

An enclosed, pre-“Belgic” Iron Age farmstead with later occupation at Hinksley Road, Flitwick

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SUMMARY

Evaluation and subsequent excavation, as part of a mitigation strategy under PPG16, in advance of a housing development on the outskirts of Flitwick revealed settlement activity from the Iron Age through to the Saxon period. The earliest settlement, originally unenclosed but subsequently enclosed, was established during the middle Iron Age on a low ridge in the upper Flit valley. The available evidence suggests the enclosed farmstead may have been based on a largely pastoralist economy. The study area was devoid of late Iron Age/early Roman activity with a new settlement established in the 2nd century AD. Traces of Early to Middle Saxon occupation were also recorded.

INTRODUCTION

In 1993 a planning application was submitted for outline permission for residential development of 3.5 hectares of land on the NE edge of the town of Flitwick in Mid Bedfordshire (TL 03634/35677) (Figs 1 and 2).

Aerial photographs held in the County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER 573) suggested that the area contained significant archaeological deposits. In accordance with the guidelines contained in the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* an archaeological field evaluation was carried out by Bedfordshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) between August and October 1993. The programme of archaeological works comprised aerial photograph interpretation, geophysical survey, field artefact collection and trial trenching. The results of the evaluation were used to design a mitigation strategy which included further open area excavation.

This report brings together the evidence for Iron Age to Saxon activity from all stages of the archaeological investigations.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

(Figs 1 and 2)

Topographically the development area is situated

towards the centre of the SW-NE aligned Greensand ridge. The River Flit is located 1.1km to the S and a small tributary of the Flit is situated 500m to the N. The confluence of these watercourses is located approximately 2km to the E.

The actions of the Flit and its tributary have divided the ridge in this area creating low-lying land to the N, E and S. Within the development area the ground surface sloped gently from N (70m OD) to S (65m OD). The underlying geology comprises sands and gravels overlying Lower Greensand which overlies Jurassic clays. Within the flood plain of the Flit and its tributary alluvial deposits overlie river gravels. The soils are imperfectly drained gleyed brown earth soils.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

(Figs 1 and 2)

The HER contains a considerable amount of evidence for the history of the Flitwick area from the immediate post-glacial period through to the present day.

Evidence for early prehistoric activity is largely confined to the discovery of artefacts during field artefact collection (Fadden 1975). Early prehistoric artefacts have been found in the vicinity of Ruxox Farm (Fadden 1970), 1km E of the study area. Residual Mesolithic and Neolithic lithics were recently discovered within Roman deposits during excavations by BCAS N of Ruxox Farm (Dawson forthcoming) and indicate successive phases of domestic activity. No contemporary structural or ceramic evidence was located to confirm this. Environmental evidence from these excavations suggests woodland clearance had commenced by c.3500BC, being followed by regeneration on the edge of Flitwick Moor.

Bronze Age activity is also indicated by finds of artefacts. There are no domestic sites and few funerary monuments (in contrast to the Ouse Valley). One of the identified burial monuments in the Flitwick area is located 100m E of the study area and consists of a double ring ditch (HER 15311) visible on aerial photographs, presumably the

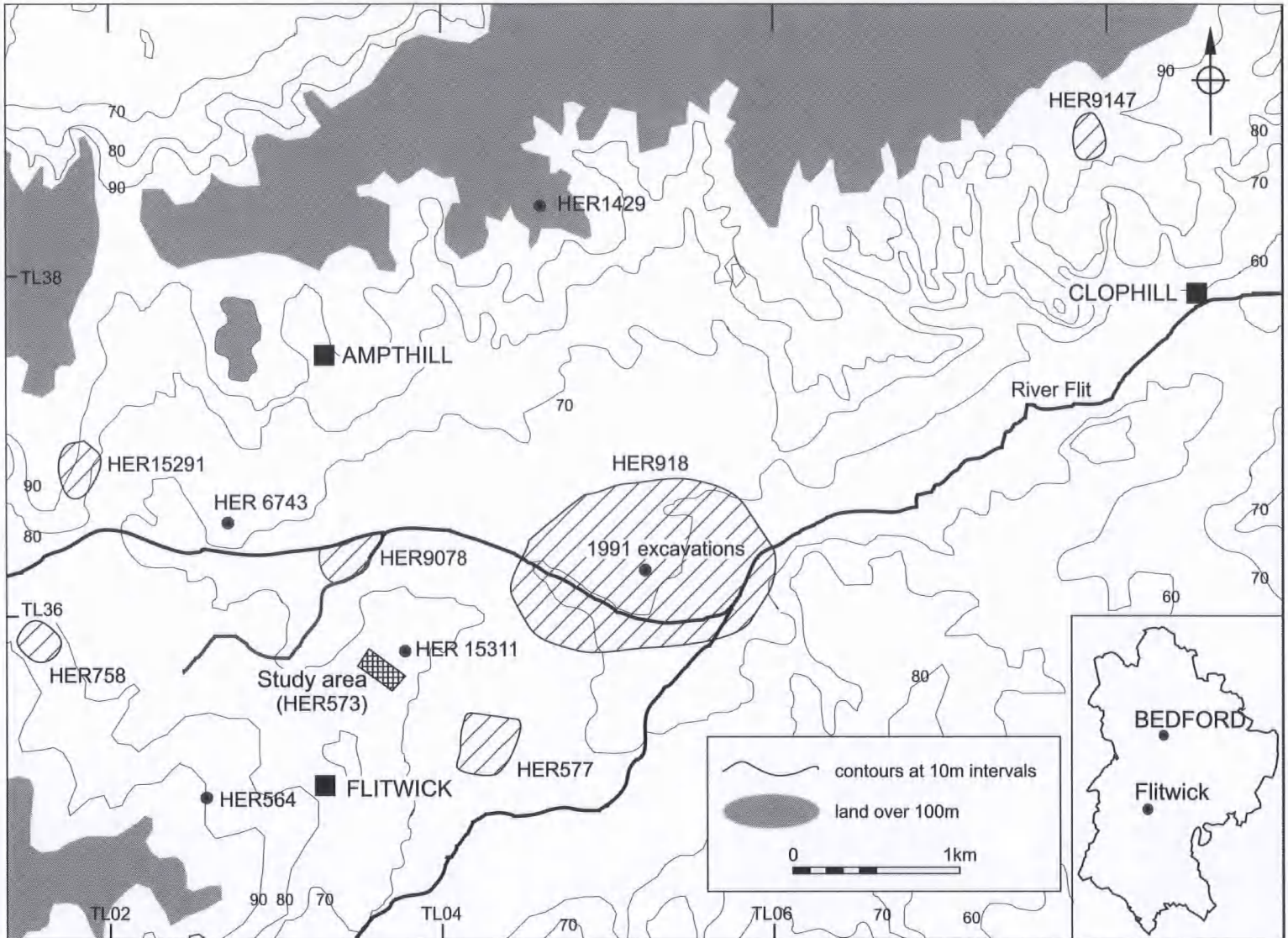


Figure 1 Topography and known archaeological sites in the area

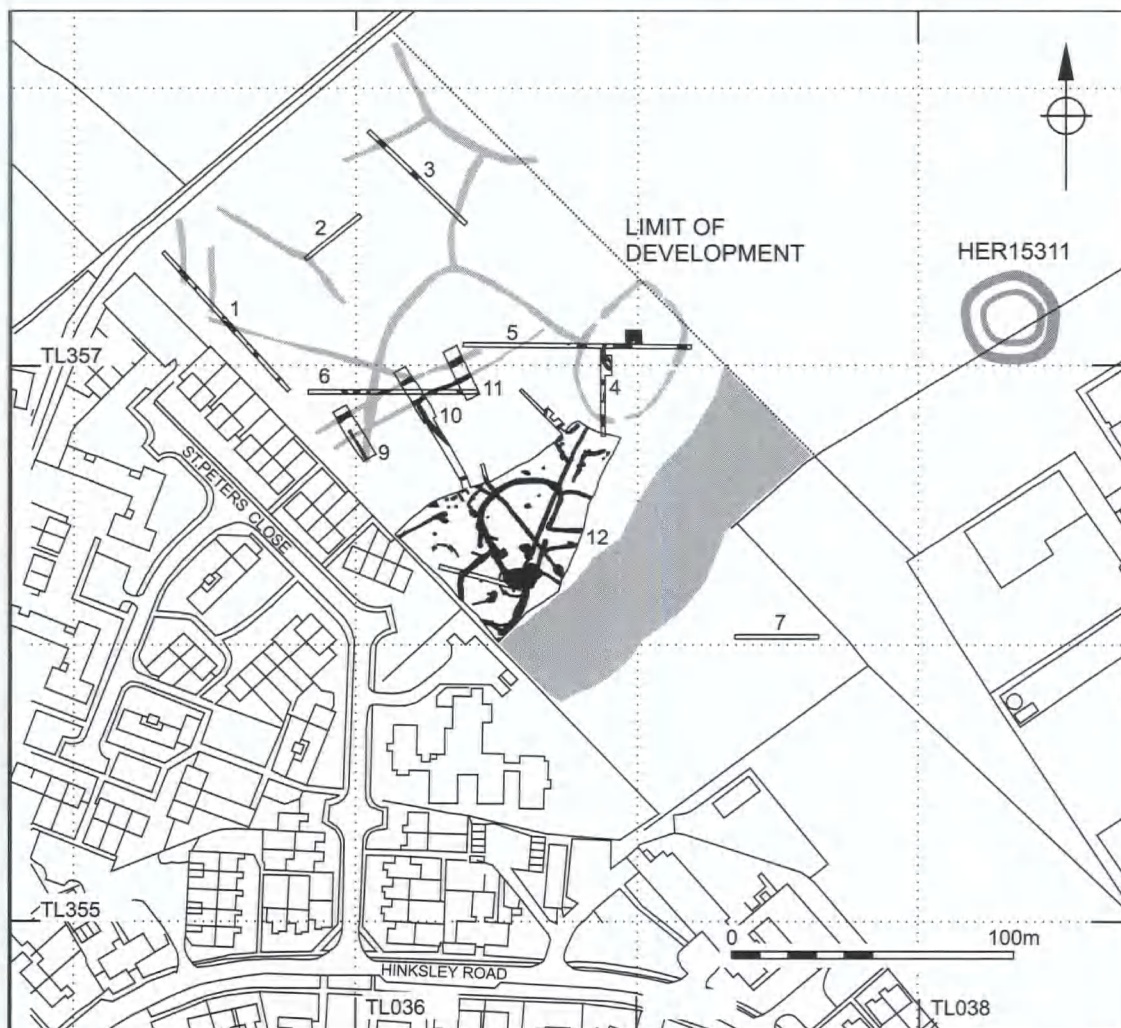


Figure 2 Limits of study area, with trench locations, all excavated features and cropmarks

plough damaged remains of a burial mound.

A number of cropmark sites (HER 758 and 15291) in similar topographical locations to the study area may be of middle Iron Age date. However, on the recent BCAS excavations near Ruxox Farm the only pre-"Belgic" pottery recovered was residual in later features.

Located 1.3km NW of the study area was a group of pottery kilns (HER 6743). These kilns produced "Belgic" style vessels and continued to manufacture pottery into the 2nd century AD.

Approximately 1km E of the study area is an extensive area (possibly up to 10ha) of "Belgic" and Roman settlement (HER 918). This settlement is

centred on Ruxox Farm (possibly significantly) in the vicinity of the confluence of the Flit and a tributary. It lies both in the river valley and on higher ground to the N and S. Recent excavations by BCAS (Dawson forthcoming) to the N of the Flit located a series of Roman enclosures in a linear arrangement perpendicular to the valley bottom. Over the past 30 years the majority of the settlement has been subject to sporadic archaeological investigation, with much of the evidence unpublished, unpublishable or lost. Evidence has been claimed for the presence of a Roman road (two parallel ditches visible on cropmarks), buildings, a drying oven, pits, ditches and working hollows. Isolated

burials and a cremation cemetery have been located. The richness of the artefacts, which include coins, pins, brooches, intaglios, painted wall plaster, tesserae and pipeclay figures, suggested to Simco (1984) the possibility of a temple at the centre of the settlement.

Within 1km to the N and SE of the study area cropmarks (HER 9078 and 577 respectively) indicate ditches and enclosures; the former is associated with Roman pottery. A square ditched enclosure of 2nd century date was investigated at Manor Way (Fadden 1976). This contained a centrally located T-shaped drying oven, but no other evidence for occupation.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was organised in a staged sequence of investigative techniques. The results from each stage informed and partly determined the next stage of the fieldwork. Study of the aerial photographs suggested that a number of the cropmarks were archaeological in origin, including two parallel ditches and a sub-circular enclosure. These were intermixed with a number of geological features, which were particularly dense to the S of the presumed enclosure.

A geophysical survey (GSB 1993) both confirmed the survival of features visible on the aerial photographs and located additional ones. It was possible to distinguish between geological (negative magnetic anomalies) and archaeological (positive magnetic anomalies) features.

Although 159 pieces of worked flint were recovered during surface artefact collection, the majority was not diagnostic and did not display any significant spatial patterning. The scarcity of pottery was striking. Only 15 sherds were recovered, one of Roman date, the remainder medieval or post-medieval.

Eight trial trenches were opened to test aerial photograph or geophysical anomalies and to investigate areas where no such features had been detected.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

The results of the field evaluation (BCAS 1993) were used to amend the development design, in order to minimise destruction of Iron Age and Roman settlement remains and to reduce

expenditure on large scale archaeological excavation. The mitigation strategy was based on the three zones of archaeological interest identified during the evaluation. Zone 1 contained the sub-circular settlement enclosure and was removed from the development. The area of Iron Age and Roman settlement between the enclosure and the western limit of the development (Zone 2), together with the parallel ditches (Zone 3) were considered significant enough to warrant full excavation prior to development.

THE EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The open area excavations, awarded following a tender competition, were undertaken by BCAS during October and November 1995 based on the submitted project design (BCAS 1995a).

The main area of excavation (area 12) comprised an approximately triangular area, 75m by 53m, over the Iron Age and Roman features (Zone 2). This area (2,953m²) was situated to the SW of the enclosure located in the evaluation. Three trenches (9, 10 and 11) were also opened to investigate further the supposed trackway represented by two parallel ditches (Zone 3). These covered a total area of 288m².

The overburden, generally comprising 0.35m of humic topsoil and in places 0.1m of a sandy gravel subsoil, was machined off under archaeological supervision.

All excavation and recording was carried out in accordance with Bedfordshire County Council's *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork* (BCC 1996). The unique site recording number sequences started during the evaluation were continued.

POST-EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

During analysis a structural hierarchy, consisting of sub-groups, groups, landscapes and phases, was defined. This report is arranged in order of phase, landscape and group. Sub-groups are not described.

Sub-groups form the basic, indivisible unit of interpretation, e.g. the primary fills of different excavated ditch segments. Groups represent more interpretative entities and may embrace several episodes of activity, e.g. the digging and initial filling of a ditch. Because upper fills generally provide only a broad *terminus ante quem* for the features in which they are found, such deposits were assigned to their own groups. At phase level these are denoted by the letter "B", e.g. Phase 3B represents the upper fills of features assigned to

Phase 3. Group numbers were also issued to geophysical and cropmark anomalies. Landscapes represent a collection of contemporary and spatially coherent groups, e.g. an enclosure and associated internal activity. Landscapes were assigned to a phase on the basis of stratigraphic and artefactual dating.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

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Despite the presence of prehistoric flint within the ploughsoil no contemporary sub-surface features were identified. Evidence for prehistoric activity within the study area has, therefore, not been assigned to a phase but is discussed below in the flint artefact section.

PHASE 1: GLACIAL DEPOSITS AND ICE WEDGES (Fig 2)

The natural substrata across the study area

comprised a light to mid orange-brown gravel mixed with occasional patches of yellow-orange sand and light orange-brown sandy clay. Several linear features located in trenches 1, 3 and 6 were probably glacial in origin. They were mainly aligned NW-SE or NE-SW. They measured between 1.20m and 3.10m in width and between 0.4m and 1.6m in depth. All these features had the irregular, sometimes V-shaped profiles, characteristic of ice wedges.

PHASE 2: UNENCLOSED, PRE-"BELGIC" IRON AGE SETTLEMENT (Fig 3)

The earliest settlement activity comprised three concentrations of structural features approximately 45m apart. These probably represent three farmsteads. In the absence of adequate dating evidence it is unclear whether they were occupied simultaneously or successively. However, the close spacing between them suggests they were probably not in use at the same time.

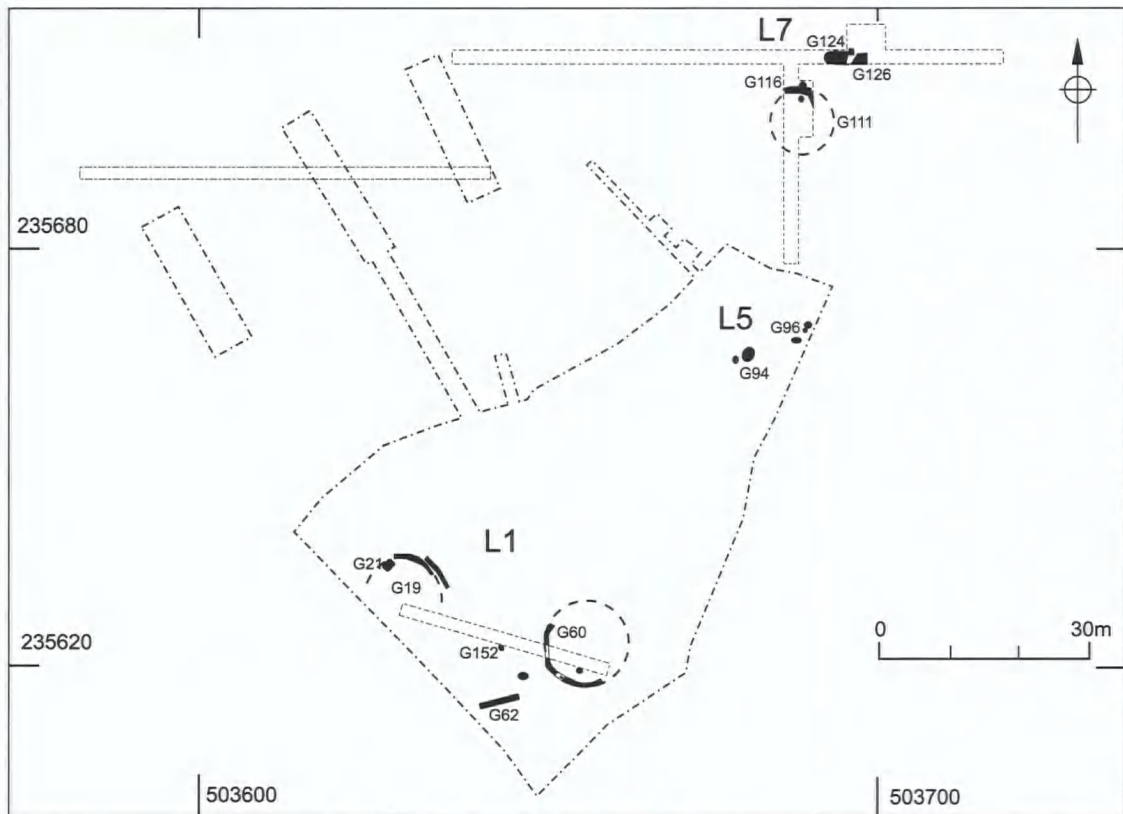


Figure 3 Phase 2: pre-"Belgic" Iron Age unenclosed settlement, all features plan

Farmstead L1

This farmstead comprised one roundhouse, a semi-circular structure, one isolated pit and isolated structural features.

Roundhouse G60

This roundhouse comprised a drip gully (Fig 4) and internal posthole. The western half of the roundhouse survived as a semi-circular gully with a projected diameter of 12m. The eastern half had been truncated by Phase 3 ditches and a Phase 5 pond. The gully was 0.35-0.45m wide and 0.2m deep, with symmetrical steep sides and a flattish base.

The posthole was located within the interior of the area defined by the drip gully, approximately 1.4m from its inner edge. It was circular in outline, approximately 0.5m in diameter and 0.1m deep. There was no evidence for a postpipe or packing material.

Both drip gully and posthole were filled (G61) by a mid grey silty sand with moderate quantities of stones, but only one sherd of pre-“Belgic” pottery (Fig 16.23).

Structure G19

This structure was located 20m NW of roundhouse G60 and comprised two partially parallel lengths of curvilinear gully with a projected diameter of 12m. The gullies were both

approximately 5.4m in length, 0.25m wide and 0.05m deep. Each had an irregular profile with slightly concave base.

Three stakeholes were situated in the base of the gully, just off its centre line. They were circular in outline, approximately 0.08m in diameter and 0.05m deep.

The nature of these gullies and their association with the stakeholes suggest they may be structural in nature rather than functioning as drip gullies. They probably represent a structure other than a roundhouse.

The gullies and stakeholes were filled (G20) by a mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent stones, but only two sherds of pre-“Belgic” pottery.

Pit G21

A rectangular pit (G21) (Fig 4) would have lain within the projected circumference of structure G19. It measured 1.30m in length, 0.90m in width and 0.34m in depth. Depressions in the two excavated corners of the pit suggest the presence of posts. It was possibly associated with structure G19 and may have had an uncertain specialist function.

The pit was filled by a mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent stones but no artefacts (G22).

Farmstead L5

This farmstead was situated 45m NE of farmstead L1. It is represented by two concentrations of postholes and small pits (G96 and G94 respectively) approximately 10m apart. It is probable that the main structural evidence for this farmstead is situated beyond the limit of excavation.

Postholes G96

Three sub-circular postholes were located 1.6m and 0.4m apart, on a SW to NE alignment. They measured 0.40-0.60m in diameter and 0.07-0.40m in depth with no evidence for the posts or packing material. These were filled by a deposit (G97) of dark grey brown silty clay with moderate quantities of stones.

Pits G94

Two further small sub-circular features and a slightly larger pit (G94) were situated 7m to the SW of postholes (G96) and may be related. The postholes were 0.55m in diameter and 0.7m deep and the pit was 1.2m in diameter and 0.15m deep. They were filled by a deposit (G95) similar to that within the other postholes.

Farmstead L7

A third area of activity, located during the evaluation, comprised one roundhouse and a concentration of small pits and postholes.

Roundhouse G111

The evidence for this roundhouse comprised a curvilinear feature, interpreted as a drip gully. This was excavated to a length of 4m and measured 0.80m in width and 0.60m in depth. Its projected diameter would be c. 10m. The gully had a steep sided profile with a concave base.

The drip gully was filled by a light yellowish brown silty sand with moderate quantities of stones, but no artefacts (G112).

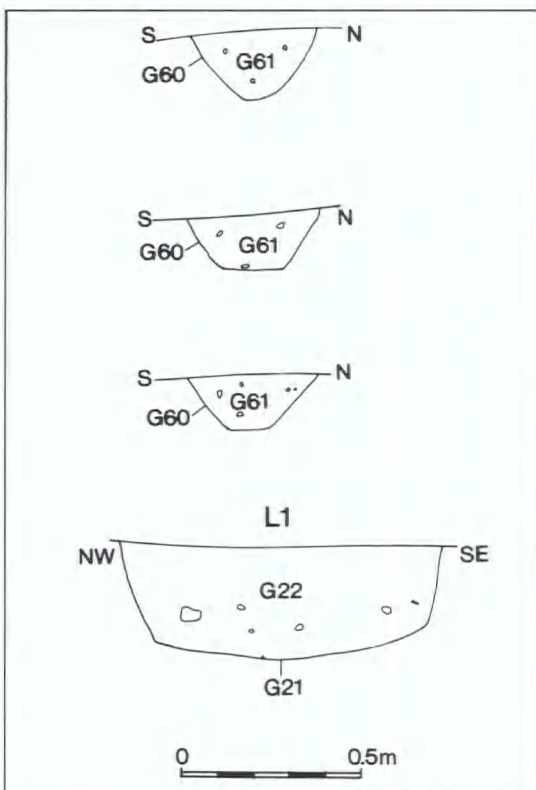


Figure 4 Phase 2: pre-“Belgic” Iron Age unenclosed settlement, sections. Drip gullies: G60 SS16/46, SS40/102 and SS40/103. Pit: G21 SS40/72

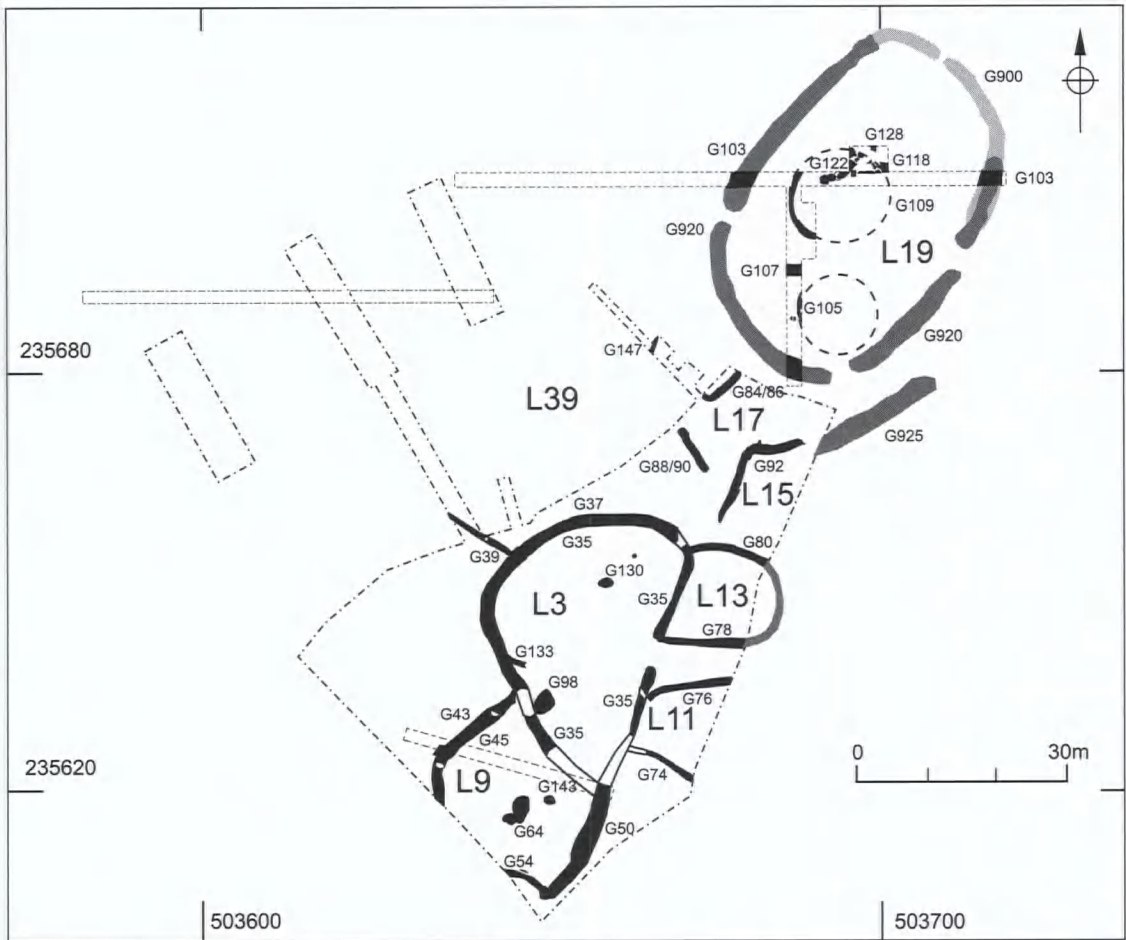


Figure 5 Phase 3: pre-"Belgic" Iron Age enclosed settlement, all features plan

Postholes G116

The gully may have been associated with a group of unexcavated sub-circular features (G116), although some of these were clearly earlier in date. The postholes were filled by a mid to light brown silty sand with moderate stone inclusions (G117).

Pits G124 and G126

These were located to the NE of roundhouse G111. Later occupational features considerably truncated them and thus their precise form and function remains unclear. These features were filled by deposits (G125 and G127 respectively) comprised of light grey brown sandy silt with moderate stone inclusions. These deposits contained a small assemblage of pre-"Belgic" pottery sherds. Deposit G125 contained a fragment of hearth bottom probably associated with iron smithing.

PHASE 3: ENCLOSED, PRE-"BELGIC" IRON AGE SETTLEMENT (Fig 5)

During this phase settlement was concentrated within a ditched enclosure in the same area as the

earlier farmstead L7 (Phase 2). Several other enclosures were constructed to the SW of the main enclosure, some containing occasional pits, but limited structural evidence. It is likely that the majority functioned as cattle corrals. The enclosure immediately S of the settlement enclosure may have had a different function, given its location and the content of some of its ditches. No direct stratigraphic evidence was recorded to associate the settlement and non-settlement enclosures although their form and layout strongly suggest that they are contemporary.

Enclosed farmstead L19

A ditch defining an area 40m in length and 31m wide (a total area of 1,034m²) enclosed this farmstead. The enclosure was sub-circular in plan, orientated SW to NE.

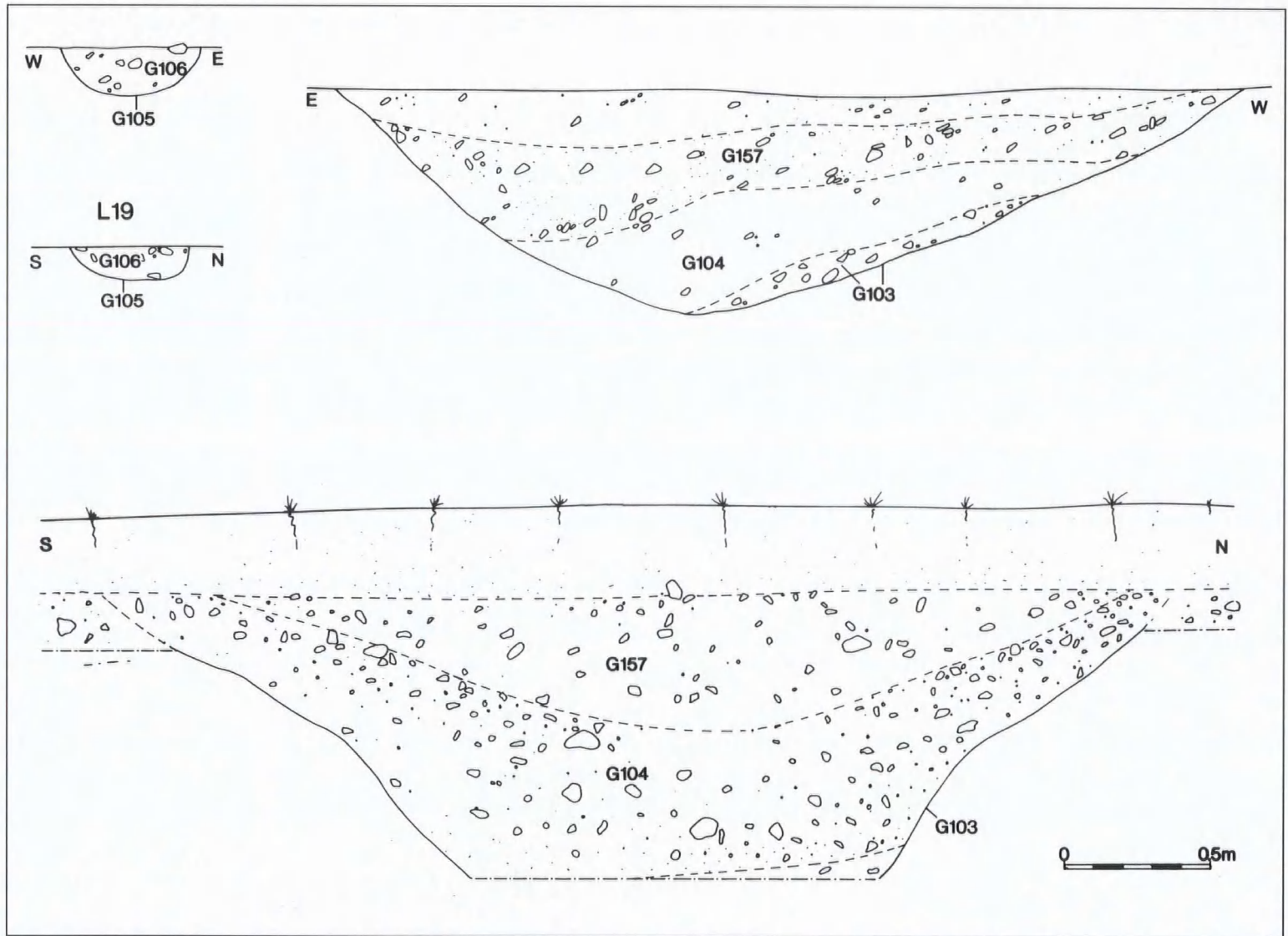


Figure 6 Phase 3: pre-“Belgic” Iron Age enclosed settlement, sections.
 Drip gullies: G105 SS5/20 and SS5/21. Settlement enclosure L19 ditches: SS2/4, SS2/10, SS5/11

The geophysical survey identified four gaps in the ditch that could represent entranceways. These included two entrances situated to the SE, one to the W (where the ditch was poorly defined) and one off centre to the NE (where the ditch may have been confused by a more recent and straighter field boundary). The enclosure contained at least two roundhouses (one centrally located), an area of postholes and small pits and occasional isolated postholes.

Enclosure ditch G103, G900, G920/G921

The three excavated segments (Fig 6) were consistently 3.80m wide and over 0.8m deep. They had a regular profile with sides sloping gradually at the top and more steeply towards the base. The excavated segments of the W and E sides are very similar in shape and dimensions, both being slightly asymmetrical and 0.8m deep. The ditch segment investigated on the S side is symmetrical in profile and was over 1m deep. This segment was located 4m from one of the possible entranceways, which may account for its different form.

The enclosure ditch was filled by a sequence of deposits (G104), which were generally consistent within each of the segments. The lower deposits comprised mid grey sandy silt with moderate stone inclusions. Only these deposits contained pottery sherds, all pre-"Belgic" in date. Possibly significantly the majority of these sherds came from the segment located close to an entranceway. The upper deposits comprised mid orange grey sandy loam with frequent stone inclusions. No pottery was recovered from these deposits. The nature of the filling deposits did not indicate whether an associated bank was located on the inside or outside of the ditch.

Roundhouse G109 and associated features

This roundhouse was situated centrally within the enclosure. Its drip gully was exposed for 8m. It was 0.65m wide and 0.4m deep with a bowl-shaped profile and a projected diameter of around 12m.

The drip gully was filled by a yellow brown sandy loam, with frequent inclusions of small stones and one sherd of pre-"Belgic" pottery (G110).

A group of unexcavated sub-circular features (G118 and G128) were located where the drip gully may have been anticipated to the NE. These may represent an entrance structure. These features were filled by deposits (G119 and G129) similar in nature to the fill of the drip gully. These contained pottery sherds of pre-"Belgic" date and animal bone.

Within the interior of the drip gully, a group of shallow postholes/pits/scoops (G122) may be associated with the roundhouse. The pits measured 0.7m to 1.40m in diameter and 0.35-0.45m in depth. They were situated on a tenuous E-W alignment, with a posthole located at its NE end. This measured 0.7m in diameter and 0.4m in depth. An orange brown sandy loam, with frequent inclusions of small stones and large sandstone cobbles (G123) filled these features. The deposit contained a large assemblage of pre-"Belgic" pottery and a small quantity of ferrous slag. The sandstone cobbles may have derived from the floor of the roundhouse.

Roundhouse G105

This roundhouse was located towards the S of the enclosure, and would have been 5m from roundhouse G109. It comprised

a curvilinear gully (Fig 6), over 3.60m in length, 0.5m width and 0.25m deep with a regular bowl-shaped profile. The curvature of the gully would suggest a diameter of no more than 11m. No internal structural features were identified. An apparently isolated posthole was located 0.6m SW of the gully and may be associated.

The drip gully and posthole were filled by a brown loam with frequent small stone inclusions and a small number of pre-"Belgic" pottery sherds (G106).

Ditch G107

An E-W aligned ditch G107 was located between the two roundhouses and may have sub-divided the enclosure. The ditch was 1.3m wide and 0.36m deep with a regular profile and sides sloping at 45 degrees to a flat base. It was not located during the geophysical survey and no other boundaries were located within the enclosure.

The ditch was filled by a reddish brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of small stones (G108). A small quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery was found within these deposits.

Enclosure L3

Enclosure L3 lay 27m to the SW of the settlement enclosure. The two were joined by elements of a series of inter-linking ditches, forming sub-circular and sub-rectangular enclosures attached to enclosure L3. The latter was D-shaped in plan and orientated SW to NE. It was 34m long, 23m wide and enclosed an area of 583m² (half the area of the settlement enclosure). The only entrance was located centrally on the SE side. This was 4m wide and was approached by two parallel ditches.

Enclosure ditch G35

The enclosure ditch was between 1.3m and 2m wide and between 0.5 and 1m deep (Fig 7). Its profile changed from a V-shaped section at the N, to a wider and flattish-based profile to the W and S.

Its fill (G36) consisted mainly of naturalised sands and gravel probably formed through erosion and natural silting of the ditch sides.

The primary ditch G35 was redug centrally along most of its length by a shallow ditch G37. No evidence for recutting was located to the SE. The recut was 1.2-2.2m wide and 0.2-0.45m deep and had an irregular bowl-shaped profile.

The recut was filled by a mid brown silty sand with moderate quantities of small stones (G38). A relatively large assemblage of pre-"Belgic" pottery was recovered from this deposit.

Internal features G98, G130, G133

Four isolated features were located within the enclosure. Situated adjacent to the SW arm was a large sub-oval shaped pit G98. This was 3.0m by 3.6m in plan and 1.20m in depth with a V-shaped profile (Fig 12). It was filled by a dark grey-brown silty clay with moderate quantities of stones (G99), the lower deposits exhibiting signs of waterlogging. This contained relatively large quantities of pre-"Belgic" pottery but no other artefacts. A soil sample (6) from one of these deposits contained glumes of spelt wheat, bracken and various weed seeds. It is likely this feature acted as a source of water and was later reused as a rubbish pit.

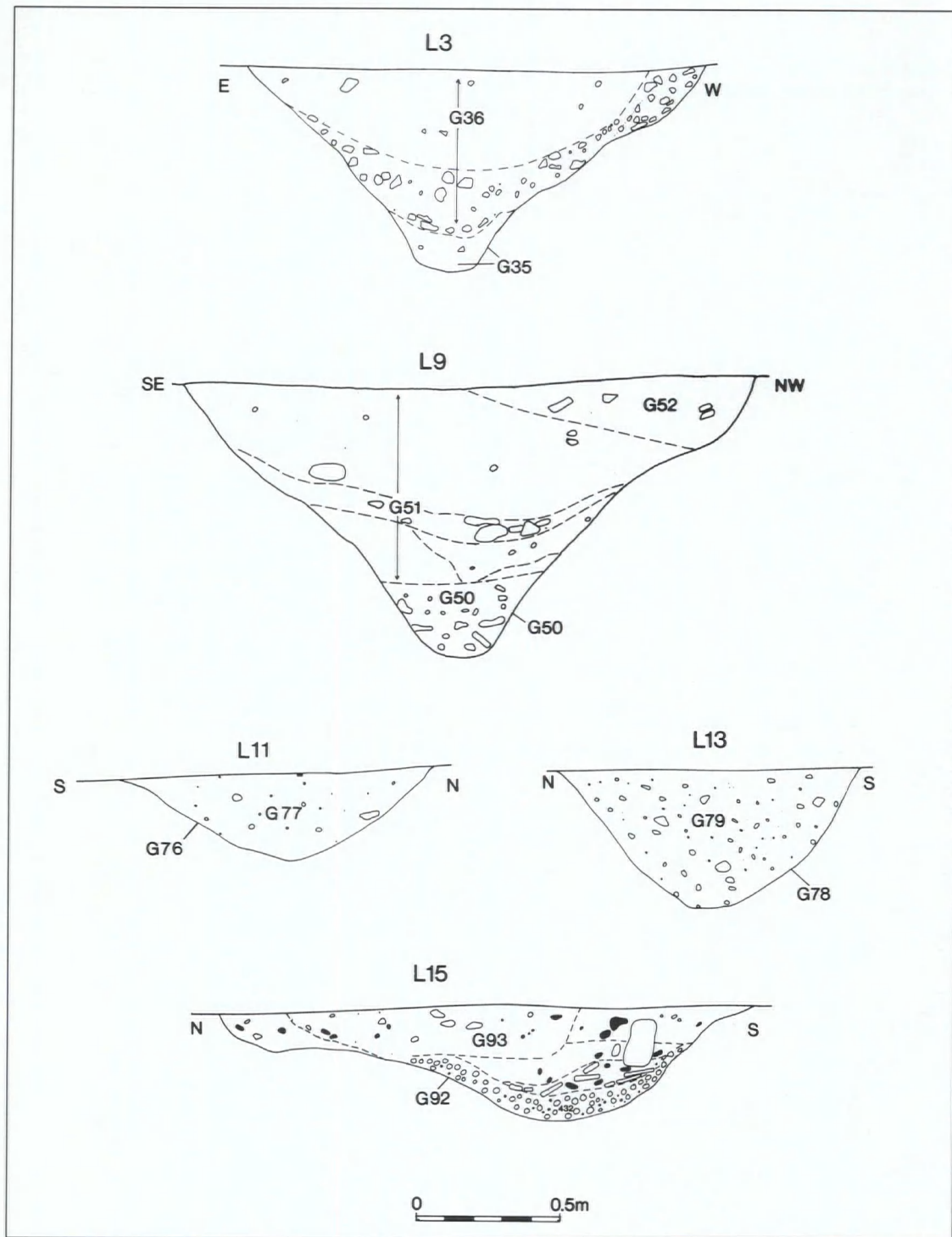


Figure 7 Phase 3: pre-“Belgic” Iron Age enclosed settlement, sections.
 Enclosure ditches: L3 SS47/89, L9 SS16/70, L11 SS53/97, L13 SS43/104, L15 SS43/61

A small gully G133 was located 4m N of pit G98 on an E to W alignment. It was 5m long, 0.85m wide and 0.2m deep. Its relationship with the enclosure ditch was unclear, although it could have functioned as a drain feeding into the larger ditch. It was filled by a red-brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of small stones (G134).

A posthole and possible pit (G130) were located in the northern area of the enclosure. The posthole was sub-circular in plan with a diameter of 0.5m and depth of 0.23m. The pit was oval in plan, 2m by 1.4m and 0.38m deep. These features were filled by a similar orange brown silty sand with frequent small stones and occasional larger stones (G131). These deposits contained a moderate quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery. The detection of these small features suggests that their general absence in this enclosure is genuine rather than a result of plough damage.

Enclosure L9

Enclosure L9 was attached to the S of enclosure L3. It was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 20m by 18m, enclosing an area of 583m². No entranceway was located. It is possible the main entrance into the enclosure was located just outside the limit of excavation to the W or that an entrance into enclosure L3 was destroyed by the Phase 4 pond G58. The enclosure contained a group of inter-cutting pits and one isolated pit.

Enclosure ditches G43, G50, G54

These three ditches bounded the enclosure NW, SE and S (respectively). They varied in character and did not form a continuous length. The enclosure ditch of L3 formed the NE side.

Ditch G43 was orientated SW to NE, but curved to the S at its W end. It was exposed over a length of 28m with a consistent depth of 0.8m. The width varied between 1.6m (towards the S) and 2m (at the N). It had a steep sided profile with a slight step in both sides and a flattish base. The ditch was filled by a generally grey brown silty sand with moderate quantities of small stones and a small quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery (G44).

Ditch G43 was recut by G45, truncating the upper fills of the original ditch. The recut varied between 1.2 and 1.8m in width and between 0.4 and 0.6m in depth. It had a V-shaped profile towards the S and widened to a bowl-shaped profile at the N. This ditch was filled by a yellow-grey silty sand with moderate quantities of small stones (G46). The deposits contained pre-"Belgic" pottery and a small amount of Roman pottery, which may be intrusive.

Ditch G50 formed the SE side of the enclosure and was aligned SW to NE. It was 18.3m long, approximately 2.2m wide and 0.9m deep (Fig 7). It had a V-shaped profile with sides changing from a gentle slope at the top to a steep gradient towards the base of the ditch. Its relationship with enclosure L3 ditches to the N was removed by pond G58 (Phase 5). At the S it terminated in a rounded butt-end. The relationship between ditch G50 and G54 suggests G50 may represent a recut completely obliterating the line of an earlier ditch contemporary with G54. It is therefore possible that the W side of the enclosure was open at a later date.

The lower fills (G51 and G52) of ditch G50 appear to represent the intermittent dumping of rubbish, inter-leaved with

naturally derived deposits. These deposits were generally grey brown in colour with occasional inclusions of small stones (some burnt), charcoal flecks, a large quantity of fired clay, a quern stone fragment (RA 2) and animal bone fragments. Both contained pre-"Belgic" pottery with the largest quantity coming from the lowest deposit (Fig 16.18 and 20). A soil sample (9) for charred plant remains produced very little material. The quantity and nature of this material suggest domestic activity in the vicinity, although no structural features were located. The upper fill (G53) comprised a brownish grey sandy silt with moderate inclusions of small stones and only small quantities of pre-"Belgic" pottery (Fig 16.22).

Ditch G54 towards the S was exposed for a length of 8.5m; it was 0.80-1.20m wide and 0.37m deep. The ditch had a regular profile with sides sloping steeply to a wide flattish base. Towards the E it terminated in a wider and deeper pit-like butt-end, possibly indicating the location of an entrance. The ditch was filled by an orange mottled grey sandy clay with moderate quantities of small stones and animal bone (G55). The pottery sherds from this deposit were all pre-"Belgic" in date.

Internal features G64 and G143

A group of intercutting pits G64 was located centrally within enclosure L9. The pits were sub-circular to oval in plan and varied in diameter and depth. They were generally 1.2m by 0.9m in plan and 0.8m deep. The largest was 3m by 2.2m in plan and 0.8m deep. They were filled by natural sand and gravel deposits (G65), which contained large quantities of pre-"Belgic" pottery. One fill contained several large angular blocks of sandstone which may have been deliberately placed. The function of the pits and their association with enclosure L9 is uncertain, although their central position within the enclosure and repeated recutting may be significant.

Pit G143 was situated 2m E of the pit group and comprised an oval shaped feature with steeply sloping sides, 0.97m by 0.9m; it was 0.63m deep. It was filled by a mottled grey and orange silty sand with occasional small stones (G144). A relatively large quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery was recovered from these deposits.

Enclosure L11

Enclosure L11 was located to the SE of enclosure L3. It was sub-rectangular in shape and widened from 7m at the W to 14m at the E. This enclosure continued beyond the limit of excavation to the E. No internal features were located.

Enclosure ditches G74 and G76

The boundaries of the enclosure were formed by the SE arm of enclosure L3, ditch G76 to the N and ditch G74 to the S. Ditch G74 was orientated approximately W to E. It was visible for over 7.6m, being 0.65m wide and 0.18m deep. The Phase 5 pond G58 destroyed its relationship with the enclosure L3 ditch.

Ditch G76 ran SW to NE and measured 12.50m in length, 0.80-1.20m in width and 0.30m in depth (Fig 7), intercepting the enclosure L3 ditch 4m S of its terminal where the relationship was ambiguous. Both ditches had a similar bowl-shaped profile. No entrances were located to provide access to the enclosure and it is presumed this would have existed on the E side, beyond the limit of excavation.

The ditches were respectively filled by G75 and G77, mid brown grey silty sand with occasional inclusions of small

stones. Only a small amount of pre-“Belgic” pottery was recovered from these deposits.

Enclosure L13

Enclosure L13 was similar in location, shape and size to L11. It was located adjacent to enclosure L3 on the opposite side of the entranceway to L11. The enclosure was sub-rectangular in shape, 14m by 12.5m in size and did not contain any features.

Enclosure ditches G78 and G80

The enclosure was formed by the SE arm of enclosure L3, ditch G80 to the N and G78 to the S.

Ditch G78 was aligned W to E and intercepted the N entrance terminal of enclosure L3, indicating it also acted as the N side of a trackway leading to this enclosure. It was visible for over 11m, varying in width from 0.85m (at the W) to 1.3m (towards the E) and was 0.6m deep (Fig 7).

Ditch G80 was orientated W to E with its W end curving slightly towards the SW to intercept the corner of enclosure L3. It was over 11m long, 0.85m wide and 0.55m deep.

Both ditches had a similar profile with sides sloping at 45 degrees to a concave base. No entrances were identified so these are presumed to have been located on the E side beyond the excavation limit.

The ditches were respectively filled by G79 and G81, mid grey silty sand with frequent quantities of small stones. These deposits contained a moderate quantity of pre-“Belgic” pottery.

Enclosure L15

Enclosure L15 was only partially exposed within the excavated area. The S boundary was also the N boundary of L13. The arrangement of ditches G92 and G925 would suggest they enclosed an irregular shaped area. No internal features were identified.

Enclosure ditch G92/G925

Ditch G92 was an irregular L-shape in plan, 18m long, 1.10-1.35m wide and 0.20-0.40m deep (Fig 7). The ditch was continuous but had two distinct alignments. The longer ran SW to NE (on the same alignment as the E side of L3 and L9) before curving sharply to a W to E orientation. It had an irregular profile with steep sides merging into an irregular concave base. There was a gap of 3m between the S terminal of the ditch and the N side of L13 forming an entrance. A terminal also existed to the N, approximately 3m from the limit of excavation.

The ditch appears to have been deliberately filled with brownish grey gravel deposits (G93) with moderate quantities of small stones, a very large assemblage of pre-“Belgic” pottery (Fig 15.8-13), moderate quantities of fired clay and part of a reaping hook (RA 6). A soil sample (7) taken for charred plant remains produced a few grains of wheat and grass seeds.

The alignment of ditch G92 was continued by geophysical anomaly G925. This appears to have been parallel to the settlement enclosure ditch G920.

Enclosure L17

L17 was located immediately S of the settlement enclosure L19 and adjacent to enclosure L15,

sharing their boundary ditches. It was of an irregular shape possibly continuing in a narrow area immediately to the S of the settlement enclosure. The boundary ditches were intermittent with consistent gaps of 5m, which would have permitted easy access. The proximity of settlement enclosure L19 to the N may be significant. No internal features were located within the enclosure.

Enclosure ditches G84/86, G88/90

These ditches were at right angles to each other, forming the NW and SW sides of the enclosure. Ditch G86 was orientated SW to NE. It was 4.6m long, 0.90m wide and 0.50m deep, with rounded termini at both ends. It had a steep sided profile with a flattish to concave base. Evidence for an earlier ditch G84 was only located at the SW terminus.

The original ditch G84 was filled by a grey brown silty sand with occasional small stones, charcoal flecks and large quantities of pre-“Belgic” pottery (G85).

The recut ditch G86 was backfilled with a deposit (G87) of mid brown clayey silt and frequent closely packed sandstone cobbles, overlain by an orange gravel deposit. These deposits contained a very large assemblage of pre-“Belgic” pottery (Fig 14.1-7).

Ditch G90 was separated from G86 by a gap of 5.0m. It was orientated NW to SE and was 6m in length, 1.0m wide and 0.34m deep with slightly squared termini. It had a regular profile, with sides sloping at 40 degrees to a concave base. Evidence for an earlier ditch G88 was only located at the W terminus, where the recut did not completely truncate it.

The original ditch G88 was filled by a grey brown sandy silt with frequent small stones and occasional large pebbles (G89). This deposit contained a moderate quantity of pre-“Belgic” pottery. The recut ditch G90 was filled (G91) by a mid brown and orange silty gravel deposits containing a moderate quantity of pre-“Belgic” pottery and a complete hearth bottom (probably derived from iron smithing).

Open Area L39

This area was located N of the D-shaped enclosure L3 and W of the settlement enclosure L19. The limited area visible during the excavation makes it uncertain if this area represents another enclosure. The two identified features could either represent small enclosure ditches or isolated features.

Ditch G39

Ditch G39 was located to the NW of enclosure L3. It lay on a NW-SE alignment and measured 6m in length, extending beyond the limit of excavation in the W, 0.90m in width and 0.40m in depth. Its SE terminus truncated the primary ditch G35 of enclosure L3. It was filled by a mid orange brown sandy silt with frequent small stones (G40).

Ditch G147

Ditch G147 was aligned N to S and was visible over a length of 4m. It was 1.60m wide and 0.43m deep with gradually sloping sides becoming steeper to the S, and a concave base. It may represent a boundary ditch linking the N ditch of settlement enclosure L19 and the N ditch of enclosure L3. The ditch was

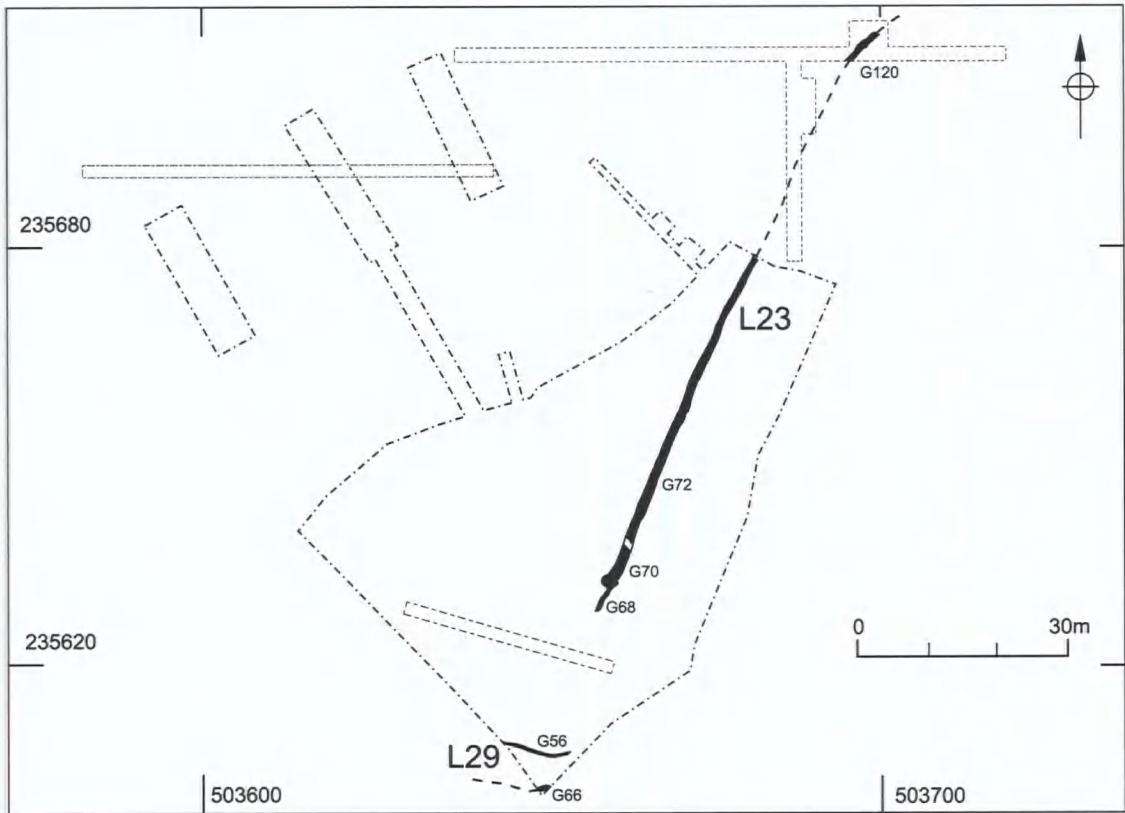


Figure 8 Phase 4: pre-"Belgic" Iron Age field system, all features plan

filled by a reddish grey brown sandy silt with moderate quantities of small stones (G148).

PHASE 4: PRE-"BELGIC" IRON AGE FIELD SYSTEM (Fig 8)

This phase seems to represent a shift in settlement beyond the limits of the excavated area. The Phase 3 enclosures had largely silted up, but may have still been visible. Activity recorded in the study area was restricted to a boundary ditch and two small curvilinear features.

Fields L23

Two probable fields were divided by a boundary ditch and bounded to the W by a trackway L29.

Boundary ditch (G68, G70 and G72)

Ditch G72 was aligned NE to SW, on a similar alignment to a number of the ditches of the Phase 3 enclosures. The ditch was visible for 52m within the main excavation area and, if ditch G120 represents its continuation, may have truncated the Phase 3 settlement enclosure L19.

Ditch G72 was generally 1.20m wide narrowing to 0.80m towards the N and 0.36m deep decreasing in depth to 0.12m at the N. The ditch had a regular profile with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. At the terminal the ditch turned slightly westwards where it was 1.67m wide and 0.52m deep.

It was filled by a brown grey silty clay with frequent small stones and small quantities of fired clay (G73). At the terminal this deposit produced a very large quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery (Fig 16.14-17) and one intrusive Roman sherd.

The continuation of this ditch may be represented by G120 located during the evaluation. This had gently sloping sides with a flat base. It was 1m wide and 0.35m deep. It was filled by a deposit G121 similar in nature to the fill of the rest of the ditch and also containing pre-"Belgic" pottery.

Evidence for the original ditch G70 only survived at the S terminal. Further N it was completely truncated by ditch G72. This ditch was filled by a mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent small stones (G71).

The alignment of ditch G70/G72 was continued from its major terminal by a small gully G68. The relationship with the original ditch G70 suggests the gully was earlier and may represent an earlier boundary which had originally continued further N. It was visible for 5m before being truncated by the large Phase 5 pond G58. The gully was 0.45m wide and 0.25m in depth with a bowl-shaped profile. The gully was filled by an

orange mottled grey silty sand with frequent small stones (G69).

Trackway L29

Two parallel gullies probably represent the side gullies associated with a trackway. The gullies were similar in nature and approximately 5m apart. This trackway was perpendicular to ditch G72 indicating that both are part of the same field system.

Gullies G56 and G66

Gully G56 was orientated W to E. It was exposed for a length of 9m and was 0.35-0.45m wide and 0.35m deep. It had steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. It was filled by a mid grey sandy silt with occasional small stones, infrequent charcoal flecks and a small quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery (G57).

The southern trackside boundary comprised two small inter-cutting curvilinear gullies G66 on a similar alignment to G56. They extended beyond the limit of excavation at both ends, and were exposed for a length of only 1.70m. Both gullies were approximately 0.26m wide and 0.13m deep with a shallow bowl-shaped profile. They were filled by a grey brown sandy loam with moderate quantities of small stones (G67). A small quantity of pre-"Belgic" pottery was recovered from this deposit.

PHASE 5: ROMAN FIELD SYSTEM AND TRACKWAY (Fig 9)

A system of regular fields or enclosures incorporating a trackway was established on a different orientation to the previous phase. At least one of the enclosures was utilised for various kinds of activity including both quarrying and settlement. Pottery evidence suggests activity can be assigned both to the 2nd centuries AD and to the 4th (see Roman pottery section).

Trackway L27

Trackway L27 was defined by two parallel ditches, approximately 7m apart and aligned SW to NE. The trackway was recorded for a distance of 50m within the study area.

Trackside ditches G1/3 and G5

Both trackside ditches G3 and G5 measured 1.50-2.0m wide and 0.50-0.60m deep. They had an irregular profile with sides varying between steep and gradual, and a concave base. Only the N ditch showed evidence of recutting. The original N ditch G1 was shallower and narrower, being 0.80-1.20m wide and 0.32m deep. It was considerably truncated by its re-cut G3 which was similar in size and profile, but located slightly to the N of the original alignment.

Brown grey sandy silts with occasional inclusions of small stones (G2, G4 and G6) filled the ditches. There was no evidence for a bank in the silting pattern of the fills. The only artefacts recovered from the ditch fills were a fragment of a Saxon loomweight (RA 13) and a number of fragments of animal bone.

Enclosure L25

This enclosure was only partially examined by excavation. It was bounded by trackway L27 to the NW, ditch G9 to the NE and ditch G13 to the SE. The enclosure was rectangular in shape, approximately 40m NW to SE and over 35m in length. It appeared to have entrances for access to both the trackway and the enclosure L16 to the SE. Limited evidence for activity was identified within the enclosure.

Ditch G9

Ditch G9 was aligned NW to SE, perpendicular to the trackway, and extended for over 80m, continuing beyond the limit of the excavation. The ditch was 1.10m wide and 0.80-0.25m deep, increasing in depth to the NW. Ditch G9 may represent a later recutting of earlier boundaries G23 and G25. The later ditch G9 was filled by a mid grey brown sandy silt with moderate inclusions of small stones (G10).

Ditch G13

Ditch G13 was orientated SW to NE, perpendicular to ditch G9. It was exposed for a length of 19m and was 1.20m wide and 0.40m deep. It had a steeply sided profile with a concave base. The ditch terminated in a rounded butt-end towards the E. Prior to the terminal a 4m length of the ditch widened to 1.80m. The main part of the ditch was filled a reddy brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of small stones (G14). Deposits (G16) from the terminus contained an assemblage of Roman pottery (Fig 17.26-31), which may have been deliberately dumped.

Ditch G41/G155

Ditch G41 continued the approximate alignment of ditch G13 after an entrance gap of 4m. The ditch extended for 4.5m; it was 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep. The terminal at the W was narrow and rounded in contrast to the opposing terminal of G13. The relationship with ditch G9 was not observed. The ditch was filled by a reddy brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of small stones (G42). The ditch fills contained pre-"Belgic" pottery only.

At the entrance a further length of ditch G155 was situated at right angles to ditch G41 and appears to represent part of the entranceway. The profile, dimensions and fill of this ditch were similar to those of the adjoining ditch. The fill (G157) contained a large quantity of Roman pottery.

Internal features G17

Only a small area of the interior of the enclosure was examined and those features located were situated close to the entrance. Two small postholes appeared to truncate the N edge of ditch G13. Two postholes and a pit were located in the entranceway and give the appearance of a 3 post structure although their form is extremely variable. These features were filled by orange brown sandy loams with moderate inclusions of small stones and Roman pottery (G18).

Enclosure L16

This enclosure was situated adjacent to, and to the SE of L25. Boundaries were only located to the NW (G13) and the NE (G9). The enclosure would have

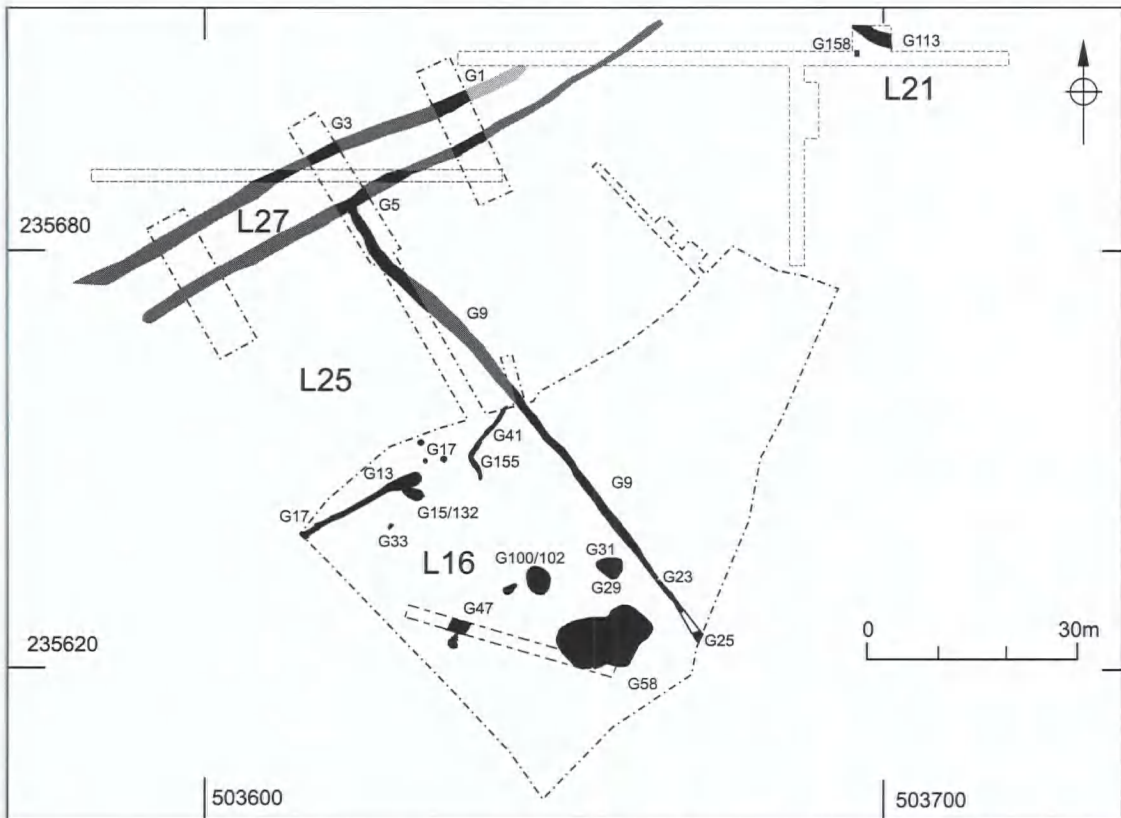


Figure 9 Phase 5: Roman field system and trackway, all features plan

been rectangular in shape, over 35m SW to NE and over 50m NW to SE. This enclosure contained isolated gravel surfaces, isolated postholes, a number of pits and water holes and a large pond or quarry. The dating evidence suggests activity commenced in the early 2nd century AD and may have continued into the 4th century AD.

Ditches G9, G23 and G25

Evidence for the earlier ditches of the boundary G9 alignment were only located adjacent to enclosure L16. It is possible the ditch-line was only recut to the N at a later date to provide access from enclosure L16 into the field to the E. The SE terminus of G9 truncated ditch G23 which was situated on the same alignment and visible for 3m. This was 0.54m wide and 0.17m deep, with a similar profile to ditch G9. Ditch G23 was filled by a grey brown silty sand with occasional small and medium stones (G24).

The SE terminus of ditch G23 truncated ditch G25 that was also situated on the same alignment. This ditch was visible for 8m, within which it widened from 0.56m at the NW to 1.20m at the SE. It was 0.22m deep with a similar profile to ditches G9 and G23. The ditch was filled by a brown grey silty sand with occasional inclusions of small stones (G26). One of the fills within these deposits contained a high percentage of

charred material, including wheat grains and glumes (soil sample 17).

Pond G58

Situated approximately 2m SW of boundary ditch G9 was a large irregular-shaped pond or quarry pit. This feature was 13m long, 9m wide and 1.20m deep (Fig 10). It had gently sloping sides and a wide flattish base. The lower deposits appeared to have derived from natural silting, weathering of the sides and also showed some evidence for the formation of a peat. The feature had clearly been dug through pure clay bands within the gravel, but whether this was by coincidence or design is unclear. It is possible the feature was originally dug to extract clay and gravel but was later used as a water hole. A soil sample (20) from the primary deposits contained glumes of spelt wheat. Moderate quantities of animal bone were also recovered from these deposits.

The pond backfilled over time with a variety of deposits (G59) ranging from blue grey sandy silty clay to grey brown silty clay with moderate quantities of stones and infrequent animal bone. A fragment of a saddle quern is likely to be residual from earlier phases. Moderate quantities of Roman pottery were recovered from this feature (Fig 18.41 and 43). A soil sample (12) from these deposits contained badly preserved seeds of marsh/water edge plants. Other samples from this deposit did not contain waterlogged remains.

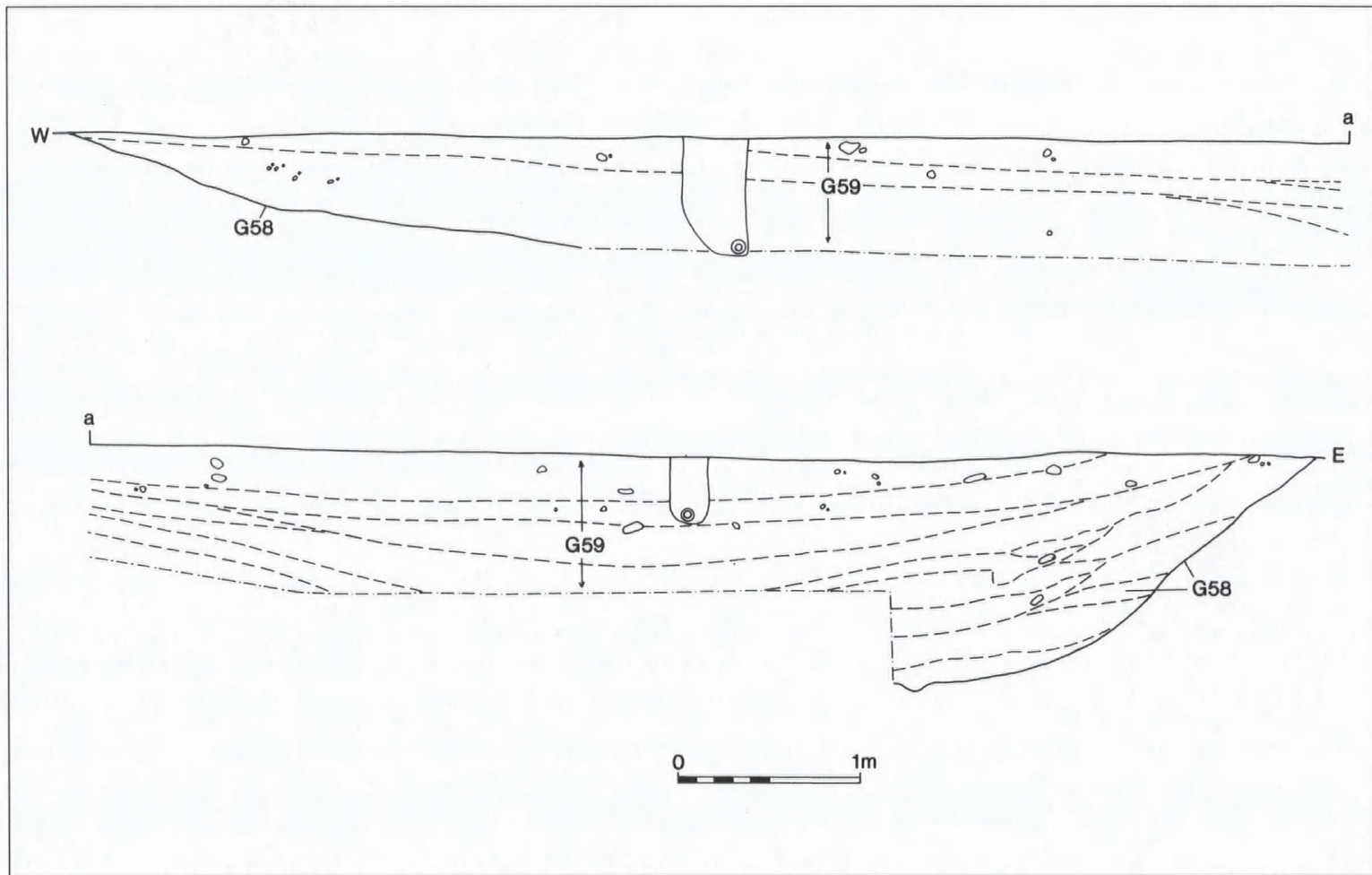


Figure 10 Phase 5: Roman field system and trackway, sections. Pond G58 SS55/91

Well/pit G29 and G31

To W of the terminus of ditch G9, pit G31 was dug into the backfill (G30) of an earlier well G29 (Fig 12). The well was sub-oval in plan, 3.70m by 3.06m wide at the top and 1.80m by 1.60m wide at the base and was 1.62m deep. It had steeply sloping sides to the E and a stepped profile to the W with a concave base. The well was filled by two distinct deposits (G30). The lower deposit comprised a dark grey waterlogged clay silt with frequent small and occasional large stones. A moderate quantity of Roman pottery sherds and infrequent animal bone was recovered from this deposit. The upper deposit comprised mid brown silty sand with frequent small stones.

Pit G31 was sub-circular in plan, measuring 2m in diameter and 0.70m deep (surprisingly shallow considering it was dug into soft deposits filling the earlier well). It was filled by a dark brownish-black silt with occasional medium sized stones and infrequent fragments of animal bone (G32). This deposit contained a moderate quantity of Roman pottery (Fig 18.36-40), tile including imbrex and tegula and five nails.

Pits G100/102

Pit G102 situated to the NW of pond G58 appeared to have been dug into the fill of an earlier pit G100. The original pit was oval in shape, measuring 3.4m by 4m. It was 0.45m deep. Its sides sloped gradually to a flattish base. The pit was filled by a mainly grey brown sandy clay with moderate quantities of small stones and moderate quantities of Iron Age and Roman pottery (G101).

The recut G102 was oval in plan and measured 2.80m by 3.10m; it was 0.40m deep. It was filled by a black silty loam with frequent inclusions of wood charcoal, charred wheat grains (soil sample 5) and burnt pebbles and occasional inclusions of fired clay and tile. The nature of this deposit suggests it may have been deliberately backfilled with material derived from a hearth.

Cobbled surfaces G47

Three isolated areas of cobbling G47 were located to the W of pond G58. At the W the surface was irregular in plan and measured 1.40m by 0.40-1.20m. Immediately to the N lay a sub-rounded area of cobbling with a diameter of 1.1m. Both comprised rounded flint cobbles, 70mm in diameter, set in a firm dark greyish-brown sandy silt matrix. Deposits both over and between the cobbles may represent deposits built up during use of the surfaces. They contained a moderate amount of Roman pottery and a small quantity of animal bone.

A further cobble surface was situated 9m to the NE, but was slightly different in nature. It comprised rounded flint pebbles in a loose reddish brown silty sand matrix. The surface was irregular in plan, being 2m by 1m, narrowing to the E and was less substantial in nature than the other surfaces.

These surfaces probably only survived because they had slumped into the upper deposits of the Phase 3 ditch G45. It is uncertain if they were internal or external surfaces.

Hearth G33

A small hearth G33 was situated 2m S of ditch G13. It was sub-circular in plan, with a diameter of 0.80m. The natural gravel showed a reddish discolouration indicating *in situ* burning. The hearth was backfilled by two layers of dark reddish brown silt with frequent inclusions of charcoal (soil sample 4), fired clay and burnt stones (G34). A small quantity of Iron Age and

Roman pottery sherds (unburnt) was found within this material, along with animal bone fragments (unburnt). These may represent the dumping of a mixture of raked out material and domestic refuse after the hearth had been abandoned.

Pits G15 and G132

Two inter-cutting pits were situated immediately to the S of boundary G13 in the vicinity of the entrance gap, approximately 5m NW of hearth G33.

The earlier pit G15 measured 3.10m by 1.20m and was 0.40m deep. It was ovoid in plan and had a wide shallow profile with a steep side to the N and a more gradual sloping side to the S. The pit was filled by two deposits of orange brown sandy silt with occasional inclusions of small stones. The primary deposit contained a large assemblage of Roman pottery (Fig 17.32, 34 and Fig 18.35). This pit was located adjacent to the terminus of ditch G13, which also contained a large assemblage of pottery.

The later pit G132 was smaller at 0.9m by 0.6m and 0.3m deep. It had an asymmetrical profile with steep sides and a flat base. A deposit of dark brown-black sandy silt, with moderate inclusions of charcoal and burnt stones filled the pit. A moderate quantity of Roman pottery was recovered from this deposit. The burnt filling deposits may have been derived from the hearth G33, indicating both features were contemporary.

Open Area L21

Only limited activity was identified to the NE of ditch G9. A NW to SE aligned ditch may represent the E boundary of a field. Adjacent to the ditch was an area of stones, which may indicate limited settlement activity.

Ditch G113

Ditch G113 lay on a NW to SE alignment, possibly parallel to ditch G9. It was visible for a length of 5.0m and was 2.0m wide and 0.50m deep with gradually sloping sides and a concave base. The ditch may have been deliberately backfilled by a dark yellowish brown sandy silt, with frequent small and large stones and frequent charcoal flecks (G114). A small quantity of Roman pottery was recovered from this deposit. The base of the ditch also contained two blocks of sandstone measuring 0.25m by 0.15m, similar to, and probably derive from the possible structure G158 to the W.

Sandstone blocks G158

Approximately 4m to the SW of ditch G113 a tenuous NW to SE alignment of sandstone blocks was located. It was visible for a length of 2.20m and was 0.50m wide and 0.30m deep. The sandstone blocks measured 0.08m by 0.25m and 0.12m by 0.15m. They were situated within a shallow gully, which truncated Phase 3 pits and postholes. It was uncertain whether the sandstone blocks were part of an *in situ* structure, or whether they represented displaced elements of a structure situated in the vicinity.

PHASE 6: UNENCLOSED SAXON SETTLEMENT (Fig 11)

The final phase of settlement within the study area was characterised by isolated occupational features including a well, a pit and two small linear boundary ditches.

Open Area L31

Two small, possibly parallel, ditches, a pit and well have been assigned to this landscape.

Boundary Ditches G145 and G7

Two small boundary ditches were situated towards the NW of the study area. Ditch G145 was orientated NW to SE, but was only exposed for a length of 1.5m. It measured 0.80m in width and 0.15m in depth. The ditch had gently sloping sides with a flat irregular base. Its fill (G146) comprised an orange brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of small stones. A small quantity of Saxon pottery was recovered from this deposit.

Ditch G7 was located parallel and to the SW of ditch G145. It was exposed for a length of 12m and measured 0.6-0.8m in width and 0.22m in depth. It had a very irregular profile. Towards the N the ditch terminated in a rounded butt-end and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the S. It terminated prior to reaching the main area of excavation. The ditch was filled by an orange brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of small stones (G8).

Pit G137

Shallow pit G137 was oval in plan, measuring 1.5m by 3m and 0.3m deep. It had gently sloping sides and a wide flat base. Its fill (G138) comprised a reddish brown sandy silt with moderate inclusions of small stones. This deposit contained residual Iron Age pottery and a moderate quantity of ferrous slag.

Well G27

Feature G27 which probably functioned as a well truncated the Phase 5 boundary ditch G25. It was oval in plan measuring 3.7m by 3.0m; it was 1.66m deep. The base was narrower being 0.60m by 0.80m. The well was asymmetrical in profile with a stepped side on the NE, steep sides to the SW and a concave base (Fig 12).

The well was later re-used as a rubbish pit and was filled by a dark brownish black silty sand (G28), which became more organic with depth. The lower deposits contained waterlogged remains of marsh/water edge plants (soil sample 16). Some of these may have been residual from Roman deposits. Three undiagnostic leather fragments (RAs 9, 10 and 12), a residual quern fragment (RA 5) and a fragment of an annular loomweight (RA 11) were recovered from this deposit. The remains of a wooden ladder found within this deposit were not *in situ*, but may have been used in this feature. Pottery sherds included Roman and Saxon sherds (Fig 18.44). After its use as a rubbish pit the well was deliberately backfilled with natural gravel deposits.

PHASE 7: MODERN FEATURES

Several rectangular features G11 were located across the excavation area. These were generally between 2m and 4m in length, 0.75m wide and 0.2-0.4m deep. All the pits had square profiles and

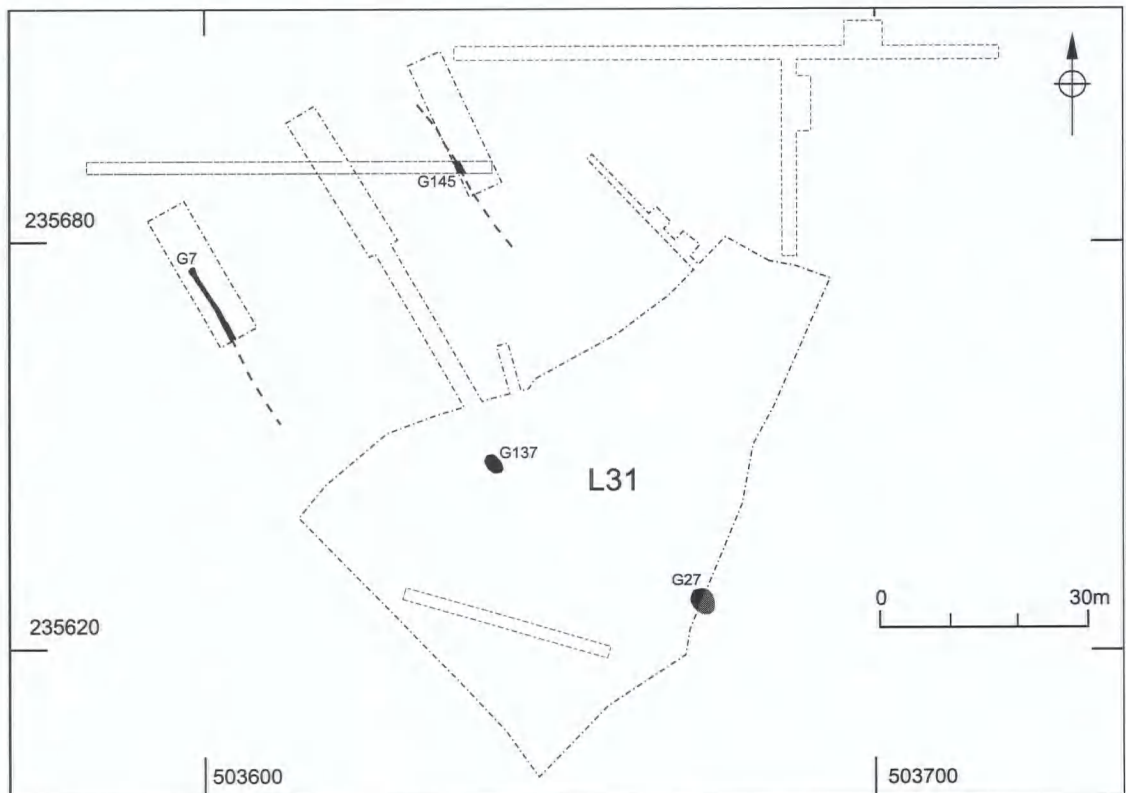


Figure 11 Phase 6: unenclosed Saxon settlement, all features

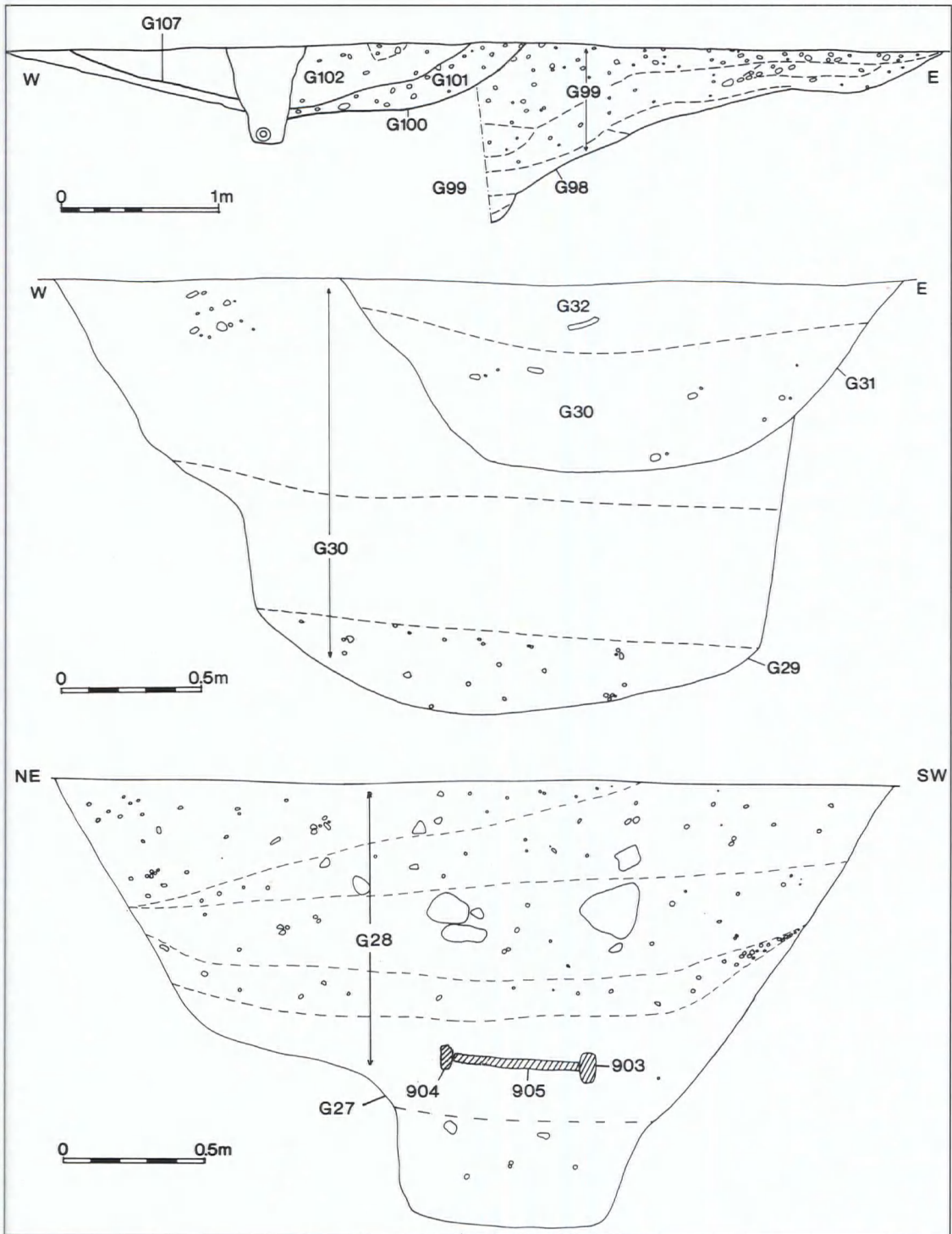


Figure 12 Phases 5 and 6, sections. Phase 5 pits: G100/102 SS47/67, G29/31 SS52/109.
Phase 6 well: G27 SS52/76

appear to have been deliberately backfilled (G12). These may represent test pits for earlier archaeological or other ground investigations.

THE POTTERY

Ed McSloy

INTRODUCTION

The study area produced 3,107 sherds of pottery, representing 2,140 individual vessels, weighing 44.095kg. Of this material 3,094 sherds were hand-collected during the excavation and the remainder sieved from soil samples. Unless otherwise stated, quantitative data in the text is based on the vessel count.

Soil conditions had a damaging effect on most fabric types. Fossil shell inclusions did not survive except in sherds from waterlogged deposits. Otherwise, these fabrics were identified by the presence of plate like voids, visible in section under the microscope. Even Roman sandy fabrics had suffered surface damage, giving sherds an abraded appearance.

The pottery was recorded using the common names and type codes in the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series. Quantification (Fig 13) included minimum vessel count, sherd count, and weight. In the case of wheel-made pottery, measurement of the estimated vessel equivalent (EVEs) was also made and this information is included in the site archive. Examination of attributes including extent of abrasion, presence of residues, sooting and wear marks was undertaken to provide an indication of the function of the pottery.

A representative sample of the pottery has been illustrated (Figs 14-18). Standard drawing conventions have been used, with vessels shown at one quarter size, external view on the right and a section and internal view on the left. Hand-made vessels are illustrated with hatched sections and wheel-thrown vessels with solid sections. The pie diagram at the base of each illustration indicates the proportion of the vessel recovered.

TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

The pottery types are described below in numerical order within broad chronological groups. Full fabric descriptions are given only for those types not published previously. Percentages are given for all fabrics constituting over 1% of the total pottery assemblage.

Pre-"Belgic" Iron Age

F01B Fine flint tempered

Fabric: described in Dawson *et al* 1988, 11

Forms: hand-made vessel of indeterminate form.

F03 Grog and sand tempered (2%)

Fabric: first defined in Dawson *et al* (1988, 11) and more fully described by McSloy (1996, 21). Examples from Flitwick also contain sparse glauconite, 0.2-0.4mm.

Forms: hand-made, plain or strap handled ovoid vessels. Decoration includes finger tipping on the rim, scoring and burnishing.

Illustrations: 1-3, 8.

F04 Organic tempered

Fabric: first defined in Dawson *et al* (1988, 11) and more fully described by McSloy (1996, 24).

Forms: hand-made ovoid vessels.

Illustrations: 18.

F17 Grog tempered

Fabric: described by McSloy (1996, 24).

Forms: hand-made vessels of indeterminate form.

F19 Sand and organic tempered (1%)

Fabric: described by McSloy (1996, 24).

Forms: hand-made ovoid vessels, with a single example of fingernail incised decoration on the rim.

Illustrations: 9.

F22 Grog and organic tempered

Fabric: described by McSloy (1996, 24).

Forms: hand-made vessels of indeterminate form.

F28 Fine sand tempered (9%)

Fabric: described by La Niece (1998): this volume. Examples from Flitwick also contain sparse rounded glauconite, 0.2-0.4mm.

Forms: hand-made ovoid and globular vessels with flat or pedestal bases. One vessel (Fig 16.13) is decorated with grooved and dimpled La Tène ornament. This consists of zones on the shoulder, defined by diagonal grooves, each with a line of small circular impressions to each side. Other decorative motifs include finger tipping on the rim, scoring and burnishing.

Illustrations: 13, 19-20

F29 Coarse sand tempered (67%)

Fabric: described by La Niece (1999): this volume. Examples from Flitwick also contain sparse sub-rounded glauconite pellets, 0.2-0.4mm.

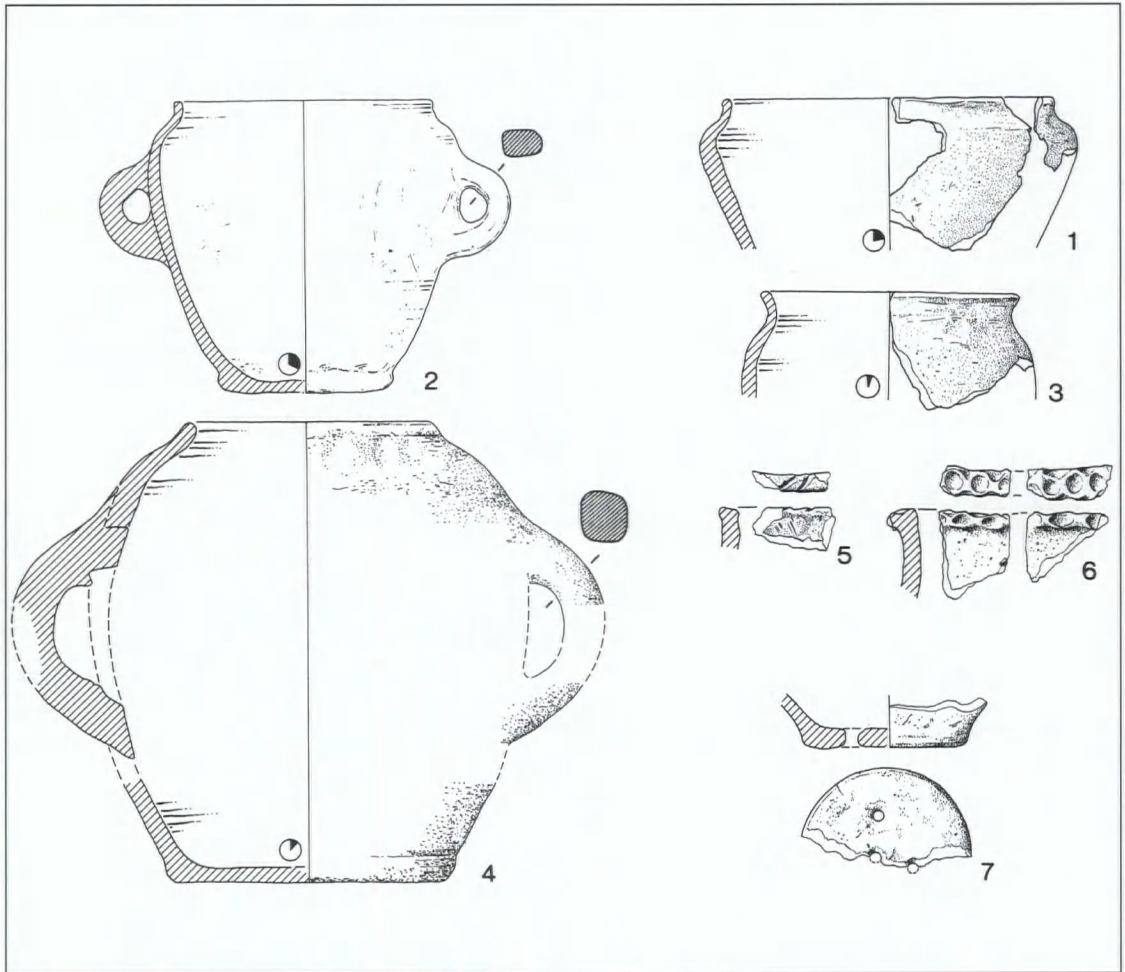
Forms: hand-made, plain and strap handled ovoid vessels, and large storage jars. Decoration includes finger tipping on the rim, incised decoration on the rim, both with the fingernail and with a sharp implement such as a knife, scoring and burnishing. Comments: this fabric is the overwhelmingly dominant type in the assemblage from the study area.

Illustrations: 4-7, 10-12, 14-17, 21-24.

"Belgic" Iron Age

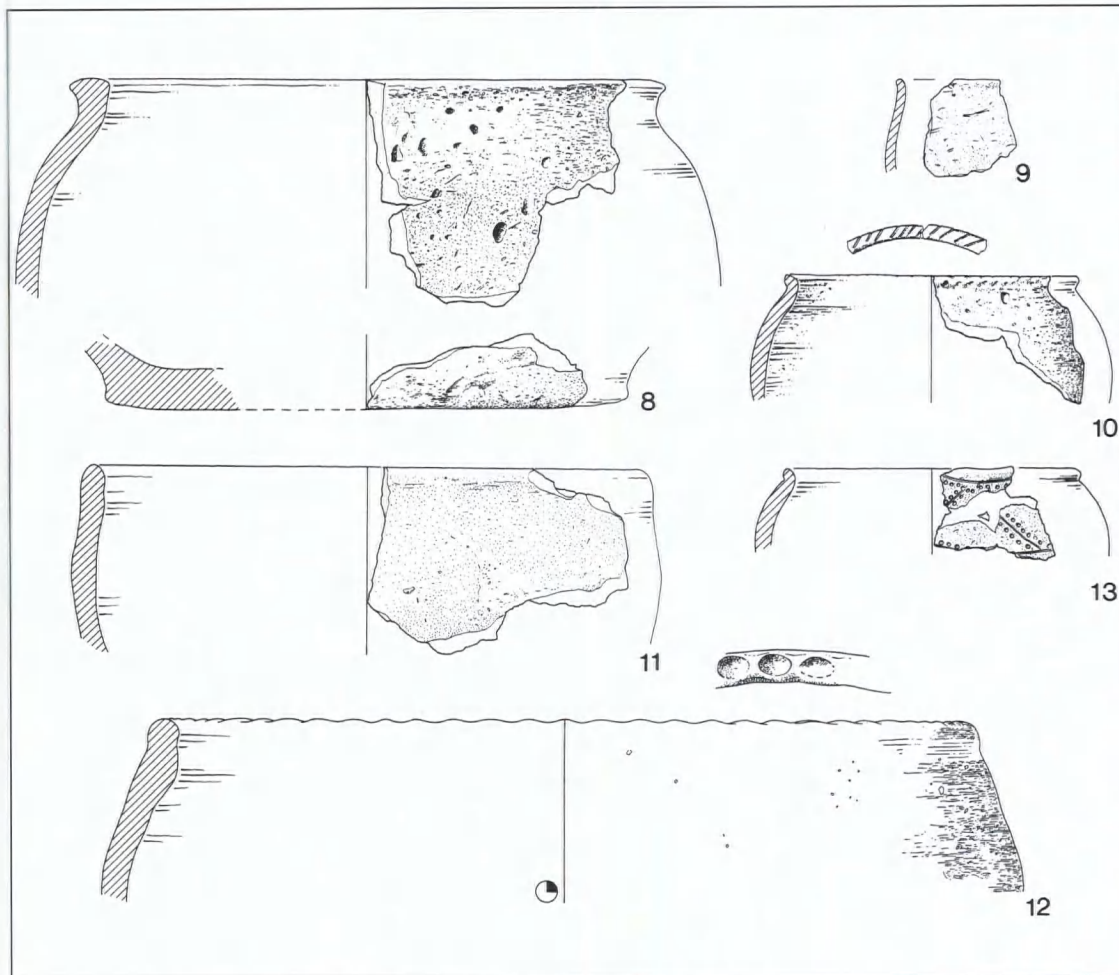
F06 Grog tempered

Fabric: described by Stead and Rigby (1986) and fully discussed by Thompson (1982). Three sub-divisions of this type have been defined, based on the coarseness of the grog inclusions.



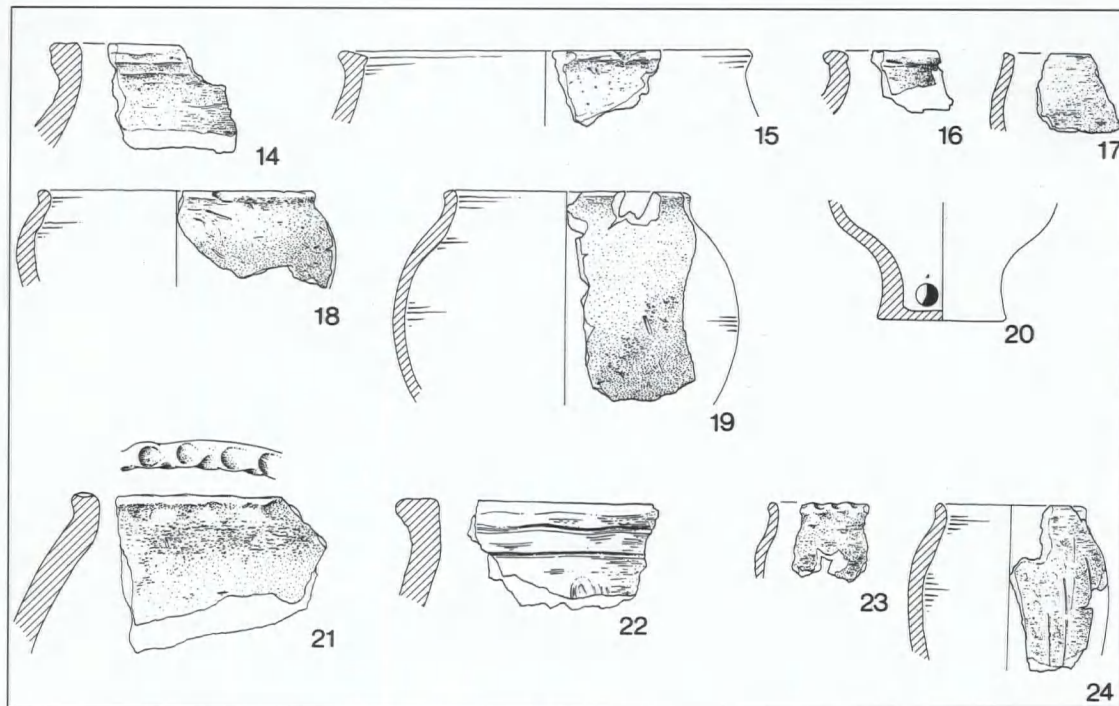
Illustr. no.	Fabric Code	Form	Group	Landscape	Phase
1	F03	Round shouldered jar	G.87	L.17	3
2	F03	Ovoid jar with strap handles	G.87	L.17	3
3	F03	Ovoid jar	G.87	L.17	3
4	F29	Ovoid jar with strap handles	G.87	L.17	3
5	F29	Jar with slashed rim	G.87	L.17	3
6	F29	Large storage jar with fingertip impressed rim	G.87	L.17	3
7	F29	Perforated base	G.87	L.17	3

Figure 14 Nos. 1-7 pre-“Belgic” Iron Age pottery: G87 (1:4)



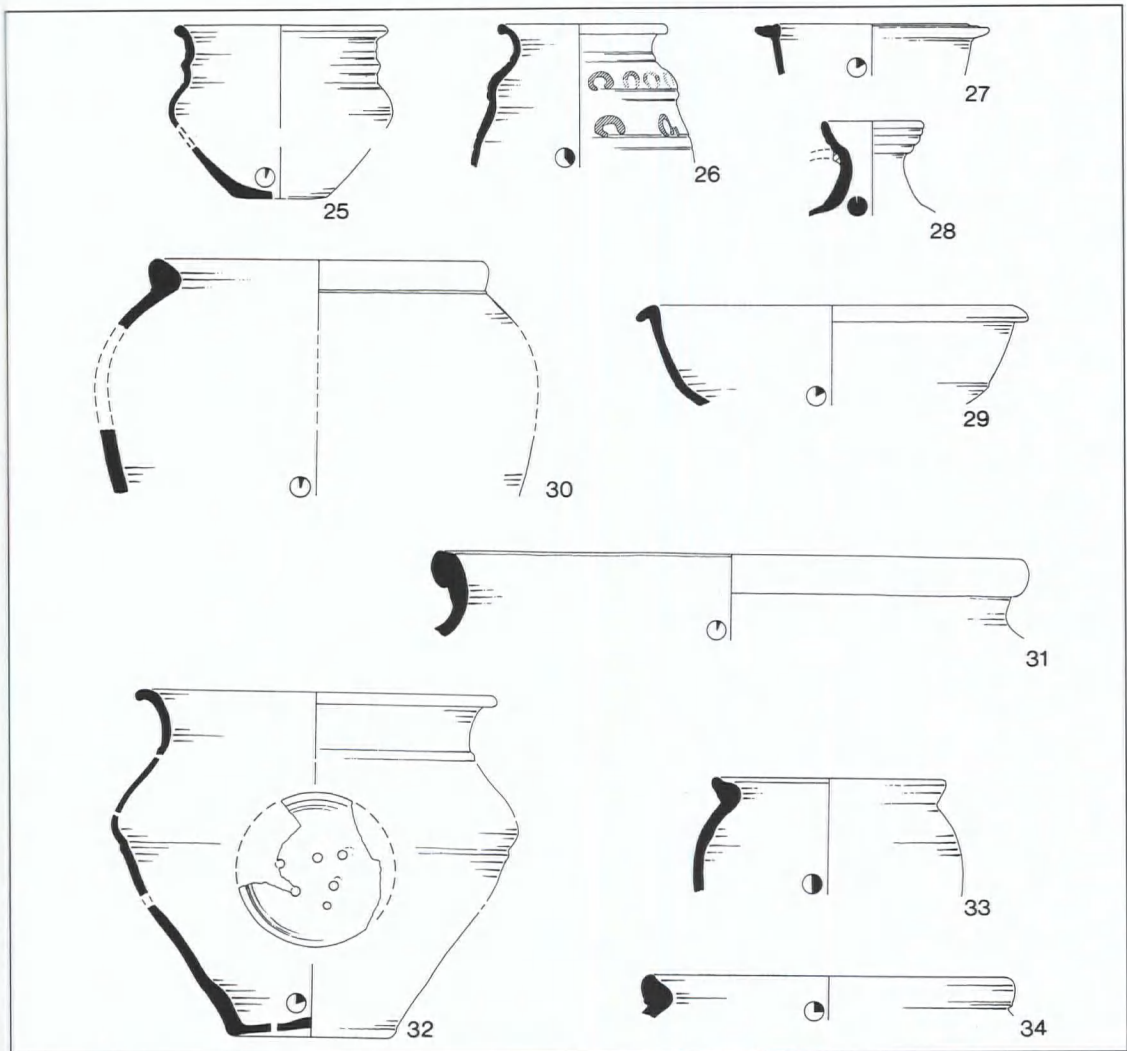
Illustr. no.	Fabric Code	Form	Group	Landscape	Phase
8	F03	Large ovoid storage jar	G.93	L.15	3
9	F19	Neckless ovoid jar	G.93	L.15	3
10	F29	Ovoid jar with slashed decoration to rim	G.93	L.15	3
11	F29	Large storage jar	G.93	L.15	3
12	F29	Large storage jar with fingertip impressed rim	G.93	L.15	3
13	F28	Globular jar with <i>la Tene</i> decoration	G.93	L.15	3

Figure 15 Nos. 8-13 pre-"Belgic" Iron Age pottery: G93 (1:4)



Illustr. no.	Fabric Code	Form	Group	Landscape	Phase
14	F29	Large storage jar	G.73	L.23	4b
15	F29	Large storage jar	G.73	L.23	4b
16	F29	Large storage jar	G.73	L.23	4b
17	F29	Ovoid jar	G.73	L.23	4b
18	F04	Ovoid jar	G.51	L.9	3b
19	F28	Globular jar	G.38	L.3	3b
20	F28	Pedestal base	G.51	L.9	3b
21	F29	Large storage jar with fingertip impressed rim	G.38	L.3	3b
22	F29	Large storage jar	G.53	L.9	3b
23	F29	Ovoid jar with fingertip impressions to rim	G.61	L.1	2b
24	F29	Ovoid jar with scored decoration to body	G.65	L.9	3b

Figure 16 Nos. 14-24 pre-“Belgic” Iron Age pottery (1:4)



Illustr. no.	Fabric Code	Form	Group	Landscape	Phase
25	F09	Cordoned jar	G.36	L.3	3b
26	R03E	Gallo-Belgic copy globular jar	G.16	L.25	5b
27	R03	Reeded-rim bowl	G.16	L.25	5b
28	R05A	Ring-necked flagon	G.16	L.25	5b
29	R06B	Bowl	G.16	L.25	5b
30	R13	Jar	G.16	L.25	5b
31	R13	Jar	G.16	L.25	5b
32	R06B	Jar with multiple perforations to base	G.15	L.16	5
33	R13	Lid-seated jar	G.132	L.16	5b
34	R13	Large storage jar	G.15	L.16	5

Figure 17 No. 25 miscellaneous "Belgic" pottery, nos. 26-31 early Roman (late 1st-early 2nd century) pottery, nos. 32-34 early Roman (early-mid 2nd century) pottery (1:4)

Forms: miscellaneous wheel-made sherds.

Comments: the coarsest type, F06C, is absent from the study area.

F07 Shell tempered

Fabric: fully described by Tilson (1973, 30-31) under the name Clapham shelly ware.

Forms: hand-made vessels of indeterminate form. Scoring or twig brushing is the only form of decoration.

Comments: a number of kilns producing this type, primarily lid-seated jars, have been found in N Bedfordshire, e.g. Bromham (Tilson 1973) and Stagsden (BCAS in prep).

F09 Sand and grog tempered

Fabric: defined by Dawson *et al* (1988, 13).

Forms: carinated cup with everted rim and a single cordon constricting the waist (Thompson 1982, type E-1).

Illustrations: 25.

Roman

R01A Samian – Central Gaulish

Fabric: described by Stanfield and Simpson (1958).

Forms: wheel-made platter/dish (Dr.18/31), bowl (Dr.31) and dish (Curle 15).

Comments: early 2nd-3rd century.

R03 Undiagnostic whiteware

Fabric: fully described in the archive.

Forms: Reeded-rim bowl.

Comments: possibly dated to the 1st-2nd century.

Illustrations: 27.

R03A Verulamium fine whiteware

Fabric: described by Marney (1989, 182: fabric 18g).

Forms: miscellaneous wheel-made sherds.

Comments: late 1st-2nd century. This type was produced in kilns in the Verulamium region.

R03E "Gallo-Belgic" copy

Fabric: White throughout, with patches of orange colour coat surviving. Fabric is hard, harsh to the touch with a fine fracture, containing abundant, well sorted clear or opaque quartz, 0.1-0.2mm and sparse ironstone, 0.4-0.9mm.

Forms: Globular jar with pronounced cordons.

Comments: a possible *Terra Rubra* imitation, Flavian (pers. comm. Friendship-Taylor).

Illustrations: 26.

?R04E Colchester colour coat

Fabric: described by Hull (1963).

Forms: bag-shaped beaker with zoned rouletting.

Comments: mid 2nd-4th century.

R05A Orange sandy

Fabric: described by Parminter and Slowikowski (forthcoming).

Forms: Ring-necked flagon and miscellaneous wheel made vessels.

Comments: 2nd-4th century.

Illustrations: 28

R06A Nene valley greyware

Fabric: described and discussed by Howe, Perrin and Mackreth (1980).

Forms: Miscellaneous wheel-made sherds.

Comments: 2nd-4th century.

R06B Coarse greyware (3.3%)

Fabric: described by Parminter and Slowikowski (forthcoming).

Forms: flanged bowls, flagons, wide and narrow-necked jars.

Comments: 1st-4th century.

Illustrations: 29, 35, 36, 41, 43.

R07B Black sandy (5.5%)

Fabric: described by Parminter and Slowikowski (forthcoming).

Forms: wide necked jars, narrow-necked jars, bowls.

Comments: possibly 2nd century.

R11D Oxford colour-coat

Fabric: described by Young (1977).

Forms: C47 Bowl.

Comments: mid 3rd-4th century.

Illustrations: 40

R12A Nene valley mortaria

Fabric: described and discussed by Howe, Perrin and Mackreth (1980).

Forms: Mortaria.

Comments: late 3rd-4th century.

R12B Nene valley colour-coat

Fabric: described and discussed by Howe, Perrin and Mackreth (1980).

Forms: Folded and miscellaneous beakers.

Comments: late 2nd-4th century.

Illustrations: 39.

R13 Shelly (8%)

Fabric: described and discussed by Brown (1994).

Forms: lid-seated jars, wide-necked jars, storage jars, and bowls.

Comments: 1st-4th century. Kilns have been excavated at Harrold, N Bedfordshire (Brown 1994).

Illustrations: 30-34, 38.

R14 Red-brown harsh

Fabric: described by Parminter and Slowikowski (forthcoming).

Forms: Flagon or bottle.

Comments: first recognised at Kempston, possibly of 2nd-4th century.

Illustrations: 37.

R18A Pink gritty

Fabric: described by Parminter and Slowikowski (forthcoming).

Forms: undiagnostic body sherds.

Comments: possibly 2nd century.

Saxon

A06 Sandy

Fabric: described by Baker and Hassall (1979, 152).

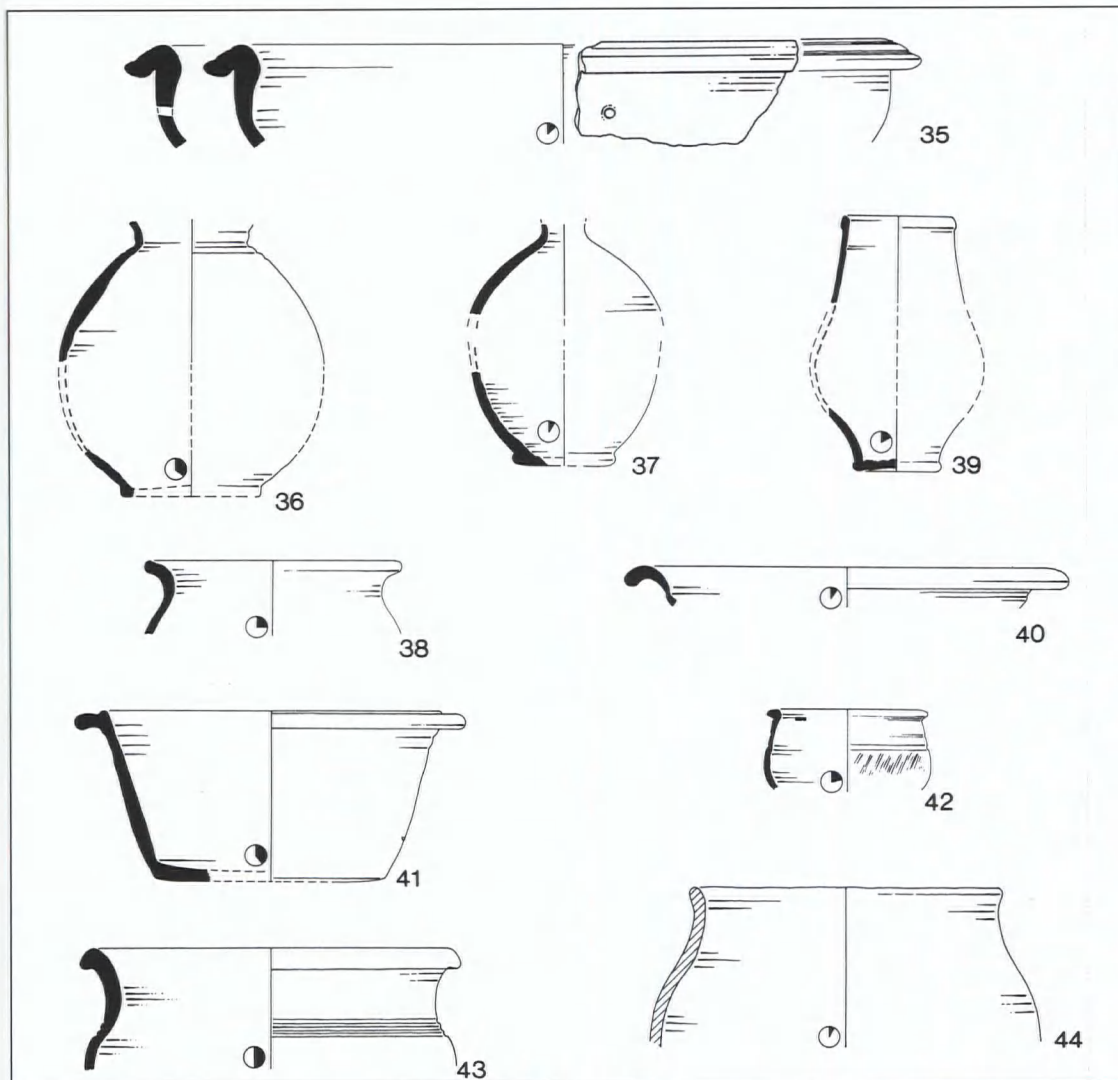
Forms: hand-made jar.

Comments: this type was first defined at Bedford. It has been dated to the Early-Middle Saxon period.

Illustrations: 44.

A16 Mixed coarse quartz

Fabric: hard-fired, fairly rough fabric, usually dark grey or black throughout, although surfaces may be light brown.



Illustr. no.	Fabric Code	Form	Group	Landscape	Phase
35	R13	Bowl with perforation to body	G.15	L.16	5
36	R06B	Narrow necked jar with cordon	G.31	L.16	5
37	R14	Flagon or bottle	G.31	L.16	5
38	R13	Jar	G.31	L.16	5
39	R12B	NVCC Beaker	G.31	L.16	5
40	R11D	Oxford bowl form C47	G.31	L.16	5
41	R06B	Flanged bowl	G.59	L.16	5b
42	R04E	Colchester colour-coat beaker	G.140	L.33	7
43	R06B	Jar with slipped decoration	G.59	L.16	5b
44	A06	Jar	G.28	L.31	6b

Figure 18 No. 35 early Roman (early-mid 2nd century) pottery, nos. 36-40 late Roman (early-mid 4th century) pottery: G31, nos. 41-43 miscellaneous Roman pottery, no. 44 Saxon pottery: G28 (1:4)

Contains abundant ill sorted sub-rounded to rounded quartz inclusions, 0.3-0.6mm, probably deriving from the Greensand. The surfaces of some sherds bear sparse organic impressions. This may indicate that the pottery rested on grass or straw for drying rather than the inclusion of organic matter in the fabric. Forms: hand-made but otherwise indistinguishable.

Comments: pottery of the same fabric type found at Furnells, Raunds, Northamptonshire, has been dated to c.600 AD (Blinkhorn pers. comm.) Comparable examples from Bedfordshire are known at Grove Priory, near Leighton Buzzard and Stratton, Biggleswade, where their use appears to continue well into the Middle Saxon period (BCAS in prep).

IRON AGE POTTERY

Chronology

The current Iron Age ceramic chronology (Knight 1984) in the Nene and Ouse valleys suggests that only broad divisions are definable between assemblages dating to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (c. late 9th-5th century BC) and those from the pre-"Belgic" La Tène period (5th-1st century BC). The assemblage from the study area equates well with the later, pre-"Belgic" tradition, with its ovoid forms and restricted decoration.

Fabrics

The range of fabrics is consistent with that known for the middle to late Iron Age in the county. Knight noted no distinct chronological trends in fabric composition in his survey of pottery in the Nene and Great Ouse valley basins. It appears likely that the availability of clays and mineral or other fillers largely dictated fabric composition prior to the late Iron Age "Belgic" period. Consequently a local clay source for the more commonly occurring fabrics from the study area might be expected. Evidence for this is provided by the presence of glauconite within the three fabrics which make up the majority of the assemblage (F03, F28 and F29). Glauconite is a mineral largely peculiar to the Lower Greensand and would occur in the local soils. Clay deposits suitable for making pottery were encountered during the excavation in the form of lenses within the gravels.

Forms

Ovoid vessels were the most common form present (7 vessels), round-shouldered vessels (3 vessels) and globular vessels (2 vessels) being less well represented. Wide variations were noted in the projected size of vessels in the assemblage (Fig 16.21-22). Sherd thickness varied in accordance

with projected vessel size. A broad division was observed between large, heavily built vessels, with sherd thickness varying between 12 and 20mm (640 sherds), and slighter vessels with sherd thickness typically between 8 and 10mm (980 sherds).

The impracticalities of using such large jars for cooking or serving food makes it likely that they were mostly used for storage. These vessels are, therefore, termed large storage jars in this report and frequently have the profile of jars (Fig 14.6, Fig 15.11-13, Fig 16.14-16 and 21-22, Fig 17.34). Bases are extremely thick, up to 30mm, and may be designed to counterweight the vessels and keep them upright on uneven surfaces.

The bulky large storage jars occurred only in coarse sand F29. Given their porosity, it is likely that they were used to store dry foodstuffs, such as grain or flour. It is possible, however, that organic coating could have been used to make the vessel waterproof. The only difference in form between these storage vessels is that the larger vessels appear to be neckless.

One vessel of characteristic "Belgic" form was recovered. This is a wheel-made carinated cup of Thompson's (1982) type E-1. This form of vessel is a miniaturised version of a jar form. Examples of the larger version are known in the county from Radwell (Hall 1973, 73) and Harrold (Hall and Nickerson 1969, 9).

Decoration

The pottery from the study area fits well the broad regional pattern established by Knight (1984) that sees finger ornament (Fig 16.21 and 23) and scoring mainly restricted to coarser fabrics. Vessels of fine sandy F28, as well as featuring the only example of La Tène style ornament (Fig 15.13), were also more frequently burnished than other fabric types.

Manufacture

The pre-"Belgic" Iron Age material is hand-made, either pinch built from a solid lump of clay or in the case of larger vessels, slab or coil-built. Some sherds exhibit low ridges on the interior surface, the result of successively added clay coils or rings. Impressions of organic material (in one case the clear imprint of a fern leaf) suggest the proximity of such material at, or near, the time of manufacture. Organic padding may have been used when the pots were left to dry out, prior to firing. The extensive cracking, probably caused by shrinkage, visible on two grog and sand F17 vessels suggests that this drying process was not always successful.

Variations in colour from vessel to vessel, or (occasionally) on the same vessel, are largely the result of uneven temperatures generated by bonfire firing. A uniform buff or orange-brown colour occurred on a single vessel of fine sandy F28 and 59 vessels of coarser sand F29. The limited numbers and the mixed range of vessels suggest oxidation was accidental and did not result from the deliberate control of the firing.

All the "Belgic" type pottery is wheel-made, a technology that makes possible thin walls and precise appearance of vessel form (Fig 17.25).

Evidence for use

A number of pre-"Belgic" vessels bore features interpreted as the result of use. In three instances this took the form of external sooting, caused by suspension over direct heat, most likely a cooking fire. A further ten vessels preserved traces of internal black residues, probably resulting from accidental burning of foodstuffs during cooking.

Bases from two vessels of uncertain form featured post-firing perforations. In the first instance these took the form of at least three irregularly spaced holes of c.6mm diameter (Fig 14.7). The second vessel is more unusual, featuring a single large central perforation of 11mm diameter. A possible use for such perforated vessels is in the preparation of cheese (Harding 1974, 88). These holes were, however, made post-firing, suggesting that the vessel was originally made for a different purpose.

ROMAN POTTERY

Chronology

The Roman pottery assemblage spans the entire Roman period. The earliest includes a small quantity of "Belgic" styles. The process by which the "Belgic" wheel-made technology supplements then supplants the native hand-made tradition is the subject of some debate (Thompson 1982, 1-5). Other 1st century AD pottery includes Gallo-"Belgic" copies and various white wares. A small quantity of 2nd-3rd century AD Samian ware was present. The dominant fabric R13 can only be broadly dated between the 1st to 4th century AD. A small quantity of late 3rd-4th century AD pottery including Nene Valley mortaria and colour-coats was present.

Fabric and form

Coarsewares are represented by a standard range of local greywares, oxidised sandy wares, blackwares and imported whitewares from the Verulamium region.

Shell tempered pottery is the most common Roman fabric, comprising 43% of the Roman assemblage. The most likely source for the majority of this pottery is Harrold, approximately 23km N of Flitwick. Unlike many kiln sites established in the middle of the 1st century AD, Harrold survived the turn of the century to become a significant regional manufacturing centre, producing coarse kitchen wares throughout the Roman period. Although not the exclusive supplier of shell tempered pottery, the Harrold potters' share of the market was undoubtedly dominant in the region. Represented forms of the known Harrold repertoire, include flanged bowls, rilled lid-seated jars, large storage jars and cooking pots with simple everted rims (Brown 1994).

Reduced sandy wares, predominantly R06 and R07B, account for 45% of the Roman assemblage. Among the forms represented are not only cooking pots but also tablewares, including narrow-necked jars, reeded-rimmed bowls and flagons. More than one source is likely for these fabric types, especially in the earlier Roman period when small local kilns are likely to be the chief suppliers. From the 2nd century AD onwards, the market was dominated by large scale production centres to the eventual exclusion of the smaller local potteries. Only one such centre, the Lower Nene Valley can be positively identified as a supplier of coarsewares. These may have accompanied the more distinctive mortaria and colour-coated vessels.

Oxidised sandy pottery R05A, R03A and R18A, represents only 4% of the Roman assemblage. White and pink gritty fabrics, R03A and R18A, are likely to have been produced in the Verulamium region, predominantly in the 1st to 2nd century AD. Orange sandy R05A cannot be sourced. It is quite unlike the later Roman Hadham and Oxfordshire oxidised products and may be a product of local kilns, more usually producing reduced wares.

In the early Roman period Samian vessels and a single colour-coated globular jar in imitation of a Gallo-"Belgic" type (Fig 17. 26) represent the limited range of finewares. The Samian includes a single example of Curle 15, predominantly pre-Antonine (AD 138-161) and Dr.18/31 (AD 100-150) which represents a transition between platter and bowls (Webster 1987).

Decoration

Standard decorative elements of the period were noted: combing and rilling on R13 shelly wares, rouletting on Nene valley R12B and Colchester colour-coat wares R04E, burnishing on R07B black sandy ware. Some forms of surface treatment such as burnishing, slips and painted decoration may have been lost due to the abrasive effect of the ground conditions.

Evidence for use

One jar of fabric R06B (Fig 17. 32) featured seven perforations to the base, drilled after firing. This possibly served the same function as the perforated Iron Age vessel described above, but, like that vessel, it had been modified to suit a secondary purpose.

Two vessels featured single holes drilled in the body after firing, in one case below the neck of a bowl (Fig 18.35) in fabric R13. The purpose of such holes may have been for attaching a lid, leather thong or metal rivets for repair.

Two vessels provided evidence for cooking over a direct heat source, in the form of sooting to the external surfaces. A third vessel featured an internal black 'tarry' residue possibly caused by the accidental burning of food.

SAXON POTTERY

Three sherds of Saxon pottery broadly dated to the Early to Middle Saxon period were recovered. None was decorated, although one sherd of fabric A06 appears to be burnished. Fabric A16 is more distinctive, with coarse quartz inclusions distinct in the fracture. Only one form was recoverable (Fig 18.44) representing a plain jar with a slightly everted rounded rim.

DISCUSSION OF THE POTTERY BY PHASE

The occurrence of fabric types by vessel count for each Phase, Landscape and Group has been set out in a seriation table (Fig 13). This provides the structure for the following discussion, which considers the pottery of each Phase and Landscape.

Phase 2: pre-"Belgic" Iron Age unenclosed settlement

The Iron Age pottery assemblage from Phases 2, 3 and 4 cannot provide a more precise date than the second half of the first millennium BC. Neither can the pottery serve to elucidate any significant relationships between the various structural elements of the three Iron Age Phases.

Secondary, "disuse", deposits (Phase 2b) contained a small quantity of pottery. Sandy fabrics F28 and F29 dominated the range of fabrics, and the forms are comparable to the material from the succeeding Phase 3.

Phase 3: pre-"Belgic" Iron Age enclosed settlement

This Phase produced the largest quantity of ceramic material from the study area. In common with the preceding Phase most of the Landscapes produced little or no pottery from their primary "use" deposits and often substantially larger quantities from their "disuse" deposits (Phase 3b).

The ditches bounding enclosures L15 and L17 are important exceptions in this respect, producing 399 and 448 vessels respectively from primary deposits. The stratigraphic evidence suggests this material was deposited shortly after the ditches were dug. There is also a low incidence of abrasion on this pottery, 1.2%, compared to 12.5% for pottery from disuse Phase 3b. The pottery assemblage from these ditches comprises approximately 71% of the vessel total from this Phase. It is possible that the pottery represents a dump of accumulated debris from the settlement enclosure L19, although Hill (1995) has suggested ritual interpretations can be placed on such deposits if associated with other unusual assemblages.

The distribution of pottery within the remaining groups of Phase 3 probably reflects in some way usage and/or proximity to living areas. Enclosures L3, L11 and L13, which contain few, if any internal features, are particularly clean. The filling deposits of the settlement enclosure L19 ditch produced little in the way of pottery. Although only sample excavated, it is possible the ditch was intentionally kept free of rubbish or that an internal bank prevented easy access.

With the exception of a single vessel from the "disuse" deposits of enclosure L3, wheel-made "Belgic" pottery is conspicuous by its absence. Small quantities of Roman pottery occur in "disuse" deposits within enclosures L3, L9, L11 and L19. This could suggest that these features did not become completely infilled until long after their original function had ceased.

Phase 4: pre-"Belgic" Iron Age field system

No ceramics were recovered from primary "use" deposits from Phase 4. "Disuse" deposits (Phase 4b) mainly from L23 produced large quantities of

pottery. The majority of this assemblage was deposited within the terminal of ditch G72. Overall the assemblage from Phase 4b is comparable to that from Phases 3 and 3b, being hand-made and predominantly of sandy fabrics. There are minor differences: for example, a greater tendency towards flattened rims and an overall paucity of decoration (two vessels exhibiting random scoring). In common with Phase 3b small quantities of Roman pottery is also present from secondary filling deposits.

Phase 5: Roman field system and trackway

The Phase 5 pottery assemblage spans the entire Roman period. The majority of the assemblage came from enclosure L16, with a smaller quantity coming from the adjacent (partially investigated) enclosure or field L25 and none from trackway L27. The trackside ditches were excavated in several locations so the absence of pottery is significant and suggests this track did not provide a focus for occupation.

The assemblage suggests occupation commenced early in the 2nd century AD and continued at least into the late 3rd century AD. The assemblage mainly comprised locally produced coarsewares with a limited range of imported finewares including colour-coats and Samian. The broad dating assigned to the dominant coarsewares (R06B and R13) prevent a more detailed sub-division of the Roman period. The majority of the settlement activity dates to the 2nd century AD with only limited activity continuing into the 4th century AD.

The broad dating assigned to the greywares means only two Groups produced closely dated pottery assemblages.

Pottery from deposit G16 (filling the terminal of ditch G13) can be dated to the late 1st-early 2nd century AD. Amongst the finewares are Samian forms, including Curle 15 (AD 138-161) and Dr.18/31 (AD 100 -150). Additionally, the ring-necked flagon (Fig 17.28), in orange sandy fabric R05A, is characteristic of the late 1st-early 2nd century AD.

Coarsewares from G16 are less well datable but are consistent with this early Roman date. Forms mainly consist of simple everted rimmed cooking jars; also present are three lid-seated jars in shelly fabric R13, a form ultimately derived from "Belgic" antecedents. The rilling below the rim on these vessels is a common feature of Harrold products.

A second closely dated deposit came from pit G31 (within enclosure L16), which contained an

assemblage of 4th century pottery (Fig 18.36-40). Finewares from this group comprise colour-coated products from the Nene Valley and of Oxfordshire type. These dominate the fineware markets in the later Roman period after the cessation of Samian imports to Britain in the mid-3rd century AD. The type C47 Oxfordshire bowl, a form in imitation of Samian Dr. 36, was current in the period AD270-400+ (Young, 1977, 158). Production of Nene Valley folded beakers commenced in the late 2nd century AD, but they are rare after the mid-4th century AD. The beaded rim forms, which occur on all the represented vessels (Fig 18.39) point to a 4th century AD date (Howe, Perrin and Mackreth 1980).

Phase 6: unenclosed Saxon settlement

A small assemblage of Saxon pottery was recovered from features assigned to Phase 6. The Saxon pottery from deposit G146 (filling ditch G145) and deposit G28 (filling well G27) was assigned to the Early to Middle Saxon period.

THE CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

Ed McSloy

INTRODUCTION

Ceramic building material from the study area comprises twenty-three fragments of brick or tile, weighing 1437g and ninety-nine fragments of miscellaneous fired clay weighing 407g.

BRICK AND TILE

Type series

RB01 Sandy

Fabric: hard fired, fairly smooth fabric, orange throughout, or reddish where over-fired. Contains abundant, well-sorted sub-angular, clear or whitish quartz c. 0.2-0.5mm also rare dark red and black iron ore c. 0.1-0.3mm.

Forms: brick, *imbrex* and unidentified fragments.

RB02 Grey-cored sandy

Fabric: hard, fairly smooth fabric with bright orange to dark red-brown surfaces, characteristically with blue-grey core. Contains generally abundant clear or milky white quartz 0.1-0.5mm and poorly sorted red iron inclusions 0.5-1.0mm. Also sparse mica specks and shell fragments.

Forms: brick and unidentified fragments.

RB05A Shelly

Fabric: fairly soft, smooth fabric. Pale orange in colour, occasionally with grey core. Characterised by abundant shell inclusion, indicated by plate-like voids 2-4mm in size.

Forms: *tegulae*, flue tile, brick and unidentified fragments.

Discussion

Eighteen fragments of Roman brick and tile were recovered from stratified deposits within Phases 5 and 5b. The majority of this material is made up of fabric types, RB01 and RB02, with quartz sand inclusions. No kilns producing brick or tiles in these fabrics are known in the immediate vicinity, although a local source remains possible, conceivably using quartz sand from the Greensand ridge as a tempering agent. The remaining five tile fragments are of shelly fabric RB05A. The most likely source for this fabric is the Harrold kilns located to the NW of the county. Products from the Harrold pottery kilns are present within the study area and the same site is known to have produced building material.

The largest concentration, eleven fragments, came from a deposit filling pit G31 (Phase 5). Fragments included examples of brick, flue tile, *imbrex* and large fragments of *tegula*. The quantity and variety of brick and tile from these deposits contrasts with the paucity from other deposits. The pottery assemblage from this group is uniquely dated to the late 3rd to mid 4th century AD. The presence of flue tile and roofing tile in this feature suggests the presence of a high status building in the vicinity during the later Roman period.

MISCELLANEOUS FIRED CLAY

Type series

Sand

Pale orange throughout. Generally soft and smooth to touch. Contains sparse to common, poorly sorted sub-rounded clear or milky white quartz, typically between 0.4 and 0.8mm.

Sand and organic

Orange throughout. Soft and smooth to touch. Contains sparse to common well sorted sub-rounded clear or milky white quartz, typically between 0.4mm and 0.6mm. Also common linear voids between 4 and 7mm where organic inclusions have burnt out or otherwise perished.

Discussion

Small quantities of daub were recovered from the majority of the phases of occupation. There was no correlation between fabric type and dating. Only a few pieces displayed attributes hinting at their original function. A number of pieces were smoothed or bore finger impressions as if moulded by hand. A single fragment preserved a rounded wattle impression.

It seems likely that the bulk of this material represents structural daub, preserved by accidental contact with fire.

REGISTERED AND NON-CERAMIC BULK ARTEFACTS

Ed McSloy

INTRODUCTION

A total of twelve registered artefacts were recovered from the study area. Additional non-ceramic bulk artefacts included three pieces of worked timber, seven iron nails, 1136g of ferrous metalworking residues and 256 worked or burnt flints.

These artefacts were assigned to functional categories, in accordance with the Bedfordshire Artefact Typology. Catalogue entries are given only in cases where the artefact is typologically datable or of intrinsic interest. The lithic assemblage, all residual in later deposits, is only summarised, a full report is contained within the site archive.

The catalogue entries are prefixed by coding containing the following information:

RA 2	G51	L10	Ph6
Registered	Group	Landscape	Phase
Find No.	No.	No.	No.
or timber			
No.			

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY 1: BUILDINGS AND SERVICES

Two oak stiles and an ash rung, part of the same wooden ladder, were recovered from a secondary fill within well G28. The two upright stiles were perforated for the insertion of rungs, one of which was still attached. The rung had been prepared from a length of roundwood, the upper side showing signs of axe marks. An elongated perforation through each of the stiles may have been originally designed to accommodate an extra wide rung. The position of the perforations on discovery did not correspond between stiles suggesting that the ladder may have been reassembled from broken components. In the reused form they may have functioned together with a 'tusk tenon' as a combined rung and lock-bar (pers. comm. D. Goodburn).

Saxon period ladders have been recently excavated at Pennyland and Hartigans, Bucks (Williams 1993, 88, 163, 197-8) where they were thought to be 7th century or earlier in date. These were similar to the Hinksley Road ladder in both the species of wood used and construction techniques. Both were 'side axe' hewn; one was made from a mix of oak, field maple and blackthorn, the other

from field maple and ash. The ladder from Hinksley Road would appear to be unusual in its use of a lock-bar.

Wooden ladder (Fig 19)

903, Stile, G28, L31, Ph 6b, *Oak*

Secondary fill of well G27. Surviving length 900mm, width 90-110mm, thickness 51-53mm. The top of the stile had rotted badly, otherwise preservation was good. Individual axe marks, cut with the direction of the grain, are identifiable. The stile tapers away from the rounded end, although this is exaggerated by shrinkage. Evidence for three rung-holes survives. Two are circular, measuring 40mm in diameter and presumably augured. The third is elongated, measuring 120mm wide, and was probably initially constructed using an augur and subsequently expanded using an axe.

904, Stile, G28, L31, Ph 6b, *Oak*

Secondary fill of well G27. Surviving length 57mm, width 85-103mm, thickness 45mm. More fragmentary than stile 903, missing terminal and featuring parts of only two rung-holes (including elongated type). Axe-marks running with the grain are identifiable on all faces. In common with stile 904 the upper end is badly decayed.

905, Rung, G28, L31, Ph 6b, *Ash*

Secondary fill of well G27. Length 502mm, width 45mm, thickness 28-30mm. Complete rung was found *in situ*, joining the two stiles. It was made from a halved wooden stake, with the flat face uppermost and both ends reduced for fixing to stiles.

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY 2: FASTENERS AND FITTINGS

Iron nails

Seven nails were recovered, all of Roman date and all from Phase 5 deposits. Six conform to Manning's multi-purpose timber nail type 1B, being flat-headed with tapering square section (Manning 1985, 134-137). The remaining nail comprises a shank only. The complete nails from pit G31 measure 70mm in length.

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY 3: HOUSEHOLD

Querns

Simple saddle querns (RA 2 and RA 5) were used from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. RA 2 was found in association with ceramics of pre-"Belgic" Iron Age date and is likely to be contemporary. Quern RA 4, residual within a Roman deposit, is likely to have been derived from the Iron Age occupation. The source for both querns is almost certainly from tertiary deposits on the Greensand ridge. Rotary

quern fragment RA 5 was recovered from well G27, associated with ceramics of Early to Middle Saxon date and residual Roman pottery. The fragment itself may be residual from Roman occupation. The use of granite in this area is unusual, with the nearest British source situated at Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire.

RA 2, G51, L9, Ph 3b,

Medium-grained ferruginous sandstone saddle quern fragment from secondary fill of ditch G50. Roughly square, preserving one outside edge and a smoothed grinding surface, sloping gently towards the centre. Length (surviving) 143mm; width 110mm; thickness 130-111mm.

RA 4, G59, L16, Ph 5b, (Fig 20)

Medium-grained ferruginous sandstone saddle quern fragment from secondary fill within pond G58. Preserves dished profile and smooth grinding surface. Length (surviving) 200mm; width 125mm; thickness 75-45mm.

RA 5, G28, L31, Ph 6b,

Granite rotary quern fragment (upper stone?) from secondary fill within well G27. Retains one original rounded edge and well smoothed grinding surface. Shallow concentric scratch marks on the grinding surface match the outside edge and suggest a rotary action. Length (surviving) 113mm; width 70-83mm; thickness 91mm.

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY 4: CRAFT AND INDUSTRY

Leather fragments

The leather fragments from well G27 displayed no stitching or other diagnostic features. Two fragments did preserve knife cut edges suggesting they were manufacturing waste. The grain pattern was not visible and the animal species cannot be identified.

Loomweights

Fragments from two Anglo-Saxon annular loomweights were recovered. Although incomplete, both conform to Dunning's early type where the internal diameter exceeds the width of the body (Dunning *et al* 1959). Loomweights of this type are widely distributed and date to no later than the late 7th century AD. RA 13 was recovered from the upper fill of a Roman ditch which was likely to have still been partially open in the Saxon period.

RA 11, G28, L31, Ph 6b, *Ceramic* (Fig 20)

'D' sectioned 'annular' loomweight from secondary fill within well G27. Approximately 60% complete. Fabric is hard, reduced to grey or black throughout. Contains abundant clear or milky white quartz 0.2-0.5mm, sparse flint, 0.5-2.8mm; and

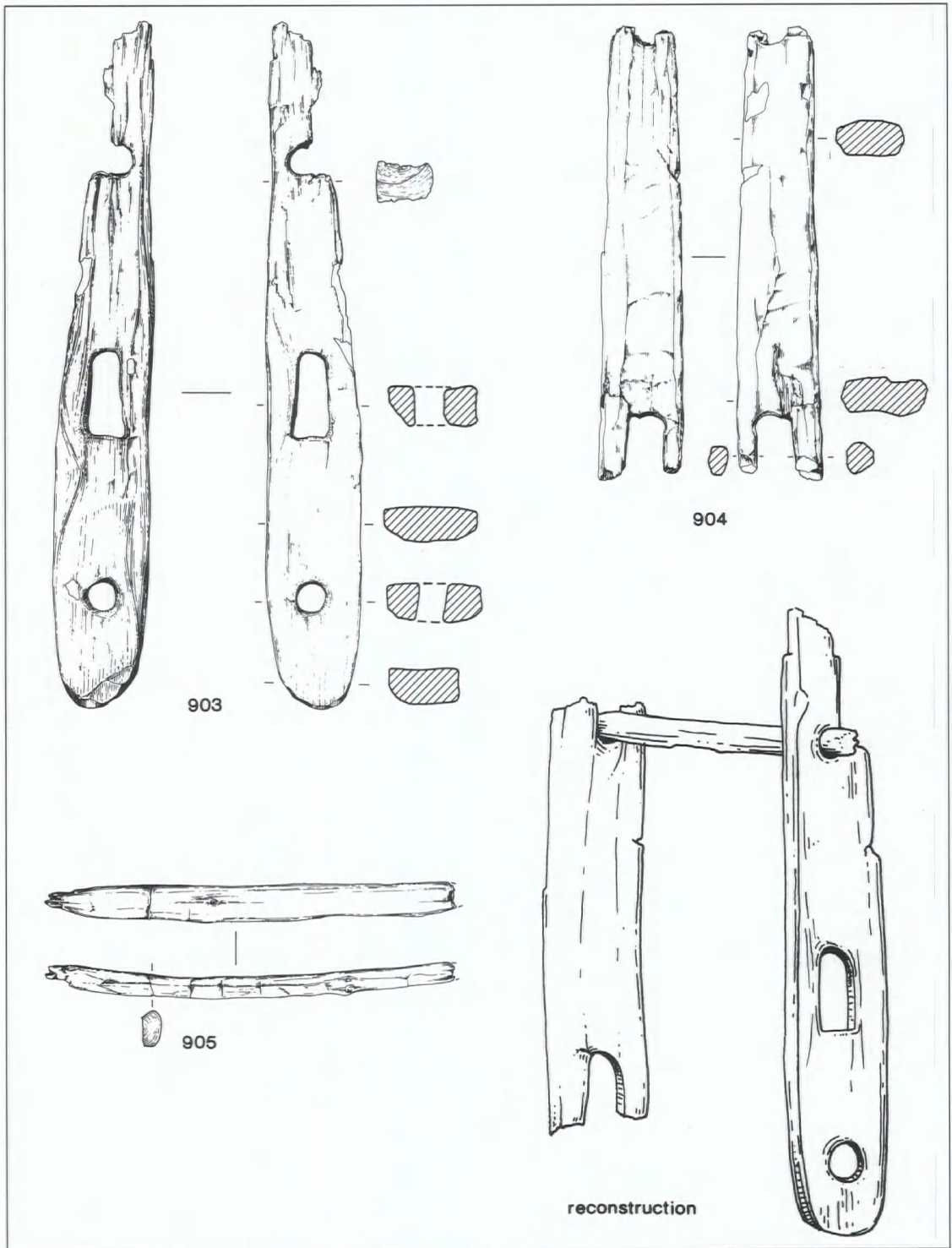


Figure 19 Stiles RA 903 and RA 904 and rung RA 905 (scale 1:8) and partial reconstruction of ladder

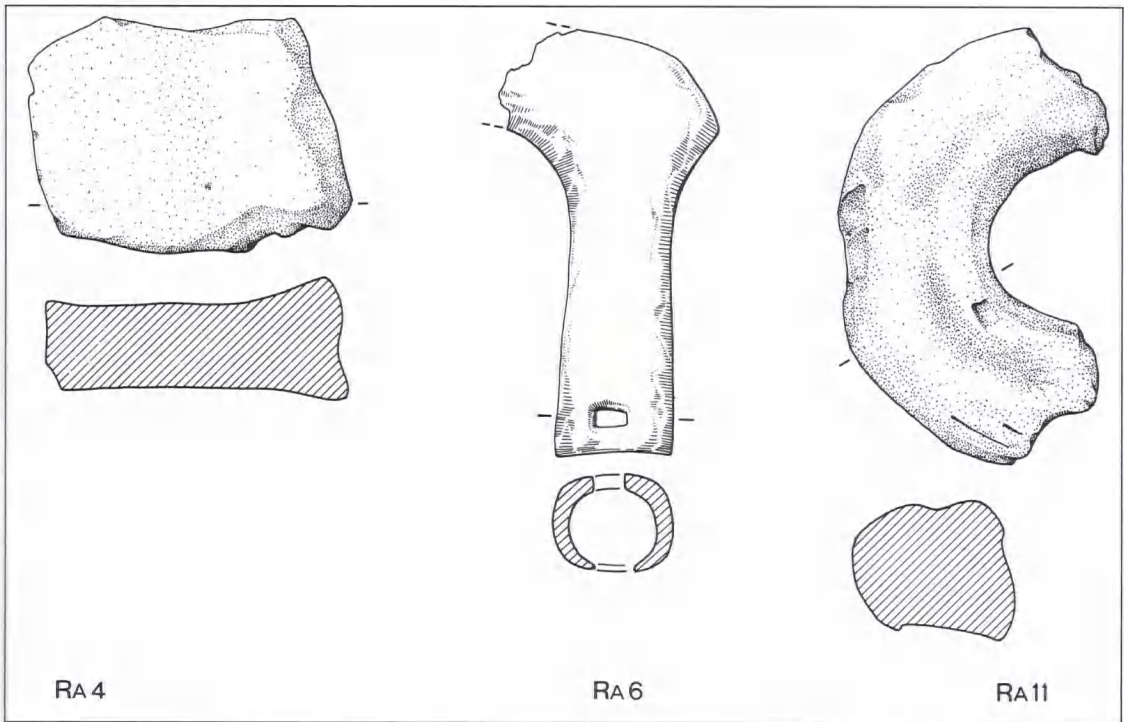


Figure 20 Quern fragment RA 4 (scale 1:4), reaping hook RA 6 and loomweight RA 11 (scale 1:2)

sparse calcareous material, 0.5-1.6mm. Estimated external diameter 120mm; estimated internal diameter, 70mm; depth 37mm.

RA 13, G4, L27, Ph 5b, *Ceramic*

Round sectioned annular loomweight from tertiary fill within ditch G3. Approximately 20% complete, comprising only part of the inner ring. Fabric is very soft, with orange coloured surface and mid-dark grey core. Contains only sparse clear quartz 0.3-0.6mm. Estimated internal diameter 50-60mm.

Ferrous metalworking residues

Small quantities of ferrous slag (iron silicate) were recovered from the study area, principally from Iron Age phases (Table 1). Of this material, only the

hearth bottoms from deposit G125 (filling pit G124) and deposit G91 (filling ditch G90), can be related to a particular metal-working process (iron smithing). Both examples exhibit the characteristic dished surfaces resulting from pressure diverted downwards from the tuyère. Unfortunately only that from deposit G91 is complete, measuring 70x85mm and 35mm in depth. These dimensions, although small, are comparable to those of Iron Age hearth bottoms from Salford, Bedfordshire (Duncan forthcoming).

The remaining slag consists of vesicular material, in blocky or amorphous form, which can originate from either smithing or smelting.

Phase	2b	3	3b		6b	
<i>Groups</i>	125	91	108	123	138	Total
<i>Fill of</i>	124	90	107	122	137	
vitriified clay			4			4g
dense ferrous slag	–	–	–	47	–	47g
vesicular ferrous slag	–	–	–	22	148g	170g
hearth bottom	610	309	–	–	–	919g
Total	610	309	4	69	148g	1140g

Table 1 Industrial residues (weight in g) by phase

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY 10: AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

Reaping hook

Reaping hooks are known in Britain from the early Iron Age and continue in use into the Roman and medieval periods. The example from Hinksley Road cannot be classified and dated exactly because it is incomplete. An Iron Age date is probable, although a later date cannot be ruled out. The rivet hole set into the socket is a feature of many recorded Roman examples (Manning 1985, plates 22-25).

RA 6, G93, L15, Ph 3, Iron (Fig 20)

Heavily corroded, split-socketed object from primary fill of ditch G92. Revealed by x-ray to incorporate part of a curving blade. The socket is apparently perforated close to the end, presumably to accommodate a rivet. Length c.72mm; diameter of socket c.37mm.

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY 15: FLINT ARTEFACTS

The flint was in a variable condition, suffering from considerable post-depositional damage. Cortex remained on c.48% of the worked flint, suggesting that the raw material was often small nodules derived from local gravel or clay deposits.

The presence of a crested blade (Fig 21.1), a number of bladelets and truncated blades (Fig 21.2) indicates Mesolithic activity. Two end-scrapers of similar form were manufactured from long and narrow blade-like blanks. These are probably of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date (Figs 21.3 and 21.4).

The majority of the assemblage is likely to date to the late Neolithic and beyond. The cores are multi-platform, varying in size and lacking edge preparation noted with the blade cores. One knife (Fig 21.5) has a backing of continuous abrupt retouch and partial invasive retouch to the cutting edge; this technique may indicate a "Beaker" date.

No variations were detected in the flint artefacts recovered from Iron Age deposits to those artefacts, considered typologically to be late Bronze Age in date. Unlike at Thetford (Gardiner 1993) and St. Ives (Pollard 1996) there was no evidence to suggest that the use of flint continued into the Iron Age.

OVERVIEW OF THE REGISTERED AND NON-CERAMIC BULK ARTEFACT EVIDENCE

The small non-ceramic artefact assemblage allows

only limited conclusions to be drawn about the character and date of activity within the study area.

Early prehistoric

Evidence for early prehistoric activity is limited to a large but disparate flint assemblage that ranges in date from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. No significant concentrations were detected by the field artefact collection and few tools were present.

Iron Age

Non-ceramic artefacts from deposits assigned to Iron Age phases are confined to fragments from two saddle querns and a reaping hook. The relatively small quantity of industrial residues recovered from Phases 2b and 3b is consistent with the likely scale of craft activity at small farmstead sites. The presence of two hearth bottoms suggest small scale smithing was taking place, in common with most Iron Age settlement sites. The residues do not assist a recent re-appraisal of Iron Age metalworking practises, which suggested that smelting may have been far more widespread than once thought.

The overall dearth of artefacts dated to the Iron Age is in contrast to the large pottery assemblage from the study area. This apparent imbalance can partly be explained by the economics of the period, notably the rarity and expense of metals. In such circumstances, metal items of all kinds would be carefully looked after and wherever possible "recycled" if worn out. The small number of quernstones may be more significant and give a genuine indication of the relative insignificance of cereal production.

Roman

Non-ceramic artefacts of Roman date comprise a granite quern fragment and seven iron nails. This meagre assemblage reveals little about the nature of activity in the Roman period. The presence of nails reflects changes in construction techniques, while their discard may indicate an increased capacity for iron production. The presence of a quern of granite, possibly from Leicestershire reflects the expansion in trading routes which characterises the period.

Saxon

Evidence for Saxon activity within the study area comprises two fragments of annular loomweights, the lower part of a wooden ladder and three small fragments of leather. All artefacts, except one of the

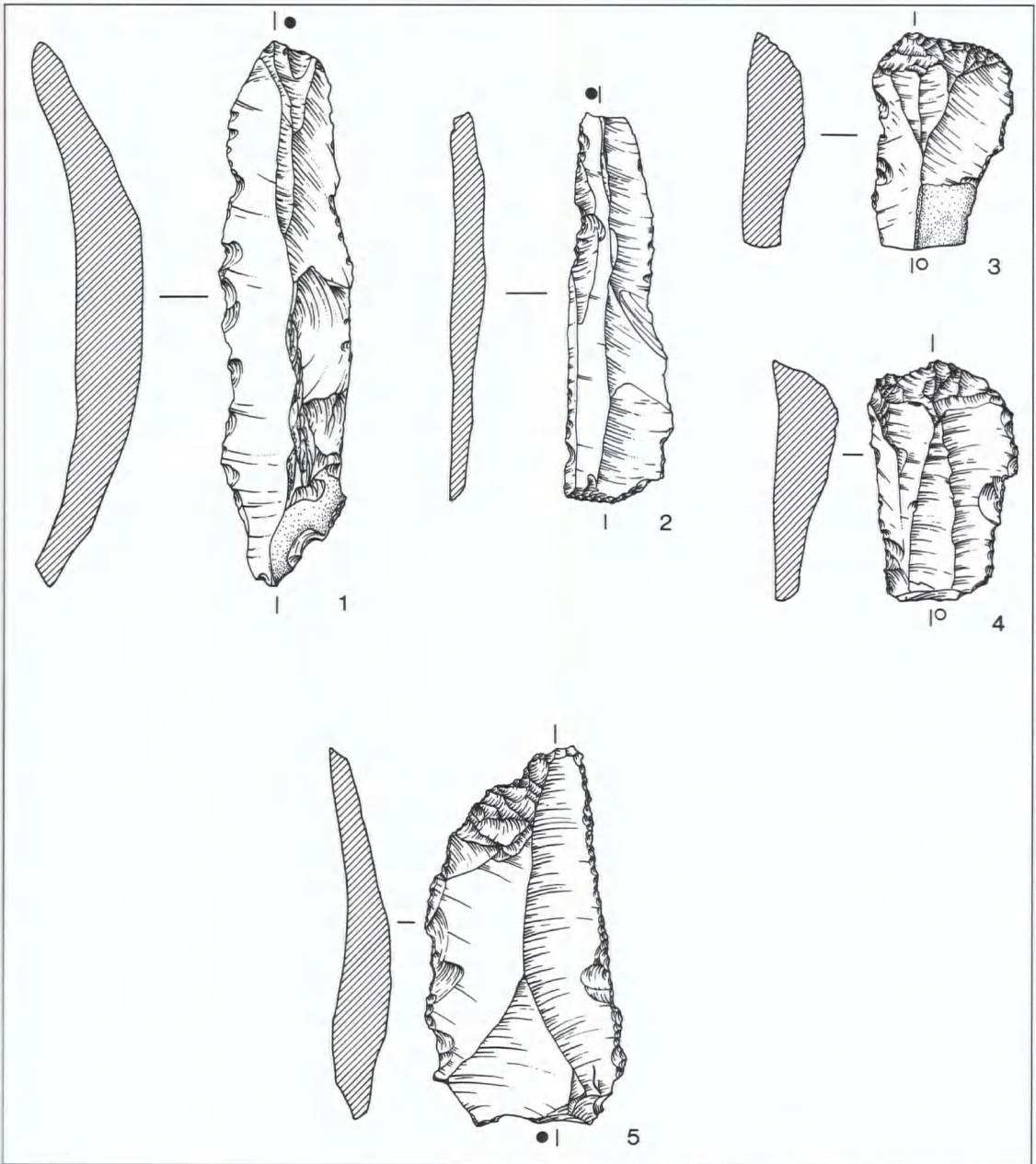


Figure 21 Flint artefacts (scale 1:1).

1) Crested blade 2) Truncated blade 3-4) Scraper 5) Knife

loomweight fragments, were deposited in well G27. Annular loomweights are generally ubiquitous on Saxon settlements reflecting a truly 'home-based' weaving tradition. King (1986) in his study of over

500 Millstone Grit and lava querns from the region failed to identify any material of conclusively early Saxon origin.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

A total of twenty-two soil samples were collected during the evaluation and the excavation. Sampling was targeted on waterlogged deposits and deposits containing visible charred plant remains.

WATERLOGGED MACROSCOPIC PLANT AND INVERTEBRATE REMAINS

Mark Robinson

Only four samples contained waterlogged remains. The material was assessed but no detailed analysis was undertaken.

6, G99, fill of pit G98, L3, P3b

Preservation was mediocre. Plant remains included glumes of *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat), frond fragments of *Pteridium aquilinum* (bracken) and various weed seeds. Beetle remains included dung beetles such as *Aphodius* sp.

12, G59, fill of pond G58, L16, P5b

Preservation was poor. Contained seeds of marsh/water edge plants.

16, G28, fill of well G27, L31, P6b

Produced an assemblage very similar to that of sample 12.

20, G58, fill of pond G58, L16, P5b

Preservation was very poor. Contained glumes of *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat).

CHARRED MACROSCOPIC PLANT REMAINS

Lisa Moffett

The soil samples were processed by water flotation, using a 0.5mm mesh sieve to collect the flots, which were then dried at room temperature. The flots were sorted and the material identified by the author, using a low power binocular microscope at up to x40 magnification. The taxonomy used follows Stace (1991). Five samples contained charred remains. The results are summarised below; the detailed quantification is retained in the site archive.

4, G34, fill of hearth G33, L18, P5b

Contained very little other than wood charcoal.

5, G102, fill of pit G102, L16, P5

The charred material consisted mainly of grains of wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and unidentifiable cereal grains which were probably also wheat. The wheat may have been spelt (*Triticum spelta*), although it was not possible to be certain about this from the small amount of chaff material recovered. A few weed

seeds including dock (*Rumex* sp.), vetch or vetchling (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) and grasses (Poaceae) were present; these could have been crop contaminants. A single seed of hawthorn (*Crataegus* cf. *monogyna*) and a thorn which could have been hawthorn or sloe (*Crataegus/Prunus spinosa*) may have been associated with the wood charcoal in the sample rather than the crop remains.

7, G93, fill of ditch G92, L15, P3

Contained very little charred material with a few grains of wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and grass seeds (Poaceae).

9, G52, fill of ditch G50, L10, P3b

Contained very little charred material with only a single grain of wheat (*Triticum* sp.).

17, G26, fill of ditch G25, L18, P5b

Contained somewhat more chaff fragments than cereal grains. The chaff fragments were mostly glume/bases identified as either emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*), although the few which were well preserved enough to identify to species were all of spelt. About half the cereal grains could be identified as wheat; the other half were unidentifiable. The weeds in the sample were similar to those in the material from sample 5.

DISCUSSION

Phase 3: pre-“Belgic” Iron Age enclosed settlement

The samples provide only limited information on the economy and local environment of the Phase 3 Iron Age settlement. The glumes of spelt wheat in the waterlogged sample 6 may have been derived from crop processing. The fragments of bracken, which is known from several Iron Age sites, in the same sample may indicate this plant was imported as a bedding material for animals or humans. The presence of dung beetles may be interpreted as further tentative evidence for the presence of livestock within one of the non-settlement enclosures.

Phase 5: Roman enclosures and fields

It is possible that the charred remains from samples 5 and 17 represent different stages of crop (probably spelt) processing. Sample 5 could be from a stage where the crop was fully, or almost fully, processed and ready for consumption, while sample 17 could represent the fine sieving by-product of crop processing (see Hilman 1984) with some grain mixed in from another source. The sample from the well, however, could have had more chaff material in it before it became charred and may not have been as fully processed as it now seems. The evidence from the charred plant remains does not

show whether the crop was grown at the site. Spelt can be stored in the spikelet (*i.e.* with the grain still enclosed in the glumes) to prolong its storage life.

Phase 6: unenclosed Saxon settlement

The seeds of marsh/water edges plants recovered sample 16 are appropriate for a feature interpreted as a well.

ANIMAL BONE

INTRODUCTION

Animal bone was hand collected from 21 deposits; in addition only two soil samples produced bone. The soil conditions are likely to explain the small quantity recovered and the assemblage's extremely fragmentary nature. The best preserved material was recovered from deposits likely to have been subject to a degree of waterlogging.

Where possible the assemblage was identified to species and skeletal element. The material was assessed for potential but no detailed analysis was undertaken due to the small and fragmentary nature of the assemblage.

DISCUSSION

The bulk of the assemblage was recovered from deposits assigned to Phases 3 and 5. In Phase 3 cattle bones were only recovered from the non-settlement enclosures, although cattle, dog and pig bones were recovered from the settlement enclosure. Horse bones were only present in Phase 5 deposits that also contained cattle bones. The majority of the bone from Phase 5 comprised cattle, dog and pig from pond G58 and horse from adjacent features.

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Despite the relatively limited extent of the study area, the investigations revealed several phases of activity from the Iron Age to the Saxon period. Unfortunately, notwithstanding a sizeable pottery assemblage, the three pre-"Belgic" Iron Age phases cannot be more precisely dated than the 5th-1st century BC. The earliest settlement was unenclosed and was subsequently replaced by a substantial enclosed farmstead. Later during the pre-"Belgic" period settlement may have shifted beyond the

study area. Although activity dating to the early Roman period was located, it is possible the main area of Roman settlement was situated to the W of the study area. Only limited activity took place during the later Roman period, prior to the establishment of an unenclosed Saxon settlement.

EARLY PREHISTORIC ACTIVITY

Early prehistoric activity is suggested by a flint assemblage ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age, similar to that located at Ruxox Farm (Fadden 1970). Despite the presence of a double ring ditch to the east of the study area no habitation of this period existed within the study area.

PHASE 2: UNENCLOSED PRE-"BELGIC" IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

The limited nature of the artefactual assemblage from the earliest settlement makes precise dating impossible. The sparse ceramic assemblage is restricted to sandy fabrics F28 and F29, which correlate to the second chronological subdivision established by Knight (1984); 5th-1st century BC. This tradition is dominated by ovoid forms and restricted decoration.

The nature of the settlement, with the total absence of boundaries, can be classed as 'open' or unenclosed. At the time of Knight's study this class (Group 4) was considered relatively uncommon in this region. Hingley's (1984) study of settlement evidence and social organisation within the Upper Thames Valley suggested that although these settlement types appear similar in form, they result from diverse social and economic functions. A comparable 'open' settlement at Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat 1994) was situated in a similar geographical location on high ground overlooking a river valley. The excavators of this site considered the absence of enclosures was probably explained by the stalling of livestock nearer the valley bottom, closer to the supply of water.

The settlement comprises three foci of activity, each including evidence for buildings and isolated small pits. The buildings conform to the general type found elsewhere in the region, for example Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat 1994), with circular buildings contained within drainage ditches. The semicircular structure G19 does not fit neatly into Knight's classification of this type of structure. The excavated example cannot contribute to the debate as to whether they were roofed. It may

be significant that like other examples, e.g. Moulton Park (Williams 1974), the open side was situated to the W. They may have functioned as small animal pens or windbreaks behind which other activities took place. Perhaps significantly, the Hinksley Road structure was associated with a pit which may have been lined. As at Bancroft, it is impossible to define whether the settlement pattern resulted from the linear drift of a single farmstead or represented a degree of zoning within a larger settlement.

The scarcity of animal bone (due at least in part to soil conditions) and plant remains prevent a fuller discussion on the settlement's economy. The significance to be attached to the absence of both 4-posters and storage pits is unclear. Bancroft contained 4-post structures interpreted as grain stores (Williams and Zeepvat 1994) but no storage pits. At Bancroft it was suggested that the total absence of storage pits was due to the poorly drained nature of the subsoil. Had storage pits existed beyond the limit of excavation at Hinksley Road, the geophysical survey would have located them. Therefore, the balance of evidence appears to suggest that the storage of grain was not a major feature of the economy of the settlement.

The settlement, like Pennylands (Williams 1993), was probably agriculturally self-sufficient. The general styles and types of pottery suggest it was manufactured locally. The fragment of a hearth bottom indicates that iron smithing for repairing and reforging tools was undertaken within the settlement. The absence of metal artefacts suggests few items were ever disposed of, probably because they were being continually recycled.

PHASE 3: ENCLOSED PRE-"BELGIC" IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

A substantial ditched settlement enclosure, presumably with a bank/hedge, was established on the site of one of the Phase 2 farmsteads. This enclosure was sub-circular in plan, enclosing an area of 1,034m² surrounded by a ditch 3.8m wide and over 0.8m deep. The area and shape of the enclosure are similar to those excavated at Pennylands and Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al* 1996). The substantial nature of the ditch may be compared with the ditch enclosing settlements at Moulton Park and Draughton (Grimes 1961). At Draughton the enclosure was 30m across and contained three houses of varying size. The four possible entranceways into the Hinksley Road enclosure were only located by geophysical survey

and are, therefore, not proven. The S entrance was associated with additional external ditches designed to control access. The tradition of enclosing the principal settlement area with a ditch and bank is common from the 4th century BC to the Roman Conquest and beyond (Cunliffe 1991).

The settlement enclosure contained two roundhouses, identified by their circular drainage gullies. The larger (12m diameter), centrally placed building would have dominated the enclosure. The second, smaller, structure was located close to the enclosure's S ditch. No evidence of walling in the form of postholes, palisades or stakeholes was located. The position of the doorway in both buildings is uncertain, although door posts for the larger building were probably situated to the NE. The smaller roundhouse clearly did not have a doorway to the W and it is probable that both roundhouses conform to the expected pattern with doorways situated to the E (Oswald 1991). Hill (1995) suggests recent studies have shown this preference for an easterly direction cannot be explained purely by functional requirements, for example, avoidance of the prevailing wind, but may result from a desire to enter and leave a building the "correct" way (*i.e.* facing the sunrise).

Although not proven by dateable artefacts, the spatial arrangement of this enclosure, and a group of seven others to the SW, suggests they are contemporary. However, the difficulties in accurately establishing stratigraphical relationships between enclosure ditches with near identical fills should not be underestimated. The two largest enclosures were defined by ditches which had clear evidence for recutting on a least one occasion. However, evidence for recutting and cleaning of ditches is always difficult to detect, so that it is possible that the others were also periodically renewed. Only the entrance to one enclosure (L3) was located. This was situated to the SE and was, therefore, perhaps significantly, not orientated towards the settlement enclosure. The majority of the enclosures did not contain any internal features. Where present these are interpreted as water collection pits.

A number of enclosed settlements in the region are associated with additional enclosures, for example Pennylands (Williams 1993) and Blackthorn (Williams 1974). Within Bedfordshire a number of aerial photographs indicate interlinked sub-rounded enclosures similar in nature to the Hinksley Road settlement, for example at Ravensden (HER 15041) and Great Barford (HER 1630 and 1800). St Joseph (1972) suggested one of

the Great Barford sites represented gradual evolution over a period of time, and included trackways and settlement enclosures. Even on excavated sites, such as Pennylands, without accurate dating or stratigraphical evidence it is often impossible to be certain that settlement activity was contemporary with enclosure ditches. Such activity could simply reflect the repeated occupation of a preferred settlement location.

The shape and entranceway arrangement of L3 is similar to 'Banjo'-type enclosures, so common in other areas of the country, for example Micheldever, Hampshire (Fasham 1987). These are frequently associated with stock control and are relatively rare in this region, although one was investigated at Wavendon Gate (Williams, Hart and Williams 1996).

The meagre animal bone assemblage is of no statistical value. However, it may be noted that cattle, dog and pig bones were recovered from the settlement enclosure, while the other enclosures only produced cattle bones. Environmental evidence from one of the features interpreted as a water pit indicates that although animals were present (as evidenced by the presence of dung beetles) crop processing was also taking place. As already discussed, the significance of the absence of storage pits or 4-post structures is impossible to gauge. The recovery of saddle quern fragments (surprisingly only two) and part of a reaping hook suggest arable cultivation was taking place.

On balance, the non-settlement enclosures are likely to have been for stock, although whether this represents a transition from an arable economy in Phase 2 is impossible to say. It may be that more intensive utilisation of the flood plain or environmental changes made it necessary to keep stock nearer to the settlement.

Within the settlement enclosure small quantities of slag were recovered, in the vicinity of the main roundhouse. A complete hearth base was also recovered from just outside the enclosure. As in Phase 2 it appears small scale metalworking was practised, probably only in the form of smithing to repair and reforge tools. The general styles and types of pottery suggest local manufacture. Ovoid forms still dominate, with a high proportion of heavily built vessels. These have thick sides and occasionally extremely thick bases and may have functioned as storage vessels for dry foodstuffs, such as grain or flour.

Hill (1995) has suggested that deposits containing large artefact assemblages including

different types should be closely studied to assess whether there is any significance to the associations. At Hinksley Road three Iron Age deposits (all from ditches) each contained more than 300 pottery vessels. Two of these deposits were situated within the short ditch lengths of L17 immediately adjacent to the settlement enclosure. Possibly significantly one of these deposits contained part of the curving blade of a reaping hook (the only metal object recovered from the site). The third deposit was situated in a ditch terminal. It is unfortunate that due to the limited nature of the metalwork and animal bone assemblage, Hinksley Road cannot be used to contribute more fully to the debate on rubbish and ritual deposits.

PHASE 4: PRE-"BELGIC" IRON AGE FIELD SYSTEM AND SETTLEMENT SHIFT

The pottery assemblage from this phase is comparable to that of the preceding phases. Although a relatively large assemblage, no vessels possessed the characteristics of wheel manufacture and "Belgic" style decoration. The artefactual dating evidence, once again, can be no more precise than between the 5th and 1st century BC.

In Phase 4 the focus of settlement may have shifted beyond the study area. The only features assigned to this phase are a boundary ditch and associated trackway. This major boundary is aligned on a similar orientation to some of the previously existing enclosure ditches, suggesting some of the elements of the Phase 3 landscape were still visible.

It is uncertain if the pottery recovered from the boundary ditch relates to contemporary activity outside the study area, or is the result of the disturbance of earlier midden deposits.

A number of enclosed settlements are known to continue into the early Roman period, for example Moulton Park. At Hinksley Road the settlement enclosures clearly ceased to function, but the limited extent of the study area make it impossible to determine whether the settlement had been abandoned or had simply shifted in location.

PHASE 5: ROMAN FIELD SYSTEM AND TRACKWAY

The Phase 5 pottery assemblage comprised mainly local coarsewares, but also some imported finewares. These suggest activity commenced in the early 2nd century AD and continued into the 3rd

century AD. More limited activity in the 4th century AD is indicated by the presence of pottery of this date within a well.

During the early Roman period a system of regular fields incorporating a trackway was established on a SW-NE orientation. The trackway was defined by two parallel ditches, which were an integral part of the adjoining field system. When the alignment of the track is projected to the NE, towards the Roman settlement at Ruxox Farm (HER 918), it coincides with two parallel ditches visible as a cropmark and interpreted as a Roman road. It would be unwise to suggest this alignment may form part of the Woburn to Dunton Roman road (HER 5342) proposed by the Viatore (1964). It could, however, represent a local track connecting the Hinksley Road settlement with the major settlement at Ruxox Farm. Such local trackways with associated field systems are common on the first river gravel terrace, for example at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979). Although located on aerial photographs they are often proved, by excavation, to be of Roman origin, for example Stanton Harcourt (McGavin 1980). At Farmoor the trackway crossed the gravel terrace to meet the edge of the floodplain and then turned to run along its edge. This arrangement, along with biological evidence, suggested the track functioned mainly as a droveway. The evidence from the study area is insufficient to suggest this may have been the function of the Hinksley Road track.

The trackside ditches were intermittent, being fairly continuous over the W half of the study area and absent over the E. This may suggest that they are also intermittent in other areas. "Local" trackways of this kind may have only been defined by ditches where this was necessary either for drainage, supplying stones for the surface or where it was important to establish a boundary. Simco (1984) has noted abrupt discontinuities in trackside ditches on aerial photographs in respect of the Cople/Willington "road". Similarly the trackway at Broughton (Petchey 1978) did not continue into a recently evaluated area 100m to the E (BCAS 1995b).

It is probable that the ditches running parallel and perpendicular to the trackway were dug at the same time. The visible extent of this system suggests the fields were usually rectangular, but could vary in size. A similar system of fields opening off a central trackway in the Thames Valley, was considered by Miles (1978) to represent the yards, closes and paddocks of an adjacent settlement. At Hinksley

Road, as at Broughton, the nucleus of the settlement may be outside the study area.

Only one of the fields (L16) contained settlement related activity. It may be significant that this activity did not occur in a field adjacent to the trackway. The evidence comprised wells, waterholes, pits, a quarry or pond, a hearth and gravel surfaces. Similar activity is recorded within the fields at Broughton (Petchey 1978). It is not possible to say if this activity was contemporary with the original field system or represents expansion into it. The nature of the activity and the quantity of pottery recovered suggest it represents settlement and not merely seasonal occupation. The original function of pond/quarry G58 is uncertain, but clearly it could have provided clay for pottery manufacture.

The field systems at Broughton were considered by Petchey (1978) to serve different economic purposes. The environmental evidence from Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979) suggested this system was set in grassland with the larger enclosures functioning as paddocks. Petchey considered the various sizes and shapes of the fields at Broughton to suggest a variety of uses, some paddocks and stockyards, but others small arable fields. Lambrick and Robinson (1979) suggested that the blank areas between clusters of fields might represent the main arable and grassland fields. These could have been unenclosed or enclosed by boundaries which leave no physical trace.

It would be unwise to suggest that the fields attached to the trackway at Hinksley Road had either a single function, or that each was used for different functions. The situation is probably more complex and is likely to have changed over time.

The only evidence for craft activity is a possible quarry that might have produced clay for use in pottery manufacture. Kilns (HER 6743) of early Roman date were located to the NW of the study area and the suitability of the clay is not in doubt. No pottery wasters were identified in the assemblage, although a number of fabrics are presumed to be locally produced. Pottery kilns of 1st and 2nd century AD date are frequently found associated with farmsteads, for example at Warren Villas (Dawson and Maull 1996) and recently excavated within the Biddenham Loop (BCAS in prep).

Roman activity within the study area was mainly of 2nd and 3rd century AD date. Deposits filling well G31, however, contained 4th century AD pottery. These deposits also contained a number of

nails and fragments of brick, roof and flue tile. These suggest the presence of a high status building in the vicinity.

PHASE 6: UNENCLOSED SAXON SETTLEMENT

The presence of Saxon occupation within the study area has been deduced from the recovery of two Anglo-Saxon annular loomweights typologically dated to no later than the end of the 7th century. Only one of the features assigned to this phase can be shown, on stratigraphical grounds, to be late in date.

Evidence for Saxon settlement is limited to one well, one pit and two ditches. The ditches were too small to function as enclosures. Both were perpendicular to the Roman trackway, suggesting it may have survived in some form into this period. This is supported by the presence of a loomweight in the upper fill of one of its ditches. The presence of a well (on the limit of the excavated area) suggests domestic occupation in the vicinity. On some dispersed settlements like Hartigans wells and buildings could be separated by 150m. At both Pennylands and Hartigans it was difficult to define both the settlement pattern and even the limits of the settlements (Williams 1993).

Williams (1993) has noted that, when the local geology permits, wells (as either the main source of water or as a supplement to surface collection) are commonplace on Saxon settlements. The method of construction usually utilised upright stakes with interwoven wattle, as for example at Stratton, Biggleswade (BCAS in prep).

The presence of waterlogged seeds of cultivated plants within the well should be treated with caution, as this feature truncates a Roman ditch and therefore could contain residual material.

The only evidence for traded items is the granite quernstone from the well, although this may be residual from Roman deposits. There is, however, some evidence for on-site textile working. The presence of two examples of the ubiquitous annular clay loomweights testifies to textile production probably at the family level. Two leather fragments from the well exhibit knife cut edges suggesting they are manufacturing waste. Again, these fragments may be residual from Roman deposits. Limited quantities of slag suggest small scale smithing may have been undertaken, although no hearths or furnace bottoms were located. The local clay is known to be suitable for pottery manufacture

in the Roman period and could have been utilised during this period.

SUMMARY

Despite the study area being situated adjacent to a presumed Bronze Age double ring ditch, the earliest settlement was established in the Iron Age. Three phases of pre-"Belgic" settlement were identified and a sizeable ceramic assemblage recovered. However, in the absence of a more precise chronology for the pottery fabrics of this period, it is unfortunately impossible to determine the longevity of individual phases. Nor can they be assigned a more precise date than the second half of the first millennium BC. The settlement was initially open but later enclosed. The latter included a domestic enclosure and a system of linked animal corrals, suggesting a pastoralist economy during this phase.

No evidence for "Belgic" Iron Age activity was recovered. It is uncertain whether the site was abandoned in favour of the large, valley bottom, settlement at Ruxox Farm or whether occupation simply shifted beyond the limits of the study area. Activity recommenced in the 2nd century AD, apparently peripheral to a settlement situated to the W of the study area. A trackway provided access to the valley bottom at Ruxox Farm. Limited evidence was identified for a Saxon period settlement.

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