

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Late Iron Age and Roman occupation
and medieval field boundaries at
Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds
Leicestershire
November- December 2005



Pat Chapman
with
Ian Fisher and Anthony Maull
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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN OCCUPATION

AND MEDIEVAL FIELD BOUNDARIES

AT MELTON ROAD, BURTON ON THE WOLDS

LEICESTERSHIRE

SK 590 213

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

REPORT 07/11

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BURTON ON THE WOLDS, LEICESTERSHIRE

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project name	Late Iron Age and Roman occupation and medieval field boundaries at Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds, Leicestershire November-December 2005
Short description (250 words maximum)	Between November and December 2005 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out open area excavation on three separate blocks of development land at Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds, Leicestershire. A late Iron Age ditch in the north-eastern area suggested the presence of an early focus of occupation, perhaps set within a ditched enclosure. This was superseded in the early Roman period, the mid-1st to 2nd centuries AD, by a system of rectilinear field or plot boundaries. Late Roman activity lay to the west, where a complex of large intercutting quarry pits are dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. The small quantity of pottery and lack of other artefacts may indicate that the Roman activity lay near the margins of the associated settlement. By the 12th century there was a medieval field boundary running north to south in the western area with minor east to west boundaries.
Project type	Open area excavation
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None
Previous work	Desk-based assessment ULAS, Evaluation NA
Current Land use	Farm buildings and pastoral, now housing
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	None
Monument type/ period	Iron Age, Roman
Significant finds	Pottery
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Leicestershire
Site address (including postcode)	Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.45ha
OS Easting & Northing	SK 590 213
Height OD	78m aOD
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project Manager	Anthony Maull, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Sponsor or funding body	David Wilson Homes
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	November 2005
End date	December 2005
ARCHIVES	Location Leicestershire County Museum Service (Accession no.) XA.164.2004
Physical	Pottery, Flint, Animal Bone, Metal Finds
Paper	Site Context Record, Plans & Sections, Photographic Record
Digital	Mapinfo Site Plans & Client Report
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	
Serial title & volume	07/11
Author(s)	

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**LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN OCCUPATION
AND MEDIEVAL FIELD BOUNDARIES
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ABSTRACT

Between November and December 2005 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out open area excavation on three separate blocks of development land at Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds, Leicestershire. A late Iron Age ditch in the north-eastern area suggested the presence of an early focus of occupation, perhaps set within a ditched enclosure. This was superseded in the early Roman period, the mid-1st to 2nd centuries AD, by a system of rectilinear field or plot boundaries. Late Roman activity lay to the west, where a complex of large intercutting quarry pits are dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. The small quantity of pottery and lack of other artefacts may indicate that the Roman activity lay near the margins of the associated settlement. By the 12th century there was a medieval field boundary running north to south in the western area with minor east to west boundaries.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of David Wilson Homes Ltd, to undertake archaeological mitigation works following earlier trial evaluation at Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds, Leicestershire during November-December 2005 (NGR SK 590 213; Fig 1). The mitigation work, covering *c* 0.2ha, was undertaken in advance of the proposed redevelopment of a former transport depot and pig farm for residential housing by David Wilson Homes on land occupying approximately 2.5ha. An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken in 2004 (George 2004), followed by archaeological trial trench evaluation by NA during July 2004, which identified settlement evidence, primarily in the form of ditches dating to the late Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods.

The work was undertaken to meet the requirements of a brief issued by CgMs Consulting (2005) in accordance with the specific requirements as issued by English Heritage (2001 and 1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999).

1.1 Topography and geology

The site is located on the north-eastern edge of the village of Burton on the Wolds, adjacent to Brook Street and the B676 Melton Road (Fig 1). The site comprised three fields, separated by hedge boundaries running north to south; within the eastern field was a farmhouse, yard and a range of ancillary buildings. The largest, central field sloped sharply from the high ground in the east to a lowest central point before rising gradually to the south and west. To the north and beyond the northern boundary of this field there is a pond, indicating that this area has seen extensive quarrying in the past, as indicated by the results from the 2004 evaluation. The highest point in the evaluation area is *c* 78.5m aOD, at the northern end of the west field. Locally the topography consists of fairly low domed hills, broad river valleys and some fairly flat expanses.

The British Geological Survey has mapped the area as glacial drift sands and gravels (BGS Sheet 142), and there is some physical and anecdotal evidence of local outcroppings of gypsum close to the surface of and alabaster at depth (George 2004: 4; Shaw pers comm).

1.2 Archaeological background

The proposed development plot lies within an area long favoured for settlement and agriculture. A desk-based assessment carried out by University of Leicester Archaeology Services (George 2004) recorded no archaeological finds from the immediate development site, though they recorded prehistoric, Roman and medieval finds in and around Burton on the Wolds.

A Neolithic flint axe (**LE7146**) was recovered from a building site east of Prestwold Park, which lies to the west of the development area. A sherd of Roman pottery was found to the south of Burton Hall, south of the development area in association with a pair of burials (**LE516**). The development site lies within the medieval village core of Burton on the Wolds (**LE521**). The site is 320m to the west of the ploughed out medieval grange of Garendon Abbey (**LE514**), with a possibly associated moat still extant as an earthwork (**LE515**) and north of a series of fishponds (**LE518**) possibly associated with the hall. Lastly there is an undated bank and ditch earthwork situated 60m south of the site near the Greyhound Inn (**LE517**).

The historical background of the site was covered in detail in the desk-based assessment (George 2004) and is briefly summarised here, “Burton on the Wolds is not mentioned in the Domesday Book. The name Burton on the Wolds is a combination of ‘*Burton*, a common name, usually Old English for ‘fortified farmstead’, or ‘farmstead near a fortification’, and ‘*Wolds* from the Old English for high forest-land later cleared”. The desk-based assessment also related that the SMR map evidence for the village showed ridge and furrow farming immediately to the north and east of the development area indicating that the site was situated within the medieval village core. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 showed the development site as a series of enclosed fields fronting onto Back Street, with some buildings in the south-east corner of the site and a pond immediately to the north (George 2004, fig 4). Apart from the construction of a road linking Back Street to the structures noted above, very little change was noted to the plan layout in the 1903 and 1921 Ordnance Survey maps (George 2004, figs 5 and 6). The principal change to the plan layout is clear on the 1992 and 1993 Ordnance Survey maps of the area, which clearly show the construction of the depot buildings, though it was unclear if any of the buildings noted in the earlier Ordnance Survey maps were incorporated or demolished in the depot’s construction. In summary, the desk-based assessment indicated the potential for the site to yield prehistoric, Roman and medieval evidence, particularly the potential for recovering medieval remains close to the street frontage (George 2004).

Following the desk-based assessment a scheme of trial trenching comprising 11 trenches was undertaken during July 2004 by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of CgMs Consulting (Lewis and Dawson 2004). The trial trenching revealed part of a field system and a pair of parallel ditches, some containing sherds of Iron Age pottery. The feature recorded as a large ditch containing Roman pottery in the evaluation was subsequently shown to be part of a large quarry pit. What was believed to be an undated spring-fed waterlogged pond or large water hole in the north-eastern corner of the site on the highest part of the evaluation area (Lewis and Dawson, fig 5), in excavation was seen to be part of a possible enclosure ditch dated to the pre-Roman Iron Age. In Area 2 during the evaluation an infilled quarry was recorded towards the northern higher end of the field, which probably dated from the medieval period. Some slight evidence for remnant medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation was noted in Area 2 and in Area 3, but these latter were not seen in the excavation.

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The main objective of the excavation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting. The objectives, as stated in the project design (CgMs 2003), were as follows:

- To mitigate the effects of development on the identified archaeological sites at Melton Road
- To determine and understand the contribution the sites will make to the creation of model of landscape development on the clay lands of Leicestershire
- To determine the nature, date, function and character of the deposits identified in the archaeological evaluation and their cultural and environmental setting
- Obtain a chronological sequence for the human activity on the sites and to place within its regional context(s)
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental sequence and context of archaeological deposits and features
- To make available the results of the investigation.

2.2 Methodology

Following the trial trenching in 2004, three areas of archaeological mitigation areas were identified for further excavation (Fig 2, Areas 1-3).

Area 2 was due to be stripped and planned, with any features identified to be excavated and recorded. However, on arrival to begin the excavation Area 2 was being used as a dumping ground for topsoil/subsoil and general rubbish from the building site. It was not possible to move this material to another location, so it was agreed that an archaeological watching brief would be conducted during the stripping of the access road.

Two lengths of road were stripped under archaeological supervision. One length was orientated east to west and the other length north to south, the two forming an inverted 'T' shape. The spoil from the southern length was stored on the northern part, which created more rutting and disturbance to the whole area. The ground was therefore heavily disturbed and truncated and no archaeological features were identified.

Following a discussion between Michael Dawson (CgMs Consulting) and Richard Clarke, Senior Planning Archaeologist Leicestershire County Council, it was concluded that no further work would be undertaken in this area.

Area 1 lay at the top of the field to the north of the farm building complex and measured 44m long east to west, narrowing from 22m wide in the west to 13m wide in the east (Fig 2, Plate 1). Area 3 was in the middle of the western field and was almost square, measuring 37m north to south and 31m east to west (Title page and Plate 2).

Topsoil was removed by machine under archaeological supervision to reveal the first significant archaeological layer or the natural substrate, depending on which was encountered first. Where necessary the archaeological surface was cleaned by hand. The site was planned at a scale of 1:100 and the sections were drawn at between 1:10 and 1:20 scales. All discrete features were sectioned and where they formed part of recognisable structures, contained deposits of particular value or significant artefactual or environmental assemblages, they were fully excavated.

Approximately 5-10% of the length of each linear feature was sectioned, away from intersections with other features or deposits to obtain unmixed samples of material. This was increased to c 20% where areas of complexity were encountered.

A unique context number in a single continuous sequence was allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. Soil samples of a minimum 40% were taken from dateable contexts with a potential for the recovery of charcoal and carbonised plant remains. A full photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated prints, and colour transparencies was maintained.

All works were conducted in accordance with IFA *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (1994, revised 2001) and the *Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists* (1985, revised 2000). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines. Monitoring of the programme of fieldwork was carried out by Leicestershire County Council.

3 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

3.1 Summary of chronology

The earliest indication of occupation was a ditch at the eastern end of Area 1 (Fig 2). This ditch was probably early 1st century AD in origin, but continued in use following the Roman Conquest (43AD) into the later 1st century. It may have been the west side of a ditched enclosure.

This ditch was superseded by a system of rectilinear field or plot boundaries dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

During the 2nd to 4th centuries AD the focus of Roman activity lay to the west, Area 3, and comprised a cluster of large intercutting quarry pits.

A north to south field boundary with associated minor east to west boundaries in the west, developed in the west, Area 3. These lasted from the 12th century until the 17th century.

3.2 Late Iron Age to early Roman ditch system (1st century AD)

In Area 1, the earliest ditch [2078] ran north to south and ended at a rounded terminal (Fig 3, Plate 3). It may have formed part of the western side of a ditched enclosure, with a western entrance in excess of 7.0m wide. This ditch was later replaced by a continuous ditch of similar form [2083/2060], which would have blocked the entrance.

The original ditch had a broad, V-shaped profile, at least 1.50m wide by 1.05m deep. The primary fill was light grey silty clay, overlain by red-brown silty clay and dark grey clayey loam (2084). The later ditch had a similar profile, and was 2.50m wide by 1.15m deep [2083/2060]. A later recut along its western edge was 0.80m deep, although no recutting was evident in the section further south [2060]. The primary fill of [2083] was dark grey clay loam overlain by yellowish brown silty loam. Further south the fills of [2063] were orange brown silty clay overlain by grey brown clay loam.

Both phases of ditch, [2078] and [2060], produced small amounts of pottery that included some Late Iron Age shellywares and a little early Roman pottery. It would appear that this ditch system was probably established in the early 1st century AD but was retained into the later 1st century.

If it is to be interpreted as part of an enclosure, then the main focus of occupation at this time would have lain further to east, situated on the higher ground.

3.3 Early Roman boundary ditches (1st to 2nd century AD)

The existing ditch system was abandoned, although the general pattern of alignment was retained. It was replaced by linear ditches and gullies that formed a rectilinear system of boundaries, presumably part of a field or plot system attached to a settlement (Fig 3).

The origin of the new boundary system lay in a ditch [2018/2064] running east-west to a rounded corner [2059], with a further arm running north (Plates 4 and 5). This may have been the south-western corner of a new enclosure. This ditch had a U-shaped profile, 1.0m wide and 0.45m deep, with the fills varying between grey brown sandy silt and red brown sandy clay.

The western arm [2059] was replaced by a linear ditch [2025/27] that crossed the excavated area. It had a U-shaped profile, 1.50m wide by 0.40m deep, and the fills varied between grey clay and dark brown orange mottled silt. Two ditches [2022/2009/2033 and 2016/2055] abutted the western side of this boundary. They were 0.75-1.45m wide by 0.35-0.60m deep, with fills of brown grey silty sand. In the angle of ditches [2025] and [2016] there were the terminals of two north-south ditches [2002] and [2004]; both were very shallow, no more than 0.20m deep. Three shallow postholes, between 0.30m and 0.10m deep with V-shaped profiles, lay adjacent to the terminal of the eastern gully.

To the north-east, there was a shallow gully [2054], 0.40m wide and 0.12m deep, with a terminal to the west, which was parallel to the principal early east-west boundary [2064].

The pottery from the fills of these boundary ditches and gullies included a little residual late Iron Age material but the majority was early Roman pottery dated to the mid 1st to mid 2nd centuries AD. The only non ceramic artefact was an irregular lead disc recovered from the subsoil, just to the east of ditch [2078].

3.4 Later Roman pit group (2nd – 4th centuries AD)

The final phase of activity in Area 1 comprised a ditch on a new alignment [2001/2075] and another gully at right-angles to it (Fig 3). This was a V-shaped ditch, 1.0m wide and 0.30m deep. The fill contained some pottery dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries, perhaps suggesting that this ditch was contemporary with the pit group in Area 3, to the west (Fig 4).

Within Area 3 the only features that can be dated to the Roman period were three large intercutting quarry pits [4138, 4127 and 4042]. All three pits were sub-rectangular in plan, from 2.5 to 4.4m wide by up to 5.0-6.0m long, with steep sides.

All three pits were at least 0.80-1.10m deep, but a rising watertable at the time of excavation caused flooding and collapsing of the sections, which precluded their full excavation (Plates 2 and 6). The lower fills excavated were dark grey silty clays, which were overlain by orange silty sands and gravels. The pottery from these pits is dated to between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD, although the 2nd century material may well be residual. The earliest pit [4138] contained an

assemblage including Dorset black burnished ware and Mancetter-Hartshill whiteware, which can be more precisely dated to the second half of the 3rd century AD.

To the south-east of the pits there were a few irregular features comprising a gully [4011], a pit [4036] and small gullies [4100]. A coin of Crispus, dating to 324-326 AD, and two sherds of similar date were found in the upper fills of ditch [4034], where it cut pit [4036].

3.5 Medieval to post-medieval field boundaries (12th to 17th centuries)

In Area 3 the major ditch system [4080/4043/4005] ran north to south, fully crossing the excavated area (Fig 4). This ditch was up to 1.35m wide, but comprised some three successive ditches, each no more than 0.60m deep, and presumably heavily truncated by later activity. The fills were grey brown to orange brown clay loams.

Several ditches and gullies branched from both the eastern and western sides of the north-south boundary. The most substantial of these lay to the south [4034/4093]. This had a V-shaped profile, up to 1.70m wide by 50m deep, and a fill of orange mottled grey silty clay (Plate 7). The gullies to the north [4017 and 4068] were about 5m apart. Gully [4068] measured up to 0.75m wide and 0.37m deep with a U-shaped profile, while [4017] was only 0.25m wide and 0.10m deep.

To the west there was a double ditch system [4104 and 4117/4123], which crossed the late Roman pit group. These ditches had V-shaped profiles and measured up to 1.60m wide and 0.50m deep, narrowing to 0.70m wide further east (Plate 6). The fills of these ditches and gullies comprised grey brown silty sandy clays.

The linear ditches and gullies in Area 3 produced only very small quantities of pottery, a total of eleven sherds. While some of this material was of Roman date, there were six sherds that have been dated from the 12th to 17th centuries, indicating that the ditch system must be broadly dated to the medieval period. The frequent recutting of the principal ditch and the presence of subsidiary boundaries would suggest that these may have been plots within the medieval township boundary, rather than part of the open field system.

Undated features

There were two short lengths of gullies [4031] and [4085] north and south of the double ditch system. Adjacent to gullies [4017/4068] was a pit and four postholes. The pit [4019] was steep-sided and U-shaped, measuring 0.90m wide and 0.75m deep. The postholes were shallow and diminished in diameter to the south from 0.70m to 0.30 wide and were 0.10m to 0.20m deep. The lack of similarity between these features makes it doubtful that they formed any coherent part of a structure or fence line.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 The worked flint by Andy Chapman

A total of four flints were recovered, one each from fills (2008) and (2032) of east to west gully [2009/2033], fill (2026) of north to south gully [2025], and (2074) fill of north-west to south-east gully [2071]. They are all in a good quality vitreous flint, dark grey in colour, and three pieces have areas of cream coloured cortex surviving. There are two irregular primary flakes and a shattered piece. The fourth flint has been subject to more recent damage, and the surviving original edge has irregular edge damage, perhaps from utilisation. It is not possible to provide

any specific date for these pieces, and it is possible that all four could be the product of fortuitous and accidental flaking through natural agencies.

4.2 The Iron Age and Roman Pottery by Andy Fawcett

A total of 133 sherds weighing 2451g with a combined estimated vessel equivalent (eve) of 1.62 were recorded from the two areas of excavation. The late Iron Age to early Roman area, dated mid 1st to mid 2nd century AD, produced a total of 52 sherds with a combined weight of 771gms, 31% of the total by weight. The pottery dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD produced 81 sherds with a combined weight of 1680gms, 69% of the total by weight.

Through interpretation of the ceramic record, this report provides a date range for activity on the site as well as a socio-economic statement. To enable comparison with sites of a similar nature in Leicestershire and neighbouring counties, the fabric codes are based upon a style developed by Going (1987) and further enhanced by Tomber & Dore (1998). Form matches are principally taken from Causeway Lane (Clark 1999), Rutland (Cooper 2000), the Leicester type series (Pollard unpub); other regional assemblages are used as and when necessary.

All of the pottery has been examined at x20 vision. Specific detail such as unsourced coarseware division and detailed fabric division can be found in the site archive. A full record of fabrics encountered on the site is listed below.

Fabric Codes

LGF SA	La Graufesenque samian ware (southern Gaul)
LEZ SA 2	Lezoux samian ware (central Gaul) category 2
LNV CC	Lower Nene Valley colour coat
MAN WH	Mancetter-Hartshill white ware
UNS WH	Unsourced white ware
UNS OX	Unsourced oxidised ware
BSW	Black surfaced/Romanising grey wares
DOR BB 1	Dorset black burnished ware category 1
GRS	Unsourced sandy grey wares
LNV RE	Lower Nene Valley Reduced ware
UNS BB	Unsourced black burnished ware
UNS SH	Unsourced shell tempered ware
UNS SO	Unsourced sand & organic tempered ware
UNS GS	Unsourced sand & grog tempered ware
SOB GT	Southern British grog tempered ware

Discussion

The earliest phase Area 1 comprised part of a late pre Roman Iron Age ditch. This was followed by a series of east to west and north to south field boundaries.

The assemblage is fragmentary, slightly abraded and the percentage of diagnostic pieces is low. Shell-tempered fabrics (UNS SH, CG01A) are the predominant type, making up 42% of the total by sherd count. They were produced locally and were long lived, from the late Iron Age through the Roman period. The few forms noted are jars with simple everted rims and a dish with plain-rim; all are fragmentary examples.

The Roman fabrics comprising unsourced whiteware, black surfaced/Romanising grey wares, sandy greywares and a fragment of southern Gaulish samian are all dated to between the mid 1st and early to mid 2nd century AD (the few later dates that do occur are those simply assigned to long-lived fabrics).

The ceramics as a whole are indicative of low status rural activity during the late pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) and early Roman era.

Table 1: Quantification of late Iron Age and early Roman pottery, Area 1

Feature/context	Date/fabric type	No	Weight (g)	References
Ditch 2078 / 2084	Late Iron Age / Roman UNS SH	7	43	undiag. Same vessel, sli
Ditch 2060 / 2061	Late Iron Age-2nd century AD BSW	1	19	undiag, abraded
	UNS SH [CG01A]	1	84	undiag, 1st-2nd century sli
Ditch 2064 / 2065	Late Iron Age to 2nd century AD UNS SH [CG01A]	10	288	B/C tsm same vessel style 1st-2nd century 0.08 abr-sli
Ditch 2018 / 2019	Late Iron Age to c AD70 UNS SO	2	43	G [HM]simple evert Rut6 1st century 0.12, sli
Ditch 2027 / 2028	Mid to later 1st century AD GRS	1	21	undiag, style early Roman abraded
	UNS GS	1	23	undiag, 1st century abraded
Ditch 2027 / 2029	mid 1st-early 2nd century AD LGF SA	1	<1	undiag, ex
	UNS WH	5	5	undiag, abraded
Ditch 2025 / 2026	mid 1st to early/mid 2nd century AD BSW	1	13	G tsm style mid 1st-mid 2nd century 0.10, sli
Ditch 2009 / 2008	mid 2nd-early 4th century AD LNV RE	1	20	undiag, sli
Ditch 2022 / 2023	Late Iron Age to c AD70 UNS SH [CG01A]	2	40	G [HM] simple evert Rut6/9 1st century 0.05, sli
	SOB GT	8	20	undiag, 1st century abr-sli
Ditch 2033 / 2032	Late Iron Age to 2nd century AD UNS SH [CG01A]	1	8	undiag, abraded
Ditch 2016 / 2017	c AD70-120/30 UNS WH	2	31	G CL111 Late 1st-early 2nd century 0.15, sli
Ditch 2004 / 2005	Late 1st-mid 2nd century AD UNS SH [CG01]	1	33	G Rut 9/94 Late 1st-mid 2nd century 0.12, sli
Linear 2075 / 2074	Early 2nd to 4th century AD UNS BB	7	79	Bpl tsm same vessel early 2nd-4th century 0.10, sli
TOTAL		52	771	

All prefix form codes (ie G for jar) relate to the Going *corpus* (1987) and those with a further 'CL' or 'RT' prefix relate to the Causeway Lane and Rutland *corpuses* (Clark 1999 & Cooper 2000), Ver is Verulamium for cross reference purposes (Wilson 1984).

B = dish, C = bowl, D = mortaria, G = jar, HM = hand-made, tsm = too small for accurate identification, ex, sli = abrasion (extremely, slightly abraded).

The Roman features of Area 3 comprised quarry pits from which all the Roman pottery, with the exception of five sherds, was recovered. The pits [4042], [4127] and [4138] are well dated. The remaining five sherds were residual within the medieval east to west boundary ditches. As in the the eastern area, the assemblage is fragmentary, slightly abraded and the percentage of diagnostic pieces is low.

Although the assemblage is small, it is possible to provide an accurate date for pit [4138] (AD240/50-275/300). It contains ceramics from two of the major suppliers in this period, Dorset

Black-burnished ware (DOR BB 1) and Mancetter-Hartshill (MAN WH). Black-burnished ware forms represented include a ‘flared’ jar and a flanged dish. The former is well documented and may be paralleled by examples from Causeway Lane, Leicester (Clarke 1999, 161) and Verulamium, St Albans (Wilson 1984: No 2135). Mancetter-Hartshill wares are represented by two sherds of mortaria, which display similarities to a mortaria from Causeway Lane (Clarke 1999, 266).

The ceramics are indicative of low status rural land use. In contrast to the pottery from late Iron Age and early Roman area, the assemblage dates to the later Roman period (3rd century AD onwards), although the presence of an abraded sherd of samian ware (LEZ SA 2), hints at 2nd century activity.

The main unsourced fabric on this site falls within the GRS (unsourced sandy greywares) category. Whilst none of the sherds are diagnostic, the presence of common black iron ore within the fabrics, suggests that they originated from the same source.

Table 2: Quantification of Roman pottery, Area 3

Feature/context	date/fabric type	No	Weight (g)	References
Pit 4138 / 4137	Mid 2nd to 4th century AD LNV CC	2	37	undiag, same vessel base 0.07, abraded
	BSW	12	278	undiag, abraded
Pit 4138/ 4111	AD240/50 to 275/300 MAN WH	2	73	D CL266 style AD240-320 0.07, sli
	DOR BB1	29	290	G CL161 AD230-300, VER 2135 AD200 275 0.15, Bfl frag mid 3rd century + 0.08, sl
	GRS	4	36	undiag, abr-sli
Pit 4127 / 4134	Early 2nd to 4th century AD UNS BB	1	115	undiag, base 0.16, sli
	GRS	1	22	undiag, sli
Pit 4127 / 4132	Mid/late 3rd century AD? + UNS OX	1	110	Bfl no match, mid 3rd-4th century 0.22, base 0.036, sli
	UNS BB	6	318	G CL230 style mid/late3rd century + 0.30, other Base 0.32, sli
	GRS	1	30	undiag, sli
Pit 4127 / 4128	Roman (contains abraded samian dated AD120-180/200), LEZ SA 2	5	17	Drg18/31 or 31 early-late 2nd century 0.08, abraded
	GRS	5	40	undiag, same vessel, sli
Pit 4042 / 4040	Roman / UNS OX	1	31	undiag, abraded
	GRS	3	83	undiag, same vessel, sli
Pit 4042 / 4041	Roman GRS	3	82	undiag, abr-sli
Ditch 4034 / 4035	Roman / GRS	2	9	undiag, abraded
Ditch 4123 / 4124	Roman / GRS	3	109	undiag, same vessel sli
Total		81	1680	

All prefix form codes (i.e. G for jar) relate to the Going *corpus* (1987) and those with a further ‘CL’ or ‘RT’ prefix relate to the Causeway Lane and Rutland *corpuses* (Clark 1999 & Cooper 2000), Ver is Verulamium for cross reference purposes (Wilson 1984).

B = dish, C = bowl, D = mortaria, G = jar, HM = hand-made, tsm = too small for accurate identification, ex, sli = abrasion (extremely, slightly abraded).

4.3 The other finds by Pat Chapman and Ian Meadows

There were two finds, both recovered by metal detection in the subsoil. From Area 1, about 1m east of ditch [2078] there came a flat oval piece of lead, measuring 28mm by 32mm and 1.5mm thick. In one side there are two small indentations and a few tiny flecks of white calcareous material pressed into the lead.

From Area 3 there was a coin in the top of east to west ditch [4034]. It is a coin of Crispus 324-326 AD, with a camp gate on the reverse, ref Hill and Kent (1960) Number 4, Providen Tiaecaess.

4.4 The medieval and post-medieval pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The small pottery assemblage comprised six sherds with a total weight of 393g. Three sherds, weighing 377g came from a single context, (4004), fill of north south boundary [4005], another sherd from east west ditch (4092) [4093] and the remaining two came from (4105), the fill from east to west ditch [4104] in the west. The pottery was recorded using the conventions of the Leicestershire County type-series (Sawday 1994), as follows:

ST2: *Developed Stamford ware*, 1150 – 1250, context (4004) ditch [4005] 1 sherd, 9g.

EA6: *Post-medieval earthenwares*, late 17th century +, context (4004) 1 sherd, 358g.

The following, not in the Leicester type-series, were also noted:

Late Medieval Oxidized Ware, c ?AD1450-1550 (McCarthy 1979), contexts (4004) ditch [4005], 10g (4092) ditch [4093], 7g and (4105) ditch [4104], 9g. This material has a number of sources in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire. Fabric is generally very hard and grey, with weak to bright orange surfaces, sometimes with a poor quality green glaze. Moderate to dense subrounded quartz up to 1mm, with sparse rounded ironstone up to 2mm. Occasional calcareous fragments. Full range of late medieval/transitional vessel forms (Cisterns, 'fish dishes' etc). 1 sherd, 10g.

5 THE FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 The animal bone by Matilda Holmes

Methodology

Bones were identified using the author's reference collection, and further guidelines from Schmidt (1972). Due to anatomical similarities between sheep and goat, bones of this type were assigned to the category 'sheep/goat', unless a definite identification using guidelines from Prummel and Frisch (1986) or Payne (1985) could be made. Bones that could not be identified to species were, where possible, categorised according to the relative size of the animal represented (small – rodent /rabbit sized, medium – sheep / pig / dog size, or large – cattle / horse size). Ribs were not identified to species. All fragments were recorded.

Tooth wear and eruption were noted using guidelines from Grant (1982) and Silver (1969), as were bone fusion (Amorosi 1989, Silver 1969), metrical data (von den Driesch 1976), anatomy, side, zone (Serjeantson 1996), pathology, butchery, bone working and condition (Lyman 1994) of the bones.

Taphonomy, Condition and Carcass Representation

The bones were generally in good condition, although they were fragmentary and complete bones are uncommon. Other taphonomic factors affecting the material were recorded, 1% of the assemblage had been burnt, 8% recently broken, 10% showed signs of canid gnawing and 6% of fragments have butchery marks on them. Fifty-eight bone fragments could be refitted to make fourteen conjoined fragments.

The absence of sieved samples may lead to a negative bias in the number and variety of small mammals, fish and bird bones recorded in the assemblage.

Although the sample was very small, the anatomical elements found were more indicative of general food refuse than specific butchery, industrial or tanning waste as most fragments came from limb bones. There were no phalanges and very few vertebra, rib and skull fragments.

Species Representation

A total of 122 fragments were recorded, of which 48% could be identified to species. As Table 3 shows few bones were identified to species from the Iron Age phase (21 fragments), although cattle were found in the greatest quantities, but sheep/goat and horse were also present.

However, the majority of bones came from Roman contexts (46 identified fragments), of which cattle were the most common species found, but horse was also significant as were sheep/goat remains. Pigs were also present, but in much lower numbers, and dog.

The assemblage

Because of the small sample size, the assemblage cannot reveal any trends in diet, animal husbandry or economy for either period. However, the assemblage revealed the following: a late Iron Age horse metatarsal was used to calculate a wither height of 1.24 Mtrs (using indices from Keiswalter 1888) and two cattle metacarpals, from the earlier 1st to 2nd century Roman period were complete enough to be used to calculate shoulder heights, which were 1.13 and 1.09 Mtrs (using indices from Fock 1966).

Two cattle bones showed signs of pathological changes, from the 1st to 2nd century Roman period a metacarpal had eburnation on the distal aspect of the condyles – a condition typical of joint degradation, and the articular surface of a mandible from the 3rd to 4th century Roman period had a pronounced lip on the anterior aspect. Very little ageing data was recorded although all cattle, horse and sheep bones were fused, and the one cattle mandible complete enough to be used for tooth wear analysis gave a wear stage of 46 which would have come from an old animal.

Table 3: Species representation

Species	Iron Age	Roman
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	7	29
Sheep/goat (<i>Ovicaprid</i>)	3	4
Pig (<i>Sus</i>)		3
Horse (<i>Equus</i>)	3	8
Dog (<i>Canid</i>)		1
Total identified	12	46
Unidentified mammal	1	27
Unidentified large	7	25
Unidentified medium	1	3
Total	21	101

5.2 Charred plant macrofossils and other remains by Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

Excavations at Burton-on-the-Wolds revealed ditches, gullies and other discrete features of Roman date, samples 1 to 5 from the 1st to 2nd centuries AD, samples 6 and 7 from the 3rd to 4th centuries AD. Samples for the extraction of the plant macrofossils were taken from across the excavated area, and seven were submitted for assessment.

The samples were bulk floated by Northamptonshire Archaeology, and the flots were collected in a 500 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16, and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed on Table 4. Nomenclature within the tables follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern contaminants, including fibrous roots, seeds, leaves and arthropods, were present throughout.

Table 4: Plant macrofossils and other remains

Sample No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Context No.</i>	2017	2008	2029	2019	2000	4118	4105
<i>Feature No.</i>	2016	2009	2027	2018	2001	4117	4104
<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Ditch</i>
Cereals							
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grains)				xcf			
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)						x	
Cereal indet. (grains)			x	x			x
Herbs							
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	x						
<i>Bromus</i> sp.		x					
Other plant macrofossils							
Charcoal <2mm	x	x	x	x		x	
Charred root/stem		x	x				
Other materials							
Black porous 'cokey' material	x	x				x	
Black tarry material						x	x
Bone		xb					
Small coal frags.	x	x		x	x	x	x
Vitrified material	x	x			x		
Sample volume (litres)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Results

Plant macrofossils

Grains of barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and seeds of common cereal crop weeds (namely stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) and brome (*Bromus* sp.)) were present within all but sample 5. However, the density of material was exceedingly low, and only rarely did an assemblage contain more than one specimen. Preservation was very poor, with most of the grains being very badly puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures. Minute charcoal fragments were noted within five of the samples, and small pieces of charred root/stem were present in two.

Other materials

The fragments of black porous and tarry material may be residues of the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures. Other remains included a fragment of burnt bone, small pieces of coal and globules of vitrified material. However, it should be noted that, at the time of writing, it is not clear whether any of this material is contemporary with the features from which the samples were taken, or whether it may be intrusive within the contexts.

Summary

It would appear most likely that the few remains recovered from the assemblages are present as accidental inclusions within the feature fills. As there is no evidence for the primary deposition of refuse, it is assumed that the ditches and other features were not situated close to any centre of either domestic or agricultural activity.

6 THE ARCHIVE

The site records and artefacts will be deposited with the Leicestershire Museum Service with the Accession Number XA.164.2004. A summary report for this site will be submitted for publication to the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Table 5: Quantification of site archive

Contexts	Plans	Sections	Back and white photos	Colour slides	Digital photos	Artefacts
233	2	101	112	112	36 + 2 moving	flint flakes, pottery sherds, animal bone 1 coin, 1 lead object plant macrofossils

7 DISCUSSION

The site seems to have been on the margins of settlement, for both the late Iron Age and Roman periods, as there are a range of boundary ditches, with no evidence of domestic occupation in the immediate vicinity.

A late Iron Age ditch that was probably part of a ditched enclosure to the east and north-east that may have had a western entrance was the earliest evidence of occupation on the site. The possible entrance was later blocked. This period of activity is dated to the late pre-Roman Iron Age and to the early post-Conquest.

The late Iron Age enclosure was then overlain by a series of small plot or infield boundaries dated to the mid 1st century to early 2nd century AD. This would seem to indicate that a small farmstead was in the vicinity. The presence of the long lived shellyware, together with sherds dated to the Roman period, suggests a continuation of settlement even though the land divisions had changed. This does seem to be a relatively common pattern of early Roman occupation overlying or being adjacent to Iron Age settlement in the East Midlands (Taylor 2006, 111; Clay 2001, 4).

By the middle of the 3rd century AD the focus of activity seemed to have moved westward, possibly to the other side of the shallow valley, as indicated by the 3rd and 4th century quarry pits. Again, the low level of material remains shows that the settlement was further away to the west. The pottery is indicative of a low status small farming settlement, although the presence of

pottery such as the Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria and Lower Nene Valley colour coat indicate the links with trading routes.

There is little to indicate the nature of the local economy from the late Iron Age to the late Roman period. There are no finds associated with textiles or arable cultivation and very few animal bones. Neither are there personal objects that would indicate a fairly constant human presence, were the sites in fairly close proximity to settlement. Overall, the evidence would indicate that this was an area of low rural status throughout this period.

The medieval period comprised part of a long-lived system of field and plot boundaries on the edge of the medieval village. Evidence from the evaluation indicated that at least part of the three fields under investigation was subject to ridge and furrow cultivation.

The site was part of the agricultural landscape in this area during the Iron Age and Roman periods and remained so throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods until very recently.

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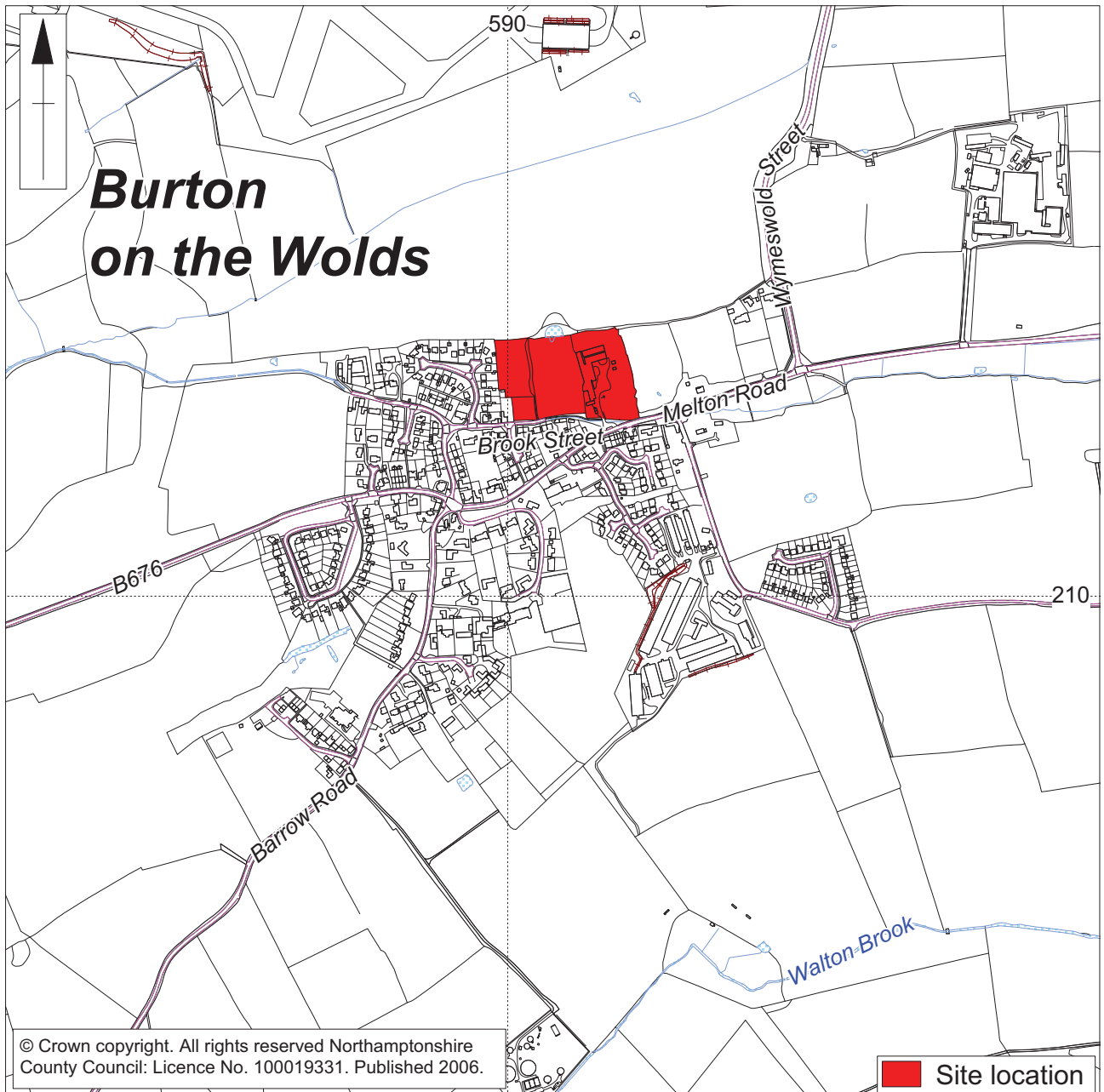
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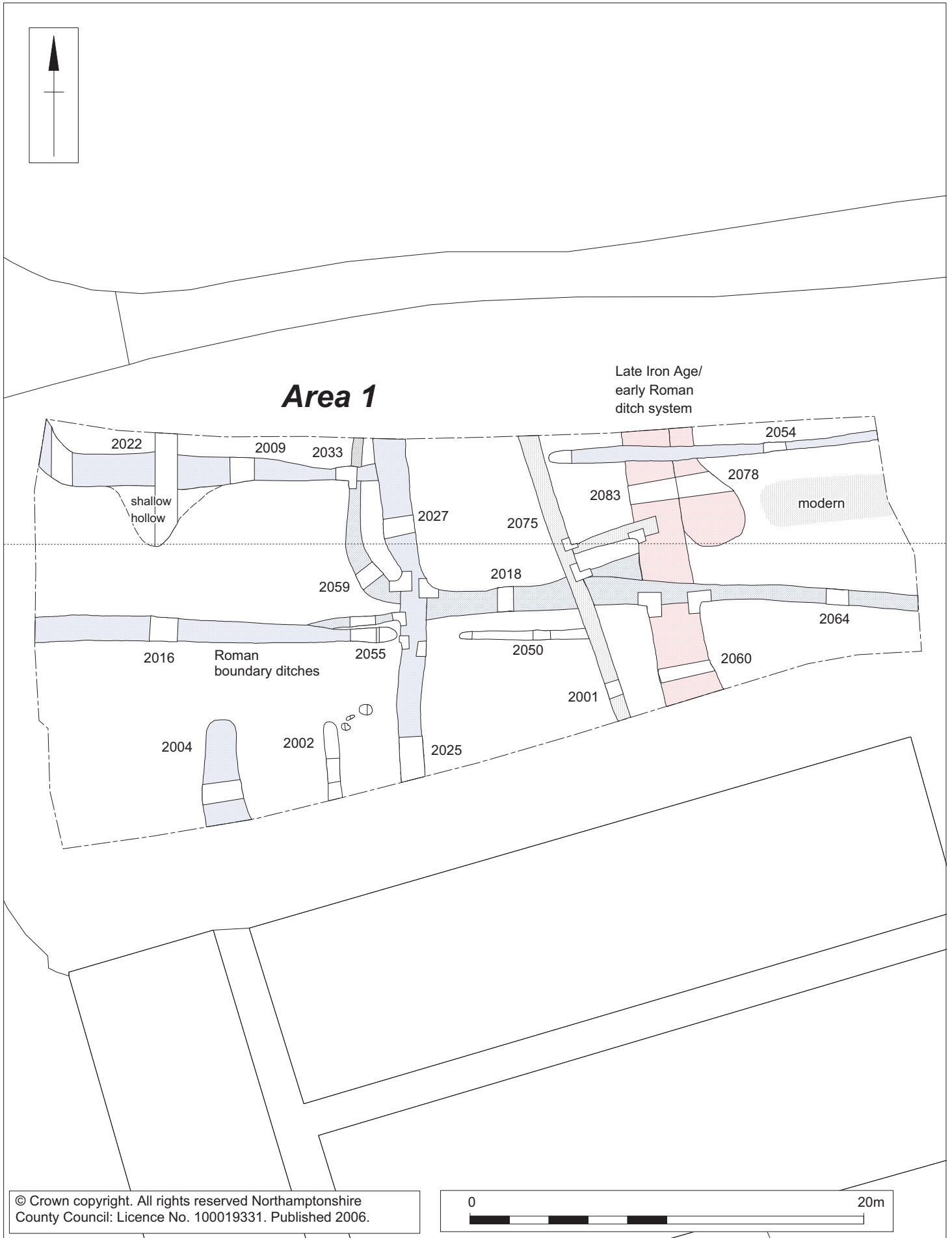
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Site location Fig 1

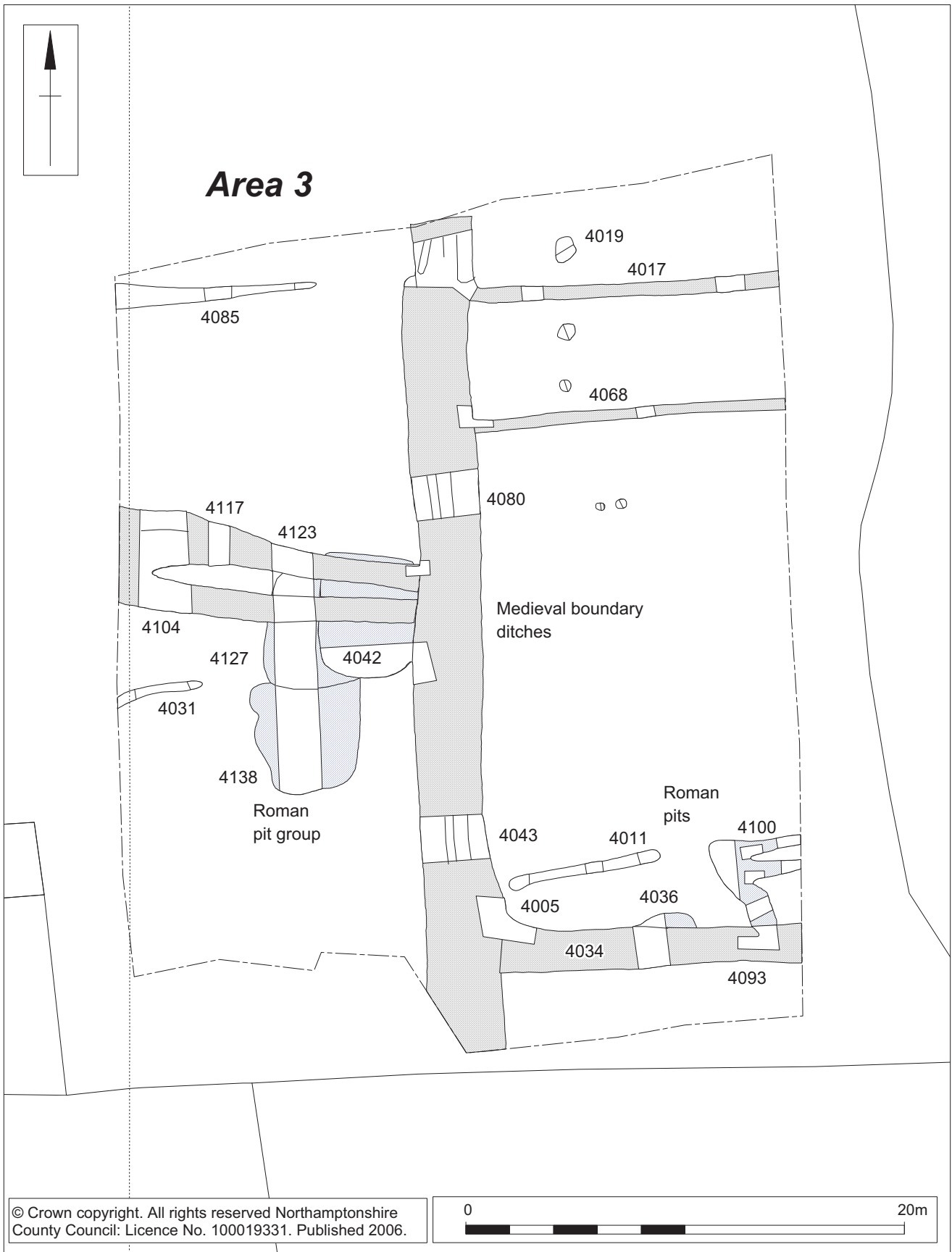
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The excavated areas
Fig 2





Area 1: Late Iron Age and early Roman ditches Fig 3



Area 3: Roman pit group and medieval ditches Fig 4



Plate 1: General view of Area 1, looking east



Plate 2: General view of Area 3, looking north

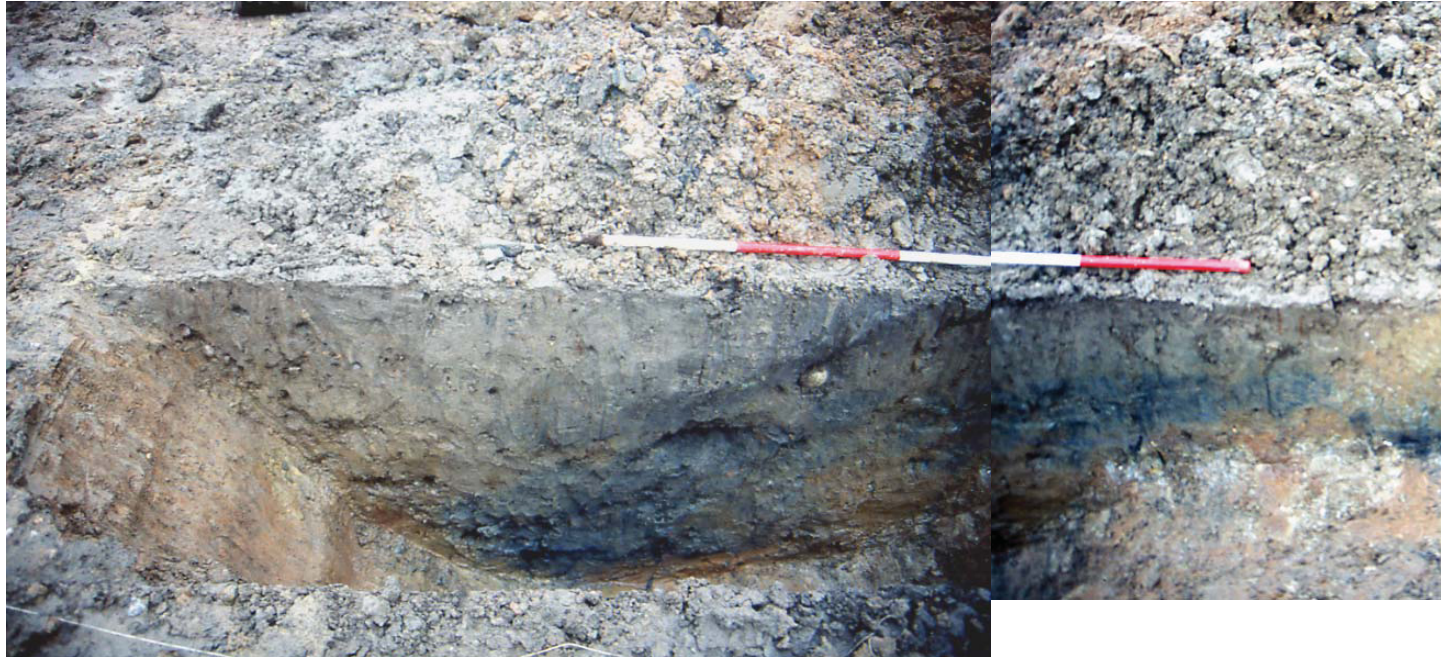


Plate 3: Area 1, section across late Iron Age/early Roman ditch system, original ditch [2078] (right, top edge overcut), recut [2080] (left), looking north



Plate 4: Area 1, corner of early Roman ditch [2059], looking south-east

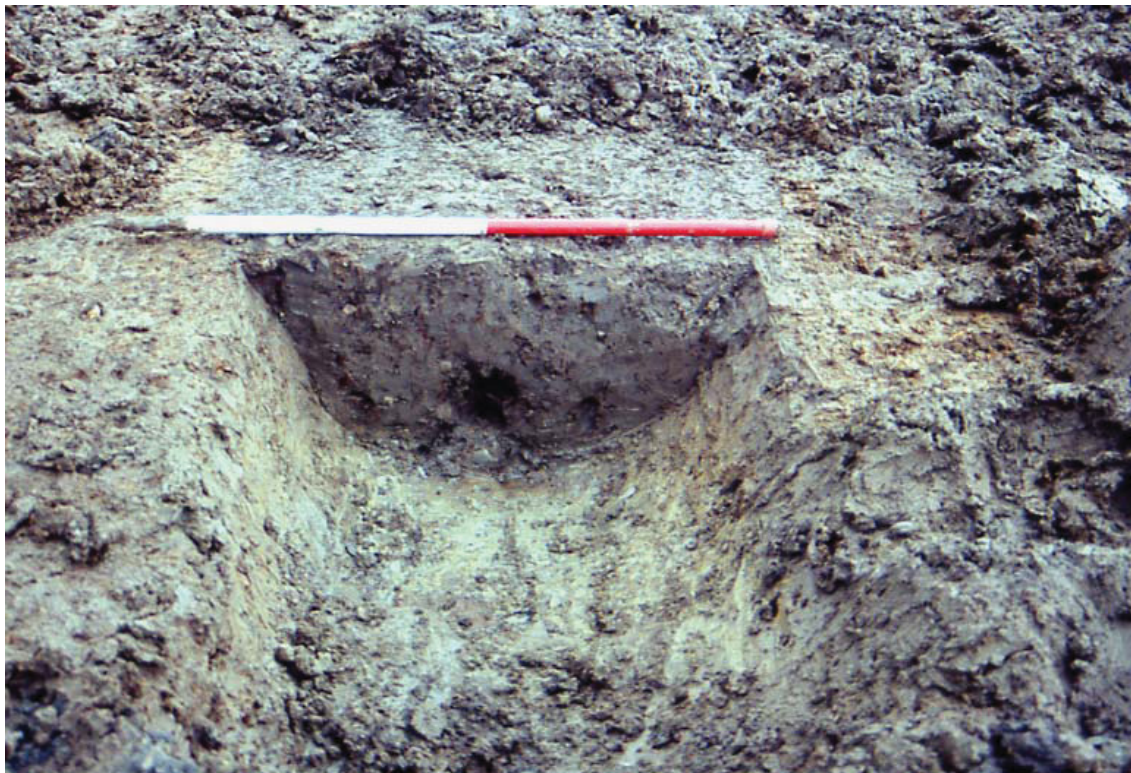


Plate 5: Area 1, Roman ditch [2064], looking east



Plate 6: Area 3, flooded Roman quarry pit [4127], and section across medieval ditch [4123] on right, looking west



Plate 7: Area 3, medieval ditch [4036], looking north-east



Plate 8: Area 3, medieval field boundary [4080], looking south



Plate 9: Area 3, medieval field boundary [4043], looking south