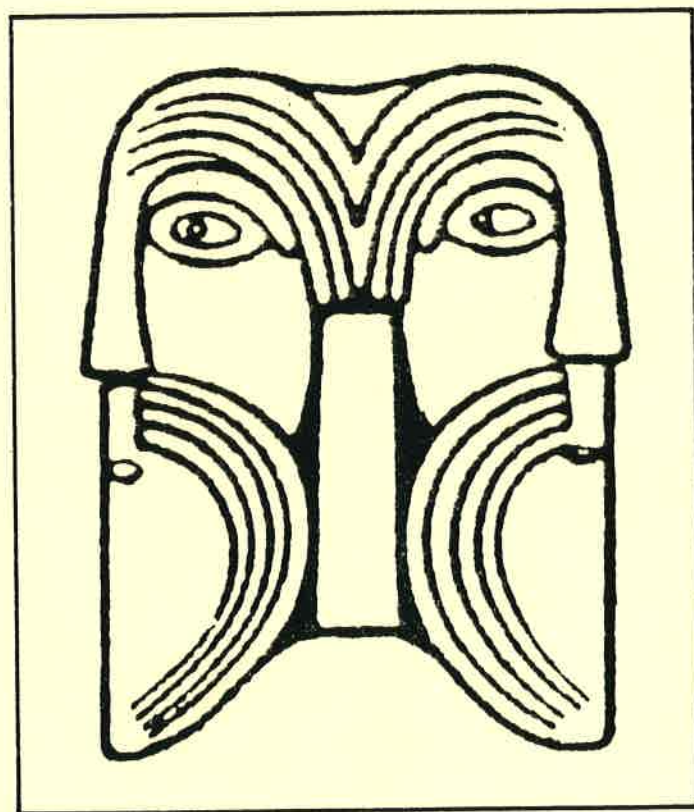


OXFORDSHIRE  
FRINGFORD CROSSLANDS

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



# CROSSLANDS, FRINGFORD, OXON

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### SUMMARY REPORT

#### INTRODUCTION

As part of the consideration for a planning application for new housing the County Archaeological Officer requested an archaeological evaluation. The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook the work during June 1992.

#### STRATEGY

Initially a 2% sample of the application area was examined by machine excavated trenches 1.85 m wide (84 m in total length). Due to the amount of archaeological features revealed the sample was increased by a further 120 m of trench resulting in a 5.8% sample.

#### RESULTS (Fig. 1)

Three distinct phases of archaeology were located: Romano-British settlement, medieval boundaries, post-medieval and modern features.

##### **Romano-British Settlement**

A settlement is indicated by small curving gullies which probably represent drainage gullies around timber roundhouses. Some may be defining small circular paddocks for temporary penning of animals. Examples of these gullies appear in Trenches 3, 5 and 9. Structural evidence for buildings may be indicated by the two post-holes found in Trench 3.

The core of the settlement activity is probably defined by an enclosure ditch with the southern boundary found in Trench 2 (2/3) turning northwards with the east boundary further located in Trench 9 (9/4). It is noticeable that the east-west ditch in Trench 2 marks a change in geology, defining the southern limit of a gravel terrace. The area to the south is clay and is noticeably wetter today than the rest of the site.

Within the settlement area are other types of feature; straight gullies and ditches which probably define subdivisions within the main enclosure. The pit found in Trench 3 is a typical feature found close to areas of buildings.

The Romano-British ditches in Trenches 1 and 10 (1/15, 10/7) appear to define a droveway leading to the main enclosure. Three features were found external to the postulated main enclosure; a short length of gully in Trench 4 (4/8), a recut ditch in Trench 4 (4/11) and a pit in Trench 1 (1/9). While the ditch most likely belongs to part of a field system associated with the settlement, the other features show that activities were being undertaken outside of the main settlement area. The number of features found indicates that this activity was sporadic.

The pottery recovered from the evaluation was from the 1st- to 4th-century, however, very few sherds were certainly of 1st-century.

### **Medieval**

The features dated to this period mainly exist in the eastern half of the site. The north-south ditches appear to be land divisions running back from Main Street defining individual land holdings. The lack of boundaries in the west half, except for the feature in Trench 8, suggests that the Green extended further east in the medieval period than at present. Of interest is the ditch in Trench 10 (10/9) which was dated to the 10th- to 11th-century.

### **Post-Medieval**

Post-medieval ditches were found in Trench 13 and Trench 1 and modern activity was revealed in the east end of Trench 12. The latter was probably connected to the recent housing development on Crosslands.

### **Topography**

The east and west parts of the site are noticeably different. The west end (for the west side of Trench 15) is substantially lower and has had the topsoil removed. This has resulted in the top of Roman features being only 0.35 - 0.45 m below present ground surface in this western part. This contrasts with in Trench 1 medieval features preserved at a depth of 0.40 m and Roman features at a depth of 0.70 m.

### **Summary of Pottery**

235 sherds were recovered. Of these 131 were Roman, 83 medieval and 28 post-medieval. Some of the sherds were small but few were heavily abraded.

62 of the Roman sherds were in contexts for which they provided a likely TPQ. The rest occurred in later or unstratified contexts. The total Roman

material ranges from 1st- to 4th-century, but very few sherds were certainly of 1st-century date, and many reduced and oxidised coarse-wares could only be dated to the 2nd-century or later. Fine-wares were scarce and were confined to Oxfordshire and Nene Valley wares. There were no exotica and the collection suggests a middle to low status settlement, though its total size is not sufficient to allow a confident assessment.

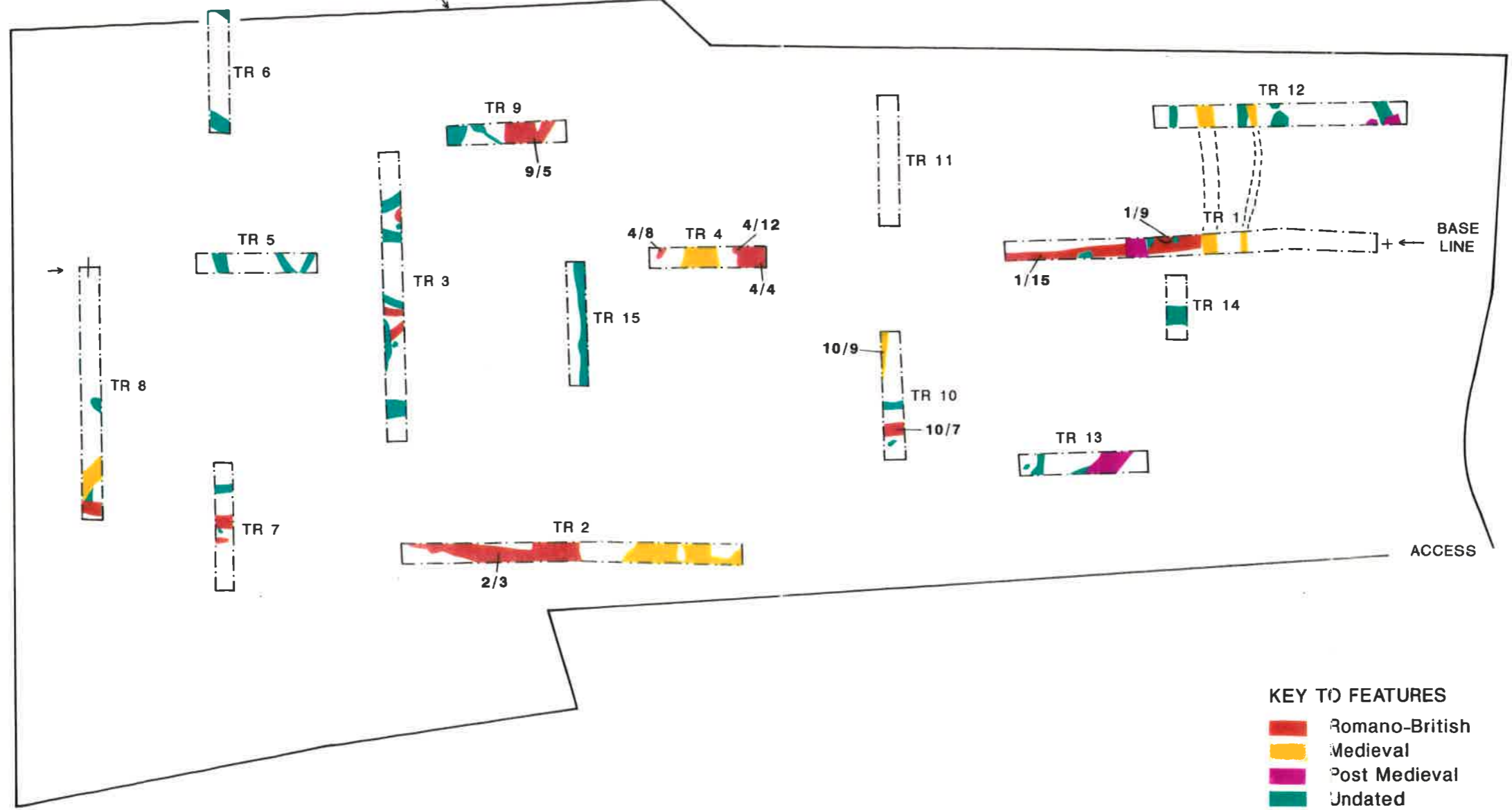
23 of the medieval sherds were in contexts without later material. The overall range was probably from 10th- to 11th-century onwards, though late medieval material appeared to be scarce. There were relatively few glazed sherds, even amongst the unstratified material. The most noteworthy piece was a St Neots type rim sherd probably of 10th- to 11th century date.

The post-medieval material was unremarkable. It did not include noticeably recent material (i.e. 20th-century).

OAU  
July 1992  
*JM/ML/ASSESS/FRING*



LIMIT OF EVALUATION AREA





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