

# Iron-Age and Roman Settlement at Station Road, Uffington

CHRIS ELLIS and RICHARD MASSEY

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY JACKY SOMMERVILLE, E.R. MCSLOY, T. YOUNG, SARAH COBAIN, RUTH SHAFFREY and MATILDA HOLMES

## SUMMARY

*Two strip, map and sample areas were excavated on a site at Station Road, Uffington. Evidence from the site was almost exclusively of middle to late Iron-Age and Roman date. A small residual assemblage of worked flint of Neolithic/Bronze-Age date was recovered, in addition to a small quantity of late Bronze-Age pottery. Middle to late Iron-Age enclosures and settlement features were recorded on the south-east side of the site, including a probable roundhouse, and at least three four-post structures. Iron-Age enclosure earthworks appear to have remained extant during the early Roman period. In the later Roman period the site was subject to major reorganisation, with the laying out of successive phases of rectilinear field boundary ditches, together with associated enclosures. Evidence for Roman ironworking, including spreads of smithing hearth slag, was recorded. Deposits of high-status Roman building materials were also found, together with contemporary items of metalwork. These finds indicate the presence of a substantial late Roman building in the vicinity.*

Between late July and late September 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) undertook the archaeological excavation of two strip, map and sample areas (areas A and B) on a site at Station Road, Uffington, on behalf of Redcliffe Homes Limited (Fig. 1). Previous evaluation of the site had identified significant evidence of Roman-period settlement activity, including enclosure ditches, a possible cobbled surface and quantities of ironworking residues.<sup>1</sup> The pottery evidence indicated a settlement chronology which extended, albeit episodically, from the early to middle Iron Age to the fourth century AD. On the basis of the evaluation, it was determined that a targeted strip, map and sample excavation be carried out within the two parts of the site which displayed a significant concentration of archaeological features. This report presents a description of the stratigraphy, archaeological features, finds and ecofactual data recovered from the excavations, in conjunction with the results of the field evaluation. The 2.45-hectare site at Station Road is situated towards the eastern outskirts of Uffington village at NGR SU 3085 8948 (Fig. 1). It comprised two irregularly-shaped fields, which were in use as equestrian pasture before the excavation. The metalled track of Lower Common forms the north-western boundary of the site, and the rear gardens of houses on Lower Common, White Horse and Station Road respectively form the south-western, southern and south-eastern boundaries. The site occupies relatively level ground, at an elevation above Ordnance Datum of 88–89 metres. It is situated within a geologically and hydrologically complex area at the southern margins of the Vale of the White Horse, with underlying solid geology comprising Gault Mudstone of the Cretaceous Period, with an exposure of lower Greensand just to the north.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Land at Station Road, Uffington, Oxfordshire: Evaluation Report', unpublished CA report, no. 14021 (2014).

<sup>2</sup> BGS (British Geological Survey) Geology of Britain Viewer: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (2014).

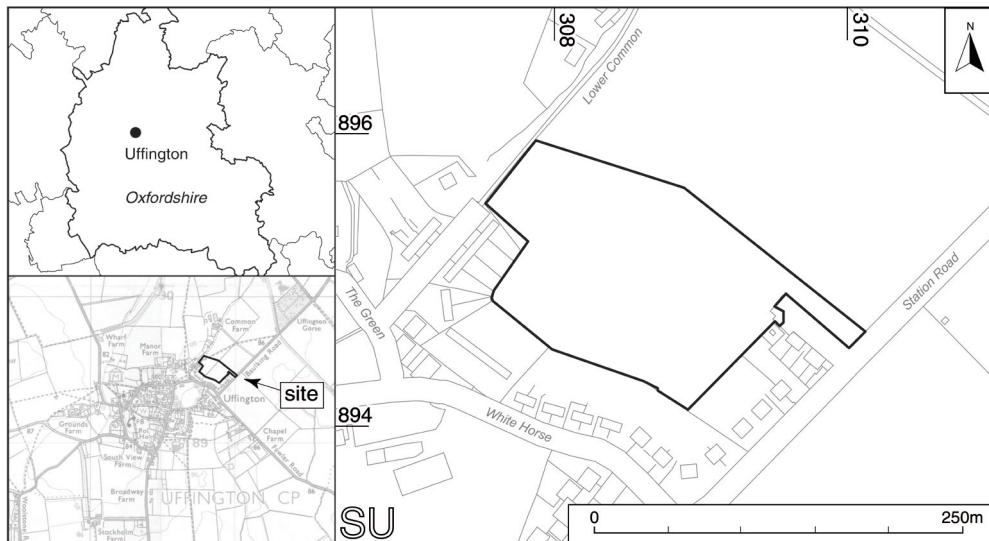


Fig. 1. Station Road, Uffington: site location plan (1:5,000).

The site was investigated within two areas (A and B) of notably dense archaeological features, which had been identified by evaluation. These areas also corresponded to the principal construction footprint of the proposed residential development. During the course of excavation, the natural geology was recorded below an overburden comprising 0.4–0.5 metres of topsoil and subsoil. In a number of interventions across Area A, a sandy natural geology was recorded at depth, which dipped gently down to the east. The deposit was characterized by a light orange-brown, fine clayey sand (3095, not labelled), with abundant, pale blue-grey lenses, and large, irregular ironstone inclusions (more than 0.75 metres long and more than 0.3 metres wide). In the west of Area A, this deposit was recorded at 0.5 metres below machined depth, and sloped gently down to the east, to a maximum depth of 0.7 metres.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION

The Station Road site is situated within an area of intractable and poorly-drained Gault Clay, on the southern margins of the Vale of the White Horse. The chalk escarpment, together with the eponymous chalk-cut figure, is situated approximately 3 km to the south. To date, the relative paucity of archaeological data associated with the clay vale has been associated with historically low levels of fieldwork, compared with the gravels of the upper Thames valley. In addition, the heavy vale soils have proved relatively unresponsive to aerial survey, compared with those of neighbouring areas. Previous survey work has, however, identified a surprising number of later prehistoric sites, together with those recorded on the Corallian ridge to the north.<sup>3</sup> The spring-line associated with the foot of the chalk escarpment, has clearly been an important locational determinant for a number of Roman and medieval settlements.

In 2002, fieldwork at Fernham Road, to the north-west of Uffington, confirmed an extensive area of late Bronze-Age (eighth-century BC) to late Iron-Age settlement which had initially

<sup>3</sup> M. Tingle, *The Vale of the White Horse Survey*, BAR BS, 218 (1991), pp. 88–92; W. Wintle, 'Becoming Romano-British: The Landscape of the Late Prehistoric and Romano-British Periods in the Vale of the White Horse', University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis (2013).

been recorded by aerial and geophysical survey.<sup>4</sup> The recorded settlement comprised a series of ditched enclosures, with associated droveways and roundhouse structures. In addition, a number of later prehistoric and Roman-period sites have been investigated within the wider environs of Uffington, including those at Alfred's Castle, Ashbury; Watchfield (Shrivenham); Denchworth Road, Wantage; Hatford Quarry; and Watchfield Triangle and Coxwell Road, Faringdon. Early Iron-Age material was residual in a Period 2, middle to late Iron-Age, context within excavation Area A at Station Road. This was of sixth- or seventh-century BC date, and suggests an earlier phase of Iron-Age activity within the vicinity.

Isolated Roman finds have previously been recorded in Uffington village, including a glass flask, possibly from a burial, and a quern-stone. In the 1970s, a significant assemblage of Roman material was recovered from Craven Common, immediately south of the Station Road site, during housing development. The unpublished finds comprised pottery, including imported amphora and fine wares, building material, coins and lead weights, which collectively suggest a building of at least moderate status adjacent to the Station Road site.<sup>5</sup>

The initial stage of archaeological evaluation undertaken by CA comprised the excavation of twenty-two trenches.<sup>6</sup> Significant evidence for Roman settlement activity was recorded, including enclosure ditches, a possible cobbled path and ironworking residues. The assemblage of pottery recovered represented a broad date-range, extending from the middle Iron Age to the fourth century AD. Iron-Age activity was principally concentrated within Area A, with Roman-period activity more evident to the west of Area A, and within the east of Area B, thus suggesting a westward shift in settlement focus over time.

#### *Excavation Methods*

The aims of the excavation were to further investigate the two areas (A and B) of relatively dense archaeological activity which had been identified across the site during the evaluation stage (Fig. 2). A large number of discrete irregular features, measuring between one and four metres across, were recorded within the eastern part of Area A. It was agreed that a statistically valid sample of twelve of these features would be investigated. The aim was to characterize and date the features, and to assess their stratigraphic and chronological relationships to nearby curvilinear ditched features of Iron-Age and Roman date. Any pottery exposed on the stripped surface of the features was collected and three-dimensionally recorded, and assigned to one of the two distinctive fill-types which were apparent in all the features investigated. Some of these were subsequently identified as tree-throw hollows, but others, on investigation, were found to comprise shallow pits, which in many places displayed evidence of inter-cutting. A significant proportion of these features contained residual Iron-Age pottery, in addition to Roman material.

## DISCUSSION

### *The Landscape Context of the Station Road Site*

An apparent concentration of later prehistoric and Roman-period settlement evidence in and around Uffington may reflect the attractions of a spring-line at the base of the chalk escarpment, together with the logistical benefits conferred by a location adjacent to the boundary between two contrasting physiographic zones. This boundary is likely to have been significant throughout prehistory, as the line of hillforts along the northern crest of the downs attests.<sup>7</sup> The deep, cultivable soils of the Vale of the White Horse are likely to have offered an

<sup>4</sup> 'Uffington Village Project 2002: Archaeological Interim Report', unpublished OA report (2003).

<sup>5</sup> HER, PRN 16852.

<sup>6</sup> 'Land at Station Road, Uffington'.

<sup>7</sup> M. Henig and P. Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire* (2000), p. 16.

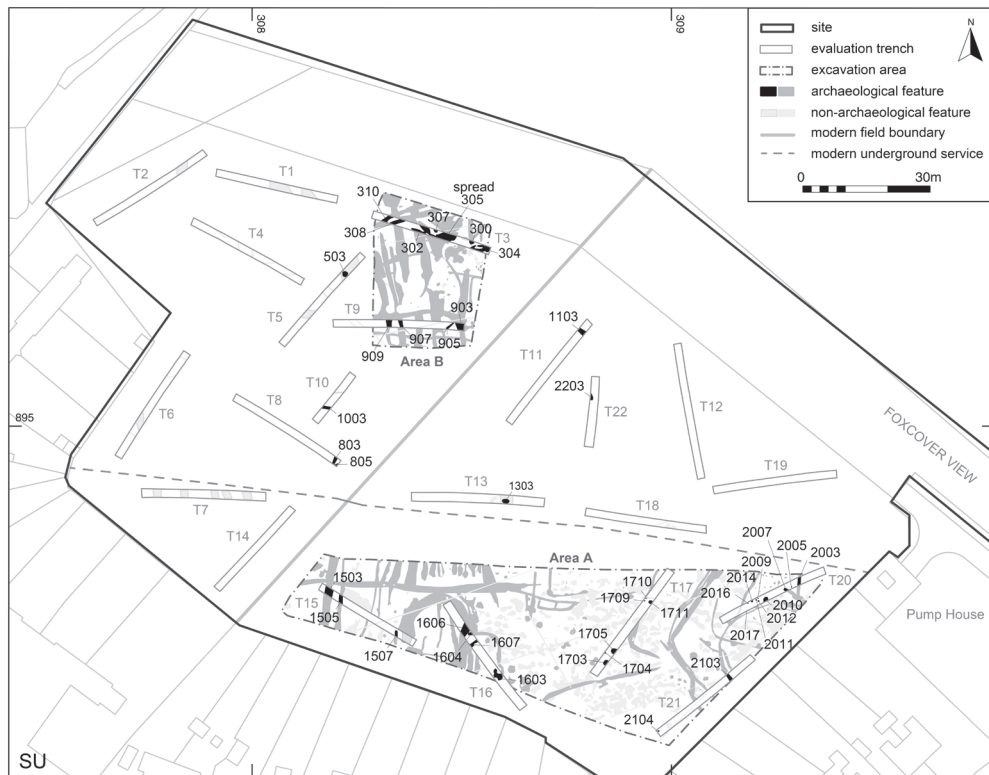


Fig. 2. Site plan, showing excavation areas and archaeological features (1:1,500)

attractive proposition for settlement expansion in prehistory, although understanding of the long-term development of the vale has not benefited from the same levels of archaeological visibility as those associated with the upper Thames gravels, to the north, or the chalk downland to the south.

The 'Vale of the White Horse Survey' identified a wide distribution of late prehistoric and Roman material throughout the vale, although this has historically been assumed to be less densely distributed than on parts of the neighbouring Downs.<sup>8</sup> A number of investigated sites within the wider environs of Uffington include Hatford Quarry,<sup>9</sup> Coxwell Road, Faringdon,<sup>10</sup> Watchfield Triangle,<sup>11</sup> and Bowling Green Farm, Stanford in the Vale.<sup>12</sup> These settlements are principally of late Iron-Age and early Roman date, and represent a predominant class of lower-status farmsteads. While a number of sites, including Station Road, appear to result from a middle Iron-Age phase of settlement expansion, which is well recognised elsewhere, most appear as *de novo* settlements in the pre-conquest period.<sup>13</sup> The general impression

<sup>8</sup> Tingle, *The Vale of the White Horse Survey*, pp. 82–94.

<sup>9</sup> P. Booth and A. Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and Early Romano-British Site at Hatford Quarry, Sandy Lane, Hatford', *Oxoniensia*, 69 (2004), pp. 319–54.

<sup>10</sup> J. Cook et al., 'Excavations of an Iron Age Site at Coxwell Road, Faringdon', *Oxoniensia*, 69 (2004), pp. 181–286.

<sup>11</sup> R. Heawood et al., 'Iron Age and Roman Activity at Watchfield Triangle', *Oxoniensia*, 69 (2004), pp. 287–318.

<sup>12</sup> A. Mudd, 'Stanford in the Vale, Bowling Green Farm', *SMIdA*, 23 (1993), pp. 79–80.

<sup>13</sup> V. Birbeck, 'Excavations at Watchfield, Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, 1998', *Oxoniensia*, 66 (2001), pp. 287–88; Cook et al., 'Excavation of an Iron Age Site at Coxwell Road', p. 277; A. Smith et al., *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, Britannia Monograph Series, 29 (2016), pp. 151–4.

across the Downs in this period is of agricultural intensification, with increasing networks of settlement and blocks of field systems.<sup>14</sup> This invites speculation as to whether the agricultural economies of both downland and vale were jointly controlled by centres within the vale at this time, thus possibly reflecting earlier socio-cultural relationships. In the absence of further environmental data, it is difficult to speculate about functional relationships and differences between respective farming regimes, such as have been hypothesised elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> However, the later evidence for Roman villas within the vale may support the view that this area was economically dominant. Examples include East Challow, Woolstone, and Fawler along the foot of the Downs, to which may be added possible candidate sites at Stanford in the Vale and Kingston Bagpuize.<sup>16</sup> It has been suggested that this apparent concentration represents a distinct 'villa zone', centred on the Corallian Ridge to the north.<sup>17</sup> Beyond this, considerable potential for undiscovered non-villa settlement within the vale is suggested by an extensive programme of evaluation work undertaken between Abingdon and Wantage.<sup>18</sup> Within this area, enclosed settlements of predominantly middle Iron-Age date appeared to have been largely abandoned by the late Iron Age, but subsequently re-occupied in the Roman period. Unlike in western parts of the vale, there appears to be relatively little evidence of late Iron-Age to Roman continuity.

Environmental evidence across the upper Thames valley suggests that widespread forest clearance began in the middle Bronze Age, which by the Iron Age had spread to tributary valleys, with the widespread establishment of organised farming landscapes detectable by the later middle Iron Age. By this time, a network of enclosed settlements within the vale, and on the Greensand and Corallian Ridges, are likely to have dominated a mixed farming economy.<sup>19</sup> These include the largely uninvestigated sites of One Tree Hill and Badbury,<sup>20</sup> and, more particularly, the valley fort of Cherbury, whose highly developed defences and ceramic record appear to be broadly contemporary with the middle Iron-Age phase identified at Station Road.<sup>21</sup>

A Roman date for elements of the extensive field systems on the Downs has been proposed by a number of commentators.<sup>22</sup> The extent of field systems in use in the Roman period appears to support interpretations of agricultural intensification at this time.<sup>23</sup> However, this contrasts with the evident paucity of contemporary settlement forms along the downland

<sup>14</sup> D. Miles et al., *Uffington White Horse and its Landscape: Investigations at White Horse Hill, Uffington, 1989–95, and Tower Hill, Ashbury, 1993–4*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 18 (2003), p. 263; P. Levick, *Late Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes on the Berkshire Downs*, BAR BS, 612 (2015), pp. 24–5.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Miles et al., *Uffington White Horse and its Landscape*, p. 260; N. Sharples, *Social Relations in Later Prehistory. Wessex in the First Millennium BC* (2010), p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. C. Gosden and G. Lock, *Histories in the Making. Excavations at Alfred's Castle, 1998–2000*, OUSA Monograph, 79 (2013), p. 215.

<sup>17</sup> Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 92; D. Miles, 'Villas and Variety: Aspects of Economy and Society in the Upper Thames Landscape', in K. Branigan and D. Miles (eds.), *The Economies of Romano-British Villas* (1989), p. 68; but see Smith et al., *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, p. 158, fig. 5.19.

<sup>18</sup> C.M. Hearne, 'Archaeological Evaluation in the Vale of the White Horse, near Abingdon, 1997–99', *Oxoniensia*, 65 (2000), pp. 9–10.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. D. Miles, 'Conflict and Complexity: The Later Prehistory of the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, 62 (1997), pp. 8–9; M.A. Robinson, 'Landscape and Environment of Central Southern Britain in the Iron Age', in B.W. Cunliffe and D. Miles (eds.), *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain*, Oxford Committee for Archaeology Report, 2 (1984), pp. 2–11.

<sup>20</sup> M.A. Cotton, 'Berkshire Hillforts', *Berkshire Archaeology Journal*, 60 (1962), pp. 30–52.

<sup>21</sup> J.S.P. Bradford, 'The Excavation of Cherbury Camp, 1939: An Interim Report', *Oxoniensia*, 5 (1940), pp. 13–20; D. Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin* (1972), p. 92.

<sup>22</sup> S. Ford et al., 'The Date of the "Celtic" Field Systems on the Berkshire Downs', *Britannia*, 19 (1988), pp. 401–4; V. Gaffney and M. Tingle, *The Maddal Farm Project: An Integrated Survey of Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes on the Berkshire Downs*, BAR BS, 200 (1989); M. Bowden et al., 'The Date of the Ancient Fields on the Berkshire Downs', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 74 (1991–3), p. 130.

<sup>23</sup> M. Van der Veen and T. Connor, 'The Expansion of Agricultural Production in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain', in J. Bayley (ed.), *Science in Archaeology: An Agenda for the Future*, English Heritage (1998), pp. 130–2.



crest and adjoining dip-slope areas to the south of Uffington.<sup>24</sup> The limited environmental and ecofactual record from the Station Road site precludes any firm conclusions regarding the character of local farming regimes, although the evidence from Hatford Quarry suggested an open, arable landscape, locally typical of the Iron-Age and Roman periods, with spelt wheat as a dominant crop.<sup>25</sup> Significantly, this site provided possible evidence of the expansion of cultivation into wetter areas, which had previously been considered marginal for cultivation.

#### *Earlier Prehistoric Activity*

A small assemblage of residual worked flint of probable Mesolithic and Neolithic date (8,000–2,400 BC) provides evidence of episodic or transient occupation by hunter-gatherer and/or early farming groups on, and within the surroundings of, the Station Road site. Comparable redeposited material has been recorded from a number of neighbouring late prehistoric and Roman sites.

#### *Late Prehistoric Settlement*

Sommerville and McSloy (this report) have drawn attention to the incidence of earlier Iron-Age material in a Period 2 (middle to late Iron-Age (c.400 BC–AD 43) context, in Area A. This included fineware bowls and fingertip-decorated coarseware forms, which appear to be of sixth- or seventh-century BC date (Period 1). Other decorated components of the Iron-Age assemblage could, on the basis of regional comparanda, be theoretically as late as the fourth or third centuries BC, and thus possibly continuous with the Period 2 middle Iron-Age phase, which is altogether more evident within the areas excavated. Elsewhere within the Vale of the White Horse, middle Iron-Age occupation, again with early Iron-Age antecedents, is attested at Coxwell Road, Faringdon.<sup>26</sup> Here, the size of pits suggested increasing levels of grain storage at this time, while the faunal assemblage indicated a preponderance of sheep. The earliest phase at Hatford Quarry was also of middle Iron-Age date, and these sites suggest, along with the more numerous investigated sites further east in the vale, a distinct phase of colonising settlement and agricultural organisation towards the end of the middle Iron-Age period.<sup>27</sup> The relationship of this developing agricultural landscape with the hillfort-dominated downland to the south, together with the proximity of the Ridgeway, invites further investigation, although there is little convincing evidence of direct contemporaneity of occupation and land use. In any case, Uffington Castle, amongst these hillforts, does not appear to have fulfilled the defensive or central-place functions conventionally associated with this monument type.<sup>28</sup> There is no recorded evidence of subsequent activity within the hillfort until the later Roman period, and thus contemporary with the fourth-century phase of occupation which is primarily evident within Area B of the Station Road site.<sup>29</sup> A wider conspectus of early and middle Iron-Age settlements on the downland dip-slope suggests little obvious integration, either with contemporary hillforts, or with the economy of the vale to the north.<sup>30</sup> Any broader understanding of the character of enclosed middle Iron-Age settlement at this site is necessarily precluded by the limited extent of investigation, although the evidence of associated later enclosures might suggest subsidiary livestock compounds comparable with those recorded at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick with Yelford.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Levick, *Later Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes on the Berkshire Downs*, pp. 29–33; J.C. Richards, *The Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs: An Introductory Survey* (1977), p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> D. Druce, 'The Environmental Evidence', in Booth and Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and Early Romano-British site at Hatford Quarry', pp. 347–50.

<sup>26</sup> Cook et al., 'Excavation of an Iron Age Site at Coxwell Road', pp. 275–6.

<sup>27</sup> Booth and Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and Early Romano-British Site at Hatford Quarry', p. 351; Hearne, 'Archaeological Evaluation in the Vale of the White Horse', p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> D. Miles et al., *Uffington White Horse and its Landscape*, pp. 122–4.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Levick, *Later Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes on the Berkshire Downs*, pp. 23–33, fig. 4.7.

<sup>31</sup> 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 (fig. 8), 31–2.

*The Station Road Site in the Roman Settlement Record*

Despite episodes of extensive reorganisation, activity on this site appears to have been continuous from at least as early as the middle Iron Age, and possibly earlier, although only limited evidence of later Iron-Age and early Roman occupation was encountered within the areas excavated. This may contrast with the limited evidence for late Iron-Age and early Roman continuity, followed by second-century abandonment, which characterises a number of other investigated Vale of White Horse sites, including those of Hatford Quarry,<sup>32</sup> Watchfield Shrivenham,<sup>33</sup> Watchfield Triangle,<sup>34</sup> Manor House Farm, Hatford,<sup>35</sup> and Old Shifford Farm, Standlake.<sup>36</sup> The settlement hiatus of the early second century AD is otherwise well recognised elsewhere across the upper Thames valley, and beyond.<sup>37</sup> The Station Road site may therefore bear comparison with a number of longer-lived or re-occupied Roman settlements, including Denchworth Road, Wantage, where later occupation appeared to be associated with evidence of a substantial masonry building.<sup>38</sup> The suggested association with a later Roman building at Craven Common, only 250 metres from the Station Road site, may be significant in this respect.

The presence of deposits of Roman building material in the later Roman ditches and gullies within Area B is significant in view of the otherwise relatively modest material record of the Station Road site, and the absence on the site of any structural evidence of a masonry building. This material, including ceramic tiles, stone, tesserae, and plaster, suggests a well-appointed building in the vicinity, and this, together with complementary evidence from Craven Common, including amphora and fine wares of second- to fourth-century date, plausibly identifies a villa establishment. In this context, it is possible to consider the Station Road site within a sub-regional settlement landscape. Villa sites, by no means all investigated under modern conditions, are attested at Woolstone, East Challow and Bishopstone, with a further example suggested at Fawler, Kingston Lisle.<sup>39</sup> These examples suggest a relatively high density of villa settlement within this part of the vale, and the postulated villa site at Craven Common, Uffington, is situated only 1.5 km from that at Woolstone. The results of the earlier evaluation, together with the significant, if unpublished, evidence from Craven Common, certainly suggests a close relationship between the two sites in the later Roman period, and it is possible to speculate on the possible role of the reorganised Station Road site as a dependant settlement, possibly comprising part of the *pars agrariae* of a villa estate.

*The Station Road Site within the Regional Economy of the Roman Period*

The material record of the Station Road site is characterised by low levels of imported wares, metalwork items and coinage which, in common with a number of comparable rural sites in the vale, appears to exhibit a relatively low level of integration with the wider Roman-period economy. Evidence of regional imports, including the clear dominance of Oxfordshire products, suggests that principal economic links in the later Roman period were with the densely-settled upper Thames region, rather than with the small town of Wanborough and the

<sup>32</sup> Booth and Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and Early Romano-British Site at Hatford Quarry', pp. 351–2.

<sup>33</sup> Birbeck et al., Excavations at Watchfield, Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, 1998', p. 236.

<sup>34</sup> Heawood et al., 'Iron Age and Roman Activity at Watchfield Triangle', pp. 307–8.

<sup>35</sup> R. Bourn, 'Manor House Farm, Hatford, Oxfordshire: An Iron Age and Early Romano-British Settlement', in R.J. Zeepvat (ed.), *Three Iron Age and Romano-British Settlements on English Gravels*, BAR BS, 312 (2000), pp. 5–74.

<sup>36</sup> G. Hey, 'Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Old Shifford Farm, Standlake', *Oxoniensia*, 60 (1995), pp. 168–71.

<sup>37</sup> G. Lambrick 'The Development of Late Prehistoric and Roman Farming on the Thames Gravels', in M. Fulford and E. Nichols (eds.), *Developing Landscapes of Lowland Britain. The Archaeology of the British Gravels: A Review* (1992), pp. 83–4; Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, pp. 106–8.

<sup>38</sup> A. Barber and N. Holbrook, 'A Romano-British Settlement to the Rear of Denchworth Road, Wantage, Oxfordshire: Evaluation and Excavation in 1996 and 1998', *Oxoniensia*, 66 (2001), pp. 293–300.

<sup>39</sup> A. Hamilton, 'A Romano-British Villa at Woolstone', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 57 (1959), pp. 83–5.

important Ermin Street corridor, which are located c.11 km to the south-west. This contrasts with an earlier preponderance of North Wiltshire fabrics, including North Wiltshire colour-coated wares and Savernake types.<sup>40</sup> The early use of Savernake and Wiltshire products, suggesting a more westward economic orientation at that time, is also attested at Watchfield Triangle,<sup>41</sup> although here the incidence of later Oxfordshire products was low, possibly indicating a local lacuna in the marketing range for these products.<sup>42</sup> The notable lack of other later finewares at Station Road, including those of the New Forest industries, appears to reflect the local dominance of the Oxfordshire wares, although the former are well-attested at Wanborough.<sup>43</sup> At Denchworth Road, Wantage,<sup>44</sup> only 8 km to the east, Oxfordshire wares were well represented, as in the later Roman phase at Old Shifford Farm, Standlake.<sup>45</sup> While regional pottery sequences for the later Roman period are more definitively represented by larger and more diverse assemblages from the upper Thames valley and adjoining areas of Wiltshire, the character of the later Roman assemblage from Station Road broadly conforms to that of a number of regional sites.<sup>46</sup>

The quantity of ironworking residues recorded from later Roman contexts represents significant evidence of an ancillary economic activity at this time.<sup>47</sup> Quantities of smithing hearth slag were recovered from later Roman ditch fills in Area B, and these appeared to correspond to similar material within the spreads of late Roman soil recorded in trench 3 of the evaluation phase, and exposed within the northern part of Area B (Fig. 4).<sup>48</sup> The limited quantities of slag recovered, together with the absence of stratified evidence of hearths or furnaces within the areas excavated, did not justify further detailed assessment or analysis. However, the great majority of the residues have been identified as smithing hearth cakes (Young, this report), with much of the remainder comprising related smithing slags. The observed wide variations in this material, and the small size of the cakes, do not suggest an industrial scale of ironworking, but rather the occasional operation of an estate smithy.

While limited in size, the assemblage of ironworking residues is relatively unusual amongst Roman sites in this locality. No confirmed evidence was recorded at Watchfield Triangle,<sup>49</sup> or at Denchworth Road, Wantage, although small quantities of probable smithing residues were recorded at Watchfield, Shrivenham.<sup>50</sup> There otherwise appears to be little evidence for basic iron production within the region,<sup>51</sup> where most recorded sites have produced evidence for the smithing of imported iron, rather than smelting on site.<sup>52</sup> Significantly, the small assemblage of ironworking residues recovered from third-century contexts at Alfred's Castle, Ashbury, also appears to have derived from small-scale smithing activity.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>40</sup> R.H. Seager Smith, 'The Coarse Pottery', in A.S. Anderson et al., *The Romano-British 'Small Town' at Wanborough, Wiltshire*, Britannia Monograph Series, 19 (2001), pp. 25, 240.

<sup>41</sup> E. Biddulph, 'The Iron Age and Roman Pottery', in Heawood et al., 'Iron Age and Roman Activity at Watchfield Triangle', pp. 307–8.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. P. Tyers, *Roman Pottery in Britain* (1996), p. 178.

<sup>43</sup> Seager Smith, 'The Coarse Pottery', p. 247.

<sup>44</sup> J. Timby 'The Pottery', in Barber and Holbrook, 'A Romano-British Settlement to the Rear of Denchworth Road, Wantage', pp. 312–3.

<sup>45</sup> J. Timby, 'The Pottery', in Hey, 'Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Old Shifford Farm, Standlake', pp. 126–9.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Seager Smith, 'The Coarse Pottery', pp. 232–257.

<sup>47</sup> T. Young and E.R. McSloy, below.

<sup>48</sup> 'Land at Station Road, Uffington'.

<sup>49</sup> C. Howard-Davis, 'Industrial Debris and Residues', in Heawood et al., 'Iron Age and Roman Activity at Watchfield Triangle', p. 309.

<sup>50</sup> P. Andrews, 'Metalworking Evidence', in Birbeck et al., 'Excavations at Watchfield, Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, 1998', p. 247.

<sup>51</sup> Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 160.

<sup>52</sup> C. Salter, 'Metallurgical Debris', in P.M. Booth, *Asthall, Oxfordshire, Excavations in a Roman 'Small Town'*, 1992 (1997), pp. 89–99.

<sup>53</sup> C. Salter, 'Report on the Iron Slag', in Gosden and Lock, *Histories in the Making. Excavations at Alfred's Castle, 1998–2000*, pp. 116–17.



Few conclusions can be made regarding the nature of environment and farming regimes at Station Road, as plant macrofossil and charcoal remains were rare within sampled contexts and generally poorly preserved. Only very small animal bone assemblages were recovered for each period, and these represented an expected range of domestic species. Such limited evidence broadly suggests a mixed farming regime throughout the Roman period.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Patterns of Settlement Change in the Roman Period*

The phase of late Iron-Age and early Roman activity at Station Road is poorly defined, and only sporadic or peripheral activity is evident before c.AD 200. The Period 3 early Roman material is diagnostically of the mid to late first century AD, with some distinctive pottery types suggesting some continuity of this phase into the early second century. The great majority of securely dated features across the site are of the later Roman period, and appear to represent a distinct scheme or reorganisation comprising an array of ditches of broadly sub-rectilinear plan, which replaced the layout of Iron-Age features in Area A, and the earlier Roman ditches in Area B. Period 4, Roman (AD 100–410) phase, is represented by very much larger pottery groups, and therefore clearly represents a more intensive phase of occupation. The relative preponderance of south-east Dorset black-burnished, Oxfordshire and Midlands forms indicate the predominantly late Roman date of many Period 4 features, which in a number of cases appear to date from the middle decades of the third century. While this Period 4 activity continued well into the fourth century, there is, however, little indication that it extended much beyond AD 350.

The extent of Period 4 reorganisation suggests a low level of occupation across the site at this time. Indeed, the evidence indicates either abandonment or changed use of the site after the earlier second century AD, a pattern that is otherwise well-recognised across the upper Thames region and surrounding areas.<sup>55</sup> A significant number of investigated sites within the Vale of the White Horse and surrounding areas also fall into this category, including Old Shifford Farm, Standlake,<sup>56</sup> Hatford Quarry,<sup>57</sup> and Watchfield Shrivenham,<sup>58</sup> although a number of these sites, including Old Shifford Farm, appear to have been associated with longer-term shifts in settlement focus. The phenomenon of abandonment also affected a number of larger-scale settlements in the upper Thames valley, including that at Thornhill Farm, Fairford.<sup>59</sup> Such widespread evidence of structural change may well reflect external political or economic factors, rather than ones relating to internal development.<sup>60</sup>

The evidence for later Roman change and reorganisation at Station Road is broadly paralleled elsewhere within the vale, and may reflect wider changes in the tenurial or economic basis of rural settlement.<sup>61</sup> The successive phases of boundary ditches, speculatively associated with either settlement or livestock enclosures, together with the relative abundance of later Roman pottery, could plausibly represent an increase in settlement density, and here it may be possible to suggest the development of a dependant settlement associated with a villa estate. The demise and demolition, before the end of the fourth century, of a substantial later Roman

<sup>54</sup> Lambrick, 'The Development of Late Prehistoric and Roman Farming on the Thames Gravels', p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 106; Lambrick, 'The Development of Late Prehistoric and Roman Farming on the Thames Gravels', pp. 83–4.

<sup>56</sup> Hey, 'Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Old Shifford Farm', pp. 129, 171.

<sup>57</sup> Booth and Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and Early Romano-British Site at Hatford Quarry', p. 344.

<sup>58</sup> Birbeck et al., 'Excavations at Watchfield Shrivenham', pp. 287–8.

<sup>59</sup> 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. 158–9.

<sup>60</sup> Lambrick, 'The Development of Late Prehistoric and Roman Farming on the Thames Gravels', p. 84; cf. J. Taylor, 'Rural Society in Roman Britain', in S. James and M. Millett (eds.) *Britons and Romans: Advancing An Archaeological Agenda*, CBA Research Report, 125 (2001), pp. 58–9.

<sup>61</sup> Barber and Holbrook, 'A Romano-British Settlement to the Rear of Denchworth Road, Wantage', p. 334; Heawood, 'Iron Age and Roman Activity at Watchfield Triangle', pp. 317–18; Hey, 'Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Old Shifford Farm', pp. 171–2.

building within the proximity of this site has been noted elsewhere in this report. A possible historical context for mid fourth-century destruction is offered by Ammianus Marcellinus' description of the widespread recriminations and sequestrations of villa estates in Britain following the defeat of Magnentius in AD 353.<sup>62</sup>

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

In total, 1,111 contexts were recorded during both the evaluation and excavation stages of fieldwork on the site, of which 583 (52.5 per cent) were phased. Of the 362 cut features or interventions, a total of 228 (40.6 per cent) were phased. Of the 118 discrete features recorded within the areas excavated, 72 (61 per cent) were phased. Archaeological features were identified in both excavated areas A and B, with relative concentrations of middle to late Iron-Age and Roman features recorded within the areas identified by the evaluation.

The middle to late Iron-Age and Roman features included a number of small enclosures, pits, and evidence of post-built structures. In addition, a large number of features were interpreted as possible quarry pits and tree-throw hollows (Area A) (Figs. 3, 9 and 11). The most numerous and extensive features were represented by successive phases of drainage or field boundary ditches, and enclosure ditches, of middle to late Iron-Age and Roman date. A series of close-set, parallel trenches of this date (11) were of an unidentified function, but were thought by the excavator to possibly represent horticultural activity on the site (Fig. 3).<sup>63</sup> The remains of a small area of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, which had partly truncated earlier archaeological deposits, were also recorded.

Features were assigned to periods according to the dating of recovered pottery, together with any spatial/stratigraphic relationships with features containing dated artefacts. A number of features remain undated. As excavated, most ditches were relatively shallow, and had been extensively truncated by medieval and post-medieval cultivation, with surviving ditch sections displaying mostly single, primary fills.

The relatively large pottery assemblage recovered from ditch fills included a large component of middle Iron-Age material of limited diagnostic quality, which did not permit a more precise dating of a number of contexts. This, together with a degree of residuality within inter-cutting features in a number of areas, precluded the accurate dating of many features beyond broad Iron-Age or Roman periods. On the basis of this qualified approach, excavated finds and features were assigned to the following periods:

- Period 1: Early to late prehistoric, including early Iron Age (c.10,000–400 BC);
- Period 2: Middle to late Iron-Age (c.400 BC–AD 43);
- Period 3: Late Iron-Age/early Roman (c.100 BC–100 AD);
- Period 4: Roman (AD 100–410);
- Period 5: Post-Roman to modern.

## PHASING (Figs. 2, 3, 4)

### *Period 1: Earlier Prehistoric (10,000–400 BC)*

A total of 54 items of worked stone, and seven pieces of burnt flint, were recovered from 36 deposits, and 70 worked flints and 45 pieces of burnt, unworked flint were recorded from the

<sup>62</sup> D. Mattingley, *An Imperial Possession. Britain in the Roman Empire* (2006), p. 235.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. M. Allen, 'Agricultural Expansion and Specialisation in Roman Britain: A Multi-Scaled Approach to a Complex Problem', *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain* (2015): [www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/archaeology/agricultural-expansion\\_RRSP\\_MGA](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/archaeology/agricultural-expansion_RRSP_MGA).

bulk soil-sampling of a further 18 deposits. This material was almost entirely residual within Roman or middle or late Iron-Age contexts. In addition, eight items of prehistoric worked flint were recorded from topsoil and subsoil contexts in Areas A and B. Only one feature, posthole 3416 (Fig. 3, inset), contained early Iron-Age (700–400 BC) pottery. This was situated within the northern group of postholes recorded in the 'outer' enclosure area of Iron-Age activity, and situated in the north-east corner of Area A. This residual material may represent an ephemeral, earlier phase of Iron-Age activity, which was not otherwise recorded within the areas excavated.

*Period 2: Middle to Late Iron-Age (400 BC–AD 43) (Figs. 2, 3 and 8)*

This period of activity was recorded exclusively in the eastern part of the site within Area A (Fig. 3). The most prominent feature of this period was the large, sub-oval, but incomplete, enclosure 18, situated within the south-west of this area, which enclosed an area measuring approximately 13 m by 12 m in extent. A north-north-east to south-south-west aligned ditch below the west side of enclosure 18 may represent an element of an earlier Iron-Age enclosure. The ditch of enclosure 18 was substantial, with steep, concave sides and a relatively flat base, and was 3.2 m wide and 1 m deep (Fig. 8). Primary and secondary fills within the ditch contained middle and late Iron-Age pottery. No evidence indicating an internal enclosure bank was found. A possible western entrance of the enclosure was postulated just within the excavation area although, if present, this had been at least partly truncated by a later Iron-Age quarry pit, and therefore remains unconfirmed. No internal features contemporary with the enclosure ditch were evident. This apparent absence may reflect the relatively higher elevation of this part of the site, and the disproportionately greater levels of truncation resulting from later Roman ditches and medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

Later re-cuts and subsequent fills of the enclosure 18 ditch clearly indicated that the enclosure remained in use during the early Roman period (Period 3). However, no sufficiently diagnostic pottery was recovered to provide a more precise chronology for the construction and use of the enclosure. By the third to fourth centuries AD (Period 4), this feature had



Fig. 3. Area A: phased plan of all features (1:800 and 1:500 inset).

clearly gone out of use and been partly overlain by a rectilinear array of field boundary ditches (1, 2, 3, 9), together with a number of ditched features which may relate to a succeeding settlement, possibly situated to the north, beyond the excavated area (ditches 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 17, 20, 25) (Figs. 3, 5 and 7).



Fig. 4. Area B: phased plan of all features (1:300).





*Fig. 5. Late Roman ditch 3, cutting enclosure 18 in area A. View to west (scale 1 metre).*



The other principal area of Period 2 middle Iron-Age activity comprised a series of enclosures and post-built structures in the east of Area A. This was represented by an incomplete, sub-oval ditched enclosure (16), measuring 23 m by 10 m at its maximum extent (Figs. 3 and 6). As excavated, the ditch measured 1.1–1.6 m in width, and only 0.2–0.5 m in depth, with moderately concave sides and base. The predominantly dark-grey, silty-clay fills, with occasional charcoal inclusions, were characterised by high concentrations of organic material, possibly associated with domestic activity in the vicinity.

Within enclosure 16, a partly-excavated arc of evenly spaced postholes indicated a probable roundhouse building (Structure 42), with an internal diameter of approximately 9.6 m (Fig. 3, inset). The posthole fills contained small quantities of middle Iron-Age pottery. Two postholes situated internally, within this arc (3477 and 3575, Fig. 3, inset), may represent supporting structural features or internal divisions, and their fills also contained early to middle Iron-Age pottery. An outer series of rectilinear ditches (13, 24) which surrounded the ‘inner’ settlement boundary represented by enclosure 16, were also recorded within the east of Area A. These contained middle Iron-Age pottery, and are probably contemporary with the inner enclosure. Three discrete groups of postholes were recorded within the southern and northern parts of this ‘outer’ area enclosed by ditches 13 and 24, the configurations of which clearly represented three, individual four-post structures (22, 23, 43) (Fig. 3, inset).

Significantly, the evaluation trenches 13, 16, 17, 21, but particularly 20, produced increasing quantities of middle Iron-Age pottery towards the east of the site.<sup>64</sup> This confirmed the evidence from Area A, which confirmed middle Iron-Age occupation within ditch 13, at its eastern extremity.



Fig. 6. General view of inter-cutting late Roman quarry pits to the east of gully 17 and enclosure 18, in Area A. View to north-west.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Land at Station Road, Uffington.’

*Period 3: Late Iron-Age to Early Roman (100 BC–AD 100)*

Evidence of domestic occupation of the late Iron Age and ‘transitional’ early Roman periods was notably limited within the areas excavated. Only two postholes (3627, 3636, Fig. 3, inset), within the southern group of postholes in the east of Area A, and two ditches in Area B (including 30, Fig. 4), contained pottery of this period (Fig. 14). Three residual sherds of this date were also recovered from later Roman features. In conjunction with the evaluation evidence for the eastern part of the site, there was limited evidence for some degree of continuity of middle Iron-Age settlement in the east of Area A into the later Iron Age. Although the late Iron Age is otherwise not well or coherently represented within the areas excavated at the Station Road site, it is conceivable that evidence of a settlement focus of this period survives to the east of Area A.

Although undated, a series of broadly parallel, north–south aligned ditches (26–29, Fig. 4) were recorded at the very base of the stratigraphic sequence for Area B, and were provisionally assigned a Period 3, late Iron-Age to early Roman date. The ditches averaged 1.5–1.7 m in width, and 0.25–0.5 m in depth, with moderately concave sides and base. Some of these features (ditches 26 and 27) were recorded below the level of the Period 3 east–west aligned ditch 30, thus suggesting a broadly similar date.

*Period 4: Roman (AD 100–410)*

The Roman period is represented by the longest and most coherent stratigraphic sequences recorded from both excavated areas. Third-century Roman pottery was recorded from the upper fills of enclosure 18, and pottery of second- to third-century date was recorded from the later fills of the earlier Iron-Age ‘outer’ enclosure ditch 13, in the east of Area A. The recovery of second- to third-century, and later, Roman pottery from these later fills, together with evidence for the re-cutting of the Iron-Age ditches in Area A, suggested that these features had remained extant as visible earthworks throughout the earlier Roman period. Otherwise,

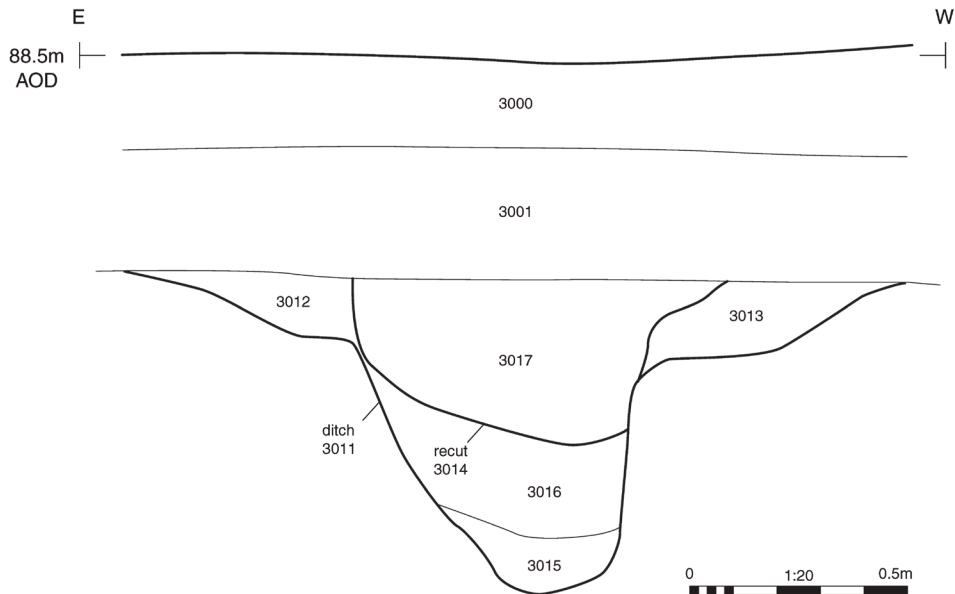
*Section AA*

Fig. 7. North-facing section of ditch 3011 (ditch 2), and rear 3014 (Section AA).

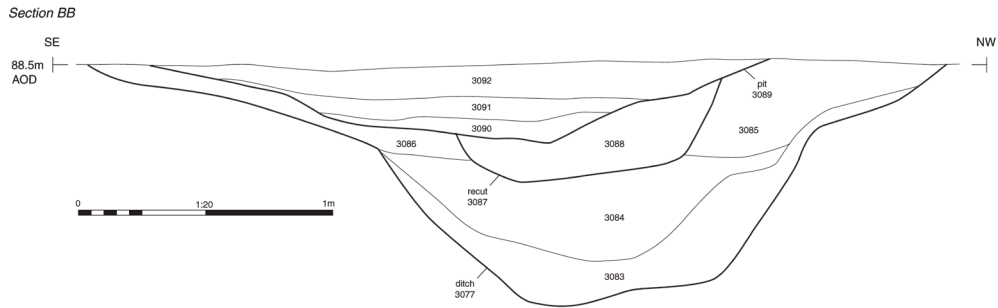


Fig. 8. North-east facing section of ditch 3077 (ditch 18), with recut 3087 and later pit disturbance 3089 (Section BB).

the degree of settlement continuity and the morphology of the ditched enclosed settlement, as indicated by limited excavation, appeared to be broadly typical of a number of recorded later prehistoric and Roman settlement sites in the region.<sup>65</sup>

The series of broadly parallel, north-south aligned ditches in Area B (26–29, Fig. 4) was provisionally assigned a Period 3, late Iron-Age to early Roman date. These features were superseded by an overlying scheme of Period 4 later Roman agricultural and/or settlement enclosure ditches and gullies (30–41), all of which belonged to Period 4, and apparently represented the latest phase of Roman activity on the site.

The greatest number of closely dateable features belonged to Period 4, and particularly to the later Roman period of the third to fourth centuries AD. These were characterised by a complex layout of superimposed ditches and gullies (30–41), which could be placed in stratigraphical sequence, but were otherwise of broadly similar, but exclusively later, Roman date. These features were difficult to characterise satisfactorily, and appeared to relate both to

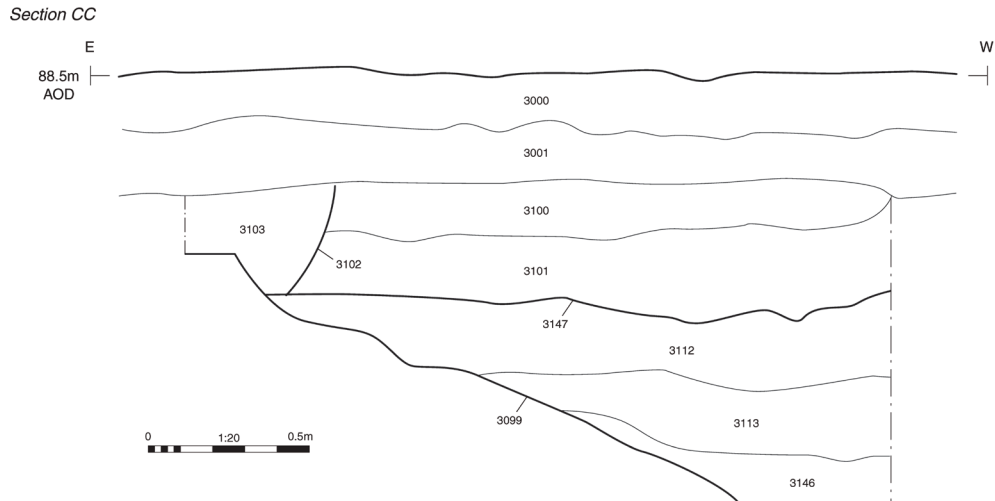


Fig. 9. North-facing section of quarry pit 3099 (Section BB).

<sup>65</sup> P. Booth et al., *The Thames Through Time: The Early Historical Period: AD 1–1000*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 27 (2007), pp. 42–3; Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 106.

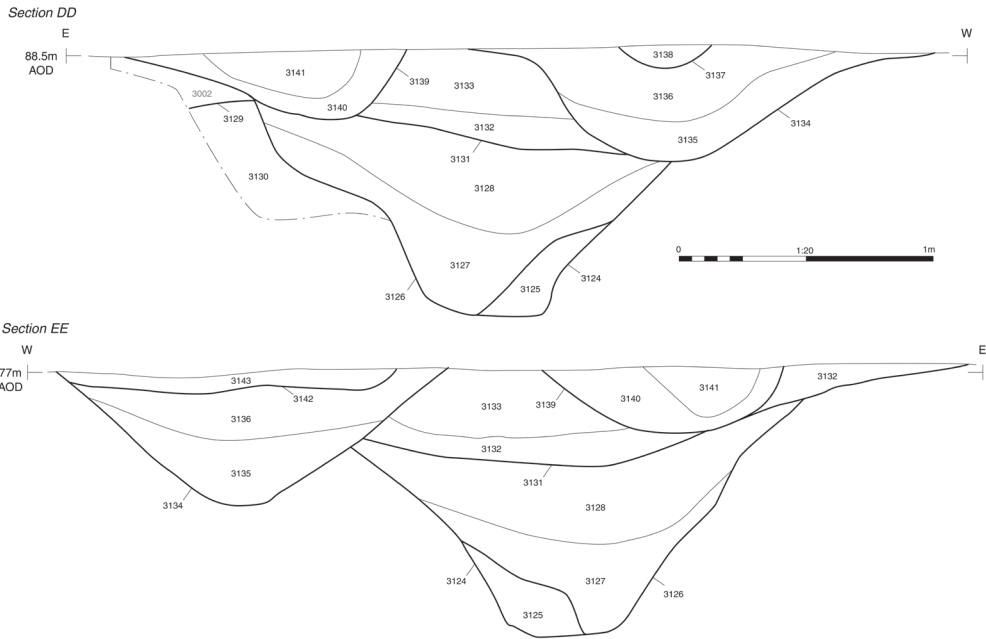


Fig. 10. North-facing (Section DD) and south-facing (Section EE) sections of ditch 13 and ditch 13 recut: 3134, 3126, 3131, 3134, 3137, 3139, and 3142.

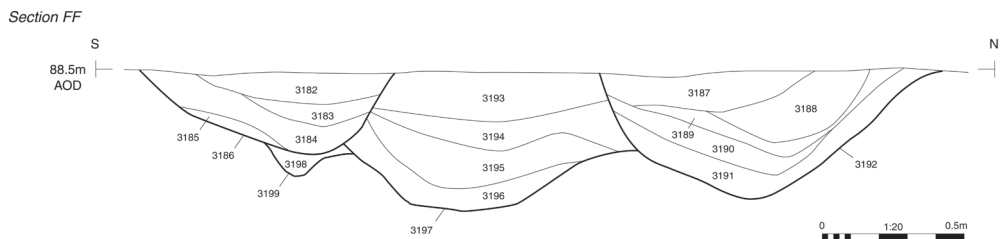


Fig. 11. East-facing section of ditches 3186, 3192, 3197 (ditch group 3), and tree-throw hollow 3139 (Section FF).

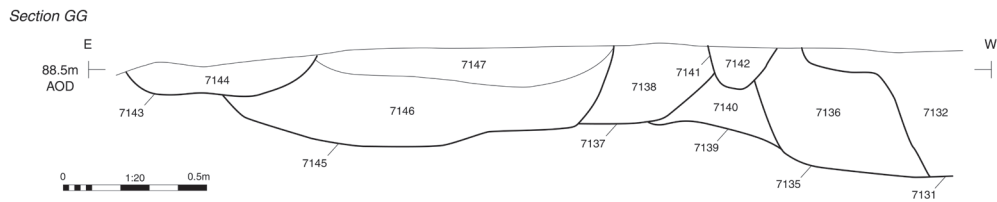


Fig. 12. North-east facing section of 7131 and 7135 (ditch 34), 7141 (ditch group 41), 7139, 7137, 7145 and 7143 (Section GG).

agricultural and domestic activity. This complex array of intercutting linear and rectilinear ditched features superseded both the Iron-Age features in Area A, and the earlier, Period 3 ditches in Area B. The later Roman phase was associated with a poorly understood, but extensive, re-organisation of enclosure and land boundaries across the site, which appeared to reflect the prevailing north–south and east–west alignments evident in the layout of Period 3 features. The evidence indicates a successive re-arrangement of boundary ditches, with what appear to be associated stockade or settlement enclosures (4, 5, 8, 10, 17, 25, 36). In addition, notable deposits of ironworking residues and Roman building material were associated with ditch fills in the north of Area B (Fig. 4, Spread 305).

A large number of pits of this period, possibly associated with quarrying, were recorded exclusively in Area A (Figs. 9, 13), and were predominantly located between the two areas of Period 2 enclosures. These comprised a discrete group of individual cut features of sub-circular and circular plan, which were relatively regular in size and depth. These measured from 1.5 to 2 m in diameter, or extent, but were only 0.2–0.3 m deep, with shallow, concave sides and flat bases. Most notably, group fill 3676 (Fig. 3, inset) was characterised by dark, organic-rich clayey silts, which strongly suggested the close proximity of domestic occupation. Group fill 3677, possibly representing extractive pits (Fig. 3, inset), contained residual middle Iron-Age pottery (Period 2), in addition to Period 4 Roman material. The distribution of stratified material from these otherwise uncharacterised features indicated that all were associated with Period 4 activity.

The palimpsest of overlying features of this phase in Area B included a concentrated area of agricultural and/or settlement ditches and gullies (30–41, Fig. 4). The relative complexity of the stratigraphic sequence in this area, in conjunction with problems of residuality and intrusive material resulting from bioturbation in this part of the site, made it difficult to attribute a number of features to specific periods. This problem was compounded by the extensive spreads of later Roman slag-rich deposits over the northern part of Area B (Fig. 4).

A substantial quantity of ironworking residues, principally comprising smithing hearth cakes, was recovered from ditches in the north of Area B, and this material appears to correspond with the midden layer associated with such residues, which was recorded in the earlier evaluation trench 3 (evaluation context 305, Fig. 2). Despite the recovered quantities of this material, no evidence of *in situ* burning or hearths was recorded in this part of Area B. The quantity of ironworking residues recovered from the later Roman ditches suggests that many of these features were open, and in use, during the principal period of ironworking activity. The assessment of smithing hearth cake (Young, below) indicates that this activity was episodic in nature, and that this was not a specialised industrial site. Also associated with this part of Area B were deposits of high-status Roman building and occupation material,

#### Section HH

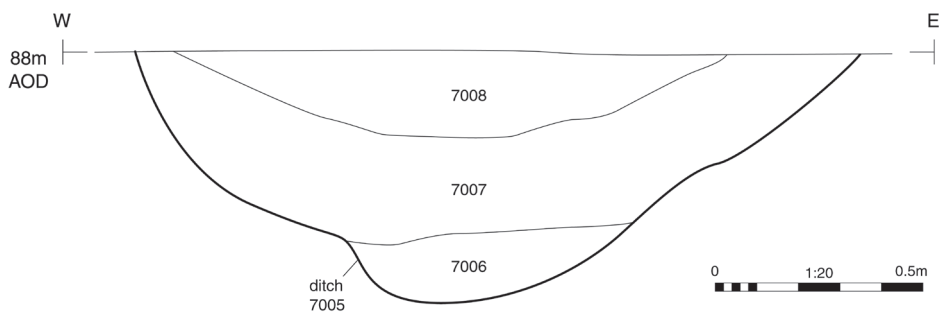


Fig. 13. South-facing section of pit 7005 (Section HH).



including box flue-tile, tessera, *tegula*, *imbrex* and brick fragments, and stone roof-tile. Rare small finds included a fragment of a Roman pewter platter, and a copper-alloy coin which is probably an *aes* issue of second-century AD date. A fragment of plaster, and a further sandstone roof tile, were also recovered from the subsoil (3001) of Area A, in addition to a small number of fragments of ceramic building material of Roman date from evaluation trenches 11, 13, 16, 18 and 21, in the south-east of the site.

Within the northern margins of Area B, an incomplete penannular ditch (41) was recorded as the latest feature in the stratigraphic sequence for this area (Fig. 4). This feature had an extrapolated external diameter of c.9 m, and appears to have represented an ancillary structure, quite possibly associated with metalworking activity in the vicinity. Ditch 41 appeared to be stratigraphically later than the Period 4 ditch 34, and it is significant that some of the spreads containing ironworking residues in the north of Area B also covered Period 4 ditches, thus indicating their late Roman date. The quantities of Roman building material, together with the ironworking residues recovered from both the evaluation trenches and the excavation stage of fieldwork, suggest that centres of domestic and/or ironworking activity were situated close to the northern limits of Area B. The relatively closely-spaced and approximately rectilinear configuration of ditched features within this area appears to indicate a sequence of later Roman reorganisation and separation, which could reflect the increasing importance of villa-dependant economic activity at this time.

#### *Period 5: Post-Roman to Modern (AD 410 to Present)*

Negative features associated with medieval ridge and furrow cultivation were found to have truncated all earlier archaeological features, particularly in the west of Area A, and in Area B. All furrows were aligned in a north-south direction, suggesting that the current field boundary dividing the Station Road site represents a relatively recent landscape feature. Post-medieval ceramic field drains and modern shingle field drains, of probable nineteenth- and early twentieth-century date, were recorded across the whole site.

## THE ARTEFACTUAL RECORD

The range of finds recovered from the Station Road site was limited, and overwhelmingly comprised a pottery assemblage of later prehistoric and Roman date, weighing a total of 29.081 kg. This was augmented by an assemblage of ceramic building material, and a highly fragmented and largely undiagnostic group of fired clay fragments. Small finds were notably scarce, and included a single Roman coin and fragments of a Roman spoon and a pewter plate. Recovered plant remains and charcoal were very restricted in quantity and level of preservation, as was the small assemblage of animal bone.

## FLINT by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of 53 items of worked flint, weighing 541 g, and seven pieces of burnt, unworked flint, with a total weight of 85 g, were recovered from the hand-excavation of 36 deposits, including those from evaluation. A further 76 worked flint items, with a weight of 91 g, and 45 pieces of burnt, unworked flint, weighing 37g, were recorded from the bulk soil sampling of 18 deposits. Of the total of 129 worked flint items recovered, the majority were found in Area A: only 26 were from Area B and 6 were from evaluation trenches. A breakdown of the worked flint assemblage is provided in Table 1, below.

#### *Provenance*

Sixteen per cent of the assemblage (20 items) was recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits. The remainder (109 items) was recovered from cut features, including ditches/

ditch terminals (36 per cent); pits (19 per cent); postholes (18 per cent); pits/postholes (5 per cent); tree-throw hollows (2 per cent); furrows (2 per cent); gullies (1 per cent); and pit/ditch terminals (1 per cent). Of the items of worked flint from cut features, nine were from deposits which contained no other dateable material. The remainder comprised residual finds from contexts dated to the Roman (65 per cent), or middle to late Iron-Age (27 per cent), periods. The majority of these deposits contained only one to three flint items.

#### *Raw Material and Condition*

Most of the items of worked flint assessed were fabricated from raw material of moderate to good quality. Of the 66 items which retained cortex, this was chalky or pitted on 18 items (27 per cent), suggesting a primary (chalk, or clay-with-flints) source, and abraded on 48 (73 per cent), indicating the use of secondary sources, such as river gravels. Where present, the cortex was white, cream or grey in colour. Of the worked pieces, excluding chips (95 in total), 20 were broken, nine were corticated to some degree, and four had been burnt. The majority of the unburnt material (72 per cent) ranged in colour from pale to dark-grey/black, although brown, greenish and honey-coloured staining was recorded on 28 items (25 per cent). Moderate to heavy edge-damage was recorded on 66 per cent of worked flints, and moderate to heavy rolling (edge abrasion) on 48 per cent. Such high figures are typical of a residual assemblage.

#### *Primary Technology*

The recorded material was almost entirely residual within contexts dated to the middle or late Iron-Age or Roman periods. Only one context, the fill (3409) of ditch 3408, demonstrated any potential for dating by lithic evidence, although in this case the poor condition of the seven items recovered precluded any refinement of the broad later prehistoric date offered by pottery evidence. Items of flint débitage totalled 106, of which only four were products of a primary reduction stage, suggesting that initial stages of flint-working were carried out elsewhere. The five blade types recorded amongst the débitage pieces are typical components of Mesolithic and early Neolithic assemblages, as is a core rejuvenation flake recorded from the topsoil. A total of 14 cores and 6 core fragments were recorded from the site, all of which had been used to produce flakes. The 14 cores comprise eight multi-platform types, five with dual platforms and one tested nodule, the latter having only one flake removed. Most of these examples were small, and had been unsystematically reduced.

#### *Secondary Technology*

A notched flake, recovered from fill 7118 of the Roman-period pit 7117 (not labelled on figures), displayed a small notch formed from three removals in the centre of the ventral distal edge. A miscellaneous retouched item from the same context comprised a piece of débitage, which displayed very fine, abrupt retouch along one edge. A scraper, recorded in topsoil 3001, and made on a thermal blank, displayed semi-abrupt retouch along a concavity along one edge. None of these tools comprised diagnostic types, and all were of broadly prehistoric date. The flint assemblage was almost wholly redeposited, and principally comprised knapping waste which was largely undiagnostic in character. The blade component is indicative of a Mesolithic or early Neolithic date, although the unsystematically worked cores and flakes are more typical of Bronze-Age flint technology, and it is therefore probable that a significant component of the assemblage dates to this period. As such, the small, redeposited flint assemblage from Station Road is broadly typical of excavated later prehistoric and Roman-period sites within the Vale of the White Horse.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Cf. K. Cramp, 'The Flint', in Booth and Simmonds, 'An Iron Age and Early Romano-British Site at Hatford Quarry', pp. 333–5.

Table 1. Flint assemblage by category and provenance

CATEGORY	Hand recovered	Soil sampled
Primary technology		
Blade	5	0
Chip	0	34
Core	12	2
Core fragment	3	3
Core rejuvenation flake	1	0
Flake	29	30
Shatter	1	6
<b>Secondary technology</b>		
Miscellaneous retouched	0	1
Notched flake	1	0
Scraper – concave	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>76</b>

#### THE POTTERY by JACKY SOMMERVILLE and E.R. McSLOY

An assemblage totalling 3,702 sherds (29.055 kg) was recovered. A further 1090 sherds of pottery (14.784 kg), were recovered from topsoil and subsoil contexts within excavated Areas A and B. Only the stratified assemblage was fully recorded, and is reported on here. The pottery was sorted by fabric per context, and quantified by sherd count, weight and rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalents). In addition, vessels identifiable to form (mostly rim-sherds) were recorded for each deposit by fabric.

The large bulk of the recorded pottery relates to the later prehistoric and Roman periods, and the assemblage is described chronologically below. Late prehistoric pottery fabrics are described below in summary, coded according to primary inclusion(s). A summary of pottery by area and period is given in Table 2. Fabric codings for the Roman assemblage are set out in Table 3. Where applicable, codings match those of the NRRFC,<sup>67</sup> and a concordance has been provided, equating types from this site with Oxford Archaeology's type-series.<sup>68</sup>

The majority of the later Roman assemblage largely conforms to widely published vessel forms, and the illustration of common types has therefore focussed on featured sherds representing the late Prehistoric group and earlier Roman 'transitional' vessels.

#### *Late Prehistoric Pottery*

Handmade pottery of late prehistoric type amounted to 1,281 sherds, weighing 5,208 g (1.13 EVEs). Much of this group was heavily fragmented, which was reflected in a mean sherd weight of only 4.1 g. Poor surface survival was a notable feature of the assemblage, due in part to an unfavourable burial environment which has also resulted in the leaching of some calcareous inclusions.

A significant proportion of the group (358 sherds, or 28 per cent) was re-deposited within Roman phased deposits, and a further 99 sherds (7.8 per cent) were derived from unphased deposits. The bulk of the stratified Periods 1–2 material was recovered from ditch fills, and primarily as small context groups (fewer than 20 sherds). Only six deposits produced groups of 20 sherds or more, to a maximum of 132 sherds, from ditch 3465, fill 3466.

<sup>67</sup> R. Tomber and J. Dore, *The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection: A Handbook*, MoLAS Monograph, 2 (1998).

<sup>68</sup> P. Booth, 'Oxford Archaeology Roman Pottery Reporting Guidelines', unpublished OA document.

Table 2. Summary of pottery by area and period

Area/Stage	Period	Count	Weight (g)
Evaluation	Late prehistoric	6	32
	Late Iron Age/Early Roman	24	131
	Roman	299	3347
	Post-medieval	1	12
Excavation Area A	Late prehistoric	1224	4918
	Late Iron Age/Early Roman	9	33
	Roman	1305	11438
	Modern	1	4
Excavation Area B	Late prehistoric	51	258
	Roman	783	8894

## Assemblage Summary: The Prehistoric Fabrics

- LI Handmade. Common limestone and sparse fossil shell inclusions. Totals: 24 sherds; 87 g.
- VES Handmade. Common, rounded and plate-like voids (probably leached calcareous inclusions). Totals: 11 sherds; 61 g.
- QZ Handmade. Abundant to common sub-angular quartz. Totals: 919 sherds; 3,767 g
- QZL Handmade. Abundant to common sub-angular quartz, and common or sparse limestone and fossil shell. Totals: 264 sherds; 957 g.
- QZA Handmade. Abundant to common sub-angular quartz, and sparse argillaceous (rounded clay pellet or mudstone). Totals: 24 sherds; 121 g.
- QZO Handmade. Abundant to common sub-angular quartz, and common burnt-out organics. Totals: 37 sherds; 209 g.
- O Handmade. Common burnt-out organic material (linear voids up to 2mm). Totals: 2 sherds; 6 g.

The late prehistoric group principally comprises handmade quartz-bearing types, with smaller quantities in calcareous (limestone or fossil shell-tempered) tempers. The majority of this material is local in origin, with the likely source for the quartz-bearing types being the Upper Greensand of southern Oxfordshire. The overall composition compares with early to middle Iron-Age groups from surrounding areas of Oxfordshire and north Wiltshire, including those from Watkins Farm, Northmoor,<sup>69</sup> Alfred's Castle, Ashbury,<sup>70</sup> Coxwell Road, Faringdon,<sup>71</sup> and Groundwell West, Swindon.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> T.G. Allen, 'The Iron Age Pottery', in T.G. Allen, *An Iron Age and Romano-British Enclosed Settlement at Watkins Farm, Northmoor*, Thames Valley Landscapes: The Windrush Valley, 1 (1990), pp. 33–7, figs. 20–22.

<sup>70</sup> L. Brown, 'The Iron Age Pottery', in Gosden and Lock, *Histories in the Making: Excavations at Alfred's Castle*, pp. 84–9.

<sup>71</sup> E. Bryan et al., 'The Pottery', in Cook et al., 'Excavations of an Iron Age Site at Coxwell Road', *Oxoniensia*, 69 (2004), pp. 224–8.

<sup>72</sup> J. Timby, 'The Pottery', in G. Walker et al., *An Iron Age Site at Groundwell West, Wiltshire. Excavations in 1996* (2001), pp. 25–6.

*Vessel Forms and Decoration* The assemblage includes only 25 rim sherds, with the majority of sherds too small to confidently ascribe to a particular vessel form. Where form was evident (8 vessels), these belong to jar-proportioned, globular, or slacker-profiled vessels, and with upright or slightly-everted rims and simple or thickened rims (Fig. 14.1–14.7). Such forms are typical of the utilitarian classes used for cooking or storage, and are common within Iron-Age assemblages from the region. In some instances (four vessels), necks are ‘tall’ (Fig. 14.3, 14.4); a feature most typical of earlier Iron-Age styles. One further vessel, represented by a portion of its neck and angular shoulder from Period 1 posthole 3416 (fill 3476), is probably a carinated bowl.

Examples of decoration are rare in this group, and are limited to five vessels. Three vessels, all smaller bodysherds in fabric QZ, exhibit incised line decoration (Fig. 14.2 and 14.7), which in the latter instance is combined with impressed ‘dimples’. A further vessel, also in fabric QZ, features dimpled decoration only. Such vessels are representative of fine ware bowls, belonging to early Iron-Age traditions (below). Also typical of this period, but from a larger coarseware vessel form, is a probable jar featuring a line of fingertip impressions to its lower neck (Fig. 14.6).

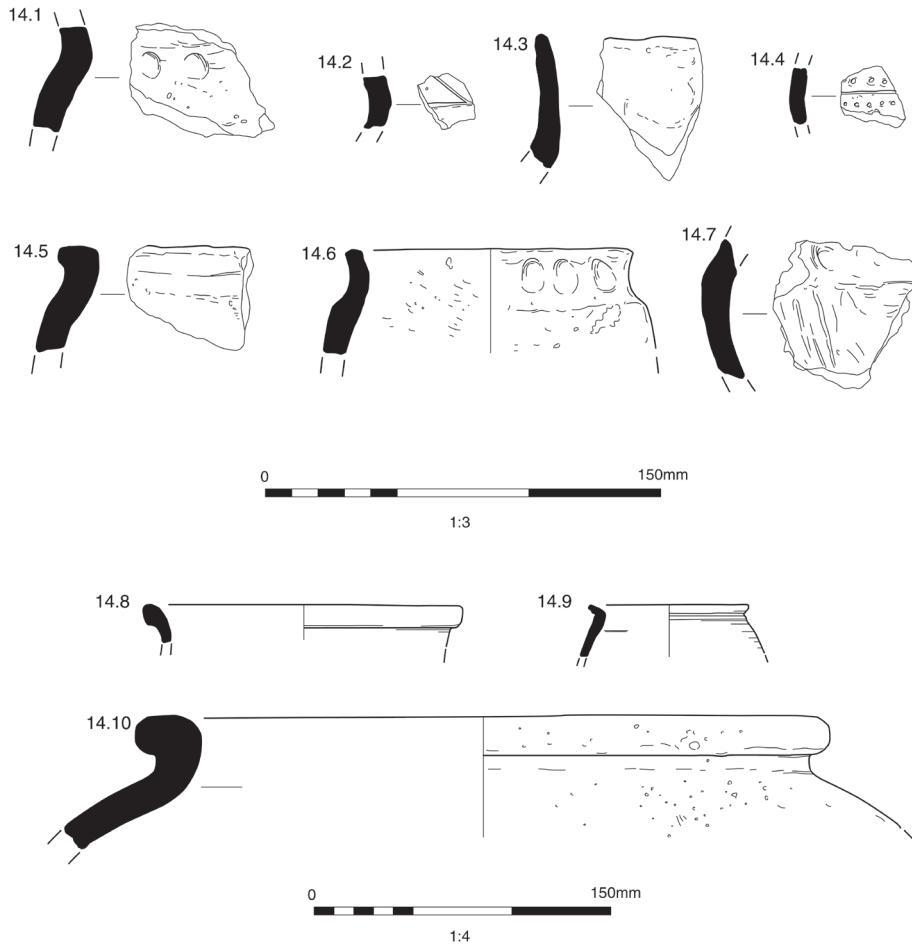


Fig. 14. Selected late prehistoric and Roman rimsherds (1:4).



*Stylistic Associations/Dating* Although the assemblage is well fragmented and largely lacking in featured sherds, the incidences of fine ware bowls, and tall-necked and fingertip-decorated coarseware forms, are sufficient to support dating in the earlier part of the Iron-Age. An absence of the carinated/round-shouldered forms with 'extensive' fingertip decoration, which are frequently associated with the transitional late Bronze-Age/early Iron-Age period, implies a date no earlier than the sixth or fifth centuries BC. The incised and dimpled decoration is a feature of some early Iron-Age assemblages from south-central England, including those among Cunliffe's Chinnor-Wandlebury grouping, where the suggested date-range spans the fifth to fourth/third centuries BC.<sup>73</sup> None of the pottery from this site need be any later than this range, although forms such as the globular/slack-profiled vessels (Fig. 14.4–5) are imprecisely dateable, and perhaps as late as the later middle Iron-Age. Possibly significant absences are the bead-rimmed forms characterising pottery of the first centuries BC/AD, or the Palaeozoic limestone-tempered (Malvernian type) pottery, which also appears in this period.

#### *Roman Pottery (Including 'Transitional' Late Iron-Age/Early Roman)*

A total of 3,702 sherds of Roman pottery, weighing 29.055 kg (27.44 EVEs) was recovered. The larger part of the assemblage (68 per cent by count) was derived from ditch/gully fills, and much of the group is well-fragmented, and reflected in a moderately low mean sherd weight (9.9 g). Poor surface survival was also a feature of the assemblage, and was particularly pronounced in the case of fine ware types, including the samian and Oxfordshire red-slipped wares, where a partial or complete loss of slip was typically encountered.

#### *Assemblage summary*

The composition of the Roman group is set out in Table 3. A small proportion (35 sherds; 182 g) comprises wheel-thrown ('Belgic'-style), grogged, sandy or limestone-tempered types, which are locally characteristic of the earlier or mid first century AD. The larger part of the assemblage comprises material dating after c.AD 70, and is composed of a mix of local, regional or continental ware types.

Reduced coarsewares (greywares) make up the largest portion of the assemblage (1,187 sherds or 49 per cent). Although confident determination of source is made difficult by the conservative nature of such traditions, it is probable that most originates from major kilns south of Oxford (Table 3).<sup>74</sup> Only modest quantities are attributable to the North Wiltshire sources, with the largest component made up of coarse, grog-tempered Savernake products dating to the second century, or earlier. Forms among the latter group exclusively comprise large storage jars (Fig. 14.9), and the relative abundance of this type suggests a particular requirement from a source specialising in such forms. Among the remaining reduced coarsewares, medium or wide-mouthed jars are heavily dominant, mostly as medium or wide-mouthed necked vessels and neck-less jars, based on south-east Dorset black-burnished cooking pot types. Non-jar forms make up c.14 per cent (EVEs total) of this group. Most are plain-rimmed dishes and flanged bowls derived from late black-burnished ware classes, with a small number of flagons. One amongst the latter, from Ditch 3114, matches a late Oxford greyware type, with a slashed cordon to its collared rim (Young's form R9).<sup>75</sup> Forms among the oxidised fabrics (type OXID, OXIDC and OXFFO) comprise a mix of bowls, including Young's classes O44 and O47, necked jars,<sup>76</sup> with a small number of disc-necked flagons

<sup>73</sup> B. Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain. An Account of England, Scotland and Wales from the Seventh Century BC until the Roman Conquest*, 4th edn (2004), pp. 101–2, fig. A12; M.D. Howe et al., *Roman Pottery from the Nene Valley: A Guide*, Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery Occasional Paper, 2 (1980), p. 23, fig. 6, nos. 64–5.

<sup>74</sup> Booth et al., *The Thames Through Time: The Early Historical Period*, pp. 304–5.

<sup>75</sup> C.J. Young, *The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region*, BAR BS, 43 (1977), pp. 190–2.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 198 (fig. 73), 199.

(Young O4) and funnel-necked beakers. The majority are late or broadly-dateable classes, although some, including a beaker with a well-executed cornice rim (Fig. 14.8), is probably no later in date than the early third century.<sup>77</sup>

The Oxfordshire potteries are responsible for the bulk of fine and 'specialist' wares (mortaria) from the assemblage. Most common (175 sherds or 7 per cent) are Oxford red-slipped wares (OXF RS), all of which are dateable after c.AD 240. Forms in this type comprise mainly bowls, in particular those derived from samian forms (Young's classes C45, C48/49, C51), together with a single funnel-necked beaker. Mortaria also occur in this type, as both wall-sided (Young C97) and flanged (C100) forms. Whiteware (OXF WH) mortaria also occur, and are exclusively of late flanged forms (Young M22).

Table 3. Quantification of transitional late Iron-Age and Roman fabrics

Period	Code	Oxon	Fabric description	Count	Weight (g)	Code
Late Iron Age/	LS		Limestone-tempered		2	10
Early Roman	QZ		Wheel-thrown quartz sand-tempered		14	53
	QZLS		Wheel-thrown quartz sand-and-limestone tempered		17	101
Roman	GWOXF		Oxford reduced ware		76	1068
local Oxfordshire	OXF FO	R11	Oxford fine oxidised ware		22	261
	OXF PA*	R11C	Oxford Parchment ware		4	119
	OXF RS*	R11G	Oxford Red-slipped ware		174	2229
	OXF WH*	R11A	Oxford White ware		8	246
	LOC CC	R38	Local colour-coated ware		9	17
local-north	GWPA		Greyware with pale grey fabric throughout		32	283
Wiltshire	SAV GT*		Savernake Grog-tempered ware		141	3563
	SOW WS*		South-West White-slipped ware		1	13
local-unsourced	OXID	R05A	Medium oxidised		152	693
	GT	R36	Grog-tempered		2	18
	GTGW		Grog-tempered greyware		1	17
	GW		Medium greyware		520	4718
	GWC	R06B	Coarse greyware		44	487
	GWF	R06C	Fine greyware		297	3403
	GWM	R06D	Micaceous greyware		4	16
	GWOR		Greyware with orange/orange sandwich core		148	1517
	OXID	R05A	Medium oxidised		152	693
	OXIDC	R36	Coarse oxidised		15	186
	OXIDF	R05B	Fine oxidised		96	544
	RS		Red-slipped ware		1	1
	WHF	R03E	Fine whiteware		32	154
	WHS	R03	Sandy whiteware		26	131

(Continued)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. pp. 192 (fig. 71), 193.

Table 3. (Continued)

Period	Code	Oxon	Fabric description	Count	Weight (g)	Code
(regional imports)	DOR BB1*	R07G	Dorset Black-burnished ware		341	2577
	GWNV	R12D	Lower Nene Valley greyware		9	83
	HAR SH*	R13	Harrold Shelly ware		28	114
	LNV CC*	R12B	Lower Nene Valley Colour-coated ware		7	37
	MAH WH*	R20	Mancetter-Hartshill whiteware		1	20
(continental imports)	CNG BS*		Central Gaulish black-slipped ware		1	<1
	EG SAM	R01	Eastern Gaulish Samian		24	115
	LEZ SA2*	R01	Central Gaulish Samian (Lezoux)		17	179
	LGF SA*	R01	South Gaulish Samian		3	3
	LMV SA*	R01	Central Gaulish Samian (Les Martres-de-Veyre)		3	12
	MOS BS*		Moselkeramik Black-slipped ware		3	3
Modern	FLOW		Flowerpot		1	4
<b>Total</b>					<b>3702</b>	<b>29055</b>

\* National Roman Fabric Reference Collection

Regional ware types make up 16 per cent (by count) of the Roman group. By far the largest proportion consists of south-east Dorset black-burnished ware (341 sherds or 14 per cent). The identifiable vessel forms comprise late-style (flared-rim) jars, plain-rim dishes and conical flanged bowls, suggesting that most date to the period after *c.*AD 200/250. The remaining regional imports (types AHF GW; LNV CC; ROB SH; MAH WH) are similarly types associated with later Roman activity in this area.<sup>78</sup> The Alice Holt greyware vessel, a large jar from Period 4 ditch 1107, and Midlands-type shell-tempered ware (ROB SH), date to the fourth century, and probably to the period after *c.*AD 330/350. All of the forms identified in this type are jars with a characteristic, hooked/undercut rim (Fig. 14.8). The single identifiable type, LNV CC, a pinch-necked flagon (Period 4 ditch 1604) is also a fourth-century class.

Pottery from continental sources amounts to 51 sherds, or 2.1 per cent of the total. All are fine ware types, with the majority (47 sherds) comprising Gaulish samian. The samian group is well fragmented, with a low mean sherd weight, at 6.7 g, and much of the group in abraded condition. A small number of sherds from South Gaulish (La Graufesenque), and three of Central Gaulish (Les Martres de Veyre) sources, suggest some 1st and earlier 2nd-century use. The few identifiable samian forms (Drag. 31R, 38 and 45), and the proportionally large East Gaulish component, indicate that the majority of the samian dates after *c.*AD 150/160. Similar dating, extending into the early 3rd century, is probable for the non-sigillata fine wares, which are present as a few sherds of the black-slipped types MOS KER and CNG BA.

*Stratigraphy/Dating* The clear emphasis on the later Roman date evident from compositional factors is further supported by the relationship of the assemblage to stratigraphic phasing (Table 3). Only small quantities among the stratified pottery (99 sherds or 4.2 per cent) appear to be derived from earlier Roman Period 3 deposits, and this suggests only sporadic

<sup>78</sup> Howe et al., *Roman Pottery from the Nene Valley*, p. 23, fig. 6, nos. 64–5.

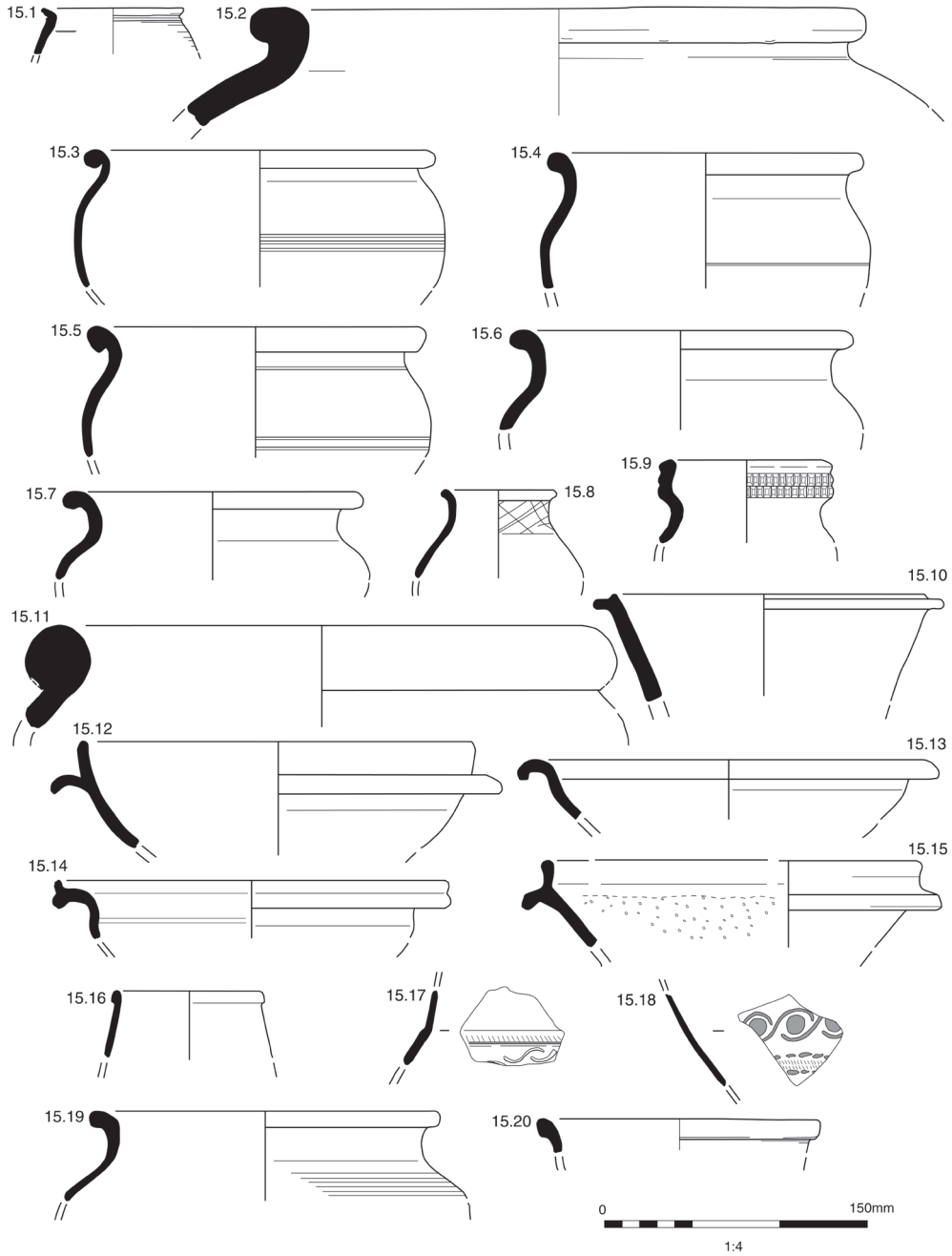


Fig. 15. Roman pottery (1:4).

or peripheral occupation activity before c.AD 200. The earlier Roman material (Period 3) includes the majority of the 'Belgic'-related types, suggestive of mid or later first-century dating. The presence of some black-burnished wares and Central and East Gaulish samian in some deposits, suggests a degree of continuity into the second century.

The pottery from Period 4 features represents a significantly larger group (1,402 sherds). The Savernake ware and much of the samian is likely to be residual in this phase, although some of the East Gaulish samian might be stratified in deposits dating into the middle decades of the third century. The distinctly later Roman character of the Period 4 group is evident from the relative abundance of types including OXF RS and ROB SH, and from the predominance of diagnostically late forms amongst the black-burnished ware and other coarsewares. The better-dateable elements suggest that activity continues into the fourth century, although there is limited evidence for continued activity much beyond c.AD 350.

*Discussion* The composition of the Period 4 Roman pottery from the Station Road site is broadly consistent with the expected profile for the area in terms of the range of wares and the relative proportions of fabrics and vessel forms. The assemblage compares in most respects to groups from surrounding parts of Oxfordshire, including those from Mill Street, Wantage,<sup>79</sup> Denchworth Road, Wantage,<sup>80</sup> Wyndyke Furlong, Abingdon,<sup>81</sup> and sites along the Cleve to Fyfield pipeline.<sup>82</sup> The predominance of Oxfordshire coarsewares over equivalent north Wiltshire types at Uffington probably reflects the distinctly later emphasis of the assemblage, and the apparent contraction of the Wiltshire industry prior to the fourth century. The proximity and expanding importance of the Oxfordshire kilns is doubtless also responsible for the relative dearth of fine and specialist ware-types from non-local sources. The prominence of Dorset black-burnished wares is a notable feature of this group, and its representation (14 per cent by sherd count) is significantly higher than at neighbouring Oxfordshire sites, including Mill Street, Wantage,<sup>83</sup> but closer to the representation at Groundwell Ridge, Swindon.<sup>84</sup> The occurrence of Midlands shelly-type ROB SH in Period 4 deposits provides a good indication that activity continued into the fourth century. It remains unclear, however, whether the presence of this type necessarily signifies activity dateable after c.AD 350/360, as appears to be the case for major sites to the west, including Cirencester and Gloucester. The notable dearth of New Forest fine wares here is typical of many Oxfordshire sites.<sup>85</sup>

Overall vessel form representation (Table 3) is typical of most Romano-British assemblages, and in particular those from rural sites. Jars are strongly dominant, and there are few drinking or serving-related or specialist forms, including mortaria and flagons. This utilitarian focus is common to the majority of rural sites across southern Britain, and probably reflects a limited requirement for table or display vessels among subsistence-level rural communities.<sup>86</sup> A similar interpretation is suggested by the low levels of samian and other continental fine wares

<sup>79</sup> J. Timby, 'The Pottery', in N. Holbrook and A. Thomas, 'The Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon Settlement at Wantage, Oxfordshire: Excavations at Mill Street 1993-4', *Oxoniensia*, 61 (1996), pp. 134-5.

<sup>80</sup> J. Timby, 'The Pottery', in Barber and Holbrook, 'A Romano-British Settlement to the Rear of Denchworth Road, Wantage', p. 307.

<sup>81</sup> J. Timby, 'The Pottery', in J. Muir and M.R. Roberts, *Excavations at Wyndyke Furlong, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 1994*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 12 (1999), pp. 32-3.

<sup>82</sup> E.R. McSloy, 'The Pottery', in J. Hart et al., 'The Archaeology of the Cleve to Fyfield Water Main, South Oxfordshire: Excavations in 2006-7', *Oxoniensia*, 77 (2012), pp. 240-3.

<sup>83</sup> J. Timby, 'The Pottery', in Holbrook and Thomas, 'The Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon Settlement at Wantage', pp. 134-5.

<sup>84</sup> J. Timby, 'The Roman Pottery', in G. Morley and P. Wilson, 'Groundwell Ridge Roman Villa, Swindon, Wilts: Excavation of the Bath Suite and Associated Structures, 1996-2005', forthcoming.

<sup>85</sup> Personal communication from P. Booth.

<sup>86</sup> J. Evans, 'Material Approaches to the Identification of Different Romano-British Site-Types', in S. James and M. Millet (eds.), *Britons and Romans: Advancing an Archaeological Agenda*, CBA Research Report, 125 (2001), pp. 25-35.

(1.9 per cent by count), and the absence of amphora. The assemblage is predictably less diverse in this respect when compared to that from the small town at Wanborough, some 10 km to the south-west.<sup>87</sup> In its quantity, and dominance of plain forms, the samian component is comparable with that from the majority of smaller, 'low status', rural assemblages in the region.<sup>88</sup>

#### Illustration Catalogue:

##### *Late Prehistoric*

- 14.1 Fabric QZ. Sherd with fingertip impressions to neck. Area A: Period 4 posthole 3484 (fill 3485).
- 14.2 Fabric QZ. Sherd with incised decoration. Area A: Period 2 posthole 3416 (fill 3475).
- 14.3 Fabric QZ. Rim sherd from tall-necked vessel. Area A: Residual in furrow 3338 (fill 3339).
- 14.4 Fabric QZ. Rim sherd from tall-necked vessel. Area A: Period 1 posthole 3416 (fill 3476).
- 14.5 Fabric QZ. Globular vessel with upright neck/thickened rim. Area A: Period 2 ditch 3218 (fill 3219).
- 14.6 Fabric QZO. Slack-shouldered vessel with upright neck/simple rim. Area A: Period 2 ditch 3077 (fill 3084).
- 14.7 Fabric QZ. Sherd with fingertip impression. Area A: Period 2 ditch 3077 (fill 3084).

##### *Roman*

- 14.8 Fabric ROB SH. Necked jar with hooked/undercut rim. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3698 (fill 3700).
- 14.9 Fabric OXF FO. Beaker (?bag-shaped) with cornice rim. Area B: Period 4 ditch 7124 (fill 7126).
- 14.10 Fabric SAV GT. Large, necked storage jar. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3289 (fill 3281).
- 15.1 Fabric OXF FO. Beaker (?bag-shaped) with cornice rim. Area B: Period 4 ditch 7124 (fill 7126).
- 15.2 Fabric SAV GT. Large, necked storage jar. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3289 (fill 3281).
- 15.3 Fabric GW OR. Necked, medium-mouth jar; 'olive' rim. Area B: Period 4 ditch 7030 (fill 7033).
- 15.4 Fabric GWF. Necked, medium-mouth jar; out-curved, thickened rim. Area B: Period 4 ditch 7133 (fill 7134).
- 15.5 Fabric GWF. Necked, medium-mouth jar; out-curved, thickened rim and narrow cordon at neck. Area B: Period 4 ditch 7018 (fill 7019).
- 15.6 Fabric GWF. Necked, medium-mouth jar; out-curved. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3061 (fill 3062).
- 15.7 Fabric GWF. Necked, medium-mouth jar; out-curved, thickened rim. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3144 (fill 3145).
- 15.8 Fabric GWF. Necked, narrow-mouth jar; everted rim. Burnished lattice at neck. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3144 (fill 3145).
- 15.9 Fabric GWF. Flagon, Cupped rim with slashed cordons. As Young R9. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3114 (fill 3116).
- 15.10 Fabric GWF. Bowl/dish. Flanged. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3061 (fill 3062).
- 15.11 Fabric ALH RE. Large storage jar. Heavy rolled rim. Eval. Tr. 11: Period 4 ditch 1107 (fill 1108).

<sup>87</sup> Seager Smith, 'The Coarse Pottery', p. 247.

<sup>88</sup> 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), p. 259; A. Smith et al., *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, p. 185.



- 15.12 Fabric OXF RS. Bowl imitating samian form 38 (as Young C51). Area B: Period 4 ditch 7016 (fill 7017).
- 15.13 Fabric OXF FO. Bowl imitating samian form 36 (as Young O44 or C47/48). Area B: Period 4 ditch 7005 (fill 7007).
- 15.14 Fabric OXF RS. Bowl imitating samian form 36 (as Young C49). Eval. Tr. 13: Period 4 pit 1303 (fill 1304).
- 15.15 Fabric OXF RS. Flanged mortarium (as Young C100). Area A: Period 4 ditch 3144 (fill 3145).
- 15.16 Fabric OXF RS. Beaker; funnel-necked, with bead rim (as Young C22–33). Area A: Period 4 ditch 3186 (fill 3184).
- 15.17 Fabric OXF RS. Beaker; funnel-necked, with rouletting and self-coloured barbotine (as Young C26). Area A: Period 4 ditch 3186 (fill 3182).
- 15.18 Fabric LNV CC. Beaker with white barbotine circles and scrolls, and rouletting. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3192 (fill 3187).
- 15.19 Fabric ROM SH. Necked, medium-mouth jar with out-curved, thickened rim and rilling at shoulder. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3186 (fill 3184).
- 15.20 Fabric ROM SH. Necked jar with hooked/undercut rim. Area A: Period 4 ditch 3698 (fill 3700).

#### CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of 160 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 11.71 kg, was recovered from 35 separate deposits (Table 4, below). The breakdown of ceramic building material is given in Table 5, below. Of the material, 31 fragments were of medieval or post-medieval date, 90 per cent of which was recovered from topsoil or subsoil contexts. Of the 90 fragments of CBM of Roman date, some 29 per cent comprised box flue-tile, 6 per cent *tegula*, 4 per cent *imbrex*, 11 per cent brick, and 7 per cent other tile types, including a single tessera (1 per cent). Six fragments, including box flue-tile and brick, were made in a buff/pink-coloured fabric, and two in a brown fabric. The box flue-tile included several large fragments recovered from topsoil in Area B.

Although the relatively small size of the CBM assemblage does not in itself suggest other than a fairly typical rural site of the Roman period, the high proportion and relative concentration of box flue-tile is significant, as it suggests the close proximity of a building with a hypocaust heating system. This evidence appears to correlate with the Roman-period building material recorded from the nearby Craven Common site, and the suggested high-status building in that location. The apparently deliberate disposal of Roman building material on the Station Road site, and its presence in contexts dated by fourth-century Roman pottery might equally suggest a demolition event somewhat before the end of the Roman period.<sup>89</sup>

#### ITEMS OF FIRED CLAY by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

A total of 264 fragments of fired clay, weighing 1.402 kg, was recorded in 90 separate contexts. Of these, most were amorphous in form, and of low-fired texture, and in the majority of cases their original function and form could not be determined. The fabrics were buff to orange, or patchy orange/grey in colour, sandy, or without visible inclusions, and soft to medium-fired. One fragment, from the fill of quarry pit 3694, was identified, on the basis of a wattle impression, as burnt daub, while seven fragments from Roman-dated fills 3751

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Henig and Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire*, p. 110.

Table 4. Breakdown of the ceramic building material assemblage

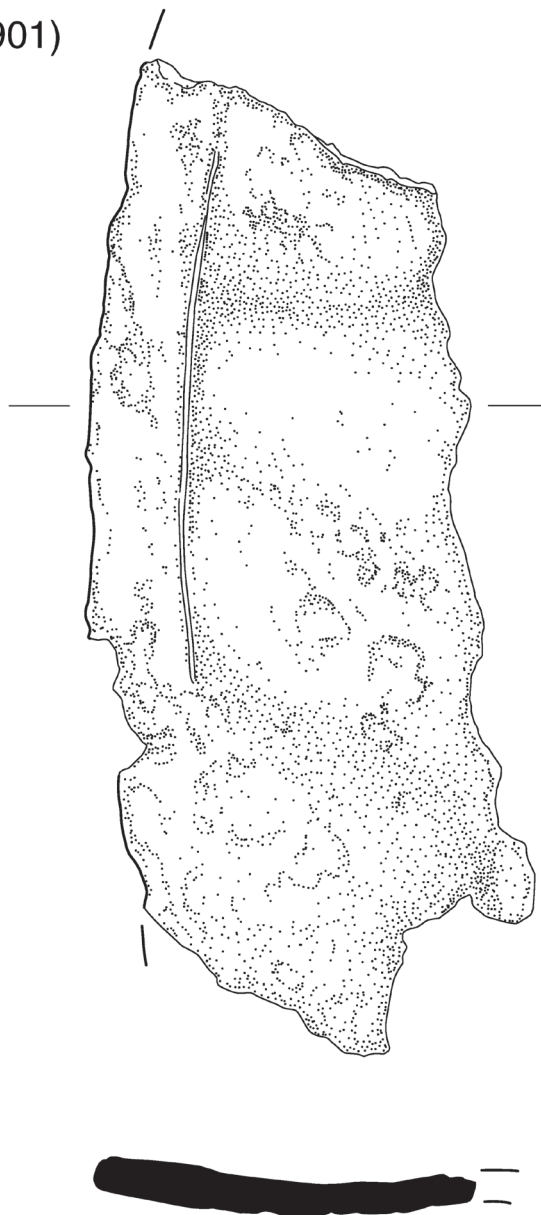
Area/Stage	Date	Total	Type	Count	Weight (g)	
Evaluation	Roman	17	Box flue	3	107	
			Tegula	1	137	
			Imbrex	1	118	
			Brick	2	451	
			Tile	1	66	
			Fragment	9	438	
	Post-medieval	3	Pan tile	2	310	
			Fragment	1	18	
	Undated	1	Fragment	1	4	
	Excavation Area A	Roman	28	Box flue	6	335
Tegula				2	179	
Imbrex				3	252	
Brick				2	512	
Tile				3	92	
Fragment				12	123	
Post-medieval/ modern		27	Flat roof tile	7	227	
			Tile	2	238	
			Drainpipe	3	78	
			Fragment	15	134	
Undated		37	Fragment	37	768	
Excavation Area B		Roman	45	Box flue	17	4508
				Tegula	2	151
				Brick	6	1730
	Tile			2	77	
	Tessera			1	28	
	Fragment			17	510	
	Post-medieval	1	Fragment	1	16	
	Undated	1	Fragment	1	10	

and 7067 were identified as parts of ceramic plates associated with a form of portable oven recorded elsewhere at Roughground Farm, Lechlade,<sup>90</sup> and at a number of other Oxfordshire sites.<sup>91</sup> The fabric of these items is coarse, very sandy, orange-coloured and hard-fired, with smoothing evident on one surface. A further, amorphous fragment from topsoil context 3001 retained possible wattle impressions, and may also derive from an oven.

<sup>90</sup> T. Allen et al., *Excavations at Roughground Farm, Lechlade: A Prehistoric and Roman Landscape*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 4 (1993), p. 252.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. G. Lambrick with M. Robinson, *The Thames Through Time: Late Prehistory: 1500 BC–AD 50*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 29 (2009), pp. 159–60.

RA2 (901)



1:1

Fig. 16. Roman pewter vessel fragment Ra2 (1:1).

## METALWORK by E.R. McSLOY

A total of some 73 items of metalwork was recovered, of which the majority were hand-excavated from stratified deposits in Areas A and B. The recorded metalwork comprises a small group, which is restricted in its range and interpretive value. Within this, a fragment of a pewter vessel and a fragmentary spoon are amongst the small number of objects which are datable on the basis of form. The fragment of pewter vessel (Fig. 16) is likely to represent a plate or platter form of late Roman date (post-AD 250). The spoon, recovered as a metal-detector find from subsoil deposit 7001, is a relatively common form, which was current throughout the Roman period, and is characterised by an offset bowl with moulded decoration at the junction with the handle.<sup>92</sup> Of the remaining items, only an iron shoe cleat (Period 4) can be assigned to the Roman period with any confidence, and this is of a later Roman date. Otherwise, a more generic group of nails and fragmentary, non-specific ironwork items is generally associated with Roman-period deposits, although some items from unphased deposits (mostly 7001), while likely to be of Roman date, may conceivably be of medieval or post-medieval origin.

## METALLURGICAL RESIDUES by T. YOUNG and E.R. McSLOY

A total of 14.6 kg of metallurgical residues, almost all related to ironworking, was recorded. The majority was hand-recovered from features within Area B, and from evaluation trenches 3 and 9, which were located in the same area. Bulk soil samples were scanned magnetically and, apart from some magnetically charged clay or mineral particles, no micro-residues, including hammerscales, were recovered. A summary of metallurgical residues is provided in Tables 5 and 6, below. Almost all of the recovered material comprises ironworking slag, and of this a large proportion, identifiable as smithing hearth cakes, is derived from blacksmithing activity.

*Provenance/Dating (Tables 6 and 7, below)*

The substantial majority of the metallurgical residues were recovered from features in the northernmost excavation area (Area B), and from evaluation trenches in the same area (trenches 3 and 9). The residues were derived from the fills of ditches (60 per cent); pits/postholes (21.5 per cent), with the remainder from 'hollow' feature 7096 (12.5 per cent), or from layer-type deposits (5.7 per cent). Most material was recorded from deposits which were only broadly datable to the Roman period (Period 4). Quantities of residues from late Iron-Age to early Roman phased deposits (Period 3), and those of later, Period 4 date, suggest that ironworking activity may have extended across the Roman period.

*Description*

The metallurgical residues were scanned by context, and sorted macroscopically by class.<sup>93</sup> This assemblage comprised approximately 14.6 kg of archaeometallurgical residues, out of the approximately 17.8 kg of submitted materials (Table 5).

The residues were almost entirely indicative of ironworking (blacksmithing), employing coal as fuel. Some 81 per cent of the Areas A/B assemblage by weight (Table 6) was identifiable as complete or partial smithing hearth cakes (SHCs). Most of the remainder (17 per cent) comprised indeterminate smithing slags, comprising either small fragments of SHCs, or other slag pieces from the hearth. Some 2 per cent of the assemblage was represented by small fragments of vitrified hearth lining.

<sup>92</sup> N. Crummy, *Colchester Archaeological Report 2: The Roman Small Finds from Excavations in Colchester, 1971–9*, Colchester Excavation Committee (1983), p. 69.

<sup>93</sup> T. Young, 'Assessment of Archaeometallurgical Residues from Uffington, Oxfordshire', unpublished GeoArch report, no. 2015/30 (2015).

The smithing hearth cakes ranged up to 614 g in weight, but only three of the 57 measurable examples weighed more than 300 g. The spectrum of SHCs ranged down to small plano-convex slag masses, in the 60–70 g weight-range, with the lightest of these weighing as little as 36 g. Overall, 72 per cent of the SHCs weighed less than 150 g, making this assemblage uncharacteristically small, with a mean weight of just 137 g.

The SHCs include a range of textures, from dense, iron-rich puddle-like slag masses, typical of 'conventional' forms, to those formed of more prill-like materials. Approximately 11 per cent of the assemblage was formed by SHCs of a distinctively low density, suggesting a very low degree of loss of iron to the hearth. This wide variation in SHC type suggests that a correspondingly wide range of ironworking tasks was undertaken. The typically small size of SHCs suggests that these tasks were not undertaken for extensive periods, perhaps indicating that the residues represent the occasional work of a farm or estate smithy, rather than an establishment undertaking continuous commercial work or artefact production. The use of coal is typical of blacksmithing residues over much of Roman Britain, and contamination with this fuel source has provided much of the non-iron input into the resulting slag.

Fragments of vitrified lining, from ironworking hearths, were present in small quantities. These consisted of fragments of fired clay with a slag-coated surface. No in situ remains of smithing hearths were recorded, although the spread and volume of material coincident with Area B suggests that ironworking activity was undertaken nearby. In addition to the ironworking residues, a single sherd of crucible (unphased Area B ditch fill 7026) within this assemblage also suggests that the casting of copper alloys was undertaken, at least on an occasional basis.

#### THE COINS by E.R. McSLOY

Only two coins were recovered from the Station Road site. One appears to be a Roman issue (Ra1, from Period 4 layer 305), but is too fragmentary and worn to permit accurate dating or identification. Its module, weight and visible detail suggest a Roman *as* of mid to late second-century AD date, in which case it is likely to represent a redeposited item within a later Roman deposit. Its fragmentary condition appears to result from deliberate breakage, probably resulting from a strike from a chisel, or similar. Aes issues of the later Antonine period are common as site finds in Britain, although generally recovered, as here, in very worn condition. The second coin (Ra 4002), which was recorded from topsoil context 4000, is heavily worn and details are unclear, although its module and weight suggest a halfpenny of late seventeenth- or eighteenth-century date.

Table 5. Summary of metallurgical residues, and coal, by excavation area

Residue class	Evaluation Trench				Excavated area		
	2	3	5	9	A	B	Total*
ironworking slags	118	841	27	53	38	13334	<b>14411</b>
Hearth lining		11				222	<b>233</b>
<i>Total</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>852</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>13556</i>	<i>14644</i>
Coal			11			39	<b>50</b>
Iron						3	<b>3</b>
Ironstone						3185	<b>3185</b>
Crucible						16	<b>16</b>
Fired clay						4	<b>4</b>

\*Quantities as weight in grams



Table 6. Areas A/B metallurgical residues by class/period

Area	Context	Period	SHC high-density	SHC low-density	Indet iron slag	hearth lining	Total*
A	3572	4			8		8
	3617	4	30				30
B	7063	3	714	288	188	48	1238
	7166	3	86	60			146
	7014	4	260				260
	7017	4	66				66
	7023	4			78		78
	7065	4			62		62
	7066	4	396				396
	7067	4			16		16
	7092	4	216		10		226
	7109	4				2	2
	7132	4	112	62	56	12	242
	7136	4	7		7		14
	7174	4	298		14	2	314
	7021	4	296		38		334
	7028	4	566	248	222		1036
	7029	4	128				128
	7033	4					0
	7080	4			46		46
	7085	4	290	110			400
	7087	4	556		204		760
	7088	4	1240		498	50	1788
	7101	4	32		10		42
	7118	4			6		6
	7119	4	920		16		936
	7151	4	1884	470	656	64	3074
	7156	4					
	7157	4	24				24
	7168	4	600	188			788
	7176	4			100		100
	7001	Unph.	440	46	104	14	604
	7027	Unph.				30	30
	7049	Unph.		114			114
	7053	Unph.	170				170
	7093	Unph.	90	26			116

\*Quantities as weight in grams

## THE GLASS by JACKY SOMMERVILLE

Two fragments of dark-green post-medieval glass, probably of a wine or spirits bottle of late seventeenth- to nineteenth-century date, were recovered from topsoil context 3000. A fragment of the base of a blue/green glass bottle of Roman date (Ra. 4003) was recovered from the fill of ditch 7150. The bottle is likely to be of square form, with a flat base and a base-ring in low relief. A mid first- to second-century date has been attributed, and the type is readily paralleled at the neighbouring small town site at Wanborough (Wilts.).<sup>94</sup>

## ITEMS OF WORKED STONE by RUTH SHAFFREY

Six pieces of worked stone were recovered from excavated areas of the site. These comprise five worn stone slabs, and one fragment of millstone. The stone was examined macroscopically, with a x10-magnification hand-lens. The millstone fragment, of Pennine Gritstone may, judging by the 26 cm diameter of the eye, have had an original overall diameter in excess of 70 cm, and therefore represents a rare example of a stone from a mechanised mill, presumably one situated somewhere in the locality.<sup>95</sup>

The five worn slabs, all of the same sandstone clast, may represent hones or pallettes. Four are broken fragments, one of which appears to have been deposited after breakage (3010), and one prior to breakage (7019). A fifth piece exhibits bevelled edges, and may have been used as a crude palette, or similar (Fig. 17.1). This, and another piece, (Fig. 17.2) have peck-marks evident, which may result from preparation of the surface, or from use as a cushion-stone. These stones are of an identical, fine-grained grey micaceous and feldspathic sandstone, which may be a Pennant Sandstone, although this source remains unconfirmed. The identical lithology of the stone slabs suggests that all were gathered locally or, more probably, left over from the roofing of a building. The unpublished record of the adjacent Craven Common site includes references to both ceramic and stone roofing material, and it seems entirely plausible that the sandstone slabs ultimately derive from a substantial later Roman building attested on this site.<sup>96</sup>

## CHARCOAL AND PLANT MACROFOSSILS by SARAH COBAIN

Twenty bulk soil samples were retrieved for plant macrofossil and charcoal assessment. Following flotation, the residue was dried and sorted by eye. The floated material was subsequently scanned, and seeds identified using a low-power stereo-microscope (Brunel MX1), at magnifications of x10 to x40. Identifications were carried out with reference to images and descriptions by Cappers et al.,<sup>97</sup> Berggren,<sup>98</sup> and Anderberg.<sup>99</sup> The nomenclature of species follows Stace.<sup>100</sup> A selection of charcoal fragments was fractured by hand, to reveal the wood anatomy on radial, tangential and transverse planes. The pieces were then supported in a sand bath and identified under an epi-illuminating microscope (Brunel SP400), at magnifications

<sup>94</sup> J. Price and S. Cottam, *Romano-British Glass Vessels: A Handbook*, CBA Practical Handbook in Archaeology, 14 (1998), pp. 194–6; L. Monk, 'The Glass', in Anderson et al., *The Romano-British 'Small Town' at Wanborough, Wiltshire*, pp. 170–1, fig. 67.

<sup>95</sup> R. Shaffrey, 'Intensive Milling Practices in the Romano-British Landscape of Southern England. Using Newly-Established Criteria for Distinguishing Millstones from Rotary Querns', *Britannia*, 46 (2015), pp. 55–7. Cf. Smith et al., *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*, pp. 237, 240, regarding preponderance of millstones in nucleated and wayside settlements.

<sup>96</sup> HER, PRN 16852.

<sup>97</sup> R.T.J. Cappers et al., *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands*, Groningen Archaeological Studies, 4 (2006).

<sup>98</sup> G. Berggren, *Atlas of Seeds: Part 3*, Swedish Museum of Natural History (1981).

<sup>99</sup> A.-L. Anderberg, *Atlas of Seeds: Part 4*, Swedish Museum of Natural History (1994).

<sup>100</sup> C. Stace, *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd edn (2010).

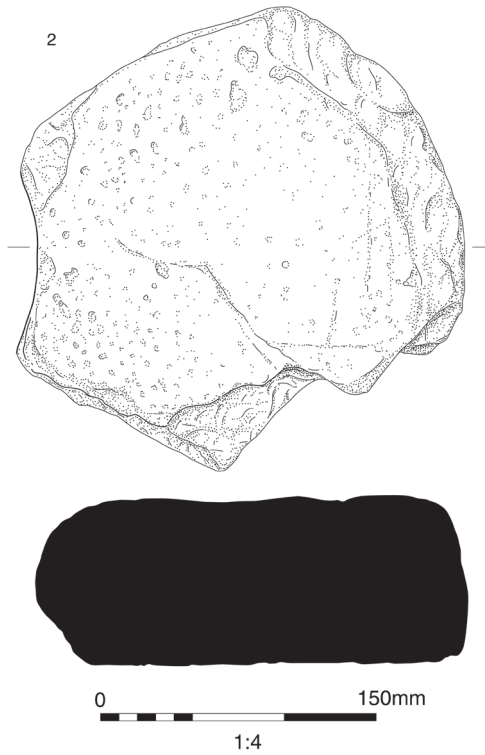
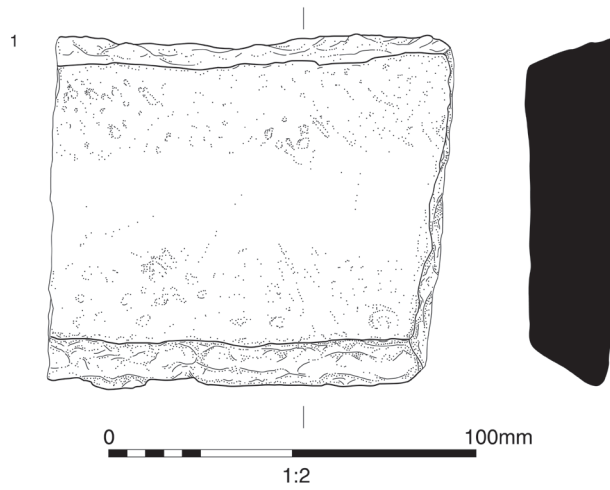


Fig. 17. Items of worked stone (1:4).

from x40 to x400. Identifications were carried out with reference to images and descriptions by Gale and Cutler,<sup>101</sup> Schoch et al,<sup>102</sup> and Wheeler et al.<sup>103</sup>

### Results

The results are presented below, in tabular form (Tables 7–10). SS refers to the Soil Sample number.

*Period 2, Area A* Posthole group 22 (SS 508 and 509), posthole group 43 (SS 511 and 512) (Fig 3, inset) and posthole 3378 (506), contained no plant macrofossil material, although charcoal was recovered in small quantities, and was moderately to poorly preserved. The species identified were oak (*Quercus*), hawthorn/rowan/crab apple (*Crataegus monogyna/Sorbus/Malus sylvestris*) and maple (*Acer campestre*). Ditch 16 intervention 3408 (SS 505) contained a single, moderately well-preserved spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) glume-base. Poorly preserved charcoal was recorded in small quantities, and was identified as oak and hawthorn/rowan/crab apple.

*Period 4, Area A* Pit/posthole 3108 (SS 500), pit 3248 (SS 502), and ditch 17 intervention 3144 (SS 501), contained a small number of moderately to poorly preserved plant macrofossils, including emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*), possible emmer/spelt wheat, and indeterminate cereal grains. Charcoal was moderately abundant, moderately to poorly preserved, and identified as maple, alder/hazel (*Alnus glutinosa/Corylus avellana*), oak, ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hawthorn/rowan/crab apple, cherry species (*Prunus*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Ditch 19 (intervention 3369) (SS 504, Fig. 3, inset) contained a single, indeterminate cereal grain, and no charcoal material. Pit 3546 (SS 513) contained no plant macrofossil material. Charcoal was present in small quantities, and was identified as oak and hawthorn/rowan/crab apple.

*Period 4, Area B* Ditch 31 intervention 7052 (SS 600) contained no plant macrofossil or charcoal material. Pit 7064 (SS 602) contained a single, moderately well-preserved vetch/pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) seed. Charcoal was present in small quantities, and was identified as maple, oak and ash. Pit 7117 (SS 603 and 604) and ditch 7150 (SS 605) contained no plant macrofossil material. Charcoal was moderately well preserved and moderately abundant, and was identified as oak, ash, hawthorn/rowan/crab apple and cherry species. The identification of metallurgical residues within these samples suggests that this charcoal represents forge or hearth debris associated with metal-working activities.

*Undated Area A* Pit/posthole 3621 (SS 516) contained two moderately well-preserved hazelnut shells. Charcoal was abundant but poorly preserved, and identified as oak.

*Undated Area B* Pit 7059 (SS 601) contained a small number of moderately well-preserved plant macrofossils, including Oats (*Avena*), spelt wheat and wheat cereal grains, and a possible Sedge (*Carex*) seed. Charcoal was rare, and was identified as alder/hazel, oak and ash.

### Discussion

The majority of the plant macrofossil and charcoal remains were rare, and generally moderately to poorly preserved. Only small quantities of material were recovered, and it is probable

<sup>101</sup> R. Gale and D.F. Cutler, *Plants in Archaeology. Identification Manual of Artefacts of Plant Origin from Europe and the Mediterranean* (2000).

<sup>102</sup> W. Schoch et al., *Wood Anatomy of Central European Species* (2004).

<sup>103</sup> E.A. Wheeler et al., 'IAWA List of Microscopic features for Hardwood Identification,' *IAWA Bulletin*, ns, 10:3 (1989), pp. 219–332.

Table 7. Plant macrofossil identification (Area A; Periods 2 and 4)

Area	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Context number	3381	3392	3409	3412	3495	3496	3109	3145	3250	3371						
Feature number	3378	3391	3408	3411	3494	3494	3108	3144	3248	3369						
Feature Label		22	16	22	42	42		17		19						
Sample number (SS)	506	508	505	509	511	512	500	501	502	504						
Flot volume (ml)	<0.5	<0.5	4.5	1	3	1.5	1.5	6.5	6	3						
Sample volume processed (l)	6	5	20	4	8	3	20	20	20	10						
Soil remaining (l)	0	0	8	0	0	0	10	20	10	10						
Period	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4a						
Plant macrofossil preservation	N/A	N/A	Moderate	Moderate	N/A	N/A	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Poor						
Habitat Code	Family	Species	Common Name													
E	Poaceae	<i>Triticum dicoccum</i>	Modern seeds Emmer wheat grain													
E		<i>Triticum spelta</i>	Spelt wheat glume base	1												
E		<i>Triticum dicoccum/</i>														
Triticum spelta	Emmer/spelt wheat grain															
E	Poaceae		Indeterminate cereal													
grain (fragment)																
D/A/P	Polygonaceae	<i>Rumex L.</i>	Docks	3	1	3	1									
HSW	Rosaceae	<i>Prunus L.</i>	Cherry species pip fragment	1	1											
<b>Total</b>				0	0	1	1	0	0	4	2	7	1			



Table 8. Plant macrofossil identification (Area A, Period 4, and undated)

Area	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Context number	3544	3618	3620	3622	3622	7055	7066	7118	7119	7151	7060	
Feature number	3546	3659	3621	3623	3623	7052	7064	7117	7117	7150	7059	
Feature Label						31						
Sample number (SS)	513	515	516	517	517	600	602	603	604	605	601	
Flot volume (ml)	2	2	1	1	1	14	20.5	42	5	11	<0.5	
Sample volume processed (l)	30	4	3	3	3	20	20	10	10	20	20	
Soil remaining (l)	0	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	20	20	
Period	4	UD	UD	UD	UD	4	4	4	4	4	4	UD
Plant macrofossil preservation	N/A	N/A	Moderate	N/A	N/A	N/A	Moderate	N/A	N/A	N/A	Moderate	N/A

Habitat Code	Family	Species	Common Name
HSW	Betulaceae	<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	Modern seeds
M/D	Cyperaceae	<i>Carex</i> L.	Hazelnut shells
D/A/P	Fabaceae	<i>Vicia</i> L./ <i>Lathyrus</i> L.	Sedges
E	Poaceae	<i>Avena</i> L.	Vetches/Peas
E		<i>Triticum</i>	Oats grain
E		<i>Triticum spelta</i>	Wheat grain
E		<i>Poaceae</i>	Spelt wheat grain
E			Indeterminate cereal grain (whole)
E			Indeterminate cereal grain (fragment)
			Total
			0 0 2 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 26

Table 9. Charcoal identification (Area A; Periods 2 and 4)

Area	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Context number	3381	3392	3409	3412	3495	3496	3109	3145	3250	3371					
Feature number	3378	3391	3408	3411	3494	3494	3108	3144	3248	3369					
Feature Label		22	16	22	42	42		17		19					
Sample number (SS)	506	508	505	509	511	512	500	501	502	504					
Flot volume (ml)	<0.5	<0.5	4.5	1	3	1.5	1.5	6.5	6	3					
Sample volume processed (l)	6	5	20	4	8	3	20	20	20	10					
Soil remaining (l)	0	0	8	0	0	0	10	20	10	10					
Period	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4					
Charcoal quantity	+++	++	++++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	++++	0					
Charcoal preservation	Poor	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor	Moderate	Poor	Moderate	Poor	Moderate	N/A	
Family	Species	Common Name													
Aceraceae	Acer campestre L.	Field maple													
Betulaceae	Alnus glutinosa (L.) Gaertn./ Corylus avellana L.	Alder/Hazel													
Fagaceae	Quercus petraea (Matt.) Liebl./Quercus robur L.	Sessile Oak/													
Oleaceae	Fraxinus excelsior L.	Pedunculate Oak													
Rosaceae	Crataegus monogyna Jacq./ Rowans/	Ash													
	Sorbus L./Malus sylvestris (L.) Mill.	Hawthorn/													
	Prunus L.	Rowans/													
	Prunus spinosa L.	Crab apple													
	Prunus spinosa L. r/w	Cherries													
		Blackthorn													
		Blackthorn r/w													
		Indeterminate													
	<b>Total</b>	10	0	9	10	0	0	10	1	9	0	10	1	9	0

Table 10. Charcoal identification (Areas A and B, period 4 and undated)

Area	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
Context number	3544	3618	3620	3622	7055	7066	7118	7119	7151	7060
Feature number	3546	3659	3621	3623	7052	7064	7117	7117	7150	7059
Feature Label					31					
Sample number (SS)	513	515	516	517	600	602	603	604	605	601
Flot volume (ml)	2	2	1	1	14	20.5	42	5	11	<0.5
Sample volume processed (l)	30	4	3	3	20	20	10	10	20	20
Soil remaining (l)	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	20	20
Period	4	UD	UD	UD	4	4	4	4	4	UD
Charcoal quantity	+++	+++++	+++	+++++	++	+++	+++++	+++++	+++++	++
Charcoal preservation	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor	Moderate
Family	Species	Common Name								
Aceraceae	<i>Acer campestre</i> L.	Field maple								
Betulaceae	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> (L.) Gaertn./ <i>Alder/Hazel</i>	5								
Fagaceae	<i>Quercus petraea</i> (Matt.) <i>Liebl./Quercus robur</i> L.	5	10	8	10	2	4	3	7	8
	<i>Quercus petraea</i> (Matt.) <i>Liebl./Quercus robur</i> L. h/w			1						
	<i>Quercus petraea</i> (Matt.) <i>Liebl./Quercus robur</i> L. r/w								3	
	<i>Quercus petraea</i> (Matt.) <i>Liebl./Quercus robur</i> L. r/w									
Oleaceae	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L.					2	3	4		1
Rosaceae	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i> Jacq./ <i>Hawthorn/Rowans/Crab</i>					1	1	1		
	<i>apple</i>									
	<i>Prunus</i> L.						2	2		
	Indeterminate				4					
	<b>Total</b>	7	10	8	10	9	10	10	10	10

that most of this is likely to have originated from wind-blown hearth debris, although the nature of any related socio-economic activities concerned remains uncertain. The presence of metallurgical residues and charcoal-rich flots within pit 7117 (SS 603 and 604), and ditch 7150 (SS 605), suggest that this firing debris is associated with iron-working activity. However, given the paucity and/or poor preservation of all charred material, no further conclusions can be made.

#### THE ANIMAL BONE by MATILDA HOLMES

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from Iron-Age and Roman-period features in Areas A and B, a considerable proportion of which was in burnt condition. The assemblage had limited potential for analysis, although the incidence of taxa, and their relative proportions, was recorded. A summary of species represented is given in Table 11, below.

Table 11. Animal bone: summary of species representation by NISP

Taxa	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Cattle	11	1	7
Sheep/ Goat	2		16
Sheep			1
Pig	1		2
Horse	25	1	8
Total	39	2	34

#### Methodology

Bones were scanned, and basic information recorded for those that could be identified to species or anatomy. This information was used to provide some indication of the scope and nature of the workable data likely to be retrieved from a full catalogue. Other data noted included condition (after Lyman), the presence of gnawing and burning, and the potential of the material for recording fusion, tooth-wear, butchery, pathology and bone-working information.<sup>104</sup>

Due to anatomical similarities between sheep and goat, bones of this type were assigned to the broad category 'sheep/goat', unless a definite identification could be made.<sup>105</sup> Bones that could not be identified to species were, where possible, categorised according to the relative size of the animal represented (small – rodent/rabbit sized; medium – sheep/pig/ dog size; or large – cattle/horse size). Rib heads were identified to size category, vertebrae were recorded to taxa when the vertebral body was present, and maxilla, zygomatic arch and occipital areas of the skull were identified from skull fragments.

#### Results

*Taphonomy and Condition* Bones were generally in fair condition, although fragmentary. Only three fragments from Period 4 late Roman contexts showed signs of gnawing, although a considerable number of fragments were calcined, indicating exposure to high temperatures. All burnt bone came from Area A, the majority from Period 2 Iron-Age ditch

<sup>104</sup> L. Lyman, *Vertebrate Taphonomy* (1994).

<sup>105</sup> M. Zeder and H. Lapham, 'Assessing the Reliability of Criteria used to Identify Post-Cranial Bones in Sheep, Ovis, and Goats, Capra', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 37 (2010), pp. 2887–2905.

16 (intervention 3408) and post hole (3411 and 3494) features, and Period 4 Roman ditches 17 and 19 (interventions 3144 and 3369 respectively).

*Basic description of findings* Very small assemblages were recovered for each period (Table 11), and were quantified by NISP. These entirely comprised domestic taxa, with horse, cattle and sheep/goat predominating. Tooth and tooth fragments dominated the assemblage, followed by metapodials and other long-bone fragments, which is a pattern which typically reflects those elements subject to best preservation, rather than the redistribution of carcass parts. A small number of bones were recorded to provide ageing data in the form of fusion and tooth wear, and of these only one was measurable. Otherwise, very little of the material recovered was capable of providing ageing data. The small size of the animal bone assemblage precluded any reliable assessment of the agricultural economy of the site.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# NOTES

## Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2016

This year saw a wide variety of projects undertaken in Oxford including the conclusion of the extensive excavation at the new Westgate Shopping Centre and other significant excavations within the walled town and its historic suburbs. Separate projects at Savile House and at St John's College appear to have together proved the theory of David Sturdy (former assistant keeper of the Ashmolean Museum) that an east-west bank and ditch of likely defensive character stretched across the gravel terrace between the Thames and Cherwell rivers to the north of the *burh* in the eleventh century. The feature, which can be followed in surviving property boundaries along part of its route, may yet prove to be earlier in date. Its discovery demonstrates the further potential for significant new discoveries within this rich and well-studied archaeological landscape. Initial summaries of these works are provided below along with a selection of other projects.

### SELECTED PROJECTS

#### *Westgate: Main Phase of Works*

The extensive archaeological recording project by Oxford Archaeology (OA) at the Westgate Shopping Centre site continued from 2015 through to June 2016. Towards the end of the main excavation, work within part of the medieval Franciscan friary cloister revealed an impressive tiled floor of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century 'Stabbed Wessex' tiles. The tiles have been carefully lifted and conserved. Elsewhere a small investigation within the friary church revealed the southern wall of the church and a small number of medieval burials. The burials were revealed and recorded in plan before they were carefully preserved in situ.

One small additional piece of work was undertaken within the footprint of the 1970s Westgate where a trial trench was excavated to establish whether any trace of the late Anglo-Saxon *burh* defences or medieval town wall survived to the west of the former Franciscan church. Remarkably a small section of wall was exposed, sandwiched between the service basement of the Westgate and truncation caused by improvements to Castle Street to the west. The depth and character of the un-mortared foundation indicates that it may have formed part of the late Anglo-Saxon defences. However, the structure was disturbed by later pits and a Victorian cellar and did not produce any conclusive dating evidence. The proposed nearby pile cap was rotated to preserve the section of wall in situ.

During this period further outreach work for the Westgate project was undertaken by OA with pupils from Northfield School. Another very successful pop-up museum exhibition 'Westgate – the story so far', with artefacts from the 2015–16 dig, was hosted by the Museum of Oxford between March and April. Thanks are due to the army of volunteers who helped staff the exhibit and contributed greatly to its success. The exhibit was concluded with a public talk on the results of the excavation by OA project director Ben Ford in the Town Hall. The success of the excavation has been recognised by the British Archaeological Awards which presented Land Securities and OA the Best Archaeological Project Award in July.