

# A Roman farmstead and Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Glaphorn Road, Oundle

by

ANTHONY MAULL AND PETER MASTERS

with contributions by

Trevor Anderson, Paul Blinkhorn, Wendy Carruthers,  
Karen Deighton, Brenda Dickenson, Rowena Gale, Tora Hylton, Dennis Jackson,  
Donald Mackreth, Ian Meadows and Jane Timby

## SUMMARY

*Excavation in advance of new houses on land to the rear of the George Inn, Glaphorn Road, Oundle examined Iron Age and Roman settlement and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. A few dispersed pits are dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. A roundhouse ring ditch marks the origin of a late Iron Age/early Roman settlement of the mid-first century AD. By the early second century a system of ditched enclosures had been created. In the early third century there was an expansion of settlement, including the provision of a trackway, with modification of the system continuing through the fourth century. In the earlier phases the domestic focus may have lain in an adjacent area to the west, probably surrounded by a timber palisade at one stage, but this focus only became clearly evident in the late-third century when a walled rectilinear enclosure was created. This indicates that the settlement was flourishing and wealthy, perhaps then comprising a small stone villa, but the principal house lay beyond the excavated area. The domestic compound opened to the east into two ditched enclosures, which in the fourth century contained a T-shaped corn drier and other ovens/hearths, as an area involved in farming the attached estate. A small Anglo-Saxon cemetery, containing ten inhumation burials, occupied part of a former Roman enclosure. Radiocarbon dating and the artefact assemblages date the cemetery to between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh centuries AD. Furrows of the medieval ridge and furrow field system, and a series of recent land drains, ran across the site.*

## INTRODUCTION

The excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 1999 in advance of housing development on 0.8ha of land to the rear of the George Inn, Glaphorn Road, Oundle, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR TL 033 890). A watching brief was conducted during the spring of 2001 to the immediate east and south of the main excavation (Fig 2). The work was carried out on behalf of and was fully funded by Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd and special thanks are extended to Mr Evans of Persimmon Homes.

The first stage of site investigation had comprised a fieldwalking and metal detecting survey, undertaken during November 1996, which identified a concentration of first to fourth century AD Roman pottery, building material and metal objects (NA 1996).

The next phase of work comprised geophysical survey and trial trenching, carried out in September and October 1998 (Masters 1998). The geophysical survey covered an area of 1.8ha encompassing the principal artefact concentration recorded during 1996, and revealed traces of a complex enclosure system arranged either side of an east-west aligned trackway. The subsequent trial trenches, located to intersect both anomalies and apparent blank areas, confirmed the results of the geophysical survey.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavation was carried out under the direction of Anthony Maull with Peter Masters as site supervisor.

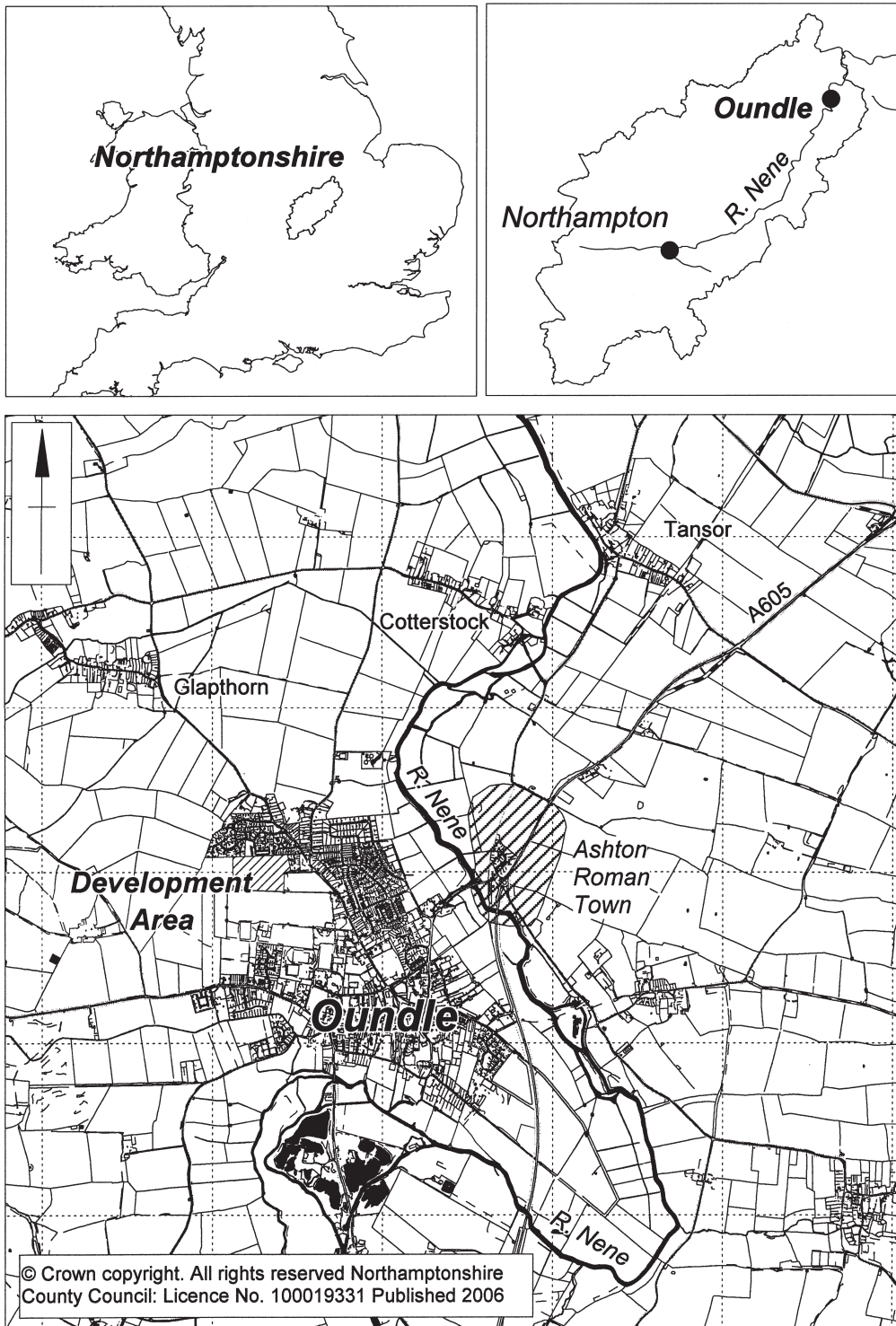


Fig 1 Site location

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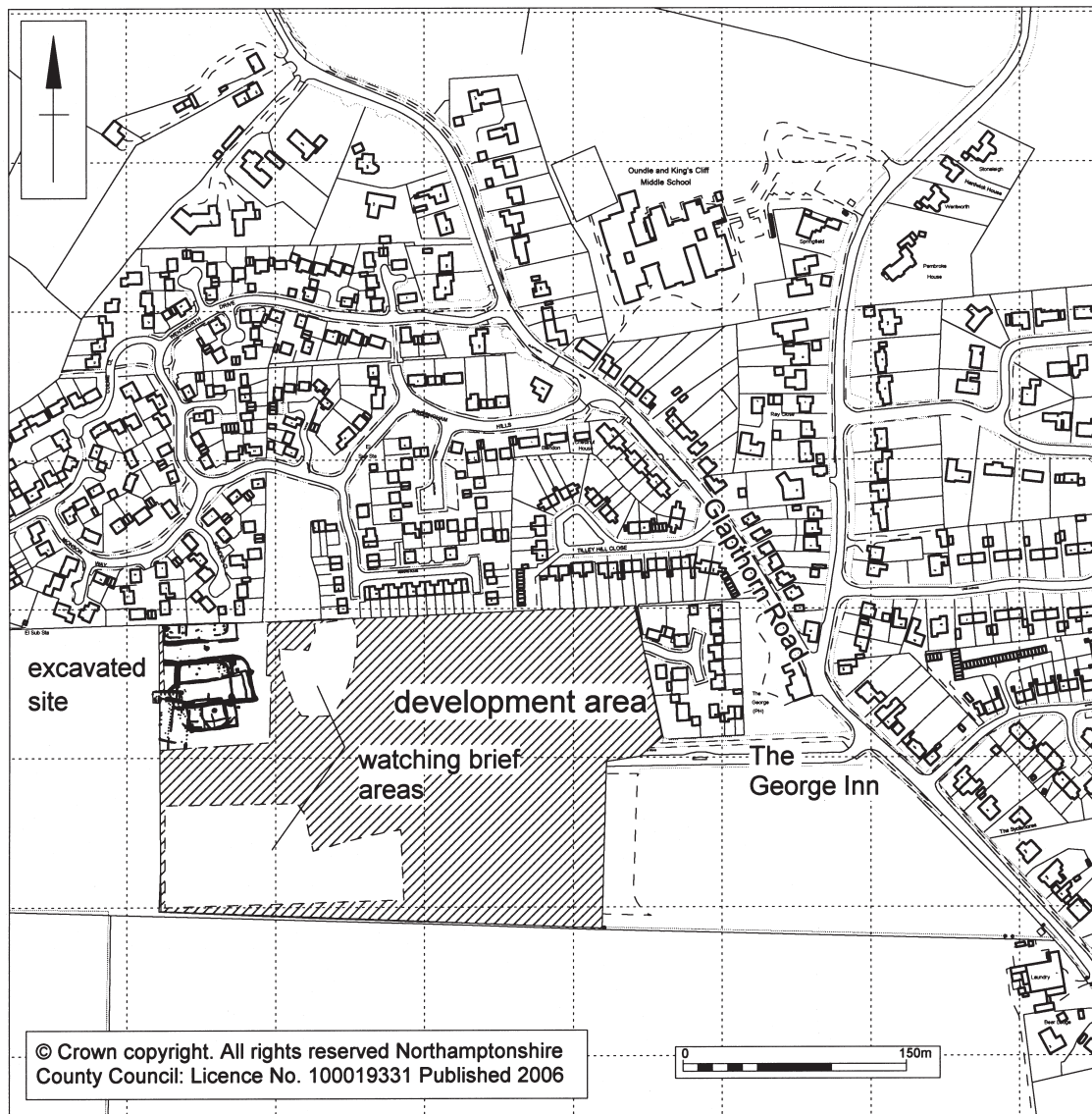


Fig 2 Excavation and watching brief areas

Mark Holmes and Peter Masters observed the site stripping. The excavation team comprised Alistair Clarke, Sophie Edwards, Steve Hayward, Erlend Hindmarch, Pat Kent, Steve Morris, Isabel Parker, Denis Taylor, Alex Thorne, Steve Thorpe and David Salt. Helpful advice was given by Glenn Foard, former County Archaeological Officer, Sandy Kidd, former Archaeological Planning Officer at Northamptonshire Heritage (now the NCC Historic Environment Team)

and Dr Helen Keeley, who advised on environmental matters. Steve Critchley, who undertook a detailed metal detecting survey during all stages of fieldwork, also provided invaluable help. Illustrations are by Jacqueline Harding, Hari Anne Jacklin, Alex Thorne and Mark Roughley, with the final compilation by Andy Chapman.

The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery has been studied by Dennis Jackson, the Roman pottery

by Jane Timby, with Brenda Dickenson commenting on the Samian, and the Saxon pottery by Paul Blinkhorn. The archaeobotanical remains were analysed by Wendy Carruthers, the waterlogged wood by Rowena Gale, the animal bone by Karen Deighton, and human bone by the late Trevor Anderson. Ian Meadows, Tora Hylton and Donald Mackreth studied the other finds. The first draft of the assessment report was compiled by Peter Masters and this was edited and completed by Anthony Maull, who also produced the full excavation report, with assistance from Charlotte Walker (nee Stevens). This has been considerably condensed and edited for publication by Pat Chapman, and Andy Chapman has carried out the final editing. The client report, which contains the full specialist reports and a wider range of finds illustrations, is available in the Sites and Monuments Record.

#### LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site is on the northern fringes of the town of Oundle, to the west of the junction of roads leading to the nearby villages of Glapthorn and Cotterstock (Figs 1 and 2). It is situated on a broad plateau within a generally flat field, at *c* 51m above Ordnance Datum, with the River Nene approximately 1km to the east and south, with Oundle sitting on a peninsula within a loop of the river. At the time of excavation, the field was under arable production with housing to the north and east, school playing fields to the south and further arable fields to the west.

The underlying geology comprises Kellaway Clays, Cornbrash and Great Oolite Clay (British Geological Survey 1974). The excavation exposed a natural substrate of stiff yellow brown clay with small flint pebble inclusions, while the watching brief zones also included areas with high limestone content, probably part of a natural outcrop of Cornbrash. The underlying blue/grey Oxford Clay was observed in the bases of deeper archaeological features, which indicates that the mapped Kellaway Sand deposits lie at some depth below the Oxford Clay.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is within an area of Archaeological Priority designated by Northamptonshire County Council (Foard 1979). Although there were no known archaeological sites within the development area, two sites of national importance are in the

immediate vicinity: Ashton Roman town, 1.4km to the east, and Oundle Saxon settlement, 1.2km to the south-east (Fig 1).

A search of the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) located a variety of other sites within the general vicinity of Glapthorn, but only sites and finds with direct significance for the excavated site are considered here. A number of Bronze Age round barrows and other sites lie close to Glapthorn Road, as well as other sites in the parishes of Fotheringhay, Tansor and Warmington to the north-east, and at Ashton Roman town. These include a Neolithic to Bronze Age funerary monument on the A605 east of Tansor (Chapman 1997) and flat Beaker burials at Warmington (Parry pers comm.) and within Ashton Roman town (Dix pers comm.)

Iron Age settlement has been found within Oundle, as well as a possible funerary site at Ashton. Other settlements were at Pilton and Thorpe Achurch to the south and a settlement and field system in Warmington to the north. However, the nearest site of immediate relevance to Glapthorn Road is the early Iron Age ringwork at Thrapston some nine miles to the south, which contained comparable pottery types to that from the early pits at Oundle (Hull 2000-01).

At Ashton, excavation during the early to mid 1980s revealed a sequence of Roman deposits dating from the middle of the first century AD to the fourth century AD, principally mid to late second century AD stone buildings aligned either side of a metalled street, developed over an earlier system of land division (Frere *et al* 1983). Occupation continued until the end of the fourth century, although by then at least one of the stone buildings had been dismantled and the stone re-used elsewhere within the town. Other features included hearths containing hammerscale from smithing workshops and a large fourth century inhumation cemetery.

A Roman road linked the small town of Ashton with the small towns of Water Newton, Cambridgeshire, to the north, and Irchester, to the south. A large number of settlements are mainly clustered around the river or the road, as at Warmington and Glapthorn. There are a number of villas or farmsteads, including Barnwell and Cotterstock. An aisled building with associated settlement and a funerary site has been recorded at Fotheringay. Within Oundle itself, settlement and a possible temple have been discovered to the south-east of the Glapthorn Road site.

Anglo-Saxon activity is less well known in the

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area, and is limited to Oundle parish, in particular the Blackpot Lane settlement and metal working site within the historic core of the town.

### METHODOLOGY

The overburden was removed using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. Archaeological features were then cleaned by hand, excavated and recorded. A consistent level of feature sampling was undertaken, with all discrete features sectioned, and fully excavated when they formed part of recognisable structures or contained significant

artefact or environmental assemblages.

The feature fills were generally similar in composition, comprising light to mid grey brown clay silts with occasional small flint gravel, charcoal fragments and limestone inclusions. Where marked differences to the above occurred in the composition of the deposits will be described in more detail.

### SUMMARY OF SITE CHRONOLOGY

There was a dense palimpsest of cut features, which were dominated by the ditch systems of a succession of Roman enclosures occupying the central part of the excavated area (Fig 3). The broad outline of



Fig 3 General site plan

the organisation of this central area was readily evident, comprising two abutting sub-rectangular enclosures, one larger than the other. However, with the clay natural and the consequent clay fills of the cut features, resolving the sequences of ditch cutting at the multiple intersections was far from straight forward. For the earlier phases of the Roman enclosures there are some uncertainties of sequence and interpretation, particularly with respect to the phasing and function of the numerous shorter minor ditches, many of which may have been short-lived drainage channels, rather than formal boundaries.

Some further information is provided by the geophysical survey, which extended a little to the west and south of the excavated area (Fig 3).

Table 1: Site chronology

Period	Character
Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (9th-7th centuries BC)	Sparse pits and postholes
Late Iron Age/early Roman settlement (1st century AD)	Two roundhouse ring ditches, and other partial arcs
Roman settlement (early 2nd to late 2nd/early 3rd century AD)	Settlement enclosures, postholes and pit groups
Settlement development (early 3rd to late 3rd century AD)	Settlement enclosures and trackway
A late Roman villa? (late 3rd to 4th century AD)	Ditched enclosures with walled domestic area
Anglo-Saxon cemetery (6th to 7th century AD)	Inhumation cemetery
Medieval	Furrows of field system

#### LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE

Two pits, 282 and 543, produced 35 sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery (Fig 4 and see Fig 8, 543). The pits were sub-circular to oval in plan with U-shaped profiles, measuring 1.65m to 2.60m long by 0.60m to 0.72m deep. The primary fills were mottled yellow brown clay, similar to the surrounding natural, and pit 282 contained a deposit of charcoal. The secondary fills comprised light to mid grey silt clays with occasional to moderate charcoal flecks. A number of scattered postholes that also produced a few sherds of similar pottery were probably also contemporary. The presence of further sherds as residual finds in features of Roman date

indicates that further contemporary pits or postholes had been disturbed.

#### THE LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY by Dennis Jackson

A total of 98 sherds (307g) of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery was recovered from the pits and postholes, and as residual finds from features of Roman date. The pottery was very weathered but the size and nature of voids in the sherds suggest that fine shell was the dominant inclusion. Some soft limestone grits survived and grog occurred in around 10% of the sherds.

Sherds from a carinated bowl were recovered from pit 282, and other thin-walled sherds may have come from similar vessels. There were only five rim sherds in the assemblage and no rim to shoulder profiles survived. Most of the sherds were originally smooth faced with colours ranging from red-brown to buff on the external surface, and commonly black or dark grey in the core and the internal surface. No decoration has survived.

The only recognisable forms are thin-walled carinated bowls and these occur principally between the ninth and fourth centuries BC. However, the thin walls, the colour and general appearance of the assemblage suggests that it dates to the earlier part of this period. The sherds have much in common with material from an excavated circular ditched enclosure at Thrapston, some nine miles to the south of Oundle, which has associated radiocarbon dates spanning the ninth to seventh centuries BC (Hull 2000-01).

#### LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN SETTLEMENT (FIRST CENTURY AD)

Evidence for this period is slight when compared with the later phases. A curvilinear ditch in the south-western area, RH1, formed a near complete roundhouse ring ditch, 11m in diameter with a broad 6.5m wide entrance causeway to the east (Fig 4 and see Fig 8). The ditch and recut on the southern side measured up to 1.75m wide by 0.90m deep, while the smaller ditch on the north was 0.35m to 1.10m wide by 0.10m to 0.20m deep.

An arc of ditch to the north-east, c 8m long by 0.35m wide by 0.06m deep, cut away by later enclosure ditches (Fig 4, RH2), appears to have been a second similar roundhouse ring ditch. Short arcs of gully to the immediate south of RH1 and between RH1 and RH2 suggest the former presence of other smaller roundhouses, and another complete ring ditch, with an internal diameter of c 8.5m, was recorded by geophysical survey to the west of the excavated area.

The dating evidence for this group comprised 104 sherds of late Iron Age pottery dated to the first century AD. The occupation probably continued into the early Roman period, as indicated by the presence of coarseware jars comprising a mixture of shelly, limestone-tempered, grog-tempered and reduced sandy ware, and one sherd of a South Gaulish samian cup (Drag, type 27).

The two probable roundhouses lay in an area that in the fourth century was the main domestic enclosure, and this may suggest that the Roman domestic core was established in direct respect for the pre-existing late Iron Age domestic complex. A curvilinear ditch system, Enclosure 1, might have been contemporary with the roundhouses, lying to the east of RH1, but was certainly retained until the end of the first century, and is described below (Fig 4, Enclosure 1 and Fig 5).

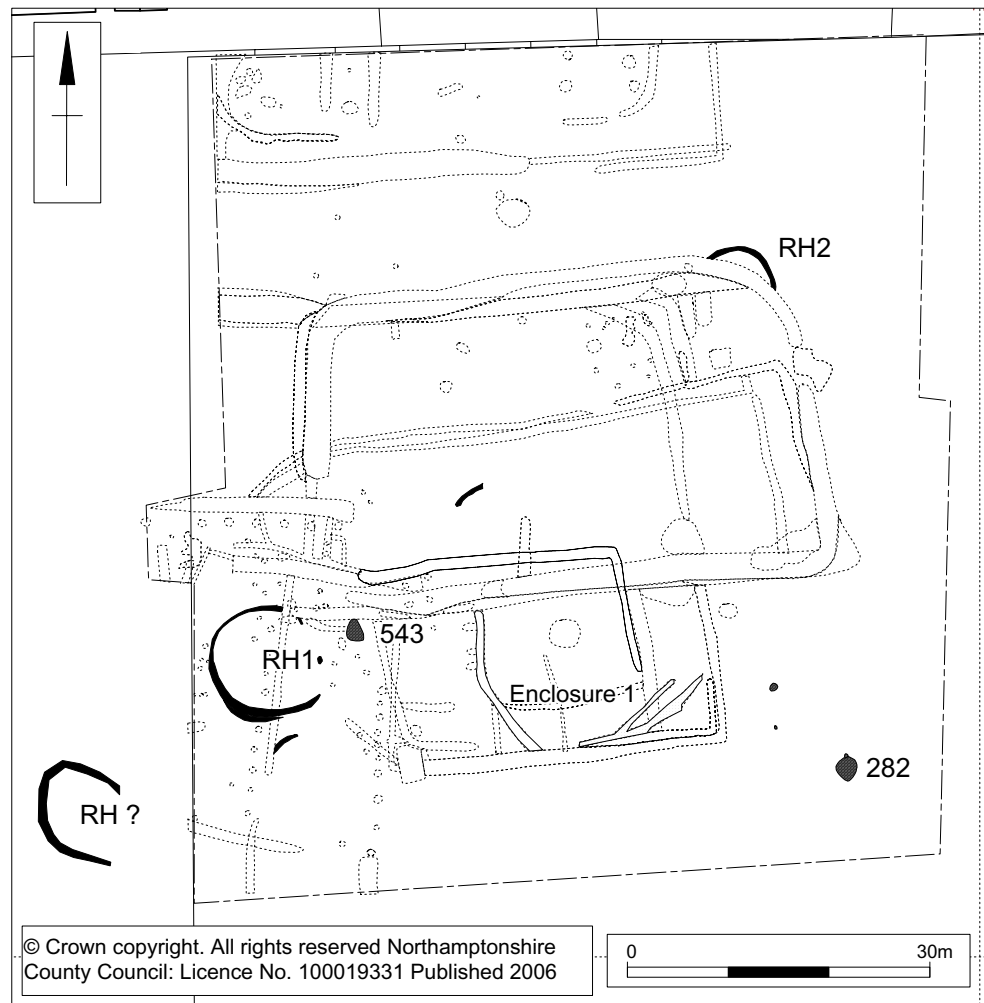


Fig 4 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits, and late Iron Age settlement

ROMAN SETTLEMENT ENCLOSURES  
(EARLY SECOND TO LATE SECOND/EARLY THIRD  
CENTURIES AD)

In the second century AD a system of small ditched enclosures was created. There was much recutting, modification and sub-division and this, together with disturbance from the later enclosure systems, makes it impossible to fully resolve all the individual enclosure forms.

Two curvilinear ditch systems may have formed the southern side of an oval or sub-circular enclosure, measuring up to 21m east-west, although no trace of a northern boundary survived (Fig 5, Enclosure 1). To the east the earlier ditch was up to 0.4m wide and 0.05m deep, while a later recut, lying slightly to the south, was 0.5m wide by 0.20m to 0.32m deep, with a steeper profile.

This curvilinear ditch system might be suspected of having an origin in the first century AD, perhaps even being contemporary with the roundhouses (Fig 4), but the ditches contained later pottery, indicating that the enclosure was only finally backfilled into the second century, presumably immediately before the creation of a new enclosure system.

The curvilinear enclosure was directly replaced by a rectilinear ditch system forming a rectangular enclosure measuring 25m east-west by 20m north-west (Fig 5, Enclosure 2). A series of modifications or sub-divisions lay within the southern part of the enclosure, which also extended a further 7m to the east, where there may have been an entrance. The enclosure ditches and the sub-divisions were between 0.60m to 0.78m wide and 0.20m to 0.28m deep, with U-shaped profiles. Finds included pottery, with a large quantity from the northern end of the

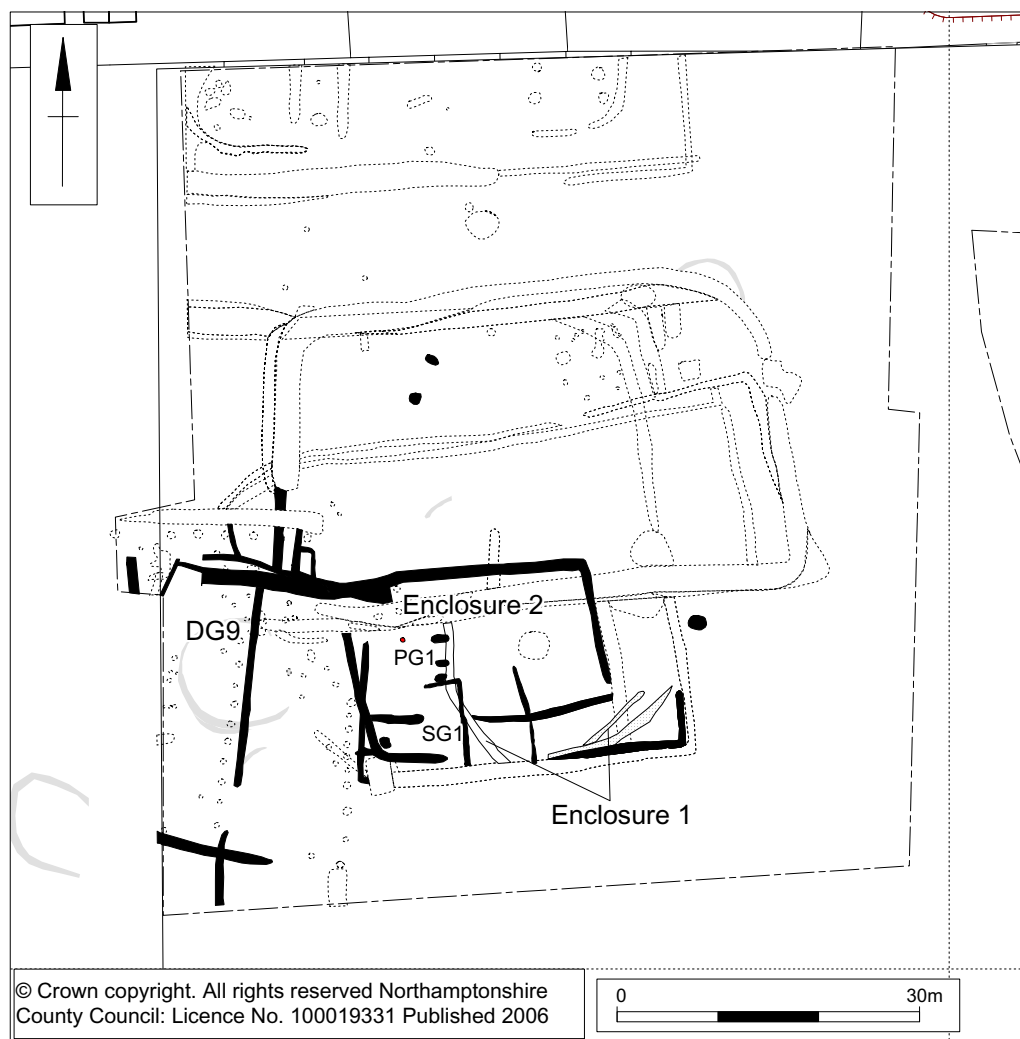


Fig 5 Roman settlement enclosures (2nd century AD)

western arm, bone and occasional fragments of ceramic building material.

An L-shaped linear slot (SG1), 0.50m wide by 0.25m deep, with limestone fragments up to 0.25m long in the fills, lay at the centre of the enclosure, and may denote the presence of a timber building 8.5m long by at least 4.0m wide. To the immediate north there was a line of three similar sized sub-rectangular to oval pits (PG1), all elongated east to west and around 1.0 to 1.1m long by 0.45m to 0.72m wide and 0.12m to 0.34m deep.

To the west there was a north-south ditch (DG 9), including a possible entrance, and a complex of east-west ditches at the northern end were coincident with the northern arm of Enclosure 2. These ditches may have formed the eastern side of a further enclosure, perhaps marking the origin of the western domestic

enclosure that was later to be defined by a walled boundary, and in an area previously occupied by at least two roundhouses. Adjacent to the western limit of excavation there was a cluster of postholes, which may have been the eastern end of a timber building at least 5m wide. This building could have belonged with this or any later phase of occupation in this area.

The enclosure ditches were between 0.4m to 0.9m wide by 0.15m to 0.30m deep. The secondary and upper fills comprised darker soils, and finds included pottery, bone and occasional fragments of ceramic building material. The ditches of DG9 produced the largest collection of wares for this period, some 698 sherds, and the material from this phase in general included several samian sherds, both South and Central Gaulish including a complete Central Gaulish bowl from Lezoux (Drag.37) from Enclosure 2 (Fig 10.1)



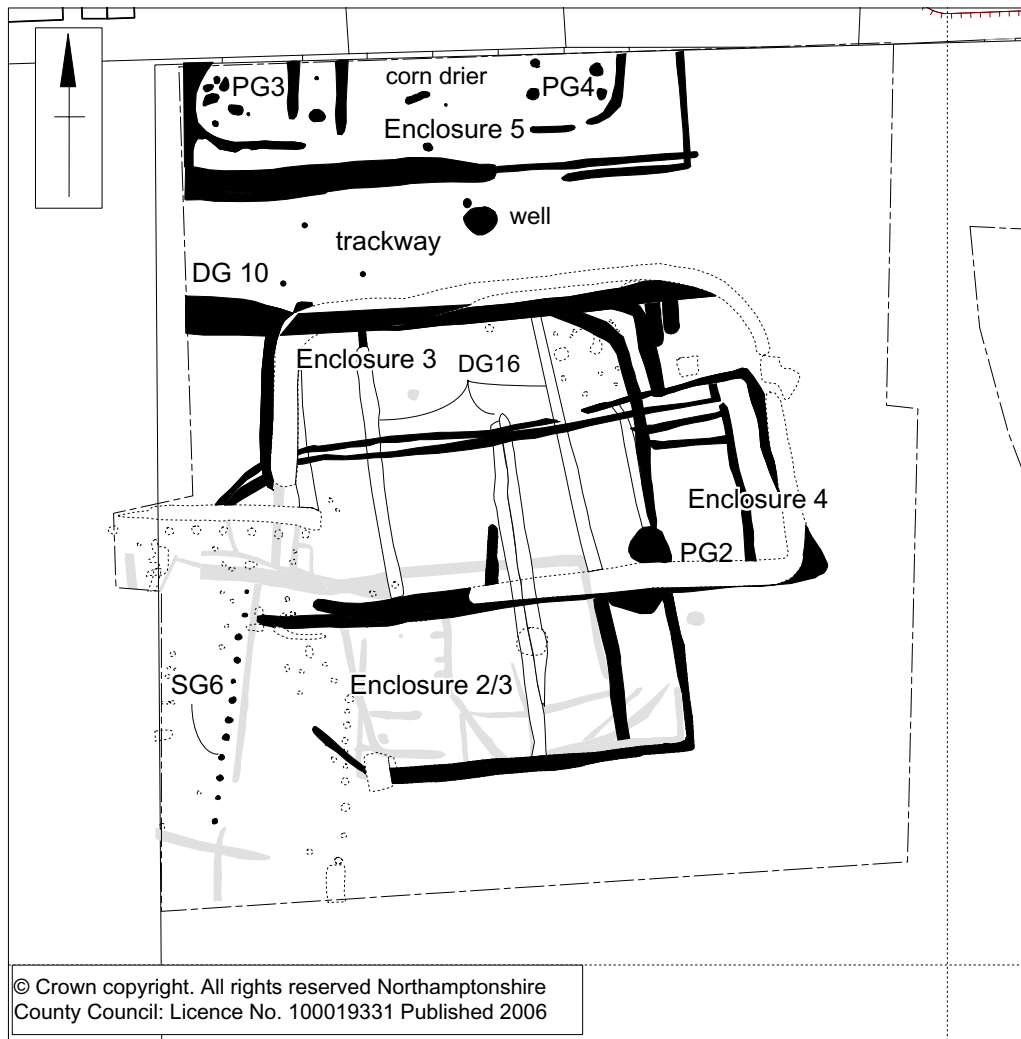


Fig 6 Roman settlement enclosures (3rd century AD)

and fine black decorated ware. One of the South Gaulish sherds shows a rivet repair. Nene Valley products are well represented with colour-coats, grey wares, white wares and mortaria with substantial parts of single vessels present. The colour-coated wares are mainly from beakers, one of the earlier products of this industry. The pottery evidence would suggest that all the boundaries had fallen out of use in the later second or early third century.

#### SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT (EARLY TO LATE THIRD CENTURY AD)

During the third century a more extensive system of boundaries and enclosures was introduced and later modified, and to the north there was an east-west trackway (Fig 6).

The existing small southern enclosure was clearly retained, but with the southern and eastern ditches fully recut. Rather than a separate enclosure, it probably formed the southern end of a larger rectangular enclosure (Fig 6, Enclosure 3), measuring 45m north-south by 38m east-west, and running to the southern margin of the trackway to the north. The enclosure ditches were 0.55m to 1.6m wide and 0.15m to 0.53m deep, with broad V-shaped profiles.

The southern half of the western side of the enclosure was open, again suggesting the presence of an adjacent domestic area to the west. The ditch systems bounding this area in the previous phase (Fig 5, DG9) were probably retained, as it appears to be respected by some of the new boundary ditches. Another possibility is that the eastern side of the domestic enclosure

was also enclosed with a timber palisade, lying 1.0m to the west of the ditch (Fig 6, SG6 & Fig 8). The individual posts were in substantial stone-packed post-pits, up to 0.50m in diameter and 0.36m deep, set 2.0-2.5m apart. The phasing of the post-pits relative to the ditch is unknown, so it is not clear whether one replaced the other or whether the palisade and ditch were contemporary in origin and use. There was no contemporary line of post-pits along the northern boundary of the domestic area, but it is possible that they may have been lost when the later walled boundary was introduced.

Within the new enlarged central enclosure, there was a series of four north-south ditches at intervals of only 5m, with a broader, 10m wide, space at the centre of the enclosure (Fig 6, DG16, depicted in outline only). These were of comparable dimensions to the enclosure boundaries. Four of these ditches ran across all or most of the length of the enclosure, and one stopped 9m short of the northern boundary. Their function is unclear, as they would have sub-divided the interior into several long but narrow compartments, although these may have had a use as control blocks for stock similar to that expected within a crew yard. A similar system of parallel ditches sub-dividing an enclosure was noted at a contemporary Roman settlement at Earls Barton, Northamptonshire, where the partitioned enclosure was similarly adjacent to a domestic focus (Chapman & Atkins 2004, fig 7).

A cluster of four intercutting pits (PG2) partly cut across the eastern enclosure ditch. They were sub-rectangular to oval shape in plan and 2.4m to 4.2m long by 0.28m to 0.85m deep, with shallow to gradual-steep sided profiles and concave to flat bases. They may have been small quarry pits cut into an exposure of cornbrash limestone. They also quickly filled with water once excavated, as the cornbrash served as an aquifer between the impermeable layers of clay. Whether this was the case during the Roman period is unknown but, if so, they may have functioned as water pits.

Enclosure 3 was later replaced by a new enclosure that was elongated east to west (Fig 6, Enclosure 4). The new enclosure measured 54m east-west by 16m north-south, and to the west there was an 11m wide opening flanked by curving ditches, which provided access to the domestic enclosure. The northern and southern arms were later recut, and there was more complex recutting at the eastern end. The part of Enclosure 3 to the south was retained, so that it again formed a small sub-rectangular enclosure, as it had in the previous phase (Fig 5, Enclosure 2).

To the north the ditch system bounding the trackway was retained, and was also recut in this phase to a narrower and steeper V-shaped profile, up to 2.0m wide by 1.56m deep towards the west (DG10). The trackway was 10m wide, and probably served as a driveway. Within this area there was a large sub-circular pit, 2.8-3.1m in diameter by 0.7m deep, with gradual to steep sides and a concave to flat base. This may have been a well or at least a water hole, perhaps for livestock, with its irregular profile caused by trampling. There were also a few other pits within the trackway, measuring 0.5-1.1m in diameter by 0.10-0.35m deep.

On the northern side of the trackway there was a linear boundary ditch (DG11), with a single phase narrow ditch to the east, while to the west a recut length was 4.1m wide by 1.24m deep. Curvilinear and linear ditches to the north formed a northern enclosure (Fig 6, Enclosure 5), which was at least 42m long.

Within the enclosure there was a western group of pits (PG3), which were sub-rectangular to oval in plan and up to 1.55m long

by 0.75m to 1.0m wide by 0.06m to 0.23m deep. To the east there was a roughly rectilinear arrangement of four large sub-circular pits (PG4), 1.00m to 1.32m in diameter by 0.72m to 0.96m deep, which contained limestone blocks that may have been post-packing. These may therefore have been post-pits forming the southern end of a timber building some 7.0m wide. At the centre of the enclosure there was an elongated stone-surface, 2.70m long by 0.75m wide, associated with dark soils and a quantity of burnt grain and charcoal, which suggest that it may have been part of a heavily truncated corn drier, perhaps originally T-shaped but with the elongated flue lost.

The pottery recovered from this phase, a total of 1859 sherds, constituted the bulk of the material from the site, and indicates the extent of the expansion of the settlement as this time. The presence of primary deposits comprising large pottery sherds were a marked feature of deposits from Enclosures 3 and 4 to the south, and from pit group PG4 to the north. There is a marked presence of South and Central Gaulish samian, 34 sherds in total, although this forms only 2% of this third century assemblage. Sherds of Dressel 20 olive oil amphorae appear for the first time. Other imports include a small amount of Verulamium white ware and two sherds of Dorset black burnished ware from Enclosure 3. Other finewares include a single sherd of British glazed ware from Enclosure 4, ten sherds of fine black ware and two sherds of mica-slipped ware.

There is a much higher incidence of Lower Nene Valley Colour-coat wares, nearly 15% by sherd count compared to 2% in the previous phase. Colour-coated forms include beakers, some with barbotine decoration or applied scales, straight-sided dishes, flat rim bowls, jars, grooved rim bowls, boxes, flagons and flanged rim and flanged wall bowls. The latter two forms, probably dating to the second part of the third century came from Enclosures 3 and 5 only.

Within the coarsewares, shelly ware is very marked as is Lower Nene Valley grey ware, each accounting for 23.5% and 27.5% respectively of this assemblage. Although jars still dominate, a number of bowls/dishes, tankards, beakers, lids, flasks, jug and mortaria are present. One Lower Nene Valley grey ware base had been deliberately holed and one jar rim bears an incised batch or other identifying mark (Fig 10, 27).

#### A LATE ROMAN VILLA (LATE THIRD TO FOURTH CENTURIES AD)

It was only in the final phase of development that the settlement resolved into a relatively simple plan form, with larger and smaller ditched enclosures lying to the east of a domestic enclosure now surrounded by a stone wall (Fig 7). This elaboration suggests continuing, if not increasing, prosperity and it seems likely that a fully stone-built domestic range, a small villa, probably appeared at this time, lying within the unexcavated area to the west. The presence of small quantities of box flue tile would suggest that at least one room was heated.

The previous complex central enclosure sequence was replaced by a single large sub-rectangular enclosure, measuring 47m east-west by 28m north-south, with the ditched boundaries respecting parts of the early boundary systems (Fig 7, Enclosure 6). The enclosure ditch was 1.55-2.55m wide and 0.44m to 0.94m deep, with both U- and V-shaped profiles, and was shallower towards the terminals. Towards the northern end of the eastern arm there was a 3.5m wide entrance causeway, with a limestone surface

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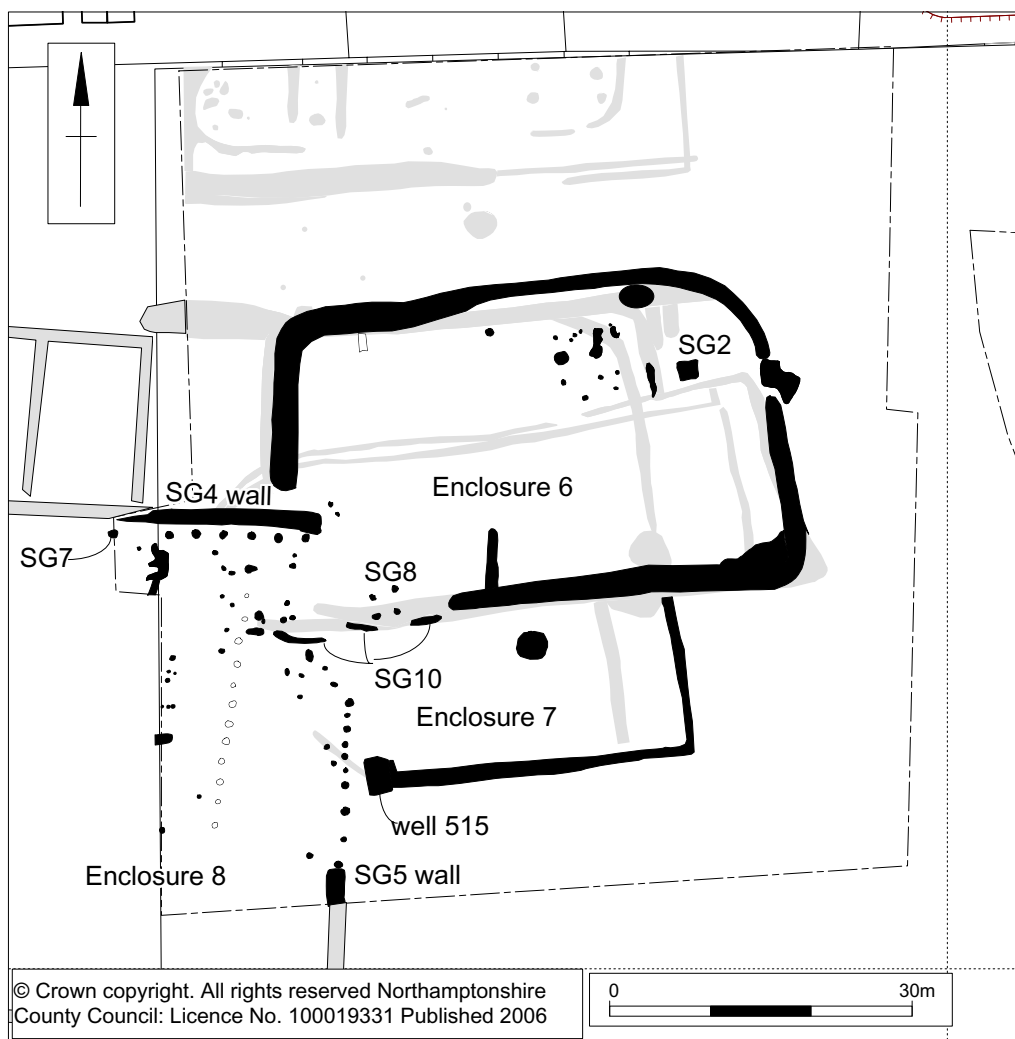


Fig 7 Roman settlement enclosures and walled domestic compound (4th century AD)

filling the eroded hollow between the ditch terminals. Finds from the enclosure ditch fills included substantial quantities of pottery, animal bone, occasional ceramic building material and oyster shell. Ten of the 31 coins from the site were recovered from the enclosure ditch, with a date range running from the mid-third century to barbarous radiates of the mid-fourth century.

In the north-eastern corner of the enclosure concentrations of limestone survived in the upper fills of the earlier ditches, indicating the presence of patchy surfacing across the area associated with the use of several specific features. A scatter of ten postholes within a rough rectangular area, measuring 7m north-south by 5.7m east-west, may denote the presence of a timber building. A sub-circular pit lay on the western margin of this area, 1.35m in diameter by 0.43m deep, with two stakeholes

in the base of the pit and a fill of dark grey-brown silt clay. To the east there was a square hearth base, measuring 1.8m by 1.96m, comprising a surround of large irregular limestone slabs around a central deposit of brown-black silty clay containing up to 40% charcoal, which would appear to have had some industrial function (SG2).

To the south, the original enclosure was again reinstated, with the provision of an L-shaped ditch, enclosing an area measuring 32m east-west by 16m north-south (Fig 7, Enclosure 7). The ditches were 0.7-1.0m wide by up to 0.5m deep and had gradual to very steep sides and concave to flat bases. Towards the centre of the enclosure, there was a large sub-circular pit, 2.8m in diameter by 0.65m deep, with shallow sides and an irregular base, which may have served as a watering hole. It contained a

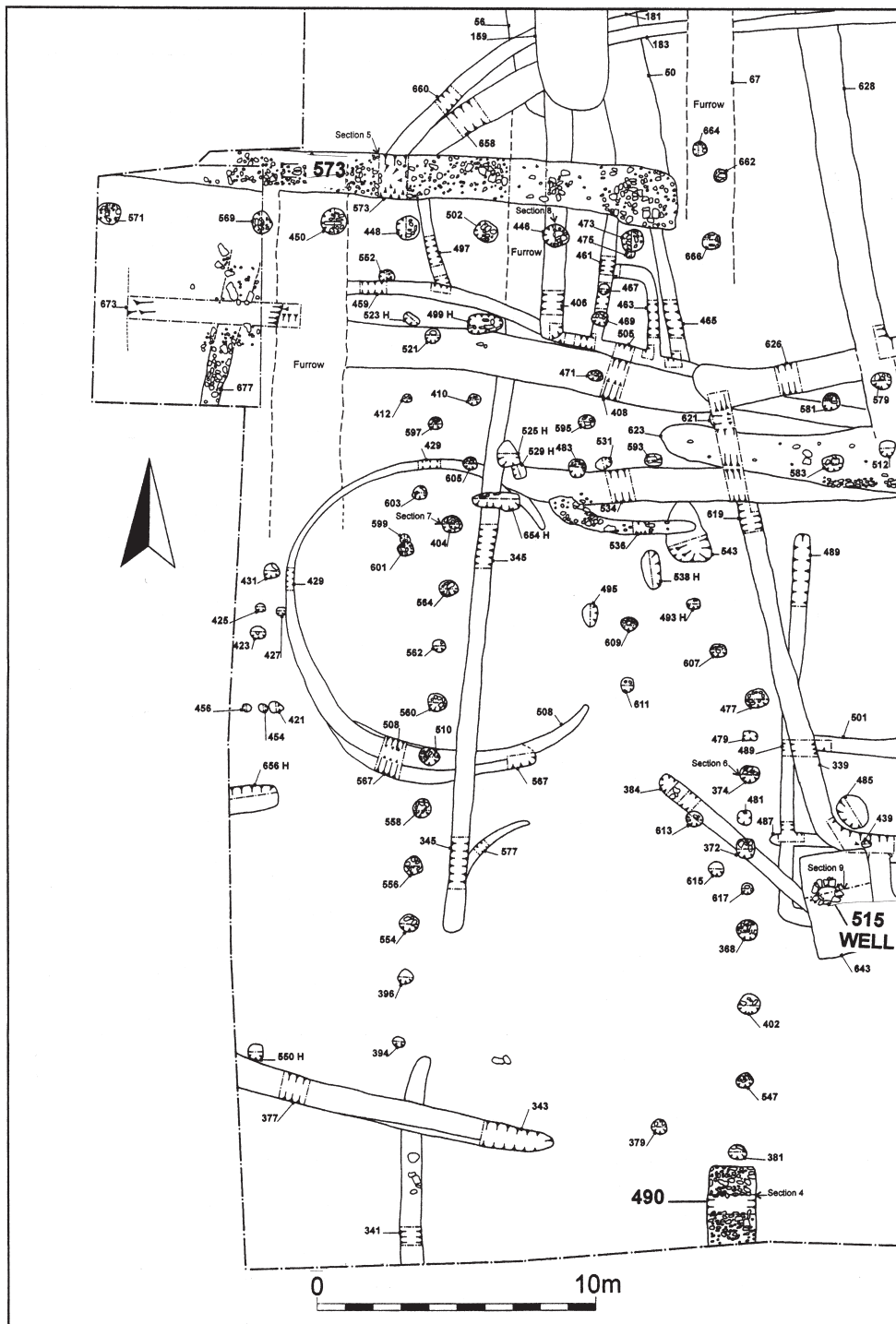


Fig 8 The area of the walled compound, all phases

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fill of dark grey clay silt with occasional medium sized limestone fragments.

The south-west corner of the larger enclosure was open, as was the western end of the smaller enclosure, where both abutted a new rectilinear walled enclosure or compound (Fig 7, Enclosure 8 & Fig 8). Part of the southern side of this enclosure was located by geophysical survey, indicating that it was of a regular rectangular plan, measuring 50m north-south and something in excess of 25m east-west. If square in plan, it would have occupied a quarter of a hectare, with well over a half of the interior lying beyond the excavated area. The new eastern boundary lay 10m to the east of the ditch and the timber palisade of the earlier domestic enclosure, indicating that it was enlarged at this time, perhaps to accommodate new building ranges.

A long length of the foundations for the northern wall was exposed, along with the terminal of the partial eastern wall (Fig 7, SG4 & SG5). The construction trenches for these walls were 1.35-1.90m wide and 0.38-0.60m deep, with U-shaped profiles. The eastern wall was the best preserved, with up to three courses of tightly packed pitched limestone set within a stiff yellow clay matrix, with two of the courses comprising blocks measuring up to 0.35m by 0.20m by 0.15m (Fig 8, 490). These two courses were separated by a thin intermediate course of smaller limestone fragments measuring between 0.15m by 0.10m by 0.07m. Along the northern wall substantial robbing had taken place, leaving a backfilled deposit of dark grey brown silt clay interspersed with limestone fragments and much dumped pottery (Fig 8, 573). Both wall lengths had abrupt, squared terminals, and at least on the northern wall there was a broader foundation for the final 2.0m, suggesting the provision of a strengthening buttress.

A line of post-pits at intervals of 2.5m lay 1.2m south of the northern wall (Fig 7, SG7 & Fig 8). They were circular, 0.5-0.9m in diameter by up to 0.25m deep. The disposition of the stone packing indicates that they could have held timber posts up to 300mm in diameter. It is unclear whether these represent an earlier phase of the northern boundary, or were contemporary with the wall as an architectural feature, although they are too close to the wall to have formed a colonnaded walkway.

A line of seven post-pits, at an even spacing of 2.6m, ran northward from the partial eastern wall (Fig 7, SG5 & Fig 8). Between the three northernmost pairs there were smaller, intermediate postholes. The main post-pits were smaller than those adjacent to the northern wall, at 0.5-0.7m in diameter by up to 0.36m deep, and the stone packing indicates that they could have held timber posts measuring 200-300mm in diameter. It is again unclear whether these are part of an original palisade, later partly replaced by a wall, or a timber palisade extending northward from the wall terminal to partly block the western end of the smaller enclosure (7).

To the north of this post line there were three irregular lengths of shallow gully aligned roughly west-east, continuing the line of the southern arm of Enclosure 6 (Fig 7, SG10 & Fig 8). Limestone fragments, some pitched, were set within the dark grey silty clay fills, perhaps indicating that they formed foundation trenches for a further, but less substantial length of boundary wall. To the immediate north there was a sub-square setting of circular postholes, 0.45-0.75m in diameter by up to 0.38m deep and containing packing stones (Fig 7, SG8), which suggest the provision of a timber gateway forming a southern access between the two enclosures.

Any buildings within the domestic compound must have lain further to the west. Adjacent to the western limit of excavation

there was a cluster of postholes, which may have been the eastern end of a timber building at least 5m wide, although this building could have belonged with an earlier phase of occupation.

In the north-eastern part of the domestic enclosure there were numerous smaller features, many of which can be dated to this final phase of occupation. There was a scatter of small irregular pits, many of which contained deposits of burnt soils and limestone, presumably dumped hearth debris, although in some instances the excavators suggested the fills may have derived from *in situ* burning. Finds from these pits included pottery, animal bone, charred grain and iron nails (Fig 8, feature numbers with an H affix).

A stone-lined well lay at the western terminal of the southern arm of Enclosure 7 (Figs 7 & 8, well 515). The construction pit was rectangular, 3.7m long by 2.3m wide at the top, narrowing to 3.1m long by 1.5m wide at the base, which was 4.3m deep (Fig 9). The well shaft was 0.55m in diameter at the top and 0.80m in diameter at the base, and was built of large roughly squared blocks of limestone. The fills of the shaft comprised deposits of dark blue-grey clay silt containing waterlogged organic wood (645). The majority was roundwood, with tool marks observed on a number of the pieces, and there were remnants of a wattle lining. The single manufactured object was a length of square-sectioned oak with dowel rods at closely spaced intervals (see Other Finds), which may have come from a water lifting mechanism. Other finds included three Nene Valley Ware vessels, comprising a flagon (Fig 11, 43), a jar (41), and the lower half of a second jar, together with the substantial part of a shelly jar and a flanged bowl, both with signs of sooting. It is suggested that these may have formed some form of deliberate closure deposit, although as they were quite widely scattered in the fills they had evidently been dropped into the partially filled well, during whilst it was being deliberately infilled.

The waterlogged soils produced a wide range of plant remains including waterlogged cereal chaff, weeds of cultivated and disturbed places, flax seeds, imported spices and grassland taxa (see The Waterlogged Plant Remains).

This latest phase of Roman activity produced 2529 pottery sherds, weighing 39.8kg. The range of fabrics is very similar to the preceding phases with slight changes in emphasis. Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware is 24.5% by sherd count of the assemblage, and there are a greater number of flanged bowls and jars. Imported sherds of samian and amphorae clearly represent redeposited or curated material. Other imports include two Verulamium mortaria, two sherds of Dorset black burnished ware and one sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware. As before the coarsewares are dominated by Lower Nene Valley grey ware and shelly ware, accounting for 35.5% and 16% by sherd count respectively. Generally speaking the ditch groups show a higher level of fragmentation compared with earlier phases.

### THE ROMAN POTTERY

by Jane Timby, with Brenda Dickenson

An assemblage of 6749 sherds from the first to fourth century AD, weighing 102.4kg, came from 230 contexts in 196 features. The condition of the assemblage was variable with some exceptionally well-preserved material, but also a number of very fragmentary groups containing smaller, more abraded sherds. A number of vessel profiles were able to be reconstructed. The overall average sherd size is quite good, c15g, suggesting a

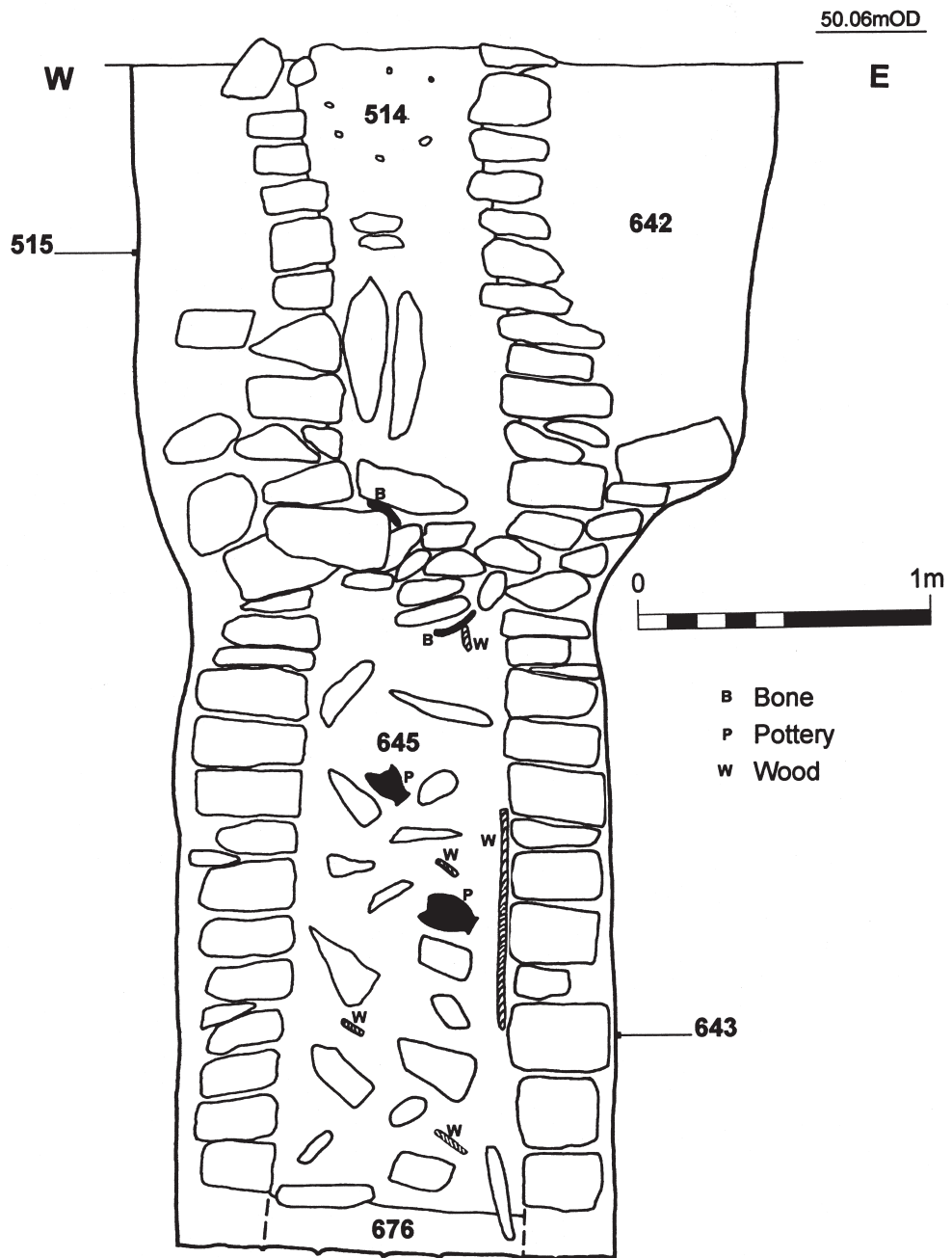


Fig 9 Section of the Roman well (515)

## A ROMAN FARMSTEAD AND ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT GLAPTHORN ROAD, OUNDLE

generally well-preserved assemblage. Surface preservation was generally good although some of the softer colour-coated wares had lost their surfaces. Full fabric lists are in the archive report.

### DESCRIPTION OF FABRICS AND ASSOCIATED FORMS

The products of the Nene Valley industries dominate the group from the early-mid second century onwards. The fabrics are overwhelming dominated by three main wares, local shell-gritted ware (SHELL), Lower Nene Valley grey ware (LNV RE) coarseware and colour-coated ware (LNV CC) fineware.

### CONTINENTAL IMPORTS

There are 130 sherds of Gaulish samian. One vessel is an unusual variant of a Drag. 46. There are at least three stamped pieces, and one vessel had been repaired using lead rivets. There are 25 sherds of South Gaulish ware with potentially some pre-Flavian sherds (Dragendorff (Drag.) forms 15/17, 18, 24/25, 27 and 29). Most of the remaining sherds appear to be Central Gaulish.

### NOTES ON SELECTED SAMIAN SHERDS

by Brenda Dickenson

Form 18 sherd, South Gaulish, stamped [SV]LPICI: Sulpicius of La Graufesenque, Die 8c. Like many of Sulpicius's stamps, this one occurs at Domitianic foundations (Wilderspool and the Saalburg). The die was used on form 37 moulds in styles suggesting Flavian-Tranjanic manufacture c 80-110 AD.

Form 30, South Gaulish, in the standard style of Germanus I of La Graufesenque. The ovolo and bifid wreath below it occur on his stamped bowls, the ovolo on one from Nijmegen (Mees 1995, Taf. 69, 3) and the motif in the wreath on one form Colchester (ibid 4) c 70-85 AD. Form 30 or 37 rim sherd from DG9, South Gaulish. The flat rim with barbotine decoration was a variant of the form used at Les Martres-de-Veyre, where this cup was made, Tranjanic or early-Hadrianic.

### Samian bowl (Fig 10.1)

Form 37, complete decorated central Gaulish Drag. 37 bowl bearing the mould maker's name QUINTILIANIM retr below the decoration: Quintilianus I of Lezoux, Die 1b (Stanfield & Simpson 1958, pl.169). The decoration comprises a series of 8 panels, repeated once: 1) seated figure, 2) Kneeling doe over a harpy, 3) Saltire, with peacock in the upper quadrant and seven-beaded rosettes in the rest, 4) Leaf-cross over a double medallion, 5) Another seated figure, also a single bordered ovolo, wavy-line borders and eight-beaded rosettes. All the details, apart from the two seated figures, are known for Quintilianus, and those occur on bowls by Libertus and Butrio, who had some figure-types in common with the Quintilianus group. The stamp on the Oundle bowl comes from a die, which the potter used, mainly on decorated moulds. On plain samian it occurs in the 'pottery shop' at Castleford, destroyed in the 140s (Hartley & Dickinson 2000, 59, 839-42) and at South Shields c 125-150 AD. (see Déchelette 530 = 0.547; 530 = 0.863; 1027 = 0.2365; 528 = 0.138 6-8) = 2.4; Oswald.1752A; Rogers C282; L2; B28; A23; C281).

### Amphorae

There are 19 sherds of Dressel 20 olive-oil amphorae imported from Southern Spain between the first and third centuries, the most frequently occurring amphora to be found in Britain (BAT AM) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 84-6).

### REGIONAL IMPORTS

Regional imports are limited to (Tomber and Dore 1998): Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1), four sherds, third to fourth century enclosures; Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (OXF RS), single bodysherd, early fourth century settlement; and Verulamium whiteware (VER WH), flagon and mortaria (Fig 10.3)

### FINE WARES

#### *Fine black ware (BWF) (Ashton C7)*

Decorated with incised, stamped or rouletted designs including compass drawn semi-circles, 'London ware' (Fig 10, 2). A widespread tradition across eastern England (Rodwell 1978). Many sherds redeposited. Mostly beakers or bowls.

### CONCLUSIONS

The assemblage is dominated by local Nene Valley products whose broad chronology has recently been outlined by Perrin (1999). The earliest contexts at Glapthorn Road generally show a mixture of shell-gritted ware and various grog-tempered wares. The presence of a few sherds of pre-Flavian South Gaulish samian are also indicative of some early first century Roman activity in the locality.

Most of the assemblage appears to date from the second century continuing into the third century. Much of the dating hinges on the presence of LNV RE and LNV CC and the different forms these wares occur in, where these can be recognised. The samian also provides a useful dating indicator although fine wares of this type may well have been curated for longer periods compared to the coarse wares, and it is clear that many of the sherds are either redeposited or are entering the discarded rubbish some time after their manufacture period. Shell gritted wares have a very long chronology extending from the Iron Age through to the fourth century AD and are difficult to date closely.

Whilst there is clear evidence of fourth century activity, it is difficult to determine at present how far into the fourth century this extends. One of the later groups appears to be that from well 515.

The assemblage from Glapthorn road shows very similar overall trends to that displayed by the considerably larger group of material analysed from Ashton (Aird and MacRobert nd). Ashton, like Glapthorn road, has a relatively small imported component and these mirror those seen at Glapthorn road, with Samian, Dressel 20 amphora, Verulamium white ware and Dorset black burnished ware. A few sherds of lead glazed ware are also present from both sites. This suggests similar trading mechanisms were in place serving the settlements in this area from the first to fourth centuries.

### CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY (Figs 10 & 11)

- 1 Central Gaulish bowl (Drag.37) which bears the mould-maker's mark. Enclosure 1
- 2 Fine, black ware bowl with incised decoration in the 'London style', Fabric BWF. Enclosure 1
- 3 Verulamium white ware mortarium (VER WHM). Very worn single-line stamp either side of spout. Enclosure 1
- 17 Fine black ware bowl decorated with impressed concentric circles. Fabric BWF. Ditch Group, DG9

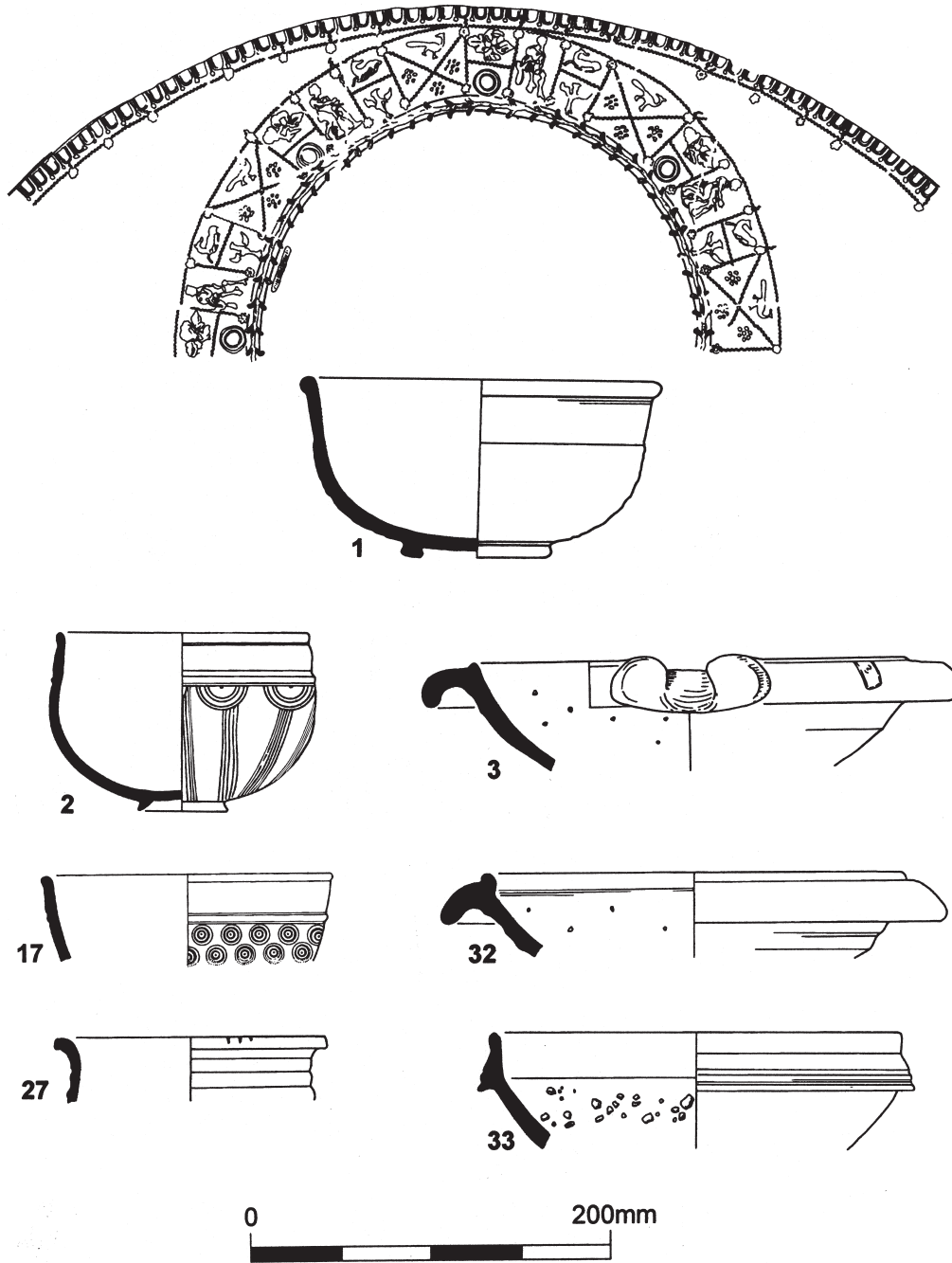


Fig 10 Roman pottery from the enclosures



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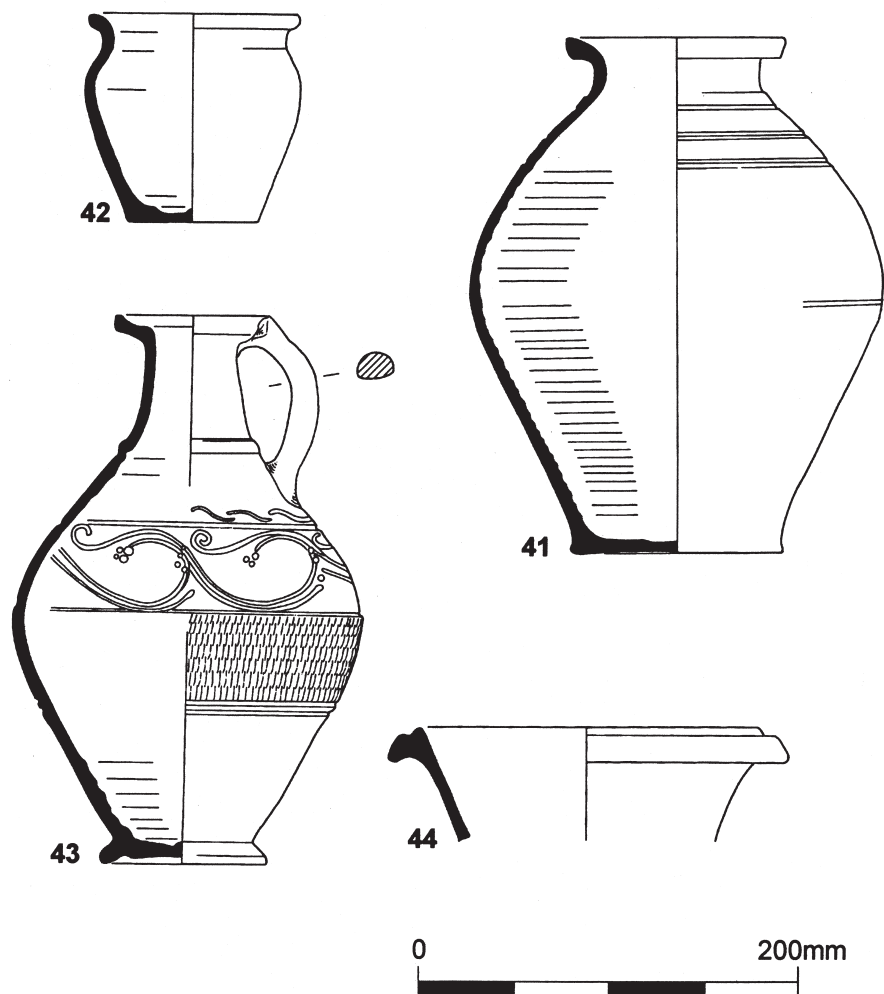


Fig 11 Roman pottery from the well (515)

- 27 Bowl with a ridged upper wall. Marked with three incised lines on the rim made after firing. Fabric LNV RE. Enclosure 4
- 32 Flanged rim mortarium. Fabric LNV WH. Worn interior surface. Pit 265, Enclosure 3, Pit Group PG2
- 33 Wall-sided mortarium. Fabric LNV WH. Enclosure 3, PG2
- 41 Complete red-brown colour-coated jar. Thrown on a fast wheel with finely spaced throwing lines. Fabric LNV CC. Well 515
- 42 Small jar with sooting on the upper body. Fabric SHELL. Well 515
- 43 Almost complete handled flagon with finely executed white barbotine decoration. Brown colour-coat. Fabric LNV CC. Well 515
- 44 Flanged brown colour-coated bowl, burnt. Fabric LNV CC. Well 515

THE ROMAN FINDS

by Tora Hylton, Donald Mackreth and Ian Meadows

There were 117 individual or group recorded small finds from Roman deposits. Small groups of finds pre-dated the mid-third century, while the majority were from enclosure ditches dated from the late-third century to the fourth century. There were some residual finds, and a small number from the trial trench evaluation (Masters 1998).

The assemblage comprises a small range of domestic related artefacts, together with a quantity of structural debris. The personal items of jewellery and brooches reflect the proximity of occupation, although there is an absence of tools and a only small number of structural fittings, including a little lead and the occurrence of only short nails. The tile was not related to any structure in the excavation area and may even have been imported to the site as hardcore. There are a large number of coins and, as

is typical of coin finds on rural sites, the assemblage is biased to the third and fourth centuries when small bronze coins were lost in large numbers.

The finds are published as individual types within functional categories. Only small groups and the miscellaneous and unidentified objects have been considered by material type.

#### PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

A small number of items of jewellery were recovered from the site; eight Roman brooches, one silver finger ring and seven pins, a fragment of a bracelet and a possible earring.

##### *The Brooches*

by Donald Mackreth

The eight brooches include three Colchester Derivatives, three of the Aucissa Series, a Late La Tène and a Headstud, and all are dated to the mid or later first century. The Headstud, from second century deposits, is found mainly in eastern Britain, and there is a Colchester Derivative local to the Nene Valley from Enclosure 6. The Late La Tène type is probably military.

##### *Other jewellery*

A complete but broken silver finger ring with stylised snakes' head terminals came from the northern boundary of Enclosure 4. There are four metal pins and fragments of three bone pins from the late second to fourth century phases. A distinctive copper alloy pin probably in use by 125 AD, similar to Cools Type 9, (1990, fig 6, 6-7), came from the evaluation. A fragment from a copper alloy bangle, from Enclosure 6, comprises a circular sectioned rod, twisted in a clockwise direction, and is similar to a complete example recovered from a fourth century context in Colchester (Crummy 1983, 38-9 no 1602). A probable copper alloy earring from Enclosure 3 comprises a small loop, formed by bending the wire back and tightly winding it around the other side below a now bent hook, which would have supported a pendant or glass bead. There is a similar example from Wroxeter (Allason-Jones 1989, no 550). Two ligulae, both bent and incomplete, and a short fragment of a shaft surmounted by an elongated tapering narrow drum were the only cosmetic/medical type objects recovered.

#### BUILDING EQUIPMENT

A split spike loop and a hinge pivot came from Enclosures 6 and 7. Forty-four nails were recorded, including three hobnails. The majority of the identifiable nail types were Manning types IA and B (Manning 1985, 134ff). Their generally short length indicates use in furniture or light structural fixings.

There are 148 pieces of ceramic tile, weighing 20.6kg, comprising fragments of roof tile (*tegulae, imbrices*), box tiles and indeterminate pieces. The third century fragments came from the trackway ditches and Enclosure 3, and also from Enclosure 6. The tile in late Roman contexts is possibly due to the demolition of a nearby structure, as it is generally removed and re-used.

#### HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

There is a small collection of artefacts that may have been for domestic use. These include the remains of a copper alloy object, probably a furniture fitting comprising two stylised feet resting on a solid sphere on a hollow cube (Fig 12); a copper alloy pear-shaped spoon-bowl, Crummys Type 2 (1979, fig 73, 2014); a turned bone handle; and fragments of vessel glass.

There are four fragments from rotary querns, all from the late third to fourth century deposits. Two are fragments of lava quern whilst the other two are from an upper and a lower stone of Millstone Grit, 0.5-0.6m in diameter.

The earliest of the three knives came from DG9, the ditches enclosing the domestic area to the west, and may be a fragment of a dagger, but only the tip survives. The other two knives with tangs in line with the back of the blade (Manning 1985, 108ff, Types 11 and 12b) came from the third and fourth century phases. The only whetstone is a fragment of fine-grained sandstone, from the latest phase.

Part of a substantial lead weight (weighing 2600g but incomplete) which originally had an iron suspension ring extending from a pyramidal top would have functioned on a steelyard for weighing heavy items. The sparse presence of lead perhaps denotes that only timber structures stood on the site.

#### WATERLOGGED WOOD

From the stone-lined well (515) there are parts of a manufactured object, comprising three fragments of oak, with a section 30mm square but with one end thickening to a rectangular section of 38mm by 30mm. A series of dowel holes, 3-4mm in diameter, are spaced at intervals of 40-55mm, centre to centre, and many holes still contain the dowels, which are made from hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). A similar beam, also of oak, from a well at Dalton Parlours, Yorkshire (Morris 1990, no 87), was interpreted as part of the mechanics or structure of the well, probably as part of a water lifting mechanism.

#### COINS

Thirty-one coins were found by excavation, trial trenching and metal detection. Of these 21 were stratified, mainly from enclosures 6 (10 coins) and 7 (7 coins) in the final phase of development, and one was residual within the fill of a Saxon grave (burial 2). With the exception of a mid-second century coin of Antoninus Pius (138-161AD) from Enclosure 7, and a late second century coin of Commodus (177-192AD), the assemblage dates from the mid-third, a coin of Philip I (244-249 AD), to mid-fourth centuries, with the latest coin attributed to Valens (364-78), the period copper alloy coin finds typically peak on many rural sites.

#### ANIMAL BONE

by Karen Deighton

A total of 1242 fragments of animal bone and five partial skeletons, weighing 56.165kg, was recovered and examined. The Roman material was dominated by sheep/goat followed by cattle with much smaller numbers of pig. There are also some horse, dog and chicken, and very low numbers of deer, the bone size suggests red deer (Table 2).

Canid gnawing was low, at 10.5 % of identified fragments, with a single incidence of rodent gnawing. Fragmentation was average, at 38.4%. Surface abrasion was moderate. Only three examples of burning suggest that this was not a preferred method of disposal.

Two well preserved partial horned cattle skeletons came from the mid-third century to fourth century AD Roman well (515). No evidence of butchery was noted. Two partial pig skeletons with some evidence of butchery indicative of dismembering were also present. A partial sheep skeleton had some evidence for butchery,

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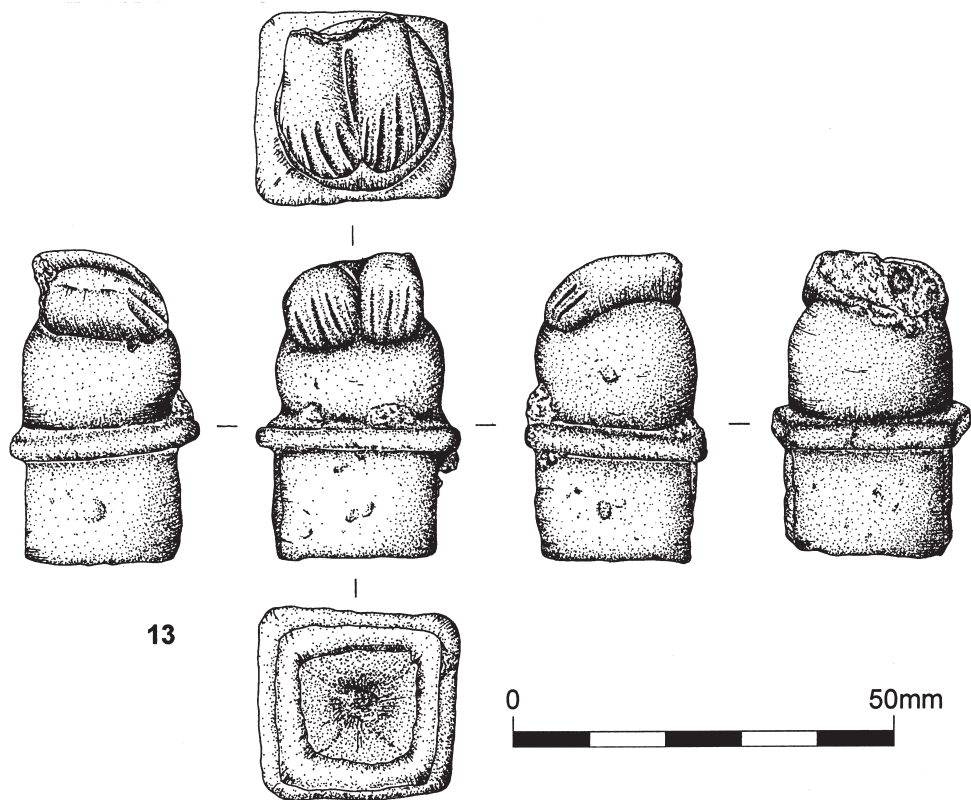


Fig 12 Copper alloy furniture fitting

with the tooth wear suggesting an animal of between 6 and 12 months.

Data from sheep (11 mandibles and teeth) suggests a predominance of animals of 8-10 years of age and an absence of animals under two months. Only seven of ten cattle mandibles and teeth could be allocated to a single age class with a predominance of older animals and no animals under the age of eight months.

Two pig mandibles both suggest sub-adults. There are only four examples of neonatal bone, three cow and one ovicaprid. However, it would be unwise to draw any conclusion concerning animal husbandry and stock maintenance from such a small amount of evidence.

Comparisons of cattle and ovicaprid bones with a preservation index show an over-representation of fragile bones with high meat

Table 2: Summary of major domesticates

Period	Cattle ( <i>Bos</i> )	Sheep/goat ( <i>Ovicaprid</i> )	Pig ( <i>Sus</i> )
Late Iron Age/ early Roman (1st century AD)	2	10	2
Roman settlement (early 2nd to late 2nd century AD)	30	90	15
Settlement development (early 3rd to late 3rd century AD)	103	129	16
A Roman villa (late 3rd to 4th century AD)	91	120	9
Anglo-Saxon cemetery (6th to 7th century AD)	8	9	1

yields (eg proximal tibia, proximal femur and proximal humerus) and a relative under representation of low meat yielding bones (eg astragalus and calcaneum). This suggests that carcasses were butchered on site, and the consumption of choice meat cuts was favoured. The small amount of butchery, 3%, appeared to be consistent with chopping and dismembering. Several contexts contained ribs, which had been chopped into short lengths. It has been suggested this practise indicates their use in stews and soups. No change in the dominance of species is evident throughout the Roman period, although there is a slight increase in the relative abundance of cattle in the third and fourth centuries. The dominance of sheep suggests a continuation of subsistence farming from the late Iron Age, as a dominance of cattle would be expected for a more Romanised site. A similar pattern is seen at Maxey (Pryor et al 1985), with sheep numbers dominating those of cattle into the second century and again from the late third century.

Although an increase in cattle numbers is seen the species never becomes dominant, this could suggest trade with Romanised settlements such as Ashton was more restricted here. The preference for better cuts of meat also suggests trade was not the main concern of animal exploitation here. The assemblage is typical of that expected from a native farmstead with an economy geared towards subsistence rather than trade. The assemblage confirms, for this site at least, the continuing importance of subsistence (Condron 1995) during the Roman period.

#### THE CHARRED AND WATERLOGGED PLANT REMAINS by Wendy Carruthers

Environmental samples were taken from a range of features dating from the first to fourth centuries AD. Karen Deighton assessed the flots and recommendations were made as to which samples should be submitted for full analysis. In addition, three waterlogged samples from Roman well (515) were wet-sieved and the residues were kept wet. The author was sent eight of the charred flots and the three waterlogged well residues for full analysis. Nomenclature and most of the habitat information are taken from Stace (1991).

#### THE CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

The charred plant assemblages recovered from the later Roman period were typical for this area of the British Isles. Cereal remains are clearly favoured by charring, because of human intervention in this process, and provide information about the arable crops grown, their weed contaminants and the types of soils cultivated. The cereals were primarily hulled wheat (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) with a trace of free-threshing bread-type wheat (*T. aestivum*-type), a little hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and possibly a few oats (*Avena* sp.), although this latter taxon could have been growing as a weed. The glume bases suggested that spelt (*T. spelta*) was much more commonly grown than emmer wheat (*T. dicoccum*).

The range of weed taxa in the charred samples was fairly small and no particular species were very numerous. Most of the taxa were general weeds of cultivated and disturbed soils, such as docks (*Rumex* sp.), chess (*Bromus* sect. *Bromus*) and small-seeded weed vetches (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.).

#### THE WATERLOGGED PLANT REMAINS

The deposits from the well (515) have given some information

about the local environment and different types of waste (Fig 9). The basal fill produced the lowest species diversity (30 taxa). Most species were weeds of cultivated and disturbed soils, particularly of nutrient-enriched soils, such as stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and orache (*Atriplex patula/prostrata*). There was little evidence that domestic waste, faecal waste or crop processing waste had been deposited in the well at this time, although a few seeds of cultivated flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) and fragments of sloe/cherry/plum (*Prunus* sp.) stone were recovered.

The middle fill produced higher concentrations of remains and a few additional taxa, but again primarily waste ground weeds. Thistle (*Cirsium/Carduus* sp.) achenes were particularly numerous, suggesting that the plants were growing locally. Thistles often dominate overgrazed pastures. It is possible that the predominance of plants of nutrient-enriched soils in these lower deposits, in particular stinging nettles, was due to livestock grazing around the well.

The upper fill produced more than twice as many taxa as the lower, though not as many remains as the middle, with evidence for the dumping of crop processing and domestic waste in the well, though not human faecal waste. Hay or dung was probably present, as meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus* sp.) and fairy flax (*Linum catharticum*) were recorded. The economic plants included spelt chaff, opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*), cultivated flax for both oil and fibre, coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), cotton thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) and possibly dill (cf. *Anethum graveolens*). In addition to these imported spices, there were a few native hedgerow fruits such as bramble and elderberry. However, the number of fruit remains was far less than is usually found in human sewage. It is likely that this deposit was derived from waste being dumped in the well soon after it had gone out of use - the cereals and spices are typical of the Roman period but are rarely recovered from later deposits.

All of the imported spices have been recovered from other Roman sites in Britain. Cotton thistle is an interesting plant that is rarely found in deposits earlier than the Roman period, although Iron Age deposits at Farmoor, Oxfordshire (Robinson 1979) produced a large enough number to indicate cultivation or collection. Several uses for this plant are documented; the thistle down to stuff mattresses and pillows, the large seeds providing oil for cooking and lighting, and the stems can be peeled, boiled and eaten (Readers Digest 1981).

This evidence is similar to the results from Prickwillow Road, Ely (Carruthers 2002), although there were no waterlogged deposits. The arable weed flora provided evidence for the cultivation of the local fenland soils, so differences were observed in the weed species recovered. One similarity of note was the occurrence of a particular grass caryopsis (seed) in relatively high numbers in one or two samples from both sites. This long (3mm), thin grass seed with a faint hilum has been tentatively identified as *Lolium* cf. *perenne*, perennial rye-grass, a common grass of rich, heavy soils that has long been valued for grazing and hay production. It may have been growing on as a weed in soils recently ploughed up for arable cultivation, or along the field margins.

#### WATERLOGGED WOOD by Rowena Gale

Waterlogged wood fragments were recovered from the Roman well (515). They include artefactual items, as well as narrow

A ROMAN FARMSTEAD AND ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT GLAPTHORN ROAD, OUNDLE

roundwood and twiggy material, some of which still retained bark. The small twiggy pieces probably occurred through natural deposits, but the roundwood and worked wood are more likely to have accumulated accidentally or by deliberate dumping. The wood structure was fairly firm and well preserved. Samples were prepared for examination using standard methods. Classification follows that of Flora Europaea (Tutin & Heywood et al 1964-80). In most respects the taxa are anatomically similar. Where a genus is represented by a single species in the British flora this is named as the most likely origin of the wood, given the provenance and period. However, it should be noted that it is rarely possible to name individual species from wood features, and exotic species of trees and shrubs were introduced to Britain from an early period.

The taxa identified include dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), oak (*Quercus* sp.) and willow (*Salix* sp.) or poplar (*Populus* sp.). Hazel and blackthorn twigs (diameter <5mm) were identified but the structure and morphology of other narrow roundwood were more consistent with coppice stems. These ranged in diameter from 10mm - 25mm, and in age from 2 - 8 years, depending on the species. The structural similarity between some roundwood fragments suggested a common origin, ie from the same stem. Tool-marks on some roundwood denoted areas of trimming or oblique felling cuts.

Worked wood included narrow pieces of oak (*Quercus* sp.), possible lathe turned and the length of oak containing a series of dowels, as described in the finds report.

It is likely that most of the wood examined derived from local sources. The range of taxa identified included large woodland trees, oak (*Quercus* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and shrubbier species such as hazel (*Corylus avellana*), dogwood (*Cornus*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and probably willow (*Salix* sp.). Poplar (*Populus* sp.) may also be implicated.

Most of the species identified originated from coppiced stems probably grown on a fairly short rotation, as suggested by 4 year old hazel and ash stems. Wider oak roundwood, diameters 50mm and 60mm (excluding bark), were also relatively juvenile, with 13 and 14 growth rings respectively.

THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY

Nine burials forming part of an inhumation cemetery lay in the northern part of the excavation (and further burials may lie unexcavated to the north), and there was a single isolated burial 25m to the south (Fig 13, burial 1). The principal group of burials occupied an area measuring 13.5m east to west by 10m north to south (Fig 14). Six were aligned north-south and three east-west. They were laid supine, either extended or in semi-crouched positions. The graves were generally steep-sided and flat bottomed, tapering towards the foot end, 1.6-2.4m long by 0.6-1.0m wide and up to 0.3m deep. Two graves were partly cut into Roman features. Given the narrowness of the grave cuts and the body postures it is most likely that they were buried clothed, and perhaps shrouded, but not in coffins.

Several of the burials were accompanied by grave goods (Table 3). Bone from three burials has been radiocarbon dated: Burial 1 to 545-645 cal AD (68% confidence, 1481+/-49 BP, WK11237);

Table 3: Characteristics of burials

Burial	Sex	Age (years)	Stature	Special characteristics	Grave goods (residual finds)
1	Female	Adult 35-45	1.643 (5' 4.75")	Walking over rough terrain or prolonged squatting	
2	Male	Adult 30-40	1.754 (5' 9.25")	Possible over-use in the shoulders	(Fe objects) (Residual Roman coin)
3	Female	Adult 20-25	1.667 (5' 5.75")		Two pots, bone comb copper alloy rings and objects
4	Female	Adult 35-45	NA	Prolonged squatting	Fe knife
5	Female	Adult 40-50	1.482 (4' 10.5")	Prolonged squatting	(Fe object)
6	Female	Adult 23-28	1.698 (5' 7")		(Fe nails)
7	Male	Adult 35-45	1.736 (5' 8.5")	Possible over-use in the shoulders	Bone comb Fe knife
8	Female	Adult 20-25	NA	Prolonged squatting	A pot, melon bead Fe knife and objects
9	NA	NA	NA		Fe blade
10	Male	NA	NA	Prolonged squatting	(Fe nail)



Fig 13 The Anglo-Saxon burials

Burial 3 to 540-640 AD (68% confidence, 1481 $\pm$ 49 BP WK11235) and Burial 8 to 605-690 AD (68% confidence, 1378 $\pm$ 51 BP, WK11236). This dating, together with the style of the associated grave goods, indicates that use of the cemetery spanned the mid-sixth century to the mid-seventh century AD.

The isolated female burial to the south (Burial 1), was the only one laid in a prone position, perhaps indicating that she had been deliberately kept apart from the main group as an outcast. She had no

accompanying grave goods, but the radiocarbon date confirms that she was at least broadly contemporary with the others.

THE ANGLO-SAXON GRAVE GOODS  
by Tora Hylton, Ian Meadows and Paul Blinkhorn

Burials 3, 7 and 8 had the greatest number and range of grave goods, and two of these (3 and 8) were also accompanied by pottery vessels placed near the head, which may have contained food and drink offerings. The others generally possessed only a knife. This type and range of artefacts is consistent with seventh

A ROMAN FARMSTEAD AND ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT GLAPTHORN ROAD, OUNDLE

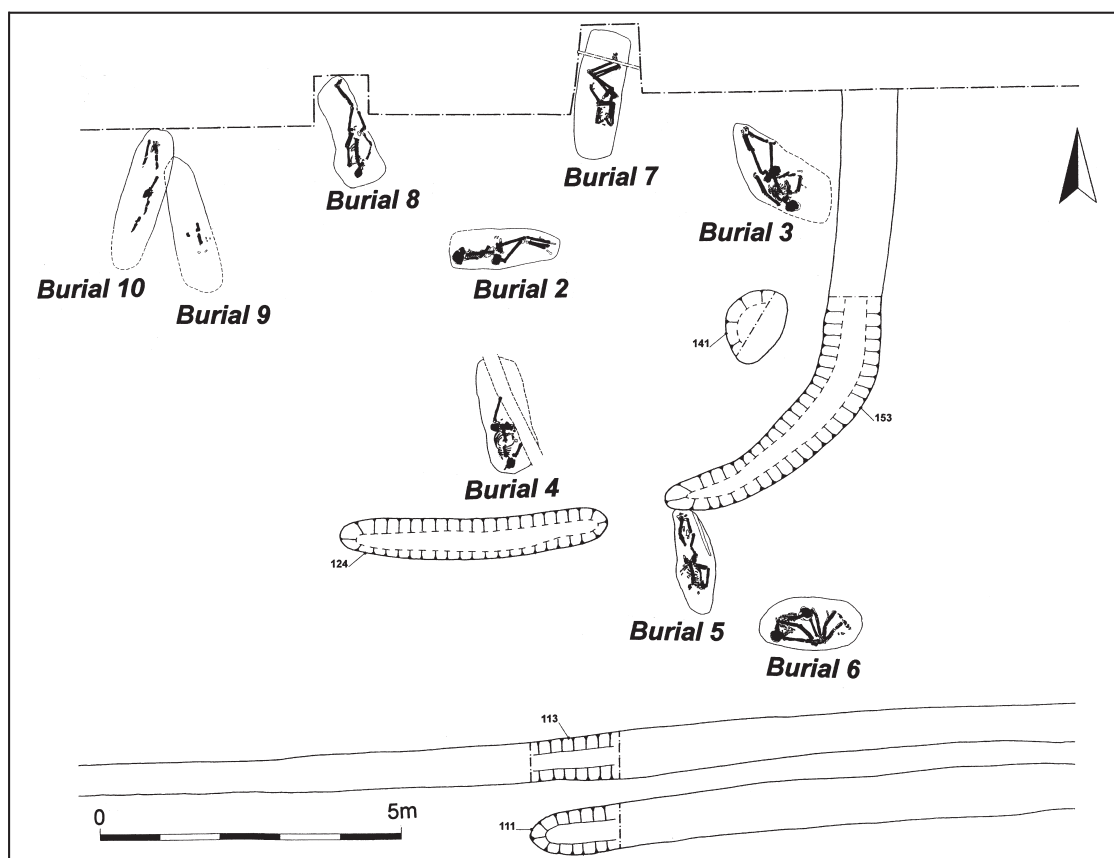


Fig 14 The Anglo-Saxon cemetery

century burial practises (Hyslop 1963), and these features conform to what Leeds (1936) called 'final phase' cemeteries, also lacking fifth to sixth century burials.

The grave goods are part of everyday dress (brooches, a pendant, beads and a mount) and personal equipment (knives and combs). Burial 3 had a single annular brooch, dating to the seventh century, near the right shoulder, reflecting the stylistic changes that took place in dress fashion during the late sixth to seventh centuries (Lucy 2000, 25). Previously, two brooches were worn, one on each shoulder.

On females the knife was usually worn at the waist, on the left or the right side. Two male burials had knives lying on the left side of the body and in close proximity to the arm (Burials 2 and 7). They had either been placed in the grave or had been attached to the left forearm.

**THE POTTERY VESSELS**

by Paul Blinkhorn

The vessels accompanying Burials 3 and 8 are an interesting addition to the small corpus of Anglo-Saxon pottery from the

Oundle area. The fabrics are typical of those of other handmade Anglo-Saxon pottery noted at sites in the town, such as Stoke Doyle Road (Pearson 1993/94a), Black Pot Lane (Pearson 1993/94b) and St. Peter's Church and churchyard (Blinkhorn 1993/94; Pearson 1993/94c).

Applying a chronology to the vessels on form alone is somewhat difficult. The vessels with Burial 3 (Fig 15, 3 & 4) would be dated to the early Anglo-Saxon period, the fifth to sixth centuries, due to the end of the practice of furnishing graves (other than those of the highest status) during the early seventh century, although the radiocarbon date would suggest that the burial could have occurred during the earlier seventh century.

The vessel with Burial 8 (not illustrated) is worthy of some consideration as it is decorated with concentric cordons on at least the lower body, and has no exact parallels in the Myres Corpus (1977). Decorated handmade pottery is largely fifth to sixth century in date, with plain horizontal linear schemes said to be amongst the earliest Anglo-Saxon pottery known from England Myres (1977, 17-18), and it is not impossible that the missing upper body had stamping or other forms of decoration, which would mark it out as later.

## CATALOGUE OF BURIALS AND FINDS

*Burial 1*

This burial was separate from the main group, lying to the south, within Enclosure 3 (Fig 13). A female, 35 to 45 years old, lying west-east and prone, with the head turned to the left and the lower legs bent to the right. No grave goods.

*Burial 2*

A male, 30 to 40 years old, lying west-east on left side, with a knife close to the left arm (Fig 14). One side of the blade is ornamented with a single groove set just below the back of the blade, a feature found on knives of seventh century date. Mineral preserved organic remains survive on tang, probably remains of handle. To the right of the right shoulder lay a Roman coin, a late third century barbarous radiate, severely corroded around the edges, with an irregular indentation probably the surviving part of a perforation.

*Burial 3*

A female, 20 to 25 years old (Figs 15 and 16). The body was supine and extended, aligned south-east to north-west, with the right arm and leg bent outwards. At the left hip was a group of eight items: a knife (not illustrated), beads and an amulet were probably in a bag or pouch, or were suspended from the waist as part of a chatelaine, while the brooch/buckle (8), belt stiffener and rivet (9, 10) may have been part of a belt fitting.

- 3 Pottery vessel. Rounded body, flat base, upright and slightly everted rim. Fabric mainly black, although light brown areas on outer body below shoulder. Outer surface "wet-hand" finished and unburnished. Inclusions sparse to moderate oolitic limestone, up to 2mm. Rim diameter 130mm (32% complete).
- 4 Pottery vessel. Rounded body, flat base, rim missing. Uniform black fabric, "wet-hand" finished surfaces. Inclusions sparse to moderate sub-angular quartz up to 1mm, sparse shelly limestone fragments up to 2mm.
- 5 Brooch, copper alloy. Cast annular brooch, zoomorphic, with stylized back-to-back birds' heads with long beaks slightly open, a dimple denoting the eye; ornamented with groups of transverse lines. D-shaped section, waisted at the point where the pin (now missing, but evidently of iron) would be attached. Dated to the seventh century (Leslie Webster, British Museum pers comm). External diameter 24mm, internal diameter 18mm, height 2mm.
- 6 Ring/brooch, copper alloy. Cast ring with circular section. Plain, small patch of iron corrosion possibly from pin on brooch as it may have been used in conjunction with it. External diameter 18mm, internal diameter 12mm, height 2mm.
- 7 Double-sided composite bone comb. The tooth segments and the connecting plates have been secured by 7 iron rivets (two extant), and as the four tooth-segments are of different sizes the rivets are not equidistant. The connecting plate is ornamented with a marginal incised line and transverse grooves. Length 180mm, width 40mm. SF33
- 8 Brooch/buckle, copper alloy. Fragments of penannular brooch, 20mm diameter, with circular section, 1.5mm diameter. Coiled terminals, up to 3mm across, formed by

the rolling back the flattened ends. Pin, 17mm long, circular section and terminal folded around the ring.

- 9 Mount, copper alloy. D-sectioned bar mount with terminal lobes pierced by rivets, one with rove still attached. The surface is decorated with shallow incised grooves. Width 23mm, length 3mm.
- 10 Rivet, copper alloy. Circular section with domed head. Length 12mm, diameter of head 4mm.
- 12 S-shaped link and loop, iron. Circular section, the link passes through the loop. Loop length 23mm, width 10mm.
- 13 Bead, rhyconellid fossil shell. Elements of a copper alloy ring survive in the perforation.
- 14 Bead, annular, opaque greenish blue glass. Diameter 17mm, hole 7mm, thickness 5mm.
- 15 Sub-spherical polychrome bead. Yellow glass, onto which a wave motif of criss-crossing lines of red and green had been marvered. Diameter 15 mm, hole 4mm, height 12mm.
- 16 Pendant/amulet, manufactured from the burr end of an antler. Tear-shaped with a large central perforation and perforated for suspension. Rings of closely spaced ring-and-dot motifs run around the outer edge and the central perforation and seven pairs of ring-and-dot motifs link the main rings, although one face is worn. A similar example has also been recovered from an Anglo-Saxon burial dated to the first half of the seventh century (600-670 cal AD, 68% confidence, 1403+/-48BP, Wk-11232), close to Wootton Fields Roman Villa, Northampton (Chapman and Thorne 2004). Length 62mm, width 46mm, thickness 4mm.

*Burial 4*

Possible female, 35 to 45 years old, lying south-north, supine and extended (Fig 14). An iron knife lay on the right, above the waist, back of blade and tang in line and cutting edge parallel. Blade length 60mm, width 9mm, thickness 3mm.

*Burial 5*

A female, 40 to 50 years old, aligned south-north, supine and extended (Fig 14). A knife lay on the right side, close to the pelvis, stepped shoulder, back of blade and cutting edge parallel. Blade length 60mm, width 13mm, thickness 3mm.

*Burial 6*

A female, 23 to 28 years old, aligned west-east, lying on right side with the legs flexed and hands resting on the knees (Fig 14). No grave goods.

*Burial 7*

A male, 35 to 45 years old, aligned south-north, lying on the left side with the legs flexed, and the left arm extended towards the knees (Fig 17). A knife on the left hand side, tang central to blade, sloping shoulder. Blade width 13mm, thickness 3mm. A comb lay by the left hip.

- 20 Double-sided composite comb, bone/antler (incomplete). The connecting plates are D-sectioned, tapering towards the terminals, and are ornamented with an incised linear motif of transverse grooves and crosses; length 120mm, width 13mm.



**Burial 3**

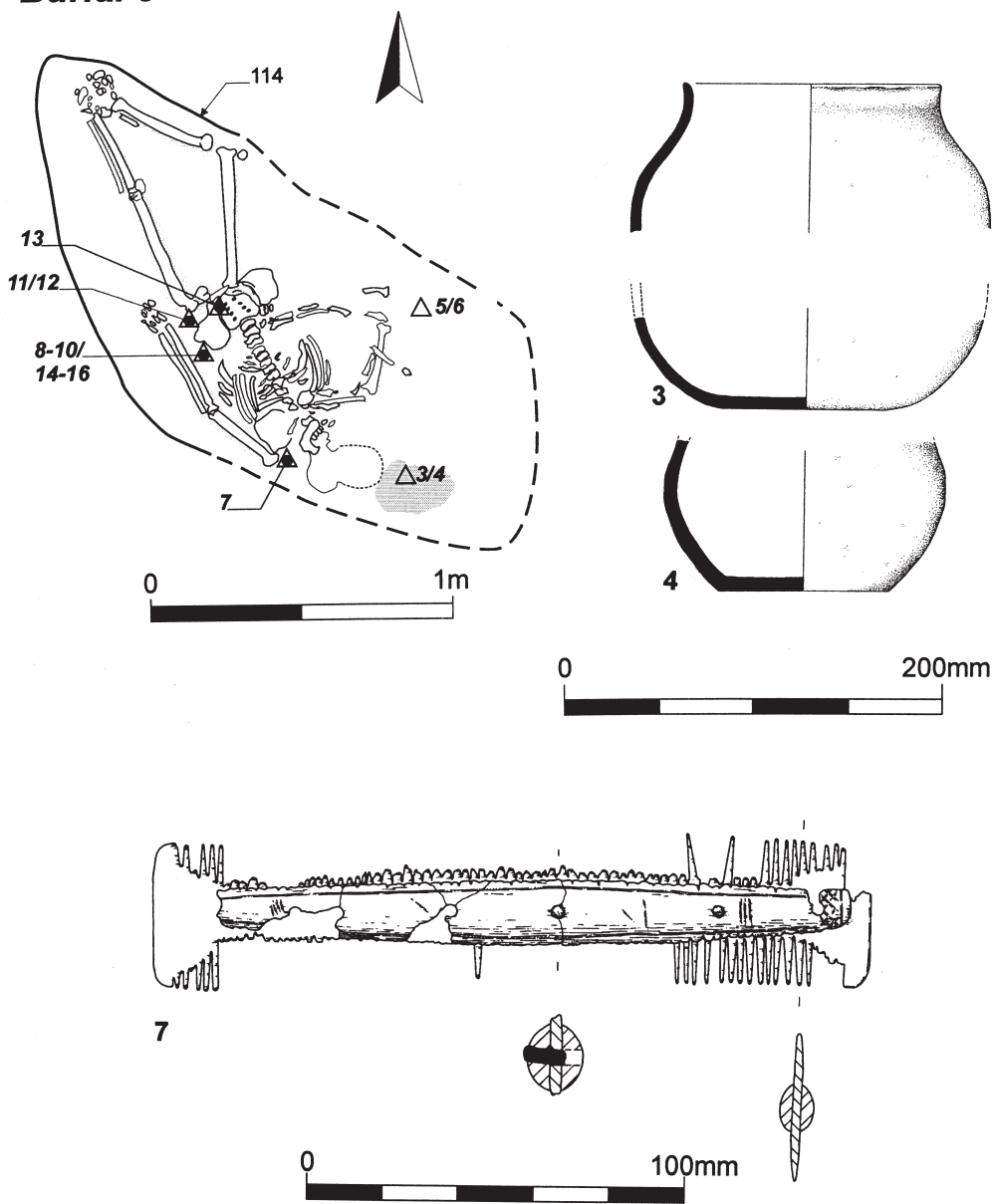


Fig 15 Burial 3, with pottery vessels and bone comb

**Burial 8**

A female, 20 to 25 years old, aligned south-north, supine and extended (Fig 17). Two iron objects adjacent to the right arm (24 & 25) comprise a fragment possibly from the blade of a small knife and a binding strip folded along one edge are not

illustrated. An iron knife lay on the left side at the waist (22). A pottery vessel comprised the base of jar in a very dark grey fabric, with a smoothed outer surface decorated with incised concentric cordons. A single large bead lay on the neck (23).

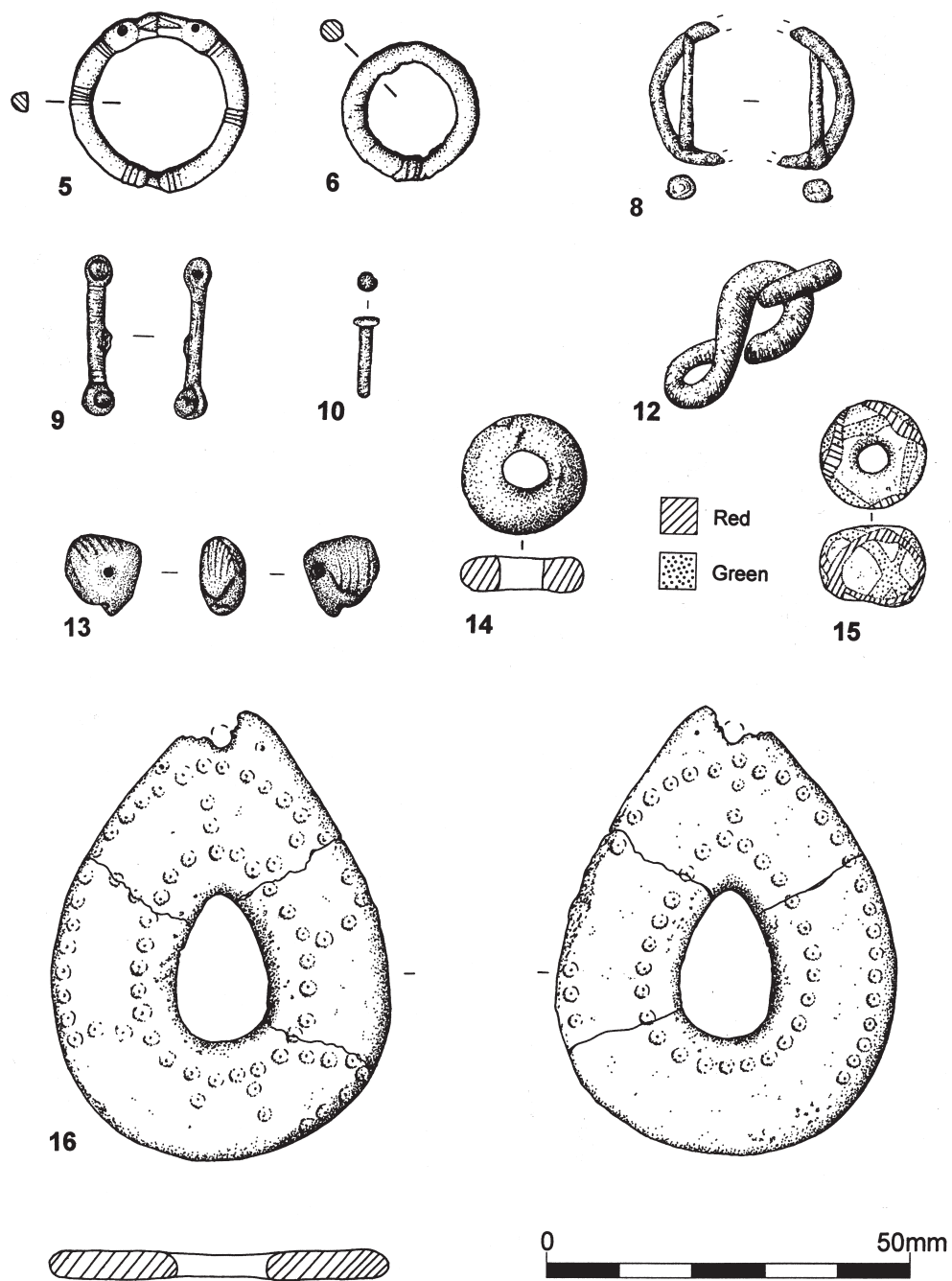


Fig 16 Grave goods from burial 3: brooches, beads, fittings and antler amulet

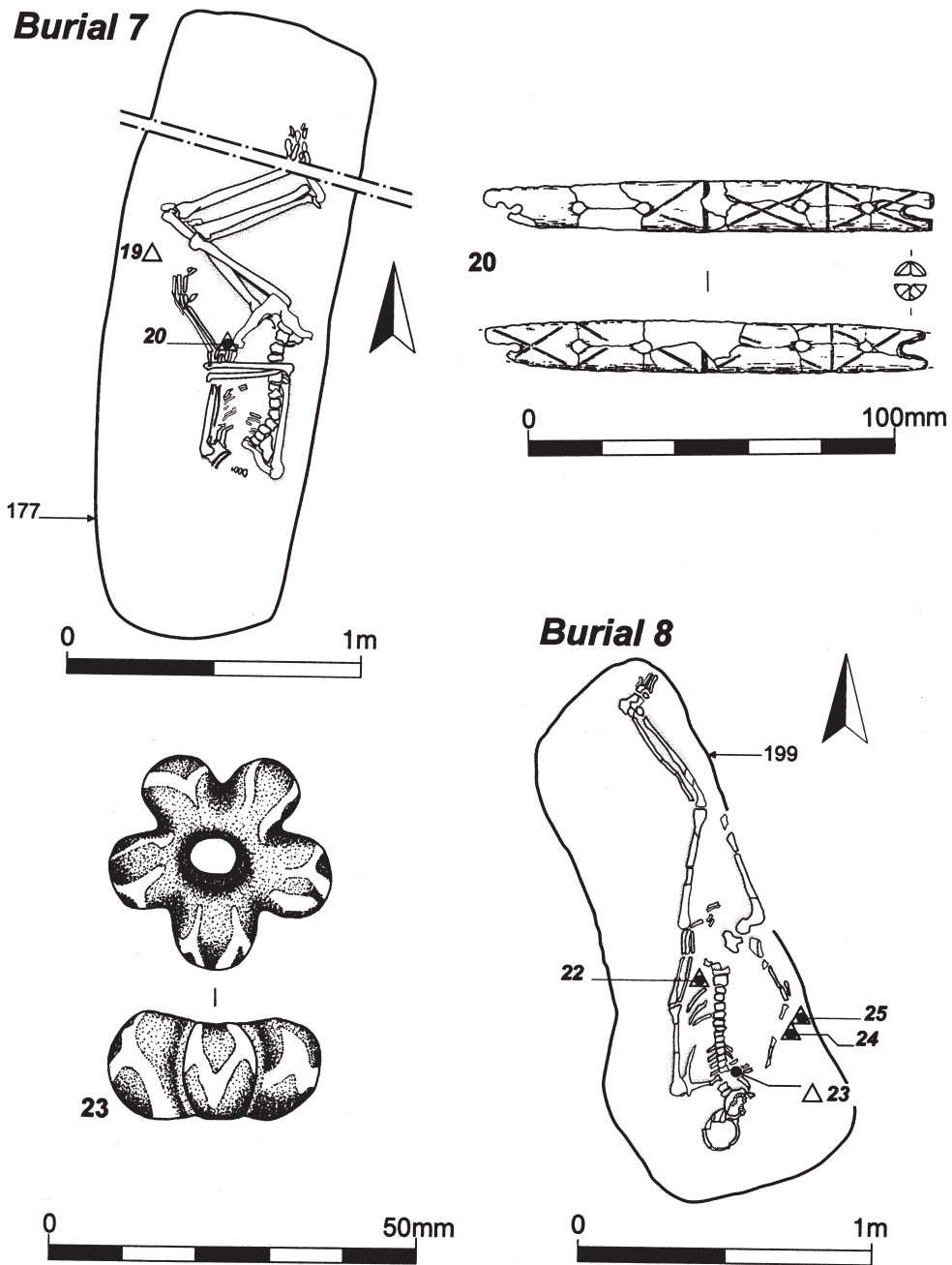


Fig 17 Burials 7 and 8, and bone comb and bead

23 Bead. Large, dark green glass bead with marvered white lines representing the most extreme form of the melon bead

with only five ribs. This type of bead has a long life from pre-Roman to Viking times (Guido 1978, 100)

Table 4: Radiocarbon determination

Lab number Burial	Sample details	d13C d15N	Conventional radiocarbon age BP	Calibrated date cal AD 68% confidence 95% confidence
Wk-11237 Burial 1	Bone collagen	-20.34 11.00	1467+/-48	545-645 430-670
Wk-11235 Burial 3	Bone collagen	-20.17 10.91	1481+/-49	540-640 430-660
Wk-11236 Burial 8	Bone collagen	-20.30 12.05	1378 +/-51	605-690 560-780

Radiocarbon dating laboratory: University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand  
Method: AMS measurement by IGNS [NZ-15977]  
Calibration: OxCal v3.5 Bronk Ramsey (2000)

*Burial 9*

An adult of unknown sex, apparently aligned south-north. An iron knife on the right side comprised only a fragment of blade heavily encrusted in corrosion.

*Burial 10*

A possible male, aligned south-north. No grave goods.

## THE RADIOCARBON DATES

Radiocarbon dates were obtained from three of the Anglo-Saxon burials (Table 4). Two of these were from the main cemetery (Burials 3 and 8) and the other was from the isolated burial (Burial 1).

THE HUMAN BONE  
by Trevor Anderson

Of the ten Anglo-Saxon burials only Burial 3 is practically complete; Burials 2 and 6 are reasonably complete and Burials 9 and 10 are represented by incomplete limb bone fragments. Apart from the complete example, the burials are fragmented and required a great deal of repair. The remains have been aged and sexed by accepted criteria, including cranial and pelvic morphology and dental attrition. Stature assessment is based on long bone length.

All the skeletons are adult and their characteristics are catalogued in Table 3. Mean male stature was 1.745 (5' 9") and the female mean was 1.616m (5' 3¾"), with a range of 1.482m (4' 10 ½") Burial 5, to 1.698m (5' 7") Burial 6. The metrics and indices that could be taken on the fragmented material fall within the bounds of normality.

## NON-METRIC VARIANTS

Three females (Burials 3, 4 and 8) display a unilateral (left side) septal aperture, a trait first mentioned in 1815 by Meckel (Hrdlicka 1932). The female and left-side bias seen here is well established in the literature (Glanville 1967; Slomann 1926; Trotter 1934). The aperture is largely developmental. In a very large sample (n3354) of mixed white material an overall frequency of 6.9% was obtained.

Two individuals (Burials 2 and 3) display calcaneus secundarius. The trait, an accessory ossicle located at the antero-medial angle of the dorsal calcaneal surface, was first described by Steida in 1867 (Biermann 1922). It is largely asymptomatic and its true prevalence in modern material is uncertain. Earlier sources (quoted in Sarrafian 1983: 94) gave occurrences of 0.14 - 2.5% in nineteenth century Europe. An examination of 750 British calcanei revealed three cases, 0.4% (Laidlaw 1905). The few reported osteo-archaeological cases suggest an incidence of 3.4 - 4.8% (Anderson 1988, Mann 1989).

Four individuals (Burials 4, 5, 8 and 10) display evidence of prolonged squatting. The trait was first referred to by Thomson (1899), who noted that it was more marked in 'savage races'. High frequencies of the trait are known to occur in populations which habitually squat; whereas the trait is uncommon in modern European material (Wood 1920).

An adult female (Burial 1), with the lower legs missing, had an estimated stature of 1.643m (5' 4¾") (Trotter & Gleser 1958). Both tibia are platycnemic, a term coined in 1863 by Busk to describe the medio-lateral flattening of the upper tibial shaft in the inhabitants of Gibraltar (Lovejoy et al 1976). The condition is more frequent in pre-industrial and modern primitive societies (Brothwell 1981, 8) the flattening develops due to repeated antero-posterior bending strain. Such strain would occur when walking over rough terrain or in individuals who habitually squat. Both humeri display septal aperture. Pathology was restricted to lumbo-sacral osteophytes and a single Schmorl's node.

*Pathology*

There was very little evidence of bone pathology. Five individuals display minor vertebral degeneration, none of which was widespread. The only other evidence of pathology involves possible over-use of the shoulders in two males. Burial 2 displays a well-developed right conoid tubercle and Burial 7 displays an enlarged trapezoidal ridge. Both are sites for the attachment of the coraco-clavicular ligament, which limits the anterior and posterior movements of the scapula (Plastanga et al 1989, 162).

*Dentition*

Seven individuals presented with dental remains, although in Burial 5 only two loose teeth were recovered. All the dentitions display minimal amounts of calculus. Only two individuals, a male (Burial 2) and a female (Burial 4) had lost teeth (mandibular

molars) during life. Caries experience was restricted to a small occlusal cavity on the left third mandibular molar of a young adult female (Burial 6). A single abscess was noted in another female (Burial 4). Enamel hypoplasia, a single defect of both lower canines, occurred in an adult male (Burial 2) and a young adult female (Burial 8). An adult male (Burial 7) presented with rotation of a mandibular second premolar. Congenital absence of third molars was noted in two males (Burials 2 and 7) and a female (Burial 8). In Burial 1 oral health was poor. Caries had destroyed the right upper first molar crown and the left tooth presented with a large mesio-occlusal cavity. The lower right third molar displayed a medium sized mesial cavity.

## OVERVIEW

The excavations at Glapthorn Road, Oundle produced a wide range of archaeological features spanning the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age to the Anglo-Saxon period. The principal period of occupation was Roman in date and comprised part of a substantial farmstead. Such settlements are recorded as the predominant type over much of the central midlands (Hingley 1989), although the Glapthorn Road farmstead may have been more prosperous than many and may have developed into a small villa in the fourth century.

The late Bronze Age-early Iron Age activity comprised only a sparse scatter of pits, and conforms to a pattern seen across both the Nene and Great Ouse valleys (Knight 1984 and Dawson 2000), and is claimed to date from at least the beginning of the first millennium BC. The absence of sites of a similar date in the immediate Oundle area is principally due to the lack of large-scale fieldwork, and means that no local comparisons can be made. A site at Thrapston, some nine miles to the south of Oundle (Hull 2000-01), has produced comparable pottery types to that recovered at Glapthorn Road, although at Thrapston the pits were associated with a large ditched enclosure.

The origins of the Roman settlement appear to have lain in a small late Iron Age farmstead of the first century AD. One roundhouse was excavated, another was recorded by geophysics and some arcs of gully suggest the presence of at least another two smaller structures. These seem to have formed a small, unenclosed farmstead, perhaps occupied by a single extended family group. The location of the main roundhouses to the west, an area which was later the main focus of Roman domestic activity, suggests that there was probably direct continuity of the domestic core of the settlement from the mid-first century AD onward. Although the pottery

dating is to the early second century, it is possible that a small oval enclosure, or partial enclosure, may have been contemporary with the roundhouses, but with this native settlement surviving through the first century, and only being Romanised, with the introduction of rectilinear ditch systems, in the early second century.

The Iron Age arrangement was retained in the second century, with a rectangular enclosure to the east serving the farm estate, while a similar rectangular enclosure to the west, and largely beyond the excavated area, contained the new domestic focus. A group of postholes at the edge of the excavated area may have been the eastern end of a timber building range contemporary with the second or third century occupation. Either originally or into the third century, the ditch defining the eastern side of the domestic enclosure was accompanied or replaced by a timber palisade with major posts set at 2.0m intervals with lighter infilling between, perhaps suggesting a rapid growth in the prosperity of the family occupying the estate and a desire to exhibit this growth in the provision of more grandly appointed domestic buildings.

In the third century the associated enclosure system was also substantially expanded, and encompassed a broad trackway or droveway lying to the north. The main enclosure south of the trackway was probably used to manage livestock, functioning as a stock or crew yard, with its distinctive interior arrangement of multiple parallel internal ditches. An enclosure excavated at Lynch Farm, near Peterborough, dated to the second to fourth centuries AD, had similar sub-divisions, which were interpreted as forming part of an animal compound (Jones 1975).

It is unclear whether the new northern enclosure was part of an expanded single estate or a separate focus. The pits groups and the probable T-shaped corn drier in the northern enclosure may suggest a separation between stock enclosures south of the trackway and enclosures related to arable farming, including cereal processing, to the north.

By the late third and into the fourth century, the final phase of development provides a more readily interpretable plan form. There were two enclosures, a large rectangular enclosure and a smaller, abutting annex. These were presumably both used for stock control, although one corner of the larger enclosure contained a cluster of pits and the base of a hearth or oven, indicating that it was a focus for other activities. The northern enclosure

appears to have fallen out of use, perhaps indicating that there was now a specialisation in only pastoral agriculture. Whatever the basis for the economy of the settlement, it was certainly productive and profitable, as the domestic compound was both enlarged and provided with a stone boundary wall, furthering the move towards a more Romanised life-style. It is unfortunate that nothing is known of the nature of the buildings that lay within this walled compound, but the presence of some box tile within the scatter of roof tile from the ditches of the both third and fourth century date suggest that there may well have been a stone domestic range containing at least one room that was heated by a hypocaust system. It can therefore be suggested that by the end of the third century the domestic buildings within the new walled compound probably constituted a small villa.

The settlement had been abandoned by the later fourth century, with the latest coin (of Valens, 364-378) suggesting that this happened no earlier than the 370s to 380s.

The site at Glapthorn Road conforms well to the English Heritage (1989) type B classification for Roman farmsteads, comprising (i) rectilinear enclosures with roundhouses, superseded by (ii) rectilinear enclosures with rectangular houses. These sites formed, *the dwelling places and small-scale production and processing centres of individual families or small kinship groups involved in mixed farming, often at a subsistence level*. The inhabitants were probably part of a discrete family unit or small kinship group, with little evidence of individual wealth. Initially there may have been little aspiration to live a Romanised way of life, although this may be seen to be developing through the third century at Glapthorn Road and very clearly so in the fourth century provision of the walled domestic compound.

With reference to the wider archaeological context, particularly the nearby Roman town of Ashton, it is clear that the settlement at Glapthorn Road formed part of an organised Roman landscape within the lower Nene Valley. In Condrón (1995) it is stated that much fieldwork had already been undertaken in the Nene valley during the early nineteenth century and late twentieth centuries. The latter prior to and during the development of Peterborough new town, major road building schemes and gravel and sand extraction, though few sites had been excavated under modern conditions. Of the sites investigated,

two in particular, Werrington and Monument 97 (Orton Longueville), can be described as similar to Glapthorn Road. All three lie towards the lower end of the settlement scale, and were probably occupied by single family units.

Farmsteads such as the one at Glapthorn Road may have functioned as part of a rural estate or peripheral holding tenurially dependent on a major villa estate. Many similar settlements, when excavated, are identified as having been created in the second century AD, corresponding directly to the growth of many of the small towns of Roman Britain (Millett 1990). The villas were possibly constructed as part of a consolidated holding for the new town-based elite. The villa, generally located within the town's hinterland, owned peripheral holdings, such as the Glapthorn Road settlement, where agricultural surpluses would be collected and sold to the local centres, such as Ashton. Limited evidence does exist for localised estates where non-villa sites appear in close conjunction with villa's, such as at Fotheringhay, Northamptonshire (Hingley 1989), and a number of villa sites have been noted in the vicinity of Oundle, such as Cotterstock to the north.

It has been noted at many sites that pottery is a low-value commodity and therefore would generally only travel over short distances, with imported wares such as Samian and Black burnished wares having a higher value (Millett 1990). The vast majority of the pottery at this site would generally tend to support this view, with local Nene Valley wares probably manufactured at Ashton or Water Newton (Durobrivae) further to the north-east dominating the assemblage. The relatively small imported component clearly is not only similar to that from many other farmsteads of the period but can also be mirrored at the Ashton, which comprised a much larger corpus of ceramic material. Though at the latter, *The impact of the Roman invasion on the settlement pattern is clearly seen with the military sites, and Ashton, Durobrivae and Great Casterton all show superior access to luxury items relative to surrounding settlements* (Condrón 1995). Condrón goes on to say that the evidence for smaller rural sites participating in exchange to any degree is limited, so only a small section of the population would have been involved in the acquiring the goods and pretences of being Roman. Most people were either not able, or had no desire, to get involved in the Roman economy, relying on small, local networks, not operating through the urban market.

A ROMAN FARMSTEAD AND ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT GLAPTHORN ROAD, OUNDLE

The Anglo-Saxon cemetery evidently served a nearby settlement, but no contemporary settlement evidence was recovered from either the excavated area or the watching brief areas. A causal reason for interment within the environs of the abandoned Roman settlement could be that the Anglo-Saxon settlement population contained within their populace those who wanted to inter their dead on the Roman site, perhaps as descendants of the former inhabitants (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 203). This would fit with the pattern noted at Spong Hill, Suffolk where the cemetery was established on the site of a Romano-British farmstead and its accompanying enclosures with a new settlement located nearby (Carver 1992, 12).

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