JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

ROSE COTTAGE, 10 WITTENHAM LANE,

DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES,

OXFORDSHIRE

Su 5783 9383

On behalf of

Mr R Booth

AUGUST 2007

REPORT FOR	Mr R Booth C/o Rose Cottage Wittenham Lane Dorchester-on-Thames Oxfordshire OX10 7JW
PREPARED BY	Daniel Sausins & Gwilym Williams
EDITED BY	John Moore
FIELDWORK	4th May – 6th June 2007
REPORT ISSUED	17th August 2007
ENQUIRES TO	*John Moore Heritage Services* *Hill View* *Woodperry Road* *Beckley* *Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ* *Tel/Fax 01865 358300* *Email info@jmheritageservices.co.uk*
JMHS PROJECT NO.	1752
SITE CODE	DOWL 07
ARCHIVE LOCATION **Accession Number**	Oxfordshire Museum Service OXCMS : 2007.32

CONTENTS

Summary

A watching brief was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services during groundworks for an extension at 10 Wittenham Lane. The investigation revealed several late Iron Age/early Roman features comprising ditches and possibly pits along with two later Roman burials and evidence for at least one more burial.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location *(Figure 1)*

The development site was located at 10 Wittenham Lane in the south part of Dorchester-on-Thames (NGR SU 5783 9383). The underlying geology is alluvium overlying First Terrace Gravels and the site lies at about 50m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for the erection of a single storey rear extension (P06/W1134). Due to the potential presence of archaeological deposits on the site a condition was attached requiring an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. The County Archaeological Services (OCAS) issued a *Design Brief* for such a watching brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The development site lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential being situated between the Scheduled Monuments of the Roman town of Dorchester to the north and the Iron Age site of Dyke Hills earthworks and enclosed settlement to the south.

A human burial, probably of late Roman date, was recorded on the east side of Wittenham Lane only 50m south of Rose Cottage, (SMR 13029) This burial had also cut through an earlier Roman ditch or pit, indicating activity during this period. Two inhumations were discovered in 1965 during building works in the garden of what is now 1 Orchard Lane, some 50m to the north. They were buried in an east-west orientation with one apparently interred within a wooden coffin (SMR 5530). There were also indications of further grave cuts in the area suggesting that they were part of a cemetery as opposed to being isolated burials. The graves seemed to have been cut through gravel containing pottery of 1st century, possibly indicative of settlement of that period. Alternatively the gravel could represent a road surface. It is unclear whether the graves are late Roman, Saxon or medieval but given the location just to the south of the Roman town and the lack of any later artefacts within the fills of the grave cuts it seems that they may be of late Roman date. Recently a burial has been found at Haven Close, west of Orchard Haven, along with a 2nd century north/south orientated ditch (*pers. com*. R Bashford).

A watching brief in 2003 (JMHS) next door at 8 Wittenham Lane reported negative results for archaeological remains.

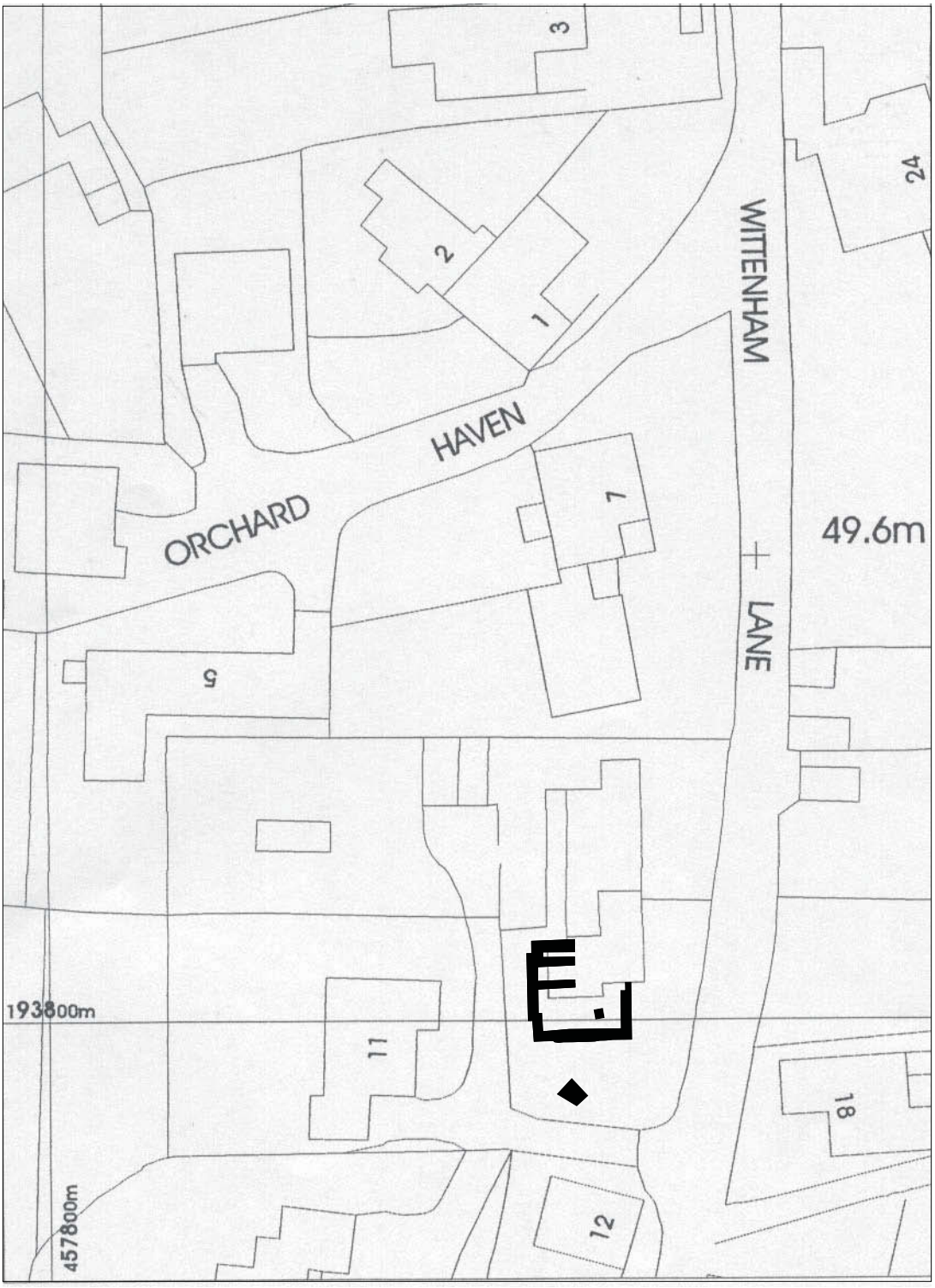

Figure 1. Site Location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- to record any remains associated the Roman activity known 50m to the south, should it extend this far north
- to record any burials that might be present

The results of the investigations will be made public.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Strategy

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with OCAS. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record throughout, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of all operations that may have disturbed or destroyed archaeological remains. This involved the observation of the surface stripping, the excavation of the foundation and service trenches and the excavation of a pit for a soakaway. This work was conducted using a tracked 3 tonne 360^{o} mini-digger.

Paul Smith, County Archaeologist, monitored the project and carried out a site-visit on 24th May 2007.

4 RESULTS

Context numbers in [] brackets refer to features (i.e. pits, ditches etc) while those in ( ) are layers or deposits. The contexts were observed in the external footings of the new build as well as in two further east/west footing trenches on the north side of the site. Two features were seen in the pit for the soakaway

4.1 Late Iron Age/ early Roman (AD 20/30 to 100)

The natural, First Terrace Gravels, was observed at a height of c. 48.7m OD. The

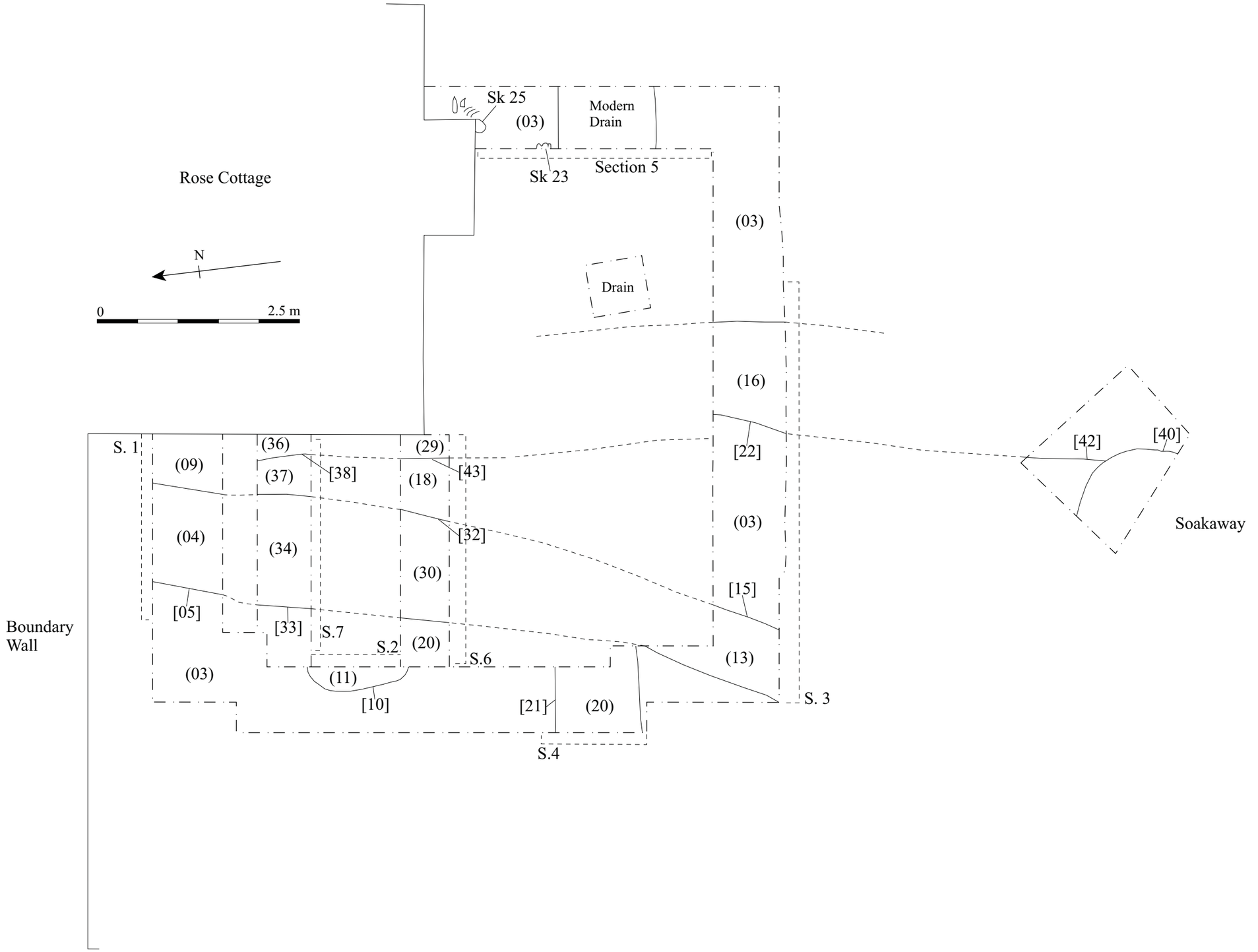

Figure 2. Site Plan

natural was overlain by (19)/(07), a layer of mid brown loamy sand, containing c. 5% gravel, measuring between 0.15m and 0.2m thick, which was seen in the south and north sections of site. This deposit may well be a relict landsurface – although no finds were recovered from the layer – by virtue of the gravel inclusions. The general loess deposits seen above the gravels in the Dorchester area do not contain gravel. Sealing this layer was (18)/(37), a deposit of friable yellow gravelly sand and brownish yellow loamy sand, between 0.1m and 0.3m thick. Finds were retrieved from this context dating from the first century AD. On the north side of the site this deposit was replaced by a more greyish clay layer (08), c. 0.21m thick which was cut by ditch [05], and ran under the present dwelling, which limited its potential for interpretation.

This sequence of (18)/(37), (08) and (19)/(07) was cut by two ditches: [38] and [05]. The roughly north-south ditches were seen in more than one location across the site and, as a consequence of this, the ditches have been assigned more than one cut numbers, i.e. ditch [38] is also [43], [22] and [42]; and [05] is also recorded as [33], [32] and [15]. The context numbers [05] and [38] will be used throughout this report for these two ditches.

The earlier ditch was [38] and it was *c.* 1.8m wide and 0.40m deep as [22] and more than 1.6m wide and 0.75m deep as [42]. The sides were 35°-45° from the horizontal and the ditch had a slightly rounded base. The ditch was filled with yellowish brown to dark reddish brown loamy sand/silty sand containing up to 5% gravel and charcoal flecking (36), (29), (16) and (41). The ditch was sealed and filled by deposit (16) within the house footprint. The final filling of ditch section [22] was mid grey-brown clayey silt with 35% gravel content (17). The pottery from ditch fill (16) as opposed to the bank material (16) dates to *c*. AD 20/30 to 60/70.

Deposit (16) partly filled ditch [22] and extended east and west of the cut to a total extent of *c*. 4.5m (Fig. 3 sections 3, 6 & 7). On the west side of the cut [22] it formed a bank between 0.4m and 0.7m thick. To the north the fill was recorded as (09) were it was cut by the later ditch [05] (Fig. 3, section 1).

On the western side of the site, ditch [05] was orientated approximately north-south across the site and cut through the bank-deposit (16). The earlier ditch had partly silted up with deposits (09), (36), (29) and also bank collapse material (16) before the later ditch was dug. It is probable that the bank was partly levelled before the digging of the new ditch as the bank material (16) extends to the east limit of the excavation area. The later fill (17) in ditch section [22] may be material from the digging of ditch section [15]. This later ditch [05] measured approximately 1.3m wide at the top and more than 0.8m deep. The ditch was not bottomed. Its profile was broadly V-shaped, although to the north it was slightly more rounded, with straightish edges at c. 60°. The ditch had two fills as seen: the lower (06), (35), (31) and (14); the upper (04), (34), (30) and (13). The lower fill ranged from mid grey-brown sand loam with up to 10% gravel to mid red brown silty sandy loam with 10-30% gravel content and some charcoal flecks. The later was observed to strongly resemble the earlier bank-material (16) and may be that material eroding into the ditch. The upper deposit was a more friable mid brown to dark greyish brown silty sand loam with up to 30% gravel and 2% charcoal. Pottery from the lower ditch fills (06)/(12 – finds number) is thought to have been deposited just after AD 60/70.

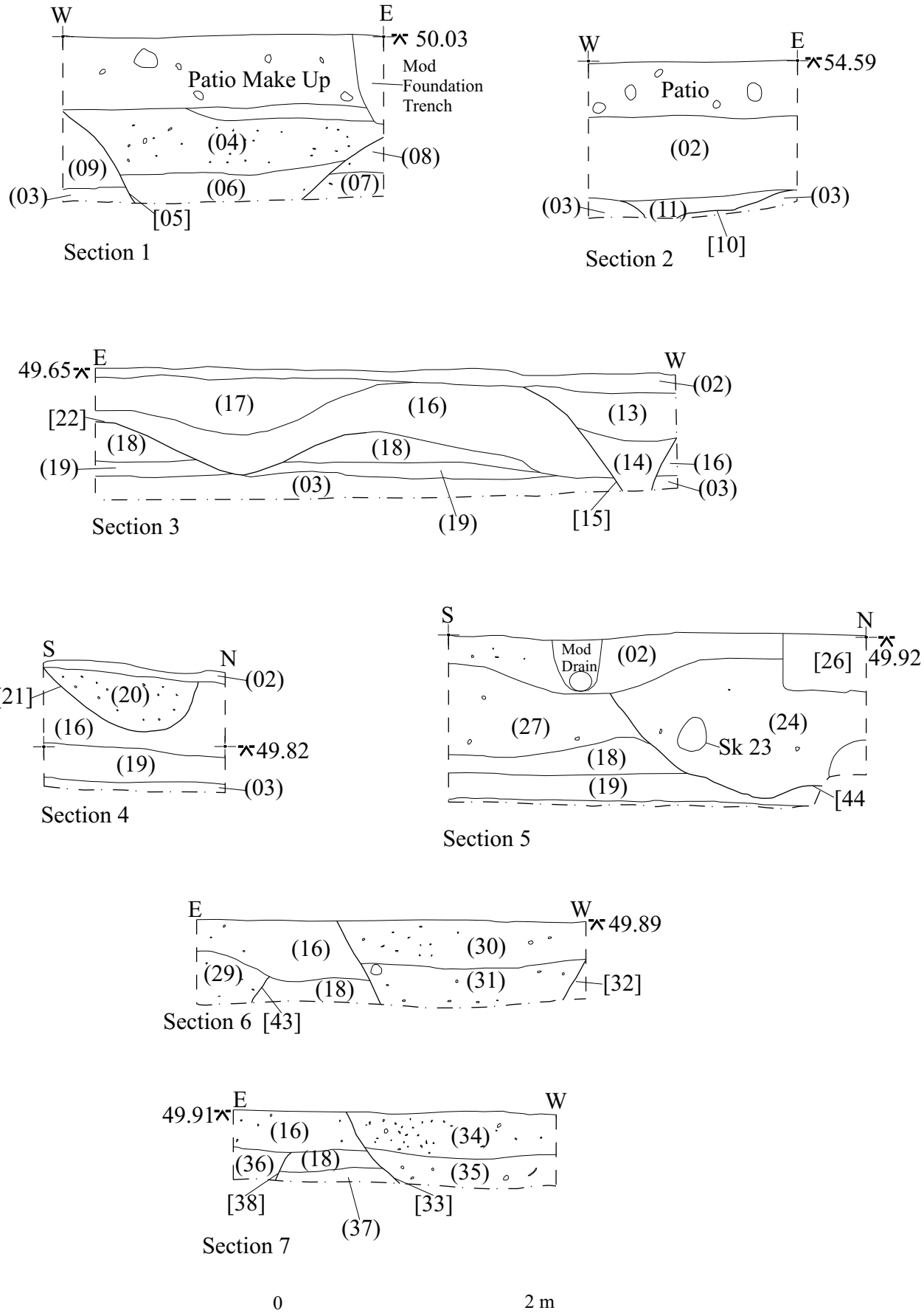

Figure 3. Sections

On the west side of the house footprint, again cutting the bank material (16), was an east-west oriented ditch [21]. This was 1.1m wide and more than 0.35m deep. The break of slope was sharp at the top and gentle at the base, which was rounded. The north edge was at *c*. 75° while the south was at *c*. 45° (Fig. 3, section 4). The cut was filled with (20), a dark brown sandy loam, mottled with charcoal and white sand. Finds recovered from the fill date from around AD 20/30 to AD 100, although the condition of the sherds suggests that they may well be residual.

On the eastern side of the footings trench, overlying layer (18) was a thick layer (27) of possible cultivation soil. It was greyish-brown sandy silty loam containing c. 20% gravel; it extended 1.5m from the south footings' trench northwards and was c. 0.5m thick (Fig. 3, Section 5). To the north it was cut by 'pit' (44). This measured c. 3.6m north-south, more than 0.8m east-west and 0.96m deep; it had a clean break of slope at the top, on the south side, which was at c. 45°, and an irregular base. This feature must have been at least two intercutting graves that were not distinguishable from each other.

The fill (24) of the feature was friable green-brown silty sand containing c. 10% gravel. Pottery from the feature and associated with burial [25] yielded a date after AD 60/70. The two burials (sk 23) and (sk 25) recovered during the watching brief came from within this deposit.

No actual grave cuts were observed during the watching brief, but there is no reason to believe that they were buried at the same time in the same cut. The constrained access to the burials within the narrow trench – c. 0.8m – limited the possibility for a clear identification of the actual grave cuts. It is possible that feature [44] and fill (24) are the remains of more than two graves as the bone report indicates the presence of at least one, if not two, further individuals as charnel within the fill (24).

The two skeletons comprise a female and an individual of unknown sex. (sk 23) is an adult female in her mid-30s, oriented north-south – only the skull and upper vertebrae were recovered from the section during the watching brief. The skull was to the north. The second individual (sk25) was an adult in their 50s, oriented east-west, buried face-up with arms over the chest and head to the west. Osteoarthritis was observed in the vertebrae. Only the upper half of the body was removed during the watching brief, the remainder was left in the section of the footings trench. As no more than 25% of either skeleton was recovered, due to the inhumations extending beyond the edges of the footings trench, it is not possible to fully assess the context of their burial. Nonetheless, inhumation replaces cremation for the disposal of the dead over the course of the 2nd century, which broadly correlates with the pottery from the site.

A deposit (07) relating to a feature of unknown type, and cut by ditch [05], was found in the north-west corner of the building footprint (Fig. 3, Section 1).

4.2 Post-medieval feature and modern deposits

A post-medieval large sub-circular pit [40] was observed in a soakaway south of the footings of the new build. The pit measured at least 1.4m in diameter and was tapered from top to bottom – the top 0.65m was at c. 45° and the lower 0.3m was vertical and 0.9m in diameter. The fill was a topsoil-like material containing brick, clay tobacco pipe-stem and residual Roman and medieval pottery.

Overlying all the site was (02) a mid brown tinted orange silty loamy clay, containing c. 10% gravel, and c. 0.5m thick which was observed over the whole area of the site. This contained a sherd of medieval North-East Wiltshire Ware.

The house foundations [26] cut through the layer (02) and the top of the fill (24). The deposit [26] was a sandy loam with c. 20% rubble through it. Pottery from the deposit yielded a date from the mid-16th century onwards.

This, and deposit (02) were in turn sealed by (01) dark blackish brown silty loam garden soil.

4.3 Undated features

Cut into the natural (03) on the east side of the western north-south footing trench was an undated pit [10], which was heavily truncated to the north by concrete, removing any relationship with the section of ditch [05]/[33]. The pit measured 1.08m north-south and 0.18m deep (Fig. 3, Section 2). An arc of the western edge of the feature was visible in plan in the footings trench. The fill was dark, blackish brown sandy loam with up to 15% gravel – no finds were recovered, and heavy truncation does not permit further analysis of the feature in respect of the other features identified on the site.

4.4 Reliability of results and methodologies

The watching brief was carried out successfully with minimal disturbance to the contractors. The results can be assessed as reliable, carried out under the best conditions within the constraints of a watching brief.

5 FINDS

5.1 Medieval Pottery *by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 15 sherds with a total weight of 489g. Four sherds were of medieval date, the rest post-medieval or modern. All except one of the medieval sherds were redeposited in a context which also produced post-medieval material.

It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1989; 1994), as follows:

OXBF: *North-East Wiltshire Ware*, AD1050 – 1400. 2 sherds, 18g.
OXY: *Medieval Oxford ware*, AD1075 – 1350. 1 sherd, 6g.
OXAM: *Brill/Boarstall ware*, AD1200 – 1600. 1 sherds, 4g.
OXDR*: Red Earthenware*, mid 16th - 19th century. 6 sherds, 430g.
WHEW: *Mass-produced White Earthenware*, 19th – 20th century. 5 sherds, 31g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

	OXBF		OXY		OXAM		OXDR		WHEW		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
U/S					1	4	2	206	2	10	U/S
1							2	18	3	21	19thC
2	1	14									M11thC
26	1	4	1	6			2	206			M16thC
Total	2	18	1	6	1	4	6	430	5	31	

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

5.2 The 'Belgic' Style Wares *by Frances Raymond*

5.2.1 Introduction

The small assemblage of late Iron Age to early Roman pottery is composed of 49 sherds, weighing 1.557 kilograms. The group is dominated by 'Belgic' style wares spanning the period between AD 20/30 and 100. Although individual features produced low numbers of sherds much of this material is in good condition indicative of rapid burial. While it is possible to suggest a phasing for some of the features, the small size of the assemblages and the lack of sufficient numbers of diagnostic pieces mean that this should be regarded as tentative.

The pottery was analysed in accordance with the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group (PCRG 1997). The variables recorded included fabric, form, vessel dimensions, decoration, surface treatment, colour, wall thickness, sherd size and condition, manufacturing techniques and residues. The assemblage was quantified within each of these categories both by number and weight. The descriptive data relating to these recorded attributes are available on a database in the project archive.

5.2.2 Fabrics and Vessel Characteristics

The wares were sorted and described with the aid of a binocular microscope set to a magnification of X20. Sixteen fabrics were identified, each of which was distinguished by an alphanumeric code using the initial letters of the main inclusion types present. The numbers distinguish between fabrics containing the same range of inclusions, but in contrasting frequencies or size ranges. The letter codes include: C – calcareous inclusions; cl – clay pellets; F – burnt flint; G – grog; gl – glauconite altered to limonite; M – mica; O – organic inclusions; S – sand; sh – shell; and V – voids.

Due to the small size and incomplete character of the assemblage these descriptions have not been reproduced in detail, but are available in the project archive. Instead the fabrics have been grouped according to the predominant inclusion type and are described in summary form. For the purposes of comparison these wares have been keyed into the fabric series used by Oxford Archaeology (OA).

Grog Tempered Wares (Fabrics G/1; G/2; GS/1 and GV/1)
The grog tempered wares (equivalent to OA E80) are represented by 30 sherds, weighing 1022 grams. The majority are in hard fabrics containing common to abundant grog with a size range of up to two or three millimetres. These wares can additionally include sparse calcareous grits marked by voids and rare flint, sand and mica. The sherds are either largely unoxidised or are unevenly fired with exterior

surfaces ranging from black to grey, through pinkish grey to light brown. Some of the fragments have slips, while others have been wiped or burnished. Where the evidence survives the wares appear to have been used for wheel finished vessels with occasional wheel-made examples. A small number of sherds display Romanised firing characteristics. The forms include a foot-ring base that is probably part of a platter; a small plain high shouldered vessel with an everted rim; and necked bowl and storage jar in a Romanised ware.

Sandy Wares (Fabrics CglS/1; CMS/1; CS/1; CS/3; FS/1; glOSV/1 and S/1)
The sandy wares are represented by 13 sherds, weighing 409 grams. Five of the fabrics (CglS/1; CMS/1; CS/1; CS/3; and FS/1) contain common, medium to coarse sand and are equivalent to OA E30. In all four examples (CglS/1; CMS/1; CS/1; and CS/3) the sand is accompanied by sparse to moderate calcareous inclusions some of which are shell and limestone. Sparse to rare mica and glauconite are present in some of the wares which can also contain rare flint. In the fifth fabric the sand is accompanied by sparse amounts of fairly finely crushed burnt flint (FS/1). Some of the fragments are from wheel finished or wheel-made vessels and one of the sherds displays Romanised firing characteristics. The surfaces may be burnished, wiped or slipped and vary in colour from very dark grey to greyish brown through light brown to a reddish yellow. The two stylistically diagnostic sherds are from bowls or jars with simple everted rims.

Two of the sandy wares are distinguished by contrasting characteristics and in both cases there is no evidence for vessel form. The first (glOSV/1) also falls within OA E30 and is a soft largely unoxidised fabric filled with equal moderate quantities of medium grained sand, glauconite and calcareous inclusions marked by voids. Sparse organic inclusions and rare mica and calcite are also present. This is represented by six sherds, weighing 199 grams which have wiped mostly dark grey exteriors. The other is a hard unoxidised hand-made fabric (S/1) containing very common fine sand which is equivalent to OA E20. This is represented by a single sherd with a dark grey burnished exterior.

Shell Tempered Wares (sh/1)
This group is represented by a single featureless sherd, weighing six grams and is equivalent to OA E40. The fabric is hard and largely oxidised and has been tempered with common, coarse ill-sorted shell.

Romanised Sandy Fabrics (CGS/1; clS/1; CS/2; and S/2)
Four sherds, weighing 85 grams, are each made from a contrasting reduced Romanised sandy fabric post-dating AD 60/70. All are wheel-made and contain common to abundant sand. The three with medium to coarse sand (CGS/1; clS/1; and CS/2) are equivalent to OA R30 and are additionally characterised by sparse grog, and/or calcareous inclusions or clay pellets. The only featured sherd is part of a foot-ring base. The one remaining sherd is in a contrasting fine sandy fabric equivalent to OA R10.

5.2.3 Discussion

As a whole the assemblage is dominated by grog tempered wares (61% by count and 65% by weight). Broadly similar frequencies have been noted on a number of sites elsewhere in the Upper Thames Valley region including Hatford Quarry (Booth

2005), Old Shifford Farm, Standlake (Timby 1996) and sites in Bicester (Booth 1997; Brown 2000; Woodward and Marley 2001). As at Rose Cottage, the sandy wares also comprise a notable component of these 'Belgic' style assemblages.

The presence of this material at Rose Cottage is not surprising given the proximity of Dyke Hills. Unfortunately none of the featured sherds are sufficiently complete to allow for the identification of vessel forms, and it is usually uncertain as to whether the rims are derived from jars or bowls. This has precluded close comparison with the 'Belgic' wares from Dorchester.

5.2.4 Contexts and Phasing

The largest assemblage composed of 25 sherds, weighing 1024 grams, was recovered from the later of two north/south ditches [05] (Table 2). The primary fill in one of the cuts (12) [15] included a wall sherd in a Romanised sandy fabric, while the fill of a second section through the ditch (06) [05] produced a hollow knob from a lid and a fine sandy sherd displaying characteristics that also point to a post-Conquest date. The absence of other Romanised sherds from this ditch may indicate that the assemblage was deposited shortly after the introduction of new manufacturing techniques around AD 60/70.

The earlier ditch [22] cut by [5] only yielded six sherds, weighing 164 grams. All are in native wares of 'Belgic' character that are thought to have been introduced to the Upper Thames region at a relatively late stage, notionally around AD 20/30 (Booth 1997). The assemblage may have been deposited between this date and sometime around AD 60/70, but in view of its small size the suggested phasing is entirely tentative.

Context	Cut/Feature	Shd. No.	Shd. Wt.	OA Fabric	Comments
1	-	5	90	E30	Includes one Romanised sherd
1	-	3	51	E80	Includes one Romanised sherd
1	-	1	27	R30	Post-dates AD 60/70
2	-	1	15	E80	-
6	5	3	59	E80	Includes one Romanised sherd
6	5	1	5	R10	Post-dates AD 60/70
7	22	2	28	E80	-
12	15/5	4	143	E30	-
12	15/5	4	239	E80	-
12	15/5	1	43	R30	Post-dates AD 60/70
14	15/5	2	83	E30	-
14	15/5	1	14	E80	-
16	22	1	64	E20	-
16	22	1	4	E80	-
19	-	1	29	E30	-
19	-	1	72	E80	-
20	21	3	57	E80	-
25	-	1	3	E80	-
25	-	1	10	R30	Post-dates AD 60/70
28	U/S	1	42	E80	Romanised storage jar rim
30	32/5	3	182	E80	-
31	32/5	3	194	E80	-
35	33/5	3	62	E80	-
39	40	1	6	E40	-
41	42/22	1	35	E30	-
TOTALS		49	1557		

Table 2: Catalogue of pottery

The few sherds from the ditch [21] and the possible old land surface (19) are all made from native wares and are in variable condition. It is only possible to bracket the material rather broadly to between AD 20/30 and 100. The condition of the pottery increases the likelihood that it may have been residual.

The grave also produced 'Belgic' style pottery. However, one of the two sherds from the fill (25) is in a kiln fired reduced sandy ware (CS/2) that indicates a date after AD 60/70 for the deposit.

The rest of the pottery from a Roman pit [40] and the topsoil (1) and subsoil (2) is residual. Again a broad date range between AD 20/30 and 100 would be appropriate for this material.

5.3 Roman Pottery *by Paul Booth*

Five sherds were submitted for examination; four were of Roman date and one medieval.

Context 39 (fill of post-medieval pit) produced 3 small sherds (7g) of Oxford colour-coated ware (OA fabric F51), all apparently slightly burnt. These included an upright bead and a hooked flange, both potentially from a flanged bowl of Young (1977) type C51, dated AD 240-400 but more common from the later 3rd century onwards. In the same context was a single medieval sherd (15g), the base angle of a cooking pot in a sandy fabric comparable to Oxford fabric OXY (Mellor 1994, 63-71). A later 11th-13th century date is likely for this piece. All the sherds are in fairly fresh condition.

The fifth sherd was unstratified. This was a small (2g) rim sherd, probably from a jar in a fine reduced coarse ware fabric (OA fabric R10). It is not closely datable within the Roman period.

5.4 The Human Remains *by Linzi Harvey*

5.4.1 Nature of the sample

Two partial adult skeletons were recovered this work. The remains comprised a skull and upper vertebrae of one individual (23) and the skull and a few post-cranial elements of another, (25). Whilst no grave cuts were discernable, it is likely that they represent separate burials. No grave goods were recovered. Appendix 1, below, details the condition, surviving elements, pathological condition and other information for both individuals.

5.4.2 Methods

Skeletal remains were examined macroscopically and data recorded onto paper record forms following both IFA and English Heritage standards and guidelines (Brickley & McKinley 2004, Mays & Brickley *et al* 2004 respectively). Additional references, including age/sex estimation schemes were used where appropriate.

5.4.3 Results

Preservation and Completeness
Both individuals recovered were less than 25% complete, but the bone preservation of most skeletal elements was generally very good with little cortical erosion of the bones and fine surface detail still visible. However, the skull of individual (25) was highly fragmentary, with the frontal, facial and maxillary bones missing. This is likely to be due to post-depositional damage.

Minimum number of individuals
Individuals (23) and (25) appear to represent single inhumations with little intermingling. The presence of an additional fragment of a right scapula in with skeleton (25) indicates the presence of one other individual. A calcaneus (ankle bone) found with (25) might also be from another individual, since it is unlikely an ankle bone from individual (25) would have been recovered along with its skull/shoulder. These additional fragments are likely charnel in nature and may suggest that other burials are present in the area.

Several fragments of animal bone were also recovered along with skeleton (25), all of which appeared to be from medium sized mammals (pig/sheep/goat), one of which was butchered. A small fragment of animal rib, probably sheep or goat was recovered along with individual (23). It is not unusual to find animal bones intermingled with burials.

Age at death
The age of death for both adults could only be broadly estimated due to the incomplete nature of the sample. Using dental wear and cranial suture closure to estimate age, it is likely this sample represents an adult of between 34 and 38 years (individual 23) and an older adult of around 48 to 52 years (individual 25).

Sex estimation
The biological sex of the adult (23) was assessed as probable female, with 60% (n=14) of the observable sex diagnostic indicators of the skull being female or probable female. The older adult (25) was assessed as unknown, as the nine sexually diagnostic features observable on their skull were spread evenly among ‘probable male’, ‘probable female’ and ‘unknown’.

Stature
Stature could not be estimated due to the lack of complete long bones in this assemblage.

Metrical data
The dental arcade and skull of the adult female (23) could be measured for metrical data. Only the remaining teeth, in the mandible of the older adult (25) and the mandible itself could be reliably measured. The table in Appendix 2 below outlines this metrical information.

Some cranial non-metric data was collected for this assemblage and can be accessed in the site archive.

Palaeopathology
Both adults in this sample revealed a small amount of skeletal pathology. The adult female (23) exhibited a small amount of porosity in the pedicle of her second cervical vertebrae. This may be indicative of osteoporosis – a reflection or increasing age – or of osteoarthritis, perhaps caused by stress, strain or trauma. Individual (23) also exhibited a small amount of *cribra orbitalia* in the left, and to a much lesser extent, right eye sockets. This almost certainly indicates iron deficiency anaemia, associated with a diet lacking in iron or some sort of infection elsewhere in the body.

The older adult (25) exhibited typical osteoarthritic changes in all but one of the six recovered cervical and thoracic vertebrae. These changes included marginal osteophytic growth around the vertebral bodies and joint surfaces, increased porosity of several joint surfaces and the eburnation of joint surfaces in the upper vertebrae. This individual also exhibited some pathological changes to the acromion of the scapula, visible as an area of porosity at the articulation with the clavicle.

Dental pathology
Parts of the mandible and/or maxilla were recovered for both individuals. The adult female (23) had notably good teeth, with slight calculus (tartar) deposits on all teeth. The calculus was most notable on the posterior of the mandibular incisors. All teeth recovered were fairly worn but there was little or no gum disease, abscesses or dental caries. It is likely the calculus formation is evidence of poor dental hygiene.

Only the mandible of individual (25) was recovered. Notably, its teeth were very worn, to the root in some cases. This attrition probably contributed to the pre-mortem loss of the first molars and right premolar. Around 90% (n=10) of teeth present exhibited calculus. As with (23), there were no other dental conditions, such as abscesses or caries in this individual.

5.4.4 Discussion

The skeletal material presented here is largely incomplete. It is possible to roughly characterise the individuals recovered, but with only c.25% of the skeleton available for analysis, conclusions must remain unsubstantiated. It is impossible to comment on the date of these burials with confidence. From the 2nd century AD onwards, inhumations replaced cremations and there was a subsequent gradual trend for east-west burials (Roberts & Cox 2003:108). Since these skeletons were not both aligned east-west, but were buried and not cremated, it is possible they are early Roman in keeping with the pottery recovered nearby.

The adult female, (23), was in her mid to late thirties at death. A small area of porosity in a cervical vertebra indicates a touch of osteoarthritis or osteoporosis – both of which may be related to a stressful occupation or increasing age. This individual also exhibited *cribra orbitalia*, a condition found in the roof of the eye socket, which usually indicates iron deficiency anaemia. Of these two conditions, spinal joint disease was slightly more prevalent in Roman Britain whilst *cribra orbitalia* was more prevalent in Iron Age Britain. Her teeth were worn, but otherwise in good condition. A slight build-up of calculus indicates a lack of dental hygiene, although it may be this calculus that prevented further decay in the teeth. Calculus was slightly more prevalent in the Roman period.

The older adult (25), whilst represented by more skeletal elements than (23), was highly fragmentary. Sex could not be reliably determined, although the age could be estimated at around 50 at the time of death. The majority of the vertebrae recovered exhibited some signs of osteoarthritis, with some spinal joint surfaces heavily changed in appearance by osteophytosis and eburnation. The shoulder joint also showed pathological change. This is almost certainly connected with the increasing age of the individual and/or occupational stress. The remaining teeth of this individual were heavily worn, with calculus adhering to most of them. This again suggests a lack of dental hygiene coupled with a tough diet.

Whilst this assemblage provides us with some information on the age, sex and health of two individuals, a lack of contextual information and complete skeletons means that this information is limited in scope. No further work is recommended on this sample.

5.5 Animal bone

Animal bone was recovered from the following late Iron Age/early Roman contexts contexts: (06), (14) and (16) lower fill of ditch [05]; deposit (07) of an unknown feature; ground surface (19); and upper fill (30) or ditch [05].

5.6 Fired Clay *by John Moore*

Part of what are commonly referred to as clay plates or 'Belgic bricks' was found in deposit (14), the lower fill of ditch [05]. Only one side survives that is straight with a rounded angle on the ?upper smoother side. The piece is 25mm thick and survives 80mm x 100mm in size. Examples have been found at Verulamium where the rounded angle is on the lower side (Stead & Rigby 1989, 52) and at Bancroft (Williams & Zeepvat 1994, 363). These are commonly found in pre- and post-conquest deposits dating to the first century AD.

5.7 Metalwork

A piece of iron came from deposit (170 the upper fill of ditch [38]. It is too corroded to determine function.

5.8 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

Rose Cottage lies between the Roman walled town and the Iron Age Oppidum of Dyke Hills to the south.

Dyke Hills has evidenced a dense array of cropmarks showing pit groups, penannular and sub-rectangular enclosures, and linear features (Benson & Miles, 1974:66). Little work, apart from a cutting through the earthworks in the 19th century has been carried out at the site (Henig & Booth 2000, 22). Dorchester-on-Thames was the scene of early Roman military activity, and the settlement was later defended probably in the

later second century by a ditch and bank with a wall added, probably in the later part of the third century (*ibid.* 58-9).

There appears to be extramural settlement south of the Roman town in the area of the watching brief. However no pottery or artefacts later than the second century appear to have been found (except at Rose Cottage – see below), and the second century ditch recently found at Haven Close is the latest dated feature. This ditch is aligned north/south similar to two on the Rose Cottage site. Burials cut first century remains at Orchard Haven and by implication also through early Roman remains 50m east of Wittenham Lane. Here a burial cut through an earlier Roman pit or ditch. The burials at Rose Cottage contained residual material of a date no later than AD 100. The unordered pattern of burials, both east/west and north/south, and apparent disturbance of previous burials is unlike the orderly later fourth century cemeteries at Queenford Mill and Church Piece, Warborough *(ibid.* 62). Given the lack of later finds and that from the 2nd century AD onwards, inhumations replaced cremations and there was a subsequent gradual trend for east-west burials (Roberts & Cox 2003:108) the burials could belong to the second century. The number and location of burials seems to indicate a relatively large cemetery.

Three sherds of Oxford colour coated ware including an upright bead and a hooked flange, dated AD 240-400 but more common from the later 3rd century onwards came from the post-medieval pit. Whether they are original to the site or have been imported onto it is unknown. If original to the site then the burials may be of third century date.

The ditches, the unknown type of feature in the north-east corner, and the undated pit that may be contemporary, along with the quantity of pottery, animal bone and fragment of 'Belgic brick' suggest settlement dating from *c*. AD 20/30 to AD 100.

The pottery from the earlier north/south ditch is thought to have been deposited between AD 20/30 and AD 60/70 while that in the later ditch is considered to have been deposited shortly after AD 60/70. The effort that must have been involved in digging both the new ditch through bank material and the apparent levelling of the bank material must have been considerable. It would have been easier to have dug out the partly silted up ditch. Elsewhere it has been argued that enclosure/field/plot boundaries are extensively redug or laid out again in subsequent generations as the landholdings pass to a new family member at death (*pers. com.* B Dix). This may be such a case. The east/west ditch must belong to the second phase as it cuts the earlier bank deposit. Deposit (27) to the east of the north/south ditches may be a cultivation soil suggesting areas of horticulture or otherwise within the extramural settlement.

To the south of the site at Rose Cottage two parallel east-west ditches have been observed (Henig & Booth, 2000, 60). These ditches along with those observed at Rose Cottage and the north/south ditch at Haven Close apparently are all on the same alignment suggesting a well-ordered arrangement of extramural settlement.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents
The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief	The primary site records
Written scheme of investigation	Finds contents list
The project report	Pottery reports

Finds

Pottery	Animal Bone
Ceramic building material	Metalwork

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services. The archive will be transferred to: Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre, Cotswold Dene, Standlake, Witney OX29 7QG.

The accession number for the site is: OXCMS 2007.32

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bass, W J, 2005 *Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual.* Missouri Archaeological Society, 5th ed. Columbia

Benson, D, & Miles, D 1974 *The Upper Thames Valley. An Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels.* Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit. Oxford

Booth, P, 2005 'Pottery', 335-344, in P. Booth and A. Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and early Romano-British site at Hatford Quarry, Sandy Lane, Hatford", *Oxoniensia*, **69**, 2004, 319-354

Booth, P, 1997, 'Pottery and other ceramic finds', 75-88, in C. Mould, "An archaeological excavation at Oxford Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire", *Oxoniensia*, **61**, 1996, 63-108

Brickley, M, & McKinley, J L, (eds.) 2004. *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains* BABAO/IFA 8-12.

Briggs, G, Cook, J, & Rowley, T, 1986 *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region*. University Department for External Studies. Oxford

Brown, K, 2000, 'The pottery', 182-195, in A. M. Cromarty, S. Foreman and P. Murray, "The Excavation of a late Iron Age enclosed settlement at Bicester Fields Farm, Bicester, Oxon", *Oxoniensia*, **64**, 1999, 153-233

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Henig, M, & Booth, P, 2000 *Roman Oxfordshire* Sutton Publishing Stroud

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

JMHS 2003 *An Archaeological Watching Brief at 8 Whittenham Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames*. Unpublished Client Report.

Mays, S, Brickley, M, *et al* 2004 *Human Bones from Archaeological Sites: Guidelines for Producing Assessment Documents and Analytical Reports* English Heritage

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxfordshire pottery: A synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region, *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217.

PCRG 1997 *The Study of Later Prehistoric Pottery: General Policies and Guidelines for Analysis and Publication*, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group Occasional Papers **1** and **2**, revised version

Roberts, C A, & Manchester, K, 1995 *The Archaeology of Disease* Alan Sutton Publishing Limited 2nd ed. New York

Roberts, C A, & Cox, M, 2003. *Health and Disease in Britain: From Prehistory to the Present Day.* Stroud: Sutton Publishing.

Roberts C A, & Connell, B, 2004 Palaeopathology. In Brickley M & McKinley J L (eds.) *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, BABAO/IFA 8-12.

Stead, I M, 1989 *Verulamium. The King Harry Lane Site.* English Heritage

Timby, J R, 1996, 'Pottery', 124-136, in G. Hey, "Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Old Shifford Farm, Standlake", *Oxoniensia*, **60**, 93-175

Woodward, A, & Marley, J, 2001, 'The Iron Age pottery', 233-248, in P. Ellis, G. Hughes and L. Jones, "An Iron Age Boundary and Settlement Features at Slade Farm, Bicester, Oxfordshire: a Report on Excavations, 1996", *Oxoniensia*, **65**, 211-265

Williams, R J, & Zeepvat, R J, 1994 *Bancroft. A Late Bronze age/Iron Age Settlement Roman Villa & Temple – Mausoleum*. Bucks Arch Soc Monograph 7.

Young, C J, 1977 *The Roman pottery industry of the Oxford region*, British Archaeological Report (British Series) **43**, Oxford.

Appendix 1 – Summary Table

Skeleton no.	***Preservation***	***Completeness***	***Age***	***Sex***	***Pathology and trauma***
(23)	Good	Complete skull and mandible, majority of teeth. Three cervical vertebrae (C1, C2 and C4) and one small fragment of rib.	Adult: 34 – 38 years	?Female	Porosity of part of C2 vertebrae and *cribra orbitalia* in the left eye socket. Teeth in good condition, but with calculus on 100% of teeth present.
(25)	Good	Fragmentary skull, mandible. Partial left and right scapulae and proximal left humerus, several rib fragments, 1 proximal phalange (finger) bone, three cervical and three thoracic vertebrae.	Older adult: 48 – 52 years	Unknown	Evidence of osteoarthritis in vertebrae (osteophytosis, eburnation and porosity exhibited on several joint surfaces and vertebral bodies). Teeth extremely worn, with small amount of gum disease visible. Some antemortem tooth loss. Calculus present on 90% of teeth present.

Appendix 2 – Metrical data

Measurement	***Skeleton (23)***				***Skeleton (25)***			
Cranium (mm)								
Max length	200				/			
Max breadth	140				/			
Mandible (mm)								
Bicondylar width	114.3				/			
Bigonal breadth	96.6				/			
Symphyseal height	27.4				33			
Height of ascending ramus	63				64			
Dentition	**MAXILLA**		**MANDIBLE**		**MAXILLA**		**MANDIBLE**	
	Mesio distal (mm)	**Bucco lingual (mm)**	**Mesio distal (mm)**	**Bucco lingual (mm)**	**Mesio distal (mm)**	**Bucco lingual (mm)**	**Mesio distal (mm)**	**Bucco lingual (mm)**
I1	PM	PM	3.7	3.1	/	/	2.6	5.4
I2	5.2	4.0	4.2	2.9	/	/	4.2	3.9
C	6.0	3.9	6.0	2.4	/	/	6.4	3.6
PM1	5.1	5	5.9	5.5	/	/	6.0	6.0
PM2	6.7	7.9	5.0	7.0	/	/	R	R
M1	8.6	10.0	8.6	8.5	/	/	PRM	PRM
M2	7.2	7.5	8.8	7.7	/	/	*9	*9
M3	6.2	8.3	9.1	7.2	/	/	*9.4	*8.9