

Iron Age and Saxon Activity at Bassingbourn Village College, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire



Excavation Report



January 2009

Client: Pick Everard

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**Iron Age and Saxon Activity at Bassingbourn Village College,
Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire**

Archaeological Excavation

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CAM ARC OASIS Report Form

OASIS Number: 25690

PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Excavation at Bassingbourn Village College, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire			
Short description	Excavation of approximately 0.5ha revealed a series of boundary ditches orientated NNE-SSW, provisionally dated to the Iron Age. They may be shifting boundaries or may form a trackway perhaps over several phases. There was also a Saxon SFB (sunken features building) and a pit of possible Saxon date. Later activity comprised Post-Medieval field systems.			
Project dates	Start	12/02/07	End	13/03/07
Previous work	Iron Age and other undated remains at Bassingbourn Village College, Bassingbourn, Cambs. An Archaeological Evaluation. CCC AFU Report no. 896. Liz Muldowney. ECB 2321		Future work	no
Associated project reference codes	BASBVC 06, ECB 2553, Planning Application No. S/01687/06/CC			
Type of project	Field Evaluation: Targeted Trenches (open area), Environmental Sampling. Medium scale extensions to existing structures (school). PPG16 Condition			
Site status	Area of Archaeological importance			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Playing fields			
Planned development	New sports hall			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	Iron Age boundary ditches or trackway, Saxon building, Saxon well, Post-Medieval field system			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	Small amount of Iron Age pottery, possible Saxon pottery, Post-Medieval pottery, antler bone			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Bassingbourn	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	Bassingbourn Village College, Bassingbourn, Royston, Herts, SG8 5NJ			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.5ha			
National grid reference	TL3299 4355			
Height OD	Min OD	29.64m	Max OD	30.06m
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Andy Thomas			
Project design originator	James Drummond Murray			
Director/supervisor	Tom Phillips			
Project manager	James Drummond Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Pick Everard on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council			
ARCHIVES				
	Location and accession number		Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)	
Physical	Cambridgeshire County Store		Pottery, animal bone, tile	
Paper	Cambridgeshire County Store		Context sheets, site registers, plans, photos.	
Digital	CAM ARC		photos.	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Iron Age and Saxon Activity at Bassingbourn Village College, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire			
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Summary

Between 12th February and 13th March 2007 Oxford Archaeology East, (formerly CAM ARC) conducted an excavation at Bassingbourn Village College in South Cambridgeshire. A series of parallel ditches, orientated north-north-east to south-south-west and dated to the Iron Age, were encountered which may represent a wide trackway or droveway, set within a landscape of known prehistoric and Roman routes, boundaries and monuments. No Roman features were uncovered but an abraded piece of Roman tile and two sherds of pottery hint at Roman occupation in the area. Saxon activity related specifically to a sunken featured building, located west of the ditches and a well or pit, to the east. Field plots, dating to the post-medieval period completed the sequence.

In addition, two examples of deliberately placed animal bone were found in the Iron Age ditches; a complete red deer antler and a cattle skull. These provide evidence of ritual behaviour associated with the ditches.

1 Introduction

Between 12th February and 13th March 2007 an archaeological excavation was undertaken at Bassingbourn Village College on playing fields which are the proposed site for a new sports hall (Fig. 1).

This archaeological excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application S/01687/06/CC), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Oxford Archaeology East (formerly CAM ARC).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990).

The site archive is currently held by Oxford Archaeology East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

The site overlies chalk according to the available geology maps (British Geological Survey 2001) although the excavation encountered no solid chalk deposits.

The site varied between 29.64m OD in the north and 30.06m OD in the south. Landscaping is likely to have taken place on the site to create level playing fields. A brook running north to south is located approximately 150m to the west and Bassingbourn springhead lies to the south-west (Fig. 7).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The name Bassingbourn, meaning stream of Bassa's people, indicates a pre-Conquest origin (Reaney 1943). No prehistoric or Roman settlements are known within the village although evaluation of the subject area by CAM ARC (Muldowney 2006) revealed ditches and some structural remains tentatively dated to the Iron Age. Taylor (1997) suggested that High St appeared to be one of a series of east to west prehistoric trackways known in the area. Ashwell St to the south of the subject area runs parallel to it, as does the Icknield Way further to the south. The Roman road Ermine Street, approximately 1.5km to the east of the village runs north-south and crosses the Icknield Way at Royston.

Heading south from the village there is an abundance of prehistoric activity (Fig. 7). On Therfield Heath, an area of higher land approximately 3km to the south, there are several Bronze Age round barrows and a long barrow, the only known example in Hertfordshire. Of particular interest is a set of parallel ditches known as the Mile Ditches, described as '...three buried ditches which commence near an upstanding round barrow on Therfield Heath golf course...and run parallel to each other NNW to Bassingbourn Springs, a distance of nearly three kilometres' (Burleigh 1980). The spring is located to the south-west of the current development site. The banks flanking the Mile Ditches were once visible, but were levelled during World War Two. Precise dating for construction of the Mile Ditches does not exist although they were already silting up in the Roman period and a horse mandible discovered during excavation in 1978 was carbon-dated to the 2nd century BC (Burleigh 1980).

Between Ashwell Street and the Icknield Way, following the same alignment as the roads, are a set of 'camps' thought to be Iron Age (Crawford 1936). These include Arbury Banks, south of the village of Ashwell; Limlow Hill, west of the Mile Ditches; Hoy's Farm, south of Bassingbourn and Burlow Hill to the east of Royston. The evidence for these comes mainly from aerial photography and no excavation has taken place.

Prehistoric finds in the parish, recorded in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record, include a Neolithic axe (HER 03090) found 400m north of the site and a Bronze Age rapier (HER 11494A) found by metal detector 600m to the north. Roman finds came from the same location (HER 11494) as well as a Saxon brooch fragment (HER 11494B). Other Roman evidence includes a coin (MCB 15964), a statuette of Diana (HER 03123) and pottery (HER 03089).

The site lies approximately 600m south of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (33602, HER 01237) based around the Bury Yard medieval moated site. The site is associated with the manor of Richmonds, which was held by Eddeva the Fair, widow of Edward the Confessor, before the Norman Conquest and later by John of Gaunt in the 14th century. An evaluation (ECB 884) and subsequent excavation (ECB1046) by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit to the east of the scheduled area revealed four phases of activity from the Saxon to post-medieval periods (Ellis *et al* 2001) and suggests a Late Saxon origin for the village.

The only other fieldwork was an evaluation at Back Orchard (ECB107) in the north-east of the village which uncovered linear features probably representing medieval and post-medieval land boundaries (Wall & Bray 1998).

Aerial photography has revealed three groups of ring ditches to the south of the village (HER 09463, 09464 & 09466), 800m south of the site.

Two other medieval moated sites are recorded, one associated with the church and rectory (HER 01238) and the other near the Red Lion pub (HER 01239).

The Ordnance Survey First Edition of 1891 (old-maps) shows the site lying within an enclosed field to the south-west of the village.

4 Methodology

The objective of this excavation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that an area of approximately 0.5ha (the footprint of the sports hall) be opened up to the natural/archaeological horizon. Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CAM ARC's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Twenty environmental samples of 10L or 20L were taken from relevant features to investigate possible survival of micro- and macro-botanical remains.

Weather conditions were generally dry for the duration of the excavation. The water table was only encountered in the deeper features, approximately 1m below modern ground level.

5 Results

Remains dating to three broad periods were encountered (Fig. 2). The phasing is based on a combination of dated artefacts and, for some features, how they are spatially associated with others. Soil descriptions are included in the text where appropriate. A full context description can be found in Appendix 1. Trench depth, from modern

ground level to the top of natural, varied between 0.46m in the north-west corner and 0.56m in the north-east corner.

5.1 Period 1: Iron Age

This period of activity consisted of a series of linear ditches, all orientated north-north-east to south-south-west, separated spatially by up to 26.5m. The size and form of the ditches varied greatly but the strict alignment remained the same (Plate 1). The fills were also very similar throughout being a reddish brown or greyish brown sandy silt. Two other ditches on different alignments may also belong to this period.

Ditch 1 (cut **106** filled by 107, **191** filled by 190, **252** filled by 251, **259** filled by 260, and **293** filled by 294; Fig. 3, S. 9, Fig. 4, S. 34, 35, 36, Fig. 5, S. 23) ran across the site from the northern edge of excavation to the south-west corner of the area, approximately 70m in length. It measured between 0.33m and 0.47m deep but due to heavy truncation by ditches 2 and 3 its width and profile are unknown.

Ditch 2 (cut **189** filled by 188, **254** filled by 253, **262** filled by 263 and 264, and **295** filled by 296, 297 and 298; Fig. 4, S. 34, 35, 36, Fig. 5, S. 23) truncated ditch 1 along its eastern edge. This re-cut was not present in the far north of the site suggesting it must have terminated somewhere north of cut **189**, resulting in a length of approximately 60m. It had a u-shaped profile, measuring between 0.44m and 1.5m wide and between 0.32m and 0.52m deep. Two sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery, one a rim sherd from a large jar (Fig. 8, no. 2), came from 253, the fill of cut **254**.

Ditch 3 (cut **104** filled by 105, **193** filled by 192, **240** filled by 257 and 258, **256** filled by 255, and **299** filled by 300 and 301; Fig. 3, S. 9, Fig. 4, S. 34, 35, 36, Fig. 5, S. 23) truncated ditch 1 along its western edge. No relationship could be seen between ditches 2 and 3 making it difficult to establish which re-cut is earlier. Similarly to its predecessor ditch 3 ran the entire length of the site extending beyond both northern and western baulks. It was u-shaped in profile, measuring between 1.36m and 1.8m wide and between 0.29m and 0.6m deep. A complete red deer antler was found in cut **240** (fill 258), deliberately placed in the ditch when it had partially filled up (Plate 3). A very small fragment of medieval pottery was retrieved from the surface of cut **299**. This is almost certainly intrusive.

Approximately 1m to the west of this very regular re-cut ditch line was a series of four narrow and shallow ditches with a more sinuous appearance. Ditch 4 (cut **142** filled by 141, **184** filled by 185 and **219** filled by 218; Fig. 3, S. 14, 21, 26), the earliest, terminated to the south of cut **142**. In the north it was too truncated by ditch 5 to determine whether it ended before it reached the northern edge of excavation. It

had a u-shaped profile measuring between 0.3m and 0.39m in width and between 0.11m and 0.18m in depth. No dateable artefacts were found.

Ditch 5 (cut **116** filled by 117, **144** filled by 143, **186** filled by 187, **215** filled by 214 and **282** filled by 281; Fig. 3, S. 21, 26) truncated ditch 4 on its western edge but extended beyond both northern and western baulks, a total length of 60m. It was u-shaped in profile, measuring between 0.44m and 0.77m in width and between 0.11m and 0.3m in depth. Eight sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery were retrieved from cut **144**, including the rim and upper body of a jar (Fig. 8, no. 1)

Ditch 6 (cut **182** filled by 183, **217** filled by 216 and **307** filled by 306; Fig. 3, S. 21, 26, Fig. 5, S. 37) truncated ditch 4 along its eastern edge but only in one place. It was slightly curvilinear to the north and may have terminated as it curved back and truncated ditch 4 just south of cut **116** although this could not be seen in plan. If this assumption is correct it would have a length of approximately 53m. It had a flat based u-shape in profile, measuring between 0.19m and 1.1m in width and between 0.16m and 0.29m in depth. One sherd of pottery was recovered from cut **307** (Fig. 8, no. 3), dated broadly to the Early Saxon period, which suggests it was intrusive. As there is known Saxon activity on the site it is possible the ditches were still partially open in the Early Saxon period resulting in this sherd of pottery finding its way into the ditch.

Ditch 7 (cut **180** filled by 181, **213** filled by 212 and **305** filled by 304; Fig. 3, S. 21, 26, Fig. 5, S. 37) truncated ditch 6 although ran along exactly the same course suggesting one was constructed very soon after the other. It was u-shaped in profile, measuring between 0.4m and 0.72m in width and between 0.12m and 0.22m in depth.

Some 13m to the west was ditch 8 (cut **194** filled by 195, 196 and 197, and **204** filled by 205 and 206; Fig. 3, S. 22, 25). Only 29m of the ditch was exposed. In the north and south it extended beyond the limit of excavation. It was u-shaped in profile to the north and v-shaped to the south, measuring between 0.76m and 0.92m in width and between 0.54m and 0.58m in depth. One sherd of Iron Age pottery was retrieved from 206, the fill of cut **204**.

Ditch 9 (cut **198** filled by 199 and **207** filled by 208 and 209; Fig. 3, S. 22, 25) truncated ditch 8 on its western edge, along its entire exposed length. The re-cut was u-shaped in profile and shallower than ditch 8, measuring between 0.64m and 0.66m in width and between 0.24m and 0.31m in depth. No dateable artefacts were recovered.

Ditch 10 (cut **220** filled by 221, 222 and 223, and **327** filled by 326 and 325; Fig. 4, S. 27, Fig. 5, S. 40), the final ditch on a north-north-east to south-south-west alignment, was located 5m to the west of ditch 9. Only 19m were exposed and in the north and south it extended beyond

the edge of excavation. It was markedly different in its form and size from the other ditches. It was v-shaped in profile, measuring between 1.76m and 1.98m in width and between 0.84m and 1m in depth. No dateable artefacts were recovered but the primary fill contained a significant amount of animal bone compared to all the other ditch fills.

Ditch **311** (Fig. 5, S. 38) was located in the north-west corner of the site. It was orientated west-north-west to east-south-east and extended for 2.5m from the western baulk before terminating. It had a u-shaped profile, measuring 1.14m wide and 0.71m deep. Its fill (310) was a blackish grey sandy silt. Significantly, a cow skull had been deliberately placed near the base of the terminal (Plate 4). Although only a short length of this ditch was exposed it appears to be perpendicular to the other ditches. Two sherds of Early/Middle Saxon pottery were retrieved from the surface of the feature. However, this pottery may be intrusive as the ditch is located close to the Saxon building (Building 2) and the orientation of the ditch and the cattle skull suggest an Iron Age date (see discussion). Ditch 10 lies approximately 5m to the east of the terminal.

Building 1 consisted of four postholes (cut **268** filled by 267, **270** filled by 269, **272** filled by 271 and **274** filled by 273) that together form a curvilinear shape with varying dimensions. Posthole **268** was the smallest measuring 0.25m in diameter and 0.05m deep and **274** was the largest, measuring 0.35m in diameter and 0.18m deep. All had a u-shaped profile and steep sides except **268** which had sloping sides. These four postholes could be the remains of a post-built roundhouse or circular structure. Unfortunately less than half of the building survived but if it was circular it would have a diameter of approximately 7-8m. No dateable artefacts were retrieved from any of the postholes but given that roundhouses are common on prehistoric sites a tentative Iron Age date can be suggested.

5.2 Period 2: Saxon

This period is represented by a sunken featured building (SFB) with associated postholes and rubbish pit. In the east of the site was a possible well, truncating an earlier pit.

Building 2 (cut **312** filled by 316 and 315, and **322** filled by 321. Postholes **314** filled by 318, **320** filled by 319 and **324** filled by 323; Fig. 5, S. 39) was located in the north-west of the site and only approximately half of it was visible. Aligned north to south it was 5.5m in length, sub-rectangular in plan with vertical sides and measured 0.35m in depth. Its two fills contained no dateable artefacts. Opposing post-holes were located in the middle of each short side, **314** in the north and **324** in the south. This is a common form of SFB (see discussion) and if the post-holes are in the middle a width of approximately 3m can be estimated for the building. Posthole **314** was circular and u-shaped in profile,

measuring 0.36m in diameter and 0.37m deep. In section it appeared to truncate through the fills of the SFB, which would make it stratigraphically later than the building. As the posthole is almost certainly integral to the building one possibility is that the fill is the remains of the timber post. Posthole **324** was similar in shape and profile but measured only 0.21m deep. A third posthole, **320**, was located immediately to the east of the building and could be associated. It was circular and u-shaped in profile measuring 0.37m in diameter and 0.13m deep.

Truncating the upper fill of building 2 was pit **313** (filled by 317), only partially visible. Fill 317 contained seven sherds of Early/Middle Saxon pottery and a large quantity of animal bone.

Pit **168** was located 10.5m west of the eastern baulk. Its size and form had been mostly truncated away by the possible well **170**. Section 20 suggests it was a shallow pit, measuring 0.4m deep.

Well **170** (Fig. 3, S. 20) was circular with vertical sides and a u-shaped profile. It measured 1.05m in diameter and 1.3m deep. Its lower fill (169) contained an abraded fragment of Roman tile and two sherds of Early/Middle Saxon pottery. Its upper fill (175) contained five sherds of Early/Middle Saxon pottery and a single sherd of residual Roman greyware. The only logical function for a pit of this shape and depth would be for obtaining water, even if only small quantities. It was truncated by post-medieval ditch **166**.

5.3 Period 3: Post-Medieval

Features attributed to this period consisted of small field systems or plot boundaries orientated either east-north-east to west-south-west or north-north-west to south-south-east. These follow the same alignment as other boundaries to the east as well as some of the roads in the village. Most were heavily truncated and only survived to a shallow depth. The fills were consistently a greyish brown silty sand.

Ditch 11 (cut **237** filled by 236, **248** filled by 247 and **250** filled by 249; Fig. 4, S. 29) was located in the south of the site and was orientated east-north-east to west-south-west. It was 40m in length, extending from the eastern baulk and terminating 2.5m east of ditch 2. It had a u-shaped profile, measuring between 0.55m and 0.75m wide and between 0.16m and 0.33m deep. Its fill was a brownish black sandy silt. A lack of dateable artefacts made it difficult to date this ditch. In certain respects it was similar to the Iron Age ditches. For example, the post-medieval ditches were filled by a lighter grey soil whereas ditch 11 contained fill very similar in appearance to the Iron Age ditches and with a similar frequency of molluscs. Also, ditch 11 appeared to respect the position of ditch 2 by terminating before it reaches it. However, this may simply indicate the Iron Age ditches survived as a

landscape feature when ditch 11 was constructed. Coupled with its orientation which fits with the post-medieval layout, this ditch is likely to be later and was possibly the boundary which established the post-medieval pattern of use.

Ditch 12 (cut **146** filled by 145 and **148** filled by 147) was linear and extended 17.5m from the eastern baulk on a east-north-east to west-south-west alignment before terminating. It was heavily truncated with a shallow flat-based profile and measured between 0.7m and 0.8m wide and between 0.06m and 0.12m deep. Its single fill contained no dateable artefacts.

Extending from the eastern baulk were a series of gullies (cut **103** filled by 102, **134** filled by 133, **225** filled by 224 and **227** filled by 226) all orientated east-north-east to west-south-west with shallow profiles. These are part of the same system as ditch 12 and may relate to hedge rows earlier in date than the main post-medieval field boundaries.

Ditch **121**, orientated east-north-east to west-south-west, was located in the north of the site. It was heavily truncated and measured 1m wide and 0.1m deep. A single fragment of post-medieval brick was found in its fill (122).

Ditch 13 (cut **109** filled by 108, **120** filled by 119 and 118, and **171** filled by 172), located in the north-east corner, was rectilinear. It extended 11m from the northern baulk on a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation before turning east-north-east to west-south-west and continuing for approximately 24m before fading out. It had a shallow flat-based profile although in cuts **120** and **171** a deep gully was also present on the northern edge, possibly for a fence or for drainage. It measured between 0.76m and 0.88m wide and between 0.2m and 0.37m deep. One sherd of 18th-century Staffordshire slipware was recovered from fill 108.

Ditch 14 (cut **150** filled by 149 and **152** filled by 151) truncated ditch **225** and was very similar in layout to ditch 13 except the east-north-east to west-south-west arm continued to the western baulk. It measured 0.65m wide and 0.1m deep. No finds were recovered from its single fill.

Ditch **166** ran between ditches 13 and 14 and was orientated north-north-west to south-south-east. The northern terminal truncated ditch 13 and in the south it joined ditch 14 although no relationship could be seen. It also truncated well **170** and ditch 14. It was u-shaped in profile and measured 0.53m wide and 0.25m deep. A small fragment of post-medieval brick was found in its fill (165).

Ditch **229** was another rectilinear field system, similar to ditches 13 and 14 although more heavily truncated. It measured 0.47m wide and

0.18m deep. A single fragment of post-medieval brick was found in its fill (228).

Ditch **308**, orientated east-north-east to west-south-west, was located in the south of the site and ran for approximately 15m between western and eastern baulks. It was u-shaped in profile, measuring 0.7m wide and 0.05m deep. Its fill (309) contained post-medieval brick.

5.4 Undated features

This group of features consists mainly of postholes, which, due to a lack of association with other features and because of the absence of any dateable artefacts, cannot be assigned to any period.

5.4.1 Postholes

Posthole **113** (filled by 112) was located to the west of ditch 13 and was mostly truncated away. It measured 0.1m in diameter and 0.02m deep with a shallow concave profile.

Located to the east of ditch 13 was posthole **115** (filled by 114). It measured 0.25m in diameter and 0.2m deep with steep sides and a u-shaped profile.

Postholes **124** (filled by 123), **126** (filled by 125) and **128** (filled by 127) were located to the south of ditch 13. All were similar in size and form. Posthole **128** had the largest dimensions, measuring 0.32m in diameter and 0.15m deep.

Posthole **136** (filled by 135) was located to the east of the south-east corner of ditch 13. It measured 0.28m in diameter and 0.16m deep with steep sides and a flat based u-shaped profile. Directly to the west was posthole **138** (filled by 137), which was slightly larger, measuring 0.45m in diameter and 0.3m in depth, with a v-shaped profile. These two postholes may be the remains of a fence line associated with ditch 13.

Located again to the east of ditch 2 and to the north of ditch 13, posthole **163** (filled by 164) measured 0.32m in diameter and 0.18m deep with steep sides and a u-shaped profile.

Posthole **177** (filled by 176) was located to the north-west of well **170**. It measured 0.3m in diameter and 0.15m deep with vertical sides and a u-shaped profile.

Posthole **158** was located to the east of ditch 2 in the northern half of the site. It measured 0.4m in diameter and 0.08m deep with a u-shaped profile. Its fill (157) was a reddish brown sandy silt, similar to the fills of the nearby Iron Age ditches.

Heavily truncated posthole **154** (filled by 153), to the west of ditch cut **134**, measured 0.44m in diameter and 0.06m deep with a flat based u-shaped profile. This posthole could simply be part of ditch **134** but truncation of both has made them appear as separate features.

Posthole **266** (filled by 265) was located to the west of ditch 14. It measured 0.3m in diameter and 0.15m deep with steep sides and a u-shaped profile. It had no obvious associations.

Postholes **242** (filled by 241; Fig. 4, S. 31), **244** (filled by 243; Fig. 3, S. 30), **246** (filled by 245; Fig. 4, S. 32) and **331** (filled by 330) were located to the east of ditch 2 in the southern half of the site. Three of the postholes (**242**, **244** and **331**) were aligned north-north-east to south-south-west and were similar in size and form. Posthole **242** had the largest dimensions, measuring 0.25m in diameter and 0.25m in depth with a u-shaped profile. These may represent the remains of a fence line, possibly associated with the Iron Age ditches. Posthole **246** was not quite perpendicular to the other three but could be associated. It measured 0.3m in diameter and 0.1m deep with a flat based u-shaped profile.

Postholes **284** (filled by 283) and **286** (filled by 285), located in the south of the site, were 0.6m apart, aligned east-west. Posthole **284** measured 0.45m in diameter and 0.18m deep with steep sides and a u-shaped profile. Posthole **286** also measured 0.45m in diameter but only 0.07m deep with a flat based u-shaped profile. The two postholes are probably associated but because they are isolated it is difficult to suggest what they represent.

Posthole **290** (filled by 289) was located between ditches 5 and 6 in the south of the site. It measured 0.25m in diameter and 0.07m deep with a shallow u-shaped profile. Posthole **292** (filled by 291) was located 3.5m to the south-east, measuring 0.3m in diameter and 0.1m deep with a u-shaped profile.

5.4.2 Pits

Pit **111** (filled by 110) was located to the west of ditch 13. It measured 0.47m in diameter and 0.13m deep with a u-shaped profile. It was noticeably larger than postholes **113** and **115**, to the south and east respectively, but could just as easily have been a posthole itself.

Pit **280** was located in the south-east corner of the site. It measured 1.05m in length, 0.55m wide and 0.11m deep with a u-shaped profile. Its fill (279) contained a pig burial. There is a piggery located approximately 0.5km to the west of the site but this could be coincidence. Pig burials are uncommon in both the Iron Age and Saxon periods.

5.5 Natural features

There were a number of features on site that formed through natural processes. These are best described in two separate groups of hollows and tree bowls.

5.5.1 Hollows

Most of the natural features belonged to a distinct group of hollows (cut **156** filled by 155, **201** filled by 200, **203** filled by 202, **231** filled by 230, **233** filled by 232, **235** filled by 234, **275** filled by 276, **277** filled by 278, **288** filled by 287, Fig. 7, S. 23) which in plan were circular, sub-circular or irregular, on average 1m wide with irregular profiles, and were filled with a purpley black silt that contained molluscs. Approximately half of the hollows were excavated which provided an adequate sample. These hollows represent natural, periglacial undulations in the ground, which, during a period when the local habitat was wet, filled with rotting plant material. They are probably much older than any of the archaeological features. Two were truncated by later features; **201** was truncated by ditch 2 and an unexcavated hollow was truncated by ditch 5 south of **282**.

5.5.2 Tree bowls/tree throws

Five tree bowls or tree throws were excavated (cut **129** filled by 130, **159** filled by 160, **161** filled by 162, **178** filled by 179, and **239** filled by 238). They were either sub-circular or irregular in shape and irregular in profile. Feature **178** was truncated by ditch 4 and feature **239** was truncated by ditch 11.

All archaeological features were sealed by subsoil (101), a light brown sandy silt measuring up to 0.3m in depth. A rim sherd from a Roman poppy-head beaker (late 1st-2nd century) was retrieved from the subsoil spoil heap after the excavation had been completed. The subsoil was sealed by topsoil (100), a dark greyey brown sandy silt measuring up to 0.26m in depth.

6 Discussion

6.1 Iron Age

6.1.1 The Droveaway

Interpretation of the Iron Age ditches poses certain problems. The ditches all follow the same strict north-north-east to south-south-west orientation (Fig. 2), all are very straight and are generally consistent in form along the length of each ditch, suggesting little maintenance was carried out after each one was originally constructed. There is however

great variability in character between the ditches. For example, ditches 1, 2 and 3 are wide but relatively shallow, ditches 4-7 are extremely narrow and shallow in places and ditch 10 is completely different, deep with a v shaped profile. Dating evidence is scarce; only eleven sherds of Iron Age pottery were retrieved from ditches 1-10. Environmental remains shed little light on the ditches, the samples containing only snail shells.

The most likely function of the ditches is that they formed a linear droveway or trackway that shifted over time. Figure 6 shows the results of a geophysical survey carried out by the Archaeology Rheesearch Group. The results clearly show a continuation of some of the ditches for at least 100m to the south-west. This strengthens the theory of it being a droveway as it is obviously much longer than what is exposed in the excavation area alone. At the extreme south-west corner there is a hint that the ditches narrow in to a funnel, a feature which aids animal management and which is a common feature of droveways.

The distances between any two sets of ditches that could form a droveway varies from 13m (between ditches 5 and 8) to 26.5m (between ditches 3 and 10). There is a tendency to assign the function of droveway to sets of ditches with a much smaller width than this but to control, for example, a large number of cattle, a wide area would be required. Factors such as truncation also need to be considered. Truncation has almost certainly had an influence here, the result of post-Roman agricultural practices and levelling for the creation of the school playing fields. This means the ditches would originally have been wider and deeper, narrowing further the gap between them. Ditches 4-7 for example, would have been more substantial and probably formed one set of re-cut ditches with ditches 1-3.

One possible scenario is that ditches 1, 2 and 3 formed a droveway with ditches 8 and 9. As the eastern side gradually moved west through the construction of ditches 4-7, narrowing the size of the droveway, it was decided to construct the western ditch afresh in a more substantial form as ditch 10. This would mean a consistent width for the droveway of between approximately 18-20m, although this would be less once truncation is taken in to account.

If the ditches form a droveway the question arises of where it originates and where it terminates. The north-north-east to south-south-west orientation of the droveway does not fit in with the alignments of other roads and routeways in the area (Fig. 7). Ermine Street to the east runs north-north-west to south-south-east and perpendicular to this are a number of east to west roads such as the Icknield Way and High Street which runs through the village. These are thought to be prehistoric in origin (Taylor 1997). Since the droveway does not follow these alignments it may be a track linking fields or enclosures together rather than a major routeway. The only feature on a similar alignment

to the droveway is a track, approximately 200m to the south. To the north, the droveway does appear to be heading towards the main crossroads in the village, of High Street and North/South End. To the south it is heading slightly up hill, evidently towards the adjacent spring. The presence of the Mile Ditches to the south-west is significant. The Mile Ditches are thought to terminate at the Bassingbourn springhead to the south-west of the site and are orientated north-north-west to south-south-east rather than north-north-east to south-south-west. However, the fact that a substantial droveway exists so close to the Mile Ditches, a significant multi-ditched territorial boundary, suggests an association is possible.

A further clue relating to the function of the droveway comes from the limited number of artefacts retrieved from the ditches suggesting this part of the droveway is not located near the core of a settlement. This is borne out by the faunal remains from Iron Age contexts, which show a lack of the domestic mammal fragments usually associated with settlements; rather, they indicate sporadic depositions along the droveway (see Appendix 4).

6.1.2 Deliberately placed animal bone

The two instances of deliberately placed animal bones in ditches are evidence of ritual or symbolic activity on the site. The red deer antler in ditch fill 258 (ditch 3) was a complete antler. Such an item would have been highly valued in prehistoric times, and indeed later, so the chance of it casually finding its way in to the ditch in an area otherwise lacking in artefacts, is highly unlikely. The way the antler was laid in the ditch also suggests deliberate placement (Plate 3). Deer antlers are common on early prehistoric monumental sites such as Maumbury Rings, Dorset (Bradley 1975) but are also found on settlement sites dating as late as the Saxon period. At Love's Farm, St Neots, a large Iron Age/Romano-British settlement, pieces of antler were deliberately placed in to narrow ditches that dated to the Late Roman and Early Saxon periods (Hinman forthcoming). Another local example comes from Babraham Road, Cambridge where two red deer antlers were found placed at the base of a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pit (Hinman 2001). A Roman pit at Wasperton, Warwickshire (Frere *et al.* 1984, 296) contained a sandstone block crudely inscribed with the word *FELICITER* (happily), above which were two sets of antler, arranged in a square.

Ditch terminal **311** with its placed cattle skull near the base is assumed to be Iron Age because the ditch is perpendicular to the droveway ditches to the east and its fill (310) is very similar in appearance. The skull was placed upright facing the terminal (Plate 4). Similar local examples include the Iron Age farmstead at Edix Hill, Barrington where a dog and a cattle skull were found placed in a pit (Malim & Hines 1998) and Trumpington Park and Ride, Cambridge, where pits and

ditches were found to contain selected and placed arrangements of both human and animal remains (Hinman 2004). At Burgh in Suffolk an isolated human skull was found in a deep Late Iron Age pit 1.8m below the surface (Martin 1988).

There is now a growing list of examples of the deliberate placement or deposition of animal bones on archaeological sites, particularly in a prehistoric context and many authors have discussed their interpretation as ritual deposits (Wait 1985; Hill 1995). Both examples of placed animal bone at Bassingbourn come from ditches and there is no association with anything out of the ordinary such as a shrine or burial. In this context the deposits may be signifying change or transition, a ritual opening or closing of the ditch or droveway. In the case of the skull, its upright position facing the terminal may be significant. As is suggested in Appendix 4, if ditch terminal **311** relates to the periphery of a settlement the deposition of the cattle skull may be associated with the setting out of settlement boundaries. Alternatively the ritual behaviour may be linked to the location of the site, close to springs and earlier prehistoric monuments. The examples listed above of human skull deposition suggests that to prehistoric populations animal and human remains were equally sacred.

6.1.3 Other Iron Age activity

Other than the droveway any associated Iron Age activity is limited. As already mentioned ditch 11 may be Iron Age in date due to its appearance and the fact that its terminal respects ditch 2. Ditch terminus **311** with its deliberately placed cattle skull (see above) is also probably Iron Age. Building 1 has been given a tentative Iron Age date on the basis of its morphology, although there are no dateable artefacts to prove this.

6.2 Saxon

The Saxon period is represented on the site by two discrete features, the SFB (building 2), and well **170**. SFB's (sunken-featured buildings, also known as *grubenhauser*) are one of the defining markers of Anglo-Saxon settlements in England. They have been defined as 'a building type in which a pit forms the central component of the structure...They are typically sub-rectangular in shape, measuring c. 3x4m in area [by] 0.3-0.5m in depth' (Tipper 2004, 1). They often have postholes along the short sides of the pit, which would have accommodated gable end posts, although the number of postholes can vary from zero to six (Tipper 2004, 68). These defining characteristics correspond well with the SFB at Bassingbourn.

However, the lack of datable material or any cultural debris from the fills is problematic given the often large assemblages found in many

grubenhauser pits. For example, at West Stow in Suffolk 79% of the pottery (42,000 sherds) derived from a total of 69 SFBs (West 1985, 128). At Melford Meadows in Norfolk (Mudd 2002), all nine excavated SFBs contained Saxon pottery, and other artefacts such as spindle whorls, fired clay, slag and glass. It would seem logical that any domestic structure built over a pit would naturally accumulate domestic refuse but at Bassingbourn all seven sherds of Early/Middle Saxon pottery and the large quantity of animal bone came from pit **313**, which truncated the upper fill of the SFB. One possibility is that the building was kept clean during its period of use. The fact that the pottery in the later pit is Early or Middle Saxon in date means the building must have had a short lifespan and was probably deliberately backfilled with material that was itself clean. Being the only SFB encountered suggests it may be on the edge of a settlement, or at least away from the core of it. In contrast to the faunal remains from Iron Age contexts on site, the Saxon assemblage from pit **313** is indicative of domestic waste, providing weight to the theory of settlement in the immediate vicinity (Appendix 4).

The north to south orientation of the Bassingbourn SFB is not exceptional although east-west is more common by far. At Bloodmoor Hill in Suffolk, for example (Dickens, Mortimer & Tipper 2006), only one out of 38 SFBs was definitely orientated north-south. Similarly, at West Stow, of the 69 discovered, one SFB was orientated north-south (West 1985).

If a Saxon settlement does exist in the vicinity it is likely to be to the west. The well (**170**) is possibly an outlying water source for such a settlement.

6.3 Post-Medieval

The post-medieval period is characterised on site by shallow ditches, which form small field systems or plot boundaries. These probably relate to small holdings used for cultivation. Their shallow nature suggests the ditches were cut in to topsoil and have mostly been truncated away. The presence of a narrow, deep gully in ditch 13 is evidence that a fence line may have been constructed to surround the plot. The orientation of the ditches follow the same alignment as many of the modern day buildings to the east and north. These in turn are aligned on older field and plot boundaries visible on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.

7 Conclusions

This small excavation has uncovered evidence of Iron Age, Anglo-Saxon, and possibly Roman, occupation and land use in the village of Bassingbourn. It provides the first evidence for Iron Age settlement in

the parish. While the core of the Iron Age settlement has not been found, the presence of a substantial droveway with several phases of maintenance, suggests movement of a large number of animals, and therefore a sizeable human population in the vicinity. An association, if any, between the droveway and the Mile Ditches is a possibility although further study is required. The discovery of deliberately placed animal bones, in the form of red deer antler and a cattle skull offer an insight in to ritual behaviour on the site.

The Saxon sunken featured building hints that a Saxon settlement lies nearby. Unfortunately the excavation only revealed one building, its position suggesting that, if any settlement exists, it lies to the west.

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The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, who visited the site and monitored the excavation.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
100	0	layer	accumulation	topsoil		0.26	dark greyish brown	sandy silt	frequent small chalk flecks, frequent small flint pieces				
101	0	layer	accumulation	subsoil		0.3	light brown	sandy silt	rare flint pieces				
102	103	fill	gully	disuse	0.4	0.18	dark grey	sandy silt	one sherd of pottery				
103	103	cut	gully	hedgerow	0.4	0.18				linear	steep	irregular	irregular
104	104	cut	ditch	boundary	1.36	0.29				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
105	104	fill	ditch	disuse	1.36	0.29	light greyish brown	silty loam	occasional flint				
106	106	cut	ditch	boundary	1.41	0.33				linear	gently sloping	gradual	flat
107	106	fill	ditch	disuse	1.41	0.33	mid greyish brown	clayey loam	occasional flint				
108	109	fill	ditch	disuse	0.85	0.2	greyish brown	silty sand	rare pottery and occasional flint				
109	109	cut	ditch	field system	0.85	0.2				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave
110	111	fill	pit	disuse	0.47	0.13	greyish brown	silty sand	occasional flint				
111	111	cut	pit	use	0.47	0.13				circular	stepped	gradual	flat

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
112	113	fill	posthole	disuse	0.1	0.02	brownish grey	silty sand	one piece of animal bone				
113	113	cut	posthole	use	0.1	0.02				circular	shallow	imperceptible	concave
114	115	fill	posthole	disuse	0.25	0.2	brownish grey	sandy silt	occasional small pebbles				
115	115	cut	posthole	use	0.25	0.2				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
116	116	cut	ditch	boundary	0.65	0.14				linear	gently sloping	gradual	flat
117	116	fill	ditch	disuse	0.65	0.14	mid greyish brown	silty loam	occasional flint				
118	120	fill	ditch	disuse	0.7	0.15	light greyish brown	silty sand	occasional flint				
119	120	fill	ditch	disuse	0.16	0.2	light brown	sandy silt					
120	120	cut	ditch	field system	0.76	0.37				linear	gently sloping	sharp	concave
121	121	cut	ditch	boundary	1	0.1				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	flat
122	121	fill	ditch	disuse	1	0.1	mid greyish brown	silty loam	occasional flint				
123	124	fill	posthole	disuse	0.14	0.1	brownish black	silty sand	occasional small stones				
124	124	cut	posthole	use	0.14	0.1				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
125	126	fill	posthole	disuse	0.27	0.11	blackish brown	silty sand	occasional small stones				
126	126	cut	posthole	use	0.27	0.11				circular	steep	gradual	flat

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
127	128	fill	posthole	disuse	0.32	0.15	mid brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
128	128	cut	posthole	use	0.32	0.15				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
129	129	cut	tree bowl	use	0.66	0.15				circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
130	129	fill	tree bowl	disuse	0.66	0.15	light greyish brown	silty loam					
131	131	cut	posthole?	use	0.45	0.08				circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
132	131	fill	posthole?	disuse	0.45	0.08	mid greyish brown	silty loam					
133	134	fill	gully	disuse	0.33	0.05	greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
134	134	cut	gully	hedgerow	0.33	0.05				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
135	136	fill	posthole	disuse	0.28	0.16	light brown	sandy silt	occasional sub angular flints				
136	136	cut	posthole	?	0.28	0.16				circular	steep	sharp	flat
137	138	fill	posthole	disuse	0.45	0.3	light greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional sub angular flints and pieces of chalk				
138	138	cut	posthole	?	0.45	0.3				circular	steep-vertical	sharp	concave
139	140	fill	natural?	disuse	1.2	0.5	light brown	silty sand	occasional sub angular flints and chalk flecks				
140	140	cut	natural?	?	1.2	0.5				sub-circular	irregular	sharp	irregular

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
141	142	fill	ditch	disuse	0.39	0.11	mid brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
142	142	cut	ditch	boundary	0.39	0.11				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	flat
143	144	fill	ditch	disuse	0.59	0.29	dark brown	sandy silt	several sherds of pottery, occasional flint and rare charcoal				
144	144	cut	ditch	boundary	0.59	0.29				linear	steep	gradual	concave
145	146	fill	ditch	disuse	0.8	0.06	greyish brown	silty sand	occasional flint and chalk				
146	146	cut	ditch	field system	0.8	0.06				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
147	148	fill	ditch	disuse	0.7	0.12	greyish brown	silty sand	occasional flint and chalk				
148	148	cut	ditch	field system	0.7	0.12				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
149	150	fill	ditch	disuse	0.65	0.1	greyish brown	silty sand	occasional flint and chalk				
150	150	cut	ditch	field system	0.65	0.1				linear	gently sloping	gradual	flat
151	152	fill	ditch	disuse	0.65	0.1	brownish grey	silty sand	occasional flint and chalk				
152	152	cut	ditch	field system	0.65	0.1				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	flat
153	154	fill	posthole	disuse	0.44	0.06	mid grey	sandy silt	occasional chalky flecks				
154	154	cut	posthole	?	0.44	0.06				circular	gently sloping	gradual	flat
155	156	fill	natural	disuse	1.35	0.2	brownish black	silty sand	occasional molluscs				

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
156	156	cut	natural	use	1.35	0.2				circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
157	158	fill	posthole	disuse	0.4	0.08	reddish brown	sandy silt	rare small pieces of flint				
158	158	cut	posthole	?	0.4	0.08				circular	gently sloping	gradual	flat
159	159	cut	tree throw	use	3	0.28				irregular	irregular	irregular	irregular
160	159	fill	tree throw	disuse	3	0.28	dark blackish grey	sandy silt					
161	161	cut	tree throw	use	2.05	0.32				irregular	irregular	irregular	irregular
162	161	fill	tree throw	disuse	2.05	0.32	dark blackish grey with mottled yellow	sandy silt					
163	163	cut	posthole	structural	0.32	0.18				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
164	163	fill	posthole	disuse	0.32	0.18	mid brownish grey	sandy silt					
165	166	fill	ditch	disuse	0.53	0.25	light greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional sub angular flints				
166	166	cut	ditch	field system	0.53	0.25				linear	gently sloping	sharp	concave
167	168	fill	pit	disuse	1.8	0.45	light brown	silty clay	occasional sub angular flints				
168	168	cut	pit	?	1.8	0.45				sub-circular	gently sloping	sharp	truncated away

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
169	170	fill	pit	disuse	1.05	0.75	dark greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional sub angular flints				
170	170	cut	pit	well	1.05	1.3				sub-circular	steep-vertical	sharp	concave
171	171	cut	ditch	field system	0.88	0.09				linear	shallow	imperceptible	concave
172	171	fill	ditch	disuse	0.88	0.09	mid greyish brown	sandy loam	occasional flint				
173	173	cut	gully	fence/drainage	0.12	0.3				linear	vertical	sharp	flat
174	173	fill	gully	disuse	0.12	0.3	mid yellowish brown	sandy loam					
175	170	fill	pit	disuse	1.1	1.4	light greyish brown	silty sand	occasional sub circular flints and occasional chalk flecks				
176	177	fill	posthole	disuse	0.3	0.15	light brown	silty clay					
177	177	cut	posthole	?	0.3	0.15				circular	vertical	sharp	flat
178	178	cut	tree throw	use	1.8	0.4				irregular	irregular	imperceptible	irregular
179	178	fill	tree throw	disuse	1.8	0.4	dark grey	clayey loam	occasional flint				
180	180	cut	ditch	boundary	0.48	0.13				linear	shallow	imperceptible	concave
181	180	fill	ditch	disuse	0.48	0.13	mid brownish grey	sandy loam					
182	182	cut	ditch	boundary	0.46	0.22				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
183	182	fill	ditch	disuse	0.46	0.22	mid brownish grey	sandy loam					
184	184	cut	ditch	boundary	0.38	0.18				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave
185	184	fill	ditch	disuse	0.38	0.18	mid brownish grey	sandy loam					
186	186	cut	ditch	boundary	0.4	0.11				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
187	186	fill	ditch	disuse	0.4	0.11	mid brownish grey	sandy loam					
188	189	fill	ditch	disuse	0.44	0.38	brownish black	sandy clay	occasional flint and rare bone				
189	189	cut	ditch	boundary	0.44	0.38				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave
190	191	fill	ditch	disuse	1.7	0.43	brownish orange	sandy clay	occasional flint and chalk flecks				
191	191	cut	ditch	boundary	1.7	0.43				linear	truncated	truncated	flat
192	193	fill	ditch	disuse	1.8	0.6	brownish black	sandy clay	occasional flint pebbles and chalk flecks				
193	193	cut	ditch	boundary	1.8	0.6				linear	steep	gradual	concave
194	194	cut	ditch	boundary	0.76	0.58				linear	steep	gradual	concave
195	194	fill	ditch	disuse	0.76	0.12	dark yellowish brown	sandy loam	occasional flint chunks				
196	194	fill	ditch	disuse	0.44	0.22	dark greyish brown	silty loam	occasional flint				

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
197	194	fill	ditch	disuse	0.74	0.24	mid greyish brown	silty loam					
198	198	cut	ditch	boundary	0.64	0.24				linear	steep	gradual	flat
199	198	fill	ditch	disuse	0.64	0.24	mid greyish brown	silty loam	occasional flint				
200	201	fill	natural	disuse	1.4	0.57	blackish brown	sandy clay	occasional molluscs and flint stones				
201	201	cut	natural	use	1.4	0.57				circular	steep	gradual	flat
202	203	fill	natural	disuse		0.34	greyish black	silty loam	occasional molluscs and flint				
203	203	cut	natural	use	0.95	0.34				sub-circular	irregular	irregular	irregular
204	204	cut	ditch	boundary	0.92	0.54				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave
205	204	fill	ditch	disuse	0.69	0.4	dark yellowish grey	sandy loam					
206	204	fill	ditch	disuse	0.92	0.4	dark brownish grey	silty loam					
207	207	cut	ditch	boundary	0.66	0.31				linear	steep	gradual	flat
208	207	fill	ditch	disuse	0.52	0.09	light brownish grey	silty loam					
209	207	fill	ditch	disuse	0.66	0.22	mid brownish grey	silty loam					
210	211	fill	ditch	disuse	0.41	0.19	reddish brown	silty sand	rare molluscs				

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
211	211	cut	ditch	boundary	0.41	0.19				linear	steep	gradual	concave
212	213	fill	ditch	disuse	0.72	0.22	dark reddish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
213	213	cut	ditch	boundary	0.72	0.22				linear	steep	gradual	concave
214	215	fill	ditch	disuse	0.77	0.3	dark brown	sandy silt	rare charcoal and occasional flint				
215	215	cut	ditch	boundary	0.77	0.3				linear	steep	gradual	concave
216	217	fill	ditch	disuse	0.19	0.16	mid brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
217	217	cut	ditch	boundary	0.19	0.16				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	flat
218	219	fill	ditch	disuse	0.3	0.11	mid brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
219	219	cut	ditch	boundary	0.3	0.11				linear	truncated	truncated	flat
220	220	cut	ditch	boundary	1.76	0.84				linear	steep	gradual	concave
221	220	fill	ditch	disuse	0.72	0.22	dark grey	clayey loam	occasional flint, gravel and molluscs				
222	220	fill	ditch	disuse	1.53	0.28	dark brownish grey	clayey loam	occasional flint				
223	220	fill	ditch	disuse	1.76	0.37	mid brownish grey	sandy loam					
224	225	fill	ditch	disuse	0.87	0.06	brownish grey	sandy clay	occasional flint				
225	225	cut	ditch	?	0.87	0.06				linear	gently sloping	gradual	concave

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
226	227	fill	ditch	disuse	0.46	0.14	brownish grey	sandy clay	occasional flint				
227	227	cut	ditch	?	0.46	0.14				linear	gently sloping	gradual	concave
228	229	fill	ditch	disuse	0.47	0.18	brownish grey	sandy clay	occasional flint, rare modern brick				
229	229	cut	ditch	field system	0.47	0.18				linear	gently sloping	gradual	concave
230	231	fill	natural	disuse	0.9	0.2	blackish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint and rare molluscs				
231	231	cut	natural	use	0.9	0.2				irregular	irregular	irregular	irregular
232	233	fill	natural	disuse	0.75	0.25	blackish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
233	233	cut	natural	use	0.75	0.25				circular	irregular	irregular	irregular
234	235	fill	natural	disuse	0.6	0.17	blackish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
235	235	cut	natural	use	0.6	0.17				irregular	irregular	irregular	irregular
236	237	fill	ditch	disuse	0.75	0.33	brownish black	sandy silt	occasional flint and bone				
237	237	cut	ditch	boundary	0.75	0.33				linear	steep	gradual	flat
238	239	fill	tree bowl	disuse	0.76	0.42	blackish grey	silty clay	occasional flint				
239	239	cut	tree bowl	use	0.76	0.42				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
240	240	cut	ditch	boundary	1.58	0.48				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
241	242	fill	posthole	disuse	0.25	0.25	dark greyish brown	sandy silt					
242	242	cut	posthole	structural	0.25	0.25				circular	steep	gradual	concave

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
243	244	fill	posthole	disuse	0.25	0.18	light greyish brown	sandy silt					
244	244	cut	posthole	structural	0.25	0.18				circular	steep	sharp	concave
245	246	fill	posthole	disuse	0.3	0.1	light grey	silty clay	occasional sub angular flints				
246	246	cut	posthole	structural	0.3	0.1				circular	steep	sharp	flat
247	248	fill	ditch	disuse	1	0.16	brownish black	sandy silt	occasional flint and bone				
248	248	cut	ditch	boundary	1	0.16				linear	steep	gradual	flat
249	250	fill	ditch	disuse	0.55	0.2	brownish black	sandy silt	occasional flint and bone				
250	250	cut	ditch	boundary	0.55	0.2				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
251	252	fill	ditch	disuse	0.61	0.47	mid brown	sandy silt	occasional gravel inclusions, occasional flint and rare molluscs				
252	252	cut	ditch	boundary	0.61	0.47				linear	truncated	gradual	concave
253	254	fill	ditch	disuse	1.2	0.36	reddish brown	sandy silt	one sherd of pottery, one piece of bone, occasional flint pebbles and rare molluscs				
254	254	cut	ditch	boundary	1.2	0.36				linear	gently sloping	gradual	flat
255	256	fill	ditch	disuse	1.6	0.34	reddish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint pebbles and rare molluscs				

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
256	256	cut	ditch	boundary	1.6	0.34				linear	gently sloping	gradual	concave
257	240	fill	ditch	disuse	1.52	0.12	light brownish grey	silty loam					
258	240	fill	ditch	disuse	1.58	0.38	mid greyish brown	silty loam	one large antler				
259	259	cut	ditch	boundary	0.86	0.36				linear	truncated	truncated	flat
260	259	fill	ditch	disuse	0.86	0.12	dark yellowish brown	sandy loam					
261	259	fill	ditch	disuse	0.66	0.26	mid greyish brown	silty clay	occasional flint				
262	262	cut	ditch	boundary	0.62	0.32				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave
263	262	fill	ditch	disuse	0.76	0.12	dark yellowish brown	sandy loam	occasional flint				
264	262	fill	ditch	disuse	0.62	0.3	dark greyish brown	silty clay					
265	266	fill	posthole	disuse	0.3	0.15	blackish grey	silty clay	occasional small stones				
266	266	cut	posthole	use	0.3	0.15				circular	steep	gradual	concave
267	268	fill	posthole	disuse	0.25	0.05	blackish grey	silty clay	occasional stones				
268	268	cut	posthole	structural	0.25	0.05				circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
269	270	fill	posthole	disuse	0.23	0.08	blackish grey	silty sand	occasional stones				
270	270	cut	posthole	structural	0.23	0.08				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
271	272	fill	posthole	disuse	0.4	0.15	blackish grey	silty clay	occasional stones				
272	272	cut	posthole	structural	0.4	0.15				circular	steep	gradual	concave
273	274	fill	posthole	disuse	0.35	0.18	blackish grey	silty clay	occasional stones				
274	274	cut	posthole	structural	0.35	0.18				circular	steep	gradual	concave
275	275	cut	natural	use	1.38	0.28				irregular	gently sloping	imperceptible	irregular
276	275	fill	natural	disuse	1.38	0.28	dark grey with mottled yellow lenses	silt	occasional flints				
277	277	cut	natural	use	1.54	0.12				irregular	shallow	imperceptible	irregular
278	277	fill	natural	disuse	1.54	0.12	dark grey with mottled yellow lenses	silt	occasional flint				
279	280	fill	pit	burial	0.5	0.11	mid grey brown	silty clay	rare stones				
280	280	cut	pit	burial	0.5	0.11				sub-circular	steep	gradual	concave
281	282	fill	ditch	disuse	0.65	0.25	reddish brown	sandy silt	rare flint				
282	282	cut	ditch	boundary	0.65	0.25				linear	steep	gradual	concave

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
283	284	fill	posthole	disuse	0.45	0.18	brownish grey	silty clay	occasional pebbles				
284	284	cut	posthole	structural	0.45	0.18				circular	steep	gradual	concave
285	286	fill	posthole	disuse	0.45	0.07	brownish grey	silty clay	occasional pebbles				
286	286	cut	posthole	structural	0.45	0.07				circular	steep	gradual	flat
287	288	fill	natural	disuse	1.3	0.22	blackish grey with whiteish grey patches	silty clay	frequent molluscs				
288	288	cut	natural	use	1.3	0.22				irregular	irregular	gradual	irregular
289	290	fill	posthole	disuse	0.25	0.07	mid brown	sandy silt					
290	290	cut	posthole	use	0.25	0.07				circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
291	292	fill	posthole	disuse	0.3	0.1	mid brown	sandy silt					
292	292	cut	posthole	use	0.3	0.1				circular	gently sloping	gradual	concave
293	293	cut	ditch	boundary	0.58	0.44				linear	steep	gradual	flat
294	293	fill	ditch	disuse	0.58	0.44	mid greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
295	295	cut	ditch	boundary	1.5	0.52				linear	steep	gradual	concave
296	295	fill	ditch	disuse	0.84	0.42	mid greyish brown	silt					
297	295	fill	ditch	disuse	1.12	0.1	greyish brown	sandy silt					

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
298	295	fill	ditch	disuse	1.4	0.35	mid greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
299	299	cut	ditch	boundary	1.4	0.32				linear	steep	gradual	flat
300	299	fill	ditch	disuse	1.14	0.06	light grey	chalky silt					
301	299	fill	ditch	disuse	1.14	0.26	mid greyish brown	sandy silt	occasional flint				
302	303	fill	gully	disuse	0.23	0.05	mid greyish brown	silty clay	rare small stones				
303	303	cut	ditch	?	0.23	0.05				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	flat
304	305	fill	ditch	disuse	0.4	0.12	greyish brown	silty sand	occasional flint				
305	305	cut	ditch	boundary	0.4	0.12				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
306	307	fill	ditch	disuse	1.1	0.29	brownish grey	silty clay	occasional stones				
307	307	cut	ditch	boundary	1.1	0.29				linear	steep	gradual	flat
308	308	cut	ditch	boundary	0.7	0.05				linear	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
309	308	fill	ditch	disuse	0.7	0.05	dark brownish grey	sandy silt	occasional flint and gravel				
310	311	fill	ditch	disuse	1.14	0.71	blackish grey	sandy silt	occasional bone, occasional charcoal, occasional flint and rare pot				

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
311	311	cut	ditch	boundary?	1.14	0.71				unknown	vertical	sharp	slightly concave
312	312	cut	sunken building	use	2	0.35				sub-rectangular	steep	sharp	flat
313	313	cut	pit	?	1.67	0.25				sub-circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
314	314	cut	posthole	structural	0.36	0.64				circular	vertical	gradual	concave
315	312	fill	sunken building	disuse	1.1	0.15	light brown	clayey silt	occasional chalky flecks				
316	312	fill	sunken building	disuse	1.74	0.2	mid brown	clayey silt	occasional gravel, rare bone and rare charcoal				
317	313	fill	pit	use	1.67	0.25	blackish grey	clayey silt	frequent bone, occasional charcoal and rare pot				
318	314	fill	posthole	disuse	0.36	0.37	dark greyish brown	clayey silt	occasional chalky flecks and flint inclusions				
319	320	fill	posthole	disuse	0.37	0.13	greyish brown	clayey silt					
320	320	cut	posthole	structural	0.35	0.14				circular	gently sloping	imperceptible	concave
321	322	fill	sunken building	disuse	2.34	0.35	mid brown	clayey silt	occasional gravel, rare pot and bone and rare charcoal				
322	322	cut	sunken building	use	2.34	0.35				sub-rectangular	steep	sharp	flat
323	324	fill	posthole	disuse	0.34	0.21	mid brownish grey	sandy silt					

Context	Cut	Category	Feature Type	Function	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Shape in Plan	Side	Break of Slope	Base
324	324	cut	posthole	structural	0.34	0.21				circular	steep	imperceptible	concave
325	327	fill	ditch	disuse	1.98	0.56	dark brown	sandy silt	occasional molluscs and flint				
326	327	fill	ditch	disuse	0.66	0.44	mid brown	sandy silt	occasional molluscs and bone				
327	327	cut	ditch	boundary	1.98	1				linear	steep	imperceptible	concave
328	329	fill	ditch	disuse	0.35	0.14	mid brownish grey	silty loam					
329	329	cut	ditch	?	0.35	0.14				linear	gently sloping	gradual	?
330	331	fill	posthole	disuse	0.28		not recorded	not recorded	not recorded				
331	331	cut	posthole	structural	0.28					circular	not recorded	not recorded	not recorded

Appendix 2: Finds Summary

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg
102	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.008
108	Ceramic	Vessel	0.007
	Flint		0.003
118	Stone		1.316
	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.001
122	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.015
143	Ceramic	Vessel	0.135
165	Ceramic	Vessel	0.006
169	Ceramic	Vessel	0.055
	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.235
	Bone	Bone	0.313
	Flint		0.004
172	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.001
175	Ceramic	Vessel	0.015
	Bone	Bone	0.155
	Ceramic	Vessel	0.040
	Flint		0.006
188	Bone	Bone	0.035
206	Ceramic	Vessel	0.002
	Bone	Bone	0.040
221	Bone	Bone	0.001
222	Bone	Bone	0.015
223	Bone	Bone	0.072
228	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.009
236	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.001
	Flint		0.001
	Bone	Bone	0.540
241	Bone	Bone	0.005
253	Ceramic	Vessel	0.033
	Bone	Bone	0.026
255	Flint		0.013
279	Ceramic	Vessel	0.001
	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.010
	Flint		0.022
	Bone	Bone	1.399
281	Flint		0.009
301	Bone	Bone	0.001
306	Ceramic	Vessel	0.037

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg
309	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.077
310	Bone	Bone	2.157
	Ceramic	Vessel	0.018
315	Bone	Bone	0.032
317	Ceramic	Vessel	0.303
	Bone	Bone	6.008
	Ceramic	Daub	0.045
	Flint		0.017
321	Ceramic	Vessel	0.005
	Bone	Bone	0.022
326	Bone	Bone	0.703
99999	Ceramic	Vessel	0.044

Appendix 3: The Pottery

by Paul Blinkhorn

1 Introduction

The pottery assemblage consists of 29 sherds with a total weight of 628g. It comprised a mixture of Iron Age, Romano-British, Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon, medieval and Post-medieval wares.

2 Fabric

2.1 Iron Age

F1: Fine chaff. Moderate to dense very fine chaff voids up to 10mm. 8 sherds, 136g.

F2: Sparse fine shell up to 5mm, sparse to moderate sub-angular quartz up to 1mm. 1 sherd, 25g.

F3: Sparse to moderate reddish-brown grog up to 3mm, moderate sub-angular quartz up to 1mm. 2 sherds, 10g.

2.2 Romano-British

A single heavily abraded and otherwise unidentifiable sherd (weight = 2g) of residual Romano-British greyware occurred in context 175.

2.3 Early/Middle Saxon

F10: Organic tempered. Moderate to dense chaff voids up to 5mm, rare quartz and flecks of silver mica. 3 sherds, 51g.

F11: Quartz and Chalk. Sparse sub-rounded chalk fragments up to 2mm, sparse to moderate sub-angular quartz up to 3mm. 6 sherds, 279g.

F12: Fine quartz and chalk. Moderate to dense sub-angular quartz up to 1mm, rare calcareous material up to 1mm. 3 sherds, 49g.

F13: Angular lumps of red ferruginous sandstone up to 3mm, calcitic cemented sandstone of the same size and shape, moderate to dense 'free' sub-angular quartz grains up to 1mm, rare sub-angular red ironstone up to 2mm. 2 sherds, 64g.

2.4 Medieval and Later

Sandy Coarseware: ?11th century. Hard grey ware with moderate to dense sub-round white, grey and orange quartz up to 0.5mm, rare grains up to 1mm. Local? 1 sherd, 4g.

Staffordshire Slipware. AD 1680-1750. Fine cream fabric with white slip and pale yellow lead glaze, commonest decoration is feathered dark brown trailed slip. Chiefly press-moulded flat wares, although small bowls and mugs etc are known. 1 sherd, 7g.

Staffordshire Manganese Mottled Ware. Late 17th – 18th century. Hard buff fabric with distinctive purplish-brown glaze. Usually fine drinking pottery, but chamber pots and other more utilitarian vessels also known. 1 sherd, 1g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

3 Chronology

3.1 Iron Age

The Iron Age assemblage, although small, includes fragments of two vessels which are likely to be of Middle Iron Age date. The first, from context 143, is eight sherds, including a piece of the rim, from an ovoid jar with fragments of vertical scratches on the body (Fig. BV1) in a manner typical of the Scored Ware tradition (Elsdon 1992). Scored ware, which is commonly found on Middle – Late Iron Age sites in the south-east midlands, particularly Northamptonshire, is thought to be of Middle Iron Age date, ie. 5th/4th – 1st centuries BC (Knight 2002, 124-6). The second sherd is a rimsherd from a large jar which occurred in context 253. The top of the rim bead is decorated with fingertipping, with nail marks visible in the centre of each impression (Fig. BV2). Fingertip decoration occurs on both Early and Middle Iron Age pottery in Cambridgeshire. It would appear therefore that there was certainly human presence at this site during the middle Iron Age pottery, and it is possible that activity may have started in the Early Iron Age

Illustrations

Fig. 8, no. 1: Context 143, fabric F1. Rim and upper body of jar, Black fabric with brown patches on outer surface.

Fig. 8, no. 2: Context 253, fabric F2. Rimsherd from large jar with finger-impressed rim. Black fabric with orange outer surface.

3.2 Anglo-Saxon

The dating of Early Saxon hand-built pottery, is entirely reliant on the presence of decorated sherds. It seems that the Anglo-Saxons generally stopped decorating hand-built pottery around the beginning of the 7th century (Myres 1977, 1), but it cannot be said that an assemblage which produced only plain sherds is of 7th century date. Usually, decorated hand-built pottery only comprises around 3 – 4% of domestic assemblages, as was the case at sites such as West Stow, Suffolk (West 1985) and Mucking, Essex (Hamerow 1993). Here, all the pottery is undecorated apart from a single sherd from the rim and shoulders of a jar with corrugated and burnished shoulders (Fig. BV3). The vessel is difficult to date other than to within the broad Early Anglo-Saxon period (AD 450 – 650), but it does have some similarities with a class of decoration, that of linear design on the neck and shoulders, which Myres (1977) saw as dating to the earlier part of the Early Saxon period. Further work at the site can only help to clarify the chronological picture of the Anglo-Saxon settlement.

Illustrations

Fig. 8, no. 3: Context 306, F11. Dark brown fabric with black surfaces, outer surface burnished.

3.3 Medieval and Post-Medieval

The sherd of medieval sandy ware is typical of the medieval coarsewares of Cambridgeshire and East Anglia generally. It probably dates to the 12th – 14th century.

The post-medieval pottery is again typical of the region, and indicates that there was a phase of activity at the site in the later 17th – early 18th century.

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Context	F1		F2		F3		RB		F10		F11		F12		F13		Sandy		S Slip		Mang		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
108																			1	7			Mid 17thC
143	8	136																					MIA
169											1	28			1	26							E/MS
175							1	2	2	12			1	1	1	38							E/MS
206					1	3																	IA
253			1	25	1	7																	MIA
279																					1	1	Late 17thC
301																	1	4					12thC
306											1	37											5thC AD?
310													1	13	1	5							E/MS
317									1	39	4	214	2	48									E/MS
99999							1	43															U/S
Total	8	136	1	25	2	10	1	2	3	51	6	279	3	49	2	64	1	4	1	7	1	1	

Table 1: The pottery quantified by fabric type, occurrence and weight

Key to abbreviations

E/MS	Early/Middle Saxon
IA	Iron Age
MIA	Middle Iron Age
No	Number of sherds
Wt	Weight in grams
U/S	Unstratified

Appendix 4: Faunal Remains

by Chris Faine

1 Introduction

A total of 94 “countable” bones was recovered from the excavations, with a further 48 fragments not identifiable to species (33.8% of the total sample). Faunal remains were recovered from a variety of contexts including pits and linear features ranging in date from the Iron Age to the post-medieval periods.

2 Methodology

All data was initially recorded using a specially written MS Access database. All elements identifiable to species and over 25% complete were included in the database. Loose teeth, caudal vertebra and ribs without proximal epiphyses were noted but not included in any quantification. Elements not identifiable to species were classed as “large/medium/small mammal”, but again not included in any quantification. Initially all elements were assessed in terms of siding (where appropriate), completeness, tooth wear stages (also where applicable) and epiphyseal fusion. Completeness was assessed in terms of percentage and zones present (after Dobney & Reilly 1988). Initially the whole identifiable assemblage was quantified in terms of number of individual fragments (NISP) and minimum numbers of individuals MNI (see Table 2). The ageing of the population was largely achieved by examining the wear stages of cheek teeth of cattle, sheep/goat and pig (after Grant 1982). Where possible sheep/goat differentiation was carried out via cranial morphology. Any instances of butchery were noted and recorded using a separate table from the main database. The type of lesion, its position, severity and direction were all noted. The presence of any further taphonomy, i.e. burning, gnawing etc was also noted. A separate table for any pathology, giving the position and type of lesion was also used.

3 The Assemblage

Table 2 shows the broad species distribution for the entire assemblage. This largely consists of the common domestic mammals, with cattle being the most prevalent species, followed by sheep/goat. In terms of identifiable fragments (NISP) pigs are over represented in the assemblage due to the undated pig burial from pit fill 279. Wild mammals are represented by red deer. Dog remains most likely represent commensal species. Faunal remains were recovered from Iron Age and Early to Middle Saxon contexts.

3.1 Iron Age

Compared to later phases relatively little faunal material was recovered from Iron Age contexts. All material came from ditch fills. Of most interest from this period were portions of red deer antler from a single animal recovered from ditch fill 258. Examples of all portions were recovered including the pedicle (base) indicating the antlers were naturally shed. Red deer shed their antlers in late February/early March. Further deliberate depositions from this period were seen in the form of a single cattle skull from ditch fill 310. Cranial suture closure indicates an adult animal, around 7-9 years of age. Metrical analysis of the horn cores suggests an animal of similar morphology to those from contemporary sites. However, the sex of the individual cannot be determined as there is frequently a great deal of overlap morphologically between the sexes for cattle from this period. The remaining cattle remains from this period consist of butchered portions of long bone and a single intact metatarsal from an adult female. Horse remains were also recovered from Iron Age contexts in the form of a number of butchered radii and tibiae. A single intact dog mandible was also recovered.

3.2 Saxon

The vast majority of identifiable fragments were recovered from Saxon contexts, most of which came from a single context (310); a pit fill associated with a sunken-featured building (SFB). In contrast to the Iron Age assemblage, the range of species from the Saxon context is rather more limited, comprising largely of cattle remains along with smaller proportions of sheep/goat. The assemblage as a whole is quite heavily processed, with 60% of fragments showing signs of butchery. In addition several elements show signs of gnawing, especially at the already broken ends of long bones. In terms of cattle remains a wide variety of body parts are represented, particularly mandibles, crania and lower limb bones such as radii and tibiae. Few measurable bones were recovered, with those that were showing animals somewhat larger than those from contemporary rural sites, such as West Stow (Crabtree 1990). Almost all elements recovered were from physically mature animals.

Sheep/goat remains are again heavily processed, with 55% of fragments showing signs of butchery. Again a wide variety of skeletal elements are represented, entirely from adult animals. A metrical analysis was not available for this population due to a lack of complete elements. However, two skulls with horn cores were identified via cranial morphology as goat, with a further skull being identified as sheep. Metrical analysis of these horn cores suggests the goats were of a similar morphology to those from other Early-Mid Saxon sites (Bourdillon & Andrews 1997), although at the smaller end of the size

range. Dog remains are represented by a single mandible, and fifth metatarsal from context 175.

In addition to these remains, an undated pig burial was also recovered from context 279. Consisting largely of the skull and axial skeleton, the vast majority of elements are unfused, suggesting an animal no younger than 3 ½ - 4 years of age. No butchery was observed on any element.

4 Discussion

Unfortunately the Iron Age sample is too small to draw any definite conclusions from. What is clear is that the lack of domestic mammal fragments (from the ditch contexts in particular) suggests that it is not material directly associated with any settlement, but rather sporadic depositions along the putative droveway. The deliberate deposition of animal remains is a common theme through prehistory and into the Roman and Saxon periods. Antler deposited in similar fashion was recovered from a Late Roman/Saxon context from Loves Farm, St Neots (Hinman forthcoming). Indeed, the vast majority of red deer remains in the Iron Age are recovered from such deposits, with relatively little from domestic contexts (Hambelton 2000). Deliberate inhumations of cattle remains (particularly skulls) are also relatively common on Iron Age sites, particularly in the Thames valley (Mulville et. al. forthcoming). In the case of the antler it could represent the ritual "end" of use of the droveway. If it is the case that the Iron Age archaeology represents the periphery of any settlement, the deposition of the cattle skull could be related to the setting out of the settlement boundaries.

As mentioned above most of the remains were recovered from Saxon contexts. This material is far more indicative of domestic/settlement waste associated with the SFB and/or its disuse. The majority of fragments were from mature animals suggesting a meat based animal husbandry strategy. The large number of cattle remains, both in terms of NISP and MNI, is unusual given that sheep/goat is usually the dominant species in assemblages from this period (Crabtree 1990). However, given the small sample size and concentrated nature of the material this is probably for reasons of spatial distribution/sampling. The proximity of settlement in this period is born out by the dog remains also recovered. As referred to earlier the pig remains were from an undated context (279), therefore drawing any further conclusions is difficult. However, such burials are uncommon in both the Iron Age and Saxon periods.

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	NISP	NISP%	MNI	MNI%
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	37	40.4	5	27.8
Pig (<i>Sus scrofa</i>)	28	29.6	3	16.6
Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis/Capra</i>)	13	13.7	3	16.6
Horse (<i>Equus caballus</i>)	6	6.3	3	16.6
Red Deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	5	5.1	1	5.6
Sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>)	1	0.9	1	5.6
Goat (<i>Capra hircus</i>)	1	0.9	1	5.6
Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)	3	3.1	1	5.6
Total	94	100	18	100

Table 2: Species distribution for the entire assemblage

	NISP	NISP%	MNI	MNI%
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	5	31.2	3	50
Red Deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	5	31.2	1	16.6
Horse (<i>Equus caballus</i>)	5	31.2	1	16.6
Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)	1	6.4	1	16.6
Total:	16	100	6	100

Table 3: Species distribution for the Iron Age assemblage

	NISP	NISP%	MNI	MNI%
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	32	65.5	5	45.8
Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis/Capra</i>)	12	24.5	2	18.1
Goat (<i>Capra hircus</i>)	2	4	1	9
Sheep (<i>Ovis aries</i>)	1	2	1	9
Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)	2	4	2	18.1
Total:	49	100	11	100

Table 4: Species distribution for the Saxon assemblage

Appendix 5: Environmental Remains

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

Twenty bulk samples were taken from across the excavated area. Ten litres of each sample were processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts is noted in Table 5.

2 Results

The results are recorded in Table 5.

Sample Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Flot contents	Residue contents
4	15	104	Snails only	No artefacts
5	107	106	Snails only	No artefacts
6	143	144	Snails only	No artefacts
7	155	156	Snails only	Fe fragment
8	169	170	Snails only	Animal bone
9	175	170	Snails only	No artefacts
10	195	194	Snails only	No artefacts
11	202	203	Snails only	No artefacts
12	210	211	Snails only	No artefacts
13	221	220	Snails only	Small bones
14	165	166	Snails & single charred grain	No artefacts
15	243	244	Snails only	No artefacts
16	241	242	Snails only	Animal bone
17	236	237	Snails only	No artefacts
18	273	274	Snails & two charred grains	No artefacts
19	283	284	Snails only	No artefacts
20	306	307	Snails only	No artefacts
21	294	293	Snails only	No artefacts
22	301	299	Snails only	Small bones
23	321	322	Snails only	No artefacts

Table 5: Environmental sample results

Preservation of charred plant remains was extremely poor. One sample contained two charred cereal grains and another two samples had single specimens. The remaining samples were devoid of charred plant material. All of the samples contained numerous snail shells.

Small bones of rodents and possible amphibians were recovered from two samples and a further three samples contained fragments of animal bone.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The general lack of plant remains suggests that conditions at the site do not favour preservation. The cereal grains recovered were extremely abraded and were only identifiable as cereals by their characteristic dense honeycomb structure.

The amphibians and large snails probably represent things that hopped/crawled into the features. Shells of several species of snails are present in all of the samples and have potential as indicators of the local environment and the conditions under which deposits on the site were laid down. Both wetland and grassland species are present as well as *Ceciloides acicula* (the blind snail) which is a burrowing species that can occur to depths of well over a meter. This species is believed to be a post-Roman introduction (Evans 1972) and therefore post-dates the Iron Age or earlier features in which they were found.

In conclusion, the samples showed only a low abundance of charred material that is not considered worthy of further analysis.

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Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation —————






Deposit - Conjectured - - - - -

Natural Features —————

Sondages/Machine Strip - - - - -

Intrusion/Truncation - - - - -

Illustrated Section S.14 —————

Archaeological Deposit		Field Drain	
Archaeological Feature		Water Duct	
Excavated Slot		Cut Number	118
Modern Drain		Bone	

Sections

Limit of Excavation - - - - -

Cut —————

Cut-Conjectured - - - - -

Deposit Horizon —————

Deposit Horizon - Conjectured - - - - -

Intrusion/Truncation - - - - -


Top Surface/Top of Natural —————

Break in Section/
Limit of Section Drawing - - - - -

Cut Number 118

Deposit Number 117

Ordnance Datum $\frac{18.45\text{m OD}}{\times}$

Inclusions 



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Figure 1: Location of the excavation area (black)

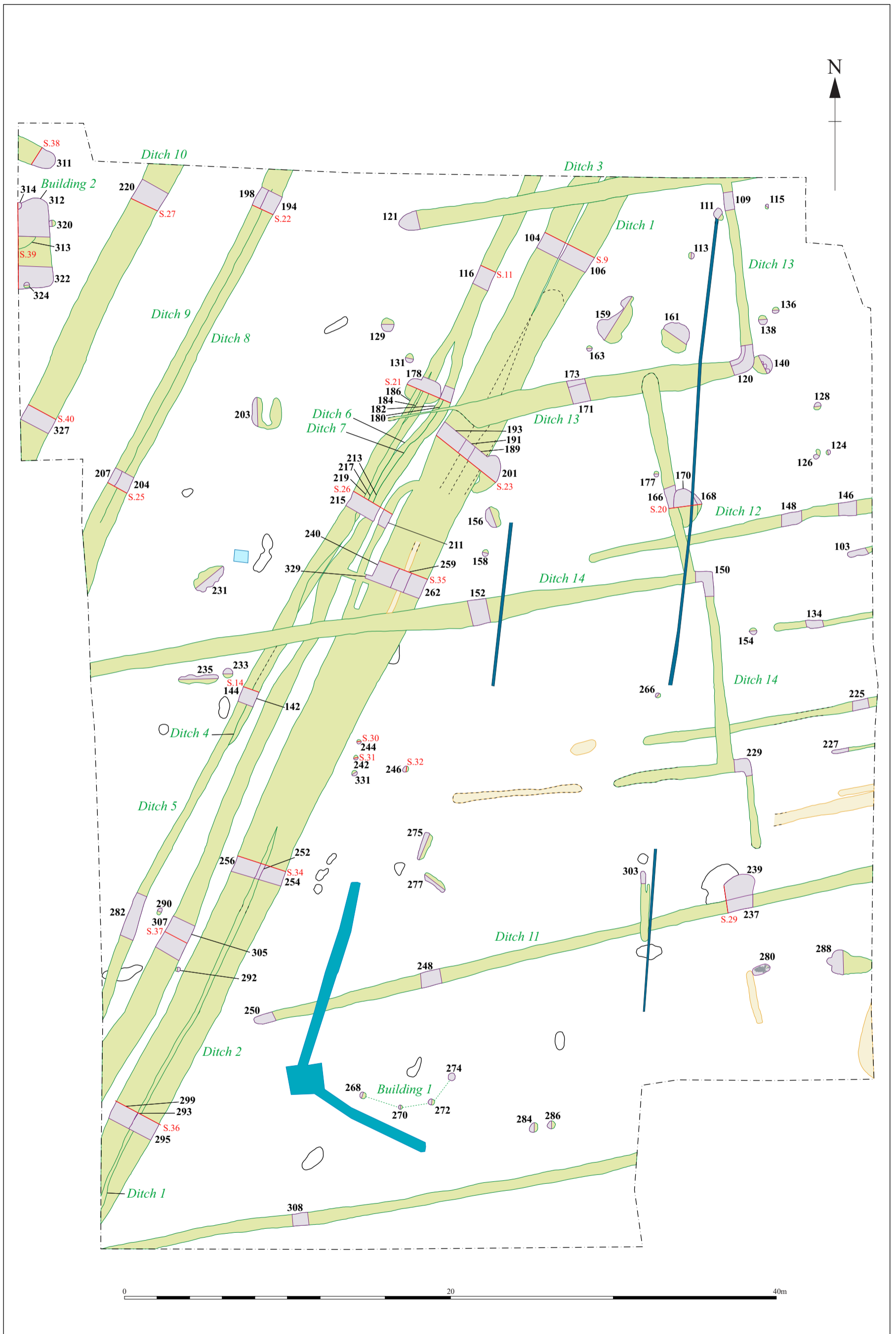


Figure 2: Excavation area plan

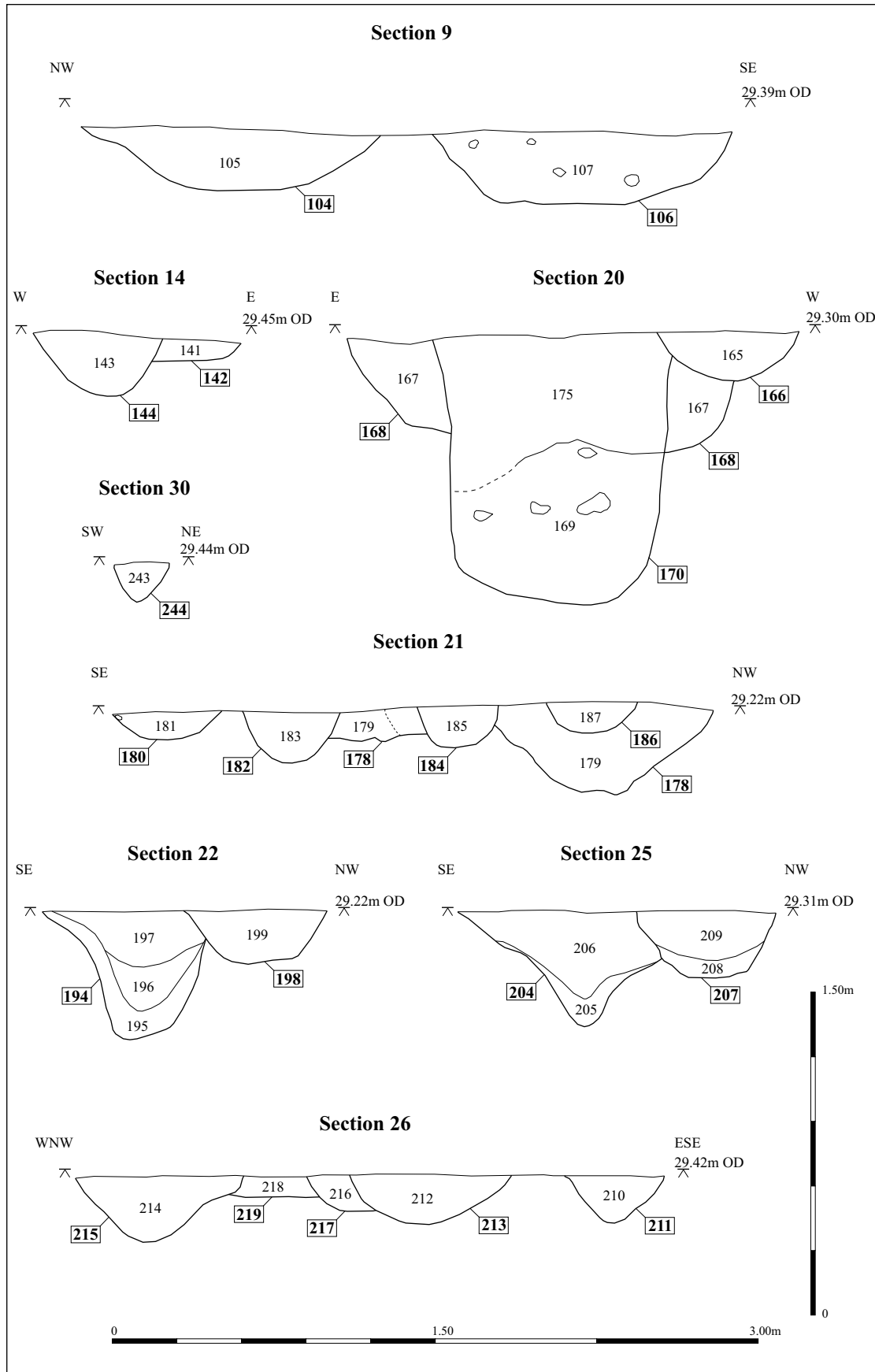


Figure 3: Section drawings

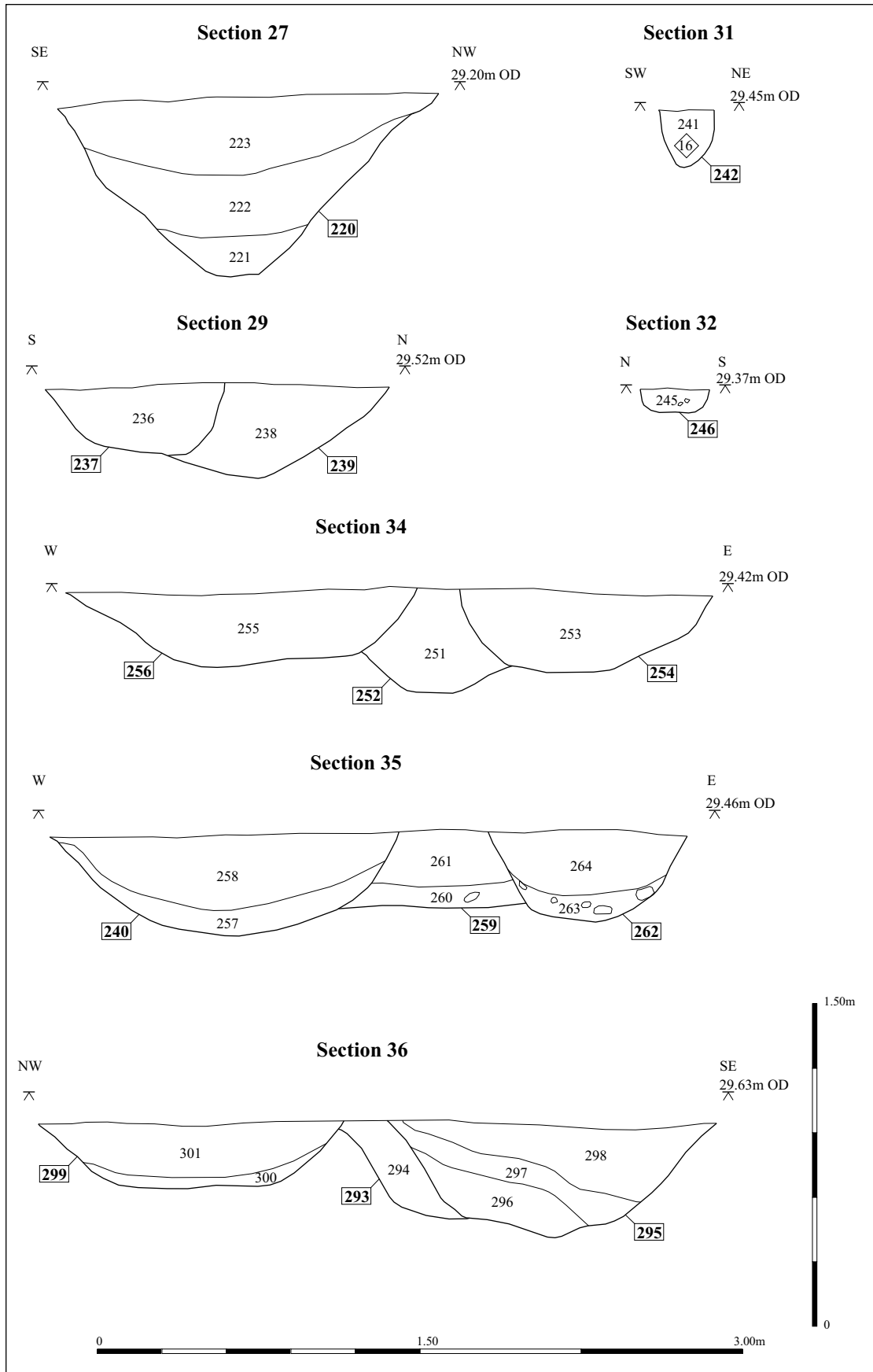


Figure 4: Section drawings

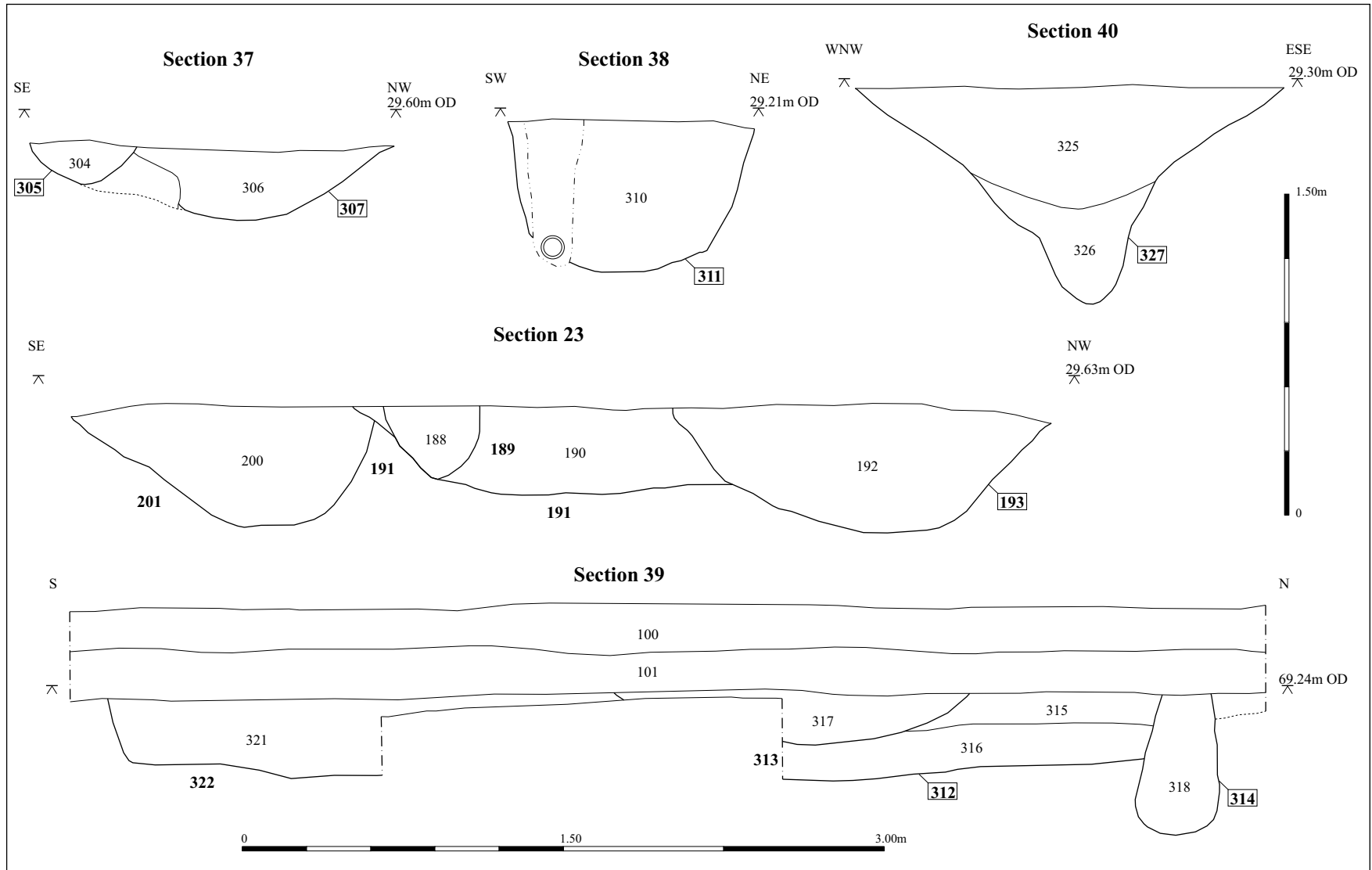


Figure 5: Section drawings



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Figure 6: Excavation area with geophysics results to the south-west

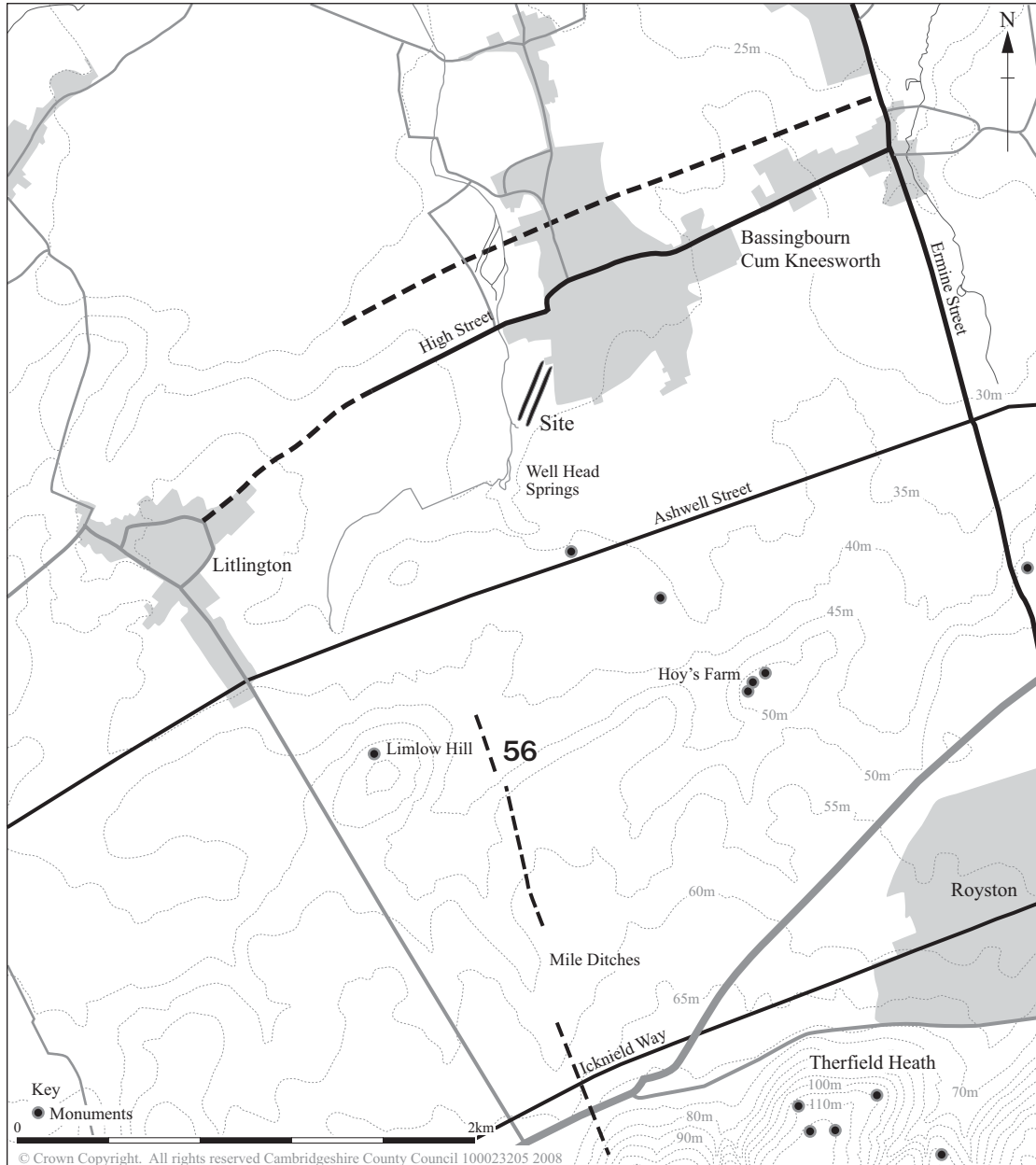


Figure 7: Map showing local monuments and Prehistoric/Roman communication routes

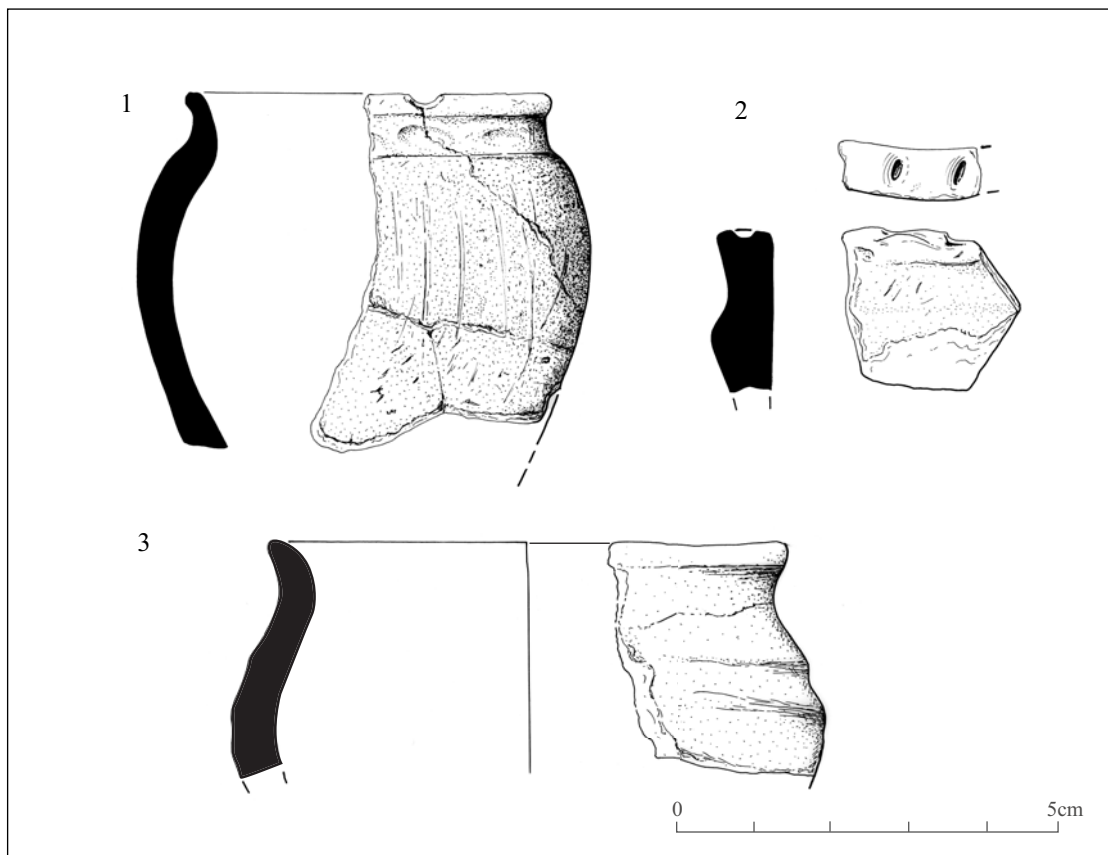


Figure 8: Iron Age and Saxon pottery



Plate 1: Site from the south-west with ditches 1-7 and 11 visible



Plate 2: South-facing section 34, ditches 1-3



Plate 3: Deliberately placed red deer antler in fill 258 (ditch3)



Plate 4: Cattle crania in ditch terminus 311



Plate 5: Well 170. Roman tile can be seen in the section, bottom left



Plate 6: Building 2, Saxon sunken-featured building, looking west



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