EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

A Romano-British Settlement in the Waveney Valley: Excavations at Scole, 1993–4

by Trevor Ashwin and Andrew Tester

with contributions from
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For details of *East Anglian Archaeology*, see last page

Cover photograph:
A Roman well and tank complex, featuring waterlogged timbers which included re-used Roman rafters, under excavation to the south of the River Waveney

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Preface and acknowledgements

The fieldwork for both of the projects reported on here — the A140 Scole–Dickleburgh Improvement and the A143 Scole Bypass — took place in 1993 and 1994. From the outset, it was clear that producing a synthetic account of a major series of excavations such as these, carried out under such a range of individual and often demanding circumstances, would be a major challenge. A draft excavation report was submitted to English Heritage and to the principal client, the Highways Agency, at the end of 1998. Comments were also sought from other consultees and interested parties at this stage.

The long delay in producing this revised report reflects a series of difficulties in completing the project. One of the principal authors, Trevor Ashwin, left the Norfolk Archaeological Unit. It also became clear that even a synthetic report on the results could not be contained within the single *East Anglian Archaeology* volume that was envisaged when the project was designed. This led to close discussion of how much detailed information required publication, and how the production costs of a more substantial report were to be met. The decision to place synthetic reports by the specialists on a CD (Volume II) accompanying the printed book (Volume I) seemed to represent the most cost-effective solution to the problem, and — crucially — one that would minimise further delay in making the results available.

So many people have served the project, in one capacity or another, over twelve years that we may name only a few of them here. The projects were funded by the Highways Agency (A140 Scole–Dickleburgh) and Norfolk County Council (A143 Scole Bypass); the A140 project, although a collaboration between the Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Units, took place under the overall management of the NAU. Myk Flitcroft, who left the NAU in 1996, directed the main Norfolk excavations (Areas 1–4) while Jez Reeve acted as overall co-ordinator for the A140 fieldwork. Other work in Norfolk at the Scole temple (Site 30650) was directed by Andy Shelley. To the south of the Waveney, excavations at Areas 6 and 7 were by Andrew Tester while those at Area 8 were by David Gill. The excavations in Suffolk were under the general management of John Newman.

A few project participants deserve special thanks. Trevor Ashwin needed help and support in familiarising himself rapidly with a large and complex project when he took it over from Myk Flitcroft in 1996. He is grateful to Jayne Bown, manager of the NAU (now NPS Archaeology), for assistance and support over many years. Also, he is especially pleased to thank the NAU's Alice Lyons and David Whitmore — Chapter 2 of this report is a presentation of the results of their analytical work on the stratigraphy and the pottery assemblages. Peter Murphy co-ordinated the programmes of environmental work, while Gordon Turner-Walker looked after conservation. Working with all of the illustrators was a pleasure. While it seems unfair to name individual specialists from amongst such a large number, the scale and significance of the contributions by Nick Cooper, Jane Cowgill, Richard Darrah, Alice Lyons, Richard Macphail and Patricia Wiltshire deserve special mention. We are grateful to Martin Millett and Jude Plouviez for their comments on the initial draft of this report in 1998–9. Jude Plouviez has edited the pottery report for publication. Jane Cowgill, J.M. Mills and Rowena Gale are very grateful for the advice they received from Hector Cole, Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths and Eminent Master.

Trevor Ashwin has benefited from many conversations with Jenny Glazebrook, Managing Editor at *East Anglian Archaeology*, over the years, and is grateful for her constant advice and support.

Trevor Ashwin and Andrew Tester, April 2007

Summary

This synthetic report presents the results of very large-scale excavations during 1993–4 at the Roman settlement at Scole, in advance of highway construction. Scole is located on the border between the present-day counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, at the point where the main road from *Camulodunum* to *Venta Icenorum* crossed the River Waveney. As well as describing settlement morphology and development over an extensive area, it includes (in Chapter 6–9) a number of specialist studies of exceptional importance — notably those dealing with a large body of waterlogged Roman structural timber, with the character and context of metalworking within the settlement, and with the environmental sequence recorded in a palaeochannel of the river. Other highlights include an account of a possible maltings complex, and a critical study of the formation of a variety of 'dark earth' deposits which draws upon the evidence both of artefact distributions and of soil chemistry.

The most extensive previous excavations at Scole, in the 1970s, had taken place close to the centre both of the modern village and of the Roman settlement. The 1993–4 excavations examined more 'peripheral' areas. To the north of the Waveney, a secondary road leading westward from Scole saw significant ribbon development from the early 2nd century AD onward (Chapter 2). Area excavation illustrated the growth of this part of the settlement and revealed abundant evidence for ironworking and tanning. Elsewhere, to the east of the village, a small Romano- Celtic temple was excavated during a watching brief on road construction (Chapter 4).

South of the river (Chapter 3), one excavation area focussed on an area close to the Waveney which may have seen brewing and malting in the later 2nd–mid 3rd centuries AD. Two other extensive adjacent areas close to the southern limit of the Roman settlement were also examined, revealing evidence of activity close to the main

Roman road and illustrating in some detail the morphological development of this zone during the 1st–4th centuries AD. The results of artefactual and chemical analysis of extensive Roman-period 'Dark Earth' deposits from this part of the site are of special interest.

There were no clear indications that the settlement at Scole persisted beyond the early 5th century AD, although Early Saxon activity may be represented by at least one burial and by renovation of a timber causeway approaching the south bank of the Waveney.

While the main focus of the project has been the Roman settlement, a palaeoenvironmental study of river sediments (included in Chapter 9) spans the Early Neolithic period to Anglo-Saxon times. Key results included signs of a dramatic episode of tree clearance during the later Bronze Age, of increasing impacts on woodland during the Iron Age, of Roman-period woodland exploitation and management, and of a seeming intensification of agriculture locally in the post-Roman centuries.

Résumé

Ce rapport synthétique présente les résultats de fouilles à très grande échelle menées en 1993–94 dans l'implantation romaine de Scole, antérieurement à la construction d'une route. Scole se trouve à la limite des comtés actuels du Norfolk et du Suffolk, à l'endroit où la route principale de *Camulodunum* à *Venta Icenorum* traverse la rivière Waveney. Ce rapport décrit la morphologie et le développement de l'implantation sur une large étendue; il comprend également (dans les chapitres 6 à 9) un certain nombre d'études de spécialistes d'une importance exceptionnelle. Il s'agit en particulier des études traitant d'un large ensemble de bois de charpente détrempée de l'époque romaine. On y trouve une analyse du caractère et du contexte du travail du métal dans l'implantation avec l'enregistrement de la séquence environnementale dans un paléochenal de la rivière. On comptera au nombre des documents remarquables un compte-rendu sur un éventuel ensemble de malteries et une étude critique sur la formation de différents dépôts de « terres noires », qui s'appuie à la fois sur des preuves tirées de distributions d'artefacts et de la chimie des sols.

Les fouilles antérieures les plus importantes entreprises à Scole se sont déroulées dans les années 70, à proximité à la fois du centre du village moderne et de l'implantation romaine. Les fouilles des années 93–94 ont porté sur des zones plus périphériques. À partir du début du deuxième siècle de notre ère (chapitre 2) il s'est développé une ville-ruban au nord de la rivière Waveney le long d'une route secondaire partant de Scole en direction de l'ouest. Les fouilles de la zone ont montré la croissance de cette partie de l'implantation et ont révélé de nombreuses preuves du travail du fer et du tannage. À un autre endroit, à l'est du village, un petit temple romano-celtique a été mis à jour lors d'un compte-rendu d'observations concernant la construction d'une route (chapitre 4).

Au sud de la rivière (chapitre 3), des fouilles se sont concentrées sur une zone proche de la rivière Waveney, où se sont peut-être développées des activités de brasserie et de malterie de la fin du deuxième siècle au milieu du troisième de notre ère. Deux autres larges zones voisines, proches de la limite sud de l'implantation romaine ont également été étudiées ; elles contenaient des preuves d'activités menées à proximité de la principale route romaine, ce qui illustre de façon détaillée le développement morphologique de cette zone pendant la période comprise entre le premier et le quatrième siècle de notre ère. On notera l'intérêt particulier des résultats de l'analyse artefactuelle et chimique des grands dépôts de « terres noires » de la période romaine qui proviennent de cette partie du site.

Il n'existe aucune indication précise concernant la persistance de l'implantation de Scole au-delà du début du cinquième siècle de notre ère. Toutefois, la présence d'au moins une tombe et la rénovation d'une chaussée en bois à proximité de la rive sud de la rivière Waveney sont peut-être le signe d'activités au début de la période saxonne.

Alors que l'essentiel du projet concerne l'implantation romaine, une étude paléoenvironnementale des sédiments de la rivière (compris dans le chapitre 9) couvre la période comprise entre le début du néolithique et l'époque anglo-saxonne. L'étude a essentiellement révélé des indices concernant l'abattage spectaculaire d'arbres à la fin de la période du bronze, les répercussions croissantes sur les forêts pendant l'âge du fer, l'exploitation et la gestion des forêts pendant la période romaine, l'intensification apparente de l'agriculture sur un plan local au cours des siècles qui ont suivi l'époque romaine.

(Traduction: Didier Don)

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Synthesebericht enthält die Ergebnisse der umfangreichen Ausgrabungen, die 1993/94 im Vorfeld von Straßenbauarbeiten in der Römersiedlung Scole stattfanden. Scole liegt an der Grenze der heutigen Grafschaften Norfolk und Suffolk, und zwar dort, wo die wichtigste Verbindungsstraße zwischen *Camulodunum* und *Venta Icenorum* den Fluss Waveney überquerte. Neben der Beschreibung der Siedlungsmorphologie und der großräumigen Entwicklung des Gebiets enthält der Bericht (in den Kapiteln 6 bis 9) mehrere bedeutende Fachanalysen, insbesondere zur großen Menge von Nassbauholz aus der Römerzeit, zur Beschaffenheit und zum Kontext der Metallbearbeitung innerhalb der Siedlung sowie zu der in einem Paläokanal des Flusses erhaltenen ökologischen Befundsequenz. Weiterhin hervorzuheben sind die Beschreibung eines möglichen Mälzbereichs und eine kritische Untersuchung zur Entstehung eines Typus schwarzer Schichten (« dark earth »), die sich sowohl auf die Verteilung der Artefakte als auch die Bodenchemie bezieht.

In den 1970er Jahren waren die zuvor umfangreichsten Ausgrabungen von Scole nicht weit vom Zentrum des heutigen Ortes sowie der Römersiedlung durchgeführt worden. 1993/94 wurden weiter am Rand gelegene Bereiche untersucht. Nördlich des Flusses Waveney fand man an einer von Scole nach Westen führenden Nebenstraße eine ausgedehnte Bandbebauung, die zu Beginn des 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. einsetzte (Kapitel 2). Eine Flächengrabung, bei der reichhaltige Belege für Eisen- und Gerberarbeiten ans Licht kamen, konnte das Wachstum dieses Siedlungsbereichs illustrieren. Östlich der Ortschaft wurde im Zuge einer archäologischen Baubegleitung ein kleiner römisch-keltischer Tempel ausgegraben (Kapitel 4).

Südlich des Waveney (Kapitel 3) war ein Grabungsareal auf ein flussnahes Gebiet konzentriert, das Ende des 2. bis Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. womöglich für Brau- und Mälzarbeiten genutzt wurde. Unweit der Südgrenze der Römersiedlung wurden außerdem zwei weitere direkt nebeneinanderliegende größere Flächen untersucht. Hier traten Hinweise auf Aktivitäten in der Nähe der römischen Hauptstraße und recht detaillierte Belege für die morphologische Entwicklung des Gebiets in der Zeit vom 1. bis 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr. zutage. Die Ergebnisse der artefaktischen und chemischen Analysen ausgedehnter schwarzer Schichten aus der Römerzeit an dieser Stelle sind besonders interessant.

Obwohl keine eindeutigen Belege dafür existieren, dass die Siedlung von Scole über das frühe 5. Jahrhundert hinaus fortbestand, deuten mindestens eine Begräbnisstätte und die Instandsetzung eines Holzdamms am Südufer des Waveney auf eine Nutzung in frühangelsächsischer Zeit hin.

Obgleich das Projekt in erster Linie auf die Römersiedlung ausgerichtet war, wurden auch die Flusssedimente einer umweltarchäologischen Untersuchung unterzogen (dargestellt in Kapitel 9), die die Zeit vom Frühneolithikum bis zu den Angelsachsen abdeckt. Zu den wichtigsten Ergebnissen zählen Hinweise auf eine Zeit dramatischer Rodungen in der jüngeren Bronzezeit, eine zunehmende Abholzung in der Eisenzeit, die Nutzung und Bewirtschaftung der Wälder in der Römerzeit und eine scheinbare Intensivierung der örtlichen Landwirtschaft in den nachrömischen Jahrhunderten.

(Übersetzung: Gerlinde Krug)

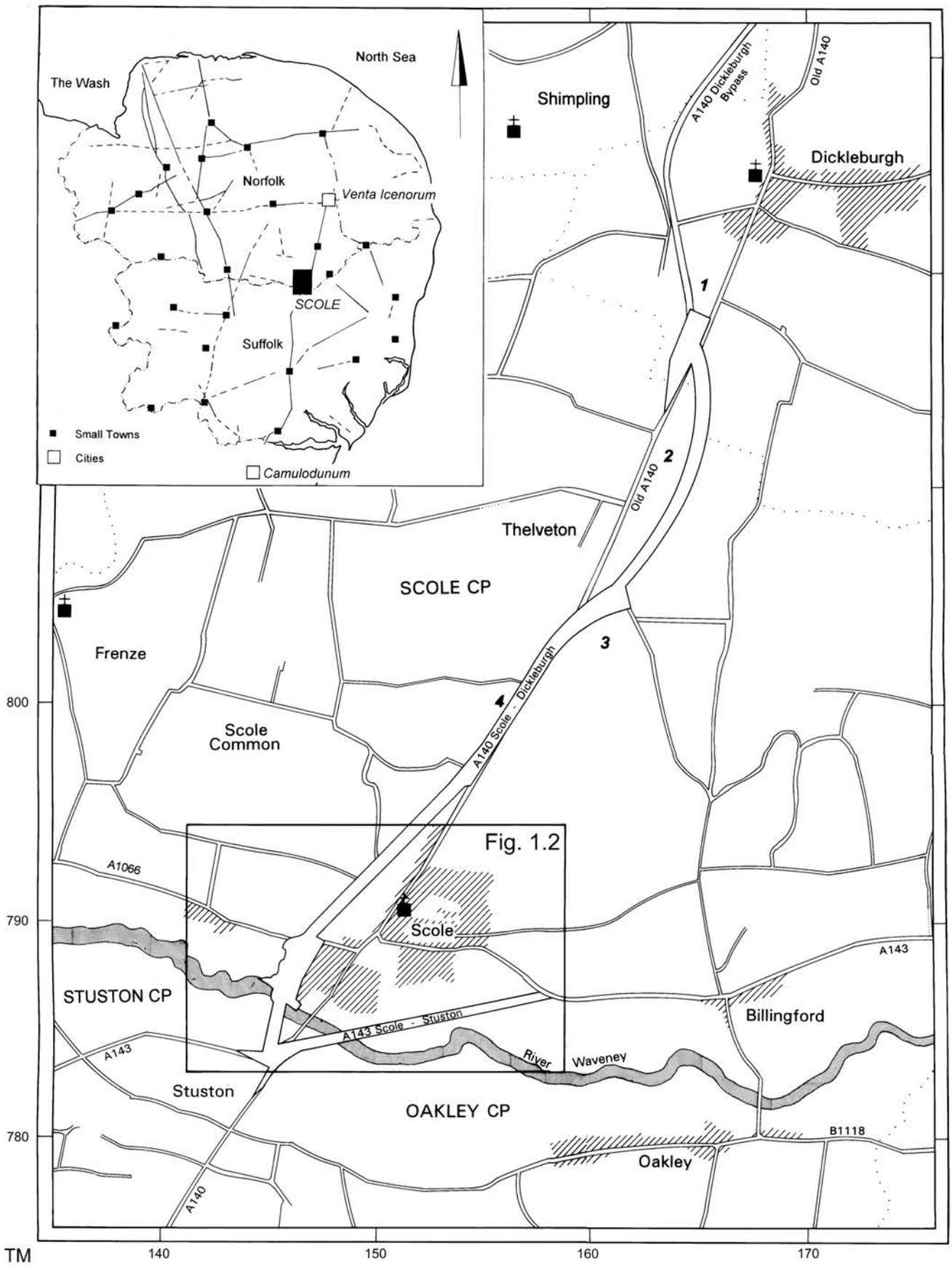


Figure 1.1 Location of Scole; showing area of Fig. 1.2. Inset at upper left shows Roman settlements and roads in Norfolk and Suffolk

Chapter 1. Introduction

by Trevor Ashwin and Andrew Tester

I. Background to the project

(Plate 1.1; Fig. 1.1)

The modern north-to-south A140 trunk road linking Norwich and Ipswich perpetuates the line of the Roman road which linked the cantonal capital *Venta Icenorum* at Caistor St Edmund with Roman *Camulodunum* (Colchester). Identified with the *IX iter* of the *Antonine Itinerary* (Margary 1967), it has been known since medieval times as the 'Pye Road'.

Despite carrying steadily increasing volumes of traffic throughout the post-war period the Pye Road has seen very little reconstruction, dualling or other improvement, and some built-up areas and important junctions have become centres of serious traffic congestion. While these locations include the villages of Long Stratton (Norfolk) and Stoke Ash (Suffolk), neither of which have been bypassed, the most serious of these bottlenecks was at the Norfolk–Suffolk border, marked by the River Waveney, where the villages of Scole and Dickleburgh lay at the intersection of the A140 and the east-to-west A143 linking Bury St Edmunds and Great Yarmouth. During the early 1980s it was decided to relieve this pressure by reconstructing a seven-kilometre section of the A140 on a new alignment to bypass both Scole and Dickleburgh. This was to be combined with the construction of a new bypass to carry the A143 to the south of Scole.

It was clear from the outset that any large-scale development of this kind would impact on the remains of a substantial Roman settlement at Scole, which had grown up at the point where the Roman road crossed the Waveney. This threat was particularly serious in the case of the line of the new A140 which would destroy a significant area of the western side of the Roman settlement, part of which had been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The construction of the new highways took place in three stages. The ***A140 Dickleburgh Bypass***, to the north of Scole, was built first, and opened in October 1990. Creation of a new single-carriageway road passing immediately to the west of the village of Dickleburgh was not preceded by any formal archaeological excavation. The ***A140 Scole–Dickleburgh Improvement*** was contiguous with the Dickleburgh Bypass at its northern end and extending southwards into Stuston (Suffolk) on the south bank of the Waveney. Its construction in 1994 was preceded, during 1993–4, by a series of major area excavations by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit and by Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service. These took place immediately to the west and south-west of modern Scole, in areas which had seen little development or disturbance since Roman times and where there were clear indications that Roman remains survived. Fieldwork and post-excavation research were funded by the Highways Agency. The ***A143 Scole–Stuston Bypass*** was also constructed during 1994, and was preceded by area excavations to the south of Scole at Oakley (Suffolk) and by a watching brief along the length of the road in Norfolk. All fieldwork on the line of the A143 was funded by Norfolk County Council.

II. Topography and geology

The study area lies in the valley of the east-flowing River Waveney, which forms along much of its length the natural boundary dividing Norfolk and Suffolk. The Waveney's source lies 11km further to the west while the river discharges into Breydon Water, and thence the North Sea, some 35km to the east. Scole itself developed at the point where the main north-to-south Roman and medieval highway crossed the river.

The valley itself contains fen peat and alluvium of the Mendham soil association (Hodge *et al*. 1983; Macphail *et al.*, Chapter 9). Glacial sandy soils and riverine deposits overlie glacial drift and, to the north of the Waveney, areas of chalky till which form a slight ridge parallel to the river. Although much of the valley-bottom is dominated by light free-draining soils, it is flanked to both north and south by the Boulder Clay plateaux of south Norfolk and northern Suffolk.

III. Previous investigations

(Fig. 1.2)

Introduction and gazetteer

The existence of a significant Roman site at Scole has long been known. The *Introduction* to the report on Andrew Rogerson's 1973 excavations (Rogerson 1977, 97–101) offered a useful summary of previous discoveries known in the mid-1970s; this has been updated here to include subsequent excavations, watching briefs and chance finds.

The line of the Roman road linking Colchester and Caistor St Edmund was well known in the 19th century. The earliest published reference to archaeological findings at Scole, mentioning the discovery of numerous coins in the area of the river crossing, dates to the 1850s (Chester 1855, 313). Excavations in the 1930s by Brown, Gale and Thonger provided many important insights; several important chance finds and watching briefs may be added to the results of subsequent excavation work by Moss in 1967 and Rogerson in 1973.

All known prehistoric and Roman recorded finds from the vicinity of the 1993–4 excavations are listed here with reference to Fig. 1.2.

Prehistoric

1. ***1936–7.*** As well as producing Roman-period finds (*7*, below), excavations at Waterloo, Scole, by B. Brown, C.H. Gale and Ipswich Museum yielded many microliths and flake-blades of Mesolithic date (Gale 1936). These finds have subsequently been re-appraised by Wymer (in Rogerson 1977, 153–4).

Roman

2. ***1903***. Found during gravel digging: iron objects, including spearheads, copper alloy objects; 27 sherds of pottery (Dutt 1913). Ditches apparently forming part of a square enclosure described by Gale (1936, 269). Proposed as post-Boudican fort

Plate 1.1 Aerial photograph of Scole, looking north, 8 July 1976 (Derek A. Edwards TM1478/T/AFM11). The route of the main Roman road — the pre-bypass A140 — and the River Waveney are both clearly visible. The 1993–4 excavation areas (with the exception of the temple, which is out of shot to the east) are indicated, as is the 1973 excavation site

by Hawkes (1939, 189–90), but evidence for this generally regarded as insufficient (Rogerson 1977, 99).

3. ***1923***. Large stone measuring 2.1m x 1m x 0.6m recorded; thought at first to have been mortared but probably in fact a glacial erratic (C. Morley and M. Hardy, Suffolk SMR).
1986. Found by metal-detectorist R. Morley close to stone: 105 Roman coins; bronze ring with missing intaglio; octagonal silver ring; figurine foot; duck-shaped terminal and two miniature axes. A little pottery/tile/tesserae observed at surface: possibly evidence for a temple site with masonry buildings (S. West, Suffolk SMR)? Other metalwork finds suggest presence of a 5th–7th-century Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

4. ***pre-1936***. Excavations by Thrower and Long exposed road 6.5m wide with ditch on western side. Now sealed beneath 'old' (pre-Bypass) line of A140 (Gale 1936, 267).

5. ***pre-1936***. Excavations by Thrower located road 3.5m wide following line of footpath leading from river crossing south-westwards towards Oakley; appears to have followed S edge of flood plain.

6. ***1936 or earlier.*** Roman building excavated 1.1km to the west of the old Scole Bridge (Gale 1936, 263; Brown, Suffolk SMR). Lying at south end of Stuston Common on a site overlooking the river, it measured 11ft 6ins (3.5m) square and had foundations of flint with a central hearth of burnt flint. Overlying dark soil contained pottery, and 1st–3rd-century coins. Along with the coins, Gale 1936 illustrates a potentially significant miniature bronze axe, although this was not mentioned in his text or in Brown's records. A cambered gravel 'Roman road', leading to a 'known ford site', was recorded 70ft (21.3m) east of this building.

7. ***1936***. Excavations by Brown and Gale (Gale 1936) located road running north to south with ditch to south-west; wooden piles and other timbers interpreted as wharf. Excavated features further to south include occupation layers, flint foundations for two timber structures, mortared flint wall with doorway, rubbish pits. Pottery (incl. samian) indicates late 1st–2nd century, although some published by Gale could be 3rd century.

8. ***pre-1937***. Excavations by C.E.T. Thonger at Scole House (Gale 1936, 267; Gale 1937). Findings included a pit; at least two structures with concrete floors and walls of flint and oyster shell (one of them containing a complex of ovens); remains of a north-to-south road 2.7m wide; a burnt structure with daub-and-wattle walls. Coins, 2nd-century samian and coarse pottery also found. Subsequent work here in 1982.

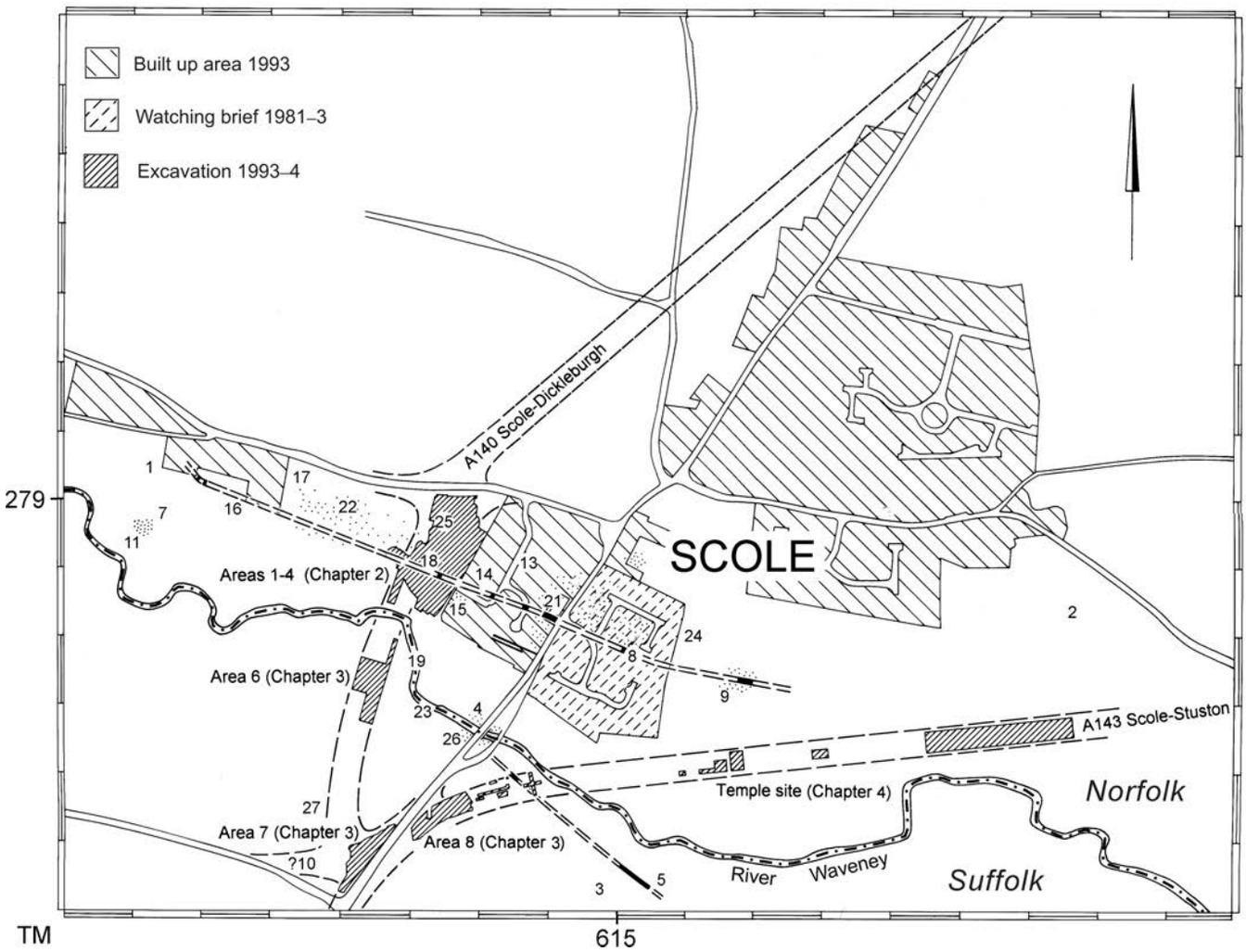


Figure 1.2 Previous archaeological findings at Scole

9. ***1951***. Sewage works. R.R. Clarke and B. Brown recorded cobbled areas *c.* 15m square, upon which rested pottery and animal bone. Further to the north-east lay a clay oven. Also recorded was a cambered east-to-west road *c.* 0.6m below the surface. Coins included *dupondii* of Faustina I and Claudius I.

10. ***1954***. Possible Roman cremation (not precisely located) recorded by B. Brown in general area to west of Area 7; also a road surface.

11. ***pre-1958***. Slag and Romano-British pottery collected.

12. ***pre-1958***. Bronze coin of Constantine II found in filling-station garden.

13. ***1963***. Karen Close development. Upper part of human skull found at depth of *c.* 1m on line of new road; also Romano-British pottery, although not in direct association.

14. ***1964***. Karen Close development. Clay floor, hearth and occupation layers recorded by W.F. Milligan and A.K. Knowles during drainage works. Romano-British pottery and animal bone recovered.

15. ***1964***. East-to-west road observed by W.F. Milligan and A.K. Knowles during housing construction; *c.* 4m wide and slightly cambered; no ditches recorded. Finds from area included pottery, animal bone, iron slag and 2nd-century samian.

16. ***1964***. Road, running west-north-west to east-south-east, observed by A.K. Knowles.

17. ***1964***. Construction of bungalow 'D'Avenir'. At least two cremation burials recorded by W. Milligan and E.B. Green; associated with 1st- and 2nd-century pottery; other finds included worn 2nd-century coin and glass lachrymatory. A clay floor produced 12th-century pottery, while 16th-century pottery came from a nearby hearth.

18. ***1967***. Excavations by G.I. Moss (Suffolk WEA) exposed an east-to-west oriented gravel road surface; iron-smelting debris to the north of the road was apparently associated with 1st-century pottery and lay below a *denarius* of Nerva. A late 4th-century coin was found on the road surface.
1972. Further excavations by Moss on the north side of the road exposed the ?1st-century roadside ditch. This was sealed by a timber building, which was floored with layers of gravel and chalk and contained an oven; a post-hole to the south was interpreted as part of a portico fronting onto the road. Finds included 2nd-century samian and coarse wares and a coin of Lucius Verus. The surrounding area saw total excavation in 1993, when Moss's trenches were opened and re-examined. As far as possible, the results of these excavations have been integrated into Chapter 2.

19. ***1969***. Roman pottery reported from river dredgings by Keith Rackham.

20. ***1969***. Roman pottery reported from river dredgings by Keith Rackham.

21. ***1973***. NAU excavations in advance of housing development, directed by A. Rogerson (Rogerson 1977). Summary below.

22. ***1976***. Romano-British pottery collected from molehills by A. Rogerson and N. Adams, who also noted series of earthwork platforms in the northern part of the field. These probably indicated a series of tofts extending back from the south frontage of the A143 Diss road.

23. ***1978***. Roman pottery reported from river dredgings by Keith Rackham.
?1982. Metal-detected finds included 200 Roman coins and 18 brooches, one Iceni Pattern-Horse coin and a 1st-century (?)

terret-ring fragment from 'area of enclosure'. The enclosure, visible as crop-marks in air photographs, had been identified as a possible marching camp (Edwards 1977). Also Mesolithic and Neolithic flints reported by Rackham.

24. ***1981–3***. Scole House/Long Meadow development. Watching brief by NAU staff during construction of houses. Significant finds included an iron-smelting furnace thought to date to the early 2nd century AD, a number of unaccompanied inhumation burials and a timber-lined well-shaft. A hoard of 202 Iceni and 87 early Roman coins was found. Full details in Norfolk SMR.

25. ***1987***. Trial-trenching and contour survey of the general area threatened by the line of the proposed bypass, by A. Gregory (NAU) and Bert and Barbara Dollin. Summary in Chapter 2.

26. ***1989***. Human cranium found at base of peaty layer; observed from boat while canoeing 62m to the west of A140 Scole road bridge; 'associated with pottery'. Also Neolithic polished axe from same field (J. Dean, Suffolk SMR).

27. ***1995***. Evaluation trenching by A. Tester in advance of construction of Hearts Services, Stuston. Single Roman coin (irregular *as*) found (Tester 1995).

Previous excavations

Three episodes of formal excavation have taken place at Scole since 1967. Two of these (**18**, **25** above) are considered more fully in the introduction to Chapter 2 since they coincide with the excavation of Areas 1–4.

The third (**21** above) was directed for the NAU by Andrew Rogerson in 1973, when an area of *c.* 900m^2 excavated in advance of housing development probably lay close to the centre of the Roman town. No significant evidence for pre-Roman occupation was noted. It is unlikely that Roman activity pre-dated *c.* AD 70, while the assemblage of 46 Roman coins implied that the main phase of occupation had ended by AD 275. The results are fully published in Rogerson 1977, which also included a useful gazetteer of previous finds and fieldwork at Scole.

The secondary east-to-west Roman road which dominated the 1993 excavations further to the west was recorded here in the southern part of the trench, where it was approximately 4m wide. Little structural evidence was noted apart from a floor surface of rammed chalk, perhaps lying within a timber-framed building of sill-beam construction. Metalled pathways and possible yard surfaces were found; a series of hearths and ovens and quantities of metalworking debris indicated iron-smelting, but Rogerson concluded that activity here was mostly domestic. Two timber-lined wells dating to the early–mid 2nd century AD were emptied to depths of 3m or more. The lower parts of their timber linings had been preserved by waterlogging. Much organic material, including leather shoes and wooden furniture fragments, was collected from their lower fills. Almost 700kg of coarse pottery was recovered, along with 25kg of samian. Considering the relatively small size of the area this assemblage appears large, certainly compared with the total collection from *all* of the 1993–4 excavation areas together (756kg coarse pottery plus 21kg samian).

IV. Archaeological potential

The development provided an opportunity to examine a significant proportion of an apparently typical Roman Small Town, situated at an important river-crossing on one of East Anglia's main Roman highways. It was clear that all of the foci of excavation likely to be dictated by the forthcoming A140 and A143 construction lay a little distance away from the river crossing and from the presumed centre of the settlement. This, however, was offset by the potential for recording evidence of expansion, contraction and functional change within the 'suburbs' extending along the roads leading to the south and west.

Previous work had demonstrated unusually good stratigraphic and environmental preservation in many of the areas designated for excavation to the north of the Waveney. While some parts of the road line in Suffolk had seen greater disturbance by ploughing, the evaluation trenching south of the Waveney in 1992 revealed evidence for structures immediately to the west of the present A140. These trial works also showed that extensive deposits of 'Dark Earth', resembling the characteristic late Roman overburden deposits found on many urban sites, survived for study. It was appreciated that controlled sample-excavation of these deposits might shed light on sub-Roman as well as Roman activity at Scole, and that any opportunity to examine this aspect of a Small Town site was clearly of great significance.

Waterlogging was anticipated in the low-lying riverine zone. Much of the scheduled area immediately to the north of the Waveney had seen little or no modern ploughing and boasted surviving earthworks of Roman, medieval and later date. The possibility that more industrial evidence, of the kind recorded by Rogerson's 1973 excavation, would be encountered gave the project obvious potential, not only for the study of industrial processes *per se* but also for assessing the settlement's social and commercial status and its position within local, regional and national trade networks. The chance to uncover surviving waterlogged riverside structures, perhaps including wharves and quays, enhanced these possible lines of enquiry.

While it was clear that the Roman-period occupation would be the focus of the project, the chance to record important information about human activity in other periods was also recognised. The proximity of the well-known Mesolithic site at Waterloo, a short distance to the west of the new road's line in Norfolk, suggested that waterlogged Mesolithic deposits concealed beneath the riverine peats might await discovery. With regard to the later prehistoric period, Scole lies within a tract of south Norfolk/north Suffolk where important evidence for a major co-axial field system, perhaps of Iron Age date, has been identified by Williamson (1988). The construction of the new highway made it possible that there would be opportunities to record elements of these land-divisions, and perhaps study their physical relationship with Roman features. The presence of earthworks representing house-platforms and toft divisions in and around the excavation area to the north of the River Waveney promised information about medieval occupation as well as the possibility that earlier buried soils concealed beneath them would be identified.

V. Site evaluation

The Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Units were commissioned by the Department of Transport in April 1992 to conduct a field evaluation of the proposed new route of the A140 (Emery 1992; Tester and Emery 1992). A preliminary desktop survey of existing archive sources and Sites and Monuments Record entries was carried out by NAU and SCCAS staff. This was supported by a landscape survey of field boundaries undertaken by Dr Tom Williamson of the Centre of East Anglian Studies,

UEA, which was intended to identify any visible landscape elements which might relate to Williamson's suggested pre-Roman land divisions (Williamson 1993). Only in the area to the south of the Waveney did any evaluation excavation take place.

Norfolk

Desktop survey to the north of the Waveney revealed few potential sites of interest which lay beyond the already-known area of the Roman settlement (Emery 1992). The southern corner of an extant moat was identified close to the road line at Thelveton (TM 165 818; ***1*** on Fig. 1.1), while a second moat a short distance to the south (TM 163 811; ***2*** on Fig. 1.1) lay *c*. 90m to the west of the alignment. The road would pass close to a partially-enclosed area identified as 'Thelton Common' on Faden's 1797 *Map of Norfolk* (***3*** on Fig. 1.1). There was speculation that an isolated building illustrated by Faden on the western corner of the common might have been the only surviving remnant of a medieval common-edge settlement, and it was suggested that excavation or watching brief observations might clarify this. Just to the north of the village of Scole a series of crop-marks suggestive of medieval cottages and land divisions was recorded on the projected line of the road at TM 154 796 (***4*** on Fig. 1.1).

Fieldwalking and metal-detecting on the line of the A140 in Norfolk took place during October 1992–January 1993 (Penn and Tester 1993). Surface collection utilised a series of 20–25m square gridded units, and was followed by detector survey at varying degrees of intensity. Few finds were recorded, and the survey reinforced the view that intensive Roman-period settlement was indeed confined to the area of the river crossing and the present village of Scole.

Suffolk

The entire field crossed by the line of the new A140 to the south of the Waveney was fieldwalked, with all finds located within a series of 20m square collection units (Penn and Tester 1993). About 100 worked flints were found, several of them blades probably of Mesolithic date. These finds reinforced the evidence for prehistoric activity here provided by earlier surveys and chance finds. The Roman period was represented by an assemblage of artefacts which included 1240 sherds of pottery. Although this material was spread all over the survey area it was concentrated most heavily alongside the eastern field-edge (*i.e.* close to the western frontage of the main Roman road). A decrease in the intensity of finds in the southern corner of the field suggested that this area lay beyond the limits of the settlement itself. Post-Roman activity was represented by a Middle Saxon bronze pin and a few glazed medieval sherds.

A series of fifteen evaluation trenches was excavated across the field to the west of the Pye Road. Full reports on this work are lodged in the Project Archive. Trenches 1–6 were excavated during May 1992 (Tester 1995). The results of this work confirmed the initial impression, drawn from surface survey results, that the eastern side of the field adjacent to the old A140 had seen prolonged Roman-period occupation. Trenches 7–15 were excavated subsequently during January 1993 to define more clearly the southern limits of Roman-period activity on either side of the A140 (Penn and Tester 1993). Of especial interest in Trenches 1a, 7 and 9 was a distinctive 'dark soil' deposit of Roman date. Areas of this had survived relatively undisturbed by subsequent ploughing. A series of trenches to the east of the A140 produced no significant archaeological results.

The corresponding field to the west of the Pye Road in Oakley parish, which was to be crossed by the new A143 Scole–Stuston bypass, saw trench evaluation during 1993 (Boulter 1993). Stratigraphic preservation was excellent, with Roman features sealed by a thick deposit of 'dark soil'. Excellent conditions for environmental study were also identified here.

VI. The excavations

(Plates 1.2–1.7; Fig. 1.3)

Strategy

A Project Design for excavations on the line of the A140 was drawn up in March 1993 in the light of the site evaluation results (Flitcroft and Tester 1993). This set out a specification for area excavations at three main locations (Fig.1.3):

1. *Scole: Areas 1–5 (Chapter 2)*. A large part of the scheduled area immediately to the north of the River Waveney and south of the A143 Diss Road was designated for full mechanical stripping followed by sample excavation. Crossed by the east-to-west Roman road recorded by Rogerson and Moss, and encompassing Moss's excavations and three of Gregory's trial trenches, this was thought likely to represent up to 20% of the small town's total area and appeared to be virtually unaffected by recent development. The area-identifier code numbers Areas 1–5 were assigned to parts of the area which lay within the different pre-existing land divisions: Area 5, along the western edge of the road line, was eventually left unexcavated after a mitigation strategy was agreed.
2. *Stuston: Area 6 (Chapter 3)*. The area of a low sand hill immediately to the south of the Waveney and its surrounding riverine peats was considered to have excellent stratigraphic and environmental potential, not only for the retrieval of Roman material but also for identifying prehistoric evidence. Excavation was to continue northwards from the sand-hill itself into the river-margin area, to permit the sequence of peat deposits to be examined and to see if any waterlogged traces of river-front structures survived.
3. *Stuston: Area 7 (Chapter 3)*. An area sited in the angle of the old A140 and the A143 Old Bury Road was inended to study the supposed southern limit of the Roman-period settlement, and to examine the 'dark soil' horizon identified in evaluation Trenches 1a, 7 and 9.

At the same time, an archaeological reponse to the A143 Scole–Stuston bypass was also agreed upon by curatorial and field archaeologists in Norfolk and Suffolk.

4. *Oakley: Area 8 (Chapter 3)*. Construction of the length of the road to the south of the Waveney provided an opportunity to examine land on the eastern side of the main Roman road (*i.e.* opposite Stuston Area 7. Trench evaluation in 1993 demonstrated excellent stratigraphic preservation, and excavation of a large proportion of the road line followed in advance of construction.
5. *Scole: the temple, Site 30650 (Chapter 4)*. A watching brief was maintained on the new A143 as it crossed the Waveney valley-bottom, a series of four areas being monitored by archaeologists during and after topsoil-stripping by highways contractors.

Sequence

Area excavation began on the line of the A140 in June 1993, with the mechanical stripping of Areas 6 and 7 (Suffolk) and of the southern part of Areas 1–4 (Norfolk); the northern part of the main Norfolk excavation area was opened in September, so that spoil could be dumped in adjacent areas where recording was already complete. Excavation continued on the line of the A140 until December 1993, with limited additional work undertaken in the western part of Area 6 during February 1994.

Works on the line of the A143 Scole–Stuston Bypass took place during the spring and summer of 1994.

Method

Excavation and recording was carried out in accordance with the standard practises of the Norfolk and Suffolk

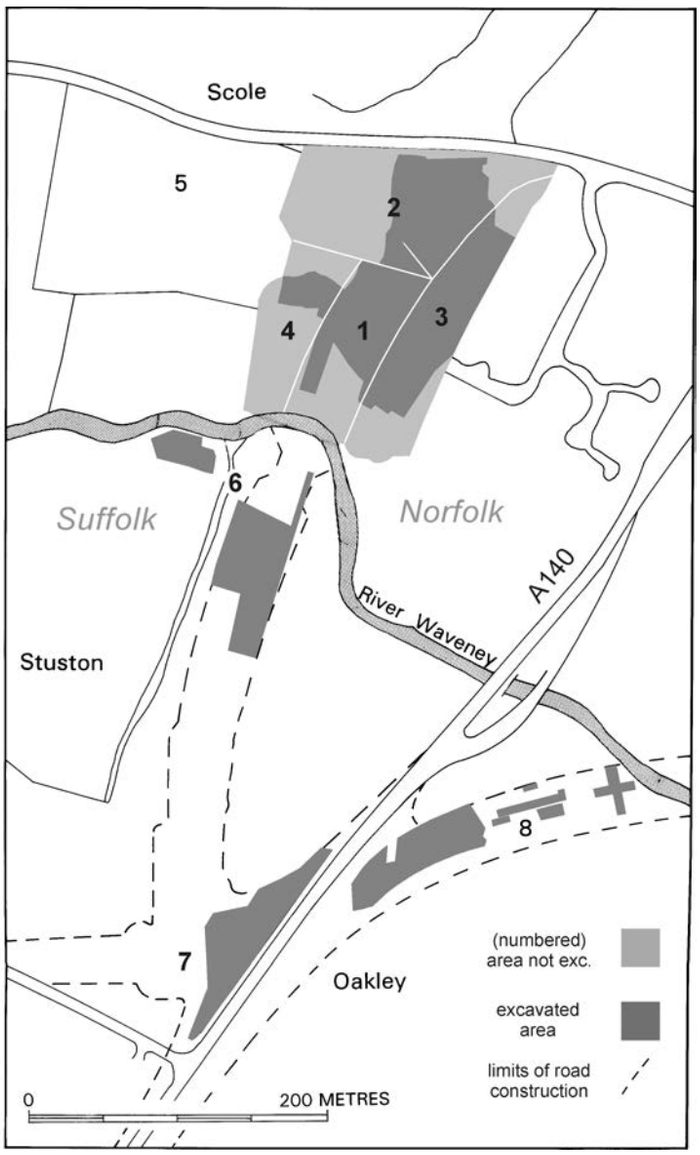


Figure 1.3 Location of excavation Areas 1–8

Archaeological Units, although a high level of conformity between the works in the two counties was sought from the outset.

Excavation

Approaches to site clearance and sampling strategy varied according to the circumstances of each individual site, and are summarised in more specific terms in the Introductions to Chapters 2–4.

Initial contour survey was confined to Norfolk Areas 1–5, since only here were traces of earthworks apparent. A full preliminary metal-detector survey was carried out across all of the areas designated for excavation. Overburden was stripped from all areas using hydraulic tracked excavators under close supervision by archaeological staff. Machine-removal of overburden in a series of spits allowed comprehensive metal-detecting of lower topsoil, subsoil and 'dark soil' horizons. Sample areas of 'dark soil' and other buried topsoil horizons were defined for hand-excavation. Sample-excavation of features commenced after the creation of pre-excavation plans showing all visible features.

The excavation strategies adopted in each of the individual areas are outlined in Chapters 2–4. Clear priority was assigned to examining features and activity surfaces of Roman date. Identification of land-divisions and plots, full excavation of waterlogged timber structures, elucidation of peat-formation sequences and examination of 'dark soil' deposits were designated as being of especial importance.

A single series of five-digit context numbers was established for the entire project, with the initial digit (1–8) of each number identifying the site Area in question. Standard NAU and SAU recording proformas were used, in accordance with the requirements of curatorial archaeologists in Norfolk and Suffolk. A computerised context record was created during the fieldwork stage, and checked and completed during assessment.

Plate 1.2 Ministerial visit: Rt. Hon. John Macgregor, then Minister for Transport, receives a guided tour of the Norfolk excavations from the excavation director Myk Flitcroft

Plate 1.3 Site clearance and sampling: a – mechanical clearance was monitored intensively by metal-detector; b – overburden and 'Dark Earth' layers were sampled by targeted sieving

Plate 1.4 Air view of excavations in progress, looking south, 29 July 1993 (Derek A. Edwards TM1478/ABT/HAF10). In the centre of the picture, the tree-flanked Waveney separates Areas 1–4 (Norfolk) and Area 6 (Suffolk); Area 7 may be seen in the background. The northern part of Areas 1–4 is as yet unstripped

Finds and samples

Bulk finds were assigned to their individual context or collection unit. Metal-detector finds from upper topsoil contexts were collected in 20m square units; detector finds from all other contexts were identified by a series of temporary numbers prior to individual objects' confirmation and logging as 'genuine' small finds. Small finds were located three-dimensionally within their collection unit. For the Norfolk excavation areas a series of small find numbers starting at *1000* was utilised. In Suffolk, in accordance with standard county practise, context number ranges from *68000*, *78000* and *88000* were assigned to small finds from Areas 6, 7 and 8 respectively. Computerised databases were created for

Plate 1.5 Scientific sampling. Botanical, palynological and other scientific analyses yielded highly significant results. Here, Dr Richard Macphail collects soil samples for micromorphological study

both bulk finds and small finds. With the exception of legible coins, all metalwork was generally x-rayed; this was undertaken at the Conservation Department, Norwich Castle Museum.

Collection of environmental samples targeted deposits that promised high levels of organic preservation. Comparative samples for pollen, insect remains and plant macrofossils were normally taken from such deposits. Additional plant macrofossil samples were taken from deposits when preservation by charring could be observed. A selection of micromorphological samples was taken from 'Dark Earth' and buried soil deposits.

VII. Assessment and analysis

Assessment

At the conclusion of the project's fieldwork phase all outstanding context, finds and graphic records were checked, and the computer database of context and finds information completed. All site plans were digitised, as feature outlines only, using AutoCAD r12. Initial stratigraphic matrices compiled during fieldwork were integrated to create a provisional matrix covering the whole site. A site narrative was produced and circulated to all specialists contributing to the site Assessment.

As an aid to assessment and as a preliminary analytical step, a series of context groups were first defined at this stage. The groups and their constituent contexts were included in a group register and formed the units used in the stratigraphic assessment. Provisional phasing, making use of pottery spot dates and both vertical and horizontal stratigraphy, was carried out at this stage for all of the excavation areas.

Individual artefact assessments were carried out for pottery, animal bone, brick and tile, fired clay, metalwork, coins, metalworking debris, glass, leather and flint. Waterlogged timber was assessed with an eye to potential both for structural/technological analysis and for dendrochronological dating. Formal assessment of the human bone was confined to a sample of the cremated material. Bulk environmental samples, which had been processed on site, were assessed summarily; only the organic flots from a selection of samples were scanned, to give a broad impression of assemblage composition. Assessment of palynological and insect-analysis and soil micromorphology sample material was summary. An integrated Assessment Report, dealing with the results of the A140 excavations and including an Updated Project Design specifying the full analysis programme to follow, was produced in Summer 1994. A separate Assessment Report dealing with the results of the Oakley excavations was produced to a comparable format by SCCAS in 1995.

Analysis

Context and finds databases were related to the digitised site plans using AutoCAD r12 to create a Geographic Information System for studying the excavation areas. Analysis of the site record began with the formal division of all stratigraphic units into a definitive series of context groups. These were intended to collate all of the component contexts within individual structures, ditches, pit groups or other interpretative units. Where necessary, the component contexts within specific Groups were further assigned to a series of subgroups, used (for example) to distinguish contexts representing the use of a building from those indicating its abandonment or demolition.

Definitive phasing schemes for all the individual sites was based upon spot-date information provided by samian, coarse pottery and coins. Analysis programmes dealing with ceramics, glass, coins, metalwork and small finds, leather, slag, human and animal bone, wet wood and environmental evidence were commissioned from a range of in-house and external specialists. Site phasing and group interpretation was reviewed in the light of the completed analysis reports. Study of 'dark soil' deposits focussed initially on the spatial distribution of artefacts; this was augmented by the results of soil micromorphology and environmental analyses.

Once the full results of scientific and artefactual analyses were available a series of report text sections, describing and offering interpretative discussion for each

a

b

Plate 1.6 Water everywhere. Winter 1993–4: looking towards the tree-lined Waveney from Norfolk Areas 1–4 (a) and Suffolk Area 6 (b)

individual group, were written. These group texts are the building blocks from which the publication report itself has been assembled and edited.

Throughout these reports, group (rather than context) numbers have been used wherever possible when describing features or when referring to them. Group numbers appear in ***bold italics***, whereas context numbers are in plain *italics*.

VIII. Periodisation and phasing

All of the five discrete excavation areas described in Chapters 2–4 featured quite distinct sequences of activity and development during the Roman period. Out of necessity, therefore, local *phasing* schemes were created for each of the individual excavated sites. In order to correlate events in different parts of Scole, especially for specialist studies and for the purposes of synthesis and discussion, an overarching series of *Periods* was devised, within which these individual phase divisions are nested. This is summarised in Table 1.1.

Within the integrated archaeological narrative these Period divisions act as a primary chronological framework, and they feature prominently in all of the main text headings within these chapters. Within this overall structure the account of the sequence at each site has been ordered by Phase, except in the case of Chapter 4 where a series of developmental stages within Periods 3 and 4 could not be closely dated. The Period system also acts as a framework for the concluding discussion sections of Chapters 2–4, and for the overall synthesis of the Small Town's context and development offered in Chapter 5.

IX. The monograph

This monograph report is presented in two parts for publication, with site narratives and a general overall discussion of the results in printed form being supported by synthetic specialist reports on an accompanying CD.

Volume I: Narrative and synthesis
Introduction (Chapter 1): integrated summary of project background and research aims, methods adopted and publication policy.
The archaeological narrative (Chapters 2–4): excavation results from the different areas of Roman Scole which were examined (north of the Waveney; south of the Waveney; the temple) are presented in three discrete chapters. Detailed description of features and finds is confined to specific key groups identified during the analysis programme as being of special importance to site interpretation. The overarching Period system (Table 1.1) is used in main section-headings to help correlate the differing phasing systems required by the various excavation areas.
General discussion (Chapter 5): the main component is a series of discussions of the most significant themes arising from the research, and an attempt at assessing the broader significance of the Scole findings to studies of Roman Britain, both regionally and nationally.

Volume II (CD): Specialist studies
Specialist reports (Chapters 6–9): a total of seventeen reports dealing with artefactual and environmental evidence have been prepared for publication. This body of material has been assembled into four discrete chapters discussing pottery (Chapter 6), coins and small finds (Chapter 7), metalworking and wood technology (Chapter

	Chapter 2: *Norfolk, Areas 1–4 (1007 SCL)*	***Chapter 3:*** *Suffolk, Area 6 (SUS 005)*	***Chapter 3:*** *Suffolk, Area 7 (SUS 005)*	***Chapter 3:*** *Suffolk, Area 8 (OKY 005)*	***Chapter 4:*** *Norfolk, the temple (30650 SCL)*
PERIOD 1 (pre-C1 BC)	*Phases 1 and 2*	*Period 1*	*Preh (SUS)*	*Phase 1*	
PERIOD 2 (C1 BC, early–mid C1 AD)		*Period 2*			
PERIOD 3 (mid C1–mid C2)	*Phase 3* *Phase 4*	*Period 3*	*Phase A*	*Phase 2* *Phase 3*	field drainage
PERIOD 4 (mid C2–late/end C3)	*Phase 5A* *Phase 5B*	*Period 4*	*Phase B* *Phase C* *Phase D*	*Phase 4* *Phase 5* *Phase 6*	Romano-Celtic temple
PERIOD 5 (late C3/C4)	*Phase 6*	*Period 5*	*Phase E*	*Phase 7*	
PERIOD 6 (C5–C19)	*Phase 7* *Phase 8*	*Period 6*		*Phase 8 (Early and Middle Saxon)*	
PERIOD 7 (modern)	*Phase 9*				

Table 1 Concordance of individual site/area phasing schemes

8) and environmental evidence (Chapter 9). These reports include all catalogues of illustrated finds or of sample material deemed worthy of publication. Wherever appropriate, the functional categories defined by Crummy (1983) have been used when artefacts are grouped for discussion and illustration. The full texts of all analysis reports have been lodged in the project archive, along with all supporting material.

Our aim has been to produce an integrated report. By this, it is understood that the narrative accounts of the individual excavations (Chapters 2–4) will present and draw upon artefactual and environmental data — as well as spatial and stratigraphic information — throughout, and attempt to give appropriate weight to all classes of excavated evidence. This 'integrated' approach, however, has not extended to the dissection of text and catalogue material from specialist reports and its inclusion verbatim within the site narrative. Instead, accounts of excavation areas and specific features include summary paragraphs outlining relevant environmental and finds information. These are cross-referenced with the specialist reports (Chapters 6–9) wherever appropriate.

Deciding on a consistent approach to the integration of specialist material has not always been easy, due to the authors' concern not to weigh down the narrative text with excessive detail and to the varying formats of the contributions themselves. Eventually it was decided to adopt a synthetic approach wherever possible. The specialist studies published in Chapters 6–9 are intended to stand alone in their own right as self-contained essays on their subjects. The full reports from which they have been drawn are lodged in the project archive.

All catalogues of illustrated artefacts and ecofacts have been nested within the specialist reports rather than being integrated within the narrative Chapters 2, 3 and 4. However, illustrations of a very small number of key artefacts and artefact groups (perhaps most notably, the re-used structural timbers excavated in Area 6) have been included in the narrative accounts. Although this means that a small number of figures and plates are in fact duplicated, it was felt that including these key illustrations within the printed volume, as opposed to consigning all finds figures to the digital part of the report, represented a worthwhile enhancement.

X. Summaries of specialist studies included in Volume II (CD)

Chapter 6. Specialist Reports I

Pottery

Report by Alice Lyons and Cathy Tester, with contributions from Brenda M. Dickinson, Kay Hartley, Sarah Percival and Alan Vince

A total of 75,706 pottery vessels and sherds, weighing 756.054kg, were recovered from Scole Areas 1–8 and the temple (Site 30650) during the 1993–4 excavations. The majority of pottery was found in stratified deposits, although 1824 sherds (3.32% by weight) were unstratified. 99.26% of the assemblage was Roman. Prehistoric pottery accounted for 188 sherds (1.307kg: 0.17% of entire assemblage), while 526 sherds (4.264kg: 0.56%) were post-Roman.

While much pottery was recovered from features associated with peripheral areas of the Roman settlement, a significant quantity came from major Roman soil deposits. In Areas 1–4 a 'Grey Soil' interpreted as the Roman topsoil contained 18,485 sherds weighing 105.225kg (13.92% by weight of all pottery from these areas). An extensive Dark Earth layer in Areas 7 and 8, interpreted as the result of domestic rubbish disposal and sealing all Roman features, contained 25,003 sherds, weighing 234.365kg (31.00% of pottery from these areas).

Products of the local Suffolk production centres at Wattisfield (coarsewares) and Pakenham (finewares) predominate. Mortaria and other specialist wares were strikingly scarce. The samian is largely Central Gaulish material of Hadrianic or Antonine date. A ceramic pseudo-cauldron from the temple (Site 30650), complete with two articulated ceramic suspension rings, is an important example of this rare form.

The total assemblage from the 1993–4 excavations is only slightly larger than that from Rogerson's far more limited 1973 excavations in central Scole (yielding 725kg: Rogerson 1977). However, analysis has shed light upon Roman pottery supply processes in the region, and particularly the role of the nearby Wattisfield industry. This has important implications for appreciation of the economic contexts of East Anglia's Roman Small Towns more generally. An important factor here has been our greatly improved understanding of many local wares that could not be attributed to source at the time of Rogerson's research (Rogerson 1977).

Chapter 7. Specialist Reports II

Coins

Report by John A. Davies

Almost all of the 2051 coins from the 1993–4 excavations are Roman. The analysis report considers the collection both site-by-site and in aggregate, and also considers the evidence in the light of previous finds at Scole.

Only a single Iron Age coin was catalogued. While the earliest coins from the sites are 1st-century types usually associated with military activity, there is no clear evidence for a significant military presence at Scole. This contrast is intriguing, and the losses may relate to other commercial or administrative activity.

The coin lists from across the settlement show that late 3rd-century coinage is lightly represented, by comparison with Roman Small Towns in general. In terms of Reece's study of coin assemblages from 'urban' and 'rural' contexts in Roman Britain (Reece 1991) the Suffolk excavation areas appear to fall within the normal 'urban' range but the two Norfolk sites appear 'rural', as does the aggregated collection from Scole assemblage. Coin lists from many other Small Towns in Norfolk display this 'rural' pattern, with high proportions of 4th-century coin (Davies and Gregory 1991); the coinage from south of the Waveney exhibits a different pattern, however. This is not easy to explain in terms of a 'rural'/'urban' environmental division, although such numismatic contrasts are not uncommon in and around major settlements in Roman Britain.

A group of 311 Barbarous Radiate issues from Area 7 appears to represent a dispersed hoard of 275–94. Areas 1–4 saw massive coin loss in the period 330–48, with 43% of the site total coming from those years. These finds do not appear to represent a dispersed hoard, and probably

indicate intense activity in this part of the settlement. Strong coin loss persisted through the 4th century until a marked fall-off right across the site after 378. Similar declines have previously been observed at Scole and in stray finds from Norfolk (Davies and Gregory 1991). However, widespread activity at Scole at the end of the 4th century is indicated by the presence of the latest coin issues at all of the major sites.

Portable material culture

Report by Nicholas Cooper, with contributions by Fiona Seeley, Quita Mould, Judith Plouviez and Ralph Jackson

This report concerns all small finds of metal (other than coins), worked bone, glass, leather, ceramic, and stone. The body of the report comprises a detailed discussion of the finds by functional category to accompany a selective, illustrated, catalogue of 361 objects, and is preceded by a functional and spatial analysis of the finds across the sites, with relevant distribution maps in the main volume (Fig. 2.7 *etc.*). Use of controlled metal detection greatly enhanced the numbers of metal finds although periodic flooding left the iron objects in poor condition, and the numbers of bone objects appears unusually low.

The assemblage from Areas 1–4, north of the Waveney, is the largest and reflects industrial, domestic/ritual, funerary, agricultural and commercial activities. The small assemblage from Area 6 relates primarily to the water mill and to lead-working, whilst that from Area 7 divides between a largely residential group, relating to buildings fronting the road (Phases A–D), and a substantial group from the Phase E Dark Earth deposit which includes mainly household items, an unusual number of styli and very few personal items. The temple (Site 30650) yielded only a small assemblage comprising overtly religious items with objects of a personal nature which are best seen as votive in function. A substantial assemblage from Area 8, largely deposited in the Dark Earth, indicated a wide range of functions. Spatial analysis indicated a concentration of metalworking debris along the east–west road and around a proposed smithy.

Chapter 8. Specialist Reports III

Ironworking technology

Report by Jane Cowgill and J.M. Mills, with contributions from Rowena Gale, G. McDonnell, Adam Russell and Alan Vince

An aggregated assemblage of 147kg of metalworking debris was dominated by secondary iron smithing waste. Exceptions to this were clinker, fuel ash slag, concretion and possibly the tap slag, although small quantities of the latter may in fact have been produced by secondary smithing. All of the smithing slag groups display similar characteristics, generally being pale in colour and light in weight, with high silica and low iron content. As well as including SEM analysis of numerous slag pieces and hearth bottoms, the analysis also featured ceramic petrology analysis of sixteen of the 45 tuyere fragments found.

It is not clear whether the smithing evidence from earlier excavations at Scole by Rogerson (1977) and others represents the primary smithing of a bloom to a bar or secondary smithing (*i.e.* the production and repair of objects). The evidence from the 1993–4 excavations indicates secondary smithing, with all the smiths presumably using imported blooms, billets or bars.

The analysis considers in detail the effectiveness of the techniques used by the Scole smiths. The pale, light, silica-rich slags are highly distinctive, and their characteristics are hard to explain. While the smiths might appear, at first glance, to have been losing very little metallic iron during smithing, this argument is only valid if *small* quantities of slag were produced. The large amounts of slag generated at Scole suggest that iron loss may in fact have been closer to the norm, while the volumes of slag generated by the process may have been a major nuisance.

All the excavated smithies of this date appear to have been sited on roads on the edge of the town, with concentrations of evidence suggesting that ironworking was concentrated in discrete 'quarters'. It is possible, however, that this patterning reflects the locations of the areas that have been extensively sampled archaeologically.

Wood technology

Report by Richard Darrah, with a contribution from Carole A. Morris

Excavations at Scole produced a significant and diverse assemblage of waterlogged Roman timber, featuring a complex mixture of Roman woodworking technology and more traditional methods. The surviving wooden artefacts provide evidence of the timber resource that was exploited, the felling, conversion techniques and tools used, the joints created, and the types of structures built.

An important group of five complete roof-timbers provides insights into Romano-British roofing technology. A large number of timber-lined wells recorded allowed study of the various carpentry techniques used, and of an elegant timber well-lining technique unique to Scole. Some re-used timbers recovered from well-linings display interesting features surviving from their original uses in other structures.

All the recorded timbers were preserved in the wet sands and fen peats of the Waveney valley. The state of preservation of the wood was very variable, sometimes ranging from excellent to very poor within 0.5m of the same horizontal plank's length. Remarkably, two maple bowl-blanks were recovered in perfect condition. Other important finds included a maple furniture fragment — probably a table base — and a large timber re-used in a pit revetment which may have been a cart side.

The Romano-British carpenters preferred oak (even sapwood, which is not rot-resistant) when building well linings. However, the oak used changed in character over time. It appears that early wells made use of slow, clean-grown timber, and use the traditional method of cleaving for conversion. Later oak is knottier, and saws were used to convert it in the more central parts of the settlement while cleaving continued to be used in the outskirts. The use of fast-grown timber in later 2nd- and 3rd-century contexts suggests that even at Scole, well away from the large urban centres, there were no large supplies of slow-grown timber left by the later 2nd and 3rd centuries.

One well lining utilised a combination of tangentially-split planks and reused seasoned oak boards which had been cut to length. While the builder does not seem to have had access to a large frame saw for ripping the

Plate 1.7 Wet wood:
a – one of a pair of remarkable maple bowl-blanks excavated from riverine peats to the north of the Waveney;
b – recording and retrieving waterlogged timber (here a revetment within pit *18056*) required great effort and care

freshly-felled timber down its length, he did possess a saw capable of cutting seasoned oak across the grain. The nail-holes were countersunk with an auger, implying the use of a punch — and possibly a hammer — as well as the axe, adze and saw.

Joints such as the fox-wedged mortice and tenon joint in the possible table base, and the edge-dowelled planks from a barrel, show us how little the woodworker's repertoire of joints has changed over the last two thousand years. Several methods were used to minimise the length of nails needed.

Tree-ring analysis and wood identification
Report by Ian Tyers and Cathy Groves
Out of 76 samples submitted, 23 were suitable for analysis and dates were obtained for seven of them. Subsequently a further 23 samples were taken from hitherto-unsampled timbers, eleven of which were successfully dated. Due to the absence of previously-excavated late Roman material from East Anglia, all of this material was analysed as a single group.

Samples from four wells, two rafters and a possible cart side that had been reused as part of a pit revetment

provided a well-replicated chronology covering the period 71 BC to AD 172. This is highly significant given that it is from an area of the country for which no previous Roman data had been obtained. The results provide good correlation with sequences from Snettisham (north-west Norfolk: 112 BC–AD 90), Heybridge (Essex: AD 27–205); and Boreham (Essex: AD 66–178), as well as with a single timber from Humberside and with a number of more distant chronologies. Two other chronologies of 142 and 150 years length, each from two different trees, and a replicated sequence of 192 years from an individual tree, clearly show that other currently undatable but potentially useful data have been collected.

Quernstones and millstones
Report by David Buckley
While most of the quern and millstone pieces were fragmentary and of limited individual interest, the collection is large and of regional importance. In addition to single examples of saddle, beehive and puddingstone quernstones, fragments of lavastone from 67 contexts are taken to derive originally from quernstones. This lavastone was extremely fragmented, and probably represents a large number of individual querns.

Pieces of coarse sandstone (probably deriving from the Pennine Millstone Grit series) from 92 contexts probably derive originally from quernstones and millstones, although many are broken in such a way as to provide little detail about the form of the quern. However, it is clear from the size and thickness of many that stones for mechanically turned mills, rather than hand mills, are represented. The date at which flat Millstone Grit querns began to be traded widely across southern Britain, including East Anglia, in later Roman times is still a topic deserving detailed study. While most of these stones from Scole derived from late 3rd-century contexts their presence in some earlier 2nd-century contexts supports their being traded into East Anglia over a prolonged period. A small number of red sandstone querns are hard to provenance.

A possible leat, large plank-lined pit and associated features in Area 6 might have represented a water mill site, succeeded by a maltings complex (p.131ff). While this interpretation is not entirely certain, a collection of quern or millstones within the plank-lined pit may have been used for crushing malted grain for brewing close by.

Chapter 9. Specialist Reports IV

Human skeletal remains; pyre technology and ritual
Report by Jacqueline I. McKinley
Cremated and unburnt human bone was recovered from a total of 30 contexts, nineteen from Scole Areas 1–4, eight from Stuston (Areas 6 and 7) and three from Oakley (Area 8). The contexts included twelve (possibly thirteen) cremation burials and four inhumations. Unburnt bone from other contexts mostly comprised redeposited material.

Only two out of nine cremation burials from Areas 1–4 were totally undisturbed. Five other urned burials showed slight damage to the vessels acting as urns, either in antiquity or more recently. Two cremations from Area 6 were badly truncated, and it is probable than much of the bone that they contained was lost. The context of a vessel with cremated fill recovered from Area 8 by highways contractors is unclear.

Foetal/neonatal remains were recovered from eight contexts distributed across all excavation areas. No formal burials of individuals of this age were found, and in no instance were the total skeletal remains of an individual recovered from one context. Redeposited bone from adult individuals was found in only two non-burial contexts, one of them the corner post-hole of a timber structure.

Pathological lesions were noted in bones from eight cremation burials (61.5%), three of the inhumation burials (75%) and two of the contexts containing redeposited foetal/neonatal bone (25%).

The oxidisation of cremated bone varied and generally there was no clear pattern to the selection of skeletal elements. The overall average weight of bone from the cremation burials (discounting three burials that were badly-truncated or of uncertain context) is 812.6g, with a range of 296.3–1371.2g. The maximum weight of bone recovered would indicate that at least 85% of the bone was included in most of the burials (McKinley 1993). These figures compare well with those from other cemeteries in Roman Britain. No multiple cremation burials were represented. Cremated animal bone was recovered from two, and possibly three, of the cremation burials. No pyre debris (charcoal) was recovered from any of the burials or from the backfills of the graves.

Subsistence and animal use
Report by Polydora Baker
The aggregated faunal assemblage includes approximately 4000 identified bones and teeth, almost all from Roman contexts. It adds to the information about subsistence and husbandry obtained from the 1973 Scole excavation assemblage (Jones 1977) and provides new data pertaining to chronological and spatial variation in subsistence and livestock raising practices, as well as possible evidence for ritual activity.

The assemblage provides indications of continuity and change in meat supply and stock-raising practices throughout the Roman period. The proportions in which the main food animals were consumed remained stable throughout the occupation, with cattle the main meat supplier followed by sheep. The presence of elements from all bodyparts of the main livestock indicates that whole animals were slaughtered within the settlement. The relative frequency of butchered bones of cattle and pigs is greater than that normally observed for rural Roman sites, but the intensity of butchery appears somewhat less pronounced than at urban sites that have seen study (Maltby 1989). Shoulders of beef were prepared in a standard fashion and distributed within the settlement, but slaughter and butchery of smaller livestock may have been undertaken at a household level by non-specialists.

Livestock were probably raised mainly outside the settlement. The caprine cull-pattern shows a distinct change over time, with meat production in the 2nd–3rd centuries giving way to a broader range of uses. One diagnostic measurement in sheep shows a significant increase in size over time; the cattle measurements provide conflicting evidence, perhaps reflecting a change in shape rather than in overall size.

Wild mammals, wild birds and fish are poorly represented, supporting the suggestion that during the

Roman period adequately food supply was ensured by stock-raising and agricultural activities (Grant 1989). The shed antler of a fallow deer is one of a growing corpus of pre-Norman fallow deer finds from Britain. It is the first specimen to be radiocarbon-dated, and the result confirms its early date. It does not, however, help to resolve the issue of whether or not live fallow deer were present in Britain during the Roman period, since it might have been imported from the continent.

'Unusual' faunal deposits included an almost-complete immature cattle skeleton deposited in the upper fill of a well, and two horse skulls discovered in the base of a Roman leat. An unusual assemblage of partially-cremated animal remains from a midden-like deposit in Areas 1–4, in the vicinity of a 2nd–3rd century cremation and inhumation cemetery, included the highly fragmented bones and teeth of domestic mammals, in addition to remains of hare, birds, fish and microfauna. These may represent burnt refuse sweepings or the contents of owl pellets.

Insect remains

Report by Mark Robinson

Samples from various waterlogged deposits were assessed for the survival of insect remains. Full analysis was undertaken on material from three large pits and a well, and a smaller sample was investigated from an infant burial.

The results indicate a relatively open landscape surrounding the settlement. Despite the proximity of the River Waveney and its adjacent fen peat, there was little evidence for marshy conditions beyond the margins of archaeological features. The range of species identified is largely familiar from other Roman settlements. The results indicate stagnant water in pits; within the town there were areas of weedy ground, accumulations of organic refuse and buildings, all set against a background of a largely open landscape. The insect faunas were semi-rural rather than fully urban in character, with grain beetles and other pests of stored products entirely absent.

Plant macrofossils

Report by Val Fryer and Peter Murphy

An extensive series of bulk samples was collected and processed for assessment. While full analysis focussed on three Roman features — a 'corn-drier', a child's burial and a field ditch fill — assessment of material from several other groups yielded useful results.The findings from these sites reflect their peripheral location to Roman Scole. There is evidence for some cereal processing, specifically malt-drying, a process now known from several rural Roman sites in valley locations. Malt-drying and perhaps other activities using cereal processing waste as a fuel resulted in the production of large amounts of charred cereal waste, which became incorporated into almost every Roman context. The existence of at least one hedged boundary ditch has been established with reasonable certainty. The plant macrofossil assemblages from wells do not indicate any large-scale disposal of domestic wastes, and the abandoned shafts appear to have infilled mainly by natural processes. The remains of box and deadly nightshade collected from a child's coffin would have been of ritual significance and not chance incorporations.

Palynological assessment and analysis

Report by Patricia E.J. Wiltshire

A number of archaeological features and buried soils were assessed for their palynological potential. Only two of these — one of them of late/post-medieval date — contained sediments which were polleniferous enough to warrant detailed analysis, and many contained no suitable material. Others yielded valuable information, however, even though much of the palynomorph content had clearly been lost to decomposition.

A 130cm depth of waterlogged, polleniferous sediments was found within a palaeochannel to the south of the Waveney at Area 8. This channel probably represented a previous course of the River Waveney. Assessment of these sediments showed that by the Early Bronze Age this palaeochannel had become a cut-off containing stagnant water. Radiocarbon estimates also showed that, except for a notable hiatus in the later Bronze Age, there was continuous sedimentation for nearly three millennia to later Saxon times, providing a history of the surrounding vegetation.

While the hiatus in the Bronze Age record presents some difficulty for interpretation, it is clear that in the post-Neolithic period the area around the palaeochannel supported dense *Tilia*-dominated woodland, probably with *Corylus* and *Alnus* fringing the Waveney. Clearings were made in earlier Bronze Age times, but there is evidence that woodland on the lighter, more acidic soils was most affected. At some time in the later Bronze Age the *Tilia* woods were dramatically cleared away, giving way to light conditions allowing grassland and herbs to burgeon. Podzolisation of some areas at least was well established long before the beginning of the Iron Age.

The Early Iron Age landscape was very similar to that of the Late Bronze Age, except that arable agriculture was more prominent, cereal cultivation increasing slightly. A Middle Iron Age relaxation in woodland management seems to have seen an expansion of *Alnus*, but pasture was important. Woodland decline in the Late Iron Age may indicate agricultural intensification. The Roman period saw massive exploitation of trees but, perhaps, some conservation of *Quercus*. While scrub expanded near the site, the wider landscape saw both arable and pastoral farming increasing in intensity. It is likely, however, that extensive arable farming took place some distance from the palaeochannel, since the pollen record for cereals is very poor when compared with data obtained from corn driers and other excavated features from Scole. The pattern of land-use around Scole in Roman times allowed herbaceous plant characteristic of a wide range of habitats and soils to flourish, and the vegetation became very diverse: in this respect, the record from on-site features resembles that from the palaeochannel.

The results of palynological analysis of the palaeochannel argue against the contention that the landscape was neglected in the immediately post-Roman period. Indeed the opposite may have been true, with the end of the Roman period heralding a time of settled and intense agriculture. By Middle Saxon times, woodland and scrub were reduced almost to extinction, but valuable resources such as *Corylus* and *Quercus* seem to have been conserved by careful management. The palaeochannel pollen record indicates cereal cultivation very close by. Hemp was grown, and viticulture had been established. The Saxon landscape was probably very open, with low

numbers of various tree species but with well-managed hazel and oak coppice/pollard. Arable fields were extensive and pasture was important. The character of the local area changed slightly in later Saxon times, and there may have been some relaxation of management, even though cereal production was still important. It is even possible that the site was flooded with water from the Waveney.

Soil micromorphology and chemistry

Report by Richard I. Macphail, G.M. Cruise and Jöhan Linderholm

Seventeen thin-section samples were taken during work in Areas 1–7; an additional twelve came from Area 8. While deposits from within feature fills, and soil layers sealed by a Roman road, were sampled, the main foci of the research were extensive soil deposits of Roman date. A 'Dark Earth' in Areas 7 and 8 was rich in organic refuse and artefacts, while a colluvially-thickened topsoil deposit in Areas 1–4 was termed a 'Grey Soil'.

The Roman soil landscape appears to have been acid and infertile. Areas of podzols would also have been droughty, except in the case of gley podzols affected by the River Waveney. Major inputs of organic matter and domestic waste would have been needed to improve soil fertility, and also the water-holding capacity of the soil. While the extensive soil deposits recorded within the main settlement area are suggestive of domestic waste dumping, the Dark Earth studied at the southern settlement limits was quite different in character, with higher manure content and only sparse domestic waste. Dung-rich Dark Earth has only once been tentatively identified to date, on the 'rural' outskirts of Roman Worcester.

When soil micromorphology was combined with specific chemical tests on the Dark Earth, a clear understanding of the two types of Dark Earth present emerged. 'Typical' Dark Earth deposits — rich in calcareous domestic waste and building debris — occurred within the settlement, whereas probably manure-rich plaggen-type horticultural soils had formed beyond it. The former gave rise to anomalously base-rich soils in this area of podzols, and must have influenced the local flora of the town even if these Dark Earth-covered areas had been left purely as waste ground. The podzolic landscape on the north bank of the River Waveney may have been a heathland area, and parts of it were used for human burial in the late 2nd–3rd centuries.

Analysis of soils from the base of a feature in the possible Roman maltings complex in Area 6 supported its interpretation as a tank. To the north of the Waveney in Areas 1–4, thin-section study of soils into which cremation burials had been inserted suggested that these deposits had been made in a wet area that lay beyond the settlement core. An adjacent 'midden' — at first interpreted as a pyre — was seen to have been composed of a weakly-stratified humic sand containing inclusions of coarse wood, along with other waste which may have included guano.

Palynological analysis suggests that ploughsoil deposits sampled at Oakley (Area 8) were of Anglo-Saxon, rather than Roman, date. There is little evidence that the agricultural soils examined at Area 8 were ever ploughed under wet conditions. It is more likely that a rapid rise in water tables occurred in the post-Roman period.

XI. Finds and archive

Archive storage arrangements follow the requirements and standard procedures specified by curatorial archaeologists in Norfolk and Suffolk. Finds, site records and photographs resulting from the excavations in Norfolk are held by Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service; finds, site archive material generated in Suffolk is held by Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service. Copies of the complete Research Archive, including context Group data, stratigraphic matrices, artefact distribution plots and the full texts of specialist reports, are held by the Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Units.

Plate 2.1 Air view of the southern parts of Areas 1, 3 and 4, looking north, at an early stage of excavation, 29 June 1993. Only the southernmost *c*. 50% of Areas 1–4 had been exposed at this time, yet many important features are prominent. Derek A. Edwards TM1478/ACU/G559

In the north-east corner, re-excavation of the structures originally examined by Geoffrey Moss and Suffolk WEA has begun (A). The Phase 5B stake-line complex close to the peat margin has been exposed and is under protective sheeting (B), as is the burial/'midden' complex *18100* (C). At D, the Period 1 burnt mound is emerging from beneath the peat. Many of the gridded sample boxes excavated into the Grey Soil overburden are visible. As was often the case, the two cuttings extending southward towards the river are well flooded

Chapter 2. Excavations North of the Waveney (Norfolk Site 1007; Areas 1–4)

by Trevor Ashwin and David Whitmore

I. Summary

A large area on the western periphery of the Roman-period settlement saw area-stripping and sample excavation in advance of highway construction. Roman-period activity was focused on the east-to-west Roman road previously identified by surface survey and during excavations by G.I. Moss (1967–72) and Andrew Rogerson (1973). It is unclear how much further this 'ribbon development' extended to the west beyond the excavated area.

Prehistoric evidence was scant. An extensive spread of burnt flint on the north bank of the River Waveney may have been of Neolithic or Bronze Age date (Phase 1). A rectilinear series of features, including a well-defined field enclosure, probably dated to the later prehistoric period (Phase 2), although an early Roman date cannot be ruled out.

The main focus of settlement during the later 1st century AD (Phase 3) lay beyond the excavation area limits; a roundhouse close to the Waveney margins was the only significant 'early' Roman feature identified, although a small number of coins were found. The east-to-west road seems to have been defined by deep ditches by the early/mid 2nd century (Phase 4), although the road itself might have existed earlier, given the 1st-century date indicated by Rogerson's excavations. The road frontage was not built up during this period, but ditches extending north from the roadside may have bounded enclosures connected with activity in the core of the settlement, or even have marked the western boundary of the settlement. Close to the River Waveney an infant inhumation within a timber coffin lay close to a deep reservoir-like pit, perhaps used for tanning.

More intensive development probably began during the later 2nd century (Phase 5A). Activity was focused on the roadside itself, with little evidence found away from the road in the northern part of the site. The land fronting onto the road itself was divided up into a series of enclosures, many of them containing clay-floored buildings of modest timber construction. Evidence for ironworking was abundant in the area of the northern roadside. A series of deep water-filled pits close to the river margins may have been used by tanners working in the enclosures to the south of the road. A series of timber-lined well shafts included some very well-preserved examples. Most of these were clearly associated with individual buildings or enclosures, and the majority of

Plate 2.2 Panoramic view of Areas 1–4 under excavation, looking south towards the Waveney

their linings were of a distinctive pattern known to date only from Scole. Two small groups of cremation burials had been sited at corners of one of the enclosures.

The mid 2nd–4th century sequence of activity (Phases 5A, 5B and 6) is only datable in fairly general terms. Coin deposition peaked in the period AD 330–378, and indicated that this part of the settlement was still occupied toward the end of the 4th century. The very large number of 4th-century coin finds is striking by comparison with those of the 3rd, especially since there are no signs that the high volume of 'late' coinage has been boosted by the contents of dispersed hoards.

There are no clear indications that occupation persisted into the 5th century, although a 'late' burial laid in the upper fill of a 4th-century pit was accompanied by a Germanic equal-armed brooch and an 'heirloom' Colchester derivative.

Medieval and early modern occupation in the northern part of the site, fronting onto the Diss Road, was represented by two house-platforms, evidence for enclosures and a large pit apparently used for hemp-retting.

II. Introduction

Background

(Plates 2.1 and 2.2; Figs 1.3 and 2.1)

The length of the A140 alignment on the north bank of the Waveney designated for open-area excavation comprised a total area of 15,500m^2 of land, extending over 200m northwards from the bank of the Waveney and occupying five adjoining land parcels. The axis of the excavation area ran parallel with the line of the main Roman road, followed by the pre-1993 alignment of the A140. This lay approximately 200m further to the east, and would have passed through the centre of the Roman Small Town. All of the area examined lay under pasture at the outset of excavation. There were no signs of modern cultivation, although some ploughing had clearly taken place in antiquity. Figure 2.1 locates these works in relation to the Waveney, and to the extent of Areas 1–4.

Chapter 1 includes a summary of the results of all previous archaeological observations and interventions recorded in and around the present-day village of Scole (pp1–4; Fig. 1.2).

Previous excavations and survey

(Figs 1.2 and 2.1)

Two previous episodes of fieldwork in or around the area excavated by the NAU in 1993 deserve mention here.

Excavations by G.I. Moss (1967, 1972)

(Figs 1.2 and 2.1)

During the 1960s the discovery of Roman remains during housing development to the west of the A140, at Karen Close and elsewhere (Chapter 1), made clear the scale of the archaeological threat to Roman Scole. Against this background — and in the light of early discussions regarding an A140 Bypass — the Glebe Meadows were identified by a Suffolk WEA archaeology group as a useful location for small-scale excavations. Two episodes of work were directed by Geoffrey Moss (Moss 1972). No full report was ever published or deposited with the Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record, while neither site records nor finds were available to the current analysis programme.

In 1967 a cutting was made into the east-to-west Roman road which crossed the excavation area. While the remnant earthwork was not especially pronounced here (below, *Topographical survey*), its line would have been easy enough to predict on the basis of then-recent discoveries at Karen Close. Removal of overburden revealed gravel road-metalling deposits, while a number of flanking post-holes were interpreted as the remains of roadside buildings.

More extensive works in an area immediately to the north of the road followed in 1972 (Fig. 2.1). These revealed the incomplete plan of a clay-floored timber structure, defined on three sides by beam-slots. Few tile fragments were found, indicating that its roof was of thatch or shingles. Post-holes excavated along the road frontage led to suggestions that this was a portico-fronted shop or workshop. Areas of metalling were recorded to both east and west. 'A concentrated spread of iron-smelting residues' lay to the east of the building, suggested that metalworking was carried on here, although the remains of a domed oven within the building itself were interpreted as a domestic feature. A 'considerable amount' of coarse pottery in a grey micaceous fabric was found. The vessel forms implied a 2nd-century date to the excavator, as did the presence of Central Gaulish samian of probable Antonine date. A number of coins were also found; while many of these were probably 4th-century issues, a *sestertius* of Lucius Verus (AD 161–169) was also found 'in association with 2nd-century pottery within the "portico"'. Other finds included an enamelled copper-alloy brooch, beads, fragments of hairpins, and a copper alloy seal box.

The unavailability of the original excavation records and finds (and the thoroughness of the 1972 excavation, which penetrated natural sand and gravel deposits to some depth in many places) has made interpretation of this building intensely problematic. The re-interpreted sequence — structures ***38031*** (Phase 5A) and ***38054*** (Phase 5B) — is described as fully as possible on pp67–71.

Evaluation excavations by Tony Gregory (1987); topographical survey

(Fig. 2.1)

In November 1987 four small trial-holes were excavated at intervals of *c*. 50–70m along the proposed line of the A140 bypass. A report on the work has been deposited in the county Sites and Monuments Record, with a copy held in the Project Archive.

The most southerly trench (*Trench 1*) encountered flood-plain peat deposits 0.4m below the modern ground surface; these contained few visible artefacts. *Trench 2* was excavated into an earthwork bank which had been postulated as part of the *agger* of the east-to-west Roman road. The 1993 excavation was to show that the true alignment of the road lay *c.*20m further to the north; while Trench 2 produced Roman pottery in abundance, the earthwork itself was of later date. *Trench 3* was intended to gauge the extent of Roman occupation in the area to the north of the road alignment. No positive evidence for structures was found, but soil deposits up to 0.7m thick were rich in Roman pottery and other artefacts. *Trench 4*, the biggest of the trial excavations, was aimed at the southern part of one of a series of medieval house platforms and an east-to-west ditch immediately to the south. The ditch was *c.* 1m wide and had infilled by weathering.

Bert and Barbara Dollin conducted a topographical survey covering both the area threatened by the new road and the field immediately to its west (Site 4988). The course of the east-to-west Roman road was identified easily. Although represented by only a slight 'terrace' within the bypass zone itself, in the area further to the west it emerged as a well-defined *agger* over 10m wide which clearly extended beyond the western limit of the survey area. Other earthworks indicated medieval occupation focused on the Diss Road to the north, two prominent house platforms being recorded in Site 4988. These features were less clearly defined in the northernmost part of the 1993 excavation area due to past ploughing; several groups of east-to-west aligned 'ridges' in this latter area still defy interpretation even after the 1993 excavation. The area south of the house-platforms appeared to have been divided up into a series of large rectangular ditched enclosures measuring up to *c*. 45m x 90m, which may have been contemporary paddocks or small fields.

The 1993–4 excavations: sequence and method

(Plates 2.1 and 2.2; Figs 1.3 and 2.1)

Fieldwork began during May 1993. A contour survey, undertaken using a total station theodolite, was complemented by a comprehensive topsoil metal-detecting survey, with all artefact findspots being logged individually. As well as maximising the size of the body of artefacts collected from the site, this was also intended to minimise any loss or damage from illicit detecting arising from the excavations. A systematic survey of the topsoil/subsoil artefact content was effected by hand-excavation of a gridded series of metre-square test pits. Twenty-five of these sample-stations, sited on the intersections of a rough forty-metre grid, were excavated.

Figure 2.1 Areas 1–4: Plan showing location of earthworks, earlier excavations and trial trenches. 1993 excavation areas/main ditched boundaries in coloured outline

It was impractical to strip overburden from the whole excavation area in one operation. Instead, large discrete areas in the southern and northern parts of the site (Area 1 and the northern part of Area 3) were opened during June, with overburden being stacked in the central zone (mostly parts of Areas 2 and 4). Topsoil removal exposed a grey subsoil deposit extending across most areas, but water-bearing deposits of peat were encountered directly beneath the topsoil in the southernmost zone close to the Waveney itself. The upper layers of peat were also removed to a depth of *c.* 0.3m but high ground-water levels prevented further area stripping. Detailed excavation and recording in the riverine zone had to be confined to two major north-to-south sondages, the south-east corner of the western sondage coinciding with the location of Gregory's Trench 1 of 1987. After initial excavation (which had been intended to show if waterlogged timber structures survived in the area) the eastern peat cutting was deepened to record the depth of the deposit and to confirm the absence of sealed archaeological deposits beneath.

The central zone of the site (Area 2, Area 4 and the northern part of Area 3) was stripped in September after the completion of work in Area 1, which was then used for spoil storage. An average depth of 0.3m of topsoil was removed; a deposit of colluvium was also encountered in the southern part of Area 2. The underlying natural deposits encountered in all of the excavation areas were fine, leached alluvial sands.

Overburden was removed in a series of thin layers using 360° hydraulic tracked excavators and dumper trucks. This process was closely supervised to maximise opportunities for collecting finds. Metal-detecting took place at every opportunity; metal finds were all co-ordinated individually by total station theodolite, while other artefacts were located within 20m-square grid-defined collection units. In the area of the medieval earthworks in the northern part of the site machine-clearance amounted to careful mechanical de-turfing. Initial plan recording, at a scale of 1:50, began as machine-stripping progressed; any discrete features identified in the subsoil itself during the machining process were plotted and recorded in appropriate detail prior to removal. Basic site planning was undertaken at a scale of 1:50. Specific areas or individual features were planned at scales of 1:10 or 1:20 where appropriate. All context recording and photography followed standard NAU documentation and archiving procedures.

Site clearance showed that no extensive deep Roman-period stratigraphy survived for study and that discrete ditches, pits, post-holes and other negative features dominated the site landscape. It was intended that a 50% sample of all structural features (post-holes, beam-slots *etc*.) be excavated, along with a 10% sample of the length of ditches and other linear phenomena, and that all other discrete or isolated features be half-sectioned. Unfortunately these targets could not be fulfilled in many parts of the site, due to pressures of time and frequent difficulties with flooding and high ground-water levels. In the case of features considered to be of special interest, or of importance to dating and chronology, hand-collection of artefacts was supported by limited dry-sieving of soil using a 10mm mesh. All coins, metal objects and small finds were three-dimensionally located, while other finds from each context were collected in bulk. Standard NAU finds processing and recording procedures were used throughout. A series of timber-lined wells and other deep features with waterlogged fills produced an important assemblage of Romano-British structural timber, some of it very well preserved. This material was collected and recorded under the supervision of Richard Darrah.

A programme of environmental sampling was implemented under the direction of the project's Environmental Co-ordinator, Peter Murphy of the Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia. Samples for flotation to recover botanical remains were collected judgementally at all stages of the excavation work. These were wet-sieved on site during the fieldwork phase of the project, the material retrieved being assessed subsequently by Peter Murphy and Val Fryer. Buried soils and similar sediments were sampled by Dr Richard Macphail, while a series of wells, pits and other features was sampled for palynological remains by Dr Patricia Wiltshire and for insect remains by Dr Mark Robinson.

Structure of the report

This report on the excavations in Areas 1–4 is divided into three main sections, dealing with prehistoric activity (Periods 1 and 2; Phases 1 and 2), the Roman settlement (Periods 3–6; Phases 3–6) and with the post-Roman period (Period 6; Phases 7–9). Within each of these sections an account of the archaeological sequence, ordered by phase, is followed by a discussion.

Each section deals with the sequence throughout all four Areas. References to the individual numbered Areas have been kept to a minimum, since their boundaries (dictated by present-day land allotment rather than archaeological considerations) have not sub-divided the site in any archaeologically meaningful way. The initial digits of both context and group numbers identify the Area within which they were located.

Efforts have been made to keep this report as brief and interpretative as possible. Each of the individual phase accounts begins with an introductory summary. This is followed by a synthetic description of the evidence for human activity within the excavation area, progressing where necessary from south to north. Detailed accounts of features are wholly confined to a selection of the Key Groups defined during the analysis programme. These descriptions of buildings, enclosures, ditches, graves, wells and other features are summarised versions of the group texts held by the Project Archive, and summarise artefactual and scientific evidence wherever appropriate.

The key series of illustrations within this chapter are the 1:1000 phase plans (Figs 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 2.10, 2.24, 2.54, 2.61 and 2.71). Detail illustrations have been kept to a minimum. Many structural features that were poorly-preserved or clearly of lesser importance receive only very brief description. Full details on all Groups may be found in the project archive.

III. Periods 1 and 2: pre-Roman features and finds

Phase 1: Pre-Iron Age activity

(Plates 2.1 and 2.3; Fig. 2.2)

Summary

Human activity on the north bank of the Waveney in the Mesolithic period was attested by a small number of unstratified lithic finds; very little worked flint was found but a predominance of blades suggested a significant Mesolithic component. Only two Neolithic/Bronze Age flints (a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead and a scraper, both unstratified) were collected from the whole excavation area.

No Neolithic or Bronze Age features were recorded, with the exception of an amorphous burnt flint mound lying on the north bank of the Waveney and a possible second example a little to the north.

The burnt mounds

(Plates 2.1 and 2.3; Fig. 2.2)

Burnt mound ***18017***

An extensive spread of charcoal-rich soil and burnt flint measured 25m from north-west to south-east and extended at least 10m from north to south. It was orientated north-west to south-east parallel to the River Waveney. Only the southern and south-eastern sides of the

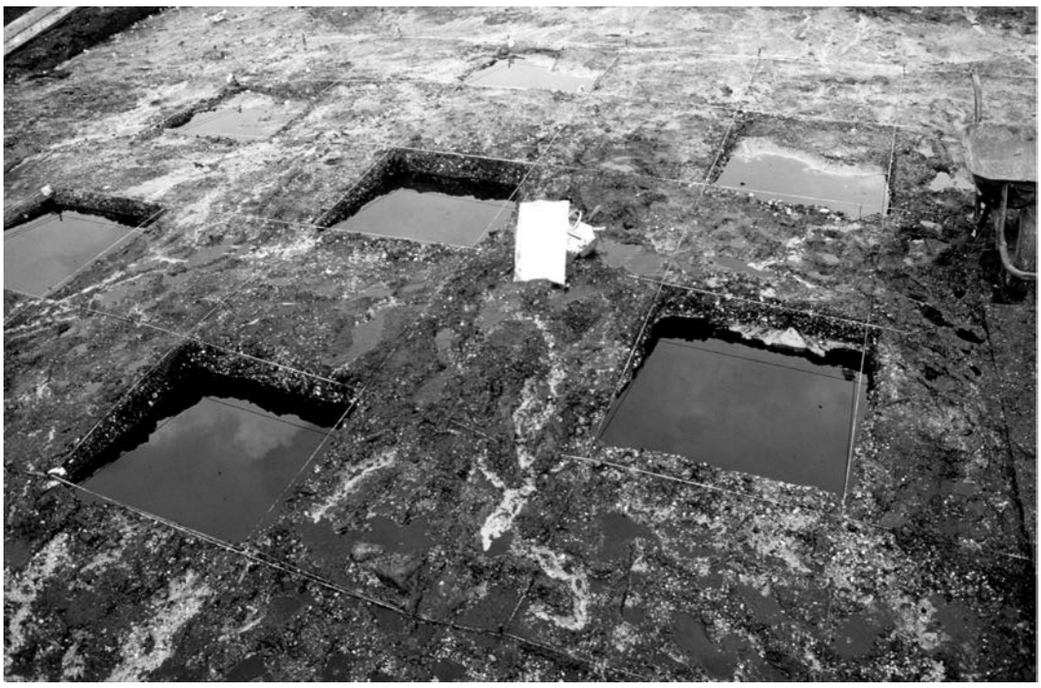


Plate 2.3 Burnt mound *18017* under excavation, looking west, showing sample pits

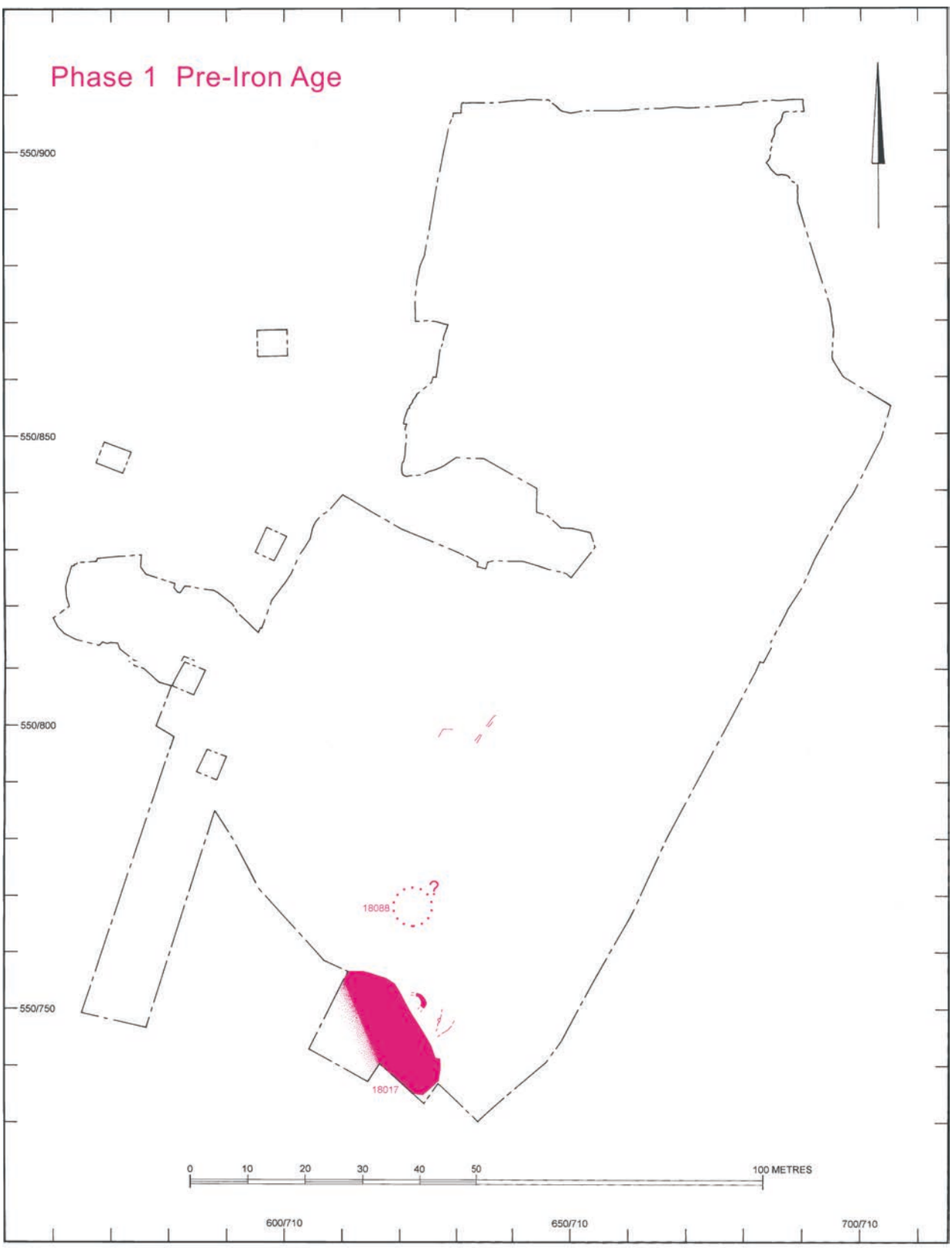


Figure 2.2 Phase 1, phase plan

feature were fully exposed, while its western extent lay beyond the limit of excavation. The northern edge had been truncated by many Roman features, primarily the Period 5/6 drainage ditch systems, and many of the Roman features along the peat edge did in fact contain residual burnt flint in their fills. The mound's greatest recorded depth was 0.65m.

The principal mound deposit was homogeneous and was composed of innumerable small pieces of burnt flint, mostly varying in size between 1–3mm, in a sandy matrix. During excavation a grid-defined series of twenty soil riddle samples was collected and scanned for artefacts, but no worked flint was recovered. Overlying the main deposits of burnt flint were thinner peaty layers with a much higher organic content, representing post-mound vegetation growth. These included a distinctive 'alder scrub' deposit and a tree-stump, and in turn were overlain by a silty waterlain deposit which contained very little burnt flint. Eventually the mound was completely sealed over by later prehistoric and Roman peat growth (its stratigraphic relationship to the peat accumulation and to Roman features may be observed at the southern end of Fig. 2.14). Environmental sampling of the mound and adjacent waterlogged deposits produced macrofossils of alder, bramble, hawthorn, elder and ?birch, along with remains of aquatic, wetland, grassland and weed plants (Fryer and Murphy, Chapter 9).

No associated features were observed, and no direct dating evidence retrieved. Two unfinished maple bowl-blanks were found nearby within peat deposits, at a depth of *c*. 0.5m below the likely upper surface of the late Roman peat-growth (Morris, Chapter 8). While these may well be prehistoric items their stratigraphic location above the 'alder' peat sealing the burnt mound indicates that they were not connected with activity at the mound itself.

Possible burnt mound ***18088***

Approximately 15m to the NW of burnt mound ***18017*** a putative second mound was identified. Located in an area of the site that had been heavily disturbed by Roman cut features, the extent of this spread of burnt material could not be clearly determined. It was identified in section in the excavated sides of two deep Roman features, Phase 5A ditches ***18002*** and ***49027***. Sealed beneath waterlain sand deposits, the 'mound' was up to 0.2m thick and was composed of a layer of burnt flint in a sand-and-charcoal matrix. This overlay a grey charcoal-rich sand deposit. No finds were recovered.

Phase 2: Iron Age

Summary

(Fig. 2.3)

The only features thought likely to date to the later prehistoric period were traces of a series of two or more ditched enclosures, crossing the excavation area on an east-to-west alignment in the general area of the subsequent Roman road. They could not be dated by artefactual association; a prehistoric date is suggested only by their stratigraphic primacy to the road and to all other Roman features in the vicinity, and by the dissimilarity of their leached 'silvery' sand deposits to the fills of Roman features generally.

Very little unstratified Iron Age material was found during the excavation. A small number of diagnostic sherds recovered from overburden layers and ditch fills suggest human activity here in the 3rd–1st centuries BC (Percival, Chapter 6), but none came from any undisturbed deposit assigned to Period 2.

Ditches and enclosures

(Fig. 2.3)

?Enclosure *49005*

Two parallel curvilinear ditches may have formed the north-eastern corner of a field enclosure. They passed beyond the excavation limits to the west and had been disturbed by Phase 4 roadside ditch ***48008*** to the south. No definite continuation could be seen in the very small area which was exposed to the south of the latter feature.

The outermost of the two ditches was somewhat deeper (*c.* 0.3m) than its neighbour. Both were substantially filled by an identical light grey sand, making impossible any stratigraphic differentiation between them. The outer ditch also contained a somewhat darker basal fill of grey sand.

Enclosure *38007*

The north-western limit of this small 'field', measuring approximately 36m (NW to SE) by 28m (NE to SW), lay beyond the limits of the 1993 excavation. Its long sides were slightly sinuous. Only two of the enclosure's rounded corners were visible, that to the south-east having been wholly removed by a rectilinear modern disturbance. A possible 'entrance' defined by two rounded butt-ends *c*. 1.4m apart, was recorded in the northern part of the circuit.

Fourteen segments of the ditch were excavated. Its northern side, which lay within the alignment of the (unmetalled) later Roman road, was relatively shallow. The southern side was better-preserved, perhaps due to a lesser degree of traffic erosion and (in places) the protective presence of overlying Roman clay floors and demolition deposits; it survived to a depth of up to 0.4m. The ditch was filled with a uniform light grey or (occasionally) pale brown sand, often with a distinctive 'silvery' appearance. Where the ditch was deeper the sand was slightly darker.

No environmental samples were taken. Very few artefacts were found in the ditch fills, none of them of Iron Age date. Five Roman sherds, of Wattisfield grey ware and white ware A, were recovered; amongst them was part of a medium-mouthed jar with a rounded rim. Although neither abraded nor closely datable, these are best regarded as intrusive pieces.

Linear features south-east of enclosure *38007*

A series of ditches and gullies recorded in the south-eastern part of the excavated area shared the general alignment and character of enclosure ***38007*** immediately to the north-west. With the exception of ditch ***49024***, which could be traced over a distance of over 40m, they could only be recorded intermittently. This was due either to the partial removal of the overlying Roman road-metallings or to heavy disturbance by Roman ditches and pits assigned to Phases 5 and 6.

Ditch ***49024*** lay beneath the east-to-west Roman road. The few segments excavated across it showed that it was 0.25m–0.4m deep; some variations in depth may have been due to differential truncation occurring during the mechanical bulk removal of the overlying road metallings. Although clearly primary to all of the recorded road-metallings, it had been cut through a well-defined buried soil deposit upon which the road had been constructed. Its mid-brown clay sand fill contrasted strongly with the light grey 'silvery' sand fills of enclosure ***38007***, and may indicate backfilling. No dating evidence was found.

Some fragments of ditch to the north of ditch ***49024***, and aligned roughly parallel with it, held a similar stratigraphic relationship to the road and its underlying soils. They were filled with brown or yellow-brown sandy deposits, which probably represented silting rather than backfilling.

Three other fragments of ditch located *c*. 25m to the south of ditch ***49024*** were also assigned to Phase 2. All had been heavily damaged by later ditches and pits, however, and were only examined summarily.

Discussion

Phase 1

Mesolithic activity

The results of the excavation were somewhat disappointing, especially considering the abundance of Mesolithic material from the Waveney valley in general and the many later Mesolithic finds from the Waterloo site immediately to the west of the 1993 excavation area in particular (Wymer 1977). Not only was very little flint retrieved, despite extensive topsoil-sampling and sieving across the entire area, but no waterlogged Mesolithic peat deposits were positively identified either.

The excavation results in themselves certainly do not constitute *negative* evidence for Mesolithic activity on the north bank of the Waveney. The predominance of blades in the small flint collection suggests a significant Mesolithic component; the failure to identify *in situ* Mesolithic peats may have been due in part to the small scale of the excavations which were possible on the river margins themselves. In short, the previously-known Mesolithic presence in the area has not been characterised in any further detail.

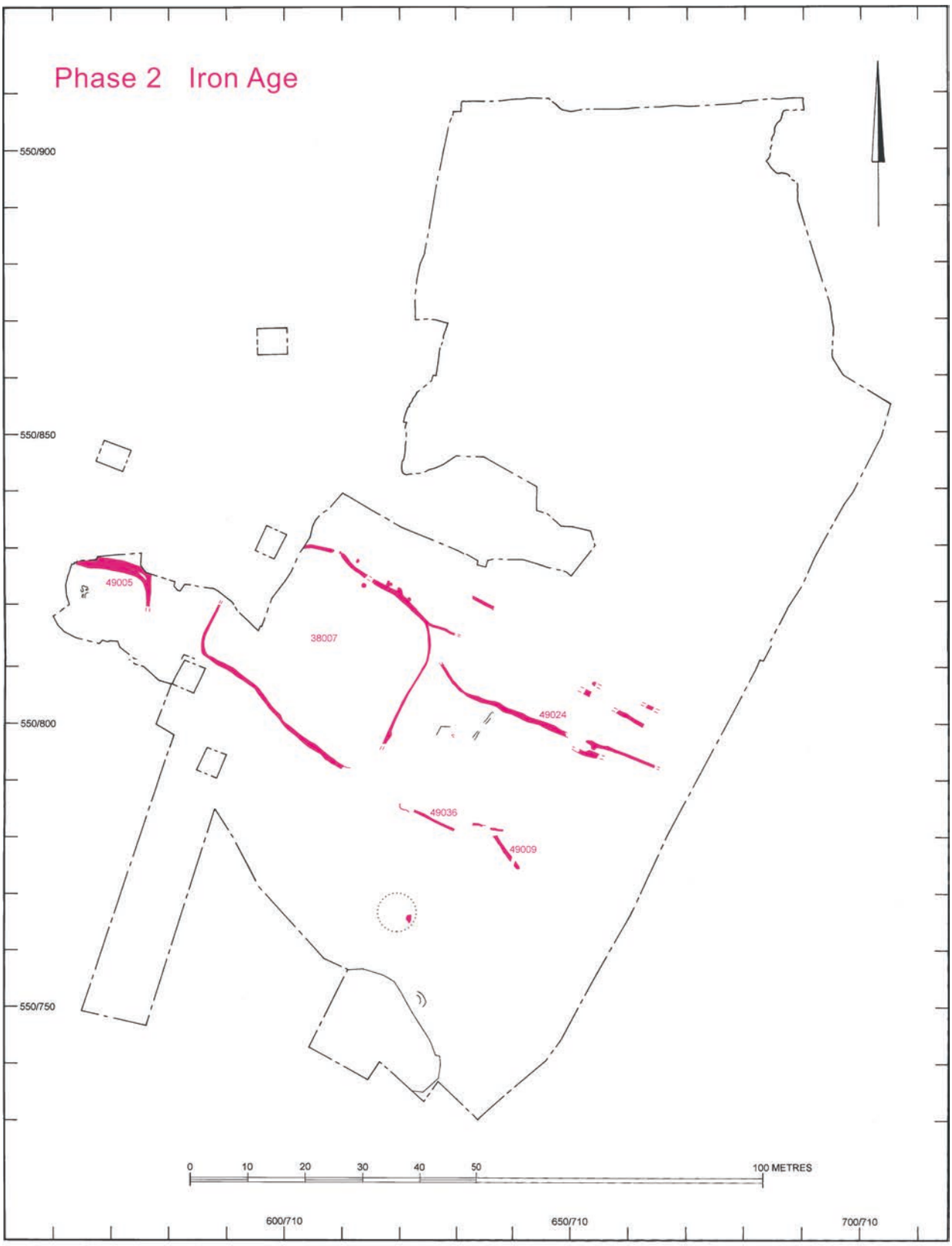


Figure 2.3 Phase 2, phase plan

Neolithic and Bronze Age activity

Early hopes that the excavations would shed light on the Mesolithic–Neolithic transition were not fulfilled. The dearth of Neolithic and Bronze Age features and finds from the Norfolk excavations suggests low levels of human activity here during the 5th–2nd millennia BC, notwithstanding the possibility that prehistoric features or other evidence had been obliterated by the intensive Roman-period activity recorded over much of the area.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that surrounding areas of the Waveney valley saw little occupation, especially since environmental analyses have stressed the possible variety of ground-water regimes and environmental habitats that may have co-existed within a small area in this riverine landscape tract (Wiltshire, Chapter 9). Evidence of Early Neolithic occupation was recorded to the south of the Waveney during excavations on the southern edge of the Roman town (Chapter 3). This latter area and others could well have been preferred for habitation because they were 'dry', or due to other environmental factors.

Scole was the fourth Norfolk site at which prehistoric burnt mounds were examined during the 1990s (Murphy, Chapter 9). Entire mounds have been excavated as part of the Fenland Management Project at Feltwell Anchor (Bates and Wiltshire 2000) and at High Fen Drove, Northwold (Crowson 2004). While both of these examples were less extensive than the riverside 'mound' ***18017*** at Scole they appeared altogether more complex, with adjacent cut features clearly used for water storage or management. Both dated to the later 3rd–early 2nd millennia BC, and appear significantly 'early' when compared with the numerous burnt mounds from the West Midlands and Ireland published to date, which tend to be of mid or later Bronze Age date (Crowson 2004).

The range of activities that produced these large volumes of heat-shattered flint remains unclear (Murphy, Chapter 9; Hodder and Barfield 1991). It is most often suggested that the debris resulted from large-scale communal cooking, possibly in a ritual context, with water being heated in wooden troughs using hot flint 'pot-boilers'. Alternatively, hot stones may have generated steam to fill sweat-lodges or saunas. The Scole mounds were not associated with artefacts, pits/troughs or structural remains, and thus can offer no new insights.

Burnt mound ***18017*** cannot be linked with the burial of two undated maple bowl-blanks found in nearby peat deposits (Plate 1.7; Morris, Chapter 8). These items came from the peat layer overlying the alder-rich peat deposit associated with the burnt mound. Most of the peat depth appears to have formed during the Roman period, although it is possible that the relatively deep peat surrounding the bowls was in fact pre-Roman.

Phase 2

Phase 2 features were confined to a north-east to south-west band across the excavated area. Chance might have contributed to this recorded disposition, the east-to-west Roman road not only protecting these remains from disturbance by building but also isolating pre-Roman deposits stratigraphically and spatially in a manner which would be less obvious elsewhere on the site. But the logic of the landscape suggests that the string of Phase 2 enclosures was simply sited on the slightly drier land immediately to the north of the 'wet' valley bottom. Indeed, the same topographic determinant probably dictated the line of the subsequent Roman road too. It is possible that the east-to-west Roman road had been laid out along the line of a pre-existing routeway, although the conclusions of micromorphological analysis of soil from the area (Macphail *et al*., Chapter 9) suggest that dumped soil rather than traffic-compacted deposits immediately preceded the construction of the Roman road itself.

It seems unlikely that any extensive Iron Age presence has gone unrecognised within the excavation area, especially since so little Iron Age pottery was found despite intensive artefact-collection from overburden (Percival, Chapter 6).

The phasing of these features remains speculative. The excavators suggested a pre-Roman date for the gullies since they had been cut or overlaid by all Roman features with which they had stratigraphic contact, while their excavated fills contained almost no Roman material. The distinctive 'silver' leached sands within them also seemed quite unlike the deposits within other Roman linear features at Scole. While a later prehistoric date seemed most plausible a date in the later 1st century (Phase 3) cannot be ruled out, especially given that the earliest of the major Roman ditches cutting enclosure ***38007*** was assigned to Phase *4* (earlier 2nd century AD) during analysis, rather than to Phase 3. It must be acknowledged that the currency of these linear features might have overlapped chronologically with the Phase 3 roundhouse ***18000***.

The most coherent of all the Phase 2 features was the rhomboidal enclosure ***38007***. The interpretation of the fragmentary linear gullies and ditches to the south-east is more difficult. Although it is possible they represent a second enclosure, conjoined with ***38007*** and lying immediately to its south-east, this is far from certain. It is interesting to note the evidence suggesting that the infilling of ditch ***49204*** (whatever its date of excavation) did not long pre-date the construction of the east-to-west Roman road itself, the feature conceivably being deliberately backfilled with compact clay sand deposits when this occurred. Perhaps this feature was even the southern 'roadside ditch' of a precursor to the east-to-west Roman road. If this were the case enclosure ***38007*** could have bordered the southern side of this routeway, with ditches ***38052*** or ***49019*** representing fragments of its northern counterpart.

IV. Periods 3–5: the Roman Small Town

Introduction

The Roman sequence within Areas 1–4 (Phases 3–6) is described in phase order. The evidence from Grey Soil and Dark Earth overburden deposits cannot easily be fitted into this phase framework, since they appear to date from all periods of Roman occupation, and so this evidence is summarised first.

'Grey Soil' and 'Dark Earth'

(Plate 2.1; Figs 2.4–2.6)

Extent and character

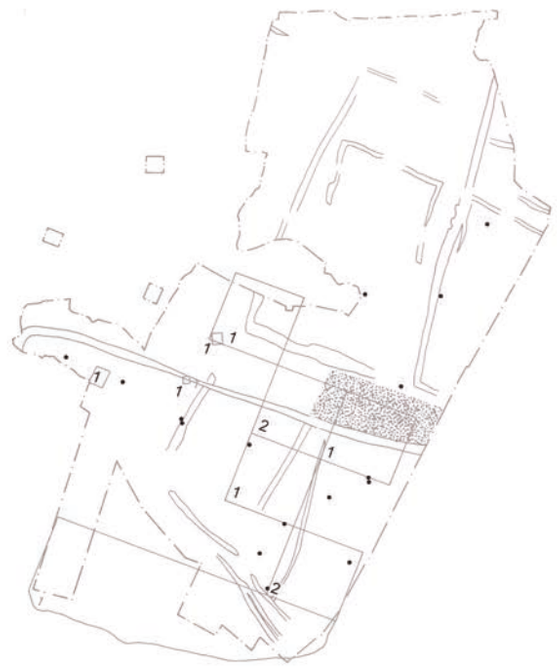
Grey Soil

A deposit of 'Grey Soil' — a distinctive podzolic subsoil, apparently of Roman date — extended across the whole excavation area, except the northern part of the site where soil erosion and greater upslope truncation had removed all but a few isolated patches. In most areas this deposit was an unstructured mid to dark grey or grey-brown silty sand, with varying levels of organic and artefactual content (Macphail *et al*., Chapter 9).

Grey Soil deposits were encountered after the topsoil and subsoil had been stripped. Typically 0.2–0.4m thick,

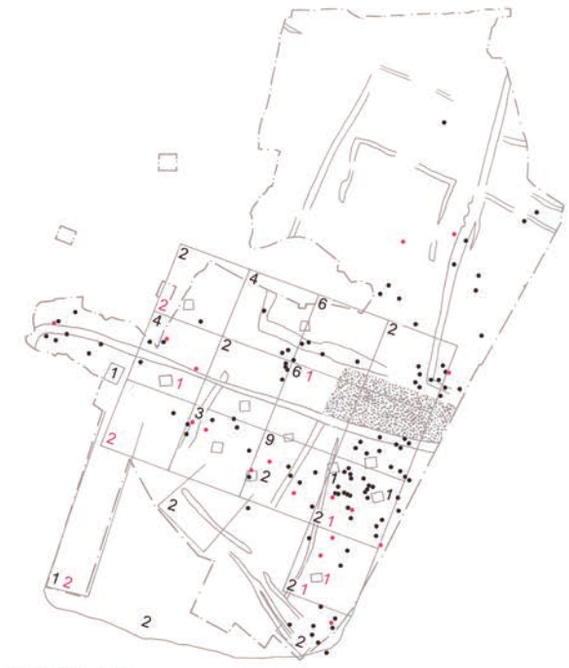
Figure 2.4 Iron Age and Roman coin distributions (Roman coin periods 1–9 after Reece)

they were removed mechanically in series of thin spits in order to expose archaeological features below, this operation being monitored constantly by site staff and metal-detectorists. Context numbers were assigned to 10m x 20m gridded areas of deposit, and these blocks were used for locating all coins, metal small finds and other artefacts. Other context numbers were allocated to specific localised Grey Soil deposits, in particular any which appeared to be cut by Roman features. To provide raw materials for the study of artefact-patterning a total of 45 2m x 2m test-boxes were excavated into the Grey Soil, all excavated material from them being passed through a 10mm mesh. These stations were spaced at approximate 10m intervals and were mostly concentrated in the central



10–11 (259–94)

13–14 (317–64)
Fallen horsemen



15 (364–88)
16 (388–402)

C1–2 illegible
C3–4 illegible

(numbers in collection unit squares indicate coin finds without 3D co-ordinates)

Figure 2.5 Roman coin distributions (Reece periods 10–16, fallen horsemen, illegible)

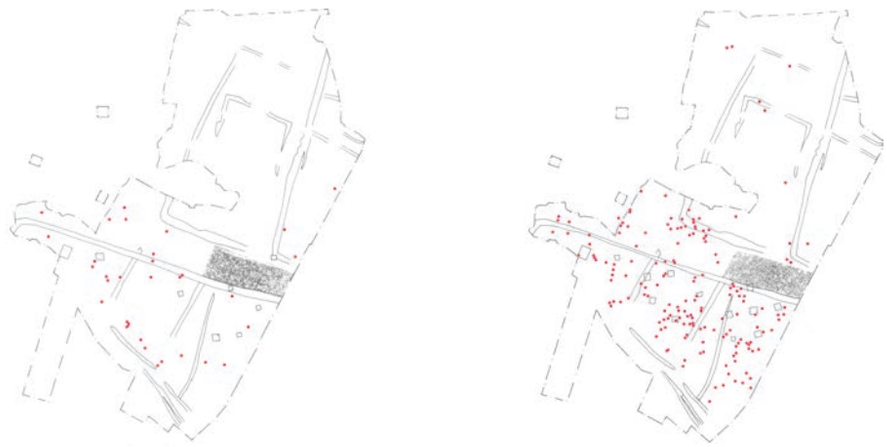


Figure 2.6 Dark Earth and Grey Soil: summary artefact distribution plans

part of the site. Most were later extended into 3m x 3m boxes by additional hand excavation. These extensions produced many more artefacts; indeed, careful trowel-excavation seemed to be as effective as sieving for retrieving small objects!

Soil micromorphology and chemistry studies indicate that soil cover before the onset of Roman activities was dominated by acid podzols (Macphail *et al.*, Chapter 9). It is suggested that the Grey Soil was, in origin, a buried podzol of pre-Roman date that was subject to varying degrees of disturbance by Roman-period occupation and industrial activities. Its surviving depth may have been affected by proximity to Roman structures; although deposits up to 0.4m deep were recorded in the vicinity of buildings, they were generally less than 0.2m thick elsewhere. This may indicate that accumulations of soil and debris tended gradually to surround and enclose standing structures, a pattern perhaps accentuated by the presence of demolition waste in these areas, too.

These subsoils represent a complex series of deposits that evolved gradually over a period of 300 years or more. On occasion pits, post-holes and other excavated features were seen to cut Grey Soil layers, which in turn sealed earlier Roman features. There were few opportunities for observing such relationships of this kind, however, since the majority of Grey Soil deposits were (necessarily) removed wholesale by machine. Many features which cut through the Grey Soil had undoubtedly been truncated during machining, and ephemeral post-hole or stake-built structures may well have been removed entirely on occasion.

Dark Earth

Deposits resembling the classic organic-rich 'Dark Earths' observed in many of the towns and cities of Roman Britain extended across large parts of the areas excavated to the south of the Waveney at Stuston Area 7 and Oakley Area 8. Build-ups of material of this kind were very much more localised in the Norfolk excavation areas, however. In fact, they were only identified and recorded in two locations, both of them close to buildings. In the area of post-built structure ***49000*** (Phase 5B, Figs 2.54 and 2.55), located on the southern roadside, a depth of 0.45m of dark grey/brown silty sand was recorded in detail during hand-excavation of one of the initial 5m x 5m trial trenches. Micromorphological and chemical analysis by Macphail *et al.* (Chapter 9) showed how this deposit — which sealed a thin Grey Soil/podzol layer but had apparently been cut by one of the building's component post-holes — contained inclusions of peat, chalk, building debris, charcoal and burnt and unburnt bone within an alluvial soil matrix. It was also rich in ashy material. The soil probably represented both the remains of a 'pre-building' soil and an accumulation of debris dating from the time of its use and demolition. Another distinct Dark Earth deposit was examined in detail in an isolated 5m x 5m trial excavation to the north-west of the main excavation area, where it sealed the remains of Phase 5A post-hole structure ***48094*** (p.64). This layer, which contained much 4th-century pottery, was probably a combination of use- and demolition debris.

While these Dark Earths resemble the well-known deposits of this kind from Roman London, neither 'industrial' wastes nor faecal material were recorded in any quantity. Macphail *et al.* have concluded that domestic rubbish and building materials were the most important components, and the results of their researches are presented in Chapter 9. The lack of slag or vitrified material is of great interest in the light of evidence for 3rd/4th-century ironworking nearby, especially considering the doubts as to whether this evidence indicates intensive 'mass production' of objects on any scale (Cowgill *et al.*, Chapter 8). Valuable as the soils analyses are, their results must be interpreted very cautiously since so few locations could be sampled. The fact that both of the areas of 'real' Dark Earth identified to the north of the Waveney were encountered during the hand-digging of sample boxes which coincided fortuitously with Roman buildings would suggest that further localised deposits of this kind went unrecognised during general machine clearance of the excavation area.

Artefact content

(Figs 2.4–2.6)

Pottery and coinage were collected in quantity; intensive metal-detecting greatly enhanced retrieval of coins and metal objects. They indicated that the formation of Grey Soil and Dark Earth deposits spanned the entire period of Roman settlement at Scole.

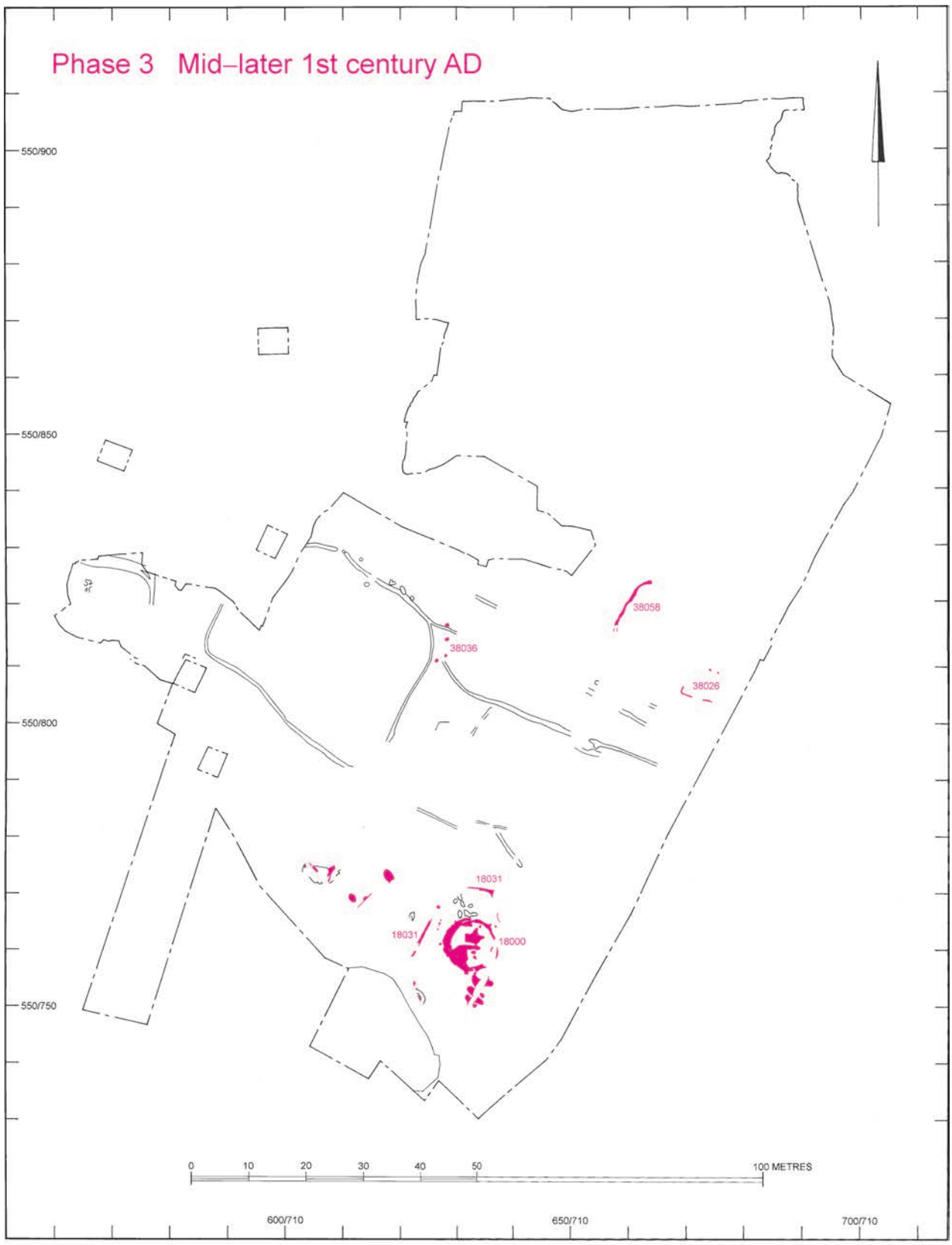


Figure 2.7 Phase 3: phase plan

18.485kg of pottery was recovered from Grey Soil deposits; in addition, no less than 12.915kg was recovered from the limited areas of 'Dark Earth' which were identified. The Grey Soil total alone, nearly all of it collected from the 46 hand-excavated test-stations, amounted to no less than 53.3% of the entire Roman pottery assemblage from the excavations north of the Waveney. The results of the study are presented in full by Lyons and Tester in Chapter 6, along with a summary of the analytic methods employed. Fabric analysis was concentrated on the ten wares which represented over 10% of the entire assemblage; of these, 64.82% were Wattisfield grey wares. Few pronounced patterns emerged when considering the distribution of fabric types to which broad date-ranges could be assigned, and 'early' (1st–3rd centuries), 'middle' (3rd–4th centuries) and 'late' (4th–5th centuries) Roman wares were found everywhere. Although an apparent 'late' concentration in the eastern part of the area might have suggested an eastward contraction of activity during the 4th century, this was corroborated neither by the patterning of coins nor the distribution of phased features.

The lower levels of Grey Soil contained least intrusive post-Roman material. There were no positive indications that any concentrations of sherds identified in the Grey Soil represented material disturbed or 'spread' from pits or other subsoil features. This strengthens the impression that most of the finds from these deposits originated in surface deposits of rubbish.

Metal small finds and coins retrieved from the Grey Soil were distributed extensively across the southern half of the site, mainly around the line of the east-to-west Roman road and in the area to its south. The spatial patterning of individual classes of small find is considered by Cooper *et al.* (Chapter 7). Distributions of all coins and of small finds (plotted by Crummy's interpretative categories) are held in the Project Archive. While in the majority of cases these display no especially strong patterning, summary plots of the coinage, dress accessories and metalworking debris from these deposits are presented here (Figs 2.4–2.6).

As with the pottery, there were few indications that metal finds or groups of finds had been introduced into the Grey Soil from underlying feature fills by ploughing or other erosive processes. While three-dimensional plotting of metal-detected finds revealed at least four relatively strong concentrations of findspots, these did not coincide particularly strongly with specific buildings. A broad linear concentration of findspots, lying parallel to the southern roadside ditch ***48008*** and 15–20m to its south, may be seen especially clearly in the distributions both of coins and metalworking waste. While this undoubtedly lies in the general area of the remains of a number of clay-floored buildings lying within the 2nd–3rd century roadside land-divisions which dominate this part of the site, the linear nature of the distribution is difficult to explain. If this does not echo patterns of commercial/industrial activity or foot-traffic directly, it might represent a linear zone where rubbish was either deliberately dumped or simply accumulated over a long period. Perhaps it indicates that heavy human activity or foot-traffic was concentrated in the road-frontage area, with debris building up naturally or being swept or dumped deliberately around and beyond the southern limit of intensive occupation. Most of the coins within this linear concentration were of 4th-century date, indicating it may have been a relatively late phenomenon.

The recorded distribution of objects appears for the most part to offer only a general impression of the intensity and character of human activity, with most findspots occurring in the road area and to its south but not extending into the deep riverine peats. A concentration of objects and coins recorded in the south-eastern corner of the excavated area coincides with the line of the postulated 4th-century gravel pathway ***48082***, thought to be defined on its western edge by Phase 6 ditch ***18001*** (Fig. 2.61). While this suggests that at least some findspot patterning does reflect the tides of human traffic and activity across the site, Cooper's spatial analysis of the distribution of most metal-detected objects (Chapter 7) revealed very little patterning of interest.

Phase 3 (?mid–later 1st century AD)

Introduction
(Fig. 2.7)

The number of 1st-century features and finds is small, while the evidence for this Phase as a whole seems ambiguous in some respects. This is particularly true of the east-to-west road: while stratigraphic/ceramic analysis has suggested an earlier 2nd-century date for the major roadside ditches this does not marry perfectly with the later 1st-century dating for the feature arising from Rogerson's excavation. Furthermore, the surviving road metalling cannot be dated, a topic that will be considered further with reference to Phase 4 and 5A (pp37–41, 58–9). Bearing this in mind, it is possible that the road did already exist at the end of the 1st century even though it had been assigned here to Phase 4. Indeed, a precursor of the more formal routeway need neither have been ditched nor metalled.

There are no indications of settlement on any scale, but the solitary roundhouse ***18000*** close to the River Waveney was an important discovery. Although only a small proportion of this structure was excavated finds of metalwork and glass suggest a 1st-century date, while a local cluster of coin finds from Grey Soil and overburden reinforces the likely significance of this small area during this period. A possible structure further to the north, ***38026***, although cut away by one of the Phase 4 roadside ditches, cannot be dated closely.

Structure 18000 and its setting
(Figs 2.8 and 2.9)

Round structure ***18000*** lay in the southern part of the site, on a slight natural promontory extending into an area of low-lying ground, and measured *c*. 9.3m in diameter. The summit of this localised area, which was elevated up to 1.2m above the level of the surrounding peat, may have been enclosed on its north, south and west sides by an enclosure, represented by ditch ***18031***. This feature only survived in very fragmentary form but may have been contemporary with the construction and early use of the roundhouse.

The roundhouse

This was represented by two shallow concentric gullies. Excavation was limited by pressures of time and this has placed constraints on reconstruction and interpretation of the building itself. The eastern side of both gullies had been completely removed by the north-to-south Phase 6 enclosure ditch ***18001***, which cut the remains of the building tangentially.

The outer gully was not continuous. Intermissions were recorded in its southern and northern sides, and it may have been an eaves-drip feature. Since none of the apparent 'termini' were excavated, it is not known whether they were steep-sided butt ends or were less well-defined. Even with the help of further excavation distinctions of this kind may have been difficult to make, however, since (where excavated) the gully was only 0.09m–0.25m deep, and up to 0.5m wide. Dark grey silty sand fills predominated: finds included a Nauheim-derivative bow brooch, a piece of an iron knife-blade and a fragment of glass from the base of a blown hexagonal bottle of Isings form 50 (cats 2, 207: Cooper, Chapter 7).

The inner gully was uninterrupted save where it was clearly disturbed by later features. It survived to a depth of up to 0.25m on its western side, and was generally filled with a dark grey-brown silty sand containing visible charcoal inclusions. A series of closely-spaced post-holes in its base extended between 0.04m–0.18m in depth below the floor of the gully itself, and these were filled by sandy deposits similar or identical to the gully fills. In excavated segment *30258/30259,* on the western side of the feature, the post-holes lay immediately inside its line. It is possible, however, that the inner gully represented the construction cut for the wall of a roundhouse of 'post-in-trench' type. No clear evidence for an entrance or doorway was recognised.

Few features lay within the interior. Several post-holes were all deeper than those forming the suggested 'post-in-trench' wall; two (*30485* and *30490*) may have formed a pair. Three other substantial post-holes sited around and beyond the circuit of the gullies were probably related to the structure too; one of them (*30502*) appeared to cut the edge of the inner gully. It is conceivable that further post-holes with sandier fills were not identified at the time of excavation. Several infant human bones were collected from the fill of possible post-hole *30502*.

A series of dark grey-brown and black silty sands, with many inclusions of clay, chalk and charcoal, sealed all of these features. These resembled the Grey Soil layers in the roundhouse's vicinity, and have been interpreted as an abandonment/demolition residue.

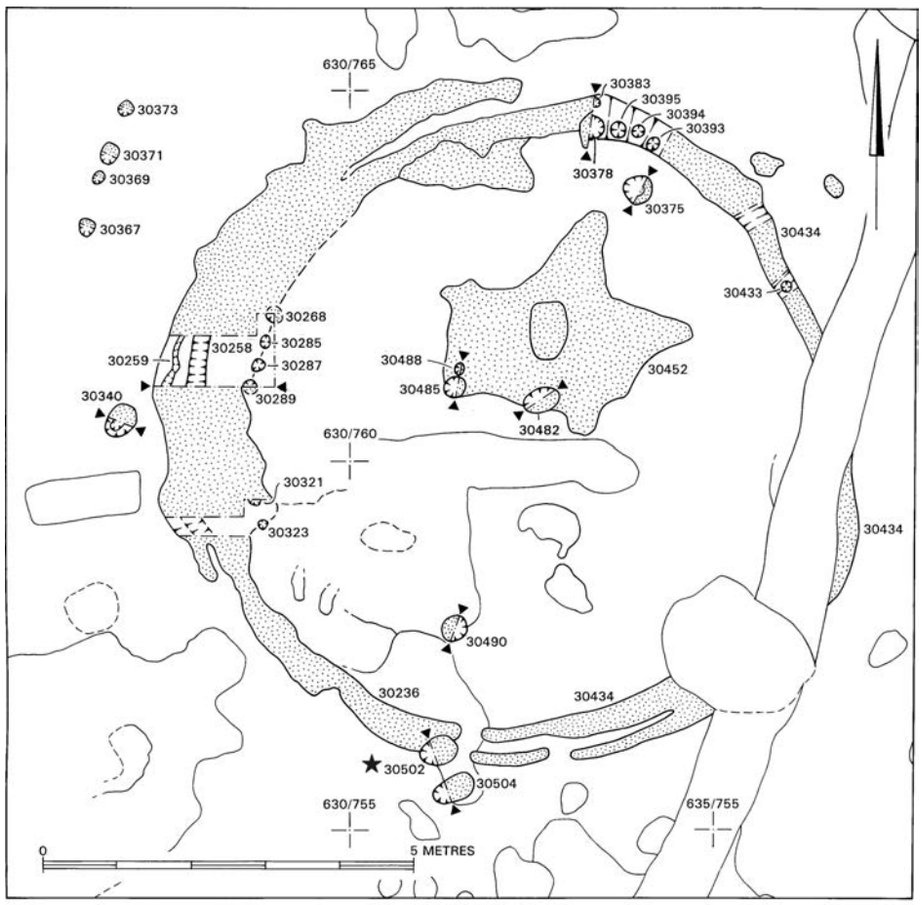


Figure 2.8 Phase 3: plan of structure ***18000***. ★ – feature containing infant bones

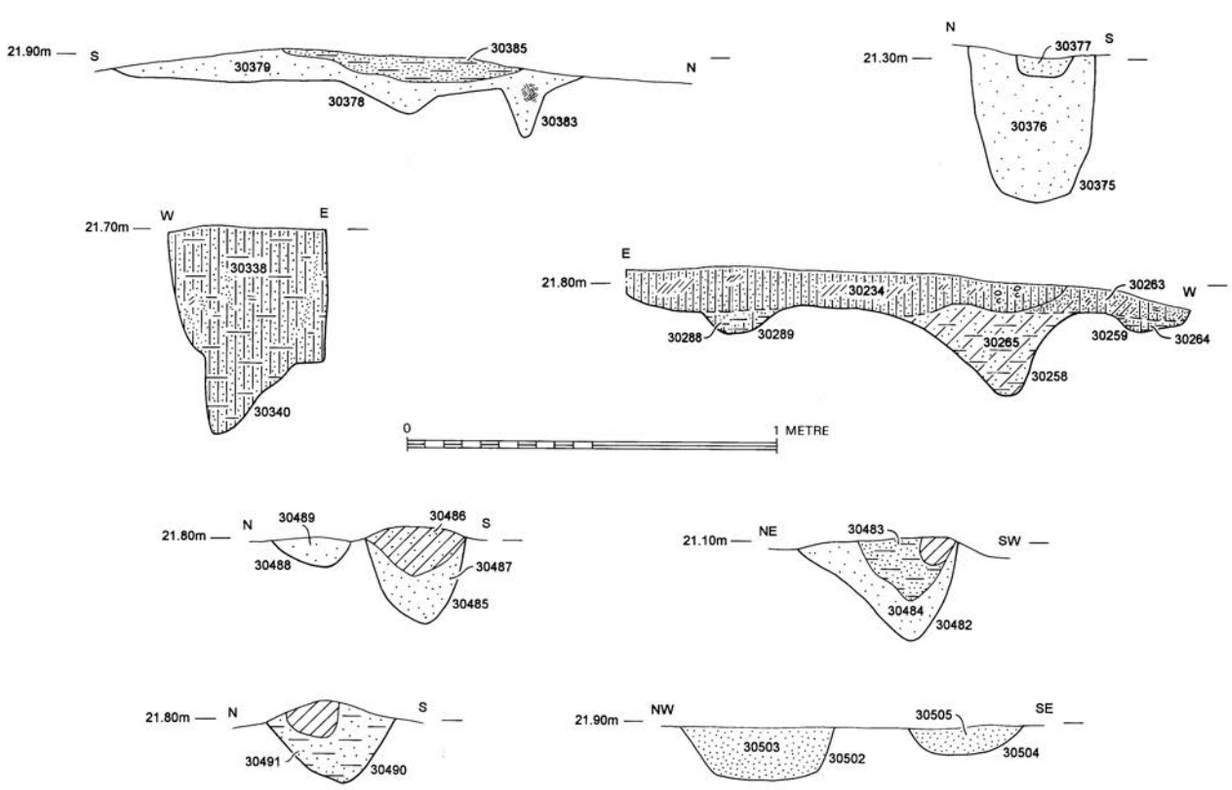


Figure 2.9 Phase 3: roundhouse ***18000***, sections

Figure 2.10 Phase 4: phase plan. Features in solid black may have persisted in use/remained open from previous phases

Significant finds from the roundhouse and its vicinity included an Iron Age coin (a Wolf stater) found by metal-detector in adjacent Grey Soil layers. A number of 1st-century Roman coins were also noted in the area (Fig. 2.4; Davies, Chapter 7), although a heavy concentration of late 3rd- to mid 4th-century coins is more likely to relate to a later north-to-south path or routeway in the area immediately to the east (Phase 6, pp89–93) than to the roundhouse itself. Only 195g of pottery (20 sherds) was collected, and this came mostly from the ?demolition horizon rather than from the fills of gullies and post-holes. Small numbers of fine grog, coarse and fine grey ware and red colour coat sherds were found; the colour coat and fine grey ware sherds probably date to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The Nauheim derivative brooch and early Roman coinage indicate a 1st-century origin but the pottery assemblage, albeit small, suggests that final demolition and clearance did not take place until maybe a hundred years subsequently. There is no clear evidence of what took place within the building. Its location immediately alongside the ritual/funerary complex represented by infant burial ***18056*** (Phase 4), cremations ***18050*** and the 'midden' ***18101*** (Phase 5B) does raise the possibility of use for ritual rather than mundane 'domestic' purposes. Furthermore, it seems to have seen activity throughout the period when the adjacent funerary complex was frequented.

?Enclosure ditch *18031*

This insubstantial feature was only identified and recorded in fragments, largely due to massive disturbance by later features. It is possible, however, that it constituted a gully-like enclosure surrounding the 'summit' of the promontory on its western side.

Four segments were excavated. On the northern side the ditch was 0.42m deep, had steep sides and a flat base, and was filled by light grey sands which overlay a lighter grey primary silty deposit. None of the other excavated segments were deeper that *c*.0.3m, but all of them shared similar excavated profiles and filling sequences. On the western side of the feature a near-continuous length of ditch 8m long was tentatively identified where it had been sealed by the build-up of the later 'midden' deposit ***18100*** (Phase 5B). Immediately to the west, and almost in direct contact with its western edge, lay the timber mortuary chamber which contained infant burial ***18056*** (Phase 4). The southern element of the feature may be seen in section in Fig. 2.14, where it is cut away by drainage ditch ***18026*** which was assigned to Phase 4.

No artefacts were recovered from the small excavated portion of the feature. It was assigned to Phase 3 on account of its early stratigraphic position and the manner in which roundhouse ***18000*** (also assigned to Phase 3) apparently lay within it. The fact that the Phase 5A stake alignment ***18038*** appeared to have been a redefinition of the western side of the enclosure during the mid–late 2nd century suggests that the longevity of this boundary could well have matched that of the roundhouse itself.

Other features

(Fig. 2.7)

A shallow north-to-south aligned linear feature, ***gully 38058***, was assigned to Phase 3 on stratigraphic grounds, being one of very few recorded features which had clearly been cut away by the excavation of the Phase 4 northern roadside ditch ***28003***. Sample excavation revealed that the feature was only *c*. 0.1m deep and contained a single light sandy fill. It is conceivable that it was a remnant of beam-slot representing a small structure pre-dating the Phase 5A building ***38031*** excavated by Moss (pp67–73).

?Structure 38026, approximately 15m further to the south-east, represented a debatable building whose location coincided with the northern frontage of the subsequent Roman road. Its southern edge was defined by a narrow gully or beam-slot 5.7m long, which turned northwards at its western end; unfortunately this had been damaged by substantial later features, including Phase 4 ditch ***28014***. The gully itself was 0.1m deep and *c*. 0.2m wide, and was filled with light grey sand. At its eastern end it appeared to terminate in a pair of shallow post- or stake-holes. Two small post-holes approximately 5m to the north of the beam-slot have been included speculatively within this group; both of them filled with dark grey-brown silty sand containing clay lump inclusions. Both contained sherds from a single heavily-sooted, grogged grey ware vessel of 1st-century type.

Phase 4 (early–mid 2nd century)

Introduction

(Fig. 2.10)

The area of the 1993 excavation still lay beyond the western limits of the main settlement area at the outset of the 2nd century. Analysis suggested that the major ditches flanking the east-to-west Roman road which dominated all subsequent developments on the site were laid out at this time, but — as discussed in the previous section — it is possible that the road was in fact earlier. The small number of other features encountered included large pits which would have held ground water, perhaps indicating the earliest phases of the craft and industrial activities dominating this part of the settlement from the later 2nd century onward.

The relatively small number of features assigned to Phase 4 have mostly been dated on ceramic grounds. Some of them — especially the roadside ditches ***28003***, ***28014*** and ***48007*** — are crucial to phasing and interpretation of the site as a whole, on account of their stratigraphic contact with so many later structures and other features. Jar, beaker and flagon forms identified by Lyons as diagnostically 'early' (Chapter 6) were collected from primary fillings and backfill deposits in the ditches and from deposits within the large pits ***18075*** and ***28030***. While dendrochronological analysis of a revetment timber from the latter feature indicated a mid-1st-century felling date it was clear that the sampled piece itself was re-used in this context.

a

b

Plate 2.4 Burial *18056*, looking north:
a – before removal of coffin lid; skull and left tibia clearly visible; b – after removal of lid and contents.

South of the road
(Plate 2.4; Figs 2.10–2.14)
Clear evidence for activity was discerned only on the promontory occupied by the Phase 3 roundhouse ***18000*** and in a tract of the peat edge extending *c*. 20m further to the west. The finds assemblage from the roundhouse area suggested that it had continued in use during this period. It cannot be shown whether or not the shallow ditch ***18031***, which may have enclosed this complex on its western side, was still maintained as an open feature during the 2nd century. Immediately to its west lay a solitary inhumation burial, ***18056***. Another feature close by, however, points to the beginning of industrial activity on the edge of the riverine peats.

Burial *18056*
(Plate 2.4; Fig. 2.11)
A timber mortuary structure in the southern part of the excavation area, sited only 4m to the west of roundhouse ***18000,*** contained a single infant burial. Enclosed within a very close-fitting rectangular cut *c*. 0.25m deep, the structure measured 1.4m x 0.8m and was aligned roughly north-to-south.

The outer element of the chamber was constructed of oak planks attached to corner posts, and featured a planked roof which had collapsed inwards. Within this lay a lidded inner box containing a skeleton. The planks were too poorly preserved for any carpentry evidence to survive, although it was clear that nails had not been used (Darrah, Chapter 8). The inner box had no bottom plank, but halves of two split logs had been placed beneath it along with other small pieces of wood. All of the timber identifiable to species was of oak. The plank remains were mainly tangential in section, although one may have been radially split from a large, slow-growing tree. Dendrochronological samples taken from this latter piece were not suitable for dating (Tyers and Groves, Chapter 8). Remarkably, however, this analysis did show that it had been fashioned from part of the same tree that provided the raw material for a timber 'bench-end' which had been re-used as part of a revetment in the ?tanning pit ***18076*** excavated 20m further to the north-west (Darrah, Chapter 8; Tyers and Groves, Chapter 8). Since this latter feature has been assigned to *Phase 5B* (mid–late 3rd century) on the basis of a large and well-characterised pottery assemblage, its reuse in this context may have post-dated the grave itself by 150 years or more. The possibility of error, in the dating or in stratigraphic analysis, is a real one.

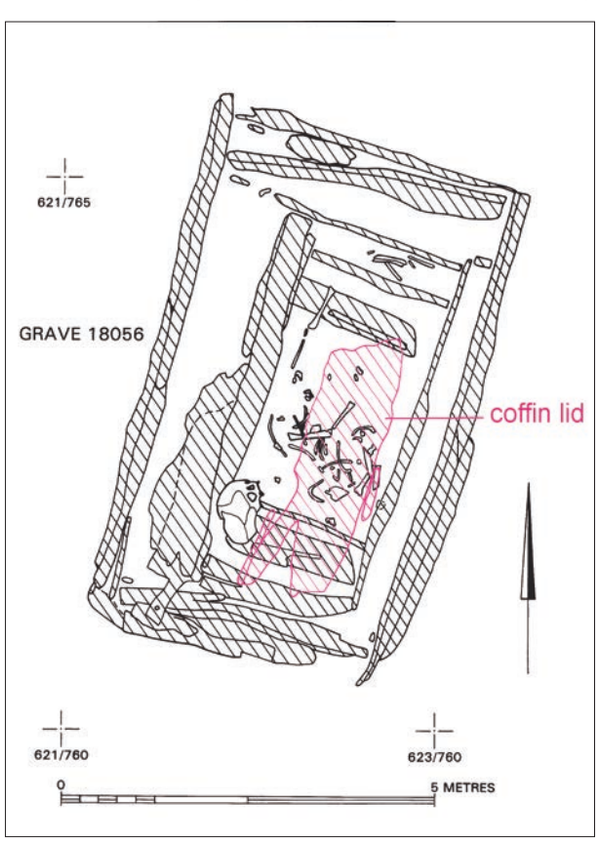


Figure 2.11 Phase 4: burial ***18056***, plan

Lying within the grave was the skeleton of an infant girl or boy who had died at the age of 2–3 years. The body had probably been deposited supine and extended (McKinley, Chapter 9). Of the various bones, only the skull, hips, right arm and legs surviving relatively intact. Most other bones had either disappeared completely or were very fragmentary; some disturbance of the skeleton might have been caused by the periodic river inundations that probably affected this area. Seeds of deadly nightshade and box leaves — certainly representing deliberate funerary deposits rather than accidental incorporations — were discovered during analysis of plant macrofossils and insect remains (Murphy, Chapter 9). Soil deposits recorded within the grave were all mid- and dark brown silty sands, which probably entered the chamber during episodes of flooding or after the collapse of the roof. A layer of light brown sand had sealed the structure; when its roof collapsed this also entered the burial chamber.

A collection of 1.04kg of pottery (40 sherds) was recovered from the grave fill; this included sherds of Wattisfield grey ware, white ware and samian, all of them abraded but consistent with a late 1st- or early 2nd-century date. It is suggested that they originated within the soil deposits which sealed the wooden roof of the chamber, and only entered the grave itself when the roof collapsed. Despite the assemblage's residual appearance it seems likely that the grave and its immediately overlying deposits pre-dated the 3rd century; they had been sealed wholesale by 'midden' deposit ***18100*** which has been assigned to Phase 5B on ceramic grounds.

Other features
(Figs 2.12–2.14)
Pit 18075, a deep ovate feature 11m to the north-west of burial ***18056***, measured 5.2m by 4m in plan and was at least 1.3m deep. When open it would undoubtedly have contained standing water, and this was probably essential to an industrial process of some kind. Slightly undercut on its southern side, it displayed a complex infilling sequence, and had probably remained open for a lengthy period. Thick naturally-deposited grey/brown sand and peat fills had been 'capped' by a layer of yellow-brown clay (*10951*), perhaps intended to prevent foot traffic causing subsidence. Palynological assessment of sample material from the siltings confirmed that the feature had probably contained standing water; while located in an area high in semi-aquatic flora, it was probably also close to areas of grassland and drier soil vegetation (Wiltshire, Chapter 9). This implies that the peat-edge zone was not intensively occupied or exploited by humans at the time. Insect remains indicative of stagnant water (Robinson, Chapter 9) reinforced the impression that it was situated in a damp area away from intensive human settlement. The insect studies suggested either that the pit had been used as a dump for decaying organic matter at some period during its life, or that material of this kind had been abundant around its edges.

The high levels of standing water in this area made excavation difficult, but the waterlogged conditions did allow the collection of nine fragments of leather waste. Eight of these were pieces of sheep/goat hide, while the ninth was of cattle (Mould, Chapter 7). Also found was a smoothed square stone object with a central hole which at the time of excavation was likened to part of a 'block-and-tackle' assembly; unfortunately this was lost before it could be recorded and catalogued. An assemblage of 3.9kg of pottery (226 sherds) was dominated by grey ware shreds (Fig. 2.13; Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 1–27). Seven sherds of samian and a single piece of Oxfordshire red colour coat were the only finewares found. The relatively high number of dishes in the assemblage — and especially the presence of one particular type with an internal angle and in-curving rim — is significant, since it is thought that straight-sided dishes only became current towards the end of the 2nd century. Although no closely-datable material was retrieved from the primary fills, the earliest backfill layers contained sherds of late 1st-century type; subsequent backfill deposits were ceramically 'later', while the upper fills producing material perhaps dating to the late 2nd or early 3rd centuries. The Oxfordshire colour coat sherd, from the uppermost fill, was probably intrusive.

Pit ***18075*** was the earliest of a series of large Roman pits excavated in the peat-edge area of the site. It is possible that the area was used by tanners and Phase 5A pit ***48051***, a large feature excavated *c*.10m further to the north-east, was identified as a possible oak tanning pit (pp54–5; Wiltshire, Chapter 9). The presence of leather offcuts in pit ***18075*** is also suggestive of this, although these may be detritus from leatherworking elsewhere in the area. On its eastern side, the pit appeared to cut another large, elongate feature whose upper levels were filled with a silty peat growth. This might have been a similar feature to ***18075***, but was not excavated due to pressures of time.

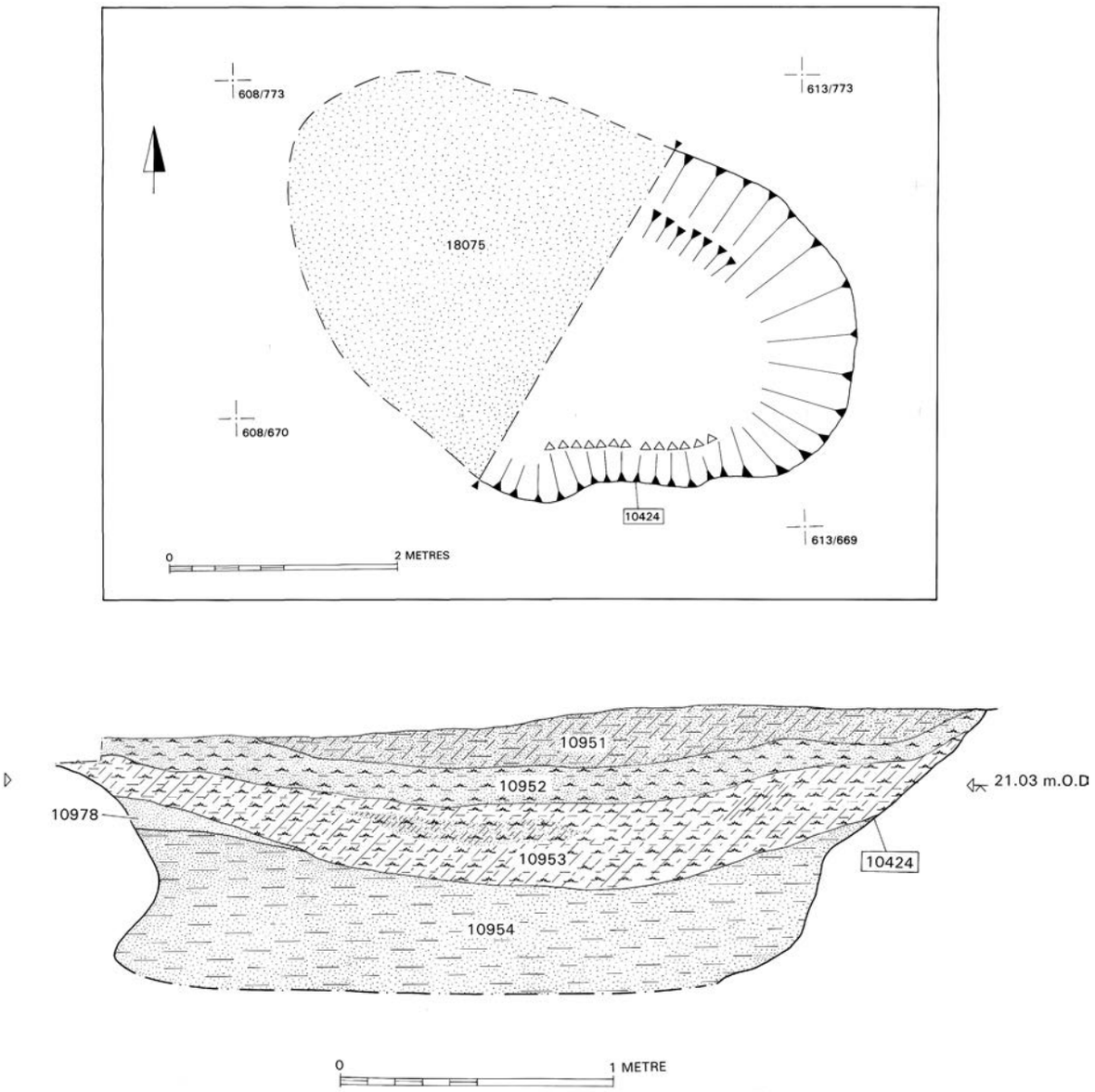


Figure 2.12 Phase 4: pit ***18075*** (cut context no. *10424*), plan and section

Closer to the river-edge, ***ditch 18026***, the earliest of a long-lived series of Roman drains, has also been assigned to Phase 4. Much of its volume had been lost to truncation by subsequent ditches following the same alignment but it may clearly be seen in section in Fig. 2.16. Its phasing is tentative: while the pottery collected from its fills dates may only be dated broadly to the 2nd to mid 3rd centuries, the feature has been cut away by ditch ***18025***, dated to Phase 5A. Clear traces of an associated bank, constructed of upcast sand, may be seen in section on its northern side.

The road and roadside

The east-to-west road
(Plate 2.5; Figs 2.10, 2.15–2.17)

Extant road metalling deposit ***49020*** was confined to the easternmost *c.* 30m of the excavated area. This series of coarse sand and gravel layers 7.1m wide and up to 0.3m deep had seen many episodes of repair and resurfacing.

The principal metalling deposit *31051* was cambered and was composed of orange sandy gravel. In many places it had been repaired and consolidated with layers of pale yellow sandy gravel, dark grey-brown or reddish-brown gravely loam sands or orange sandy gravels. Micromorphological analysis of a series of sand deposits beneath the metalling showed that it had been constructed over a deposit of loose topsoil and turf (Macphail *et al.*, Chapter 9). Palynological analysis of material from this sequence suggested that the road had been laid down over a podzolic deposit which supported heath vegetation and weedy trampled grassland (Wiltshire, Chapter 9). The western limit of the metalling was abrupt, and coincided with the point at which the Phase 5 ?porticoed building ***38031/38054*** (excavated by Geoffrey Moss) was sited on its northern frontage. The continuance of both roadside ditches further to the west made clear that the road persisted beyond this point. That this more westerly area was unmetalled was indicated by the local absence of sand and gravel deposits, either *in situ* or washed into the flanking ditches.

Little detailed recording was possible within the time-constraints of the excavation, and most of deposit ***49020*** was removed by machine. Before this took place two cross-sections were recorded. Neither was hand-excavated: the first was achieved by emptying one of Moss's trenches, while the second was a machine-dug slot located *c.*9m further to the east (Fig. 2.16).

No stratified dating evidence was recovered. The final phase of metalling had been sealed by a build-up of Grey Soil material (***49025***: *31048/9, 31250*) which was mixed with some displaced road gravels. Only 23g of pottery (11 sherds) was recovered from excavation of the road metalling itself. Small sherds of grey, white and red wares displayed heavy abrasion; red colour-coated sherds and pimply grey ware

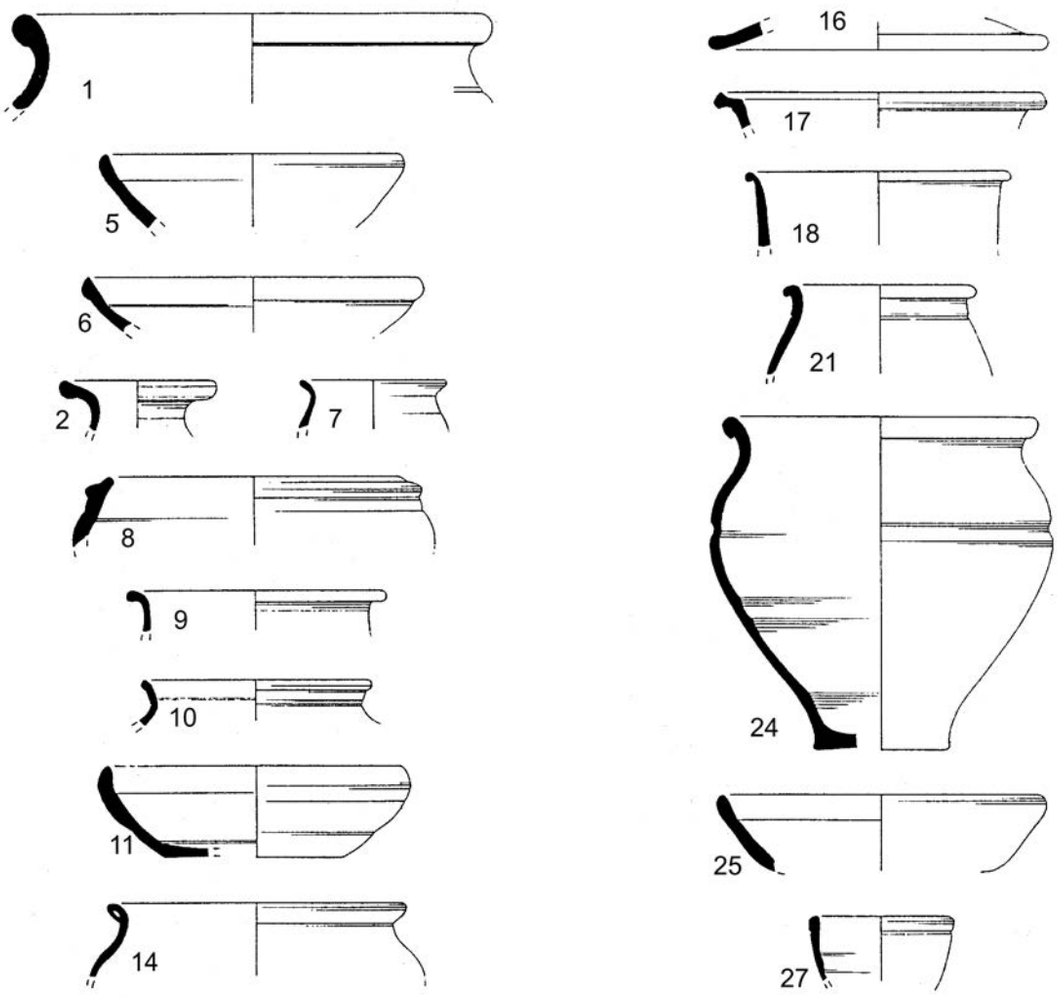


Figure 2.13 Select pottery from pit ***18075*** (see Chapter 6 for catalogue descriptions). Scale 1:4

recovered from ruts and from repair deposits in the upper part of the metalling both date broadly to the 3rd century AD.

As time elapsed, many features of 2nd–4th century date encroached upon the road margins. These included pits ***38011*** (Phase 5A) and post-hole structures ***48080*** and ***49000*** (Phase 5B). Well ***38000***, nearby post-hole ***38001*** and possible latrine ***38008*** were all dated to Phase 5A; conceivably these features represent 'public utilities' or even street furniture (pp59–61, below).

Southern roadside ditch *48008*
(Figs 2.15–2.18)
Running uninterrupted across the entire width of the 1993 excavation area, this east-to-west aligned ditch turned southwards close to the site's western limits. In the area of the metalled road, a margin of *c.* 1m separated the northern edge of the ditch from the southern fringe of metalling ***49020***.

The eleven excavated segments sited along the 120m length of ditch exposed by the excavations showed that it ranged between 0.4m and 1m in depth and was up to 2.1m wide. It survived to greatest depth in the western part of the area, and where it had not been truncated during the course of machine-removal of the road metalling. Indeed, slight variations in the depth of archaeological machining probably account for many localised differences in the ditch's dimensions, although it seems to have deepened slightly with distance to the west.

The ditch had been infilled with a mixture of grey-brown silty sands and yellow-brown or light brown sands (Figs 2.16 and 2.17). In contrast with the northern roadside ditch ***28003***, there were no clear signs of deliberate backfilling on any scale. Segments adjacent to the metalled section of the road contained some washed-in gravel in their upper siltings. Where excavated segments showed evidence for cleaning and recutting, it appeared that these recuts had also silted naturally. No attempt could be made to phase episodes of recutting and cleaning in detail on account of the homogeneity of the pottery collections made from the ditch siltings as a whole. Indeed, it is possible that there were many episodes of 'recutting' and cleaning which were not discerned.

Alongside the western limit of the road-metalling, three urned cremations (***48083****;* Phase 5A, Fig. 2.24) revealed during excavation of segment *30363* had been placed in the ditch when it had partially silted up. Their late 2nd- or 3rd-century date shows that this part of the ditch, at least, was no longer maintained by this period.

An assemblage of 5.6kg of Roman pottery (384 sherds) was recovered from all of the excavated segments (Fig. 2.18; Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 97–128). The collection from this ditch featured a slightly smaller range of forms and fabrics than that from its northern counterpart ***28003***. Significant quantities of fine grog grey ware were found, as well as small amounts of coarse, pimply and fine grey ware. Samian was well-represented and Oxfordshire red colour coat sherds occurred in small quantities. Most vessels were of types common from the mid 2nd century onward, and no late Roman forms were identified. The primary fill of a recut segment produced a 4th-century Oxfordshire red colour coat sherd, suggesting that the western part of the ditch, at least, remained open during the later Roman period.

Northern roadside ditches *28003* and *28014*
(Figs 2.15, 2.20–2.22)
Much of the north side of the road is marked by major ditches sharing a common alignment. These, and the series of enclosures extending back to the north, represent a co-ordinated and concerted series of actions in laying out the area.

Ditch ***28003*** — apparently the northern counterpart of ditch ***48008*** — flanked the roadside over a length of *c.* 35m in the western part of the excavation area. Some 22m to the west of the termination of the metalled section of the road its course turned northwards through an angle of approximately 90°, and it could be traced for over 80m to the north of this point. It proved impossible to identify its western terminus conclusively since it lay within an area which was had obscured by the erection of the

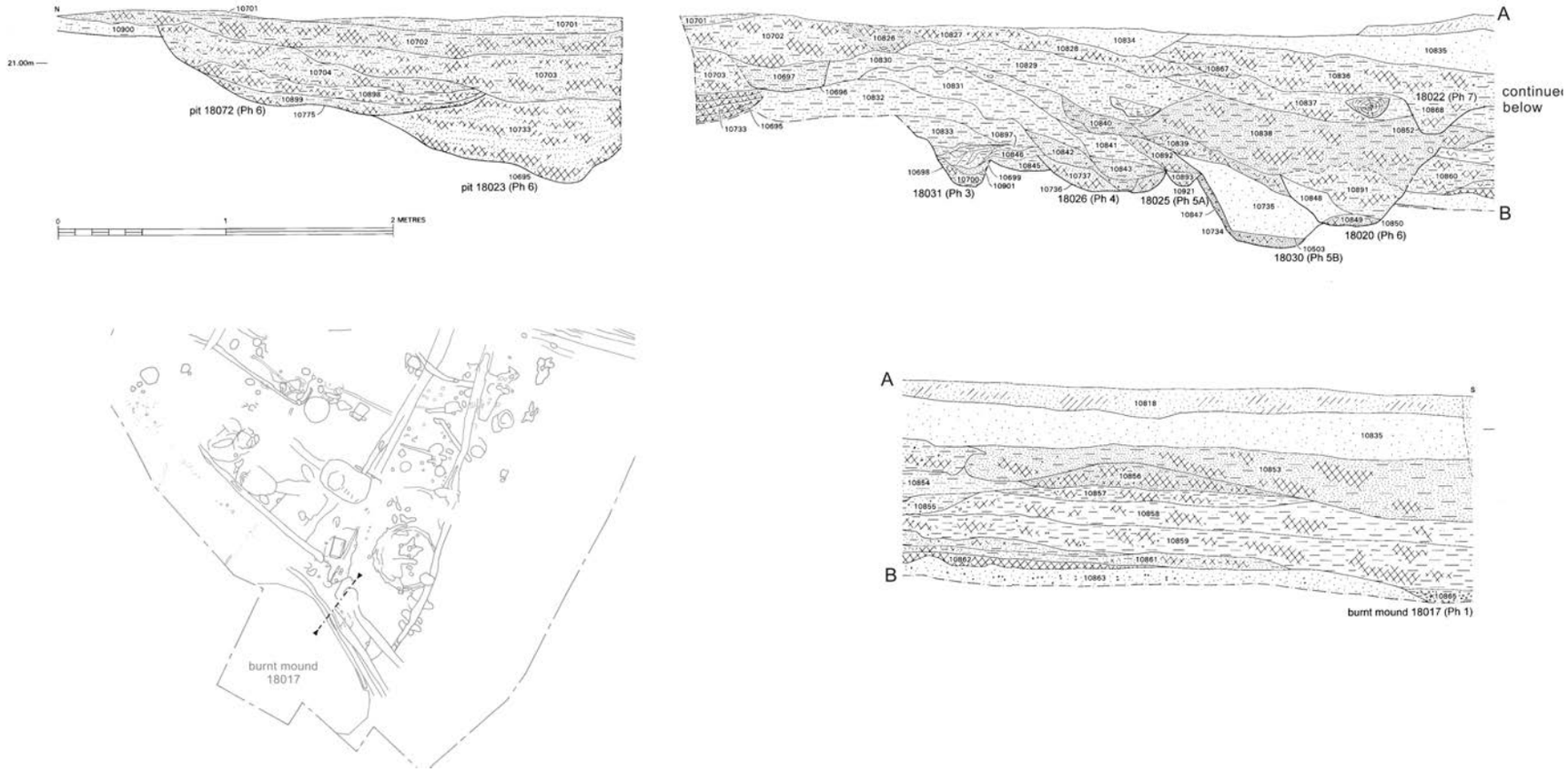


Figure 2.14 West-facing section through riverine peats, drainage ditches and other features

Figure 2.15 Phase 4: road and roadside ditches ***48008***, ***28003***, ***28014***, plan

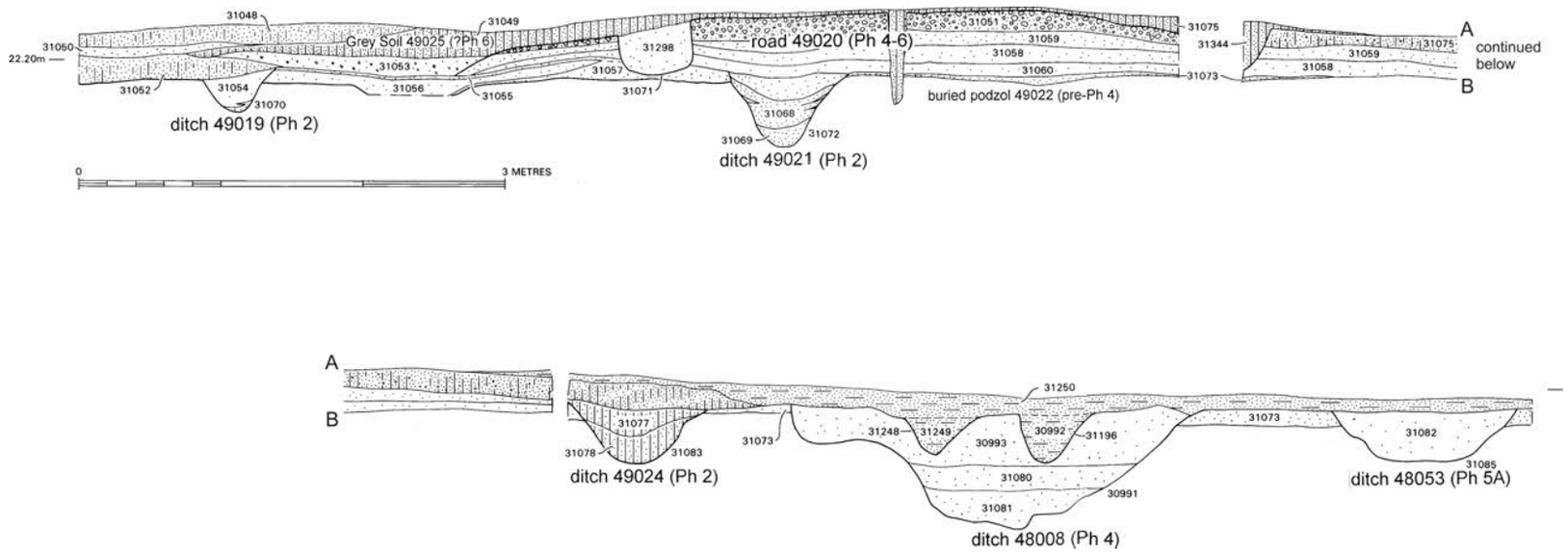


Figure 2.16 West-facing section across road ***49020*** and adjacent features

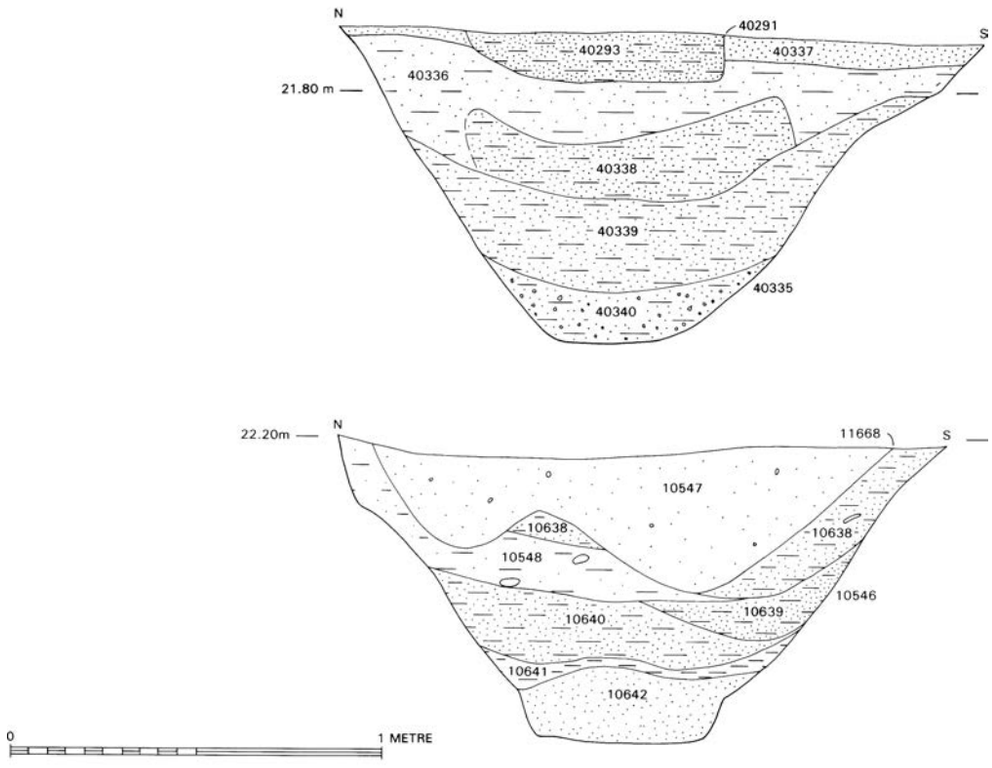


Figure 2.17 Phase 4: ditch ***48008***, sections (segments *10546*, *40335*)

Plate 2.5 Road metalling *49020*, looking west

later ?porticoed roadside building ***38031*** (Phase 5A) and was heavily disturbed by Moss's excavations. The eastern terminus of the ditch was originally thought to lie adjacent to the road. It is possible, however, that it actually turned northwards for a distance of 6m before finishing in a broad, shallow terminal. This remains unclear, since most deposits which once existed here had been removed by the 1967 excavation.

Four segments were excavated across the ditch where it ran alongside the east-to-west road; these revealed that it was a substantial feature, up to 3.5m wide and varying between 0.7 and 1.1m in depth. Further segments excavated across the north-to-south arm of the ditch showed that it shallowed to the north, maybe due to plough-truncation.

In the area of the roadside itself the ditch displayed a complex history of infilling and cleaning-out, with different filling-sequences recorded in the various excavated segments. Segment *30131*, sited immediately to the west of the Phase 5A building ***38031*** excavated by Moss, had initially been filled by dark yellowish-brown sands. It had been substantially recut, however, during the 3rd century, and this cleaning-out had been filled by dark grey-black silty sands from which over 25kg of iron slag was collected (Cowgill *et al.*, Chapter 8). Further to the west, segment *10948* (Fig. 2.20) also showed that the ditch had been cleaned-out to a depth of over 1m at this point, this recut (probably also dating to the 3rd century) containing a variety of grey-brown, orange-brown and brown silty sands. These deposits had been sealed by the clay floor of the Phase 6 ?workshop structure ***38051***, which had been erected over the line of the ditch at this point.

Of the three segments sited in the northward-aligned length of ditch, all but *10535* showed clear evidence of heavy cleaning and recutting (*e.g. 10379*: Fig. 2.20). The secondary ditch cuts had been backfilled with a variety of dark grey and grey-brown silty sand deposits, with yellowish brown and brown sands towards their bases. They contained significant quantities of metalworking debris; the presence of slag in the upper fills of the 'un-recut' segment *10535* (Fig. 2.20) implies that this length of the ditch had been similarly cleaned-out, even though no obvious secondary cut was identifiable in section.

Ditch ***28003*** may have been a significant landscape feature throughout much of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Although its easternmost part had been deliberately backfilled during the later 2nd or 3rd centuries to allow the construction of Phase 5A structure ***38031***, most of its length saw regular cleaning-out during this period. The roadside section of the ditch must have disappeared by the later 3rd or 4th centuries, since the infilled ditch was sealed by the clay floors of Phase 6 structures in this area.

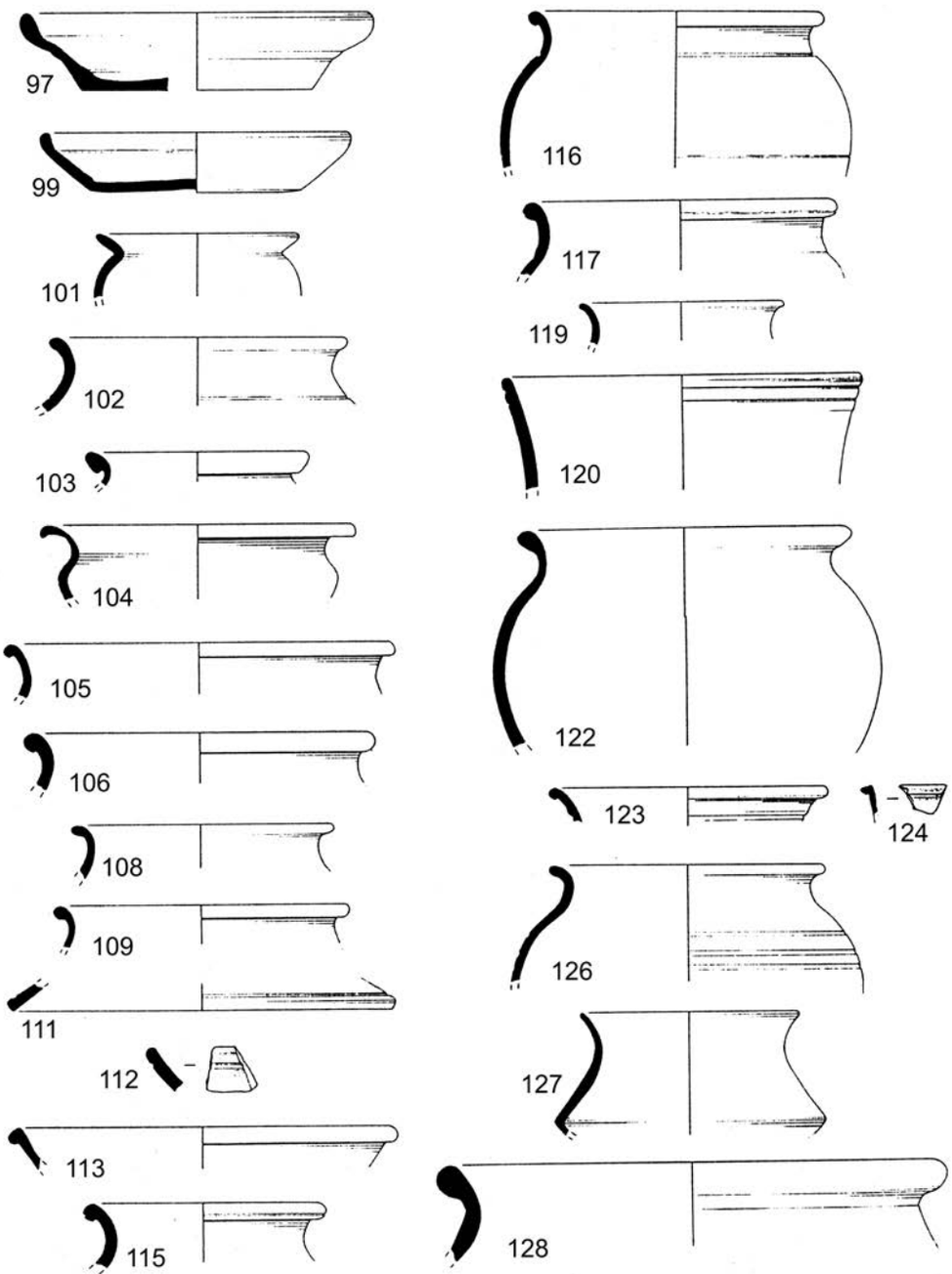


Figure 2.18 Select pottery from ditch ***48008*** (for catalogue see Chapter 6). Scale 1:4

The ditch produced one of the largest pottery feature-assemblages recovered at Scole, the total of 11.288kg (633 sherds) recovered amounting to 2% of the entire collection from Areas 1–4 (Fig. 2.21; Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 28–96). This pottery came from a variety of contexts, including siltings both of the primary ditch and of recuts, ranging in their likely date between the early 2nd and late 3rd centuries. Sherds recovered from the primary fills are only datable in broad terms to the later 1st to mid 3rd centuries. Those from the fills of recuts and upper ditch siltings included sherds which may have dated to the later 3rd or 4th centuries. Of the eighteen Roman pottery fabrics recorded, Wattisfield grey ware (8.198kg/507 sherds) was by far the most numerous, but significant amounts of fine grog grey ware were also recovered. Large quantities of coarse white wares were found, along with sherds of mortarium and amphora and a single piece of Nene Valley white ware. The range of forms indicating a time-span of at least 150 years. Early 2nd-century forms included a butt beaker, a medium-mouthed jar with stabbed decoration around the shoulder, carinated bowls and a bowl with curving sides and an out-turned rim. Later vessels included medium-mouthed jars with a projection underneath the rim and a straight-sided dish with a small bead and double flange.

Ditch 28014's north-to-south alignment could be traced over a distance of over 100m. Three-and-a-half metres to the north of its projected intersection with the road line it turned eastwards through an angle of approximately 100°; to the east of this point it extended over a distance of three metres parallel to the road before terminating. In this area the fully-infilled ditch was overlain by post-hole structure ***38029*** (Phase 5A), and had been deliberately backfilled at this point during the late 2nd century to allow its construction.

Few segments were excavated. The ditch's southern part was at least 0.5m deep (and possibly deeper in places) and was filled with dark grey-brown silty/loam sands and yellow-brown silty sands. Further to the north it was rather deeper (up to 0.8m) and was filled with slightly lighter grey brown silty sands. Its exact line was sometimes difficult to trace, and only limited excavation was possible. A total of 2.736kg of pottery (150 sherds) included small quantities of fine grog and pimply grey wares. Oxidised coarse grey wares were well-represented, and a significant amount of samian (142g) was also collected. A Wattisfield flagon was of a ring-neck type common in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries, while a bowl was also of 'early' pattern. The other forms present appeared somewhat later. Different parts of the ditch probably became infilled at

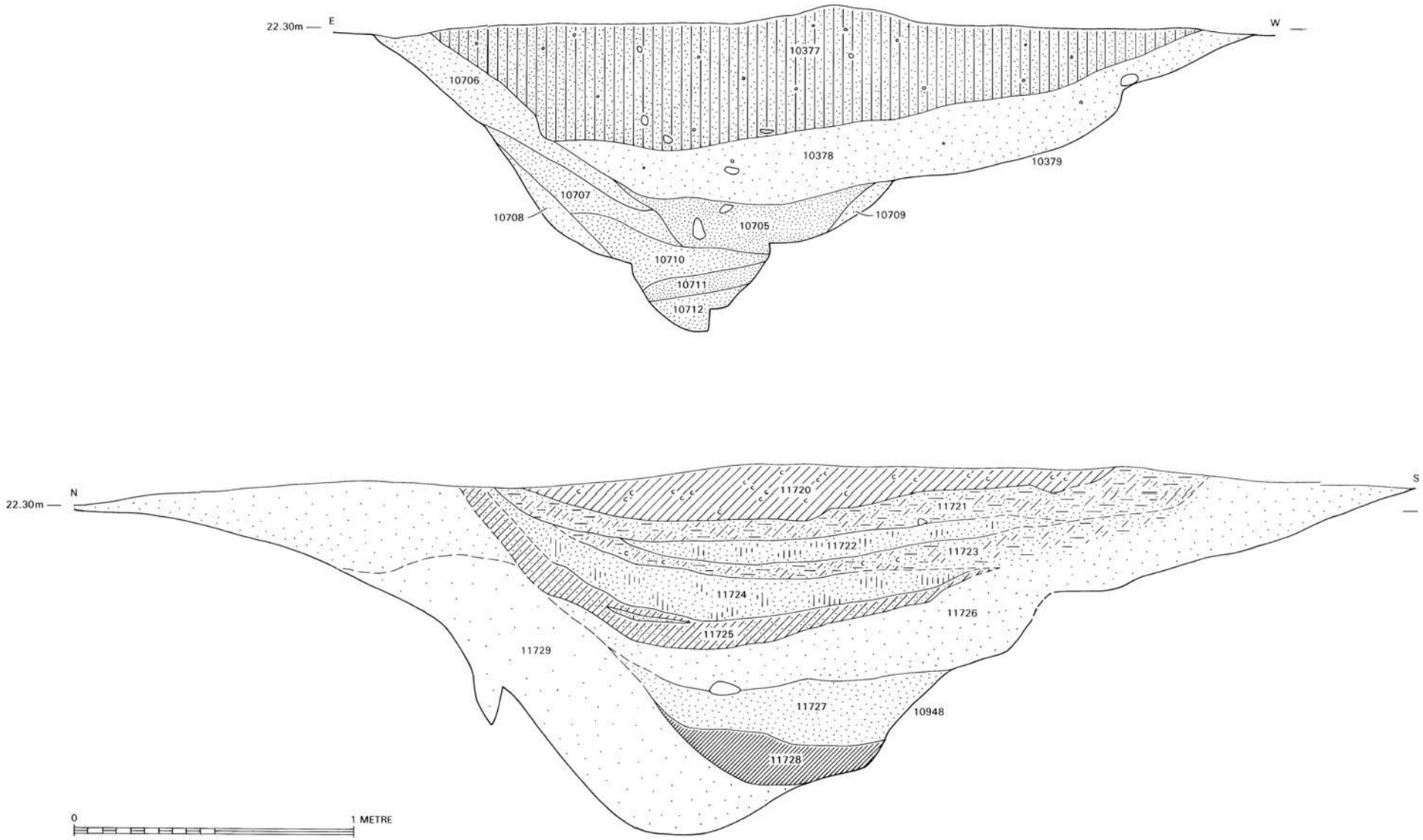


Figure 2.19 Phase 4: ditch ***28003*** (segments *10379* and *10948*), sections

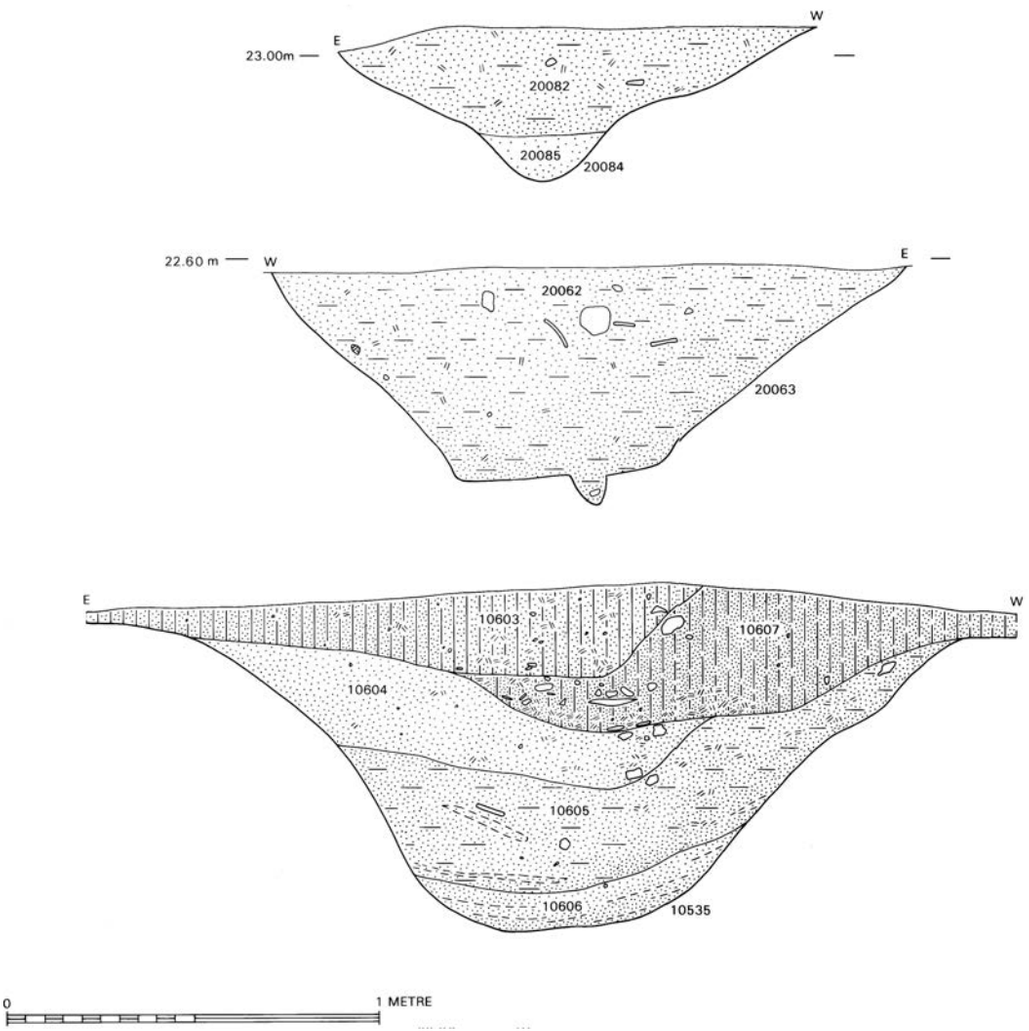


Figure 2.20 Phase 4: ditch ***28003*** (segments *10535*, *20063*, *20084*), sections

different times, the samian from excavated segment *30699* (below structure ***38029***) suggesting that backfilling took place hereabouts in the mid 2nd century AD.

Other roadside features
(Fig. 2.10)
A small number of apparently 'early' features on the northern roadside deserve mention. The large pit ***38056***, immediately to the east of the Phase 5 buildings excavated by Moss, could not be fully examined due to atrocious weather conditions at the time when this area was excavated. It was at least 0.5m deep, however, and was filled with alternating sand and charcoal-rich deposits suggestive of deliberate backfilling. Pottery from the lower excavated deposits suggested a late 1st- to mid-2nd-century date for this event; the feature was sealed by gravel layers associated with the later buildings excavated by Moss (Figs 2.43–2.45). Two pits excavated further to the east (***38025***) were of similar general proportions and also contained charcoal-rich deposits. Little pottery was found but a large sherd of Flavian samian implied relatively early infilling.

Activity to the north of the road

(Plate 2.6; Figs 2.10 and 2.23)

Few features were assigned to Phase 4 apart from two deep pits, lying *c*. 30m apart in the north-eastern part of the excavated area.

Pit 28030 measured *c.* 7m x 5.5m in plan but was of unknown depth. Excavation below a depth of *c.* 1m was impossible due to ground-water, which also prevented sectional recording. It was filled with thick layers of mid–dark grey sandy silts, along with slumped natural sand and sandy deposits with a higher organic component. Along the south-east edge of the feature a wooden revetment had been constructed, presumably to prevent further collapse of an unstable pit-side (Fig. 2.23). This was composed of two freshly-cut planks 1.86m long, along with a 2.2m-long 'plank' (*30974*) bearing mortise holes which had been somewhat crudely augered-out. This latter piece was a reused item and has been interpreted by Darrah as one side of a cart-box (Chapter 8). Dendrochronological analysis showed that this timber had been felled after AD 64 (Tyers and Groves, Chapter 8). The revetment had been held in place by three upright 'posts'; one of these (*31023*) was apparently a section of a former sill-beam. The timbers had not been nailed together, and the structure was held in position by the packing deposit behind it, a mixture of soil, organic waste and wood offcuts. Forty-two sherds of Roman pottery (822g) were retrieved from the pit's fills. All of the forms recorded appeared consistent with an early- or mid-2nd-century date.

Pit ***28030*** may originally have functioned as a water-hole. If so, it might have remained open for some years, being cleaned and maintained before it gradually became infilled by silting and rubbish-dumping. These processes probably continued into the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries. By that time, the feature may have become connected with activities in and around the post-hole structure ***38029*** (Phase 5A) 35m further to the south. Alternatively, it may have related to agricultural activities in the open area to the north.

Pit 28017 further to the north-west may well have been a similar feature, although little excavation was possible since most of it lay beyond a local excavation limit. Its northern side had been cut away by a later well, ***28010*** (Phase 5A). Ground-water levels once again restricted excavation. The sides of the pit, where examined, appear to have had a stepped profile.

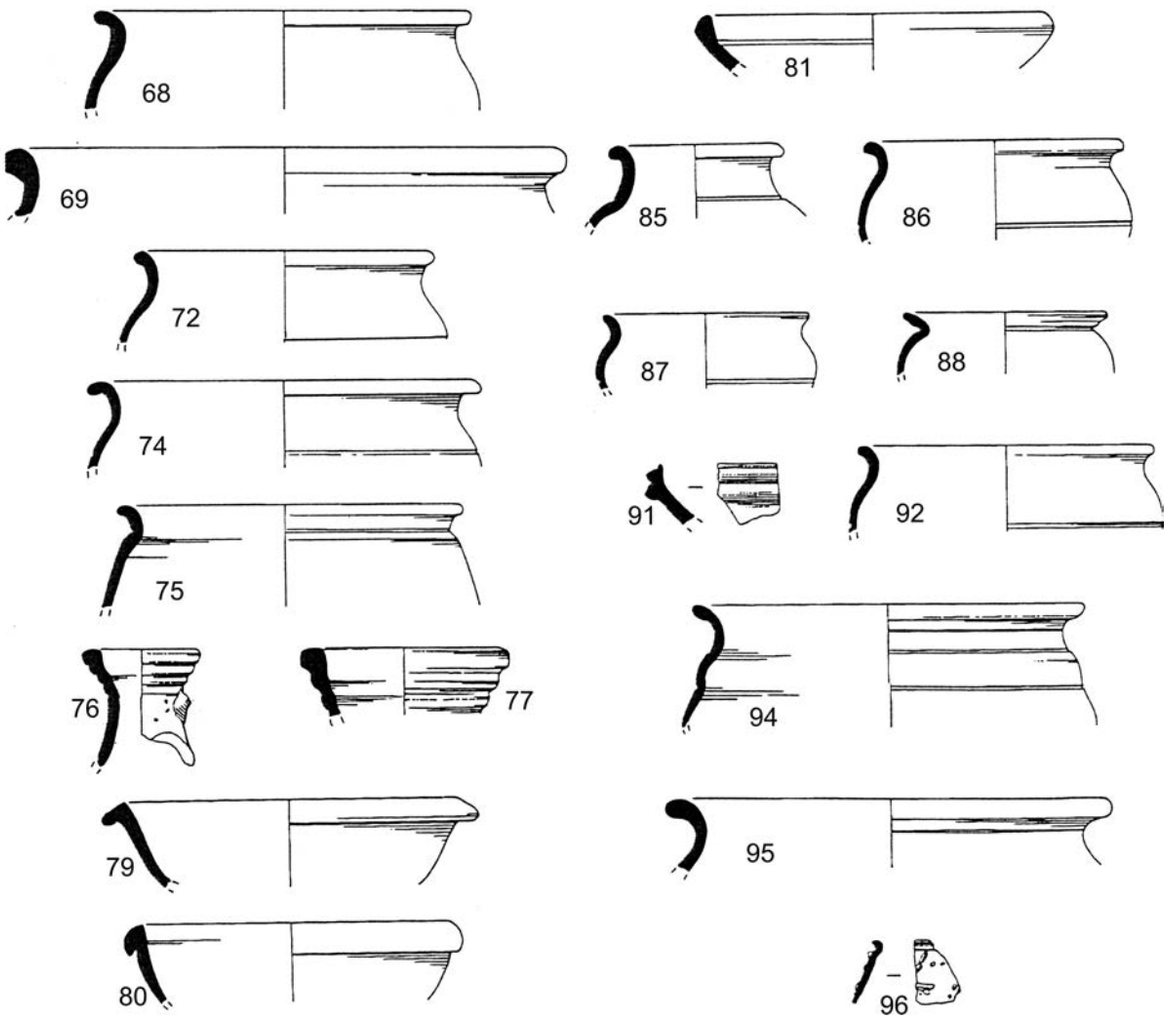


Figure 2.21 Select pottery from ditch ***28003*** (see Chapter 6 for catalogue). Scale 1:4

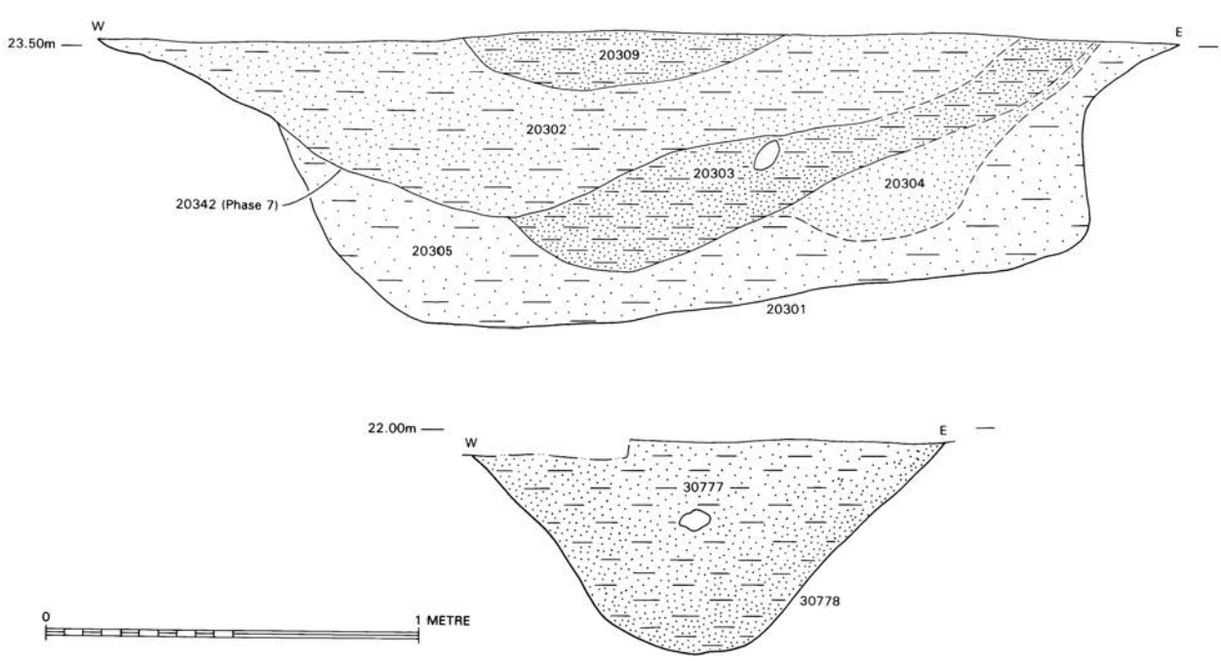


Figure 2.22 Phase 4: ditch ***28014***, sections

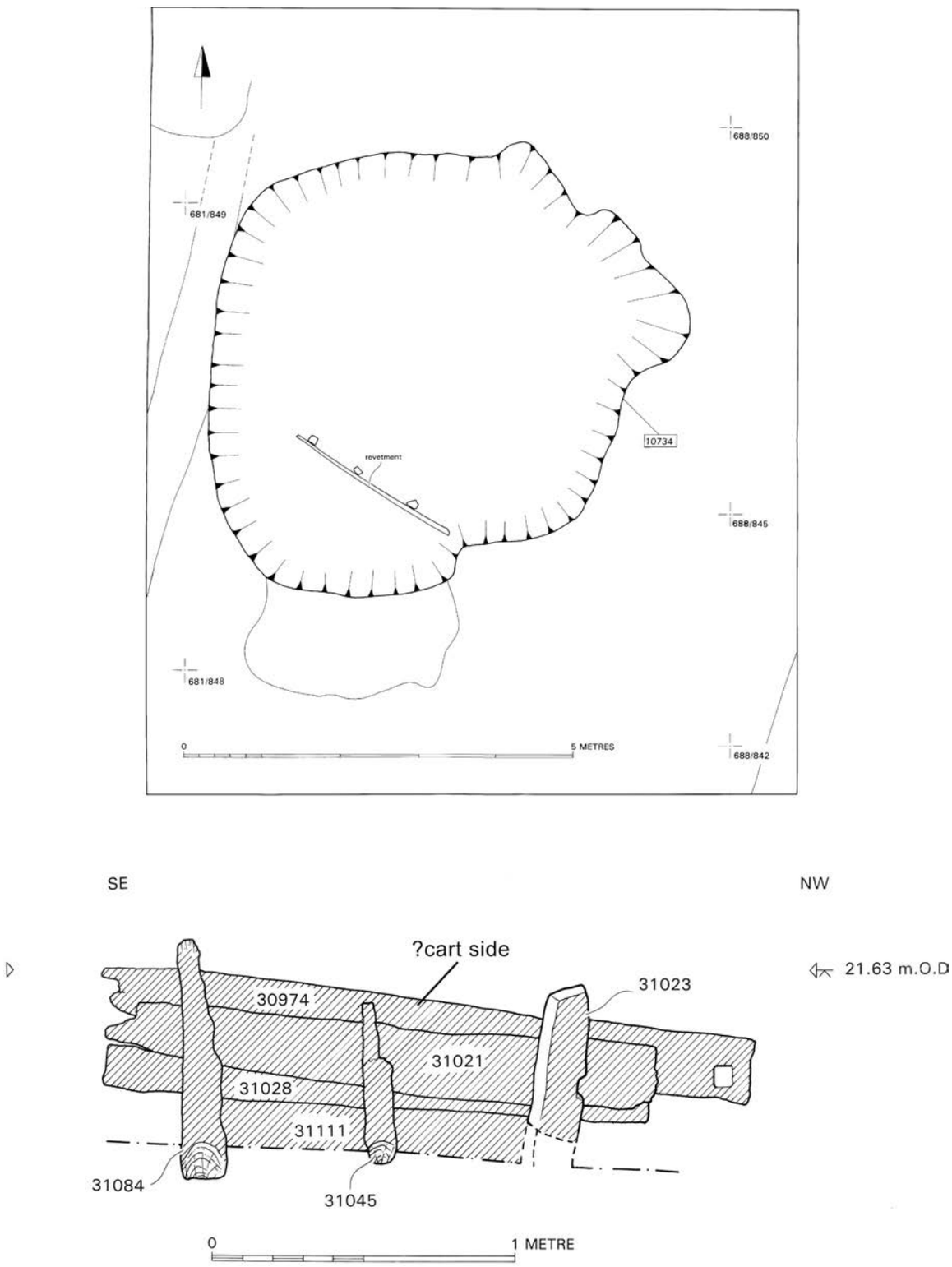


Figure 2.23 Phase 4: pit ***28030*** (cut context no. *10734*), plan and north-facing elevation of timber revetment

a

b

Plate 2.6 Pit *28030*: a – the pit under excavation, looking south-east (excavator standing next to revetment); b – north-west facing elevation of the revetment

Figure 2.24 Phase 5A: phase plan

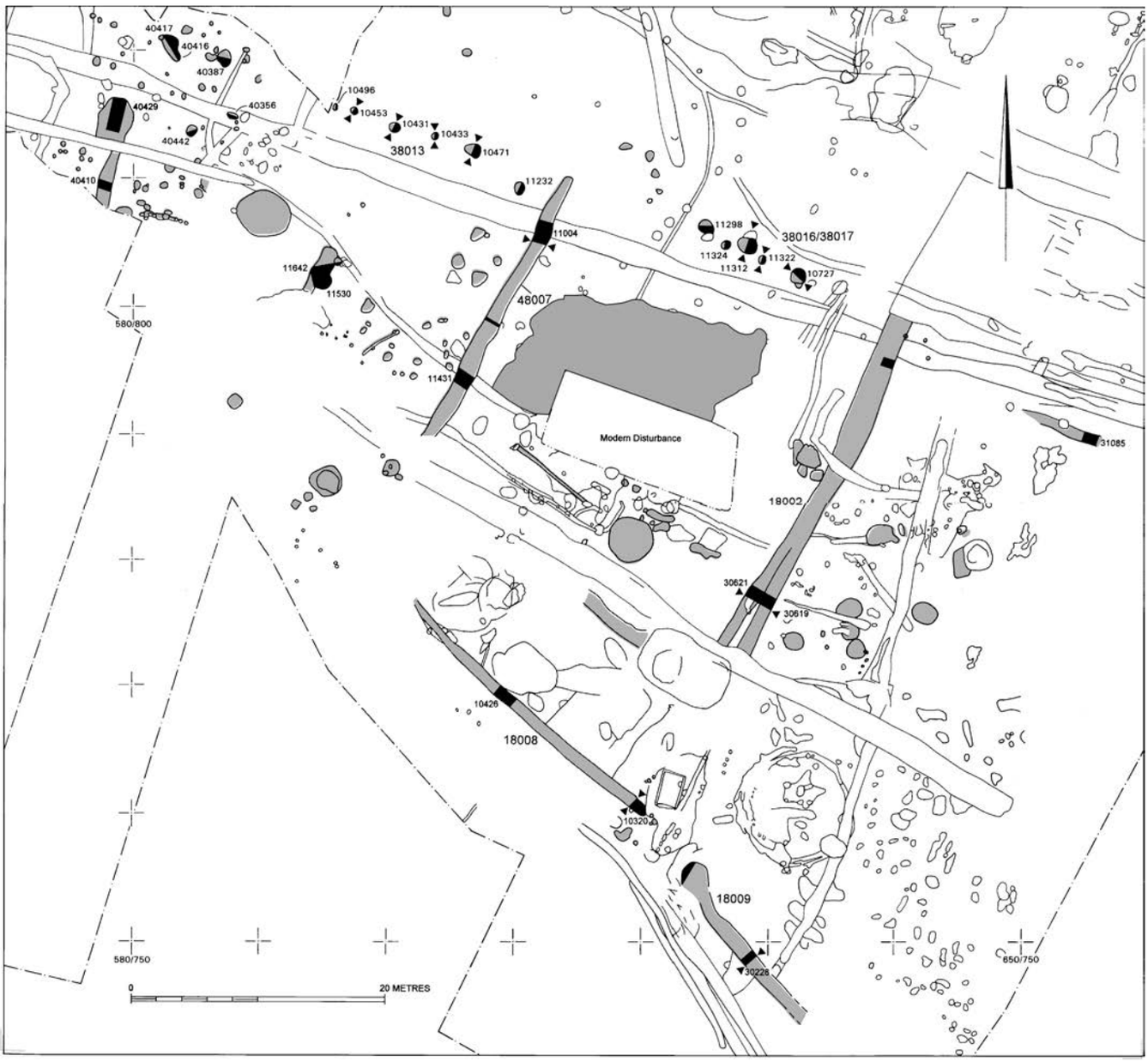


Figure 2.25 Phase 5A: peat-edge boundary features, plan showing excavated segments (Period 5A features in grey)

Phase 5A (later 2nd–earlier 3rd centuries)

Introduction
(Fig. 2.24)
Ribbon-like development along both frontages of the east-to-west Roman road was represented by the construction of roadside buildings, and by the establishment of a series of rectilinear land divisions occupied by buildings, pits and timber-lined wells. These developments may be broadly dated to the later 2nd–mid 3rd centuries on stratigraphic and artefactual grounds.

A great many structures, enclosures and other significant features were assigned to this phase during analysis. Yet defining it, and assigning structures and other features to it, was not without difficulty. The risks involved in a heavy dependence on pottery as dating evidence should not be forgotten, in particular considering the very small numbers of coins of Reece's Periods 7–9 which were recovered. The features assigned to this phase produced much larger quantities of pottery than heretofore. A decline in samian deposition, a corresponding rise in colour-coated wares, and the appearance of a wider range of Wattisfield grey ware forms than before, have all been regarded as significant ceramic dating indicators (Lyons, Chapter 6).

Stratigraphic relationships recorded in the roadside area show how all of the various 'new' elements post-dated the major Phase 4 ditches. On the southern fringes of the road the peat-edge enclosure ditches cut the roadside ditch ***48008*** at right-angles. Lengths of the north roadside ditch ***28008*** had been backfilled deliberately to permit the erection of buildings, and a piece of early–mid 2nd-century samian was found in the ditch fill beneath structure ***38029***. Firmly-dated elements of the Phase 5A landscape include the urned cremation groups ***18050*** and ***48093*** — seemingly 'marking' the two western corners of the eastern peat-edge enclosure — which featured Wattisfield and Pakenham vessel-types typical of the later

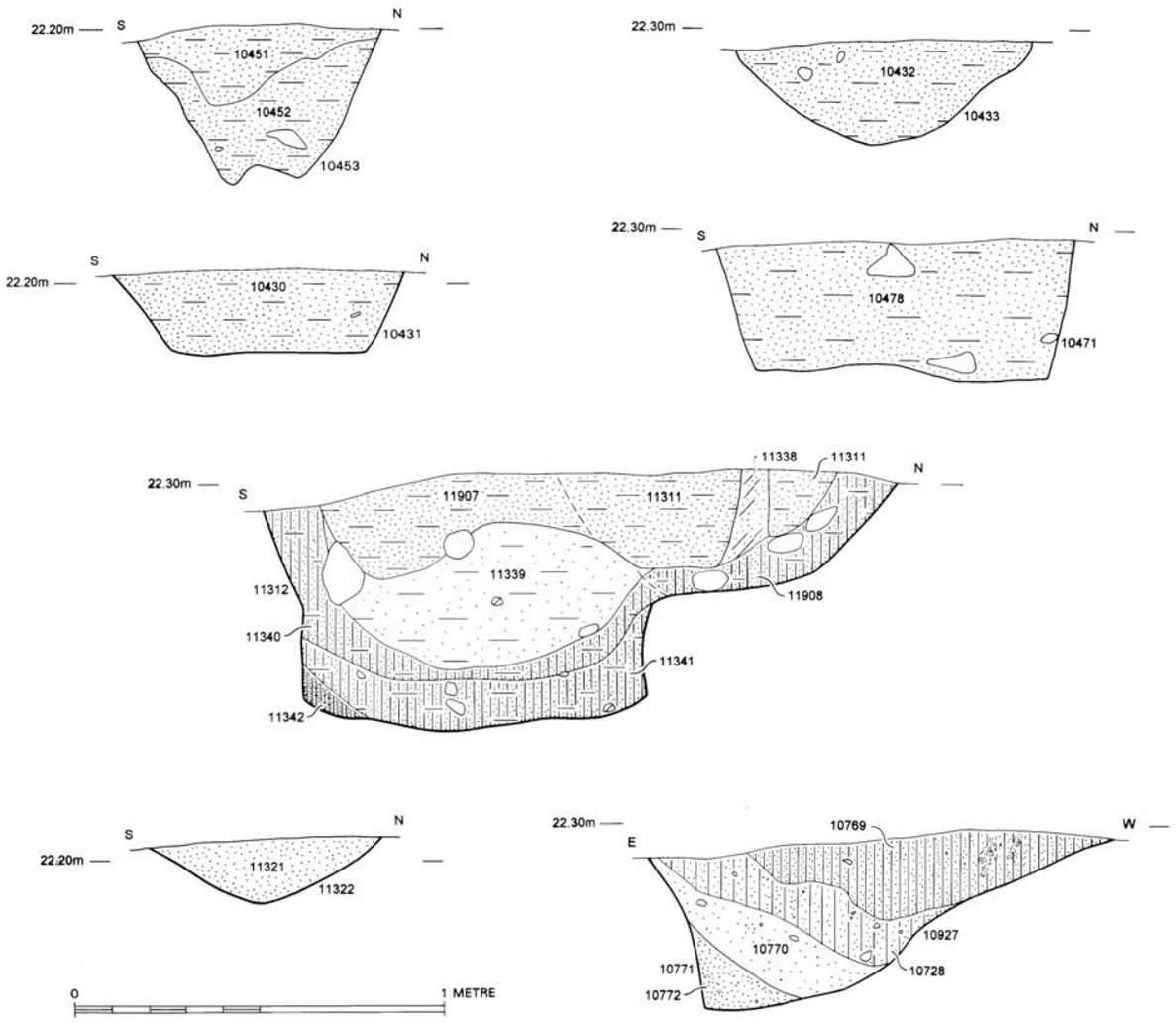


Figure 2.26 Phase 5A: peat-edge enclosures, post-hole alignments ***38013***, ***38016*** and ***38017*** and associated features north of the road, sections

2nd century. Useful (albeit small) collections of sherds also came from construction contexts within several of the timber-lined wells. Importantly, dendrochronology showed that the lining within well ***38018*** had been built not long after AD 172, reinforcing the likelihood that many, if not all, of the highly distinctive 'Scole-type' timber-lined wells were built in the later 2nd century. Assemblages of pottery from two large ?tanning pits close to the peat-edge also dated these to the later 2nd/early 3rd centuries.

One of the most difficult of the Phase 5A Key Groups to date was the roadside structure ***38031*** previously excavated by Moss, since the earlier excavations had left very few undisturbed deposits for study in 1993. Many other individual features and groups, especially those lying further away from the roadside area and lacking stratigraphic links with other features, have also been assigned to the Phase somewhat tentatively. In fact many of the less significant features which appear on Fig. 2.24 may only be dated to a broad late 2nd–3rd century range on the basis of the pottery collected.

South of the road: the peat-edge enclosures

General

(Figs 2.14, 2.24–2.27)

A series of three enclosures fronted onto the southern roadside. Separated from each other by ditches, at least two of these property divisions seemed to encroach upon the margin of the road area itself, their northern limits being marked by an alignment of pits and post-holes lying up to 3m to the north of the (Phase 4) southern roadside ditch ***48008***. To the south, a series of drainage ditches separated the enclosures from the deep peats of the river margins.

Neither the southern nor the western limits of the ***western enclosure*** could be seen clearly, but it appeared that its north side occupied at least 40m of the southern road frontage. This northern limit was marked by east-to-west line of ***post-holes 38013***, which lay a short distance to the north of the southern roadside ditch itself (Figs 2.25 and 2.26). To the west the precise line was lost amongst the numerous structural post-holes in this area; to the east it may well have been contiguous with the post-hole lines ***38037*** and (especially) ***38016*** which defined the northern limit of the central enclosure. Pottery suggested a late 2nd–mid 3rd century date. The eastern side of the enclosure was

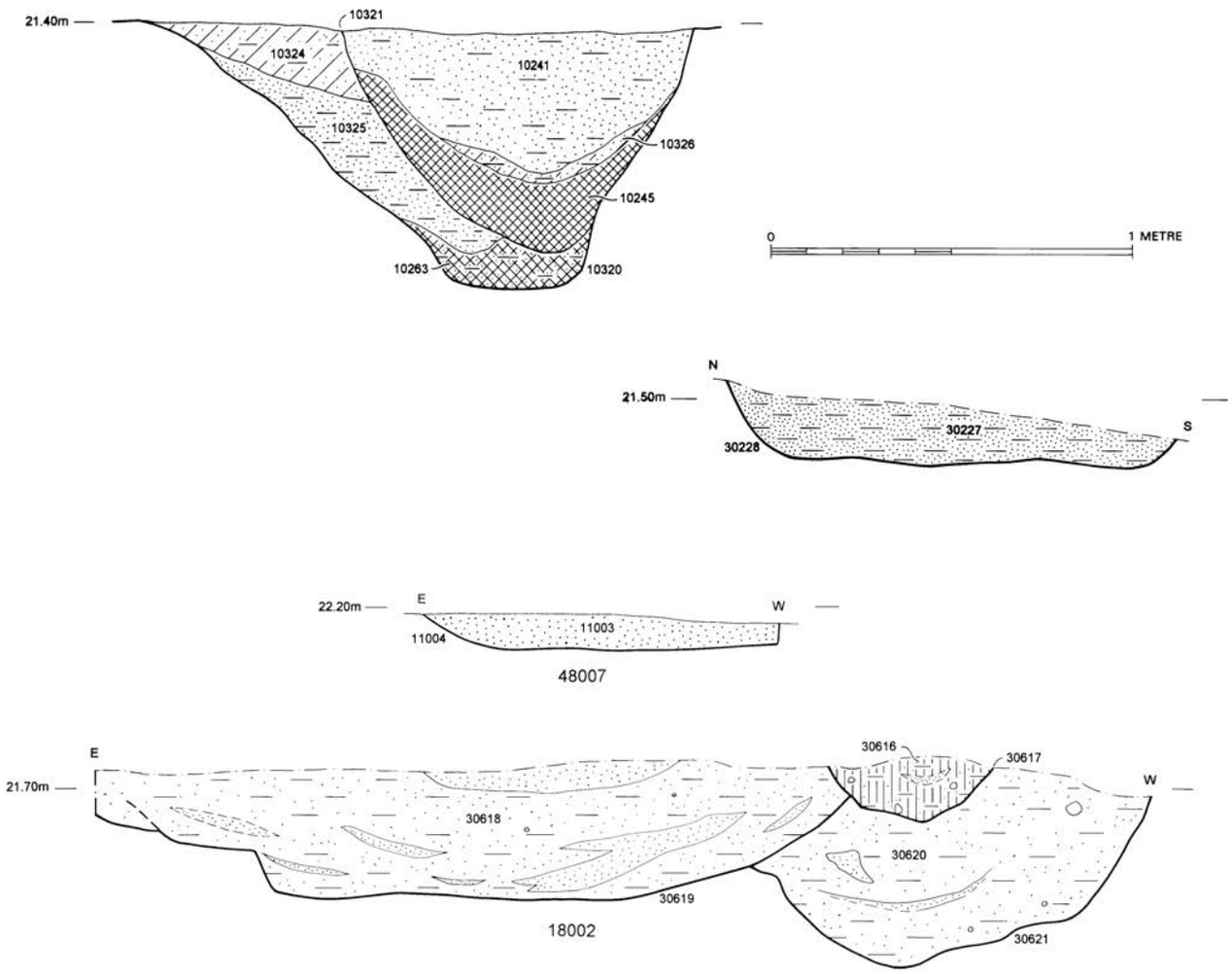


Figure 2.27 Phase 5A: ditches ***48007***, ***18002***, ***18008*** and ***18009***, sections

delineated by ***ditch 48007***. This may have extended further to the south into the waterlogged peat zone yet remained unrecognised due to difficult excavation conditions. It was shallow and filled with grey-brown sand, becoming somewhat darker and siltier with distance to the south. The small pottery assemblage offered a *terminus post quem* in the mid/later 2nd century.

The ***central enclosure*** occupied *c*. 25m of the southern road-frontage and extended southward nearly 40m. Its boundaries could clearly be discerned on all four sides. Its northern limit was defined by ***post-holes 38037*** and larger ***?post-pits 38016***, which followed the same approximate alignment as 'fence' ***38013*** to the west. Most of the post-holes forming alignment ***38037*** were very shallow. The larger features comprising ***38016***, varying in depth between 0.45m and 0.7m, were less obviously structural, since no clear evidence of post-impressions or packing was recorded. All were filled with silty or loamy deposits. The eastern limit of the enclosure was marked by ***ditch 18002***, a feature with steep sides and a concave basal profile (Fig. 2.27). Its southern extent in the area of riverine peat, like that of ditch ***48007***, could not be traced.

The ***eastern enclosure*** probably extended beyond the eastern limit of excavation. Recorded features were confined to a north-to-south band *c*. 20m wide running parallel to the western boundary ditch ***18002***. Two important pre-existing features, roundhouse ***18000*** (Phase 3) and infant burial ***18056*** (Phase 4), lay within its south-west corner. The absence of recorded features to the east may have been partly due to demanding excavation conditions, caused by flooding and high ground-water levels. No evidence for any road-frontage 'fence' was recorded. ***Ditch 48053***, recorded a short distance to the south of the road, might have formed a northern boundary to the enclosure but this cannot be proven. The northern frontage of this area coincided exactly with the *metalled* length of Roman road that was encountered in 1993, the northern terminus of north-to-south ditch ***18002*** coinciding with its abrupt eastern limit.

Deep ditches dividing the dry land from the riverine peats marked the southern limits of both the central and eastern peat-edge enclosures. The southern limit of the central enclosure was defined by ***ditch 18008***. This was recorded along a total length of 25m. It probably extended further to the west but was not clearly visible in the peaty subsoil. Its eastern terminus coincided with the junction of the central and eastern enclosures, and with the small cemetery represented by Phase 4 inhumation ***18056*** and Phase 5A cremations ***18050***. The excavated segments were up to 0.7m deep (Fig. 2.27). The ditch's western terminus was well defined, and its dark grey- or yellow-brown clay peat primary fill gave way to a brown silty sand further to

the west. There was clear evidence for cleaning-out (recut *10321* in excavated segment *10320*). The high clay content might denote episodes of flooding and deliberate backfilling as well as gradual silting. Little dating evidence was recovered. The ditch clearly cut through the southern edge of Phase 4 pit ***18075*** and was probably cut in turn by the Phase 5B revetted pit ***18076***. An assemblage of 266 sherds (5.69kg) of pottery was collected. Sherds from primary deposits were dateable to the mid/later 2nd century; the assemblage from the recuts appears later, with a suggested mid 2nd to mid 3rd century range. This implies that cleaning-out of this ditch continued well into the 3rd century; Lyons has observed how the pottery assemblage resembles that from the Phase 5B 'midden' deposit ***18100***, which coincided with its eastern terminus (pp86–7).

A 'causeway' 6m wide separated ditch ***18008*** from ***ditch 18009*** further to the south-east. A length of *c.*15m was visible in plan but only two sample segments were excavated. The ditch was 0.17m deep and was filled with a dark grey/brown silty sand (Fig. 2.14). These features appear to define an entrance in the south-western corner of the eastern peat-edge enclosure. This entrance was bisected by the southern end of north-to-south stake-line ***18038***, which was also assigned to Phase 5A.

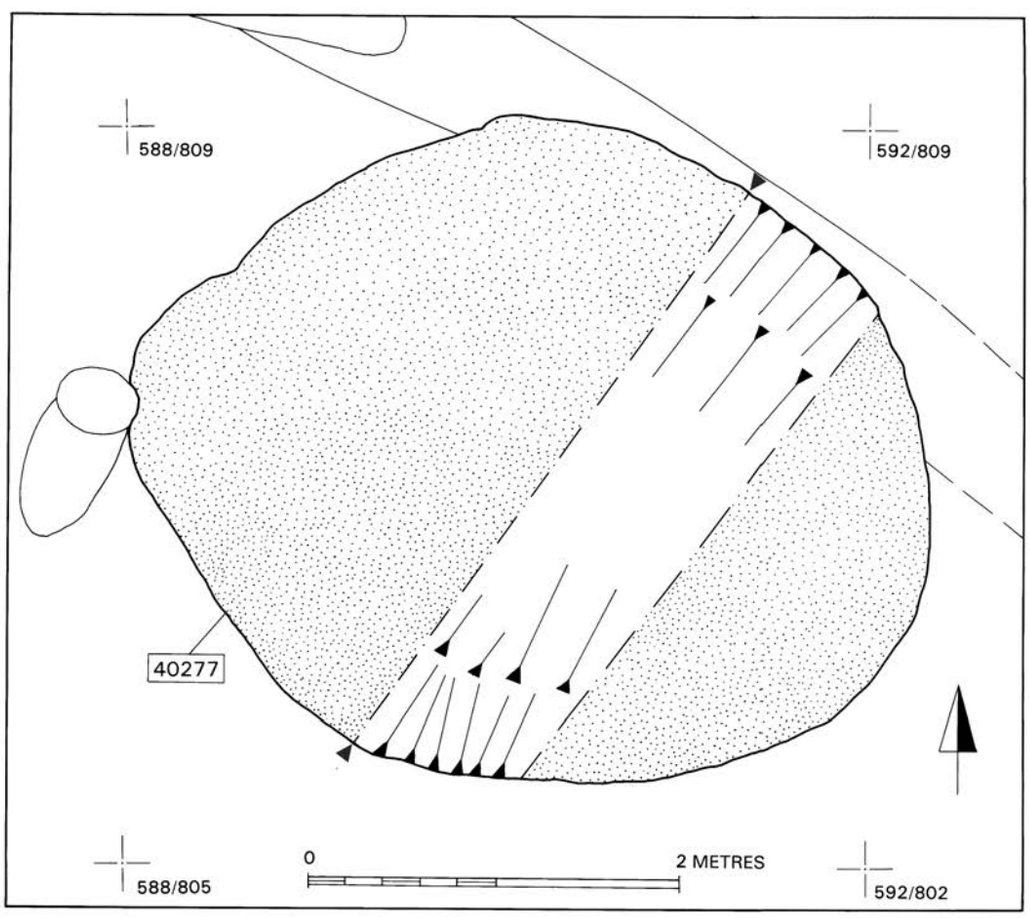


Figure 2.28 Phase 5A: pit ***49002*** (cut context no. *40277*), plan and section

Western enclosure
(Plate 2.7; Figs 2.24, 2.28–2.31)
Two features within this enclosure were of special interest. The large sub-circular ***pit 49002*** was at least 0.8m deep, although ground-water levels made full excavation impossible. One of a number of similar features from the peat margin (*e.g.* pit ***48051***, in the central peat-edge enclosure) it would have contained standing water, and was probably a reservoir fulfilling an industrial function. It had been infilled by a series of grey sandy silts, interspersed with sand horizons and peat deposits; peat deposit *40288* filled much its lower part. Twenty-two fragments of leather waste were recovered from silty sand layer *40276*. These were offcuts from the pattern-cutting of one-piece shoes, and included pieces of sheep/goat and cattle leather (Mould, Chapter 7, cat. 358). It is unclear if these indicated leather preparation or working nearby, or if they were simply refuse fortuitously preserved by waterlogging. Few other artefacts were found. The modest assemblage of pottery (580g/57 sherds) was composed entirely of grey wares (Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 192–198). The composition of the ceramic group, and the high levels of abrasion noted, suggested a late 2nd/early 3rd-century date.

Well 18016 lay in the damp, peaty south-eastern corner of the enclosure, only a very short distance to the west of the projected line of the north-to-south boundary ditch ***48007***. The shaft was 1.7m deep. Its timber lining had been packed into position with a mixed clay deposit containing gravel and large flints. The lining's design followed the

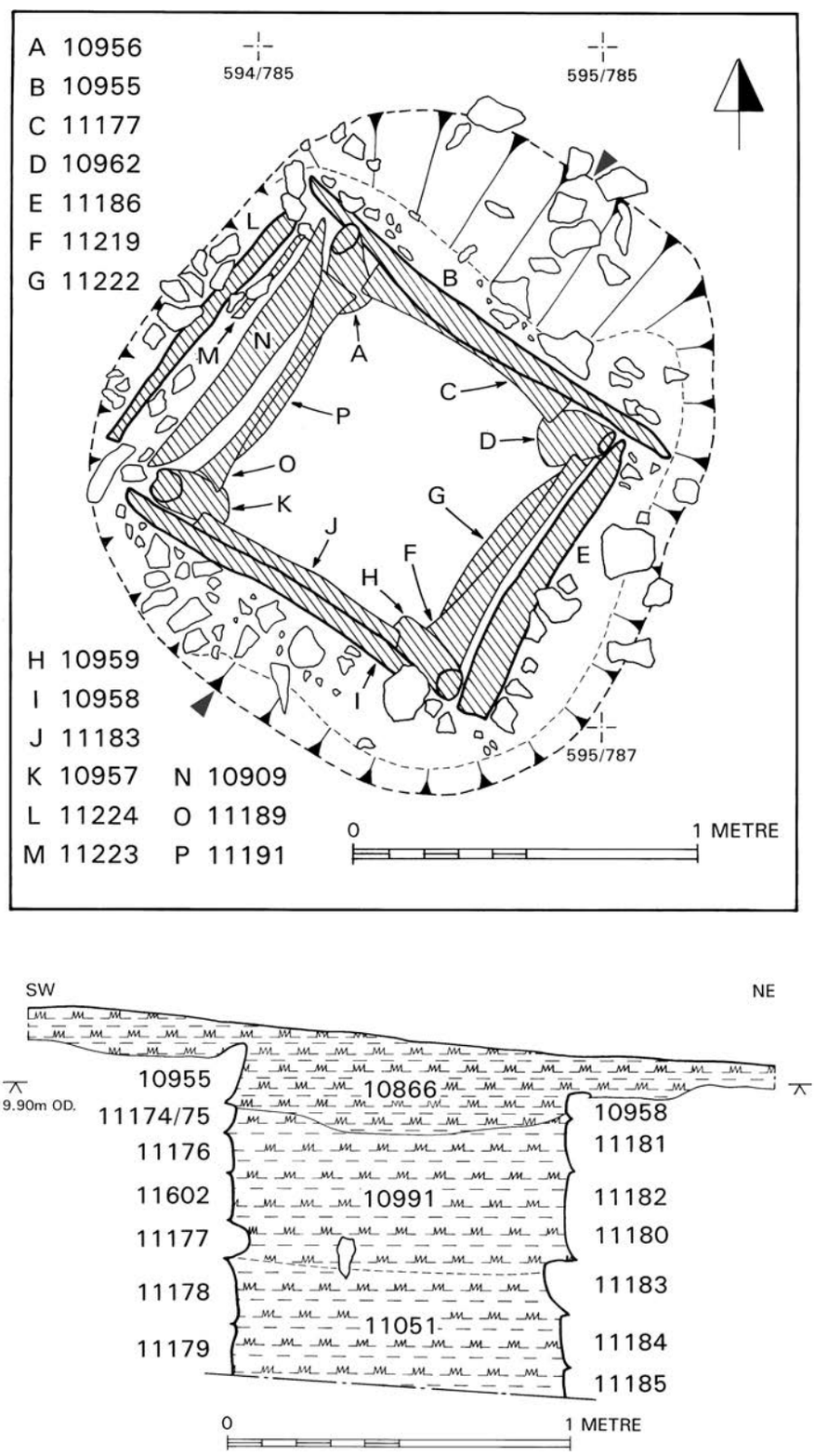


Figure 2.29 Phase 5A: well ***18016***, plan and section

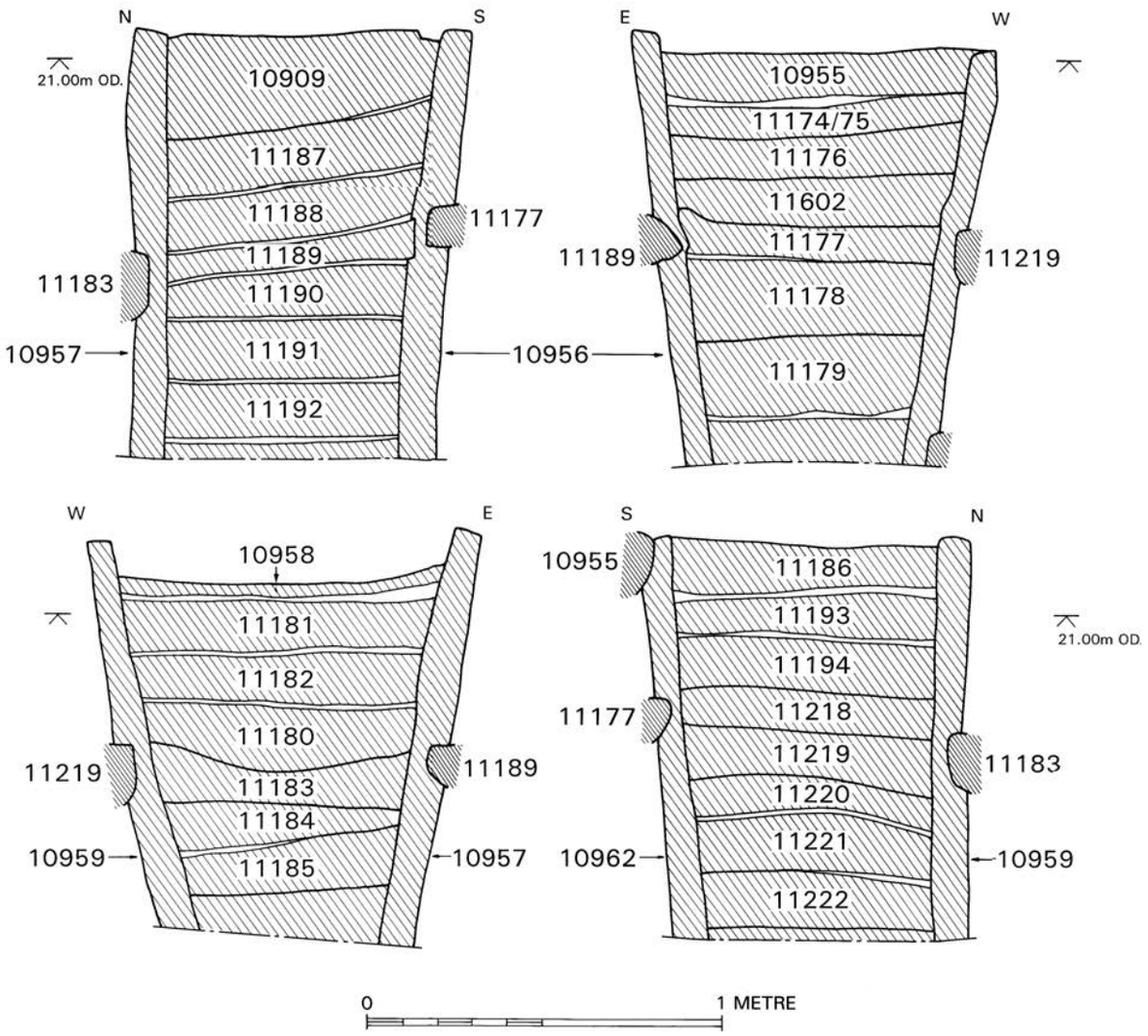


Figure 2.30 Phase 5A: well ***18016***, elevations

characteristic 'Scole' pattern, with squared corner-posts, planks and curved braces (Darrah, Chapter 8). It was, however, unusual in that the planks were cleft, re-used timbers which had not been nailed. The braces had been nailed to the corner-posts, so the packing deposit must have been introduced stage-by-stage as each plank was fitted. Most of the timber (although not all) was spring-felled oak. The braces had been hewn to their curved shape, although the laps on two had been sawn out. Since these joints had been countersunk but not nailed, it is possible that the timbers were reused components from a previous well. Their similarity with the timber used for the other braces, however, suggested that all the components were contemporaneous.

The shaft was mostly filled with silty peat layers, rich in brushwood fragments and containing many lenses of white sand. Palynological assessment (Wiltshire, Chapter 9) produced evidence of willow, lime and grassland plants, while pollen of ling was also present in the lowest fills examined. A lack of evidence for floating aquatic plant species suggested that the well had been kept covered or was regularly cleaned out. The water drawn from a well in this location would probably have been more brackish than that from the wells located to the north which had been cut through fine sands. The feature returned promptly to fulfilling its original function at every opportunity during the excavation (Plate 2.7).

Much leather scrap were collected from the shaft fill, along with an almost-complete pewter dish (Fig. 2.31; Cooper, Chapter 7, cat. 190). An assemblage of 1.97kg of pottery (147 sherds) included significant amounts of shell-tempered reduced ware (Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 129–144), but little fine ware. The vessels included two flanged dishes of later 3rd-century pattern and a 'late' mortarium in a white Oxfordshire fabric. Most of the pottery came from the middle and upper siltings. The lower peat contained 2nd- and 3rd-century material, including samian, Pakenham and Colchester colour coat sherds, and vessel forms of the mid 2nd century onward. Two large sherds of later 3rd- or 4th-century shell-tempered ware from this layer may indicate that the well remained open 'late', but these could have been intrusive pieces.

A group of flint-packed post-holes, ***18086***, immediately to the south of the well may have been connected with its use.

Central enclosure

(Figs 2.24, 2.32–2.34)

An extensive clayey spread, ***48018***, occupying much of the area was sealed by a later clay floor-surface ***48015*** (Phase 5B). This latter layer was interpreted as demolition debris, perhaps indicating the former presence of a building that was taken down sometime during the 3rd century. These deposits of sandy clay loam were up to 0.2m thick, and covered an area measuring *c*. 17m by 7m; the spread's southern part had been destroyed by a rectangular modern disturbance. The deposit contained much chalk, charcoal and fired clay (predominantly daub). The small pottery assemblage from the demolition horizon included samian and Nene Valley colour coat sherds, implying a date in the early or mid 3rd century for this event.

Large ***pit 48051*** lay near the centre of the enclosure, at the boundary between riverine peat and the drier ground to the north. Measuring 3.6m in diameter and 1m deep, it was filled with dark grey-brown silty sands which overlay a primary fill of grey-brown to brownish yellow sand. A layer of dark brown silty peat, *11017*, occurred at a depth of 0.6m; the deposits above this were rich in charcoal and small clay lumps. The lower fills represent both silting and dumping of charcoal-rich organic rubbish, followed by general backfilling. Palynological assessment (Wiltshire,

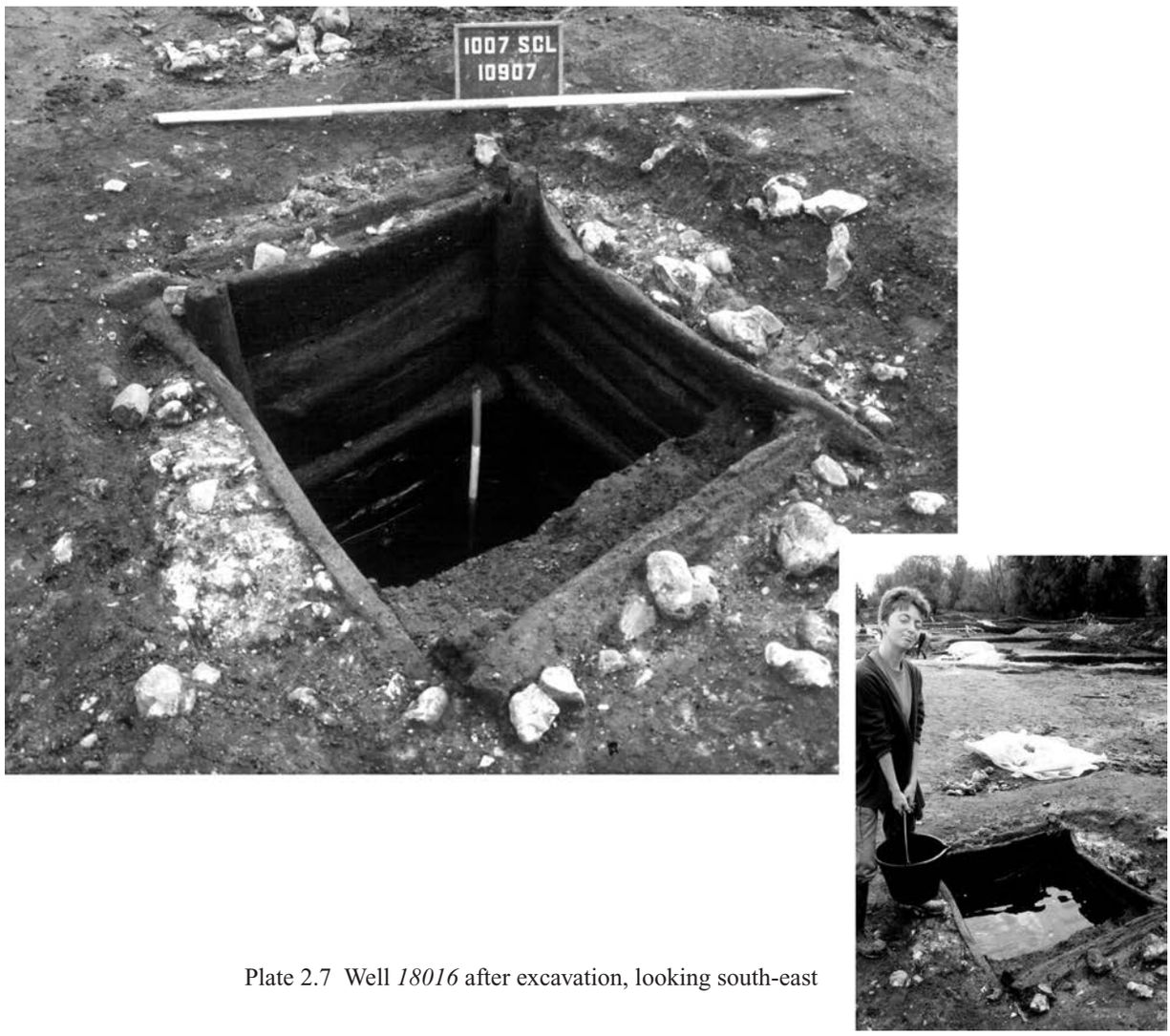


Plate 2.7 Well *18016* after excavation, looking south-east

Chapter 9) suggested that it lay in an area of open grassland, with heathland vegetation close by. Large quantities of cereal and oak pollen were collected from its basal fills. Analysis of insect remains identified species that would have thrived in weedy open ground or on decaying timber and organic matter (Robinson, Chapter 9); woodworm beetle is suggestive of nearby structures. These environmental studies showed that the base of the pit had once contained organically-enriched stagnant water.

This feature resembled pit ***49002*** in the western peat-edge enclosure. Wiltshire has suggested that the oak pollen indicates tanning, although it is also possible that it represents dumped carpentry waste (particularly bark, which is a prime source of oak pollen). An assemblage of 1.8kg of pottery (116 sherds) included significant amounts of fine grog grey ware but finewares were unrepresented. Sherds from the primary fill may be attributed to the late 1st to the 3rd centuries, while the assemblage from the upper deposits may have dated to the mid 2nd century.

A hearth complex, ***49007***, located close to the eastern edge of the enclosure, saw only limited excavation.

Eastern enclosure
(Figs 2.24, 2.33–2.37)

The fact that no other ditch or boundary feature was identified in the area to the east of ditch ***18002***, suggested that this land-division occupied at least 25m of the southern road-frontage. While the absence of features from the area alongside the eastern limit of the excavation was striking, this may reflect difficulties with flooding at the time of excavation rather than constituting real negative evidence.

The south-western part of this land-division was occupied by the pre-existing Phase 3 roundhouse ***18000***. Although only a small proportion of this feature was actually excavated (pp31–4) the pottery assemblage implied that it was still in use — or, at the very least, that activity persisted here — during the later 2nd and early 3rd centuries. The Phase 4 infant burial ***18056*** lay very close to the likely south-west

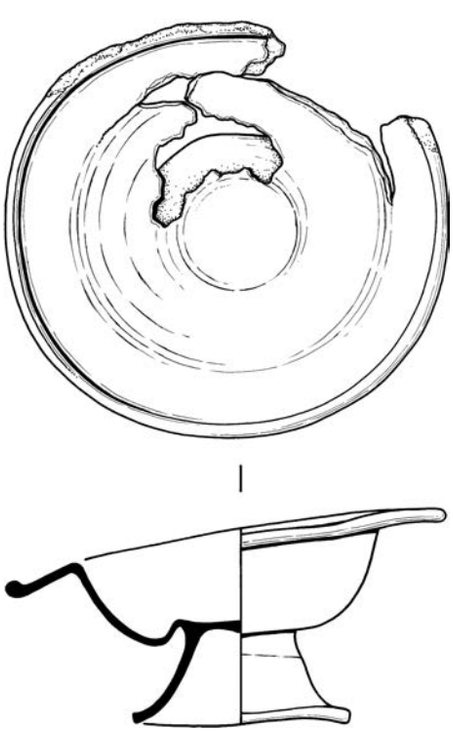


Figure 2.31 Pewter dish from the fill of well *18016*, fill *11051* (for details see Chapter 7, cat. 190). Scale 1:2

corner of the enclosure; the subsequent location here of a group of urned cremations ***18050*** (Phase 5A) and adjacent midden-like deposit ***18100*** (Phase 5B) suggested that the funerary significance of this area persisted through the 2nd century and into the 3rd.

Cremations 18050 and adjacent features

Cremations *18050* were seven in number (Figs 2.33 and 2.34). They lay between 1m and 4m to the south of the Phase 4 infant inhumation ***18056***, in and around a broad 'causeway' across the main peat-edge drainage ditches which may well have been an important access route to the unoccupied river-margin area. Five of the seven cremations were interred within upright urns. Their stratigraphic relationship with the southern edge of the 'midden' deposit ***18100*** — whose southern edge impinged upon two of the more northerly cremations — was not recorded with certainty, but at least one of the cremations (*11605*) was apparently sealed by the midden. Lyons's attribution of the substantial pottery assemblage from the overlying midden to the 3rd century (Chapter 6) has led to this latter feature being regarded as significantly later than the cremations, being assigned to Phase 5B.

Four of the cremations were of adult males (McKinley, Chapter 9). The remains of a juvenile male had been deposited alongside three of the adult male cremations, while two adult female cremations had been interred together in a shallow pit a little to the south-west of the main group.

Two of the urns were in fine grog grey ware (Fig. 2.34; Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 145–149); a small Pakenham colour coat beaker and the base of a grey fine ware vessel were also found. Five of the six vessel-types identified occurred as a cremation container; one medium-mouthed jar was not used to hold a cremation but had been included within an un-urned deposit. Each of the vessels was different, although some patterns of selection may be identified. Four out of the five cremation vessels were of grey ware. Two of these were of fine grogged grey ware, one of them deliberately damaged by piercing. Another was a colour-coated fine ware beaker; an indented example with roughcast decoration which would have been made locally at Pakenham, this contained the cremated remains of a child.

It appears that the north-to-south ***stake-hole alignment 18038***, observed after the excavation of the overlying midden deposit ***18100***

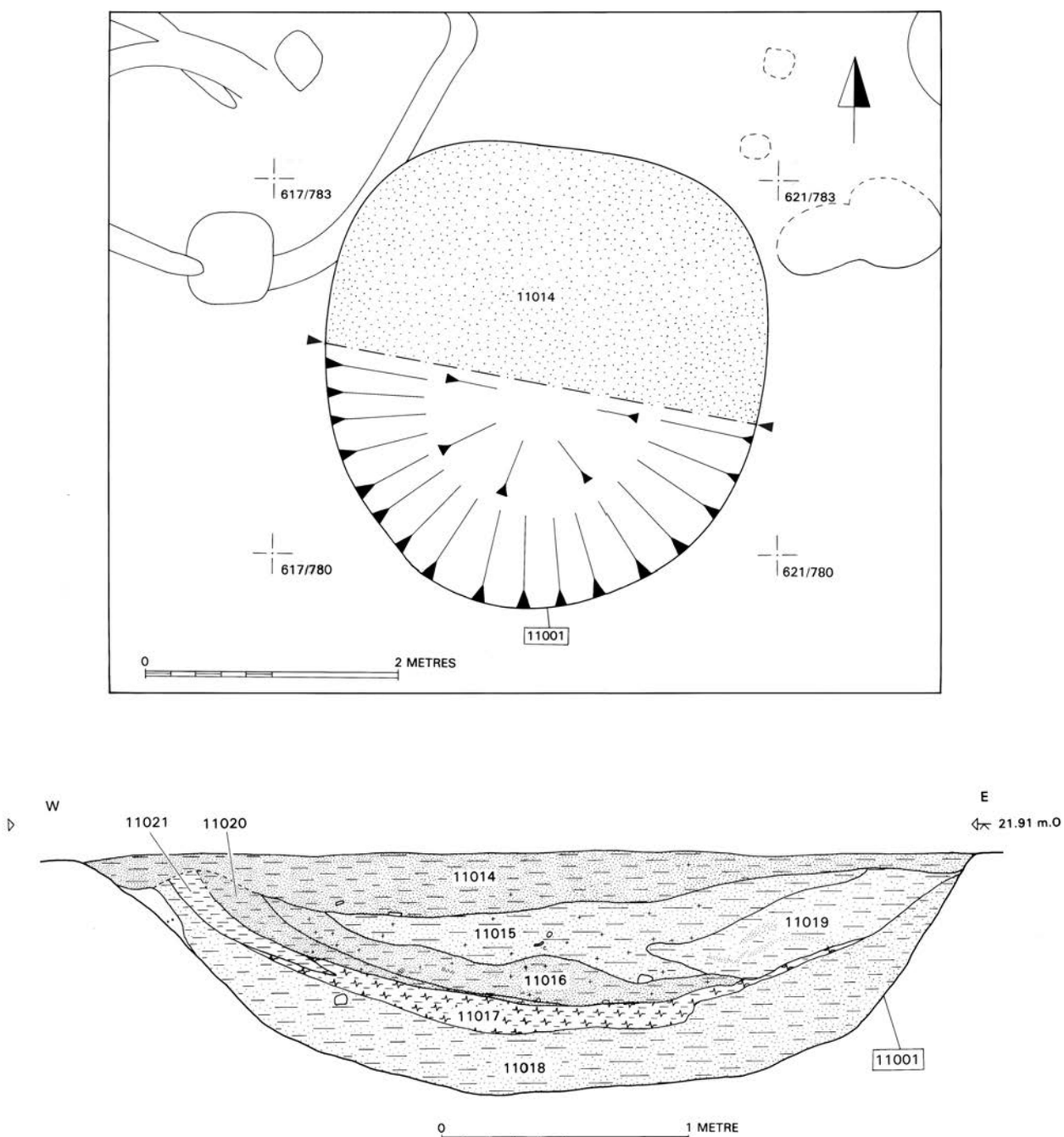


Figure 2.32 Phase 5A: pit *48051* (cut context no. *11001*), plan and section

(Phase 5B), separated the cremations from the (still-extant?) Phase 3 roundhouse ***18000*** further to the east (Fig. 2.33). This may have been established before the Phase 3 enclosure ditch ***18031*** (p.34) had fully infilled. The recorded features were closely but somewhat irregularly spaced. Heavy local root-disturbance may have hindered identification of individual stake-holes, and some of the smaller examples excavated and recorded as such were probably root-holes. The pointed tips of poorly-preserved wooden stakes were found in the bases of three of the holes, however. Two larger post-holes at the southern end of the stake-line have been included because they follow the precise alignment of the feature and also contained wood fragments. It is suggested that the later (Phase 5B) midden deposit ***18100*** had sealed the stake-line after the stakes had been either broken off or removed. While the stake-line was not closely datable using artefactual or stratigraphic evidence, a later 2nd–3rd-century date was suggested by the manner in which it bisected the causeway separating the major peat-edge ditches ***18008*** and ***18009***, both of which were assigned to Phase 5A.

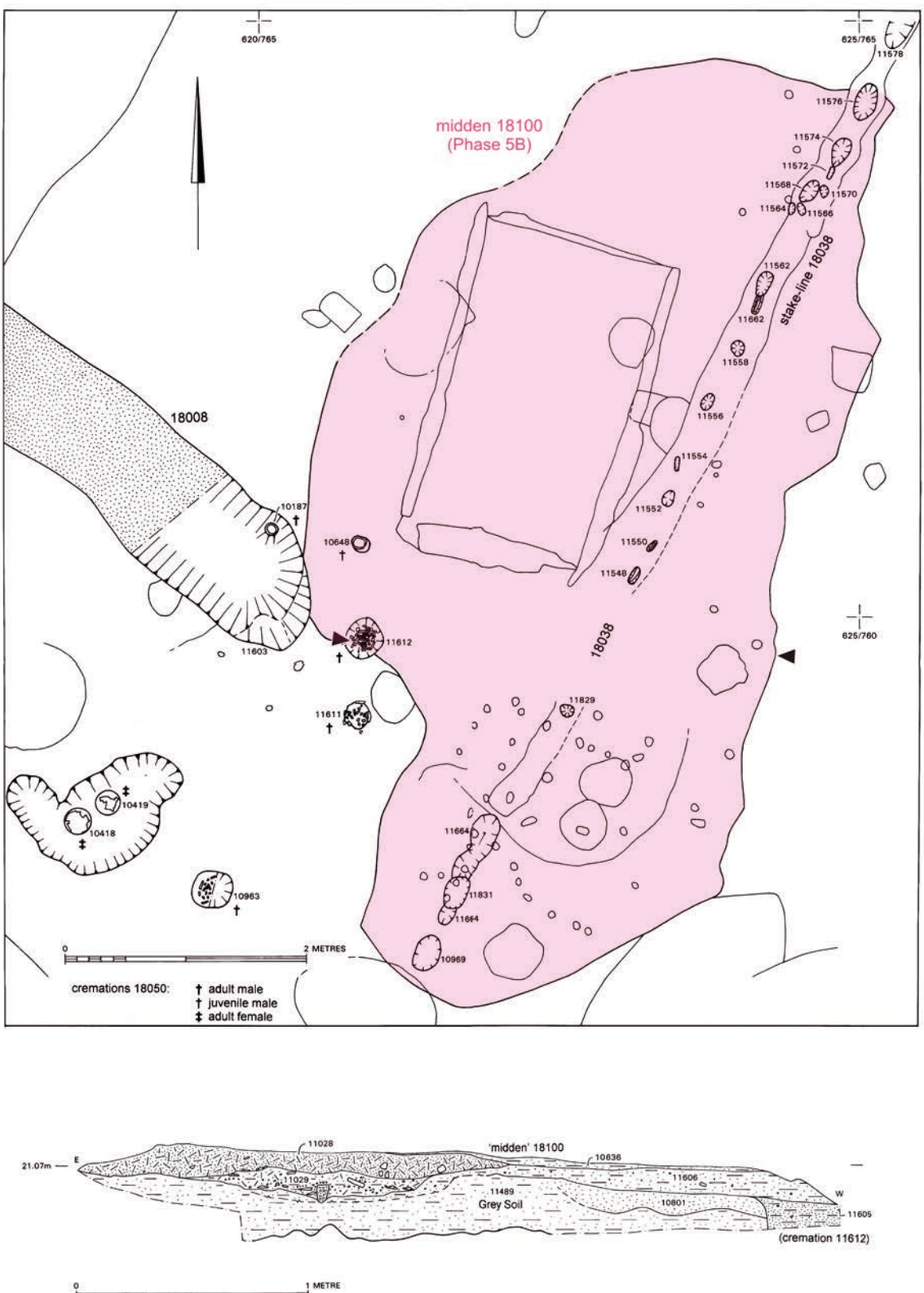


Figure 2.33 Phase 5A: cremations ***18050***, 'midden' *18100* (Phase 5B: coloured shading), plan and north-facing section

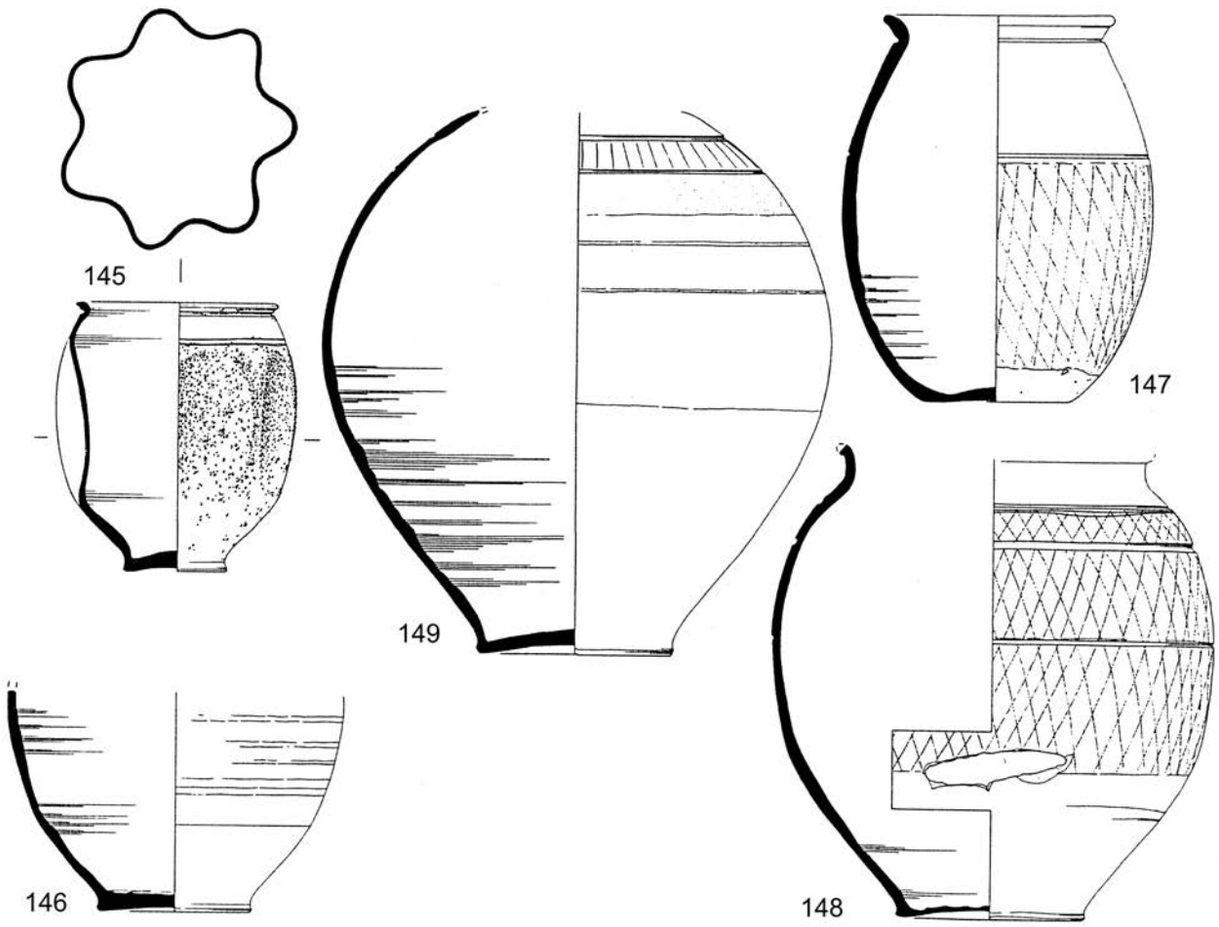


Figure 2.34 Cremations ***18050***, vessels (for catalogue descriptions, see Chapter 6). Scale 1:4

Other features

Relatively few other features within this enclosure clearly originated during Phase 5A, although a group of eight post-holes or small pits was exposed by the removal of the overlying clay-floored structure ***48071*** (Phase 5B; p.87).

Only two of the four component features of pit group ***49014*** were excavated. Both of these were flat-based and were 0.35m deep. The 'greenish' hue of one of the pits' lower fills suggested the presence of organic waste or cess. The assemblage of 17.77kg of pottery (208 sherds) retrieved was dominated — most unusually — by amphora (16.68kg/153 sherds) rather than by grey wares. However, the amphora sherds were from a single globular Dressel type 20 vessel of Spanish origin, approximately half of which was recovered. The assemblage as a whole suggests a late 2nd–3rd-century date.

A rather different circular feature lay a short distance to the west of pit group ***49014***. ***Pit 49015*** was 1m in diameter and 0.7m deep (Fig. 2.35). Its vertical sides had been revetted with a series of planks and stakes, the bases of which had been driven into the pit base. The general condition of the surviving timber was poor (Darrah, Chapter 8). The stakes ranged between 0.24m and 0.8m in length and were 0.05m–0.09m in diameter, while the planks varied between 0.27m and 0.64m in length and were 0.06m–0.11m wide. One stake retained for detailed examination had been radially cleft; sections across some of the other stakes suggested that this was common to all of them. Because of the poor preservation of the wood, it was impossible to tell whether the planks had been split or sawn. A deposit of mid-brown silty sand had been dumped behind the stake revetment, presumably as a packing. The primary fill of the pit was a yellowish-brown sand; above this layers of pale to mid yellowish-brown sand and clay laminations had accumulated, before the pit had been backfilled with a deposit of dark brown silty clay. The 90g of pottery (12 sherds) collected, all from backfill deposits, suggested a date between the late 2nd and late 3rd centuries.

Wiltshire (Chapter 9) describes palynological analysis of the filling deposits in detail. Palynomorphs from the primary fills suggested the presence of grasses, riverside trees and heathland vegetation such as ling and bracken. A lack of iron pyrites indicated that the pit was probably kept clean and free of organic waste. The middle fills of the pit contained relatively few palynomorphs; these, however, represented a great variety of woodland and shrub taxa, along with damp-loving plants such as sedge and docks. Cereal pollen was common, as were plants such as cornflower associated with arable fields. Aquatic plants were identified in the upper part of this fill-zone along with pollen of grape and hemp, both seldom recorded in Roman Britain.

It seems most likely that this pit was excavated as a source of fresh water, either for use during agricultural processing or for some industrial purpose. The presence of grape pollen suggests viticulture nearby, since vines only produce pollen in very small quantities.

The road and roadside

(Plates 2.8 and 2.9; Figs 2.24, 2.26, 2.36–2.42)

General

Although it was clear that the two roadside ditches were still maintained as open features along most of their lengths during the late 2nd/early 3rd centuries, this period saw some encroachment upon the margins of the east-to-west road corridor by buildings and other features. Along the southern roadside, the post-hole alignments marking the northern limits of the central and western peat-edge enclosures were both located up to 3m to the north of the line of roadside ditch ***48008***. On the northern roadside, buildings ***38031*** and ***38054*** excavated by Moss and the post-hole structure ***38029*** immediately to its east were all

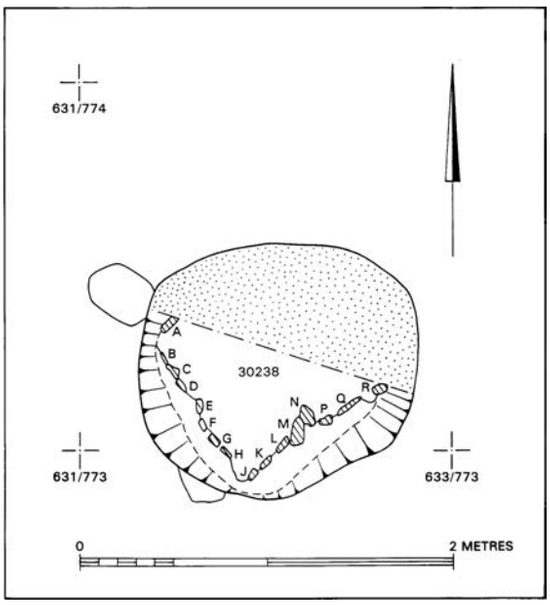


Figure 2.35 Phase 5A, pit ***49015***, plan

built over lengths of roadside ditch which had been deliberately backfilled during the later 2nd century. An apparent coincidence between the road metalling's western limit and the siting of other Phase 5A features including building ***38031*** and the boundary of the eastern and central peat-edge enclosures — raises the possibility that the metalling itself was also laid down at this time, rather than at the time of the road's initial definition. In the absence of clear dating evidence for the metalling itself, however (pp36–7), this should not be given too much weight.

Cremations *48083*
(Plate 2.8; Figs 2.36 and 2.37)
Three urned cremations overlay a layer of charcoal-rich soil recorded in the upper fill of the southern roadside ditch ***48008***. Their location coincided with the western termination of the road metalling, and also

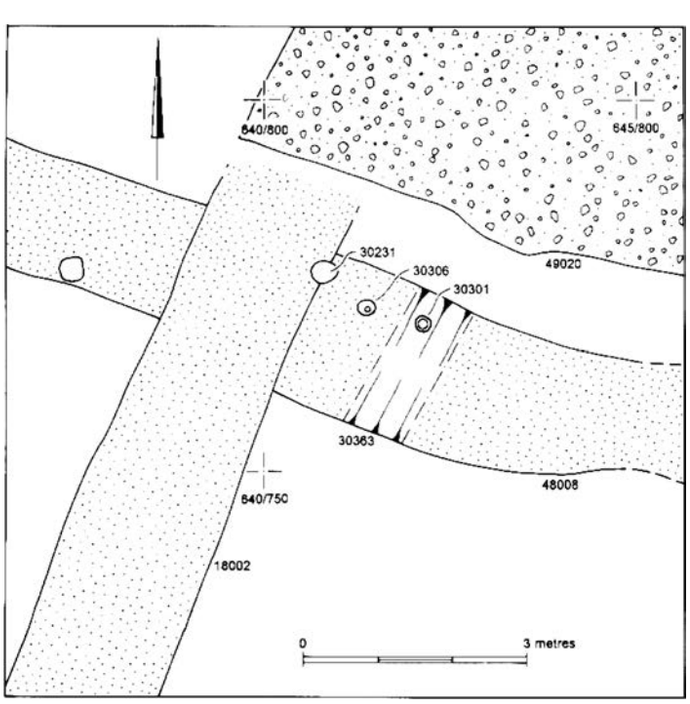


Figure 2.36 Phase 5A: cremations ***48083***, plan

with the boundary ditch separating the central and eastern peat-edge enclosures. *Cremation 30231* was of an older adult, probably male (McKinley, Chapter 9), and had been interred within a heavily-damaged Wattisfield grey ware pot of unidentifiable form. *Cremation 30301* representing an adult male lay within a slightly-damaged Wattisfield grey ware jar. *Cremation 30306* was of an older mature adult, possibly female, within a Wattisfield grey ware jar which had been deliberately punctured at the shoulder.

Only a small proportion of the roadside ditch was excavated hereabouts, and it possible that other cremations within its fills were not identified (although no cremations were seen in any of the other excavated segments). Of the Wattisfield-type vessels containing cremations, one (cremation *30301*) was carinated and wide-mouthed while another (cremation *30306*: Plate 2.8) was narrow-mouthed; the third vessel's form was unclear (Fig. 2.37; Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 189–191). Narrow-mouthed jars are not often found as cremation vessels, maybe due to the difficulty or discomfort that may have been involved in inserting hot bone fragments (some of them over 10mm long) through a constricted opening. The narrow-mouthed vessel bore areas of burnished decoration and two cordons of criss-cross burnish on its shoulder; the puncture on its neck may indicate deliberate damage of ritual or symbolic significance. Wide-mouthed jars are not common as cremation receptacles either; the vessel containing cremation *30301* was decorated with narrow burnished bands and also bore 'slashed' damage to its body which may have been inflicted deliberately.

Well *38000* and adjacent features
(Plate 2.9; Figs 2.38–2.41)
In contrast with most of the other wells, ***well 38000*** was not clearly associated with any one structure or enclosure but was situated on the northern roadside. The shaft was approximately 1.7m deep; although the upper part of the timber lining had been lost to decay and collapse, waterlogging had preserved the lower *c*. 1.1m of its height exceptionally well.

The lining measured 0.73m square and was built of planks and braces nailed to the backs of four squared oak corner-posts. The structure had been strengthened by means of a series of curved braces, which had been lapped around the inner side and back of the corner-posts and then into position (Fig. 2.40); this method of construction was similar to that seen in the wells excavated by Rogerson in 1973. Three of the corner-posts had flat bottoms, while the fourth featured a felling cut; there was no indication that the corner-posts had been hammered into the

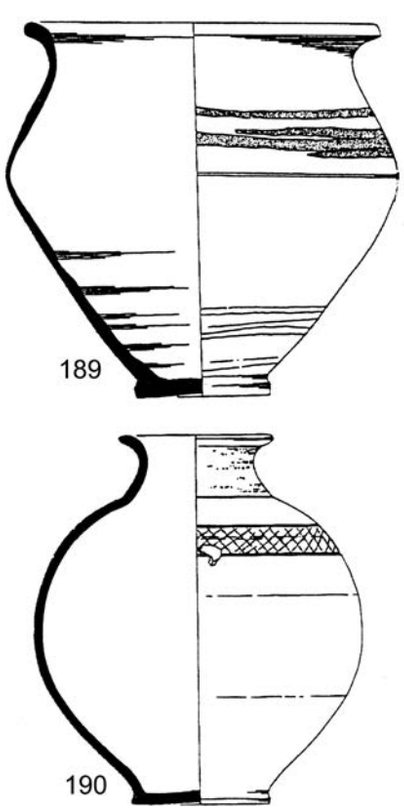


Figure 2.37 Cremations ***48083***, vessels (for catalogue descriptions, see Chapter 6). Scale 1:4

Plate 2.8 Cremation group ***48083***: cremation *30306*, as discovered in upper fill of Phase 4 roadside ditch, looking east. Damage to shoulder of the pot is clearly visible

base of the well. The basal horizontal timbers were unattached spacers, showing that the frame had been fabricated *in situ*. The way in which the planks had been nailed into the backs of the corner-posts necessitated the well-pit being considerably larger than the frame itself to allow the hammer to be swung. The presence both of countersunk nail-holes and of *un*countersunk examples (some of them containing bent nails) suggested that some re-nailing of planks took place during construction. It is unclear if the countersunk nail-holes had been pre-drilled. The lowest nail was recorded only 0.07m above the base of the well-lining, and had probably been nailed in underwater. All of the timbers had been sawn from fast-grown oak trees, and axe-blade marks survived on some felling-cuts. The use of timber seemed highly efficient, suggesting either that the trees had been specially selected or that large stocks of timber were available. No timbers had been re-used.

The well-lining had been packed in position with a brownish-yellow sand deposit, sealed by a layer of yellow clay, sand and flint which formed a solid ground-surface around the edge. The timber-lined shaft's primary fill was a dark brown sandy silt; above its base it had been backfilled deliberately with a series of grey-brown clay sand layers. Many nail fragments, presumably relics of the decayed upper lining,

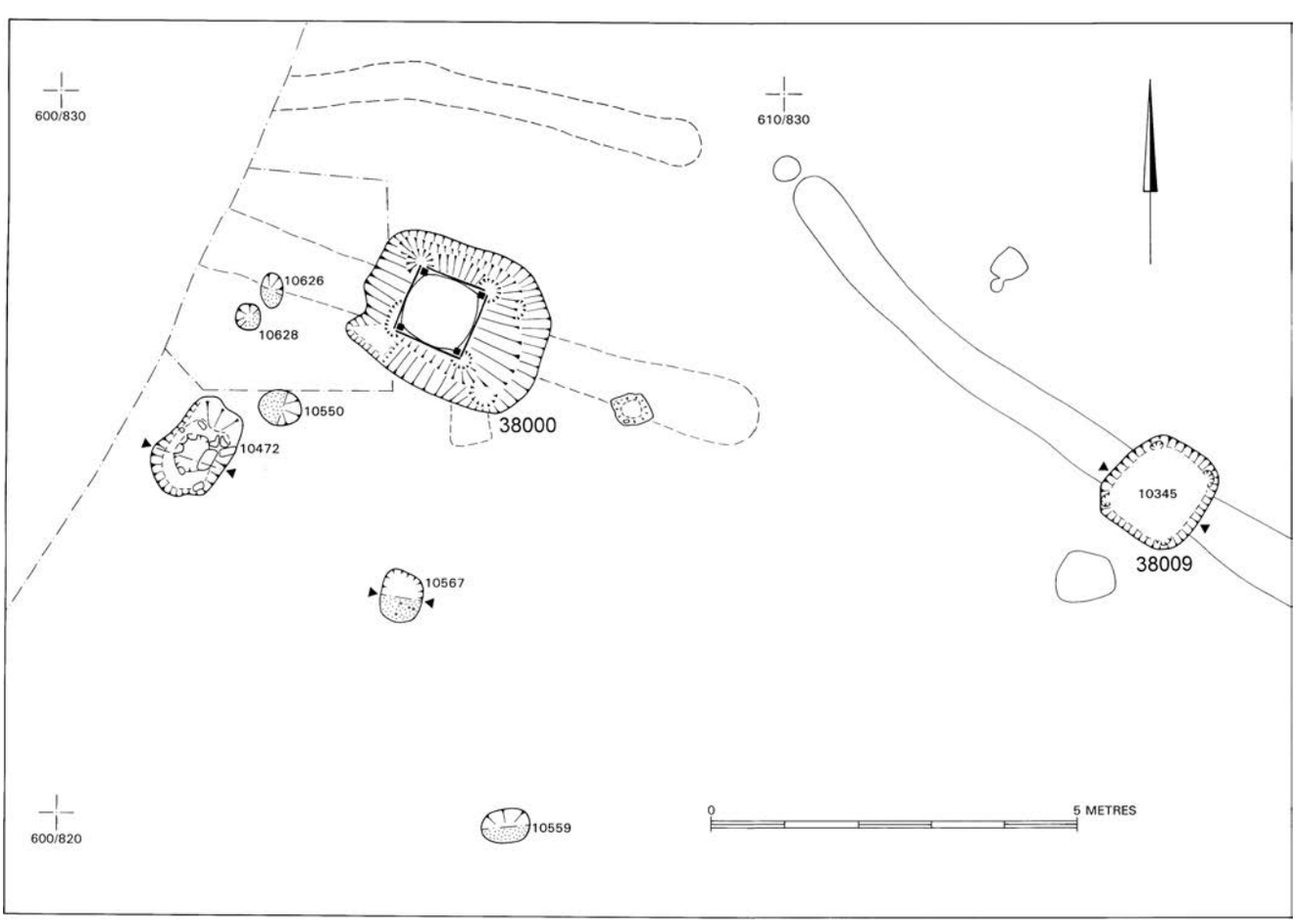


Figure 2.38 Phase 5A: well ***38000*** and adjacent features, plan

were found. Other finds included several fragments of leather, including eight pieces of fine leather thonging and a worn fragment of the base of a shoe (Mould, Chapter 7). Palynological assessment revealed little pollen except in the bottom siltings of the well (Wiltshire, Chapter 9); this lack of evidence might indicate that the well was covered or that it had been regularly cleaned out.

The pottery assemblage suggested continuous or intermittent use over a period of up to two hundred years. A total of 3.153kg (174 sherds), in twelve fabrics, was recovered from both shaft fills and packing material (Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 150–171). Fine grog and grey wares were found in significant quantities, while samian and small amounts of Nene Valley colour coat were also retrieved. Two later Roman fabrics were noted, Oxfordshire red colour coat material and a single sherd of white Oxfordshire mortarium. The construction and packing deposits contained sherds consistent with a date in the mid 2nd century or later. The primary silting of the shaft produced samian sherds datable to the late 2nd or early 3rd centuries; the upper fillings yielded 4th-century fabrics and forms, although the abraded condition of many of these sherds implied that they were not deposited here until near the end of that century.

Five post-holes excavated in the vicinity of well ***38000*** were assigned tentatively to Phase 5A (Figs 2.38 and 2.41). Much the largest was sub-rectangular ***post-hole 38001***, 1.8m to the south-west. Surviving to a depth of 0.6m, the ghost of a timber upright *c.* 0.4m in diameter was surrounded by a packing deposit of yellow brown clay and flint. This feature has no obvious parallel amongst other excavated post-holes at Scole, although the closeness of the excavation limits makes it uncertain it was an isolated feature. This group of cuts might indicate the presence of a timber structure which contained or roofed the well. Alternatively, the upright contained by the large post-hole ***38001*** might have had a special function, as a tethering-post or possibly even as a lamp-standard or other item of street furniture The feature's roadside location close to the western limit of the road-metalling — already suggested as the western limit of the settlement proper in this period — makes it conceivable that it supported a sign or boundary-marker. The single sherd of pottery recovered from post-hole ***38001*** was not closely datable, but the post-impression fill contained a coin of the House of Constantine dated to AD 330–335.

Approximately 8m to the east of well ***38000*** lay an isolated feature 0.9m deep, ***pit 38008***. A circular post-hole up to 0.6m deep was recorded in each corner. There was evidence for at least one 'recut', and it is possible that the pit saw many cleanings-out. It was filled with mixed dark grey and grey-brown loamy sand deposits; the primary fill of the 'recut' was a highly organic deposit. The abandoned feature appears to have been capped with compact yellow-brown clay. This was possibly a latrine sited in a public location on the northern roadside, although no environmental analyses took place to confirm this hypothesis. Only a small amount of pottery (228g/22 sherds) was recovered, the collection as a whole resembling a small kitchen/tableware assemblage of the mid 2nd to early 3rd centuries.

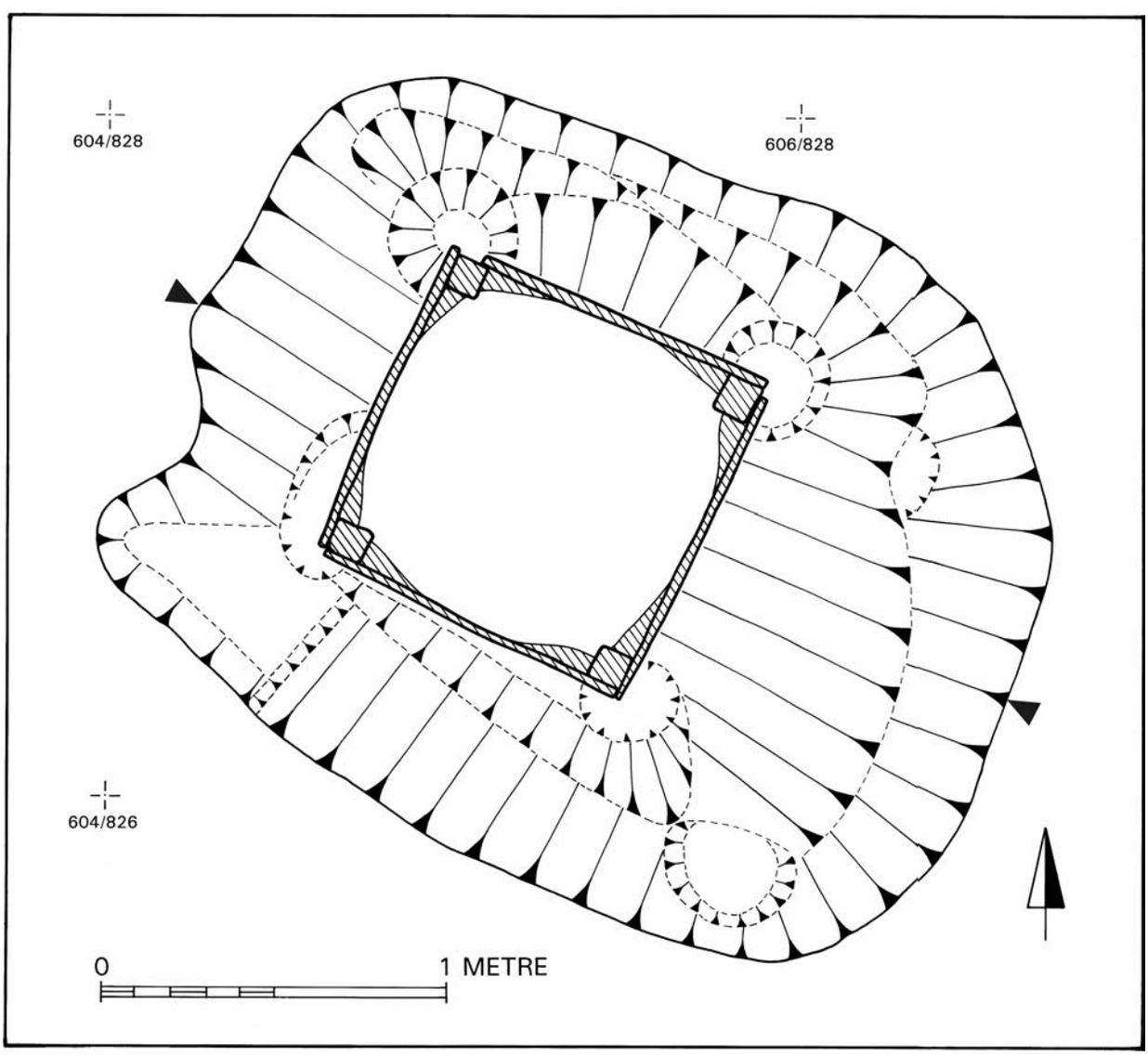
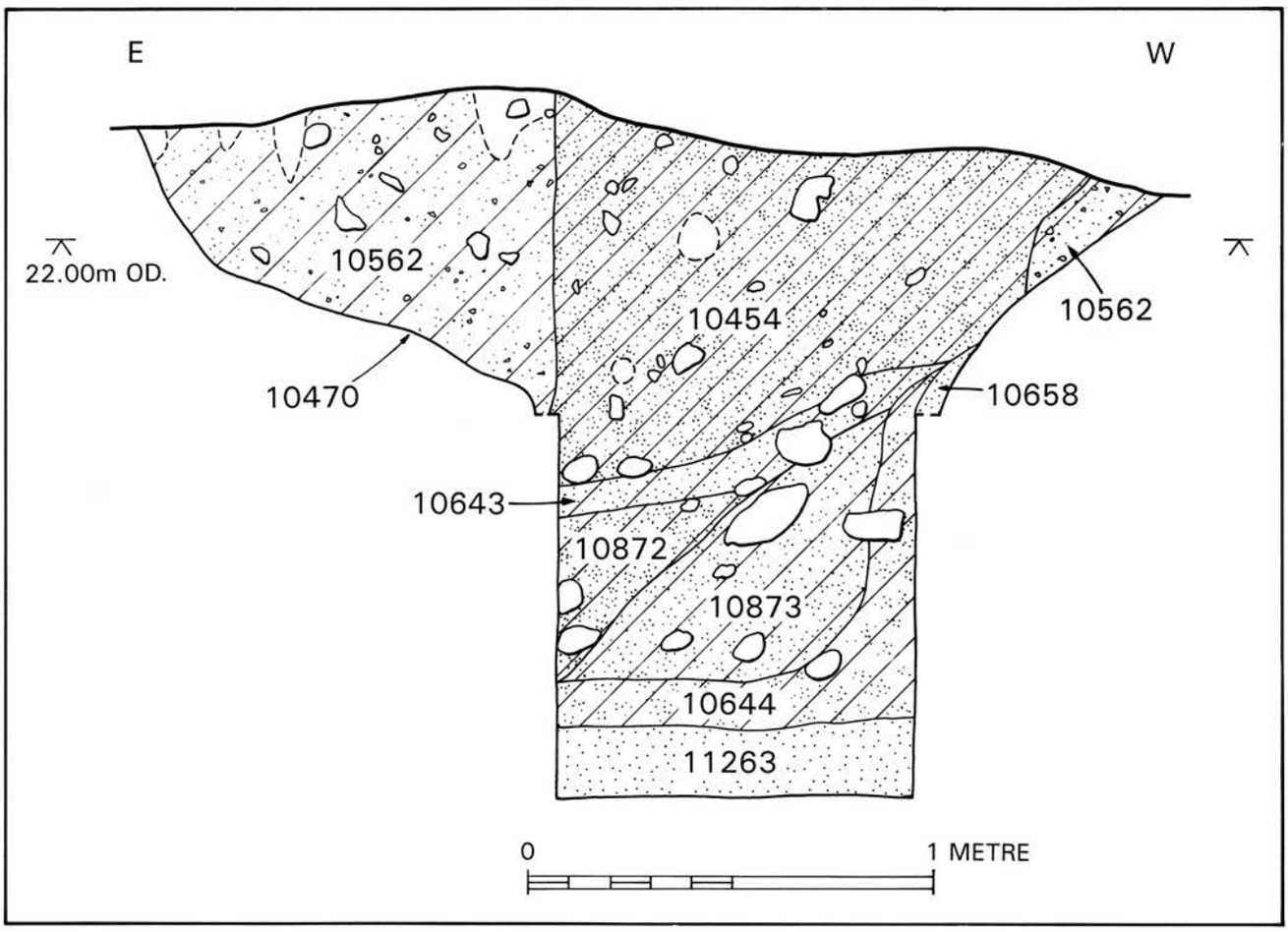
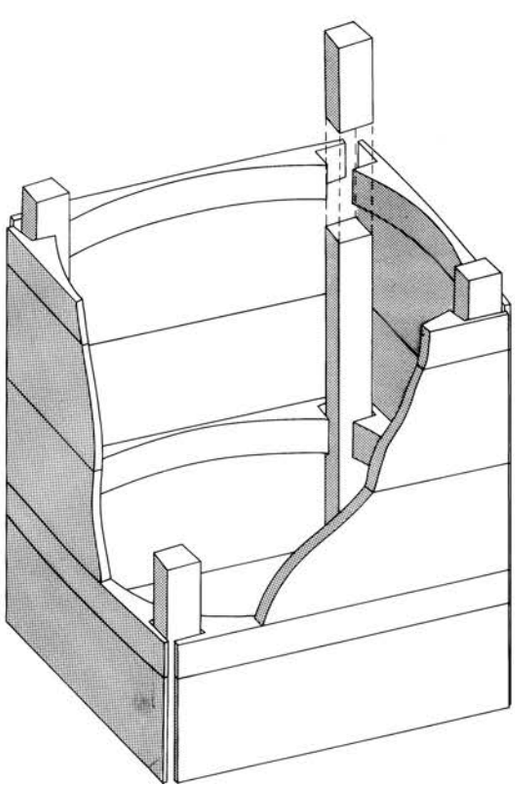


Figure 2.39 Phase 5A: well ***38000***, plan





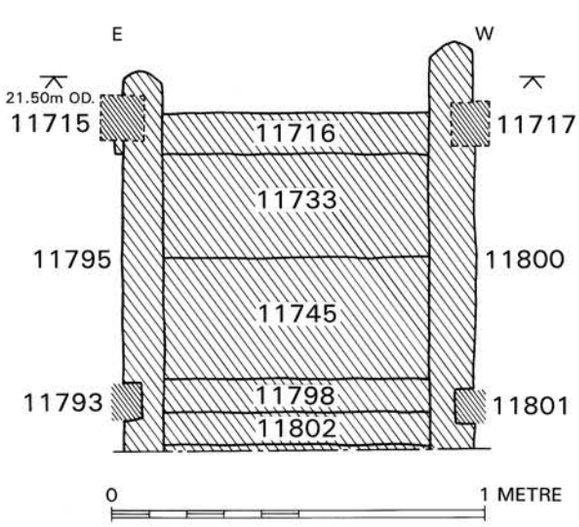
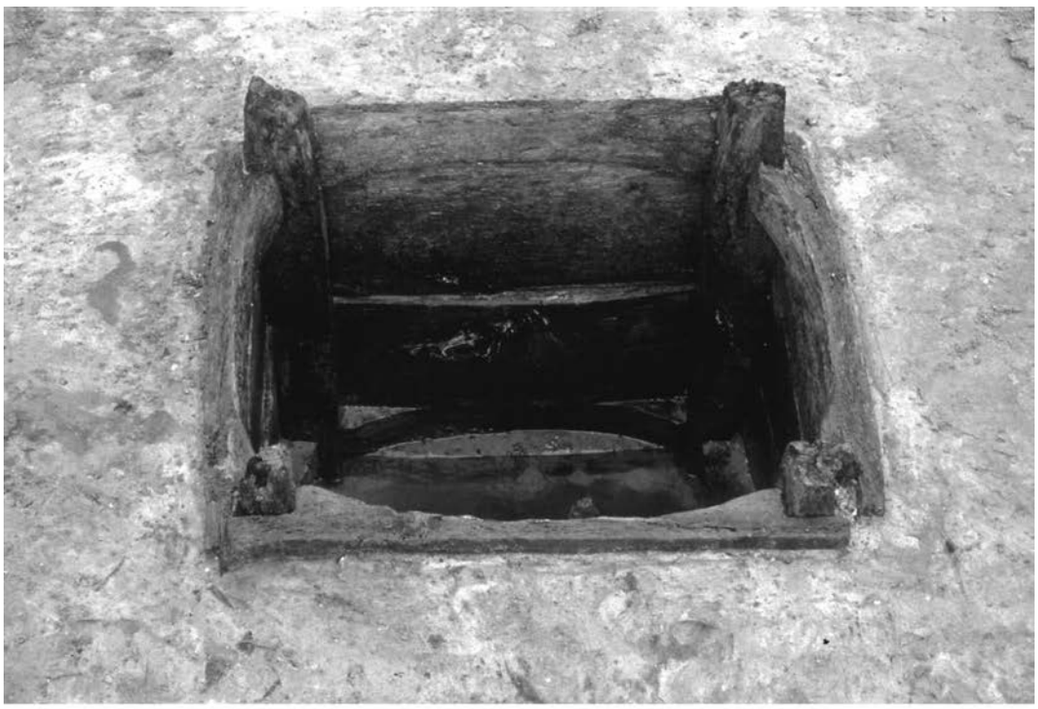


Figure 2.40 Phase 5A: well ***38000***, north-facing section, west-facing elevation and isometric reconstruction



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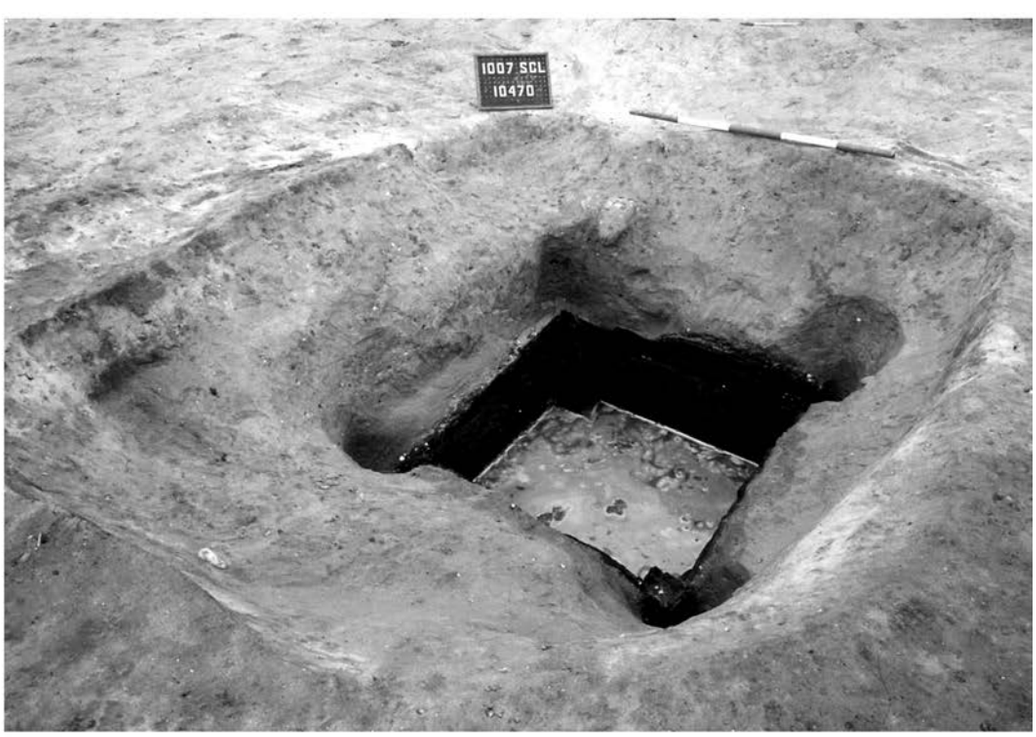


b

Plate 2.9 Well ***38000*** after excavation, looking south-east:
a – showing upper level of preserved shaft lining, looking south;
b – after removal of upper lining components, looking south-east

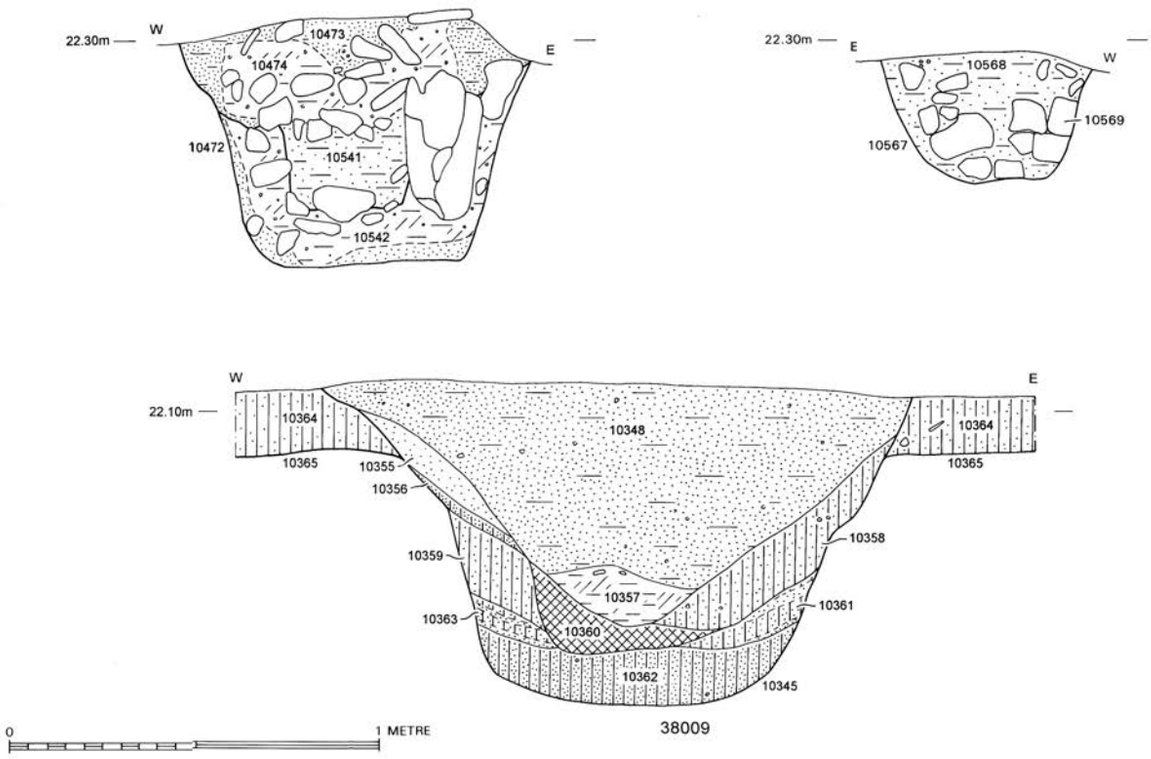


Figure 2.41 Phase 5A: post-holes *38001* and *10567*, pit *38008*, sections

Activity north of the road
(Plates 2.10–2.14; Figs 2.24, 2.42–2.53)

General
The ?porticoed building ***38031*** excavated by Geoffrey Moss has been assigned to this phase, along with its neighbours ***38015*** and ***38029*** which were excavated by the NAU in 1993. Although the pattern has been confused in places by later disturbance, by Moss's trenching, and by the fact that certain areas north of the road frontage which might have yielded significant evidence were not excavated in 1993, each of these structures may have been the focus of a land-division fronting onto the road. In the cases of structures ***38015*** and ***38029***, these property divisions may have extended back 20m or more from the roadside, with a timber-lined well situated towards the rear of each. Situated in between these two structures, the more substantial building ***38031*** may have occupied the southern frontage of an altogether larger plot, at least 20m wide and defined by a spread of pits and other features extending back over 35m. In contrast to the roadside well ***38000***, the wells to the north of the road may have been for the use of the structures' occupants or for those working within each enclosure.

Evidence for activity in the northernmost part of the site during Period 5A remained sparse, as was the case in previous Phases. An outlying well (***28010***) had no obvious context, although it is possible that contemporary features lay concealed beyond the limit of excavation nearby.

Structure *48094* and adjacent features
(Fig. 2.24)
Excavation of one of the preliminary 5m x 5m trial trenches to the west of the main excavation area, sited to the north of the road-line and *c*.35m west of well ***38000***, revealed part of a post-hole building, ***structure 48094***. This was represented by at least five structural post-holes. A series of fifteen possible stake-holes was composed of much less substantial features, the deepest of them only 0.1m deep, which were filled with similar deposits. The post-holes probably formed the corner of a clay-floored structure enclosing a fired clay 'hearth' with an accompanying pit filled with burnt debris. A distinctive deposit of Dark Earth (Macphail *et al*., Chapter 9) sealed the complex.

Only one sherd of pottery, post-dating the mid 2nd century, was recovered from the post-holes themselves. A relatively large quantity of pottery was recovered from the lining of the hearth, however, and this assemblage may be dated to the mid 2nd to 3rd centuries.

Structure *38015* and adjacent features
(Fig. 2.24)
Situated immediately to the north of roadside ditch and 18m to the west of the structures excavated by Moss, ***structure 38015*** was represented by a series of clay deposits, and perhaps also by three post-holes lying *c*. 5m further to the west. A number of compact clay deposits — up to 0.7m wide and 0.15m thick, and best interpreted either as post-pads or as *in situ* remnants of a clay floor — were contained within an extensive spread of brown clay silt, which was up to 0.2m thick and contained some flint. This silty deposit was probably an admixture of demolition debris and Grey Soil material. A very shallow north-to-south aligned gully is best interpreted as a component beam-slot forming part of the structure itself. Finds were sparse. The largest item in a pottery collection of 404g (11 sherds) was a samian sherd which was stamped and incised on its base with a post-firing graffito of four evenly-spaced lines (Lyons, Chapter 6), from one of the smaller clay patches. The assemblage suggested that the clay material had been demolished by the late 2nd–mid 3rd century.

This building may have been a precursor of the later clay-floored structures ***38028*** and ***38051*** erected immediately to its east during the 4th century (Phase 6). Its dimensions are not clear. It is uncertain whether the adjacent section of roadside ditch ***28003*** was open or maintained at this time, or whether the structure extended over its line at any point. The 'angle' of the ditch a short distance further to the west had been infilled in the later 3rd century; this may have occurred after — or when — the structure was demolished.

Well 38018 (Fig. 2.42) was situated approximately 20m to the north of the northern roadside ditch. A number of unremarkable pits lay in the area immediately to its east and north-east; the well's southern and western environs lay beyond the excavation limits, and little of the area that separated the well from its possible companion structure ***38015***

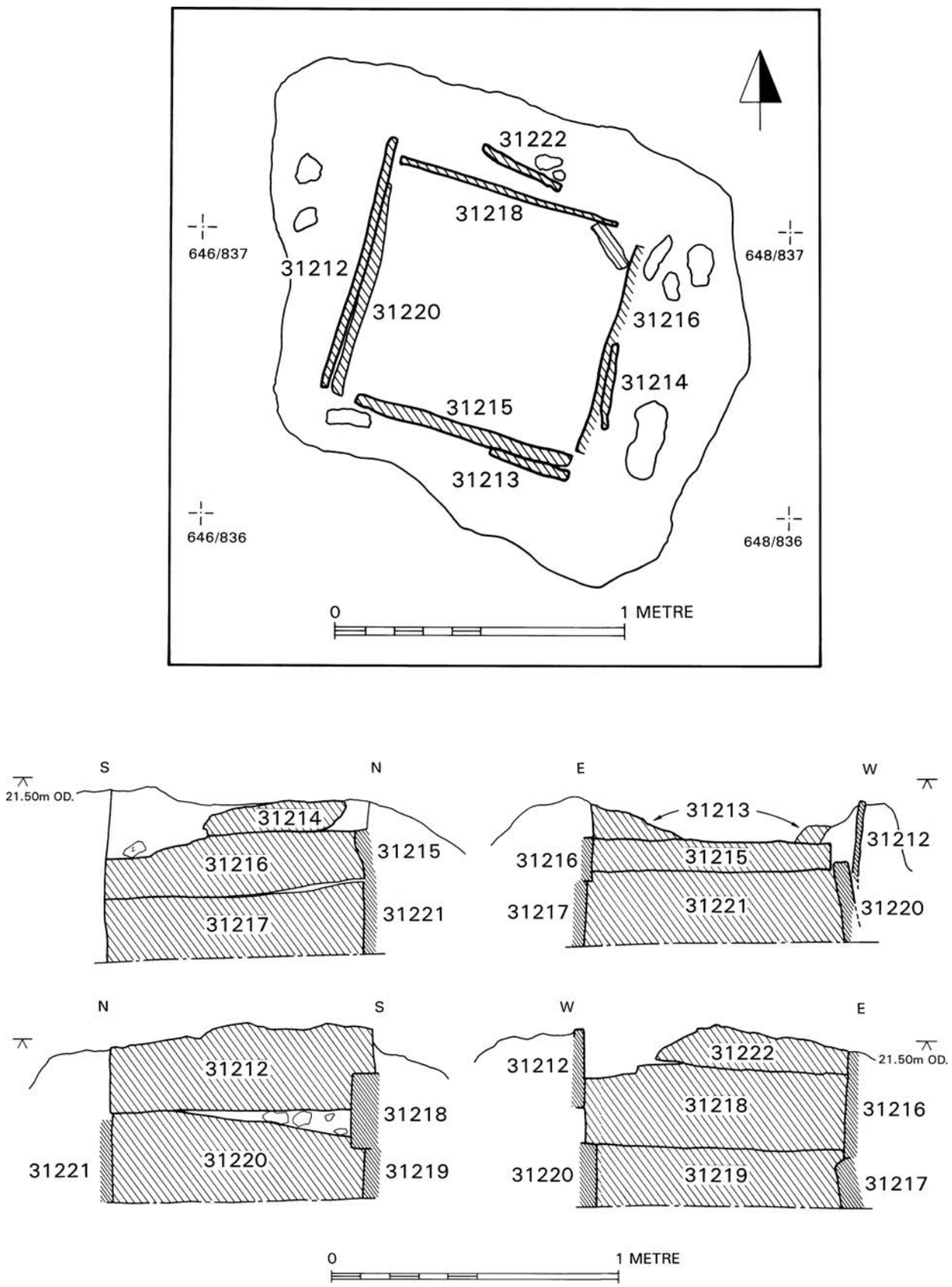


Figure 2.42 Phase 5A; well ***38018***, plan and elevations

could be examined. Unusually, the lining was built solely of fast-grown, sawn green oak planks of varying width. There were no corner-posts, and the timbers had been edge-lapped together (Darrah, Chapter 8): the planks were lapped on one edge only, while there was no evidence for the use of nails. Some un-lapped planks may have been used to infill spaces where lapped planks did not fit perfectly. This un-nailed structure could have been assembled under water without difficulty. Dendrochronological sampling of two planks provided a 94-year tree-ring sequence which could be compared with sampled timbers from Stuston Area 7 and matched to established sequences from London,

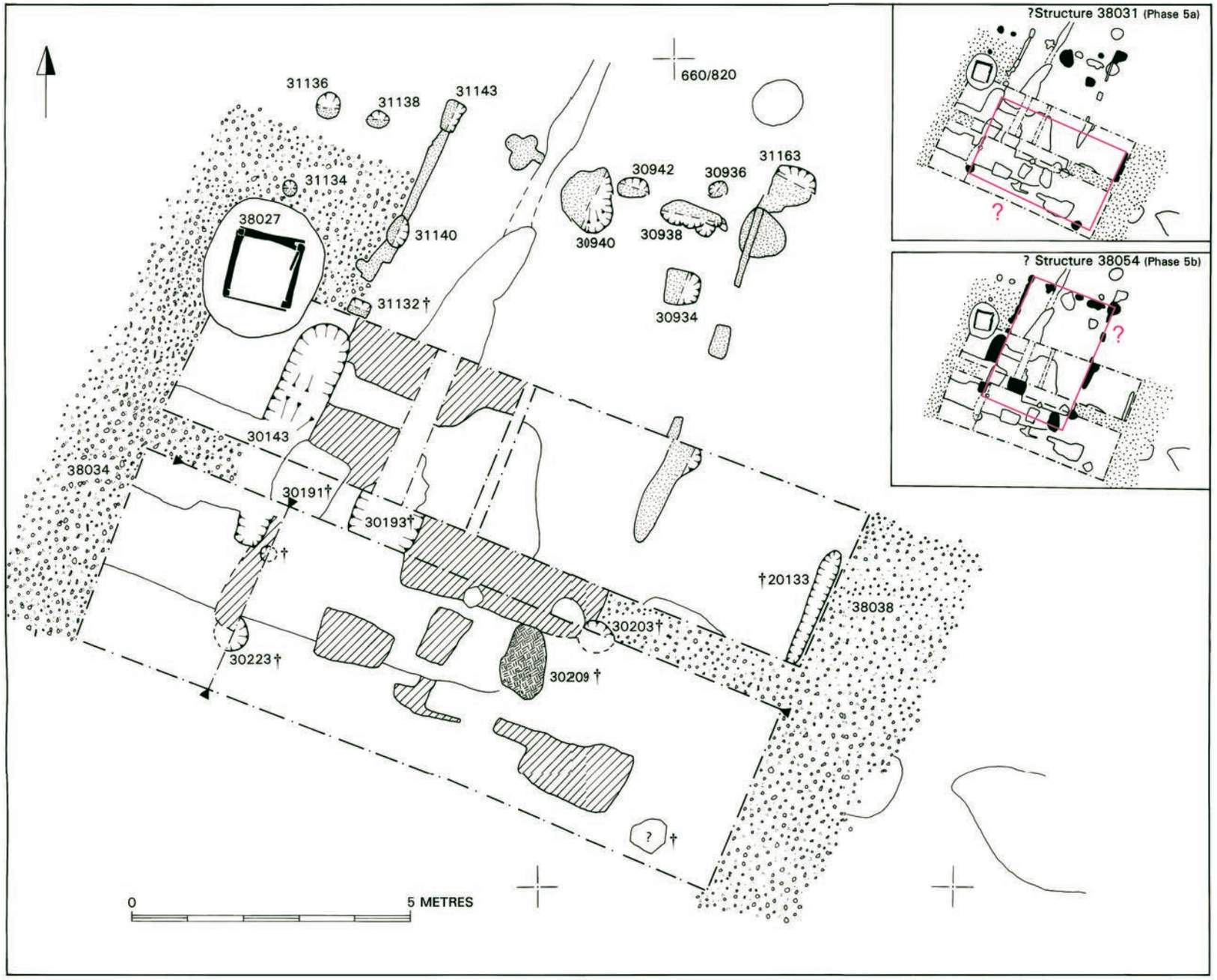


Figure 2.43 Phase 5A/5B: structures ***38031/38054*** excavated by Geoffrey Moss, plan. (Hatching – clay flooring not previously excavated; † – cut feature previously excavated)

Essex and Humberside. This comparison gave a date range of AD 78–171, therefore suggesting that the well had been lined in AD 172 or shortly afterwards (Tyers and Groves, Chapter 8).

Collapses caused by flooding and high ground-water levels restricted excavation to a depth of *c*.1m, and the primary siltings were not seen. The packing deposit behind the timber lining was composed of a mixture of silt, sand and clay deposits. A pit *c*. 0.7m deep had been dug through the upper levels of the well, maybe to allow the removal of some of the upper timbers. This pit had been backfilled with a mixture of grey, grey-brown and yellow-brown silty sands. Palynological sampling took place. Palynomorphs collected for assessment were all from deposits within the secondary cutting (Wiltshire, Chapter 9), but the results were broadly similar to those from other Scole wells. Floating aquatics and cereal pollens were absent and a local environment of weedy trampled grassland seems likely, while brambles had probably grown in the vicinity. Pottery weighing 1.202kg (114 sherds) from the upper backfill/robbing fills (Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 172–181) dated to the mid 2nd to mid/late 3rd centuries, and did not include the 4th-century material so often found in the Scole wells. This might indicate relatively early disuse.

Structure *38031* (excavated by Geoffrey Moss) and adjacent features
(Plates 2.10 and 2.11; Figs 2.24, 2.43–2.45)
Comprehensive excavation by Moss's team in 1972, penetrating natural deposits in many places, meant that the 'porticoed' building they discovered had been almost completely removed, and few features save beam-slot *30188* and post-hole *30223* survived for excavation or re-excavation in 1993. Baulks surviving from the previous intervention were often the only available sources of information, and this made it difficult to gauge the building's precise dimensions and its inter-relationships with adjacent layers. Very few finds were recovered.

The building appears to have been situated *c.*1.5m north of the edge of road metalling deposit ***49020***, and had been built over the deliberately-backfilled eastern terminus of the northern roadside ditch ***28003***. A 'two-phase' reconstruction of this complex of buildings has been suggested in the light of re-recording of the scant deposits left by the previous work. A primary structure, ***38031***, with a suggested date in the mid to later 2nd century, has been assigned to Phase 5A. This may have been succeeded by structure ***38054***, which has been assigned to Phase 5B. The available evidence (for both putative phases) has been summarised in plan in Fig.2.43, and this is augmented by south-facing and east-facing specimen sections (Figs 2.44, 2.45).

It is suggested that the primary (Phase 5A) building ***38031*** had been rectangular, with its long axis parallel with the road, and that it had measured *c*. 9.6m by 6.2m. Only one definite post-hole (*30223*) was excavated for the first time during 1993, on the west side of the building close to the probable south-west corner. The east side and south-east corner of the structure were marked by a possible beam-slot 2.4m long and 0.2m deep, *20133*. This feature had been emptied by Moss and only contained modern backfill. The remains of a post-hole (no context number) previously excavated by Moss, located in the south-eastern corner of the 1972 excavation area, might have corresponded with *30223* further to the west.

The building's likely extent was partly defined by recorded remnants of floor layers (deposits *30089* and *30198* on Fig. 2.44; *30215* on Fig. 2.45). A basal layer of greyish- or greenish-white clay and chalk *c.* 0.05m thick was sealed by a deposit of chalk with orange clay-lump inclusions, and a red clay layer with inclusions of brick and tile; both of these deposits were up to 0.1m thick. Below the floor sequence, deposits of dark grey or grey-brown silty sands *30201* resembled a debris-rich Grey Soil deposit, often with a significant clay and chalk component.

Well 38027 (Figs 2.46 and 2.47) lay immediately to the west of structure ***38031***, and might have been contemporary with its use. (Although at the time of excavation it appeared that it had been cut through the gravel 'courtyard' ***38034*** which had been recorded in the area west of Moss's excavations, it is now thought more likely that this gravel deposit — speculatively dated to Phase 5B — had been laid *around* the already-extant well.) The timber-lined shaft could be excavated to a depth of 0.7m. The lining displayed the usual 'Scole' method of construction (Darrah, Chapter 8), with braces and planks nailed to the rear faces of corner-posts, but used inferior timber. The planks used were only 25–30mm thick and those that survived were fragile; the braces were mainly sapwood, as was most of the only surviving corner-post. The nails through the planks had not been countersunk, but were driven through into the sapwood on the back of the corner-posts. Darrah has suggested that timber of this kind would only have had a short useful life-span.

Three distinctive braces fashioned from half-round timbers 0.14m in diameter, two of them with stub tenons at one end, represented either a repair to the existing well or part of a replacement lining. Three distinct sizes of timber were utilised: trees up to 0.7m in diameter (sawn through to make the planking); of *c*. 0.3m diameter (sawn into slabs for the braces and corner-posts); and of less than 0.15m in diameter (used for the half-round braces). The curved braces and corner-post were outer sections of trunk, with sapwood as their main component; they were probably sawn from the trunk, and their sapwood faces hewn. The planks' hewn edges matched when the trunk was re-assembled, indicating that it had been hewn square before sawing. The structure resembled an inferior copy of the nearby 'roadside' well ***38000***. The upper part of the lining would have decayed rapidly, perhaps within only ten years of construction, and the unusual half-round braces may have been a response to signs of collapse.

Plate 2.10 Structures ***38031*** (Phase 5A) and ***38054*** (Phase 5B) partly excavated by Geoffrey Moss, looking west

This well could have provided a source of water for either or both of the two structures — ***38031*** (Phase 5A) and ***38054*** (Phase 5B) — excavated by Moss. It had been deliberately backfilled and then 'capped' with clay and chalk deposits, perhaps indicating that heavy traffic continued here after its disuse. Finds were sparse; while 1.5kg of iron slag was collected there were only seven sherds of pottery, none of them closely datable. It is possible that the clay-and-chalk material found in the shaft filling was demolition debris from structure ***38031***.

Few significant features lay to the north. A group of large pits (***38019***) displayed few common traits save their general proportions, being 0.4m–0.5m deep. Finds were sparse and their purpose is unclear, although the ever-present ground water may have been important to their function. Only a small proportion of the many post-holes in the area was excavated.

Structure *38029* and adjacent features
(Plates 2.12 and 2.13; Figs 2.24, 2.48–2.51)
Rectangular post-built structure ***38029*** was sited end-on to the northern roadside and measured 8m north-to-south by 5.4m east-to-west. Within its area lay a floor-layer of compact clay and chalk. In the south-west corner lay a hearth (***49028***), while a spread of demolition debris was recorded immediately to the east. The southern frontage had been built directly over the line of the Phase 4 roadside/boundary ditch ***28014***, which had been deliberately backfilled at this point.

a

b

c

Plate 2.11 Sections across structures ***38031*** and ***38054***
a and b – south-facing sections showing clay and chalk floor deposits *30065*, *30087 et al.*.; ?smithy structure *30209* prominent in b;
c – north facing section showing floor deposits; *in situ* flooring in right foreground cut away by Moss excavation trench

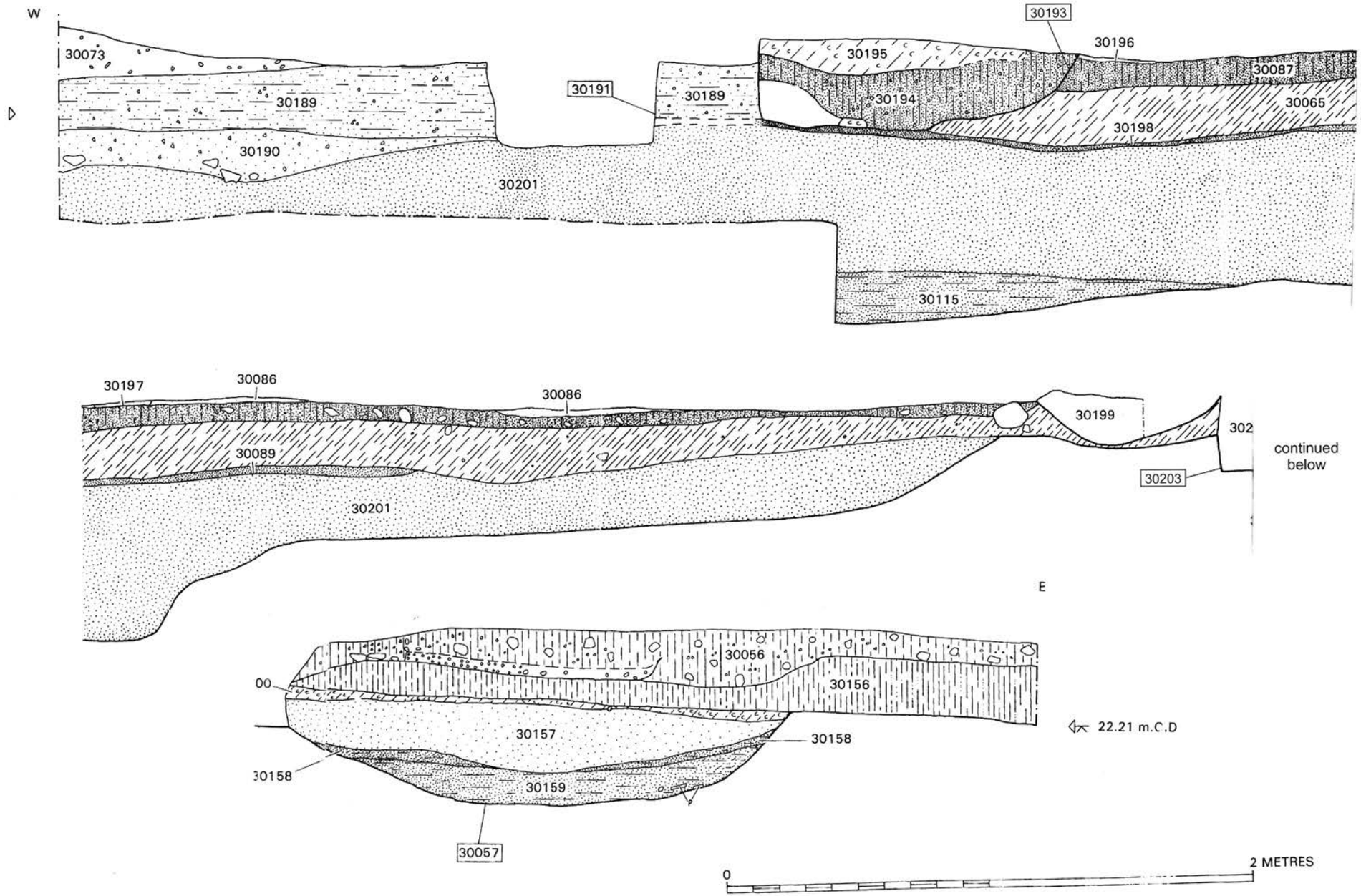


Figure 2.44 Phase 5A/5B: structures ***38031/38054***, south-facing section

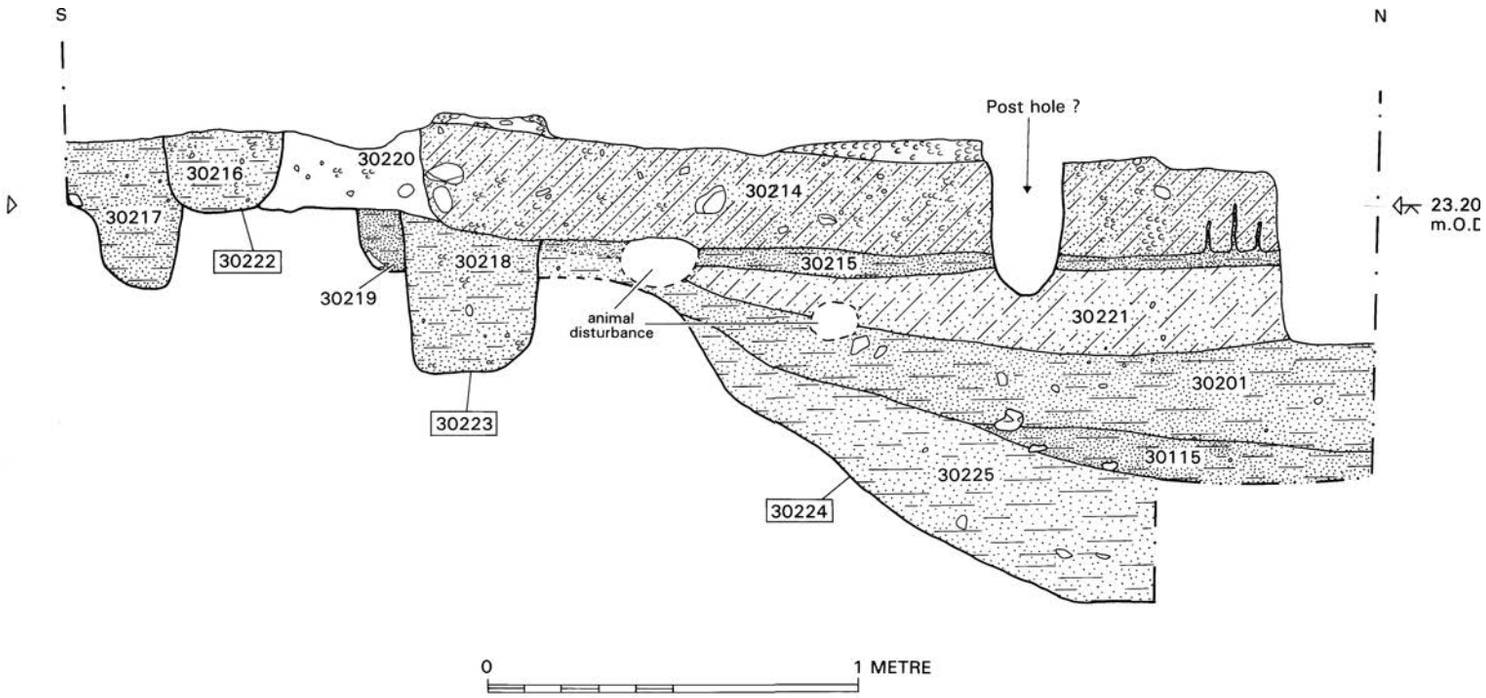


Figure 2.45 Phase 5A/5B: structures ***38031/38054***, east-facing section

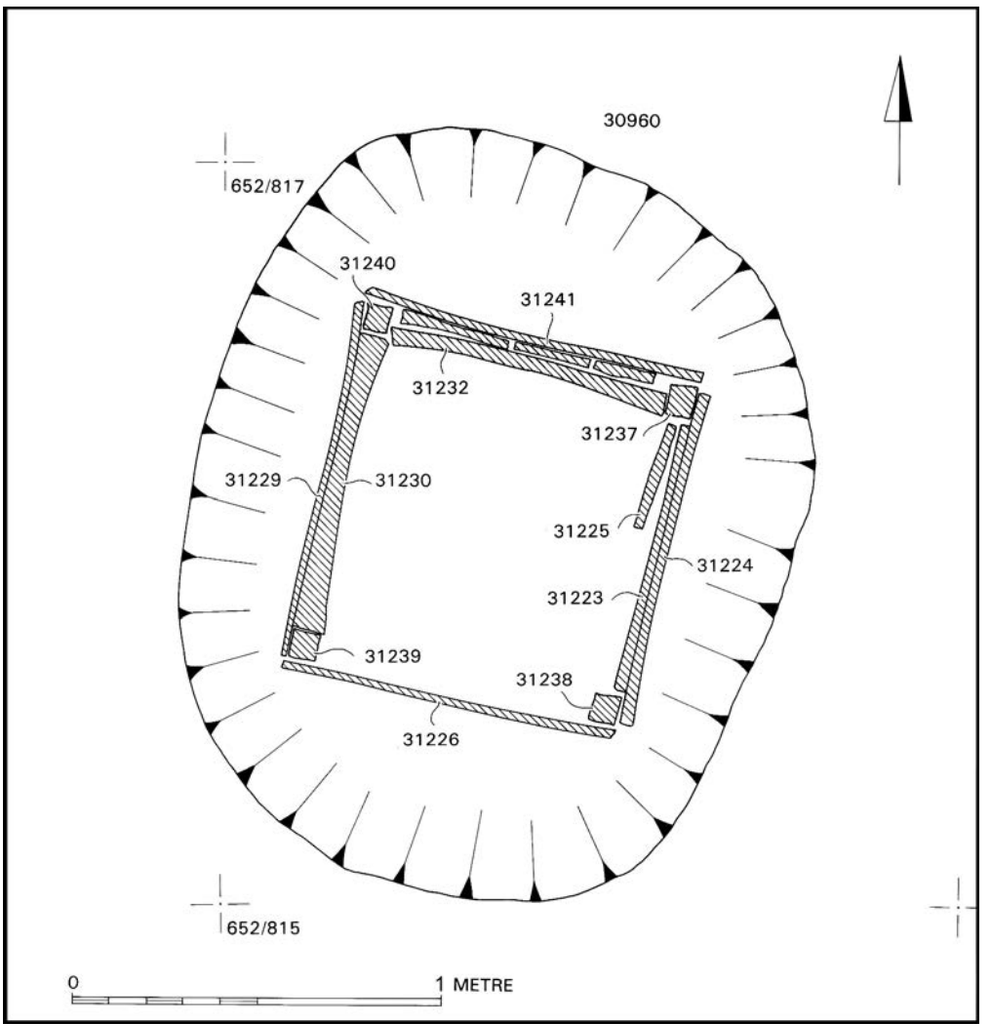


Figure 2.46 Phase 5A: well ***38027***, plan

The east side of the building was represented by four post-holes, sited a little over 2m apart. Those forming its western side were relatively substantial, as was the oval south-western post-hole *30880.* The building's southern frontage was composed of three equally spaced post-holes. The three post-holes composing the northern side of the building appeared to have been linked by a second east-to-west beam-slot; unfortunately this could not be excavated due to flooding. A piece of human bone — a femur head from a young/mature adult — was collected from the primary fill *30881* within the main south-western corner post-hole *30880*. Its position beneath post-impression *30883* and its packing suggested that it formed part of an intentional deposit.

The remains of clay-and-chalk floor surfaces were recorded in the southern half of the building. These tended to fade with distance to the north rather than terminating abruptly, but they had extended at least as far as transverse beam-slot *31340*. The floor was up to 0.15m thick, and was composed of mixed deposits of clay, chalk and flint. A small number of deposits included in this group during excavation and analysis may possibly have represented demolition debris rather than floor deposits. Quantities of iron-smithing slag were recovered, while a coin dated to AD 350–353 was recovered lying directly on the top of one of the fragments of chalk and clay floor-surface.

In the south-west corner of the building lay the base of a demolished or truncated clay hearth, ***49028***, which had been constructed upon the floor material. It measured 3m east-to-west by 1.5m north-to-south; its superstructure survived to a height of only 0.1m above the level of the floor. The hearth itself was composed of layers of reddish-yellow and yellowish-brown chalky clay, variations in colour probably being caused by locally-differing intensities of heat. A sub-rectangular combustion chamber, oriented east-to-west and 0.25m deep, lay in its centre. This was lined with a brownish-yellow fired clay, and surrounded by layers of heat-discoloured yellowish-red and dark red-brown sand. The chamber had been backfilled with mixed pale yellow-brown chalky clay and sandy loam deposits, probably debris from demolition of the upper parts of the hearth. A square pit just outside the structure, *30796*, was 0.6m deep and contained both iron-smithing waste and lumps of fired clay.

Iron-smithing slag and tuyère pieces were found in and around the building (Cowgill *et al.*, Chapter 8). An assemblage of metalworking debris weighing 2.61kg was recovered from demolition deposits, while an additional 1.5kg came from overlying Grey Soil spits. Remarkably, these deposits also produced the largest assemblage of tuyères from the entire site (eight). These fragments were relatively large (weight 40–240g; mean 103g) (the mean object weight of the only heavier feature-assemblage from the whole site, that from well ***38027*** — also Phase 5A — was somewhat biased by the fact that two specimens were attached to 'hearth-bottoms'). This collection of metalworking debris is hard to interpret. It is possible that structure ***38029*** was itself used as a smithy, even though relatively little slag was found other than in the demolition layers themselves. But while incorporation of such quantities of slag within the *demolition* horizon might represent the recycling of iron fittings on-site when the building was dismantled, this is not a particularly satisfactory explanation for the number and size of the tuyère pieces found. The discovery of smithing debris within some of the structure's constituent post-holes is of interest: some of this could have been introduced into rotted voids by sweeping, as well as falling in when posts were extracted.

A total of 1.465kg of pottery (52 sherds) from the various structural features included a significant quantity of 2nd-century samian (235g/60 sherds). To this must be added 252g (4 sherds) from clay floor deposits in the south-western corner of the building and 1.384kg (135 sherds) from overlying demolition deposits. The collection as a whole implied demolition between the mid 2nd and mid 3rd centuries, although the sherds from the internal post-holes were not closely datable.

Well 38024 was located 6m to the north-west of structure ***38029*** (Plate 2.13; Figs 2.50 and 2.51). The sub-circular construction cut was

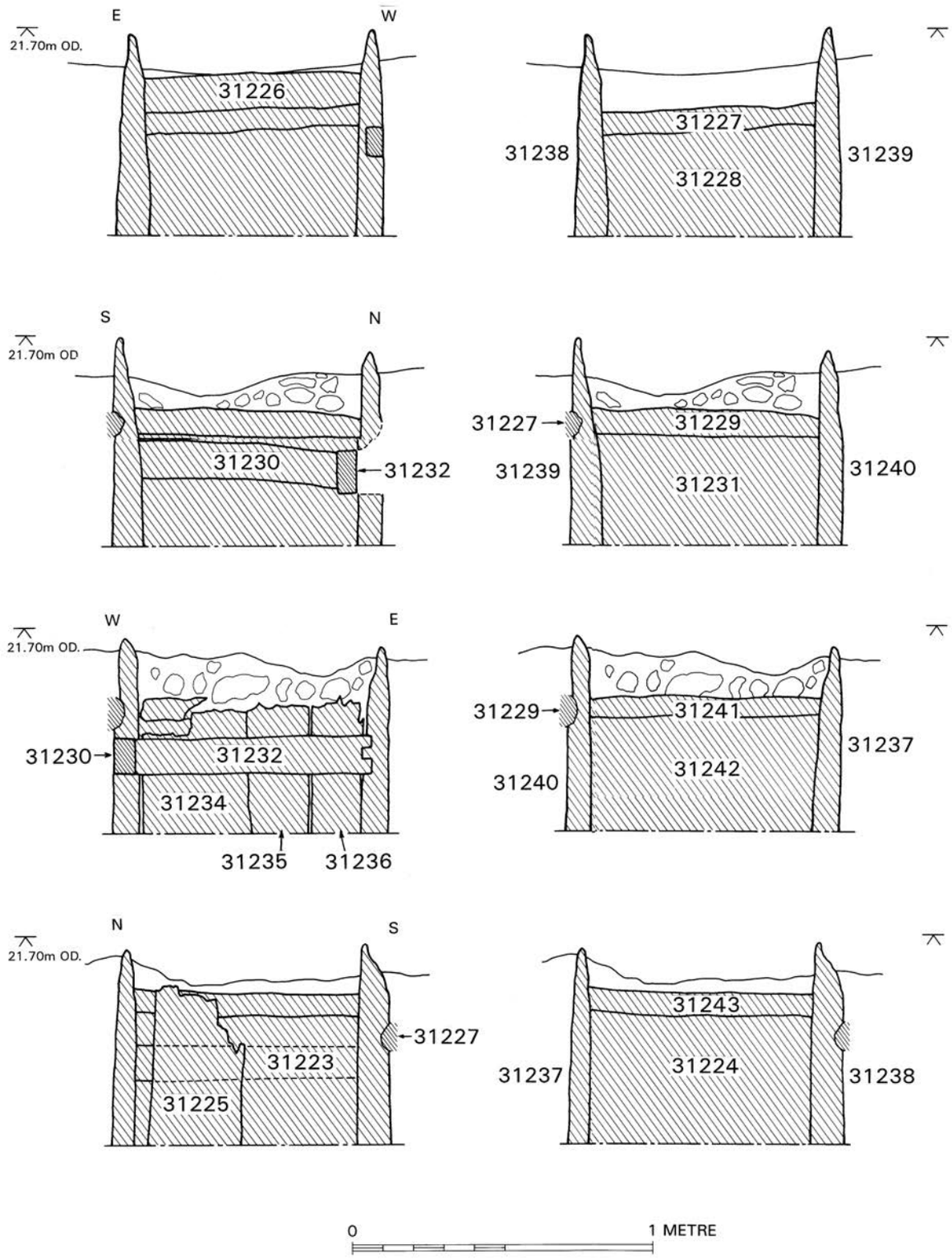


Figure 2.47 Phase 5A: well ***38027***, elevations

excavated to a depth of 0.65m. The well-lining was of characteristic 'Scole' type (Darrah, Chapter 8), but only one specimen plank could be recovered for study from the limited excavations. This had a hewn outer face, suggesting the original tree had been hewn square before being sawn into planks. The lining had been packed in position with a layer of dark grey sand, above which lay a brownish olive sandy clay deposit with flints. The shaft was filled with a dark grey-brown sandy silt, and appears to have been 'capped' by yellow-brown clay and flint deposit *30622*. None of the primary fills were seen. Many leather fragments were recovered, some with thonging or fastening loops and including at least eleven pieces from one-piece shoes (Mould, Chapter 7, cat. 154–6, 158, 159). Fifty other leather scraps were collected, one of them bearing clear marking-out lines. A collection of 1.737kg of pottery (40 sherds) included pimply and fine grog grey wares as well as small amounts of

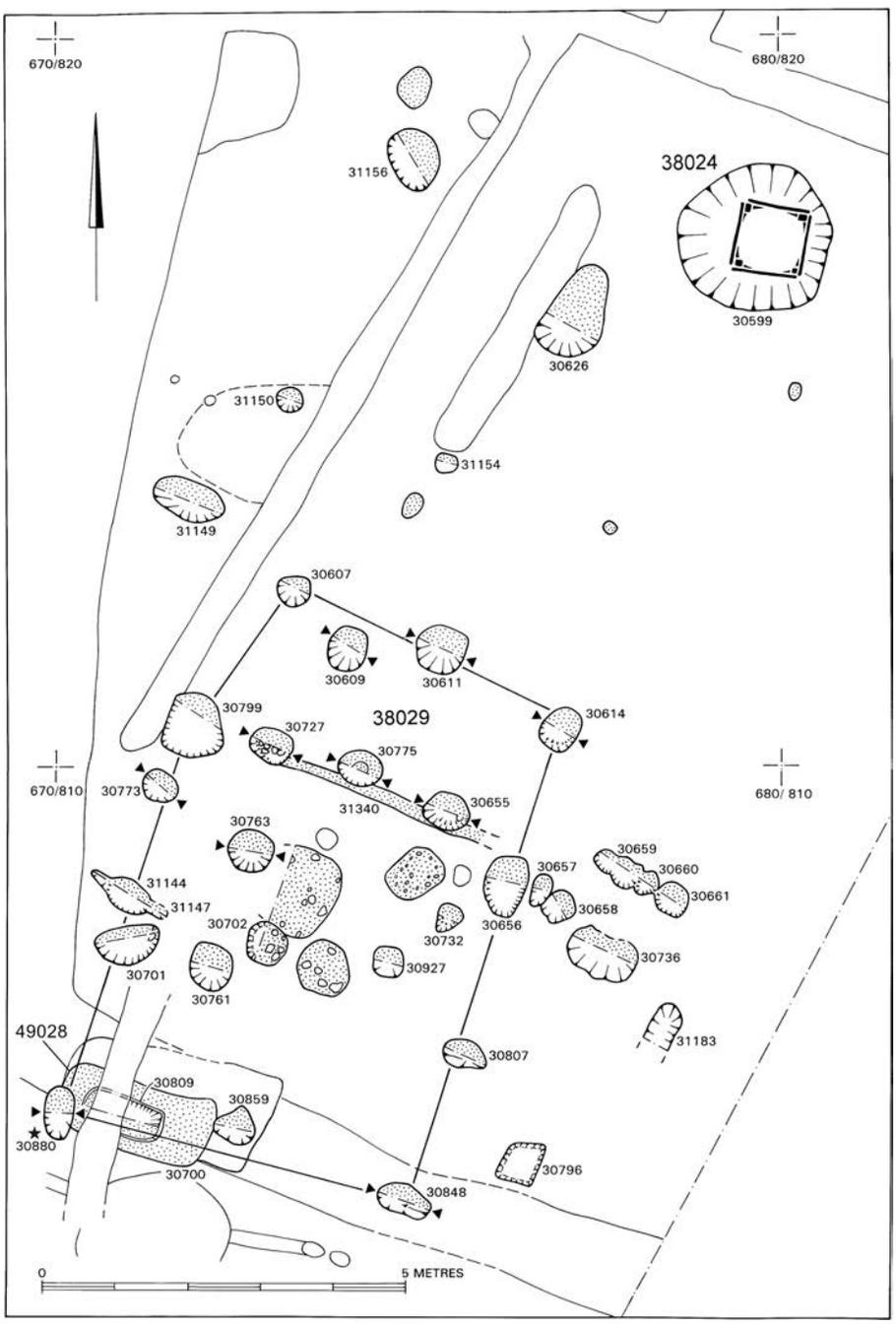


Figure 2.48 Phase 5A: structure ***38029***, well ***38024*** *etc*., plan. ★ – post-hole containing human bone fragment

amphora, white ware and slightly micaceous mortarium (Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 182–188). All of the forms present were consistent with cooking or water-drawing and carrying. The shaft packing contained mid-2nd-century samian and a fine grog grey ware dish of similar date. While its fills produced no diagnostically late fabrics, a late 3rd–4th-century flanged dish suggested that the well remained open for more than a century.

The lower fill of the shaft, *30786*, produced an unusual collection of animal bones. As well as caprine remains and cattle butchery waste, bones from a buzzard and a complete shed fallow deer antler (Plate 2.13) were also collected. This assemblage is interpreted by Baker (Chapter 9) as refuse rather than as part of a 'special deposit' of ritual significance, but the antler itself is of some intrinsic interest. Fallow deer remains are seldom found in Roman contexts in Britain and there is some doubt as to whether or not the species actually lived in Britain in the 1st millennium AD. Radiocarbon dating of the antler itself yielded an age-range of AD 267–545 (AA-26221; 1620±45 BP); this does not contradict the late Roman date for the well's abandonment suggested by the pottery. It is conceivable, however, that a shed antler such as this was actually an imported object, rather than from an animal which had been hunted locally (Baker, Chapter 9).

The location of the well suggested that it provided water for the post-hole building ***38029***, and its position might give some indication of the minimum extent of any roadside enclosure within which the building had lain.

Plate 2.12 Southern part of structure ***38029*** under excavation, looking south-east

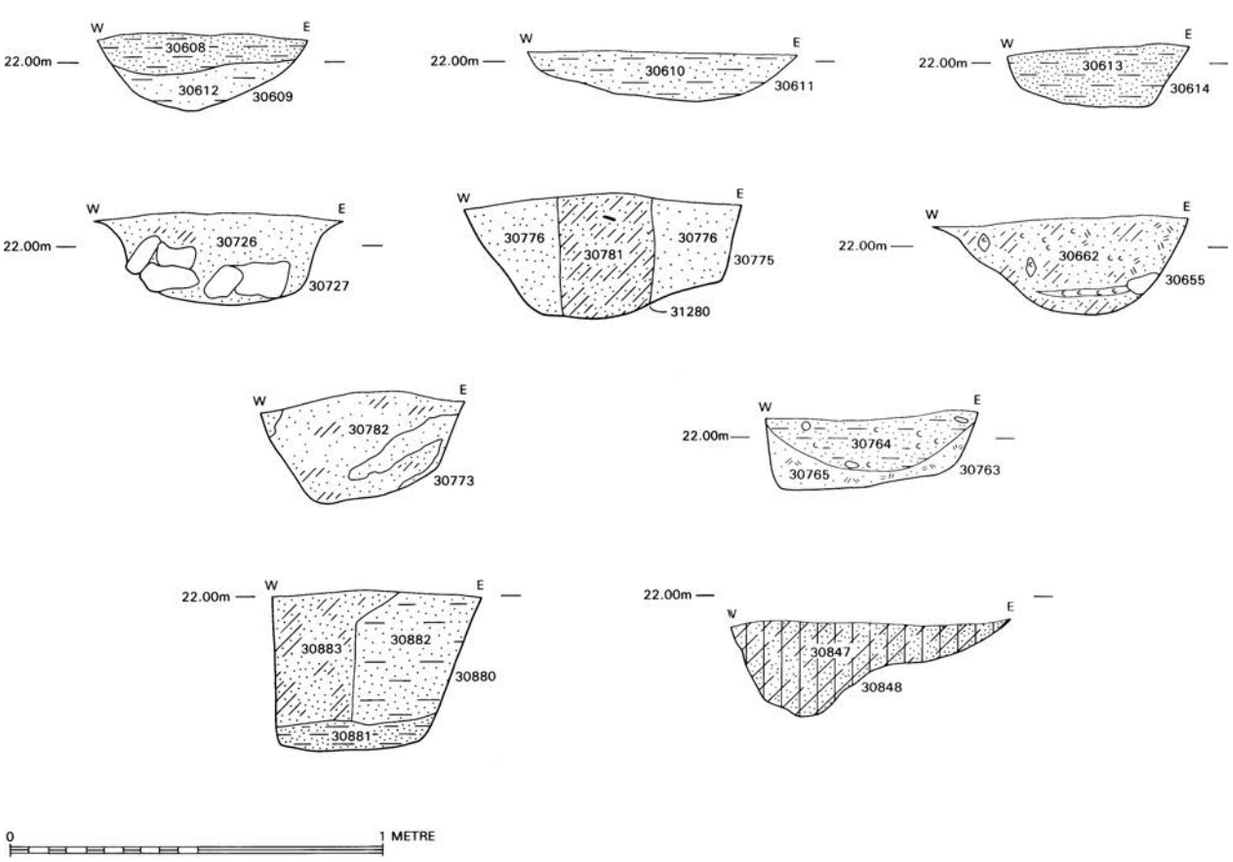


Figure 2.49 Phase 5A: structure ***38029***, sections

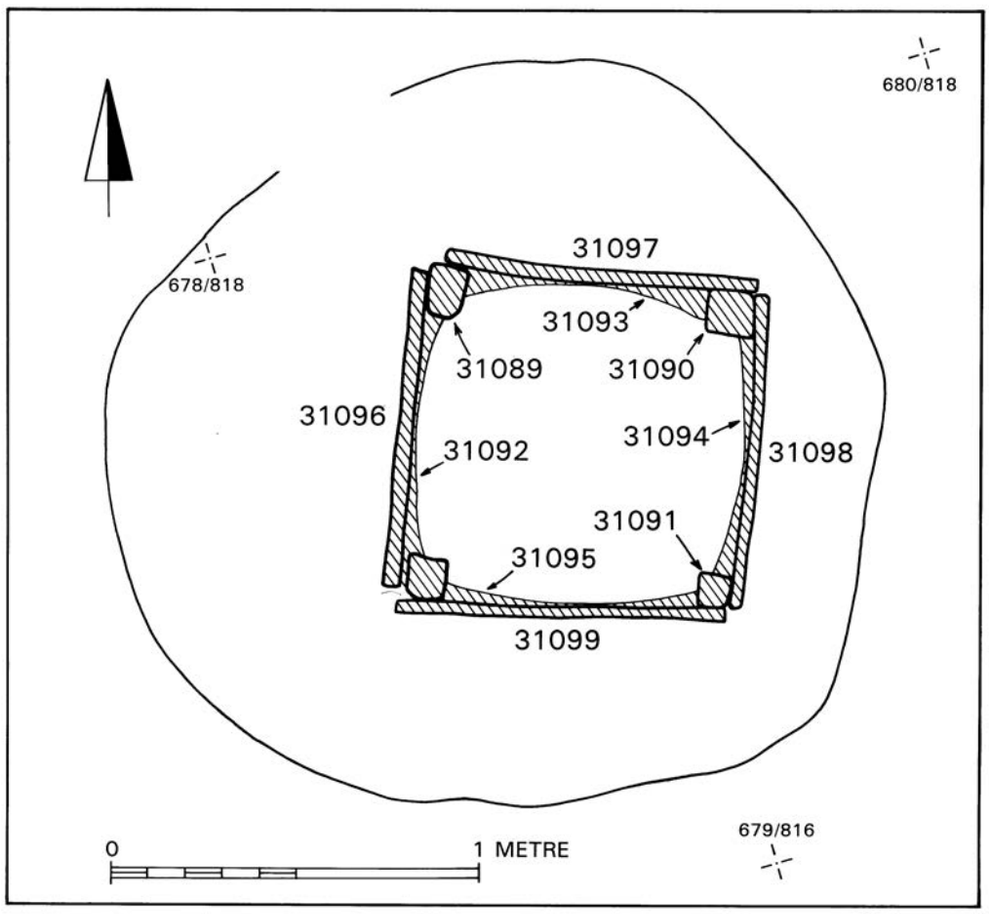
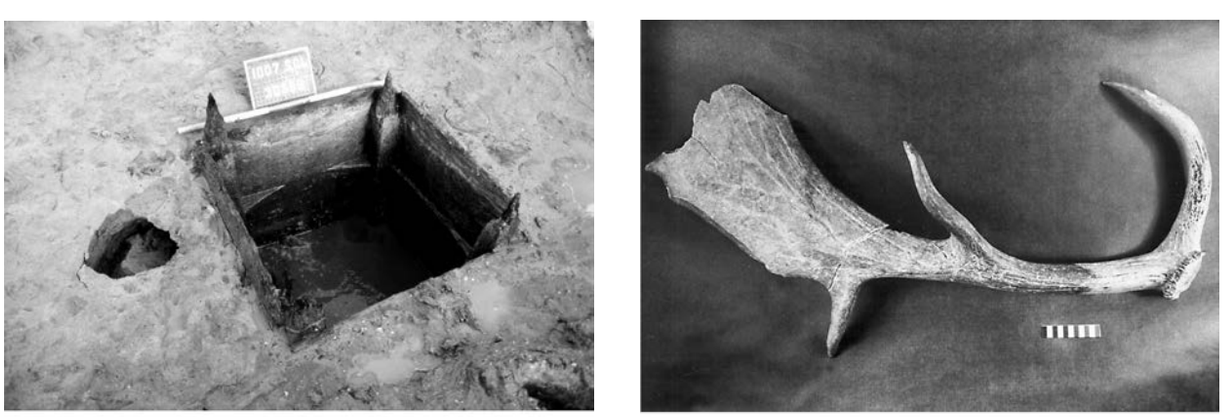


Figure 2.50 Phase 5A: well ***38024***, plan



a b

Plate 2.13 Well ***38024***:
a – after emptying of shaft, looking north-east; b – fallow deer antler from shaft fill

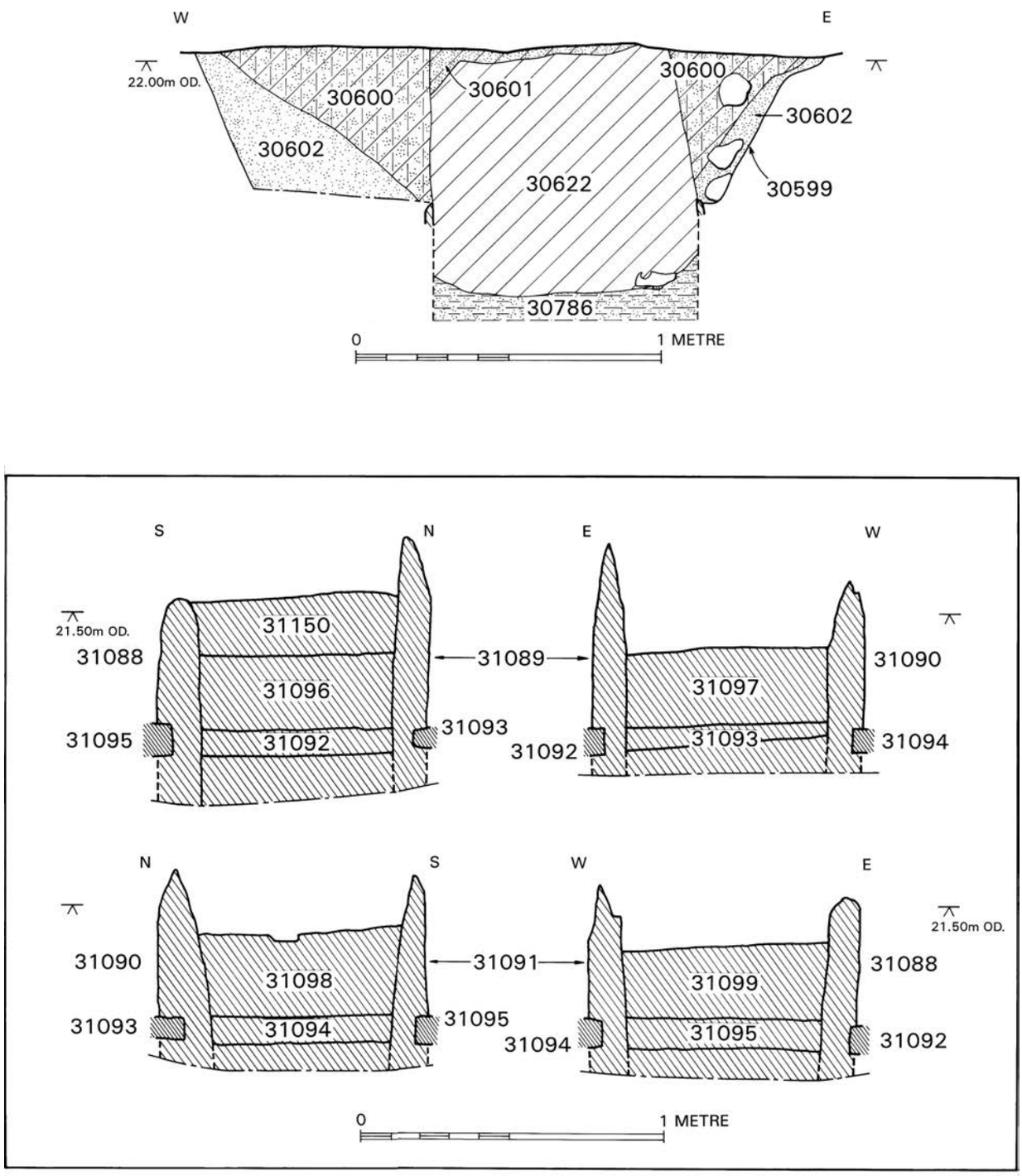


Figure 2.51 Phase 5A: well ***38024***, section and elevations

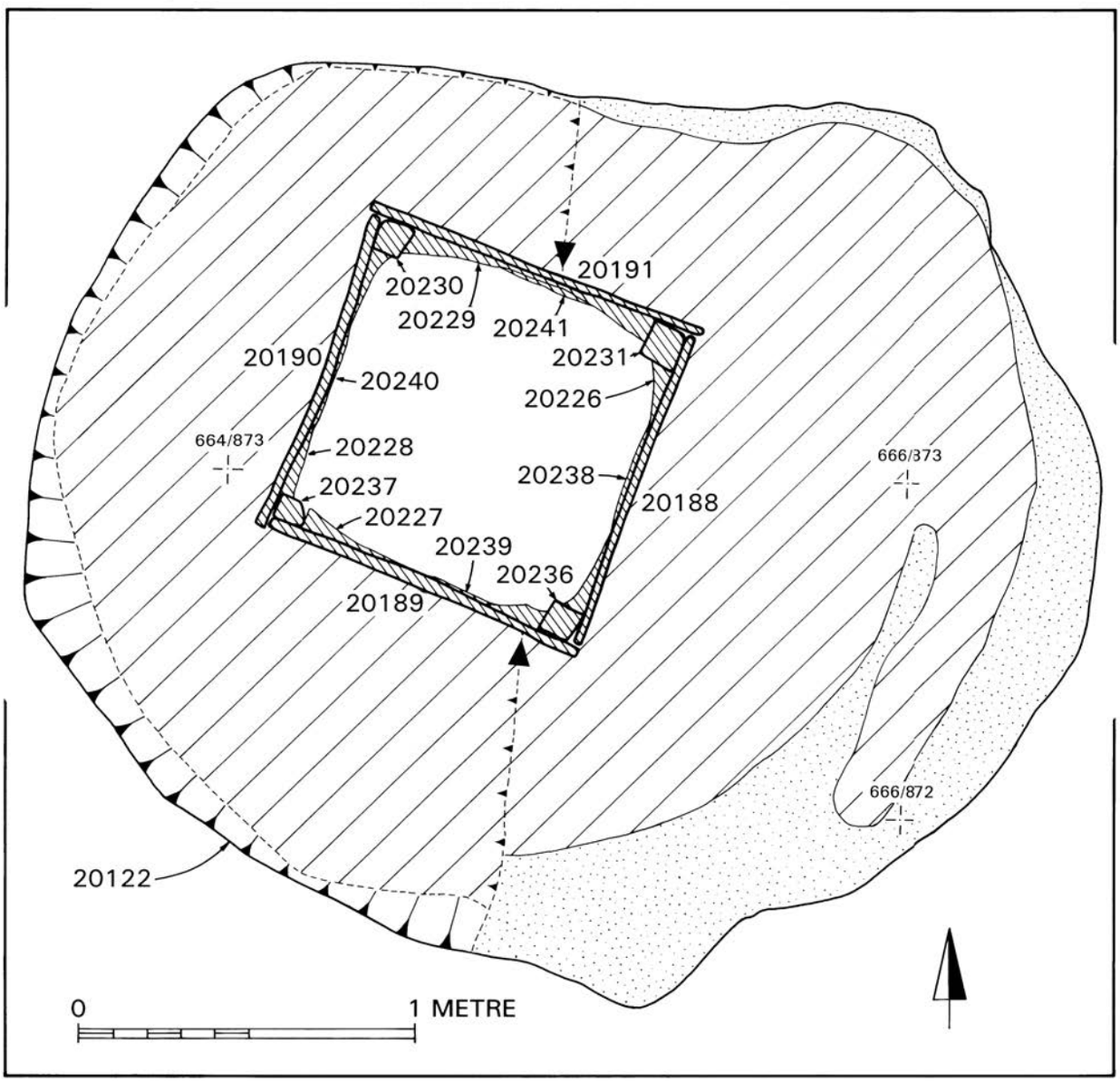


Figure 2.52 Phase 5A: well ***28010***, plan

Activity in the northernmost excavated area
(Plate 2.14; Figs 2.24, 2.52 and 2.53)
Only a single feature, a well, is worthy of individual note.

Well 28010, the most northerly example excavated in 1993, had been cut into the northern part of the large Phase 4 pit ***28017*** (p.44). Its broad circular construction cut contained a timber-lined shaft measuring 0.75m square. Although it was not possible to excavate the well completely it was clear that the shaft was at least 2.1m deep, and 1.6m of this depth was lined in surviving waterlogged timber. The carpenters had employed the familiar Scole construction techniques, with planks and braces nailed onto the rear surfaces of corner-posts. Only three timbers could be retrieved, although these were in excellent condition. The uppermost *c*. 0.5m of the timber lining did not survive and was only visible as an organic stain in the clay that surrounded it. The planks had been sawn from a tree 0.35m in diameter. The one recorded brace was a split quarter from a similar tree with the sapwood hewn away to form the curve. The backs of the lap joints had been thinned down so that short nails could be used. The construction cut had been packed with yellow-grey sandy clay and pale yellow-brown sand, while the upper shaft had been backfilled with a series of mid/dark grey silty sands overlying clayey deposits. Pottery weighing 1.478kg (91 sherds) included vessel-types of the mid 2nd and mid 3rd centuries, and a later 2nd-century samian sherd came from the shaft's lower silting. The well may have been backfilled by the end of the 3rd century.

Well ***28010***, unlike most of the other Scole wells, did not clearly correspond with any particular structure or group of structures. It is possible that post-Roman plough erosion had destroyed associated features in the northern part of the site. Alternatively, important evidence could have remained concealed within the unexcavated area immediately to the south. In the mid–later 3rd century it may have lain in the area of an east-to-west track or droveway bounded to the north by ditch ***28033*** and to the south by ***28002*** (Fig. 2.54). In this context it may — like the roadside well ***38000*** — have been in some sense a shared facility.

A scattered group of four pits to the west and south-west of well ***28010*** was also assigned to Phase 5A on the basis of pottery recovered. All were either sub-circular or ovate; they varied in depth between 0.25m and 0.4m, and were filled with silty sand deposits.

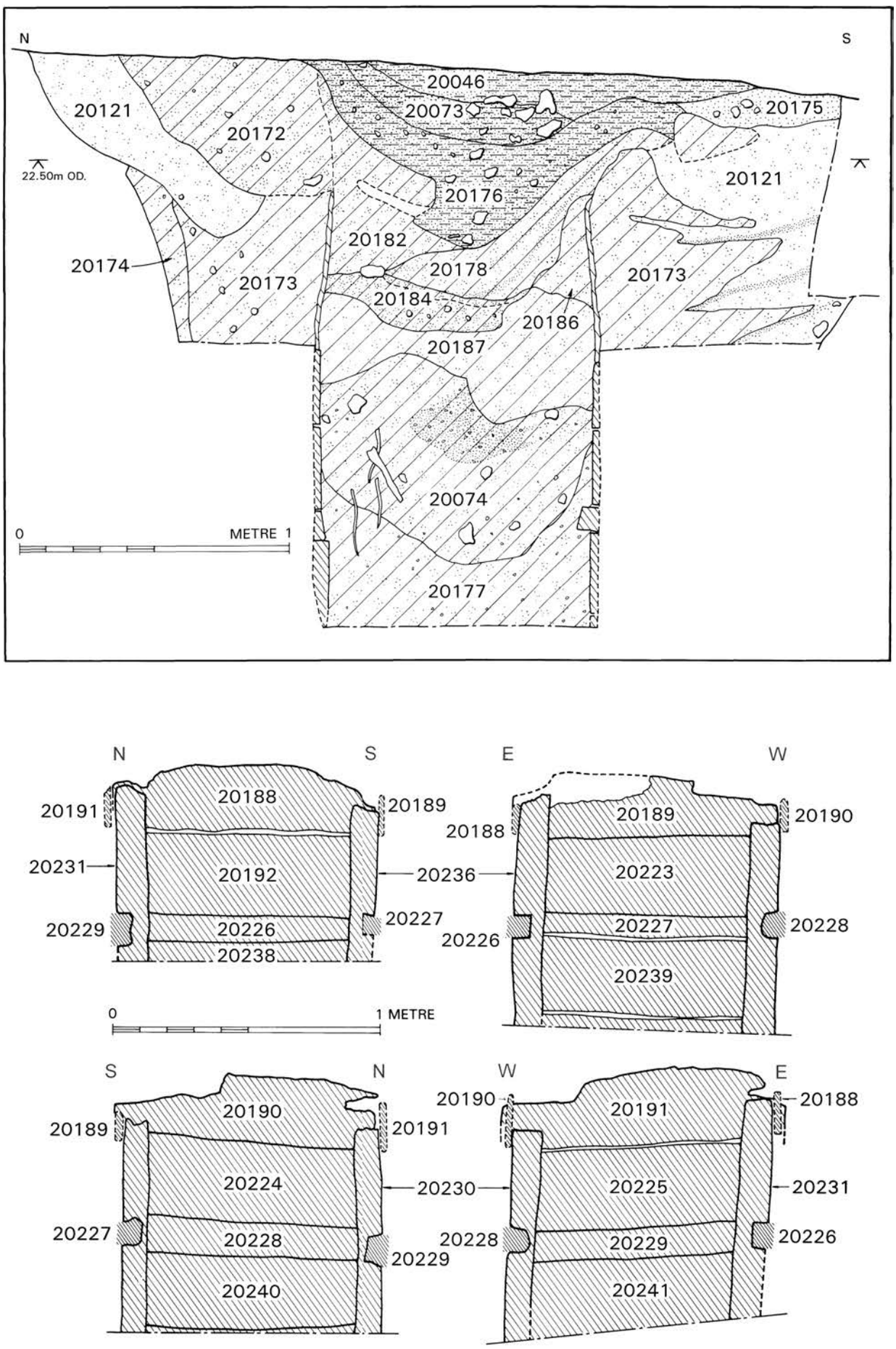


Figure 2.53 Phase 5A: well ***28010***, section and elevations

Plate 2.14 Well ***28010*** under excavation, looking north

Phase 5B (mid–late 3rd century)

Introduction
(Fig. 2.54)
It appeared that the broad pattern of land-holding and human activity established in this part of Scole during Phase 5A persisted through the 3rd century. Features within this framework that appeared to have originated in the mid–later 3rd century have been assigned to Phase 5B, although the landscape seems to have been dominated by pre-existing structures, wells and other features that continued in use.

This phase, like its predecessor, may only be defined in approximate chronological terms. A number of significant features have been assigned to it on the basis of stratigraphic relationships, and on ceramic grounds. While the differences between ceramic assemblages of Phases 5A and 5B were not always pronounced, Lyons (Chapter 6) has drawn attention to an increased proportion of white ware — represented by characteristic flagon forms — in the contexts assigned to the latter. The peat-edge ?tanning pit ***18076*** and the 'midden' deposit ***18100*** both produced large assemblages thought to fall into this category. The collection from structure ***49000*** — constructed over a length of roadside ditch that may still have been open in the later 2nd–earlier 3rd century — might offer some confirmation that an increased proportion of white ware is indeed a significant temporal indicator.

Inevitably, some feature assignations to Phase 5B are tentative ones. The second of the two postulated buildings in the area excavated by Moss, ***38054***, produced little datable material in 1993, on account of its very thorough removal by the earlier excavation work. The rectilinear enclosure/trackway system in the northern part of the site saw very limited excavation — datable material was recovered from only one excavated ditch segment, and it is uncertain whether all of the lengths of ditch that remained unexcavated did indeed form part of the same complex.

South of the road: the peat-edge enclosures
(Plates 2.15–2.17; Figs 2.54–2.59)

General
A discontinuous series of north-west to south-east oriented stake-lines, ***18013*** (Plate 2.15), extended over a distance of 35m or more along the northern edge of the riverine peat, following the line of the drainage ditches which delineated the areas of industrial activity from the deep peat to the south-west. At least two other south-west to north-east oriented lines of stakes extended towards the river. The western part of the main NW–SE feature was in fact a double alignment of close-set stakes situated *c.* 2m apart. Stakes that were extracted varied between 0.1m and 0.4m in surviving length and were up to 0.08m in diameter, although one of the stake-lines included a single large collapsed post. The stakes' surviving length tended to increase with distance towards the river. All of those examined were of oak, a single exception being of hazel (Darrah, Chapter 8). They had multi-faceted points and were of three general types: roundwood rods; radially-split stakes (from trees with a diameter of less than 0.3m); and small, split stakes (from larger trees). The evidence of growth-rings suggest that slow-grown coppiced timber was used, in contrast to the fast-grown oak used in the revetment of the nearby deep pit ***18076*** also assigned to this phase. The stakes had been hammered into earlier Roman peat deposits and sandy upcast layers deriving from the excavation of the peat-edge drainage ditches. Further stakes probably remained unidentified, due to differential preservation or deliberate removal, or because they had been inserted from a higher level.

The two main parallel stake alignments might have revetted upcast banks flanking the major peat-edge

Figure 2.54 Phase 5B: phase plan

a b

Plate 2.15 Stakes in stake-lines ***18013***, looking south (a) and north (b)

drainage ditches. The northern line would have revetted the bank alongside drainage ditch ***18030*** and its redefinitions; the more southerly line probably fulfilled the same function for the latest drainage ditch in the sequence, ***18020***. A large fragment of wood (visible in Fig. 2.14, within deposit *10637*) lying within a deposit of collapsed bank material corresponded well in level and alignment with the tips of the stakes of the northern stake-line, and may have formed part of this revetment too. The stake-lines extending into the peat may indicate that the river-margin marshland was also divided into plots. These bore no obvious relation to the landward property enclosures, although the more easterly of the two lines shared the broad alignment of the other Roman boundaries in this area.

Western enclosure
(Figs 2.54–2.55)

Few 'new' features here could be attributed to the mid–later 3rd century. By this time, the large Phase 5A ?tanning pit ***49002*** had been backfilled. It appears, however, that the extant well ***18016*** in the enclosure's south-eastern corner (p.53–5) continued in use through the 3rd century. Two rectangular post-hole structures, each of them orientated end-on to the road and measuring *c*. 8m x 4m, lay side-by-side in the westernmost area of excavation.

Structure 48080, the more westerly of the two, straddled a backfilled section of the southern roadside ditch ***48008*** (Fig. 2.55). No clay flooring was seen. The excavated post-holes varied between 0.1m and 0.5m in depth, the most substantial lying in the building's western side. Impressions of upright timbers measuring between 0.3m and 0.4m in diameter were noted in some post-holes. Finds were generally sparse. A total of 388g of pottery (49 sherds) was recovered. One post-hole, *40387*, contained sherds of both early Roman and 4th-century types. The 'early' flint-tempered sherds were abraded, however, and the shell-tempered and Oxfordshire red colour coat pieces accord well with the later Roman date suggested for the structure. Some later 2nd-century pottery seems likely to have been residual, particularly given the building's stratigraphic position (over the infilled roadside ditch).

Structure 49000 was located 7m further to the south-east, measured 7m by 3.5m, and also encroached upon a backfilled length of the southern roadside ditch. No evidence for clay floors was noted. A clay hearth, ***49001***, was situated within the north end of the structure. The majority of post-holes were 0.2m–0.3m deep and filled with silty sands. Many other undated post-holes in the vicinity could have related to this building. The assemblage of 1.13kg of pottery (83 sherds, Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 235–245) contained no obviously late Roman material. A little Antonine samian was recorded and the assemblage as a whole probably included some residual material.

Hearth 49001 measured 1.7m (north-to-south) by 1.05m (east-to-west) and was rather amorphous. Alternate layers of unfired red clay and yellowish-brown fired clay were interpreted by the excavator as representing two distinct phases of its use. A shallow hollow in the later hearth layers, recorded during excavation as 'pit' *30323* (Fig. 2.54), was filled almost entirely with sherds of pottery and lumps of fired and unfired clay. The hearth may have been integral to the structure, although it is unclear whether it represented domestic or industrial activities. Fired and unfired clay fragments in surrounding Dark Earth deposits may have related to its demolition. The shallow 'pit' *30323* contained no less than 5.82kg (588 sherds) of pottery. White ware A was well-represented, being only marginally less common than Wattisfield material (Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 246–259). A small piece of samian dated to the early–mid 2nd century. An early–mid 3rd century *terminus post quem* is suggested.

Central enclosure
(Plate 2.16; Figs 2.54, 2.56–2.59)

Structures

An intermittent layer of compacted chalk and clay up to 0.1m thick, ***48015***, was probably the remains of a demolished clay-floored building. Measuring at least 9m from east to west, this would have been a successor to the earlier structure represented by the Phase 5A demolition/make-up layer ***48018***. This mixture of *in situ* floor deposits and demolition debris had been cut away to the south by a large modern pit-like disturbance. Various post-holes in the immediate area could have been related either to these deposits or to earlier flooring and demolition residues. A small pottery group with several amphora sherds gave a *terminus post quem* in the 3rd century AD; a single abraded sherd of 4th-century Hadham red ware was probably intrusive.

Structure 48035 (Fig. 2.56), further south from from the road frontage 'behind' clay deposit ***48015***, was represented by a complex of post-holes and beam-slots, lying on a north-west to south-east alignment roughly midway between the Roman road and the peat edge. The area immediately to the north had been completely disturbed by the large rectilinear modern 'pit'. As well as removing any archaeological traces which once existed there, this had severed any relationship between ***48035*** and the remnants of the demolished building to the north. The structure's south-western side was defined by a shallow ?beam-slot *c*. 9m long, punctuated by occasional post-holes. A probable entrance 0.85m wide was flanked by relatively substantial post-holes. A parallel slot a little to the north-east, giving way to an alignment of small, sub-square

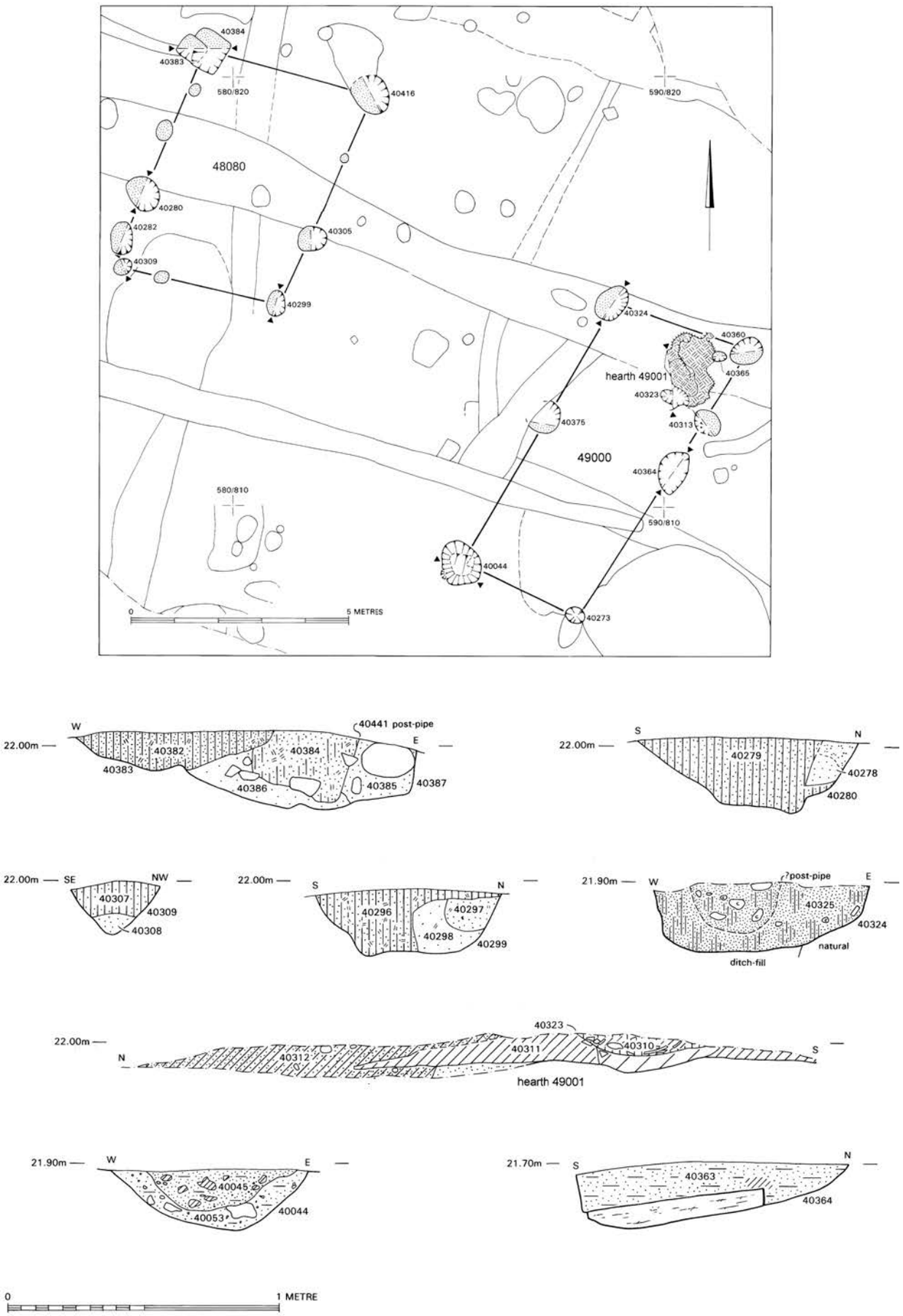


Figure 2.55 Phase 5B: structures ***48080*** and ***49000*** and associated features, plan and sections

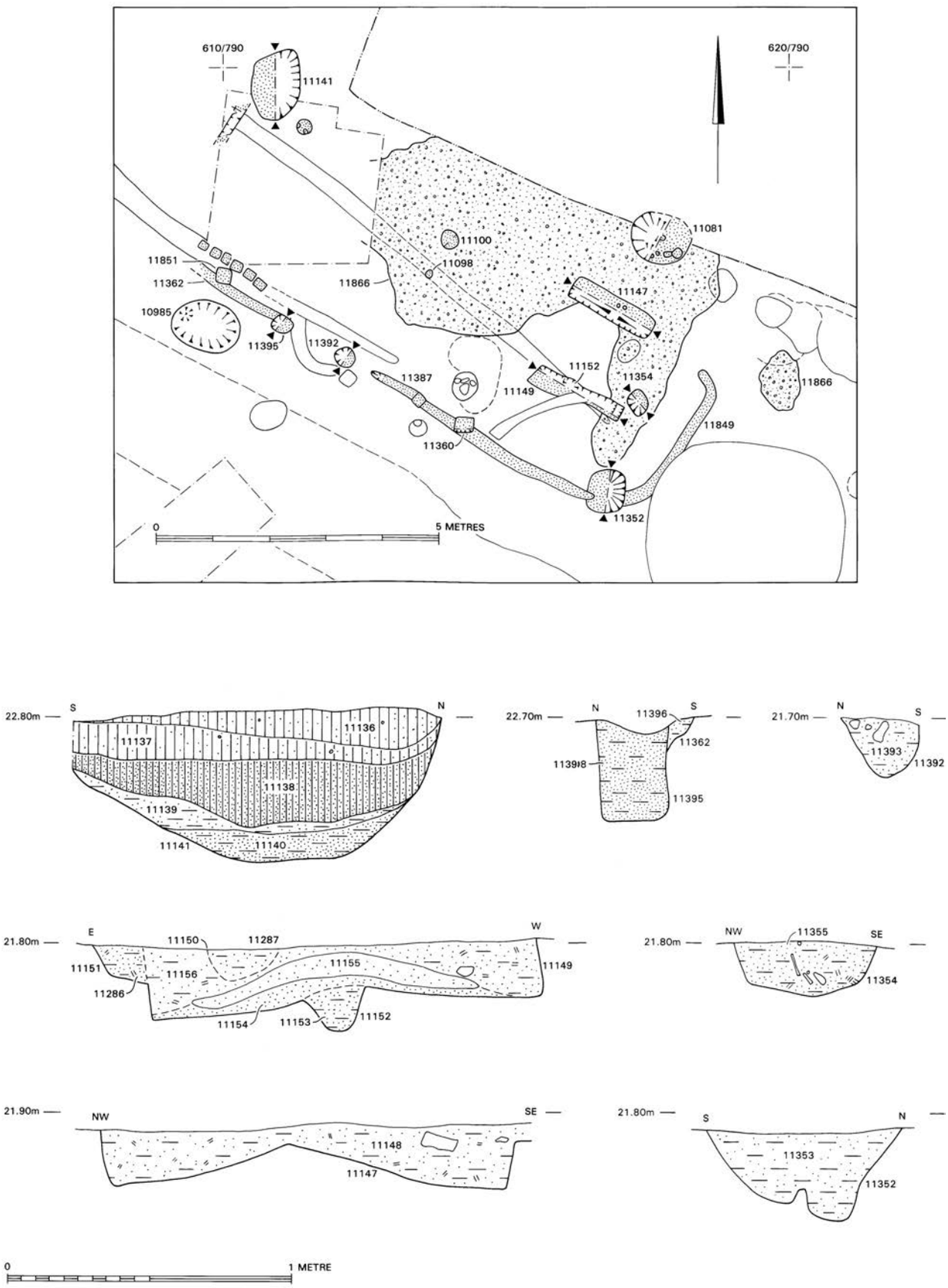


Figure 2.56 Phase 5B: structure ***48035*** and adjacent features, plan and sections

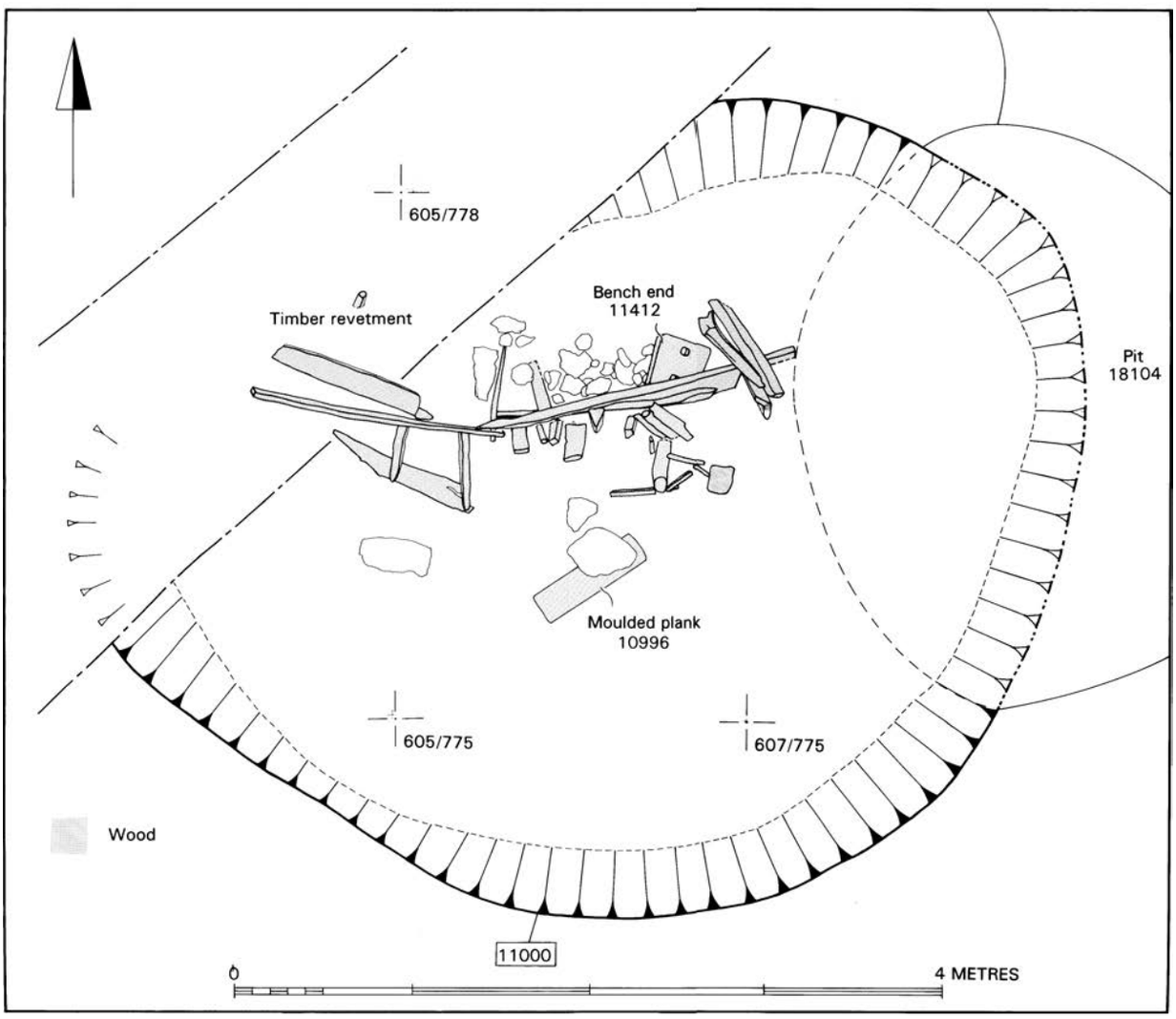


Figure 2.57 Phase 5B: pit ***18076*** (cut context no. *10001*), plan

post-holes at its north-western end, could have represented an earlier wall or fence or else a later repair. A large circular post-hole (*11352*), 0.33m deep, marked the structure's south-east corner; the slot was seen to continue in a north-easterly direction over a distance of *c*. 2.5m beyond this point, but was not excavated. A short length of ?beam-slot *11903* might have formed part of the corresponding north-western side of this structure. Since the slot itself often survived only to a depth of 0.05m, it is likely that differential truncation has had an impact here. The little pottery recovered from the fills of these features suggested a *terminus post quem* in the mid 3rd century.

Rather than defining a building *per se*, structure ***48035*** may have enclosed the southern side of a yard-surface measuring at least 9m x 4m, metalled by the series of chalk and gravel spreads within. It might represent an enclosed rear yard behind the Phase 5B structure ***48015***. Some smaller patches of compacted clay and chalk lay somewhat to the east of the main gravel area. Although grouped *en masse* during analysis with the various metalling layers, some may have been post-pads or other structural features. All of the small amount of pottery recovered, which included 4th-century material, came from the chalk and clay patches. Two parallel rectangular slots (*11147* and *11149*) recorded in the area of the gravel sharing the main alignment of structure ***48035*** have no obvious function.

Pit 18076 (Plate 2.16; Figs 2.57–2.59) was a large sub-circular feature excavated into peat deposits only a short distance to the west of the rather similar 2nd-century pit ***18075*** (Phase 4). Some time after it was dug its northern side had been revetted in timber, perhaps to ensure that activities around the pit edge did not lead to its collapse. The pit was 6.2m in diameter and was excavated to a depth of 0.8m; high ground-water levels prevented examination of its base and sectional recording. It was probably used for tanning or for some other industrial function.

The wooden revetment had been installed after a silty grey-brown primary deposit had accumulated in the pit base. Packed behind it to the north was a series of compact deposits containing large flints and clay. A grey-green peaty sand accumulation around the revetment base had been sealed in turn by a thick, uniform dark brown peat growth. The revetment was composed of planks and other timbers, some of them re-used and cleft stakes (Plate 2.16; Figs 2.57 and 2.58; Darrah, Chapter 8). The stakes themselves had chisel-ended or multi-faceted points and had been split from fast-grown oak timbers, possibly derived largely from a single tree. Two ash poles, a birch pole and a hazel rod had also been used. The planks, whose condition was relatively poor, had either been packed behind these uprights or interlaced between them. Some had been radially or tangentially split while others had been sawn. One of the lower cross-pieces was a plank with a mortise hole; a long peg through it was probably inserted to hold the plank in its place in the revetment, rather than being residual from its previous use. Also found was a re-used bench-end made from radially cleft timber, *11412*. This had been sawn in half, and had two surviving square angled leg-holes. Remarkably, dendrochronological analysis showed that it was derived from the same tree as a plank retrieved from the Phase 4 timber mortuary structure ***18056***, excavated 18m further to the south-east (Tyers and Groves, Chapter 8).

The pit's waterlogged fills were rich in artefacts. Many small scraps of leather were found (Mould, Chapter 7), including fragments of one-piece shoes and offcuts from their production. Several fragments of thin, pointed silver birch stakes did not form part of the timber revetment, but had been dumped in the pit instead. A finely carved maple plank with

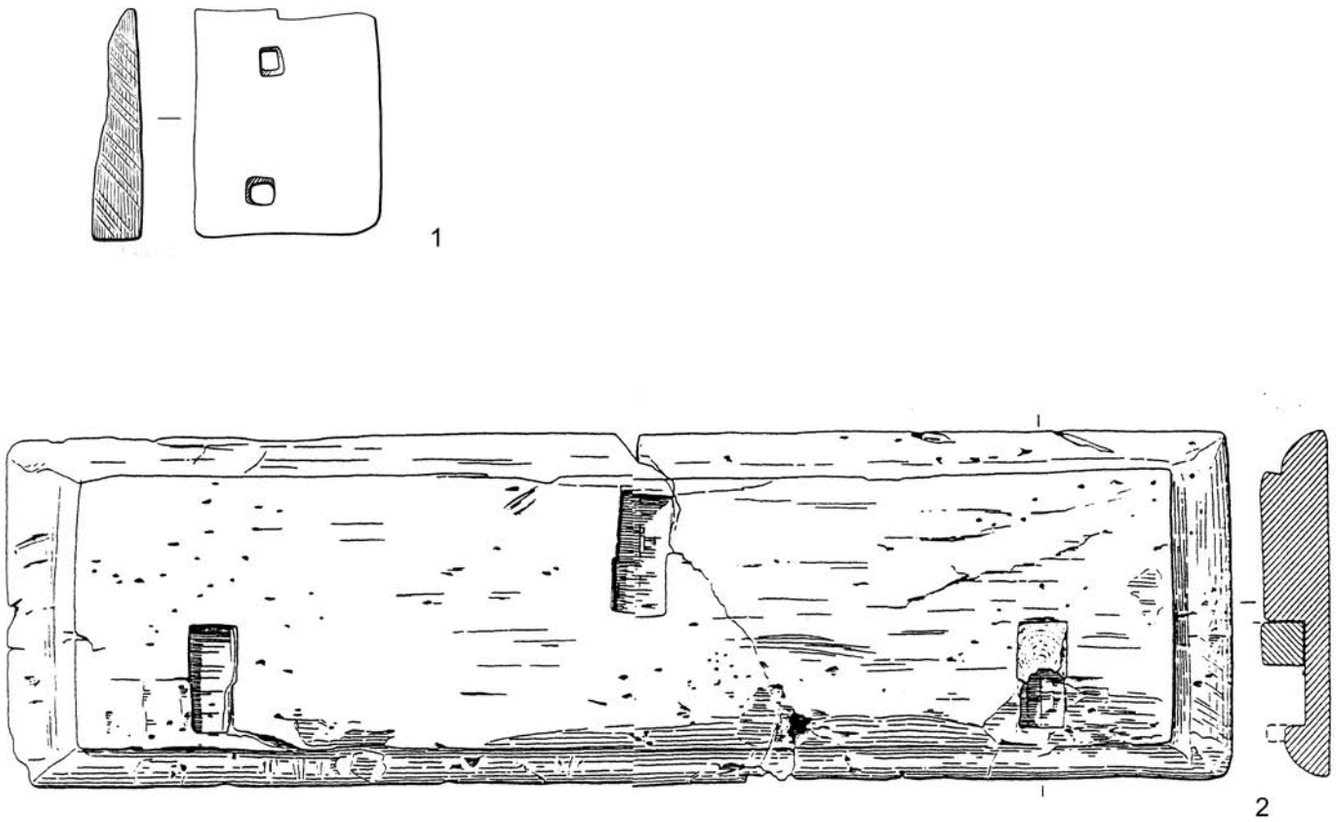


Figure 2.58 Phase 5B: wooden finds from pit ***18076***.: 1 – bench-end; 2 – moulded ?table base. Scale 1:20

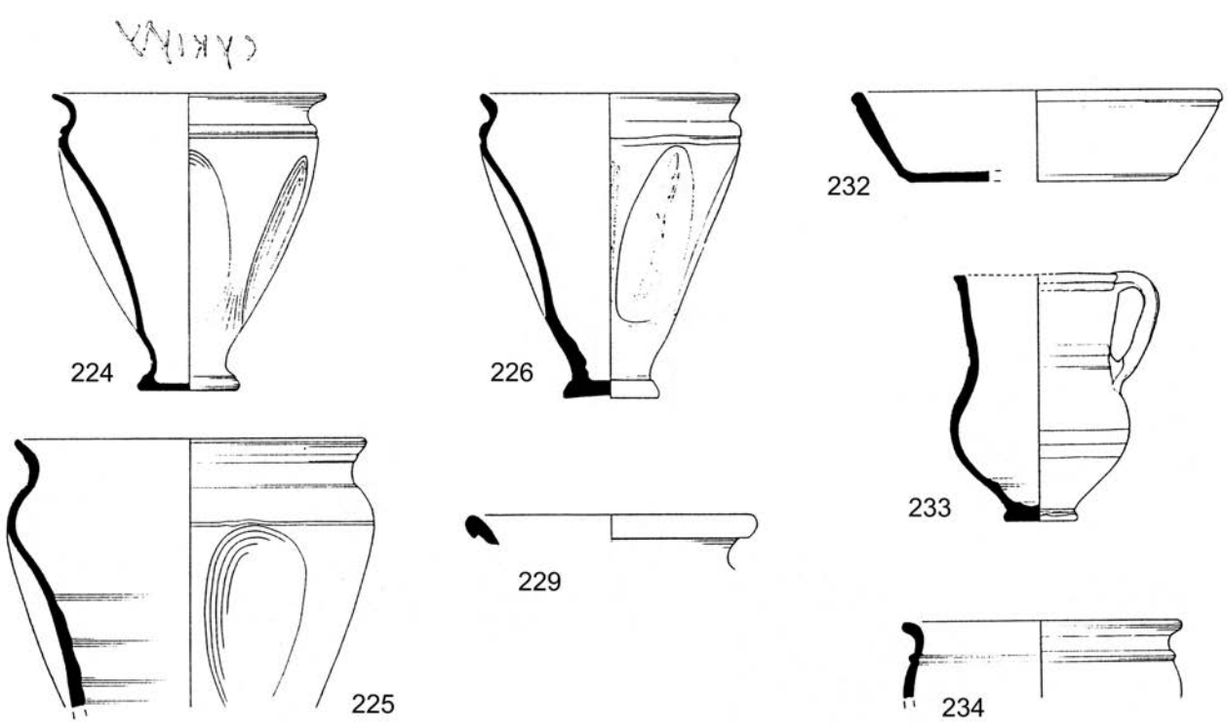


Figure 2.59 Phase 5B: selected pottery from pit ***18076*** (catalogue details in Chapter 6). Scale 1:4

a

b

Plate 2.16 Wooden objects *in situ* in pit ***18076***
a – revetment, looking west, showing re-used bench-end in foreground;
b – moulded plank (?table base), looking south

moulded edges, *10996*, was possibly a table base (Plate 2.16; Fig. 2.58; Darrah, Chapter 8). Its upper surface displayed three mortise holes, along with three re-cut replacements. One of these contained the remains of a wooden tenon.

The pottery assemblage of 9.08kg (324 sherds) was the largest from any pit or other discrete feature excavated at Scole (Fig. 2.59; Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 199–234). Over 60% of this material (by weight) was of Wattisfield grey ware, but Brampton (-type) and other grey wares were present too. Relatively large quantities of white wares, fine wares and amphora were also recovered. Samian was the most common fine ware but Pakenham, Nene Valley and Colchester colour coats were present too, as well as Oxfordshire red and Rhenish colour coats. The unusually high proportion of white and fine wares (*c*. 20%) is suggestive of refuse from a dining room rather than a kitchen. The assemblage suggests that the pit was backfilled during the later 3rd or 4th centuries.

Activity within and around this pit may well have been focused upon clay-floored structures ***48015*** and ***48035*** lying immediately to the north; indeed, the south-west facing 'entrance' recorded in the south side of ***48035*** (Fig. 2.56) may have been a gateway providing access to the pit from this possible yard area. Another possible structure *c*. 12m further to the east may also have been involved in these activities. A mixed spread of clay and grey-brown silty sand 0.10m thick, ***18058***, sealed a Phase 4 pit (***18019***) and probably represented floor material from a demolished structure which had become intermixed with Grey Soil. The site of this possible building is unclear. A small group of structural features recorded immediately to the north, ***18092***, might have formed part of it, or of another located nearby. Comprising two lengths of east-to-west aligned beam-slot and a shallow pit or post-hole that cuts one of the beam-slots, these remains shared the alignment of structure ***48035*** to the north-west. One of the slots contained almost half of an asymmetrical poppy beaker with an everted rim, indicating a date in the mid 3rd century or later.

Eastern enclosure
(Plate 2.17; Figs 2.33, 2.54)

In the 'cemetery' area in the south-west corner of this land-division, already described with reference to Phase 4 (p.35) and 5A (pp55–8), a sub-rectangular midden-like spread of soil measuring *c*. 8.3m by 4.3m in plan appeared to have been superimposed upon the Phase 4 infant burial ***18056***. Further to the north-east and much closer to the road, the remains of at least one clay-floored structure were recorded.

'Midden' 18100 comprised a series of thin humic sand layers rich in charcoal and other burnt material. The laying-down of these deposits had been punctuated by episodes of flood inundation (represented by silt horizons). The deposit sealed the ?fence alignment ***18038*** (Phase 5A), and its southern part protruded into the 6m-wide 'causeway' interrupting the peat-edge drainage ditches ***18008*** and ***18009***. The Phase 5A cremation group ***18050*** lay around its southern fringes; its stratigraphic relationship with the cremations was unclear, however, since the edge of layer ***18100*** in their vicinity was extremely shallow.

Deposit ***18100*** was fully excavated by trowel. It survived to a maximum thickness of 0.2m (Plate 2.17; Fig. 2.33). The upper burnt deposits *10278/11028* were very mixed, and no discrete layering could be noted. Micromorphological analysis of the lower deposits *10282/11029* identified two distinct charcoal-rich layers within them. Other horizons of burnt material were also identified by the excavators, on the west side of the midden in particular, but these were not subject to detailed scientific analysis. Beneath ***18100*** itself, deposits *11606* and *10801* may have represented a mix of burnt humic material and Grey Soil, while *11489* was a pre-midden accumulation of Grey Soil. Numerous 'stake-holes' recorded during excavation of the body of the deposit — provisionally interpreted as the remains of a timber structure of some kind — were more probably root-holes caused by large, semi-aquatic plants. Environmental sample assessment suggested that virtually all of the burnt plant material present was wood charcoal (Murphy, Chapter 9). Thin-section soils analysis revealed small fragments of burnt soil and peat, as well as bone and charcoal, indicating that the local area had been inundated frequently during the period of deposition (Macphail *et al.*, Chapter 9).

The burnt bone present was calcined to greatly varying degrees, and no identifiable pieces were human. Although teeth and fragmentary remains of several larger domestic animals (especially sheep/goat) and wild species were found, the faunal assemblage was dominated by small mammals, some of them perhaps the contents of owl pellets (Baker, Chapter 9). Small numbers of bird and amphibian bones, some of them calcined, were recovered during processing of environmental samples.

An assemblage of pottery weighing 9.11kg contained significant amounts of fine grog grey ware and grey fine ware. White wares were well-represented, and fine wares included Nene Valley, Oxfordshire red, Pakenham, Colchester colour coat and samian. The collection's 'domestic' or 'household' character seemed to be reinforced by a high number of mortarium and lid sherds. All of the forms identified may be dated to the mid 2nd to mid 3rd centuries AD (Lyons, Chapter 6). The group is very similar to that from the adjacent drainage ditch ***18008***, which was also assigned to Phase 5B. Cooper's study of the small finds from the midden and underlying soils (Chapter 7) also produced interesting results. In addition to twelve pieces of glass no less than six hairpins were found, a concentration unique on the site. These finds are

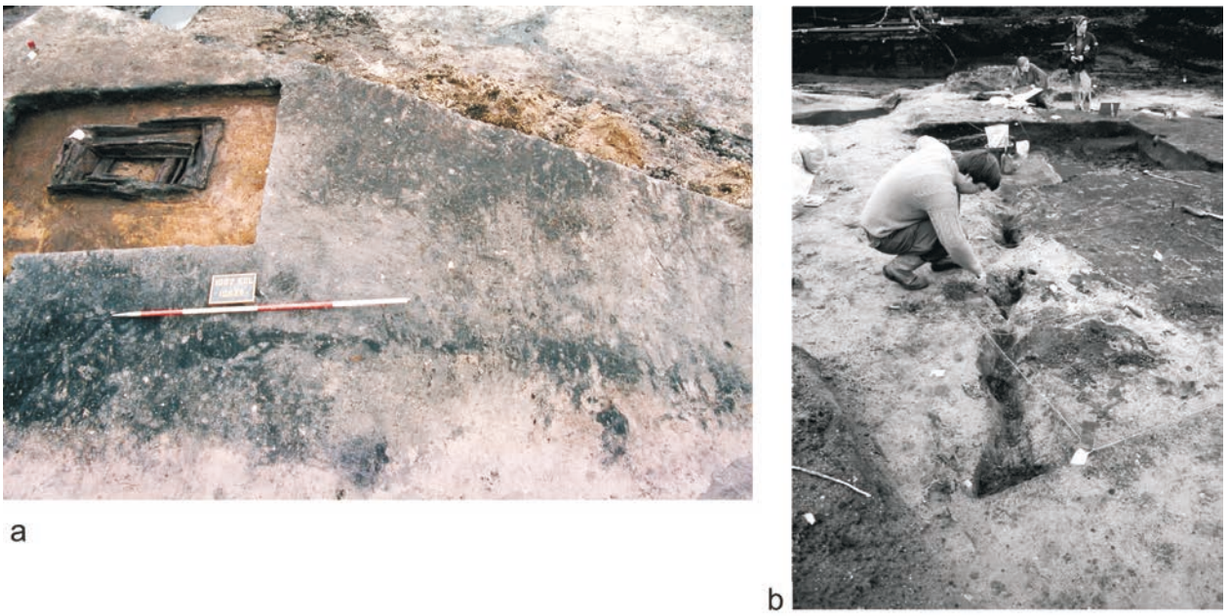


Plate 2.17 Phase 5B'Midden' ***18100*** and associated features:
a – deposit partially excavated, looking south-west; Phase 4 coffined inhumation ***18056*** at left centre;
b – gridded excavation in progress, looking south; Phase 5A stake-line ***18038*** being revealed

difficult to explain, although it is possible that some were deposited either during funeral rituals or during the preparation of corpses for burial or cremation.

At the time of excavation the complex was provisionally interpreted as the remains of a pyre, this view being supported by the adjacent cremation deposits and by the presence of abundant charcoal and bone inclusions. Scientific analyses, however, have suggested that none of its component deposits represented *in situ* burning and that the feature was actually an accumulation of 'rubbish' — especially since all of the pottery appeared unburnt.

It is uncertain whether or not the Phase 5A ditch ***18002*** lying on the boundary with the central peat-edge enclosure was still open at this time. The 3rd century may, however, have seen the erection of a new clay-floored building, ***structure 48071*** (Fig. 2.54). This was represented by a complex of clay floor deposits covering an area measuring 7m (north-to-south) by 6m (east-to-west), with a typical depth of 0.07m. It was mostly composed of light yellowish-brown clay with chalk and brick fragment inclusions. Other isolated patches of fired clay and chalk were also noted. The surface had been constructed over an extensive layer of Grey Soil, and sealed a collection of post-holes assigned to Phase 5A which may represent an earlier structural phase. Three hearths (***48075***), all carefully set into the clay flooring, were all probably components of this same building. Many nearby pits could have been associated it; in the absence of an identified well it is possible that stake-lined pit ***49015*** (Phase 5A) acted as a water source. Although many 4th-century coins were recovered from Grey Soil deposits in the vicinity (Davies, Chapter 7) these may indicate losses on a possible 4th-century pathway (Fig. 2.70) rather than intensive 'late' occupation of this structure or its environs. The small pottery assemblage included material dating to the late 3rd and 4th centuries, much of it abraded. Three sherds of Hadham red ware from floor material provided a 4th-century *terminus post quem* (Lyons, Chapter 6).

The road and roadside
(Fig. 2.54)

It appears that many of the prominent features which originated in Phase 5A continued in use through much of the 3rd century too. These may have included the complex of buildings excavated by Moss and its post-built neighbour ***38029***, as well as the well ***38000*** and the possible latrine pit nearby. Some short lengths of the roadside ditches still saw maintenance and cleaning-out during this period, notably the northern ditch ***28003*** in the area to the west of building ***38031***.

Activity north of the road
(Plates 2.10 and 2.11; Figs 2.43–2.45, 2.60)

Structure *38054* (excavated by Geoffrey Moss) and adjacent features
(Plates 2.10 and 2.11; Figs 2.43–2.45)

Structure 38054, apparently a second structural phase in the complex of buildings excavated in 1972, either replaced the earlier building ***38031*** (Phase 5A) or represented a wholesale remodelling of it. Once again, much important evidence had been obscured or destroyed by the earlier archaeological excavation, leaving the 1993 team heavily reliant on the baulks left by the earlier trenches.

It is suggested that this building was rectangular and measured *c.* 11.5m by 6.3m; unlike its precursor ***38031*** but like its easterly neighbour ***38029***, it was aligned end-on to the road. Fortunately, only the southern half of the building fell within the area excavated by Moss, leaving the northern part relatively undisturbed for excavation in 1993. The absence of clay floor-surfaces from this northernmost part of the building is striking, and the post-holes and beam-slots describing the building's northern outline were only observed when Grey Soil deposits had been machine-stripped to expose the natural sand. The north wall was defined by a series of post-holes which varied both in form and spacing and were typically c. 0.2m deep. One appeared to cut a short length of east-to-west aligned gully or slot, while a group of three intercutting post-holes (*30938*) was recorded close to the north-eastern corner. The surviving northern part of the west side was dominated by a three-metre length of beam-slot. This was punctuated by at least two post-holes (*31140* and *31143*) which appeared to have been set into it, although the limited scope of excavation here may well have prevented others from being identified. None of the east side's component features were excavated but it, too, appeared to include both post-holes and lengths of sill.

The floor surfaces in the southern part of the building were up to 0.3m thick (Figs 2.44 and 2.45) and comprised a series of pink, orange, red and yellow clay-and-chalk layers; they are prominent in the sections presented in Plate 2.11. Many areas of clay were partially fired and included brick, tile and flint inclusions. At least one post-hole (*30203*) had been cut into these floors. A similar post-hole located in the south-western part of the building (*30222*) was only visible in section. Other internal features included three pits, which varied from 0.1m to 0.25m in depth but were only identifiable in section. They contained mixed deposits of sandy loam with high clay, chalk and gravel content. Close to the front of the structure lay a substantial hearth (*30209*) which had been half-excavated by Moss. This measured 1.25m (north-to-south) by 0.8m (east-to-west) and was constructed of reddish-orange fired clay.

A layer of very dark grey brown sandy loam had accumulated above the floor surfaces. This may have been a 4th-century or post-Roman deposit that formed after the building's abandonment.

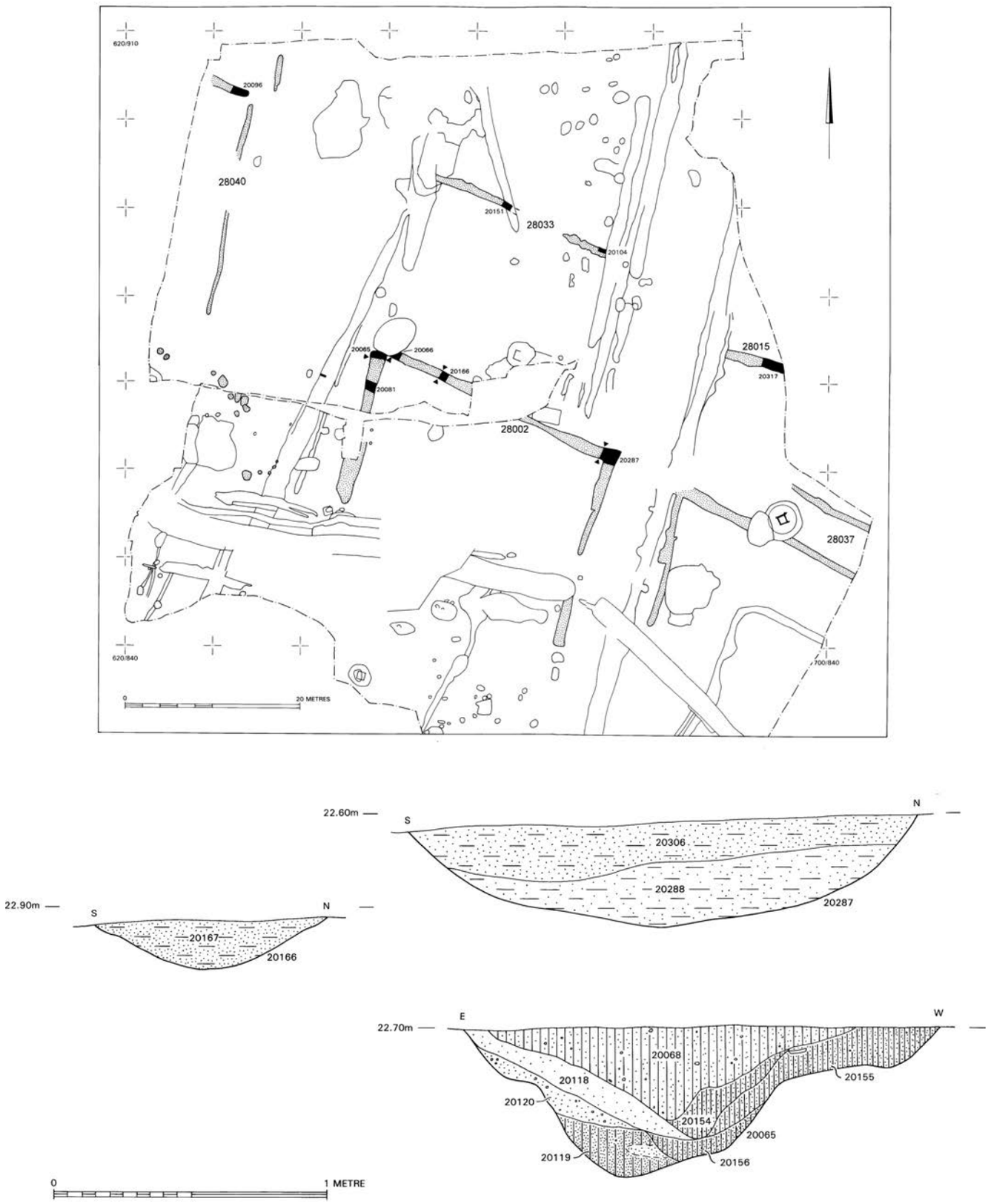


Figure 2.60 Phase 5B: enclosures and trackways in northern part of site, plan and sections

Immediately to the west of structure ***38054*** lay an extensive area of gravel metalling, ***38034***, which may have shared its 3rd-century date (Figs 2.43–2.45). Disturbance by Moss's excavation trenches (to the east) and by a north-to-south post-medieval ditch (to the west) made it impossible to record its extent and dimensions accurately. A stony levelling/foundation deposit near the building (Fig. 2.45: *30190*) may have been intended to prevent subsidence into the backfilled ditch ***28003*** below. This coarse layer appeared to have been a foundation for a spread of compact gravel and flint, *30189*, which was set in a yellowish-brown sandy matrix. This was 0.2m thick, and sloped gently from east to west (*i.e. away* from the adjacent building). While the surface cannot be dated closely, its relatively high level when viewed in section would suggest that it was associated with the Phase 5B structure ***38054*** rather than with its predecessor ***38031***. Its precise relationship with the Phase 5A well ***38027*** could not be determined, although it is possible that the metalling was laid *around* this earlier feature while it was still in use. The very small assemblage of pottery recovered included sherds of 2nd- to 4th-century date.

Building ***38054*** seems to have been distinctively different in character from the other structures excavated in 1993. The thickness of the clay flooring was striking, although this may indicate that these deposits had not seen demolition or deliberate reduction of the kind seen in the cases of other buildings. Its adjacent gravelled yard surfaces were also distinctive. The hearth lying within the clay-floored southern part of the building, although largely swept away by the earlier excavations, had been a substantial feature which was probably integral to the clay floor surfaces around it. The shallow pits recognised in section may have been 'robber' features, however, especially considering the quantities of building debris which were observed within them. The apparent absence of clay flooring from the northern portion of the structure *not* previously excavated by Moss is hard to account for. Clay floor-layers like those seen in the building's southern part could hardly have been swept away unnoticed during supervised machining; further, if the clay deposits had continued in this direction it is perhaps surprising that they were not 'followed' northwards by Moss's team in 1972. If the northern part of the building had not been floored in this manner, it may have seen different uses from the portion close to the road.

Activity in the northernmost part of the site
(Figs 2.54, 2.60)
An extensive complex of ditches in the northern part of the site may have defined a series of at least two rectilinear enclosures. It is possible that a north-west to south-east aligned droveway or other thoroughfare up to 20m wide was defined by ditches ***28002*** (to the south) and ***28033*** (to the north). At least two sub-rectangular ditched enclosures seem to have fronted onto the southern side of this corridor, and may be traced southwards over a distance of *c*. 25m. The enclosure lying in the central part of the site (defined by ditch ***28002***) may also have been bounded on either side by somewhat narrower north-to-south aligned trackways. This layout remains speculative. Although assigned to Phase 5B because of the available ceramic evidence, neither the ditch system's dating nor its overall integrity are beyond doubt since only a small fraction could be excavated.

The western arm of ***ditch 28002*** was relatively well preserved, with excavated segments showing that it was between 0.4m and 0.55m deep. This part of the ditch was filled with mixed deposits of yellowish brown and dark grey-brown loam and silty sand. The shallower northern section was filled with mid- to light grey silty sands. Some of the variations in depth may have been due to differential truncation, either resulting from plough truncation or from the mechanical removal of Grey Soil. A gap *c*.5m wide in its eastern arm did, however, represent a genuine intermission. Only a small quantity of pottery was recovered, but a large fragment of a late 3rd/4th-century flanged dish was found in the primary silting of the ditch's north-east angle (segment *20065*). ***Ditch 28033***, further to the north, was very shallow. This was probably due to erosion, although it had also been damaged in places by medieval features including a house-platform. No dating evidence was recovered.

Further to the east, the line of the putative north-west to south-east trackway was continued by ***ditches 28037*** and ***28015***. Ditch ***28037*** appeared to perpetuate the eastward line of ditch ***28002***, also turning southwards to define the western side of an enclosure. They were not excavated.

Close to the western limits of the site lay the intermittent north-to-south ***ditch 28040***. This was not excavated.

Phase 6 (4th century)

Introduction
(Fig. 2.61)
An apparent dearth of positively-dated 'new' structures and other features is most unlikely to indicate any falling-off in activity within the area examined until the end of the 4th century. Indeed, the abundance of 4th-century coins after a 3rd-century dearth might indicate intensification in activity, or even (conceivably) re-occupation of an area of the settlement that had seen some kind of hiatus, although there is no other detailed or substantive evidence for this.

Several pre-existing structures remained in use into this period and there is evidence for the continuing importance of iron-smithing and leather-working. The exceptional number of 4th-century coins recovered from the central and southern part of the excavation show that coin-loss continued until the end of the Roman period (Davies, Chapter 7). Larger quantities of pottery from the excavations have been dated to the 4th century than to any earlier period (Lyons, Chapter 6). While relatively few 'new' features of substance definitely originated within its span, new structural developments may be seen on the northern roadside, especially in the vicinity of buildings ***38028*** and ***38051***. It is also possible that the pottery assemblages from 'Phase 5B' structures ***48080*** and ***49000*** to the south of the road actually indicate a 4th-century date for them as well.

Lyons characterises the diagnostically 'Phase 6' 4th-century pottery assemblages as containing significant quantities of colour-coated wares — including the 'late' Oxfordshire products — and a wider range of Wattisfield forms than before (Chapter 6). Particularly notable was the number of late assemblages from silting and backfill deposits in the shafts of the Phase 5A timber-lined wells. It is suggested that many of these features may have remained in use continuously or intermittently since the later 2nd century AD; the assemblages of pottery from the Phase 5 structures on the northern roadside also suggest continuity from the previous century.

Nearly 82% of the coin assemblage from Areas 1–4 dates to Reece's Periods 13b–15a (AD 330–378; Davies, Chapter 7). Most of these were unstratified and occurred in distinctive linear concentrations in the area to the south of the east-to-west road. While this provides further evidence of continuing activity here in the late Roman period, the contrast with the near-coinless 3rd century is very striking (*Discussion*, p.103) and is not easy to explain.

South of the road
(Plate 2.18; Figs 2.61–2.63)
The Phase 5 enclosure pattern did not necessarily persist unaltered into the 4th century, and the main north-to-south dividing ditches ***18002*** and ***48007*** had silted up entirely by this time. Phase 5B post-hole structures ***48080*** and ***49001*** may have remained in use, although it is not clear when the buildings represented by the clay spreads ***48015*** and ***18058*** were demolished. The digging of large pits ***18023***, ***18072*** and ***18104*** shows that industrial activities persisted. In the area of the former eastern enclosure a 'new' north-to-south ditch, ***18001***, betrays 4th-century reorganisation. Coin-losses suggest that a pathway leading down towards the Waveney may have lain on the eastern side of this ditch.

Figure 2.61 Phase 6: phase plan

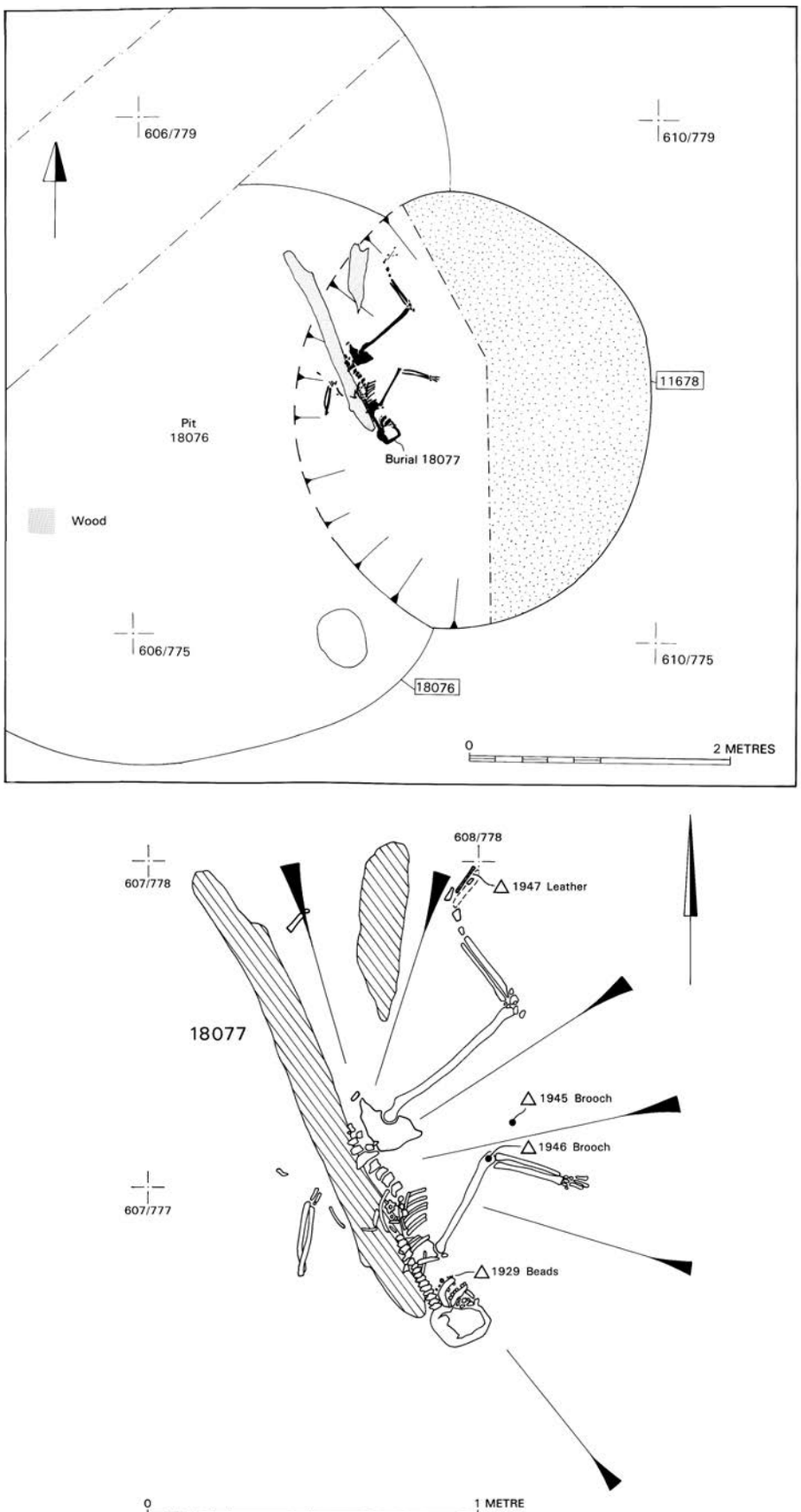


Figure 2.62 Phase 6: pit ***18104*** (cut context no. *11678*), plan; detail plan of burial ***18077***

Plate 2.18 Burial ***18077*** in upper fill of pit ***18104***, looking south

Pit 18104, a broad feature sited on the northern margins of the riverine peat, had been cut into the north-eastern part of 3rd-century revetted pit ***18076*** (Phase 5B) and was one of the latest of the large reservoir-like pits excavated in this part of the site. It measured 3.3m (north-to-south) by 2.6m (east-to west: Fig. 2.62) and was at least 0.7m deep. High water-levels and continual collapses prevented sectional recording. A primary deposit of black sandy peat and mottled yellowish-grey silty sand had been sealed by a dark brown peat growth which contained many large pieces of wood. Artefacts recovered included an assemblage of 1.662kg of pottery (77 sherds: Lyons, Chapter 6, cat. 260–272). This included some Nene Valley, Pakenham and unsourced grey colour coats; small quantities of shell-tempered reduced ware, Hadham red ware and Oxfordshire red colour coat confirm the 'late' date indicated by its stratigraphic position.

An inhumation, ***18077***, lay in a very shallow depression in the pit's uppermost fill. The skeleton lay on its right side (Plate 2.18; Figs 2.62 and 2.63) and probably represented an adult of age *c.* 30 years (McKinley, Chapter 9). It had seen disturbance in antiquity, particularly to the left arm and leg, and had also been slightly damaged during initial machining. The remains of the upper left arm were found in the layer of peaty sand that sealed the body. Its back appeared to 'rest' against a large branch or tree trunk, one of a number of pieces of wood which had been thrown into the pit at this time. A layer of pale brown peaty sand 0.15m thick dumped over the burial contained disturbed human bone and a fragment of blown green window glass.

The skeleton was accompanied by an extraordinary pair of copper alloy brooches: a 4th/5th-century Germanic supporting-arm brooch (Fig. 2.63; Cooper, Chapter 7, cat.53) and a hinged Colchester derivative of early Roman date (cat.32). A necklace of eight annular glass beads, threaded with catgut, was possibly fastened by a copper-alloy strip bent into an incomplete ring (Cooper, Chapter 7, cat.97). Fragments of leather shoe were recorded around the right foot. This skeleton may represent a clandestine burial, perhaps post-dating all recorded Roman period activity in this part of the site; the window glass from the sand deposit sealing the skeleton might indicate the abandonment or demolition of nearby buildings.

Pit ***18104*** was probably not the only large water-filled pit hereabouts dating to the 4th century. ***Pits 18023*** and ***18072***, observed during the sectioning of the main Waveney-edge drainage ditch complex, were not fully exposed and were only summarily excavated, but their waterlain fills suggested that they, too, had been used as reservoirs (see Fig. 2.14). Numerous sherds of Pakenham colour-coat flanged bowl from pit ***18023*** corroborated their late stratigraphic position.

North-to-south ***ditch 18001*** crossed the area once occupied by the Phase 5 eastern peat-edge enclosure. Neither its northern nor its southern extremities could be examined in detail but a length of at least 45m was observed; its southerly 'disappearance' might well have been due to problems with archaeological visibility in the surrounding peat deposits. It cut two earlier structural features, roundhouse ***18000*** (Phase 3) and clay floor surface ***48071*** (Phase 5B). Seven segments were excavated; the feature was up to 0.4m deep and its filling deposits varied considerably.

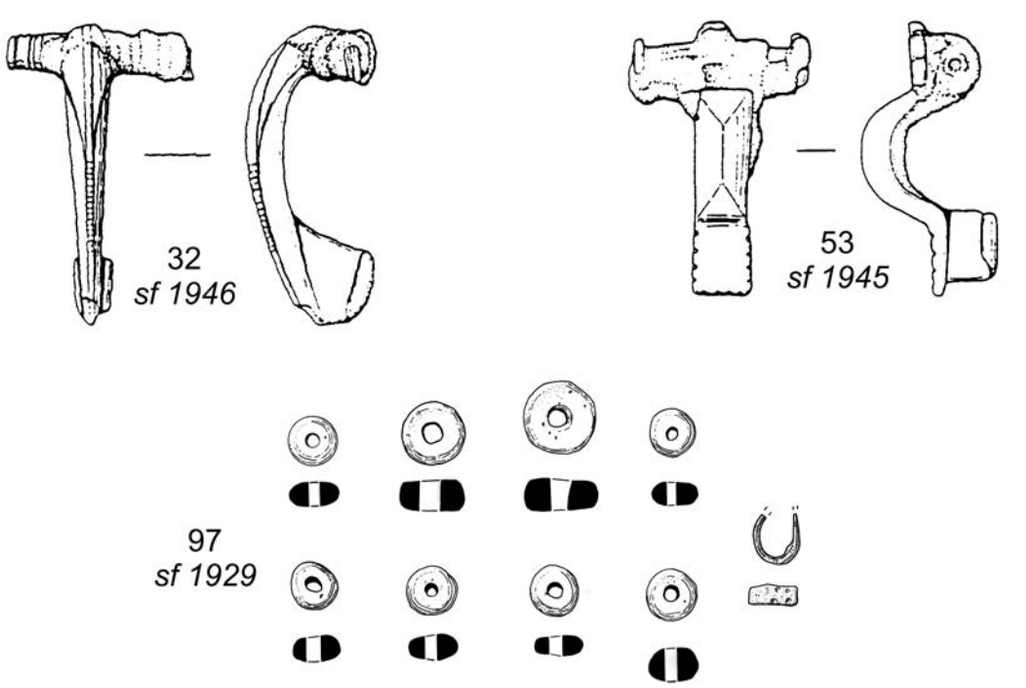


Figure 2.63 Objects found with burial ***18077***. Scale 1:1
32/sf 1946 – Colchester derivative brooch; 53/sf 1945 – supporting arm brooch; 97/sf 1929 – beads

Ditch ***18001*** may have represented an important new axis of development in this part of the site, marking the western edge of a route leading towards the river edge. ***?Path 48082***, was represented by numerous small patches and thin layers of compact gravel and by a strong distribution of coins of Reece's Periods 13b–15a (AD 330–378). A series of short east-to-west aligned gullies protruding westwards from the main ditch alignment may indicate a series of small land parcels fronting onto or abutting this pathway.

The road and roadside

The distribution of 4th-century coin losses demonstrates the continuing significance of the roadside area in the later Roman period. There were no indications that it fell out of use or became obstructed. The pottery assemblage from the filling deposits within the 'roadside' well ***38000*** (Phase 5A) shows that this remained open into — or, at least, was not backfilled until — the 4th century. Although the Grey Soil accumulation ***49025*** sealing the road-metalling was assigned to Phase 6 on ceramic grounds, this could well have been a post-Roman deposit (Fig. 2.16) rather than indicating late Roman dereliction. Likewise, a number of 'post-holes' cutting the road-metalling layers ***49020*** could have been post-Roman cut features, or even mere pot-holes.

North of the road

(Plates 2.19 and 2.20; Figs 2.61, 2.64 and 2.65)

Structures ***38028***, ***38051*** and adjacent features

(Plate 2.19; Fig. 2.64)

Structure 38028 was represented by a substantial spread of clay flooring measuring 7m by 4.7m, lying *c.* 8m beyond the likely northern edge of the road line. The eastern edge of the floor had been cut away by a later (medieval) boundary ditch while its most northerly part lay beyond the local limit of excavation. The floor was 0.1–0.15m thick and had been laid down upon a compact 'foundation' of brown silty sand which also contained inclusions of clay, metalworking debris and sherds of 4th-century pottery. Post-hole *10714*, 0.25m deep and with a packing deposit of flint and slag, lay close to the northern limit of excavation. A close-set line of ?stake-holes which followed the south-western edge of the clay was recorded in plan (although not excavated), while a second short, eccentric alignment was recorded close to the eastern edge of the floor. These were not wholly convincing as structural features — especially where they appeared to follow the ragged, truncated southern edge of the surviving clay rather than the limits of any likely structure, which probably lay further to the south-east. They may have represented animal and root disturbance around the surviving floor's edges.

Little of the clay deposit itself was actually excavated, and additional post-holes and structural features may have escaped detection. The presence of metalworking debris in the make-up layer beneath the clay suggested ironworking hereabouts prior to the 4th century. This could well have been centred on nearby structures ***38015*** and ***38029*** (Phase 5A) or on structure ***38052*** (Phase 5B). The assemblage of 371g of pottery (32 sherds) included an indented beaker, probably of 3rd-century date, in an unsourced red colour-coat fabric. Iron slag totalling 5.91kg was collected, along with two tuyère fragments and quantities of hammerscale (Cowgill *et al.*, Chapter 8); this quantity must be considered large in view of the small fraction of these deposits which was actually excavated.

Structure 38051 was represented by another area of clay flooring 2m further to the south. Rectangular in plan and measuring 6.2m (north-to-south) by 4.1m (east-to-west), this was also oriented end-on to the road straddling backfilled roadside ditch ***28003***. In the area of the ditch itself it had been laid down upon a foundation of olive green chalky clay. The main floor layer of light brown and orange sandy clay and chalk was 0.2m thick, and was edged on three sides by close-set alignments of stake-holes. While these were not excavated, they appeared — in contrast with the less certain examples recorded for structure ***38028*** — to reflect the likely perimeter of the building itself. To the west lay a pathway or fragment of yard surface, ***38053***, composed of gravel and flint cobbles. This was 0.2m thick and overlay the backfilled roadside ditch ***28003*** (Fig. 2.64). Elongate ***hearth 18099*** measured 1.8m (east-to-west) by 0.55m (north-to-south) and appeared to have been set into its western part (Plate 2.19). This was composed of light orange and red fired clay, progressively less heat-discoloured and yellower towards its edges. The silty sand within the cavity included some fired clay-lump inclusions.

Only one other nearby feature was dated to the 4th century. Pit ***38005***, 1m deep and *c.* 3.1m in diameter, was assigned to Phase 6 since it had been cut through roadside ditch fills thought to be of mid–late 3rd-century date. A collection of 3.1kg of pottery included a small quantity of Oxfordshire red colour coat material (Lyons, Chapter 6, 273–289). The main loam backfill deposit sealed several dumps of yellow-brown clay and large flint cobbles. Environmental assessment (Robinson, Wiltshire, Chapter 9) showed that this pit — unlike other deep features closer to the Waveney — had always been 'dry'. Its purpose is unclear.

This entire complex of features may have been associated with ironworking and the presence of metalworking debris in the upper fills of the roadside ditch ***28003*** — some lengths of which were probably still open during this period — is revealing. An absence of metalworking debris from the backfill of the roadside ditch *beneath* the clay floor ***38051*** contrasted with large quantities recovered from the fills of excavated segments to east and west, and in the area of the ditch's northward turn. Segment *10535*, close to the northern limit of excavation, produced 1kg of slag, while segments *10379* and *30131* yielded no less than 32.5kg of debris (Cowgill *et al.*, Chapter 8). These ditch deposits were heavily admixed with soil, and probably indicate gradual or spasmodic rubbish-dumping rather than systematically backfilling. Some of this debris may have originated in the Phase 5A/5B structures ***38031*** and ***38054*** excavated by Moss; indeed, structure ***38054*** may have seen simultaneous use with structures ***38028*** and ***38051*** in the 4th century.

Further to the east, pottery from the Phase 5A structure ***38029*** suggests that its use continued into the 4th century, but it is unclear whether the metalworking debris here represented its use for industrial purposes or the scrapping of ironwork on-site at the time of demolition (p.71). A large circular feature close to the eastern limit of excavation, ***pit 38044***, 12m to the north-west of this building and very close to its attendant well ***38024*** (originating in Phase 5A), was assigned to Phase 6. Excavation was incomplete, ceasing at 0.5m. Its dark silty sand filling deposits contained 3.5kg of animal bone but few other finds; the small quantity of pottery suggested a 4th-century date. Although perhaps intended for industrial purposes, it may have been a well which was not identified as such because excavation ceased above the level below which shaft timbers might have been expected to survive.

Features in the northernmost part of the site

(Plate 2.20; Figs 2.61, 2.65)

Features that clearly originated in the 4th century were sparse, although it is possible that the rectilinear ?trackway system defined by ditches ***28002*** *et al.* remained in use.

Well 28008, located close to the western limits of excavation, appears to have been the only excavated example of an obviously 'late' timber-lined well (although it is possible that pit ***38044***, described above, was another which could not be identified as such). The timber lining lay within a large circular construction cut which impinged upon part of the ?3rd-century enclosure ditch ***28037*** (Plate 2.20; Fig. 2.65). Excavation ceased 1.2m below the stripped surface. The waterlogged timber well-lining was only encountered at a depth of 0.7m below the surface; no trace survived at a higher level, and its upper components may have been robbed. It was badly decayed, and only two complete planks were extracted. Structurally, it appeared quite different from the other well-linings, being fashioned from slow-grown timber and assembled using neither saws nor nails (Darrah, Chapter 8). Apart from well ***38018*** (Phase 5B), it was also the only example without corner posts. A set of radially-cleft planks had been edge-lapped together to form a box lining measuring 0.9m square which was probably assembled *in situ*, this technique being ideal for underwater construction. The absence of laps on two of the upper planks suggested a slightly different construction was used in the absent ?robbed portion. The planks had been radially split from straight-grained oak trunks up to 0.6m in diameter and had been converted by sawing. The edge-laps had sloping sides and flat bottoms, and had been cut with either an axe or adze.

The shaft had filled with a series of brown silty sand deposits, the lowest excavated fill being a grey-brown silty sand (the primary silting was not seen). Waterlogged conditions in the lower levels of the well shaft led to good preservation of pollen, although the number of taxa noted during assessment was low (Wiltshire, Chapter 9). Most samples were dominated by weed and grass pollens; cereal palynomorphs suggested nearby crop-growing or processing. Tree pollen levels were very low and floating aquatic taxa were absent.

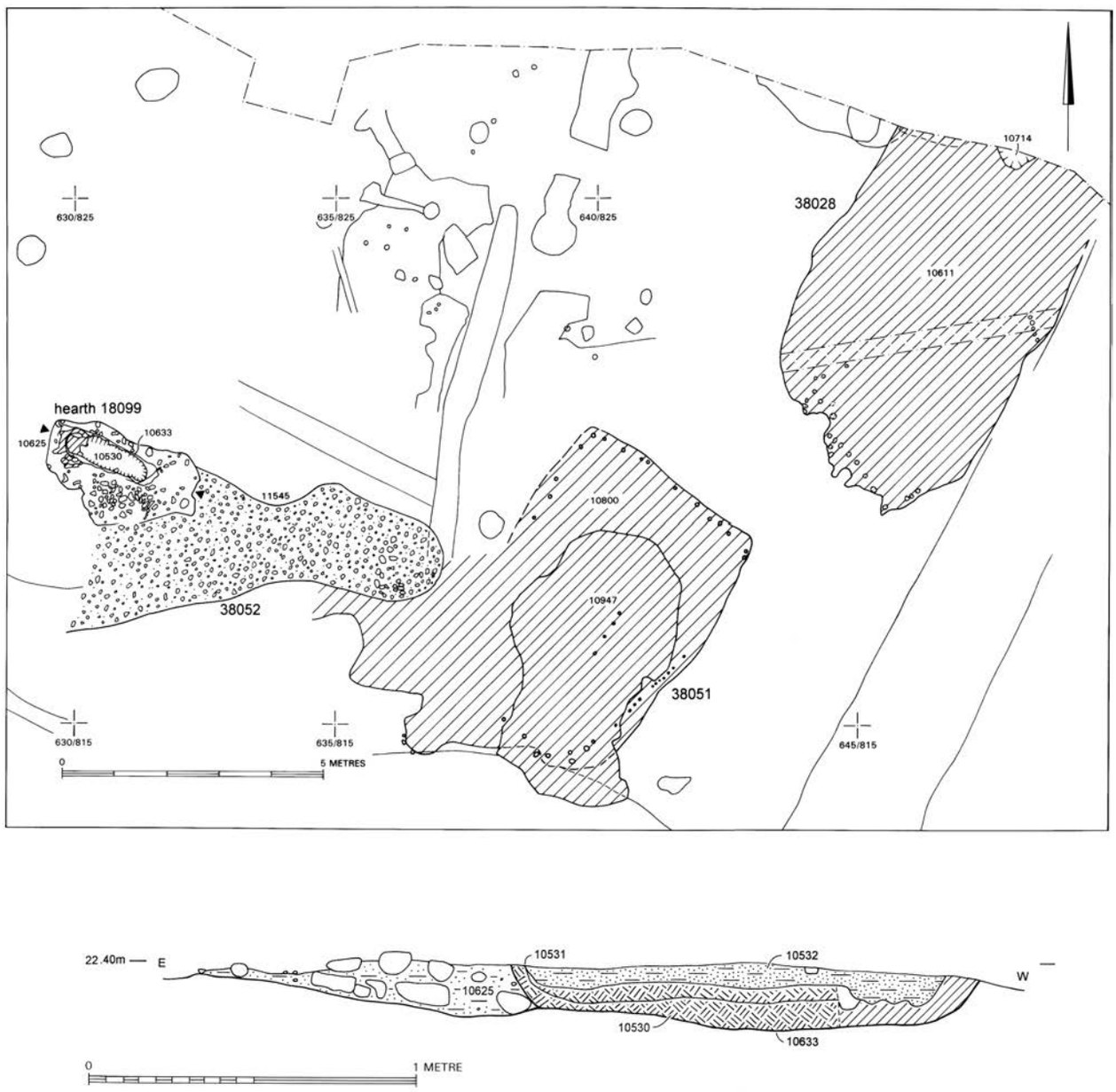


Figure 2.64 Phase 6: plan of structures ***38028***, ***38051*** and adjacent features; north-facing section through hearth *18099*

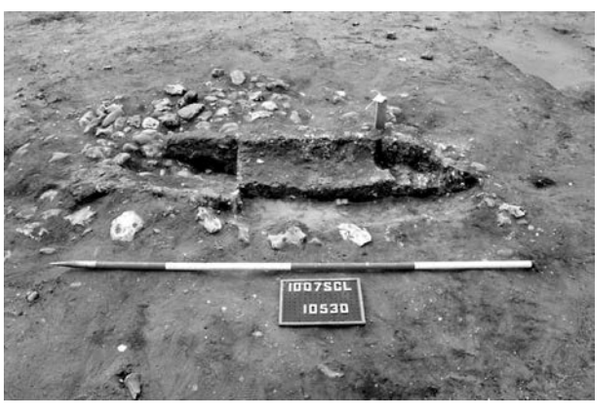


Plate 2.19 Hearth *18099* partially excavated and showing surrounding cobbling, looking south

The meagre pottery collection was dominated by Nene Valley colour coat material, but small amounts of white ware, Pakenham and Hadham red ware were also present. The only two vessel types recorded dated to the 4th century. While Darrah has suggested that the use of slow-grown timber indicates an early Roman date for the feature, this seems contradicted both by the composition of the pottery assemblage and by the manner in which the well had been cut *through* the Phase 5B enclosure ditch ***28037***. Perhaps the well functioned as a 'roadside' utility lying on the southern edge of the suggested north-west to south-east trackway crossing the northern part of the site.

Discussion

Phase 3
(Fig. 2.66)
It is clear that the area saw no intensive settlement during this period. The distance of *c*. 200m from the line of the main north-to-south road through central Scole may have been a significant factor, but Rogerson's 'town-centre' excavation area of 1973 offered no clear evidence of

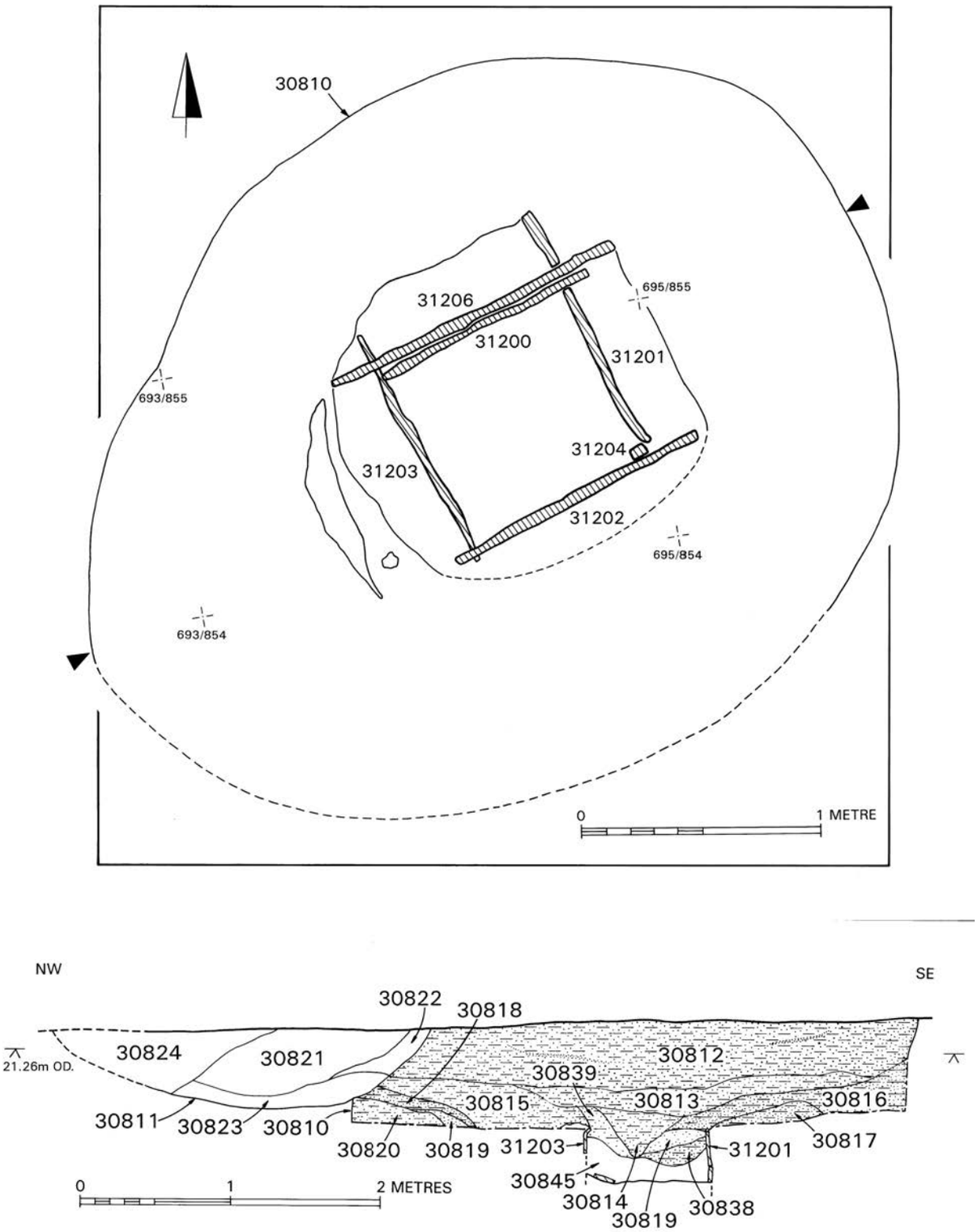


Figure 2.65 Phase 6: well ***28008*** and pit ***28009***, plan and north-west facing section

pre-Flavian occupation there either. The possibility that the road had an Iron Age or 1st-century antecedent, in the form of a trackway or a less formal road of some kind, is a real one, and especially given the late 1st-century dating of Rogerson's corresponding feature. The Phase 2 linear ditches ***49009***, ***49024*** and ***49036*** might have represented or echoed a later prehistoric antecedent. One piece of evidence hinting at the existence of an early Roman road pre-dating the Phase 4 roadside ditches is provided by the location of the possible post-hole and sill-beam structure ***38026***, which lay alongside and parallel to the northern road-frontage. It is unfortunate that this feature is poorly understood and was undated save by the fact that it had been partly cut away by the roadside ditch ***28014***. Other ephemeral remains of this date, had they existed, could well have been swept away or damaged beyond recognition by the subsequent intensive development of the roadside area during the later 2nd–4th centuries.

Plate 2.20 Well ***28008***, with shaft partly excavated in half-section, looking north-west

Roundhouse ***18000***, and the small enclosure within which it may have lain, appears to have been an isolated centre of activity, elevated above flood level upon a slight promontory close to the Waveney. The distribution of coin findspots (Fig. 2.66) also implies that this area was significant in the early Roman period. The purpose for which the building was constructed remains unclear. The finds assemblage, although limited, suggests that it was long-lived and may have remained in use into the latter part of the 2nd century. Although it may have been a dwelling house it is equally possible that the roundhouse was a centre for ritual or funerary activities, especially in view of the cluster of burials which was sited in the area immediately to its west during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. These burials included the infant inhumation ***18056*** (Phase 4) and cremations ***18050*** (Phase 5A); it is possible that the 3rd-century 'midden' ***18100*** (Phase 5B) which overlay it was also of ritual significance. Indeed, a structure that had had a long use-span or an enduring significance beyond the 1st century may have had a complex development history or 'after-life' — for example, a dwelling structure of early Roman date may have acquired some unknown religious or commemorative significance over time.

Audouze and Büschenchütz (1991) provide a summary account of roundhouse architecture, and offer some assistance with their reconstruction. Maybe the structure was thatched and featured a wall of close-set posts. If it was indeed roofed it is most likely, in the absence of deep post-sockets, that the principal roof-support timbers rested upon now-vanished pads of clay or stone at ground level (*cf.* Fengate; Pryor 1984, 126). The discovery nearby of an Iron Age coin — albeit from an open context — hints at later Iron Age activity.

While roundhouses are regarded as a quintessentially *pre*-Roman building type, this particular example probably originated in the later 1st century AD. Other long-lived round structures were excavated in the southern part of the settlement at Oakley Area 8 (Chapter 3). The presence of roundhouses in Roman Small Towns is documented by Burnham and Wacher (1990, fig. 2). Elsewhere in East Anglia, excavations at the Roman-period settlement at Pakenham (Suffolk) exposed a small roundhouse dating to the later 1st century AD which preceded the laying out of the rectilinear land-divisions typical of many Small Towns (Plouviez 1995, 71).

The manner in which the structure shared its promontory location with later cremated and inhumed burials — as well as with the 'midden' ***18100*** — has already been mentioned. The Late Iron Age/conquest period enclosure at Fison Way, Thetford contained several round buildings of the mid 1st century AD which were apparently used for religious or ritual purposes (Gregory 1991, 109) but were not clearly associated with burial. At a first glance, the archaeological traces of roundhouse ***18000*** at Scole bear some resemblance those of buildings 4 and 5 at Fison Way. Although Gregory thought that these particular structures were roofless (*ibid.*, 107–110) this seems less likely here, especially considering the ceramic evidence for the building's persistence. While a free-standing screen wall exposed to the elements would have needed frequent repair and renewal during a long period of use such as that suggested here, this need not necessarily have been true of a substantial roundhouse which was not structurally dependent upon deep earthfast posts and was protected by a substantial roof. Drawing on the results of prolonged experimental work at Butser and Pimperne Down, Reynolds (1995) has argued that many roundhouses could well have remained viable buildings (held in structural equilibrium by their roof-weight) for very long periods of time after the bases of earthfast posts had rotted away.

The precise form of surrounding enclosure ***18031*** is unclear, particularly on its eastern side. If the building

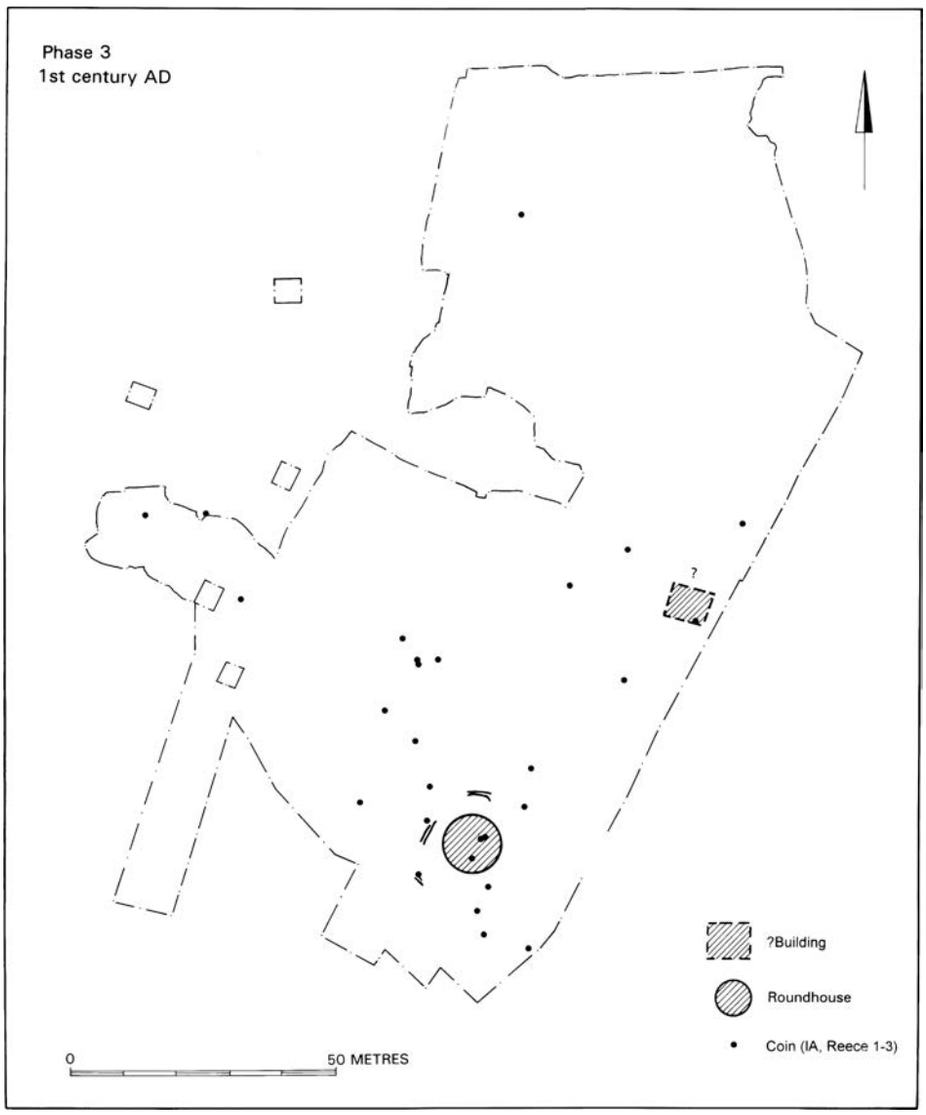


Figure 2.66 Phase 3: interpretative plan showing main features and coin distribution

within was indeed used for religious purposes it may have been a *temenos* enclosure of some kind. Against this must be set the frequent occurrence of domestic roundhouses within domestic enclosures (Hingley 1989). The partial excavation of this feature and the intensity of later disturbance in the area prevent further comment.

Phase 4
(Fig. 2.67)

South of the road
It appears that the peat-edge zone remained relatively undeveloped during the period. The attribution of burial ***18056*** and the adjacent tanning pit to the broad span of Phase 4 rests on analysis of the pottery assemblages which they contained, rather than on clear stratigraphic relationships or artefact associations; it cannot be demonstrated conclusively that burial ***18056*** took place at a time when the nearby tanning-pit was in use. The low promontory occupied by roundhouse ***18000*** may already have been established as a ritual focus during the 1st century. The location of the subsequent cremation group ***18050*** (Phase 5A), and the evidence for the roundhouse's continuing use into the later 2nd century or even beyond, imply that ritual and industrial pursuits both continued here into the late 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The edge of the riverine peat may have been favoured for burial and industry for entirely different reasons. The high levels of ground-water in this part of the site would have been ideal for opening reservoirs and soaking-pits — and for keeping them filled! — with a minimum of effort. The marshland adjacent to the river could also have been useful for discarding waste and effluent well away from areas of human habitation. In funerary terms the area's 'boundary' location, lying at the southern limit of all human activity north of the Waveney and at the interface between wet and dry terrain, could have been symbolically meaningful. The environmental evidence from pit ***18075***, however, confirms that the area is unlikely to have seen intensive occupation (p.35). Industrial activity and burial are both often marginal to settlement in Roman Britain, and the co-location of these features may have had no deeper intrinsic significance.

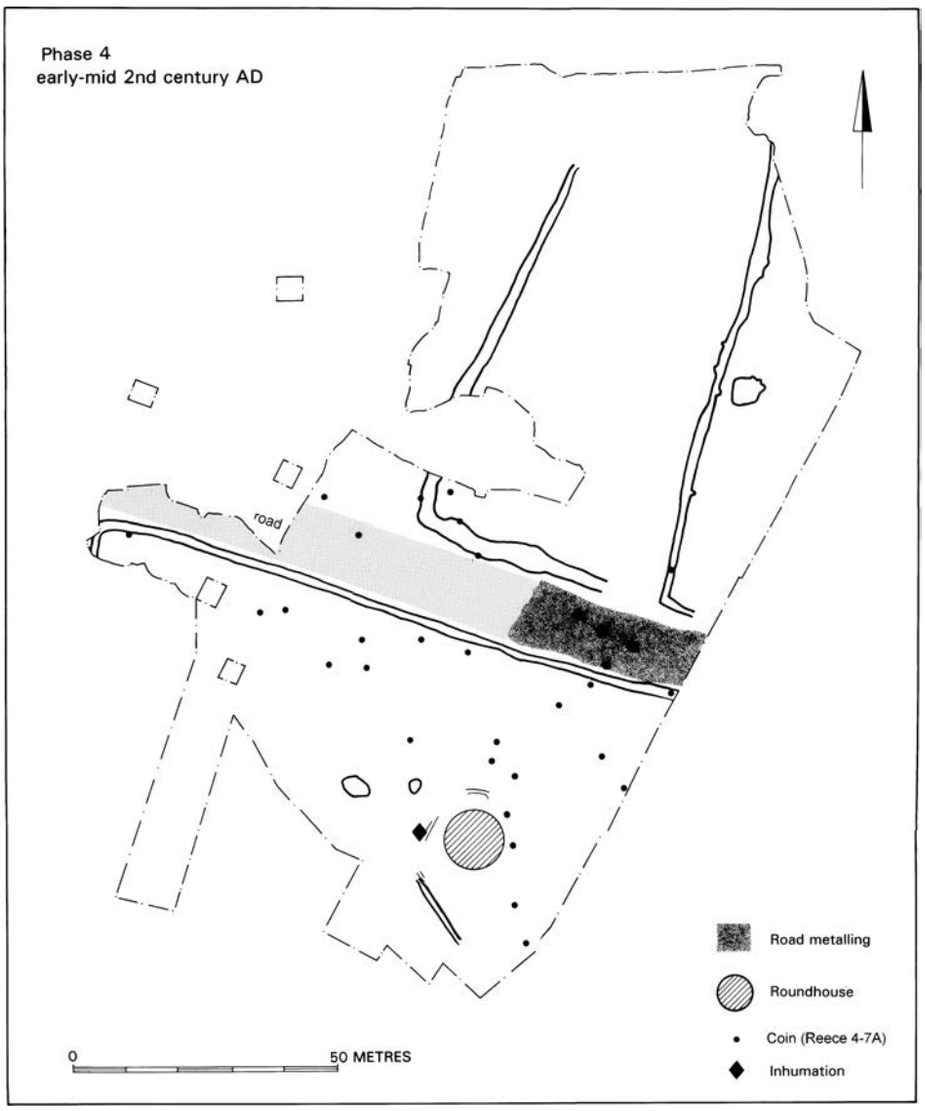


Figure 2.67 Phase 4: interpretative plan showing main features and coin distribution

The road and roadside

The construction-date of the main east-to-west road is not entirely certain. The pottery assemblages from the two main roadside ditches and from ditch ***28014*** offer a *terminus ante quem*, and indicate that these features were in existence by the early or mid 2nd century. The general coincidence between the alignment of the road and the Iron Age linear features of Phase 2 has already been mentioned, along with the possibility that this Roman road perpetuated the line of a less substantial predecessor. More significantly the late *1st*-century date for this road suggested by the results of Rogerson's excavation may indicate that it did pre-date the laying out of the ditches.

It was clear that the western part of the length of road examined in 1993 had never been metalled. This absence cannot be explained in terms of deep ploughing or other truncation. Although no positive signs of rutting or traffic-compaction were recorded, traces of this kind could well have gone unnoticed during the mechanical removal of Grey Soil from the area. The western limit of the road-metalling may have taken the form of a shallow yet well-defined ramp. Perhaps this was the western limit of a series of 'proper' road surfaces which were confined to the more central parts of the settlement. It is not known if the metalling was an original 1st–2nd century feature or a subsequent development or embellishment, although the coincidence between its western limit and Phase 5 ?porticoed building ***38031/38054*** might indicate that building and road-surface together formed part of a later scheme dating to the late 2nd–3rd centuries.

The roadside ditches were not intended only to provide rainwater-drainage for the road itself: they were *c.* 15m apart and (in the surfaced area) there was an unmetalled margin of 3m or more between the edge of the road surface and the ditch. Given the proximity of the Waveney they may have been intended to ensure rapid drainage of the highway after flooding. Perhaps their importance as elements of the road itself should not be over-estimated, the road continuing in use long after they had been fully infilled and (in some places) encroached upon by structures dating to Phases 5 and 6.

The southward turn taken by the southern roadside ditch close to the western limit of excavation might indicate a junction with a secondary route heading southwards towards the Waveney.

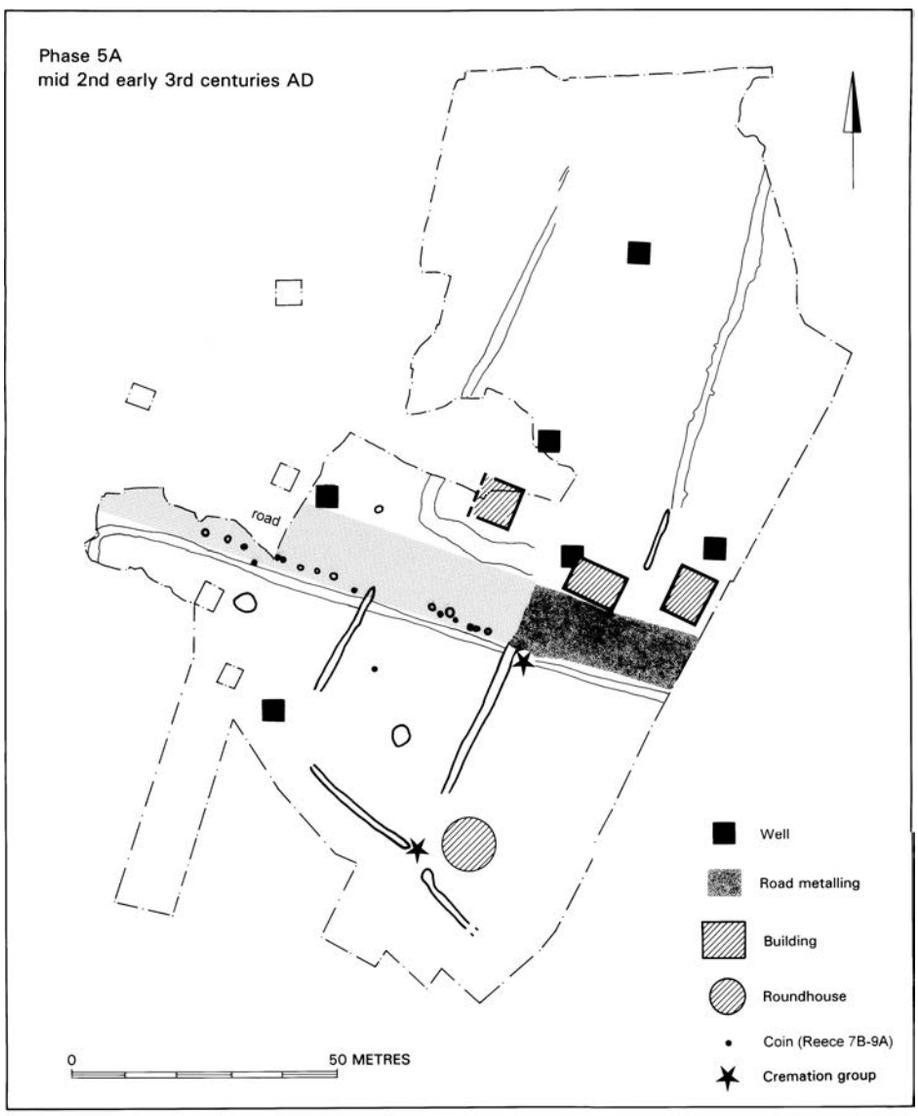


Figure 2.68 Phase 5A: interpretative plan showing main features and coin distribution

North of the road

This zone was probably agricultural or waste land during the earlier 2nd century. Compared with the pits excavated in the area to the south of the road, pits ***28017*** and ***28030*** were both exceptionally broad and deep. They would have been partly filled by ground water at all times. Perhaps they were water-sources for humans or stock and thus precursors, in general terms, of the numerous Phase 5 timber-lined wells.

Either ditch ***28014*** or the north-to-south section of roadside ditch ***28003*** may have marked the western perimeter of the early Roman settlement before its subsequent expansion in the mid–later 2nd century. This cannot be proven, however. The northern section of neither ditch was very deep (although plough-truncation may have played a part here); perhaps they simply demarcated individual small fields or other land-divisions associated with the settlement prior to its later 2nd-century expansion. While the east-to-west section of ditch ***28014*** respected the Roman road, acting as an easterly continuation of the 'main' roadside feature ***28003***, it had been deliberately backfilled during the late 2nd or early 3rd centuries (Phase 5A) to permit building over its line. The north-to-south part of its alignment probably remained open beyond this date, however, and may have functioned as a property-division in the system of Phase 5 roadside enclosures. The length of 'roadside' ditch ***28003*** that headed northwards might have indicated the eastern edge of a tributary road or track.

Phase 5A

(Fig. 2.68)

Chronology and dating

The accounts of each phase have already emphasised the 'approximate' nature of Phase 5A and 5B's date-spans. A more fundamental question, however, is raised by the coins from Areas 1–4, which date overwhelmingly to the *4th* century (Davies, Chapter 7), rather than to the suggested period of settlement expansion in the later 2nd–3rd centuries. Although Davies has stated that such a preponderance of 'late' coins is by no means unusual on rural settlement sites in northern East Anglia the patterning from Areas 1–4 is particularly extreme,

especially given the very small number of 3rd-century issues. How may the coin evidence be reconciled with the suggested development of this part of the town in the later 2nd and 3rd centuries?

The possible frailties of a phasing methodology that depended heavily on appraising feature assemblages of pottery (especially pottery from ditches and large pits) must be acknowledged clearly. Yet the 2nd-century origins of the series of developments construed as Phase 5 seem clear enough. The collection of samian wares recorded from Moss's 1972 excavation (although neither quantified nor available for re-examination) suggested that the structural complex he excavated originated in the 2nd century. To this, and the ceramic dates for the backfilling of sections of the roadside ditch and for the cremation groups ***18050*** and ***48083***, may be added the evidence of the distinctive timber-lined well shafts, many of them perhaps built by the same workshop if not by the same hand. The dendrochronological date of *c*. AD 172 on green oak from well ***38018*** accords with the 2nd-century date for Rogerson's Wells I and II, whose linings were of the same distinctive pattern as those of so many of the wells in Areas 1–4 (Rogerson 1977, 107–17).

Despite the dearth of coins, this seems to indicate that occupation and formal development in this area pre-dated the onset of heavy coin deposition. An alternative explanation is that this area of the settlement was abandoned for a lengthy period during the 3rd century before re-occupation in the 4th. This may indeed have been the case, yet the histories of some of the individual structures in Areas 1–4 would appear to contradict this. Very few of the buildings clearly originated in the 4th century or offer clear evidence for reconstruction or re-modelling during Phase 6. Furthermore, many of the timber-lined wells assigned to Phase 5A appear to have remained open well into the 4th century, in a manner which could only be explained by deliberate 'capping' at the time of any abandonment followed by subsequent re-opening.

The mid–later 2nd-century westerly extension to the Small Town seems to have coincided with similar developments around the southern periphery of Scole (Chapter 3); Chapter 5 considers the possibility that both these developments form parts of a wider-ranging development initiative. While the southern limit of roadside development in Areas 7 and 8 was clearly identifiable, the westerly extent of the ribbon development seen in Areas 1–4 was unclear. Roman-period activity could well have continued westward beyond the areas that saw excavation and survey.

South of the road

Phase 4 tanning pit ***18075*** suggested that industrial activity began in this part of the site before the onset of this phase. The later 2nd century, however, saw the laying out of a series of rectilinear property divisions stretching southwards from the peat and the creation of a formal ditched boundary separating 'dry land' from the marsh and deep peat adjacent to the River Waveney. As well as marking the extent of distinct land-units which may well have reflected divisions of property, these ditches could also have played a role in draining this low-lying area. It is unclear whether the enclosures were divided one from another by fences or banks as well as ditches. The more southerly parts of the north-to-south ditches which separated them could not easily be traced. While discontinuities could well have existed (for instance in the boundary between western and central enclosures, both of which might possibly have been served by the well ***18016***), it is also possible that these features were not always clearly visible to archaeologists in this peaty zone of the site.

It appears that much of the length of southern roadside ditch ***48008*** persisted as an open feature during the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries. Yet the northern limits of the central and western enclosures were actually defined by the east-to-west post-hole alignments a short distance further to the north. Either the roadside ditch was insufficiently deep by this time to pose a serious obstacle to traffic, or else it was bridged or infilled at certain points. On the northern boundary of the *western enclosure*, the termination of fence ***38013*** *c*. 8m short of the northern end of the north-to-south dividing ditch may indicate an entrance, while the cluster of cremations in the north-west corner of the *eastern enclosure* might have coincided with another. The northern edge of this land-division seems to have fronted directly onto the metalled section of the road itself, with no indications of a fenced boundary.

Only the central peat-edge enclosure was fully exposed (although most of the western enclosure, whose trapezoidal form would have been dictated by the westerly convergence of the road and the River Waveney, was probably examined). The extensive clay ?demolition layer ***48018***, also assigned to Phase 5A, implied that a building of some kind lay in the middle of the central enclosure, but neither its size nor its appearance may be reconstructed. Its location immediately to the north of the possible tanning pit ***48051***, however, makes it possible that the two features were related. Other evidence for buildings was slight. Clusters of post-holes recorded in all of three enclosures were suggestive of timber structures but there were no signs of the clay floors which characterised the more substantial buildings. They may have represented ephemeral stores or shelters.

Easy access to water, and remoteness from the centre of the town and (probably) from the most intensive human habitation, could have made the area suitable for noxious or dangerous industrial activities. The single large round pits in the western and central enclosures indicated that tanning was practised here. Leather offcuts from the fills of waterlogged features in the western enclosure imply leatherworking, although this was represented only by debris and may in fact have taken place elsewhere (p.54). The only timber-lined well hereabouts, ***18016***, would probably have produced relatively peaty, brackish water.

The evidence for ritual and funerary activity around the fringes of the eastern enclosure is important. It is striking that one group of cremations, ***18050***, is on the stream-side of the enclosures but outside them, while the other, ***48083***, is on their corresponding road-side but also beyond their limits. Roman-period burials in both town and countryside have frequently been recorded on and around boundary features and at roadsides. The two groups of late 2nd- or early 3rd-century cremations appear to have been deliberately sited at the enclosure's north-west and south-west corners respectively. The evidence from the south-west corner, where the seven cremations were concentrated on and around a 6m-wide causeway across the peat-edge drainage ditches, is especially interesting. Although the group (***18050***)

appeared carefully sited at this nodal point in the Phase 5A enclosure system, it is equally possible that it represented continued ritual activity a part of the site which was already significant *before* this formal land-division occurred. The cremations lay immediately to the south of infant burial ***18056***, which was assigned to Phase 4 during analysis on the basis of the pottery it contained. If the ceramic phasing of these features is correct, it is possible that the enclosure pattern respected, or was articulated around, a pre-existing complex of funerary features when it had been laid out in the later 2nd or early 3rd centuries.

This impression is strengthened by the manner in which the eastern enclosure seemed to incorporate the earlier roundhouse ***18000*** within its south-western corner. The pottery assemblage from the area of this building suggested that its use continued in use into the later 2nd or 3rd century (pp33–4). The roundhouse's proximity to the Phase 4 infant burial ***18056*** has already been discussed; its closeness to the Phase 5A cremations ***18050*** may also have been significant. At this time, the intermittent stake alignment ***18038*** may have separated the cremations (on its western side) from the roundhouse (to the east). Perhaps it had been erected as a symbolic barrier of some kind, separating activities taking place in and around the roundhouse from the cemetery itself.

The road and roadside

A number of important matters remain unclear, not least with regard to the metalling deposit ***49020***. The possibility that this was a secondary development post-dating the (Phase 4) roadside ditches has already been discussed (pp36–44), particularly with reference to the location of the Phase 5 ?porticoed building alongside what appears to have been its formal western limit. The metalling's western limit also coincided with the junction between the central and eastern peat-edge enclosures, both of which fronted onto the road, and with the small group of Phase 5A cremations ***48083*** in and around the southern roadside ditch.

If the abrupt termination of the metalling marked the western limit of the settlement, in a relatively formal sense, at the time of its laying-down, it is possible that the relatively imposing building ***38029*** had been deliberately sited at this significant location. Within this context, the nearby cremations ***48083*** may offer another example of a liminal Roman cemetery. But while this point coincided with the boundary separating the central and eastern peat-edge enclosures, no ditch or other feature which could be interpreted as a major settlement boundary intersected with the road here. The northward turn taken by the northern roadside ditch ***28003*** only 25m further to the west might well represented one side of a road or track marking the limit of settlement, but the lack of large-scale stripping in the area further to the west makes it impossible to determine to what extent this area had actually been built up or developed.

Two features perhaps intended for public use — the timber-lined well ***38000*** and possible latrine nearby — lay at this road intersection, while the unusual post-hole ***38001*** was perhaps a boundary-marker or similar roadside feature (p.61). Once again, the closeness of the western limit of excavation made it difficult to be certain whether or not they had lain at the western 'entrance' to the main settlement. Roadside 'street furniture' in Small Towns has seen little systematic study. Gurney has suggested that an unusual crop-mark at a junction between two roads at Hockwold (1995a, 66, pl. 6.2) indicates a statue or other monumental feature. Might this apparently single oversize post-hole here represent something similar?

The fringes of the *c*. 15m-wide road corridor delineated by the Phase 4 roadside ditches had seen encroachment by buildings and land-allotment to both north and south. Similar invasive development was recorded by Green's 1973–4 excavations in the south-western outskirts of Brampton (Green 1977, fig. 13). While it is possible that southern ditch ***48008*** remained an open feature during the later 2nd century its northern counterpart ***28003***, by contrast, was now heavily interrupted, its eastern terminus apparently backfilled wholesale to allow the construction of building ***38031***. The length of Phase 4 ditch ***28014*** that flanked the road was also backfilled, apparently to permit the construction of timber building ***38029***.

North of the road

While enclosure boundaries were less explicit than to the south of the road it seems likely that this area, too, was formally divided into a series of plots in the later 2nd century or afterwards. Disturbances by later features (and the presence here of an east-to-west tract of the site that remained unexcavated) all make it difficult to understand the layout. However, it appears that each of the three putative divisions featured both a substantial building lying on the road-frontage and an associated well. The siting of two of these wells suggested that these plots were at least 25m deep, and they may have had an even greater north-to-south extent.

It is difficult to determine the uses to which the three roadside buildings were put. The available evidence, albeit partial and in many ways unsatisfactory, suggests that building ***38031*** was different in character from its neighbours. Evidence for its relative formality is to be found in the location of its associated well, ***38027***, surrounded by a possible gravelled yard-surface abutting the western side of the building and fronting onto the road. This alone of the buildings recorded at Scole in 1993 might have represented a higher-status structure or even a minor public building of some kind. The possibility that it was sited in a significant location close to the entrance to the town proper (discussed above), although unproven, offers some support for this.

Roadside building ***38015*** was in poor condition. It may have been quite large, however, especially if the group of post-holes 5m to the west of the recorded limits of clay flooring marked its western side. The metalworking-debris assemblage within building ***38029*** (p.71) may relate to the building's demolition rather than to activities within its lifetime. They may have been workshops or modest dwellings fronting onto the road. Their encroachment onto the road corridor resembles that seen in the cases of Green's Building B at Brampton (Green 1977, figs 13 and 14).

The linings of the three wells in this area were probably constructed at around the same time, possibly even by the same individuals. Unlike well ***18016*** to the south of the road, which had been cut into peat deposits, all would probably have yielded relatively clean water. This could just as easily have been used for craft or industrial processes, however, as for drinking. Leatherworking (if not tanning) might have been carried on to the north of the

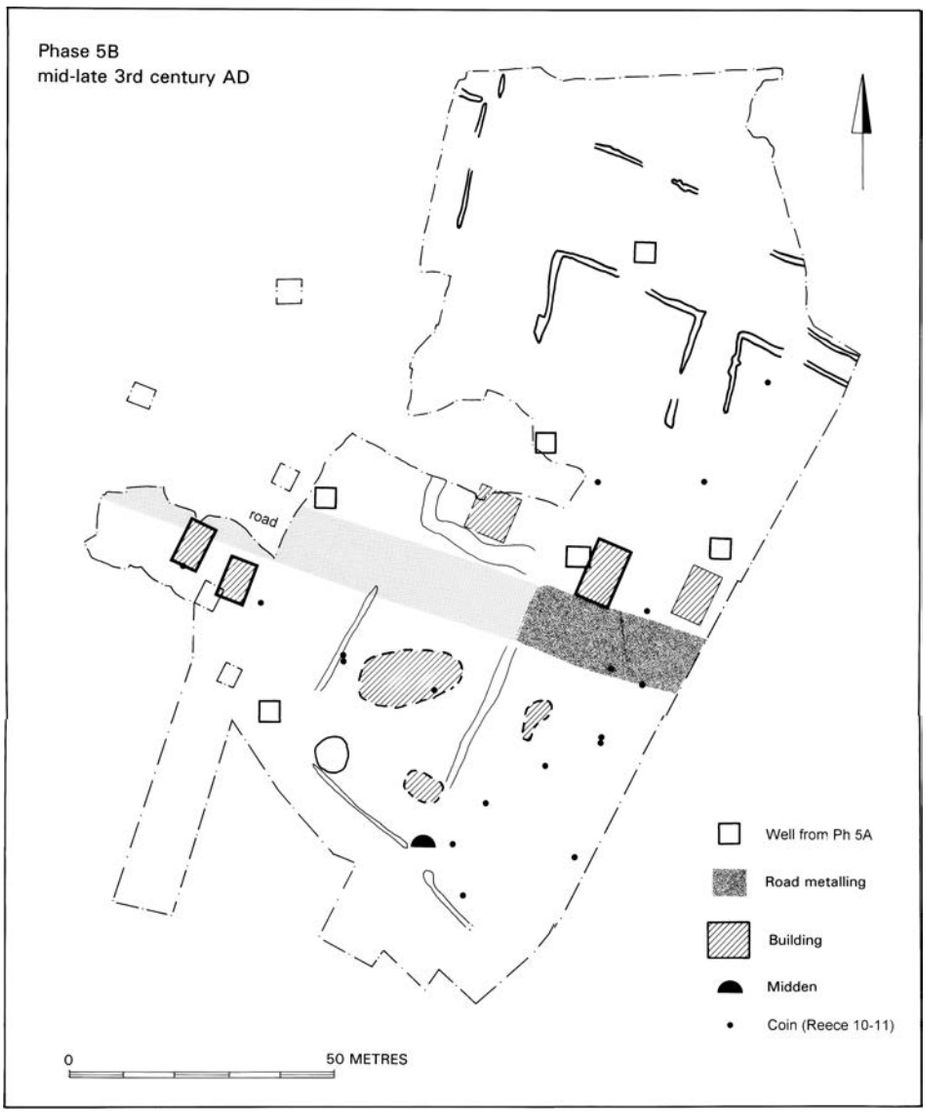


Figure 2.69 Phase 5B: interpretative plan showing main features and coin distribution

road, to judge from the leather offcuts from the fills of well ***38024***. The ceramic evidence suggests that the two large water-filled Phase 4 pits ***28030*** and ***28017*** may still have been open during this period. This pottery might simply indicate dumping into disused features, however, rather than the pits' continuing use.

Phase 5B
(Fig. 2.69)

South of the road
Although it is unlikely that the ditch dividing the eastern and central peat-edge enclosures remained an open feature by the later 3rd century, the most important aspects of earlier layout and land-use in this part of the site probably persisted from Phase 5A. The stake-lines and timber revetments recorded along the edge of the peat all indicate the redefinition and maintenance of pre-existing boundaries during the mid–later 3rd century. While the Phase 5A reservoir pits in the western and central enclosures were probably no longer extant, the 'new' revetted pit ***18076*** indicated that similar activities persisted, and leatherworking offcuts were present in its fill along with other rubbish material. Perhaps this pit stood at the rear of a building (***48015***) with a fenced rear yard area (***48035***); this could have been a successor to the earlier structure represented by Phase 5A clay deposit ***48018***. The clay floor layer ***48071,*** although less extensive, might have represented a similarly-located building in the centre of the eastern enclosure. Continuing use of well ***18016***, in the south-east corner of the western enclosure, may offer further evidence for land-use continuity hereabouts.

The two rectangular post-hole buildings lying close to the road frontage in the western enclosure, ***48080*** and ***49000***, were distinctive in their rectangularity and in the lack of evidence for clay flooring. In the absence of any traces of clay flooring they are likely to have been of relatively low status and ***48080*** was represented only by its constituent post-holes. Their location straddling the southern roadside ditch ***48008*** suggests that this latter feature was no longer open hereabouts by the mid–later 3rd century.

No burials were assigned to Phase 5B. The 'midden' deposit ***18100*** remains hard to interpret conclusively as either a 'sacred' or a 'mundane' phenomenon, however. Its

location in the area of the small peat-edge cemetery — and its superimposition upon the Phase 4 infant burial ***18056*** — would suggest that it was a carefully-sited deposit of funerary significance. Much of the pottery and other material within it, however, appeared domestic in character and 3rd-century in date (Lyons, Chapter 6). It is at least possible that the shared location of the earlier burials and the midden was coincidental, especially if this south-western corner of the enclosure was actually a convenient place for dumping rubbish during the mid–later 3rd century. Micromorphological analysis indicated that the material had been laid down in a series of events separated by episodes of inundation. Both Baker and Macphail *et al*., in their studies of animal bone and soils from the midden (Chapter 9), have suggested that organic household or butchery waste which had been scavenged by birds was an important component. The midden's position on the edge of the settlement may well have been appreciated by nearby residents if quantities of decaying or noxious material were deposited or burned here periodically.

North of the road

The overall pattern of land-use established in Phase 5A persisted by the roadside, with the buildings ***38015*** and ***38029*** apparently continuing in use as well as the complex excavated by Moss. This impression of continuity is reinforced by signs that many of the earlier wells remained open. There are still indications of significant change, however, seen most notably in the wholesale reconstruction of Moss's building ***38031*** on a new axis end-on to the road.

By contrast, the rectilinear enclosure/trackway system dominating the northernmost part of the site appears, on the basis of the ceramic evidence at least, to have been a new development. It is possible that the east-to-west road or track defined by ditches ***28002***, ***28033*** and ***28037*** actually marked the northern limit of the property-divisions within which the main roadside structures — and their associated wells — lay. By extension, it is possible that the north-to-south tributary 'trackway' defined by ditches ***28002*** and ***28037*** extended further southward beyond these features' surviving extent, and lay along the property-division separating structure ***38029*** from its western neighbour. Such a feature would have followed the approximate line of the deep Phase 4 ditch ***28014***, which was probably fully infilled by the early–mid 3rd century.

No further interpretative comment is possible, due to the ephemeral nature of these features and to the very limited excavation that was possible. The manner in which the new layout may have incorporated Phase 5A well ***28010***, a possible 'roadside' feature, has already been discussed. While no traces of metalling were noted on the line of the broad east-to-west alignment it is possible that any formal surfacing of this kind would have been confined to the more central area of the town proper, as already considered in the case of the main east-to-west road (p.101). It is possible that this trackway equates with a secondary road or path in the central area of the settlement similar to metalled lane *169* excavated by Rogerson (1977, fig.46).

Phase 6

(Fig. 2.70)

Rogerson's 1973 excavations suggested that Scole's core area was in decline by the end of the 3rd century. By contrast, the ribbon development sampled by the 1993 excavations seems to have thrived through most of the 4th century. Davies (Chapter 7) has noted how coin loss at the site appeared to have peaked in the period AD 348–378. These finds were concentrated around the roadside and in the area immediately to the south. Davies does not believe this 4th-century coin-loss peak includes any hoards, either intact or dispersed.

Some of the questions raised by the coin-deposition peak have already been considered. It may indicate some kind of change in the nature of activity in this part of the settlement, or else intensified or renewed occupation in the 4th century. An increase in trading activity in the roadside area may have corresponded with the 'town-centre' decline suggested by the coin list from Rogerson's excavations (Rogerson 1977, 222).

The contrast between the patterns of land-use previously seen to the north and south of the road appears magnified in the late period. Intensity of activity and organisation in the area south of the road appear to have diminished, with the outlines of any peat-edge enclosures no longer clearly described by subsoil features. On the northern roadside substantial pre-existing buildings apparently remained in use, while at least two 'new' clay-floored structures were erected. The area of the central peat-enclosure seems to offer the clearest evidence of direct continuity with 2nd- and 3rd-century land use. It is suggested that the enclosed 'yard' structure ***48035*** remained in use into the 4th century, and that the revetted pit ***18076*** which had probably been associated with it during Phase 5B was replaced by a similar feature, ***18104***. The earlier well ***18016***, in the south-eastern corner of the western enclosure, was also maintained during the 4th century. However it is unlikely that the north-to-south ditches separating the enclosures were maintained as open features by this time. It is possible that the Phase 5B clay-floored building ***48071*** in the area of the eastern enclosure was still extant during the 4th century. By this time, however, the 'new' pathway ***48082*** immediately to the east of the building formed a route southwards towards the river which would have bisected the area of the former enclosure.

The northern road frontage remained built up, with new clay-floored ?smithy structures ***38028*** and ***38051*** and their attendant hearth being added to the already-existing buildings ***38029*** and ***38054***. While it cannot be proven that these buildings were actually dedicated to ironworking (Cowgill *et al.*, Chapter 8), it does seem likely that some of the large quantities of slag and hammerscale in the vicinity were generated here. These developments may represent continuity from earlier phases, since it is likely that Phase 5 structures ***38031*** and ***38054*** were also used by smiths. They also illustrate how the southward encroachment of the 'building line' towards the road continued into the later Roman period. These buildings may have supplanted the clay-floored structure ***38015*** (Phase 5A) which once stood within this putative land-division. It is not clear which water-source this complex would have drawn on, since the well ***38018*** located within this plot was probably one of the few timber-lined wells to have gone out of use before the end of the 3rd century.

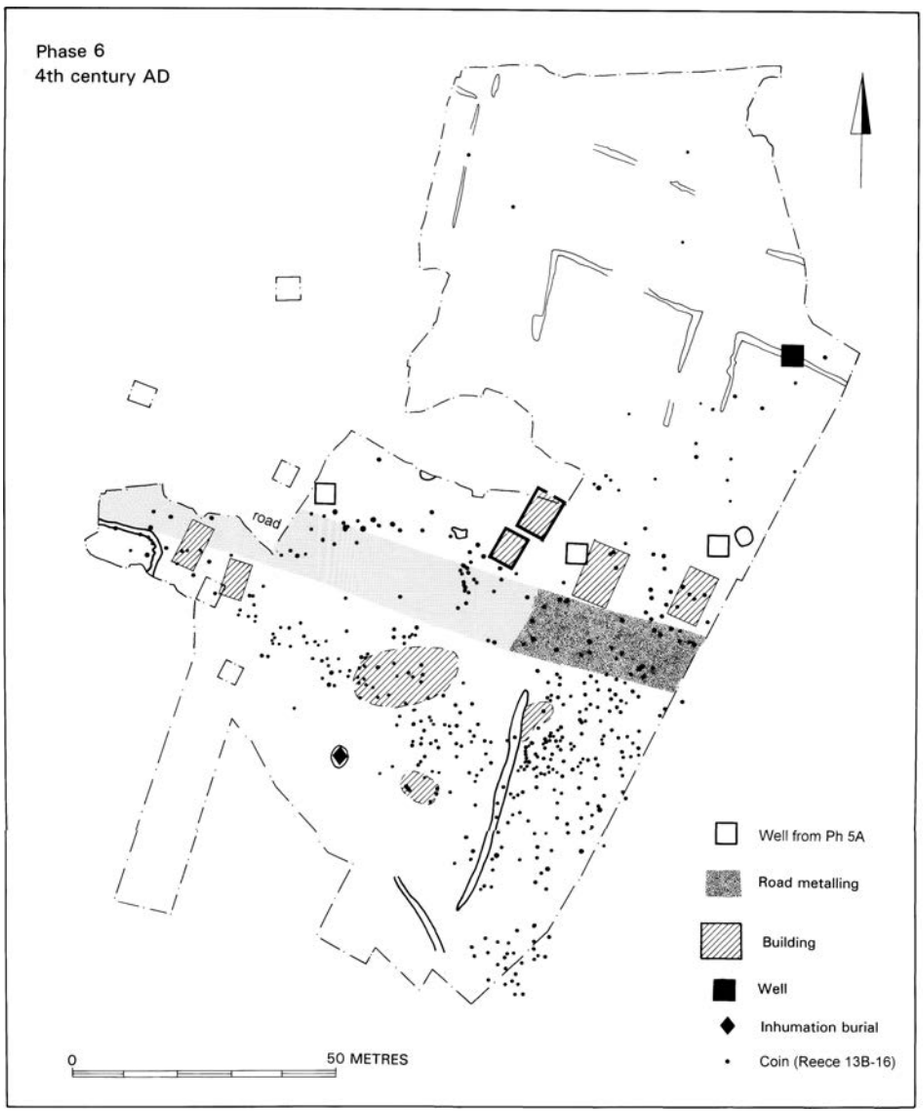


Figure 2.70 Phase 6: interpretative plan showing main features and coin distribution

In the northern part of the site features remained sparse, although the effects of differential truncation may have accentuated this. As in previous Phases, this zone lay beyond the limits of development; the pollen assemblage from the filling of ?track-side well ***28008*** suggests an agricultural setting.

The end of Roman activity is characterised by a sharp falling-off in coin deposition after AD 378, and by evidence both for the infilling of well-shafts and the dismantling of certain structures. Importantly it contrasts with the sequence in the southern part of the town at Oakley Area 8, where an area of the settlement had reverted to agriculture well before the end of the 4th century (Chapter 3). While a small number of coins of Reece's Period 16 (AD 388–402) were recovered there was no artefactual evidence for pagan Saxon occupation in the area, despite the high intensity of metal-detecting. It can only be suggested that this part of the settlement was abandoned by the early years of the 5th century. Accompanied by its Germanic brooch, the enigmatic burial ***18077*** in the upper filling of Phase 6 pit ***18104*** (although assigned to Phase 6) might be an early 5th-century deposit rather than a Roman one. While this may have been a careful and deliberate burial, it is perhaps as likely to have been casual or clandestine.

V. Periods 6 and 7: post-Roman activity

Phase 7 (Anglo-Saxon and medieval)

Structures *28004* and adjacent features
(Figs 2.71 and 2.72)
A pair of house-platforms in the northernmost part of the excavation area, ***28004***, lay *c*. 6m apart. Only the more easterly of the two features was excavated, revealing a pair of pits partially overlain by an extensive clay-and-chalk floor surface measuring 9.2m (north-to-south) by 4.6m (east-to-west). It had been constructed over a foundation deposit of grey/brown silty sand and clay and a layer of white chalk. The floor surface itself was up to 0.2m thick, and was composed of a light, slightly 'greenish' grey clay containing many flecks of chalk. In addition to the two pits already mentioned, it also sealed a length of backfilled north-to-south aligned ditch, ***28024***. The assemblage of Grimston, Local Medieval Unglazed (LMU) and Late Medieval Transitional (LMT) wares from this feature suggested that it had been backfilled in the 16th century. Sherds of LMU and LMT wares from the floor surface itself suggested a late medieval or early post-medieval date.

Pit 28011, a large feature 15m to the south of house-platform ***28004***, was 0.8m deep (Fig. 2.72). It contained a sequence of sandy backfill deposits and, near its base, a laminated and highly compacted dark fill

Figure 2.71 Phases 7–9: phase plan

containing peat and organic clay and silt. Detailed analysis of a sequence of pollen samples showed that the base of the pit had been permanently waterlogged, and that periodic inundations — either natural or anthropogenic — had occurred (Wiltshire, Chapter 9: full results of analysis in archive). The dark organic deposits were seen to be composed of large quantities of hemp and nettle remains; they also contained much charcoal, especially towards their base. The feature may have been a hemp-retting pit, probably for the production of rope or textiles. The charcoal present may indicate attempts at raising the water temperature to assist the retting process. Other pollens from the pit suggested a surrounding environment of weedy grassland with some tree and shrub cover, possibly from nearby hedgerows. The upper fills featured fewer

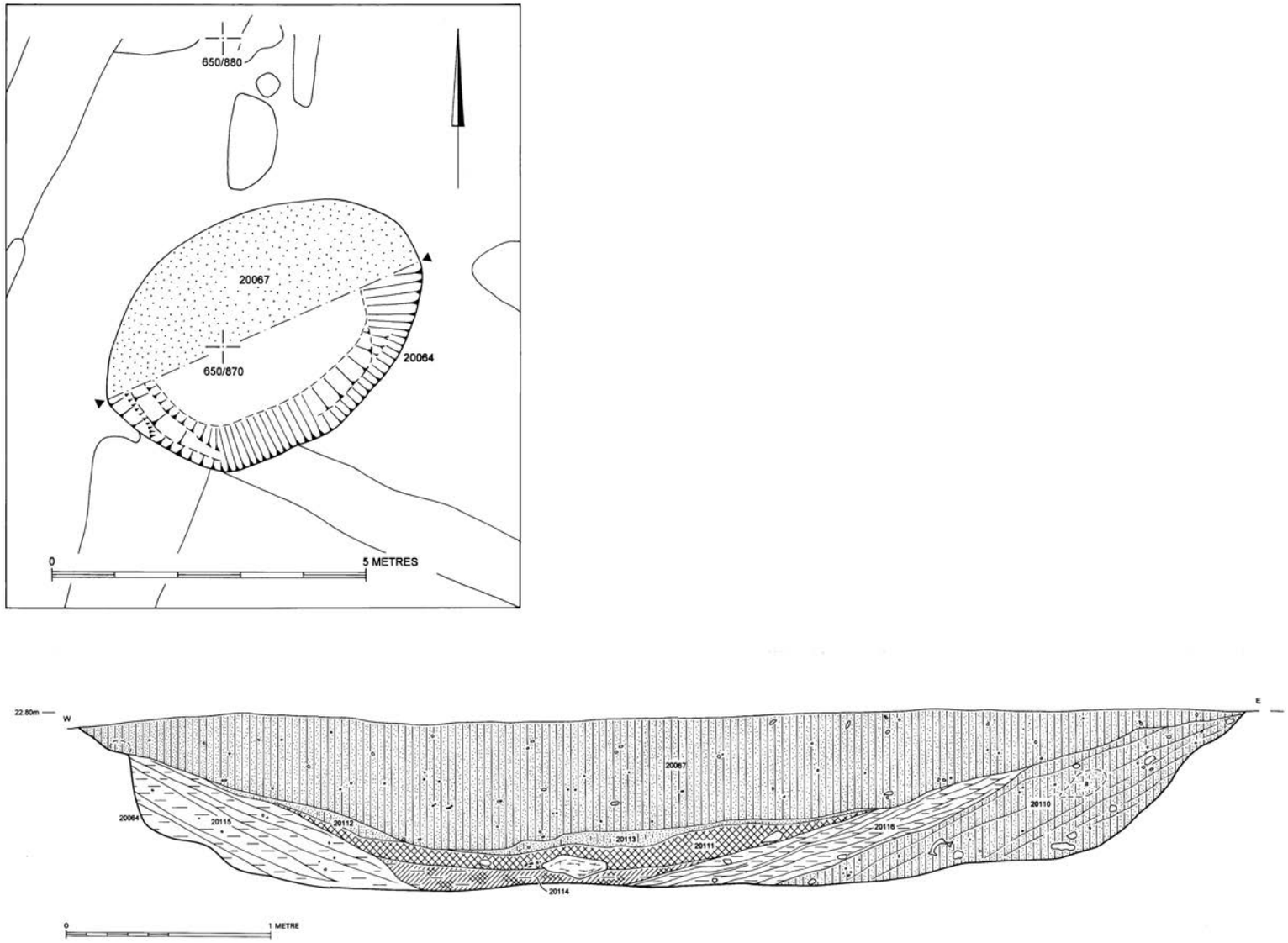


Figure 2.72 Phase 8: pit ***28011*** (cut context no. *20064*), plan and section

tree taxa and significantly more cereal pollens. Most of the pottery assemblage recovered was composed of small highly abraded Roman sherds. Sufficient LMU and LMT wares were recovered to suggest a late medieval or early post-medieval date for the pit, however.

A sequence of north-to-south aligned ditches, ***28005–7*** and ***28021***, was identified *c*. 20m to the east of the more easterly of the two house-platforms. These were clearly medieval too; the fill of ditch ***28005*** contained sherds of LMU ware and Grimston ware while ditch ***28021*** yielded two LMT sherds. They may represent successive redefinitions of the eastern boundary of the toft enclosure within which house-platforms ***28004*** lay. A disparate collection of post-holes in the area immediately to the west of this ditch defied structural interpretation.

Other activity

Possible Anglo-Saxon and medieval features in the central and southern parts of the site were very sparse. Most were linear; none were closely datable. The post-Roman date of the various lengths of ditch was indicated by their stratigraphic relationships to earlier features of Phases 4–6, and by the abraded nature of the Roman pottery collected from them. In the southernmost part of the excavated area it is possible that ***gullies 18022*** and ***18069*** indicate some limited post-Roman maintenance of the Phase 5–6 peat-edge drainage ditches. A group of large intercutting pits, ***28036***, produced a small number of Grimston Ware and LMU sherds.

Phases 8 and 9 (post-medieval and modern)

Post-medieval and modern features

(Fig. 2.71)

Most post-medieval (Phase 8) and modern (Phase 9) features were ditches or gullies. In most cases their recent date was made clear by the humic nature of the soils which they contained, as well as by their stratigraphic relationships to other features. The lines of ***ditches 18003, 18035*** and ***28001*** were all still clearly visible as distinct terraces or declivities at the time of initial field survey and evaluation work by Gregory and Dollin in 1987. This would appear to confirm that they delineated former field boundaries or property divisions. The shallow east-to-west ***ditch 38023*** was certainly associated with the modern hedgebank removed at the outset of the 1993 excavations, while gully-like features ***28031*** and ***49029*** were also probably modern.

A series of six burials of pig skeletons, ***28022***, was recorded in the northernmost part of the excavated area. A large rectangular pit in the south-central part of the site, ***48014***, was only 0.35m deep, although it had destroyed areas of Roman clay flooring which lay below. It was clearly of modern date (being very prominent on the 1987 earthwork survey, where it was initially mis-identified as Moss's excavation trench) but is otherwise mysterious. Numerous features in the south-eastern corner of the site, to the east of Phase 3 roundhouse ***18000***, were identified by their excavators as modern animal-holes and have been assigned to Phase 9 accordingly. It is likely, however, that a proportion of them at least were 'genuine' Roman features which were not identified as such during excavation and analysis, especially given the complete absence of any Phase 3–6 pits or post-holes recognised here.

Discussion

Phase 7

Anglo-Saxon

The lack of post-Roman evidence from the 1993 excavations led to the effective abandonment of one of the excavation project's original research objectives (Specific Research Aim 12: *Investigating possible continuity of activity into the sub-Roman period*) at the post-excavation assessment stage of the project (Flitcroft and Tester 1993). The significance of this apparent lacuna is heightened by the scarcity of post-Roman metalwork in the large assemblage recovered from the site by metal-detecting. By contrast, the manner in which the loss of Roman coins seems to have continued here through most of the 4th century suggests that abandonment occurred quite rapidly in the later 4th or early 5th century. There is clearer evidence for a sub-Roman presence in the centre of the town, salvage excavations at Long Meadow in 1983 yielding a small assemblage of Early Saxon pottery and metalwork.

Medieval

The two house-platforms recorded at the northern end of the site indicate later medieval or early post-medieval occupation along the southern frontage of the modern Diss Road (former A143). The earthwork survey of 1987 suggested that a series of tofts had once existed here; these were more easily discerned in the field immediately to the west of the bypass line (Site 4988), which had not been eroded by recent ploughing. These enclosures may have extended back 40–50m or more from the medieval/modern road frontage itself. It seems best to regard north-to-south ditches ***28005*** *etc.* as features separating the toft containing the two house-platforms from its neighbour immediately to the east. It is possible that retting pit ***28011*** actually lay towards the rear of this enclosure. This complex of features lay some distance west of the centre of the medieval and modern village, and probably represented ribbon development along the line of the modern A1066 Diss Road.

Phases 8 and 9

Apart from the previous archaeological trenches excavated by Moss's team, no post-medieval or modern features are worthy of comment.

Plate 3.1 Air view of the excavations adjacent to the River Waveney, looking north-east. In the foreground the whole extent of Area 6 is visible. Beyond it lies the River Waveney and surrounding low-lying terrain. Areas 1–4, on the north side of the river, are visible in the upper part of the photograph.
Derek A. Edwards TM1478/ADE/GST6, 6 August 1993