Iron Age and Roman Enclosures near Higham Ferrers: The Archaeology of the A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers Bypass

by

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with contributions from

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SUMMARY

Archaeological excavations in advance of the construction of the A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers bypass examined parts of and Iron Age and Roman farmstead (Site 3) and an Iron Age agricultural enclosure (Site 4). Site 3 showed a continuous sequence of shifting occupation from the middle Iron Age through to the later 2nd century AD. Iron Age ring gullies and a sub-circular enclosure were replaced in the 1st century AD by a more rectilinear layout of enclosures. No structures were identified and the enclosures appear to have been agricultural back-plots. While there were few exotic items in the finds assemblage, the quantity of early Roman pottery was large, and included several semi-complete vessels. The circumstances of their deposition remained enigmatic. Site 4 yielded very few finds and is interpreted as a stock corral.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of excavations undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between March and May 2002 in connection with the construction of the new A6 bypass at Rushden and Higham Ferrers. The excavations formed part of a staged programme of archaeological investigation undertaken for the Highways Agency. The excavations on two sites, which are the subject of this report, took place under two separate contracts entailing two phases of work; the first on behalf of White Young Green, Consulting Engineers, as agents for the Highways Agency, formed part of the mitigation works ahead of construction; and the second, for Stenoak Associated Services PLC, principal contractor for the construction, as part of a Watching Brief during earthmoving. Part of an Iron Age and Roman settlement lying east of Higham Ferrers was examined during the first phase (designated Site 3), while in the second stage an Iron Age enclosure east of Rushden (Site 4) was investigated. In each case the sites extended outside the road corridor and were not therefore examined in their entirety.

The new A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers bypass runs from a new link at the Chowns Mill Roundabout on the A45 north of Higham Ferrers, and passes east of Higham and Rushden, linking with the A6 Bedford Road south of Rushden, a distance of about 5.5 km (Fig. 1). Topographically, the land rises from the Nene Valley at the northern end of the route (at *c.* 40 m OD) to higher land around the Stanwick Road where Northampton Sand and Ironstone forms the underlying geology. From here there is a more gentle rise to about 75 m OD at the B645 Chelveston Road where the geology is Great Oolite Limestone. The remaining length of route, a distance of about 3.5 km, lies on Boulder Clay, which forms undulating terrain at about 80 m OD, descending slightly at the southern end.

A desk-based assessment and stages of surface collection and geophysical survey in the earlier phases of mitigation resulted in the discovery of six archaeological sites on or adjacent to the route (NA 1996; NA 1997; NA 2001a; NA 2001b). Site 1 was

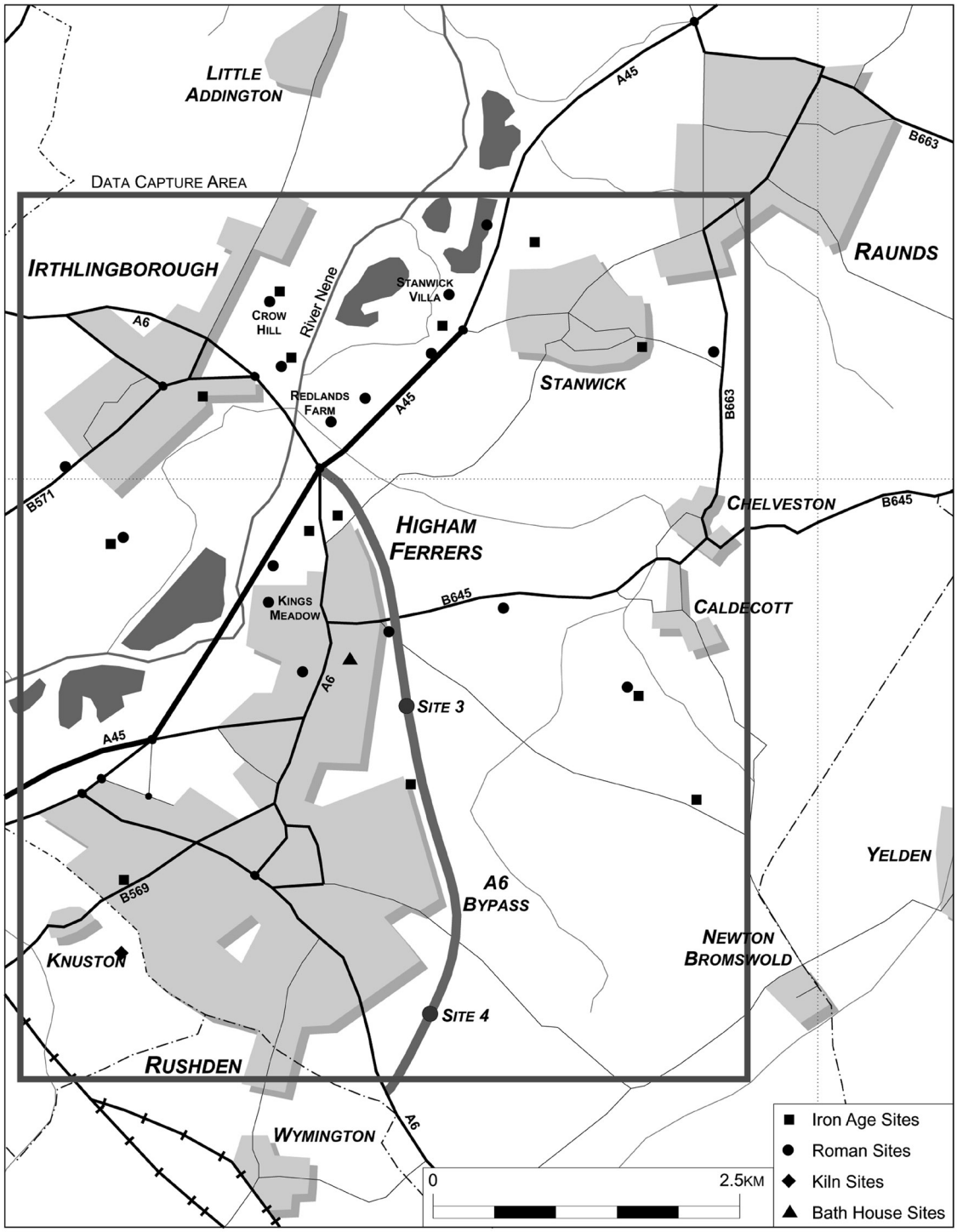


Fig 1 Locations of Sites 3 and 4 in relation to surrounding Iron Age and Roman sites (from Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record). Note that the extent of each site is not shown and the settlement density along the Nene Valley is, therefore, understated.

a cropmark enclosure of unknown date lying north of Chelveston Road, while the others were Iron Age and/or Roman sites identified from cropmarks, geophysical survey and surface finds. Only two of these sites lay within the road corridor itself, the others being at a slight distance and unaffected by the development. Site 3 (NGR SP 967682) comprised a group of Romano-British enclosures with Iron Age antecedents, and became the subject of an area excavation ahead of the award of contract. Site 4 (NGR SP968657) was initially identified through a diffuse scatter of Iron Age and Roman pottery. A magnetometer scan failed to identify any features and it was judged that the site of this date lay somewhere in the vicinity, but not necessarily within the road corridor. Immediately to the west of the route was a circular cropmark, while a linear cropmark feature approached the road corridor from this direction. As a result of this combination of evidence the area was targeted in the subsequent Watching Brief and a pair of Iron Age enclosures was discovered and excavated. These do not seem to have been related to the cropmarks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express particular gratitude to the Highways Agency for funding the fieldwork and the present publication. Much of the programming and co-ordination was undertaken by their agents White Young Green, whose project manager, Richard Brown, deserves particular thanks. Gratitude is also due to Stenoak Associated Services for co-operation during the watching brief. The geophysical surveys were carried out by a number of people over the course of the programme, chief amongst whom were Peter Masters initially, and latterly Steve Morris, Ian Fisher and Simon Pillar. Michael Webster directed the excavations with a team of assistants at Site 3. David Leigh discovered Site 4 during the watching brief. The illustrations for the present report are by Jacqueline Harding and Hari Ann Jacklin. Figure 2, the magnetometer survey of Site 3, is reproduced with the permission of Oxford Archaeology.

SITE 3: IRON AGE AND EARLY ROMAN SETTLEMENT

The site lay south of Newton Road, Higham Ferrers on fairly level ground (*c.* 80 m OD). The underlying geology is Boulder Clay. The earlier work identified a pattern of enclosure ditches and gullies dating substantially to the early Roman period, extending about 100 m along the length of the road corridor. The picture obtained from the detailed magnetometer survey (Fig. 2) indicated that the main focus of settlement lay to the south-west of the road corridor. Following initial site evaluations and recommendations by Northamptonshire Archaeology, the Highways Agency required the excavation of an area 90 m long by 60 m wide within the boundary of compulsory purchase.

The excavation area showed a complex pattern of intercutting ditches. The site phasing, based on stratigraphic relationships, together with pottery dating and the overall pattern of features, suggests seven principal phases of ditch digging (Figs. 3-9). This showed a sequence of small fields or enclosures whose positions shifted over time, with a general progression from north-east to south-west. There were a small number of pits, and one large pit which may have served as a waterhole, although no waterlogged remains came from the site. The dating, which is provided principally by the pottery, indicates that occupation started in the middle Iron Age, but intensified in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods such that the majority of features can be ascribed to a relatively short period in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. There is no real indication that occupation continued into the 3rd century, although it can perhaps be assumed that the settlement continued shifting south-westward and that later Roman features are to be found in this direction.

SUMMARY OF CHRONOLOGY

Phase 1: Middle Iron Age roundhouses and boundary ditch
Phase 2: Middle to Late Iron Age sub-circular enclosure and boundary ditch
Phase 3: 1st century AD linear boundary ditches
Phase 4: Mid to late 1st century AD enclosures
Phase 5: Late 1st to early 2nd century AD enclosures
Phase 6: Late 1st to early 2nd century AD enclosures
Phase 7: 2nd century AD ditches

PHASE 1: MIDDLE IRON AGE ROUNDHOUSES

The earliest phase is not closely datable, but several features yielded exclusively handmade pottery in the middle Iron Age tradition (Fig. 3). The features

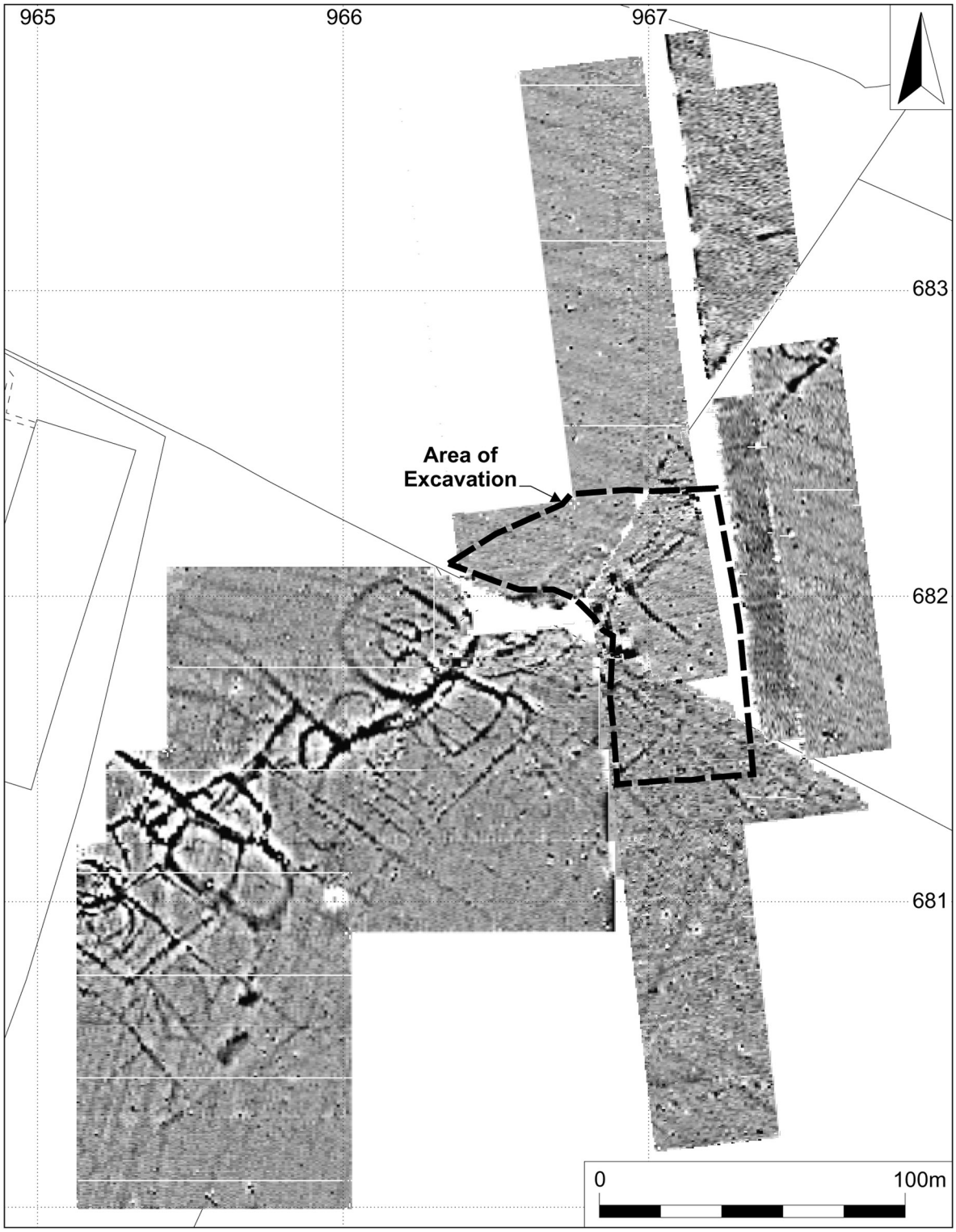


Fig 2 Extended magnetometer survey of Site 3 showing Iron Age and Roman enclosures either side of the excavated area within the road corridor. Reproduced with permission of Oxford Archaeology.

Fig 4 Site 3. Phase 2, mid to late Iron Age

Fig 3 Site 3. Phase 1, middle Iron Age

included curving gullies which can probably be interpreted as eaves drainage gullies surrounding roundhouses. These are the only evidence of structures on the site. The most complete of the Ring Gullies (Ring Gully 1) lay adjacent to a boundary ditch (Ditch 12). This ditch was cut by later ditches here and it is not known if it was continuous. It is probable that other Iron Age features lay to the north of the excavated area, but all these ditches were very shallow and were not evident on the magnetometer plot (Fig. 2).

RING GULLY 1

Two curving, narrow, shallow gullies in the north-east corner of the site formed an approximate circle and are interpreted as eaves-drainage features encircling a roundhouse. They were about 0.5 m wide and 0.25 m deep and enclosed an area about 12 m in diameter. Two interruptions may indicate the positions of entrances – one to the north, about 6 m wide, and one to the south-west, about 1.5 m wide. There were a number of small internal features, but they could not be interpreted as a pattern of post-holes.

The structure comprised five individual cuts. The western gully (1054) showed a recut (1052). The eastern gully had been cut by Ditch 4 (Phase 2) and survived in two parts (1072 and 1305). It may be assumed that Ditch 4 put the roundhouse out of use, but it can be noted that this ditch partly curves following the circuit of the earlier Ring Gully, so it is possible that it respected a surviving structure here.

A radiocarbon date from a horse radius from 1053 (fill of the earlier cut 1054) gave a weighted mean date of 363-172 cal BC (95% confidence 2190 +/- 24 years BP, NZA 16591; Table 8). A date in the later part of this range is considered likely in view of the other dating from the site.

RING GULLY 2

A short length of curving gully with a western terminal was found on the extreme northern edge of the excavation area. This was without finds but may indicate the position of another ring gully.

RING GULLY 3

A 6-m length of curving gully (1145) to the south-west of Ring Gully 1 may be the truncated remains of another ring gully. It was cut by Ditch 6 (Phase 5) and had it continued south from there its course would have been disturbed by the modern hedge line. It was without finds.

DITCH 12

This ditch (Cuts 1209 and 1302), in the north-east corner of the site, survived for a length of about 10 m. It was 1.3 m wide and 0.36 m deep. It was stratigraphically early, having been cut by Ditch 13, and yielded 7 sherds of Iron Age pottery. It was also cut by Ditch 5 (Phase 2B) and it is unclear how much further south the ditch continued. It is possible that it followed the course of the later ditch, Ditch 4 (Phase 2A), at least for a short distance. There was an early version of this ditch further south (1274), but it seems unlikely that the two sections of ditch were joined since the middle part of Ditch 4 appears too narrow to have completely removed an earlier ditch here. It seems more likely that Ditch 12 terminated to respect Ring Gully 1.

GULLIES 1315 & 1335

Ditch 12 was cut by a shallower gully, 1315, on a similar alignment (Fig. 10, S.62). This may be equated with 1335 which post-dated 1274, but followed an alignment a little to the south.

GULLY GROUP 13

Two parallel gullies (1028 and 1030), cut Ditch 12 in the north-east corner of the site on a slightly different alignment. The ditches yielded 26 sherds of exclusively Iron Age pottery and were truncated by Ditch 5 (Phase 2B). While their phasing appears secure, they are not obviously associated with a pattern of features here and it is unclear where they would have run. They must have terminated or turned sharply south, in either case perhaps respecting Ring Gully 1.

GULLY 1062

This was a short, angular section of gully cut away by Ditch 6 (Phase 5). The gully must either have terminated, or have turned sharply north-west.

ENCLOSURE DITCH 1

An early phase of Enclosure Ditch 1 appears to have existed at this time, the evidence for which is an early cut (1310) on the inside of the enclosure (Fig. 11, S.65). This cut yielded seven sherds of unfeatured shelly pottery. The main phase of Enclosure Ditch 1 has been assigned to the next phase since it interrupts the curvature of Ring Gully 3 and would therefore seem not to have been contemporary with it.

PHASE 2: MID TO LATE IRON AGE SUB-CIRCULAR ENCLOSURE AND BOUNDARY DITCH

In the mid to late Iron Age occupation appears to have been focused in a larger sub-circular enclosure (Enclosure Ditch 1) defined by a deep ditch (Fig. 4). A version of this enclosure may have existed earlier. The ditch was later infilled and a stone surface laid over the eastern arm. The boundary ditch, running north-east to south-west, continued to be defined with two further episodes of digging (Ditches 4 and 5). These curved to avoid Ring Gully 1 (Phase 1) and it is possible that the structure here was still in use. Ring Gully 2 may also have been in use in this phase.

PHASE 2A: DITCH 4

Ditch 4 followed the alignment of Ditch 12 from the north-east corner of the site. It was about 1.10 m wide and 0.26 m deep and comprised Cuts 1048, 1213, 1266 and 1276. Cuts 1048 and 1276 yielded 32 sherds (353 g) of exclusively Iron Age pottery, but 7 sherds (38 g) of later 1st-century AD pottery came from 1213. This appears to be intrusive, possibly from a later post-hole in this section of ditch whose stratigraphic position was unclear at the time of excavation.

PHASE 2A: ENCLOSURE DITCH 1

This was a large ditch, 2.5-4.0 m wide and up to 1.4 m deep (Fig. 10, S.50) comprising Cuts 1251, 1308, 1331 and 1358. It formed a partial sub-circular or oval enclosure about 15 m across east-west. It seems likely that there was an entrance causeway outside the excavation area to the south. It showed at least one earlier cut which has been assigned to Phase 1. The ditch yielded just 11 sherds (193 g) of pottery, hand-made in shelly and shell and grog-tempered fabric.

PHASE 2B: DITCH 5

Ditch 4 was cut by Ditch 5 (Cuts 1032, 1046, 1270 and 1272). The ditch was 1.30 m wide and 0.30 m deep. It yielded 59 sherds (264 g) of pottery exclusively in the middle Iron Age tradition. The southern end of the ditch, where it turned sharply north-west, was cut by Ditch 2, but it is possible that the ditch re-emerged further north-west as 1149 or as 1155, both of which yielded some grog-tempered pottery along with some more typical middle Iron Age sherds.

A radiocarbon date from a horse metacarpal from fill 1033 is calibrated to the 1st to 3rd century AD (Table 8: NZA 15952). This is late, given the pottery assemblage and other stratigraphic evidence, and it seems likely that there was an unrecognised later feature in this area. This may be the 'post-hole' which accounts for the 1st-century pottery from 1213 (Ditch 4).

PHASE 2B: GULLY 1155

After Enclosure Ditch 1 had been filled in, a much smaller rectilinear gully, 1155, was cut along the north-west arm (Fig. 10, S.50). It was 0.75 m wide and 0.25 m deep. It yielded a fairly large assemblage of 44 sherds (519 g) of pottery of mid to late Iron Age type. It may have been part of a boundary associated with Ditch 5, although it is possible that it was part of the later layout with Ditch 3 (Phase 3).

PHASE 2B: STONE SURFACE 1228/1342

The top of Enclosure Ditch 1 was sealed by a stone layer comprising medium-sized limestone blocks (typically 250 x 180 x 40 mm), together with some local pebbles and angular flint, one course deep and all generally laid flat. This occupied a rough triangle of about 10 by 10 m, extending outside the excavation to the south. This would seem to be deliberate surfacing. The layer had sunk slightly (up to 0.20 m) into the top of Enclosure Ditch 1 (Cut 1358, overlying Fill 1356).

The purpose of this surface is unclear. It may have been intended to line a watering hollow for cattle, although it is not clear that the hollow would have retained significant quantities of water for that purpose, and the stones were not particularly worn or trampled, a situation which surely would have arisen had the hollow been used for that purpose for any length of time.

The immediately overlying layers, 1227 and 1344, yielded pottery of middle and late Iron Age fabric. To the east the layer was cut by Ditch 9.

PHASE 3: 1ST CENTURY AD LINEAR BOUNDARY DITCHES

In the 1st century AD the site became characterised by ditches of a more rectilinear character (Fig. 5). Enclosure Ditch 1 had gone out of use, although Ditch 9 may have continued to bound this area for a short while. The main axis of land division was defined by Ditch 3, running NW-SE. The staggered ditch alignment north-east of this seems to have been pre-figured by shallow segments of gully which were largely truncated by later ditches.

DITCH 9

After the stone surface 1228/1342 had gone out of use, its eastern edge was cut through by a broad ditch, Ditch 9 (Cuts 1166 and 1293; Fig. 11, S.65). This was 2.00 m wide and 0.60 m deep. It appeared to be terminating at its northern end where it was cut by Ditch 3 and the later series of NW-SE ditches here. Its fill contained a large quantity of pottery (171 sherds, 2290 g) with many characteristically late Iron Age features. This broadly dates to the 1st century AD, but whether pre- or post-conquest is not possible to determine.

The quantity of pottery suggests that the focus of occupation continued to be in this part of the site, although there was no evidence for any structures.

DITCH 3

Ditch 9 may have been short-lived as it was cut by Ditch 3 which contained a similar, but smaller, pottery assemblage. Ditch 3 had a shallow south-eastern terminal but was deeper towards the north-west (Fig. 11, S.65 – 2.5 m? wide by 1.0 m? deep) where it became progressively more truncated by its re-cut, Ditch 2. Its most complete cross-profile showed it to have steep sides and a flattish base.

GULLY 1149

Ditch 3 may have continued north-west on a slightly different alignment as Gully 1149, although this was quite small (0.48 m wide by 0.17 m deep). This contained just one sherd of grog-tempered pottery and some slag.

GULLY 1050

An early phase of Ditch 6 (Gully 1050) may also have been part of this layout. This cut contained 18 sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, mostly grog-tempered ware. It was largely truncated by Cut 1056 to the west.

GULLY 1258

Another early phase of Ditch 6 (Cut 1258) may have been part of this layout. It had a northern terminal which may have left an entrance in the angle between 1258 and 1050. It was without pottery.

PHASE 4: MID TO LATE 1ST CENTURY AD ENCLOSURES

In this phase, after a brief period of use, the main NW-SE land division was re-dug (Ditch 2) and there also appears to have been some re-definition of the staggered ditch alignment to the north-east (Fig. 6). At this time there may have been some

Fig 6 Site 3. Phase 4, mid to late 1st century AD

Fig 5 Site 3. Phase 3, 1st century AD

activity to the south with the laying out of early gullies. This included the deposition of a number of semi-complete vessels in Gully 1122. It is unclear where the focus of occupation lay, and this may have shifted to the west of the excavated area.

DITCH 2

Ditch 2 replaced Ditch 3 sometime in the later 1st century. It ran north-west from a southern terminal and turned to follow the line of the Iron Age Enclosure Ditch 1. It was examined with five sections (Cuts 1067, 1143, 1157, 1284, 1298). Like Ditch 3, it was shallow towards the south-east end (Cut 1298, 1.4 m wide, 0.48 m deep with a flat base), but did not get much deeper further north-west (Cut 1143, 2.0 m wide, 0.5 m deep; Cut 1284, 1.9 m wide, 0.55 m deep [Fig. 11, S.65]). It yielded a substantial quantity (167 sherds, 3428 g) of 1st-century pottery.

GULLY 1260

This shallow gully was a later phase of Gully 1258 and pre-figured the later layout of Ditch 6. It was without pottery. It may have been contemporary with Gully 1147 at right-angles which yielded some late Iron Age and 1st/2nd century sherds.

GULLY 1122

There also appears to have been some activity on the south-western side of Ditch 2. Gully 1122 was a short and shallow cut running from a south-western terminal. It may have pre-figured Ditch 7, although due to the fact that 1122 shallowed toward the north-east, the relationship was not clear. It contained a number of semi-complete vessels, broken *in situ*, of late 1st century date (Fig. 13.8-10).

GULLIES 1231 AND 1193

It is possible that the area to the south-west of Ditch 2 was marked by an early phase of enclosure (Gully 1231, replaced by 1193) which had been truncated by the later ditch, Ditch 7. Gullies 1231 and 1193 were notably straight and 1193 had a very sharp corner. Both were fairly narrow (0.5 – 0.7 m) and shallow (0.25 – 0.3 m) with steep sides and were considered to be possible beam slots (Fig. 10, S.47). Both contained a few sherds of late 1st/early 2nd century pottery. It is possible that they belong to Phase 5.

GULLY 1205

This appeared to be an early version of Gully 1207 (Phase 5). It contained a few sherds of late 1st century pottery.

GULLY 1181

An early phase of gully running approximately at right-angles to 1205. It contained a few late 1st/early 2nd-century sherds.

GULLY 1110

A gully in the southern corner of the site, cut by Pits 1117 and 1187. It was 0.48 m wide and 0.25 m deep and contained 20 sherds of late 1st/early 2nd-century pottery.

PHASE 5: LATE 1ST – EARLY 2ND CENTURY AD ENCLOSURES

After Ditch 2 had gone out of use, a large pit, possibly a well (1323), was dug through the backfill (Fig. 7). This contained exclusively late 1st/early 2nd-century pottery and therefore does not seem to have been in use for very long. The minor gullies to the north were replaced by a much larger staggered ditch system (Ditch 6) which seems to have formed an enclosure for the well. Five semi-complete vessels were recovered from Cut 1262 of the ditch. There also appears to have been a focus of activity in the southern part of the site, with a complex of gullies forming small rectangular enclosures. As in the preceding phase the main occupation probably lay to the west of the excavated area. A semi-complete channel-rim jar came from Gully 1207.

DITCH 6

The staggered ditch system, Ditch 6, was examined with a total of eight sections where six cuts were recorded (1044, 1056, 1153, 1249, 1262 & 1280). This ditch group was in at least two sub-phases. Along the western arm of the ditch there was an earlier deep cut (1249) about 1.3 m wide and 0.6 m deep (Fig. 10, S.50). This contained a substantial amount (110 sherds, 1131 g) of mid to late 1st-century pottery. This ditch was later re-cut by 1153, which was smaller, (0.9 m wide, 0.3 m deep). This contained late 1st/early 2nd century pottery.

To the east the ditch was also shallower (1141 – 0.2 m deep; 1260 – 0.6 m wide, 0.25 m deep, 1280 – 0.28 m deep), while the NW-SE arm, 1056, was 1.3 m wide and 0.55 m deep. The middle fill of 1056 (fill 1061) contained 89 sherds (1304 g) from a single hand-made jar, while the upper fill (1057) contained six sherds of late 1st/early 2nd-century pot. Further east still, 1044 was 0.8 m wide and 0.5 m deep.

DITCH 1040/1215

In the eastern part of the site Ditch 1040 (recut of 1215) may belong to this phase. Neither ditch contained diagnostic pottery. 1040 was 0.53 m wide and 0.40 m deep, 1215 was shallower.

GULLY 1201

This was a shallow gully (0.25 m deep), possibly contemporary with 1215, but cut by Pit 1199 at the junction of the two. It contained 10 sherds of late 1st-century pottery.

WELL 1323

After Ditch 2 had gone out of use a large pit, or possibly a well, was dug through the backfill. It was about 10 m long, 7 m wide and 1.8 m deep with moderately steep sides and a broad flat base (Fig. 11, S.78). The lowest fill, 1337, was a thick deposit of clean blue-grey and orange-brown mottled clay, merging into the natural substratum. This contained 23 sherds (551g) of late 1st/early 2nd-century pottery. It was overlain by a predominantly dark brown clay with some grey mottling (1327). This was about 0.3 m deep and contained 105 sherds (2646 g) of late 1st-century

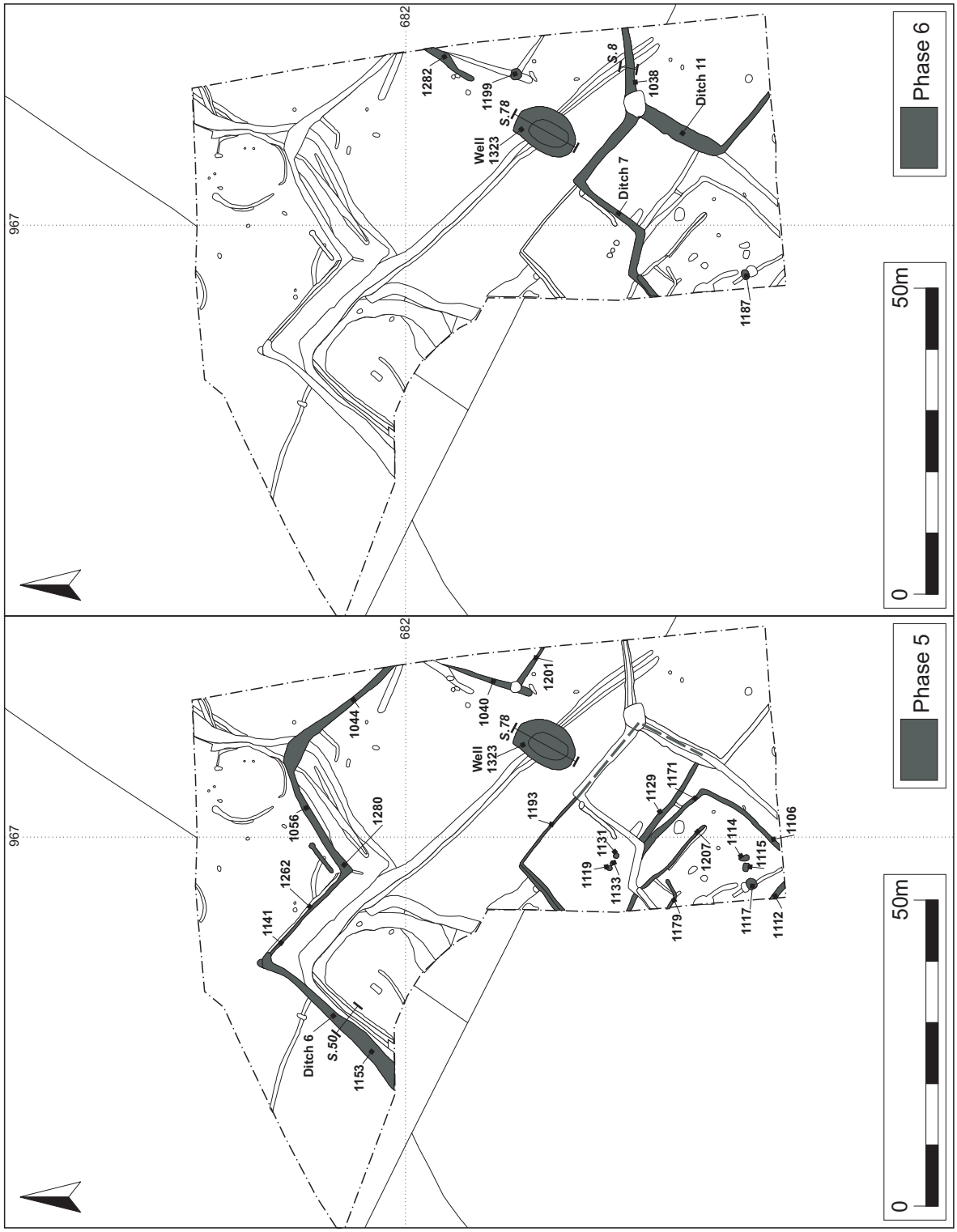


Fig 7 Site 3. Phase 5, late 1st to early 2nd century AD

Fig 8 Site 3. Phase 6, late 1st to early 2nd century AD

pottery. The layer above, 1326, was a darker greyish brown clay containing 82 sherds (1203 g) of late 1st/early 2nd century pottery. The upper layer, 1325, was a dark yellowish brown clay, containing 16 sherds (138 g) of pot; while the final fill, 1324, was a greyer clay without pottery.

There was no indication of waterlogging in the feature. There was no obvious point of access to the pit, although collecting water from it would not have been particularly difficult, had it held water. It seems unlikely that stock could have used it as a watering hole and there was no indication of trample around the sides. The pit appears far too large to have been a latrine, and it makes little sense as a quarry since it was cut through the backfill of Ditches 2 and 3.

GULLY 1129

This may have formed a small enclosure. It was 0.7 m wide and 0.36 m deep with moderately steep sides. 18 sherds of 2nd-century pottery are recorded as coming from 1129, although this may have been intrusive from Ditch 11 (Phase 6) as 1129 was clearly cut by both Ditches 11 and 7. It is possible that Gully 1193 (described above, Phase 4) belonged to this phase. It probably continued along the line of the later, deeper, Ditch 7, and may have turned a right-angle to continue along the line of Ditch 8 (Phase 7). Within the partial enclosure formed by 1193, Gully 1122 (described above, Phase 4) may also have been contemporary.

PITS 1119, 1133 AND 1131

A group of three small pits lay in alignment west of Gully 1122 (Phase 4, above). They had dark, charcoal-rich fills with some burnt stones. It is possible that they were used as hearths/fire pits, although there was no trace of *in situ* burning. Small quantities of late 1st/2nd century pottery came from 1119 and 1133, while 1131 contained pottery dated to the 2nd century.

DITCHES 1106, 1171 AND 1112

Ditches 1106 and 1171, 0.6 – 0.9 m wide and 0.35 – 0.42 m deep, formed two sides of an enclosure. They both contained late 1st-century pottery. It seems likely that it was not contemporary with 1129, although there was no evident relationship between the two ditches. Ditch 1112 in the extreme south-western corner of the site may have been related as it ran parallel to 1171. It yielded some pottery of a similar date, although it was slightly larger at 0.95 m wide and 0.55 m deep, with a composite profile.

GULLY 1207

This gully appears to have replaced 1205 and run further north-west. A semi-complete vessel was recovered (Fig. 14.15).

GULLY 1179

This gully may have been contemporary with 1207. It cut 1181, but was without finds.

PITS 1114, 1115 AND 1117

These three oval pits were relatively shallow, with steep sides and flattish bases. They contained some late 1st/early 2nd century pottery. Their functions are unclear.

PHASE 6: LATE 1ST – EARLY 2ND CENTURY AD ENCLOSURES

While there is no discernible difference in the pottery from the previous phase, the shallow-ditched enclosures in the southern part of the site were replaced, probably in the early 2nd century by Ditch 7 (Fig. 8). This may have been contemporary with Ditch 11, which formed three sides of an enclosure. The 'well' may still have been in use during this phase, together with the later phase of the eastern group of ditches. It is possible that the northern ditch system (Ditch 6) fell out of use at this time since it does not seem to have lasted much beyond the end of the 1st century.

DITCH 7

The shallow-ditched enclosures in the southern part of the site were replaced when Ditch 7 was dug. This was about 1.25 m wide and 0.80 m deep, and appears to have followed the earlier ditches to create a staggered alignment. It was examined in three sections (Cuts 1191, 1124 and 1340), the latter appeared to have identified a re-cut (1338). Pottery from all these sections is broadly of later 1st/earlier 2nd century date.

PIT 1187

Pit 1187, which cut Pit 1117, may have been of this phase. It was of a similar form to the other pits, about 0.5 m deep, and contained a few late 1st/early 2nd century sherds.

PIT 1199

Pit 1199 cut Ditches 1040 and 1201. It was about 2.0 m across and 0.60 m deep, without pottery.

DITCH 1282

Ditch 1282 was 0.80 m wide and 0.35 m deep, cutting Ditch 1040. It was without pottery.

DITCH 11

Ditch 11 formed three sides of an enclosure and comprised Cuts 1038, 1223 and 1100. Both 1038 and 1223 were substantial – 2.50 m wide and 1.60 m deep (Fig. 10, S.8), while 1100 was only 0.8 m wide and 0.38 m deep. A reasonable quantity of pottery, dating to the late 1st/2nd century, came from these sections.

PHASE 7: 2ND CENTURY AD DITCHES

Activity appears to have been confined to the south-eastern corner of the site by the mid 2nd century (Fig. 9). It appears that occupation was contracting or moving further south-west. Ditch 8 was a shallower recut of Ditch 11 and continued south-west rather than turning like the earlier ditch.

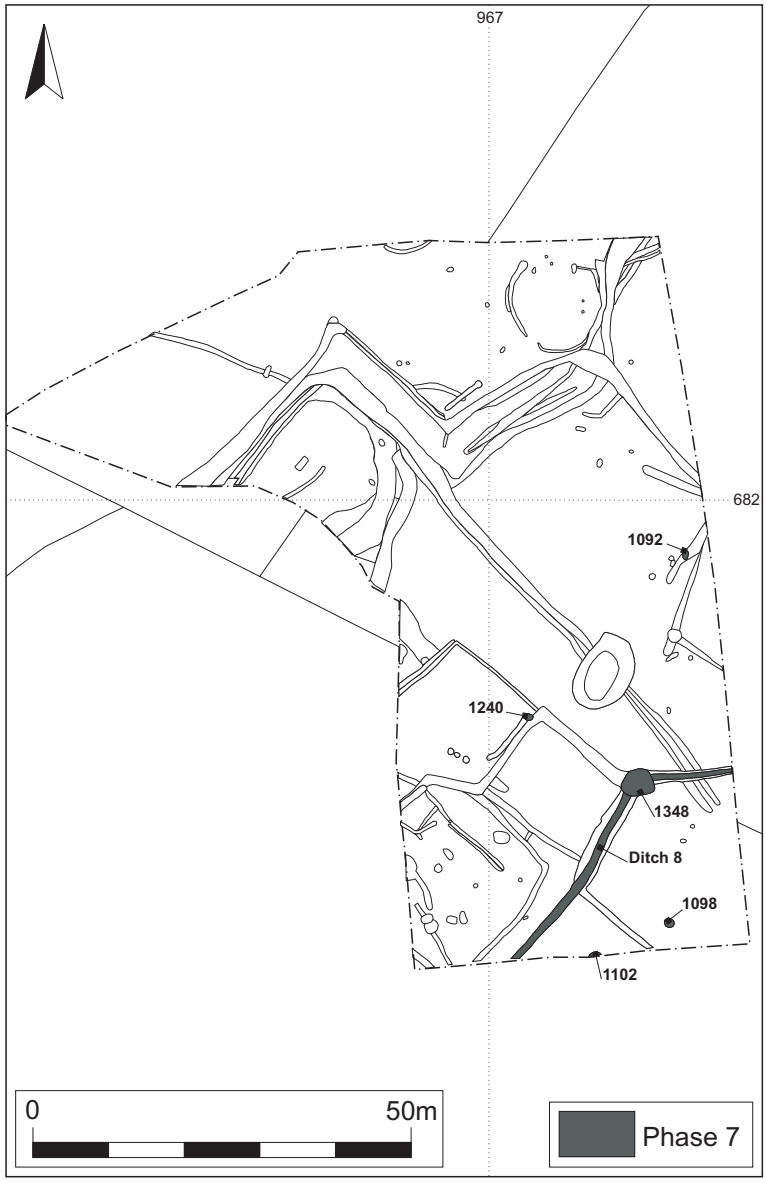


Fig 9 Site 3. Phase 7, 2nd century AD

DITCH 8

Ditch 11 was recut by a shallower ditch (Ditch 8) along its centre, and this continued to the south-west. Ditch 8 (Cuts 1104, 1126, 1351) was 0.7 – 1.6 m wide, and 0.25 – 0.55 m deep. Cut 1126 contained a 2nd-century assemblage of 27 sherds (371 g), while the pottery from 1104 (14 sherds, 281 g) is more broadly late 1st/2nd century in date.

PITS 1098, 1102 AND 1240

A scatter of pits in this area may belong with this phase. Pits 1098 and 1240 were very shallow (0.18 m and 0.20 m), while 1102 was deeper (0.42 m). 1102 contained a large amount of pottery (42 sherds, 639 g) of 2nd century date, while the others contained a few sherds.

PIT 1348

At a somewhat later date, Ditch 8 was cut by a large pit (1348) 3.5 –4.0 m in diameter and about 0.7 m deep. Its fills (1349 over 1350) were without pottery and the dating of this feature is therefore insecure.

POST-ROMAN LAND USE

There was no evidence of occupation after the 2nd century and settlement is assumed to have shifted elsewhere. The latest datable Roman object was a denarius of Septimus Severus (AD 193-211) which was retrieved from the surface of Ditch 2. This must be regarded as a superficial find. In the post-Roman period the land appears not to have been favoured for settlement. There is evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (clearly evident from the magnetometer plot – Fig. 2) and in more recent times there have been repeated attempts to drain the land. Three or more phases of land drains were found during the excavations.

SITE 4: IRON AGE ENCLOSURES

Two enclosures (designated Enclosures 1 and 2) were discovered during subsoil stripping at the Watching Brief stage between NGRs SP 96806574 and SP 69826579 (Fig. 12). The enclosures were sited on a slight eminence at about 75 m OD. By the time of their discovery the western carriageway had already been stripped to formation level in this zone of cutting and this side of Enclosure 1 was lost as a consequence. Enclosure 2 had also been partly damaged by cutting to the north, although this enclosure lay mostly outside the road corridor to the east. The surface of the remaining area of archaeological interest

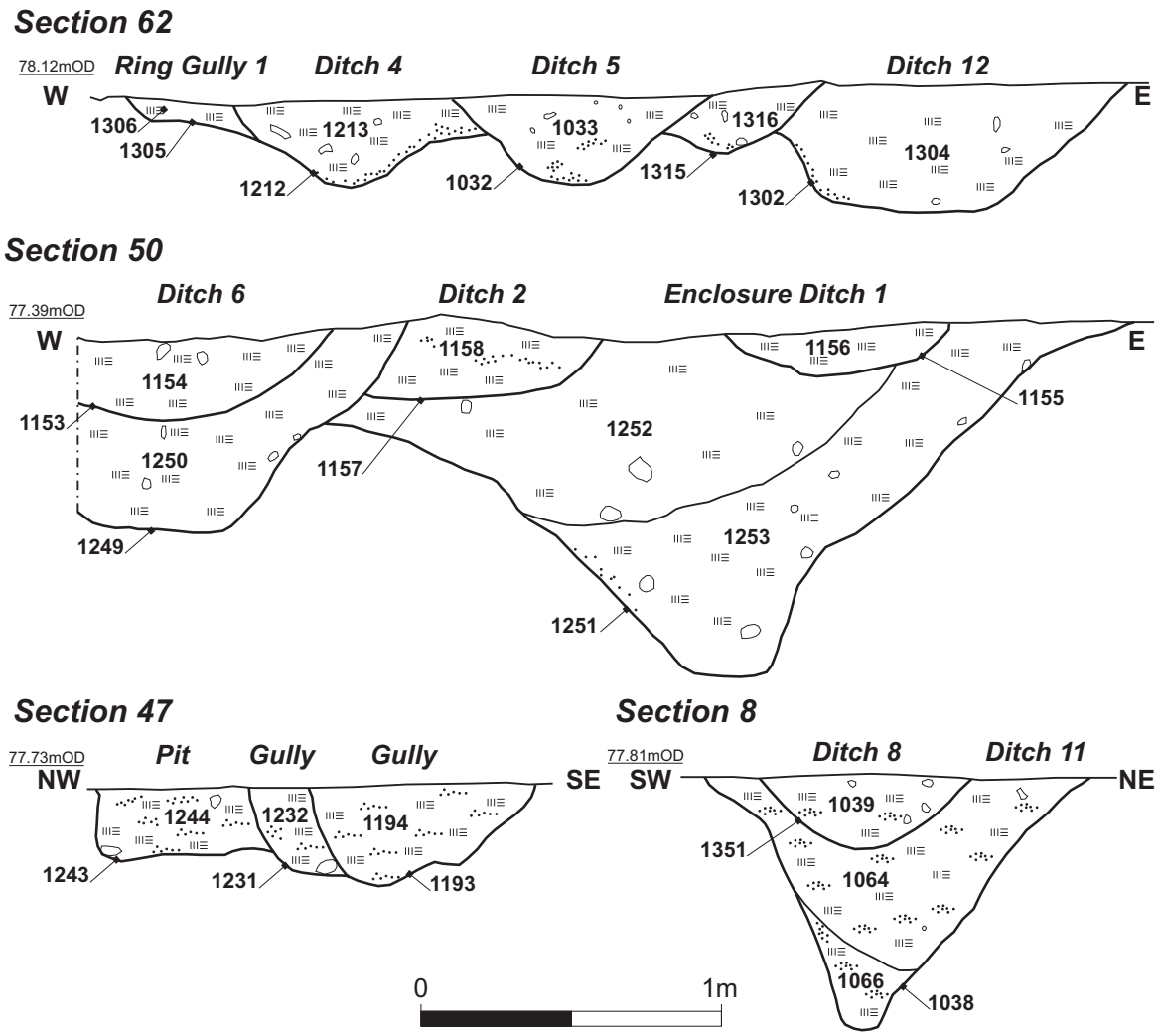


Fig 10 Site 3. Sections 62, 50, 47 and 8

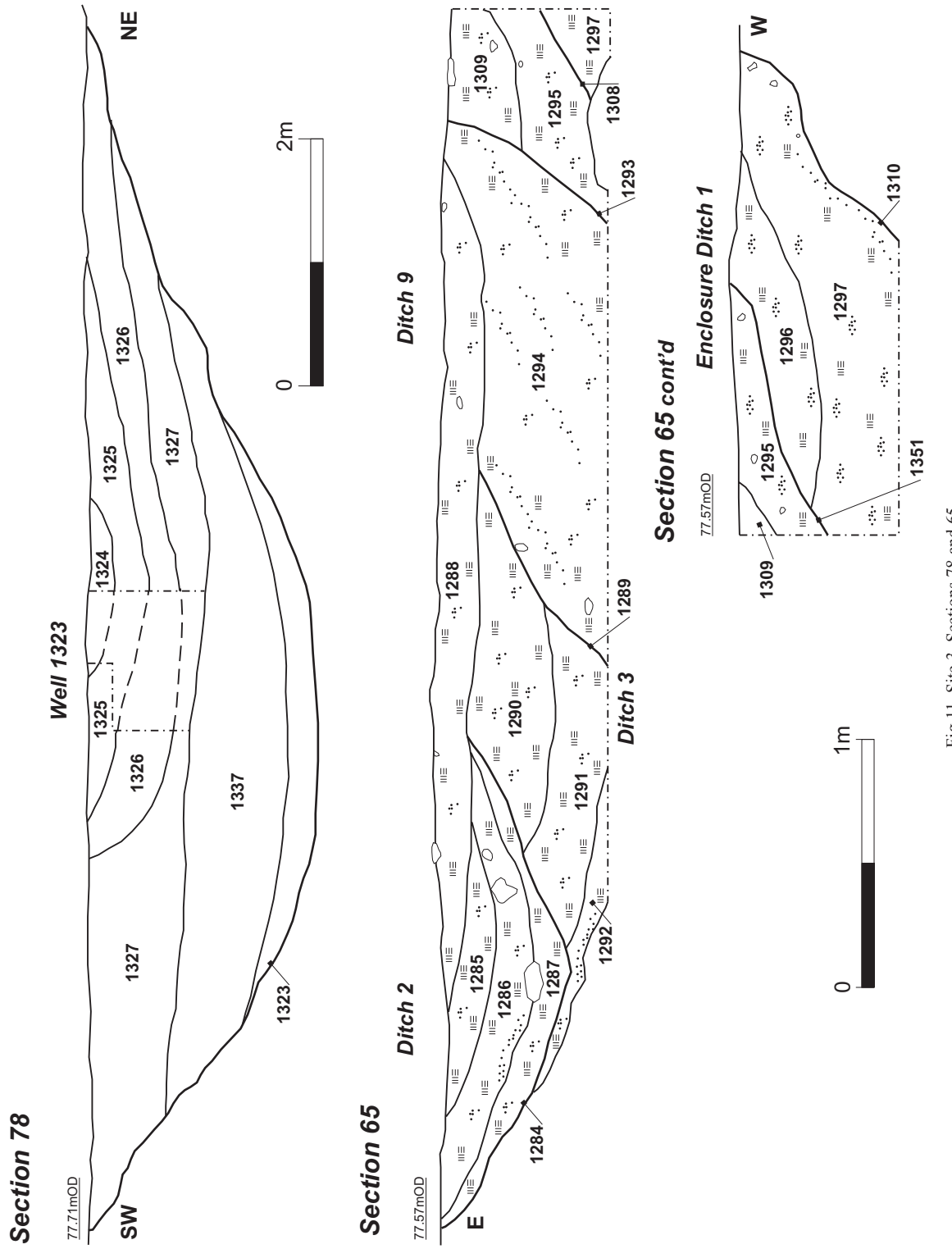


Fig 11 Site 3. Sections 78 and 65

was cleaned using a JCB mechanical excavator with a ditching bucket and recorded.

ENCLOSURE 1

A length of about 30 m of curving ditch was exposed. In plan the ditch straightened southward, suggesting a possible funnel entrance on this side. About half the enclosure was recovered and found to measure 20 m north-south. Assuming it to have been more or less regular, it would have measured about the same distance east-west internally. There were no internal features evident.

Four sections were excavated through the ditch. It was 1.9 – 2.4 m wide and about 0.7 m deep from the stripped surface. It had a slightly asymmetrical cross-profile with a consistently steeper inner edge. The base was broad and gently rounded. The fills were similar in each of the sections and consisted of a lower yellowish brown clay-silt with occasional small stones, overlain by a similar, but greyer, upper fill. The ditch fills were fairly sterile with just small quantities of pot and animal bone from some of the cuts, more particularly from the upper fill (15) of the northern cut. The pottery included Scored Ware body and rim sherds which are diagnostically middle Iron Age. A large fragment of sandstone saddle quern was the only other find. Three soil samples yielded no environmental remains. There were thin smears of dark silt on the surface of the upper fill, suggesting there may have been an anthropogenic deposit associated with the final abandonment of the enclosure.

A radiocarbon date was obtained from a pelvic fragment, probably from a cow, from the ditch. The weighted mean from

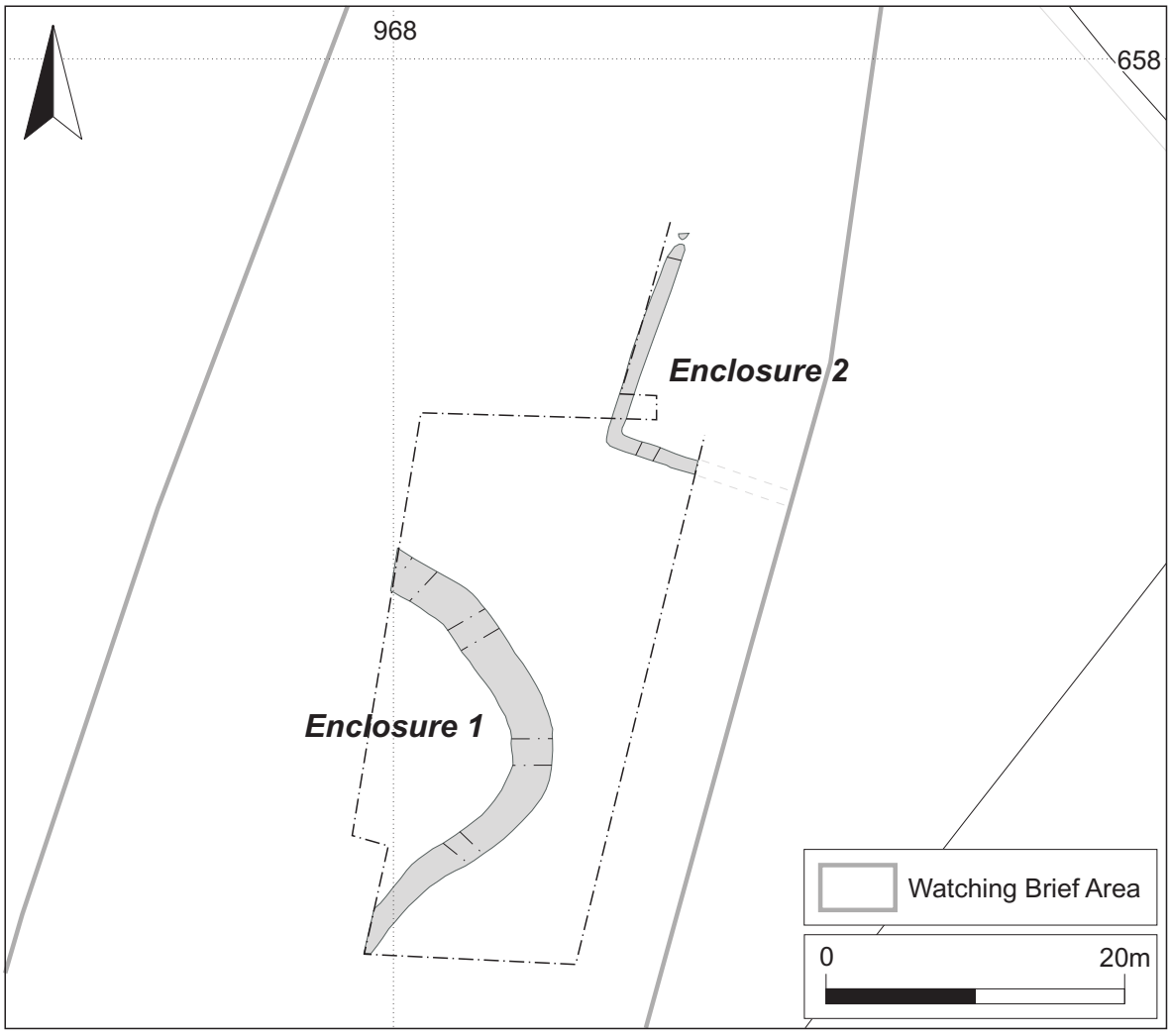


Fig 12 Site 4. Plan of Enclosures 1 and 2

three sub-samples gave a calibrated date of 200-50 cal BC (95% confidence, 2114+/-27 BP, NZA 16593 - Table 8). This clearly supports the limited pottery evidence.

ENCLOSURE 2

The corner of this rectangular ditched enclosure was found to the north of Enclosure 1. Only a small part of this feature was exposed in the excavation area, but the ditch was traced along the edge of the road cut to the north and in the drainage cut to the east. The overall dimensions of the enclosure were not found. The ditch itself was slight – 1.0 m wide and 0.3 m deep with a rounded base. A single small grog-tempered sherd of pottery was recovered.

THE FINDS

THE POTTERY FROM SITE 3
by Jane Timby

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of some 2707 sherds of pottery, weighing 41.8 kg, accompanied by a small amount of fired clay. The pottery includes material of the middle Iron Age through to the 2nd century AD, with just two post-medieval pieces recovered from the topsoil. Sherds were recovered from some 111 individual contexts comprising some 83 features, some of which can be grouped together.

For the most part the sherds were well preserved with an overall average sherd size of 15 g. There were many instances of joining sherds and a number of complete profiles could be reconstructed. The earlier material was less well preserved and featured pieces were sparse.

METHODOLOGY

The assemblage was sorted into fabrics and quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs) based on the percentages of rims present. The fabrics were coded according to the main characteristic of the paste in terms of colour and inclusions (see Table 1 for quantified summary). The range of fabrics present was relatively restricted with some types, notably the shelly wares, spanning the Iron Age and Roman periods. Vessel forms were recorded by broad type, jar, bowl etc and further subdivided according to rim or vessel morphology. Table 2 summarises the pottery recovered by phase.

FABRICS AND FORMS

LATER PREHISTORIC

Calcareous wares

SH1: A black or brown handmade ware containing a moderate to common frequency of shell and other fossiliferous detritus including fragments of bryozoa. *Forms*: Round-bodied necked jars (Fig. 13. 1), ovoid or barrel-shaped neckless jars (Fig. 13. 2, 5) and jars with finger-tipped or notched rims (Fig. 13. 2, 4).

SH2: A sandy textured black or brown handmade ware with a sparse to moderate frequency of shell fragments up to 3 mm in size. Rare red rounded grains of iron. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

LI1: A black or brown ware with a soapy texture. The paste contains very sparse fine limestone and specks of shell accompanied by rare sub-angular argillaceous fragments up to 1 mm in size, fine rounded quartz and occasional fine flint. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

LI2: Smooth black handmade ware containing a sparse scatter of limestone, shell and other fossiliferous matter including bryozoa up to 3 mm in size but mainly finer. Also present are occasional dark grey, sub-angular argillaceous inclusions and rare organic fragments. *Forms*: Ovoid, barrel-shaped jars with simple rims.

Grog-tempered wares

GR1: A dark grey or brown handmade ware with some wheel finished and wheel-made examples in the later Iron Age-early Roman period. The paste has a soapy feel and a sparse to moderate frequency of fine dark coloured grog. *Forms*: Necked, everted rim jars, butt beaker and bowls.

GR2: A distinctive orange ware with a grey inner core. The paste has a smooth, soapy feel and contains a sparse to moderate frequency of fine grog, largely finer than 1 mm, sparse fine quartz sand and rare calcareous grains. Dating to the later Iron Age - early Roman period this ware includes both handmade and wheel-made vessels. *Forms*: Necked jars and bowls, beakers.

GRFL: As GR1 but with a sparse to moderate frequency of fine calcined flint. *Forms:* No featured sherds.

GRSH: An orange-brown ware with a grey inner core. The paste contains a sparse to moderate frequency of calcareous inclusions and fossil shell mixed with grog and some fine quartz. Inclusions range from very fine up to 2-3 mm in size. *Forms*: Necked everted, rolled rim jars and larger storage jars.

OR: A dark brown, handmade, ware containing sparse to moderate burnt out organic matter with sparse sub-angular argillaceous inclusions 1-2 mm in size. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

SA: A handmade red-brown, hard, medium sandy ware with a black core. At x20 magnification the paste contains a sparse to moderate frequency of well-sorted, rounded quartz with rare calcareous grains less than 0.5 mm in size. *Forms*: Handmade and wheel-made vessels, mainly jar forms.

ROMAN

Imports

Samian: Fourteen sherds of South and Central Gaulish samian is present. *Forms:* Dragendorff types 18, 31, 35 and cup.

Regional wares

Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware (LNV CC) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 118). *Forms*:
Indented beaker.

Local wares sandy wares

Black sandy ware (BW): A black sandy ware with a dark brown core and containing a moderate frequency of well-sorted fine

Table 1 Quantified summary of pottery fabrics

	Fabric	Description	No	%	Wt	%	EVE	%
LATER PREHISTORIC	SH1	M-LIA shelly ware	153	5.7	1740	4.2	116	4.3
	SH2	sandy with sparser shell	33	1.2	115	*	0	0.0
	LI1	fine limestone, flint, quartz	9	*	59	*	0	0.0
	LI2	sparse fine limestone/shell	113	4.2	948	2.3	24	0.9
	GR1	soapy dark grog-tempered	165	6.1	2579	6.2	103	3.8
	GR2	oxidised grog-tempered ware	171	6.3	1415	3.4	106	4.0
	GRFL	grog and flint	1	*	5	*	0	0.0
	GRSH	grog and shell	95	3.5	3085	7.4	87	3.2
	GRSA	sandy with grog	1	*	101	*	5	*
	OR	organic-tempered	3	*	8	*	0	0.0
	SA	sandy ware	15	*	20	*	0	0.0
ROMAN								
Imports	SAM	South and Central Gaulish	14	*	185	*	74	2.8
Regional	LNVCC	Lower Nene Valley colour-coat	2	*	9	*	0	0.0
Local	SHELL	Roman shelly ware	653	24.1	11092	26.6	492	18.3
	BW	black sandy ware	120	4.4	1103	2.6	58	2.2
	BWMIC	black micaceous ware	4	*	36	*	0	0.0
	GW	grey sandy ware	435	16.1	5061	12.1	592	22.1
	OXID	oxidised sandy ware	107	4.0	1205	2.9	109	4.1
	OXIDF	fine oxidised ware	8	*	41	*	0	0.0
	OXMIC	micaceous oxidised ware	8	*	40	*	0	0.0
	OXIDWS	white-slipped oxidised	9	*	91	*	16	0.6
	WW	medium sandy whiteware	126	4.7	1876	4.5	134	5.0
	WWF	fine white sandy ware	21	*	87	*	30	1.1
	BWLI	black ware with limestone	13	*	304	*	80	3.0
	SALI	sandy with limestone	21	*	274	*	57	2.1
	BWW	burnt whiteware (sandy)	14	*	331	*	90	3.4
	BWWGR	burnt white/ oxid ware (grog)	341	12.6	8768	21.0	490	18.2
	BWGR	black grogged ware	24	1.0	378	1.0	0	0.0
	WWGR	grogged whiteware	21	*	645	1.5	19	*
	PNKGT	Midlands grog-tempered	2	*	140	*	0	0.0
	LOCCC	local colour-coated ware	1	*	2	*	0	0.0
	MISC	other miscellaneous	4	*	8	*	0	0.0
TOTAL			2707	100.0	41751	100.0	2682	100.0

* = less than 1%

rounded quartz less than 0.5 mm in size. *Forms*: Butt beaker, flat rim bowls, necked bowls (Fig. 13. 13), carinated bowls, necked and neckless jars and straight-sided dishes.

Black sand, micaceous ware (BWMIC): A distinctively micaceous, medium to fine black sandy ware. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

Grey wares (GW): A well-fired, light grey sandy ware with a lighter core. A very sandy texture with fine quartz sand and sparse fine dark grey specks. *Forms*: Jars including examples with flared rims, externally grooved rims, everted rim with and without necks (Fig. 13.8), and cordons; butt beakers (Fig. 13.6-7), lids, straight-sided dishes with a single groove (Fig. 13. 9), and carinated bowls and cup (Fig. 14. 21).

Oxidised sandy ware (OXID): Medium-fine orange sandy ware. In one or two casese there is a very faint trace of some a red colour-coat on some of these vessels. *Forms:* Flagon, bossed bowl (Fig. 14. 24), everted rim necked jar with a rolled rim, reeded rim bowl (Fig. 13. 12).

Fine orange sandy ware (OXIDF): Soft, very fine, powdery orange sandy ware. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

Oxidised micaceous ware (OXMIC): Dark orange with a grey core and a fine silky texture. The paste contains fine mica and sparse red iron-rich rounded inclusions. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

White-slipped oxidised ware (OXIDWS). *Forms*: Bowl or tankard.

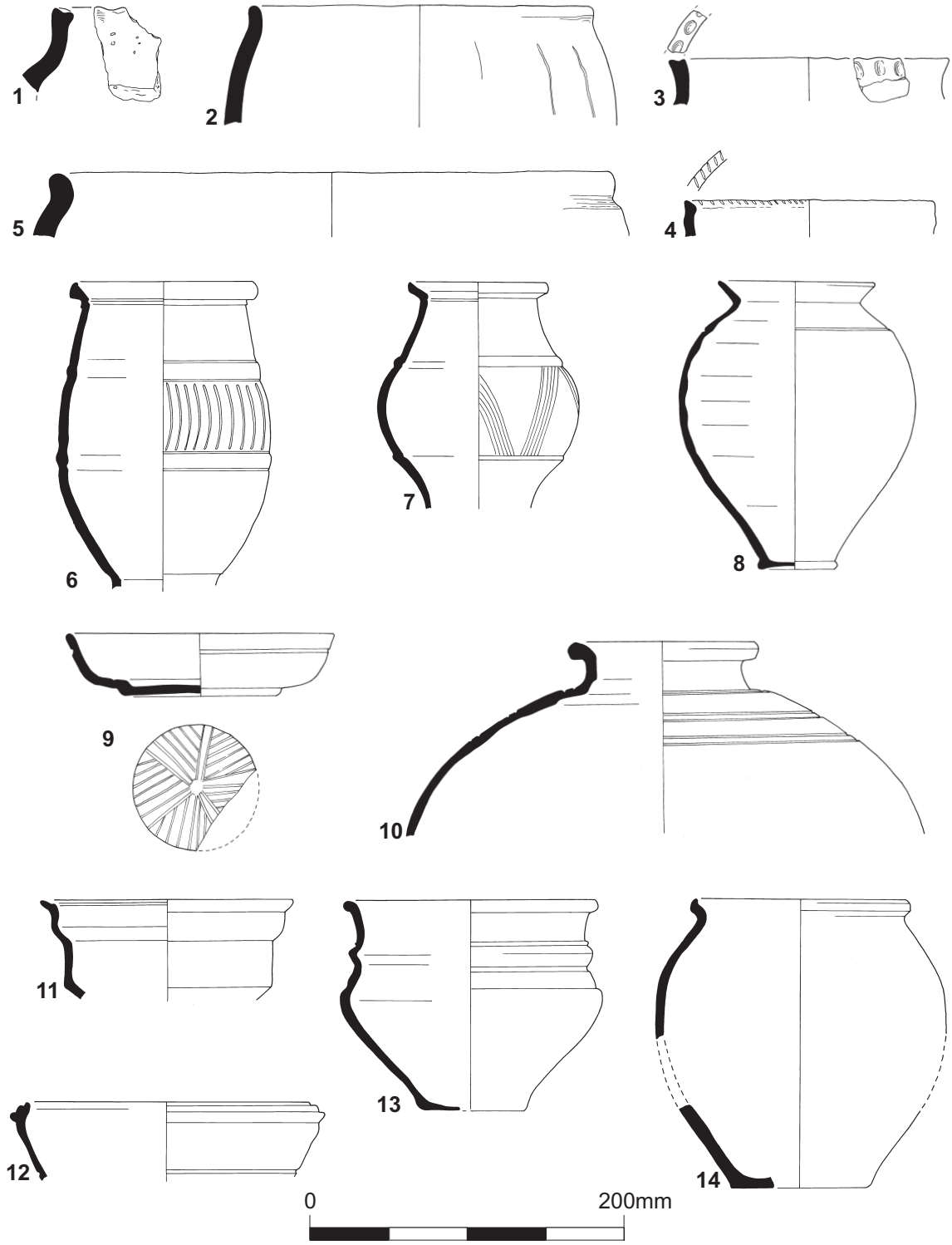


Fig 13 Site 3. Pottery. See report for catalogue

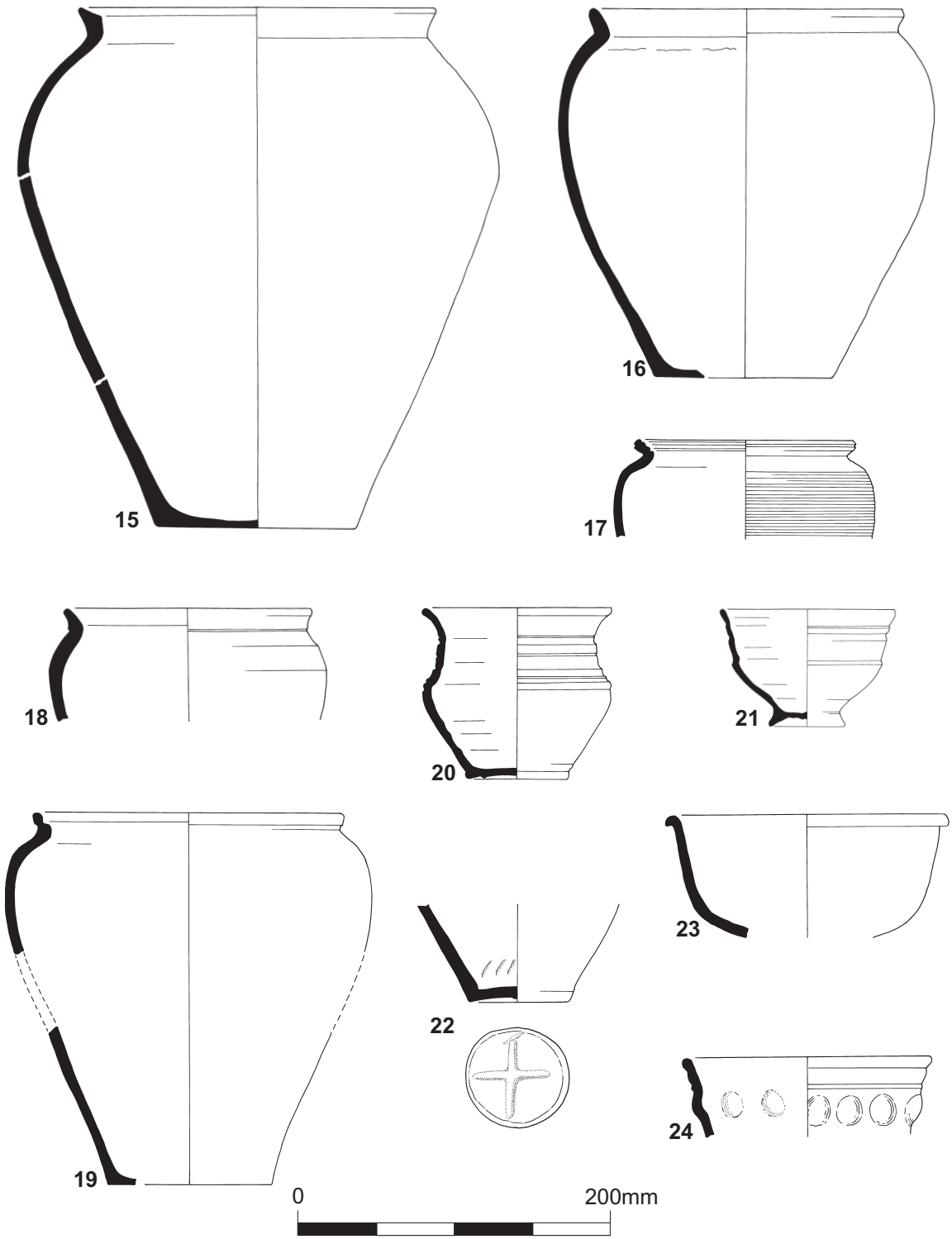


Fig 14 Site 3. Pottery. See report for catalogue

Whitewares (WW): A white sandy ware contains a sparse scatter of quartz, the grains of which are just macroscopically visible and at x 20 magnification are less than 0.5 mm in size. Rare red iron grains. *Forms:* Reeded rim bowls (Fig. 14. 26), dishes, jars with external rim groove.
Fine whiteware (WWF): Very fine white ware, no visible inclusions apart from rare red iron. *Forms*: Roulette decorated butt beaker, flagon.
Burnt sandy whiteware (BWW1): White sandy ware with a black exterior. *Forms:* Channel rim jar, everted rim neckless jars.
Local colour-coated ware (LOCCC): Fine oxidised sandy ware with a matt brownish red colour-coat. *Forms*: No featured sherds.

Local wares: shelly ware
Shelly ware (SHELL): A red-brown, orange or black ware, with a moderate to common frequency of fossil shell. *Forms:* Handmade and wheel-made vessels including channel rim jars with single and double grooved, lid-seated jars with a skeuomorphic groove, necked rolled rim jars, storage jars, and simple or shaped rim ovoid neckless jars (Figs. 13. 14; 14.15; 14.19).
Black sandy ware with sparse limestone (BWLI). As BW but with sparse limestone/ shell inclusions up to 1-2 mm in size. *Forms:* Necked bowl (Fig. 14. 20).
Oxidised sandy ware with limestone (SALI): A hard fabric with a very sandy texture and with a scatter of white specks of limestone 1 to 2 mm in size and finer. The fabric has an oxidised exterior and grey core and under x 20 magnification a moderate frequency of well-sorted fine, rounded quartz less than 0.5 mm in size and a scatter of similarly sized dark red-brown iron. *Forms:* Hemispherical bowl (Fig. 14. 23).

Local wares: grog-tempered
Burnt white or oxidised ware with grog-temper (BWWGR): A moderately hard ware with a black exterior and pink or white interior and distinctive orange and white sub-angular grog. Also present is a scatter of fine quartz with rare larger round grains less than 1mm in size. *Forms:* Channel rim jars, large storage jars and various other jars (Fig. 13. 10; 14. 16-18), butt beakers, carinated bowls (Fig. 13. 11), the closed form with a relief cross on the base (Fig. 14. 22) and a large lid (Fig. 14. 25).
White grogged ware (WWGR): As BWWGR but white throughout. *Forms*: Channel rim jars.
Midlands pink grog-tempered ware (PNK GT) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 210). *Forms*: No featured sherds.

PHASE 1: MIDDLE IRON AGE (TABLE 2)

At least 103 sherds, weighing 726 g, were recovered from features dating to Phase 1. These mainly comprise shelly wares and limestone-tempered ware (fabric LI2) present in almost equal amount accompanied by grog and shell or limestone-tempered material (fabric GRSH), two sherds of fabric LI1 and single sherds of fabrics GRFL and SH2. Featured sherds were extremely sparse and only 0.09 EVEs were present. All the sherds can be classed as coarseware with no obvious finewares present. The material was in quite poor condition and the sherds well fragmented with an overall average sherd size of just 7g.

Pottery was recovered from five discrete features in Phase 1: Ditches 1, 12 and 13, Ring Gully 1 and Gully 1063. One of the larger groups came from the first phase of Enclosure Ditch 1 (Cut 1310) , a total of 20 sherds weighing 189 g and including one rim of an ovoid or barrel-bodied jar in fabric LI2. Three fragments of fired clay of indeterminate function were also recovered. Most of the pottery comprises shell, grog and shell or limestone-tempered ware. All these fabrics are well documented in the area and are in use from the earlier Iron Age into the middle Iron Age. Two small sherds of oxidised grog-tempered ware (fabric GR2) are presumably intrusive derived from the later disturbance.

The two parallel gullies constituting Group 13 also yielded a modest group of 25 sherds of pottery weighing 183 g. This group contains one featured sherd, a rim from a necked globular bodied jar with a finger-depressed edge (Fig. 13. 1). The use of finger-tipping is perhaps more typical of the early Iron Age but evidence from elsewhere in Northamptonshire suggests that such styles continue to manifest themselves into the earlier part of the middle Iron Age. Vessels with this style of decoration have been noted in the middle Iron Age assemblage from Twywell (Jackson 1975, 70), for example. Four very tiny pieces of calcined flint-tempered ware (2 g) also from these features may be redeposited.

Ring Gully 1 produced 33 sherds from the earlier cut 1054 of the western gully, and 13 sherds from cut 1036. All the sherds were unfeatured. A radiocarbon date from 1053 (cut 1054) suggests a date in the later 3rd to early 2nd century BC. The sherds from 1054 comprised thirty sherds of fabric LI2 and three of fabric GRSH. The later cut, 1036, had a mixture of shelly and grog and shelly sherds with one small piece of fired clay.

Cut 1302 in Ditch 12 (Fig. 10, S.62) produced seven body-sherds, all shelly wares. The only other feature in this phase to yield pottery was Gully 1062 with five sherds of shelly ware, one indeterminate pot crumb and one fragment of fired clay, again all unfeatured.

PHASE 2: MID TO LATE IRON AGE

Features allocated to Phase 2 produced a total of 159 sherds of pottery, weighing 1390 g. As with Phase 1 the material is quite fragmented with an average sherd size of just 7.5 g. The pottery was recovered from seven discrete features and one layer (1227), which overlay the stone surface 1228.

Ditch 1 forming the oval enclosure produced pottery from Cuts 1251 (Fig. 10, S.50) and 1358, a total of 11 sherds from five vessels. The pottery was all handmade shelly or shell and grog-tempered. Two rimsherds and three bodysherds of a large storage jar came from 1251 and one of the shelly sherds from 1358 has burnt black residue adhering to the internal surface.

Slightly more material came from Ditch 4, 39 sherds in total, from Cuts 1048, 1276 and 1213. The sherds from 1048 comprise three grog and shell-tempered wares and five shelly wares and four small pieces of fired clay. The shelly ware includes one jar with a finger-tipped rim, presumably a residual middle Iron Age vessel. Cut 1276 also produced shelly ware and eight sherds of fabric LI2, including a barrel-shaped jar with a simple rim (Fig. 13. 2). None of the material from these two cuts necessarily indicates a date later than the middle Iron Age. Cut 1212 (Fig. 10, S.62) is slightly more problematic in that alongside five sherds of fabrics SH1 and LI2 are two sherds of grog-tempered ware BWWGR which is more likely to date to the early Roman period and is presumably intrusive here.

Ditch 5, which cut Ditch 4, produced a further 59 sherds again the same middle Iron Age as seen earlier in the sequence, fabrics SH1, SH2, LI2 and GRSH. One sherd has vertical striations also perhaps more typical of the middle Iron Age. A sherd from a simple everted rim jar in shelly ware came from 1046. The radiocarbon date obtained for 1033, calibrated to between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD appears erroneous in this context.

Table 2 Pottery fabric quantification by phase

Fabric	*PH1*			*PH2*			*PH3*			*PH4*			*PH5*			*PH6*			*PH7*		
IRON AGE	No	Wt	Eve	No	Wt	Eve	No	Wt	Eve	No	Wt	Eve	No	Wt	Eve	No	Wt	Eve	No	Wt	Eve
SH1	39	240	2	52	447	13	5	132	0	5	50	7	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SH2	1	16	0	30	89	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LI1	2	20	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LI2	38	221	7	35	549	20	2	22	7	12	39	0	11	45	0	4	14	0	0	0	0
GR1	0	0	0	1	3	0	49	581	63	52	956	25	36	677	15	8	54	0	1	132	0
GR2	2	7	0	2	7	0	71	647	27	85	2543	147	3	40	0	20	284	32	2	33	0
GRFL	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRSH	17	211	0	28	276	19	9	155	0	10	1127	51	19	1078	17	3	43	0	1	25	0
GRSA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	30	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	3	51	5
OR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SA	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	111	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISC	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ROMAN																					
SAM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	6	147	60	4	12	7	3	25	5
SHELL	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	959	81	50	1268	87	509	8446	344	19	252	0	5	139	0
BW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	394	18	68	953	199	3	14	3	3	31	3
BWMIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	36	0	0	0	0
GW	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	0	118	1767	216	243	2554	282	48	441	53	15	94	5
OXID	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	2	9	0	12	82	30	20	332	15	18	161	0
OXIDF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	3	20	0	0	0	0	4	18	0
OXMIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	3	19	0	3	5	0	0	0	0
OXIDWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	91	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	434	40	51	604	76	38	609	18
WWF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	87	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
BWLI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SALI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	180	40	6	90	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
BWW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	297	81	1	16	9	2	18	0
BWWGR	0	0	0	3	9	0	0	0	0	52	544	66	216	5554	266	6	160	10	2	104	8
BWGR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	378	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WWGR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	19	0	15	475	19	2	87	0	3	64	0
PNKGT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	140	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LOCCC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
MISC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	30	0	1	2	0	1	8	0
`	103	726	9	151	1380	52	192	2649	178	463	9070	659	1249	21520	1416	198	2376	205	102	1514	44

Gully 1155 (Fill 1156) produced 44 sherds including two shelly jar rims, one with a finger-impressed rim (Fig. 13. 3) and one with an incised rim (Fig. 13.4). Also present is an ovoid jar in fabric LI2, a necked jar in fabric GRSH and five sherds of fabric GR2. A fragment of a possible shale vessel base also came from 1156. Layer 1227 contained five sherds, four shelly wares and one small sherd of oxidised grog-tempered ware which reflects a later Iron Age date.

PHASE 3: 1ST CENTURY AD

A slightly larger assemblage was recovered from the Phase 3 features with some 192 sherds weighing 2649 g. The material is much better preserved compared to phases 1 and 2 with an average sherd size of 13.8 g.

The largest group of material came from Ditch 9, some 171 sherds. The character of the assemblage shows a number of changes compared to the earlier groups with the appearance of channel rim jars, both single and double grooved, significant quantities of grog-tempered oxidised wares and a few wheel-made wares alongside the handmade jars. Also present in the group are several sherds from a grog-tempered butt beaker. Both wheel-made grog-tempered wares comparable to fabric GR2 and channel rim jars first appear in the early 1st century AD and continue to feature into the second half of the century. As a group the pottery would appear to date to the later Iron Age although the same material persists into the post-conquest period and would be difficult to distinguish as such without the presence of other indicators. The only Roman ware proper from the Phase 3 material is a grey sand wheel-made ware from Ditch 3 (Context 1291). This may have been intrusive from Ditch 2 (Phase 4).

PHASE 4: MID TO LATE 1ST CENTURY AD

Features allocated to Phase 4 produced a total 463 sherds, weighing 9070 g. Sherd preservation is good with an overall average sherd size of 19.6 g. The pottery came from one ditch group and nine gullies.

Ditch 2 yielded pottery from Cuts 1067, 1143, 1284 (Fig. 11, S.65) and 1298, a total of 178 sherds. In contrast to the earlier material, this assemblage contains a number of wheel-made vessels and a significant proportion of sandy 'Romanised' wares, in black, grey and oxidised fabrics. Accompanying the sandy wares are shelly wares and grog-tempered wares in both handmade and wheel-made forms. Vessels mainly comprise jars and necked bowls with two examples of bevelled rim butt beakers, one with combed decoration (Fig. 13.7). The jars include channel rim types, necked, rolled rim and neckless forms. A few clearly redeposited Iron Age sherds are also present. A large rimsherd from a storage jar in a grog and shell-tempered ware was recovered from 1298.

Gully 1260 produced no pottery, but gully 1147, possibly contemporary with it, had a small group of 29 sherds, all unfeatured. Six of these are in fabric GR2, the rest were shelly wares or limestone-tempered (fabric LI2). There was no Roman component to the group which could date anytime from the early 1st century AD.

Gully 1122, although only a short, shallow cut produced a large collection of pottery amongst which were several semi-complete vessels (Fig. 13. 8-10). In total 182 sherds weighing 3731 g were recovered from this feature. A small scrap of a South Gaulish samian cup is the only imported ware in the group and a small sherd of fine oxidised ware the only other fineware. Otherwise the group appears largely domestic in character and largely comprises burnt white grogged wares and grey sandy wares with some shelly sherds and a few other types. Jars dominate with lid-seated, necked rolled rim, channel rim jars, neckless (Fig. 13. 8), and storage types (Fig. 13.10). In addition there are at least three dishes (Fig. 13. 9) and one grey sandy ware beaker.

Gullies 1231 and 1193 produced a very modest group of just 14 sherds, largely from 1193. This includes further grogged Roman wares, a grey sandy ware necked, cordoned, jar and two white sandy wares. The remaining three gullies within this group. 1205, 1181 and 1110 all produced small assemblages of six, fifteen and twenty sherds respectively. Of particular note is a ring-necked flagon and a greyware jar with a grooved outer rim from 1110, the first examples of both vessel forms in the assemblage and likely to indicate a date anytime from the Flavian period into the early 2nd century.

PHASE 5: LATE 1ST - EARLY 2ND CENTURY AD

This phase of activity produced the largest assemblage of pottery, some 1249 sherds, weighing 21.5 kg. The material was relatively well preserved with an overall average sherd size of 17.2 g. Most of this material, 61% by sherd count, was recovered from Ditch 6 with a further 20% from 'Well' 1323. The remaining 19% came from various pits, ditches and gullies.

Ditch 6 produced pottery from five cuts (1044, 1056, 1153, 1249 and 1262), a total of 500 sherds, with a further 265 sherds from 1141. The range of fabrics very much mirrors that seen in the Phase 4 material, with grey sandy wares, shelly ware and burnt white grogged wares forming the dominant groups. As with Gully 1122 there were a large number of sherds deriving from single vessels and several vessel profiles could be reconstructed (Fig. 14. 16-22). The earlier cut, 1249 contained 110 sherds. Of particular note within this group were several fine white ware sherds from a butt beaker with rouletted decoration and a black sandy ware carinated, bowl. Unless these are redeposited it is unlikely that they would be much later than the early Flavian period. Cut 1262 contained a large group of 260 sherds with several instances of multiple sherds from the same vessels. This group largely comprised three fabric groups, shelly ware, burnt white grogged ware and grey sandy ware. Of particular note is a base sherd from a jar with a raised cross on the underside (Fig. 14.22) for which no parallel is known to the author. It is just possible this is imitating the relief design sometimes seen on glass vessels. Another unusual vessel in this group is the large pedestalled grey sandy ware cup (Fig. 14.21). Semi-complete examples of channel rim jars, one in shelly ware, one in blackened white grogged ware, necked jars with rolled rims and ovoid neckless jars were also present (Fig. 14. 17-19). Cut 1056 contained a large number of shelly bodysherds probably mainly from one large handmade jar. One grey ware sherd from the same cut had a calcareous inner lining from holding or boiling water. Later cut 1153 produced just 32 sherds amongst which is a small fragment of Central Gaulish samian dish (Drag. type 35) and 11 sherds of grey sandy ware which would suggest an early 2nd century date at the earliest.

Most of the other ditches and gullies in this phase only produced small groups of pottery. Ditch 1040/1215 yielded just two grey sandy Roman sherds not closely datable. Gully 1201 produced slightly more material, 10 sherds including a grey sandy ware beaker and burnt white grogged ware. Gully 1207 contained 54 sherds of which 39 belong to one shelly ware channel rim jar. Also from this gully was a ?South Gaulish samian dish and a grey ware jar with a ridged neck. Ditch 1171 contained a small but interesting group of material including a bossed oxidised bowl (Fig. 14. 23), which was probably originally mica-slipped although no traces survive. The assemblage also includes a reeded rim whiteware bowl and two lid-seated jars and an oxidised hemispherical bowl (Fig. 14. 22).

Ditch 1106 contained a single grey ware sherd with 'London-style' decoration which is likely to date from the Flavian period through to the early 2nd century.

The 'well' (1323) produced 247 sherds from five layers. The lowest fill, 1337 produced 23 moderately large sherds, weighing 551 g. These include examples of black, grey and white sandy wares, the latter from a flagon, burnt white grogged ware, white grogged ware and shelly ware, the latter two fabrics featuring as channel rim jars. Layer 1327 produced slightly more material with 105 sherds. Amongst this was a stamped South Gaulish dish, Dragendorff type 18. The stamp is that Germanus of La Graufesenque with a production date of *c*. AD 70-85. Further flagon is present in the form of an oxidised sandy strap handle and white sandy ware bodysherds and there are at least four bowls, one in a white-slipped oxidised ware. A channel rim shelly jar has burnt residue on the interior. Slightly less material came from the layer above this, 1326, which produced 82 sherds including a shallow grey sandy ware dish, a jar with an external rim groove, a double channel rim jar and a greyware beaker all of which might suggest a later 1st to 2nd century date. The upper layer 1325 contained just 18 sherds with a white ware jar with an externally grooved rim, an orange sandy ware reeded rim bowl and an ovoid neckless shelly jar. This material matches with that recovered from ditch 1171 in broad terms. The final fill, 1324, contained 19 sherds with a further sherd of reeded rim bowl, two lids, a storage jar and a bifid rim white-ware jar with traces of a pinkish colour-wash.

Five pits produced small groups of pottery. Pits 1114 and 1115 both produced sherds of oxidised sandy reeded rim bowl, possibly originally with a colour-coat and probably from the same vessel. Pit 1119 contained just three sherds, one a large rimsherd from a large burnt lid or fire cover in burnt white grogged ware (Fig. 15.25). Pit 1117 had slightly more material with 18 sherds including a piece of South Gaulish samian. Pit 1131 had 15 sherds with one channel rim shelly ware jar accompanied by grey ware and grogged Roman wares.

PHASE 6: LATE 1ST-EARLY 2ND CENTURY

Some 200 sherds, weighing 2224 g, were recovered from Phase 6 contexts. Pottery was associated with Ditches 7 and 11, Gully 1223 and Pits 1089 and 1187. In terms of forms and fabrics there are no significant changes from the previous phases. A single sherd of South Gaulish samian cup came from Ditch 7. Other forms included storage jar, necked jar, lid, a straight-sided dish with a single groove, bowls and a beaker.

PHASE 7: 2ND CENTURY AD

A small assemblage of just 56 sherds came from Phase 7, all from Ditch 8. The trend away from shelly ware hinted at in Phases 6 and 7 appears to continue in favour of various sandy wares. Three Central Gaulish samian sherds are present one from a decorated Dragendorff 37 bowl, the other two from Dragendorff 31 dishes. Other finewares are indicated by three fine oxidised sherds and one tiny scrap of colour-coated ware. A 2nd-century date for the group from Pit 1102 is set by a Central Gaulish samian Dragendorff 31 sherd.

DISCUSSION

The assemblage contains material dating from the middle Iron Age period through until at least the early to mid 2nd century AD although the greater part of the material appears to date to the earlier Roman period. The perpetuation of the same potting traditions into the later 1st century AD means that it is not absolutely clear whether some of the features should be seen as pre- or post-conquest. Similarly the absence of any clear indicators at the latter end of the sequence to show change make it difficult to be certain how late in to the 2nd century the assemblage lasts. Two notable features of the Higham Ferrers assemblage are the exceptional preservation of some of the material with the dumping of apparently almost complete but broken vessels, and the unusual base with a cross on the underside from Ditch 6.

The earlier Roman features can probably be distinguished by the absence of grey sandy wares which are presumably a feature of the later 1st or early 2nd century. Grog-tempered wares accompanied by shelly wares are a feature of the late Iron Age and early Roman period. There are no examples of any decorated late Iron Age wares present as were prevalent in the material from Twywell (Jackson 1975) and Weekley (Jackson and Dix 1988).

The post-conquest assemblage includes local copies of butt beakers and platters similar to those found at nearby Rushden although there are no exotic painted wares present in this assemblage comparable with those from Rushden (Wood and Hastings 1984). Fine wares are rare and the only two British finewares of note, include a bossed bowl from 1172 and a sherd with incised compass-style decoration from 1121. A small amount of fine white sandy ware, probably flagon, may also be imported into the site but could equally well be a local Northamptonshire product. There are only a few imports to the site amongst the Roman material, mainly South Gaulish and Central Gaulish samian of which there were 13 sherds. Amongst the samian is a stamped Dragendorff 18 platter from 1327 with a production date between AD 70 and 85. Although it is interesting to note its presence, samian forms less than 1% of the total assemblage and is unaccompanied by other continental imports such as amphorae and mortaria and no obvious regional imports. In addition to the paucity of fine tablewares there are no specialised kitchen wares such as mortaria, cheese presses or similar, the assemblage being very much dominated by jars. There is also a noticeable lack of decorated wares, and it is curious given its close proximity to Rushden that there are no obvious products from here. Sandy grog-tempered wares dominate the assemblage with oxidised and white fired sherds, often with a black exterior. The fabric is well-known in the region being present on most early Roman sites, for example, at the recent sites excavated ahead of the A43 road improvement south of Towcester, which included a kiln producing a very similar ware near Whitfield, and at Ashton (Aird and MacRobert nd). A particularly well preserved group of material was recovered from Gully 1262 (1263) which included at least five complete profiles. Further semi-complete vessels were also present in Gully 1122 (1123) and Gully 1207 (1208).

It is clear that the site has undergone a number of changes in a relatively short time span. It is slightly unclear whether the site shows complete continuity of use or whether there is a slight hiatus in the ceramic record between the middle and latest Iron pre-Roman Iron Age. The most intense use of the land on the basis of the ceramic evidence comes in the later 1st and early 2nd centuries. There is no late Roman material present suggesting a shift in focus by the later Roman period and a likely abandonment of this area by the mid 2nd century or slightly later. The pottery evidence suggests a relatively modest status rural site largely reliant on local domestic or utilitarian products.

CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED SHERDS

Figure 13

1. Round-bodied necked jar with a finger-impressed rim. Oxidised body with a dark grey core. Fabric SHELL. Ditch 13, 1030 (1029). Phase 1.
2. Handmade barrel-shaped jar with a simple vertical rim. Irregular vertical grooves down body. Oxidised with a grey core and interior. Fabric: SALI. Gully 1276 (1277). Phase 2.
3. Handmade necked vessel with a finger-impressed rim. The vessel is sooted on the upper exterior and rim. Red-brown in colour. Fabric: SHELL. Ditch 1155 (1156). Phase 2.
4. Handmade bowl with an incised rim. Oxidised ware. Fabric: SHELL. Ditch 1155 (1156). Phase 2.
5. Handmade, wide-mouthed ovoid jar with a simple, slightly thickened rim. Fabric: SHELL. Ditch 1155 (1156). Phase 2.
6. Wheel-made butt beaker. Patchy grey-brown exterior with a dark grey interior. Decorated with vertical burnished lines. Fabric: GW. Ditch 1166 (1167). Phase 3.
7. Butt beaker in a light grey sandy ware decorated with faint combed lines. Fabric: GW. Ditch 1143 (1144). Phase 3.
8. Wheel-made ovoid jar with a sharply everted rim. Internal calcareous deposits. Grey sandy ware. Fabric: GW. Gully 1122 (1123). Phase 4.
9. Small dish with an internal base angle moulding and a single external groove. The interior is decorated with faint radiating burnished lines. Fabric: GW. Gully 1122 (1123). Phase 4.
10. Large narrow necked storage jar. Handmade. Fabric: BWWGR. Gully 1122 (1123). Phase 4.
11. Small wheel-made carinated bowl perhaps loosely copying a samian Dragendorff 37 style. Fabric GR2. Ditch 2, 1284 (1287). Phase 4.
12. Bowl with a reeded rim. Orange sandy ware with rare limestone. Very faint traces of a red colour-coat. Fabric: OXID. Pit 1115 (1114/1116). Phase 5.
13. Small wheel-made necked bowl with a carinated neck. The external base angle is worn. Black sandy ware. Fabric: BW. Ditch 6, 1249 (1250). Phase 5.
14. Handmade neckless jar with a small shaped rim. Fabric: SHELL. Ditch 6, 1141 (1142). Phase 5.

Figure 14

15. Almost complete large neckless jar. Oxidised. Fabric: SHELL. Gully 1207 (1208). Phase 5.
16. Almost complete but broken handmade jar. Patchy orange/black exterior orange brown interior Blackened upper body with a sooted rim. The base has possibly been deliberately holed with a single large hole in the centre. Fabric: BWWGR. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
17. Handmade jar with a finely ridged exterior body and a double groove on the interior of the rim. Blackened exterior with sooting on the rim and lower interior wall. Fabric: BWWGR. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
18. Handmade neckless jar with a thickened collar rim and slight faceting on the body. Fabric: BWWGR. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
19. Almost complete, but broken handmade jar. Dark grey to orange-brown in colour. Fabric: SHELL. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
20. Small necked bowl with a grooved, banded upper body. Black sandy ware with very sparse shell. Fabric: BWLI. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
21. Carinated, pedestalled wheel-made cup or small bowl. Speckled light grey sandy ware. Fabric GW. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
22. Base of a closed handmade form, probably a jar. The vessel has a blackened exterior and pink-orange interior. The exterior of the base has a cross in relief which has the appearance of having been made in a negative mould. Fabric: BWWGR. Ditch 6, 1262 (1263). Phase 5.
23. Hemispherical bowl with a small out-turned rim. Orange sandy ware with sparse limestone and a dark grey core, Fabric: SALI. Ditch 1171, (1172). Phase 5.
24. Bowl decorated with pressed out bosses. Orange sandy ware. May have originally had a mica slipped finish. Fabric: OXID. Ditch 1171 (1172). Phase 5.

Figure 15

25. Large lid with a thickened rim. The surfaces are burnt with some spalling. Fabric: BWWGR. Pit 1119 (1120). Phase 5.
26. Bowl with a low carination and a reeded rim. White sandy ware. Fabric: WW. Gully 1223, (1168). Phase 6.

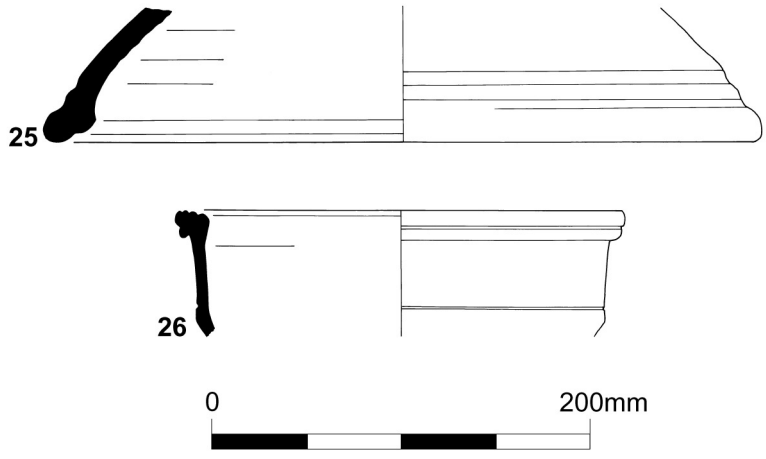


Fig 15 Site 3. Pottery. See report for catalogue

THE POTTERY FROM SITE 4
by Andy Chapman

A total of thirty-nine sherds, weighing 295 g, were recovered. Thirty-four came from contexts 10. 12 and 15 within the ditch of Enclosure 1, four sherds were superficial, and one came from the ditch of Enclosure 2 (Context 4). In general the assemblage comprises fabrics containing dense crushed shell, although a few, including that from Enclosure 2, are grog tempered. The material all has dark grey reduced cores while the surface colours vary from orange and orange-brown to dark grey. The only diagnostic sherds are from Context 15. These are two Scored Ware body sherds and two rim sherds from a Scored Ware jar with a flat-topped rim decorated with closely spaced, deeply incised, oval impressions (Fig. 16). All these sherds may be from a single vessel, along with the plain body sherds from the same context.

The Scored Ware sherds indicate that the assemblage can be broadly dated to the middle Iron Age. The unstratified material contained a single rim sherd that is a rolled, everted rim from a large jar. This is probably of late Iron Age/early Roman date and , while it is not typical of the stratified assemblage, it may suggest that the group belongs to the end of the middle Iron Age, perhaps the 2nd and 1st centuries BC.

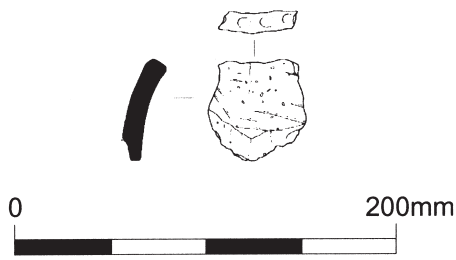


Fig 16 Site 4. Iron Age pottery

METAL AND OTHER OBJECTS FROM SITE 3
by Tora Hylton

INTRODUCTION

The excavations produced a collection of Roman and post-medieval finds. A small quantity of fired clay/daub was recovered from the Iron Age features, but no metal objects or other 'small finds'. The majority of finds are Roman and were recovered from a series ditches and gullies dating from the mid to late 1st century though to the early 2nd century (Phases 4 and 5). The range of finds is limited and includes items for personal adornment, a single coin and a small number of undiagnostic fragments. The post-medieval objects are of little interest.

In total there are 23 'small finds', in five material types. All the objects have been described and measured, and a descriptive catalogue is retained in archive. Bulk finds include fired clay, iron slag, ceramic tile, slag and shell, which have been recorded under the bulk-finds system. None of the fired clay can be attributed to structural features although some smooth surfaces are burnt and may have derived from ovens. The tile is all post-medieval in date. The shell comprised two oyster shells and one other bivalve from 1st-century features.

The finds may be quantified by material type and period as shown in Table 3:

IRON AGE (PHASES 1 AND 2)

The only finds from Iron Age deposits are nine amorphous fragments of fired clay, recovered from a small gully in the north-western corner of the site (1028) and Ditch 12.

ROMAN (PHASES 3 – 7)

The majority of finds were recovered from Roman deposits. With the exception of a small quantity of fired clay, no finds were recovered from Phase 3 deposits. The majority of finds came from Phases 4 and 5 and include a coin, a finger ring, two brooches and a stud. Small quantities of fired clay were recovered from Phases 6 and 7, the latest phase also producing two undiagnostic fragments of blue/green glass.

Table 3 Quantification of non-pottery finds by period

Material	Iron Age	Roman	Post-medieval	Unstratified/ residual
Small finds				
Copper alloy		8	1 (metal alloy)	1
Iron objects		2	1	1
Stone		2		
Glass		2		
Flint				5
Bulk Finds				
Fired clay	19g	1349g		
Slag	54g	26g		
Shell		60g		
Tile			220g	

Copper alloy

The coin was recovered from a Phase 4 enclosure ditch (Ditch 2, Cut 1143). It is denarius of Septimius Severus dating to *c.* AD 200-201.

There are a small number of objects that would have been used for personal adornment. These include a finger ring recovered from a gully (1122) and two brooches recovered from pits close to the southern edge of the site. One is penannular and from Phase 4 (Pit 1197) and the other is a fragment of a fibula from Phase 5 (Pit 1117). The finger ring is complete and comprises a circular-sectioned hoop, which expands towards the bezel to form a crude stylistic representation of two opposing snakes/serpents heads (Fig. 17.1). Such representations on items of jewellery are common during the Roman period, and are a symbol of health and healing, rebirth and the spirits of the departed (Johns 1996, 334). The penannular brooch is complete but slightly damaged; it comprises a circular-sectioned hoop with flattened, tightly coiled terminals, the pin is still attached (Fig. 17.2). Brooches of this type are not uncommon and are generally thought to be of 1st century date. This particular example displays similarities to Fowlers Type C (1960, 152) and may be compared to examples from Colchester (Crummy 1983, fig 16, 99), Magiovinium, Buckinghamshire (Butcher 1987, fig 23, 23) and Richborough (Hull 1968, plate XXXIII, 85). Later examples generally have flat cross-sections like those from the Verulamium (Goodburn 1984, fig 9, 55, 56), which date to the 3rd to 4th centuries (Fowler 1983, 19).

The fibula fragment includes the head, side wings and part of bow. The bow is decorated with central longitudinal rib, ornamented with equidistant transverse notches (not illus.). Brooches of this type generally date to the late 1st to mid 2nd century.

A decorative copper alloy stud was recovered from Ditch 2 (Cut 1143), together with the coin. Although incomplete, it is possible to determine that originally the head of the stud would have been octagonal in shape, with a raised edge/rim (Fig. 17.3). At the centre there is a circular keying cup, suggesting that originally this piece my have been decorated with an enamel or glass inset. Although not identical it displays similarities to examples from Colchester (Crummy 1983, fig. 121, 3218) and Exeter (Allason-Jones 1991, fig. 112, 63,63).

Other copper alloy objects include fragments from a copper alloy ring, probably used for suspension (Phase 4 gully, 1110) and an unidentified fitting decorated with ring-and-dot was found in topsoil deposits and is therefore unstratified (Fig. 17.4).

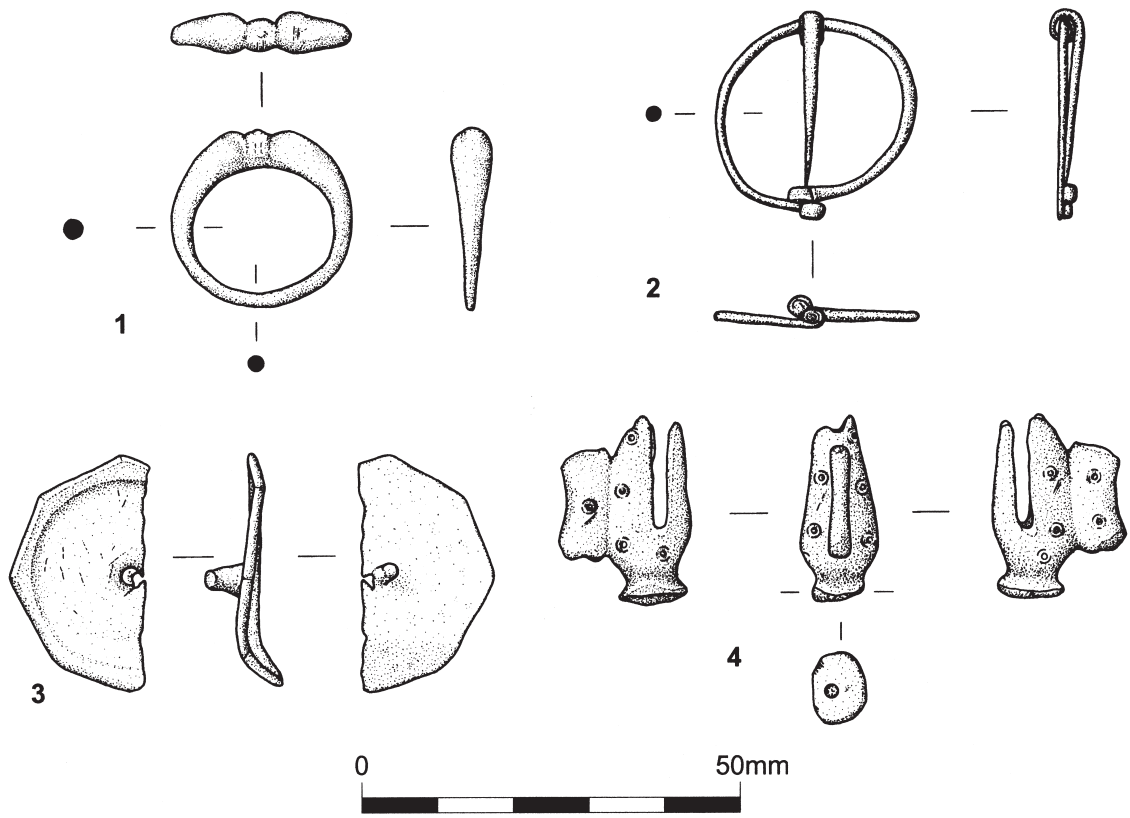


Fig 17 Site 3. Copper alloy finds. 1 Finger ring (SF1); 2 Penannular brooch (SF6); 3 Stud (SF4); 4 Fitting with ring-and-dot decoration (SF7)

Iron
Two rod fragments were recovered from Phase 4 deposits, one from Ditch 2 (Cut 1067) and the other from Gully 1122. Both have square cross-sections and one is tapered to a point, they are most probably shanks from nails.

Glass
Two undiagnostic fragments of blue/green glass were recovered from Phase 7 ditches (Ditch 8, 1126; Ditch 11, 1223).

Stone
There are two stone objects, both from Phase 5 deposits. A large pebble (glacial erratic) utilised as pounding/grinding stone was found in Ditch (Cut 1044). The stone is sub-square in section, elongated and slightly tapered. The terminal and sides display signs of wear, suggesting that that it may have been used in conjunction with a saddle quern. A rectangular-shaped piece of cut marble (89 x 22 x 9mm) was recovered from Gully 1112 in the south-western corner of the site. Although its use is unknown, especially in a rural context, it has been suggested that it looks very much like a piece of marble veneer, used either for walling or flooring in a high status structure. It is possible that the piece was brought in from elsewhere, as hard core or for dumping (pers. com., Ian Betts, MoLAS).

POST-MEDIEVAL

Finds of post-medieval date were recovered from later features. They include, a Georgian shoe buckle manufactured from iron, a metal alloy tack and five fragments of ceramic tile.

CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED FINDS

Figure 17
1. Finger ring, copper alloy. Complete. Circular-sectioned hoop, expanding towards the bezel to form a crude stylistic representation of two snakes. Height: 7mm Diameter: 25mm. SF 1, Context 1122, Phase 4, Gully (1122)
2. Penannular brooch, copper alloy. Complete with pin. Circular sectioned hoop, with flattened terminals that coil back over themselves. The pin is plain and wrapped loosely around the hoop. Diameter: 27mm Length of pin: 24mm. SF 6, Context 1198, Phase 4, Pit (1197)
3. Stud, copper alloy. Incomplete, half missing. Octagonal stud with raised edge/rim, suggesting that it was originally decorated with a glass or enamel inset. A circular-sectioned stud protrudes from the underside. SF 4, Context 1144, Phase 4, Ditch (1143)
4. Fitting, copper alloy. Decorated with ring-and-dot. Height: 25mm. SF No 7, Unstratified

FLINT
by Andy Chapman

A total of five pieces of flint were recovered, comprising three flakes, a shattered pebble and a small core with later damage. The pieces would appear to be residual and are of little significance.

SLAG
by Andy Chapman

The excavation produced a small collection of iron slag (about 80 g) from four contexts: 1037, Ring Gully 1 Cut 1036; 1150, Gully 1149; 1277, Ditch 5 Cut 1276; and Layer 1343, above the stone surface 1342. These contexts all belong to the earlier phases of the site. The quantity is too small to indicate that iron working had any significance in the economy of the settlement, although iron smithing would appear to have been practised on a small scale.

QUERNSTONE FROM SITE 4
by Andy Mudd

The only non-pottery artefact from Site 4 was a large fragment of quernstone. This measures 170 x 130 mm and is 60 mm thick. About half a saddle quern is represented. The stone is sandstone or quartzite and appears to be formed of a natural cobble which has smooth rounded surfaces on the base and one edge. The other edge has been shaped and smoothed deliberately while the upper working surface is smooth and slightly convex.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

ANIMAL BONE
by Karen Deighton

SITE 3

Method
An assemblage of 13.17 kg of bone were hand recovered from the excavation. The bone was sorted into identifiable and recordable fragments according to selected anatomical units (Halstead, after Watson 1979). Non-identifiable fragments were counted but not included in quantification. The numbers of ribs and vertebra were noted but these elements were not recorded to species level. Skeletons were recorded but not included in quantification to avoid species bias. Identifications to species, where possible, were made with the aid of Schmidt (1972) for large mammals, and bird bone identification follows Serjeantson and Cohen (1996). Recording follows Halstead (1985) and uses minimum anatomical unit (MinAU), whereby each bone is held to have a proximal and a distal half which are recorded separately or recorded as absent. Any matching fragments from the same context were rejoined and where more than one fragment belongs to the same anatomical unit only the one with the most information was recorded. This should avoid any over-recording. For each identifiable bone fragment the following were recorded; element, taxon, proximal fusion, distal fusion, side, modification, butchery and fragmentation. Identification of butchery follows Binford (1981). Pathologies are described after Baker and Brothwell (1980). Ageing of sheep/goat mandibles is after Payne (1973). Fusion follows Silver (1969). Measurements were taken after Von den Driesch (1976). Measurements are to be found in the site archive.

Preservation
Fragmentation was fairly high (59.51%) and this was mostly the result of old breaks (46.83%). This could be associated with the fact that most bone material was retrieved from ditches. A low frequency of weathering was also noted. Concretions of minerals were seen on occasional bones. Canid gnawing was low at 3.45% of identified fragments. The low frequency of both weathering and canid gnawing suggests burial occurred fairly rapidly after

deposition. The frequency of butchery was low being observed on only nine bones. This paucity of evidence of butchery could be due to the use of boning out as a method of dismembering carcasses, as the generally good surface condition of the bone suggests butchery evidence was not obscured by surface damage. Only one fragment of burnt bone was present (ie. 0.2% of the total), suggesting this was not a preferred method of disposal.

Species present
A total of 505 bones were recorded, of which 232 (*c.* 46%) were of indeterminate species. The species present are listed in Tables 4 and 5. Percentages of the total are given in parentheses. Phases 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 have been grouped together for comparative purposes as the dating overlaps.

Pathology
Context 1208 (Phase 5). Cattle second phalanx with exostosis. The pathology could be indicative of osteoarthritus due to stress on joints or old age. It could possibly be indicative of use as a traction animal.

Skeletons
Context 1068 (Ditch 2, Cut 1067, Phase 4). Dog skeleton consisting of cranium fragments, maxilla, mandible, scapula, humerii, radii, ulnas, vertebrae, ribs, metacarpals and some phalanges 1-3. However, some small bones are missing due to differential recovery, as the context was not sieved. Fusion and tooth eruption and wear suggests an animal of 8-9 months. No measurements were taken due the absence of epiphyseal fusion in some long bones. Measurements would not provide a clear indication of the size/type of dog as the animal was still growing at the time of death. No evidence of butchery was noticed. Another dog scapula from this phase is not associated.

DISCUSSION

The assemblage is dominated by the major domesticates, with pigs seen in much lower numbers than cattle and sheep/goat. This could be the result of both preservation bias (Stallibas 1985) or due to the fact pigs are more restricted in their scope for exploitation (i.e. no secondary products). Dogs and horses are observed in low numbers due to their different economic status to the other major domesticates (not usually exploited for meat, fat, etc at this time). Wild species and birds are seen as traces only, which suggests little reliance on wild resources. A single element of neonatal pig was seen. Although this demonstrates that young animals were present at the site the exact nature of this presence is unclear.

Interphase comparisons are tentative due to the small numbers present in each phase however some possible fluctuations in the relative proportions of Bos and Ovicaprids can be seen, cattle perhaps becoming more dominant over time. Pigs are consistently low throughout all phases. Wild species and birds are low in all phases. Horses and dogs are also low, but the former are more numerous in Phases 1 and 2. The reason for this is not clear and it may be simply a recovery bias.

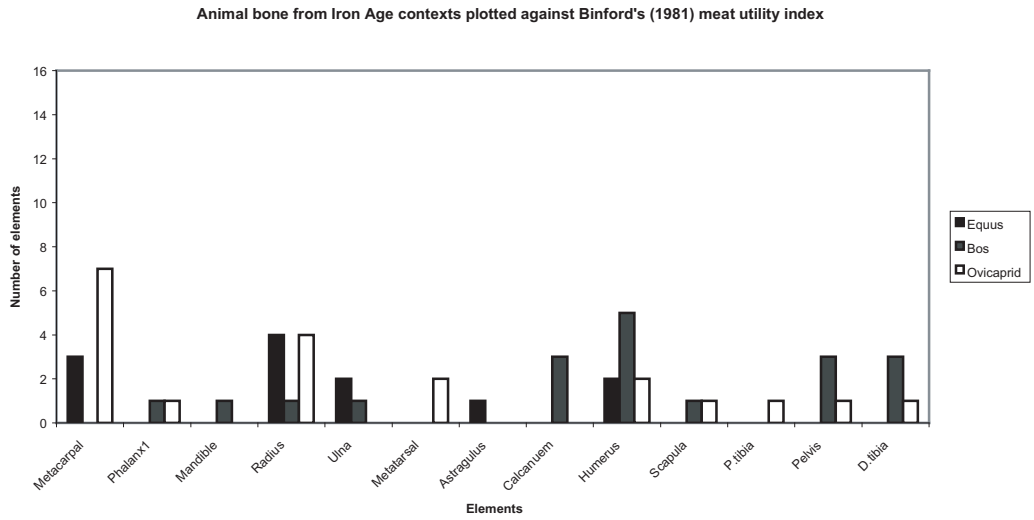
Table 4 Summary of faunal taxonomic distribution by minimum anatomical unit (MinAU)

Taxon	Common name	Ph. 1+2	Ph. 3+4	Ph. 5+6	Ph. 7
Equus	Horse	14 (10.1)	4 (1.9)	7 (5.8)	
Bos	Cow	22 (15.9)	25 (14.3)	35 (30)	5 (71.4)
Ovicaprid	Sheep/goat	26 (18.8)	23 (16.7)	20 (20)	2 (28.6)
Sus	Pig	3 (2.2)	4 (1.9)	1 (0.8)	
Canid	Dog		1 (0.5)	1 (0.8)	
Cervid	Deer		1 (0.5)	2 (1.6)	
Ovic/cap	Sheep/goat/roe		1	1	
L.ungulate	Horse/cow/red	5	14	2	
S.ungulate	Sheep/goat/roe/pig	4	11	3	
Avis	Bird	1			
Indeter.		64	104	46	18
Total		138	188	120	25

Abbreviations Ovic/cap Ovicaprid/Capreolus capreolus

Table 5 Summary of faunal taxa present by minimum number of individuals (MNI)

Taxon	Common name	Ph. 1+2	Ph. 3+4	Ph. 5+6	Ph. 7
Equus	Horse	2	2	2	
Bos	Cattle	3	2	2	2
Ovicaprid	Sheep/goat	4	4	2	1
Sus	Pig	2	2	1	
Canid	Dog		1	1	
Cervid	Deer		1	1	
Avis	Bird	1			
Total		12	12	9	3



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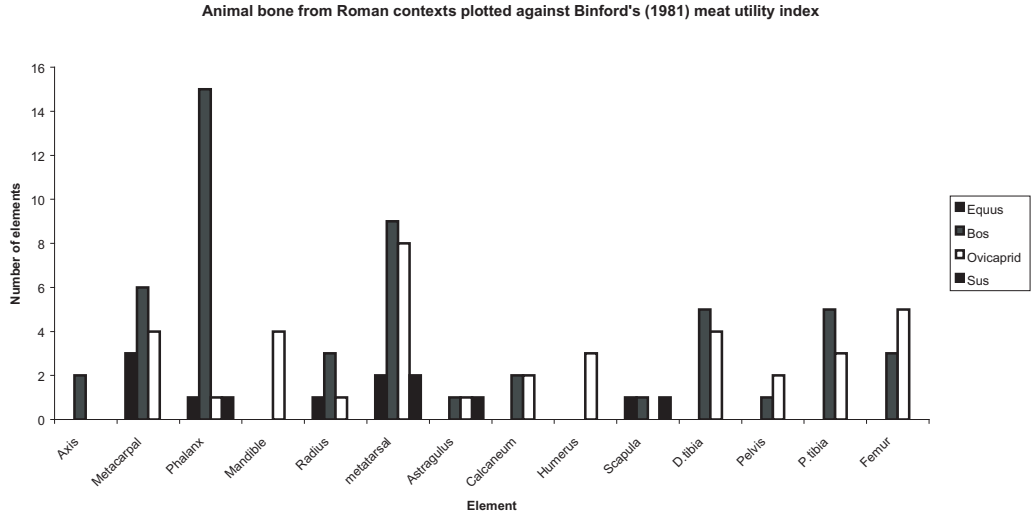

B

Fig 18 Site 3. Animal bone elements plotted against Binford's (1981) meat utility index (utility increases left to right): (a) Iron Age (Phases 1 and 2); (b) Roman (Phases 3-7). There is a suggestion that more butchery waste was deposited in the Roman period.

For most phases ageing of jaws could not be undertaken due to a lack of material. Four Ovicaprid mandibles from Phase 3/4 could not be assigned to an age class.

Due to the low numbers of fragments per phase body part analysis could not be undertaken for individual phases. However body part analysis was attempted with material grouped into the broader categories of Iron Age and Roman (Fig. 18). It would seem that there is a higher proportion of butchery 'waste'

elements (e.g. mandibles, phalanges, and axes), particularly of cattle (*Bos*) in Roman assemblage compared with the Iron Age assemblage, where the bones are more evenly distributed between 'meat' and 'waste' categories of material. This observation is tentative, as fragment numbers are still fairly low. The small size of the assemblage also renders analysis of spatial distribution of little value.

Comparisons with other sites

Detailed inter-site comparisons are of limited applicability due to the small size of the assemblage. Hambleton (1999) suggests an NISP count of 300 or above for comparisons to be valid. However, a typical range of species for Iron Age and the Roman period are seen and the analysis demonstrates that the site fits the pattern for the region and periods represented (Robinson and Wilson 1983). This is illustrated by the presence of the same range of species at local sites such as Great Oakley (Field 1982) and Sywell (Thompson 2001). The low numbers of pig, horse and dog are usual at Iron Age sites (e.g. Great Houghton) and complete or partial dog skeletons are not uncommon.

SITE 4

A small quantity of animal bone (325 g) was recovered, most from Enclosure 1 and a tiny fragment from Enclosure 2. These were rapidly scanned to gain an idea of species present, state of preservation and potential for further analysis. Fragmentation was high. Four bones of cattle (Bos) and one of sheep/goat (Ovicaprid) were identified, but the remainder of the assemblage (*c.* 65%) could not be identified. The small size of the assemblage renders further analysis of little value.

THE CHARRED PLANT REMAINS FROM SITE 3
by Wendy J. Carruthers

METHODS

Thirteen soil samples were taken from the site. Ten litre sub-samples were processed by Northamptonshire Archaeology staff using standard methods of flotation. A 500 micron mesh was used to retain both the flots and residues. The dried floats were assessed by Karen Deighton, and recommendations were made as to which of the samples should be fully analysed (NA 2002). In the light of this assessment, and following consultation with the author, the remaining unprocessed soil from eight of the samples was subjected to flotation. The dried floats and residues (both assessment sub-samples and the remaining material) from these eight samples were sent to the author for full analysis.

The floats were sorted under a dissecting microscope. Sub-samples of the residues were rapidly scanned as a check on the recovery of charred remains. The flotation was found to have been effective in some cases, i.e. very little charred material was observed in the residues, but in others considerable quantities of charred remains were present in the residues. For this reason the residues from Samples 1 and 4 were fully sorted. This problem is discussed below.

RESULTS

Table 6 presents the results of the analysis. Nomenclature and most of the habitat information follows Stace (1997).

NOTES ON THE STATE OF PRESERVATION

Most of the floats contained frequent modern roots and some small molluscs. However, charcoal was fairly scarce and the floats were all small. Much of the grain was fairly poorly preserved, being distorted, collapsed and sometimes glassy in appearance (notably Sample 1). This indicates charring whilst still green or decaying, and high temperature charring, respectively. Sample 4 produced slightly better preserved remains in that they were less fragmented, but again distorted grains were present. The glume bases in most of the samples could not often be identified to species level, since they were usually broken into very small fragments. Some of the tougher glume bases of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) were a little better preserved. Although no emmer (*T. dicoccum*) chaff was positively identified, it is possible that preservation biases have played a part, since the more slender, less- heavily veined glumes of emmer are more easily destroyed by charring and redeposition (Boardman & Jones, 1990). Emmer wheat was widely cultivated in the British Isles during the Iron Age and Roman periods, although it is usually found to be much less frequent than spelt wheat in central and southern England.

DISCUSSION

Recovery Problems

The failure of 50% of the charred material in Sample 1 and 76% in Sample 4 to float is a problem that needs to be addressed in archaeological procedures generally. If the residues had not been checked and sorted, reasonable sized assemblages would still have been recovered from these samples because they were fairly rich. The diversity of weed seeds and range of cereals grown would not have been very different. However, some of the denser remains, such as oat grains, glume bases and spikelet forks, vetch/tare seeds and cleavers nutlets would have been grossly under-represented (see figures in round brackets, Table 6). In Sample 4, only 17% of the chaff fragments had floated, whilst the remaining 83% had sunk into the residue sieve. As a result, the ratio of grain to chaff to weed seeds changes from 2: 4:3 (float only) to 2:7:1 (float plus residue). This may not appear to be a great difference, but it does affect the interpretation of the assemblage to some extent.

Incomplete flotation is a common problem on clay soils which has been acknowledged by some authors (see Jones & Moss, Beesdon Castle, 1993), but is not always taken into account in sampling programs and assessments. Although the author was not involved in the processing of the present samples, in her experience, charred remains from clay soils often appear to be slightly impregnated with fine silt or minerals. When subjected to flotation, they may hover just above the residue, rather than float to the surface, so bucket flotation using a wash-over method is often a more effective method of recovery than machine flotation. The mesh used to retain the residue is also an important factor on clay soils. Fortunately, a 500 micron mesh was used to hold the residue on this site; this is recommended, wherever possible.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Phase 2

Since only one, fairly unproductive sample from Iron Age Ditch 1 (Cut 1358) was examined in detail, very little can be said about the arable economy of this period. Spelt wheat and barley were being consumed. The few grains, chaff fragments and weed seeds recovered probably represent background waste scattered around the site. The few cereal and weed taxa represented were also found in Roman samples, so there is no evidence for major changes in the arable economy, from this sparse assemblage.

Table 6 Charred Plant remains from Site 3

Phase		2	3	5	5	5	6	6
Sample		12	1	4	7	13	8	9
Context		1356	1294	1120	1328	1263	1192	1325
Taxa	Feature	Ditch 1 1358	Ditch 9 1293	Pit 1119	Well 1323	Ditch 6 1262	Ditch 7 1191	Well 1323
Cereals :								
Triticum sp. (NFI wheat grain)			13	5			1	
Triticum dicoccum/spelta (emmer/spelt wheat grain)		1	10(8)	8(4)	2			1
Hordeum sp. (barley grain)			6(1)	(1)		1		
Avena sp. (oat grain)			(7)					
Avena/Bromus sp. (oat/chess grain)			2(5)	1				
Indeterminate cereals			58(147)	13(81)	2	7	1	13
Chaff :								
Triticum spelta L. (spelt glume base)		2	1(1)	10(4)		1		
T. dicoccum / spelta (emmer / spelt glume base)		3	26(18)	45(226)	3	4		26
T. dicoccum / spelta (emmer / spelt spikelet fork)			1(11)	2(55)				
T. dicoccum /spelta (emmer/spelt rachis frag.)			2	1				
Hordeum sp. (barley rachis frag.)		1	(1)					
Avena sp. (oat awn frag.)			++	+				+
Cereal sprout fragments				(7)				
Weeds :								
Ranunculus repens/acris/bulbosus (buttercup achene) DG			4			4		
Ranunculus subg. Batrachium (crowfoot achene) MR						1		
Papaver rhoeas L. (common poppy seed) AD			1					
Urtica urens L. (small nettle achene) CDn			3			6		
Corylus avellana L. (hazelnut shell frag.) HSW				(1)				
Atriplex patula/prostrata (orache seed) CDn			6(2)	3				1
Chenopodiaceae embryo						2		2
Montia fontana ssp. chondrosperma (Fenzl)Walters (blinks seed) dGD		2	11	3	1			2
Stellaria media (L.) Villars (common chickweed seed) CD		1						
Polygonum aviculare L. (knotgrass achene) CD			4(1)	1	1			
Fallopia convolvulus (L.) A.Love (black-bindweed achene) AD			1(1)					
Rumex acetosella L. (sheep's sorrel achene) CEGas			1	1		1		1
Rumex sp. (dock achene) CDG			8(20)	7	2			3
Malva sp. (mallow nutlet) DG					1			
cf. Calluna vulgaris (L.) Hull (cf. heather leaf)						5		
Primulaceae				1				
Aphanes arvensis L. (parsley-piert) Co			3	1				1
Trifolium/Lotus sp. (clover/trefoil seed) DG		2	9(2)	1	2	1		5
Vicia/Lathyrus sp. (small seeded weed vetch/tare) CDG			1(34)	1(2)				1
Lithospermum arvense L. (field gromwell nutlet) ADG			2					1
Plantago major L.(greater plantain seed) CDGo			1					
Odontites verrus/Euphrasia sp. (red bartsia/eyebright seed) CD			67	1	1	2 [45]		21 [7]
Sherardia arvensis L. (field madder nutlet) ADG			2(4)	(1)				1
Galium aparine L. (cleavers) CDG			2(14)		1			
Valerianella dentata (L.)Pollich (narrow-fruited cornsalad) AD				1				1
Lapsana communis L. (nipplewort achene) DHWo			1					
Tripleurospermum inodorum (L.)Schultz-Bip. (scentless mayweed achene) CD		1	19		1			3
Asteraceae cf. Tripleurospermum embryo			13					4
Eleocharis subg. Palustres (spike-rush nutlet) MPd				1		1		
Carex sp. (sedge nutlet) GdMP			(1)					
Bromus sect. Bromus (chess caryopsis) ADG			9(2)	4				
Anisantha cf. sterilis (L.)Nevski (cf. barren brome caryopsis) CDGo			1					
Danthonia decumbens (L.) DC (heath grass caryopsis)			1					
Poaceae Lolium-type (3mm, elongate)				11(1)				4
Poaceae (small seeded grass caryopsis) CDG		1	8(9)		5	1		2
Arrhenatherum elatius var. bulbosum (Willid.)St Amans (onion couch tuber)			(1)					
NFI tuberous frags			2(1)					
NFI Poaceae (grass-sized) culm frags & culm bases			15(24)	1(1)				3
Total charred remains:		14	313(315)	123(384)	22	82	2	103
Sample size:		15	20	10	20	10	20	20
Fragments per litre:		0.9	31.4	50.7	1.1	8.2	0.1	5.2

KEY: all remains are charred and recovered from the flots apart from ( ) = recovered from residue ; [ ] = silicified. Habitat Preferences A = arable; C = cultivated; D = disturbed/waste; E = heath; G = grassland; H = hedgerow; M = marsh/bog; R = rivers/ditches/ponds; S = scrub; W = woods; Y = waysides/hedgerows; a = acidic soils; c = calcareous soils; n = nutrient-rich soils; o = open ground; d = damp soils

Phase 3

The more productive early Roman sample from Ditch 9 Cut 1293 (Sample 1), contained a wide range of cereals, chaff and weed seeds in the ratio of 4 : 1 : 4. Emmer/spelt wheat appears to have been the predominant grain consumed, with positive evidence for the cultivation of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) due to the preservation of two spelt glume bases. Emmer was probably also grown, but this identification was not confirmed because most of the remains were too poorly preserved. Smaller amounts of barley (*Hordeum* sp. – probably hulled 6-row barley but poorly preserved) and a few oats (*Avena* sp.) were recovered. There is some evidence for the use of oats during the Roman period, particularly from military sites. It is not possible to say whether, in this case, oats were being cultivated or were growing as a weed, as floret bases were not preserved.

The recovery of several fine Poaceae culm (grass stem) fragments, culm bases and a few tubers suggests that burnt hay or turf may have been present in this deposit. Some of the weed taxa, such as buttercup (*Ranunculus repens/bulbosus/acris*) and greater plantain (*Plantago major*) may have been growing as grassland weeds rather than crop weeds, though they can be found in either habitat. The large number of dock achenes and vetch/tare seeds could also be from the same source. Most docks are perennials and are particularly characteristic of disturbed, nutrient-enriched habitats. The presence of a single heath grass (*Danthonia decumbens*) caryopsis suggests that hay may have been brought in from more acidic land, although it could also have arrived in animal dung.

The remaining weed taxa are common weeds of disturbed and cultivated soils, including the typical Iron Age / Roman taxa field madder (*Sherardia arvensis*) and blinks (*Montia fontana* ssp. *chondrosperma*). Blinks and sedges (*Carex* sp.) are characteristic of soils that are at least seasonally wet. Results from the mollusc analysis indicate that such conditions would have existed in some of the field ditches (Robinson, this report), although most of the mollusc taxa suggest open, dry habitats.

Phases 5 & 6

Four samples dating to the late 1st to early 2nd century from 'well' 1323 and Ditches 7 (Cut 1191) and 6 (Cut 1262) were not very productive (densities of charred remains ranging from 0.1 to 8.2 fragments per litre). Cereal grains, chaff fragments and weed species were present in three of the four samples, but the low concentrations suggested that this represented general background burnt waste. The fourth sample only contained a couple of cereal grains. The well sample produced no waterlogged plant remains, although evidence from the molluscs suggested that stagnant water had once existed in the bottom of the well (Robinson, this report). The deposits must have dried out at some point in their history, causing the loss of organic material.

Sample 4 from Pit 1119 produced the highest concentration of remains out of the seven samples examined, at 50.7 fragments per litre. As noted above, the ratio of cereal grains to chaff fragments and weed seeds was 2 : 7 : 1, suggesting that at least some crop processing waste had been deposited. The type of waste that is rich in glume bases and spikelet forks but poor in weed seeds is the waste from de-husking processed spikelets – perhaps spikelets that had been stored. The presence of a few detached cereal sprouts suggests that some of the grain may have been discarded because it had spoilt during storage. There is insufficient evidence to support the sprouting of grain to produce malt. Therefore, the burnt remains in Pit 1119 probably consisted of mixed waste from de-husking spikelets and spoilt grain. As with all of the samples examined from this site, spelt wheat appears to have been the dominant crop and barley was present in low numbers. There was just a trace of evidence for oats in the form of a few oat awn fragments and a possible oat/chess grain.

The range of weed seeds was very similar to the early Roman sample, Sample 1. Spike-rush (*Eleocharis* subg. *Palustres*), mallow (*Malva* sp.) and narrow-fruited cornsalad (*Valerianella dentata*) were the only additions to the species list, but these were recovered in small numbers. Spike-rush is another plant of wet places that may have been growing in the ditches. Mallow is rarely found in pre-Roman deposits, although it was present in middle Bronze Age waterholes at Perryoaks (Carruthers, forthcoming) and in Iron Age samples at Farmoor (Robinson, 1979). Its leaves can be cooked like spinach and its seeds can be eaten (Mabey, 1972).

Three of the early and later Roman samples produced large numbers *of Odontites vernus/Euphrasia* sp. seeds. The small seeds of these taxa cannot be differentiated, but the most likely species is red bartsia (*Odontites vernus*). Unfortunately, this is a wide ranging weed of grassy places, arable land and waste ground (Stace, 1997), so the presence of large numbers of both charred and silicified seeds adds little to the interpretation. Perhaps the plant was growing close to where the waste was being burnt.

The final record of note is the tentative identification of a few heather (cf. *Calluna vulgaris*) leaves from Ditch 6 (Cut 1262). Because the leaves were poorly preserved the identifications could not be confirmed. They may indicate that heathland vegetation was being brought onto the site for bedding, thatching or fuel. The nearest area of heathland shown on 19th-century maps lies 4-5 km to the south-east around Newton Bromswold (A Mudd, pers. comm.). Heather is a useful fuel for industrial purposes, as it burns at a high temperature.

COMPARISONS WITH OTHER SITES IN THE VICINITY

Both the limited Iron Age assemblage and the Roman assemblages were very similar to Iron Age assemblages from Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers (Moffett, pers. comm.) and the Huntingdon to Willington Gas Pipeline sites, Bedfordshire (Carruthers, forthcoming). These sites follow the typical pattern of Iron Age and Roman sites in central and southern England, with spelt wheat being the predominant cereal, with the addition of a little hulled barley (Greig, 1991). The range of weed taxa is also very similar, including a few wet ground taxa such as blinks, spike-rush and sedges, with a range of annual cultivated/disturbed ground weeds such as chess (*Bromus* sect. *Bromus*), scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*) and cleavers (*Galium aparine*).

In conclusion, these results have added to the overall understanding of the agricultural economy of the area, suggesting that the Iron Age and Roman occupation was very similar to other settlements of the period. The findings also raise some important points regarding the processing and assessment of samples from sites on clay soils.

CHARRED PLANT REMAINS FROM SITE 4
by Karen Deighton

Three soil samples of 20 litres each were collected from the lower fills of Enclosure Ditch 1 and processed using a 'siraf' tank fitted with a 500 micron mesh and float sieve. The floats were assessed.

One sample was entirely sterile and the other two yielded only occasional charcoal fragments. There was no potential for further analysis.

MOLLUSCS
by Mark Robinson

Eleven samples from Site 3 were floated onto a 0.5 mm mesh and the residue sieved to 0.5 mm, primarily to recover charred plant remains. However, snail shells were noticed in some of the floats. The entire floats of Samples 1, 9 and 12 were scanned for the presence of snail shells and an estimate of their abundance listed in Table 7. Sample 6 had a much higher concentration. Sub-samples of the float and residue equivalent to 1 litre of the unprocessed sample were sorted and the results quantified in Table 7.

Shells were very sparse in Sample 12 from late Iron Age Ditch 1 (Cut 1358) and in Sample 1 from early Roman Ditch 9 (Cut 1293). However, the presence of *Vallonia excentrica* and *Pupilla muscorum* suggested open, relatively dry, conditions. The concentration of shells was rather higher in Sample 9 from Roman well 1323. The occurrence of *Lymnaea truncatula* and *Anisus leucostoma* was possibly a reflection of stagnant water in the well bottom, while the shells of *Vallonia* sp. were probably from dry ground around the top of the well.

The great majority of shells from Sample 6 from Roman Ditch 11 (Cut 1038) were of *Anisus leucostoma*. This suggested that the ditch, at least seasonally, held standing water in the bottom. The aquatic bivalve mollusc *Pisidium* sp. was also present. However, the occurrence of three individuals of *Vertigo angustior* is of interest. This snail, which occurs in open marshy habitats is now extremely rare in Britain and no longer occurs in Northamptonshire (Kerney 1999, 101). It would not be anticipated as living on a settlement site. However, it was formerly widespread in its distribution, for example being found in a Roman ditch on a settlement at Wyndyke Furlong, Abingdon, Oxon (Robinson 1999, 56). Presumably there is some subtle ecological requirement of this snail which is no longer to be found in modern moist habitats. The presence of *Carychium* sp. was probably due to areas of tall herbaceous vegetation in the ditch. The remaining snails, such as *Vallonia costata*, were probably from dry open habitats presented by the upper part of the ditch sides and the surrounding ground surface.

RADIOCARBON DATING

Radiocarbon dating was carried out on three samples of bone, two from Site 3 and one from Site 4. They were all 'enhanced precision' AMS dates using the weighted mean of three determinations on the same sample. The dating was undertaken by the Rafter Radiocarbon Laboratory in New Zealand. Calibrations use the INTCAL programme. The results are summarised in Table 8.

SITE 3

Sample NZA 16591, Context 1053 (Ring Gully 1, Cut 1054)
The sample was a horse radius (148 g). The context was of the earliest stratigraphically determined phase (the earlier cut of the Ring Gully), and yielded a few unfeatured sherds of Iron Age pottery. The individual determinations are consistent and there is no reason to doubt the validity of the date. The calibrated range at the 95% confidence level runs from the 4th to 2nd centuries BC. The 68% confidence range indicates either 353-291 BC or 228-197 BC, with the latter being the more likely given the other dating from the site.

Sample NZA 15952, Context 1033 (Ditch 5, Cut 1032)
The sample was a horse metacarpal (65 g). The ditch lay in a later phase in the Iron Age sequence, the context yielding a reasonably large assemblage of middle Iron Age pottery. The

Table 7 Molluscs from Site 3

Phase	2	3	5-6	6
Feature	Ditch 1 Cut 1358	Ditch 9 Cut 1293	Well 1323	Ditch 11 Cut 1038
Context	1356	1294	1325	1064
Sample	12	1	9	6
Sample Volume (litres)	15	20	20	1
Carychium sp.	-	-	-	8
Lymnaea truncatula	-	-	+	4
Anisus leucostoma	-	-	++	274
Cochlicopa sp.	-	-	-	2
Vertigo pygmaeum	+	-	-	1
V. angustior	-	-	-	3
Pupilla muscorum	-	+	-	-
Vallonia costata	-	-	-	5
V. excentrica	+	+	++	2
Vallonia sp.	+	-	+++	-
Punctum pygmaeum	-	-	-	1
Aegopinella nitidula	-	-	-	1
Trichia hispida gp.	-	+	+	2
Cepaea sp.	-	-	-	1
Pisidium sp.	-	-	-	2
Total				306

Key + 1-5, ++ 6-10, +++ 11-20

Table 8 Radiocarbon dates

Laboratory Number	Context Number	Context Type	Material	Radiocarbon Age (BP)	$d^{13}C$ per thousand	Calibrated date range {68% confidence 95% confidence
Site 3						
NZA 16591	1053	single fill of Ring-Gully 1, early phase cut 1054	horse radius	2205+/-39	-22.3	
				2209+/-46		
				2159+/-41		
				2190+/-24*		{353-291 BC plus {228-197 BC 363-172 BC
NZA 16592	1033	single fill of Ditch 5, Cut 1032	horse metacarpal	1891+/-46	-23.1	
				1850+/-39		
				1789+/-40		
				1840+/-35*		{AD 129-233 AD 81-251
Site 4						
NZA 16593	13	lower fill of Cut 11, Enclosure Ditch 1	cattle/ horse pelvis	2113+/-43	-21.1	
				2097+/-47		
				2135+/-50		
				2114+/-27*		{180-95 BC 200-50 BC

* weighted mean

calibrated date from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD is too late to be accepted as valid, but it is not entirely clear where the error lies. The individual determinations have a fairly wide spread but are not greatly inconsistent. It seems probable that the sample came from an intrusive feature in the ditch here. It can be noted that the earlier Ditch 4 yielded a few intrusive Roman sherds from Cut 1213 in this area (Timby, this report).

SITE 4

Sample NZA 16593, Context 13 (Enclosure 1, Cut 11)
The sample consisted of two pelvic fragments from a large ungulate (probably cattle), weighing 33 g. This was one of the very few suitable samples available from this site due to the general poverty of the remains. The date range in the 1st-2nd centuries BC is consistent with the limited pottery and illustrates that the enclosure would have been contemporary with Site 3 in one of the latter's phases.

DISCUSSION

The archaeological investigations at Site 3 examined part of an Iron Age and Roman agricultural settlement within the land-take of the new A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers bypass, and at Site 4 parts of two Iron Age enclosures were examined. The extent of the latter site remains unknown, but the wider view provided by the geophysical surveys at Site 3 shows this settlement to have continued for over 150 m to the south-west and at least 100 m to the north-east, forming a linear development with enclosures and fields to either side (Fig. 2). Settlements of this nature and extent have been recognised on the river gravels and Ironstone and Limestone ridges of the county (both through aerial survey and investigations ahead of mineral extraction) – for example Ecton/Sywell (Atkins et al. 2000-1; RCHME 1979, 47-50), but that some Boulder Clay areas were similarly densely occupied has only become apparent more recently (Kidd 1999).

Site 3 is dated from the middle Iron Age, through until the 2nd century AD. The earliest phase is dated to the 2nd or 3rd century BC by radiocarbon. Although there is the possibility of a hiatus in occupation between the middle and latest Iron Age on ceramic grounds (Timby, this report), the

site phasing suggests a direct continuity, and the suggested discontinuity would seem to relate to the difficulties of the ceramic chronology in this period. This continuity is apparent both from the way in which the later features were conditioned by the presence of the earlier ones, and the way the settlement has been shown to have 'drifted' from north-east to south-west. This suggests that the Roman period settlement was not coincidentally related to the Iron Age one, but developed from it, despite the fact that the overall form and layout of the settlement is not known for any phase. It is worth pointing out that the linearity of the Roman settlement appears to have been conditioned by the orientation of the Iron Age boundary ditches, and it appears likely that the settlement developed along an existing Iron Age land division.

In the Iron Age the settlement was characterised by ring gullies which were not enclosed overall by an encircling ditch. The occupation was therefore relatively invisible on the geophysical survey. It is probable that a focus of occupation lay to the north-east (there are certainly traces of curving gullies in this area) but this does not preclude the possibility that some of the enclosures to the south-west are also Iron Age and formed part of a more scattered open or agglomerated settlement. In any case the form of settlement contrasts with Site 4 where the paucity of cultural material associated with Enclosure 1 suggests that the feature was a stock corral, or perhaps a domestic enclosure that was intermittently occupied. The longevity of this, or the adjacent enclosure (Enclosure 2), is not known, but the radiocarbon date indicates that they would have been at least partly coeval with Site 3, and it is possible to speculate that these enclosures were specialised components of the Site 3 settlement. In the present state of knowledge it is unclear whether apparently empty and archaeologically inconspicuous enclosures such as those at Site 4 were common elements of the middle Iron Age landscape.

The nature of the settlement at Site 3 in the 1st century is also enigmatic. No evidence for structures was identified and the most likely interpretation sees an arrangement of small 'backyard' agricultural plots. That said, the intensity of activity in the 1st and 2nd centuries, together with the amount of pottery deposited, much of which was in quite fresh condition, suggests that the site here cannot be termed peripheral to settlement in any sense. It is possible that forms of construction were used which left very little trace, and there is certainly evidence for this in some parts of southern England in the 1st century, but it is generally found that middle Iron Age forms of construction continued well into the Roman period on rural sites in this part of the country (Taylor 2001). The stone-founded roundhouses at the Stanwick villa 'estate' are a nearby example (Neal 1989).

A number of the gullies in the southern part of the site have the potential to have been beam-slots for rectangular timber-framed buildings (particularly Gully 1193 with its sharp rectangularity) but no convincing building plan can be made of any of these features. The quantity of finds also perhaps argues that these gullies were open to receive debris. There is furthermore no evidence for any Roman-style buildings; no brick, tile or plaster was recovered. The fragment of marble veneer from Gully 1112 appears anomalous and may be intrusive. The gullies can therefore perhaps be seen as plots for domestic and agricultural tasks. The presence of probable crop-processing waste from Pit 1119 (Sample 4) hints at activities carried out, but there is no other evidence for what these might have been.

The character of most of the finds was mundane, but the increase in the deposition of pottery in the 1st century is remarkable. A relatively high proportion came from deposits of semi-complete vessels (eg. Ditch 6, Cut 1262; Ditch 1122). The large average size of sherds from other contexts is also surprising, given the nature of the features, which comprised mainly ditches and gullies as opposed to pits. This is illustrated by a comparison with the animal bone assemblage which was highly fragmented, perhaps an indication that it had derived from surface middens. From this perspective the pottery appears to have included a significant component which was not normal 'rubbish', but appears to have been deposited either as dumps of waste or in some circumstance of ritual. As no entire vessels were recovered the argument for ritual deposition is perhaps weak, but the association of a finger-ring (Fig. 17.1) with the group of pottery in Gully 1122 (Fig. 13.8-10) be significant.

At face value the site was part of a non-villa agricultural settlement which saw particularly rapid changes over a relatively short time span in the 1st and 2nd centuries. The nature of the settlement is difficult to characterise from the available evidence.

Certainly the majority of the pottery was locally made, and despite a wider range of vessel forms used compared with the preceding Iron Age, there were few finewares. The very small quantity of South and Central Gaulish Samian was not accompanied by other continental imports, or even apparently, regional ones. The absence of the exotic painted wares from the local kilns at Rushden is noteworthy, and suggests access to these was restricted. There were no vessels such as amphorae or mortaria which related to specifically Roman eating habits, and the presence of just two oyster shells (from Phase 5) can be noted.

From the limited available evidence, the site therefore appears not to be associated with any of the specifically Roman developments in the area, which in settlement terms included the town at Irchester, the roadside settlement at Kings Meadow Lane on the north-west side of Higham Ferrers (Hardy 2003), and the villa estate at Stanwick. The burst of activity in the 1st century has no obvious connection either with military supply networks, or any social and economic stimuli introduced with the Roman occupation. This is significant since it has been claimed that middle Iron Age settlements tended to fail by the 1st century due to their inability to intensify production or meet the demands of markets and Roman taxation (Fulford 1992, 32-6). In this location one might have expected the local workforce to have moved to a local centre or estate. However, contrary to this model, Site 3 seems to be an example of a 'native' farming settlement which successfully adapted to the new conditions of the Roman period, although through what means remains unclear.

The site lies on the fringe of a zone which is exceptionally rich in remains of both the Iron Age and Roman periods. The town at Irchester (about 5 km to the south-west) and the villa estate at Stanwick (about 4 km to the north-east) have been mentioned. Other major sites in the area include the Iron Age hillfort at Crow Hill (re-used in the Roman period), the villa at Redlands Farm, the Iron Age and Roman settlements at Kings Meadow Lane, and the kilns and associated settlement near Knuston Hall west of Rushden (Woods & Hastings 1984). There is no doubt that this was a core area of settlement in both Iron Age and Roman times. Consideration of what all this means is beyond the scope of this report and a presentation of the evidence from Stanwick and the Raunds Area Survey in forthcoming publications is awaited (Crosby and Neal, forthcoming; Parry, in press). At a basic level, however, Figure 1 shows the distribution of Iron Age and Roman sites within a radius of about 3 km taken from the Sites and Monuments Record, and demonstrates the density of occupation which has become apparent in the area. The plot includes the site of a possible bath-house near the castle in Higham Ferrers. Although the antiquarian record is acknowledged to be unsatisfactory (RCHM 1975, 55), this is an intriguing suggestion of a site of somewhat different status very close by.

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