

EXCAVATION AT ATTLEBRIDGE

1989

by Jenny J. Hall, with Alex Little and Martin Locock

SUMMARY

Excavations in 1989 north of St Andrew's church, Attlebridge, revealed evidence for Romano-British and Late Saxon occupation and medieval boundary ditches. The first - and second-century feature was in the form of a two-phase ring-ditch, believed to be a foundation trench for a sequence of circular timber structures. South of the ring-ditch were three Late Saxon post-hole buildings, aligned north-west to south-east, two of which were joined by an intermediate structure. A post-in-trench building cut one of the post-hole buildings at right angles. This was also of Late Saxon date.

A series of linear and rectilinear cropmarks proved to be medieval boundary ditches, with a fenced enclosure in the north of the field.

The Site (Figs 1-2 and Plate 1)

The parish of Attlebridge is 10km north-west of Norwich and east of the River Wensum. The

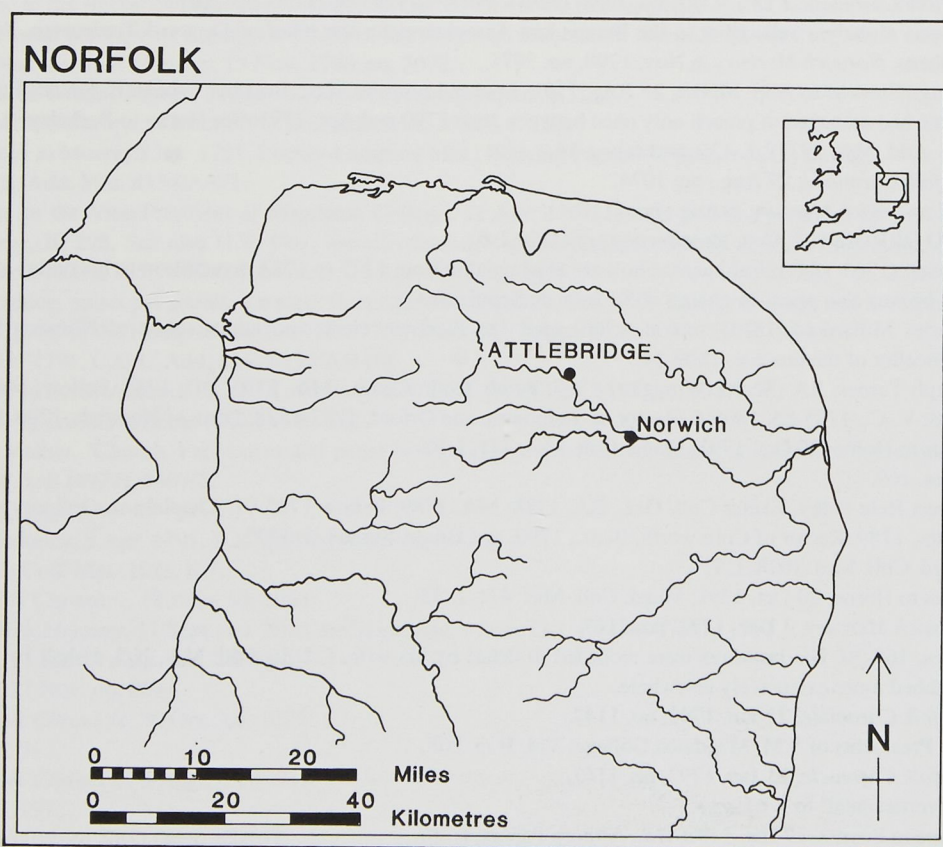
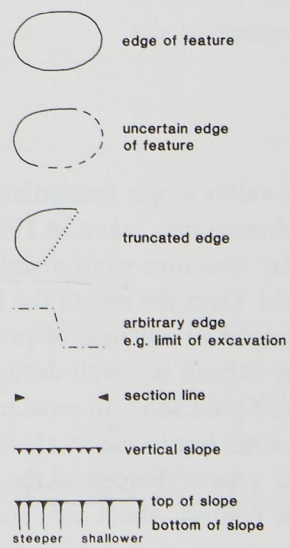


Fig. 1
Location of Attlebridge



Fig. 2
Site location plan

Plans Key



Sections Key

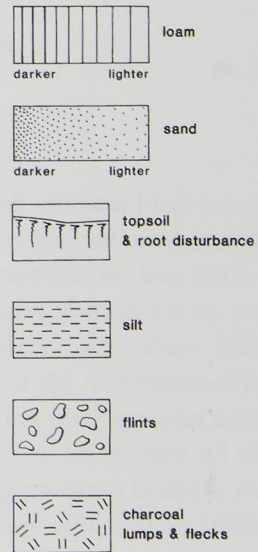


Fig. 3
Key to plans and sections

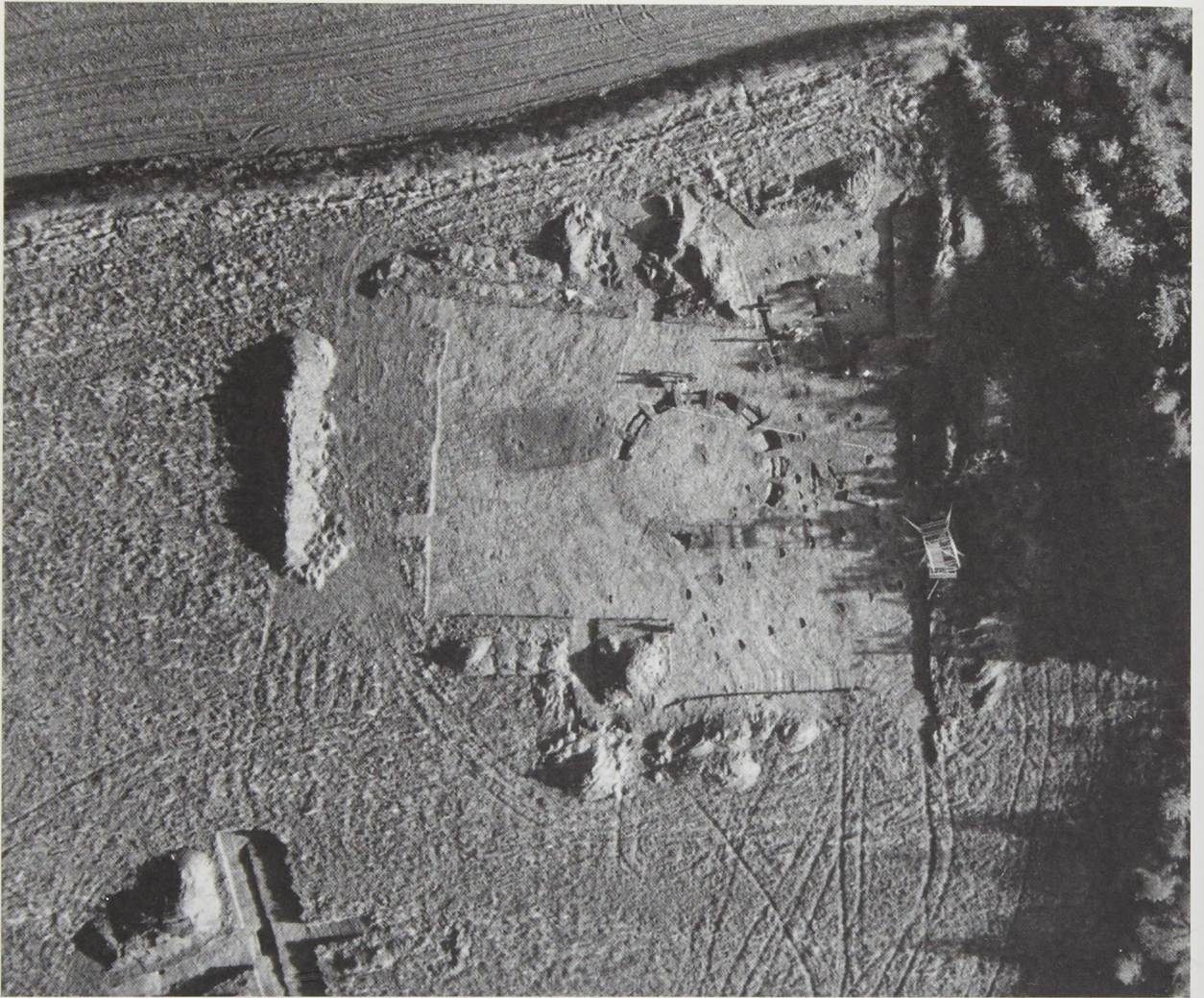


Plate 1
Aerial photograph of site.

excavation was in a field towards the top of the valley slope, immediately north of St Andrew's church. The site had been located from aerial photographs taken in 1977 showing several crop-marks. A ring-ditch and an adjacent rectangular structure were visible on high ground in the south-east corner on the highest point of the field. Over the rest of the field were a series of linear and rectilinear marks. Excavation was arranged in advance of proposed development and was funded by the developer, Mr G. Dacre. The subsoil is a well-drained glacial outwash gravel, its composition ranging from gravels to almost pure sand. In most parts of the field, this was directly overlain by ploughsoil to a depth of 0.40m. but in places there was a layer of hillwash between the two. Animal burrowing had caused a lot of damage at the ploughsoil-subsoil interface. The pH value of the soils was just below neutral, about 6.5, and is at variance with the expected figure for such a site. This would indicate heavy or persistent liming of the field in the recent past.

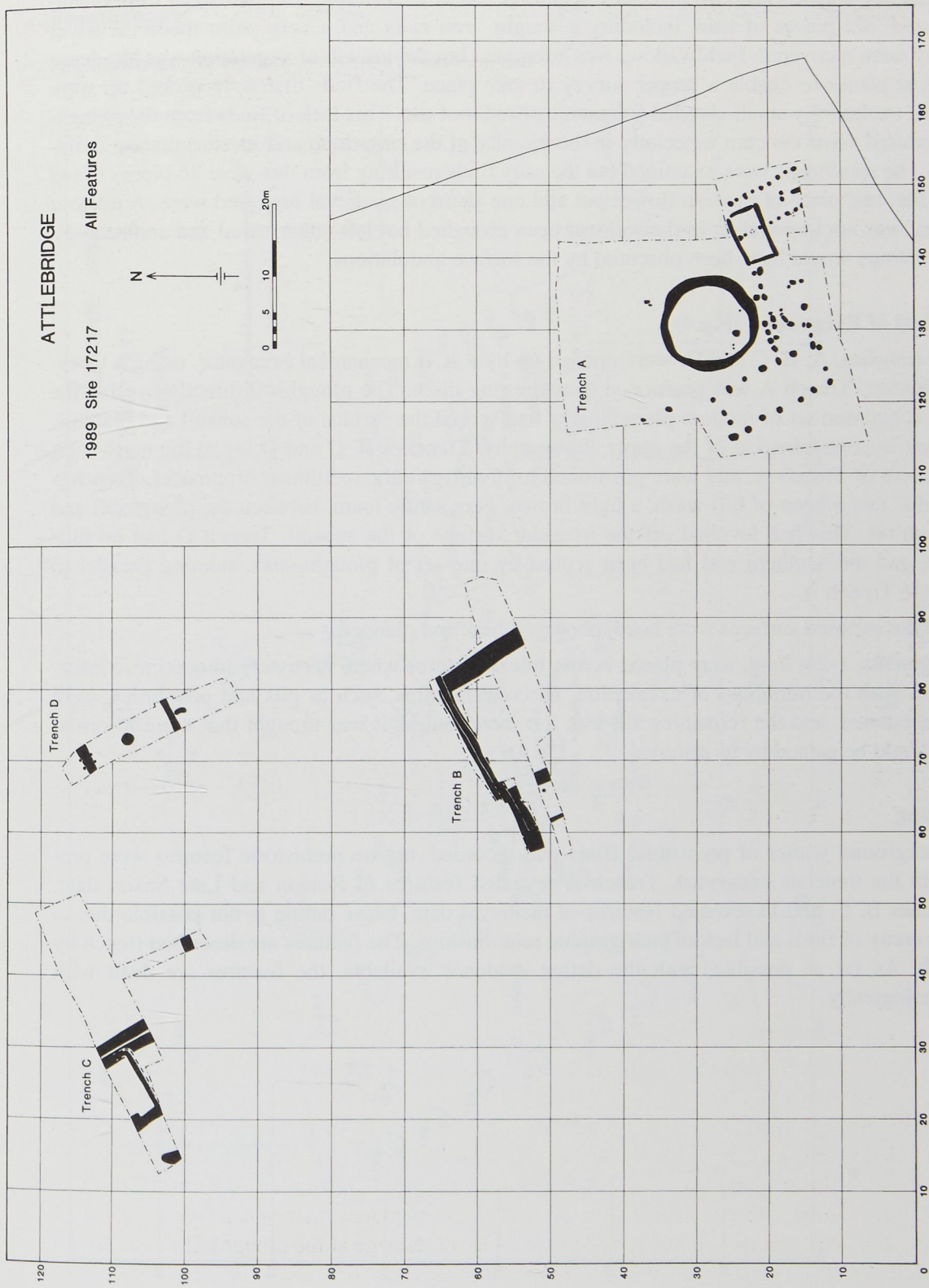


Fig. 4
Trench location and overall plan of excavated features

Prior to excavation the field was scanned with a metal detector but the finds from this were limited to iron nails and two pieces of horseshoe. After excavation, the spoilheaps were metal-detected. Six pieces of lead, including a weight, iron nails and a very worn medieval silver penny were recovered. Fieldwalking was attempted but the growth of vegetation was too dense in most places to enable a proper survey to take place. The finds that were picked up were almost exclusively small abraded fragments of red roof tile. This lack of finds from the ploughsoil caused some concern especially in the vicinity of the ring-ditch and its surrounding buildings. The spoilheaps were examined but the only finds resulting from this were 26 pieces of red roof tile, one piece of modern flower pot and one sherd of medieval unglazed ware. A contour survey was not undertaken as the soil had been ploughed but left unharrowed and archaeological contours would have been obscured by the surface undulations.

Method of Excavation (Fig.4)

Four trenches, A, B, C and D, were opened up by a JCB mechanical excavator, using a toothless bucket. Trench A was positioned over the ring-ditch. The ploughsoil directly overlay the subsoil and one set of modern ploughmarks had scored the surface of the subsoil and features, leading to contamination of the upper stratigraphy. Trenches B, C and D lay to the north-west and north of Trench A, and were positioned to investigate the rectilinear cropmarks. Trenches B and C had a layer of hill-wash, a light brown, very sandy loam, between the ploughsoil and the subsoil. This had levelled off the irregular surface of the subsoil. Trench D had no hill-wash, and the southern end had been scored by one set of ploughmarks, running parallel to those in Trench A.

All the exposed surfaces were hoed, photographed, and planned.

Segments, 1-2m long, were placed across linear features where necessary to maximise information with the minimum of excavation. Discrete features, such as pits and post-holes, were half-sectioned, and the remaining fill was left intact unless it was thought that more information would be gained by its removal.

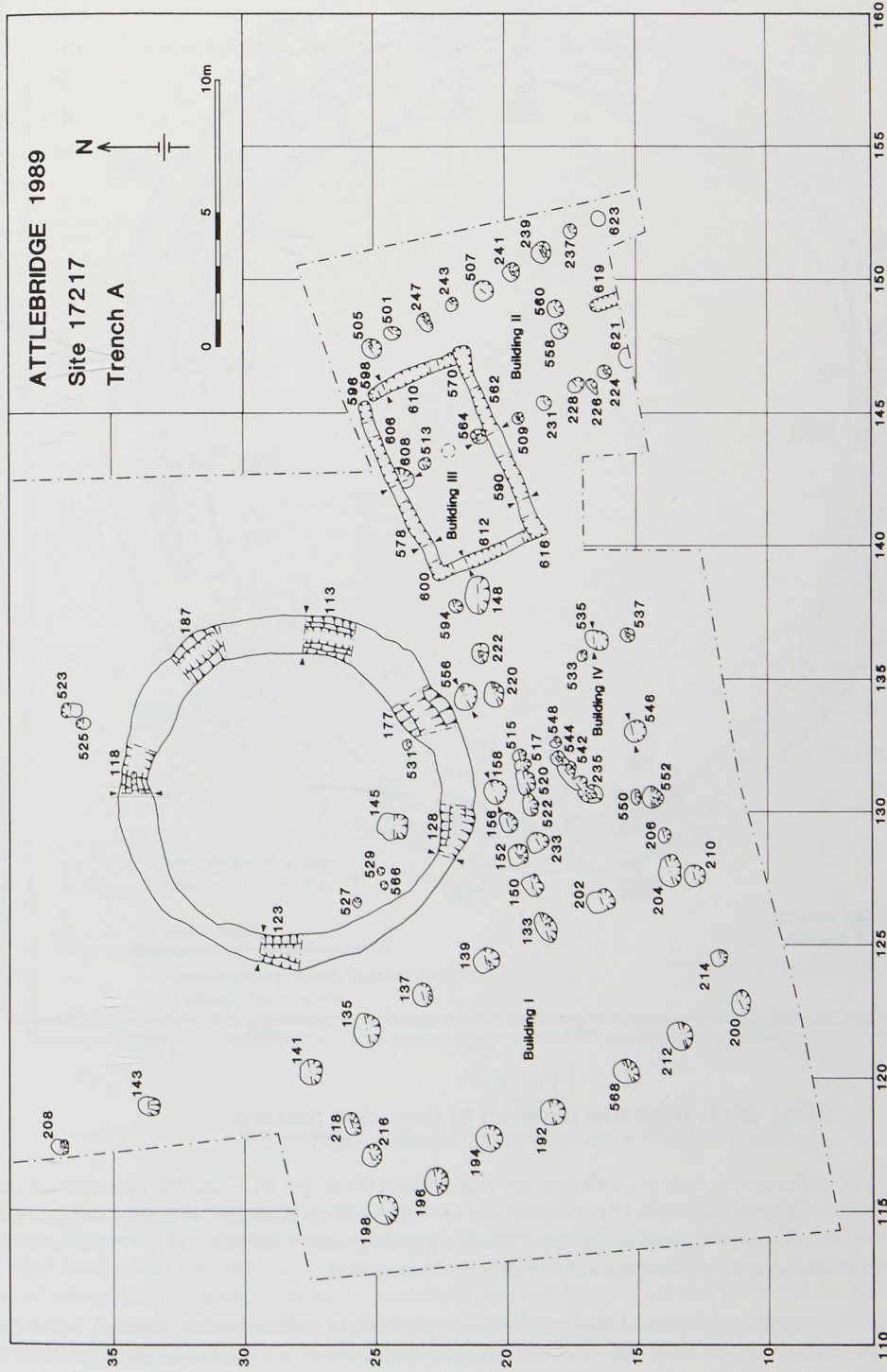
Phasing

A background scatter of prehistoric flints was recorded, but no prehistoric features were present in the trenches excavated. Trench A revealed features of Roman and Late Saxon date. Trenches B, C, and D revealed features of medieval date. Close dating is not possible due to the scarcity of finds and lack of stratigraphic relationships. The features are described trench by trench. As far as possible, with the dating evidence available, the features are dealt with chronologically.

TRENCH A

Romano-British

Ring-ditch (Figs 5-8)



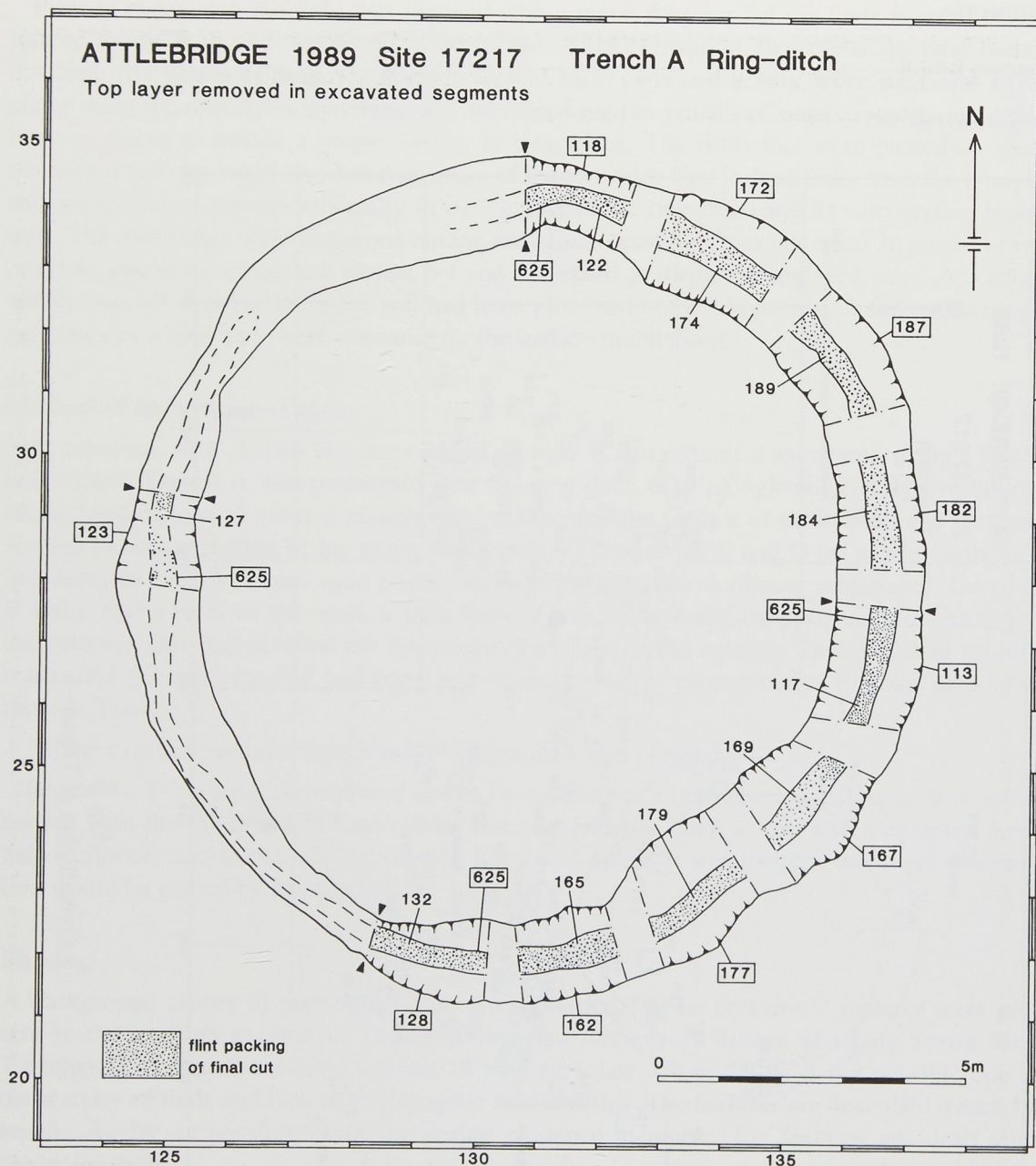


Fig. 6
 Ring-ditch, layer 626 removed to show flint packing.

Four segments, 113, 118, 123 and 128, were placed across the ring-ditch, at 90-degree intervals. The eastern quadrants were further subdivided by segments 162, 167, 172, 177, 182 and 187. The western quadrants were not excavated further because of the amount of plough damage to the upper stratigraphy. Segments 118, 187, 113, 177, 128 and 123 were fully excavated; the others were only excavated till the flint fill was exposed.

The initial phase of the ring-ditch had an external diameter between 12.75m and 13.50m and width between 1.00m and 2.00m. The profile varied from straight, steep sides with a flat base, to concave with a square-sided cut in the base. In all segments the fill was a brown sand containing flint/gravel. No primary silting was observed.

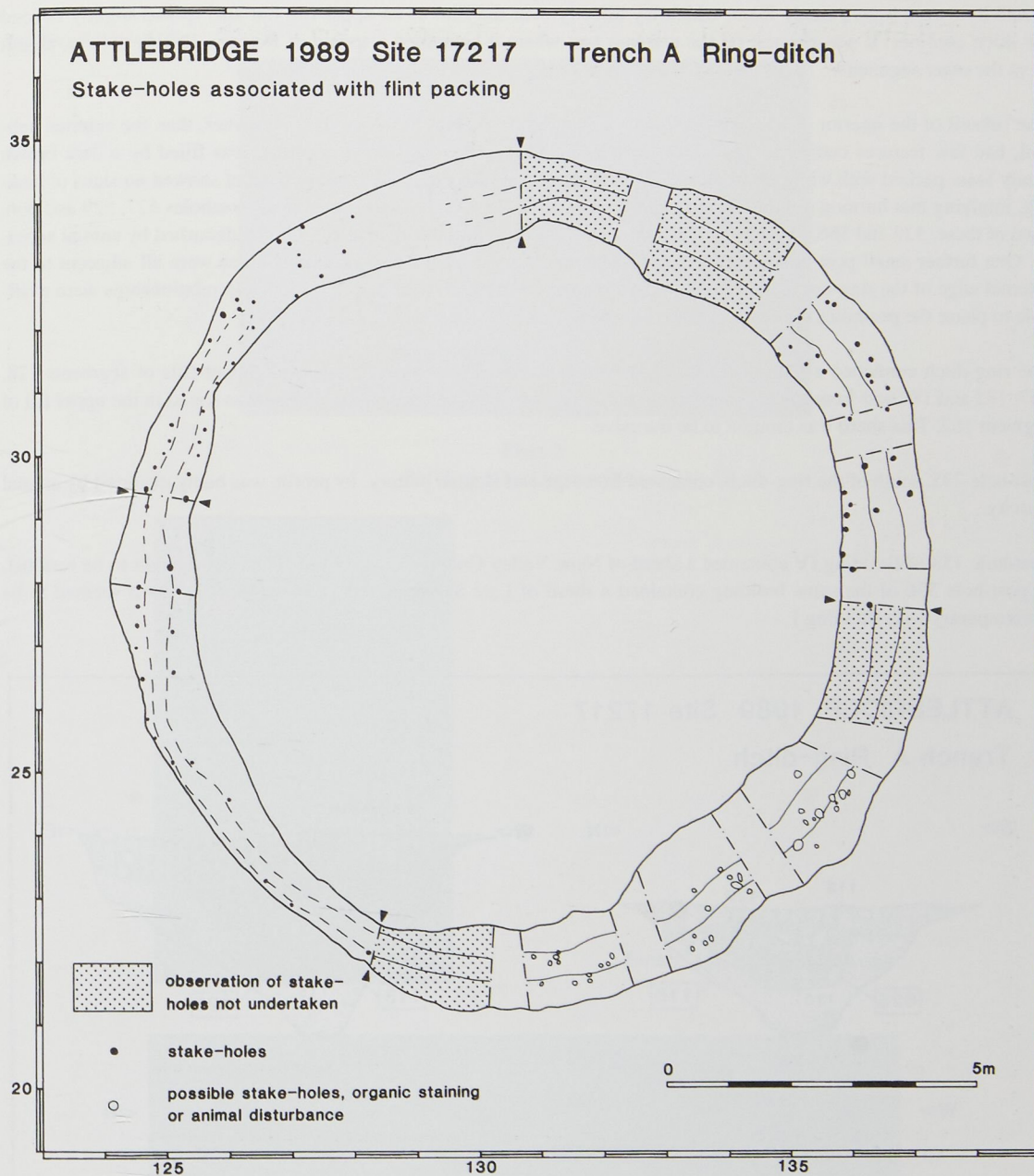


Fig. 7
 Ring-ditch, stakeholes associated with flint packing.

Where excavated, the ditch fill was found to be cut by a central slot of subsquare profile, 625, backfilled with very coarse flint gravel. In the south-west, and part of the north-west, quadrants, the flint fill was seen on the surface as a central band within the ditch. A series of dark brown-black, sub-circular stains, <0.10m in diameter, were seen along either side of the flint band. These were examined in the ditch segment 123 and are thought to be stake-holes, although some may be due to animal activity or plant roots. Following closer examination, similar stains were seen in the eastern segments when layer 626 was removed to reveal the top of the flint (Fig. 6). Irregular black marks existed on top of the flint in some segments. The stake-holes in the north-west quadrant continued alongside the flint band where it was visible, but the pattern was then disrupted and disappeared in the northern part of the quadrant. This was probably due to

masking by an upper fill, but pressures of time did not allow further investigation. The eastern half of the ditch was sealed by a dark brown sandy loam, which lay directly over the flint as an upper fill, but also spread slightly beyond the ditch confines. It was deepest on the extreme east where it contained a spread of Romano-British pottery, absent from the other segments.

The subsoil of the interior of the ring-ditch, although appearing more discoloured, i.e. browner, than the external subsoil, had few features cutting it. A shallow depression, 145, in the south-west quadrant, was filled by a dark brown sandy loam packed with white heat-cracked flints. The subsoil into which this feature was cut showed no signs of heating, implying that burning did not occur *in situ*. To the north-west of this were three small postholes 527, 529 and 566. Two of these, 529 and 566, lay side-by-side and were very deep for their diameter but badly disturbed by animal activity. One further small post-hole, 531, was excavated in the south of the area. The post-holes were all adjacent to the internal edge of the ring-ditch, but did not form a recognisable pattern. No dating evidence or relationships were available to phase the postholes in relation to the ring-ditch.

The ring-ditch contained a total of 90 Romano-British sherds. These were found in the upper fills of segments 128, 167, 182 and 187 and from lower down in segment 182. One sherd of Late Saxon pottery was found in the upper fill of segment 162. This sherd was thought to be intrusive.

Post-hole 235, south of the ring-ditch, contained Iron Age and Roman pottery. Its profile was badly distorted by animal activity.

Post-hole 158 of Building IV contained a sherd of Nene Valley Colour-Coated Ware. This was thought to be residual, as post-hole 556 of the same building contained a sherd of Late Saxon pottery, and the building itself seemed to be contemporary with Building I.

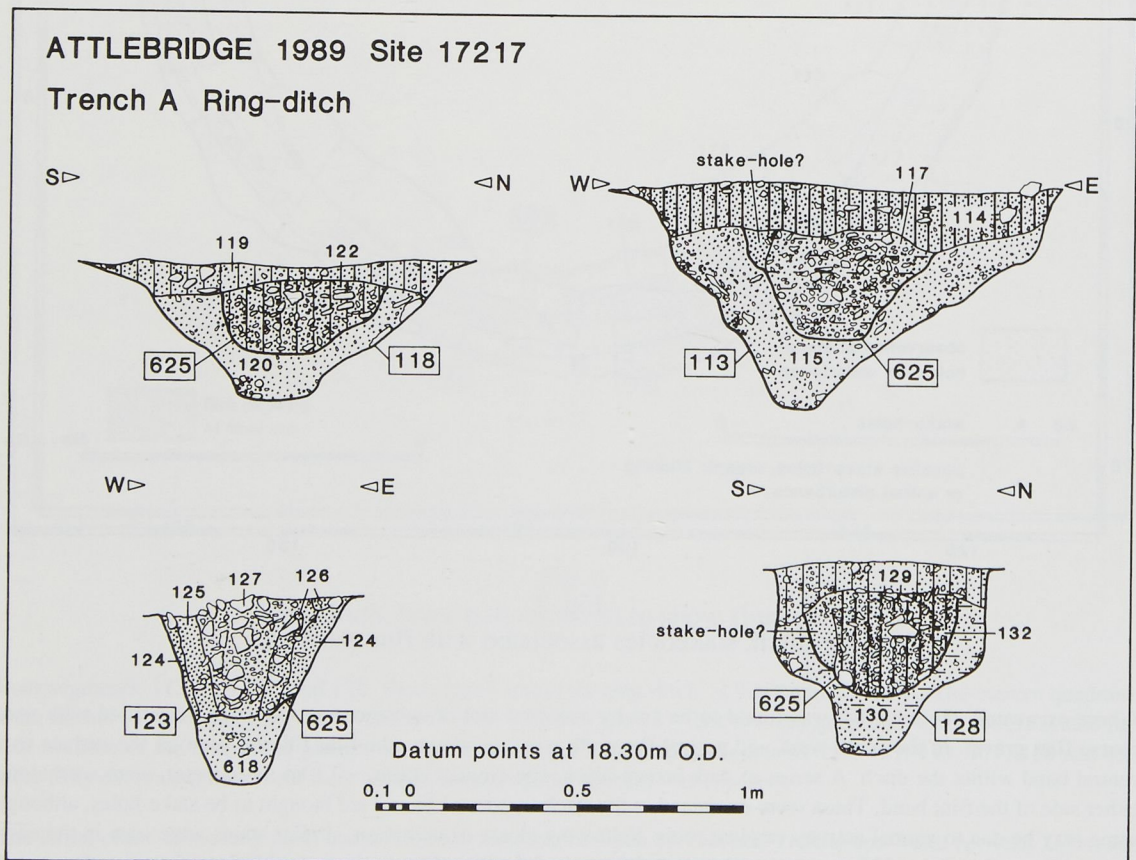


Fig. 8
 Ring-ditch, sections.

Late Saxon

Building I (Figs 5, 9)



Plate 2
Building I, looking north-east



Plate 3
Building II, looking south-east



Plate 4
Building III, looking south-east

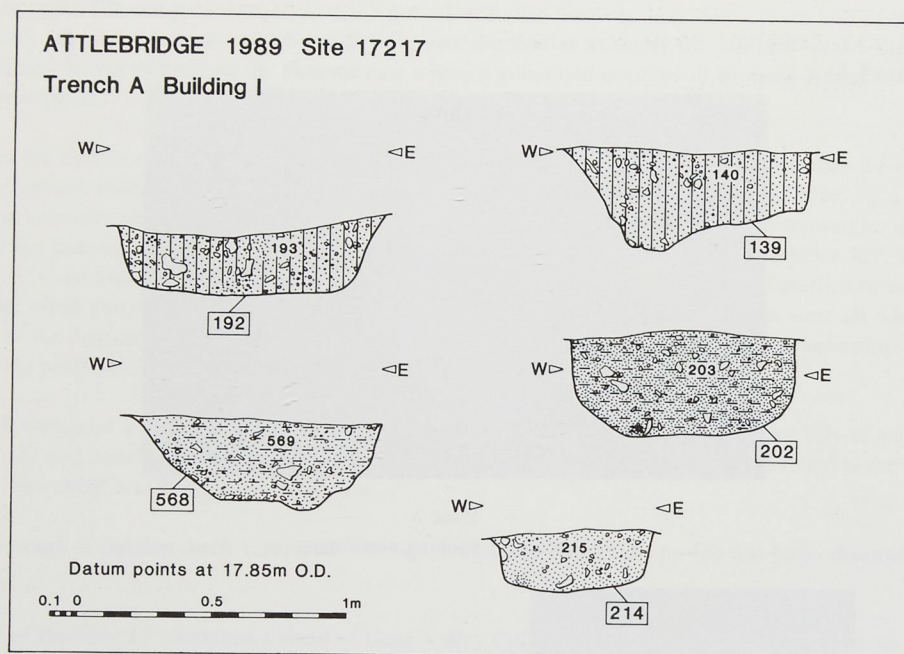


Fig. 9
Building I, sections

South-west of the ring-ditch was a post-hole structure, aligned north-west to south-east. It was 16.00m by 7.50m externally, and had seven post-holes on each side, spaced 2.50m centre to centre. The post-holes were flat-based, with near-vertical sides. Their diameters were between 0.80m and 1.10m, and the depths were between 0.20m and 0.30m. The fills were slight variations on a mid-brown silty sand. No post-pipes were visible, but 133 and 139 showed a possible post-cut in the base. Post-holes 139 and 202, on the east side, were deeper than the rest, being 0.48m and 0.39m respectively. The post-hole at the north-west corner, 198, was also atypical, being only 0.07m deep. At the northern end were two post-holes 216 and 218, and at the southern end one post-hole, 214, offset from the centre to the west. All three were smaller than the side post-holes being an average of 0.20m deep and between 0.60m and 0.80m diameter.

At the south-east corner of the building a post-hole, 210, lay just to the south-west of the corner post-hole, 204.

There were no internal features or signs of an external foundation trench.

Post-holes 135, 192, 196 and 200 contained Late Saxon pottery, and post-hole 139 contained a sherd of Early Medieval Ware. The building is dated to the Late Saxon period; it is assumed that the Early Medieval Ware sherd was intrusive.

Building II (Figs 5, 10)

Building II was a post-hole structure, aligned north-west to south-east, to the south-east of the ring-ditch. The external dimensions were 10.50m by 5.50m. Each side was made up of nine post-holes with none at the ends. The post-holes were not of a consistent form. Their diameter ranged from 0.46m to 0.98m and the depth from 0.16m to 0.40m. Post-holes 228, 231, 237, 243, 507, 513 and 564 had near-vertical sides, with a broad, slightly concave base. Post-hole 241 was similar in form, but with two post-cuts in the base. Post-holes 501, 505 and 509 had more sloping sides and narrower concave bases. Post-holes 224, 239 and 247 were similar to the latter but with post-cuts in their bases. Post-pipes were seen in 228, 241, 243, 247, 501 and 509. Two post-holes, 623 at the south-east corner of the building, and 621, one in from the south-west corner, were not excavated, as they ran under the baulk. The baulk to the south of 623 was later removed, establishing that 623 was the corner post-hole. The south-west corner post-hole was not uncovered. At the north-west corner, post-hole 513 was only 0.16m deep. South of this was a surface discoloration in the correct place for a post-hole but, on excavation, the cut was very shallow and irregular, and appeared to be the remains of an animal burrow. North of 513, post-hole 608 was aligned with the western side of the building, but beyond the corner (assuming that the building was rectangular). Adjacent to 228 was a shallow post-hole 226.

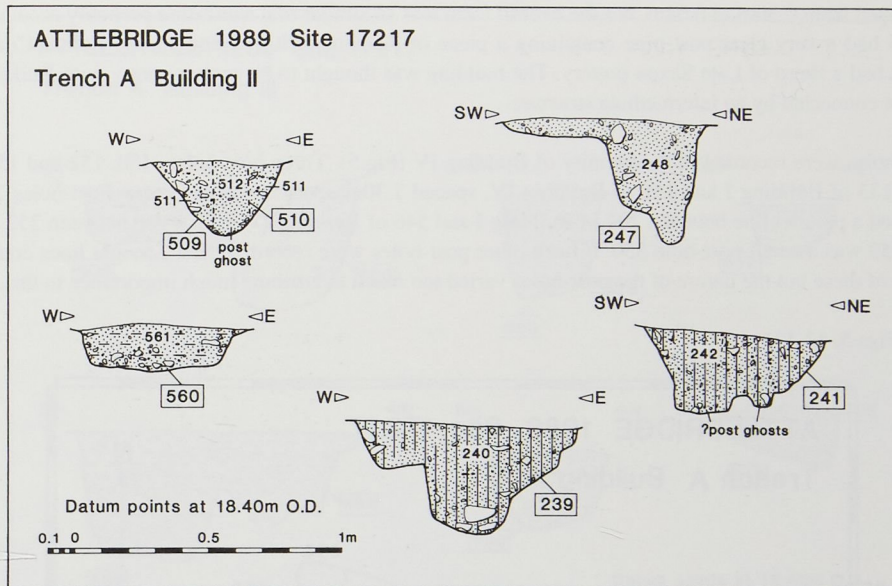


Fig. 10
Building II, sections.

Inside the building were two post-holes, 558 and 560, aligned east to west. These were each 0.55m diameter and 0.20m deep. If these represented an internal division, it would have been at an angle to the building (again assuming that the building was rectangular). The only pottery from the building was a sherd of Early Medieval Ware in post-hole 228. Post-holes 564 and 608 were cut by the foundation trenches 562 and 606 respectively of Building III which was dated to the Late Saxon period. Therefore the Early Medieval Ware sherd would appear to be intrusive.

Building IV (Figs 5, 11)

South of the ring-ditch were four large post-holes, 158, 535, 546 and 556, forming a rectangle, 6.50m by 4.75m, aligned parallel to Building I. They were between 0.70m and 0.85m diameter, with near-vertical sides and flat bases.

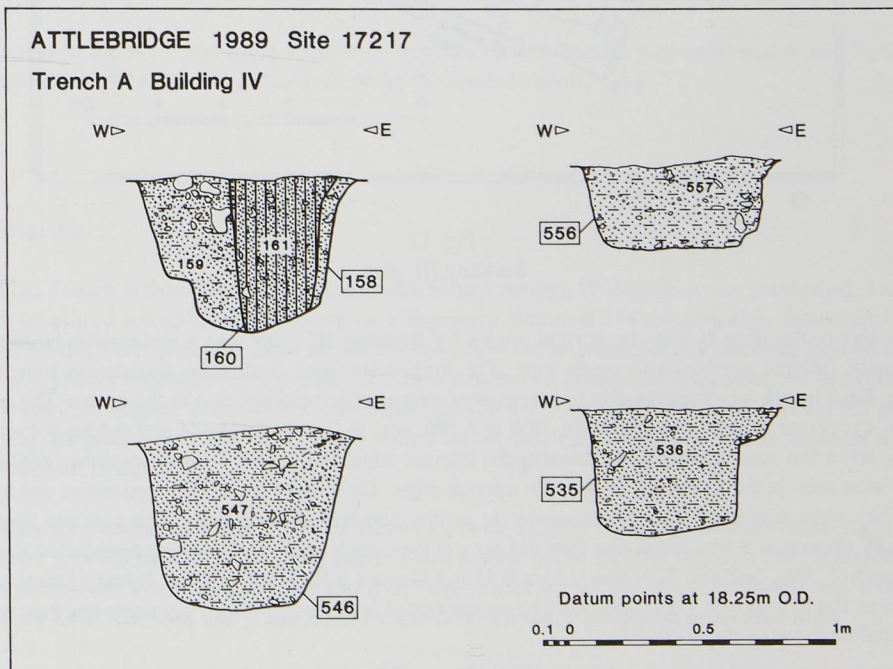


Fig. 11
Building IV, sections.

The depth ranged from 0.30m to 0.64m, but the overall form was so similar that truncation probably accounted for this. Post-hole 158 had a very clear post-pipe containing a piece of Romano-British Nene Valley Colour-Coated pottery. Post-hole 556 had a sherd of Late Saxon pottery. The building was thought to be contemporary with Building I as they appeared to be connected by an intermediate structure.

Several post-holes were recorded in the vicinity of Building IV (Fig.5). Three post-holes, 150, 152 and 156, formed a line between 133 of Building I and 158 of Building IV, spaced 1.30m apart, centre to centre. Post-holes 206 and 252 possibly formed a parallel line between 204 of Building I and 546 of Building IV, with a gap between 252 and 546. To the north of 552 was a small post-hole 550. Fifteen other post-holes were recorded here. Straight lines could be drawn through some of these but the nature of the post-holes varied too much to attribute much importance to this.

Building III (Figs 5, 12-13)

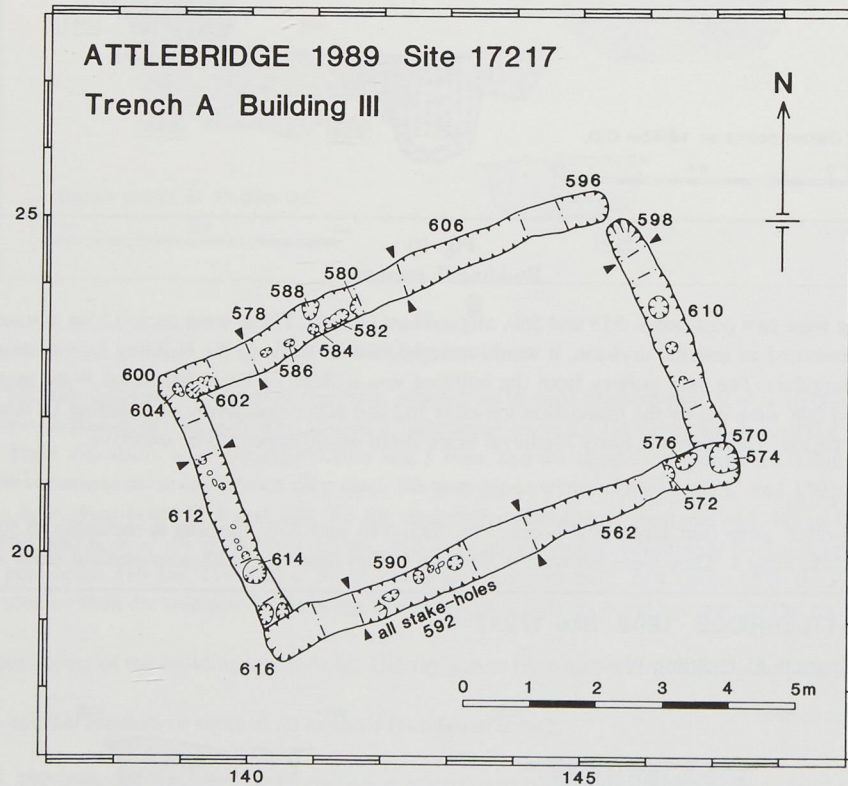


Fig. 12
Building III, plan.

As described above, Building II was cut at right angles by Building III. This was a rectangular building, 7.75m by 4.75m externally, aligned north-east to south-west. The long sides were continuous foundation trenches with sub-rounded ends. Each trench was excavated in four segments, one at either end and two in the centre. The northern foundation trench, excavated in segments 600, 578, 606 and 596, was 0.35m-0.45m wide and 0.40m-0.45m deep. It had vertical sides, and a flat base sloping down towards the internal edge. In the two western segments, 600 and 578, dark brown stains were seen in the trench fill against the internal edge. These were excavated separately, and appeared to be post-pipes. They were spaced at 0.40m from centre to centre, and had vertical sides with concave bases. When the trench was fully excavated it was noted that they did not cut the trench base. The southern foundation trench, excavated in segments 616, 590, 562 and 570, was 0.35m-0.55m wide and 0.35m-0.45m deep. It had vertical sides, and the base varied from flat to concave. Post-pipes were again excavated in the two western segments but they were not regularly spaced, unlike those on the north side.

The end slots were shallower and inserted between the side foundation trenches. In the north-east corner they did not touch at all. Each of the end slots was excavated in three segments. The western slot, excavated in segments 616, 612

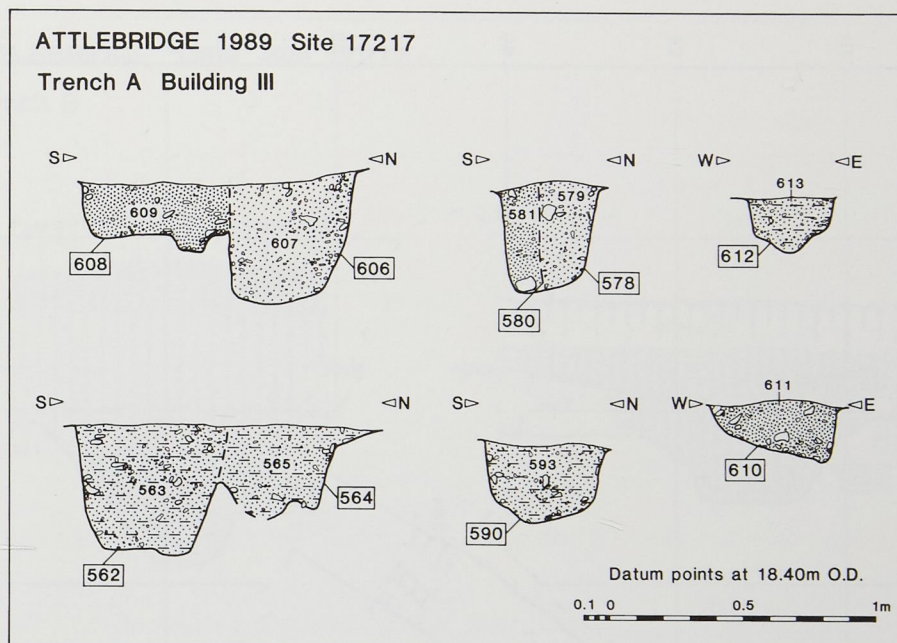


Fig. 13
Building III, sections.

and 606, was 0.30m wide and 0.20m deep. Eight stake-holes were excavated cutting the base of the slot. They were arranged to leave a gap of 1.0m in the middle of the slot. In the southern baulk between segments 612 and 616, post-hole 614 was excavated. Although there was a soil discoloration in the corresponding place to the north, this had suffered badly from animal activity, and if a post-hole had existed it had been destroyed. The eastern slot was 0.50m wide and 0.20m deep, and had three post-holes cut through its base.

No internal features were seen. Foundation trenches 562, 578 and 606 contained Late Saxon pottery.

A slot, 619, similar to the north and south foundation trenches of Building III, was excavated within Building II. The feature was aligned parallel to Building II and ran under the southern baulk.

Medieval

TRENCH B (Figs 14,15)

Ditch 271 entered Trench B from the south-east, and then turned through 90 degrees to run south-west. Two segments, 254 and 262, were placed across the ditch, one on each alignment. Segment 254 cut a smaller, similar ditch, 269, on its western edge. This ditch ran along the same alignment but could not be traced in any direction beyond the corner of 271. The later ditch had a simple concave profile filled by a mid-brown loamy sand. Segment 262 had been cut by two later ditches. Ditch 258, aligned north-west to south-east, cut ditch 271 on its southern side but did not go through to the northern side. Its profile was a broad U shape with a sub-square cut in the base. It was filled by a dark brown sand/silt and abundant flint pebbles.

Ditch 273 was parallel to ditches 352 and 383 in Trench D, being aligned north-east to south-west. It cut through the top of 271, where it could be seen as a gravel band. Three metres to the west of segment 262, it turned through 90 degrees to run south-east. Two segments, 256 and 252, were placed across this ditch. Its profile was concave, with a shoulder to a steep-sided flat base, and it was filled by a mid-brown sandy loam with occasional flint.

A shallow post-hole, 260, lay between 258 and 252. Ditches 271, 258 and 273 contained sherds of medieval pottery.

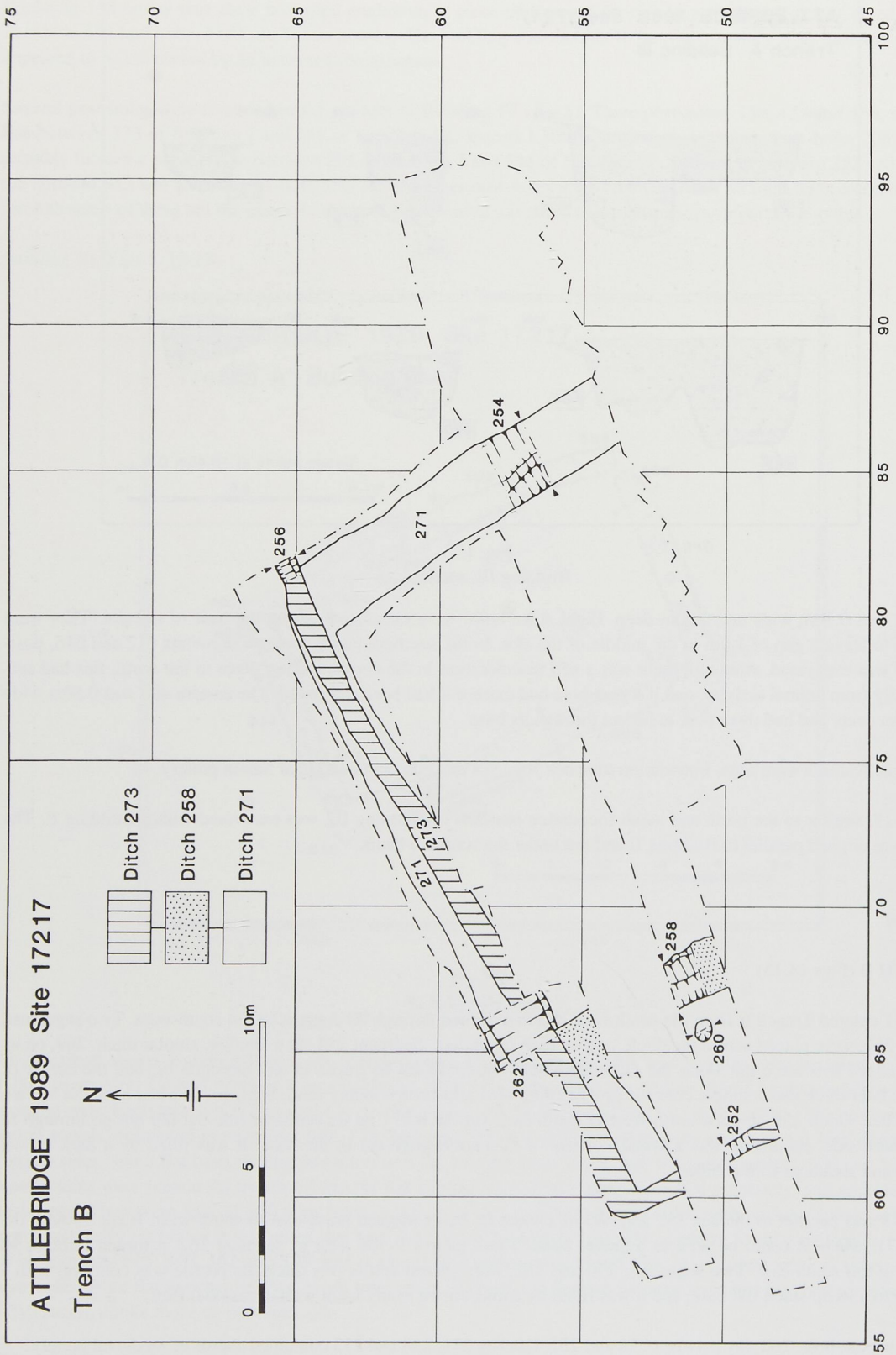


Fig. 14
Trench B, plan.

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Trench B

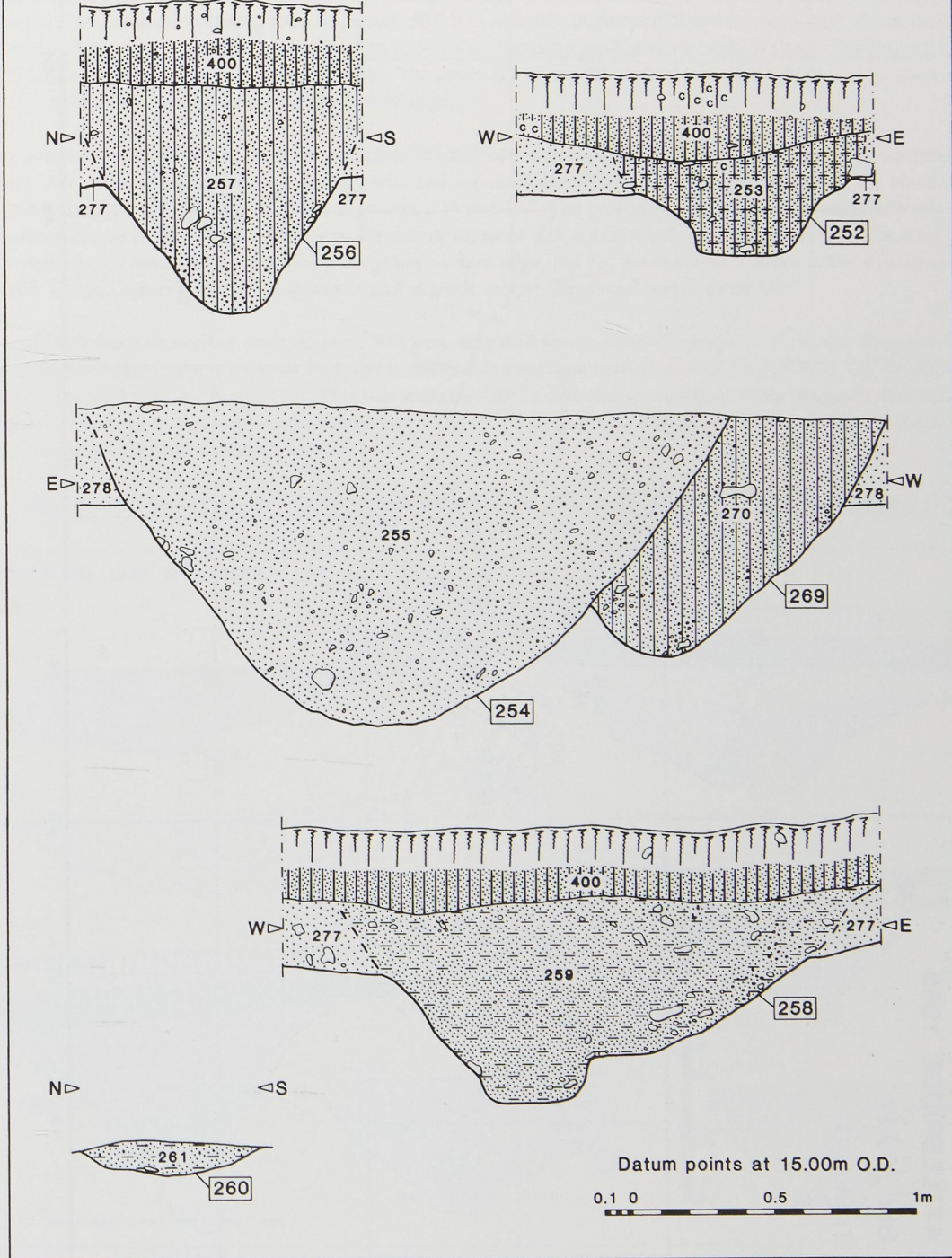


Fig. 15
Trench B, sections.

TRENCH C (Figs 16-17)

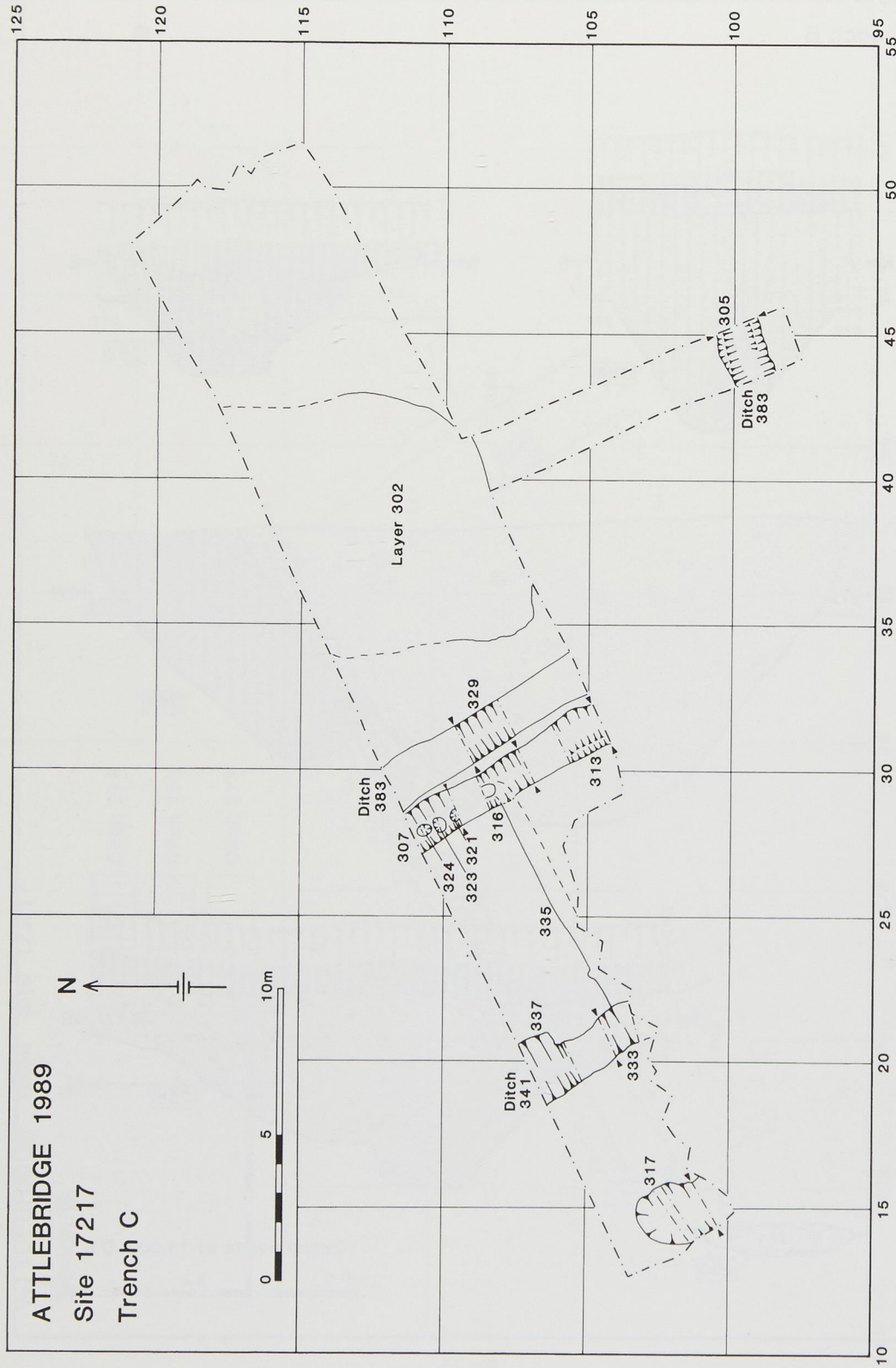


Fig. 16
Trench C, plan.

Ditch 383 (see also Trench D) was excavated in two segments, 305 and 329, in this trench. Segment 305 was on the same north-east to south-west alignment as segments 354 and 380 in Trench D. About 5m to the west of this segment, the ditch turned through 90 degrees to the north, and segment 329 was placed across the ditch 14m from the corner. Segment 305 had convex sides, which then dropped vertically to a flat base. It contained one homogeneous fill, 306, a mid-grey/brown silty sand with occasional flint and pebbles. A soil mark on its northern edge at the section was due to animal activity. The other segment, 329, had convex sides with a flat base. On the sides, at the bottom of the ditch, was 322, a light brown sand with occasional flint/pebbles. Above this was 331, a mid-brown sand with abundant flint/pebbles, and above that was 330, a mid-brown sand with occasional flints. Parallel to, and adjacent to, the ditch at segment 329 was a ditch, 340, excavated in three segments, 307, 313 and 316. Segment 307 and the north part of 316 had been disturbed by later activity, described with feature 335 below. The ditch profile was a broad U shape. The lower fill was a light brown sand, with occasional flint/pebbles. The upper fill lay on the eastern side of the ditch, and its shape suggests that a shallow re-cut existed along the eastern edge.

At the western end of Trench C, parallel to ditches 383 and 340, were two broad shallow linear cuts. The westernmost of these, 317, became shallower towards the north, and appeared to butt before it reached the edge of the trench. The cut to the east, 341, was excavated in two segments, 333 and 337. The profile was broad and was shallow at the ends but became deeper in the middle. In the eastern side of segment 333, a cut of sub-square profile, 335, was seen. This ran at right angles from 333 to 340, where it cut the western edge, but did not continue through to the eastern side of the ditch. Instead, the evidence suggests that it turned north, cutting the central part of ditch 340.

The north and south sections of ditch segment 307 were very different to those elsewhere in ditch 340. They showed a near-vertical division in the fill. On the east was a mid-brown sand with more than 40% flint/pebbles. On the west was a light brown sand with occasional flint. This was sealed by 308, a dark brown sand containing charcoal, shell and animal bones. The base of this segment had three post-cuts, 321, 323 and 324. The above was recorded as a foundation trench 341, probably connected with cut 335.

Ditch 383 contained medieval pottery in this trench but contained post-medieval pottery in Trench D. Ditches 317 and

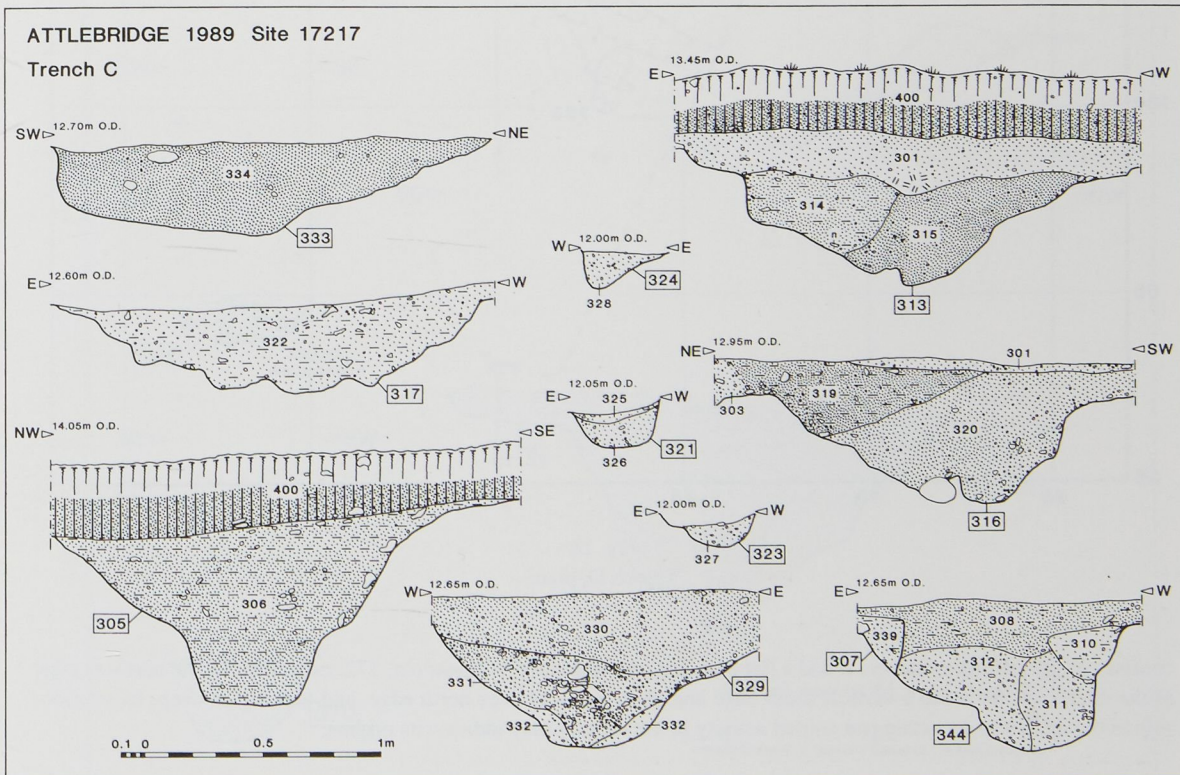


Fig. 17
Trench C, sections.

341 contained late medieval pottery and 340 had post-medieval pottery.

TRENCH D (Figs 18-19)

The southern ditch, 352, was initially excavated in a 1.40m segment, but was then fully excavated within the trench

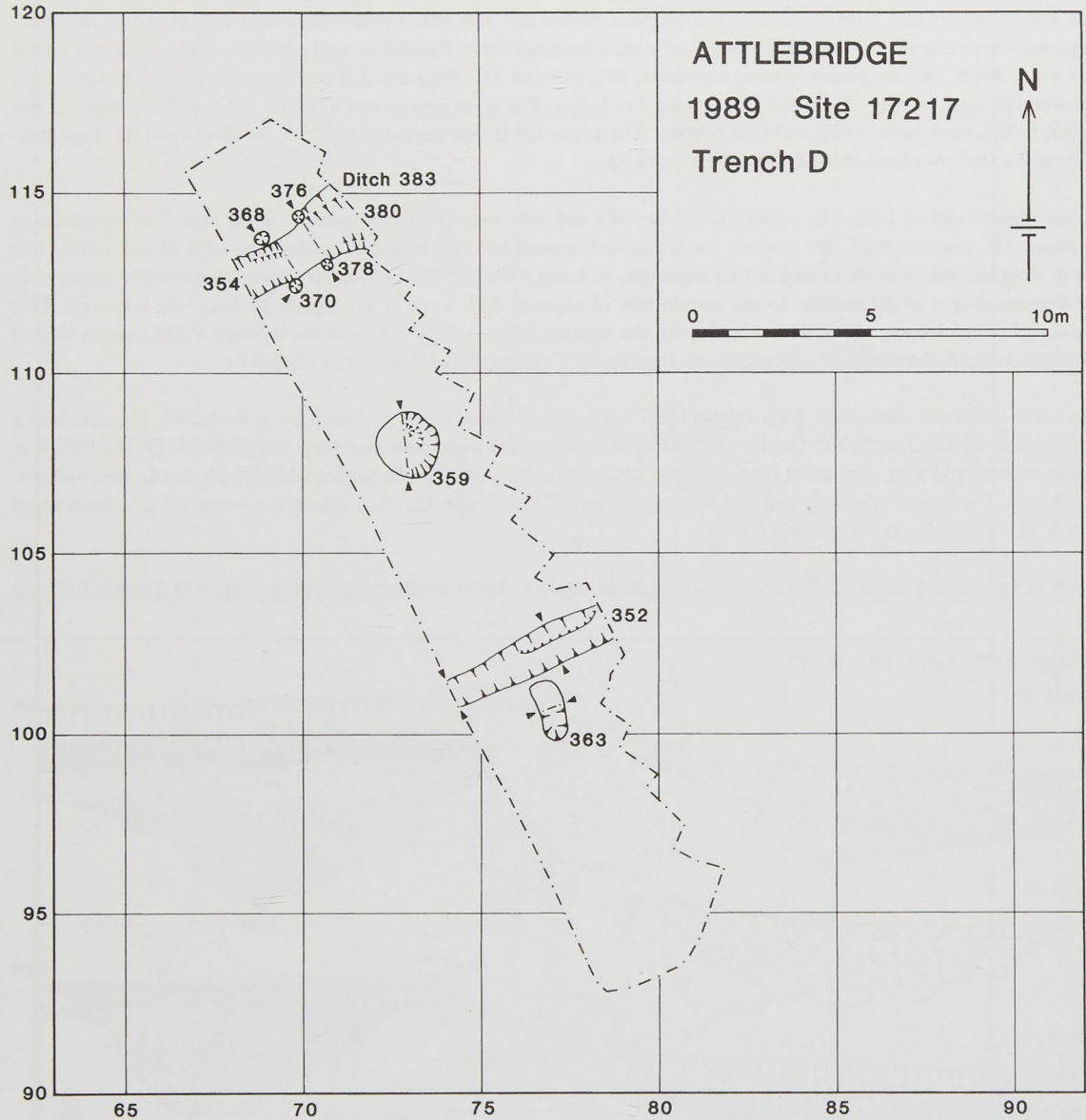


Fig. 18
Trench D, plan.

confines to gain dating evidence. It had a flat base and concave sides. A linear cut, 372, existed along the northern edge of the ditch base. This had a vertical south edge and an irregular convex north edge, and was 0.10m deep. Its relationship to the ditch was uncertain and animal activity in the vicinity may indicate its origins.

The north ditch, 383, was excavated in two segments, 354 and 380 (ditch also present in Trench C). The sides were near-vertical with a concave base. Both segments had a lower fill, a light grey-brown silty sand with sparse flint/pebbles. This would appear to be primary silting. The upper fill was a mid-brown with abundant flint-pebbles.

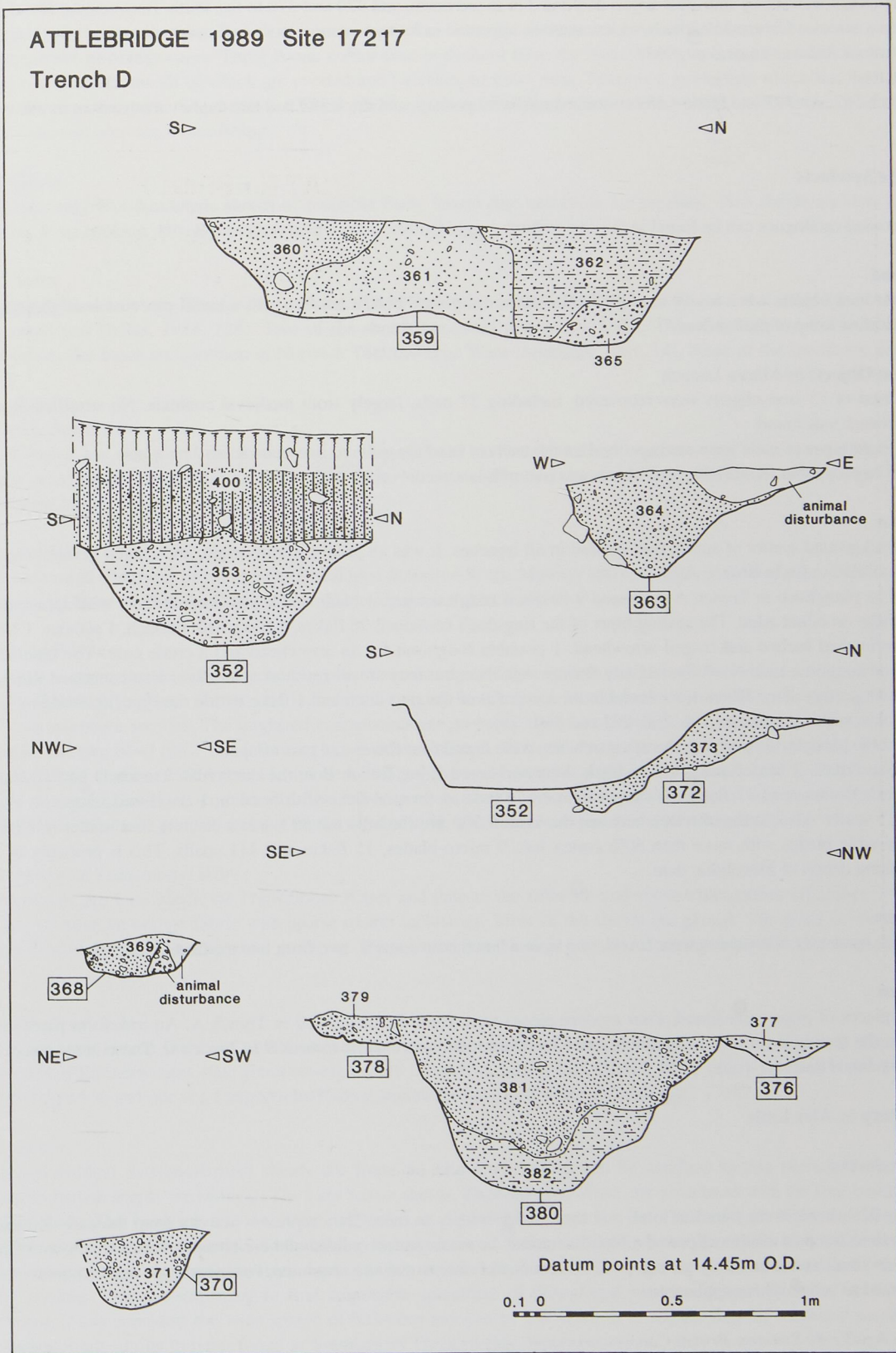


Fig. 19
 Trench D, sections.

This ditch was cut by four post-holes, 368 and 376 to the north, and 370 and 378 to the south. Between the two ditches was a circular feature 359 which, on excavation, appeared to be two or more post-holes and not a single large feature. South of 352 was an oval pit, 363.

Ditch 352, cut 372 and feature 359 contained medieval pottery, and ditch 383 had late medieval pottery in its fill.

The Artefacts

Detailed catalogues can be found in the site archive.

Lead

Four lead objects were found in ploughsoil contexts: a plumb bob, a musket ball, a small piece of lead sheet and a solidified lump of molten lead.

Iron Objects by Martin Locock

A total of 55 iron objects were recovered, including 37 nails, largely from medieval contexts. No stratified Roman ironwork was found.

Eight types of nails were distinguished on the basis of head shapes.

The only other identifiable iron object was part of a late medieval horseshoe, from a ploughsoil context.

Flint

A background scatter of struck flint existed in all trenches. It was all prehistoric in origin, and ranged in date from the Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age.

The ploughsoil in Trench A contained 9 flakes, 1 rough scraper, 1 blade and 1 non-cortical flake with apparent use damage on either edge. The sealing layer of the ring-ditch contained 96 flakes, 1 flake with retouch, 1 scraper, 1 blade, 1 unfinished barbed and tanged arrowhead, 1 possible rough-out for an arrowhead and a crude core. The latter three would suggest a Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date, but they are all residual as the layer also contained Romano-British pottery. Two flakes were found in the lower fill of the ring-ditch and 1 flake within the flint fill. Building I had 6 flakes within post-holes 196, 200, 202 and 569.

In the ploughsoil overlying the other trenches were found four flakes and two scrapers.

Ten flakes, 2 blades and 1 micro-blade were recovered from Trench B in the ditch fills. Trench D had 13 flakes. Trench C contained 37 flakes, 1 scraper on a crude flake, 1 thermal flake with retouch, 1 crude end scraper, 6 blades and 5 spalls. Also, at the interface between the subsoil 500 and the hillwash 303, was a discrete flint scatter of 1 blade, 3 possible blades with more than 50% cortex left, 9 micro-blades, 15 flakes and 111 spalls. This is probably *in situ* working debris of Mesolithic date.

Stone

Three sandstone whetstones were found, one from a late Saxon context, two from late medieval contexts.

Glass

Six pieces of glass were found. Four modern pieces were from the ploughsoil in Trench A. An iridescent piece came from the sealing layer of the ring ditch, and a badly corroded piece came from 309 in Trench C. These latter pieces are of medieval date.

Pottery by Alex Little

Introduction

Only 329 sherds were found in total, and these range widely in date. They represent activity from the early Romano-British to the post-medieval periods. No illustrations or catalogue are published here because the total amount of pottery is small and it can only give general indications of date to the site sequence. Published type series, however, are referred to below where applicable.

Iron Age/Early Romano-British Coarsewares

Sixteen handmade sherds including two jar rims and one possible bowl rim are Late Iron Age or Early Romano-British. They have sandy fabrics and are gritty. Ten examples are burnished.

Romano-British

Ninety-six sherds are Romano-British of which ninety-four are coarse wares and two are finewares. The coarse wares are greywares or orangewares. There is one colour-coat bodysherd from the Nene Valley and one Samian bodysherd. There are four jar rims all of which are everted and two flanged bowl rims. There is a mortarium which has flint and quartzite trituration grits. Six sherds are bases, all of which are flat. Decoration on bodysherds is limited to grooved, wavy lines and occasional burnishing.

Early Saxon

There are only four handmade sherds of probable Early Saxon date and these are residual. Two sherds are rims and both are from cooking pots. Decoration is limited to burnishing.

Late Saxon

Twenty-eight sherds are Thetford-type Ware. There are three rims and these are all jars of Dallas type AA11 (Rogerson and Dallas, 1984, 128). Two of the sherds are bases and both are flat. This may indicate a source near Norwich as flat bases are common in Norwich Thetford-type Ware (Jennings, 1981, 14). None of the sherds are decorated.

Early Medieval Ware

These sherds are sandy and micaceous and overlap with the medieval unglazed coarsewares. There are eighty-eight sherds in total and one of these has a pimply fabric. No rims or bases are present. There are two examples of incised decoration but no decoration otherwise.

Stamford Ware

One very small sherd can be ascribed to Developed Stamford Ware, Mahany fabric C, glaze 3 (Mahany *et al.* 1982, 56) and is dated from the mid-twelfth century to the early thirteenth century.

Medieval Wares

Of seventy-seven sherds, fifty-two are unglazed coarsewares and twenty-five are glazed. The glazed wares comprise mainly Grimston (eighteen sherds) and include one sagging base and one handle in this fabric. The other glazed sherds are from unknown sources. The unglazed coarsewares are probably from local sources and include three jar rims, six jug rims and two bowl rims. The following types (after Jennings, 1981, 40-49) are present: figure 12, numbers 258 and 259; figure 14, number 298; figure 15, numbers 302 and 310 and figure 17, numbers 326(2) and 331(2). There are four bases, all sagging, and one strap handle. The majority of the sherds are undecorated but there is one sherd with thumb impressions, two have grooves and one has an applied strip which has been pinched with a fingernail.

Late Medieval Transitional Wares

Eight sherds are Late Medieval Transitional Wares and date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Jennings, 1981, 61-2). All have an orange fabric with sparse quartz inclusions. Most of the sherds are glazed. The glaze is brownish green. One of the sherds has external grooving. There is one rim which is a bowl of Jennings type 408 (Jennings, 1981, 63).

Post-Medieval Wares

There are only eleven sherds of post-medieval date. Five of these are China (probably nineteenth-century), three are Glazed Red Earthenwares (late sixteenth-eighteenth centuries), one is Iron-Glazed Ware (early sixteenth-late seventeenth centuries) and one is a Langerwehe/Raeren stoneware base (late fifteenth century).

Discussion

The non-residual Romano-British sherds are from the ring-ditch, which can be ascribed to this period. Only four Romano-British sherds are residual. The Late Saxon sherds, Thetford-type Ware, are associated with the four buildings in Trench A. The Norwich area has been suggested as a probable source for the Thetford-type Ware (see above). 50.46% of the site total comprises Early Medieval and medieval wares and dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Most of these sherds derive from ditches within trenches B, C and D. The presence of Grimston Glazed Ware is quite notable. It is not surprising to find reasonable quantities of this glazed ware on a rural site this far east of Grimston if one considers the wide sphere of influence enjoyed by this ware. It is notable that the medieval unglazed coarsewares are similar to types found in Norwich (*cf* Thetford-type Wares).

The later medieval and post-medieval periods are represented by few sherds which derive from mainly ploughsoil and hillwash layers and the upper fills of ditches.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the pottery as so little was found. Very little work has been undertaken in mid-Norfolk and so little is known about the types of pottery common in this area.

Clay pipe

Five pieces of clay pipe stem were found in ploughsoil contexts 101, 163 and 302. Two pieces in 163 were non-abraded, suggesting immediate deposition in the sealing layer of the ring-ditch, probably by deep ploughing.

Tile by Martin Locock

A total of 2182g of architectural ceramic fragments was recovered. They could be separated into four types. No complete examples were recovered.

Roof tile

All examples were flat, with thicknesses of 10-21 mm. No fragments displayed nibs or nail-holes, but many had traces of mortar attached, and it is possible that this was the primary method of fixing.

Floor Tile (Yellow Glaze)

This type (285g) was 28-30mm thick, with poorly preserved traces of yellow glaze on the top and side. The fragments may represent two tiles. Found in Trench C.

Floor Tile (Green Glaze)

The examples with a translucent green glaze (125g) were 24mm thick, with a bevelled side. The fragments may represent one tile. Found in Trench C.

Floor Tile (Unglazed)

These were thicker than the glazed examples (32mm), and often had one face (presumed top) fired to a blue/grey colour. Two tiles (260g) at least are represented. Found in Trench A.

Discussion

All tile on the site is the result of secondary dumping.

The roof tiles are all of a plain, fairly thin, flat form, and seem to have been mortared into place on the roof. The glazed floor tiles are of late medieval form. The plain floor tiles/bricks are thick for floor tiles, and it is probable that they are Roman bricks. They are relatively thin for Roman bricks but fall within the range for 'Lydion' bricks, as found at Caistor St Edmund (Brodrigg 1987, 37-40).

Other finds

Daub

A small quantity (35g) of daub was found in Trench C Context 303.

Mortar

A lump of lime-rich mortar, weighing 25g, with occasional stones up to 8mm, was found in Trench C Context 318.

Shell

Snail-shell fragments were hand-collected during the excavation of Trench C Context 308.

Animal Bone by Martin Locock

Mammal Bone

A total of 211 mammal bone fragments were recovered, of which 65 (30.8%) could be identified by species; of the remainder, 87 (41.2%) could be classified by bone type and size, while 59 (28.0%) were completely unidentifiable (Table One). Although the assemblage is small, the bones recovered were fairly well preserved, and it is not systematically biased in its representation.

Species present included Cow, Sheep/Goat, Pig, Horse, Red Deer and Dog. The sample size was too small to allow a meaningful analysis of the frequency of the various animals but, in general, the site seems to have had a typical domestic fauna for a rural site in the late Saxon and medieval periods (Clutton-Brock 1976, 376-7; Noddle 1975, 251).

Eight of the bone fragments had been exposed to considerable heat, as part of rubbish disposal rather than cooking. Only three fragments displayed butchery marks. When this fact is considered, along with the presence of animals not usually eaten (dog, horse), it seems probable that the bones on the site are the result of casual dumping, and that the material from occupation of the site must usually have been disposed of off-site or in an unrecoverable manner.

TABLE 1: Number of Fragments Recovered

| Trench | Period | Cow | S/G | Pig | Horse | Red Deer | Dog | Unident. | Total |
|---------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|----------|-----|----------|-------|
| A | Romano-British | 2 | | | | | | | 2 |
| A | Saxon | 3 | | 1 | | | | 24 | 28 |
| B, C, D | Medieval | 24 | 14 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 119 | 177 |
| A | Modern | 1 | | | | | | 3 | 4 |
| Total | | 30 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 146 | 211 |

Non-Mammal Bone

A total of 14 fragments were recovered, of which two could be positively identified, and one assigned to element and family. All non-mammal bone was from medieval contexts.

| Trench | Period | Context |
|--------|----------|--|
| D | Medieval | 259 2 unidentifiable bird bones |
| C | Medieval | 308 1 wood pigeon, 1 unidentified bird; 1 ?pike, 4 unidentified fish |
| C | Medieval | 310 1 wood pigeon; 3 unidentified fish. |

Discussion

The two-phase ring-ditch is almost certainly of Romano-British date belonging to the 1st-2nd centuries. The first phase, a steep, well-defined cut with no visible silting layers, seems to have been backfilled rapidly, with little erosion of the sides. Therefore it may have held upright timbers, although no trace of these remained. The second phase was defined by a foundation trench, possibly lined with stake-holes, and backfilled with flint packing. The stakes may have protruded above-ground as a double circle of stakes with a cavity between, held apart at the base by the flint. The function of each phase is unknown and may have differed. No precise parallels have been found, although circular structures are common in the British Iron Age and on Romano-British sites.

The Late Saxon buildings have a planned layout and represent a rural, domestic, settlement. Buildings I, II and IV are aligned parallel to one another; Buildings I and IV are joined at right angles by an intermediate structure. Evidence for doorways is limited. Slot 619 indicated that there were further structures to the south of the trench. Building I has a gap in the southern end with two post-holes at the south-east corner, which probably represent a doorway. The intermediate structure between I and IV has a similar arrangement in its southern side. The individual buildings have paired post-holes across the structures, with no emphasis on the corner posts. These are similar to buildings B1 and B2 described at Chalton, Hants (Addyman *et al.*, 1972) and buildings 1 and 2 at West Stow (West, 1985), although these buildings have been dated to the Early Saxon period, not Late Saxon. Building III and the possible building represented by slot 619 show a development from post-hole to post-in-trench building technique as described by Rahtz (1976, 84) but within the Late Saxon period rather than Early-to-Middle Saxon. The buildings are of a more regular construction than those of Late Saxon villagers at North Elmham (Wade-Martins, 1980). The building techniques are similar, as are some features like gable-end doorways, but the Attlebridge buildings, with their paired post-holes and true rectan-

gular plans, appear to be of better construction. This contrast may indicate a higher social standing for the settlement at Attlebridge.

The excavated medieval ditches appear to be field boundaries; aerial photographs show similar alignments reflected on the opposite bank of the river.

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