

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation of land at Chelveston Renewable Energy Park, Chelveston Airfield, Bedfordshire, September 2013



Northamptonshire Archaeology Bolton House Wootton Hall Park Northampton NN4 8BN t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822 e. <u>sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk</u> w. <u>www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk</u>

Northamptonshire County Council



Jason Clarke & Mo Muldowney

Report 13/221 November 2013

ST	AFF
Project Manager:	Ian Meadows BA
Text:	Jason Clarke BSc MA AlfA
	Mo Muldowney BA AlfA
Fieldwork:	Jason Clarke

Iron Age pottery	Andy Chapman BSc MIfA FSA
Roman pottery	Ed McSloy BA MIfA (Cotswold Archaeology)
Animal bone	Philip Armitage BSc MSc PhD
Fe nails	Tora Hylton
Charred plant material	Val Fryer BA MIfA
Illustrations	Amir Bassir BSc

## QUALITY CONTOL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman	PC	
Verified by	lan Meadows	M74	
Approved by	Andy Chapman	<i>AC</i>	

### OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS 174363				
Project title	Archaeological evaluat	on of land at Chelveston Airfield			
Short description	In September 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of CgMs Consulting acting for Chelveston Renewable Energy Limited. The works identified a series of ditches and a pit spanning the middle to late Iron Age to early Roman periods as well as traces of medieval ridge and furrow. Evidence for use of the land as an American airbase was also identified.				
Project type	Trial trench evaluation				
Previous work	Watching brief				
Current land use	Arable				
Future work	Unknown				
Monument type & period	Ditch, pit. Middle to late Iron Age and early Roman				
Significant finds	Pottery	ž ž			
PROJECT LOCATION	· ·				
County	Bedfordshire				
Site address	Chelveston Airfield				
Easting Northing	500629, 268051				
Area (sq m/ha)	c. 10 hectares				
Height aOD	90.00mAOD				
PROJECT CREATORS	RS				
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)				
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting				
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting				
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke (NA)				
Project Manager	Mike Dawson (CgMs) a	and Ian Meadows (NA)			
Sponsor or funding body	Chelveston Renewable	Energy Limited			
PROJECT DATE					
Start date	10/09//2013				
End date	24/09/2013				
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents			
Physical		Flint, pottery, animal bone			
Paper	DEDEM 2012 40	Site records (1 archive box)			
Digital	BEDFINI.2013.49	Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs			
BIBLIOGRAPHY					
Title	Archaeological evaluation of land at Chelveston Renewable Energy Park, Chelveston Airfield, Bedfordshire				
Serial title & volume	13/221				
Author(s)	Jason Clarke & Mo Muldowney				
Page numbers	30, 5 figs				
Date	November 2013				

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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND AT CHELVESTON RENEWABLE ENERGY PARK, CHELVESTON AIRFIELD BEDFORDSHIRE SEPTEMBER 2013

#### Abstract

In September 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of CgMs Consulting acting for Chelveston Renewable Energy Ltd. The works identified a series of ditches and a pit spanning the middle to late Iron Age to early Roman periods as well as traces of medieval ridge and furrow. Evidence for use of the land as an American airbase was also identified.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) at Chelveston Renewable Energy Park, Chelveston Airfield, Bedfordshire. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Chelveston Renewable Energy, and was undertaken to inform planning consent for solar photovoltatic panels.

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013). The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation.

#### 2 BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Location and geology

#### Location

The development site comprises c 10ha of land in the former military airfield, to the south east of Chelveston, Bedfordshire and centred on NGR TL 00629 68051 (Fig 1). The village of Chelveston lies approximately 15km east of Wellingborough in the County of Northamptonshire.

#### Geology

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Oxford Clay with Kellaway Beds of Jurassic date (BGS Geoindex <u>http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex</u>).

The site lies on the watershed between the catchment of the River Nene which flows to the northwest, and the River Great Ouse at about 90m aOD.

#### 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

Chelveston Airfield was built in 1940-1 and opened on 15 August 1941. The airfield comprised a standard RAF 'A' pattern airfield and its fully developed form is recorded in contemporary plans and photographs (Chelveston Record Site Plan Site No1 [Airfield Site] October 1941). In mid-1942 the airfield was established as the base for the USAAF 301<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, replaced in December by the 305th Bomb Group.



Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1

During the winter months of 1942/43 the airfield's runways and dispersal areas were expanded to accommodate the B17s of the 305th Bomb Group. At the end of the war the airfield was returned to the RAF and from October 1945 to May 1947 it remained a sub-site of 25 Maintenance Unit.

The Second World War Airfield officially closed in 1947, but in 1951 it was recommissioned to accommodate USAF B-47 bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons. This required the construction of a rectangular concrete apron, headquarters building and crash tender shed and a new control centre in addition to a new runway, dispersal and taxiways. On 1<sup>st</sup> December the base was handed over to the USAF Third Air Force. Between 1951 and 1954 the airfield was almost entirely re-built. The former runways and taxi-paths partially removed to accommodate the new designs (Smith 2006, 58, 60, 65). The airfield remained under the jurisdiction of the USAF until 1<sup>st</sup> August 1962. In 1977 the runways and most of the perimeter tracks were removed to be used as hardcore in the development of Milton Keynes. Inspection of the area exposed beneath the runways revealed features containing early Iron Age pottery and part of a quern (NAS 1978). Later in the year the airfield site was re-commissioned (B/TP/75/1492/A) as a Radio Transmitter site under the 81st Signals Unit. Eighteen aerial masts were erected on the site of the former airfield and remained in use until December 2003.

Previous archaeological work comprises desk-based assessment (Dawson 2013), watching briefs (Dawson and Leigh 2013) and the recording of Nissen huts (Upson-Smith 2012).

#### 3 METHODOLOGY

Eleven trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by CgMs Consulting and approved by Vanessa Clarke (Senior Archaeological Officer, Bedford Borough Council) (Fig 2).

Nine of the trenches were 100m long, one 50m long and one 400m long and 1.8m wide, totalling 1350m, amounting to approximately 3%. Trenches were positioned using a Leica system 1200 GPS.

As part of the contingency two additional trenches were excavated, one 25m long and one 45m long (Fig 2).

A 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m-wide ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. A hand-drawn plan of all archaeological features was made at scale 1:50 or 1:100 and was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Context sheets were cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs. Photography was with 35mm black and white film, supplemented with digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and related to Ordnance Survey datum. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.



All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008).

#### 4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

#### 4.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying geology of clay was encountered between 0.6-2.2m below the modern ground surface. This occurred as brownish-yellow sandy clay with occasional angular to sub-angular pebbles and chalk. Buried soil from the former plough horizon was present in trenches 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. This occurred as mid brown sandy clay 0.20-040m thick. Made ground resulting from the construction of the airfield was present in trenches 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. This comprised re-deposited clay, brick, tile and metal, 0.50-0.80m thick. The topsoil was mid greyish-brown sandy clay. All trenches were truncated by ceramic land drains and modern service trenches associated with airbase activities.

Archaeological features cut into the natural geology were found in six of the thirteen trenches (Trenches 2, 4, 7, 10, 12 and 13). Remnant furrows from ridge and furrow cultivation were encountered in Trenches 5 and 7.

#### **4.2** The trial trenches (Figs 3 - 5)

The trench locations are shown in Figure 2 (above) and an inventory of contexts is provided in Appendix 1.

#### Iron Age

#### Trench 4

Trench 4 was 100m long and aligned north to south (Fig 3). It was located on the former runway of the American airbase, the construction of which had caused severe truncation to the deposits identified within. One ditch was found and produced Iron Age pottery and animal bone.

#### Ditch [405]

In the middle of the trench was ditch [405], aligned east to west, 1.10m wide and 0.30m deep, with a V-shaped profile (Fig 4, section 1). The fill of dark grey-black clay (404) contained late to middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone. The ditch had been truncated by the construction of the runway leaving only the base.

#### Roman

#### Trench 2

Trench 2 was 400m long and aligned east to west (Fig 3). The trench transected the made ground to the east and west and the former American runway through the middle. One ditch was present at the east of the trench and produced Roman pottery.

#### Gully [208]

At the east end of the trench was a gully [208], aligned north-east to south-west, 0.50m wide and 0.10m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile (Fig 3, section 6). The fill of mid grey-brown sandy clay (207) contained Roman pottery. The gully terminated to the north-east.



Scales 1:125 & 1:200



Scale 1:10

Sections of features in trenches 2 and 4 Fig 4

#### Trench 7

Trench 7 was 100m long, aligned north to south (Fig 3). At the north end of the trench was a ditch that produced Roman pottery. Also within the trench were furrows, ceramic land drains and modern services.

#### Ditch [705]

At the north end of the trench was ditch [705], 0.75m wide and 0.28m deep with a steep U-shaped profile. The fill of mid grey-brown sandy clay (704) contained Roman pottery.

#### Trench 10

Trench 10 was 100m long, aligned east to west (Fig 5). At the west of the trench were four ditches that produced Roman pottery and animal bone. Another ditch at the east end of the trench produced Roman pottery and animal bone. The features at the west end had been truncated during the construction of the runway for the American airbase.

#### Ditch [1005]

At the west end of the trench was ditch [1005], 0.60m wide and 0.08m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. The fill of dark grey-brown sandy clay (1004) contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

#### Ditch [1007]

Located to the east of ditch [1009] was ditch [1007], 0.44m wide and 0.11m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. The fill of mid grey brown sandy clay (1006) contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

#### Ditch [1009]

To the west of ditch [1007] was a ditch [1009], 1m wide and 0.23m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. The fill of dark grey-brown sandy clay (1008) contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

#### Ditch [1012]

Located between ditches [1009] and [1005] was ditch [1012], 2.20 m wide and 0.70m deep with a deep V-shaped profile. The primary fill of mid orange-grey clay (1013) contained no finds and was overlain by mid grey-brown sandy clay (1011) which contained Roman pottery and animal bone. An environmental soil sample taken from the latter deposit contained wind-derived burnt cereal processing waste. The upper fill of dark black-grey sandy clay (1010) contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

#### Ditch [1017]

At the east end of the trench was ditch [1017], 0.75m wide and 0.30m deep with a U-shaped profile. The primary fill of mid brown-grey sandy clay (1016) contained no finds; it was overlain by dark brown-black silty clay (1015), which contained Roman pottery.

#### Trench 12

Trench 12 was 45m long, aligned east to west (Fig 5), in the middle of the trench was a ditch and pit which produced Roman pottery and animal bone.

#### Ditch [1206]

In the middle of the trench was a ditch [1206], 2.00m wide and 0.47m deep with a broad U-shaped profile. The primary fill of light brown clay (1207) contained Roman pottery. It was overlain by dark black-brown silty clay (1205), which also contained Roman pottery as well as animal bone and iron nails.



#### Pit [1209]

To the east of ditch [1206] was a sub-circular pit [1209], 0.73m in diameter and 0.12m deep, with a fill of light brown clay (1208) which contained Roman pottery.

#### Trench 13

Trench 13 was 25m long, aligned east to the west (Fig 5), in the middle of the trench was a ditch.

#### Ditch [1306]

Ditch [1306] lay on a similar alignment to, and is thought to be a south-eastward continuation of ditch [1017], which was excavated in Trench 10 (see above). The exposed fill was light brown grey sandy clay (1305). The ditch was unexcavated due to health and safety concerns. No finds were recovered.

#### 4.3 Later features

The remains of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing aligned east to west and running downslope were present in all trenches although they did not appear to have impacted greatly upon the underlying Roman archaeology.

#### 5 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

#### 5.1 The Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman

The fill (404) of ditch [405] produced six large sherds of hand-built pottery, weighing 410g, with an average sherd weight of 68g.

There are three body sherds from large thick-walled jars, 10-12mm thick, with fabrics containing dense inclusions of crushed shell, with frequent pieces up to 5mm long. They have grey to grey-brown cores with dark brown to grey-brown inner surfaces but variable outer surface colours from bright orange-red, light brown to grey-brown. These variations may suggest that they are from different vessels, but surface colours can vary widely across a single large jar. There is a sherd from a flat base in the same fabric, but the body is slightly thinner at 8mm thick, while the base is 12mm thick. There is a rim sherd, also in the same fabric, with red to grey outer surface, 10mm thick, with a simple rounded and slightly everted rim above a rounded body with no defined neck. These five sherds are all from large thick-walled jars, possibly a single jar, typical of the later middle and late Iron Age, 2nd and 1st centuries BC.

There is a single body sherd in a finer fabric, containing sparse, finely-crushed shell, dark grey-black throughout, with smoothed surfaces, from a globular bowl typical of late Iron Age assemblages, 1st century BC.

The assemblage can be dated to the late middle to late Iron Age, 2nd-1st centuries BC.

#### 5.2 Roman pottery by Ed McSloy

A total of 308 sherds of pottery weighing 4314g was recorded (6.11 EVEs). With the exception of a small and abraded post-medieval sherd from a Trench 10 furrow, the assemblage dates to the Roman period.

The pottery has been fully recorded; sorted by fabric type (Table 1) and within context (Table 2) and quantified accorded to sherd count, weight and rim EVEs (Estimated Vessel Equivalents). A fabric coding system developed for large Romano-British pottery assemblages from Northamptonshire (summarised in Perrin 2006) has been

used and a concordance provided with the Bedfordshire pottery type series (summarised in Parminter and Slowikowski 2004) and also the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998).

Fabric	Description	BPTS*	NRFRC**	No	Weight (g)	EVEs
А	Grog-tempered	F06	-	25	446	.27
AB	Grog with shell	F05	-	5	116	.44
AC	Grog with quartz	F03	-	3	158	-
D46	Fine grog/silty type wares	-	-	7	64	-
A1	Hard cream grogged	-	-	30	177	-
В	Shell	R13	-	61	940	.21
B4	Shell (Harrold)	R13	HAR SH	13	284	.83
С	Reduced	R06	-	1	6	-
C1	Lower Nene greyware	R06a	-	4	24	.07
C4	Standard Upper Nene grey	-	-	24	155	.17
C10	Coarse greyware	R06b	-	1	49	-
C11	Dark grey with pale core	-	-	11	234	.25
C15	Grey with reddish yellow core	-	-	6	94	.22
C16	Grey with grey/reddish yellow 'sandwich'	-	-	2	23	-
	core					
C17	Grey with cream/pale grey 'sandwich' core	-	-	31	221	.25
C19	Dark grey/black coarse	R07	-	5	135	.10
C20	Grey throughout	-	-	11	178	.28
D	Oxidised	-	-	4	28	-
D1	Lower Nene colour-coated	R12b	-	44	794	1.24
D2	Lower Nene/Midlands self-coloured	R03c	-	8	106	.70
D21	Lower Nene self-coloured (creamware)	R12c	LNV WH	1	14	-
D24	Lower Nene colour-coated (orange)	R12b	LNV CC	2	22	1.0
D4	Oxford red slipped ware	R11d	OXF RS	2	10	-
D9	Gritty whitewares (Upper Nene?)	R03b	-	4	20	.08
D40	Central Gaulish samian (Lezoux)	R01a	LEZ SA	2	14	-
Sub tot.	· ·			307	4312	6.11
PMGRE	Glazed red earthenware (post-medieval)	-	-	1	2	-

*Table 1: Pottery summary quantification by type with concordances* 

\* Bedfordshire pottery type series (summarised in Parminter and Slowikowski 2004)

\*\* National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998)

The condition of the group is good, with little abrasion apparent among material from stratified deposits. Average sherd weight is high for a Roman group (14g) and there are several vessels represented as joining sherds which can be reconstructed to below shoulder level.

#### Assemblage composition/dating

The overall composition and context-level quantification and dating are set out in tables 1–2. Grogged pottery types (fabric A, AB, AC), 'silty type' wares (Fabric D46) and a proportion of the shell-tempered wares are representative of pottery which spans the Late Iron Age/early Roman period or the early to middle 1st century AD. Such types are present from deposits 207, 1004 and 1015, although some material is clearly residual. Identifiable vessel forms include large, necked storage jars (gully fill 207) and a girth beaker with hollow cordons (ditch fill 1004).

A number of context groups (207, 1006, 1008 & 1205) include reduced coarsewares of various types, which are representative of Upper Nene valley greywares. Such types are known to be produced at kilns to the east of modern Northampton (Johnston 1969) across the later 1st to 3rd centuries AD. Forms are mainly necked jars, with single examples of platter (gully fill 207) and plain-rimmed dish (ditch fill 1006).

Shell-tempered wares (fabrics B and B4) are present in most context groups and most or all can be considered local. Type B4 can be identified with the major kiln sites at Harrold, north Bedfordshire, where production is attested throughout the Roman period (Brown 1994). Medium-mouthed jars with rilled surfaces and squared rims (untstratified from Trench 10) can be paralleled among the 3rd or 4th-century products of the Harrold kiln (*ibid* figs 29 and 34). Large, necked, storage jars with rolled-over rims (ditch fill 1207) are also recorded and are less certainly from this source (*ibid* fig 22).

Context	Fabric	Sherds	Weight	EVEs	Spot-date
207	•		<u>(g)</u>	20	Late 1st Ord century
207	A 	2	107	.20	Late Tst-2nd century
	A1 A3	3 27	156	-	
	C15	21	13		
	C17	31	221	25	
	C19	2	16	10	
704	D2	8	106	70	Mid 2nd-3rd century
Trench	 B	9	186	05	-
10 U/S	D	Ũ	100	.00	
	B4	13	284	.83	
	C10	1	49	-	
	C11	5	26	-	
	C16	1	13	-	
	C20	2	6	.01	
	C21	1	9	-	
	C4	1	21	.07	
	D1	11	121	.10	
	D21	1	14	-	
	D24	1	20	1.0	
		2	23	-	
1004	PMGRE	1	2	-	Mid 1st septum
1004	A D46	3		-	
1006	A .	3	90	-	Mid –late 2nd century
	AC	1	19	-	
	В	16	199	-	
	C11	3	165	.25	
	C16	1	10	0	
	C19	1	15	0	
	D1	7	13	.15	
	D9	4	20	.08	
1008	A	7	108	-	Late 1st-2nd century
	B	13	129	.09	
	C15	1	101	-	
	C4	23	134	.10	
1015	D40	12	120	- 07	Mid to late 1st contury
1015	A AB	5	130	.07	4th century intrusive?
	AC.	2	139		
	B	9	98	-	
	D	2	5	-	
	D1	1	13	.15	
	D4	2	10	-	
	D46	3	17		
1205	В	13	172	-	4th century
	С	1	6	-	
	C1	4	24	.07	
	C11	3	43	-	
	015	2	/4	.22	
	C20	9	1/2	.27	
		25	047	.84	
	D24 D40	1	∠ 12	-	
1207	B	1	156	- 07	2nd century +
1201	D40	1	1	.07	
1208	C19	1	95	-	RB

 Table 2: Pottery quantification by context (with context spot-date)

British finewares present in the assemblage are all products of the Lower Nene valley and Oxfordshire industries. A Lower Nene valley colour-coated ware (fabric D1) bagshaped/cornice-rimmed beaker (ditch fill 1006) is representative of the earliest production phase and probably dates to the second half of the 2nd century AD. Most or all of the remaining material dates to the later Roman period, probably to the 4th century AD. The majority occurs from ditch fill 1205 and consists of late 'coarseware' forms in Lower Nene valley colour-coated ware (jars, conical flanged bowls and plainrimmed dish). Curved-wall/bead rim bowl forms (Howe *et al* 1980, fig 7, 80) also occur in this ware from deposit 1205 and among the unstratified material. A second jar in this type and two sherds of Oxford red slipped ware (fabric D4) were recorded from ditch fill 1017, although these appear to be intrusive within an early-Roman dated group.

A single mortarium sherd in Lower Nene valley white/creamware (fabric D21) was recorded as an unstratified (Trench 10) find. Flagons occur in creamware fabric D2, of uncertain Nene Valley or Midlands origin. A vessel in fabric D2 from ditch fill 704 is of unusual two-handle form with cup-like rim. It probably dates to the later 2nd or 3rd centuries.

Gaulish samian occurs as bodysherds (ditch fills 1205 and 1207) which are indeterminate of form and dateable only broadly to the 2nd century AD.

#### Summary

For a small group the Chelveston assemblage is diverse in terms of its date range and supports activity at the site which is probably domestic in nature and extends across the Roman period. The group is fairly representative of pottery supply patterns in the area, with a range of coarsewares originating from mainly local sources and finewares/specialist wares (mortaria) coming from mainly regional sources. The group is too small for conclusions to be drawn with regard to economic status or function.

The assemblage has been fully recorded and merits no further work. Should further excavation be undertaken at this site, the records of the pottery from the evaluation and excavation phases should be integrated, and the assemblage considered together.

#### **5.3 Animal bone** by Philip Armitage (Appendix 2: Tables)

#### Methodology

Basic NISPs (number of identified specimens) data were collected for species/taxon and anatomical determinations, carried out using the author's modern comparative collections and with reference to standard published osteological/zooarchaeological works (including Schmid 1972 and Getty 1975). Wherever possible, sheep and goat bones and teeth were differentiated following Boessneck *et al* (1964) and Payne's (1985) criteria. Although no positive identifications of goat were made and all elements with diagnostic features proved to be sheep, it remained a possibility there may have been a few unrecognised goats among the broken elements. All ovicaprid material in this report is therefore referenced as sheep/goat, except where specific mention is made to positively identified sheep elements. Measurements (in mm) were taken on selected elements using a Draper dial calliper (graduated 0.02 mm); following the systems of von den Driesch (1976) and Levine (1982).

# Numbers of identified specimens present (NISP) and species represented – Table 3

The assemblage from the combined Roman ditch deposits totalled 142 specimens of which 61 (43%) are identified to species and anatomy and 81 (57%) remain as unidentified fragments (Table 4). Five mammalian species are represented in the Roman material: horse *Equus caballus* (domestic); cattle *Bos* (domestic); sheep *Ovis* (domestic); pig *Sus* (domestic); dog Canis (domestic). *Bos* (domestic) is also

represented by an isolated scapula from the Iron Age ditch [405]. No bird, fish, amphibian or reptile species are present in the submitted samples.

Trench	4	10	10	10	10	12	Totals	%
Context	404 (a)	1004	1006	1008	1015	1205		
Feature	405	1005	1007	1009	1017	1206		
Date	IA	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB		
Horse				1			1	1.6
Cattle	1	14	5	2	9	1	32	51.6
Sheep/goat		1	8	12	4		25	40.3
Pig			1				1	1.6
Dog			3				3	4.9
Totals	1	15	17	15	13	1	62	

Table 3: Iron Age and Roman ditches: Number of identified specimens/elements (NISP) by taxonomy and context

Table 4: Iron Age and Roman ditches: unidentified bone fragments by context

Trench	4	10	10	10	10	12	Totals
Context	404 (a)	1004	1006	1008	1015	1205	
Feature	405	1005	1007	1009	1017	1206	
Date	IA	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	
Cattle-sized fragments		9		4	3		16
Sheep/goat-sized fragments		19					19
Indeterminate (a)				8	38		46
Totals	0	28	0	12	41	0	81

(a) Highly fragmented/"scrappy" bone material

#### Taphonomy and condition of the bone

The general condition/state of preservation of the bones is assessed as fair to good but with an especially high proportion of fragmented material. Owing to the brittle condition of many of the bones, breakages had apparently occurred during excavation and/or during post-excavation handling. Such recent breakage is evident in the several pieces of the reconstructed scapula from the Iron Age ditch [405]. Several bone elements appear to have been shattered whilst buried (see note), as for example the distal cattle humerus from 1004 (fill of ditch [1005] Trench 10) which was in five pieces. Where fragments/pieces of the same bone elements were able to be refitted together, these were counted as single NISPs. Dog gnawing was only present in the cattle humerus from 1004; evidenced by tooth groove marks on the trochlea (distal epiphysis). There was no evidence of butchery or of burning in the submitted bone.

#### Descriptions of the species represented

*Horse* - Based on the crown height (58.1 mm) in the upper third molar from 1008 fill of ditch [1009] the horse represented is estimated to have been aged 7 to 8 years at time of death (criteria of Levine 1982).

*Cattle* – The cattle appear to have been of small stature and build. Age at death could only be established in one individual, represented by a lower third molar (context 1006) exhibiting wear stage A3 (criteria of Bond & O'Connor 1999: 346). This animal was probably aged at least 5 years and possibly up to 8 years at time of death (lbid: 347). *Sheep* – In appearance the sheep were clearly small sized, gracile-limbed animals,

*Sheep* – In appearance the sheep were clearly small sized, gracile-limbed animals, probably resembling modern Soay sheep. Using the eruption/tooth wear in their

mandibular cheekteeth (criteria of Payne 1973) the ages of three sheep were determined as follows: 6 to 12 months; 2 to 3 years; 4 to 6 years.

*Pig* – Represented solely by a calcaneum from 1006 fill of ditch [1007] Trench 10.

Dog – Context 1006 also yielded the only dog bones in the submitted samples, comprising parts of a skull (incomplete but including the maxillae) with associated, almost complete, right and left jawbones. These elements are from an adult dog of large size by Roman standards, as indicated by measurements taken on the upper and lower dentition and jawbones (Appendix 2); comparable to the largest dogs recorded by Maltby (2010: 216 - 217) from Roman Winchester. In comparison with modern dog breeds examined by the author, the dental measurements for the Chelveston dog match those of an English Pointer (collections of the Booth Museum of Natural History Brighton, specimen Reg. No. 101276). No direct ancestral association with this particular modern breed is implied but such comparison may indicate the Chelveston dog was of similar overall size; with perhaps a stature (shoulder height) of c.55 to 58 cm.

#### Conclusions and Discussion

Any detailed meaningful reconstruction of the local livestock economy is rendered unfeasible owing to the insufficient sample size. However, based on the limited evidence that is available there is perhaps an indication that, as in the case of the majority of Roman sites in Britain, the economy had been dominated by cattle with, at this site, sheep of virtually equal abundance. Both horse and dog would have been usefully employed in assisting herd and flock movements between enclosures and grazing pastures.

There is very scant evidence of pig keeping and a notable absence of exploitation of wild game (deer, wild boar or hare), wildfowl, or aquatic resources (freshwater fish); though this situation may simply reflect the small sample size and lack of sieved samples.

#### 5.4 The iron nails by Tora Hylton

Three iron nails were recovered from Ditch 1206. One complete example with a T-shaped head, is 48mm long, while the other two incomplete examples are up to 50mm long. The types present would have had any number of uses with wood, for fixing light structural fittings etc.

#### Catalogue

Nail, iron. Complete. T-shaped head with square-sectioned shank tapered to a point. Clenched terminal. Length: 48mm

Nail, iron. Incomplete, terminal missing. Flat sub-circular head with square-sectioned shank. Length (incomplete): 40mm

Nail, iron. Incomplete, no discernable head. Square-sectioned shank tapered to a point. Length (incomplete): 50mm

#### 5.5 Charred plant materials by Val Fryer

#### Introduction and method statement

A sample for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblage was taken from the fill of ditch [1012] within trench 10.

The sample was bulk floated by NA and the flot was collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flot was scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to

x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 5. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots and arthropod remains were also recorded.

Sample	1
Fill	1011
Feature	1012
Feature type	Ditch
Trench	10
Cereals	
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)	х
(glume bases)	х
<i>T. spelta</i> L. (glume bases)	х
Cereal indet. (grains)	х
Herbs	
Arrhenatherum sp. (tuber)	Х
Bromus sp.	Х
Fabaceae indet.	xcf
Other plant macrofossils	
Charcoal <2mm	XXX
Charcoal >2mm	XX
Charcoal >5mm	Х
Charred root/stem	Х
Other remains	
Black porous 'cokey' material	XX
Mollusc shells	
Woodland/shade loving species	
Oxychilus sp.	Х
Open country species	
Pupilla muscorum	х
<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	х
V. costata	х
Vertigo pygmaea	Х
Catholic species	
Trichia hispida group	х
Marsh/freshwater species	
Anisus leucostoma	х
Armiger crista	х
Sample volume (litres)	40
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%

Table 5: Charred plant remains

#### Results

Although the assemblage is small (<0.1 litres in volume), cereal grains/chaff and seeds of common weeds are recorded. However, preservation of the remains is quite poor,

with many being puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures.

Elongated 'drop' form wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains typical of spelt (*T. spelta*) are present along with a small number of spelt glume bases. Weed seeds are scarce, but do include a brome (*Bromus* sp.) fruit, possible small legume (Fabaceae) cotyledons and an onion-couch (*Arrhenatherum* sp.) type tuber. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are also recorded along with small pieces of charred root/stem and fragments of black, porous material, with the latter probably being a residue of the combustion of the cereal grains at very high temperatures.

Although specific sieving for molluscan remains was not undertaken, a limited number of shells of both terrestrial and marsh/freshwater species are recorded. Assuming that these are contemporary with the context from which the sample was taken, they would appear to indicate that the ditch was situated within an area of open grassland and was at least seasonally damp or partly water filled.

#### Conclusions

In summary, it would appear most likely that this assemblage is largely composed of cereal processing waste. Whether this waste was subsequently used as tinder/kindling or whether it was burnt as agricultural refuse is not known, but the presence of the onion-couch tuber may indicate that combustion occurred within an area of rough grassland or waste ground. The occurrence of this material within a ditch fill is almost certainly a result of the wind-dispersal of the burnt remains.

Although this assemblage is both small and from a secondary context, it clearly shows that charred plant remains are preserved within the archaeological horizon at Chelveston. Therefore, if further interventions are planned, it is strongly recommended that additional plant macrofossil samples of approximately 20 – 40 litres in volume are taken from all dated and well-sealed contexts recorded during excavation.

#### 6 DISCUSSION

The trial trenching identified a series of ditches and one pit spread across the development area, dated by an assemblage of diagnostic and largely unabraded pottery sherds from the middle to late Iron Age and early Roman periods. Medieval ridge and furrow was also identified across the trenched area. Extensive modern activity associated with the construction and use of the area as an airbase was present in all but three trenches (Trench 3, 7 and 13).

Activity as represented by the ditches and pit indicate that the area was part of a field system with little or no evidence for buildings, although the Roman pottery assemblage (Section 5.2) contained a range of fabric types and forms that suggest domestic activity is likely to have been sited close by. The animal bone assemblage supports the physical evidence. It contained a small range of species typical of Roman sites in Britain, with cattle and sheep as livestock and horse and dog as working animals. The occupation can therefore be characterised as rural Romano-British, with a probable Iron Age antecedent (ditch [405]).

Evidence for post-Roman activity comprised medieval ridge and furrow only. It was present in trenches 5 and 7 where it was seen to have had little destructive impact on the earlier remains, which indicates that where modern impact has also been minimal there is a high probability that further archaeological remains in close proximity will survive and be well-preserved.

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Northamptonshire Archaeology a service of Northamptonshire County Council

November 2013

### APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
1	100m x 2.0m E-W	TL 00439 68136	90.04m aOD	89.14m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.15m thick	
102	Made ground	Re-deposited clay mixed with brick and tile. Present in the southern part of the trench	0.40m thick	
103	Subsoil	Light grey-brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	
104	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
2	400m x 2.0m E-W	TL 00405 68083	90.16m aOD	87.96aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
202	Made ground (within eastern part of trench)	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragments	0.60m thick	
203	Buried soil	Truncated former plough soil, mid brown sandy clay	0.45m thick	
204	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions		
205	Made ground (within western part of trench)	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragments	1.10m thick	
206	Buried soil	Truncated former plough soil, mid brown sandy clay	0.90m thick	
207	Fill of [208]	Mid grey-brown sandy clay		Roman pottery
208	Cut of gully	Shallow U-shaped profile. Filled by (207)	0.50m wide 0.10m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
3	100m x 2.0m N to S	TL 00542 68097	88.76m aOD	88.53m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Mid grey- brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
302	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
4	100m x 2.0m NW-SE	TL 00666 68199	88.34m aOD	88.02m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.30-0.35m thick	
403	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions (truncated)		
404	Fill of [405]	Dark grey-black clay		Pottery and animal bone
405	Cut of ditch	V-shaped profile, filled by (404)	1.10m wide and 0.30m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
5	50m x 2.0m N to S	TL 00784 68150	89.52m aOD	88.66m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
501	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
502	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragments	0.60m thick	
503	Buried soil	Mid orange-grey sandy clay	0.20m thick	
504	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
6	100m x 2.0m E to W	TL 00749 68177	89.34m aOD	86.84m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
601	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
602	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragments	0.90m thick	
603	Buried soil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	
604	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
7	100m x 2.0m N to S	TL 00880 68193	88.41m aOD	87.86m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
701	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.40m thick	
702	Subsoil	Light grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
703	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions		
704	Fill of [705]	Light brown-grey sandy clay		Roman pottery
705	Cut of ditch	U-shaped profile, filled by (704)	0.75m wide 0.28m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
8	100m x 2.0m E to W	TL 00748 68047	89.71m aOD	88.51m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
801	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.15m thick	
802	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragments	0.80m thick	
803	Buried soil	Truncated former plough soil, mid brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
804	Natural	Light brown-grey sandy clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
9	100m x 2.0m NW to SE	TL 00619 68038	88.74m aOD	87.32m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
901	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.15m thick	
902	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragments	0.80m thick	
903	Buried soil	Truncated former plough soil, mid brown sandy clay		
904	Natural	Light brown-grey sandy clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
10	100m x 2.0m E to W	TL 00576 67951	90.38m aOD	89.11m aOD
Context	<i>Context type</i> <i>Feature &amp; type</i>	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1001	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
1002	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.10m thick	
1003	Natural	Light brown-grey sandy clay		
1004	Fill of [1005]	Dark grey-brown clay		Roman pottery and animal bone
1005	Cut of ditch	Shallow U-shaped profile, filled by (1004)	0.60m wide 0.08m wide	
1006	Fill of [1007]	Mid brown-grey clay		Roman pottery and animal bone
1007	Cut of ditch	Shallow U-shaped profile, filled by (1006)		
1008	Fill of [1009]	Dark grey-brown sandy clay		Roman pottery and animal bone
1009	Cut of ditch	U-shaped profile, filled by (1008)	1.00m wide 0.23m deep	
1010	Fill of [1012]	Dark grey-black silty clay	1.00m wide 0.40m deep	Roman pottery and animal bone
1011	Fill of [1012]	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	2.00m wide 0.45m deep	Roman pottery and animal bone sample 1
1012	Cut of ditch	U-shaped profile, filled by (1010-11, 13)	2.20m wide 0.70m deep	

1013	Fill of [1012]	Light orange-grey clay	1.10m wide 0.10m deep	
1014	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragment	0.30m thick	
1015	Fill of [1017]	Dark brown-black sandy clay	0.43m deep	Roman pottery
1016	Fill of [1017]	Mid brown-grey sandy clay	0.75m wide 0.10m deep	
1017	Cut of ditch	U-shaped profile, filled by (1015-16)	0.75m wide 0.30m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
11	100m x 2.0m N to S	TL 00432 67983	89.58m aOD	89.30m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1101	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
1102	Made ground (at northern end)	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragment	0.20m thick	
1103	Natural	Light brown-grey sandy clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
12	45m x 2.0m E to W	TL 00576 67951	90.17m aOD	88.89m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1201	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	
1202	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragment	0.45m thick	
1203	Buried soil	Truncated former plough soil, mid brown sandy clay	0.60m thick	
1204	Natural	Light yellow brown clay		
1205	Fill of [1206]	Dark brown-black sandy clay	2.00m wide 0.47m deep	Roman pottery and animal bone
1206	Cut of ditch	U-shaped profile, filled by (1205, 1207)	2.00m wide 0.67m deep	
1207	Fill of [1206]	Light brown sandy clay		Roman pottery
1208	Fill of [1209]	Light brown clay		Roman pottery
1209	Cut of pit	Sub-circular, filled by (1208)	0.50m diam 0.12m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
13	25m x 2.0m E to W	TL 00576 67951	90.17m aOD	88.80m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1301	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	Tile, brick
1302	Made ground	Re-deposited clay, brick, tile and limestone fragment	0.70m thick	
1303	Buried soil	Truncated former plough soil, mid brown sandy clay	0.50m thick	
1304	Natural	Light yellow brown clay		
1305	Fill of [1306]	Light brown-grey sandy clay		
1306	Ditch	Same feature as [1017]		

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Trench	4	10	10	10	10	12	
Context	404 (a)	1004	1006	1008	1015	1205	
Feature	405	1005	1007	1009	1017	1206	
Date	IA	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	Totals
Horn core					1		1
Skull					1		1
Lower			1		2		3
Cheekteeth							
Cervical						1	1
Scapula	1						1
Humerus		1		1	1		3
Radius		1					1
Metacarpus					2		2
Femur		1			1		2
Phalanx I				1			1
Phalanx II			1				1
Long bone		11	3		1		15
Shaft frag.							
Totals	1	14	5	2	9	1	32

#### APPENDIX 2: ANIMAL BONE TABLES



Table 7: Summary of cattle epiphyseal fusion data: Roman contexts combined

	Unfused	Fused
Early fusing		
epiphyses:		
Radius proximal		1
Scapula glenoid		1
process		
Humerus distal		2
Phalanx I proximal		2
Later fusing		
epiphyses:		
Metacarpus distal	1	
Late fusing epiphyses:		
Femur proximal		1
Totals	1	7

Table 8: Iron Age and	Roman ditches.	Anatomical di	listributions of	the sheep/goat
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Trench	4	10	10	10	10	12	
Context	404 (a)	1004	1006	1008	1015	1205	
Feature	405	1005	1007	1009	1017	1206	
Date	IA	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	Totals
Mandible				1	1		2
Incisor		1					1
Upper cheekteeth				1			1
Lower cheekteeth			1				1
Cervical					1		1
Rib			3				3
Scapula			1				1
Metacarpus				1			1
Tibia					1		1
Long bone shaft frag.			3	9	1		13
Totals		1	8	12	4		25

-	-									
Maxilla	[15]	[19]		P4 L	P4 B	P4	M1 L	M1 B	M2 L	M2 B
						GB				
	71.6	20.2		19.7	8.4	10.7	14.1	15.3	6.8	10.2
Mandible	[7]	[8]	[9]	[18]	[19]	[20]	M1 L	M1 B	M2 L	M2 B
	86.7	79.3	77.4	55.5	23.5	21.0	23.4	9.4	10.2	6.9

Table 9: Metrical summary for the dog maxilla and mandible from (1006) fill of Roman ditch [1007] - Trench 10

All measurements are in mm and follow the system of von den Driesch (1976)

Key to measurements:

Maxilla

[15] length of cheektooth row along the alveoli

[19] length of upper carnassial tooth (P4) alveolus

P4 L & P4 B length & breadth of upper fourth premolar (carnassial tooth)

M1 L & M1 B length & breadth of upper first molar

M2 L & M2 B length & breadth of upper second molar

Mandible:

[7] length of mandible

[8] length of cheektooth row P1 - M3

[9] length of cheektooth row P2 - M3

[18] height of vertical ramus

[19] height of mandible behind M1

[20] height of mandible between P2 and P3

M1 L & M1 B length & breadth of lower first molar (carnassial tooth)

M2 L & M2 B length & breadth of lower second molar

Upper Third Molar	Species	ht.crown	M3 L	M3 B	Context	Period
	Horse	58.1	27.0	21.2	1008	Roman
Lower Third Molar	Species		M3 L	M3 B	Context	Period
Wear stage A3 (a)	Cattle		36.2	13.5	1006	Roman
(a) wear stage (criteria of Bond						
& O'Connor 1999: 346)						
Scapula	Species	GLP	SLC		Context	Period
	Cattle	55.0	44.6		404	Iron
						Aae

All measurements are in mm and follow the system of von den Driesch (1976) except for crown height in the horse tooth (method of Levine 1982)



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# Northamptonshire Archaeology



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





Northamptonshire County Council