



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Iron Age and Roman enclosures at HMP Littlehey, West Perry, Cambridgeshire



Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council

Event no. ECB3112

Jim Brown

Report 10/13

February 2010



STAFF

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Project Manager | Adam Yates BA AlfA |
| Fieldwork | Leon Field BA BCom, Jim Burke, Nathan Flavell BA PGDip, Rob Smith, Daniel Nagy BA and Peter Haynes |
| Text | Jim Brown BSc PGDip MlfA |
| Flint | Yvonne Wolframm-Murry BSc PhD |
| Prehistoric pottery | Andy Chapman BSc MlfA |
| Roman pottery | Tora Hylton |
| Querns | Andy Chapman |
| Fired clay and mortar | Pat Chapman BA CMS AlfA |
| Other finds | Tora Hylton |
| Animal bone | Karen Deighton MSc |
| Environmental evidence | Karen Deighton |
| Charcoal and wood | Dana Challinor MA (Oxon) MSc |
| Illustrations | Amir Bassir BSc and Charlotte Walker BSc AlfA |

QUALITY CONTROL

| | Print name | Signed | Date |
|-------------|--------------|--------|------|
| Checked by | Pat Chapman | | |
| Verified by | Adam Yates | | |
| Approved by | Andy Chapman | | |

OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Project name | Iron Age and Roman enclosures at HMP Littlehey, West Perry, Cambridgeshire | |
| Short description | <p>In the 3rd century BC a possible watering hole was established for livestock on unenclosed upland pasture. A sinuous ditch partitioned the two sides of the watering hole by the 2nd century BC forming an axial boundary upon which subsequent developments were aligned. Increased pottery deposition may suggest settlement. In the 1st century BC an enclosure, subdivided by a fence and containing scattered internal pits, lay east of the boundary and the fragmentary remains of two possible roundhouses lay to the west. A pond and a well provided water until the early 1st century AD. Straight boundaries retained the site orientation and replaced the sinuous ditches of the Iron Age from the early 1st century AD, enclosing an area of possible pasture, perhaps for arable farmland.</p> <p>By the late 1st century a palisade enclosure was established and smaller utilitarian enclosures served ancillary agricultural practises nearby. Early Roman domestic occupation may have been present and querns indicated some grinding of seed. Scattered pottery probably accumulated until the late 2nd century and comprised mainly utilitarian jars and bowls in mundane fabrics. Abandonment took place before the mid-3rd century when the land probably reverted to rough grazing.</p> | |
| Project type | Area excavation | |
| Site status | None | |
| Previous work | Desk-based assessment (CgMs Ltd, Gajos 2008), Watching brief and trial trench evaluation (Northamptonshire Archaeology, archive ECB3112) | |
| Current Land use | Prison sports field | |
| Future work | Construction of prison blocks and outbuildings | |
| Monument type/period | Iron Age and Roman | |
| Significant finds | Flint, pottery, querns, fired clay, metal finds, animal bone and wood | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| County | Cambridgeshire | |
| Site address | HMP Littlehey, West Perry, Cambridgeshire, PE28 0SR | |
| Study area | 0.75ha | |
| OS Easting & Northing | TL 1500 6595 | |
| Height OD | 50m above Ordnance Datum | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Organisation | Northamptonshire Archaeology | |
| Project brief originator | Cambridgeshire Archaeological Planning and Countryside Advice | |
| Project Design originator | Paul Gajos, CgMs Consulting Ltd | |
| Director/Supervisor | Leon Field, Northamptonshire Archaeology | |
| Project Managers | Adam Yates, Northamptonshire Archaeology and Paul Gajos, CgMs Ltd | |
| Sponsor or funding body | HM Prison Service | |
| PROJECT DATE | | |
| Start date | January 2009 | |
| End date | March 2009 | |
| ARCHIVES | Location (Accession no) | Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc) |
| Physical | Event no ECB3112 | Pottery, animal bone, flint, querns, fired clay, metal finds, waterlogged wood |
| Paper | | Context sheets, plans, sections, registers, photographic archive, UPD |
| Digital | | Client PDF report |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report | |
| Title | Iron Age and Roman enclosures at HMP Littlehey, West Perry, Cambridgeshire | |
| Serial title & volume | Northamptonshire Archaeology report 010/13 | |
| Author(s) | Jim Brown | |
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**IRON AGE AND ROMAN ENCLOSURES AT
HMP LITTLEHEY, WEST PERRY
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

January-March 2009

Abstract

In the 3rd century BC a possible watering hole was established for livestock on unenclosed upland pasture. A sinuous ditch partitioned the two sides of the watering hole by the 2nd century BC forming an axial boundary upon which subsequent developments were aligned. Increased pottery deposition may suggest settlement. In the 1st century BC an enclosure, subdivided by a fence and containing scattered internal pits, lay east of the boundary and the fragmentary remains of two possible roundhouses lay to the west. A pond and a well provided water until the early 1st century AD. Straight boundaries retained the site orientation and replaced the sinuous ditches of the Iron Age from the early 1st century AD, enclosing an area of possible pasture, perhaps for arable farmland.

By the late 1st century a palisade enclosure was established and smaller utilitarian enclosures served ancillary agricultural practises nearby. Early Roman domestic occupation may have been present and querns indicated some grinding of seed. Scattered pottery probably accumulated until the late 2nd century and comprised mainly utilitarian jars and bowls in mundane fabrics. Abandonment took place before the mid-3rd century when the land probably reverted to rough grazing.

1 INTRODUCTION

During February and March 2009 Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) carried out an archaeological excavation on the former sports fields at HMP Littlehey, West Perry, Cambridgeshire (Fig 1; NGR TL 1500 6595). The work was carried out for Wates Constuction acting on behalf of the Ministry of Justice Custodial Property (MoJCP), in advance of development for the new young offenders' institution. The archaeological works were co-ordinated by CgMs Consulting Ltd.

Prior to the work a trial excavation was carried out that revealed Iron Age and Roman remains likely to be effected by the construction works (NA 2009). The results of the trial excavation are incorporated within this report and all excavated features of Iron Age or Roman date were subsumed within two specific areas of archaeological importance (Fig 2). Area 1 contained a concentration of Iron Age features with overlying Roman ditches, whilst other Roman ditches lay to the south in Area 2. The two areas were excavated as required by Cambridgeshire Archaeological Planning and Countryside Advice, Cambridgeshire County Council (CAPCA) and in accordance with a specification prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd (Gajos 2009). A watching brief was also conducted in an area of car park to the north (Fig 1).

The results of the excavation were assessed and a further program of analytical work was recommended (Field and Yates 2009). This document reports upon the agreed further works and will form the basis of any subsequent publication text.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological background

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) was undertaken by CgMs Consulting Ltd in support of planning proposals (Gajos 2008). The DBA consulted the Huntingdonshire Archives (CRO), Huntingdon Local Studies Library and Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER). The results are summarised below, references are given where they are stated in the DBA.

Prehistoric

A flint scatter was located c600m to the north-east but has not been properly dated (HER00485). An earthwork was reputedly located in the vicinity of the find spot, believed to have been destroyed by the water treatment works (HER00485a).

Roman

A short stretch of road, believed to be Roman, lay 1.2km to the north-east (HER00506). It was associated with a mixed cremation and inhumation cemetery. A pottery kiln was also found nearby. Various metal-detecting finds were also recorded for sites within 1.5km to the north-west, east and south-east.

Saxon

The lands of Great Staughton and Dillington were granted to Ramsey Abbey by King Edgar in 974 (Sawyer 1968). West Perry was a significant settlement by the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Harvey 1975). Saxon finds to the south-west of Perry and east of Honey Hill Plantation have been found by metal detector and include brooches and strap ends.

Medieval

There was a medieval moated manor at Gaynes Hall, c300m to the west, that belonged to the Egaynes family (HER 00477; Page *et al* 1932) and another was located at Manor Farm on the south edge of West Perry (HER 00478). A holloway lay between fields of ridge and furrow cultivation to the south of Manor Farm (HER11366). Similar remains lay c400m north of the development at Crow Spinney (HER 11603) and c800m to the south at Gaynes Lodge Farm (HER11604).

The development lies within a 13th-century park that belonged to the Egaynes estate (Way 1997). Documentary evidence of the 13th-14th centuries refers to 'Littlehey Park', although its exact location is speculative.

Post-medieval

The current Gaynes Hall is a Grade II* Listed Building redesigned by George Byfield, c1800, incorporating elements of 17th century date (Pevsner 1968). Gaynes Park was recorded in the 17th century, covering 256 acres, mainly to the east of the hall. In the 19th century this extended further to the west, giving the hall a more central location to the park (Way 1997).

A descriptive survey of 1608 mentions a place called Sheepwalks as pasture for 400 sheep (CRO 24/5). An estate map of 1801 shows the north part of the development named Sheepwalks (CRO38/22).

A duck decoy pond lay to the north at Crow Spinney, predating the 19th century (HER0487). Its disuse is indicated as a partially filled pond on the inclosure map of 1807.

Ordnance Survey maps since 1835 depict the progressive development of enclosed parkland, used for agriculture, up until the Second World War.

Modern

Gaynes Hall was requisitioned during the Second World War for use by the Special Operation Executive, named Station 61. It functioned as headquarters and billet for Air Liaison Officers and agents.

After the war the hall became the administrative office and residence of the governor for Gaynes Hall Borstal. The Ordnance Survey maps the borstal layout which remained largely unchanged from 1952 onwards, with only minor extensions between 1970 and 1980. The borstal was replaced by the current category C men's prison in 1988.

Summary

Disturbance from the construction of the Gaynes Borstal in the 1950s and subsequent levelling for the sports field was anticipated (Gajos 2008, 14).

There had been no archaeological work prior to January 2009 when Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a watching brief during a survey by Bactec Ltd seeking unexploded ordnance (Fig 1). This was followed by the trial excavations at the beginning of the current work (NA 2009).

2.2 Topography and geology

The site comprised 0.89ha of relatively flat enclosed playing field at c50m above Ordnance Datum. It is bounded on all sides by the prison fence. It lies upon a low ridge between the valleys of the River Kym and Diddington Brook, the latter now dammed to create Grafham Water reservoir. Both are tributary valleys of the River Great Ouse with gently rolling low valley sides and fairly broad flood plains. West Perry lies to the north and the village of Great Staughton lies to the south-west. The parish boundary between the two follows the southern perimeter of the site (Fig 1).

The underlying geology of the site comprises Oxford Clay and Kellaways Beds (BGS 2001). The soils are of Hanslope association which tend to be more calcareous clayey soils with some risk of water erosion (LAT 1983).

3 EXCAVATION STRATEGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

The aims for the archaeological mitigation were set out in the specification (Gajos 2009). These follow the research objectives identified for the east of England (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000). Overall the work aimed to:

- 1 mitigate the effect of the development on the existing archaeology, through preservation by record and publication of the results by journal

- 2 provide a site archive for deposition with the Cambridgeshire County Archaeological store and data for accession to the Cambridge HER
- 3 address problems encountered in the secure dating of the Iron Age site
- 4 add to the knowledge of the development of the economy in the Iron Age
- 5 add to the knowledge of settlement chronology and dynamics of the Iron Age with particular reference to the apparent discontinuity of settlement between the early and late Iron Age
- 6 provide information on the economic status of the Romano-British rural settlement which may indicate subsistence or market economy
- 7 provide information relating to changes of economic status between the late Iron Age and the early Romano-British period

These aims were to be realised through the achievement of the following site specific objectives (Gajos 2009), to:

- 1 recover the plan of the archaeological features
- 2 determine the stratigraphic sequence and chronology of the plan
- 3 establish the nature, duration and development of the its features
- 4 determine the dates of the origin and abandonment of its features
- 5 recover information relating to the social, industrial and economic nature, status and function of the site
- 6 recover palaeo-environmental samples to inform reconstructions of the immediate and wider environment
- 7 interpret the nature of human activity at the site and to place that within its local, regional, and national context as appropriate

The aims and objectives were reviewed as part of the updated project design (Field and Yates 2008). Excavation and post-excavation analysis has addressed Aims 1-2 and Objectives 1-6. The remaining aims and objectives are addressed in this current report. A radiocarbon date has been obtained to support artefactual assemblage studies from the site (Aim 3). The chronology is from the middle Iron Age and into the Roman period. Statements for the initial period of occupation are likely to be limited by the paucity of domestic or other evidence (Aim 4). There is no evidence for early Iron Age occupation of the site and therefore no capacity to address discontinuity of settlement between the early and late Iron Age (Aim 5). What evidence exists is continuous from the middle Iron Age into the Roman period and contains one episode of reorganisation. The site may be peripheral to the main focus of later domestic settlement, but the reorganisation is key to the nature of stock management (Aim 6). This is a core element of the argument towards addressing economic status between the late Iron Age and early Roman periods (Aim 7). The discussion makes comparisons with other similar sites from the local region (Objective 7).

3.2 Methodology

Trial trench excavations

Twelve trenches, each measuring 50m by 1.8m, were excavated and at the request of CAPCA a further two trenches (13 and 14) were excavated in order to determine the extent to which certain features extended across the site.

The locations of all the trenches were plotted on the ground using Leica GPS 1200 survey equipment matched to the Ordnance Survey.

Topsoil, subsoil and modern materials were removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The surface of significant archaeological remains was exposed and cleaned by hand sufficiently to enhance the definition of features and deposits. Hand sampling proceeded in a similar manner to the principal excavations (below).

Open area excavations

Area 1 was a 0.57ha irregular rectangle that was 125m long by 56m wide on the sports field (Fig 2). The area was slightly extended on its east side to clarify the extent of one of the ditches. Area 2 was a 0.17ha rectangle that was 47m long by 36m wide also on the sports field. A small area was subsequently opened to the west of it in an attempt to trace the continuation of ditches which extended beyond the excavation area. Two areas of watching brief were monitored in the car park and lay immediately to the north of the sports field.

The open area excavations were set out by NA using survey grade GPS (Leica System 1200). Removal of the topsoil, subsoil and modern overburden was carried out by a tracked 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and operating under archaeological supervision. Excavation proceeded to the surface of the significant archaeological horizon or, where this was absent, the natural substrate. Movement of machinery during site preparation was conducted in such a manner as to avoid impact on the archaeology.

The excavation area was cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. A hand drawn site plan of all archaeological features was made at scales 1:50 and 1:100, related to the Ordnance Survey with significant structures or areas of complex stratigraphy planned in greater detail. All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded. The recording methodology followed the standard NA context recording system with context sheets, cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs, both in 35mm monochrome film and on colour slides (NA 2003). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. The record was supplemented by direct annotations of the site general plan as required. All levels were related to Ordnance Survey datum. Sections of sampled features were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate, and related to Ordnance Survey datum. A representative sample of all exposed archaeological features was excavated.

All discrete features were sampled to no less than 50% of the whole, features of particular interest were 100% excavated. Linear features were sampled at frequent intervals to determine their function and date with interventions placed at terminals and midsections. Intersections were excavated where the relationships were not clear in plan. Artefacts and soil samples were collected by hand. Hand spoil and the surface of archaeological features was scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval from secure contexts.

Environmental samples were taken from potential industrial or domestic features such as domestic pits, hearths and from organic or waterlogged basal ditch deposits. Samples were only sought in deposits with a potential for the recovery of charcoal, carbonised plant remains and other ecofacts from secure and uncontaminated contexts (EH 2002). A minimum of 40 litres was taken for flotation in each case or 100% of the fill where this was less than 40 litres.

All works were conducted in accordance with *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003), *The Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation* (1995, revised 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (1985, revised 2008).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The surface of the natural yellowish-grey Oxford Clay lay between 0.7m deep in Area 1 and 0.45m deep in Area 2. All archaeological features cut this horizon. Features showed heavy truncation from modern disturbance.

The natural clays were overlain by modern levelling layers forming the sports pitch. These deposits comprised redeposited dark brown clay containing brick rubble and general detritus from the demolition of the borstal in the mid-1980s. They were thickest in the northern part of the site. A 0.15m thick turfed topsoil layer completed the sequence.

A variation on this sequence was present to the north of the perimeter fence observed under watching brief conditions. Oxford Clays lay at 0.40-0.60m depth. There were no archaeological features present. The clay was overlain by 0.20-0.30m of mid-brown subsoil and sealed by 0.20m of topsoil.

4.1 Summary of trial excavations

The stratigraphic sequence in all the trenches was similar. Natural geology, comprising yellowish-grey clay, was present at a depth of between 0.70m in Trench 1 and 0.45m in Trench 10. All of the archaeological features that were present cut this horizon. Fills generally comprised fairly sterile greyish-brown silting deposits rather than deliberate dumping or filling of features.

The natural horizon and archaeological features were overlain by levelling layers for the sports pitch. These layers comprised mostly redeposited clay material containing brick rubble and general detritus which dated from the demolition of the borstal and the construction of the prison in the mid 1980s. They were thickest in the northern part of the site which had been the location of the demolished borstal buildings.

Trench 1

This trench contained brick remains from the demolished borstal. The remains of a brick drain [104] that was 0.8m wide cut into the natural horizon. The overlying modern deposits contained large amounts of brick rubble and other demolition debris.

Trench 2

No archaeological features were present.

Trench 3

Trench 3 contained three ditches and a pit (Fig 2). The largest ditch lay at the south end of the trench [314] where it measured 1.75m wide by 1.05m deep. The profile had steep sloping sides, eroded at the top, which curved slightly with a sharp break at slope at the base into a flattish bottom. The lower fill comprised dark greyish silty clay sediment whilst the surface layers were darker and more distinct, perhaps with some dumping that contained Iron Age pottery.

The pit, [312], was 0.7m in diameter by 0.30m deep and extended beyond the east side of the trench. It was cut by ditch [305] but did not produce finds.

A shallow ditch, [309], that was aligned roughly east to west, measuring 1.4m wide by 0.4m deep. Its fill contained Iron Age pottery. It was cut by ditch, [305], aligned roughly north-east to south west. The ditch had a concave profile 0.7m wide by 0.42m deep. Its fill was much darker than other features on the site, comprising dark grey silty clay with charcoal, animal bone and burnt stone. It contained a small assemblage of prehistoric hand-built pottery from thick walled vessels of Iron Age date. The sherds had a grey-black core and either grey or red-brown surfaces, and may have had a fabric rich in crushed shell. This was typical of all the prehistoric pottery recovered from the site. A large body sherd had scored decoration typical of later Iron Age sherds.

Trench 4

A single small shallow pit, [405], was 0.45m wide by 0.10m deep and filled with mixed redeposited clay material similar to a nearby land drains indicating that it was probably a modern feature.

Trench 5

Brick foundation [504] was aligned east to west, probably a wall related to the borstal (Fig 2). The wall was 0.65m wide and the foundation cut was not excavated. Fragmented pinkish-red brick lay at the surface atop a stretcher bond foundation with coarse whitish-grey sandy mortar. Individual bricks were of uniform size, frogged, stamped 'LBC', an abbreviation of the London Brick Company, and 'PHORPRES'. The trade-name Phorpres originated from Fletton Bricks made in Bedfordshire that were pressed twice in each direction (<http://www.penmorfa.com/bricks/england4.html>).

Trench 6

Five features crossed the trench, one of which was clearly modern, the remainder were of antiquity (Fig 2). Ditches [609] and [611] were adjacent but aligned slightly differently, with [609] being north to south and [611] being north-east to south-west. Both had broad U-shaped profiles, 1.1m wide and 1.0m wide respectively. Both were 0.5m deep. The ditches contained Iron Age pottery similar to that in Trench 3.

On the west side of the two Iron Age features lay ditch [613] which was 1.0m wide by 0.85m deep, forming a steep-sided cut that tapered towards a narrow flat base. There were no finds within the fill.

At the east end of the trench lay gully [605] which was a shallow feature, 0.35m wide by 0.14m deep, aligned north-west to south-east from its terminal beyond the extent of the trench. The fill contained a large Roman pottery rim sherd from a decorated bowl in coarse fabric.

Trenches 7-8

No archaeological features were present.

Trench 9

A single ditch, [905], was orientated north-east to south-west and had a rounded profile that was 0.55m wide by 0.2m deep. Its fill contained mid- to late Iron Age pottery.

Trench 10

No archaeology was present in this trench.

Trench 11

A single modern ditch terminus or pit, [1105], was 0.7m wide by 0.10m deep. Its fill contained a fragment of brick.

Trench 12

Three ditches were exposed within the trench (Fig 2). Ditch [1205] was a broad U-shaped ditch aligned north-east to south-west which measured 1.4m wide by 0.52m deep. Ditch [1207] was on the same alignment, but was a much smaller feature, 0.4m wide by 0.18m deep. No dating was recovered from either fill. Ditch [1209], aligned north-west to south-east was 0.55m wide by 0.22m deep. Its fill contained several sherds of Roman greyware.

Trench 13

The trench contained three ditches (Fig 2). Ditch [1306] was aligned north-west to south-east with a flattish U-shaped profile measuring 0.7m wide and 0.2m deep. Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from its fill. Ditch [1312] was aligned north to south and had a broad, shallow profile, 1.3m wide by 0.3m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from its fill but it was cut by ditch [1310]. This latter ditch, [1310], was aligned north-east to south-west and had a steep-sided tapering profile, 1.5m wide by 0.7m deep. Its lower fill contained sherds of Roman greyware and animal bone.

Trench 14

A single ditch, [1405], was aligned east to west and had a steep U-shaped profile that measured 0.9m wide by 0.4m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from its fill.

Discussion

Based principally on spot dating of the evaluation pottery, most of the archaeological features appeared to date from the middle to late Iron Age, with later features belonging to the earlier part of the Roman period. A larger pottery assemblage was desirable to tighten chronology of the site. Several undated features were truncated by datable ditches implying a clear stratigraphic sequence.

Most linear features were aligned either on a north-west to south-east or north-east to south-west orientation. This similarity in alignment suggested that the same boundaries may have been identified in Trenches 3, 13, 6, and 9. An Iron Age boundary ditch and recuts was confined to an area that lay north-east to south-west across the west part of the site. A second group of ditches were present in Trench 12 to the south.

The northern part of the site was heavily disturbed by the construction of the borstal buildings, their subsequent demolition and the levelling of the sports pitch truncated and destroyed many of the features of antiquity.

4.2 Summary of the site chronology

Middle to late Iron Age activity was focused within Area 1 and overlain by Roman enclosures that exhibited continuity between periods (Fig 2). Roman enclosures extended over a wider area and were also identified in Area 2.

Table 1: Site chronology

| Period | Nature of activity |
|--|---|
| Neolithic to Bronze Age | Residual flint in Iron Age contexts |
| Middle to late Iron Age settlement (3rd century BC to early 1st century AD) | A pond, axial ditch, enclosure and two possible roundhouses An early 1st century AD reorganisation |
| Late 1st to 2nd-century Roman cultivation | Ditches formed larger rectangular enclosures Smaller sub-enclosures provided ancillary functions |
| Roman abandonment (mid-2nd to 3rd centuries) | Infrequent pottery in upper ditch fills |
| Post-Roman disuse (3rd century onwards) | No surviving evidence Modern building disturbance |

4.3 Middle to late Iron Age settlement (3rd century BC to early 1st century AD)

Initially the land was probably unenclosed and was occupied by a single large pond during the 3rd century BC, which may have served as a watering hole for livestock (Fig 3, watering hole [3077]). A ditch separated the two sides of the watering hole either side of a boundary by the 2nd century BC forming an axial division from north-east to south-west. An enclosure (E1) was subsequently added on its south-east side that surrounded an area containing scattered pits. To the north-west lay the fragmentary remains of two possible roundhouses (R1 and R2).

Possible watering hole

The watering hole, [3077], was 7.2m wide and 2.55m deep. The profile showed a gradual slope along its east side that may have allowed animals to drink without risk of falling in (Figs 4-5). The slope steepened to approximately 45 degrees towards the deepest part and had a flattish slightly concave base. The west side was too steep to serve a similar purpose, a difference that may relate to the nature of the land use either side of the watering hole. The lowest sediments were waterlogged and contained dark grey silt (3076) with large pieces of unworked waterlogged roundwood (Fig 6).

Above this were merging gleyed layers of mottled grey to greyish-brown clay silt from (3076) at the base to (3071) at the surface, each representing sequential deposition of waterborne sediment (Fig 4). The layers produced pottery spanning the middle to late Iron Age with distinctive later Iron Age sherds from the higher levels. The watering hole lay at a low point of the site and was a natural collection point for water, made more efficient by the subsequent addition of ditches. It received some maintenance during its use as the uppermost fills were contemporary with ditch fills and recutting of

the ditches had clearly necessitated cleaning out and digging at the edges of the watering hole on more than one occasion such that the latest silts spread across early ditches.

Boundary ditch

This axial boundary comprised a series of discontinuous elements along the same general north-east to south-west line (Fig 3). The initial cut was probably ditch [3069], subsequently recut in an eastward progression [3054, 3092]. The alignment of the boundary continued to the north of the pond as a series of short lengths of gully, also observed in Trench 14 [3034, 3038, 3020, 3022 and 3024].

To the south-west a single sinuous ditch formed the boundary, somewhat irregular in plan, showing considerable variation in both size and shape. The original ditch was less substantial than later recuts identified in Trench 3 and its southern continuation, recorded in Trenches 6 and 13. Ditch [3069] was 0.45m wide by 0.20m deep with a barely perceptible break of slope that dropped into a rounded base. Ditch [3054] was 0.87m wide by 0.23m deep with fairly shallow rounded sides. This suggests a degree of erosive action, probably from water channelled into the pond. At its southern end both ditches were deeper but appeared to have been largely obscured and confused by modern disturbances either side of Trench 6. Ditch [609] was 1.2m wide by 0.50m deep and ditch [611] was 1.0m wide by 0.55m deep, both exhibited slightly eroded 45-50° sloping sides but had generally flattish bases. The fills were both light yellowish-brown silty clay, mottled with orange-brown iron salts suggestive of gradual silting, rather than deliberate infill.

The boundary was broadest in its central section where ditch [3204] was 1.9m wide and 1.1m deep with a much sharper profile. These larger dimensions were a result of the addition of Enclosure E1. The orange grey silty clay fills were subject to minor variations in charcoal, iron pan, grit and stone inclusions but were generally indicative of gradual silting before the enclosure was established. Pottery accumulation was at a low level. A single fragment of stone thought to be a quern fragment was recovered but was too damaged for its use to be certain.

Enclosure E1

A rounded enclosure, E1, was open to the north and attached to the south-east side of the principal axial boundary (Fig 3). Its southern side was investigated during trial excavation in Trench 3. Internally, the enclosure was c23m by c16m, an area of c0.04ha. The enclosure ditch, [3240], measured 1.75m wide to the south and widened to 3.50m to the east, with a typical depth of 1.0m throughout. The orange-grey silty clay fills, probably derived from material washed into the ditch combined with sporadic dumping of domestic waste that included occasional Iron Age pottery sherds and animal bone.

A line of six postholes extended c10m north-east from the southern arm of the enclosure. The postholes were unevenly spaced, 1.0-2.7m apart, generally rounded, with steep near vertical sides and narrow rounded bases. Their dimensions varied between 0.5m wide by 0.18m deep and 0.25m wide by 0.11m deep. They probably represent a fence partition.

To the north-west of this partition were four discrete pits. The largest pit, [3258], was oval, 1.5m long by 1.0m wide by 0.28m deep. It had curving sloped sides that met in a rounded bowl-like base and contained a slab of fired clay, possibly from a hearth or oven. The other three pits were generally smaller, but of similar rounded forms and contained variations on the same mid- to dark brownish-grey charcoal and silt-stained

sandy clay. Pit [3253], which was adjacent to pit [3258], contained a moderate concentration of burnt flint. Together, the fill and stone inclusions give a general impression of activities that may have involved heating water.

Possible Roundhouses R1-R2 and associated features

Two curvilinear gullies lay west of the principal boundary (Fig 3). They may have been the remnants of ring ditches that had surrounded roundhouses (R1 and R2).

Semi-circular gully [3057] was open to the north-east, the arc was 6.5m long and 5.0m across, which would have encircled an area c8-9m in diameter. The gully was 0.6m wide by 0.23m deep and its profile had gently curving sides and a flattish base. To the south-west a more substantial semi-circular gully, [3226], was 10.2m long and 8.0m across. It would probably have encircled an area of c10-11m diameter. The gully was badly truncated, a shallow curved profile survived, 0.5m wide by 0.16m deep. The fills of both features produced Iron Age pottery, although a combined total of 15 sherds, weighing 180g, was quite low. A total of six shallow pits contained dumps of burnt stone in the vicinity of Roundhouse R1, two of these were adjacent to the boundary ditch and two intercutting pits lay within the roundhouse perimeter, perhaps the remnants of a former hearth. None of the pits produced datable finds. It would seem that any possible roundhouses were occupied for a very short space of time and were not necessarily primary domestic dwellings. They could have been temporary accommodation peripheral to a more permanent focus of habitation located elsewhere. The presence of smaller, finer, bowls with smoothed or burnished surfaces tend to suggest potential domestic activity was concentrated within the 1st century BC.

Late Iron Age water sources

Two substantial rounded pits produced pottery dating from the later Iron Age [3246 and 3251] (Fig 3). They were probably water sources, successors to the Iron Age pond, but appeared to function in slightly different ways. Whilst it is fair to suggest both water sources were expected to contain residual Iron Age artefacts, the Iron Age pottery, including grog ware, is consistent with the early 1st century AD and there was no Roman material in the upper fills.

Pond [3251] lay at the junction of the earlier Iron Age ditches, which were surviving earthworks likely to pool water. Pond [3251] was the larger of the two, but was far too steep-sided to allow cattle to drink without risk of plunging in (Fig 4). It was 4.9m wide and was hand excavated to a depth of 1.1m and was bottomed by machine at the end of the archaeological works (Fig 7). The basal fill comprised dark greyish-brown clay silt (3265) containing infrequent white flecks. It had a clear horizon with the greyish-orange clay silt (3264) that was above it, which contained occasional small stones and orange sandy patches. Above this, variants of orange-grey silty clay (3263) comprising gradual accumulations of material washed in from the surrounding area merged towards bluish-grey and yellow mottled silty clay (3250). The pond was deliberately filled at the surface with mid- to dark greyish-orange silty clay (3249).

Well [3246] lay at the southern terminal of the Iron Age earthworks and was 4.3m wide by 1.3m deep. It was somewhat smaller and lay outside Enclosure E1. This also had very steep edges, although one side was stepped and could have allowed water collection from the sinkhole by means of a bucket, waterskin or other receptacle (Figs 4 and 8). The upper edges of the profile were also heavily eroded and extremely uneven where disturbed in antiquity. Sedimentation towards the base was fairly minimal, comprising firm grey silty clay (3245) with charcoal flecks. The overlying dump of material was grey silty clay (3244) mottled with russet iron salt streaks. A similar, slightly more yellowish-brown silty clay (3243) was dumped on the north-west

side of the well. Both deposits were overlain by dark greyish-brown silty clay (3242) with mottled iron salts and charcoal flecks that merged towards a slightly darker, charcoal smeared, patch (3241) at the surface.

Late Iron Age reorganisation

The irregular arrangement of middle Iron Age boundaries were replaced by a series of more regular boundaries that probably owe their origin to the early 1st century AD, but which formed the basis of the arrangement of features that were silting up or filled in the late 1st to 2nd centuries. These features were spread over a wider area than was evident in the middle Iron Age (Figs 3 and 9). The ditches retained the general trend in the orientation of the Iron Age axial ditch but shifted the bearing towards the north. There was an overall enlargement of the land defined by enclosure, which conversely meant the land was parcelled up into smaller manageable units.

Initially the general division of the Iron Age boundary was retained by a shallow boundary ditch, [3108], with an eroded U-shaped profile (Fig 9). The same boundary line may be that which was identified in Trench 9. It was aligned north-north-east to west-south-west and was 1.6m wide by 0.4m deep. The silty grey fill was indicative of gradual sedimentary wash accumulated from the sides. The ditch may have continued further towards the north, as suggested by Trench 13, but further evidence of this was obscured by extensive modern disturbances (Figs 2 and 9). The presence of late Iron Age grog ware suggests it was laid out in the 1st century AD.

At a distance of c70m to the north lay ditch [3046]. Its alignment lay perpendicular to that of ditch [3108], and although no physical relationship could be demonstrated it seems likely that the two form part of the initial large-scale reorganisation. Ditch [3046] was 0.84m wide by 0.41m deep and was also identified in Trench 14. It had fairly steep sides at the upper edge that sloped sharply towards a flattish base. In parts the ditch showed signs of water erosion, creating more curved sides. Its fill was also typical of a gradual accumulation of sedimentary wash.

Ditch [3126] extended westward from ditch [3108]. It was 0.44m wide by 0.22m deep and had a generally rounded U-shaped profile that was eroded at the upper edge. This ditch also contained late Iron Age grog ware and is likely to have been contemporary with ditch [3108].

4.4 Late 1st to 2nd-century Roman cultivation

Changes to the arrangement of land boundaries enacted in the early 1st century AD subsequently became the basis for the Roman field system in use into the 2nd century. No new water sources replaced the Iron Age antecedents, suggesting a lower water requirement. Within the wider distribution of boundaries, were smaller utilitarian enclosures (E2-E3) that probably served farm management practises. Evidence for Roman domestic occupation immediately nearby was generally poor but did not exclude the possibility of some less substantial buildings in the vicinity. A quern indicated processing of cereals, but there was a lack of primary cereal processing waste, either a result of preservation conditions or because such activities did not take place at this location. Scattered Roman pottery comprised mainly utilitarian jars and bowls in mundane fabrics and there were no signs of primary domestic waste dumping or scatters of building materials. Arable cultivation may have become the dominant land use, but was perhaps still peripheral to the main focus of domestic habitation.

Palisade enclosure E2

An almost uniform rectangular enclosure (E2) had been identified in Trenches 6 and 13. It had been attached to the eastern side of the principal axial boundary, in the same way that the earlier enclosure (E1) had been (Fig 9). This new area was considerably larger, c40m long by c35m wide, covering an area of c0.14ha. Domestic waste was sparse and the open eastern side would suggest animals could not have been contained without being tethered or that features that formed the eastern side were lost to truncation. Well [3246] had ceased as a water source by this time and no provision for water was present for large animals.

The boundaries of the enclosure were narrow, no more than 0.5m wide, with near vertical sides and flat bases (Fig 10). The south side, slot [3259], was 0.5m deeper than its north counterpart, slot [3174], which was only 0.3m deep. Slot [3145], cut through ditch [3108] on the west side of Enclosure E2, and exhibited the same characteristics. It was 1.0m wide by 0.84m deep with sharp near vertical sides and a broad flat base. The profiles were atypical of enclosure drainage ditches and suggested that the feature probably held a substantial timber palisade. The south and west sides of Enclosure E2 also showed later damage to the upper profile of the sides, increasing the apparent width at the top. This was probably a by-product of removing the palisade timbers from the deep slot foundations and would have been filled in soon thereafter. The cut was U-shaped in profile, up to 0.75 wide by 0.50m deep along the south side and up to 1.05m wide by 0.90m deep along the west side.

A narrow gully, [3132], formed a central partition running the length of the enclosure. It was c30m long and no more than 0.44m wide by 0.25m deep. Its profile was generally rounded with a flattish base. It was filled with mid-bluish-orange and grey speckled silty clay derived from in-wash. Its function was not clear, as it did not drain into any other ditches. If associated with a structure, a beam slot 30m long would be unusual. Its position as a subdivision of Enclosure E2 probably marked a partition, but to what effect and in what form this took, is speculative at best.

Two small circular pits, [3139, 3155], lay within the enclosure. Both pits lay close to the palisade but were distant from one another. Pit [3139] was 0.46m wide by 0.18m deep and pit [3155] was 0.6m wide by 0.4m deep. Both contained darkish grey silty clay stained with charcoal and pit [3139] also had a small amount of animal bone.

Enclosure E3 and double-ditch boundary

Enclosure E3 lay to the south (Figs 2 and 11). It comprised two small paddocks separated by an internal partition and lay within the north-east corner of a possible wider distribution of boundaries beyond the excavated area. This sub-enclosure was bounded by a double ditch on the north and east sides that had been identified in Trench 12. Enclosure E3 was c16m long by c14m wide and encompassed an area of 0.022ha with an entrance in the centre of the north-west side. Finds from the enclosure indicate it ceased in use by the mid-2nd century.

The outer ditch, [2034], was 0.95m wide by 0.45m deep. It had distinctive steep sloping sides that met towards a V-shaped base with a slight rounded curvature at the top and on the sides indicative of erosion. It was filled with light to dark greyish-brown silty clay with black and orangey-yellow mottled variations that indicated general suspension based sedimentation with occasional episodes of silt wash. The inner ditch formed the north and east sides of Enclosure E3, ditch [2065]. The two ditches were c6m apart, the ground between them contained no other substantial features. Ditch [2065] was 0.5-0.6m wide by 0.25-0.30m deep, it had slightly rounded sides, similar to ditch [2034], however, it was less substantial and the base was generally more

rounded. The fill was also comparable with a clear difference between silting at the base and deliberate infill towards the surface. The continuation of the ditches was not observed in trial excavations to the west.

The ditches that defined the perimeter of Enclosure E3, [2014, 2046], lay either side of the entrance, and ditch [2065] lay around its north and east sides. The entrance was 3.5m wide. The surrounding ditches presented extremely similar profiles and dimensions. They were generally 0.60-0.86m wide by 0.25-0.38m deep, formed by steeply angled but gently curving rounded sides meeting in narrow rounded bases all of which seemed somewhat eroded. Fill material was mainly light greyish- and orangey-brown sandy clay with speckled with moderate chalky flecks, iron salts and other sediments indicative of gradual silting.

The enclosure was divided into front (west) and rear (east) segments relative to the position of the entrance. Ditch [2077], which was 0.5m wide by 0.3m deep, created this partition north-north-east to south-south-west and was also investigated in Trench 12. Its terminal end was towards the south, leaving a crossing between the two segments. Sharp sloping sides were slightly eroded into rounded edges and had originally met in a V-shaped base. Three fragments of white mortar from this ditch is the only possible Roman building material from the site.

A line of four postholes lay parallel to ditch [2077]. The postholes were unevenly spaced at 2.0m, 3.5m and 7.5m intervals. They were consistently circular, less than 0.5m in diameter and up to 0.28m deep, which would have housed substantial timber posts. A few packing stones were evident. A single posthole [2070] was present in the north-eastern angle of the enclosure that was 0.18m wide by 0.10m deep.

Features outside Enclosure E3

Pit [2049] lay within the entrance to Enclosure E3, it was rounded, 0.9m wide by 0.30m deep and filled with firm orangey-brown silty clay containing a single sherd of shell-gritted pottery. Pit [2028] lay further to the south, outside the enclosure and away from the entrance. It was 0.40m wide by 0.13m deep with gently curving sides and a rounded base, containing dark grey charcoal stained silty clay and a single large sherd of shell-gritted pottery.

A further group of seven pits or postholes (P1) were clustered together outside Enclosure E3 on the north side of the entrance. The features were all generally circular, but they had no distinctive distribution to suggest a structure. The largest was 0.65m wide by 0.30m deep, but most were c0.22m wide by c0.20m deep. In general they had fairly sharp, sometimes steep, sloping sides and rounded bowl-like bases more like postholes than pits. None of them contained pottery or animal bone and their generally dirty dark greyish-brown silty clay staining tends to suggest they were probably postholes and not pits for waste.

4.5 Roman abandonment (mid-2nd to 3rd centuries)

The frequency of late 2nd and early 3rd century pottery dropped significantly. A single piece of Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware from ditch [2065] tends to support an early abandonment before the mid-3rd century. This particular Roman fabric was particularly prevalent in the Cambridgeshire region in the 3rd to 4th centuries, replacing other finewares as the most favoured available pottery type (Jackson and Potter 1996, 474-475). A near absence of the fabric suggested that the enclosures were probably not fully utilised by the early part of the 3rd century and that the principal Roman domestic activity was fairly distant by this time. Finewares were

generally used for domestic purposes such as tableware, drinking vessels and decorative ceramics, its near absence also supports a low level of affluence in which more mundane pottery types such as coarsewares and greywares are typical.

4.6 Post-Roman disuse (3rd century onwards)

No further activity was evident from the 3rd century until the modern period. This tends to suggest an end to agricultural land use, although low intensity grazing may have continued leaving no discernable archaeological trace (Liddle 1994).

The area of West Perry was a significant late Saxon settlement recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Harvey 1975). The absence of medieval cultivation suggests that severe truncation may be a root cause. Extensive modern disturbance was dated to the demolition of the boys' borstal and the construction of the modern prison sports field in 1988. Its truncation has removed any remains that may have been present including all medieval cultivation layers.

Modern disturbances were identified in Trenches 1, 4 and 5 where no other features were present. The impact of modern disturbances upon the Iron Age and Roman remains in Area 1 was a major inhibition towards retrieving a complete plan (Fig 2).

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Worked flint by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

There are six flint flakes, of which two are broken, recovered as residual finds from Iron Age contexts. The flint is in good condition with little post-depositional edge damage. Four pieces are patinated and range from mottled light blue to white. The raw material is vitreous flint of light to medium greyish-brown. The cortex on four flakes is light to mid-brown. The source of the raw material is the local gravel, technologically, the artefacts do not conform to a particular period. They date from the Neolithic to the early Bronze Age.

5.2 Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman

The pottery, comprising 691 sherds and weighing 5.27kg, is considered to be from hand-built vessels dating to the middle to late Iron Age (Table 2). The average sherd weight is 7.6g, typical of assemblages from smaller Iron Age settlements in the Midlands. This is common with a high proportion of shelly ware, which is typically a soft fabric prone to leaching, usually highly fragmented and abraded.

Occupation continued into the early Roman period, and Roman contexts inevitably contain a proportion of sherds in shelly or grog-tempered fabrics that may either be early Roman shelly wares or residual late Iron Age material, with a lack of diagnostic sherds to distinguish between them. Undiagnostic shelly or grog ware sherds in contexts containing early Roman material are therefore quantified as part of the Roman assemblage.

Fabrics

Coarse shell

Large pieces of shell, often 2-4mm diameter and occasionally up to 8mm in diameter. It is a typically soft fabric, with abraded surfaces, and sometimes with voids from leaching of shell inclusions. The larger and denser the inclusions, the thicker the sherd

and the larger the vessel, including sherds from storage jars with walls 9-12mm thick. Quantification by sherd count: 407 (58.9%)

Fine shell

Contains crushed shell, typically up to 1-2mm diameter and usually at a lower overall density than in the coarse shelly fabric. Sherds with fine shell are thinner, more likely to be in a black fabric and often from smaller bowls, including those with smoothed or burnished surfaces. Quantification by sherd count: 104 (15.1%)

Sandy

A hard fabric containing quartz grains of 1-2mm gives a rough surface texture. Some sherds contain crushed shell. Quantification by sherd count: 141 (20.4%)

Grog (and shell)

Contains small pellets, 1-2mm diameter, of rounded grog that is often brown or grey and most often also contains a proportion of crushed shell, typically no more than 1-2mm diameter. Quantification by sherd count: 39 (5.6%)

The fabrics cover a broad and near continuous spectrum. At one extreme the coarse shelly wares are often soft and friable, and in a small proportion the shell inclusions have been partly leached. A smaller proportion of the coarse shelly sherds are quite hard as a result of also containing sand, while a proportion of the hard sandy fabrics contain sparse scattered pieces of finely crushed or coarser shell. The grog-tempered sherds almost all contain crushed shell, and could be viewed as shelly ware with added grog.

The coarse shelly fabric makes up over a half of the assemblage by sherd count, and would be an even higher proportion by weight. These sherds more often derive from thick-walled jars. The fine shelly wares make up a further 15% of the assemblage. The sandy fabrics form 20.4% of the total and occur in small numbers in a wide range of contexts. The grog ware is only 5.6% of the assemblage by sherd count, and has a limited distribution, which is discussed below in relation to the site chronology.

Much of the coarse shelly ware has a dark grey to black core and inner surface with an oxidised orange or orange-brown external surface. These are usually quite patchy with areas of dark brown to dark grey. The sandy fabric is harder than the coarse shelly ware, and is often grey-black throughout, as are some of the smaller vessels in the fine shelly fabric. On many of the larger vessels the breaks are oblique, indicating that they have fractured along coil joins.

Vessel forms and decoration

The assemblage is dominated by body and base sherds. There are only a limited number of rims, and when present these are usually very fragmentary. As a result it is not possible to calculate the estimated vessel equivalent (EVEs). As an alternative, matching sherds within single contexts are used to define sherd families. Using this approach the sixty contexts contained sherds from 110 vessels (sherd families).

Table 2: Quantification of Iron Age pottery

| Feature | Context | Type | Sherd count | Weight (g) | Coarse shell | Fine shell | Sandy | Grog | Sherd families |
|---------|---------|--------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------|------|----------------|
| 305 | 304 | Ditch | 70 | 391 | 10 | 52 | 0 | 8 | 5 |
| 309 | 307 | Ditch | 5 | 26 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 609 | 608 | Ditch | 5 | 24 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 611 | 610 | Ditch | 2 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 905 | 904 | Ditch | 8 | 33 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1306 | 1305 | Ditch | 7 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| 3009 | 3006 | Ditch | 10 | 120 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| 3012 | 3011 | Ditch | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3015 | 3013 | Ditch | 5 | 24 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3015 | 3014 | Ditch | 1 | 17 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3020 | 3018 | Ditch | 1 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 3020 | 3019 | Ditch | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3022 | 3021 | Ditch | 1 | 21 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3024 | 3023 | Ditch | 3 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 3030 | 3029 | Ditch | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 3034 | 3033 | Ditch | 24 | 121 | 10 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 2 |
| 3038 | 3037 | Ditch | 28 | 113 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3051 | 3049 | Gully | 10 | 101 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 3054 | 3052 | Ditch | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| - | 3055 | Layer | 22 | 60 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3057 | 3056 | Ditch | 2 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3064 | 3063 | Ditch | 3 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 3068 | 3065 | Ditch | 14 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 2 |
| 3077 | 3072 | W.hole | 5 | 27 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| 3077 | 3073 | W.hole | 43 | 250 | 39 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 3077 | 3074 | W.hole | 8 | 119 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 3077 | 3076 | W.hole | 6 | 21 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 3094 | 3093 | Ditch | 15 | 86 | 8 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| 3099 | 3095 | Pit | 26 | 155 | 22 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| 3099 | 3096 | Pit | 10 | 42 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3099 | 3097 | Pit | 24 | 72 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3102 | 3100 | Ditch | 47 | 222 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 0 | 1 |
| 3108 | 3107 | Ditch | 11 | 108 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | |
| 3108 | 3107 | Ditch | 3 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 3112 | 3111 | Ditch | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 3126 | 3125 | Gully | 6 | 90 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 3130 | 3129 | Gully | 24 | 66 | 0 | 2 | 22 | 0 | 4 |
| 3137 | 3136 | Ditch | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 3145 | 3143 | Ditch | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3157 | 3156 | Ditch | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3163 | 3161 | Ditch | 4 | 27 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| 3166 | 3164 | Ditch | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| 3198 | 3195 | Pit | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3198 | 3197 | Pit | 4 | 10 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3204 | 3202 | Ditch | 111 | 1589 | 110 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 3204 | 3203 | Ditch | 25 | 465 | 24 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 3204 | 3203 | Ditch | 5 | 70 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3213 | 3211 | Ditch | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3216 | 3214 | Ditch | 3 | 27 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3216 | 3215 | Ditch | 3 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| Feature | Context | Type | Sherd count | Weight (g) | Coarse shell | Fine shell | Sandy | Grog | Sherd families |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| 3222 | 3220 | Gully | 13 | 169 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3228 | 3227 | Gully | 2 | 78 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3230 | 3229 | Ditch | 5 | 20 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3234 | 3233 | Ditch | 7 | 26 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3240 | 3239 | Ditch | 7 | 13 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3246 | 3242 | Well | 5 | 47 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3246 | 3243 | Well | 3 | 24 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3251 | 3249 | Pond | 10 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 1 |
| 3251 | 3250 | Pond | 3 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3255 | 3254 | Ditch | 5 | 29 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| 3258 | 3256 | Pit | 12 | 49 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Totals | | | 691 | 5273 | 407 | 104 | 141 | 39 | 110 |
| Average sherd weight | | 7.6g | | | 58.9% | 15.1% | 20.4% | 5.6% | |

There are few joining sherds and many small groups. It is not possible to define vessel forms from the extant material, but the likely range can be inferred by reference to other contemporary assemblages. It is suggested that the assemblage was dominated by medium and large jars, most often in coarse shelly fabric, with the presence of some smaller jar or bowl forms in fabrics containing either fine crushed shell, sand or a mixture of the two.

The rims are typical of such assemblages, comprising simple upright rims, a flattened rim, and an expanded flattened rim. One rim with an internal bevel and one with an external bevel are less common examples. There are also two plain rims from small, thin-walled bowls. The single decorated rim is on the most complete vessel in the assemblage, a scored ware jar decorated with regular finger-tip impressions around the rim and with fingernail impressions visible in the base of each (Fig 14).

There are a number of fragmentary base sherds, all of which are flat and have a slight or well-marked external indentation between the base and the body. The most complete example is 95mm in diameter and 15mm thick, from a thick-walled jar.

The majority of the assemblage comprises plain body sherds, several contexts contain sherds from scored ware vessels, typically large, thick-walled jars, up to 13mm thick. These are characteristic of middle Iron Age assemblages in the Midlands, and continued into the 1st century BC. The scoring comprises crudely executed lines running obliquely down the vessels in roughly parallel lines (Fig 12). A single vessel has a more complex decorative scheme of dense roughly horizontal and vertical scoring forming a crude latticework (Fig 14). Similar and more regular latticework scoring has been seen at other Midland sites in contexts dating to the 1st century BC. The only other vessel with body decoration is a small jar or bowl with shallow finger-tip impressions on the neck immediately below a flat-topped rim.

There are a small number of vessels in finer fabrics, either fine shell or sandy, which are typically black throughout. The surfaces are well finished, typically smoothed, while a single vessel retains a highly burnished surface (Fig 13).

There is a single large lug/handle from a vessel in an oxidised light brown fabric containing grog, which comes from ditch [3260] and is of the early 1st century AD.

Distribution and chronology

Thirty-nine out of sixty contexts producing pottery contained less than ten sherds, and only eight contained more than 100g (Table 2). The larger groups include two sections through watering hole [3077], producing 417g and 269g respectively. The major group is the assemblage of 2134g from ditch [3204]. This group contains larger sherds that are evidently from a small number of vessels, with the 141 sherds forming nine sherd families. The group includes two large thick-walled scored ware jars (Fig 12), a small burnished bowl (Fig 13) and a scored ware jar with latticework decoration (Fig 14). The latter two vessels are diagnostic of a 1st century BC date for this group.

The small groups contain little diagnostic material but the presence of scored ware and the dearth of other forms of decoration define the overall balance of the assemblage as middle Iron Age in character. A rim sherd from the watering hole [3077] has fingertip decoration immediately below the rim, which is characteristic of the early part of the middle Iron Age, while the presence of smaller, finer, bowls that are typically black throughout and often with smoothed or burnished surfaces, would suggest a date late in the use of scored ware.

It is therefore possible that the assemblage from the middle fills of the pond may date to the 3rd or 2nd centuries BC, which would be consistent with the radiocarbon date from the wood in the primary pond silts, while the bulk of the other material is more like to have an origin no earlier than the 2nd century BC and certainly continued into the 1st century BC.

The grog ware forms 5.6% of the assemblage and these were present in only seven of sixty contexts that contained Iron Age pottery. Three of these, ditches [3108], [3126] and [3145], are closely associated with Enclosure E2. Pond [3251] and well [3246] also contained grog ware.

The distribution and associations indicate that the grog ware dates to the final phase of Iron Age activity, probably the early 1st century AD. This suggests that the reorganisation of the site took place in the early decades of the 1st century AD and was retained in that form until its abandonment.

5.3 Iron Age quern by Andy Chapman

There is a large irregular lump of coarse sandstone, possibly Millstone Grit, which was dumped in the upper fill ditch [3204] (Fig 3). It measures 160mm long by up to 85mm thick and some remnant surfaces on this damaged fragment show signs of wear. The geology would be appropriate for use as a quern, but the stone is too damaged for this to be confirmed.

5.4 Fired clay by Pat Chapman

There is an assemblage of fifty-five fragments of fired clay, weighing 390g, including thirteen pieces from trial excavations. These are small fragments, none more than 45mm long. They are typically irregularly-shaped, hard and a mix of orange, orangey-brown or pale brown and black in colour. It is generally made from silty clay, although one group of five, weighing 30g, from ditch [3204], are sandy. The fragments have no features to indicate any specific purpose they might have been used for and are small scattered fragments. Pit [3258], within Iron Age Enclosure E1, produced a slab of fired clay. It is 110mm by 90mm by 30mm thick, orange on one side and purple to black on the other. The fabric is hard, cracked and easily fragments. It could be the lining from

around a hearth or other heated surface that has survived in a clump rather than as fragments.

5.5 Roman pottery by Tora Hylton

There are 146 sherds of Roman pottery with a combined weight of 1.29kg from 30 individual deposits (Table 3). Sixteen sherds were recovered during trial excavations. A further 76 sherds were recovered from Area 1 (54% by weight) and 54 sherds from Area 2 (46%), much of it deriving from the fills of enclosure ditches. The condition of the pottery is good, but it is quite fragmentary, resulting in very few diagnostic sherds. The overall average sherd weight is 8.3g. Some of the sherds display signs of abrasion, suggesting that they were moved around prior to deposition. The analysis included sherd count and weight by fabric type.

The assemblage is dominated by locally-produced coarse wares in Greyware (52% by weight) and Shell-gritted fabrics (33%), together with a small group of undiagnostic sand-tempered wares (12%). The range of forms suggests a late 1st to mid-2nd century date. A single sherd of Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware (LNVCC) extends the date range to cAD250.

Greyware forms, some originating from the Lower Nene Valley industry comprise necked and neckless jars, a shallow bowl/dish (Howe *et al* 1980, fig 2, 18) and a wide mouthed bowl. Shell-gritted wares are represented by a jar with lid-seating (channel rim), necked jars and a storage jar. Imported wares are represented by a single sherd of Samian ware, from a Drag 36 dish, of the late 2nd century (Webster, 1996, 46).

5.6 Mortar by Pat Chapman

There are three fragments of white mortar from ditch [2077], the internal division of Enclosure E3. They are small, soft and irregular in shape and is the only possible Roman building material from the site.

5.7 Roman quern by Andy Chapman

A fragment from an upper grinding stone of a rotary quern was recovered from ditch [2065]. It is 23-37mm thick and comes from the circumference of a stone that was 450-500mm in diameter, made from Millstone Grit, and the grinding surface is covered with a regular rectilinear pattern of closely-spaced dimples, set 11mm apart. The upper surface has sparser but deeper indentations. The thinness of the stone, the minimal curvature of the grinding surface and the dimpled tooling, are all characteristic of Roman flat rotary querns.

5.8 Roman finds by Tora Hylton

The small finds include an iron nail with a T-shaped head, representing a Manning Type 3 (1985, fig 32) recovered from pit [2049] at the entrance to Enclosure E3. No other Roman finds were recovered.

Table 3: Quantification of Roman pottery

| Feature | Context | Type | Sherd count | Weight (g) | Grog-tempered | Greyware | Shell-gritted | Sand-tempered | LNVCC | Samian |
|---------------|---------|---------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|----------|----------|
| 607 | 606 | Gully | 3 | 49 | | | 3 | | | |
| 1209 | 1208 | Ditch | 5 | 49 | | 5 | | | | |
| 1310 | 1309 | Ditch | 8 | 30 | | 8 | | | | |
| 3115 | 3113 | Ditch | 1 | 28 | | 1 | | | | |
| 3118 | 3116 | Ditch | 2 | 8 | | | | 2 | | |
| 3126 | 3125 | Gully | 2 | 4 | | | 2 | | | |
| 3141 | 3140 | Gully | 2 | 10 | | 2 | | | | |
| 3149 | 3148 | Gully | 3 | 105 | | 3 | | | | |
| 3151 | 3150 | Ditch | 1 | 10 | 1 | | | | | |
| 3153 | 3152 | Pit | 41 | 276 | 1 | 40 | | | | |
| 3163 | 3162 | Ditch | 21 | 118 | | | 21 | | | |
| 3198 | 3197 | Pit | 3 | 11 | | 3 | | | | |
| - | 2002 | Subsoil | 1 | 3 | | | | | | 1 |
| 2008 | 2006 | Ditch | 1 | 19 | | | 1 | | | |
| 2011 | 2009 | Ditch | 2 | 29 | | 2 | | | | |
| 2028 | 2027 | Pit | 1 | 102 | | | 1 | | | |
| 2034 | 2033 | Ditch | 2 | 6 | | 2 | | | | |
| 2043 | 2041 | Ditch | 7 | 59 | | 5 | 2 | | | |
| 2046 | 2044 | Ditch | 5 | 39 | | 5 | | | | |
| 2049 | 2047 | Pit | 2 | 3 | | 2 | | | | |
| 2049 | 2048 | Pit | 1 | 27 | | | 1 | | | |
| 2056 | 2055 | Ditch | 1 | 138 | | | | 1 | | |
| 2065 | 2064 | Ditch | 5 | 30 | | 2 | 2 | | 1 | |
| 2068 | 2066 | Ditch | 10 | 21 | | 5 | 2 | 3 | | |
| 2068 | 2067 | Ditch | 2 | 8 | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 2072 | 2071 | Ditch | 1 | 5 | | | | | | |
| 2074 | 2073 | Ditch | 1 | 16 | | | 1 | | | |
| 2077 | 2076 | Ditch | 4 | 70 | | 2 | 2 | | | |
| 2085 | 2083 | Ditch | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| 2087 | 2086 | Ditch | 1 | 7 | | 1 | | | | |
| 2090 | 2088 | Ditch | 6 | 5 | | 6 | | | | |
| Totals | | | 146 | 1286 | 3 | 96 | 39 | 6 | 1 | 1 |

6 FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Animal bone by Karen Deighton

There is 6.11kg of animal bone, collected from Iron Age and Roman features. This material was assessed to ascertain the condition of the bone, the species present and potential contribution to the understanding of the site.

Method

The animal bone was scanned and identifiable elements were noted (Halstead 1985; Watson 1979). Data for the preservation and modification of bone, and any available biometrical data were also noted (Binford 1981; von den Driesch 1976). Ageing data

was recorded for the state of fusion (Silver 1969), and tooth eruption and wear (Payne 1973; Halstead 1985; Payne 1973; Levine 1982).

Table 4: Taxa by context

| Cut/fill | Feature | Bos | Ovicaprid | Equus | Canid | Total |
|--------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 305/304 | Ditch | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 309/307 | Ditch | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 2 |
| 609/608 | Ditch | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 1205/1204 | Ditch | 1 | 1 | -- | -- | 2 |
| 1310/1309 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | 2 | 3 |
| 3009/3006 | Ditch | 2 | 2 | -- | -- | 4 |
| 3017/3016 | Ditch | 2 | 3 | -- | -- | 5 |
| 3020/3019 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3051/3049 | Gully | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3262/3055 | Pit | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3068/3065 | Ditch | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 2 |
| 3077/3072 | W.hole | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3077/3073 | W.hole | 4 | 1 | -- | -- | 5 |
| 3077/3074 | W.hole | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 3 |
| 3077/3076 | W.hole | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3099/3095 | Pit | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3099/3096 | Pit | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3099/3097 | Pit | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3102/3101 | Ditch | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3108/3107 | Ditch | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3118/3116 | Ditch | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3126/3125 | Gully | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3130/3129 | Gully | 1 | -- | 1 | -- | 2 |
| 3145/3142 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3145/3143 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3172/3169 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3178/3176 | Ditch | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3187/3186 | Posthole | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3198/3195 | Pit | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3201/3199 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3204/3202 | Ditch | 4 | 1 | -- | -- | 5 |
| 3204/3203 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3209/3207 | Ditch | -- | -- | 1 | -- | 1 |
| 3213/3211 | Ditch | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 1 |
| 3246/3242 | Well | 1 | -- | 1 | -- | 2 |
| 3255/3254 | Ditch | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 1 |
| Total | | 35 | 13 | 10 | 2 | 60 |

Preservation

Fragmentation and abrasion were fairly high. The level of abrasion probably affected recognition of canid gnawing and evidence of butchery. Canid gnawing was noted on six bones. Evidence for butchery was restricted to knife marks on a single cattle long bone. Two burned bone fragments were recovered from ditches [3054], the principal Iron Age boundary, and [3240], Enclosure E1. No animal bone was recovered from the sieved samples. The taxa are summarised in Table 4.

Ageing and metrical data

Ageing data was restricted to the level of epiphyseal fusion of long bones. These were the articular ends of the bone fused to the bone shafts, in the process of fusing or as separate bone elements. Bone fusion data is less reliable than eruption and wear data from teeth due to the variability ages at which it can occur for any given bone element

and therefore no concrete statements would be possible without a larger assemblage. No metrical data was available due to heavy fragmentation.

Table 5: Availability of ageing and metrical data

| Bos | | | Ovicaprid | | Equus | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Fusion | Toothwear | Measurable | Fusion | Toothwear | Fusion | Toothwear |
| 9 | 2 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

Discussion

The results show a small range of common domesticates with the dominance of cattle typical of a late Iron Age and early Roman landscape. The moderate level of preservation, the difficulty of identification and the small amount of ageing or metrical data available suggests that information would be limited for the animal economy of the site. The importance of the assemblage lies as an addition to the corpus of existing work for the region (Davis 1995; Highbee forthcoming; Deighton 2003).

6.2 Soil sample analysis by Karen Deighton

There were twenty-four samples collected, of which fifteen were selected for assessment. Ten samples were taken from the Iron Age features, including the fills of watering hole [3077], the principal boundary ditch [3204], the ditch of enclosure E1, [3240], well [3246] and from pits associated with these features. The remaining samples were taken from early Roman features including fills from the ditch of enclosure E3, [2065], boundary ditch [2034] and the ditch of enclosure E2, [3260].

The material was assessed to determine the nature, presence and level of preservation of ecofacts.

Method

Bulk samples were processed using a modified siraf tank fitted with a 250 micron flot sieve and 500 micron mesh. The resulting flots were dried and examined under a microscope at x10 and x20 magnifications. Identifications were made with the aid of seed atlases (Cappers *et al* 2006) and the author's reference collection. Identification of molluscs was made with the aid of Glöer and Meier-Brook (2003).

Results

Plant remains were preserved by charring and waterlogging. Cereal grains were fragmented and fairly heavily abraded. Charcoal and waterlogged wood fragments were examined by Dana Challinor to determine species. The preservation of molluscs was reasonable.

Fat hen (*Chenopodium album*) was the only wild/weed plant taxa present. Cereals were limited to two possible spelt grains (*Triticum aestivum*). A single pea (*Pisum sativum*) was also identified. The planobid molluscs are freshwater taxa and were found within pond [3246] (Fig 3).

Table 6: Ecofacts by context and sample

| Cut/fill | Feature | Sample | Volume (l) | Charcoal | Cereal | Weed/wild | Mollusc | Wood |
|-----------|---------|--------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|------|
| 2034/2033 | Ditch | 6 | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2052/2051 | Pit | 7 | 10 | c10 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3005/3004 | Pit | 10 | 10 | c10 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3046/3045 | Ditch | 11 | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3068/3065 | Ditch | 12 | 20 | c100 | 1(pulse) | -- | -- | -- |
| 3077/3072 | W.hole | 13 | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | c20 |
| 3077/3210 | W.hole | 18 | 40 | -- | -- | -- | -- | c100 |
| 3079/3078 | Pit | 14 | 10 | c100 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3174/3173 | Ditch | 15 | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3204/3202 | Ditch | 16 | 40 | c100 | 3 | 3 | -- | -- |
| 3204/3203 | Ditch | 17 | 20 | c100 | 1 | 2 | -- | -- |
| 3213/3212 | Ditch | 19 | 40 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 3246/3242 | Well | 24 | 40 | -- | -- | -- | c300 | -- |
| 3246/3244 | Well | 25 | 40 | -- | -- | -- | c800 | -- |
| 3258/3256 | Pit | 26 | 10 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

Summary

Little can be said of the local environment of the site. The mollusca present indicate the presence of standing water, as does the presence of waterlogged wood in watering hole [3077]. The amount of charred plant material is of a fairly ordinary level comprising material blown or washed into the features from activities elsewhere.

6.3 Charcoal and wood by Dana Challinor

Charcoal

The majority of samples from the excavations were sterile of charcoal or produced only small charcoal flecks. Analysis focused upon three secure contexts of Iron Age date, probably from the 2nd century BC, from the basal fills of ditch [3204], ditch [3068] and pit [3005]. Examination of the Iron Age boundary configuration indicated a relatively long period of use with several episodes of recutting. This indicated a strong likelihood that samples from shallower upper fills in pit [3079] and ditch [3204] may contain residual material. Examination of context data and the relative sterility of all finds and ecofacts in pit [2052] suggested that it was probably not of archaeological origin. Most of the identifiable charcoal came from the residues, rather than the flots, reflecting the high levels of sediment which infused the anatomy of the charcoal fragments.

The identifiable charcoal was identified in full, by fracturing and sorting into groups based on the anatomical features observed in transverse section at x7 to x45 magnification. Representative fragments from each group were then selected for further examination using a Meiji incident-light microscope at up to x400 magnification. Identifications were made with reference to Schweingruber (1990), Hather (2000) and modern reference material. Classification and nomenclature followed Stace (1997).

Results

The results by fragment count are given in Table 7. The charcoal was generally small in size and infused with sediment. Seven taxa were positively identified, although two could not be confirmed since the species was represented by a single small fragment: *Acer campestre* (field maple), *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash), *Ilex aquifolium* (holly) Maloideae (hawthorn, pear, apple etc.), *Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn), *Quercus* sp. (oak) and *Rhamnus cathartica* (buckthorn). It was not always possible to distinguish

between genera of the same family, but all of the specimens were consistent with native taxa.

Table 7: Results of the charcoal analysis

| Feature type | | Ditch 3068 | Pit 3005 | Ditch 3204 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Context number | | 3065 | 3004 | 3203 |
| Sample number | | 12 | 10 | 17 |
| <i>Quercus</i> sp. | oak | 9 | | 5h |
| <i>Prunus spinosa</i> L. | blackthorn | | 9r | 8r |
| <i>Prunus</i> sp. | cherry type | 12r | 2r | |
| Maloideae | hawthorn group | 28r | | 12r |
| cf. <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> L. | holly | | | 1 |
| <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> L. | purging buckthorn | | | 1 |
| cf. <i>Acer campestre</i> L. | field maple | 1 | | |
| <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. | ash | | | 1 |
| Indeterminate | | 10rb | 2 | 4 |
| Total | | 60 | 13 | 32 |

Key: r=roundwood, b=bark, h=heartwood

Discussion

The charcoal is likely to have derived from domestic fires deposited alongside other rubbish, such as querns and pottery sherds. The range and type of wood used for fuel suggests the use of hedgerow or scrub species. Ash and blackthorn are light-demanding, but buckthorn is shade-tolerant, so a range of habitats may be represented. The dataset from Littlehey is limited, but it is consistent with the evidence from other Iron Age settlement sites where the use of scrub for fuel resources has been noted (Smith 2002).

Wood

Four large pieces of roundwood were recovered from the base of watering hole [3077] and are the remains of larger branches or boughs. The four pieces are all of *Acer campestre* (field maple) which is a fast growing species compared to other deciduous types. Its presence suggests vegetative colonisation of relative maturity. There is no evidence for tool marks or any other working as timber and it is probably that they were deposited together as windfall boughs.

6.4 Molluscs by Karen Deighton and Jim Brown

Two samples produced molluscs, both of which originated from the fills of well [3246]. The molluscs were analysed to ascertain the range and nature of species present and their contribution to the understanding of the environment of the site.

Method

Sub-samples of 10 litres formed 25% of the original bulk samples and, following disaggregation in water, were washed through a range of stack sieves. The resulting retents were examined under a microscope and the molluscs were collected. Identifications were made where possible with the aid of Cameron and Kerney (1994),

Glöer (2002) and the keys available on the national conchological website (www.conchsoc.org).

Results

The identifications of mollusc species are presented in Table 8. The preservation of the shells is good with little fragmentation or surface abrasion. Both samples originate from the same well, fill (3244) was the lower deposit of the two and comprised natural sedimentation. It was overlain by fill (3242), which contained a degree of dumping and merged towards deliberate backfill waste at the surface.

Conclusion

Only slight differences in the taxa exist between the two samples. Little can be said of the environment of the site, other than to comment upon the obvious presence of standing water indicated by the presence of the Planorbids (*Anisus lucostema*, *Anisus vortex*). This supports the interpretation of well [3246] as an open feature that performed a water provision function within Enclosure E2. The terrestrial taxa are a mixture of grassland and shade loving species that are commonly found in most temperate environments where cultivated land, grassland, low ground cover shrubs or hedgerows and scattered trees are found in combination. Their deposition will have been from a variety of sources. Those in the upper portions of fill (3242) may be intrusive, but those in the deeper fill (3244) are probably contemporary to its use. The quantity of molluscs is moderate, indicating a healthy environment, one which could easily have included both good quality grazing and arable land. More extensive interpretation is not possible due to a paucity of other features producing molluscs.

Table 8: Taxonomic distribution of mollusc species by sample and context

| Fill | 3242 | 3244 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|
| Sample | 24 | 25 |
| Volume | 40 | 40 |
| Terrestrial taxa | | |
| <i>Vertigo pygmaea</i> | 2 | 3 |
| <i>Vertigo</i> sp | 6 | 19 |
| <i>Vallonia cf costata</i> | -- | 5 |
| <i>Vallonia cf pulchella</i> | -- | 7 |
| <i>Vallonia</i> sp | 3 | -- |
| <i>cf Trochulus striolata</i> | 4 | 4 |
| <i>cf Oxychilus alliarius</i> | 3 | 6 |
| <i>Cochlicopa lubrica/lubricella</i> | | 2 |
| Indeterminate taxa | | 23 |
| Fresh water taxa | | |
| <i>Anisus lucostema</i> | 200 | -- |
| <i>Anisus vortex</i> | 200 | -- |
| <i>Anisus lucostema/vortex</i> | -- | 500 |
| <i>Bithynia</i> sp | 1 | -- |
| <i>Lymnaea</i> sp | -- | 2 |
| <i>Valvata</i> sp | -- | 3 |

6.5 Radiocarbon dating by Jim Brown

All four pieces of waterlogged wood are fairly substantial in size. A small section was taken from each for species identification and one of these was radiocarbon dated in an attempt to verify the date of the earliest sediments in watering hole [3077]. The wood selected was *Acer campestre* (field maple), which as a fast growing species was less likely to give a misleading date. The radiocarbon date on the wood gives the

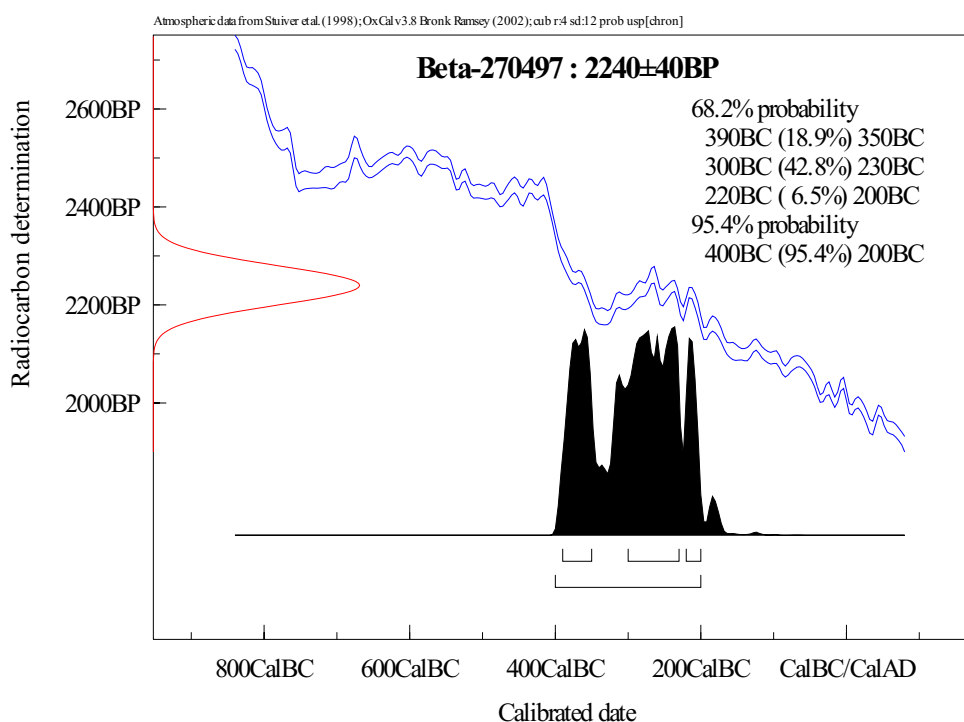
approximate period that it fell from the tree and is likely to be a close approximation to its deposition, given that the wood is completely unworked and was probably deposited in its natural state.

Results

The radiocarbon results are presented in Table 9. Three groupings of dates were identified at 68.2% confidence. It is normal in radiometric calibration for the middle Iron Age to get several possible dates, as the period suffers from inconsistent isotopic degradation of C¹⁴. By choosing material from an undisturbed deposit the date is probably as close as it was possible to attain.

The dates confirmed the early sedimentation of the pond in the middle Iron Age as broadly 3rd century BC, possibly 4th century BC. In relation to other datable finds there is a stronger likelihood that the fallen wood from watering hole [3077] dates in the range 300-200 cal BC. The site had a distinct lack of 3rd-century middle Iron Age pottery and the earliest sherds are likely to be of 2nd-century date. It is therefore far more likely that the sedimentation of the pond is closer to the end of the 3rd century BC than the 2-sigma calibration may otherwise suggest and that it was in existence for a period of time before the occupation of Enclosure E1 or the possible Roundhouses R1 and R2 nearby.

Table 9: The radiocarbon determinations



Laboratory: Beta Analytic, Miami, Florida, USA
 Calibration: Ox Cal v3.10 Bronk Ramsey 2005

7 DISCUSSION

The radiocarbon date was useful in providing an independent date source to support artefactual assemblage studies. There was a broad correlation between the radiocarbon dating of the initial sedimentation of the watering hole and the first middle Iron Age pottery in its fill, which placed this event at the end of 3rd century BC and the beginning of the 2nd century BC. The chronology was therefore from the middle Iron Age and into the Roman period, with no evidence for early Iron Age occupation.

Occupation of the site in these initial stages appeared to have been fairly limited. Although the site suffered modern truncation, there was a generally low level of material such as domestic waste within the more substantial features. A total of 6.56kg of pottery, most of which is heavily fragmented, was not very much for the size of the area and the number of sections excavated, regardless of the vagaries of archaeological sampling. Only one prehistoric site was known from the area, which was a flint scatter located c600m to the north-east, and there were no recorded instances of Iron Age enclosures within 1km. It was hard therefore to be certain if the low intensity occupation evidence was the result of modern disturbance or the result of a marginal location combined with a paucity of information from West Perry and Great Staughton parishes.

It was generally clear from the study of stratigraphic relationships and artefact deposition that the key elements that comprised the Iron Age period of development focus around the establishment of a possible watering hole, [3077]. In an unenclosed landscape this feature was the first evidence of human management practise and may have served cattle, which in turn suggested the use of pasture in an area of cleared upland. The watering hole probably existed as the sole landscape feature for a period of time, as little pottery occurred in its basal sediments until it had accumulated a fair proportion of other non-domestic materials such as hill wash, dead wood and leaf litter. A particular diagnostic sherd with fingertip decoration below the rim assisted in establishing this to around the turn of the 2nd-century BC. The animal bone assemblage for this period was almost exclusively cattle bone, a single instance of goat or sheep was recorded.

The watering hole was subsequently developed with an axial boundary ditch, around the same time as the instances of pottery and animal bone deposition gradually began to increase. The ditch probably served a dual purpose, it channelled water into the watering hole, but it also divided the land between east and west. Its addition provided evidence of increased investment in the management of the land, previously unenclosed. To judge by the rapid accretion of ditch recuts this situation remained more or less consistent for a period of time, with the boundary occasionally receiving maintenance and small quantities of artefacts appearing as finds through casual losses and discards, rather than by dumping. Animal bone was too infrequent to be certain of trends in species and does not appear to have differed greatly. Such activity tended to suggest a location slightly further from domestic areas and was the state of affairs for the larger part of the 2nd century BC.

The situation changed by the 1st century BC and it is possible that at least two roundhouses (R1 and R2) stood to the west of the boundary and an enclosure (E1) lay to the east of the boundary, perhaps for animals. Horse bones appeared amongst the animal bone assemblage for the first time and both instances of this were associated with Enclosure E1. The instances of animal bone as a whole remained infrequent at a time when their accretion might be expected to be most prominent, suggesting that preservation conditions probably distort their contribution to the study. The axial ditch may simply have marked a divide between farmland and the area of human habitation,

but it is uncertain how soon the domestic occupation took place because of the loss of potential evidence for roundhouses to modern truncation. Enclosure E1 appeared to have been created to care for valuable livestock in close proximity to the settlement, perhaps including horses, but not excluding milking cows, goats or sheep and therefore carried elements of domestic character. There were no pig bones, perhaps an indicator of generally poor affluence or a largely cleared landscape lacking in mast and unsuitable for pannage which is generally associated with woodland. A possible quern fragment in coarse sandstone was recovered. The only cereal grains from the site were recovered from ditch [3204] they included a small quantity of wild/weed seeds and some possible spelt wheat, there was no chaff and the seeds do not represent a primary dump or processing waste. Since the Iron Age pottery group includes a small burnished bowl (Fig 13) and a scored ware jar with latticework decoration (Fig 14) it is highly likely that by the 1st century BC domestic activities were located nearby. On the whole, the intensity of surviving evidence, quantities and types of artefacts, and the overall character of the site, all point towards a subsistence-based household economy perhaps for a single family unit within a short space of time. Given the distribution of features and the accumulation of smaller quantities of 2nd-century material within the principal boundary ditches, it is possible that the potential roundhouses (R1 and R2) may represent gradual migration of settlement structures towards the boundary from the west. In this instance a good place to look for earlier structures might be to the west of Crow Spinney Lane (Fig 1). However, it is very probable that given the general scarcity of remains, there may be no wider settlement at all.

The occurrence of grog fabrics amongst the pottery suggested that the characteristically native Iron Age style of occupation, with its non-uniform enclosure (E1), irregular weaving ditch lines and scattered features, continued until the early 1st century AD. As the boundary accumulated sediment it would also have become colonised by small shrubs and may have become a broken hedgerow (Meadows pers comm). Typical of many native settlements around this time, the arrangement of its features were radically reorganised. Many of the Iron Age settlement studies within the Raunds area survey, Northamptonshire, were also altered at this time (Parry 2006) and it is around this date that the site at Broadway Fields, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire was significantly redesigned (Brown forthcoming). Basic fundamental elements such as the axial boundary were retained on more or less a similar orientation, but the overall pattern of the reorganisation and its subsequent growth, were planned in a uniform rectangular arrangement to enclose large areas and parcel them into smaller manageable units.

Formalisation of the landscape over large areas is generally a good indication for a greater level of organisation and perhaps of adaption to changing social and economic trends from the 1st century AD. Indicators of domestic occupation in terms of structures or artefacts were extremely few for this period onwards. Most evidence was attuned towards enclosure based activities, perhaps cultivation. Pottery quantities, forms and fragmentation were low and did not include early finewares. There were no ceramic building materials, fixtures, fittings, general ironwork, personal artefacts, coins or other items that are usually associated with substantial domestic buildings. Less substantial buildings may have been present, the remains of which did not survive, if this was the case they were probably short-lived structures. A single hand quern fragment attested to a portable quern for grinding seed. The instances of animal bone deposition remained at a consistent level, cattle and sheep were still present, but the instances of horse bones were significantly greater and generally associated with the palisade enclosure (E2). Horses may have provided traction. Dog bones were noted for the first time and pigs remained absent.

A palisade enclosure (E2) was inferred by the general shape and dimensions of the slots that remained along its sides (Fig 10). Such sharp, and in some cases, narrow, profiles were not normal for drainage channels. Similar steep profiles were observed in a continuous trench along one side of a large ditch at Manor Farm, Silchester (Fulford 1984, 40). The principal difference was their relationship to associated features, the palisade at Silchester was probably part of the defences, whilst the example at Littlehey appeared to be non-military. The apparent late recuts and widening at the top of the profiles would tend to indicate the disturbance caused by the removal of the palisade timbers. Pottery obtained from the fills indicated that it was probably removed in the late 2nd century. A palisade is an unusual feature on a rural site and would tend to suggest a great measure of value attached to its function. There was, unfortunately, a general lack of artefactual or structural evidence to indicate what this function was. It is also rather curious that the east side remained unenclosed, like a working area, open to the fields. Less substantial features, such as sill beam buildings, may have been lost to modern truncation and no postholes were present. The palisade was certainly constructed subsequent to the wider ditch system being reorganised, probably within a fairly short space of time, as it seemed to be the successor of Enclosure E1. The period of use bridged the 1st to 2nd centuries and may have continued until the late 2nd century when all of the Roman features were filled in or had been allowed to fully silt up. The association of both enclosures E1 and E2 with horse bones may have been the continuation of a late Iron Age practise. The loss of the well and the larger pond outside before the late 1st century AD, suggested that any animals were not kept here permanently or that other water sources were available outside of the excavated area.

The enclosure (E3) to the south was clearly part of the Roman ditch system and much of its pottery is mid- to late 2nd century into the early 3rd century, which suggested that it went out of use slightly later than the palisade enclosure (E2). It also produced the single example of Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware, a fineware. The likely date of abandonment of Enclosure E3 would therefore seem to be before the mid-3rd century. A complete absence of other artefacts or environmental data, including animal bone, made this enclosure extremely difficult to interpret. It probably served an ancillary function to the agricultural practises on the site, but there is no evidence for its specific function. A double ditch around its north-east side was spaced at c6m width, which perhaps bounded it within the corner of a larger enclosure or flanked a bank and hedgerow. An attempt to identify its continuation to the north-west of Area 2 was unsuccessful.

The site as a whole appeared peripheral to the main focus of Roman domestic settlement from the 1st to early 3rd centuries. The reorganisation of boundaries and enclosures for the management of the agricultural regime was extensive and indicated a substantial investiture of time and effort. Ultimately the scale of this endeavour over a wider area is not known, so it is not certain whether there was a small scale farmstead nearby or if these enclosures were a fragment of a larger enterprise. It is therefore also problematic to determine whether the late Iron Age and early Roman development of the site remained at a subsistence level, or whether it had grown to meet the thriving Roman market economy. Despite being c10km south-west of the Roman town of *Durovigutum* (Godmanchester), its early demise suggested it was not a particularly desirable site. Several Roman sites have been studied over an area of four parishes around Raunds, Northamptonshire, within c12-15km to the north-west of HMP Littlehey and due south of the Roman town at Ashton (Parry 2006, 76-81). These studies indicated that there was disparity in the periods of disuse and abandonment between rural settlements within the same area. Most early Roman enclosures followed on from an Iron Age antecedent. However, in the later Roman period there was a sharp decline in settlement activity amongst sites upon the Boulder Clay

plateau. The trend was accompanied by increased activity at Laundes, Hargrave, north-west of HMP Littlehey (Parry 2006). It seemed to gain its momentum at the expense of surrounding, perhaps less successful or desirable sites, giving an overall pattern of late Roman nucleation. This trend may explain the early abandonment at HMP Littlehey, which is typical of some of the upland sites in the region. At Medbourne, Leicestershire, the lack of pottery deposited in manure scatters on upland sites led to the conclusion that the end of upland cultivation in the late Roman period accompanied a change in land use to woodland and pasture, reducing deposition to small casual losses representative of shepherding activity (Liddle 1994, 35). A similar situation may have occurred here.

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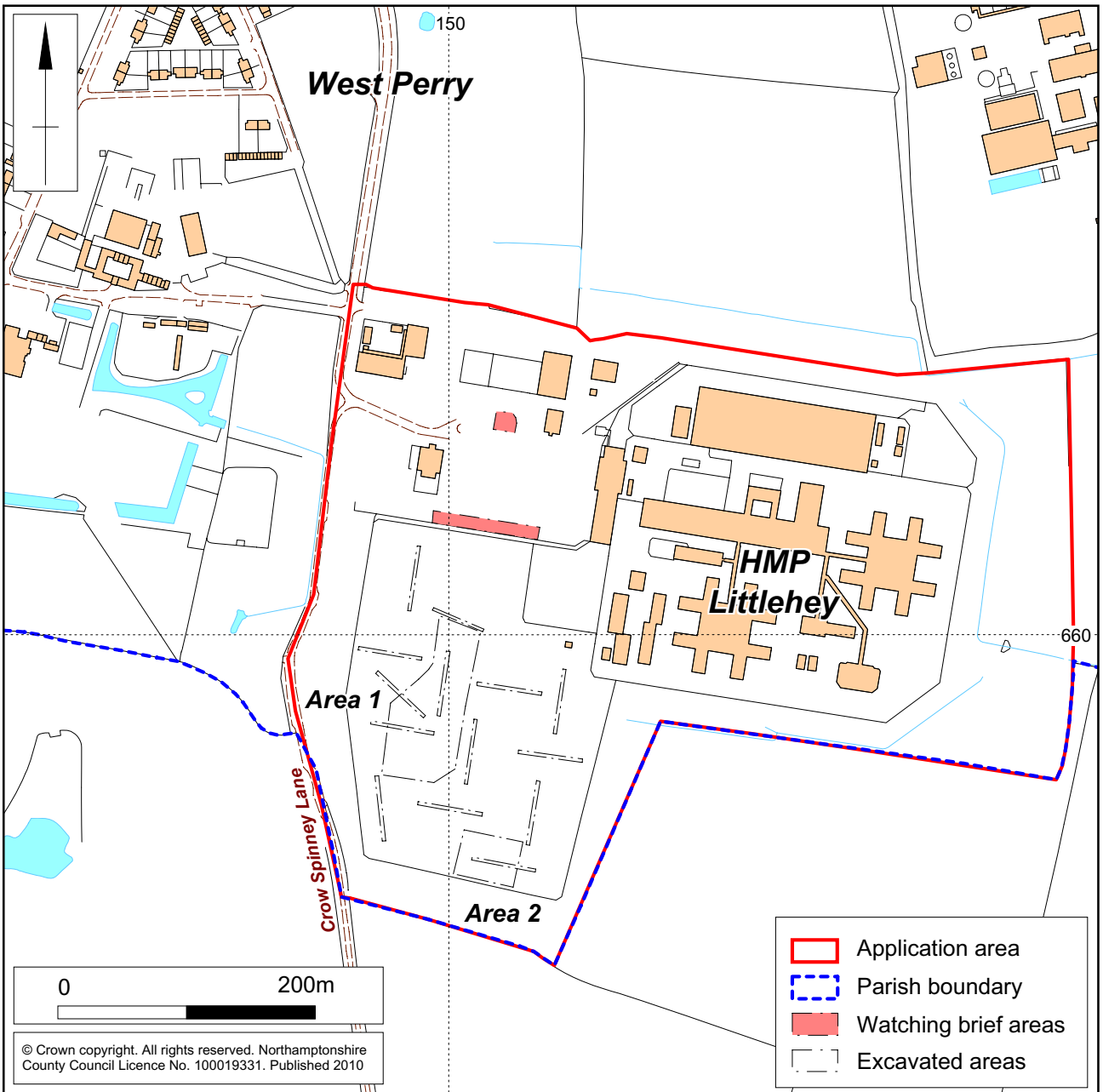
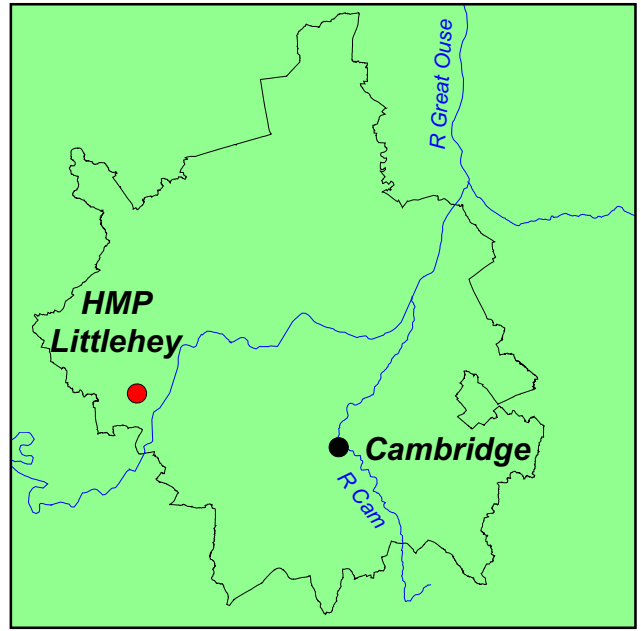
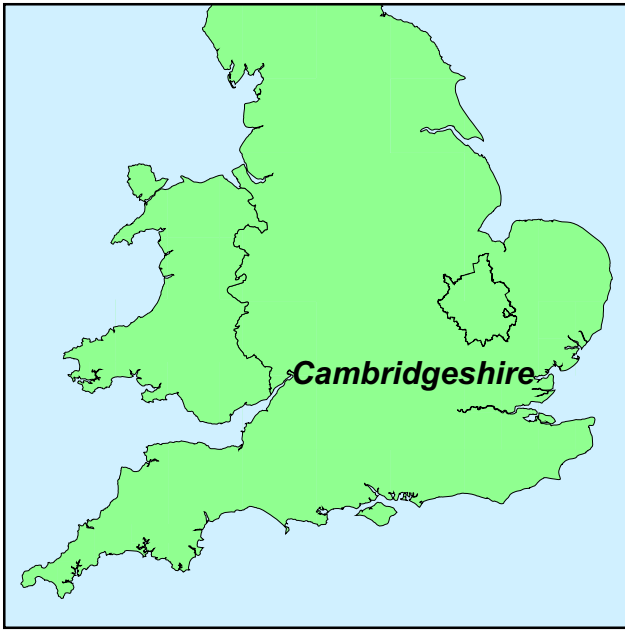
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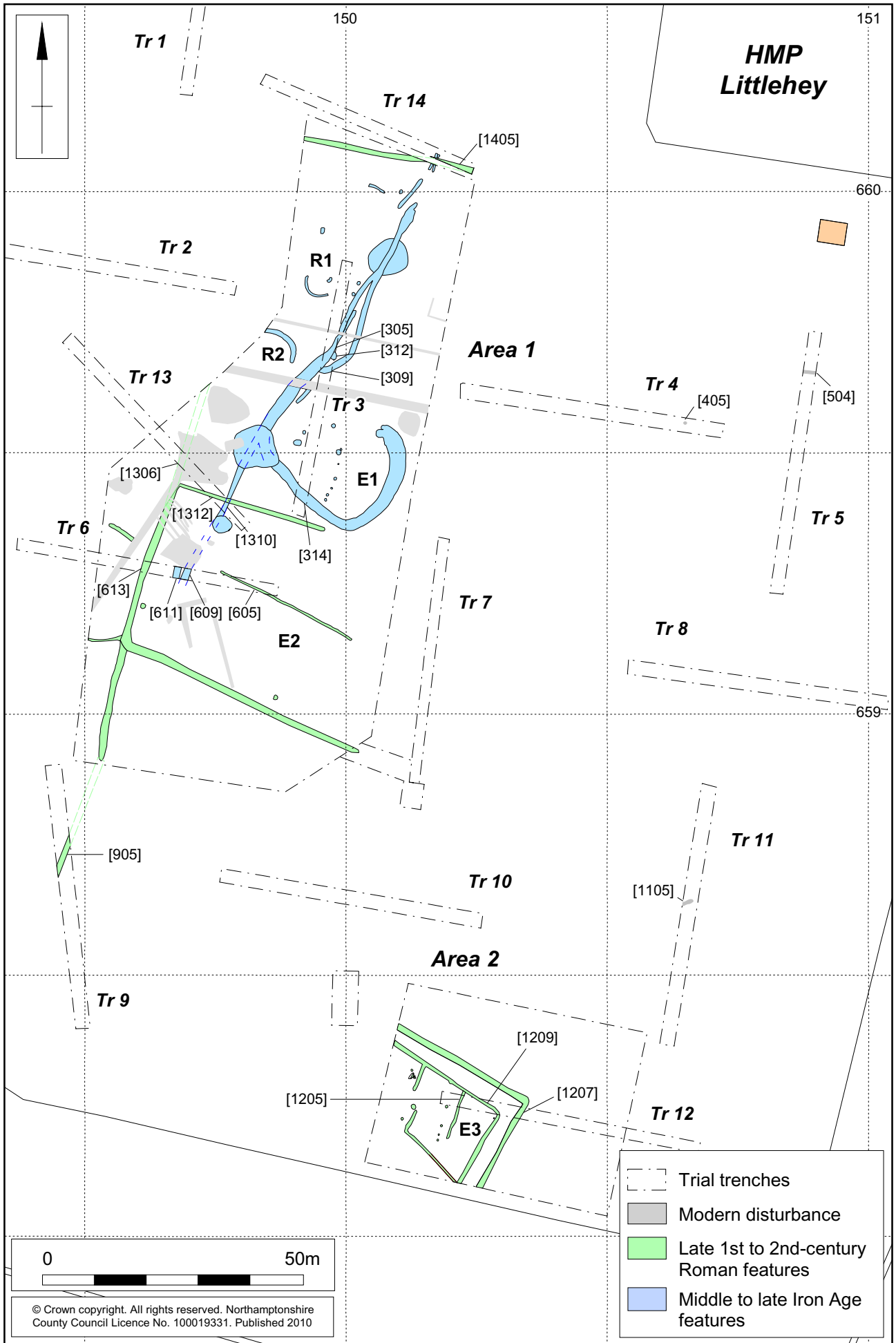
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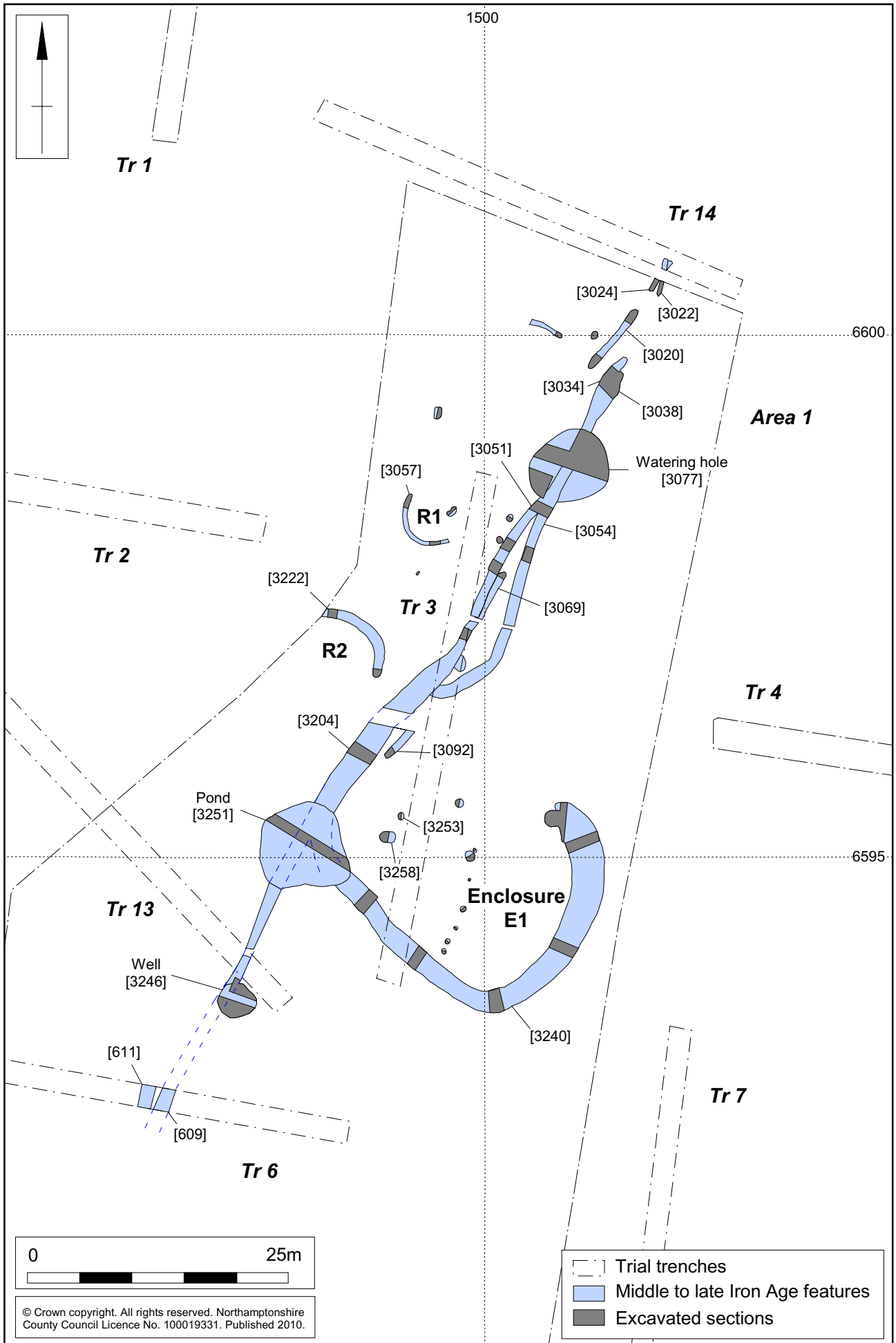
Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:1000

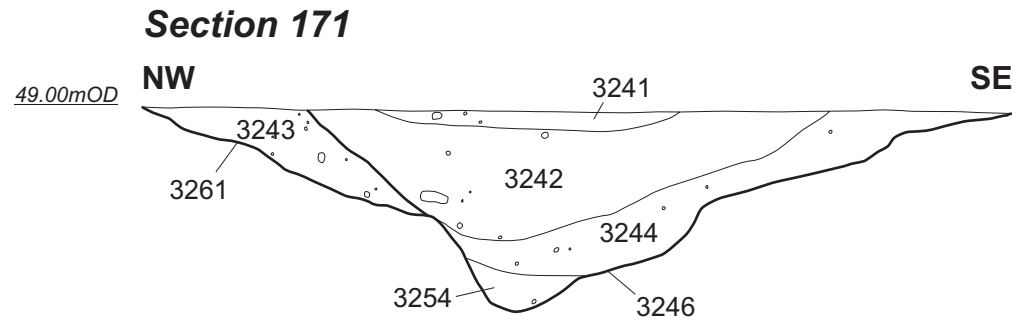
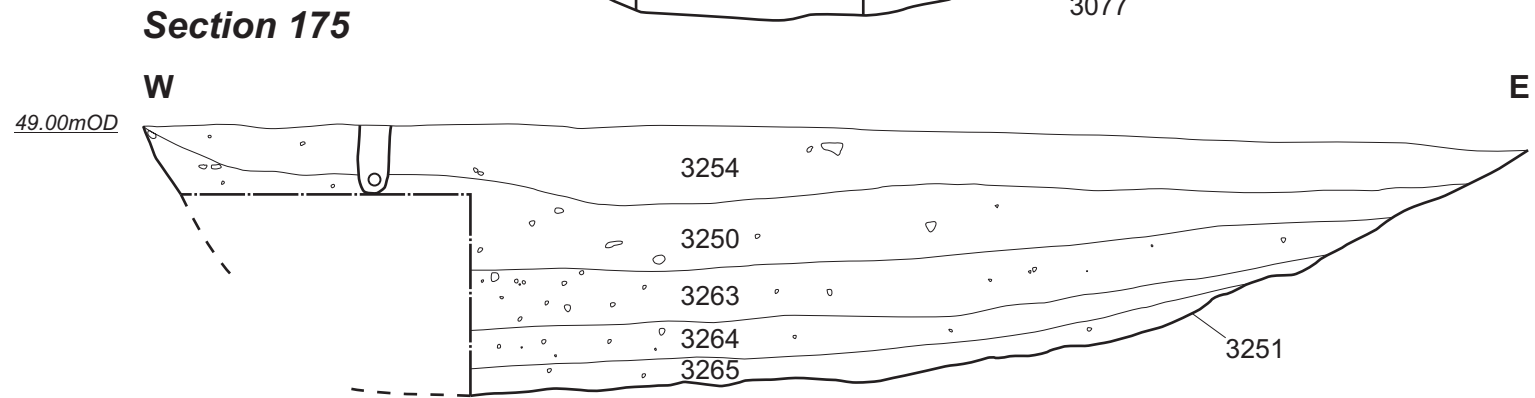
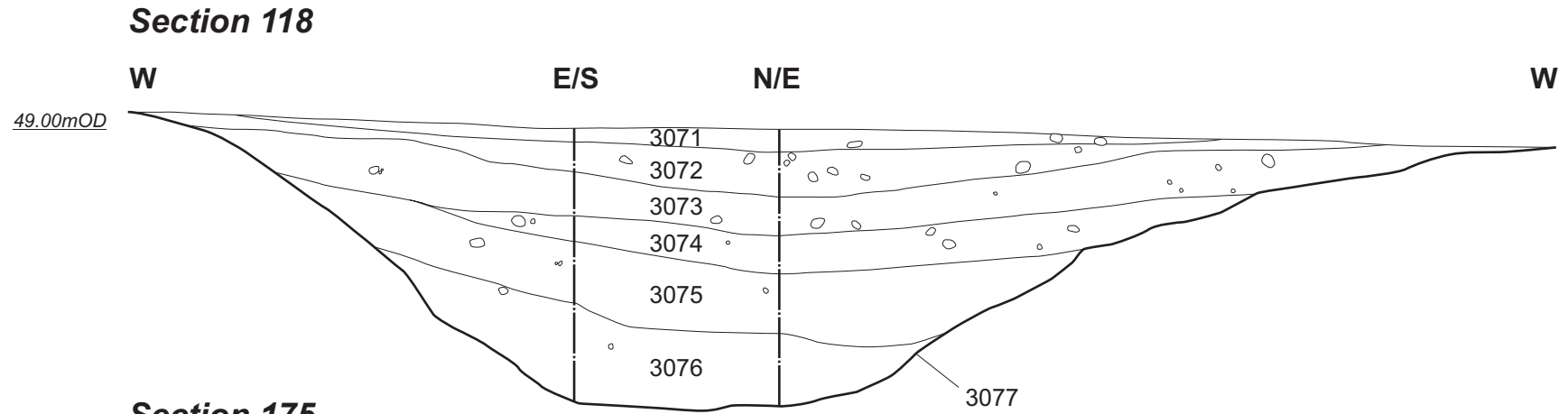
General site plan Fig 2



Scale 1:500

Middle to late Iron Age features Fig 3

Scale 1:50



Iron Age water sources Fig 4



Section across watering hole [3077] Fig 5



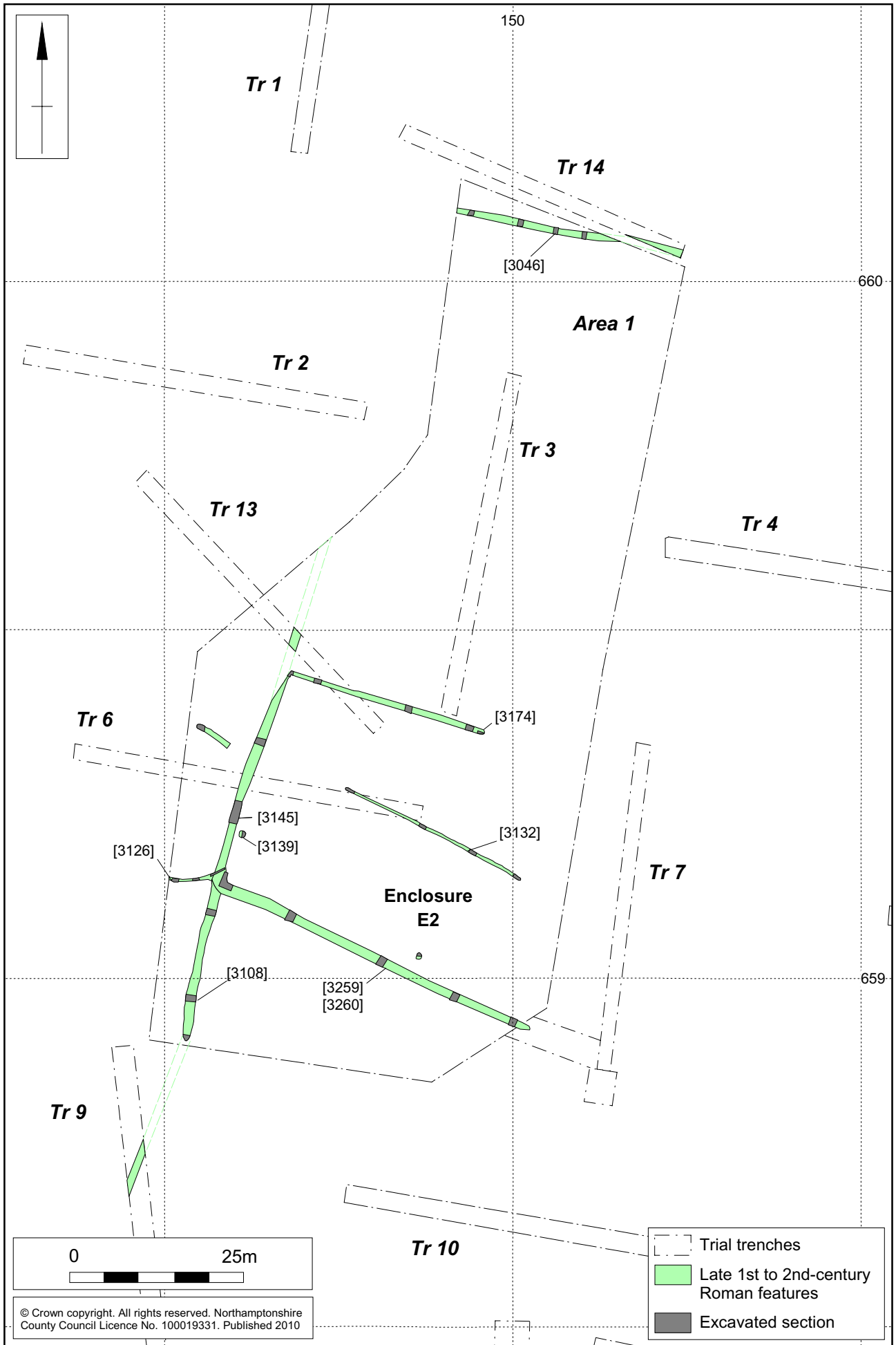
Wood in suit at the base of watering hole [3077] Fig 6



Section across pond [3251] Fig 7



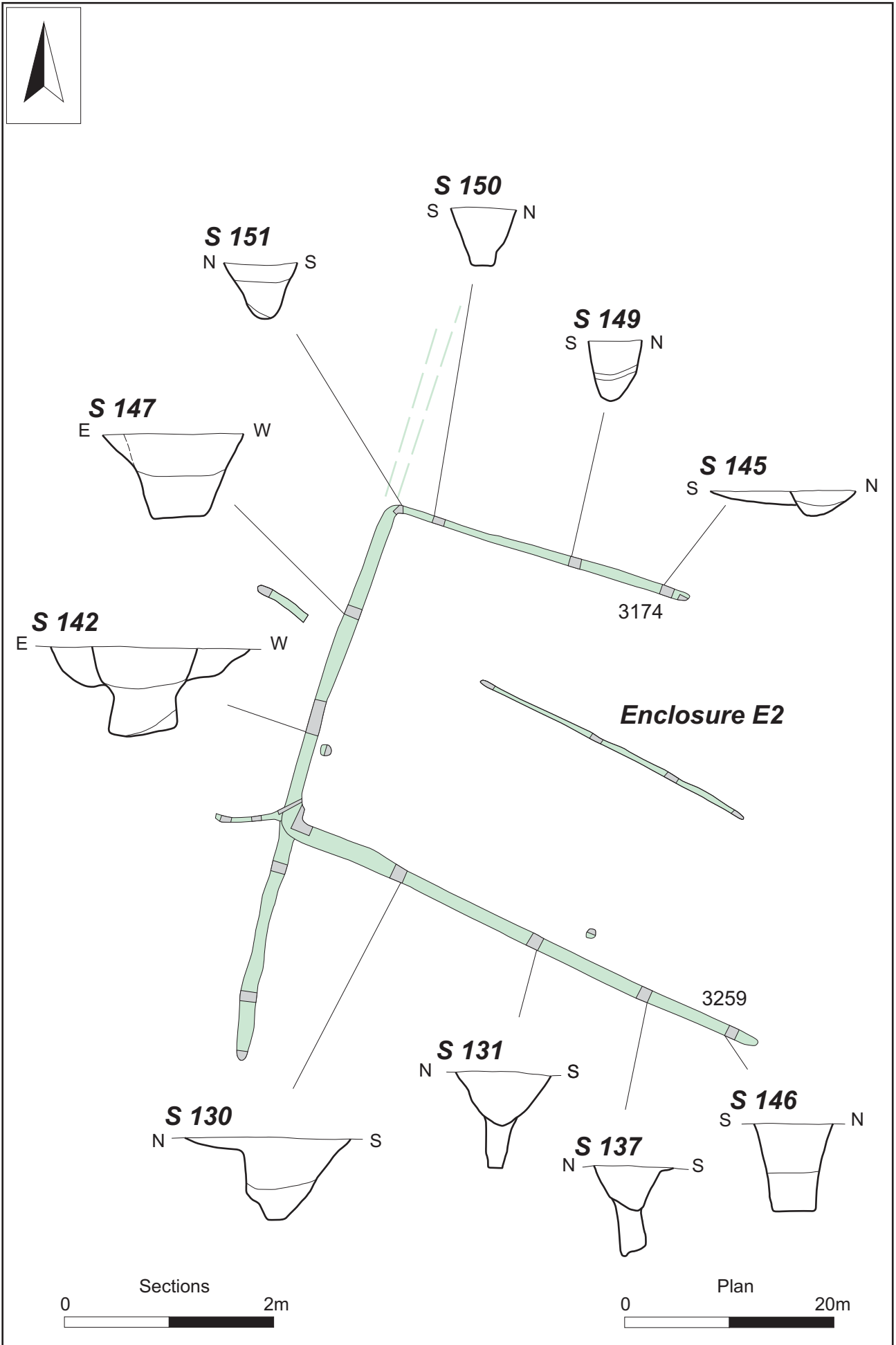
Quarter section of well [3246] Fig 8



Scale 1:750

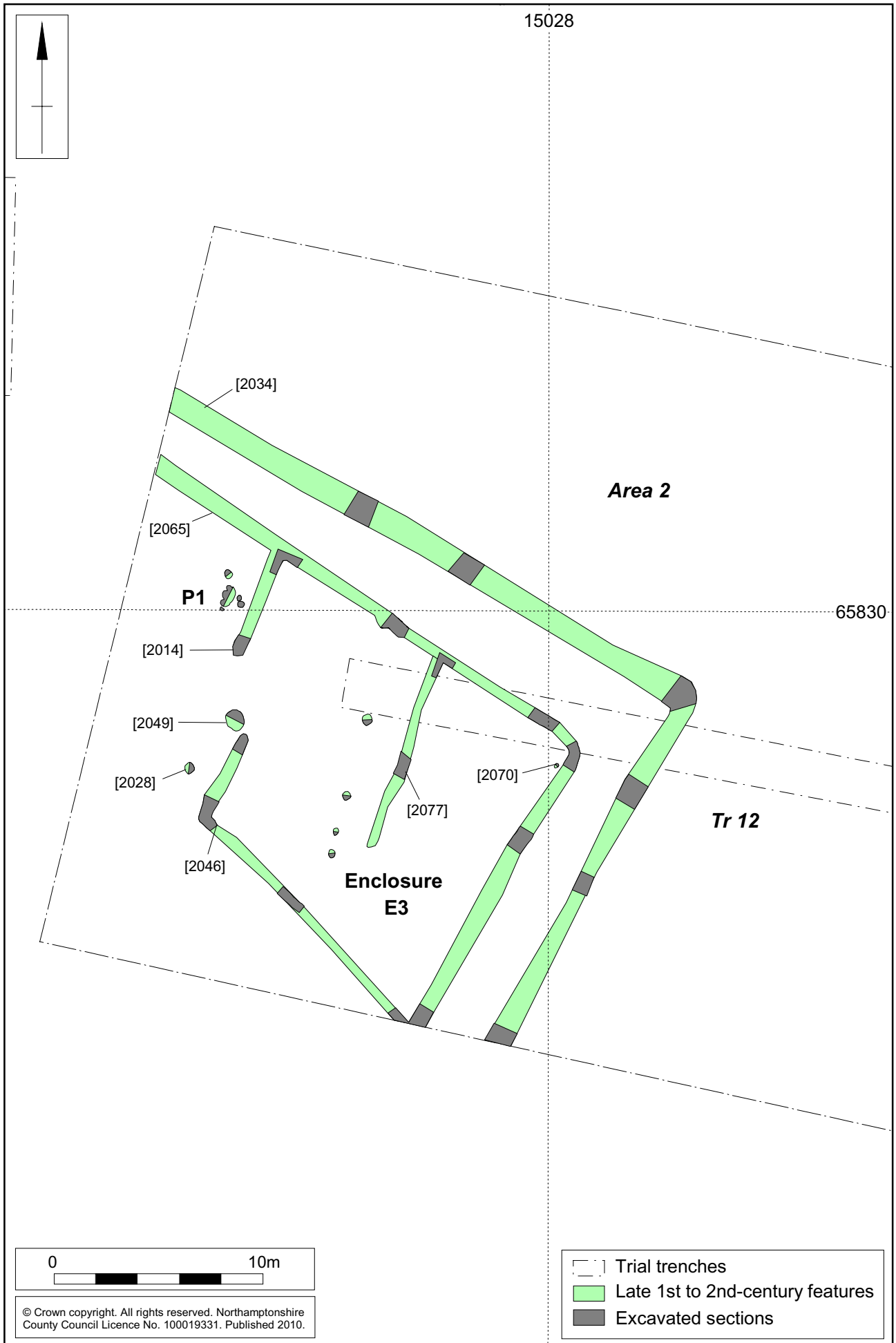
Late Iron Age to early Roman features, Area 1

Fig 9



Scale 1:50 and 1:500

Palisade sections, Enclosure E2 Fig 10



Scale 1:250

Late Iron Age to early Roman features, Area 2 Fig 11



Iron Age body sherd (Scale 50mm) Fig 12 Iron Age shouldered jar (Scale: 50mm) Fig 13



Iron Age jar with semi-regular latticework scoring, (Scale 50mm) Fig 14



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology



Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE

t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822

e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk

w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council