



Ledbury Trunk Main

Archaeological Programme of Works

Section 4

PART THREE: Archaeological Excavation
- Access Pits (AP) 5 - 13

PART FOUR: Interpretation
Bibliography
Glossary

3.6 ACCESS PIT (AP) 5

3.6.1 Site Location

Access Pit 5 was located at NGR SO 63140 43330, approximately 100m east-southeast of AP4 and 180m due west of the A417 trunk road.

3.6.2 Description

A total of 17 contexts were identified during the excavation of this access pit, the uppermost (5001) consisting of a firm mid reddish-brown silty clay topsoil with occasional medium sized subangular stone inclusions, extending to a depth of 0.3m. Underlying the topsoil was a sequence of clean stone-free alluvial subsoils, the uppermost, (5002), comprising a firm light reddish-brown silty clay measuring 0.25m in thickness, which overlaid (5003), a firm mid reddish-brown silty clay extending to a maximum depth of 0.95m.

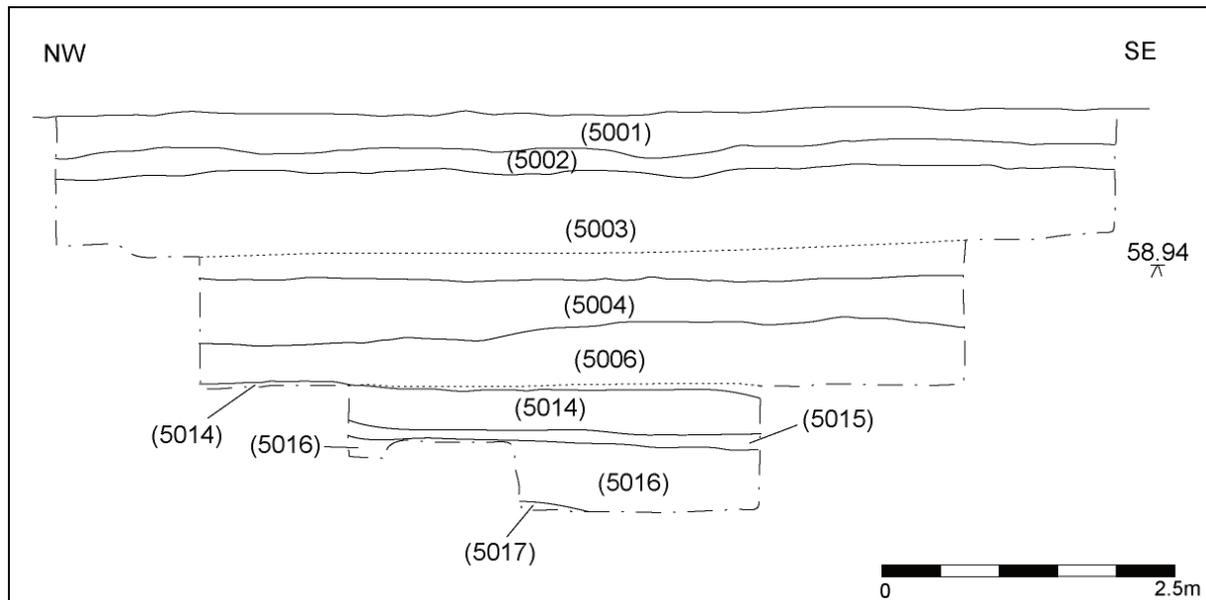


Fig. 42: Southwest facing section of Access Pit 5

Underlying (5003) was a firm mid bluish-grey silty clay with moderate charcoal flecking (5004) extending to an approximate depth of 0.48m. It contained a relatively moderate assemblage of pottery sherds with a broad date range extending from the late 1st century to the late 4th century AD, chiefly dominated by Severn Valley oxidized and reduced wares with occasional sherds of South Gaulish and Central Gaulish samian wares, together with a later group of sherds representing several types of Oxfordshire ware approximately dated to c. 240-400 AD (Timby, 2008). Within (5004) a thin lens of friable light pinkish-grey silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions was identified extending south from the south-facing section of the pit; the visible extent of this deposit (5005) measured 2.85m (northeast-southwest) × 2.5m (northwest-southeast) × 0.05m depth, it contained frequent charcoal flecking and occasional sherds of Oxfordshire red slipped ware, including sherds of a bowl and beaker with barbotine scale decoration dated to the late 3rd-4th centuries AD.

(5004) and (5005) were interpreted as occupation deposits probably associated with the latest phase of Roman activity on the site. Upon further excavation, it appeared that (5004)

and (5005) were sealing a group of earlier features, represented by pit/posthole feature [5007], possible pit/linear feature [5010] and pit [5012], all of which appeared to have been cut from (5006), a firm dark reddish-brown, stonefree silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecking extending to an approximate depth of 0.45m.

Identified in the southeast corner of AP 5 was [5007], a roughly ovoid cut oriented northeast-southwest with gradually sloping sides and a concave base; only a small part of this feature was visible as it disappeared into the southwest-facing section, its visible extent measuring 0.7m × 0.3m × 0.2m (**Plate 79; Fig. 43**).

Feature [5007] contained two fills, (5008) & (5009). The uppermost, secondary fill (5008) was a firm reddish-brown silty clay, containing a single rim sherd of Dorset black burnished ware and frequent small rounded and subangular stones. Underlying this was the primary fill (5009) consisting of moderate to firm dark greyish-brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking and moderate quantities of fired clay. The most plausible interpretation of [5007] was that it appeared to represent a domestic waste pit.

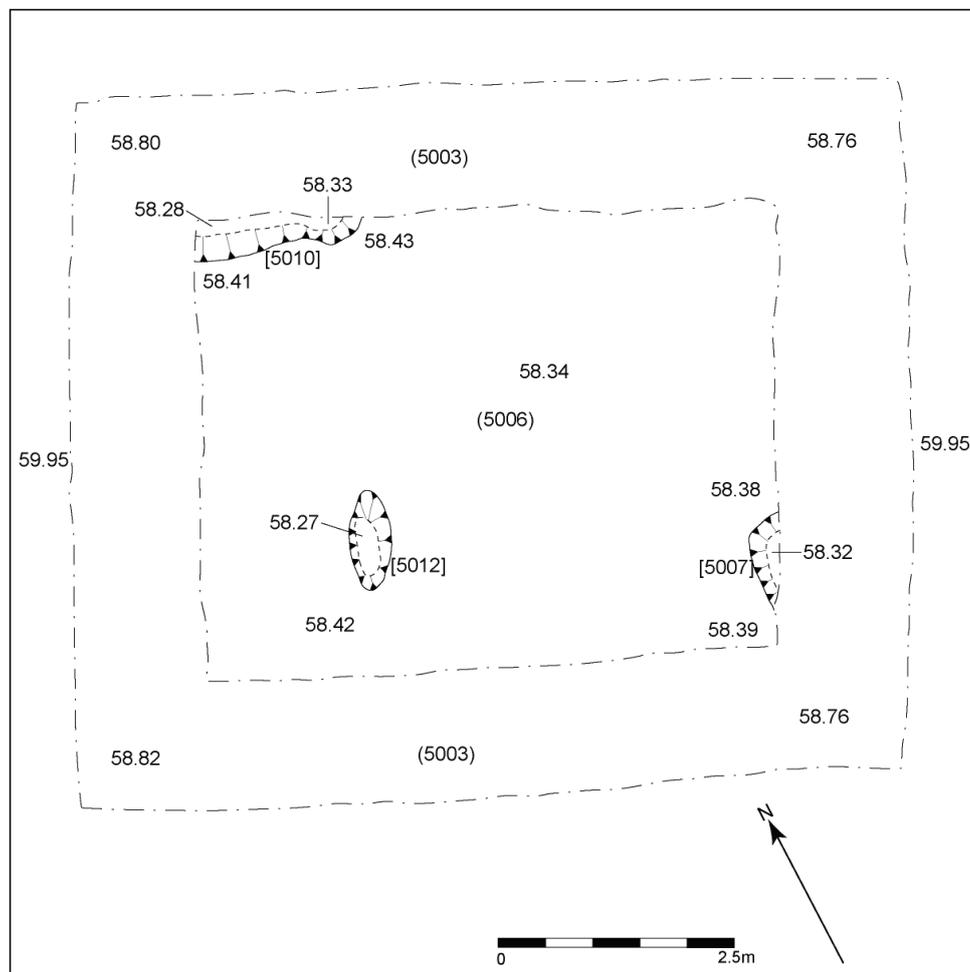


Fig 43: Plan showing features revealed in Access Pit 5

Located in the northwest corner of AP 5, approximately 5.2m northwest of [5007], was [5010], an irregular cut roughly oriented east-northeast-west-southwest, with a gradual to moderate break of slope at the top of the profile, concave sides on the east side, gently sloping on west and a gradual break of slope at the base, which was concave (**Fig. 43**).

Only a small part of [5010] was visible, the rest disappearing into section, its visible extent measured 1.4m × >0.4m × 0.12m. [5010] was filled by (5011), a firm mid greyish-brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking, moderate quantities of animal bone (comprising 38 unidentified fragments, mostly small and heavily abraded) and occasional ceramic sherds of oxidised and reduced Severn Valley ware and oxidised colour coated ware. Analysis of soil samples taken from (5011) identified a moderate quantity of charred cereal seeds, including spelt wheat glume bases and spikelet forks indicative of chaff produced as a result of cereal processing activity. [5010] was interpreted as forming part of an elongated pit or the terminus of a linear feature, its fill was characteristic of domestic fire waste.

Also cutting (5006) was a pit [5012] (**Plate 80; Fig. 43**) measuring 1m × 0.5m × 0.16m, which was filled by (5013), a moderately compacted to firm dark greyish-brown silty clay with orange mortar flecking, frequent charcoal flecking and moderate quantities of calcined animal bone fragments. A moderate assemblage of ceramic sherds and fired clay was recovered

from (5013), including sherds of oxidized and reduced Severn Valley wares and a number of Oxfordshire colour coated ware sherds probably dating from the mid 2nd century or later.



(Left) Plate. 79: View looking southeast showing partial extent of pit [5007] visible in southwest-facing section of pit

(Below) Plate 80: View looking north showing pit [5012]

Underlying (5006) was a sequence of riverine silts, the uppermost of which (5014), comprised a waterlogged, moderately compacted bluish-grey silty clay measuring > 0.42m in thickness. (5014) in turn overlaid (5015), consisting of a thin band of loose to moderately compact yellowish-grey fine gravels measuring 0.15m thick.

Underlying (5015) was a firm heavily waterlogged dark blackish brown peaty deposit (5016) with patches of whitish gravel,

measuring approximately 0.45m in thickness and gradually increasing in thickness towards the east end of the pit (**Plate 81**). Analysis of the soil samples taken from (5016) identified a quantity of water-plaintain and bog bean seeds, representative of an open shallow water environment, while the presence of pondweed and great sedge would appear to be indicative of an oligotrophic to mesotrophic environment (ASUD, 2008).



Within this deposit, at an approximate depth of 3.45m below existing ground level, a series of 30 to 40 pieces of worked wood were identified, consisting of a series of rectangular and circular pieces with varying lengths and widths remaining with the maximum length remaining

being no longer than 0.06m (**Plate 82; Fig. 45**). Several of the wood fragments were identified *in situ* and appeared to be vertical poles or stakes driven into (5016); however, this could not be ascertained for all the pieces, due to the degraded condition of the remaining wood and the frequent water ingress towards the base of the access pit. The full extent of this concentration of stakes could not be determined due to waterlogging and the fact that they disappeared beneath the southwest facing section, which could not be excavated further for access purposes.



(Left) Plate 81: Plan view looking northeast showing peat deposit (5016) towards base of Access Pit 5

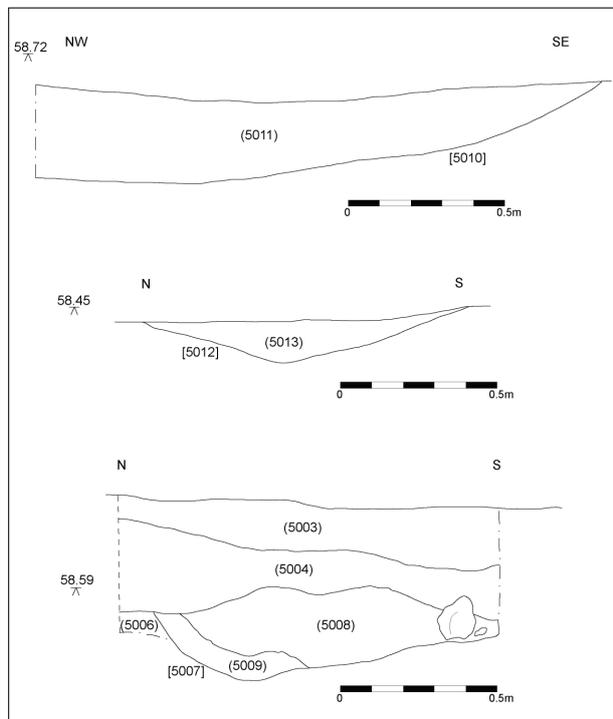


Fig. 44: Profiles of features identified in AP 5

(Below) Plate 82: Plan view looking northeast showing concentration of wooden stakes extending into the southwest facing section of AP5



Analysis of the wood fragments recovered from the deposit demonstrated that a significant proportion of them showed evidence of conversion, which could be interpreted as forming components of one or several woven hurdles or panels, whose sails and poles were constructed from alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), the use of alder would appear to suggest that the

hurdles/panels formed a structure which was to be partially immersed in water. Radiometric radiocarbon dating of a single piece of worked wood gave 2 sigma calibrated date ranges of Cal BC 3930 to 3870 (Cal BP 5880 to 5820) and Cal BC 3810 to 3640 (Cal BP 5760 to 5590).

Underlying (5016) and extending to the base of the access pit was (5017) consisting of loose yellowish-brown fine gravels measuring more than 0.10m in thickness, the full depth of which could not be ascertained.

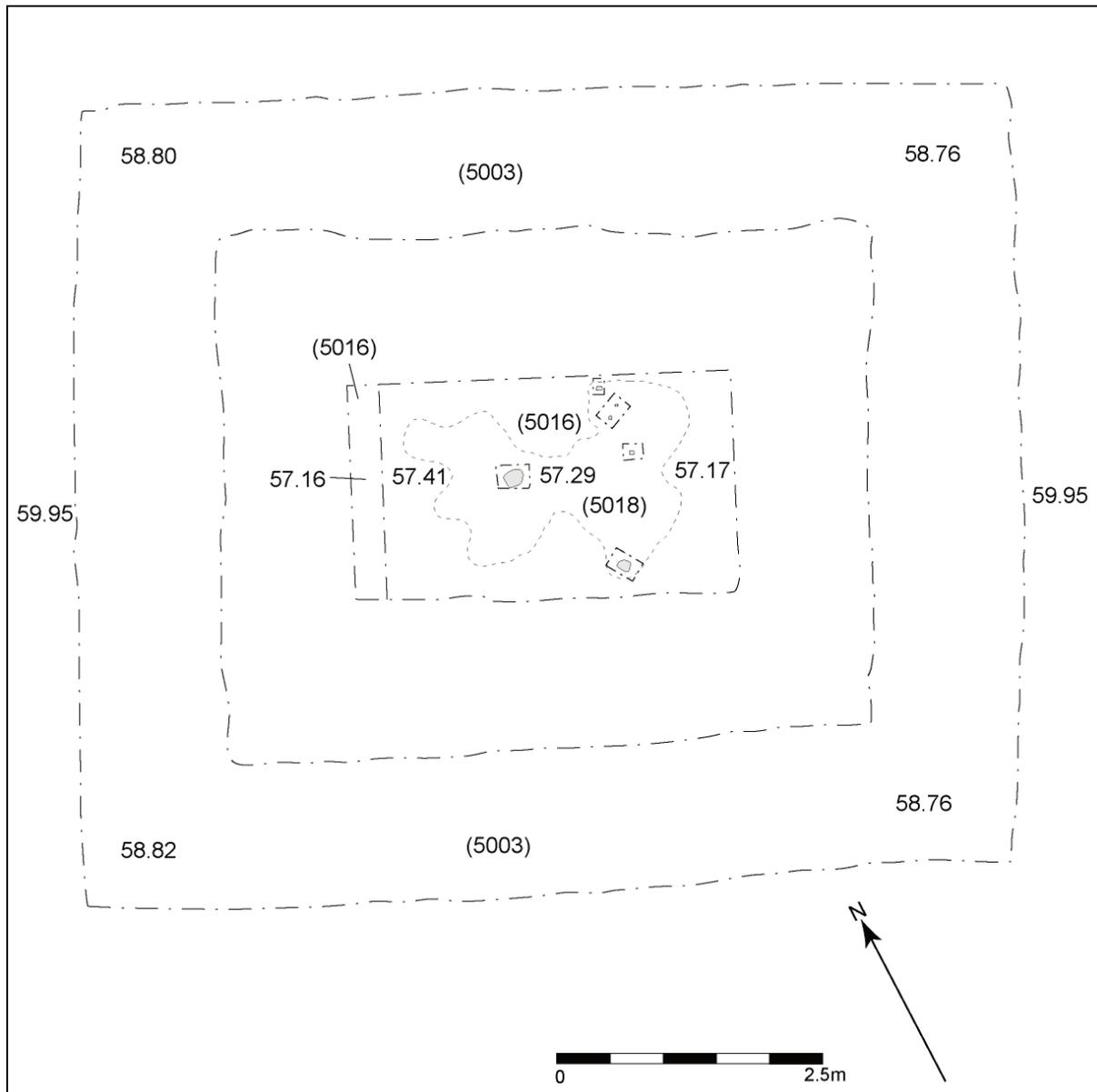


Fig. 45: Plan showing location of stakes in AP 5

3.6.3 Summary Conclusions

The excavation of Access Pit 5 identified Roman deposits at an approximate depth of 1.5m below existing ground level (59.95m AOD), slightly higher than those identified during the Welsh Water pipeline trenching south of the Frome in 1979, which identified evidence of Roman activity at a depth of 2m and in the auger transect undertaken by HWCC in 1989-90, which occurred at a depth of 1.7m (Dinn & Roseff, 1992).

The earliest evidence for human activity was represented by the series of worked wood fragments (5018) found at a depth of approximately 2.9m below existing ground level. Radiocarbon dating of the wood fragments indicated a late Mesolithic-early Neolithic date, while analysis of the fragments indicated that several of the fragments probably represented vertical and longitudinal components of one or several wooden hurdles or panels; the use of a particularly water-resistant wood such as alder would appear to suggest that the hurdles/panels were intended to be partially immersed in water.

The most plausible interpretation of these woven hurdles/panels is that they formed components of a timber structure extending across an area of shallow wetland, possibly similar to that encountered in AP2. This could represent a trackway or possibly a fish trap/weir, however it is difficult to draw more detailed conclusions regarding its function or extent due to the limited nature of the remains as revealed. Due to the heavily waterlogged conditions at the base of the pit and the fact that only part of the feature was revealed, it was impossible to establish its full extent and alignment; however it appeared to be extending to the north of the access pit.

The character of the Roman occupation deposits and features identified in AP 5 may best be described as peripheral, consisting of pits and a possible linear ditch containing domestic fire waste which presumably were associated with settlement activity nearby. Of particular interest is the relatively abundant occurrence of charred spelt wheat glume bases and spikelet forks in occupation deposit (5005) and pit fill (5011) which appear to be indicative of cereal processing activity in the immediate vicinity.

The dating of the Roman occupation features revealed in AP 5 is uncertain; in stratigraphic terms they appear to be cut from a single deposit (5006), however the ceramic evidence does not allow for a particularly tight date range. The presence of a solitary sherd of Dorset black burnished ware in the secondary fill of [5007] indicates that this was most likely deposited no earlier than the early 2nd century AD.

The ceramic assemblage in (5011) consisted of oxidised and reduced Severn Valley sherds, which could only be broadly dated to the late 1st-early 4th century AD. The fill of [5012] contained a more diverse range of wares that appeared to date from no earlier than the mid 2nd century AD. These features were in turn sealed by (5004) and (5005) which appear to represent a phase of late Roman occupation, attested by the presence of sherds of Oxfordshire red-slipped *mortaria* dating from the 3rd-4th centuries AD and a substantial quantity of oxidised Severn Valley ware of a type datable to the late 3rd-4th centuries AD (Fabric Ref. W. 27).

3.7 ACCESS PIT (AP) 6

3.7.1 Site Location

Access Pit 6 was located at NGR SO 63220 43295, approximately 90msoutheast of AP5 and 110m west of the A417 road. The original dimensions of the pit measured 9m × 8m × 3m; however, due to the fact that a modern land drain was discovered extending north-south across the southwest corner of the pit, this area was backfilled and the pit was further extended by 2m to the east for access purposes.

3.7.2 Description

A total of 20 contexts were recorded during the excavation of this access pit, the uppermost context, modern topsoil/ploughsoil (6001), consisting of moderately compact mid reddish brown sandy clay with occasional medium subangular stones and measuring 0.33m thick. Underlying (6001) was a sequence of what appeared to be riverine flooding/alluvial deposits, the uppermost (6002) consisting of a moderately compacted to firm light reddish-brown sandy clay with very occasional charcoal flecking measuring 0.36m in thickness, which overlaid (6003), consisting of firm mid orangey-brown silty clay with occasional medium sized subangular stones measuring 1m thick.

Underlying (6003) was (6004), a firm mid bluish-grey silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking measuring 0.23m thick, containing frequent charcoal flecking, moderate quantities of Roman pottery, ranging in date from the late 1st-4th centuries AD, and occasional fragments of animal bone, which was interpreted as representing a probable occupation deposit of Roman date. A single copper alloy bow fibula brooch was also recovered from this deposit; the object, which survived in an excellent state of preservation (with its brooch pin intact), is virtually identical in form to a brooch recovered from excavations on the eastern defences of Wroxeter (Ellis & White, 2003, 31 Fig. 3.14 no. 2), which was identified as a Colchester Derivative brooch, its broadest date range extending from c.75-175 AD.

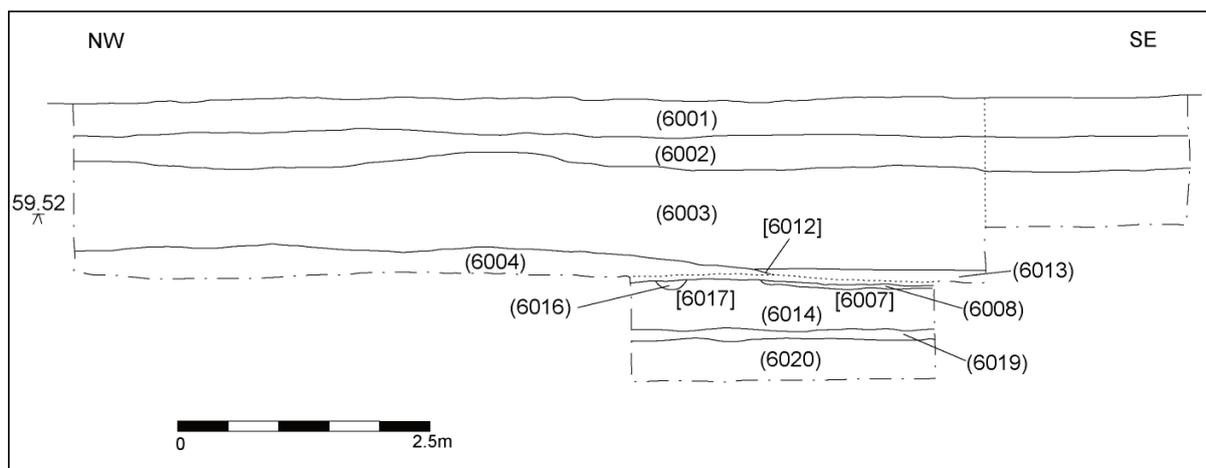


Fig. 46: Southwest-facing section of Access Pit 6

(6004) appeared to be cut by a substantial curvilinear feature [6012] extending northwest-southeast across the northeast corner of the access pit (**Plate 83; Fig. 46**). Only a small portion of [6012] was visible, as the majority of the feature lay outside the limits of the excavation area, its visible extent measuring 3.4m × 1.4m × 1.2m (maximum visible depth).

[6012] was filled by a single fill (6013), consisting of a firm orangey-brown silty clay with no inclusions. Upon further excavation it appeared that (6004) was sealing a series of features, comprising a series of four shallow 'teardrop' shaped scoops [6011] identified as probable ploughmarks and three shallow intercutting ditch features represented by [6005], [6007] and [6017], all of which appeared to be cut from (6014=6018) a firm dark orangey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking and degraded sandstone fragments, extending to a maximum depth of 0.60m, which was interpreted as an occupation deposit of possible late Iron Age or early Roman date. Although the composition of (6014) and (6018) appeared to be largely identical in terms of soil type and coloration, there was however a subtle differentiation in terms of the inclusions contained in the two deposits.

The latest of the three ditch features [6007] was a substantial, shallow linear oriented east-west, its visible dimensions measuring 6m (east-west) × 1.4m (north-south) × 0.1m with a sharp break of slope at the top and concave sides, and a moderate break of slope at the base, which was undulating (**Plates 83& 86; Figs. 47-8**). [6007] was filled by (6008) a firm dark greyish-brown silty clay with charcoal flecking and infrequent subangular stone inclusions, containing occasional sherds of oxidised and reduced Severn Valley wares, grey fine wares and handmade and wheelthrown Roman Malvernian wares (Glos TF 19) broadly dated to the 2nd–early 4th centuries AD (Timby, 2008).

Moderate quantities of animal bone were also recovered from this deposit, including a caprovid second phalanx (burnt); however, the majority of the bone fragments were too small to be conclusively identified (Jaques & Carrott, 2008). The western continuation of [6007] could not be further investigated due to the presence of a modern land drain running north-

south across the extreme southwest corner of the access pit.



Plate 83: View looking northeast showing curvilinear feature [6012] extending across northeast corner of AP6 with ditches [6005], [6007] and [6017] in foreground

Linear [6007] appeared to truncate two further ditch features, represented by [6005] and [6017] which ran parallel to each other on a roughly north-south alignment (**Plates**

83-6; Figs. 47-8). The visible extent of [6005] measured >6m (north-south) × 1.6m (east-west) × 0.15m, it had a sharp break of slope at the top, concave sides and a moderate to sharp break of slope at the base, the base being concave to V-shaped.

This ditch was filled by two fills, the primary fill (6015) comprising a mid reddish-brown silty sandy clay with frequent charcoal flecking and occasional bone fragments, measuring 0.08m thick, while the secondary fill (6006) consisted of a firm mid to dark greyish-brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking, moderate small rounded and subangular stones, measuring



Plate 85: View looking east showing slot excavated across linear ditch [6007]

The sherd was burnt suggesting secondary use. This fill contained 40 fragments of animal bone, these being fairly well preserved with some evidence of dog gnawing, representing the main domestic mammals (Jaques & Carrott, 2008). Analysis of soil samples taken from this deposit identified a significant quantity of charred

plant remains, chiefly consisting of wheat grains and spelt wheat chaff, the abundance of chaff in this deposit may be indicative of cereal processing in the vicinity (ASUD, 2007).



Plate 86: Plan view looking east showing ditch [6007] truncated by linears [6005] and [6017] and modern land drain.

Linear [6017] was located approximately 2.1m east of [6005] on the same north-south alignment, its visible extent measuring 5m (north-south) × 0.45m (east-west) × 0.2m with a

sharp break of slope at the top, slightly concave sides, a gradual break of slope at the base and an undulating base. This was filled by (6016), a firm dark greyish-brown gravel and clay. The fill contained a moderate ceramic assemblage broadly dating to the 2nd century AD, including sherds of Dorset black burnished ware, Severn Valley ware and a Wroxeter whiteware *mortaria* flange with the edge of a grid stamp, as well as a single *amphora* sherd deriving from the Dressel 20 fabric which was heavily burnt suggesting secondary use.

As in the case of (6008), analysis of soil samples taken from (6016) revealed a significant amount of wheat grain and chaff indicative of cereal processing activity. Analysis of the fills of ditches [6005], [6007] and [6017] indicates that they primarily consisted of waste material associated with domestic occupation, cereal processing activity and animal husbandry, evidenced by the quantities of pottery, animal bone and charred plant remains recovered from these deposits.

Due to the presence of significant groundwater it was extremely difficult to investigate fully the nature of the deposits below a depth of 2.4m, however it appeared that underlying (6014=6018) was a thin band of loose light grey gravel contained within a silty sand matrix (6019), measuring approximately 0.10m thick, which in turn overlaid (6020), a loose purple brown clayey sand, extending to the base of the pit which was interpreted as natural deposition.

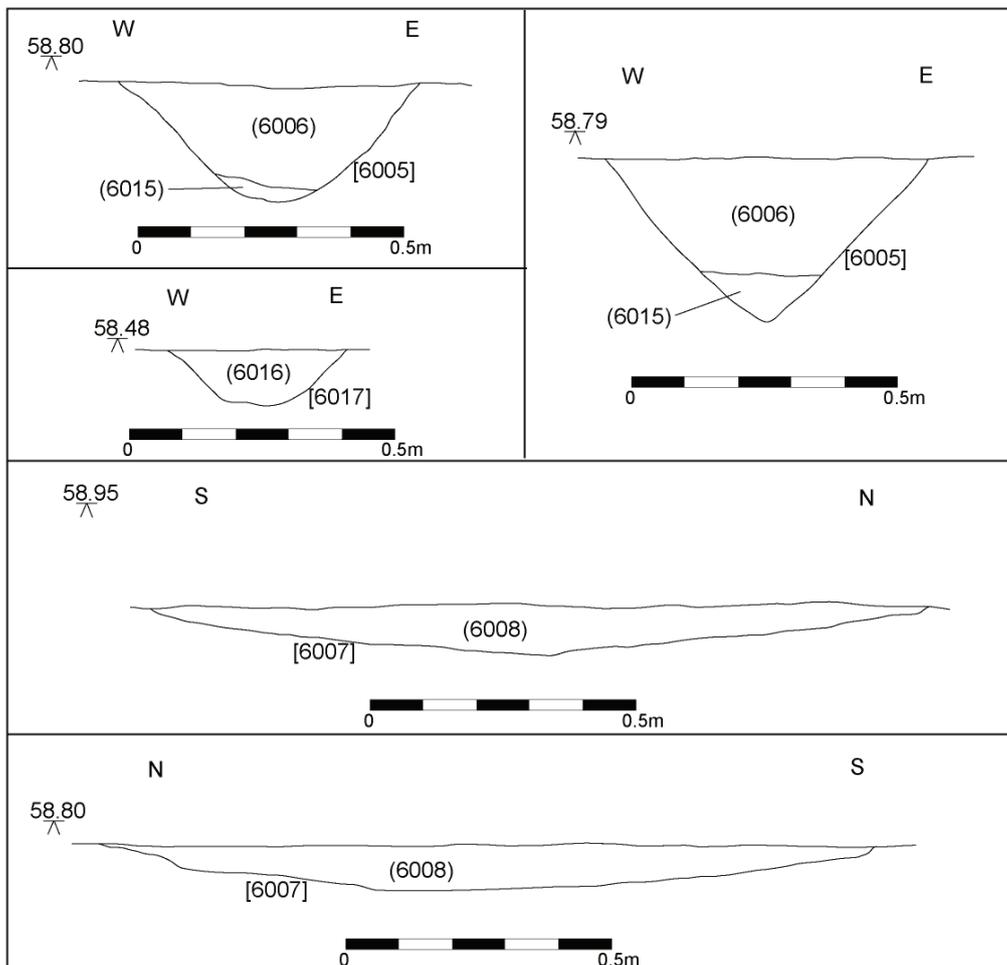


Fig. 48: Profiles of features in AP6



3.7.3 Summary Conclusions

The archaeological deposits and features revealed in Access Pit 6 appear to represent several phases of activity extending from the late Iron Age through to the late Roman period; however, the dating evidence is somewhat contradictory.

The uppermost Roman occupation deposit (6004) contained samian ware dating from no later than 85 AD and a fibula trumpet bow brooch dating from c.75-175 AD, although the finds assemblage was dominated by oxidised and reduced Severn Valley wares. However, the fills of the various ditch features sealed by (6004) contained pottery broadly ranging in date from the late 2nd-4th centuries AD.

It is unclear how these earlier finds managed to appear in (6004), a context that, stratigraphically, would appear to represent the latest phase of Roman occupation on the site; one possible explanation is that they were redeposited as a result of ploughing activity. Whatever the case, it is clear that there is a high degree of residuality in the finds assemblage from (6004).

The ditches themselves appear to represent a sequence of definition and redefinition of field boundaries, the dating of which again presents various difficulties. The latest of the ditches [6007] contains pottery broadly dating from the 2nd-early 4th centuries AD; however, the fills of the earlier ditches appear to have a somewhat tighter date range. Assuming that the date of [6007] is established by the latest pottery in the fill, dating from the late 3rd early 4th century AD, then the earlier pottery occurring in [6007] was presumably residual, resulting from the ditch cutting the fills of the earlier linear features.

The function of the ditches is uncertain; they may simply have functioned as field boundaries or drainage ditches; on the other hand, it is possible that they represent one of several phases of enclosure boundaries defining a zone of occupation, most likely a rural farmstead, although no structural features, such as postholes, have been identified. Perhaps the most plausible explanation is that the features identified in AP 6 relate to activity on the outskirts of a rural settlement and its adjoining field system, based on the finds recovered from the ditch fills, which have a strongly domestic and agricultural character, with an emphasis on cereal processing and animal husbandry.

3.8 ACCESS PIT (AP) 7

3.8.1 Site Location

Access Pit 7 was located at NGR SO 63330 43250, approximately 100m southeast of AP6 and 25m west of the A417 trunk road.

3.8.2 Description

Thirteen contexts were identified during the excavation of this pit, the uppermost deposit (7001) comprising a moderate to loose mid reddish-brown silty sand topsoil, extending to a depth of 0.33m. Underlying (7001) was a sequence of ploughsoils, the uppermost deposit (7002), consisting of a moderately compacted mid orangey-brown sandy clay with frequent small angular stones, measuring 0.15m in thickness, which in turn overlaid (7003), a friable light greyish-brown sandy clay with very frequent rounded and sub-rounded gravel inclusions, extending to a depth of 0.17m. Underlying (7003) was (7004), a firm reddishbrown silty clay extending to a depth of 0.80m, which appeared to represent a phase of prolonged alluvial deposition.

At the base of (7004) was a thin band of greyish-brown silty sand with an orange hue with occasional charcoal flecking (7014), extending pit-wide to a depth of 0.12m. Although no finds were recovered from this deposit, its composition suggested that it might represent the top of the Roman occupation levels, based on comparison with similar deposits found in the other access pits; on the other hand, it might represent a phase of low-level occupation or abandonment marking the conclusion of the main phase of settlement activity in this area.

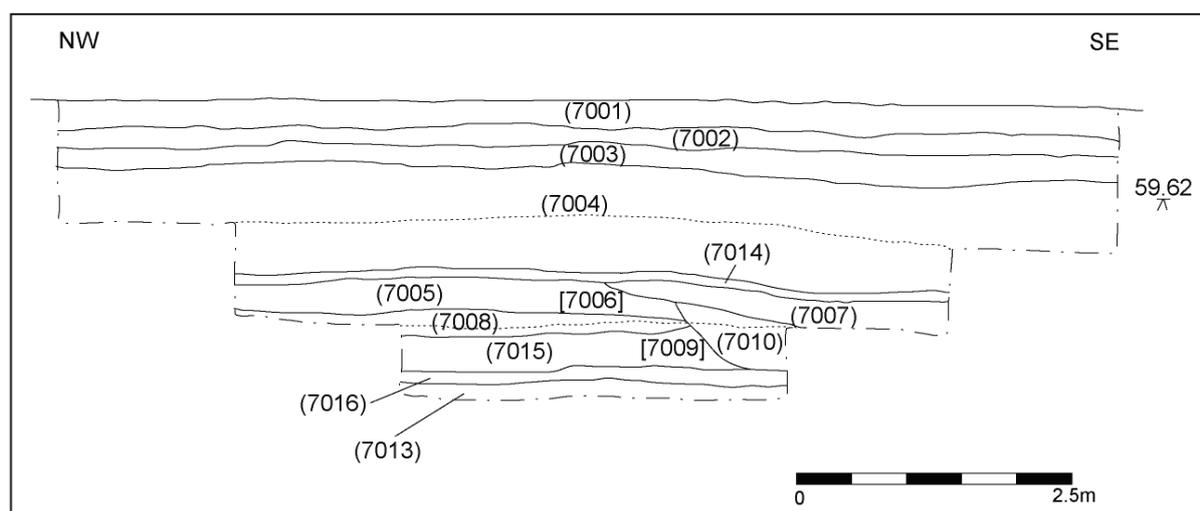


Fig 49: Southwest-facing section of Access Pit 7

Underlying (7014) was (7005), a firm light reddish-brown silty clay with very frequent degraded sandstone fragments, its visible extent measuring 6m × 5m × 0.45m, from which was recovered a single sherd of oxidised Severn Valley ware and occasional animal bone fragments, comprising two cattle teeth and four mandible fragments, almost certainly associated with the teeth (Jaques & Carrott, 2008). (7005) was interpreted as a probable Roman occupation deposit; a series of linear ditch features appeared to have been cut from this deposit and were also identified as being of probable Roman origin



The uppermost of these, [7006], consisted of a substantial linear ditch feature running north-south across the pit, its visible dimensions measuring 6.75m (north-south) × 2.5m (east-west) × 0.3m, with a gradual break of slope at the top of the profile, gradually

Plate 87 (Above): Pre-ex photograph looking southeast showing linear ditch feature [7006]

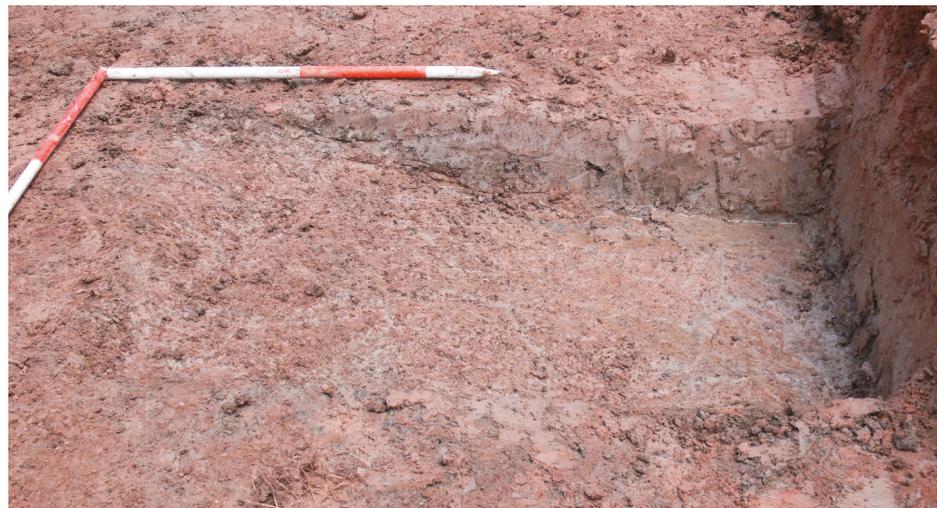
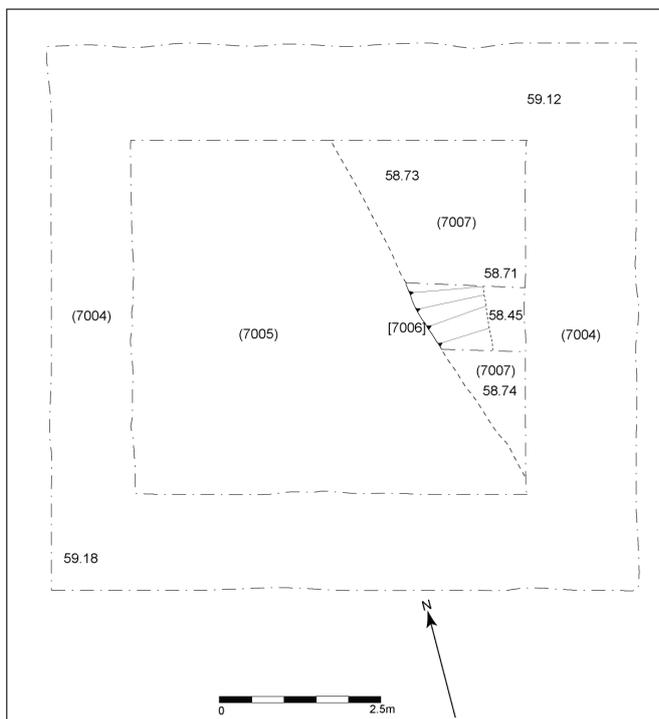


Plate 88: View looking north showing slot excavated across ditch [7006]

Fig 50: Below Plan showing linear ditch [7006] running north-south



sloping sides and a concave base (Plate 87-8; Figs. 50 & 52). [7006] contained a single fill (7007), a firm bluish-grey silty clay containing five sherds of oxidised Severn Valley ware, broadly dated to the late 2nd–3rd century. Upon further excavation, [7006] was clearly shown to truncate two earlier, smaller ditch features on the same north-south alignment, [7009] and a later re-cut [7011]. The visible extent of [7009] measured 0.8m (east-west) × 1.84m (north-south) × 0.35m, it had a sharp break of slope at the top with slightly concave sides and a concave base and was filled by (7010), a moderate to firm mid reddish-brown silty clay with occasional small to medium subangular stones and infrequent mollusc shell fragments.

Evidence of a later re-cutting and deepening of ditch [7009] was noted, represented by linear [7011] (Plate 89; Figs. 51-2) which had a sharp break of slope at the top with sharply tapering sides and a flat base, its visible dimensions measuring 0.65m (east-west) × 0.93m (north-south) × 0.44m. [7011] contained a single fill (7012) consisting of a moderate to firm dark reddish-brown silty clay (with a noticeable greyish-brown hue towards the base of the feature) with frequent root disturbance, and occasional medium angular sandstone fragments. No pottery finds were recovered from this deposit although a small quantity of animal bone was identified, consisting of a single caprovid metatarsal shaft fragment, while analysis of a soil sample from the same ditch fill produced a further three fragments; none of which were identifiable and two were burnt (Jaques & Carrott, 2008).

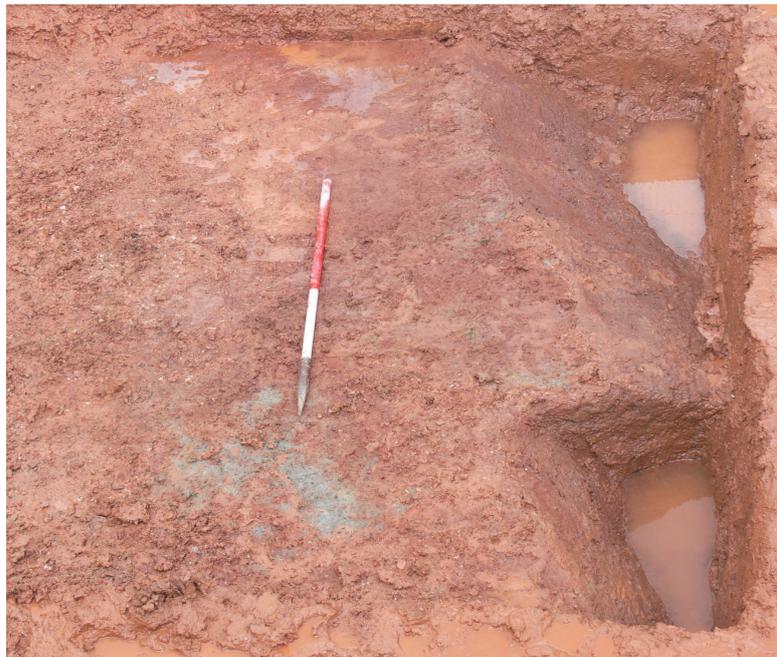
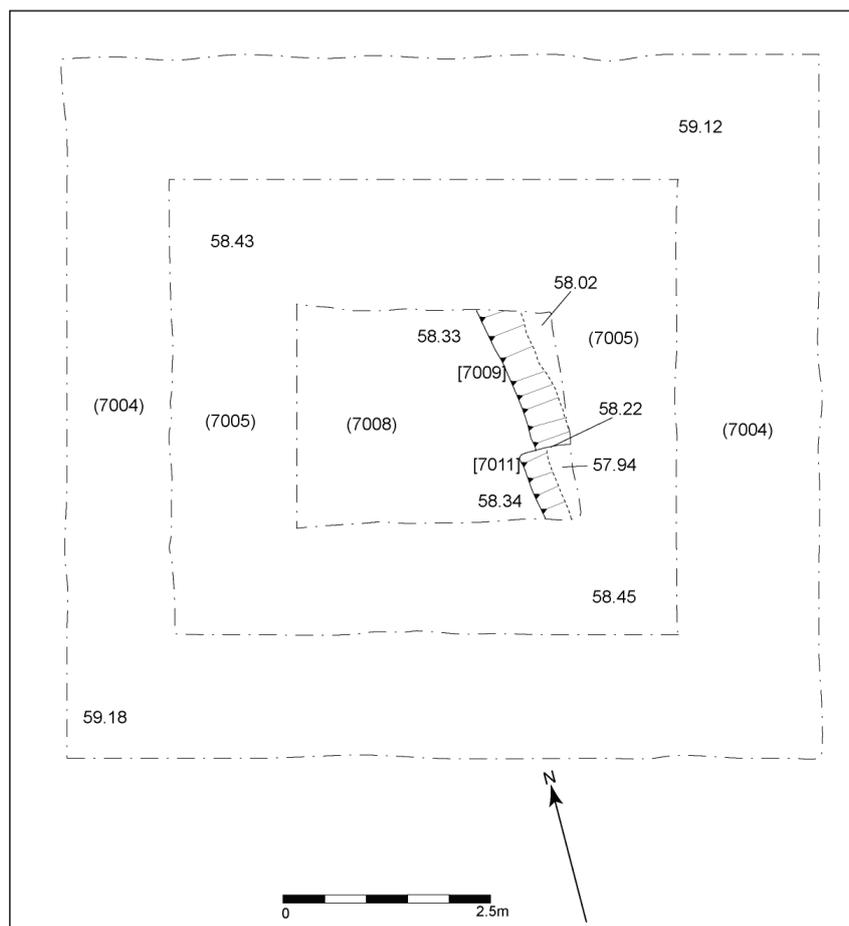


Plate 89: View looking north showing linear [7009] and later re-cut [7011]

Fig. 51: Plan showing linear [7009] and later re-cut [7011] on same alignment as [7006]



Underlying (7005) was evidence of what appeared to be a sequence of natural deposits, the uppermost of which (7008) consisted of a moderately compact reddish gravel deposit (7008), its visible extent measuring 6m x 5m x 0.80m, this in turn overlaid a probable natural deposit (7015) represented by a moderately compacted light purple gravelly sand extending across the pit to a depth of 0.30m. Underlying (7015) was a moderately compacted orange sandy clay (7016) measuring 0.10m in thickness, which in turn overlaid solid reddish-brown sandstone bedrock (7013) that extended to the base of the pit.

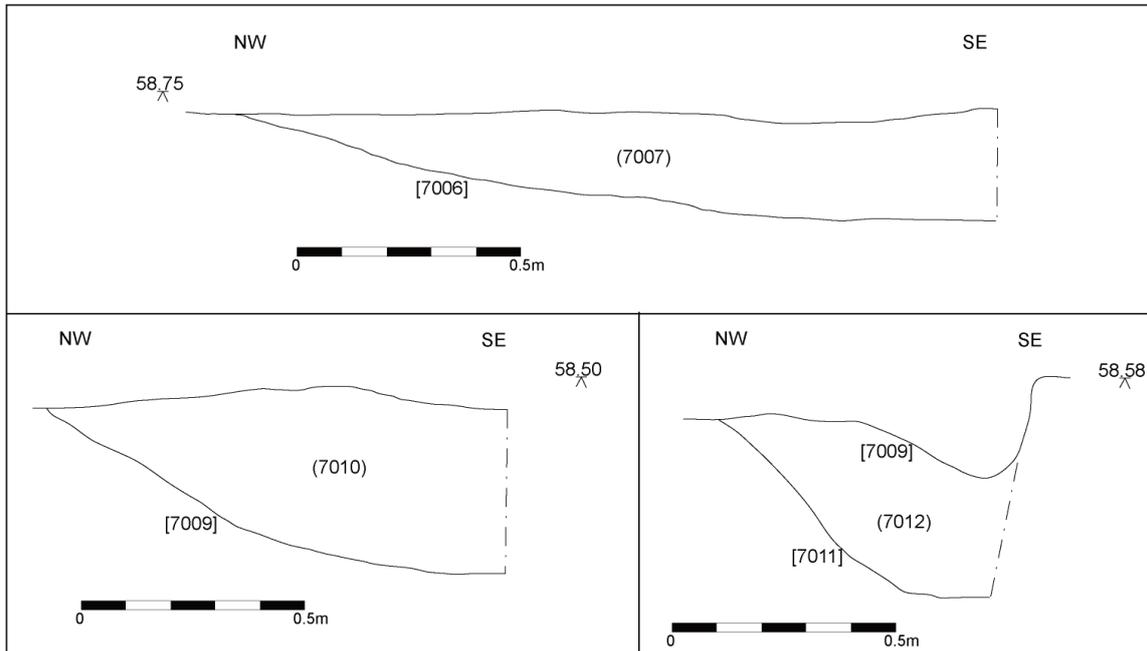


Fig. 52: Profiles of features in AP7

3.8.3 Summary Conclusion

The excavation of Access Pit 7 identified probable Roman deposits at an approximate depth of 1.45m below existing ground level, which is higher than those identified in the auger transect undertaken by HWCC in 1989-90, which occurred at a depth of 1.7m (Dinn & Roseff, 1992).

The deposits and features revealed in AP 7 appear generally to be indicative of a low level of occupation, evidenced by the relative lack of charcoal flecking, pottery and other artefacts compared to APs 4, 5 and 6. The relative absence of evidence for domestic waste in the fills of ditch features [7006], [7009] and [7011] appears to suggest that these probably functioned as field boundaries rather than enclosure ditches in close proximity to an area of settlement, in marked contrast to the ditch fills in APs 5 and 6.

The relatively low density of occupation identified in AP 7 is somewhat surprising, in view of the fact that this pit is situated close to the scheduled area of the defended enclosure, which is presumed to have represented the main focus of settlement in this area during the Roman period. The dating evidence for the ditches is very limited; however, the occurrence of late 2nd-3rd century pottery in the fill of [7006] would appear to provide a *terminus ante quem* for its construction while ditches [7009] and [7011] presumably pre-date the late 2nd century.

3.9 ACCESS PIT (AP) 8 (including APs 8a & 8b)

3.9.1 Site Location

Access Pit 8 was located at NGR SO 63460 43270 approximately 100m east-southeast of AP 7 and approximately 50m east of the A417 trunk road, within the southwest corner of the scheduled area of the Roman defended enclosure (SAM Herefordshire 330). The dimensions of the original access pit measured 6m × 5m × 3m. Following the excavation of AP8, the pit was further extended to the east in order to give room to align the two separate pipe sections for welding. This eastward extension (AP8a) measured 2.6m (east-west) × 5.25m (north-south) with a further slot cut through this pit measuring 1.3m (north-south) × 1.8m (east-west) × 1.94m (max depth).

3.9.2 Description

Twenty-five contexts were identified, the uppermost of which was a friable mid greyish-brown humic silty clay (8001) with moderate small subangular stones, ceramic sherds and occasional CBM fragments, extending to a maximum depth of 0.34m. Underlying (8001) was the fill (8022) of a single northeast/southwest robber trench [8023] (**Plate 90; Figs. 53-4**), consisting of moderately compact mid reddish-brown sandy silt, with frequent large fragments of stone rubble, some of which exhibited evidence of having been roughly worked.

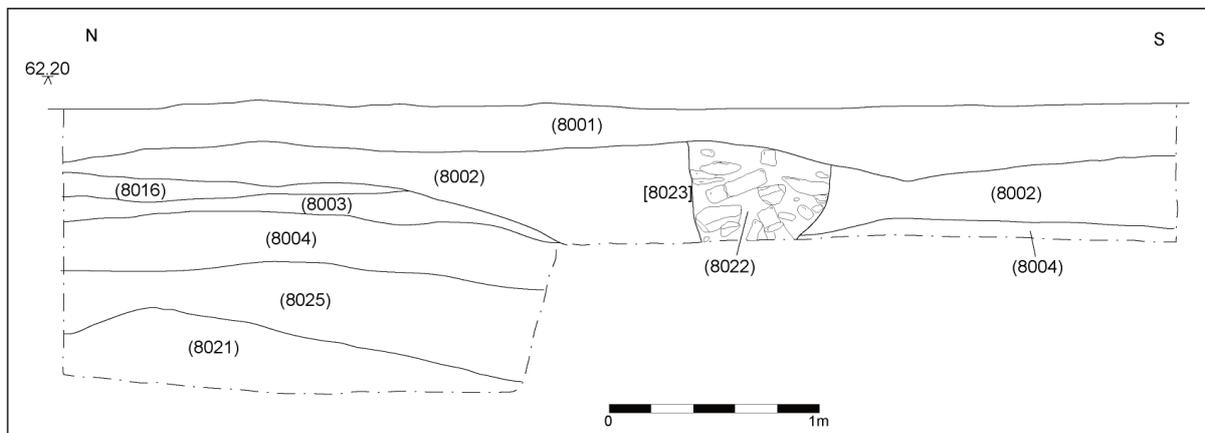


Fig. 53: West-facing section of AP8

This feature was initially identified in section during the excavation of AP8 and revealed a roughly U-shaped profile, with a sharp break of slope at the top and steeply sloping sides breaking moderately/sharply to a flat base. The excavation of extension AP8a revealed further evidence of the northeast/southwest alignment of the trench, its maximum visible extent measuring >3m (northeast/southwest) × 0.68m (northwest/southeast) × 0.56m.

Trench [8023] appeared to have been cut from (8002), a moderately compact mid reddish-brown sandy clay (8002) containing rare small-to-medium charcoal pieces, which extended over the entirety of the excavated area to a maximum depth of 0.46m. The full extent of [8023] was not established during the excavation; it appeared to represent the robbing-out of a masonry wall on the same alignment. It was not possible to discern the original foundation cut for the wall within the robber trench.



Plate 90: View east showing robber trench [8023] in west-facing section of AP8 with pit [8005] in foreground

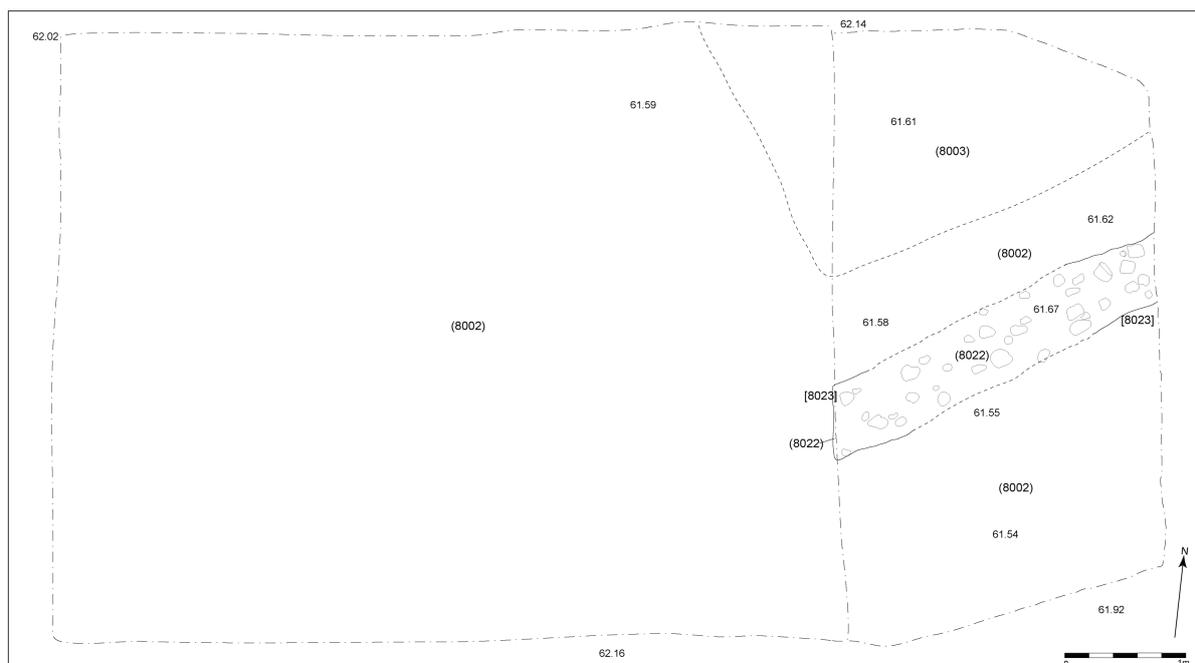


Fig. 54: Plan showing continuation of robber trench in eastern extension to Access Pit 8

Extending northeast-southwest across the northeast corner of the pit, underlying (8002), a sequence of distinct lenses was identified, the uppermost of which (8016) consisted of a moderately compacted mid reddish-brown sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions and degraded sandstone fragments and moderate charcoal flecking, its visible extent measuring 1.7m (north-south) × 3.65m (east-west) × 0.14m depth. This in turn overlaid (8003), a friable reddish-brown fine sandy gravel deposit with occasional Roman ceramics (dimensions 2.3m (north-south) × 3.55m (east-west) × 0.14m depth. Both (8003) and (8016) appeared to respect the wall alignment represented by robber trench [8023].

The function of (8003) and (8016) was difficult to establish due to the limited extent of the deposits that were exposed by the excavation. Although the projected line of the Roman road from Gloucester via Dymock to Stretton Grandison (RR 610) appears to run just to the east of AP 8, it is unlikely that (8003) and (8016) represent components relating to this road, based on the shallow depth of the deposits and the fact that they appear to be oriented northeast-southwest, whereas the Roman road is oriented northwest-southeast. Moreover

the absence of a pronounced agger and the lack of associated side ditches appears to rule out the possibility of a major roadway, although the possibility that intensive modern ploughing might well have reduced or severely truncated evidence of these features cannot be entirely discounted.

A more plausible explanation is that (8003) and (8016) either represent a minor roadway within the defended enclosure, or that they constitute the heavily denuded remains of a metalled surface defining a specific zone of occupation within the enclosure, possibly a courtyard area relating to a building which stood to the west of the main Roman road. It may be that the wall alignment represented by robber trench [8023] relates to a boundary wall defining this courtyard area. The limited extent of the metalling exposed during the excavation, however, prevents any definite conclusions being drawn concerning its date and function.

Both (8002) and (8003) overlaid (8004), a moderate to firm light to mid reddish-brown silty clay with moderate Roman ceramics, occasional animal bone and charcoal flecking, measuring approximately 0.25m in thickness and becoming noticeably darker in colour towards the base of the deposit. (8004) overlaid a moderate to firm dark reddish-brown stonefree silty clay (8025) measuring approximately 0.65m in depth which was interpreted as an alluvial deposit, in turn overlying (8021), a firm dark reddish-brown degraded sandstone deposit representing natural bedrock, the visible extent of which measured approximately 6m × 2m × >0.8m.

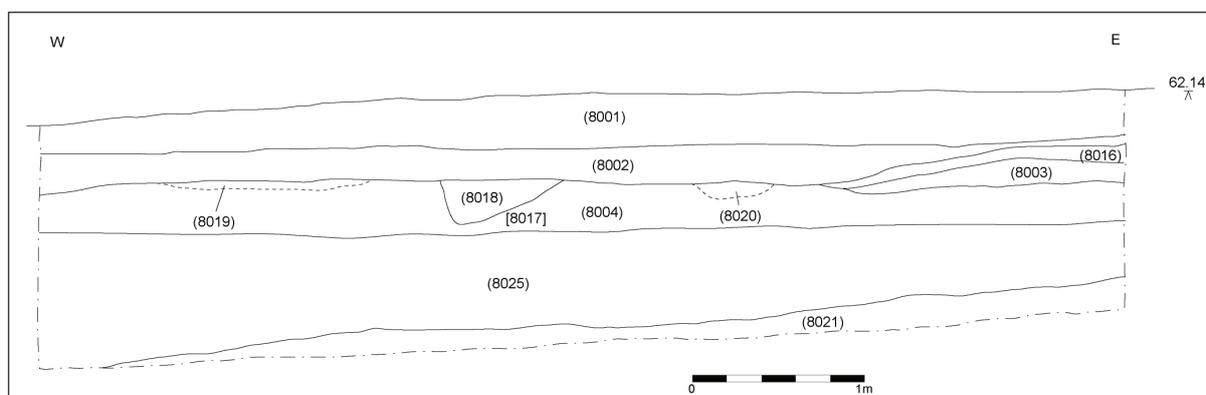
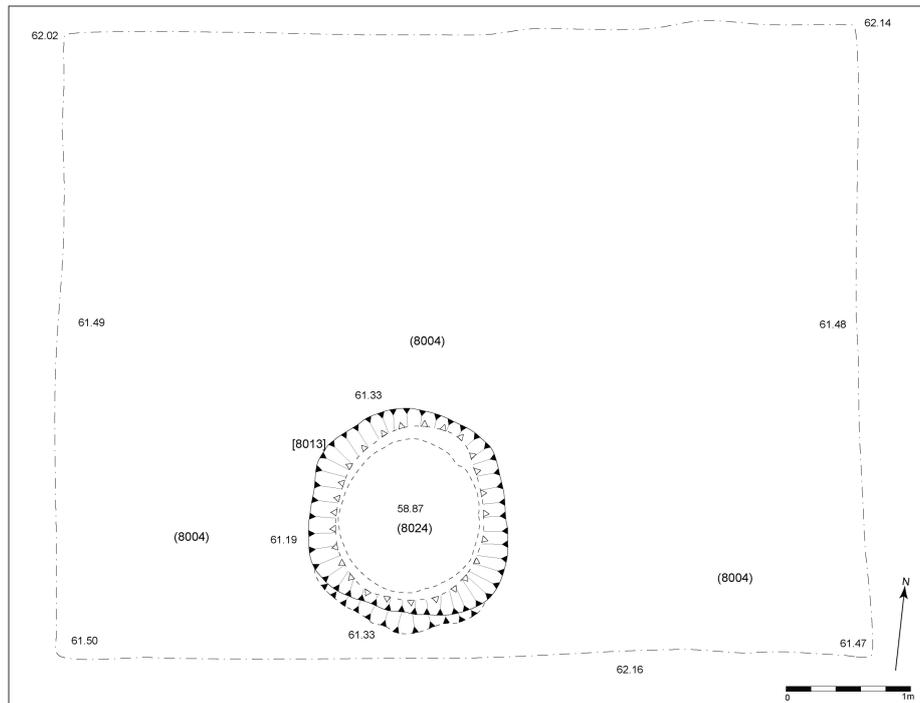


Fig. 55: South-facing section of AP8

(8004) was interpreted as relating to a prolonged phase of occupation which, based on the pottery evidence, was broadly dated to the late 1st-2nd century AD. A series of features appeared to have been cut from this deposit, including a possible well feature [8013] and a composite structure comprising two sub-circular pits [8005] and [8007] linked by a gully [8009], all of which were located in the southern half of the access pit, while two smaller subcircular pits [8015] and [8017] were identified on the northern edge of AP8.

The earliest feature identified consisted of a large, deep sub-circular well [8013] (**Plate 91; Figs. 56-8**), the full depth of which exceeded the designated depth of the excavation, its visible dimensions measured 1.9m (north-south) × 1.8m (east-west) × 2.45m (maximum visible depth). The well contained two visible fills, the uppermost of which (8011) consisted of a loose to moderately compacted dark blackish-brown silty clay with frequent ceramic sherds and animal bone, measuring approximately 0.75m in thickness. Analysis of samples taken from this deposit revealed very small quantities of charred cereals, including oats (*Avena*),

barley (*Hordeum*) and spelt wheat glume bases (*Triticum spelta*) and a fairly large quantity of animal bone fragments (171 in total), chiefly consisting of cattle and caprovid bones and a small quantity of bird bones and a single fish bone fragment identified as a salmonid vertebra.



(Above) Fig. 56: Plan showing well feature [8013]

Underlying (8011) was (8024), comprising a moderately compacted dark greyish-brown gleyed clay silt with moderate charcoal flecking and evidence of heavy waterlogging which appeared to extend to the maximum excavated depth of the pit (58.87m AOD). It is unclear whether (8024) represents a silting up of the well or actually formed part of the same backfill deposit as (8011) which subsequently became gleyed as a result of later hydrological changes.



Plate 91: View showing heavily waterlogged deposits towards visible base of well feature [8013]

The ceramic assemblage from (8011) points to a probable early 2nd century date for the backfilling episode, evidenced by the noticeable absence of Dorset black burnished ware.

Subsequent to the backfilling episode, it appears that a smaller pit was cut into the top of well [8013], represented by [8007] (**Plates 92-3**) measuring 1.2m (north-south) × 1.05m (east-west) × 0.8m with a sharp break of slope at the top and near vertical sides with a sharp break of slope at the base which was flat. [8007] was filled by (8008), a loose dark blackish-brown silty clay with very frequent charcoal and moderate small rounded and sub-circular stones; a substantial assemblage of Roman ceramics was recovered from this deposit, mostly dating from the late 1st-2nd century AD (including a significant quantity of decorated Central and South Gaulish samian wares, mostly of Flavian-Trajanic date with some later Hadrianic and early Antonine pieces) as well as a small group of later sherds including Oxfordshire colour-coated wares and a burnt flanged rim bowl in Dorset black burnished fabric, probably dating from the later 3rd-early 4th century. Other finds included a small quantity of Fe objects comprising nails and a pruning saw.

Analysis of samples taken from this deposit identified a large quantity of charred cereal grains, chiefly consisting of glume bases and spikelet forks of spelt or emmer wheat (probably indicative of cereal processing activity) as well as smaller quantities of oat and barley and false oat grass. A significant quantity of animal bone fragments (339 in total) was also identified within this deposit, chiefly consisting of cattle and caprovid and pig bones, a number of which displayed evidence of butchery marks, as well as a quantity of unidentified bird bone fragments.



At the base of [8007] a number of large angular sandstone blocks was noted lying within a reddish-brown sandy gravel matrix (8012), which appeared to represent a stone lining for the pit. [8007] appeared to form part of a composite structure with another sub-circular pit [8005] immediately to the east, the two being linked by a linear gully feature [8009] (**Plate 93; Fig. 57**).

Plate 92: View showing masonry deposit at base of pit [8007]

The dimensions of pit [8005] measured 1.2m (north-south) × 1.4m (east-west) × 0.85m with a sharp break of slope at the top and steeply sloping sides, breaking into a shallower slope at 0.5m and then becoming steeper again from 0.7m, with a sharp break of slope at the base, which was gently sloping downwards from south to north. [8005] was filled by (8006), a moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking. A substantial assemblage of Roman ceramic sherds (242 in total) was recovered from this deposit, broadly dating from the 2nd century AD (including a significant quantity of decorated samian ware, mostly of Hadrianic-Antonine date); other finds included a single fragment of a cylindrical glass bottle of a type commonly used during the late 1st-early 2nd century (Cool, 2008) and a small collection of domestic Fe and Cu alloy objects including a pair of tweezers and fragments of a toilet set.

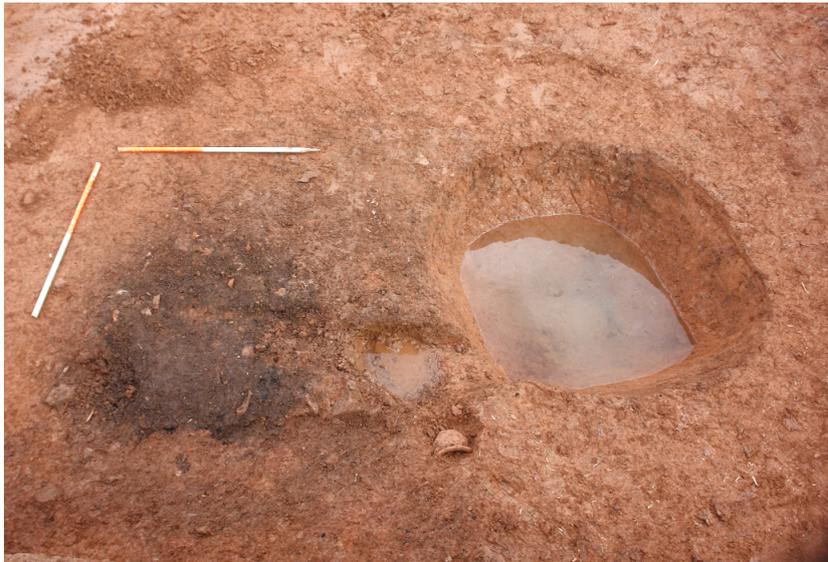


Plate93: Plan view looking north showing pits [8005] and [8007] linked by gully feature [8009]

Analysis of samples taken from this deposit identified a sizeable quantity of charred cereal grains, largely consisting of glume bases and spikelet forks of spelt or emmer wheat (comparable to [8007] in many respects); however there was also evidence of bread wheat chaff and a relatively large number of

charred peas, barley grains and hazelnut shell fragments as well as other arable weed seeds such as black-bind weed and field gromwell and a single false oat grass tuber. Also identified within this deposit was a significant assemblage of animal bone, chiefly consisting of cattle, pig and caprovid fragments (many of which displayed evidence of butchery) as well as a moderate quantity of *mollusca* and smaller quantities of fish bones (including *Cyprinidae* remains and a salmonid vertebra) and bird bone fragments (identified fragments included a chicken sternum and phalanx).

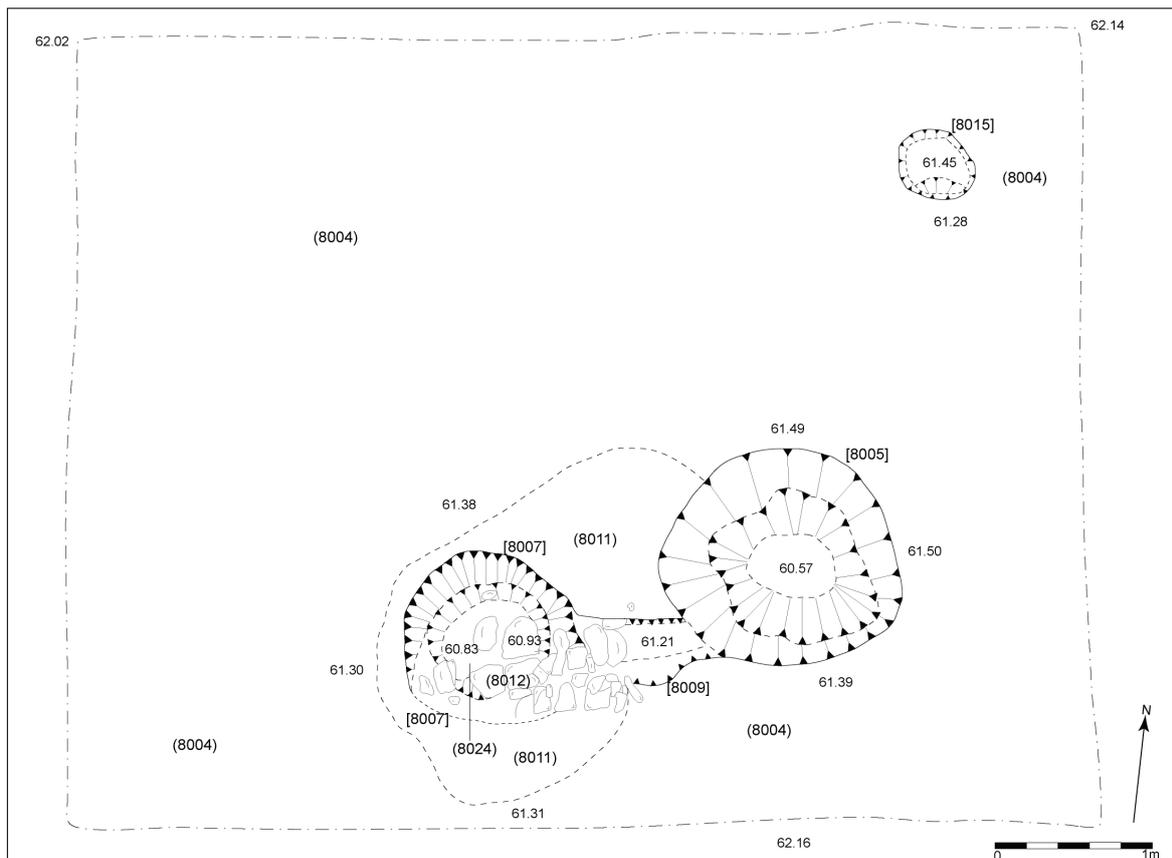


Fig. 57: Plan showing pits [8005] and [8007] linked by gully feature [8009]

Pits [8005] and [8007] were linked by a shallow linear gully feature [8009], measuring 0.38m (north-south) × 0.23m (east-west) × 0.16m, with a moderate break of slope at the top with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. [8009] was filled by a moderate compacted mid greyish brown silty clay with moderate ceramic sherds, occasional glass sherds and occasional charcoal flecking. A moderate assemblage of Roman ceramics was recovered from (8010), which appeared to be primarily of early 2nd century date, including a sherd of Central Gaulish samian dated to c.100-120 AD. Analysis of samples taken from (8010) revealed a moderate quantity of charred cereal remains and a relatively small assemblage of animal bone, chiefly cattle and caprovid fragments and a moderate quantity of terrestrial *mollusca* fragments.

In addition to the composite structure represented by pits [8005], [8007] and gully [8009], two other features were identified cutting (8004), namely [8015] and [8017]. [8015] (**Fig. 57**) consisted of a sub-circular pit located in the northeast corner of AP8 which appeared to be sealed by gravel deposit (8003). The feature measured 0.49m in diameter × 0.17m depth, with a sharp break of slope at the top with steeply sloping sides and a moderately sharp break of slope at the base, which was flat. A single fill was identified within [8015], consisting of a loose to moderately compacted mid greyish-brown silty clay (8014) with moderate charcoal flecking, occasional Roman ceramics and animal bone fragments.

The profile of a small U-shaped pit feature [8017] was also identified in the centre of the south facing section of AP 8, its visible extent measured 0.68m × 0.26m with a sharp break of slope at the top with steeply sloping sides and a concave base; it was filled by a single deposit (8018) comprising a moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking and small rounded stones.

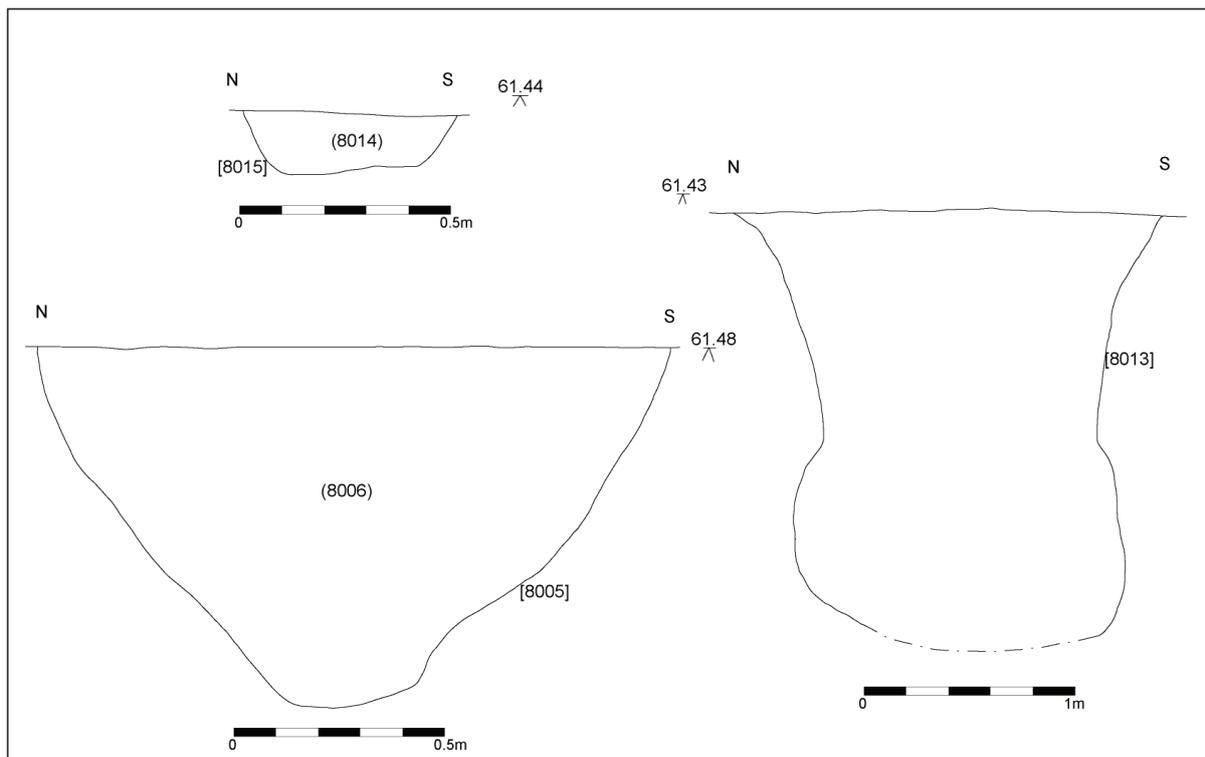


Fig. 58: Profiles of features [8005], [8013] and [8015]

3.9.3 Additional Access Pit (AP) 8b

In addition to the excavation of AP8 and its eastward extension, another small area (AP8b) was excavated to investigate pushed-up ground measuring approximately 2.7m in diameter, situated about 7.5m west of AP8. The pushed-up material resulted from the pressurised mix of water and soil venting, where the ground makeup is less compact as the drill head passes. The dimensions of this additional engineering driven area (AP8b) measured 2.45m (north-south) × 2.9m (east-west).

A total of seven contexts were revealed during this excavation, the uppermost of which, (8101) consisted of a moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay topsoil with frequent small subangular stones, moderate ceramic sherds and occasional, heavily abraded CBM fragments of Roman date, extending to a maximum depth of 0.24m. Underlying (8101) and extending to a maximum visible depth of 0.25m was (8102) a firm light reddish-brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones.

Immediately following the initial topsoil strip, evidence of a series of rectilinear wall foundations (8104) (**Plate 94; Fig. 59**) was noted, consisting of a wall running north-south (2.55m × 0.92m) with a return to the east (1.15m × 0.6m) and another return partially visible at the eastern end of this wall, running approximately north-south (1m × 0.25m). The walls roughly formed a H-shaped structure in plan, although their full extent was not revealed within the limits of the excavation area as defined for engineering purposes.

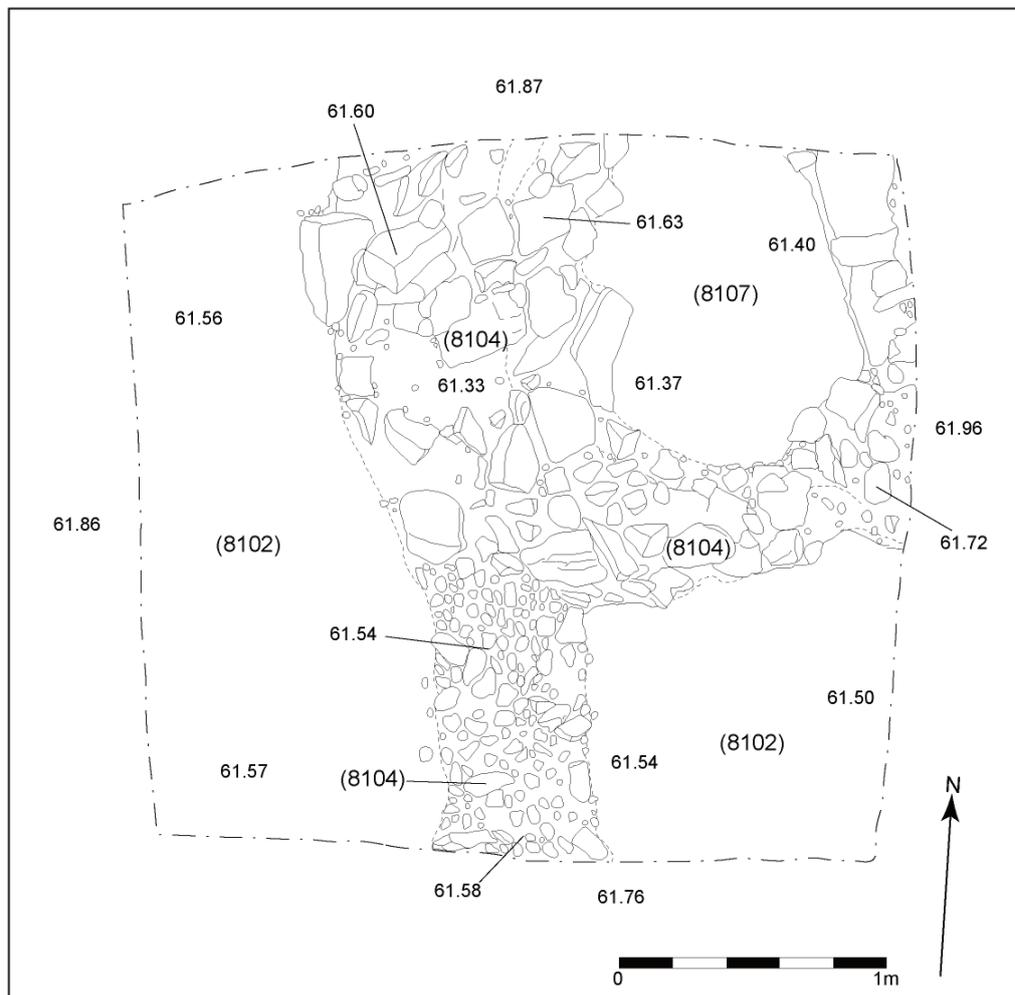


Fig. 59: Post-ex plan showing masonry wall foundations revealed in AP8b

The wall foundations had clearly been heavily robbed and damaged by ploughing activity and consisted of uncoursed, earth bonded sandstone rubble masonry. Due to the shallow depth of the excavations, the base of the walls was not revealed, neither was it possible to determine precisely from where these wall foundations were cut. Within the northeast corner of the access pit, the walls appeared to enclose three sides of a roughly rectangular area, its visible dimensions measuring 1.2m (north-south) × 0.95m (east-west).

A series of deposits was identified within the void encompassed by this series of walls, the uppermost of which (8103), consisted of a firm dark reddish-brown sandy silt with frequent small rounded stones and occasional Roman ceramics. (8103) in turn overlaid (8106), a moderately compacted mid to dark brown silty sand with occasional gravel and small stones in the deposit. This in turn overlaid (8107), a firm mid reddish-brown sandy clay with rounded stones



Plate 94: AP8b View looking west showing rectilinear masonry wall foundations (8104)

3.9.4 Summary Conclusions

The deposits and features revealed in AP 8 and its extensions appear to relate to roughly three main phases of occupation on the site that can be broadly assigned to the late 1st-4th centuries AD, based on the dating of the pottery.

The earliest phase of occupation appears to be represented by occupation deposit (8004) from which the majority of the features appear to be cut. The pottery from (8004) does not allow for a particularly tight date range, which, at its broadest, extends from the late 1st century through to the end of the 2nd century AD.

The occupation features cut from (8004) comprised the complex of sub-circular features in the southern half of AP 8, well [8013], pits [8005] and [8007] linked by gully feature [8009] and two small pits [8015] and [8017] located in the northern half of the access pit.

The earliest feature identified consisted of the large, deep well feature [8013], which appears to have gradually silted up (represented by (8024), a waterlogged greyish silt) and was backfilled by (8011). The large assemblage of pottery contained in backfill deposit (8011) consisted of wares typical of the late 1st-early 2nd century and was particularly distinguished by the absence of sherds of Dorset black burnished ware, which suggests a *terminus post quem* not much later than c.120 AD. Sub-circular pit feature [8015] may also belong to this early phase of occupation, again based on the pottery evidence.

A second phase of activity following the backfilling of well [8013] was represented by the digging of pits [8005] and [8007], which were in turn linked by linear gully [8009], forming a composite structure which can be interpreted as a probable grain drying kiln or oven. An abundance of charred cereal remains (including spelt wheat and barley) was recovered from the fills of the two pits and the gully feature which would seem to support this hypothesis; certainly there must have been cereal processing activity in the immediate vicinity of the pits, which is further suggested by presence of an agricultural implement, a pruning saw in the fill of [8007].

It would appear that [8005] and [8007] must be almost contemporary with each other as the fills of both pits contained samian sherds from the same bowls. The date range of the pottery from the fills of [8005] and [8007] largely consisted of late 1st- 2nd century sherds (with a significant proportion of decorated samian ware present in both assemblages) although there is a distinct group of later wares in [8007], including sherds of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware and a Dorset black burnished burnt flanged rim bowl, indicating that this feature had a longer life-span than [8005], extending into the late 3rd/4th century AD. The fill of the gully feature [8009], however, contained pottery dating no later than the early 2nd century, suggesting that the gully, and by implication the structure of which it formed an integral part, fell out of use fairly rapidly. Following the cessation of its primary function, therefore, it would appear that [8005] and [8007] were subsequently converted to use as domestic refuse pits. The remainder of the finds assemblage in both pits, consisting of a significant quantity of butchered animal bone, occasional Fe and glass objects and other artefacts, appears to be generally characteristic of domestic waste deposits.

The unusually large quantity of decorated samian vessels found in the fills of both [8005] and [8007] is significant and demands further explanation. The presence of such a substantial quantity of decorated samian suggests a military association, as has been suggested at Dymock (Wild, 2007, 155-8), which is not surprising in view of the close proximity of the



Roman auxiliary fort, some 250m to the west of the defended enclosure. On the other hand, it may simply represent a domestic assemblage associated with a nearby high-status, 'official' residence, possibly the *mansio* presumed from aerial photographic evidence to have been situated further to the north within the defended enclosure, at the junction of the roads from Gloucester and Kenchester (Baker, 1970), or the masonry building which was partially revealed in the additional excavation undertaken to the west of AP8. However, based on parallels with other Roman sites, a ritual function must also be strongly considered, as J. Timby has observed, the assemblage 'may be connected with the use of the site as a cemetery and perhaps with festivities and ceremonies connected to the action of burial... they may also reflect a sacred area or nearby shrine' (Timby, 2008).

Gravel lenses (8003) and (8016), overlying occupation deposit (8004), represent a later phase of activity and appear to comprise either a minor roadway or a roughly metallated surface defining a specific zone of activity within the defended enclosure. However, the two sherds of oxidised Severn Valley ware recovered from (8003) were insufficiently diagnostic to provide any meaningful dating evidence.

Robber trench [8023] represented the latest phase of activity identified during the course of the investigations in AP8. This was filled by roughly worked masonry (8022) that appeared to represent a heavily robbed wall foundation, the continuation of which was observed in the eastward extension of the access pit (AP8a). It was not possible to discern the original foundation cut for the wall within the robber trench. Unfortunately, no dating evidence was recovered from the fill of [8023], although the fact that it was cut from subsoil deposit (8002), postdating the main phase of Roman occupation, would appear to indicate a probable late Roman or post-Roman date for this robbing activity. It is worth noting that the alignment of [8023] is respected by earlier gravel lenses (8003) and (8016) which appear to be of Roman date.

The limited extent and heavily disturbed condition of the masonry walling revealed in AP8b, located to the west of AP8, precludes detailed conclusions being drawn regarding its date, layout and function. There was no obvious evidence of a relationship to the masonry wall revealed in AP8 and its eastward extension. The limited depth of the excavation (determined by engineering considerations) meant that the base of the masonry walling was not revealed, consequently it was not possible to determine from where it was originally cut although it appeared to be at a greater depth than the masonry wall identified in AP8 and its extension.

The pottery recovered from (8104) the fill of the construction cut [8105] contained handmade and wheelthrown Roman Malvernian wares (Glos TF 19) broadly dated to the 2nd–early 4th centuries AD, together with a quantity of CBM, chiefly consisting of roofing tile fragments of unspecified Roman date but also including a small amount of material for which a possible post-Roman date has been suggested (Timby, 2008).

In overall terms, it is difficult to characterise the nature of the occupation features identified in AP 8, the presence of the deep well feature [8013] is significant and appears to represent the earliest evidence of settlement in this specific area. However the well appears to have had a relatively short lifespan, being filled in by the early 2nd century AD and a grain drying kiln/oven, represented by pits [8005] and [8007] and gully [8009] being constructed, which appears to indicate that cereal processing activity was taking place in the immediate vicinity. The evidence for a grain drying kiln and substantial cereal processing activity suggests that there could well have been a granary building in the immediate vicinity, which have often been found in association with *mansio* complexes on other Roman sites (Black, 1995).



The grain drying complex appears to have had a relatively short span of activity, with gully [8009] being filled in at an early date and [8005] and [8007] subsequently being re-used as domestic waste pits, the latter remaining in use until the late 3rd-4th century AD. The substantial assemblage of samian drinking vessels recovered from both pits would appear to be indicative of high status occupation or possibly a shrine/temple site in the immediate vicinity.

The remains of masonry walling (albeit heavily robbed), a metalled surface and substantial fragments of CBM found in AP8 and AP8b to the west would certainly imply the existence of a complex of masonry buildings in this immediate vicinity, which would have probably had a clay tiled roof and central heating (implied by the presence of a *pila* or hypocaust tile in the fill of [8007]).

However the dating of the masonry walling revealed in AP8 and AP8b remains problematic, chiefly due to the heavily disturbed condition of the walls, which had clearly been heavily robbed and disturbed by later ploughing activity. No evidence of the original foundation cut of the masonry wall was observed in robber trench [8023]; similarly, no foundation cut was discernable for the rectilinear wall footings observed in AP8b, because of the shallow depth of the excavation.

3.10 ACCESS PIT (AP) 9

3.10.1 Site Location

AP 9 was located at NGR SO 63555 43260, approximately 90m east-southeast of AP 8 and about 20m within the southern edge of the scheduled area of the Roman defended enclosure (SAM Herefordshire 330).

3.10.2 Description

A total of 19 contexts were identified during the excavation of this pit, the uppermost of which (9001), consisted of a moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay topsoil, with occasional small rounded stones extending to a maximum depth of 0.25m. (9001) in turn overlaid a moderately compacted mid greyish-brown silty clay with frequent gritty inclusions (9002), measuring 0.14m (maximum thickness).

Two deposits were identified underlying (9002), namely (9003) and (9004), which were interpreted as relating to one or several phases of alluvial deposition within this area (possibly as the result of seasonal flooding events). (9003) was only visible within the southern part of the pit, consisting of a moderate to firm reddish-brown silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecking, a single sherd of Roman grey ware and a mollusc shell fragment, its visible extent measured 4m (east-west) × 0.42m (north-south) × 0.1m (maximum thickness). (9004) extended across the rest of the pit and consisted of a moderately compacted mid yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking, extending to a maximum depth of 0.25m.

Underlying both (9003) and (9004) was a loose to moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay (9007) with lenses of charcoal and burning and rare, very small stones, which extended to a depth of 0.4m. This deposit contained a moderate quantity of animal bone and a large number of Roman ceramic sherds (125 in total) including South Gaulish and Central Gaulish samian wares, Dorset black burnished wares, oxidised and reduced Severn Valley wares and CBM including *tegula* and *imbrex* fragments.

Analysis of soil samples taken from this deposit revealed moderate amounts of charred plant remains, including spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*). This deposit was interpreted as an occupation layer of Roman date, the substantial quantities of ceramics, including tile fragments, indicating the likely presence of a building in the immediate vicinity, while the moderate quantities of spelt wheat are indicative of cereal processing activity, probably on a domestic scale (ASUD, 2008).

Underlying (9007) was a sequence of deposits which appeared to relate to one or more phases of seasonal flooding, the uppermost of which (9008) consisted of a moderately compacted yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking, measuring up to 0.12m in thickness, which in turn overlaid (9006), a thin band of moderately compacted pinkish red gritty silty clay with occasional mollusc shell fragments, its visible extent measuring 6m (east-west) × 1.9m (north-south) × 0.05m.

Underlying (9006) was (9009), a moderately compacted yellowish-brown silty clay with a small assemblage of pottery sherds of Roman date, including central Gaulish samian ware, oxidised and reduced Severn Valley wares and moderate quantities of animal bone (25

intotal), including the remains of cattle and caprovids with one cattle metacarpal shaft having been split longitudinally, presumably for extraction of the marrow (Jaques & Carrott, 2008). Contained within (9009) and visible within the east-facing section of the pit was a lens of greyish-brown sandstone rubble (9014), its visible extent measuring 0.68m (north-south) × 0.21m (east-west) × 0.15m, which was interpreted as representing a demolition layer

Underlying (9009) was (9010), a thin band of moderate to firm pinkish-orange silty clay with moderate gritty sandstone fragments and occasional charcoal flecking, its visible extent measuring 6m (east-west) × 1.9m (north-south) × 0.1m. This deposit yielded relatively little in terms of finds, with the exception of a solitary bone hairpin fragment with plain tapering shaft, lacking both the top of the head and the tip with a single groove below the point where the head has broken (its dimensions measuring 68 mm in length with a maximum diameter below head of 3mm). Analysis of the pin identified it as being of a relatively common type probably dating from the mid 1st century to c. AD 200 (Crummy, 2008).



Plate 95: View looking west showing metallated surface (9017) overlying charcoal rich deposit (9016)

Underlying (9010) were two thin lenses (9011) and (9013), respectively observed in the east and west-facing sections of the pit. (9011) consisted of a moderately compacted greyish-black silt with frequent charcoal, measuring 0.7m × 1.2m × 0.06m while (9013) comprised a moderately compacted blackish peaty deposit, its visible dimensions measuring 0.4m (east-west) × 1.9m (north-south) × 0.3m.

Underlying both (9011) and (9013) was a moderately compacted yellowish-brown silty clay (9012) with occasional charcoal flecking and devoid of finds, extending to a maximum depth of 0.3m, which was interpreted as probably relating to another phase of alluvial deposition. (9012) overlaid a metallated surface represented by (9015) and (9017) (**Plate 95**) consisting of tightly compacted, small greyish-brown angular stones set within an orangey-brown silty clay matrix. The function of (9015) and (9017) is uncertain, it could have formed part of a larger expanse of metallating which might have extended across the defended enclosure, other possible alternatives include a courtyard area associated with a building or a minor roadway within the enclosure.

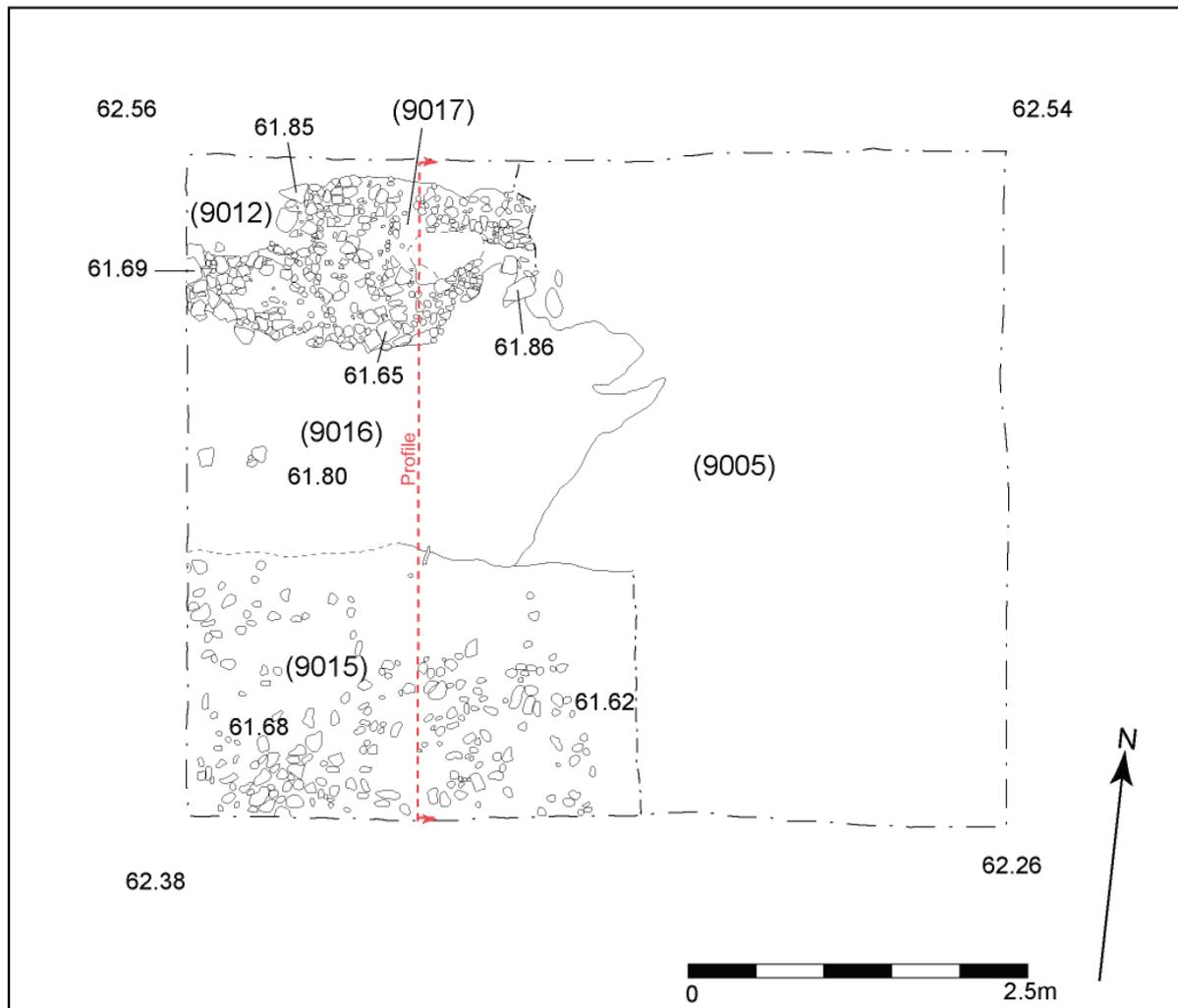


Fig. 60: Plan showing extent of metallised surfaces (9015) and (9017)

Extending between and partially underlying (9015) and (9017) was a friable, dark blackish-brown charcoal lense (9016) its visible extent measuring 4m (east-west) × 3m (north-south) × 0.1m. Analysis of soil samples taken from this lense revealed a substantial assemblage of charred cereal remains, the predominant species consisting of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) with a relatively small quantity of oat grains (*Avena*). A significant proportion of these charred cereals consisted of chaff (ie. glume bases) suggesting that it may have specifically been a deposit of domestic fire-waste, containing the chaff remains from domestic scale processing of glume wheat (ASUD, 2008).

A quantity of animal bone was also identified within this charcoal lense, further analysis identified a fragment of a pig carpal/tarsal and 13 rib fragments of indeterminate species, some of which were burnt black and extremely brittle (Jaques & Carrott, 2008). The relatively localised area of the burning activity, the lack of any charred wood and the substantial presence of charred cereal remains and animal bone suggests that (9016) represents a domestic occupation/fire-waste deposit, possibly relating to a dispersed hearth feature which was subsequently built over by the metallised surface represented by (9015) and (9017).

Underlying charcoal deposit (9016) was (9005), a moderate to well compacted reddish brown

silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecking in the upper part of the deposit and degraded sandstone patches towards its base, extending to a maximum depth of 0.70m. No finds were recovered from (9005) which appeared to represent a substantial phase of alluvial deposition. Underlying (9005) and extending to the base of the pit was (9019), a well compacted reddish brown silty clay with frequent gravels, interpreted as being of natural deposition.

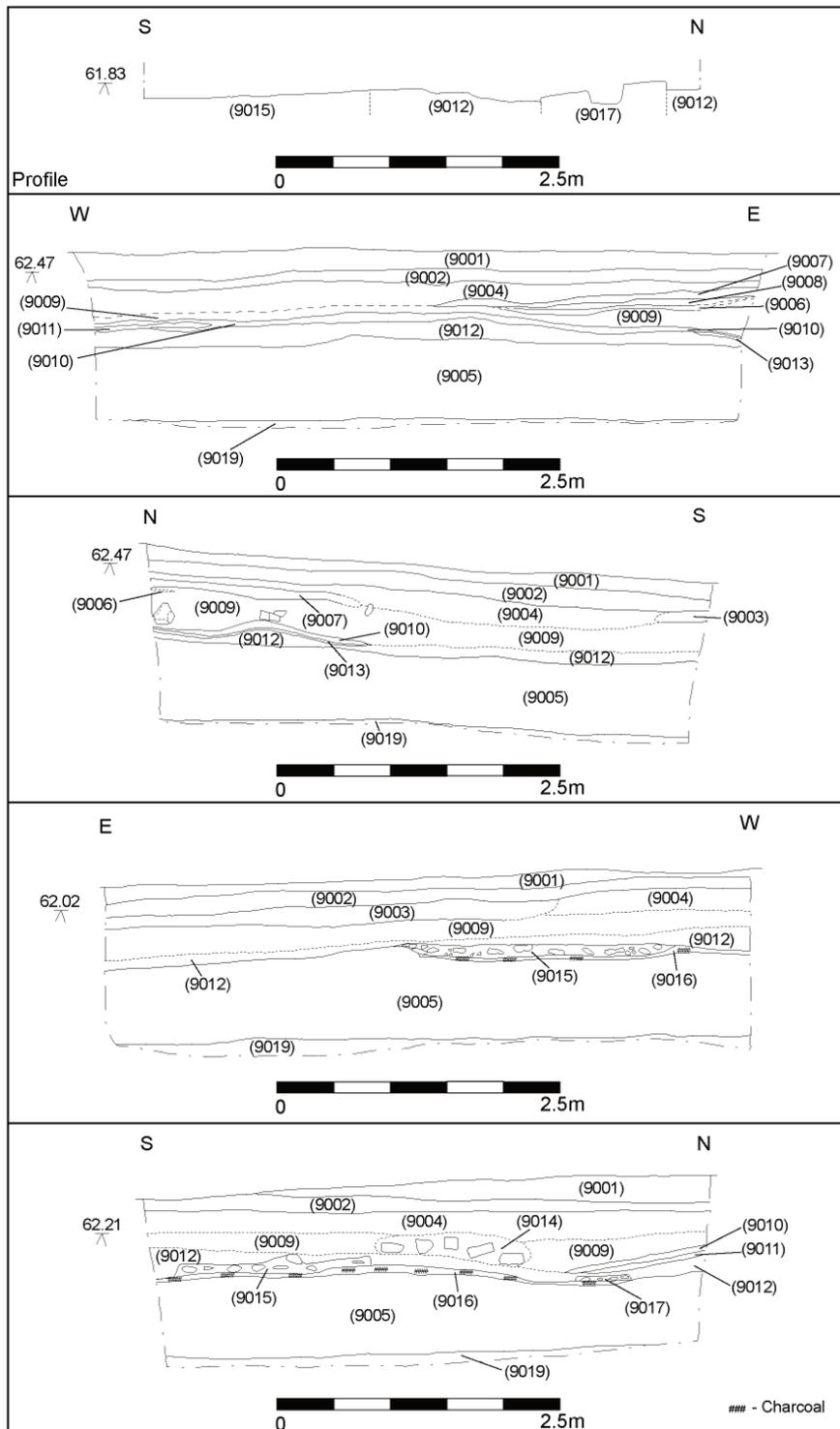


Fig 61: Sections from AP9, including east-facing profile across metalised surfaces (9015) and (9017)



3.10.3 Summary Conclusions

Roman occupation deposits were identified at an approximate depth of 0.75m below existing ground level, similar to that encountered during drainage ditch excavations undertaken further to the north within the scheduled area in 1982, but at a greater depth than those encountered in AP8.

The earliest evidence for occupation found in AP9 was represented by charcoal layer (9016), identified as a domestic waste deposit possibly associated with a dispersed midden, containing abundant charred cereal seeds probably indicative of substantial cereal processing activity in the immediate vicinity.

Unfortunately no datable material was recovered from (9016) although this is likely to represent an early Roman (or possibly late Iron Age) domestic occupation deposit. This was subsequently overlaid by a metalled surface, represented by (9015) and (9017), the full extent of which could not be determined. No dateable material was recovered from (9015) and (9017), which were interpreted as representing either a minor roadway within the settlement or defining a particular zone of occupation.

Following the construction of metalled surface (9015) and (9017), there appears to have been an interval in occupation represented by alluvial deposit (9012) and lenses (9011) and (9013) presumably representing an episode of flooding. Following this interval there appears to have been another phase of occupation, represented by (9009) (9010) and rubble lens (9014) which appeared to be a demolition deposit, though no evidence of a structure associated with this rubble deposit was identified.

A small pottery assemblage was recovered from (9009) which included samian ware of early to mid 2nd century date. This phase of activity appears to have terminated with another brief episode of alluviation represented by (9006) and (9008), followed by a more intensive phase of activity, represented by (9007) containing a large assemblage pottery, mostly of mid-late 2nd century date (in addition to a number of late 1st century samian sherds which presumably are residual) as well as a quantity of CBM including *tegula* and *imbrex* fragments which indicate the presence of a fairly substantial building in the vicinity. The presence of quantities of charred cereals in this deposit appear to represent evidence of domestic cereal processing in the vicinity, clearly on a much lower scale than that encountered in charcoal-rich layer (9016).

3.11 Access Pit (AP) 10

3.11.1 Site Location

AP 10 was located at NGR SO 63621 43250, approximately 15m southeast of the edge of the scheduled area of the defended enclosure. The pit dimensions measured 5m × 4m × 3m



Plate 96: View looking west of AP 10 following topsoil strip showing linear roadway feature [10002] running east-west along north edge of access pit

3.11.2 Description

A total of six contexts were revealed during the excavation of this pit, the uppermost of which (10001) consisted of a moderately compacted dark brown sandy clay with occasional CBM fragments and very occasional charcoal flecking extending to a depth of 0.15m.

Immediately underlying the topsoil, a well compacted light greyish brown gravel deposit with occasional CBM fragments (10002) (**Plates 96-7; Fig. 62**) was observed extending roughly east-west across the north edge of the pit, its visible extent measuring 5m (east-west) × 0.8m (north-south) × 0.3m. This deposit was interpreted as the remains of a metallised surface, probably representing the line of a post-medieval trackway leading to Canon Frome Court, the alignment of which is clearly shown on the Canon Frome tithe map and the OS 1st edition map and is still marked by a field boundary and further to the east by an avenue of trees running directly towards the house.

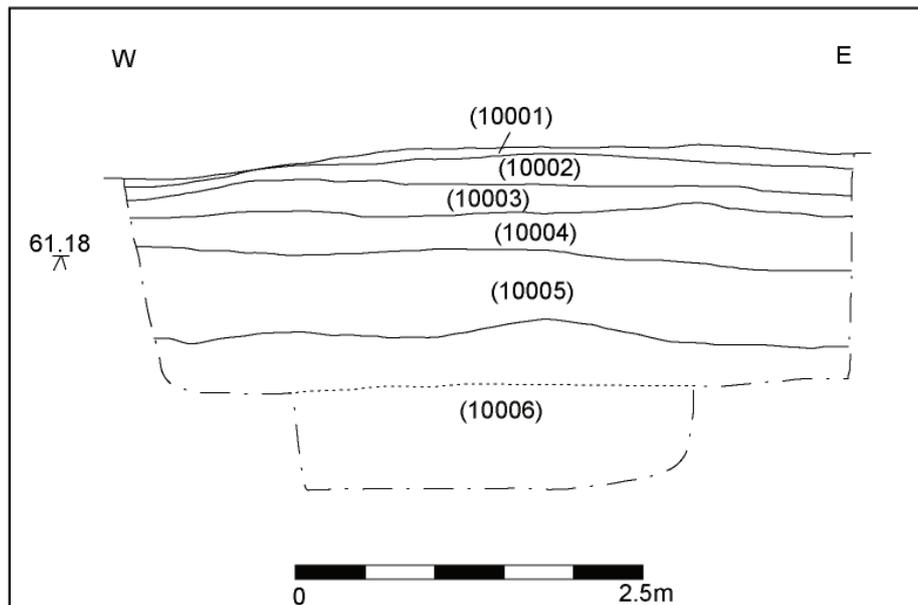


Fig 62: South-facing section of AP 10

Underlying (10002) was (10003), a moderately compacted greyish-orangey brown silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecking, extending pit-wide to a depth of 0.18m. Underlying (10003) was a well compacted light greyish brown silty clay (10004) extending to a maximum depth of 0.33m. (10004) in turn overlaid (10005), a plastic, greyish brown silty clay with occasional degraded sandstone fragments and two fragments of unburnt bone, measuring 0.48m in thickness. Although no pottery was recovered from this deposit, it appeared to be similar in composition to the Roman occupation layers identified in APs, and consequently it was interpreted as a possible Roman occupation deposit. Underlying (10005) was a well compacted reddish brown silty clay with very frequent gravel inclusions, extending to the base of the excavated area, which was interpreted as being of natural deposition.



Plate 97: View looking north showing south facing section of AP 10 with evidence for line of post-medieval trackway represented by gravel deposit (10002)

3.11.3 Summary Conclusions

Somewhat surprisingly, in view of the proximity of AP 10 to the scheduled area of the defended enclosure, little or no evidence of Roman activity was identified within this access pit. The only anthropogenic feature noted within AP 10 consisted of gravel deposit (10002), which denoted the line of a post-medieval trackway leading to Canon Frome Court, the line of which is shown on the Canon Frome tithe map of 1838 and the OS 1st edition map.

3.12 Access Pit (AP) 11

3.12.1 Site Location

AP 11 was located at NGR SO 63690 43225, approximately 100m east-southeast of AP 10 and 100m to the northwest of the boarding kennels at Ledbury Lodge.

3.12.2 Description

A total of eight contexts were revealed during the excavation of this pit, the uppermost of which consisted of a friable dark greyish brown sandy clay topsoil (11001), containing very occasional small sub angular stones, extending to a depth of 0.27m and overlying subsoil deposit (11002), a moderate to well compacted mid reddish brown silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecking and small sub-angular stones, measuring 0.48m in thickness.

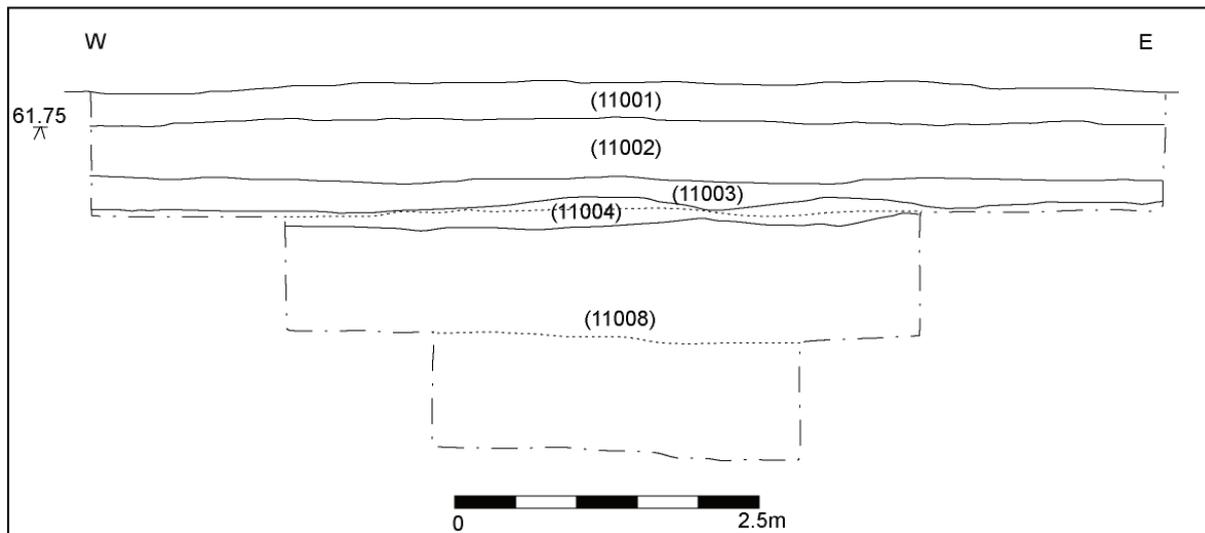
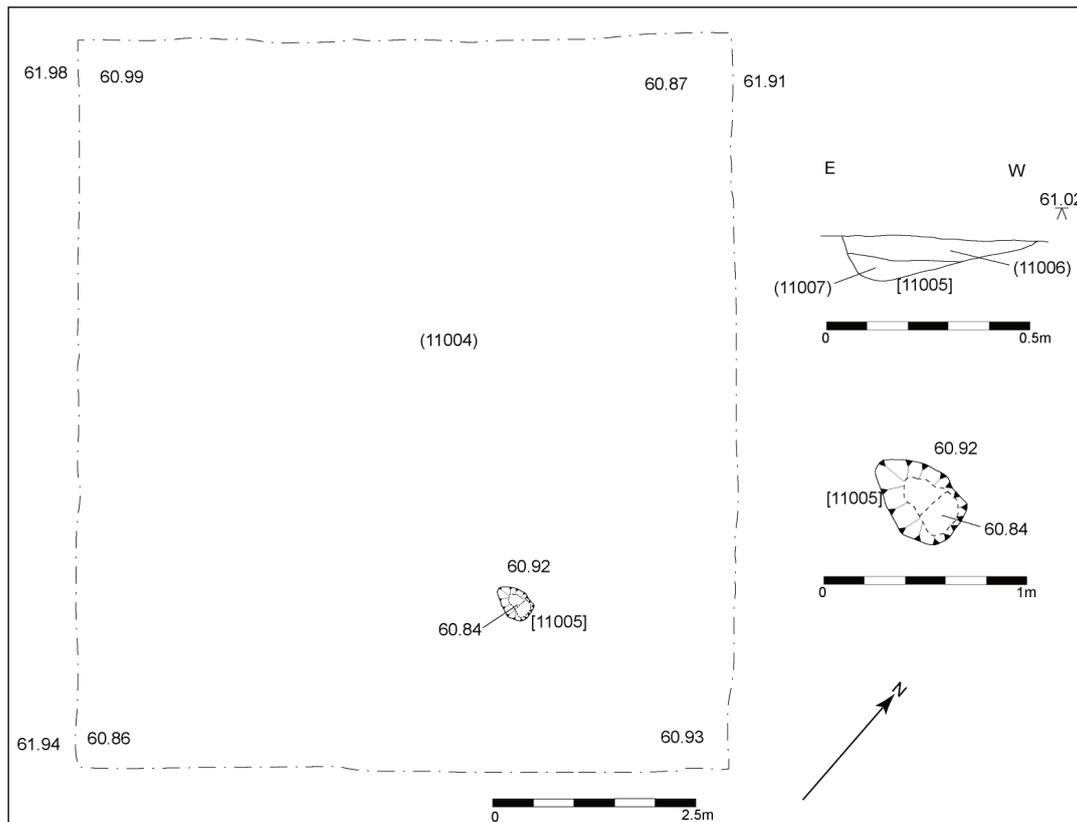


Fig 63: South-facing section of Access Pit 11

Underlying (11002) was a moderate to well compacted yellowish brown silty clay (11003) with frequent degraded sandstone fragments, measuring 0.2m in thickness, which in turn overlay riverine gravel deposit (11004), consisting of well compacted mid reddish brown sandy gravels with inclusions of yellowish brown silty clay and degraded sandstone fragments, extending to a depth of 0.26m. Underlying (11004) was a well compacted reddish brown silty clay with frequent degraded sandstone fragments (11008), extending to the base of the pit and interpreted as natural deposition.

Located within the northeast corner of the pit, cut from (11004), was a small sub circular pit or possible posthole feature [11005] oriented roughly east-west with an irregular sloping base, its dimensions measuring 0.37m × 0.3m × 0.12m. The eastern side of the feature had a sharp break of slope at the top with a near vertical face, while the western side had a moderate break of slope with a gently sloping face. (Plate 98; Fig. 64)



(Above) Fig 64: Plan and profile of sub-circular pit [11005]

(Below) Plate 98: View looking northeast showing sub-circular pit or posthole feature [11005] in AP 11

[11005] contained two fills, (11006) and (11007); the secondary fill (11006) comprised a moderately compacted bluish-grey silty clay with frequent charcoal fragments, measuring 0.05m in thickness, while the primary fill (11007) consisted of a moderately compacted light greyish brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking, 0.07m thick, from which a sample was taken for further analysis (ASUD, 2007). No further material was recovered from the primary or secondary fills indicative of the date or function of the feature, however it appears more likely to be a small, isolated pit rather than a posthole as no other features were identified in the vicinity.



3.12.3 Summary Conclusions

A solitary pit feature was identified within AP 11, the date of which is uncertain as no artefactual evidence was recovered from the primary or secondary fill. The depth from which [11005] was cut appears to be consistent with a Roman or possibly prehistoric origin for this feature.

3.13 Access Pit (AP) 12

3.13.1 Site Location

AP 12 was located at NGR SO 63750 43245, approximately 100m east-southeast of AP 11 and 120m southwest of the scheduled area of the Roman auxiliary fort at Canon Frome.

3.13.2 Description

A total of 10 contexts were recorded in this pit, the uppermost (12001) consisting of a friable mid greyish brown silty clay topsoil, containing occasional small sub-angular stones and extending to a depth of 0.25m. This deposit in turn overlaid a friable, light orangey brown silty clay subsoil (12002), with frequent degraded sandstone fragments and small sub-angular and rounded stones measuring 0.30m in thickness. Underlying (12002) was a firmly compacted, light greyish brown silty clay (12003) containing occasional degraded sandstone fragments and small sub-angular stones, 0.25m thick which in turn overlaid (12004), a thin band of friable mid reddish brown silty clay with small angular stones measuring 0.12m in thickness.

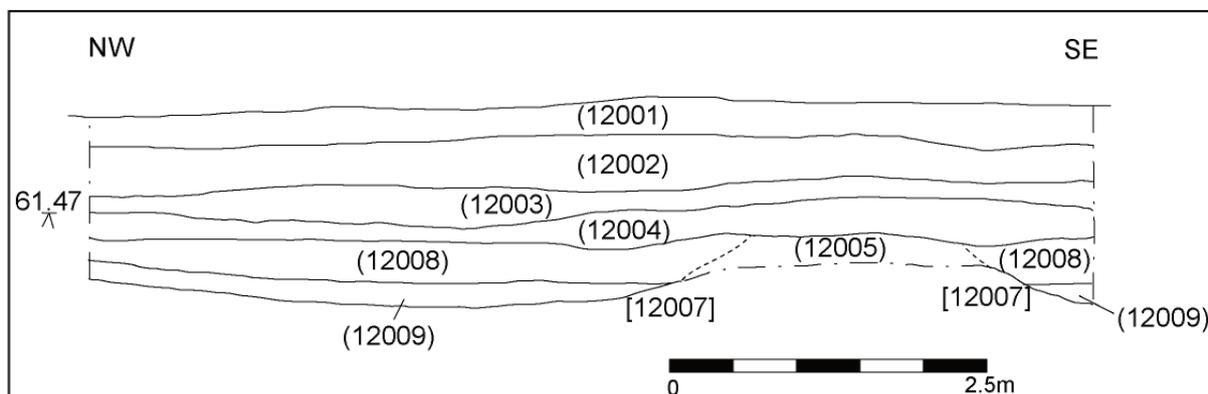


Fig. 65: South-facing section of Access Pit 12

Underlying (12004) was a friable mid greyish brown sandy clay (12005), measuring 0.20m in thickness, with frequent gravel inclusions and occasional charcoal flecking, mollusc fragments and ceramics of Roman date, comprising eight sherds of oxidised Severn Valley Ware and a single *tegula* fragment. A sample was taken from (12005) for further analysis (ASUD, 2007), which was interpreted as a probable Roman occupation deposit, based on the presence of Roman ceramic materials.

A single feature was identified within AP12, namely a curvilinear ditch [12007] extending roughly northwest-southeast along the northeast edge of the pit, its visible dimensions measured 9.00m × 0.97m × 0.30m, with a sharp break of slope at the top and steeply sloping sides which became slightly more concave towards the northwest end of the feature; the visible section of the base of the ditch appeared to be flat and fairly regular (**Plate 99; Figs. 66-7**).

[12007] appeared to be cut from the top of Roman occupation deposit (12005) and contained two fills (12008) and (12009). The primary fill (12009) measured 0.13m in thickness and comprised a firm mid reddish brown sandy silt, containing occasional charcoal flecking and fairly frequent mollusc fragments. The secondary fill (12008) measured 0.17m and consisted



of a firmly compacted mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional small sub-rounded stones, charcoal flecking and very occasional ceramics of Roman date, comprising one possible *tegula* fragment and three pieces of oxidised Severn Valley ware. Occasional fragments of unburnt animal bone (which appeared to be sheep-sized) and *mollusca* were also contained in the fill. Samples were taken from the primary and secondary fills of [12007] for further analysis (ASUD, 2007).

Plate 99: View looking east showing curvilinear feature [12007] extending northwest-southeast along the north edge of AP 12

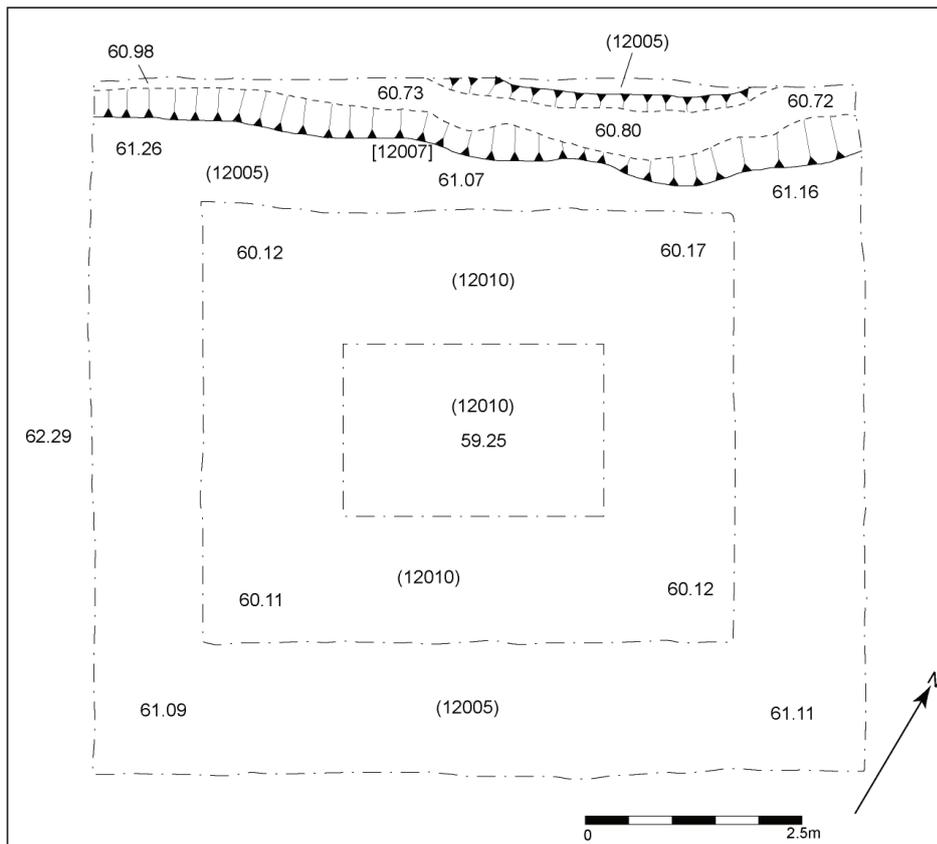


Fig. 66: Post-ex plan showing curvilinear ditch feature [12007]

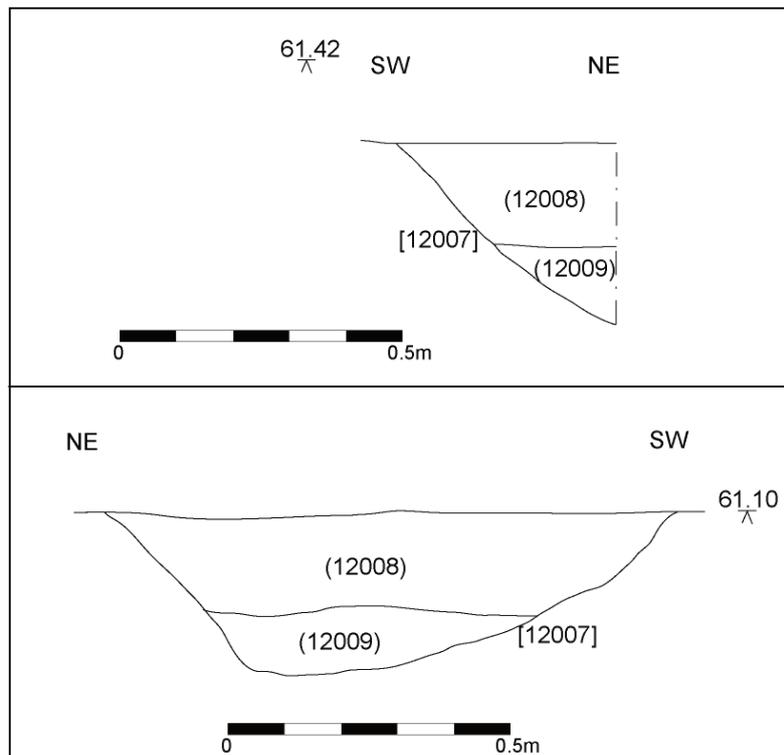


Fig. 67: Northwest and southeast-facing sections of ditch feature [12007]

Underlying (12005) was (12006), a well compacted dark reddish brown gravelly clay, measuring 0.24m in thickness; underlying (12006) and extending to the base of the pit was (12010), a well compacted dark reddish-brown silty clay with very frequent greyish brown gravel inclusions interpreted as natural deposition.

3.13.3 Summary Conclusions

The excavation of Access Pit 7 identified probable Roman deposits at an approximate depth of 0.92m below existing ground level (62.39m AOD). The evidence from AP 12 appeared to indicate a noticeably higher density of occupation in this area compared to that recorded in APs 10 and 11, with evidence of a substantial ditch feature [12007] which could have formed part of a field system but seems more likely to have been an enclosure ditch defining an area of settlement (possibly a small farmstead). This is further suggested by the material contained in the ditch fills, which appeared to be characteristic of a domestic waste deposit with some evidence of animal husbandry indicated by the bone assemblage. The presence of fragments of *tegula* in the fill of [12007] could also suggest the presence of a building with a tiled roof in the immediate vicinity. The date of the ditch feature was difficult to establish precisely; a quantity of oxidised Severn Valley ware was recovered from the secondary fill, broadly dated to the late 1st-early 4th century AD.

3.14 Access Pit 13 (AP 13)

3.14.1 Location

AP 13 was located at NGR SO 63855 43225, approximately 90m east-southeast of AP 12 and 110m south of the scheduled area of the Roman auxiliary fort at Canon Frome.



Plate 100: View looking north showing south-facing section of Access Pit 13

3.14.2 Description

A total of five contexts were identified, the uppermost of which (13001) consisted of a friable mid greyish brown sandy clay with very occasional small rounded stones, extending to a maximum depth of 0.3m. Underlying (13001) was subsoil deposit (13002), a well compacted dark greyish brown silty clay with very occasional charcoal flecking and occasional small rounded stones, measuring 0.3m in thickness. (13002) in turn overlaid (13003), a firmly compacted mid orangey-brown silty clay with frequent small sub-rounded stones, extending to a maximum depth of 1.4m.

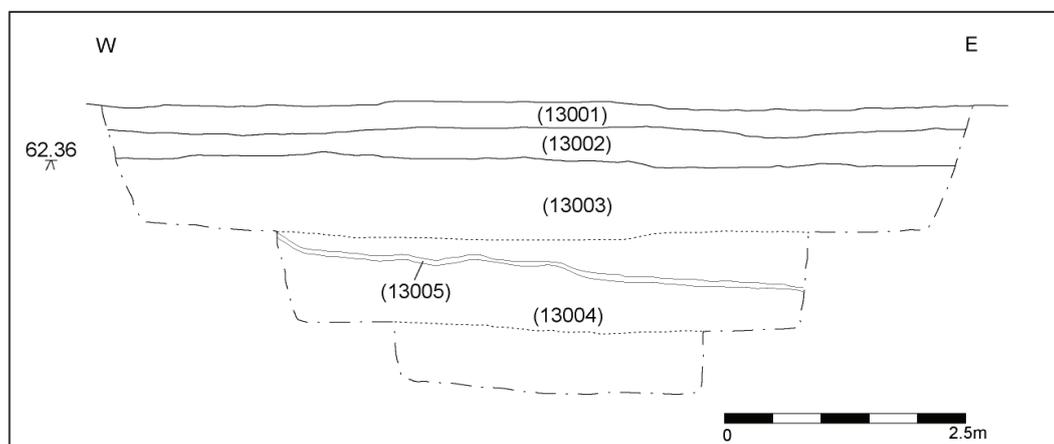


Fig. 68: Access Pit 13: South-facing section



Within the south facing section of the pit, a thin band of loosely compacted blue gley and gravel was identified (13005), sloping down quite sharply from west to east across the section. This deposit was interpreted as a probable geological feature as the overlying deposit (13003), and the underlying deposit (13004), a well compacted mid reddish-brown silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions extending to the base of the pit, both appeared to be of natural deposition.

3.14.3 Summary Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were identified during the excavation of this access pit.

PART FOUR: Interpretation

4.1 The Natural Environment

The Frome Valley floodplain in the vicinity of the Roman settlement at Stretton Grandison is broad, with valley sides clearly rising at Watery Lane to the north. Soils observed in trenches, roadside ditches and other exposures located to the east of the unclassified road between Shucknall (Castle Farm) and Stoke Edith and west and the A417 revealed a uniform sedimentary sequence consisting of typical brown alluvial soils over fine-grained stone-free overbank alluvium, with typical argillic brown earths on the drier valley sides to the north.

Subsequent targeted geoarchaeological examination and description of sequences exposed during the excavation of Access Pits 2, 4 and 5 in conjunction with the recovery of palaeoenvironmental data (e.g. pollen, waterlogged plant remains) from key contexts have revealed important insights and together make a significant contribution both to understanding the changing character of the natural environment in this part of the Frome Valley from the prehistoric era onwards and to the development of the archaeological landscape.

Deposits exposed in the lower part of the sedimentary sequence in AP 2, 4 and 5, together with pollen and plant macrofossil evidence from pre-Roman waterlogged contexts containing assemblages of seeds from a range of aquatic, ruderal, woodland, wetland and wide niche *taxa*, attest to the presence of a prehistoric floodplain environment characterised by stands of open woodland, probably occupying drier raised areas and forming a mosaic with surrounding wetland, which was subject to regular flooding. Macrofossils from woodland *taxa* are recorded for birch and hazel, with evidence also of alder, pine, lime, sloe, hawthorn, elder and willow, with the occurrence of grass pollen, although poorly preserved, indicating areas of open ground.

Significantly, an assemblage of worked wood fragments recovered from AP2 (2006) and AP5 (5018) attests to the use of this area by human groups from an early period. These pieces appear to be the fragmentary remains of woven wood panels, constructed largely of alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), a species no doubt selected for its durability and resistance to decay when partly submerged in water. One of these pieces, a fragment of worked alder recovered from context (5018) in AP5, has returned a 2 sigma radiocarbon date range of Cal BC 3930 to 3870 (Cal BP 5880 to 5820) and Cal BC 3810 to 3640 (Cal BP 5760 to 5590) representing the earliest direct evidence of human activity recovered during the course of the excavations at Stretton Grandison.

Such panels had many temporary and permanent uses, one of which may have been in the construction of trackways traversing predominantly open marshy ground, and it is possible to envisage late Mesolithic/early Neolithic groups using such trackways to access the diversity of woodland and aquatic resources available at this time, possibly to supplement a diet based on the products of small-scale cultivation and animal husbandry.

Although there is no evidence for the practice of agriculture in (5018), context (2006) in AP2 presents a rather different picture. Cereal remains are notably absent, but the presence of a few unburnt fragments of cow, sheep and pig bone, together with a single pig lower canine,



suggest at least the possibility of animal husbandry, albeit presumably on a limited scale. This could mean either that animal husbandry was established at an early period in this part of the Frome Valley or that the worked items from (2006) are somewhat later in date than those recovered from (5018), the evidence possibly being weighted in favour of the latter conclusion, as the samples from AP2 and AP5 reflected slightly different vegetation communities, perhaps indicative of environmental change over time, although it should be noted that dating of the worked wood in (2006) remains undetermined.

These results can be compared with the findings of previous investigations carried out in the neighbouring Lugg Valley, where pollen evidence is indicative of woodland at c.6800 BP (5000 BC), with alder carr dominating the valley base, followed, around 5000 BP, by evidence of oak charcoal and traces of cereal and plantain indicative of human impact within a local environment composed largely of wetland, with evidence of alder, hazel, elder, sloe and a range of herbs. Gradual clearance activity followed and, at a considerably later date, the record shows a decline in elm, oak and lime, associated with increasing indications of cereals, grasses and grassland.

A small number of unidentifiable vertebrate remains were also recovered from (2005), which overlaid (2006), although, again, no cereals were identified. The first evidence of pottery also appears in this context, comprising a very small assemblage of handmade Malvernian rock-tempered ware, a long-lived pottery type with Iron Age origins. Although this ware continued in use well into the Romano-British period, the absence of any associated Roman material suggests that these sherds represent a period of pre-Roman activity. Additionally, (2005) produced a single piece of worked oak (*Quercus robur*) and several fragments of alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) displaying evidence of conversion, these fragments again probably representing either structural components or associated waste material.

Overall, it seems likely that (2005) represents a period of middle to late Iron Age activity during which further trackways of oak and alder were constructed over what remained a predominantly open and regularly flooded landscape, as attested by the relative abundance and diversity of aquatic and wetland *taxa*, including the shade intolerant bog-bean, together with water snail (*Bithynia tentaculata*), a species inhabiting large bodies of slow-moving, well-oxygenated hard water, which favours muddy substrates and areas with dense aquatic vegetation.

Arable cultivation is attested by traces of spelt wheat chaff in context (2004) representing what appears to be a pre-Roman phase of agricultural activity. Common nettle, elder and bramble, also present, suggest a predominantly open landscape with evidence of human disturbance but with some permanent and/or seasonal wetland. Spelt (*Triticum spelta*) appears to have been first sown and harvested in the Bronze Age and was grown extensively in southern England during the Iron Age. Its slight occurrence here, if not intrusive via bioturbation from overlying chaff-rich Roman deposits, suggests that some grain production was taking place, albeit on a very limited scale. Judging by the absence of pottery, the area around AP2 does not appear to have been subject to intensive settlement activity at this time and may thus represent a fairly marginal environment.

The natural environment of Stretton Grandison during the main period of Romano-British occupation appears to have been characterised by gradual hydrological change, reduced sedimentation and seasonally drier conditions. The charred and uncharred seed assemblages reflect largely open conditions and disturbed ground, with the presence of nutlets from sedge and sheep's sorrel indicating localised areas of wet ground and heath,

respectively. Wild foods such as hazel nuts and wild plums, gathered from local woodland or from bushes growing at the site, appear to have made some contribution to a diet based largely on the products of animal husbandry and arable cultivation, although remains were generally not abundant.

Heavy use of a stone-lined well (4004) revealed in AP4 is attested by the presence of water plantain, with hemlock and rushes, which are indicative of damp and disturbed ground. Common nettle and knotgrass would also have thrived in the disturbed area adjacent to the well.

These drier conditions eventually yielded to a hydrological regime characterised by increased sedimentation over the floodplain soil. During the post-Roman period, there seems to have been further hydrological change, giving rise to a seasonally flooded system accumulating fine-grained mineralogical deposits.

4.2 Settlement Chronology and Topography

4.2.1 Evidence for Prehistoric Activity

4.2.1.1 Mesolithic/Neolithic

The excavations at Stretton Grandison revealed important evidence for human activity in this area dating back to the late Mesolithic-Neolithic period, primarily consisting of two concentrations of worked wood fragments identified at the base of Access Pits 2 and 5. Analysis of both sets of wood fragments indicates that they probably formed parts of wooden hurdles or panels constructed of alder, a water-resistant wood, which suggests that they may have formed components of timber structures that would have been partially immersed in water.

In AP2 there was evidence of worked wood fragments in two contexts, the lower exclusively containing alder fragments, while the upper context contained both oak and alder fragments, which might indicate a phase of construction and renewal or, more likely, two entirely separate structures. None of the wood fragments in AP2 were identified *in situ*, whereas in AP5 there was clear evidence of *in situ* wood fragments, vertically driven into a rich humic silt (5016). Radiocarbon dating of a single piece of worked wood from AP5 yielded a date of range of Cal BC 3930 to 3870 and Cal BC 3810 to 3640

It should be emphasised that the visible extent of these fragments in APs 2 and 5 was limited both by engineering constraints and the rapid waterlogging encountered at a depth of 2m below existing ground level in both pits, which severely restricted the full recording of these features. Consequently it is difficult to draw definite conclusions regarding the extent and function of these concentrations of wood fragments and further archaeological investigation of these features would certainly be merited. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to presume that these fragments formed components of larger timber structures, about which several possible interpretations may be advanced.

One possible explanation is that these structures were in fact trackways, which would have been constructed to traverse what would have been a predominantly open, semi-aquatic environment, dominated by areas of semi-permanent swamp and wetland with occasional



areas of high ground supporting human occupation and probably subject to periodic flooding which may have been seasonal or the result of severe climatic events. Another possibility is that these structures could have formed fishtraps or fish weirs although these are more commonly encountered in estuarine environments.

Well-preserved examples of prehistoric timber trackways have been identified in the Somerset Levels (eg. the Sweet Track, Abbot's Way and Bell Track) which have been variously dated to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (Godwin, 1960, 1-36); trackways of similar date have also been identified in other heavily alluviated environments such as the late Neolithic trackway at Silvertown, E. London, situated within the Thames Basin (Crockett et al., 2002). The radiocarbon dating of the wood fragments recovered from AP5, approximately dated to c. 3800-3700 BC, places it in the late Mesolithic-early Neolithic period, comparable in date to the earliest timber trackways so far identified in the United Kingdom.

In general terms, the nature of occupation in this area from the Mesolithic through to the Iron Age period can be described as being ephemeral and low-level in character, probably limited to isolated pockets of settlement on areas of higher ground. The timber structures revealed in AP2 and AP5 must presumably represent indicators of nearby occupation sites, whether they are fish-traps/weirs or trackways linking discrete areas of settlement.

4.2.1.2 Late Prehistoric Activity

Evidence of later prehistoric activity was limited in scope; no securely dated features associated with either Bronze Age or Iron Age occupation were identified within APs 1-13. However a number of contexts were identified that might possibly represent evidence of Iron Age occupation.

The presence of sherds of Malvernian rock and grog tempered wares in several of the pits and posthole features in AP 1 suggests that some of these features could possibly be of late Iron Age or early Romano-British origin. However the long-lived, relatively unchanging nature of these Malvernian fabrics does not allow for a particularly tight date range to be assigned and several of these features also contain Roman ceramics and glass sherds indicating that some, if not all, either post-date the Roman invasion or continued in use into the late 1st-2nd century AD.

Within AP2, possible evidence for late prehistoric activity is represented by a small assemblage of worked oak and alder fragments in (2005), some of which appear to be components a timber structure that could be interpreted as a trackway or possible fish trap/fish weir. The context in which these fragments were found also contained a small assemblage of Malvernian rock tempered sherds, suggesting a probable mid to late Iron Age date as this deposit clearly predated the main phase of Roman occupation in this area, represented by context (2003).

Clearly, while there is archaeological evidence for human activity in this area preceding the Roman invasion, this activity appears to have been restricted in scope, which may reflect prevailing environmental conditions (a largely open landscape with areas of semi-permanent wetland prone to seasonal flooding). However further investigation of the cropmarks and possible hut circle site at NGR SO 6300 4300 previously identified from aerial photography (SMR Record No. 7354), might shed light on more permanent pre-Roman settlement in this area.

4.2.2 Evidence for Romano-British and post-Roman settlement

The programme of excavations from Yarkhill to Canon Frome revealed significant archaeological evidence of Romano-British settlement, its broadest date range extending from the mid 1st century through to the end of the 4th century AD.

It should be emphasized that due to the nature of the excavations as dictated by engineering criteria, this archaeological record essentially consists of a series of 13 isolated 'snapshots' across a broad swathe of landscape, consequently it was impossible to obtain a full and complete overview of the character, chronological development and geographical distribution of settlement across this area.

Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some general conclusions about the layout and phasing of the Roman settlement, which however may well be modified in the light of future archaeological work carried out within the settlement area.

4.2.3 Chronology of Settlement

The chronology of Romano-British and post-Roman settlement activity as revealed during this programme of excavation presents some difficulties; in particular, residuality has been identified as a significant problem in several of the access pits excavated, which may be the result of several factors, such as the digging of graves and the recutting of features in Access Pit 4 and ploughing activity in Access Pits 6, 8 and 9. Bioturbation and intensive modern ploughing activity in specific areas have also been identified as agencies responsible for the presence of modern intrusive material in some contexts.

While the problem of residuality cannot be overlooked, it is nevertheless possible to establish a general, relative chronological phasing for the settlement activity within the area traversed by the pipeline route, primarily based on the stratigraphic record and supported by the dating of the pottery assemblage, coinage and other artefactual evidence and, in selected instances, by radiocarbon dating.

The chronology of the Romano-British and post-Roman settlement can broadly be divided into three main phases: Phase 1 (mid 1st-late 2nd century AD), Phase 2 (3rd-early 4th century AD) and Phase 3 (mid 4th-mid 7th century AD).

4.2.3.1 Phase 1: Mid 1st-late 2nd/early 3rd century AD

This phase appears to represent the principal phase of Romano-British settlement activity across the area traversed by the pipeline route, which at its very broadest date range, extends from the mid 1st century to the late 2nd/early 3rd century AD.

The earliest datable features appeared to be located in AP1, consisting of two sub-circular pits [1010] and [1012] which contained pottery dating to the mid-late 1st century AD. The latter pit contained also contained a single sherd from a polychrome pillar moulded bowl of Claudio-Neronian date (c. AD 43-68) which is particularly significant in view of the almost complete lack of securely dateable pre-Flavian deposits, finds and features across the entirety of the area traversed by the pipeline route.

A series of post-hole features extending east-west across AP1 also appeared to be of a

probable mid-late 1st century date, based on the occurrence of Malvernian grog tempered ware in the fill of posthole [1032]. Apart from the pits and posthole alignments in AP1, very little evidence of pre-Flavian activity has been identified within the pits excavated from Yarkhill to Canon Frome, which might suggest that the main area of settlement to the south of the Frome was not established until the late Neronian-early Flavian period.

The majority of features identified during this programme of excavations appear to fall within the late 1st-2nd century AD, indicating that this was almost certainly the most intensive period of Romano-British settlement activity within the area traversed by the pipeline route. Within AP1, this period of activity was represented by the gravel deposit (1016), possibly representing a roughly metallated surface, which contained late 1st-early 2nd century pottery. In AP3, the pottery assemblage recovered from occupation deposit (3003) appears to be of mid to late 2nd century date.

Within AP4, the masonry well [4005], pottery kiln [4069] ditch features [4106] [4063], [4067] and pits [4057], [4059], [4061] [4089] [4091] and [4095] appear to date broadly to the 2nd century AD, which would appear to indicate that settlement activity was at its height during this period.

Associated with these settlement features was a series of cremation and inhumation burials (including both adults and neonates) the full extent of which was not established during the programme of excavation. The random distribution of these burials and their close proximity, both in temporal and spatial terms, to the agricultural/settlement features suggests localised, possibly familial groupings connected with a farmstead/villa complex, rather than an extensive, clearly defined formal burial ground associated with a fully-fledged 'urban' settlement, and may be compared with similar 'farmstead' cemeteries previously excavated at Frocester and Hucclecote (Price, 2000; Thomas et al., 2003).

The burials belonging to this phase of activity ranged quite widely in date. The earliest appeared to be neonate burial (4027) dated to the early 2nd century based on the evidence of rusticated Severn Valley ware sherds in the backfill, while a single cremation burial [4043] contained sherds of Gloucester TF19 ware suggesting a 2nd century or later date.

The two inhumations in wooden coffins (4039) and (4073) could belong to either Phase 1 or Phase 2. Radiocarbon dating of the skeleton contained in coffin burial (4039) yielded a broad date range of AD 10-210; however the evidence for late 2nd-3rd century pottery in (4038), the lowest fill of the grave cut, suggests a likely date at the upper end of this range. Coffin burial (4073) appeared to date broadly to the 2nd century or later, based on the occurrence of sherds of Dorset Black Burnished ware and Gloucester TF 19 ware; the presence of a number of possible sherds of New Forest colour coated ware could indicate a date as late as the late 3rd-early 4th century AD although the identification is tentative (Timby, 2008).

The date range for the two coffins appears to generally fit into the general chronology for inhumation burials in Roman Britain as suggested by Philpott, who identified a widespread shift from cremation to inhumation in romanized areas of Britain during the second half of the second century and an increasing frequency of interments in wooden coffins (Philpott, 1991, 53).

It is possible, in the case of (4039), that the body was partially decomposed before being placed in the coffin, which infers that an excarnation rite may have taken place prior to burial.

Such excarnation rituals are usually associated with Iron Age funerary practice (Gwilt & Haselgrove, 1997, 167-73; Cunliffe, 2005, 21), although there is limited evidence for its continuing practice into the Roman period on various sites, including the Folly Lane ceremonial site at St Albans (Niblett, 1999), Silchester and Baldock (Carr, 2007, 446). Evidence from several Romano-British burial grounds in the Middle and Upper Ouse Valley also indicates that the tradition of excarnation may have continued, albeit sporadically, throughout the Roman period (Meade, 2008), and possible evidence of excarnation has been identified on a number of Romano-British sites in Wales (Pollock, 2006, 83).

Another concentration of ditch and pit features broadly datable to the 2nd century can be identified in APs 5 to 7, including domestic waste pit [5007], pit/linear feature [5010] and pit [5012] in AP5, linear ditches [6005] and [6017] in AP6 and linears [7009] and recut [7011], the fills of which both contained pottery datable to the mid to late 2nd century.

Evidence of late 1st-2nd century activity within the area of the defended enclosure is consists of the deep well feature [8013] in AP8 which appears to have been backfilled by no later than c.120 (primarily based on the absence of Dorset Black Burnished ware from the backfill deposit) and superseded by a corn-drier structure, represented by pits [8005], [8007] and gully [8009], which in turn rapidly fell out of use (certainly no later than the mid 2nd century AD), and the pits then re-used for domestic waste disposal (including the deposition of an unusually large assemblage of decorated samian ware broadly ranging in date from c.70-200 AD). This rapid sequence of activity perhaps suggests military or official involvement, which is not altogether surprising in view of the proximity of the Roman fort some 350m further to the east and the likely existence of a *mansio* or posting station in the immediate vicinity of AP8.

The sequence of activity within AP9 is more difficult to interpret due to intervals of flooding which appear to have interrupted settlement activity in this area; the occurrence of this periodic flooding activity in AP9, rather than in AP8 may reflect the underlying geology, as natural bedrock was recorded at a much higher level in AP8 compared to AP9. It would appear that the metalled surface represented by (9015) and (9017) was probably established in the late 1st century, predating the deposition of (9009) which contained pottery dating to the early-mid 2nd century AD. This was followed by another brief interval of flooding activity, evidenced by (9006) and (9008), followed by the deposition of occupation layer (9009) containing pottery dating to the mid to late 2nd century.

4.2.3.2 Phase 2: 3rd -mid 4th century AD

This phase appears to represent a general reorganization/redefinition of field boundaries and a gradual decline in settlement density, contrasting markedly with the more intensive occupation evidenced in Phase 1, although this decline was by no means consistent across the area.

This activity was represented in AP 1 by (1004), interpreted as a possible dispersed midden deposit containing a significant quantity of Severn Valley ware dated to the late 2nd-3rd century AD, which sealed the features associated with the main phase of Roman occupation.

The Phase 2 features in AP 4 appear to represent a continuation of occupation associated with a nearby farmstead or villa site, with evidence of a redefinition of field boundary features, possibly followed by a gradual decline of settlement activity towards the late 3rd-early 4th century. Phase 1 features such as the masonry well [4005] and several of the

ditches (e.g. ditches [4009]/[4087] and [4063]) appear to have remained open throughout most if not all of this period.

There also appears to have been a partial redefinition of field enclosure boundaries in this area, evidenced by a substantial ditch feature [4109], which was later truncated by linear [4074]. The pottery evidence contained in the fills of [4109] and [4074] appears to confirm this hypothesis, with the former containing chiefly 3rd century sherds while the latter ditch produced material typical of the 4th century.

Evidence of what appears to have been a gradual decline of settlement activity towards the late 3rd-early 4th century is represented by the deposition of (4003=4047) across the site, sealing all the earlier occupation features with the exception of the masonry well (4005). The deposition of (4003=4047) appears to represent the latter stages of the main period of Romano-British occupation in this area; pottery evidence suggests a probable early to mid 4th century date for this deposition, which is further confirmed by the presence of two coins of c.337-40 AD within both (4003) and (4047).

Also identified as belonging to this later phase of activity were five adult cremation burials, each of which were contained within largely complete ceramic vessels (all of Severn Valley oxidised ware) which were broadly assigned a late 3rd-early 4th century date (Timby, 2008). Three of the vessels were found within occupation layer (4003)=(4047) while the other two were found within the fills of ditches [4063] and [4109]. The presence of the latter two vessels within the ditch fills of [4063] and [4109] may be significant; it is possible that they were deliberately sited, possibly in a ritual context as the 'guardians' of field boundaries, or they may have been placed there to commemorate the final backfilling of these ditch features (which might also explain their remarkably well preserved condition). A similar explanation might be advanced for the presence of the three urned cremations in (4003)=(4047), which appears to denote the end of the principal phase of Romano-British occupation in this particular area.

Further evidence of a significant reorganisation of field boundaries during the late Roman period is attested in AP 6, where a large, shallow linear feature [6007] running east-west truncated two earlier ditches aligned north-south, while in AP 7 another substantial ditch feature [7006] aligned north-south and containing pottery dated to the late 2nd-3rd centuries truncated two earlier, smaller ditch features on the same alignment.

There was noticeably limited evidence of Phase 2 occupation within the two access pits excavated within the scheduled area of the defended enclosure (APs 8 & 9). The occurrence of pottery in the upper fill of [8007] dated to the late 3rd-early 4th century shows that this pit remained in use as a repository for domestic waste until the late Roman period. However there was little other evidence of Phase 2 activity within these two pits, which might suggest that occupation within the scheduled enclosure declined markedly towards the end of the 3rd century AD.

4.2.3.3 Phase 3: Mid 4th-mid 7th century AD

The evidence relating to late Roman/post-Roman occupation revealed during the Stretton excavations is relatively limited in scope, but nonetheless of considerable importance in understanding this transitional phase of activity, which potentially extends from the mid 4th century through to c. 650 AD.



The main body of evidence for this phase of occupation consists of a large boundary ditch [4009], several domestic fire waste pits and nine inhumation burials identified in AP4, which were cut from deposit (4003=4047) which appeared to seal all the features associated with the main phase of occupation, with the exception of masonry well [4005] which appears to have continued in use into this period. (4003=4047) both contained coins dating to 340 AD, suggesting that this layer must almost certainly have been deposited by that date and the features cut from it must, presumably, date from the mid 4th century or later.

The interments were clearly distinguishable from the earlier phase of burial activity, and included two adults, of which one, the prone burial of an adolescent, showed clear evidence of having been decapitated. The radiocarbon dating and the stratigraphic evidence indicate that this series of burials is likely to date from the late Roman or early post-Roman period (certainly later than c.340 AD and continuing up to c.550-650 AD).

The burials themselves have been subject to a detailed analysis (ASUD 2008); while the prone adolescent burial certainly has characteristics of an execution burial, by itself this does not necessarily imply the existence of an 'execution cemetery'; however the presence of at least six neonatal burials and the burial of an adult female suffering from severe scoliosis certainly raises the possibility that it could represent a 'deviant burial ground' established on the fringes of a pre-existing cemetery site, of a type found quite frequently during the early Anglo-Saxon period (Reynolds, 1997). It is also worth noting that most, possibly all the burials lay to the east of ditch [4009], the full extent of which was not determined during the excavation but appeared to define the western edge of an enclosure, separate from an area of domestic occupation represented by the masonry well [4005] and to the north, a concentration of domestic fire waste pits [4010] [4012], [4014], [4013], [4016] and [4022].

While the 'deviant burial ground' hypothesis has much to support it, it should be emphasised that the burials identified during this programme of excavations by no means represent the full extent of burial activity on this site; indeed it is entirely possible that a significant proportion of burials still remain to be discovered. The possibility must therefore be considered that this group of burials discovered represents only a component within a larger cemetery enclosure, examples of prone burials may be found within general cemeteries during the late Roman-post Roman period, such as those at Beckford in Worcestershire (Evison & Hill, 1996). Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of the burials appear to be situated close to boundary ditch [4009] perhaps suggests that they were deliberately placed in a peripheral location, set apart from the main community, a practice which was relatively common during the Roman period (Philpott, 1991).

As such, the latest group of burials may be usefully compared with other excavated cemetery sites in the Midlands dating from the late Roman-early post Roman period, including the cemeteries at Beckford (Worcs), Stretton on Fosse and Wasperton (Warks) and Oundle (Northants). The parallel with Beckford is particularly apposite as it has been argued that the distribution of the graves respected the presence of earlier burial features dating from the Roman period or earlier; the later interments at Stretton appear to display a similar respect for the locations of the earlier Roman burials, which suggests that some, if not all may still have been visible (even if only as depressions or mounds) until the late Roman period (Evison & Hill, 1996).

Based on the evidence discussed above, it would appear that there had been a significant decline in occupation density across the area covered by the Stretton Grandison from the mid 4th century AD onwards, based on the marked absence of later material in the pottery

assemblage across all the pits. However, while there had clearly been a decline in settlement activity, it should not, by any means, be viewed as a complete cessation of occupation. In the vicinity of AP4, there is evidence for continuity of occupation (albeit at a much less intensive level) extending into the post-Roman period, represented by the continued usage of the masonry well and the presence of a series of domestic waste pits, in addition to the later group of burials.

This should be viewed in the context of other evidence for post-Roman occupation in the wider locality of the Herefordshire basin, recent studies have identified a possible sub-Roman church site at Egleton, north of Stretton Grandison, one of three locations in Herefordshire incorporating the placename element 'eccles' which have been suggested as the sites of 'early British' churches, the others being Eccleswall near Weston-under-Penyard and Eccles Green W of Kenchester, both of which are situated close to known Roman settlement sites (Ray, 2001, 115).

4.2.4 Settlement Status and Morphology

The size and status of the Roman settlement remains an issue of some uncertainty; Stretton was described as a town by Stanford and provisionally classified as urban by the authors of the *Central Marches Historic Towns Survey* (Stanford, 1980, 90; Buteux, 1995, 2), while Crickmore refers to it as a local market and service centre (Crickmore, 1984, 119).

The results of the programme of excavations reported here cannot provide a complete overview of the extent and scale of the settlement, as only a limited part of it was actually revealed. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the construction of the Roman auxiliary fort at Canon Frome and (probably to a much greater degree) the establishment of the associated military road network, with a probable *mansio* or imperial posting station at the junction of the road from Gloucester with another highway running east-west towards Kenchester, provided the catalysts for the founding of a more permanent settlement in this area.

The earthworks of the fort (SMR Ref. 1745), a bivallate rectangular enclosure covering an approximate area of 4.8 acres, were still largely extant in the early 1880s and covered in dense woodland (Bull, 1882, 255; O'Donnell, 1997, 13). However, subsequent tree clearance and intensive ploughing in the late 1960s have resulted in the destruction of the surviving earthworks; although the outline of the defences was revealed as a cropmark visible from the air (Baker, 1970, 45-47). The size of the fort is smaller than the fort at Jay Lane but roughly comparable with forts at Caerau and Castell Collen, suggesting that it was probably intended to house an auxiliary regiment, possibly consisting of a mixed complement of infantry and cavalry.

Precisely when the fort was founded is uncertain; no archaeological excavations have yet been undertaken within the fort itself although fieldwalking undertaken by Professors Frere and St Joseph in 1970 identified a small pottery assemblage (including samian) which has not been subject to detailed assessment but appears to date broadly to the mid to late 1st century AD (Stevenson, 1999, 481; letter of Prof. S.S. Frere dated 10 Oct 1997 in Hereford City Museum).

It is possible that the fort may have been established as part of Ostorius Scapula's campaign of 47-48 AD, as suggested by Stanford (Stanford, 1980, 124); however it is equally possible that it was established during one of the subsequent campaigns waged by successive

Roman governors to pacify the Marches during the 50s-early 60s AD, contemporary with the establishment of the Roman supply base at Brandon Camp or the auxiliary fort at Jay Lane in Leintwardine, for which a date of c.55-61 AD has been suggested (Stanford, 1968; Brown, 1996). However, in the absence of detailed archaeological investigation of the fort, it is difficult to draw firmer conclusions regarding its date.

Possible evidence in favour of a late Neronian-early Flavian date for the establishment of the Romano-British settlement is the almost complete absence of pottery or other material culture of pre-Flavian date among the finds recovered during this programme of archaeological works, the only securely dated pre-Flavian find consisting of a single fragment from a polychrome pillar moulded bowl of Claudio-Neronian date, which was found in the fill of domestic waste pit [1012] in AP1, some distance to the northwest of the Roman fort and the road junction.

It is noticeable that the samian assemblage recovered during recent excavations on the Roman settlement at Dymock included a small quantity of wares of Claudio-Neronian date, contrasting with the complete absence of pre-Flavian samian wares at Stretton Grandison (Wild, 2007; Wild, 2008). While the quantities of samian involved are probably too small on which to base detailed conclusions, it does hint that settlement activity at Dymock may have commenced at a slightly earlier date than at Stretton.

Further evidence of a military presence is indicated by the quality of the decorated samian assemblage, the majority of which was recovered from corn drying kiln pits [8005] and [8007] in AP8, one of the two access pits excavated within the scheduled area of the defended enclosure, although the presence of this assemblage may also be associated with the presence of a *mansio* in the vicinity of the road junction.

A military association is also suggested by the presence of moderate amounts of Baetican *amphorae* sherds, specifically of Dressel 20 fabric, a type of *amphora* frequently encountered on Roman sites in Britain but which recent studies have specifically connected with military rather than public consumption (Monfort, 1998; Carreras & Funari, 1999/2000, 231-5). The discovery of a bone 'dumb-bell' toggle of late 1st-2nd century date within the fill of pit [8005], which may well have originally belonged to a paenula or soldier's hooded cloak, also strongly suggests a military presence in the immediate vicinity.

While the finds assemblage at Stretton certainly hints at a military presence within the settlement, presumably connected with the nearby auxiliary fort, there is also evidence to suggest that the origins of the settlement were closely associated with the *mansio* or imperial posting station presumed to have been established at this important road junction

It is reasonable to assume that the remains of this *mansio* complex are located within the area of the large rectangular ditched enclosure lying to the east of the A417 at Canon Frome identified from aerial reconnaissance in 1976, the western half of which encompasses the line of the Roman road running north from Gloucester and its junction with the road running southeast from Kenchester. A possible location for the *mansio* building was suggested by Baker's aerial reconnaissance in 1969, which identified the cropmark of an oblong structure situated within an area to the north framed by the intersection of the two roads (Baker, 1970).

However, based on comparison with other *mansio* sites which have been excavated, such as at Wall (Staffs) or Godmanchester (Cambs), it is likely that there would have been not one single structure but a extensive complex of buildings ranged around several courtyards,



including high status accommodation, barrack style standard accommodation and stabling and large granaries used as fodder stores and often a shrine or temple (Green, 1969, 133-8; Round, 1990-1; Black, 1995).

Significantly, the programme of excavations undertaken by Border Archaeology revealed evidence of several features which might be interpreted as components of a *mansio* complex, including a series of substantial masonry wall footings (though heavily robbed) within both AP 8 and AP 8b, together with a large quantity of CBM fragments indicative of the presence of one or more large masonry buildings with tiled roofs and hypocaust floors which may well represent high-status accommodation. Evidence for metallised surfaces was also revealed in both AP8 and AP9 which could possibly represent courtyard areas within the *mansio* itself or minor roadways associated with a settlement which may well have developed around the *mansio* complex.

Considerable evidence of cereal processing activity was also identified in both the pits excavated within the defended enclosure, which in AP 8 was associated with a composite structure, represented by pits [8005], [8007] and gully [8009] and interpreted as a corn drying kiln or oven. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that there was a granary building somewhere in close proximity to the corn dryer. The nature of the decorated samian assemblage found within pits [8005] and [8007] could also have religious associations, indicating the presence of a 'sacred area or nearby shrine' (Timby, 2008).

However, while the results of Border Archaeology's investigations within AP8 and 9 certainly indicate the presence of components that one might associate with a *mansio*; further work is needed to establish the full extent of the complex and any associated settlement activity. Of particular importance is establishing the date of the large, rectilinear ditched enclosure at the road junction, was it established at the same time as the *mansio* or does it represent the later establishment of a defensive circuit around an existing settlement comparable to the defences at Kenchester (*Magnis*) Leintwardine (*Bravonium*), Wall (*Letocetum*) and Water Eaton (*Pennocrucium*), all of which appear to date from the mid to late 2nd century. The fortification of these settlements has been interpreted either as part of a general administrative reorganization of the Marches, which has been suggested in the case of Kenchester (Wilmott, 1980), or perhaps as a response to a deteriorating political situation along the Welsh frontier (Stanford, 1980, 154; Webster, 1991).

In addition to the high status nucleation within the defended enclosure, evidence has also been identified for further settlement activity extending to the northwest, with two probable foci (partially represented by APs 1 and 4) located on either side of the River Frome. The status of these other settlement foci is difficult to gauge due to the limited extent of the excavations as dictated by engineering considerations; however the character of occupation at both AP 1 and AP 4 appears to be decidedly rural, though nonetheless intensive in nature.

The excavations at AP 1 identified a series of domestic waste pits and postholes of uncertain function, as well as evidence for a metallised surface partially extending across the site. These features are difficult to place into a coherent context but the presence of a metallised surface indicates an attempt to establish a formal zone of occupation on part of the site while the finds assemblage appears to be characteristic of a small Romano-British farmstead. The relationship of the settlement features in AP 1 to the roadway leading northwest to Kenchester is more problematic; evidence was noted for features extending to the south and southwest of the excavated area, towards the river rather than the presumed line of the Kenchester road, which might suggest that, in this case, the settlement activity was not

directly associated with proximity to the road, although this cannot be determined conclusively without further archaeological investigation.

The results of the excavations at AP4 appear to indicate the likely presence of a large farmstead or possibly a villa complex in the immediate locality, suggested by the evidence for high status masonry structures (including a remarkably intact well shaft) and the presence of one or more buildings with central heating (implied by the survival of a box-flue tile). Evidence for substantial grain processing activity and a pottery kiln further confirms the impression of a large, potentially high status rural establishment.

The full extent of occupation associated with this farmstead/villa site and the location of the main complex of buildings has not yet been established. It seems likely that the principal buildings were located further to the east or northeast of AP4, adjoining the presumed line of the Roman road running northwest from Canon Frome towards Kenchester, which would be comparable with the site of the Romano-British villa/farmstead complex situated to the east of the walled Roman town at Kenchester, excavated in the late 1970s, which adjoined the road leading from the East Gate of the Roman town (Wilmott & Rahtz, 1985). However, the possibility cannot be discounted that occupation may also have extended westwards towards the river, comparable with the Roman villa site at Huntsham, situated in a loop of the River Wye near Goodrich (Taylor, 1995).

Similarly, it was not possible to establish the full extent of the burial activity represented by the inhumations and cremations identified within AP4. It appeared initially that the burials could represent a 'roadside cemetery', situated outside the main focus of settlement located in the vicinity of the road junction at Canon Frome. However there are several obstacles to accepting this hypothesis, in particular the distribution of the Romano-British burials as excavated and their close proximity, both spatially and temporally, to features associated with domestic occupation and agricultural activity (specifically cereal processing).

The distribution of the Romano-British inhumations and cremations (belonging to Phases 1 & 2) as revealed at AP4 can be generally described as dispersed and informal in character, suggestive of small-scale family plots rather than a formal extra-mural cemetery. The close proximity of cremation vessels 1 & 2 to coffin burial (4071) might possibly represent a deliberate grouping; a similar case might be advanced for the proximity of the cremated infant burial [4043] to coffin burial (4039); however this can only remain speculative. The proximity of these burials to boundary ditches and a pottery kiln also suggests a location on the periphery of a settlement, most likely a farmstead or villa site. The fact that the majority of the burials were concentrated to the northeast of the masonry well (4005) suggest that the structure and the immediate surrounding area may have some ritual or specific votive associations, particularly in view of the previous discovery of two Romano-Celtic stone heads found in a field immediately north of the River Frome at NGR SO 625 429 (O'Donnell, 1985, 501).

The later, post-Roman inhumations (belonging to Phase 3) appear to generally consist of scattered clusters of infant burials interspersed with two adult burials (4037) and (4050), the former aligned roughly north-south while the latter is clearly aligned east-west. It is noticeable that almost all the inhumations are located to the east of ditch [4009], which would appear to separate the burial activity from the occupation features and the masonry well immediately to the west.

Clearly, there remain significant lacunae in our knowledge of the status of the Roman



settlement. While the close association of the *mansio* complex and associated settlement with the Roman road junction is clearly discernable, the relationship of the other settlement foci with the road running northwest from Canon Frome towards Kenchester is more difficult to evaluate, based on the limited information available. BA's programme of excavations revealed no evidence for the main Roman highway running north-south towards Gloucester or the line of the road branching northwest towards Kenchester, which is probably due to the fact that the projected line of the Roman road, based on aerial photographic evidence, appears to have probably run some 150-200m northeast of the pipeline corridor in most cases, excepting AP8.

It is possible that there may have been a continuous ribbon settlement extending northwest from the core vicus located at the road junction. However, based on a provisional assessment of the findings to date (which will probably be subject to revision in the light of future archaeological investigation) it appears that the Roman settlement was more dispersed in character, with several distinct foci of occupation (which may have been associated with the road to Kenchester) separated by areas of less intensive activity.

The dispersed pattern of settlement in this area may have been influenced by environmental conditions to some extent; evidence for possible episodes of flooding during the Romano-British period was identified in AP2, AP 3, AP4 and AP 9. It is possible that these episodes of flooding, which appear to have increased in intensity from the mid 4th century onwards, may have inhibited the growth of Roman settlement and later contributed to its decline and eventual abandonment during the early medieval period, although other political/military factors must also be considered.

4.2.5 Economy

The evidence from BA's programme of excavations at Stretton appears to indicate that the settlement was primarily agricultural in character. The animal bone and charred plant remains clearly represent evidence of mixed farming being practised on the site. Evidence of animal husbandry and butchery practices was identified in the majority of the access pits (predominantly consisting of cattle with caprovids and pigs present to a lesser degree). Cereal processing activity was evident within the majority of the pits excavated, with significant concentrations of charred cereal remains present in AP 4 and AP 8, which in the latter case appear to be associated with a corn drying kiln or oven, possibly indicating the presence of a granary in the immediate vicinity.

Evidence of ironworking and ceramic manufacture within the access pits was relatively limited in scope and appeared to be characteristic of small-scale domestic activity rather than large-scale production, as at the major industrial centre of *Ariconium* (Weston-under-Penyard). Although a moderate quantity of iron objects was identified during the excavations, chiefly consisting of nails, with a small quantity of agricultural implements (including a pruning saw) and domestic items (including an exceptionally well preserved 'Colchester derivative' fibula brooch of late 1st-2nd century date), there was relatively little evidence of iron processing across the site, restricted to six pieces of fuel ash slag, five of which, in contexts (1011) (1013), (4026), (4110) and (6006) were identified as being probably domestic in origin while a single piece in (4064) was identified as possible ironworking slag.

Further limited evidence of industrial activity was restricted to a probable pottery kiln feature (4069) containing a large quantity of fired clay; however, the size of the kiln suggests that it was probably intended for the domestic manufacture of pottery rather than large-scale

ceramic manufacture. However this may not necessarily represent the full extent of industrial activity in this area; finds of iron slag have been found during fieldwalking in the vicinity of the fort which suggests that there may be a focus of ironworking activity in that specific area (O'Donnell, 1990; Stevenson, 1999, 481; letter of Prof. S.S. Frere dated 10 Oct 1997 in Hereford City Museum).

In view of the location of the settlement at a strategically important road junction within the Roman military road network in the West Midlands, it is perhaps not surprising that BA's programme of excavations revealed a sizeable quantity of imported material from both regional and overseas sources. This is particularly well evidenced by the ceramic assemblage, which included a moderate quantity of samian ware (primarily central and south Gaulish) and a small quantity of Baetican *amphorae* (which would have been used to transport olive oil) and Gallic *amphorae* (probably used to transport wine). Regional trade links are also evidenced by the presence of Dorset Black Burnished ware, white ware *mortaria* from Mancetter and Wroxeter and various Oxfordshire wares (which figure predominantly among the 3rd-4th century ceramic assemblage). Evidence for the importation of foodstuffs is also indicated by the presence of small quantity of edible marine shellfish among the finds assemblage, which presumably would have been transported in brine either overland or by river. The finds assemblage from these excavations confirms the likely presence of a market centre somewhere in the vicinity, suggested by previous finds such as the discovery of a remarkably complete iron steelyard during excavations for the Hereford and Gloucester Canal in the 1840s (Buteux, 1995)

4.2.6 Contextual Discussion

The settlement activity revealed during the course of BA's programme of excavations at Stretton Grandison may be broadly characterised as representing evidence of a 'roadside settlement' as defined by R. Finch-Smith (Finch-Smith, 1987), with evidence of a prestigious, high-status nucleation at the road junction, which may represent a vicus settlement associated either with the Roman fort to the east or, more likely, the *mansio* complex presumed to have been situated in the immediate vicinity, with evidence for further settlement activity extending to the northwest of the road junction.

The precise relationship of the settlement features identified in the pits extending to the northwest of the defended enclosure (APs 1-7) to the alignment of the Roman road to Kenchester remains undetermined although there is evidence to suggest that the features identified in AP4 were probably extending both northeast and east towards the line of the Roman road. However, there is, at present, insufficient evidence for the existence of a continuous ribbon settlement extending along the road; the results of the excavations appear to suggest a more dispersed settlement pattern with several settlement foci located along the course of the road, both to the north and south of the Frome.

In economic terms, the function of the settlement appears to have been primarily agricultural with limited evidence of manufacturing activity represented by a pottery kiln and occasional deposits of iron slag which appear to be chiefly domestic, rather than industrial in nature.

Parallels may be drawn between the settlement at Stretton Grandison and the results of the archaeological investigations undertaken between 1995-2002 at Dymock, located further to the south on the line of the Roman road to Gloucester, which revealed evidence of a similar roadside settlement, situated at the junction of the Gloucester road with another route running east-west from near Tewkesbury and terminating at Dymock (Catchpole, 2007).



Of particular significance was the discovery of a rectilinear enclosure containing timber structures, a bronze casting pit and a series of inhumations, identified during excavations at the Dymock Sewage Treatment Works, which was suggested as the site of a possible early *mansio* (Catchpole, 2007). The settlement at Dymock appears to have primarily had an agricultural function, with evidence for animal husbandry and cereal processing activity similar to Stretton Grandison; however at Dymock a significant industrial component was also identified, with evidence for iron smelting activity extending over a large area (Catchpole, 2007).

This contrasts markedly with the evidence for iron-smelting activity found during the excavations at Stretton, which appeared to be on a limited scale, largely commensurate with domestic use rather than industrial production, although the possibility that the focus of ironworking activity may have been located to the east of the defended enclosure, closer to the fort, should also be considered in the light of quantities of iron slag which have been found during fieldwalking activities in the vicinity of the fort.

The date range for occupation at Dymock appears to be chiefly focused on the period c. 50-150AD with a significant hiatus in activity after the late 2nd-early 3rd century, which roughly corresponds with the principal phase of occupation at Stretton, although the noticeable absence of pre-Flavian finds and features at the latter site might suggest a slightly later date for this settlement. However, the date range of occupation at Stretton appears to have been considerably longer than at Dymock, with a later, more sporadic phase of activity roughly dated to the 3rd-early 4th centuries, represented by the gradual abandonment of some areas and the redefinition of enclosure boundaries in others (particularly APs 4-7), following which there appears to have been a phase of low-level activity dated to the mid 4th-7th centuries AD, primarily represented by the occupation features and burials in AP4.

In terms of date range, the settlement activity at Stretton appears to have more in common with another probable roadside settlement at Blackwardine, located close to the line of a Roman road running north-south, presumably towards the fort/vicus of Leintwardine (Bravonium). The settlement at Blackwardine still awaits detailed study; it has been heavily disturbed by railway excavations in the early 1880s, amateur archaeological investigations in the mid 1970s and landfill groundworks in the early 1980s. Consequently the available archaeological information relating to the settlement is limited in scope and difficult to interpret (Brown, 1990; Buteux, 1995).

Nevertheless it would appear, based on unstratified coin and pottery dating, that the broad date range for settlement activity at Blackwardine extended from the late 1st century through to the early 5th century, which is roughly comparable with the evidence from the excavations at Stretton Grandison (Buteux, 1995). Although the full extent of the settlement at Blackwardine has yet to be established, tentative parallels may be drawn with the settlement morphology at Stretton, with indications of a possible focus of high status occupation to the east of the Roman road, evidenced by the discovery of substantial masonry buildings that could potentially be interpreted as a *mansio* complex, although further detailed investigation would be needed to confirm this hypothesis.

The fortified roadside settlement at Leintwardine, situated directly on the line of another important military route to Wroxeter (Watling Street West) also bears striking similarities to Stretton Grandison, both in terms of location and military associations (being situated in close proximity to a late 1st century auxiliary fort at Jay Lane) and date range, with archaeological evidence of settlement activity spanning the late 1st through to the late 4th-

early 5th century (Stanford, 1968; Brown, 1996).

The morphology of the Leintwardine settlement also bears comparison with Stretton, with evidence for a possible *mansio* complex identified at Roman Rise (although this has recently been questioned), the presence of a defensive enclosure directly on the line of the road (dated to c.160-70AD) and a growing body of evidence for settlement/industrial activity to the north of the fortified enclosure, scattered along the route of the Roman road (Brown, 1996; Arnold, 2008; Archer & Priestley, 2009).

4.2.7 Pathology and Diet

Examination of the human skeletal remains recovered from AP4, together with the study of plant and animal remains preserved in the fills of pits, ditches and other features in this and other access pits has yielded a considerable body of data relating to the diet and general health of a sample of the population occupying this part of the Frome Valley during the Romano-British and post-Roman/early medieval periods.

In terms of age profile, this small sample of five excavated skeletons comprises three non-adults and two adults, based on the application of standard ageing techniques. The non-adults include two neonates (4027 and 4044) and a young juvenile aged two to five years (4042). One of the adults (4039) is a mature adult (46+ years of age); the second (4037) has proved more difficult to age, since many of the relevant parts of the skeleton were missing, but was probably over the age of c.35 years at the time of death. Skeleton (4050) was an adolescent aged 15-16½ years.

Based on the use of scaled photographs of seven skeletons that were recorded *in situ* but not excavated, measurements were taken of identifiable and apparently complete long bones to give an approximate age estimate. Four of the individuals have been classified as probable neonates and skeleton (4073) was probably an adult.

Most of the 12 Romano-British burials were those of neonates (or possibly infants), with one slightly older child of two to five years, bringing the number of non-adults to nine, representing 75 per cent of the total assemblage.

As sexual characteristics develop during adolescence, it was not possible to determine the sex of the non-adults. Of the adult remains, skeleton (4037) was almost certainly female while (4039) showed probable male traits, although the pelvis, the most reliable indicator of sex, was fragmented and incomplete. The adolescent skeleton (4050) was too young to estimate sex with any certainty.

All the excavated skeletons were examined for evidence of disease or trauma and for such a small number of skeletons, a significant number of pathological changes were recorded, including evidence of nutritional deficiencies, infectious disease, degenerative joint disease (DJD) and dental disease. These included:

Degenerative joint disease (DJD) and osteoarthritis (OA): DJD and OA affected the older male (4039). DJD was evident in the spine, which exhibited enlarged and porous joint surfaces, right hip, collar bones and mandible. OA was evident in the neck vertebrae resulting from bone-to-bone contact and was also seen in the right hand, left wrist and both knees. Joint degeneration was also observed in two of the cremation burials.



Diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH): (4039) was also affected by this condition, which is commonly seen in older men and has been linked to rich diets and late-onset diabetes. DISH is characterised by the formation of bony outgrowths in the spine and at the sites of muscle and ligament attachment elsewhere in the skeleton.

Scoliosis: The adult female (4037) suffered from a sideways spinal curvature to the right in the chest area, the onset of which probably occurred around the age of 10-12 years, although the cause is unknown. Part of her spine would have leaned over to the left and there is clear evidence that her ribs were also affected, showing a very tight curve inwards, while the base of the spine had fused to the pelvis on the right hand side. This condition would probably have given rise to shortness of breath and back pain and would no doubt have been visible to others.

Dental Enamel Hypoplasia (DEH): (4039) and (4050) both revealed multiple lines on the surface of the tooth crown indicating defective enamel formation caused by severe stress during the first seven years of childhood, such as episodes of malnutrition or disease.

Periostitis (inflammation of the membrane surrounding the bone): This was seen in the legs of three skeletons (4037, 4039 and 4042) resulting from infection, low-grade trauma to the shins, leg ulcers or even varicose veins. The evidence of normal lamellar bone in all these individuals implies the lesions were healed and no longer active.

Skeleton 4039 also had an additional lumbar vertebra, with six rather than five vertebrae in the lower back. There were also two toes where the bones had fused together. This might be the result of joint disease, or perhaps trauma. There were faint traces of striated bone on the tibiae (shin bones) indicating a long healed inflammation or infection. The tibiae are commonly affected in this way in archaeological populations, and the changes could indicate infection, low-grade trauma to the lower legs or even leg ulcers or varicose veins.

Heavy deposits of mineralised plaque on the teeth of both adults suggest poor oral hygiene, although the heavy build-up of such deposits can also reflect diets high in protein. The presence of a small dental cavity on the gum line of the mature male (4039) may indicate a diet high in simple sugars or, again, may simply be the result of poor hygiene and failure to clear food debris. The female exhibited a series of dental anomalies, including impaction of a lower third molar, probable congenital absence (or possible impaction) of three premolars and unusual occlusion on the right side of her mouth leading to atypical wear patterns. There was little evidence of dental disease in the adolescent, beyond light deposits of calculus and minimal crowding and rotation of teeth, which could reflect the young age of this individual.

Evidence of trauma, whether accidental or deliberately inflicted, was observed in the adolescent and the mature adult male, including broken bones sustained through falls, or dropped objects on the foot. Evidence for interpersonal violence was observed in the adult male, who had probably fractured his thumb through punching, with later degeneration of the involved joint. The early medieval adolescent had suffered a violent death, with multiple perimortem sharp blade wounds to their head, neck, and right shoulder, some of which had penetrated deep into the skull. This individual was also decapitated and buried prone. Traumatic injury and degeneration of joints were also observed amongst the cremation burials.

Evidence of diet has been gained both from examination of the human bone assemblage from AP4 and from plant and animal remains recovered from deposits by hand-collection and the processing of bulk samples in this and other access pits.

The pattern of moderate-to-heavy tooth-wear revealed in the adult remains, together with evidence of joint disease observed between mandible and cranium in (4039), indicate a predominance of coarse unrefined foods and chewing a heavy diet. It is possible, however, that the evidence of DJD and OA between the lower jaw and cranium of (4039) reflect the use of the mouth as a tool, placing stress on these joints.

The evidence from across the site generally seems to indicate a diet based predominantly on the main domestic mammals, particularly cattle, and cultivated cereals, chiefly spelt wheat, with some hulled barley and oats. The bulk of the vertebrate remains were concentrated in AP4 and AP8, particularly AP4, although the condition of the material from this pit was generally poorer and showed a higher degree of fragmentation than the remains from AP8, probably due to disturbance of deposits during grave digging. Much of the material from AP4 represented primary butchery waste, whilst refuse from secondary butchery activities was more common from AP8.

Spelt and barley were the main crops of the Roman period throughout Britain. Emmer wheat was not specifically identified on the site but its presence cannot be ruled out. The paucity of bread wheat remains may be due to its susceptibility to high temperatures and not a true reflection of its contribution to the diet. A small number of barley grains were recovered, with hulled barley specifically identified in context (4003) and (8008), where some of this type were recorded as having begun to germinate prior to charring suggesting some of the grain had been harvested in wet conditions, where germination had begun on the ear, or that they had been stored in unsuitable damp conditions. Although charred germinated grain is associated with brewing, the proportion of germinated grain in context (8008) is too low for such an interpretation. While oat grains were recorded in contexts (4027), (4038), (4072), (8008), (9007) and (9016), it was not possible to identify whether these were cultivated oats or wild oats growing amongst the wheat and barley crops.

A few peas and pea/beans were recorded in context (4038) and (8006). These are not usually associated with Roman assemblages, although it is known that peas and beans were grown in Roman Britain.

The diet appears to have been supplemented to some extent by a range of wild plant and animal foods, although gathered resources appear to have formed a relatively minor component. Evidence of roe deer and fish, such as *Cyprinidae* (carp family) and *Salmonidae* (salmon and trout), appeared in some contexts, together with hazel nuts, sloes and wild plum, with nutshell fragments abundant in context (8006), which also contained fruit stones from sloe and wild plum. A wild plum fruitstone was also recorded in context (4058). Bird remains including chicken and *Turdidae* (blackbird/thrush family) were also recovered. Trade with coastal areas is implied by the presence of small quantities of edible marine shellfish, mainly oyster, which would have been transported in brine either overland or by river. Some of the oyster remains displayed characteristic V- or W-shaped notches on the shell margins caused by opening with a knife or similar implement. The presence of *amphorae* shows that wine and oil were imported from the continent.

The paucity of evidence for the pre-Roman period means that little of substance can be deduced regarding the diet of earlier populations. It is probably safe to assume that for much



of this period gathered resources formed a major dietary component, with an increasing contribution from domesticated species, beginning perhaps from the period represented by (2006), which contained a few remains representing the main domestic mammals. Spelt wheat seems to have figured to some extent during the middle to late Iron Age, as suggested by the remains from (2004), although, as previously stated, there is a distinct possibility that the very slight presence of chaff in this context represents intrusive material from later chaff-rich Romano-British deposits.

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Glossary of Technical Terms

<i>Amphora</i> :	A type of ceramic vase used for transportation and storage of goods such as for wine, oil, olives, grain,. Large and round, with two handles and a long neck narrower than the body. The word <i>amphora</i> is Latin, derived from the Greek amphoreus
Anglo-Saxon:	term usually used to describe the invading tribes in the south and east of Great Britain from the early 5th century AD; composed of two separate groups, the Angles and the Saxons; and their creation of the English nation, to the Norman conquest of 1066
AP:	(Engineering) Access Pit
Archaeological observation:	The monitoring of groundworks by an archaeologist to record and investigate any archaeological deposits or finds revealed. (see also watching brief).
Box-flue tile:	Boxed shape tile used to line the walls of centrally heated buildings during the Roman period. (E.g. public bathhouses and other high status buildings)
Bronze Age:	The period from 2300 BC to 600 BC characterised by the use of copper and subsequently bronze for the manufacture of tools and weapons. The Bronze Age is divided into different cultures and metalworking industries, the earliest being the Beaker phase.
Calcanei:	The large bone making up the heel of the human foot.
Clavicle:	The prominent bone between the shoulder and the neck. “Collar-bone”
CMHTS:	Central Marches Historic Towns Survey.
Cranium:	Skull
DCMS:	Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
DCWW:	Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water
Early medieval:	The period from AD 410 to 1066 (previously known as the ‘Dark Ages’).
Excavation:	Systematic digging and recording of an archaeological site
Femur:	Thighbone
Fibula:	The smaller of the two bones in the lower leg, the calf bone.
<i>Fibula</i> :	<i>An ancient brooch, serving both a decorative and practical function, used to fasten clothes and cloaks – Technically the Latin term Fibulae “to fasten” refers specifically to Roman brooches. They replaced the Neolithic straight pin, and their descendants are the modern safety pin</i>
HWCAS:	Hereford and Worcester County Archaeology Service.
HWCC:	Hereford and Worcester County Council
Humerus:	The bone of the upper arm
ICOMOS:	International Council on Monuments & Sites.
IfA:	Institute for Archaeologists.
Ilium	The upper and widest of the three bones that make up each side of the hipbone and pelvis
<i>Imbrex</i> :	Semi-circular roofing-tile, linking two flat tiles (tegulae)
<i>In situ</i>	Latin expression meaning “in its original position”
Iron Age:	The increasing use of iron, together with a process of significant social and economic change, characterises the period from 600



	BC to AD 43. The Iron Age appears to have seen the emergence of tribal groups occupying extensive territories. The most visible Iron Age remains are the prominent enclosures known as hillforts.
LOR:	Laing O'Rourke
Mandible:	Lower jawbone
<i>Mansio</i> :	An inn, especially for government officials
Medieval:	The period from 1066 to 1485 known also as the 'Middle Ages'.
Metapodials:	A metapodial bone - of or pertaining to the human metacarpal bones (between the wrist and fingers) or the metatarsal bones (between the ankle and toes); of or pertaining to the equivalent bones in animals.
Metatarsal:	The five bones that form the intermediate part of the foot between the toes and the ankle
Mesolithic:	The period from the end of the last ice age c. 10000 years ago to the introduction of farming c. 4000 BC. Monmouthshire at this time would have been inhabited by small, mobile hunting / gathering / fishing groups exploiting resources on a seasonal basis.
Midden:	A rubbish heap or pit containing quantities of organic remains
Modern:	Post-1900 in date.
<i>Mortaria / Mortarium</i> :	A kind of mortar used by Romans for grinding
Neolithic:	The period from 4000 BC to 2300 BC representing the gradual shift away from a mobile hunting and gathering way of life towards agriculture, although the Neolithic economy probably contained elements of both.
NMR:	National Monuments Record
Oligotrophic:	being deficient in nutrition
Palaeolithic:	A very long period extending from the appearance of the first recognisable stone tools in the archaeological record to the end of the last ice age, c. 10000 years ago. The appearance of anatomically modern humans in Europe some 30-40000 years ago was accompanied by a marked increase in the range and sophistication of tools.
Post-medieval:	The period from 1485 to 1900; often subdivided into the early post-medieval period (to 1700) and later post-medieval period (1700 - 1900).
Phalanx / Phalanges:	A large group of people, animals or things, compact or closely massed, or tightly knit and united in common purpose
Posting-station	Small town on a main road, where traveling officials could find an inn (<i>mansio</i>)
Prehistoric:	The period before written records in a given area, or the study of that era
Radium / Radius:	The long bone in the forearm, on the side of the thumb
Roman:	The period of initial military conquest and subsequent assimilation from AD 43 to AD 410 during which indigenous populations adopted Roman culture to a greater or lesser extent.
Sacroiliac:	Referring to the region of the sacrum and the ilium in the lower back
SAM:	Scheduled Ancient Monument
Samian ware:	A distinctive red, highly polished earthenware pottery style produced in massive quantities between 100 and 300AD in



	Roman Gaul and the Mosel region.
Seax:	Large Anglo-Saxon single-edged knife
Scapula:	Either of the two large, flat, bones forming the back of the shoulder
SMC:	Scheduled Monument Consent
Stretton:	“a settlement on a Roman road”.
<i>Tegula</i> :	A roof tile
Terminus ante quem:	the date before which an archaeological artifact must have been deposited
Tibia:	The inner and usually the larger of the two bones of the leg or hind limb below the knee. “Shinbone”
Ulna:	The bone of the forearm that extends from the elbow to the wrist on the side opposite to the thumb, corresponding to the fibula of the hind limb
Villa:	A substantial Roman country house, having an estate and usually consisting of buildings ranged around a courtyard.
Watching brief:	The monitoring of groundworks by an archaeologist to record and investigate any archaeological deposits or finds revealed. (see also archaeological observation).