Northamptonshire County Council

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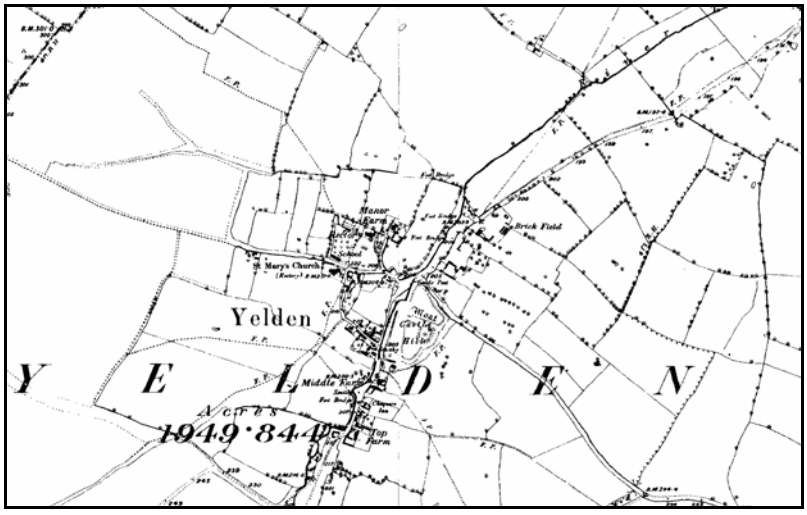
Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations at Spring Lane, Yelden, Bedfordshire

July 2003



NGR TL 0117 6708

Planning application no. 02/02231/FUL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological Investigations at Spring Lane Yelden Plots 1-3	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Archaeological investigations undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology acting on behalf of CgMs Consulting on land at Spring Lane, Yelden, Bedfordshire revealed a sequence of activity dating from the Neolithic. Principal features excavated revealed evidence for Iron Age /Roman land division, settlement and burial, Saxon and medieval land divisions and medieval industrial activity.	
Project type	Recording Action	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)		
Future work	Excavation of Plot 4	
Monument type and period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Neolithic/Bronze Age flint; Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval pottery, Human remains	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Spring Lane, Yelden, Bedfordshire	
Easting)	501170	
Northing	267080	
Height OD	65	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Bedfordshire County Council Heritage and Environment Section	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology / CgMs	
Director/Supervisor	Edmund Taylor	
Project Manager	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	May 2003	
End date	July 2003	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)**
Physical	BEDFM 2003.97	Pottery, flint, human remains, animal bone
Paper	BEDFM 2003.97	Site record (context sheets, drawings, photographs etc)
Digital	BEDFM 2003.97	Photographs, digital reports, spreadsheets
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title		
Serial title and volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT

SPRING LANE, YELDEN,

BEDFORDSHIRE

JULY 2003

Abstract

Archaeological investigations undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology acting on behalf of CgMs Consulting on land at Spring Lane, Yelden, Bedfordshire revealed a sequence of activity dating from the Neolithic. Principal features excavated revealed evidence for Iron Age / Roman land division, settlement and burial,middld/late Saxon and medieval land division, and medieval industrial activity.

This document includes a synthetic account of the results of the excavations together with detailed descriptions of the features excavated and supporting specialist reports. It is intended that the results will be incorporated with other works on the same site to produce an overarching sythesis.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological excavation covering approximately 0.25ha was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Spring Lane, Yelden Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0117 6708, Figs 1 and 2). The work was carried out ahead of the proposed development of the land comprising three detached dwellings (Planning Application No 02/02231/FUL). Plot 1 was located at the north end of the site and was separated from Plots 2 and 3 by Plot 4 which was not excavated during these works. It is envisaged that Plot 4 will be excavated at a later date.

The proposed development area is located in Yelden, at the extreme north end of Bedfordshire, east of Rushden. The site comprises terraced pasture sloping from north to south, with an average height of 65m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mainly Oxford Clay with some localised patches of sand and gravel.

The archaeological works were carried out following an evaluation undertaken by Bedfordshire Council Archaeological Service (BCAS 1999) in accordance with the Design Brief prepared by Bedfordshire County Council Heritage and Environment Section (BCCHES 2003) and a Project Design prepared by CgMs Consulting and Northamptonshire Archaeology (Yates and Dawson 2003).

2 BACKGROUND

The proposed development is sited within an area of archaeological sensitivity as illustrated by the results of previous archaeological work within the application area and the surrounding areas. An archaeological trial excavation of land immediately to the east, by Bedfordshire County Archaeological Service in 1992 (BCCAS 1992), demonstrated a long sequence of intermittent occupation from the late prehistoric through to the modern day.

An archaeological trial excavation was carried out in 1999 within the proposed development area. The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches in Plots 2 and 3 and between Plots 1 and 2. No investigation took place in Plot 1. These demonstrated activity from the Roman period to the modern day.

Immediately to the north west of the site is the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin, a predominantly 13th to 14th-century building (HER 1154). The earthworks of Yelden Castle and its associated features, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (HER 341), are situated approximately 150m to the east.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the archaeological excavation, as defined in the Design Brief, were to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The specific aims of the project were to:

- Determine the date and character of the Roman and Saxon activity on the site as suggested by the boundary features seen in Trenches 1 and 3 of the evaluation and the pits seen in Trench 1.

- Determine the date and character of the medieval activity at the site, particularly the post-built structure and the various cut features (boundary ditches, pits and postholes).

- Obtain a chronological sequence for the human activity on the site and to place it within its regional context.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Topsoil was removed, under intensive archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil was stripped to reveal the first significant archaeological layer or the natural substrate. Removed soil was handled by a wheeled dumper and stacked in the intervening plot between Plots 1 (Area A) and 2 (Area B). Baulks were left running across Plot 1 (Area A) to avoid modern active services.

A site grid was established at 5m intervals and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Where necessary the archaeological surface was cleaned by hand and planned at a scale of 1:50. All discrete features and approximately 5% of linear features were sectioned and the sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10, with context descriptions recorded on pro-forma sheets. A unique context number was allocated to each distinct deposit and feature.

Soil samples of 40 litres (where possible) were taken for flotation 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.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural substrate (048) was encountered between 0.60m and 0.45m below ground level. Across both Areas A and B this comprised mottled orange and grey clays and gravels with patches of orangey yellow sand. Area A was fairly flat and Area B sloped gently from the north-east to south-west. In the middle of the western edge of Area B the natural substrate sloped sharply, dropping approximately 0.50m. It is possible that this was due to human intervention. The following section gives a broad overview of the stratigigraphic sequence; detailed descriptions of individual features and specialist reports can be found in the Appendices.

Phase 1: Prehistoric activity

No features earlier than Iron Age were present; however a scatter of residual flint indicated a general level of background activity (see Thorne below). The majority of the flint assemblage (34 in total) dated to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age, with a small background presence of earlier material. The majority of the flint comprised debitage ie waste flakes and blades, which were generally small in size (under 250mm). Only a few of the flakes and retouched pieces were primary flakes, of the remainder, there were an equal proportion of secondary and tertiary flakes.

Phase 2: Iron Age/Roman activity

The earliest cut features on the site belonged to the Iron Age, and comprised a series of linear ditches, mostly aligned west northwest- east southeast, although some examples were set at right angles to these (Fig 3 and Fig 4, Sections 1-2). The largest was ditch [183] / [208]. This substantial feature was present in two segments, whose rounded terminals were separated by a gap of 1.2m, suggesting an entrance or gateway. Both ditches were broad and relatively shallow, with a series of fills suggesting rapid silting. The lower fills were more organic, although assessment of the samples did not reveal sufficient quantities of palaeoenvironmental indicators to make analysis viable. These features produced Iron Age ceramics together with some Roman material, probably intrusive.

At the extreme southern end of Area B, two ditches ([081] and [117]) meeting at a right angle may have formed the north-eastern corner of a enclosure (Fig 3 and Fig 4, Sections 3-6). The terminals of these ditches were bulbous. Posthole on the inner faces may indicate a palisade. Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from the fill of ditch [117]. Ditch [115] may indicate an internal division. Ditch [117] cut ditches [081] and [115], and may represent a recut, removing all trace of the original feature. Parallel ditches [119] and [121] led off to the northeast from the angle of the enclosure, possibly defining a track way or green way, although these could not be traced beyond an area of modern disturbance. This would imply an entrance to the enclosure in the eastern angle, although this has been blocked up by the later recutting, and possible extension, of ditch [117]. The possible track way and entrance in the corner may indicate that this enclosure related to stock management, either as a pound or as the corner of a larger field, although a fragment of lava quern recovered from the fill of ditch [119] would indicate that crop processing was being undertaken in the vicinity.

A penannular ditch [135], probably representing the eaves-drip gully of a roundhouse, was constructed over silted boundary ditches [208] and [183] (Fig 3 and Fig 5, Sections 8-12). It had an internal diameter of 8m. Two rounded termini on the northern edge of the ditch formed an entrance with a width of 1.2m facing west. The ditch was between 0.40m to 0.60m deep, and its width was between 1m and 1.15m, with a straight sides and a concave base. The primary fill consisted of sandy silt clay with frequent gravel inclusions (136), the secondary fill comprised similar material with fewer gravel inclusions and charcoal flecking in places (Fig 5). Late Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from these fills. A shallow slot

[235] located within the penannular ditch may have been part of the internal structure. It was filled with grey silty clay (236) which produced 2ndcentury AD pottery. Two otherwise undated postholes [158] (Fig 5, Section 9) and [230] were cut by the penannular ditch. The third posthole [232] had no direct relationship with the ditch and was undated but may have formed part of an internal structure.

A curvilinear ditch [156] with bulbous terminal at its western end had a fill (157/270) of dark brown silty sand, which contained Roman pottery (Fig 3 and Fig 4, Section 7). Subsequent to it's silting an inhumation burial [271] was inserted in the upper fills (Fig 6, Plate 1). The burial was probably female aged between 17 and 25 years. It was orientated head to the north east and feet to the south west. Both arms were flexed at the elbow, the left arm over the stomach, the right over the chest. Four, smooth water worn stones may have been intentionally placed in the grave. These were positioned to the left and right of the skull, beneath the left humerus and beneath the right foot (see Appendix 5). The fill of the grave (272) comprised a firm mid grey silty clay with occasional patches of charcoal flecking. Two sherds of 1st/2ndcentury Lower Nene Valley reduced ware were retrieved from this context.

Other activity included a number of small pits and postholes forming no discernable pattern.

The features belonging to this phase generally contained few finds, what assemblage there was, was dominated by ceramics (see Timby below), however even this assemblage was too small and lacking in diagnostic material to draw any very meaningful conclusions other than intimating occupation spanning the ?mid-later Iron Age through to the later 2nd- early 3rd century AD. The greatest concentration of activity appeared to be in the early Roman period but the incidence of sherds per feature was low and some pieces appear redeposited or possibly intrusive. The character of the assemblage might suggest a fairly low status rural occupation site. The animal bone assemblage (see Deighton below) was dominated by the major domesticates, which is expected for all the periods covered, the range of elements present suggests a domestic origin for the assemblage (eg kitchen refuse) as opposed to an industrial one.

Phase 3: Early/middle Saxon activity

Given the presence of some Maxey-type ware, it is suggested that activity probably only began in the middle Saxon period, sometime after *c* 650AD. Whilst several features produced early/middle Saxon pottery, it was often residual and only four features can be ascribed to a possible early/middle Saxon date (Fig 7).

Ditch [180] cut two shallow, otherwise undated gullies [178] (Fig 8, Section 14) and [242]. Ditch [180] ran north-west to south-east across Area B, it had steep sloping sides and a narrow flat base (Fig 8 section 13). The upper fill (182/241) produced eight sherds of early/middle Saxon pottery, perhaps indicating an early date of origin and backfilling and an early origin for the layout of this part of the village. However, given the small sample of the ditch examined and low levels of pottery present on the site in general, the pottery could have been residual, with the ditch system having a later origin and use, perhaps broadly contemporary with the medieval boundary ditches to the north. This argument might be supported by the appearance of the same alignment line in a modern day plot boundary to the east. It may also be noted that ditch [180] lies 50m (or 10 rods) south of the medieval boundary ditches to the north, in Area A, suggesting that they all formed part of a related boundary system.

A pit [143] also probably dates to this period. This generally sparse level of activity probably relates to agricultural practices.

Phase 4: Late Saxon and medieval boundary ditches

A soil layer accumulated over parts of the site (or the whole site, but with later truncation), during the late Saxon and medieval periods (067), (078), (177) and (202). This was associated with a series of shallow ditches, mostly seen in Area A, with one example in Area B. The bulk of these were aligned northwest-southeast, [024], [026], [028], [030], [065], [076] and [079], some of which were overlain by the soil horizon while some cut through it (Fig 9 and Fig 10, Sections 15-17). They produced pottery dating from the middle Saxon period through to the 14th century, often from the same feature, with occasional sherds of residual Roman pottery. The fills of these features were very similar to, and probably derived from, the plough soil.

Ditch [012] can be seen as a boundary feature and was curvilinear in plan (Fig 9 and Fig 10, Sections 18-19). It ended in a rounded terminal and cut pits [165], [167] and [014] and posthole [018]. It probably dates from the 14th century at the earliest and may signal the establishment of a property division on what had been an arable field in Area A; a sub-circular pit [04] was cut at its south-western end. North-east to south-west aligned ditches [020] and [059] may also be a boundary features. Ditch [059] was cut by the north-west to south-east aligned ditches, but produced no dating evidence (Fig 10 section 17), ditch [020] cut them (Fig 10 section 22), and was in turn cut by possible boundary ditch [044] (fig 9, Fig 10 section 21).

The pottery assemblage (see Blinkhorn below) indicates virtually unbroken activity at the site from the middle Saxon period to around the end of the 14th century, although the late Saxon pottery appeared to be under-represented and often found in later features. The assemblage for these features incorporated a wide range of material including Roman wares, presumably deriving from reworking of earlier deposits. The majority of the pottery dates to the early medieval period, or the mid-late 14th century. It seems likely that the site was abandoned at some time in the latter period. A single piece of iron slag from the fill of posthole [018] may indicate metal working in the vicinity.

The animal bone assemblage (see Deighton below) was dominated by the major domesticates, which is expected for this period. As with Phase 2 material, the range of elements present suggests a domestic origin for the assemblage (eg kitchen refuse) as opposed to an industrial one. The charred plant remains identified include common crop and weed species (see Deighton below), indicative of crops being brought onto the site rather than being grown there. This would indicate that the primary purpose of the ditches or furrows was to aid drainage rather than for crop production.

The density of these features is indicative of an environment in which cut features became rapidly silted and required constant maintenance or replacement. This constant reworking of the deposits would also account for the very mixed pottery assemblages retrieved from these features.

Phase 5: Medieval industrial activity

Activity in this phase was restricted to Area B. No occupation features were apparent, but evidence for industrial activity was present. In the northeast part of Area B was a small oven or kiln, associated with a slot and a number of posthole, perhaps indicative of an insubstantial structure (Fig 11).

The oven was constructed in two ovoid pits [175] and [189], both cutting the plough soil (177). Two posthole, [188] and [203], were cut into the base of [175]. The cut for the oven [171] was also an ovoid pit, lined with scorched chalky clay (172) forming a horseshoe shape with an opening to the east, the internal dimensions of which were 0.4m by 0.45m. The primary fill (173) was nearly identical, and may represent the oven floor or collapse from the

roof, this produced 12th-century pottery. The secondary fill (174) was relatively clean, a spread of chalky clay to the east (255) probably derived from redeposition of oven material. The oven was cut by a shallow pit [191] (Fig 12, Plate 2). Pit [175] may represent an earlier oven, superseded by structure [171]; its fill (176) contained quantities of charcoal and burnt clay indicating that industrial activity was taking place in the vicinity prior to the construction of [171].

To the west and south of the oven a slot [252] and a line of postholes [258], [228], [256], 226], [222], [224], [222], [220], [218], [216] and [214] may represent the remains of a structure, either a fence line or windbreak.

At the south end of Area B a posthole [198], a small pit [196] and a stake hole [200] were cut onto the buried soil (202). A fragmentary Iron Age vessel was retrieved from the fill of [198], (199). These features were overlain by a series of dumps of burnt material (193), (194) and 195). The pottery from the dumps varied from the Iron Age to the middle Saxon periods; however their stratigraphic position suggests a medieval date. The presence of Iron Age and Roman pottery indicates they probably derive from the redeposition of material from earlier contexts, perhaps as part of an attempt to raise the ground surface in this boggy part of the site, perhaps due to problems with water-logging or flooding.

As previously, the animal bone assemblage (see Deighton below) was dominated by the major domesticates probably of domestic origin. As in Phase 4 the charred plant remains are indicative of late stage processing, not crops being grown on site. It is possible that the oven formed part of this process, perhaps used as a drier.

Phase 6: Post-medieval and modern Activity

Various post-medieval and modern features were encountered across the site, generally relating to recent buildings and services (some still active). Two pits [057] and [105] produced 17th-century pottery.

Features of Uncertain Phase

A number of features across the site were not datable on either stratigraphic or artefactual grounds; these generally comprised postholes or small pits, and did not form any particular patterns indicating structures or areas of particular activity.

6 DISCUSSION

The excavations at Spring Lane Yelden have revealed a sequence of activity dating from the Neolithic to the present day, concentrated during the Roman and medieval periods, although background levels of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity, Iron Age occupation and evidence for Saxon agriculture were also identified. Although the excavation revealed a long sequence of activity, the excavated area was too small to allow much to be said about overall patterns of occupation or the landscapes within which the activities occurred.

The Iron/Age Roman activity can be seen as following the models of activity described elsewhere (eg Knight 1984, Dawson 2000), however, given the limited area excavated, it is not possible to determine where the Yelden site fits into Knights classification of settlement forms (Knight 2004, 168-257). The features identified are typical of the period, with ditches, pits and a drip gully from a round house. Although in the case of the round house, the entrance would have been unusual in that it faced west, rather than the more normal easterly or south-easterly direction. Whilst initial Iron Age / Roman activity comprised boundary features, this was superseded by the round house and a single burial. It is worth noting that the roundhouse was constructed over an entrance, situated between two silted up ditch terminals, whilst the grave was inserted across the fill of another silted up ditch. Both events can be seen as deliberate closure, with a rural activity being replaced by a more domestic context; the presence of a dwelling and the placement of an ancestor being powerful statements of ownership and belonging.

The character of the finds assemblage from this period is poor, indicating a low status rural site, with little evidence for imported material until the Roman period. Unfortunately, there was insufficient evidence preserved in the deposits excavated to determine much in the way of the palaeoeconomy of the site during this period.

Activity in the early/middle Saxon period was at a relatively low level, as evidenced by the boundary ditch. During the later Saxon and medieval periods a plough soil built up across the site associated with a series of shallow ditches. This phase probably ceased by the 14th century. In the southern part of the site a small oven was constructed situated within a fenced enclosure. There was no evidence for any occupation in either of the two areas during the Saxon and medieval periods, either in the form of structural remains or rubbish pits. It seems likely that this part of the village, despite its central location between the castle and the church, was not subsequently developed until at least the early post-medieval period; there was no sign of any structures on the portion of the Spring Lane frontage excavated in Area B. The first edition Ordnance Survey map (front cover) shows houses are aligned along parts of the eastern side of Spring Lane (including the frontage of Plot 1 which lay outside the current excavation area), with the rear of Plot 1 and all of Plots 2 and 3 shown as undeveloped.

Plot 4 is due for development and pre-emptive excavation, which is to be undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology. Although this will be the subject of a separate report for planning purposes, it is intended that the results will be incorporated into an overarching report covering all works on the site which will be submitted for publication to *Bedfordshire Archaeology*.

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APPENDICES

A1: DETAILED FEATURE DESCRIPTIONS

Phase 2: Iron Age / Roman activity

Table 3: Phase 2: Iron Age/Roman feature descriptions

Area A	
Postholes / pits	
Posthole [006]	One posthole or small pit [006], 0.19m in diameter, with sharp sides and a concave base, 0.09m deep, contained a single fill of dark green-grey silty clay (007), which produced a fragment of Roman *imbrex* tile.
Area B	
Ditches	
Ditch [208] Recut [205]	Substantial linear [208] 2.6m wide, with irregular sloping sides to a flattish base 0.9m deep and terminated in a rounded terminal at its eastern end. Primary fill (213) comprised redeposited gravel 0.15m deep, with secondary fills (212) and (211) of sandy silt, all resulted from sedimentation. A single piece of unworked timber was recovered from context (212). A small recut was present along the southern edge [205], 0.85m wide, U-shaped in profile and 0.28m deep, with fills of sandy silty clay (206) and (207). Further alluviation then infilled the remainder of the main ditch, overlying the recut (210) and (209). Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery was retrieved from these contexts.
Ditch [183] Recut [186]	Ditch [183] continued the same alignment as [208] to the east, 2.2m wide, with sloping sides to a flat base 0.45m deep. It had a rounded terminal at its western end, separated by a small gap 0.80m from the eastern end of [208]. It contained two fills of silty clay, primary fill (183) and secondary fill (184). The southern terminal was excavated as ditch [273] and revealed a more complex sequence of fills, primary fill of dark grey organic clay (274/5) overlain by mid orange brown silty clay (276) and mid brown clay (277). Context 276 produced late Iron Age / early Roman pottery. A small recut [186] was present along the northern side. It was shallow U-shaped in section, 0.7m wide, 0.27m deep, with a single fill of sandy clay (187). Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery was collected from these contexts. These ditches represent part of substantial boundary feature, the gap between the terminals perhaps forming an entrance. The feature was subject to rapid silting, and although some effort at maintenance seems to have been made with shallow recutting, the evidence would suggest that it soon fell out of use.
Ditch [156]	A curvilinear ditch 0.55m wide, concave in profile 0.08m deep, which ended in a shallow, bulbous, irregular terminal. It was filled with dark grey sandy clay (157), which produced early Roman pottery; a single sherd of 12th century pottery from its terminal was probably intrusive. The ditch was cut by ditch [169] and grave cut [271].
The Penannular Ditch	

Ditch [135]	A penannular ditch [135] was located approximately in the middle of Area B, cutting Phase 1 ditches [208] and [183]. It had an internal diameter of 8m and two rounded termini on the northern edge of the ditch formed an entrance with a width of 1.20m. Five sections were excavated across the ditch. These showed that the depth ranged from 0.40m to 0.60m and its width was between 1m and 1.15m. This was not true of the south-west section of the ditch which narrowed to 0.73m and was only 0.23m deep. Generally, the profile of the ditch had steep almost straight sides with a narrow concave base. In places there was an almost vertical break of slope towards the bottom of the ditch. Two fills were identified in four of the five excavated sections [135 / 138 / 153 / 160]. The primary fill (136 / 139 / 154 / 161) consisted of sandy silt clay with frequent gravel inclusions (136), the secondary fill (137 / 140 / 155 / 162) comprised similar material with fewer gravel inclusions and charcoal flecking in places (137). Late Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from these contexts. In the south-west section of the ditch [145], only the primary fill (146) was present. This allied to the fact that this section was much narrower and shallower than the rest of the ditch suggested some kind of truncation, possibly levelling of the ground. It is likely that this feature represents a drip gully for a roundhouse. A shallow slot [235] located within the penannular ditch may have been part of the internal structure. It was filled with grey silty clay (236) which produced 2ndcentury pottery.
Postholes / pits	
Postholes [158], [230] and [232]	Three postholes or shallow pits were located in the immediate vicinity of the penannular ditch. These ranged in depth from 0.20m to 0.50m and were between 0.40m and 1.10m in diameter Two otherwise undated postholes [158] and [230] were cut by the penannular ditch. The third posthole [232] had no direct relationship with the ditch and was undated but may have represented part of the internal structure along with slot feature [235].
Possible enclosure	
Ditches [81] and [117]	Two ditches, [81] and [117] may mark the north-eastern corner of a small enclosure. Ditch [081] was 0.9m wide, concave in profile, 0.16m deep, filled with dark brown sandy clay (082). Ditch [117] had steep sloping sides and a concave base, 1.1m wide, 0.38m deep, and was filled with silty clay (118), its terminal cut ditch [81], together perhaps forming the eastern angle of a rectangular enclosure. Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from the fill of ditch [117]. The terminals of these ditches were bulbous, and small postholes were present on the internal faces ([113] and 111]), possibly indicating the presence of a palisade. The terminal of ditch [117] was excavated as cut [125], fill (126), the terminal of ditch [081] was excavated as cut [107] fill (108).
Ditch [115]	Ditch [115] had steep sloping sides and a concave base and was filled with silty clay (116), this produced a single sherd of early/middle Saxon pottery (intrusive).

Ditches [119] and [121]	Two parallel ditches aligned northeast-southwest. Ditch [119] had gently sloping sides to a flat base, and measured 0.80m wide by 0.18m deep. The fill (120) comprised dark greyish brown silty clay which produced fragments of quern stone but no pottery. It was on a similar alignment as ditch [121] and ended in a rounded terminal which abutted ditch [117]. Ditch [121] had a shallow concave profile, 0.5m wide and up to 0.24m deep. The single fill (122) was dark grey sandy silt which produced a single piece of .burnt flint. Pit [133] cut ditch [121], it was ovoid in plan, 0.9m across, with sloping sides and a flat base 0.3m deep. The fill (134) of mid grey-brown sandy silty clay produced late Iron Age / early Roman pottery.
Other features	
Ditch [156] / [269]	Curvilinear ditch with bulbous terminal at western end. It had a single fill (157/270) of dark brown silty sand, which produced Roman pottery.
Human Burial 1	
Burial [271]	A single human burial was encountered which cut ditch [269], the grave cut [271] was aligned north east to south west, and was trapezoidal in shape, 1.9m long, 0.82m wide at the head end and 0.6m wide at the foot and 0.2m deep. It had straight sides and rounded ends and a flat base. The shallowness was due to truncation from a modern pond. The south east and west edges sloped gradually while the northern edge was almost vertical running to a flat base. The skeleton (HB 1) was of a possible female aged between 17 and 25. She was orientated head to the north east and feet to the south west. Both arms were flexed at the elbow, the left arm over the stomach, the right over the chest. Four, smooth water worn stones may have been intentionally placed in the grave. These were positioned to the left and right sides of the skull, beneath the left humerus and beneath the right foot (see Appendix 5). The fill of the grave (272) comprised a firm mid grey silty clay with occasional patches of charcoal flecking. Three sherds of 1st/2ndcentury pot were retrieved from this context.

Phase 3: Early middle Saxon activity

Table 4: Phase 3: Early/middle Saxon feature descriptions

Area B	
Ditches	
Ditch [180 / 239] Gullies [178] and [242]	Ditch [180 / 239] ran north west to south east across Area B. It had steep sloping sides and a narrow flat base, 2.4m wide and 0.77m deep. Two fills were identified within the ditch. The primary fill was sandy silt clay with occasional gravel inclusions (181 / 240). The upper fill was similar but had a greater gravel content and occasional charcoal flecking (182 / 241) and early-middle Saxon pottery. Ditch [180] cut two shallow, otherwise undated gullies [178] and [242].
Pits	

Pit [143]	Pit [143] was circular in plan, 1.1m in diameter and concave in profile, 0.21m deep. The single fill of dark grey sandy clay (144) produced early/mid Saxon pottery. This pit cut penannular ditch [135].

Phase 4: Late Saxon and medieval boundary ditches

Table 5: Phase 4: Late and medieval feature descriptions

Area A	
Buried Soil	
Buried soil (067) / (078)	At the extreme southern end of Area A was an intermittent spread of buried soil. The layer to the south east corner of the site (078) was mid greyish brown silty clay which was approximately 0.25m deep. The layer to south west corner of the site (067) was lighter brown silty clay and was on average 0.20m deep. Its maximum surviving depth across the site was 0.32m. Layer (067) overlay ditches [076] and [079]. It was cut by ditches [065], [028] recut [030] and posthole [72]. Layer (078) was cut by ditches [026] recut [024] and [028] recut [030].
Ditches	
Ditch [059]	A ditch with shallow sloping sides to concave base, 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep. A single fill (060) of mid grey sandy clay-silt produced no finds. It ended in rounded terminal to the west, where its upper edge was cut by ditch [028], and may have continued to the south at a right angle as ditch [079], although later ditch [065] obscured the relationship between them. Ditch [059] was cut by ditches [029] and [065].
Ditch [079]	A ditch with a shallow U-shaped profile, 1m wide, 0.55m deep. The single fill [080] dark grey-brown sandy silt produced no finds. The ditch underlay the plough soil (067) and was cut by ditch [065].
Ditch [026] Recut [024]	A sinuous linear which cut plough soil (078), cut [026] had a sharply sloping side to the east, a shallower side to the west and a flat base, 0.7m wide, 0.5m deep. It was filled with a single fill of grey-brown silty clay (027) containing a single sherd of middle Saxon pottery. It continued south of the baulk as cut [068], fill (069), which produced two sherds of Roman and 1 sherd of middle Saxon pottery. Whilst the pottery is early, its stratigraphic position implies a later date. The recut to the west [024] was 0.4m wide, with shallow sloping sides and a concave base 0.3m deep, and contained a single fill of grey-brown silty clay (025). This was indistinguishable at its boundary from (027). Middle Saxon and 12th/14th century pottery was retrieved from this feature. It continued south of the baulk as cut [070], fill (071). Ditch [026] was cut by ditch [020].

Ditches [028] and [030]	These two shallow ditches cut the plough soil (067) and (078) Both were concave in profile, and had undifferentiated fills (029) and (031) of mid grey-brown silty clay. Ditch [028] was 0.45m wide and 0.4m deep, ditch [030] was 0.5m wide and 0.21m deep. It is probable that this feature represented two features (ditch / furrow and recut), on the same alignment, although the order could not be determined due to the similarity of their fills. No finds were produced from either. They continued to the north as ditches [061] and [063]; fills (062) and (064). Both were cut by ditch [020].
Gully [049]	Gully [049] was a discontinuous, ephemeral feature. It was approximately 0.40m wide and ranged in depth from 0.13m to 0.05m. It had steep sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (50) comprised mid grey sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecking, this produced a single sherd of 12th century.
Ditch [065]	A sinuous linear ditch with a shallow U-shaped profile, measured 0.76m wide by 0.3m deep. It contained a single fill (066) of grey sandy silty clay with generally 13th to 15th century pottery and a single sherd of early/mid Saxon ware. It continued as cut [042] fill (043) and cut [079] fill (080) and cut plough soil (67) and ditches [059] and [079].
Ditch [076]	A sinuous linear ditch with a shallow U-shape profile, measuring 1.1m wide by 0.35m deep. A single fill (077) of dark grey-brown sandy silt with 12th to 16th century pottery and a residual Roman sherd. It continued as cut [051] fill (052), and underlay plough soil (067).
Ditch [020]	A shallow linear with sloping sides and a flattish base, 0.76m wide, 0.3m deep. A single fill (021) of dark brown silty clay produced Roman and 10th to 14th century pottery. Ditch [020] cut ditches [024], [026], [030] and [028].
Ditch [012]	A curvilinear ditch, irregular in plan with a shallow concave profile and rounded termini at either end, measured 1.3m wide by 0.54m deep. The single fill (013) of dark green-grey silty clay with Roman and 12th - 16th century pottery. This feature cut pits [014], [165] and [167] and posthole [018].
Ditch [044]	A narrow linear ditch with a U-shaped profile, measured 0.46m wide by 0.29m deep, with single fill (045) of dark grey silty clay which produced no finds. Ditch [044] cut ditch [020].
Postholes / pits	
Posthole [018]	Small posthole [018], 0.19m diameter with sharp sides to a rounded base. The single fill of orange grey silty clay produced 14th century pottery.
Pit [004]	An ovoid pit, bowl-shaped in profile, 1.4m wide and 0.53m deep, contained a single fill (005) of blue-grey silty clay which contained 14th to 16th century pottery.
Pit [014]	Irregular pit, 1.1m by 0.45m, 0.2m deep, whose single fill (015) of pale grey silty clay contained 14th century pottery.
Pit [165]	Sub-circular pit, 1.05m across, sloping sides to concave base, 0.4m deep. Single fill of dark grey silty clay (166).

Pit [167]	A sub-circular pit measured 0.65m diameter by 0.9m deep, with stepped sides and a convex base, contained a single fill of dark grey silty clay (168) dated to the 14th century.
Pit [032]	An irregular shaped pit measured 2.30m wide by 0.45m deep. It had gently sloping sides and a flat base. The fill was dark greenish grey silty clay (033) which produced 48 sherds of 10th to 16th century pottery. A small bone die (SF1) was also retrieved from a soil sample of this context during the post excavation process. It was possible it represented a number of intercutting pits but the similarity of fills made this impossible to determine.
Area B	
Saxo-Norman plough soil	
Soil (202) / (177)	At the extreme southern end of Area B there was a buried soil layer (202), which overlay ditches [81] and [115], and comprised dark grey silty loam. In the north east quarter of the site there was a buried soil (177), this comprised a dark grey silty loam which was at least 0.40m deep but became thinner and patchy to the south.
Ditches	
Ditch [169]	This ditch measured 0.80m wide by 0.50m deep and had steep sides and a narrow concave base. The fill (170) was light brown silty clay which contained one sherd of early middle Saxon pottery and one sherd of 10th to 12th century pottery. Ditch [169] cut ditch [156].
Postholes	
Postholes [089] and [095]	Two postholes in the southern part of Area B ([089] and [095]) contained 12th century pottery. Posthole [089] was circular, 0.46m in diameter by 0.2m deep, with a bowl shaped profile. It had a single fill of dark brown silty clay loam (090). Posthole [095] was circular in profile, 0.47m in diameter by 0.32m deep, with straight near vertical sides to a flat base. The single fill (096) was dark grey-brown silty clay.

Phase 5: Medieval industrial activity

Table 6: Phase 5: Medieval industrial feature descriptions

Area B	
The Oven	
Oven	Cut into the Saxo-Norman plough soil (177) were three small pits or postholes [189], [203] and [188]. Posthole [189] was irregular in plan with a diameter of 0.77m and a depth of 0.22m; it was filled with dark grey silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking (190). Posthole [203] was sub circular in plan with a diameter of 0.70 and was 0.37m deep. This was also filled with dark grey silty clay with charcoal flecking and pieces up to 0.02m (204). Posthole [188] was circular with a diameter of 0.34m and a depth of 0.13m. It was filled with dark grey silty loam which had patches of red and orange mottling and frequent inclusions of burnt clay and charcoal pieces up to 0.05m. This was identical to the fill of pit [175] which overlay or cut [188]. Cutting posthole [189], pit [175] was irregular in plan, between 1.10m and 0.95 across by 0.20m deep. The fill (176) was a dark grey silty loam with red and orange mottling and frequent inclusions of charcoal and burnt clay/daub pieces up to 0.05m. Inserted into pit [175] was an oven structure [171], built within an ovoid cut which measured 1.30m long, 1.45m wide by 0.20m - 0.25m deep, the oven was formed of light orangey brown firm clay with abundant chalky burnt daub inclusions and patches of pink scorching (172). Deposit (172) was 0.30m thick and formed a rough horseshoe shape in plan and contained 12th century pottery. Within this structure was a layer of almost identical material (173), 0.20m deep which also produced 12th century pottery. This latter layer may have represented a lining in the base of the oven, or demolition / collapse of material from the oven walls and roof. A spread of similar demolition material extended from the oven approximately 3m to the east (255). Overlying (173) but respecting the line of the oven wall formed by (172) was a thin 0.05m thick layer of dark brown silty loam (174). This contained occasional charcoal flecks and pieces of burnt clay/daub. Cutting the east side of layer (174) was an irregular shallow pit [191], which measured 1m in diameter by 0.15m deep, and contained a single fill (192) of dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and produced single sherds of Roman middle Saxon pottery, both thought to be intrusive. To the north west of oven [171] there was a small dump of burnt orange clay (254). This was sub-circular, approximately 0.02m deep and had a diameter of 0.40m. It produced no finds.
Ditch [252]	A linear ditch or gully on a north west to south east alignment. It had gently sloping sides and a narrow concave base. It was 0.52m wide and 0.19m deep and contained a single fill (253) of mid brown orange silty clay which produced no finds.

Posthole alignment	Postholes [218], [220], [222], [224], [226], [228], [256] and [258] formed a north-west to south east alignment. Posthole [226] produced one sherd of 12th century pottery. Although pit [214] and posthole [216] were to the north west of this main grouping but were approximately on the same alignment. One sherd of 13th century pottery was retrieved from fill (215) of [214]. The postholes ranged in depth from 0.06m to 0.40m and were between 0.30m and 1.05m in diameter. All were filled with mid or dark grey silty clay with occasional incidences of charcoal flecking.
Postholes [246], [248] and [250]	A second group of three postholes comprised postholes [246] fill (247), [248] fill (249) and [250] fill (251). This was a dispersed group to the north and south of ditch [252].
Spread of Burnt Material	
Spread	Cut into the Saxo-Norman buried soil was a pit or posthole [198] which had a diameter of 0.40m and a depth of 0.10m, filled with dark grey silty clay with a high amount of burnt clay/daub and frequent charcoal flecking (199) and a fragments from an iron age vessel. A sub-rectangular pit [196] also cut the buried soil, filled with mottled grey and dark yellow silty clay with occasional inclusions of burnt clay/daub (197). Also cutting the buried soil was a small stake hole [200] which measured 0.07m in diameter by 0.05m deep, and was filled with dark yellow silty clay (201). Overlying all of these features was a sub-circular spread of burnt material which measured 2.70m in diameter, the material probably filling a very slight depression in the buried soil. This spread comprised three distinct layers of dumping; (193), (194) and (195). Deposit (195) appeared to be the earliest deposit of the sequence. This comprised dark orangey grey silty clay with frequent burnt clay and charcoal flecking with Roman pottery. Deposit (194) was dark grey and orange mottled silty clay which contained no finds. The latest deposit (193) comprised largely burnt clay/daub pieces in greyish brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecking and had one sherd of middle Saxon pottery. Due to the lack of scorching from the surrounding and underlying soil (202), it would suggest that these deposits were removed from elsewhere on site a used to fill a slight hollow The pottery retrieved from this series of deposits varied from the Iron Age to the middle Saxon periods, however its stratigraphic position suggests a medieval date. The pottery probably derived from the redeposition of earlier contexts, perhaps as part of an attempt to raise the ground in this boggy part of the site.

Phase 6: Post-medieval and modern Activity

Table 7: Phase 6: Post-medieval and modern feature descriptions

Area A	
Drains [002], [278] and [279]	Running across Area A on a south west to north east alignment were three drains ([002], [278] and [279])
Wall [281]	Mortar bonded stone wall [281] associated with modern china and glass (not retained), and probably represented a recently demolished building.
Disturbance (284)	There was an area of disturbed ground at the north end of Area A (284). This truncated ditch [012] and was truncated by drain [002]. The disturbance comprised a 0.4m thick mottled grey and orange silty clay.
Pit [057]	A slightly irregular ovoid pit with almost vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled with dark grey and orange mottled silty clay with occasional charcoal flecking [058] and a single sherd of 17th century pottery.
Area B	
Pit [105]	A sub rectangular 'slot' shaped pit with a concave base. It was 1.30m long, 0.45m wide and 0.40m deep. Its fill (106) was dark bluish grey silty clay which produced 1 sherd of 17th century pottery.
Modern pit	At the north east side of the site there was a small refuse pit containing 20th century household debris. This included glass bottles, tin cans, scrap metal and china (not retained).
Spread (280)	Approximately in the centre of Area B was a spread of brownish grey silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions (280). It was irregular in shape and measured 12m long, 7m wide and approximately 0.40m deep. It is probable that this spread represented the consolidation of soft ground resulting from a natural spring or wet hollow. When this layer was mechanically removed during excavation water was seen to well up from the underlying ground. Two postholes [147] and [150] cut this layer.
Boundary (282)	At the south end of Area B there was a possible former hedge line or robbed out wall (282). This comprised a spread of mixed mortar and clay with china and glass (not retained), which was 7m long, 2m wide and of undetermined depth.
Topsoil and Subsoil	The topsoil and subsoil were fairly uniform across both Areas A and B. The topsoil (046) comprised a dark brownish grey silty clay loam which was generally between 0.30m and 0.35m thick. The subsoil (047) comprised mid greyish brown silty clay and was generally between 0.25m and 0.35m deep.

Features of Uncertain Phase

Table 8: Unphased feature descriptions

Area A	
Postholes / pits	
Postholes / pits	A number of undated features (postholes and small pits) were present across the site these included [034], [036], [038], [040], [053], [055], [072] and [074].
Area B	
Ditches	
Ditch/Pit [266]	A feature of undetermined shape in plan which was at least 1.50m wide and 0.35 deep. It had a gently sloping, irregular south side, (the north side was unexcavated), and a flattish but irregular base. It contained two fills of grey and dark grey silty clay (267) and (268) which produced no finds.
Postholes / pits	
Postholes / pits	A number of postholes and small pits across Area B were undated by either stratigraphic or artefactual grounds, these included features [83], [85], [87], [098], [102], [100], [103], [110], [127], [129] [131], [244] and [260]

A2 THE IRON AGE AND ROMAN POTTERY

by Jane Timby

Introduction

A moderately small assemblage of 91 sherds weighing 1981g was recovered dating to the later Iron Age and Roman periods. Two pieces of possibly Roman ceramic building material were also found. The pottery derived from 27 separate features some of which date to the post-Roman period. The incidence of sherds per context / feature is thus very low which has some ramifications with regard to accurate date assessment on the basis of pottery alone. This is particularly the case for the later Iron Age and early Roman periods, a date when the same pottery traditions can span the pre and post conquest assemblages.

The pottery for the most part was well preserved with an overall average sherd weight of 22g. Scoop Fill (199) produced the substantial part of a single vessel (Fig 13.1).

The assemblage was sorted into fabric types according to the main inclusions present in the fabrics, or firing characteristics. Where relevant named regional and traded wares were coded using the National Roman Fabric reference system (Tomber and Dore 1998). Other wares were coded following the Bedfordshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) type fabric series (details in site archive). The pottery was quantified by sherd count and weight for each context and the resulting data inputted onto an Excel spreadsheet, a copy of which is deposited with the site archive.

Description of fabrics and forms

All the fabrics identified have been fully described and discussed elsewhere (cf Tomber and Dore 1998; McSloy 1999; Slowikowski 2000; 2001). The assemblage comprises a mixture of handmade and wheel-made wares and can be broadly divided into probable Iron Age, Late Iron Age-early Roman and Roman (Table 7).

Probable Iron Age

Typologically the earliest vessel in the group appears to be that recovered from fill (199) of posthole [198]. This is a squat straight-sided wide-mouthed jar of which most of the profile is present the vessel being broken just above the base angle (Fig 13.1). It is sooted with an internal residue adhering to the surfaces. The fabric is black and contains coarse fossil shell fragments (BACS F16). Provisionally such a vessel could date to the middle to later Iron Age. No other examples of the same fabric were recovered and overlying dump (195) produced a very small scrap of Central Gaulish samian (2nd century) and one handmade shelly ware (fabric F07).

Late Iron Age – early Roman

Approximately 27 sherds (554g) date to the later Iron Age or early Roman period. These comprise a mixture of handmade and wheel-made wares in grog, sand, shell or shell and grog-tempered fabrics (BCAS F05, F06, F07, F09, F11). Features, which appear to exclusively contain this material, include postholes [91] and [95], pit [133], ditches [205/208/273] and [186]. Ditch [205] produced seven sherds (fabrics F05-07) including a shelly ware channel rim jar and a sandy grog-tempered bowl with tooled decoration (Fig 13.2). This feature appears cut by round house gully [145] with a single grog-tempered sherd. The terminals of the ring gully [145] (135 and 138) produced a slight mix of material, some of which is probably intrusive, in particular a fragment of ceramic building material and the rim and

bodysherd of a Nene Valley grey ware jar. Other sherds from the terminals include a handmade sandy grog-tempered ware, two shelly wares and a burnt sherd, which appears to be limestone-tempered. The two postholes, [91] and [95] produced three sherds in total, two shelly and one grog and shelly.

Table 9: Iron Age and Roman pottery occurrence by fabric type

Period	BCAS TF	NRFC	Description	No	%	Wt (g)	%
?IRON AGE	F16		coarse shell-tempered	15	16.48	446	22.51
LIA/ERO	F05		grog and shell-tempered	4	4.40	141	7.12
	F06		soapy grog-tempered	3	3.30	155	7.82
	F07		dense shelly ware	17	18.68	226	11.41
	F09		sandy with grog	1	1.10	14	0.71
	F11		sandy	2	2.20	18	0.91
ROMAN	R01		Central Gaulish Samian	3	3.30	25	1.26
	R03	LNV WH	Lower Nene Valley whiteware	1	1.10	56	2.83
	R03A	VER WH	Verulamium whiteware	3	3.30	47	2.37
	R05A		oxidised sandy ware	2	2.20	70	3.53
	R06A	LNV RE	Lower Nene Valley reduced	17	18.68	268	13.53
	R06C		fine grey ware	1	1.10	3	0.15
	R06F		sandy grog-tempered	17	18.68	473	23.88
	R07B		black sandy ware	3	3.30	29	1.46
	R12B	LNV CC	Lower Nene Valley colour-coat	2	2.20	10	0.50
	?R28		miscellaneous with limestone	3	3.30	14	0.71
TOTAL				***91***	**100.00**	***1981***	**100.00**

Roman

The Roman assemblage is signalled by the appearance of grey or black wheel-made sandy wares (BCAS fabrics R06A and R07B) accompanied by shelly or grog-tempered wares. Recognisable regional or continental traded wares are relatively scarce. Exceptions include two sherds of Central Gaulish samian: an unstratified cup (Drag. 33) stamped by the potter Mercussa (Lezoux) and one very small sherd from a dish (Drag. 36) from fill (199) of feature [200]. In addition three sherds of Verulamium flagon from fill (151) of pit [150] and ditch [183]. Two sherds of Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware from gully [68] and redeposited in pit [143] are all relatively local. The latter is the latest datable material in the group current from the later 2nd and 3rd centuries. Features containing exclusively Roman material include ditch [12], gullies [20], [24], [68], ditches [118], [160], [183], and [269], pits [150] and [191], slot [235] pit [200], and grave [271]. A single Roman *imbrex* roof tile came from posthole [6], fill (7).

Conclusions

The assemblage is too small and lacking in diagnostic material to draw any very meaningful conclusions other than intimating occupation spanning the mid-later Iron Age through to the later 2nd- early 3rd century. The greatest concentration of activity appears to be in the early Roman period, but the incidence of sherds per feature is low and some pieces appear

redeposited or possibly intrusive. The character of the assemblage might suggest of a fairly low status rural occupation site.

Illustrated sherds (Fig 13)

1 Handmade black shelly vessel with vertically smoothed walls. BCAS fabric F16. Scoop 200 (199).

2 Handmade dish decorated with a band of tooled line crosses on the exterior. Fabric F09. Gully RD208 (211).

3 Reeded rim bowl. Pale brownish-pink sandy ware with a sooted external rim. Fabric R05A. Ditch 273 (274).

A3 THE SAXON, MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

by Paul Blinkhorn

The post-Roman pottery comprised 179 sherds with a total weight of 2,514g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 1.83. The range of ware types present suggests that there was virtually unbroken activity at the site from the middle Saxon period to around the end of the 14th century, although late Saxon pottery appears a little under-represented.

Fabric

Where appropriate, the codings and chronology of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS) type-series were used. The following wares are not covered by this:

Middle Saxon Handmade wares: ?7th – 9th century. Undecorated, handmade wares, in a variety of sandy and/or mineral-tempered fabrics:

F1: Fine, few visible inclusions apart from rare quartz up to 0.5mm, and rare mica up to 1mm. 3 sherds, 21g, EVE = 0.

F2: Moderate, rounded quartz up to 1mm, sparse mica. 9 sherd, 88g, EVE = 0.

F3: Moderate Sandstone up to 2mm, rare calcareous material up to 4mm. 3 sherds, 24g, EVE = 0.

Southern Maxey-type Ware: Exact chronology uncertain, but generally dated c. AD650-850 (e.g. Hurst 1976). Wet-hand finished, reddish-orange to black surfaces. Soft to fairly hard, with abundant Jurassic fossil shell platelets up to 10mm. Vessels usually straight sided bowls with simple rims, and/or 'bar-lugs'. Differs in form from Lincolnshire Maxey-types, which tend to have upright, triangular, rim-mounted pierced lugs. Such vessels are found on many sites in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, with local finds at, for example, Stratton. 4 sherds, 109g, EVE = 0.11.

?South Lincs Oolitic Ware: c.AD1100-1300. Slow-wheel made. Pale grey fabric with abundant greyish limestone ooliths up to 2mm, rare to moderate limestone up to 1mm, sparse flint and/or haematite up to 0.5mm. Ooliths on surface often white in colour. Vessels usually jars with thickened everted rims. Fabric tends to be grey with brown, red or orange surfaces. Main form jars with simple everted, sometimes triangular rims, sometimes thumb-impressed. Wavy line

decoration not uncommon. Some bowls known, usually shallow, often with internal wavy line decoration. Source unknown, but appears likely to have originated in the region around Peterborough (Blinkhorn in print b). 1 sherd, 10g, EVE = 0.

The rest of the assemblage is coded according to the BCAS system.

B01: St Neots Ware	*c* AD900-1100.	10 sherds, 135g, EVE = 0.32
B05: Harrold/Olney 'A' ware,	12th – 14th century.	74 sherds, 765g, EVE = 0.67
B09: Lyveden/Stanion Ware.	*c* AD1200 - ?mid 14th century.	6 sherds, 122g, EVE = 0.13
C08: Thetford –type ware,	10th – 12th century.	1 sherd, 4g, EVE = 0
C09: Brill/Boarstall Ware:	mid 13th – 15th century.	1 sherd, 58g, EVE = 0
C10: Potterspury Ware:	mid 13th – 15th century.	13 sherds, 178g, EVE = 0.18
E01: Late medieval reduced ware,	mid 14th – 16th century.	9 sherds, 190g, EVE = 0.13
E02: Late medieval Oxidized ware,	mid 14th – 16th century.	32 sherds, 677g, EVE = 0.29
P03: Black-glazed Earthenware,	late 16th – 19th century.	1 sherd, 12g, EVE = 0
P30: Staffordshire Slipware,	mid 17th – late 18th century.	1 sherd, 7g, EVE = 0

In addition, 11 sherds (92g) of Roman wares were noted, all redeposited in later contexts. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 8. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Chronology

The range of ware types present indicates that there was activity at the site from the middle Saxon period onwards, and possibly earlier. The early/middle Saxon handmade sherds cannot be dated other than to within the broad period. Late Saxon pottery was noted, but it was all redeposited in later features. The majority of the pottery dates to the early medieval period, or the mid-late 14th century. It seems likely that the site was abandoned at some time in the latter period.

Each context-specific pottery assemblage can be given a Ceramic Phase date, based on the range of wares present, as shown in Table 8.

Table 10: Saxon and medieval ceramic phase dating and pottery occurrence (all fabrics)

Ceramic Phase	Date	Ware types	No Sherds	Wt (g)	EVE	Mean sherd wt (g)
E/MS	AD 450 –850	Hand-made	14	122	0	8.7
MS	?mid 7th– mid 9th century	Maxey	6	119	0.11	19.8
LS	10th- 11th century	B01	4	34	0	8.5
CP1	12th – mid 13th century	B05	42	447	0.65	10.6
CP2	mid 13th – mid 14th century	C09, C10	9	98	0	10.9
CP3	mid 14th – late 15th century	E01, E02	90	1563	1.07	17.4
		Total	165	2383	1.83	14.4

The assemblage is fairly fragmented, and it was not possible to reconstruct any vessels to any significant degree, and no cross-fits were noted.

Table 11: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	RB		E/MS		Maxey		B01		Oolitic		B05		B09		C08		C09		C10		E01		E02		P03		P30		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
0											9	57							1	6	1	2							U/S
5																							2	9					M14thC?
13	2	14									6	172							2	10	2	12	7	84					M14thC
15											1	5											4	123					M14thC
19																							1	4					M14thC
21	2	24					9	130			10	83																	12thC
23											1	6																	12thC?
25	1	10									1	27																	12thC
27					1	30																							MS
33									1	10	16	131	5	97			1	58	6	42	6	176	13	232					M14thC
50											1	16																	12thC
52											6	35																	12thC
58																											1	7	M17thC
66			1	9							6	57							1	7									M13thC
69	2	10			1	40																							MS
77	2	11									6	60											3	83					M14thC
90											2	10																	12thC?
96											3	26																	12thC
106																									1	12			L17thC?
116			1	3																									E/MS
144			3	24																									E/MS
157											1	5																	12thC?
166													1	25															13thC
168																			2	88			2	142					M14thC
170			1	9											1	4													10thC?
172											3	34																	12thC
173											1	33																	12thC?
182			8	84																									E/MS
187	1	16					1	5																					11thC?
192	1	7	1	4																									E/MS
193					2	39																							MS
215																			1	25									M13thC
227											1	8																	12thC?
Total	11	92	15	133	4	109	10	135	1	10	74	765	6	122	1	4	1	58	13	178	9	190	32	677	1	12	1	7	

A4 TILE

by Tora Hylton

A small quantity of ceramic roof tile (2,329g) was collected from a concentration of features, sited to the west of the northern area (5, 13, 15, 33 & 166). One piece was furnished with a vestige of a peg hole.

A5 SMALL FINDS

by Tora Hylton

The excavation produced a small group of finds spanning the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. In total there are 9 small finds (1 bone/antler, 6 iron, 1 stone and 1 glass) and miscellaneous ironwork from a 17th-century pit. Finds of Roman and medieval date were recovered from both Areas A and B.

Roman finds

Two artefacts were recovered from features of Roman date, an iron nail from a small pit sited in the area to the north, context (7) and a stone disc from an Iron Age/Roman ditch (276) in the area to the south. The nail has a square-sectioned shank surmounted by a small globular head. It displays similarities to Manning's Type 9 (1985, fig 32), a type generally thought to have been used for upholstery etc. The stone disc has been manufactured from a piece of sandstone, the edges have been ground down to form a piece measuring c.70mm in diameter and with a depth of 15mm. It is difficult to determine what exactly this piece might have been, but examples of a similar size and also manufactured from stone have been recovered from Colchester (Crummy 1983, fig 101), who has postulated that such items may have been used as gaming counters (Ibid 96), rather like those manufactured from pottery and tile.

Medieval finds

The majority of medieval finds were concentrated in the northern part of the site. They include a gaming piece, a small group of iron objects and a fragment of window glass. A bone/antler die was recovered from a pit (33), it is complete, but slightly asymmetrical, with the sides of the cube ranging in size from 7-8mm. The numerals are marked with small shallow depressions and the faces conform to the rule of opposite sides totalling seven. Similar examples are known from Winchester (Brown 1990, fig 193) and for a discussion see MacGregor 1985 (129).

Iron objects were recovered from pits, a fragment of possible knife (193), two nails (33) and an undiagnostic object (176). A fragment of clear window glass was recovered from a 14th century ditch (013). The piece although incomplete would originally have been part of a lozenge shaped quarry with grozed edges.

Post-medieval finds

A group of nails and fragments from structural fittings were recovered from a 17th century pit.

A6 THE WORKED FLINT

by Alex Thorne

A total of 34 humanly worked flints and a single burnt flint were recovered by hand from 24 contexts. The flints were recovered from secondary contexts (eight dated to the late Iron Age, or the Roman period, and a further seven were Saxon or medieval) and so were therefore residual. A further eight flints were retrieved from undated contexts (31, 82, 102, 139, 151, 183 and 194). The flint assemblage can be categorised as follows:

Table 12: Composition of the flint assemblage

Category of flint	Number
Retouched knife	1
Scrapers	3
Cores	1
Core rejuvenation flakes	1
Notched flakes	1
Denticulated blade	1
Miscellaneous retouched	4
Utilised flakes	2
Utilised blades	2
Waste flakes	13
Waste blades	3
Burnt flint	1
Palaeolithic flint	1
Total	**34**

The majority of the flint appears to date to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. There is also a small background presence of earlier material present.

The majority of the flint comprises debitage ie waste flakes and blades, which were generally small in size (under 250mm). Few flakes and retouched pieces were primary flakes (6), but there is an equal proportion of secondary flakes (11) and tertiary flakes (10). As most pieces had been struck from prepared cores, it is possible that some of the primary core preparation was occurring away from the site. However, the presence of a limited number of cores and core rejuvenation flakes and the debitage, which include several smaller chips or spalls, indicates that flint working was taking place on the site. Where the bulbar end of the flake has survived, the majority of flints had been worked by means of a hard hammer of flint or stone. Several of the flints also exhibited distinctive percussion marks from miss-hits. Only a small percentage of flakes and blades were detached using a soft hammer, including the pressure flaked knife.

The nature of the debitage, with a predominance of flakes which were irregularly shaped, and the limited number of blades suggest that the assemblage post-dates the earlier Neolithic period. The predominance of hard-hammer struck to soft-hammer struck pieces also supports a later Neolithic date. Diagnostic early Bronze Age pieces such as small thumbnail scrapers are however absent from the assemblage. The few scrapers present are mostly crudely shaped, with irregular or little retouch, also suggestive of a later, not earlier Neolithic date. Their presence indicates that the skinning/preparing of leather hides was occurring in the vicinity of the site. The presence of a fragment of pressure flaked knife in the assemblage suggests a later Neolithic/early Bronze Age date.

Other tools are few – mainly comprising utilised flakes, the sharp edges of which had been used for cutting in an ad hoc manner, then discarded (some after a prolonged period of

use/heavy duty tasks). This sort of item was used throughout the Neolithic period. Other subsistence activities were occurring on or near the site as evidenced by notched flakes (also called spoke-shaves, for paring lengths of wood or bone into a regular profile, e.g. arrow shafts). Several flints showed a degree of retouch, some with use-damage and or possible notching, indicating that there was not a specific 'tool-kit' of specialised tools as seen in the earlier prehistoric period, but the flakes served a variety of purposes.

Only a single example of burnt flint was recovered, which showed no sign of previous working.

A single example of earlier prehistoric flint is present in the form of a possible scraper from context [118]. A large primary flake was modified with limited retouch around all sides may have been detached from the affect of cold, rather than humanly struck. It had been subjected to rolling and the exposed flint had become glossy. The entire piece was ochrenous/brown stained.

The raw material used was predominantly small to medium sized gravel noduled, some of which had been frost-affected. These flints had thin brown or grey grainy cortex or patina, with a small proportion having an ochrenous finish. A smaller amount of flint had been obtained from chalk-land source, characterised by a thick creamy coloured or weathered, brown rough cortex. It was likely to have derived from surface exposed deposits of flint.

]

A7 THE QUERNS

by Andy Chapman

There are two large, non-joining fragments, weighing 1764g, from a lava quern. One piece retains part of a plain central aperture, c 100mm in diameter. It thickens from 20mm at the central aperture to 40mm thick at a radius 200mm, although the original outer edge is missing. It has a convex, dimpled grinding surface, while the other side has parallel lines of linear tooling. The other fragment is similar in form and most probably comes from the same stone, but has no original edges. Both pieces are fresh and uneroded indicating primary deposition, as lava erodes rapidly if left exposed to the elements. The stone was recovered from a Roman ditch fill (120). The lava would have been obtained from one of the standard continental sources such as the Eifel region of Germany (Watts 2002, 33-37).

A8 SLAG

by Andy Chapman

A single fragment of light, vesicular fuel ash slag, weighing 98g, was recovered from an early/middle Saxon context (182). A single fragment of miscellaneous iron slag, weighing 253g, came from a medieval pit fill (019). No conclusions can be drawn from such insignificant quantities of material, although the iron slag may suggest that small-scale secondary smithing had been carried out somewhere nearby.

A9 THE FIRED CLAY

by Pat Chapman

The assemblage comprises 378 fragments of fired clay weighing 1809g from 19 contexts. The fragments are made from two distinct fabrics; a hard, sandy, red brown poorly bonded clay with inclusions of occasional to frequent crushed shell; and a hard pink with inclusions of chalk, calcined flint and occasional unburnt flint.

The majority of the fragments are red brown and quite small, with a few quite large pieces at 60 x 50 x 35mm. A few are blackened and one piece, from posthole (94), has an almost vitreous surface from being exposed to intense heat. There are a few wattle impressions, as well as a few stem impressions.

The pink fired clay only come from four contexts, (172), (173), (174) and (255) (all from oven structure [171]) They are small to very small fragments, with one larger piece at 35 x 35 x 20mm, with an occasional smoothed curved surface. There are a few fragments with stem impressions.

The wattle and stem impressions imply a structural use of the fired clay. The difference in fabrics may be of interest in conjunction with other evidence.

A10 THE HUMAN BONE

by Harriet Anne Jacklin

Introduction

The osteological analysis of the human remains recovered from the site followed standard methodologies, as described by Bass (1987) and Brothwell (1981). Unfortunately, due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving skeletal material, only the most basic analysis has been able to be undertaken. A catalogue of all surviving material can be found in Table 11.

Age

Age – Young Adult (17 – 25 years)
Due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving skeletal material a reliable estimation of age cannot be established, however, it is clear the individual's life was short lived.
The estimation of the individual's age has been based on:

- The degrees of epiphyseal fusion
- The stage of tooth development (White 1991) and subsequent wear (Brothwell 1981)
- The lack of age related pathology

Sex

Sex – Possible Female

The estimation of the age of the individual has been based upon femoral head measurements (Bass 1987). No other analysis has been able to be undertaken and therefore this conclusion should be regarded with caution.

Height

Due to the fragmentary condition of the long bones it was not possible to determine the height of the individual.

Cranial morphology and facial/cranial index

Due to the absence of facial bones and the fragmentary condition of the surviving skull it was not possible to undertake facial/cranial analysis

Pathology and dental health

The diagnosis of any trauma, pathological conditions and dental health follows accepted works by Ortner & Putschar (1981), White (1991), Aufderheide & Rodriguez-Martin (1998) and Manchester & Roberts (1995). These are set out below

Degenerative disease

Degenerative disease is the most commonly observed skeletal disease in both modern and archaeological specimens. Most of these conditions arise as a result of normal prolonged use of the joints over a long life span. However, repetitive occupational use of a particular joint may lead to early onset. Traumatic damage to a joint may also lead to early onset arthropathies.

Grade 1 Intermittent osteophytosis (Brothwell 1981) was observed in the thoric vertebra. Osteophytosis is a condition where growths of new bone (Osteophytes), arise around the margins of joints.

Schmorl's nodes

The individual also suffered from a condition known as Schmorl's Nodes, affecting the thoric vertebra. A Schmorl's node is a crater like depression occurring either on the anterior or posterior surface, mostly toward the dorsal side, of vertebral bodies.

It has been suggested that trauma and/or strenuous activity, especially in adolescence, and metabolic and degenerative disorders may contribute to the formation of these lesions.

Dental health

The individual's teeth showed signs of mild periodontal disease and mild calculus (analysis based on Brothwell 1981). Peridontitis is an infection of the alveolar bone and the soft tissues of the mouth. The condition is recognised by the recession of the alveolar bone from around the base of the teeth, which, in the most extreme cases, can lead to the loosening and eventual loss of teeth.

Hypoplasia lines were also observed on the teeth. Dental hypoplasia is characterised by transverse lines, pits and grooves which are a result of disturbances in the enamels development. Hypoplasia is indicative of infectious disease in childhood and can also indicate the age at which onset occurred. Analysis has shown the individual suffered from two periods of intense illness during childhood: the first occurred between 1 and 2 years and again between 2.5 and 3.5 years.

Post-mortem bone modification

A sharp circular hole measuring 6.6mm cutting laterally through the vertebral body of a thoric vertebra was discovered during analysis. The modification occurred post mortem, possibly to damage caused during excavation/ previous land use.

Table 13: Catalogue of human remains

	Left	Right	Unsided
Sternum			
Manubrium			
Clavicle	Present**	Present**	
Scapula	Present**	Present**	
Ribs			40+ fragments**
Humerus	Present *	Present*	
Radius	Present*	Present *	
Ulna	Present*	Present*	
Carpals	6	1	1
Metacarpals	5	5	
Phalanges (hand)	10	7	2
Pelvis	Present**	Present**	
Femur	Present*	Present*	
Patella	Present		
Tibia	Present*	Present*	
Fibula	Present*	Present*	
Tarsels	6	7	
Metatarsals	5	5	
Phalanges (foot)	4	1	
Skull			Present**
Mandible			Present*
Cervical Vertebrae			7*
Thoracic Vertebrae			12** approx
Lumbar Vertebrae			5** approx
Sacrum			

* = Fragmented
** = Very fragmented

A11 THE ANIMAL BONE

by Karen Deighton

Method

One archive box of hand collected animal bone was scanned to assess the potential for future work. Identifiable bones were noted. Ageable and measurable bones (after Von Den Driech 1976) were also noted. Ageable elements included cheek tooth rows, bones where fusion is discernible and neonatal bones. Animal bone from wet sieving (3.4mm and 1mm residues) was also included; sample sizes varied with context but were typically between 20 and 80 litres. Hand collected bones had previously been washed.

Results

Preservation

Fragmentation was fairly high with few complete long bones noted. This was largely the result of old breaks, although several fresh breaks were also observed. The surface condition of the bone was generally good with the majority of fragments exhibiting smooth hard surfaces. Two examples of dark staining due to waterlogging were noted. The frequencies of gnawing, evidence for butchery and burning were all low. The low level of burning suggests this was not a preferred method of disposal.

Taxonomic distribution

Table 14: Species present

Bos (cattle)	Ovicaprid (sheep/goat)	Sus (pig)	Equus (horse)	Canis (dog)	Avis (bird)	Gallus (chicken)	Small mammal	Total
37	20	9	3	1	2	1	4*	77

* Includes partial skeleton and Bank vole mandible.

Table 15: Number of identifiable bones per phase

Phase	Fragments
Phase 2	28
Phase 4	28
Phase 5	5
Undated	16

Three neonatal elements were noted; one bos, one sus and an indeterminate. A possible pathology was also observed: a Bos tibia with exotosis (excess boney growth) at the proximal articulation. This is usually found in elderly animals or those that have been used for traction.

Discussion

The assemblage is dominated by the major domesticates, which is expected for all the periods covered. The range of elements present suggests a domestic origin for the assemblage (eg kitchen refuse) as opposed to an industrial one. The paucity of the assemblage prevents any further comment.

A12 CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

by Karen Deighton

Introduction

Thirty-two samples were collected by hand during the course of excavation. Of these 30 were processed and assessed (Deighton 2003). Eighteen samples were chosen for full analysis from phases four (late Saxon) and five (medieval). The seven samples from phase 4 were largely contained within area A with the exception of a sample from buried soil in area B. The 11 samples from Phase 5 were from area B an area of medieval industrial activity. Six of these were from the oven complex, three were from a dump of burnt material and the remainder from a posthole group.

Method

The selected flots were sorted in full with the exception of one very large sample (s25) which was subsampled (1 quarter by volume) and numbers for the whole sample were estimated. Fine residues (i.e. those which passed through a 3.5mm sieve) were scanned in order to check on the efficacy of the flotation and to recover further evidence. Charred plant remains were examined with a microscope, identified with the aid of the author's modern seed reference collection and a seed atlas (Pawlik and Schweingruber1988). Identified finds were counted and tabulated and densities per litre of soil were calculated. Phasing follows that described previously.

Results

Preservation

All the ecofacts were charred. Fragmentation and abrasion were moderate to high.

Taxonomic distribution

Table 16: Taxa by context and sample (Phase 4)

Sample	1	3	4	5	6	7	21
Context	66	142	69	77	33	5	202
Phase	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Feature	D	D	D	D	P	P	B
Volume (litre)	10	10	10	10	10	30	10
Cereal							
Bread wheat *Triticum aestivum*	3				32	24	238
Spelt *Triticum spelta*	1	1	3	1	19		20
Emmer/spelt *T.monococcum/spelta*	1		2		2	1	
c.f.einkorn *T.monococcum*							
Spelt/bread *T.spelta/aestivum*					4		
Hulled barley *Hordeum vulgare*	1		1		18	6	6
Naked barley *H.vulgare*			1		21	3	3
Barley indet *H.vulgare*	1	1					
Breadwheat/barley *T.aestivum/H.vulgare*							
BW/spelt/barley *T.aestivum/spelta/H..vulgare*							
Wheat/barley *Triticum/Hordeum*	28	2	24	14		35	62
Oat *Avena sativum*				2	1	1	4
Rye *Secale cereale*	1		1		4	2	4
Rye/oat *Secale/Aven*	1			1		3	7
Cereal indet		1	2	7		18	128
Total cereal	**37**	**4**	**34**	**25**	**101**	**93**	**472**
Chaff							
Spelt *T.spelta*							24
Bread wheat *T.aestivum*							
Total chaff							**24**
Pulses							
Pea *Pisum sativum*							3
Celtic bean *Vicia faba*							
Lentil *Lens culinaris Medikus*							1
Indet pulse			2		2		2
Total pulse			**2**		**2**		**6**
Wild/weed							
Cleavers *Galium aparine*				1	1		1
Fat hen *Chenopodium album*				2		1	1
Rumex sp.							
Indet weed							1
Total weed				**3**	**1**	**1**	**3**
Totals	**37**	**4**	**36**	**28**	**104**	**94**	**505**
Percent cereal	100	100	94.4	89.2	96.8	97.9	93.5
Items/litresoil	3.7	0.4	3.6	2.8	10.4	3.13	50.5

Key
Feature Type D=Ditch, P=pit, B=buried soil

Table 17: Taxa by context and sample (Phase 5)

Sample	17	18	19	20	22	23	25	26	28	29
Context	172	173	190	176	194	195	193	247	192	255
Phase	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Feature	O	O	P	P	L	L	L	PH	P	O
Volume	10	20	5	10	10	10	10	5	10	10
Cereal										
Bread wheat *Triticum aestivum*	5	5	38	31	221	75	43	11	32	
Spelt *Triticum spelta*	2	13	1		1	7	12		1	7
Emmer/spelt *T.monococcum/spelta*						1				
c.f.einkorn *T.monococcum*	1									
Spelt/bread *T.spelta/aestivum*	2	2		9	6	8	2			1
Hulled barley *Hordeum vulgare*	2	3	8	10	1	2	1		10	1
Naked barley *H.vulgare*		7	2	13		7	4		2	
Barley indet *H.vulgare*							10			
Breadwheat/barley *T.aestivum/H.vulgare*				5		1	2		1	
BW/spelt/barley *T.aestivum/spelta/H.vulgare*								105		
Wheat/barley *Triticum/Hordeum*	2	29	41	72	67	35	41	22	8	
Oat *Avena sativum*		2	3			2			1	3
Rye *Secale cereale*	6		4	4	9	1	3	3	1	2
Rye/oat *Secale/Avena*									1	
Cereal indet	5	24	5	58	41	9	41	13	4	
Total cereal	**25**	**85**	**102**	**202**	**346**	**148**	**159 636e**	**154**	**61**	**88**
Chaff										
Spelt *T.spelta*						2	1			
Bread wheat *T.aestivum*			2					2		
Total chaff			**2**			**2**	**1**	**2**		
Pulses										
Pea *Pisum sativum*				1			4		1	
Celtic bean *Vicia faba*							1			
Lentil *Lens culinaris medikus*										
Indet pulse	1			1				1	1	
Total pulse	**1**			**2**			**5**	**1**	**2**	
Wild/weed										
Cleavers *Galium aparine*		2			1		1	1		
Fat hen *Chenopodium album*				1						
Dock Rumex sp.		1								
Indet weed									1	1
Total weed		**3**		**1**	**1**		**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Totals	**26**	**88**	**104**	**205**	**347**	**150**	**166 664e**	**158**	**64**	**89**
Percent cereal	96.2	95.5	98.1	98.5	99.7	98.7	99.2	97.5	96.8	98.9
Items/litre soil	2.6	4.4	20.8	20.5	34.7	15	16..6 66.4e	31.6	6.4	8.9

Key
O=oven, P=pit, L=layer, PH=posthole, e=estimated value for whole sample

Summary of Phase 4

The samples are from four ditches, two pits and a buried soil

Samples from the ditches produced low frequencies of ecofacts. These were dominated by bread wheat type cereal grains with lower frequencies of barley. Rye was noted in samples 1 and 4 only and oat was seen in sample 5. Pulses were observed only from sample 4 and weed species from sample 5. Sample 3 has only 4 ecofacts and appears to be "background" (i.e. a low level of charred material found on most occupation sites). The remaining charred plant remains in the samples were probably refuse swept into ditches after burning during preparation. Any further discussion is precluded by the low number of ecofacts recovered.

The pits were dominated by cereal grains (again largely bread wheat type) although spelt wheat was seen in sample 6. Low frequencies of hulled and naked barley, oat and rye were also observed. A single weed seed was recovered from each sample and 2 pulses from sample 6. This material could represent the remnants of storage crops, burned during souring of storage pits (re; absence of chaff and very low frequencies of weeds).

The sample from the buried soil had the largest number of ecofacts for this phase (50.5 items/litre soil). The dominant cereal type appeared to be bread wheat although spelt, hulled and naked barley, rye and oat are also present, however weeds, identified as cleavers and fat hen were very sparse in frequency. Pulses, such as pea and lentil, were recovered in very low frequencies. Chaff was observed from the buried soil only in this phase; this was largely spelt glume bases. Although this is the largest concentration of chaff seen for the site it still only represents 4.7% of ecofacts in the sample. The general dearth of chaff and weeds is surprising from an area of presumed agricultural activity.

Summary of Phase 5

The oven complex was extensively sampled with samples taken from the oven wall, the oven lining, a posthole adjacent to the oven, the pit into which the oven is built, a demolition layer and a shallow pit. The frequency of finds was low to moderate, with the largest from the fill of the pit containing the oven itself and the smallest from its wall lining. Cereal grains predominated, with bread wheat as the dominant taxon and spelt, oat, rye, hulled and naked barley once more present. Two bread wheat rachis fragments were noted from sample 19. Weeds were very sparse in three samples and are cleavers, fat hen and dock. Pulses and peas were present in low frequencies from three samples. The paucity of both chaff and weed taxa suggests a late stage in crop processing. (i.e. immediately prior to use or storage). The deposit of grains in the oven pit possibly derived from grains burnt during preparation for use or storage and accumulated here following the rake out of the oven.

Three samples were taken one from each of the layers of a spread of burnt material. A particularly large sample (66.4 items/litre soil) derived from the earliest of these layers. Again more samples were dominated by bread wheat type grains with lower numbers of hulled and naked barley, and rye. Oat was seen in sample 23 only. A very low frequency of spelt chaff was noted from samples 23 and 25. Pulses (in this instance possible Celtic bean and pea) were recovered from sample 25. A very sparse number of weeds (cleavers) were observed in samples 22 and 25. Interpretation is problematic as material appears to be redeposited. It is possible that these samples represented accumulated waste, collected from elsewhere on the site and dumped.

A single sample was taken from a group of postholes. Again the sample was dominated by bread wheat type cereal grains, with low frequencies of rye. Two bread wheat rachis fragments and a single cleaver were also observed. Unusually no definite identifications of barley were made although high numbers of wheat/barley grains were recorded.

Discussion

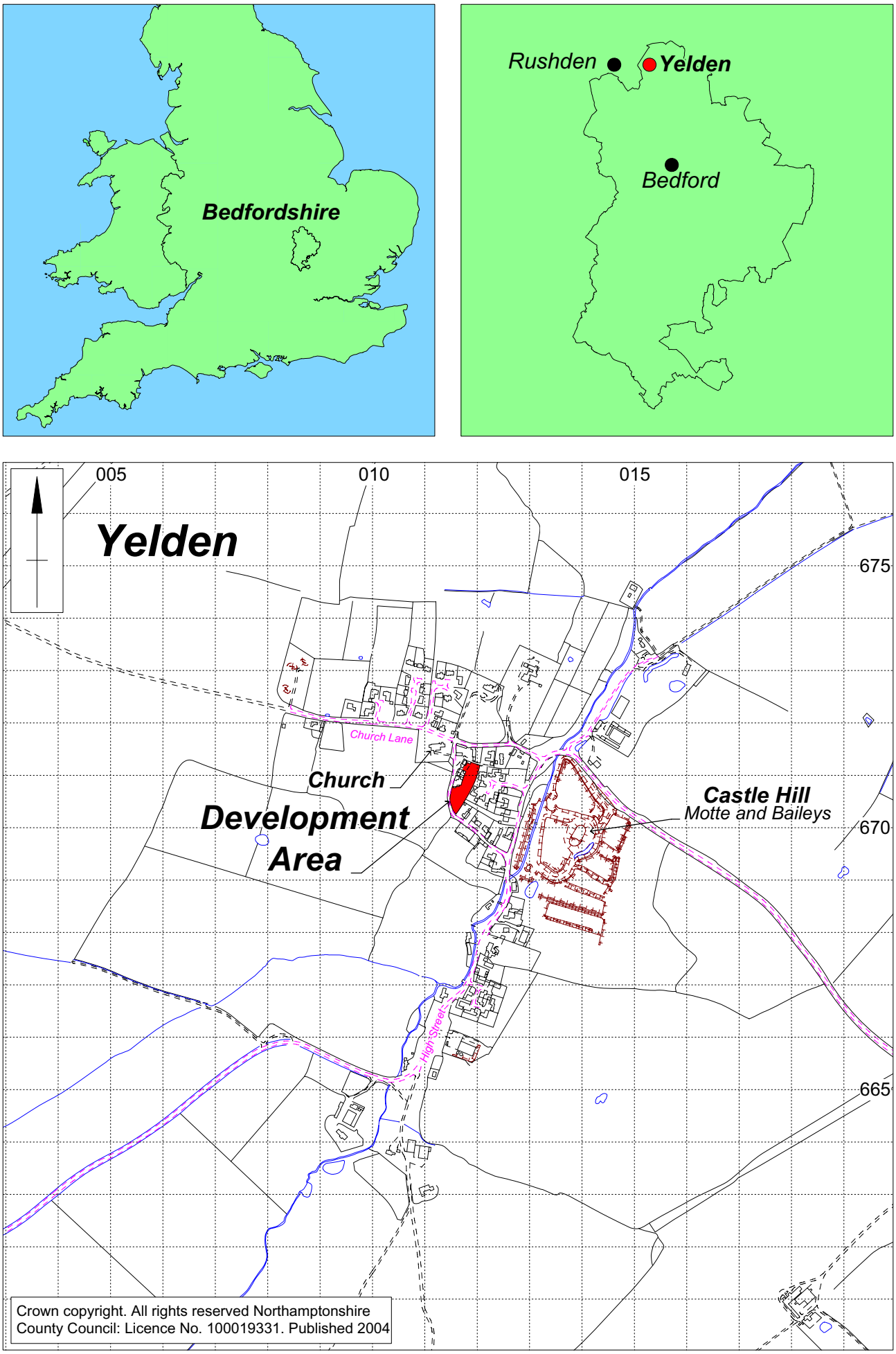
Little difference can be seen in overall taxonomic composition either within or between phases. Both phases were dominated by cereal grains especially bread wheat. Slight fluctuations can be seen in the presence or absence and proportions of the minor crops.

The general paucity of chaff and weeds suggests a consumer site with crops brought to the site ready for storage or use with the processing taking place off site. This could also reflect the status of the site and in the case of Phase 5 the function of the site. The samples appear to have been generated as a result of accidental burning during final processing for use or storage, or as a consequence of refuse disposal (i.e. burning of rubbish). The identified weeds present are common ruderals, although it is worth noting that the leaves of dock and fat hen are edible. Fat hen can be ground for flour in times of stress. Its presence can also indicate autumn sown crops.

Comparisons with medieval sites such as Wing, Buckinghamshire (Carruthers 2003), West Cotton, Northamptonshire (Campbell 1994) and Tempsford, Bedfordshire (Hutchins 2005) suggest that the dominance of bread wheat with barley, oats and rye also grown is usual for the periods under consideration. The evidence from these three sites demonstrated a lack of temporal change between the late Saxon and medieval periods, a model Yelden follows. A lack of chaff is also seen at Tempsford, a high status site. However a smaller range of weed taxa and a smaller number of individual weed seeds are seen at Yelden than at either Tempsford or Wing.

Conclusion

The samples appear to represent a late stage in crop processing and to have produced taxa typically grown and utilized as part of the agrarian economy of the Saxon and medieval periods in the region.



Scale 1:10,000

Fig. 1

Fig 1: Site location

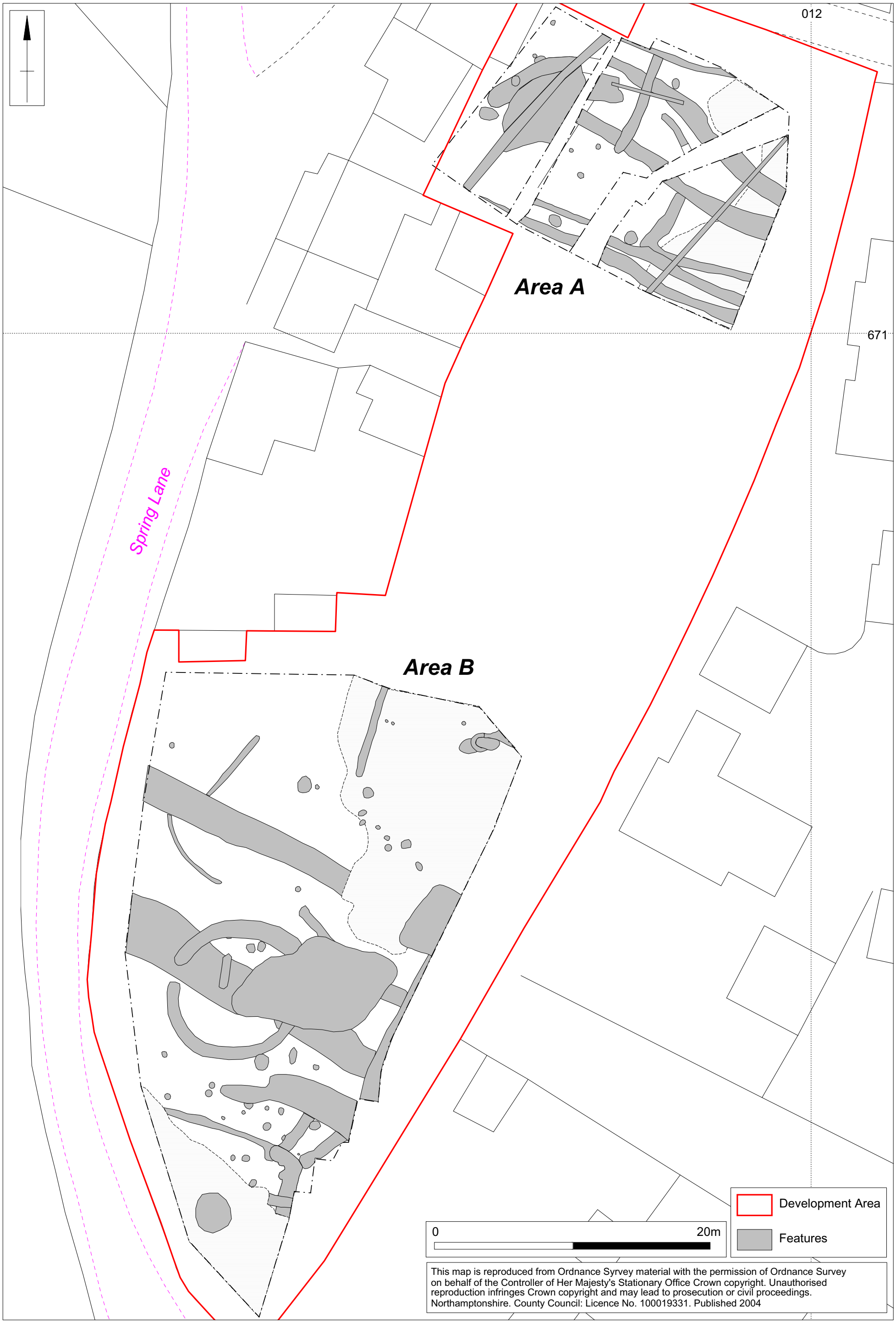


Fig 2: General site plan

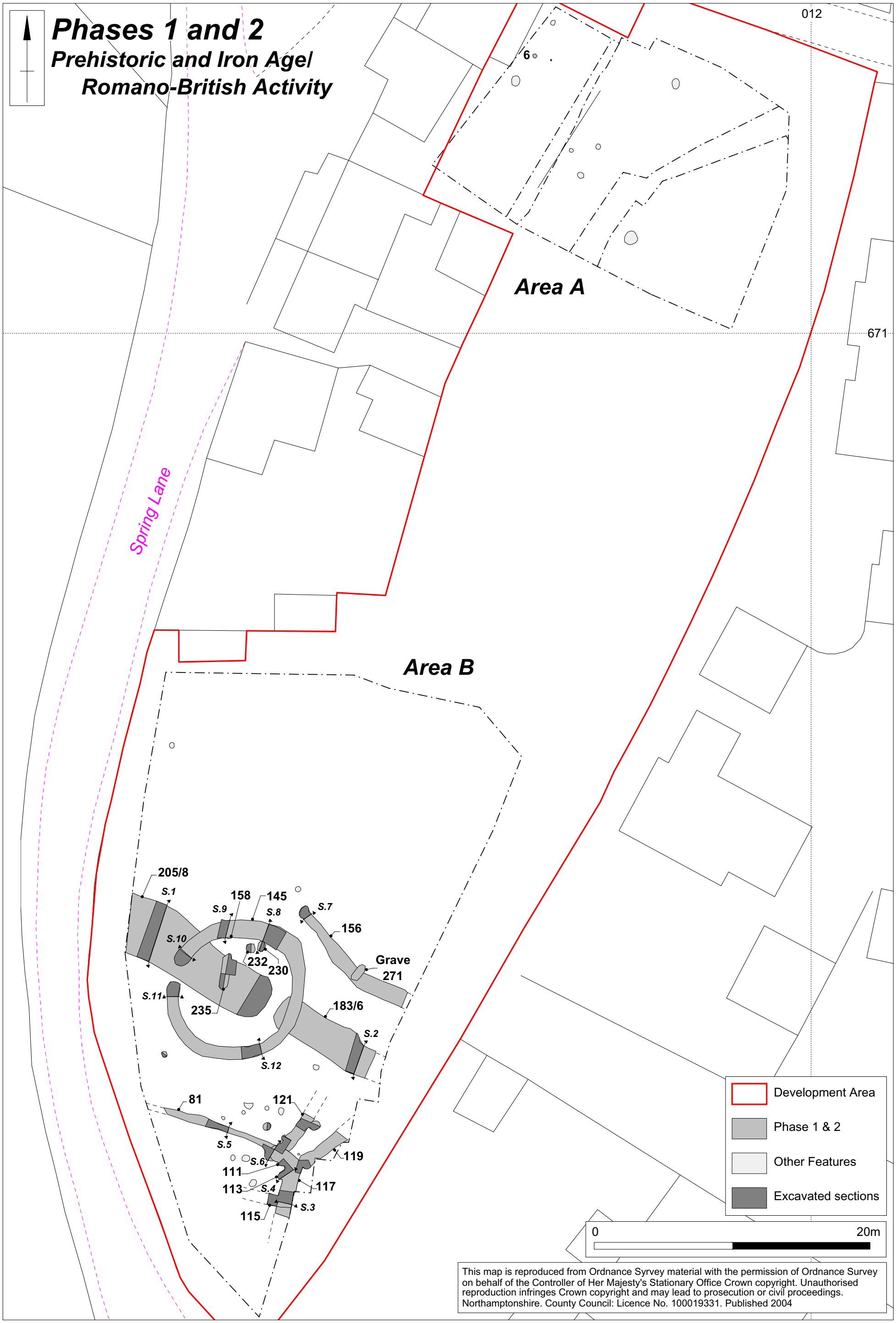
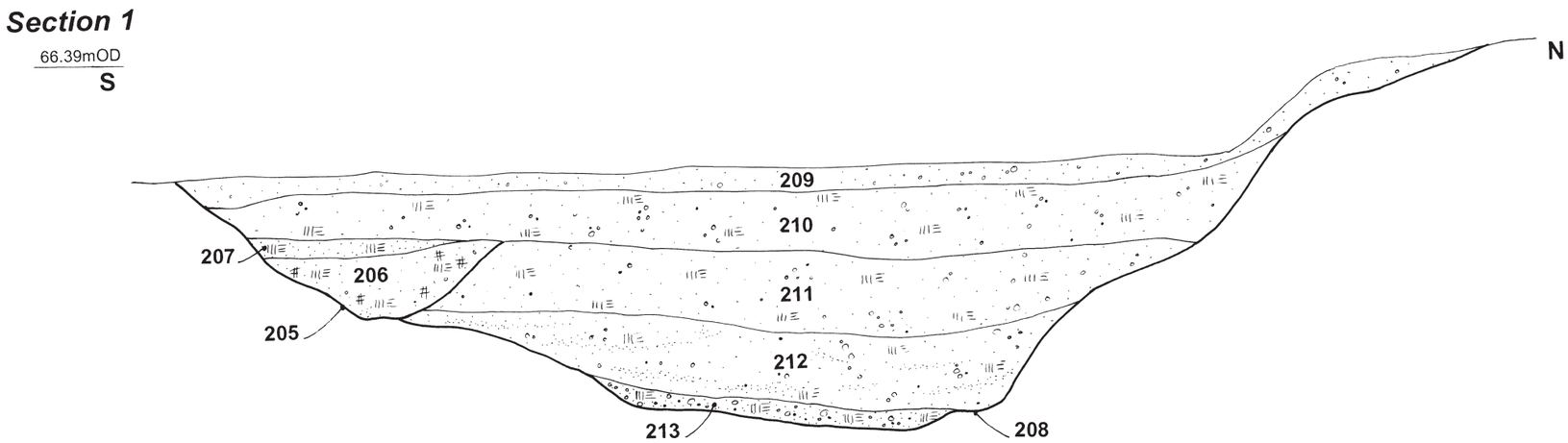
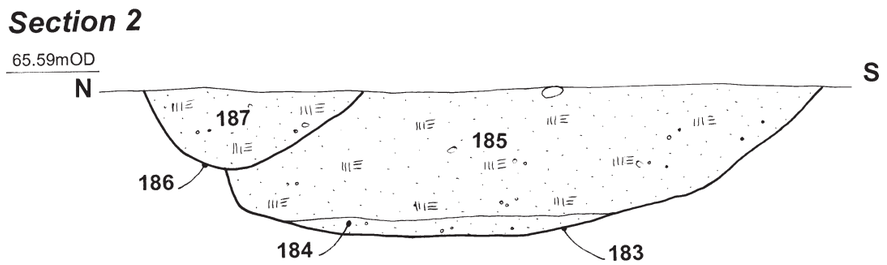
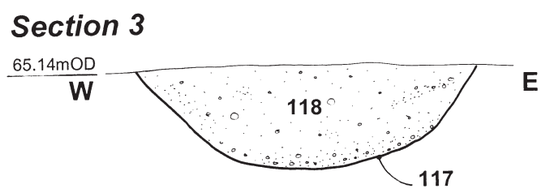
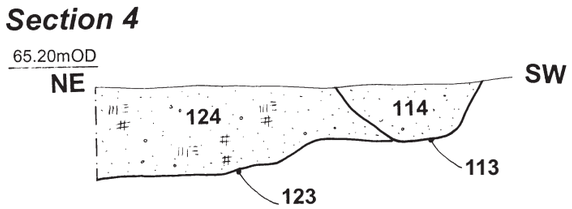


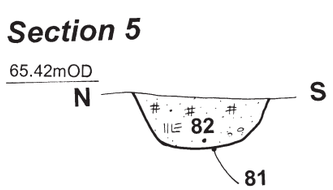
Fig 3: Phase 2: Iron Age/Roman features

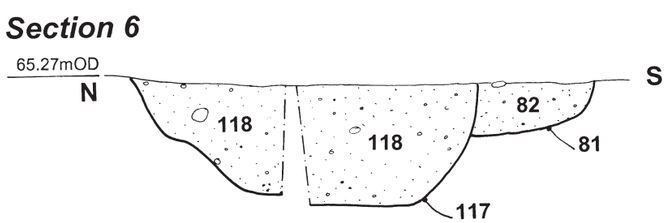












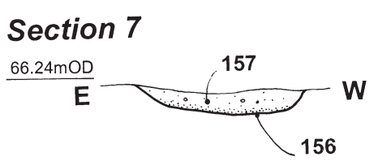


Fig 4

Fig 4: Sections of Iron Age/Roman features

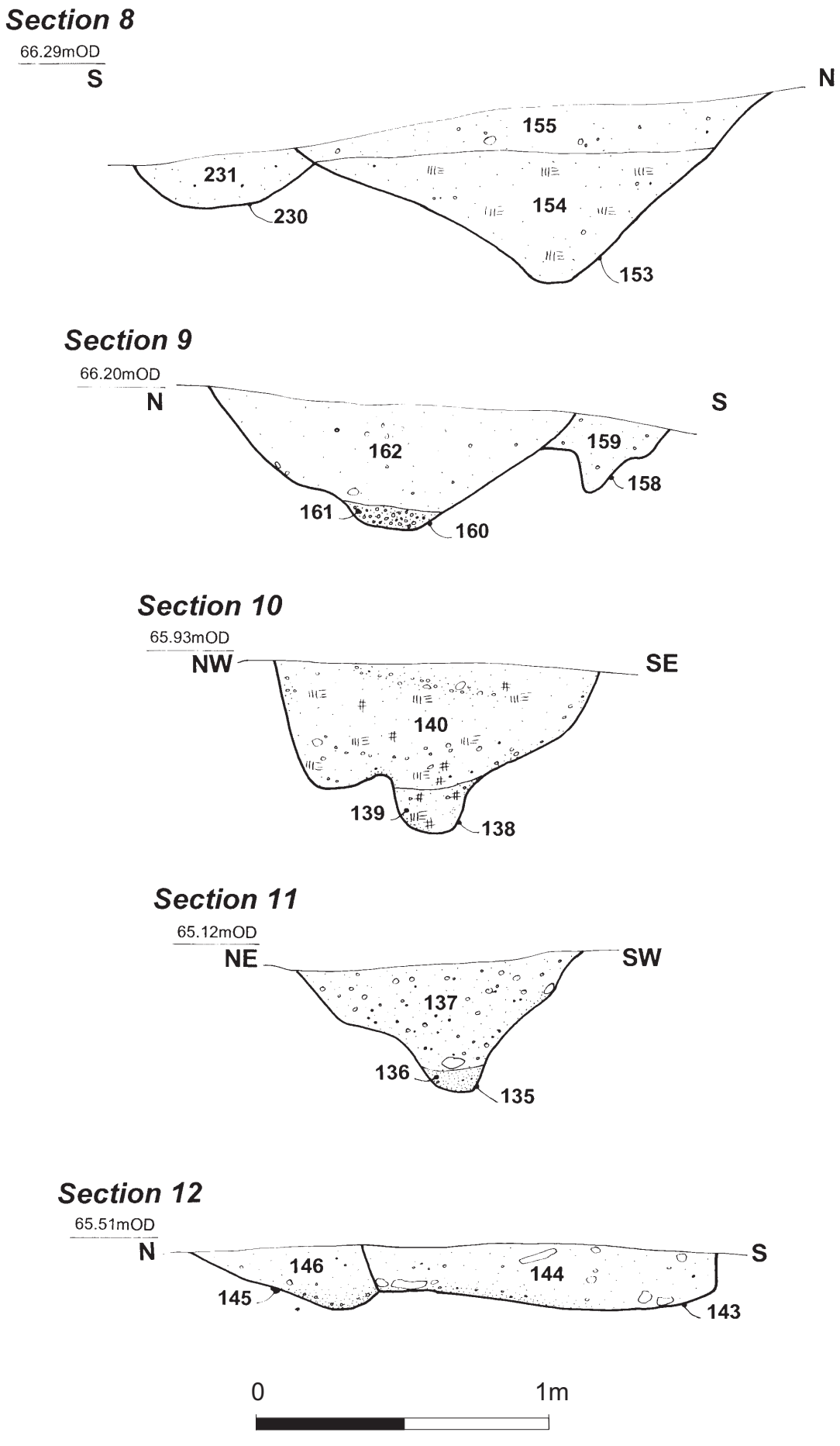


Fig 5

Fig 5: Sections of Iron Age/Roman features

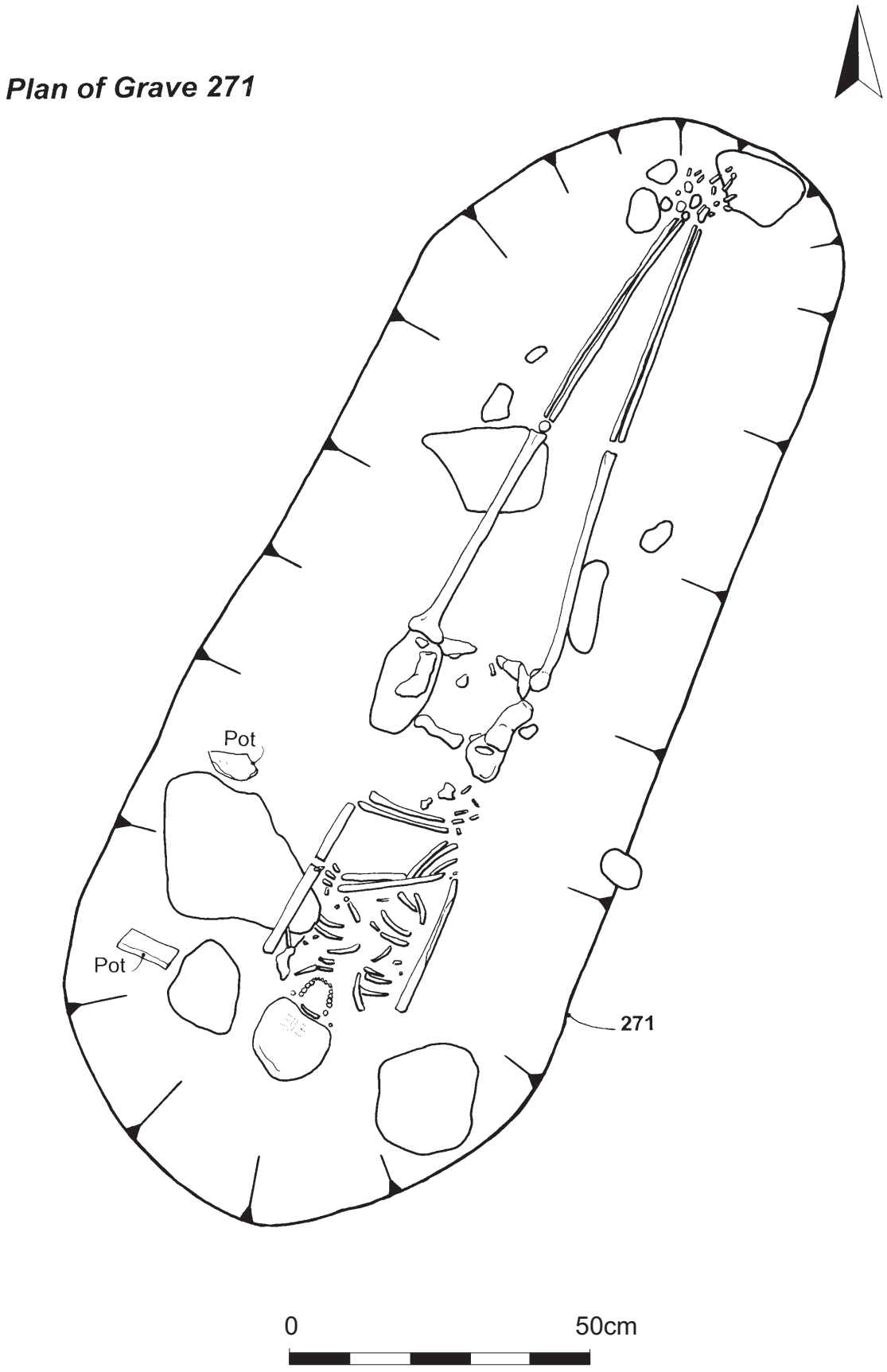


Fig 6

Fig 6: Roman burial, 271

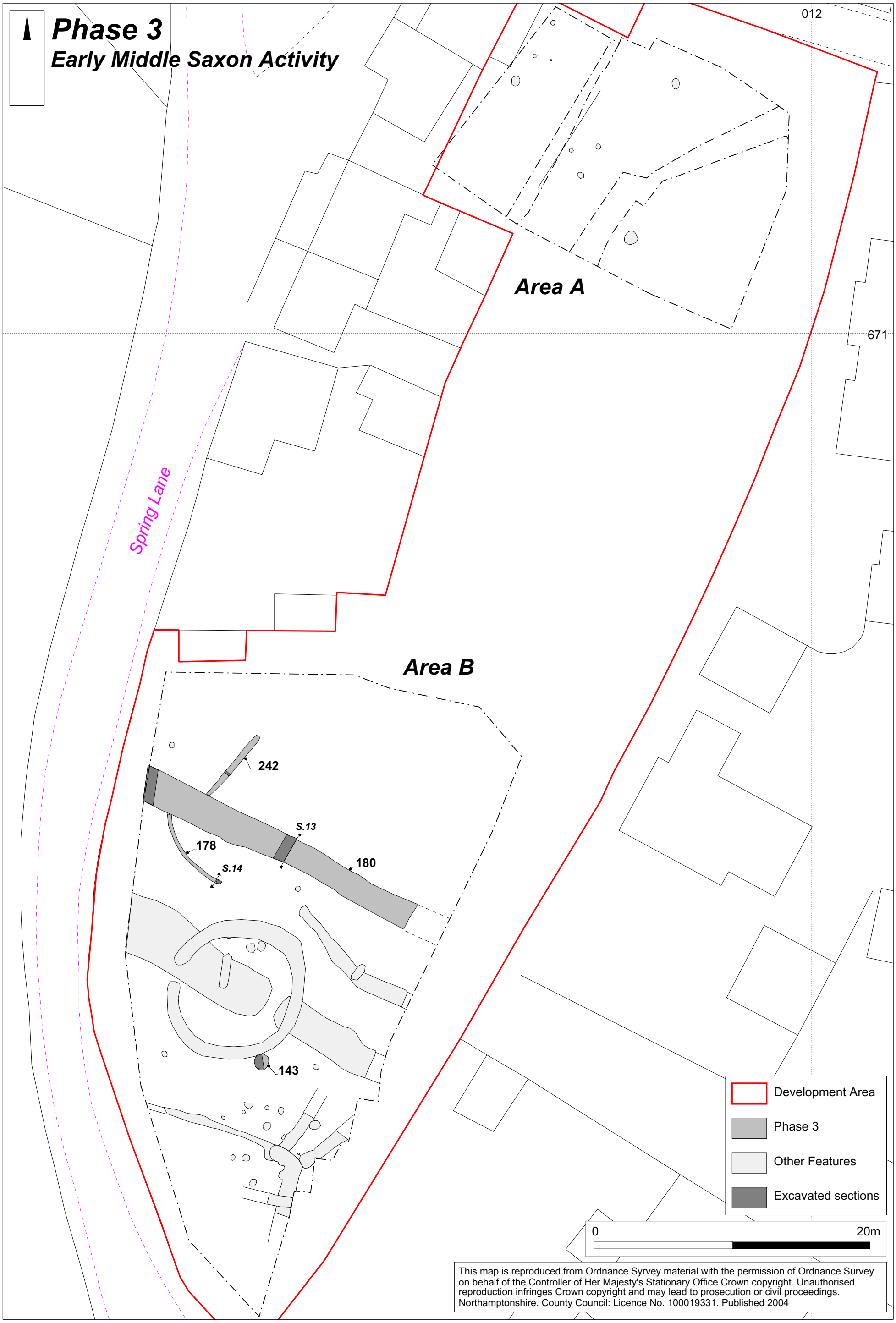


Fig 7 Phase 3: Early/middle Saxon features

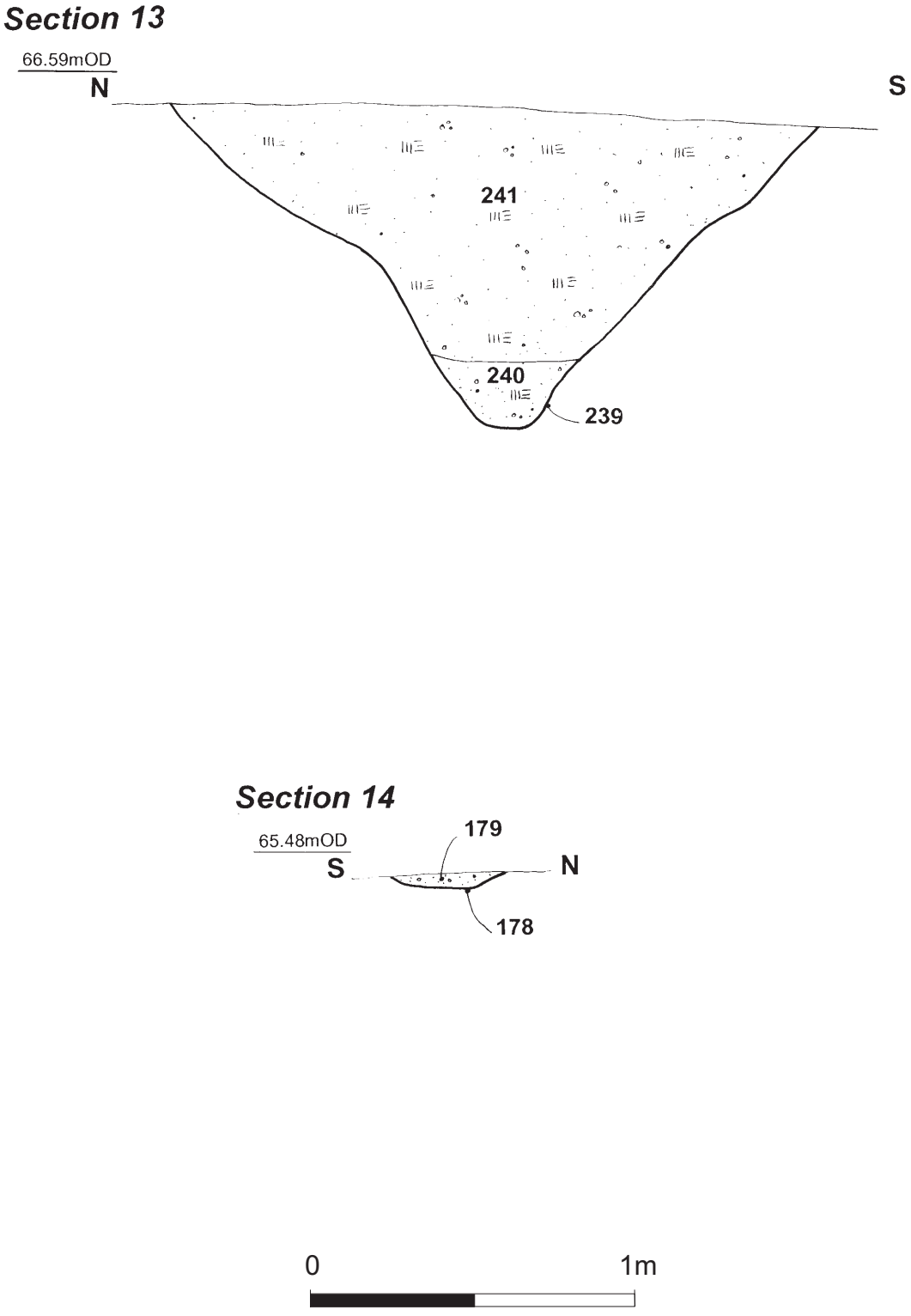


Fig 8

Fig 8: Sections of early/middle Saxon features

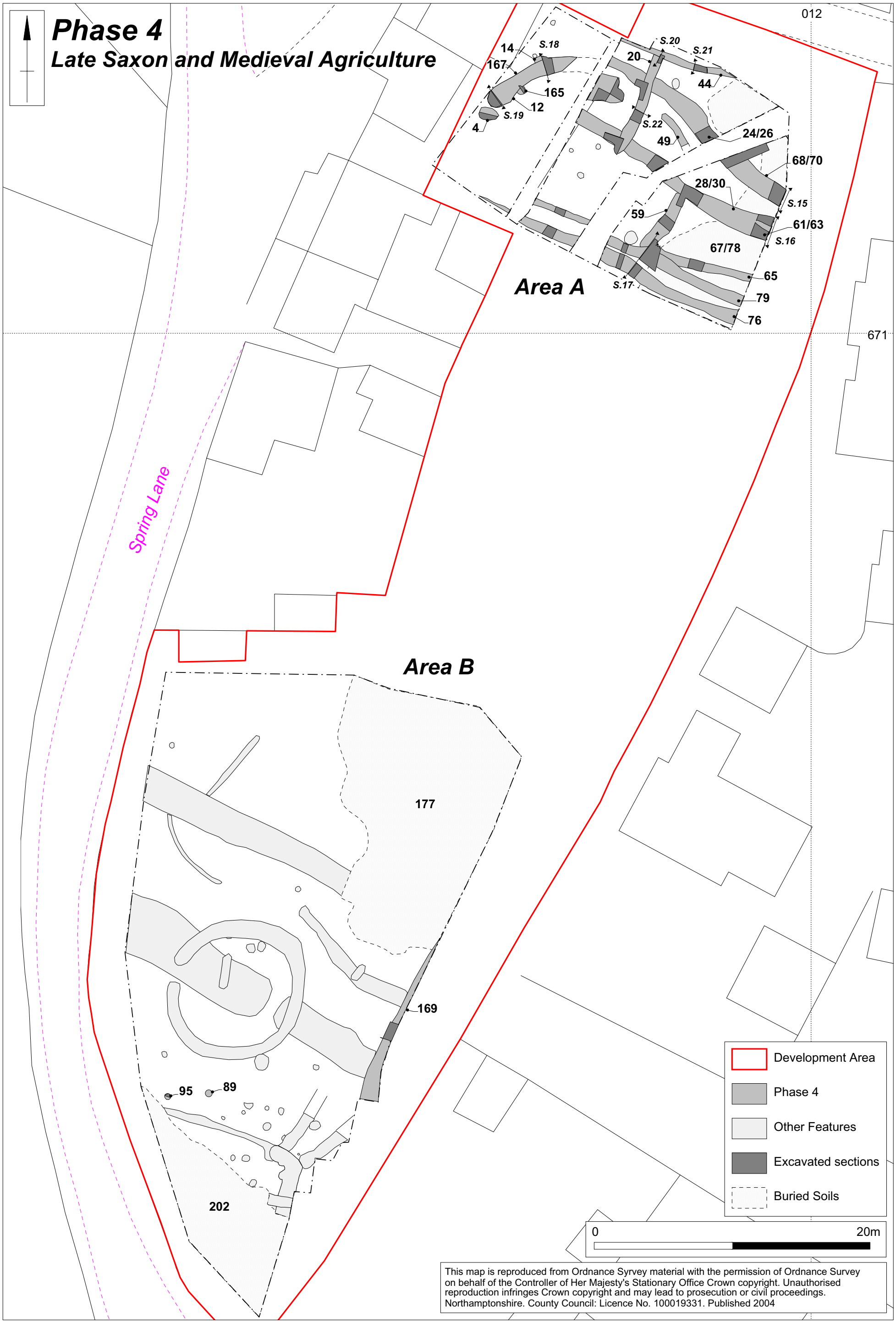
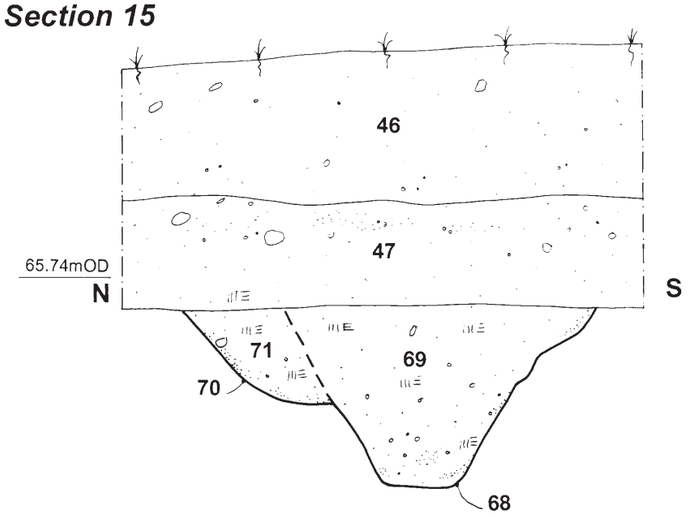


Fig 9: Phase 4: Late Saxon and medieval ditches

Section 15



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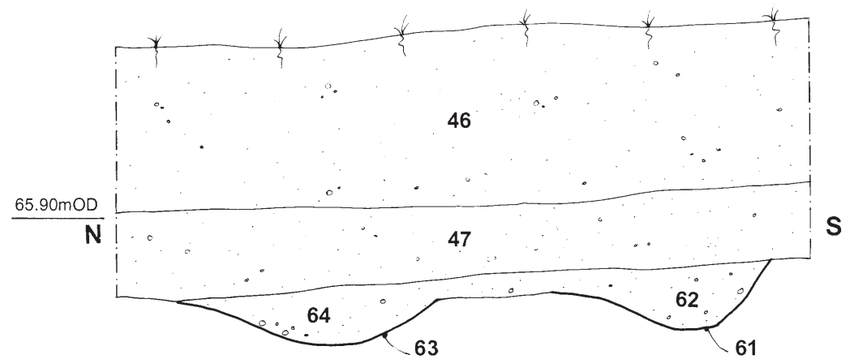

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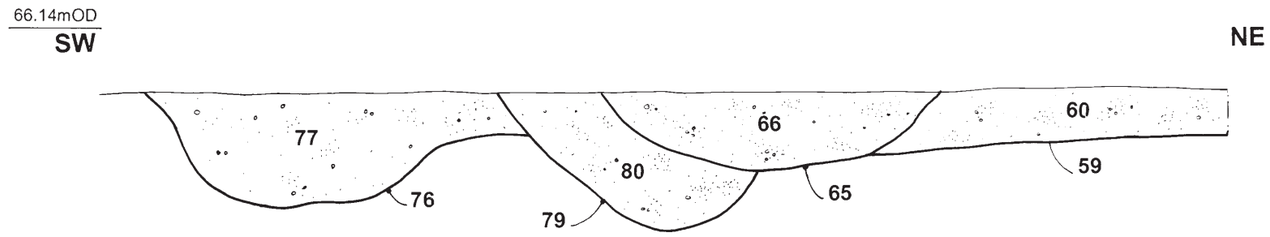

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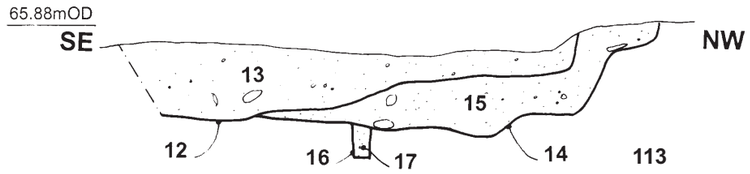

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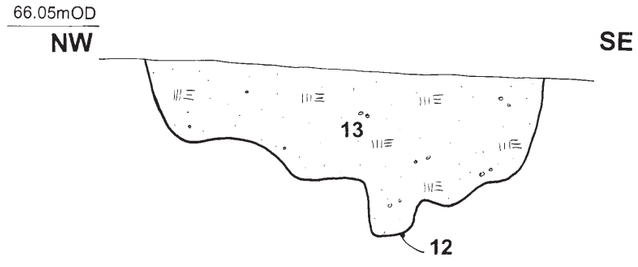

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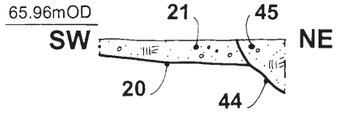

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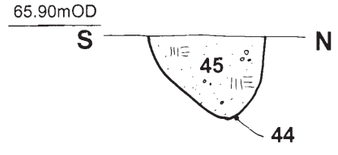

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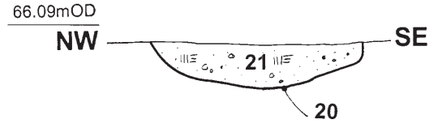


Fig 10

Fig 10: Sections of late Saxon and medieval ditches

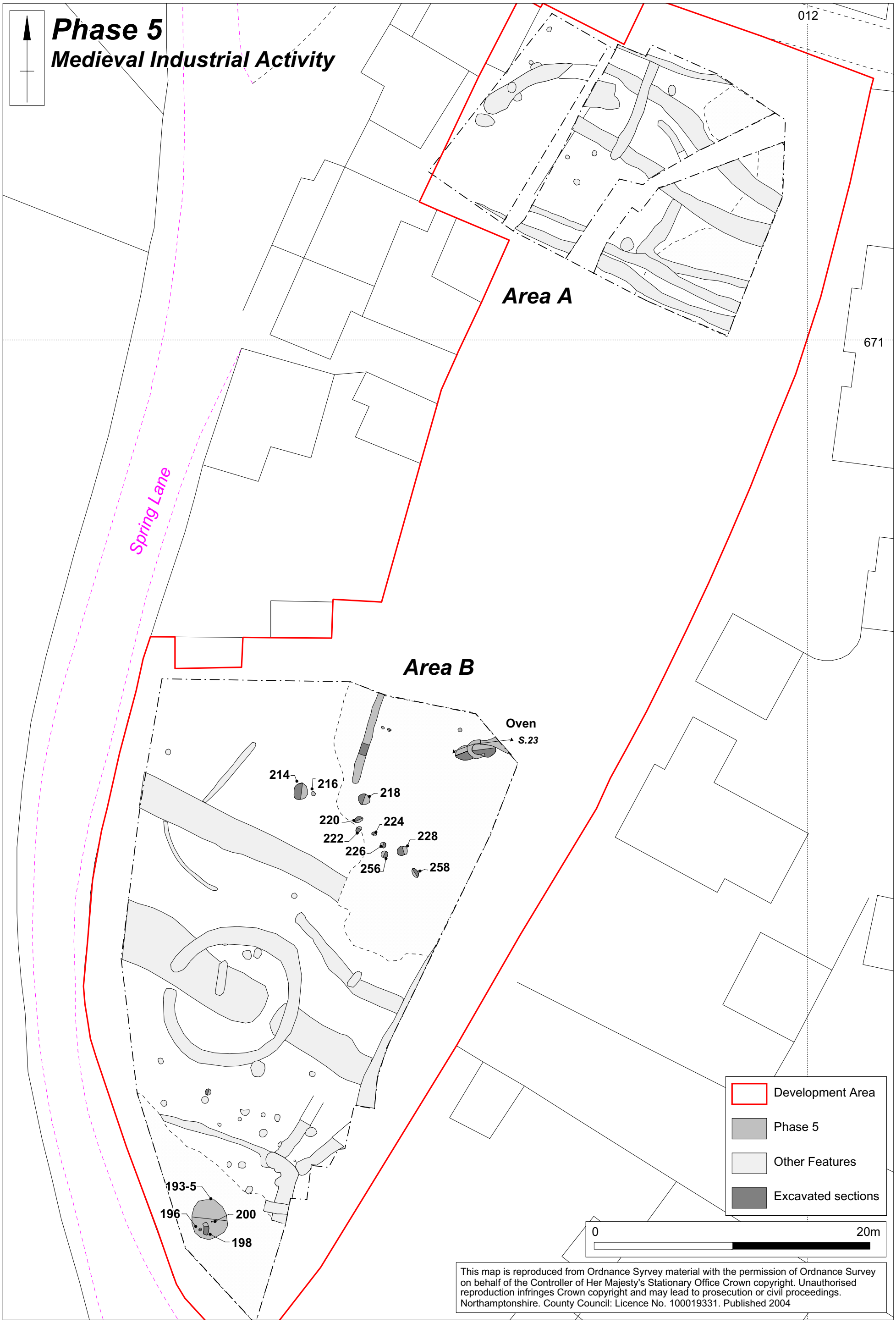
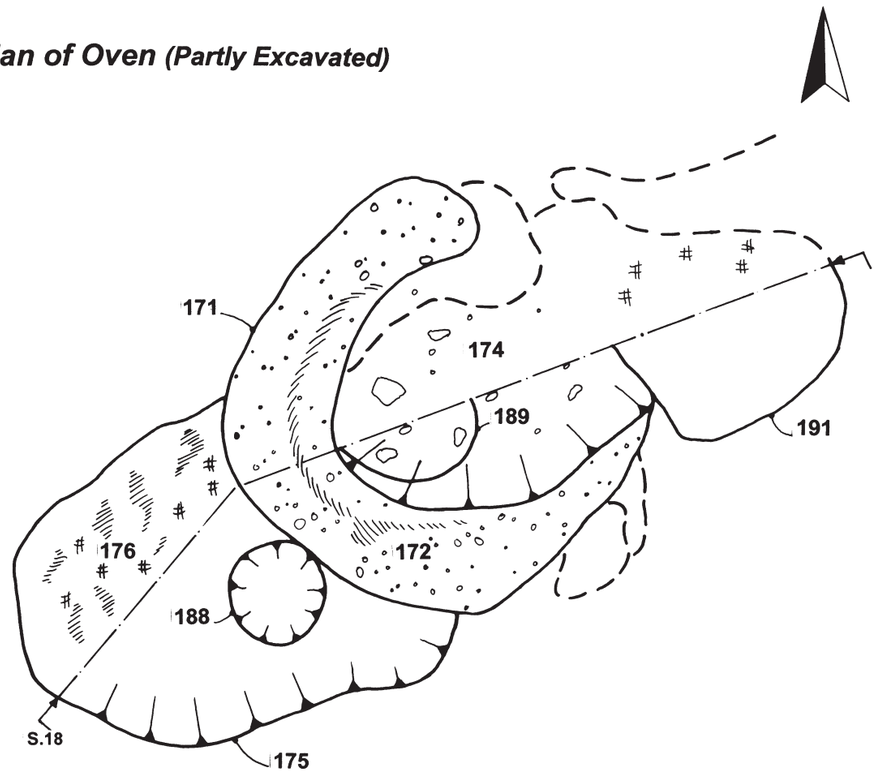
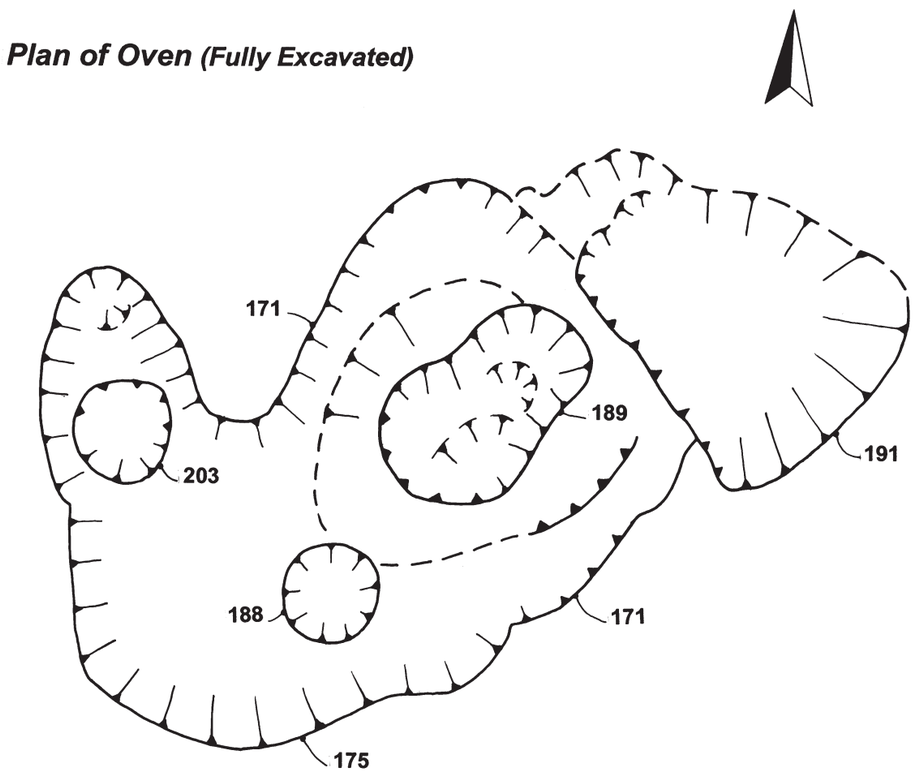


Fig 11: Phase 5: Medieval industrial activity





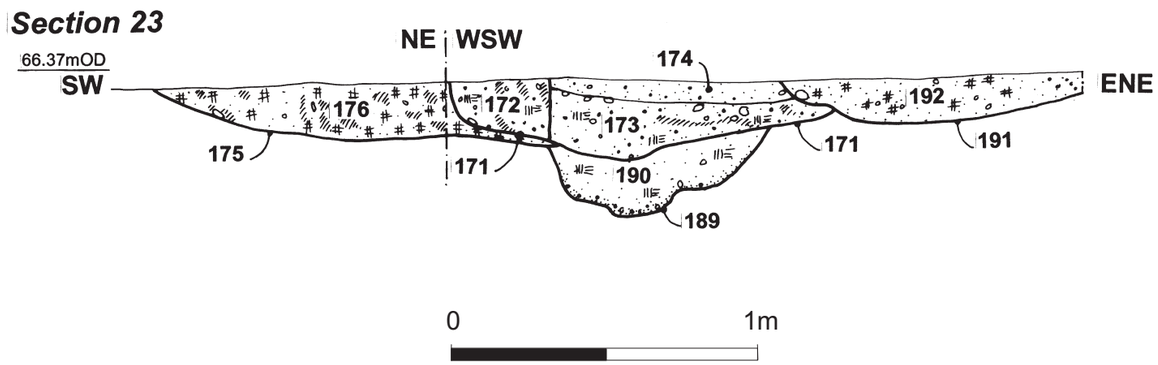
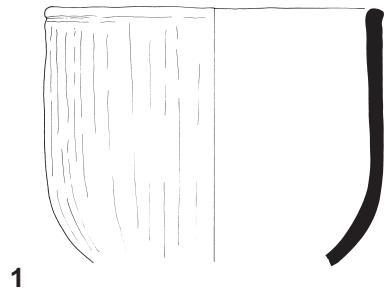


Fig 12

Fig 12: Plans and sections of medieval oven



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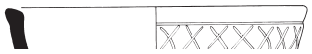

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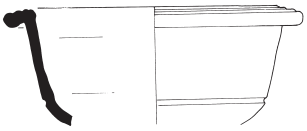

3

Fig 13: Iron Age and Roman pottery

Fig. 13

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 1: The Roman burial, 271 and Plate 2: The medieval oven