IRON AGE AND ROMAN SETTLEMENTS, WITH PREHISTORIC AND SAXON FEATURES, AT FENNY LOCK, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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Small-scale fieldwalking and limited trial-trenching in 1975/6, carried out in the search for a suspected Roman road, located a quantity of Roman finds and subsoil deposits suggesting the presence of a settlement. Subsequently, an evaluation was conducted in June 1996 as a part of proposals to develop the site. This revealed extensive deposits of earlier prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman date and subsequent excavation took place between September and November 1996. The excavation revealed limited evidence for Mesolithic, earlier Neolithic and Bronze Age activity, together with more extensive late Bronze Age through to middle Iron Age occupation. The latter consisted of post-built structures, small ring-gully enclosures and a pit alignment. Roman occupation was found at two locations. On one site early Roman occupation consisted of ring-gully structures, field systems, and paddocks that went out of use by the end of the 2nd century AD. On the other a large early Roman enclosure was succeeded by later Roman ring-gully enclosures, ditched field boundaries, enclosures, and a structure that had been rebuilt in stone. Later ploughing had badly damaged a number of human cremations and inhumations. Post-Roman activity included one, possibly two, Saxon sunken-featured buildings. Medieval ridge and furrow overlay the site. There are reports on the pottery, struck flint, quernstones, metalwork, glass, burials and animal bone.

INTRODUCTION

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out at Fenny Lock, Milton Keynes (centred on SP 8845 3460) (Fig. 1). The work was carried out as part of proposals by the Commission for the New Towns to release the land for development as a food distribution centre, and was funded by them. There were severe financial constraints on the programme. The evaluation was carried out according to a brief prepared by Mr Michael Farley, County Archaeological Officer for Buckinghamshire. The archaeological fieldwork took place during June 1996 (evaluation) and between September and November 1996 (excavation). The site code is FLMK96 and the finds have been deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum Service (Acc. no. AYBCM1997.137 CAS7004 MK5898).

The archaeology of the city of Milton Keynes is better known than any other region in the British Isles. When the new city was first planned, little archaeological information about the area was available but, at the outset of development, systematic excavation and recording by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit was integrated within the development timetable (Mynard 1987, xi). This work has led to the publication of a series of reports of a site-specific and synthetic nature (e.g. Williams 1993; Mynard 1987) and has provided a framework with which to address the significance

of new sites discovered during continued development of the conurbation.

At Fenny Lock, trial trenching by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit in 1975 and by members of Bletchley Archaeological and Historical Society in 1976 located features containing finds of Roman date. Subsequent systematic fieldwalking, casual surface finds, and metal detecting have produced further Roman material as well as prehistoric flints, Saxon pottery, metalwork, etc. (Mynard 1987, site 309, 23). The course of an alleged Roman road (Viatores 1964) crosses the westernmost part of the development site. In addition, lying as it does on the edge of the floodplain of the River Ouzel and not too distant from Watling Street and the Roman town of Magiovinium (Neal 1987; Hunn *et al.* 1995), the area is likely to have been a favoured location for settlement at various times during the past (Fig. 1).

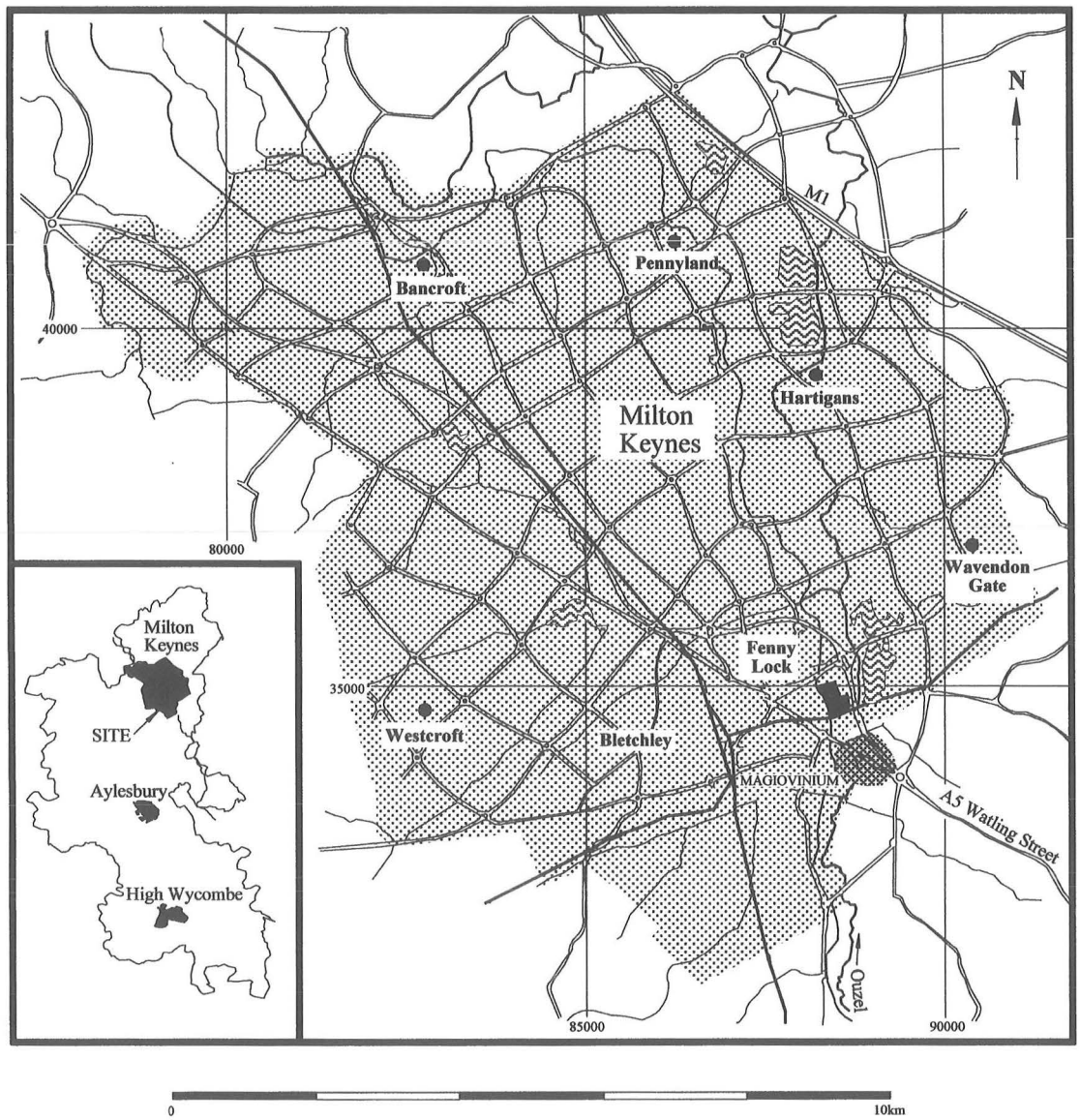

FIGURE 1 Location of Fenny Lock within the city of Milton Keynes and its position relative to other sites

The Site

The development site, of *c.* 26 hectares, is adjacent to the River Ouzel to the east, and bordered to the west by the Grand Union Canal, and to the south by the Bletchley–Bedford railway line (Fig. 1). It includes areas of the former Bletchley Sewage Treatment Works and associated buildings, with areas of landfill to the north. The central, south and west parts were open farmland. The land slopes gently from west to east and encompasses parts of the river terrace and the slope down onto the flood-plain of the Ouzel, a topographic feature exaggerated by a medieval headland. The British Geological Survey of the area (BGS 1992) indicates that the site lies on alluvium and river terrace gravel.

The Evaluation

The evaluation consisted of 132 trenches, each 20m long, located within the area of approximately 15.8 hectares that was thought to consist of undisturbed farmland (Saunders 1996) (Fig. 2). The trenches revealed a large number of archaeological deposits comprising pits, ditches, postholes and artefact-rich spreads, which covered in total *c.* 5 hectares. Only a small proportion of the deposits were examined. They mostly dated to the Roman period but two small Neolithic pits were found and residual and unstratified sherds of Iron Age and Saxon pottery were also present.

The Excavation

The results of the evaluation identified four areas (A–D) for further examination by open-area trenching to make best use of the financial resources that could be assigned to the project. In-field adjustments to the dimensions of the excavated areas to better examine the real distribution of archaeological deposits meant that the division between Areas A and B was arbitrary and they are discussed together (Fig. 2). The description of the discoveries within the four areas follows the chronological scheme below:

Phases

1 Mesolithic
2 Neolithic
3 Early Bronze Age
4 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age
5 Middle/late Iron Age
6 Early Roman, later 1st century AD
7 Roman, 2nd to 3rd century AD
8 Roman, later 3rd century to 4th century AD
9 Early/middle Saxon
10 Medieval

Description of Excavation in Areas A and B

Area A consisted of an area machine-strip of 15,800sq m, and Area B 1,920sq m. Typically, 0.4m of rough ploughed topsoil and 0.1m of subsoil were removed to expose features cut through gravel and sand terrace deposits. During topsoil stripping it became clear that archaeological deposits had been cut through the subsoil deposit. However, except in a number of instances where features with pottery, such as cremation burials, were present (e.g. 4025 and 5119), the subsoil had to be removed to expose features clearly.

Phase 1: Mesolithic

The Mesolithic period was represented by a few residual or unstratified struck flints. A single rod microlith of later Mesolithic date was found in a posthole (5009) (Fig. 4). Several of the other struck flints from the site were blades or blade cores and could be of Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic date.

Phase 2: Neolithic

A single, circular bowl-shaped pit (44), found in evaluation trench 55, had a diameter of 0.75m and a depth of 0.29m. It contained 20 struck flints and 36 sherds of Neolithic pottery (Fig. 4). It was not possible to identify the pottery more specifically within the Neolithic period but several of the struck flints (blades) are more likely to be earlier Neolithic in date. Earlier Neolithic activity elsewhere in Area A is demonstrated by the presence of a leaf-shaped arrowhead, and in Area D by pit 224 (Fig. 2).

Phase 3: Early Bronze Age

A small, oval pit with a bowl-shaped profile (4317) contained a largely intact, collared biconical urn (Fig. 13), which was lying on its side. The pit was 0.5m x 0.3m and 0.15m deep. The fill contained a small fragment (0.4gms) of unidentifiable cremated bone and no charred plant remains.

Early Prehistoric

Four features, two pits (4328 and 4600) and two postholes (4736 and 5115), are dated by pottery

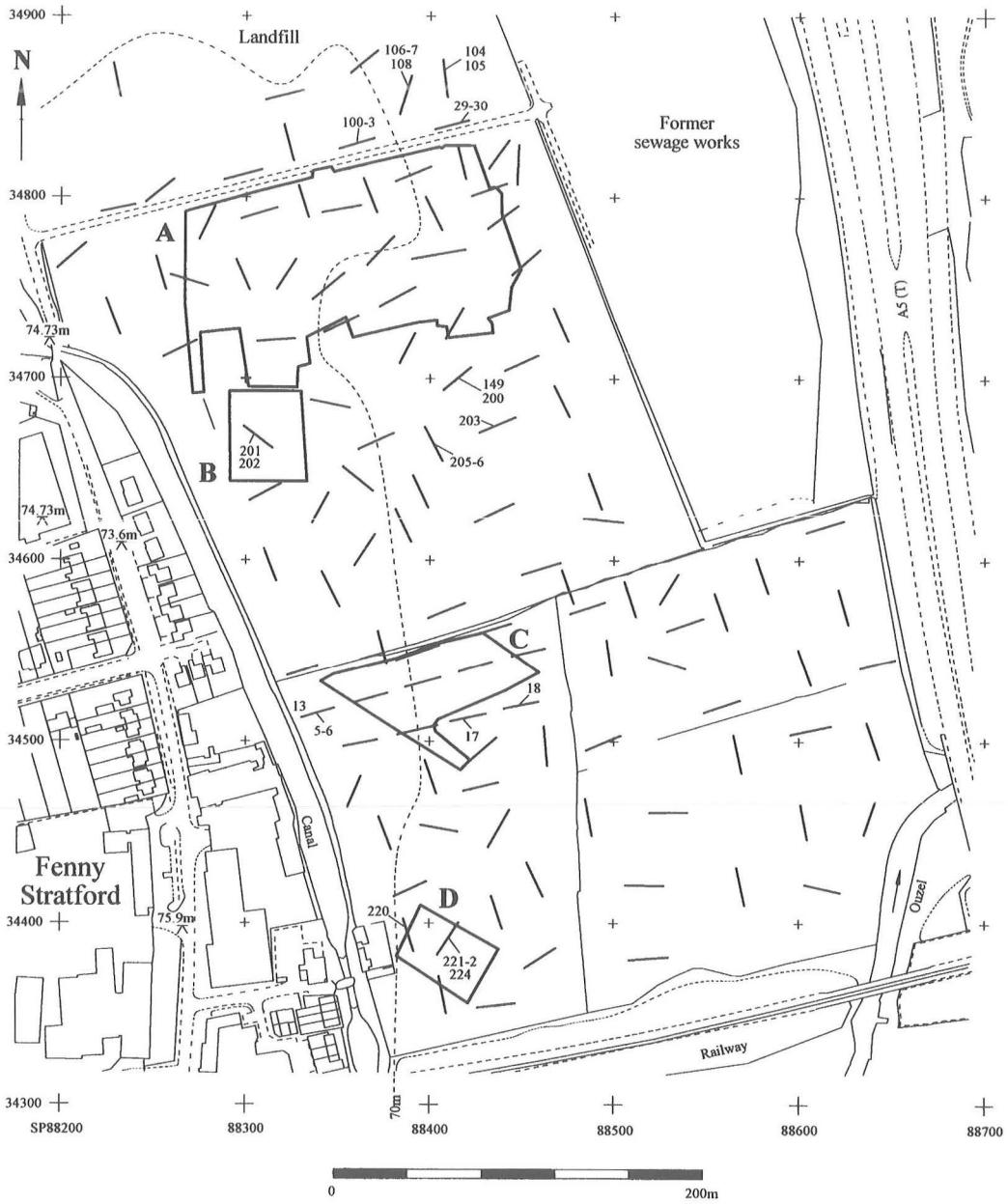

FIGURE 2 Location of Fenny Lock excavation trenches, evaluation trenches and other features mentioned in the text

that cannot be identified more specifically other than to say it is early prehistoric. Similarly, two other features (4512 and 4700) produced small quantities of poorly-dated struck flint, also broadly dated as early prehistoric.

Phase 4: Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

This period was characterised by a concentration of postholes and pits on the western side of the site, with a few outliers. Two possible post-built roundhouses were identified (500 and 501) (Fig. 4). Two

FIGURE 3 Areas A and B, showing all archaeological features including evaluation trenches, plough furrows and modern disturbance

other possible structures (502 and 503) were in the same area but, as the meagre dating evidence suggests that they are later in date, they have been discussed in a later section.

Roundhouses (Fig. 5)
Structure 500
The evidence for this possible structure comprised eight postholes (5031, 5046–8, 5132–3, 5136 and 5414) forming an oval area with a maximum diameter of 7.5m. The postholes ranged in diameter from 0.24m to 0.41m and in depth from 0.08 to 0.25m. Just one of the postholes (5136) produced datable pottery of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date. There was no evidence for internal structural features or for the likely position of an entrance.

Structure 501
A circular arrangement of up to 17 postholes (4902, 4904, 4912, 4941–2, 5040, 5042–4, 5120–2, 5124–7 and 5147) could be the remains of a large roundhouse, with a diameter of 13m. The postholes themselves were very diverse, ranging in diameter from 0.18m to 0.68m and in depth from 0.04m to 0.25m. There is a large gap on the western side, but no indication of an entrance or central hearth. Three of the postholes (5121, 5127 and 5147) produced late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery.

Pits
Eight pits can be assigned to this period (4512, 4524, 4729, 4812, 5041, 5139, 5206 and 5305). These were both circular and oval in plan, with maximum dimensions of 0.44m to 1.8m and between 0.09m and 0.44m deep. The profiles were usually bowl-shaped, sometimes with flat bases. One isolated feature (4729), which may have been a large posthole, had a more V-shaped profile. One feature (5142) contained pottery and animal bone but was irregular in both plan and profile and is thought to be a roothole. A single pit (5206) is of note as it contained fragments of unworked red deer antler.

Phase 5: Middle/Late Iron Age
In common with other excavated sites of Iron Age date within Milton Keynes and the east Midlands (Williams *et al.* 1996), a detailed chronology for this site was difficult to establish. The dating of deposits at Fenny Lock relies heavily upon pottery and, whilst sherds were retrieved from the majority of features, the slow typological development of this period does little to assist interpretation of the sequence. Except for a pit alignment at the eastern end of Area A, the majority of Iron Age deposits were located at the western end and in the adjacent Area B. The features mostly comprised postholes, with a number of ring gullies and pits.

Pit alignment (Fig. 4)
On the slope of the terrace, towards the eastern side of the site, was a sinuous pit alignment comprising at least 28 pits aligned approximately N–S. Several pits within the excavated area are likely to have been destroyed by later activity and the alignment continued in both directions beyond the edge of the excavation. Fourteen of the pits were examined, typically consisting of a circular pit with a bowl-shaped profile and with a range of depths from 0.14m to 0.51m and diameters from 0.68m to 1.40m. The spacing between the pits was usually about 1.2m but some pits were conjoining and others were irregularly spaced. Pottery from several of the pits is of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date but others contained middle/late Iron Age pottery. As there are no grounds for suggesting that the pit alignment was constructed in two phases, and as there is no evidence for recutting, it is most probable that the early pottery is residual. The boundary that this alignment defines appears to have been long-lived. An early Roman ditch (600) bends and approximately follows the alignment of the pits. The pit alignment was redefined in part by a gully (617), not closely dated but probably Roman (Fig. 6). Similarly, another early Roman ditch (601) runs parallel to the pit alignment, but 12m to the east.

Ring gullies and gully enclosures
Four lengths of gully may be parts of ring gullies (504–7; Figs 4 and 5). The most complete example is 504. This consisted of a roughly penannular gully, typically 0.48m wide and 0.17m deep, with a maximum internal dimension of 15.5m, of which 75% was visible. No entrance was found but there may have been one facing north or north-west as this segment of the gully was not present. In this gap was a section of another, unrelated curvilinear gully (505), which comprised approximately 20% of a complete circuit and had a diameter of *c.* 8m; the western end was a terminal. The gully was 0.28m across and 0.07m deep. A single posthole

(4832) possibly pre-dated the ring gully but the relationship was not entirely clear.

Numerous postholes, including four-post structure 508, were located both inside and outside ring gullies 504 and 505 but none of these were definitely associated with them (Fig. 5).

Ring gully 506, which conjoined 507, may have had additional gullies joining it (Fig. 4). Ring gully 506 was 0.74m wide and 0.31m deep and approximately 60% of the circuit was present, with a diameter of 9m, whereas ring gully 507 was more rectilinear in plan, 0.86m wide and 0.34m deep, and 13m across, with a terminal at its north-eastern end.

One gully terminal (1043) was located in Area B but its significance is unclear as the majority of this feature lay beyond the baulk.

In common with other sites in the region (Williams *et al.* 1996, 15), there is no evidence to indicate exactly what these gullies represent structurally. They may have been the foundations of roundhouses, or drip or drainage gullies indicating the position of the eaves of houses, or small enclosures defining entire house plots. As no internal

FIGURE 4 Dated prehistoric features (Neolithic to mid-late Iron Age)

features can be clearly associated with the gullies, the nature of any buildings that may have stood within them remains elusive.

Post-built structures

On sites such as Fenny Lock, where concentrated activity over a length of time has led to the presence of large numbers of postholes, the identification of structures usually requires the recognition of regularities in the ground plans present. Yet ethnographic comparisons (e.g. Kroll and Price 1991) suggest that perfectly regular patterning should not be expected from the inevitably haphazard human occupation of any enivronment, whether in the present or the past. A number of the patterns have been outlines below, but these are by no means the only possible interpretation.

?Roundhouse 502

Structure 502 comprised a series of eight posthole, of which five were excavated (4905, 5026, 5131, 5238, 5129). The postholes ranged in diameter from 0.22m to 0.46m and in depth from 0.12m to 0.24m. The diameter of the structure was 8m. There were two large gaps on the west and east sides, which may be a product of selective destruction by modern disturbance and medieval furrows. There is no obvious entrance or any certain contemporary internal features. Two of the postholes produced datable pottery; posthole 5026 contained 11 sherds of early Iron Age pottery and posthole 5238 produced 12 sherds of Iron Age pot. There are two interpretations of this evidence: either the structure is of middle/late Iron Age date with other postholes having residual finds, or the apparent circularity of the posthole pattern is entirely coincidental.

Fences 509 and 510

Two distinct, if short, fencelines were apparent in the north-west corner of Area A (Fig. 4). The most convincing, fence 509, comprised five postholes (4643–7) orientated W–E. Fence 510 was made up of four postholes (4636–9) orientated N–S. However, these postholes are not well dated; with the exception of 4645 in fence 509, which produced a single prehistoric pot sherd, no datable finds were retrieved. An alternative interpretation, that they are the remains of Saxon halls (see below), also has little supporting evidence and, given the extensive evidence for Iron Age activity in the area, an Iron Age date for these features is more likely.

Windbreak(?) 513

In Area B was a group of features (513) comprising two postholes (1019 and 1021) and three large stakeholes (1046–8) arranged in an arc (Fig. 5). The stakeholes suggested an inclined setting. At the projected centre of the arc was a hearth (1044), indicating that the group may have formed a windbreak. Only two of the post- and stakeholes (1021 and 1048) produced any pottery: seven prehistoric sherds between them. The central hearth contained no datable material.

Four-, five- and eight-post structures

Four-post structures 508 and 511

A possible four-post structure (508) was located within ring gully 504, although there is no evidence to associate the two (Fig. 5). Unfortunately, none of the four postholes (4841–4) produced any datable material. The structure was 1.95m square with circular, near vertical-sided postholes, each 0.19–0.21m in diameter and 0.13–0.17m deep.

Another possible four-post structure (511) was south of ring gully 504. The four postholes (5112–4 and 5032/3), one of which may have been replaced, formed a rectangle 0.7m x 1m (Fig. 5). Pottery recovered from the postholes is prehistoric in date.

Five-post structure 512

This structure comprised a near-square arrangement of five postholes with sides 2.2m long. Three of the postholes were excavated (4900, 4901 and 5236/7); 4900 and 4901 contained late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery but 5236 and its replacement, 5237, contained mid/late Iron Age pottery. It is possible that these features relate to a circular structure (513) located mostly in Area B.

Eight-post structure 514

A group of eight postholes (4719–21, 4733, 4737, 4747–8 and 4808) formed a near square area of 3.7m x 4m (Fig. 4). The postholes were 0.20–0.42m in diameter and 0.15–0.24m deep. The square lacked a corner post and one post (4733) was not in perfect alignment. Nevertheless, the pattern they produce is distinctive and is in a location without many other features. Apart from prehistoric pottery from 4719, other pottery from the structure is not well dated.

Four-post structures are a frequent occurrence on Iron Age sites, whereas rectangular structures

with five or more posts are less common. The most likely interpretation of these structures is that they were raised granaries (Gent 1983), although other interpretations are possible (Ellison and Drewett 1971). Interpreting the Fenny Lock examples as shrines (Downes 1997) is less convincing as there is no evidence of ritual activity on the site, such as placed deposits of unusual character.

Posthole group

Just to the south-west of structure 500 is a group of postholes (503) that can be interpreted in several ways (Fig. 5). Firstly, ten of the postholes may be evidence of a roundhouse (4919–20, 4921–3, 4929, 4931, 5029 and two unexcavated postholes). Alternatively, nine of the postholes may represent the corner of a fence (4919–20, 4927, 4931, 5028 and four unexcavated). If these are added to a further three postholes (4921–2 and 5029), they make a rectangular building 5m wide and at least 8m long (this is discussed more fully in the Saxon phase below). Finally, postholes 4919, 4921, 5028 and 5030 may represent a four-post structure.

Hearths

Four hearths were located in Area B, defined by the discoloration of the bedrock caused by intense burning (1011, 1014, 1027 and 1044). Several other pits and scoops on the site had been filled with charcoal-rich and fire-reddened material but these do not represent in situ fires. None of the four hearths were associated with datable finds, but they were within the area containing the majority of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and mid/late Iron Age deposits on the site. Hearth 1027 was the most elaborate and was located to the south of most features in Area B. It was a shallow scoop 0.65m in diameter and 0.1m deep, lined with flint nodules and infilled with smaller stones. Fire-reddening was present on the surface of the infilled scoop. Hearth 1014 consisted only of a fire-reddened area of natural gravel 0.5m across, whereas hearth 1011 was in a small oval pit 0.7m long and 0.14m wide. The only hearth possibly associated with other features was hearth 1044, which may have been protected by a windbreak (513) (see above).

Pits

A total of 18 pits belonged to this period (excluding the pit alignment), all located at the south-western end of Area A and in Area B. Eleven were distributed widely across the site (136, 1102, 4043, 4506, 4525, 4731, 4734, 4837, 5025, 5306 and 5307). Typically these were 0.12–0.9m deep and 0.62–2.1m wide. They were mostly circular in plan but oval and rectangular shapes were present. They were also usually bowl-shaped in profile but a few were steep-sided and flat-based. Pits with beehive or cylindrical profiles, typical of Iron Age sites in southern England, were conspicuously absent. In Area B eight pits formed a discrete, partly intercutting cluster (1034, 1036–42) (Fig. 4). They were 0.5–1.6m across and 0.12–0.66m deep, with mostly bowl-shaped profiles. None of these were particularly artefact-rich and none had obviously been used for ritual deposition. Pit 237, at the far-eastern edge of the excavated area, contained just a single sherd of possible late Iron Age pottery but, due to its isolated location and association with later features, it seems likely that this was residual.

A further nine large pits were excavated but remain undated (133, 137, 1012, 4226, 4623, 4749, 4910, 4911/4915 and 4916); at least eight other unexcavated features may have been pits. The excavated examples were generally wide (1.4–2.2m) but shallow (0.25–0.35m) and had bowl-shaped profiles. Similar pits on the site were found to be Iron Age or Roman. In addition, several smaller, undated pits were excavated (e.g. 116, 4017, 4132, 4405, 4412, 4507, 4624, 4626, 4702–3, 5234 and 5248). These were less regular in shape and profile. Some could be large postholes.

Indeterminate prehistoric features

As a result of the ill-defined pottery sequence a large number of features can only be said to be of indeterminate prehistoric date. Given the predominance of Iron Age evidence at the western end of this area, it seems likely that the majority of these features belong to this phase. Likewise, the difficulty in differentiating between Iron Age and Saxon pottery fabrics (Timby below) caused problems in assigning several features to a period. Again, when these are located at the western end of the excavated area, it seems likely that they are Iron Age and they have been included in this section.

Late Iron Age(?)

The chronology of the early–middle Iron Age period is difficult to define with precision, due to both long-lived ceramic styles and methods of manufacture (Elsdon 1996, 169). However, there is

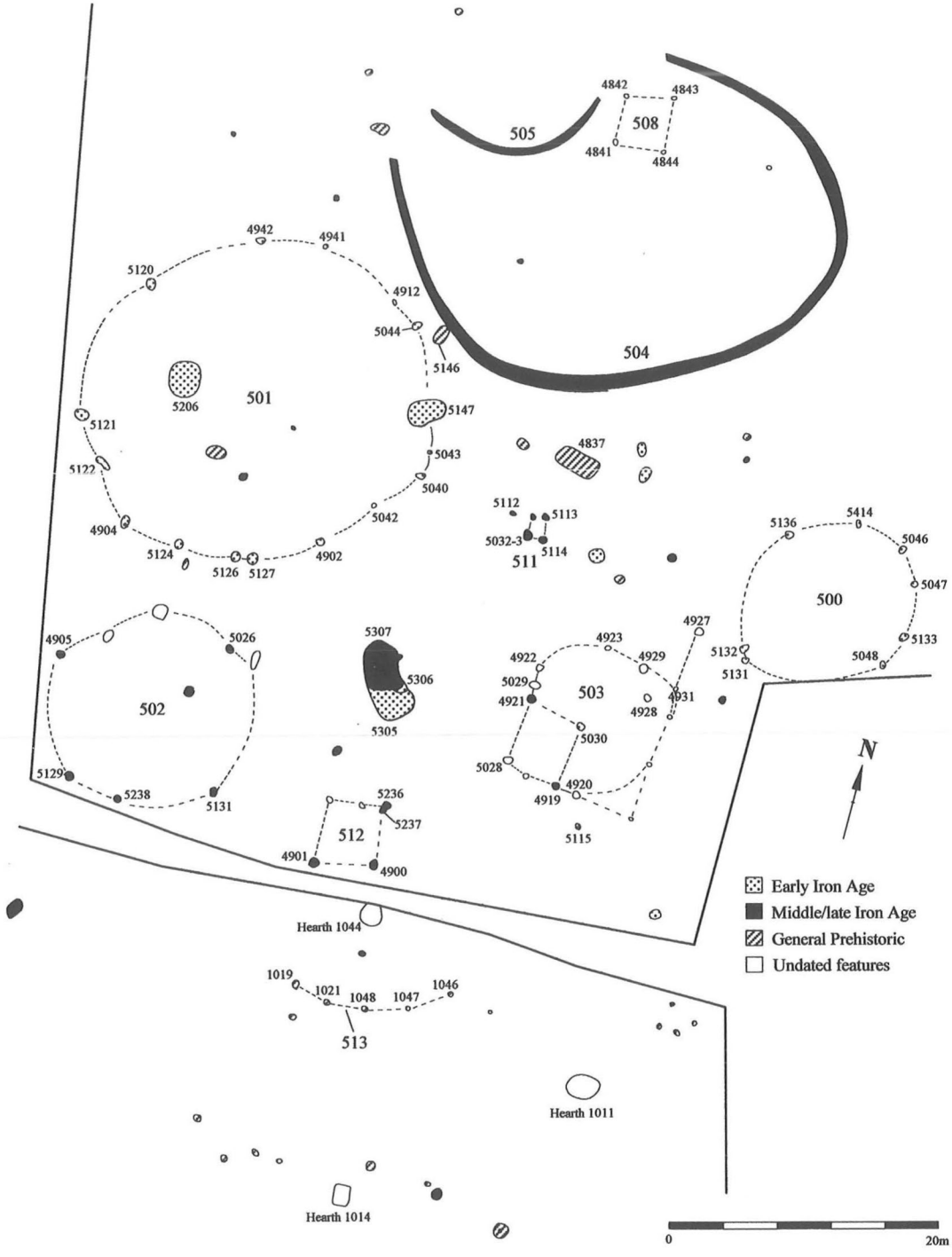

FIGURE 5 Detailed plan of prehistoric features in Areas A and B

FIGURE 6 Phase 6, Areas A and B, early Roman features

a relative dearth of material in the assemblage as a whole that could belong to the latest Iron Age. For example, late Iron Age coins are present only as residual finds in Roman features in Area C. When one also considers the spatial distribution of Iron Age deposits relative to those of the early Roman period, there is a marked contrasting pattern. This suggests that occupation of the middle/late Iron Age settlement on the western part of the site ceased and several decades, possibly centuries, later an early Roman settlement was established at the eastern end of the site. Patterns of land division established in the Iron Age (the pit alignment), nevertheless, appear to have influenced the layout of part of the Roman settlement.

Phase 6: Early Roman (Later 1st Century AD) (Fig. 6)

The most significant event on the site during this period was the digging of a large ditch (600) which ran south from beyond the northern edge of the site for 40m before turning eastwards for a further 60m. At the point at which the ditch met the earlier pit alignment it turned south again and ran approximately on the same line as the pit alignment for another 35m before meeting the southern edge of the excavated area. This ditch was V-shaped in profile and up to 2m across and 0.75m deep, with no evidence of any recuts. The ditch remained open (or was efficiently recut) and was respected during the whole of the Roman occupation of the site.

Ditch 601 was 14m to the east and parallel to both the pit alignment and ditch 600. It was up to 3m across and 1.2m deep, with no evidence of recuts. Where the two ditches run parallel to one another, at the south-eastern end of the site, they may represent a trackway or droveway, albeit wider than most other examples. These two ditches also formed a very large enclosure of at least 0.45 hectares. This may be only a small fraction of the whole if this site is comparable, for instance, to the 3 hectare enclosure at Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al.* 1996, 27). Within this enclosure contemporary deposits are rare, but residual pottery of this date is common. The interior features are restricted to a roundhouse and ring gully, and a few pits and postholes.

Building

Following the initial stripping of the site, a dense arc of stone (4227) was recorded at the south centre of the enclosure (Fig. 7). This coincided with a humic soil (4024), rich in finds, which is thought to represent the latest phase of a building. Following removal of the upper horizons, a complex group of short linear features was revealed. These were typically 0.3m wide and 0.2m deep. They were either curvilinear or straight, some as long as 10m. Some terminated abruptly whilst others petered out and there were some short segments joining two adjacent gullies. In most cases the pottery from these features is broadly Roman, but in a few cases it is specifically early Roman. An extensive early Roman ring gully (618) (see below) was cut by gully 619, of 2nd to early 3rd century date. These features were also overlain by the humic soil (4024), which is of 3rd to 4th century date, at the base of which was a 2nd century coin. One of the linear features, 620 (and possibly 621), could represent part of a ring-gully roundhouse, rebuilt on the same site on several occasions. However, this interpretation does not lend itself to all the linear features in this area. No convincing interpretation of the pattern of these features can be made and it is quite possible that the majority represent the remains of a badger sett. Unfortunately, this interpretation is not supported by the inclusion of badger bones in the faunal assemblage from the site. The lack of late Roman pottery, which was found in great abundance in the upper layers, indicates that the badger sett must have been occupied either before the first structure was erected, or between phases of building. A similar pattern of features in late Roman enclosure 'E' is also best interpreted as a badger sett (Fig. 9).

The most plausible sequence of building in this area is as follows:

The earliest structure is represented by an irregular ring gully (620). This gully was 0.5–0.8m wide and 0.35m deep and enclosed approximately 60% of a circular area with a diameter of 6.5m. This structure lies within a larger enclosure (618) and both structures may be contemporary. Enclosure 618 was 0.43m wide and 0.1–0.3m deep. The curving part of the gully was 14m wide. It was open to the west but was extended on the southern side for another 25m. Its northern extent is uncertain. Two postholes on the western side of the roundhouse (5402 and 5404) may relate to this phase of use although, like nearby posthole 5403, they may be of Saxon date. The position of this structure appears to have been respected by gully 619 (of

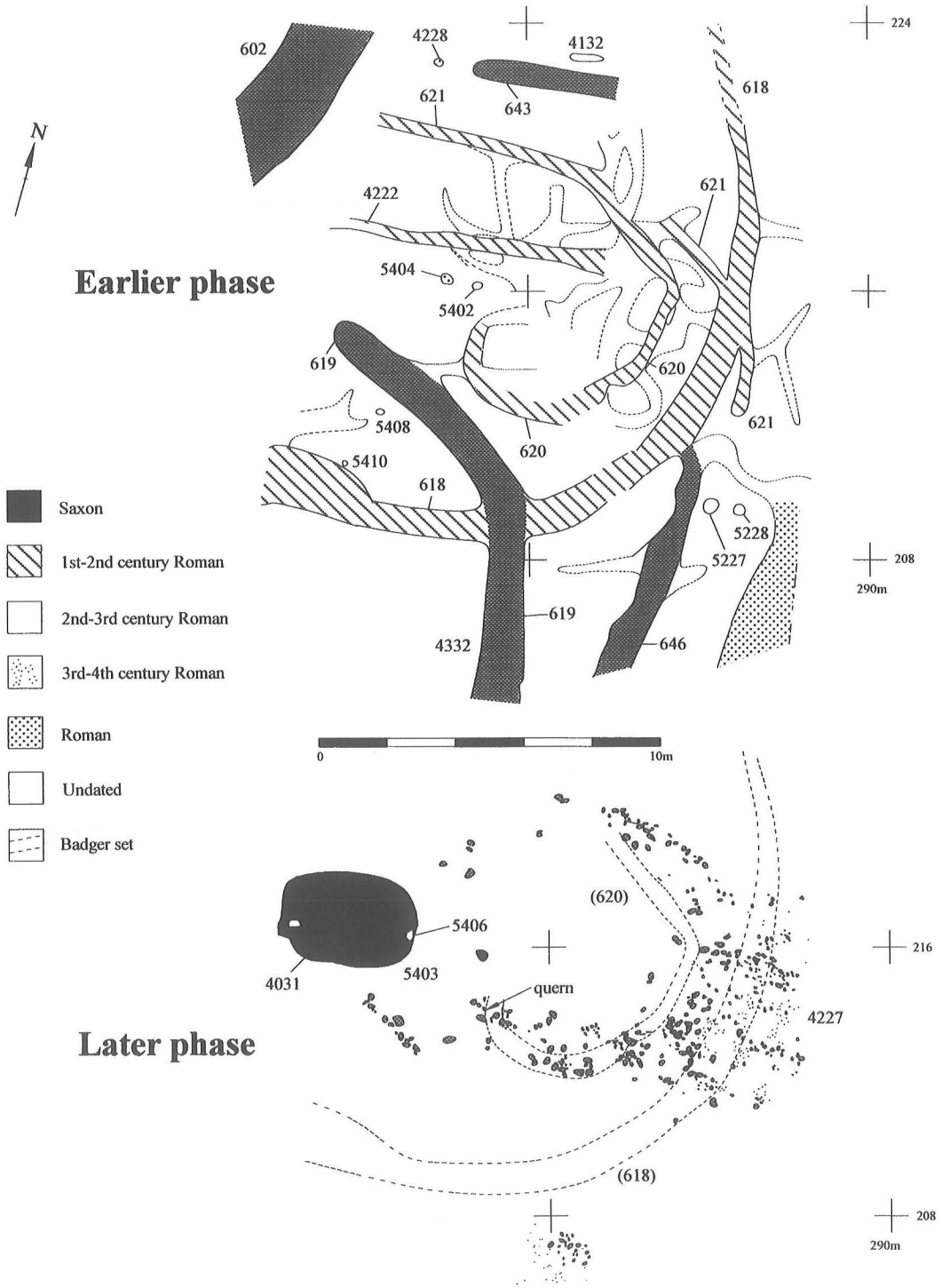

FIGURE 7 Detailed plan of area of building in Area A

FIGURE 8 Phases 7 and 7a, Areas A and B, mid Roman features

2nd to 3rd century date) and was subsequently closely respected by the arc of the stone-founded building (4227), of 3rd to 4th century date, described below.

Pits

Three pits (4015, 4215 and 5326) are the only other features assigned to this phase; the former two produced considerable quantities of 1st century pottery, the latter just five sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pot.

Phase 7: Roman (2nd to Early 3rd Century AD)

The bulk of the deposits of Roman date in Area A belong to this period but it is clear from the juxtaposition and intercutting nature of the many ditches and gullies that several phases of remodelling have taken place. Most of the episodes of remodelling at various locations on the site, along with discrete deposits such as pits, cannot with any certainty be phased together. However, one major episode of ditch-digging permits a sub-division of this phase.

Phase 7A

Within the large enclosure defined by ditches 600 and 601, which were still open and in use in this phase, deposits belonging to this period are spatially and numerically the largest group (Fig. 8). These deposits were largely confined to gullies and small ditches and several intercutting features. The gullies and ditches often, but not exclusively, were of rectilinear plan with right-angled bends. Several had clearly-defined terminals. However, some curvilinear gullies were also present. These may define two main types of enclosure:

Rectilinear enclosures

The clearest enclosure is 14m wide, at least 13m long and made up of ditches 611 and 603 (Fig. 8). There was a simple entrance 4.8m wide on the southern side, with ditch 611 continuing to the south, perhaps as a guide to traffic. This enclosure may have been redefined and enlarged by ditches 606/608, and possibly 604 and 605. The relationship between these and ditches 641 and 642, orientated diagonally within the enclosed area, is unclear but the pottery suggests that the diagonal ditches may have been slightly earlier than the enclosure.

A second enclosure, defined by ditches 611, 612 and 613, may have defined a 10m x 5m rectangular area with a possible short length of droveway (611 and 613) to the north. Further east there is a configuration of 'L-shaped' ditches (612 and 614), which may represent a structure used to sort stock (cf Pryor 1996).

Towards the western side of the main enclosure was an arrangement of ditches that may have been a droveway with a gate. This was made up of a right-angled gully (628), 5m away from and parallel to gully 629, which had a right-angled bend at the southern end. A further gully (633) 3m to the east was also parallel to gully 629 and stopped close to the right-angled bend of 628.

Just outside the large enclosure ditch (601) on the eastern side was ditch 622, which may be a rectangular paddock. This paddock was 10m wide and at least 15m long and utilised one side of the main enclosure (601). There may have been an entrance to the south. A second, smaller enclosure, defined by ditch 623, may have replaced the former. The smaller one was 7.5m wide and 10m long. It is not clear how gully 235, discovered during the earlier evaluation, relates to these.

Curvilinear enclosures(?)

Several other curvilinear gullies are present on the site within the main enclosure, e.g. 615 and 626. It is not clear how these relate either structurally or chronologically to the rectilinear features outlined above but they may be curvilinear enclosures.

Phase 7B

Towards the end of this phase (7B) a subdivision of the main enclosure took place with the digging of ditch 602. This ditch represented a major reorganisation of the original enclosure, splitting the site approximately in half but terminating before reaching the (assumed) northern return of the enclosure. The ditch was recut on at least two occasions. Enclosure ditch 600 was still an important boundary at this time as ditch 602 drained into it. From an inspection of the plan of the phase 7A ditches and gullies it is clear that ditch 602 cut them. However, a number of gullies also ran up to ditch 602 and this is either coincidental or the new ditch was following the line of least resistance. Additionally, gully 609, which appears to cut 606, may belong to this phase as it is parallel to ditch 602.

Building(?)

There were no new structural elements in the area of the earlier building, although a quantity of late

2nd to 3rd century pottery was recovered from the surface of the existing ring gully 618, suggesting that it continued in use. This was cut by gully 619, which appeared to respect the position of the building, hinting at some form of activity on the site at the time. As the building appears to have been refurbished in stone in the subsequent phase, on the same ground plan, this suggests that it was also occupied in this phase. The numerous small linear features in this area have been interpreted as the remains of a badger sett (see above), although the possibility that they represent some form of activity during the 2nd and 3rd centuries remains.

Pits

Just four certain or probable pits belong to this phase: 4040, 4116, 4413 and 5333. The latter was not excavated and was dated only by finds recovered from its uppermost levels.

Phase 8: Roman (Later 3rd to 4th Century AD)

Later Roman use of the site appears to reflect a marked change in comparison to previous activity. Whereas the large enclosure (600 and 601) effectively defined the site limits during the previous phases of Roman occupation, later Roman use is more extensive with a greater emphasis in the western and southern parts of Area A. The principal features of this phase are: a series of gully enclosures that mostly lie just beyond the main enclosure ditch (600); continued use of the same site within the main enclosure for a circular stone building; some pits, including a large waterlogged one (4815); and a number of inhumation and possibly cremation burials.

Gully enclosures

Towards the western end of the site, a 70m-long L-shaped gully (630) formed the spine for a series of five interlinked enclosures (A–E) (Fig. 9). The main spine had been recut at least once. Three of the enclosures were curvilinear in plan (A–C; each *c.* 10m across) and two were rectangular (D and E). Enclosure D, defined by gully 631, was 10m x 12m across and may have been open on the southern side, unless it was placed to utilise gully 632 (enclosure C). If this was the case, it may have had two entrances, both on the southern side, one of which led into enclosure C. Enclosure E (gully 634) was 15m x 20m (min.) and had been recut. The full extent of the enclosure was not fully exposed within the excavated area. There is no evidence to indicate whether enclosures A, B and C were small paddocks or roundhouses. A number of postholes present within enclosure D are not easily interpretable as representing a post-built roundhouse or other structure. In contrast, enclosure E contained a number of features including shallow gullies, pits and postholes. One of the gullies is sinuous, with a number of offshoots, and is similar in plan to those found beneath the stone building to the east, which are thought to represent the remains of a badger sett.

Up against the right-angled bend in the main enclosure ditch (600) and utilising the latter, lay a second group of conjoining enclosures (G–I) (Fig. 9). Enclosures H and I may be the earliest in this sequence and they were defined by gully 638 and ditch 600, and divided by gully 639. Enclosure H was square in plan 9m x 7m, and enclosure I was triangular, 12m x 8m. Although they clearly respect the main enclosure ditch 600, perhaps the latter was so infilled by this time that the northern stretch of 638 was needed to define the enclosure (H). Enclosure G was defined by gully 637, and was oval in plan, 23m x 12m. Enclosure F lay to the west and was roughly rectangular at 10m x 5m. It was defined by two gullies (635 and 636). Clearly, 635 and 637, which crosses the end of enclosure F, were not in use together and this enclosure may predate the others in the area. It is not clear how several other gullies in this area relate to these enclosures. Few internal features were present.

Towards the western side of the site was one isolated ring-gully enclosure (640) that had been recut on at least one occasion. This structure had *c.* 50% of a circuit about 15m diameter, but the presence of one terminal and a marked narrowing and shallowing of the other extreme indicate that its plan is largely complete.

Building

The arc of stone (4227) found just beneath the topsoil (noted in phase 6 above) is thought to comprise demolition deposits or a plough-damaged wall. It has already been suggested that the activity of badgers may also have led to disturbance of the stonework. None of the stonework found can be identified with certainty as in situ foundations and there was no trace of a bedding trench. The stonework comprised lumps of ferruginous sand-

stone, typically 0.2–0.3m across, but also included fragments of Mayen lava quernstone. The stonework occupied an arc approximately 0.8m across, with a diameter of 7m. The stonework was largely absent to the west. No features were found in the interior and there were no recognisable floor deposits. An area of smaller stones, with much pottery and bone, to the east, could be part of a poorly-constructed yard surface. The main band of stonework was of very similar dimensions and location to a ring gully that has been interpreted as a building created during the initial phase of Roman use of the site. Although there is no clear evidence for a structure of 2nd to 3rd century date, the coincidence of location seems too much to be a product of chance and the stonework is thought to be evidence of a successor.

Circular structures of Roman date are a common feature on rural sites within the east Midlands and elsewhere (Williams and Zeepvat 1994, 207). The presence of an example at Fenny Lock is, therefore, no surprise. The dimensions of this building, at *c.* 7m, with a wall thickness of perhaps 0.7m, fall within the average values reported by Williams and Zeepvat (*ibid.*) and are similar to other Milton Keynes examples, such as at Bancroft (*ibid.*) and Stantonbury (Zeepvat 1997). However, Williams *et al.* (1996, 86) also point out that there is a lack of suitable building stone in the southern Milton Keynes area and the use of stone here is, therefore, unusual. The circular structures at Bancroft and Stantonbury were associated with villa complexes and perhaps the stone building at Fenny Lock indicates the home of a family of some status. Although a considerable quantity of roof tile was recovered from the site in general, little was directly associated with this structure.

Pits

Four pits (4309, 4322, 5102 and 5119) were assigned to this phase. Pit 5119, an isolated feature, contained the substantial remains of a large storage jar. This particular pit is noteworthy as it clearly illustrated the extent to which archaeological deposits were present within the subsoil, which had to be removed by machine to locate features clearly. Pits 4322 and 4309, located in the area containing burial deposits, are also noteworthy. The former contained a cattle skull and the latter contained a small Nene Valley jar with white painted raised decoration, as well as a jet bead and two copper-alloy objects – an earring and a bracelet. The pits were oval or circular, 0.7–1.9m across and 0.34–1.0m deep, with U- or bowl-shaped profiles.

The barrel pit

A very large oval pit (4815), 1.6m deep and 5.0m x 3.8m across, had been dug sufficiently deep that its lower levels were below the permanent water table. The pit contained five fills, the lowest of which (4861) contained the remains of wood: 53 thin planks up to 1.45m long, 0.10–0.12m wide and 2–11mm thick, were found in a tidy bundle (Fig. 14). The planks varied in manufacture with cross-sections including plano-convex, convex, flat and wedge-shapes. One had a square iron fixing hammered into its face. The wood was examined by Maisie Taylor, who commented that it was made of a very straight-grained oak with a ring pattern suggesting wood from a 6–7 year coppice. The wood is too thin to be structural and the finding of numerous pieces lying on top of one another suggests that they may have originated from the collapse of a hollow structure, such as a barrel. There were no other pieces present, such as barrel ends or metal hoops, and it may be that the object had already been partly dismantled before deposition. As this feature is one of the largest on the site, it produced one of the better assemblages of faunal remains, mostly representing butchery waste (see Hamilton-Dyer, below).

Burial deposits

At least six, but possible as many as nine, human burial deposits were recorded on the site (Fig. 9). Four of these were inhumations (4048, 4225, 4338 and 5321), and two were cremations (4025 and 5247). Two findspots of isolated human bone are likely to represent another three graves that had largely been ploughed away. Cranial fragments were also recovered from gully 45 in evaluation trench 55.

The inhumations were all in shallow cuts of various dimensions and orientations. The grave for burial 4048, an adult lying supine and orientated roughly N–S, was 1.93m by 0.70m, whilst the grave for 4225, possibly a sub-adult female, was 1.00m by 0.52m and orientated W–E. The small size of the remaining grave may be accounted for by plough damage as the legs appear to have been totally removed by later disturbance. This burial was accompanied by a decorated, penannular,

copper-alloy armlet placed on the chest (Fig. 14). The most securely dated of the inhumations was 4338, which had a 4th century vessel placed to the left of the position of the skull. The grave cut was 2.12m long, 0.85m wide, and aligned N–S, and the occupant lay prone with the hands behind the back, possibly bound. The body of an infant aged 0–6 months was placed in a shallow pit (5321), 0.31m by 0.25m, which also contained fragments of a twisted-rod copper-alloy bracelet.

All four inhumation burials were associated with sherds of Roman pottery and one of the cremation burials (4025) was contained within a grey-ware jar. The other cremation burial (5247) is undated. (See also McKinley, below.)

All of the burials and findspots, except for undated cremation pit 5247, were in the centre or western half of the main enclosure (600) but they were too widely spaced to be considered a formal cemetery.

Indeterminate Roman features

Whilst pottery and stratigraphic evidence allowed many features to be assigned to one of the phases above, a large number are of indeterminate Roman date, including several pits (1032, 4121, 4327, 4513, 4515–7, 4523, 4602, 4700–1, 4909 and 5320).

Phase 9: Early/Middle Saxon

Sunken-featured buildings

One definite and one possible sunken-featured building (SFB) were located in the eastern part of the excavated area. The clearer of the two examples (SFB 4031) was a sub-rectangular hollow orientated E–W. It was 4.40m long and 3.10m wide, while the maximum depth below the stripped surface was 0.16m. At each end was a fairly substantial post-hole, the western one (4034) being 0.43m in diameter at the surface and 0.42m deep, while the eastern one (5406) was shallower due to the fact that it was only discovered after further machining in the area, which removed the cross baulk. The SFB contained Saxon pottery and this arrangement, with two gable posts, is fairly typical for a Saxon SFB and similar to the type A structures found at West Stow (West 1985). The other posthole within the building (4133) was found to be shallow and irregular and possibly pre-dates the structure, although there was no dating evidence to confirm this.

Compared to 4031 the second SFB (4234) is more dubious. It was situated in an area of dense activity and, despite extensive investigation, was never clearly defined. It appeared as an elongated or sub-rectangular hollow orientated NE–SW, approximately 4.0m wide and possibly as much as 10.0m long, with a maximum depth of 0.10m. A small pile of flat pieces of stone (4217) 1.0m from the eastern end may represent a post-pad, but the western end was so confused by other small features that nothing more could be determined except that the depression pre-dates medieval ditch 800. Pottery from the feature indicates that it is no earlier than later Roman times.

Post-built structures

Among the considerable spread of postholes located towards the western side of the area (see Fig. 3) were several containing pottery that has been identified as Saxon. Whilst it is possible that these represent the remains of Saxon post-built structures, it seems more likely, considering the difficulty in differentiating between some Saxon and prehistoric fabrics, that these features are Iron Age in date, except for the few that also contained Roman sherds. Where these postholes form possible structures they have, therefore, been discussed in more detail in Phase 5 above; e.g. fences 509 and 510 and possible structure 503, all in Area A. An alternative interpretation of the latter (503) is that it forms part of a rectangular building, 5m wide and at least 8m long (Fig. 5). This would fit within the usual parameters of Saxon post-built halls, although the spacing between the postholes is greater than for well-dated examples, such as those at Pennyland (Williams 1993, 75).

Phase 10: Medieval

Medieval activity on the site was extensive, but limited to elements of the rural landscape. The whole site was covered by remnants of a broad ridge and furrow field system, with a spacing between furrows of *c.* 10m. Two orientations were defined with a headland between the two orientated N–S, which coincided both with the natural terrace edge and the densest area of Roman deposits. The headland was prolific in finds of Roman date and its presence may have resulted in the preservation of parts of the stone-built structure. To the west of the headland and on the same alignment was ditch 800 (Fig. 10), which was not visible until the head-

FIGURE 9 Phase 8, Areas A and B, later Roman and Saxon features and burial deposits (inh = inhumation crem = cremation, A–I = enclosures)

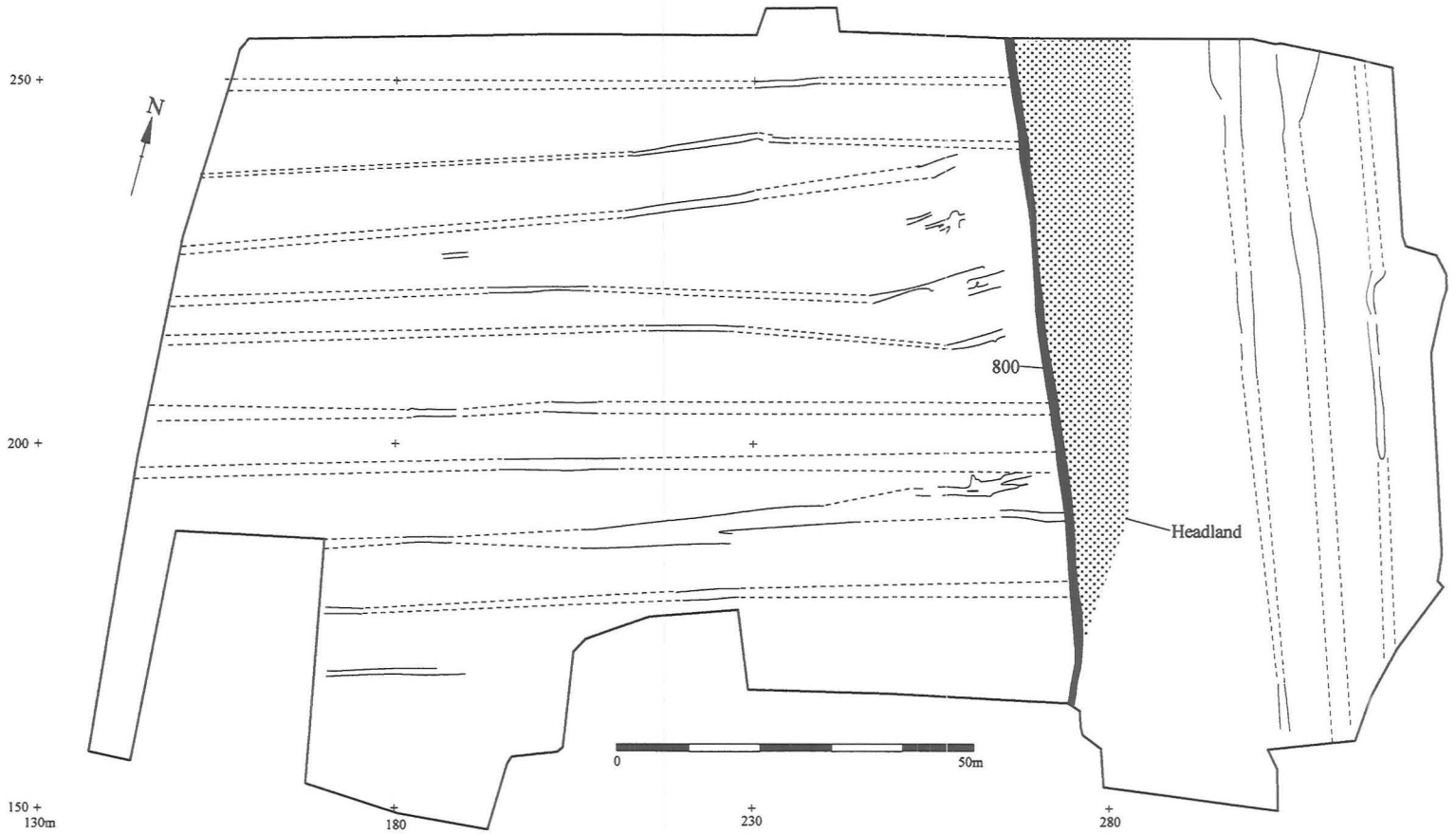

FIGURE 10 Medieval features

land deposits had been removed. It may have been used to set out the boundary between the two furlongs but became buried by the soil creep that ultimately formed the headland.

Description of Excavation in Area C

Area C was 200m to the south of Area A (Fig. 2). It was an area strip of 3600sq m in which, typically, 0.4m of fresh ploughsoil and 0.2m of subsoil were removed to reveal features cut into the gravel (Fig. 11). The dating of the features on the site broadly corresponds with phases 6 and 7 (late 1st to late 2nd century AD) as defined for Areas A and B. The features revealed in Area C form a far less complex pattern than those to the north. The main elements consist of ring gullies and ditches, which were mostly laid out in a rectilinear fashion. A noteworthy aspect of this area was the finding of an iron socketed axe and two Iron Age coins, one of which came from slot 2038 across Roman ditch 709.

Ring gullies

The southernmost ring gully in the area (700) was adjacent to the western baulk and was only partially revealed. It comprised a 50% circuit with an internal diameter of approximately 16m. A 1.2m gap on the south-eastern side may have been a narrow entrance, although this may simply represent a more shallow part of the gully. The width of the gully varied from 0.38m to 0.55m; the five sections excavated revealed a flat-based gully between 0.08m and 0.18m in depth. No internal features were visible, except a short length of ditch (708), which seems more likely to be related to the field system. This ring gully was not closely datable as it only produced 15 sherds of undiagnostic Roman pottery.

Ring gully 701 to the north was smaller and more complete, with 75% of the circumference within the limits of the excavated area, although a full circuit was not clearly seen on the ground. The internal diameter of this feature was approximately 8.5m with a possible location for an entrance on the east or south-east side. The gully itself varied in width from 0.10m to 0.32m and had a depth of approximately 0.12m and a U-shaped profile. Again, the feature was not closely datable as the 22 sherds of pottery recovered were broadly Roman in date. Unlike ring gully 700, however, ring gully 701 had two internal features, a central ovoid pit (2031), which contained a moderate amount of charcoal but showed no evidence of in situ burning, and a posthole (2035). Just outside the circuit were postholes 2033 and 2034, and in addition there may have been two further pits to the west but these were not investigated and were partially obscured by a later furrow.

Field system and enclosures

A series of small ditches extended across the entire area and probably represent elements of a rectilinear field system. These ditches were laid out on a regular orientation; ditches 702–8 and 710 were aligned N–S and ditch 709 W–E. The evaluation trenches in the surrounding area (Fig. 2) revealed further ditches on roughly the same alignment (trench 13, 6; trench 20, 17; trench 21, 18; trench 25, 19; and trench 108, 226). This seems to indicate that the system continued beyond the margins of the excavation.

The main ditches were typically 0.6–1.8m wide and 0.16–0.4m deep, with U-shaped profiles. The relatively small size of the excavated area means that the plan of the layout is incomplete, but the largest field was approximately 30m by 32m, assuming its four sides to be ditches 705, 706, 709 and paddock ditch 717. Pottery from these ditches was mostly undiagnostic but broadly Roman in date, but ditch 705 contained late 2nd century pottery and the latter butted paddock 717, which is also of 2nd century date. Ditch 709 stopped short of ring gully 701 and ditch 703 was aligned on the edge of 701, suggesting that the field system incorporated this ring gully into its layout.

Traces of an earlier rectilinear field system with an entrance may be represented by three gullies (713–5) and possibly also 702, 704, 708 and 710. Gully 713 was parallel to part of 715 and may define a short length of trackway 6m wide. These gullies are typically 0.32–0.59m wide and 0.12–0.32m deep, with U-shaped profiles. The terminal of 714 was defined by a pit (2037). The stratigraphic relationship with the larger field system could not be determined, but the chronology provided by the pottery, in particular that from pit 2037 which produced 40 sherds of 1st century pottery and 12 undiagnostic Roman sherds, has been used to suggest the primacy of these features.

Paddocks

A curving length of ditch (717) 1m wide and 0.34m deep with a U-shaped profile, appears to represent

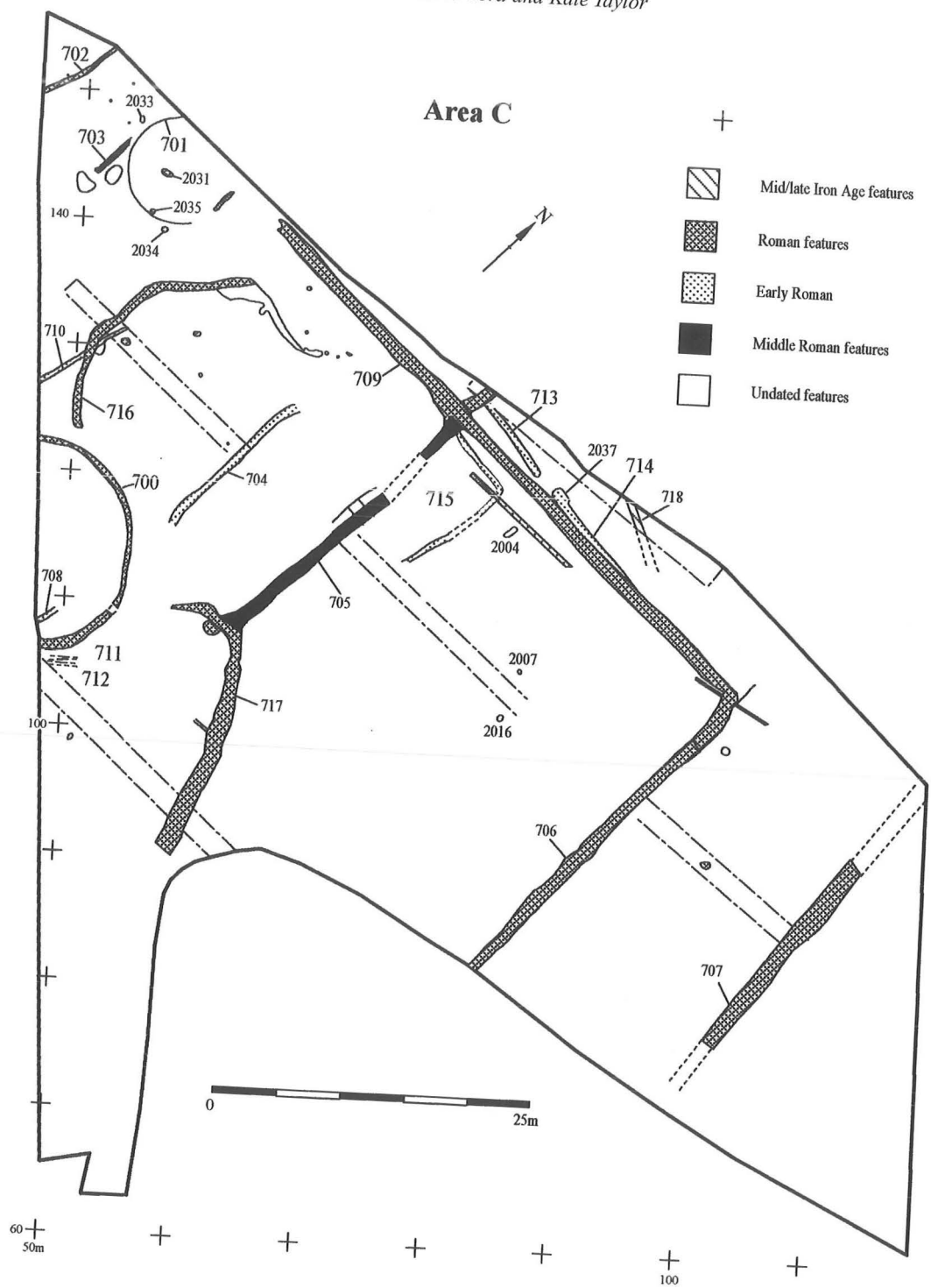

FIGURE 11 Plan of Area C

a small enclosure that may have been bounded to the west by ring gully 700. This paddock was respected by the field system (705) and formed one of the boundaries of the latter. This feature produced a sizeable assemblage (121 sherds) of 1st/2nd century pottery and 15 sherds of Roman pottery.

A second paddock is defined by gully 716, which was 0.58m wide and typically 0.22m deep. It petered out to the south and respected the position of ring gully 700. This feature also cut gully 710, which is thought to be a part of the earlier field system discussed above. Pottery from 716 was relatively prolific: 49 sherds of 1st century Roman date and 44 sherds of general Roman date recovered.

Other gullies

Two short lengths of gully were found near ring gully 700 (711 and 712). Their function and relationship are not clear. One other gully (718) was found in evaluation trench 110 at the north-eastern limit of the excavated area. It was on a different alignment to the Roman field system and produced two sherds of probable Iron Age pottery. However, it was not traced during the excavation.

Hearth(?)

An oval pit (2004), 1.2m x 0.45m across and 0.12m deep, was partially fire-reddened and the fill was charcoal rich. It may have been a hearth. No datable finds were recovered from the fill.

Pits, scoops and postholes

Eighteen features are interpreted as pits, scoops, or postholes. Several of these were associated with ring gully 701, as discussed above. Two postholes are noteworthy: 2007 had a postpipe and 2016 had stone post-packing. The remaining features were distributed across the area, with no marked patterning. The pits and scoops ranged from 0.5 to 1.3m wide and from 0.07 to 0.3m deep with bowl-shaped profiles.

Sequence of deposits in Area C (Fig. 11)

Apart from a few sherds of late Iron Age or early Roman pottery, two late Iron Age coins and possibly gully 718, the evidence points to the first significant activity on the site taking place in the late 1st century AD. This initial activity may be represented by a rectilinear field system defined by small gullies (702, 710, 713–5 and 718). This may have been superseded, in part, in the later 1st century AD by gully enclosure 716 and, by association, ring gullies 700 and 701.

Paddock 717 appears to have been added slightly later, in the late 1st or early 2nd century. The larger field system defined by small ditches appears to be the latest activity on the site and was laid out in the later second century. The spatial configuration of the latter field system and the ring gullies and paddocks is such that they appear to have existed as a composite entity. Activity appears to have ceased on this site before the 3rd century AD as the features described above appear to have silted up in the 2nd century. Similarly, none of the stray finds of pottery located during topsoil stripping and hand-cleaning were of later Roman date. Metal detector finds include only two (out of a total of three) Roman coins of 4th century date from this area. These could easily be a product of casual loss and the number found contrasts strongly with the number of coins found in Area A.

Description of Excavation in Area D

This area was sited to examine an area around evaluation trenches 103 and 104. Trench 104 had located a small bowl-shaped pit (224), 0.7m across and 0.4m deep, which contained two sherds of possible Neolithic pottery, a few small fragments of fired clay, and flint flakes. Two postholes (221 and 222) were found nearby, one of which (222) produced a flint flake from the surface. A doubtful, undated posthole (220) was found in trench 103. Although the subsequent excavation examined an area of 1490sq m, it failed to locate any additional deposits to those recorded in the evaluation.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

Summary

The evaluation and subsequent excavation at Fenny Lock produced approximately 8,730 sherds, weighing approximately 103kg. Owing to considerable resource constraints the material could only be scanned extremely briefly to assess its likely chronology. The assemblage was extremely variable in condition, with some exceptionally well preserved groups but also some quite degraded col-

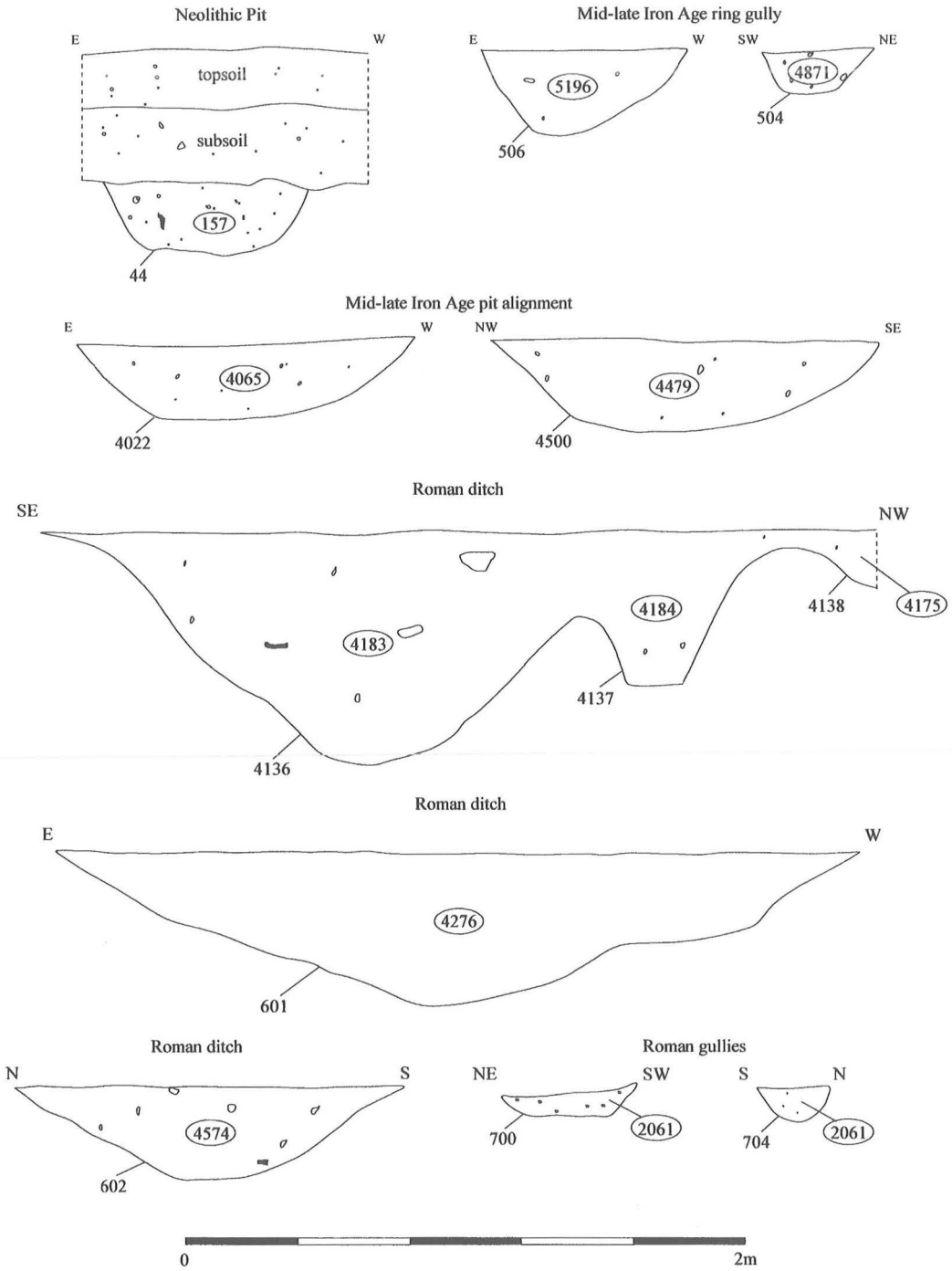

FIGURE 12 Selected sections

lections. The assemblage is also a particularly complex one in that it includes material spanning a wide chronology, ranging from the earlier prehistoric period through to post-medieval times. Material of later Bronze Age/early Iron Age, Roman and early Saxon date was particularly well represented (see Tables 1 and 2). Unfortunately, the earlier prehistoric material, except for a single collared urn (4317; Fig. 13) of early Bronze Age date, contained no featured sherds, making identification difficult. Further problems were encountered with the repeated use of certain fabric types through time, most notably shell-tempered wares which, if unaccompanied by other material, could not be

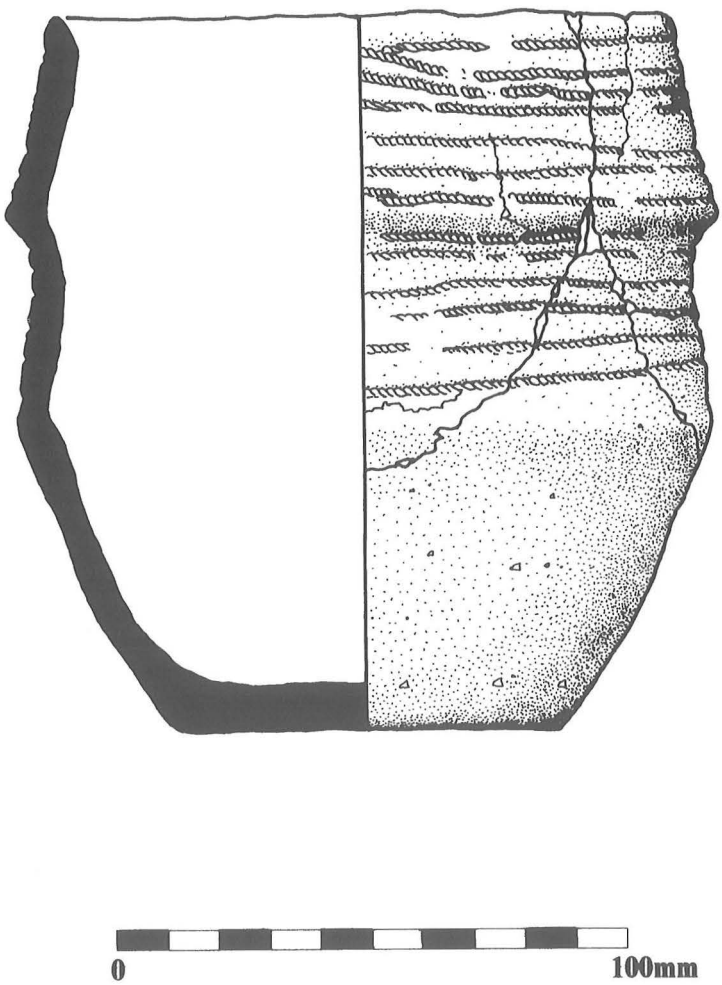

FIGURE 13 Collared urn from Area A, feature 4317: (⅓ scale)

dated with a high level of confidence.

The pottery was quantified by overall sherd count and weight for each context with a brief note made of fabric types by main inclusions, i.e. sand, shell, grog, etc. The information was entered onto an Excel spreadsheet. A considerable number of Roman tile fragments were also present, particularly shell-tempered examples. These were noted but, unfortunately, resources for the project were not sufficient to include the tile in the quantification or to analyse the assemblage further.

Finally, as a general comment, there appears to be a marked percentage of redeposited material, most clearly noticeable in the Roman and Saxon groups, perhaps not surprising in view of the longevity of occupation and use of the site. Small groups of perhaps fewer than 5–10 sherds cannot, therefore, be taken as necessarily a true reflection of the date of the context in which they have been found. With further work, in particular integrating the pot dates with the stratigraphy of the site, an exercise it has not been possibly to pursue at this stage, it may be possible to refine the dating.

Early prehistoric

There were several unfeatured calcined flint-tempered and grog-tempered sherds, indicating an earlier prehistoric date. The main vessel attributable to this period is a small, almost complete, collared biconical urn with twisted cord decoration (Fig. 13) of early Bronze Age date from pit 4317. The vessel was found lying on its side. No other finds or charred plant remains were recovered from the fill of the pit or within the vessel.

Later prehistoric

A substantial number of sherds derive from the later Bronze Age/early Iron Age period including a significant proportion of decorated pieces – in particular finger depressions, nicked rims and incised geometric designs. Many of the vessels are sharply carinated. Other less distinctive sherds may indicate continued activity into the middle Iron Age period. Late Iron Age material is also present but the stratigraphic analysis (above) does not suggest continuity of occupation throughout the Iron Age period.

Roman

Roman wares account for the bulk of the assemblage. Most of the vessels appear to be of local manufacture, notably grog-tempered and shell-tempered wares. Overseas imports are limited to samian and Dressel 20 olive oil amphorae. Regional imports include Nene Valley colour-coated and grey wares, products of the Oxford industry, and, in the earlier Roman period, white-ware mortaria and flagons from Verulamium. It would appear that the site was occupied throughout the Roman period extending into early Saxon times.

Saxon

A small number of plain Saxon wares were present. Although certain fabrics were quite distinctive, others are similar to the prehistoric material and further work would be required to characterise the fabric ranges for each period more closely. None of the Saxon material appears to be decorated and it frequently occurs alongside later Roman wares.

Medieval/post-medieval

A very light background scatter of medieval, and more commonly, post-medieval wares were recovered almost exclusively from unstratified or surface layers.

TABLE 1 Summary of prehistoric pottery by number and weight (gms), by phase

	Early prehistoric		*EBA*		*LBA/EIA*		*EIA*		*MIA*		*IA*		*LIA*		*Late prehistoric*	
Area	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*
A	46	161	21	320	32	99	865	6366	–	–	192	684	1	4	262	1462
B	–	–	–	–	–	–	11	31	38	248	82	406	–	–	97	246
C	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	46	–	–
D	2	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

TABLE 2 Summary of Roman and later pottery by number and weight (gms), by phase

	LIA/ER		*Roman*		*Roman 1st–2nd*		*Roman 2nd–3rd*		*Roman 3rd–4th*		*Saxon*		*Roman/ Saxon*		*Medieval*		*Undated*	
Area	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*
A	101	811	256	3389	2237	13957	455	6000	782	30757	246	2642	17	140	–	–	132	601
B	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	28	152
C	76	108	513	3266	909	12399	320	3075	–	–	1	5	–	–	–	–	104	900
D	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other	–	–	17	269	69	517	7	53	–	–	–	–	26	579	1	25	441	4996

STRUCK FLINT BY STEVE FORD

A collection of 332 prehistoric struck flints was recovered from the evaluation and excavation phases on the site detailed in Table 3.

Within this total, eight had possibly been retouched and another piece might have been a petit-tranchet derivative arrowhead. One core-rejuvenation flake and one flake with a retouched striking platform were noted. There were 14 burnt pieces and 15 were patinated.

Where sufficient cortex remained on pieces, this appeared to indicate that the majority of raw material was obtained locally from the river gravels or glacial drift deposits.

The majority of the flint was recovered either as stray finds or as residual finds in features of Iron Age or later date. One feature in Area A (pit 44 in evaluation trench 55) produced twenty struck flints including a broken blade, two serrated flakes and a flake from a polished axe. Thirty-six sherds of Neolithic pottery were also recovered. Elsewhere, pit 4512 produced 11 flakes, two spalls, a core, and a core fragment, and posthole 4700 produced three flakes, two cores, and a spall.

The repertoire of flint recovered shows a range of dates. Mesolithic activity is confirmed by the presence of a rod microlith and possibly a number of blades, blade cores, a burin and serrated flakes/blades. Earlier Neolithic activity is indicated by a leaf-shaped arrowhead, and, again, possibly by the blades, blade cores and serrated flakes/blades. It is also likely that pit 44 is of earlier Neolithic date although neither the pottery nor flintwork it contained was sufficiently diagnostic to date the feature closely.

A Bronze Age/early Iron Age component of the flint collection cannot be conclusively demonstrated but the presence of a collared urn on the site and a number of struck flints within later Bronze Age and early Iron Age features suggest that this is likely.

ROTARY QUERNSTONES by DAVID WILLIAMS

Six fragments of stone used as querns were recovered from the excavations:

TABLE 3 Summary of all struck flint from the site

Narrow flakes and possible narrow flakes	16	Awls	3
Flakes	208	Notched flakes	2
Spalls	36	Retouched flakes	4
Cores	17	Hammerstone	1
Narrow flake cores	3	Fabricator/rod	1
Bashed lumps	9	Serrated flakes	3
Core fragments	13	Flake from polished flint axe	1
Scrapers	9	Leaf-shaped arrowhead	1
Denticulate scrapers	2	Burin	1
Thumbnail scraper	1	Microlith	1

1) Context 4020, Area A

Part of a topknot containing a worn outer collar (375gms). Mayen lava from the Eifel Hills region of the Rhineland.

2) Unstratified, north-east sector of Area A

Two rounded burnt lumps of quernstone (137gms). Mayen lava.

3) Ditch 4003 (5471), Area A

Part of an upper stone in which the grinding surface shows much evidence of wear (1350gms). A quartz conglomerate, probably coming from the Forest of Dean or from other outcrops further to the west.

4) Gully 4800 (4796), Area A

A small part of an upper stone of quartz conglomerate (582gms).

5) Ditch 4725 (4771), Area A

Two small joining pieces of quernstone with a flat, worn surface (266gms). Millstone grit from the Pennine region of northern Britain.

6) Ditch 236 (76), Evaluation trench 50

Part of a quernstone of hard, compact sandstone, probably a sarsen from the local upper Cretaceous (537gms).

Metalwork by David Richards

The evaluation and excavation produced more than 200 objects of iron, copper alloy and lead, in addition to coins or tokens. About 10% of these are from stratified contexts, the remainder being found during topsoil stripping or metal-detecting of the spoil heaps.

There are surprisingly few objects which can be firmly assigned to the Roman period on typological grounds, just 17 of copper alloy, three of iron and one of lead (Table 4). The larger proportion of recoveries – in all three metals – cover a wide date range from the medieval to the early modern periods. There are more copper-alloy objects in the total assemblage than there are iron, even counting the 65 nails, which may be a product of selective retrieval by the metal-detector users who found the majority of these finds.

Whilst two of the iron objects are agricultural, the copper-alloy finds are all items of dress or personal adornment, i.e. fibulae (4); armlets and bracelets (4); a fragment of a ring; a possible earring; and a number of implements from personal toilet sets. The implication is that these objects originate from burials, either inhumations or cremations. Similar grave-goods are recorded at well-known Roman cemeteries, e.g. King Harry Lane, Verulamium (Stead and Rigby 1989), and Colchester (Crummy 1983). These are all of 1st century date and in terms of typology the objects from Fenny Lock would not look out of place in an assemblage of a similar date.

Coins by Paul Cannon

Fenny Lock has produced a total of 239 coins including nine found during the evaluation. Table 5 presents the coin evidence for the site as a whole by traditional periods.

Pre-Roman activity, in coin terms, is represented by three bronze units, one of Tasciovanus (SF 378) from Roman ditch 2038 on Area C, and two of his son Cunobelin (SF 72 and 379, unstratified Area A, C). Both the latter are of the 'metal-worker' type (Van Arsdell 1989, 423).

The majority of the coins are of the Roman period (Table 5). Those of the 1st, 2nd and early 3rd centuries are few. The larger bronzes for these years are extremely worn, which suggests they were in circulation for many years before being lost. The numbers of coins rapidly increase from the late 3rd century onwards and reach a peak during the 330s and 340s. Two soldiers with one or two standards plus those issues commemorating the founding of Constantinople and Rome are particularly common. Three coins of this period were found adhering together and may be from a small cache (SF 413–5) from ditch 4136, Area A. A single probable AE 4 of Honorius is the latest Roman coin (SF 150).

The small number of medieval coins range from Edward I to Henry VII (SF 67; 340; 341; 359 and 375). Amongst the equally small number of post-medieval coins there is one example of local token coinage (SF 180). The two small corroded lead discs (SF 110 and 374) may also have been produced as a result of the local need for small change. The smooth copper-alloy disc apparently scratched with the date '1717' no doubt served some specific local purpose (SF 434). Farthings of George I and George V mark the latest coins recovered from the site (SF 68 and 310).

TABLE 4 Metal finds dated to the Roman period

Material	*Object*	*Description*	*Area*	*Provenance*
Lead	Steelyard weight	Conical weight with remains of iron suspension hook. 875gms.	A	u/s (4227)
Iron	Hob nail	Length <5mm.	A	u/s
Copper alloy	Armlet	Diameter 100mm. Penannular ring made by twisting three flattened strands together. One tapering terminal damaged, other missing (Crummy 1983, fig. 41, no. 1628).	A	4144 (4191) 271E/285N
Copper alloy	Armlet	Diameter 75mm. Penannular ring made from flat strip with multiple motif decoration, i.e. squares, rosettes and grouped lines (Crummy 1983; fig. 47, no. 1745).	A	4225 (4273) Sk2
Copper alloy	Bracelet	Diameter 35mm. Small penannular ring, probably of twisted wire but badly corroded.	A	4309 (4356)
Copper alloy	Earring	Length 30mm. Thin wire bent to symmetrical star shape with small loop at one end.	A	4309 (4356)
Copper alloy	Ring or bracelet	Length 30mm. Fragment of armlet – like SF 126 – OR piece cut down to make ring.	A	u/s
Copper alloy	Bell	Diameter 20mm. One half of cast decorated sphere with round hole. Either medieval bell or from Roman armlet (Crummy 1983; fig. 41, no. 1690).	A	u/s
Copper alloy	Bracelet	Length 60mm unrolled. Flat tapering strip rolled to loop at one end. Both original ends missing. Linear decoration on both sides plus diagonal slashes.	A	u/s
Copper alloy	Fibula	Length 25mm. In two pieces. Part spring, bow and part catch-plate of small brooch.	C	u/s
Copper alloy	Nail cleaner	Length 25mm. Piece of rod with ovoid flattened end, pierced by central hole.	C	u/s
Copper alloy	Fibula	Length 42mm. Round section, arched bow and (detached) catch-plate of small brooch.	A	270E/170N
Copper alloy	Nail cleaner	Length 20mm. Cast top end of nail cleaner or tooth-pick.	A	205E/180N
Iron	Spud	Length 145mm. Socketed weeding tool.	C	117.5E/106.6N
Iron	Bill or socketed axe	Length 410mm. Rees's type IV axe. Crescentic blade has cutting edge nearly parallel to line of socket and handle.	C	111.5E/101.5N
Copper alloy	Fibula	Length 45mm. Spring, flat tapered bow and part catch-plate of a one-piece, 1st century brooch.	C	u/s
Copper alloy	Fibula	Length 26mm. Bow, spring casing and fragment of spring of brooch with flat ribbed bow.	A	305E/185N
Copper alloy	Nail cleaner	Length 63mm. Badly corroded, end missing.	A	4332/4044 (4397/4087)
Copper alloy	Nail cleaner	Length 56mm. Square or rectangular section. Suspension loop missing (Crummy 1981; 38, no. 1873).	A	u/s
Copper alloy	Bracelet	Length 10mm. Two very small pieces of twisted rod (Crummy 1981; fig. 41, no. 1602).	A	5321 (5374) Sk4
Copper alloy	Brooch?	Length 26mm. Fragment of annular brooch?	EV	Tr 86 u/s

TABLE 5 Summary of coins and tokens from the evaluation and excavation by period

Period	*Date*	*No. of coins*	*% of total*
Iron Age	25 BC–AD 43	3	1
Claudian	AD 43–54	-	-
Neronian	AD 54–68	-	-
Flavian I	AD 68–81	1	<1
Flavian II	AD 81–96	1	<1
Trajanic	AD 96–117	-	-
Hadrianic	AD 117–38	-	-
Antonine I	AD 138–61	3	1
Antonine II	AD 161–80	-	-
Antonine III	AD 180–92	-	-
Severan I	AD 192–217	-	-
Severan II	AD 217–60	2	1
Gallic Empire	AD 260–73	25	11
Aurelianic	AD 273–86	-	-
Carausian	AD 286–96	2	1
Diocletianic	AD 296–317	4	2
Constantinian I	AD 317–30	14	6
Constantinian II	AD 330–48	93	39
Constantinian III	AD 348–64	12	5
Valentinianic	AD 364–78	26	11
Theodosian I	AD 378–88	1	<1
Theodosian II	AD 388–402	1	<1
Medieval		5	2
Post-medieval		8	3
Unidentified		38	15
Total Number of Coins/Tokens		*239*	*100*

GLASS by MATTHEW GLEAVE

The assemblage consists of two probable glass vessel fragments and one glass bead.

Vessel fragments
Gully 5319 (5372)
One fragment of pale bluish-green glass vessel with slight curvature. Bubble-free glass with slight iridescence and weathering on both surfaces. Use scratches on outer surface. Maximum dimensions: 30 x 13mm. Thickness: 1.5mm.

Ditch 4141/2 (4188–9)
One fragment of light green glass vessel fragment with curvature suggesting fragment comes from neck of small bottle. Dull and weathered on both surfaces with a few pin-prick bubbles and scratches on inner surface. Inadequate remains for close identification or dating of both fragments.

Bead
Unstratified
Complete annular bead of light bluish-green glass, D-shaped in section. Weather-fractured and pitted surface, many bubbles and occasional opaque white inclusions. Hole slightly off-centre and not of uniform thickness. This type of plain, undecorated, annular bead is of a form found throughout the Roman period. Beads produced in this 'natural' bluish-green coloured glass are very common from the Roman conquest through to the Saxon period, peaking in manufacture in the 1st to 3rd centuries (Guido 1978, 11). Examples of beads of similar design and size have been found at Hambleden in Buckinghamshire and at Ditchley in Oxfordshire (*ibid.*, 140–1). Diameter: 21mm. Thickness: 9–10mm.

CREMATED BONE by JACQUELINE MCKINLEY

Introduction
Cremated bone from three contexts was received for analysis, including a Roman urned burial (4025), fragments from within an early Bronze Age collared urn (4317), and the fill of an undated pit (5247). All three contexts had been disturbed to some degree. There were no spatial links between the features from which the cremated bone was recovered, which were dispersed over a wide area of the site.

Method
All cremation-related contexts were subject to 100% recovery and wet-sieved to 1mm sieve-fraction size. Analysis followed the writer's standard procedure for the examination of cremated bone (McKinley 1989; 1994). Age was assessed from the stage of tooth development (Van Beek 1983), ossification/epiphyseal bone fusion (Gray 1977; McMinn and Hutchings 1985), the general stage of cranial suture fusion and other age-related degenerative changes to the bone (Bass 1987). Sex was ascertained from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (*ibid.*) including the maximum cranial vault thickness '1a' in accordance with Gejvall (1981). Levels of reliability reflect the quantity and

quality of available traits on which to base the assessment. Pathological lesions were recorded. Anatomical terminology used accords with Gray (1977) and McMinn and Hutchings (1985).

Results

Table 6 presents a summary of the results. Full details of all identified bones are presented in the archive where bone weights and percentages by fraction size and identified skeletal element groups are documented.

The bone was well preserved and did not appear to have suffered undue degradation during burial as a result of adverse soil conditions. The bone from pit 5247 (5298) (the undated pit) was charcoal-stained, presumably due to its proximity to the charcoal inclusions within the pit. Several fragments of bone from pit 4025 (4067) had been stained by the iron fragments present within the burial, in some instances the iron fragments having fused to the bone.

The remains of two, possibly three, individuals were identified: two adults of >30 years, and one possible immature individual. Sexing was only tentative with one possible female being identified. The very small size of the assemblage and dispersed nature of the features preclude any further demographic comment.

The observed pathological lesions are of a degenerative nature, most commonly resulting from age-related wear (Adams 1986), though there may be other predisposing factors (Rogers *et al.* 1987).

The predominant colour of the bone was buff-white, indicative of efficient cremation. Several fragments of femur shaft from burial 4025 (4067) showed blue/black coloration of the interior of the bone and several finger phalanges from 5298 were slightly grey. Such variations are within the norm (McKinley 1994, 83) and do not suggest any technical problems during cremation. The unilateral blue/black coloration seen in fragments of temporal vault from pit 5247 (5298) may suggest localised temperature or oxygen deficiency to one side of the skull during cremation. The disturbed nature of the contexts renders any comment on the quantity of the bone recovered inappropriate, since an unknown proportion of bone may have been lost. There is no evidence to suggest any deliberate fragmentation of bone before deposition. A selection of skeletal elements was included in each of the contexts and there is no evidence to suggest deliberate selection of particular bones. The nature of the fill of pit 5247 (5298) is open to question as it contained a mixture of both charcoal and cremated bone and most likely represents re-deposited pyre debris (McKinley 1997, 56–57).

Several fragments of iron, mostly nail shafts, were recovered from burial 4025 (4067). These seem most likely to represent the remains of an item included on the pyre. Five fragments of cremated chicken bone were also recovered. A fragment of cremated animal bone was also recovered from pit 5247. As the context is undated no specific comment can be made, but it is not uncommon for cremated animal bone to be recovered amongst cremated remains from any archaeological period in Britain.

Human Remains by Andy Smith

Human bone was recovered from four inhumation burials, two isolated findspots, and a gully excavated during the evaluation (gully 45). The datable burials belong to the later Roman period. The bone condition was poor, with notable absence of many elements due to plough damage, thus impeding many important analytical estimates.

The analysis has shown that there are two adult inhumations (one male, the other female) and a possible female sub-adult. Both isolated crania are adult in appearance, but are unsexable. The male adult has had a probable fall, while the female has had vascular problems resulting in an aneurysm. The loose crania possess traits suggestive of

Table 6 Summary of cremated human bone

Feature/fill	*Weight (gms)*	*Number of individuals*	*Age*	*Sex*	*Pathology*	*Other*
4025 (4067)	241.5	1	older mature/adult	?	exostoses- femur shaft	chicken bone
4317 (4364)	0.4	?	? immature			within collared urn
5247 (5298)	283.2	1	mature adult	??female		animal bone

damage to the inside of the skull either from trauma or infection.

The evaluation
Ten skull fragments from gully 45 (156, trench 55) were discovered. The relatively small thickness of the fragments suggests a juvenile.

The excavation
Burial Sk1 (4048)
This was a supine burial with the left arm covering the pelvis. The bone preservation is poor. Surviving sex indicators provide both male and female tendencies. Metrically, the left humerus has a female bias, whereas both femurs and calcaneii are male. Orthologically, the pelvis has a narrow sciatic notch which is again a male attribute. Unfortunately, no other useful observations could be made. Evidence for ageing the individual with certainty was minimal. All the surviving epiphyses have fused, giving a minimal age of >*c.*22 years of age. The surviving right portion of the mandible possesses three teeth only (RM3, RM2, RP2). RM3 has erupted obliquely, growing at 45° labially as a wisdom tooth and the lack of RM1 has created an unusual wear pattern on RM2 and RP1. This makes a useless pattern for ageing purposes.

Bone pathology present consists of degenerative, traumatic and infectious lesions. Osteoarthrosis occurs as an eburnation on the left femur and the corresponding acetabulum, and slight osteophytosis on the trochlea of the right ulna. There is mild degenerative disc disease occurring in the mid to lower vertebrae and Schmorl's nodes are located on L3, L4, T12 and T8. L5 is sacralised. Osteitic change due to trauma occurs in the lower right leg, right radius and right clavicle. The right fibula has a healed fracture and there is reactive bone growth on the distal posterior of the tibia along the fibula attachment. The right clavicle and radius have enthesophytes as a result of muscle stress on tendon insertions. The anterior iliac spine and the roof of the acetabulum of the left ilium is extremely porotic and vascular, with slight periosteitic growth along the lateral edge of the anterior iliac spine and around the lateral-anterior of the acetabular lip. Vascularization occurs at the base of the anterior iliac spine, with holes running right through the ilium. A particular crater on the lateral side of the ilium, above the acetabulum, is 13.8mm in diameter. There is a slight osteitic reaction superior to the fovea capitis in the form of a minor enthesophyte.

These observations suggests osteomyelitis as a result of a possible infection of the pubis (which did not survive) or as a result of trauma. The fractured fibula may have been the result of a fall and although there is no indication of a fractured pelvis, the stress may have caused muscular damage around the anterior iliac spine. Secondly, the result of a damaged leg is extra stress on the opposite leg, hence the eburnation and minor osteophytosis on both the femoral head and the acetabulum.

Burial Sk2 (4225)
This burial was supine. The torso and proximal ends of both humeri and femurs are present, with the posterior part of the cranium. The long bone epiphyses suggest an age of between 14 and 25 years of age. There are no other ageing indicators. Sexing adolescents is difficult due to the immaturity of bone morphology. However, orthologically the auricular surface appears elevated from the ilium – a feminine trait. The posterior portion of both temporals and adjoining part of the occipital, plus the anterior portion of the left shoulder bones, have turned black and greyish-white in places. This kind of colour change is caused by the application of heat in the region of *c.* 600°C – a low-grade fire. This was not an attempted cremation, rather the top half of the body had been laid on hot ashes.

Burial Sk3 (4338)
This burial was prone. The remains were poorly preserved and were orthologically feminine, e.g. gracile long bones, a wide sciatic notch, but with no metrical data possible to confirm or deny this. All epiphyses have fused where present, suggesting an age of 30+ years. Pathology traits consist of a possible aneurysm on the rear of the right femur with slight porotic periosteitis above the lateral condyle.

Burial Sk4 (5321)
This burial was possibly crouched. The well-preserved bones were of a juvenile aged between 0 and 6 months old. There is no indication of the cause of death.

Unstratified human skull fragments
These finds were retrieved from two locations

during topsoil-stripping of the site. There were no apparent post-cranial remains associated with them and the latter are presumed lost due to plough damage. One cranium (Cr 1) consists of a left parietal, occipital and temporal adjoined and all damage was post-mortem. A second piece of occipital showing the internal occipital crest and a partial foramen magnum was found 4m to the north. Cr 2 is in several pieces, comprising the frontal, left and right parietal and a right temporal. The remaining sutures indicate adulthood in both individuals. Cr 1 has little left remaining of the occipital and the periosteum is badly abraded so assessment of gender is impossible. Cr 2 has a slight supra-orbital ridge tentatively suggesting a female. Both have similar pathologies. On the posterior portion of the left parietal of Cr 1 is a roughened area of periosteitic growth *c.* 40mm in diameter. The outer table is only thickened by *c.* 1mm but is distinctive from the rest of the cranium. This is possibly necrotic growth with a sheath of new bone growth covering the necrosis – an involucrum; however, there is no hypervascularity surrounding the swelling. This is probably due to a dull impact to the head, not necessarily a blow, but from accidental contact with a hard surface. On the inner table there is a band of porosity *c.* 20mm across, stretching from the point of the lambdoid through the parietal. The full extent is unknown.

Cr 2 has much of the periosteum removed through external abrasion. There is a distinctive thinning of the inner table, exposing the diplöe which was initially thought to be a pseudo-trephination due to rock abrasion or root action, on the inner table. There is distinct osteolytic lesioning in two places, joined by a band of milder porosis and pitting.

Animal Bones by Sheila Hamilton-Dyer

Introduction

Features in Areas A, B and C produced animal bone and are treated as a single unit chronologically. Most of this material relates to the Roman period; the prehistoric and post-Roman periods are both poorly represented. The remains are mainly the result of hand recovery but also include some sieved material. Bone from evaluation trenches is included.

Methodology

Identifications were made using the modern comparative collections of S Hamilton-Dyer. The bones have been recorded to species and anatomy where possible; undiagnostic fragments have been classified as horse/cattle-sized (LAR) and sheep/pig-sized (SAR). Ribs and vertebrae (excepting atlas, axis and sacrum) are classified as LAR or SAR. Some small fragments could not be ascribed to any group and are recorded only as mammalian (MAM). Measurements were taken using a vernier calliper and are in millimetres. In general these follow the methods of von den Driesch (1976). Withers heights of the domestic ungulates are based on factors recommended by von den Driesch and Boessneck (1974). The archive database contains records for individual bones and includes further information on butchery, ageing, measurements and other details.

Results

A total of 1375 bones was recovered from the site. A summary of the distribution of the taxa by phase is given in Table 7 (the 155 amphibian bones are not included). The condition of the bones varies from context to context; overall most bones are slightly eroded. Some are moderately eroded and fragile, a few are burnt and some have been gnawed by dogs. Few bones are complete but 53% could be identified to taxon. Most of the unidentified fragments are cattle-sized and are likely to be of cattle, as remains of horse and red deer are rare. Cattle clearly dominates the entire assemblage. Sheep bones are common; other remains are infrequent: they include horse, pig, red deer, dog, domestic fowl, eagle, small mammals and amphibians.

Prehistoric phases

The 180 bones come from contexts ranging from Neolithic to later Iron Age, mostly from the Iron Age phases. The bones are mainly of cattle, sheep and pig and unidentified fragments probably also of these animals. Cattle bone is a little more frequent than bones of sheep and pig. Other taxa are rare but include horse, a red deer antler, dog and a single bird bone. Most of the bones are slightly eroded, chalky and fragile. Some fragments have been burnt. Almost all of the cattle bone is of loose teeth, jaw fragments, toes and tarsals. These are elements resistant to erosion and on the whole the bone from other taxa is similarly biased. There are, however,

two metatarsi of a neonatal lamb from ditch 4026, which would not have survived in very aggressive soil conditions.

Phase 4 pit 5206 contained the much fragmented caudal half of a red deer antler. The anterior part is not present; therefore it is not possible to tell whether this was naturally shed or from a hunted animal. The antler did not appear to have been modified. Pit 4512, also from this phase, offered one of the largest groups of bone, 39 fragments. Most of these are cattle- and sheep-sized limb bone fragments but other bones are present, including a dog jaw and a fragment of an antler comb.

Bone from the phase 5 pit alignment is variable in amount, content and condition. Pit 5307 offered a sample which included cattle, horse, sheep and pig and indirect evidence of dog. Some of the bones were heavily burnt. Pit 4032 contributed the largest group of bone from prehistoric contexts, and the second largest sample from the site at 56 fragments. Of special interest is a fragment of an eagle wing bone (humerus) which had been repeatedly cut near the distal end of the shaft. It is possible that the marks were made in removing the part of the wing which holds most of the flight feathers. Each wing can reach almost a metre and would be a spectacular trophy. Bird bone is rare from the site in any case (only seven in total) but eagle bones are not common, though they do occur sporadically from a wide spectrum of sites. The white-tailed eagle is the largest species and is the most frequently identified. It was once a common scavenger. This context also included the only positively identified goat bone from the site and a pig fibula pin.

None of the bones from these phases showed evidence of butchery, although some may have been eroded. This is in sharp contrast to the Roman material which frequently had visible butchery marks.

Roman phases

The majority of the bone is from contexts dated to these phases, 827 bones from Areas A and B and a further 27 from Area C. Although several phases of occupation have been identified, many of the bones are from linear features which may have had a long period of usage; other features could be dated only generally and, therefore, the bone is discussed as a single assemblage, especially as the sample is relatively small and phase differences are unlikely to be detected.

The collection is mostly of cattle, with sheep the second most frequently identified taxon. Horse and pig are uncommon; other remains are rare: one fragment of red deer, five of dog, six of fowl and probable fowl, and two of small mammals.

Pit 4300 contained the partial remains of three cattle skulls. A bull, cow and castrate are probably indicated by the size and formation of the horn cores. The pit contained few other remains but the collection does include a cattle scapula with the spine sliced off, a style not infrequent at Roman sites but unusual from Iron Age sites and those with less evidence of Romanisation.

In barrel pit 4815 the bulk of bone is of cattle butchery waste, mainly prime meat bones, but there are also four jaws, one chopped. Three limb bones have clear filleting marks. The bones include two complete tibia, a femur and a metatarsus, from which withers height estimates can be made, all very similar at just over 1.1m (see discussion below). The metatarsus is pathological with a lump on the medial side of the shaft, perhaps in response to an injury. Other bones from the pit are few: they include fragments of a horse skull, two bones of a sheep hind foot, a neonatal pig radius and a dog metacarpus.

Five of the seven bird bones from the site were contained within a grey-ware jar containing cremation 4025. Three of these can be positively identified as domestic fowl, all are calcined and it is likely that they represent an offering included with the remains. Several examples were found at Verulamium and at Alington Avenue, Dorset, though mainly associated with late Iron Age inhumations (Davis 1989; Maltby nd). There is some evidence that fowl are more often placed with females (Wells 1981) and fowl are frequently included with Roman inhumations on the continent (Lauwerier 1983). The few scraps of mammal bone from inhumations here are more likely to be from the infill rather than deliberate inclusions.

At least two features contained animal bones together with human cremation remains; others may have been present but, as many features were not fully excavated, this is difficult to ascertain. Pit 4040 contained the head and feet of a horned sheep. This has an estimated withers height of 0.596m. Ditch 4136/4137 contained the partial remains of a probably complete sheep skeleton.

In addition to the metatarsus described above there were three other pathological cattle bones. In ditch 4229 an acetabulum exhibited eburnation and extra bone growth with another similar one in ditch 4044/4332. A vertebra from ditch 30 had a depressed and perforated anterior face. The single red deer bone is a jaw with the remains of the deciduous fourth premolar impacted between the permanent fourth premolar and the first molar.

Butchery marks are visible on some of the fragments and include knife marks as well as the more common chop marks. Layer 4024 contains some axially split cattle metapodia. As indicated above, three of the cattle limb bones from barrel pit 4815, together with some from other contexts, exhibited shave marks, made when using a heavy blade to strip the (raw) meat from the bones.

Knife marks are mostly those which would have been made during skinning or removing meat from the jaw and ribs. Most of the butchery marks are on the cattle bones but there are some on the sheep bones. There are also knife marks on a horse tibia, probably indicating skinning in this case, as horse meat does not seem to have been much used during this period. Of the few pig bones with butchery marks most indicate axial splitting of the head, a common technique at all periods.

Data on the age of the animals represented is limited. Epiphysial fusion evidence is probably unreliable as taphonomic factors affect the bones differentially, and there are few mandibles with teeth present in the collection. It is possible, however, to make some general comments. Animals of a wide spread of ages are represented. Whilst most bones are from adult or sub-adult animals, there are a few bones of very young animals. These include a bone from a neonatal lamb in ditch 4111 and a calf bone from ring ditch 4037. One of the horse jaws represents a young animal, an unusual find as the bones usually represent adult animals culled or dying at the end of a long working life. Two of the cattle acetabulae show pathological changes associated with arthritis and generally considered to indicate old animals while other bones were from animals which had not finished growth. Sheep bones were also a mixture of fused and unfused elements and the bones and jaw of the partial skeleton from ditch 4136/4137 are of an animal around six months old.

Despite a high level of recent breakage and ancient fragmentation some bones were measurable. These include a few complete limb bones from which withers height estimates can be made. Two sheep metapodia offer withers heights of 0.596m and 0.604m. These are similar to material from the Oxford region (Wilson 1978) and are very similar to those already published for Milton Keynes. There are seven complete cattle limb bones which offer height estimates between 1.104m and 1.232m.

Saxon

There are just 24 fragments from three contexts which could be identified as Saxon. There are 20 from the probable sunken-featured building 4031. These few bones are of cattle, sheep, pig and fragments of this size range.

Medieval

There are just four bones including sheep and pig, all from gully 800. There is a strong possibility that these are residual finds.

Unphased and modern

There were 158 bones from contexts which could not be dated, were contaminated by modern material or were poorly stratified. These bones were mainly of cattle and sheep and fragments of this size. The few other bones are of horse, pig, dog, small mammals, and also of amphibians from gully 5229. A horse metacarpus from ditch 200 and a cattle metatarsus from spread 23 were sufficiently complete for withers height estimates of 1.314m and 1.144m respectively. These are both typical of prehistoric and early historic material and much of the bone was indistinguishable in general character from the Roman material.

Discussion

In common with the majority of later prehistoric and early historic sites in England the assemblage is dominated by bones of the domestic ungulates. With only three bones of deer and one bone of a wild bird (eagle), there is little reliance on wild resources, although taphonomic bias may count against the smaller species as little sieving was undertaken and the condition of the bones was generally fair but not good. No fowl bones were recovered from the prehistoric material and, although the sample is small, this is as expected as this bird seems to have been introduced only at the very end of the Iron Age, and even then is rarely recorded, becoming more common throughout the Roman

period (Maltby 1981; nd). Finding the remains in association with a cremation may indicate a higher class status of the deceased. The amount of bone from phases other than the Roman ones is too small for further comment.

Cattle dominates the Roman assemblage, accounting for 26% of all bone and 60% of the cattle/sheep/pig total. Sheep accounts for 36% of this total but pig forms less than 5% and is less frequent in the collection than bones of horse. Dog and domestic fowl are present at low levels and there is a single bone of red deer.

The relative proportions of cattle, sheep and pig fall within the overlap area of the 'polygons' for vici and un-Romanised settlements (King 1987). The amount of pig is negligible, falling just outside the 'polygon' for villas. At Barton Court Farm, Oxon, Wilson *et al.* (1986) reported an increase in cattle over time while the presumed native site at Ashville (Wilson *et al.* 1978) remained high in the representation of sheep. This is perhaps a rather generalised method of classification and other factors may also be at work here, including taphonomic bias and the local conditions of the site. The low-lying area adjacent to Fenny Lock has heavy soils eminently suited to cattle pasture and, therefore, it is perhaps to be expected that the level of cattle is quite high. This method does, however, indicate that the assemblage from Fenny Lock is unlikely to derive from an urban or military site. The amount of pig seems to be very variable on Roman sites and is perhaps more influenced by cultural factors. The amount of pig is usually highest at urban and legionary sites, for example at Dorchester (Dorset) (Maltby 1993), but it can reach 20% or more at some villa and vici sites. It is necessary to apply caution in the interpretation, especially of small samples, as disposal practices and taphonomic factors are likely to count against pig. Material from linear features dominates the assemblage, and bone from these is often biased in favour of cattle.

It is useful to compare the results for the Roman phases with material previously reported from Milton Keynes (Westley 1987). This report covers animal bones recovered from seven sites and comprising several years of excavation at Milton Keynes. Although it is not entirely clear how much material was examined from each site, the bones undoubtedly form considerable collections: over 3,000 identified fragments from Bancroft Villa, over 1,500 from Stantonbury, and 'eight boxes of broken bones' from Little Woolstone, of which 744 were identified. While the methods of recording and analysis are not directly comparable, nor fully described, there are several general points of similarity. As at Fenny Lock the assemblages consist mainly of cattle and sheep bones with small amounts of pig and horse. The few other fragments are usually of dog, red and roe deer and domestic fowl. It is suggested that most of the animals were killed in the second or third year with some bones from aged animals and very few from neonatal stock. This is consistent with culling for prime meat and the small amount of evidence from Fenny Lock does not dispute this finding. Urban and military sites frequently have a high number of remains from adult cows. This does not seem to be the case at Milton Keynes where the ages are less biased and there are several remains of bulls. The remains are perhaps representative of proximity to a producer site but not directly where stock breeding was being carried out.

The butchery style at Fenny Lock is of heavy chopping, typical of Roman sites, and includes some bones which had been marked during filleting. This style is rarely found at rural, non-Romanised sites (Maltby 1989). The butchery technique is not fully described by Westley but there are indications that much of the bone was repeatedly chopped, excepting that from Little Woolstone.

None of the sites, including Fenny Lock, appeared to contain specific dumps of butchery waste, nor were there concentrations of head and foot bones from slaughter or tanning. There is some bias in the anatomical representation with few skulls, femurs, phalanges and carpals/tarsals. These are bones which are either small or fragile and are the least likely to survive, be collected, or identified. The suggestion by Westley that the cattle were pole-axed because of this lack of skulls can probably not now be justified, although they may well have been. Studies have shown that certain elements, including the skull, are under-represented at most sites due to taphonomic processes (Maltby 1985).

Although many of the bones were broken or butchered, there were some measurable bones. The general impression is of animals similar to those from elsewhere in England, and from previous excavations at Milton Keynes. There is consider-

able evidence of the presence of larger cattle in the Roman period in comparison with Iron Age stock, particularly in the south-east (Maltby 1981; Luff 1982). It can be seen from Table 7 that the cattle measurements from Fenny Lock fit comfortably within the range for the other sites. Bancroft has not only the largest sample but also the minimum and maximum values. This last was noted as particularly large and is thought to be from a bull. These withers height estimates are similar to those from later Roman Winchester (mean 1.178m, Maltby nd 3) and Owslebury (mean 1.158m, Maltby nd 2), and mostly larger than those from Exeter and Dorchester (Maltby 1979; 1993).

It is clear that, while individual sites in and around Milton Keynes offer animal bone assemblages with interesting intra- and inter-site variations, animal bone from excavations of Roman date from the area have several overall similarities: the assemblages are dominated by domestic stock, mainly cattle; pig is at a low level; wild species are very few; and the animals, especially the cattle, are of good size and are culled mainly at the best time for meat. Each site offers a relatively small collection but there is ample scope for the further analysis of aspects of the assemblages as a group.

General Discussion

Mesolithic

During the excavation a single microlith and a few blades were recovered, indicating a low level of Mesolithic activity on the site. Few findspots and sites are recorded for the Mesolithic period for the Milton Keynes area and the adjoining areas of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire (Holgate 1995, fig. 5). Nevertheless, the Fenny Lock finds and the two flint scatters (certainly and probably of later Mesolithic date) found in observations during the construction of Caldecotte Lake just to the north-east of Fenny Lock (Williams 1994, 29) add to the limited knowledge of use of the valley in this period.

Early Neolithic

A small number of early Neolithic finds and deposits were found on the site, comprising a few certain and probable pits and postholes, and some distinctive stray finds. Neolithic deposits and finds in the Milton Keynes and surrounding areas are as rare as, if not rarer than, those of the Mesolithic period (Zeepvat 1991; Holgate 1995, 10ff; Ford 1999). There is too little data to add significant comment to the distribution and chronology of Neolithic settlement, other than to say that the excavations at Fenny Lock confirm that Neolithic settlements are present in the Ouzel Valley.

Early Bronze Age

A single small pit (4317) containing a collared urn (Fig. 13) is the only certain evidence of activity on the site during this period. Collared urns are most frequently associated with cremation burials, either as burial deposits in their own right or as 'foundation deposits' for cremation cemeteries of middle Bronze Age date (Longworth 1984). In this case, the vessel was not associated with cremation deposits (other than a very small fragment). It is more probable that this vessel reflects the presence of an occupation site. Collared urns are rare in settlement contexts, although a number of recent excavations of early and middle Bronze Age occupation sites have revealed such pottery (Benson *et al.* 1990; Ruben and Ford 1992). As with the preceding periods, much of the surviving evidence for early Bronze Age occupation is likely to be contained within the topsoil as a scatter of struck flints rather than as features cutting the subsoil (Healy 1983). In an area such as Fenny Lock, where prehistoric flint use and discard is low due to the limitations on supply of raw materials, such slight traces of this prehistoric evidence would have been difficult to observe and record during topsoil stripping of the site.

On a broad level, this deposit contributes to our overall understanding of the early Bronze Age in the Milton Keynes area on two counts. Firstly, it demonstrates the ephemeral character of occupation sites at a time when the archaeological record is dominated by evidence from burial mounds and stray finds, which adds weight to the notion that the transient nature of occupation reflects a highly mobile or transhumant lifestyle. Secondly, it adds to the limited evidence for Bronze Age occupation in the Ouzel Valley and Milton Keynes area and indicates that settlement of the region was more dense and widespread than the distribution of burial mounds suggests.

Late Bronze Age/Iron Age

The discovery of late Bronze Age/Iron Age settlement at Fenny Lock was an unexpected result of the

TABLE 7: Summary of all faunal remains from the excavation (including evaluation finds)

Phase	*Horse*	*Cattle*	*Sheep/ Goat*	*Pig*	*Red Deer*	*Cattle– Size*	*Sheep– Size*	*Mammal*	*Dog*	*Fowl*	*Other Bird*	*Small Mammal*	*Totals*
Prehistoric 2–3	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	*2*
2–5	–	3	–	2	–	1	4	6	–	–	–	–	*16*
4	–	8	2	5	2	18	15	1	1	–	–	–	*52*
4/5	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	*3*
5	3	21	15	3	–	43	18	2	1	–	1	–	*107*
Total	*3*	*33*	*18*	*10*	*2*	*64*	*38*	*9*	*2*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*180*
percent	*1.7*	*18.3*	*10*	*5.6*	*1.1*	*35.6*	*21.1*	*5*	*1.1*	*0*	*0.6*	*0*	
% cattle, sheep, pig		*54.1*	*29.5*	*16.4*									*61*
Roman 6	8	51	13	1	–	61	13	33	1	–	–	1	*182*
6–7	–	22	6	6	–	29	20	1	–	–	–	–	*84*
6–7?	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	*1*
6–8	4	24	16	–	–	34	8	11	–	3	2	1	*103*
7	1	16	21	–	–	36	6	5	–	–	–	–	*85*
7–8	–	1	3	–	–	2	4	–	1	–	–	–	*11*
7a	3	21	27	3	–	26	21	2	–	–	–	–	*103*
7a?	–	2	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	*3*
7b	9	19	19	1	1	28	5	–	1	–	–	–	*83*
7?	–	5	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	*6*
8	9	63	29	5	–	63	17	4	2	1	–	–	*193*
Total	*34*	*224*	*134*	*17*	*1*	*280*	*95*	*56*	*5*	*4*	*2*	*2*	*854*
percent	*4*	*26.2*	*15.7*	*2*	*0.1*	*32.8*	*11.1*	*6.6*	*0.6*	*0.5*	*0.2*	*0.2*	
% cattle, sheep, pig		*59.7*	*35.7*	*4.5*								*375*	
Saxon 9	–	6	5	2	–	5	6	–	–	–	–	–	*24*
Total	*0*	*6*	*5*	*2*	*0*	*5*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*24*
percent	*0*	*25*	*20.8*	*8.3*	*0*	*20.8*	*25*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
% cattle, sheep, pig		*46.2*	*38.5*	*15.4*									*13*
Medieval 10 –	–	1	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	*4*	
Total	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*4*
percent	*0*	*0*	*25*	*25*	*0*	*0*	*25*	*25*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
% cattle, sheep, pig		*0*	*50*	*50*									*2*
Undated and modern	7	27	17	1	–	59	20	12	1	–	–	14	*158*
Total	*7*	*27*	*17*	*1*	*0*	*59*	*20*	*12*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*14*	*158*
percent	*4.4*	*17.1*	*10.8*	*0.6*	*0*	*37.3*	*12.7*	*7.6*	*0.6*	*0*	*0*	*8.9*	
		60	*37.8*	*2.2*									*45*
Grand total	*44*	*290*	*175*	*31*	*3*	*408*	*160*	*78*	*8*	*4*	*3*	*16*	*1220*
	3.6	*23.8*	*14.3*	*2.5*	*0.2*	*33.4*	*13.1*	*6.4*	*0.7*	*0.3*	*0.2*	*1.3*	
		58.5	*35.3*	*6.3*									*496*

excavations. Despite the limitations of a chronological sequence derived only from pottery, clearly occupation of the sites at this time took place over several centuries, spanning the traditional late Bronze Age, early Iron Age and middle Iron Age periods. The coincidence of both earlier and later elements here suggests continued use of the same location, even if occupation without a break is impossible to demonstrate. Without a chronological sequence based on radiocarbon dating or associated metalwork, the phasing of the site relies on reference to the ceramic sequence outlined by Barrett (1980). Barrett recognised two phases of post-Deverel-Rimbury pottery: plain ware (11th–9th century BC) lying within the traditional late Bronze Age, and decorated ware (8th–5th century BC) which spans the late Bronze Age – early Iron Age transition. For Fenny Lock there are few large stratified groups and the clear recognition of a plain-ware component has not been demonstrated (see pottery report). Therefore, just two phases have been defined, namely late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and middle/later Iron Age.

Settlement sites of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date in the city of Milton Keynes and the wider region in general are uncommon and the evidence for occupation is often insubstantial (Zeepvat 1991; Knight 1984). A number of the recently excavated sites in the city have extensive evidence of prehistoric occupation but this is usually of middle/late Iron Age date. At Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al.* 1996, 11) early Iron Age activity was restricted to a single pit. At Hartigans (Williams 1993) traces of possible palisaded enclosures pre-dated a middle Iron Age enclosure, whereas at the nearby site of Pennyland, no evidence of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age occupation was found. The exception to this pattern was at Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat 1994, 21) where a substantial and complex late Bronze Age/early Iron Age structure was found. This structure comprised three circular rings of postholes, one of which was partly defined by a ring gully, and the whole structure was surrounded by a ring gully. Nearby were a 'working hollow' and a few other pits.

The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age occupation at Fenny Lock may have comprised two post-built roundhouses, a small number of pits, and several isolated postholes. The site was unenclosed. Superficially, the deposits at Bancroft appear to provide a comparison for Fenny Lock, in that it too was unenclosed and comprised a circular structure using earthfast posts for foundations. However, the structure at Bancroft was a substantial and elaborate building and was probably an elite residence similar to those recorded within 'mini-hillforts', as at Thwing (Manby 1980). The only puzzle is that it was not enclosed. In contrast, the evidence from Fenny Lock is for less-complex structures more in keeping with typical occupation sites found elsewhere.

Faunal remains from Fenny Lock that unambiguously belong to this period are few, but appear to indicate a reliance on the usual cattle, sheep and pig, species typical of this and later periods. This, the character of the other artefacts recovered, and the nature of the physical remains are best regarded as representing evidence of a small farming settlement.

Middle/Late Iron Age

The middle/late Iron Age deposits on the site are characterised by ring gullies, post-built structures, pits, hearths, fences and a pit alignment. Conspicuous in their absence are clay-lined pits, stone-filled pits, dense pit groups, linear features representing droveways, and paddocks and ditched enclosures.

At several other sites excavated in the Milton Keynes area such as at Pennyland, Hartigans and Wavendon Gate (Williams 1993; Williams *et al.* 1996), Iron Age sites are characterised by a combination of ring-gully roundhouses and one or more small ditched enclosures. At Pennyland, for example (Williams 1993, fig. 5), the major features of the settlement comprised five small enclosures and eleven ring-gully houses with a droveway and paddock boundaries although not all of these features were in use at the same time. Nevertheless, the settlement as a whole was unenclosed. In contrast, at Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat, 1994, fig. 23) the main settlement features only comprised a linear arrangement of 15 ring-gully houses, again not all in use at the same time.

Whilst new fieldwork continues to add to the diversity of settlement form, some of the contrasting patterns in this small sample of Milton Keynes sites may be a product of either function or chronology. Sites with the small enclosures exemplified by Pennyland appear most likely to be dominated by a need to handle stock. In contrast, sites such as Fenny Lock, Bancroft and Westcroft (*ibid.*;

Ford 1998–2000) may be less stock orientated. The numbers of faunal remains which belong to this period are few, and represent the usual range of domesticated species without any evidence for specialised activities. It is possible that at Fenny Lock part of this pattern is chronological: a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age component has been demonstrated for the site and perhaps most of the succeeding activity present belongs early in the middle Iron Age before the complex lay-out of settlements, as on other Milton Keynes sites, had yet been developed.

The pit alignment in Area A belongs to a monument type widely recognised across the British Isles but especially so in the Midlands and Yorkshire (Wilson 1978, fig. 1.1; Knight 1984, map 20). They are clearly boundary features, yet as Pollard (1996, 110) has pointed out, their interrupted nature would not lead to an effective barrier, even if the spoil was used to create a small bank which was eventually hedged. A ditch would be a much more effective boundary at restricting access and would only be marginally more time-consuming to dig than a series of pits. The pits at Fenny Lock, as for other sites, were dug only once and not maintained. Together, these elements could be interpreted as a symbolic rather than restrictive physical boundary at a time when tight control over landholding was not prevalent. Nevertheless, as a practical solution a boundary of land ownership defined by a line of pits/mounds would be as distinctive and durable a marker as, say, a line of posts. The Iron Age occupation at Fenny Lock as a whole is not characterised by ditched enclosure of any form and may reflect a loose structure to the pattern of settlement and fields. This pattern contrasts markedly with the Roman pattern where enclosure is extensive. Yet despite the ephemeral nature of the pit alignment, there are good reasons to suggest that its position determined the pattern of landholding in Roman times.

No late Iron Age deposits were found on the site. The only items of note are three coins, one of Tasciovanus and two of Cunobelin, and a few sherds of pottery. Only the coin of Tasciovanus came from a stratified deposit, a Roman ditch on Area C. It is entirely possible that an ancestral late Iron Age site lies beyond the northern margins of Area A as it is clear from both the evaluation and excavation that the site as a whole continued to the north. However, a pattern has been observed at sites such as Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al.* 1996, 83) that even where there is no evidence for any break in the sequence of occupation, in early Roman times there was a compelling need to re-site the settlement on new ground. Why this should be is not clear but does appear to have occurred at Fenny Lock.

Roman

Roman occupation at Fenny Lock began in the later 1st century AD and succeeded a period of several hundred years in which the site was not used for occupation. Two Roman foci were identified in Areas A and C. The construction of a large enclosure in the later 1st century AD (in Area A) is a feature recurrent on many sites (Williams *et al.* 1996, 83) as are subsequent major and minor subdivisions of the internal space. Yet, despite the major investment in this enclosure, deposits confidently datable to this period are few and appear to consist of a single residence. The full extent of the enclosure to the north has not been determined but it seems unlikely that many more deposits of this period would have been present in the unexcavated areas. However, it also seems unlikely, from the density of activity on the site, that the single house site identified at this time was the only domestic structure but perhaps its more durable nature, resulting in its survival in the archaeological record, is due to its enhanced status. Lesser domestic structures may not have been so well founded. The possibility that the structure was a shrine has been considered but there is little evidence to support this view. In particular, deposits that might be considered as votive were not present in the immediate environs and there were no architectural features to distinguish it from other late Roman buildings in the region. Although a large number of stray coins were found across the site, these are of low denominations and are not easily described as votive offerings rather than casual losses. On balance, the interpretation of this structure as a domestic building is preferred.

More clearly recognisable domestic structures are present in Area C. There, two ring-gully structures with paddocks are associated with a rectangular field system. These features came into existence in the late 1st century AD but had been abandoned by the end of the 2nd century.

The early Roman occupation pattern contrasts with the subsequent period (2nd to early 3rd cen-

tury) when numerous small enclosures, trackways, etc., are defined and redefined by small gullies. The majority of these gullies lie within the enclosure apart from an external paddock on the east. It is only relatively late in this phase that a major subdivision of the large enclosure takes place, splitting the area into roughly two halves. The purpose of this subdivision is not clear, although it was important enough to have been recut on at least two occasions. Some of the earlier subdivisions have been slighted by this ditch and many, if not all, may have been disused. At other Milton Keynes sites such as Wavendon Gate (*ibid.*) there is evidence that the major internal subdivisions were used for different activities, but at Fenny Lock no such evidence is forthcoming.

In Area A, in later Roman times (mid 3rd to 4th century), the original enclosure, its main subdividing ditch, and the residence remained in use, with the latter being rebuilt partly in stone. Occupation in Area C had ceased by this time. The 4th century is regarded as a period of prosperity and the rebuilding in stone may be indicative of this. Yet the main evidence for new construction lies beyond the enclosure limits. It is only in this phase that Roman settlement began to reuse areas occupied by the late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements. At this time, ring-gully enclosures were dug, some conjoining, some free standing, and others using part of the original enclosure ditch. It is possible, but not proven, that some of the ring gullies are house sites. Several burials have been found and at least one of the inhumations belongs to this period. These burials, which include both cremations and inhumations, are not clustered into a formal cemetery although they all lie within part of the main enclosure. Other finds of human bone during topsoil and subsoil stripping point to the former presence of now ploughed-out inhumations. Perhaps a larger number of burials have been ploughed out as the metal-detector finds include a disproportionate number of objects for personal decoration which may originally have derived from graves.

Some 80% of all identified Roman coins belong to the period after AD 317, which is fairly typical of Roman sites in general such as at Magiovinium (Curnow 1987, 32). The pattern of coin loss shows the greatest numbers from AD 330–378, but with few beyond this time. It is not clear if this coin evidence indicates that the settlement was abandoned some time near the end of the 4th century or was a product of disruption to the circulation of coinage. The presence of a Saxon sunken-featured building (below) located close to the stone-footed building may be a mere coincidence but could indicate the continuity of site use well into the 5th century.

One of the aims of the project was to examine the nature of the site and its finds with respect to any influence the nearby town of Magiovinium may have had. This concept has its origins in the early market economy of post-medieval industrial Europe (Christaller 1966) and may be inappropriate for earlier periods. Nevertheless the possibility of the presence of specialised production, such as of foodstuffs, to supply an urban centre was a topic worth examining. In practice, evidence for large-scale food production/processing was not found at Fenny Lock. There was no evidence for extensive grain storage facilities such as large storage pits or post-built granaries. A full programme of analysis for charred plant remains could not be carried out, due to the resource constraints on the project, yet no evidence was found for large-scale processing such as dumps of accidentally burnt grain or dumps of burnt chaff. The large number of gullies in Area A could have reflected a need to handle a disproportionally larger number of stock than the production of a basic farmstead, but this is not supported by the evidence of the faunal remains. The faunal remains provide a species list and body part composition broadly typical of Roman sites in the Milton Keynes area and the wider Midlands region. Horse, a species that could, for example, be specially reared, was particularly poorly represented. On the basis of this brief review, there is nothing to suggest specialised production for Magiovinium.

One of the most intriguing finds is that of a Saxon sunken-featured building immediately adjacent to the late Roman residence, which had perhaps stood in the same place for several centuries. A second possible sunken-featured building lies to the north. It may be that this proximity is entirely coincidental or that the structure was located next to a landscape feature (such as a pile of derelict stonework) several decades or centuries after abandonment of the Roman building. However, it could equally represent continuity of the site beyond the end of traditional Roman rule, with refurbishment of the house taking place in the latest style imported from the Continent. In this respect the coin list from the site does include a coin dated AD 388–402 and another possible example of Honorius

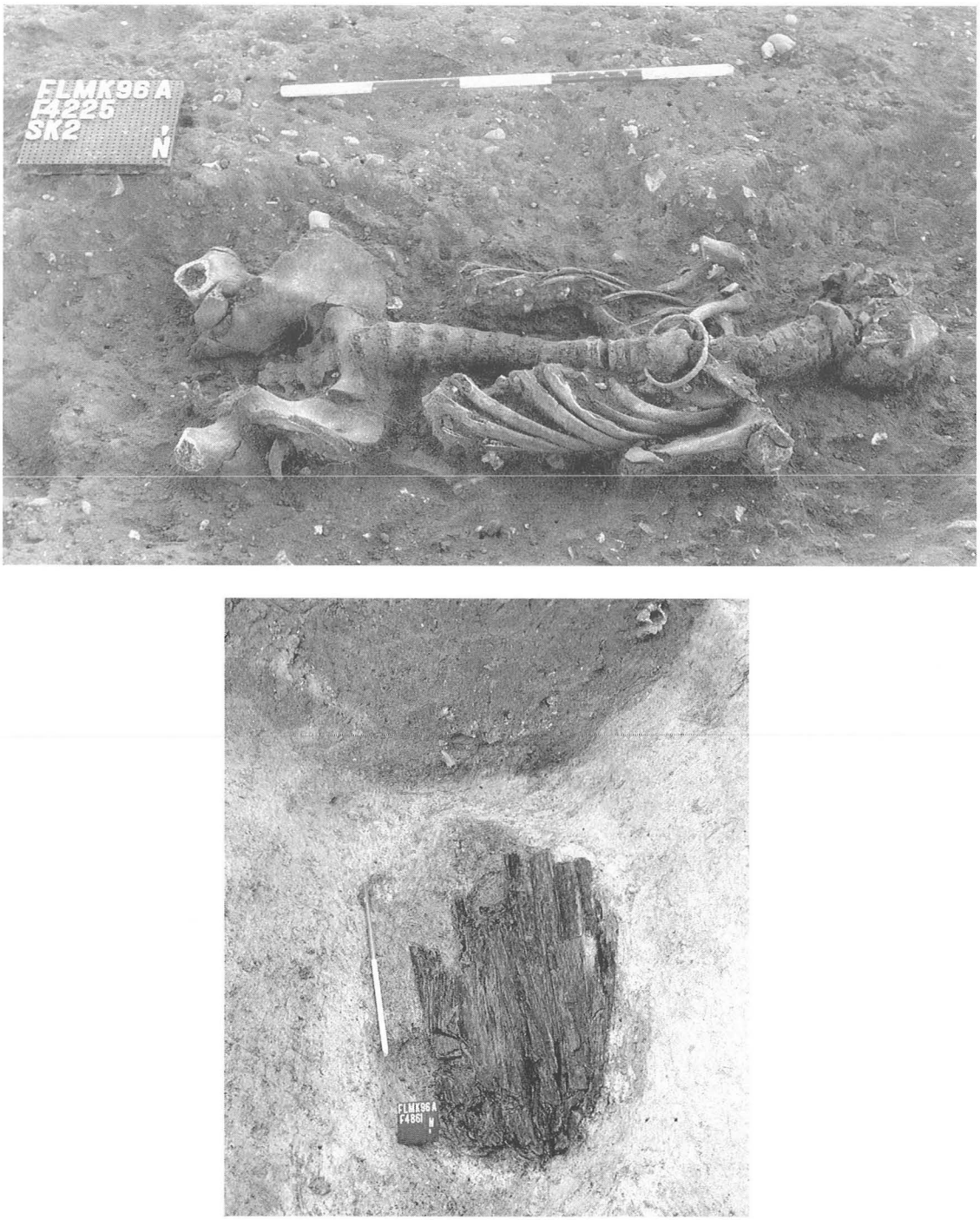

FIGURE 14 top: inhumation burial 4225, showing copper-alloy armlet placed on chest
bottom: barrell pit 4815, showing remains of what may once have been an oak barrel

(AD 402–410) (Cannon, above). These features probably reflect the presence of a small farmstead, part of a dispersed settlement pattern thought to be typical of the region in the 5th–6th centuries (Williams 1993). There is little to suggest, however, that the site was occupied for any great length of time or was a part of a dispersed cluster forming a larger Saxon settlement.

Medieval

The final evidence for the site is that by medieval times the land had been taken into arable cultivation as evidenced by the presence of ridge and furrow. A single ditch (800) of medieval date was present, which was used to define two furlongs; the presence of this boundary later led to the formation of a headland.

Acknowledgements

A number of individuals assisted during the course of this project and we would like to thank them for their help: Rupert Baderman, Keith Cooper, Adam Croney, Alan Ford, Matthew Gleave, Adrian Gollop, Gordon Heritage, Graham Hull, Jennifer Lowe, Jo Pine, John Saunders, Maisie Taylor and Leigh Torrance, who assisted during the excavation and post-fieldwork; also Simon Colcutt, Mike Farley, Gary Brown and the staff of the Commission for the New Towns, especially Ruth McCarthy and Tim Marshall, who assisted at the planning and implementation stage of the project.

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The project was funded by the Commission for the New Towns.