

# The Romano-British Farmstead and its Cemetery at Lynch Farm, near Peterborough

By RICHARD JONES

with contributions by

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*Part of a large farmstead known from air-photography was examined in advance of gravel-working. The pits and ditches, although disturbed by ploughing, yielded evidence for occupation throughout the third and at least the first half of the fourth century. An adjoining cemetery, containing one cremation and at least 50 inhumations, presumably served the farmstead. Many of the burials had been in wooden coffins, and two were in stone cists. Some grave-plots were re-used several times, one example yielding the remains of six adults and a baby successively interred on virtually the same spot. Grave goods were rare. An attempt is made to give a quantitative consideration of the pottery. The question of rural cemeteries is discussed.*

## 1. THE EXCAVATION

An extensive programme of gravel extraction in Milton Ferry Meadows, Peterborough, necessitated an equivalent amount of archaeological investigation by the Nene Valley Research Committee and the Department of the Environment, beginning in 1972. The site was situated in the centre of a large meander in the River Nene, to the south-west of Peterborough itself. This land is divided between the parishes of Alwalton, Orton Waterville and Orton Longueville, but the present site lies in Orton Waterville (N.G.R. TL 145976). Many crop mark features had been observed from the air within an area roughly defined by the 20 ft. O.D. contour. It seems clear that this higher land has always been better drained and in modern times has been used for crops which have revealed the underlying features, whilst the lower land has been used for the less responsive pasture. This affected original ideas of the extent of ancient settlement based upon the air photographs alone and it is now clear that most of this area was occupied at some time. However it still seems likely that the higher land was more highly prized for its better drainage. The surface geology was the usual river gravel of the Nene Valley.

The importance of this area was already recognised and recorded as the Lynch Farm Complex in the R.C.H.M. survey of the Designated Area of Peterborough New Town (R.C.H.M., 1969, FIG. 7, PL. 2, pp. 19, 29, 31-2). It was decided that the central core of features shown from the air promised to be so important that it should be preserved and the area of the gravel quarry was planned with this in mind (FIG. 2, PL. 1). However, this left much to be dug in advance of destruction

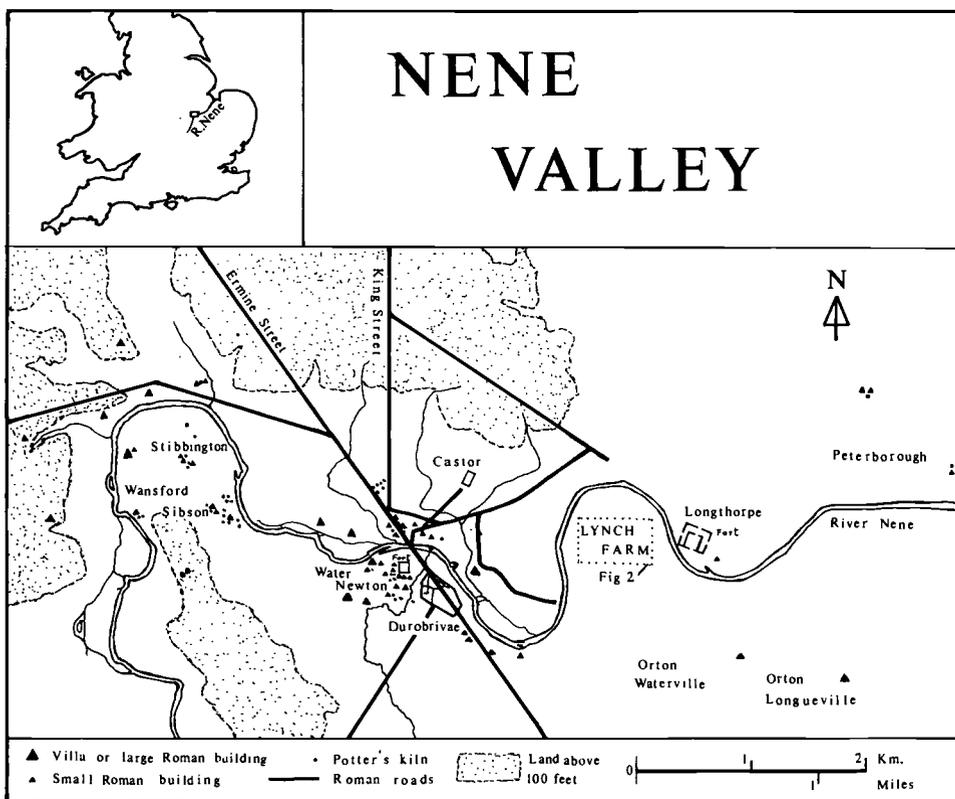


Fig. 1 The Nene Valley (after J. P. Wild, *Durobrivae*, 1, (1973))

on the periphery of the main complex. Accordingly work began in spring 1972 under Adrian Challands in the area of the multiple linear ditches, to the south of the main complex (R.C.H.M., 1969 p.19, monument (9); Challands, 1973). Another significant site was then revealed in the course of gravel workings to the east of the central complex, across Ham Lane (Wild, 1973a). The present site was the third to be started, on 31 July 1972, and excavation continued until 16 September. It consisted of the northernmost part of the quarry, on the immediate southern fringe of the main complex. A surface scatter of Romano-British pottery here suggested the existence of a site needing excavation in the summer of 1972 while sufficient volunteer labour was available.

A close study of the air photographs revealed that the southern edge of the courtyard enclosure was also likely to be destroyed by the gravel workings (R.C.H.M., 1969 p.32, monument (9)). An outstanding landmark in the form of an electricity pylon stood close to the southern ditch of the courtyard enclosure. As this had not been noticed, the gravel workings encroached upon the monument that was intended for preservation. The precise extent was not clear however and it was decided to explore the overlap by stripping the topsoil from an area 25 m. wide along the whole northern end of the designated quarry, some 180 m. Comparison with other neighbouring areas stripped by Mr. Challands suggested

that the field which included both sites had been ploughed to a considerable depth. Indeed there was little sign of any B horizon at all, with the ploughsoil extending as far as the undisturbed gravel, both on Mr. Challands's site and on a small preliminary sample examined on this site.

With limited resources available the only way to find out exactly what was on the site was to take some risk of losing some evidence by stripping off the topsoil with a bulldozer. Accordingly a Drott 175 and then a JCB3C were used to remove the ploughsoil. All this machine work was carefully supervised. By this method it was possible to examine the whole site, without losing more than the minimum of evidence, since there was no doubt that the plough had already disturbed everything down to the level of the gravel. In the course of stripping operations several concentrations of bone were observed, some clearly human with recognisable skulls. This was the first sign of the existence of a cemetery here and even then there was no indication that it was as extensive as it proved to be. With hindsight it must be admitted that some damage may have been done to the skeletal material by the compression caused by the weight of the bulldozer passing above, but there can be no doubt that the shallower graves had already been severely damaged by the plough, and that only a very partial impression of the site would have been gained without the use of machinery.

When the overburden had been removed, further cleaning of the gravel surface was unnecessary as many features stood out clearly. The site now exposed was divided into a grid of 10 m. squares, and excavation of the features revealed was begun.

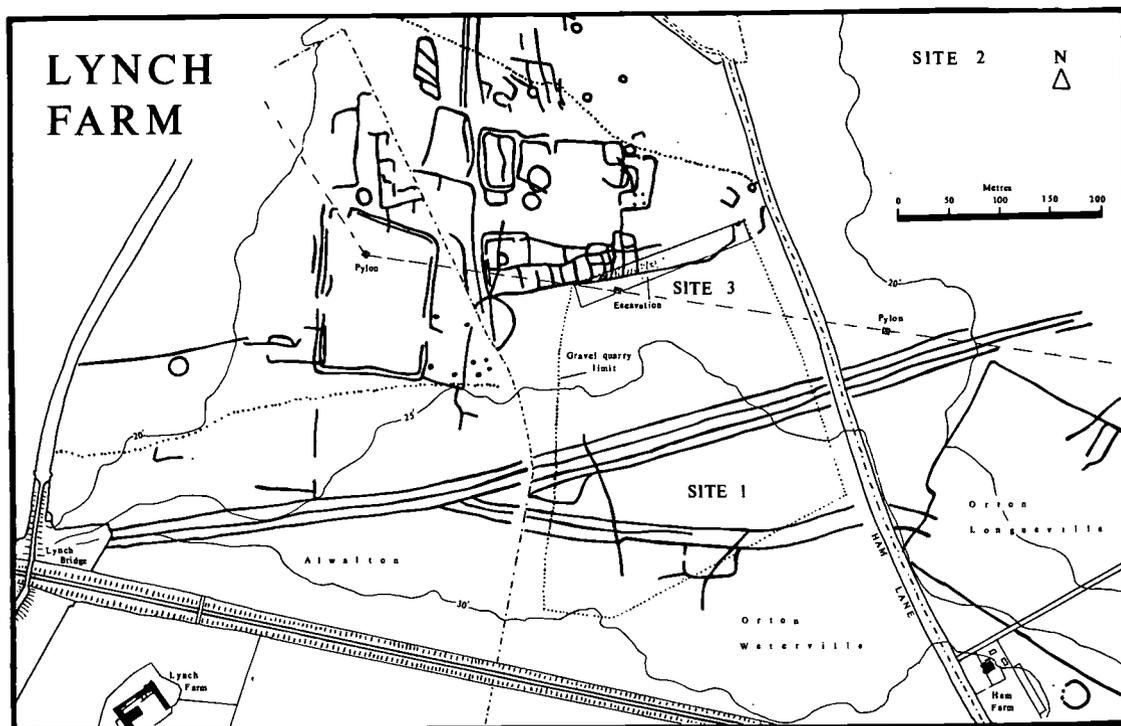


Fig. 2 The Lynch Farm Complex (after RCHM 1969, FIG. 7)

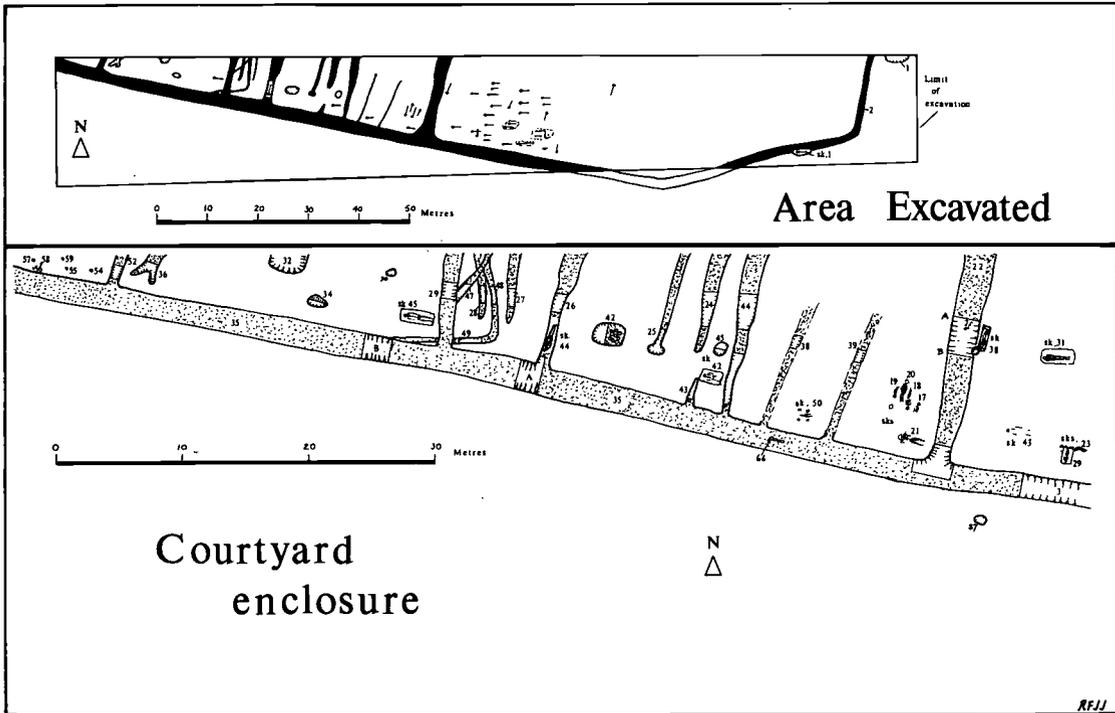


Fig. 3 Lynch Farm: the Area Excavated and the Courtyard Enclosure.

### THE FARMSTEAD

The site had only one substantial phase of occupation, in the later Romano-British period. The only other period was represented by a single large pit at the eastern end of the site (1)<sup>1</sup>. It was discovered first when checking that the right level had been reached on the natural gravel below the ploughsoil by taking a small test section with the JCB. This cut was soon discovered to have struck the only pre-Roman feature on the site. Some of the pit extended into the preserved area. The width of the section here was 4 m. and the depth below the scraped surface was 1.05 m. It produced some very fragile pottery and animal bones. The pottery has been identified by Mr. Francis Pryor as late Iron Age.

Apart from this feature there was no evidence of anything else which did not belong to the main activity on the site. The features revealed apart from the graves were almost exclusively pits and ditches, the deepest parts of which survived beneath the disturbed level of the ploughsoil. The Romano-British farmstead consisted of two areas, the courtyard and a paddock enclosed by a ditch extending to the east. This enclosing ditch (2,3) ran roughly east from the courtyard before turning sharply to the north some 12 m. from the limit of the excavation, and continuing into the preserved monument. Most of this ditch was excavated. It was found that it became gradually smaller towards the east. It contained pottery and animal bone and a small hoard of fourth century bronze

<sup>1</sup> Figures in parentheses in this section refer to feature numbers. Reference should also be made to the plans, FIGS. 3 and 4.

coins. The paddock enclosed by the ditch had no archaeological features except for graves, but was punctuated by many patches of silt which on the surface looked like pits. Several of these were excavated, but no sign of human interference was found: no artifact nor any disturbance of the soil. They were therefore interpreted as natural features in the gravel, similar to solution holes.

The courtyard showed much more evidence of occupation. It was enclosed by a large ditch. On the southern side this ditch was 3.50 m. wide and 0.85 m. deep (35), a continuation of (2). The eastern side was of similar size, contemporary, and the boundary between the courtyard and the paddock (22). The surface appearance suggested that this ditch overlapped and so had a direct stratigraphical relation with one of the graves of the nucleus of the cemetery (23/sk. 38). Full excavation however revealed a small pit intervening, whose fill was identical with that of the ditch, but which was cut by the grave. Although it could not be certainly established, there was a suggestion that at least some of the ditch's several recuts came after the grave, since stones very similar to those apparently lost from the grave's lining on the western side were found in the bottom of the ditch. Otherwise no direct link could be fixed between the burial area and the farmyard.

Within the courtyard a pattern of smaller ditches was found which closely followed the plan based on the air photographs. Most ran at right angles to the southern enclosing ditch, producing a system of small rectangular enclosures (24-29, 36, 38-39, 43-44, 47-49, 52). The bases of several small pits were excavated here (32, 34, 42, 45). None showed any remarkable features except 42. This was one of the largest pits, 2.2 x 1.9 x 0.6 m. It had first been left open for a short while, allowing some silting, and then some quite substantial pieces of limestone had been thrown in, followed by much household rubbish such as broken pots and bones. Whatever may have been the original reason for digging this hole, it was finally used as a rubbish pit. Why the stone was disposed of at the bottom of it is of some interest, for it cannot have been intended for consolidation there, and yet was of quite good quality. No structural remains survived, except a few possible stake-holes at the western end of the excavation, perhaps once a fence along the inside of the main ditch (54-59).

## THE CEMETERY

In all fifty-one burials were found, of which only one was a cremation. The rest were inhumations. The main burial area lay in the south-west corner of the paddock, and contained three-quarters of the graves found. Most of these were arranged in four distinct rows, aligned east-west with the heads towards the west, and were in single graves undisturbed by any later inhumations (FIG. 4; PL. 2). However there were several exceptions to these generalisations. There were four isolated single burials that were not aligned like the rest (sks. 9, 10, 14, 29). There were also places where there were intrusive inhumations. Two graves were of pairs of adults (sks. 5 and 6, and 30 and 34, FIG. 8), a third was the grave of a child which cut through that of an adult above (sks. 29 and 23 FIG. 7) and was perhaps closely associated with two graves of adults in the east-west rows, although it was itself aligned north-south (sks. 35, 36). Moreover the bones of

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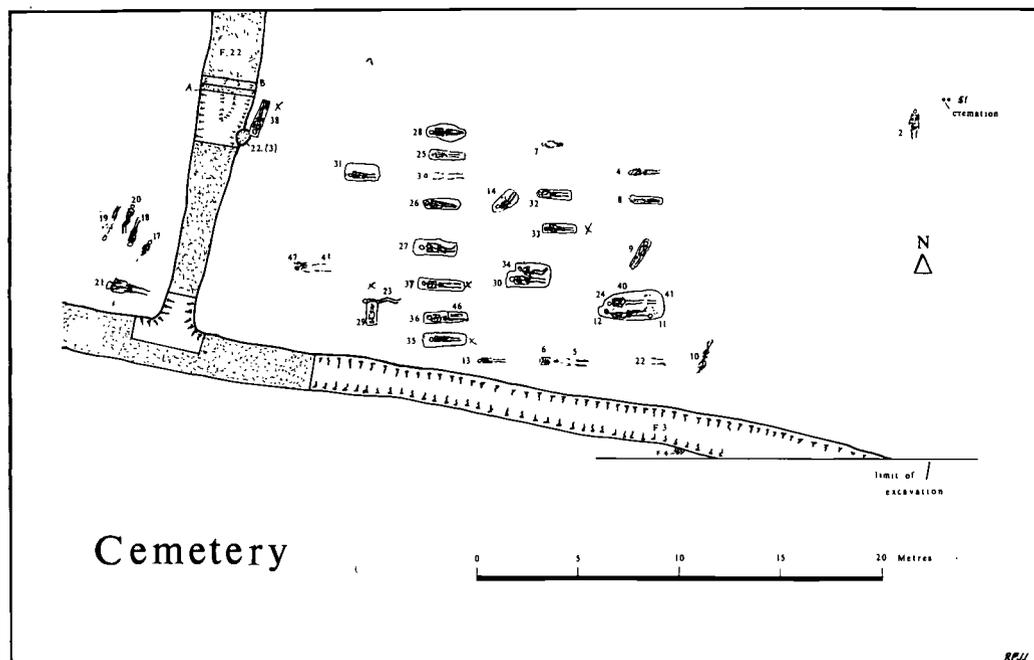


Fig. 4 Lynch Farm: the Cemetery.

skeleton 46 had been collected and reburied in the grave then replacing it, 36 (FIG. 10). Similarly the bones of skeleton 47 had been put aside to make way for the burial of 43 (PL. 8). However there was one outstanding case of a multiple burial. In one large grave, feature 7, were at least seven burials, six adults and a baby, each cut through by its successor. The baby, probably with its mother, was the latest of the sequence (PLS. 3 and 4; FIG. 6).

The other graves outside the nucleus of the cemetery spread all across the courtyard, and even the paddock. Most of these graves occurred in isolation. There was only one concentration, of four skeletons (17-20), just inside the eastern ditch of the courtyard. These skeletons survived poorly and could not be fully excavated, but were interred very close together, perhaps even at the same time. They were aligned north-south, but with the heads on no special line. The other graves had no apparent scheme of layout, two being in ditches, one in the middle of the courtyard and one in the paddock (sks. 44,1). There was some tendency towards east-west alignment even in the scattered graves.

The bodies were generally laid in neatly dug graves, which occasionally were far too wide for the body. Two examples of stone cists were found (sks. 38 and 50; PL. 5), simply made by lining the grave with blocks of stone. The depth of the graves varied considerably. Some skeletons were lying on the very bottom of the topsoil and had been severely damaged by the deep ploughing and to a lesser extent by the mechanical stripping of the topsoil. Several graves however had been dug to a depth of as much as 50 cm. below the stripped surface. As the

topsoil before removal was only 50 cm. deep, it is difficult to see how any of the graves could originally have exceeded 1 m., markedly shallower than modern specifications. It certainly seems likely that ploughing had already removed a number of the shallower graves completely, long before the present excavation.

This could have been especially true of cremations, which would probably have been buried in shallower pits. The single example found was uncovered in the course of mechanical stripping. The ashes were contained in two Nene Valley pots, which had once probably been enclosed in a wooden casket, since some iron nails were also found with them. The pots have been dated to the late second or early third century.

All the other burials were simple inhumations, the bodies mostly on their backs with arms crossed on the front in various attitudes. Some variations in these positions were recorded and may be examined in FIGS. 6 to 12. About one third of these were definitely buried in coffins, including skeleton 38, which was also in a stone cist. The coffins' presence was observable only through the survival of iron nails, as no actual wood remained. The construction of the coffins seems to have been fairly simple, probably of rough planks; yet they varied in detail, some being nailed only at the corners, others all along the edges, like that of skeleton 31. The evidence of a nail bent over inside the coffin of skeleton 38 shows that the wood there cannot have been more than 3 cm. thick (FIG. 13, small find 35).

Grave goods as such were very rare with the inhumations. Skeleton 20 had a bronze finger ring, and skeleton 24 a bone comb and bracelet. The only pottery deliberately placed in a grave was the small Nene Valley beaker found with the disturbed bones of skeleton 47, which lay sealed below skeleton 43 (PL. 8). This beaker has been dated to the first part of the fourth century. Otherwise only occasional fragments of pottery were found in the grave fills.

## FEATURES CATALOGUE

(N.B. Colour refs. are given by the Munsell system)

No.	Type	<i>Small Finds</i>	Description
1	Pit		Brown sand silt and gravel (7.5 YR 4/6). Contains bone and late Iron Age pottery. Northern half of pit not excavated because in preserved area. 4 m. at widest point and 1.05 m. deep.
2	Ditch	8 to 23	Brown sand silt and gravel (7.5 YR 4/6). Eastern part of paddock enclosing ditch, running from preserved area south, then turning west, and passing under southern limit of excavation. Probably continued by 3. Contains pottery, tile, bone, small hoard of bronze coins buried in the side of the ditch. Sk. 1 also buried in the edge of the ditch.
3	Ditch		Dull brown sand silt and gravel (7.5 YR 5/4). Western part of paddock-enclosing ditch. Emerges from edge of excavation, presumably continuing 2, and runs north-west to junction with courtyard ditches, 22 and 35. Grows wider and deeper. Apparently contemporary with 22 and 35. Contains pot, bone.
4	Patch of burning		Brownish black sand silt with occasional pebbles and much charcoal (7.5 YR 2/2). Contains one sherd of pottery. Cut by ditch 3.

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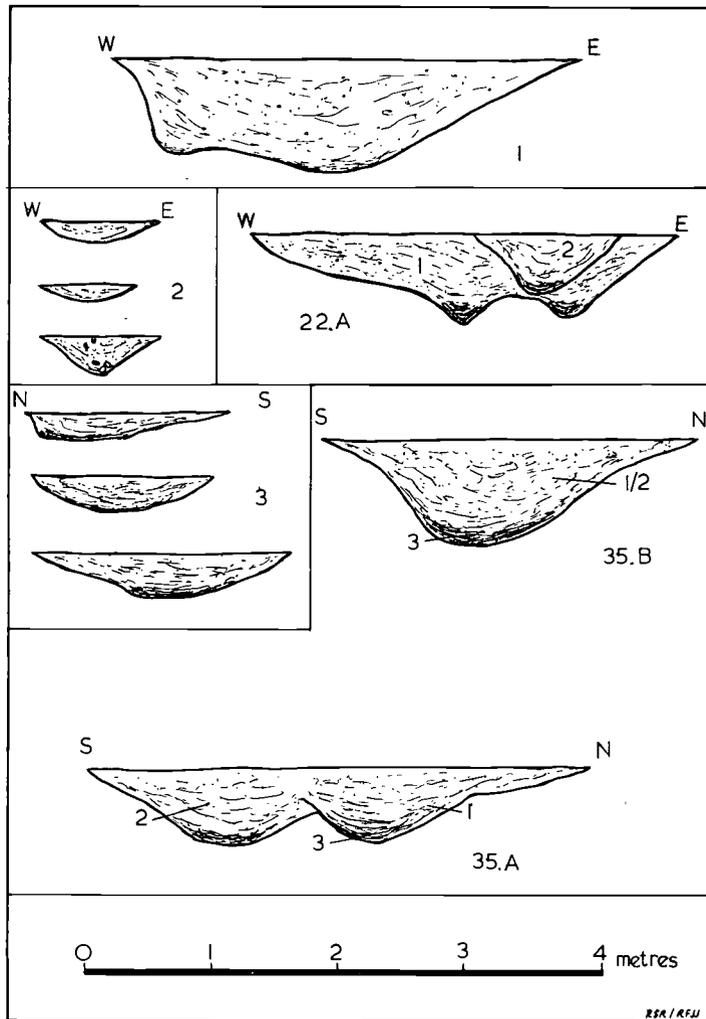


Fig. 5 Lynch Farm: Sections.

5 to Graves —  
22 see below  
22 Ditch

30, 62 Eastern enclosing ditch of courtyard. Meets and is contemporary with 3 and 35. Two sections cut, A and B.  
(1) Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/3). Several pieces of limestone in bottom of fill, also pot and bone throughout fill. Skull, sk. 39, in ditch, but no other human bones.  
31, 32, (2) Dark brown sand silt (10 YR 3/3). Recut of ditch (1) above.  
33, 39 Contains pot, bone, shells, metal objects.  
(3) Same as (1). Small pit at east side of ditch. Cut by grave 23, but not clear what was its relationship with 22 (1) since fills were identical.

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23	Grave — see below		
24	Ditch	63	Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/4). Very shallow (max. depth 15 cm.). Runs north/south. Possibly cuts 45. Peters out to the south, but line continued by 43 as far as 35. Contains pot, bone.
25	Gully		Brown sand silt with occasional pebbles (7.5 YR 4/3). Shallow depression, ending in a T-shape to the south (max. depth 20 cm. in end, otherwise 10 cm.).
26	Gully/ small ditch	53	Dark brown sand silt (7.5 YR 3/3). Runs into 35, perhaps cut by latest form of 35. Shallow, max. depth 20 cm. Contains many sherds of pottery, animal bone, and sk. 44.
27	Gully		Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/4). Shallow, max. depth 20 cm. Running north/south, but peters out before reaching 35.
28	Gully		Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/4). Very shallow, max. depth 7 cm. Runs north/south, cuts 48, merges with 47, but fades out before 35. Contains pottery, bones.
29	Ditch	48	Dark brown sand silt (7.5 YR 3/3). Max. depth 50 cm. Largest of group of north/south ditches. Cuts 49, joins 35 and 47. Contains several pieces of limestone, some burnt, and pot and animal bone.
30	Pit		Very dark brown sand silt (7.5 YR 2/3). Max. depth 13 cm. No finds.
31	Grave — see below		
32	Pit		Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/3), with many small pebbles. Max. depth 20 cm. Contains much pot, bone.
33	Silt patch		Natural. No finds.
34	Pit	50	Dark brown sand silt (7.5 YR 3/4). Irregular shape. Contained pot, nails.
35	Ditch		Main southern enclosing ditch of courtyard, continuing the line of 3. Many smaller ditches and gullies join it at right angles from the north. Two sections were taken, A and B.
		51	A (1) Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/3). Latest cut of the ditch. Over (2). (2) Very similar fill, but recut can just be distinguished. Slightly to the south of, and cut by (1). (3) Grey gravel with a little brown sand silt. Rapid silting in bottom of ditch.
		58	B (1) and (2) Again very similar fills to A (1). At first thought that two separate layers could be distinguished, but idea later abandoned. Contains pot, bone, iron object, deer antler. (3) Grey gravel with a little brown sand silt. Rapid silting in bottom of ditch. Contains pot. As no recut visible in B, this must represent a total recut here on exactly the same line as before, whereas at A the line was shifted slightly to the north.
36	Gullies		Two small gullies running together. (1) Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/3) with many pebbles. (2) Very similar, but with fewer pebbles and more flecks of charcoal. Contains small fragment of pottery. (2) cut (1).
37	Pit		Very thin spread of brown sand silt, containing some pot. Either very bottom of pit or just lens of topsoil.
38	Ditch	69	Brown sand silt (10 YR 4/4). Contains pot and bone. Runs north/south.
39	Ditch		Brown sand silt (10 YR 4/4). Runs north/south parallel to 38.

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- |             |                       |    |  |
|-------------|-----------------------|----|--|
| 40, 41      | Graves —<br>see below |    |  |
| 42          | Pit                   | 43 | Roughly rectangular in shape.<br>(1) Dark brown sand silt (10 YR 3/3). Upper part contains much pot and animal bone. Beneath that were many pieces of limestone, some burnt, and some squared for building.<br>(2) Dark brown sand silt with many pebbles (10 YR 3/3). Under (1). Natural silting. |
| 43          | Gully                 |    | Brown sand silt. Shallow irregular gully from south-west corner of grave 41 to ditch 35. Possibly cutting 41. No finds.  |
| 44          | Gully                 |    | Brown sand silt. Runs north/south, parallel to 24 and 43. Max. depth 20 cm. Probably cuts 41. No finds.  |
| 45          | Pit                   |    | Brown sand silt. Max. depth 35 cm. Between 24 and 44, probably cutting both. No finds.   |
| 46          | Silt patch            |    | Natural.   |
| 47          | Gully                 | 46 | Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/3). Runs between 29 and 28. Max. depth 11 cm. Contains pot.  |
| 48          | Gully                 |    | Brown sand silt (7.5 YR 4/6). Max. depth 12 cm. Runs north/south, but is continued through a right angle turn by 49. Cut by 28 and 47. No finds.   |
| 49          | Gully                 |    | Very similar to 48. Runs east/west, but a direct continuation of 48. Cut by final phase of 35. No finds.   |
| 50, 51      | Graves —<br>see below |    |  |
| 52          | Ditch                 | 44 | Dark brown sand silt with many pebbles (10 YR 3/4). Max. depth 40 cm. Runs into 35. Contains pot and iron fragment.  |
| 53          | Pit                   |    | Base of pit or topsoil spread. No finds.   |
| 54          | ? Post hole           |    | Dark brown sand silt (10 YR 3/3). 25 cm. deep. Perhaps a fence post, associated with 55, 56. No finds.   |
| 55          | ? Post hole           |    | Similar to 54, but much shallower. No finds.   |
| 56          | ? Post hole           |    | Similar to 54, but again shallower. No finds.  |
| 57          | Pit                   |    | Brown sand silt. Very shallow depression. No finds.  |
| 58          | Pit                   |    | Brown sand silt. Similar to 57. No finds.  |
| 59          | Gully                 |    | Brown sand silt. End of gully running away north beyond the excavation into the preserved area. No finds.  |
| 60          | Surface scatter       | 49 | Not a distinct feature, but merely the material found on the surface in the area of the badly ploughed features 54-59. Pot and metal slag.   |
| 61          | Silt patch            |    | Natural.   |
| 62 to<br>65 | Graves —<br>see below |    |  |
| 66          | ? Grave               |    | Stone-lined feature cut into the top of ditch 35. Had the appearance of being half of a grave, but no sign of any bones were found. Fill similar to but slightly darker than main ditch fill.  |
| 67          | Grave                 |    | Cremation burial. See below.   |

CATALOGUE OF GRAVES

<i>Skeleton No.</i>	<i>Feature No.</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Small Finds</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	2	E/W		Cut into the side of ditch 2, after the ditch had partly silted up.
2		N/S		No grave discernible.
3	9	E/W	1, 2	Sandy silt with some pebbles. Maximum depth 10 cm.
4		E/W		No grave discernible.
5		E/W		No limits of grave discernible. Overlies sk. 6.
6		E/W		No limits of grave discernible. Below sk. 5.
7		E/W		No limit of grave discernible. Child skeleton buried on its stomach.
8		E/W		No grave discernible.
9	5	NE/SW		No limits of grave discernible.
10		N/S		No limits of grave discernible.
11	7	E/W		See below.
12	7	E/W		See below.
13		E/W		No grave discernible. Body very narrow, perhaps compressed in a coffin.
14	6	NE/SW		Sand silt with some pebbles. Maximum depth 20 cm. Body not properly laid out, possibly in the attitude of death?
15				Unexcavated.
16				Unexcavated.
17 to 20		N/S		Only partially excavated. Skeletons laid head to toe on north-south alignment.
17	50			
18			40	Animal bones found between the skeleton's jaws.
20			42	Bronze ring on finger.

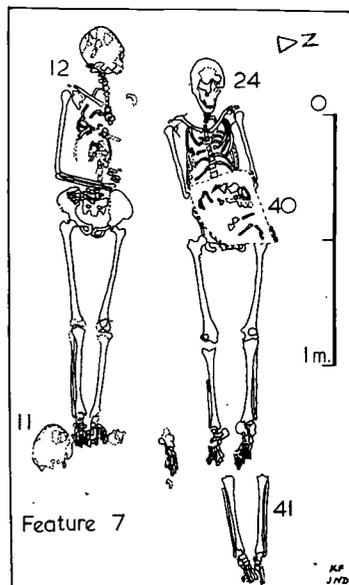
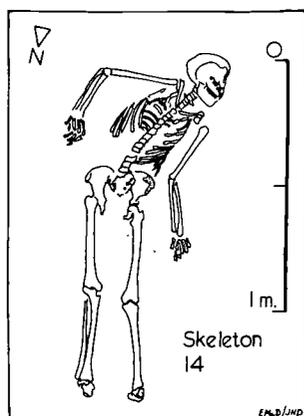
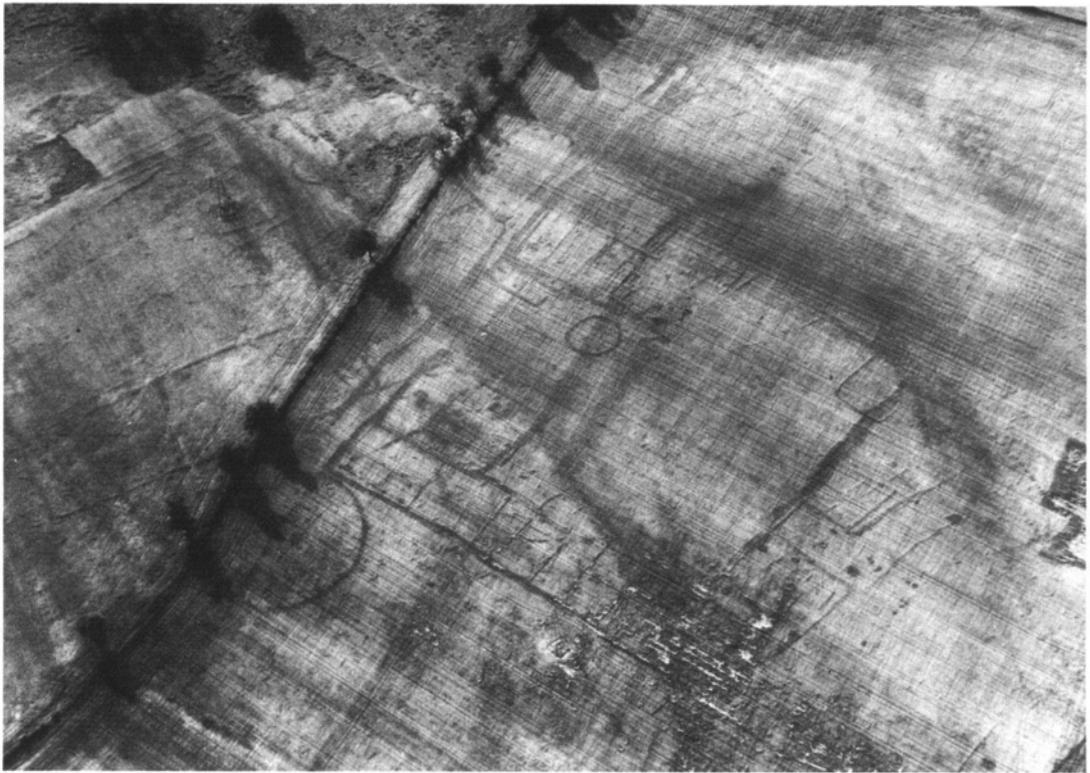
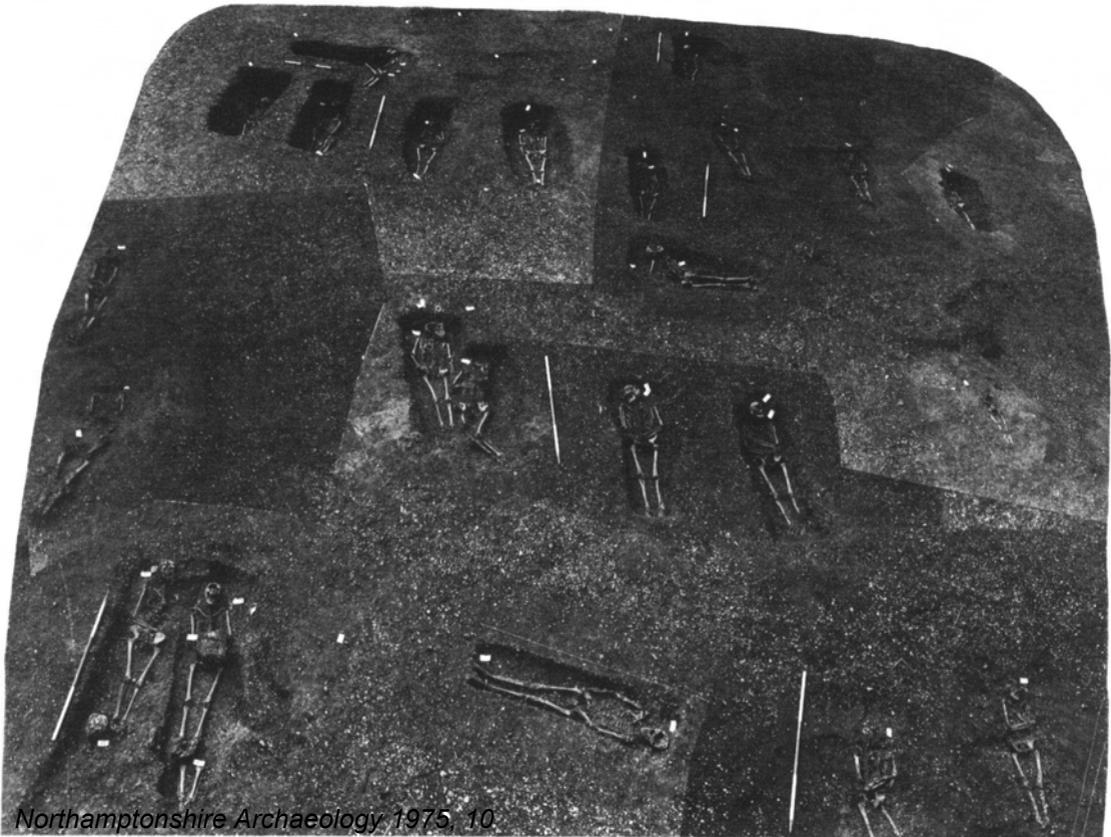


Fig. 6 Lynch Farm: Skeleton 14 and Feature 7.



*Plate 1* Lynch Farm Complex from the air, from the south-east. (Photo.: Professor J. K. St. Joseph, Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography, copyright reserved.)



*Northamptonshire Archaeology 1975, 10*

*Plate 2* General view of the cemetery. (Photo.: R. F. J. Jones)



Plate 3 Lynch Farm: Feature 7, showing skeletons 11, 12, 24, 40 and 41 (photo.: R. F. J. Jones).



Plate 4 Lynch Farm: the baby, skeleton 40 (photo.: R. F. J. Jones).



*Plate 5* Lynch Farm: Skeleton 38, showing the remains of the stone cist. (Photo.: R. F. J. Jones)



*Northamptonshire Archaeology 1975, 10*

*Plate 6* Lynch Farm: Skeleton 31, showing some iron coffin nails beneath right leg. (Photo.: R. F. J. Jones)



*Plate 7* Lynch Farm: Skeleton 42, showing erupting second teeth and some distortion in the chest. (Photo.: R. F. J. Jones)



*Northamptonshire Archaeology 1975, 10*  
*Plate 8* Lynch Farm: Skeletons 43 and 47, showing the bones of skeleton 47 with the beaker, sealed beneath a coffin nail of skeleton 43. (Photo.: R. F. J. Jones)

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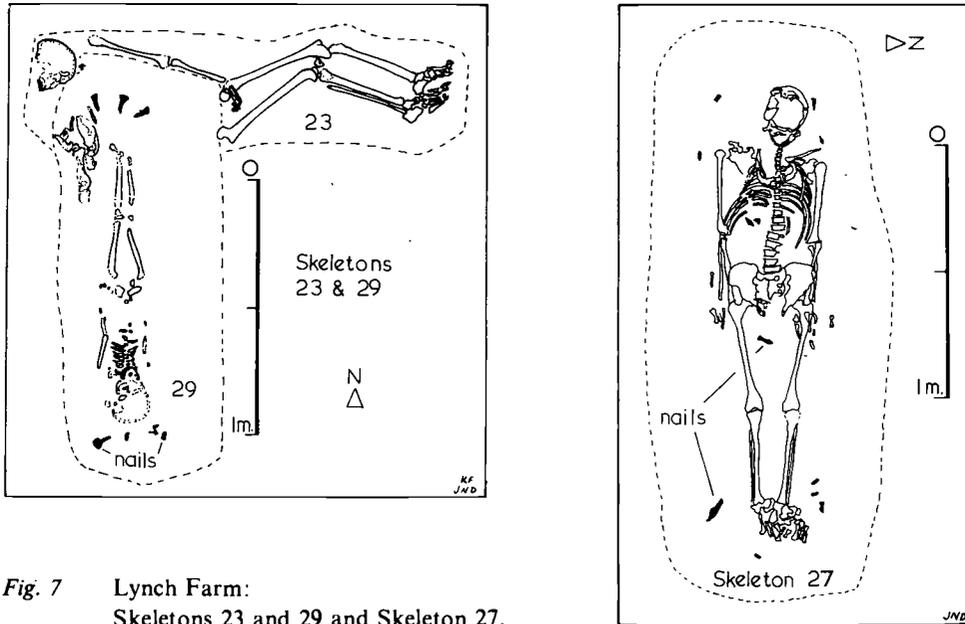


Fig. 7 Lynch Farm:  
Skeletons 23 and 29 and Skeleton 27.

21	51	E/W	47, 52	Rodent's tooth and flint flake found in association with skeleton.
22		E/W		Grave discovered during bulldozing.
23	8	E/W		Right torso of skeleton cut through by feature 13, grave of skeleton 29.
24	7	E/W	36, 37, 38	For grave see below. Bone bangle on wrist and bone comb near hip. Also a possible bead.
25		E/W		No grave discernible.
26	11	E/W	61	Iron nails from coffin. Deep grave, with a maximum of 40 cm.
27	12	E/W	25	Iron nails from coffin. Deep grave, with a maximum of 40 cm.
28	15	E/W	26, 57	Iron nails from coffin. Deep grave, with a maximum of 35 cm.
29	13	N/S	27, 67	Iron nails from coffin. Deep grave, with a maximum of 45 cm. Cut through sk. 23 and the grave fill contained some bones from sk. 23.
30	14	E/W		Maximum depth 20 cm. Grave cut for sk. 30, then extended to take sk. 34 also, alongside sk. 30 and on the same alignment.
31	16	E/W	24, 60	Iron nails from coffin, including row under right leg of sk. 31. Deep grave, with a maximum of 35 cm.
32	17	E/W		Deep grave with a maximum of 35 cm.
33	18	E/W		Maximum depth 20 cm.
34	14	E/W		Skeleton laid beside and slightly above sk. 30.
35	19	E/W	28, 64	Iron nails from coffin. Deep grave, with a maximum of 60 cm.

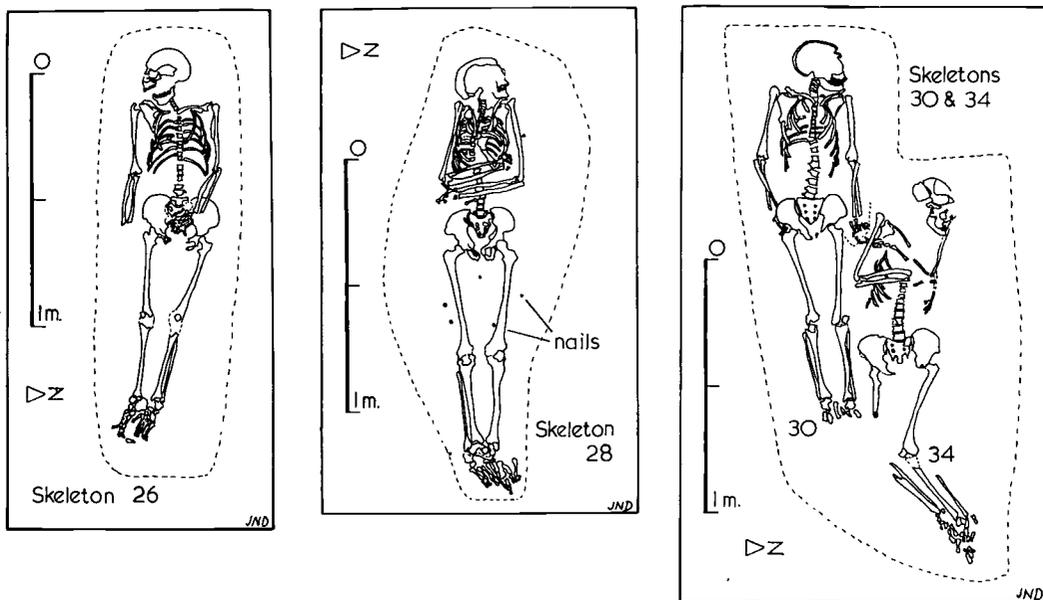


Fig. 8 Lynch Farm: Skeleton 26, Skeleton 28, and Skeletons 30 and 34.

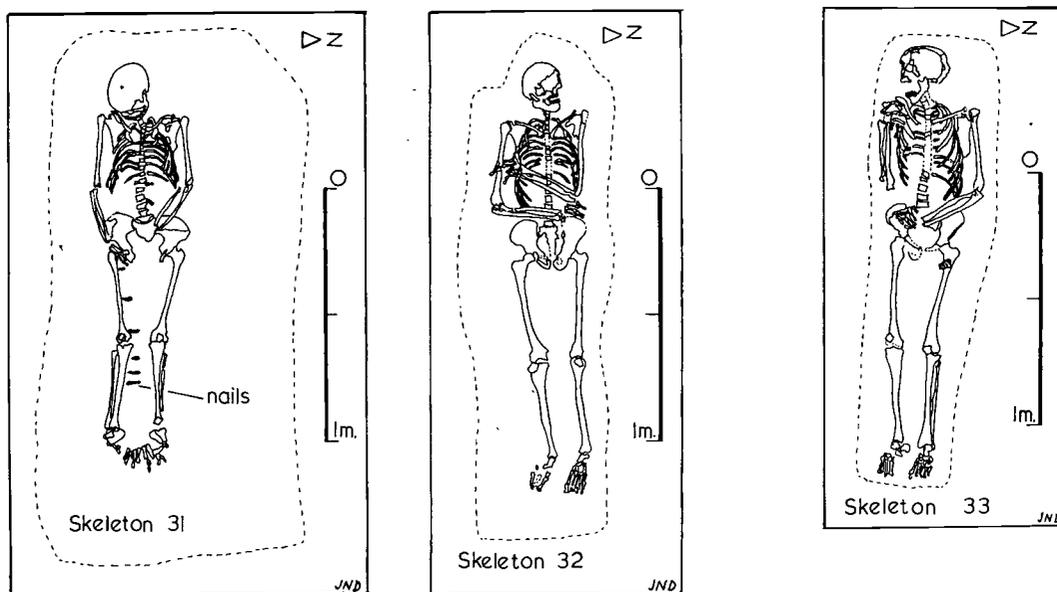


Fig. 9 Lynch Farm: Skeleton 31, Skeleton 32 and Skeleton 33.

36	20	E/W	29, 66	Iron nails from coffin. Deep grave, with a maximum of 40 cm. Corner of the grave cut the edge of feature 8, grave of sk. 23. Grave fill contains several human long bones, presumably the remains of another, earlier burial (sk. 46).
37	21	E/W	55	Iron nails from coffin. Maximum depth of grave 30 cm.

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

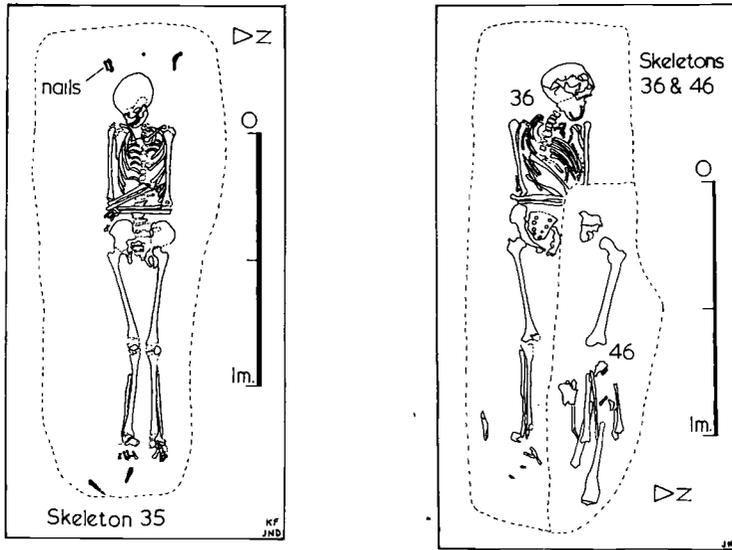


Fig. 10 Lynch Farm: Skeleton 35 and Skeletons 36 and 46.

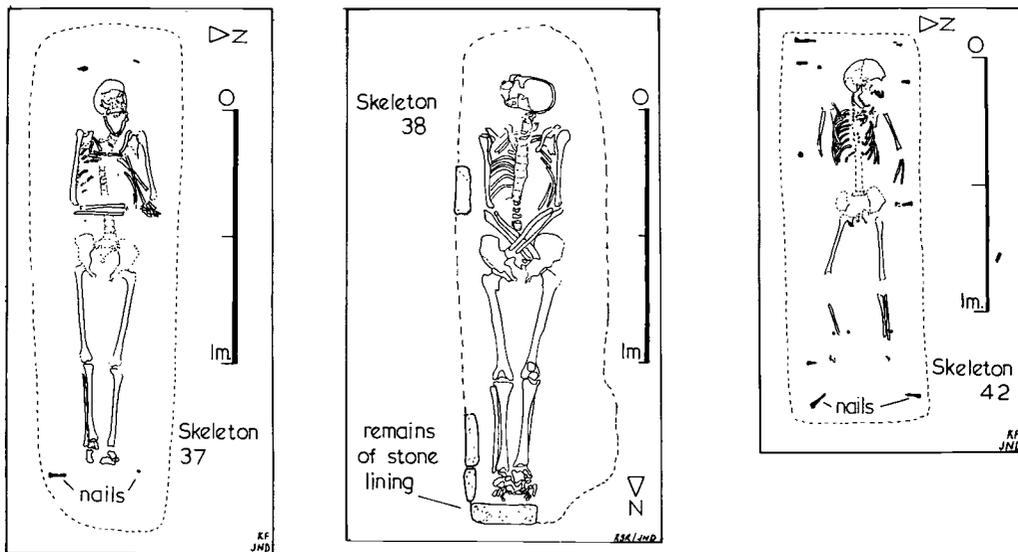


Fig. 11 Lynch Farm: Skeleton 37, Skeleton 38 and Skeleton 42.

38      23      N/S      34, 35      Stone-lined grave, though only 4 stones surviving in place. Cuts 22 (3), small pit, but itself probably partially cut by a recut of the main ditch, 22, since some pieces of limestone similar to the grave lining were found in the bottom of the ditch. Only one course of stone survived *in situ*.

39	22	—		Skull only found in ditch.
40	7	—		See below.
41	7	E/W		See below.
42	41	E/W	45, 49	Iron nails from coffin. Child, in grave rather bigger than necessary, although the position of the coffin nails suggests the coffin did occupy the whole grave, and it was the coffin that was too big. Maximum depth of grave 15 cm. Probably earlier than gullies 43, 44.
43	62(2)	E/W	56	Iron nail from coffin. No limits of grave discernible because of ploughing. Overlies collection of bones (sk. 47), presumably remains of an earlier burial disturbed by the digging of this grave.
44	26	N/S	53	Iron nails from coffin. Skeleton laid in a ditch. (Feature 26.)
45	31	E/W	54	Iron nails from coffin. Grave large and deep, with a maximum of 40 cm.
46	20	—		Group of bones in grave of sk. 36. Presumably from an earlier burial disturbed when the new grave was dug.
47	62(1)	—	65	Iron nail from coffin. Again a bundle of disarticulated bones, found beneath a nail from the coffin of sk. 43. Also in amongst the bones was a complete colour-coated beaker, probably originally buried with sk. 47.
48	7	E/W		See below.
49	7	—		See below.
50	40	E/W		Very badly ploughed away, especially above the pelvis, but there survived some parts of a stone lining to the grave.
51	67	—	5	The single cremation, found during bulldozing. The ashes were contained in two Nene Valley beakers. Iron nail fragments suggest that they were themselves enclosed in a wooden casket.

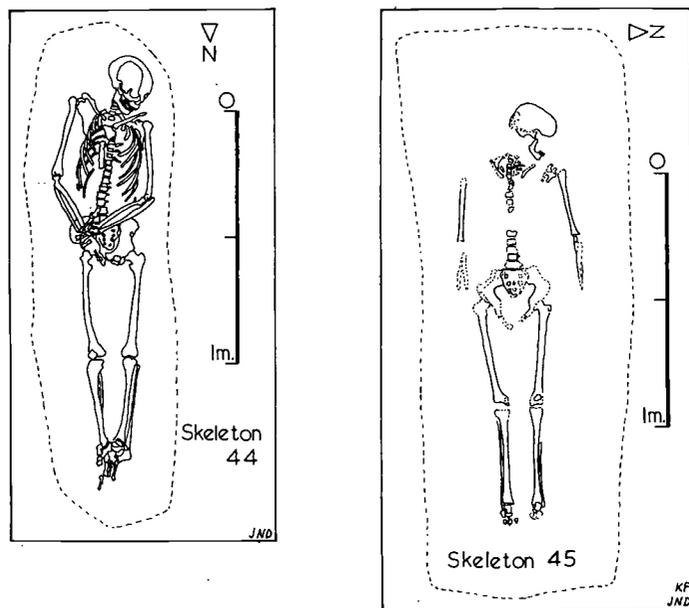


Fig. 12 Lynch Farm: Skeleton 44 and Skeleton 45.

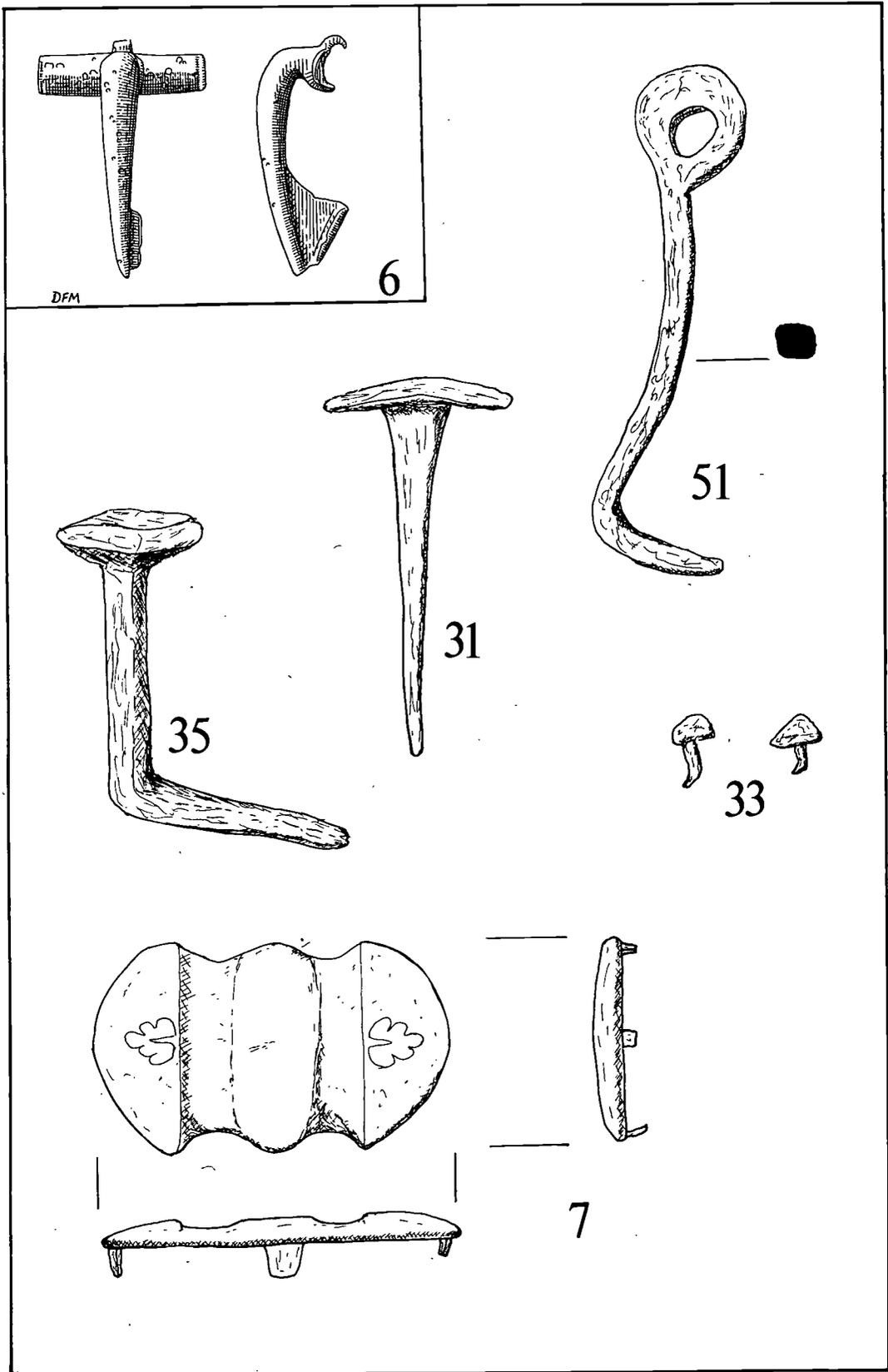
FEATURE 7

This was a large grave, containing at least seven burials, six adults and a baby. The sequence of burial can be reconstructed. The earliest was sk. 49; then came sk. 48, then sk. 41. Each of these was disturbed by its immediate predecessor. Sk. 11 remained only as an articulated foot and a skull, but it must have been either contemporary with or later than sk. 41. It was also laid slightly to the south side of the others. Next came sk. 12, which was cut almost right through 11. Finally sk. 24 was inserted above sk. 41 with the baby, sk. 40, in the process removing the left chest of sk. 12. The baby lay above the stomach of sk. 24 and it was clear that from its size that it was very young. At first was conjectured that it might have been still *in utero*, but the amount of soil between the bones of the adult and the baby must deny this. Dr. Fulton's examination of the remains (see below, 3.A) shows the baby to have reached only about 30 weeks' maturity and it is suggested that, as sk. 24 was a female, she was the mother of the baby, who had a miscarriage and then died herself, perhaps from sepsis. The upper fill of the feature produced many disarticulated bones and it is conceivable that there were originally even more burials here.

2 THE FINDS

CATALOGUE OF SMALL FINDS

<i>No.</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	With sk. 3	1 iron nail
2	With sk. 3	4 fragments of iron nail
3	Unstrat.	2 iron nails
4	Unstrat.	Metal fragment
5	With cremation	8 iron nail fragments
6	Unstrat.	Bronze brooch
7	Unstrat.	Bronze object — ? coffin fitting
8 to 22	F.2	15 bronze coins
23	F.2	5 fragments of bronze coins
24	F.16	20 iron nails and fragments
25	F.12	9 iron nails and fragments
26	F.15	8 iron nails and fragments
27	F.13	2 iron nail fragments
28	F.19	1 iron nail
29	F.20	2 iron nails and fragments
30	F.22 (1)	4 iron nail fragments
31	F.22 (2)	Iron object
32	F.22 (2)	1 iron nail
33	F.22 (2)	10 iron hob-nails
34	F.23	14 iron nails and fragments
35	F.23	1 bent iron nail
36	F.7 (with sk. 24)	Fragments of bone comb
37	F.7 (with sk. 24)	? bone bead
38	F.7 (with sk. 24)	Fragments of bone bangle
39	F.22 (2)	Lumps of lead slag
40	Between jaws of sk. 18	Rodent bones
41	F.23	Fragment of worked bone
42	On finger of L. hand of sk. 20	Bronze ring
43	F.42	Colour-coated rim sherd with tally marks



Northamptonshire Archaeology 1975, 19  
 Lychnis and Small Finds 6, 7, 31, 33, 35, 51. (6 drawn by D. F. Mackreth.)

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

44	F.52	Iron fragment
45	F.41	3 iron nail fragments
46	F.47	1 iron nail fragment
47	F.51	1 flint flake
48	F.29	3 iron nail fragments
49	F.60	Lump of metal slag
50	F.34	6 iron nails
51	F.35A(1)	Iron fragment
52	F.51	Rodent's tooth
53	F.26 (with sk. 44)	2 iron nail fragments
54	F.31	9 iron nails
55	F.21	4 iron nail fragments
56	F.62 (with sk. 43)	7 iron nails
57	F.15	9 iron nails and fragments
58	F.35B(1)	Iron object
59	F.41	26 iron nails and fragments
60	F.16	14 iron nails
61	F.11	14 iron nails and fragments
62	F.22(1)	1 iron nail
63	F.24	1 iron nail
64	F.19	14 nails and fragments
65	F.62 (with sk. 47)	1 iron nail
66	F.20	4 iron nails and fragments
67	F.13	11 nails and fragments
68	Unstrat.	2 flint flakes
69	F.38	Colour-coated sherd with finger print
70	F.35	1 bronze coin

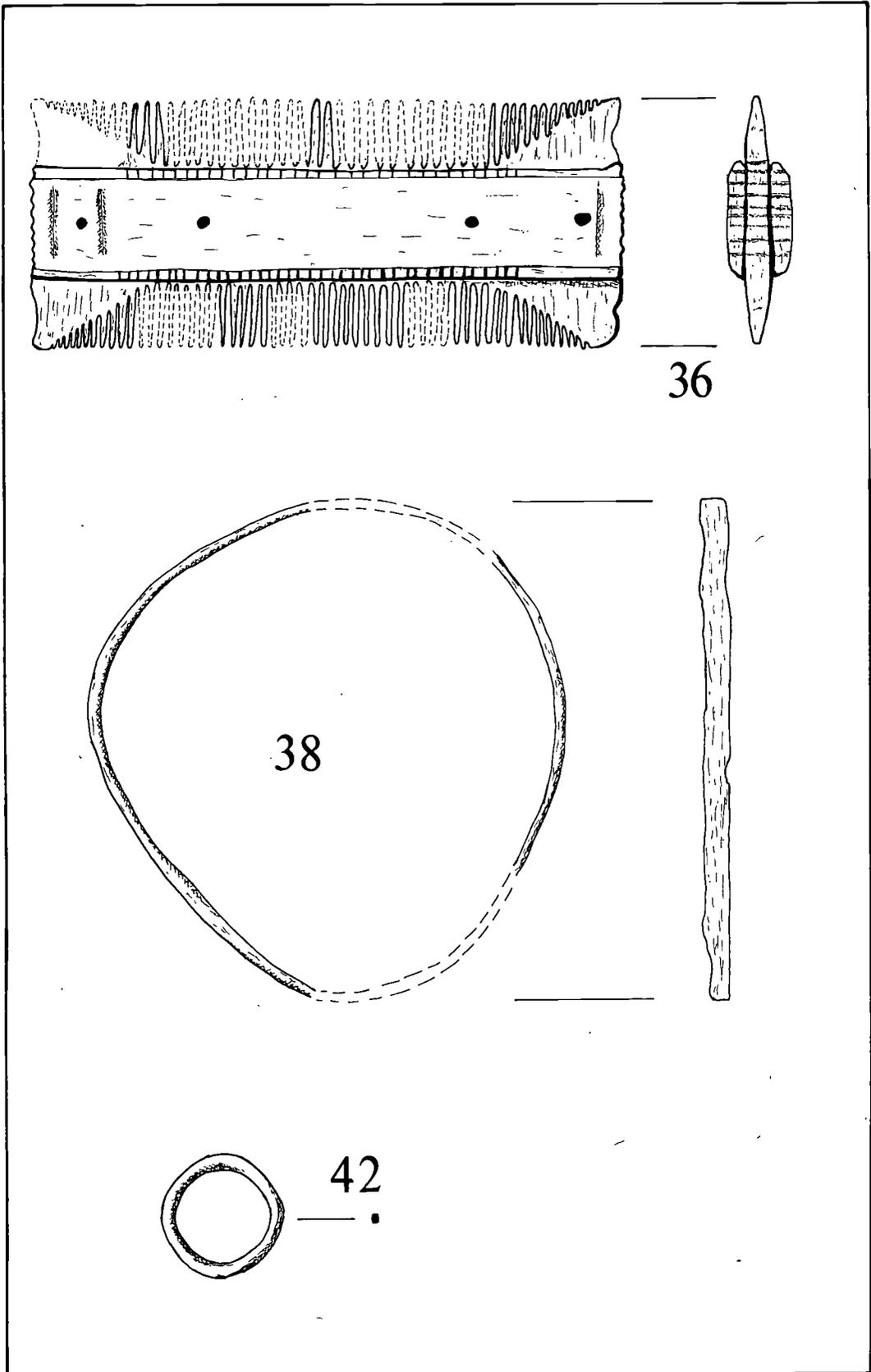
A. THE COINS

by Richard Reece

*Small*

*Find No. Comments*

- 8 House of Constantine, AD 350-60. Copy as R. A. G. Carson and J. P. C. Kent, *Bronze Roman Imperial Coinage of the Later Empire* (1965), 25.
- 9 House of Valentinian, AD 364-78. Reverse illegible.
- 10 Magnus Maximus, AD 387-8. CK 560.
- 11 House of Theodosius, AD 388-402. Reverse illegible.
- 12 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 13 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 14 Probably House of Theodosius, AD 388-402.
- 15 House of Theodosius, AD 388-402, as CK 162.
- 16 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 17 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 18 Probably House of Theodosius, AD 388-402.
- 19 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 20 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 21 Probably Magnus Maximus, AD 387-8, as CK 560.
- 22 Fourth century. Illegible.
- 23 Fragments including House of Constantine copy.
- 70 House of Valentinian, AD 364-78.



Northamptonshire Archaeology 1975, 10. Lynch Farm: Small finds 36, 38, 42.

B. OBJECTS OF BRONZE

*Small*

*Find No. Comments*

- 6 The bronze brooch, by D. F. Mackreth (FIG. 13). Colchester Derivative. Each wing is slightly curved to seat the spring, now missing, and is plain except for a single vertical groove at the end. The bow is also plain and is clearly marked off from the wings by a sharp angle which is carried under the head to form a V-shaped platform bordered on its surface by an incised line. The bow tapers to a pointed foot. The rear of the catch-plate has a single bordering line just where the curve of the catch starts. The spring was held in place by a single hook behind the head.
- This type of Colchester Derivative seems to be the first to develop from the Colchester proper and is not too common, almost certainly because of the inefficient method of securing the now separate spring by means of a single hook over the chord. At Camulodunum it had evolved before the end of Period IV, A.D. 49-61, but was not found in any earlier period (*Camulodunum*, p.311, type V). A single specimen comes from Hod Hill, a fort site which is thought to have been abandoned by c.A.D. 50 (*Hod Hill I*, p.7, FIG. 6. C13; *Hod Hill II*, p.119). The type is absent from the early material from Skeleton Green, Braughing (publication forthcoming). It seems that its floruit was c.A.D. 50-60 and it was soon replaced by its two more efficient and common successors which were developing in the same period.
- 7 Bronze plate, (FIG. 13). Raised leaf motifs on the end panels, possibly oak leaves. On the back of the plate are four projecting pins which probably fixed the plate to some softer material, perhaps wood or leather. As it comes from this site, it seems a reasonable suggestion that it was a fitting of some sort on a coffin or casket.
- 42 Bronze finger ring, (FIG. 14). A simple band with no sign of a fitting for a stone. Internal diameter 15 mm.

*Small*

*Find No. Comments*

C. OBJECTS OF BONE

- 36 Bone comb (FIG. 14). Made in three pieces, the central spine in which the teeth were cut, and two reinforcing bars. They were held together by four iron rivets. The reinforcers were decorated with vertical incised lines. It would appear that the actual cutting out of the teeth and decoration at the ends of the comb were done when the whole was assembled together, since the lines cut out for the teeth are exactly continued in small cuts on the bevelled edge of the reinforcing plates.
- 38 Bone bangle (FIG. 14). Simple asymmetrical bangle. It was not clear whether the irregularities in the profile were original or the result of wear or erosion in the ground. Internal diameter 14.5 cm.

D. OBJECTS OF IRON

Most of the iron found consisted of nails, and most of these were from graves and so presumably from coffins. Many were very badly oxidised, but both round and square headed types were represented. A few were bent.

*Small*

*Find No. Comments*

- 31 Not an ordinary type of nail and perhaps a pin from some piece of machinery (FIG. 13).
- 33 Hob-nails, probably from a leather shoe (FIG. 13).
- 35 Bent nail. From a grave, this shows the maximum width of the wood of the coffin, c.2.5 cm.
- 51 Iron hook, possibly part of a latch.

## E. THE POTTERY

This pottery report differs from the normal in that no attempt has been made to find parallels for or to date the coarse wares. The Samian ware has been identified by Mrs. Joanna Bird. All the other pottery has been fully described and illustrated. No further information is offered because the bulk of this material consists of locally made vessels in colour-coated, plain grey and shell gritted fabrics. The past fifteen years has seen much work on the Nene Valley pottery industry, including the excavation of many kilns and kiln-groups, but no definitive report has yet appeared. The existing publications are rather brief (Wild, 1973c, Dannell, 1973) and sometimes in need of modification in the light of more recent work (Hartley, 1960). The first instalment of the new reports is promised soon, and therefore it has seemed best to look forward in detail to that (Gillam, Hartley and Webster, forthcoming). A general inspection of the pottery by Dr. Wild has confirmed that virtually all the recognised types fall into the period of the local industry's main production, the third and fourth centuries.

An attempt has been made to draw the greatest possible amount of information from the pottery assemblage, in the hope of revealing the overall pattern of the pottery usage on the site. Laid out below are tables giving a sherd count, divided by fabric, and a functional analysis of the identifiable vessels. These figures are also recorded in terms of the volume of "archaeological earth" removed from each feature, giving a series of pottery indices showing the number of sherds from each cubic metre. It is hoped to discuss this approach and its implications more fully elsewhere in the near future. It can be stressed here that this method depends upon the recording of all the pottery found on a site. Only then can valid comparisons be made of the patterns of pottery use, or at least of pottery loss, on different sites, at different periods, and on different parts of the same site. Much of this potential information is irrevocably lost whenever an excavator adopts a policy of discarding pottery repeats, or 'swaps', rather like a stamp collector. The pottery we find, which is often our most common artifact, surely deserves more respect and attention than it receives from this collector's attitude.

## THE SAMIAN WARE

In all fourteen sherds were found and identified as follows:

	<i>East Gaulish</i>	<i>Central Gaulish</i>
Form Dr. 31	Feature 24: 1 sherd Unstratified: 2 sherds	Feature 5: 1 sherd Feature 31: 1 sherd Feature 40: 1 sherd Unstratified: 1 base <i>Date</i> : late second to mid third century.
Form Dr. 33	Feature 18: 1 sherd, slightly burnt <i>Date</i> : late second or early third century.	Feature 22.B(1): 1 sherd, slightly burnt <i>Date</i> : Second century.
Unidentifiable	Features 3, 22.A(1), and unstratified: 1 fragment each. Feature 22.B(1): 2 fragments.	

The amount of Samian found was far too small for any meaningful conclusions to be drawn about its distribution across the site. The absence of any early pieces perhaps points to the occupation's beginning about the start of the third century.

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

THE COARSE POTTERY

Table 1. Simple sherd count

Feature	Samian	brown	Colour-coated orange	grey	red	Cream slip	Coarse grey	Coarse orange	Shell gritted	
1										Iron Age pot only
2		1		5			3		3	
3	1	9		16		2	29	1	14	
4									1	
5	1								3	
6				2			4			
7				4			4		3	
10				1						
11							1			
12				1			1	1		
13			1	1			3		2	
14							3	1		
15							4		2	
16		2		4		2	7		5	
18	1									
19		1							1	
20							4			
21				1					2	
22(1)	4	5	6	9		3	56	1	29	
22(2)	1	3	1	12			10		17	
23						1	3		2	
24	1	2	1	4			15	1	4	
26		3	1	15			40		4	
28			2	4			9		4	
29		5	5	4		1	12		15	
31	1		9	7			3		1	
32				4			11		3	
34				4			1		3	
35.A(1)		11		20	4	3	10		22	
35.A(2)		1		1					5	
35.B(1)		3	1	6			8			
35.B(2)				2			1		1	
35.B(3)				1					1	
36		2		5			2		9	
37				2			12			
38		11		2		3	4		18	
40	1						1		1	
41				1			1			
42(1)		22	21	10		4	60		30	
47				1					1	
50				1					5	
51				1		1			1	
52		1							6	
53		1								
60				3			1	1		
62			1	1			1			
63		1				2	1			
64		1		3					1	
65			1	1						
Total	11	85	50	159	4	22	325	6	219	
%	1.25	9.62	5.68	18.18	0.45	2.50	36.94	0.68	25.00	
Unstratified	4	36	10	33		11	67	2	39	19 other sherds
Grand Totals	15	121	60	192	4	33	392	8	258	
%	1.4	11.2	5.5	17.7	0.4	3.0	36.1	0.8	23.8	

RICHARD JONES

Table 2. *Frequency of pottery finds*

<i>Feature</i>	<i>No. of sherds</i>	<i>Volume of earth (estimate) cu. m.</i>	<i>Index (sherds per cubic metre)</i>
1	c.12 (very crumbly)	8.0	1.5
2	12	3.5	3.43
3	72	6.0	12.00
4	1	—	0.00
5	4	0.075	53.33
6	6	0.225	26.67
7	11	1.125	9.78
8	0	0.048	0.00
9	0	0.1	0.00
10	1	0.075	13.33
11	1	0.288	3.47
12	3	0.64	4.67
13	7	0.315	22.22
14	4	0.35	11.43
15	6	0.3	20.00
16	20	0.56	35.78
17	0	0.2	0.00
18	1	0.17	5.88
19	2	0.648	3.09
20	4	0.456	8.89
21	3	0.3	10.00
22(1)	113	2.00	56.5
22(2)	44	0.6	73.33
23	6	0.216	27.27
24	28	0.267	103.7
25	0	0.087	0.00
26	63	0.2	315.00
27	0	0.065	0.00
28	19	0.023	826.09
29	42	0.423	100.00
30	0	0.011	0.00
31	21	1.044	20.01
32	18	0.26	69.23
33	0	Natural	—
34	8	0.06	133.33
35.A(1)	70	0.45	155.56
35.A(2)	7	0.765	9.15
35.B(1)	18	0.81	27.16
35.B(2)	4		
35.B(3)	2		
36	18	0.2	10.00
37	14	0.12	150.00
38	14	0.07	200.00
39	38	0.073	520.55
40	0	0.073	0.00
41	3	0.01	300.00
42	2	0.225	8.89
43	147	1.75	84.00
44	0	0.175	0.00
45	0	0.175	0.00
46	0	0.09	0.00
47	0	Natural	—
48	2	0.015	133.00
49	0	0.09	0.00
50	0	0.011	0.00
51	6	0.01	600.00
52	3	0.01	300.00
	7	0.176	39.5

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

Table 2. *Frequency of pottery finds (continued)*

<i>Feature</i>	<i>No. of sherds</i>	<i>Volume of earth (estimate) cu. m.</i>	<i>Index (sherds per cubic metre)</i>
53	1	0.01	100.00
54	0	0.01	0.00
55	0	0.01	0.00
56	0	0.01	0.00
57	0	0.01	0.00
58	0	0.01	0.00
59	0	0.01	0.00
60	5	Surface	—
61	0	Natural	—
62	3	0.05	60.00
63	4	0.05	80.00
64	5	0.05	100.00
65	2	0.05	40.00
66	0	0.15	0.00
Grand Total:	893	34.3	26.0
Graves:	128	7.7	16.6
All other features	765	26.6	28.8

Table 3. *Functional analysis of stratified pottery*

Numbers given are of the minimum identifiable vessels in each category.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Beakers</i>	<i>Dishes/</i>		<i>Box</i>	<i>Mortaria</i>	<i>Totals</i>
		<i>Bowls</i>	<i>Jars</i>			
Samian	2	7	—	—	—	9(6.7%)
Col.-coats: brown	1	10	12	1	—	24(17.8%)
orange	2	12	1	—	—	15(11.1%)
grey	5	10	14	—	—	29(21.5%)
Cream slip	—	4	1	—	2	7(5.2%)
Coarse grey	—	14	13	—	—	27(20%)
Coarse orange	2	—	1	—	—	3(2.2%)
Shell-gritted	—	—	21	—	—	21(15.6%)
Totals	12	57	63	1	2	135
%	(8.9)	(42.2)	(46.7)	(0.7)	(1.5)	

Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide most of the basic information about the pottery found on the site. Table 1 gives a simple sherd count, divided by the fabrics found and by feature. The totals are also represented as histograms in FIGS. 15 and 16. The pottery falls into three main wares: colour-coats, plain grey and shell-gritted. The most common is the plain grey, with more than one third of all sherds, closely followed by the colour-coats with a third, then the shell-gritted with a quarter. The distribution of the various colour-coats may also be of interest, with a strong emphasis on the grey. These figures are slightly in conflict with the proportions given by the analysis of identifiable vessels (Table 3), where there is a greater stress on the fine wares. Here the colour-coats exceed 50%, with the plain grey and shell-gritted fabrics having 20% and 15% respectively. Which assessment should be preferred is difficult to decide at this stage in the study. It may be that with larger samples of pottery the whole vessel count may prove more reliable, but here the material is so short that the general sherd count of all the sherds is perhaps superior. There may always be a bias in the vessel count towards the finer, better known wares and the smaller vessels, with the large storage jars heavily influencing the sherd count.

Table 2 gives an account of the sherds per cubic metre of each feature. All the fabrics are totalled together here and the estimate of "archaeological earth" moved is as accurate as possible and is given correct to three decimal places. It only includes earth actually excavated by hand from a feature. Where the feature was very small some obviously ludicrous results are obtained for the index figure, notably 826 sherds per cubic metre for feature 28. Also the index is calculated correct to two decimal places, which would seem to be needless accuracy in normal circumstances, particularly because of unavoidable variation in standards of collection of the pottery. A figure

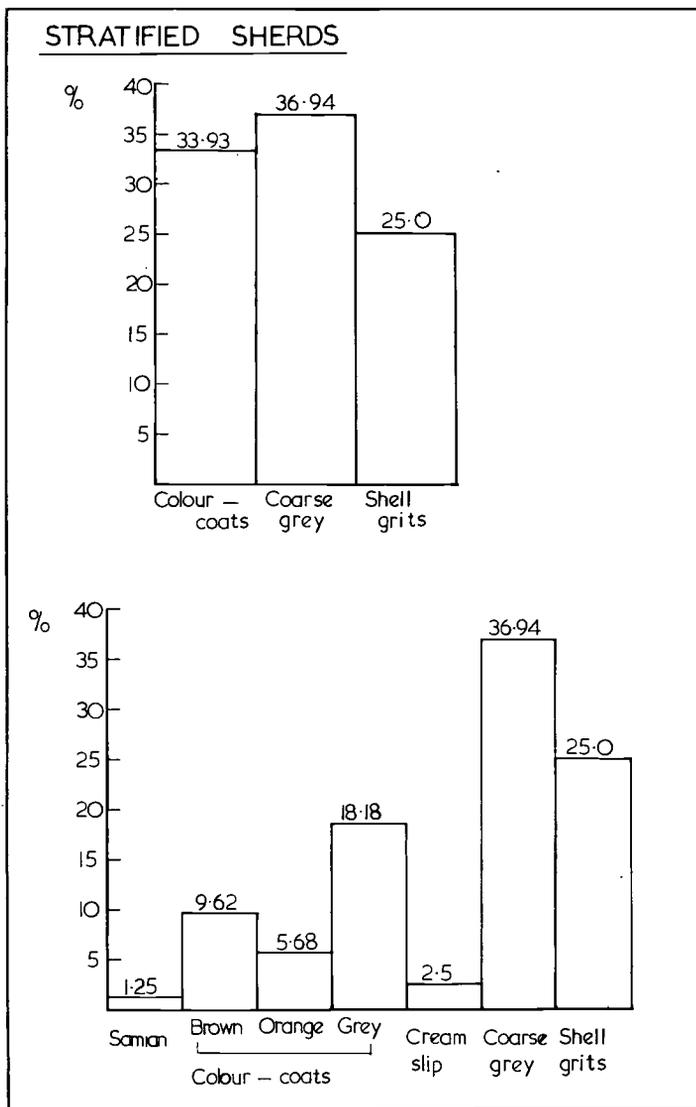


Fig. 15 Lynch Farm: the stratified sherds.

correct to the unit number should be sufficient. This form is adopted for the graph (FIG. 17), which also excludes features with less than 0.2 cubic metres excavated. Here the simple plotting of features on axes of the number of sherds and the pottery index reveals a clear grouping of the graves showing a low intensity of pottery. Those ditch features which also have a low score may perhaps be showing signs of having been kept clean, whilst those with high scores were allowed to fill up with rubbish.

Table 3 is probably the most tentatively offered of the tables, both because of the smallness of the sample available and because of the subjective element in deciding the classifications, often from small fragments of rim.

In discussing these figures it is a problem to make much of the frequency indices without a quantity of comparable material from other sites. Until that becomes available, the main point of

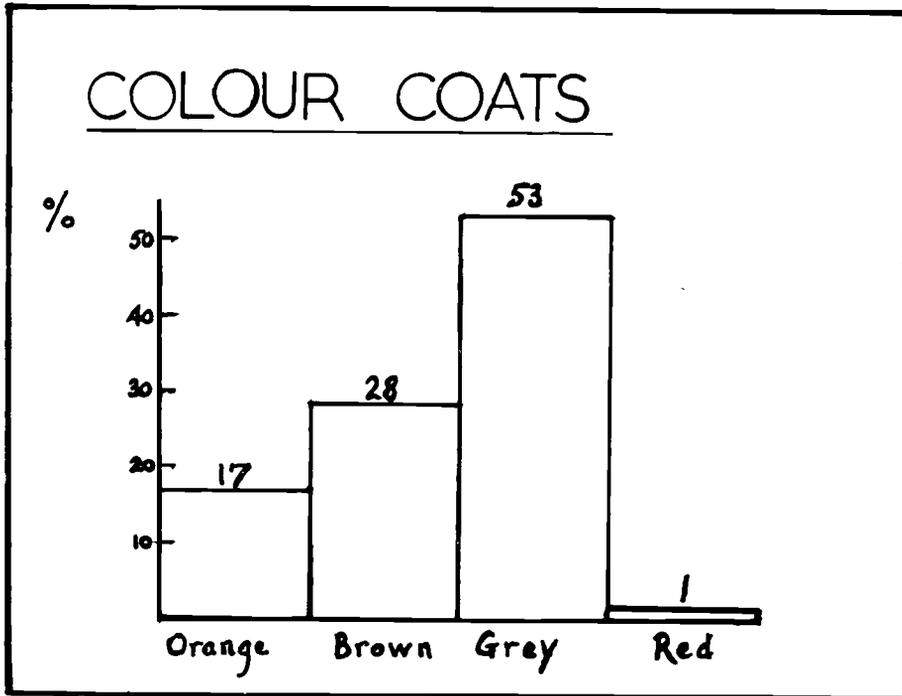


Fig. 16 Lynch Farm: the colour-coated pottery.

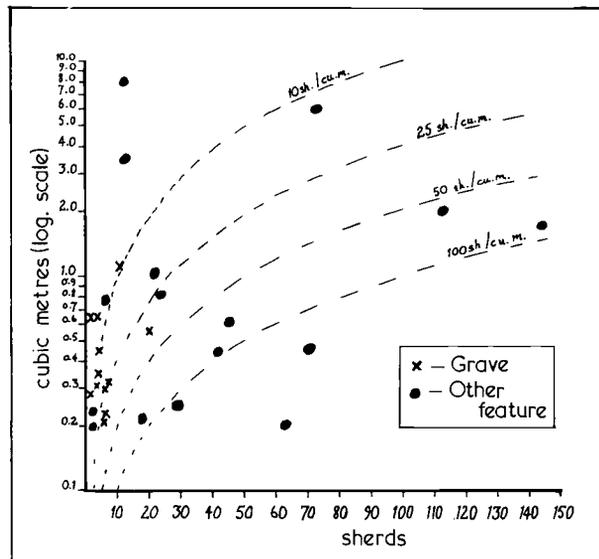


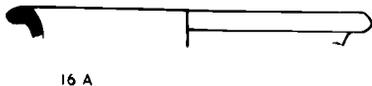
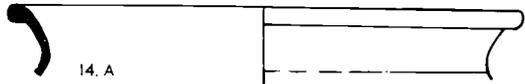
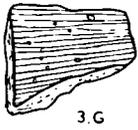
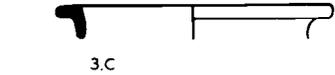
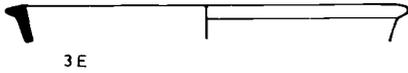
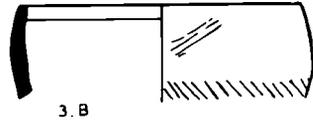
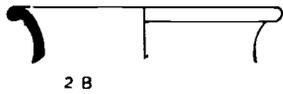
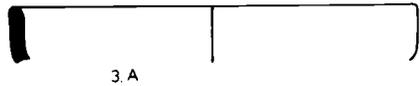
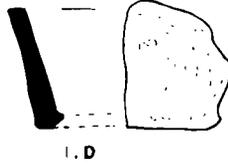
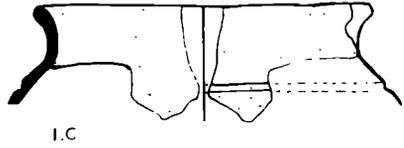
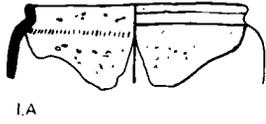
Fig. 17 Lynch Farm: the frequency of pottery finds.

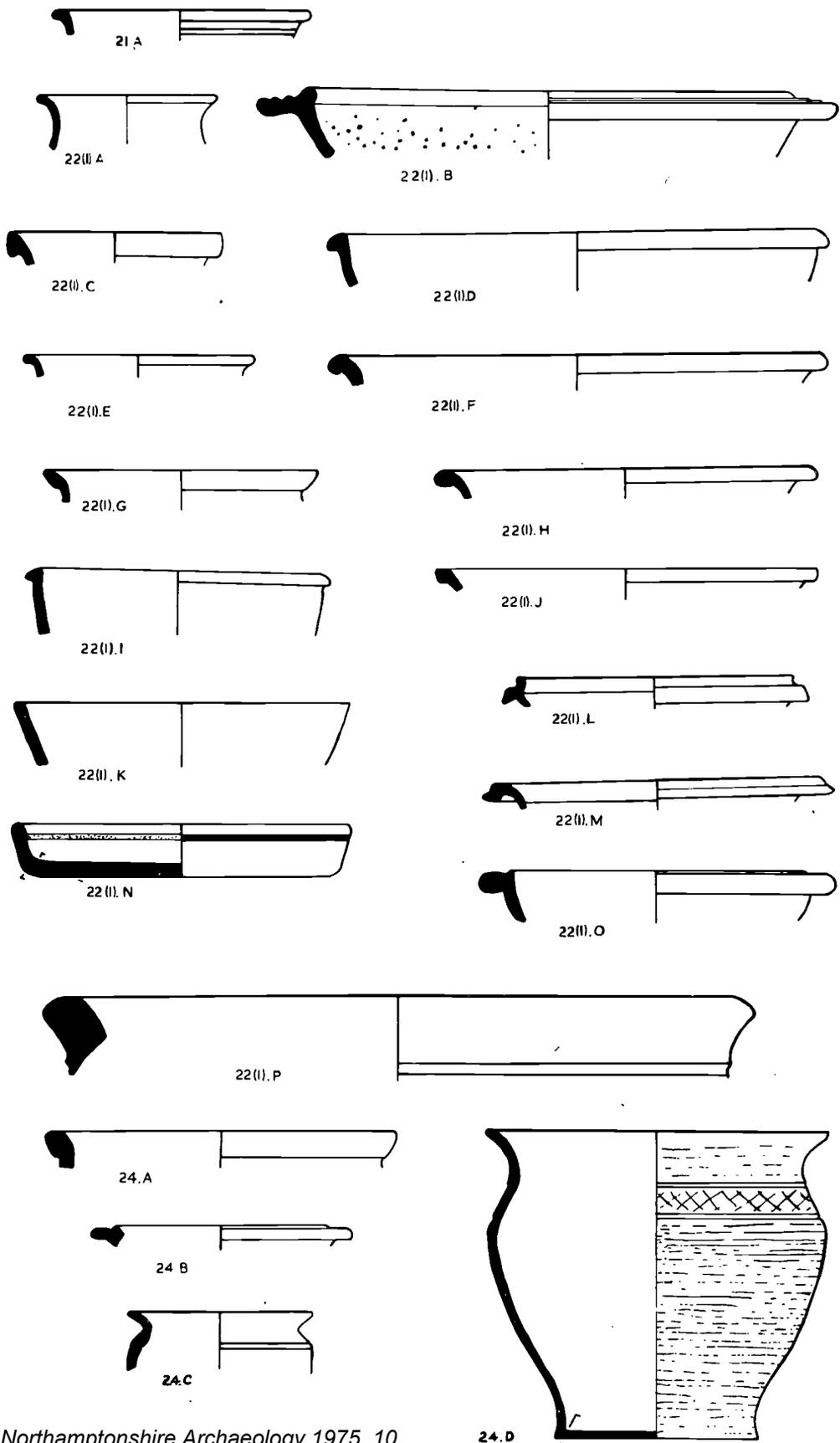
note is the clear distinction between the graves and the farmstead features. The pattern of use shown by the other tables gives more room for comment. There is obviously a clear preference for grey wares, both colour-coated and plain. The exact distinction between fine and coarse wares is not clearly established through the difference between sherd and vessel counts, but they are at least equally balanced, and probably the coarse wares make up as much as two thirds of the assemblage. Incidentally, no glass vessels were identified. The functional study shows a heavy preponderance of the basic working vessels, jars and bowls, with few of the finer, and perhaps more decorative beakers, boxes and the like. Certainly few of the more ornamental types known to have been made in the Nene Valley are present here. Also scarce are mortaria. It may be significant that there are no liquid containers such as flagons and flasks. Might this reveal that the inhabitants of this site had little use for expensive oil and wine? The pottery assemblage does not suggest a life with much luxury.

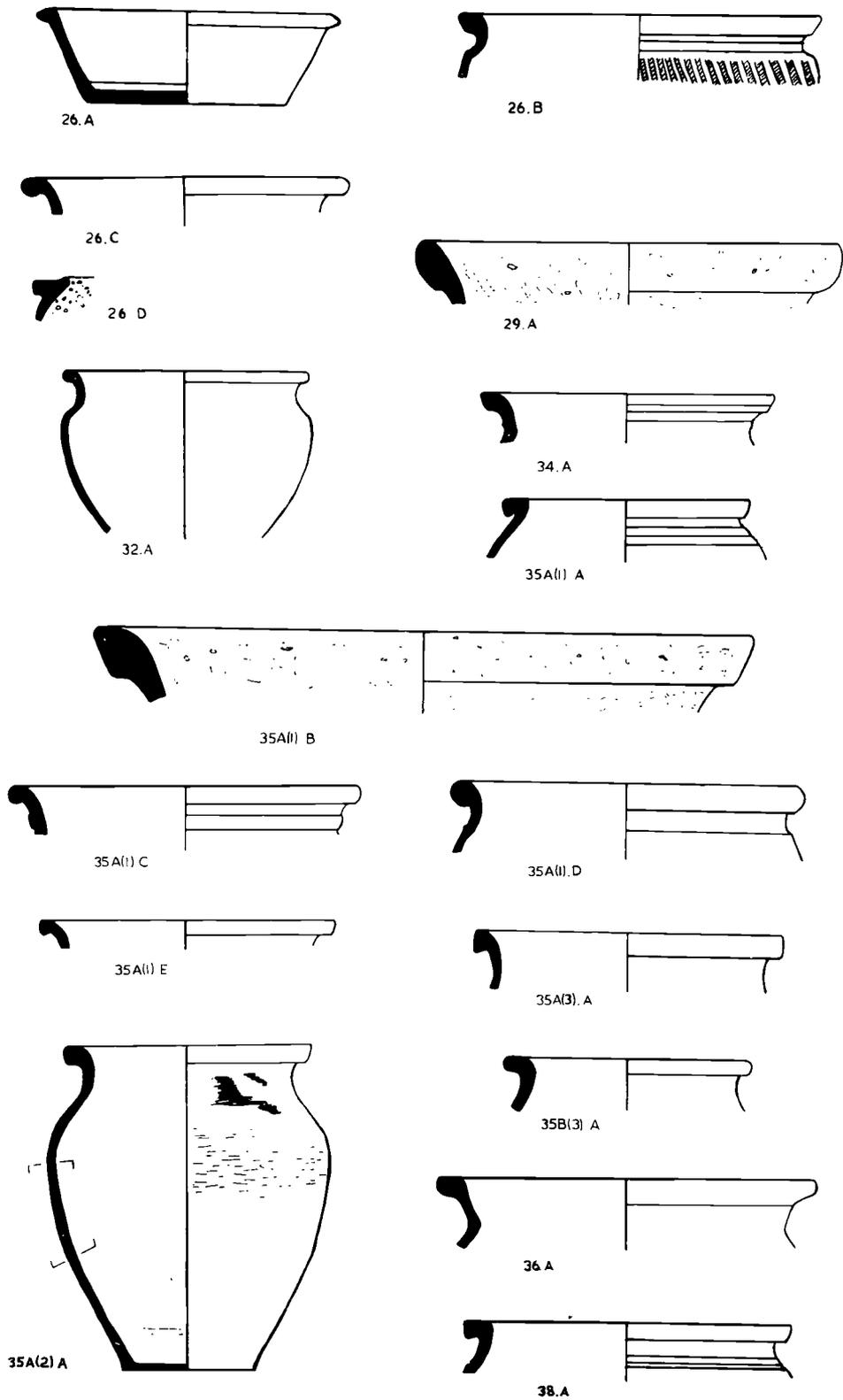
The method of analysis used here obviously has scope for much greater refinement when applied to larger samples. It may then be possible to examine more fully the variations from feature to feature of fabric and functional type. A useful check on the sherd count may be provided by also weighing the sherds (Evans, 1973). The greatest potential may nevertheless lie with the vessel count. The typology and identification of Romano-British forms is now well enough established for this to be undertaken easily on larger samples, particularly in the Nene Valley where there is an intensely studied local pottery industry. (For forms see Webster, 1969b.) The pottery index figures too are only likely to achieve their fullest application when large features are completely excavated. Here distortion often arose when a concentration of pottery was found in one small area, but none at all in another.

*The illustrated pottery*

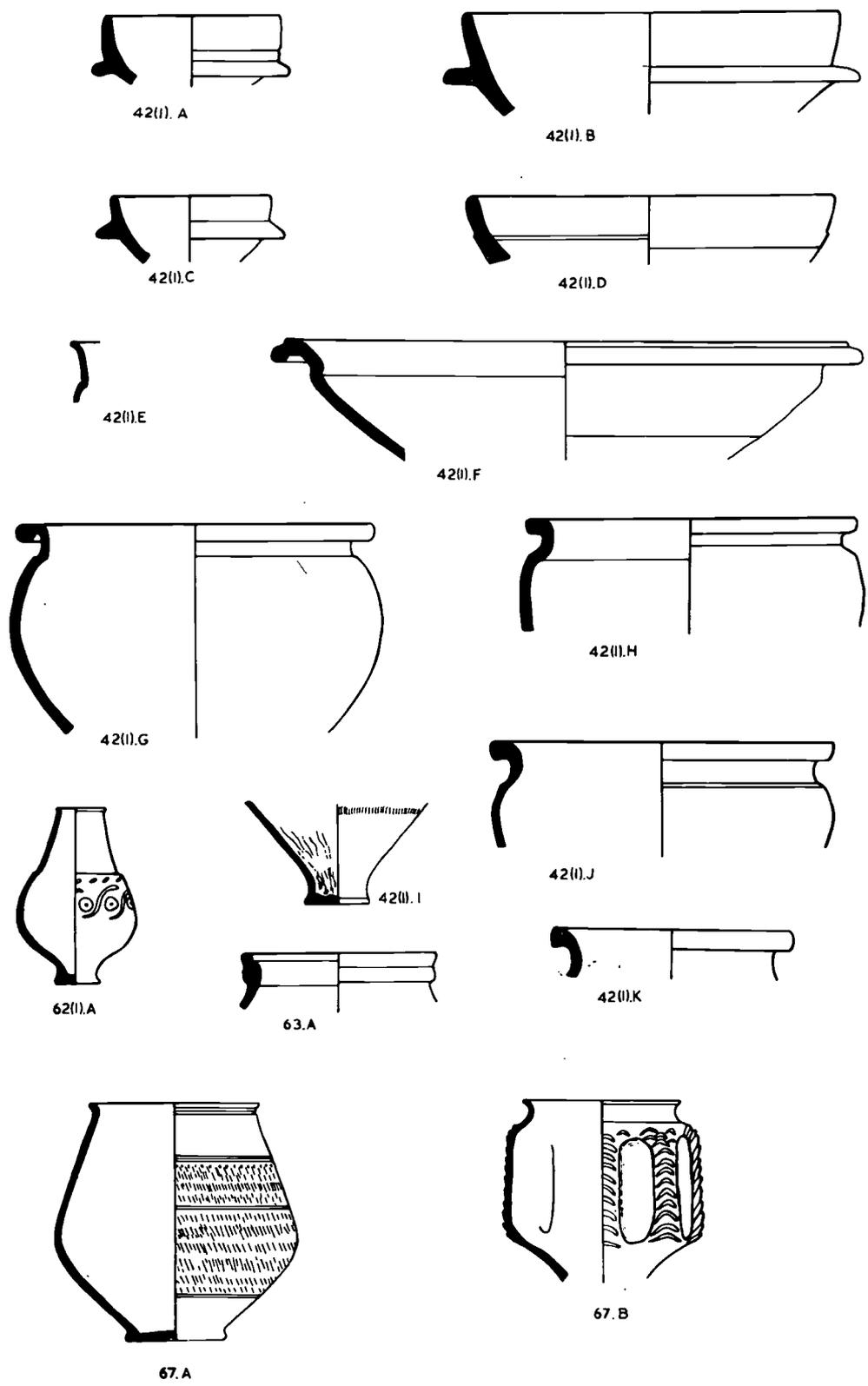
<i>Feature</i>	<i>Pot</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	A	Hard shell-gritted fabric. Black to orange in colour. Hand made.
	B	Similar to A, but perhaps with fewer shell grits.
	C	Shell-gritted fabric but much finer than A or B and better fired. Buff, with grey core.
	D	Very fragile, coarse and ill-fired shell-gritted pottery. Dull orange in colour.
	E	As D.
2	A	Pale grey fabric. Traces of grey/brown colour coat.
	B	Sandy grey fabric.
3	A	Hard light grey fabric.
	B	Fine white fabric with brown/grey colour coat.
	C	Fine white fabric with brown colour-coat.
	D	Pale grey fabric with grey colour-coat.
	E	Pale grey fabric with light grey colour-coat.
	F	Very coarse shell-gritted fabric. Deep orange, but grey/brown core.
	G	As F, but paler orange.
4	A	Orange sandy fabric with grey core. Incised decoration.
6	A	Hard light grey fabric.
14	A	Sandy orange fabric with grey core.
15	A	Smooth grey fabric.
16	A	Pale pink fabric with traces of pink/cream slip.
	B	Pale pink fabric with brown colour-coat. Box lid.
21	A	Fine cream fabric with grey colour-coat.
22(1)	A	Sandy grey fabric.
	B	Fine cream fabric with slightly darker cream slip. Black grits inside.
	C	Orange shell-gritted fabric with dark grey core.
	D	Pink/cream fabric with brown colour-coat.
	E	Fine cream fabric with grey colour-coat.
	F	Hard sandy grey fabric.
	G	Smooth dark grey fabric with paler grey core.
	H	As G.
	I	As G.
	J	Coarse grey fabric with orange core.
	K	Smooth grey fabric.







**Fig. 20** Lynch Farm: Pottery (features 26 to 38;  $\frac{1}{4}$ ).  
*Northamptonshire Archaeology* 1975, 10



**Fig. 21** Lynch Farm: Pottery (features 42 to 67; ¼).  
*Northamptonshire Archaeology* 1975, 10

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

*The illustrated pottery (continued)*

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Pot</i>	<i>Description</i>
	L	Hard smooth orange fabric, but oddly fired and red and brown areas inside.
	M	Pink/cream fabric with brown colour-coat.
	N	Smooth grey fabric.
	O	Fine cream fabric with grey colour-coat.
	P	Black shell-gritted fabric with smooth orange surface.
24	A	Cream smooth fabric with grey colour-coat.
	B	Cream smooth fabric with grey colour-coat.
	C	Coarse orange sandy fabric.
	D	Grey/brown sandy fabric.
26	A	Buff fine fabric with grey colour-coat.
	B	Almost white, with faint blue tinge, fine fabric, with some small black grits. Slightly darker colour-coat. Incised decoration on body.
	C	Light grey/brown self-coloured, fine fabric. Perhaps a waster, as some sign of misfiring.
	D	Coarse grey fabric, shell-gritted. Coarse pock marking on inside and outer rim.
29	A	Coarse shell-gritted, orange fabric with grey core.
32	A	Coarse grey fabric.
34	A	Coarse shell-gritted fabric with black exterior.
35A(1)	A	Cream fabric with grey colour-coat.
	B	Brown shell-gritted fabric, oxidised to orange on surface.
	C	Cream fabric with grey colour-coat.
	D	Orange fabric with brown colour-coat.
	E	Black fabric, oxidised to buff. Finer fabric than B, but still shell-gritted.
35A(2)	A	Grey shell-gritted fabric, oxidised to orange.
35A(3)	A	Grey shell-gritted fabric, oxidised to orange. Similar fabric to 35A(2)A, above.
35B(3)	A	Smooth black shell-gritted fabric. Oxidised to orange inside and black outside.
36	A	Brown fabric, shell-gritted, oxidised to bright orange.
38	A	Cream fabric with brown colour-coat.
42(1)	A	Cream fabric with brown colour-coat.
	B	Cream/orange fabric with orange colour-coat.
	C	Cream fabric with orange colour-coat.
	D	Cream fabric with orange colour-coat.
	E	Grey fabric with grey colour-coat.
	F	Cream fabric with orange colour-coat.
	G	Cream fabric with brown colour-coat.
	H	Smooth grey fabric with grey colour-coat.
	I	Orange fabric with dark grey colour-coat.
	J	Brown/grey coarse fabric with dark grey colour-coat.
	K	Coarse shell-gritted fabric, with smooth surface, orange outside and black within.
62(1)	A	Orange fabric with dark grey colour-coat and smooth texture. White barbotine decoration.
63	A	Smooth cream fabric with traces of cream colour-coat.
67	A	Fine cream fabric with grey colour-coat. Slightly misfired and brown in places.
	B	Fine cream/pink fabric with brown/orange colour-coat, evenly fired.

F. THE ANIMAL REMAINS

*by Joan Wilson*

The bones were well preserved in the silt and gravel of the site just above water level. About 600 bones were examined; 107 were of bone chips from long bones of cattle size and could not be used in the joint analysis or for ageing but were useful in showing butchering techniques. Species present were cattle, horse, sheep, with a few bones of pig, dog, red deer, human, and rodent. No

shells were in the sample seen. Sheep may have included goat as no horns or other identifiable criteria were seen.

Table 1 shows the number of fragments from each layer divided into species of animal, age of animal in age groups A (new born), B (immature), and C (mature). Also shown are the class of joint the bone came from: 1st class are the joints carrying most meat (trunk and upper limbs), 2nd class those with little meat value (head and lower limbs).

Table 2 shows the minimum number of animals present in each layer. This is found from the least number of beasts that could have produced the number of bones, i.e. 3 left and 4 right femora of sheep give a minimum of 4 sheep. It can be seen that there were no new-born animals killed. Over half the cattle were mature and sheep were evenly divided between young and mature animals killed. The horses were mainly older animals.

Signs of butchering were present on few bones. Only 15 were cut, 10 showed signs of having been chopped, mainly on limb bones and pelvic bones, and most of the limb bones were broken, probably for marrow. Only 10 were chewed, mostly bones of the lower limbs probably by dogs. Only 3 bones had been burnt, one a human tooth in a ditch layer.

Two deformities were noted both from mature cattle, one on a metacarpal on which the proximal end had arthritic changes causing a 10mm. increase in size by frilling, probably from pulling heavy loads. The second was the head of a femur which showed wear to the articulating surface of the joint and erosion at the top.

In Table 3 the sizes of cattle and horse are seen to be similar to those of other animals found on Roman sites in the Nene Valley and elsewhere in Britain. No quantity of measurable bone was found from the other species present. The Iron Age beasts are slightly smaller than the Roman ones, except for a horse tibia and a metatarsal which were larger than those seen from other Roman sites.

The cattle horn cores were short and either straight or curving forward. The large one probably came from a bull. This type of horn is similar to other Roman cattle seen from this area. The red deer antler had been shed, since no pedicle was attached and the burr was complete. It was of a male red deer of 10 years of age, as 9 tines were present. The antler was 1 metre in length. The burr's circumference was 265mm. and that above the first tine was 210mm. There was no sign of degeneration due to age or malnutrition.

Table 1. *Distribution of fragments*

A. *Cattle*

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Total frags.</i>	<i>1st class joints</i>	<i>2nd class joints</i>	<i>Loose teeth</i>	<i>No. of indivs.</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Age B</i>	<i>C</i>
Ditches:								
1	8	4	4	—	3	—	2	1
2	10	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
3	141	56	72	4	4	—	1	3
22(1)	102	41	49	12	7	—	3	4
22(2)	5	5	—	—	2	—	1	1
26	14	3	11	—	1	—	—	1
28	2	—	—	2	1	—	—	1
29	5	4	1	—	2	—	1	1
35.A(2)	1	—	—	1	1	—	1	—
35.B(1/2)	17	12	4	1	3	—	1	2
35.B(3)	3	3	—	—	1	—	—	—
36	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
38	2	2	—	—	2	—	1	1
Ditch total	311	132	141	20	29	—	11	16
Pits:								
32	2	1	1	—	1	—	1	—
37	3	—	2	1	1	—	—	1
42	28	6	18	4	2	—	1	1
Pits total:	33	7	21	5	4	—	2	2
Graves:								
7	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	1
16	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Graves total:	2	1	—	1	2	—	—	1
GRAND TOTAL:	346	140	162	26	35		13	19

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

B. Sheep

Feature	Total frags.	1st class joints	2nd class joints	Loose teeth	No. of indivs.	A	Age B	C
Ditches:								
1	2	1	1	—	2	—	1	1
3	17	15	2	—	3	—	2	1
22(1)	8	1	4	3	4	—	3	1
22(2)	7	1	1	—	1	—	—	1
26	7	—	3	4	1	—	1	—
29	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
35.A(2)	2	2	—	—	1	—	1	—
35.B(1/2)	9	6	3	—	2	—	—	1
Ditch total:	53	27	14	7	15	—	8	5
Pit:								
42	10	10	—	—	2	—	—	2
Grave:								
16	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	1
GRAND TOTAL:	64	37	14	8	18	—	8	8

C. Pigs

Feature	Total frags.	1st class joints	2nd class joints	Loose teeth	No. of indivs.	A	Age B	C
Ditches :								
1	2	2	—	—	1	—	—	1
3	2	2	—	—	1	—	1	—
22(1)	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
29	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Ditch total:	6	6	—	—	4	—	1	1
Pit:								
42	6	5	—	1	1	—	1	—
GRAND TOTAL:	12	11	—	1	5	—	2	1

D. Other Animals

Feature	Horse		Human		Rodent		Carnivore		Bird		Unidenti- fied large ani- mal frags.
	Indivs	Age	Indivs	Age	Indivs	Age	Indivs	Age	Indivs	Age	
1	1	C	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	—	—	1	C	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	—	—	1	B	—	—	1	C	—	—	60
22(1)	1	B	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	C	44
	2	C	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
22(2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	B	—
29	1	C	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35.B(1/2)	1	C	1	c.20?	—	—	1	deer	1	C	—
49	1	C	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
51	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	B	—	—	—
42	1	B	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	C	3
TOTALS:	2	B	1	B	1	—	3	(1B, 1C)	1	B	107
	6	C	2	C	—	—	1	deer	4	C	—
	8		3						5		

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Table 2. Summary of minimum number of animals

Feature	Cattle		Sheep		Pig		Horse	Bird	Carnivore
	B	C	B	C	B	C			
Ditches:									
1	2	1	1	1	—	1	1	—	—
2	—	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
3	1	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	1
22(1)	3	4	2	1	1	—	3	2	—
22(2)	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
26	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
28	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
29	1	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
35.A(2)	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
35.B(1/2)	1	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
38	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
49	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Graves:									
7	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
51	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Pits:									
32	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
37	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
42	1	1	—	2	1	—	1	1	—
TOTALS:	13	19	8	8	2	1	8	5	3

Table 3. Bone measurements

All measurements are given in millimetres and show the largest and smallest found.

	Length	Proximal width	Shaft width	Distal width
<b>HORSE</b>				
Iron Age (feature 1):				
Tibia	317	70	37	57
Roman features:				
Tibia	366	93/92	48	70/74
Femur	351	—	43	88/106
Humerus	—	—	—	80
Radius	—	—	46	—
Metacarpal	220	47	32	49
Metatarsal	280	48	32	48
1st phalanx	83/54	54/53	—	45/43
2nd phalanx	48/45	56/50	—	49/46
3rd phalanx	width 56, depth 36, height 32			
Calcaneum	Tuberosity W 42/37			
Scapula	Neck width 41			
Astragalus	length 59/50, depth 50, width 56/55			
<b>CATTLE</b>				
Iron Age (feature 1):				
Tibia	326	72	41	58
Roman features:				
Tibia	—	—	—	66/64
Humerus	245/239	—	30/29	73/67
Radius	287	87/68	46/36	79/66
Metacarpal	197	70/48	38/28	64
Metatarsal	—	53/37	30/24	—
1st phalange	59/55	27	—	28
Calcaneum	118	width 25, tuberosity W 37/35		
Astragalus	71/42			48/30
Innominate	Acetabulum length 45, width 62/52. Neck 41/31			
Scapula	Neck width 48/43			
Horn cores	Circumferences 190/124/122/107. Outer length 90			

### 3. THE HUMAN REMAINS

#### A. THE SKELETAL MATERIAL

by Dr David Fulton

<i>Skeleton</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	F	c.25	Poor survival.
2	—	Adult	Poor survival.
3	—	Adult	Skull fragments show gross asymmetry. Bulge in the right parietal region, and the inner surface was rough.
4	—	Adult	Poor survival.
5	—	Adult	Poor survival.
6	—	Adult	Poor survival.
7	—	Child	Poor survival.
8	—	Adult	Only small fragments of cortical bone seen.
9	M	Adult	Only occipital and parietal bones from skull seen. Thick, up to 10 mm.
10	—	Adult	Poor survival.
11	M	Adult	Only skull, L. foot and body of lumbar vertebra.
12	M	Adult	No intact long bones seen. Moderate wear on teeth. No congenital abnormalities. A little osteo-arthritis in spine.
13	F	Old adult	Thin skull bones. Between the skull and the upper cervical vertebrae, arthritis at the occipito-cervical joint. Odontoid process separate from the rest of vertebra C2. The sockets of incisor and molar teeth obliterated.
14	M	Adult	Moderate wear on teeth. L forearm deformed. Possible healed fracture in R ulna. A gap, perhaps a cut, in the spine between L1 and L2.
15	—	Adult	Unexcavated.
16	F	Adult	Unexcavated.
17	M	40/50	Lower jaw only seen. Much wear on teeth, but no caries.
18	M	Adult	Bulge in the R parietal area. Teeth worn on the inner side. R2 and 3 removed in life, as sockets obliterated. Perforation of hard palate opposite 3rd R molar. Small fragments of cortical bone also.
19	—	Adult	Skull above eye level and some fragments seen. Erosion of outer table of frontal bone, perhaps from osteo-myelitis or from soil action.
20	—	Adult	Only skull fragments seen, mostly parietal bones. Smallish skull but thick bone, up to 7 mm. in parietal bones.
21	F	Adult	Teeth very worn.
22	M	Adult	Severe osteo-myelitis in knees and hip. Only lower bones of body seen.
23	M	Adult	Very fragmentary. Teeth very worn. Olechronon foramina.
24	F	Adult	Complete skeleton. Probably mother of baby, 40. Death probably following miscarriage, through sepsis.
25	F	c.20	Poor survival.
26	F	c.20	L arm shorter than R. Apparently some calcification in L chest, possibly from an old empyaemia.
27	M	25/30	Badly shattered. Heavy orbital ridges, low forehead. Large sphenoidal sinus. Teeth worn, except lower 8s which are only slightly worn.
28	M	c.40	Very fragmentary. Moderate wear on teeth.
29	—	Child 7/8	Badly fragmented. Skull disarticulated. R mastoid partially destroyed, probably from an old mastoiditis, which could have been the cause of death.
30	M	Young adult	Moderate wear on teeth. Large cavity on 1st R molar.

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31	F	Adult	All teeth present and little wear. Small hole in L parietal bone, but no surrounding cracks, suggesting ante-mortem origin. No growth of bone, so perhaps the cause of death.
32	M	Adult	Teeth worn and many sockets obliterated. Some arthritis. Long clavicles, suggesting broad shoulders.
33	M	Adult	Upper jaw edentulous. Neck of R femur short, possible dislocation of R hip. Extensive calcification of posterior spinal ligaments. Old fracture of R clavicle. Olechroon foramina.
34	M	Adult	Teeth worn and some sockets obliterated. Several large cavities.
35	F	15/20	Skull bones shattered when seen, but sutures not united. Upper R canine and premolars erupting. L3, 4 and 5 not erupted. No intact long bones seen. Small olechroon foramina.
36	M	Adult	Much fragmented when seen. Thoracic spine deviated to R. Lateral scoleosis. R pleural almost obliterated.
37	F	Old adult	Almost edentulous. Bilateral olechroon foramina.
38	M	Adult	Teeth worn. Extensive arthritis. Squatting facet on astragalus. Bilateral olechroon foramina. R humerus head slipped, perhaps in childhood. Thick skull and low forehead.
39	M	c.12	Skull fragments only.
40	—	Baby c.30 weeks	As only 30 weeks maturity, this could have been the result of a miscarriage leading to the death of the mother through sepsis.
41	M	Adult	Squatting facet.
42	F	Child c.8	R mastoid 'moth-eaten' compared to L. Probably the result of mastoiditis, and perhaps the cause of death. L chest much smaller than R. Calcification between ribs, probably from some sort of chronic infection. Teeth erupting.
43	F	Young adult	Very fragmentary. Teeth only slightly worn. Skull rather thin.
44	M	Adult	Teeth all present. Moderate wear. Very well preserved, with even the coracoid process on scapula intact.
45	F	Adult	Poor survival even though in a deep grave. Most of the chest gone. Teeth very worn.
46	M	Adult	Only fragments.
47	M	Adult	Long bones only.
48	F	Adult	Very fragmentary. Olechroon foramen on L humerus, but R not found.
49	—	Adult	Skull only. Very large superciliary ridges and low forehead.
50	—	Adult	Poor survival.

BONE MEASUREMENTS (in cm.)

<i>Skeleton</i>	<i>Tibia</i>	<i>Femur</i>	<i>Radius</i>	<i>Ulna</i>	<i>Humerus</i>
14	—	—	—	—	R 29.5
23	—	R 47.5	—	—	—
27	R 37.2	—	—	—	R 34.0
28	—	—	R 26.4	R 27.4	—
30	L+R 35.6	R 40.9	—	—	—
31	R 33.0	L 41.4	—	—	—
32	—	—	L 24.2	—	R 34.6
36	—	R 42.5	R 22.5	—	—
37	R 31.7	—	—	—	L 29.8
38	R 36.6	—	—	—	L 31.2
44	L 34.0	L 43.5	—	—	—
45	R 35.5	L 45.4	—	—	—
	L 35.8	—	—	—	—
47	—	—	—	R 29.5	—

ROMAN FARM AND CEMETERY, LYNCH FARM

SUMMARIES  
by Richard Jones

Age group	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
Child	39	1 42	1 29, 40	2 4
Young adult 15-25	27, 30	2 1, 25, 26, 35, 43	5	— 7
Adult 25-40	9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 22, 23, 28, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 41, 44, 46, 47	17 16, 21, 24, 31, 45, 48	6 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 19, 20, 49, 50	13 36
Old adult 40+	17	1 13, 37	2	— 3
Totals		21	14	15 50

Olechronon foramina were observed in skeletons 23, 33, 35, 37, 38.

All the skeletons were fully drawn and photographed *in situ* and examined by Dr. Fulton as closely as possible then. Unfortunately many skeletons were badly damaged and many bones broke when lifted. This meant that Dr. Fulton was unable to examine all the skeletons in as much detail as might have been hoped. It also accounts for the few long bone measurements available.

The table above provides a summary of the demographic information. The size of the sample precludes any serious conclusions, but the difference between the proportions of male and female in the young adult and adult age groups is very marked. The adult group is probably rather over-emphasised since those skeletons are included which provided no more information than their simple size. A number of these must in reality have belonged to the younger group, and perhaps even to the older. Indeed comparison with the large sample of 290 Romano-British skeletons examined from the Trentholme Drive cemetery at York suggests that the older group should be increased (Warwick, 1968, Table 1, p. 163). However little other comparative material is available, especially from rural cemeteries.

B. THE CREMATION

by Calvin Wells, F.R.A.I., Ph.D., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

1. *In brown colour-coated beaker (67.B)*

These remains consisted of about 100 very small fragments. The largest (75 mm. long) was a tibial shaft; only one other piece was longer than 35 mm. Identifiable are: a few tiny fragments of cranial vault; a fragment of cervical vertebra and one of (? lower) thoracic; part of a humeral head; splinters from the shafts of humerus, ulna, femur (with *linea aspera*) and tibia; a sliver of metacarpal. These remains have been fired with fair efficiency, although a few flakes of cranial vault and part of a femoral shaft are slightly underfired. Collection of the residue was incompetent. Only one individual can be detected here. No animal bones were found.

2. *In grey colour-coated beaker (67.A)*

A few dozen very small scraps: the largest (39 mm. long) is probably from a tibial shaft. Identifiable are: fragments of a cranial vault; splinters of long bone shafts; the head of a radius; rib splinters; the head of a phalange of a hand. One of the cranial vault fragments shows a length of unfused suture. Firing was mostly efficient but parts of the vault and a piece of proximal femoral shaft are slightly underfired. Collection of the residue was poor. Only one person was detected here. No animal bones were found.

*Summary*

It is highly probable, though not quite certain, that these two collections of bone are parts of only one skeleton. The sex is almost certainly female. The fused epiphysis of the head of a radius indicates an adult or older teenager. The unfused cranial suture may indicate a young adult. The few scraps of underfired bones are from deeply placed structures or from the occiput, which is often not fully attacked by the flames. The incompetent retrieval suggests that burning, rather than the subsequent collection, was regarded as the most important part of the ritual.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

## (A) HISTORY OF THE SITE

Pre-Roman occupation of the site is only shown by the single Iron Age pit (1). This must be seen as part of the phase of activity the remains of which have been excavated elsewhere in the Lynch Farm area by Adrian Challands (Challands, 1973), but it adds little of significance to that material. The absence of any other signs of an Iron Age population so close to the centre of the densest features shown on the air photographs may be of some interest in the interpretation of the system of ditches to the south.

The earliest Roman object is the bronze brooch described above (Section 2.B.6). None of the features found on the site remotely approach this in date, as can be seen from the frequency of colour-coated pottery. The most likely explanation is that it was associated with the apparently military enclosures now identified only 400 m. away at site 2, where some first century cremation burials have also been found (Wild, 1973a, and personal communication). With the fortress at Longthorpe lying immediately across the Nene to the east, a major concentration of early military operations can now be observed (Frere & St. Joseph 1974; Wild 1974).

The courtyard enclosures of the farm must represent the first intense occupation of this area. Close dating of the pottery has not been attempted yet for reasons explained above (Section 2.E), but it is clear that the general assemblage dates from the third and fourth centuries. The earliest definite date comes from the cremation and Samian, of the late second or early third centuries. From then activity seems to have been continuous until at least the middle of the fourth century. The latest date is provided by the beaker with sk. 47, dating from the early fourth century. This was apparently carefully placed with the bones of 47 when 43 was interred, strongly suggesting that it had then been found buried with 47. It may be assumed that the grave of 47 would originally have been marked like the others, and would not have been disturbed for a considerable period, at the very least 20 to 25 years, bringing the date of 43 to a point somewhere in the middle of the fourth century. The hoard of coins is indeed significantly later, belonging to nearer the end of the century, but this can only prove that someone was active in the area then and that the line of the ditch was still discernible to offer a convenient hiding place. It does not show that the farm had continued in operation. There was no evidence of any sudden reason for the farm to go out of use, so a gradual decline may be supposed.

## (B) THE NATURE OF THE FARM

Little evidence for the economy of the farm was recovered. This was partly because so little of the farmstead was investigated, and partly because the cemetery commanded priority of attention. Serious discussion of the farming activity must await the excavation of the remaining, much larger, portion of the courtyard in the area now preserved, but a few observations may be made. As no sieving or flotation processes were employed there is an inevitable bias towards the animal and away from the vegetable remains. In fact no seeds at all were recovered, nor even any part of a millstone or quern. The animal bones were unfortunately again only a small sample, but they do represent a wide spread of

species present. How much regular meat these animals provided must be a matter for conjecture, but it may be noted that the cattle and sheep were quite evenly divided between mature and immature animals; so not all were kept as working animals or for milk and wool. Some bones also bore the marks of butchering. Thus a place in the diet for meat is established: perhaps the red deer provided a special feast.

The actual layout of the farmstead poses some problems, particularly the function of the small enclosures within the courtyard. As no structures of stores or workshops were found some kind of animal compounds may be the best explanation to offer. The presence of some metal slag does suggest metal-working not too far away. The paddock did have the cemetery in one corner, but the rest appeared to be just open space. There was no way of deciding whether this was used for arable or pasture.

(C) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CEMETERY AND THE FARMSTEAD

There was no clear stratigraphic link discovered between the elements of the site: the burial area and the farm. Admittedly it is difficult to envisage a satisfactory link, short of an overall sealing layer. Even a farm ditch cut through some of the graves need not prevent parts of the farm and the cemetery being contemporary. As it is, all that can be said definitely is that two burials (sks. 1, 44) are later than two ditches (2, 26). Yet neither of these graves forms part of the main nucleus of the cemetery. That does seem to have a definite spatial relationship with the farmstead, being excluded from the central courtyard, but enclosed by the paddock ditch, and perhaps even by a fence on the north and east sides. This suggests that the cemetery can hardly have preceded the farm. Some dispersed burials must be later than the ditches, but it cannot be shown that others were definitely not earlier. It is unclear whether graves spread from the nucleus, or were concentrated there after a period of haphazard burial, or there were cases of both. At no point is the ceramic evidence, at best slight for the graves, able to show a distinction within the broad pattern of third and fourth century forms. Two separate phases of activity could easily pass undetected.

Thus two interpretations are possible: that the farm fell out of use, perhaps in the late third century, with an isolated cremation there already, and that the land was then turned into a burial area, or that they were broadly contemporary, with some of the latest inhumations spreading into the farm's working area. In view of the way in which the cemetery nucleus did respect the edge of the courtyard and the possibility of more cremations having been ploughed away, it seems that the former theory demands more proof. It is the present writer's opinion that the farm and cemetery were in operation at the same time.

(D) POPULATION OF THE CEMETERY AND BURIAL RITE

Who was buried in the cemetery? The question is inextricably involved with the interpretation of the burial rite, as well as with the estimate of how long the cemetery was used. The skeletal remains themselves are of only limited use here. They do show considerable signs of the "wear and tear" of physical labour, and such activities as prolonged squatting. We may thus assume that we are dealing with people involved in regular physical work, and not with the leisured classes.

One of the most interesting aspects of the anatomical evidence is the high frequency of the abnormality known as *olechronon foramen*. The proportion of people with this characteristic is remarkably high, and if it is transmitted genetically, could point to a close family relationship. The five examples found seems high even in the full total of fifty inhumations, and becomes correspondingly greater when the most fragmentary skeletons are not considered, perhaps one in eight. This evidence may be seen in connection with the suggestion of family groups being identifiable from the layout of the cemetery. There is no proven correlation between these two suggestions, but this need not deny the likelihood of close family ties between those buried here. A long period of use would involve a sequence of nuclear families, which would explain the apparent existence of several family plots, with a slight genetic link continuing between them.

The general rarity of grave goods may be explained either in economic or in religious terms. During the time the cemetery was in use Constantine did adopt Christianity as the official religion of the Empire and there can be no doubt that the burial rite does seem to possess the expected Christian characteristics: inhumation with the head to the west and without grave goods. Nonetheless there are no positive signs of Christianity on the site, such as Chi-Rho symbols or representations of fish. Moreover the suggestion of much physical labour by these people points to a fairly low economic level. Certainly the pottery analysis shows a high proportion of very coarse wares. It may well be that poverty alone can account for the lack of grave goods, since otherwise at least one coffin of lead or stone might have been expected. While fashions of burial rite were indeed followed that are identified as Christian, there is no final proof that Christianity was the religion practised by those buried here.

#### (E) THE SITE AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

A difficult problem is posed by the proximity of another agricultural site, apparently contemporary, only some 400 m. away (Wild, 1973a). Matters are further complicated by the unknown material in the preserved area immediately north of the present site. The plan of the courtyard revealed by the air photographs and confirmed by these excavations is in itself suggestive of some centre of occupation in its middle. Such suspicions may be reinforced by the discovery of an extensive scatter of building stone brought up by the plough in an appropriate place. Eventual excavation may prove this to be unconnected with the Roman activity, but it is possible that the stone did come from the main building of this particular complex. Even if there is a substantial structure in the centre of the courtyard, the question remains of how the whole establishment was associated with that to the east. The two areas of activity are separated by the empty spaces of the paddock and no obvious physical link between them, such as a drove-way, has so far been found. Were they independent foci of settlement? It may have been that the eastern site was chiefly concerned with working the land towards the river, which would have been liable to frequent flooding, using techniques of drainage similar to those employed in the Fens (Wild, 1973a), whilst the present site's occupants were using the better drained land in the middle of the meander, roughly delimited by the 20 ft. contour. It might be

expected that this would have been exploited before the marshier land, but the evidence at present available shows no sign of that.

Even if the two sites were not directly connected there is no reason why they could not both have been part of the same estate, perhaps associated with one of the villas that line the banks of the Nene. Unfortunately so little evidence is to hand for questions of land tenure that such discussion is bound to be conjecture.

#### (F) RURAL CEMETERIES

There is a wide belief that each rural establishment, or at least each villa, must have had its own burial area (e.g. Webster, 1969a, 233). This certainly does seem very likely, but in Britain there is little evidence to support it. As shown by Webster, much of this lack of material must be due to the very restricted view of the villa estate so far provided by British excavations. Future work is surely likely to remedy this condition.

There are numbers of rural cemeteries known on the Continent, such as the mausolea at Newel (Wightman, 1970, 148-9), or those noted by van Doorselaer (van Doorselaer, 1967, 24-6, and further references there). In this country there are occasional examples of grand villa tombs, as at Lullingstone (excavated by Lt.-Col. G. W. Meates, *Roman Britain* in 1958, 132). That recently excavated at Keston, while undoubtedly belonging to the nearby villa and having large monumental tombs, also seems to have included the graves of the more humble members of the household (Philp, 1969). In Germany, at Koln-Mungersdorf two cemeteries were found, one with expensive sarcophagi, the other with much simpler burials (Fremersdorf, 1933). Another villa with its associated cemetery has also been discovered at Katsch (Schmid, 1929). At Owslebury in Wiltshire a small cemetery was excavated, of about the same size as Lynch Farm and in association with a farmstead, but it spanned a longer period, starting before the Roman conquest. Although it does seem to have received burials as late as the fourth century, in the extent at present revealed it cannot have been the only burial place for the farm for so long a time. Again the cemetery was enclosed by ditches, with a few inhumations in the ditches, both near the main burial area and elsewhere in the farm. There was however little sign of any formal arrangement of the graves (Collis, 1968). The closest parallel in Britain now appears to be at Bradley Hill in Somerset, clearly belonging to a small fourth century farmstead. Forty-nine inhumations were found, mostly with their heads to the west, but curiously only twenty of them were adults. Some of the graves at least were in a walled enclosure. Unfortunately fuller information for comparison is not yet available, as the site was excavated in the same year as this one, 1972 (excavated by R. H. Leech, *Roman Britain* in 1972, 310-1). Otherwise there are few properly excavated and reported cemeteries that can be linked with rural settlements. There are frequently burials found in the countryside which presumably originated from rural sites, such as at Radley in Berkshire (Atkinson, 1952/3), and some isolated graves must in fact signal the existence of larger cemeteries around them. Near Lynch Farm, at Longthorpe, just four skeletons were found recently, which must have come from the farmstead there (Wild, 1973b). None of these afford satisfactory parallels to this site, nor do those burials sometimes found in the countryside associated with temples (Lewis, 1966, 135). Still we must look for

the normal burials of the country population. Were they merely given haphazard burial in a convenient ditch, or taken to the town graveyards, or placed in organised cemeteries of their own, and if this in relation to what settlements were these cemeteries located?

This cemetery thus may have considerable implications for both burial and social patterns. It would appear that it was a special burial area for a small group of farm workers, which over the period of use proposed could hardly have exceeded one family at a time. For burial purposes at least it seems to have been very much self-contained. Although no direct correlation need have existed, it is tempting to ask whether this extended to social arrangements as well. If the farmstead were integrated with a larger estate, would such a separation have been likely? It may be argued that whatever the theoretical legal position of land tenure, the people of the farmstead here maintained a strong social independence and paid little attention to any villa or even to the town of Durobrivae itself, less than half an hour's easy walk away. Without much confidence the modern analogy may be offered that on a modern isolated farm the people bury their dead in the nearest village churchyard. Eventual excavation of the rest of the courtyard should allow a fuller consideration of these speculations, but this cannot be expected in the foreseeable future, as the preserved area is to be grassed over to form part of the Nene Park.

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