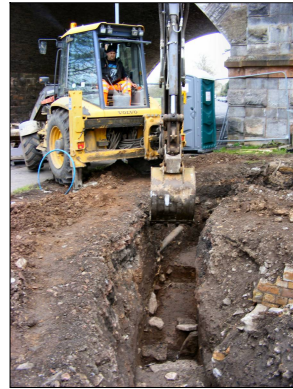


Archaeological Watching Brief on the site of the former Public Conveniences, Sea Mills Lane, Sea Mills, Bristol

NGR ST 55067 75911

Bristol Historic Environment Record BHER 24970

Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery Accession BRSMG 2011/8



on behalf of
Antony Wild

Donna EY Young MA

Avon Archaeological Unit Limited

Bristol: April 2011

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PROJECT HEALTH & SAFETY STATEMENT

In all matters pertaining to this fieldwork project Health and Safety has taken priority over all archaeological matters.

All archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM 2002, *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology*) and also the relevant requirements set out in Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 1994 (Health & Safety Commission 1994).

NOTE

Whereas Avon Archaeological Unit Limited has taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

SUMMARY

The following report details the results of an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise (watching brief, BHER 24970) commissioned by the site owner and developer, Mr. Antony Wild, on land formerly occupied by public conveniences on Sea Mills Lane in Sea Mills, Bristol (centred at NGR ST 55067 75911, **figures 1 and 2**). The work, which aimed to identify and record all unforeseen significant archaeological deposits and finds revealed during the course of the groundwork, was undertaken by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited in March 2011, in order to comply with a Condition attached to planning consent (application number 10/03744/LC) for residential development on the site. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with legislation set out in Planning Policy Statement 5 (Communities and Local Government 2010, PPS5) and an approved Scheme of Work (AAU 2010) submitted to Bob Jones, City Archaeologist for Bristol City Council.

The site lies within an extensive zone of known archaeological remains of Romano-British date related to the important military garrison and port of *Abonae* established in the years following the Conquest in the 1st century AD, which subsequently developed into a long-lived civilian port and settlement after the military garrison was withdrawn. The recent history of the study site suggests that it had been unoccupied since at least the late 18th century, used as farmland until the erection of the former public conveniences in the latter half of the 20th century.

The construction groundworks involved the excavation of standard strip foundations for a single residential property to be erected on the site (**figure 3**). This work revealed significant archaeological evidence for at least three phases of Romano-British activity spanning the late 1st to 3rd centuries AD. The archaeological features and deposits were exposed at c. 7.8m aOD, buried some 1.2m below the modern ground surface. The activity represented involved the cutting of scattered pits and the construction during the late 1st/early 2nd centuries of a drystone masonry building located just inside an enclosure defined with a ditch and bank. Subsequently, the silted enclosure ditch was sealed with an accumulation of soil that butted the lower reaches of the bank and building, suggesting the two may still have been in use at that time (**figures 3 and 4**). The enclosure and building were finally abandoned later in the 2nd century, when the landscape was reorganised and a new field or enclosure partly defined by a recut ditch was laid out on a differing alignment (**figures 3 and 4**). This activity appeared short-lived however, as pottery dating to the 2nd century was also recovered from the soil layer that accumulated over the infilled boundary ditch. The site appears to have been all but abandoned thereafter, the accumulation of a deep sequence of ploughsoils indicating a prolonged period of diminished activity that extended through the medieval and post-medieval periods, the only interruption in this sequence being the isolated burial of a human cremation in a Black Burnished ware jar during the 3rd century AD (**figures 3 and 4**).

The limited exposure of identified archaeological features and deposits and the small quantity and restricted range of associated finds has inhibited any detailed understanding and interpretation of the activities represented on the site. Despite the date range of the Romano-British pottery retrieved, spanning the 1st to 3rd centuries, stratigraphic analysis of the physical remains suggests that the 1st century pottery, mainly Samian wares, is likely to be residual in context and that the activity recorded, save for the later, 3rd century cremation burial, took place during the 2nd century AD. Samian pottery often appears in later contexts on Romano-British sites suggesting that it was curated over long periods, possibly as family heirlooms, or perhaps as special vessels only used for specific purposes or occasions. This 2nd century dating indicates that the structures and deposits recorded post-date the military origins of Sea Mills and are more likely to relate to its subsequent development as an important civilian port and town.

In conclusion, the watching brief at Sea Mills Lane has produced significant new archaeological evidence for human activity within the development footprint during the Romano-British period and adds to the growing corpus of data for the 2nd century development of the civilian settlement at Sea Mills after the military garrison became redundant.

INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief on land at Sea Mills Lane in Sea Mills, Bristol, centred at NGR ST 55067 75911 (**figures 1 and 2**). The development footprint consisted of an approximately semicircular area of land on the southeast corner of the junction, situated at the foot of one of the stanchions for the A4 Portway viaduct. The work, assigned Bristol Historic Environment Record Number BHER 24970, was required as a Condition attached to Planning Consent (reference number 10/03744/LC) and was undertaken by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited (AAU) in March 2011 on behalf of the site owner and developer, Mr. Antony Wild. The archaeological monitoring and recording exercise was carried out in order to preserve by record all unforeseen archaeological structures and deposits located during the development groundworks for the erection of a single residential property on the site (**figure 3**). The work was carried out in accordance with legislation set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (Communities and Local Government 2010, PPS5) and an approved Scheme of Work (AAU 2010) submitted to Bob Jones, the City Archaeologist for Bristol City Council.

The archaeological project was carried out in a manner consistent with the relevant guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (2)* and the standard procedures of the Unit (AAU). The project archive, which includes all site records, drawings and photographs, temporarily will be stored at the premises of Avon Archaeological Unit Limited before ultimately being lodged with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery for longterm curation and storage under the accession number BRSMG 2011/8.

METHODOLOGY

The former public conveniences were demolished and the site cleared prior to the excavation of standard strip foundations for the property at which time a slew-tracked mini-digger equipped with narrow toothless grading bucket was employed.

All archaeological and non-archaeological features and deposits were recorded on standard Avon Archaeological Unit Limited context-based record sheets with scaled plans and section drawings made as appropriate. Photographs were taken using digital format. Artefacts and ecofacts recovered were washed and marked with a unique identifier before being submitted for specialist assessment, if required. Archaeological features and deposits were related to a nearby Ordnance Survey spot height on a manhole at the junction of Glenavon Park and Roman Way (26.20m aOD) and located on the National Grid at an appropriate scale, as required.

All records, drawings and photographs have been prepared as a standard Archive according to English Heritage MAP2 standards (1991) and will be lodged with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the accession number BRSMG 2011/8 upon completion of the project.

GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDUSE

The underlying geology of the site (maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer) consists of marginal facies conglomerate of the Mercia Mudstone group overlain with superficial tidal flats deposits of clay and silt.

The topography of the site is essentially level at c. 9.0m aOD and is situated close to the southern bank of the River Trym.

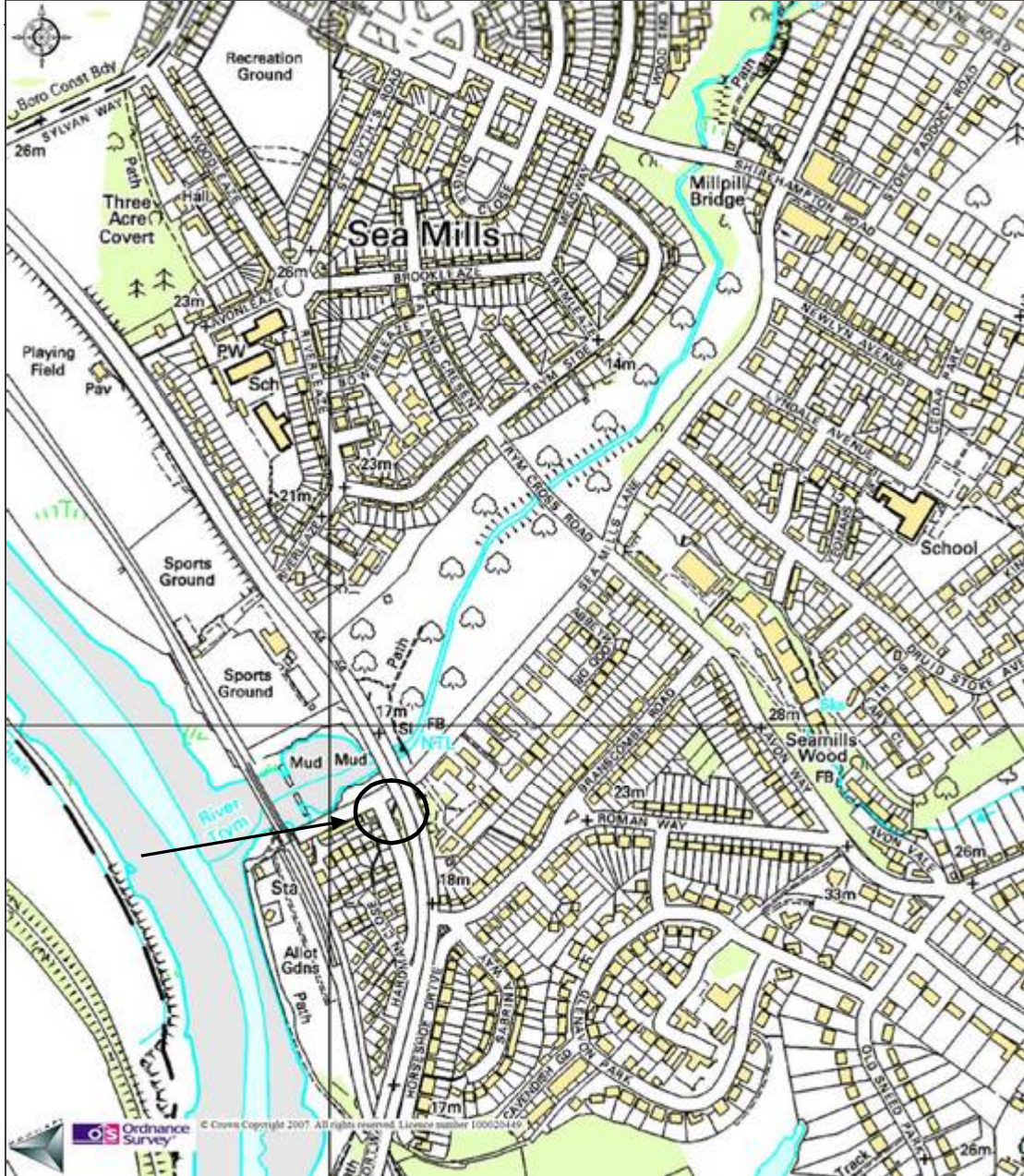
Prior to development, the site had been occupied by a block of public conveniences set in an area of grass, since demolished.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Sea Mills Lane lies on the northern boundary (defined by the River Trym) of the parish of Westbury-on-Trym and was part of the *Manor of Huesbury* (Westbury) held at Domesday (AD 1086) by the Bishop of Worcester. At the time of writing, Atkyns (1712) and Rudder (1779) listed Sea Mills as a tithing within Stoke Bishop, but still part of the larger manor and parish of Westbury, where it remains to the present.

Figure 1

Site Location



ST76N

Scale 1:7500

ST55E

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Figure 2

Boundary of the Development Footprint
outlined in **red**



Scale 1:1250

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No site-specific desk-based archaeological or historical research has been carried out, however reference to extracts from a series of historical maps reproduced as part of a desk-based assessment undertaken some years before for land at nearby Hadrian Close (Erskine 2002, figs.3-6) revealed the current site was unoccupied between the later 18th and mid-20th centuries. The Sea Mills area largely was farmland until the development of Sea Mills Dock in 1712 and contemporary navigation improvement works on the adjoining River Avon. The dock was short-lived however, recorded as in a ruinous state by 1766. An estate plan draughted in 1771 reveals the current site located within a large field, *Dock Field*, part of the landholdings of one Edward Southwell Esquire, who later became Lord de Clifford. The 1841 tithe survey showed this field remained unchanged in all but name, the apportionment listing it as the *Close above Sea Mills* owned by one Philip John Miles, a Bristol banker and businessman. By the time the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan of the area was compiled in 1886, the field had been amalgamated with the adjoining plot to the southeast, but again remained unoccupied save for the construction (in 1865) of the Great Western and Midland Joint Railway, formerly the Bristol Port and Pier Railway, in the west. A series of Ordnance Survey plans of the area viewed online at old-maps.co.uk-index.html revealed that the field remained the same on the 2nd edition OS plan dated to 1917 and on the subsequent 1921 plan of the area. This plan showed that the A4 Portway had not yet been constructed (construction commenced the following year), whilst the following plan in the sequence, dating to 1936, revealed the viaduct for the carriageway had been completed to the east by that time. The 1938 plan showed that several properties had been constructed on the river frontage along Sea Mills Lane to the east of the Portway, but that no building had yet taken place to the west on the sloping land between the road and railway. This situation had changed markedly by 1955, at which time the area had been entirely infilled with housing, including several post-war prefabricated bungalows erected on Hadrian Close in 1946. The subsequent plans revealed little change in the general area thereafter and that the public conveniences were erected on the current site at some time between 1961 and 1974.

Significant archaeological remains of Romano-British date were discovered at Sea Mills during the construction in the mid-19th century of the railway line and associated station and signal buildings. These discoveries were of sufficient importance to be recorded on the 1st edition OS plan (1886), where several fields in the area to the east of the railway line and including the current site are designated as *Site of Roman Camp*. The Romano-British port and settlement revealed was identified as the likely location of *Abonae*, a military garrison and later civilian settlement established in the 1st century AD at the terminus/junction of a number of roads linking important Roman settlements in the area, including Bath (*Aquae Sulis*, Margary 1973, road 54) and Gloucester (*Glevum*, Margary 1973, road 541). Subsequent development during the 20th century in the locale has allowed for further discoveries associated with the Roman settlement, the results of which indicate that *Abonae* occupied an area of about half a square kilometre south of the river and towards Sneyd Park. Early excavations were undertaken in 1911-1913 with subsequent works in the 1920s and 1930s (Ellis 1987), whilst monitoring of the construction of the post-War prefabricated houses on Hadrian Close revealed several Roman buildings and associated occupation deposits at No. 32 (Ellis *ibid*). A series of excavations in the 1960s, at Abon House (1965-66), Nazareth House (1965-68), Nos. 5 and 28 Hadrian Close (1965), 87 Sea Mills Lane (1967) and 51 Roman Way (1968) revealed some 4th century burials and multi-phase Roman buildings and roads that span the history of Sea Mills from its 1st century military origins to the 4th century civilian town and port (HER *passim*). Further structures and deposits were recorded during evaluation in 2005 by Cotswold Archaeology and excavation in 2006 by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services at No. 31 Hadrian Close, although monitoring of the demolition of the shallow concrete raft foundations for several of the other prefabricated buildings on the street during 2006/7 produced few results (Foundations Archaeology 2007). This contrasted with the results of an evaluation in 2006 at the southern end of Hadrian Close where significant evidence of 1st and early 2nd century activity survived. Subsequent evaluation in 2008/9 on land at the northern end of Hadrian Close provided further evidence of Romano-British occupation with structures located at two foci, one each to either side of an east to west orientated road, as well as areas of fields or enclosures defined by ditches and cut by dispersed pits. The majority of the activity recorded dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries, although once again some 4th century burials were also identified (Foundations Archaeology 2009). Such is the interest in the Roman settlement at Sea Mills that investigations in the vicinity are still ongoing to the present day; members of the local archaeological society, the Sea Mills Community Archaeology Project, were undertaking excavations within the allotment gardens to the west of the railway line when the current project was undertaken on Sea Mills Lane.

SITE OBSERVATIONS

Excavation of the Foundation Trenches

Significant archaeological structures and deposits were exposed at depths in excess of 1m below the modern ground surface in each of the four conjoining foundation trenches (Trenches A, B, C and D, **figure 3**) for a single residential building opened by machine within the development footprint. The archaeological stratigraphy was cleaned and recorded by hand and largely preserved in-situ thereafter, covered with porous membrane in the base of the foundation trenches. Only those deposits exposed over a 4.1m length in the northeast of Trench D could not be preserved and were excavated by hand prior to the machine excavation of a 2.5m deep foundation cutting at that location.

The modern ground surface was defined throughout the development footprint by made ground of variable thickness (layer 100, depth 190mm - 430mm) consisting of some rubble and other modern detritus in a matrix of mixed and redeposited clays and silty clays. In Trench A, this deposit was cut to the east by the service trench (F102) for a live electricity cable that formerly provided power to the public conveniences adopted for the current development. The sequence of deposits underlying made ground 100 was distinctly different in Trench A to those recorded in the remaining foundation trenches (B-D). Here, the made ground directly sealed the infilled service trench (F131) for a water pipe that cut a thin horizon of crushed mortar and weathered stone (101), possibly the remnant of a bedding layer for a former surface since removed. Layer 101 had been deposited over buried soil 103, some 160mm thickness of humic black garden soil, which, in turn, sealed further crushed mortar lumps and nodules (114) that formed a discrete deposit on the surface of the underlying soil horizon (111/115). This is in contrast to the simple stratigraphic sequence recorded in Trenches B, C and D, where made ground 100 overlay a well-sorted former clayey silt ploughsoil (130) of variable thickness. The ploughsoil had an uneven lower profile defined by small pebbles at the interface with the underlying layer (111/115) and was also cut by service trenches F102 and F131, as well as by a modern gas service trench (F134) in the southwest. Layer 111/115 was revealed at the base of the stratigraphic sequence in all four foundation trenches and consisted of a deep horizon (400mm - 650mm) of homogeneous dark brown silty clay sporadically flecked with charcoal and containing a few random pebbles and coarse grits. Horizon 111/115 immediately sealed significant archaeological features and deposits and probably represented a gradual accumulation of soil over a prolonged period.

Significant Archaeological Features and Deposits Recorded

The earliest evidence for archaeological activity was revealed in the extreme southwest of the development footprint at the junction of Trenches C and D some 1.64m below the modern ground surface (c. 7.1m aOD, **plate 1**). Here, part of a possible stone surface (F119) declined gently to the southeast below layer 118. This layer (118) consisted of some 180mm of charcoal-flecked, mottled silty clay that extended over the southern half of the development footprint, where it was truncated by two cut features, F117, a ?circular pit edged with large pitched stones (Trench D), and F120, a partially-defined squared feature filled with mixed silty clay and redeposited clay lumps (Trench B, **figure 3**) that yielded a fragment of 1st century Samian pottery and some animal bone. The full extent and/or relationship of layer 118 with features and deposits located over the northern half of the development footprint was not determined, as this was obscured by spoil remaining in unsafe areas of the trenches.

Deposit 125, a probable occupation horizon recorded in the north of Trench B, was similar in composition to layer 118, but was revealed at shallower depth (7.43m aOD) and contained sporadic medium rubble, unlike the latter. Horizon 125 was cut by the construction trench for a drystone masonry wall (F107, **plates 2 and 3**) with fair face and rubble core composed of mixed limestone and sandstone that crossed the junction of Trenches A and B on an approximate north to south orientation. It (125) had also been disturbed when a ditch and associated bank were established nearby and, somewhat later, by a human cremation (F106,



Plate 1. Trench D pit F117 lined with pitched stones and adjacent stone surface F119 exposed in the junction with Trench C, viewed from the northeast, scale 2m

Cremation 1) with trumpet brooch (SF200, **plate 6**) contained in a 3rd century Black Burnished ware jar that had been interred closely adjacent to the wall (**figures 3 and 4**).

Ditch F105 was opened some 1.2m to the south of, and parallel with wall F107, the upcast from the ditch forming a broad low bank (F104, **plate 3**) on its southern side. The ditch was not excavated, but several sherds of 1st and 2nd century pottery, including two amphora fragments, were recovered from the surface of its charcoal-flecked silty fill during hand cleaning of the feature. No finds were recovered from the adjacent bank material (104), mixed silty clay soil and rubble.

The continuation of the bank to the north was recorded in Trench D, where the upper surface of a low mound of the same mixed soil and rubble (F108/110, **plate 4**) was defined by an intermittent, thin lens of desiccated pale brown clay and grits (124). Here, the bank deposits yielded several sherds of pottery dating to the early 2nd century, alongside animal bone, some butchered, oyster shell and a fragment of small copper alloy rod (SF201), possibly part of a balance or pin. Underlying the bank was a thin deposit of similar, but grittier soil (121), probably also part of the bank makeup, which in turn sealed layer 122, redeposited stiff

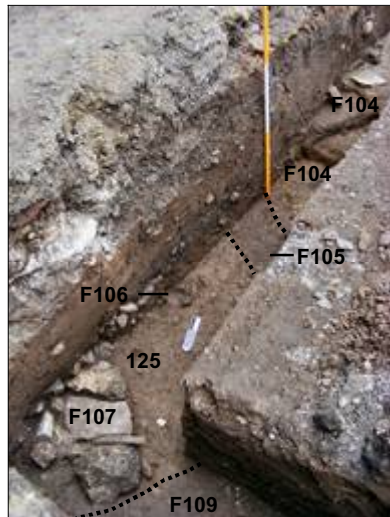


Plate 3. Trench B ditch F105 and associated upcast bank material F104, viewed from the north, scale 1.5m

reddish grey clay that produced a single, residual 1st century Samian pottery sherd. The continuation to the north of Ditch F105, which on its projected route would have been revealed in Trench A, was not observed, as it appeared to have been entirely destroyed by later ditches F109 and F127 (below).

An extensive reddish grey silty clay soil layer (deposits 129 and 123 in Trenches B and D respectively, **figures 3 and 4**) some 110mm - 250mm thick accumulated against the north face of the bank after the ditch had been infilled. Deposit 129 subsequently was cut by a small pit (F128, **figure 4**) of indeterminate function dating to the 2nd century and both deposits were truncated by intercutting ditches 109 and 127 recorded in Trench A (**figures 3 and 4, plates 3 and 4**). The northeast to southwest orientation of these ditches indicated a distinct change in the landuse pattern of the area from the earlier north-south trend, although the dating to the 2nd century of the pottery retrieved from the later of the two, ditch F109, suggests both phases of activity are close in overall date. Ditch F109 also entirely destroyed the northern extent of the earlier wall (F107) sited at the junction of

Trenches A and B. Both the wall and ditches were sealed thereafter by layer 116/126 (**figure 4**), which had been deposited against the north face of the bank, levelling the ground surface at this location.

The final archaeological feature recorded was the partly destroyed remains of a stone-built culvert (F133, **plate 5**) located to the immediate south of, and very likely truncating, the bank (F108/110) in Trench D. The northern side of the culvert was defined by large edge-on limestone rubble slabs with further associated displaced stones (112) lying nearby, some smaller stones being used to define the opposing southern side. The culvert channel was largely filled with mixed silty clay and rubble fill 113, which sealed the primary silts (132) accumulated over the stone floor of the structure. Finds retrieved from the culvert fills

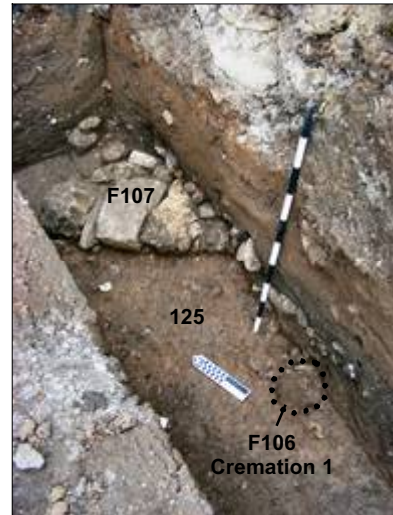


Plate 2. Trench B human cremation F106, Cremation 1 interred alongside drystone wall F107, viewed from the west, scale 1m

entirely destroyed the northern extent of the earlier wall (F107) sited at the junction of



Plate 4. Trench D bank makeup F108/110, 121 and 122, viewed from the northeast

included animal bone and fragments of technological residue from secondary deposit 113 and further animal bone, 1st and 2nd century pottery sherds and an iron nail (SF202) from silts 132.

Trench D - Northern End

A deep cutting some 4.1m in length was machine-excavated by JCB with a narrow toothed bucket to a maximum depth of 2.5m (c. 6.3m aOD) below the modern ground surface after the investigation and recording of all archaeologically significant features and deposits exposed at shallower depth at that location (**figure 3, plates 4, 5 and cover plate right**). The cutting revealed the combined bank deposits (F108/110, 121 and 122) were c. 600mm thick and that the bank overlay a thick horizon of yellowish brown silty clay (135) with no obvious finds or inclusions save for a few random large stones. This layer in turn sealed a paler deposit of similar silty clay (136) revealed in the base of the cutting. No true alluvial deposits were exposed.



Plate 5. Trench D stone lined base and remnants of edge-on stones defining northern side of culvert F133 truncating southern side of bank makeup F108/110, viewed from the west, scale 500mm x 500mm

THE FINDS

Romano-British Pottery

by Dr Jane Timby

Introduction

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 129 sherds of pottery (weighing 1617.5g) and six pieces of ceramic building material dating to the Roman period. The assemblage is of mixed condition with some larger well-preserved sherds and some smaller more abraded pieces. The overall average sherd weight is 12.5g. Pottery was recorded from 12 individual contexts with 23 sherds from unstratified collection. The assemblage was scanned to determine the main fabrics present and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarised in **table 1**.

Description of assemblage

The assemblage comprises a mixture of imported continental finewares, regional imports, native handmade wares and local coarsewares.

Most of the group appears to belong to a single phase of occupation dating from the 1st century into the early-mid 2nd century AD. A single vessel from (106) used as a cremation container is probably 3rd century in date.

Nine sherds of Samian are present with both South (La Graufesenque) and Central Gaulish (Lezoux and Les Martres de Veyre) pieces. Forms include two small, decorated sherds from a bowl Dragendorff 30 and dishes in Dragendorff 18 and 31. The proportion of Samian in such a small group is quite high accounting for 7% of the assemblage by count, but is quite usual for Sea Mills, reflecting the status of the site.

Other continental imports are limited to three sherd of Baetican amphora imported from Southern Spain. Two form shapes are probably present; the globular Dressel 20 used for transporting olive oil for cooking and lighting and the slimmer Haltern 70 used for transporting *de frutum* and perhaps other commodities.

Two sherds of 'native' handmade ware are present, both from context (118) in a calcite-tempered ware probably from the Mendips, although pre-Roman tradition wares continue to feature up to the later 1st century AD.

Regional imports include sherds of black burnished ware from Poole Harbour, Dorset and the south-west from probably around Exeter, Devon. In total 59 sherds are present but 52 of these are from a single jar with a just oblique burnished lattice from (106) used as a cremation container. The other

seven sherds are from jars with acute lattice and a flat-rim bowl suggesting a late 1st or 2nd century date.

Local oxidised and reduced wares make up the rest of the assemblage and include sherds of Severn Valley ware, South-West oxidised ware and various grey or black sandy wares.

Ceramic building material

Six fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered with examples of both *tegulae* and *imbrices* used for roofing. A fragment of a probable *tegula* (two joining pieces) from unstratified collection is quite narrow with a measurable width of 158 mm.

Comments

Sea Mills is a well-known Roman site, which has seen a large number of interventions over the years. Originally the location of a military fort, the site developed as an important port with occupation spanning the entire Roman period.

Whilst some previous work at Sea Mills has produced assemblages spanning the entire Roman period, for example, Abon House and Sea Mills Lane (Ellis 1987) and Nazareth House (Bennett 1985), other more recent interventions have produced groups of more specific date suggesting some patterning or differential development across the area.

Potential and further work

The assemblage is typical of that to be expected from Sea Mills. Although it is of some interest in terms of the location, the assemblage is very small and as a group does not merit detailed publication.

Context	Sam	amp	BB1	SVW	Other	No	Wt	Date	CBM no	CBM wt
105	0	2	0	0	4	6	106	C1/C2	0	0
106	0	0	52	0	0	52	469	C3	0	0
108	1	1	0	0	4	6	348.5	eC2	2	121
109	1	0	0	0	2	3	42	C2	0	0
111	0	0	1	1	2	4	61	late C1-C2	0	0
118	0	0	0	2	6	8	204	C2	0	0
120	1	0	0	0	0	1	29	C1	1	195
122	0	0	0	0	1	1	18	Roman	0	0
123	0	0	0	0	1	1	29	Roman	0	0
126	0	0	0	1	2	3	19	C1/C2	0	0
128	0	0	1	1	0	2	7	C2	0	0
132	4	0	0	0	9	13	81	C1	0	0
108/132	0	0	1	1	4	6	77	C2	1	73
U/S	2	0	4	0	17	23	127	C2	2	801
TOTAL	9	3	59	6	52	129	1617.5		6	1190

Table 1. Quantification and dating of the Romano-British pottery assemblage by context

Other Finds

by Sarah News

Small collections of other find types, described below, were collected during the watching brief. The collections included three metal small finds, some animal bone and a handful of miscellaneous objects, too few in number to warrant further specialist analyses.

Three metal small finds, comprising two copper alloy objects and a small iron nail, were retrieved from deposits dating to the Romano-British period (**table 2**).

A Roman trumpet brooch fragment, SF200 (**plate 6**), was retrieved from the Romano-British cremation (F106, Cremation 1). The brooch is in a heavily corroded and fragmentary condition, but retains part of the original ribbed bow, a chain loop, circular head with corroded spring, axis bar and "safety loop". Corrosion around the head suggests that one or more elements of the hinge mechanism may have been composed of iron.

Standard trumpet brooches first appeared in the northern military area of Britain in the late 1st century AD, but variants are also found in the civilian south (Butcher 2004). Brooch moulds for this type of brooch have been found in the Mendip lead mining area (*ibid*).

The presence of the chain loop suggests that the brooch would have originally been worn as one of a pair, with an interconnecting chain running across the chest (Mills 2000, 41). A similar example, with moulded decoration on the bow, was retrieved during excavations at Nazareth House, Sea Mills, in 1972 (Bennett 1985, 29, 30). The present example and that found at Nazareth House display an additional wire head or “safety loop”, designed to rotate with the spring (*ibid*). Bennett suggests a date range of between c. 64-70 AD and the mid-2nd century AD for this type of brooch (*ibid*). It is uncertain whether the brooch formed part of the cremation, or was placed with the remains during subsequent burial.

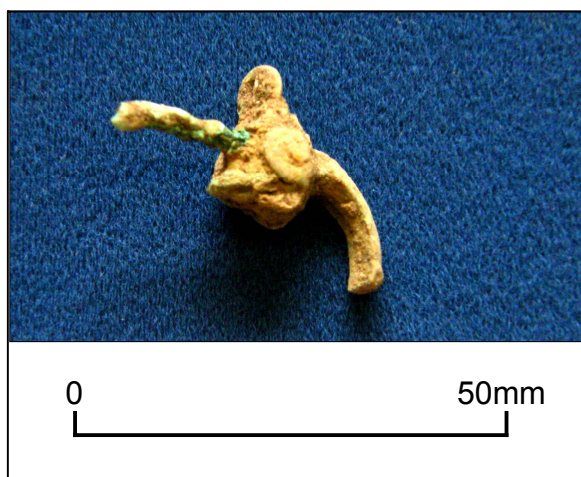


Plate 6. SF200 Romano-British trumpet brooch fragment recovered from F106, Cremation 1

The second copper alloy object, SF201, was retrieved from deposit 108, bank makeup in Trench D, and consists of a short length of fractured square-sectioned rod, with the possible terminal obscured by corrosion. The rod, which measures 29mm long by 3mm square, is too small a fragment to be identified or dated with certainty, but may have formed part of the shank of a square-sectioned pin or nail, or part of the arm of a small balance. Examples of both types of object have been recovered during earlier excavations at Sea Mills and have been dated to the Romano-British period (Ellis 1987, 49, 52).

The final small find, an iron nail, SF202, was retrieved from fill 132, the primary silts in culvert F133, and is 40mm in length. The shank is heavily corroded and covered with concretions and the head is flat and sub-circular.

Context	Quantity	Weight (g)	Description
106	1	6	Small Find 200: Copper alloy trumpet brooch fragment, with some possible iron corrosion. Pin fragmented and very fragile, head heavily corroded, chain loop visible. Surviving length (including pin): 35mm.
108	1	3	Small Find 201: Small fragment of copper alloy rod, square in section, slightly twisted longitudinally, fractured at one end, possible terminal obscured by corrosion. May be fragment of small balance or large pin. Dimensions: 29mm long by 3mm square in section.
202	1	5	Small Find 202: Medium sized iron nail, heavily corroded and concreted shank, circular flat head. Length: 40mm; diameter of head: 13-15mm.

Table 2. Catalogue of the small finds

A small assemblage of animal bone comprising 67 fragments and weighing a total of 1232g was retrieved (**table 3**). Approximately half of the assemblage was retrieved from deposits associated with the makeup of the Romano-British bank, ditch and adjacent culvert, deposits 108, 105, 132 and 113. A further nineteen fragments were retrieved, unstratified, and the remaining few were recovered from Romano-British occupation horizon 118, indeterminate cut F120 and deposit 111 overlying the bank. A significant proportion of the bone fragments are from animals of medium-large size. Nine of these fragments, notably the larger long bone fragments, show signs of butchery suggesting these derive from domesticates and five smaller fragments (including one tooth) have been burnt.

The very small number of miscellaneous finds comprised two shell fragments, a small water-washed pebble, a charcoal fragment, two flint chips and three fragments of metallic slag (**table 3**).

With the exception of the pebble and one shell fragment, which were unstratified, the remainder of the miscellaneous finds were retrieved from Romano-British deposits, including bank makeup F108/110 and 121, as well as the secondary culvert fill (113) and soil horizon 118.

Context	Quantity	Weight (g)	Description
100 (U/S)	1	1	1 shell fragment
100 (U/S)	1	22	1 water-washed pebble
100 (U/S)	19	329	4 burnt fragments (including one which is completely calcined); 4 rib fragments (including one with butchery marks); 1 near-complete long bone (large size); 10 miscellaneous bone fragments (including five long bone fragments).
105	2	13	1 calcined tooth fragment (large size) 1 unidentified bone fragment.
108	23	303	1 head of femur with butchery marks (large size); 1 rib fragment (small/medium size); 1 long bone fragment (probable bird); 20 miscellaneous fragments.
108	1	9	1 oyster shell fragment.
111	1	89	1 near-complete long bone (large/medium size).
113	7	138	5 long bone fragments (large/medium size), all with butchery marks; 2 miscellaneous fragments.
113	3	239	3 metallic slag fragments (one of tap slag, two vesicular).
118	6	244	1 head of femur with butchery marks (large size); 5 miscellaneous fragments.
118	1	>1	1 charcoal fragment.
120	3	30	1 fragment with butchery marks; 2 miscellaneous fragments.
121	2	1	2 unworked flint chips.
132	5	87	4 miscellaneous medium/large size bone fragments (including one with butchery marks); 1 tooth (small incisor).

Table 3. Catalogue of miscellaneous finds and animal bone

Figure 3

Location of Archaeological Features within Foundation Trenches A-D

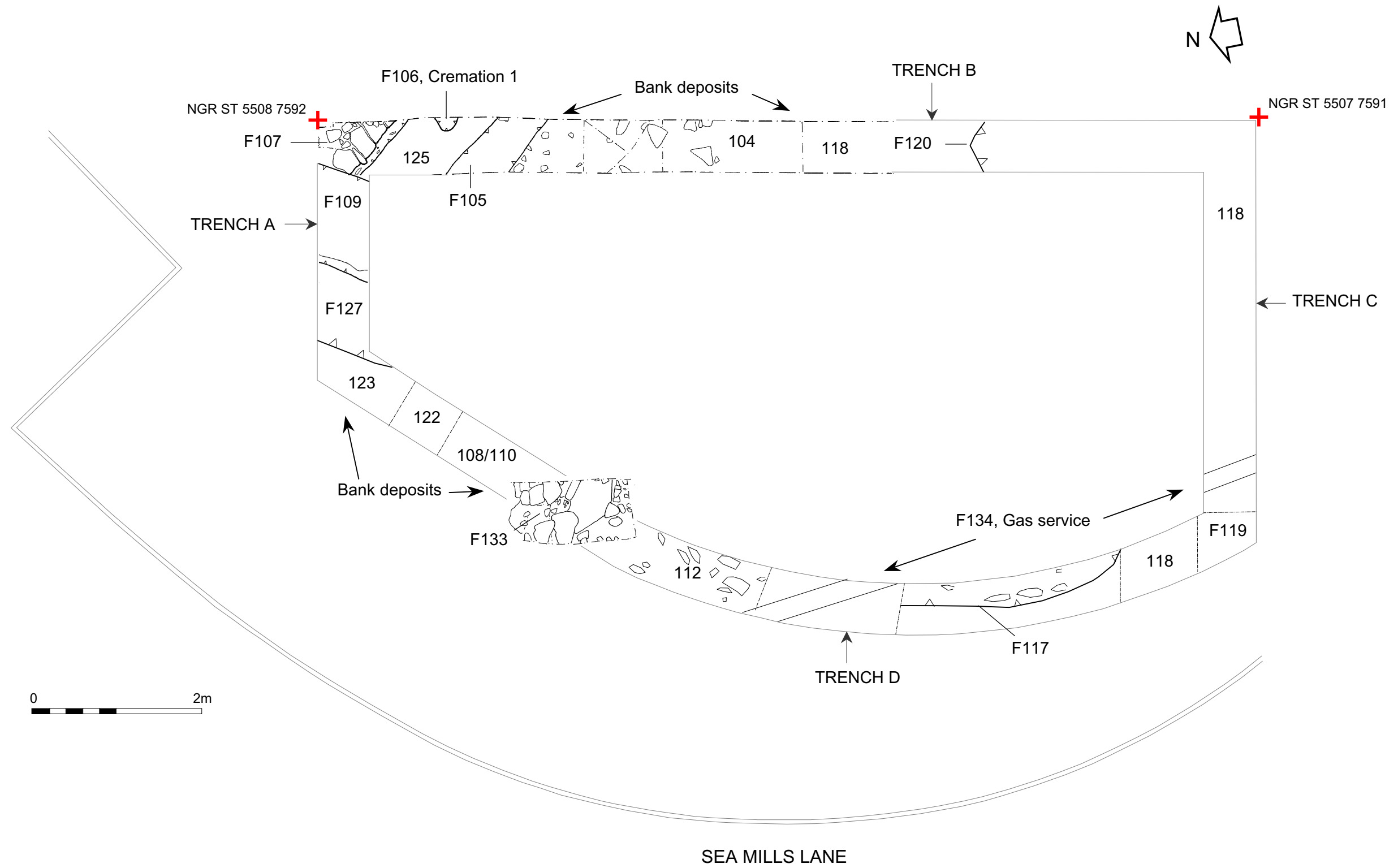
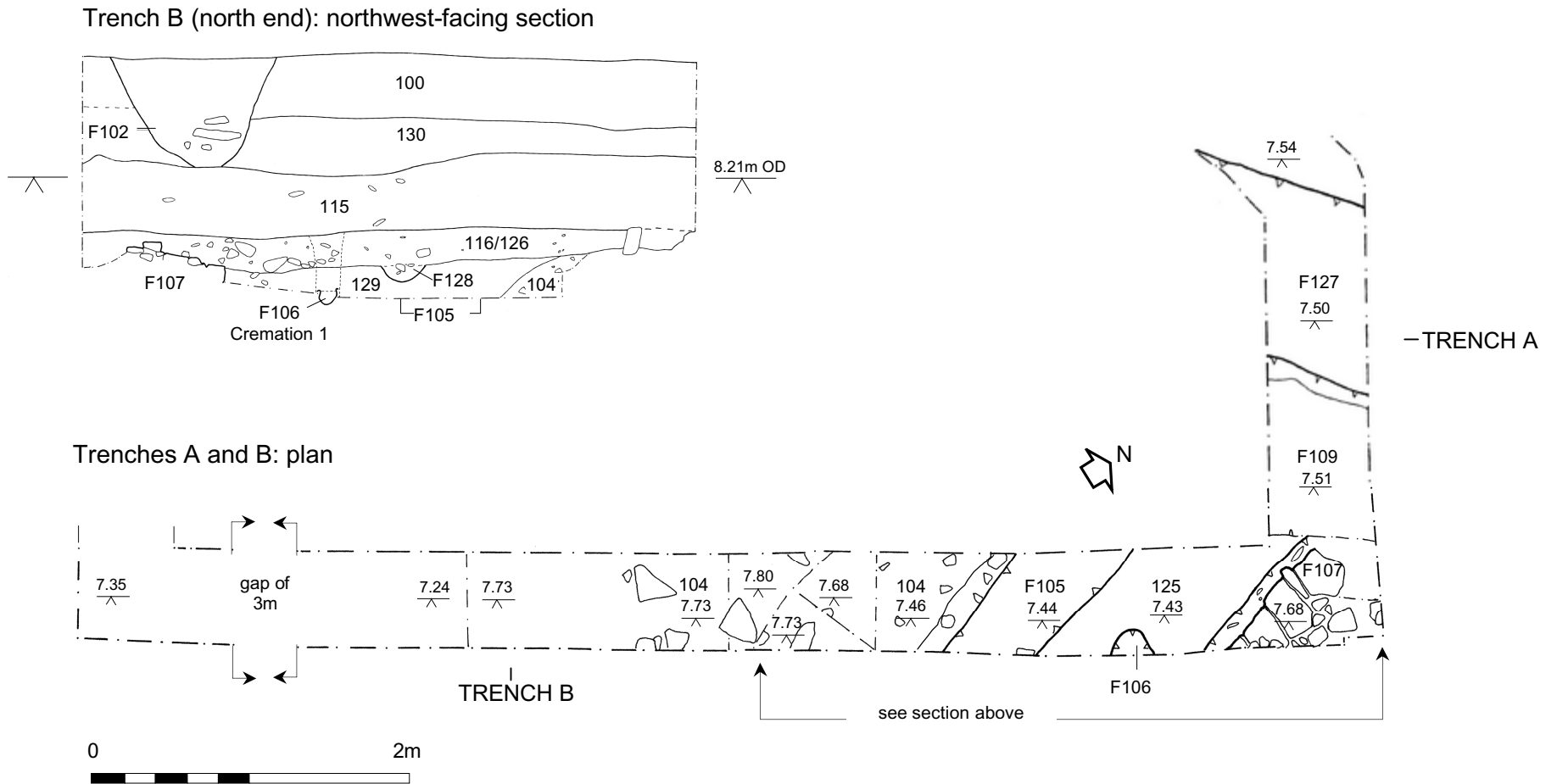


Figure 4

Trenches A and B: Archaeological Features and Deposits



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological monitoring and recording exercise (watching brief) has been carried out in accordance with a Planning Condition issued by Bristol City Council (application number 10/03744/LC) and a Scheme of Work compiled by Avon Archaeological Unit Limited (AAU 2010) approved by the City Archaeologist for the Local Planning Authority.

Historic plans, including early editions of the Ordnance Survey coverage for the area, reveal the development footprint was agricultural land in the late 18th century and remained unoccupied into the 20th century until the erection in the 1960s/1970s of the public conveniences that formerly occupied the site. Archaeological recording carried out during various development projects in the surrounding area, including the 19th century construction of the nearby railway line and station, has identified that the development footprint lies within an extensive zone of dense archaeological remains of Romano-British date associated with the port and military garrison of *Abonae*, reaching southwards from the River Trym to Sneyd Park.

The excavation of four conjoining foundation trenches for a single residential building (Trenches A-D) revealed significant archaeological features and deposits of Romano-British date spanning the 1st - 3rd centuries AD lying at c. 7.8m aOD at shallowest and buried some 1.2m below the modern ground surface.

At least three phases of archaeological activity have been recorded, two of which were close in date demonstrating possible continuous activity on the site from the late 1st and into the 2nd centuries. An initial phase was represented by the construction during the late 1st/early 2nd centuries of a possible enclosure defined by a bank and ditch recorded in Trenches B and D (**figures 3 and 4**). A related masonry structure, possibly a building, was erected on a parallel alignment in close proximity to the enclosure boundary, whilst a number of probable pits were opened on land to the south (**figure 3**). A possible change in the use of the enclosure was suggested by the accumulated soil layers that butted against the lower face of the bank and masonry wall, sealing the now infilled ditch (Trench B, **figure 4**). That the enclosure had been entirely abandoned later in the 2nd century was indicated by the truncation of these deposits and of the masonry foundations of the building during the second phase of activity, when the boundary of a new enclosure or field was laid out on a differing alignment. The change in alignment of this new boundary, defined by intercutting ditches recorded in Trench A (**figures 3 and 4**), pointed to a wider change in the organisation of the landscape at this time. A substantial stone-lined culvert was also constructed to the southwest, where it disturbed the earlier bank (**figure 3**), which survived as an extant shallow earthwork only. This phase of activity appeared relatively short-lived however, as further 2nd century pottery sherds were recovered from an extensive soil deposit that sealed the infilled boundary ditches and butted against the upper reaches of the earlier bank, levelling the land on its northern side. Thereafter, the post-Roman accumulation of deep horizons of plough soil over the site indicated it appeared to have entered a prolonged period of diminished activity, interrupted only by the interment during the 3rd century of a human cremation in a Black Burnished jar during the final Romano-British phase (**figures 3 and 4**). No archaeological evidence for subsequent occupation on the site prior to the modern period was recorded, suggesting it had been in use, at most, as farmland during the intervening medieval and post-medieval periods.

The limited exposure of the archaeological features and deposits recorded and the small quantity of finds recovered makes it difficult to determine the activities represented on the site with any certainty. Despite the date range of the Romano-British pottery retrieved, spanning the 1st to 3rd centuries, stratigraphic analysis of the physical remains suggests that the 1st century pottery, mainly Samian wares, is likely to be residual in context and that the activity recorded, save for the later, 3rd century cremation burial, took place during the 2nd century AD. Samian pottery often appears in later contexts on Romano-British sites suggesting that it was curated over long periods, possibly as family heirlooms, or perhaps as special vessels only used for specific purposes or occasions. This 2nd century dating indicates that the structures and deposits recorded post-date the military origins of Sea Mills and are more likely to relate to its subsequent development as an important civilian port and town.

In conclusion, the watching brief at Sea Mills Lane has produced important new archaeological evidence for significant human activity within the development footprint during the Romano-British period and added to the growing corpus of data for the 2nd century development of the civilian settlement at Sea Mills after the military garrison became redundant.

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