

AUDIT OF THE 1972–3 EXCAVATION ARCHIVE REDHILL, SHROPSHIRE



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Audit of the 1972–3 excavation archive, Redhill, Shropshire

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With a contribution by Robert Hedge

Summary

The following report presents an audit of the archaeological archive resulting from rescue excavations undertaken at Redhill in 1972–3, which were led by David Browne, and focussed on the area of the fort.

The audit was particularly prompted by more recent, development-led, commercial excavation in 2011/13 in the same general area as the 1972–3 work, and which produced significant structural and artefactual evidence relating to both the early fort phase and the civilian settlement, but primarily the latter. One aim of the audit was to enhance the results of the more recent fieldwork, allowing features excavated by David Browne to be integrated with those recorded in the subsequent work, so that a more full account could be given of those major features encountered in the course of excavating both sites.

The audit process involved the summary examination of the scope, quantity and quality of the 1972–3 site archive, including the extent and quality of post-fieldwork conservation, analysis, and reporting done over an extended period. The report makes a summary case for future analysis and publication, proportionate to the undoubted regional significance of this site.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Location of the site

Redhill (NGR SJ 7261 1097) is located near Lilleshall (Shropshire), in the unitary area of Telford. It is a known Roman site, mentioned in the *Antonine Itinerary (Uxacona)*, situated on Watling Street to the east of the major Roman town of Wroxeter (*Viroconium*). The site occupies an exposed hilltop, which is a prominent landmark with clear views in all directions, so making it an ideal strategic location.

1.2 Previous fieldwork and rationale for this project

Given its elevated topographical position, the Redhill prominence provided the ideal place for a large covered reservoir providing gravity water supply to Telford, the site first being extensively developed by Severn Trent Water for this purpose in 1973. In 1972–3 an extensive rescue excavation, funded by DoE/Ministry of Works, was undertaken during the construction of a large covered concrete reservoir, and this demonstrated the extensive and well preserved remains of a Roman fort (Fig 1). This fieldwork led directly to adjacent areas being scheduled as an Ancient Monument (list entry number 1006272).

The earliest fort probably belongs to the primary phase of Roman conquest/occupation in this part of the west Midlands and presumably formed part of the garrisoning system based on the legionary fort at Wroxeter. Subsequently civilian settlement also developed here in the 2nd century and continued into the 4th century. This sequence has been published in a very summary account (9 pages - see this for published site location) by Browne and Boon (2002; published in 2004). Buteux (2005) reviewed the evidence for the overall site which is extensive and has long attracted attention, and speculation about its purpose.

In 2011/13 a further archaeological project was undertaken for Severn Trent Water during the extending of existing facilities. This audit report covers the 1972–3 site archive for the purposes of providing a context for the later site and enabling two datasets to be related, especially where they are overlapping in terms of features. While, the 1973 Redhill work was focussed on the main fort area, the 2011/13 fieldwork was located to its south and along the north side of the main road (Watling Street). Together these two sites potentially provide a full transect across the settlement.

1.3 Wider archaeological background

In terms of Roman archaeology, Shropshire is best known for the site of Wroxeter, where a series of major excavation campaigns were mounted in the 1970s-80s (Barker *et al* 1997; Ellis 2000, Webster 2002; Ellis and White 2006). However, given the rural character of the county, relatively little excavation of Roman remains has occurred elsewhere. Fieldwork in advance of construction of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury bypass (Ellis *et al* 1994) highlighted the potential of studying sites of different character in the environs of Wroxeter. This led to a major research project on the Wroxeter Hinterland, including some small scale excavation (Gaffney *et al* 2007; White *et al* 2013). The research undertaken during this project, together with the Wroxeter excavation publications, provides an up-to-date foundation for any future research in the county.

Redhill (*Uxacona*) is the first significant Roman settlement on Watling Street to the east of Wroxeter, and would have been a staging post in the supply chain to the legionary fort and its subsequent civilian settlement. Very little is known about the next significant Roman settlement to the east along Watling Street, at *Pennocrucium*, near Stretton Bridge in Staffordshire.

1.4 Research framework

The West Midlands Research Framework (Watt 2011) and the period-based Research Agenda and Assessment (Esmonde-Cleary 2011, and White forthcoming, respectively) both comment on the significance of the Roman military in the context of Shropshire archaeology.

2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this audit is to assess the condition of the archive and to ensure that it is in a suitable state to be deposited with Shropshire Museums. The objectives, therefore, are:

- a) to assess the scope, quantity and quality of the archive;
- b) to make a summary case for its future analysis and publication, and;
- c) to ensure it is in a suitable state for museum deposition.

3 Methods

All classes of site records were scanned to assess their contents and condition with attention to their quantification, condition, state of packaging, and clarity of labelling (Table 1).

Conservation

All categories of find in the site archive were also broadly checked for condition, and appropriate packaging substituted (within reason) with a view to long term storage in the museum. Accordingly finds stored in a range of impromptu containers (cigarette packets, match boxes, tobacco tins, slide boxes and unsealed cash bags) were repackaged to archive standard. Most metal finds had not previously been stored with silica gel, and, where silica gel had been used, there was no evidence that this had been changed. In this case re-boxing with fresh silica gel was undertaken. Care was taken that all finds were clearly labelled, original labels being kept with finds where possible.

Analysis of records

No detailed structural/finds analysis was undertaken, except where this related to features where the 1972–3 and 2011/13 excavation areas overlapped. In the case of these features, additional information was extracted from the earlier excavation archive by reference to the site plans/sections combined with a fresh appraisal of the relevant finds.

Deposition process

Nothing archaeological was discarded during the audit process, and this was agreed with Emma-Kate Lanyon (Shropshire Museums) as appropriate, as this is an historical archive, where full analysis and reporting has not yet been achieved.

4 Inventory of the archive

The stratigraphic record was reviewed by Andrew Mann, and the finds archive by Jane Evans, except for the worked flint which was examined by Robert Hedge.

4.1 Field record archive

record type: site records	estimated qty	comment (condition etc)
Area A site records. A4 hardback note book.	1	Contains context descriptions for layers 1-27. Including depth from surface, stratigraphic position, basic finds description. In ink and pencil.
Area B site records. A4 hardback note book.	1	Contains context descriptions for layers 1-25. Including depth from surface, stratigraphic position, basic finds description. In ink and pencil.
Area C site records. A4 hardback note book.	1	Contains context descriptions for layers 1-25. Including depth from surface, stratigraphic position, basic finds description. In ink and pencil.
Area D site records. A4 hardback note	1	Contains context descriptions for layers 1-19. In ink and pencil.

book.		
Area E site records. A4 hardback note book.	1	Contains context descriptions for layers E3 1-26 and E4 1-33. Including depth from surface, stratigraphic position. Also includes feature descriptions, a drawing register (dwgs 11-16) and sample register (samples 9-20). In ink and pencil.
Area F No Site Diary.		Records for this area are recorded on drawing 16. Includes descriptions for layers 1-27. In ink and pencil.
Area G No site records.		Not located - missing?
Area H site records. A4 hardback note book.	1	Contains context descriptions for layers 1-87. Including depth from surface, stratigraphic position, basic find description. Also includes feature descriptions, layers by units (Context Group descriptions) and a general summary narrative of Area H. In ink and pencil.
x4 A3 photocopied OS maps.	4	Photocopied OS map transcribed with the locations of the excavation areas. In ink and pencil.
Site plans and sections	47	47 drawings on graph paper ranging in size from A4 to A0. Each page (drawing) may contain multiple sections or plans. In pencil and ink. Providing AOD heights to the records would be more difficult, although an existing topographic survey may help with this by enabling an approximate AOD to be produced based on the bgs measurements given on feature sections.
Sample register cards	23	Samples 1-23. Contains description of sample and reason for collection. Contains information on whether they were discarded or processed. In ink and pencil.
Photographic colour slides	66	Photos 22-88. These have been digitised for the purpose of archive conservation.
Photographic black and white prints mounted on card	21	Photos 89-110
Photographic black and white aerial prints	18	18 photographs with two interpretive drawings of cropmark features.
Photographic negatives 35mm	19	Photographs 2-21
Photographic negatives medium format	18	Photographs 92-110

General comments

Site diaries

The site diaries are in good condition and the text is legible. The excavation records however focus upon layer descriptions and few features are given a context number in the field. On occasion however where layers are discussed the feature in which they were located is described. These descriptions are however brief and a fuller record would require the amalgamation of the layer descriptions and dimensions and the drawn record where available.

The site diaries are also variable and in some instances the layer or deposit does not have a full record. For example in Area D there is only a context description for each layer. Its dimensions, stratigraphic relationships, height and associated finds record are missing. Although the records appear reasonably complete trying to form a structural narrative or discussion form them would be extremely time consuming and laborious as no matrix exists and layer numbers have not been group. Often layer descriptions are also brief, for example fill of military ditch. To create a matrix or structural narrative form the records would require significant cross-correlation with section drawings.

Drawings

The drawings are in good condition and legible. Each section or plan appears to have been located via the site wide grid system for which there is an overall site plan to locate all drawings too (Drawing 12). Each feature appears numbered with the corresponding layers (contexts) minus feature numbers, as these were often not assigned numbers. The location of sections is more variable, in some instances a section line will be drawn on a corresponding plan, however more often it appears that the section has been located using the site grid system. The general drawing conventions are also variable and in some instances the features have been hatched, coloured coded to a key, inked up or left as original. The drawing record is however in a

condition to be digitised and amalgamated for a site report, although an excavated (hatched) site plan would be difficult to create given the limitations of the drawn record and the feature descriptions. The drawn record does contain a reasonable number of section drawings, mostly the larger ditched features or pits which enables a good visual representation of the site.

Samples

Very few samples appear to have been taken and the majority of those appear to have been discarded prior to analysis. Where they have been processed there does not appear to be an associated environmental report, although occasional charcoal identifications are discussed in post-excavation draft texts.

Photographs

Very few photographs were taken during the excavation (110 in total) many of which are site working shots. One roll of film is missing.

Table 1: Summary of site archive records

4.2 Finds archive

There is a total of 10 boxes of finds plus plastic tubs.

material	estimated qty	comment (condition etc)
Coarse pottery	c 4320 sherds (8.5 boxes)	All bags do have labels with context info.
Pottery fabric type series	1 box (58 fabrics)	Most sherds have labels with fabric no. but some would require cross-referencing to check fabric.
Samian	c 250 sherds (1 box)	Bagged by context, rather than context/fabric and form, so not straightforward to match sherds with samian records. Bags all seems to have labels with context info.
Iron 'not for detailed reporting'	204 on list (2 cardboard boxes)	Originally sent to Rowley House 1983/1984. Mainly nails, frags, but some bars/ straps and a key. DB notes 'most of the ironwork comes from contexts that contain material of different dates', ie not primary deposits/primary associations. All finds have labels in the bags.
Metal work (for detailed reporting?): Fe, Cu, Ag**	24 objects (1 tub)	All packed using foam/sometimes crystal boxes, and with silica gel. Labelled with AML cards, which have space to record: drawn, treated, photo, X-ray No, Analysis. Mostly not filled in, though 5 objects record XRF analysis for ID of material. Active corrosion noted on Cu. x4 Fe items were stored with finds for illustration but presumably had not been sent to AML. These have been re-bagged and integrated with the rest of the iron
Lead	4 frags	lead sheet
Metal residues	27 frags	Labelled.
Glass	39 frags	c 18 Roman and c 11 post Roman frags vessel/window glass (needs checking) More diagnostic fragments include: 5 frags vessel glass (including pillar moulded bowl, a sherd of polychrome glass), 2 counters, 1 melon bead and 2 tiny beads ie includes notable finds.
Burnt clay, tile and brick		Listed in synopsis but not seen - ?missing
stone		Listed in synopsis but not seen - ?missing
Lithics	14 flake/tools [^]	Labelled; good-quality flint of later Mesolithic–early Bronze Age date. A small flint blade fragment labelled "RH 848 (RH 73 A22)" is missing [^]
Early Bronze Age pottery	9 sherds	Labelled; including 1 rim sherd, from three contexts.
coal		Listed in synopsis - ?missing
bone		Listed in synopsis - ?missing
Post Roman - Clay pipe	1	Pipe bowl listed in records - ?missing
wood	1 fragment	SF 215, Lab no 734678, RH 080 – 1 fragment of wood, now mouldy.

Table 2: Quantification of site archive finds

** A total of 89 coins (including 69 coins from a hoard) were not present.

4.3 Environmental archive

Environmental remains			
Material	qty	Completed by	comment
Sample Register Cards	23	Various site supervisors	Samples 1-23. Records give description of sample and reason for collection, and information on whether they were discarded or processed. In ink and pencil.
General comments No environmental sample material is present in the archive other than the original sample register cards. Although there is reference through the archive to charcoal identifications having been undertaken, however there is no report visible.			

Table 3: Quantification of environmental remains in site archive

4.4 Post-excavation archive

Post excavation stratigraphic records			
material	qty	completed by	comment
Field Record Indices. A4 hardback diary.	1	David Browne	Contains Pottery Drawing index, Drawing Index, Photo Index and samian pottery index. In ink and pencil.
Excavation stratigraphy records. A4 hardback diary (book 1).	1	David Browne	Contains post-excavation field record methodology and a re-written site record based upon the original excavation site diaries. The records contain the new post excavation context numbers, their location, their stratigraphic relationship, it size and description and associated drawing numbers, photographic numbers and finds. ***
Excavation stratigraphy records. A4 hardback diary (book 2).	1	David Browne	Contains post-excavation field record methodology and a re-written site record based upon the original excavation site diaries. The records contain the new post-excavation context numbers, their location, their stratigraphic relationship, it size and description and associated drawing numbers, photographic numbers and finds. ***
Stratigraphic notes, A4 and A5 pages.	x38 A4; x70 A5	David Browne	Hand-written notes on the archaeological remains. Each layer or deposit appears to have been grouped and some matrices produced before discussing their form, stratigraphic relationships and narrative.
Draft stratigraphic publication text, A4 pages typed.	47 pages	David Browne	These draft publication text summarise the hand-written notes and describes the structural remains and stratigraphic sequences on site.
Interim publication text for <i>Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeology and Historical Society</i> (Vol LXXVII 2002).	9 pages	David Browne and George C Boon.	Interim publication text summarises the draft publication text and describes the main structural phases and the site. It contains a useful plan of the ditches investigated, but little on other features.
General comments Each layer (context) identified during the excavation has been renumbered in a single number series and the new unique post-excavation number has been written in red pencil in the original site diaries and on the original site drawings. In the post-excavation diaries the original layer numbers have been written next to the new ones for cross-correlation. No full matrix has been produced, although there are numerous hand-written notes describing the structural deposits and sequences which sometimes contain feature matrices. Within these notes features also appear to have been assigned group numbers (for example Ditch III or Marl Wall II as reflected in the 2002 interim publication report).			

Table 4: Summary of stratigraphic post-excavation records (***) = key archive document

Finds and environmental records				
material	type of post-exc archive	qty	completed by	comment
Coarse pottery	records	1 file	David Browne	Pottery recorded by context, then fabric. Total count and weight by fabric, and minimum no of vessels, though quantifications not clearly presented (lists not pro-forma sheets; summaries of total wt and min. no. vessels by context, but not count). Vessel classes listed but not recorded separately. Form type not recorded, nor rim diameter, % extant. Pottery is not bagged by fabric, though for larger groups sherds are split into oxidised, reduced etc. This makes it difficult to assess the consistency/reliability of pottery recording in relation to the series devised (see below). The record is, therefore, judged by current methods incomplete and of an unreliable standard. The pottery would need to be recorded to modern standards for publication.
	fabric series	58 fabrics	David Browne (with advice from Peter Webster)	Fabric type sherds boxed separately (see above). Fabric description sheets filled in. Peter Webster reviewed the fabric type sherds. Fabrics need to be reviewed in light of recent work on material from Redhill and cross referenced with Wroxeter fabric series. It is likely that some of the coarse ware fabrics could be merged.
	Pottery drawings	175	?David Browne	Pot drawings on separate cards, filed by drawing number (photocopies filed by fabric). Listed by 'PD no', context, fabric and form in red book. 'PD' no not necessarily noted on bag with sherd. A very small sample of dwgs/sherds were matched, to check the accuracy of the drawings. There are inaccuracies, so drawings would need to be checked against sherds before use, and corrections made where necessary (focussing on forms for publication).
Samian	catalogue		David Browne (verified by George Boon)	Catalogue by context identified to SG, CG, EG but not to production centre. Forms identified. Count, but weight not consistently recorded. Rim diameter and % extant also not recorded. Stamps: 2 stamps (no specialist report) Decorated sherds: 7 sherds, mostly abraded but larger SG sherd drawn (no specialist report) Graffiti: 1 sherd with crudely inscribed cross noted in records More detailed analysis needed.
	Illustration catalogue		D Browne with advice from G C Boon	Handwritten list by feature
Lithics and Early Bronze Age pottery	Catalogue/list (2009)	1 catalogue	Elizabeth Walker Collections Manager/Curator of Palaeolithic & Mesolithic Archaeology, National museum of Wales	Lists 9 sherds EBA pottery (no fabric description, quantification or information re type). Lithics – 14 items catalogued, from flakes to blades/scrapper. It is accurate and comprehensive, though context information is lacking (DB 'thinks that they are residual')
Metal: small finds	SF index cards	301	?David Browne	Cards organised by SF no, noting area, trench, layer, description of find, date and finder. Cards for finds from some layers record exact location, but this seems to have been abandoned after

				SF103
	Summary identifications	24	?David Browne	Photocopied sheets of 24 objects with brief written identifications. The reliability of these identifications needs checking.
coins	Catalogue		George Boon	Coin report by George C Boon (included in interim report), and correspondence. Letter 7/7/80 asking DB to collect coins from National Museum of Wales -- ?missing
	AML Examination & conservation report	68 sheets	AML	Sheets for Lab nos 736051-736118, coins; some sheets note multiple coins stuck together. Most record conservation treatment on reverse
Iron 'not for detailed reporting'	SF list		D Browne	Listed in 'new numbering/SF book' by SF, context, with AML Lab numbers, some have photo nos, some X-rays noted. Brief classification ('nail', 'bar' etc) and description ('bent', 'frags') some measurements
Iron	X-rays	12 plates	AML	2 plates with AML report A8828 and A8829 (7 objects) 10 plates filed separately: A247-250, A252-7 (c 83 items, some listed in photo index in red book), varying quality but provide a record of objects that will have subsequently decayed further. Needs to be assessed afresh by a finds specialist.
Metal finds	Drawings	24 objects	T G Driver (1995)	Pencil drawings and stippled ink drawings. Note on folder: drawings at either 1:1 or enlarged at 141%. The accuracy of the drawing has not been checked. If accurate they could be scanned and reworked for publication
Lead				No detailed records – two bags of finds
Metal residues				No detailed records – only 4 bags of finds
Conservation	List of finds sent to AML (24/5/73)	89 items	AML	Xerox copies of lists, mostly clearly legible. Finds listed by 'excavator's number' (context/SF no), lab number, photo number (not recorded), x-ray number (recorded for some but very feint and not always clearly legible), 'for drawing' (not recorded) and 'description and instructions' (brief description and mainly C/C for cleaning & consolidation)
	Report (Sept. 1992)	1	Barbara Niemayer, AML	Summary report and list of 24 objects sent for investigative conservation (silver, Cu alloy and Fe). 6 brooches examined for alloys using XRF. Noted that the 4 Fe objects included were already in very poor condition then, as they had not been stored at low relative humidity.
	Conservation records	8 sheets	AML	Lab nos 733868, 733877, 734629, 734680, 734686, 920792 Condition and treatment records (noting cleaning, repair and in one case composition)
Glass	Notes			Rough notes by SF no/context with preliminary identification
	Drawings	6 dwgs	?	3 sheets of paper with 6 pencil drawings. The accuracy of these has not been checked. If accurate they could be scanned and reworked for publication
Burnt clay, tile and brick				Listed in synopsis but no records
Coal				Listed in synopsis but no records
Bone				Listed in synopsis but no records
Stone				Listed in synopsis but no records
Clay pipe				Listed in synopsis but no records

Table 5: Summary of finds and environmental post-excavation records

No digital archive was noted.

5 Statement of overall quality of the archive

In the absence of a formal assessment it is only possible to make quite general statements about the state of the archive and its progress towards publication. Though there appears to have been substantial strides made towards publication, this would need to be reviewed in the event of any renewed work, especially in respect of updating the finds data. The excellent physical state of the archive (apart from for the metalwork), and the careful upgrading of the record already done to facilitate any post-excavation, would make this much easier than it would otherwise have been. It should not, however, be underestimated how much new work would be needed before publication would reasonably be possible. Below some broad comments are made to inform any future plan to take the project further, whereas for more detailed information about the state of specific parts of the archive see Tables 1–5.

Stratigraphic sequence

A phased sequence has been produced but this needs careful reconsideration, as some relationships have been assumed and perhaps over-interpreted, as was normal during an earlier era of reporting. Fortunately the introduction of a unique context numbering system (in post-fieldwork), and the clear assignment of contexts in many instances to groups (indicated by, for instance, numbered ditches, as published in the interim report) provides a ready-made structure for future analysis. However, the shortage of photographs for some areas of the site will make any modern interpretative analysis less easy to present in some respects.

Finds

All the finds are clearly labelled and can be related to stratigraphic records, and so the original potential of the site assemblage still remains intact. Some classes of material have been catalogued by recognised specialists, notably the coins and lithics, but the analysis undertaken on most classes of material is very basic by modern standards, and all the finds data would benefit from updating. There ideally needs to be an assessment stage (ie review for each class of material) to determine better the precise course to be taken.

Some specific issues of note

- a) The metalwork finds are generally in poor condition and a **priority** would be to report on these at the earliest opportunity.
- b) Several items seemed to be still **missing**, the most significant being the coins, including the hoard. Steps need to be taken to locate these and re-unite them with the rest of the archive.

Overall significance of the archive

Though this is not an assessment report, it is felt a brief overall statement of significance would be helpful, as the site clearly has great merit.

The site archive still maintains considerable value, as it relates mainly to a specific phase of Roman military activity that was relatively short-lived and potentially represents the Conquest period and/or its immediate aftermath. The scale of the archive contents means that the site has the potential to contribute greatly by enhancing the results of the 2011/13 fieldwork. This is indicated, for instance, by the Roman coarse ware assemblage which is more than double the size of that from the recent 2011/13 excavations (c 4320 and 1964 sherds respectively), and it has also the benefit of containing many diagnostic sherds. It should be noted that the earlier fieldwork was concentrated on the fort structures proper, in contrast to the later fieldwork which has been focussed on the roadside civilian settlement. Therefore, further work on the Browne archive would not represent any duplication of the work associated with the 2011/13 site. In particular, the finds archive is outstanding for the West Midlands for its items of personal ornament and for glass vessels, and specifically for military items.

Placing the site in a wider context, the 1972–3 archive has the potential to fill the gap in knowledge of patterns of production and supply between Wroxeter, and other forts/civilian settlements in the Midlands such as Wall and Greensforge. Redhill can also be compared and contrasted with sites to the west of Wroxeter, for example the roadside settlement at Meole Brace (Ellis *et al* 1994) and the fort and *vicus* at Brompton (White forthcoming). Much of the importance of early Roman archaeology for this area lies in this early military phase, focussed around the presence of the military depot at Wroxeter, and the subsequent emergence of a new pattern of civilian settlement following its demise.

The audit has, therefore, concluded that the Browne archive is mostly intact and in good order, being much enhanced by the quality of the field record and the scale, range and quality of the finds, and relates to a site long known to be of considerable regional interest, but yet to reveal its full potential.

Specific significance of the Browne archive in terms of its potential

The site is clearly of importance due to part of it relating to the earliest conquest period, and the site went through several permutations (civilian roadside settlement, later Roman fortified post set athwart the road) the nature of which has not been much explored. The site is therefore far from just an ordinary Roman fort of early date, which on its own would still have made the site of considerable interest. There is additional value in the site as it seems to have had a key official role which may have continued far beyond its initial foundation as a fort (ie into the late Roman *burgus* phase).

When excavated in the 1970s there was only limited ability to date some types of the finds, and subsequent accounts of the site tend to only use the samian and coins, both liable to give misleading dates if not treated as *tpq* dates. The Browne site archive, therefore, holds the potential that the extensive features excavated in the 1970s can today be much better dated based on the pottery, and in particular the coarsewares, so that an improved/revised chronology can now be achieved, and conjoined with the results of the recent excavation. There is, therefore, a great deal of potential to gain additional chronological information, so that the extensive features are placed in a sounder dating framework.

There is, therefore, the potential here to develop a more coherent account of the overall site, based on new dating results and on a review of the structural evidence against a modern understanding of Roman archaeology in the area. This will be of value for future management purposes, as some confusion easily occurs working with the piecemeal record that has stemmed from several episodes of investigation, and where the quality of the data is in many respects not adequate, so that synthesis cannot yet be readily undertaken to any useful end.

At that juncture (ie having derived additional value from the archive and so enhanced our understanding of the site), then that would be a suitable time to ensure the archive is safely deposited with the local museum.

6 Recommendation and estimated cost of further work

An audit does not allow detailed costing of future work to be established and the following are just estimates of future options. This is based on the premise that, while the extensive military activity and civilian occupation that is the subject of the report would not provide direct information on all phases, yet in combination with the recent commercially-funded work, it certainly could significantly advance our understanding of what is currently a poorly-understood site.

Assessment

This would involve upgrading the archive by creating a database of key data and so revisiting the records for this purpose, and starting from a lower baseline that would be expected with modern work. The assessment would follow the standard MoRPHE format. An allowance has been made:

- a) for having to modernise the archive data structure ie extract for database input the relevant data scattered across text and plan records, and fill in gaps by additional analysis of the archive, where data is not yet readily available, and;
- b) covering the quality artefactual composition of the site archive.

Proposed cost £12,000

Select archive analysis

The purpose of this would be to extract the maximum archaeological value towards a better understanding of the 1972–3 site sequence, for integration with the evidence for the civilian occupation recorded in 2011–13. This could be based on analysing the best sequences of each ditch and any other substantial feature, in combination with reviewing all their associated dating evidence (ie using *tpq* dates rather than formally recording all the pottery, small finds etc as in the normal course of full analysis). However, care should be taken to ensure that specialist input is of sufficient standard, as some of the work already undertaken is no longer acceptable in this respect.

We would then marry that up with a review of the stratigraphy (ie its composition) for the purposes of just characterising these deposits, and the features in plan, so achieving a fresh interpretation of the structures excavated in the 1970s. The latter will require some scanning of field plans to create a base plan against which to amalgamate the new finds dating, as previous plotting by Browne relied on presuming correspondences between aerial crop marks and the excavated features and plotting from the former rather than the latter.

To make this comprehensive it is suggested that any other archives relating to pre 1970s fieldwork should be searched for via the Shropshire Museums Service and briefly reviewed as well as part of this project should they exist - PAS data should also be checked.

Explicit purpose

Such a focussed assessment would inject more credibility into the interpretation of the overall site, as it would update the earlier work and so would provide, when integrated with the 2011-13 results, a clearer model for future reference, including for the purposes of site management. Both excavation areas could then be united in a common narrative based on a modern interpretation of the evidence. This would make management of the scheduled part of the site on this side of the main road more straightforward by providing a single reference point and a modern perspective on the evidence (based just on a sufficient working of the archive record to extract that evidence).

Output

The report would be made available through OASIS. The opportunity also still remains that the essence of the results could be combined with the reporting of the 2011-13 excavation in the *Shropshire Archaeological Transactions*, perhaps through an expansion of the background section in this report.

Proposed cost - about £14,000

Full analysis and reporting

Without prior assessment this is very difficult to indicate and so a ballpark figure is given. It is likely this stage would be focussed on the better finds, and their presentation and so it is possible, therefore, that this stage would not cost proportionately as much as it usually would when viewed against the assessment. However, such a view is subject to the results of an assessment.

Estimated cost £30,000

7 Acknowledgements

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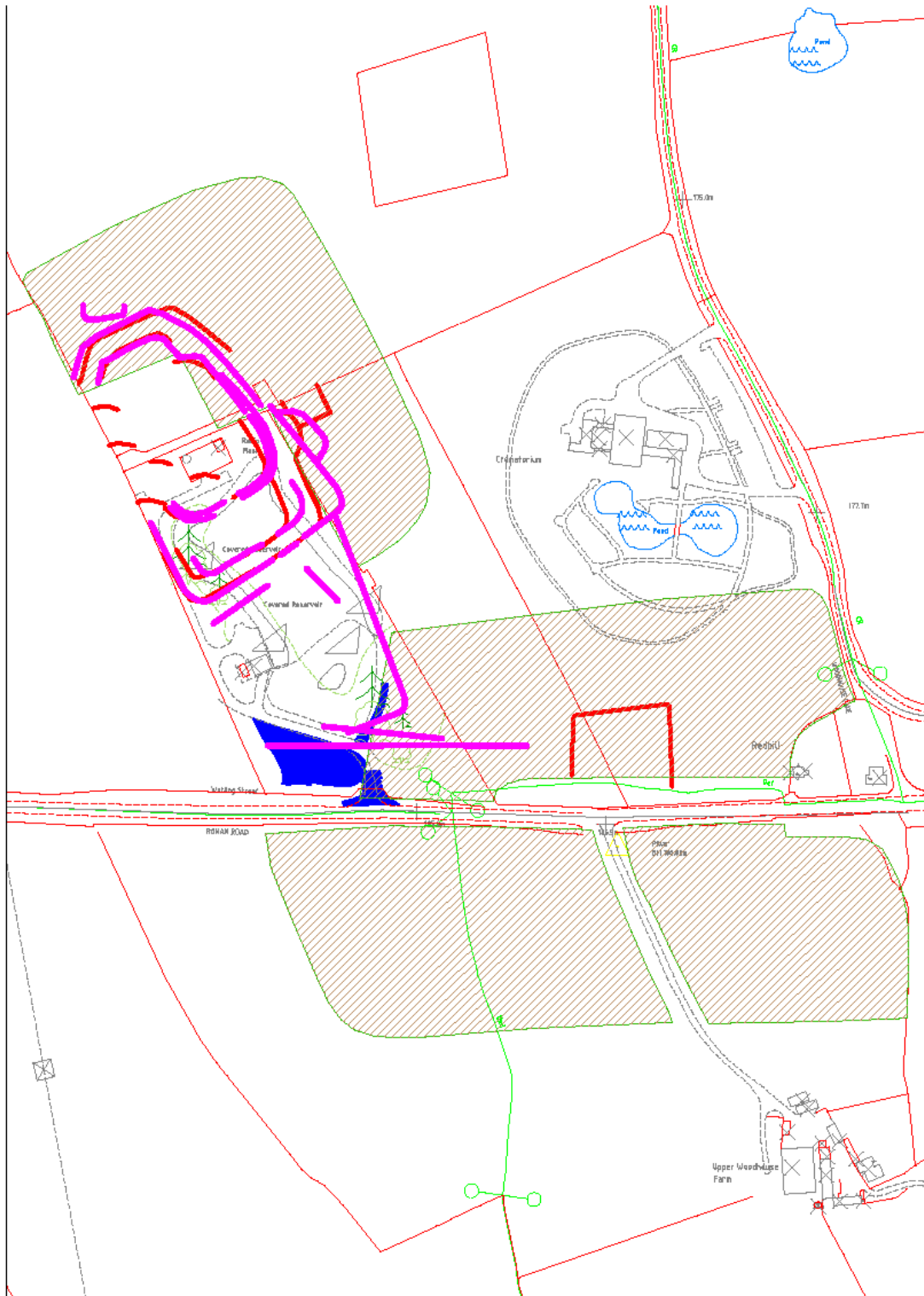


Figure 1. Combined plot of cropmarks from aerial photography undertaken in the 1950s as interpreted by W A Baker (1992; red) and D Browne (Browne and Boon 2002; pink), and indicating the Roman fort in particular. Excavation area in 2011–13 (blue) and Scheduled Ancient Monument areas (hatched)