

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

AT

BERNWOOD FIRST SCHOOL,

NORTH WAY, BARTON,

OXFORD

NGR SP 5535 0780

On behalf of

Barratt Mercia

DECEMBER 2005

REPORT FOR Barratt Mercia
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Summary

An excavation of this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during May 2005. Although the site was heavily truncated by modern activity significant archaeological deposits were located.

This long lived site started as an open settlement in the early Iron Age, by the late Iron Age it had been enclosed by a defensive ditch. The last use of the site was as a cemetery in the early Roman period.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the northern side of North Way in Barton, Oxford (NGR SP 5535 0780). The published 1:50,000 geological map of the area (Sheet 237) indicates that the site is underlain by Beckley Sand Member of the Corallian Formation, which comprises sands and calcareous sandstone. The site lies at approximately 95-97m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

Oxford City Council has granted planning permission for the erection of 115 dwellings. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, a condition requires for a programme of archaeological work to be carried out. Three phases of evaluation have been carried out.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The line of the Dorchester to Alchester Roman road lies less than 500 m to the east of the investigation site. Flanking the road and lying some 300-400 m east of the school is an area of extensive Romano-British occupation. The evidence for this, as derived from the County Sites and Monuments Record, is as follows:

PRN 3664 (SP 5578 0780 centred): During development in 1946 extensive traces of Romano-British occupation were found including inhumations, coins, and Samian and coarse ware pottery dating mainly to 3rd and 4th centuries AD. Building plans were not recovered, but this was due to the nature of the building operations and the very limited form of archaeological investigation.

PRN 3665 (SP 5571 0776): During development in 1946 an undated human skeleton was discovered with no associated finds. It is likely to be related to the extensive occupation evidence cited under PRN 3664.

PRN 3666 (SP 5590 0777): Found in 1949 east of the Roman road, a Romano-British cremation burial in an urn of greyware, together with a whetstone and the iron head of a small pick. Dated to the later 1st or early 2nd century AD.

PRN 3668 (SP 5580 0780): Iron Age pottery recorded on OS cards.

PRN 3802 (SP 550 078): About 200 m to the west of the proposal site, in 1931 a single Anglo Saxon inhumation was discovered. This unaccompanied burial was allegedly found at the base of a sunken featured building, which contained Anglo Saxon pottery.

An initial phase of archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical survey was undertaken in October 1998 within the proposal area (Stratascan, 1998). This consisted of both a magnetometer and resistivity survey. Both surveys produced evidence of below ground anomalies. The anomalies M3 and M4, while being of possible modern origin, were closely aligned on a linear feature M5 that had the characteristics of an archaeological feature. A complex set of roughly linear anomalies (R1) was considered to be geological.

As part of the ground investigation of the site, a review of old Ordnance Survey plans (1879/81, 1899, 1921, 1936/7, 1956 and 1988) at 1:1250 and/or 1:2500 scales was undertaken (GSP 2001). These indicate that the site had not previously been developed; the school buildings are the only buildings to be shown on the site, which first appeared on the 1956 edition, essentially as existing. Prior to this the site was shown as open fields traversed by a footpath.

An archaeological field evaluation in January 2002 comprised a 3% sample of the site, not occupied by buildings and hard surfaces, involving machine dug trenches and hand excavation of features. The only significant feature found was a burial pit, which was an irregular oval in plan. The pit was shallow, surviving up to 220mm deep. The burial was immediately under the topsoil and turf and had been heavily disturbed by the landscaping for the school playing field (JMHS 2002). This inhumation was dated by carbon 14 dating to the period between 20AD and 240AD (95.4% probability).

In July 2004 a further stage of evaluation was undertaken. This comprised the machine excavation of a 2% sample of the site formerly occupied by the buildings, playgrounds and car parking areas of the school. This failed to find any evidence of archaeological activity (JMHS, 2004).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

In particular

- To recover evidence for further burial in the area.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

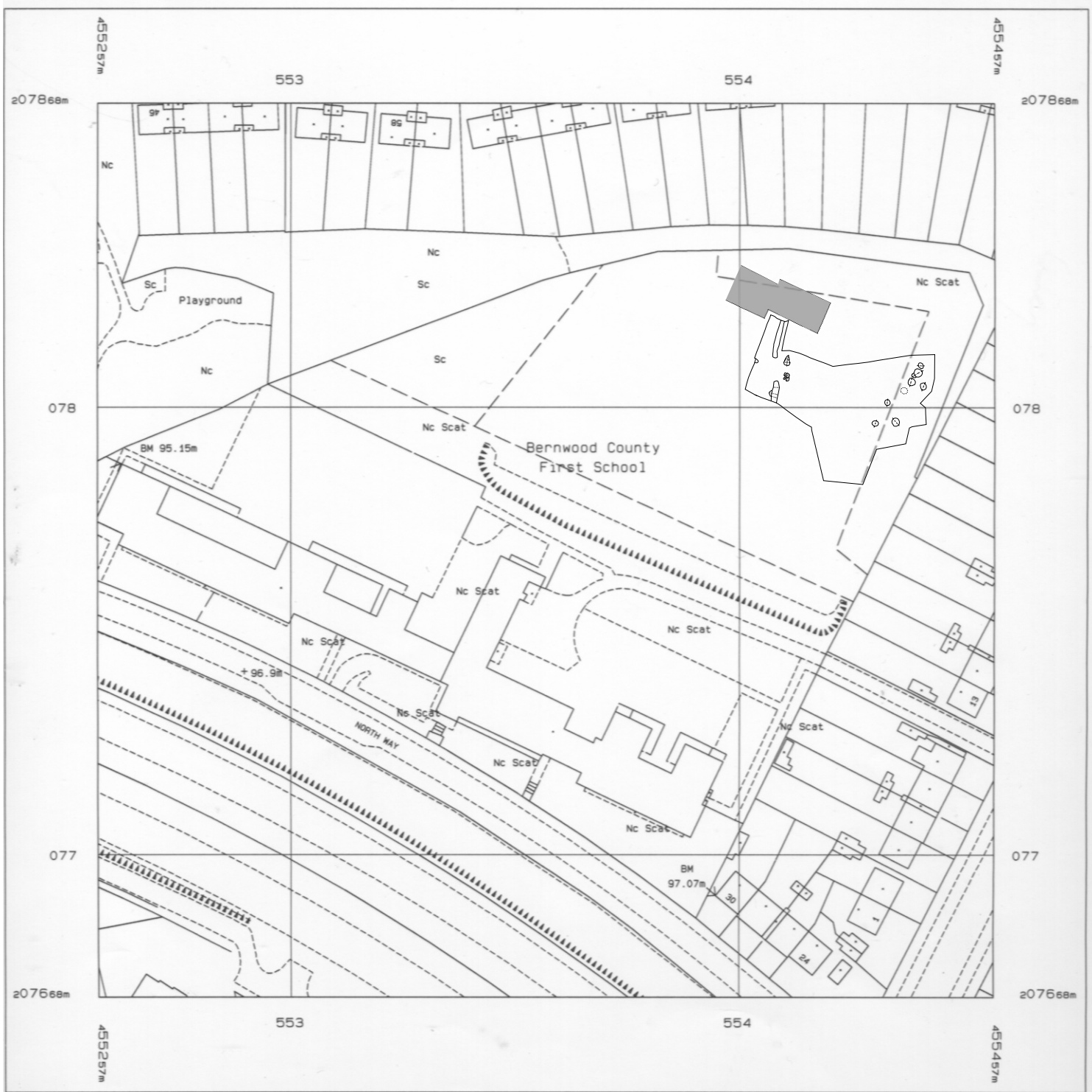
In response to the *Briefs* issued by Oxford City Council a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the Oxford City Council and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of two trenches across the site followed by full excavation in one area (Figure 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994/5).

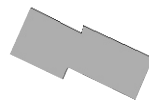
3.2 Methodology

The topsoil was removed by JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The resulting surface was cleaned by hand prior to hand excavation of all identified archaeological deposits.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced.



0 m 50 m



Area of Watching Brief

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The site lies on a slope of a hill, within an area presently used as a school playing field. When this field was levelled to form a playing surface a large amount of material was removed, lowering the ground by as much as 1.5m in some places. This severally truncated the archaeological deposits in the area, leaving only the bottom of the lowest features.

Lower down the slope, especially towards the north and east of the site, the ground was raised with a made ground to complete the levelling of the playing field.

The natural across the entire site was a light brown-orange clayey sand, with lenses of angular limestone (202). Overlying this on the north side of the site was a modern made ground (201), which was excavated to a depth of 90.18m OD. A topsoil (200) cover the entire area, overlying both the natural and made ground.

Cut into the natural were various features, including pits, postholes and a pair of ditches.

4.1 The Pit Cluster (*figures 2-6*)

A linear cluster of 8 roughly circular pits were located in an area approximately 15m x 10m. This area is centred around a pit containing a crouched inhumation that was discovered during an evaluation excavation in 2002 (JMHS 2002).

Pit [203]

A circular pit 1.2m in diameter. Truncated by later activity it was 0.15m deep, and filled with a dark brown silty sand (204). Disarticulated human bones were recovered from this fill, as was a small amount of pottery sherds, animal bone and burnt material. The placement of the human bone along with those from various animals on the bed of burnt material and stone, may indicate a ritual deposit.

Pit [227]

A sub-circular pit roughly 1.25m in diameter, with a shallow rounded base. Truncated by later activity it is 0.18m deep, and filled with a grey-brown silty loam (228). Within this was an inhumation of an adult human (229). The skeleton was tightly flexed and crouched. The head was to the west facing north and very fragmented. Set amongst limestone fragments which could possibly be the remains of a cairn. No finds were associated with this inhumation.

Pit [233]

An oval pit 1.22m x 1m in plan, that is heavily truncated and 0.15m deep. The fill of this pit is a grey-brown sandy loam (232) and also contained a small amount of pottery sherds and animal bone.

Pit [234]

A sub-circular pit measuring 1.63m north-south and 1.64m east-west. It has near vertical sides and a flat base. The lowest fill of the pit was a mid-yellow loam with occasional limestone fragments (237). This deposit was 0.12m deep and showed signs of scorching in places. The upper fill was a purple-brown silty-sand (235).

This pit also contained the skeleton of an adult human (236). It was crouched, lying on its left side, with the head towards the north and facing east. The preservation was poor with considerable post depositional damage. The body appears to have been placed on the lower fill (237) to the west edge of the pit, with the head to the north resting on a "pillow" stone.

Some disarticulated human bone and animal bone was recovered from the upper fill (235), as was some pottery fragments.

Pit [243]

A sub-circular pit measuring 1.7 x 1.9m in plan. The pit is heavily truncated and its remaining depth is 0.25m. The sides are near vertical and the base flat. Towards the centre of the pit were large pieces of limestone rubble. The lower fill to the north of these stones was a grey-brown sandy loam with small limestone chips (242), and 0.1m deep. While the fill to the south while similar it had a greater humic content and was devoid of stone chippings (241). It was up to 0.15m thick. Above both these deposits was a layer of mid brown soft sandy silt-loam (240), that was up to 0.2m thick. The upper pit fill was largely confined to the centre of the pit was a darker brown sandy loam (239), and had a maximum thickness of 0.16m. Animal bone was present within the pit (239, 242). The upper fills (239, 240) also contained a small pottery assemblage, some worked flint (239).

Pit [246]

A sub-circular pit measuring 1.5m x 1.7m in plan, and 0.42m deep. The sides are near vertical and the base is flat which slope slightly from east to west. The lowest fill was an orange-brown sand (245) which varied in thickness from 0.09m to 0.18m. Above this was a layer of yellow-brown sand with some limestone fragments (244). This layer varied in thickness from 0.19m to 0.3m. Animal bone was present within both layers, as was pottery sherds.

Pit [249]

A circular pit that is 2m in diameter, and truncated to a depth of 0.22m. Its sides are angled at approximately 45° and its base is flat. The lowest fill of this pit was a soft orange sandy-clay loam (248), with some large limestone blocks. This was thicker towards the edges of the pit, up to 0.1m thick, and very thin towards the centre. Above this was a grey-brown sandy loam (247), which also contained some large limestone blocks and animal bone. Both layers produced pottery sherds. Pit [249] cut an earlier and smaller pit [251].

Pit [251]

A small possibly circular pit, approximately 0.5m in diameter. Heavily truncated it was only 0.15m deep and was also cut by a later pit [249]. The fill was a grey-brown sandy loam (250) that filled the entirety of the pit. Present were some sherds of pottery.

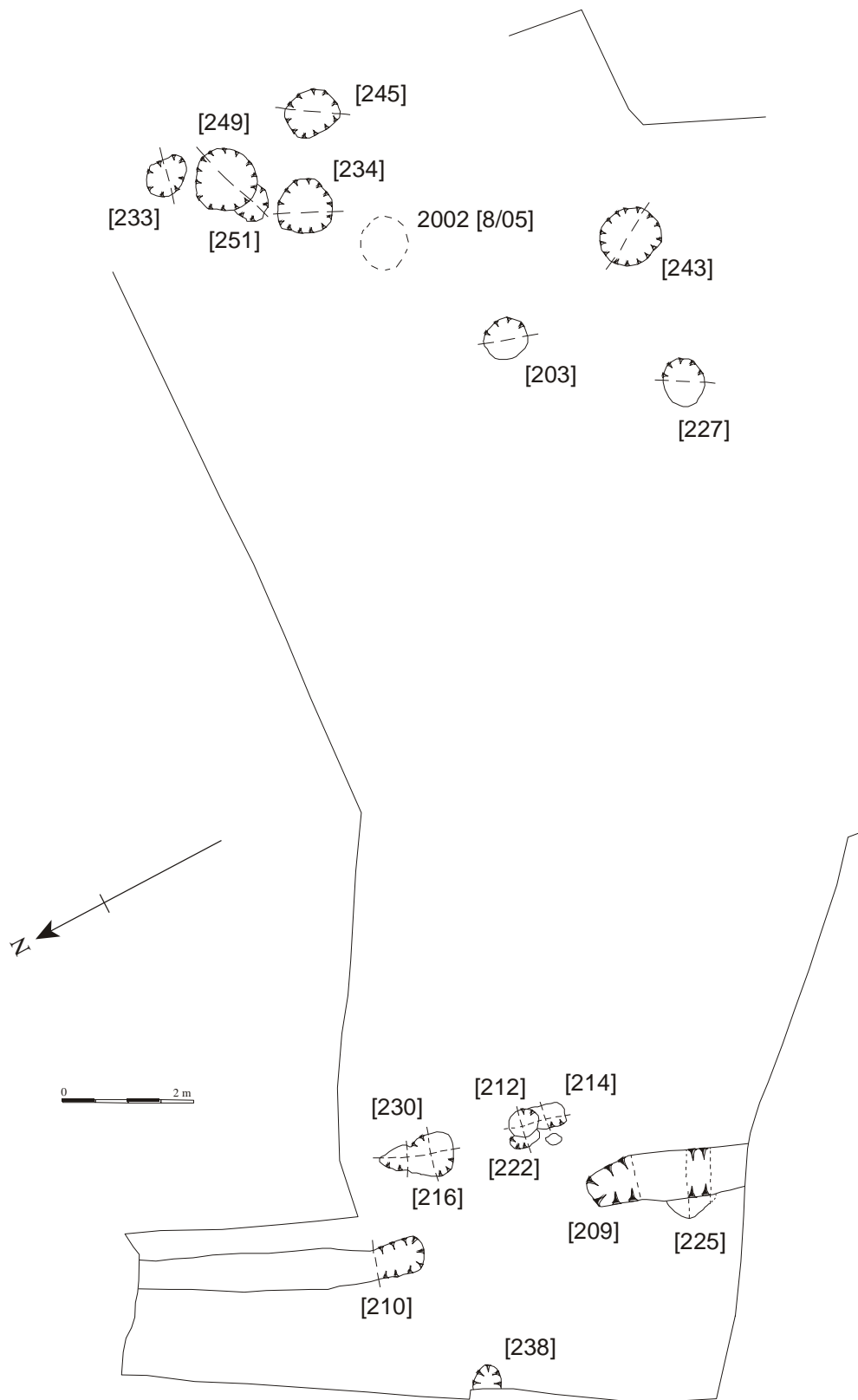
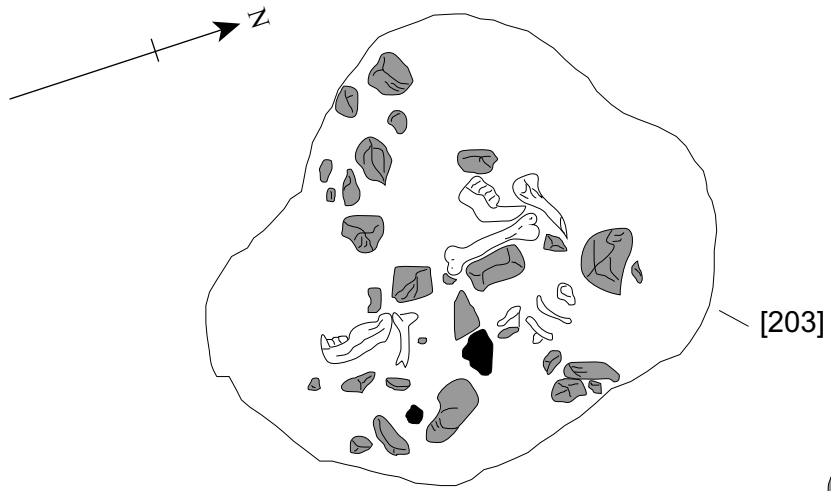


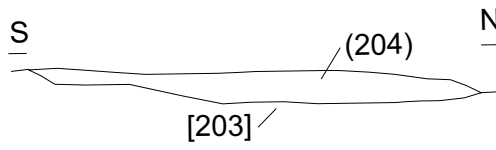
Figure 2. Site Plan.



Rock

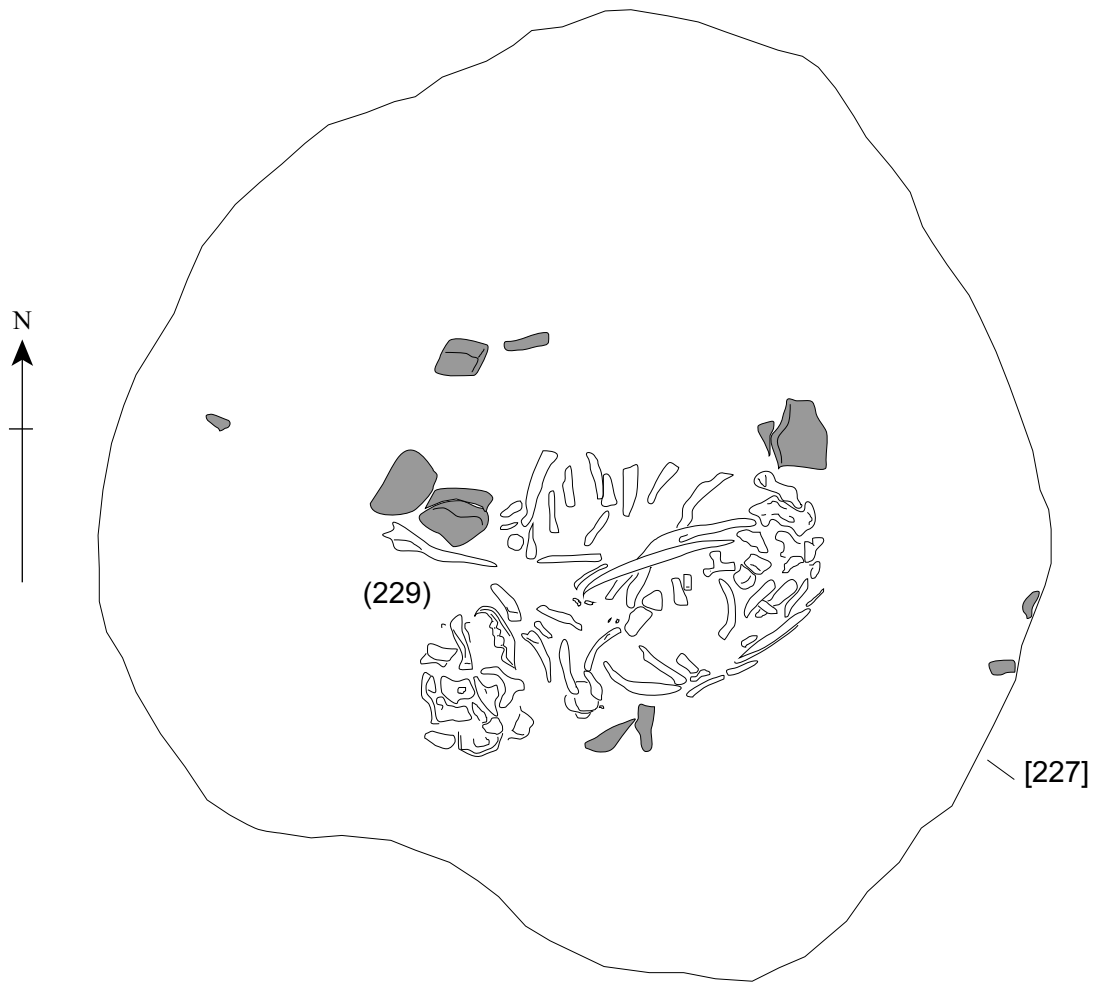
Pot

0 1 m



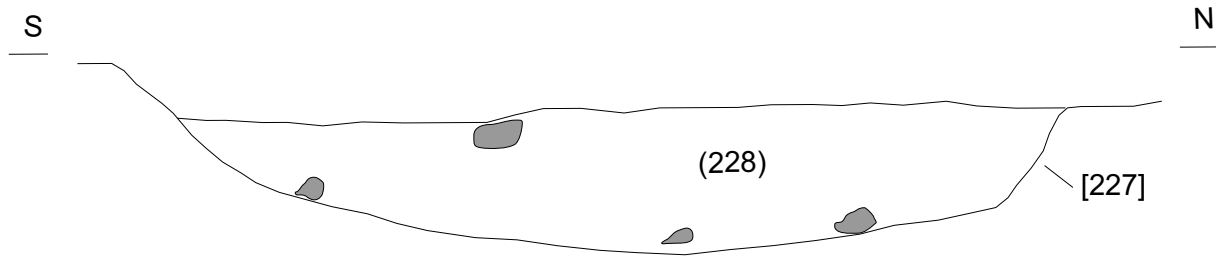
Rock

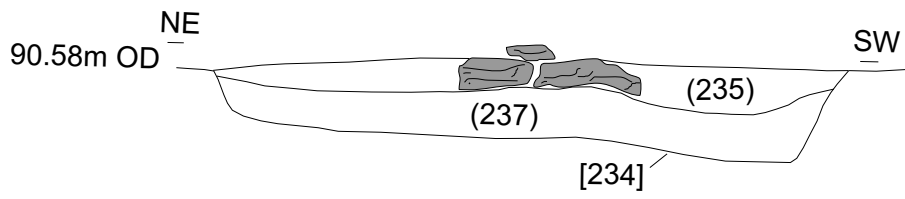
0 1 m



0 1 m

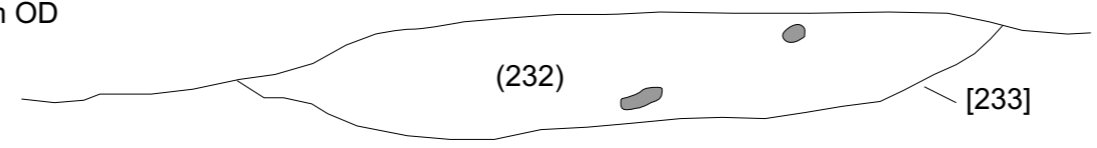
 Rock





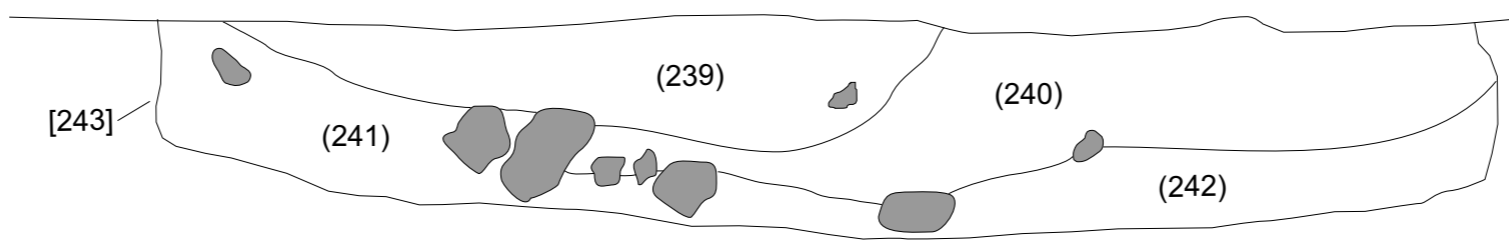
E
92.77m OD

W



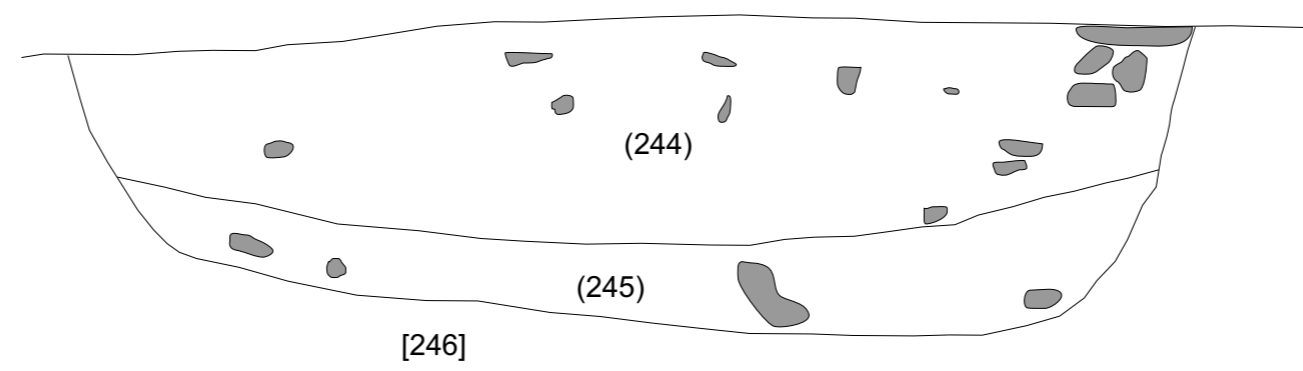
SE

NW
90.85m OD



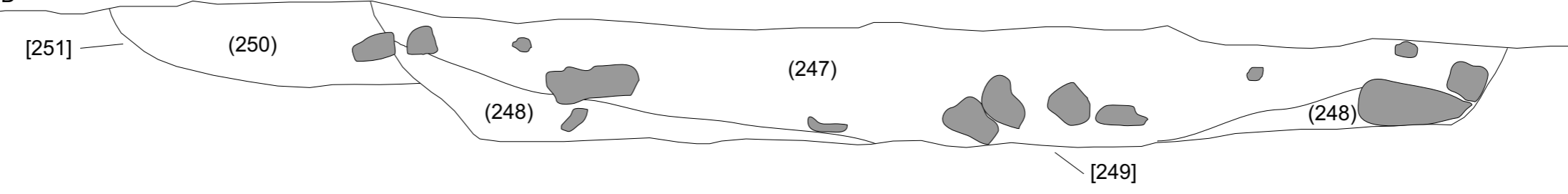
NNE

SSW
90.76m OD



SW
90.59m OD

NE



0 50 cm

4.2 The Ditches (figures 2 & 7)

Two ditches were excavated [208] & [210]. These were on the same line and alignment as each other, running roughly north to south. The two ditches terminated at a distance of 5m from each other, forming a causeway between the two.

Ditch [210]

This ditch was traced for 9m within the area of excavation and was sampled at its southern terminal for a length of 1.5m. It has been truncated by later activity and remains only 0.6m in depth at 89.61m OD. It is 1.1m wide and a rounded “V” shape in profile. No differentiation could be determined for any layers in its fill, which appeared to be a homogeneous yellow-brown loam (209), with some limestone fragments present especially towards the base. The fill also produced small quantities of animal bone and pottery.

Ditch [208]

This ditch was traced for 5m within the area of excavation. It was sampled at its northern terminal for a length of 1.5m, and also a second 1m wide section was cut through it 1.5m further south to investigate its relationship to a possible pit feature [225].

It has also been truncated by later activity and is 0.8m in depth at 89.88m OD. It is 1.3m wide and a rounded “V” shape in profile. The lower fill is a yellow-brown sandy silt-loam (207), above this a layer of similar sandy silt-loam but with sub-angular limestone fragments (206). The upper fill of the ditch consisted of a dark brown sandy loam also with limestone fragments (205).

The second section cut to the south of the terminal showed the same sequence of fills. Each layer was recorded separately, but close investigation proved them to be identical. These were recorded as fill (252) = (207), fill (219) = (206), fill (218) = (205) and cut [224] = [208].

Animal bone was present within the ditch fill (205), (218) and (219).

Cut feature [225]

A sub-circular feature approximately 1m in diameter on the edge of cut [208/224]. It was shallow only 0.05m deep and filled with a yellow brown loam (226). Unfortunately the interface with the ditch [208/224] and its upper fill (205/218) could not be determined, although the area of the interface did produce some finds (217). It is probable that this feature is a tree root cast.

4.3 The Postholes (*figures 2 & 8*)

A series of 6 intercutting post holes were excavated 1m to the west of the line of the two ditches and in between the two terminals at the causeway. Although 6 were positively identified it would seem that many show evidence for multiple cuts and re-cuts.

These are clustered in to two groups one associated with each ditch terminal. The northerly group consists of [216] and [231], the southerly group of [212], [214], [220] and [222].

Posthole [212]

An ovoid post hole measuring 0.95m x 0.85m and 0.3m in depth. It has vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill is a dark yellow-brown loam (211) with limestone rubble possibly used as packing. The cut for this posthole cut two earlier ones [214] and [222]. No finds were associated with the fill.

Posthole [214]

An ovoid post hole measuring 1.12m x 1.02m and 0.13m in depth. It has rounded sides and a flat base. Its fill is a dark yellow-brown loam (213) with limestone rubble possibly used as packing. This cut was quite irregular and indistinct and may prove to be more than one earlier intercutting postholes. It was by cut the later posthole [212]. No finds were associated with the fill.

Posthole [216]

An ovoid post hole measuring 2.4m x 1.25m and 0.2m in depth. It has sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill is a dark yellow-brown loam (215) with limestone rubble possibly used as packing. This cut was quite irregular and indistinct and due to its size may prove to be more than one earlier intercutting postholes. No finds were associated with the fill. It was cut by a later post hole [231].

Posthole [220]

An ovoid post hole measuring 0.34m x 0.5m and 0.16m in depth. It has near vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill is a dark yellow-brown loam (221) with limestone rubble possibly used as packing. No finds were associated with the fill.

Posthole [222]

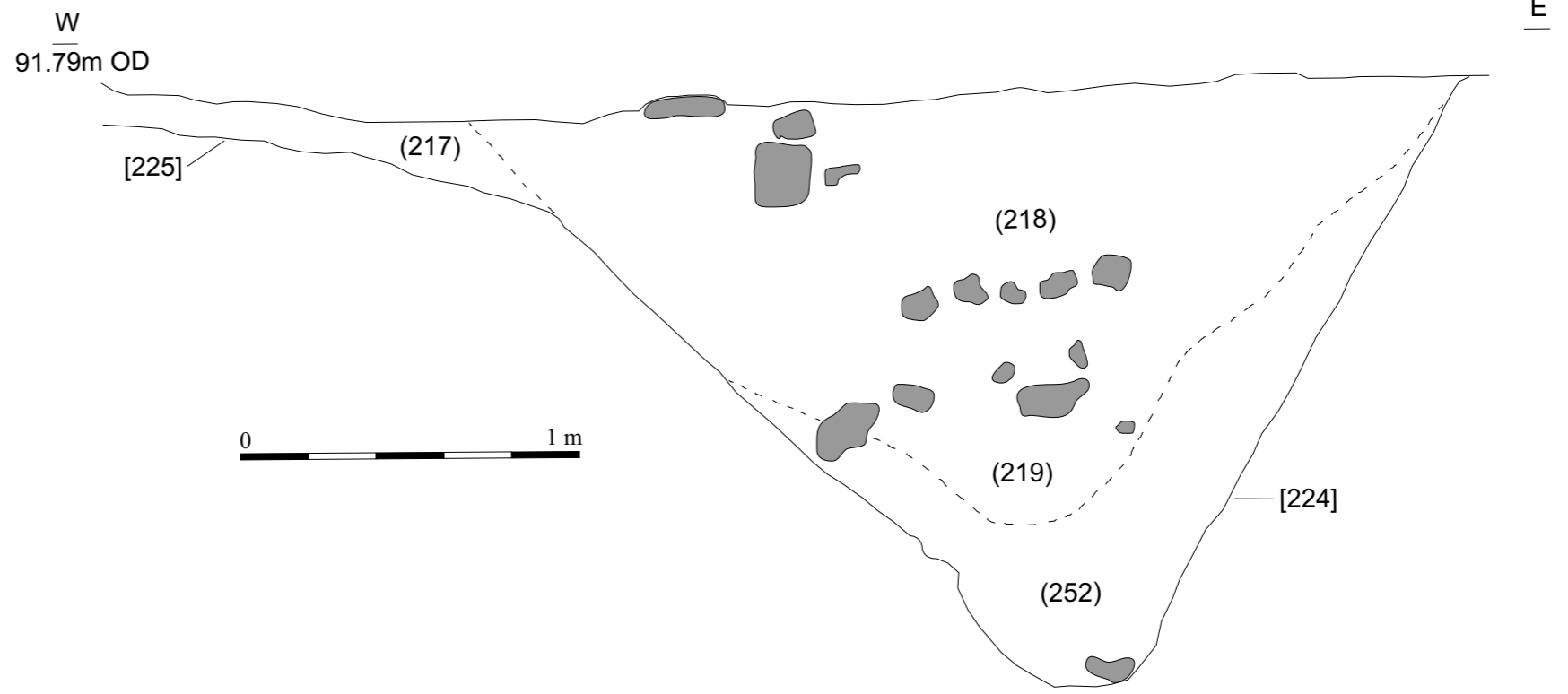
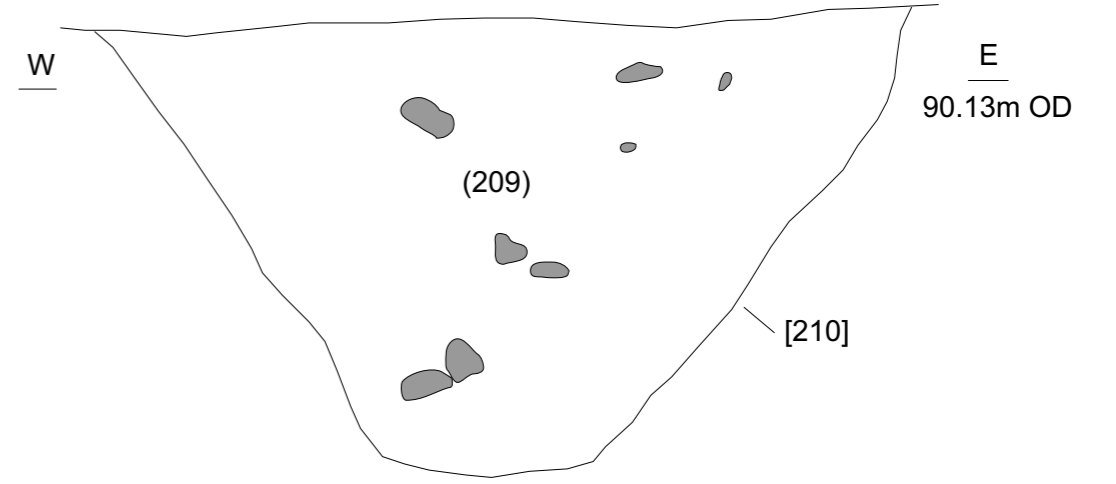
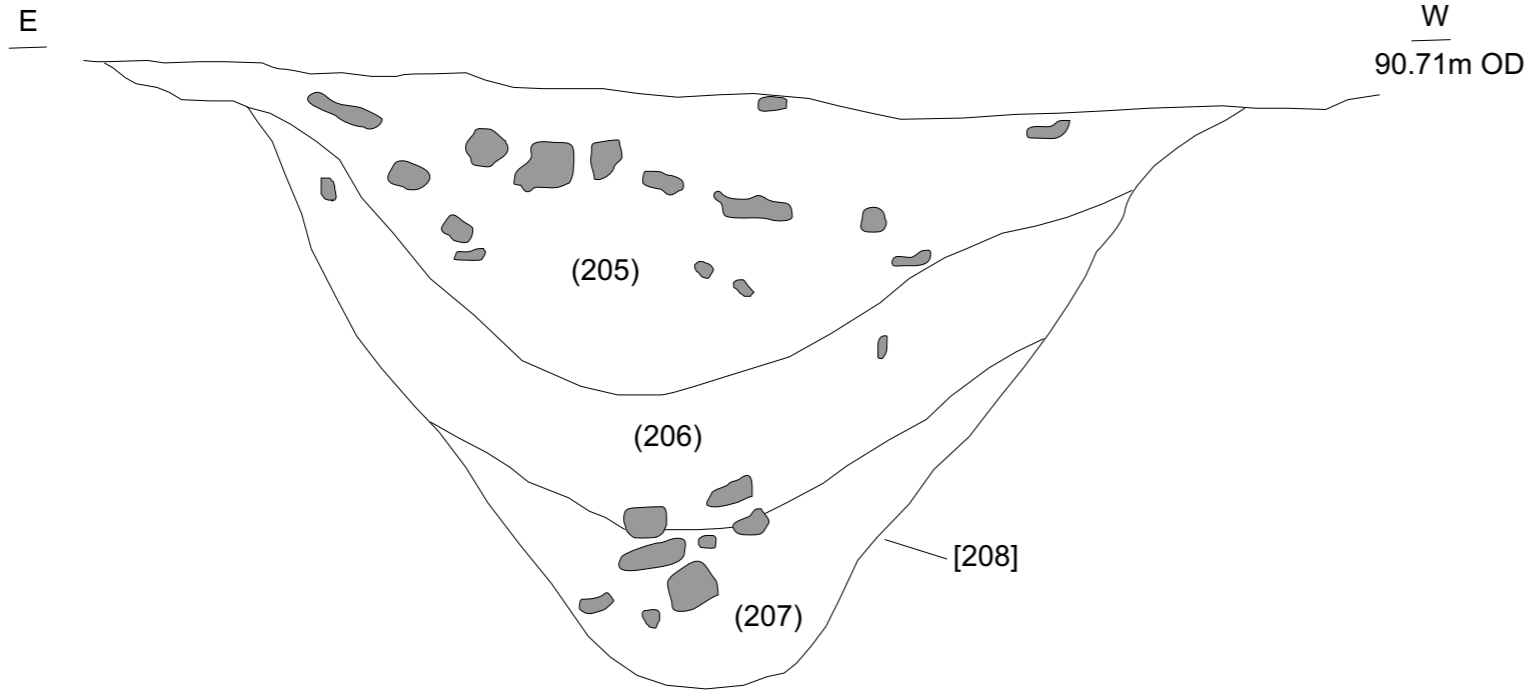
An ovoid post hole measuring 0.95m x 0.45m and 0.14m in depth. It has steeply sloped sides and a flat base. Its fill is a dark yellow-brown loam (223) with limestone rubble possibly used as packing. It was cut by a later posthole [212], and may be part of a series of earlier posthole cuts. No finds were associated with the fill.

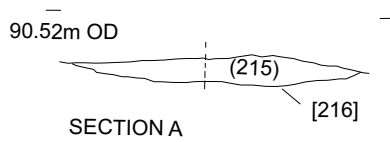
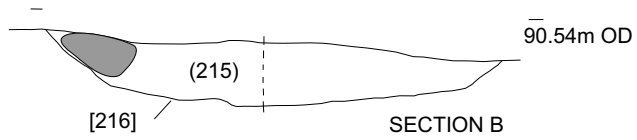
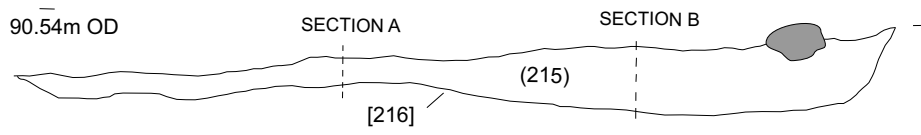
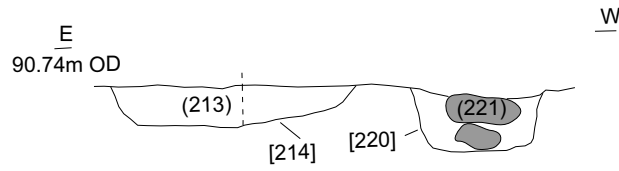
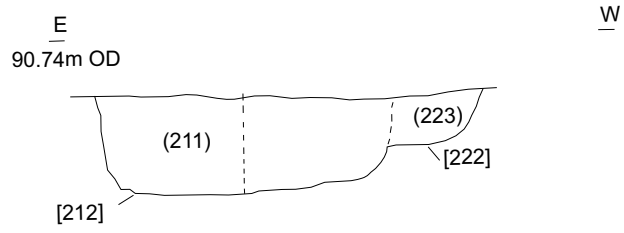
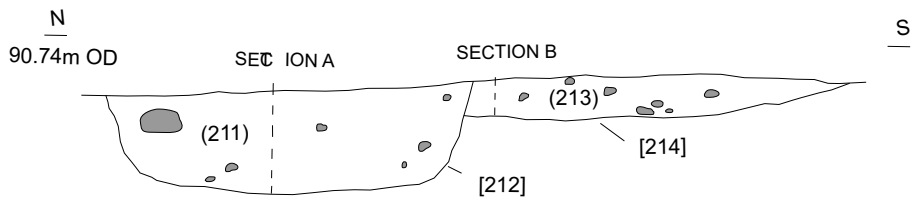
Posthole [231]

A shallow post hole with very indistinct edges. It appears to have vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill is a dark yellow-brown loam (230) with limestone rubble possibly used as packing. The cut for this posthole cuts an earlier one [216]. No finds were associated with the fill.

Posthole/Pit [238]

To the east of the ditches at a distance of 3m is a small sub-circular posthole/pit approximately 0.8m in diameter and 0.06m in depth. It is filled by a dark yellow-brown sand (253). No finds were associated with the fill.





5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (*by Frances Raymond*)

The Iron Age assemblage is composed of 131 sherds of pottery weighing 1137 grams. Much of this material is fragmented and there is relatively little stylistic information. However, enough survives to suggest that one of the pits may have been dug during a transitional phase at the end of the early Iron Age Cut [234], while the sherds in three others Cuts [203], [233] and [246] were deposited during the middle Iron Age. Contemporary pottery was also found in one of the perimeter ditch terminals Cut [210], in the same context as two grog tempered sherds of late Iron Age character.

The rest of the assemblage from four pits Cuts [227], [243], [249] and [251], sections through the perimeter ditch Cuts [208] and [224] and the gateway postholes Cuts [212] and [216] lacks diagnostic featured sherds. The fabrics from virtually all of these deposits are certainly consistent with an early to middle Iron Age date, but cannot be phased more precisely. Late Iron Age activity is again denoted by a single grog tempered fragment from one of the gateway postholes Cut [216].

The assemblage was analysed following the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997). The recorded traits included fabric, form, decoration, surface treatment, colour, wall thickness, abrasion and sherd size. The material was quantified by context within these categories and the results entered on a database, which is available as part of the project archive.

5.11 The Early to Middle Iron Age Deposit

A small group of eight sherds, weighing 129 grams, and representing at least three different vessels was recovered from Cut [234]. These include a rim from a short necked shouldered jar with crudely wiped light yellowish brown surfaces (Figure 9, P1), made from a sandy ware containing limestone (Fabric Group 3); and part of an open miniature vessel with a yellowish red exterior (Figure 9, P2) in a sandy fabric (Fabric Group 1). The shouldered jar rim is in fresh condition and came from the lower pit fill (237), while the moderately abraded fragments from the miniature vessel are derived from both the upper and lower horizons within the feature (235 and 237). The third vessel, also from the lower fill (237), is represented by a single body sherd in a contrasting sandy ware containing shelly limestone (Fabric Group 4).

5.12 The Middle Iron Age Deposits

A total of 64 sherds, weighing 571 grams, are from features which have produced pottery diagnostic of the middle Iron Age. The largest group from Cut 246 is composed of 41 sherds, weighing 319 grams, which represent at least 10 vessels. The diagnostic material includes two very dark grey burnished fragments in good condition made from a shell tempered ware (Fabric Group 6), decorated with a shallow tooled zig-zag motif of middle Iron Age character (not illustrated). A simple flat-topped and upright rim fragment in an identical fabric may be part of the same vessel (not illustrated). A residual externally expanded rim of early Iron Age type from a necked vessel is also represented (Figure 9, P3). This has a dark grey burnished exterior and is made from a sandy fabric containing shell (Fabric Group 5). The rest of the assemblage cannot be phased. Sandy wares are dominant (Fabric

Group 1 – 44%), while sandy wares with limestone or shell are also a prominent component (Fabric Groups 3 and 5 – 27%). The principal inclusions in the remaining fabrics are either shell (Fabric Group 6 – 17%), shelly limestone (Fabric Group 7 – 5%), oolitic limestone (Fabric Group 8 – 5%) or clay pellets (Fabric Group 10 – 2%).

A smaller group of seven sherds, weighing 52 grams, from three different vessels came from Cut [233]. The only diagnostic fragment is from the upper part of a slack shouldered jar (not illustrated). This is in fresh condition with very dark grey wiped surfaces and is made from a sandy fabric (Fabric Group 1). The other vessels are represented by featureless body sherds in contrasting sandy wares which additionally contain either limestone (Fabric Group 3) or shelly limestone (Fabric Group 4).

A deposit of different character, marked by refitting sherds from a single vessel, was recovered from Cut [203]. The sherds, which are in fresh condition, are from a closed globular jar with a handle (Figure 9, P4). This is broken into four fragments weighing 120 grams, that represent 20% of the rim and upper walls. The vessel has a burnished dark grey to yellowish brown exterior and is made from a sandy fabric with limestone (Fabric Group 3).

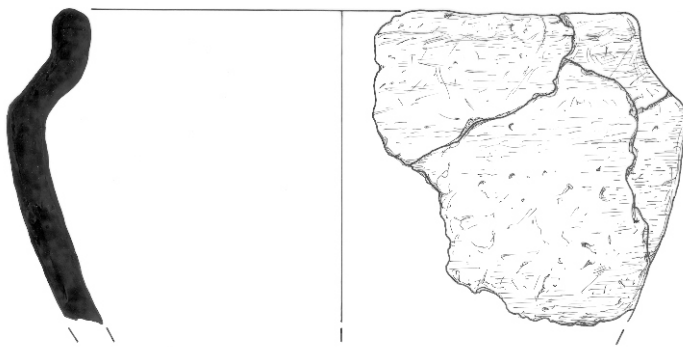
The only other demonstrably middle Iron Age pottery came from one of the perimeter ditch terminals Cut [210], which produced two sherds weighing 64 grams. The more complete is a fresh rim fragment from a neutral globular bowl with a dark grey burnished exterior (Figure 9, P5), in a sandy fabric containing shell (Fabric Group 5). A second upright simple rim came from a vessel decorated with a single narrow horizontal line set close to its mouth, that had been incised into the clay before firing (not illustrated). Both sherds are either residual or were deposited at the very end of the middle Iron Age, since two small late Iron Age grog tempered fragments (Fabric Group 11), weighing nine grams, came from the same deposit Context (209).

5.13 The Un-diagnostic Iron Age Deposits

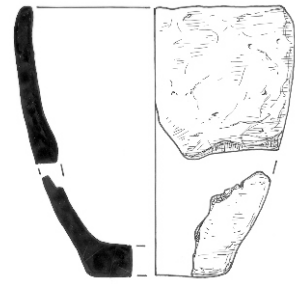
A further 58 sherds, weighing 430 grams, lack stylistically diagnostic features and are made from fabrics which could have been produced during either the early or middle Iron Age (Fabric Groups 1 to 7 and 9). Although there may have been a change in the relative proportions of preferred wares between these periods, none of the assemblages are large enough for these trends to be identified in a statistically meaningful way.

The groups of early to middle Iron Age sherds from three of the pits Cuts [227], [243] and [249] are broadly similar in character. Each of these features contained 10 to 16 fragments of pottery, weighing from 40 to 142 grams, representing between five and seven vessels. By contrast the fourth pit Cut [251] contained an assemblage of comparable size (14 sherds, weighing 32 grams), but derived from only two vessels. In all cases the sherds exhibit varying degrees of abrasion, with each of the pits incorporating a number of fragments in fresh condition.

The perimeter ditch terminal and section Cuts [208] and [224] only produced five sherds, weighing 92 grams, made exclusively from sandy fabrics (Fabric Group 1). Similar wares were used for the two fragments of pottery, weighing five grams, from one of the gateway postholes Cut [212]. A second gateway posthole Cut [216] produced a late Iron Age grog tempered sherd, weighing seven grams.



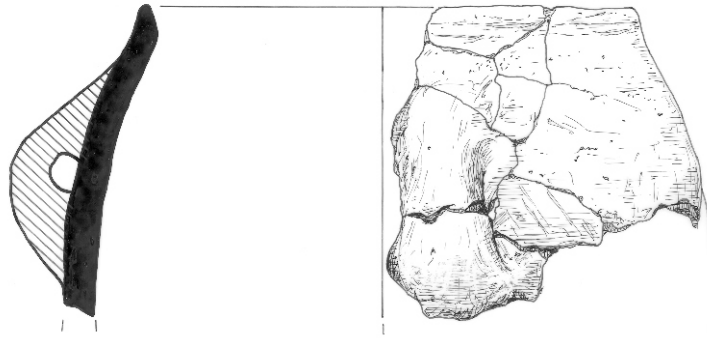
P1



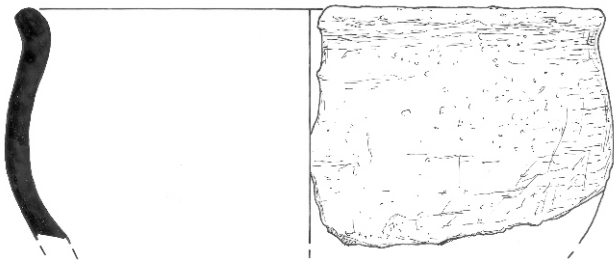
P2



P3



P4



P5

1 0 1 2 3 4 5
scale 1 : 2 cms

5.14 The Character of the Fabrics

The assemblage from the site is dominated by sandy wares (Table 1: Fabric Groups 1 to 5) that were apparently derived from several different sources. This exploitation of contrasting resources, possibly pointing to different production sites, is indicated most clearly by the additional presence of glauconite (Fabric Group 2), limestone (Fabric Group 3) or shelly limestone (Fabric Group 4) in some of the fabrics. In spite of the observed contrasts there is little to indicate more than a localised distribution network, since all of the inclusions would have been present in the varied geological outcrops in the countryside surrounding Oxford. Certainly the common use of high proportions of sand in all of these wares suggests that they were being produced using a widely shared 'preferred' technology.

Fabrics with calcareous inclusions and little or no sand also form a small, but significant component of the assemblage (Table 1: Fabric Groups 6 to 8). These are dominated by shelly wares (Table 1: Fabric Group 6), although once again the presence of both shelly and oolitic limestone (Table 1: Fabric Groups 7 and 8) suggest that either the raw material or pottery was being obtained from different sources or production centres. Unfortunately the assemblage is too fragmentary to determine whether there was a relationship between fabric type and vessel form, or to distinguish any chronological trends.

Fabric Group	Sherd No.	% No.	Sherd Wt. (gms.)	% Wt.
1	61	46.6	376	33.1
2	4	3.0	12	1.1
3	21	16.1	298	26.2
4	6	4.5	63	5.5
5	19	14.5	173	15.2
6	11	8.4	79	6.9
7	2	1.5	70	6.2
8	2	1.5	11	1.0
9	1	0.8	4	0.3
10	1	0.8	35	3.1
11	3	2.3	16	1.4
TOTALS	131	100.0	1137	100.0

Table 1: The relative proportions of pottery by fabric group

5.15 The Fabric Descriptions

Twenty-six wares were identified during the analysis which have been amalgamated into 11 fabric groups. Descriptions of the individual wares are available in the project archive, while the characteristics of the fabric groups are outlined below.

Fabric Group 1 – Sandy Wares

The fabrics in this group were used for early and middle Iron Age vessels, are soft and all contain common to abundant sand. A small percentage (5 sherds, weighing 80 grams) include silt sized to fine sub-angular or rounded quartz sand (<0.06 to 0.25 mm.), together with sparse iron ore and rare glauconite in the same size range, and rare angular calcareous inclusions (0.1 to 0.8 mm.). A slightly higher proportion of sherds (13 sherds, weighing 21 grams) incorporate fine to medium grade sand composed of a mixture of rounded quartz and quartzite (0.12 to 0.5 mm.), together with sparse mica (<0.06 mm.) and organic inclusions (1.0 to 2.0 mm. long), and rare

sub-rounded voids which probably represent leached calcareous material (2.0 to 5.0 mm.). The majority of the sandy sherds (43 sherds, weighing 275 grams) contain fine to coarse sub-rounded quartz sand (0.125 to 1.0 mm.), alongside rare organic inclusions (up to 2.0 mm. long).

Fabric Group 2 – Glauconitic Sandy Wares

These wares are both hard and soft and contain very common to abundant quartz sand. This is either angular and silt sized to fine (<0.06 to 0.25 mm.) or rounded and of a medium grade (0.25 to 0.5 mm.). Sparse to moderate glauconite in the same size range as the sand is also present, as are rare particles of mica (<0.06 mm.) and angular calcareous inclusions (up to 1.0 mm.).

Fabric Group 3 – Sandy Wares with Limestone

This fabric group was used for both early and middle Iron Age vessel types and includes both hard and soft wares. It is characterised by moderate to very common sand and sparse limestone. The sand is mainly composed of fine to coarse rounded grains of quartz (0.12 to 1.0 mm.), while the limestone is angular and in most of the wares ranges up to 1.0 or 2.5 mm. in size, but is up to 5.0 mm. in one of the fabrics. Moderate well rounded iron ore (<0.06 to 1.0 mm.), sparse rounded to sub-angular clay pellets (0.5 to 1.5 mm.), and rare to sparse organic inclusions (up to 17 mm. long) and mica (<0.06 mm.) can also be present.

Fabric Group 4 – Sandy Wares with Shelly Limestone

These wares can be hard or soft and contain moderate to common quartz sand and moderate to sparse shelly limestone. The sand is rounded and is either fine to medium (0.12 to 0.5 mm.) or medium to coarse (0.25 to 1.0 mm.), while the shelly limestone is angular to sub-rounded with a size range of 0.1 to 1.5 mm. or 0.2 to 5.0 mm. Sparse well-rounded iron ore (<0.06 to 0.25 mm.) and rare ooliths (up to 0.5 mm.) may also be present.

Fabric Group 5 – Sandy Wares with Shell

These fabrics were used for early and middle Iron Age vessels. They are mostly hard and all contain common to very common sand together with sparse to common shell. The sand is either composed entirely of quartz or of a mixture of quartz and quartzite, while the size range in individual wares varies from very fine (<0.06 to 0.1 mm.) to medium (0.25 to 0.5 mm.) or coarse (<0.06 to 1.0 mm.). The shell in most of the wares ranges up to 2.0 mm., with fragments of up to 6.0 mm. in one of the fabrics. Sparse well rounded iron ore (<0.06 to 0.2 mm.) and rare mica (<0.06 mm.), organic material (up to 6 mm. long) or sub-angular grog (up to 2.5 mm.) may also be present.

Fabric Group 6 – Shell Tempered Wares

The wares in this group were used for middle Iron Age vessels and are hard to soft. They are characterised by common shell which is mostly up to 2.0 or 3.0 mm., but ranges up to 6.0 mm. in one of the fabrics. Rare to sparse angular or rounded quartz sand (<0.06 to 0.3 mm.), and rare mica (<0.06 to 0.1), clay pellets (0.2 to 3.0 mm.) and grog (2.0 mm.) can also occur in some of the wares.

Fabric Group 7 – Wares Containing Shelly Limestone

These wares are hard and contain moderate to common angular shelly limestone (0.2 to 4.0 mm.). Rare to sparse rounded fine to medium grained quartz sand (0.2 to 0.5 mm.) and rare angular grog (up to 5.0 mm.) are also represented.

Fabric Group 8 – Wares Containing Oolitic Limestone

The fabrics in this group are hard and are characterised by sparse angular limestone (0.5 to 1.5 mm.) and moderate well rounded ooliths (0.2 to 0.8 mm.). Sparse rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 0.8 mm.) and rare mica (<0.06 mm.) and glauconite (0.6 mm.) are also present.

Fabric Group 9 – Wares Containing Limestone and Sand

These fabrics are hard and contain sparse angular limestone (0.2 to 8.0 mm.) and equal quantities of rounded quartz sand (0.3 to 0.5 mm.). Rare rounded clay pellets (up to 1.0 mm.) are also present.

Fabric Group 10 – Wares Mainly Containing Clay Pellets

These are hard fabrics containing common rounded to sub-angular clay pellets (0.5 to 2.0 mm.) and sparse shell (0.2 to 4.0 mm.) and rounded quartz sand (0.1 to 0.5 mm.).

Fabric Group 11 – Grog Tempered Wares

The wares in this group are soft and are characterised by very common sub-angular grog (0.5 to 2.0 mm.). Rare well-rounded quartz sand (0.3 to 0.6 mm.) is also present.

5.16 Discussion of the Pottery Assemblage

Although much of the pottery cannot be phased, there are tentative indications that at least one of the pits may date to the early Iron Age, or to a transitional period between the early and the middle Iron Age Cut [234]. Unfortunately the evidence for this is somewhat ambiguous. The profile of the shouldered jar (Figure 9, P1) is closely paralleled by a vessel recovered from an early/middle Iron Age structure at Slade Farm, Bicester (Woodward and Marley 2001, Figure 17:27), while the well-defined angular shoulder is more typical of the early Iron Age. The style of the miniature vessel (Figure 9, P2) echoes that of the much larger barrel shaped jars within the early Iron Age assemblage from Site 1 at Stanton Harcourt to the west of Oxford (Hamlin 1968, Figure 6: 1 and 11). Yet it also recalls the shape of the middle Iron Age miniatures from Appleford to the south (De Roche and Lambrick 1981, Figure 22: 15 and Figure 23: 1).

The residual early Iron Age rim from Cut [246] provides unequivocal evidence for activity on the site during this period. A vessel with a broadly similar profile came from the Phase I pits at Farmoor (Lambrick 1979, Figure 21:4), where a date between 550 and 300 BC was suggested (*ibid.*, p. 37). Further parallels occur within the early Iron Age assemblage from Site 1 at Stanton Harcourt (Hamlin 1968, Figure 6: 24).

The globular profiles of the two more complete middle Iron Age vessels from Cut [203] (Figure 9, P4) and one of the perimeter ditch terminals Cut [210] (Figure 9, P5) are typical of contemporary assemblages from the Upper Thames Valley, where such vessels are in the majority. They are represented, for example, in south and south-east Oxford at Whitehouse Road (Timby 1994, Figure 12: 1, 3, 4, and 13) and Blackbird

Leys (Brown 2004, Figure 5: 13); to the south of Oxford at Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (De Roche 1978, Forms D0 and D1) and Appleford (Hinchliffe and Thomas 1981, Figure 5: 19 and 22; De Roche and Lambrick 1981, Figure 18: 3, 4, 5 and 9); to the west at Farmoor (Lambrick 1979, Figure 22: 39, 43 and 55, Figure 23, 75, 89, 90, 107 and 108) and Northmoor (Allen 1990, Figure 20: 6, Figure 22: 4 and Figure 23: 18); to the north-west at Witney (Timby 1996, Figure 6: 3, 4 and 9); and to the north-east at Merton (Barclay 1998, Figure 12: 8) and Bicester (Woodward and Marley 2001, Figure 14: 8, 9, 11 and 12).

The forms of these vessels may well be common, but the occurrence of a handle on the jar from Cut [203] marks it out as exceptional. Occasional handles are represented within the assemblages from sites in the Oxford region, with examples being recorded at Whitehouse Road (Timby 1994, Figure 12: 7 and Figure 13: 15), Ashville Trading Estate (De Roche 1978, Figure 44: 188 and Figure 48: 261), Appleford (De Roche and Lambrick 1981, Figure 23: 8) and Farmoor (Lambrick 1979, p. 37). However, all of these are detached and it is rare to find a handle still mounted on a middle Iron Age jar.

The decorated sherds from Cut [246] (not illustrated) are equally unusual. Decorated vessels form a minor component within middle Iron Age assemblages from the Oxford area (Lambrick 1979, p. 37; Allen 1990, p. 42), but the motifs are usually incised or stamped. The incised line on the rim from Cut [210] is fairly typical and is a feature which recurs within the larger assemblages from Farmoor (Lambrick 1979, p. 37) and Northmoor (Allen 1990, Figure 25: 22 and p. 42). The shallow tooling on the sherds from Cut [246] recall a vessel from Whitehouse Road also decorated with burnished lines (Timby 1994, p. 58), although in this instance the criss-cross design is entirely different. The use of shallow tooled geometric motifs is far more reminiscent of the decorative devices found on middle Iron Age pottery further to the south in the Blewburton/Dorchester area (cf. Lambrick 1984, 170-173).

The varied character of the fabrics is echoed in Oxford by a similar range of wares from Whitehouse Road (Timby 1994, p. 56-60) and Blackbird Leys (Brown 2004, 212-215). The derivation of pottery from a number of different sources suggests that Iron Age communities in the area were keying into a complex distribution network, albeit one that appears to have been locally based. The unique connections shared by local groups may well account for some of the apparent contrasts between the Oxford assemblages and those selected and used by the occupants of settlements in the surrounding countryside.

It has been argued that there was a progression in the Upper Thames area from the preferred use of shell tempered pottery during the early Iron Age to sandy wares in the middle Iron Age (Harding 1972, p. 98; Lambrick 1979, p. 36). This is somewhat blurred at Bernwood School and on other Oxford sites, (Timby 1994, p. 59; and Brown 2004, p. 215), where shell tempered fabrics were used for middle Iron Age forms. It is not inconceivable that this might signal links with communities further to the north around Witney (Timby 1996, p. 80) Merton (Barclay 1998, p. 68-69), Bicester (Woodward and Marley 2001, p. 246; Brown 2000, p. 184-185 and 193), Woodstock (Booth 1998, p. 105-107), Steeple Aston (Brown 2001, p. 184) and Rollright (Lambrick 1988, p. 93), where shelly and other calcareous wares predominate during the middle Iron Age.

At Bernwood School the assemblage is unfortunately far too small for the identification of convincing trends. It is possible that the use of shell tempered wares was confined to the earlier part of the middle Iron Age, but this cannot be demonstrated from the available evidence. It is, however, notable that the mixed character of the wares from the pits contrasts with the restricted range of mainly sandy fabrics from the enclosure ditch and gateway postholes (Fabric Group 1). Grog tempered pottery from these same deposits (Fabric Group 11) suggests that the features may date to a transitional phase between the middle and late Iron Age. There is a notable absence of 'Belgic' wares dating at the end of the first century BC.

5.2 Human Bone *(by Amy Grey Jones)*

Two skeletons, (229) and (236), were recovered from two individual crouched inhumations, [227] and [234] respectively. Burial [227] was orientated west-east, with the head at the west end facing to the north. Burial [234] was orientated north-south, with the head at the north end facing towards the east. Further human remains were also recovered from the following contexts; a left distal humerus (upper arm) was recovered from the fill of pit [203], three fragments of human cranium, a hand phalange and a tarsal from context (235), and a fragment of rib from context (228), the latter two both being grave fills from the respective inhumations.

During the preceding evaluation of the site a crouched inhumation was also discovered (context (8/06)). This was badly truncated horizontally and the remains were very fragmentary. It was orientated north-south, probably with the head at the north end, facing towards the east in a similar position to burial [234] which was later discovered immediately adjacent to its location. The remains from the evaluation were not available for analysis as part of this report and although it was established that the individual was an adult the remains were too fragmentary for more specific age and sex information to be determined.

5.21 Methods

Skeletal data for the two inhumations (BABS04.85 229) and (BABS04.85 236) were recorded onto paper record forms following the MoLAS standards and guidelines (Connell and Rauxloh, *forthcoming*). Both skeletons were of adult age and therefore only methods concerning the analysis of adults are outlined below.

Preservation

An assessment was made of the state of preservation of the inhumed remains: from 'good' (1) to 'poor' (3).

- 1) Bone surface is in good condition with no erosion, fine surface detail such as coarse woven bone deposition, if present, would be clearly visible to the naked eye. (Good).
- 2) Bone surface is in moderate condition, with some post mortem erosion on long bone shafts, but the margins of the articular surfaces and some prominences are eroded. (Moderate).

- 3) Bone surface is in poor condition with extensive post-mortem erosion, resulting in pitted cortical surfaces and long bones with articular surfaces absent or severely eroded. (Poor).

Age at death

Age at death estimation was based on observations of the pubic symphysis and the auricular surface as outlined in Buikstra & Ubelaker (1994) and on changes at the costo-chondral junction (Iskan *et al* 1984; 1985). In addition the amount of wear on the molar teeth was used as a broad guide to the age at death (Brothwell 1981).

The resulting data was used to assign the skeleton to a broad age group, as shown below in Table 1.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Age range</i>
Young adult	18-25 years
Middle adult A	26-35 years
Middle adult B	36-45 years
Mature adult	>46 years

Table 1: Adult age codes

Sex estimation

Estimation of the sex of adult remains was based on the visual observation of the morphological characteristics of the pelvis and skull as collated and described by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). A total of seven pelvic features and seven skull characteristics were scored on a five point scale as follows, 1 = male, 2 = probable male, 3 = intermediate, 4 = probable female and 5 = female.

Metrical data

Where preservation and completeness allowed, measurements were taken of a number of cranial, dental and post-cranial features, using landmarks identified in Brothwell (1981) and Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994).

Stature estimation

The length of the long bones, when available for measurement, were employed to provide an estimate of stature. This was calculated using the formulae created by Trotter (1970).

Non-metric traits

Cranial, mandibular and post-cranial non-metric or epigenetic traits were examined (Berry and Berry 1967, Finnegan 1978, Brothwell 1981) and scored as '1' present, '0' absent or '9' unobservable, if the area was damaged or absent. A full list of the traits observed can be found on the skeletal recording forms.

Palaeopathology

Pathological changes were recorded using guidelines set out by the British Association of Biological Anthropologists and Osteologists (Roberts and Connell 2004). Basic pathological information was obtained from Aufderheide and Rodriguez-Martin (1998) and Cox and Mays (2000) with supplementary references as required. Cribra orbitalia was scored according to Stuart-Macadam (1991). The severity of vertebral osteophytes were based on the criteria set out by Sager (1969).

Dental pathology

The recording of dental pathology covered five pathological changes; calculus deposits and periodontal (gum) disease, according to Brothwell (1981), and carious lesions, hypoplastic defects, and periapical lesions, according to the methods described by Connell and Rauxloh (*forthcoming*). Each observation was recorded by tooth or tooth position as appropriate.

5.22 Results

Preservation and completeness

Skeleton (236) was virtually complete but the cervical vertebrae and some parts of the cranium and torso were absent. Skeleton (229) was much less complete with mainly the torso and left upper limb represented and the most durable areas of the skull preserved. Again the cervical vertebrae were missing and none of the bones of the pelvis or lower limbs were recovered. A full catalogue of the remains is contained in the site archive and a summary catalogue can be found in Table 4. Both skeletons were generally well preserved but there was some cortical erosion and damage to the ends of the bones, resulting in a score of 2 (moderate). The skeleton recovered during evaluation was heavily truncated, fragmentary and poorly preserved (score 3), with only the left lower limb and part of the spine recovered.

Minimum number of individuals

There were a total of four adult individuals represented by the skeletal remains. Each of the burials contained a single adult individual and a minimum of one other adult individual was represented by the disarticulated bone recovered from context (204). No age, sex, or metrical data could be obtained from the disarticulated material, or from the burial discovered during evaluation, beyond the fact that both these individuals were adult.

Age at death

Due to the poor completeness of skeleton (229) an estimate of age at death could only be based on tooth wear, this suggested that the individual was a young adult, between 18 and 25 years of age. The third molars were in the process of erupting which also supports this age estimation.

A more reliable age estimate was gained for skeleton (236), based on tooth wear and the auricular surface, suggesting an age of 26-35 years, with the emphasis on the latter half of that age range.

Sex estimation

The biological sex of both skeletons was assessed as male. The middle adult individual (236) was a definite male and the young adult (229) was estimated as a probable male. This uncertainty was mainly due to the lack of observable pelvic characteristics in skeleton (229).

Metrical data

No teeth were available for dental measurements in skeleton (236) and no postcranial elements of skeleton (229) could be measured. The following tables outline all of the metric data obtained, in mm.

<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Skeleton 229 (mm)</i>
Maxillary	
L canine (b-l)	8.2
L canine (m-d)	8.2
L M1 (b-l)	12.3
L M1 (m-d)	11.5
Mandibular	
L canine (b-l)	7.5
L canine (m-d)	7.1
R M1 (b-l)	11.8
R M1 (m-d)	12
L M1 (b-l)	11.7
L M1 (m-d)	12.1

Table 2. Dental metrics

<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Skeleton 236 (mm)</i>
Femoral length (R)	434
Femoral head diameter (R)	46

Table 3. Postcranial metrics

Stature estimation

Stature was estimated at 165 cm for the middle adult male (236), based on the length of the femur. This is consistent with the known range of 164 – 174 cm for males from the Iron Age period in Britain (Roberts and Cox 2003:103). Stature could not be estimated for the young adult male (229) as none of the long bones could be measured.

Non-metric traits

Few non-metric traits were observable and only one, a lateral “squatting” facet of the left tibia (skeleton 236), was present. These traits are considered to be of a non-pathological, epigenetic nature and have been used in the past to try and establish familial groupings and separate populations. However, the “level of heritability” of such morphological traits has not been established (Tyrrell 2000:303). Evidence suggests shared environmental circumstances may have as much of an influence as genetic factors (Saunders 1989). Obviously the current sample is too small for further analysis.

Palaeopathology

Dental pathology

Dental caries

Only two teeth were affected by carious lesions, both from skeleton (236) (2/34 teeth overall). The lower right second incisor had a gross carious lesion (the site of origin could not be identified) penetrating the pulp cavity and the lower left canine was affected by a shallow carious lesion on the root surface.

Hypoplastic defects

These defects in the tooth enamel are caused by stresses that interfere with proper growth: for example, nutritional imbalances, vitamin D deficiency and serious childhood illnesses. Skeleton (229) had lines, grooves, and pits affecting the permanent lower canine, upper and lower premolars, and lower molar teeth (6/34 teeth overall) indicating that they may have suffered biological stresses during childhood.

Calculus

Only small deposits of calculus were recorded on one tooth (1/34 teeth), a lower right third molar from skeleton (236).

Periodontal disease

Only skeleton (236) had evidence for periodontal disease causing recession of the bone around the mandibular canine, premolar and molar teeth.

The younger adult skeleton (229) was only affected by hypoplastic defects, but the middle adult individual suffered from carious cavities, periodontal disease and slight deposits of calculus. This increase in dental disease in the second individual might be expected with increasing age.

Vertebral pathology - Skeleton (236)

The vertebral column is incomplete but the observed changes were confined to the joint between the fourth and fifth lumbar vertebral bodies (referred to as L4 and L5 respectively). There is anterior periarticular lipping (osteophytes) and adjacent

periosteal reactive bone on the anterior surface of the bodies. In particular there is significant erosion of the anterior aspect of the joint surfaces, particularly on the fifth lumbar vertebral body.

There are also significant changes to the joint surfaces. The anterior two-thirds of the inferior endplate of L4 and the superior endplate of L5 are both grossly porotic. The intervertebral joint space is greatly reduced and the inferior endplate of L4 is depressed and closely follows the contour of the eroded anterior L5. There is subsequently some polishing of these joint surfaces, as the intervertebral disc has degenerated to a degree where the bony surfaces articulate with each other rather than with the intervertebral disc.

These changes are considered to be suggestive of an anterior herniation of the intervertebral disc, resulting in focal erosion of the anterior body and marginal reactive bone formation, as described by Ortner (2003:558). The herniation of the disc probably has a traumatic aetiology, hyperextension of the spine, and in turn this has caused the degeneration of the disc and joint, i.e. osteoarthritis, specifically indicated by the development of osteophytes and the porosity of the vertebral endplate.

Although the vertebrae are both partially damaged post-mortem there also appears to be some lateral (left) rotational displacement of L4 over L5. Intermittent osteophytic lipping, i.e. joint degeneration, was also found throughout the thoracic vertebrae, T3 – T7 and T9 – T11, probably as a result of the lumbar displacement affecting the distribution of weight throughout the spine.

5.23 Summary

A summary of the osteological data can be seen in the following table (Table 4). No age, sex, or metrical data could be obtained from the disarticulated material, beyond the fact that the third individual represented was an adult.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Preservation</i>	<i>Completeness</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Stature</i>	<i>Pathology</i>
(8/06)	Poor	Lower vertebrae, left pelvis and lower limb only	Adult	U	U	U
204 fill of pit [203]	Moderate	Distal left humerus only	Adult	U	U	None
228 fill from 229	Moderate	Rib fragment only	Adult	As 229	As 229	As 229
229	Moderate	No cervical/sacral vertebrae, no pelvis or lower limbs	18-25 years	?M	U	Dental hypoplasia
235 fill from 236	Moderate	Fragment of cranial vault, int. hand phalange, and tarsal only	Adult	As 236	As 236	As 236
236	Moderate	Cervical vertebrae missing	25-35 years	M	165 cm	Carious cavities, slight periodontal disease, compression fracture of lumbar vertebra

Table 4. Summary of osteological data (U=unobservable)

5.24 Discussion

Two young adult male individuals were recovered from two crouched inhumations and a third adult individual was represented by a single bone recovered from the fill of a pit. These features have been dated to the late Iron Age. A third adult individual was represented by the burial found during the evaluation of the site.

Stature was consistent with the known range for males from the British Iron Age and both individuals had very little dental disease. Generally dental disease was relatively low during the Iron Age, especially compared with the preceding Bronze Age, perhaps reflecting better oral hygiene or a change in diet (Roberts and Cox 2003:100). Defects in the enamel of the teeth indicate that one individual (229) suffered physiological stresses during their youth.

One individual (236) displayed evidence of a traumatic injury to the lower back. Indications of stress, strain and trauma in the back are not uncommon in the Iron Age, with around 23% of all individuals recorded in this period from Britain having evidence for joint disease in their spine (Roberts and Cox 2003:95). This correlates well with the archaeological evidence for increased clearance and working of the land in the later Iron Age (*ibid*:96). It is probable that the people who occupied the site at Barton participated in the types of manual activities associated with this agrarian economy, as indicated by features such as pits that may have been utilised for the storage of grain.

Burial traditions during the Iron Age incorporated a number of imported practices but a general 'native' tradition, of crouched inhumations without grave goods, usually in casual situations such as disused storage pits, are commonly found within hill forts and other permanent settlements, and even persist where alternative rites, such as rich cremation graves, predominate (Taylor 2001: 68). Disarticulated human material recovered from contexts containing animal bone or generally described as rubbish are also not uncommon. Suggestions for the origins of this material include the disturbance of shallow graves in densely settled areas or as the result of exhumation practices.

Radiocarbon dating of the burial found during the evaluation of the site dated it to the period 20 AD-240 AD (95.4% probability). This date range is predominantly Roman suggesting that this burial was of early Roman date. Given that it was on the same orientation and also crouched there is no significant difference in burial practice between this burial and those discovered during the excavations. It is accepted that despite the Roman imperial colonisation of Britain at this time, it is unlikely, for these late Iron Age rural communities, that their immediate social environment or local economy changed radically. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that a later burial, belonging to the early Roman period, should appear so like those of the later Iron Age, and rather represents a continuity of practice into the early Roman period in these rural communities. In fact it is not until the later 2nd century that we start to see major changes in the organisation of the rural landscape that would affect these communities.

6 DISCUSSION

Bronze Age activity is known in the area, it is at the base of the hill along the Bayswater Brook at approximately 500-600m west of the line of the later Roman road (Allen 1995).

In 2002 evaluation Trench 8 located a pit [8/05] containing a crouched inhumation (JMHS 2002). The head was to the north and the fill showed signs of scorching and burning. The current work located a further 8 pits in the vicinity of this burial.

This burial is very similar to the two inhumations (229) & (236). These also show signs of scorching and burnt material in the fills. They are all within 6m of the 2002 burial, one as close as 1.5m.

Two pits as seen to inter-cut each other [249] & [251], suggesting multiple phases of activity on the site. These pits do not show any evidence for inhumation, probably indicating that these pits were dug for similar purposes, that of storage. The sherds from [251] show no signs of abrasion and likely date this feature to the middle Iron Age.

The pottery report highlighted the mixed character of the wares from the pits contrasting with the restricted range of mainly sandy fabrics from the enclosure ditch and gateway postholes. It is therefore possible that the pits are multi-phased covering a wide date range. This gives more evidence to the theory of an open settlement later enclosed in the late Iron Age.

One inhumation (236) was placed on the primary fill (237) of the pit [234] that it was buried in. This may indicate that the burials are in fact a secondary use for these pits. The scorching within these reused pits may be evidence for some form of ritual cleansing by fire before the burial of the dead.

There is a linear alignment to the pit cluster, which is consistent with other sites in the region during the early to middle Iron Age (Allen 2000). Although it is possible that the pits excavated are only part of a much larger area that extended to the east and north of the site and has been truncated by later activity.

The majority of the pits are circular, possible storage pits common in the early and middle Iron Age. Although some are more irregular in plan, which is often attributed to the late Iron Age. As there is a gradual disappearance of cylindrical storage pits into the late Iron Age (Allen 2000). There appears to be a long period of use of pits of the site as storage, with some smaller ones possibly being filled while larger ones dug.

Most Iron Age settlements include the occasional human burial in storage pits, as at Beard Mill and Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt, Standlake, Dorchester, at City Farm and at Ashville, Abingdon (Allen 2000). Sometimes only select bones are present within these pits. This has parallels to pit [203] which may be a ritual burial. The fresh conjoining sherds of a globular jar indicate the date of this deposit is in the middle Iron Age.

The morphology of the pits combined with the early to middle Iron Age pottery in the fills of burials [234] and [227] would seem to clearly date these features. Apart from in certain contexts the majority of the pottery shows signs of abrasion. However a convincing indicator that the pottery is not contemporary with the deposits and may be residual is the C14 date obtained from the inhumation (8/07) excavated in 2002. This was dated to the period between 20AD and 240AD with a 95.4% probability.

The burial pit [8/05] associated with this inhumation contained within its fill 11 sherds of Iron Age date. These appear to conform to the fabric groups 1, 5, 8, 10 and 11. Also within the pit was a worn rim in a sandy fabric that is possibly Roman (Oxfordshire). The presence of fabric group 11 would also suggest a later date. It is

also interesting to note that the majority of this pits assemblage is described as worn, relatively small and could be redeposited/residual (JMHS 2002).

Iron Age burials in the region are usually laid on one side in either a crouched or foetal position. Grave goods are not present (Allen 2000). All the inhumations discovered on the site conform to these criteria. Including the burial [8/05] which is demonstrably Roman in date.

Although the burial pits [227] and [234] did contain datable material, much of it was abraded in a similar fashion to the material from [8/05]. It is therefore impossible accurately date these inhumations, without more C14 dating. It is possible that these burials date to the middle Iron Age, although it is more likely that they are all contemporary with each other dating to the early Roman period.

The site is surrounded by two enclosure ditches. The two ditch terminals form a 5m wide causeway. Between these terminal and slightly to one side are two groups of intercutting postholes. This spacing and juxtaposition would suggest some form of gateway blocking the causeway across the ditches, and would further suggest that the west side of the ditches be considered the interior of a ditched enclosure.

Six postholes were positively identified and it would appear that many show evidence for multiple cuts and re-cuts. The fact that some of those that were identified also cut others lends some weight to this theory. This would indicate that the gateway structure associated with these postholes was maintained and rebuilt over a period of time.

This gateway was set back from the causeway and not at the terminals, this would suggest that an internal bank was originally in place, created from the up-cast from the digging of the ditches. All cut features show signs of have being truncated by reduction of ground level, this would have removed all evidence for any bank that may have existed.

The pit [238] outside the gateway is slightly off centre to the north. It is probably from an earlier phase of occupation on the site, but may be part of an outer defensive line. Similar short ditches were discovered at Mingies Ditch (Allen & Robinson 1993) and Watkins Farm (Allen 1990).

An evaluation trench was excavated in 2002 to the north of ditch [210]. Trench 5, as it was labelled, did not show any evidence for a continuation of the ditch (JMHS 2002). This is because of the truncation of the old land surface sloping down away to the north and the depth of made ground above this in the area.

As has already been reported this truncation could have removed as much as 1.5m. This would give an overall depth for the ditches around 2m to 2.5m and a width of about 3m. Larger than the middle Iron Age ditches at Mingies Ditch (Allen & Robinson 1993) and Watkins Farm (Allen 1990). It dimensions would lie closer to those of the middle ditch at Abingdon (Allen 2000), although that is not to suggest that this site on the same scale as the Oppida.

The primary fill (209) of the northern ditch contained a small quantity of Late Iron Age pottery as did the fill of one of the earliest postholes (215). This indicates that the

gateway is contemporary with the ditch. In the middle to late Iron Age enclosed settlements became more common in the region (Allen 2000), and the date attributed to the ditch fits in to this regional pattern. The pottery evidence suggests that there is significant early and middle Iron Age activity on the site, and it is likely that this site started as an open settlement and was later enclosed similar to the site at Rollright. This would also fit the pattern of continuity of community demonstrated at Stranton Harcourt and Gravelly Guy field (Allen 2000).

The area of the Upper Thames Valley, west of Oxford and east of Lechlade remains relatively unchanged into the late Iron Age, as an area of traditional farming. In contrast to Abingdon and Dorchester. Coin evidence suggests that this area was on a boundary zone of tribal groups (Miles 1998). It is possible that its location close to this frontier was the catalyst for the settlement to adopt a more defensive stance and construct the enclosure ditches.

Late first century activity is confined to the vicinity of the road, in the form of a cremation. By the second century this activity had moved about 200m to the east of the road and north of the Bayswater Brook. In the third and fourth centuries the activity was closer to the road. Ditches, kiln debris and burials of this date have all been found to the north-east of the site clustered along the Roman road (Allen 1995).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The main problems associated with this site is that much of the archaeology on the site has been truncated by later landscaping of the area.

Bronze Age activity in the area appears to have been confined to the valley bottom of Bayswater Brook that is overlooked by the site. By the early Iron Age this activity had moved to the adjacent hillside. This area is the focus of activity until the 2nd century AD with a move back to the valley bottom.

There is early and middle Iron Age activity on the site possibly in the form of an open settlement utilising cylindrical storage pits. In the late Iron Age this settlement appears to have been enclosed by a substantial bank and ditch. These defences were maintained over a long period of time as attested by the rebuilding of the gateway.

The last phase of activity on the site would appear to be its use as a cemetery. The evidence would suggest a continuation of earlier Iron Age burial traditions within the area, into the early Roman period, possibly even continuing the tradition of pit digging in the area. It may mark a time of change within the society with people trying to keep links to the past alive, reaffirming traditions and ancestral land claims.

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APPENDIX A – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date (TPQ)
200	Deposit	Topsoil		-	-	-	
201	Deposit	Made Ground		-	-	-	Modern
202	Natural	Orange-brown clay-sand	-	-	-	-	
203	Cut	Pit	0.15	1.2	1.2	-	
204	Fill	Dark brown silty sand	0.15	-	-	Pot, Bone, burnt mat.	Middle Iron Age
205	Fill	Dark Brown sandy-silt	0.4	-	-	bone	
206	Fill	yellow-brown silty loam w/ stone	0.2	-	-		
207	Fill	yellow-brown silty loam	0.2	-	-		
208	Cut	Rounded V-shaped ditch	0.8	1.3	(5.0)		
209	Fill	yellow-brown loam	0.6	-	-	pot, bone	Late Iron Age
210	Cut	Rounded V-shaped ditch	0.6	1.1	9.0	-	
211	Fill	yellow-brown silt	0.3	0.85	0.95	-	
212	Cut	Posthole	0.3	0.85	0.95	-	
213	Fill	yellow-brown silt	0.14	1.02	1.95	-	
214	Cut	Irregular cut	0.14	1.02	1.95	-	
215	Fill	yellow-brown silt	0.18	1.25	2.40	-	Late Iron Age
216	Cut	Irregular cut	0.18	1.25	2.40	-	
217	Findings	Findings, interface 224 & 225	-	-	-	?	
218	Fill	Dark Brown sandy-silt	0.6	-	-	bone	
219	Fill	yellow-brown silty loam w/ stone		-	-	bone	
220	Cut	Posthole	0.16	0.34	0.50	-	
221	Fill	yellow-brown silty sand	0.16	0.34	0.50	-	

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
222	Cut	Posthole	0.14	0.45	0.95	-	
223	Fill	yellow-brown silty sand	0.14	0.45	0.95	-	
224	Cut	Rounded V-shaped ditch	0.86	1.5	(5.0)	-	
225	Cut	Sub-circular pit	0.1	1.5	0.6	-	
226	Fill	Dark yellow brown loam	0.1	-	-	-	
227	Cut	Sub circular pit	0.18	1.25	1.25	-	
228	Fill	Grey-Brown sandy loam	0.18	-	-	-	Early-Mid Iron Age
229	Inhumation	Human Skeleton	-	-	-	-	
230	Fill	Yellow-orange sand	0.06	-	-	-	
231	Cut	posthole ?	0.06	-	-	-	
232	Fill	Grey-Brown sandy loam	0.15	-	-	pot	
233	Cut	Pit	0.15	1.22	1.0	-	
234	Cut	Pit	0.24	1.63	1.64	-	
235	Fill	Purple-brown silty sand	0.12	-	-	pot, bone	Early Iron Age
236	Inhumation	Human Skeleton	-	-	-	-	
237	Fill	Yellow Loam	0.12	-	-	-	
238	Cut	Pit	0.06	0.8	-	-	
239	Fill	Brown sand silt	0.18	-	-	pot, bone, flint	
240	Fill	sandy loam	0.15	-	-	pot	
241	Fill	Grey-Brown sandy loam	0.15	-	-	-	
242	Fill	sandy loam	0.1	-	-	-	
243	Cut	Pit	0.25	1.9	1.7	-	
244	Fill	Yellow-Brown sand	0.25	-	-	pot, bone	
245	Fill	Orange-Brown Sand	0.15	-	-	pot, bone	
246	Cut	Sub circular pit	0.4	1.5	1.7	-	
247	Fill	sandy loam	0.22	-	-	pot, bone	
248	Fill	clay loam	0.1	-	-	pot	
249	Cut	circular pit	0.22	2		-	

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	 Finds	 Date (TPQ)
250	Fill	Grey-Brown sandy loam	0.15	-	-	pot	Middle Iron Age
251	Cut	Circular (?) pit	0.15	0.5		-	
252	Fill	yellow-brown loam		-	-	-	
253	Fill	Dark yellow-brown sand	0.06	-	-	-	

APPENDIX B – ANIMAL BONE INVENTORY

Table showing species and elements (not necessarily complete) represented in each context. (N.B. Numbers of unidentified fragments not included).

Context	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Dog/Fox	Comments/ Unidentified
204		Left metacarpal, fragment of maxilla	Fragment of humerus	Fragment of mandible		
205		Cervical vertebra, horn core, skull fragment (palatine)			Metatarsal	
209	Right proximal radius-ulna	Fragment of horn core			Femur (juvenile)	
218	Mandibular tooth					
219						Unidentified fragments only
228			Mandible			
229						Scapula – dog/pig?
232				Fragment mandible		
235					? Thoracic vertebra	Rib fragments
239			Axis vertebra, fragment of radius, mandibular molar			
242		Talus, deciduous teeth (<2 years)				Large mammal rib
244	Fragment of orbit, mandibular incisor (from an older individual c. 12 yrs).	Skull fragments incl. zygomatic bone, scapula(glenoid fossa), distal tibia, phalanx, naviculo-cuboid.	Right metatarsal*, left femoral diaphysis, tibial diaphysis*, ischium (juvenile),	Fragment of scapula (glenoid fossa), vertebra		

Context	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Dog/Fox	Comments/ Unidentified
245		Fragment of mandible and teeth	Ischium, distal tibia, mandibular 3 rd molar			One burnt fragment
247		Left zygomatic, mandibular 2 nd premolar	Fragment of mandible, distal tibia	Femur		
248			Metacarpal (juvenile)			

* = Cut marks

244 Sheep/goat - Right metatarsal with fine cut marks around the proximal shaft
- Tibial diaphysis with cut/gnaw marks along whole shaft