



Roman settlement at Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Excavation Report

June 2019

Client: Bellway Homes Limited (South West)

Issue No:

OA Reference No:

NGR: SU 27927 94369

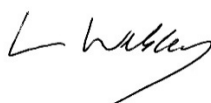


Client Name: Bellway Homes Limited (South West)
Document Title: Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire
Document Type: Archaeological Excavation Report
Grid Reference: SU 27927 94369
Planning Reference:
Site Code: FAX17
Invoice Code: FAXPX
Assession/HER No.: OXCMS:2017.1

OA Document File Location:

OA Graphics File Location:

Issue No: Draft
Date: June 2019
Prepared by: Kate Brady (Project Officer)
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Roman Settlement at Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Excavation Report

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Summary

Excavations at Coxwell Road, Faringdon, uncovered a Romano-British settlement. The site represents the continuation of the Iron Age to Roman site investigated in two previous excavations at Coxwell Road immediately to the north. No certain prehistoric features were found, though small amounts of residual worked flint and prehistoric pottery were recovered, and an enclosure ditch producing no datable finds was cut by early Roman features. A complex of rectilinear, ditched enclosures was established in the mid to late 1st century AD, and was developed further in the 2nd century, when occupation was at its most intense. No buildings could be clearly identified within the enclosures, but a curving gully may have been part of a roundhouse, and a shallow hollow containing stone rubble could have been a building foundation. Very little ceramic building material was recovered, suggesting that any buildings did not have tiled roofs. Evidence for grain production and processing is provided by a T-shaped corn-dryer, and significant amounts of cereal chaff recovered from samples across the site. Two millstone fragments indicate that a mill lay in the vicinity. The animal bone assemblage suggests that cattle and sheep were bred at the site. Small-scale blacksmithing also seems to have taken place. The pottery assemblage is fairly utilitarian in character, and other artefacts are limited in quantity and range, although an enamelled peacock brooch is an unusual find. The site appears to have been largely abandoned by the end of the 2nd century, with only a single ditch dated to the late Roman period.

Acknowledgements

OA are grateful to Chris Jones of Bellway Homes Limited (South West) who commissioned the project, and to Hugh Coddington, the Oxfordshire County Archaeologist, who monitored the fieldwork.

The fieldwork programme was managed by Gerry Thacker, and the on-site work was directed by Paul Murray, and later Kate Brady, assisted by Surveyors Benjamin Brown and Matt Reynolds, and Archaeologists Robert Backhouse, Libby Bennett, John Carne, Edyta Cehak, Diana Chard, Rachael Daniel, Victoria Green, Richard Knight, David Pinches, Emma Powell, Meirion Prysor, Charles Rousseaux, Caroline Souday, Ashley Strutt and Elizabeth Williams.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Bellway Homes Limited (South West) to undertake a strip, map and record excavation of the site of a proposed housing development at Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire. The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission. A specification was set by Hugh Coddington, the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist, detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition. The work was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (OA 2016). An area of 2.26ha was excavated.

Location, geology and topography

The site is centred on SU 27927 94369 and situated on the south-western edge of the town of Faringdon in the Vale of White Horse, and is bounded to the west by Coxwell Road (Fig. 1). The site consisted of open farmland located on a south-facing slope at a level of c 130m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north, falling to c 120m aOD in the south.

The solid geology of the site comprises limestone of the Stanford Formation (a member of the Corallian series) in the south-west of the site. Mudstones of the Amptill Clay formation overlie this in the north and east (British Geological Survey 1971, Sheet 253).

Archaeological and historical background

The archaeological and historical background for the site is described in detail in the Heritage Assessment (Pugh 2010). The site is in an area of significant Iron Age activity, located roughly between two Iron Age hillforts, Badbury (SAM OX257), located approximately 1.5km to the west, and Little Coxwell Camp (SAM OX207), located 1.25km to the south-east (Pugh 2010).

Excavation by Thames Valley Archaeological Service (TVAS) directly north of the site revealed an early Iron Age settlement, and a 2nd-century or later Roman shrine or temple (Weaver and Ford 2004); a second excavation, located directly north of the TVAS site, was undertaken by OA, and revealed more evidence of early to middle Iron Age settlement, with a single pit of a late Iron Age date, and evidence of some Romano-British activity (Cook *et al.* 2004). An evaluation at Highworth Road, immediately to the north-west of the site, uncovered few archaeological features, although a cluster of Iron Age features including pits and a gully was found in one trench (Sanchez and Mundin 2017).

A trial-trench evaluation of the site was undertaken by OA in September 2010. Of the 40 trenches excavated, 29 contained archaeological features. These included a group of linear features, pits and postholes, concentrated in the north-western area of the field, some of which dated to the late Iron Age–early Roman period. Furrows of probable medieval date were identified throughout the field but particularly towards its northern boundary. Post-medieval quarry pits were present in the south-western area of the field, and probable post-medieval ditches were seen adjacent to the field's eastern boundary, beyond the area of excavation.

Original research aims and objectives

The aims of the excavation, as stated in the WSI, were as follows:

-
- To characterize and date, where possible, the prehistoric, Roman and other significant remains present.
 - To understand the nature of any potential settlement activity.
 - To contextualise the findings within the local and regional landscapes.
 - To make the results of the excavation available through publication in an appropriate journal.

Archive

The archive will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service under the accession code OXCMS:2017.1.

Publication

An edited version of this report, with the addition of a longer Discussion section, will be submitted for publication in *Oxoniensia*.

STRATIGRAPHY

General

Most of the activity on the site appears to have taken place during the 2nd century AD and phasing is largely defined by two phases, Phase 2, early Roman, and Phase 3, middle Roman. Phase 3 is divided into two sub-phases as in some instances pottery date ranges are sufficiently narrow to assign the date of a feature's infill to the earlier or later half of the 2nd century.

Phase 1: Prehistoric?

Ditch 1004 (Figs 2 and 3) appeared to form the eastern and southern sides of a large enclosure. It emerged from the western edge of excavation and extended on a broadly west-east alignment before turning to the north and continuing NNW and terminating. The ditch measured c 2.5m wide and 0.56m deep and it bottomed at the interface between the silty clay geology and the underlying limestone. It had moderate sides and a wide flat base and three silty fills, which were very homogeneous in colour and had few inclusions. No pottery was recovered from the ditch, but its stratigraphic position, being cut by early and middle Roman ditches, and alignment that was at odds with the prevailing alignment of the later features suggest that it predated the early Roman activity on the site and may have been prehistoric in date.

Seven redeposited pieces of prehistoric worked flint were recovered from Roman features or the topsoil, including a fragment of a probable Bronze Age knife, while a very small amount of residual flint-tempered pottery of probable prehistoric date was recovered from six Roman features. These finds attest to prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site.

Phase 2: Early Roman (c AD 43-100)

Several ditches were laid out in this period, forming the earliest incarnation of an enclosure system that continued in use, albeit with some recutting, into the middle Roman period (Phase 3) (Fig. 2). To the north, a large ditch (1003) was aligned WNW-ESE and extended for c 90m along the northern edge of excavation and beyond the eastern site boundary. It measured 1.6m wide and 0.53m deep (Fig. 4, section 4). Next to its western terminus was a circular pit (72), which measured 1.5m wide and 0.54m deep. Only a single, residual, sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from the ditch, and none from the pit.

Ditch 1021, parallel with 1003, similarly extended for over 90m across the site. Much of the feature had been truncated by a recut to the north-west, but the ditch was better preserved to the south-east. The ditch had been cut through the silty clay and bottomed as the cut met the underlying limestone. It measured 1.5m wide and 0.4m deep (Fig. 4, section 42). An intact, upturned base from a grog-tempered pottery vessel dated to the late 1st century BC or 1st century AD was found in the upper part of the ditch. Other pottery recovered from the feature included Savernake ware, suggesting an early Roman date for deposition. This ditch may have continued to the south-east, extending for at least 135m in length on the same north-west to south-east alignment and beyond the edge of the site, where an excavated intervention suggested two cuts here also. However, the stratigraphic relationship was not clear and they both appeared to be filled with the same material; no early Roman pottery was recovered.

Another boundary ditch was situated 50m to the south of, and parallel with, ditch 1021. Ditch 1011 measured 1.3m wide and 0.8m deep (Fig. 4, section 68). It contained pottery of mixed date, including a grog-tempered sherd of late Iron Age date alongside black-burnished ware dating to after AD 120. However, the recut of this ditch (1012) also contained a mixed pottery assemblage, which included sherds dated to the mid/late 1st century AD, possibly derived from the earlier ditch. It is likely that only the very upper part of this ditch was infilled after AD 120 and that the ditch was originally cut and filled in the early Roman period.

Ditch 1033 extended south-west for some 28m from the northern edge of excavation. The ditch, perpendicular to ditches 1003 and 1021, measured at least 1m wide and 0.4m deep (Fig. 4, section 139). Pottery recovered from its single silty clay fill dated to AD 43-100 and included grog-tempered ware and Savernake ware. The ditch was subsequently recut (1034). The recut had an almost identical profile to 1033 that measured 1.8m wide and 0.45m deep and contained a single silty clay fill. Twenty sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill and also included grog-tempered ware and Savernake ware. Ditch 1055, which was parallel to 1033, may have defined the western edge of the settlement. The ditch, which extended for some 80m, was recut (as 1002) and subsequently infilled in the middle Roman period (Phase 3), but an earlier, larger ditch may have belonged to this phase, although no finds were recovered from it (Fig. 4, section 138). In the north a break in the ditch may represent an entrance through it.

A small sub-enclosure was formed by an L-shaped ditch (1032) that joined the southern edge of ditch 1021 and the western side of ditch 1033. The enclosed area measured 16.5m (NE-SW) by 7.5m (NW-SE). Ditch 1032 was up to c 1.5m wide and had a broad V-shaped profile measuring 0.3m in depth. It contained two silty clay fills with few inclusions. Pottery from the ditch dated to the early Roman period (AD 43-100), again consisting of grog-tempered ware, Savernake ware and broadly dated Roman reduced coarse wares. There were no Roman features within the enclosure, only two undated hollows, which cut the ditch in the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. A small amount of fired clay, a fragment of probable oven furniture and four pieces of animal bone were recovered from the ditch. There was no gap in the ditch to suggest an entrance.

A line of four shallow postholes (108, 110, 112, 116), one of which (112) was recut (114), extended along the western edge of 1033 to the south of the enclosure. Only one posthole contained pottery (112); one of the two sherds was of broad Roman date, the other was a very small sherd of grog-tempered ware. Their alignment with ditch 1033 suggests that the two groups were contemporaneous, the postholes perhaps representing the remains of a fence.

Only two features attest to activity in the area enclosed by the ditches during this phase. Posthole 124 was situated in the southern enclosed space. It measured 0.45m in diameter and was very shallow, being only 0.2m deep, but the upper of the two silty clay fills yielded seven sherds of pottery of late Iron Age or early Roman date and 93g of fired clay, probably oven furniture. Without associated features it is not possible to say whether this was a posthole forming part of a structure or the base of a heavily truncated small oven or hearth. Situated approximately 35m to the north-west of posthole 124 was a shallow scoop (162), which may also be a heavily truncated posthole. The feature measured 0.7m in diameter and was just 0.04m deep. It contained four sherds of grog-tempered pottery.

Phase 3: Middle Roman (c AD 100/120-200)

The middle Roman period saw the main phase of activity on the site, with a series of enclosures containing features and deposits attesting to occupation and industrial activity (Fig. 5). Most of the features recorded were ditches. These overlay the ditches of Phase 2 on the same alignment, recutting some of the earlier boundaries, and it is possible that some earlier ditches were removed entirely. During the excavation it was often difficult to establish the stratigraphic relationship between intersecting ditches, as fills were often identical and in some cases relationships have only been clarified by the dating of pottery within them. This has allowed two sub-phases to be established:

- Sub-phase 3.1 – c AD 120-150: construction and early activity
- Sub-phase 3.2 – c AD 150-200: continued activity and subsequent abandonment

Nevertheless, many features are assigned to the broader Phase 3, and those attributed to Phase 3.2 on the plans represent modifications and continuous use of existing enclosures, rather than site reorganisation in defined phases of activity although in many cases these sub-phases are also defined chronologically by pottery dates. Spatially, the concentration in activity was highlighted by the amounts of pottery deposited into ditches. In many of the ditches around the edge of the site, away from the concentration of features in the centre, pottery assemblages numbered just a few sherds, which often could not be dated more closely than Phase 3. However, it is likely that these ditches were in use throughout the phase, defining larger enclosures with an agricultural function, and were not infilled as quickly with occupation debris and other waste.

Ditches were laid out on a NNE-SSW/NNW-SSE alignment to form a series of enclosed spaces. These have been labelled E1 to E6 (Fig. 3) and both sub-phases of activity within these enclosures are described together below.

Enclosure E1

Enclosure E1 in the southern part of the site was defined by narrow and shallow linear features (1009 and 1004). It cut Phase 2 boundary ditch 1012 and enclosed a rectangular area measuring 34m by 20m. A smaller enclosure (1010) extended from the south-western side of E1 and there appeared to be an entrance between the two. Ditch 1009 was V-shaped in profile and measured c 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep. Ditch 1004 was a little wider at 0.8m wide but had a similar depth. A spread (1008) of loose silty material in the northern part of E1 contained black-burnished ware dating from AD 120 onwards, as well as residual early Roman grog-tempered ware. The layer appeared to overlie the middle Roman enclosure ditches and may represent disturbed upcast from earlier features, redeposited when digging ditch 1005, or may relate to activity within the enclosure, possibly as a spread of occupation debris. A post-pit (335) was located within the enclosure. It was oval in plan and had a posthole at its north-eastern end. The shallow remnants of a curvilinear gully (369) were located to the west of it, but although both could be dated to Phase 3, it is not clear if they belonged to activity inside this early enclosure or related to slightly later activity, as stratigraphic relationships in this area were very difficult to determine owing to the identical appearance of the deposits.

Enclosure E2 (Fig. 6)

A series of regular enclosures or plots were laid out in relation to ditch 1027, which extended on a NNE-SSW alignment for some 75m. Shorter ditches, extending to the west, were set

perpendicular to 1027 to form four plots, each c 20m wide. Ditch 1027, which had been severely truncated by later activity (Fig. 7, section 74), contained pottery dating to c AD 120-150. Enclosure E2 was defined by ditch 1017 and its recut (1018) on the north-eastern side, ditch 661 on the western side (though this may represent an internal division), and 1027 to the east. The stratigraphic relationship between ditches 1017 and 1018 (Fig. 7, section 33) is supported by pottery recovered from them. Ditch 1017 contained a group of pottery dated to c AD 70-150; pottery from the lower fills of its recut was dated to c AD 150-200. Ditch 1017 measured 0.56m wide and 0.36m deep. It had a steep, regular concave profile and three silty clay fills. Ditch 1018 was wider than 1017 at 0.92m but shallower at 0.26m and contained four silty clay fills. Much of the pottery recovered from the feature was recovered from a dump in its eastern end. An environmental sample from the ditch contained spelt wheat and oat remains but also a cherry stone, suggesting the gathering of wild fruits.

Three pits (48, 51 and 92) were recorded within the enclosure (Figs 6 and 7, sections 10 and 17). The largest, pit 92, measured 1.5m by 1.7m and was roughly square in shape but with rounded corners. It had almost vertical straight sides and an even, flat base and was 0.25m deep. Its dark soft fill contained an assemblage of 63 sherds of pottery dating to c AD 120-200. The two other pits were of similar form, though slightly smaller, and contained pottery of 2nd-century date. Environmental samples collected from the pits contained abundant chaff and small amounts of charred grain, which may have been burnt as fuel. A linear feature (1016), recorded to the west of pit 92, had a very irregular base, possibly the remnants of postholes, and measured up to 0.5m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig. 7, section 69). Eighty-four sherds of pottery dating to c AD 120-200 were recovered from the feature, along with a small number of iron nails. Another irregular gully (1015) was recorded to the south. Together, the two features may have defined internal fences or possibly two sides of a structure. An isolated posthole (505) just to the north of the 1016 was not dated. An area of compacted gravel (1050), which perhaps formed a surface, was identified to the east of 1015. It had been cut by later ditches but extended for up to 12m to the east. No pottery was recovered but a copper alloy brooch pin (SF5) was found on the surface. A layer of silty material lying directly over the natural to the west of the area (478) contained a small amount of pottery dating to AD 120-410 and may represent occupation debris. A shallow posthole (516) was located to the west of gully 1015 but was not dated.

Enclosure E3

This plot was defined by ditches 1017/1018 to the south, 1020 to the north and 1027/1028 to the east (Fig. 8). Ditch 1020 had steep straight sides and measured c 1.2m wide and up to 0.3m deep (Fig. 4, section 42). It contained firm yellowish-grey silty clay that contained a large pottery assemblage of 173 sherds, including black-burnished ware jars, Savernake ware, and a Central Gaulish samian ware dish dated to c AD 120-150. Pottery dating to c AD 120-200 was collected from the fill of 1028. At its junction with ditch 1017/1018, ditch 1028 was overlain by a layer of stone (39) comprising roughly hewn, though generally flat limestone fragments 0.3m by 0.6m in size that covered an area measuring 2.6m long by 1.8m wide (Fig. 7, section 74). This may be the remains of a paved surface or dump of stone rubble that served as a causeway between enclosures E2 and E3. Pottery recovered from the stone layer was dated c AD 120-200. Two rotary quern fragments, an upper and lower stone (though not a pair), were set within the surface.

Ditch 1041 was located along the inner eastern side of Enclosure E3, parallel with ditch 1027/1028. It was on a curving alignment and the pottery assemblage recovered from it included a black-burnished ware bowl dated to c AD 180-250.

Within the enclosed area was a group of pits (1051). The pits were intercutting, but ranged from 0.5m to 1.5m in diameter and from 0.4m to 0.6m deep (Fig. 9, sections 135, 143 and 146). Some 236 sherds of pottery were recovered from the pit group. A samian ware cup from pit 559, one of the earliest features in the sequence, had a name stamp dated c AD 150-170, and the remaining pottery from the group is consistent with deposition in the mid to late 2nd century AD. Other finds from the pits included iron nails, a possible ox goad (SF19) and a complete copper alloy brooch in the shape of a peacock with enamel inlays (SF 18). Environmental remains recovered from pit 562 included charred grain, chaff (again perhaps used for fuel), pea/bean, oats, a hazelnut shell fragment and another cherry stone, which together attest to the exploitation of wild food resources alongside arable production and processing. Two pits located to the south-west of the group were not dated, but due to their proximity to the other pits may be of the same date.

A short gully (596) contained 2nd-century pottery and, with posthole 592 and pit 590, may have formed part of an entrance related to the causeway. Another length of gully (1019) was located to the south of the pit group. It did not join any other features and spatially there is little indication of its function. Pottery from the feature dated to AD 150-200.

Waterhole 618 to the north-west of the pit group had been cut through the silty clay natural soil and into the underlying limestone and a probable earlier feature (634) that only partially survived on the south-eastern side. The waterhole was circular in plan and measured 2.6m in diameter. It had vertical sides cut and a depth that exceeded 1.9m (Fig. 9, section 145). Five deposits of grey and yellow-brown silty clay were excavated. These contained a total of 413 pottery sherds, which dated to c AD 120-180, suggesting that the feature was out of use by the late 2nd century AD. A sample taken from the lowest excavated fill of the waterhole produced no identifiable plant remains. A gully (1042) extended along the northern side of pit group 1051. This may have been connected to the waterhole as a drain, although the relationship between the features could not be ascertained.

Feature 131, which was oval in plan and measured 1.4m long, 0.74m wide and 0.3m in deep, may have been a hearth or oven (Fig. 9, section 38). It contained a basal layer of hard, vitrified soil and, above that, burnt silty clay and charred grain identified as barley. A small pottery assemblage recovered from the feature dated to AD 43-100. Although the pottery would appear to place the feature within Phase 2, a Phase 3 date is more likely, given the feature's proximity to the other features within the enclosure.

Plots to the North and West of Enclosures E1–E3

The area to the north of enclosure E3 was sub-divided into two plots by a narrow ditch (1022). The feature was not dated by finds, but it joined boundary ditch 1027, suggesting that it had been constructed as part of the layout of these enclosed areas in Phase 3.1. The two plots were devoid of features, suggesting that they were used for farming. Phase 2 ditch 1003 was not recut in Phase 3, but as the space between the feature and 1020 was divided more-or-less equally by ditch 1022, it may have remained in use as a boundary. The western side of the settlement was defined by ditch 1002, a recut of Phase 2 ditch 1055. The later feature was c 1.5m wide and 0.28m deep (Fig. 4, section 138). It is notable that ditches 1017/1018, 1020

and 1022 did not extend as far as 1002. This may be due to differential truncation, but it is possible that the enclosures terminated roughly halfway across and that the westernmost part of the site was largely open.

Enclosure E4

Enclosure E4 in the north-eastern corner of the site was only partially revealed within the excavated area. Ditch 1030 and its recut 1053, which defined the enclosure's western edge, followed the alignment of Phase 2 ditch 2034. The ditch was 2.1m wide and 0.6m deep and had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Pottery from the ditch included a black-burnished ware plain-rimmed bowl or dish deposited in the later 2nd century or later. Ditch 1023 and its recut 1040 defined the southern boundary of the enclosure. The earlier ditch was the larger, measuring 0.86m wide and 0.36m deep. Its recut was a shallower gully. The pottery from both features had a similar date (mid/late 2nd century AD) and included black-burnished ware and Central Gaulish samian ware.

Within the enclosed area was the partial remains of a curvilinear gully (34). It continued beyond the eastern limit of the site and may have served as the eaves gully or wall trench of a roundhouse. If so, it enclosed an area of c 8.3m in diameter. The feature was 0.66m wide and 0.16m deep and contained a single dark greyish brown silty clay fill. Pottery recovered from the gully included the base of a Central Gaulish samian ware bowl dated to AD 160-200. An iron nail was also recovered. The interior contained two possible adjacent postholes (although these were not dated) and a pit (18). The pit was circular and concave in profile and measured 1.6m in diameter and 0.4m in depth. It contained with a silty fill very similar to the surrounding natural, from which a single, but residual, sherd of grog-tempered pottery and a sherd of samian ware dated c AD 120-200 were recovered. The latter suggests that the filling of the pit was broadly contemporary with the gully.

Enclosure E5

This enclosure was defined by ditch 1030/1053 to the west and ditch 1026 to the south. The enclosure was c 27m wide and at least c 38m long; its eastern end lay beyond the edge of excavation. Ditch 1026 had near-vertical sides and a flat base and measured 1.4m wide and 0.5m deep (Fig. 10, section 7). It appeared to have been cut before the earlier, Phase 2 ditch (1021) had filled completely. The upper fill of 1026, which also filled the upper part of the earlier cut, contained a large dump of pottery and was visible on the surface, along with what appeared to be a burnt deposit. Some 600 sherds of pottery were collected. Among the forms identified were flat-rimmed and plain-rimmed dishes in reduced and black-burnished wares, a Severn Valley ware tankard, and a colour-coated bag-shaped beaker probably made at Nuneham Courtenay in Oxfordshire. Together, the pottery suggests a mid/late 2nd-century date for deposition. Analysis of the burnt deposit showed no identifiable charred plant remains or charcoal. Ditch 1026 was the latest in a sequence of several ditches defining this and the surrounding enclosures and the dump of pottery in the top of it therefore probably represents one of the latest deposits relating to activity in the vicinity of this enclosure.

Several features were recorded within the enclosure. Layer 316 was a spread of ashy material, scorched soil and stone rubble. It lay on the natural soil and there were no structural remains or other associated features within it. The layer contained pottery, including a Central Gaulish samian ware bowl or dish and a black-burnished ware bowl/dish with a flanged and grooved

rim, suggesting a late 2nd-century date for deposition. Also recovered from this layer was a complete iron mortice chisel, a hobnail and a nail.

A curvilinear gully (287) was recorded west of the spread. When the subsoil remnants were hand cleaned off they appeared quite separate as shown on the survey. The feature was very slight, cutting only 0.03m into the natural soil, but was clearly visible as a soil mark after the topsoil had been stripped. At its western terminus there appeared to be a square-shaped feature, which was similarly visible only as a trace, but which may have originally been a posthole. Gully 287 may have been related to a straight gully (1043), which extended to the south. The latter measured 0.64m wide and 0.2m deep and produced 37 sherds of pottery dated to the mid/late 2nd century AD. The gap between the west terminal of 287 and the north terminal of 1043 was c 2m. It is possible that this formed an entrance into a pen or structure. Alternatively, 1043 may have formed a pen or sub-enclosure measuring c.13m by 15m with ditch 1024, which extended into the enclosure from the western boundary.

Two possible postholes (254 and 256), situated to the east of gully 1043, also belonged to this phase of activity. Both were very shallow, measuring less than 0.2m in depth. Feature 256 was sub-oval in plan and measured 2.26m long and 1.45m wide. Feature 254 was sub-rectangular, measuring 1.4m long and 1m wide. Feature 256 contained a very small pottery assemblage dated only broadly to the Roman period, but 254 contained 23 sherds dating to the 2nd century AD. Another gully (363) was recorded in the south-eastern part of the enclosure. It extended NW-SE for c 14m before continuing beyond the edge of excavation. The ditch was 1.4m wide and 0.44m deep and had two silty fills from which a relatively large amount of pottery was recovered. The assemblage included a black-burnished ware 'cooking pot' and Central Gaulish samian ware body sherds dating to the mid/late 2nd century AD.

Enclosure E6

The area to the south of ditch 1026 saw industrial activity and contained other features of more elusive function. The space was bounded to the south by ditch 1035 and a possible trackway (Fig. 10, section 107), but it appears to have been open to the west, with no clear replacement for Phase 2 ditch 1033 being dated to this phase. The trackway was defined by four identically aligned and closely spaced shallow linear features (1052) and a small remnant of a surface (673). The linear features may be wheel ruts and may mark the line of a trackway leading from the site to the east. Corresponding depressions were identified the surface, suggesting that the track was metalled, at least in part. The metalled surface measured c 4.8m NE-SW. The north-eastern edge of the surface overlay Phase 2 posthole 116. Pottery recovered from the surface included a flagon and the rim of a white ware mortarium, dating the assemblage to the second half of the 2nd century AD. Ditch 1035 formed the southern edge of the trackway and extended NW-SE for some 50m before turning at a right angle to continue south-west for c 30m. Pottery recovered from it dated to AD 120-200.

The remains of a corn-dryer (273) were uncovered in the northern part of the enclosure (Fig. 11). The feature was roughly T-shaped in plan and lay within a construction cut that measured 4.85m long, 3m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig. 10, sections 59 and 60). The western edge was disturbed by a plough furrow. The cut was lined on all sides with two surviving courses of roughly hewn limestone blocks, except the eastern end, which was open. A large stone slab had been placed on the base of the cut at this end, possibly to aid the raking out of ashes; there was otherwise no stone base within the structure. A shallow scoop cut into the natural soil at the eastern end served as a rake-out pit, the soil here having been burnt. A layer of

burnt grain and chaff – used as fuel – was preserved in the fill all along the length of the structure. Smaller fragments of stone lay above the grain, this fill also containing five sherds of pottery dated to the mid/late 2nd century AD. A dark scorched clay deposit was recorded at the west end of the structure, but there was no visible grain.

To the south of the corn-dryer was a stone-lined pit (1037). It measured c 2m long, 1.7m wide and 0.5m in depth and had a rounded rectangular shape in plan. Its single fill contained 80 sherds of pottery, the most diagnostic pieces dating the assemblage to the mid-2nd century AD. Flat limestone fragments had been laid flat on the base of the pit. More stone was found within the pit, including a relatively large (more than 1m long), thin slab, which was found on its side. The slab could have formed a cap for this pit or may have been part of the corn-dryer. The fill of the pit contained an assemblage of charred plant remains that was similar to that recovered from the corn-dryer. Again, much of it comprised chaff, suggesting that it had been burnt as fuel and represented waste from the corn-dryer. The pit also contained an iron nail, a whetstone fragment and a millstone fragment (SF 15).

Gully 1038, south of the pit, was sinuous in form and measured 0.45m wide and 0.2m deep. It may represent the remains of a structure or be related to drainage. Pottery recovered from the feature could only be broadly dated to the Roman period. Two postholes (426 and 428) were situated on either side of the gully. Posthole 428 contained two sherds of pottery, one of which was Savernake ware, dated to the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. Together, the features may represent a structure or relate to some other function, such as drainage.

A deep pit or well (468) was situated further to the south-west. It was circular in plan, measuring c.2.5m in diameter, and was cut through the natural silty clay and into the underlying limestone bedrock (Fig. 10, section 113). Excavation of the feature continued to 1.2m before ceasing for safety reasons. Some 270 sherds of pottery were recovered from the upper fill. These included Central Gaulish samian ware and black-burnished ware, suggesting that the feature went out of use during the second half of the 2nd century AD.

Close to the south-eastern edge of this area was a large, shallow, sub-rectangular feature (7). Initially it was only partially uncovered, but the area was extended so that it could be investigated fully. The lower fill of the feature contained a large amount of rough limestone fragments, perhaps the remnants of a foundation, and the upper fill had infilled with silt and dumped domestic refuse, including a very large pottery assemblage. The cut was c 9m long, 4m wide and 0.15m deep. The western side of the feature was truncated by a furrow, but the feature did not extend beyond that. The eastern edge was irregular and it was initially thought this marked the position of postholes, though none was detected on excavation. While function is uncertain, the abundance of stone rubble within it, including at least one piece of possible architectural stone (SF2), suggests that the feature represented the cut for a building foundation. The large pottery assemblage from the feature – more than 550 sherds – included black-burnished ware jars and bowls, two samian ware vessels, two Oxford white ware mortaria and three south Spanish amphora body sherds. A name-stamp on a samian vessel was dated c AD 150-170, and deposition is likely to have taken place during the second half of the 2nd century.

Other features

The space created to the south of enclosure E6 by ditch 1035 contained a single gully (1036). It extended NE-SW for c 6m and was 0.18m deep.

The area between ditches 1027/1028 and 1030/1053 formed a long narrow space and there is little evidence to suggest what activity took place within it. A layer of stone rubble (502) was recorded in a small area overlying the corner of Phase 2 ditch 1032. The layer contained 27 sherds (255g) of pottery, including a sherd of samian with a name-stamp dated to c AD 145-175, suggesting that this layer was deposited in the latter half of the 2nd century. It is not clear from where this layer derives but it may represent demolition rubble from a stone building in the vicinity, or perhaps just the upcast from the construction of a feature that cut deep through the natural limestone. Alternatively, the stone could represent an area of metalled surface, perhaps the remnants of a trackway here.

Phase 4: Later Roman (c AD 240-300/400)

A single feature (118) was dated to the late Roman period. This possible ditch terminus was cut by a plough furrow and located in an area where stratigraphic relationships were particularly unclear. It was situated c 10m to the south of the terminus of the latest Phase 3.2 ditch on the site (1041) and it is possible that they were related, but ditch 118 was only traced for c 3m to the south, possibly curving round to the east, so it is not clear whether this formed part of an enclosure as no further traces of ditch relating to either were found. The fill of ditch 118 contained a very large pottery assemblage. Most of the pottery dated to the mid/late 2nd century AD, but a single sherd of an Oxford white ware mortarium dating to c AD 240-300 suggests that at least some of the deposition dated to the later 3rd century or later.

Phase 5: Medieval to post-medieval

The remnants of ridge and furrow were found across the whole site on a NE-SW alignment identical to that of the Roman enclosure ditches. Indeed, this alignment still prevails in the modern field boundaries in the immediate area. The furrows truncated many of the underlying features.

Post-medieval field drains also traversed the site on the same NE-SW alignment as earlier linear features and their truncation of earlier features and relationships occasionally made interpretation difficult.

ARTEFACTS

Flint by Tom Lawrence

The flint assemblage consisted of seven worked pieces (Table 1). A large number of these were damaged or broken and found in later Iron Age or Roman features, demonstrating the ex-situ nature of this assemblage.

The assemblage included four flakes and one bladelet with a mix of plain, shattered or dihedral platforms. All flakes were squat in nature and had a mix of multi-directional, crossed and unimodal flaking patterns. One context of note, gully 363, yielded a heavily worked knife fragment. The dorsal face of this fragment was invasively worked and similar in style to complex Bronze Age knives and may be a plano-convex type. The distal end of this piece was reworked into an awl or piercer. The context that it derived from was clearly Roman in date so it may have been residual. It is not uncommon, however, for aesthetically pleasing flintwork to have been curated in the Roman period (Turner and Wymer 1987). It is often the case that these complex knives were associated with ritualised or structured deposition (Balin 2002).

The mixed flaking pattern (Table 2) and platform type (Table 3) of this assemblage suggests a variable date that may stretch throughout the Holocene, and is not dissimilar to assemblages from Hatford Quarry (Booth and Simmons 2004) and previous excavations at Coxwell Road (Cook and Guttman 2004). It is clear, though, that there is an important Bronze Age element to this site reflecting the diverse Bronze Age environment in which this site is situated (Gosden and Lock 1998).

Category type	Total
Flake	4
Bladelet	1
Blade Index	1/5 (20%)
Irregular Waste	1
Knife	1
Total	7
No. broken (%) (not including waste)	4/7 (57.14%)
No. retouched (%) (not including waste)	1/7 (14.29%)

Table 1: Flint

Flaking pattern	Total
Unimodal	2
Crossed	1
Multi-directional	2
Total	5

Table 2: Flaking pattern

Platform Type	Total
Plain	1
Faceted	1
Shattered	1
Total	3

Table 3: Platform type

Roman pottery by Kate Brady

Introduction

Some 6634 sherds of Roman pottery, weighing c 48.06 kg, were recovered. The assemblage was recorded following standards set out by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (PCRG, SGRP and MPRG 2016) and OA's guidelines (Booth 2016). Ware codes pertaining to regionally significant fabrics were cross-referenced with the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). Quantification of fabrics and forms is given in Tables 4 and 5.

Assemblage composition and supply

Phase 2 (Table 6)

Pottery from context groups dated to the early Roman period (c AD 43-100) and assigned to Phase 2 took only a 1.8% share of the assemblage by weight. Around 50% of the phase group consisted of late Iron Age/early Roman wares (E wares) of various fabrics, including a jar or bowl and two jars in grog-tempered ware. The E wares were supplemented by reduced wares (R10, R20 and R30), which included a jar or bowl and three jars. A globular jar in a dark-surfaced fabric (R50) was recorded, along with two jar or bowls in coarse-tempered wares, one of which being Savernake ware (R95) made in kilns in Savernake Forest between AD 43 and 200. Despite the wider date range of Savernake ware, these groups also contained a good proportion of E wares, strongly suggesting a 1st-century date for these features.

A single South Gaulish samian ware sherd was present in the Phase 2 assemblage, a body sherd from a Drag. 37 bowl with vine leaf decoration and a retrograde moulded stamp reading

Mercato. The stamp matches a die used by Mercator i (die 7a) at La Graufesenque and dates to AD 70-110 (Hartley and Dickinson 2010, 81-6).

Phase 3 (Table 7)

Pottery from context groups dated to the middle Roman period (c AD 100-240) made up the vast majority of the dated groups, taking a 91.9% share of the assemblage by weight and 94.4% by estimated vessel equivalents (EVE). This phase has been divided into two sub-phases: 3.1 (c AD 120-150) and 3.2 (c AD 150-200).

The Phase 3 group was dominated by reduced wares, which took a 66.6% share of the assemblage by weight and a 66.7% share by EVE. These largely comprised fine to medium reduced fabrics (R10 and R30), supplemented by a smaller proportion of coarse sandy fabrics (R20) from various local sources, including the Oxford region. These were available as jars (C) and to a lesser extent beakers (E), bowls (H) and dishes or platters (J). Savernake ware (R95) also contributed to the reduced ware assemblage (2.9% by weight and 5.9% by EVE) and was recorded in medium-mouthed jars (CD) and large storage jars (CN). A smaller 'jar' beaker (EH) was more unusual in the fabric. A coarse-tempered reduced fabric (R90), also available in types CD and CN, may have been a local Savernake-type product. North Wiltshire grey wares (R35) were identified, although the proportions attributed to this ware are not large. It is likely that some material attributed to the more general R30 code originated from the North Wiltshire kilns, with the remainder attributable to the Oxford industry or other local unidentified sources. The grey ware components of other assemblages in the region are dominated by North Wiltshire fabrics and it is likely that this was also the case at Faringdon.

Oxidised wares, taking a 12% share of the assemblage by weight and 12.7% share by EVE, were less well represented. Coarse-tempered fabric E80 (incorporating mainly grog) was dominant and all the identifiable forms were large storage jars (CN) except for a single small 'jar' beaker (EH). Other oxidised wares consisted of medium sandy fabrics (O20) in a range of forms including jars (three of which were lid seated), at least two beakers (E/EH) and a curving-sided bowl (HC). Forms in finer oxidised fabrics (O10/O11) included at least five beakers, two of which were of globular/bulbous type (ED), while one was indented (EE). A small number of sherds were identified as North Wiltshire oxidised ware (although the true number may have been greater, with some assigned to codes O10 and O20). Among the forms were two jars, a jar or bowl and a straight-sided bowl. Just a single sherd of Severn Valley ware (O40) was identified. No rim was present, but from the decoration and angle of the fairly large body sherd it was evident that a tankard, a mainstay of the Severn Valley repertoire, was represented.

Black-burnished ware (B11) comprised 4.9% of the whole assemblage by weight and 6.1% by EVE. Many forms were identified, including at least 12 'cooking pots' (CK) and 11 jars (C) that could not be identified to a specific type. There were also at least two further jars or bowls (D), two bowls of unidentified form (H), 12 straight-sided bowls (HB) and bowls or dishes (I) with flat rims and plain rims and three dishes or platters (J). The proportion of the ware at the site is low compared to many other sites of comparable date in the region, such as Totterdown Lane, Horcott and Stubb's Farm, Kempford where the percentages of black-burnished ware were 25% and 39% by sherd count respectively (Booth 2007). However, the pattern is variable; at Whelford Bowmoor, a site contemporary with the current Faringdon site, there was almost no black-burnished ware, which accounted for 0.3% of the assemblage by sherd count (ibid.). It has been suggested that this variation is linked to supply and access to major roads (Allen

and Fulford 1996). As suggested by Booth (2007), at other low-status rural sites distant from larger settlements in the region, black-burnished ware is hardly present before the mid-2nd century and although this does not appear to be the case at the current site, where groups containing black-burnished ware have been assigned to the second quarter of the 2nd century, there does appear to be an increase in black-burnished ware supply to the site, particularly by weight, after c AD 150. There is also a significantly larger proportion of black-burnished ware at the current site than at the previously excavated Faringdon site, where it made up only 1.9% of the total assemblage by sherd count, even though activity there continued throughout the 2nd century and into the 3rd at least and assemblage sizes from these phases were large enough to suggest continued occupation (Bryan *et al.* 2004). This may reflect differing locations for waste deposition in different periods, especially if the material from both sites originates from the same settlement.

A small number of fairly local finewares were identified. These included sherds from at least three beakers (one bag-shaped and two indented types) in fabric F59, a 2nd century Oxford colour-coated ware produced at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay (Booth 1993, 140). Two body sherds of Wiltshire or southern England glazed ware (F22) were identified. Both had a greenish brown glaze and were decorated, one with a chattering technique, the other with diagonal grooving around the girth. Another glazed beaker is likely to have arrived from Nuneham Courtenay (F25) (*ibid.*, 137). It had a white or buff fabric, a green glaze and applied decoration and was probably copying a Central Gaulish prototype. A fine sandy oxidised sherd with a red/brown colour-coat is most likely fabric F65, a ware of Oxfordshire or Gloucestershire origin identified at Asthall (Booth 1997). Six sherds of Nene Valley ware (F52) from a single vessel dated to the latter part of the phase (from c AD 170) and represent the only material from the industry.

Five amphora sherds were recovered from two contexts. These were of South Spanish (A11) and South Gaulish (A13) origin and all were body sherds. A minimum of three mortaria were identified from Phase 3 groups, all in Oxford white ware (M22). The only closely identifiable form was an M6-type dated to AD 100-170 (Young 1977, 70).

White wares in Phase 3 groups took a 5.1 % share of the whole assemblage by weight and 4.8% share by EVE. These were mostly identifiable as Oxfordshire sandy white ware (W22) but also included sandy white fabrics not identified to source (W20). There were a minimum of 11 jars identified and also two flagons and a bowl (H). The finer white wares were mainly identifiable as Oxfordshire fabrics and included a small flagon, a bag-shaped beaker and a probable beaker that was not identifiable to specific type.

Samian ware from Phase 3 contributed a 1.45% share by weight and 1.31% by EVE within the phase and context groups dated to Phase 3 produced a minimum of 10 vessels. These were all in Central Gaulish fabrics (S30), broadly dated to AD 120-200, though several sherds could be more closely identified and dated. Forms recorded included five Drag. 18/31 dishes and one Drag. 18/31R, dating to c AD 120-150. A Drag. 31R dish dating to c AD 160-200, a Drag. 37 bowl, and a body sherd of a Drag. 35 cup were also identified. Three Drag. 33 conical cups were also present. One bears a complete stamp identified as that of Albinus iv (die 6h), who was producing pottery in Lezoux in c AD 135-165 (Hartley and Dickinson 2008, 128-32). Another Drag. 33 was stamped by Albusius ii (die 3b), who worked in Lezoux between AD 145 and 175 (*ibid.*, 137-44). A single body sherd of residual South Gaulish samian (S20) was identified in Phase 3 context group 704.

Other imported wares included body sherds of fine white Central Gaulish ware (F42), three body sherds of Central Gaulish Lezoux 'Rhenish' ware (F43) and one body sherd of Trier 'Rhenish' ware (F44).

Late Iron Age to early Roman E wares (mostly grog tempered) were present in some groups of this phase. All occurred with later material, however, mostly in the recuts of the early Roman ditches, and were residual. Calcareous wares (C10), mostly shell-tempered, made a small contribution to the assemblage of this phase. No rims were present and forms were not identifiable.

Of the material discussed above, 17.3% by weight and 23.9% by EVE of the Phase 3 assemblage could be assigned more closely to Phase 3.1, while 42.7% by weight and 40.8% by EVE could be assigned more closely to Phase 3.2. This shows an increase in the volume of pottery deposition during the second half of the 2nd century AD. However, this material derives from a smaller number of contexts and includes large dumps of material in the top of ditches and pits and appears to be related to the period of last use and abandonment of the settlement, rather than material routinely discarded during the life of it.

Chronology

Deposition of E wares suggests that there is a small number of features with origins in the early Roman period, mainly boundary or drainage ditches and the earliest features in intercutting pit groups. The E ware assemblage made up 2.9% by sherd count, significantly lower than the percentage at the previous OA Coxwell Road excavation (Bryan *et al.* 2004), where it was 9.1%, a reflection of the difference in date of main occupation and suggests that the site had a peripheral function in the early Roman period. Forms also suggest that there was little early significant activity in the early Roman period at the current site. There were few bead-rim or high-shouldered necked jar-types that would have been ubiquitous in the 1st century. These types were present at the previous Coxwell Road excavation (*ibid.*).

Many contexts were dated to the period c AD 120-200 by the presence of Savernake ware (R95) in association with black-burnished ware (B11). Closer dating was often possible with identification of black-burnished ware forms and decoration and the occasional accompaniment of well-dated samian forms and/or stamps. The complete absence of Oxford fine wares (and other late Roman fabrics), apart from those manufactured at Nuneham Courtenay, strongly suggests that occupation had ceased by AD 240. Just a single form, an Oxford white ware mortarium, dates after this (Young 1977, 72), suggesting that almost all pottery deposition had ceased before the late Roman period.

Taken in isolation, the assemblage from the current site sits most closely alongside sites of mainly 2nd-century date within the neighbouring parts of Gloucestershire to the north and west rather than Oxfordshire sites to the east (Table 8; Booth 2007, 328). A proposed hiatus of settlement, with sites abandoned in the early part of the 2nd century, is a trend that has been suggested for this Upper Thames Valley region (Booth 2007), but this is not seen here, as the main phase of settlement began at this time. Chronologically similar sites include Totterdown Lane, Horcott, Stubbs Farm, Kempford and Whelford Bowmoor, which were also largely occupied in the 2nd century, with little or any 1st-century or late Roman material recorded (Booth 2017, 290). However, the current site forms part of a larger settlement complex at Coxwell Road, that had been established in the middle Iron Age and continued through the Roman period and at least into the latter part of the 3rd century, with the

inclusion of late Roman colour-coated sherds from the Oxford industry (F51) present in the assemblage (Bryan *et al.* 2004, 231). The close dating of the vast majority of the material from the current site suggests that this represents a short-lived expansion of activity or a satellite settlement probably originating in the second quarter of the 2nd century and being abandoned by the turn of the 3rd.

Later forms that may represent the latest of the main period of activity on the site include a B11 flanged bowl with a slight bead and flange dating to AD 180-250 from context 6 (a silting layer overlying a cobbled surface) and another black-burnished ware flanged rim with a more down-sloping flange and a slightly beaded end (Gillam type 44) of a type that appears just before the end of the 2nd century (ditch fill 554). A single sherd of Oxford mortarium was a form M17 (Young 1977) and was the only sherd of material dated to the late Roman period. The sherd came from a pit (context 121, pit 118), which otherwise contained no material of clear late Roman date.

Pottery condition and pattern of deposition

The overall mean sherd weight (weight divided by the number of sherds), which records average fragment size and is therefore a useful proxy for condition, was 7.2g and was consistent across all the phased groups. This is low and indicates a poorly preserved assemblage. This suggests the material had been discarded and perhaps moved several times before final deposition. Even material that appears to represent single events in deposition, such as context 70, a Phase 3.2 dump in the top of ditch 1002, and context 13, a dump of Phase 3.2 in enclosure ditch 1026, had a low mean sherd weights (7g and 7.5g respectively), again perhaps suggesting that the material was deposited or middened elsewhere before deposition in these ditches, probably away from the main focus of settlement activity. There was no difference in mean sherd weight between groups of Phases 3.1 and 3.2, suggesting there was no change in the method of deposition throughout the 2nd century.

Similarly, the large group of material from feature 7 (possibly representing the remains of a building, also in Phase 3.2) had a mean sherd weight of 7g and a similar method of deposition is suggested for this group. The particularly low mean sherd weight of E wares (4.2g) reflects the residual nature of much of this material.

The assemblage was recovered from a variety of feature types. Most of the pottery (some 59% by sherd count) was collected from ditches. Twenty-seven per cent was recovered from pits, 5% cent from layers (spreads and silting layers) and 4% from two features that may have been waterholes or wells. Postholes contained 1.5% of the assemblage. The remaining 3.5% was recovered from other features including the corn-dryer (only five sherds) and from the subsoil. The pattern of pottery deposition and condition suggests that, while deposition was concentrated in ditches, there was no significant difference in the condition of the pottery across most feature types, suggesting that most of the pottery was subject to a similar process of waste management (e.g. being incorporated into middens before being deposited into cut features) after household breakage and initial discard.

Evidence for pottery use

Evidence of use was restricted to a few vessels. Two sherds were over-fired, one in fabric R20 and one in O30. These may have been regarded as 'seconds', rather than production wasters. A single sherd in fabric R35 had a spalled appearance and may also have been a useable vessel. One vessel in fabric R10 had been repaired with a rounded rivet on the lower part of the body

of the vessel. One vessel appears to have been reused, a pedestal base from a vessel in fabric R30. The base had a bead-like rim and it had been trimmed neatly at the other end, possibly to produce a miniature vessel. Twenty vessels exhibited evidence of burning, with two of those from a dump in ditch 1026 having burnt food deposits. Other burning was equally divided between sherds that appeared to have been burned while in use and after breakage, including on one Oxford mortarium rim and on a samian ware Drag. 18/31 dish. The latter may reflect methods of waste treatment for a small number of vessels.

Settlement status

The pottery assemblage suggests that the site formed part of a low-status rural settlement and was consistent with the regional pattern of pottery supply. Jars were dominant, accounting for 64% of the assemblage by EVE, which is high, and comparable to Horcott (Booth 2017), where it was 53%. It has been observed that the higher the proportions of jars, the lower the status of the settlement (Evans 2001, 28).

Of particular note is the very low occurrence of amphorae, numbering only five sherds of South Spanish (A11) and South Gaulish (A13) material, making up just 0.07% of the assemblage by sherd count. Even though low-status rural settlements rarely exceed 0.3-0.4% (Booth 2004, 49), this is especially low. It can be observed that none was recovered from the earlier excavated sites at Coxwell Road, probably part of the same wider settlement. This suggests very limited access to non-essential products (in this case wine and olive oil) or perhaps only access to small amounts brought to the site in vessels into which the oil or wine had been decanted beforehand. Fine wares constituted 0.42% of the overall assemblage and samian wares 1.08%; this is within the expected range for the region for this period for a low-status rural settlement where use of non-essential ceramics would have been low (Booth 2007, 328).

Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Figure 12)

1. Globular beaker (ED), fine reduced ware (R10). Context 13, fill of ditch 12, group 1026, Phase 3.2
2. Bag-shaped beaker (EC) with bifid rim, fine reduced ware (R10). Context 13, fill of ditch 12, group 1026, Phase 3.2
3. Bag-shaped beaker (EC) with bifid rim, fine oxidised colour-coated fabric (F59). Context 13, fill of ditch 12, group 1026, Phase 3.2
4. Medium-mouthed jar (CD), sandy white fabric (W20) with blackened outer surface. Context 13, fill of ditch 12, Phase 3.2
5. Bowl (Drag. 31R), Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian ware, c AD 160-200. Context 31, fill of ditch 32, group 34, Phase 3
6. Bag-shaped beaker (EC), fine colour-coated fabric (F59). Context 49, fill of pit 48, Phase 3.2
7. Straight-sided bowl (HB), moderately sandy reduced ware (R30). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
8. Curving-sided bowl (HC), coarse sandy greyware (R20). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2

9. Medium-mouthed jar (CD), moderate to fine greyware (R20). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
10. Storage jar (CN), coarse grog-tempered greyware (R90). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
11. Lid-seated jar (CJ), sandy grey ware (R30) with blackened rim. Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
12. Everted-rim jar, sandy white ware (W20) with scorched rim. Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
13. Medium-mouthed jar (CD), coarse sandy oxidised ware (O20). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
14. Medium-mouthed jar (CD), coarse sandy greyware (R20). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
15. Indented beaker (EE), fine oxidised ware (O10). Context 70, fill of ditch 69, group 1002, Phase 3.2
16. Carinated bowl, fine reduced ware (R10) with burnished surface. Context 94, fill of pit 92, Phase 3
17. Storage jar, Savernake ware with lattice decoration. Context 99, fill of ditch 98, Phase 3
18. Bowl/dish, black-burnished ware with flat rolled end rim and all over lattice decoration. Context 155, fill of ditch 153. Phase 3.2
19. Cup (Drag. 33), Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian ware with internal stamp on base of Albucius ii (die 3b), AD 145-175. Layer 502, Phase 3.2
20. Cup (Drag. 33), Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian ware with internal stamp on base of Albinus iv (die 6h), AD 135-170. Context 560, fill of pit 559, Phase 3.2
21. 'Jar' beaker with bead rim and cordoned body, fine reduced ware. Context 448, fill of ditch 447, Phase 3
22. Bowl (Drag. 37), body sherd, South Gaulish (La Graufesenque) samian ware with reversed moulded stamp on body and leaf decoration. Mercator I (die 7a), AD 70-110. Context 645, fill of ditch 638, Phase 2
23. Miniature vessel made from a pedestal base neatly trimmed, sandy oxidised ware. Context 646, fill of pit 639, Phase 3.
24. 'Jar' beaker, high shouldered with carinated body, fine reduced ware (R10), late 1st to early 2nd century. Context 710, fill of ditch 709, Phase 3.1

Fabric	Description	No. Sherds	Weight (g)	MV	EVE
A Amphora					
A11	South Spanish Amphora (BAT AM 1/ BAT AM 2)	3	189	0	0
A13	South Gaulish Amphora (GAL AM 1)	2	36	0	0
B Black-burnished wares					
B11	Black-burnished ware (DOR BB 1)	439	2527	46	2.92
B30	Imitation B11	2	3	1	0.03
C Calcareous wares					
C10	Shelly ware	19	107	0	0
C20	Limestone-tempered fabrics	19	159	0	0
C80	Flint-tempered fabrics	4	20	0	0
E Iron Age/early Roman wares					
E10	Organic-tempered fabrics	2	8	0	0
E30	Coarse sand-tempered fabrics	21	59	1	0.07
E40	Shelly fabrics	39	85	0	0
E50	Limestone-tempered fabrics	21	34	1	0.03
E60	Flint-tempered fabrics	4	25	0	0
E70	Rock-tempered fabrics	2	12	0	0
E80	Grog-tempered fabrics (SOB GT)	108	599	9	0.56
F Fine wares					
F22	South-central England glazed ware	2	10	0	0
F25	Nuneham Courtenay Lower Farm glazed ware	2	13	1	0.12
F42	Fine white Central Gaulish ware (CNG CC 1)	1	1	0	0
F43	Central Gaulish Lezoux 'Rhenish' ware (CNG BS)	3	3	0	0
F44	Central Gaulish Trier 'Rhenish' ware (MOS BS)	1	1	0	0
F52	Nene Valley ware (LNV CC)	6	16	1	0.07
F59	Early Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (Nuneham Courtenay)	12	39	3	0.4
F65?	Fine sandy oxidised, red-brown colour coat (Oxon/Glos)	1	3	1	0.03
M Mortaria					
M22	Oxfordshire white ware mortaria (OXF WH)	25	570	4	0.32
O Oxidised wares					
O10	Fine oxidised wares	146	404	10	1.71
O11	Oxfordshire fine oxidised ware	35	195	5	0.34
O20	Sandy oxidised wares	310	1898	13	2.33
O21	Sandy Oxfordshire oxidised ware	39	566	5	0.67
O22	Coarse sandy oxidised ware	3	11	0	0
O30	Wiltshire wares	8	61	3	0.23
O31	Fine Wiltshire wares	4	72	2	0.11
O40	Severn Valley ware	1	20	0	0
O80	Coarse-tempered oxidised wares	89	2522	4	0.33
R Reduced wares					
R10	Fine reduced wares	148	640	25	2.39

R101		1	31	0	0
R20	Sandy reduced wares	781	5284	45	6.76
R21	Coarse sandy Oxfordshire reduced ware	38	436	6	0.71
R29	Coarse reduced ware with large quartz grains	81	670	3	0.29
R30	Medium/fine reduced fabrics	2983	16,292	151	14.67
R35	Generally fine/abundantly sandy fabrics, probably North Wiltshire	154	1134	6	0.55
R37	Fine sandy reduced fabric with occasional black iron/grog and organic inclusions	8	78	3	0.25
R40	Miscellaneous reduced fabrics	3	10	1	0.03
R43	Reduced clean fabric with abundant mica. Pale grey core and dark grey surfaces	2	19	0	0
R50	Dark-surfaced reduced fabrics	107	615	13	2.34
R70	Miscellaneous reduced calcareous fabrics	6	62	0	0
R85	Fairly fine sandy reduced fabric with moderate-abundant mica (SW micaceous wares)	2	9	1	0.1
R90	Coarse-tempered reduced wares	155	2481	15	1.23
R95	Savernake ware (SAV GT)	414	6739	15	1.98
S Samian wares					
S	Samian ware	1	1	0	0
S20	South Gaulish samian ware (LGF SA)	3	21	0	0
S30	Central Gaulish samian ware (LEZ SA 2)	68	606	10	0.59
S32	Les Martres-de-Veyre samian ware (LMV SA)	1	5	0	0
W White wares					
W10	Fine white wares	5	51	0	0
W12	Oxfordshire fine white wares (OXF WH)	30	117	2	0.75
W20	Sandy white wares	115	850	9	0.74
W22	Oxfordshire sandy white ware	121	1452	6	0.67
Total		6634	48,062	427	44.32

Table 4: Quantification of the Roman pottery by fabric

Form	Description	Ware									Total EVE
		B	C	E	F	M	O	R	S	W	
B	Flagons							0.45		0.87	1.32
C	Jars	1.65		0.46			3.13	22.45		1.02	28.71
D	Bowl jars and indeterminate bowls or jars	0.06		0.13	3		0.40	2.41			3.03
E	Beakers				0.52		1.31	2.22		0.10	4.15
F	Cups								0.24		0.24
G	Mugs/tankards						0				0
H	Bowls	0.33					0.45	1.90	0.20	0.14	3.02
I	Dishes and indeterminate bowls/ dishes	0.66						0.31	0.15		1.12
J	Platters	0.25						1.89	0		2.14
K	Mortaria					0.32					0.32
L	Lids							0			0
U	Indeterminate	0	0	0.07	0.07	0	0.43	0.25	0	0.03	0.85
Total		295	0	66	62	32	572	3188	59	216	44.90

Table 5: Vessel function by ware. Quantification by EVE

Fabric	No. Sherds	Weight (g)	MV	EVE
E30	7	15	0	0
E40	39	85	0	0
E50	9	14	0	0
E70	1	3	0	0
E80	21	168	4	0.23
O20	3	15	0	0
O80	3	55	0	0
R10	2	4	0	0
R20	3	6	0	0
R30	43	241	4	0.22
R50	7	54	1	0
R90	1	32	1	0
R95	6	152	1	4
S20	1	18	0	0
Total	146	862	11	0.49

Table 6: Phase 2: Quantifications by fabric

Fabric	No. sherds	Weight (g)	MV	EVE
A11	3	189	0	0
A13	2	36	0	0
B11	408	2338	43	2.70
B30	2	3	1	0.03
C10	19	107	0	0
C20	19	159	0	0
C80	4	20	0	0
E10	2	8	0	0
E30	14	44	1	0.07
E50	12	20	1	0.03
E60	4	25	0	0
E70	1	9	0	0
E80	82	422	5	0.33
F22	1	8	0	0
F25	2	13	1	0.12
F42	1	1	0	0
F43	3	3	0	0
F44	1	1	0	0
F52	6	16	1	0.07
F59	12	39	3	0.40
F65?	1	3	1	0.03
M22	23	470	3	0.22
O10	146	404	10	1.71
O11	31	194	5	0.34
O20	291	1812	12	2.30
O21	33	556	5	0.67
O22	3	11	0	0
O30	6	51	2	0.19
O31	4	72	2	0.11
O40	1	20	0	0
O80	82	2423	4	0.33
R10	142	602	22	2.10
R101	1	31	0	0
R11	27	184	4	0.46
R20	756	5140	44	6.73
R21	35	415	6	0.71
R29	79	664	3	0.29
R30	2715	14914	140	13.42
R35	147	1113	6	0.55
R37	8	78	3	0.25
R40	1	2	1	0.03
R43	2	19	0	0
R50	97	553	12	2.34

R70	6	62	0	0
R85	2	9	1	0.10
R90	145	2218	12	1.13
R95	375	5984	13	1.88
S	1	1	0	0
S20	2	3	0	0
S30	68	606	10	0.59
S32	1	5	0	0
W10	5	51	0	0
W12	30	117	2	0.75
W20	114	847	9	0.74
W22	121	1452	6	0.67
Total	6099	44547	394	42.39

Table 7: Phase 3 quantification

Ware Group	%
S	1.08
F	0.42
A	0.07
M	0.37
W	4.08
Q	-
Fine and specialist ware subtotal	6.02
E	2.9
O	9.5
R	74.1
B	6.6
C	0.6
Unclassified	-
Total Sherds	6634

Table 8: Percentages of total sherds in major ware groups (for comparison with Booth 2007, 328)

Fired clay and ceramic building material by Cynthia Poole

Introduction and methodology

A small assemblage of fired clay and ceramic building material amounting to 194 fragments (615g) was recovered from 19 contexts, predominantly ditch and pit fills. The assemblage has been fully recorded on an Excel spreadsheet in accordance with guidelines set out by the Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group (ACBMG 2007), which whilst not specifically designed for fired clay provide appropriate guidance. The record includes quantification, fabric type, form, surface finish, organic impressions, dimensions and general description. Fabrics were characterised on macroscopic features and with the aid of x10 hand lens. The assemblage is quantified in relation to form and fabric in Table 9.

Structural fired clay

A structural function is considered most probable for 138 fragments (216g) of fired clay, all of which are made in sandy fabric Q, except for one piece in a shell-tempered fabric (H). Fabric Q is a red, orange, brown or black fine sandy clay containing a sparse to moderate scatter of medium quartz sand less than 0.5mm in size (Q1). A small number of pieces contained a high density of uniform well sorted quartz sand (Q2). This fabric is likely to derive from a local sandy soil or subsoil. Most pieces were amorphous and some looked more like burnt natural soil or subsoil, possibly from burnt or heated deposits surrounding or underlying hearths or ovens, rather than prepared clay. Only a few pieces had a deliberately shaped surface, which was generally flat and undulating. Most pieces are likely to derive from the interior wall lining of ovens or the surface of hearths, most probably domestic in character or used for crop processing. Two small fragments from context 419 were vesicular and vitrified, similar in character to fuel ash slag, which may hint at higher temperature industrial activities, but such material can also form in lower temperature scenarios.

Portable oven/hearth furniture

This category is thought to be the most appropriate for fired clay (49 fragments, 258g) occurring in fabrics A and AM. This fabric was a very uniform smooth soapy clay, occasionally visibly micaceous (AM) containing very sparse medium quartz sand grains and red ferruginous inclusions c 1mm or less. It generally fired to a light orange, buff, yellowish brown, red or reddish brown colour at the surface and margins grading to dark grey or black in the core. This effect is most typical, though not exclusively so, of portable items, which in conjunction with the surface finish suggests most or all of the material in this fabric originated from portable oven or hearth furniture. Where the surface survived this was smooth, flat and well finished in most cases, but two pieces had a rougher surface with chaff impressions. Fragments ranged in size from 10 to 55mm, but thicknesses ranging from 7 to 35mm were all incomplete. These characteristics are all consistent with the fragments representing remains of circular discs or plates.

Ceramic building material

Ceramic building material amounting to seven fragments weighing 141g was nearly all made in a hard pinkish red-orange fine sandy fabric (Fabric D) flecked with fine red ferruginous inclusions less than 1mm in size. One was made in a red micaceous fine sandy clay containing a moderate scatter of medium quartz sand up to 0.5mm and fine red ferruginous inclusions. Most pieces were fragments of flat Roman tile with smooth even upper surfaces and measuring 15-20mm thick. The largest piece measured 32-35mm thick increasing to the edge, a characteristic typical of Roman brick. The top and edge surfaces were smooth and the base rough sanded, all of which had been burnt grey. One of the other fragments had also been heat discoloured on the surface to a dark reddish brown colour.

Discussion

The character of the fired clay assemblage suggests a limited range of simple structures were in use on the settlement, probably domestic hearths and ovens for heating, cooking or processing of agricultural produce. Any ovens were most probably single chamber structures for baking. Tile was commonly used for the construction of hearths and ovens in the Roman period, but the small quantities of tile found on the site suggest the community had little access to building materials to reuse in this manner.

None of the fired clay can be dated and the tile can be dated no more closely than Roman. However nearly all the material was associated with dated pottery, with which it is likely to be broadly contemporary. This indicates that the majority of the assemblage is of middle Roman date (Table 10), predominantly 2nd-century, though a small quantity of fired clay is associated with late Iron Age - early Roman pottery. All of this earlier material has been interpreted as oven furniture, probably circular discs, and fabric A is the only fabric to occur before the middle Roman period. The apparent absence of triangular perforated bricks suggests a discontinuity with native Iron Age traditions.

The condition of the material is poor and though not heavily abraded, it has fragmented into small pieces with an overall very low mean fragment weight (MFW) of 3.2g (CBM 20g, fired clay 2.5g). Such a low MFW would typically herald an absence of diagnostic material and this has proved to be the case with this assemblage. The majority of the assemblage was found in natural soil accumulations filling ditches and pits and it is likely much of the material has been dispersed from the main areas of occupation and activity.

One deposit of interest is a dump of burnt debris (fill 129) in pit 131, a small oval pit, measuring 1.4m long and 0.3m deep, which may have served as an oven base. Structural fired clay from this deposit was associated with charred grain and charcoal, and a pot base containing vitrified material, all lying within a matrix of black and red clay that is likely to be weathered heated and burnt clay from an oven structure. The relatively small quantity of fired clay that could be recovered from this deposit for analysis, suggests the clay structure had been subjected to fairly low temperature activity which would not have been sufficient to fire the clay to preserve it in a recognisable form. This would be consistent with crop processing. No fired clay or tile was recovered from the corn-dryer (273) and no evidence of a clay lining was observed in excavation.

The poor quality of preservation has precluded the dating of any single item, though the overall characteristics of fabric, finish and the little that can be gleaned of form is consistent with a late Iron Age – Roman date. All the fired clay and tile is likely to derive from activities and structures related to domestic activity, in particular ovens or hearths related to cooking, crop and food processing and heating. The material interpreted as portable furniture is all likely to derive from discs or plates that are typical of this period and region (though other objects such as triangular perforated bricks cannot be entirely ruled out). Circular discs are a regular component of Roman fired clay assemblages in the Thames Valley and Oxfordshire as well as neighbouring areas of the East Midlands. Their purpose is not well understood, though they are generally assumed to have had a domestic function associated with cooking or food preparation. Examples of circular discs have been found at Alchester (Booth 2001) from early Roman contexts and from Watkins Farm (Allen 1990, 53), Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979, 53-4), Old Shifford (Barclay *et al.* 1995, 138), and Oxford (Biddulph 2005), where they are all associated with the Roman period.

Nos	Function	Fabric	A	AM	Q	Q1	Q2	H	C	D	Soil	Total
CBM	Brick									1		1
CBM	Flat tile								1	4		5
CBM	Indeterminate									1		1
FC	Oven structure?					10	4					14
FC	Structural?					14	1					15
FC	Furnace?					2						2
FC	Oven Furniture ?Plate/Disc	14										14
FC	Oven Furniture? Indet	33	2									35
FC	Indeterminate				61	22		1			21	105
FC	Natural					2						2
	Total Nos		47	2	61	50	5	1	1	6	21	194
Wt (g)	Fabric	A	AM	Q	Q1	Q2	H	C	D	Soil	Total Wt (g)	
CBM	Brick								103		103	
CBM	Flat tile							7	28		35	
CBM	Indeterminate								3		3	
FC	Oven structure?				26	31					57	
FC	Structural?				20	15					35	
FC	Furnace?				2						2	
FC	Oven Furniture ?Plate/Disc	101									101	
FC	Oven Furniture? Indet	145	12								157	
FC	Indeterminate				76	17		4			9	106
FC	Natural					16						16
	Total Wt (g)	246	12	76	81	46	4	7	134	9	615	

Table 9: Quantification of fired clay and ceramic building material tabulated by form and fabric

Form	LIA-ER		ER		E-MR		MR		M-LR		Ro		U		Total	
	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt g	No s	Wt (g)
Brick							1	103							1	103
Flat tile							3	24	2	11					5	35
Oven str?											14	57			14	57
Furnace ?							2	2							2	2
Struct.?							15	35							15	35
Oven furn?	11	93	23	107	1	2	13	47			1	9			49	258
Indet							10	108					1	1	10	109
Natural							2	16							2	16
Total	11	93	23	107	1	2	14	335	2	11	15	66	1	1	19	615

Table 10: Quantification of fired clay and ceramic building material by period

Worked stone by Ruth Shaffrey

Fragments of four querns or millstones and one probable whetstone were recovered. The whetstone is of standard sub-rectangular form with rounded arrises, suggesting that blades

were sharpened across them. The whetstone is broken but is not likely to have been used to sharpen anything other than small knives or blades. The two rotary quern fragments were used in stone causeway 39; one was a lower stone, the other an upper stone. Both are made from Quartz Conglomerate from the Forest of Dean/Wye Valley area, but their grinding profiles do not match and they therefore do not seem to be partner stones. Two millstone fragments were found in the upper fill of pit 347 and a fill of ditch 1030. The larger fragment, from the ditch, is of a lower stone of very slightly tapered disc type, while the smaller fragment is of a large stone (possibly also a lower stone) greater than 900mm in diameter. They are both made of medium- to coarse-grained sandstone, but the stone is too different for them to be from the same millstone. The smaller fragment is more feldspathic and is probably Millstone Grit, while the larger is less feldspathic and probably Old Red Sandstone. However, it has not been possible to microscopically analyse them and given their lack of diagnostic mineralogy in hand specimen, their identifications are not certain.

The presence of two querns and millstones, alongside the corn-dryer and burnt grain, provides evidence for the processing of crops at the site. These can be added to at least four querns of Roman date from previous excavations at Coxwell Road, which included querns of Old Red Sandstone, Lodsworth Greensand and local Greensand (Shaffrey 2004; Williams 2004). The two millstones are particularly significant, because they are clear evidence for the intensive and centralised processing of grain. Such activity is normally found in towns and roadside settlements or is associated with villa estates. Centralising grain processing by constructing and using a mill allowed groups of individuals to be freed up from the preparation of daily food to carry out other tasks and changed the dynamics of the daily lives of a whole group of people. The millstones at Faringdon were substantial in size and probably had not moved very far from their original point of use. Although no evidence for a mill building was found, there must have been one nearby. This suggests that activity at Coxwell Road was part of a larger estate, possibly connected to occupation at Bowling Green. No other millstones have been found and published in the area surrounding Faringdon.

Catalogue of worked stone

Probable whetstone Fine-grained micaceous beige sandstone. Slightly coarse grained for a whetstone, but of the right overall shape. Flat faces, sub-rectangular section and rounded arrises. Measures >43 x 15-22mm thick x 21-23mm wide. Weighs 31g. Context 349, upper fill of pit 1037, Phase 3.1.

Lower rotary quern fragment Old Red Sandstone, Quartz Conglomerate, Forest of Dean/Wye valley source. Tapered type with roughly flat base, worn smooth in several areas suggesting reuse, possibly in a floor surface. Grinding surface was pecked but is worn into rotational grooves except for 50mm around the socket, which is worn smooth. Distinct lip. Socket is narrow, cylindrical and 50mm deep. Edges are narrow but pecked. Measures 390mm diameter x 64mm thick at centre, 20mm thick at edge. Weighs 1517g. Context 39, stone causeway across upper fill of ditch, enclosure E3, Phase 3.1.

Upper rotary quern fragment Old Red Sandstone, Quartz Conglomerate, Forest of Dean/Wye valley source. Tapered type with slightly concave grinding surface and flat top. Only roughly worked on top and edges, which lean in slightly. Grinding surface is rough, probably pecked originally and now worn into rotational grooves. Profile does not match the lower stone and they do not seem to have been a pair. Centre does not survive and there is no evidence for a handle socket on this fragment. The quern measures approximately 410mm diameter x 22-

41mm thick. Weighs 1369g. Context 39, stone causeway across upper fill of ditch, enclosure E3, Phase 3.1.

Lower millstone fragment Old Red Sandstone or possibly Millstone Grit, medium- to coarse-grained well-sorted sandstone. Slightly tapered but more-or-less flat disc type. Neat pecking on grinding surface worn into some rotational wear but no smooth areas. Circumference straight and vertical and also pecked. Other face has deep spaced pock marks. The grinding surface is also blackened from burning. Measures approximately 830mm diameter x 48-57mm thick. Weighs 3004g. Context 683, fill of ditch 1030, Phase 3.

Millstone fragment, possible lower stone Possible Millstone Grit, medium- to coarse-grained feldspathic sandstone. Flat disc type with flat faces and straight vertical edges. Pecked all over but one face has fine pecking, and one has deep spaced pecking. Measures >900mm diameter (E) x 52mm thick. Weighs 2011g. Context 349, upper fill of pit 1037, Phase 3.1.

Metal finds by Ian R Scott

The metals assemblage comprises 45 objects (56 fragments), including 19 nails or nail fragments and 8 pieces of miscellaneous metalwork. Most of the metal objects come from contexts of Phases 3 and 3.2 (Table 11). The range of functional types is limited, with very few tools, personal items or household objects (Table 12).

Six pieces of metal are not from phased contexts and include a probable hinged pin from a brooch, a small fragment of coiled brooch spring and also a small circular stud or mount (Cat. No. 3). The last is cast and hand finished and has a central hole for a rivet. It is probably Roman in date and was possibly a box mount. The remaining unphased finds comprise a hobnail, a nail and a piece of iron bar.

The Phase 3 finds include seven nails and five pieces of miscellaneous metal, two hobnails, a piece of iron strip or binding with two nail holes and a fragment of a possible iron bolt or peg with a square head. From ditch 1029 (context 524) there were two fragments probably from a copper alloy needle, although no trace of the eye survives. Most of the finds were recovered from ditches. Perhaps the most interesting find from this phase is a small, simple, badly squashed and twisted bow brooch with sprung pin of 1st-century date (Cat. No. 4) from ditch 374 (fill 375, ditch 1014). It seems that the brooch had been deliberately crushed before deposition.

Phase 3.1 finds comprise just three objects: two nails and a piece of curved iron bar. Phase 3.2 contexts produced 17 pieces of metal, most of which were recovered from pits. Two pits (7 and 562), each produced six metal finds. The finds from pit 7 comprise the head of T-staple, three nails, a piece of thin iron strip and piece of iron bar. The finds from pit 562 comprise a socketed spike, possibly used as a goad (Cat. No. 2), three nails and two very small pieces of thin iron strip, both cut at an angle and of uncertain function. A third pit (559) produced a small enamelled plate brooch in the form of a peacock (Cat. No. 5). The final find from Phase 3.2 contexts is the blade of mortice chisel (Cat. No. 1) from context 4, a cleaning layer associated with corn-dryer 273. The only finds from a context assigned to Phase 4 were a nail and a piece of bar or nail stem.

The metal finds, which lack more than a handful of craft, domestic, and personal items combined, suggest that the excavation explored an area peripheral to a settlement – perhaps enclosures within a sparsely settled agricultural landscape, rather than part the settlement

itself. Given the relatively sparse material assemblage, the recovery of two brooches is worthy of note. The first is a simple bow brooch of 1st-century date from Phase 3 ditch 374. The second, a plate brooch in the form of a peacock brooch (Cat. No. 5), is more remarkable. Although plate brooches in the form of animals and birds are quite common, examples of peacock brooches are less frequently found. Feugère recorded just six such brooches, with a distribution from Italy (Bologna), Switzerland (Augst) and France (four examples) (Feugère 1985, 383 and 410, fig. 60, types 29a22a and 29a22b). More recently Mackreth has noted two examples from Britain: from Great Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire and Exeter, Devon (Mackreth 2011, 185, plate 128, no. 8029, CD-Rom, nos 8028 and 8128), while the Portable Antiquities Scheme records examples from Wiltshire and Kent. Feugère identified features of plate brooches that can be used to define the products of three potential workshops (Ateliers A, B and C: Feugère 1985, 385-93, figs 58-61). The products of Atelier B were decorated with a few large panels of enamel often with small dots embedded in them, and it is to this 'workshop' that the Faringdon brooch can be assigned. The brooch was probably produced in the later 1st century or early 2nd century.

Catalogue of illustrated finds

1. Mortice chisel, of thick rectangular section (14mm x 22mm) with angled cutting edge. The blade deepens towards the handle. Probably originally tanged, but tang largely lost. Fe. L: 192mm. Context 4, surface cleaning of corn-dryer 273, Phase 3.2.
2. Socketed spike or possible ox-goad with tapered square-section point and flanged socket. Fe. Socket external D: 19mm; Overall L: 79mm. SF19. Context 563, fill of pit 562, Phase 3.2.
3. Circular plate or escutcheon for handle. Slightly domed with concentric grooves around central piercing, and a grooved rim. Cast Cu alloy. D: 27mm. SF3. Context 2, subsoil, unphased.
4. Simple one bow brooch with plain narrow bow and four coil spring, now bent and crushed. Presumably deliberately destroyed. Small example. 1st century AD. Cu alloy. L: 30mm. SF14. Context 375, fill of ditch 1014, Phase 3.
5. Peacock plate brooch. Peacock facing right, with crest on its head, single enamel panel on wing and two parallel narrow panels on its tail, which has a narrow tongue or extension. The enamel on the wing appears to be orange with border of yellow. The panels on the tail may have had yellow enamel, but little now survives. Late 1st century or early 2nd century. L: 30.5mm; Ht: 19.5mm. SF18. Context 560, fill of pit 559, Phase 3.2.

Phase	Interpretation	Totals
3	beam slot?	1
	ditches (x 7)	9
	ditch/gully	1
	pits (x 2)	4
	posthole	1
	Layer (silting)	1
	Total	17
3.1	demolition rubble	1
	pit	1
	finds ref (cleaning)	1
	Total	3
3.2	ditch	1
	pits (x 3)	13
	finds ref (cleaning)	3
	Total	17
4	pit or ditch	2
	Total	2
unph	ditch	1
	subsoil	2
	(blank)	3
	Total	6
	Total	45

Table 11 Summary quantification of the metalwork assemblage by phase and context type (object count)

Function	Phase					Totals
	3	3.1	3.2	4	unph	
Tool	1		2			3
Personal	1		1		2	4
Footwear	2		1		1	4
Household					1	1
Structural	1		1			2
Binding	1					1
Nails	7	2	8	1	1	19
Miscellaneous	3	1	2	1	1	8
Query			2			2
Waste	1					1
Totals	17	3	17	2	6	45

Table 12 Summary quantification of the metalwork assemblage by phase and functional category (object count)

Glass by Ian R Scott

There are just four pieces of glass, two of which appear to be comparatively late in date. A sherd from Phase 2 ditch 1003 is from the body of a comparatively modern bottle (SF 9), possibly a medicine bottle and probably of 19th-century date and therefore intrusive. Phase 3.1 ditch 1026 produced a small sherd from the horizontal shoulder of a small cylindrical

vessel, possibly a phial of 18th- or early 19th-century date. The other two pieces of glass are of Roman date. Phase 3 pit 328 produced a rim sherd of pale green glass, probably from a beaker of late Roman date, while Phase 3.2 ditch 1018 produced an intact frit melon bead.

Catalogue of Roman glass

1. Beaker? Rim sherd with fire rounded rim, possibly from a beaker. The form and the fine bubbles in the glass suggests a late Roman (mid-4th- to early 5th-century). Pale green glass. D: c 60mm. Context 328, fill of pit 327, Phase 3.
2. Melon bead, complete. Dark blue green frit. L: 13mm: D: 17mm. Context 157, fill of ditch 1018, Phase 3.

Worked bone by Leigh Allen

A single worked bone fragment was recovered from context 9, a fill of pit 7, dated to AD 150-170. The fragment is crudely cut, tapering along its length and broken at both ends (L:38mm). It is an unfinished piece, possibly a peg or pin in the process of being made.

Slag and vitreous materials by David Dungworth

Methods

All of the material submitted was examined visually and recorded following standard guidance (Historic England 2015). The categories identified include the following:

Smithing slag cake (SSC): Plano-convex (or concave convex) accumulations of slag that are approximately circular in plan which have formed inside a blacksmith's hearth (Historic England 2015, fig. 32; McDonnell 1991; Serneels and Perret 2003).

Vitrified fuel ash (VFA): Vitrified fuel ash is a non-metallurgical waste material formed in a fire. Almost all organic fuels contain a small proportion of inorganic material. In many cases this will remain as ash; however, if the fire is hot enough this may vitrify (Historic England 2015, fig. 54).

Results

The material was weighed and selected fragments were photographed. In total 216.1g of material was examined (Table 13).

The material examined includes two small smithing slag cakes and numerous small fragments of vitrified fuel ash. The smithing slag cakes provide definite evidence for the smithing of iron objects; however, they represent one or two days (at most) of blacksmithing. The vitrified fuel ash represents a non-metallurgical waste material formed in a fire. It is very light — due in large part to the presence of air holes (vesicles) but also to some extent because of the low levels of metals (such as iron). The vitrified fuel ash displays a range of colours but the most obvious (pale grey to creamy) is likely to represent compounds formed at the surface as the vitrified fuel ash weathered. Where fresh fracture surfaces are visible, the vitrified fuel ash tends to be greenish. Vitrified fuel ash is usually amorphous — to such an extent that it is not possible to see the original orientation when it formed. The surface morphology displays no flow textures: it is unlikely that this material was ever hot enough to flow under its own weight. Vitrified fuel ash is weak and brittle and so is often recovered as many small fragments (with no apparent surface morphology). Almost all organic fuels (such as wood, peat, dung, charcoal, etc) contain a small proportion of inorganic elements (silicon, aluminium, calcium,

potassium, etc). In many cases these will remain as ash; however, if the fire is hot enough this may vitrify (the temperature required will depend on the chemical composition of the ash, Dungworth 2016; Historic England 2015, fig. 54). One suggested origin of vitrified fuel ash is haystacks (Biek 1977; Nickolls 1977), and vitrified fuel ash is sometimes found associated with corn-dryers. In some cases, it is also likely that earthy materials (such as daub) may be incorporated into vitrified fuel ash (cf Biek 1978; Evans and Tylecote 1967; Salter 2005). It is highly unlikely that vitrified fuel ash is directly associated with a metallurgical activity.

The detailed examination of similar material from Beckford (Dungworth and McDonnell forthcoming) suggests that vitrified fuel ash was produced by reactions between wood ash and soil and/or ceramic material (possibly daub) at temperatures between 850°C and 1150°C. Mack and McDonnell also rule out a metallurgical association but suggest a slightly higher temperature of formation (Mack and McDonnell 2006). The recovery of substantial amounts of vitrified fuel ash slag is a phenomenon often noted on prehistoric sites (Andrews 2009; Cowgill *et al.* 2001; 2006; Grimes and Close-Brooks 1993; McDonnell 1986; Salter 1991; Young 2011).

Context	Fill of	Phase	Interpretation	Type	Weight (g)
129	131	2/3	Pit fill	VFA	26.6
284	283	?	Ditch fill	SSC?	68.9
431		0	Trample	VFA	5.1
476	474	3	Ditch fill	SSC?	107
495	494	3	Posthole fill	VFA	0.7
502		3.2	Layer	VFA	7.2
560	559	3.2	Pit fill	VFA	0.6
Total					216.1

Table 13: Slag

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OSTEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal bone by Martyn Allen

Introduction

A total of 603 animal bone specimens were recorded. The majority derived from Phase 3 contexts, representing activity in the 2nd century AD. Preservation of the remains was variable, though most were in a good condition. Remains of cattle and sheep/goats dominated the assemblage in fairly equal numbers and were accompanied by small numbers of pig and horse bones. Dogs and chickens were largely represented by articulated remains of single individuals. Wild animals were represented by small numbers of deer bones and a couple of small bird bones that could not be identified to species. Rodent and frog bones were recovered from sieved samples, though fish bones were absent.

Methods

The assemblage was recorded at OA using the in-house skeletal reference collection. Each fragment was analysed and identified to taxon where possible. In order to increase recording time, long bone shafts, ribs and vertebrae were recorded as large- or medium-sized mammal rather than to species. Fragments that could be refitted or were obviously from the same element but broken post-deposition were counted as single specimens. Specimens were recorded according to element zone, which focusses on the presence of specific parts of each bone and allows for minimum numbers of animals and minimum numbers of elements to be calculated (Serjeantson 1996). Animal bones recovered from sieved samples were weighed and counted, and identified taxa were recorded.

Ageing data were collected from the analysis of tooth-wear patterns following Grant (1982) and, using these, estimated ages were drawn from comparisons with modern livestock following the work of Jones and Sadler (2012) for cattle, Jones (2006) for sheep, and Hambleton (1999) for pigs. Epiphyseal fusion of post-cranial elements was also recorded, and age estimates were calculated using the timings presented by Getty (1975).

Measurements were taken using the standards of von den Driesch (1976) and withers' heights were calculated from von den Driesch and Boessneck's (1974) methods. Butchery marks were recorded following Maltby's (2010) criteria. Evidence of burning was recorded according to colour (e.g. black, grey or white, i.e. calcined). Gnawing marks were recorded where present. Signs of pathology were recorded in detail and diagnoses are presented below.

Taxa representation

Cattle and sheep/goat remains contributed about 80% of the total identified, hand-collected assemblage, being present in roughly equal numbers (Table 14). No clear evidence of goats was found and, although goats may be present, all the ovicaprid remains are assumed to be from sheep. Cattle bones were slightly better represented in Phase 3.1 features, while sheep bones were more common in Phase 3.2 features and this is likely to reflect differential patterns of carcass disposal between ditches and pits (Table 15; see below). Only five pig bones were identified, each of which were single finds in Phase 3 and 3.2 features. These consisted of mandible, scapula, femur and tooth specimens. Horse bones were slightly more numerous, proving almost 6% of the total identified, hand-collected assemblage. These were all disarticulated specimens, dispersed across several features including ditches, pits, structural

features and layers. A total of 12 dog bones were identified, though 11 of these probably derived from a disturbed burial in Phase 3.1 ditch fill 13. Chicken was represented by nine specimens probably from a single carcass buried in a Phase 3 pit (fill 337). The chicken bones included a humerus, scapula, both ulnae, a complete femur and a tibiotarsus. The bones were skeletally mature and there was no sign of pathology or butchery.

Wild animal remains were rare. Red deer was represented by upper first and second molars found together in a Phase 2/3 posthole (fill 436). Roe deer was similarly represented by upper first and second molars that were found together in a Phase 3 ditch (fill 466). Three bird bones almost certainly came from wild species, smaller than chickens, though neither could be identified with any certainty. One was an ulna from Phase 3 pit fill 176 and another was a tibiotarsus from Phase 3.2 ditch fill 624. The third specimen derived from an environmental sample taken from Phase 3.1 ditch fill 13 (Table 16). Rodent bones were recovered from two environmental samples taken from Phase 3.1 pit fill 349 and Phase 3.2 pit fill 473, though these were not identified to species. Pit fill 473 also produced several frog bones.

Provenance

The majority of the assemblage, over 80%, was recovered from ditch/gully and pit fills (Table 15). Just over 10% was recovered from layers, while structural features (i.e. postholes, beamslots, etc.) and a single Phase 3 well (fills 629 and 631) produced only small numbers of animal bones, as did a couple of medieval/post-medieval furrows that may have disturbed earlier Roman features. It was notable that cattle bones were more frequently recovered from ditch fills and layers, compared to a higher proportion of sheep bones being found in pits. This pattern is also reflected in the fact that long-bone shaft fragments, vertebrae and ribs from large mammals were more commonly recovered from ditch fills, while medium mammal-sized specimens more often derived from pits; again, this probably reflects a difference between cattle and sheep carcass disposal practices.

The presence of articulated deposits of dog and chicken carcasses has been noted above. Alongside these, the faunal remains recovered from pit 7 (fill 9) are also worth highlighting. This feature produced 90 animal bone specimens. These consisted of cattle remains including skull and mandible fragments, meat-bearing body parts such as the humerus and pelvis, foot bones, plus numerous large mammal ribs and long bone shaft fragments. Some of the cattle bones had clearly been butchered. These were accompanied by a considerable number of sheep bones, again represented by a range of body parts including skull, trunk, limb and foot elements. A pig tooth and a horse metacarpal that had been chopped through the shaft were also present alongside many unidentifiable fragments.

Cattle

The animal bone assemblage contained the remains of at least four cattle, as indicated by the number of repeated element zones from one side of the body (Table 17). A range of cattle body parts were identified and there is little evidence for selectivity. Distal humeri, proximal metacarpals and distal tibiae were well represented, reflecting the relatively high density of these elements.

There were few ageing data for cattle. Only one mandible specimen was present (Table 18). This derived from a new-born calf, suggesting the presence of a breeding herd nearby. The limited epiphyseal fusion data should be treated with caution, though these indicate that cattle did not tend to be slaughtered until they were 2–4 years old, which perhaps indicates

the selection of prime-beef animals (Table 19). Undoubtedly, however, some cattle lived to an older age than this and secondary products are likely to have been important (see below).

Three mandibles showed signs of pathology. A calf's mandible from Phase 3 gully fill 566 had been exposed to an infection on the underside of the jaw, reminiscent of an early stage of lumpy jaw. This condition is caused by the bacteria *Actinomyces bovis*, which is normally present in cattle mouths but can cause serious infection through lesions or abnormal tooth eruption. Actinomycosis causes a painless swelling under the jaw that can rupture and drain foul-smelling fluid. If left to fester, the swelling becomes very enlarged and can cause feeding difficulties that may even lead to starvation. Prior to the discovery of antibiotics, the treatment of this disease would have been difficult. A notable aspect of the calf mandible is that it had been burnt around the infection and it is possible that this was a deliberate attempt to treat the infection, though it may have occurred after death. The other two mandibles, both from adult cattle, showed signs of periostitis along the ascending ramus and up to the articulating joint. These specimens were recovered from Phase 3 ditch 97 and Phase 3.1 ditch 322. A metatarsal from Phase 3.1 ditch fill 13 included a splayed medial condyle. This may have resulted naturally from old age but is now recognised as being caused by severe mechanical loading during the life of the animal, normally through extensive use on the plough (Allen 2017, 113).

Six cattle specimens exhibited butchery marks (Table 21). There is little evidence that cattle carcasses were intensively butchered, and fragmentation appears to have been relatively low. Nonetheless, there is some evidence for the use of a heavy-bladed implement, such as a meat cleaver, particularly in the axial splitting of long bones and blade marks found on a scapula, which is indicative of raw meat being stripped. Other butchery marks, however, were made using sharp knives, most notably cuts on a long bone shaft and on an astragalus to sever the tendons and ligaments around the ankle.

Sheep

A minimum of four sheep were present in the assemblage (Table 17). Most body parts were represented, though there is clear evidence of preferential survival of the more robust elements. For example, distal tibiae were very well represented, as were mandibles, distal humeri, proximal radii, and proximal metacarpals.

The good survival of sheep mandibles provided a larger sample of dental ageing data than for cattle. Eight specimens in total indicated the presence of a range of sheep ages (Table 18). The youngest were lambs killed between 10 and 20 months of age. Two sheep were killed between 20 and 36 months. Another two were slaughtered between 2.5 and 4.5 years, while one was notably older, surviving at least until 6 years of age and possibly up to 11 years old. The epiphyseal fusion data were less helpful in discerning slaughter patterns owing to the small sample size, though suggested that sheep were being culled from around 3–4 years old (Table 20). Although the ageing data are limited, there is no evidence for age selection or specialised husbandry, suggesting the presence of a small, multi-use flock.

Too few sheep bones were available for measurement, making it difficult to assess the stature of the flock. The breadths of two distal tibiae measured 21.1mm and 24.1mm, both of which fell within the lower end of the range for early and middle Roman sites, being more consistent with late Iron Age stock (Allen 2017, 106). It is possible that these specimens derived from

ewes, and a larger sample is needed to see if these measurements reflected the normal size pattern for the site.

Horses

Horses were represented by 13 specimens from at least two animals. These included a range of different elements, with radius and metacarpal bones being well represented. All the bones derived from adult animals.

Two metacarpals, from Phase 3 context 57 (linear feature 1016) and ditch fill 96, were complete enough to calculate withers' height (shoulder heights). These were estimated at 1429mm and 1461mm respectively. Heights above 1.4m measure within the upper range for horses in Roman Britain and are generally much larger than native Iron Age stock (Allen 2017, 129).

A metacarpal from Phase 3.2 pit fill 9 had been chopped horizontally through the shaft of the bone. This may have been to access the marrow within, or perhaps represents an early stage of bone working. Most of the horse bones were not greatly fragmented and there is no conclusive evidence that horse meat was eaten.

Dog burial

The remains of a probably disturbed dog burial were recovered from Phase 3.1 ditch fill 13. The bones present included fragments of tooth, vertebrae, humerus, radius, ulna, femur, metapodial and phalanges. None were complete enough to take measurements and a withers' height could not be calculated. All the bones had undergone epiphyseal fusion. Three specimens showed signs of pathology. A 2nd phalanx had abnormal bone growth along the shaft, perhaps caused by trauma to the toe. Considerable bone modification on an ulna fragment and on the medial side of the right radius was clearly caused by an infection in the front forelimb, perhaps resulting from an earlier trauma. Given the level of extra bone growth, the dog appeared to have survived these events.

Summary

Given the small size of the assemblage, the animal bones are limited in what they can tell us about the pastoral economy at the site. Although the sample size is small, a range of different cattle and sheep elements were present and there was no evidence for body-part selection or specialised butchery practices. The ageing data for sheep suggests that animals of all ages were present and there is little evidence of selectivity. Some lambs were slaughtered for their meat, while 3–5-year-old sheep would have provided several clips of wool before they were culled. The presence of older animals also suggests the presence of a breeding flock and this is supported by the neonatal sheep bones, representing lambs that died at birth.

Neonatal cattle bones were also present and there are signs that secondary products were important. The presence of a splayed medial condyle on a metatarsal is indicative of an animal used extensively on the plough, and this is likely given the evidence for arable processing at the site. There is some evidence that livestock animals were well cared for, particularly if the apparent treatment of lumpy jaw infection is sustained. The dog also appears to have survived traumas and infections that may have been caused by a difficult working environment.

Evidence for dietary patterns are difficult to discern. Beef and mutton were certainly consumed, if only on a relatively limited basis. Pork seems to have been a rare addition as was venison. There is no conclusive evidence that horse meat was consumed, though this should

not be ruled out. Perhaps the most interesting single deposit were the remains found in pit 7, including a sizable number of butchered cattle and sheep bones that appear to represent the remains from a feast.

Taxa	Phase 2	Phase 2/3	Phase 3	Phase 3.1	Phase 3.2	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total	%NISP
Cattle	4	2	32	25	22		2	87	39.5
Sheep/Goat	1	2	38	14	32		1	88	40.0
Pig			3		2			5	2.3
Horse			6	1	5	1		13	5.9
Dog			1	11*				12	5.5
Red deer		2						2	0.9
Roe deer			2					2	0.9
Chicken			9*					9	4.1
Bird			1		1			2	0.9
Large mammal	4	4	56	29	36	2	1	132	–
Medium mammal	2	3	64	12	47		2	130	–
Unidentified	1	1	47	39	33			121	–
Total	12	14	259	131	178	3	6	603	–

Table 14: Number of hand-collected animal bone specimens per taxon in each phase (* indicates specimens from articulated groups of bones)

Taxa	Ditch/Gully	Pit	Well	Structural	Layer	Furrow	Total
Cattle	45	24	1		15	2	87
Sheep/Goat	32	46	1	3	5	1	88
Pig	2	3					5
Horse	8	3		1	1		13
Dog	12*						12
Red deer				2			2
Roe deer	2						2
Chicken		9*					9
Bird	1	1					2
Large mammal	78	31	1	1	20	1	132
Medium mammal	55	58	4	3	8	2	130
Unidentified	45	48		12	16		121
Total	280	223	7	22	65	6	603
%	46.4	36.9	1.2	3.6	10.8	0.9	–

Table 15: Number of hand-collected animal bone specimens per taxon in different feature types (* indicates specimens from articulated groups of bones)

Context	Phase	Feature	Sample	Fraction	Weight (g)	NISP	Taxon present	Comments
129	2/3	pit fill	10	>10mm	1	1	cf. mammal	burnt grey
54	3	pit fill	6	>10mm	2	3	cf. mammal	two burnt grey and white
94	3	pit fill	8	>10mm	7	4	cf. mammal	vertebrae burnt grey
157	3	ditch fill	9	>10mm	14	6	cattle	one calcined fragment
328	3	pit fill	14	>10mm	5	10	cf. mammal	all burnt white and grey
337	3	pit fill	15	>10mm	4	5	cf. mammal	two grey fragments
628	3	well fill	27	10–4mm	<1	1	sheep/goat	
13	3.1	ditch fill	2	10–4mm	3	6	small bird species, dog, sheep	
13	3.1	ditch fill	2	>10mm	3	3	sheep/goat	
275	3.1	corn-dryer	17	>10mm	<1	2	cf. mammal	
276	3.1	corn-dryer	13	10–4mm	<1	1	cattle	
276	3.1	corn-dryer	13	>10mm	33	1	cattle	
349	3.1	pit fill	16	10–4mm	2	2	sheep/goat	
349	3.1	pit fill	16	4–2mm	<1	3	rodent species	
349	3.1	pit fill	16	>10mm	1	1	cf. mammal	
9	3.2	pit fill	24	>10mm	2	1	cf. mammal	
9	3.2	pit fill	25	>10mm	2	2	cf. mammal	
473	3.2	pit fill	19	10–4mm	<1	3	rodent species, sheep (neonatal)	
473	3.2	pit fill	19	4–2mm	<1	10	frog, rodent sp.	
473	3.2	pit fill	19	>10mm	1	3	sheep/goat	
563	3.2	pit fill	22	>10mm	6	6	sheep/goat	

Table 16: Summary of animal bone specimens from sieved samples

Element	cattle		sheep/goat	
	MNI	MNE	MNI	MNE
mandible	2	3	3	5
scapula	2	2	1	1
humerus	4	5	3	5
radius	1	3	3	5
ulna	1	1	0	0
metacarpal	4	5	3	5
pelvis	1	2	2	3
femur	1	1	2	4
tibia	2	4	4	8
astragalus	2	2	1	1
calcaneus	1	1	1	1
metatarsal	1	2	2	2
MAXIMUM	4	5	4	8

Table 17: Cattle and sheep/goat body part patterns (MNI = minimum number of individuals, and MNE = minimum number of elements)

Context	Phase	Taxa	dp4	M1	M2	M3	Grant (1982) MWS	Estimated age
477	3	cattle	b				3	neonatal
448	3	pig	b				1-8	0-7 months
259	2	sheep/goat			j	g	41-43	6-11 years
228	3	sheep/goat		g	g	a	30	20-36 months
419	3	sheep/goat	l	g	e		26	10-24 months
674	3.1	sheep/goat			f	b	30-31	20-36 months
9	3.2	sheep/goat	h				18-24	10-24 months
9	3.2	sheep/goat				e	33-38	2.5-4.5 years
70	3.2	sheep/goat			g		27-40	2-9 years
70	3.2	sheep/goat				e	33-38	2.5-4.5 years

Table 18: Dental wear data and estimated age-at-death (MWS = mandible wear stage)

Estimated age	Element	Fused	Unfused	%fused
0-1 year	P metapodial	6		100
	scapula	1		
Total				
1-2 years	P radius	4		100
	P phalanx 2	1		
	D humerus	4		
	P phalanx 1	3		
Total				
2-3 years	D tibia	2		80
	D metapodial	2	1	
Total				
3-4 years	P humerus	1		50
	D radius		1	
Total				

Table 19: Epiphyseal fusion data for cattle

Estimated age	Element	Fused	Unfused	%fused
0-1 year	P radius	1		100
	D humerus	4		
	pelvis	1		
	P phalanx 2	1		
	P phalanx 1	2		
Total				
1-2 years	D tibia	3		100
	D metapodial	2		
Total				
2-3 years	calcaneus	1		100
Total				
3-4 years	P tibia	1		33
	P femur		1	
	D femur		1	
Total				

Table 20: Epiphyseal fusion data for sheep/goats

Taxa	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Horse
Axial chop through long bone	2			
Horizontal chop on long bone shaft	1	1		1
Axial blade marks on long bone shaft			1	
Horizontal knife cuts on long bone shaft	1			
Blade marks on scapula spine	1			
Knife cuts on astragalus	1			
Total	6	1	1	1

Table 21: Summary of butchery evidence by taxon and mark type

Burn type	Ditch/Gully	Pit	Well	Structural	Layer	Furrow	Total
Black	5	9					14
Grey	4	2		3	1		10
Calcined (white)	3						3
Total	12	11		3	1		27
% of total assemblage	4.3	4.9	0.0	13.6	1.5	0.0	4.5

Table 22: Summary of burnt animal bone specimens by feature type

Specimen no.	Context	Phase	Taxon	Element	GL	LI	Bp	Dp	BFp	SD	Bd	BFd	Dd	DFd	BT	HTC	GB
208	96	3	cattle	astragalus	57.8	52.1											32.9
353	467	3	cattle	astragalus	64.8	59.4											40.4
198	97	3	cattle	metacarpal			55.5	32.5									
173	349	3.1	cattle	tibia						37.9	63.8		47.9				
75	13	3.1	cattle	tibia							54.5			40.8			
79	13	3.1	cattle	metatarsal							52.4			27.4			
358	502	3.2	cattle	astragalus													34.7
184/185	288/6	3.2	cattle	metacarpal			62.7	34.5			62.5			30.9			
7	94	3	sheep/goat	tibia						13.6	24.1		18.5				
145	337	3	sheep/goat	humerus						13.0	25.8				24.7	12.2	
146	337	3	sheep/goat	radius			27.6		23.6	12.7							
144	357	3	sheep/goat	metacarpal						11.5	21.4	11.5					
94	365	3	sheep/goat	tibia						12.0	21.1		16.4				
156	321	3.1	sheep/goat	humerus						12.6	25.4				23.4	11.4	
170	57	3	horse	metacarpal	232.0	223.0				33.8	47.2						
206	96	3	horse	metacarpal	231.0	228.0	46.4	40.2		27.8	43.0						
107	10	3.1	horse	radius			76.9		71.8								
318	473	3.2	horse	astragalus	56.5												56.1

Table 23: Biometric data—all measurements taken in mm (GL greatest length; LI lateral length; Bp breadth of proximal end; Dp depth of proximal end; BFp breadth of the proximal articulation; SD shortest breadth of diaphysis; Bd breadth of distal end; BFd breadth of the distal articulation; Dd depth of distal end; DFd depth of distal end at fusion point; BT breadth of trochlear; HTC height of trochlear constriction; GB greatest breadth)

Charred plant remains *by Sharon Cook*

Introduction

Twenty-seven bulk soil samples were taken during the excavations, ranging in volume from 2-40 litres, although the smallest samples came from discrete deposits such as pot fills and most samples were 35-40 litres. These samples were processed in their entirety by water flotation to 0.25mm (flot) and 0.5mm (residue) and rapidly assessed, based on which 18 flots, all from samples dated to the middle Roman phase, c AD 100-240, were selected for further work based on the quantity and quality of charred material but also to ensure coverage across the site.

Method

The dried flots were sorted using a low power (x10) binocular microscope to extract cereal grains and chaff, smaller seeds and other quantifiable remains. Identifications were carried out using standard morphological criteria for the cereals (Jacomet 2006) and with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Cappers *et al.* 2006) for identification of wild plant remains, as well as comparison with modern reference material held at OA. Classification and nomenclature of plant material follows Stace (2010).

Quantification of remains is as follows; cereal grains and the seeds of wild plants were only quantified for items of which more than half was observed, this means that all cereal and seed counts may be used to reach an MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals). For chaff, awns and nutshell fragments the count is for all observed fragments, this means these figures are not suitable for use in calculating MNI.

The assemblages

Details of the identified material are given in Table 24. Generally, across the site the charred material was in poor condition with grain largely fragmented, lacking their testa and presenting a 'clinkered' appearance as a result of heating to a fairly high temperature, but there was some variation allowing the identification of the better preserved material. As with the material observed during the evaluation of this site (Meen 2010) where charcoal is present it is generally highly fragmented. Apart from charcoal, the flots all comprised a mixture of cereal grains and uncultivated plant seeds, with most samples also including cereal chaff, a waste product from crop processing. Several of the sorted flots contained a mixture of grain types, predominantly wheat (*Triticum* sp.) with smaller quantities of barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and oat/brome (*Avena/Bromus*). At least some of the barley grains (especially in sample 10) have characteristics indicative of six-rowed hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) with asymmetrical boat-shaped grains and a shallow V-shaped ventral furrow.

Cereal chaff is present within the majority of the samples and typically appears in much better condition than the other charred material. While few spikelets were sufficiently complete to allow species identification, at least five have characteristics consistent with spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) and in addition a number of glume base fragments have prominent minor veins, a wide angled keel and wide bases typical of spelt, although few are complete enough to include all characteristics. Although small pieces of rachis are present in samples 5, 8, 9, 14, 16, 22 and 25 they are too fragmented to identify beyond free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) or barley (*Hordeum* sp.), but the presence of barley grains indicates that it is more likely to be the latter. The majority of the wheat on this site is probably spelt, which in the

south and east of Britain was the more common cultivar during the late Iron Age and Roman periods, with barley as the secondary crop (van der Veen 2016). The occasional oat awn fragments are small and fragmentary and insufficient to demonstrate the use of oats as a crop, although the presence of this material in a number of sample (see below) hints at it. The introduction of oats as a cultivated crop at the site in the Roman period was suggested by Pelling (2004), but unfortunately the data from both the previous and current excavations is equivocal on this point.

Legumes are frequent and while these are mostly vetches (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) <2mm in size, occasional larger pieces may be fragments of pea (*Pisum sativum*) or Celtic bean (*Vicia faba*). Hazelnut shell fragments (*Corylus avellana*) were also observed in Samples 4, 16 and 22; although these are few in number they may indicate some utilisation of wild resources. Other wild plant seeds are typically small in size and in poor condition, missing their distinguishing characteristics, and consequently a relatively high proportion are identified only to family or genus. The seeds are typically from plants of cultivated fields, disturbed ground, grassland or damp ground and where numerous, such as in sample 22, their fairly uniform size may indicate that they derive from an early stage of crop processing such as coarse sieving, larger seeds being removed from the assemblages at a later stage, by hand.

The central pits

Samples 4 and 5 both originate from fills in pit 48, with sample 4 coming from the upper fill (49) and 5 the lower fill (50). Samples 6 and 8 are both fills from immediately adjacent pits: sample 6 came from upper fill 54 in pit 51 and sample 8 came from the upper fill of pit 92. The flots from these features are broadly similar, containing small amounts of charred grain, larger amounts of chaff and a similar range of charred uncultivated seeds. Sample 5 also includes some small fragments of wheat or barley awns as discussed above. Sample 9, which originated from a ditch fill to the north of these pits, contains similar material. It is interesting to note that all these samples contain oat awn fragments, possibly indicating the processing of a crop or that burning of waste material took place nearby. Sample 15, from pit 335 to the south, contains a much smaller quantity of charred remains, the majority of which is in extremely poor condition.

Pit 131

In contrast to the remains from the central pits there is no cereal chaff from isolated pit 131, and wild plant seeds are rare. Barley grain is also proportionately far more common in this sample although many of the grains show evidence of external abrasion and there are a large number of detached embryos which appear to have been scraped away, and a large proportion of the grain is cleanly broken. Very few of the embryos show evidence of sprouting and there appears to be no evidence of pest damage to explain the discarding of grain which had already been cleaned. In addition, the grains are internally compact showing no evidence of the friability of the endosperm which is evident after malting. The lack of evidence of sprouting also indicates that this is not malted grain, although the sizes of the charred remains are reminiscent of deposits of malting waste such as those found at Nonington, Kent (Helm and Carruthers 2011), and a post-germination drying process (known as kilning) could theoretically have resulted in accidental burning (van der Veen 1989).

In the preparation of grain for consumption there are a number of processes utilising fire, for example drying of whole grain in preparation for milling, but the grains in sample 10 show

some evidence of abrasion and fragmentation prior to burning. This is especially evident on the barley grains where fragments of the bran are still present around the ventral furrow. There are a number of processes which could have caused this combination of both abrasion and fragmentation, both de-hulling without parboiling and coarse grinding of grains have a similar effect (Cappers 2016, 1499, 1578). It therefore seems likely that the grain in sample 10 was accidentally charred during a late stage of processing or food preparation although the deposit is to the north of the area of greatest activity on site. Significantly, the fired clay within this pit has been interpreted as a possible oven base.

Hulled barley, oats and brome were utilised as fodder-crops in the Iron Age (Van der Veen 1992, 75; Campbell 2000), and this appears to have continued into the Roman period. Pliny stated that barley grain had fallen into disfavour and was now used for animal feed only (Pliny HN 5.18.14) but the ubiquity of it as a crop in Roman Britain, as well as the cleaned and processed nature of the remains in sample 10, makes it unlikely that this was the case here. Robinson noted the presence of barley bread from Iron Age deposits at this site (Robinson 2004), and the manufacture of a similar product may be indicated by this Roman sample.

Pit 562

Sample 22, from pit 562 also stands out within the site assemblage as being of very different composition. This sample is the only one to contain any real quantity of charcoal of identifiable size and also contains a larger quantity of non-cultivated plant remains than the remaining samples combined. The sample is from a pit cluster to the north of ditch 153, includes both wheat and barley grains together with abundant cereal chaff including *Triticum dicoccum/spelta* glume bases, some of which were clearly spelt, confirming its dominance, as well as seeds from common weeds of arable fields and grassland. It is likely that this material is waste from a preliminary crop cleaning process, such as dehusking or threshing, winnowing and sieving which are all processes intended to remove wild seeds and other waste from the crop. Large weed seeds, which remain with the grain and have to be removed by hand, were relatively rare. Plum or cherry stones (*Prunus* sp.) were unfortunately too fragmented to identify further, but together with fragments of hazelnut shell probably indicate the collection of wild fruit.

Pit 7

Samples 24 and 25 represent quadrants of shallow pit 9. This feature is quite close to corn-dryer 273, although separated from it by the pit cluster that contains pit 347. Sample 24 contains very little charred material while sample 25 is much richer particularly in *Triticum dicoccum/spelta* glume bases with rachis fragments and a small number of grains and seeds of wild plants also present.

Corn-dryer 273 and associated features

Samples 13 and 18 both originate from the flues of corn-dryer 273 and both contained large quantities of glume wheat chaff, with spelt again the only wheat positively identified, as well as occasional grain and wild plant seeds. As seems to be fairly typical in corn-dryers, the chaff appears to have been used as fuel. There is some disagreement about the use of these structures: whether they were predominantly used for parching grain prior to milling and/or storage or for drying malted grain for brewing (van der Veen 1989) but it is generally accepted that burning chaff and straw from the crop produces little smoke and is an efficient use of a

waste product (Hillman 1982; Monkton 1999). In addition, chaff is a convenient fuel source with the chaff from one ton of grain being sufficient to dry the next ton in parching prior to de-husking and milling (pers. comm. Birsay Heritage Trust).

Sample 16 from the nearby pit cluster (pit 347) also contains extremely large quantities of similar glume wheat chaff, possibly waste from cleaning out the flues of the corn-dryer prior to use. Sample 2 from ditch 36, adjacent to the corn-dryer, contains only a single indeterminate cereal grain.

Wells 618 and 468

Although it was initially thought that the well fills would contain anaerobically preserved material, or backfill that included significant quantities of plant remains, this proved not to be the case. Sample 27 from well 618 and sample 19 from well 468 both contained very few charred remains and no other plant remains, the majority of the flot volume being composed of modern material. Since all of the charred remains are small in size and in poor condition, they probably accumulated as windblown material rather than deliberately dumped waste.

Discussion and conclusions

The majority of samples include a limited range of wild plant taxa with vetch/tare (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), orache/goosefoots (Amaranthaceae) and grass seeds being the most common across the site. Dock seeds (*Rumex* sp.) are also fairly frequent. These are ruderal species, commonly found on the edges of arable ground and on disturbed or waste ground. The oat/brome (*Avena/Bromus*) grains and cleavers (*Galium aparine*) are likely to be crop contaminants, harvested along with the cereals, as are the other grass seeds. Vetch/tare and medick/clover/trefoil type (*Medicago/Trifolium/Lotus* sp.) legumes are also commonly found with cereal assemblages although they are species of grassy places. Legumes are nitrogen fixers and an increase in leguminous weeds may be indicative of a decline in soil fertility (Pelling 2004). Certainly brome grass, goosefoot, docks, clover-type plants, blinks, black bindweed and cleavers appear to have more similarities with the weeds of extensive cultivation in fields rather than intensive garden-type cultivation as described by van der Veen (1992) (Monkton 2015).

Sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and oxeye daisies (*Leucanthemum* sp.) are plants of dry, well-drained habitats including grasslands where the vegetation is short and open through disturbance such as grazing and hay cutting. It is possible that the presence of relatively large numbers of these seeds is an indication of pasture land nearby, although they are all also commonly found on arable sites of the Iron Age and Roman period. The large amounts of grass seeds present may also be an indicator of uncultivated land although they do appear as crop contaminants on some sites. A small number of species are present which typically prefer damper conditions and/or heavier soils, such as stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) which is often considered to be an indicator of cultivation on clay soils. These however are present in low numbers and may have been growing in ditch bases or in damper areas around the periphery of fields. This mixture of species preference is in keeping with the 'mixture of weeds of arable fields and cultivated ground, grassland flora and wetland species' described by Pelling (2004) for Iron Age samples from earlier excavations at Coxwell Road.

The presence of rush seeds (*Juncus* spp.) which appear in most samples and are fairly numerous in sample 22, may be a reflection of their use in a domestic setting or agriculture, for example as livestock bedding, flooring or in roofing.

Both in terms of the cultivated and the non-cultivated plants, these samples are compositionally similar to those described from excavations nearby at the Iron Age site at Coxwell Road (Pelling 2004; Robinson 2004). Robinson reported the presence of emmer grains (*Triticum dicoccum*) in addition to the spelt wheat, but while it is possible that the cultivation of emmer continues into the Roman period, the lack of grains and chaff that can be unequivocally assigned to this species in these Roman samples means that the question cannot be resolved at this site, a conclusion also drawn by Pelling (*ibid.*) as emmer chaff was a very minor component of the wheat assemblage in the Roman corn-dryer samples from the earlier excavations.

As also described by Pelling (*ibid.*), the samples include glume bases in a better condition than grain from the same samples. It has been suggested that this may be due to the materials having different origins (*ibid.*), but if so then the practise of mixing material is widespread across the area.

As is typical in the Upper Thames region at this time, the evidence from this and previous excavations indicates the continuation in the Roman period of a mixed farming regime of spelt wheat and hulled barley, together with the keeping of livestock (see Allen above). It is unclear if legumes were also cultivated, since unfortunately peas and beans are rarely processed in a manner that would make them likely to be carbonised and so there is a bias in their preservation on archaeological sites (Treasure and Church 2016). The small quantity of hazelnut and plum/cherry stones may indicate use of natural resources although it is possible due to the small size and relative rarity of these items that they are accidental arrivals as a result of bird or animal activity.

It is generally considered that glume wheats such as spelt were usually stored in the glume during the Iron Age and Roman period (Stevens 2003), as this protects the grain from spoilage (Hillman 1981; Jones 1985). This would certainly seem to be the case on some rural sites, such as Bredons Norton in Gloucestershire (Hunter 2016), which are thought to be 'producer' sites in contrast to 'consumer' urban and military sites such as Colchester (Murphy 1984) and London (Straker 1984) which have evidence for the storage of cleaned grain. The large quantities of glume bases and other cereal chaff in samples from across the current site are indicative of a 'producer' site, with grain stored largely in the glume for domestic consumption. Gradual crop processing done on a monthly or even weekly basis would explain the ubiquity of the material with the waste from these processes being used as fuel, or burnt as refuse, and then gradually accumulating in pits and ditches as cleaning of areas of cooking and processing occurred.

Significantly, however, the discovery of two millstones may indicate the grinding of grain for consumption beyond the local settlement (see Shaffrey above), as part of a wider supply system providing food for a nearby villa or town. The lack of storage structures at the site and the lack of larger weed seeds may also corroborate this hypothesis, with the activity here connected to a larger estate. The lack of rachis, awn and straw fragments is likely to be an indicator that either initial crop processing such as winnowing was being carried out elsewhere, or that the debris produced has not survived. Awns – being fragile – are frequently

removed during the early threshing processes, and if used as fuel are less likely to survive than more robust material.

Table 24 (overleaf): Charred plant remains. *1-4, **5-24, ***25-49, ****50-99, *****100+
#Denotes fragmented or otherwise damaged/missing external details

Sample No		2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	18	19	22	24	25	27
Context No		13	49	50	54	70	94	157	129	276	328	337	349	275	473	563	9	9	628
Feature		12	48	48	51	69	92	153	131	273	327	335	347	273	468	562	7	7	618
Phase		3.1	3.2	3.2	3	3.2	3	3	2/3	3.1	3	3	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3
Description		Ditch Fill	Upper Pit fill	Lower Pit fill	Upper Pit fill	Ditch Fill	Upper Pit fill	Upper Ditch fill	Upper Pit fill	Corn-dryer Flue	Pit fill	Pit fill	Upper Pit fill	Corn-dryer Flue	Well	Pit fill	Layer Quad A	Layer Quad B	Well
Volume (L)		6	35	15	35	18	38	15	35	30	30	35	40	35	30	40	35	35	35
Flot Volume (ml)		1	10	8	10	8	18	40	210	8	15	2	25	15	3	50	3	15	3
Flot scanned		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	12.5%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Charcoal																			
	>4mm				*			*								**			
	2-4mm	*			**	*	**	**	**		**			*		***		**	
Cereal grain																			
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat		2#		1	1#	2	18#			17#	3#	3#	5#	1#	25#	3#	5#	
<i>cf Triticum</i> sp.	cf. wheat		2#	5#	1#	5#	2#	25#	95#	1#	24#		5#	1#				6#	
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	barley								281#			3#				24#			
<i>cf Hordeum</i> sp.	cf. barley				2#			10#	72#							3#			
<i>Avena/Bromus</i>	oat/brome		1#	1#	1#		7#	4#	1#		9#			1#		4#		1#	
Cerealia	indet cereal	1#	8#	26#	15#	13#	52#	225#	500+#	12#	106#	17#	12#	23#	6#	192#	1#	7#	1#
Chaff																			
<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i>	emmer/spelt glume base		83#	121#	6#	8#	325#	130#		500+#	500+#		500+#	500+#	2#	500+#		98#	1#
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	spelt glume base		1#	2#			15#	2#		38#	23#		31#	8#		47#		7#	
<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i>	emmer/spelt spikelet forks		2#				3#							2#		10#			
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	spelt spikelet forks						1#									2#			
<i>Triticum/Hordeum</i>	rachis fragments			1#			9#	3#			12#		20#	1#		12#		15#	
<i>Triticum/Hordeum</i> sp.	wheat/barley awns			***															
<i>Cerealia</i>	indet detached embryos		2	5	1	1	10	4	500+	2#	10#		4#	19#		122#		3#	
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oat awns		**	***	***		*	**						***					
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oat floret bases						2#												
Fruit, Nutshell etc																			
Fabaceae >4mm	pea/bean					10#										5#	1#		
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	hazelnut shell		1#										1#			10#			
<i>Prunus</i> sp.	cherry family fruitstone frag.							3#								4#			
Wild Species																			
Papaveraceae	poppy family															2#			
<i>Papaver</i> sp.	poppy													1#		10#			

Sample No		2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	18	19	22	24	25	27
Context No		13	49	50	54	70	94	157	129	276	328	337	349	275	473	563	9	9	628
<i>Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosis</i>	meadow buttercup /creeping buttercup /bulbous buttercup				1#						1#					11#			
Fabaceae	pea family				2#	4#	11#	3#			6#		2#			66#			3#
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp. >2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare etc					2#	6#	1#				1#				17#		1#	
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp. <2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare etc		9#	5#	3#	12#	48#	5#		4#	26#	1#	9#	14#		107#		3#	
<i>Medicago</i> sp.	medicks		3				3			3#			2			72#	1	1	
<i>Medicago/Trifolium</i> sp.	medicks/clover			6#	2#						13#					71#			
<i>Trifolium</i> sp.	clover															3#			
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	birds foot trefoil						2#				1#					27#			
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	fairy flax															2			
<i>Malva</i> sp.	mallows						1									1#			
<i>Brassica</i> sp.	cabbages						1		16#		2								
<i>Thlaspi arvense</i>	field penny-cress										3#								
<i>Persicaria</i> sp.	knotweed (2 sided)												1	1#					
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i>	black bindweed													2					
<i>Rumex</i> spp.	docks	1	2			8	7#		2#		7#		2#	5#		76#	1#		
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	sheep's sorrel	4	1	1			4	6#	3#	2	8		2	1		43#		2	
Caryophyllaceae	pink family					1#										2#			
<i>Stellaria media</i>	common chickweed					1							13			14#			
<i>Silene</i> sp.	campions	1																	
Amarantheceae	goosefoot family	1#	1#				5#	1#			3#					160#			
<i>Atriplex/Chenopodium</i> spp.	orache/goosefoots	1#	1#											6#		65#			
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fat hen				2	12#	3	3		2	10		1			56			
<i>Montia fontana</i>	blinks					1							2						
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers		8#	4	2	4#	13	1#		1	9		2	1#		8		2	
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	ivy-leaved speedwell												1					2	
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain								1		2					7			
Lamiaceae	dead-nettle family						2#									5#			
Asteraceae	daisy family		2#		2#		8#	1#		4#	6#		2#	1#		103#			
<i>Centaurea</i> sp.	knapweed															2#			
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	stinking chamomile													2		5			
<i>Leucanthemum/Tripleurospermum</i> sp.	oxeye daisies/mayweed															40#			
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	elder													1					
<i>Juncus</i> spp.	rushes			1#	13	2	14	6#			6#	1			1	72			1
Cyperaceae	sedge family		1#																
<i>Isolepis setacea</i>	bristle club-rush				1#						1					2			
<i>Carex/Rumex</i>	sedges/docks (3 sided)										12#								
<i>Carex</i> spp.	sedges		2#	1	1#	1	9		2#							3#			
Poaceae	grass seeds (various)		21#	12#	3#	24# +3	56#	15#	3#	2#	87#		20#	9#	1	98#		7#	2#
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	brome						5#												
Other																			
Indet.	seed/fruit		15#	16#	9#	23#	38#	11#		2#	27#		13#	6#	1#	272#	1#	8#	1#
Indet	coleoptiles		3#																

Charcoal by Julia Meen

Initial assessment of the 27 charred flots showed that only one, sample 22, contained charcoal of sufficient quantity and preservation to permit further analysis. Sample 22 was from the fill (563) of a pit dating to AD 100-240, and as well as containing the most charcoal of any of the samples from the site, also contained a large quantity of crop processing waste including highly abundant weed seeds. Identification was carried out on 50 items of charcoal in order to characterise the range of wood taxa present in the sample. Each charcoal piece was fractured along the transverse, radial and tangential sections as required and examined at up to x400 magnification, using a Brunel metallurgical SP-400 microscope. Identifications were made with reference to Schweingruber (1990) and nomenclature follows Stace (2010). The results are shown in Table 25.

The charcoal was dominated by oak (*Quercus* sp.), with occasional small roundwood fragments of Maloideae, and a single larger roundwood fragment of blackthorn/cherry (*Prunus* sp.). The Maloideae are a group of closely related wood taxa in the family Roseaceae which cannot be easily distinguished by their anatomical characteristics, and which includes apple, hawthorn, rowan, sorbus and whitebeam; the small number of pieces recovered from this sample may well be fragments from the same twig. It is notable that the sample also contained a *Prunus* stone, and it may be that this was incorporated into the deposit alongside the blackthorn/cherry wood. However, aside from these few roundwood fragments, the sample is strongly dominated by one taxa, possibly suggesting deliberate selection, and may well result from dumping of charred fuel. Oak makes an excellent fuel, being a dense wood that burns evenly at a high temperature and for a prolonged period (Gale 2003, 36).

	Sample Number	22
	Context Number	563
	Feature type	Pit Fill
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak	44
<i>Prunus</i> sp.	blackthorn/cherry	1 r
cf Maloideae	hawthorn/apple/sorbus/whitebeam type	4 r
diffuse porous		1
	TOTAL	50

Table 25: Charcoal from Sample 22. r = roundwood

DISCUSSION

The early to middle Iron Age settlement previously investigated immediately to the north (Cook *et al.* 2004; Weaver and Ford 2004) appears not to have continued into the present site. No certain Iron Age pottery was recovered, and the only possible prehistoric feature encountered was an enclosure ditch that producing no datable finds but was cut by early Roman features.

A complex of rectilinear, ditched enclosures was established in the mid to late 1st century AD, and was developed further in the 2nd century, when occupation was at its most intense. The site appears to have been largely abandoned by the end of the 2nd century, with only a single ditch dated to the late Roman period. No buildings could be clearly identified within the enclosures, but a curving gully may have been part of a roundhouse, and a shallow hollow containing stone rubble could have been a building foundation. Very little ceramic building material was recovered, suggesting that any buildings did not have tiled roofs.

Evidence for grain processing is provided by a T-shaped corn-dryer. Charred cereal chaff was recovered from this feature, though this probably represents fuel rather than the residues of the corn-drying process itself. Significant amounts of cereal chaff were recovered from other samples across the site, and two millstone fragments indicate that a mill lay in the vicinity. This is notable, as mills denote intensive and centralised processing of grain, and are typically associated with towns, roadside settlements or villa estates. If the site formed part of a larger agricultural estate, the focus of this is not clear. Livestock husbandry was also practiced. The animal bone assemblage was dominated by cattle and sheep, and there are indications that both were bred at or near to the site.

The only direct evidence for craft working was smithing slag cakes, that suggest that small-scale blacksmithing may have taken place. The pottery assemblage is fairly utilitarian in character, and other artefacts are limited in quantity and range, including simple iron tools and fittings, a glass bead and a bow brooch. An enamelled peacock brooch is a much more unusual find, with only a few plate brooches depicting this bird previously recorded from Britain. Overall, the picture is of an agrarian settlement of modest status.

Sparser Roman activity was identified in the two previous excavations to the north. Features in this northern area included a 2nd-century corn-dryer (Cook *et al.* 2004), echoing the evidence for crop processing at the present site. Other Roman features in the previous excavation areas included an inhumation burial (*ibid.*) and a sub-circular stone structure of 2nd century or later date interpreted as a shrine, based on associated finds of metalwork such as a spearhead and arrowhead (Weaver and Ford 2004). It would appear that the focus of 2nd-century domestic activity lay within the present site, while the area to the north had more of a ritual association.

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Figure 1: Site location

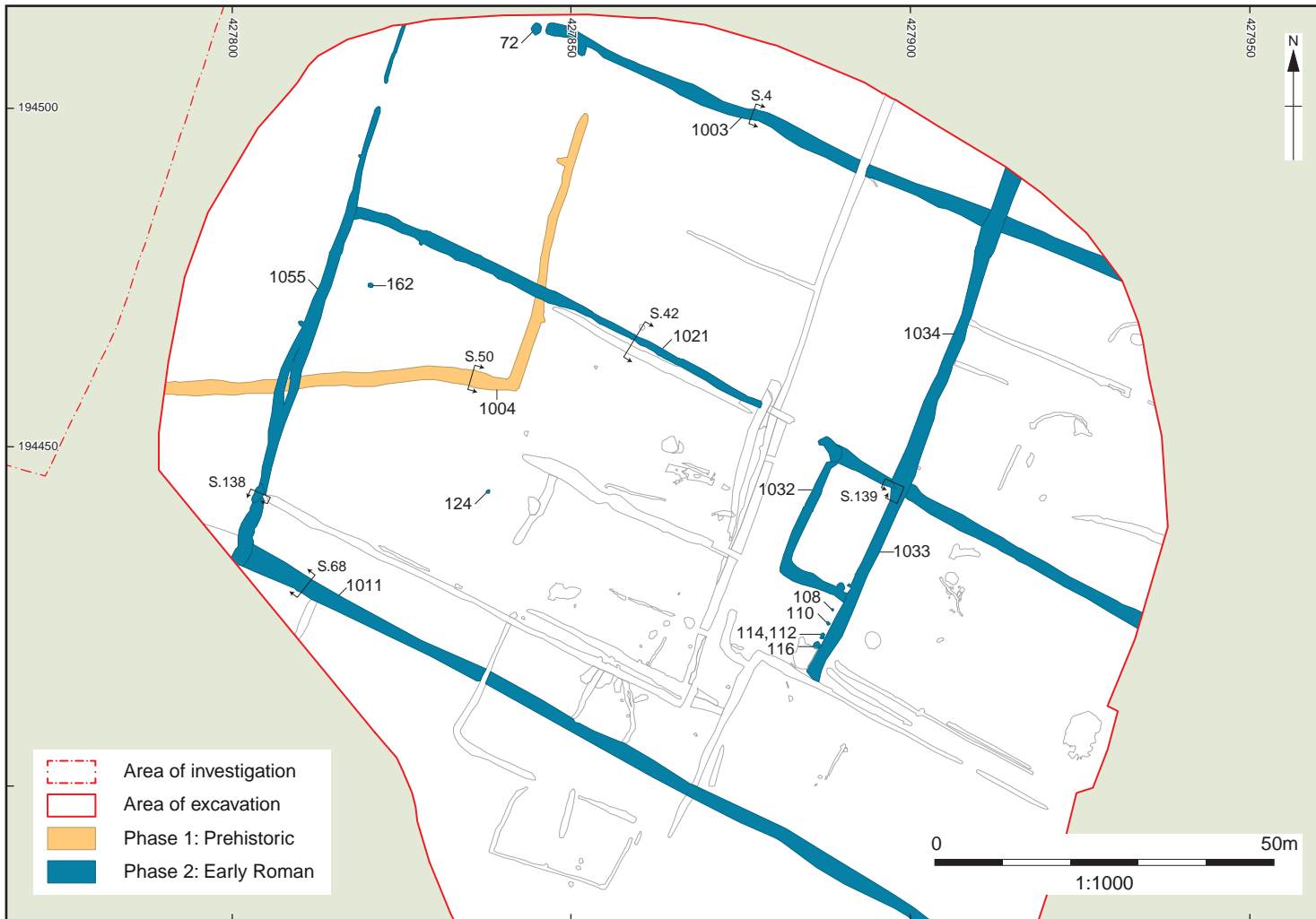


Figure 2: Phase 1 and 2 features

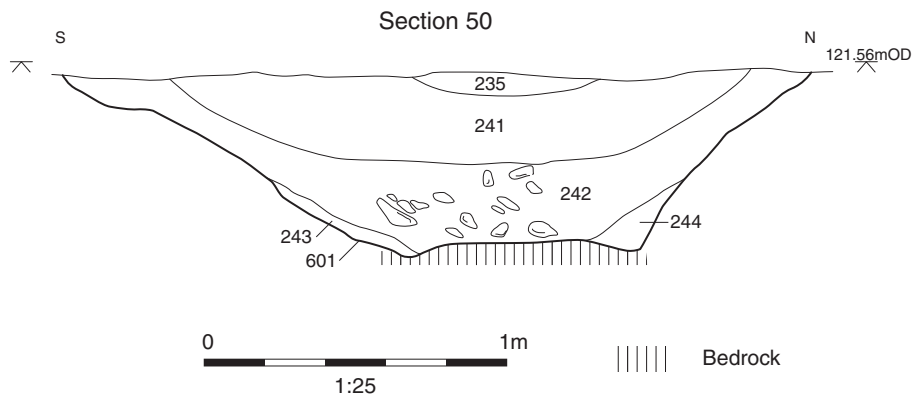


Figure 3: Phase 1 section

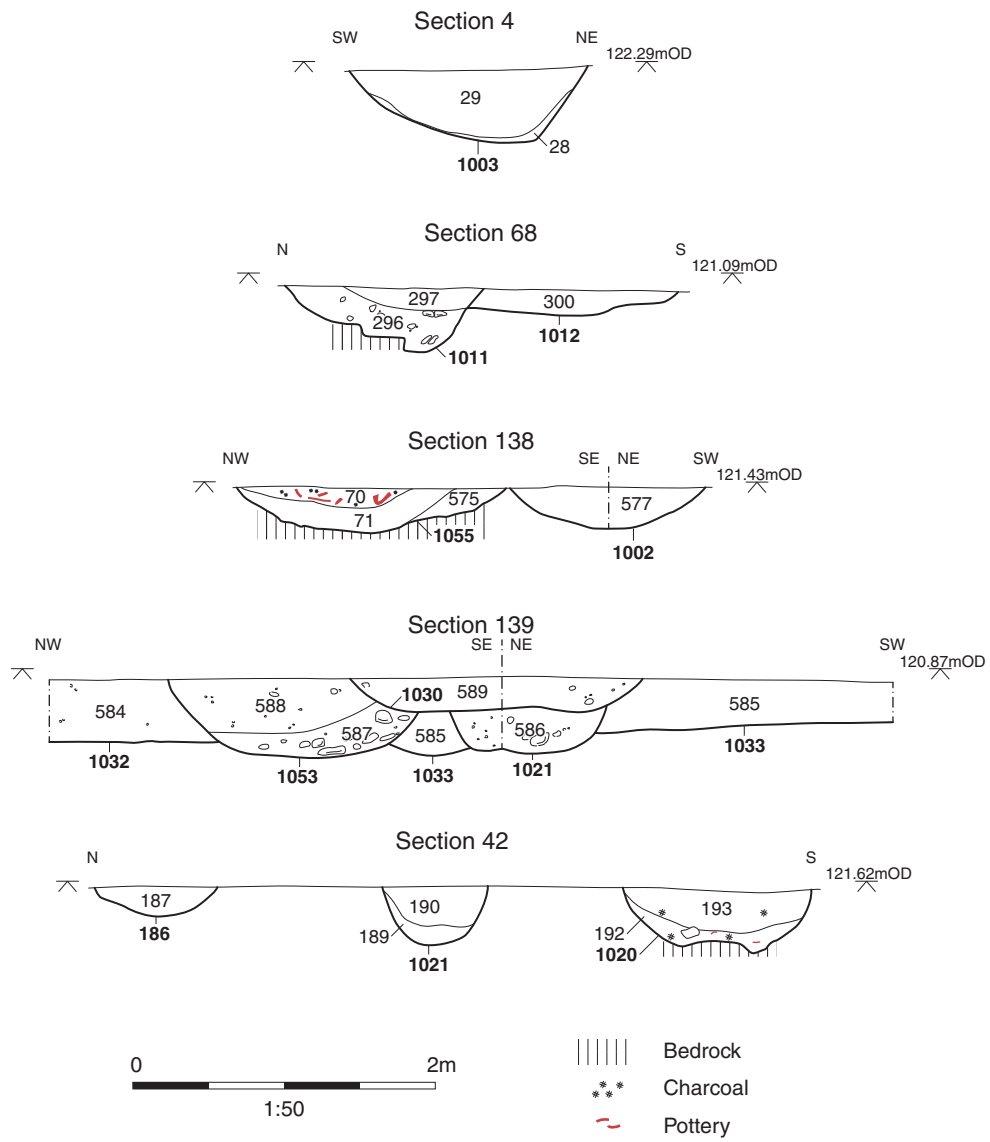


Figure 4: Phase 2 sections

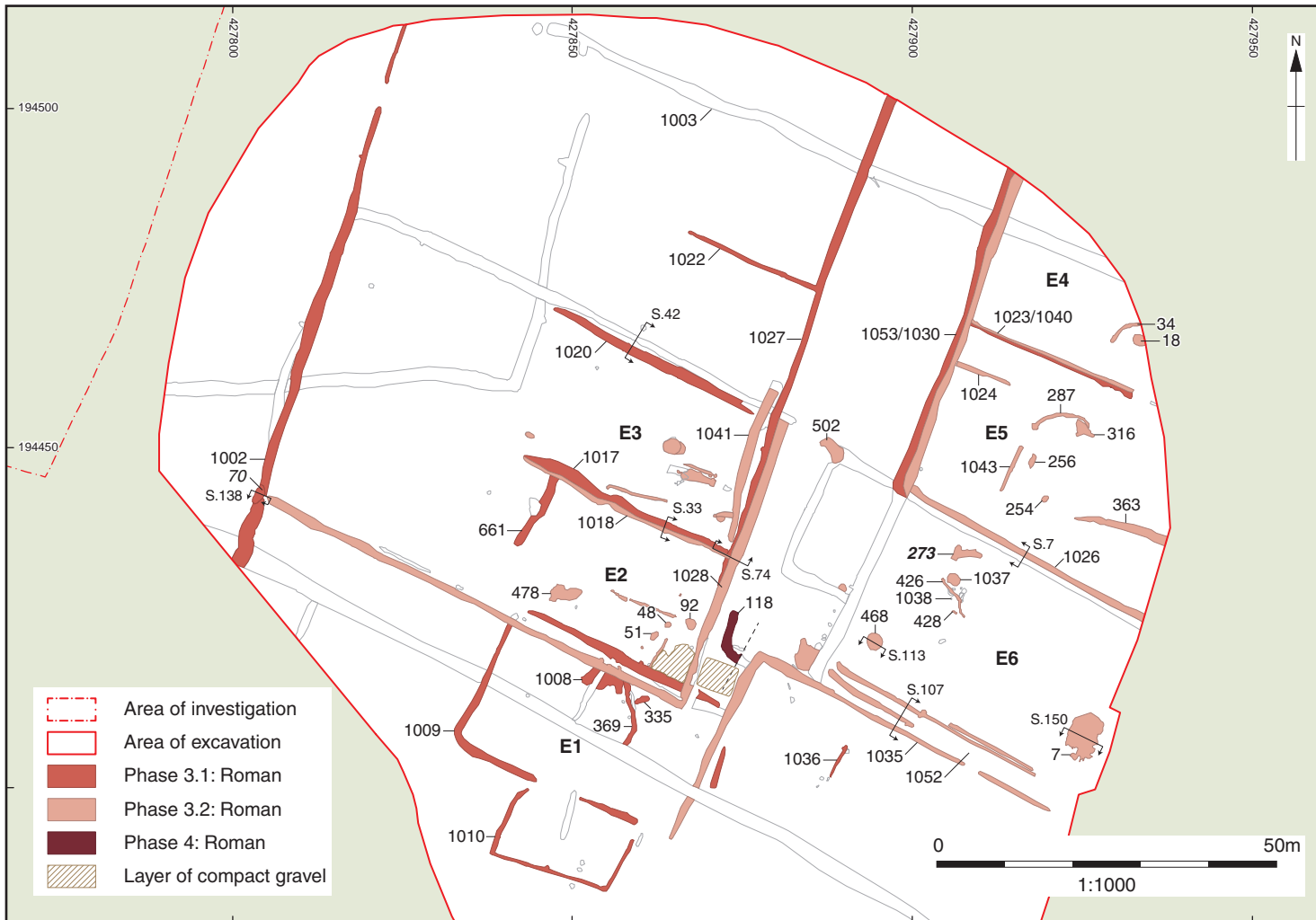


Figure 5: Phase 3 and 4 features

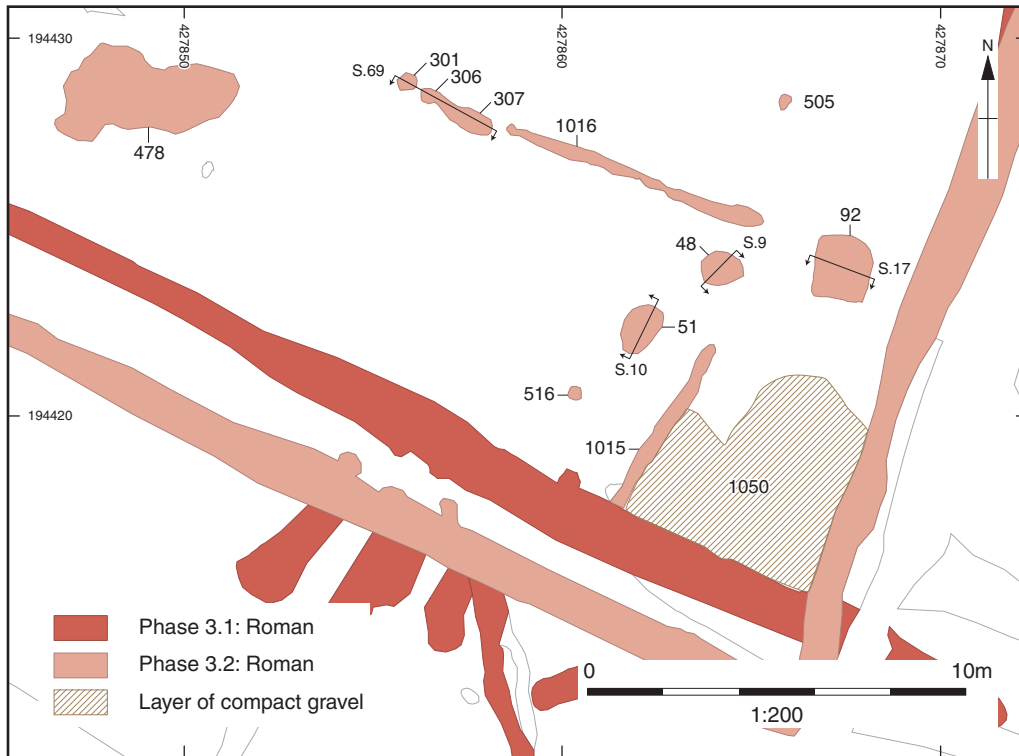


Figure 6: Enclosure 2

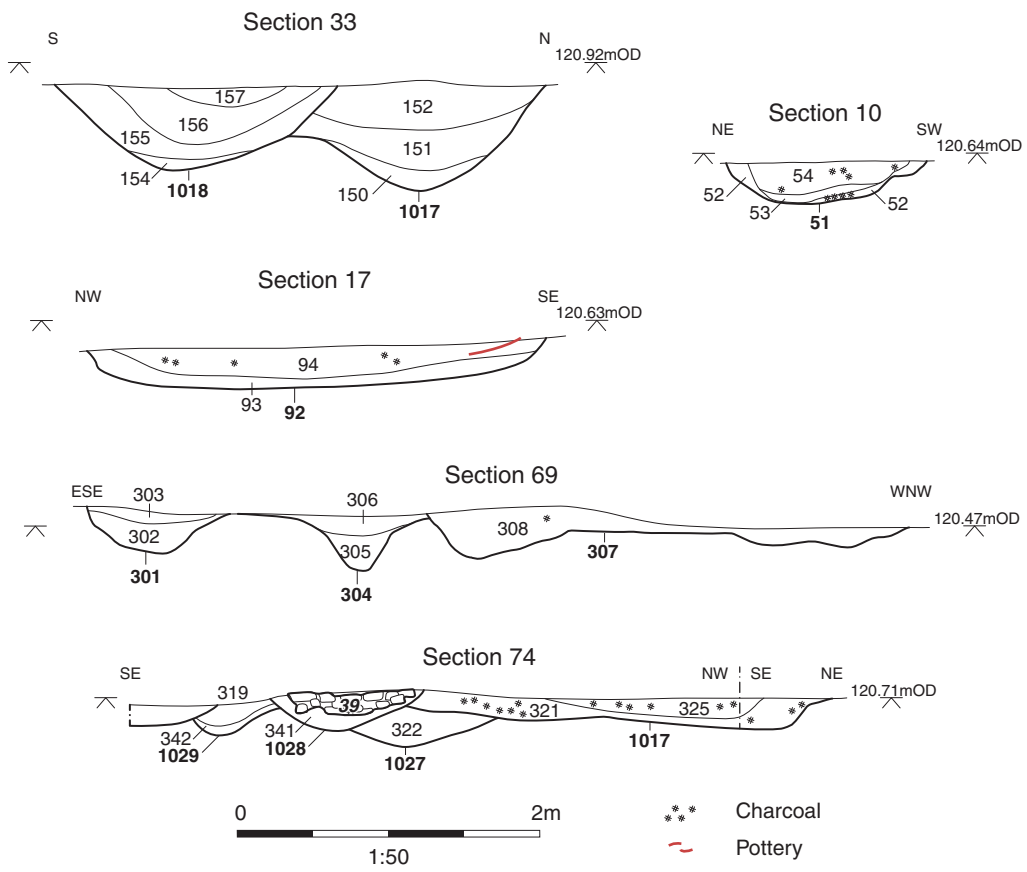


Figure 7: Enclosure 2 sections

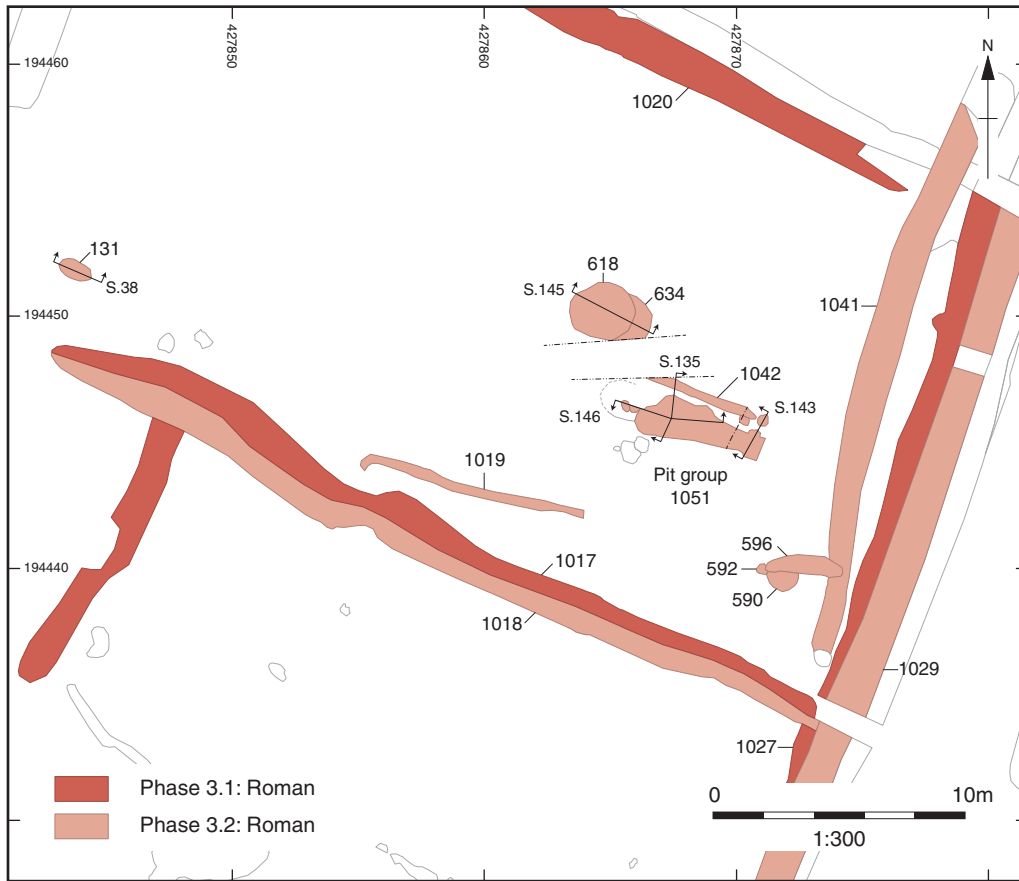


Figure 8: Enclosure 3

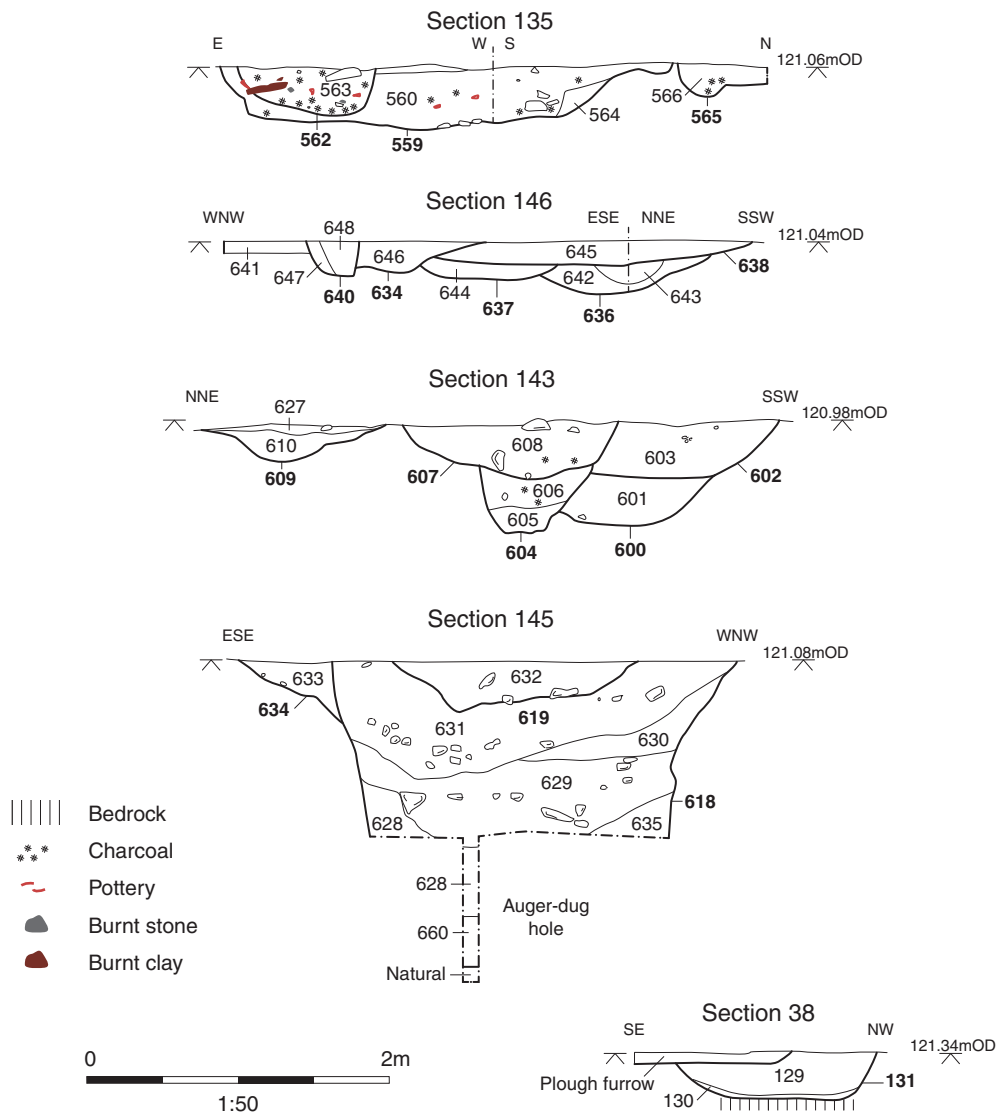


Figure 9: Enclosure 3 sections

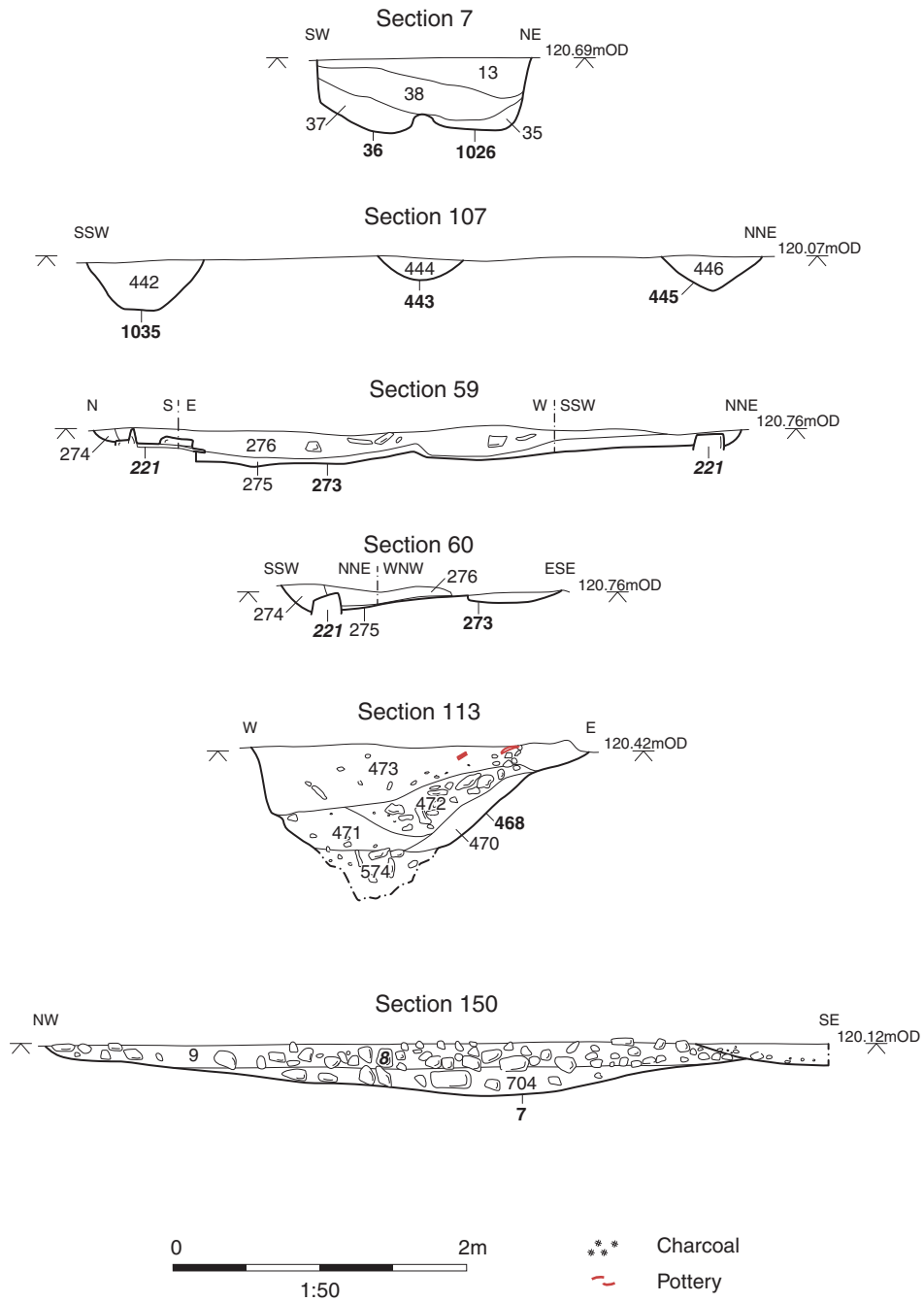


Figure 10: Enclosure 6 sections



Figure 11: Corn-dryer 273

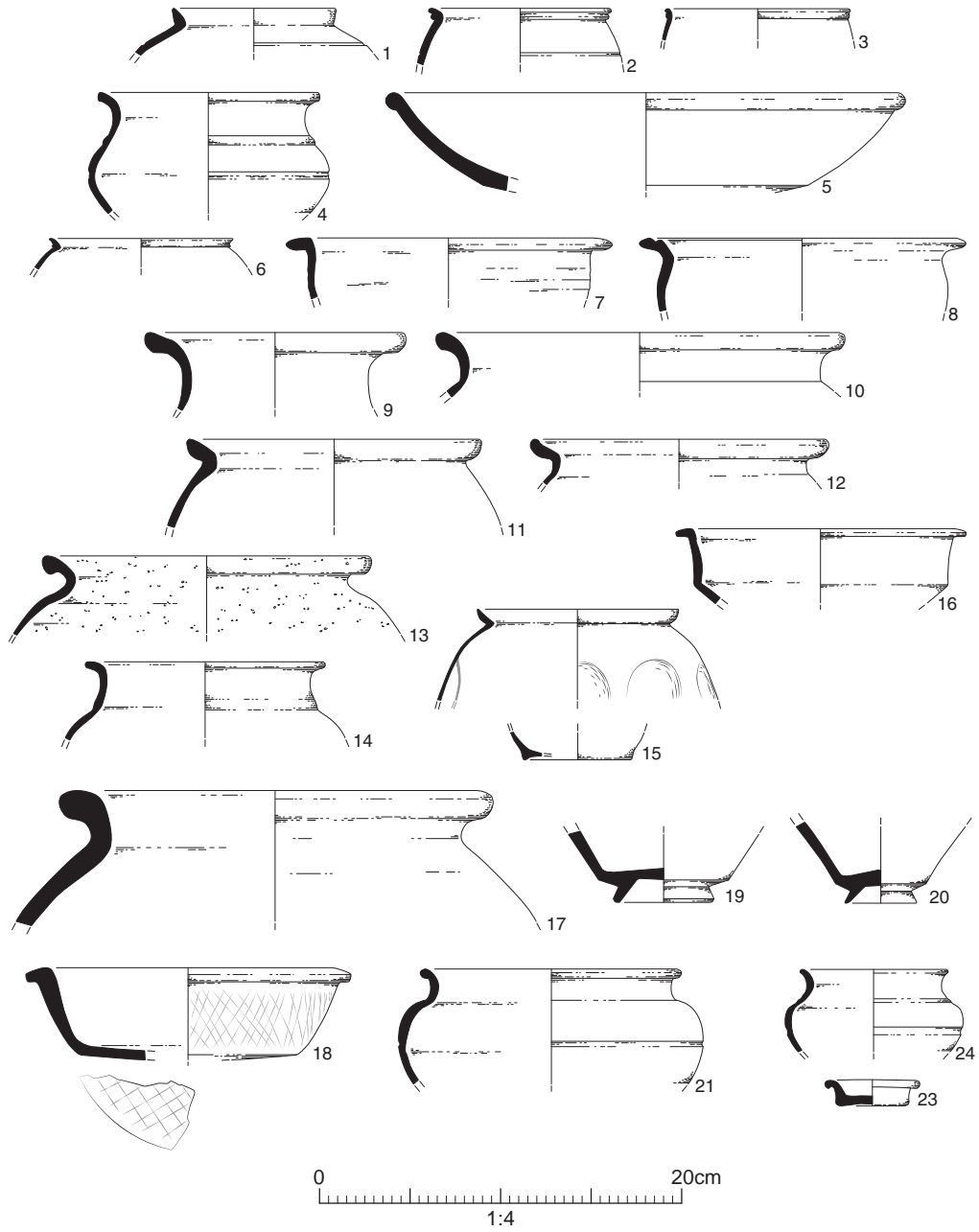


Figure 12: Roman pottery 1-24

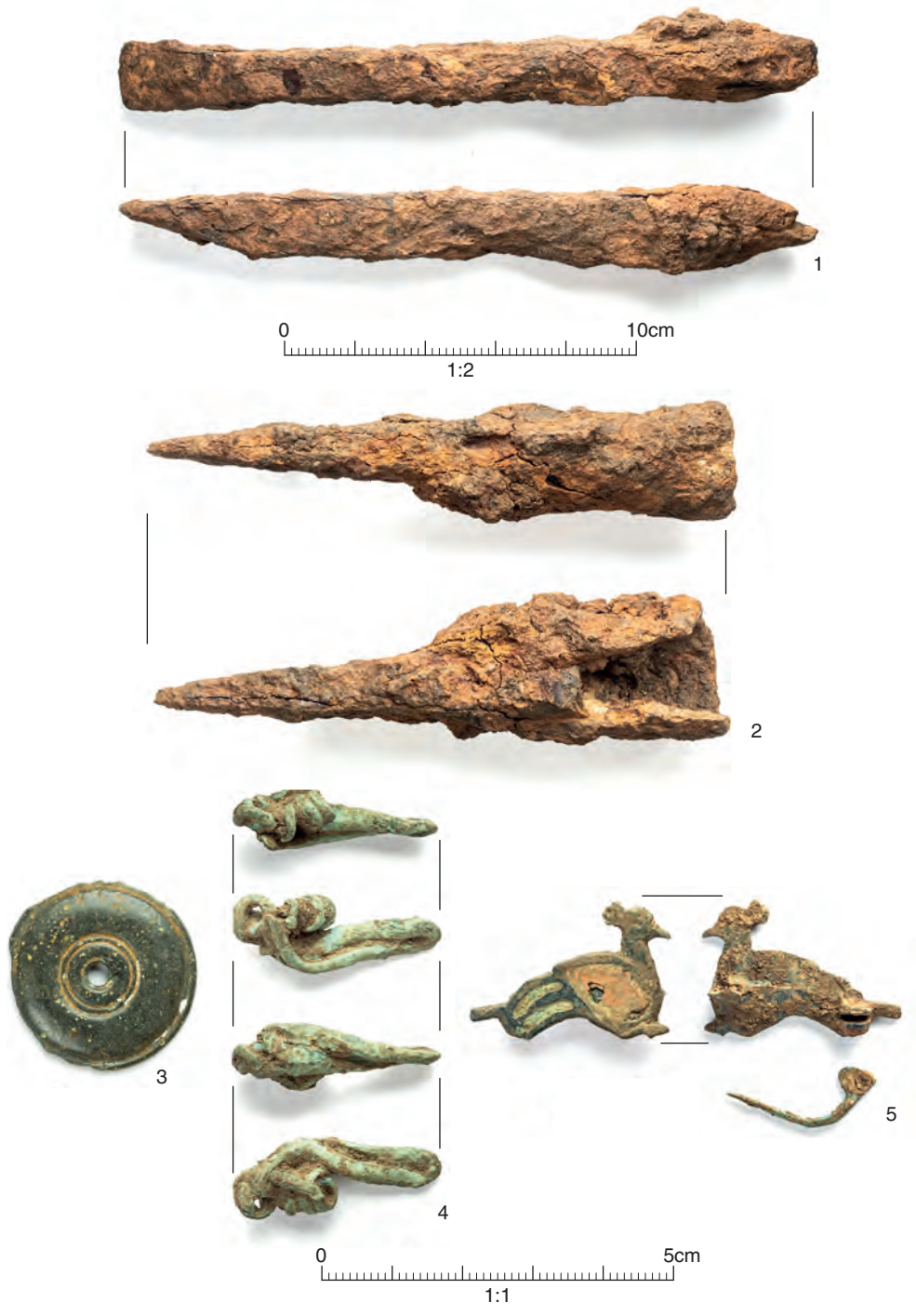


Figure 13: Small finds



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