Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Excavation on Former Sports Ground, Alma Road, Peterborough

Post-excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design

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Report 06/12

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	P Chapman		
Verified by	A Mudd		
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Former Sports Ground, Alma Road, Peterborough	
Short description (250 words maximum)	A small excavation on the site of the former sports field revealed late Iron Age/early Roman ditches which appear to represent enclosures peripheral to settlement lying to the north. There were few other features, although one large pit contained a clay 'brick' which is probably pottery kiln lining. There was a LBA/EIA ditch in the eastern part of the site and an early medieval pit in the southern area.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Excavation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	none	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Evaluation	
Current Land use	Disused	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	No	
Monument type/ period	Roman ditches	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	EIA pot, Roman pot, ?kiln lining, medieval pot, animal bones	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Peterborough	
Site address (including postcode)	Alma Road	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	2.7 ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	5190 3005	
Height OD	14 m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Peterborough City Council Archaeology Service	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith	
Project Manager	Andy Mudd	
Sponsor or funding body	Nene Housing Society	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	September 2005	
End date	October 2005	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)**
Physical	Peterborough City Museum	Pottery, fired clay, animal bone, metal,
Paper	ditto	Site records, report, illustrations, colour and monochrome films
Digital	ditto	Report, illustrations, photos

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION ON FORMER SPORTS GROUND ALMA ROAD, PETERBOROUGH

POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT AND UPDATED PROJECT DESIGN

ABSTRACT
A small excavation on the site of the former sports field, Alma Road, Peterborough revealed late Iron Age/early Roman ditches which appear to represent enclosures peripheral to settlement lying to the north. There were few other features, although one large pit contained a clay 'brick' which is probably pottery kiln lining. There was a late Bronze Age or early Iron Age ditch in the eastern part of the site and an early medieval pit in the southern area.

The assessment of these findings suggests little potential for further analysis. It is proposed to publish the results in a short article in the Northamptonshire county archaeological journal.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) were commissioned by Davis Langdon Project and Cost Management Consultants, acting on behalf of the client Nene Housing Society, to undertake a programme of archaeological work on land at the former sports ground, Alma Road, Peterborough, in support of a planning application for social housing (Fig 1).

Peterborough City Council Archaeology Service (PCCAS), as advisers to the local planning authority (LPA), indicated that the site lies within an area with potential to contain important archaeological remains. As a condition of full planning permission, PCCAS required that archaeological work be undertaken, in line with government guidance PPG16 and LPA policy, to ensure an appropriate record was made of any archaeological work before their destruction.

A trial trench excavation was undertaken by NA in May 2005. The evaluation identified Roman ditches and other features which appeared to represent agricultural enclosures on the margins of a settlement lying mainly to the north of the application site (NA 2005a; Fig 2).

In view of these findings, PCCAS indicated that further archaeological excavation and reporting should be undertaken in limited areas of the site in order to 'preserve by record' significant archaeological features which were to be impacted by the development (Ben Robinson, Archaeological Officer, PCCAS, *in litt.* 27/6/05). The work was undertaken in accordance with an approved Project Design which outlined the scope, aims and methods of the excavation, including the present document (NA 2005b).

1.2 Aims and methods

The excavations were targeted on three areas of the site where Roman and possibly Bronze Age features had been identified in the evaluation (Fig 2).

- Area 1: 1250 sq m in the northern part of the site where a substantial Roman ditch was found to run approximately east-west.

- Area 2: 100 sq m in the eastern part of the site where Roman and possibly Bronze Age gullies were found.

- Area 3: 100 sq m in the southern part of the site to explore the context of a pit, containing possible Roman pottery (Trench 14).

The precise locations of the excavation areas were to be flexible to allow changes in strategy as soil stripping proceeded.

In view of the modest potential and small extent of the excavations, the investigations had the limited aim of characterising the nature of archaeological deposits and relating them to what is known of the archaeology the surrounding area. This was to include assessing the extent, date, function, and significance of any such deposits to enable a characterisation of the complete archaeological sequence, where possible.

The research aims of the project were also limited, but there appeared to be some potential for examining the nature of Roman farming and land use in this part of the fen edge, including:

- determining at what stage the land became divided into enclosures and fields;
- investigating the nature of these land parcels and what they were used for;
- finding out whether there were any prehistoric precursors to this activity;
- discovering when the system here ended.

2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

2.1 The excavated evidence

The following provides a brief summary of the excavated evidence (see also Figs 2-3). More detailed reports are contained in Appendix 1.

Area 1

The site showed a simple layout with a major Roman east-west ditch (2103) cutting a north-south ditch, while being respected by others on the same alignment (Fig 3). There was one large pit and several smaller ones. These features were cut by a pattern of post-medieval cultivation gullies/furrows on a north-east to south-west alignment.

The earliest features were two shallow ditches at the western end of the trench (2071 & 2097). These were on a staggered alignment and cut by the major east-west ditch 2103. They were without finds.

The major east-west ditch (2103) was examined with five sections (Fig 3; 2095, 2069, 2053, 2032 & 2083). It was about 0.5 m deep and contained finds of pottery and animal bone. The pottery showed a date range potentially from the Iron Age through to the 2nd century AD (Timby, Appendix 2) and the feature therefore may have been long-lived.

Two ditches, apparently respecting Ditch 2103 and running at right-angles northward contained pottery of a similar date. The eastern ditch (2106) was cut at its terminal by a large pit (2100), about 4 m in diameter and 1.4 m deep. This contained material dated to the 1st-2nd centuries AD. Lower fills contained fragments of fired clay which appear to be pottery kiln lining (Hylton, Appendix 3).

A small number of other pits were present. Only Pit 2013, containing possible crop processing waste, is of intrinsic interest (Fryer, Appendix 5).

Area 2

This trench examined an area around a ditch and gully identified in the evaluation (Fig 3). The ditch (2059) was 2.6 m wide and 0.38 m deep with an asymmetrical profile. It yielded 13 sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, suggesting that the feature was of this date.

The nearby gully was found to be curving in an arc and may have been part of a ring-gully. It was 0.21 m deep. A project of the arc suggests it might have completed a ring about 15 m in diameter. A small quantity of Late Iron Age/Roman pottery was recovered.

Area 3

No features other than the previously identified pit were revealed in this trench (Fig 3). The pit was found to be 1.6 m in diameter and 1.75 m deep, the excavation having reached 1.55 m in depth and the remaining fill tested using a hand-held auger. A total of 73 sherds of pottery were recovered dating the pit to the 10th-12th century. Animal bones and charred plant remains were also recovered.

2.2 Quantification of archive

Records	*Evaluation*	*Excavation*
Paper site records	1 lever arch file	1 lever arch file
Plans	4 A2 sheets	8 A2 sheets
Sections	2 A2 sheets	5 A2 sheets
Colour slide films	2	2
Monochrome films	2	2
Finds		
Pottery	56 sherds (0.94 kg)	412 sherds (7.5 kg)
Tile	3 fragments	7 fragments (0.5 kg)
Fired clay	1 fragment	5.69 kg
Metal objects	-	1 Fe, 1 Cu, 1 Pb
Animal bones	29	293
Environmental samples	3	8
Lava quern	1 broken piece	-

3 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

3.1 Site structure

The site layout is essentially simple with no more than three Iron Age/Roman phases represented by intercutting features. The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age occupation is represented by just a few sherds and activity at this time cannot be refined. The early medieval pit and post-medieval cultivation furrows are self-evident.

The dating of these features is unlikely to be refined by further consideration of the pottery, and the site structure does not need any further analysis.

3.2 Pottery (Appendix 2)

The pottery assemblage is a small one (412 sherds, 7.5 kg). Dating is provided by the featured sherds and there is little more that can be done with the Roman pottery, although the early medieval element warrants further examination, and a radiocarbon date would be useful to help refine the dating of the prehistoric material from Ditch 2059 (Area 2).

3.3 Fired clay (Appendix 3)

There was a moderately large assemblage of fired clay (5.69 kg). The most interesting component was the possible kiln lining material from Pit 2100 (4.44 kg) which dates to the early Roman period. There was also a smaller group of daub from a number of features, a few fragments of Roman tile, and some miscellaneous plate-like material. There is no potential for more examination of this material.

3.4 Metal objects (Appendix 3)

There was just one metal object from a Roman feature, an iron rod fragment from a recut of Ditch 2106. There were two unstratified finds – a bronze horse harness mount of probable medieval date and a clipped lead disc. This is a very small collection with no further potential.

3.5 Animal bones (Appendix 4)

A total of 243 animal bones were recovered from Iron Age/Roman features, of which 128 were identifiable to species. The assemblage was moderately well preserved and the composition was fairly typical of Roman period domestic sites, with the majority of bones (51%) being those of cattle. There were an unusually high number of dog bones which may relate to disturbed or disarticulated burials of these animals. The assemblage is a useful addition to the corpus of data on animal bones on the Roman fen edge and tends to confirm existing trends. However, the assemblage is too small to provide much information on animal exploitation.

3.6 Charred plant remains (Appendix 5)

There was a low density of cereal grains, weeds and wood charcoal from seven Roman soil samples and one early medieval sample. The results are similar to those from three samples from the evaluation phase of work. The results are unremarkable and suggest that the site was peripheral to main areas of activity. There was insufficient material for quantification and comparisons.

4 PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

4.1 Revised project objectives

The original research objectives were commensurate with the small scale of the excavations and essentially focused on the main issues of the dating and function of the Roman enclosures. There was also considered to be some potential for gaining more understanding of the late Bronze Age evidence.

Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

A few sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery was recovered from a ditch in the eastern part of the site (Area 2) to add to the small quantity identified as late Bronze Age in the evaluation. This would appear to indicate activity of the early first millennium, perhaps

related to an enclosure or field. There is no prospect of analysing the nature of this activity this further, although a radiocarbon date from an associated animal bone has the potential to refine the dating. There was no definable occupation of this period in Area 1 although a single sherd of slack-shouldered jar may be early Iron Age.

Late Iron Age/early Roman

The objectives of dating the origin and demise of the enclosure system have been met in a broad sense from the pottery which indicates a date range from the late Iron Age through until the 2nd century AD. There would appear to be no prospect of more precision to this dating either from the pottery or from any scientific dating technique.

Very little of the pattern of enclosures was revealed and there were few associated features. No specific function could be ascribed to any of the pits and the activities carried out here therefore remain undefined. The discovery in the largest pit of clay 'brick', possibly used to line a pottery kiln, suggests that pottery production may have been undertaken nearby, but there was no trace of a kiln, nor any pottery wasters.

Early medieval

The pit discovered in the southern part of the site (Area 3) was found to be early medieval rather than Roman in date. It was shown to be isolated and without immediate context. There would not appear to be much potential for further analysis of this single feature.

4.2 The structural evidence

The simple site layout, minimal phasing and moderate preservation of the archaeological deposits leave little further potential for analysing the site structure. The wider results from the evaluation trenches will be considered for addition to the site plan in the final report.

4.3 Pottery

No more work is recommended on the prehistoric and Roman pottery. Up to half a dozen sherds will be illustrated in the final report.

The early medieval and post-medieval pottery will be examined by a specialist. The content of final report is to be determined.

4.4 Fired clay

No further analysis is recommended.

4.5 Metal objects

No further analysis is recommended.

4.6 Animal bones

No further analysis is recommended.

A suitable piece from Ditch 2059 (Area 2) will be selected for radiometric or AMS radiocarbon dating and submitted, subject to agreed contingency funding.

4.7 Charred plant remains

No further analysis is recommended.

5 FINAL REPORT AND ARCHIVE

5.1 Publication

The excavation results will be abstracted from the current document and evaluation report and edited for a summary publication in the journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology.* There will be a brief discussion of the results in the context of the wider picture of the fen edge in the later prehistoric and Roman period, but no extensive research is warranted.

It is envisaged that the report will be *c*. 12 pages long and illustrated with plans, sections and selected pottery drawings.

5.2 Archive

The archive will be prepared in accordance with Peterborough Museum requirements and will include digital data.

The landowner (Nene Housing Society) has been contacted with the request to donate the finds to Peterborough Museum.

6 TIMETABLE

The report will be prepared and submitted to the editor of *Northamptonshire Archaeology* within 3 months from the date of this assessment. At present there is no deadline for the forthcoming issue of *Northamptonshire Archaeology.*

It is envisaged that the archive will be prepared for deposition by September 2006.

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SSEW 1983 *Soils of Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales

Northamptonshire Archaeology
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Fig 1 Site Location

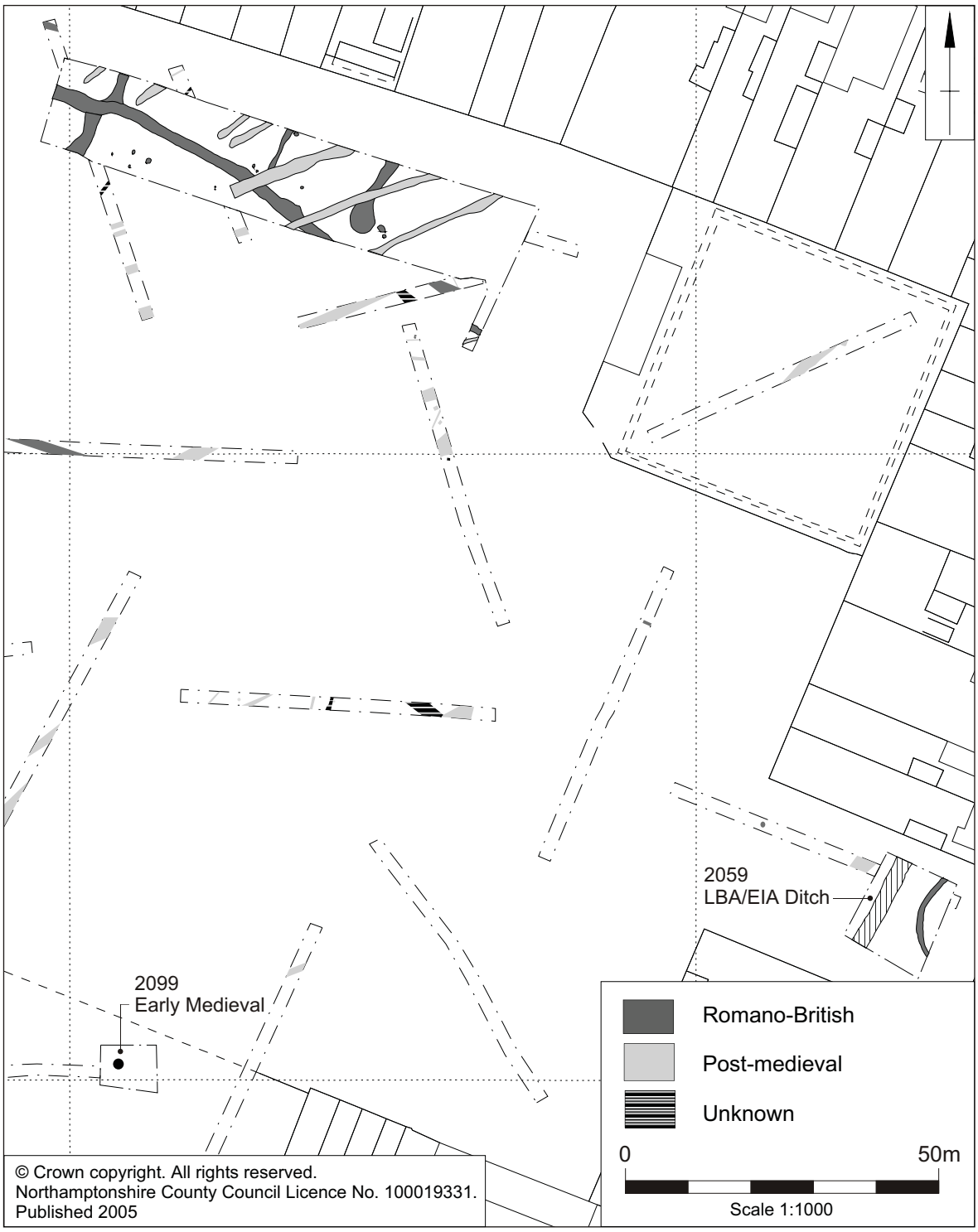

Fig 2 Overall Site Plan

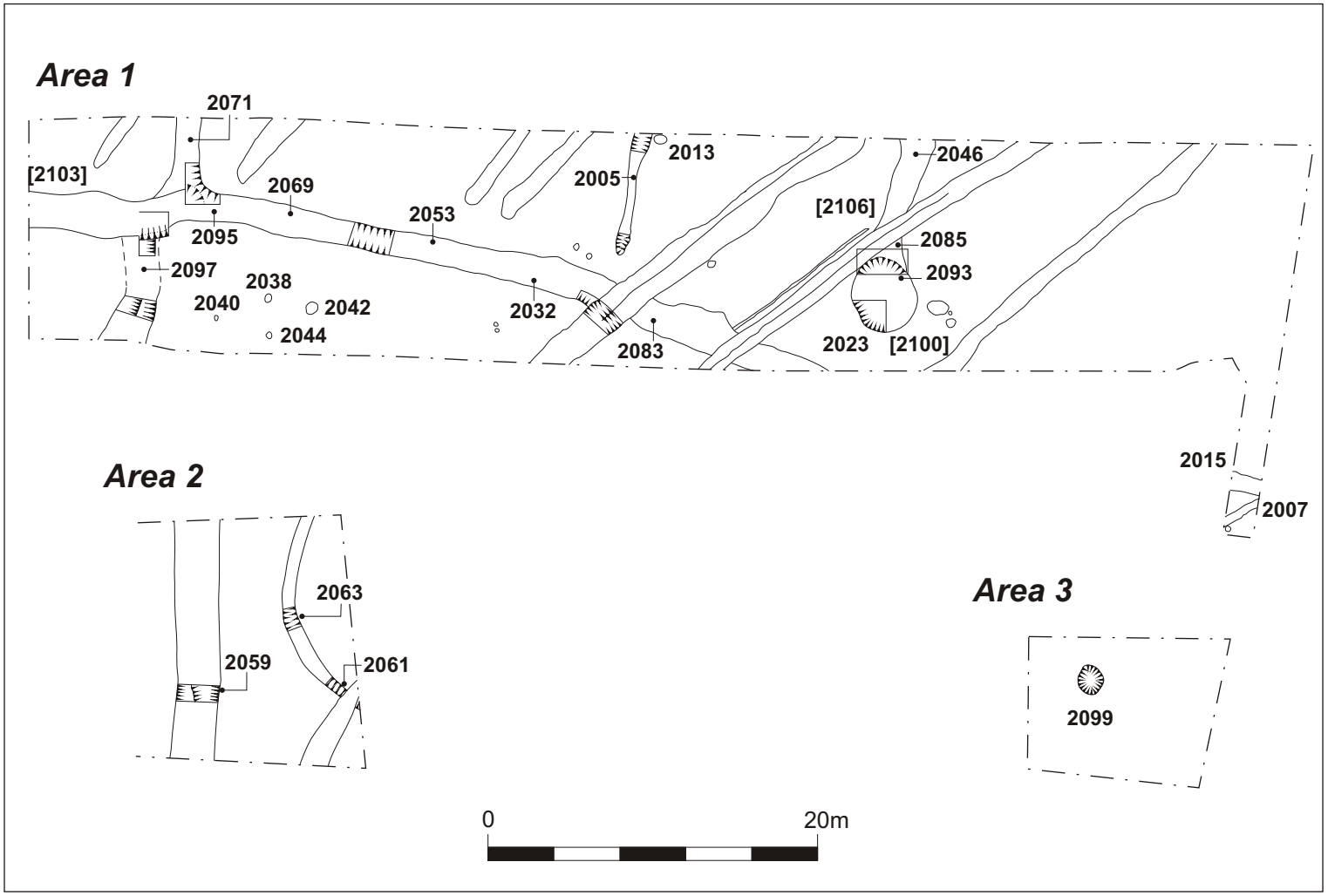

Fig 3 Area Plans: Feature group numbers in [ ]

APPENDIX 1: EXCAVATION REPORT

by Tim Upson-Smith

Area 1 (Fig 3)

This area located in the northern part of the site was targeted to investigate a series of linear features identified in evaluation trenches 1, 16 and 2 (NA 2005a). Natural sand and gravels were exposed at a depth of 0.4m.

Pits and postholes

In the north-west part of Area 1 a group of four pits/postholes were excavated [2038], [2040], [2042] and [2044]. Pit [2038] cut the natural sand and gravel, the pit was 0.33m wide by 0.1m deep with a rounded base. It contained a single fill, consisting of a firm dark grey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks. The feature yielded shelly ware pottery which would suggest an Iron Age or early Roman date for it. The three other pits in the group were not dated.

Gullies 2005 and 2007

A north to south aligned gully [2005] in the northern part of the area and a north-east to south-west aligned gully [2007] in the south eastern part of the site were both dated by pottery to the late Iron Age or early Roman period.

In the northwest part of Area 1 three Roman ditches meet forming a crossing; stratigraphically the north south ditch is earlier than the east west ditch, although they do form a coherent system.

Ditches 2071 and 2097

These ditches were stratigraphically earlier than the main east-west ditch 2103. Two sections were excavated through the north-south ditches [2071] and [2097]; they were 1.6m wide by 0.36m deep with a flat base. The fills (2070) and (2096) consisted compact grey brown sandy loam.

Ditch 2103

Five sections were excavated through the east west ditch (three of these were intersections); [2095], [2069], [2053], [2032] and [2083]. The ditch was 1.55m wide by up to 0.55m deep with a U- to V-shaped profile. The fill, a firm dark grey brown sandy clay with infrequent charcoal flecks, was consistent along the length of the ditch. The pottery recovered from this feature would suggest a 2nd century date for the abandonment of the feature.

Ditch 2106

In the eastern part of the area was a north-south ditch which terminated in a large pit. Two sections were excavated through the ditch [2046] and [2085]. The ditch cut the natural sand and gravels and was up to 2m wide by 0.43m deep, with a flat base. It contained single fill consisting of a compact mid brown silty loam with occasional charcoal flecks.

Pit 2100

At its southern end the ditch [2085] was cut by a large pit [2100] which was examined with two sections (Cuts [2023] and [2093]. The pit measured 4.1m wide by 4.5m in length by 1.42m deep, with steeply sloping sides. It contained a sequence of six fills. The primary fill (2020), a friable grey brown sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions, contained kiln lining (See section 5.4), suggesting that a pottery kiln was in the vicinity. The pottery from the upper fills of the feature would suggest that it was abandoned in the 2nd century AD.

Area 2 (Fig 3)

This area in the eastern part of the site was targeted to investigate a linear feature and a gully in evaluation trench 11 (NA 2005a). Natural sand and gravels were exposed at a depth of 0.4m. One feature of pre-Roman origin was identified - a north-south aligned ditch. The gully may have been part of a ring-gully and was of Roman origin. A post-medieval furrow and a field drain were noted.

Ditch 2059

A single section was excavated through the north-south aligned ditch [2059] which cut the natural sand and gravels. It was 0.38m deep by 2.64m wide with a shallow sloping western edge and a steep sided eastern edge. It contained a single fill (2058), which consisted of a friable mid brown loam which had charcoal flecks evenly distributed within the context. The feature produced 10 thick-walled handmade sherds, one of which carried a line of finger depressions, and three thinner wall everted rim jar/bowl sherds with a smoothed finish, suggesting a late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date for the feature.

Gully 2107

Two sections were excavated through the ring gully ([2061] and [2063]), which cut the natural sand and gravel. The gully was 0.21m deep by 0.84m wide with a shallow U-shaped profile. The feature contained a single fill (2060 same as 2062) consisting of a firm dark orange brown silty loam. A small amount of pottery and bone was recovered from (2060), suggesting a Roman date for the feature.

Area 3 (Fig 3)

Pit 2099

In the southern part of the development area, this trench was targeted on a possible well identified (but not bottomed) in evaluation trench 14 (NA 2005a). Natural sands and gravels were exposed at a depth of 0.40m. There was just a single sub-circular feature [2099] which was re-excavated and deepened. The feature was 1.6m in diameter and 1.75m deep, with near vertical sides. It was excavated to a depth of 1.55m with its total depth of 1.75m being determined with a hand-held auger. It contained a single fill (2098) consisting of a firm dark grey brown sandy clay, with some gravel and flecks of charcoal distributed evenly throughout.

Seventy-three sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill of the feature indicating a 10th-12th century date for it. It was probably too shallow to be a well but its purpose is not clear.

APPENDIX 2: THE POTTERY

by Jane Timby

The archaeological excavation resulted in the recovery of 412 sherds of pottery weighing just under 7.5 kg to add to the 56 sherds recovered from the earlier evaluation.

The assemblage was of mixed date with Iron Age, Romano-British, early medieval and post-medieval material present. Overall the assemblage is well preserved with an average sherd size of 18 g. The early medieval material in particular is in fresh condition.

Pottery was associated with 18 separate feature interventions with four features producing in excess of 50 sherds, ditches 2046, 2053, pit 3093 and pit/well 2099.

For the purposes of the assessment the sherds were scanned to determine the possible date range and quantified by sherd count and weight by context. Freshly broken joining sherds were counted as one. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1. Although it is clear from featured sherds that there are several different periods represented the dominant fabric for all periods is a shelly ware which makes discrimination of unfeatured sherds difficult in some cases.

Table 1 pottery

Cont	Feat	Type	IA	IA/RB	Ro	Med	Pmed	Tot No	Tot Wt	Date	fclay
2004	2005	gully	9	8	0	0	0	17	169	IA/RB	5
2006	2007	gully	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	IA/RB	0
2021	2023	pit	0	0	7	0	0	7	131	C1	0
2026	2027	pit	0	0	7	0	0	7	33	C1/C2	0
2031	2032	ditch	22	0	0	0	0	22	88	IA	1
2035	2036	ditch	0	0	0	0	1	1	16	Pmed	0
2038	2038	p-hole	0	1	0	0	0	1	10	IA/RB	0
2045	2046	ditch	0	0	52	0	0	52	999	late C1	0
2052	2053	ditch	0	0	109	0	0	109	1828	C2	0
2054	2055	ditch	0	1	0	0	3	4	81	Pmed	0
2058	2059	ditch	13	0	0	0	0	13	129	LBA/ EIA	1
2060	2061	ditch	0	4	0	0	0	4	28	IA/RB	0
2068	2069	ditch	0	0	24	0	0	24	408	C2	0
2082	2083	ditch	3	0	0	0	0	3	130	?LIA	0
2090	2093	pit	0	0	53	0	0	53	1085	C1	0
2094	2095	ditch	0	0	2	0	0	2	294	C1/C2	0
2098	2099	pit	0	0	0	73	0	73	1318	10-12th	0
2068/70	2069/ 71	ditch	0	0	19	0	0	19	728	C1/C2	0
TOTAL			**47**	**15**	**273**	**73**	**4**	**412**	**7481**		**7**

Later Prehistoric

At least one feature, ditch 2059, appears to contain material exclusively of pre-Roman date. This produced 10 thicker walled handmade sherds one of which carried a line of finger depressions and three thinner wall everted rim jar/bowl sherds with a smoothed finish. Provisionally this material could be later Bronze Age or early Iron Age.

A number of other potential Iron Age sherds are present but mixed in with later material

notably a fragment from a slack-sided jar with an undifferentiated rim from (2004) which may be early Iron Age. There are also some beaded rim jars, which could be later Iron Age or early Roman, notably from, ditch 2083 and pond/pit 2093. Alternatively they could be survivals into the later 1st century AD. A few sherds have scored lines, another feature that could pre or post conquest.

Features which produced exclusively shelly wares, which could Iron Age or early Roman, include gullies 2005 and 2007, posthole 2038.

Roman

Although the Roman assemblage largely comprises shelly wares and grey sandy wares there are at least two continental imports, a sherd of South Gaulish samian from pit 2023 and a sherd of Spanish amphora from ditch 2095 which may be a from a fish sauce Camulodunum type 186.

Ditch 2053 (2052) and ditch 2046 (2045) both produced sherds of a fine oxidised sandy ware from a copy of an imported butt beaker. Ditch 2046 also produced an abraded whiteware, which is probably also an import to the site.

Good well-fired Roman grey wares, probably early Lower Nene Valley grey ware were recovered from ditches 2069/71, 2053, 2069 and pit 2027 and these are probably the latest Roman features on the site, probably dating to the 2nd century. Other Roman wares include a black sandy ware, a grey sandy ware with sparse shell and a more micaceous grey ware.

The largest group, 160 sherds, came from the various interventions along ditch group [2103] the latest of which would suggest that this feature was abandoned in the 2nd century.

The repertoire is quite restricted comprising predominantly jars. There is a single example of a lid seated shelly ware jar, several necked cordoned jars/ bowls and some beaded or expanded rim jars.

Medieval

Pit/well 2099 produced a group of 73 sherds largely of two fabric types, a grey sandy ware (?Thetford ware) and a wheelmade shelly ware (St Neots ware) amongst which were a number of featured sherds. The former includes sherds with applied thumbed strips and a bodysherd decorated with roller stamping. The latter includes several sherds from jars decorated with roller stamping around the upper body. A provisional date of 10-12th century is given to these wares (see recommendations below).

This feature produced six sherds, two shelly and four grey sandy from the evaluation which were erroneously dated Romano-British but now in the light of the featured material from the excavation should also be regarded as of medieval date.

Post-medieval

Four sherds of post-medieval date were recovered from ditches 2036, and 2055. These were all sherds of glazed red earthenware.

Conclusions

The assemblage suggests a low level of activity in the later prehistoric period and in the late Iron Age/early Roman period. It is difficult to ascertain from such a small group whether there is continuity of use but is likely that two episodes of activity are present one in the later Bronze Age or early Iron Age, the other in the later Iron Age-early Roman period. The imports although limited add a new dimension to the assemblage and show that the settlement was acquiring new Roman forms and produce (samian and amphora). Copies of imported

forms are also evident in the butt beaker.

One feature, the well, is of medieval date. The material is unfamiliar to the present author and needs to be seen and assessed by a medieval pottery specialist to determine a more precise date and assess if the group is unusual.

Further work

The group is a small one that does not warrant a very detailed report. If publication is envisaged a small number of featured sherds could be illustrated and a summary report produced for the later prehistoric and Roman wares.

The medieval and post-medieval wares need assessing separately to determine more precise dates and requirements for further work.

A radiocarbon date on material associated with the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery in 2059 would be useful in establishing more precise dating for this feature.

APPENDIX 3: FIRED CLAY, TILE AND METAL FINDS

by Tora Hylton

Fired clay

In total over 5 kilos (5.691 kg) of fired clay were recovered. The largest concentration of material by weight (4.442 kg) was recovered from the fill of a pit (2023), while much smaller amounts were recovered from ditches (2032, 2034, 2055, 2059, 2070, 2083), pits (2005, 2093), Gully 2005 and Pit 2099. Examination of the material (by eye) indicates that three main fabric types and two object categories are represented. There appears to be a differentiation between the fabric type and its use.

Fabric 1 (1.108 kg) is a compact, hard, abrasive fabric containing a high percentage of sand. This fabric type appears to have been used as wall daub, as many of the fragments display the remains of recesses where the interwoven wattles would have been; both horizontal rods and vertical sails are represented. The wattle impressions are spaced *c* 30mm apart and measure from 7-17 mm in diameter. Fragments of daub with wattle impressions were recovered from Gully 2005 and Ditch 2032.

Fabric 2 (0.141 kg) is tempered with large amounts of organic material, together with a little sand; the surfaces are oxidised and the core black. The pieces are thin and plate like and measure up to 8mm thick.

Fabric 3 (4.442 kg) is a poorly mixed natural looking clay with sparse sand and stone inclusions, it fractures easily. Large fragments of this fabric were recovered from pit 2023. Four of the fragments join together to form a piece measuring up to 235 x 170mm and c.50mm thick. Although incomplete, the shape of the piece suggests that originally it may have been part of a pre-fired rectangular block. Such blocks were specially made for lining kilns, particularly in the Nene Valley (Swan 1984, pl 30). Curved blocks have been recovered from Sibson and Stibbington, while rectangular blocks, like that example from Alma Road, have been recovered from kilns at Chesterton (Kilns P and R) and Stanground (Kilns I and II). For a discussion see Swan 1984 (95-97).

Tile

There were seven undiagnostic fragments of ceramic tile weighing 0.497 kg.

Metal finds

The metal objects included an undiagnostic iron rod fragment from Roman Ditch 2081. Finds post-dating the Roman period include a medieval gilded circular mount for connecting a pendant to a horses harness, and a clipped lead disc.

Catalogue

Fired clay

Context No	Wgt	Description	
2004	40+	819g	Fabric 1 – fragments of daub with wattle impressions, some measuring c 7-17mm in diameter. Some wattle impressions on two alignments. Some pieces with smoothed surfaces. Oxidised surfaces, grey int.

2020	20+	4442g	Fabric 3 – Large fragments of kiln lining Four pieces join together to form part of a pre-fired block measuring up to 235 x 170mm and c.50mm thick. The piece has one finished edge, the ext. surface is blackened and the int. surface is oxidised and furnished with horizontal smearing marks, created by fingers during the manufacture of the piece.
2031	1	102g	Fabric 1 – Two parallel wattle impressions measuring 10mm in diameter and 30mm apart.
2033	1	15g	Fabric 1 – small fragment with smooth surface
2052	2	72g	Fabric 2 - Thin fragments (depth: 8mm) with oxidised surfaces and black core. Organic tempering burnt out, possibly some sort of lining.
2058	11	76g	Fabric 1a – rounded amorphous fragments, very sandy with oxidised surfaces and black/grey int. No diagnostic features.
2068/2070	8	69g	Fabric 2 – Three flat pieces with organic tempering like pieces from context 2052. Five larger pieces tempered with seeds and chaff all on same alignment. Oxidized surfaces and grey core.
2082	1	26g	Fabric 1 – Amorphous fragment with one smooth surface
2090	6	48g	Fabric 1 - small undiagnostic frags. 4 with single smooth surface.
2098	2	22g	Fabric 1 – undiagnostic frags.

Ceramic tile

2052	2	134g	Undiagnostic fragments
2068/70	1	24g	Undiagnostic fragment
2090	1	150g	Undianostic fragment
2098	3	189g	Undiagnostic fragments

Small finds

SF 2 Disc, lead. Circumference of disc clipped. U/S

SF 3 Mount, copper alloy. Circular mount for attaching horse harness pendant to harness. Patches of gilding evident on exterior surface. For similar example see Griffiths 1986 (fig 21b). Length: 30mm Date: medieval. U/S

SF 4 Fragment of burnt animal bone – unworked (Context 2045)

SF 5 Iron rod fragment with square cross-section and covered in a thin layer of corrosion products. Nature of object difficult to determine. (Context 2080)

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APPENDIX 4: ANIMAL BONES

by Mark Maltby

Methods

All animal bones from prehistoric, Roman and medieval contexts were recorded individually onto a database, which forms part of the site archive. Where appropriate, the following information was recorded on each fragment: species; anatomical element; part (zone) of element present; proportion of element present; gnawing damage; surface condition; fusion data; tooth ageing data; butchery marks; metrical data; other comments. Counts of fragments (Number of Individual Specimens - NISP) included any identified limb bone shaft fragments, dorsal ends of ribs and vertebral bodies. Unidentified fragments were not recorded in detail but their numbers were noted. Tooth eruption and wear descriptions followed the method of Grant (1982). Bones from unstratified contexts and from two post-medieval contexts (805 and 2033) were not recorded. Animal bones from sieved contexts were scanned but not included in the database. They included only one identified fragment (sheep/goat radius).

Assemblage Size and Preservation

A total of 243 animal bones and teeth from 15 early Romano-British contexts, together with 18 from an early Iron Age ditch and 31 from an early medieval pit, were examined. Of the Roman group, 150 were recovered from ditches and gullies and 93 from ponds, pits and well (Table 1). General preservation of the bones ranged from quite good to quite poor with the majority being recorded as moderately preserved. Surface preservation of the bones was generally good, although 21 identified bones were recorded as eroded, mostly from ditch fill (2052). At least 26 bones had been damaged by gnawing indicating they were subjected to scavenging before or subsequent to deposition. Many (47) of the identified bones bore evidence of modern breakage inflicted during or subsequent to excavation. Only three specimens from the hand-recovered material were burnt, although a few charred unidentified fragments were also found in the sieved samples.

Species Representation

A total of 146 (50%) of the fragments were identifiable to species. The percentage of unidentified fragments is to be expected given the moderate preservation of most of the assemblages. Of these 128 were from Roman contexts.

Cattle bones and teeth (NISP = 65) dominated the identified Roman assemblage. They provided 51% of the identified elements (Table 1). They tended to be better represented in ditch fills (56%) than in pits (44%). Sheep/goat elements (NISP = 17) were comparatively poorly represented in the overall assemblage (13%). Only sheep (two positive identifications) were definitely present. Sheep/goat bones were relatively more abundant in the pits (20%) than in ditch contexts (8%). Equid bones and teeth (NISP = 19) were quite well represented (15%). Like cattle, they were better represented in the ditches (17%) than in other features (12%). It is assumed that most of the equid bones belonged to horse but the presence of mule cannot be ruled out. Dog (NISP = 21) was the second most common species contributing 16% of the identified elements. Dog elements formed 15% of the ditch assemblage and 18% of the material from the ponds, pits and well. Only one bird bone was recovered and was identified as a carpometacarpus of a corvid, the size of a rook or crow.

Table 1: Alma Road, Peterborough, Animal Bones Identification and Preservation Data

Context	Feature [Group]	Type	Cow	S/G	Pig	Hor	Dog	R/C	Unid	Total	Pres	Gnawed	Eroded	Frag	Burnt
104	105	Rom. Ditch	5							5	QG	5		3	
106	108 [2103]	Rom. Ditch	2			2	3		5	12	QG	1		5	
210	211 [2106]	Rom. Ditch	4	1		3			2	10	QG	2	1	4	
1406	1405	Med. Pit	2		1					3	M	2			
2004	2005	Rom. Gully	1	1					1	3	QP		1	2	1
2014	2015 [2103]	Rom. Ditch							1	1	M				
2021	2023 [2100]	Rom. Pit	4	1		3	3		8	19	QG	3		5	
2022	2023 [2100]	Rom. Pit	1	2		1	5		10	19	M			3	
2026	2027 [2101]	Rom. Pit		1		1	1		5	8	QP				
2045	2046 [2106]	Rom. Ditch	5	2		1		1	16	25	M	2	2	3	2
2052	2053 [2103]	Rom. Ditch	5			5	5		11	26	QP	1	12	4	
2058	2059	EIA Ditch	6	1	1				10	18	M			5	
2060	2061 [2107]	Rom. Ditch	1						2	3	M				
2068	2069 [2103]	Rom. Ditch	9			1	3		18	31	M	3	2	4	
2082	2083 [2103]	Rom.Ditch	3	2	1	1			10	17	M	2		2	
2090	2093 [2100]	Rom. Pit	18	6	2	1			20	47	M	3	3	5	
2094	2095 [2103]	Rom. Ditch	7		2		1		7	17	M	2		2	
2098	2099	Med. Pit	2	2	3		1		20	28	QP				
Total			**75**	**19**	**10**	**19**	**22**	**1**	**146**	**292**		**26**	**21**	**47**	**3**

All totals are numbers of individual specimens (NISP) excluding bones in sieved samples
S/G = sheep/goat; Hor = equid; R/C = rook/crow; Unid = unidentified
Pres = general state of preservation (M = moderate; QG = quite good; QP = quite poor)
Frag = fragmented by modern break
Eroded = eroded or weathered bones
Counts of gnawed, eroded and broken bones exclude unidentified fragments

Table 2: Alma Road, Peterborough, Anatomical Elements identified (NISP)

Element	Cattle	S/G	Pig	Equid	Dog	R/C
Horncore	1					
Mandible	16	1	4	5	1	
Maxilla	2					
Skill	5					
Loose Teeth	16	3		2		
Scapula	2	1	1			
Humerus	5	2		1	2	
Radius	6	2		1	2	
Ulna	1		2		4	
Pelvis	5		1		1	
Femur	4	1		3	2	
Tibia	6	4		2	6	
Fibula			1		1	
Calcaneus				1		
Metacarpal	1	1		1		1
Metatarsal	4	4			2	
Lat. Metapodial				1		
2nd Phalanx				1		
Rib					1	
Atlas				1		
Cervical vertebra	1					
Thoracic vertebra			1			
Total	75	19	10	19	22	1

S/G = sheep/goat; R/C = rook/crow

Table 3: Alma Road, Peterborough, Animal Bone Metrical Data

Species	Element	Bp	Dp	BFp	GLP	BG	LO	DC	Bd	Dd	HT	GL	SD
Cattle	Humerus										37.5		
Cattle	Radus	73.7	37.1	68.3									
Cattle	Radus		39										
Cattle	Tibia								60.8	44.6		345	36.9
S/G	Scapula				27.6	18.3							
S/G	Metacarpal	18.9	13.5										
Equid	Tibia								66.3	40.9		300	35.9
Dog	Humerus								26.6		16.4		
Dog	Humerus		38.3										
Dog	Radus	17											
Dog	Ulna						29.2						
Dog	Femur	29.5						15.2					
Dog	Tibia								21.3	16.5		150	
Dog	Tibia								17.6	12.4			

All measurements in millimetres
Bp - proximal breadth; Dp - proximal depth; BFp - proximal articular breadth;
GLP - greatest length glenoid process; BG - breadth of glenoid; LO - length of olecranon;
DC - depth of caput; Bd - distal breadth; Dd - distal depth; HT - height of distal trochlea;
GL - greatest length; SD - minimum shaft breadth

Discussion

Although it is unwise to make sweeping statements from such a small sample, the indications are that cattle were the most common species exploited. However, the large size and robustness of their bones would have favoured their survival and recovery. Higher percentages of cattle and equid often tend to be found in ditch deposits than in other types of feature on Iron Age and Romano-British rural sites due to a combination of taphonomic factors (Maltby 1995; 1996). High percentages (over 50%) of cattle bones have been found on a number of rural Romano-British sites in Bedfordshire including Biddenham Loop and Marsh Leys Farm near Bedford. However, the relative abundance of cattle and sheep/goat is quite varied on contemporary sites in the East Midlands (Maltby in prep.).

The poor representation of pigs is typical of many Iron Age (Hambleton 1999) and rural Romano-British assemblages (King 1984), whereas equids tend to be better represented on Romano-British rural sites than in Roman urban assemblages (Maltby 1994). Horse bones also can form quite high proportions of assemblages from Iron Age sites (Moore-Colyer 1994), as can be seen for example in some areas of the settlement complex at Wilby Way, Wellingborough (Maltby 2003).

The percentage of dog bones is unusually high. However, there are indications that several of their bones are associated and may represent either the remains of disturbed or redeposited burials or, perhaps less likely, the deliberate placement of parts of their bodies in these features. Probable associations include a pair of tibiae and a humerus in ditch [108]. Minor exostoses (abnormal bone growth) on two of the bones probably indicate they belonged to quite an old animal. Pit [2023] produced eight elements probably all from the same adult dog scattered in contexts (2021) and (2022). The bones recovered consisted of a pair of ulnae, and parts of the left radius, humerus, femur, tibia and fibula and a rib. Similarly, all the five dog bones from ditch [2053] could have belonged to one elderly animal (a pair of tibia, mandible, radius and metatarsal). The same feature produced substantial portions of mandibles of two cattle and a horse, and two largely complete right equid tibiae and a femur.

Element counts (Table 2) show no unusual biases in the assemblage, although both cattle and equid assemblages included quite high numbers of mandible fragments. At least six different cattle mandibles were represented. A minimum of two equids were represented by mandibles, tibiae and femora. The sheep/goat sample consists mainly of the more robust elements of the skeleton and at least four individuals are represented by shafts of tibiae. At least two pigs are represented by mandibles.

The metrical data from 14 bones are shown in Table 3. A complete tibia of a dog produced a shoulder height estimate of 44.7 cm based on Harcourt's (1974) conversion factors indicating it was a medium-sized animal. None of the measurements indicated the presence of unusually small or large animals for any of the species represented. Cattle mandibular toothwear evidence indicated the presence of at least four adult cattle, including one with very heavy wear on all three molars (Mandible Wear Stage = 52: Grant 1982) from an old animal kept for breeding, milking or working purposes. Two cattle jaws belonged to immature animals probably culled for meat between the ages of 2-3 years old. Both horse mandibles from pond/pit [2023] had heavy wear on their molars and belonged to mature, presumably working, animals. Epiphysial fusion data were too sparse to merit analysis.

Butchery marks were recorded on three bones. Fine incisions were observed near the distal end of a cattle humerus and the proximal end of a cattle radius. Both marks would have been made during the disarticulation of the elbow joint using a metal knife. This type of butchery is typical of methods employed in the Iron Age and there is no evidence in this small sample that cleavers were used in the processing of cattle carcasses, as became increasingly common in the Roman-British period, particularly at more Romanised sites (Maltby 1989). On the other hand, a sheep/goat scapula from Pit/pond [2093] had evidence of relatively heavy marks alongside finer incisions across the neck. These could have been made by a cleaver during

disarticulation from the humerus. There is no evidence that any of the dogs or horses represented were butchered.

The sample is too small to provide much information about animal exploitation at the settlement. The assemblage appears, however, to be fairly typical of other early Romano-British rural sites, in which there is little evidence for changes in the meat diet, processing and disposal practices and the sizes of animal from the Iron Age.

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APPENDIX 5: CHARRED PLANT MACROFOSSILS AND OTHER REMAINS

by Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

The initial evaluation at the site included three plant macrofossil samples from ditches and a pit of probable Roman date. A rapid scan of the assemblages showed moderate densities of cereal grains and charcoal (Deighton, in NA 2005), and further sampling was recommended from any dated features encountered during the excavation phase of the project.

During the subsequent excavation, features of probable Romano-British to post-medieval/modern date were recorded including small pits and postholes, and one large pit. Samples for the extraction of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from six of the Romano-British features and from an early medieval pit [2099].

The samples were bulk floated by Northamptonshire Archaeology, and the floats were collected in a 500 micron mesh sieve. The dried floats were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16, and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed on Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern fibrous roots were present within most assemblages.

Results of assessment

Cereal grains and/or seeds of common weed plants were present at a low density within all but sample 4. Preservation was moderately good, although many of the grains were puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures.

Oat (*Avena* sp.), barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains were recorded, with wheat occurring most frequently. Both elongated 'drop-form' grains typical of spelt (*T. spelta*) and more rounded hexaploid forms were noted, along with rare fragments of wheat chaff including a single spelt glume base and a bread wheat (*T. aestivum/compactum*) type rachis node.

Weed seeds occurred in only three assemblages. Segetal and grassland taxa were predominant and included brome (*Bromus* sp.), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), grasses (Poaceae), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), dock (*Rumex* sp.) and vetch/vetchling (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.). A single large fragment of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell was recorded within sample 11. Charcoal fragments were present throughout along with occasional small pieces of charred root/stem.

Other remains were particularly scarce although small pieces of black porous and tarry material were noted within all but sample 5. Most would appear to be residues of the combustion of organic materials at very high temperatures. Small vitreous globules (possibly pieces of fuel ash slag) were recorded from samples 5 and 6.

Conclusions and recommendations for further work

Of the eight assemblages studied, only two (samples 6 and 11) contain sufficient material for outline assessment. Sample 6, from Roman pit 2013, comprises a very low density of probable cereal processing waste including grains, chaff and weed seeds. Although two assemblages studied during the evaluation of Alma Road showed that cereals were possibly of significance within the local economy of the Roman period, the assemblage from sample 6

does little to support this hypothesis, other than establish that cereal processing may have been conducted somewhere nearby. However, the site itself appears to have been peripheral to any main centre of either domestic or agricultural activity.

Although the assemblage from early medieval pit 2099 (sample11) may include small quantities of processing and/or domestic waste, it appears very unlikely that the material constitutes a deliberate deposit of refuse within the pit fill. It is perhaps far more likely that the remains accidentally accumulated, possibly in the form of either scattered or wind-blown detritus.

As none of the assemblages studied contain sufficient material for quantification (i.e. 100 + specimens), no further analysis is recommended.

Table 1

Sample No.	**4**	**5**	**8**	**6**	**7**	**9**	**10**	**11**
Context No.	**2002**	**2022**	**2020**	**2012**	**2018**	**2037**	**2039**	**2098**
Feature No.	**2003**	**2023**	**2023**	**2013**	**2019**	**2038**	**2040**	**2099**
Feature type	**?Rom ph**	**Rom pit**	**Rom pit**	**?Rom pit**	**?Rom ph**	**Rom ph**	**?Rom ph**	**Med. pit**
Cereals								
Avena sp. (grain)								xcf
Hordeum sp. (grains)				x			x	x
Triticum sp. (grains)		x	x	x			xcf	x
(glume base)				x				
(spikelet base)				x				
T. spelta L. (glume base)				x				
T. aestivum/compactum type (rachis node)								x
Cereal indet. (grains)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
(basal rachis node)								x
Herbs								
Bromus sp.				x				x
Chenopodiaceae indet.								x
Fabaceae indet.								xtf
Fallopia convolvulus (L.)A.Love								xtf
Plantago lanceolata L.								x
Small Poaceae indet.				x				x
Large Poaceae indet.							x	
Polygonaceae indet.								x
Raphanus raphanistrum L. (siliqua frag.)				x				
Rumex sp.								x
Vicia/Lathtyrus sp.				x				x
Tree/shrub macrofossils								
Corylus avellana L.								x
Other plant macrofossils								
Charcoal <2mm	xx	x		xx	xx	xx	xxx	xxx
Charcoal >2mm		x	x	x	xx	x	x	xx
Charred root/stem				x			x	x
Indet.seed	x						x	x
Other materials								
Black porous 'cokey' material	x			x		x	x	
Black tarry material	x		x			x		x
Bone								x

Sample No.	**4**	**5**	**8**	**6**	**7**	**9**	**10**	**11**
Context No.	**2002**	**2022**	**2020**	**2012**	**2018**	**2037**	**2039**	**2098**
Feature No.	**2003**	**2023**	**2023**	**2013**	**2019**	**2038**	**2040**	**2099**
Feature type	**?Rom ph**	**Rom pit**	**Rom pit**	**?Rom pit**	**?Rom ph**	**Rom ph**	**?Rom ph**	**Med. pit**
Fish bone					x			
Vitrified material		x		x				
Sample volume (litres)	**10**	**10**	**20**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**20**
Volume of flot (litres)	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**0.1**
% flot sorted	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Key to Table

x = 1 = 10 specimens xx = 10 – 100 specimens xxx = 100+ specimens
tf = testa fragment ph = post-hole

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