ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

PROPOSED PROCESSING PLANT, ELTON ESTATE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

A 'STRIP, MAP & SAMPLE' ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

INTERIM SITE NARRATIVE

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NGR: TL 081 922	Report No: 3009
District: East Northamptonshire	Site Code: AS966
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Project description (250 words) *From October to December 2007 Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted an archaeological excavation at the proposed processing plant on the Elton Estate, Warmington, Northamptonshire. The site occupies c.3 hectares of land proposed for a new minerals processing plant associated with the construction of the adjacent agricultural reservoir. The site contained cropmarks (recorded on the Northamptonshire SMR) that have been interpreted as prehistoric trackways, boundaries and enclosures. It was anticipated that these features might prove to be part of a significant prehistoric landscape.* *Struck flint suggestive of flint tool preparation or knapping in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods was found during a field walking survey at the site.A geophysical survey confirmed the presence of features shown on aerial photographs, and revealed further features some of which indicated two phases of possible agricultural activity (Stratascan 2006). The evaluation revealed a series of ditches forming an Iron Age field system with evidence for associated structures. Evidence suggestive of a ploughed out barrow and several peri-glacial channels were also present.* *The excavation revealed a total of 83 features across the site consisting of 1 inhumation, 1 cremation, 10 ditches, 47 pits and post holes, 14 furrows, 7 field drains, a palaeochannel, and a sediment-filled depression. 44 of the features remain undated. The archaeology yielded evidence of four periods of activity; late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Phase 1), Iron Age through to the 1st century AD (Phase 2), medieval (Phase 3) and post-medieval activity (Phase 4).*		
Project dates (fieldwork)	-		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	*Y*	Future work (Y/N/?)	*N*
P. number	*1738*	Site code	*AS966*
Type of project	*Archaeological Excavation*		
Site status			
Current land use	*Arable*		
Planned development	*Proposed Processing Plant*		
Main features (+dates)	*Cropmarks of enclosures and other features (undated)*		
Significant finds (+dates)			
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	*Northamptonshire*	*East Northamptonshire*	*Warmington*
HER/ SMR for area	*Northamptonshire SMR*		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site	*c.3 hectares*		
NGR	*TL 081 922*		
Height AOD (max/ min)	*26m/24m*		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	*NCC*		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	*Gareth Barlow*		
Funded by	*RJD Ltd*		
Full title	*Proposed Processing Plant, Elton Estate, Northants. An Archaeological Evaluation*		
Authors	*Gareth Barlow BA*		
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PROPOSED PROCESSING PLANT, ELTON ESTATE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

A 'STRIP, MAP & SAMPLE' ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION INTERIM SITE NARRATIVE

SUMMARY

From October to December 2007 Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted an archaeological excavation at the proposed processing plant on the Elton Estate, Warmington, Northamptonshire. The site occupies c.3 hectares of land proposed for a new minerals processing plant associated with the construction of the adjacent agricultural reservoir.

The site contained cropmarks (recorded on the Northamptonshire Sites & Monuments Record) that have been interpreted as prehistoric trackways, boundaries and enclosures. It was anticipated that these features might prove to be part of a prehistoric landscape of some significance. It was possible that they may be related to Neolithic activity, which is evidenced in the area by a burial cairn containing at least five different individuals, or to a number of other cropmark features that have been interpreted as Bronze Age ring ditches and barrow.

Struck flint suggestive of the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods was found during a field walking survey. A previous field-walking survey in 1991 (SMR 5810; 6070) only recorded post-medieval pottery being present. A cluster of three struck flint flakes, a core, two broken blades and a scraper were present in towards the south-western sector of the site. This may indicate that flint tool preparation or knapping occurred in this area of the site, and may indicate the presence of subsurface prehistoric remains. A geophysical survey confirmed the presence of the features identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs, and revealed two further small linear anomalies in the western part of the site. Faint parallel marks indicative of two phases of possible agricultural activity were also identified (Stratascan 2006). The evaluation revealed a series of ditches which formed a field system of Iron Age date. A small quantity of postholes were identified possibly representing associated structures. A ring ditch was identified that likely represented the remains of a ploughed out barrow. Several peri-glacial channels were also present.

The excavation revealed a total of 83 features across the site consisting of 1 inhumation, 1 cremation, 10 ditches, 47 pits and post holes, 14 furrows, 7 field drains, a palaeochannel, and a sediment-filled depression. 44 of the features remain undated. The archaeology yielded evidence of four periods of activity; late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Phase 1), Iron Age through to the 1st century AD (Phase 2), medieval (Phase 3) and post-medieval activity (Phase 4).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 From October to December 2007 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological `strip, map & sample' excavation of land at the Elton Estate, Warmington, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 9939 7804) (Figs.1-2). The excavation was commissioned by RJD Ltd and undertaken as part of a planning requirement by the local planning authority (based on advice from the Historic Environment Team Leader, Built and Natural Environment, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)). It is proposed to construct a minerals processing plant in association with the construction of the Elton Reservoir. Construction of the processing plant will require the removal of topsoil and subsoil from the whole of the site to create a base for the processing plant.

1.2 The excavation was undertaken in accordance with a specification prepared in response to advice issued by the Northamptonshire County Council Development Control (on advice from Myk Flitcroft of CgMs Consulting who advised the County Council on archaeological matters). A brief was issued by NCC Historic Environment Team (dated 11/11/2005), prior to consent, which set out the initial requirements for an excavation. This required a programme of archaeological evaluation to include an updated archaeological desk-based assessment, geophysical survey, fieldwalking and trial trench evaluation. These surveys have now been carried out and the results submitted to Northamptonshire County Council. The results of these elements of the project are presented separately (Grant 2002, Newton 2006, Schofield 2006, Stratascan 2006 and Pole 2007). No brief relating to mitigation has been prepared by NCC or their archaeological advisor.

1.3 All elements of the project adhered to the NCC Historic Environment Team's *Policy and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork Projects in Northamptonshire*. Standards for Field Archaeology in Northamptonshire. The project was also be carried out according to the relevant guidelines of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003),* which relates to the immediately adjacent East Anglian region, the IFA *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (revised 2001).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 A programme of archaeological 'strip, map & sample' excavation was required during the programme of topsoil stripping for the proposed processing plant.

2.2 The 'strip & record' excavation was required to:

- Provide a record of all archaeological deposits which would otherwise be damaged or removed by the proposed development

- Recover as much information as possible on the origins, date, development, phasing, spatial organisation, character, function, status, significance and the nature of social, economic and industrial activities on the site.

- Secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

- Prepare a full archive and an assessment of potential for further analysis and to prepare a final publication report as appropriate to the results of the project.

2.3 The archaeological investigations specifically aimed to:

- Further characterise the date and form of the cropmarks present on the site, which have been confirmed as negative archaeological features during the evaluation, and allow their extent to be adequately mapped

- Understand the nature of the circular enclosures (?barrow ring ditches) in the north eastern and south western corners of the site and to identify any evidence of burial or ritual activity.

- Understand the nature, layout and date of the droveway/s and to clarify the southern extent of the main north-south boundary ditch identified during the evaluation.

- Identify and record any surviving evidence relating to prehistoric, Roman or later settlement/burial and the nature of that occupation.

- Assess the evidence in relation to its contemporary landscape setting

- Assess the economy of all phases of any settlement (including industrial, domestic and potentially commercial production)

- Assess and sample any surviving organic deposits on the site

- Assess the evidence for landscape division during the periods of activity represented on the site

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 The site lies within the Elton Estate in the Nene valley, in the north-eastern corner of Northamptonshire, to the north of the village of Warmington and the small outlying hamlet of Eaglethorpe. It fronts the A605 Warmington bypass which lies its south-east; the Elton Estate lies to the north. The site comprises some 3ha of land proposed for a new mineral processing plant associated with the construction of the adjacent agricultural reservoir.

3.2 The previous desk-based assessment of the adjacent site (Grant 2002) and the updated desk-based assessment carried out for the current site (Newton, 2006) concluded that there is evidence of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval activity in this part of the Nene valley in the vicinity of the site. Archaeological finds and cropmark evidence are known from

nearby, indicative of human activity. Ten sherds of post-medieval pottery (SMR 5810) were found on the site during fieldwalking in advance of the construction of the A605 Warmington bypass.

3.3 The original project brief notes that cropmarks representing probable archaeological features are present within the current site. These comprise a series of boundaries and trackways of possible later prehistoric or Roman date in the north-eastern third of the site (SMR 2590/0/1), with a further possible early boundary identified in the south-western edge of the site (SMR 2590/0/4). A possible circular feature representing a plough-razed Bronze Age barrow lies adjacent to this possible early boundary. A similar feature is also present in the north-eastern part of the site. Possibly associated features are present over a wide area to the north-east of Warmington, and to the east and south of the current site.

3.4 The original project brief also records the presence of the route of a Roman road along the Nene valley, linking Water Newton, Oundle & Thrapston, running to the east of the current site (SMR 1897/1). The brief notes that early Saxon pottery sherds, possibly indicative of contemporary settlement, were also recovered during archaeological work in 1991 in the southern part of the site, along with medieval and post-medieval material (SMR 6070).

3.5 Non-intrusive archaeological surveys were carried out in early 2006 (geophysical survey and field walking), and the intrusive trial trench evaluation was completed in early July 2007, as access to the field became available.

3.6 The geophysical survey confirmed the presence of the features identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs, and revealed two further small linear anomalies in the western part of the site. Faint parallel marks indicative of two phases of possible agricultural activity were also identified (Stratascan 2006).

3.7 The field walking and metal detecting survey revealed small-scale surface finds only (Schofield & Cameron 2006). The finds dated to the Neolithic and early modern period, though no Iron Age, Roman or Saxon finds were recovered. A small number of struck flints were recovered from the site; these were broadly spread across the site with a small cluster in the south-western area. Pottery sherds were widely scattered across the site, and included medieval and post-medieval items, probably distributed during manuring. Much of the pottery was in an abraded state. No metal items of pre-modern date were recovered.

3.8 The project brief originally proposed that the evaluation would comprise a maximum of 3000m^2 of trenches. Following the results of the non-intrusive surveys, it was agreed with NCC's Archaeological Advisor that the required programme of archaeological field evaluation would follow a more focused approach, with a lesser volume of trenches targeting anomalies revealed during the geophysical survey, the cropmarks revealed by aerial photography, and a sample of the 'blank' areas of the site.

3.9 This programme was to identify any areas of significant archaeological activity where a further phase of pre-emptive archaeological excavation might be required by NCC's

Archaeological Advisor. If necessary, this would be implemented in advance of any required programme of archaeological 'strip, map & sample' excavation.

3.10 The project objectives for the trial trench evaluation (as set out in the original project brief) were to:

- Provide consistent detailed information on the presence/absence, extent, degree of survival and depth of any buried archaeological deposits or features across the proposal site; and

- Provide sufficient information on the site's surviving archaeology to allow a proper assessment to be made on its future management and/or effective mitigation of the impact of the proposed development

3.11 The trial trench evaluation (Pole 2007) confirmed the presence of negative archaeological features reflecting the cropmark and geophysical survey evidence. The evaluation revealed a series of ditches comprising a field system of Iron Age date. Some ditches contained no dateable material, however, the similarity of their alignment and form indicates that they were probably contemporary with the Iron Age ditches.

3.12 An east-west aligned droveway was recorded as a pair of parallel ditches in Trenches 11, 14, 16 & 18. Parallel ditches to the north were also recorded in Trenches 12, 13, 15, 17 & 19. A major north-south boundary identified during the non-intrusive surveys was also recorded as a large ditch in Trenches 9 & 10, though it was not traced further to the south in Trenches 7 & 8. Small circular features/enclosures (possible barrow ring ditches), thought to be present in the north-eastern and south-western corners of the site were identified in Trenches 1 (F1043), 2 (F1040) and 20 (F1003 (= F1007)), though the latter feature less obviously corresponds with the cropmark evidence and it was considered that further investigation may help better characterise it. The evaluation confirmed the presence of previously identified linear ditches. However, only a single ditch was present of the north/south aligned `double' ditches identified through crop-mark evidence. The western ditch may have been present as a series of peri-glacial channels on a similar alignment.

3.13 A series of postholes (Trench 2; F1056, F1058, F1060, F1062, F1064 & F1066), and several small pits or postholes (Trench 11; F1073, F1074 & F1075) were revealed. This evidence broadly corresponds with the geophysical survey which identified possible discrete anomalies.

3.14 Finds were generally sparse. Five ditches contained prehistoric or Iron Age pottery (Trench 13; F1026, Trench 12; F1027, Trench 14; F1037, Trench 9; F1054 and Trench 18; F1050). Pottery generally occurred in small quantities. F1027 contained a relatively large amount of struck flint (20g) in comparison to the rest of the site. Several other ditches (Trench 15; F1022, Trench 2; F1045 and Trench 9; F1054) contained struck flint, though in very small quantities (4g, 6g and 4g). F1026, F1027 and F1037 contained relatively large quantities of animal bone (108g, 38g and 234g). Smaller quantities of animal bone were present in other ditches (Tr. 15 F1018 and Tr. 11 F1050). F1037 contained the only fragment

of daub (5g). The circular ditch in the north-eastern sector of the site (Tr. 20 F1003 (=1007)) contained a piece of burnt stone. None of the discrete features (Tr.2 and Tr. 11) contained finds

3.15 The locations of the features which yielded struck flint do not reflect the findings of the fieldwalking survey which located a scatter `concentrated' in the south-western sector of the site.

3.16 The cropmarks indicated that, to the south beyond the site, Ditch F1036 (=F1054) turned eastwards and encloses a circular feature. In the northern sector of the site an entranceway to this enclosure was seen between Trench 10, Ditch F1036 (= F1054) and Trench 13, Ditch F1026.

3.17 The double Iron Age ditches, aligned south-east/north-west and recorded in Trenches 11, 14 16 and 18, are likely to represent a droveway given their similarity in alignment and proximity (10m). As seen on the cropmark plot these ditches continue eastwards, beyond the evaluation site, towards a penannular feature, possibly an enclosure.

3.18 The other NW/SE ditches (F1047, F1027 and F1021), recorded in Trenches 12, 15, 17 and 19, are also likely to represent a droveway. Eastwards the ditches appear to widen at Ring Ditch F1003 (= F1007, Trench 20).

3.19 Ring Ditch F1003 (= F1007, Trench 20) contained no dating evidence, and no internal features. It is most likely to represent the remains of a ploughed out barrow. Barrows are known from the area with one recorded to the west of Warmington (SMR 2608).

3.20 In the southern area of the site a curvilinear feature, recorded as a cropmark, was present but may represent a peri-glacial channel (Trench 2; F1040 (Tr.1, = F1043)). A series of six postholes, aligned North - South, were also present in Trench 2 and likely represent a fence line. No dateable material was present within the postholes, but they may relate to Curvilinear Ditch F1045.

3.21 Three small pits or post holes (F1073. F1074 and F1075) were located in Trench 11. A small ditch, F1072, was located in Trench 12. None of these features contained finds.

3.22 The archaeological features were well preserved below the subsoil, however, deep ploughing had truncated many of the ditches.

3.23 Dating of the linear ditches is tentative. Further excavation would enhance the finds assemblages and provide for the further identification of associated features (pits and postholes).

3.24 It is understood that, following on-site advice from NCC's Archaeological Advisor, the remaining requirement prior to development proceeding was likely to be a programme of archaeological 'strip, map & sample' excavation, this is to be confirmed once the evaluation report had been received and reviewed by NCC. This 'Written Scheme of Investigation',

provides for such a programme. This was confirmed by e-mail comment from NCC's Archaeological Advisor (dated 16/08/2007).

Research Topics

3.25 The principal aims of the projects will be to further characterise the date and form of the cropmarks present on the site, which have been confirmed as negative archaeological features during the evaluation. The programme of 'strip, map & sample' excavation will also allow their extent to be accurately mapped. It will be particularly important to understand the nature of the circular enclosures (?barrow ring ditches) in the north-eastern and south-western corners of the site, and to identify any evidence of burial or ritual activity. It will be important also to understand the nature, layout and date of the droveway/s and to clarify the southern extent of the main north-south boundary ditch identified during the evaluation.

3.26 Research issues for the region are suggested in the East Midlands Archaeological Research Frameworks (Cooper 2006 in particular). Research topics for the immediately adjacent East Anglian region (which includes nearby Peterborough and the Nene valley) are suggested by a number of authors in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 23-26. Where possible, the results of the project will be assessed in the light of these research frameworks. It will be particularly important to identify any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site, in the light of the information contained in the Northamptonshire SMR. It is important also to be alert to the presence of archaeological remains from later periods.

3.27 In the East Midlands, Clay (in Cooper 2006, 86-88) suggests that for the Neolithic and early to middle Bronze Age, research themes could centre on the study of the later Mesolithic to earlier Neolithic transitions, the introduction, character and development of agricultural practices, the study of how different landscape zones were exploited from the fifth to the second millennium BC, the development of ceremonial monuments and their environs, and the nature of Neolithic and Bronze Age societies and access to resources and trade connections. Research issues for the immediately adjacent East Anglian region are suggested in Glazebook (1997) and Brown & Glazebrook (2000). The key issues for the Neolithic and Bronze Age (as set out by Brown & Murphy in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 9-13) centre on the theme of the development of farming and the attendant development and integration of monuments, fields and settlements.

3.28 For the later Bronze Age and Iron Age in the East Midlands, Willis (in Cooper 2006, 89-136) suggests research topics to consist of further research into issues of chronology (through scientific dating programmes), issues of archaeological visibility, site prospection and landscape exploration, settlement archaeology of both the later Bronze Age/early Iron Age, the middle Iron Age and the late Iron Age, issues of settlement and landscape, further research into hillforts and analogous sites, linear monuments and other land divisions, ritual, structured deposition and religion, the agricultural economy, craft industry and exchange, social relations and society in the first millennium BC and issues of conservation, management and the public. Research topics for the Iron Age are set out by Bryant (in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 14-18). These include further research into chronologies, precise dating and ceramic assemblages, further research into the development of the agrarian economy

(particularly with regard to field systems), research into settlement chronology and dynamics, research into processes of economic and social change during the late Iron Age and Romano-British transition (particularly with regard to the development of Aylesford/Swarling and Roman culture, and also the development of tribal polities in the late Iron Age and further research into *oppida* and ritual sites), further analysis of development of social organisation and settlement form/function in the early and middle Iron Age, further research into artefact production and distribution and the Bronze Age/Iron Age transition.

3.29 For the East Midlands region, research issues are set out by Taylor in Cooper (2006, 137-159). Research topics centre on issues of chronology, research into the late Iron Age landscape and the strategy and consequences of conquest, issues of urbanism (origins, development, growth and the role of urban centres), issues of communications and new geographies of power, issues of rural settlement, landscape and society, artefact production, exchange and consumption and issues of ritual, religion and identity. Research topics for the Roman period in immediately adjacent East Anglia are set out by Going & Plouviez (in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 19-22). These topics include analysis of early and late Roman military developments, further analysis of large and small towns, evidence of food consumption and production, further research into agricultural production, landscape research (in particular further evidence for potential woodland succession/regression and issues of relict landscapes, as well as further research into the road network and bridging points), further research into rural settlements and coastal issues.

3.30 Vince (in Cooper 2006, 161-184) notes Saxon research issues for the East Midlands region. These include further study into the Roman-Saxon transition, the Trent valley as a cultural boundary, the emergence of a monetary economy in the middle Saxon period, issues of chronology and cultural history, demography, political and social groups, issues of ritual and belief, research into the road network, settlement hierarchy, inland towns and 'central places', issues of industry (such as salt production, lead mining and iron smelting, pottery production and other crafts and issues of subsistence, agriculture and animal husbandry, fish consumption and hunting). Lewis (in Cooper 2006, 185-216) suggests research priorities for the East Midlands in the medieval period. These consist of research into urbanism, rural settlement, the manor, castles and military sites, religion, industry and the agrarian landscape (field systems, woodland, stock rearing and communications). Research topics for the rural landscape in the Saxon and medieval periods in the adjacent East Anglian region are suggested by Wade in Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 23-26. These include examination of population during this period (distribution and density, as well as physical structure), settlement (characterisation of form and function, creation and testing of settlement diversity models), specialisation and surplus agricultural production, assessment of craft production, detailed study of changes in land use and the impact of colonists (such as the Normans) as well as the major institutions such as the Church.

3.31 For the post-medieval period, Courtney (in Cooper 2006, 217-235) notes research topics for the East Midlands, to comprise further research into urbanism, issues of the rural landscape, country houses and gardens, agricultural landscapes, vernacular architecture and commons, industry and communications, ecclesiastical issues, military issues, and issues of material culture.

4 SITE DESCRIPTION

4.1 The site occupies *c.* 3 hectares of land *(Fig.2)* situated within the Nene Valley in the north-eastern corner of Northamptonshire and runs parallel to the A605 Warmington Bypass. It is bordered to the south by the A605, to the west by a strip of trees named 'The Ferns', and to the east and north by a field hedge boundary. The small hamlet of Eaglethorpe lies 0.5km south-west of the site just northwest of the village of Warmington, with Elton Hall *c*. 0.75km to the north-east. The site is accessed to the north-east off the A605 by a trackway. The river Nene lies close by to the north west of the site.

4.2 It is proposed that a reservoir to aid local water supplies for agricultural practice during the summer months is constructed to the west of the site, adjacent to the River Nene. The proposed processing plant for the minerals extracted from the construction of the reservoir is to be located on the current site. The size of the proposed processing plant is *c.* 3ha. The site is in arable use, recently ploughed and harrowed at the time of writing.

5 TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

5.1 The site lies on the floodplain and southern edge of the terrace of the river Nene. Drift deposits of floodplain and terrace sands and gravels are found in association with the river and are locally overlain by alluvium. The solid geology of the area is limestone. The site lies at an average height of 26m AOD, with land rising steeply to the south-east past Warmington village.

5.2 Warmington lies on a thin strip of Moreton Jurassic clay and limestone, characterised by well drained calcareous clayey and fine loamy soils which are shallow and brashy in places with some deeper slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983). The very near east and south of Warmington is composed of Oxpasture soils, drift over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay shale, fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slow permeable subsoils and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils. To the east and beyond the thin strip of Oxpasture soils lie those of the Evesham 3 soils (Jurassic and Cretaceous clay), which are slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. There are some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey soils. These soils are suitable for growing winter crops in the dry lowlands, with the moist lowlands suitable for grassland and some cereals. To the north of Warmington lie soils of the Elmton 1 soil association, a Jurassic limestone of shallow well drained brashy calcareous fine loamy soils over limestone.

5.3 Soils of the Fladbury 1 association are found in association with the course of the Nene itself. These are derived from river alluvium, and are stoneless clayey soils, calcareous in places.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

6.1 There is evidence of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval activity in this part of the Nene valley in the vicinity of the site. Archaeological finds and cropmark evidence known from nearby are indicative of human activity.

6.2 The original project brief notes that cropmarks representing probable archaeological features are present within the site. These take the form of a series of former boundaries and trackways of possible later prehistoric or Roman date, in the north-eastern third of the site (SMR 2590/0/1 & 2590/0/2). A further possible early boundary is located at the south-western edge of the site (SMR 2590/0/4), with a possible circular feature representing a plough-razed Bronze Age barrow adjacent. A similar feature is also present in the north-eastern part of the site. Features possibly associated with the activity onsite are present over a wide area to the north-east of Warmington, and to the east and south of the site.

6.3 The brief records the presence of the route of a Roman road along the Nene valley, linking Water Newton, Oundle and Thrapston, running to the east of the site (SMR 1897/1). It also notes that early Saxon pottery sherds, possibly indicative of contemporary settlement, were recovered during archaeological investigations in 1991 in the southern part of the site, along with medieval and post-medieval material (SMR 6070)

6.4 Desk-based Assessment

6.4.1 The Nene valley is an area that has been settled since prehistoric times, and was particularly important during the Roman period. Elton, Eaglethorpe and Warmington, situated as they are in the Nene Valley, have produced Neolithic and Bronze Age finds, many of which were chance finds (internet source 1). An excavation prior to road construction in 1989 at Elton (NGR 088 925) chanced upon a small ditched enclosure and a pit containing remnants of at least five inhumation burials. This was suggested to be evidence of ceremonial/burial activity of Neolithic date (internet source 1).

6.4.2 The Roman presence in Warmington may have been more of a cultural influence on the indigenous population. The small Roman town of *Durobrivae* lay less than 6km to the north-east and could have 'Romanised' the local population, given the combination of late Iron Age and Roman finds in the area of the village. Roman cultural influence is superseded by a fairly dominant Saxon presence that can be seen to link right through to the modern era. Although at times demographic levels have receded (as evidenced by the now shrunken settlement of Eaglethorpe), the core of the Saxon and medieval hamlets came together to form the villages of Eaglethorpe and Warmington as they appear today.

6.4.3 The village and parish of Warmington are recorded as a land holding of Peterborough Abbey from at least AD 963. It is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 and, when compared with its value in 1066, there was an obvious increase in investment in the village.

6.4.4 In 1398 there were five free tenants living in Eaglethorpe in addition to some probable villains. Before the Dissolution freeholds were acquired by Sir Richard Sepcote of Elton. Eaglethorpe was noted in *c.*1720 as being a former hamlet of 'about ten houses' now found to be depopulated (Allison *et al* 1966, 38). The presence of the watermill (SMR

2600/0/34) and the coin hoard (SMR 2600/0/52) indicate that Warmington had a strong agricultural economy and skilled craftsmen may have lived in the area.

6.4.5 The site contains cropmarks that are listed by the Northamptonshire SMR as being of prehistoric date (or possibly Romano-British date). These would appear to fit in to a prehistoric landscape evidenced by further cropmarks that are recorded in the area. They may be related to the Neolithic activity, most strongly evidenced by the cairn and mass inhumation (SMR 7229, 7229/0/1, 7229/0/2, 7229/0/3, 7229/0/4), which lies very close to the western boundary of the site. Equally, they may form part of the Bronze Age landscape, which is represented by ring ditches (SMR 2588/1/1; 2588/1/2) and possible barrows (SMR 2590/0/15; 2608/0/1) that are situated near the site to the south west.

6.4.6 In addition to being part of what may be an extensive prehistoric landscape demonstrating continued human presence in the area through the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age and beyond, the site also contains evidence of Saxon activity. The Northamptonshire SMR states that a possible Early Middle Saxon settlement is situated within the bounds of the site. This is based upon finds of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery at this location recovered during fieldwalking.

6.5 Field walking & Metal Detecting Survey

6.5.1 A field walking and metal detecting survey was undertaken in February 2006 (Schofield and Cameron 2006). During the survey it was observed that the field had been fairly deep ploughed recently, with areas of limestone natural visible. Ceramic field drains were recovered in the pottery assemblage which confirms this.

6.5.2 The majority of pottery and iron finds recovered from the site date from the post-medieval to early modern periods. The pottery is heavily fragmented and abraded. It is likely that it is associated with the manuring of the fields over the past centuries. No metal items of pre-modern date were recovered, though the metal detector survey identified modern iron items. A possible stirrup is the only object of potential interest.

6.5.3 Struck flint suggestive of the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods was found. A field-walking survey undertaken in 1991 *(SMR 5810; 6070)* only recorded post-medieval pottery being present. A cluster of three struck flint flakes, a core, two broken blades and a scraper were present towards the south-western sector of the site. This may indicate that flint tool preparation or knapping occurred in this area of the site, and may indicate the presence of subsurface prehistoric remains.

6.6 Geophysical Survey

6.6.1 A geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan in February 2006. A reconnaissance technique of magnetic susceptibility was employed over the whole of the site. From this, areas of enhancement were targeted with detailed magnetometer survey together with an area of low enhancement to test `blank' areas. The survey was successful in locating anomalies that may be of archaeological origin. A number of anomalies match the

characteristics of cropmark features. Discrete positive anomalies may indicate the presence of possible pits.

6.7 Trial Trench Evaluation

6.7.1 A trial trench evaluation was undertaken in June 2007 (Pole 2007). It revealed a series of ditches which form a field system of Iron Age date. A small number of postholes were identified possibly representing the presence of structures. A ring ditch was identified that most likely represents the remains of a ploughed out barrow. Several peri-glacial channels were also present.

7 METHOD OF WORK

7.1 Undifferentiated overburden was mechanically excavated using a 360º tracked excavator fitted with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket, under the close supervision of an Archaeological Project Officer. Thereafter, all investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

8 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 Archaeological remains were present across the whole site, and yielded evidence of human activity during the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/Early 1st century AD, medieval, and post-medieval to modern periods. No evidence for any intervening periods was found, with the exception of a single abraded sherd of possible Saxon pottery in a depression in the extreme northern end of the site.

8.1.2 The excavated features have been phased according to finds evidence and stratigraphic relationships, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Phase	***Date***	***Characteristics***
1	*Neolithic/Early Bronze Age*	*Inhumation and cremation*
2	*Late Iron Age/Early1st century AD*	*Droveway, ditches and pits*
3	*Medieval*	*Ridge and furrow*
4	*Post medieval and modern*	*Field drains*
-	*Undated*	*Pits*

Table 1: Phasing

8.1.3 The Phase 1 features were concentrated towards the southern end of the site. Phase 2 features were concentrated in the northern half of the site. Phase 3 features covered the

central area whist Phase 4 features were encountered across the whole site. The undated features were located in the northern half and the extreme southern end of the site.

8.2 Phase 1: Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

8.2.1 Phase 1 activity comprised three features located towards the south-western edge of the site, possibly representing the ploughed out remains of a cemetery.

8.2.2 Grave F2107, located in Grid Square I4 *(Figs.3 & 4)*, contained a single crouched inhumation, a juvenile SK2108, accompanied by a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pottery vessel that had been placed in a position adjacent to where the feet would have been had they survived. The grave had been severely truncated by ploughing; only the basal 0.10m remained *(Fig.4)*. Into this shallow grave, almost the entire skeleton had been compressed which, combined with the fragility of juvenile bones and poor bone preservation, meant that the majority of bones were highly fragmented.

Age	*Juvenile*
Sex	*?*
Stature	*?*
Grave dimensions (m)†	*1.50 x 0.80 x 0.10*
Orientation	*North-South*
Shape of grave	*Sub rectangular with vertical sides and flat base*
Fill	*L2106 Mid orange-brown sandy clayey silt*
Skeletal position	*Crouched, originally laid on left side, torso later rolled on to back*
Bones present	*Skeleton in crushed and degraded condition. Missing elements of the face, spine, pelvis, and feet. Hands disturbed, some bones recovered from chest area.*
Grave goods	*Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pottery vessel (?Beaker) placed at feet. Badly damaged, crushed flat.*
Finds	*None*

† In all feature description tables dimensions are given as length x width x depth.
Table 2: Grave F2107 (SK2108)

8.2.3 Cremation Pit F2003 (0.80 x 0.70 x 0.06m), located in Grid Square K3 *(Figs.3 & 5)*, contained Vessel 2021 within which was found Cremation F2020. This feature had been badly truncated by ploughing and the vessel severely broken, with the sherds (46, weighing 269g) and its contents (31g Burnt? Human Bone) distributed throughout the remaining fill of the pit. The vessel is of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date.

8.2.4 Pit F2055 (0.78 x 0.77 x 0.05m), was located in grid square K4 *(Fig. 3 & 6)*. It contained one fill L2054, a friable dark brown sandy silt with moderate angular burnt flints. The limestone at the base of the pit showed no evidence of burning suggesting that this pit was used to dispose of fire waste, or may possibly be the ploughed out remains of a cremation burial, rather than a hearth. Although it contained no dateable finds it has been tentatively assigned to Phase 1 due to its proximity, and similarity of dimensions, to

cremation pit F2003.

8.3 Phase 2: Late Iron Age/Early 1st Century AD

8.3.1 Most of the dated features onsite were assigned to Phase 2 and were located in the northern half of the site. They were dominated by a series of parallel ditches possibly forming one or more droveways. A boundary ditch and three pits, one of which showed evidence of industrial activity, were also present.

8.3.2 Pit F2018 (3.30 x 1.00 x 0.10m), located in grid square E11 *(Fig.3)*, contained the only evidence of industrial activity onsite. It was an elongated sub-oval in shape with the long axis aligned east-west. It contained a light red-brown sandy clay fill *(Fig.4)*. This feature yielded the largest finds assemblage from the site, including 31 sherds (529g) of late Iron Age pottery, 1 piece (23g) of metal slag, and 1450g of an as yet unidentified pale/mid grey, very light slag-like material full of air bubbles. At the western end of the feature were the remains of a possible crucible or some sort of kiln lining. It measured 0.25 x 0.20 x 0.08m and consisted of a pale blue grey clay outer lining with a fractured inner of dark red-black highly fired clay. Further evidence of high temperature activity in this feature is provided by 6 burnt stones (1203g), however, no charcoal was recorded. Once this feature ceased to be used for its industrial purpose it appears to have been used to dispose of general rubbish as, in addition to the afore mentioned pottery, it also contained animal bone (139g), CBM (37g), and a single struck flint (6g).

8.3.3 Pit F2177 (Grid square D12; *Fig.3*) was sub circular (1.31 x 1.18 x 0.30m) with moderately sloping sides which gradually broke to a slightly concave base *(Fig.7)*. The lower fill (L2178) was a compact mid orange-brown silty clay with frequent medium angular limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks. It contained no finds. The upper fill (L2179) was a dark reddish brown/black silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks. It contained 58 sherds (601g) of Iron Age pottery, the largest assemblage recovered from the site.

8.3.4 Pit F2014 (2.70 x 2.00 x 0.21m), located in grid square E13/14 *(Fig.3)*, was sub oval in plan with moderately sloping sides and an irregular base *(Fig.5)*. Its mid orange-brown silty clay fill contained frequent charcoal flecks, suggesting the disposal of fire waste. The three pottery sherds that were recovered broadly dated to the Iron Age, and were of a type that continued to be produced during the late Iron Age. It is therefore possible that this pit is contemporary with the other late Iron Age features at this site.

8.3.5 Ditch F2024 (120 x 1.50 x 0.50m) traversed the site north/south, entering at grid square I9 *(Fig.3)*, and appeared to be the earliest of the ditches on the site. The feature changes profile along its length, at the southern end it had moderately sloping sides with a shallow concave base, and towards the middle of its length it becomes rather more irregular. This may suggest that it was dug in phases and/or by different work gangs *(Fig.5)*. Slot D (grid square G9/10) revealed what appeared to be a terminus, but the ditch was then continued, on the same line, at a slightly shallower depth. By the time it reached Slot E (grid square E10) its profile had become a moderately steep, straight-sided, V shape. The fill was,

however, uniform throughout; a firm, mid reddish-brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks and frequent small to medium flat angular limestone fragments, suggesting a single backfilling event. Slots excavated across this ditch yielded a small quantity of animal bone and one very small piece of pottery, dated to the late Iron Age. Whilst this does not provide a secure date, it does tie in with the results of the excavation in Evaluation Trench 9 across this feature (F1054, L1055) which also produced late Iron Age pottery (2g) and struck flint (4g). The ditch continued northward where it was cut (grid square C10) by parallel ditches F2022 and F2026, its terminus having been removed by the most northerly of the pair (F2022). There was then a gap, possibly representing an entrance, of approximately 5 metres before it continued as F2168, heavily truncated, northward, having been picked up to the north in Trial Trench 13 (F1026). This ditch continued to the north for a distance of 4 metres where it was cut by heavily ploughed out, undated, linear feature F2150.

8.3.6 Two parallel ditches, F2022, and F2026, four metres apart, ran east-southeast to west-northwest (from grid squares E15 & D15 to C9 and B9; *Fig.3*) forming a possible droveway. Crop marks show these ditches continuing to run on the same alignment on the southeast side of the A605 road towards an area of possible enclosures. The northernmost of these ditches (F2022) measured 100+ x 3.00 x 0.74+m. It was quite shallow with moderately sloping sides and a flat base towards its eastern end, becoming much deeper with moderate/steep sloping sides further to the west. A 30m stretch of the upper fill of this ditch at the mid point of its length was much darker and contained more charcoal than the rest. A slot dug through this fill (Seg. B; grid square C12) showed this to be the upper fill of a possible re-cut, not evident to the east in Segment A (grid square D14). The original ditch (F2022B) had moderate/steep sloping sides and was filled with L2184, a mid orange-brown slightly sandy clayey silt with occasional angular limestone fragments. It contained 1 sherd (3g) of mid-late Iron Age pottery and 117g of animal bone. The re-cut (F2185) had the same profile and contained at least two fills (L2186 & L2187); the slot was not bottomed due to flooding. The lower fill (L2186) was a firm, darkish mid red-brown clayey silt with frequent large angular limestone fragments. It contained 17 sherds (282g) of 1st century AD pottery and 424g of animal bone. The upper fill, L2187 (30.00 x 3.00 x 0.36m) was a firm, dark grey-brown clayey silt with a moderately high proportion of charcoal and very occasional angular limestone fragments. It contained 12 sherds (107g) of late Iron Age/early 1st century AD pottery and 5g of animal bone. The southernmost of these ditches, F2026 (100+ x 3.00 x 0.90m) was, like F2022, was shallowest at its eastern end, exhibiting a profile with shallow moderately sloping sides and a shallow concave base (grid square E15). Further west it became deeper, with moderately sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill, L2027, a dark red-brown clay-silt with frequent large angular limestone fragments. It contained 1 sherd (8g) of 1st century AD pottery, 36g of animal bone, and 4 fragments (13g) of burnt clay. The exception was in Segment C (grid square D12) which was placed across a darker upper fill (L2105) opposite, and similar in appearance to L2187 in Ditch F2022. This layer measured 30.00 x 0.50 x 0.10m and consisted of a dark grey-brown clayey silt with a moderately high proportion of charcoal. It contained no finds.

8.3.7 Three parallel ditches (F2068, F2070, and F2110) running east-west were exposed at the extreme northern edge of the site (*Fig.3*). The gap between each measured *c*. 3m and although the two most northerly ditches (F2068 and F2070) (grid square A12) did not

produce any datable material their proximity and similarity to Ditch F2110 (grid square B12) suggests they were of the same or similar date. Ditch F2110 ran across the full width of the site, turning towards the south-east in grid square B16, and was joined near the eastern edge (grid square C17) by undated east-west aligned Ditch F2132. The relationship between these two ditches was obscured due to the presence of a modern field drain (F2136) on almost the same alignment as F2132 at this point. All three ditches showed evidence of having been re-cut to a narrower profile, but to their original depth, and backfilled with very stoney material soon afterwards as there is no evidence of silting at the base.

8.4 Phase 3: Medieval

8.4.1 The medieval phase of activity on this site is represented by a series of evenly spaced, ploughed out, very shallow furrows (F2042, F2044, F2047, F2053, and others not excavated) running east-west across the central/southern part of the site *(Fig.3)*. The deepest furrow (F2047) was dated to 1100 – 1400 AD. Whilst furrows F2044 and F2053 produced finds of post-medieval date (and F2042 produced no finds at all) these features are so shallow that it is possible that these artefacts could easily be intrusive from the plough soil above. The furrows have, therefore, been assigned a broad medieval date.

8.4.2 Although the furrows appear to respect Ditch F2024, appearing only to its west, Furrow F2053 does cut the earlier ditch. It is, therefore, possible that they once continued right across the site and may simply have not survived to the east of this ditch, though no evidence of truncation of Ditch F2024 in the locations corresponding to the projected lines of these furrows was recorded.

Feature	***Context***	***Dimensions (m)***	***Plan/Profile***	***Fill***
F2042	*L2043*	*40+ x 1.80 x 0.02*	*Linear with slightly irregular edges. Base slightly irregular, flattish. Badly plough truncated.*	*Dark orange-brown sandy clayey silt with frequent medium and large angular limestone fragments*
F2044	*L2045*	*35+ x 1.90 x 0.07*	*Linear with slightly irregular edges. Shallow concave base. Badly plough truncated, completely ploughed out in places.*	*Dark orange-brown sandy clayey silt with frequent medium and large angular limestone fragments*
F2047	*L2046*	*50+ x 1.80 x 0.14*	*Linear with slightly irregular edges. Shallow concave base. Badly plough truncated, completely ploughed out in places.*	*Mid brown sandy clayey silt with frequent medium and large angular limestone fragments*
F2053	*L2052*	*50+ x 1.90 x 0.08*	*Linear with slightly irregular edges. Shallow concave base. Badly plough truncated, completely ploughed out in places.*	*Mid brown sandy clayey silt with frequent medium and large angular limestone fragments*

Table 3: Phase 3 furrows

8.5 Phase 4: Post Medieval

8.5.1 Phase 4 is represented by field drains running in differing directions across the whole site. Those in the northern part of the site were narrow linears, with straight vertical sides and a flat base. They were cut into the limestone bedrock then backfilled with flat angular limestone pieces packed vertically creating a large number of voids as evidenced in F2136 (grid square C17; *Figs. 6 & 7*). Those in the southern part of the site contained red ceramic pipe.

8.6 Undated Features

8.6.1 Undated features at the extreme south-western sector of the site consist of 16 possible postholes in three groups; a possible circular structure, a possible fenceline, and a single isolated posthole.

8.6.2 The first group consists of 10 post holes (F2078, F2080, F2082, F2084, F2086, F2088, F2090, F2092, F2094, and F2096), located in grid square M2 *(Fig.3)*, in a roughly circular arrangement 2m in diameter and may represent some kind of structure. No finds were recovered from these features.

8.6.3 The second group was located 4m to the south-west of the first and consisted of a linear arrangement of five post holes (F2059, F2061, F2063, F2065, and F2067) aligned north-west/south-east *(Fig.3)*. This arrangement may represent a fence. Again no finds of any description were recovered from these features.

8.6.4 Posthole F2057 was located in isolation at the extreme southwest of the site (grid square N1). More substantial than the previous features, it yielded no finds.

8.6.5 Undated features in central and north-eastern parts of the site all occurred to the east of Ditch F2024 and consisted of 26 pits, three linear features, and a silty layer. Pits F2048 and F2075 (grid squares H9 and G9) were both similar in shape and had very similar fills. Only F2048 contained any finds, and the struck flint would suggest a prehistoric date. The latter is supported by the fact that both pits were cut by Iron Age ditch F2024.

8.6.6 Pits F2170 and F2172 lay in close proximity to each other 20m to the east of Pit F2075. The larger of the two, F2172, was irregular in plan and profile *(Figs. 3 & 7)*. Neither contained any finds and both were filled with a dark orange-brown compact silty clay typical of many of the natural features scattered across the site. It is possible, therefore, that these are natural solution holes or root hollows.

8.6.7 A loose group of pits (F2016, F2028, F2030, F2032, F2034, F2036, F2038, F2040, and F2180), centred on grid square F12, are also likely root hollows as none produced any finds and many had irregular sides and/or bases. The fills were also similar to other natural features scattered across the site.

8.6.8 Pits F2158, F2160, F2162, F2164, F2166, and F2174 (grid square E11), were located in close proximity to Iron Age pit F2018 and may have been associated with an industrial process taking place there. Pit F2174 lay to the north adjacent to Pit F2018. It was an elongated sub oval aligned east-west, however, it produced no finds or evidence of burnt material. Together with its slight irregularity of form this could equally be a natural feature. Pits F2158 and F2160 to the north west of pit F2018 contained dark charcoal-rich fills, but no finds, which may suggest association with the activity at Pit F2018. Again, the irregularity of the bases is more suggestive of natural features and, therefore, they may represent tree hollows with the roots burnt *in situ*. Pits F2162, F2164 and F2166 to the south-east and north-east of pit F2018 were rather more regular in form but yielded no finds or evidence of burning, therefore may also have been natural.

8.6.9 Three pits (F2007, F2009, and F2011) located on the eastern edge of the site (Grid square E14), between Iron Age Pit F2014 and Iron Age Ditch F2026 may be of similar date. Pit F2007 produced one small fragment (1g) of late Iron Age pottery. Although insufficient to conclusively date this feature and possibly residual, its proximity to other Iron Age activity may suggest that F2007 of this date.

8.6.10 Pits F2009 and F2011 were sterile and slightly irregular suggesting they were of natural origin, however, the presence of charcoal suggests some human use. These pits may possibly be of Iron Age date lying in an area of activity to the east of the site just south of Ditch F2026.

8.6.11 Pit F2005 (grid square E15), although undated, post dated Iron Age ditch F2026 as it was cut into the top of the backfill. It contained a high proportion of charcoal and burnt clay, though it is not clear if this represented some sort of hearth or fire pit.

8.6.12 Three other features were located along the line of the possible droveway. Pit F2148 (grid square C12) lay *c*. 1m to the north of Ditch F2022, whilst Pits F2154 and F2156 (grid squares D13 and C11) lay between possible droveway Ditches F2022 and F2026. All three of these pits displayed slightly irregular sides and bases, and contained no finds or evidence for burnt material indicating the possibility that they were of natural origin.

8.6.13 Pit F2141, (grid square B11) was circular with slightly irregular sides and base, and cut both Ditch F2110 and its re-cut F2112, thus post dating them. The absence of any finds evidence and the irregularity of the feature suggests this may be a root hollow.

8.6.14 Three undated linear features (F2114, F2132, and F2150) were found at the northern end of the site. Linear F2132 (grid square C17), measured 10.00+ x 1.20 x .0.30m. It had steeply sloping sides and a flat base, and entered the site in the north eastern corner, running east-west before joining ditch F2110. The cut of a modern field drain (F2136) on almost the same alignment as F2132 obscured the relationship between these ditches. The fill of F2132, a mid brown soft sandy clayey silt, contained no finds. This ditch and drain were a continuation of those recorded at the southern end of Evaluation Trench 20 which also provided no dating evidence.

8.6.15 Linear feature F2114, (grid square B12) measured 5.20 x 0.67 x 0.35m with near vertical sides and a rounded base. Its fill was a mid brown firm clayey silt with frequent small flat angular limestone fragments. It ran north/south perpendicular to Iron Age Ditch F2110 which cut its northern end, and parallel to earlier Iron Age ditch F2024. Whilst the date and function of this linear is unclear it is possible it was in someway associated with Ditch F2024 and is, therefore, also of Iron Age date, though this is a tentative interpretation.

8.6.16 Linear feature F2150 (grid square B10) measured 6.50+ x 1.38 x 0.10m with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill was a mid orangey-brown soft sandy silt. It ran northwest-southeast and was completely ploughed away at the south eastern end. It cut Iron Age Ditch F2024, thus post dating it. Its alignment is different from the other Iron Age linears running across the site suggesting it is unlikely to be contemporary with these. In form it most closely resembles the medieval furrows to the south, but again its alignment is different. Its date and function, therefore, remain unknown.

8.6.17 Feature F2117 (grid square B14) was a short irregular gully (1.50 x 0.45 x 0.20m) with a dark brownish-red soft sandy silt fill, lying beneath feature F2109 and was most likely a palaeochannel. It lies in natural depression F2109 (2.00 x 1.50 x 0.10m) and was overlain by (L2130) a light brown sandy clay-silt. It is likely that this was a natural silting layer infilling the depression, and contained a single sherd of residual Saxon pottery.

Feature	Context	Dimensions (m)	Plan/Profile	Fill
F2057	L2056	0.37 x 0.15 x 0.33	Oval with straight vertical sides and flat base.	Mid brown friable sandy silt
F2059	L2058	0.23 x 0.13 x 0.10	Oval with steep sides and a concave base.	Mid brown friable sandy clay-silt
F2061	L2060	0.33 x 0.16 x 0.14	Oval with steep sides and a concave base.	Mid brown friable sandy clay-silt
F2063	L2062	0.19 x 0.13 x 0.14	Oval with steep sides and a concave base.	Mid brown friable sandy clay-silt
F2065	L2064	0.17 x 0.11 x 0.10	Oval with steep sides and a concave base.	Mid brown friable sandy clay-silt
F2067	L2066	0.17 x 0.10 x 0.07	Oval with steep sides and an irregular concave base.	Mid brown friable sandy clay-silt
F2078	L2077	0.34 x 0.25 x 0.15	Oval with steep sides and an irregular concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2080	L2079	0.28 x 0.19 x 0.09	Oval with moderately sloping sides and an irregular concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2082	L2081	0.30 x 0.23 x 0.09	Oval with moderately sloping sides and an irregular concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2084	L2083	0.23 x0.20 x 0.04	Sub circular with straight shallow sloping sides and a concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2086	L2085	0.16 x 0.14 x 0.03	Sub circular with straight shallow sides and a concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2088	L2087	0.17 x 0.14 x 0.05	Sub circular with moderately sloping sides and a concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2090	L2089	0.26 x 0.12 x 0.06	Oval with moderately sloping sides and an irregular concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2092	L2091	0.23 x 0.18 x 0.11	Sub circular with moderately sloping sides and a concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2094	L2093	0.26 x 0.23 x 0.12	Sub circular with moderately sloping sides and a concave base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt
F2096	L2095	0.35 x 0.25 x 0.06	Oval with moderately sloping sides and an irregular base.	Mid brown moderately compact clay-silt

Table 4: Undated features at south western end of site.

Feature	Context	Dimensions (m)	Grid square	Plan/Profile	Fill
F2005	L2006	0.60 x 0.60 x 0.08	E15	Sub circular with very gently sloping side. Flat base	Mid grey-brown mottled with mid orange clay with frequent charcoal flecks.
F2007	L2008	2.10 x 1.25 x 0.20	E14	Sub oval with moderately sloping sides, steep on east. Slightly irregular flat base.	Mid orange-brown compact silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks.
F2009	L2010	0.90 x 0.70 x 0.20	E14	Sub circular with steeply sloping sides and irregular base	Mid grey-brown firm-friable silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks.
F2011	L2012	1.60 x 0.90 x 0.21	E14	Sub oval with moderately sloping sides. Slightly irregular flat base sloping downwards towards north.	Mid bluish-brown compact clay with occasional charcoal flecks.
	L2013				Light orange-brown firm-friable silty clay.
F2016	L2017	0.60 x 0.60 x 0.09	F13	Sub circular with moderately sloping sides. Flat base.	Mid orangey grey-brown compact clay with occasional charcoal flecks and occasional baked clay flecks.
F2028	L2029	0.39 x 0.26 x 0.17	F12	Sub circular with steep sides. Slightly concave base.	Mid reddish-brown soft silty clay.
F2030	L2031	1.53 x 1.05 x 0.04	F12	Sub circular with gently sloping sides. Slightly irregular flat base	Mid reddish-brown soft silty clay.
F2032	L2033	1.40 x 0.62 x 0.11	F12	Sub circular with gently sloping, slightly irregular sides. Slightly concave irregular base.	Mid reddish-brown soft silty clay.
F2034	L2035	1.88 x 1.23 x 0.20	F12	Sub circular with slightly irregular moderate/steep sloping sides. Concave base.	Mid reddish-brown soft silty clay.
F2036	L2037	0.99 x 0.97 x 0.10	F12	Sub circular with gently sloping slightly irregular sides. Slightly concave irregular base.	Dark reddish-brown soft silty clay.
F2038	L2039	1.43 x 1.04 x 0.20	F12	Sub oval with sides irregular sides. Slightly concave base.	Mid reddish-brown soft silty clay.
F2040	L2041	1.93 x 1.83 x 0.20	E12	Sub circular with straight near vertical sides. Very irregular	Dark reddish-brown soft silty

				base.	clay.
F2048	L2049	2.10 x 0.70 x 0.30	H9	Sub oval with gently sloping irregular sides. Irregular concave base. Cut on western side by Ditch F2024.	Dark reddish-brown soft silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks..
F2075	L2076	0.90 x 0.40 x 0.15	G9	Sub oval with moderately sloping irregular sides. Irregular concave base. Cut on western side by Ditch F2024.	Dark reddish-brown soft silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks.
F2141	L2142	1.96 x 1.96 x 0.21	B11	Circular with slightly irregular moderately sloping sides. Slightly irregular concave base.	Mid reddish-brown soft sandy silt.
F2148	L2149	1.20 x 0.80 x 0.10	C12	Sub oval with moderately sloping slightly irregular sides. Slightly irregular flat base.	Dark reddish-brown soft silty sand with moderate medium flat angular limestones.
F2154	L2155	1.00 x 0.70 x 0.15	D13	Oval with moderately sloping slightly irregular sides. Slightly irregular flat base.	Dark reddish-brown soft silty sand with occasional medium flat angular limestones.
F2156	L2157	1.70 x 0.60 x 0.20	C11	Oval with moderately sloping irregular sides. Irregular base.	Dark reddish-brown soft silty sand with occasional lenses of greenish-yellow clay and moderate medium flat angular limestones.
F2158	L2159	1.20 x 1.00 x 0.14	E11	Sub circular with moderately sloping irregular sides. Irregular base.	Dark brown-black friable sandy silt.
F2160	L2161	1.80 x 1.30 x 0.25	E11	Sub circular with gently sloping irregular sides. Very irregular base.	Dark brown-black friable sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks.
F2162	L2163	1.35 x 1.30 x 0.26	E11	Sub circular with moderately sloping slightly irregular sides. Concave slightly irregular base.	Dark orangey- brown friable sandy silt.
F2164	L2165	1.00 x 1.00 x 0.15	E12	Circular with moderately sloping slightly irregular sides. Concave slightly irregular base.	Dark reddish-brown firm silty sand with occasional rounded medium limestones.
F2166	L2167	0.50 x 0.50 x 0.22	E12	Circular with steeply sloping straight sides. Narrow concave base.	Dark reddish-brown firm silty sand with occasional rounded medium limestones.
F2170	L2171	0.66 x 0.59 x 0.12	G10	Sub circular with moderate/steep sloping straight sides. Concave base.	Dark orangey-brown compact silty clay.

F2172	L2173	2.88 x 0.04 x 0.23	G10	Sub oval with gentle/moderate sloping slightly irregular sides. Slightly concave irregular base.	Dark orangey-brown compact silty clay.
F2174	L2175	4.00 x 3.00 x 0.29	E11	Sub oval with gentle/moderate sloping slightly irregular sides. Slightly concave irregular base.	Mid reddish-brown firm sandy clay.
F2180	L2181	0.94 x 0.91 x 0.22	E12	Sub circular with steeply sloping sides. Concave base.	Mid orangey-brown compact silty clay with moderate medium flat angular limestones.
F2182	L2183	0.56 x 0.36 x 0.14	E12	Recut of F2180. Circular with moderately sloping sides. Concave base.	Dark black-brown compact silty clay.

Table 5: Undated pits

9 CONFIDENCE RATING

9.1 The initial recognition of archaeological features was hindered by the presence of small geological solution features and root hollows across the whole of the site and increasing in density towards the south-east. Excavation enabled misidentifications to be identified and resolved. Heavy rain during the excavation raised the water table sufficiently to make the base of some of the ditch sections difficult to identify. The base of Section B in Ditch F2022 was not reached due to flooding as a result of this. No other factors were felt to hinder the identification of features or finds at the site.

10 DEPOSIT MODEL

10.1 The underlying natural geological deposits, L2002, comprised a friable mid brown yellow clayey silt sand in a matrix of flat, angular limestone. The limestone was more solid and frequent further down the deposit. The natural geology was located across the whole of the site between 0.30m and 0.80m below the present surface, mainly at a depth of between 0.40m and 0.50m.

10.2 Overlying L2002 was Subsoil L2001, a mid orange brown clayey sandy silt between 0.15m and 0.40m thick. L2001 was generally present across the whole site but was absent to the extreme southern, western and north-eastern limits of the site.

10.3 Topsoil L2000 was a friable mid to dark clay sand silt. It overlay Subsoil L2001 and was between 0.30m and 0.50m thick. It extended across the whole of the site.

11 DISCUSSION

11.1 Summary of the archaeology

11.1.1 A total of 83 features were revealed across the site consisting of an inhumation, a cremation, 10 ditches, 47 pits and post holes, 14 furrows, 7 field drains, a palaeochannel, and a sediment-filled depression. 44 of the features remain undated. The archaeology yielded evidence of four periods of activity; late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Phase 1), Iron Age through to the 1st century AD (Phase 2), medieval (Phase 3) and post-medieval activity (Phase 4).

11.1.2 The first phase of activity (late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age) was located at the south-western end of the site and consisted of a crouched inhumation burial of a juvenile with a pottery vessel placed at the feet, a cremation burial and a possibly associated pit of similar dimensions containing evidence of burning but no bones.

11.1.3 Phase 2 (late Iron Age – 1st century AD) features were located in the north-eastern half of the site and were dominated by a series of boundary ditches and a possible droveway. Pits were found in this area, the majority of which remain undated, but five

were dated to the late Iron Age. These included one which had been used for some, as yet unidentified, industrial process.

11.1.4 Phase 3 (medieval) features were found along the western side of the site and comprised east/west aligned furrows.

11.1.5 Phase 4 (post-medieval) features consisted of field drains running in various directions over the entire site.

11.1.6 Undated features were found at the extreme southwest end and in the north-eastern half of the site. Those in the south-western sector of the site were post holes possibly the remains of a structure and a fence, whilst those in the north consisted mainly of pits and linear features.

11.2 Interpretation of the site: archaeology and history

11.2.1 Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age

11.2.1.1 The earliest phase of activity consisted of an inhumation burial, a cremation, and a pit containing burnt flint and burnt stone. These features were very shallow and badly damaged by ploughing. They may represent the remains of a small portion of a cemetery, the rest of which may already have been lost, or was located outside of the excavated area. Other burial activity of similar date is known nearby; a Neolithic burial site containing the disarticulated remains of five individuals in a pit has been found just to the north-east of the site during excavations prior to the construction of the A605 road (internet source 1). Bronze Age burial activity is suggested by the presence of ring ditch crop marks, possibly representing ploughed out barrows near the south-west of the site and its north-eastern corner. No evidence of a continuation of the curvilinear ditch at the extreme south-western end of the site recorded during the trial trench evaluation was found. It would appear that this area of high ground overlooking the river Nene and its flood plain may have been used as a burial ground starting in the Neolithic and continuing through into the Bronze Age. The inhumation recorded at the site may bridge a gap between the Neolithic, defleshed and disarticulated, burials and the Bronze Age practice of barrow building.

11.2.1.2 It is possible that the postholes found at the south-western end of the site form some kind of structure and fence associated with this activity, but this is highly speculative as these postholes remain undated and lie at a distance of *c*. 90m from the inhumation (F2107).

11.2.2 Late Iron Age – 1st century AD

11.2.2.1 The next phase of activity occurred during the Iron Age with a boundary ditch running north/south. Crop marks show this ditch continuing south before turning through a right angle to the east just to the south of the current A605 road, and northwards after a break near the north-western edge of the site. The crop marks

suggested that the southern part of this boundary consisted of two closely spaced ditches, however, only a single ditch was found. This ditch appears to have been dug piecemeal as there are a number of profile changes over its length and there is the suggestion of a terminus and subsequent continuation from the same location part way along its length.

11.2.2.2 During the late Iron Age this ditch fell into disuse and a series of parallel ditches running west-north-west/east-south-east were cut. The three northern ditches were re-cut and backfilled in the 1st century AD, whilst of the southern pair only ditch F2022 appears to have been re-cut, and then only in one area. These ditches also appear to have gone out of use in the 1st century AD.

11.2.2.3 Multiple parallel ditched boundaries, often running for considerable distances were common features of the late Bronze and Iron Ages of the East Midlands (Boutwood 1998), with double, triple, and quadruple ditches well attested. The majority of these parallel ditched boundaries are aligned north-east/south-west, as are the ones on this site. The function of these boundary features is unknown, and it is unlikely that any single interpretation can be applied. It is likely that such features marked some sort of territorial division, although the scale and significance of these cannot be certain (Willis 2006, 125). The boundaries were possibly political and constructed between tribal territories. It is equally possibly however, that they just mark land divisions between smaller local communities. In addition to being boundary markers, such arrangements of ditches could also function as trackways or droveways.

11.2.2.4 A double ditched boundary, revealed during excavations at South Witham Quarry, Lincolnshire (Nicholson, 2006), was tentatively interpreted as a land division that doubled up as a trackway running between Ermine Street and Margary's Route 580. The absence of evidence for fencing or palisades was thought to preclude their use for stock control. A similar interpretation could be applied, to the southern pair of ditches which could easily have functioned as a trackway or droveway for channelling people or animals to/from a settlement east of the site to/from the River Nene which would have been an important transport route. The river and adjacent flood plain could also have provided water and lush grazing for the animals. The northern set of three ditches is more difficult to interpret as they are more irregular and appear to diverge around the crop mark of a ring ditch which possibly represents a ploughed out barrow. Whether or not these ditches were simply boundary markers or also functioned as some kind of track, they were long-lived and important enough to have been maintained, having been recut.

11.2.2.5 During this period an industrial process, represented by a single pit containing slag, took place just to the south of these boundary ditches. Exactly what this process was is as yet unknown, analysis of the slag like material recovered should shed more light on this feature.

11.2.2.6 During the 1st century AD, a major reordering of the landscape appears to have occurred as although the northern ditches had only recently been re-cut they were backfilled eliminating whatever land divisions these ditches represented. Whether this land went out of use or became part of a larger division is unknown, certainly there is no

evidence of activity on this site from then until the medieval period.

11.2.3 Medieval

11.2.3.1 During the medieval period the site was given over to ridge and furrow cultivation, with the furrows running east-west. Although these furrows run at right angles to, and appear to stop at Ditch F1024 (which has been dated to the Iron Age) this is probably due to a combination of coincidence and poor preservation as this ditch was long out of use. It is possible that these furrows originally extended across the whole site.

11.2.4 Post Medieval

11.2.4.1 In the post-medieval period agricultural activity continued and at least two phases of field drains were laid.

11.3 Interpretation of the site: geology and topography

11.3.1 Human effects on the topography of the site are very much in evidence. In addition to the evidence for localised alteration of the site's topography in the medieval period, as evidenced by the presence of the remains of ridge and furrow (F2042, F2044, F2047, F2053), the site also appears to have been subject to extensive ploughing more recently. Many features at the site display severe plough truncation.

11.4 Finds

11.4.1 Finds recovered included flint, pottery, daub/CBM, animal bone human bone and shell. Overall preservation was moderate to good though human and animal bone was substantially eroded and brittle or fragmentary. The plough damage that has caused truncation to many features may also be seen to have impacted upon the finds assemblage; ploughing may have contributed to the fragmentary nature of the human remains in Grave F2107.

11.5 Research potential

11.5.1 Relevant research topics are set out in section 3 of this report. The Phase 1 inhumation and cremation may inform on research issues, as set out by Clay (in Cooper 2006, 86-88), regarding ceremonial landscapes in the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

11.5.2 Landscapes, linear monuments and boundaries are considered important aspects of the Iron Age in relevant research agendas. The presence of the long north/south aligned ditch and the two groups of parallel, broadly east/west aligned ditches in the northern part of the site add to the corpus of information regarding such features in the East Midlands area. The possibility of evidence for an industrial process having been carried out in the Iron Age relates to research topics regarding artefact production, a subject considered as important for the area (Taylor in Cooper 2006, 137-159).

12 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

12.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site, at the local museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

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APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS BY FEATURE

Feature	Context	Segment	Description	Spot Date	Pottery (g)	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
2004	2020		Cremation					Human Bone? 31g
	2021		Vessel	Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Beaker?)	(46) 269			
2007	2008		Pit Fill	Late Iron Age	(1) 1			
2014	2015		Pit Fill	Iron Age	(3) 26			
2018	2019		Pit Fill	Late Iron Age	(4) 61			Struck Flint (1) 6g
		A	Pit Fill	Late Iron Age	(12) 190	37	65	Metal Slag (1) 23g
		B	Pit Fill	1st century AD	(15) 278		74	Ore? 1450g
								Crucible Lining (3) 473g
								Burnt Stone (6) 1203g
	2176		Crucible					Ore? 4g
								Burnt Clay (4) 16g
2022	2023		Ditch Fill				117	
	2184	B	Ditch Fill	Early to Middle Iron Age	(1) 3			
2025	2024		Ditch Fill				181	
		C	Ditch Fill	Late Iron Age	(1) <1			
		E	Ditch Fill				9	
2026	2027		Ditch Fill	1st century AD	(1) 8		313	Burnt Clay (4) 13g
		B	Ditch Fill				36	
		E	Ditch Fill				74	
2044	2045		Fill of Ridge and Furrow	1650-1800	(2) 2			Fe Fragment (2) 2g
								Struck Flint (2) 15g
								Clay Pipe Stem (3) 7g
2047	2046		Fill of Ridge and Furrow	1100-1400	(1) 3		22	Burnt Clay (1) 12g
2048	2049		Pit Fill					Struck Flint (1) 5g
								Burnt Clay (6) 11g
2053	2052		Fill of Ridge and Furrow					Shell (1) 5g

								Clay Pipe Stem (1) 2g
2068	2069		Fill of Ditch	1500-1700	(1) 1			
2107	2106		Grave Fill					Human bone, Right Leg Fem?: 58g Human bone, Right Leg Tib?: 42g Human bone, Right arm Rad + Uln: 25g Human bone, Left Leg Fem: 72g Human bone, Left Leg Tib: 54g Human bone, Left Leg Fib: 10g Human Bone, Torso Western Half: 27g Human bone, Left Arm: 23g Human bone, Torso Eastern Half: 22g Human bone, Right Arm: 29g Human bone, Right Hand: 2g Human Bone, Right Leg Fib: 17g Human bone, Left Arm: 19g Human bone, Misc: 18g Skull: 305g
	2116		Vessel	Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Beaker)	(41) 71			
2109	2130		Ditch Fill	Late Saxon/Early med	(1) 3			
2110	2119		Ditch Fill	Late Iron Age	(1) 13		19	
2112	2113		Ditch Fill				17	
2118	2120		Fill of Re cut Ditch 2110	Late Iron Age	(3) 5		225	Struck Flint (1) 1g

2134	2135		Ditch Fill				2	
2177	2179		Pit Fill	Iron Age (residual?)	(58) 601		18	Clay Pipe Stem (1) 1g
2185	2186		Fill of Re cut Ditch 2022	1st century AD	(17) 282		424	
	2187		Fill of Re cut Ditch 2022	1st century AD	(12) 107		5	

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Flint

The assemblage is composed of seven pieces of worked flint weighing 28g in total. The only noteworthy piece is a retouched snapped blade from Context 1023, the fill of a 1st century AD ditch, which is probably a residual upper Palaeolithic artefact.

Context	Trench	Find	No.	Weight	Comment
1002	6	Secondary Flake	1	10	
1022	15	Tertiary Flake	1	3	
1041	2	Burnt Worked	1	6	
1023		Retouched snapped blade	1	4	
1055	9	Natural	1	3	
1055	9	Uncorticated Flake	1	1	
1048		Broken Flake	1	2	?Blade segment
1031	12	Natural	2	17	Residue
1031	12	Uncorticated Flake	2	2	
		TOTAL	**11**	**48**	

Table 1: The composition and distribution of the assemblage

Terminology

Throughout this analysis the term 'cortex' refers to the natural weathered exterior surface of a piece of flint while 'patination denotes the colouration of the flaked surfaces exposed by human or natural agency. Following Andrefsky (1998, 104) dorsal cortex is divided into four categories; the term primary flake refers to those with cortex covering 100% of the dorsal face while secondary flakes have cortex on between 50% to 99% of the dorsal face. Tertiary flakes have cortex on 1% to 49% of the dorsal face while flakes with no dorsal cortex are referred to as non cortical

A blade is defined as an elongated flake whose length is at least twice as great as its breadth. These often have parallel dorsal flake scars, a feature that can assist in the identification of broken blades that, by definition, have an indeterminate length/breadth ratio

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The Baked Clay/Daub

By Andrew Peachey

Excavations produced a single fragment (118g) of baked clay crucible lining and 29 fragments (94g) of baked clay/daub.

The crucible lining was recovered from Pit F2018 L2019 Seg.B and comprises part of a very crudely fashioned 'plate' of clay that may represent the lining of a crucible set in the ground or part of a free standing ceramic object. The fabric of the fragment has been exposed to low levels of heat resulting in a part-baked fabric that exhibits a pale oxidised exterior and an inconsistently oxidised/reduced core. The fabric of the fragment was manufactured from poorly levigated clay containing varying quantities of inconsistent coarse inclusions (including sand, limestone, iron rich clay pellets and charcoal) of such low quality and consistency that it may be suggested that this was not intended for repeated use. This fragment of baked clay was found in conjunction with two fragments (363g) of red sandstone that had also been exposed to low levels of heat.

The remaining fragments of baked clay/daub were present in Pits F2018 (L2019 (19 fragments, 38g)), F2018 (L2176 (4 fragments, 18g)), F2048 (L2049 (5 fragments, 12g)), Ditch F2026 (L2027 (4 fragments, 14g)) and Ridge & Furrow F2047 (L2046 (1 fragment, 12g)) and comprised very small, poorly preserved, friable fragments of baked clay that appear to have been baked at a low temperature. The fragments are present in a variety of dark oxidised tones in a fabric that contains common poorly sorted angular to sub-angular quartz (0.1-1mm) with sparse angular fragments of pale grog/clay pellets and ?degraded chalk (0.5-2.5mm). Due to the small size and poor preservation of the fragments it is not possible to draw any further conclusion on the function or source of the baked clay.

The Pottery
By Peter Thompson

The excavation produced 221 sherds weighing 1.903 kg. The assemblage is almost exclusively prehistoric with 60% of the sherds dating to the late Iron Age/early Roman period and 37% to the Neolithic/early Bronze Age, although the latter all derive from two vessels. The sherds are quantified below by period.

Period	*Sherd Count*	*Fabric Weight*
Neolithic/Early Bronze Age	82	332
Iron Age	134	1,562
Late Saxon/Early Medieval	1	3
Medieval	1	3
Post-medieval	3	3

The Beaker Pottery
The earliest pottery comes from two vessels associated with burials, one is a cremation vessel the second an accessory vessel accompanying a crouched inhumation. Cremation

vessel 2021 comprised 41 sherds weighing 248g in coarse shell tempered fabric the upper profile is re-constructable and is probably from a Beaker (Figure 1). Decoration comprises comb decoration forming a zig-zag pattern with one sherd containing apparently random 'stab' impressions. The accessory vessel 2116 from grave 2107 is very fragmented and consists of 41 sherds weighing just 74g. It is a Beaker containing sand and grog temper, the date range for Beakers is 2500 to 1700 BC. A fragment of simple rim with horizontal lines of comb decoration beneath (Figure 2) and a flat base sherd are present whilst most of the body sherds also have comb decoration.

Late Iron Age and Belgic wares

One of the potentially earliest Iron Age sherds came from Ditch 2022 (L2184) comprising a fairly thin, flat rim sherd in a dissolved shell fabric with fingernail decoration to the outer rim edge. Such decoration indicates an early or middle Iron Age date, at Werrington a date of c.500-250+ BC was suggested for an assemblage including similar decoration (Mackreth 1988, 107-112). Pit F2177 (L2179) contained the largest pottery assemblage with 59 sherds weighing 594g these are probably all from a single jar but are not re-constructable. An almost squared rim fragment has faint finger tip impressions and a flat base sherd is also present.

Pit F2018 (L2019) contained 36 sherds all but one shell tempered, and included two fragments of burnished cordons from 'Belgic' vessels, one in shell and one in grog temper. Two late Iron Age upper profiles are from shoulderless vessels, one with an upright rim is probably from a barrel jar and the other with a flattened rim matches profiles from sites in the region including Orton Longueville where it is described as tub-shaped (Mackreth 2001, figure 33 no. 19 and 55). The latter rim was dated between the 2nd century BC and c. AD 80.

Ditch 2185 (L2186) contained 'Belgic'-type pottery from two vessels in comparatively good condition in grog and shell temper. The upper profile of a bowl (Figure 6) is almost identical to one recovered from Roman Ditch C at Weekley, Northants (Jackson and Dix 1978, Fig 40 no 166). The other vessel had a corrugated or furrowed upper body sherd also similar to examples from Weekley which came from a phase dated c. AD 25-75 (Jackson and Dix 1978, 79). Both profiles were also present at Wakerley also in Northants, coming from Ditch B which were dated by analogy to comparable groups from Rushden to c. AD 30-60 (Jackson and Ambrose 1978, Fig 38 no's 54 and 57 and 175).

Dating evidence has already been discussed above. In addition, the lack of any Middle Iron Age and Late Iron Age scored pottery supports the view that score decoration stopped in Northamptonshire with the introduction of Belgic ceramics (Jackson and Ambrose 1978, 174) whereas at sites just to the east such as Orton Longueville it continued. At Moulton Park 'scratched decoration' appeared on vessels dated not later than AD 30 but not on vessels dated c. AD 25-50 (Mackreth 2001, 55). A date of c. AD 25-80 is therefore probable for the Elton Iron Age assemblage, with a post-conquest date thee more likely.

The later pottery
Feature F2109 (L2130) contained a small quartz tempered sherd with a black fabric and micaceous surfaces which is of probable later Saxon or Early Medieval date. The ridge and furrow L2046 produced a grey medieval sherd with dissolved platy shell and rare fine quartz fabric, it is possibly a Lyveden-type ware. Ditch F2068 (L2069) contained a tiny sherd with vitreous purple-brown fabric and dark brown glaze which is a Cistercian ware or something very similar of early post-medieval date.

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Human Bone
By Carina Phillips

Human bone was excavated from a single feature Grave F2107 (L2106). The remains consist of one individual. All the bone is poorly preserved, exhibiting erosion and highly fragmented. An initial evaluation indicates the remains consist of one individual, aged approximately 15 years old based one tooth development. The results gleaned from further osteological analysis will be limited by the poor condition of the bone. Further analysis will consider the age of the individual in more detail using both tooth development and fusion; however consideration of the sex and height of the individual will be limited by the fragmentation of the bones. Evidence of pathological change on the bones may also be hindered by the poor preservation.

Animal Bone

Animal bone was recovered from 12 contexts. Eight contexts have spot dates of late Iron Age- 1st century AD, one has a spot date of 1100-1400. The assemblage is small in size, consisting of 75 fragments. The bone is of poor preservation; being eroded and brittle, which has caused a number of bones to fragment. The poor preservation of the bone hindered identification of many bones to species. Only domestic species were observed; the bones of cattle (*Bos* sp.), sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra* sp.), horse (*Equus* sp.) and pig (*Sus* sp.) were all identified in small numbers. Butchery marks were observed in very small numbers, this is probably the result of the poor condition of the bone.

Further analysis will be restricted by the poor condition of the animal bone. It will be

possible to provide and indication of species present in the assemblage. However consideration of the utilisation and husbandry patterns of species present in the assemblage will be limited by its small size and poor preservation.

Shell

A single shell was hand excavated from Elton Estate (present in L2052). It has been identified as a fragment of oyster shell (*Ostrea edulis*).