

## REPORTS

### Investigations at Thrupp House Farm, Radley, near Abingdon

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#### SUMMARY

*Features previously seen as crop marks on aerial photographs were exposed during machine stripping of topsoil and subsoil at Thrupp House Farm prior to gravel extraction between 1970 and 1984. These features all lay upon first terrace gravels bordering the River Thames and included hut gullies, pits, ditches and enclosures dating from the Middle to the Late Iron Age. There was limited evidence of Early Iron Age activity. The results indicate the gradual shifting along the gravel terrace of a small farmstead. The site continued to be inhabited into early Roman times when a trackway and a ditched field system were laid out. Many Iron Age and Roman artefacts were recovered including locally manufactured ceramics, loomweights, animal bones (including two complete pig burials), two human burials and metalwork including smithing slag, a coin of Tasciovanus and a Late Iron Age bow brooch. Grain storage pits indicate that cereals were grown and processed locally and the bones of domesticated animals suggest animal husbandry. The site was probably unoccupied, although still farmed, during the later Roman period.*

#### INTRODUCTION

The Thrupp House Farm sites (Figs. 1 and 2) were located 2.5 km. due E. of Abingdon and were situated on light soils covering first terrace gravels c. 2 m. above the level of the modern Thames (O.D. 52.5 m.). All were damaged during topsoil and subsoil stripping and later destroyed during gravel extraction. Aerial photographs show a dense cluster of cropmarks in the Thrupp area.<sup>1</sup> Thrupp has had an extensive history of human activity and excavation, and fieldwalking by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (AAHS) has shown that the area was exploited throughout the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age (hereafter IA) and early Roman periods, extending into medieval times.<sup>2</sup> If there was a hiatus it occurred during the Saxon period. The name Thrupp, which

<sup>1</sup> N.M.R. SU 5292/2/109, 22 June 1970.

<sup>2</sup> R. Holgate, 'Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Settlement Patterns south-west of Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, li (1986), 1-14; B. Skellington, 'Thrupp SU 520 971: An Iron Age Hut Circle' (TS. held by authors); J. Wallis, 'Radley, Thrupp Farm', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 11 (1981), 134-5; N. Trippett, 'Excavations at the Thrupp Gravel Pits 1984' (TS. held by authors); A. Sherratt, 'A New Beaker from Radley', *Oxoniensia*, xxxviii (1973), 384-5; 'Thrupp', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 8 (1977), 75.

now refers to the whole area, is a derivation of the name of the nearby medieval hamlet 'Thorpe' (NGR SU 516973), once consisting of several cottages but now represented by only two.

Rescue excavations were undertaken by the AAAHS over a 15 year period. Work was usually carried out at weekends, often in difficult conditions and with limited time. As a result of the differing style of each director and the frequent difficulty of recording in detail, the quality of site recording is variable. Discrepancies in site notes mean that not all excavated features appear on plans and not all features drawn on plans appear in the text. Dotted lines on plans indicate the probable continuation of features. If fills, feature dimensions and/or finds are not stated they were either not recorded during excavations or were not found. Quantities and weights of pottery are given for each feature, and unstratified recoveries by site, if these were recorded. For many features only the period from which the pottery came was documented. Analyses, therefore, only take account of quantified recoveries. Where possible bones are identified for each feature but in most cases they can no longer be assigned to any particular one. The individual bone report discusses these objects as either IA or Romano-British (hereafter RB) by site only. All flints were humanly worked and/or burnt, are thought to have been residual (although this view may not be entirely accurate), and with the exception of a Palaeolithic biface will be covered in a later paper.<sup>3</sup> Excavations are reported chronologically. Phases of topsoil stripping at Thrupp meant that only parts of some sites were revealed at the same time. For example, Sites C1979 and C1984 formed two halves of what was probably the same occupation spread although the E. and W. ends were exposed five years apart. No samples of pit or ditch fills, for example, were taken and therefore no environmental analyses are possible.

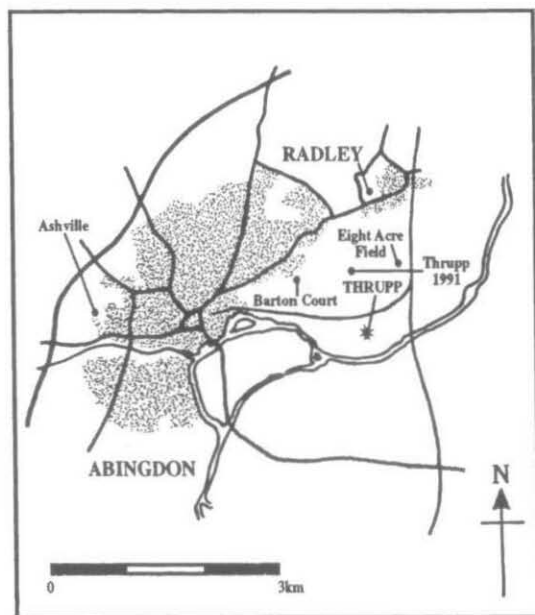


Fig. 1. Location of Thrupp sites.

<sup>3</sup> R.M.G. Eeles, R.N. Everett and J.P. Wallis, 'Lithic Scatters in the Upper Thames Valley' (forthcoming).

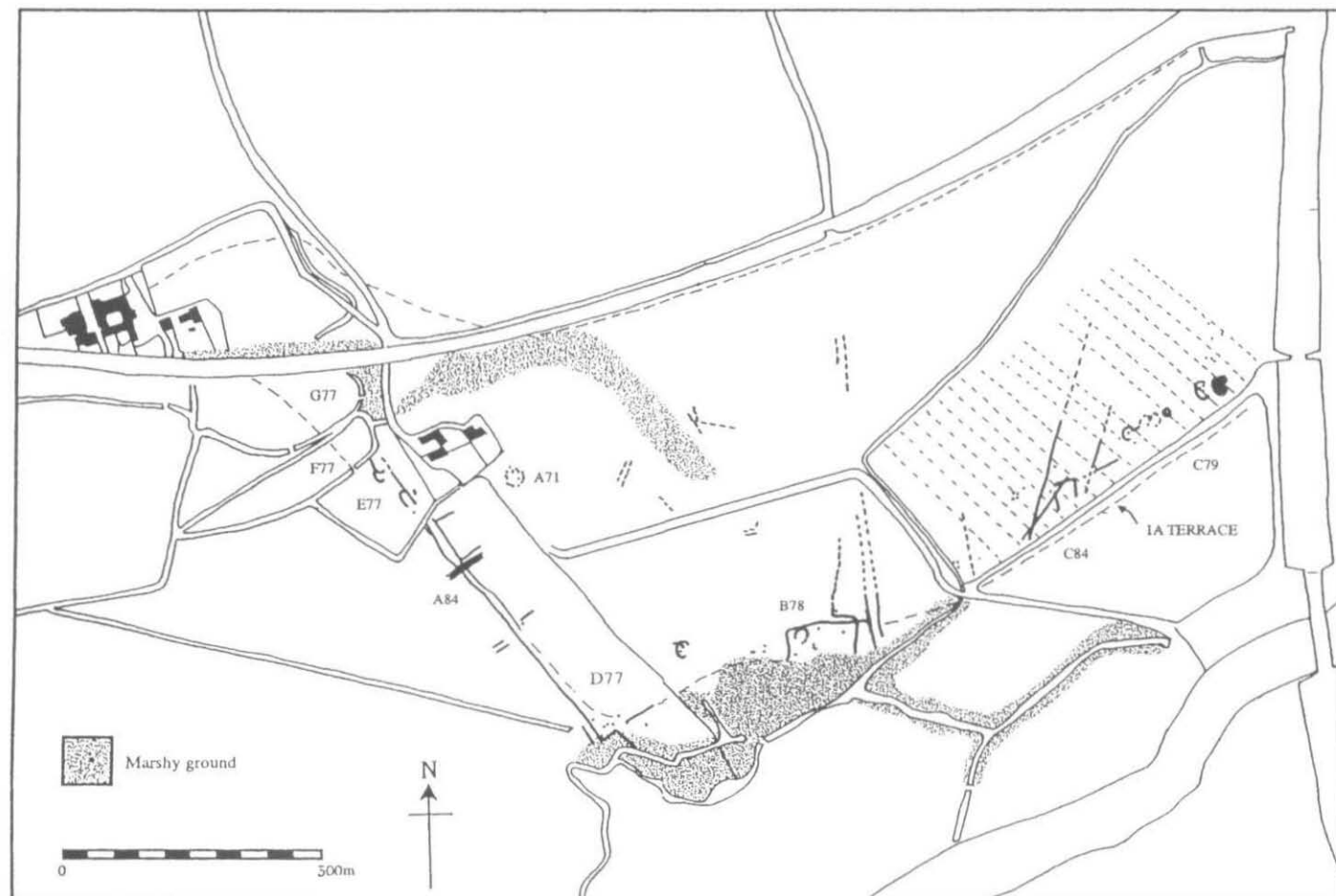


Fig. 2. Overall plan of Thrupp sites.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

## SITE A 1971 (NGR SU 520972) Figs. 2 and 3

Excavations were directed by B. Skellington and L. Hale. Soils were machine stripped prior to excavation and many features were damaged. Unstratified finds included 121 sherds (1,467 g.) of Middle Iron Age (hereafter MIA), 35 sherds (886 g.) of Late Iron Age (hereafter LIA) and 25 sherds (143 g.) of RB pottery.

*Pits*

D1-D5 were circular, vertical-sided and flat-bottomed, c. 1.1 m. wide x 0.35 m.-0.4 m. deep. They were filled with a soft brown sandy loam containing bone, flints, burnt stones and burnt clay. D3 contained a fragment of iron. Pottery (MIA) included 4 sherds (184 g.) from D1, 19 sherds (334 g.) from D3, 25 sherds (54 g.) from D4 and 13 sherds (68 g.) from D5.

P1-P4 and P6 were oval to circular in plan c. 0.9 m. wide x 0.05 m.-0.35 m. deep. Fills were sandy-red loams containing flints, burnt stones and burnt clay. Pottery (MIA) included 2 sherds (10 g.) from P1, 33 sherds (330 g.) from P2, 7 sherds (74 g.) from P3 and 14 sherds (13 g.) from P4.

P10 was rectangular containing three postholes 0.15 m. wide x 0.25 m. deep with a red sandy loam fill. One posthole contained bone fragments.

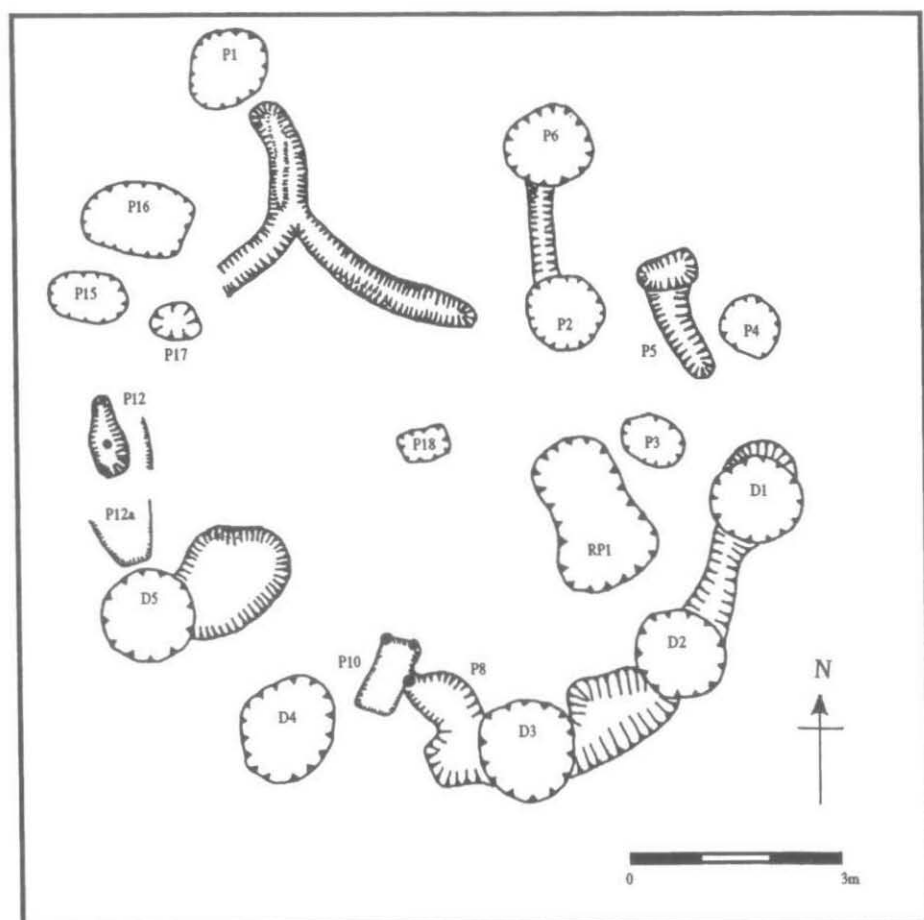


Fig. 3. Site A1971 excavation plan.

P15 and P16 were oval, vertical-sided and flat-bottomed *c.* 1.1 m. wide x 0.35 m. deep. They were filled with black loam, ash, charcoal, burnt clay and stones and contained bone and flints. Five sherds (32 g.) of MIA pottery came from P16.

P17 was small oval and flat-bottomed and filled with a sandy loam containing bone, flints, 8 sherds (56 g.) of MIA and 1 sherd (10 g.) of LIA pottery.

P18 was rectangular and filled with a light sandy loam containing bone.

R2: Nine sherds (42 g.) of MIA pottery came from this unplanned feature.

RP1 was vertical-sided, flat-bottomed, rectangular (1.85 m. x 1.17 m.) and 0.65 m. deep. A layer of clean sandy loam containing two whole MIA vessels (66 sherds, 5,925 g.) overlay black loam with concentrations of bone and stones at one end and a dark, sandy loam with fewer unquantified MIA sherds and bones at the other. Other finds included a bone weaving comb, an incised piece of bone, a perforated triangular loomweight (hereafter PTL), a flat perforated stone (all untraceable), a single LIA sherd (15 g.), flints and a residual sherd of Neolithic Peterborough Ware.

A1, A2, A3 occurred next to Site A 1971 but their precise location was not recorded. They were oval *c.* 1 m. x 0.7 m. wide and filled with a dirty sandy soil containing bone, burnt clay and flints. A1 contained 7 sherds (30 g.) of MIA pottery.

### *Gullies*

These were observed between pits D1-D2, D2-D3 and D3-P10 (P8 on plan), were shallow and uneven, *c.* 0.65 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep and filled with a light sandy loam containing bone. One section contained 7 sherds (35 g.) of MIA pottery.

P5 was 1.55 m. long x 0.3 m. deep and filled with black soil overlaying a light sandy soil containing MIA sherds, bones and flints.

P12 was 0.8 m. long x 0.2 m. deep containing MIA sherds and flints.

Two gullies between pits P1 and P2 and pits P2 and P6 were U-shaped, 0.35 m. wide x 0.15 m. deep. The former contained daub and bone.

A ditch (1.27 m. wide x 0.75 m. deep) oriented N.-S. and located 54.3 m. W. of the main site had a V-shaped profile. It was filled with soft brown silt overlaying gravelly soil containing bone, 4 sherds (70 g.) of MIA and 1 sherd (22 g.) of LIA pottery.

### *Other Features*

'Area 2' was a 0.27 m. deep depression with a sandy fill containing MIA sherds, bone and flints. An area of compacted clay and burnt stones on the W. side of pit D2 may have been a hearth. A posthole (P12) contained 2 sherds (11 g.) of MIA pottery.

## **SITE D 1977 (NGR SU 526974) Fig. 2**

Surface finds in this area included 1 sherd (10 g.) of MIA and 8 sherds (73 g.) of RB pottery.

## **SITE E 1977 (NGR SU 518971) Figs. 2 and 4**

Excavations were directed by G. Jones and J. Wallis and found two IA hut gullies (3 and 5). 3 had a burnt cobble packing and contained 13 sherds (237 g.) of MIA, 25 sherds (162 g.) of LIA and 1 sherd (146 g.) of RB pottery. A ditch (7) cut gully 5 and contained a PTL fragment (310 g.) and 1 sherd (247 g.) of LIA pottery. It was presumably a continuation of one of the N.-S. gullies recorded later at Site A 1984. Feature 4 (not on plan) was a silty pit-like feature containing stonework and 8 sherds (185 g.) of LIA pottery. Unstratified recoveries included 11 sherds (202 g.) of MIA, 11 sherds (245 g.) of LIA and 21 sherds (262 g.) of RB pottery. An enclosure (E2) contained flint, a cattle lower molar and 22 sherds (452 g.) of RB pottery.

## **SITE F 1977 (NGR SU 517971) Fig. 2**

A continuation of ditch E1 (Site E 1977) was observed here. Unstratified recoveries included 7 sherds (54 g.) of RB pottery.

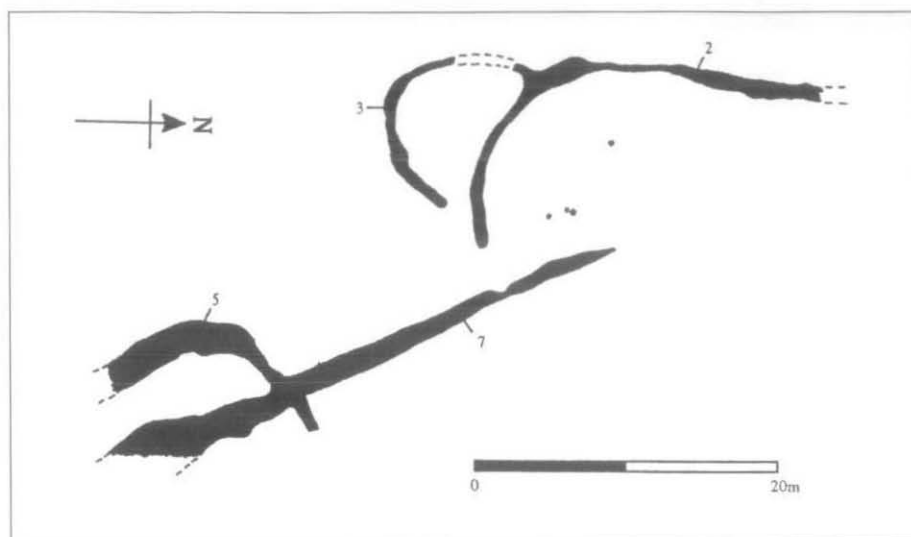


Fig. 4. Site E1977 excavation plan.

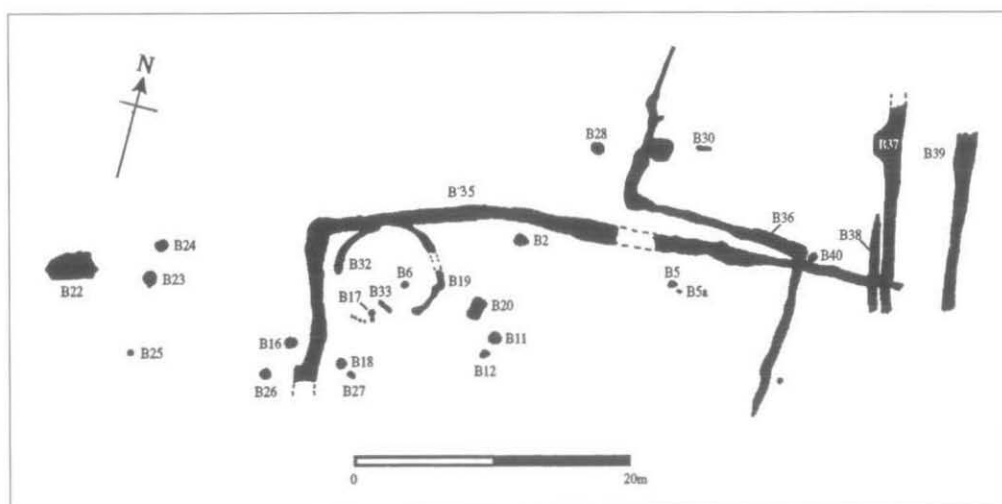


Fig. 5. Site B1978 excavation plan.

# SITE G 1977 (NGR SU 518972) Fig. 2

Ditch E1 (Sites E 1977 and F 1977) was also noted here together with possible penannular gullies which were machine damaged. Unstratified recoveries included 4 sherds (52 g.) of MIA and 3 sherds (160 g.) of RB pottery.

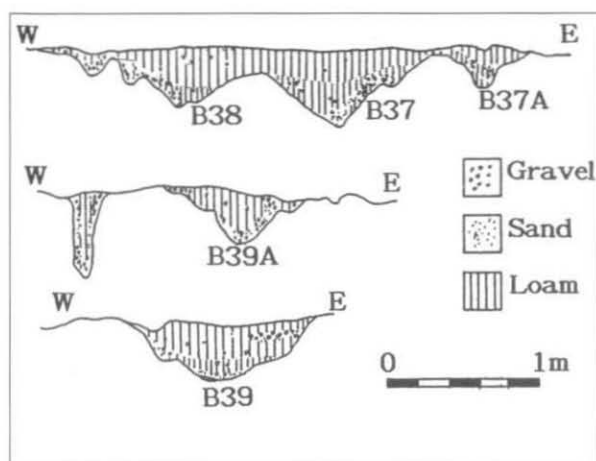


Fig. 6. Site B1978 sections.

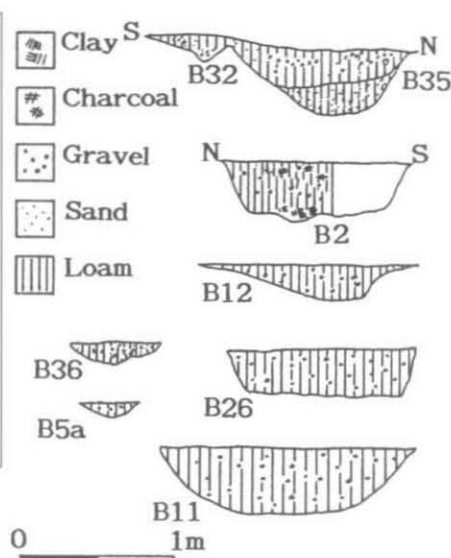


Fig. 7. Site B1978 sections.

#### SITE B 1978 (NGR SU 523970) Figs. 2 and 5

This site was fieldwalked in 1976 and 1977. Four sherds (66 g.) of MIA pottery were found. During 1977 an evaluation trench 11 m. x 2 m. was dug 25 m. from the S. boundary which exposed a trackway and ditches. Its precise location was not recorded. The following ditches were sectioned (Fig. 6). B37 was 1.6 m. wide x 0.7 m. deep. B37a was 0.75 m. wide x 0.4 m. deep. B39 was V-shaped, 1.2 m. wide x 0.55 m. deep. B39a was 1.25 m. wide x 0.45 m. deep. All were filled with a red-brown gravelly loam containing no finds. B37 and B39 were traceable for 250 m. Ditches B37a, B38 and B39a ran parallel to B37 and B39 and formed discontinuous lengths visible on the gravel surface for no more than a few metres.

In early 1978 subsoil was mechanically stripped from the S. edge of the site. Excavations were directed by G. Jones and J. Wallis and the following features were found (Fig. 7).

##### Linear Features

B35 formed two sides of a rectangular enclosure covering an area of at least 65 m. x 25 m. Of this ditch 88 m. was cleaned. Neither terminal was located but it had a U- to V-shaped profile, c. 2 m. wide x c. 0.55 m. deep. The fill was a red-brown gravelly loam containing cattle bones and the right lower jaw of a dog. Surface finds (6 sherds, 86 g., of MIA pottery) were recovered near penannular gully B32.

B36 (possibly recut) was traced for 66 m. It was c. 1.1 m. wide x 0.35 m. deep with a red-brown gravelly loam fill.

##### Penannular Gullies

B19 and B32 (only recognised later as parts of the same feature and hence labelled separately in Fig. 5) were badly damaged, 12 m. in diameter, mostly surviving as stains in the gravel surface. Surviving parts were up to 0.6 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep with a U- to V-shaped profile filled with a red-brown gravelly loam containing burnt limestone and quartzite cobbles and 25 sherds (425 g.) of Early Iron Age (hereafter EIA) and MIA pottery.

### Pits

B2, B5, B11, B12, B16, B23 and B26 were circular or oval in plan with gently sloping or vertical sides and flat bottoms. They were *c.* 1.5 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep and filled with red-brown loam with gravel. B2 and B11 contained charcoal, burnt bone (a cattle scapula in B2), quartzite and limestone cobbles and fired clay. B2 produced a lead object (see below) and B12 a PTL fragment. Pottery recoveries were 28 sherds (951 g.) of EIA and MIA from B2, 6 sherds (51 g.) of MIA from B5, 50 sherds (918 g.) of EIA from B11 and 4 sherds (65 g.) of MIA from B16.

Features containing MIA pottery, whose dimensions and contents were otherwise unrecorded, were B5a (1 sherd, 31 g.), B7 (13 sherds, 119 g.), B8 (8 sherds, 72 g.), B9 (6 sherds, 261 g.), B18 (7 sherds, 155 g.) and B28 (1 sherd, 19 g.). A slide of the contents of pit (?) B9 shows a small, slender mammalian tibia (possibly sheep/goat) and two cattle jaws.

B20 and B30 were rectangular. B20 measured 1.5 m. x 2.4 m. and contained 4 sherds (46 g.) of EIA and MIA pottery. B30 measured 1.5 m. x 0.6 m.

B22 (possibly a hearth) was a disturbed circular depression 3 m. wide x 0.1 m. deep containing a bone pin, a PTL fragment, large quantities of burnt limestone and quartzite, charcoal and burnt clay. Bones are identified from a slide and include cattle bones (limbs and toes, ribs and at least two jaws) and at least three sheep jaws.

### Postholes

Six circular marks (B31) on the SW. edge of linear feature B32 may have been postholes, as may have B5a. None were excavated.

### Pig Burials

A complete pig burial was found *c.* 5 m. SW. of pit B26. It was badly damaged by machinery and could not be excavated. Bones were pitted and badly eroded and were obviously ancient. A second complete pig burial, in the same condition, was located *c.* 85 m. NW. of the enclosure.

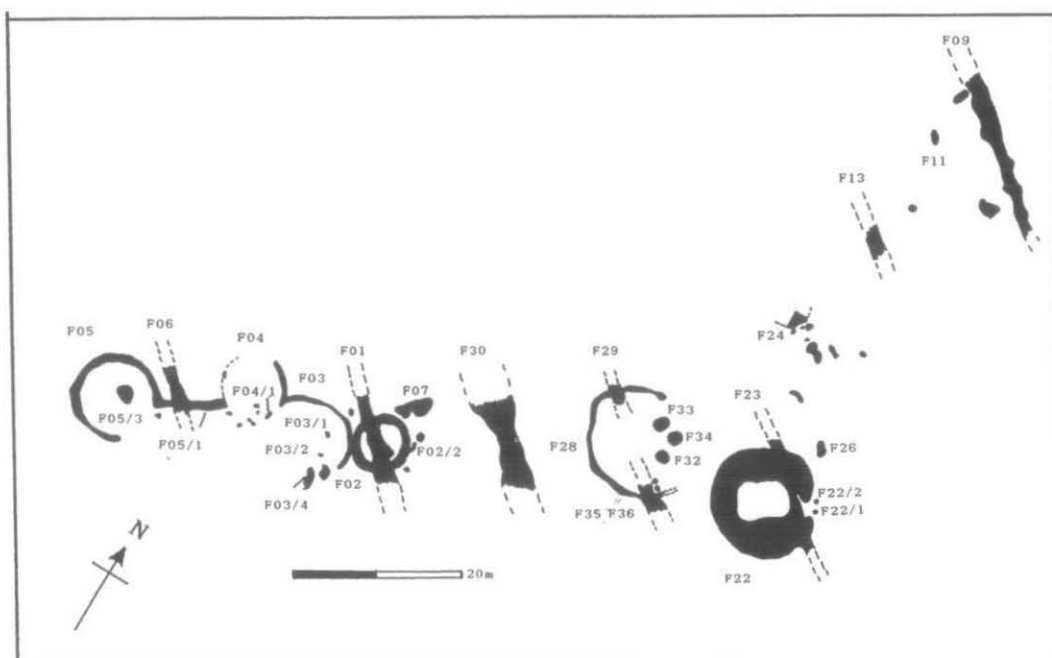


Fig. 8. Site C1979 excavation plan.



**SITE C 1979** (NGR SU 525973) Figs. 2 and 8

Machine stripping exposed penannular gullies, pits and ditches. These were excavated under the direction of G. Jones and J. Wallis. A grooved ware pit (F03/3) excavated at the site is described elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Many features were cut by a medieval ridge and furrow field system. Unstratified recoveries comprised 223 sherds (1,661 g.) of MIA pottery.

*Enclosure*

F28 (Fig. 9) formed a curving 30 m. gully *c.* 0.3 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep with a V-shaped profile. Postholes *c.* 0.3 m. deep at 0.5 m. intervals occurred along its length. Its fill of red-brown loam with gravel contained burnt clay and 2 sherds (21 g.) of MIA pottery.

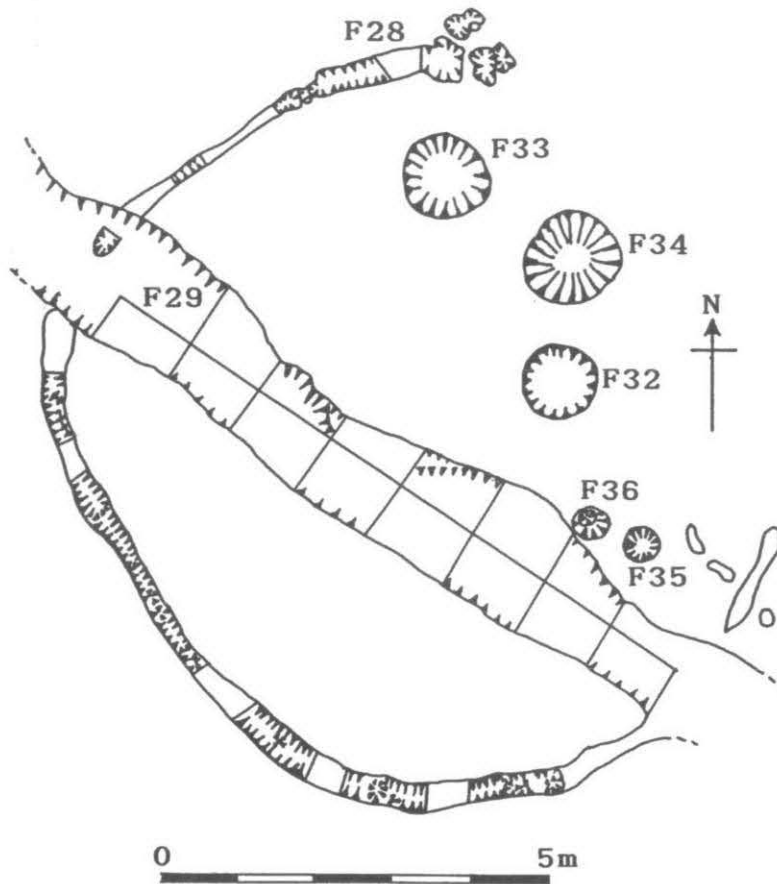


Fig. 9. Site C1979, F28 excavation plan.

<sup>4</sup> J. Wallis, *op. cit.* note 2.

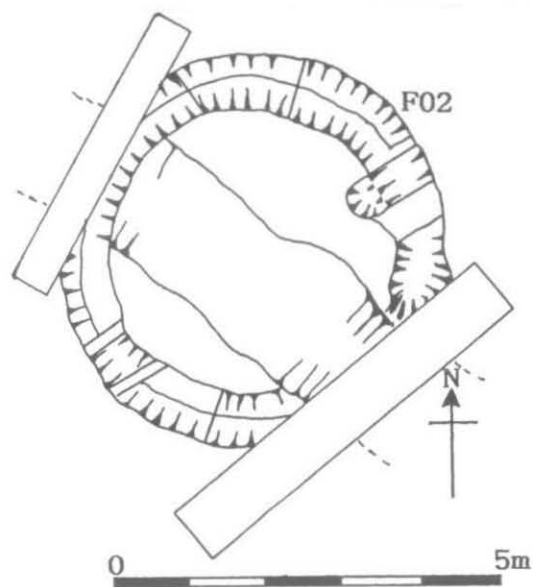


Fig. 10. Site C1979, F02 excavation plan.

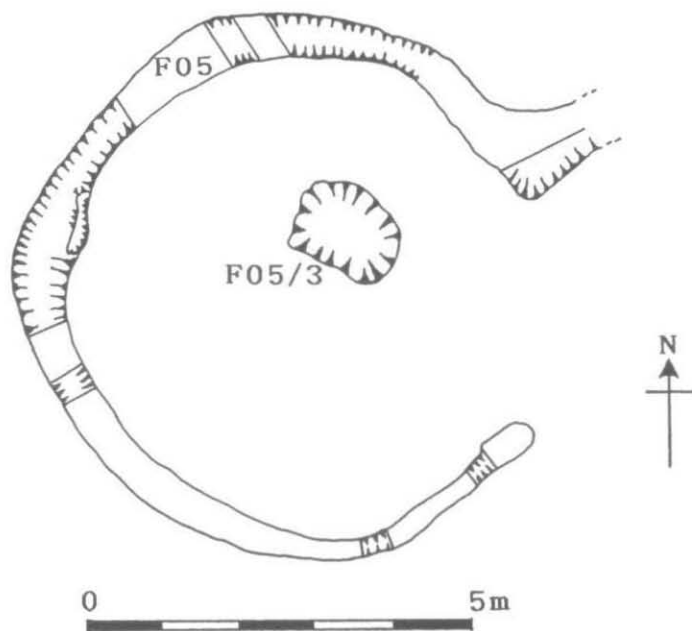


Fig. 11. Site C1979, F05 excavation plan.

*Penannular Gullies*

Five were recorded, all filled with red-brown gravelly loams.

F02 (Fig. 10) was 5 m. wide, abutted posthole F02/2 and gully F03 and had a 4 m. wide SE. entrance. Its E. terminal was rounded in plan *c.* 1.1 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep.

F03 was semicircular with its open side to the S. It was *c.* 10 m. in diameter, *c.* 0.6 wide and *c.* 0.2 m. deep with a rounded profile. Its W. terminal (F03/5) was rounded, *c.* 1.5 m. in diameter with a depth of 0.2 m. The fill contained 39 sherds (109 g.) of MIA pottery and quartzite cobbles. The E. terminal (F03/4) contained 3 sherds (20 g.) of MIA pottery.

F04 was semicircular *c.* 7 m. across, *c.* 1 m. wide with a U-shaped profile with a depth of 0.2 m. Its W. terminal existed as a stained area in the gravel surface and contained burnt limestone and quartzite pieces and bone. The intersection between F03 and F04 was 0.63 m. wide, 1 m. in length, 0.2 m. deep and oval in shape with a rounded profile. Its fill contained limestone cobbles and 5 sherds (12 g.) of EIA and MIA pottery.

F05 (Fig. 11) was *c.* 7 m. in diameter with a SE. entrance. Its profile varied from a shallow U- to a deeper V-shape (0.02 m.-0.2 m. in depth). Its S. terminal was oval in plan and *c.* 0.8 m. wide. The fill contained charcoal, burnt limestone and quartzite, a large sherd (254 g.) of a decorated MIA globular bowl and an iron nail. A straight gully (F05/1) containing 30 sherds (186 g.) of MIA pottery ran from the N. terminal of F05 for 20 m. F05/1 had a mean width of 1 m. and a depth of 0.4 m.

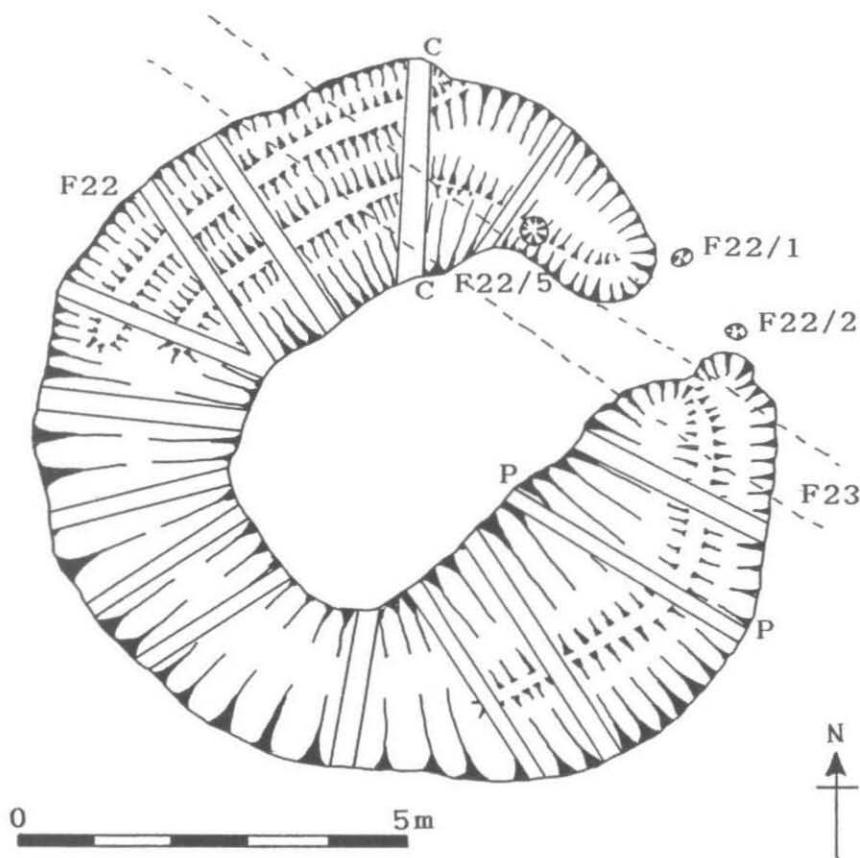


Fig. 12. Site C1979, F22 excavation plan.

F22 (Fig. 12) was c. 10 m. in diameter with a SE. entrance flanked by postholes (F22/1 and F22/2). It was recut at least three times but their sequence was not recorded. Profiles were V- or U-shaped and were 3 m.-4 m. wide x 0.4 m.-1.2 m. deep. Finds comprised burnt and unburnt limestone and quartzite cobbles, cattle bones, 658 sherds (4,761 g.) of EIA and MIA, 9 sherds (34 g.) of LIA and 17 sherds (78 g.) of RB pottery. Other finds included a bronze coin of Tasciovanus struck at Camulodunum (Colchester) between 20 BC and 10 AD, a bow brooch (see below) and a Palaeolithic biface (see below).

### *Pits*

F03/4, F05/3, and F26 were oval and irregular c. 2 m. wide x c. 0.25 m. deep with rounded profiles. Fills contained burnt limestone and quartzite cobbles and in the case of F05/3, 2 sherds (17 g.) of MIA pottery.

F32-F34 were circular, straight-sided and flat-based c. 1.5 m. wide. Fills contained burnt limestone and quartzite cobbles, burnt clay, charcoal and bones. F32 contained 23 sherds (470 g.) of MIA pottery and an iron nail.

F11 contained 2 sherds (4 g.) of MIA pottery. All pits had red-brown gravelly loam fills.

### *Postholes*

Several were recorded, all with red-brown gravelly loam fills.

F02/2 had a rounded profile, was 0.48 m. wide x 0.28 m. deep. It abutted penannular gully F02.

F03/1 and F03/2, within penannular gully F03, had rounded profiles. F03/1 was 0.41 m. wide x 0.28 m. deep and F03/2, 0.38 m. wide x 0.07 m. deep.

F05/6, within penannular gully F05, had a rounded profile, was 0.88 m. wide x 0.35 m. deep. This was not recorded on plan.

F22/1 and F22/2 were postholes flanking the entrance to penannular gully F22 with widths of c. 0.3 m., depths of c. 0.12 m. with U-shaped profiles.

F22/5, in the N. terminal of penannular gully F22, was earlier than, or contemporary with, the earliest phase of F22. It was 0.42 m. wide x 0.22 m. deep.

F24 was oval in plan with a U-shaped profile, 0.55 m. wide x 0.14 m. deep. Its fill contained quartzite cobbles and 1 sherd (86 g.) of MIA pottery.

F35 and F36 occurred near enclosure F28. Both had off-centre post pipes and were c. 0.6 m. wide x 0.4 m. deep, with the pipe a further 0.3 m. in depth. Fills contained quartzite cobbles.

### *Adolescent Burial, Feature F04/1*

A hollow c. 0.3 m. deep on the E. side of penannular gully F04 was filled with red-brown loam containing the crouched inhumation of an adolescent (see below). It falls into Whimster's category of 'Pit burial and related traditions'<sup>5</sup> and forms part of the increasing trend towards burial within settlements during the IA.<sup>6</sup> Comparable examples include LIA male crouch burials from Ashville<sup>7</sup> and Barton Court Farm.<sup>8</sup>

### *Adult Burial*

The leg bones of an adult male(?) oriented NW.-SE. were found in feature F31 (near penannular gully F03). It was thought initially that the upper parts had been lost during machining but it is equally possible that the body was incomplete when buried. The right leg is complete and the left removed above the knee, only the distal end of the left femur being present.

<sup>5</sup> R. Whimster, 'Iron Age Burial Practice in Southern Britain', *Proc. of Prehistoric Soc.* 43 (1977), 317.

<sup>6</sup> G. Wait, *Ritual and Religion in Iron Age Britain* (BAR 149i, 1985), 88.

<sup>7</sup> 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 Rep. 28, OAU Report 1, 1978), 37.

<sup>8</sup> D. Miles (ed.), *Archaeology at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, Oxon.* (CBA Research Rep. 50, OAU Report 3, 1986), 30.

### Other Features

F07 was an irregular oval feature near the N. edge of F02. It dimensions were 3.8 m. x 2 m. with a shallow profile and a depth of 0.2 m. It was filled with red-brown loam with gravel containing limestone pieces.

### SITE C 1984 (NGR SU 524972) Figs. 2 and 13

Excavations were directed by N. Trippett and found a W. continuation of Site C1979. Unstratified recoveries comprised 2 sherds (26 g.) of MIA pottery.

### Ditches

Ditches 47, 49 and 50 formed three sides of a rectangular enclosure with expanded terminals (48) with an entrance oriented NW. Ditches were 0.6 m.-1.1 m. wide x 0.2 m.-0.3 m. deep with U-shaped profiles. 47 was filled with a red-brown gravelly loam and 48-50 contained reddish-grey silty loams with gravel. 49 contained 8 sherds (15 g.) of MIA pottery.

Ditch 45 ran NE.-SW. for at least 20 m, and probably 40 m. It was 0.6 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep and was filled with red-brown loam with gravel overlaying a light brown gravelly loam.

### Pits

Pits 41 and 42 were flat-based and circular with gently sloping sides. 41 was 1.5 m. wide, 0.15 m. deep and was filled with dark-brown sandy clay loam containing charcoal and burnt stone. It contained 4 sherds (31 g.) of MIA pottery. 42 was 2.4 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep and filled with fine red-brown loam mixed with gravel. It contained 14 sherds (58 g.) of MIA pottery.

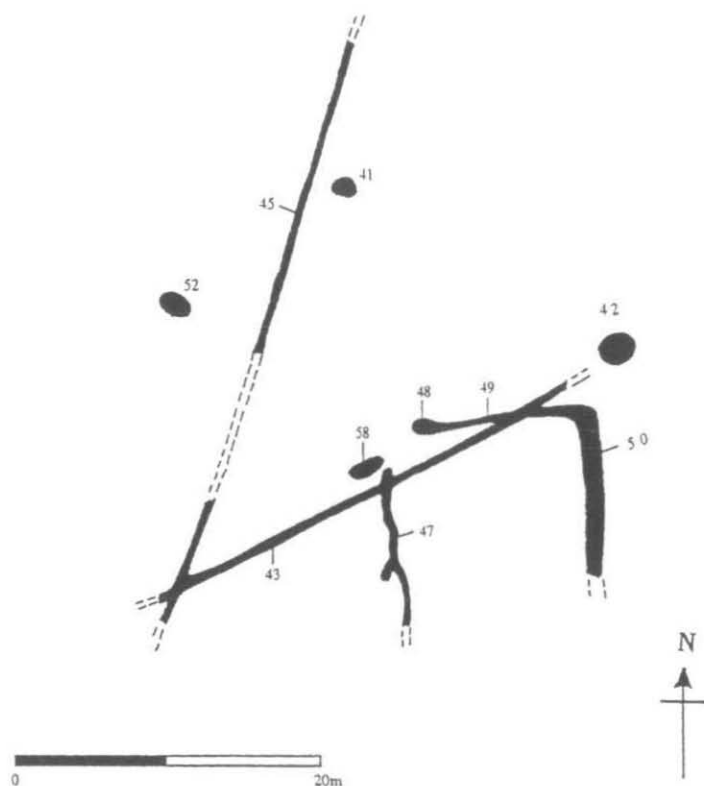


Fig. 13. Site C1984 excavation plan.

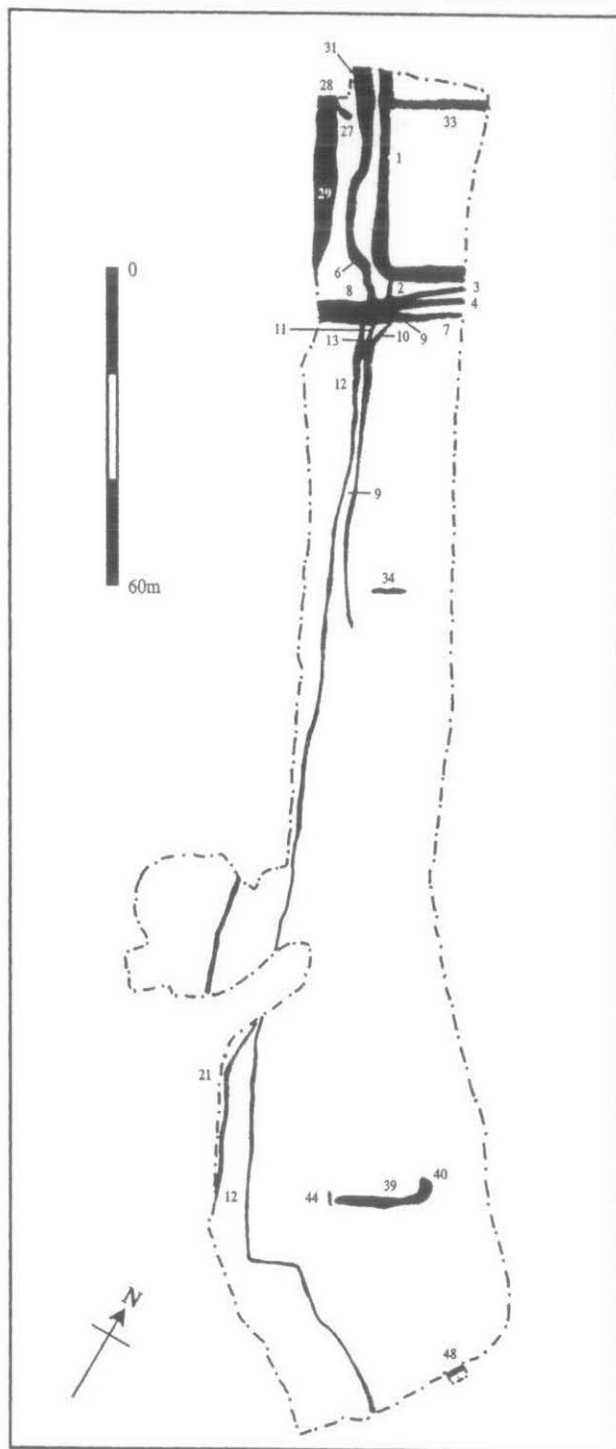


Fig. 14. Site A1984 excavation plan.

Pit 52 was oval, 1.2 m. in length and filled with a red-brown gravelly loam containing daub, charcoal and 9 sherds (76 g.) of MIA pottery.

Pit 58 was oval, 1.5 m. x 1 m. with an irregular V-shaped profile, 0.4 m. deep, and filled with a dark-grey sandy silty loam.

#### SITE A 1984 (NGR SU 520970) Figs. 2 and 14

Excavations were directed by N. Trippett. A series of 1st- to 2nd-century RB ditches were located. All were badly damaged by machinery during topsoil stripping. Unstratified recoveries comprised 10 sherds (56 g.) of MIA and 3 sherds (37 g.) of RB pottery.

##### *N.-S. Aligned Ditches*

Ditch 1, 36 m. long, 2.8 m. wide x 0.5 m. deep had a U-shaped profile. A fill of firm black peat and silt overlay a mid-grey sandy silt with gravel overlaying light-grey gravelly sand. It had been recut. Finds included charcoal, bone, 8 sherds (85 g.) of MIA, 6 sherds (222 g.) of LIA and 4 sherds (106 g.) of RB pottery.

Ditch 2 was 0.5 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep. A fill of yellow sandy gravel with iron-stained silt overlay orange iron-stained gravel.

Ditch 5 (Fig. 15), 1.2 m. wide x 0.4 m. deep was filled with a light-grey iron-stained silt with some gravel overlaying a clayey silt with iron-stained peat. It cut ditches 7 and 5/1 (its original cut) and was cut by ditches 4 and 8.

Ditch 6 (Fig. 15), 0.4 m. wide x 0.05 m. deep was filled with a grey-brown sandy silt with gravel overlaying a manganese-stained sandy fill. It was cut by ditch 3. It contained flint, bone and 3 sherds (32 g.) of MIA, 1 sherd (10 g.) of LIA and 1 sherd (18 g.) of RB pottery.

Ditch 9 (Fig. 15), 0.48 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep, was filled with an iron-stained sandy-buff silt with gravel containing burnt limestone and quartzite cobbles. It was cut by ditches 7 and 10.

Ditch 10 (Fig. 15), 0.5 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep, was filled with grey partially iron-stained sand. It cut ditch 9.

Ditch 12 (Fig. 15), 0.54 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep, was filled with a black peat with sandy silt containing burnt quartzite cobbles.

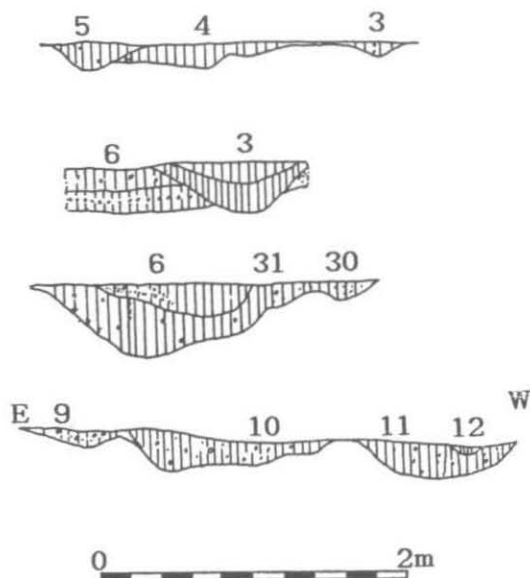


Fig. 15. Site A1984 sections.

Ditch 21, 0.3 m. wide x 0.19 m. deep, was filled with slightly clayey grey sandy silt with iron-stained gravel.

Ditch 30 (Fig. 15), 0.44 m. wide x 0.15 m. deep, was filled with buff-grey clay with silt and sand. It was a recut of ditch 6.

Ditches 31 (Fig. 15) and 40 were visible as stains in the gravel surface.

#### *E-W. Aligned Ditches*

Ditch 3 (Fig. 15), 0.42 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep, was filled with a grey-buff silt with gravel overlaying mid-grey iron-stained silt. It was cut by ditch 4 and cut ditches 2 and 6.

Ditch 4 (Fig. 15), 0.17 m. wide x 0.64 m. deep, was filled with light-grey silt with a little iron-stained gravel. It cut ditch 3 and the original cut of 5 (5/1) and contained RB pottery and bone.

Ditch 7, 1 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep, was filled with a light-grey silt with some peat and gravel. It cut ditch 9, was cut by ditches 8 and 5 and contained 2 sherds (38 g.) of RB pottery and bone.

Ditch 8, 4 m. wide x 1.2 m. deep, was filled with dark-brown peat with sand and silt containing 1 sherd (12 g.) of MIA and 1 sherd (8 g.) of RB pottery. Its terminal was 0.5 m. wide x 0.2 m. deep.

Ditch 13 was 1.2 m. wide x 0.14 m. deep with a U-shaped profile and had a fill of grey clay with silty sand and some gravel overlaying orange iron-stained sand and gravel.

Ditch 33 was filled with a grey-buff silty sand with gravel and was cut by ditch 1. It contained 1 sherd (16 g.) of MIA, 2 sherds (112 g.) of LIA, and 1 sherd (18 g.) of RB pottery.

Ditch 34, 0.32 m. wide x 0.17 m. deep, was filled with a buff-grey silty clay with gravel overlaying compacted sandy gravel.

Ditch 39 was 0.8 m. wide x 0.3 m. deep and had a U-shaped profile. It contained a fill of brown silty clay overlaying yellow-brown silty sand overlaying dark-grey clay with gravel and stones.

Ditch 48 was only seen in section.

### THE POTTERY

Descriptions of IA pottery follow classifications used by DeRoche.<sup>9</sup> In total 26.9 kg (1,948 sherds) of pottery were recovered from the Thrupp sites comprising 21.5 kg (1,683 sherds) of EIA and MIA, 3.6 kg (141 sherds) of LIA and 1.8 kg (124 sherds) of RB.

#### *Iron Age Pottery*

Pottery was examined by fabric, form, decoration, manufacture, surface treatment and firing.

#### *Fabrics*

Four major fabrics are distinguishable which are separated into four or five sub-groups.

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Group 1 | <p>A. Moderate fine to very fine non-fossil shell platelets and sub-rounded calcareous inclusions. Fine sparse to moderate ochreous red inclusions. Sparse to moderate sub-rounded to rounded fine to medium quartz grains.</p> <p>B. With little or no shell.</p> <p>C. With abundant fossil shell.</p> <p>D. With some oolitic limestone.</p> |
|---------|---|

<sup>9</sup> C.D. DeRoche, 'The Iron Age Pottery', in M. Parrington, op. cit. note 7, p. 37.



- Group 2    A: Fine to moderate medium sub-rounded to rounded quartz grains in sparse to moderate quantities.  
               B: With angular quartz grains (larger pieces crushed).  
               C: With moderate to abundant grains of limonite.  
               D: With some calcareous inclusions.  
               E: With some grog.
- Group 3    A. Coarse to medium calcareous inclusions including fossil shell in moderate to very abundant quantities.  
               B. With fine calcareous inclusions.  
               C. With abundant oolitic limestone.  
               D. With some coarse quartz grains.
- Group 4    A. Moderate to abundant medium grog inclusions.  
               B. With some quartz grains.  
               C. With moderate calcareous inclusions and fossil shell.  
               D. With both quartz inclusions and fossil shell.

*Proportions of inclusions are: sparse = < 20%, moderate = 20%-40%, abundant = > 40%. Sizes of inclusions are: fine = < 0.25 mm., medium = 0.25-1.00 mm., coarse = > 1.00 mm.*

Inclusions and clays for fabrics were available locally. The origin of Group 1 appears to be the local alluvial clays from the Thames floodplain beside which Thrupp stands. Non-fossil mollusc shells are particularly characteristic. Quartz sand and particles of limestone are also present in the mixture. Other fabrics sometimes contain non-fossil shell platelets but alternative clay sources were available locally. Gault and Kimmeridge clays outcrop on the opposite side of the Thames at Warren Farm c. 500 m. due S. of Thrupp (NGR SU 523966) and Kimmeridge clay 1 km. due N. (NGR SU 523982). Oolitic and corallian limestone were available in the gravels on which Thrupp stands. Lower Greensand occurs between the clays at Warren Farm. Some Group 2 fabrics may contain Ferruginous (Portland) sands which outcrop 2 km. to the NE. on Nuneham Rise (NGR SU 545979). The use of local materials compares with other sites of similar date, such as Ashville,<sup>10</sup> Farmoor<sup>11</sup> and Watkins Farm, Northmoor.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age Pottery*

Quantities and fabrics of EIA and MIA pottery by site are presented in Table 1. Group 1 is the most common EIA and MIA fabric comprising 70.6% by sherd weight, 59.8% by number. This is followed by Group 2 (15.4% and 27.9%, respectively) then Group 3 (11.7% and 9.1%, respectively) and finally Group 4 (2.3% and 3.2%, respectively). Most recognisable vessels can be classified as coarseware barrel jars (DeRoche, B1) (Fig. 16: 1-3; Fig. 17: 1), globular jars (DeRoche, B2) (Fig. 17: 2) or fineware globular bowls (DeRoche, D) (Fig. 18: 1-5, Fig. 19: 1).<sup>13</sup> The majority occur in fabric Group 1. This appears to be a local variant and fabrics similar to Group 1 occur locally.<sup>14</sup> Sand is the more common temper as the IA advances. Vessels of these forms also occur in sandy (Group 2) and occasionally in shelly (Group 3) fabrics. Shelly fabrics are recognised as marking the EIA in the area and those at Thrupp are mainly classifiable as DeRoche A2 and A3 (expanded rims) (Fig. 19: 2-5). There is, however, an example of an expanded rim in fabric 1A and of a carinated sherd (DeRoche, C) also in 1A. Grog tempered pottery (Group 4) appears within the MIA assemblages but without diagnostic sherds.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> G. Lambrick and M. Robinson, *Iron Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire* (CBA Research Rep. 32, OAU Report 2, 1979), 126.

<sup>12</sup> T.G. Allen, *An Iron Age and Romano-British Enclosed Settlement at Watkin's Farm, Northmoor, Oxon.* (Thames Valley Landscapes: The Windrush Valley, vol. 1, OU Committee for Archaeology 1990), 32.

<sup>13</sup> DeRoche, *op cit.* note 9, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> G. Lambrick, 'Pitfalls and Possibilities in Iron Age Pottery Studies - Experiences in the Upper Thames Valley', in B. Cunliffe and D. Miles (eds.), *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (OU Committee for Archaeology Monograph 2, 1984), 174.

TABLE 1. QUANTITIES OF EIA AND MIA POTTERY BY FABRIC

SITE A1971			SITE G1977		
Fabric	Weight, g & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)	Fabric	Weight, g & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)
1A	7,759 (251)	88.8 (75)	1A	21 (1)	40.4 (50)
1B	3 (1)	0.03 (0.3)	3A	31 (1)	59.6 (50)
1C	27 (3)	0.3 (0.9)			
2A	379 (26)	4.3 (7.8)	SITE B1978		
2B	11 (1)	0.1 (0.3)	Weight (g.) & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)	
2D	208 (8)	2.4 (2.4)			
3A	213 (29)	2.4 (8.7)	Fabric	1,307 (77)	40 (47.2)
3D	42 (4)	0.5 (1.2)		43 (2)	1.3 (1.2)
4A	34 (6)	0.4 (1.8)	1A	208 (15)	6.4 (9.2)
4B	28 (3)	0.3 (0.9)	1B	88 (14)	2.7 (8.6)
4C	11 (1)	0.1 (0.3)	1C	1,619 (55)	49.6 (33.7)
4D	20 (1)	0.2 (0.3)	2A		
			3A		
SITE D1977			SITES C1979 & C1984		
Fabric	Weight, g & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)	Fabric	Weight, g & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)
1A	10 (1)	100 (100)	1A	4,471 (487)	55.2 (45.4)
			1B	687 (112)	8.5 (10.4)
			1D	27 (3)	0.3 (0.3)
			2A	1,938 (333)	23.9 (31.1)
			2B	41 (4)	0.5 (0.4)
			2C	102 (9)	13 (0.8)
			2D	106 (21)	13 (1.9)
			2E	50 (15)	0.6 (1.4)
			3A	353 (36)	4.4 (3.4)
			3B	87 (24)	1.1 (2.2)
			3C	13 (1)	0.2 (0.1)
			4A	15 (5)	0.2 (0.5)
			4B	10 (1)	0.1 (0.1)
			4C	68 (8)	0.8 (0.7)
			4D	121 (13)	1.5 (1.2)
SITE E1977			SITE A1984		
Fabric	Weight, g & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)	Fabric	Weight, g & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)
1A	193 (26)	32.1 (53.1)	1A	116 (13)	57.7 (56.5)
1C	56 (3)	9.3 (6.1)	2A	66 (9)	32.8 (39.2)
2A	130 (10)	21.6 (20.4)	4A	19 (1)	9.5 (4.3)
3A	140 (2)	23.3 (4.1)			
4A	82 (8)	13.6 (16.3)			
SITE F1977					
Fabric	Weight, g. & (Number)	% Weight & % (Number)			
1A	54 (4)	100 (100)			

TABLE 2. QUANTITIES OF DECORATED EIA AND MIA POTTERY BY FABRIC

SITE	Feature	Decoration & (Number of sherds)	Fabric & (Form)
A1971	RP1	Single incised line (2)	1A
	RP1	Fingertip marks within groove (2)	1A (B2)
	RP1	Fingertip marks below rim (1)	1A (B3)
	RP1	Broad groove (2)	1A (B3)
	RP1	Fingertip marks within groove (3)	* (B3)
	RP1	Fingertip marks on body (2)	* (B3)
	RP1	Broad groove (2)	* (B3)
	Unstrat.	Single incised line (3)	1A
SITE	Feature	Fabric Decoration & (Number of sherds)	& (Form)
E1977	E3	Single incised line (1)	2A
SITE	Feature	Fabric Decoration & (Number of sherds)	& (Form)
B1978	B2	Thumbnail on rim (1)	3A
	B2	Thumbnail on rim (1)	3A (C)
	B18	Thumbprint on rim (1)	3A (A2)
	Unstrat.	Thumbnail on rim (2)	3A
	Unstrat.	Thumbprints on rim (1)	3A
SITE	Feature	Fabric Decoration & (Number of sherds)	& (Form)
C1979	F3 Term.	Double curvilinear, with borders (1)	1A
	F5 Term.	Curvilinear with borders (1)	1A (D1)
	F22	Fingernail marks on rim (1)	1A (B2/D1)
	F22	Double curvilinear, no borders (1)	1A
	F22	Curvilinear, no borders (2)	1A
	F22	Single incised line (2)	1A
	F22	Single incised line (1)	2A
	F22	Curvilinear with borders (2)	2A
	F32	Single incised line (1)	1A (B1/B3)
	Unstrat.	Single incised line (1)	1A
	Unstrat.	Curvilinear, no border (4)	1A
	Unstrat.	Curvilinear, no border (4)	2A

\* Only known to authors as drawings made at time of excavation.

*Decoration.* Alluvial fabrics (Group 1) were given decoration of single broad grooves and/or fingertip impressions below the rim, or fingertip impressions on the upper body in the case of forms B2 (coarseware globular jars) and B3 (coarseware barrel jars). There is one case of a globular jar or bowl (B2 or D1) with fingernail marks on the rim in the style of the Group 3 pottery (Fig. 17: 2) and one clear case of a D1 fineware globular bowl with curvilinear decoration in the form of crescentic punchmarks within borders (Fig. 19: 1). Other sherds with decoration of the latter type (the marks are often closer to teardrop than crescent-shape and occur with or without a border) are not assignable to form (Fig. 19: 6, Fig. 20: 1-2). A few examples of body sherds with single incised lines, presumably forming curvilinear patterns, are also found (Fig. 20: 3). It appears that curvilinear decoration is associated with finewares and fingerprint/line decoration with coarsewares. Sandy (Group 2) fabrics are, apart from one example of a single incised line under the rim, associated with teardrop-shaped marks forming curvilinear decoration. Shelly (Group 3) expanded rims, where decorated, were given a line of thumb or fingernail impressions along the top of the rim (Table 2).

*Manufacture and Surface Treatment.* There is little trace of forming processes beyond the observation that all were hand-made. The occasional sherd shows traces of coiling. Most vessels must have lost traces of forming during later finishing processes.

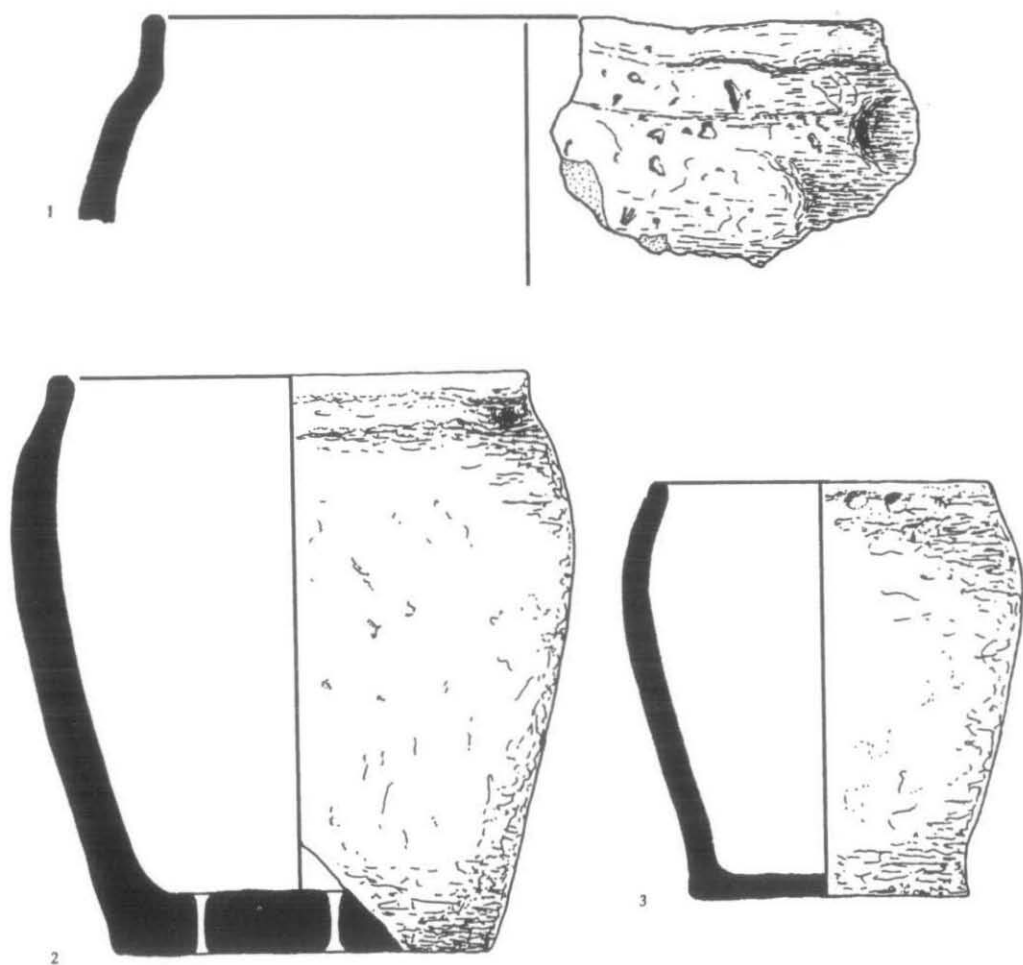


Fig. 16. Colour descriptions throughout: Outside/middle/inside. 1. (C1979, F24) MIA upright rim. Fabric 3A. (Pink-brown/grey/pink-grey). 2. (A1971, RP1) MIA barrel jar with base perforated twice and upright rim. Fabric 1A. Wiped. (Dk. grey to lt. orange-brown/dk. grey-brown). 3. (A1971, RP1) MIA barrel jar with fingertip decoration below rim. No colour description available.

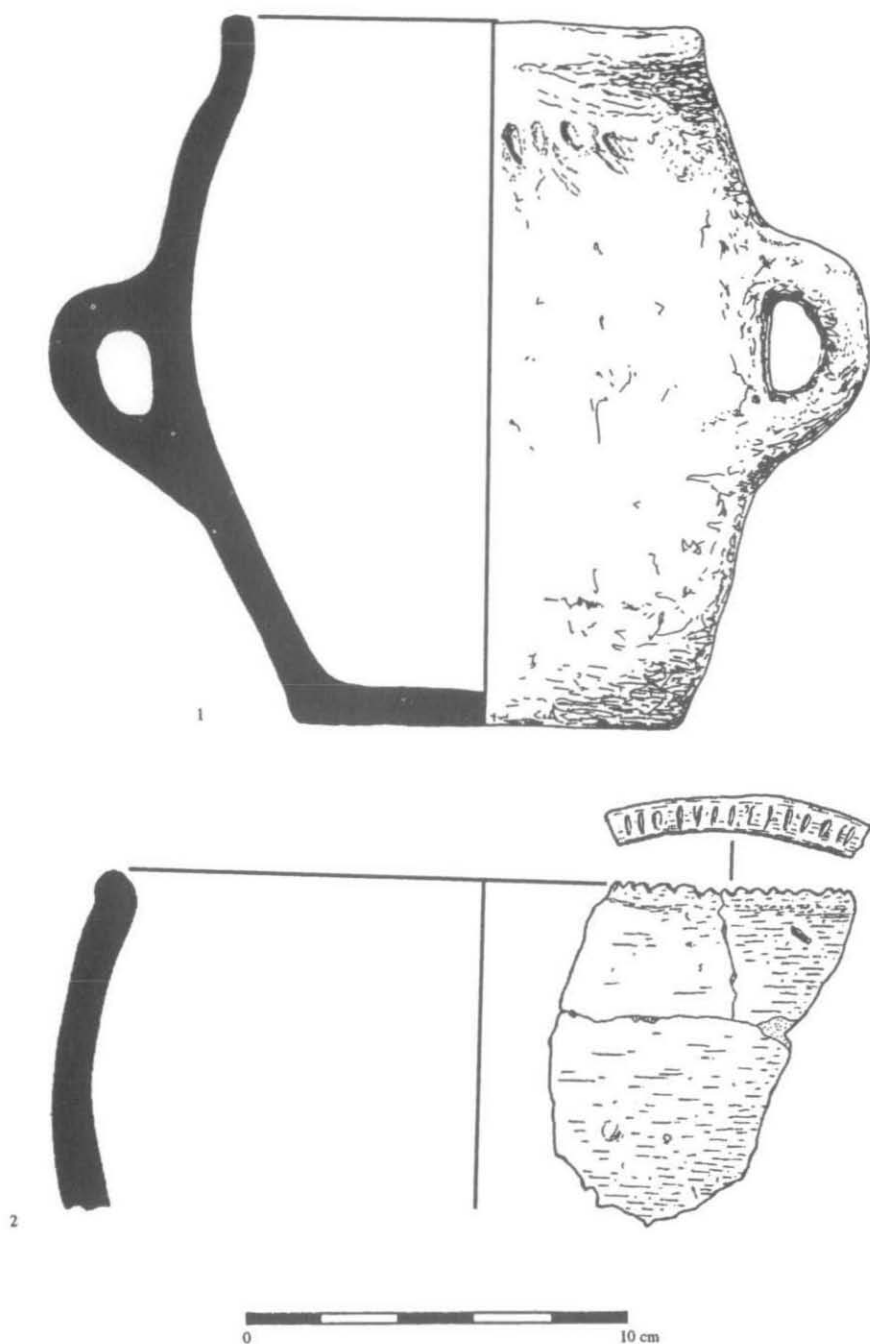


Fig. 17. 1. (A1971, RP1) MIA barrel jar with upright rim, lug handles and fingernail decoration below rim. Fabric 1A. Smoothed. (Dk. grey to lt. orange brown/black/lt. orange-brown). 2. (C1979, F22) MIA rim of globular vessel with fingernail marks. Fabric 1A. Smoothed. (Dk. grey-brown to lt. yellow brown/dk. grey to dk. grey-brown/dk. grey-brown).

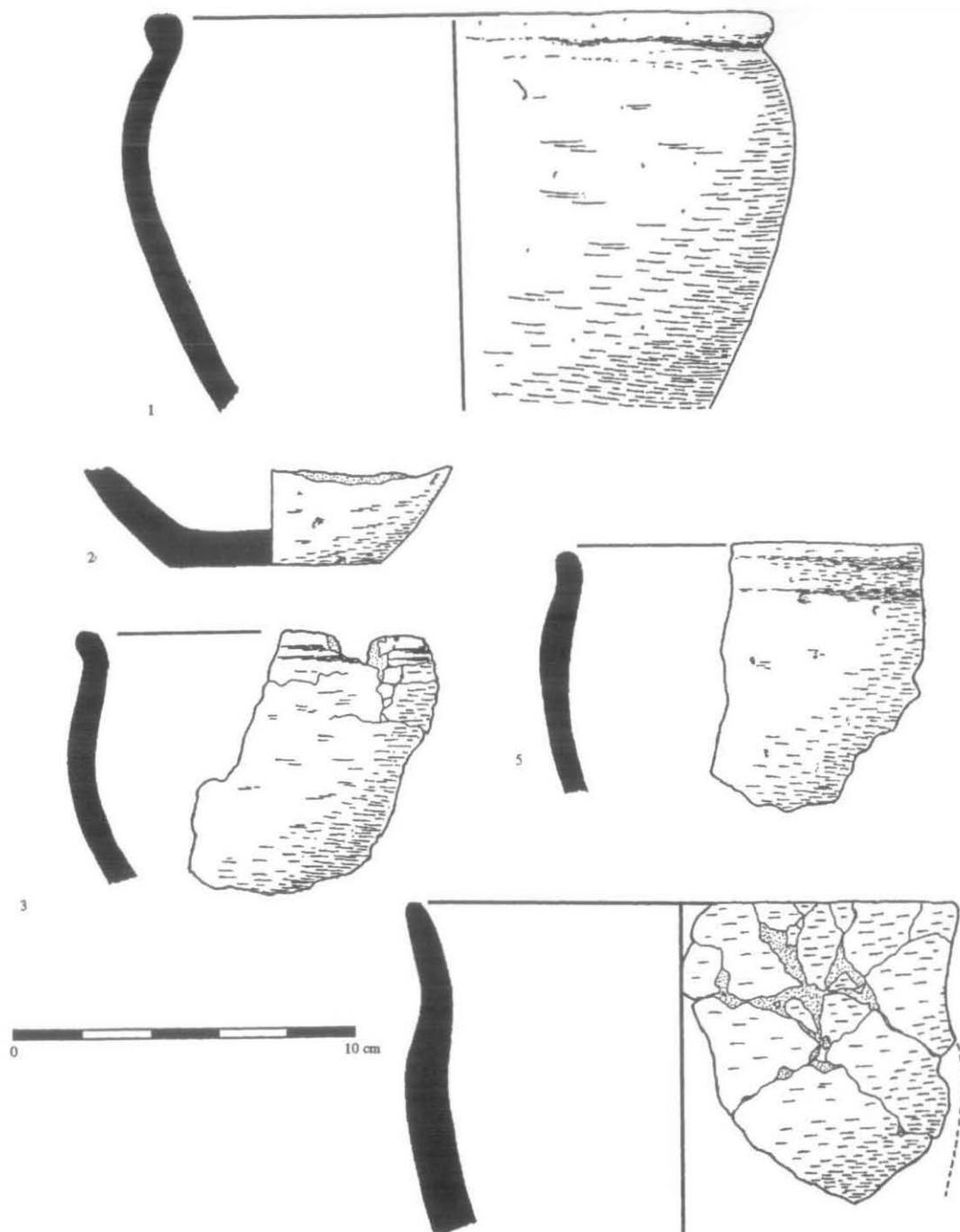


Fig. 18. 1. (B1978, B2) MIA everted rim. Fabric 1A. Smoothed. (Lt. orange-brown to dk. grey/grey/orange-brown). 2. (C1979, F22) MIA flat-bottomed base sherd. Fabric 1A. (Grey-brown/dk. grey/dk. grey). 3. (C1979, F22) MIA everted rim. Fabric 1A. Burnished. (Dk. grey-brown/dk. grey-brown/dk. grey). 4. (B1978, B9) MIA everted rim. Fabric 1B. Smoothed. (Dk. grey/dk. grey/pink-red). 5. (C1979, F05/3) MIA everted rim. Fabric 1A. Smoothed. (Orange-brown to dk. grey/dk. grey/black).

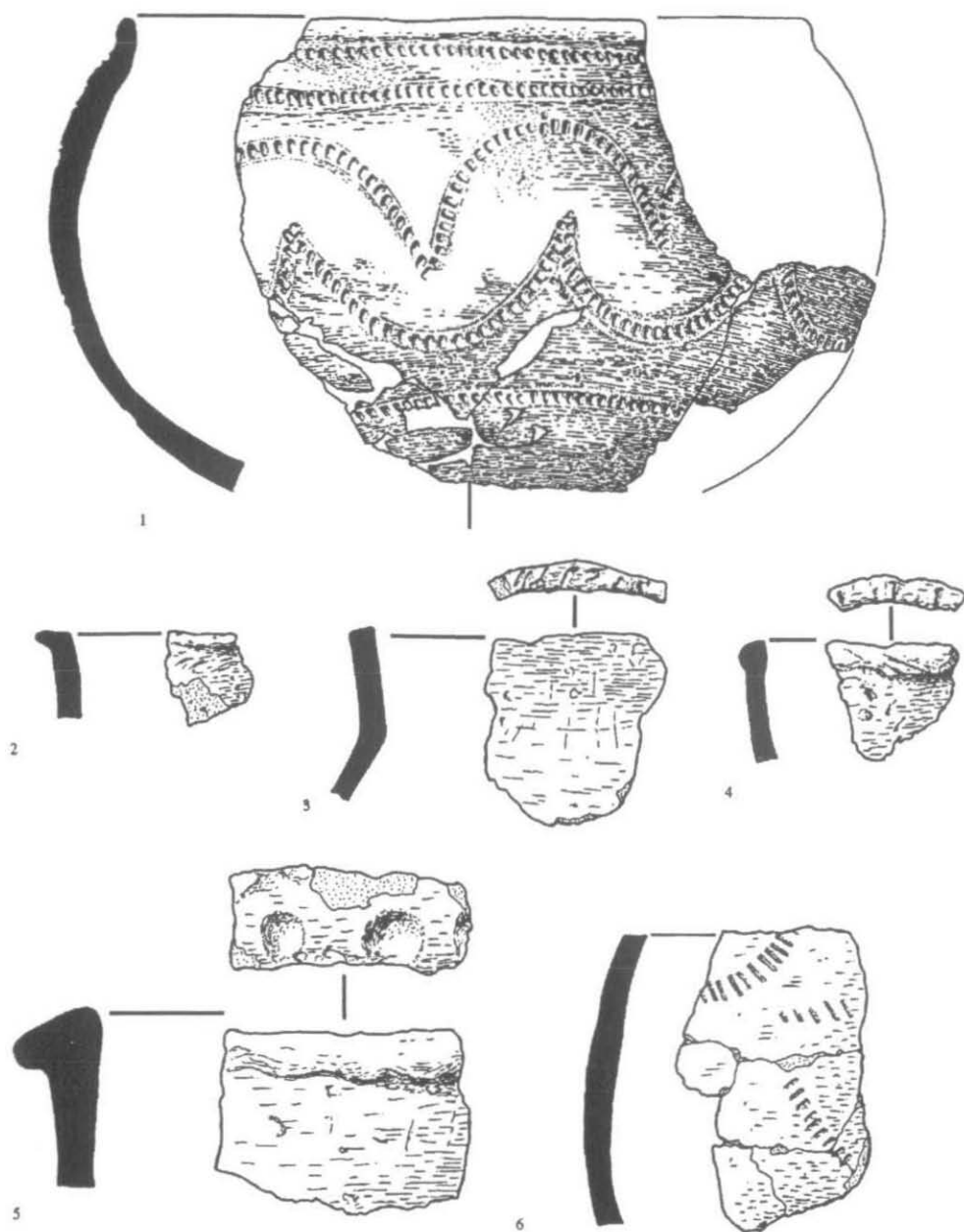


Fig. 19. 1. (C1979, F05) MIA 'Swag-ornamented' globular bowl. Fabric 1A. (Dk. grey-brown/dk. grey/dk. grey to orange). Drawn by J. Wallis. 2. (C1979, F22) EIA flat-topped everted rim. Fabric 3A. (Dk. red-brown/v. dk. grey/v. dk. grey). 3. (B1978, B2) EIA flat-topped rim with thumbnail decoration. Fabric 3A. (Orange-brown to dk. grey/dk. grey/lt. grey). 4. (B1978, B2) EIA flat-topped rim with thumbnail decoration. Fabric 3A. (Orange-brown to dk. grey/dk. grey/lt. grey). 5. (B1978, B18) EIA externally expanded rim with thumbprints. Fabric 3A. (Orange/lt. grey/orange). 6. (C1979, unstrat.) MIA incised curvilinear decoration, no borders. Fabric 1A. Smoothed. (Dk. grey/dk. grey-brown/black).

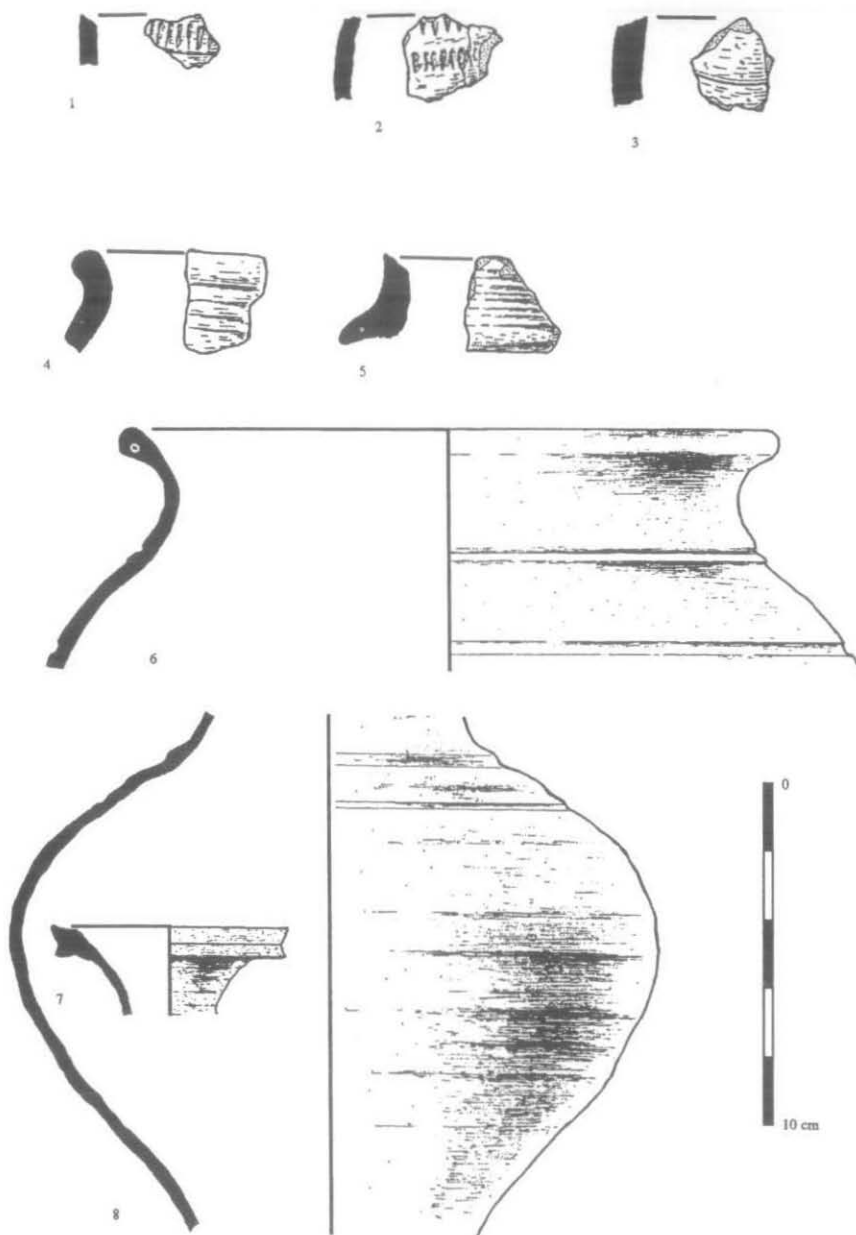


Fig. 20. 1. (C1979, F22) MIA incised curvilinear decoration with border. Fabric 2A. Burnished. (Grey-brown/black/dk. grey). 2. (C1979, F22) MIA sherd with double tooled curvilinear decoration. Fabric 1A. Smoothed. (Pink-red/v. dk. grey/pink-grey). 3. (C1979, F23) MIA incised line decoration. Fabric 1B. Burnished. (Lt. orange-brown/m. red-brown/mid-brown). 4. (A1971, unstrat.) LIA wheelmade rim. Fabric 2D. (Dk. grey/dk. grey/dk. grey). 5. (C1979, unstrat.) LIA. Wheelmade footring. Fabric 1B. (Dk. grey-brown/dk. grey/dk. grey). 6. (E1977, 4, not on plan) Cordoned jar. Hard abundantly sandy temper. (Lt. grey/buff/v. lt. orange). (Young: Reduced Wares 3b). 7. (E1977, 3) Neck of bottle or flagon. Hard abundantly sandy fabric. (Lt. grey/buff/lt. orange). 8. (E1977, 4, not on plan) body of bottle or flagon. Hard abundantly sandy fabric. (Lt. grey throughout). (Young: Reduced Wares 3).



2.2 kg. (12.6% by weight) or 170 sherds (9.9% of total number) were burnished on one or both surfaces. All MIA finewares decorated with curvilinear motifs were burnished.

7.78 kg. (36.1%) or 729 sherds (42.83% of total number) are smoothed on one or both sides. There was no preference for any one fabric for smoothing.

A few vessels (0.2% by weight, 1.1% by number) had been wiped, leaving a striated effect. In the case of the coarser fabrics, inclusions had sometimes been dragged across the surface during the finishing process. In other cases impressions of grass, grains and other organic matter are visible where the wet pots had come into contact with them.

*Firing.* Group 1 alluvial fabrics show a complete range of firing colours, often on the same vessel (43.6% by weight, 21.6% by number show both oxidised and reduced colours). Group 2 sherds show a strong tendency towards reduced colours (80% by weight or 70.7% by number). This may be the result of their association with finewares which in fabric Group 1 are also generally reduced. Shelly (Group 3) sherds show a tendency towards oxidised colours (65.6% by weight, 70.7% by number). Without a larger sample it is not possible to know if this was the result of changes in firing, as well as paste preparation techniques, or whether it is the result of bias because of the smaller number and size of Group 3 pieces. Group 4 sherds show a tendency towards reduced colours (59.6% by weight, 64.7% by number).

#### *Late Iron Age Pottery*

The most common fabric Groups are, in descending order, 4 (62.8% by weight, 51% by number) and 2 (34.2% by weight, 38.1% by number) followed by 1 (1.1% by weight, 6.5 by number) and 3 (1.9% by weight, 4.3% by number) (Table 3). The assemblage includes fine and coarse wares with diagnostic sherds mainly consisting of everted rims (Fig. 20: 4) and footrings (Fig. 20: 5). Most vessels were wheel-made although there are a few examples that may have been handmade and then finished on a turntable. Many sherds were burnished on the exterior. Most fabrics are harder than earlier ones and were more evenly fired in reduced colours.

TABLE 3. QUANTITIES OF LIA POTTERY BY FABRIC

Fabric	Weight (g.)	Number	% Weight	% Number
1A	5	1	0.1	0.7
1B	34	8	0.9	5.8
2A	814	30	22.3	21.6
2B	201	17	5.5	12.2
2C	218	5	5.9	3.6
2D	16	1	0.1	0.7
3A	39	5	1.1	3.6
3C	29	1	0.1	0.7
4A	183	11	5	3.6
4B	16	1	0.1	0.7
4C	174	6	4.8	4.3
4D	1,918	53	52.6	38.1

### Discussion of Iron Age Pottery

*EIA*: Shell tempered fabrics (Group 3) compare with EIA assemblages from sites such as Ashville (Phase 1),<sup>15</sup> Farmoor,<sup>16</sup> Radley<sup>17</sup> and Tuckwell's due N. of Thrupp.<sup>18</sup> Pottery from pits B11 and B18 (Site B1978) possibly indicate EIA activity at Thrupp. Pottery of this type is generally given a date range between the mid 7th century BC and the 3rd century BC.<sup>19</sup> Supposing continuity of settlement at Site B1978, the material may be assigned to the later part of this date range.

*MIA*: The bulk of diagnostic material (coarseware jars and bowls) had a long life-span in the region. Comparable forms were present at Ashville and Farmoor (Phase 1) but a MIA date range is suggested on the basis of fabric. Similar examples with thumbprint decoration below the rim or on the shoulder grooves below the rim and lug handles were found at Ashville (Phase 2) and other sites in the area.<sup>20</sup> Ashville (Phase 2) also produced a comparable example of fingernail decoration along the top of the rim and a jar with a perforated base.

'Smooth dark ware' globular bowls such as were found in pit B2 (Site B1978) are considered by Harding<sup>21</sup> to appear from the early 3rd century BC and also occurred in Ashville Phase 2 deposits. On the basis of the absence of decorated sherds, which Harding considers to be a later development, Site B1978 may have predated settlement at Sites C1979 and A1971.

*MIA and LIA*: Punched curvilinear decoration can be assigned to the 'Frilford Style Zone'<sup>22</sup> and compared with material from Frilford itself, as well as that from Ashville (Phase 2), Farmoor (Period 2), Watkin's Farm,<sup>23</sup> and Abingdon Vineyard.<sup>24</sup> Frilford style decoration also occurs in Ashville (Phase 3) and it seems that it appeared late in the 3rd century BC, lasting until the introduction of wheel-turned pottery in the later 1st century BC. At Site C1979 (penannular gully F22) 'Frilford' and other 'typically MIA' pottery were associated with a coin and brooch of the early 1st century AD indicating that curvilinear decoration was used well into the LIA. LIA material compares with Phase 3 from Ashville and that from Barton Court Farm.<sup>25</sup> DeRoche's forms E (necked bowls, often with a cord on the neck), F (butt beakers), G (bead rim vessels), H (jars) and perhaps K (dishes) can be recognised. These are dated between the second half of the 1st century BC and the mid 1st century AD. Assemblages of similar material were excavated from the Vineyard, Abingdon,<sup>26</sup> dated to the period 45-70 AD.

### Roman Pottery

RB sherds are classified using Young's<sup>27</sup> scheme (Table 4). Of the total 1.86 kg (147 sherds) most (71% by weight, 64% by number) is composed of Reduced Wares, with smaller amounts of Oxidised (12% by weight, 10% by number), White (13% by weight, 21% by number) and Samian Wares (4% by weight, 5% by number).

### Discussion of Roman Pottery

Few sherds are diagnostic, most comprising reduced ware jar rims or bases which were made throughout the Roman period. Sherds of Young's 'heavily tempered' grey ware (2)<sup>28</sup> may be of 1st-century AD date. A few reduced ware sherds have a micaceous slip comparable to others excavated at Abingdon<sup>29</sup> and were possibly

<sup>15</sup> DeRoche, op. cit. note 9, p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, op. cit. note 11, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> E.T. Leeds, 'An Iron Age Site near Radley, Berks.', *Antiq. Jnl.* xi (1931), 339-404.

<sup>18</sup> J. Wallis, pers. comm.

<sup>19</sup> DeRoche, op. cit. note 9, p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> C.D. DeRoche and G. Lambrick, 'The Iron Age Pottery', in J. Hinchcliffe and R. Thomas, 'Archaeological Investigations at Appleford', *Oxoniensia*, xlv (1980), 45.

<sup>21</sup> D.W. Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin* (1972), 101-3.

<sup>22</sup> Lambrick, op. cit. note 14, p. 171.

<sup>23</sup> J.P.S. Bradford and R.G. Goodchild, 'Excavations at Frilford, Berks', *Oxoniensia*, iv (1939), 1-70;

D. Harding, op. cit. note 21, Plate 63; DeRoche, op. cit. note 9, Fig. 52, no. 357; Lambrick, op. cit. note 14, Fig. 22, no. 59-60, Fig. 23, no. 88; Allen, op. cit. note 12, Fig. 25, no. 28.

<sup>24</sup> T.G. Allen, 'Excavations at the Vineyard, Abingdon' (forthcoming).

<sup>25</sup> Miles, op. cit. note 8.

<sup>26</sup> J. Timby, in Allen, op. cit. note 24.

<sup>27</sup> C.J. Young, *Oxfordshire Roman Pottery* (BAR 43, 1977).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> M. Parrington, 'The Pottery', in 'A Human Burial from Queen St. Abingdon', *Oxoniensia*, xl (1975); S. Miles, 'The Pottery', in 'Excavations in West St. Helen's St., Abingdon', *Oxoniensia*, xl (1975).

TABLE 4. QUANTITIES AND FABRICS OF RB POTTERY BY SITE AND FEATURE

SITE A1971	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware	SITE F1977	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware
Unstrat.	47 (3)	Fine Oxidised	Unstrat.	15 (2)	Fine Oxidised
Unstrat.	16 (5)	Coarse White	Unstrat.	5 (1)	Samian
Unstrat.	10 (2)	Fine White	Unstrat.	14 (1)	Reduced (3a)
Unstrat.	12 (1)	Samian	Unstrat.	20 (3)	Reduced (4)
Unstrat.	6 (1)	Reduced (2)			
Unstrat.	23 (8)	Reduced (3a)	SITE G1977	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware
Unstrat.	24 (4)	Reduced (3c)	Unstrat.	135 (1)	Reduced (3a)
Unstrat.	5 (1)	Reduced (4)	Unstrat.	25 (2)	Reduced (3b)
SITE D1977	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware	SITE C1979	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware
Unstrat.	24 (5)	Fine White	F22	13 (3)	Fine Oxidised
Unstrat.	23 (2)	Coarse White	F22	32 (10)	Coarse White
Unstrat.	26 (1)	Reduced (3a)	F22	9 (1)	Fine White
			F22	5 (1)	Samian
			F22	19 (2)	Reduced (3a)
SITE E1977	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware	SITE A1984	Weight, g. & (Number)	Ware
F3	146 (1)	Reduced (4)	D1	106 (4)	Fine Oxidised
E2	24 (1)	Fine Oxidised	Unstrat.	13 (1)	White
E2	26 (1)	White Parchment			(Parchment)
E2	30 (1)	Samian	Unstrat.	24 (2)	Reduced (3a)
E2	108 (3)	Reduced (1)			
E2	243 (14)	Reduced (3b)			
E2	21 (2)	Reduced (3c)			
Unstrat.	20 (1)	Oxidised (Colour Coat)			
Unstrat.	19 (2)	Samian			
Unstrat.	13 (1)	Fine White			
Unstrat.	66 (4)	Reduced (2)			
Unstrat.	59 (9)	Reduced (3a)			
Unstrat.	65 (1)	Reduced (3c)			
Unstrat.	40 (3)	Reduced (4)			

produced at the Overdale kilns of Boar's Hill which were active in the first half of the 2nd century AD. One fine grey ware (4) sherd can be assigned to one of Young's type R1 to R4 'bottles and flagons' (Fig. 20: 6-8) with a late 1st- to 2nd-century AD date. The colour-coated sherd of oxidised ware is late Roman as is a sherd of a parchment ware bowl with diagonal slashed decoration.

*Samian Sherd from Site A1971* (by DAVID WILLIAMS)

Part of a Flavian period platter with a footring and stamped 'Logrini' on the inside centre. Thin section examination suggests an origin at La Graufesenque.

## FIRE CLAY

*Site A1971.* 1,146 g. was collected; 968 g. of a crumbly material, sometimes with wattle impressions (comparable to that from Site B1978) and 43 g. of a harder grey material with coarse calcareous inclusions. All came from pits D3, D4, P2, P16. A large unstratified tile-like object (91 g.) has one side heavily pitted with grain impressions and is of a hard grey-brown fabric tempered with quartz, calcareous inclusions and grog. The fabric suggests a Roman date. The PTL (fabric and weight not recorded) from feature RP1 is illustrated as Fig. 21: 1.

*Site B1978.* 669 g. was collected; 109 g. from enclosure ditch B35 and 560 g. from pit B12, including a MIA PTL fragment. All is of a crumbly, very soft pinky-orange material containing a mixture of quartz, grog, calcareous and ochreous inclusions. Some lumps show wattle impressions.

*Site C1979.* 319 g. was collected from pit F32, enclosure F28 and penannular gullies F22 and F03. There were 94 g. of the pinky-orange fabric described above. This sometimes shows wattle marks. 34 g. of material from penannular gully F22 is of a harder pink to grey fabric with abundant coarse calcareous grit and quartz inclusions. 65 g. from pit F32 is of a red-brown medium hard material tempered with moderate amounts of quartz and calcareous grit. One piece has a smooth, flat surface.

## Discussion

Perforated triangular loomweights are a common MIA type in the area: compare, for example, those from Farmoor.<sup>30</sup> Other material may be PTL fragments (e.g. 65 g. from pit F32, Site C1979). The tile-like fragments are harder to interpret. Similar examples were excavated at Ashville<sup>31</sup> and are referred to as 'lids', 'trays' and 'working surfaces'. At Barton Court Farm<sup>32</sup> thick slabs of clay are interpreted as cob ovens for parching grain - perhaps the unstratified example from Site A1971 falls into this category. Thirty-four g. of material from penannular gully F22 (Site C1979) compares with clay from the fragment of hearth bottom (now lost) from penannular gully F05 on the same site.

## ANIMAL BONE by BOB WILSON and ALISON LOCKYER

Overall counts of bones and fragments are given in Table 5. Several are unidentifiable, many showing signs of recent breakage. The majority are relatively well preserved except those from Site C1979, which are in the last stages of degradation, mostly loose teeth surviving. A quantity of burnt bones occurred in pit B11 (Site B1978). Bones are typical of IA sites elsewhere. In particular, mandibles of lambs and immature sheep and cattle are well represented. Three bones of a foal were excavated. Less typical are a small forked horn core of a sheep and a partial skeleton of a medium-sized, possibly wild, cat (*Felis sylvestris*), both from circular depression B22, Site B1978. Bird bones were identified by Alison Lockyer and consist of 6 goose cf. greylag (*Anser anser*), 2 domestic fowl, 1 teal (*Anas crecca*) and 3 duck cf. wigeon (*Anas penelope*). No butchery marks were noted.

<sup>30</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, op. cit. note 11, Fig. 29, 4.

<sup>31</sup> DeRoche, op. cit. note 9, p. 72.

<sup>32</sup> Miles, op. cit. note 8, p. 72.

## HUMAN SKELETON (from Site C1979) by MARY HARMAN

The skeleton is incomplete and the bones are in poor condition and fragmented with eroded surfaces. Bones found are parts of the thoracic, lumbar and sacral vertebrae, rib fragments, parts of the left radius and ulna and left and right innominates, femora, tibiae and fibulae, and some tarsals, metapodials and phalanges. None of the diaphyses are complete. The bones of the innominate are not fused, indicating an age of less than 16 years. Estimates of the total length of the diaphyses of the radius, fibula and femur that are most complete suggest an age of 10-14 years. There is no evidence of disease or injury.

## INCISED BONE (from site A1971)

This object from Feature RP1 is illustrated as Fig. 21: 2. The size of the object and the illustration appears to indicate that the marks were incised on the rib or limb bone of either a cattle or horse but this cannot now be verified.

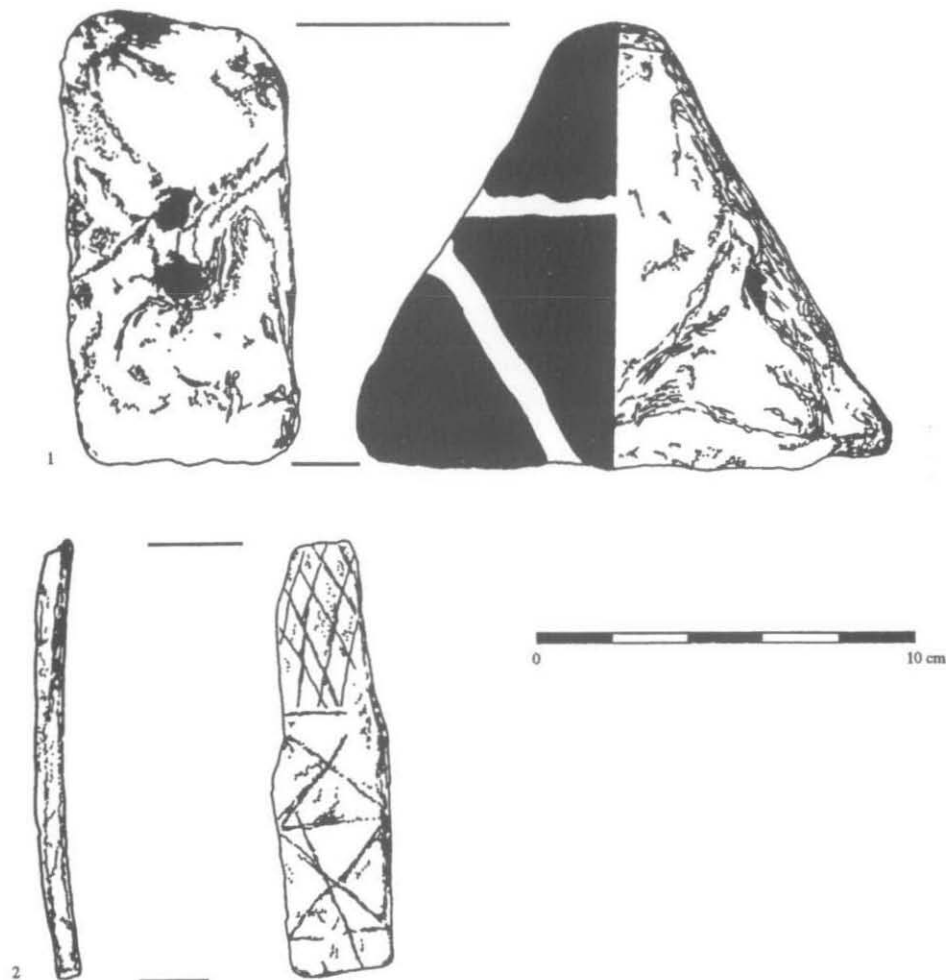


Fig. 21. 1. (A1971, RP1) triangular loomweight. 2. (A1971, RP1) incised bone object. (Both objects drawn by B. Fuller.)

TABLE 5. FRAGMENT FREQUENCIES OF ANIMAL BONES BY PERIOD AND SITE

SITE	IRON AGE				ROMAN	
	A1971	E1977	B1978	C1979	E1977	A1984
Number & (%) of identified	Number & (%) of identified	Number & (%) of identified	Number & (%) of identified	Number & (%) of identified	Number & (%) of identified	Number & (%) of identified
Cattle	19 (26)	5 (62.5)	70 (33.3)	22 (41.5)	9 (75)	8 (80)
Sheep	41 (56.2)	1 (12.5)	103 (49)	19 (35.8)	1 (8.3)	1 (10)
Pig	7 (9.6)	1 (12.5)	8 (3.8)	5 (9.4)		
Horse	1 (1.4)	1 (12.5)	3 (1.4)	5 (9.4)	2 (16.7)	1 (10)
Dog	3 (4.1)		3 (1.4)	1 (1.9)		
Cat			10 (4.8)			
Red Deer				1* (1.9)		
Birds	1 (1.4)		13 (6.2)			
Frog	1 (1.4)					
Unidentified	190	13	647	301	13	10
Burnt	11		32	1		1

\* = Antler tine

#### LEAD OBJECT (from Site B1978) (Fig. 22: 1)

This resembles an example, described as an annular weight, excavated at Audlett Drive, Abingdon.<sup>33</sup> Similar examples (in lead and tin) were found at Glastonbury and Meare 'lake villages'<sup>34</sup> and these are interpreted as spindle whorls. Although the example from Thrupp is not comparable in exact form, its size and general appearance is much the same.

#### BOW BROOCH (from Site C1979) by GRACE SIMPSON

A Nauheim derivative brooch (Fig. 22: 2), with a flat leaf-shaped bow decorated by two double lines of square punch marks, the solid foot tending to recurve. The brooch falls into Hull's type 10, comparing best with his 5795 from Cirencester, 4689 from Silchester, 6984 from Woodeaton, two from Hambleden near Henley (3275 and 3277) and 8301 from Dunston, Northants.<sup>35</sup> A date of between 20 BC and AD 60 seems most likely.<sup>36</sup>

#### PALAEOLITHIC BIFACE (from site C1979)

Found in feature F22, this medium sized implement is heavily patinated and heavily rolled (Fig. 23). It is a typical example (hard hammer struck, heavy butted pointed to chordate) of the lower to middle Palaeolithic objects frequently found in gravel pits, and occasionally as surface finds on higher gravel terraces locally. Broken in antiquity it appears to have been reworked into a cleaver. Its 'crude' appearance is a consequence of the poor quality flint used in its manufacture (glacially derived often frost fractured flint available in the

<sup>33</sup> G. Keevill, 'An Anglo-Saxon Site at Audlett Drive, Abingdon, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lvii (1992), 55-79.

<sup>34</sup> A. Bulleid and H. St. George Gray, *The Glastonbury Lake Village*, vol. 1 (1911), 248-53; A. Bulleid, *The Meare Lake Village*, vol. 2 (1953), 250-2.

<sup>35</sup> M.R. Hull and C.F.C. Hawkes, *Pre-Roman Bow Brooches* (BAR 168, 1987).

<sup>36</sup> G. Simpson, 'Some British and Iberian Penannular Brooches and other Early Types in the Rhineland *Decumates Agri*', *Antiq. Jnl.* lix (1979), 319-42.

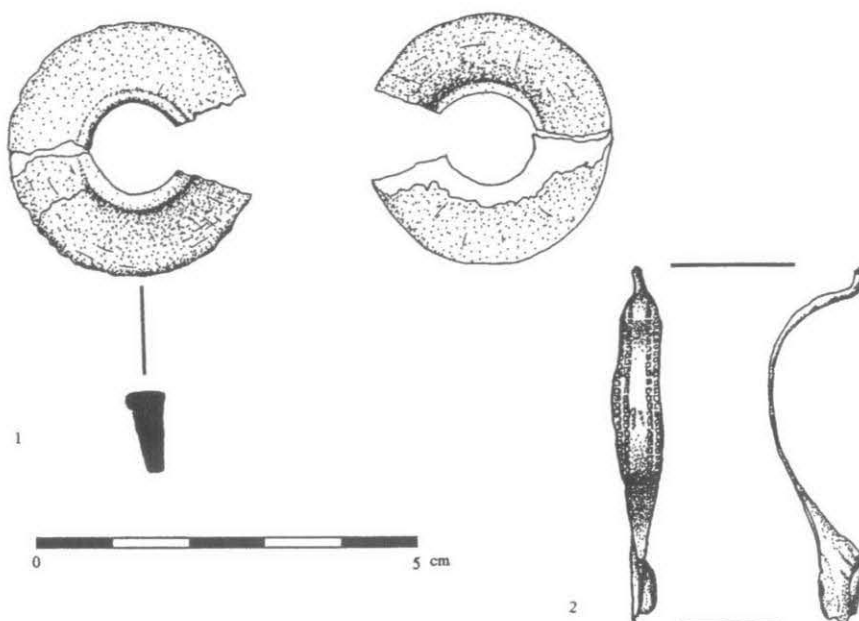


Fig. 22. 1. (B1978, B2) lead object. 2. (C1979, F22) bow brooch. (Drawn by J. Wallis.)

vicinity) rather than indicating a technologically 'inferior' or earlier culture, which is a common misconception. Its presence may indicate deliberate deposition during the IA. 'Unusual' objects are often found in this context at prehistoric settlements which suggests that they may have been picked up in the past as 'curiosities'.

## INTERPRETATION

### *Early Iron Age*

There was only limited evidence of EIA activity at Thrupp. Pottery indicates that the earliest features were pits B11 and B18 (Site B1978). Many later features contained some EIA sherds so it is possible that pits B11 and B18 were actually later in date but did not contain any contemporary artefacts. However, finds of reasonable quantities of residual EIA pottery implies a widespread but relatively low intensity exploitation of the Thrupp area. Linear ditch B36 may, as suggested by its stratigraphy, also be EIA but no other features can be confidently identified as belonging to this period.

### *Middle Iron Age*

*Enclosures.* Gully B35 (Site B1978) was, on the basis of its pottery, contemporary with penannular gully B32. This arrangement of enclosure defining an area within a settlement is common in the Upper Thames 'open' gravel sites.<sup>37</sup> Gullies F48 and F49 formed two sides

<sup>37</sup> R. Hingley and D. Miles, 'Aspects of Iron Age Settlement in the Upper Thames Valley', in Cunliffe and Miles, *op. cit.* note 14, pp. 52-71.

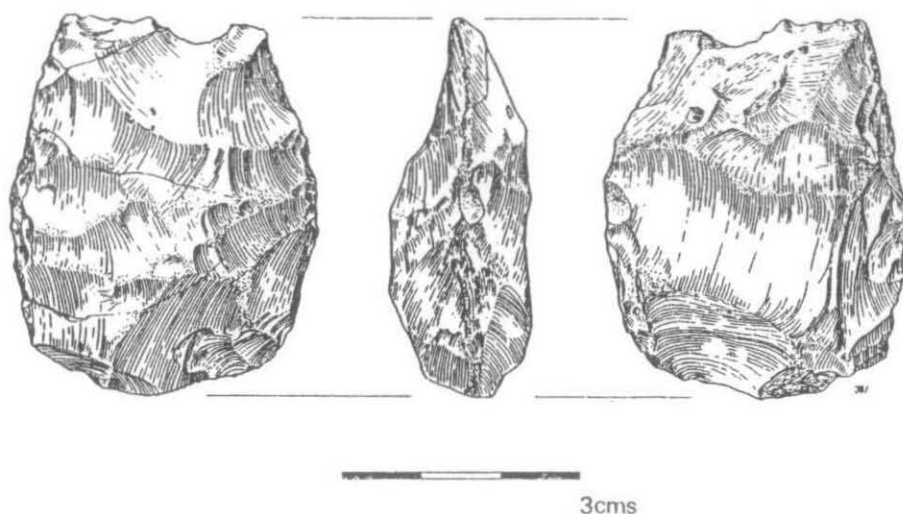


Fig. 23. (C1979, F22) Palaeolithic handaxe. (Drawn by J. Wallis.)

of a small, rectangular enclosure at Site C1984 which, on the basis of their pottery, were contemporary with features at Site C1979. This enclosure compares with examples at Farmoor that are considered to be associated with stock-raising.<sup>38</sup>

*Penannular Gullies.* Thrupp produced six clear examples. They resemble features from other Upper Thames IA sites on first terrace gravels in size, form and orientation, i.e. penannular to semicircular gullies varying from 10 m. to 25 m. in diameter with entrances oriented SE. to E. They are interpreted either as drainage gullies or as small enclosures.<sup>39</sup> The Thrupp examples share the pattern of a V-shaped profile and an irregular construction. In addition, their terminals and intersections broadened into hollows filled with cobbles. These are similar to examples excavated at Farmoor which are interpreted as 'sumps'.<sup>40</sup>

F05 formed a crook-shaped arrangement with F04 which was in turn linked to F03 (Site C1979). Similar clusters were observed at sites such as Ashville<sup>41</sup> and are referred to as 'annexes' providing working, storage areas or livestock enclosures close to domestic buildings. Alternatively they are interpreted as accommodation for extended families.<sup>42</sup> A single posthole (F05/2) survived at the entrance to penannular gully F05 (Site C1979) that had an internal pit (F05/3) which is presumed to have been contemporary. Pits are common features of house interiors, e.g. Claydon Pike<sup>43</sup> and are interpreted as 'cooking holes'.

<sup>38</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, *op. cit.* note 11, Figs. 4, 6, 10, 14.

<sup>39</sup> T.G. Allen, D. Miles and S. Palmer, 'Iron Age Buildings in the Upper Thames Region', in Cunliffe and Miles, *op. cit.* note 14, pp. 89-101.

<sup>40</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, *op. cit.* note 11; 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: The Windrush Valley 2, OUCA, 1993), 41.

<sup>41</sup> Parrington, *op. cit.* note 7, Fig. 12.

<sup>42</sup> P. Drewett, 'Later Bronze Age Downland Economy and Excavations at Black Patch, East Sussex', *Proc. of Prehistoric Soc.* 48 (1982), 321-400.

<sup>43</sup> Allen, Miles and Palmer, *op. cit.* note 39.



Postholes (F04/2, F04/3, F04/4) associated with penannular gully F04 may be connected with an internal structure.

F22 (Site C1979) is the only gully whose entrance postholes (F22/1, F22/2) clearly survived. These may have represented a porch or gate rather than a door as they were located outside. F22 was unusual in comprising such a wide ditch bounding a small internal space. Excavation proved this was caused by successive recutting.

F28 (Site C1979) appeared to be a standard penannular gully but excavation showed it was probably a fenced enclosure. Postholes were evenly spaced along its base. A similar, though straight, example was excavated at Beard Mill, Stanton Harcourt.<sup>44</sup>

Features E2, E3, and E5 (Site E1977) are interpreted as surviving traces of a gully, forming an 'annexe' to E2. E2a and E2b may represent postholes of an interior structure within it.

It is unclear whether the arrangement of pits (D1-D5, P15 and P16 and P1) and the ditches between D1-D4 and between D5 and P15 at Site A1971 comprised a MIA house site. It is, however, a distinct possibility based on their arrangement. The pottery in their fills indicates that they were all broadly contemporary.

*Pits.* Circular, straight sided, flat based pits are generally interpreted as being dug for grain storage and latterly for rubbish disposal.<sup>45</sup> B2 (Site B1978) retained traces of a clay lining which supports this conclusion. RP1 (Site A1971) and F05/3 (Site C1979) were located inside penannular gullies and their rectangular and sub-rectangular shapes may reflect their function as internal house features. Irregular shallow hole B22 (Site B1978) contained large amounts of burnt material and can be compared to F1013 at Farmoor,<sup>46</sup> and a 'hearth' at Stanton Harcourt<sup>47</sup> similarly situated W. of an occupation area.

#### *Late Iron Age and Roman*

Linear ditches at Sites A1971, E1977 and A1984 formed part of a system of N.-S. gullies with E.-W. gullies connected to them. The N.-S. ditches lay along the edge of an area of what may have been marshland during the IA. Comparable ditches were excavated at Farmoor.<sup>48</sup> The divisions may have defined small enclosures for livestock or small rectangular fields such as those at Appleford.<sup>49</sup>

The trackway at Site B1978 produced no dateable artefacts but is presumed to have been LIA or Roman on the basis of its similarity to features such as the Roman trackway at Appleford<sup>50</sup> and the driveway at Farmoor.<sup>51</sup> A fragment of MIA trackway was excavated at Appleford,<sup>52</sup> however, and the possibility exists that the Thrupp example may have been earlier.

<sup>44</sup> A. Williams, 'Excavations at Beard Mill, Stanton Harcourt', *Oxoniensia*, xvi (1951), 5-22.

<sup>45</sup> Parrington, op. cit. note 7, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, op. cit. note 11, p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> A. Hamlin, 'Early Iron Age Sites at Stanton Harcourt', *Oxoniensia*, xxxi (1966), 9.

<sup>48</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, op. cit. note 11, F72.

<sup>49</sup> Hinchcliffe and Thomas, op. cit. note 20, pp. 62-6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Lambrick and Robinson, op. cit. note 11, pp. 25-30.

<sup>52</sup> Hinchcliffe and Thomas, op. cit. note 20, pp. 40-1.

## CONCLUSIONS

Probable grain storage pits and the impressions of grain on pottery and fired clay fragments from Sites A1971 and C1979 show cereals were being processed, and presumably grown, locally. The quantities of bones (primarily cattle and sheep) indicates that animal husbandry also formed an important part of the site's economy. Fragments of slag from an unrecorded feature and hearth bottom from Site C1979 and PTLs from Sites A1971, B1978 and E1977 indicate small-scale industrial activity. If the archaeological evidence from Thrupp represents the activities of the same group of people occupying the same area it may be viewed as a largely self-sufficient mixed-farming community such as that considered to have been in existence at Gravelly Guy.<sup>53</sup> There is no firmer evidence with which to support our conclusions concerning the type of farming practised at Thrupp because no environmental sampling was undertaken.

Taken as a whole Thrupp fits the generally accepted pattern of settlement within the upper Thames Valley during the IA and early Roman periods, i.e. a period of little recognisable change (perhaps several hundred years) followed by marked changes in the Roman period. In common with other IA sites such as Ashville,<sup>54</sup> Thrupp could be interpreted as the shifting of a single settlement over time (possibly beginning at Site B1978 then branching to Sites A1971, E1977 and C1979/C1984).

It is difficult to identify phases of occupation at Thrupp other than those distinguished by the pottery from Site B1978, but perhaps the two seemingly discrete clusters of penannular gullies at Site C1979 can be interpreted as separate occupation episodes with the W. being earlier. Settlement shifted over time but was always placed on the boundary between the drier first terrace gravels and the edge of the floodplain.

The area surrounding Thrupp was intensively exploited during the IA. A MIA site was excavated at Home Farm,<sup>55</sup> and this may be part of the same general spread of occupation, as may Eight Acre Field<sup>56</sup> to the N. and the heavily disturbed MIA and LIA features (including a possible penannular hut gully and numerous pits) and many unstratified IA sherds recovered and investigated in 1993 (NGR SU 518970) by the AAAHS.<sup>57</sup> Extensive peat deposits c. 500 m. to the W. of Thrupp (NGR SU 515972), recently excavated by the AAAHS,<sup>58</sup> overlay a limestone paved trackway (representing considerable effort by an unidentified local settlement) and other features, with associated pottery, which appear to date from the EIA to MIA period. Unpublished evidence (pottery scatters and coins and other metalwork found by metal detectors) indicates that the ridge of higher ground across the Thames to the S., overlooking Thrupp and extending 2 km. to the SW., was also extensively exploited during the IA (particularly at Warren Farm NGR SU 525966 and

<sup>53</sup> D. Miles, 'Conflict and Complexity: The Later Prehistory of the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, lxii (1997), 12.

<sup>54</sup> Parrington, op. cit. note 7.

<sup>55</sup> R. Ainslie, 'Excavations at Thrupp, near Radley, Oxon.', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 22 (1992), 63-4.

<sup>56</sup> A. Mudd, 'The Excavation of a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age site at Eight Acre Field, Radley', *Oxoniensia*, lx (1995), 21-65.

<sup>57</sup> Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society, unpubl. records.

<sup>58</sup> R. Ainslie, 'Thrupp, near Radley', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 29 (1999), 30.

Culham Hill NGR SU 504961). The most notable recent IA discovery in the Abingdon area has been the location of oppidum ditches surrounding much of the modern town centre<sup>59</sup> indicating that IA Abingdon was a more substantial settlement than had been appreciated previously.

It is not possible to ascertain how much, if any, overlap occurred between the 'abandonment' of IA settlement at Thrupp and the laying out of the Roman linear ditch systems. The changes were part of the trend towards a more tightly organised landscape in the Roman period, possibly connected to the Roman ladder settlement to the N. of Thrupp at Gooseacre Farm.<sup>60</sup> Alternatively, these may have been part of the field-system of the nearby villa at Barton Court Farm.<sup>61</sup> The re-organisation of the settlement may have been associated with the growth of Roman Abingdon. There is no evidence to indicate that Thrupp was 'abandoned' as a result of increased seasonal flooding. It was probably too high for this to have occurred. None of the dateable features excavated contained alluvium or peat whereas extensive deposits of peat and alluvium, dating to the same period, are found on lower lying land immediately to the W.,<sup>62</sup> S. and E. (Fig. 2). However, there would have been a significant reduction in the amount of farmland adjacent to water courses throughout the area.

Thrupp was excavated many years ago with limited resources and under extremely difficult conditions. Many newer methods of recording and analysis exist now that did not then. It was dug by an amateur society whose members could not anticipate current archaeological practices. It is a credit to the excavators that any information was obtained at all from such a large site over such a long period of time. Without the benefit of modern recording techniques and the taking of environmental samples our overall conclusions must remain somewhat limited.

#### LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

Much archive material is deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museums Service and Abingdon Museum. Many finds are, however, retained in the private collections of members of AAAHS and others, specified in the text, are now untraceable.

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<sup>59</sup> T.G. Allen, 'Abingdon Vineyard Redevelopment', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 20 (1990); T.G. Allen, 'An "Oppidum" at Abingdon, Oxfordshire', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 21 (1991); T.G. Allen, 'Abingdon Vineyard 1992: Areas 2 and 3, the Early Defences', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 23 (1993); T.G. Allen, 'Abingdon: West Central Redevelopment Area', *S. Midlands Archaeol.* 27 (1997), 50.

<sup>60</sup> D. Benson and D. Miles, *The Upper Thames Valley; An Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels* (OAU Survey 2, 1974), map 31, 60.

<sup>61</sup> Miles, *op. cit.* note 8.

<sup>62</sup> Ainslie, *op. cit.* note 58.

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