

Bronze-Age Activity and Roman Settlement at Abingdon Road, Drayton

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SUMMARY

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology (CA) in 2015 on land to the west of Abingdon Road, Drayton, following geophysical survey and evaluation. Excavation confirmed the results of earlier fieldwork, and identified two principal phases of activity, comprising middle Bronze-Age ditches and a late Iron-Age/Roman enclosed farmstead. A principal enclosure ditch, originally of Bronze-Age date, appeared to partly delineate an isolated area of gravel alluvium, and may have provided drainage. This ditch was recut in the late Iron Age or early Roman period, and was subsequently integrated into a complex scheme of ditched enclosures. The dating of the pottery assemblage recovered within the excavated area indicated that this part of the site was occupied for a limited period, between the mid first and mid second centuries AD, although pottery of later Roman date was recovered from the evaluation, and has been recorded elsewhere beyond the excavated area. The extent and form of the enclosed settlement has been confirmed by the results of more recent geophysical survey. A penannular gully, representing an Iron-Age or early Roman roundhouse of c.15 metres diameter, was recorded within the northern corner of the excavated area, and evidence of a smaller structure was recorded nearby.

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September and October 2015 on land west of Abingdon Road, Drayton, prior to a residential development (Fig. 1). The excavated area was situated within arable fields to the north of the village of Drayton, Oxfordshire, at NGR SU 4771 9500, and at an elevation of approximately 60–64 metres above Ordnance Datum (OD). Abingdon Road (B4017), and associated housing, is situated to the south-east, and a trackway, with arable fields and housing, to the south-west. The superficial geology of the Site comprises alluvial sands and gravels, overlaying the solid geology of Ampthill Clay, of Jurassic date.

Previous evaluation of the site identified evidence of a possible Bronze-Age un-urned cremation burial and ditches, together with enclosure ditches of late Iron-Age and Roman date, together with evidence of occupation during these periods.¹ An earthwork mound, which had been previously identified as a barrow, was also evaluated, and suggested to be of relatively recent date. Within the area excavated, the pottery evidence indicated a limited chronology for late Iron-Age and early Roman settlement. On the basis of these findings and the results of an earlier geophysical survey, the local authority archaeological advisor recommended that excavation be targeted within that part of the site which displayed a

¹ 'Land at Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire: Evaluation Report', unpublished CA report, no. 15199 (2015).

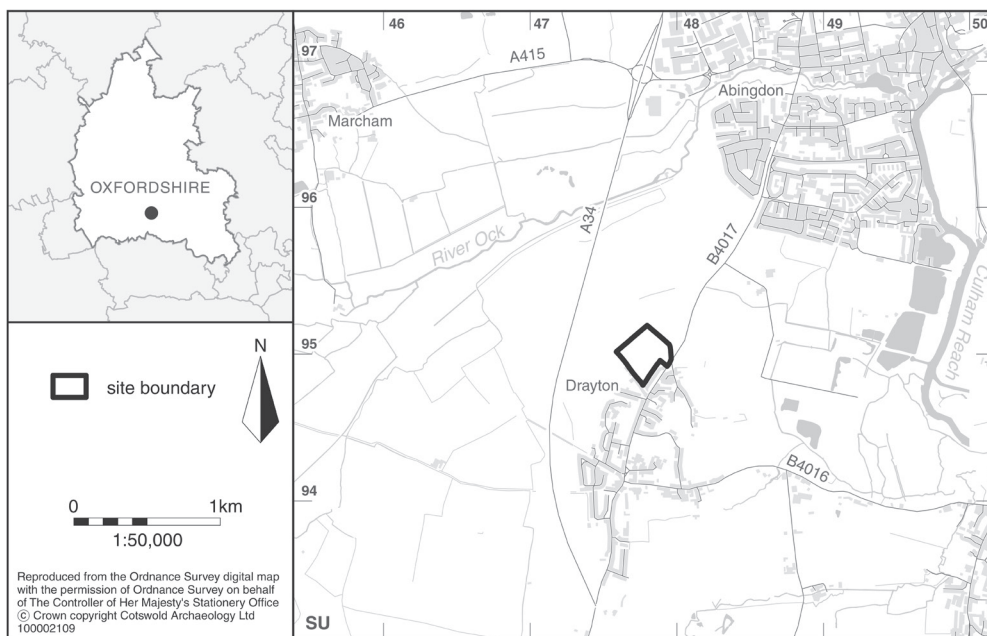


Fig. 1. Site location plan (1:50,000).

significant concentration of archaeological features, and which represented the proposed development footprint.² This confined investigations to a limited area of 0.6 hectares within the north-western margins of the site. Development proposals enabled all other contiguous features immediately to the north-east, including the 'barrow', to be preserved in situ, under the terms of a Section 106 agreement, within an extensive open area of proposed sports pitches and play areas (Fig. 2). In view of the minimally intrusive nature of ground works proposed for this open area, it was decided that no further investigation would be required. This report presents a description of the stratigraphy, archaeological features, finds and ecofactual record recovered from the excavation, in conjunction with the results of the earlier evaluation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Evidence of earlier prehistoric activity within the environs of the site principally comprises individual findspots of worked flint of Mesolithic and Neolithic date, comparable to those within the wider Thames valley region.³ A number of important Neolithic ceremonial monuments, including the Abingdon Causewayed Enclosure and the Drayton cursus, are located within the wider environs of the site.

The remains of a number of Bronze-Age barrows have been identified as cropmarks close to the Abingdon Road site, including possible examples located approximately 500 metres to the east, to the east of Sherwood Farm. The location of these, and other examples, may reflect the proximity of the Drayton cursus, the northern section of which is situated 1.2 km to the east of

² 'Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire, Geophysical Survey', unpublished ArchaeoPhysica Ltd report (2014).

³ HER, PRNs 9071, 15585.

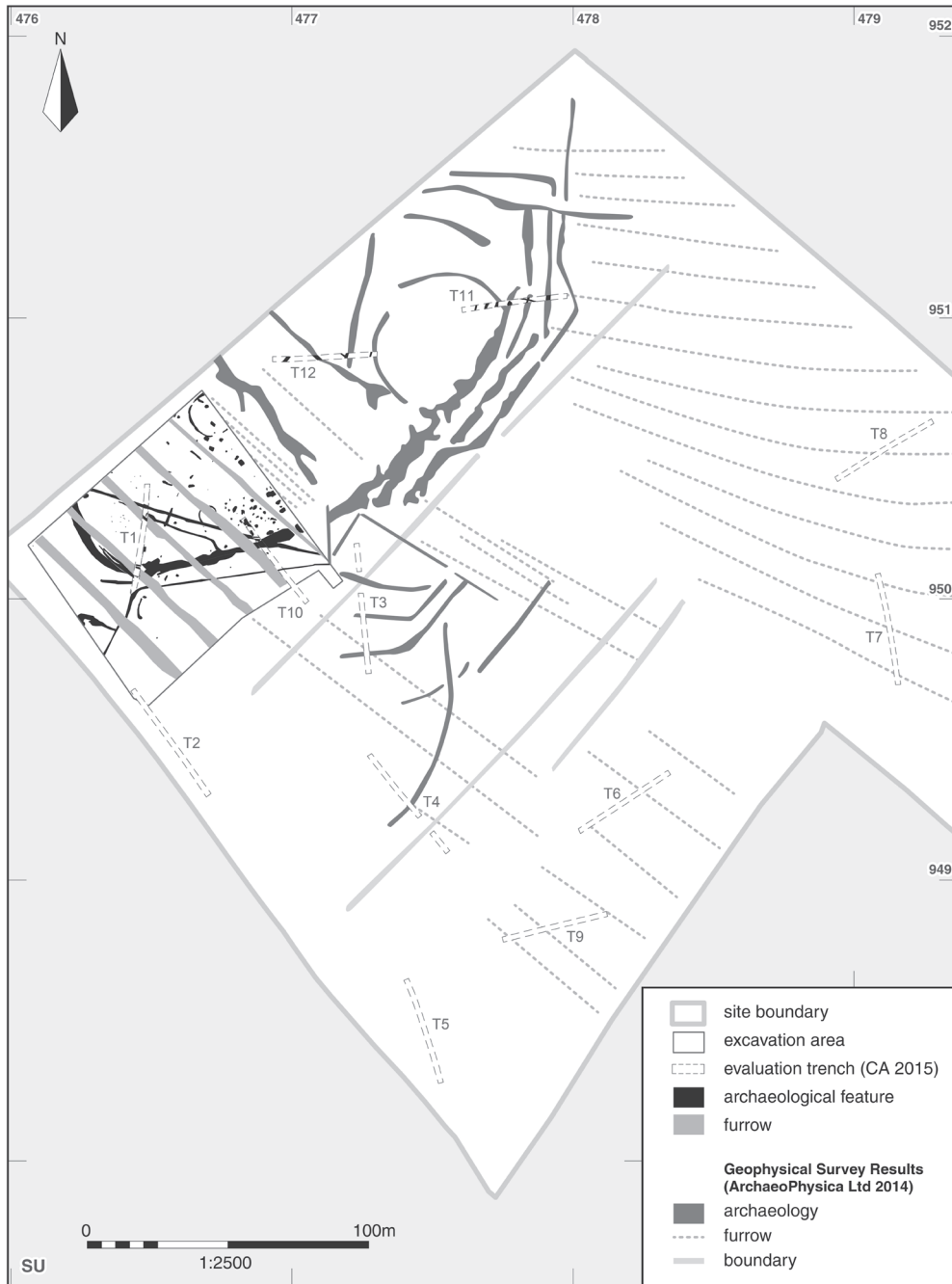


Fig. 2. The site, showing features identified by geophysical survey, evaluation trenches, and the excavation area (1:2,500).

the Abingdon Road site.⁴ A further suggested barrow appears to be associated with the Drayton cursus itself, and other recorded cropmark features have been recorded to the south and west of Drayton village, including a significant group of ring ditches at Garford.⁵ Evidence for arable cultivation of Roman date was revealed during investigation of the cursus monument, which was overlain by early Roman fields associated with a contemporary settlement to the north.⁶ The Abingdon Road site is situated within an extensive settlement landscape of late prehistoric and Roman date, which is attested by a rich record of excavation, cropmark evidence and surface finds. A number of known enclosed settlements within a 1–2 km radius of this site appear to be contemporary with it.⁷

The excavated area was contiguous with a complex of ditched enclosures and boundaries identified by geophysical survey which, by direct association, have been dated to the late Iron-Age/early Roman period.⁸ Excavation has confirmed the existence of an enclosed settlement, with associated land boundaries (Figs. 2 and 3).

Roman pottery of first-, second- and fourth-century date has previously been recorded by fieldwalking and limited investigation in the north-east part of the site, beyond the excavated area.⁹ A Roman trackway and ditch, together with a number of undated cremation burials, have also been identified further to the east.¹⁰ The Abingdon Road site comprises part of an extensive later Iron-Age and Roman settlement landscape which extended across the eastern zone of the Vale of the White Horse,¹¹ and may have been focussed on a major late Iron-Age and early Roman centre located at the confluence of the Rivers Ock and Thames.¹² This suggested ‘nucleated oppidum’ was defined by major ditches running between the two rivers, with a dense pattern of internal occupation and activity, which continued well into the Roman period.¹³ The Abingdon Road, Drayton site is therefore closely contemporary with a number of investigated sites within and around Abingdon, including Barton Court Farm,¹⁴ Ashville Trading Estate,¹⁵ and Abingdon Vineyard.¹⁶ The area between the Thames/Ock confluence at Abingdon and the Thames/Thame confluence at Dorchester is also associated with a notable concentration of early and middle Anglo-Saxon sites, including a large group of sunken-floored buildings excavated by Leeds in the 1920s and 1930s. Cropmarks representing a group of large timber halls, of probable middle Saxon date, are located within a field slightly to the

⁴ A.J. Barclay et al., *Lines in the Landscape: Cursus Monuments in the Upper Thames Valley*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 15 (2003).

⁵ HER, PRN 12138.

⁶ G. Lambrick, ‘The Development of Prehistoric and Roman Farming on the Thames Gravels’, in M. Fulford and E. Nichols (eds.) *Developing Landscapes of Roman Britain. The Archaeology of the British Gravels: A Review*, Society of Antiquaries of London Occasional Paper, 14 (1992), pp. 98–9.

⁷ HER, PRNs 15290, 26433, 26430.

⁸ ‘Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire Geophysical Survey’; ‘Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon.’, unpublished Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics report (2016).

⁹ ‘Drayton Barrow’, unpublished Abingdon West Area Archaeological and Historical Society report (1997); R. Ainslie, ‘Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon.’, *SMidLA*, 45 (2015), p. 57.

¹⁰ HER, PRN 31224.

¹¹ C.M. Hearne, ‘Archaeological Evaluation in the Vale of the White Horse, near Abingdon, 1992–99’, *Oxoniensia*, 65 (2000), pp. 7–12, fig. 1; J. Hart et al., ‘The Archaeology of the Cleeve to Fyfield Water Main, South Oxfordshire: Excavations in 2006–7’, *Oxoniensia*, 77 (2012), pp. 219–24.

¹² T.G. Allen, ‘An ‘Oppidum’ at Abingdon, Oxfordshire’, *SMidLA*, 21 (1991), pp. 97–9; idem, ‘Abingdon, Abingdon Vineyard 1992: Areas 2 and 3, The Early Defences’, *SMidLA*, 23 (1993), pp. 64–6.

¹³ K. Brady et al., ‘Excavation at Abingdon West Central Redevelopment. Iron-Age, Roman, Medieval, and Post-Medieval Activity in Abingdon’, *Oxoniensia*, 72 (2007), pp. 111 (fig. 3), 113 (fig. 5), 114–15, 141; T.G. Allen, ‘Abingdon: West Central Redevelopment Area’, *SMidLA*, 27 (1997), pp. 47–54.

¹⁴ D. Miles (ed.), *Archaeology at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, Oxon.: An Investigation into the Late Neolithic, Iron-Age, Roman and Saxon Settlements*, CBA Research Report, 50 (1986).

¹⁵ M. Parrington, *The Excavation of an Iron-Age Settlement, Bronze-Age Ring Ditches and Roman Features at Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (Oxfordshire), 1974–76*, CBA Research Report, 28 (1979).

¹⁶ Cf. R. Devaney, ‘The Excavation of Iron-Age, Roman, Medieval and Civil War Features South of the Vineyard, Abingdon, Oxfordshire’, *Oxoniensia*, 72 (2007), pp. 78–9.



Fig. 3. Results of 2015 geophysical survey, mapped onto a modern aerial photographic image (copyright Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics; approximate scale 1:5,000).

south, and within the northern section of the Drayton cursus.¹⁷ These are located some 1.3 km to the east of the Abingdon Road site.

Geophysical survey and excavation has also identified the ploughed-out remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation on the Abingdon Road site, although there was otherwise no evidence of early medieval or medieval occupation within, or immediately surrounding, the site.

¹⁷ E.T. Leeds, 'A Saxon Village near Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire', *Archaeologia*, 73 (1923), pp. 147–92; idem, 'A Saxon Village at Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire, Second Report', *Archaeologia*, 76 (1926–7), pp. 59–80; P. Booth et al., *The Thames Through Time: The Early Historical Period: AD 1–1000*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 27 (2007), pp. 91, 94, fig. 3.26.

EXCAVATION METHODS

The fieldwork strategy outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation was set out with reference to the period summaries in the Solent-Thames Research Framework, and with the brief provided by the Oxfordshire County Archaeologist.¹⁸ The location of the excavation area was informed by the results of the archaeological evaluation, and the primary aim of the fieldwork was to identify and record any significant archaeological features or deposits which could be affected by the development, particularly with regard to later prehistoric and Roman remains and any putative relationship with the suggested barrow monument. An excavation area of 0.6 hectares was set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates, using Leica GPS. Fieldwork commenced with the removal, under archaeological supervision, of topsoil and subsoil from the excavation area by mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. The archaeological features thus exposed were hand-excavated to the bottom of the archaeological sequence. Deposits were assessed for their environmental potential, and five features which were considered to have potential for characterising earlier phases of activity were sampled.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Earlier Prehistoric

A small assemblage, totalling 27 items of worked flint, almost all of which was redeposited, was recovered from evaluation and excavation stages. This is broadly indicative of transient activity during the Neolithic and early Bronze-Age periods, and is complemented by a number of recorded surface finds in the locality.¹⁹

Bronze-Age

Evidence for Bronze-Age activity was identified at evaluation stage by a miniature bipartite collared urn, which was found within a possible cremation pit (1106) in evaluation trench 11, to the east of the excavated area (Fig. 10, P1). The collared urn accompanied a deposit of poorly-preserved burnt bone within pit 1106 of the evaluation, and was originally thought to represent an offering accompanying an otherwise un-urned cremation burial.²⁰ However, following assessment it was determined that the poor levels of preservation in this case precluded any identification of this bone as human, and it could not therefore be established whether the collared urn actually contained cremated human bone, or was simply part of a votive offering which included animal and organic remains. In view of the almost exclusively funerary associations of the collared urn series, it appears highly likely that Pit 1106 represents a cremation burial. The limited extent of excavation in this case invites speculation as to whether this possible cremation burial may in fact have comprised part of a larger contemporary group. A considerable proportion of the middle Bronze-Age cremation burials recorded within the upper Thames region have been associated with artefacts, including pottery and flint-work, although the majority of these are not well dated. Evidence elsewhere in the region, most notably at Yarnton,²¹ suggests that individual pits containing cremation burials are likely to be distributed at various points within the near environs of settlement, or individually, in

¹⁸ Cotswold Archaeology, 'Written Scheme of Investigation for Excavation at Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire' (2015); G. Hey and J. Hind (eds.), *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas* (2014).

¹⁹ HER, PRNs MOX8840, MOX8841, MOX8837.

²⁰ 'Land at Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire, Evaluation Report'.

²¹ G. Hey et al., *Yarnton: Neolithic and Bronze-Age Settlement and Landscape*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 39 (2017).

relation to land boundaries.²² The relationship with the possibly contemporary ditch 5 may be significant in this respect, and may indicate that this ditch was recognised primarily as an important boundary feature, in addition to one which simply facilitated drainage within a low-lying area adjacent to the river floodplain.

Palaeoenvironmental evidence suggests that the upper Thames floodplain was not subject to extensive flooding throughout the Bronze Age, and may have had a lower water-table than in succeeding periods.²³ This supports a wider body of evidence suggesting the rapid spread of settlement forms and cultivation during this period, as evidenced at Yarnton, amongst a number of investigated sites.²⁴ On a number of these sites, evidence for a rising water table, and significant accumulation of clay alluvial soils, is present from the end of the Bronze Age, with seasonal inundation of some parts of the upper Thames floodplain apparent by the middle Iron Age.²⁵

The earliest phase of archaeological activity on site comprised a curvilinear enclosure ditch, ditch 5 (Figs. 4 and 5), which together with two possibly associated linear features, ditches 8 and 9 (Figs. 4 and 6), may have comprised part of the same broad scheme of Bronze-Age enclosure, although ditch 9 was clearly stratigraphically later than ditch 5. No trace of a bank associated with ditch 5 was confirmed by excavation, and it is therefore possible that this feature may originally have a primary function as a drainage ditch, which demarcated an 'island' of relatively dry gravel alluvium from the surrounding clay geology of the floodplain. Very limited dating evidence was recovered from ditch 5, suggesting that it was regularly cleaned or recut during the original period of occupation.

Middle Bronze-Age ditch 9 (Figs. 4 and 6) ran parallel to the western section of the larger enclosure ditch 5, although its precise relationship with the latter is unclear, as evidence of any stratigraphic relationship between the two features has been truncated by a later medieval furrow. It is possible, however, that ditch 9 may represent a later phase of enclosure or land division. A short, twelve metre-long section of the middle to late Bronze-Age ditch 8 ran in an east-west direction, and may originally have merged, at a point slightly to the north-east, with the larger Bronze-Age ditch 6. However, any evidence of a stratigraphic relationship between these two features had been removed by a medieval furrow, and ditch 8 was not identified within trench 1 of the evaluation. This feature may plausibly represent a westward extension of ditch 5 that was later abandoned. More recent geophysical survey suggests that some elements of the scheme of Bronze-Age ditches were partly overlain or cut by late Iron-Age/early Roman enclosure ditches, and while ditches 5 and 6 were recut at this time, as ditches 10 and 11 respectively, other earlier features are likely to have been either deliberately infilled, or become naturally silted (Fig. 3).²⁶

The middle and late Bronze-Age periods throughout the upper Thames valley are elsewhere characterised by evidence of agricultural intensification and ongoing clearance. Interstitial areas of woodland are known to have existed, as at Shorcote Quarry (Glos.), and the sparse charcoal evidence from this site suggests at least some local availability of woodland resources.²⁷ Evidence elsewhere, including at Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt, indicates extensive land clearance by the end of the second millennium BC, both within the main river

²² G. Lambrick with M. Robinson, *The Thames Through Time: Late Prehistory: 1500 BC–AD 50*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 29 (2009), pp. 306–7.

²³ M. Robinson, 'Waterlogged Macroscopic Plant and Insect Remains', in A. Brossler et al., 'Shorcote Quarry: Excavations of a Late Prehistoric Landscape in the Upper Thames, 1997 and 1998', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 120 (2002), pp. 94–8.

²⁴ Hey et al., *Yarnton: Iron-Age and Romano-British Settlement and Landscape*.

²⁵ Lambrick with Robinson, *The Thames Through Time: Late Prehistory*, pp. 22–3, 31; M. Robinson, 'Environmental Archaeology on the River Gravels: Past Achievements and Future Directions', in Fulford and Nichols (eds.), *Developing Landscapes of Roman Britain*, p. 55.

²⁶ 'Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon.' [2016].

²⁷ Robinson, 'Waterlogged Macroscopic Plant and Insect Remains', pp. 74–8.

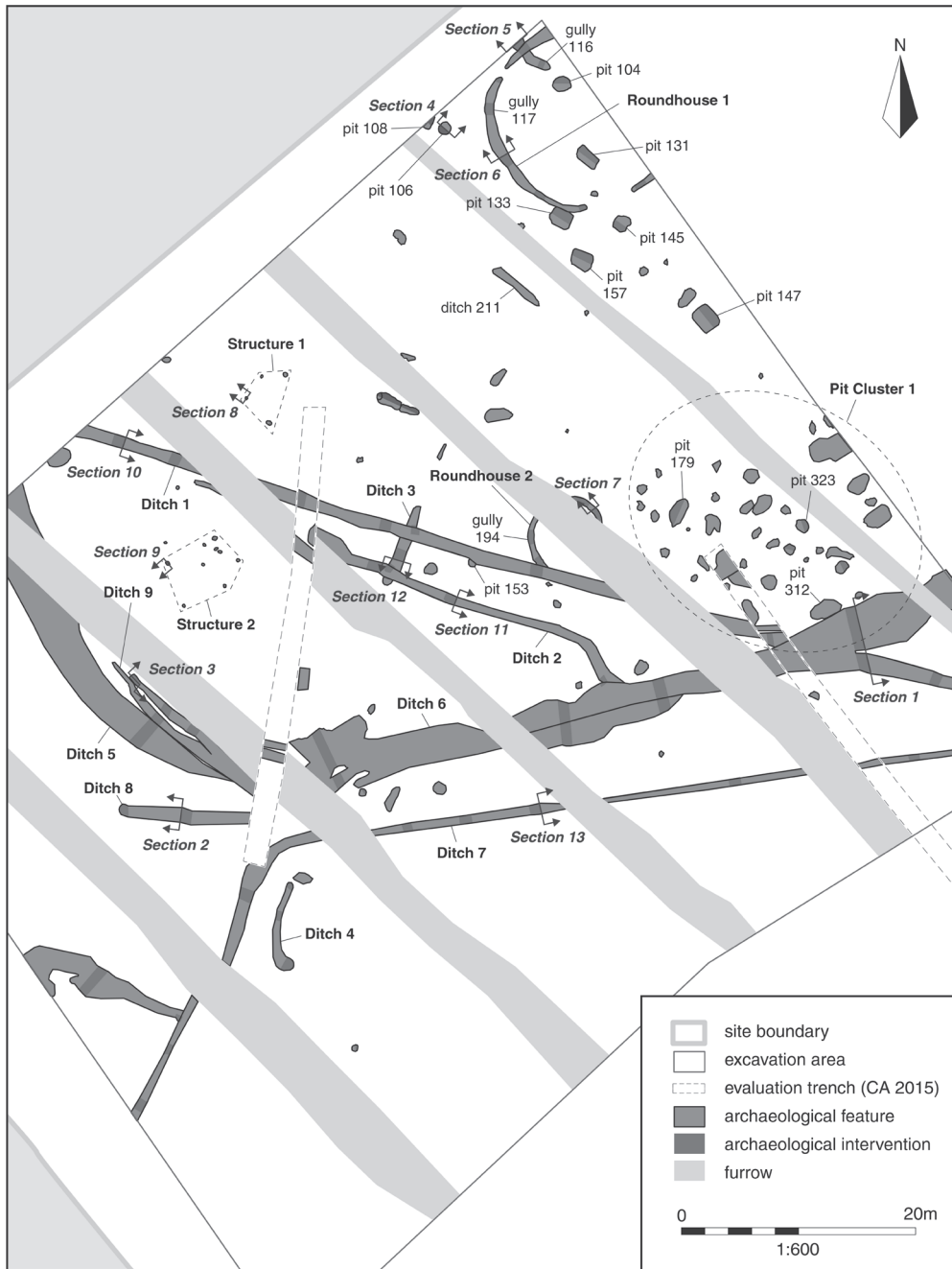


Fig. 4. The excavation area, showing recorded features (1:600).

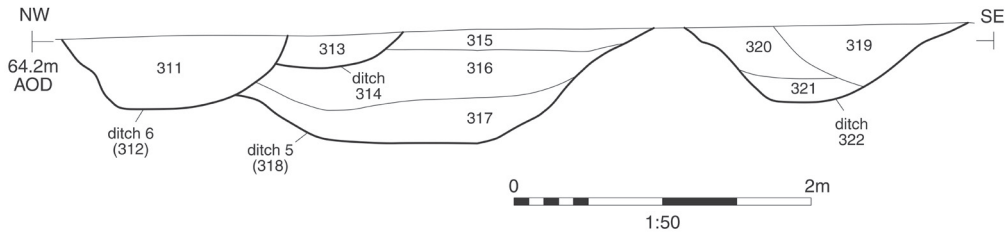
Section 1

Fig. 5. Ditches 5 and 6 (ditches 10 and 11): section and photograph (2 metre scale).

floodplain and around the smaller tributaries.²⁸ While crop remains of this period are attested at a number of sites in the upper Thames valley, evidence of cultivation and crop production is otherwise fairly meagre. The limited and poorly-preserved faunal assemblage of this date at the Abingdon Road site at least suggests a regime of mixed livestock husbandry. This broadly conforms to wider environmental evidence for Bronze-Age pastoralism across the upper Thames region, which is combined in places with more limited evidence of cultivation, although recovered faunal assemblages have generally, as here, been small.²⁹

Early Iron Age (700–400 BC)

While an early Iron-Age date is considered possible for a number of sherds, including a carinated vessel in a fine, flint-tempered fabric, from fill 1121, of gully 1120 (evaluation trench 11, Fig. 2),

²⁸ R. Scaife, 'Pollen from Waterlogged Samples in the Floodplain Sequence', in G. Lambrick and T.G. Allen, *Gravelly Guy: The Development of a Prehistoric and Romano-British Community*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 21 (2004), pp. 417–20; M.A. Robinson, 'The Plant and Invertebrate Remains', in D. Jennings et al., *Thornhill Farm, Fairford, Gloucestershire, an Iron-Age and Roman Pastoral Site in the Upper Thames Valley*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 23 (2004), pp. 133–45.

²⁹ M.A. Robinson, 'Environment, Archaeology and Alluvium on the River Gravels of the South Midlands', in S.P. Needham and M.G. Macklin (eds.), *Alluvial Archaeology in Britain*, Oxbow Monograph, 27 (1992), pp. 197–208.

there is no evidence of continuity with a late Bronze-Age phase of occupation, and the limited evidence for Period 3, early Iron-Age, activity may simply represent episodic re-occupation of a favourable site. Later prehistoric settlements on the gravel terraces of the upper Thames valley exhibit different patterns of change during the Iron-Age. The lower-lying settlements associated with the valley floor are broadly characterised by short-lived farmsteads, which appear to be generally engaged with pastoralism.³⁰ A more recent body of evidence, including this site, has identified a Bronze-Age precursor to the later Iron-Age pattern, which appears to be more dispersed in character and favouring areas of lower ground, including the river floodplain. Only few middle or late Bronze-Age farmstead sites do not appear to demonstrate some degree of spatial association with subsequent Iron-Age settlements, although confirmed evidence of direct settlement continuity between these periods is rare. This apparent relationship may simply represent the repeated choice of favourable sites, with middle and late Iron-Age enclosed farmsteads simply re-establishing re-occupation, often after a considerable hiatus. The reasons for widespread settlement discontinuity after the later Bronze Age within the Thames valley are not immediately apparent, but may well relate to climatic deterioration and rising water tables, accompanied by progressive abandonment of the river floodplain and lower terraces.

Late Iron-Age to Early Roman (c.100 BC–late 1st Century AD)

In common with many other contemporary rural sites in the region, there was clear evidence of continuity of occupation between the late Iron-Age and early Roman periods, and there was no archaeological distinction between them.³¹ Pottery evidence suggests that late Iron-Age occupation was unlikely to have commenced earlier than the two or three decades preceding the Roman conquest, and was thus integral to a rapidly-developing settlement and farming landscape during this period.

Amongst such 'transitional' features, a penannular gully (117), representing a late Iron-Age/early Roman roundhouse of c.15 metres internal diameter, was partly revealed by excavation within the northern corner of the excavated area (roundhouse 1, Figs. 4 and 7). A smaller, circular-plan structure, of probable late Iron-Age date (gully 194, roundhouse 2, Figs. 4 and 7), was recorded to the south of roundhouse 1. This seems likely to have represented an ancillary structure, possibly a livestock pen or working area, rather than a domestic dwelling. The limited excavated evidence of roundhouses 1 and 2 permits little inference regarding detailed architectural reconstruction, although the estimated internal diameter of roundhouse 1, at 15 metres, is well within the upper range of regional examples.³² The lack of internal structural evidence appears to conform to recognised evidence of regional change in late Iron-Age building technique, possibly involving the adoption of cob mass walling, which may have obviated the need for earth-fast timber uprights.³³ Assuming that roundhouse 1 is representative of the limited period of occupation associated with the excavated area, possibly until the early second century AD, its eventual demise may have marked radical changes in the layout and settlement focus of the site. Within an early Roman context, roundhouse 1 typically reflects the conservatism of indigenous building traditions, which is evident in other lower-status rural settlements across the region.³⁴

³⁰ G.H. Lambrick and M. Robinson, *Iron-Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire*, CBA Research Report, 32 (1979), p. 125; G.H. Lambrick and M.A. Robinson, 'The Development of Floodplain Grassland in the Upper Thames Valley', in M.K. Jones (ed.), *Archaeology and the Flora of the British Isles*, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology (1988), pp. 55–75; Lambrick with Robinson, *The Thames Through Time: Late Prehistory*, pp. 43–6.

³¹ M. Henig and P. Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire* (2000), p. 81.

³² N. Sharples, *Social Relations in Later Prehistory: Wessex in the First Millennium BC* (2010), pp. 192–3.

³³ Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 82; D.W. Harding, *The Iron-Age Round-House: Later Prehistoric Building in Britain and Beyond* (2009), pp. 71–6.

³⁴ D.W. Harding, *The Iron-Age Round-House: Later Prehistoric Building in Britain and Beyond* (2009), pp. 151–3; Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 95.

More recent geophysical survey has identified the extent and plan of the late Iron-Age and Roman phases of enclosed settlement beyond the excavated area (Fig. 3).³⁵ These are evident as a complex of enclosure and boundary ditches, which in some places appear to have an ambiguous relationship with earlier Bronze-Age ditches. Other ditched features, especially on the northern side of the site, may conceivably relate to a Bronze-Age enclosed settlement, although if so it is striking that so little evidence of occupation of this date was recorded within the area excavated. Geophysical survey also suggested that elements of the late Iron-Age/early Roman ditches may have cut, or partly overlain, the Bronze-Age ditch 6. While the latter, along with ditch 5, appears to have been recut at this time, other late Iron-Age/early Roman ditches, including ditches 1 and 2, display an incoherent relationship to it, which suggests that other Bronze-Age features may have been infilled or gone out of use by this time.

As revealed in plan by geophysical survey (Figs. 2 and 3), the enclosed settlement with associated ditched boundaries is broadly typical of a range of small Romano-British farmstead types, but of a morphology which is not commonly found within the upper Thames region.³⁶ As in this case, these commonly include evidence of one or more houses associated with enclosed pens, paddocks and work areas, which are generally demarcated by shallow ditches. At the Abingdon Road site, the layout of the settlement and its component enclosures has clearly undergone some degree of modification or enlargement during the course of what appears to have been relatively brief period, and at least some elements of these ditched features appear to relate to the Bronze-Age phase of enclosure. The outer enclosures on the north-east side are reminiscent of a number of excavated regional examples of attached livestock pens or corrals, and may thus be broadly comparable with recorded examples of middle Iron-Age date at Watkins Farm, Northmoor and Mingies Ditch, Hardwick.³⁷ A more local example, at Corporation Farm, Abingdon, may offer a further parallel.³⁸

The 'Barrow'

The low earthwork mound, which has previously been interpreted as a barrow, remains problematic.³⁹ As it was not situated within the proposed development footprint within the site, this feature was not included within the area excavated, and was investigated only at evaluation stage (trench 11, Fig. 2). Although its stratigraphic relationship with underlying features, sealing four securely-dated early Roman ditches, must at least indicate a later Roman or post-Roman date, this feature otherwise displays characteristics which are broadly diagnostic of a barrow mound, including, as originally surveyed, a sub-circular plan of c.35 metres diameter. The mound was evident at the time of excavation as a visible, but plough-degraded, feature, with the mound make-up surviving to a depth of c.0.75 metres.⁴⁰ Although not featured on first-edition Ordnance Survey maps, the mound was depicted and labelled as a 'Tumulus' on later editions. The original limits of the mound appear to be partly, but eccentrically, delineated by a sub-circular or ovoid ditch, which is evident on earlier geophysical survey plots (Fig. 2),⁴¹ but not on more recent ones (Fig. 3).⁴² This ditch extends across a modern field boundary to the south-west, and conforms to the extent of the earthwork monument depicted on earlier Ordnance Survey mapping. Earlier survey and small-scale investigation

³⁵ 'Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon.' [2016].

³⁶ A. Smith et al., *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, Britannia Monograph Series, 29 (2016), pp. 154–5.

³⁷ T.G. Allen, *An Iron-Age and Romano-British Enclosed Settlement at Watkins Farm, Northmoor, Oxon.*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph: The Windrush Valley, 1 (1990), pp. 74–5, figs. 34, 35; T.G. Allen and M.A. Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron-Age Enclosed Settlement at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick-with-Yelford, Oxon.*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph: The Windrush Valley, 2 (1993), pp. 22, 31–2, fig. 8.

³⁸ A. Barclay et al., 'Excavations at Drayton South, 1921–37', 'Drayton Highways Depot, 1994', and 'Corporation Farm, 1971–74', in Barclay et al., *Lines in the Landscape*, pp. 37–40.

³⁹ HER, PRN 2552.

⁴⁰ 'Land at Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire, Evaluation Report'.

⁴¹ 'Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire Geophysical Survey', fig. 2.

⁴² 'Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon.' [2016].

by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society has cast considerable doubt on the previously assumed prehistoric date of this feature.⁴³ In addition, geophysical survey undertaken both before and after this investigation indicates that the mound appears to be closely respected by surrounding Roman-period enclosure ditches, which appear to leave a comfortable and remarkably consistent margin around what originally must have been a prominent earthwork feature.⁴⁴ The incorporation of earlier funerary monuments within late Iron-Age enclosed settlements is well attested elsewhere, and such could plausibly be the case here, were it not for the clear evidence that the mound post-dates early Roman features on the site.⁴⁵ Any suggested association with the probable Bronze-Age cremation burial in pit 1106 presents further difficulties. Alternative interpretations, as a later Roman barrow, early Saxon *hlæwe*, or medieval windmill mound are equally unsupported by available evidence, and a more plausible suggestion is that it may simply represent a dump of material of probable early modern date.

Settlement Chronology

Most of the pottery assemblage recovered from the excavated area dates to between the mid first and the mid second centuries AD. This narrow date range may represent a limited period of occupation of a hundred years, or less, and is comparable with that of a number of contemporary settlements within the Abingdon area,⁴⁶ most notably the early villa settlement at Barton Court.⁴⁷ Such a limited chronology is, however, at variance with the second- to fourth-century dates for pottery from ditch 1103 of evaluation trench 11, and with the first- to fourth-century date range of surface-collected pottery from north of the excavated area.⁴⁸ This additional evidence must considerably extend the chronology of the wider site, most probably indicating a shift away from the confines of the area around roundhouse 1, and possibly associated with changes in the status and economy of the settlement. Such evidence accords with a wider body of evidence for structural changes in rural settlement from the early to mid second century AD.⁴⁹ Within the upper Thames valley generally, it has been observed that the great majority of settlements established by the mid first century AD continued to be occupied at the end of that century, although in a large number of cases occupation had ceased by the end of the first quarter of the second century. This situation appears to apply to those sites first occupied, or re-occupied, in the late Iron Age. A corollary may be that large numbers of other sites were occupied from the early to mid second century onwards, many of which subsequently continued to be occupied until the end of the Roman period.⁵⁰

The pottery assemblage recovered from excavation is overwhelmingly represented by local coarsewares, with only a limited presence of continental and regional imports. While the low overall incidence of central Gaulish samian within the assemblage is broadly typical of a range of farmstead settlements occupying the lowest tier of the rural settlement hierarchy, any

⁴³ Ainslie, 'Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon,' p. 57.

⁴⁴ 'Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire Geophysical Survey'; 'Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon.' [2016].

⁴⁵ Cf. R. Bradley, *The Past in Prehistoric Societies* (2002), pp. 60–7.

⁴⁶ Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, pp. 106–108; Cf. Devaney, 'The Excavation of Iron-Age, Roman, Medieval and Civil War Features South of the Vineyard', pp. 73–106; J. Pine, 'Early Roman Occupation at Jubilee Villa, 21 The Moorlands, Benson, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 70 (2005), pp. 115–28; Parrington, *The Excavation of an Iron-Age Settlement, Bronze-Age Ring Ditches and Roman Features at Ashville Trading Estate*; D. Challinor and D. Petts, 'Excavations at Manor Farm, Drayton, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 68 (2003), pp. 282–4, fig. 2.

⁴⁷ D. Miles (ed.), *Archaeology at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, Oxon.* (1986), pp. 52–5.

⁴⁸ HER, PRN MOX 8766.

⁴⁹ Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, pp. 106–108; Booth et al., *The Thames Through Time: The Early Historical Period*, p. 43; Smith et al., *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, pp. 147–50.

⁵⁰ M. Fulford, 'Iron-Age to Roman: A Period of Radical Change on the Gravels', in Fulford and Nichols (eds.), *Developing Landscapes of Lowland Britain*, pp. 27–8.

interpretations of status should be qualified by the early date at which occupation of this part of the site appears to have terminated.⁵¹

Agricultural Economy

Limited ecofactual data, including a small faunal assemblage, suggest a largely pastoral regime which exploited low-lying land within surrounding river floodplains and lower terraces. Limited plant macrofossil evidence for cereal production could conceivably indicate reliance on a mixed farming economy, although grain could equally have been imported onto the site from elsewhere. The prevalent evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation across the site is testimony to its fertility and suitability for cultivation during the medieval and post-medieval periods, and there is therefore no reason why such conditions should not also have prevailed in later prehistory. The late prehistoric and Roman-period landscape context of the Abingdon Road site is partly illustrated by the results of excavation at Manor Farm, Drayton, c.0.5 km to the south, where a mid/late Bronze-Age boundary ditch was closely associated with a probable waterhole.⁵² A series of apparently related, small linear gullies, of first- or second-century Roman date, were interpreted as field boundaries, some of which may be partly contiguous with elements of the Roman-period agricultural landscape surrounding this site. Comparable local configurations of small fields and trackways of this date have been recorded at Appleford, where field boundaries related to an enclosed settlement of early second-century date.⁵³

Medieval/Post-Medieval Activity

Evidence of medieval farming activity within the excavated area is indicated by the five medieval furrows running in a north-west to south-east direction, which were recorded during the course of the excavation and found to have truncated a number of earlier features (Figs. 2 and 3). They ran parallel to the modern field boundary at intervals of 10–12 metres, and measured c.4 metres in width. Ridge and furrow features are diagnostic of medieval ploughing practices within an open-field system, although the cultivation strips (or 'selions') are somewhat wider than those usually encountered. The evidence of medieval land use is supported by the results of excavation elsewhere along Abingdon Road.⁵⁴

EXCAVATION RESULTS (Fig. 4)

Fieldwork Summary

In total, 327 contexts were recorded during both the evaluation and excavation phases of fieldwork on the site, of which 172 (52.5 per cent) were phased. Of the 118 discrete features investigated, 72 (61 per cent) were phased. Archaeological features were predominantly of late Iron-Age and early Roman date, with limited evidence for later Roman activity predominantly of the second and third centuries AD.

Archaeological Evaluation

The evaluation, comprising the excavation of twelve trenches targeted on the results of initial geophysical survey, revealed a series of ditches which were associated with a complex scheme

⁵¹ S. Willis, 'Samian Pottery in Britain: Exploring its Distribution and Archaeological Potential', *Archaeological Journal*, 155 (1998), pp. 82–133; P. Booth, 'The Occurrence and Use of Samian Ware in Rural Settlements in the Upper Thames Valley', in D. Bird (ed.), *Dating and Interpreting the Past in the Western Roman Empire* (2012), pp. 255–66.

⁵² D. Challinor et al., 'Excavations at Manor Farm, Drayton, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 68 (2003), pp. 282–85.

⁵³ Booth and Simmonds, *Appleford's Earliest Farmers: Archaeological Work at Appleford Sidings*.

⁵⁴ S. Anthony and K. Taylor, 'Medieval Paddocks at 54–80 Abingdon Road, Drayton', in S. Anthony et al., *Excavations in Medieval Abingdon and Drayton, Oxfordshire*, TVAS Monograph, 8 (2006), pp. 93–106.

of enclosure ditches concentrated within the north-western part of the site (Fig. 2).⁵⁵ Ditches of late Iron-Age/Roman date were identified within trenches 1, 10, 11 and 12. Trenches 3 and 4 identified no trace of the linear features identified by geophysical survey immediately to the south-east of the excavated area. The pottery and environmental evidence recovered from the ditches indicated domestic activity at, or close to, the site, and that recovered during the evaluation stage also provided evidence of later Roman occupation beyond the eastern margins of the excavated area. Several fragments of Roman ceramic building material (CBM), including tegula, were also recovered from a number of the ditches recorded within trenches 1 and 12.

Trench 11 evaluated the low earthwork mound, the so-called barrow, which had been identified from cartographic sources and previous survey work (Figs. 2 and 3).⁵⁶ Features of Bronze-Age and late Iron-Age/Roman date were identified within trench 11, and were found to be clearly sealed beneath the make-up of the mound. This stratigraphic relationship therefore confirmed, at the earliest, a late Roman or post-Roman date, although, beyond this, the function and date of the mound could not be determined.

Phasing

Following excavation, the stratigraphic analysis of finds and excavated features identified six distinguishable phases of activity on the site:

- Period 1: Early prehistoric (to *c.*2600 BC)
- Period 2: Early to middle Bronze Age (*c.*2600–1500 BC);
- Period 3: Middle to late Bronze Age to early Iron Age (*c.*1500–400 BC);
- Period 4: Late Iron Age to early Roman (*c.*100 BC–late 1st century AD);
- Period 5: Roman (late 1st century–2nd century AD);
- Period 6: Medieval and post-medieval.

The natural geological substrate (103) varied across the site. Within the northern part of the excavation area it comprised a mid-brown/orange clay silt, with moderate gravel inclusions, whereas within the southern part of the site it comprised a mid-grey/brown silty clay, with rare gravel inclusions. The majority of the archaeological features revealed in the excavation were located within what was interpreted as a distinct ‘island’ of superficial gravel deposits, within prevailing clay/silt alluvia. Across the excavation area, the natural geology was overlain by a 0.10-metre deep layer of subsoil (102), which may have derived from medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation of the site. The subsoil was in turn sealed by layer 101, an agricultural plough-soil, which had an average depth of 0.30 metres.

Period 2: Early to Middle Bronze-Age (c.2600–1500 BC)

Evidence for Bronze-Age activity was represented by an early to middle Bronze-Age miniature collared urn from the fill of pit 1106, in evaluation trench 11 (Fig. 10). Due to poor bone preservation, it could not be established whether the collared urn contained cremated remains, or represented an accessory to a cremation burial. The location of this pit, adjacent to the earthwork mound previously interpreted as a barrow, was initially thought to be significant, although the mound was confirmed, by both earlier investigation and evaluation, as a considerably later feature.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ ‘Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire Geophysical Survey’; ‘Land at Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire, Evaluation Report’.

⁵⁶ ‘Land at Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire, Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment’, unpublished WYG report (2014); ‘Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire Geophysical Survey’.

⁵⁷ Ainslie, ‘Drayton Barrow, Abingdon, Oxon’, p. 57.

Period 3: Middle/Late Bronze-Age to Early Iron-Age (c.1500–400 BC)

Apart from pit 1106, the earliest datable archaeological features recorded comprised the enclosure ditch (ditch 6), and three other ditches which probably comprised part of the same system of enclosure system (ditches 5, 8 and 9) (Figs. 4, 5 and 6). Ditches 5 and 6 were recut in the early Roman period (Period 5), and the recuts were respectively identified as ditches 10 and 11 for this phase (Fig. 4).

The Bronze-Age enclosure ditches 5 and 6 (Figs. 4 and 5) are likely to have comprised elements of the same enclosure circuit. Ditch 6 ran on a general east-north-east to west-south-west alignment, before turning northwards, as ditch 5, within the western part of the excavated area. The relationship between ditches 5 and 6 had been obscured by the truncation resulting from a medieval furrow, and it is therefore possible that ditch 9, which cut ditch 5, may actually represent a northward extension of ditch 6. Ditch 5 was distinctly curvilinear in plan, with the excavated portion measuring 94 m in length. At its principal intervention, 318, the ditch averaged 2.49 m in width, and 0.77 m in depth, with steep, concave sides and a concave base. Limited quantities of pottery were recovered from the silty clay fill of this feature, making dating problematic, although a middle to late Bronze-Age date is probable, on the basis of eight sherds from an ovoid jar with an incurving rim, in a shell-tempered fabric (SHE), which were recovered from fill 206, of intervention 204 (ditch 5).

A short section of a Bronze-Age ditch, ditch 8 (Figs. 4 and 6), measured 11 m in length and 0.78 m in width. This feature ran on a broad, west-north-west to east-south-east alignment, and may eventually have merged with the larger Bronze-Age ditch 6, although no trace of the eastward extension of this ditch was recorded in evaluation trench 1. Pottery attributable to the middle to late Bronze-Age, comprising a bodysherd in a coarse, quartz-tempered fabric (QZCE), from fill 340, was recovered from ditch 8. It was filled with an orange/yellow-brown, moderate sandy clay, with frequent, sub-rounded pebble inclusions.

A partly bifurcated ditch, ditch 9 (Figs. 4 and 6), ran approximately parallel to, and appeared to cut, the larger enclosure ditch 5. It is possible that ditch 9 represents an extension of ditch 6, but any stratigraphic relationship between these two features remained unclear, for the reason stated above. As excavated, ditch 9 was 15 m in length and 0.44 m in width, with a depth of 0.12 m. The fill of ditch terminal 341 (Ditch 9) produced a fine, flint-tempered (FLE) bodysherd from a Deverel-Rimbury urn (Fig. 10, P2), with a date-range of c.1600–1000 BC.

Pit 323, within pit cluster 1 (Fig. 4), contained two sherds of broadly late prehistoric date, and was situated within the enclosure partly defined by ditches 5 and 6. It measured 1.16 m in diameter and 0.17 m in depth, and was filled with a mid-grey/brown, loose silty clay. Pit cluster 1 is described in further detail below.

Further, securely-dated evidence of prehistoric activity which pre-dated the late Iron-Age/early Roman transition, included a small, circular pit 106 (Figs. 4 and 6), which was c.1 m in diameter, with a depth of 0.32 m, and located close to the north-western limits of the excavation area.

Period 4: Late Iron-Age to Early Roman (c.100 BC–c.75 AD)

Excavation complemented the results of the field evaluation in confirming evidence for a small late Iron-Age/early Roman enclosed settlement. Pottery of the late Iron-Age/early Roman transitional period comprised the greater bulk of the site assemblage, although its narrow date-range indicated relatively short-lived occupation within the area excavated. However, later Roman material has previously been recorded to the north and west of the excavated area, and suggests some degree of continuity of occupation across the site as a whole.

A discontinuous, curvilinear gully (118), within the northern corner of the site, cut an earlier feature, 116, a further possible gully, which extended beyond the northern edge of the excavated area (Fig. 4). This feature had a length of 18 m, a width of 0.7 m and an uneven

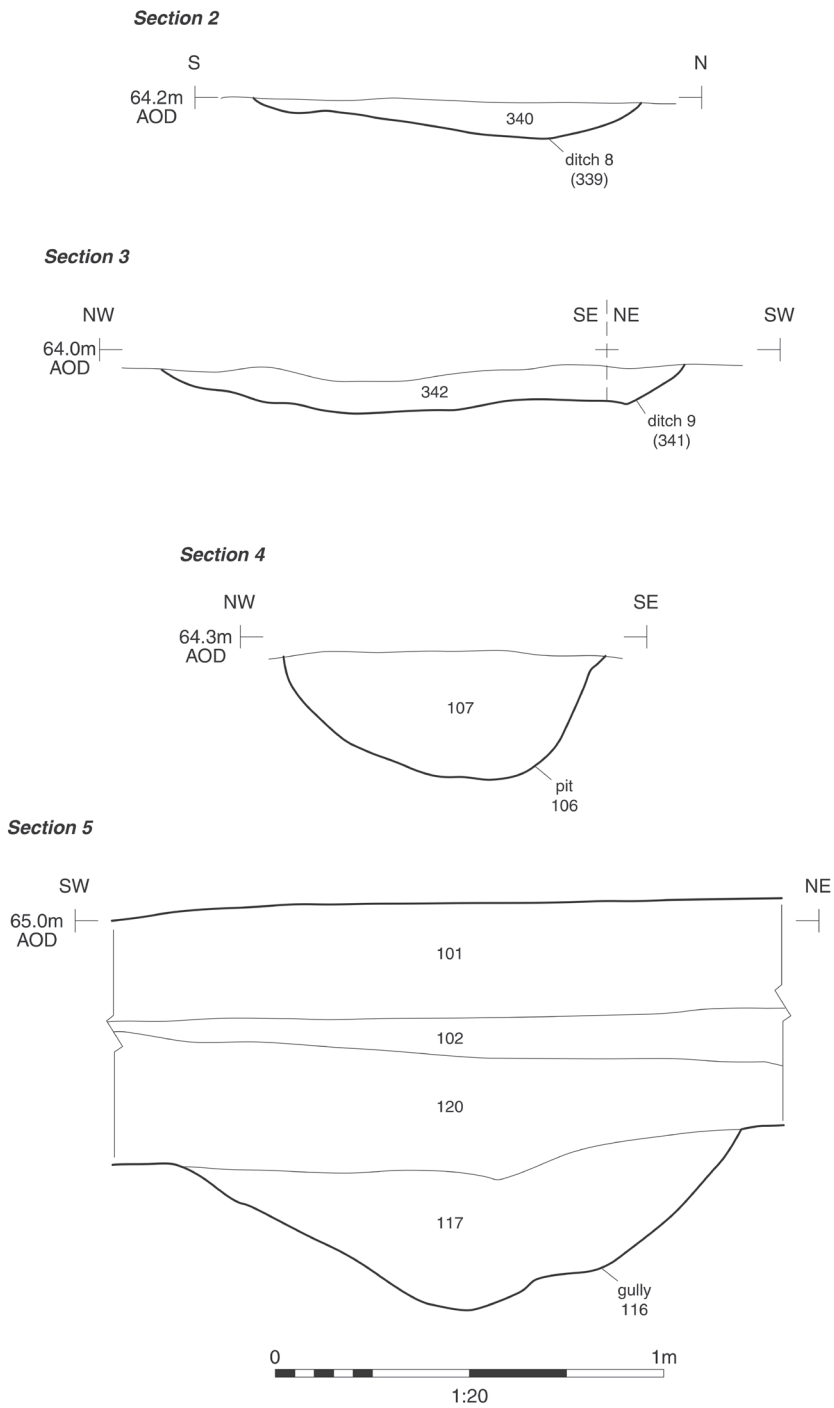


Fig. 6. Ditch 8: section; ditch 9: section; pit 106: section; and gully 116: section (1:20).

depth which averaged 0.11 m. Its fill, 119, comprised a mid-grey/brown silty clay, and included Period 4 pottery and burnt animal bone. Together with discontinuous gullies 112 and 121, which extended beyond the north-eastern edge of the excavation area, gully 118 represented part of a drip-trench, or foundation slot, of a circular structure (roundhouse 1, Figs. 4 and 7). The fills of gullies 112 and 121 comprised similar, silty clays, containing Period 4 pottery. Roundhouse 1 was not fully recorded in plan, as this feature also extended beyond the edge of the excavated area, to the north-east. However, on the basis of the penannular gully exposed within the excavated area, the roundhouse had an estimated internal diameter of c.15 m. No confirmed entrance was identified, although a 2 m gap between gullies 118 and 121, on the south-south-east side of roundhouse 1 may represent this. The interior of roundhouse 1 contained remarkably little structural evidence. Pit 104, located towards the north-west of the roundhouse interior, was a shallow pit of sub-circular plan, with a maximum diameter of 1.5 m and a depth of 0.15 m (Fig. 4). Such dimensions do not suggest a post setting, and the silty clay fill (105) of this feature contained a significant quantity of cereal grains and crop processing waste (sample 1) which, together with animal bone and charcoal, clearly indicated a deposit of domestic character. Pit 131, located towards the southern side of the roundhouse interior, was a shallow, sub-rectangular feature, measuring 1.99 m by 1 m, with a depth of 0.08 m. This contained a dark grey-brown sandy silt fill (132), which included Period 4 early Roman pottery and animal bone, and may therefore be interpreted as a similarly domestic feature, although it was not possible to determine any chronological relationship between pits 104 and 131 and roundhouse 1. The lack of convincing internal structural evidence in this case may not simply reflect the effects of later plough truncation, as stake-wall or mass-wall methods of construction may have been employed.⁵⁸

A smaller, discontinuous, circular-plan gully (194) was recorded c.25 m to the south of roundhouse 1 and, although of unconfirmed date, this appears to represent a further late prehistoric structure (roundhouse 2, Figs. 4 and 7). The gully had an estimated internal diameter of 6.9 m and a depth of 0.2 m, and was cut into the natural sandy gravel subsoil, within the centre of the excavated area. In profile, it displayed steeply-sloping sides and a rounded base. A small sondage was cut on the inside edge of this feature, to investigate its fill, 195, which comprised a dark, grey-brown, compact sandy silt, with charcoal flecks, and contained animal bone and Period 4 pottery. This pottery evidence, and the fact that roundhouse 2 had been cut by the later Roman ditch 1 (Fig. 8), indicates a late Iron-Age or early Roman date. Its small size is problematic, considering the size-range of numerous recorded examples within the Thames valley, which are commonly ten metres or more in internal diameter.⁵⁹ In this context, roundhouse 2 more closely resembles the ancillary, or 'working area' structures associated with some domestic roundhouses, and possibly comparable with those of middle Iron-Age date recorded at Farmoor.⁶⁰

Pit cluster 1, comprising 31 individual features, was located within the south-west corner of the excavated area, and may have been associated with the domestic occupation of roundhouse 1 (Fig. 4). It is probable that further pits associated with group are situated beyond the limits of excavation, to the north-east. The pits displayed considerable variation in terms of size and internal form, and their fills appeared to be largely associated with Period 4 domestic refuse, including animal bone. They displayed no coherent plan which might suggest evidence of post-built structures. The maximum excavated depth of these features was only 0.15 m, which indicated substantial plough truncation across this part of the site during the historical period.

⁵⁸ D.W. Harding, *The Iron-Age Round-House. Later Prehistoric Building in Britain and Beyond* (2009), pp. 68–71. Cf. B.W. Cunliffe, *Danebury, An Iron-Age Hillfort in Hampshire. Volume 6. A Hillfort Community in Perspective*, CBA Research Report 102 (1984), fig. 4.9; Sharples, *Social Relations in Later Prehistory*, pp. 204–5.

⁵⁹ Lambrick with Robinson, *The Thames Through Time: Late Prehistory*, pp. 134 (fig. 5.1), 144 (fig. 5.7).

⁶⁰ Cf. Lambrick and Robinson, *Iron-Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire*, pp. 21 (fig. 11), 24 (fig. 13).

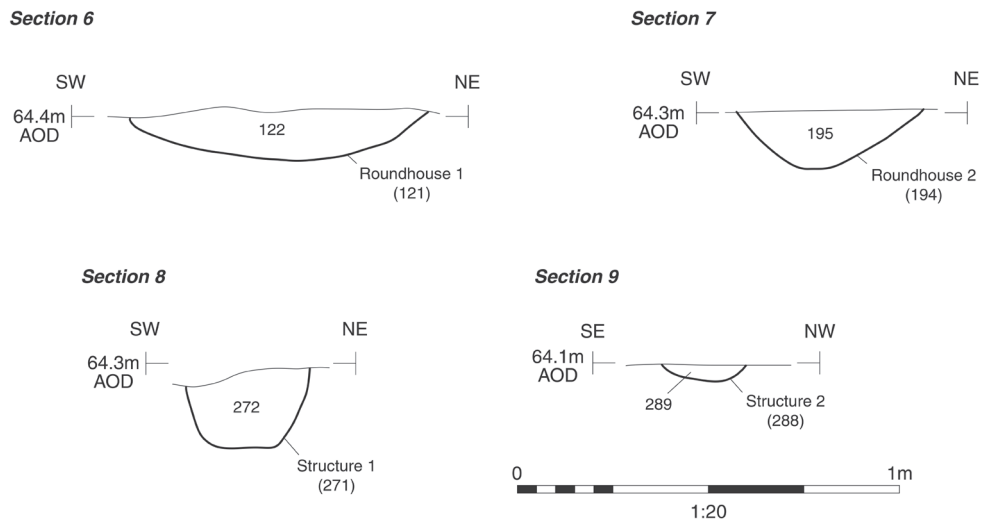


Fig. 7. Gully of roundhouse 1: section; gully of roundhouse 2: section; post pit 272 of structure 1: section; and post pit 288 of structure 2: section (1:20).

Samples obtained from fill 180, within pit 179 of pit cluster 1 (sample 2) (Fig. 4), produced a small number of barley and emmer/spelt wheat grains, together with a small quantity of spelt wheat processing waste. The small assemblage of plant macrofossil remains included hazelnut, vetches/peas, and clover and brome seeds. The evidence of crop processing, and the use of barley and spelt wheat on this site, is typical of the period, and may suggest cultivation of some, or all, of these crops within the vicinity. The charred cereal/chaff composition of the material suggested the burning of crop waste, possibly following initial threshing or winnowing. Although unsampled, a similar range of evidence for domestic and crop processing activity could be envisaged for the fills of adjoining features in pit cluster 1.

Period 5: Roman (c.AD 75–2nd Century AD)

Ditches 5 and 6 were recut in the early Roman period (ditch 6, Figs. 4 and 5), and continued to define an enclosed settlement. These recut features were respectively identified as ditches 10 and 11 for this period. As excavated, they measured 94 m in length, with a width of 1.65 m and a maximum depth of 0.49 m. Their Period 5 primary fill comprised a dark grey compact clay, with moderate gravel inclusions. The later recuts closely followed the alignments of the Bronze-Age ditches. The character of their primary fills suggested natural silting under wet conditions.

The late Iron-Age/early Roman ditches 1 and 2 ran in a north-west to south-east direction across the centre of the site (Figs. 4, 8, and 9). Ditch 3 was of a short length (8 m), but of comparable profile to ditches 1 and 2, and ran perpendicular to these features in the centre of the excavated area, and was cut by them. Subsequent geophysical survey indicated that these ditches comprised elements of a wider scheme of settlement enclosure at this time, possibly involving more than one phase (Fig. 3), and not field divisions as originally thought.⁶¹ The pottery recovered from these ditches included both coarsewares and a limited quantity of imported finewares, including Lezoux samian of mid second-century AD date.

Ditch 1 was 85 m in length and 1.18 m in width, and had a maximum depth of 0.55 m (Figs. 4 and 8). Pottery evidence indicated a date-range extending from the mid first to the

⁶¹ 'Abingdon Road, Drayton, Oxfordshire Geophysical Survey'.

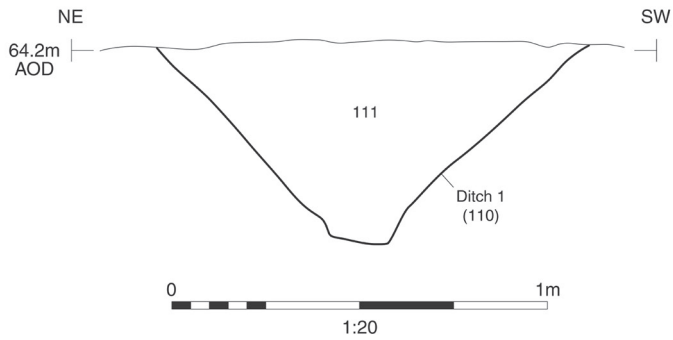
Section 10

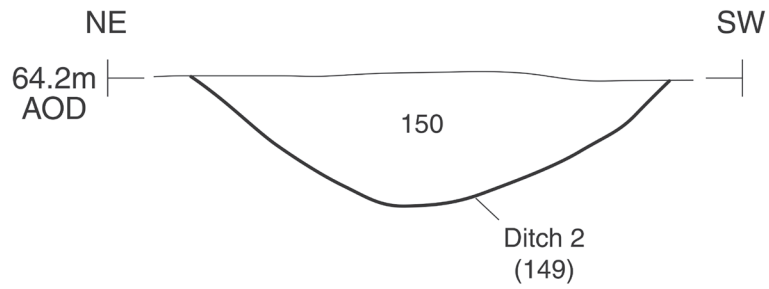
Fig. 8. Ditch 1: section (1:20) and photograph (0.5 metre scale).

early second century. This ditch, characterised by a remarkably regular 'V'-profile, contained a single, consistent fill which comprised a friable, silty clay of variable mid-grey/brown colouration, with a high inclusion of flint gravel.

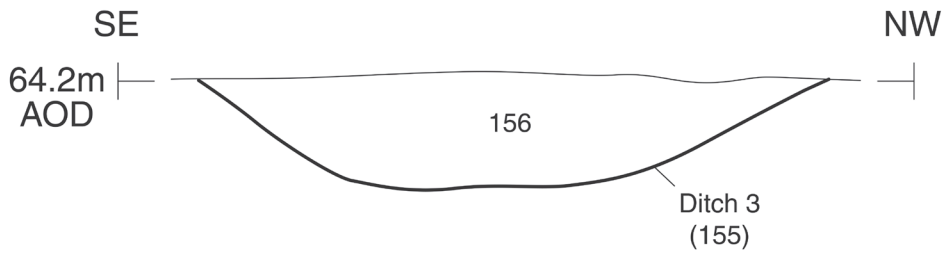
Ditch 2 was 40 m long and 0.77 m wide, and had a maximum depth of 0.30 m (Figs. 4 and 9). Pottery evidence also indicated a mid first- to early second-century date. It was filled with a mid-brown/grey, friable sandy silt, with moderate gravel inclusions. Ditch 2 was cut by ditch 6 at its southernmost extent, although its relationship to ditch 5 was uncertain. Ditches 1 and 2 appear to represent part of a coherent Period 5 layout, although the extent to which these two features related to recut Bronze-Age ditches remained unclear.

Ditch 3 (Figs. 4 and 9) comprised a short section of ditch, which ran on a north-east/south-west alignment, and appeared to be cut by ditches 1 and 2, but was otherwise undated. It was filled with a mid-grey/brown, friable silty clay, with frequent gravel inclusions, and was 7.5 m in length, with a width of 1 m and a maximum depth of 0.19 m.

Section 11



Section 12



Section 13

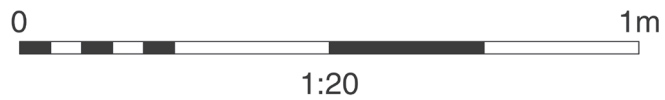
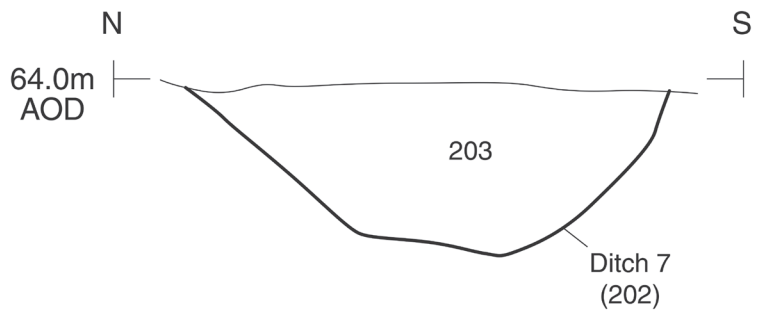


Fig. 9. Ditch 2: section; ditch 3: section; ditch 7: section.

Ditch 7 (Figs. 4 and 9) was a finely-cut north-west to south-east aligned ditch, of mid first- to early second-century AD date. It ran closely to the south of ditch 6/11, and was therefore situated outside the enclosure. Its fill comprised a mid-brown, friable silty clay, with occasional gravel inclusions. It averaged 0.78 m in width, with a maximum depth of 0.28 m. This ditch appears to represent part of a later Roman phase of re-organisation of the site. A marked southward turn towards its westernmost extent appeared to form part of a funnelled entranceway, which may suggest an association with stock handling. The remarkably even, finely cut character of ditch 7 invites speculation that it may originally have been accompanied by a stock-proof hedge.⁶²

The two shallow pits, 104 and 131, located within the interior of roundhouse 1, were of first- to second-century AD date, and may therefore post-date this structure (Fig. 4). These features may have been broadly contemporary with other Period 5 pits of comparable dimensions, which were located immediately to the south of roundhouse 1, and included 133, 145 147 and 157. All were shallow, with depths ranging from 0.14 m to 0.18 m. Pits 133 and 147 contained small quantities of animal bone within their fills, and along with 145 were of confirmed second-century date, whereas 157 contained no dateable material.

Period 6: Medieval/Post-Medieval

Five medieval furrows, running on a north-west to south-east alignment (Figs. 2 and 4), were recorded during the course of excavation. These features ran parallel to the modern field boundary at intervals of *c.*12 m, and measured 4 m in width. These dimensions are considerably greater than the average width of the selions commonly associated with medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, and may suggest a somewhat later, post-medieval date. An iron buckle of thirteenth- to sixteenth-century date (Ra 1), which was recovered from the topsoil, may represent a casual loss of this period.

Undated Features

Structure 1 (Figs. 4 and 7) was the more northerly of two suggested post-built structures, which were respectively located 25m and 35m to the south-west of roundhouse 1. In plan, it had an overall length of *c.*5 m, and a width of 3 m. Structure 2 (Figs. 4 and 7) had an overall length of *c.*4 m, and a width of 4 m. While each is represented by a group of discrete and closely-spaced post holes, their notably irregular plans do not convincingly resemble the four- or six-post structures which are well-attested features of late prehistoric sites elsewhere in the Thames valley.⁶³ It is therefore possible that Structures 1 and 2 represent ephemeral, stake-built structures, of which further evidence has been removed by truncation. No artefacts were recovered from the fills of their constituent post holes, and while these features remain undated, an Iron-Age attribution would be plausible.

Feature 116 comprised a discontinuous ditch of 4 m in length, which extended beyond the north-western edge of the excavated area (Fig. 4). It had a width of 1.4 m and a depth of 0.35 m, with a single, truncated fill (117) comprising a mid-brown silty clay, which contained no dateable material. This was cut by the gully 112 of Period 4 roundhouse 1, and must therefore be of earlier prehistoric date. A Bronze-Age date was suggested by the excavator.

FLINT by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of 27 items of worked flint (160 g), and 85 pieces of burnt, unworked flint (62 g), was recovered from 21 deposits from the evaluation and excavation stages. This material is

⁶² Cf. Lambrick and M. Robinson, *Iron-Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor*, pp. 121–2.

⁶³ Allen and Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron-Age Enclosed settlement at Mingies Ditch*, pp. 59–62, fig. 29; Lambrick with Robinson, *The Thames through Time: Late Prehistory*, pp. 100 (fig. 4.8), 104 (fig. 4.10).

Table 1. Summary of the flintwork assemblage

	Evaluation	Excavation
Burnt unworked	15	70
Primary technology		
Blade	1	3
Chip	1	1
Core		2
Flake	5	13
Secondary technology		
Scraper (end)	1	
Total	23	89

summarised in Table 1, above. Six of the worked flints, and all but two of the burnt, unworked flints, were recovered from the bulk soil sampling of seven deposits. The soil sampling of fill 1107, of cremation-related pit 1106, and fill 1125 (contained within vessel Ra. 2, from evaluation trench 11), produced a total of 13 small fragments (2.3 g) of burnt, unworked flint, and one flint chip, which are likely to represent stratified items. This small assemblage is otherwise broadly typical of redeposited material within later Iron-Age and Roman-phased contexts in the wider region, and is representative of transient earlier prehistoric activity within, and around, the Abingdon Road site.⁶⁴

THE POTTERY by E.R. McSLOY and JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of 697 sherds (8.447 kg) of pottery was recovered from the evaluation and excavation of 68 separate deposits, and as unstratified finds. The majority of this material was retrieved from hand excavation, although 36 sherds (121 g) were recovered from the bulk soil-sampling of three deposits from the excavation phase. The assemblage was sorted by fabric per context, and quantified by sherd count, weight and rim EVEs (estimated vessel equivalents). In addition, vessel form, rim morphology and any evidence for vessel use were recorded. The fabric codes used for recording are set out by the period, below, and overall quantification by type for the late prehistoric and Roman group is set out in Table 2, below.

Pottery dating from the early Bronze Age to the Roman period was recovered from evaluation and excavation, and is described below, by period. The majority of the assemblage (91 per cent by sherd count) was recovered from ditches/gullies. The remainder was mostly retrieved from pit fills. The largest context groups derive from: fill 182, of ditch 181 (ditch 2, 114 sherds); fill 212, of ditch 211 (ditch 1) (58 sherds); and fill 1004, of ditch 1006 (ditch 1) (115 sherds). The total EVEs value of the assemblage is 6.15.

Prehistoric pottery fabrics are defined according to primary/secondary inclusion type, sometimes further divided by inclusion size, and are described in summary.

Early Prehistoric: Early and Middle/Late Bronze-Age

A total of 26 sherds (384 g) are attributable with greater or lesser certainty to these periods. The Early Bronze-Age material consists of a single, complete vessel from Pit 1106, which is described individually (P1) (Fig. 10). A further eight, unfeatured bodysherds (71 g) were attributable to the prehistoric period on the basis of fabric and firing characteristics.

⁶⁴ Cf. K. Cramp, 'The Flint', in P. Booth and A Simmonds et al., 'An Iron-Age and Romano-British Site at Hatford Quarry, Sandy Lane, Hatford', *Oxoniensia*, 69 (2004), pp. 334–5.

Broad prehistoric fabric:

- FLP Medium flint-tempered. Common, moderately sorted flint (1–2 mm). Two sherds, 30 g.
 FLCP Coarse flint-tempered. Common, moderately sorted flint (2–4 mm). One sherd; 31 g.
 QZP Medium quartz-tempered. Sparse, poorly sorted quartz (0.5–1 mm). Two sherds, 3 g.
 VESP Vesicular fabric. Common vesicles (2–3 mm). Three sherds; 7 g.

Early Bronze-Age fabric:

- GRE Coarse, grog-tempered. Common, well-sorted grog (1–2 mm). Sparse voids from burnt-out organic matter. 18 sherds; 313 g.

Discussion. P1 is crudely made and small, within the lower size-range for the collared urn series, based on Longworth's corpus.⁶⁵ Examples from the region which are comparably small, and of bipartite form, include those from Hanborough, Long Wittenham and Abingdon.⁶⁶ Longworth grouped these examples within his secondary series/south-east style; the combed decoration (also present with P1) being most characteristic of the regional grouping. Dating for P1 late within the range expected for the collared urn series (c.2000–1500 BC), is also supported using Burgess' scheme: the bipartite form, pinched-out collar base and an absence of decoration below the collar being traits associated his 'late'-style vessels.⁶⁷

Small quantities of poorly-preserved cremated bone were recorded in association with vessel P1, although it could not be determined whether this was human in origin. Given the almost exclusively funerary associations of the collared urn series as a whole, it is highly probable that Pit 1106 represents a cremation burial. The small size of P1 clearly suggests its use as an accessory, presumably to an unurned cremation deposit which has been largely lost to truncation or other factors.

Middle/Late Bronze-Age

Fabric:

- FLE Medium flint-tempered. Common, moderately sorted flint (1–2 mm). One sherd; 31 g.
 QZCE Coarse quartz-tempered. Common, poorly sorted quartz (2–6 mm). One sherd; 36 g.
 SHE Shell-tempered. Abundant, well sorted shell (2–8 mm). Eight sherds; 18 g.
 QTE Quartzite-tempered. Common, moderately sorted quartzite (1–3 mm). One sherd; 14 g.

Discussion. Material considered to date to this period was recorded from four deposits, and amounts to 11 sherds. The context group size is small, and all material is very fragmentary, which is reflected in a mean sherd weight of only 9 g. In consequence, dating must be regarded as tentative.

Ditch terminal 341 produced bodysherd P2, in a fine, flint-tempered fabric FLE (Fig. 10). It comes from a thick-walled vessel with applied strip decoration, and almost certainly belongs to the middle Bronze-Age Deverel-Rimbury tradition, which was current from c. 1700/1600 BC to 1000 BC (Fig. 9). Pottery attributable to the middle or late Bronze Age includes rim sherds probably from a jar of neckless, ovoid form, in shell-tempered fabric (SHE) from ditch 204 (fill 206), and sherds in a coarse quartz/quartzite-tempered fabric (QZCE; QTE), from ditch 339 (fill 340), and from subsoil 1101. The use of quartzite has been noted in late

⁶⁵ I.H. Longworth, *Collared Urns of the Bronze-Age in Great Britain and Ireland* (1984).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* respectively: plate 137, nos. 1367 and 1376; and plate 131, no. 1350.

⁶⁷ C. Burgess, "Urns of No Small Variety": Collared Urns Reviewed, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 52 (1986), pp. 339–51.

Bronze-Age pottery at a number of Oxfordshire sites, including at Eynsham⁶⁸ and Milton Hill, the latter site only 5 km south of Drayton.⁶⁹

Catalogue of Illustrated Pieces:

- P1 Miniature bipartite collared urn (Ra. 2, Fig. 10). Complete. Fabric GRE. Patchy, light brown/grey external surface and light brown interior. Simple rim and straight collar, with pinched-out base (to the collar). The decoration is limited to the collar zone, and executed using repeated round-toothed comb impressions. The scheme consists of a lattice or 'saltire crosses (Longworth's Motif 'L'), within a border defined by horizontal lines. Ring diam. 80 mm; Base diam. 75 mm; height 105 mm; Th. 5–7 mm. Pit 1106 (fill 1107).
- P2 Fabric FLE. Thick-walled sherd, with horizontal and diagonal applied strips. Ditch terminal 341 (fill 342) (Fig. 10).

Late Prehistoric

Fifty-two sherds (380 g) were identifiable as late prehistoric, and of probable Iron-Age date. An average sherd weight of 7 g suggests a moderately broken-up assemblage. In terms of edge abrasion and surface preservation, condition is mostly moderate to good. Evidence for use, in the form of external carbonised residue, was recorded on four sherds in a quartz-tempered fabric, from fill 108 of ditch 107.

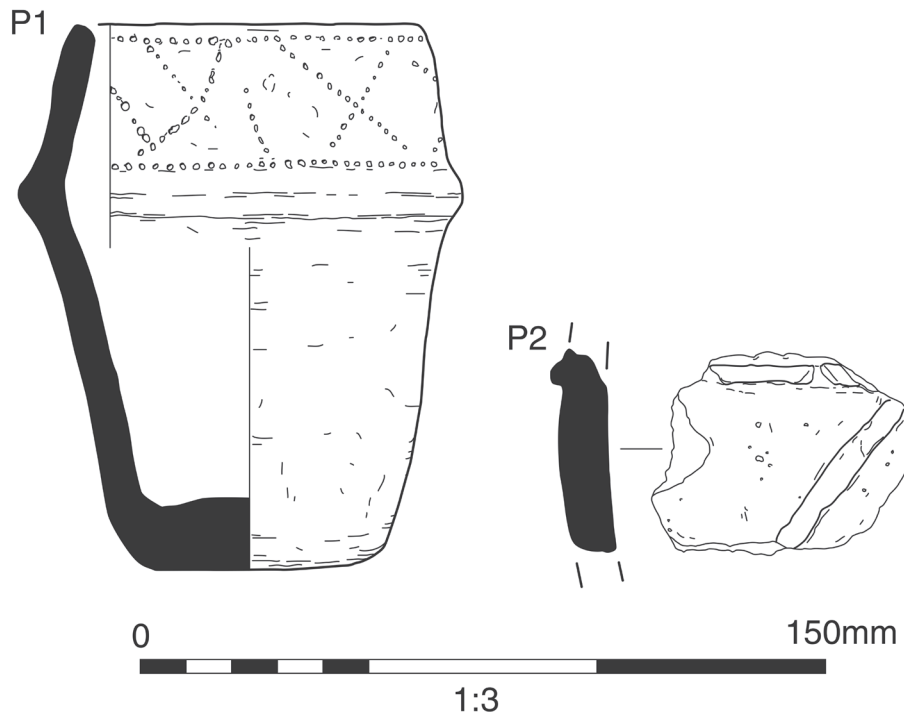


Fig. 10. Prehistoric pottery: the early Bronze-Age miniature collared urn (P1), and a decorated Deverel-Rimburg sherd (P2).

⁶⁸ A. Barclay, 'Later Prehistoric Pottery', in A. Barclay et al., 'A Prehistoric Enclosure at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 66 (2001), pp. 127–39.

⁶⁹ E.R. McSloy, 'The Pottery', in J. Hart et al., 'The Archaeology of the Cleeve to Fyfield Water Main, South Oxfordshire: Excavations in 2006–7', *Oxoniensia*, 77 (2012), pp. 230–7.

Late prehistoric fabric:

- FLL Medium flint-tempered. Common, moderately sorted flint (1–3 mm). Three sherds; 15 g.
- FLCL Coarse flint-tempered. Abundant, poorly sorted flint (2–8 mm). One sherd; 19 g.
- FLFL Fine flint-tempered. Common, moderately sorted flint (1–2 mm). Seven sherds; 139 g.
- GRL Grog-tempered. Common, moderately sorted grog (1–2 mm). Eight sherds; 24 g.
- LSL Limestone-tempered. Common, moderately sorted limestone (1–3 mm). Two sherds; 13 g.
- QTL Quartzite-tempered. Common, moderately sorted quartzite (1–6 mm). Six sherds; 60 g.
- QZL Medium quartz-tempered. Common, well-sorted quartz (0.5–1 mm). Thirteen sherds; 78 g.
- QZFL Fine quartz-tempered. Sparse, poorly sorted quartz (0.5 mm). Two sherds; 2 g.
- QZCL Coarse quartz-tempered. Sparse, poorly sorted quartz (1–3 mm). Two sherds, 9 g.
- QZOR Quartz-and-organic tempered. Abundant, moderately sorted quartz (0.5–1 mm). Sparse voids (2–3 mm long). Six sherds; 6 g.
- VESL Vesicular fabric. Sparse vesicles (1–2 mm). Two sherds; 15 g.

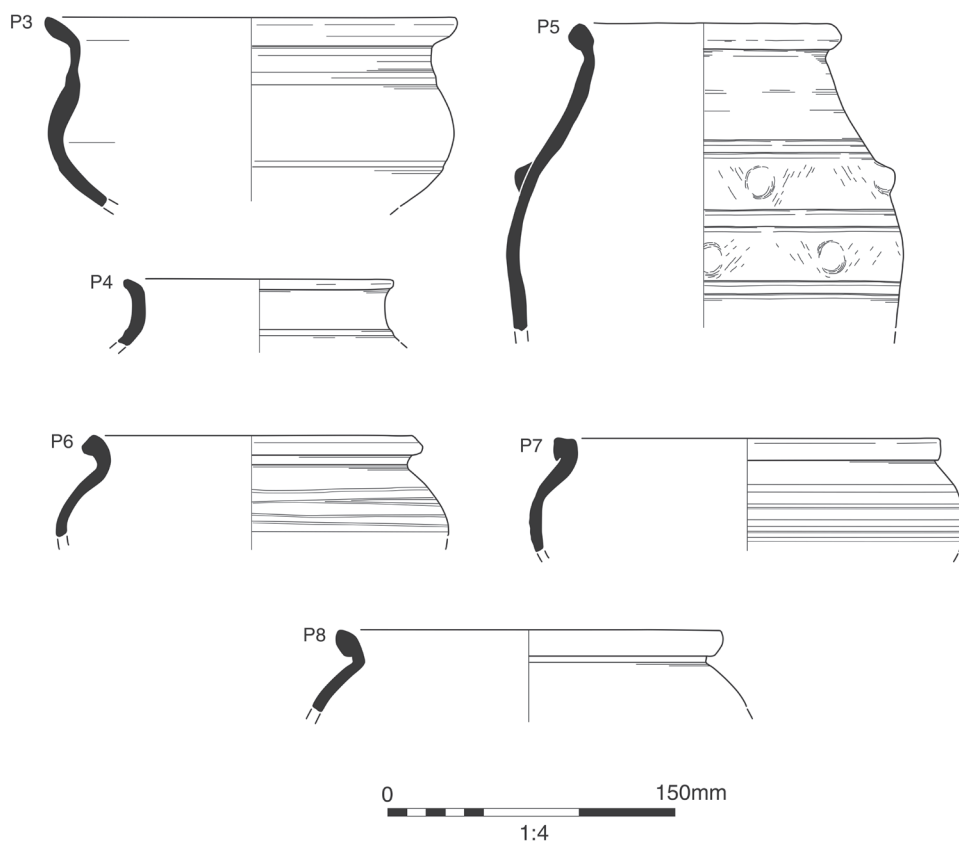


Fig. 11. Selected late Iron-Age and early Roman pottery.

Discussion. An early Iron-Age date is possible for a carinated vessel in a fine flint-tempered fabric, from gully 1120 (fill 1121), and a possible 'cauldron' pot, made in a quartzite-tempered fabric from ditch 241 (fill 242). The latter is representative of a tradition common to the earlier Iron Age in the upper Thames/southern Oxfordshire areas, known for example at Gravelly Guy.⁷⁰ The middle to late Iron-Age is represented by bodysherds in limestone and quartz-tempered fabrics from fill 107, of pit 108 on the north-western margins of the excavation area (Fig. 3; Fig. 5, section 4).

Late Iron Age

Pottery from this period amounts to 618 sherds, weighing 7.607 kg, and comprises by far the greater proportion of the assemblage (87 per cent by sherd count). Condition is generally good, and several deposits included substantially complete vessels (Fig. 11, P3–P8), including those from ditch 1 (fill 1004), and ditch 2 (fill 182). Despite this, the average sherd weight for the group is moderately low, at 12 g, and may be reflective of some disturbance. Evidence for pottery use was recorded as external carbonised residues on 19 sherds, and internal 'limey' deposits were recorded on 26 sherds, all but one of which was from ditch fill 1004.

Late Iron-Age/Early Roman 'Transitional'

The largest part of the assemblage (comprising 368 sherds, 5.108 kg, 52 per cent) is of this period, spanning the early to mid first century AD. The majority of fabrics present are wheel-thrown quartz- or grog-tempered types, which commonly characterise pottery of this period within the upper Thames valley area (Table 2).

Forms identifiable from this grouping are for the most part typical of the 'Belgic'-derived pottery styles current in this period across much of south-eastern and central England.⁷¹ Necked or shouldered bowls (Fig. 11, P7) and jars (Fig. 11, P3, P4, P6, P8) predominate. Of particular interest is a butt beaker copy in a grog and quartz-tempered fabric (GRQZ), from fill 182, of ditch 181. This is unusual for its decoration, which incorporates applied bosses (Fig. 11, P5). This form is dateable to the mid first century AD, and comparable vessels recorded at excavations at West St Helen Street, Abingdon were thought to have been of local manufacture.⁷² Further parallels have been recorded at Dorchester and similar bossed decoration has also been noted on two beakers of this date from Silchester.⁷³ A second example comprised a base sherd from a butt beaker copy in a fine 'silty' fabric (SIL), which was recovered from fill 191 of ditch 190. Similar fabrics are known from the south Midlands, and from the south-east, and a date in the mid first century is probable.⁷⁴

Roman

Just over one third of the pottery recovered (250 sherds, 2.499 kg, 35 per cent by sherd count) is of Roman date, with the majority of the second century AD. The majority comprises coarsewares, most probably of relatively local manufacture: greywares (GWF, GWM, GWOR), black-firing, sandy fabrics (BS), oxidised fabrics (OXID) and whitewares (WHF). Forms in reduced-firing fabrics mainly comprise medium-mouthed, necked jars. A devolved copy of a Cam. 113 butt beaker, in a whiteware fabric (WHF), was recorded in fill 1208 of ditch 1206. It probably dates

⁷⁰ D. Duncan et al., 'Later Prehistoric and Roman Pottery', in Lambrick and Allen, *Gravelly Guy*, pp. 259–334.

⁷¹ I. Thompson, *Grog-Tempered 'Belgic' Pottery of South-Eastern England*, BAR BS, 108(i) (1982).

⁷² Gallo-Belgic Pottery Database, viewed 8 January 2016: http://gallobelgic.thehumanjourney.net/echodata.php?data=excavation&table=excavation_results_secondbit&refid=31172&excavation=West%20St%20Helens%20St.&excavation=West%20St%20Helens%20St

⁷³ J.R. Timby, 'The Pottery', in M. Fulford and J. Timby, *Late Iron-Age and Roman Silchester: Excavations on the Site of the Forum-Basilica 1977, 1880–86*, Britannia Monograph Series, 15 (2000), pp. 261–2, fig. 135.710; S. Frere, 'Excavations at Dorchester on Thames, 1962', *Archaeological Journal*, 119 (1962), p. 132.

⁷⁴ I.M. Stead and V. Rigby, *Verulamium: The King Harry Lane Site*, English Heritage Archaeological Report, 12 (1989), p. 195.

Table 2. Quantification of the Roman pottery assemblage

Period	code *	OA code **	Description	Count	Weight (g)	EVEs
Late Iron Age/ Early Roman	FLT		Flint-tempered fabric	2	5	
	FLFT		Fine flint-tempered fabric	16	131	0.10
	GR	E80	Grog-tempered fabric	47	583	0.16
	GRF		Fine grog-tempered fabric	5	25	0.03
	GRQZ		Grog-and-quartz tempered fabric	64	1409	1.16
	GRSH		Grog-and-shell tempered fabric	2	17	
	LST		Limestone-tempered fabric	2	23	
	PEL		Fabric with clay pellet inclusions	1	10	
	QTT		Quartzite-tempered fabric	1	10	
	QZT		Quartz-tempered fabric	180	2684	1.38
	QZCT		Coarse quartz-tempered fabric	2	4	
	QZFT		Fine quartz-tempered fabric	35	107	0.03
	QZLS		Quartz-and-limestone tempered fabric	9	69	0.09
	SHT		Shell-tempered fabric	1	6	
	SIL		Silty ware	1	48	
Roman	BS		Black-firing, sand-tempered fabric	114	1016	0.78
	DOR BB1	B11	Dorset Black-burnished ware	1	4	
	GTGW	E80	Grog-tempered greyware	7	69	
	GWF	R30	Greyware (fine)	18	139	0.20
	GWM	R20	Greyware (medium)	49	580	0.40
	GWOR		Greyware (orange core)	8	28	0.03
	LEZ SA2	S30	Central Gaulish samian	3	56	0.05
	OXF FO	O11	Oxford fine oxidised fabric	3	38	0.18
	OXF GW		Oxford reduced fabric	1	8	0.05
	OXF WH	M22	Oxford whiteware	18	347	0.21
	OXIF	O10	Fine oxidised fabric	2	34	
	QZR		Quartz-tempered fabric	17	30	
	QZFR		Fine quartz-tempered fabric	3	66	0.30
	SAV GT	E81	Savernake Grog-tempered ware	1	50	
	WHF	W30	Whiteware (fine)	5	34	0.10
Total				697	8447	6.15

* codes in bold correlate with the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection types (Tomber and Dore 1998)

** codes for Roman pottery equivalent to scheme devised by Booth (1997)

to the late first or early second century. The Oxford potteries are represented by fine oxidised (OXF FO), whiteware (OXF WH) and greyware (OXF GW) products. Manufacture of the fine oxidised fabrics began in the late first century, and a beaker in this fabric was identified from fill 1208 of ditch 1206.⁷⁵ Fill 1208 also produced a Young Type M6 whiteware mortarium of second-century date,⁷⁶ and a reduced ware rim-shoulder from a Young R45 bowl, which is dateable to the second to third centuries.⁷⁷

The assemblage includes only two regional imports, both represented by single, unfeatured bodysherds. South-east Dorset Black-burnished ware (DOR BB1) was identified from ditch 1103 (fill 1104). This type typically dates to the second to fourth centuries when found outside the county.⁷⁸ Fill 1205 of ditch 1203 produced Savernake grog-tempered ware (SAV GT), which was made during the first and earlier second centuries at Savernake Forest and other Wiltshire centres.⁷⁹

Continental imports are limited to three sherds of second-century, central Gaulish samian (LEZ SA2). Identifiable forms are plain classes; a Drag. 38 bowl from ditch 1203 (fill 1204) and a Drag. 31R bowl from ditch 1206, fill 1208. Both are dateable after AD 150/160.⁸⁰

Illustration Catalogue:

- 3 Fabric QZT. Necked/shouldered bowl with everted rim. Ditch 1006 (fill 1004).
- 4 Fabric QZT. Necked jar(?). Everted rim and cordon at base of neck. Ditch 322 (fill 321).
- 5 Fabric GRQZ. Butt beaker copy with everted rim. Zoned decoration to the shoulder/girth consists of two rows of applied bosses and lightly incised diagonals. Ditch 181 (fill 182).
- 6 Fabric QZT. Neckless, globular-bodied jar with thickened, out-curved rim. Multiple grooves at shoulder. Ditch 181 (fill 182).
- 7 Fabric GRQZ. Neckless, globular-bodied jar with squared rim. Multiple grooves at shoulder. Ditch 181 (fill 182).
- 8 Fabric GR. Neckless, globular-bodied jar with thickened everted rim. Ditch 151 (fill 152).

FIRED CLAY by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of 31 fragments (127 g) of fired clay was recovered from nine deposits during the evaluation and excavation stages. These included seven fragments of medium-fired ceramic 'plate' (129 g) from early Roman fills, which contained coarse rock and possible glauconite and organic inclusions. Similar finds from other sites in Oxfordshire have been interpreted as lids, oven furniture or warming plates, and have been consistently dated to the early Roman period.⁸¹

A fragment from fill 158, of undated pit 157, is present in a hard-fired fabric, with coarse

⁷⁵ C.J. Young, *Oxfordshire Roman Pottery*, BAR BS, 43 (1977).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 70–1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 220–1.

⁷⁸ B. Davies et al., *The Archaeology of Roman London, Volume 5: A Dated Corpus of Early Roman Pottery from the City of London*, CBA Research Report, 98 (1994), p. 107.

⁷⁹ R. Tomber and J. Dore, *The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection: A Handbook*, MOLaS Monograph, 2 (1998).

⁸⁰ P. Webster, *Roman Samian Pottery in Britain*, CBA Practical Handbook in Archaeology, 13 (1996), pp. 35, 51.

⁸¹ J. Sanders, 'Finds: The Roman Pottery', in Lambrick and M. Robinson, *Iron-Age and Roman Settlements at Farnoor*, pp. 46–54; E.R. McSloy, 'The Pottery', in J. Hart, et al., 'The Archaeology of the Cleeve to Fyfield Water Main, South Oxfordshire: Excavations in 2006–7', *Oxoniensia*, 77 (2012), pp. 227–47; Lambrick with Robinson, *The Thames Through Time: Late Prehistory*, pp. 159–60, fig. 5.15, b and c.

rock and possible glauconite inclusions. It retains two surfaces, and may represent a fragment from a ceramic plate or a kiln bar.

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of three fragments of ceramic building material (203 g) of Roman date was recorded in two deposits. That from fill 1208 of ditch 1206 is identifiable as tegula, although the other two were too fragmentary to permit further identification.

METALWORK by E.R. McSLOY

A circular iron buckle (Ra. 1), measuring 14mm in external diameter, was recovered from the topsoil. The small size is typical of this type, which would have been used on shoes or clothing, and dates to between the thirteenth and sixteenth century.⁸²

ANIMAL BONE by ANDY CLARKE

A total of 386 fragments (2,833 g) of animal bone was recovered through a combination of hand excavation and bulk soil-sampling from 45 features. The results are summarised below in Table 3. For the purpose of this report, the bones were identified to species and skeletal elements, using an osteological reference collection,⁸³ in addition to standard reference literature, and were quantified by fragment count and weight.⁸⁴ Where modern breakage was observed and re-fitting was possible, those fragments were recorded as a single bone. The poorly preserved bone found in association with the Bronze-Age collared urn was not included within this assessment.

The animal bone displayed varying degrees of preservation, and was highly fragmented, with frequent historical and modern damage. This has rendered 81 per cent of the assemblage unidentifiable beyond a basic level of attribution to cattle or small ruminant species. However, it has been possible to positively identify the remains of cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*), pig (*Sus scrofa* sp.) and horse (*Equus caballus*), all of which are commonly exploited domestic species encountered in faunal assemblages from the Neolithic period onwards.⁸⁵

Period 3: Middle Late Bronze/Age to Early Iron Age

A total of 37 fragments (703 g) was recovered from nine deposits associated with the Bronze-Age enclosure ditches 5 and 8. The majority of this material (29 out of 37 fragments) was highly fragmented and unidentifiable. However, due to the survival of more robust skeletal elements, it was possible to identify cattle, sheep/goat and horse from fragments of mandible, isolated molars and shafts of the lower limbs. A sheep/goat tibia, from secondary fill 257 of slot 258, within ditch 5, displayed cut-marks which suggested an origin in butchery waste.

⁸² I.H. Goodall, *Ironwork in Medieval Britain: An Archaeological Study*, University College, Cardiff Ph.D. thesis (1980), p. 174, fig. 131.

⁸³ Cotswold Archaeology animal bone reference collection.

⁸⁴ E. Schmid, *Atlas of Animal Bones: For Prehistorians, Archaeologists and Quaternary Geologists* (1972); S. Hillson, *Mammal Bones and Teeth: An Introductory Guide to Methods of Identification*, London Institute of Archaeology (1996); R. Lyman and R. Lee, *Vertebrate Taphonomy*, Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology (1994).

⁸⁵ P. Baker, and F. Worley, *Animal Bones and Archaeology: Guidelines for Best Practice*, English Heritage (2014).

Period 4: Late Iron Age to Early Roman

The Period 4 roundhouses 1 and 2, and pit cluster 1 (Figs. 4 and 7), produced 114 fragments (339 g) of bone, from eight deposits. The material was highly fragmented, and showed evidence of gnawing and surface weathering, rendering most of the bone (104 out of 114 fragments) unidentifiable to species. Cattle, sheep/goat and horse were once again identified from fragments of mandible and lower limb-bone shafts, and no cut and/or chop marks indicative of butchery were present. As with the preceding period, the species identified were not recovered in sufficient numbers to make possible any further interpretation and, given its state of preservation, this material may well be residual in nature.

Periods 4 to 5: Late Iron Age/Early Roman to Roman

A total of 12 fragments (85 g) of animal bone was recovered from the fills of pit 108 and interventions 211 and 345, of ditches 1 and 9 respectively. The bone was in a fair state of preservation, and cattle, sheep/goat and pig were identified from meat-poor skeletal elements, including isolated teeth and bones of the feet. No butchery marks were observed, and, again, the low level of recovery precluded any inference beyond species identification.

Period 5: Later Roman

Accounting for 55 per cent of the overall assemblage, the Period 5 Roman features produced the largest quantities of datable bone, with 204 fragments (1,703 g) recovered from the fills of 23 deposits. It may be possible to relate this evidence to a possible intensification of agricultural activity at this time, and to evidence for the reorganisation of the scheme of ditched enclosures across the site. Bones from cattle were recovered from ten deposits, with 15 fragments representing 35 per cent of the identified material. Only meat-poor elements were present which, while not displaying any actual cut and/or chop-marks, had been fractured in a manner suggesting carcass dismemberment using a cleaver; a practice that leaves the waste bone with an irregular, splintered fracture, rather than a clean-cut chop-mark. A mandible fragment from intervention 140 (ditch 2) provided an estimated age at death of less than two years of age.

A total of 24 sheep/goat bones, accounting for 57 per cent of all identified material, were recovered from 13 deposits. As with the cattle remains, only meat-poor elements were present, and evidence of butchery was noted only from the pattern of historical fractures. Age at death was estimated from a mandible and metacarpal, from the fill of intervention 192 (ditch 6), at less than one year old.

The remains of horse were also identified, with evidence of three individuals recovered from pits 131 and 133, and the fill of intervention 138 (ditch 1).

CHARCOAL AND PLANT MACROFOSSILS by SARAH COBAIN

Plant macrofossil and charcoal remains were retrieved by standard flotation procedures. The seeds were identified with reference to Cappers et al.,⁸⁶ Neef et al.,⁸⁷ Berggren,⁸⁸ and Anderberg.⁸⁹ Nomenclature and habitat description follows Stace.⁹⁰ Identifications were carried out with reference to images and descriptions by Gale and Cutler,⁹¹ Schoch et al.,⁹²

⁸⁶ R.T.J. Cappers et al., *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands*, Groningen Archaeological Studies, 4 (2006).

⁸⁷ R. Neef et al., *Digital Atlas of Economic Plants in Archaeology*, Groningen Archaeological Studies, 17 (2012).

⁸⁸ G. Berggren, *Atlas of Seeds; Part 3* (1981).

⁸⁹ A-L. Anderberg, *Atlas of Seeds; Part 4* (1994).

⁹⁰ C. Stace, *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd edn (2010).

⁹¹ R. Gale and D.F. Cutler, *Plants in Archaeology. Identification of Artefacts of Plant Origin from Europe and the Mediterranean* (2000).

⁹² W. Schoch et al., *Wood Anatomy of Central European Species* www.woodanatomy.ch (2004).

Table 3. Summary of identified animal species by fragment count (NISP), and weight and context

Cut	Fill	BOS	O/C	SUS	EQ	LM	MM	Ind	Un-id SS	Total	Weight (g)
Period 3											
196	197							2		2	10
204	206	1	1		1	3		8		14	64
232	231		1				2			3	27
258	257	1	1							2	58
299	300							3		3	1
318	316	1						2		3	158
318	317				1	3				4	360
335	336					3		3		6	25
Subtotal		3	3		2	9	2	18		37	703
Period 4											
104	105		2			1			23	26	76
118	119							2		2	1
179	180		3					5	63	71	41
194	195		1		1			4		6	84
198	199		1					1		2	29
200	201		1							1	11
249	250	1						2		3	85
325	326						3			3	12
Subtotal		1	8		1	1	3	14	86	114	339
Period 4/5											
108	109		1			1				2	17
211	212		1				3			4	15
345	346	1	3	1			1			6	53
Subtotal		1	5	1		1	4			12	85
Period 5											
110	111						2			2	6
131	132				1					1	14
133	134		1		1			1		3	245
138	139		2		1			12		15	157
140	141	1				1				2	31
147	148							3		3	7
149	150		1							1	14
151	152		4					7		11	31
153	154	1	4						28	33	108
155	156	1								1	60
181	182							1	25	26	10
192	193	3	2					8		13	276
207	208	1	2				15			18	107
213	214							1		1	1
227	224	1	2			1	1	6		11	88

Table 3. (Continued)

Cut	Fill	BOS	O/C	SUS	EQ	LM	MM	Ind	Un-id SS	Total	Weight (g)
239	240		1					1		2	8
241	242		1			8				9	63
253	252							3		3	8
255	254	2				1				3	156
260	259	3	1			1				5	133
312	311	1	2				1		28	32	83
329	330		1			3				4	43
	251	1					4			5	54
Subtotal		15	24		3	15	21	43	81	204	1703
Undated											
327	328		1							1	3
Total		20	41	1	6	26	32	75	167	368	
Weight		917	430	17	726	337	134	221	43	2833	

BOS = Cattle; O/C = sheep/goat, SUS = pig; EQ = horse; LM= large sized mammal; MM = medium sized mammal; Ind = indeterminate; un-id SS = unidentifiable fragments from bulk soil samples

and Wheeler et al.⁹³ The full results are presented below, in Tables 4 and 5. SS refers to the soil sample number.

Period 2: Early to Middle Bronze Age

Two samples were recovered from the fill, 1125 (sample 2), of collared urn vessel 1107 (Ra 2), which had been placed within pit 1106, together with the backfill, 1107 (sample 1), within pit 1106, within evaluation trench 11. Fill 1125 contained a single false-oat grass tuber (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), and fills 1125 and 1107 contained a small amount of charcoal identified as oak (*Quercus*) and cherry species (*Prunus*), which appear to have been those used for pyre construction. Charred false-oat grass tubers are commonly observed in cremation burial deposits, and may reflect the use of this material as tinder.

Period 4: Late Iron Age to Early Roman

The principal evidence for cereal storage or processing was recovered from fill 105 (sample 1), of pit 104, located within roundhouse 1, within the northern corner of the site, and fill 180 (sample 3) within pit 179, within pit cluster 1, towards the south-west of the enclosure (Fig. 3). Pit 104 contained a small number of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and emmer/spelt wheat (*Triticum dicoccum/Triticum spelta*) cereal grains, spelt wheat glume-bases and bromes (*Bromus*) seeds, and three fragments of charcoal which were identified as oak. Pit 179 contained a small assemblage of plant macrofossil remains, including a single hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell, barley and wheat cereal grains, three spelt wheat glume-bases, vetches/peas (*Vicia/Lathyrus*), medick/clovers (*Medicago/Trifolium*) and bromes seeds. Charcoal was relatively rare, and identified as oak. Crops utilised on site included both barley and spelt wheat, which are typical of the period. The charred cereal/chaff composition is indicative of burnt waste, derived either from the initial threshing/winnowing or the parching/pounding stages of crop processing, or from domestic food production. However,

⁹³ E.A. Wheeler et al., 'IAWA List of Microscopic Features for Hardwood Identification', *IAWA Bulletin*, ns, 10:3 (1989), pp. 219–332.

Table 4. Summary of plant macrofossil identifications

Evaluation (Eval)/Excavation (Exc)										
Context number	Eval	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	
Feature number	1107	1125	105	180	154	154	182	181	311	
Feature Label	1106	1106	104	179	153	153	181	Ditch 2	Ditch 6	
Sample number (SS)	1	2	1	3	2	4	5	6		
Flot volume (ml)	16	0.5	4	4	1	4	1	1		
Sample volume processed (l)	8	1	17	19	17	37	15	15		
Soil remaining (l)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Period	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	5		
Plant macrofossil preservation	N/A	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Habitat Code	Family	Species	Common Name	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	
HSW	Adoxaceae	<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	Elder		1					
HSW	Betulaceae	<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Hazelnut shells	1						
D/P	Fabaceae	<i>Medicago</i> L./ <i>Trifolium</i> L.	Medicks/Clovers	1						
D/A/P		<i>Vicia</i> L./ <i>Lathyrus</i> L.	Vetches/Peas	3						
P/D	Poaceae	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> (L) P.	False Oat-grass	1						
A/D		<i>Beauv. ex J. & C. Presl</i>	Bromes	2	3					
		<i>Bromus</i> L.								
E		<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L.	Barley grain	2	1					
E		<i>Triticum</i>	Wheat grain	1	1					
E		<i>Triticum spelta</i>	Spelt wheat glume base	2	3					
E		<i>Triticum dicoccum</i> / <i>Triticum spelta</i>	Emmer/spelt wheat grain	1	1					
E		<i>Poaceae</i>	Indeterminate cereal grain (whole)	2	1	1				
E		<i>Poaceae</i>	Indeterminate cereal grain (fragment)	3	14	1				
Total				0	0	12	28	2	1	0

Table 5. Summary of charcoal identifications

Area	Eval	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc	Exc
Context number	1107	1125	105	180	154	154	182	311
Feature number	1106	1106	104	179	153	153	181	312
Feature Label				Pit cluster 1			Ditch 2	Ditch 6
Sample number (SS)	1	2	1	3	2	4	5	6
Flot volume (ml)	16	0.5	4	4	1	4	1	1
Sample volume processed (l)	8	1	17	19	17	37	15	15
Soil remaining (l)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Period	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	5
Charcoal quantity >2mm	+++	+	+	+++	0	+	+++	+
Charcoal preservation	Good	Good	Poor	Moderate	N/A	Poor	Moderate	Poor
Family	Species	Common Name						
Betulaceae	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> (L.) Gaertn./ <i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Alder/Hazel						
Fagaceae	<i>Quercus petraea</i> (Matt.) Liebl./ <i>Quercus robur</i> L.	Sessile Oak/ Pedunculate Oak						
Rosaceae	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i> Jacq./ <i>Sorbus L./Malus sylvestris</i> (L.) Mill. <i>Prunus L.</i>	Hawthorn/Rowans/ Crab apple Cherries Indeterminate						
Total		10	3	3	10	0	0	7

Key

+ = 1-4 items; ++ = 5-20 items; +++ = 21-49 items; ++++ = 50-99 items; +++++ = 100-500 items; ++++++ = >500 items

HSW = hedgerow/scrub/woodland species; A = arable weeds; D = opportunistic species; P = grassland/pasture species; E = economic species

given the small size of the charred assemblages, it is not possible to deduce which stages of processing activity were taking place within each area of the site.

Period 5: Later Roman

Samples recovered from fill 154 (samples 2 and 4), within pit 153 (Fig. 3), contained a small number of plant remains, including a charred elder seed (*Sambucus nigra*) and indeterminate cereal grains. Charcoal was rare, with only three unidentifiable fragments recovered. In addition, two samples were recovered from ditch 2 (sample 5), and from ditch 6 (sample 6). These contained no charred plant macrofossil material, and only a small amount of charcoal, which was identified as oak, alder/hazel, hawthorn/rowan/crab apple and cherry species.

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