



HERITAGE NETWORK



THE FORMER HEALTH CENTRE The Tene, Baldock, Herts.

HN011

Archaeological Assessment Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

THE FORMER HEALTH CENTRE THE TENE Baldock, Herts.

HN011

Prepared on behalf of Mr C.P. Rose

by

Penny Fenton, Mark Winter and Helen Ashworth

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12 ROYSTON ROAD, BALDOCK, HERTS. SG7 6NT
TEL: (01462) 893288 FAX: (01462) 893562

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The front cover shows Inhumation (193)

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson, Penny Fenton, Nick Armour, Chris Turner, Erica Guttman, Paul Palmer and Faith Pewtress, under the direction of David Hillelson. Artefact assessments were prepared by Mark Winter, under the supervision of Helen Ashworth. The report was compiled by Penny Fenton, Mark Winter and Helen Ashworth. The illustrations were prepared by Faith Pewtress and David Kaye. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

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NOTE

The draft assessment for this project was originally prepared in 1994. Further work was undertaken on the finds and the site phasing in 1997. The report has been re-edited and formalised to coincide with the deposition of the archive with North Herts Museums.

Summary

Site name and address:	Former Health Centre, The Tene, Baldock, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Herts
Village/town:	Baldock	Parish:	Baldock
Planning reference:	n/k	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL 248 335
Client name and address:	C.P.Rose, General Builders Ltd, 120 High Street, Stotfold, Beds		
Nature of work:	New development	Previous land use:	Health centre
Size of affected area:	250m ²	Size of area investigated:	250m ²
Site Code:	BAL-31 '94	Other reference:	HN011
Organisation:	The Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Excavation	Finds location/Museum:	NHDC Museums
Start of work	25th March 1994	Finish of work	26th May 1994
Related SMR Nos:	8; 6082; 1868	Periods represented:	Roman; post-Roman
Previous summaries/reports:	Stead, I.M. & Rigby, V., 1986, <i>Baldock, the excavation of a Roman & pre-Roman settlement, 1968-72</i> . Britannia Monograph series No 7		

Summary of fieldwork results: As the result of an archaeological condition on the planning permission for the construction of two houses on the site of the former Health Centre, at the junction of The Tene and Pinnocks Lane, Baldock, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake an archaeological excavation on the site.

Removal of the overburden revealed a concentration of archaeological features. Two adjoining areas, Areas A and B, were investigated. Area A covered the northern end of the site and measured approximately 200m². Area B covered the southern end and measured approximately 50m².

The archaeological evidence suggests that the present site, which lay on the southern edge of the early Romano-British settlement, went through several phases of use. The earliest features recorded, including pits, post holes, and ditches, indicate early Roman occupation. This was apparently replaced by a small chalk quarry and a possible cellared building, with associated post holes. Fifteen graves, some in clear groupings, were also present, part of a previously documented extensive late Roman inhumation cemetery. A number of post-Roman features were also recorded, including ditch complexes and pits.

1

Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared as the assessment stage for an archaeological excavation carried out in Spring 1994 on the former Health Centre on the corner of The Tene and Pinnocks Lane, Baldock, Hertfordshire (Fig.1). The Heritage Network was commissioned to carry out the original fieldwork by the site owner, *Mr P.Rose*. The investigations were defined in an *Archaeological Brief* prepared by the North Hertfordshire District Council's Keeper of Field Archaeology (Burleigh, 1993). The work followed a *Project Design* prepared by The Heritage Network in March 1994 and approved by the Keeper of Field Archaeology.

1.2 The development involved the construction of two new dwellings on the street frontage. It was formerly the site of the Health Centre, which has now been demolished.

1.3 The present site lies within Archaeological Area No.96 on the *North Hertfordshire District Council's* Local Plan No.2. Previous archaeological investigations in this vicinity had revealed a considerable quantity of important archaeological information, not least the identification of a well preserved *Romano-British* cemetery of a possible 3rd to 4th century date. This was known to have occupied land to the immediate north and north-west of the present development and was believed to extend into it. The likelihood of groundworks disturbing further burials meant that a controlled excavation was essential, and that all burials would have to be removed in accordance with the terms of Section 25 of the Burials Act (1857).

1.4 In accordance with the requirements set out in English Heritage's document *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP2, 1991), the present report reviews the data gathered in the course of the fieldwork programme, and assesses its quality and significance. On the basis of this assessment, an updated research design has been prepared which is intended to provide a framework for an appropriate programme of post-excavation research leading to publication. It is intended that this work should form part of the wider Baldock Project undertaken by the North Hertfordshire Museums Service, under G.R. Burleigh.

2 Archaeological Background

General

2.1 Modern Baldock was founded in the twelfth century by the *Knights Templar*, who were granted the rights for a market and a fair from King Richard I in 1189 (Beresford, 1967, 452). The Medieval town was built close to the site of an earlier settlement which flourished during the late Iron Age and Roman periods at a point where the Great North Road crossed the Icknield Way. The medieval town was defined on its eastern side by the line of the present Clothall Road, which runs approximately 200m east of the present site (see Fig.1).

2.2 Interest in the present site stems from its situation towards the known southern limits of the Romano-British settlement at Baldock, one of the most highly researched Romano-British small towns in England. Percival Westell, curator of Letchworth Museum, was the first person to discover the importance of the town with excavations carried out in the 1920s and 30s. His work on Walls Field revealed an extensive Roman cemetery, with associated settlement activity. These discoveries prompted further interest in the town as a whole, but it was not until the late 1960s and 70s that further excavations took place, under the direction of Dr. I.M.Stead for the *Ministry of Public Building and Works*. In more recent years the *North Hertfordshire District Council Museums Service* has excavated extensively in the town under the guidance of the Keeper of Field Archaeology, G.R. Burleigh. The studies together have produced perhaps the most detailed picture available of the evolution and nature of a Romano-British small town.

2.3 The limits of the Roman settlement appear to have been demarcated by a series of large cemeteries to the north, east, south and south-west of the present day Clothall Road. Only to the north-west have no cemeteries been located, probably a reflection of the lack of fieldwork in that part of the town.

2.4 The town appears to have grown steadily around the junction of several major roads, revealing an element of co-ordinated organisation demonstrating the 'early interaction between native and Roman traditions' (Burnham 1987, 168). The communication systems were of paramount importance in the Roman period, affording relatively quick contact between centres of importance and providing essential trade routes stretching throughout the Empire.

2.5 At Baldock the Icknield Way, known to have been an important routeway along the edge of the Chiltern chalk escarpment from the *Neolithic* period onwards, converged with other roads which led to some of the major towns of Roman Britain. A primary road led southwards to the large provincial town of *Verulamium* (St. Albans), and ultimately onto *Londinium* (London), affording contact with the continent and communication systems reaching deep into the heart of the Roman Empire. Another important road stretched northwards to Godmanchester, Lincoln and beyond, whilst a third road led south-east, to Braughing and ultimately to the largest of all *coloniae*, *Camulodunum* (Colchester), originally the capital city of the new Roman province of *Britannia*. These routes were doubtless the

source of much trade during the Roman occupation allowing access to a great variety of goods and influences from much of the Empire. The roads often acted as boundary markers, demarcating sub-divisions and properties within the settlement.

2.6 Baldock developed as a prosperous small town and undoubtedly acted as a local market centre. The variety of burial practices discovered through the extensive excavation programmes might also suggest that Baldock was fulfilling a separate function as a centre for local religious cults. Rich high status Late Iron Age burials have been found on The Tene and Upper Walls Common, suggesting that the local aristocracy regarded Baldock as a suitable centre for the conspicuous display of wealth in their funerary ritual.

2.7 Following the Roman invasion in AD43 the trackways, which had connected Iron Age regional centres, were improved and soon came to carry increased trade. Imported goods, although still rare and expensive, began to appear in greater quantity in the town, alongside products of local manufacture. Prosperity was reflected in the emerging street pattern and density of new buildings, as well as Romanised styles of pottery and articles of dress. The town continued as a market centre for an agricultural community and as a focus for religious activity.

Site Specific

2.8 The cemetery bordering the present site is thought to date to the late Romano-British period. Sporadic excavations since the late 1940s have given a glimpse of this area of the Roman settlement. The site was first revealed in 1947 when seven burials, together with two flint surfaces, were discovered during the construction of a number of prefabricated bungalows directly to north of the present site, and on the opposite side of the road known as The Tene (Area 40). Twenty years later, in 1967, further development took place along The Tene as the bungalows were replaced by more permanent housing. During their construction, various pits and gullies of Late Pre-Roman Iron-Age and Romano-British date were discovered. The most significant finds were two well preserved rich *La Tene III* burials, dating to the mid 1st century BC, discovered to the north-east of the development zone. Burial 1 (Stead & Rigby, 1986, 51) contained cremated human remains together with a bronze cauldron, a pair of wooden buckets with bronze attachments, two shallow bronze dishes, an amphora, two iron firedogs and the remains of a pig. This important burial assemblage clearly reflected the funerary rites of the elite. The second burial, Burial 50, known as the *Lamp Pit* burial, contained the calcined bones of a juvenile, aged between 6 and 18 years old, with fifteen pedestalled cups and thirty-one lamps (Stead and Rigby, 1986, 78). Unfortunately, both burials were discovered during actual construction and were the subject of rapid salvage excavation.

2.9 As a result of these discoveries, the footing trenches for all new houses in this zone were observed by Dr. Stead. Of considerable importance was the discovery of two buildings, on the same alignment, in the construction trenches for the new houses. Building X was observed in the footings trenches of 24 The Tene and had flint and mortar foundations, together with part of an *opus signinum* floor. Building XI in Area G represents one of the most substantial buildings yet found in Roman Baldock. Analysis of the chalk, flint and tile

wall associated with the structure, together with the pottery from an underlying pit, suggests that the building dated to the late second century AD, or later.

2.10 During the same phase of fieldwork a further twenty-one inhumations were discovered close to where the original seven had been found in 1947. These were revealed in construction trenches and adjoining service trenches at Nos. 2, 4 and 8 The Tene (*Area 30*). Most of the graves had been damaged by machining, and could only be excavated where they actually crossed the construction trenches, therefore only a fragmentary picture of the cemetery as a whole could be established. Despite this, it was evident that all the burials shared a roughly east-west orientation, with their heads to the west. A ditch running on an east-southeast / west-northwest alignment appeared to have been cut by one of the graves, and this may represent an earlier boundary ditch to the north of the cemetery. No burials were discovered north of house numbers 26, 30 and 46.

2.11 In 1978, development on the site of the former Catholic Church, directly to the north-west of the present site, disturbed at least another 28 burials and other features, including the probable boundary ditch located in 1968. Limited investigations revealed closely aligned graves, which appeared to reduce in number to the north and to the east, but apparently continued to the south.

2.12 During further work in 1990 to the north-west of *Area 31*, occupation evidence was uncovered, but no further burials, suggesting a zone of activity outside the cemetery (Burleigh, 1992). This investigation turned up ditches, pits, beam-slots and a well, all dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, and possibly into the 3rd century. Three burials recovered from *Area 48*, outside the apparent limits of the cemetery area, probably represent satellite burials situated close to the road that leads to *Verulamium*.

2.13 All the above investigations were extremely limited, recording, for the most part was confined to the construction trenches during the developments. It is clear, however, that this area is one of considerable archaeological importance.

2.14 Prior to the First World War, the present site, consisted of open meadowland, which was later turned into allotments (Burleigh and Stevenson forthcoming). No substantial development had taken place on the site, the only building erected was a prefabricated construction with no foundations, which became the Health Centre around 1950. Consequently, the degree of preservation on the site was expected to be high, affording the first opportunity for an open area excavation in this part of the Romano-British settlement.

3 Methods Statement

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 The present site was excavated in two stages (see Fig. 2). The north-western end of the site machined and investigated first (Area A), followed by the remaining half (Area B).

3.2 The overburden in each area was removed, under close archaeological supervision, by a JCB-type excavator fitted with a 1.5 metre toothless ditching bucket. In total, 250m² were stripped of topsoil. Both areas were trowelled to provide a clean surface, photographed and drawn at an appropriate scale, using an established grid which was related to the Ordnance Survey national grid.

3.3 Features were then systematically excavated by hand and recorded, using appropriate pro forma record sheets, scaled plans and photographs, in accordance with the local planning authority's Archaeological Brief and the Heritage Network's approved Project design. At least 30% of the lengths of all linear features and 50% of the fills of pits and postholes were examined, whilst all human burials known to be disturbed by the development were excavated by hand in their entirety, in accordance with the conditions of the Home Office Licence held by the Heritage Network.

POST-EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

3.4 Following current professional practice, the post-excavation phases of the present project have been divided between the Archive and Assessment stages and Post-Excavation analysis and Publication stages.

Archive

3.5 Following completion of the fieldwork, the site archive, comprising the excavation records and materials recovered have been quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. A Harris matrix has also been compiled.

3.6 The archive will be prepared for deposition with the North Hertfordshire Museums Service.

Artefacts

3.7 Where appropriate, bulk finds, such as pottery and ceramic building material, have been carefully washed in clean water to remove the soil. All pottery has been marked with the site code and context number. Where washing has not been appropriate, such as with the daub, they have been allowed to dry naturally, before being carefully brushed with a soft dry brush to remove as much soil as possible.

3.8 The metalwork from the site includes copper alloy brooch fragments and iron objects. They have been submitted to a conservation laboratory for x-raying and conservation, as appropriate.

Ecofacts

3.9 Three bulk soil samples were collected. This included one cremation burial. They have been washed in a flotation tank. No further work has been done on the resulting flots and residues.

3.10 Over two thousand pieces of animal bone, weighing approximately 17112g, were collected from 262 stratified and 1 unstratified contexts. These were washed and dried. Nearly two hundred pieces of marine shell, weighing 1716g, were collected from the site.

3.11 A total of seventeen inhumation burials were recorded on the site. These were carefully washed and dried and submitted to a specialist for analysis.

4

Collected Data

Quantification

4.1 The documentary archive incorporates the written, drawn and photographic records for the two stages of excavation on the present site. The various elements of the documentary archive are quantified in Table 1, below:

Table 1	
Record type	Items
Context records (Area A)	215
Context records (Area B)	46
Bulk soil sample sheets	3
Registered finds sheets	5
Matrices	2
Plans A2 (1:20)	9
Plans A4 (1:20)	77
Plans A4 (1:10)	5
Sketch plans (nts)	6
Level record sheets	28
Sections A2 (1:20)	2
Sections A3 (1:10)	2
Sections A4 (1:10)	9
Sections A4 (1: 20)	1
Black and white photographs	112
Colour transparencies	75
Conservation x-ray plates	3
Conservation photographic sheets	5

Material Archive

4.2 The material archive incorporates the artefacts, faunal remains and environmental samples collected during the two stages of excavation on the present site, including both stratified and unstratified material. The various elements of the material archive are quantified in Table 2 below:

Table 2		
Type	Number	Weight (g)
Pottery	1694	19196
Tile	95	3120
Daub	57	807
Human skeletons	17	n/a
Animal bone	2051	17112
Shell	195	1738
Slag	16	120
Flint	1	>5g
Iron objects	19	n/a
Copper alloy objects	21	n/a
Coins	7	n/a
Worked bone	2	n/a
Clay pipe	6	42
Charcoal	7	8
Samples	3	c.30 litres

STRATIGRAPHY AND SITE PHASING

Context Types

4.3 A total of 262 contexts were recorded from 86 features investigated during the present project. Area A accounted for 77% of all recorded contexts, with the remaining 23% in Area B. The distribution of contexts by Area and Type is recorded in Table 3 below

Table 3			
Feature	Area A	Area B	Total
Layers	4	1	5
Deposits	0	0	0
Ditches	11	9	20
Other Linears	7	4	11
Pits	16	2	18
Post holes	6	2	8
Graves	15	0	15
Other features	4	2	6
Natural features	3	0	3
Total	66	20	86

Phasing

4.4 The preliminary dating of artefacts collected from the present site has allowed five broad phases of activity to be defined (Fig. 3). These comprise: Phase 1, the settlement phase, which appears to date to the immediate post-Conquest period (mid 1st - mid 2nd centuries AD); Phase 2 relates to the excavation of the quarry pit [206] in the 2nd century; Phase 3 relates to the site's use as a cemetery in the late Roman period (3rd to 5th centuries AD); Phase 4 to the post-Roman period (5th to 6th centuries AD); Phase 5 relates to the medieval and post-medieval periods (11th - 19th centuries AD). The distribution of features by phase is shown in Table 5 below:

Table 4						
Feature	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Unknown
Layers	0	0	1	0	4	0
Deposits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ditches	7	0	1	12	0	0
Other Linears	3	0	0	4	2	2
Pits	7	1	7	1	2	0
Post holes	3	3	0	0	0	2
Graves	0	0	15	0	0	0
Other features	0	2	0	1	3	0
Natural features	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	20	6	24	18	11	7

5 Site Narrative - *by feature type*

5.1 Material recovered from the site dates from the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) through to the post-medieval period. No features on the site could be identified as earlier than Romano-British, however residual pottery from the LPRIA was found in a number of contexts and may indicate earlier activity in the area.

5.2 Immediately beneath the topsoil, a subsoil was observed across the site, comprising a friable dark grey brown clay silt, approximately 0.50m in depth, containing frequent small stones and peagrit. Pottery sherds of Romano-British, Medieval and Post-Medieval date were recovered from this layer, which probably represents a build up of material resulting from later agricultural activities. Several features on the site showed evidence of disturbance caused by animal and tree root activity.

BURIALS

5.3 Twelve burials were excavated on the site, with a further three probable burials recognised, but not excavated ([26], [172] and [194]).

5.4 The excavated burials were in the form of single discrete inhumations in vertical sided, flat bottomed grave cuts. All the burials were roughly aligned on the same east-west orientation, with skulls towards the western end of the grave. With one exception, the skeletons were lying in a supine position. In some cases where graves were close to one another, similar burial characteristics could be recognised, and these may represent contemporary family groups.

5.5 Cuts [61], [184] and [191], located on the western side of the site, represent one such group of parallel graves. Cut [184], which lay approximately a metre from cut [191], but less than 10cm from cut [61], was the southernmost of the three graves.

5.5.1 Grave [61] was highly disturbed, probably as a result of later ploughing, and much of the skeleton [60] and the grave cut had been truncated. It was possible to demonstrate that the body had been lain in a supine position, with legs straight and arms at its sides. Parts of each leg were recovered, together with the right arm, fragments of skull and jaw, and various ribs; the grave cut was almost imperceptible, but was at least 2.12m in length and approximately 0.80m wide. It contained fill (02), a light grey brown friable silt with occasional chalk lumps. Pottery of 1st - 2nd century date was recovered from the fill.

5.5.2 Grave [184] measured 2.28m long, 0.90m wide and 0.37m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It contained fill (180), a compact light grey chalky silt. A compact deposit of decayed chalk, approximately 0.05m thick, was noted around the edges of the cut, this has been interpreted as a natural deposit, possibly the result of weathering, rather than deliberate packing as recognised at other R-B cemetery sites (Green, 1977, 46). The top 10cm of the fill had been truncated by ditch cut [131]. The skeleton [183] lay on its back with arms slightly flexed, and both hands resting on the pelvis; all bones

survived except for some of the ribs and the sternum. A small coin, probably a minim, together with a fragment of copper, was found in the grave fill. These are probably residual finds, rather than grave goods.

5.5.3 Grave [191] measured 2.24m long, 1.06m wide and 0.33m deep, with steep sides and a flat base, containing fill (189), a friable dark grey brown clay silt with occasional chalk lumps approximately 40mm in size. A similar concentration of decayed chalk was noted on the edges of the grave cut. It was truncated by two N/S orientated ditches c.[131] and c.[73], however these were relatively shallow and disturbed only the upper horizons of the grave fill. The skeleton, [190], had suffered some damage, most of the ribs were missing, together with some of the vertebrae, both hands, and the right clavicle and scapula. The pelvis and sacrum were also in poor condition. The body was extended with arms by the sides.

5.6 Grave cuts [63], [69] and [80] formed a further group of three burials; with [63] directly west of [69], which lay directly to the west of [191].

5.6.1 Cut [63] was the largest of the three graves, measuring 2.40m long, 0.93m wide and 0.30m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It contained fill (29) a compact dark brownish grey silty clay, with occasional small chalk lumps. Pottery dating from the 1st - 3rd centuries was recovered from the fill. A similar compact chalk deposit was noted around the edges of the grave cut as was seen in the fills of [184] and [191]. Various bones were absent from the skeleton [62], including the vertebrae, ribs, parts of both radii, and the hands; the pelvis was also badly decayed. A heavy iron object, possibly alloyed with lead, was found at the foot end of the grave, approximately 0.06m below the surface of the fill.

5.6.2 Grave [69], measured 2.16m long, 0.75m wide and 0.15m deep, with irregular sides and base due to weathering or root action. The fill, (30) comprised a compact dark brownish grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps. Residual late 1st century and intrusive late medieval pottery was recovered from the fill. The skeleton [69] was fairly well preserved, it was laid with the arms by it's sides and hands lying under the pelvis. Damage to the skull and right femur was probably caused by later animal or root action, the presence of the intrusive pottery appears to verify this.

5.6.3 Grave [80] measured 1.94m long, 0.66m wide and 0.22m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. It contained fill (31), a compact dark brownish grey silty clay with moderate to frequent small chalk lumps. Undiagnostic Romano-British pottery was recovered from the fill. Skeleton [89] was disarticulated, the largest bones were placed carefully towards the centre of the grave, whilst the smaller bones were distributed throughout the fill. Several vertebrae were articulated, whilst one of the femurs was still attached to the socket of the pelvis, and several fingers were lying close together. The skull and the pelvis were both fragmented. It is possible that either the corpse was in a partly articulated state prior to being placed within the grave, or that this skeleton was later disturbed and reburied.

5.7 Approximately 1.80m to the W/SW of cut [63], on a similar E/W alignment, was another large grave cut, [133], which measured 2.60m long, 0.76m wide and 0.24m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It contained fill (115), a friable brownish grey sandy clayey silt with occasional small chalk fragments. Difficulties in establishing the relationship between the grave, and a large probable pit, cut [125], were encountered during excavation. It appeared that the grave cut into the uppermost fill of the pit feature, but the similarity between the fills caused problems in determining the edges of the grave cut. A thin gully, c.[138], possibly a plough-mark, truncated the southern edge of the grave, and was probably the cause of the disturbance to the jaw and the upper vertebrae of skeleton [152]. A circular hole, approximately 10-12mm in diameter, was noted in the skull above the left eye socket. Bone regrowth had apparently taken place, suggesting that this represented an *ante mortem* operation, probably trepanation, which had healed. The rear of the cranium had a conspicuous neoplastic lesion, seen as an abnormal growth of bone tissue probably associated with a tumorous condition. It is probable that the *ante mortem* trepanation on the front of the cranium took place in an attempt to relieve symptoms associated with the lesion. Analysis of this individual by an osteoarchaeologist is necessary before any further conclusions can be formed.

5.8 Burial [26] was situated directly to the west of cut [133], and extended under the N/E facing section at the edge of the excavation area. It shared the same alignment as cut [133]. The grave was left unexcavated, as it was considered that it would not be affected by the development.

5.9 All further graves were located to the north of ditch cut [79], towards the N/W side of the site. Two graves, [120] and [104], were truncated by the ditch.

5.10 Grave [120] measured 1.45m long, 0.56m wide and 0.17m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. It contained fill (22), a mid brown grey friable silt with occasional small chalk fragments. Redeposited chalk natural was concentrated around the inhumation, especially towards the bottom of the fill. Two small finds, an iron pin, located above the right shoulder, and a copper alloy fragment found close to the left wrist, may possibly represent grave goods. Pottery of late 2nd - early 3rd century date was recovered from the fill. Skeleton [119] was placed in the grave in an extended position, with arms by the sides and hands resting on the pelvis. Damage to the skull was thought to represent possible disturbance after burial and the lower legs were missing as a result of the grave being truncated by ditch [79].

5.11 Cut [104], which measured 2.10m long, 0.82m wide and 0.36m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base, was also truncated by ditch cut [79]. The grave contained two fills, [105], the upper fill, was a pale to mid grey brown chalky marl, probably redeposited natural chalk. Undiagnostic Romano-British pottery was recovered from this fill. The lower fill (129) was a mid brown silt with redeposited chalky lenses, especially on the southern side. Skeleton [100] was truncated approximately halfway down the torso, so that only the upper ribs, vertebrae, skull and arms survived at the western end and the right foot at the eastern end of the grave. The arms appear to have been crossed over the chest.

5.12 Grave [64] had been severely truncated by a 19th century soakaway. The remainder measured 0.75m wide, 0.50m deep and 1.10m long, with vertical sides and a flat base. The fill (17) comprised a mid grey brown friable silt with a moderate number of chalk lumps. Residual LPRIA and 2nd century pottery was recovered from the fill. Only the legs of skeleton [65] remained. The grave truncated an unexcavated feature, [16], to the south-west, which extended under the section edge.

5.13 Grave [182] lay parallel to, and approximately 0.60m north of, grave [64]. It measured 1.93m long, 0.66m wide and 0.54m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. The fill (15) comprised a friable mid brown grey silt, with moderate chalk lumps. Pottery of 1st - 3rd century date was recovered from the fill. The limb bones of skeleton [181] were in fair condition, but the ribs, vertebrae, pelvis and scapulae were poorly preserved. Animal activity may have caused the jaw to be displaced. The burial was of the usual supine, extended form.

5.14 Grave [192] lay roughly parallel to cut [182], but on a slightly different alignment. It measured 2.10m long, 0.80m wide and 0.50m deep. The fill (15) comprised a friable mid brown grey silt with moderate small chalk lumps. Pottery of 1st to 3rd century date was recovered from this fill. Although the grave was severely truncated from above by a series of pits no damage had actually occurred to the skeleton [181], which lay in a supine position with hands placed over the stomach. A total of 17 iron nails was recovered from the fill, some from the edge of the cut, others from approximately 20cm above the bottom of the grave, indicating that this individual had been buried in a coffin. One further iron object, shaped like a handle was located between the legs, to the immediate east of the pelvis.

5.15 Two more possible graves [172] and [194], lay parallel to and immediately north-west of [192]. Neither was excavated, as they extended outside the development area. It is possible that these three features may be contemporary as they appear to abut along their long axis.

5.16 A shallow ditch, cut [166], on the same east-west alignment as the burials, appears to represent the southernmost boundary of the cemetery as it appeared that no burials lay to the south of this ditch. North-south orientated ditches, observed on the western edge of the excavation area, were not thought to be related to the cemetery.

Discussion:

5.17 All excavated graves contained single extended adult inhumations and were generally rectangular in plan, with rounded corners and vertical sides. Grave cuts appeared to conform to two types, one was long, wide and shallow, the other was smaller and generally much deeper. The size of the grave did not appear to relate to the size of the body interred in it. Specialist examination of the skeletons may well be able to infer whether grave size is possibly related to some particular aspect of the individual or the burial rites used.

5.18 The position of the body in the grave is an important aspect in Romano-British burial studies (McWhirr, 1982, 76) in order to recognise distinct patterns of funerary deposition. All but one of the inhumations on the present site were lain in a supine position, with legs

extended. Four of the bodies had their arms extended by their sides, two had their arms bent, with the hands placed on the pelvis and two had their arms folded over their chest; one had the arms bent and one had the left arm placed over the pelvis and the right arm extended. The position of the arms of the two remaining inhumations could not be ascertained as the upper torso of one had been totally truncated, whilst the other was disarticulated. Further study is needed to understand the importance of the positions of these individuals.

5.19 Orientation of the graves was on an approximate east-west alignment, with the head at the west end. There appeared to be a degree of organisation in the layout of the cemetery, the graves were in distinct lines (see Fig. 2) and it was clear that no intercutting of the graves had taken place. Clusters of graves were also recognised, suggesting a *"strict subdivision of the plot area by family or other social group"* (Farwell & Molleson, 1993, 24). Although no evidence for grave markers was noted during the excavation it is possible that the individual burials were marked in some way.

5.20 Only one example of a nailed coffin was recorded from this cemetery. The seventeen iron nails and fittings from grave [192] were mainly concentrated around the head, legs and feet. This plain type of coffin is well represented on late Roman sites in Britain, for example, Poundbury, near Dorchester in Dorset, where the nailed wooden coffin was *"the most common form of body container"* (Woodward, 1993, 228). Six further graves, [184], [191], [63], [120], [104], [80], are likely to have contained pegged or lap-jointed coffins. This has been inferred from the fills, which consisted of a silty deposit lying centrally within the graves, surrounded by a compact, chalky rubble, which was recorded around the edges of the cut and also as lenses intermixed with the silt. The dark silty deposit is likely to represent the decayed remains of the body and the coffin, whilst the chalky deposit represents the grave fill, backfilled around the coffin during burial. The use of wooden coffins either bound by organic ties, or held together with wooden pegs, is well represented in Romano-British cemeteries (McWhirr, 1982, 88). No evidence for a coffin of either type was recognised from the remainder of the burials excavated. This may reflect the presence of a shroud or sheet, which in archaeological contexts is almost impossible to identify.

5.21 The dating of the burials is mainly dependent on stratigraphic relationships. Several of the graves were truncated by later pit and ditch features which date from between the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. The graves can also be given a *terminus post quem* from the residual finds within the fills. Most of the grave fills contained pottery dating from the 1st to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. Sherds of 'Romano-Saxon' ware from Much Hadham (fabric 49), dating to the 4th/5th century, were recovered from the fills of 6 graves, [63], [64], [80], [120], [182] and [191]. Grave [191] also produced a fragment of Oxfordshire red slipped ware, of 3rd to 4th century date, and [192] contained a sherd of 3rd to 4th century shelly ware. It is likely that this later material was intrusive rather than contemporary.

5.22 A small coin was found close to the body in grave [184]. Identification is necessary in order to procure a date for the coin, and thus a *terminus post quem* for the burial. There is the possibility that the coin may have been deliberately placed in the grave. During the mid to late 2nd century coins became *"progressively more common in inhumations"* (Philpott, 1991,

211) and are most frequently associated with late Roman burials. The coin as a grave good, was possibly introduced by *"immigrants or romanised Britons"* (ibid.), and they often occur in or around the mouth, or close to a hand. In many cases it is difficult to determine whether the coin is residual or a grave-gift.

5.23 *"West-east orientated cemeteries with few or no grave goods are not exclusively of post-Roman date, nor are they necessarily Christian"* (Rahtz, 1977, 54). There is no evidence to suggest that the cemetery at The Tene is Christian. The absence of grave goods may be explained by the poverty of the associated settlement, or an *"unwillingness to relinquish useful objects"* (ibid.) and this burial rite is also common in early Roman cemeteries. Although the dating evidence for the cemetery is meagre, it is probable that the burials on the present site can be dated to the 2nd or 3rd century.

5.24 Further study of the skeletal assemblage, their position within the grave, and the layout of the cemetery is required. Comparison with other excavated Romano-British cemeteries both in Baldock and the wider region, may help in understanding the funerary rites and beliefs of the local population.

5.25 A study of the burials at the present site, together with all other inhumations from Roman Baldock, will increase knowledge of the demography of a small Roman town.

DITCHES

5.26 Various ditches and gullies, aligned both north-east south-west and north-west south-east, were recorded on the site. Some of these were recognised as belonging to the latest phase of activity, whilst others have been interpreted as ditches flanking a medieval or later road or track. Only one ditch, [166], has a direct relationship with the cemetery.

Area A

5.27 Towards the north-western end of the site a linear feature with at least one recut ran on a south-west north-east alignment. The later ditch cut [74]/[79]/[90] measured 10.70m long, between 0.70m and 0.90m wide and 0.58m deep, though it was much shallower at the north-eastern end. It terminated in a butt-end, which cut ditch [97] approximately two metres from the eastern baulk. The upper fill (01)/(75)/(81)/(91) comprised a friable mid brown grey silt with occasional small chalk lumps, which contained pottery of 1st to 2nd century date. The lower fill (96)/(98) comprised a light brownish grey silt with moderate to frequent small stones, it contained undiagnostic RB pottery. This ditch cut graves [104] and [120] on its north-western side. To the south-west it recut an earlier ditch on the same alignment, [87]/[103], which measured approximately 6.00m in length, terminating approximately 6.00m from the eastern baulk, 0.56m deep at the western baulk and 0.14m deep at the eastern end, and between 0.40m and 0.70m wide. Two fills were identified, the upper fill (111) comprised a pale brown grey silt with moderate small stones, no finds were recovered from this fill. The lower fill (86)/(99) comprised a pale brown grey silt with frequent small stones and chalk lumps, which contained pottery of 1st and early 2nd century date.

5.28 A series of ditches, ran on an approximate north-south alignment along the eastern edge of the site. Two sections, section 12 and section 15, were excavated across the ditch complex, five metres apart, and it was possible to establish certain relationships between the ditches and other associated features.

5.29 The latest recognisable ditch, [83], was a steep sided, flat-bottomed gully, approximately 0.35m wide and 0.32m deep. The fill (82) comprised a loose mid brown grey silty chalk with moderate small chalk lumps and occasional large flints and contained undiagnostic RB greyware and post-medieval pottery. This feature was only recognised in the northern section (section 12) and truncated fill (84) of ditch [85]. This latter feature measured 1m wide and 0.43m deep, with a V-shaped profile, it was recognised in both sections. The fill (84) comprised a mid to dark brown grey clay silt, with occasional small chalk lumps. No dateable finds were recovered from this fill. This feature cut another gully, [118], to the west south-west, which was only recognised in Section 12. The surviving part of [118] measured approximately 0.30m wide and 0.25m deep. The fill (117) comprised a loose mid grey brown clay silt with moderate chalk lumps and flints, which contained pottery of probable 2nd century date.

5.30 A wide, shallow gully, [131]/[97]/[76], measuring 1.15m wide by 0.12m deep, was situated approximately 1.40m to the west of [85]. The shallow nature of this feature was probably the result of later ploughing. The fill, (130)/(04), comprised a compact light grey clay silt with moderate chalk lumps which contained post-medieval and RB pottery of 1st to 3rd century date. This feature truncated the surfaces of at least two graves, [184] and [191], and possibly a third, [61], as well as cutting into the upper fills of pit [72]. It was itself truncated by the butt-end of the east-west aligned ditch, [74] and either terminates or fades away approximately 1.30m from the northern end of the site.

5.31 Ditch [170] was not recognised in section 12, it was possibly truncated by pits [72] and [147]. In section 15 it was at least 0.80m wide and 0.40m deep with fairly steep sloping sides and a flat base. It contained two fills, the upper (143) comprised a mid grey brown silt with frequent small stones and occasional large stones. Romano-British pottery of 2nd century date and intrusive post-medieval pottery was recovered from this fill. The lower fill, (177), comprised a mid brown silt with moderate small stones. On the eastern side it was truncated by ditch [215], the southern continuation of ditch [85] and in turn cut ditch [205]. The latter feature measured 0.55m wide and 0.30m deep, with steep sides and a rounded base. It contained two fills, the upper, (144), comprised a mid brown sandy clay silt with frequent pea grit and moderate small stones. Finds included animal bone, daub, tile and pottery of 1st to late 2nd century date. It is possible that [205] may be the same as [73] to the north.

5.32 Most of the ditches in this complex are not obviously associated with the cemetery, and it is possible that several of them could represent roadside ditches associated with a possible Medieval, or later, road or trackway, on an approximate north-south alignment in the vicinity of the site, but not encroaching on it. These ditches continue both north and southwards beyond the limits of the site.

5.33 Ditch [166], aligned roughly east-west, may delineate the southern boundary of the cemetery. It measured 0.60m wide and 1.16m deep. The fill (57) comprised a soft mid yellow brown silt clay with moderate small chalk lumps. Finds recovered from the fill include animal bone and pottery of 1st to early 3rd century date. The burials and the ditch were on the same alignment, and no burials were seen to extend south beyond the ditch. The *terminus post quem* for the finds from the ditch was late 2nd /3rd century. There was an indeterminate relationship between this ditch and cut [161], a shallow insubstantial pit feature.

5.34 An unexcavated feature, assigned fill number (18) which comprised a friable mid-dark grey brown silt with moderate chalk lumps, ran along the edge of the western baulk in an approximate east south-east west north-west direction. This was truncated by grave cuts [182] and [192] on it's southern edge. The northern side of the feature lay under the baulk, but the fairly straight southern edge suggests that this feature may represent a ditch.

Area B

5.35 This area was machined to a lower level than that of Area A in order that features could be recognised within the homogenous silt deposit which overlay the whole area. During excavation it was recognised that the silty deposit represented a whole series of intercutting ditches surrounding small islands of chalk.

5.36 Two strategically placed sections were excavated with the aim of identifying the nature and development of the ditch complex (see Sections 19 and 20). Initially a half metre section was excavated across several east-west orientated linear features to the northern end of the area.

Section 19 (see Fig.4)

5.36.1 Cut [227] was a shallow gully which measured 0.48m wide by 0.08m deep. The fill (226) comprised a compact yellow brown clay silt with frequent chalk lumps, which contained pottery of 1st to 2nd century date. The gully just clipped the northern edge of [236], a V-shaped ditch, aligned west north-west east south-east, which measured 1.1m wide and 0.38m deep. It contained two fills, the upper (223) comprised a friable light grey brown fine silt with occasional small chalk lumps and sub-angular pebbles. Pottery of 1st to 2nd century date was recovered from this fill. The lower fill (228) was a friable light grey brown fine silt with moderate chalk lumps. Pottery of 1st to early 3rd century date was recovered from this fill. Both features truncated a small pit within the section excavated.

Section 20 (see Fig.4)

5.36.2 This excavated section was far more substantial, measuring 0.50m in width and 7.70m in length. It was positioned across a series of intercutting ditch and gully features which lay on the same approximate east-west alignment. The latest features identified in the section were several postholes, together with a large sub-rectangular pit, [234], aligned roughly east-west, which truncated several ditches in this complex. As a result

of the limited time allowed for the excavation the linear features were rapidly excavated, and some were only recognised in section.

5.37 Ditch [258], apparently the latest ditch in the sequence, was truncated by pit [234] and cut ditch [245]. It measured 1.22m wide and 0.42m deep, with a gently sloping side and a flat base. The fill (220) was a friable light mid brown clay silt with frequent small chalk lumps. A copper alloy belt fitting {S.F.53} and copper alloy fragments {S.F.52} were recovered from this feature.

5.38 Ditch [245] measured approximately 1.60m wide and 0.50m deep with a gently sloping side and a flat base, it was truncated on the north-west by pit [234]. Two fills were recorded, (248) and (249). The upper, (248), was a light yellow brown silt clay with frequent lenses of yellow decayed chalk. Finds recovered include animal bone and a small number of pottery sherds of late 2nd to mid 3rd century date. The lower, (249), comprised a dark grey brown fine silt with occasional small chalk and flint fragments, which contained undiagnostic RB pottery. This has been interpreted as an animal burrow into the south-eastern side of the ditch.

5.39 To the immediate north west of pit [234] was [252], the sub-rounded butt end of a ditch, which measured approximately 0.96m wide and 0.56m deep, it was truncated on the southern side by pit [234]. It truncated [255] from above and on its northern side cut ditches [261] and [253]. Two fills were recorded, (218) and (246). The upper (218) was a compact dark brown silt clay with moderate small chalk fragments which contained pottery of 1st and 2nd century date. The lower (246) comprised a loose orange brown silt with occasional chalk flecks, it contained pottery of mid to late 1st century date.

5.40 Only the base of ditch [255] survived, it had been severely truncated from above by [252] and on the southern side by [234]. What remained measured approximately 0.80m wide and 0.24m deep. The fill (254) was an orange brown silt with frequent small chalk lumps. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.41 Ditch [261] lay immediately north-west of, and was truncated by [252], in turn it cut ditch [253]. It measured approximately 1.08m wide and 0.40m deep, with a V-shaped profile. The fill (260) was a yellow brown silt, with moderate chalk lumps and small stones. No finds were recovered from this feature, which was recognised in section at the post-excavation stage.

5.42 Ditch [253], aligned north north east - south south west, was truncated from above by [261] and to the south by [252]. It measured 0.52m wide and 0.44m deep. The fill (251) comprised a loose dark brown silt with few inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.43 Gully [262] lay immediately north west of [253]. It measured 0.30m wide and 0.16m deep with gently sloping sides and a rounded base. The fill (259) comprised a dark yellow brown silt with moderate chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature, which was recognised in section at the post-excavation stage.

5.44 Ditch [239] lay approximately 0.30m north-west of [262] and cut [235] to the north. It measured 1.30m wide and 0.50m deep, with irregular sides and base. The fill (221) comprised a loose light orange brown clay silt with frequent chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.45 Ditch [235] lay immediately north of, and was cut by [239] on the southern side and [238] on the northern. It measured 0.80m at its widest and 0.30m deep, with irregular sides and base. The fill (231) comprised a friable red brown clay silt with frequent chalk fragments. Finds included animal bone and pottery of 1st and 2nd century date.

5.46 Gully [238] lay immediately north of, and truncated, [235]. It measured 0.40m wide and 0.25m deep, with a vertical northern slope and an irregular base and southern slope. The fill (222) comprised a sticky mid brown clay silt with moderate chalk fragments. Fragments of animal bone and residual 1st century pottery were recovered from this feature.

5.47 Many of the features along this section contained no dateable finds and the redeposited chalk fills suggest that they were possibly backfilled soon after they were opened up. The ditches which contained pottery showed a date range from the 1st century through to the late 3rd century, including residual LPRIA material.

Discussion:

5.48 Only one ditch, [166], can be linked with any certainty to the cemetery site. In this case, not only did the graves share the same alignment, but they also extended no further south.

5.49 South of [166] other ditches on the same alignment may have pre-dated the cemetery (see Sections 19 and 20) the pottery evidence seems to verify this. Few of these ditches were very substantial, and their function was hard to interpret. Roman cemeteries were frequently positioned outside towns, and it is known that the cemetery at The Tene was situated on the south-west edge of Roman Baldock. It is therefore possible that this ditch system may have represented drainage ditches connected with a road or trackway on the same alignment as present day Pinnocks Lane to the south. Alternatively they may have been boundary ditches, separating residential areas from other activities, such as agriculture and industry.

5.50 All other excavated ditches post-dated the cemetery. This was clear from the dating of the pottery and the relationships between the ditches and the cemetery. At the eastern end of the site ditches were excavated on the same north-south alignment during the late Roman period and into the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. The fact that so many ditches shared the same alignment suggests that they may be continuously re-dug drainage channels associated with a nearby road or trackway, possibly even one of two roads known from other fieldwork in the Walls Field area to the north, they are believed to extend southwards towards the present site.

5.51 The east-west aligned ditches to the north of the site are likely to represent possible boundary, or drainage ditches after the cemetery had gone out of use. Pottery from ditches

[79] and [90] was dated to the LPRIA and early Roman periods, only one possible 4th century sherd was recovered. The ditches are known, however, to post-date the cemetery, and although the evidence is scant, the 4th century sherd is probably the only find which is not residual.

PITS AND POSTHOLES

5.52 It would appear that most of the pits on the present site relate to a phase of settlement activity predating the use of this area as a cemetery. One feature [206] has been interpreted as a chalk quarry, probably of Roman date.

Area A

5.53 Towards the northern end of the site, and extending under the northern section, was a large pit [206]. It was sub-rectangular in plan, approximately 3 metres wide, and 0.30m deep, with steeply sloping sides and an irregular base. The pit contained a series of dumped deposits, layers (88), (95), (109), (116), (174), (175), (176) and (198), composed of silty clay and redeposited chalk. These deposits appeared to overlie one another in no obviously recognisable order, and all contained pottery of 2nd to late 3rd century date, together with residual LPRIA material. This feature has been interpreted as a chalk quarry. Overlying these deposits, and spread across the whole pit were two layers, (03) and (19), which contained finds of a similar date; these may well represent the final silting up of the feature.

5.54 Within the bottom of [206] were several other irregular, small intercutting pits [123], [153], [154], [155] and [156]. They contained similar silty clay fills to the layers above, and the pottery varied in date from the LPRIA to the 2nd/3rd centuries. It is uncertain whether these pits were cut into the bottom of [206], or were earlier features truncated from above by [206], which also truncated the eastern edge of the upper fill of grave [192].

5.55 On the eastern side of [206], there was an irregular, steep sided, post-hole, [196], which measured approximately 0.60m in diameter and 0.20 to 0.30m deep, with a base which sloped to the west. The fill (197) was a mid dark greyish brown clay silt with moderate small chalk fragments. The relationship between the pit and the posthole was uncertain, but they were possibly contemporary.

5.56 Close to the eastern edge of the site, two moderately sized pits were recognised within the two sections excavated across the northern ditch complex. The upper fills of pit [72], a recut of pit [147], were truncated by gully cuts [73], [118] and [131]. Pit [72] was sub-circular and measured 1.40m wide and 1.20m deep with steep sides and a flat base. Three fills were recorded in this feature, the upper fill (70) was a friable mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small chalk lumps. Finds recovered from the fill include animal bone, oyster shell and pottery of 1st to 2nd century date. The middle fill (71) was a friable mid brown silt with occasional flints and small chalk lumps and frequent lenses of charcoal. Finds recovered from this fill include relatively large amounts of animal bone, oyster shell, pottery of 1st to 2nd century date and a copper alloy brooch {S.F.15}. The primary fill (134) comprised a friable

mid yellow brown silt clay with moderate chalk flecks and lumps and occasional flints. Finds recovered from this fill include animal bone and undiagnostic RB pottery.

5.57 Pit [147] was square with rounded corners, it measured approximately 1.70m wide and 1.53m deep, with steep, almost vertical sides and was severely truncated from above by pit [72]. Two fills were recorded, the upper (145) was a compact mid yellow grey brown silty clay with frequent chalk flecks and lumps, at least 0.95m deep and containing pottery of 1st and early 2nd century date. It only survived on the eastern edge of the cut. The lower fill (146) was a highly organic friable dark green brown sandy silt with occasional chalk peagrit, lenses of redeposited chalk and large flints. Finds recovered from this fill include animal bone, daub, oyster shell, pottery of 1st to 2nd century date and 2 copper alloy coins, {S.F.40} and {S.F. 42}. The pottery included an almost complete samian dish, form 18, stamped [OFPASSE] and the upper half of a burnished jar. The assemblage may have been deliberately placed at the bottom of the pit, a large number of complete or near complete pots have been found in pits of a similar type during previous excavations in Baldock, and they *"owe their preservation to the depth of the pits and the soft nature of the fillings"* (Stead & Rigby, 1986), but it is more likely that this was originally dug as a cess pit, and used to deposit domestic refuse before being recut by [72]. Complete, or almost complete vessels, including samian, have recovered from cess layers in deep pits during the recent excavations at Hartsfield School, Baldock (Hunn, forthcoming).

5.58 Both pits, [72] and [147], had been truncated from above by the north-south orientated ditches, suggesting that they relate to an earlier phase of activity on the present site. Grave [191] also truncated the southern edge of [147].

5.59 Pit [185] was revealed close to the eastern edge of the site, to the south-east of grave [61]. It had been severely truncated by the north-south orientated ditches, [175], [205] and [215]. The exposed area of this feature measured 1.28m wide and more than 1.20m deep. A total of 7 fills were excavated (159), (160), (164), (165), (168), (178) and (179), which all appeared to be the result of the slumping of the south-western side. Pottery of 2nd century date was recovered from several of these fills. It is possible, from the way the slump layers had been deposited, that they represent the fills of a weathering cone, perhaps associated with a well or deep storage pit. The shaft of the feature, which was approximately 1.20m in diameter, was not excavated, a stake hammered into the fill indicated that the feature extended for at least another 1.20m.

5.60 Pit [171], was situated towards the western side of the site. Initially pit [125], a smaller and less substantial feature, was recorded as cutting into the top of it, but after further examination it is thought that it was part of the upper fills of pit [171] and not a separate feature. The relationship between grave [133] and pit [171] was at first uncertain, due to the of their fills, but it was later decided that the pit was probably cut by the grave. The shaft of pit [171] was sub-circular in shape, and 1.80m in diameter. In place of the weathering cones that are usually found with wells and deep storage pits [171] had a ledge at the top of the shaft, which showed little weathering. This was approximately 0.46m wide and between 0.40 and 0.06m below the surface, with a diameter of 2.50m and was filled with highly compact

redeposited chalk. Crumbling of the chalk natural had occurred in areas around the ledge. The pit was excavated to a depth of 1.60m, and appeared to extend downwards for at least another 1.20m. A total of 5 fills were excavated in the pit shaft, (114), (167), (200), (209) and (210), all finds came from the three top fills. The upper fill (114) was a friable dark greyish brown sandy silt clay with occasional small chalk lumps, which contained large amounts of animal bone, some showing butchery marks, oyster shell and pottery of 1st to late 2nd century date. Three copper alloy objects were also found, a possible *ligula* {S.F.19}, a possible brooch pin {S.F.20} and a brooch {S.F.21}. Below (114) was (167), a friable dark greyish brown sandy silt clay with occasional small chalk fragments, which contained some oyster shell, large amounts of animal bone and pottery of 1st to late 2nd century date. Two copper alloy objects, a pin head {S.F.22} and a possible strap fitting {S.F.24} and a bone disc, possibly a gaming counter {S.F.23} were recovered from this fill. Below (167) was (200), a dark brown sandy silt clay with a high organic content and occasional small chalk fragments. Finds from this fill comprise a large amount of animal bone, including the front end of an articulated horse skeleton, a small number of oyster shell fragments, a possible iron knife blade and pottery of 1st and 2nd century date. The remaining 2 fills consisted of redeposited chalk natural and produced no finds.

5.61 Unfortunately [171] could not be fully excavated due to safety factors, and so its function remains uncertain, it may have been either a deep storage pit or a well. Wells previously excavated in Baldock have, in general, had much narrower shafts of less than a metre in diameter, which have usually been circular in plan. These have frequently had foot-holds cut at intervals within the shaft on opposing faces (Stead and Rigby, 1986, 45), as have some of the deep storage pits. The shaft of [171] was too wide at 1.80m for foot-holds, and much wider than any of the wells previously recorded in Baldock. It is possible that the sub-square shaped shelf at the top supported a superstructure, although there was no obvious evidence for this. The diameter of the pit shaft, together with the ledge at the top of the feature, suggests that this may represent a storage pit, possibly with a structure above it. A similar feature was excavated at Hartsfield School, Baldock, in 1991. The circular shaft here was 4.50m in depth, with a diameter of approximately 1.40m. The sub-square pit at the top of the shaft, was approximately 3m in diameter with four beam-slots at the top of the shaft. It was interpreted as a pit for cool storage, and may have sat within the cellar of a building (Colley, Went and Burleigh, forthcoming).

5.62 An isolated small pit, [141] was identified towards the north-eastern corner of the site. It measured 0.68m in diameter and 0.46m deep with gently sloping sides and a flat base. The single fill (136) comprised a compact grey brown clay with redeposited chalk. Finds included animal bone, an iron object and pottery of 1st to 2nd century date.

5.63 Approximately four possible postholes and one stakehole were recognised in Area A. Three of the postholes, [94], [92] and [163], ran in a curving line on an approximate north-east south-west alignment across the northern ditch complex. The fourth lay to the south-east, between graves [80] and [69].

5.64 Cut [94] lay 0.40m north of pit [171]. It was sub-circular, measuring 0.30m in diameter and 0.15m deep with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. The single fill (50) was a friable mid grey silt with occasional chalk peagrit and small flints. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.65 Cut [92] lay immediately south of ditch [87]. It was sub-circular, but disturbed on its northern side by tree roots, and measured 0.30m in diameter and 0.20m deep. The single fill (52) was a friable mid grey silt with occasional chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.66 Cut [163] lay on the northern edge of ditch [79]. It was oval in plan, measuring 0.19m wide and 0.10m deep with a gentle slope on the eastern side and a steep slope on the western and a flat base. The single fill (162) was a loose grey brown clay silt with occasional chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.67 Cut [66] was an irregular shaped feature, it measured 0.40m in diameter and 0.70m deep, with irregular sides and base. The single fill (34) was a mid yellow brown clay silt with frequent small chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature, which has been interpreted as an animal burrow.

5.68 The one stakehole [102] measured 0.03.5m in diameter and 0.05m deep with a V-shaped profile. The single fill (101) was a mid brown grey clay with moderate small chalk fragments. It was cut into the bottom of the butt-end of the very shallow north-south orientated ditch [97]. No more stakeholes were found but it is possible that others may have occurred along the length of the ditch.

Area B

5.69 A large pit [234] lay at the southern end of the site, truncating several other features in the southern ditch complex. It was sub-rectangular in shape, with rounded ends, measuring at least 3.46m long, 1.86m wide and 0.74m deep with steep sides and a flat base. Three fills were recorded, the upper fill (225) was a friable grey brown sandy silt with frequent small chalk fragments. Finds recovered included animal bone, oyster shell and pottery of 1st to late 2nd/early 3rd century date with some intrusive post-medieval sherds. A copper alloy coin {S.F.50} and a copper alloy fragment, possibly a strap fitting, {S.F.51} were also collected. The middle fill (233) consisted of a friable light grey silt with no coarse inclusions. Finds recovered include animal bone, oyster shell and pottery of late 2nd/early 3rd century date. The primary fill (237) was a friable light reddish brown ashy silt with occasional small chalk fragments. It was apparent that this layer burnt and the chalk natural beneath was scorched. This layer possibly represents the remains of a hearth, alternatively burning ashes were thrown into the bottom of the pit. No finds were recovered from this fill.

5.70 It is possible that the substantial pit represents the cellar of a building, because although irregular in plan, when excavated it had straight sides and a flat base. It was one of the latest features on the site, and clearly post-dates the ditches in this area.

5.71 Three postholes [244], [243], and [257] could be tentatively linked with pit [234], possibly indicating the presence of an associated structure.

5.72 Cut [244] was situated approximately 0.50m east of the eastern end of the pit. It was sub-circular and measured 0.22m in diameter and 0.21m deep with vertical sides and a flat base. The single fill (224) was a loose mid grey brown silt with occasional small chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.73 Cut [243] lay approximately 0.20m north-west of the pit. It measured 0.23m in diameter and 1.40m deep with gently sloping sides and a rounded base. The fill (242) was a friable dark brown clay silt with occasional small chalk fragments. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.74 Cut [257] lay approximately 0.40m south of the pit, it was only recognised in section. It measured 0.20m in diameter and 0.18m deep. The fill (256) was a mid dark brown silt clay with occasional chalk flecks which contained pottery of 1st to 3rd century date.

5.75 Cut [232], a small circular pit, was truncated by ditch [236] and gully [227]. It measured approximately 0.85m wide, and 0.45m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base. Two fills were recorded, the upper (229) was a compact mid brown orange clay silt with frequent small fragments of chalk which contained pottery of 1st and 2nd century date. The lower fill (230) was a sticky mid orange brown clay silt with frequent chalk lumps and occasional sub-angular flints which contained pottery of 1st to late 2nd century date.

Discussion:

5.76 At least two of the pits on the present site, [171] and [185], could be interpreted either as deep storage pits or wells, both were wider at the surface with narrower shafts that appeared to be deeper than 2.50m. It is possible that a structure originally covered [171]. Wells and deep storage pits have been excavated on other sites in Baldock and would therefore provide useful comparisons.

5.77 Pit [147] may originally have been dug as a cess and rubbish pit. The primary fill was highly organic and contained a large amount of animal bone and pottery, including an almost complete samian vessel. During excavations at Hartsfield School in 1997/8 a number of similar deep pits were excavated (Hunn, 1998). These contained highly organic, cess fills and produced complete vessels from their lower layers. Comparison between such features could reveal more about the layout and diet of Roman Baldock.

5.78 Cut [234], the southernmost pit, was very regular in plan and profile, with vertical sides and a flat base. This feature has been interpreted as a possible cellar, with an associated posthole structure. It is possible that other postholes were not identified due to the difficulty in recognising features at this end of the site. If this feature was a cellared structure it would represent an important discovery in Roman Baldock, as few buildings have been excavated in the Roman town, and the identification of such features is an important research objective. It

would be useful to compare the size and nature of this feature to the similar elongated pit excavated in 1992, at the rear of 39b High Street, Baldock (Richmond, forthcoming).

5.79 The character of [206] makes it likely that it represents a chalk quarrying feature rather than a pit. It was fairly irregular in shape, and not more than 0.40m deep. It was also filled up with a series of dumps, as though it had been backfilled in order to relevel the surrounding chalk ground surface. Quarrying of chalk was a frequent activity throughout Roman Baldock, as noted on various sites in the town. Chalk was frequently quarried for use as a building material, although it was also used during the metalling process of roads (ibid).

5.80 It would appear that most of the pits on the present site date to the early Roman period, 1st to late 2nd century. If this is the case then these features may predate the cemetery, suggesting that the town may have shrunk, or the centre of settlement moved, probably in the late 2nd/early 3rd century.

6 Site Phasing

6.1 Four recognisable, but tentative, phases of activity were recognised on the present site:

Phase 1: Settlement

6.2 The earliest phase relates to a period of domestic activity. Three pits, [141], [185] and [171] could all be generally dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries. This period of activity links in well with features recorded on the site to the north-west, excavated in 1990 (Burleigh & Stevenson, forthcoming). Here various pits, ditches, beam-slots and a probable well were dated predominantly to the 1st and 2nd centuries.

6.2.1 The ditch complex in Area B has also been assigned to this phase. They appear to form a series of recuts, running on an approximate north-west south-east alignment and may represent drainage for a track within the settlement to the south of the site or part of a property boundary. These features probably continued into the second phase, and possibly even beyond, revealing continuous activity in this part of the town from the 1st to the 3rd century. Material from these ditches was dated from the 1st to 3rd centuries. Features relating to this phase of the present site consist of pits, ditches and post holes. The pits apparently served several functions, including storage and rubbish pits.

6.2.2 The pits associated with this phase lie to the north of the ditch complex. They could be divided into deep storage pits or wells ([171] and [185]) or cess and rubbish pits ([147]). The artefact assemblages appear to support the interpretation of a domestic site, these features produced butchered and unbutchered animal bone, pottery and copper alloy objects, such as brooches and coins.

6.2.3 Two probable postholes also appear to belong to this phase, [92] and [158], although, as no finds were recovered to date the features, this association must be tenuous.

Phase 2: Quarry

6.3 The second phase of activity involved the opening up of the quarry pit, [206] to the north of the site, as well as probable domestic activity, in the form of the possible cellar [234] and associated postholes, in the southern half of the site. All these features contained a range of second and third century wares, as well as the usual quantity of residual LPRIA material.

Phase 3: Cemetery

6.4 The settlement on this site was apparently abandoned at some point in the 2nd century. The pits and ditches appear to have silted up and, in certain instances, the dumping of refuse seems to have taken place. A short period of inactivity seems to have occurred prior to the re-utilisation of the land as a cemetery. This involved laying out an organised inhumation cemetery, with east-west orientated graves. Each grave was surrounded by an

area of free space, which meant that there was no evident intercutting. Pottery recovered from the fills dates from the 1st to the 4th century, however the late 3rd and 4th century Romano-Saxon sherds may relate most closely to the date of the burials.

6.4.1 Ditch [166] has been interpreted as the southern boundary to the cemetery. Pottery of 2nd and 3rd century date was recovered from the single fill (57) of this feature.

Phase 4: Post-Roman

6.5 The fourth phase of activity on the site involved the digging of ditches, which ran on a north-south alignment along the eastern edge of the site, [97], [73], [118], [131] and [85] as well as in an east-west alignment towards the northern end, [90], [79], [103], [87] and [74]. These ditches all contained a reasonable amount of 1st to late 2nd century material, although as they truncate several of the graves, it is evident that they belong to a later phase than the burials. It is likely, therefore, that the majority of these finds are redeposited residual material, and that most of the ditches probably date to the 4th century or later.

Phase 5: Medieval and Post-Medieval

6.6 Evidence of later activity was recorded across the site in the form of intrusive artefacts. The area of the present site was probably affected by later ploughing. A degree of modern disturbance and destruction was also noted, predominantly associated with the construction of 19th/20th century soakaway features, three such features were encountered on the site, relating to nearby housing. The level of disturbance has evidently led to the scatter of material from later periods within earlier Roman features.

7 Artefact Assemblages

LATE PRE-ROMAN IRON AGE AND ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY

Introduction

7.1 A total of 1694 sherds of pottery, weighing 19196g (including samian) and stored in three bulk finds boxes, was recovered from 87 stratified contexts during the excavation on the present site. The following assessment is based on a brief examination of the pottery recovered.

7.2 The assemblage dates from the late pre-Roman Iron Age to the post-Medieval period and consists of:

- 364 sherds (21.48%), weighing 1747g, from grave fills.
- 924 sherds(54.5%), weighing 12462g, from pit fills.
- 280 sherds (16.5%), weighing 3667g, from ditch fills.
- 53 sherds (3.1%), weighing 545g, from dump layers.
- 6 sherds (0.35%), weighing 50g, from post hole fills.
- 37 sherds (2.18%), weighing 335g, from the fills of cellar [234].
- 30 sherds (1.77%), weighing 390g, from gully fills.
- 367 sherds (21.66%), weighing 4220g, from unstratified layers.

7.3 The condition of the pottery varied, ranging from small, abraded fragments to sizeable, relatively unworn sherds.

Methodology

7.4 The pottery from each context was scanned, weighed, counted and assigned a spot-date on the basis of the fabrics and forms present. This was done to provide rapid information to the excavator for the phasing of the site. No further study was carried out at this stage.

Chronology

7.5 Excavations in Baldock between 1968 and 1972 (Stead and Rigby, 1986) have shown that the main phase of settlement in Baldock began in the first century BC. This continued until the 5th century AD when there appears to have been a break in the occupation of the town until the Knights Templar arrive in the twelfth century.

7.6 The pottery from the present site ranged from residual sherds of late pre-Roman Iron Age date to intrusive material from the post-medieval period. The bulk of the assemblage was of Romano-British date.

7.7 The ceramic evidence indicates three main phases of activity on the site. The first, from the first to the second century, indicates a period of human occupation on the site. The second dates from the second to the late third century when the site, possibly relating to the

digging of the quarry pit and the possible cellared building. The third indicates medieval and post-medieval activity in the vicinity of the site. A small amount of late Roman pottery was recovered from the cemetery area, this may be intrusive in the grave fills.

Recommendations

7.8 Further analysis of the pottery needs to be undertaken to divide the pottery into fabric groups which can then be weighed and counted. This will provide an insight into the importance of pottery sources to Roman Baldock. Once this has been done it may then be possible to refine the dates of the different contexts.

7.9 The assessment of the pottery from the present site was undertaken to provide a chronological sequence for the site. The pottery from the 1994 excavation is only a part of the full assemblage from The Tene and should be compared with the pottery from previous excavations on the site.

7.10 The assemblage from this site should be compared with pottery from other excavations in Baldock, especially excavations of other cemeteries, such as Walls Field and Upper Walls Common. This may help to provide a relative chronology of burials in Roman Baldock, as well as providing a deeper understanding of the site, and providing a greater understanding of the development of Roman burial rites.

7.11 Comparison of this assemblage to that of other sites in the area, such as Sandy, Skeleton Green, Welwyn and Braughing might provide us with information on the economic status of Roman Baldock and in the surrounding area. It may also be possible to examine changes in religious beliefs as grave goods change.

7.12 A medieval specialist will be required to date pottery from this era. This will then indicate what occurred on the site during this period.

SAMIAN POTTERY

Introduction

7.13 A total of 59 samian sherds (3% of the total), weighing 393g (2% of the total) were recovered from 28 stratified contexts during the excavation on the present site. These totals include 1 substantially complete vessel, weighing 230g and recorded as 1 sherd for the purpose of this assessment.

7.14 Approximately 8 vessels could be identified, the remainder of the assemblage comprised undiagnostic fragments. The following assessment is based on a brief examination of this material.

7.15 The assemblage consisted of:

- 13 sherds (22%), weighing 25g, from grave fills.
- 37 sherds (62.7%), weighing 346g, from pit fills.

- ♦ 5 sherds (8.47%), weighing 8g, from ditch fills.
- ♦ 1 sherd (1.7%), weighing 2g, from the fill of cellar [234].
- ♦ 3 sherds (5.08%), weighing 12g, from gully fills.

7.16 The condition of the samian pottery varied from small worn sherds to one well preserved, almost complete, vessel.

Methodology

7.17 The samian pottery from each context was weighed and counted and where possible the form was identified. No further study was carried out at this stage.

Discussion

7.18 Because much of the assemblage was in the form of small worn fragments it was often not possible to determine the form of individual vessels. A total of 5 vessels were identified. An almost complete form 18/31 and sherds from another 18/31 vessel, 2 form 18 vessels, 1 form 30/37 vessel and fragments from 3 shallow dishes or bowls. The form 30/37 vessel was identified from a decorated rim sherd.

7.19 The only substantially complete vessel on the site came from (146) the primary fill of pit [147]. The vessel, a plain stamped form 18/31, may have been a grave gift associated with a redeposited cremation burial, alternatively it was deposited in the pit after breakage. The potter's stamp reads [OFPASSE].

Recommendations

7.20 The samian from the present site needs to be examined by a specialist, who would date the vessels and identify the potters stamp and decorative motifs.

7.21 The assemblage could be studied in its own right, or could be considered in relation to Roman Baldock by comparing it with the samian from previous excavations on The Tene and other sites in Baldock, particularly the other cemeteries. This may provide an insight into the use and discard of samian pottery, as well as possibly providing information about the socio-economic status of the inhabitants of Romano-British Baldock.

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

Introduction

7.22 The ceramic building material was broken down into two categories, tile and daub, which have been weighed and counted. No further study was undertaken. The following is a brief assessment of this assemblage.

Tile

7.23 A total of 95 tile fragments, weighing 3120g, were recovered from 28 stratified contexts during the excavation.

7.24 Most of the tile, 60% by weight, was recovered from ditch fills. The remainder was recovered from features across the site.

Recommendations

7.25 Specialist examination is required to determine whether the tile is Romano-British or post-medieval. It will then be possible to determine if the tile is from a Romano-British building or the result of later intrusion.

Daub

7.26 An assemblage consisting of 57 daub fragments, weighing 807g, was recovered from 7 stratified contexts.

7.27 The bulk of the daub, 94% by weight, was recovered from pit fills. The remainder of the daub came from grave and gully fills. This was a small assemblage which may indicate occupation and should be compared with material from other sites in Baldock.

Recommendations

7.28 Much of the tile assemblage may be intrusive post-medieval material but the material found in ditch fills may indicate a period of occupation or the dumping of building materials to deliberately backfill the ditches. The daub found in pit fills may support evidence for a period of occupation around the 1st to 2nd century. On the basis that this material is contemporary with the settlement of the present site this material should be examined by a specialist.

SLAG

7.29 In total 16 fragments, weighing 120g, were obtained from 7 stratified contexts across the site.

Recommendations

7.30 This is a small assemblage which may indicate metal working on the site. Specialist assessment will be required to determine whether the slag is iron, copper or lead. A comparison with other sites may provide a greater understanding of this evidence.

CLAY PIPE

7.31 Six pieces of undiagnostic clay pipe stem, weighing 42g, were found on the site, chiefly in the topsoil.

Recommendations

7.32 The material is undoubtedly intrusive and so no further examination is required.

FLINT

7.33 One possible waste flake of Bronze Age date, weighing less than 5g, was recovered from pit fill 229.

Recommendations

7.34 This object is undoubtedly residual and no further work is required.

REGISTERED FINDS

Introduction

7.35 A total of 36 small finds were retrieved from 34 stratified contexts. Each of the finds has been categorised as copper alloy, bone or iron. The condition of the finds in each category varied from well preserved to badly corroded. Coins and nails have been examined separately.

Methodology

7.36 Each of the finds has been counted and photographed while the iron objects have also been x-rayed. Parallels have been sought in published reports from other sites including Baldock (Stead and Rigby, 1986) King Harry Lane (Stead and Rigby, 1989) and Skeleton Green (Partridge, 1981). No further assessment was undertaken at this time.

7.37 The following is a brief assessment based on the available material. This consisted of archive drawings and photographs of the copper alloy objects and x-rays of the iron objects as the actual artefacts were not available for examination when this report was compiled.

Copper Alloy

Table 5				
Find number	Context	Description	Spot date	Illustrate
2	u/s	Copper strip	--	no
3	u/s	?post-medieval strap fitting	--	no
5	5	pin, rounded head, 24mm long	RB	no
7	23	?brooch pin fragment	1st/2nd century	no
8	23	bent wire strip, folded ends	1st/2nd century	no
9	22	fragments	late 2nd/3rd century	no
14	132	pin, rounded head, 35mm long	RB	no
15	71	simple bow brooch	1st/2nd century	yes
17	144	fragment	1st - late 2nd century	no
19	114	ear scoop	1st - late 2nd century	yes
20	114	?brooch pin ?part of 21	1st - late 2nd century	?
21	114/167	brooch, pierced catchplate	1st - late 2nd century	yes
22	167	large pin or stud head	1st - late 2nd century	no

24	167	square buckle or strap fitting	1st - late 2nd century	no
25	180	fragments	1st - late 2nd century	no
49	231	thin wire strip, bent inwards at both ends	1st - late 2nd century	no
51	225	fragment	2nd/3rd century	no
52	220	fragment	--	no
53	220	?binding	--	no
54	218	fragment	--	no
55	217	fragment	RB	no

7.38 The identifiable objects, including pins, brooches and ear scoop, are all common on Roman settlement sites. The ear scoop can be paralleled with others found during excavations on Walls Field (Stead and Rigby, 1986, fig. nos. 56 243-248).

7.39 Brooch {S.F.21} may be a Colchester brooch, a one piece brooch with rod bow, wings, a coiled spring and a pierced catchplate, suggested by Stead to date to the 1st/early 2nd century (Stead & Rigby, 1986, p123). The present example is missing the coiled spring.

Coins

7.40 An assemblage of 7 coins was recovered from the site. At least one of the coins is of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age date {S.F.13} from fill (113) in pit [125]. Four others are probably Roman {S.F.11}, {S.F.26}, {S.F.50}, {S.F.40} and a metal detector find from the spoil heap. A probable post-medieval coin {S.F.42} was recovered from fill (146) in pit [147].

7.41 Analysis of these coins should be carried out by a specialist to identify type, date and, where possible, provenance.

Iron Objects

Table 7				
Find number	Context	Description	Spot date	Illustrate
4	29	iron object	1st - 3rd century	no
12	113	?knife blade	mid 1st - mid 2nd century	yes?
16	139	?hook	--	no
27	186	iron object	RB	no
47	174	iron object	1st/2nd century	no
48	174	iron object	1st/2nd century	no

Nails

7.42 An iron nail or handle {S.F.36} was recovered from grave fill 186 along with 11 nails {S.F. nos. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39}, probably coffin nails. Grave fill 31 produced a further nail as did grave fill 22, these were not recorded as small finds. The nails range in length from 50 mm to 25 mm. and most are badly corroded. It should be noted that no hob nails were recorded in this assemblage.

7.43 The possible knife blade and coffin nails should be examined by a specialist to determine their date and function.

Worked Bone

Table 6				
Find number	Context	Description	Spot date	Illustrate
1	3	hairpin with carved head, shank broken	1st - 3rd century	yes
23	167	disc, decorated with 2 grooves, ?gaming counter	1st - late 2nd century	yes

7.44 Two worked bone objects were found on the site, a carved pin, possibly a hairpin, and a grooved disc, possibly a gaming piece. Other examples of these objects have been recorded from excavations in Baldock.

Recommendations

7.45 All registered finds should be examined by a specialist to provide information, where appropriate, on the date, type and function of the assemblage.

8 Ecofact Assemblages

ANIMAL BONE

Introduction

8.1 A total of 2051 fragments of animal bone, weighing 17112g and stored in 4 bulk finds boxes, was recovered from 85 stratified contexts during the 1994 excavations on the site of the former health centre, The Tene, Baldock, by The Heritage Network. The following assessment is based on a brief examination of the material.

8.2 The assemblage consisted of

- 434 fragments, weighing 4114g found in ditch fills.
- 1215 fragments, weighing 10967g found in pit fills.
- 282 fragments, weighing 974g found in grave fills.
- 69 fragments, weighing 615g found in dump layers.
- 13 fragments, weighing 80g found in the fill of a cellar.
- 5 fragments, weighing 150g found in post hole fills.
- 33 fragments, weighing 212g found in gully fills.

8.3 The condition of the bone varied from large, well preserved pieces to small fragments. The bone from each context was scanned, weighed and counted. This was done to quantify the assemblage and to provide information about the type of features containing bone. No further study was carried out at this stage.

Recommendations

8.4 The animal bone needs to be submitted to a specialist to provide information on the species present, age and gender. This will provide information on the diet and agricultural practices prevalent in Romano-British Baldock.

8.5 A comparison of the assemblage from this site with that of other sites in Baldock and the wider region, especially the other Romano-British cemeteries in Baldock, would aid the understanding of the present site.

SHELL

8.6 A total of 186 fragments of oyster shell, weighing 1716g and 9 fragments of snail shell were recovered from the site. The largest quantity of oyster shell was collected from pit fills, suggesting that the pits were used to dispose of domestic rubbish. Most of the snail shell was taken from ditch fills.

Recommendations

8.7 The oyster shell should be submitted to a specialist. This should determine whether it was freshwater or saltwater, which may provide information on trade and diet in Roman Baldock.

8.8 The snail assemblage is too small and fragmented to provide any useful environmental indicators. No further work is required on the snail shell.

CHARCOAL

8.9 A total of 7 pieces of charcoal, weighing 8g, was recovered from site.

Recommendations

8.10 The assemblage is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions and so no further work is required on this material.

9 Human Remains

by Chris Turner

9.1 The skeletal assemblage represents the remains of 17 individuals. Some of which are only represented by fragmentary remains. All of the remains were laid out in anatomical position and examined macroscopically. Metrical data was obtained using sliding callipers.

9.2 The sexing of the individuals was established, where possible, using the morphology of the skull, the morphology of the pelvis, and metrical data from the humerus, scapula and femur. As many of these methods were cross referenced with each other as possible in order to improve accuracy. In some cases the evidence is inconclusive as an individual may have both male and female attributes, when this occurred the predominate sex was chosen and was indicated by a question mark.

Table 8		
Female	Male	Unsexed
7	6	4

9.3 Age at death was established, where possible, using the eruption of dentition, the fusing of epiphyses, the closing of cranial sutures, the morphology of the sternal end of the fourth rib and dental erosion patterns of the molars. As many of these methods were cross referenced with each other as possible, in order to improve accuracy. The general age categories is given first, followed by an age range in brackets.

Table 9						
	Juvenile	Subadult	Young adult	Middle adult	No age at death	Total
Male	0	0	2	3	1	6
Female	1	1	2	3	0	7
Unsexed	0	0	0	0	4	4
Total	1	1	4	6	5	17

AGE CATEGORIES - (Clavin Wells)

Embryo	1-8 weeks
Fetus	9-40 weeks
Neonate	1st month after birth
Perinatal	around birth
Infant	birth - 1st year
Childhood	1 year - puberty
Adolescence	1st three years of puberty
Juvenile	epiphyses unfused

Subadult	has not got full dentition or all epiphyses fused
Young adult	17-25 years
Middle adult	26- 45 years
Mature adult	46 years and over

9.5 The stature was calculated from the maximum length of various long bones using the tables from Trotter and Gleser (Bass, 1970, pp22-28). The calculated figure is given followed by the margin of error. The type of bones used are stated within the brackets

THE SKELETAL MATERIAL.

9.6 Skeleton: 17

Sex: -

Age at death: -

Stature: -

Comments:

9.6.1 This assemblage consisted of cranial fragments of under 20mm in size. No palaeopathology was observed.

9.7 Skeleton: 22

Sex: -

Age at death: -

Stature: -

Comments:

9.7.1 This assemblage consisted of fragmentary remains of ribs, pelvis, phalanges (hand) and scapula. No palaeopathology was observed.

9.8 Skeleton: 31

Sex: male?

Age at death: -

Stature: -

Comments:

9.8.1 This assemblage consisted of fragmentary remains of the axis, atlas and 3rd cervical vertebra, ribs, distal end of the right humerus, phalanges, mandible, scapula, and the left talus. No palaeopathology was observed.

9.9 Skeleton: 60

Sex: female

Age at death: subadult (14-17)

Stature: -

Comments:

9.9.1 This assemblage was poorly preserved, with many of the skeletal elements abraded and fragmentary. This was due, in part, to disturbance of the grave by modern machining. Periostitis was observed on the lateral aspect of the right femoral shaft.

9.10 Skeleton: 62

Sex: male

Age at death: middle adult (33-45)

Stature: 1.67m +/- 0.0337m (Tibia)

Comments:

9.10.1 This assemblage was preserved in a fair condition, apart from the absence of ribs, phalanges (hand) and the vertebrae below cervical 1 (atlas). There was crowding of the lower insisors and mild dental caries of the buccal aspect of the lower left canine and first premolar. The right lower first premolar was not present and the bone had successfully remodelled. The upper right molars were all absent, lost ante mortum, with evidence of bone remodelling. In addition, the upper left molars one and two were absent, with evidence of a dental abscess from molar two. The right mental foramen was dilated, possibly indicating infection of the mental artery. Post cranial examination revealed mild periostitis on the anterior surface of the right tibia. Osteophytes were observed on the anterior auricular surface of the atlas vertebrae.

9.11 Skeleton: 65

Sex: male?

Age at death: young adult (20-25)

Stature: 1.79m +/- 0.0337m (Tibia)

Comments:

9.11.1 This assemblage was preserved in good condition, but was only represented by both femurs, tibias, fibulas and the phalanges of the feet. No palaeopathology was observed.

9.12 Skeleton: 68

Sex: male

Age at death: young adult (20-25)

Stature: 1.73m +/- 0.0299m (Femur + Tibia)

Comments:

9.12.1 This assemblage was preserved in good condition, and virtually complete. Two non metric traits were observed, lambdoidal ossicles and the right supraorbital foramen. The left lower first premolar was compacted behind the second incisor. The dentition in general displayed little wear, except the right lower canine. This tooth appeared to be worn down to the gum line, possibly indicative of 'occupational' pathology, such as repeatedly gripping objects or materials by the teeth to allow manipulation. The left fourth or fifth digit of the proximal phalanx of the hand was tapered at the distal end. The rest of the skeletal assemblage showed no sign of disease

to explain this and it is possible the absorption of the bone could be due to traumatic injury to the finger and subsequent infection.

9.13 Skeleton: 89

Sex: female

Age at death: middle adult (30+)

Stature: 1.58m +/- 0.0372m (Femur)

Comments:

9.13.1 This assemblage was preserved in fair condition, but fragmentary in nature. Heavy calculus was present on the buccal surface of the upper first molar and second premolar, also there was slight calculus on the labial surface of the upper right incisors. Periodontal disease was present around the left canine. On the left aspect of the mandible there was evidence of periostitis around the mental foramen. A sub circular lesion, measuring 25 x 10 mm, was present on the right parietal bone, adjacent to the sagittal suture, 20mm above the lambda. This lesion affected only the outer table of the cranium where it caused new bone growth. Eburnation of the right femoral head, indicative of problems with the hip joint, was also observed.

9.14 Skeleton: 91

Sex: -

Age at death: -

Stature: -

Comments:

9.14.1 This assemblage was represented by cranial fragments, the proximal phalanges of the hand and a fragment of the humerus shaft. No palaeopathology was observed.

9.15 Skeleton: 100

Sex: female

Age at death: juvenile (12-16)

Stature: 1.55m +/- 0.0445m (Humerus)

Comments:

9.15.1 This assemblage was preserved in good, but fragmentary condition with the ribs, phalanges of the hand, pelvis and legs absent. The lower right canine had erupted compacted behind the incisors and the lower left canine had erupted almost horizontal. The lower third molars had formed but not erupted. New bone growth was observed around the left internal auditory meatus and immediately behind the temporal bone, indicating infection. There was also an abscess towards the centre of the right mastoid process. An inflammation resulted in increased porosity of the frontal bone and extensive bone remodelling around the lambda, extending across the parietal bones. Unfortunately the assemblage is too fragmentary to make a clear diagnosis of the pathogen concerned.

9.16 Skeleton: 119

Sex: female

Age at death: young adult (24+)

Stature: 1.57m +/- 0.0445m (Humerus)

Comments:

9.16.1 This assemblage was preserved in a fair condition, with only the lower legs missing. The lower right first molar is absent, lost ante-mortum as a result of a periodontal abscess. Limited osteophytes were present on the upper auricular surfaces of most of the vertebrae.

9.17 Skeleton: 137

Sex: -

Age at death: -

Stature: -

Comments:

9.17.1 This assemblage was represented by the talus, navicular, cuboid and metatarsals of the right foot, all of which were preserved in good condition. No palaeopathology was observed.

9.18 Skeleton: 152

Sex: male?

Age at death: middle adult (26-33)

Stature: 1.64m +/- 0.0299m (Femur + Tibia)

Comments:

9.18.1 This assemblage is preserved in good condition and virtually complete. The skull displayed occipital 'bunning'. This individual had two non metric traits, a septal aperture on the left humerus and lambdoidal ossicles. A dental abscess was present on the side of the lower right first molar and there were calculus flecks on the lower insisors and upper dentition. A well healed subcircular depressed fracture, measuring 17x 12mm, was noted on the right parietal bone, adjacent to the sagittal suture immediately above the emissary foramen. This traumatic lesion was probably the result of being hit by a blunt object from behind. Although the individual clearly survived, the impact may have caused a subdural haematoma (internal cranial bleeding). A surgical lesion was observed 35mm above the left supra orbital notch on the frontal bone. This lesion had cut through both tables of the cranium and represents a trepanation, possibly performed to relieve the pressure and discomfort experienced as a result of the depressed fracture and any following complications associated with head injuries.

9.19 Skeleton: 181

Sex: female

Age at death: middle adult (30+)

Stature: 1.68m +/- 0.0299m (Femur + Tibia)

Comments:

9.19.1 This assemblage was preserved in fair condition and virtually complete. New bone growth was observed on the superior aspect of the orbits, indicative of dietary deficiencies and associated with scurvy. In addition, there was a slight increase in the porosity of the palate. The lower left first molar has a carious lesion on the buccal aspect along the enamel line. The rest of the teeth displayed moderate calculus. There was extensive new bone growth and pitting on the posterior half of the left and right parietal bones. Unfortunately a large fragment of bone was lost post mortem from this area, making diagnosis of the infectious pathogen difficult. There was arthritic lipping on the head of both humeri and the proximal end of the right radius. The right fibula had mild periostitis on the lateral aspect of the shaft, caused by a non specific infection.

9.20 Skeleton: 183

Sex: female

Age at death: young adult (17-25)

Stature: 1.64m +/- 0.0372m (Femur)

Comments:

9.20.1 This assemblage was poorly preserved, especially at the proximal and distal ends of the long bones. However, the dentition was in good condition with only minimal wear on the upper left molars. There was a small sub circular lesion, 7mm in diameter, on the occipital bone, 20 mm below the lambda, with woven bone growth to the right side of the lesion. The lesion penetrated both tables of the cranium and appears to be the product of infection rather than a traumatic event. Unfortunately, this assemblage is too fragmentary to make a firm diagnosis.

9.21 Skeleton: 190

Sex: male?

Age at death: middle adult (26-45)

Stature: 1.69m +/- 0.0299m (Femur + Tibia)

Comments:

9.21.1 This assemblage was preserved in a good condition and virtually complete. The upper left and right second insisors were crowded around the upper two first insisors. The third molars were not present, but had not been lost ante or post mortem. There was extensive osteophytes on the anterior margins of the corpus of the lumbar vertebrae, with slight compaction of the fifth lumbar vertebrae. Lipping was also observed on both of the femoral heads. These lesions are indicative of joint disease, but the vertebral osteophytes may be the result of the trauma of a compacted vertebra.

9.22 Skeleton: 193

Sex: Female

Age at death: middle adult (30+)

Stature: 1.74m +/- 0.0355m (Femur + Tibia)

Comments:

9.22.1 This assemblage was preserved in good condition and was virtually complete. The hyoid bone was present in this assemblage. Lipping was present on the anterior margins of the vertebral corpus and the tenth thoracic vertebra was compacted.

Recommendations

9.23 The small number of individuals in this assemblage make any attempt to derive demographic data, or estimation of prevalence of disease within this population, meaningless. However, these individuals, together with inhumations from other cemetery sites in Baldock, could form the basis for an invaluable study of the population of a small town in Roman Britain.

9.24 In general the skeletal elements present are in a good condition of preservation, particularly the skulls, many of which are almost completely intact with most of the dentition *in situ*.

10 Further Research

RESEARCH AIMS

10.1 The original research aims for the project, as defined in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design, were to establish:

- the nature and date of any evidence for settlement on the site, with particular reference to the Late pre-Roman Iron Age settlement and the Roman small town.
- the nature and date of any cemetery evidence on the site
- the nature, range and origins of objects in use on the site

10.2 The assessment of the fieldwork demonstrates that the information collected is adequate to meet the research aims. The results can be summarised as follows:

10.2.1 The pottery evidence shows that this part of Baldock appears to have lain on the edge of the Late Iron Age and early Roman settlement. Although no features could definitely be dated to the Late pre-Roman Iron Age, residual sherds of pottery from this period were recovered from later features, indicating activity in the vicinity. Evidence of Roman occupation, in the form of domestic rubbish and storage pits, was also recorded, suggesting that this site lay on the southern edge of the Roman small town.

10.2.2 The number and types of Phase 1 features present suggest that this may have been the site of a single farmstead, located on the edge of the settlement, rather than an urban street.

10.2.3 Archaeological evidence from other parts of Baldock shows that the settlement was zoned, with certain areas designated for human burial (Burleigh and Stevenson, forthcoming). The settlement on the present site was replaced by a largely inhumation cemetery, probably in the 3rd century AD. A single cremation burial was also recovered from the cemetery. The ratio of inhumation to cremation burials on the site suggests that the cemetery was late Roman in date, cremation was the predominant rite in the earlier Roman period.

10.2.4 The artefacts recovered from the site reflect a range of everyday items used by the Roman inhabitants of Baldock, including pottery, coins and iron objects. No objects made from organic materials, such as wood or leather, were recovered from the site. There was a marked lack of grave gifts from the burials. This may either have been a part of the burial rite, or possibly a reflection of the wealth and status of the population.

UPDATED RESEARCH DESIGN

10.3 Within the context of this investigation, further areas of research to be recommended fall into two overlapping categories; those that enhance our understanding of the study area in particular, and those that provide data for comparative studies.

10.4 One of the major concerns is the nature and extent of the early settlement. Previous excavations in the immediate vicinity of the present site have revealed occupation evidence, including the foundations of two substantial buildings (Burleigh, 1992; Stead & Rigby, 1986). Features associated with settlement were also recorded during the present project. Further examination of the material assemblage may provide more information on the nature of the early occupation of the present site.

10.5 The archaeological evidence suggests that the present site was inhabited in the early and later Roman periods. Evidence from Baldock, and other Roman towns in the region, suggests that towns were zoned, with certain areas used for specific purposes, such as metal working or butchery. To this end it would be beneficial to analyse the pottery, animal bone and metal objects, to indicate dates and nature and nature of the occupation in this part of the early settlement and also the range of material used by the inhabitants.

10.6 Analysis of the animal bone would also cast further light on the diet and agricultural practices of the period.

10.7 Although only a small assemblage, comparison of the human skeletal assemblage from the present site with that from other cemeteries in the town, and from other published assemblages in the region, should be undertaken. This will add further to our knowledge of the demography and prevalence of disease in a small Roman town.

ARCHIVE

10.8 The documentary and material archive conforms to UKIC guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage. All post-excavation documentation has been filed, ordered, and indexed as part of the research archive.

10.9 The documentary and material archive is deposited with the North Hertfordshire Museums Service.

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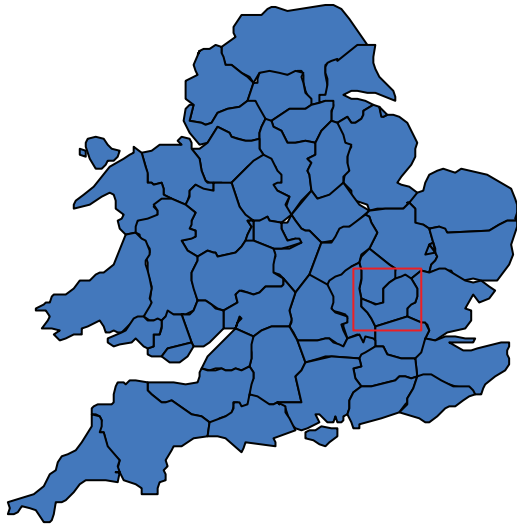
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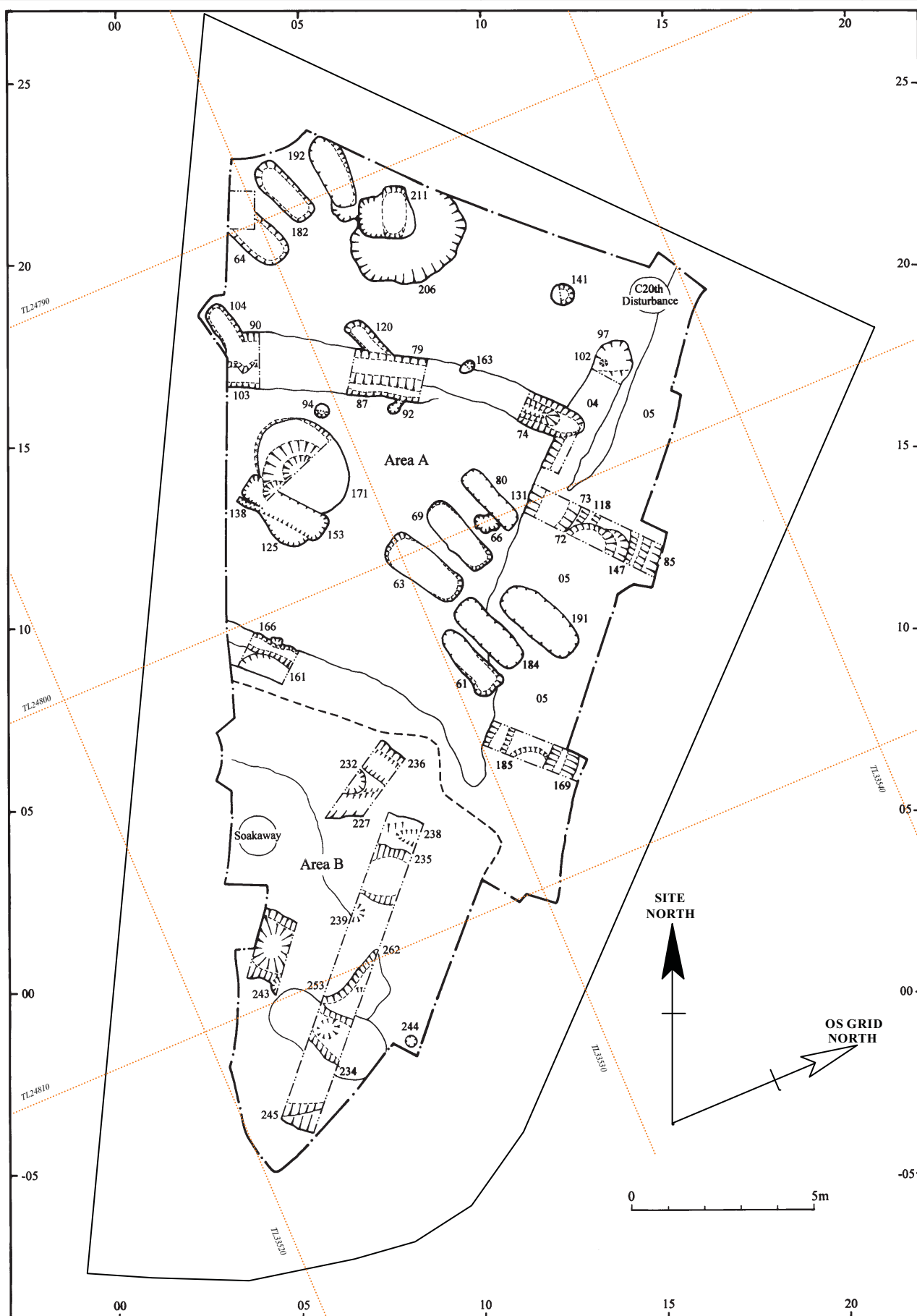
Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Overall site plan
Figure 3	Phase plans
Figure 4	Sections



Site Location

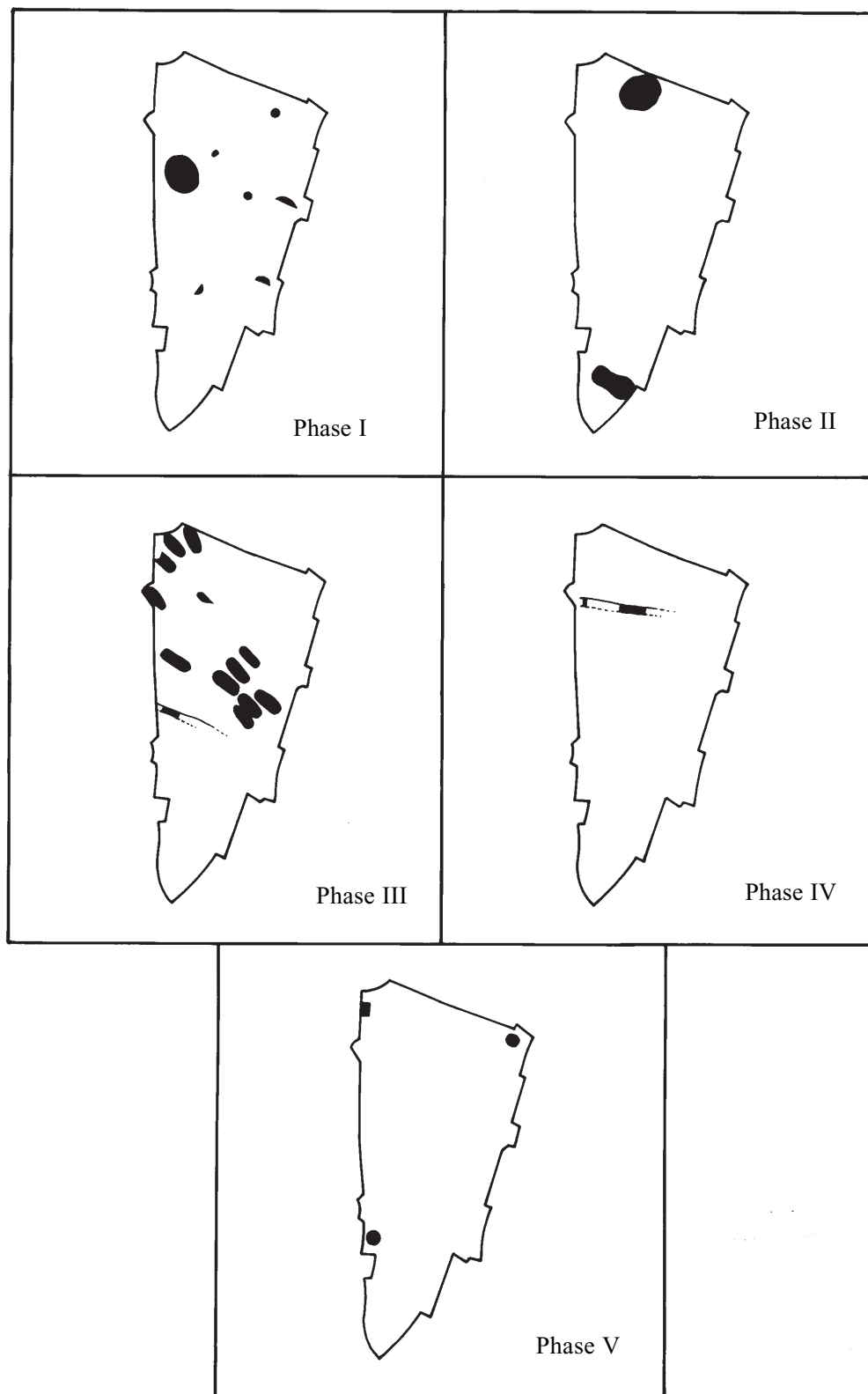
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Overall Site Plan

Scale 1:150

Figure 2



Phase Plans

Scale 1:500

Figure 3

