Iron Age and Saxon Settlement at Jugglers Close, Banbury, Oxfordshire

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SUMMARY

An archaeological recording action was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services on land adjacent to and north-east of Grimsbury Manor, Banbury, in June and July 2002, subsequent to a planning application for the development of the site as a business park.

A previous evaluation, undertaken in May 2002, had revealed significant archaeological features of regional importance relating to the late Iron Age and possibly early Roman periods.

The recording action comprised the excavation of the north to south access road and the entire footprints of three of the proposed blocks of offices and half of another. A palimpsest of archaeological features was revealed, concentrated in the south-west of the area.

As expected, the majority of the features were mid to late Iron Age in date and ditch systems defined a series of enclosures, field systems and structural evidence. The settlement did not continue into the Roman period, indicating a brief, but intensive, phase of occupation.

Evidence of late Saxon / early medieval activity was also identified, comprising a series of ditches, probably related to field boundaries and elements within them. This may relate to the settlement of Grimberie *recorded in the Domesday Book.*

This excavation has formed an important contribution to the archaeology of Banbury, providing further evidence of the multi-period use of the immediate area, and in conjunction with previous and current work to the south is providing insight into the progression of settlement over the landscape through time.

BACKGROUND

A planning application was submitted by Russell Harrison plc for the development of land adjacent to and north-east of Grimsbury Manor as a business park, with the construction of seven industrial units, road infrastructure, parking areas and landscaping (SP 4653 4175; Fig. 1).

Prior to determination of the application, an archaeological evaluation, conducted by John Moore Heritage Services and consisting of eight trial trenches, was undertaken to assess the potential disturbance of underlying archaeology. Significant features were identified, although these were concentrated in the south and west of the site. The north and east were apparently devoid of significant archaeology. In line with PPG 16 and the Local Plan, an archaeological recording action was deemed necessary to preserve the archaeology by record.

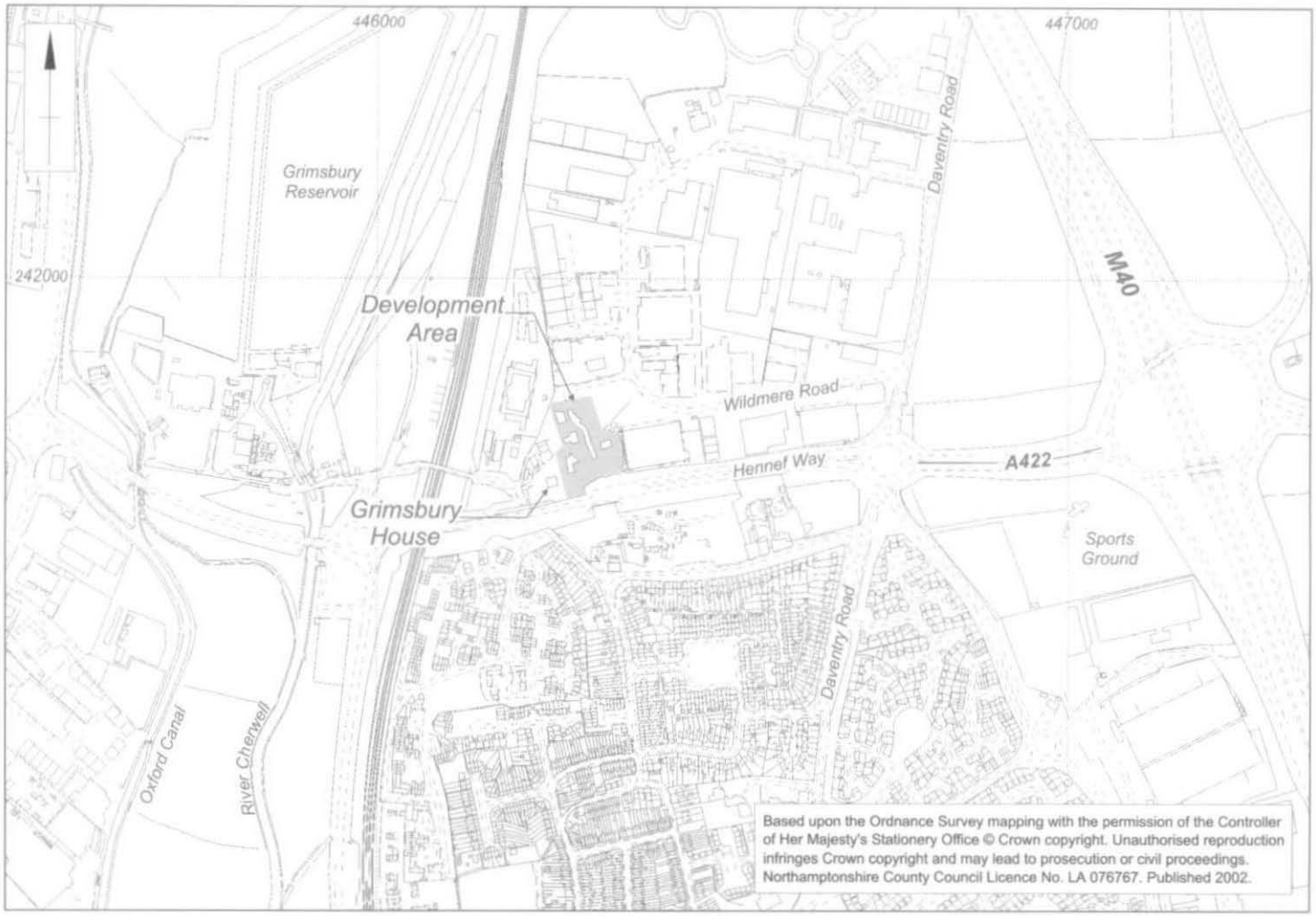

Fig. 1. Location plan.

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located on the southern side of Jugglers Close and east and north-east of Grimsbury Manor, Banbury.

It lies on a natural promontory. To the west the ground falls away relatively sharply to the floodplain of the River Cherwell, while low-lying ground to the north and south is liable to flooding.[1] The location of the site, therefore, would have afforded some degree of protection, as well as good views across the countryside.

The local geology is Lower Lias Clay. The site lay on relatively level ground, and the archaeological features were generally found at *c.* 97.20 m. AOD.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Oxfordshire County SMR has recorded a number of sites or stray finds in the vicinity for the Iron Age and Saxon periods, listed in Table 1, below. Few Iron Age sites are recorded in the vicinity, especially in comparison with the Upper Thames Basin to the south, although a number of rectangular, probably Iron Age, enclosures have been recorded in the area through aerial photography.[2] The majority of these are situated close to the River Cherwell to the north of Jugglers Close.

TABLE 1: SMR DETAILS

SMR NO.	*NGR (SP)*	*Details*
5702	46504282	Cropmark: possible prehistoric enclosure. Rectangular in plan with an entrance on the SE side. Subsidiary enclosure to the NW. Possible sign of a ring of postholes within the main enclosure.
10715	45624070	Late Saxon gullies denoting possible property boundaries, and late 11th-century pit.
11470	46404160	Old Grimsbury deserted settlement
15627		(Marginal) Findspot; Anglo-Saxon iron axeheads
5094		(Marginal) Findspot; Anglo-Saxon sceat
803	45704079	Medieval building, pottery, burial & Saxon gullies
8857		?Saxon Saltways:Tysoe/ Adderbury/ Aynho, trackway, linear feature.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

Considerable previous work has been undertaken to the south of the site in relation to the construction of Hennef Way and the development of adjacent land. A small excavation and watching brief was carried out during the construction of the link road in 1985. A range of archaeological features were noted, including prehistoric, probably late Bronze Age, occupation including a penannular enclosure and parallel ditches. There was also tentative evidence for Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity, while gullies and ditches of the late Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods occurred over a large area.[3]

[1] T.G. Allen, 'Archaeological Discoveries on the Banbury East–West Link Road', *Oxoniensia*, liv (1989), 28.

[2] R. Featherstone and B. Bewley, 'Recent Aerial Reconnaissance in North Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lxiii (1998), 16–27.

[3] Allen, op. cit. (note 1), 25–44.

Further work on this area, approximately 30 m. to the south of Area 3, has just been completed, prior to the dualling of Hennef Way. A continuation of features found previously and possibly of features found within this excavation seems probable. A possible large middle Bronze Age, or earlier, ditch aligned east to west was visible over nearly the entire area and of the later features truncating this some were possibly Iron Age or Saxon (John Moore pers. comm.).

To the south of Hennef Way an excavation at Manor Farm revealed a sequence of occupation dating from the 12th century, and abandoned in the second half of the 13th century. In the late 13th century the site was redeveloped with the construction of a cottage, associated ancillary building and yard all laid out on a raised platform. Several Neolithic pits were also discovered.[4]

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The general objectives of the excavation were to determine the form and function of the remains with particular reference to whether they formed a settlement and to discover when it was constructed, used and abandoned. The site-specific aims were:

- To collect evidence for the economic basis of the occupation.
- To gather information on the landscape through environmental remains.
- To compare the type, date and longevity of this occupation with others in the region.
- To identify any contemporary field systems.
- To identify any different zones of activity within the settlement.
- To identify and recover any house plans.
- To identify pit groups and above-ground storage structures with individual buildings.
- To identify non-agricultural specialised activities.

The site consisted of the excavation of the footprints of three plots to the west, the north–south access road immediately to the east, and half of a further plot to the east of this (Fig. 2). These were stripped of topsoil using a mechanical digger, and fitted with a 1.5 m.-wide toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. The exposed areas were then hand-cleaned. All cut features were hand-sampled to define their form and function and to identify any stratigraphical relationships between intersecting features.

SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

During the removal of the overburden it was clear that there had been quite substantial truncation, mostly concentrated to the south-east. Area 3 had to be stripped to a depth of *c.* 0.90 m. beneath current ground level before archaeological features could be discerned. The overburden consisted of modern and post-medieval make-up layers as well as large quantities of demolition rubble from previously levelled buildings.

It is therefore suggested that the archaeological features had been truncated across the site to varying degrees. This may account for the relative lack of structural remains, such as postholes, and the shallow depth of many of the features, as well as the paucity of finds. Even so, a palimpsest of archaeological features was recovered.

The complexity of the intercepting ditches, while demonstrating continued use of the site in the latter half of the Iron Age, resulted in the likely occurrence of residual pottery in later

[4] A. Hardy, 'The Excavation of a Medieval Cottage and Associated Features at Manor Farm, Old Grimsbury, Banbury', *Oxoniensia*, lxv (2000), 345–80.

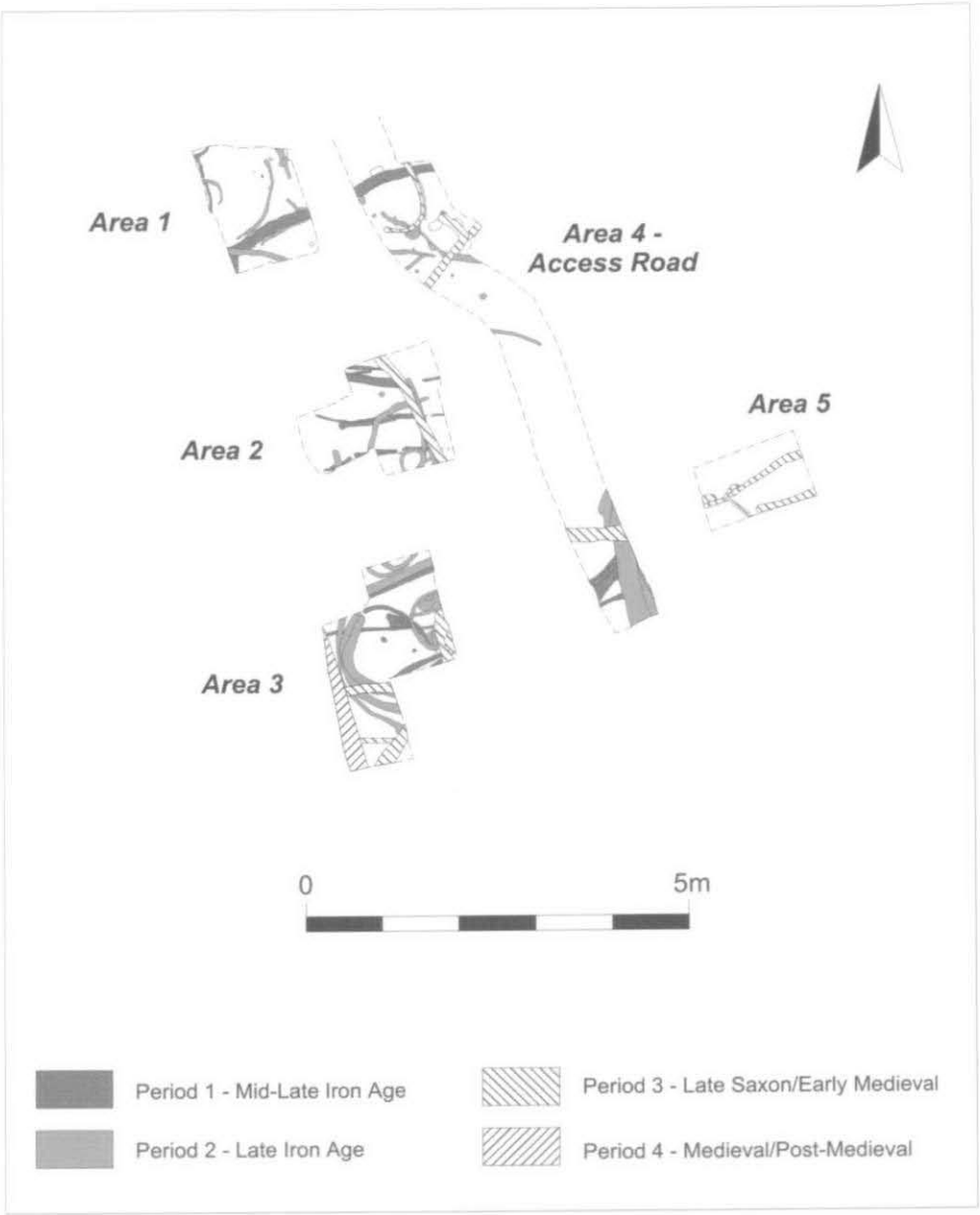

Fig. 2. All features plan.

contexts. Moreover, given the narrow date range of occupation during the Iron Age from the end of the 1st century BC to the mid 1st century AD, the pottery assemblage did not have great definition and most of the phasing was achieved through stratigraphic evidence.

An appreciable number of the features, especially the postholes, did not produce any dating evidence. Where this was the case and there was no stratigraphic evidence, the features have been assigned to a particular phase based on their spatial relationships with dated features.

Based upon a combination of stratigraphic relationships and ceramic evidence the features can be divided into four main periods (Fig. 2):

- Period 1 middle to late Iron Age
- Period 2 late Iron Age
- Period 3 late Saxon to early medieval
- Period 4 medieval and post-medieval

Period 1 – mid to late Iron Age (Fig. 2)

This phase was characterised by a comparative lack of structural evidence. Several large ditches were aligned approximately north-east to south-west. Only one, in Area 1, showed any evidence of a corner and possibly linked up with a similar ditch in Area 3. Elsewhere, groups of gullies were recorded on an approximate east to west alignment. The possible remains of a roundhouse were recovered in Area 3, although later ditches largely truncated it.

The lack of structural evidence associated with the ditches at this stage suggests that they were not performing the function of enclosure ditches in the usual sense, that is a ditch surrounding a small, family-based settlement, as was common in the middle Iron Age. Rather, the landscape was being utilised for agricultural purposes and the ditches served as field boundaries. The smaller gullies probably acted as further divisions of the landscape.

Period 2 – late Iron Age (Fig. 2)

It seems that while some of the boundaries employed previously were maintained during this period, new structural features were imposed on to this system and the settlement underwent a period of expansion. This was most obvious to the south, where there was evidence of house structures with an associated enclosure. However, it can be seen that in many areas the new structural features seem to have respected the earlier ditch systems.

Although no pits or the remains of above-ground storage structures were identified, two small circular structures, *c.* 3 m. in diameter, probably also enclosed, may have functioned as ancillary buildings. A very similar feature was found during the excavation at Hennef Way, circular in plan, with a diameter of 4 m. Although, at the time, it was interpreted as being Roman, this was on the basis of a single sherd of pottery.[5] It therefore seems more likely that this feature was directly related to the late Iron Age settlement at Jugglers Close and furthermore provides evidence of the extent of the settlement.

Having been found elsewhere in this region circular structures such as these have generally been interpreted as probable agricultural features. An example at the Iron Age and Roman settlement at Old Shifford Farm[6] was 3 m. in diameter and interpreted as an enclosure for storing animal fodder.

[5] Allen, op. cit. (note 1), 31.
[6] G. Hey et al., 'Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Old Shifford Farm', *Oxoniensia*, lx (1995), 93–176.

Although the entire area was not excavated it seems that the peripheral areas to the north and to the south, in the area of Hennef Way, may have been used for agricultural purposes, for activities that were carried out close to home, while Area 3 was within the central area of occupation.

Period 3 – late Saxon / early medieval (phases 1 and 2) (Fig. 2)

After a significant period when the area does not seem to have been occupied, a number of ditches were recorded, possibly forming square or rectangular enclosures and dating to the late Saxon / early medieval period. These probably relate to the re-organisation of the landscape that was occurring through much of the country at this point and may be part of the settlement of *Grimberie*.

Period 4 – medieval / post-medieval (Fig. 2)

Furrows were observed across the site (not illustrated). The furrows are a remnant of the medieval ridge-and-furrow field system, and from aerial photography a dense pattern of these features is visible to the north-east and south-east, with some also occurring to the north-west and south.[7] The furrows truncated all other features on the site.

A post-medieval ditch was recovered on the extreme western edge of Area 3, aligned north to south. The present boundary between Grimsbury House and the site appeared to respect this feature. A later stone-lined land drain had been set into the top of this ditch.

EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

A continuous series of context numbers was employed during the excavation and has been retained throughout the report. Cut features are denoted by square brackets, e.g. [1111], while the fills are denoted by round brackets, e.g. (1112).

Area 4, the access road, was aligned north to south and stretched virtually the entire length of the site. The archaeology, though, was found in two discrete concentrations, one to the extreme north and the other to the extreme south, with virtually nothing in between, this empty zone probably denoting the interior of an enclosure. Because they were spatially unconnected they are treated separately here.

Period 1 – mid to late Iron Age

Area 1 and Area 4 north (Figs. 3 and 4). The archaeology in these areas was relatively sparse compared to the rest of the site, consisting of probable field boundaries and other agricultural elements rather than occupation per se. This was further reflected in the paucity of finds.

In Area 1, a single large ditch, [59] (Fig. 9; Section 3), was dated to this period. It was aligned approximately east to west, although to the west, close to the edge of excavation, the ditch turned to the south. Ranging from 1.3 m. to 1.8 m. wide and 0.4 m. to 0.7 m. deep, the ditch was a wide U-shape in profile. The edges were fairly uneven, indicating a degree of weathering.

The primary fill, (58), was a firm mid brown-grey silty clay with few inclusions and considerable iron panning, while the upper fill, (57), was similar but with less iron panning. At the corner of the ditch a circular hollow was noted in the base of the ditch, about 0.25 m. deep and filled with a mid brown-yellow silty clay, with few inclusions. Similar features were seen at the base of ditches across the site and the causes posited include standing water eroding these hollows. These 'deepenings' were also found in features at the Iron Age settlement at Farmoor,[8] where they were interpreted as sumps.

To the north-west there was a north to south aligned gully, which to the north turned east. This feature was severely truncated and appeared to consist of short lengths of shallow gully in plan, [28], [68] and [98], but on excavation was shown to have originally been a single length. Two features, [94] and [96], abutting the northern terminus of [98], were originally thought to be very shallow postholes, but seem more likely to be tree root disturbance.

7 Allen, op. cit. (note 1), 43.

8 G. Lambrick and M. Robinson, *Iron Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire* (C.B.A. Research Report 32, 1979).

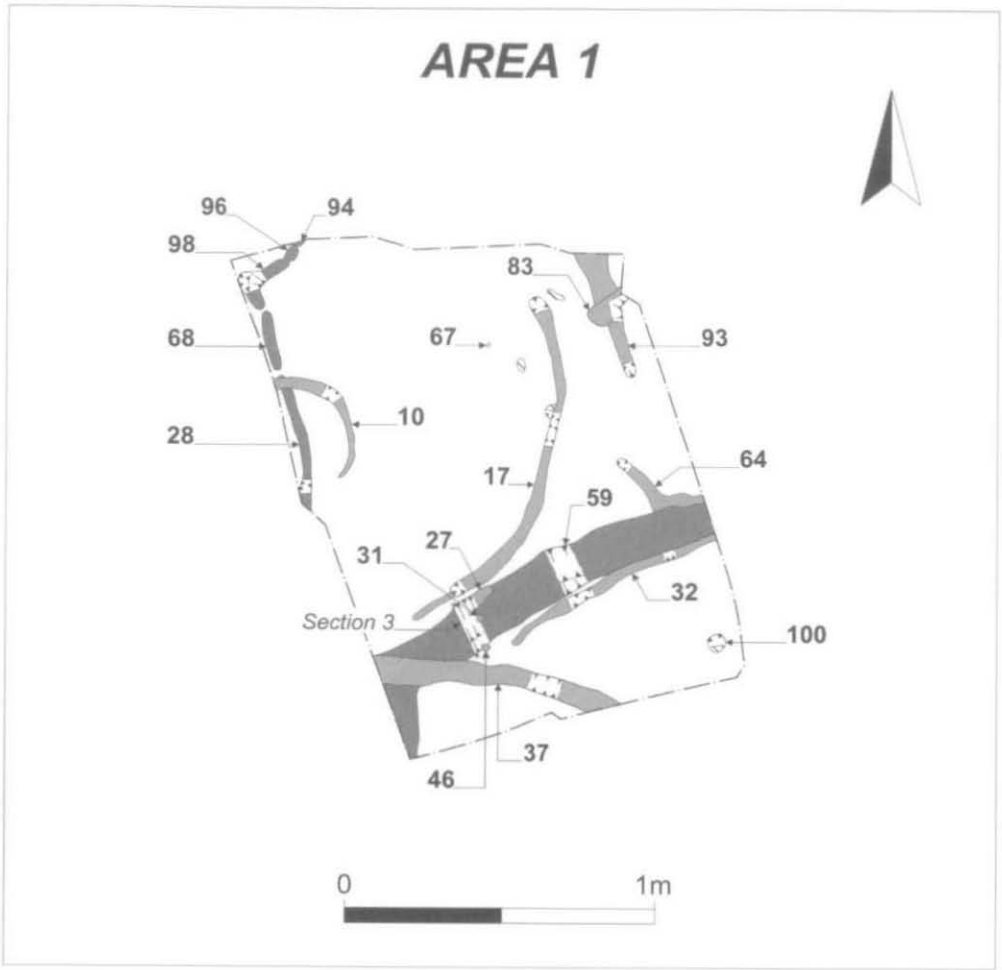

Fig. 3. Area 1.

No pottery was found in any of these shallow features, and they have been placed in this phase since they appear to respect Ditch [59].

In Area 4 Ditch [59] was found to continue as the east-to-west aligned Ditch [1507] (Fig. 9; Section 4). The ditch had similar dimensions, although was slightly more shallow, with less weathered edges. The fills were largely comparable, although the upper fill, (1505), had moderate orange mottling and patches of sand, especially to the south. However, separating the fills in one of the excavated sections was a lens of dumped material, 0.05 m. thick, containing large quantities of charcoal and charred organic material. This lens was only visible at the eastern end of the section: to the west it had petered out. Environmental analysis of this material revealed a relative abundance of bread-type wheat grains and wild radish mericarps, both very unusual for Iron Age assemblages. There was some evidence that Ditch [1507] was a recut of an earlier, shallower ditch, [1509]. It also cut a shallow depression, [1511], irregular in profile, with deeper hollows, probably a tree bole.

Ditch [1507] continued east, outside of the area of excavation, proving that some degree of activity persisted in this area, albeit possibly only field systems.

Area 2 (Fig. 5). A series of parallel gullies aligned approximately east to west ran across the area, and were probably dug to delineate field boundaries or as drainage runs. Three discrete groups were observed and each was spaced c. 4 m. from the other. Only the most northerly of the groups clearly continued beyond a large north-to-south ditch to the east. Although the north-to-south ditch, [591], was dated to the late Saxon

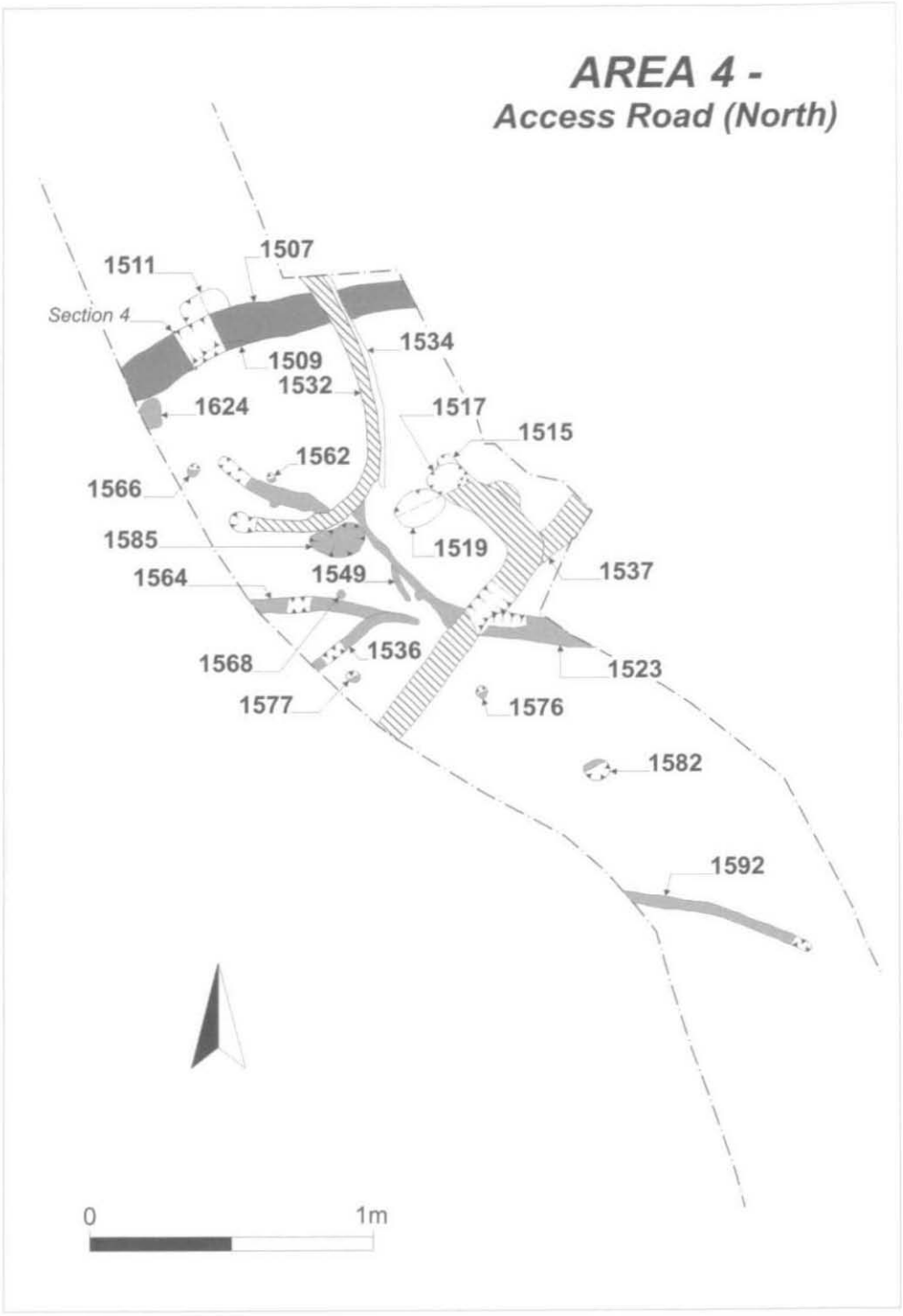

Fig. 4. Area 4 north.

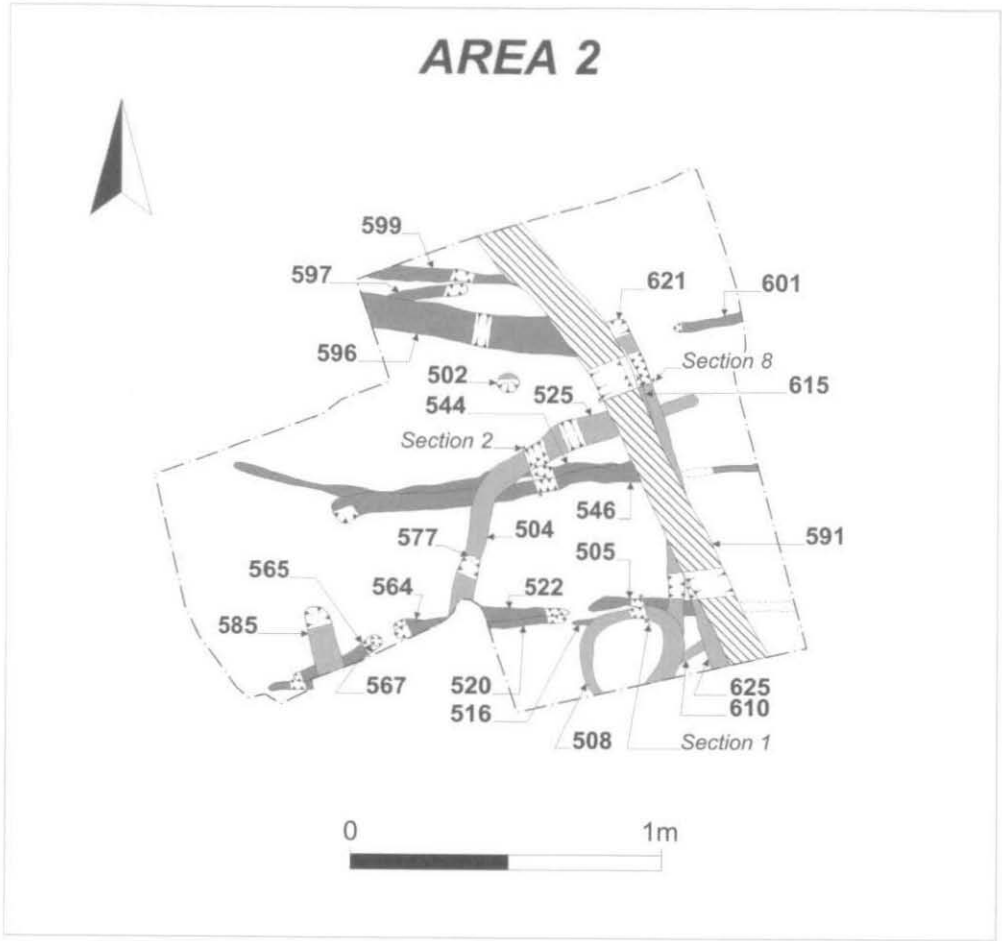

Fig. 5. Area 2.

period, there was evidence that the ditch truncated ditches on a similar alignment from this earlier period. Further traces of gullies were found to the east, but they were very shallow, largely truncated and only comprised a single phase in each case.

Each group of gullies showed evidence of recutting, with the later cut to the south of the earlier ones. The northern group of gullies consisted of [599], [597], [596] and [601]. Gullies [544] and [546] (Fig. 9; Section 2) were the middle group and [520], [521], [506], [516], [565] and [564] formed the southern group.

The southern group appeared to be made up of short lengths of gully. The terminals to the east, [521] and [520], were spurious, probably due to truncation, but the western terminals were better defined. One, [565], had a substantial posthole, [567], set into the very end. Measuring 0.50 m. long, 0.35 m. wide and 0.35 m. deep (while the gully was only 0.18 m. deep), its edges were vertical, leading gradually on to an irregular base. No post-packing was visible in the fill, but a large rock (0.3 m. x 0.2 m. x 0.15 m.) had been placed at the end of the gully and probably supported the post. The opposing terminal, [564], was 0.4 m. deep, suggesting it too may have had a post set into the end, although no post-setting was visible and no post-packing was found. The causeway between the two terminals was only 0.5 m. apart, too small to have functioned as an entrance. The upper part of a rotary quern was found in the terminus of Gully [505].

Generally the features were no more than 0.15 m. deep and between 0.2 m. and 0.5 m. wide, with shallow concave profiles. The exception to this was [544], which was 0.25 m. deep with almost vertical sides, with a sharp break of slope on to a flat, slightly concave base.

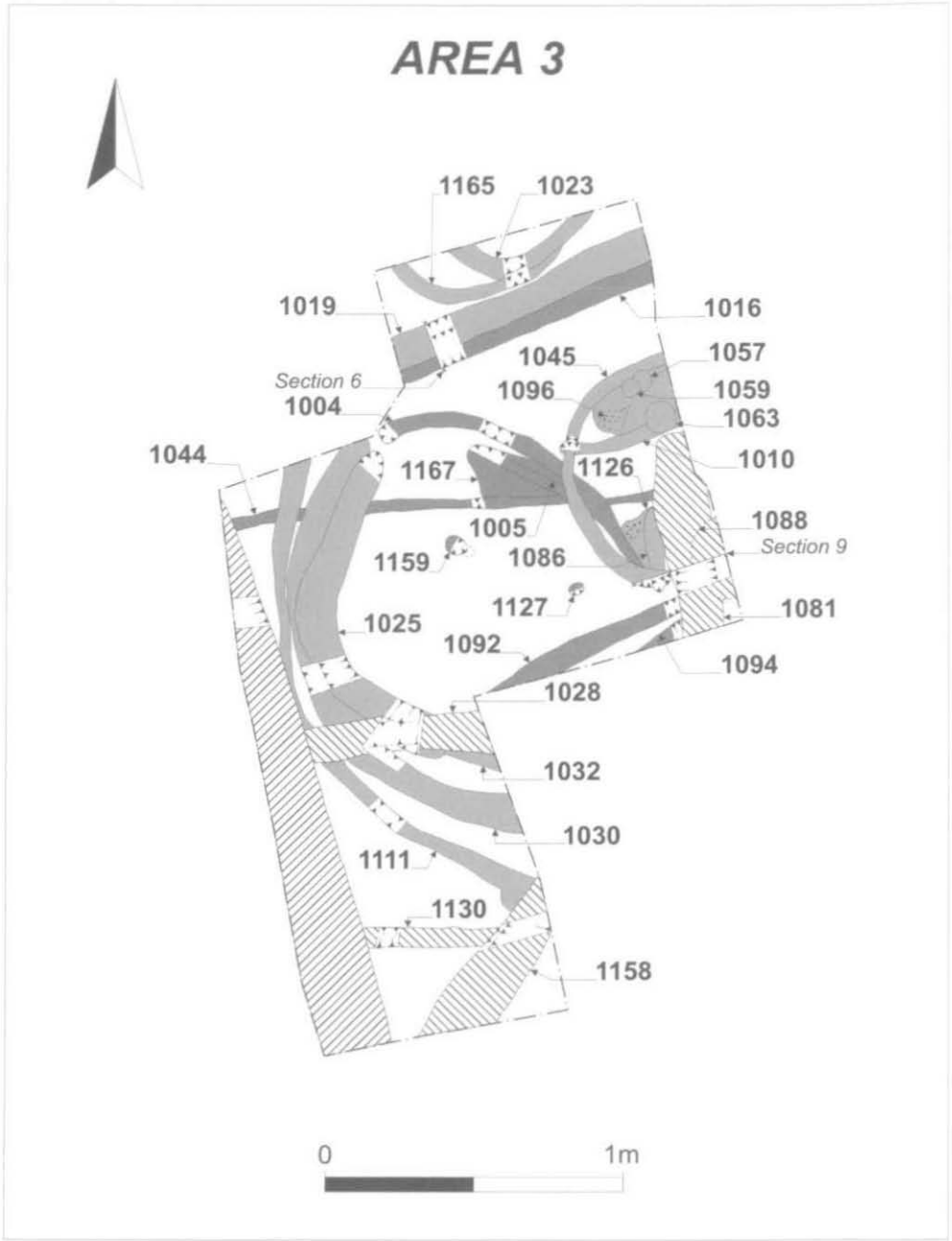
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Fig. 6. Area 3.

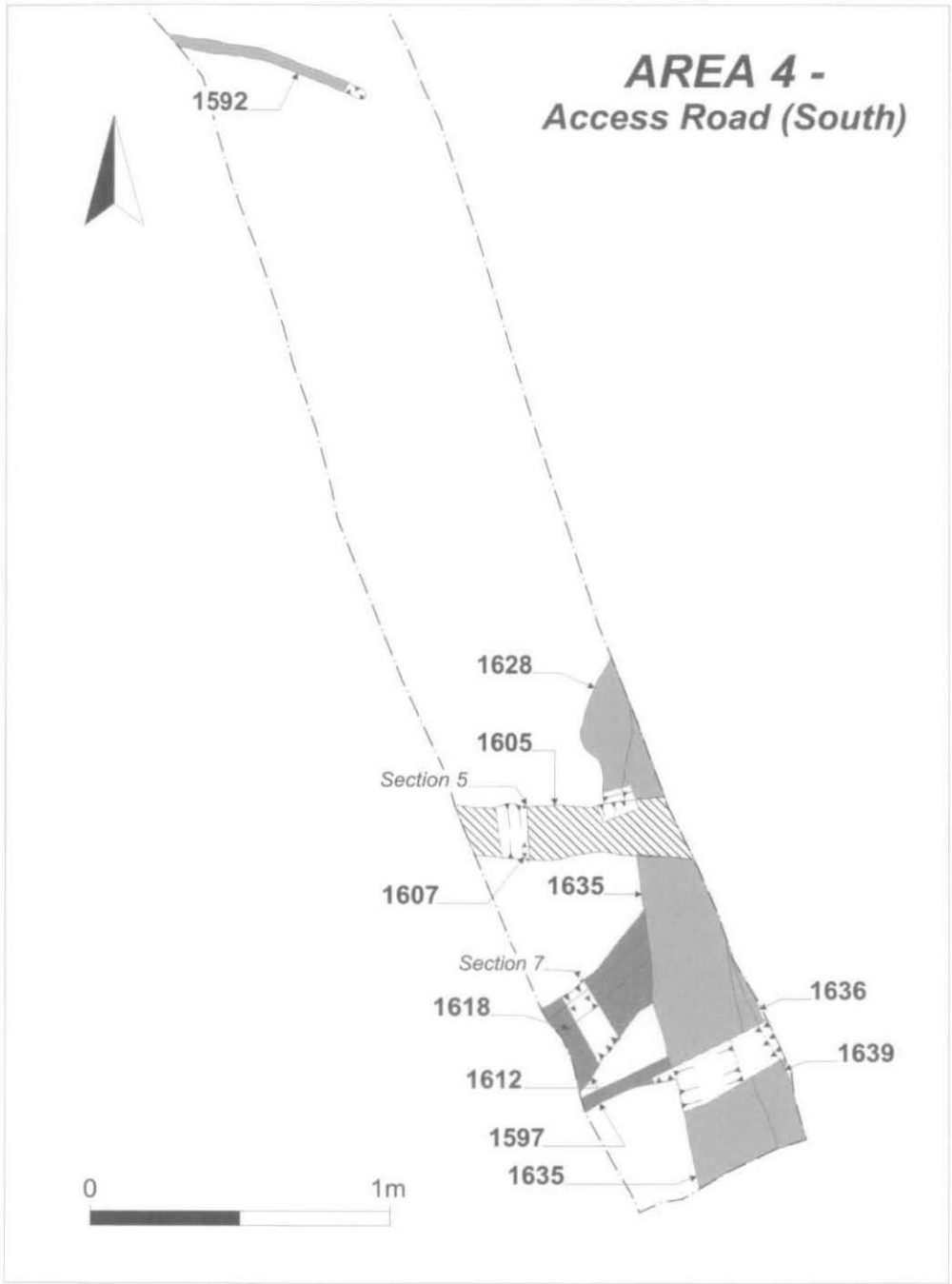

Fig. 7. Area 4 south.

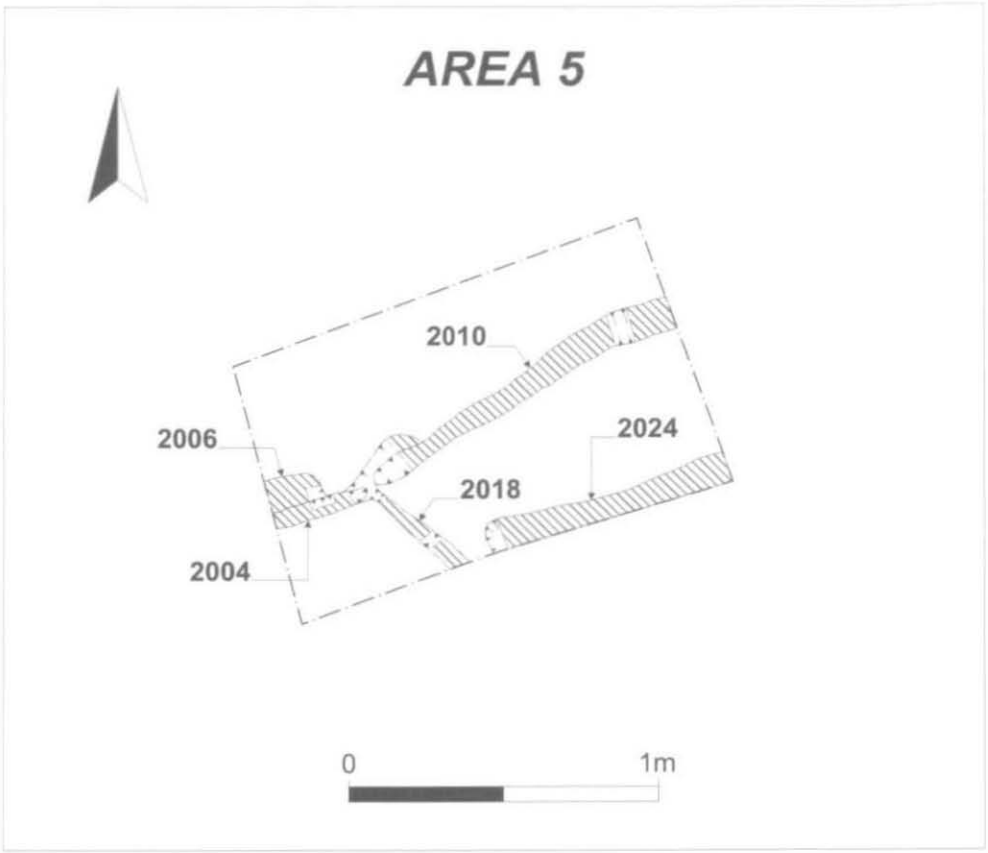

Fig. 8. Area 5.

The fills of the gullies were relatively uniform crumbly mid brown-grey silty clays with occasional orange mottling, *c.* 5% coarse sand, and sparse sub-angular stone and charcoal flecks. Again the exception was Gully [544], the fill of which was a light yellowish grey silty clay with frequent areas of redeposited natural. The nature of the fill and the sharply defined edges of this gully suggest it may have been deliberately backfilled soon after its initial excavation.

Area 3 (Fig. 6). This area was also characterised by a series of linear ditches, with the larger ditches aligned north-east to south-west. The northernmost ditch of the group was [1016] (Fig. 10; Section 6), but a later phase ditch on the same alignment, [1019], largely truncated it. However, this ditch was at least 0.9 m. wide and 0.55 m. deep. The primary fill, (1015), consisted of a light yellowish grey silt clay, very similar in composition to the natural. Above this was a lens of charcoal-rich material, (1014), with small fragments of burnt clay or daub and occasional heat-shattered stones. This lens was thickest towards the south and so therefore may represent a single dumping event from this direction. The upper fill of the ditch, (1013), was similar to most on site, being a mid brown-grey silty clay with orange mottling and few inclusions. This ditch was similar in profile and alignment to Ditch [59] in Area 1, and may have formed a return.

To the south were two undated ditches, [1092] and [1094], on the same north-east to south-west alignment. Their inclusion within this period is uncertain, since although their alignment corresponded to other features within this period, the composition of the fills did not, being very stiff mid yellow-grey silty clays, although these may represent primary fills or indicate that they were backfilled deliberately.

An east-to-west aligned gully, [1044], was one of the earliest features in this area and corresponded in form to the similarly aligned gullies in Area 2. Filled by a mid to light grey-brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal, it was up to 0.3 m. wide and 0.12 m. deep.

Cutting the east-to-west gully and probably constituting the latest phase of this period, was a stretch of curvilinear gully, [1005], with a single recut, [1004]. The primary cut was only visible for 3.5 m. To the north it petered out, probably truncated by later activity. It was deepest to the south at 0.18 m. and was 0.4 m. wide. The recut, [1004], was *c.* 11 m. long and up to 0.65 m. wide and 0.25 m. deep. The fill was made up of a dark grey clay silt and no finds were retrieved. Both the ends of the feature were almost entirely truncated by later features, and if this feature did describe a full circle the later enclosure truncated the western half.

Morphologically the feature was suggestive of a roundhouse drip gully. If it were complete, it would have had an approximate diameter of 11 m. The possibility of it having had this function is reinforced by the presence of a layer, [1167], abutting the gullies in the interior of the 'building'. This layer was intermittent, sometimes no more than charcoal-flecked, 'dirty' natural, but it extended across to the later enclosure ditches to the west. At its thickest, about 0.05 m., it was a dark grey sandy clay with very frequent charcoal and moderate burnt clay and heat-shattered stone, which suggests that this area was heavily used even if this was not the interior of a building.

Other possibly related features were Posthole [1127] and Pit [1159]. The posthole, situated to the south-east, was practically the only such feature on site. It was 0.5 m. long, 0.43 m. wide and 0.25 m. deep. The fill was generally a dark brown-grey silty clay, but to the eastern side were large patches of redeposited natural, which may have been utilised as post-packing.

The pit, [1159], was shallow, 0.14 m. deep, but fairly large, being 0.8 m. in diameter. The fill was fairly loose and primarily composed of charcoal (20–30%) and heat-shattered stone (20–30%), and the natural on the sides and base of the cut appeared burnt. The composition of the fill and the scorching of the natural clays suggest that this feature was a hearth, and therefore may have acted as an off-centre hearth for the building. However, this feature was also morphologically very similar to known examples of Belgic '1A' or '1B' type kilns from Rushden and Hardingstone, Northamptonshire.[9] These were described as comprising a shallow bowl 0.8 m. in diameter and about 0.1 m. deep. There was no evidence that these kilns had been lined, but the natural clay sides showed evidence of scorching. Very shallow stoking areas were also present, much like the ephemeral small circular depression noted to the south-east of the Jugglers Close feature. If this was a kiln it would probably belong to a later phase, especially since kiln furniture was found in a period 2, phase 1 gully. Unfortunately no pottery or kiln furniture was found within the feature. The 'dirty', charcoal-flecked natural found surrounding the feature might have been a result of raking out the ashes following a firing.

Area 4 south (Fig. 7). Gullies [1612], recut [1618] (Fig. 10; Section 7) and [1597] were aligned approximately north-east to south-west. Gully [1612] was 2.2 m. wide and up to 0.3 m. deep, with a very irregular profile consisting of weathered fairly steep sides and an uneven base. The fill was compact mottled mid grey-brown silty clay with considerable iron panning and few inclusions. Cutting through the centre of this was recut Gully [1618], 0.6 m. wide and 0.37 m. deep, with a similar, though more pale, fill. These gullies may have formed continuations of Gullies [1092] and [1094] found in Area 3.

Period 2 – late Iron Age

Area 1 and Area 4 north (Figs. 3 and 4). A series of shallow gullies in both areas are dated to this period.

In Area 1 a shallow gully, [32], cut the large ditch, [59], but seemed to respect its alignment. To the west the gully became very shallow and eventually terminated. Measuring 0.25 m. wide and 0.1 m. deep, the gully was a wide U-shape in profile and filled by a dark grey-brown silty clay with frequent orange mottling.

A short length of curvilinear gully, [17], about 11 m. in length, was aligned approximately north-east to south-west. It ranged from 0.24 m. to 0.57 m. wide and was 0.13 m. deep and almost semicircular in profile. The edges were quite sharp and it therefore seems unlikely that the gully had remained open for a long period of time. It was filled by a mid brownish grey silty clay with *c.* 5% sand with occasional small rounded pebbles and charcoal. Similarly to Gully [32], the south-west end of this feature seemed to respect Ditch [59].

Gully [64] appeared to cut [59] before it turned to the north and terminated 1.5 m. thereafter. A gully, [93], was located to the north-east of the area and aligned north to south. The terminus of this gully and [64] may have formed an entrance to a small enclosure or stockade. A further shallow feature, [83], truncated by [93], remained undated, but may have formed another part of a stockade or similar, from this phase.

A series of three shallow postholes, [27] (Section 3), [31] and [46], were cut into the top of Ditch [59], aligned north to south and placed between the western termini of Gullies [17] and [32]. The extent of Feature [27] was not clear, as its fill was very similar in composition to the ditch, but it was probably *c.* 0.4 m. wide, 0.7

[9] P.J. Woods, 'Types of Late Belgic and Early Romano-British Pottery Kilns in the Nene Valley', *Britannia*, v (1974), 265–71.

[10] Hey, op. cit. (note 6).

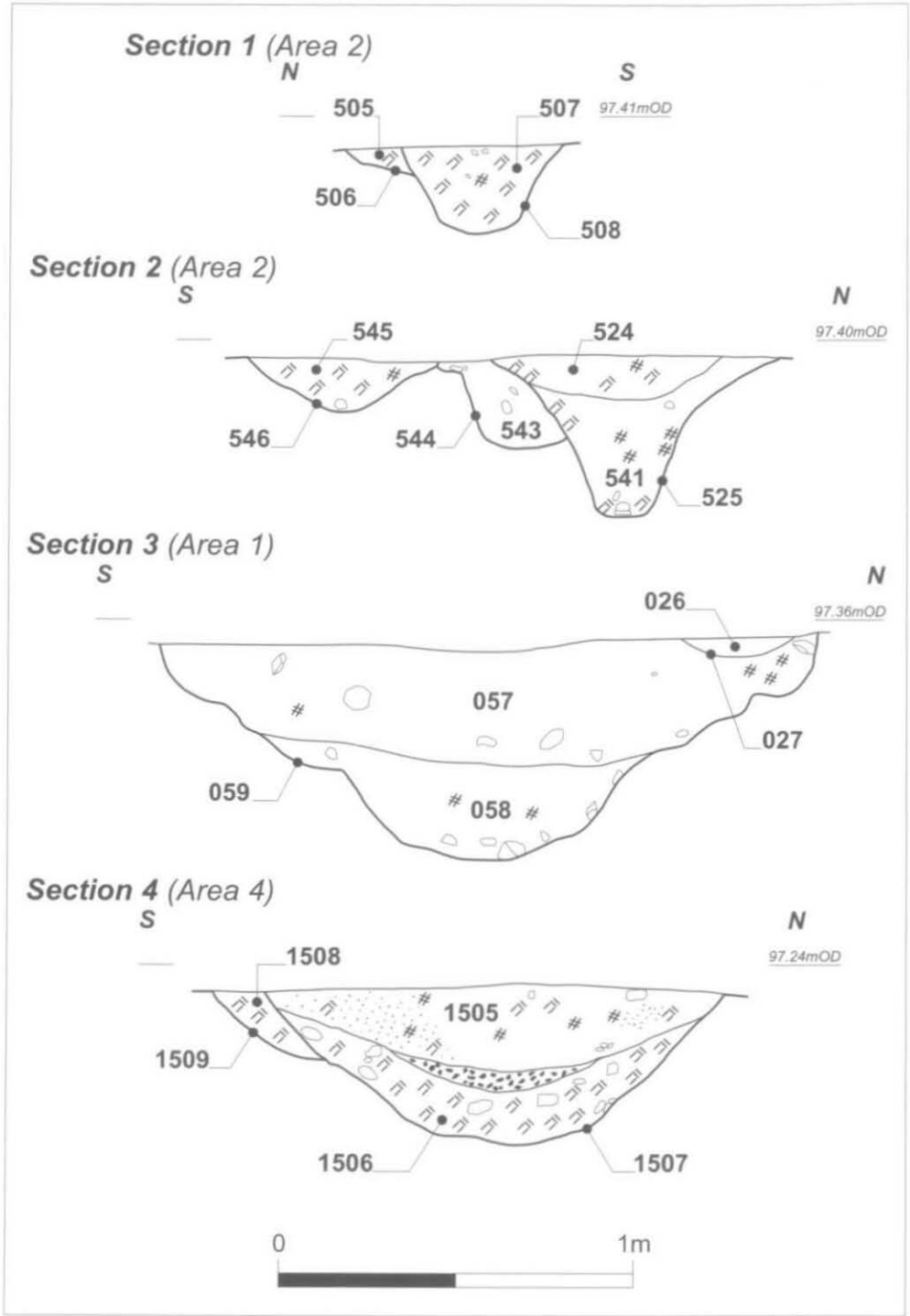

Fig. 9. Sections 1–4.

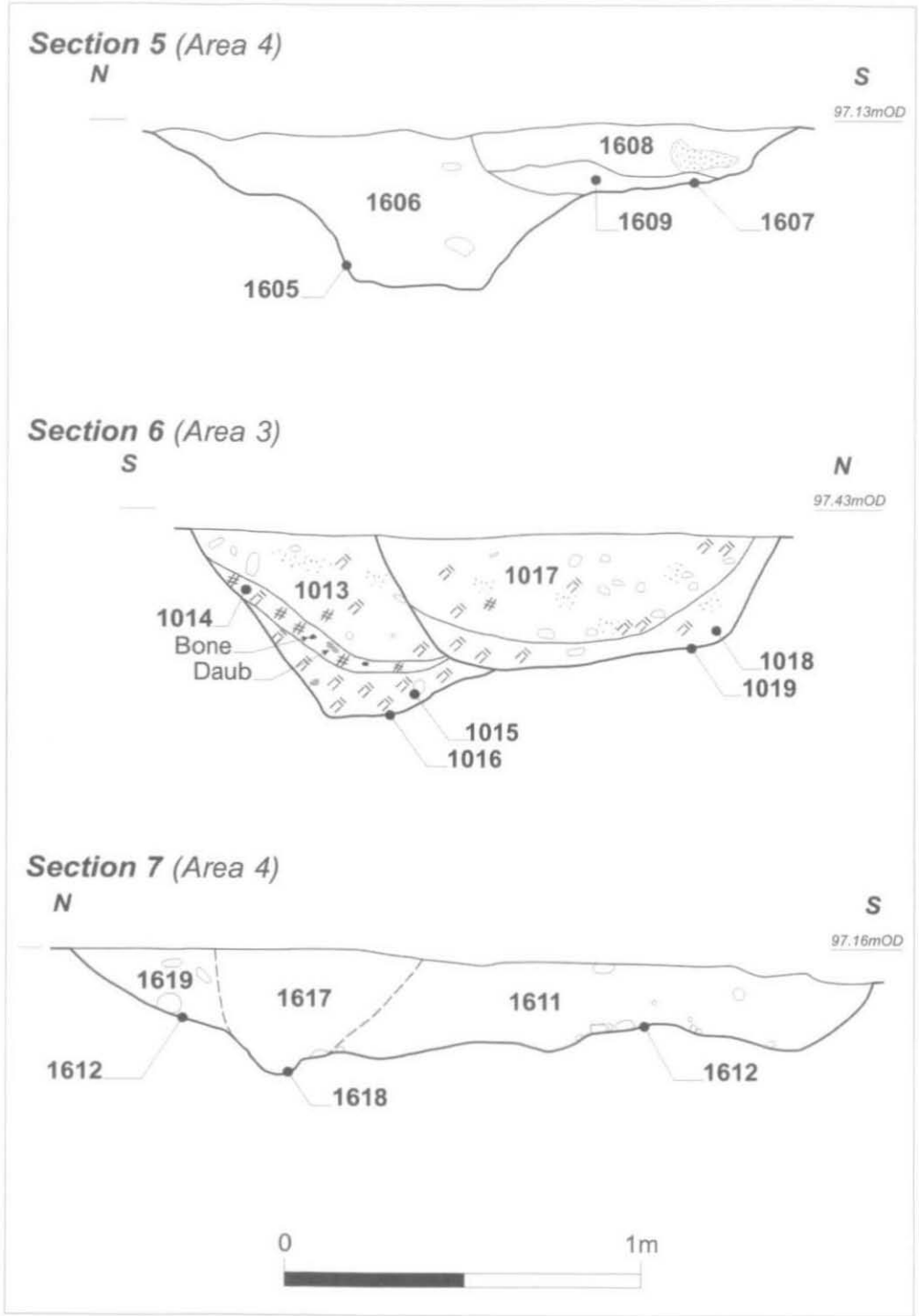

Fig. 10. Sections 5–7.

m. long and 0.2 m. deep, with a wide concave profile and a mid brown-grey clay silt fill containing occasional charcoal and sub-angular stones. Postholes [31] and [46] were very similar, being about 0.3 m. long, 0.2 m. wide and 0.07 m. deep, with dark brown-grey fills and few inclusions.

Gullies [17] and [32] may have formed a funnel, which was gated off at the narrow end, with Postholes [27], [31] and [46] representing probable gateposts. This could have formed a work area for smaller animals, for example for tupping or shearing.

To the west, part of a small circular gully, [10], was recovered. It would have had an interior diameter of no more than 3 m. To the south the feature was severely truncated and although a terminus might have been present, the gully was too shallow at this point for it to be proved. To the north the gully was more substantial and measured 0.32 m. wide and 0.09 m. deep, with a shallow dish-like profile and a mid grey-brown sandy silt fill with numerous small rounded stone and moderate charcoal. This type of feature has been described elsewhere[10] as a possible agricultural feature, possibly for the storage of winter fodder.

Cutting across the ditch and aligned north-west to south-east there was a further shallow linear gully, [37]. No dating material was recovered from this feature, which was concave in plan, but it appears to align with Gully [1592] in Area 4, which had a similar fill and profile.

In Area 4 the rest of the gullies were truncated in parts by a north to south furrow (not illustrated). Gully [1523] was aligned approximately north-west to south-east, terminating to the north-west. To the south-east it was a fairly substantial feature, 0.85 m. wide and 0.36 m. deep with a wide V-shaped profile and a single fill of a dark brown-grey silty clay with few inclusions. To the north it became much shallower through truncation and was only 0.08 m. deep in places. Gully [1549] formed a short spur off, [1523], only 1.3 m. long, again very ephemeral, and although it appeared to be cut by [1523], it did not continue after it.

Adjacent to, and abutting, [1523] was a shallow depression, [1585], 2 m. long, 1.1 m. wide and 0.12 m. deep. The feature appeared not to have been cut as such but may have been an area of heavy animal trampling or a 'working hollow'.

Gully [1564] was aligned approximately east to west, a wide V-shape in section and 0.6 m. wide by 0.18 m. deep. It was filled by a mid yellow-grey clay silt and contained 40–50% limestone (up to 200 x 150 x 40 mm.) and cobbles, some of which were burnt. The concentration of stone within this gully was unusually high, and may mean that they were being utilised as packing around posts set into the gully. This gully terminated to the west and was cut by [1536], a further shallow gully, at this point.

Other features probably relating to this phase include a number of postholes, [1566], [1562], [1568], [1577], [1576] and [1582]. Late Iron Age pottery was found in [1582]. These postholes were all shallow, no more than 0.15 m. deep, with relatively sterile fills and no discernible post-packing. These features form no coherent structures, but they may have formed fence-lines to reinforce the delineation of space by the gullies.

The shallow gullies that were found in these areas during this period are enigmatic. It has been suggested that gullies often seen on sites such as this were used to divert animals to different areas, with hurdles being placed in these features as required.[11] It could be that the majority performed this function, especially as [17] and [32] appear to form a funnel and the rest of the gullies are aligned towards it.

Area 2 (Fig. 5). A discrete group of features, primarily consisting of a gully partially enclosing a circular structure, were present during this phase.

Gully [525] (Fig. 9; Section 2) and [504] measured up to 0.82 m. wide and 0.62 m. deep. To the south the gully was aligned north-east to south-west before turning gradually to an east to west alignment and terminating to the east. The edges of the gully were initially relatively shallow, especially on the southern side, becoming steep, almost vertical in places. The base was generally flat.

The primary fill, (541), was a granular dark brown-grey silty clay with orange mottling. A moderate number of large rounded cobbles (up to 100 mm. x 100 mm. x 50 mm.) were found concentrated towards the base of the fill. An intermittent lens of material, (542), (not illustrated) was visible beneath this layer in the north-eastern part of the gully. Consisting primarily of charcoal, this lens possessed a squared profile, suggestive of the 'ghost' of the base of a post, and was probably dumped, rather than being a result of natural processes. The uppermost fill, (524), of the gully consisted of a mid brownish grey silty clay with frequent patches of redeposited natural and very few inclusions.

Additional evidence that this gully held posts was seen in Section [504] towards its southern end. This appeared to have a posthole, [577], set into the base. The fill was exactly the same as the primary fill of the gully, so no relationship could be discerned. Further investigation did not reveal any other evidence of postholes. However, the limited evidence presented above, as well as the sharp profile and depth of the gully, does suggest that it may have been utilised as a palisade trench, with upright timbers set into the gully.

11 P. Ellis, G. Hughes and L. Jones et al. 'An Iron Age Boundary and Settlement Features at Slade Farm, Bicester, Oxfordshire: A Report on Excavations', *Oxoniensia*, lxiii (1998), 262.

Circular feature [508] (Fig. 9; Section 1) had a maximum interior diameter of 2.5 m. No entrance was visible in the part within the excavated area, nor were there any internal features. The gully was at most 0.65 m. wide and 0.33 m. deep, with fairly steep sides leading gradually on to a slightly concave base. The single fill consisted of a dark brown-grey silty clay with a granular texture. Moderate numbers of rounded cobbles were observed concentrated to the base of the cut, some of which appeared to be heat-shattered. Occasional pieces of burnt clay or daub were noted as well as charcoal flecks.

Associated with this feature, and interpreted on site as being cut by it, were two linear gullies, [510] and [610]. It seems probable that the gullies were actually contemporaneous with the circular feature, especially as [510] terminates at the intersection with [508], and probably drained excess water off into north-to-south Ditch [625]. Both the gullies were shallow, no more than 0.2 m. deep and 0.4 m. wide, with fills similar to the circular gully. Ditch [625] had been largely truncated by the later ditch on the same alignment, [591], so it is difficult to say whether it belonged to this phase or the previous period. Its dimensions were lost, but it may have terminated to the north as [615] or [621].

The circular structure was apparently enclosed by the possible palisade ditch, which may have served to deter stock or otherwise from straying in.

A short length of Ditch [585] lay to the south-west, aligned north to south and terminating after 2 m. It measured 0.81 m. wide and 0.34 m. deep, with steep sides and a fairly flat base. The fills were fairly homogenous mid brown-grey silty sands, with varying amounts of iron panning. No opposing terminus was present.

Area 3 (Fig. 6). This area remained the centre of occupation in this phase. The primary roundhouse, [1045], appears to have been enclosed by a sub-circular or D-shaped enclosure, which was recut several times. A further possible structure to the north may have been an ancillary building.

The western portion of the enclosure recovered in this area was sub-circular in plan, with at least three phases of development. The earliest phase comprised a relatively shallow gully, [1111], up to 0.5 m. wide and 0.15 m. deep and filled with mid brown-grey silty clay with few stones. The subsequent phase ditch, [1030], was considerably deeper, up to 0.34 m. deep and 1.1 m. wide with fairly steep sides leading on to a flat, regular base. The fill was very similar to that in [1111]. The last phase ditch, [1025], was to the south V-shaped in profile, but to the north became wider and less regular in form. It measured up to 1.4 m. wide and 0.5 m. deep, and had a very similar fill to [1111], but with frequent orange mottling and patches of sand.

A shallow gully, [1032], almost entirely truncated by later features, may represent a further phase of this enclosure system, but its alignment is uncertain.

The depth of the ditches of this enclosure system make it unlikely that they served any sort of defensive or, indeed, status-based functions, but they probably demarcated the area for habitation.

Within the enclosure to the east was part of a roundhouse, with again just the drip gully remaining, [1045]; this was relatively dish-shaped in profile and only 0.28 m. deep and 0.4 m. wide. The entrance to the building appeared to be due south. The full interior diameter of the roundhouse would have been about 8 m., relatively small for a roundhouse. This could indicate that it was an ancillary building rather than functioning as the main family house. However, it has been suggested that a non-residential function cannot be assumed for smaller buildings and that the size may have been related to notions of social status and age differences, determining who lived where within a settlement.[12]

A gully, [1010], was found within the roundhouse and terminated at the point it intersected the drip gully. This was a relatively shallow gully no more than 0.25 m. deep and 0.5 m. wide, with a mid yellowish grey silty clay fill and containing late Iron Age pottery. It is believed to be contemporary with the roundhouse since a layer of cobbles present in the interior abutted it. The cobbles, [1096] and [1126], were intermittently present throughout the interior, and although no corroborating dating evidence was found, appear to have functioned as some sort of surface within the building, suggesting hard usage.

Adjacent to the terminus of [1045] there was an ill-defined feature, [1086]. Its relationship with the ring ditch was unclear since it was almost entirely truncated. However, it terminated to the south and at this point was 0.35 m. deep and 0.8 m. wide, with fairly steep sides and a narrow base.

The fills of the two features were hard to define but Fill (1083), the uppermost fill of [1086], was composed of a dark yellowish grey silty clay. This had *c.* 20% charcoal content within it, as well as large quantities of burnt daub (up to 100 x 70 x 60 mm.), moderate burnt sandstone and heat-shattered cobbles, and small quantities of burnt bone and pottery. Also recovered were parts of kiln bars or pedestal fragments. These have been dated as very late Iron Age. This feature may have been a posthole or gully positioned at the entrance of the roundhouse. To the north of the roundhouse, within the interior, were two small pits or postholes, [1059] and

12 S. Willis, *An Archaeological Resource Assessment of the Later Bronze Age and Iron Age (The First Millennium BC in the East Midland Counties of England)*, (East Midlands Archaeological Resource Framework, unpublished draft).

[1057]. Feature [1059] appeared to truncate [1057]. They may have functioned as postholes for uprights for possible interior features (e.g. for looms). Further similar features may have been present outside the area of excavation.

Although the relationship with the ring ditch and nearby features was not clear, they may have formed divisions within the building or as drainage elements. The size of the building and the presence of the gully may suggest that it was used as a working area rather than a living area. Unfortunately most of the interior was truncated or beyond the edge of excavation.

Two further curvilinear gullies were found to the north, probably representing two phases of a single building. The earliest, [1165], was 0.25 m. deep and was at least 0.4 m. wide, with a dark grey-brown silty clay with moderate orange mottling. The later phase gully, [1023], was shifted slightly to the east and was not as circular in form as [1165]. It was up to 0.65 m. wide and 0.27 m. deep. The fills of this gully seemed to indicate a further recut, although this was not visible elsewhere.

No finds were associated with these gullies. If they formed complete circles their full internal diameters would have been approximately 7 m. Similar to [1045], they are relatively small for a main dwelling and again may possibly have functioned as ancillary buildings.

These gullies respect, and even appear to be slightly flattened in order to avoid, the ditch to the south, [1019], a recut of [1016], which suggests that it may have still been in use at this point.

Ditch [1019] (Fig. 10; Section 6) was recut to the north of [1016] and was slightly shallower at 0.39 m. deep and 0.65 m. wide, with steep sides and a flat base. The primary fill, (1018), was a dark brown-grey silty clay with frequent orange mottling with occasional charcoal and small stone and patches of redeposited natural. The upper fill, (1017), was similar though lighter, with no patches of re-deposited natural.

Area 4 south (Fig. 7). Ditch [1635] was the largest ditch on site, 2.75 m. wide and 0.74 m. deep with uneven fairly steep sides leading imperceptibly on to an uneven concave base. It probably denoted a major boundary in the settlement, possibly its easternmost extent. Strangely, therefore, no pottery and few other finds were recovered. The fill of the ditch was very homogenous greyish brown silty clay, and no distinctions in the fill were observed. Due to the lack of finds within this ditch it is possible that it is late Saxon in date. This ditch was probably a recut of a shallower feature to the east and west, Ditches [1639] and [1628]. On a similar alignment, they were at least 1.1 m. wide and 0.44 m. deep, with a similar fill and uneven profile to [1635]. A single sherd of late Iron Age pottery was found in [1639]. Ditch [1639] truncated Feature [1636], but since it was recovered on the edge of excavation, could not be identified. Although the pottery tentatively dated the ditches to the late Iron Age, it would seem likely that this major boundary had probably been retained from the origins of the settlement.

Period 3 – late Saxon / early medieval

A single, shallow posthole, [100], found in the south-east corner of Area 1, contained pottery dating to this period.

In Area 4 north, there were two intersecting gullies, [1534] and recut [1532]. They were aligned north to south but while [1532] curved round to the west before terminating, [1534] terminated before the curve. Ditch [1534] was 0.24 m. deep and at least 0.5 m. wide, with a concave profile and a fairly sterile dark brown-grey silty clay. The recut [1532] was 0.22 m. deep and 0.49 m. wide, with a wide V-shaped profile and a light orange-grey silty clay with moderate iron panning. Large pieces of ironstone were noted lying against the western edge of the cut. The terminus of [1532] was filled with large cobbles, as well as moderate burnt clay (probably daub) and burnt bone. A possible posthole, [1528], was cut into the side of the terminus (not illustrated); the presence of this feature, as well as the considerable quantities of stone within the fill of the gully, suggests that it could have functioned as a palisade trench.

Ditch [1521] was aligned north-east to south-west, before turning a 90° corner and terminating 4 m. thereafter. However, Ditch [1537] continued on the same alignment to the north-east. Ditch [1521] was 0.46 m. deep and 1.2 m. wide, with steep sides and a flat base and relatively sterile single fill with frequent iron panning. The terminus, [1517], was of a similar, though shallower and not so sharply defined, profile and truncated a more substantial ditch, [1515], situated to the east and also terminating at this point. This earlier ditch was probably of the same period, since it was clearly on the same alignment.

Ditch [1537] was similarly dated to this period and was similar to [1521]; it may have either been contemporary to or earlier than [1521], as [1521] appeared to truncate it, and was possibly a return of largely truncated Ditch [1515].

A single large ditch was found in Area 2, aligned north to south [591]. Measuring 1.7 m. wide and 0.7 m. deep, this ditch had a single homogenous fill with frequent iron panning. There was evidence that this ditch had truncated and maybe replaced a similarly aligned ditch of an earlier period, since many of the Iron Age gullies seemed to respect it.

Area 3 had the largest number of Saxon remains, suggesting that the centre of the settlement was in this vicinity.

The earliest ditch stratigraphically, [1130], was east to west aligned, with a V-shaped profile, 0.7 m. wide and 0.35 m. deep. The fill, (1129), was noticeably different from the others on site relating to Iron Age ditches, being an obdurate, grey-brown silty clay with a substantial quantity of sand. Aligned parallel to this ditch was [1028]; this was considerably more substantial, being up to 1.3 m. wide and 0.7 m. deep, with weathered, quite shallow edges at the top of the cut, becoming steeper towards the fairly narrow flat base.

The fill of the ditch consisted of a series of relatively homogenous deposits, principally composed of the ubiquitous mid brown-grey silty clay. Towards the base of the ditch was evidence of a cut for a posthole, although the cut was not visible towards the upper half of the ditch, suggesting it may have been removed before the ditch fully silted up. Further tenuous evidence for postholes was seen in a further section to the west. The fact that these ditches were parallel to each other and only a short distance apart may suggest that they formed a droveway or demarcated a track between cultivated or enclosed pastoral land.

Ditch [1081] was aligned north to south, perpendicular to [1028], and measured 2 m. wide and 0.59 m. deep. A layer of dark brown-grey clay silt with large quantities of burnt daub and charcoal separated the two major fills. An ill-defined feature, [1088], appeared to truncate this ditch, but its edges were very unclear. It may have been semicircular in plan, with the eastern edge under the edge of excavation, implying that it was either a pit or the terminus of a ditch. However, a significant quantity of pottery was found in it dating it to this period, perhaps suggesting that a small pit was dug into the backfill of the ditch.

Truncating Ditch [1130], and on a different alignment to the other ditches in this area, was a large north-east to south-west aligned ditch, [1158]. Measuring approximately 2 m. wide and 0.7 m. deep, the ditch possessed fairly shallow, uneven edges leading gradually on to an irregular, slightly concave base. A series of fills within the ditch again showed striking differences to those observed in the Iron Age features. All the fills, (1149), (1150), (1156) and (1157), were composed of sandy clays and most contained high quantities of dumped material, like pottery, bone and charcoal. Two fills especially, (1150) and (1156), contained large quantities of carbonised material, as well as slag and the greater part of a cow skull from (1156).

In Area 5, the most easterly of the areas of excavation, the features recovered were relatively sparse. Furthermore, not a single sherd of pottery was retrieved from any of these features, suggesting that, from whatever period they related to, they may well have been located a substantial distance from occupation. The entire area was heavily disturbed by root action from a stand of trees located to the north.

Ditch [2024] constituted the most substantial feature in this area. Aligned east to west, it was positioned in the extreme south of the area, some of it beyond the edge of excavation. At the terminus, 8 m. to the west, the ditch was at least 1.1 m. wide and 0.41 m. deep, with a single fill, (2025), consisting of a firm mid orange brown sandy silt with frequent patches of redeposited clay and frequent charcoal flecks and small rounded stone.

A gully, [2010], to the north, on a similar east to west alignment, also terminated to the west. Not as substantial as [2024], it measured a maximum of 1.5 m. wide and 0.25 m. deep. The fill was a compact mid orange-brown silty clay with few inclusions. An opposing terminus, 0.3 m. to the west, marked the end of Gully [2004]. This gully had a similar fill to [2010] and was 0.6 m. wide and 0.11 m. deep. This gully truncated a shallow depression to the west, [2006], which probably represented a tree bole.

A further very shallow gully, [2018], aligned north-west to south-east and filled with the same material, appeared to terminate at the same point as [2010] and [2004]. No relationships were discerned.

Ditch [2024] and Gully [2010] were both truncated by a north-to-south aligned furrow. This indicates that they at least pre-dated this furrow. It is difficult to place them with any confidence into any of the phases found elsewhere on site, but they may have been related to the late Saxon/ early medieval occupation.

Period 4 – medieval to post-medieval

Furrows were observed in all five of the areas, aligned north to south and typically measuring 1.5 m. wide and 0.1 m. deep. The furrows were spaced at *c.* 6 m. intervals.

A post-medieval ditch, [1071] (Fig. 6), was recovered on the extreme western edge of Area 3, aligned north to south. This feature was not fully excavated. It was at least 0.5 m. deep and 2.5 m. wide. The observed fills, (1070) and (1069), were light grey clay silts with occasional inclusions. At the top of the ditch a stone-lined drain had been inserted, constructed of limestone and still running at the time of excavation. The ditch was partly beneath and aligned with the current site boundary.

THE FINDS

THE IRON AGE POTTERY by EDWARD BIDDULPH

A total of 661 sherds, (4983 g.; 4.62 RE), was recovered from the site. The majority of it (77% by weight) dated to the middle to late Iron Age, though late Saxon / early medieval pottery made a significant contribution (22%). Roman and post-medieval pottery was also represented. Assemblage condition was variable; the surfaces of the invariably small sherds were often worn. With an average sherd weight of 8 g. both for the Iron Age and medieval pottery, the assemblage was somewhat fragmented. There were, however, a number of larger pieces.

Middle to late Iron Age and Roman

Pottery was recorded using Oxford Archaeology's standard system for later prehistoric and Roman assemblages. Fabrics were identified on the basis of principal inclusion types. Where possible, a distinction was made between middle Iron Age fabrics, codes here defined by inclusions with a scale of fineness (1 = very fine, to 5 = very coarse), and late Iron Age fabrics (so-called E wares) in a 'Belgic' tradition.[13] It should be noted, however, that some fabrics, for instance shell-tempered, continued throughout these periods. Sherds that could not be placed in either category with certainty have been assigned middle Iron Age fabric codes by default. Quantification is by sherd count, weight, and estimated rim-equivalence (RE).

Fabrics

A3 Moderately coarse quartz sand-tempered fabric.
AP4 Coarse sand and clay pellet-tempered fabric.
AQ4 Coarse sand and angular quartzite-tempered fabric.
AS3 Moderately coarse sand and shell-tempered fabric.
C3 Moderately coarse calcareous sand/grit-tempered fabric.
FA3 Moderately coarse flint and quartz sand-tempered fabric.
G Grog-tempered fabric, possibly E80.
LA4 Coarse limestone and quartz sand-tempered fabric.
S2 Fine shell-tempered fabric.
S3 Moderately coarse shell-tempered fabric.
SA2 Fine shell and quartz sand-tempered fabric.
SA3 Moderately coarse shell and quartz sand-tempered fabric.
SG2 Fine shell and grog-tempered fabric.
SL2 Fine shell and limestone-tempered fabric.
SL3 Moderately coarse shell and limestone fabric.
SL4 Coarse shell and limestone fabric.
E30 'Belgic' sand-tempered ware.
E40 'Belgic' shell-tempered ware.
E50 'Belgic' limestone-tempered ware.
E80 'Belgic' grog-tempered ware.
M24 Nene Valley white ware mortarium fabric.

For ease of analysis, amalgamated fabric groups are presented in Table 2. It can be seen that, by all measures, the assemblage is dominated by grog-tempered ware (E80), presumably locally produced. The ware was produced in the area during the 1st century AD,[14] giving the assemblage a strong late Iron Age emphasis. Sherds invariably contained minor proportions of other inclusions, such as shell and sand. Such material was occasionally used as the principal filler, of which shell (E40) was the most important. This presumably reflects a continuation of a tradition from the middle Iron Age, since shelly fabrics dating to that period contributed significantly to the assemblage. Limestone was a common addition to these fabrics. In contrast, the principal use of sand appears to have declined during the late Iron Age, and chiefly belongs to an earlier tradition. A sherd of a flint-tempered fabric (FA3) is anomalous, since the fabric does not form part of Iron Age assemblages in the region. A late Bronze Age date for the sherd seems likely, although, associated with 'E' wares (Context 1079), it is clearly residual here. Roman-period pottery was confined to a sole sherd of Nene Valley white ware. It too was residual, since it accompanied late Saxon or early medieval pottery.

Vessels and decoration

The assemblage comprises jars and bowls. Barrel-shaped (CB) and bead-rimmed (CH) jar types were among the most important in terms of rim-equivalent. Both types continued to be produced in 'Belgic' wares, although only the latter was available in grog-tempered ware. The remaining vessel types were found exclusively in 'Belgic' wares, mainly E80. The single globular jar (CG) had been made in fabric E40 and probably dates to the late Iron Age. Along with CB-type jars, the form is typical of middle Iron Age assemblages. Chronological reasons may help to explain why none was found in fabrics belonging to this period, although it is worth noting that there is a degree of overlap between the rims of bead-rimmed and

[13] I. Thompson, *Grog-Tempered 'Belgic' Pottery of South-Eastern England* (B.A.R. 108, 1982).
[14] K. Brown, 'The Pottery' in A.M. Cromarty, S. Foreman and P. Murray et al., 'The Excavation of a Late Iron Age Enclosed Settlement at Bicester Fields Farm, Bicester, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lxiv (1999), 193.

globular jar types. Vessels that had not survived much below the shoulder tended to be identified as the former, rather than the latter. Medium-mouthed jars (CD), often with cordoned or rippled necks, were common late Iron Age types. The bowls, all in E80, were wheel-thrown or finished, uniformly fired, and decorated with cordons. Much of the remaining pottery, high-shouldered jars excepted, is likely to have been handmade. The assemblage did not reveal many instances of decoration. The condition of the pottery, which was invariably abraded and worn, may have contributed to this, though it should be noted that pottery of a middle Iron Age tradition from the area tended not to be highly decorated, if at all.[15] Where present, decoration was restricted to burnishing.

TABLE 2: QUANTIFICATION OF MIDDLE/LATE IRON AGE POTTERY

Fabric	*Sherds*	*% Sherds*	*Weight (g)*	*% wt*	*RE*	*% RE*
A	3	1	9	<1	–	–
AP	65	12	250	6	0.1	4
AQ	4	1	26	1	–	-
AS	2	<1	52	1	0.21	8
C	14	3	18	<1	–	–
FA	1	<1	6	<1	–	–
G	1	<1	2	<1	–	–
LA	9	2	18	<1	0.03	1
S	51	10	144	4	0.05	2
SA	8	2	38	1	–	–
SG	2	<1	6	<1	–	–
SL	102	19	658	17	0.05	2
E30	9	2	58	1	0.15	6
E40	51	10	106	3	0.26	10
E50	28	5	270	7	0.08	3
E80	182	34	2196	56	1.68	64
M24	1	<1	38	1	–	–
Total	**533**	–	**3895**	–	**2.61**	–

Chronology and discussion

On the basis of the pottery, the main period of occupation occurred during the middle to late Iron Age. How early this phase can be taken is unclear. Assemblages comprising pottery of a middle Iron Age tradition without later pottery are too small to date with certainty. While the CB vessel type, conventionally emerging during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, is characteristically middle Iron Age,[16] as attested at Abingdon[17] and Yarnton,[18] among others, it is instructive to note that all but one of the four barrel-shaped jars present are

[15] Ibid. 185.

[16] D. Wilson, 'Iron Age Pottery', in T.G. Allen and M.A. Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron Age Enclosed Settlement at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick-with-Yelford, Oxon* (OAU Thames Valley Landscapes: The Windrush Valley vol. 2, 1993).

[17] C.D. de Roche, 'The Iron Age Pottery', in M. Parrington, *The Excavation of an Iron Age Settlement, Bronze Age Ring-Ditches and Roman Features at Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (Oxfordshire) 1974–76* (C.B.A. Res. Rep. 28, 1978).

[18] P. Booth, 'The Later Iron Age and Roman Pottery', in *Iron Age to Roman Landscape and Settlement, Yarnton* (OUA Monograph, vol. 2, in prep.).

associated with 'Belgic' wares. Moreover, the form was available in E wares. Indeed, the proportion of E wares against that of middle Iron Age fabrics would suggest that the level of activity was greater towards the end of the Iron Age. These factors help to suggest that this phase began during the middle/late Iron Age transition. In this respect, the assemblage closely resembles that at Bicester Fields Farm.[19] While 'E' wares, particularly grog-tempered ware, survived the Conquest and continued within the region into the late 1st century AD,[20] the almost total lack of Roman pottery suggests that this did not happen at Jugglers Close. That this phase of activity had terminated by the middle of the 1st century AD seems to be assured. The pottery provides evidence for an intensive, but short-lived, phase of occupation, confined to the period from the end of the 1st century BC (or slightly later) to the mid 1st century AD.

The ubiquity of shell in both middle and late Iron Age fabrics firmly suggests that this tradition continued north of the Thames Valley throughout the Iron Age, confirming a trend identified at Bicester[21] and Glymton Park.[22] This is in sharp contrast to sites along the Upper Thames Valley, where the use of shell-tempered pottery declined rapidly after the early Iron Age to form only a small component of middle Iron Age assemblages.[23]

Aside from the sherd of Nene Valley white ware mortarium, which hints at late Roman activity in the area, activity resumed in the Saxon/early medieval period, beginning during the 10th or 11th century. Some of the vessel types present indicate that activity continued possibly until the early 14th century. Post-medieval pottery attests to 17th- to 19th-century activity in the vicinity of Jugglers Close.

TABLE 3: QUANTIFICATION OF VESSEL TYPES

Vessel type	*Fabric/ware group*							*Total RE*	*% total RE*
	A	*L*	*S*	*E30*	*E40*	*E50*	*E80*		
Unspecified jars (C)	–	–	–	0.15	–	–	0.05	0.2	8
Barrel-shaped jars (CB)	0.21	0.03	0.05	–	0.09	–	–	0.38	15
Medium-mouthed jars (CD)	–	–	–	–	–	0.05	0.41	0.46	18
Globular jars (CG)	–	–	–	–	0.1	–	–	0.1	4
Bead-rimmed jars (CH)	0.1	–	0.05	–	–	–	0.37	0.52	20
Unspecified jars/bowls (D)	–	–	–	–	–	0.03	0.22	0.25	10
Unspecified bowls (H)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.08	0.08	3
Carinated bowls (HA)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.15	0.15	6
Curving sided bowls (HC)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.2	0.2	8
Necked bowls (HD)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.2	0.2	8
Unidentified (Z)	–	–	–	–	0.07	–	–	0.07	3
Total RE	**0.31**	**0.03**	**0.1**	**0.15**	**0.26**	**0.08**	**1.68**	**2.61**	**–**
% total RE	12	1	4	6	10	3	64	–	–

[19] Brown, op. cit. (note 14), 193.

[21] M. Laidlaw, 'Pottery', in V. Birbeck, 'Excavations at Watchfield, Shrivenham, Oxfordshire 1998', *Oxoniensia*, lxvi (2002), 259.

[21] Brown, op. cit. (note 14), 192.

[22] P. Booth, 'The Iron Age Pottery', in C. Cropper and A. Hardy, 'The Excavation of Iron Age and Medieval Features at Glympton Park, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lxiii (1998), 105–7.

[23] Ibid.

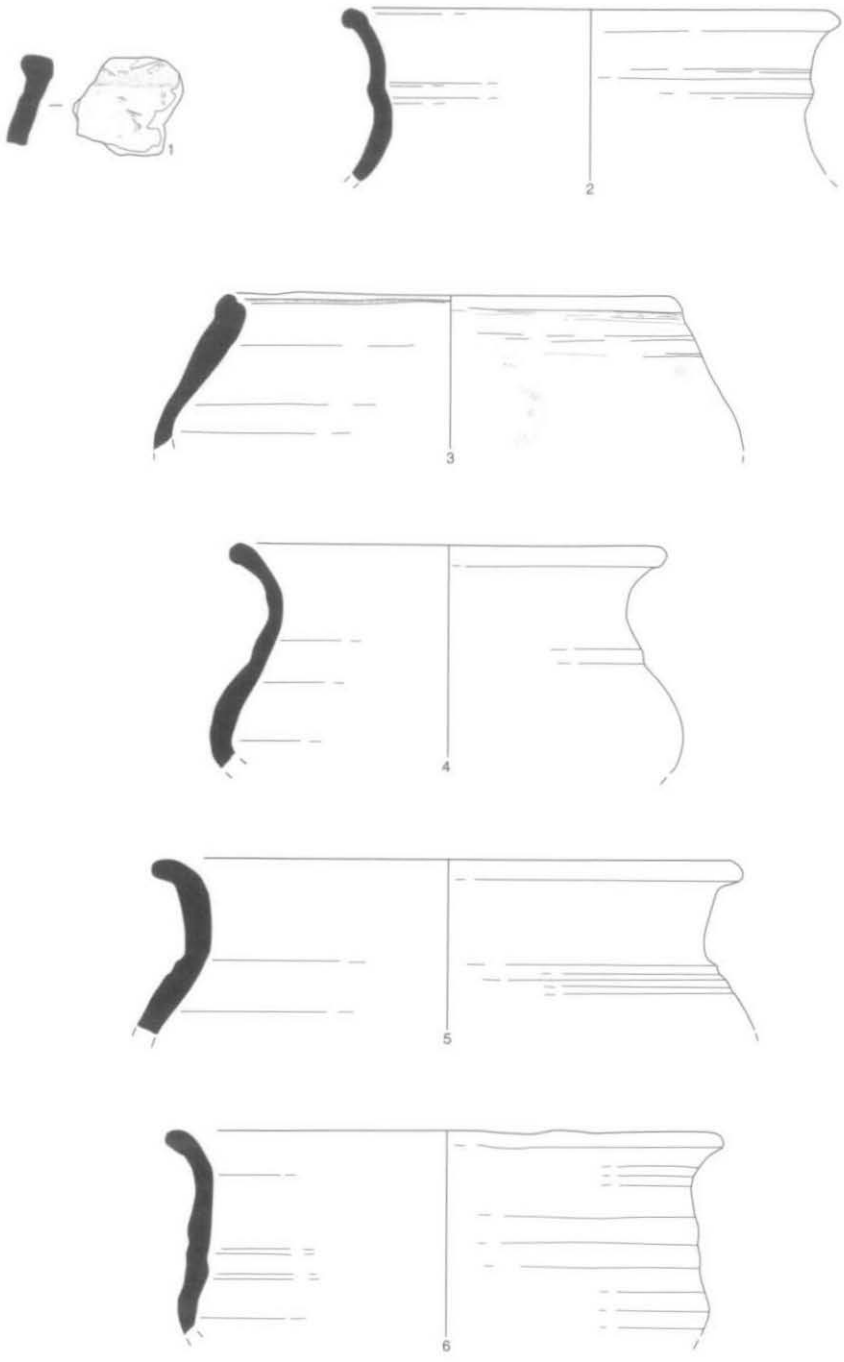

Fig. 11. Iron Age pottery.

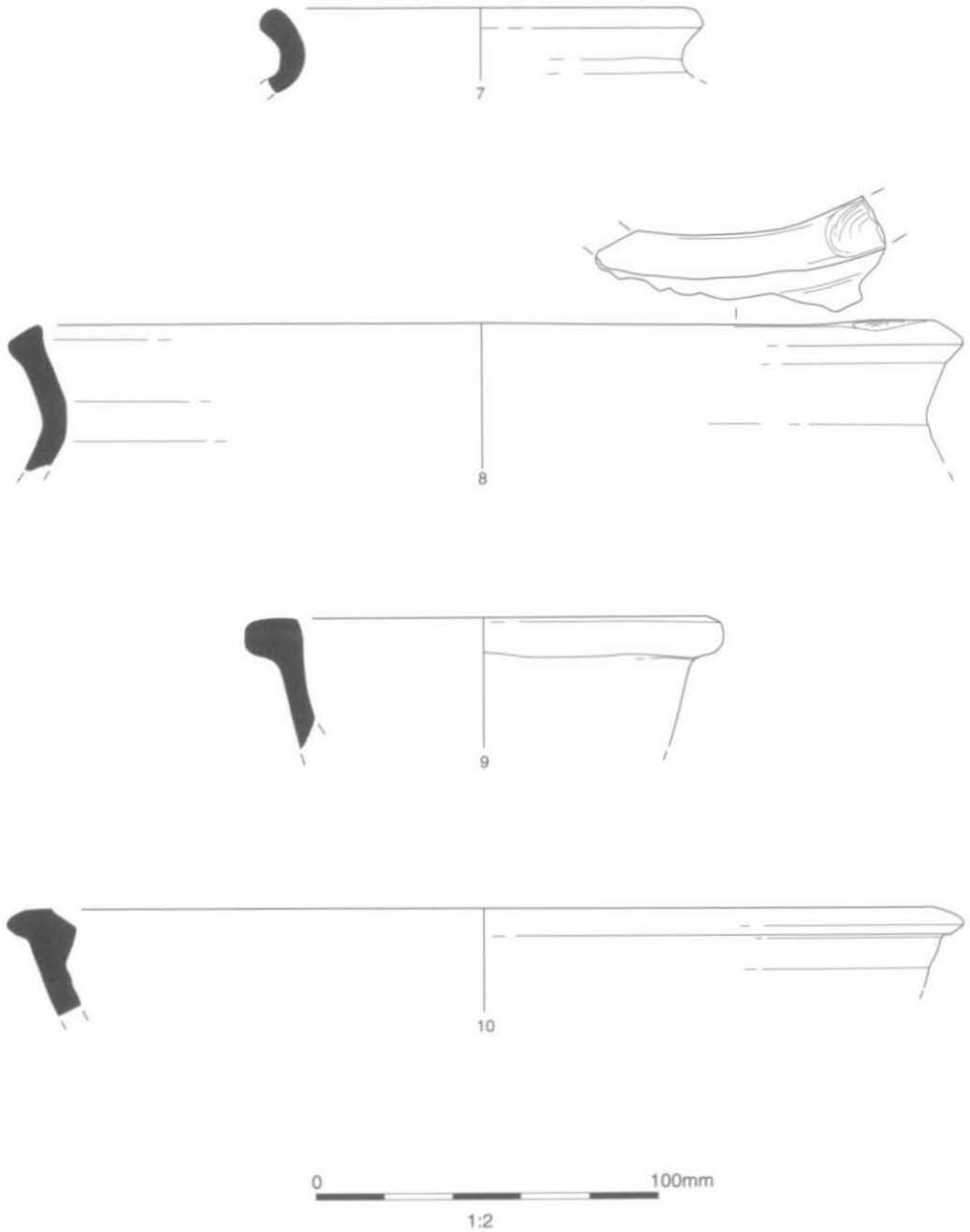

Fig. 12. Saxon pottery.

Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Fig. 11)

1. Fabric AP4, type CH bead-rimmed jar. Oxidised surfaces, dark core. Context 38.
2. Fabric E80, type HA carinated bowl. Oxidised surfaces, dark core. Context 38.
3. Fabric AS3, type CB barrel-shaped jar. Dark surfaces and core. Context 1083.
4. Fabric E80, type CD medium-mouthed jar. Dark surfaces and core. Context 1083.
5. Fabric E80, type CD medium-mouthed jar. Dark surfaces and core. Context 1083.
6. Fabric E80, type HD necked bowl. Dark surfaces and core. Context 570.

THE SAXON POTTERY by PAUL BLINKHORN

The pottery assemblage comprised 70 sherds with a total weight of 801 g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rim-sherd circumference, was 1.27. It is likely that all the pottery is late Saxon, and a case can be made for it all being of 10th-century date.

Fabric

The pottery was recorded utilising the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series,[24, 25] as follows:

OXR: St Neot's ware type T1(1), AD 850–1100. 66 sherds, 679 g., EVE = 0.85.

OXAC: Cotswolds-type ware, AD 975–1350. 4 sherds, 122 g., EVE = 0.42.

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*.

Discussion

The majority of this assemblage is late Saxon, with the range of vessel forms suggesting that most is of 10th-century date. Most of it comprises St Neot's ware (Oxford fabric OXR), which has a general date range of AD 850–1100. However, such pottery was analysed in detail by Denham,[26] with the result that she defined four different fabrics, each with a distinctive range of fabrics and forms. All the St Neot's ware from this site, small jars and hammer-headed bowls, fall into Denham's T1(1) and T1(3) types, which are given a chronology of AD 900–1100 and AD 900–1150 respectively.[27] Thus, all the features at this site which produced St Neot's ware only can be dated to the 10th century.

The presence of the Cotswolds-type ware (Oxford fabric OXAC) is, chronologically, a little more problematic. Finds of the material are known from Oxfordshire from as early as the late 9th century,[28] but in general, the material is rare in the county before the mid 11th century. Further to the west, at Winchcombe, it was the dominant pottery type by the early 11th century, and to the north, in Northamptonshire, it is known from the later 10th century, at sites such as West Cotton.[29] Thus, the features at this site, which produced sherds of OXAC, may date to the end of the 10th century, although an 11th-century date is entirely conceivable.

The complete lack of Banbury ware (Oxford fabric OX234) from the site indicates that occupation ended soon after the middle of the 11th century. Such material is ubiquitous on early medieval sites in and around the eponymous town,[30] so the fact that there is none from this site allows a latest possible end-date to be given to activity with some confidence. A case can be made for the end of the site being even earlier; Denham's T1(2) type St Neot's ware, dated to AD 1000–1200, is also entirely absent from the assemblage, despite being relatively common in the region. Thus, all the post-Roman occupation at this site may be entirely 10th century in date. Hopefully, further work will clarify this.

[24] M. Mellor, 'A Summary of the Key Assemblages: A Study of Pottery, Clay Pipes, Glass and Other Finds from Fourteen Pits, Dating from the 16th to the 19th Century', in T.G. Hassall et al., 'Excavations at St Ebbes', *Oxoniensia*, xlix (1984), 181–219.

[25] M. Mellor, 'Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of Middle and Late Saxon, Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, lviii (1994), 17–217.

[26] V. Denham, 'The Pottery', in J. H. Williams, M. Shaw and V. Denham, *Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton* (Northampton Development Corporation Monograph Series 4, 1985).

[27] Ibid. 54

[28] Mellor (1994), op. cit. (note 25), 51.

[29] P. Blinkhorn, 'The Post-Roman Pottery', in A. Chapman, *West Cotton: A Study in Settlement Dynamics: Excavations at West Cotton, Raunds, Northamptonshire, 1985–9* (English Heritage Monograph Series, in prep.).

[30] Mellor (1994), op. cit. (note 25), 80–4.

TABLE 4: POTTERY OCCURRENCE BY NUMBER AND WEIGHT (IN G.) OF SHERDS PER CONTEXT BY FABRIC TYPE

	OXR		*OXAC*		
Cntxt	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*Date*
1129			1	49	L10thC?
1149	4	17			10thC?
1156	42	196	3	73	L10thC?
1157	2	34			10thC?
1161	2	261			10thC?
1515	1	3			10thC?
1520	3	15			10thC?
1537	1	66			10thC?
1538	4	48			10thC?
1594	7	39			10thC?
Total	66	679	4	122	

Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Fig. 12)

7. St Neot's-type shelly fabric. Cooking pot. Context 1156.
8. Quartz-tempered Banbury ware. Cooking pot. Context 1156.
9. Dish in fabric of a West Oxfordshire tradition. Context 1156.
10. Dish in shelly limestone fabric. ?North-west Oxfordshire (Wychwood) ware. Context 1156.

THE POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

Post-medieval pottery amounted to four sherds, weighing 42 g. Three of the sherds were black-glazed red earthenware. A creamware sherd completed the assemblage. A 17th- to 19th-century date can be assigned to this small group.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE by WENDY CARRUTHERS

Methods

During the excavations soil samples were taken from 21 deposits for the recovery of environmental remains. Ten-litre sub-samples from these were processed using standard methods of flotation. A Siraf-type tank was used, fitted with 500-micron meshes for both the flots and residues. Following an initial assessment by Karen Deighton, the flots from 14 samples were sent to the author for assessment. Two residues (Samples 5 and 10) were also scanned as a check on the recovery of charred remains.

On the basis of the assessment, nine samples were selected for further soil processing and full analysis. Selection was made according to which samples came from the least contaminated and most securely dated contexts (Charlotte Stevens, pers. comm.), and whether the samples contained well-preserved charred plant remains.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of the analysis. Sample sizes are given at the bottom of the table. Nomenclature and most of the habitat information are taken from Stace.[31]

[31] C. Stace, *New Flora of the British Isles* (1997).

Notes on the state of preservation and contamination

The charred plant remains were reasonably well preserved, although the flots contained a lot of modern roots. Some of the samples (Samples 3, 12, 19) contained 'slaggy' fragments of material, and Sample 18 produced frequent 'glassy' remains indicative of high-temperature charring. The late Saxon / early medieval ditch sample, Sample 15, contained so many fragments of vacuolated bread-type wheat grains that they could not all be sorted and quantified. The quantity of grain recorded, therefore, is probably a gross underestimate of the original material preserved.

Three of the period 3 ditches, [592], [1081] and [1028], were originally thought to be Iron Age in date, but analysis of the plant remains suggested that the assemblages were more typical of a Saxon or later date. This is because the cereals were dominated by bread-type wheat, with only a trace of hulled wheat being present (one emmer/spelt rachis fragment and a few emmer/spelt wheat grains). Oats were also more frequent in one sample than might be expected. Radiocarbon dating was, therefore, carried out on a few grains of bread-type wheat (*Triticum aestivum*-type) from Sample 18. The results were as follows:

SURRC Lab code AA-54979 (GU-11007)

Radiocarbon Age BP 1035 + or – 35, i.e. late Saxon.

Discussion

Most of the securely dated samples came from lenses of dumped material from middle to late Iron Age enclosure ditches, particularly in Area 3. Five late Saxon / early medieval ditches (Areas 2, 3 and 4) were also productive.

Middle/late Iron Age. Two samples were examined from this phase (Samples 3 and 12), both of which came from ditches running roughly west to east, although they were at either end of the excavated area in two separate trenches. These samples produced some of the lowest concentrations of charred plant remains. A few cereal grains, chaff fragments and weed seeds were present in both samples, although the sample from Ditch [1507] was more productive than the one from Ditch [1016]. Bread-type wheat (*Triticum aestivum*-type), emmer/spelt wheat (*T. dicoccum/spelta*) and hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) were recorded. It is notable that bread-type wheat was the most frequent cereal recovered from Ditch [1507], and that wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) mericarps (one-seeded sections of the fruit that break off when the fruit is ripe) were particularly frequent. This weed of cultivated and disturbed soils is thought to have been introduced with cereal crops, rather than being a native species. It tends to be more frequent on acidic soils. Godwin lists a number of Roman sites that have produced this species, and in the author's experience this is far more commonly found in medieval assemblages than deposits of an earlier date.[32] However, small quantities of wild radish have been recovered from prehistoric sites in Devon (Gill Campbell, pers. comm.).

Late Iron Age phase 1. Ditch [1030] and Gully [1086] in Area 3 produced low concentrations of charred cereals, chaff fragments and weed seeds. The same cereals were represented as in the M/LIA samples, and in Ditch [1030] bread-type wheat was again slightly more frequent than emmer/spelt or barley. Wild radish mericarps were present in Gully [1086]. A couple of seeds of stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*) were recovered from these samples. This weed is characteristic of heavy, poorly drained soils. Although it has been recovered in small quantities from some Iron Age deposits (e.g. at Ashville, Abingdon[33]), it becomes far more frequent in the Roman period. Jones suggests that this reflects increased cultivation of heavier soils, as technological advances were made and pressures to raise productivity increased.[34] Bread wheat is well suited to heavy, clay soils, so the increase in stinking chamomile could be linked to the increased cultivation of this crop through the Iron Age and Roman periods.

Late Saxon/early medieval period. The samples from this period are considered separately since the three ditches in Areas 2 and 3 were originally thought to be Iron Age in date, and had no Anglo-Saxon or medieval pottery in them, while Ditches [1538] and [1158] both contained Saxon pottery.

[32] Sir H. Godwin, *History of the British Flora* (1975).

[33] M. Jones, 'The Plant Remains', in M. Parrington, *The Excavation of an Iron Age Settlement, Bronze Age Ring Ditches and Roman Features at Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (Oxfordshire) 1974–76* (C.B.A. Res. Rep. 28, 1978) 93–110.

[34] M. Jones 'The Development of Crop Husbandry', in M. Jones and G. Dimbleby, *The Environment of Man* (B.A.R. 87, 1981) 95–121.

These samples from Ditches [1081], [1028] and [592] were generally more productive than the Iron Age samples, particularly Sample 5 from Ditch 1081 (19.9 fragments per litre). All three samples were dominated by bread-type wheat grains, which amounted to an average of 72% of the identifiable grains. The percentage was lower in Sample 5 because 27% of the grains were identified as oats (*Avena* sp.). Although these could not be identified beyond 'wild/cultivated oat grains', the large quantity and large size of many of the grains suggest that these represent a crop plant rather than a serious weed infestation. Oats are fairly common in Saxon deposits, particularly in areas where soils are poor and acidic, and where rainfall is high, such as south-west England and Wales. They may have been grown on the clay soils along the River Cherwell and to the north of Banbury. Oats are a valuable fodder crop, especially for draft animals, since they provide high levels of energy.

Another useful fodder crop, hulled barley, was present in all of the samples from Banbury, but often only in low levels. This pattern is common on sites of many periods, possibly due to the widespread use of barley as a fodder crop. At the Middle Saxon settlement at West Heslerton, Yorkshire (Carruthers & Hunter, in preparation) barley was ubiquitous, and it was thought this may have been because it had been used for a wide variety of purposes, in addition to being a major fodder crop. Barley produces the best type of straw for bedding, being softer and more absorbent than those produced by other cereals.

A couple of poorly preserved, possible rye grains (cf. *Secale cereale*) were present in one of the phase 2 samples, providing tentative evidence that this had been another minor crop. Rye is often found in small quantities on Saxon sites, and is another crop that is useful on poor, acidic soils.

A few emmer/spelt grains and a chaff fragment were present in the late Saxon and late Saxon / early medieval phased samples. It is unlikely that hulled wheats had continued to be cultivated into the Saxon and medieval periods, although late records are sometimes found on other sites (e.g. 15th-century Brough Saint Giles, North Yorkshire[35]). These remains are more likely to be residual, resulting from the reworking of Iron Age deposits in the area.

One further cultivated crop plant of note is cultivated flax (*Linum usitatissimum*). A single charred seed of cultivated flax was recovered from Ditch [1081] (Sample 5). Although remains from this oil and fibre plant have been recorded as far back as the Neolithic,[36] flax is predominantly recovered from Saxon deposits, particularly from sites close to watercourses. Because of its small root run, flax needs damp soils to grow well. It is frequently found in waterlogged deposits such as streams and ditches, since these were often used for 'retting', the method used to extract the bast fibres from the stems.

Two further samples, from Gully [1538] (Area 4) and Ditch [1158] (Area 3), were also examined. They produced large numbers of cereal grains, with some chaff and weed seeds. The concentrations of remains were much higher than the earlier samples (33.2 and 29.2 fpl), as is often found to be the case for more recent deposits.

The principal component of the assemblages was bread-type wheat, although hulled barley, oats and a little rye were also present. The average ratio of wheat : barley : oats : rye grain was 63 : 17 : 7 : 1. As noted above, three emmer/spelt grains were recorded, but these were probably residual rather than representing a relict crop. It was not possible to determine whether rivet-type free-threshing wheat was present, as the rachis fragments were too poorly preserved to identify them to species level.[37] Although grains cannot be identified with certainty to species level,[38] their morphology was generally more typical of bread-type wheat than rivet-type wheat. Bread-type wheat is usually the predominant cereal recovered from the Saxon and medieval periods, although rivet-type wheat is increasingly being recorded from medieval sites in central and southern England.[39]

Two possible additional crops were recorded: Celtic bean (*Vicia faba* var. *minor*) and cf. pea (cf. *Pisum sativum*). Both of these remains were recovered from Gully [1538]. Legumes became much more important in the diet during the Saxon period, although it is only through examining mineralised faecal assemblages that the true extent of this is revealed. Charring does not favour legumes, as processing peas and beans does not involve contact with fire, and peas are often too poorly preserved to be identified with certainty. However, the examination of faecal deposits from middle Saxon cess pits in Hamwic (St Mary's Stadium, Southampton)

[35] J. Huntley, 'Carbonised Seeds and Pollen' in P. Cardwell, 'Excavation of the Hospital of St Giles by Brompton Bridge, North Yorkshire', *Archaeol. Jnl.* 152 (1996) 225–33.

[36] H. Helbaek, 'Early Crops in Southern England', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 18, 194–223.

[37] L. Moffett, 'The Archaeobotanical Evidence for Free-Threshing Tetraploid Wheat In Britain', in Ing. Eva Hajnalov (ed), *Palaeoethnobotany & Archaeology* (Acta Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica VII, Nitra, 1991) 233–43.

[38] S. Jacomet, *Prehistorische Getreidefunde* (Botanisches Institute der Universitat Abteilung Pflanzensystematik und Geobotanik, Basel, 1987).

[39] Moffett (1991), op. cit. (note 37).

has shown that legumes were present in 80% of the samples and frequent in over 60% of them.[40] Thus, although only two charred legumes were present in the samples from Banbury, they may have been an important element of the diet. Legumes are rich in protein and their root nodules may have nitrogen-fixing properties that can help to restore fertility to poor soils.

The diversity of weed taxa was greater in these two samples, although the additional taxa (e.g. common hemp-nettle; *Galeopsis tetrahit*) were too general in their habitat preferences to provide information about the types of soils cultivated. Stinking chamomile seeds were particularly frequent in the sample from Ditch [1158], and a sedge (*Carex* sp.) nutlet was present in Sample 13 from Gully [1538]. These remains suggest that heavy, damp clay soils were still being cultivated during this period. Since seasonally waterlogged, clay soils are widespread around Banbury, the cereals are likely to have been grown locally.

Conclusions

Because only small quantities of charred plant remains were recovered from the Iron Age ditches, it is difficult to tell whether or not the relatively high proportions of naked wheat to hulled wheat remains is significant. Increased cultivation of bread-type wheat in comparison with other Iron Age sites could indicate a higher status or more advanced economy, since bread wheats gradually replaced hulled wheats through the late Iron Age and Roman periods. However, on most sites hulled wheats were still the predominant crop until the end of the Roman period. Further work needs to be done in the area to answer this question and to rule out the possibility of contamination.

The late Saxon to early medieval samples produced higher concentrations of remains that were probably derived from mixed domestic waste and crop-processing waste, since both cereal grains and weed seeds were quite frequent. The presence of all four cereals (wheat, barley, oats and rye) and the dominance of free-threshing wheat are fairly typical of the period in an area where good quality, free-draining calcareous soils are readily available. Oats and rye may have been grown on the poorer, more clayey soils in the river valleys. Flax would also have been better suited to the wetter soils. Peas and beans may have been grown as garden plants, or could have been used as a field crop to help to improve the poorer soils.

Radiocardon date

An AMS radiocarbon date was taken of charred bread-type wheat from Ditch [1081] because of doubts about its age, due to substantial amounts of Iron Age pottery. It was sent to Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre. The results were as shown below.

Laboratory code-	AA-5479(GU-11007) (AA coding indicates sample was measured at the University of Arizona AMS facility.)
Delta ^{13}C rel. PDB-	-22.4%
Radiocarbon age BP-	1035 ±35

The age is quoted in conventional years BP (before AD 1950). The error is expressed at one sigma level of confidence.

OTHER FINDS

Other finds included part of the top half of a rotary quern from period 1 Gully [506] and fragments of probable kiln bars from Fills (1082) and (1083) of Feature [1086].

DISCUSSION

The settlement at Banbury during the Iron Age was intensive, but short-lived. Its origins were based in the second half of the 1st century BC, and it was abandoned by the mid 1st century AD. Although several phases were identified, the development of the site was

[40] W. Carruthers, 'The Mineralised Plant Remains', in R. Smith, *St Mary's Stadium, Britannia Road, Southampton* (Wessex Arch. In prep.).

probably more fluid than these suggest and probably represents organic modifications by subsequent generations of the same family unit engaged in the normal agricultural and craft activities practised on such a small, shifting settlement.

It would seem, from the quality of the material evidence, that this site was probably not of a very high status. Although the faunal evidence was poor, it was primarily agricultural in nature. The presence of the kiln furniture and possible kiln is of potential importance as there is very little evidence for pottery kilns of this period, since they appear to have been largely surface-built structures. The pottery produced was inherently local in nature, probably never travelling more than a few miles from where it was made. The type of 1A or 1B kiln, most akin to the possible example at Jugglers Close, is thought to have been of an early type during the 1st century AD.[41]

While not enclosed in the strictest sense, neither was the Jugglers Close settlement open. It probably functioned more as a settlement imposed upon pre-existing field systems. This type of site appears to become more common in the late Iron Age, a transformation from the more 'traditional' enclosed settlement commonly seen in the region during the middle Iron Age.

The initial origins of the settlement may have been allied with the agricultural changes occurring at this point in many parts of Britain. These changes were evidenced by the expansion on to the heavier clay soils such as at Jugglers Close, but seen also in Northamptonshire and elsewhere. A number of factors that induced this expansion have been put forward and include population expansion and increased infertility of the lighter upland soils due to over-cultivation. The presence of bread wheat in relatively large quantities is unusual, but it is known that towards the end of the Iron Age this type of grain becomes more popular due to the fact that it grows well on heavy clay soils.[42] However, it has so far only been found in quantity at Bierton, Buckinghamshire, and Barton Court Farm, Oxfordshire,[43] and so may be a regional specialisation rather than representing a general change.

Although the absence of Roman pottery on site might indicate that the site was abandoned prior to the Conquest it is not conclusive proof, as pottery types did not change immediately. Furthermore, there is no direct evidence to suggest that the invasion and subsequent Conquest were actually factors causing the site to be abandoned. It may be that at this time these disparate, family-based settlements were reorganised by the Roman administration into larger, nucleated communities. Certainly there is an abundance of Roman activity in the area, including a variety of settlements in the adjacent parishes, particularly at Thenford, where there is also a villa, and Marston St Lawrence in Northamptonshire. A number of minor roads are believed to have existed in the vicinity; at least one is thought to have crossed the River Cherwell at Twyford to the south.[44]

Such abandonment of Iron Age sites at this time, although rare, has been attested elsewhere in the region, including at Old Shifford Farm, Bicester,[45] and at Bicester Fields Farm, Bicester.[46] These sites, although somewhat different in character to Jugglers Close, do

41 Woods (1974), op. cit. (note 9), 278–9.
42 B. Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain* (1991).
43 Ibid.
44 Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire* (1982), 178–9.
45 Hey, op. cit. (note 6), 171.
46 Cromarty, Foreman and Murray, op. cit. (note 14), 224–5.

have similarities. Both sites had evidence of field systems, comprising adjoining rectilinear enclosures over a relatively small area. It was suggested that the enclosures, forming small, coherent units, might also have included surrounding larger open areas that left little archaeological trace.

The notion of 'infield' and 'outfield' land, known from later periods, may have been utilised here, where the enclosed 'infield' land was used for birthing, cultivation and winter fodder production in the spring and summer (thus the presence of the circular structures) and for winter grazing. The 'outfield' land would have been used for summer grazing.[47]

Any summer grazing may well have taken place to the west of the site, on the flood plain of the River Cherwell. This land has traditionally been pasture and meadowland, while the land to the east was arable,[48] and this may also have been the case in the Iron Age. The settlement at Banbury may thus have been positioned on the boundary between pasture and arable land.

The late Saxon/early medieval activity was characterised by a series of ditches found across the site and appearing to form square or rectangular enclosures. No remains of structures were found, although the degree of truncation on the site may have destroyed any evidence. This activity may relate to similar features found during the construction of Hennef Way,[49] and although no direct evidence of occupation has so far been found, the amount of pottery recovered suggests that it was nearby.

Like the Iron Age settlement, the Saxon ditches may well be related to substantial population growth and expansion of settlement from AD 850 onwards and may form part of a substantial field system.[50] It appears from the environmental evidence from the ditches at this point that the settlement may have been placed to take advantage of the damp, clay soils of the river valley to grow crops such as flax, oats and rye, while the wheat may have grown on the freer draining soils to the east.[51]

It has been suggested that the settlement of *Grimberie* appears to have been rather small and dispersed, and the evidence from both this excavation and the one prior to the construction of Hennef Way would tend to support the notion of a non-nucleated settlement.[52]

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47 Cromarty, Foreman and Murray, op. cit. (note 14), 228.
48 Allen (1989), op. cit. (note 1), 28.
49 Allen (1989), op. cit. (note 1).
50 C. Lewis, *An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda for the Medieval Period in the East Midlands (850–1500)* (East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework, unpublished draft).
51 M. Welch, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1993), 70–5.
52 J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (1994), 144.