

Summary

An archaeological excavation was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services on land adjacent to, and north of Gossway Fields, Kirtlington. During the excavation a system of 2nd –4th century Roman fields were recorded. Encroaching on these was a series of later 3rd and 4th century pits. A building with stone foundations believed to be part of a late Roman villa or higher status farmstead with an associated well was also recorded. One small pit containing human cremation believed to be Roman was recorded. At least two, possibly three, Anglo-Saxon sunken featured buildings were located with a contemporary stone lined well. While the activity is could be of 5th century a 6th century date is more likely. A small assemblage of Neolithic flint-work was also recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site of was located in the south of Kirtlington, off Bletchingdon Road between South Farm and Gossway Fields (NGR 4985 1970 centred). The site was formerly agricultural open grassland. The underlying geology is Thames 4th Terrace Gravels and the site lies at approximately 98m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application was submitted to Cherwell District Council in May 2005 for a residential development with the erection of 14 no. two storey houses. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site an archaeological field evaluation was required to be undertaken prior to the determination of the planning application. Due to the presence of significant archaeological remains a condition was to be attached to the planning permission for an archaeological excavation prior to development works commencing. This was in line with PPG 16 and Cherwell District Local Plan Policies. The excavation was undertaken during the period of November 2007 to February 2008.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site of proposed development lies within an area of archaeological interest. To the west of the proposal site is an area of earthworks believed to represent the remains of a Shrunken Medieval Village (SMR 13284) (NGR SP 4980 1929) although no remains of these deposits were recorded on site, the archaeological evaluation carried out on this site by JMHS (2005) produced evidence of Roman agricultural features and Saxon occupation evidence in the form of sunken featured buildings. No medieval remains were found.

The course of the Roman Road of Akeman Street is located just over 1km north of the site and a number of linear features, dated to the Roman period, were recorded on site, during the evaluation, most probably representing a field system. Two large pits located on the eastern side of the site were dated to the Saxon period from pottery and it is thought that these represent sunken featured buildings (*Grubenhäuser*). As these were located on the far eastern side of the plot it is thought that the main focus of this

Figure 1. Site location

settlement would be further to the east. As the site is previously undeveloped any archaeological remains that may be present are likely to be well preserved.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To identify, investigate and record any archaeological remains within the site to an appropriate level.
- To confirm that the Anglo-Saxon remains are part of a settlement and to attempt to determine the status of the settlement.
- Artefacts will be collected to ascertain the status of the site and to determine possible trade routes.
- The Anglo-Saxon element will be compared with other such sites in the area.
- The extent of the Romano British field system will be established. The artefact content of the fills of the ditches will be assessed in order to determine whether settlement is nearby.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) issued a Brief for the work, which John Moore Heritage Services carried out to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with OCAS, on behalf of the local planning authority. The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

An integrated programme of archaeological mitigation work had been required in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance No.16, *Archaeology and Planning*, DoE 1990 and has been secured through a negative condition attached to the planning permission. The archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Project Design that provided a comprehensive mitigation strategy and project planning programme to MAP2 standard based on clearly defined research objectives.

The mitigation strategy, as laid out in the OCAS Design Brief, sought to alleviate damage to significant archaeological deposits/features, and the developer was, and shall continue to be responsible for ensuring this by:-

- a) Implementing a full set-piece excavation to deal with all significant remains. Where areas of low significance were revealed during the programme these were dealt with, if agreed by the planning archaeologist, through selective recording action or smaller scale sampling. A watching

brief may also be implemented during further construction if deemed necessary.

b) And where practical and feasible, or where the status and survival quality of the remains is deemed to be of national importance (using the Secretary of States Non-Statutory Criteria), physical preservation in situ.

The area in the northwest corner of the site (Fig. 2 - Area 2) was stripped, sample excavated and recorded prior to the use of the area for spoil stockpiling. The areas to the east of the site, where evaluation found evidence of sunken featured buildings, were stripped of overburden under constant archaeological supervision. The extent was dictated by the extent of the Anglo-Saxon features and significant Roman features.

Appropriate machinery was used for the site stripping; a 360° excavator with a toothless ditching bucket/blade. The resulting surface was then hand cleaned where necessary and features were planned to the relevant scale. The recording and sampling strategy was agreed with OCAS as 50% of any discrete feature, 20% of any linear feature, with all intersections and termini being examined. All sunken featured buildings were fully excavated on a quadrant basis. Where intersections of ditches occurred outside investigated areas or where further discrete features were suspected, areas were extended.

The site consisted of a main area 68m in length by 10-24m width (Area 1). A second area 25m long by 19m wide was stripped and recorded prior to being used as a dumping area for soil (Area 2). Following the discovery of a cremation pit, an extension area of 7m width by 11m length was added to the western edge of Area 1, in accordance with the agreed mitigation strategy. Subsequently, three 4m wide, by 40m long trenches (Trench 7, 8 and 9) were stripped in order to locate the course of the Roman field system that was uncovered in Area 1.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plan and section drawings being compiled where appropriate.

The area of intercutting pits just south of the centre of Area 1 was not easily distinguishable having deeper ploughing caused by the plough apparently sinking into this softer area in wet conditions. Heavy rain on several occasions caused difficulties in determining relationships with a shortage of resources preventing constant re-cleaning of areas.

4. RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. Where linear features continued, or looked to continue, they were given the same cut numbers, but different fills. In some instances, when features were being excavated at the same time, or there was enough ambiguity over whether there was continuation of a feature, new cut and fill numbers were assigned.

Figure 2. Area of Excavation showing evaluation trenches

4.1 Field Results (by D. Gilbert)

The natural in the area was loosely compacted orange sandy gravels (03). Lying directly above this was a mid-brown sand-loam (02/1002) c.0.6m thick in places; this subsoil also contained pottery and animal bones. The uppermost deposit was a loosely compacted, grey-brown sandy loam (01/1001) c.0.3m thick containing pottery. This represented the topsoil covering the site.

Phase 1: 2nd – early 3rd Century Roman (Figures 3 - 5)

Four parallel narrow ditches or gullies were recorded to the south of Area 1. The first in the centre of Area 1 was a linear gully [138/174] 0.64m wide, 0.15m deep with a flat base (Fig. 5, S.15, S.18, S.76), filled with a loosely compacted mid-brown silty-sand (139/175/176).

Parallel and to the south was a narrower linear gully [172] that was 0.15m deep and 0.34m wide (Fig. 5, S.75), filled with loosely compacted mid-brown silty-sand (173). It was flat bottomed, and was truncated at its eastern end by a pit [170] and to the west terminated outside of Area 1.

To the south was a 0.6m wide U-shaped profile gully [122]. It contained a loosely compacted black-brown silty-sand (121) containing pottery and animal bones. It was truncated at its eastern end by a pit [125] (Fig. 5, S.22, S.19).

Ditch [202] was aligned E-W and was located at the very south of Area 1. It was 1.05m wide, 0.4m deep with a stepped U-shaped profile (Fig. 5, S. 64). The profile suggests a re-cut to the ditch with indistinguishable fills, as seen further west in Trench 7. It was filled with a mid-brown sandy clay (203) that contained some pottery and animal bone. It was cut by a later ditch [200] and continued westwards as [84/66] (Fig. 5, S.1, S.6, S.49, S.50). Within Trench 7 ditch [84] had a U-shaped profile measuring 0.9m wide, 0.24m deep and was filled with a loosely compacted reddish-brown silt-sand (85/86) that contained 3rd century Roman pottery and animal bone. It was cut by ditch [82].

On a similar alignment was a short ditch [163]. It is 0.21m deep, 0.72m wide (Fig. 4, S.59) and filled with a dark brown silty-sand (164), containing pottery and animal bone. It was truncated by a later ditch [165] and appeared to join into a perpendicular ditch [227].

This ditch [227] was V-shaped in profile, 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep, filled with a light brown, silty sand (226). No finds were retrieved from this ditch, and the fill appeared to be entirely sterile. It was previously recorded during the 2005 evaluation as [2/12]. This ditch has been assigned to this phase because it appears to join ditch [163], it may also join with ditch [174]; unfortunately this relationship was ambiguous.

Parallel and to the east of ditch [227] were two other ditches or gullies. The first [198] was 0.51m wide, 0.06m deep and orientated N-S (Fig. 5, S.63); it was filled with a loosely compacted orange-brown silty-sand (199). Although it contained no datable finds it was cut by a 4th century pit [206].

Figure 3. Plan of Area 1 and trenches 7 – 9.

Figure 4. Phase 1 plan

The second gully [231] was 0.8m wide and unexcavated and not recorded during the excavation, its number was assigned in post-excavation analysis. It is assigned to Phase 1 as it was truncated by a 4th century Roman pit [133].

Ditch [101] was aligned roughly N-S, it was 0.3m deep, 0.6m wide, with a U-shaped profile (Fig. 5, S.19). It contained a light, golden-brown loosely compacted silty-sand (100). It was over 20m long. No finds were obtained from this fill. Running parallel to this was a second ditch [103]. This was 1.8m wide, 0.5m deep (Fig. 5, S.19) and filled with a red-brown loosely compacted silty-sand (102). It is quite likely that one represents a re-cutting of the other with a slight movement in boundary overtime. These continued into Trench 7 terminating [78/111] just before the boundary ditch. The terminus was 0.2m deep, 0.42m wide (Fig. 5, S.3, S.21) at its narrowest point and aligned almost N-S. It was filled with a loosely compacted orangey-brown silty sand (79/91/110). It continued NNE until it disappeared under the eastern baulk of Trench 7. An area of collapse on the edge of this ditch was recorded as [225]/(224). No re-cut within the ditch was visible; therefore the later cut had removed traces of the earlier ditch.

Four circular pits were recorded that contained pottery solely of this phase. Although it is possible that this material is residual and they are in fact later in date.

Cut	Dia	Depth	Fill	Figure
41	0.69	0.34	Red-brown silty-sand (40)	Fig. 13, S.86
58	0.27	0.15	Yellow-brown silty-sand (57)	Fig. 5, S.33
126	82	0.6	Red-brown silty-sand (127)	Fig. 5, S.12, S.13
170	1.1	0.22	Mid-brown silty-sand (171)	Fig. 5, S.74

Pit [170] had a high concentration of charcoal flecks within its fill, although no sign of any *in situ* burning was recorded. This pit also cut gully [172] (Fig. 5, S.74).

Another pit [148], although undated by artefacts, is stratigraphically dated to this phase. It was roughly 1.6m in diameter and 0.88m in depth (Fig. 5, S.54, S.61). The primary fill was a brown, loosely compacted, silty-sand (151), 0.30m thick containing Roman pottery. Above this were two separate deposits. The relationship between these is uncertain as they were truncated by a later ditch; this was not recorded but was related to ditch [104]. Both were similar and may be the remains of the same deposit. The first was a reddish-brown, silty sand (182), 0.23m thick and the second a reddish-brown, silty sand (183), 0.26m thick, both contained no finds.

Phase 2: mid 3rd –early 4th Century Roman (Figures 3, 6 - 8)

Ditch [54] was orientated roughly E-W, 1.2m wide, and 0.29m deep (Fig. 8, S.28, S.85). It had a U-shaped profile, and was over 25.0m long, and appeared to continue into Area 2 where it was recorded as ditch [28]. It contained loosely compacted dark reddish-brown silty-sand (53/55/56/112), which contained Roman pottery. This continued into Area 2 (Fig. 10) where a 7m length was exposed [28]. Its western terminal was evident, it was 1m wide and 0.28m deep (Fig. 8, S.46) and filled by a loosely compacted dark greyish brown clayey-sand (29) that contained Roman pottery.

Figure 6. Phase 2 plan

Figure 7. Plan of Area 2

To the north of this ditch near the terminal was a post hole or small pit [04] that was roughly 0.4m in diameter and survived to 0.11m deep (Fig. 8, S.36). It was filled with dark greyish-brown clayey-sand (05) that contained Roman pottery.

A small ditch or gully [104/165/184] that was aligned roughly NE-SW. It was 1.08m wide, 0.22m deep (Fig. 8, S.9) with a U-shaped profile and was over 30m in length. It was filled with a loosely compacted dark blackish-brown sandy silt (105) that contained pottery and animal bone. This gully was first noted during the evaluation where it was recorded as [2/08] and was cut by SFB [92]; however deeper machining during the excavation removed the evidence of this association. This gully is a re-cut of an earlier ditch and slightly larger ditch, which although seen within section was not recorded as such. The fill was noted as a soft mid-brown sand up to 0.4m thick (181). It cuts gully [174] and is also cut by the circular feature [186]. This gully was roughly parallel to the presumably earlier gully [227].

Several pits were located across the site and assigned to this phase either by the date of the pottery they contained or by their stratigraphic relationship to earlier dated features.

Cut	Dia	Depth	Fill	Figure
33	1.5	0.39	Dark brown silty-sand (32)	Fig. 8, S.88
52	0.94	0.24	Yellow-brown silty-sand (51)	Fig. 8, S.29
128	0.42	0.2	Orange-brown silty-sand (129)	Fig. 5, S.12
133	3.27	1.48	Grey-brown sandy clay (132)	Fig. 8, S.80
192	1.4	0.4	Dark brown silty-sand (191)	Fig. 8, S.62
205	0.7	0.56	Dark brown silty-sand (204)	Fig. 8, S.65

A further two pits were located under the floor layer and wall foundation of the later 4th century building. Both of these contained 3rd – 4th century Roman pottery.

In the SW corner, inside the building was a large circular pit [180] 2m in diameter, 0.84m deep, contained three deposits (Fig. 8, S.77). The earliest deposit within this sequence was a loosely compacted blackish-grey sandy clay (190), 0.06m thick. It contained large angular limestone rocks at its base, and some pottery sherds. Overlying this was a loosely compacted light yellowish-brown sandy deposit (189) with gravel. It was 0.08m thick. Above this was a loosely compacted dark greyish-black, sandy clay, (188) that was 0.4m thick, containing pottery, gravel and a large concentration of charcoal and burnt materials.

The second pit [195] was sub-circular in plan 2m in diameter, 0.52m deep with a flat base (fig. 8, S.60). It contained two deposits, the lowest fill being a loosely compacted orangey-brown silty-sand (196) 0.2m thick containing Roman pottery. Laying directly above this a loosely compacted orangey-brown silty-sand (197) that was 0.3m thick. This pit may have caused some subsidence to the wall (194) of the building.

Phase 3: 4th Century Roman (Figures 3, 9-11)

The Building

The building in the south-east corner of Area 1 was found during the topsoil removal phase, and consisted of dressed square limestone blocks; 0.2m long, by 0.3m

Figure 9. Plan of building

wide, to a maximum of 0.1m thickness (194). They would appear to be the lower parts of foundations or walls of a stone dwelling. There are no signs of foundation trenches, and no visible wall scars were found during the course of excavation. The building itself measured 4m wide, and 7m in length. At the south east corner, the return of the building seems to be at an off angle to what would have been expected, and at the northern end, the walling perhaps represents an internal dividing wall, suggested by the presence of another wall orientated roughly N-S, 1m in from the NW corner, and exposed for only 0.6m of its extent.

The upper fill within the stone building a blackish-brown silty-sand (167) containing flecks of charcoal. It contained many sherds of Roman pottery, one sherd of Saxon pottery, as well as metal objects such as a possible door handle, and a large bead.

This deposit covered large flagstones that were embedded into a 0.05m thick layer of orange sand (230) that covered the natural. The largest examples of these stones were roughly 0.8m in length, 0.7m in width with a maximum thickness of 0.1m. These flagstones were only seen at the northern end of the building. It would appear the building was robbed for stone after a period of abandonment.

Underneath the flagstones were 8 postholes, these may well have been used for scaffold poles during the construction of the building or that the stone building replaced an earlier wooden structure.

Cut	Dia	Depth	Fill	Figure
209	0.4	0.6	Yellow-brown silty-sand (208)	
211	0.3	0.2	Yellow-brown silty-sand (210)	Fig. 7, S.70
213	0.2	0.2	Mid-brown silty-sand (212)	Fig. 7, S.71
215	0.3	0.4	Mid-brown silty-sand (214)	Fig. 7, S.69
217	0.2	0.25	Mid-brown silty-sand (216)	Fig. 7, S.72
219	0.14	0.28	Mid-brown silty-sand (218)	Fig. 7, S.68
221	0.2	0.25	Mid-brown silty-sand (220)	Fig. 7, S.66
223	0.3	0.5	Mid-brown silty-sand (222)	

The relationship between these postholes and the sand layer (230) was not recorded. Late 3rd – 4th century Roman pottery was recovered from the fills of two of these postholes (220) and (222). It is likely that all are contemporary.

Within the southern wall of the building was a doorway. Outside the building and in front of the doorway was an area of cobbles (193) it extended 4.5m E-W and 2.2m N-S and had been heavily disturbed in antiquity. Each cobble was roughly 0.1m x 0.1m x 0.02m thick, they would appear to have been pressed directly into the natural (03).

These cobbles sealed pits [195] and [205], they may also have sealed pit [192] as well, however this area have been disturbed.

Well

Located near the centre of Area 1 was a well. It consisted of a vertical shaft 1m wide was located at a depth of approximately 1.2m below the surface (Fig. 11, S.73). The

Figure 10. Phase 3 plan

limestone slabs which made up the stone lining (169) of the shaft were roughly 0.2m wide by 0.2m long; with a maximum of 0.05m thick and whitish-grey in colour. The internal dimensions were roughly 0.45m square. It was filled with a loosely compacted dark blackish-brown silty-sand (168) that was 0.54m thick containing animal bones and 4th century Roman pottery. The well was not bottomed.

To the north-east would appear to be an L-shaped cut [140/142/155, Fig. 5, S.57] to allow the construction of the well. This was 1.2m wide (Fig. 5, S.16, S.54). Although it was not sampled along its entire length it noticeably sloped down towards the well edge. It was filled with red-brown silty-sand (141/143/154) containing late 3rd century Roman pottery. The L-shape was presumably to allow a deeper depth to be reached while keeping the construction area quite compact.

It would appear to have been robbed of stone and capped at some later date. The cut for this [118/120] appeared to be roughly circular, with a diameter of 4.5m. The sides sloped into the centre at about 45° before hitting the central stone lining. At this point the well had been capped with limestone slabs and the pit then backfilled.

The upper deposit of this filling was a loosely compacted mid brown silty-sand (117/119), 0.7m thick (Fig. 5, S.20). This deposit contained 2 metal objects, believed to be iron ferrules from an agricultural implement. Other finds included animal bones and Roman pottery. Lying beneath this deposit was a loosely compacted orange-brown silty-sand (123) that was 0.6m thick and contained a high concentration of stone and gravel.

Boundary ditch

The earlier boundary ditch [84/202] on the south side of the site was recut as [82] and also seen in the profile of [202] (Fig. 5, S.64). As [82] it had a U-shaped profile measuring 0.2m deep, 0.5m wide and was filled with a loosely compacted dark brown silty sand (83/87/89) that contained 4th century Roman pottery. It was cut by ditch [80] (Fig. 5, S.6, S.50).

Within Trench 8 it continued as ditch [66/115] that was 0.84m wide and 0.26m deep. It had a shallow concave profile and was filled with a orange-brown silty sand (67/75/116) that was devoid of finds. Trench 9 saw the continuation of the ditch that presumably terminated just beyond the western edge of the trench as it was not seen within the evaluation Trench 5.

A posthole [77] was noted within Trench 8; unfortunately it was poorly recorded and its location is unknown. It appears to have been cut into the fill of ditch [66] and was itself cut by the later ditch [64]. It was filled with a brown-yellow sandy clay (76).

Pits

Close by to the well were two pits containing pottery of 4th century date. Pit [125] was 1.8m in diameter, 0.65m deep and contained a loosely compacted dark black-brown silty-sand (124). Within this fill, large deposits of limestone stones, as well as pottery and animal bones were observed (Fig. 4 S.19).

Pit [156/157] was 2.0m diameter and 0.4m deep (Fig. 5, S.54). The primary deposit was a 0.2m thick deposit of red-brown sand (152). Over this was 0.18m thick of loosely compacted reddish-brown silty-sand (146/159). Above this was a loosely

compacted mid brown silty-sand (150), 0.33m in depth that contained pottery. These fills appeared to be lying in deliberate tip lines. It cut an earlier pit [148] and was itself cut by a later pit [158] (Fig. 5, S.57).

To the north of the well where a group of three intersecting pits was recorded near to the centre of Area 1. The earliest [69] was 0.78m in diameter, 0.39m deep and filled by a loosely compacted dark yellow-brown silty sand (68). Within the fill were finds of late 3rd century Roman pottery.

Cutting this (Fig. 11, S.31) was a sub circular pit [71], which was 1.63m diameter and filled with a loosely compacted yellow-brown silty-sand (70). Cutting [71] on its western side was another pit [73] 0.91m in diameter, 0.18m deep and filled by loosely compacted, yellow-brown, silty sand (72). It contained some Roman pottery.

Phase 4: Early Anglo-Saxon (Figures 12 & 13)

Sunken Featured Buildings

The Sunken Featured Building (SFB) that was recorded by the 2005 evaluation [2/04] was re-excavated [92]. Unfortunately it was further truncated by heavy machining during excavation. It was 4.30m in diameter, 0.35m deep and was excavated on a quadrant basis. The primary deposit, SE (95) SW (97) NE (96) and NW (93) was a loosely compacted mid-brown silty-sand and contained a rich assortment of Saxon pottery, including some fine examples of bowls, as well as animal bone. In the SE quadrant an upper fill (94) was noted above (95), this was 0.11m of reddish-brown sandy clay. The section recorded shows this to be a later pit.

Within the base of this SFB small limestone slabs were observed. These did not appear to be in any formal pattern and were probably dumped in after abandonment of the building. A small posthole was observed within the middle of the SW quadrant. This posthole [98] was circular in plan measuring 0.13m depth, 0.2m diameter and contained loosely compacted brown silty-sand (99), but was devoid of finds (Fig. 13, S.8).

A second SFB was recorded to the north of Area 1. It was a sub-circular in plan [60], roughly 3.5m in diameter and 0.35m deep (Fig. 13, S.34). This was sectioned using a quadrant system. The fill was dark reddish-brown silty-sand (59/61) that contained Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery. No associated postholes were recorded, but undulations in the base of the feature may indicate post-occupation disturbance. It was cut on its northern side by a water utility pipe.

The third SFB may be represented by feature [186]. It was roughly 4m diameter and 0.7m deep. It was filled with a loosely compacted mid-brown, silty-sand (187). It is likely that this was not a single fill as a section of edge collapse is noted overlying an already established fill in the base of the feature. Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from this feature.

Figure 12. Phase 4 plan

Well

Initially, before excavation, this was interpreted as being a Saxon Grubenhau, and was excavated using a quadrant system. During excavation the depth of deposits required that the interpretation be reassessed.

The diameter of the cut [45] at the top was 2.6m-4.0m. At a depth of approximately 0.6m the cut's sides changed from about 45° to near vertical. At this point the cut was recorded as [30/37] and was 2.5m diameter. This formed a steeper cone to about 1.6m depth before becoming vertical Fig. 13, S.25, S.26, S.39, S.48).

The well was lined with stone (39), these stones were roughly hewn, angular limestone blocks approximately 0.31m wide, 0.19m long, and 0.05m thick. They were arranged in a concentric circle, and the lower slabs seemed to have been shaped slightly, in that they appeared to fan out, laying flat against the base of the cut of the well. No coursing or bonding was observed.

On the exterior, the upper fill was a 0.17m thick loosely compacted reddish-brown silty-sand (42). This covered the well completely, and must have been deposited after the well had gone out of use. Under this was a loosely compacted dark brown silty-sand (31/36/38) 0.7m thick, containing animal bone, Roman and Saxon pottery. Directly below this was a loosely compacted reddish-brown silty-sand (35/43/47/49), 0.4m thick contained pottery and bone. Within (43) a large bronze or copper alloyed brooch was found. Underlying this was a loosely compacted light reddish-brown silty-sand (44/48/50). These deposits contained both bone and pottery, and were over 0.4m thick. At this point the stone wall of the well was built directly against the vertical side of the cut for the well [30/37]. These last three layers are considered to be deliberate back-filling immediately after construction of the well lining.

The interior fill of the well was a dark reddish-brown silty sand (46) over 2.2m thick. Within this deposit was pottery of a Roman and Saxon date. At 1.8m depth, the water table was hit and it was considered too dangerous to continue excavation below the 2.2m point. Animal bones, included horse mandibles, with in this deposit may suggest either the deliberate contamination, or a ritual offering made into the well.

Boundary Ditch

A ditch [200] was located to the south of the site parallel to the earlier Roman one [202]. It was approximately 1.3m wide and 0.45m deep with a U-shaped profile. The fill was a loose mid brown sandy-clay (201) that contained sherds of Saxon pottery.

This would appear to be a re-cut of the boundary represented in the area by inter-cutting ditches [64], [66], [80], [82], [88] and [202] (Fig. 5, S.1, S.6, S.49, S.50, S.64). It continued into Trench 7 as [80] were it was 1.7m wide and 0.4m deep with a U-shaped profile. It was filled with a loosely compacted dark brown silty sand (81/88/90) that contained Anglo-Saxon pottery and bone. Within Trench 8 it was [64/113] and was 1.54m wide, 0.36m deep with a flattened U-shaped profile (Fig. 5, S.1, S.49), continuing through Trench 9 to terminate just beyond as it did not appear in Trench 5 (Fig. 2).

Other Features

A small pit [223] cut the 4th century ditch [54]. It was filled with a dark red-brown silty-sand (222). Roman pottery was present within the fill but this must be considered residual, possibly originating from the ditch [54] that the pit was cut into. Unfortunately this pit and its associated fill were “double numbered” by the excavator and so finds could not be assigned to this feature. It has been assigned to this phase because it obviously post-dates the 4th century deposits.

Stake-hole [135] was 0.35m in diameter and 0.18m deep; it was filled with a light grey-brown silty-sand (134). It was cut into the top of the late Roman pit [133] but was otherwise not recorded on any plan.

Several pits were located towards to southern end of Area 1; these have been assigned to this phase because they clearly cut through 4th century Roman deposits.

Cut	Length	Width	Depth	Primary Fill	Figure
131	1.45	1.25	0.62	Mid-brown silty-sand (130)	
136	1.2	0.9	0.8	Grey-brown sandy clay (137)	Fig. 4, S.15
144	2.3	2.3	0.6	Grey-brown sandy clay (145)	Fig. 4, S.16
153	1.2	1.2	0.7	Mid-brown silty-sand (160)	Fig. 4, S.54
158	1.5	1.5	0.7	Mid-brown silty-sand (147)	
228	-	-	n/a	-	

Pit [228], although assigned a number, was not recorded on-site. It may be related to feature (186).

Phase 5: Post-medieval (Figure 3)

A large pit was located near to well [120], however it was not fully understood during the excavation and was only identified during post-excavation analysis. Originally thought to be a deposit its dimensions were not accurately recorded. It was roughly circular about 4m in diameter and 0.3m deep. It was filled with a dark brown silty-sand (149).

Within Area 2 the following features (Fig. 7) were cut into the subsoil (02). A small gully [06] was 0.52m wide, 0.12m deep and filled by a loosely compacted dark greyish-brown clayey-sand (07). No finds were found within this feature, which was orientated E-W. It is clearly a continuation of the post-medieval feature recorded in the 2005 evaluation [1/08].

Next to this gully [06] was a small pit [08], c. 0.5m diameter and 0.45m deep it was filled by a loosely compacted dark greyish-brown clayey-sand (09) that contained 19th century metal objects.

To the north of the gully [06] was a modern post-hole [14] that was 0.25m in diameter and filled with a dark greyish-brown clayey-sand (15). A second post-hole or small pit [12] was located to the south, it was 0.3m in diameter, over 0.2m deep it contained a dark greyish-brown clayey-sand (13), containing 19th century glass.

Also located in this area were a recent c.19th century horse burial and a more recent animal burial [10].

Undated features (Figures 3, 7 & 13)

To the west of centre with in Area 1 a small pit [109] was located, it was 0.4m in diameter and 0.2m deep (Fig. 13, S.11). It was filled with black, silty-sand (108) containing charcoal, cremated human bone and nails. The pit had been truncated by ploughing

A shallow circular pit [106] was recorded near to the cremation pit [109]. This was 0.35m in diameter and 0.1m (Fig. 13, S.10) deep filled with a mid-brown sand (107). Unfortunately its location was not plotted on any plan

Ditch [104] (Phase 2) cuts a shallow curvilinear gully [161], almost rectilinear in plan, 0.07m deep and 0.6m wide (Fig. 13, S.59). It is filled by a loosely compacted dark brown silty sand (162), and also was cut by the Roman ditch [163]. It is recorded as containing Roman pottery sherds; if it did then these finds have been lost. Although it demonstrably earlier than a 2nd to 3rd century Roman ditch its exact date is uncertain.

Four pits were noted, but due to lack of finds and any significant stratigraphical relationship they remain undated.

Cut	Length	Width	Depth	Primary Fill	Figure
62	0.46	0.46	0.16	Yellow-brown silty-sand (63)	
178	-	-	-	(177)	Fig.8, S.81
206	0.3	0.3	0.32	Orange-brown silty-sand (207)	
229	-	-	-	-	

Pits [178] and [229] were not recorded on-site.

In Area 2 a cluster of five post-holes were seen in the south-eastern corner of the area. All of these were cut into the natural (03) and sealed by the subsoil (02). Unfortunately no datable material was found within any of them. The uniformity of the size and fills would suggest that these are contemporary.

Cut	Dia	Depth	Fill	Figure
18	0.15	0.1	Grey clay-sand (19)	Fig.13, S40
20	0.15	0.1	Grey clay-sand (21)	Fig. 13, S41
22	0.15	0.11	Grey clay-sand (23)	Fig. 13, S42
24	0.16	0.1	Grey clay-sand (25)	Fig. 13, S43
26	0.14	0.1	Grey clay-sand (26)	Fig. 13, S44

Also sealed by deposit (02) was a small pit [16], which was 0.7m in diameter and 0.18m deep with steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 13, S.45). The edges of the pit appeared scorched and it was filled with a black-greyish sandy deposit (17) of charcoal and ash. No finds were associated with this deposit.

It is odd that the gully [5/05] that was aligned N-S in Trench 5 (Fig. 2) was not seen. It is possible that it lay just outside of Trench 9 and there is a slight discrepancy between the surveying in the two phases of work. The other two linear features with evaluation Trench 5 were probably plough furrows. The two small pits in Trench 5 were undated as was the post hole in Trench 6.

4.2 Reliability of Results and Techniques (by *H. Noakes*)

Weather conditions were favourable for excavation even during heavy downpours, mainly due to the good drainage provided by the ground conditions on site. However, morning frosts meant that digging, during the later stages of the excavation, had to be done during the later part of the day, after the ground frost had melted. Light conditions were not always favourable, as the low sun during the morning and mid afternoon meant that only a small window existed for photographs to be taken.

The location of evaluation trench 2 caused some problems to the excavation, due to the necessity to leave the overburden higher than in other areas so as to relocate the Grubenhau uncovered during the evaluation. This area however, was dense in archaeological deposits which were difficult to see in plan due to the aforementioned overburden. However, further cleaning and carefully selected sections allowed this area to be resolved satisfactorily.

The difference in the level of the site meant that the well found at the north of the site could be excavated to a depth of c.3m below ground level; the water table coming in at 2.5m. Whereas the well at the southern end of the site was only excavated to 0.8m depth, the water table being present immediately at 0.5m. The well at the north end of the site was also initially excavated as a suspected Grubenhau, and was therefore quadrant sectioned as set out in the sampling strategy. However, as the depth and complexity of the feature increased, it was obvious that a re-evaluation of the feature be undertaken, and as such, it was decided that the feature should continue to be excavated using the quadrant section lines established during the earlier part of excavation, and that the feature be taken down gradually. This meant a large portion of our time and labour was directed at one end of the trench, at the cost of the middle section of Area 1.

Due to the unexpected finds of the site, a stone dwelling and two stone constructed wells, extra time was needed to excavate these features properly. As mentioned previously, a substantial amount of time was spent excavating the first well to the north of the site. This involved the use of a water pump when the water table was reached. However, due to the unsteady nature of the soil around the feature, there came a point where health and safety meant that further excavation could not continue.

The finding of the stone dwelling was entirely by chance, and the subsequent retrieval of it owes much to the keen eyes of the archaeologist who monitored the topsoil removal, as well as the digger driver. Likewise, the second well was excavated under the pretence that it formed part of a ditch complex, and as such, was sectioned, luckily, in the middle of the feature.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (by *P. Booth*)

Introduction

The excavations produced a total of 1816 sherds (35,856 g, 31.95 REs) of Roman pottery, plus 188 sherds (3,937 g, 3.07 REs) of early Anglo Saxon pottery and 12

post-medieval sherds (177 g). This last material is not considered here, and pottery of all these periods from the evaluation phase of the project was not re-examined. The pottery was recorded using the codes set out in the Oxford Archaeology Roman pottery recording system (Booth 2007; see further below). Quantification was by sherd count, weight and rim equivalents and a vessel count based on rim sherds. Overall the pottery was in good condition, with sherds of reasonable size (19.7 g average weight for the Roman sherds) and reasonable preservation of surfaces. Very few of the sherds were significantly abraded. With the exception of a tiny number of residual early pieces the Roman material dated from the mid 2nd century onwards. A small group of possible waste sherds is of considerable interest. In addition, the early Anglo-Saxon assemblage is important as such material is not well-known in this part of the county.

5.1.1 Roman Pottery

Fabrics

The Roman pottery fabrics are recorded under a series of major ware groups. They are listed, with summary descriptions and quantification, in Table 1. Where appropriate, descriptions are cross-referred to the National Roman pottery fabric reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998), the relevant codes of which are shown in bold.

Time constraints did not permit the attribution of most coarse ware sherds to specific fabric codes, but identification at the intermediate level of precision usually provides adequate characterisation of coarse wares, particularly as it is difficult to ascribe specific sources to these with complete confidence. The great majority of the oxidised and reduced coarse wares that form the bulk of the assemblage are, however, consistent with, and are presumed to be, products of the Oxford industry, although there are some clear exceptions to this.

The fine and specialist wares (ware groups S, F, M, W and Q; see Booth 2004) were also, unsurprisingly, dominated by Oxford products. The only imported fabric in any of the ware groups was samian ware, essentially from Central Gaul, with one sherd assigned to an East Gaulish source and a few tiny South Gaulish and unassigned fragments. Together these sherds only comprised 1.4% of the total. Amongst the fine wares Oxford products were supplemented by a few Nene Valley sherds and a slightly larger quantity of sherds in a single unassigned fabric, here recorded as F60. These included rims of a jar and a beaker. The fine buff-grey fabric has characteristics of both Nene Valley and Oxford fabrics, but may represent small-scale production at a site unassociated with either centre. Such a site could have been relatively local, as is perhaps also the case with the mica-gilt fabric F38, previously unrecorded in the Oxford system. Unfortunately the F38 sherds were typical of such fabrics in lacking diagnostic characteristics, the only inclusions being moderately common medium sand grains. The associated vessel forms (a beaker and a bowl/dish) suggest production in the 2nd century AD, but not necessarily early in the century. Other fine and specialist wares may have derived entirely from the Oxford industry, although this was not always certain in the case of white wares, and some of the sherds were assigned to fairly general codes. All the mortaria from the site were certain Oxford products, however, and the white wares included both parchment ware (W11) and burnt white ware (W23) as well as finer probable Oxford white wares (W10).

Table 1: Quantification of Roman pottery fabrics

Code	Summary description	Sherd count		Weight		Rim count		Rim equivalents	
		No.	%	G.	%	No.	%	REs	%
	S: samian ware								
S	samian ware, source unspecified	2	0.1	10	+				
S20	South Gaulish samian ware, including (LGF SA).	2	0.1	2	+				
S30	Central Gaulish samian ware, including (LEZ SA 2).	20	1.1	153	0.4	4	1.4	0.16	0.5
S40	East Gaulish samian ware	2	0.1	14	+	1	0.3	0.05	0.2
	<i>S subtotal</i>	26	1.4	179	0.5	5	1.7	0.21	0.7
	F: fine wares								
F38	'mica gilt' sandy oxidised fabric, ?Oxford region	6	0.3	88	0.2	1	0.3	0.36	1.1
F50	?Oxfordshire red-brown colour-coated oxidised ware	2	0.1	7	+	1	0.3	0.01	+
F51	Oxfordshire red-brown colour-coated ware (OXF RS).	164	9.0	2355	6.6	39	13.4	4.28	13.8
F52	Nene Valley colour-coated ware (LNV CC)	7	0.4	87	0.2				
F60	red/brown colour-coated fine ware fabric(s), source uncertain	17	0.9	182	0.5	2	0.7	0.15	0.5
	<i>F subtotal</i>	196	10.8	2719	7.6	43	14.8	4.80	15.5
	M: mortaria								
M22	Oxfordshire white mortarium fabric (OXF WH).	18	1.0	898	2.5	8	2.7	0.74	2.4
M31	Oxfordshire white slipped oxidised mortarium fabric (OXF WC)	5	0.3	189	0.5	3	1.0	0.15	0.5
M41	Oxfordshire red colour-coated mortarium fabric (OXF RS)	7	0.4	70	0.2	3	1.0	0.21	0.7
	<i>M subtotal</i>	30	1.6	1157	3.2	14	4.8	1.10	3.5
	W: white wares								
W10	fairly fine white fabric(s), source uncertain	10	0.5	75	0.2	3	1.0	0.22	0.7
W11	Oxfordshire parchment ware (OXF PA)	11	0.6	160	0.4	2	0.7	0.17	0.5
W12	Oxfordshire fine white ware (OXF WH)	1	0.1	9	+	1	0.3	0.15	0.5
W20	sandy white fabric(s), source uncertain	3	0.2	50	0.1	1	0.3	0.10	0.3
W23	Oxfordshire burnt white ware	5	0.3	95	0.3	1	0.3	0.16	0.5
	<i>W subtotal</i>	30	1.6	389	1.1	8	2.7	0.80	2.6
	Q: white-slipped wares								
Q10	Fine oxidised white-slipped fabric(s), source unknown	1	0.1	10	+				
Q21	Oxfordshire oxidised white-slipped fabric WC (OXF WS)	3	0.2	43	0.1	1	0.3	0.18	0.6
	<i>Q subtotal</i>	4	0.2	53	0.1	1	0.3	0.18	0.6
	E: 'Belgic type' coarse wares								
E80	'Belgic type' grog tempered fabrics (SOB GT)	1	0.1	4	+				
	O: oxidised coarse wares								
O10	fine oxidised coarse wares, mainly Oxfordshire	268	14.8	5087	14.2	45	15.5	5.94	19.1

O20	coarse sandy oxidised wares	11	0.6	149	0.4	1	0.3	0.07	0.2
O30	common fine/medium sand-tempered coarse wares	27	1.5	295	0.8	3	1.0	0.23	0.7
O36	common medium sand-tempered coarse fabric, local	22	1.2	501	1.4				
O80	coarse grog-tempered oxidised wares, Oxfordshire	8	0.4	361	1.0				
O81	pink grogged ware (PNK GT)	203	11.2	8429	23.5	13	4.5	1.14	3.7
	<i>O subtotal</i>	539	29.7	14822	41.3	62	21.3	7.38	23.8
	R: reduced coarse wares								
R10	fine (slightly sandy) reduced coarse wares, mainly Oxfordshire	290	16.0	4664	13.0	45	15.5	6.58	21.2
R11	fine Oxfordshire reduced ware (OXF FR)	1	0.1	3	+				
R20	coarse sandy reduced wares, mainly Oxfordshire	9	0.5	233	0.6	3	1.0	0.22	0.7
R30	medium sandy reduced wares, mainly Oxfordshire	383	21.1	6637	18.5	42	14.4	4.20	13.5
R35	fine abundantly sandy reduced fabrics, cf North Wiltshire	3	0.2	35	0.1	1	0.3	0.11	0.3
R37	fine abundantly sandy, ?west Oxfordshire	46	2.5	728	2.0	11	3.8	1.14	3.7
R38	as R37 with additional grog inclusions	4	0.2	82	0.2	1	0.3	0.20	0.6
R39	Alice Holt fine sandy reduced ware (ALH RE)	1	0.1	45	0.1	1	0.3	0.15	0.5
R50	dark surfaced reduced sandy fabrics (Young 1977 reduced fabric 5)	5	0.3	35	0.1				
R71	reduced fabric with common calcareous sand temper 0.3-0.5 mm (Booth <i>et al.</i> 2001, 451)	1	0.1	22	0.1	1	0.3	0.03	0.3
R86	fine sandy reduced fabric with abundant mica	1	0.1	9	+				
R90	coarse grog-tempered reduced wares, Oxfordshire	10	0.5	245	0.7	1	0.3	0.08	0.3
	<i>R subtotal</i>	754	41.5	12738	35.5	106	36.4	12.79	41.2
	B: black-burnished wares								
B10	black-burnished type wares, handmade, source uncertain	4	0.2	30	0.1				
B11	Dorset BB1 fabric (DOR BB 1).	46	2.5	563	1.6	10	3.4	0.43	1.4
B30	black-burnished type wares, wheel-thrown, source(s) uncertain	16	0.9	316	0.9	8	2.7	0.58	1.9
	<i>B subtotal</i>	66	3.6	909	2.5	18	6.2	1.01	3.3
	C: calcareous-tempered wares								
C	calcareous-tempered fabrics general	3	0.2	15	+				
C10	shell-tempered wares, various	3	0.2	14	+				
C11	late Roman shell tempered ware, Harrold?, includes (HAR SH).	164	9.0	2857	8.0	34	11.7	2.86	9.2
	<i>C subtotal</i>	170	9.4	2886	8.1	34	11.7	2.86	9.2
Total		1816		35856		291		31.05	

The coarse wares, which together comprised 84.3% of the total sherds (slightly more by weight and rather less, only 77.2%, by REs), were dominated by oxidised and reduced ware groups, with a smaller but significant contribution from shell-tempered wares and a minor contribution from black-burnished wares. Reduced wares were the most important group overall, totalling just over 41% of the assemblage by both sherd count and REs. Oxidised wares were more important in terms of weight, however, reflecting the significance of the relatively common fabric O81, pink grogged ware (Booth and Green 1989), which was used principally for large, heavy jars. This fabric is now known to have been manufactured at Stowe in Buckinghamshire (Booth 1999), only *c* 30 km distant along major Roman roads, and was therefore a relatively local product. The other principal oxidised fabric group, O10, comprised fine sand-tempered sherds consistent with production in the Oxford industry, and used particularly for examples of a wide mouthed jar, Young type O27, regarded as ‘the most prolific of the oxidised forms’ (Young 1977, 195). The dividing line between fabrics O10 and O30, the latter with more sand temper, typically of small grain size (i.e. less than *c* 0.3 mm), was not always easy to identify. Both oxidised and reduced coarse wares with densely fine grained fabrics of this general character are typical of the north Wiltshire industry and also of an unlocated industry thought to be based in west Oxfordshire (see fabric R37 below).

A number of sherds within the O30 group were assigned to a specific fabric, O36. In terms of fabric these were not particularly remarkable, having little in addition to the common fine sand grains to identify them, but they were distinguished by virtue of having slightly cracked surfaces, indicative of overfiring. The possibility that these sherds had been re-fired (whether deliberately or accidentally) was considered, but on balance it seems more likely that the surface appearance was caused in the production process, and in some cases the cracking (and also discoloration) was sufficiently marked to suggest that these sherds might represent production waste material. Sherds of this character were noted in contexts 167 and 1001. Other sherds, particularly in context 167, assigned to the O10 group, might also have belonged with this material. Since mixed colour (orange and grey) was characteristic of some of the sherds recorded as O36 it is possible that some of the totally reduced sherds recorded in the R30 fabric group also belonged with the O36 material. Overall, however, a limited definition was adopted, but it is almost certain that the total quantity of potential production-related material was greater than that recorded under fabric O36 here. Unfortunately, the sherds in question included no rims. The base and body sherds are likely to have derived from jars, but this is as much as can be determined on present evidence.

The principal reduced coarse ware fabrics were R10 and R30. Like the O10 and O30 groups, these represent a continuum from fine, almost sand free fabrics to ones with moderate quantities of fine to medium grained quartz sand. Both general types are found within the Oxford industry, and the great majority of these sherds will have been Oxford products, though it is not possible to assign them to individual production sites within the industry. Only one tiny sherd was assigned specifically to the Oxford fine reduced ware category (R11), but since production of this fabric was mostly confined to the period *c* AD 70-150 it largely precedes the likely start date of activity on the site. Reduced fabrics with common to abundant fine sand tempering were also present. R37 was the most important of these, and is likely to have originated in the western part of the county (see above; also Booth 1997, 117), and R38 is thought to be a variant deriving from the same industry. A small number of sherds recorded as fabric R35 may also have been from the same source, but this is

less certain. A single vessel in fabric R39, of similar character with common fine sand tempering, was a certain product of the Alice Holt industry. Such vessels are occasionally seen in the region in the late Roman period, but are extremely rare north of Oxford. Other reduced coarse wares were of minimal importance.

Black-burnished ware amounted to totalled 3.9% of the total sherds from the site. Sherds from the major south-east Dorset source (BB1, here fabric B11) were most numerous, but they were augmented by wheel-thrown imitations, grouped as fabric B30, which were better-represented in terms of rim equivalents. The latter fabric(s) were used largely if not exclusively for flanged bowls and dishes, while in addition to these forms B11 also occurred as cooking pots. In the case of shell-tempered wares (fabric C11) the association of fabric and specific form was even more marked. The importance of jars, and particularly cooking pots, in this fabric (see below) may explain why this type was underrepresented amongst, for example, the B30 sherds.

In the present assemblage C11 has been used as the code for almost all shell-tempered sherds. This code is associated with products of the Harrold (Bedfordshire) industry, though it is not exclusive to them. At nearby Alchester Evans distinguished a separate fabric, C13, considered to be more local and to which he ascribed the majority of shell-tempered sherds found there. The distinction is not totally straightforward, however, particularly since one of Evans' key criteria, that C11 is wheel thrown while C13 is handmade (Booth *et al.* 2001, 452), is contradicted elsewhere (Tomber and Dore 1998, 115). The macroscopic appearance of the fabrics is very similar and does not allow for separation on the basis of fabric alone. There is no doubt that at Alchester a significant part of the shell-tempered pottery predated the expansion of Harrold distribution in the later 3rd century, and was distinct from it in terms of vessel types (Evans 2001, 367-370). Second century shell-tempered fabrics, presumably locally made, are present at sites such as Yarnton (Booth forthcoming) and Gill Mill, South Leigh (unpublished). The separation of C13 and C11 in later Roman assemblages seems more problematic, however, and has not been attempted here. It should be noted, however, that surface combing or rilling, Evans' second criterion for the identification of Harrold products, was only present on 19 sherds. While this treatment is characteristic of late Roman Harrold products, particularly on the later 4th century jars (Brown 1994, 77), in slightly earlier periods it occurs on only about half of all body sherds (*ibid.*, 62). The exact proportion of non-Harrold vessels in the present assemblage remains uncertain, therefore. In terms of chronology and the broad typological range, however, there seems to be little distinction to be drawn between the sources, though the more local fabric C13 lacks the distinctive flanged bowls (e.g. Brown 1994, 75, fig. 39) of the late Harrold repertoire.

Vessel Forms

Vessel forms were recorded in terms of major classes (e.g. jar, bowl), most of which have broad subdivisions. In some cases (e.g. samian ware and many of the Oxford wares) reference was also made to specific types in well-known typologies where these could be defined. Coded rim typologies also allow more precise definition of individual forms, but although recorded these data were not widely used in the analysis. Quantification of vessel types by both rim count and REs is given in Table 2. The presence of vessel types noted but not represented by rim sherds is indicated in the table with a +. While useful, the rim count figures are not considered to be as reliable a guide to vessel quantities as RE data, and unless otherwise specified the

latter are used here. The breakdown of RE data in relation to fabric is shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Quantification of vessel types

Code	Type	Rim count		Rim equivalents	
		No.	%	REs	%
B	Flagons, undifferentiated	2	0.7	0.53	1.7
C	Jars, undifferentiated	84	28.9	8.26	26.6
CC	narrow mouthed jar	8	2.7	2.11	6.8
CD	medium mouthed jar	12	4.1	1.67	5.4
CK	'cooking pot type' jar	14	4.8	1.87	6.0
CM	wide mouthed jar	38	13.1	5.68	18.3
CN	storage jar	5	1.7	0.34	1.1
C Total		161	55.3	19.93	64.2
D	Uncertain jars/bowls	20	6.9	1.43	4.6
E	Beakers, undifferentiated	12	4.1	1.28	4.1
ED	globular/bulbous beaker	1	0.3	0.30	1.0
EE	indented beaker	+			
E Total		13	4.5	1.58	5.1
F	Cups				
FB	campanulate cup (e.g. Drag 27)	+			
FC	conical cup (e.g. Drag 33)	1	0.3	0.02	0.1
G	Tankards	+			
H	Bowls, undifferentiated	6	2.1	0.26	0.8
HA	carinated bowl	5	1.7	0.99	3.2
HB	straight sided bowl	7	2.4	0.71	2.3
HC	curving sided bowl	13	4.5	1.20	3.9
HD	globular bowl	1	0.3	0.05	0.2
H Total		32	11.0	3.21	10.3
I	Uncertain bowls/dishes	2	0.7	0.15	0.5
IA	straight sided bowl/dish	2	0.7	0.17	0.5
I Total		4	1.4	0.32	1.0
J	Dishes, undifferentiated	1	0.3	0.05	0.2
JA	straight sided dishes	27	9.3	2.08	6.7
JB	curving sided dishes	14	4.8	0.71	2.3
J Total		42	14.4	2.84	9.1
K	Mortaria, undifferentiated (see text)	14	4.8	1.10	3.5
L	Lids, undifferentiated	2	0.7	0.09	0.3
MG	strainer	+			
TOTAL		291		31.05	

As usual the assemblage was dominated by jars, which amounted to 64.2% of REs, a figure which was probably originally higher, since it is likely that a significant proportion of the class D rims - those where even a rough estimate of the ratio of rim diameter to vessel height (the basis for the distinction between jars and bowls) was not possible - were in fact from jars. In effect jars probably formed two thirds of the assemblage. In many cases attribution of rims to subclasses within the jar category was not attempted, though it is probable that medium mouthed jars formed the most numerous subclass (again the specific identification of this type relies on the survival

Table 3: Quantification (RE) of major vessel classes by fabric, percentages of vessel class totals (column percent)

Code	B flagons		C jars		D jar/bowls		E beakers		F cups		H bowls		I bowl/dishes		J dishes		K mortaria		L lids		Total	
	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	RE	%	REs	%
S30									0.02	100	0.06	1.9			0.08	2.8					0.16	0.5
S40															0.05	1.8					0.05	0.2
<i>S subtotal</i>									<i>0.02</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>1.9</i>			<i>0.13</i>	<i>4.6</i>					<i>0.21</i>	<i>0.7</i>
F38							0.36	22.8													0.36	1.1
F50							0.01	0.6													0.01	+
F51			1.38	6.9			0.15	9.5			2.12	66.0			0.63	22.2					4.28	13.8
F60			0.09	0.5			0.06	3.8													0.15	0.5
<i>F subtotal</i>			<i>1.47</i>	<i>7.4</i>			<i>0.58</i>	<i>36.7</i>			<i>2.12</i>	<i>66.0</i>			<i>0.63</i>	<i>22.2</i>					<i>4.80</i>	<i>15.5</i>
M22																	0.74	67.3			0.74	2.4
M31																	0.15	13.6			0.15	0.5
M41																	0.21	19.1			0.21	0.7
<i>M subtotal</i>																	<i>1.10</i>	<i>100</i>			<i>1.10</i>	<i>3.5</i>
W10							0.14	0.5			0.04	1.2	0.04	12.5							0.22	0.7
W11											0.17	5.3									0.17	0.5
W12					0.15	10.5															0.15	0.5
W20					0.10	7.0															0.10	0.3
W23			0.16	0.8																	0.16	0.5
<i>W subtotal</i>			<i>0.16</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>0.25</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<i>0.14</i>	<i>0.5</i>			<i>0.21</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>0.04</i>	<i>12.5</i>							<i>0.80</i>	<i>2.6</i>
<i>Q21</i>			<i>0.18</i>	<i>0.9</i>																	<i>0.18</i>	<i>0.6</i>
O10			5.05	25.3	0.10	7.0	0.49	31.0			0.18	5.6			0.08	2.8			0.04	44.4	5.94	19.1
O20							0.07	4.4													0.07	0.2
O30			0.07	0.4	0.06	4.2								0.10	3.5						0.23	0.7
O81			1.14	5.7																	1.14	3.7
<i>O subtotal</i>			<i>6.26</i>	<i>31.4</i>	<i>0.16</i>	<i>11.2</i>	<i>0.56</i>	<i>35.4</i>			<i>0.18</i>	<i>5.6</i>			<i>0.18</i>	<i>6.3</i>			<i>0.04</i>	<i>44.4</i>	<i>7.38</i>	<i>23.8</i>
R10			5.63	28.2	0.31	21.7	0.30	19.0			0.14	4.4	0.11	34.4	0.09	3.2					6.58	21.2
R20			0.08	0.4	0.06	4.2								0.08	2.8						0.22	0.7
R30	0.53	100	2.45	12.3	0.43	30.1					0.25	7.8			0.54	19.0					4.20	13.5
R35															0.11	3.9					0.11	0.3
R37			0.67	3.2	0.22	15.4							0.11	34.4	0.09	3.2			0.05	55.6	1.14	3.7
R38															0.20	7.0					0.20	0.6
R39			0.15	0.8																	0.15	0.5
R71															0.03	1.1					0.03	0.1
R90			0.08	0.4																	0.08	0.3
<i>R subtotal</i>	<i>0.53</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>8.96</i>	<i>45.0</i>	<i>1.02</i>	<i>71.3</i>	<i>0.30</i>	<i>19.0</i>			<i>0.39</i>	<i>12.1</i>	<i>0.22</i>	<i>68.8</i>	<i>1.14</i>	<i>40.1</i>			<i>0.05</i>	<i>55.6</i>	<i>12.79</i>	<i>41.2</i>
B11			0.04	0.1									0.06	18.8	0.33	11.6					0.43	1.4
B30											0.25	7.8			0.33	11.6					0.58	1.9
<i>B subtotal</i>			<i>0.04</i>	<i>0.1</i>							<i>0.25</i>	<i>7.8</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>18.8</i>	<i>0.66</i>	<i>23.2</i>					<i>1.01</i>	<i>3.3</i>
<i>C11</i>			<i>2.76</i>	<i>13.8</i>											<i>0.10</i>	<i>3.5</i>					<i>2.86</i>	<i>9.2</i>
Total	0.53		19.93		1.43		1.58		0.02		3.21		0.32		2.84		1.10		0.09		31.05	
	1.7		64.2		4.6		5.1		0.1		10.3		1.0		9.1		3.5		0.3			

of sufficient of the vessel profile - otherwise the generic category (C) is used). Wide mouthed jars are particularly well-represented in Table 2 as a consequence of the prominence of type O27 (see above). Other specific types include narrow mouthed jars, the representation of which is boosted by the presence of a complete rim in fabric R10 from context 117. The only Alice Holt (fabric R39) vessel was of this form, a jar resembling Lyne and Jefferies type 1A.20 (Lyne and Jefferies 1979, 38-9). 'Cooking pot type' jars were also present, principally in fabric C11 as discussed above. Storage jars are quite poorly represented. This is surprising in view of the relative importance of fabric O81, but while the rims in this fabric were exclusively from jars, storage jars only amounted to 21% of their RE value; other types, and in particular wide mouthed jars (e.g. Nos **13** and **30**) were more common.

It is notable that while the great majority of the jars were in oxidised and reduced coarse ware fabrics, jars also formed part of the repertoire of fine ware producers. There were at last five separate jars amongst the Oxford colour-coated ware (F51), one example of type C16 and four of type C18 (Young 1977, 150, 152; Nos **1**, **8** and **20** below) and white and white-slipped Oxford jars were also present (Young types BW2 and WC2 in fabrics W23 and Q21 respectively, for the latter see No. **16**).

The next most significant vessel classes were bowls and dishes, *c* 10% and 9% of vessels respectively. There was a relatively wide variety of types within the bowl range, although this class was dominated by Oxford colour-coated ware types, including C51, C75, C81 and C82 (types C44-C49, all present, are classed as dishes, see below). Carinated bowls (Young type P24) in parchment ware (W11) were also part of the Oxford repertoire, along with a possible example of the white ware type W50. A single example of Drag 38 was the only samian ware bowl. Bowls were scarce in the oxidised and reduced coarse ware ranges; all the examples in fabrics O10 and R30 were straight-sided flanged types, and the same may have been true of the two examples in fabric R10. It was certainly the case with the black-burnished ware examples all of which, however, were in the imitation fabrics of the B30 group; Dorset examples may have been present but were not represented by rims.

Reduced coarse wares were much more important for dishes, 40% of which were in these fabrics. The Oxford colour-coated forms noted above (C44-C49) were less significant, and there were two certain and one possible samian ware form 31s, two Central Gaulish and one East Gaulish. As with the bowls, the coarse ware dishes were exclusively straight sided types, mostly of the simple 'dog dish' form characteristic of black-burnished ware, including a single example in shell-tempered fabric C11. Black-burnished ware contributed almost a quarter of all dishes, divided equally between Dorset (B11) and 'imitation' (B30) fabrics. An example of the simple dish form in fabric O30 (No. **14**) represented an unusual fabric and form combination, and this vessel may not be an Oxford product. Almost the only dish not of the simple straight sided form, however, was an example of Oxford type O41 in fabric O10.

The minor vessel classes were headed by beakers, which comprised *c* 5% of the assemblage. Only just over a third of these were in fine wares, however, of which the vessel in mica gilt fabric F38 was much the most prominent (No. **3**). The scarcity of beakers in Oxford colour-coated ware is notable and unexplained, though some body sherds, including ones from indented beakers, were clearly from this source. Oxidised coarse wares (including an example of Young type O20 and the bulbous beaker No. **4**, the latter from the same context (112) as the mica-gilt vessel) accounted for the same quantity of beakers (by REs) as fine wares, while the rest comprised four vessels in

the fine reduced fabric R10 and a single one in white ware W10. At least one of the R10 beakers was of Young type R34. Other potential drinking vessels included a probable tankard (represented only by a body sherd) in fabric R37; tankards did not form part of the Oxford repertoire but were relatively common in the 'west Oxfordshire' industry. Cups were also scarce, with only a single small rim from a Central Gaulish Drag 33 while a possible Drag 27 was represented by a tiny South Gaulish samian body sherd. Only two flagon rims were present, both in Oxford reduced fabric R30.

The only other vessel class to require comment is mortaria. As already noted these were all of Oxford origin. The white ware types included a possible example of M11, later 3rd century forms (M17 (2) and M18) and three examples of M22. These were mirrored by the white slipped forms WC5 and WC7 (2), while the standard red colour-coated types C97 and C100 were also present.

Use and reuse

Direct evidence for vessel use was usually scarce, but the interpretation of jars in fabric C11 as cooking pots is supported by a high incidence of sooting on these vessels. Some 61 sherds, 37% of all sherds in this fabric, had some evidence for sooting, a much higher proportion than was present on any other fabric. Sooting was noted on six black-burnished ware sherds, for example (including B11 and B30), but curiously these were all from dishes. Otherwise, single sooted sherds were noted in fabrics R37 and R38 (both again dishes) and R50. Burnt sherds, less diagnostic of function, were present in several fabrics, but almost always in very small quantities (it is possible that some incidences of burning were missed in recording). The most notable occurrence of burnt sherds was amongst the mortaria; one third of all the sherds of the white Oxford fabric M22, including five separate rim sherds, were burnt. This very high figure has parallels elsewhere in the region, for example at the Roman settlement in the South Parks Road area of Oxford (Biddulph 2005, 163) and more widely (E Biddulph pers comm.) and suggests a functional aspect of mortaria rather different from their generally accepted use.

There was minimal evidence for repair and reuse of vessels. Two joining sherds of fabric O81 in context 188 had a drilled hole, probably for a riveted repair (this type of repair has been noted on this fabric elsewhere) and another sherd of fabric O81, from context 167, had been trimmed to a rough disc c 60 mm in diameter.

Chronology and phasing

In terms of chronological indications that can be derived intrinsically from the pottery, there is a tiny scatter of material that can be attributed to the 1st and early 2nd centuries, including the single sherd of E80, the South Gaulish samian fragments and perhaps occasional sherds in fabrics such as R10 and R11. These sherds are certainly residual in the present site, though they may indicate early Roman activity in the vicinity. There is sufficient material, including Central Gaulish samian and some black-burnished ware, to indicate activity in the second half of the 2nd century, but the balance of the evidence of both fabrics and forms suggests that occupation was most intensive from about the middle of the 3rd century onwards. The mortaria, for example, provide a useful guide here, with only one vessel assigned a late 2nd-mid 3rd century date range and 13 dated to the mid 3rd century or later. The preponderance of vessel types such as O27 has also been noted; this type is dated after

AD 240 by Young (1977, 195). It is less easy to determine if there was any significant difference in the scale of activity between the later 3rd and 4th centuries and some of the evidence appears slightly contradictory. For example mortarium types M17 and M18, assigned specifically to the period AD 240-300, are as numerous as type M22, with a wider date range of AD 240-400, possibly suggesting an emphasis on activity in the later 3rd century. On the other hand the Oxford colour-coated dish type C45, noted as particularly characteristic of the later 3rd century at production sites such as Lower Farm and Blackbird Leys, is relatively poorly represented (4 examples, 0.23 REs) compared to other colour-coated bowl and dish forms. None of this is conclusive, however. The Oxford colour-coated ware repertoire includes vessels dated after AD 325 (C75, C82) and perhaps after AD 340 (C46, Young 1977, 158), though the exclusively late dating of this type has been questioned (Booth *et al.* 1993, 161-163), but the majority of Oxford vessels are long-lived types (such as C51) which do not permit identification of specific phases of activity within the 4th century. The problems associated with shell-tempered wares have already been discussed. The relative scarcity of C11 sherds with features such as hooked rims and rilling of the body, considered to be particularly characteristic of the later 4th century production at Harrold, may indicate a low level of activity at this time, but the possible parallel development of Harrold and other more local products in the same tradition is not yet clearly understood (it is indeed a subject for further research) so the significance of this scarcity is unclear. Overall the assemblage is not large enough for arguments based on negative evidence to be compelling.

On balance the continuation of settlement activity into the second half of the 4th century seems very likely, but the pottery evidence does not permit definition of a possible termination date for settlement. The lack of complementary coin evidence is both disappointing and puzzling.

Features and deposits on the site have been assigned to broad phases on the basis of stratigraphic relationships and an outline of the dating resulting from the initial recording of the pottery. Quantification of both Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery by site phase is presented in Table 4.

Unfortunately the quantities of material in some of the phase assemblages are quite small, so it is not really possible to use these data to define chronological developments in the assemblage. The Phase 1 assemblage is particularly small. While it suggests that activity in this phase dates not earlier than the 2nd century, on the basis of sherds of black-burnished ware, it is less clear that a single sherd of Oxford colour-coated ware, dated after AD 240, is reliable. A 2nd century date seems most likely for the commencement of activity on the site, as indicated above. Phase 2 contexts include more Oxford colour-coated ware as well as other fabrics and types (such as Oxford parchment ware and Young 1977, type O27) dated after AD 240, so there is no doubt that activity in this phase extends into the second half of the 3rd century, even if it is not entirely after AD 240. The small Phase 3 assemblage should logically be assigned to the 4th century; such a date is likely but the phase group is dominated by the very high representation of pink grogged ware (fabric O81) sherds so that the real significance of other fabrics is difficult to assess.

The majority of the pottery is from contexts assigned to Phase 4, the early Anglo-Saxon period (two small post-medieval sherds in the upper fill of SFB2 can be safely ignored as intrusive). Only some 16.5% of sherds in this phase were of Anglo-Saxon

Table 4: Quantification of Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery fabrics by site phase

Fabric Code	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Unphased & unstratified		TOTAL	
	% nosh	% wt	% nosh	% wt	% nosh	% wt	% nosh	% wt	% nosh	% wt	% nosh	% wt
S	2.6	0.1					0.2	0.1			0.1	+
S20					0.8	+	0.1	+			0.1	+
S30			1.1	0.1	0.8	0.2	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.1	1.0	0.4
S40							0.2	0.1			0.1	+
F38			1.5	1.0			0.1	+			0.3	0.2
F50							0.2	+			0.1	+
F51	2.6	2.7	6.7	2.5	9.2	6.6	7.4	5.5	12.0	10.5	8.2	5.9
F52							0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
F60			0.9	0.1	6.6	3.4	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.8	0.5
M22			0.9	4.2			1.0	1.7	1.1	2.7	0.9	2.3
M31							0.4	1.0	1.1	0.5	0.2	0.5
M41					0.8	0.1	0.2	0.1			0.3	0.2
W10	2.6	2.1	0.6	0.2			0.5	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.2
W11			0.3	+	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4
W12							0.1	+			+	+
W20			0.3	0.3			0.1	0.1	0.3	+	0.1	0.1
W23							0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2
Q10					0.8	0.3					+	+
Q21							0.3	0.2			0.1	0.1
E80							0.1	+			+	+
O10	23.1	10.0	23.5	28.8	4.6	1.7	12.5	10.1	8.8	7.8	13.2	12.8
O20	2.6	0.9	1.5	1.2			0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.4
O30			0.6	0.7			1.7	0.9	2.4	1.2	1.3	0.7
O36							0.6	0.8	4.0	4.2	1.1	1.3
O80			1.5	4.2	0.8	0.1	0.1	+	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.9
O81			8.2	19.2	40.0	64.0	6.2	13.1	14.4	27.3	10.1	21.2
R10	25.6	25.4	16.4	14.2	9.2	9.3	12.9	9.7	18.1	14.0	14.5	11.7
R11			0.3	+							+	+
R20			0.3	0.3			0.5	0.5	0.5	1.2	0.4	0.6
R30	7.7	5.2	15.5	11.1	16.9	7.7	22.9	23.4	13.1	10.4	19.1	16.7
R35									0.8	0.4	0.1	0.1
R37	10.3	7.2	3.2	2.6	1.5	0.9	2.0	1.4	1.9	1.9	2.3	1.8
R38	2.6	1.3	0.6	0.7					0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
R39							0.1	0.2			+	0.1
R50					0.8	0.3	0.4	0.1			0.2	0.1
R71									0.3	0.3	+	0.1
R86			0.3	0.1							+	+
R90	5.1	3.9			0.8	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.8	1.7	0.5	0.6
B10							0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1
B11	10.3	16.5	1.8	1.0	2.3	0.4	2.1	0.9	2.7	2.3	2.3	1.4
B30			0.6	0.3			0.4	0.4	2.4	2.8	0.8	0.8
C							0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	+
C10			0.6	0.1			0.1	+			0.1	+
C11	5.1	24.6	12.9	7.0	5.4	4.4	6.5	6.6	10.1	8.5	8.2	7.2
Z10							0.6	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.1
Z11							1.9	2.2	0.3	0.1	1.1	1.1
Z13							3.2	5.6			2.0	2.8
Z14							10.4	11.5	0.3	0.1	5.8	5.7
Z15							0.4	0.3			0.2	0.1
Phase total	39	668	341	8226	130	3285	1119	19640	375	7974	2004	39793
Z30			1	30			2	18	9	129		

date (although the percentage by weight was slightly higher - 19.8%). It is questionable, however, if the remainder of the assemblage can be regarded as residual. While the mean sherd weight of the Roman material in this phase was slightly lower than in Phases 1-3 it was still almost 17 g. Even allowing for the fact that this figure is somewhat inflated by the presence of sherds of large jars in fabric O81 it still indicates a mean sherd weight that does not suggest the presence of extensively redeposited material. This can be interpreted in one of at least three main ways: first, that a significant proportion of the late Roman material was in contemporary use with the early Anglo-Saxon pottery; secondly, that use of late Roman pottery effectively butt-joined (chronologically) with the introduction of early Anglo-Saxon material; thirdly, that the phase includes features of both late Roman and early Anglo-Saxon date. There is as yet no meaningful evidence from this or other region to support the first suggestion. The second would be more difficult to demonstrate either way, but again is not yet clearly supported by any data set from the Oxford region, although the occurrence of early Anglo-Saxon sherds in the upper fills of late Roman ditches, for example, is a common phenomenon in the region, seen at sites such as Barton Court Farm (Miles 1986, 18) and more locally in the northern extramural settlement at Alchester (Booth *et al.* 2001, 202). The third suggestion seems the most likely, therefore, although the length of any break in the occupation sequence remains uncertain.

Catalogue (Figures 14 & 15)

The illustrated vessels demonstrate the range of material present, drawn mainly from the major groups but including less well-stratified pieces where these are unusual (e.g. vessels from subsoil, context 2). The selection also concentrates on examples which expand understanding of well known types (e.g. M22 and O27) and on uncommon fabric and form combinations. Vessels are certainly or probably wheel-thrown unless otherwise specified. Young refers to Young 1977.

Phase 2.

1. Fabric F51, everted rim jar of Young type C18. Context 87.
2. Fabric R20, straight sided dish. Lightly burnished on exterior and interior. Context 89.
3. Fabric F38, globular beaker with simple slightly flattened bead rim and pedestal base. Context 56 and 112.
4. Fabric O10, bulbous beaker with simple beaded rim. Burnished overall. Context 112.
5. Fabric O10, wide mouthed jar/bowl of Young type O27. Grooves at base of neck and below girth, burnish on top of rim and probably overall on exterior, but this is weathered below the girth. Context 112.
6. Fabric O10, wide mouthed jar of Young type O27. Burnished overall and with grooves at base of neck and below girth. Context 132.
7. Fabric R10, 'cooking pot type' jar of Young type R27. Burnished zones on rim, shoulder and lower body and narrow band of burnished lattice at girth. Context 132.

Phase 3.

8. Fabric F51, small jar of Young type C18. Context 168.
9. Fabric O10, jar of uncertain form but probably narrow mouthed, with dished everted rim. Burnished on top of rim and on neck. Context 168.
10. Fabric F51, bowl of Young type C75, with rouletted band below angle of body wall. External surfaces eroded. Context 194.
11. Fabric C11, ?handmade, 'cooking pot type' jar with eroded everted rim and lightly incised wavy line on shoulder. External sooting and internal limescale deposit. Context 194.

Phase 4.

12. Fabric F51, stamp from base on an open form (most likely a dish of Young type C45). The stamp, unfortunately incomplete, seems to be unparalleled in the industry (cf Young 1977, figs 68 and 69). It is unclear, however, if the stamp is a single design or whether elements of more than one stamp have

been combined. The central ring, quite deeply tooled, may have been separate from the stamp(s), which adds to the difficulty of understanding the surviving fragments. Context 31.

13. Fabric O81, wide mouthed jar/bowl. Burnished on top of rim and roughly on upper body. Context 46.

14. Fabric O30, plain rimmed dish, with no evidence of burnish or other decoration. Context 59.

15. Fabric W11, base of small jar of Young type P9 with red painted decoration. Context 117.

16. Fabric Q21, hook rimmed jar of Young type WC2, burnt on rim. Context 117.

17. Fabric O10, wide mouthed jar of Young type O27. Girth grooves and burnish on top of rim, but surfaces elsewhere eroded. Context 117.

18. Fabric C11, handmade, 'cooking pot type' jar with short everted rim and very light horizontal rilling on body. External sooting. Context 117.

19. Fabric R10. Narrow mouthed jar with double-lipped everted rim. Rim and shoulder burnished with band of burnished lattice beneath. Context 117.

20. Fabric F51, small jar of Young type C18, with grooves at base of neck and girth. Context 118.

21. Fabric F51, bowl of Young type C82. Rouletted bands below rim and carination and white painted scroll decoration. Context 167.

22. Fabric R39, Alice Holt, narrow mouthed jar cf Lyne and Jefferies (1979) type 1A.20. White slip on outer face of rim and on shoulder below notched cordon. Context 167.

23. Fabric R30, medium mouthed jar, cf Young type R24. Zones of burnished on rim, shoulder and lower body and a wide burnished band below girth grooves. Context 167.

24. Fabric B30, flanged bowl. Burnished overall. Context 167.

25. Fabric C11, 'cooking pot type' jar with hooked rim. Slight external sooting. Context 167.

26. Fabric C11, straight-sided dish with slightly expanded rim. Context 167.

27. Fabric R90?, small everted rim jar in an unusually fine version of the grog-tempered reduced coarse ware fabric. Context 187.

Unphased.

28. Fabric M22, mortarium of Young type M22 with simple expanded rounded flange not exactly paralleled in Young's corpus. The flange is burnt. Context 2.

29. Fabric O10, incipient bead and flanged bowl, roughly burnished on exterior and interior. This form does not appear in Young's typology, but the fabric seems to be consistent with an Oxford source. Context 2.

30. Fabric O81, wide mouthed jar with hooked rim. Cordon at base of neck, burnished on top of rim and on shoulder. Context 2.

31. Fabric R35?, 'straight-sided' dish, with inturned rim tip with groove beneath and internal burnished line. This form is unusual in the region, though it does occur at Blackbird Leys in fabric R30. The source of this vessel is uncertain, but it is possible that the fabric is R37 and the vessel can be assigned to the 'west Oxfordshire' industry. A late Roman date is likely. Context 2.

32. Fabric R10, medium mouthed jar with hooked rim. Burnish on top of rim and on shoulder. Context 149.

33. Fabric B30, flanged bowl. Burnish on rim and interior. Context 149.

Discussion: the assemblage in its local context

The Kirtlington assemblage, although modest in size, makes a useful addition to understanding aspects of the supply and use of Roman pottery in the Oxford region, particularly as it comes from an area which is less intensively studied than the Thames Valley itself. The data complement those from Alchester (Evans 2001), some 7.5 km to the east and much the largest assemblage from the area to have been studied and reported in detail. They can also be compared with evidence from Middleton Stoney (Brown and Leggatt 1984), a site potentially of rather similar character to Kirtlington and only 5 km distant to the north-east, although not all aspects of that site were quantified in a comparable way to the approaches used here (the samian ware was not quantified systematically and REs were not used, unsurprisingly given the vintage of the report). To the SSW the nearest significant fully-recorded assemblage is that from Yarnton, some 8 km distant (Booth forthcoming).

Table 5: Comparative percentages (of sherd count) of major ware groups in late Roman assemblages in the Oxford region

Site	Asthall	Barton Court Farm	Bowling Green Farm	Dorchester Beech House	Dorchester CD92	Hadden Hill	Old Shifford	Roughground Farm East	Roughground Farm 1990	Wally Corner, Berinsfield	Yarnton	Middleton Stoney	Alchester Periods 5-6	Alchester Period 7	Alchester Periods 8-9	Kirtlington
Date range	3C-4C	13C-4C	13C	c m 2C-4C	12C-4C	12C-4C	mainly 4C	12C-4C	3C-4C	m/l 2C-4C	3C-4C	1C-m/l 3C	Early mid 3C	2C-Mid-late 3C	4C	mid 2C
Ware Group																
Samian (S)	7.0%	0.7%	5.0%	?	1.9%	1.2%	0.6%	4.5%	3.2%	1.5%	+	0.9% ?	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%	1.4%
Fine wares (F)	4.9%	19.8% ?	13.6%	24.0%	9.3%	17.2%	10.5%	15.5%	4.3%	7.5%	10.2%	0.8%	0.6%	3.7%	14.3%	10.3%
Amphorae (A)	1.5%	+	-	?	0.4%	-	0.3%	0.2%	1.0%	0.1%	-	0.2%	1.1%	1.8%	2.5%	-
Mortarium (M)	0.7%	?	1.3%	?	2.1%	2.7%	2.2%	2.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.8%	0.3%	0.6%	1.5%	2.1%	1.6%
White wares (W)	1.1%	?	1.3%	5.5%	0.8%	2.4%	3.9%	1.0%	0.6%	4.3%	1.1%	3.6%	2.8%	2.6%	1.7%	1.6%
White slipped (Q)	0.4%	?	-	0.8%	0.4%	0.5%	-	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%	+	0.5%	0.8%	+	0.2%
Subtotal	15.6%	20.5% ?	21.0%	30.3% +	14.9%	24.0%	17.5%	24.6%	11.1%	15.4%	13.3%	5.8%	7.6%	12.4%	22.5%	15.6%
'Belgic' wares (E)	0.2%	6.7%	-	4.0%	1.5%	10.9%	6.6%	0.3%	0.5%	2.3%	0.1%	24.7%	-	-	-	0.1%
Oxidised wares (O)	9.0%	1.2% ?	-	4.5%	13.9%	16.7%	1.0%	4.4%	5.7%	5.0%	9.2%	11.8%	13.3%	15.4%	15.6%	29.3%
Reduced wares (R)	53.9%	62.6%	27.8%	51.8%	66.8%	47.6%	61.5%	40.5%	55.4%	72.7%	62.0%	44.0%	69.7%	58.0%	45.1%	41.3%
Black burnished (B)	16.9%	1.9%	43.5%	4.0%	2.4%	0.7%	4.8%	22.8%	24.4%	3.2%	5.6%	2.4%	3.0%	4.6%	7.6%	3.6%
Calcareous (C)	4.3%	6.9%	7.8%	5.0%	0.6%	-	8.5%	6.7%	2.7%	1.4%	9.6%	11.4%	6.5%	9.6%	9.2%	9.4%
Misc	0.1%	0.2%	-	0.4%	-	-	-	0.7%	0.2%	-	+	-				
Subtotal	84.4%	79.5%	79.0%	69.7%	85.1%	76.0%	82.5%	75.4%	88.9%	84.6%	86.7%	94.2%	92.4%	87.6%	77.5%	84.4%
Total Sherds	8853	281.0 kg	1099	?	1059	412	2686	5599	1645	2319	2401	c 12863	8386	3348	16827	18000

(Notes: Barton Court Farm - the figures are for weight, the fine ware figure includes mortaria, white and white-slipped wares and an unknown (but probably small) proportion of oxidised coarse wares, 'coarse storage' fabrics have been arbitrarily divided between oxidised and reduced coarse wares; Dorchester Beech House Hotel - figures for samian and amphorae are not known, the figures for fine wares and white wares presumably include some mortaria, the sherd total is not known!)

All these sites fall into a similar pattern in terms of major trends of supply, dominated by products of the Oxford industry, but with varying contributions from other regional suppliers such as the 'west Oxfordshire' (R37 etc) industry to the west, the pink grogged ware industry to the north-east, and the unlocated but potentially relatively local supplier of some shell-tempered wares, in quite significant quantities in the 2nd century, for example. In the 1st century and perhaps into the early 2nd Yarnton received pottery from very local sources, kilns being located at Yarnton itself, at Cassington and at Long Hanborough, but production at these sites is likely to have ceased before activity began at Kirtlington, so they are of no significance in the present context. The nearest known kilns of the Oxford industry lay only c 9 km south-east of Kirtlington at Noke, on the southern margin of Otmoor (Cheetham 1995, 422; Pine 2005), so the importance of Oxford products is to be expected.

Kirtlington contrasts particularly with sites such as Alchester in the range of non-regional material present. This is explained in part by variations in assemblage size and chronological range (the absence of early activity at Kirtlington resulting in a corresponding lack of early imported pottery, for example) and also by the greater importance of Alchester as a regional market centre, with its greater likelihood of attracting relatively unusual pottery types. These factors together account for characteristics of the Kirtlington assemblage such as the complete absence of amphora sherds.

Comparative data from the sites mentioned above can also be used to provide an assessment of the socio-economic character of the Kirtlington site based on the pottery evidence. The approach to this subject has been fully discussed (Booth 2004) and will not be reiterated here. Data from this study, mainly for late Roman assemblages, are presented here in Table 5. This is based principally on Table 3 of the original study (*ibid.*, 47), but figures for Middleton Stoney and three main period groups at Alchester have been added (derived from *ibid.*, 42-3, Tables 1 and 2), together with the data for Kirtlington.

These figures show that significant differences between Kirtlington and Middleton Stoney are largely a consequence of the different chronological profiles of these sites. There are points of similarity between Kirtlington and the later periods of settlement at Alchester, but the greater precision achieved by separating the late 3rd and 4th century periods at Alchester means that neither matches the Kirtlington data really closely. The inevitable lack of precisely comparable phase divisions from one site to another generally makes exact like-for-like comparison very difficult. Nevertheless, the Alchester data show the steady increase of fine and specialist ware representation through time, an increase which in this region is accounted for almost entirely by the expansion of the repertoire of the Oxford industry from the mid 3rd century. Most other sites in the region can be seen to conform to this pattern, and Kirtlington appears to be no exception. In many respects the proportions of the major ware groups at Kirtlington (overall, rather than by phase) are similar to those at Yarnton. The fine and specialist ware totals are fairly similar, and it is noticeable also that Yarnton, Kirtlington and Alchester have very similar representations of shell-tempered (C) wares in their later phases, perhaps supporting the suggestion that a local source was responsible for some of these.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Kirtlington assemblage is the high proportion of oxidised coarse wares - at 29.7% of sherds they are almost twice as common here as in any other assemblage in the region, and many times more common

than in some groups. This unusual characteristic again supports the suggestion of local production, but in this case it is likely to have been very local indeed on the basis of the evidence for likely wasters at the site. The occurrence of multiple examples of Oxford type O27 suggests that this production may have been an offshoot of the Oxford industry, perhaps intended specifically to supply a small nucleated settlement close to the junction of the north-south Roman road and Akeman Street. This production might also have included some reduced coarse wares, but there is no suggestion that it extended to any part of the fine and specialist ware range.

This aspect of Kirtlington apart, the similarity of the general distribution of ware group data to that of sites such as Yarnton indicates that the site is broadly of rural character. The larger nucleated centres such as Alchester and Dorchester are distinguishable from most other settlement types in the later Roman period on the basis of their fine and specialist ware levels, but smaller nucleated settlements and most other rural settlements seem to form a continuum in this regard, suggesting that they are broadly similar in socio-economic character. Villas are usually distinct from this pattern.

5.1.2 Anglo-Saxon Pottery

The 188 sherds (3,937 g, 3.07 REs) of Anglo-Saxon pottery were recovered from nine contexts, not counting topsoil/subsoil and unstratified material, but the great majority (*c* 91% of sherds and 95% by weight) derived from the fills of a single feature, SFB2. A further 109 sherds (1,523 g) from the evaluation came from the same feature.

Fabrics

Five fabrics were identified in examination of the pottery from the evaluation (Blinkhorn 2005). A broadly similar range of fabrics was present in the larger collection from the excavation, but encompassed a considerable range of variation, most of which was probably of minor significance. Using a similar approach to that adopted for the Roman wares, the fabrics are grouped under ware codes (Table 6). Details of the individual fabric codes assigned to these groups (defined in terms of inclusion types and coarseness) can be found in the project archive.

Table 6: Quantification of Anglo-Saxon pottery fabrics

Ware	Principal inclusions	Sherd count		Weight		Rim count		Rim equivalents	
		No	%	G.	%	No.	%	RE	%
Z10	Miscellaneous	6	3.2	53	1.3	1	3.2	0.03	1.0
Z11	Quartz sand (and occasional sandstone)	22	11.7	447	11.4	6	19.4	0.56	18.2
Z13	Quartz sand and limestone	40	21.3	1121	28.5	11	35.5	1.43	46.6
Z14	Quartz sand and organic	116	61.7	2265	57.5	13	41.9	1.05	34.2
Z15	Organic (and occasional quartz sand)	4	2.1	51	1.3				
Total		188		3937		31		3.07	

The assemblage is too small for variations in representation by different measures to be particularly significant, but fabric groups Z13 and Z14 together comprised roughly 80% of the assemblage by all measures, Z14 being much better represented by sherd count and weight, but Z13 containing a higher proportion of rim sherds of above average size (an average of 0.13 REs per vessel, boosted by the presence of two open

forms, as opposed to 0.08 REs per vessel for Z14). These two fabric groups, which both show some variation in coarseness and the relative proportions of the principal inclusions, were presumably of relatively local origin. The minor fabrics in the Z10 group comprised a single sherd with sand and clay pellet inclusions, three with distinctive inclusions as in the sherd illustrated as No. **46** below and two sherds not otherwise characterised. The very low representation of purely organic- (or 'chaff-') tempered pottery is notable and was exactly paralleled in the pottery from the evaluation.

Vessel types

The majority of the vessels were categorised as jars, though none of these had a complete profile allowing assessment of the rim diameter:height ratio. The only more or less complete profiles were of two open forms, a simple rounded dish and a slightly deeper bowl (Nos **37** and **41** respectively), which were the only non-jar forms present. The jars varied considerably in rim typology and ranged in diameter from *c* 110-220 mm, but because most of the rim sherds were relatively small (only one jar was represented by more than 0.14 REs) estimates of rim diameter should be treated with caution (and in 12 cases were not possible at all). The recorded diameters can be grouped as follows; 110-140 mm (4 examples, 0.36 REs), 150-180 mm (9 examples, 0.96 REs), 200-220 mm (4 examples, 0.45 REs). It is possible that some of the lugged vessels were larger, but in the absence of sherds from other parts of the rim of these vessels this is not certain. In total five separate raised lugs, one of 'swallow's nest type (No. **49** below), were recorded. All were presumably perforated, though the relevant evidence did not survive in two fragmentary cases. Three, including the swallow's nest type, were in fabric Z14 and the other two in Z13.

Surface finish, decoration and use

Just over 45% of all the sherds had burnished surfaces of some kind, and smoothing of the internal surfaces of vessels with burnished exteriors was common. The relatively good preservation of the sherds means that these figures can be considered fairly reliable. Burnishing was present on 50% of sherds in fabric Z11, 60% of sherds in fabric Z13 and 41% of sherds in fabric Z14. Other types of decoration were relatively rare and all significant examples have been illustrated below. None of the three vessels concerned was represented by rim sherds and all were fragmentary so that schemes of decoration could not be reconstructed.

Evidence for use in the form of sooting was relatively common, occurring on 44 sherds again spread across the three main fabrics. Substantial carbonised interior residues were present in a few cases in combination with external sooting. Together this evidence indicates routine use of vessels as cooking pots, but it is not possible to go beyond the simple figures to attempt to estimate what proportion of the vessel population of the site was actually used in this way. For example, slight sooting was noted in the exterior of the bowl No. **41**, but it is uncertain if this indicates definite use of this vessel for cooking rather than proximity to a hearth.

Catalogue (Figures 16 & 17)

All the sherds are hand made and are fired black/dark greyish-brown unless otherwise stated. All the vessels are from fills of SFB2.

34. Fabric Z13, jar rim. Roughly burnished exterior, internal and external sooting. Context 97.
35. Fabric Z11, jar, possibly carinated (broken at carination). Well burnished exterior. Context 97.
36. Fabric Z11, jar. Context 97
37. Fabric Z13, rounded dish. Context 96
38. Fabric Z13, jar rim. Roughly burnished on exterior, slight exterior and interior sooting on lower part of sherd. Context 96.
39. Fabric Z13, jar rim. Sooted on exterior and thick carbonised residue on interior. Context 96.
40. Fabric Z14, jar rim. Slightly sooted on exterior and thick carbonised residue on interior. Context 96.
41. Fabric Z13, simple bowl. Slight exterior sooting. Contexts 95 and 96.
42. Fabric Z14, jar. Variable overall exterior burnish, smoothed on interior. Sooting on exterior. Contexts 95 and 96.
43. Fabric Z13. Probable spindlewhorl, but the pre-firing hole is off-centre and the weight would therefore have been unevenly distributed. Context 96
44. Fabric Z14, fragments of raised perforated lug. Context 96.
45. Fabric Z14, large raised perforated lug. Context 96
46. Fabric Z10, with moderate soft laminar opaque rock inclusions up to c 1 mm and sparse quartz sand. Shoulder sherd from jar with tooled horizontal lines. Above is a row of large segmented ring stamps each containing a smaller wheel-like component. It is not clear if these represent a unified stamp or two separate elements superimposed. Context 96.
47. Fabric Z13, four non-joining fragments of a jar with raised bosses incorporated into a design with incised linear decoration and small circular stamps with a simple cross motif. Roughly burnished on exterior and smoothed on interior. Contexts 95 and 96
48. Fine fabric Z14, three non-joining fragments from decorated jar(?) of uncertain form. Burnished exterior and smoothed interior surfaces. There are four stamp types; a simple circular (dot) impression, a larger round stamp with lattice infill, a cross and an almost straight 'wyrn' stamp used in combination apparently to form a linear margin to a zone of decoration. Contexts 96 and 97.
49. Fabric Z14, jar rim with upward projecting, perforated 'swallows nest' lug. Context 95
50. Fabric Z11, jar rim. Context 95.
51. Fabric Z13, jar rim. Burnished exterior and smoothed interior, sooting on exterior. Context 95.
52. Fabric Z14, jar rim. Thick carbonised residue on interior. Context 95.
53. Fabric Z14, jar rim. Burnished exterior, smoothed interior. Context 95.
54. Fabric Z11, jar rim. Sooted on exterior and thick carbonised residue on interior. Context 95.
55. Fabric Z11, jar rim. Slightly sooted on exterior. Context 95.
56. Fabric Z13, rim of barrel shaped jar. Roughly burnished on interior and exterior. Context 95
57. Fabric Z13, fragment of raised lug with irregular deep impressions. These were presumably intended as decoration. The other (inner?) face is burnished. Context 95.

Discussion

Within the region substantial assemblages of Anglo-Saxon pottery have been published recently from Eynsham (Blinkhorn 2003), Barrow Hills, Radley (Blinkhorn 2007), the latter one of the largest domestic assemblages from the country, and from Oxford Science Park (Blinkhorn 2001). Curiously the significant Saxon settlement at Yarnton produced only a very small amount of early and middle Saxon pottery (Blinkhorn 2004). Other local groups include a very small assemblage from Alchester (Evans 2001, 382) and a rather larger group from Bicester (Mephram 2002). Sand and sand/calcareous tempered fabrics were most common at Alchester, Bicester and Yarnton, sand/organic tempered fabrics being poorly represented at Alchester and Bicester and absent at Yarnton where, however, the chaff-tempered fabric F1 comprised 17% of the total sherds (Blinkhorn 2004, 267). At Eynsham quartz-tempered and limestone-tempered fabrics were dominant, and F1 there (which included both organic and organic and sand-tempered fabrics) only amounted to 6.8% of the sherds in the principal stratified early Saxon groups (Blinkhorn 2003, 163). At Barrow Hills, rather further from the relevant source materials, calcareous fabrics were much reduced in importance, consistent with a well developed local pattern (Blinkhorn 2007, 230-231). Blinkhorn (ibid.) also discusses the significance of variations in the representation of chaff, which can be a component of a variety of fabrics with different principal inclusion types. At Barrow Hills, sherds with 'chaff' as

their principal/sole inclusion type amounted to 11.5% of the assemblage total while quartz-and-chaff-tempered fabrics comprised 35.4% of sherds. At Oxford Science Park the assemblage was dominated by quartz-tempered and quartz-and-chaff-tempered fabrics; here, solely chaff-tempered sherds formed 9% of the site total (but only 6% by weight; Blinkhorn 2001, 189, 192).

Blinkhorn (*ibid.*, 233-234) has also reviewed at some length the debate about the chronological significance of chaff-tempering vis-à-vis other fabric types, and concluded that while the use of chaff might have become more common in the 6th century it is a component of assemblages from the 5th century and variations in its occurrence might reflect non-chronological factors such as social groupings (see also Blinkhorn 2004, 272). On this basis it would be unwise, if tempting, to use the almost total absence of purely organic-tempered fabrics at Kirtlington to argue for an early date for this assemblage. Other characteristics of the assemblage such as the presence of decorated sherds might in any case suggest a 6th century date rather than earlier. It is worth reiterating, as mentioned above, that the pottery derives almost entirely from the fill of a single sunken featured building. It is clear that assemblages from such features within the same site can be hugely variable in size and content (see e.g. Blinkhorn 2004, 272; 2007, 232-233), reflecting a variety of factors perhaps including chronology but also the fact that most material from features of this type represents secondary if not tertiary fill deposits (Tipper 2004, 148). Such a view is supported on some sites by the presence of sherds of the same vessel in several different features (e.g. at Barrow Hills; Blinkhorn 2007, 232) and there was a single instance of this at Kirtlington, with joining sherds of a vessel in fabric Z13 in contexts 44 and 97, from SFBs 1 and 2 respectively.

5.2 Metalwork

5.2.1 Objects (*by D. Gilbert*)

The majority of the objects were too fragmentary and corroded to identify.

Two Roman iron lift keys were recovered during the excavation. The first was from context (117) and the second from within the stone work of wall (194). It is unlikely this key was built into wall during construction. Both appear very similar and may be for the same lock. Each was 16 cm in length.

A large iron object (119), 26 cm in length, pointed at one end with a socket at the other and two fixing nails. It is probably part of an agricultural implement, either a pick, fork or a dibber. A second smaller object 7cm long, that appears to be the pointed tip of a similar object was found with it.

A copper alloy disc brooch 26mm in diameter (43). It is in poor condition; the surface is laminated. It shows a decorative border around the circumference and possibly a horse motif in the centre. The pin on the reverse is bent and broken about half way along its original length.

5.2.2 Coin (*by D. Gilbert*)

A single coin was found within pit [192] from context (191). It is a classic example of an official issue URBS ROMA. A series of these coins were issued by Constantine I to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the city of Rome. It features the

goddess Roma, patron deity of Rome, on the obverse. The reverse shows a she-wolf suckling the twins Romulus and Remus. Under the figures it is marked PLG for the mint of Lugdunum in Gaul. It is dated 330–335 AD. The detail on both surfaces is crisp and well defined, it shows little signs of corrosion or wear. It is of museum display quality.

5.3 Cremated Bone (*By L. Harvey*)

Nature of the sample

A small amount of cremated human bone was recovered from the fill (108) of a small shallow sub-circular pit [109] during archaeological investigations in 2007. Whilst the fill of this feature contained frequent charcoal chunks and flecking, it is unlikely to represent an *in situ* cremation and appears to represent a cremation burial or cremation related deposit. No pottery or other artefacts were found within this fill. The remains examined here were found in close proximity to an area of Roman and Saxon settlement.

Methods

Cremated remains were examined under light magnification (x10) and data recorded onto paper record forms following IFA standards and guidelines (Brickley and McKinley 2004). The aim of this assessment was to characterise the cremated bone as fully as possible, with reference to demography, pathology and the circumstances of the cremation itself. Additional references were used where appropriate.

Discussion

Due to the small size of this sample, very few firm conclusions can be made. The total weight of the bone recovered was 74g, an amount inconsistent with a complete inhumation of any one adult individual (Mays 1998: 220). It is likely therefore, that a great deal of material was lost prior to inhumation or during excavation. The small amount of bone recovered raises the possibility that this is a cremation-related deposit or possibly a monumental ‘cenotaph’ type deposit.

The bone itself was mottled in appearance, with fragments ranging in colour from white and well fired to black and charred. This indicates that this individual was cremated at a temperature ranging from c.300°C to more than 600°C, probably for a period of time greater than 2 hours. The firing appears to have been uneven across the body. Notably, skull fragments were white in colour whilst probable long bone fragments were mostly grey/black.

The largest fragments recovered in this sample were around 40mm in length, with the majority of fragments being around 15mm in length. Despite this, a few skeletal elements were broadly identifiable. Ten fragments of cranial vault were identified, in addition to around 15 probable long bone fragments. Around 55 fragments of bone were miscellaneous in nature, and many of these were less than 5mm in length. The majority of the bone recovered was cortical bone, with very little spongy trabecular bone remaining. Since all broadly identifiable elements are consistent in size and fairly robust looking, it seems reasonable to assume this sample represents one individual. It is impossible however to determine the sex, age or pathological condition of the individual.

Although it is impossible to be certain, this cremation deposit has characteristics that may be Roman in date. The mottled appearance of the bone, suggesting uneven firing

at the time of cremation is a typically Roman attribute (*pers comm.* Andrew Chamberlain, 2008). It is known that inhumation (burial) replaced cremation from the second century AD onwards (Roberts and Cox 2003: 108) in southern England, so this deposit may predate this period. It is worth noting that the relatively small amount of charcoal recovered in the pit (frequent chunks and flecking) indicates the bones had probably been carefully removed from the remains of the cremation pyre, before being deposited in pit [109].

Table 7. Summary table of cremated remains

Cremation no.	Weight	Fragment count	Maximum fragment size	Colour of bone	Identifiable elements / notes
(108)	74g	c. 80 fragments	40mm x 20mm	White-grey-black, mottled appearance. (Indicates a 300°C to 600°C+ cremation temperature)	10 skull fragments, white in colour. 15 fragments consistent with being from long bones, grey/black in colour. Miscellaneous fragments mottled in colour and size, c. 55 fragments. Skull and long bone fragments appear consistently sized and robust looking (despite dehydration and warping) and probably represent one individual. Sex, age and pathological condition could not be determined.

5.4 Other Finds (by D. Gilbert)

Metal working slag was recovered from contexts (44) and (117). This material might be of Saxon date, but could also be residual from the late Roman period.

A chocolate-brown shale bead with a maximum diameter of 35mm and height of 25mm with a 5mm diameter hole drilled through it was recovered from within the building's floor make-up (230).

A fragment of a wet-stone was found in context (167), it was square with rounded corners in section measuring 29mm x 29mm x 22mm.

SFB [60] produced a fragment of a ceramic loom weight from within its fill (59). It measured 64mm x 51mm x 30mm.

A small sherd of Roman green-blue glass was recovered from the fill (132) of pit [133]. It measured 15mm x 16mm x 1mm thick.

A small assemblage of residual worked flint was located by the excavation. The assemblage is too small to give an accurate date but a Neolithic origin is likely.

A microlith was reported to have been found in pit [133] however this can not be confirmed as it has been lost.

Context	L (mm)	B (mm)	T (mm)	Notes
44	19	27	5	Broken flake of rejuvenation
52	19	12	1	Broken blade
91	38	33	10	Damaged flake of rejuvenation
96	12	19	1	Burnt, broken blade
124	26	20	2	Flake
167	19	16	3	Flake
194	46	13	2	Blade
194	32	20	7	Burnt primary flake

6 DISCUSSION *(by D. Gilbert)*

Roman Period

Residual Roman pottery of the 1st century is present on the site. Although the cremation burial remains undated, it is possible that it is of Early Roman date which would pre-date all other activity recognised on the site or be contemporary with the Roman activity investigated.

The earliest recognisable phase of activity is represented by a Roman agricultural field system defined by a series of ditches. These are in use from the 2nd century and appear to be roughly evenly spaced; one set aligned approximately north to south [1/04], [5/06], [101], [103], [227] and a second set [28], [54], [64], [66], [82], [84], [202] at 90° to them.

These ditches were obviously established boundaries for the fields and were re-cut over the Roman period from the 2nd to 4th centuries. The variation in size of these ditches is consistent with known Roman field ditches in the region (Henig and Booth 2000). The Roman road of Akeman Street lies approximately 700m to the north of the site. Around the town of Alchester 6km to the east, lies a substantial block of regularly laid out field systems to the north of this road, there is more limited evidence for a similar pattern on the south side of Akeman Street. There is no indication that this scheme was extended beyond the immediate vicinity of Alchester (Henig and Booth 2000), although there are similarities in the layout.

Within the fields that were created by the ditches, several shallow gullies were noted. These appear to be aligned on an alternating pattern from field to field of N-S and E-W. These would appear to relate to agricultural practices. Plough marks have been recorded in Roman fields at Drayton, these were made by simple Iron Age type ploughs. Wooden shares of this type have been found at Ashville, these were approximately 0.45m wide (Henig and Booth 2000). The dimensions of these ploughs are similar to the width of the gullies recorded.

The evaluation report noted that a Roman road runs from Kings Sutton crossing Akeman Street (approximately 1.2km to the north of the site) and south onwards to north Oxford (JMHS 2005). The road is 100m east of the site and the field system may be associated with a small settlement/farmstead adjacent to this road.

It would appear that towards the end of the 3rd century or early 4th century the field defined by its eastern ditch [227] was made narrower. The land to the east was then

subject to a series of pits being excavated. Their purpose is not known but may be they were for refuse.

During the 4th century it would appear that the field between [227] and [103] was no longer used. The pitting seen to the east was extended into this area and a well (169) dug. A building was erected to the east over the original area of pits. These had obviously been filled by this time.

It would seem likely that the putative farmstead to the east was expanding in size during the 4th century and fields were being used for this expansion, first for refuse pits on the edge of the settlement and then for building of the settlement itself.

Certain villa sites in northern Oxfordshire expanded during the later Roman period, these were often very wealthy. These villa sites could be extensive such as at North Leigh, but were generally smaller and less complex such as those at Garford and Little Milton. All show Romanised building traditions.

There is a general “invisibility of structures” on low-status rural sites (Henig and Booth 2000). Stone based round buildings have been noted on some sites and it is likely that “native” traditions remained dominant on these sites.

Only a small percentage of the pottery assemblage was imported wares, the majority was locally produced although the catchment area for this pottery extended as far as Dorset. This may be explained by the importance of Alchester as a regional market centre attracting goods from a wider area. The high proportion of oxidised coarse wares and the evidence for likely wasters at the site supports the suggestion of very local production perhaps intended specifically to supply a small nucleated settlement close to the junction of the north-south Roman road and Akeman Street.

The style of the building is clearly indicative of Roman traditions, with stone foundations. Unfortunately it was not possible to establish if it was an isolated building or part of a range of rooms. Although it is probably not part of a large wealthy site it would appear that it may belong to a villa site nonetheless.

Anglo-Saxon Period

The excavations at the nearby site of Yarnton indicated that Romano-British occupation had influenced the location of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Early Anglo Saxon occupation was located within and adjacent to late Roman settlement (Hey 2004). This is mirrored at Barton Court Farm near Abingdon where sunken featured buildings were found on the site of a Roman villa. A similar occurrence is evident here.

During the previous evaluation of the site a sunken featured building [2/04] was sampled (JMHS 2005). Further excavation of this revealed an indicative internal post-hole, not previously recorded. Two further SFBs [60] and [186] were also recorded in the area. These types of settlements tend to be formless and haphazard in layout with a tendency to sprawl over large areas (Blair 1994) as at Oxford Science Park, Littlemore (Moore 2001). Characteristically a scatter of sunken-featured buildings is interspersed with a smaller number of rectilinear structures as at Radley Barrow Hills (Blair 1994, 21). Unfortunately deep root penetrations combined with the nature of the natural geological deposit made the location of small post-holes difficult.

Contemporary with the SFBs was a stone lined well [45]. This was of a different construction method than the earlier Roman well (169). It would seem likely that the robbing and capping of the Roman well (169) occurred during the Anglo-Saxon period. This well may have been considered too small for the settlement, it may have become unstable at lower levels or the water table had lowered requiring the digging of a deeper well. The stone from the upper structure of the well may have been robbed at this time to help build the new well [45].

The Roman boundary ditch to the south of the site must have been still visible and a significant marker, as it was re-cut [200] in the Saxon period obviously retaining its boundary status. It is possibly indicative of continued use from the Roman into the early Saxon period.

The Anglo-Saxon features appear to respect the line of the Roman fields demarcated by north to south aligned ditches [103] and [1/04]. It is not known if these fields remained under cultivation during this period or if this juxtaposition is simply a coincidence.

Saxon features at Barton Court Farm (Blair 1994) certainly do not respect earlier Roman ditches, although at Yarnton (Hey 2004) there is limited evidence to suggest this may be the case.

At Yarnton (Hey 2004) the most conclusive evidence for continued occupation from the 4th century in to the 5th century was made by environmental data. Unfortunately no appropriate deposits were present to allow such analysis here.

Hamerow (1993) observed that Saxon sunken feature buildings are often used as rubbish dumps after abandonment. It would also appear likely from the assemblage found within the stone building that this was also the case.

If there was direct continuation of occupation from the Roman into Anglo-Saxon period it would seem likely that the building would have been occupied and used. The flagstones of the floor had been robbed before the building was allowed to fill with debris. It is likely that this robbing of stone also took place on the walls at the same time. The lack of later artefacts within the fill would suggest that this took place during the Saxon period.

It is possible that the building had become unstable and was dismantled, but not razed to the ground. The dark organic nature of the fill (167) would suggest that it was either a rubbish dump or perhaps used as an animal pen.

Later Features

There are limited later features on the site, most of these were associated with post-medieval agricultural practices or the disposal of more recent rubbish.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biddulph, E, 2005 Roman pottery, in P Bradley, B Charles, A Hardy and D Poore, Prehistoric and Roman activity and a Civil War ditch: excavations at the Chemistry Research Laboratory, 2-4 South Parks Road, Oxford, *Oxoniensia* 70, 155-167.

- Blair, J. 1994 *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing
- Blinkhorn, P, 2001 Anglo-Saxon pottery, in J Moore, Excavations at Oxford Science Park, Littlemore, Oxford, *Oxoniensia* **66**, 189-197.
- Blinkhorn, P W, 2003 The pottery in A Hardy, A Dodd and G D Keevill, *Aelfric's Abbey. Excavations at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 1989-92*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes **16**, 159-206.
- Blinkhorn, P, 2004 Early and middle Saxon pottery, in G Hey, *Yarnton: Saxon and medieval settlement and landscape Results of excavations 1990-96*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph No **20**, Oxford, 267-273.
- Blinkhorn, P, 2005 Pottery, in J Moore Heritage Services, An Archaeological Evaluation at Gossway Fields, Kirtlington, Oxfordshire, 9-10.
- Blinkhorn, P, 2007 Anglo-Saxon pottery, in R Chambers and E McAdam, *Excavations at Barrow Hills, Radley, Oxfordshire, 1983-5, Volume 2: The Romano-British cemetery and Anglo-Saxon settlement*, Oxford Archaeol Thames Valley Landscapes Mono No. **25**, Oxford, 229-247.
- Booth, P, 1997 *Asthall, Oxfordshire, excavations in a Roman 'small town', 1992*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph No **9**, Oxford Archaeol Unit.
- Booth, P, 1999 Pink grogged ware again, *Study Group for Roman Pottery Newsletter* **27**, 2-3.
- Booth, P, 2004 Quantifying status: some pottery data from the Upper Thames Valley, *J Roman Pottery Stud* **11**, 39-52.
- Booth, P, 2007 Oxford Archaeology Roman pottery recording system: an introduction, OA internal document, revised.
- Booth, P, forthcoming Iron Age and Roman pottery, in G Hey and J Timby, *Yarnton: Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and landscape: results of excavations 1990-8*, Oxford Archaeol Thames Valley Landscapes Mono.
- Booth, P, Boyle, A, and Keevill, G D, 1993 A Romano-British kiln site at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay, and other sites on the Didcot to Oxford and Wootton to Abingdon water mains, Oxfordshire, *Oxoniensia* **58**, 87-217.
- Booth, P, Evans, J and Hiller, J, 2001 *Excavations in the extramural settlement of Roman Alchester, Oxfordshire, 1991*, Oxford Archaeology Mono **1**, Oxford.
- Booth, P, and Green, S, 1989 The nature and distribution of certain pink, grog tempered vessels, *J Roman Pottery Stud* **2**, 77-84.
- Brickley, M & McKinley, JL (eds.) 2004. *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*. BABAO/IFA 8-12.
- Brown, L, and Leggatt, E, 1984 The Roman pottery, in S Rahtz and T Rowley, *Middleton Stony, excavation and survey in a North Oxfordshire parish 1970-1982*, Oxford, 76-90.
- Cheetham, C J, 1995 Some Roman and pre-Roman settlements and roads by the confluence of the Cherwell and the Ray near Otmoor, *Oxoniensia* **60**, 419-426.
- Evans, J, 2001 Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery, in Booth *et al.* 2001, 263-383.

- Hamerow, H.F. 1993 *Excavations at Mucking Volume 2: The Anglo-Saxon Settlement*. English Heritage Archaeological Report **22**
- Henig, M. & Booth, P. 2000 *Roman Oxfordshire*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing
- Hey, G. 2004 *Yarnton: Saxon and Medieval Settlement and Landscape. Results of Excavations 1990-96*. Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscape Monograph **20**
- Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (revised 1999)
- JMHS 2005 *An Archaeological Evaluation at Gossway Fields, Kirtlington, Oxfordshire*
- Mays, S. 1998. *The Archaeology of Human Bones*. London: Routledge.
- Mephram, L, 2002 Pottery, in P A Harding and P Andrews, Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement at Chapel Street, Bicester: excavations 1999-2000, *Oxoniensia* **67**, 151-155.
- Miles, D, 1986 (ed) *Archaeology at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, Oxon: an investigation of late Neolithic, Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon settlements*, Counc Brit Archaeol Res Rep **50**.
- Moore, J, 2001 Excavations at Oxford Science Park, Littlemore, Oxford, *Oxoniensia* **66**, 163-219.
- Pine, J, 2005 Ashgrove, RSPB Otmoor, Noke, Oxon; an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeol Services unpublished report 0565.
- Roberts, CA & Cox, M. 2003. *Health and Disease in Britain: From Prehistory to the Present Day*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing.
- Tipper, J, 2004 *The Grubenhaus in Anglo-Saxon England. An analysis and interpretation of the evidence from a most distinctive building type*, Yedingham.
- Tomber, R, and Dore, J, 1998 *The national Roman fabric reference collection: a handbook*, Museum of London Archaeol Services Mono No **2**.
- Williams, R.J. & Zeepvat, R.J. 1994 Bancroft: *A Late Bronze Age/Iron Age Settlement, Roman Villa and Temple-Mausoleum*. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph No. **7**
- Young, C J, 1977 *The Roman pottery industry of the Oxford region*, Brit Archaeol Rep (Brit Ser) **43**, Oxford.