse of the Roman economic system, the villa estate could no longer be run as an economic unit and that the occupants left for a better life elsewhere and the site was deserted, to be later occupied by immigrants who cleared the villa site and erected their own buildings over its ruins. One need not even in this case, however, see the villa being abandoned as the result of harassment from hostile Saxon raiders.

The second scenario would see the occupants of the villa estate (if not the original owners) surviving the economic upheavals of the early 5th century, either by shrewd estate management and/or by becoming totally self-reliant. In fact they did so well that they were able to contemplate a complete rebuilding of Building 3B. Instead of dwarf masonry walls as before, this building was constructed on a raft of compacted rubble. Probably the structure lacked roof tile, window glass or painted plaster (and the rubble raft may have been adopted simply because lime mortar was no longer available in large quantities), but otherwise the structure may have differed in its carpentry and scale only a little from the original villa. Buildings at Wroxeter at about the same time or even later were apparently markedly classical in style (Barker 1985, 114). The estate workforce may possibly have been swelled by at least one family unit of immigrant Germans (see below) who, not surprisingly, continued to make their own type of pottery, some of which even found its way to the inhabitants of the villa, who by now were beginning to run out of 'Roman' pottery.

Either of the speculative scenarios would plausibly fit the excavated evidence, and at this stage there is not much to choose between them. The likelihood of this second model depends on the nature of the black soil in the Phase 4(ii) pits. If it, and the paucity of artefacts of this phase, implies total desertion of the site, the later inhabitants are perhaps less likely to have been the original villa owners. Whoever the occupants of the site were, they apparently constructed a fully framed building or buildings of the nature which is implied by the rubble raft. Such a fully framed structure, as Drury (1976, 1) points out, would have been carefully constructed by a well-organised workforce (however, the situation may have been more complex than he allows). Also in such an exposed position the structure would have probably been substantial and well built. This would not have been some squalid shack of 'squatters', but a building put up by people who felt they had every right to be there, and intended to stay.

II. Post-Roman Occupation

Period 5

There appears to have been no occupation on Site I in this period, the only feature found being the inhumation grave F50. Despite later excavation to the north and east (Sites A and C) no other burials were found in the vicinity. If the burial was part of a cemetery, it may lie to the south and west and/or be very small (the grave on Site V is not considered here to be contemporary for the reasons discussed elsewhere). There are a number of instances now of burials on former villa sites (see Percival 1976, 183–99; and Rodwell and Rodwell 1986, 83–4). At nearby Dovercourt (VCH III, 144), excavations in 1955 by R.H. Farrands (Barford forthcoming d) found post-Roman burials on the site of a Roman settlement, the latter becoming All Saints church, a situation perhaps analogous to Rivenhall.

The rubble spread K8 on Site II is not closely dated, and may be Period 4 or Period 5. On Site III an oven and a loamy late fill of the slight depression formed by the earlier fishpond were encountered, while on Site IV to the east two large pits contained relatively large assemblages of Saxon pottery. The size and form of the pits find a parallel at Rivenhall F526–527 (Rodwell and Rodwell 1986, 68–9, fig. 51). An Anglo-Saxon brooch from the ploughsoil may be a casual loss, or may perhaps derive from a burial. Unlike the grass-tempered pottery of Period 4 discussed above, there is little doubt of the continental affinities of the Period 5 pottery and the small-long brooch. The main problem in identifying the population of the site at this period is of deciding between a 'native' population using 'Saxon' pottery, and an immigrant group of Germans. If the Anglo-Saxon brooch is indeed of continental manufacture it strengthens (but cannot prove) the case for immigrants; it is thus unfortunate that the brooch is of a type which is so difficult to categorise. The dating has been discussed above, and an early to mid 5th century date seems probable. The quantities of pottery and the types of features encountered suggest that this was the site of a settlement, and the differences between the pottery from pits 2 and 3 on Site IV suggest that this settlement lasted for a period of time (though of unknown length).

The economy of the site at this time is problematic. The bone evidence seems to show that the trends apparent in Period 4 continued, and that sheep and pig were not very common and cattle remains predominated. The small number and size of the bone assemblages from these deposits must be noted, however, and this may account for the apparent absence of horse and fowl remains. There is no reason to doubt that an agricultural economy (perhaps mixed?) was being practised, though there is no clear evidence of cereal production (examination of the 'chaff' in the grass-tempered pottery has not yet been undertaken, but could be informative).

Pottery is relatively scarce, although deposits like layer 2 on Site III and the upper fill of the Saxon pits on Site IV contained quite large assemblages of sherds. The total number of fragments from the whole site was about 540 (*c.* 8kg). This contrasts with the large quantities of Roman and even prehistoric pottery from the site. Despite this, the Saxon occupation seems not to have been transient, and it may be concluded that cultural processes of this period did not generate large quantities of potsherds. Indeed it is probable that pottery was used in quite a different way (and for different functions?) in the Saxon settlement. Most of the pottery seems to have been of local manufacture, and most of the vessels were coarse undecorated jars (form 7). Only one fabric (fabric 25) may be non-local, and similar fabrics have been found on contemporary settlements in southern and eastern Essex, including Mucking.

Evidence from other finds is scarce. Of the metal objects the small-long brooch and the copper alloy boss (CU8), two iron rings, a knife blade, and an awl are worthy of note, but are similar to the sort of thing one would expect from any Saxon settlement (e.g Mucking: Hamerow 1993). A few bone items are of interest, but, like the crucible sherd, the briquetage and jet bead from Saxon contexts could be redeposited from earlier activity.

It is worthy of note that no typically Anglo-Saxon 'grubenhauser' were found at Little Oakley. This may be due to the small extent of the Anglo-Saxon occupation area touched by the excavations. But it should be noted that to date the densest concentration of features of this type is still in the south of the county, on the Thames shore (typified by the site at Mucking).

The evidence discussed above indicates that the villa was occupied into the fifth century, with some kind of settlement in the infield immediately to the southeast. The fact that the system of Roman landscape division of the area surrounding the villa persisted in these areas into the modern landscape suggests that these areas remained to some extent in cultivation (since if the areas had gone out of use and become reforested, the pattern would not have survived subsequent clearance). If this is so, it would imply that the Anglo-Saxon estate would have been extensively farmed, but also that to some degree its layout reflected that of the Roman landscape. This situation persisted into later centuries.

The early history of the East Saxon Kingdom is difficult to untangle, and is considered by the writer elsewhere (Barford forthcoming b). Only the occurrence of datable pottery or metalwork seems likely to provide the information that is lacking. About twenty-five sites in Essex have produced Early Saxon pottery (see Drury and Rodwell 1980 fig. 30; and Jones 1980, fig. 37 for example), and most of them (like Little Oakley itself) are on the coastal side of the county, though whether or not this is a real distribution, or due to a higher incidence of fieldwork is not yet clear.

Drury and Rodwell (1980, 74) have drawn attention to the fact that many Early Saxon sites in Essex have also yielded late Roman material. Little Oakley is another example of a site of this nature, but it should be pointed out that in many cases (such as at Little Oakley) it was the discovery of Roman material which led to the sites in question being investigated in the first place.

Middle and Late Saxon occupation

The sherds of 8th or 9th century pottery found on Site D are too many to be regarded as due to manuring alone and the vessels may be an indication of Middle Saxon occupation in the area. The 'ridge and furrow' ploughing on Site A may be also of this date, since a sherd of this pottery was found in the soil overlying the ridges. This sherd is the only post-Roman material from these deposits, and can only provide a *terminus post quem* for this phase of activity.

Perhaps the siting of the Middle Saxon finds indicates a shift in focus towards the east side of the site, in the general direction of Foulton Hall which (although there is no direct evidence of this) might thus have had a Middle and Late Saxon predecessor. The Hall certainly seems to have had a central position in the land-block which succeeded the Roman estate (Fig. 119) and may thus have been a Middle or Late Saxon estate centre. It is suggestive that there is some evidence that the area in which Little Oakley Hall was later founded was at some stage abandoned and then had to be re-cleared, which accounts for the different alignments of property boundaries in some areas of this part of the parish. Perhaps it is in this context that the Saxon placename *ac-leah* should be seen. If there had been a coherent rectilinear land division system in the area beyond the western edge of the Great Oakley landblock, it would seem to have been largely abandoned at this time.

The 11th-century pottery on Site IV has been noted above. This may be connected with the foundation of the Domesday Manor of Foulton Hall to the north-east. It does not seem likely that occupation of the Little Oakley site was continuous from the 5th to 11th centuries, and a break or shift in the centre of occupation seem to be suggested by the nature of the excavated material. The settlement focus may have shifted, to the east, near Foulton Hall, but also to the west around the present church, where 11th- and 12th-century pottery has been found The possible subsequent evolution of the former Roman villa estate itself seems at some undetermined stage — but probably after the establishment of the Foulton estate centre and before the Domesday survey — to have been split into two separate estates which were then taken into medieval parishes. When this was done, the western estate apparently had most of the good farming land, though the Foulton manor retained much of the marsh.

The next phase of the landscape development would seem to be the establishment of a secondary centre at Little Oakley Hall. We have seen that, in the area of the Hall, it is very likely the original rectilinear pattern had been lost, and that the Hall was founded on waste land at the edge of the Foulton estate; In this case, it is perhaps coincidental that there are Roman remains nearby. The Hall was probably established as a secondary centre (perhaps for a younger son's inheritance?), but at some stage it increased in importance. The relationship of the halls of Little and Great Oakley is enigmatic, the latter is sited on one side of the pre-parish estate at no great distance from the former, while the Norman church is sited on the opposite side of this landblock, nearer the other two estates.

Medieval and post-medieval

The 'ridge and furrow' ploughing on Site A mentioned above may be late Saxon or early medieval in date. No other traces of this field system are visible in the environs of the site, but the headland of the Site A furrows may lie under the lynchet of the modern hedgeline to the south-east. It should be noted that (surviving) ridge and furrow is very rare in the Essex landscape.

It seems that it is probably to the 12th century at the latest that we should date the establishment of the parish boundaries of Ramsey, and Little and Great Oakley, since this is the date of the construction of the large 12th-century masonry churches at Ramsey, Great and Little Oakley which also implies that these three parishes were relatively prosperous. With the establishment of the parishes, settlement structure would seem to have stabilised, though the focus of habitation shifted around over the course of time. By the medieval period the villa site was an area of marginal land on the periphery of the parish, although it seems that agriculture was (sporadically?) continued in the area.

Various medieval sherds have been found on several sites. On Sites III and IV they are deemed intrusive, but hint at nearby occupation or, more likely, manuring. Since the site was probably marginal land, this may be why medieval pottery was so scarce in the topsoil, though the fieldwalking shows that nearer Foulton Hall pottery was more plentiful. The medieval sherd found in the robber trench D6 was probably intrusive, but it is just possible that the east end of Building 3B was left standing longer than the parts on Sites C and Site 1, and only robbed in the medieval period. Obviously this suggestion (resting as it does on the evidence of one sherd) is contentious, but one could be tempted into seeing a connection with the Middle Saxon pottery from the same area (and perhaps the burial F50?).

Medieval pottery from Red Hill 10 may indicate continued interest in the marshes, probably for summer grazing. The upstanding mound could have served as a convenient raised spot for a (dry) campsite, while overseeing the herds and flocks.

Post-medieval activity (Period 7) on the villa site was mostly confined to agriculture. During this period the settlement focus in the parish shifted to its present site.

The various types of post-Roman ploughing clearly had a considerable detrimental effect on the sites excavated 1975–8. Ploughing continued up to the time of the building of the prefab estate in 1947. The present southern and eastern boundaries of the housing estate are those shown on the 1839 Tithe map (Essex Record Office D/CT 259A). The field was then called 'Further Eight Acres' and numbered 83. The fields to the east and west had straight north-west/south-east boundaries with names like 'The Eight Acres', 'The Five Acres' and 'The Six Acres'. Most of the fields are now amalgamated, with only one surviving in its 19th-century shape. However, the lynchet forming the common boundary of four of these fields still survives. Archaeological evidence from Site A seems to suggest that ridge and furrow ploughing was up to a bank/hedge along the present boundary line. This boundary cuts across the 23m contour. From at least the early 19th century, a straight field boundary (see trench Z) has cut across the previous archaeological occupation.

The ploughing of this period has caused great damage to the site (which is still continuing). The construction of the housing estate in 1946–7 (Period 8) caused even more damage.

Endnotes

1 Red Crag at Little Oakley varies slightly in colour (from orange-red to yellow) and in shelliness. Sometimes the deposit consisted mainly of sand with a few shell flecks, other parts of the deposit consisted only of comminuted shell.

2 These beads are published for the first time here. As a group, the beads have a number of parallels in Roman Colchester both in shape and in colour of the metal. Most come from the cemeteries around the Roman town. The forms fall into Crummy's (1983b, 32–3) 'Short oblate or barrel beads' or 'standard beads'. Many of these seem to be 3rd or 4th century in date. Some earlier graves from older excavations also contain similar beads. They are all globular glass beads (some slightly irregular) and average 8mm diameter and height (smallest 6–7mm). They were wound round tapering rods (the perforation averages 2.5–3mm) and fused. Some are now cracked.

The colours of the surviving beads are as follows:

	no.
opaque dark to medium sky blue	23
transparent dark blue	10
semi-transparent pale cobalt blue	6
opaque pale cobalt blue	1
opaque pale yellow	3
opaque pale violet	1
opaque lime green	1
opaque ruby-red	2

The last three groups are slightly smaller and better-made, the surfaces of the red and violet beads are now flaking. It is clear that blue glass beads predominate in this collection. Group C is similar to the colour of Isings 50 bottles and could easily have been made of these with little modification to the metal, the other beads were of glass which had been treated in some way. Most had been opacified and coloured. The blues probably had added cobalt, the yellow lead, but other colours are more difficult to guess. It is suggestive that the brightly coloured red and violet glass beads are of a size and shape different from the remainder, possibly they came from a separate source.

3 There are brief notes in the 'Hull scrapbook' in the museum archives, but these repeat the VCH manuscript version.

4 In order not to reduce the legibility of the plan, in the preparation of this figure, some writing has been moved in from the sites of the sheet, but the central area has not been altered. Warren has noted the position of the Cromerian channel on the map. Several fragments of *Elephas antiquus* bones (humerus and teeth) were found by Farrands at an unknown place on the Little Oakley site. A mineralised bone fragment 0.27m long was found during the Corbishley excavations about half-way along Seaview Avenue in a service trench.

5 With an erroneous reference to the Dovercourt villa VCH III, 144.

6 As noted elsewhere in this report, it is difficult to distinguish these two groups of pottery adequately; while the two extremes are recognisable, there is a range of fabrics and forms which could be either.

7 Fabrics quoted are described in the pottery report.

8 Although these layers are specifically noted in the field notebooks, they were not drawn in section, nor are some apparent on the photos (Plates VIII–X), see microfiche appendix 2.

9 The technique was also used by Farrands on Site III at Little Oakley and in 1955 at Site C at Beaumont-cum-moze. Mr P. Barker informs me that the earliest British use of this technique known to him was the plan of a house at Holworth (Dorset) in 1958 (Rahtz 1959).

10 The two are separated by a lynchet, sectioned by Corbishley's Trench Z (see Chapter 2 section IX). The precise position of Site III is not known, but the position shown on Figure 4 is probably accurate to within a few metres.

11 Not fully catalogued by Farrands. Peter Curtis did some work on a few bags of these finds, but the full significance of his cataloguing system still eludes the writer.

12 Originally interpreted as a pipe-trench by Farrands, but there were no pipe collars and the later recuts suggest a drain — these layers do not seem simply to have been slumping into the cavity of a rotted pipe or drain.

13 It is not clear whether or not the layer was actually seen to thin out and disappear before the end of the final recut between sections 7 and 8 as Farrands originally drew it. In Figure 43 a different view has been taken of this junction, with Farrands' line dashed in. It is uncertain how much of this longitudinal section is interpolation from the transverse sections.

14 The recording system devised for this material contains a number of omissions, which would now be considered standard to ceramic building material studies. The most prominent of these was the decision not to record the weight of the tiles and to record their fragmentation instead. The author would now see this as an error, although the fragmentation evidence has, in fact, proved useful. The tabulated evidence, therefore, tends to be, at least in part, a factor of the fragmentation, rather than simply reflecting the relative quantities of certain forms of material. Nevertheless, it has still been possible to make some detailed statements about the relative importance of forms, whilst bearing this caveat in mind.

15 There is no reason to suppose that any of the material was imported to the site at a later date.

16 Or perhaps from the top of a 'dwarf wall'?

17 Three other plaster fragments (Site I F18: C22 upper fill and C23) were from other window-splays. These were all painted dark red.

18 The basilica site had previously produced an amulet (Barker *et al.* 1997, fig. 315) in the form of a pair of eyes made of gold sheet (*cf.* Kirschbaum 1959, pl. IIa).

19 At the time this material was catalogued (1978–80), the method of quantification by 'estimated vessel equivalent' was not in general use. Since the Little Oakley assemblages were small, and one factor the writer wanted especially to study was redeposition ('residuality'), it is likely that he would still choose to use sherd counts and weights in preference to EVEs.

20 At present the later prehistoric pottery of Essex and East Anglia has few precisely datable 'fixed-points'. The Little Waltham Pottery (Drury 1978, 51–85) is one of the notable exceptions (although its dating may not be so secure as Drury (1978, 126–8) supposes. Current indications are, however, that this pottery style is mainly a southern and central Essex phenomenon, though development in northern Essex may not have differed greatly, but Little Waltham's direct relevance to the Little Oakley pottery should perhaps be regarded with some caution.

21 Unfortunately the final text of Going 1987 was published too late for more than the main points to be included here.

22 For form numbers see further on in the text, the numbering used is the Colchester series (Hawkes and Hull 1947; Hull 1963).

23 1930–39 excavations (Hawkes and Hull 1947) throughout the text the term 'Sheepen' refers only to this material unless otherwise specified.

24 *i.e.* products of the Much Hadham Kilns, Herts. The pottery from these kilns is currently being studied by C.J. Going, with a view to publication at a future date.

25 Later work by the writer has also demonstrated differences between both sites, and material from St Osyth (TM 122 169); unpublished excavations by M.J. Corbishley.

26 Unpublished material in Colchester and Essex Museum from excavations in the *colonia*, and from the cemeteries around the town.

27 As in ditch 1 Site IV. At Sheepen fabric 10 occurred mainly as forms 228 and 246.

28 Also very common on Farrands' sites, the proportions of forms 266–8 on Corbishley's site is affected by the chronological distribution of the pottery assemblages.

29 All amphora sherds were seen and identified by P.R. Sealey.

30 In default of evidence of a kiln here.

31 A similar sherd comes from the River View Estate at Mistley (TM 125315) investigated by the writer in 1976; an archive

record is held in the SMR. Both sherds are being studied further.

32 The form 218 vessels from the Phase B fill were distinctive in having horizontal burnished bands on the lower body.

33 Only the pottery from layer C21-1 is considered in detail here, a little similar pottery came from the upper fill C21.

34 Only the pottery from C22-1 and C22-2 and C23-1, C23-2, C23-3, C23-4 is detailed here; the upper fills (C22, C22-A and C22-B; C23, C23-A and C23-B contain a little similar material.

35 Identified by C.J. Going.

36 This could be intrusive from above, but it should be noted that very little other medieval pottery was found from the site.

37 But the familiar term 'grass-tempered' is retained here for convenience.

38 Though the 'dolphin buckle' was clearly put in the grave as an old broken object (see Evison 1981, fig. 5.a).

39 *Cf.* Eagles and Evison 1970, 48–9, fig. 15.3; Myres (1968; 1969) tended to see the facetted carinations as being early 5th century, but recent continental work has produced evidence that there they can occur in the later 5th century (*e.g.* Eursinge prov. Drenthe Netherlands; J. Lanting, *Neiuwe Drentse Volksalmanak* 1977. I am indebted to Helena Hamerow for drawing my attention to this.

40 Grass-tempered pottery at Mucking now seems to have become more common in the 6th and 7th centuries, although it occurred earlier (Hamerow 1993, 31).

41 I am indebted to Mr K. Dobney for this reference.

42 Throughout this report the word 'sheep' is used for ovicaprids — recognisable goats were few, as were definite sheep.

43 These tables omit 'cattle-sized' and 'sheep-sized' fragments which would increase the numbers in these categories, but would not materially affect their proportions.

44 The term is used loosely here to refer to a nucleated agricultural establishment or estate with at least one opulent building.

45 E. Black (pers. comm.) points out to me, however, that the dating of Rivenhall to the Flavian period is not as simple as Rodwell and Rodwell (1986) claim (*e.g.* 1986, 33). Ridgewell is dated mainly by the roller-stamped tiles which are no longer extant, probably these are dies 4 and 33 — which are Hadrianic (C120–130). The Alresford tiles are probably of a similar date. Fingringhoe is a confused site, and much of the debris could belong to the 1st-century 'military' establishment.

46 The bonding may have been better higher up the wall.

47 It is salutary to note that if the Site C pits had not been excavated and the villa interpreted from Site I alone (or even from Sites I–V and A–B and D), a very different interpretation may have emerged.

48 Mr E. Black has pointed out to me that there is a general misconception about Roman estate bailiffs. Where they are attested in literature, they are not an alternative to management by the owner of villas, but permanent members of their families.

49 635 arable acres = 5.29 × 120; 5.29 × 6 = 31.74 people. If women and children are not included in this total (except at harvest) the total population may have been over a hundred. This, however, may be a maximum figure, as workforce requirements would fluctuate seasonally, and hired labour may have been taken on at busy times. Slaves of course need not have been married.

50 Since this was written, the date of Colchester's town wall has been demonstrated to belong to the later 1st century (P. Crummy, pers. comm.).

51 The derivation of the Late Roman Shell-Tempered Ware technique is still uncertain, but Kentish Grog-Tempered Ware (to which fabric 15 may be allied) probably developed from the handmade grog-tempered wares in use throughout the Roman period in Sussex (*e.g.* 'Thundersbarrow Ware').

52 The dating evidence for this structure on Site III is not certain; it may be Phase 3(ii) or Period 4.

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