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A Romano-British settlement at West Haddon, Northamptonshire

by

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with contributions by
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SUMMARY

Field survey and subsequent trial trenching in 1998 identified archaeological remains of an early Romano-British settlement located to the north of West Haddon. Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook an open area excavation of this settlement in 2005, followed by a series of watching briefs, in conjunction with the West Haddon Bypass road scheme.

The earliest occupation was an oval enclosure subsequently truncated by a sinuous gully that probably formed a large rectangular enclosure. These are presumed to be of Iron Age to early Roman date but little pottery was recovered. The Romano-British settlement, established in the late 1st century AD, comprised a series of sub-rectangular ditched enclosures, covering an area of 2ha, set on higher ground either side of a sinuous trackway. This was a low status rural settlement, with little access to higher class metalwork or imported pottery. There is environmental evidence for crop processing, but the poor survival of animal bone leaves the pastoral economy undefined.

A possible small timber building founded in beam slots, was the only surviving structural feature, but the main domestic buildings may have lain beyond the excavated area. There was limited use of stone, with this including the stone-lined flue of a corn-drier, while fragments of millstone, indicate the presence of an animal-powered mill. The settlement reached its zenith in the late 2nd century. In the late 3rd century there was probably a contraction of settlement, with new ditch systems replacing parts of the former enclosure system, but even this had been abandoned by the mid- 4th century.

INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook the excavation of a Romano-British settlement prior to the construction of the A428 West Haddon Bypass. The site lay to the north of the existing village, centred on NGR SP 6284 7243 (Fig 1). The presence of archaeological remains had been established in 1997-98 by a programme of desk-based assessment and geophysical survey (Chapman & Masters 1998) and a trial trench evaluation (Atkins 1998). The geophysical survey indicated the presence of an extensive settlement comprising a sinuous trackway flanked by sub-rectangular enclosures and a small number of potential structures. Subsequent trial trenching in 1998 confirmed these results and identified other features including ditches, pits, postholes and stake-holes (Atkins 1998). The ceramic assemblage suggested that settlement dated to the early Romano-British (mid-1st to mid-2nd century).

The initial phase of archaeological excavation, comprising a 0.9 hectare strip of road easement to the north of the village and immediately south of Village Farm, lasted for nine weeks between 28 February and 29 April 2005 (Plate 1). A second phase of excavation, comprising *c* 0.15 hectares, was generated as a result of a watching brief during soil stripping by the road contractors to the east of the earlier excavation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Gareth Talbot, Tony Lee and Andrew Holmes of Atkins Heritage for commissioning and monitoring the fieldwork and

Fig 1 Site location

Plate 1 Excavations in progress on the road line, looking east

Northamptonshire County Council for providing the funding. The project was managed by Adam Yates of Northamptonshire Archaeology and directed by Paul Mason. The hard work of the field staff and volunteers who worked on the project is greatly appreciated; Jim Burke, Adrian Burrow, Sharon Cook, Ian Fisher, Nathan Flavell, Anne Foard-Colby, Kieran Haines, David Haynes, Jennifer Jackson, Giles Macfarland, Hale Moharramzadeh, Rob Smith, Steven Tamburello, Michael Tunnicliffe, Tim Upson-Smith, Leeanne Whitelaw and Yvonne Wolframm-Murray. Thanks also to Jacqueline Harding for her illustrations, and to the various specialists who have contributed to the final report. The original client report is available online through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports (Grey Literature). The published report has been edited by Pat Chapman and Andy Chapman.

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The village of West Haddon is situated 12.5km east south-east of Rugby and 17km north-west of Northampton, and straddles the A428 (Fig 1). The West Haddon bypass curves east to west through agricultural land to the north of the village over a distance of 3.4km. The land subject to full excavation lies close to the western end of the route and occupies the summit and eastern slope of a plateau, which lies at 183m OD.I

In the vicinity of the open area excavation, as across much of the corridor, the geology comprises glacial sands and gravels with localised outcrops of ironstone overlying Upper and Middle Lias (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

PREHISTORIC

Clear evidence for occupation predating the Iron Age is sparse in this part of Northamptonshire (Fig 2). A possible prehistoric barrow, known as Oster Hill, was identified by the county antiquarian Bridges in *c*1720 at Torkington Lodge (RCHME 1981, 97). No trace of this earthwork survives. Bronze Age flint scatters were found in fields lying *c* 600m to the north-west of the site by D N Hall, and the fieldwalking survey of 1998 produced a small quantity of sparsely scattered worked flint from fields to the immediate east of the site.

A number of undated cropmarks identified by aerial photography have been loosely assigned to

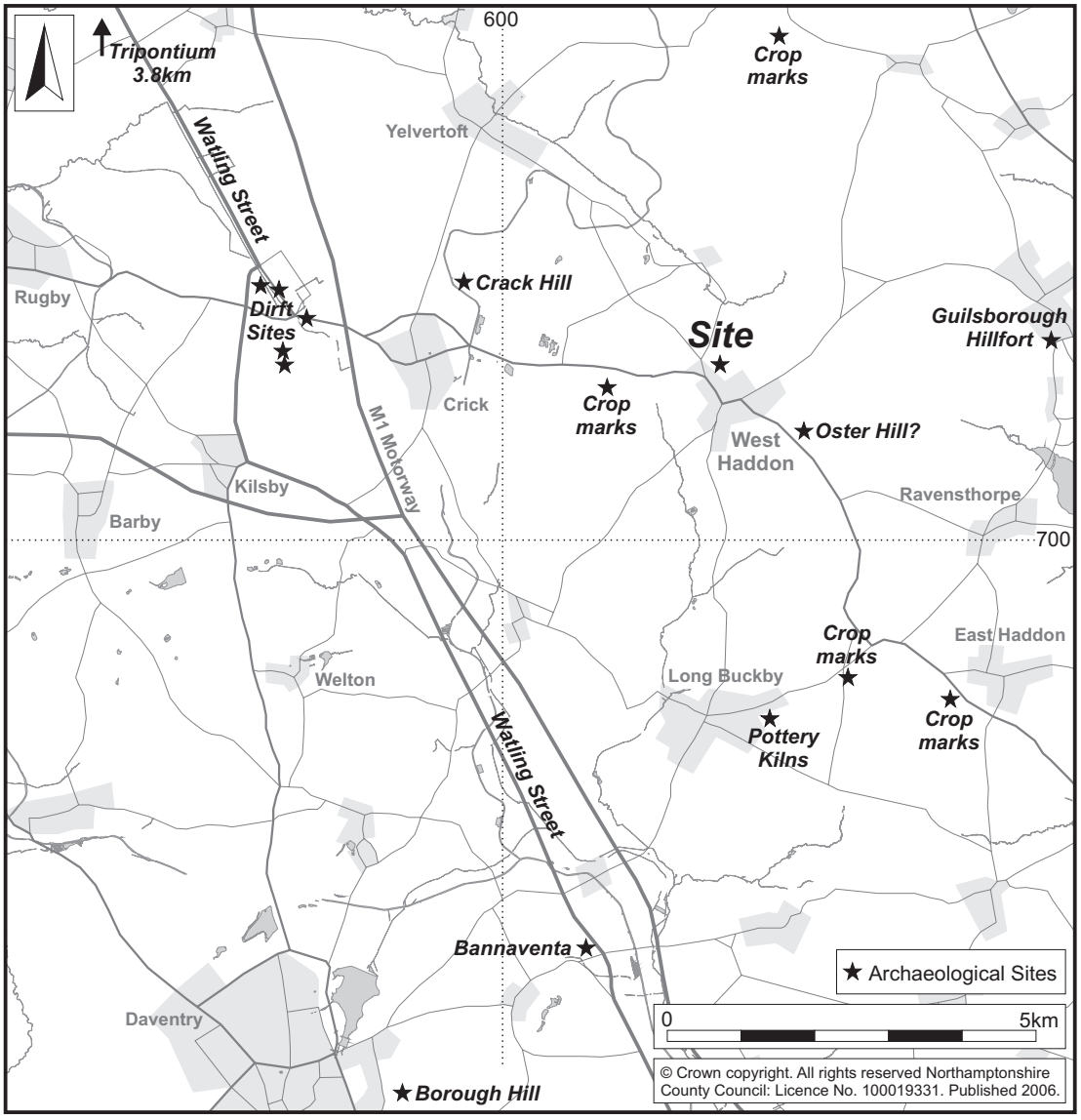

Fig 2 Iron Age and Roman sites in the vicinity of West Haddon

the prehistoric period. Two possible rectangular ditched enclosures and a linear feature are located 1.3km west of the site in fields adjoining the existing A428. Further away, larger groupings of cropmarks indicate the presence of settlements to the south between Long Buckby and East Haddon (4.5-5.5km) and to the north between Elkington and Cold Ashby (5km).

The principal prehistoric monument of western Northamptonshire is the multivallate hillfort of Borough Hill *c* 10km south-west of the site near Daventry. It is thought to date to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (Kidd 2002, 5). Another, smaller univallate hillfort of the late 1st century BC has recently been identified *c* 4.7km to the east at Guilsborough.

The only extensively excavated Iron Age settlements within the locality are near Crick, 5-6km to the west. Here, several areas of intensive Iron Age occupation were excavated in advance of developments at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (Chapman 1994, Woodward and Hughes 1998, Foundations Archaeology 1999).

ROMAN

The site lay 5.25km east of Watling Street and 8km north of the small town of *Bannaventa*. To the north-west lay *Tripontium* (11km). Both sites have been the focus of recent campaigns of excavation (Dix and Taylor 1988, Lucas 2005).

Apart from the findings of the 1998 evaluations, evidence for Roman activity in West Haddon is limited to spot finds. Morton (1712) mentions a cremation urn and coins found in the village (Morton 1712, 530). A bronze coin was also found in the churchyard of All Saints Church in *c* 1863 and another, of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161), close by in 1990.

The closest Roman site to be extensively excavated lies adjacent to the Iron Age settlement at The Lodge, Crick. Here, a complex system of linear ditches and sub-rectangular plots are thought to date from the 1st to late 2nd/early 3rd centuries (Chapman pers comm). Also near Crick, a hitherto undiscovered 'Roman Station' is marked on an OS plan of *c* 1817 in vicinity of Crack Hill, *c* 3.5km from the site.

Elsewhere the evidence for Roman occupation is, at best, patchy. Some of the undated cropmarks in the vicinity may be of Roman origin, including a configuration of ditches and enclosures lying 4.5 km north of the site at Elkington. Scatters of Roman pottery have also been collected in this vicinity. Evidence for pottery production including kiln furniture, sherds dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries, hearths and a cobbled surface have been found 4.7km to the south near Cotton End, Long Buckby (RCHME 1981, 131).

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the excavation was 'to preserve by record the early Roman settlement prior to the construction of the West Haddon Bypass' (Atkins Heritage 2005, 2). The research objectives were to examine the chronology of the settlement establishment and development and its economic base in comparison with other settlements in the Nene Valley. In addition, to determine if there was evidence for any specialised agricultural regime and to examine the cultural affinities of the settlement in comparison with sites in the Nene Valley and the wider region.

The topsoil and subsoil were removed by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to reveal archaeological features cut into the natural substratum. A metal detector survey was undertaken at an early stage of the fieldwork to pre-empt unauthorised detecting. All discrete features were sectioned and were fully excavated where they contained significant artefact/environmental assemblages. Ditches and gullies, which formed the bulk of feature types, were sectioned to establish stratigraphic relationships. Environmental samples were taken following specialist advice.

EXCAVATION RESULTS

SUMMARY OF THE SITE CHRONOLOGY

Six broad phases of activity have been identified (Fig 3 and Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of site chronology

Period	*Evidence*
Mid-late Iron Age?	A small ditched enclosure
Late Iron Age – early Roman	A large enclosure defined by a sinuous gully
The Roman settlement (late 1st to mid 3rd century AD)	Sub-rectangular enclosures arranged alongside a central trackway
Reorganisation of settlement (later 3rd century)	Ditches/gullies superimposed over the earlier 'grid' system
Late Roman abandonment (4th century)	A spread of domestic waste overlying later Roman features
Later land use (medieval-modern)	Ridge and furrow, field boundaries, a Victorian midden, 20th-century plough furrows, modern services

THE IRON AGE ENCLOSURE

The southern half of what is assumed to be a circular enclosure was located towards the western end of the excavated area (Fig 4). This enclosure, E1, was

Fig 3 General site plan and geophysics plot

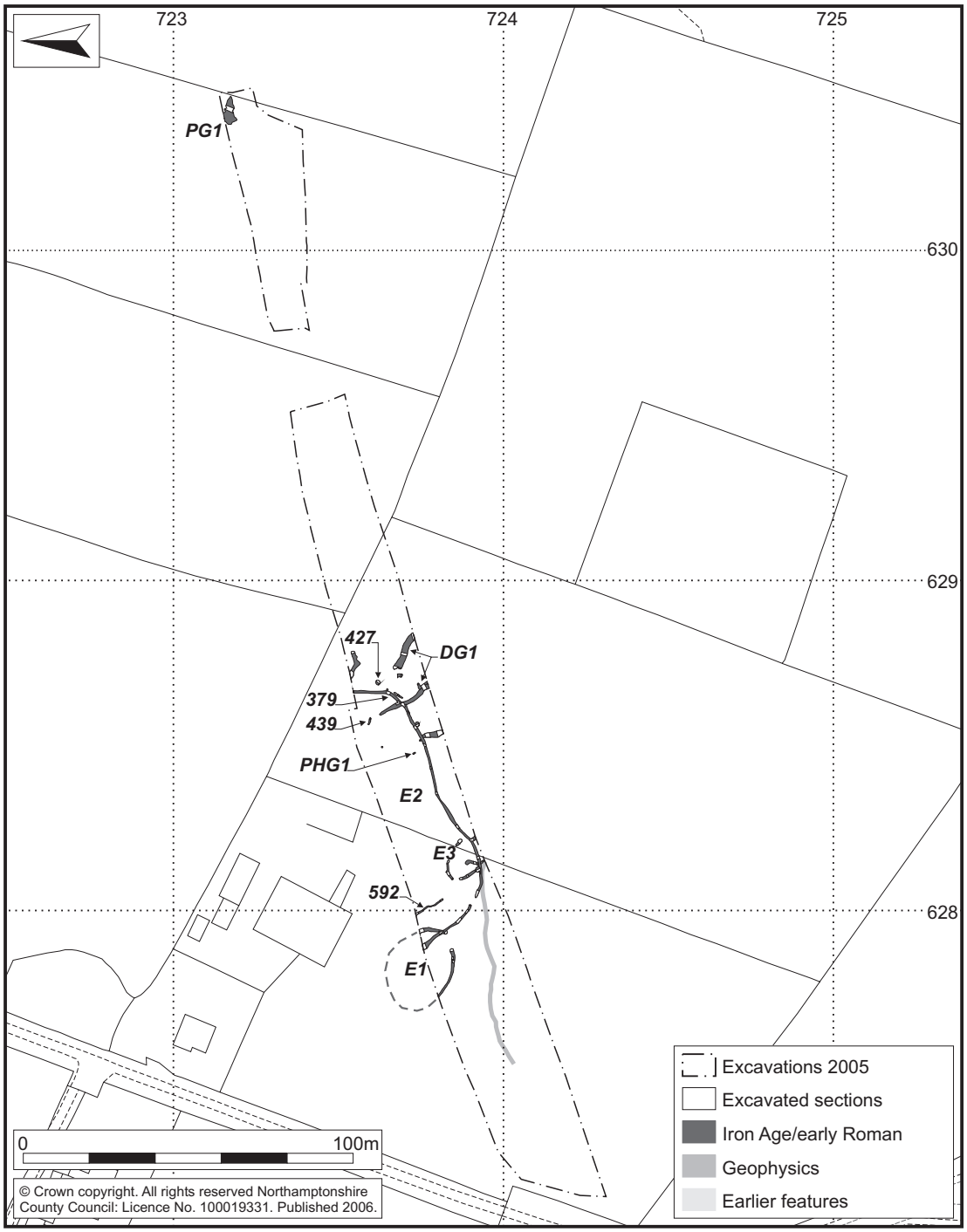

Fig 4 The probable Iron Age enclosure

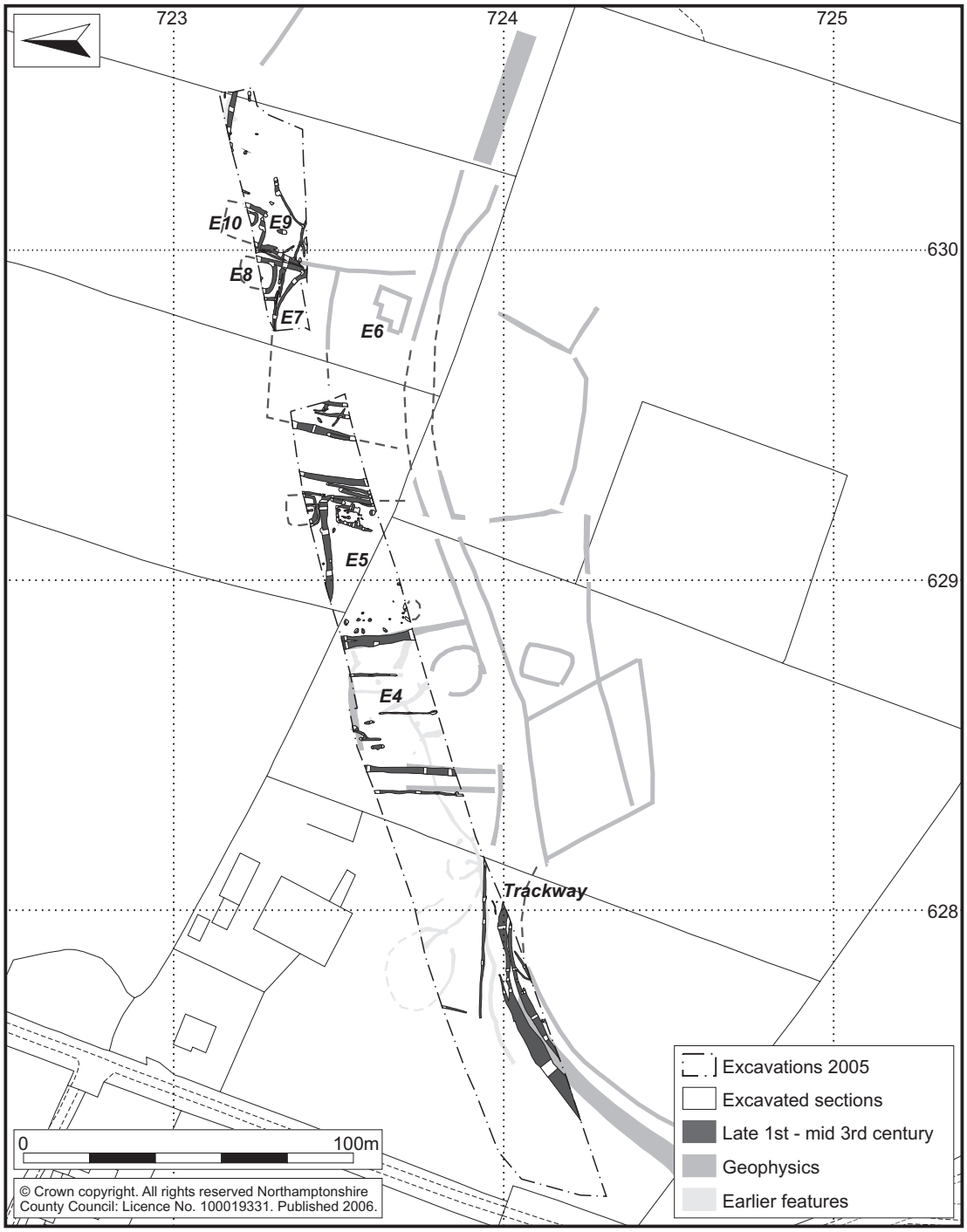

Fig 5 General plan of Roman trackway and enclosure system

defined by a 'U'-shaped gully, 0.70-0.90m wide and up to 0.50m deep. It enclosed an area approximately 20m in diameter and incorporated a *c* 5m wide, south-facing entrance. The gully was filled with a mid to dark orange brown sand. The only finds retrieved were a residual flint blade or awl and a single cattle tooth.

THE LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN ENCLOSURE

A sinuous gully is thought to have defined the southern perimeter of a large, irregular enclosure, E2 (Fig 4). It enclosed an area which measuring 75m east to west and in excess of 25m wide, and to the south-west there was a 2.5m wide entrance. A series of gullies and pits cradled within the south-west perimeter of E2 defined a small D- shaped enclosure, E3. There was no evidence for domestic or industrial activity within.

A linear feature to the south of the entrance, recorded on the geophysical survey, may have formed the boundary of a field or droveway (Atkins 1998). A small number of internal and external pits, isolated postholes and gullies may have been contemporary, and included two parallel gullies to the east that may have defined a droveway, DG1. The only dating evidence was two residual flint flakes and two sherds of Roman pottery from DG1 dating to the late 1st to 2nd century AD, which were probably introduced by later back-filling.

The enclosing gullies appeared to have been deliberately backfilled with very clean grey and reddish brown mottled sand.

THE ROMAN TRACKWAY AND ENCLOSURE SYSTEM (LATE 1ST - MID 3RD CENTURY AD)

The Romano-British settlement was characterised by a series of sub-rectangular enclosures set out either side of a central sinuous trackway that swept into the site from the south-west and dipped away to the south-east (Fig 5). The central group of enclosures ran for a distance of some 200m west-east, occupying an area of approximately 2ha, but with further boundary ditches extending both west and east of this central core. The excavation revealed part of the trackway and associated enclosure boundaries, cutting a swathe through the northern range of enclosures and exposing features at the north-eastern margin of the settlement.

THE TRACKWAY AND ASSOCIATED DITCHES/GULLIES

Entering the site in its south-west corner was a wide curvilinear feature, DG2, with a maximum width of 5.60m (Fig 6). It was up to 0.50m deep and was filled with mid-brown sand (Fig 7, Section 1). Its morphology indicated that it was a worn hollow-way rather than a cut feature, but no metalling survived. Two sherds of pottery dating to the mid-2nd to 3rd centuries were found in the fill.

To the immediate south of the trackway was a flanking ditch, which had been recut more than once, and the fills also contained sherds of mid-2nd-3rd century pottery.

To the north of the trackway a linear ditch aligned east-west, 0.80m wide and up to 0.60m deep, formed the southern side of the most westerly rectangular enclosure to the north of the trackway. This enclosure was 65m wide, and the absence of internal features suggests that it that may have formed an agricultural field or pasture at the western end of the main settlement area. The eastern gully was aligned in parallel with the perimeter of the western sub-rectangular enclosure.

THE WESTERN ENCLOSURE (E4)

Two parallel ditches, 40m apart, defined the ends of the western sub-rectangular settlement enclosure, E4, while the northern and southern boundaries had been recorded by the geophysical survey (Fig 8). In the south-eastern corner of the enclosure, outside the excavated area, there was a circular ditched feature, 14m in diameter. The north-westerly facing entrance would be unusual for a roundhouse, and it may have served as a sub-enclosure.

The western enclosure ditch was up to 2.5m wide and 1m deep, with a 'V'-shaped profile and a cleaning slot in its base. It had been recut on at least two occasions and contained pottery post-dating the early 2nd century throughout its sand-derived fills. The eastern ditch was up to 1.10m deep and had been recut three times (Fig 7, Section 4), with a consistent westward drift. The fills were of similar character to those on the western boundary, and produced pottery post-dating the late 1st century. Two pieces of Millstone Grit, both thought to have derived from millstones, were found in the fill of the final recut.

The enclosure contained a small number of contemporary pits and gullies, DG3 and DG4, which ran parallel with the enclosure ditches, forming partial sub-divisions.

THE CENTRAL ENCLOSURE (E5)

This trapezoid-shaped enclosure, E5, shared its western boundary with enclosure E4. It measured a maximum of 45m east to west axis and 40m north to south (Fig 9). The ditches defining its northern and eastern perimeter were partially revealed by the excavation and the geophysical survey had located the southern boundary, which flanking the trackway.

The northern enclosure ditch had been recut on numerous occasions, moving the boundary progressively northward, and to the east it turned sharply southward to define the eastern side of the enclosure. Where pottery was present in the sandy ditch fills it consistently post-dated the mid-2nd century. The final recut contained pottery of the mid-3rd century.

A rectangular structure

In the north-eastern corner of the enclosure a series of intercutting gullies or beam slots defined a small rectangular structure, S1

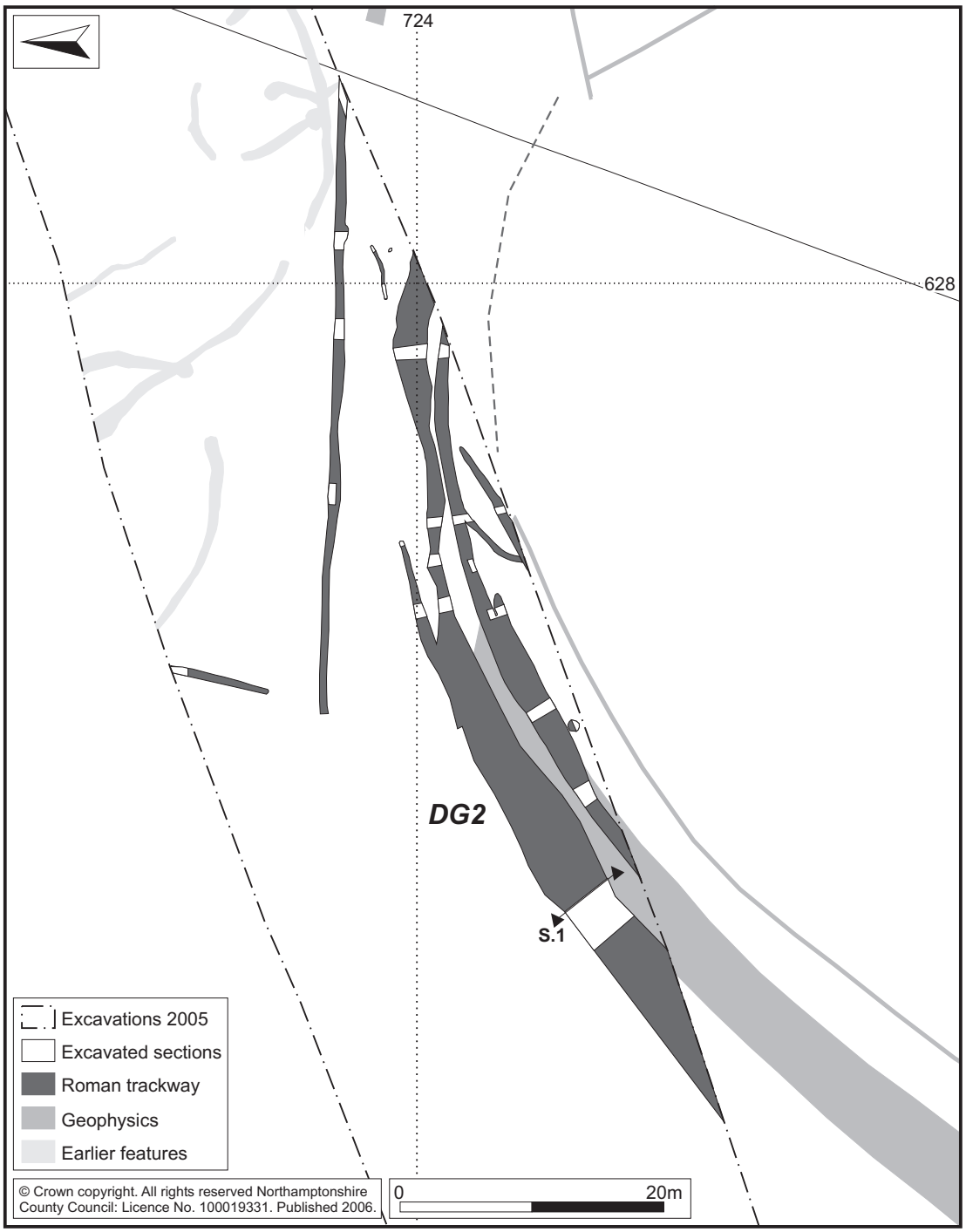

Fig 6 The Roman trackway and associated features

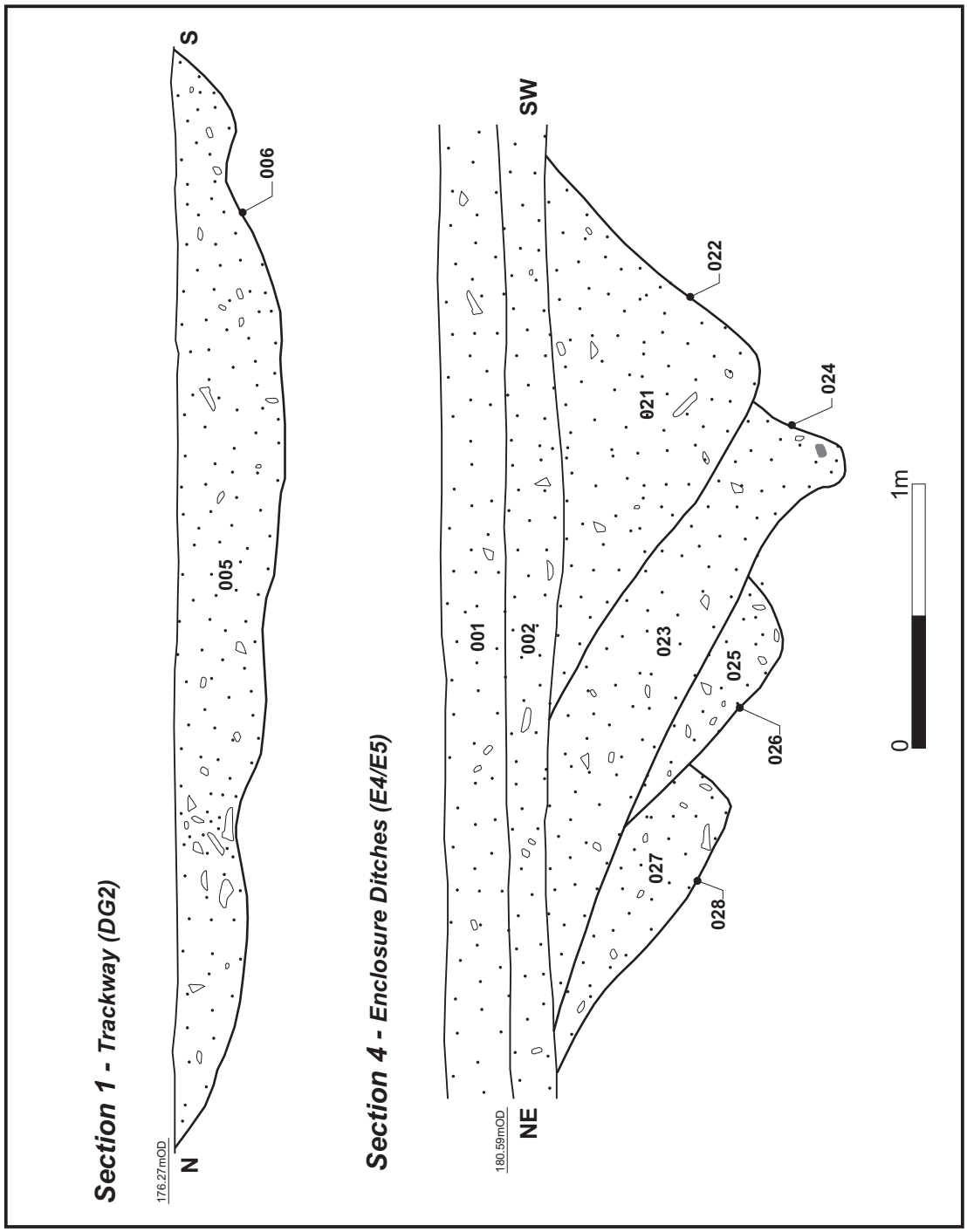

Fig 7 Sections of the trackway and Roman enclosure ditches

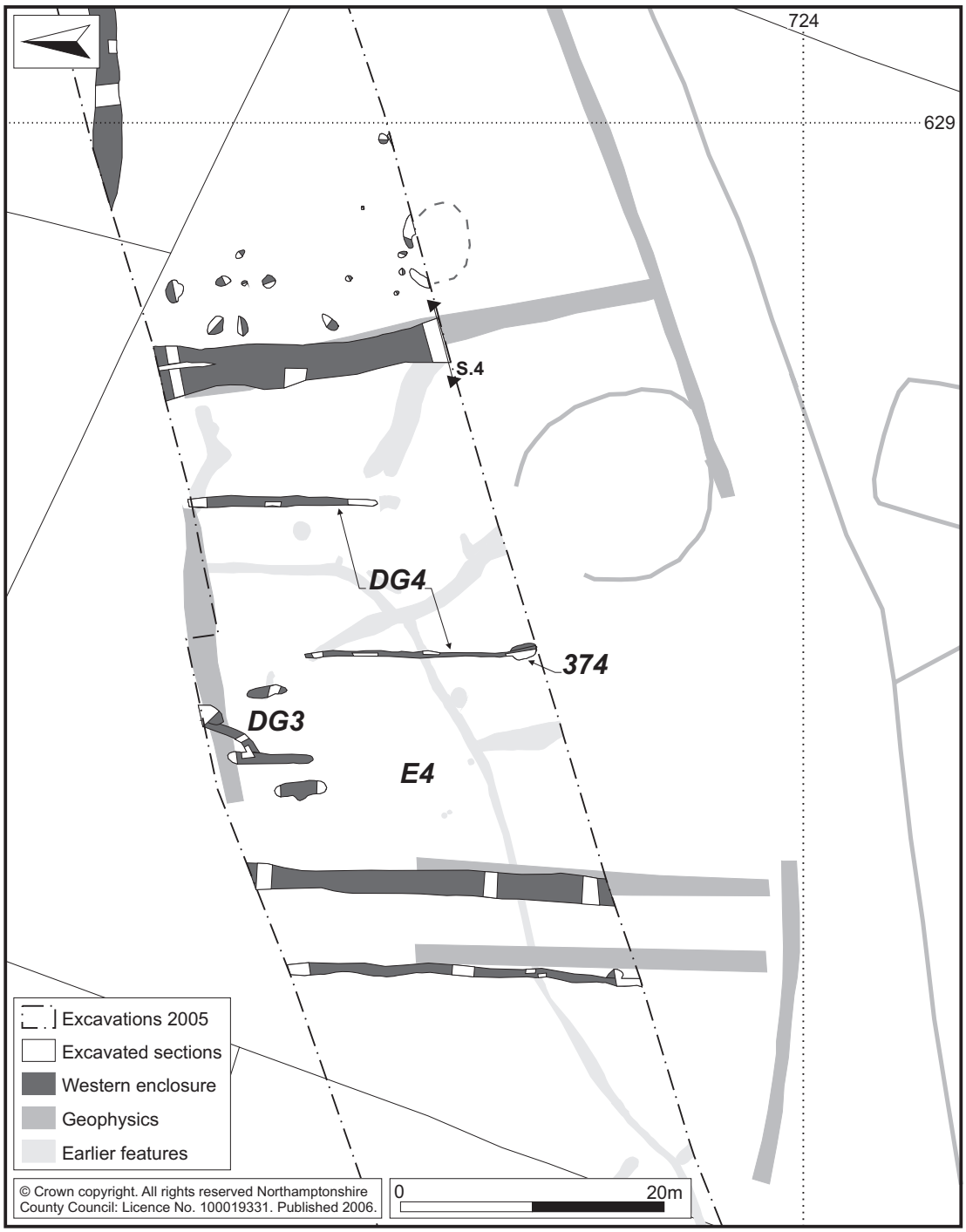

Fig 8 The western central Roman enclosures and associated features

Plate 2 Excavation of rectangular structure, S1, looking north

(Figs 9 and 10, and Plate 2). It measured 4m east-west by 6m north-south, with a 0.65m wide south-facing entrance. To the immediate south of the entrance there was a cluster of three postholes, PHG2, which may have formed part of a gate or porch. Three postholes lay along the inner edge of the western gully and another in the north-eastern corner. Within the interior there was a shallow gully, 113, and a deeper narrow gully, 156/149, cut by circular pit, 159 (Fig 10, Section 36). A third pit, 109, occupied the north-east corner and a pit, 115, was attached to the exterior of its eastern side.

Both pits and gullies were filled with orange to greyish brown sand with little environmental and material evidence to elucidate the function of the structure. Where pottery was present it was predominantly of 2nd-century date. No animal bone was recovered, although poor levels of preservation may explain its absence. A soil sample from gully 156 contained a small quantity of charred cereal grains, charcoal and a black porous 'cokey' material derived from the processing of cereals.

Pit/posthole group

In the north-west corner of the enclosure was a group of seven large postholes or pits, PG2 (Fig 9). Pottery spanning the 2nd to 3rd centuries was present, and a group of three nails preserving traces of wood was found in one of the pits.

Possible roundhouse

On the west side of the enclosure, two opposing gullies with terminals 1.5m apart may have formed the entrance of a small roundhouse, S2. The gullies were up to 0.40m deep and 1.0m wide and the eastern arm had two postholes set into its base. Two more postholes were offset from each gully terminal and another smaller one was located just inside the eastern arm.

A possible corn drier and pit 265

To the east of S2, a narrow flue-like feature, 274 (Plate 3), was constructed from large cobbles and a block of ironstone, discoloured by heating and with burnt sand at their base and

Plate 3 The flue leading to a corn-drier lying beyond the excavated area

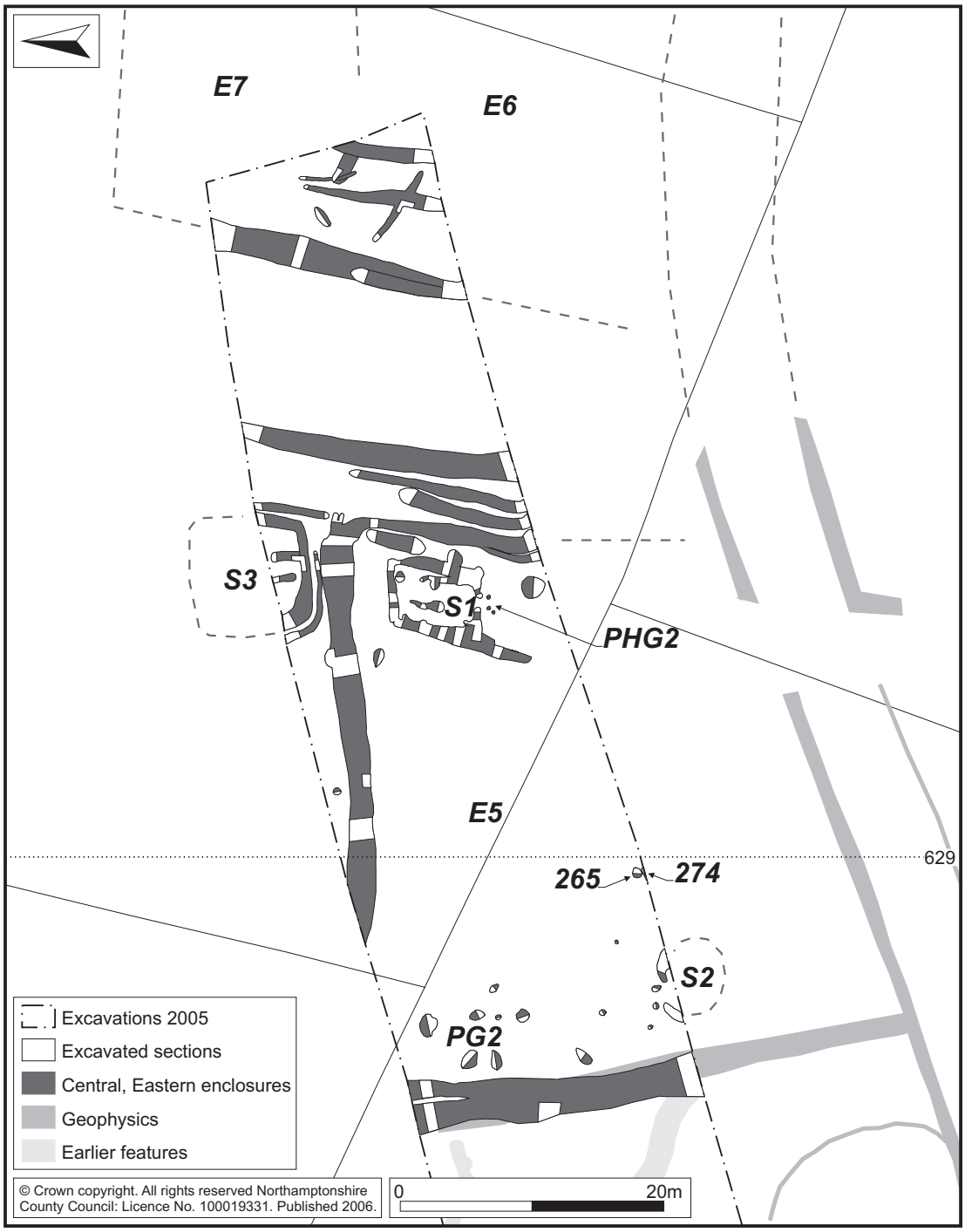

Fig 9 The eastern central Roman enclosures and associated features

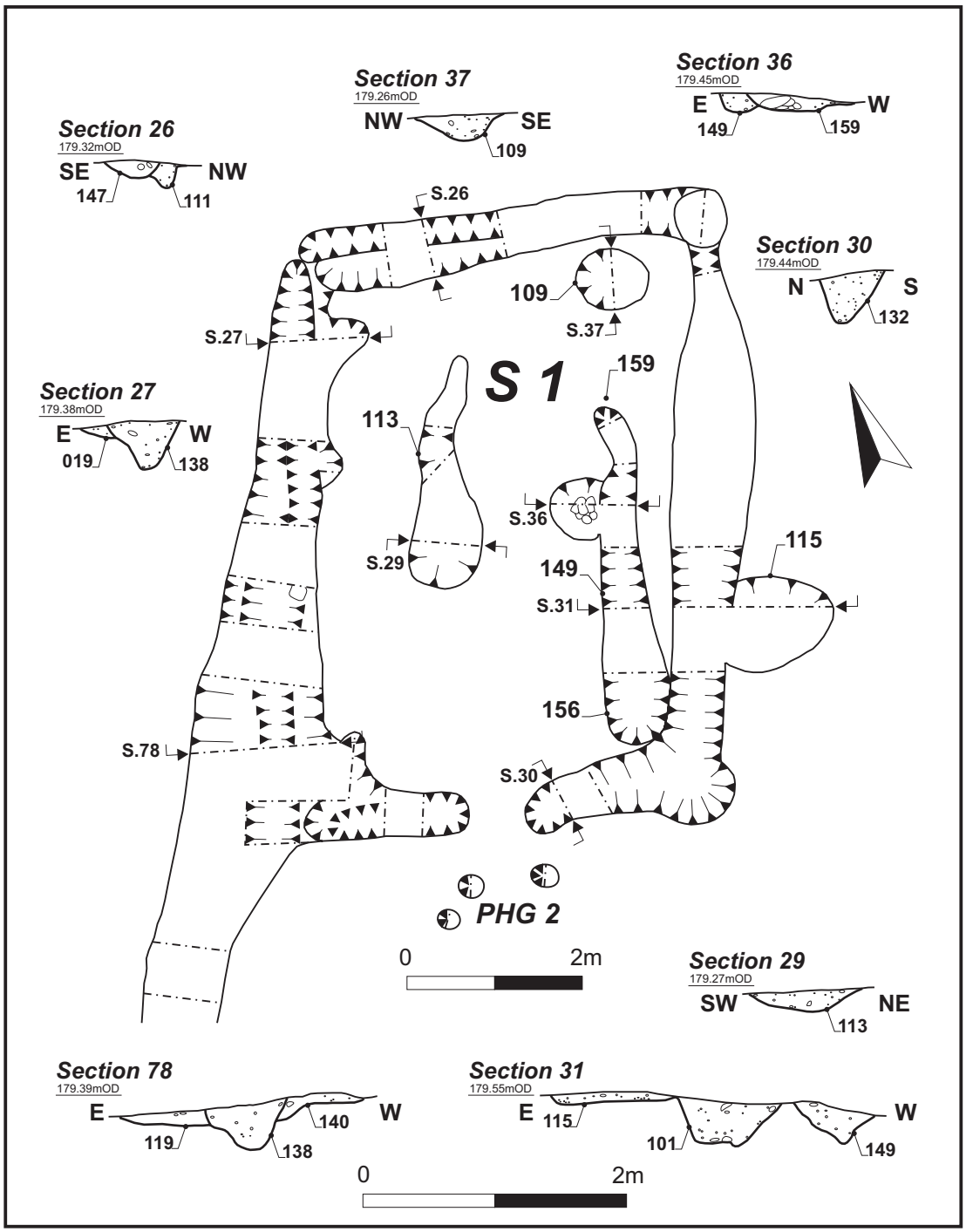

Fig 10 Plan and sections of rectangular structure, S1

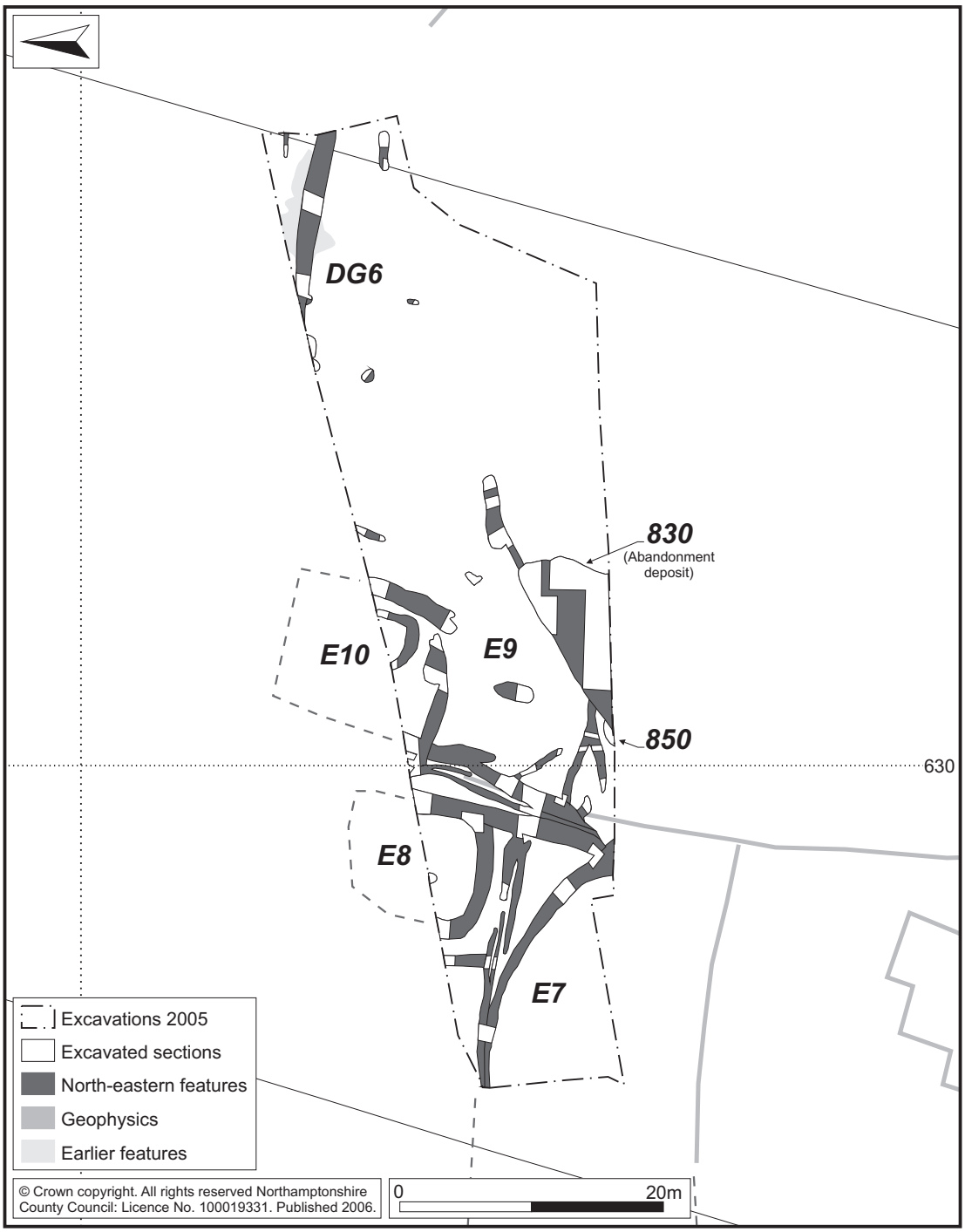

Fig 11 The eastern enclosures

burned material spread over the surrounding area. A burned area north of the flue overlay a small pit, 265, which contained Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, charred chaff and cereal grains and the black, highly fired porous material. The density of the cereal macrofossils was suggestive of parching waste. It would appear that the flue was feeding something located outside the area of excavation, perhaps a corn drier.

Possible structure north-east of enclosure E5
Just outside the north-east corner of enclosure E5, there was a series of ditches and gullies that may have defined a timber structure S3 (Fig 9). A principal ditch, up to 1.40m wide and 0.70m deep, was partially encircled by two gullies. The interior measured 7m east-west and contained two smaller gullies, with opposing north and south terminals, which may have been associated with an entrance.

A copper alloy brooch of Colchester derivative, dating to *c* 80AD, was found in the fill of the inner ditch. Pottery recovered from the gullies is dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries.

THE EASTERN ENCLOSURES

There was a 12m wide gap between the central enclosures (E4 & E5) and the eastern enclosures (E6, E7 and E9), perhaps suggesting the presence of a subsidiary track branching at right angles to central trackway (Fig 5).

Enclosures E6 and E7
These enclosures may originally have been one larger square enclosure, measuring 50m east-west and north-south, which had later been partitioned into southern and northern components, E6 and E7, 30m and 17.5m wide respectively (Fig 5). Part of the common western boundary lay within the excavated area (Fig 9).

In the south-eastern corner of enclosure E6, the geophysical survey had located an angular anomaly which was interpreted as a possible structure (Fig 5), and trial trenching had confirmed the presence of a group of undated gullies in this vicinity (Atkins 1998, 5.45). This may have been similar in form the structures S1 and S2.

The eastern side of enclosure E7 was formed by a ditch 1.25m wide by up to 0.45m deep. A double gully formed the northern boundary, but a curving gully was dug at a later date cutting across the corner (Fig 11).

ENCLOSURES 8 TO 10 AND OTHER FEATURES

Around the outside of the north-eastern corner of enclosure E6 there was a complex series of ditches, gullies and pits which may have defined up to four small enclosed or partially enclosed areas (Fig 11).

Enclosure E8
A slightly curving gully enclosed a rectangular area 8m wide. A large posthole lay near the centre. The only diagnostic pottery came from the curving gully and is dated to the 2nd century.

Enclosure E9
Adjacent to enclosures E7 and E8 was an enclosure, 10m square, defined by a complex series of intercutting gullies. An unusual entrance, facing north-east, was formed by an angled gully attached to the southern perimeter, which terminated in a group of pits. In the centre of the entrance was an 'L'-shaped posthole, while a large oval pit, measuring 2.8m by 1.35m and 0.38m deep, was placed centrally within the enclosure. Pottery with dates ranging from the late Iron Age/early post-conquest through to the late 3rd/early 4th centuries was recovered from the sandy fills of these features.

Enclosure E10
Ditches, measuring 1.1m wide and *c* 0.40m deep, set out at right angles from the northern side of enclosure E9 suggested the presence of a further square enclosure. A single sherd of late 3rd/4th century pottery was present in the fill of the eastern ditch. There was a sharply curving gully within the enclosed area.

A stone surface, 850
On the southern side of enclosure E9 there was a shallow depression overlain by a stone surface, 850, which continued southwards beyond the edge of the excavation. All of the stones, which were flat but irregularly shaped, had been laid horizontally. Very few were the local ironstone, some were slabs of oolitic limestone and another was a piece of Millstone Grit from an upper millstone (Plate 4).

A boundary ditch, DG6
Three parallel gullies were aligned east-west in the extreme north-eastern corner of the site (Fig 11). They had been cut through the top of backfilled late Iron Age/early Roman pits and contained undiagnostic Roman pottery. A south-easterly continuation of this boundary was suggested by the geophysical survey.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE ENCLOSURE SYSTEM (LATER 3RD CENTURY AD)

Over the central enclosures a number of gullies were aligned north-west to south-east in marked contrast to the principal axis of the settlement (Fig 3 and Fig 12, DG7-DG9). Two of these gullies, DG7, formed a funnel-shaped configuration towards the eastern side of enclosure E4, cutting earlier features. A small quantity of late 2nd-3rd century pottery sherds were found in the terminus of the northern gully.

To the south of enclosures E4 and E5, outside the excavated area, the geophysical survey identified a number of linear and curvilinear anomalies which might be associated with this phase of activity.

It is unclear how these new ditch systems related to the earlier grid pattern, as some terminals of the new ditches do show respect for the existing boundaries. However, they do suggest that there was probably a contraction eastward, with elements of the enclosure system being extensively modified and reorganized.

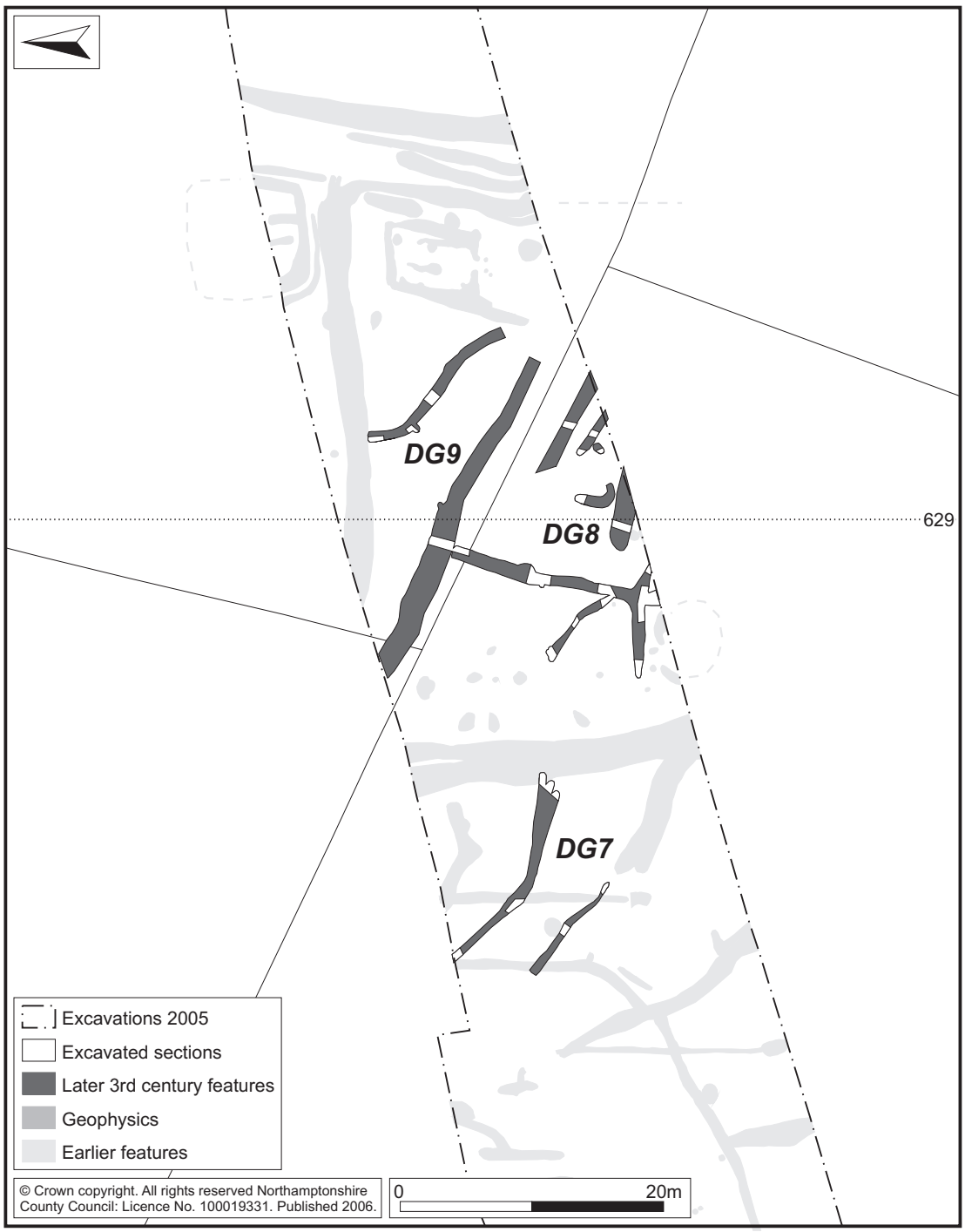

Fig 12 The central area, later 3rd century features

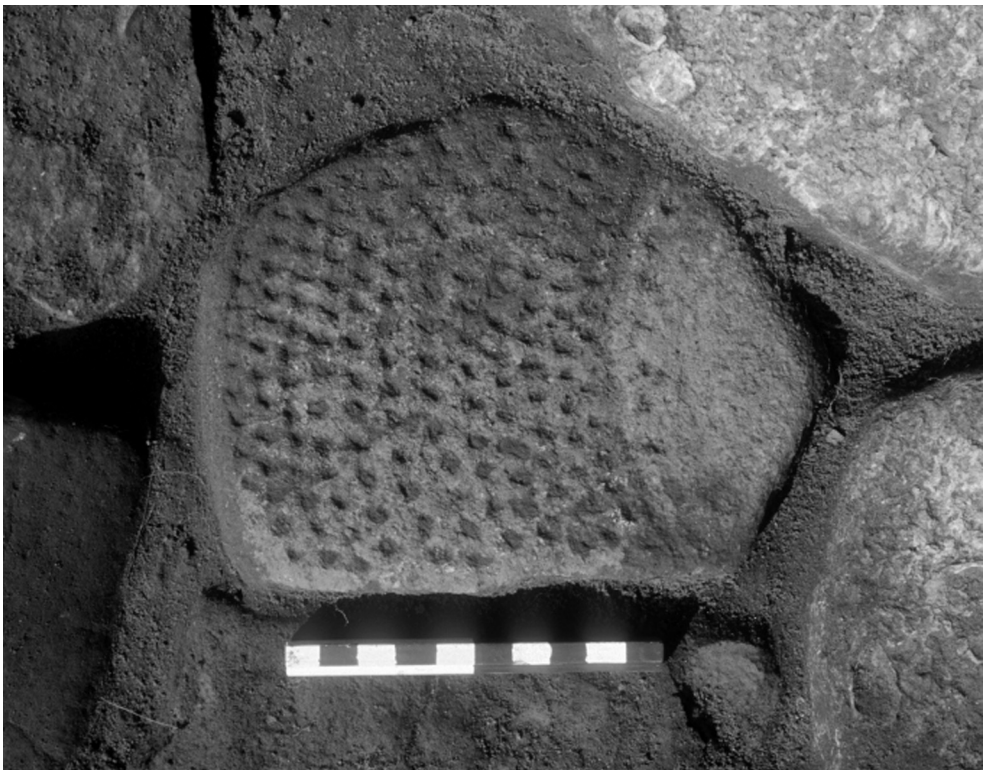

Plate 4 Fragment of upper millstone reused in surface 850

ABANDONMENT OF THE ENCLOSURE SYSTEM (4TH CENTURY AD)

At the very eastern end of the settlement, overlying the southern arm of enclosure E9 and the stone surface, 850, there was a large spread of organic, domestic and mineral-derived debris, 830 (Fig 11 and Plate 5). Its sandy loam matrix contained a considerable number of large pebbles and cobbles and was comparatively rich in finds. Material recovered from this deposit included pottery dating to the late 3rd/mid-4th century, three iron objects and a modest assemblage of animal bone, notable for its presence on a site with very poor levels of bone survival. Soil sampled from this deposit produced small quantities of charred grain and chaff, weeds, charcoal and the black 'cokey' material. The late date of the pottery suggests that this material was deposited during the final occupation of the settlement, which may have contracted to a small area at the very eastern end of the site.

LATER LAND USE

Pockets of remnant medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation were present, most notably at the eastern end of the site. Towards the western end of the site 20th-century plough furrows, revealed by excavation and earlier survey, survive as earthworks in the fields to the south of the excavation. Seven oval/circular pits were spaced between the plough furrows. They were probably dug to extract sand.

THE WORKED FLINT

by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

The assemblage of 35 flints was recovered from features of all phases, with a third of them from the subsoil or un-stratified contexts. It is suggested that they are therefore residual.

Plate 5 The stony abandonment deposit, 830

The colour of the majority of the flint is light grey to dark grey, with a semi-transparent appearance. The flint surfaces with surviving cortex (grey in colour) show evidence of heavy rolling. The colour of the flint and the cortex characteristics indicate that the raw material is of the local drift or river flint. The quality of the raw material is on the whole good although there are some flaws.

There are two cores, two core fragments and a core rejuvenation flake. These show that long narrow blades were produced alongside flakes, generally in a systematic manner. There is evidence of core preparation and long term use of the cores through the rejuvenation flake, but the cores were not exhausted. There are a number of flakes and blades that have been used without any modification; utilisation is evident through the edge damage. Also there are a number flakes and blades that have some miscellaneous retouch and notching; these also show edge damage through use. The miscellaneous retouch is generally systematic, but over small areas. However, there is one exception, a blade with extensive retouch down one side and the distal end.

The tools comprise three scrapers and an awl. One of the scrapers is elongated and one is rounded. They have been formed by retouch on the proximal end of a flake, and the edge damage indicates heavy utilisation. The third scraper has a little miscellaneous retouch and edge damage on the distal end of the flake possibly indicating one time short term use. A few of the retouched blades show possible signs having been used in the manner of a knife. One of the cores is heavily thermally damaged, apparent through the crazing on the proximal and distal ends. Otherwise there is no evidence of thermal alteration of flints on the site. The patination of a few artefacts is probably a natural occurrence. The flakes and blades were knapped with both a soft hammer and a hard hammer. A few of the waste flakes are heavily damaged around the striking platform.

The size of the assemblage does not allow for definite dating. However, it can be suggested that it shows a Neolithic component in the form of the end scrapers and blades. The possible awl is common in the Mesolithic. This artifact may suggest a mixed assemblage or point the assemblage to an early Neolithic date.

THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN POTTERY

by A R Fawcett

This report provides a date range for activity on the site as well as a socio-economic statement. To enable comparison with sites of

a similar nature in Northamptonshire and neighbouring counties, the fabric codes are based upon a style developed by Going (1987) and further enhanced by Tomber & Dore (1998). Form matches are taken from a number of regional sites for instance, Towcester (Symonds 1980) and Bannaventa (MacRobert 1988), other influential assemblages such as Causeway Lane (Clark 1999) and Verulamium (Wilson 1984) are used as and when necessary.

FABRICS

LGF SA	La Graufesenque samian ware
LMV SA	Les Martres-de-Veyre samian ware
LEZ SA2	Lezoux samian ware (category 2)
UNS SA	Unsourced samian ware
KOL CC	Cologne colour coated ware
LNV CC	Lower Nene Valley colour coated ware
OXF RS	Oxford red/brown slipped ware, OXF WS Oxford white slipped ware
LNV WH	Lower Nene Valley white ware
MAN WH	Mancetter-Hartshill white ware
OXF WH	Oxford white ware
VER WH	Verulamium region white ware
UNS WH	Unsourced white ware
UNS OX	Unsourced oxidised ware
LNV RE	Lower Nene Valley reduced ware
DOR BB1	Dorset black burnished ware category 1
UNS BB	Unsourced black burnished ware
BSW	Black surfaced/Romanising grey wares
GRS	Unsourced sandy grey wares
HAD RE 1	Hadham reduced ware category 1
HAR SH 2	'Harrold' shell tempered ware
UNS SH	Unsourced shell tempered wares
PNK GT	Pink grog tempered ware
SOB GT	Southern British grog tempered wares
UNS GC	Unsourced grog and calcite tempered ware
UNS GS	Unsourced grog and sand tempered ware
UNS SO	Unsourced sand and organic tempered ware
BAT AM 1	Baetican amphorae fabric category 1

DISCUSSION

A total of 940 sherds, weighing 13,445g with an EVE (rim estimated vessel equivalent) of 10.53 vessel equivalent, were recorded from the excavation and a further 309 sherds with a weight of 3692g and a total EVE of 3.20 were recovered at the evaluation stage. Overall the pottery condition varies between abraded and slightly abraded, although the vast majority falls within the former category. The average sherd weight of 13.5g is low when taking into account the inclusion of storage jar fabrics.

Both assemblages suffer from the same problems in terms of dating. Firstly the low percentage of diagnostic data, much of which is only identifiable by its general form and secondly, the virtual absence of finewares means that dating often has to fall back on combinations of mostly unsourced long-lived coarsewares. Furthermore a large percentage of contexts contain only small numbers of sherds.

Late Iron Age to c AD70

Only 25 sherds weighing 282g were recovered, suggesting that pre-Roman and immediate post-Conquest activity is barely recognizable. All of the fabrics straddle the conquest period (SOB GT and UNS SH being the main types), but do not occur in sufficient numbers to be confident of a date either side. Nevertheless fragments of a G1-1 platter (Thompson 1982) and a carinated cup (Thompson 1982, E1-2) indicate some minimal activity during this period.

Mid to late 1st/early 2nd century AD

This grouping of 163 sherds, weighing 1779g, is not very well dated and is identified solely by fabric combinations and a small number of jars. Indeed it may be that most of these are placed towards the end of the date range and help to demonstrate an increase in land use.

The fabrics encountered at this juncture are the locally produced BSW, GRS and UNS SH. The form suite is dominated by jars, mostly in the channel rim style, a variety of which can be seen at Bannaventa (MacRobert 1988) and Towcester (Symonds 1980). Of interest is a small BSW jar/beaker in the style of Towcester 27 (Symonds 1980) and Baldock 422/5 (Stead & Rigby 1986), it displays slanted shoulders, grooving and a worn lattice pattern (Fig 13, 1).

Early to mid 2nd century AD

Three contexts are dated to this phase, with 41 sherds weighing 374g, including one of the few sherds of samian on the site. This is a Drg18/31 dish in the central Gaulish fabric LEZ SA 2. Thereafter the only other dating clue to this being a distinct phase in its own right is the presence of MAN WH mortaria sherds, displaying early grit arrangements. The remaining fabrics are again BSW, GRS, and UNS SH.

Mid to later 2nd century AD

This period sees a slightly more diverse ceramic supply, of 51 sherds weighing 541g, with small amounts of pottery arriving from Dorset (DOR BB 1), Verulamium (VER WH), the Lower Nene Valley (LNV RE) and the introduction of the relatively local PNK GT. With the exception of one triangular rimmed dish and a number of unidentifiable jars, the only form of note occurs. The channel rim jar style is quite common; nonetheless this one shows a slight variation to most in published examples (Fig 13, 2). It is in BSW and has a well-defined grooved rim, a distinct shoulder line and fine rilling on the body. Two similar types can be seen at Towcester dated from the early to later 2nd century AD (Symonds 1980, Nos 90-91).

Second century AD

A large number of contexts are dated within this period but cannot be defined within it. The fabric trends are the same as outlined above, local versions and the introduction in very small percentages of regional fabrics. The form assemblage remains very restricted, composed of mainly jars, channel rimmed and necked with everted rims, with an occasional dish and a single two handled flagon (with the handles missing). One unusual jar type is noted. The fabric is GRS and is constructed of ill-sorted dense quartz, with sparse calcite (see below for further comment on this fabric). The form has two cordons on the neck and a groove at the girth, no direct match can be found for this form (Fig 13, 3).

Mid/late 2nd to early/mid 3rd century

This phase, comprising 55 sherds weighing 897, is represented by only a small number of contexts as few can accurately be placed within it. Nonetheless the largest numbers of fills on the site occur from around the mid 2nd century, to an undefined period in the 3rd century AD, these date ranges being generated by long-lived non-diagnostic coarsewares.

There are little changes in the fabric range, except for DOR BB 1 being a little more consistent and one instance of KOL CC in the form of rough cast beaker body sherds. The main unsourced fabric contribution is GRS, thereafter PNK GT and UNS BB.

The form assemblage is equally unchangeable with jars being the dominant form followed by a small number of plain-rimmed dishes and mortaria.

Two forms of note arise from the broadly dated pit 374 within DG4, Enclosure 4. The first in PNK GT is a typical jar associated with this fabric (Fig 13, 4). Related examples are noted at Bannaventa (MacRobert 1988, 101) and Causeway Lane (Clark 1999, 166/343). The surface is lumpy and pinky-orange in colour; grooves, vertical combing and fine rilling can also be observed on the outer surface. The second is a necked jar in the style of Verulamium 2278 (Wilson 1984) with a single cordon at the widest point (Fig 13, 5). The fabric (GRS) in medium grey consists of ill sorted quartz, sparse black iron ore and common fine silver mica.

Finally, in pit 116, Structure 1, a flat-rimmed dish occurs in GRS (Fig 13, 6). The fabric is made up of abundant, dense and fairly well sorted quartz (not dissimilar to VER WH in view), with sparse calcite (or voids) and black iron ore. The form itself has parallels at Verulamium (Wilson 1984, No 2553) and Durobrivae (Perrin 1999, 73/5).

Late 3rd to 4th century AD

Late contexts, with 153 sherds weighing 2469g, were recorded consistently across the site although the preponderance of pottery is found in 830, the abandonment deposit. This period witnesses a dramatic change in ceramic supply in line with the 'factory' style rural kilns that are in use during the late 3rd to 4th century AD (Table 2). Fabrics GRS and HAR SH dominate the assemblage and although Lower Nene Valley products are present, they are nowhere near the numbers one would expect at this stage in the Roman period. Certainly at *Bannaventa* around this period LNV CC was around the 5% mark in weight (MacRobert 1988, 326). Equally, none of the Hadham fabrics are present either, a major supplier in this part of the Roman era. However, again at *Bannaventa* there was a small contribution of Hadham wares to the late assemblages (MacRobert 1988, 330). Indeed this site appears to be drawing on pottery kilns from the south and south-westerly direction, no doubt wares finding their way up to markets via the Roman road junction at Towcester. Nevertheless one must consider that the size of this late assemblage may not be sufficient to mirror the true ceramic trends of this phase.

Although this is a fairly small collection of pottery, the form range again shows little diversification from the previous phases. Bead rimmed jars are the most frequent, followed by plain rimmed dishes, thereafter two flanged types are noted, two bowls and finally three mortaria (two mortaria are too abraded for an accurate identification). The bowl in OXF WS has previously been recorded at *Bannaventa* (Symonds 1980, 49) and at Baldock (Stead & Rigby 1986, 829).

Two forms with no direct match are worthy of comment, firstly a HAR SH 2 jar. A typical late jar product of these kilns in a thin walled fabric covered in fine rilling (Fig 13, 7). The rim is undercut and vessels in this style can be seen from Durobrivae (Perrin 1999, 444) and from Harrold itself (Brown 1994, 300). The second is a DOR BB 1 dish in 830, the abandonment deposit (Fig 13, 8). This is from the largest and best dated context on the site (in ceramic terms). However, it is not a classic version of the BB1 fabric and indeed may be a local copy. This dilemma was also encountered at *Bannaventa*, as some of the local copies are very good (MacRobert 1988, 324). The wavy line decoration is often seen on late Hadham products (Fawcett forthcoming) and a comparable type can be seen at Baldock (Stead & Rigby 1986, 790).

CONCLUSION

The pottery through all phases represents low status rural activity that gradually increased in intensity throughout the 2nd century AD. Activity continued during the 3rd century, though it is difficult to ascertain if a gap occurred due to the lack of independent ceramic dating evidence. At Towcester, a 'ceramic' decline was detected at the end of the 2nd and into at least the early 3rd century AD (Symonds 1980, 98). Unquestionably, by the late 3rd and into the early and perhaps the mid 4th century, land use at West Haddon continued and possibly picked up again,

Table 2 Late 3rd to 4th century pottery

FABRIC	SHERD No	%	WEIGHT (g)	%	R.EVE	%
LNV CC	1	0.5	1	Present	-	-
OXF RS	7	5	224	9	0.27	12
OXF WS	6	4	45	2	0.08	3
LNV WH	2	1.5	44	2	0.02	1
OXF WH	1	0.5	35	1.5	0.09	4
UNS OX	3	1.5	26	1	0.13	5
DOR BB 1	5	3.5	200	8	0.28	12
UNS BB	15	10	203	8	0.02	1
BSW	1	0.5	8	0.5	0.07	3
GRS	72	48	1269	51	0.77	33
PNK GT	2	1.5	70	3	-	-
HAR SH 2	35	23.5	337	14	0.60	26
Total	150		2462		2.33	

after a potential decline in the early to mid 3rd century AD. As we have seen it is this final period at West Haddon that demonstrates the most variety in terms of fabric and form, at least in comparison with the earlier phases.

Undoubtedly the site's geographical position and status dictated the direction from which the majority of pottery was drawn, in terms of regional imports. The Lower Nene Valley greywares for instance, as Mackreth pointed out, were exported into the Fens and through the Wash area (1998, 5) and the location of this site is too far from the source for these to have any real impact on the pottery record (Cooper pers comm).

However, locally produced ceramics were the mainstay of the site throughout its occupation, and the recording of these is perhaps the sites most useful contribution. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that there are few forms to allocate to these fabrics as well as some kind of dating sequence.

The fabrics can be put into three main groups, the first occurs in oxidised, reduced, white as well as variations in-between. It is a coarse fabric with abundant tightly packed though mostly ill sorted quartz (in the Verulamium style), the only other inclusions of note are sparse calcite or small but very irregular voids and sparse black iron ore.

The second is undoubtedly related and seems more frequent in the later assemblages (reduced and occasionally oxidised), a dense fine to medium quartz matrix (often high fired), again with sparse black iron ore and sparse to common silver mica.

The third and final composition is one that more than likely drew its inspiration from the Lower Nene Valley industry. In grey colours there is much variation in this style and probably accounted for some of the medium to lighter types in fabric 3 (Mackreth 1998, 5). Essentially, it generally has a silty background with common ill sorted quartz. This occurs with common black iron ore, sparse calcite and often, common silver mica, which is especially noticeable on the surfaces.

Catalogue of illustrated Roman pottery (Fig 13)

Mid to late 1st/early 2nd century AD

1 Small jar/beaker, Black surfaced/Romanising grey ware, slanted shoulders, grooving and decorated with a lattice pattern

Mid to later 2nd century AD

2 Channel rim jar, Black surfaced/Romanising grey wares, with well-defined grooved rim, a distinct shoulder and fine rilling on the body.

3 Jar, Unsourced sandy grey ware, two cordons on neck and groove at the girth

Mid/late 2nd to early/mid 3rd century

4 Large jar, Pink grog tempered ware. Pit 374, DG4, Enclosure 4

5 Necked jar, unsourced sandy grey ware, with single cordon at widest point. Pit 374, DG4, Enclosure 4

6 Flat-rimmed dish, unsourced sandy grey ware. Pit 116, Structure 1

Late 3rd to 4th century AD

7 Jar, 'Harrold' shell tempered ware, thin-walled fabric covered in fine rilling, with undercut rim.

8 Dish, Dorset black burnished ware category 1, possibly a local copy. 830 abandonment deposit

OTHER ROMAN FINDS

by Ian Meadows and Tora Hylton

Seventeen metal objects were recovered from Roman contexts. The only closely dateable item is a copper alloy brooch of Colchester derivative form, from structure S3, enclosure E5. This example has a moulding at the end of each wing and at the end of the foot. The back arch has a ribbed ridge extending back from the spring head about half the length of the bow. This example is of a type dating to the early post-conquest period *c* 80AD.

The only other copper alloy object is a now incomplete fitting. The piece comprises two incurved arms, the ends of both of which are broken but may originally have joined to make a loop. It is possible this piece was a handle or similar mount, the patina would suggest some antiquity but no direct parallel could be found.

Also present is a badly corroded iron object. Although broken and now in three pieces, the X-ray suggested that originally the complete object would have resembled a link from a chain, but with an opening at one end and a nail at the other, presumably to facilitate its attachment to another object. It is difficult to ascertain the true nature of the fitting; it may be a guide for reins.

The other small finds comprise fourteen iron objects, mainly nails.

THE QUERNS

by Andy Chapman

Three pieces of Millstone Grit indicate the use of millstones nearby, most probably in an animal-powered mill.

A single large fragment from a stone layer, 850, is from an upper millstone (Plate 4). It measures 340mm by 260mm, but has been reused so that all the present edges are rounded and smoothed from the secondary use. However, the dimensions indicate that is has come from a millstone at least *c* 800mm in diameter. The stone is 55-60mm thick with both surfaces bearing dimpled tool marks, although only the concave grinding surface is worn through use.

The other two pieces of Millstone Grit are from the eastern ditch of Enclosure E4. One piece is from the circumference of an upper stone, 700mm in diameter and 45-53mm thick, so this too appears to be from a millstone. The other piece is an irregular, worn fragment of Millstone Grit, but again from a stone not less than 55m thick, and so probably a millstone.

In addition, two very small abraded fragments of lava indicate the use of lava querns, with the stone imported from the Eifel region of Germany.

THE CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

by Pat Chapman

There are three small fragments of roof tile. One of these is a flange from a *tegula* roof tile. The remaining two small pieces are body sherds, one from enclosure E4.

The assemblage of fired clay comprises 148 fragments weighing 1181g, from nine contexts. The majority, 122 fragments weighing 745g, come from pit 109 within structure S1 and pit 265 adjacent to the possible corn drier, all within enclosure E5. They are characterised by flat fragments, measuring 40 by 30mm and 8mm thick or smaller, and made from hard fired silty clay. The fragments are most likely to have come from clay superstructures.

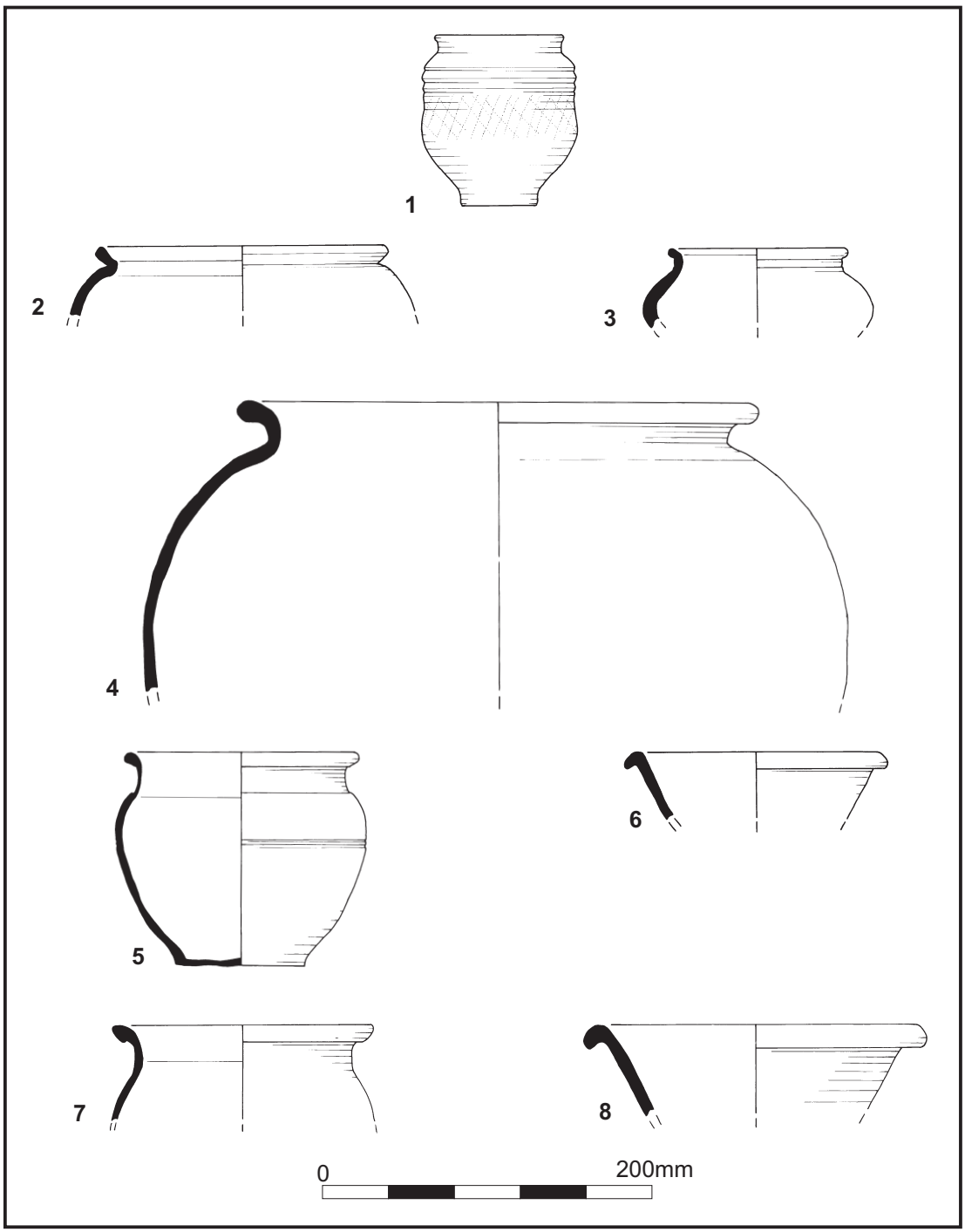

Fig 13 The Roman pottery

THE ANIMAL BONE

by Stephanie Vann

The condition of the bone is generally poor with significant amounts of erosion and weathering. A significant proportion of the material is unidentifiable because of its fragmentary and eroded condition. There is no evidence for butchery, although there is a single example of burnt bone. There are also no examples of pathology.

Of the identifiable material, all belongs to the main common domesticates. Ovicaprids (sheep/goat) are represented by a distal humerus and a tooth. Cattle and horse are mainly represented by teeth, although some fragments of bone are also likely to belong to cattle as well. As these teeth are all loose it is not possible to create an age profile of any of the individual animals represented in the assemblage. However, it is worth noting that, with the exception of the ovicaprid tooth, the teeth generally show very little wear, suggesting that these were relatively immature animals at the time of their death.

Whilst it is true that the small size and poor preservation of the assemblage make it difficult to draw any significant conclusions, there is nothing about the assemblage that is in any way extraordinary for one of this period. Sheep/goat and cattle are regularly exploited throughout the Iron Age and Romano-British periods, as is the horse, albeit not generally in the same numbers as ovicaprids or cattle (Maltby 1981).

THE CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS

by Val Fryer

Samples for the extraction of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from across the excavated area, and seven were submitted for analysis.

The samples were bulk floated by Northamptonshire Archaeology, and the flots were collected in a 500 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x16, and the plant macrofossils and other remains were quantified (Table 3). All plant remains were charred, modern contaminants, including fibrous roots and seeds, were present throughout, and the nomenclature follows Stace (1997).

RESULTS

Plant macrofossils

Cereal grains/chaff and seeds of common weeds and wetland plants are present at low to moderate densities in all seven samples. Preservation is moderately good, although some grains, particularly those within pit 265 and ditch 23 (see Figs 7 & 9), between enclosures E4 and E5, were severely puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures.

Oat (*Avena sp*.), barley (*Hordeum sp*.) and wheat (*Triticum sp*.) grains are present. The wheat grains are predominantly of an elongated 'drop-form' type typical of spelt (*T. spelta*), and spelt glume bases are also noted within four of the assemblages; pit 265, ditches 21 and 23 between enclosure E4 and E5, and gully 157 of structure S1 in enclosure E5.

Weed seeds are generally quite rare, and frequently occur as single specimens within an assemblage. Most are of common segetal species including brome (*Bromus sp*.), fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), indeterminate grasses (*Poaceae*), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), knawel (*Scleranthus annuus*), corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*) and vetch/vetchling (*Vicia/Lathyrus sp*.). The sedge (*Carex sp*.) nutlets from the two ditches 21 and 23, between enclosures E4 and E5, are the sole wetland plant macrofossils recorded.

Charcoal fragments are common or abundant in all samples. Other plant macrofossils include pieces of charred root/stem and indeterminate tubers. A single possible fragment of heather (*Ericaceae*) stem is present in ditch 21.

Other materials

Mollusc shells are exceedingly rare, being recorded from only two assemblages ditch fill 510, and pit 375 in enclosure E4. However, all are of the freshwater obligate species *Armiger crista*, which is commonly found in ponds or other small bodies of water.

A very limited range of other material types was present. The fragments of black porous and tarry material are probable residues of the combustion of organic remains (including cereal grains) at very high temperatures.

CONCLUSION

The assemblage from the fill of pit 374 is very small, containing only charcoal, a single oat grain, a vetch/vetchling seed and a solitary mollusc shell, and would appear most likely to be derived from scattered or wind-blown refuse.

The composition of the assemblages from pit 265 and ditches 510, 21, 23 and 156 is relatively uniform, although small (<0.1 litres in volume), and it would appear most likely that the material had a common source. Chaff elements are quite common, and along with the weed seeds and cereal grains, this may indicate that the assemblages are derived from cereal processing waste, possibly the winnowings from an early stage of the processing. The high density of severely charred grains within pit 265 and ditch 23 may also be indicative of the presence of parching waste.

The assemblage from the abandonment phase, from the possible midden deposit 830, is essentially similar to those from the occupation contexts, and may have had a similar origin.

In summary, the assemblages would appear to be primarily derived from small quantities of burnt cereal processing waste. As the density of material recorded is so small, it seems very unlikely that primary waste deposits are represented, and it is far more likely that the assemblages are indicative of scattered or wind-blown refuse which has accidentally been incorporated within contemporary feature fills across the excavated area.

DISCUSSION

CHRONOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND DECLINE

Previous activity in the area was denoted by small quantities of residual Neolithic to Bronze Age flint work. Occupation had probably begun in the Iron Age, but a small circular enclosure and a larger sub-rectangular enclosure are undated. A few sherds of early Romano-British pottery were probably introduced by episodes of back-filling associated

Table 3 The charred plant macrofossils and other remains

Context/Feature No.	373/ 374	510	264/ 265	21/ 22	23/ 24	156	830
Feature type	*Pit*	*Ditch*	*Pit*	*Ditch*	*Ditch*	*Gully*	*Deposit*
Cereals							
Avena sp. (grains)	X	-	-	-	XCF	X	-
Hordeum sp. (grains)	-	XCF	-	XCF	X	-	X
Triticum sp. (grains)	-	X	X	X	-	X	X
(spikelet bases)	-	-	-	-	-	X	-
(rachis internodes)	-	-	X	-	X		-
T. spelta L. (glume bases)	-	-	XX	X	XX	X	-
Cereal indet. (grains)	-	-	XX	X	XX	X	X
Herbs							
Bromus sp.	-	-	-	-	-	X	-
Chenopodium album L.	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Fallopia convolvulus (L.)A.Love	-	-	X	-	X	-	X
Persicaria maculosa/lapathifolia	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Plantago lanceolata L.	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Small Poaceae indet.	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Large Poaceae indet.	-	-	-	-	X	X	-
Raphanus raphanistrum L.	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Rumex sp.	-	-	-	-	-	XCF	-
Scleranthus annuus L.	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Spergula arvensis L.	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Stellaria graminea L.	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Vicia/Lathyrus sp.	X	-	-	-	X	-	-
Wetland plants							
Carex sp.	-	-	-	X	X	-	-
Other plant macrofossils							
Ericaceae indet. (stem)	-	-	-	XCF	-	-	-
Indet.seeds & tubers			X		XX	X	X
Armiger crista	X	X					
Other materials							
Black porous 'cokey' material			XX	X		X	X
Black tarry material				X			X
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Key to Table x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 10 – 100 specimens

with the setting out of the later settlement. An Iron Age parallel for these features exists within the locality at Covert Farm, Crick (Woodward and Hughes 1998).

The spatial relationship of the trackway and early enclosure suggests that they were, if only for a brief period, contemporary features in the landscape. It is along the trackway that the later plots were subsequently arranged. The pottery suggests that this began at the eastern end of the site, perhaps by the late 1st century. The early 2nd century saw an organic westward expansion along the trackway, the variation in size and shape of the enclosures seemingly at odds with a campaign of deliberate planning. The earlier enclosure system was lost beneath this new order. Whether the focal point of

Roman activity was deliberately shifted away from an abandoned Iron Age site or whether there was a degree of continuity remains unknown. Again a parallel exists at Crick, where Iron Age ditches were aligned beneath the periphery of the Romano-British settlement at The Lodge (Chapman 1994, 4).

Occupation of the site reached its zenith in the mid 2nd to early 3rd centuries by which time a series of enclosures had developed either side of a trackway. Within these plots were features including pits, gullies and postholes, some of which were evidently components of structures. A group of smaller enclosures, perhaps animal pens or small paddocks, were clustered around the exterior of the north-eastern enclosure. Either side of the settlement were ditches and gullies that presumably defined the boundaries of an adjacent field system.

By the mid-3rd to early 4th century the focal point of occupation appears to have retracted to the east end of the site. The integrity of the western and central enclosures was compromised by the insertion of a number of linear features whose alignments paid scant regard to the former 'grid' pattern. These features, like the earlier funnel-shaped gullies, may relate to the control of livestock.

The eastern enclosure and the cluster of smaller plots can therefore be viewed as the nucleus of the settlement. The evidence seems to suggest that by the mid 3rd century a single farmstead in this location was imposing a comparatively haphazard regime of land organisation over the former settlement enclosures to the west, and the domestic centre may have been a building lying to the south of the excavated area.

By the mid 4th century this reordered landscape had been abandoned. A clue to the nature of this abandonment is suggested by the late 3rd/4th century pottery assemblage, which indicates an upturn rather than a decline in pottery consumption. This suggests an abrupt abandonment of the settlement rather than a slow decline linked perhaps to a lengthy period of economic stagnation.

ARCHITECTURE

The only unequivocal structural evidence related to a small rectangular building in a corner of the central enclosure. It was defined by a configuration of gullies, possibly functioning as beam slots, and postholes, and the interior space measured 6m by 4m. There was no evidence for stone or ceramic building material and no surviving floor surface or hearth.

Nothing was found to elucidate the function of the building. Pottery, retrieved in modest quantities, dated to the 2nd-4th centuries. Although material indicative of cereal processing was extracted from soil samples taken from an associated feature, the small size of the assemblage precludes this activity taking place *in situ*.

Morris (1979, 66) discusses the nature of small rectangular buildings of the Roman period labeling them, '*…even more of an all purpose shed than the aisled buildings*'. Grain and fodder were often stored in such buildings which Morris describes as '*small rectangular or square rooms with floors raised slightly above ground level to create air space beneath and supported on offsets in the lower part of the walls, or on specially built inner walls*' (ibid, 34).

The absence of a floor and the presence of inward projecting postholes could be evidence of such an arrangement, but use as a sheep or pig pen cannot be ruled out, although with the entrance measuring only 0.60m wide this would have restricted the movement of larger animals.

Such rectangular buildings, along with larger aisled structures are thought to have become the dominant form of rural architecture in lowland Britain, gradually replacing the roundhouse from the 2nd century onwards (Hingley 1989, 31). It is possible that the structure located by geophysical survey in the south-east corner of the eastern enclosure falls into this category. At West Haddon there was evidence for a roundhouse contemporary with the track-side settlement in the western enclosure and perhaps the central enclosure. Hanley (2000) suggests that the 3rd and 4th century presence of roundhouses may be indicative of low status.

ECONOMY, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The excavated evidence indicates that this was a settlement with an extremely modest economy based upon the cultivation of grain. In the Roman period this formed the economic backbone of rural settlements throughout Northamptonshire, however, evidence suggests that the agrarian regime at West Haddon was far less productive than more densely populated areas of the county such as the Nene Valley. In contrast to the west of the county, the Nene Valley

has been the subject of extensive archaeological scrutiny revealing a thriving rural economy based upon mixed farming. Projects such as the Raunds Survey have identified numerous settlements set within an '*intensively exploited landscape'* (Parry 2006, 81). The manuring of agricultural fields resulted in scatters of pottery being deposited over much of the land. The high intensity farming which this denotes is thought to suggest either the presence of a large local population or increased crop production for sale in a market economy (*ibid* 273).

The economic situation in the vicinity of Roman West Haddon appears to have been one of stark contrast. The cultivated fields attached to the settlement do not appear to have been extensive. Spreads of contemporary pottery, indicative of manuring of the field system, have not been found in any quantity, despite fieldwalking surveys being conducted at the evaluation stage of the project and independently by amateur enthusiasts.

Unfortunately, the poor preservation of animal bone has made it difficult to ascertain the degree to which animal husbandry may have contributed to the economy. Some exploitation of cattle, horse and sheep/goat is indicated by teeth found in a handful of contexts and perhaps by an iron rein fitting. There is no evidence to suggest that specialised forms of agriculture were practiced, such as the viticulture identified at Roman Wollaston (Brown and Meadows 2000, 492).

Pottery does not appear to have been produced in the settlement nor was it consumed in great quantity by its occupants. Certainly evidence for coarse local wares far outstrips that of fine wares imported from greater distances. A possible source for the local products may be the kiln site at Long Buckby, whereas the imported wares probably reached the site via Watling Street and the small town of *Bannaventa*. The suffix *venta* is thought to denote 'market field' or 'market centre' (Jones and Mattingly 1991, 42).

The settlement also lacks evidence for any form of craft or industry. Despite plentiful supplies of local ironstone, there was no evidence for iron working, as found at other Roman sites in the county such as Silverstone, the Welland Valley, Harringworth, Wakerley, Laxton and Ashton (Taylor and Flitcroft 2004, 76). Nor was there evidence for religious practice or any indication of how the occupants of the settlement disposed of their dead.

The overall impression given is that of a modest rural settlement practicing subsistence farming. This lowly status may, to a degree, be attributed to its geographical location. West Haddon lies towards the central western side of Northamptonshire, a region that even today is primarily rural in aspect and given over to large tracts of pasture. In the Roman period this area corresponded with the territorial frontier of the Catuvellaunian *civitas* whose capital at St Albans (*Verulamium*) lay over 75km away to the south-east.

Although the exact boundaries of the *civitates* remain unknown, the neighbouring Corieltauvian *civitas*, with its capital at Leicester (*Ratae*), could only have been a few kilometres to the north of the settlement as Tripontium was a Corieltauvian town. Watling Street has been suggested as the possible demarcation line and also the territorial frontier of the Dobunni to the west (Branigan 1987, 28; Todd 1991, 15). It is thus probable that the settlement at West Haddon shared greater cultural and economic traits with similarly sized frontier settlements either side of the former tribal boundaries than it did with the intensively farmed and comparatively sophisticated heartland of its own *civitas* - to which it was, in effect, a backwater.

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