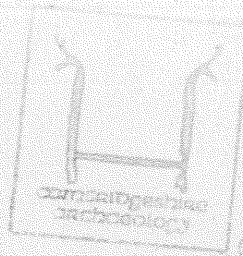


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03



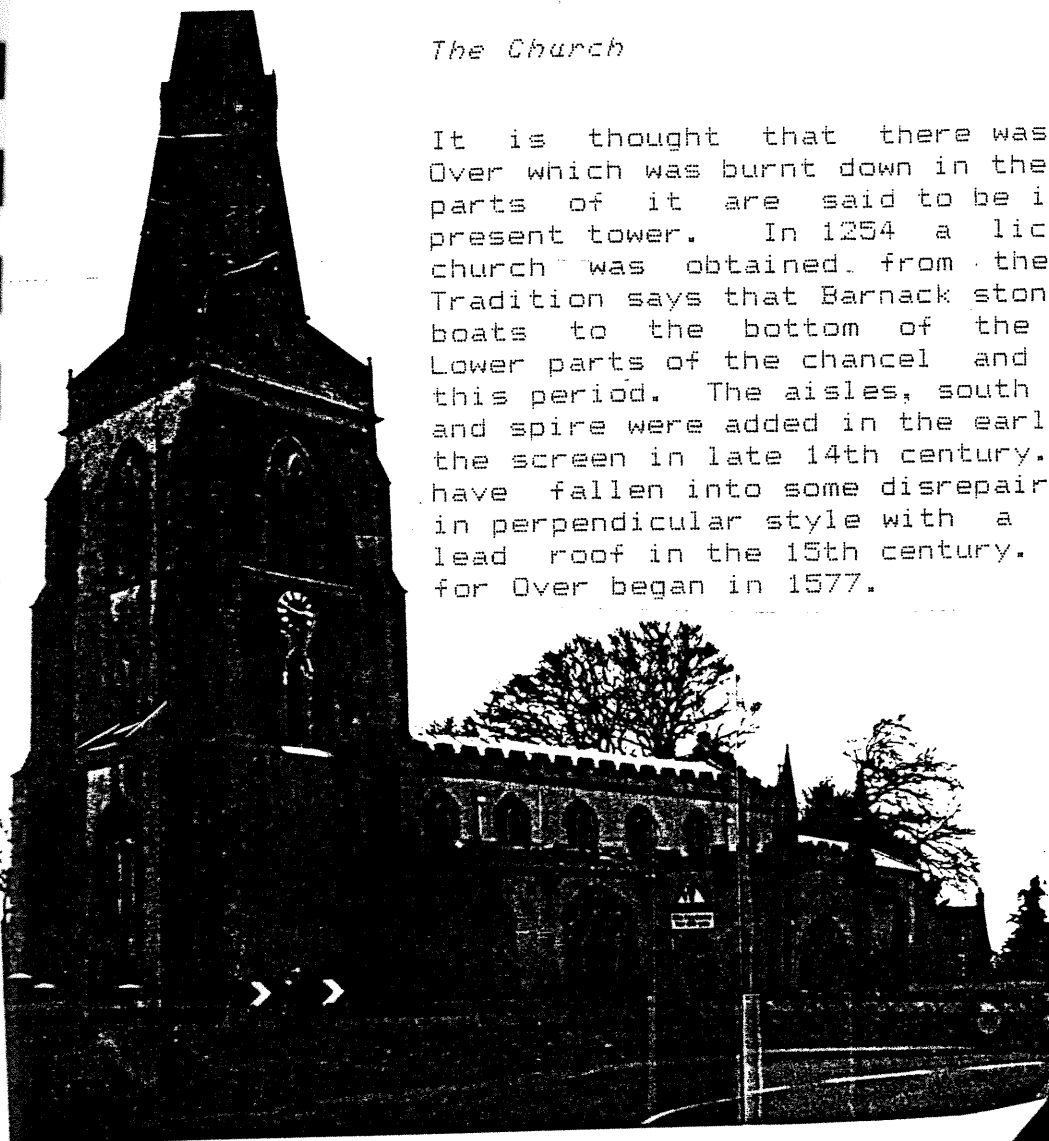
ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD OFFICE
FULBORN COMMUNITY CENTRE
HAGGIS GAP, FULBORN
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**Undated Skeleton
from Over, May 1987**

The Church

It is thought that there was a Saxon church in Over which was burnt down in the 13th century and parts of it are said to be incorporated in the present tower. In 1254 a licence to build a church was obtained from the Bishop of Ely. Tradition says that Barnack stone was brought in boats to the bottom of the vicarage garden. Lower parts of the chancel and tower date from this period. The aisles, south porch, upper tower and spire were added in the early 14th century and the screen in late 14th century. The church must have fallen into some disrepair as it was rebuilt in perpendicular style with a clerestory and a lead roof in the 15th century. Church registers for Over began in 1577.



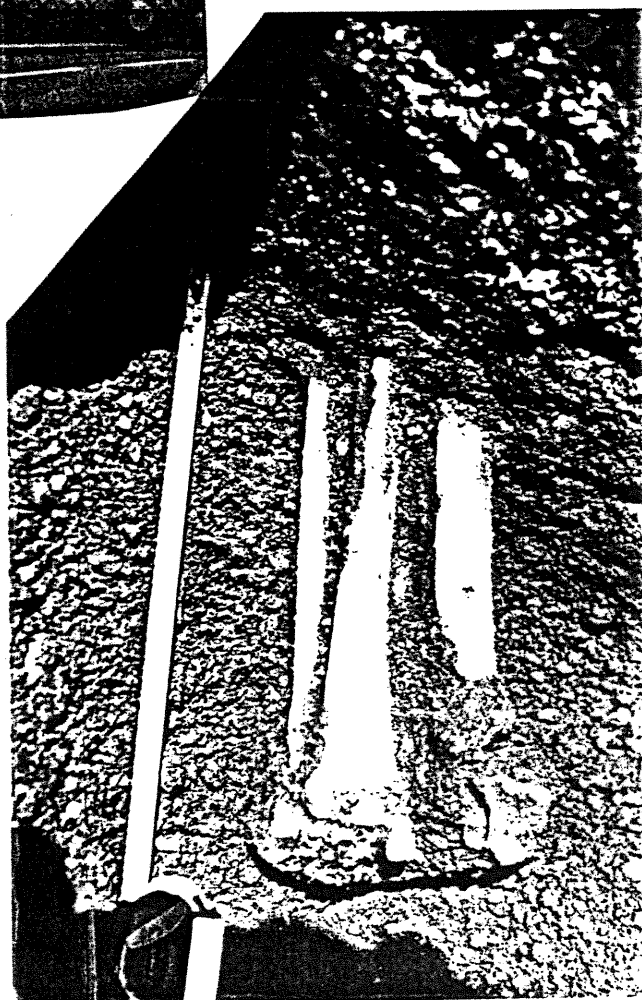
The Burials

Arriving on site it became clear that the precise location of the skull was unknown. After a brief discussion with the workmen and Mrs Maclean an approximate position was suggested and I started to excavate a hole 1 metre square and 0.8m deep. At this depth some ankle bones appeared in the right place with the lower ends of two sets of tibia and fibula.

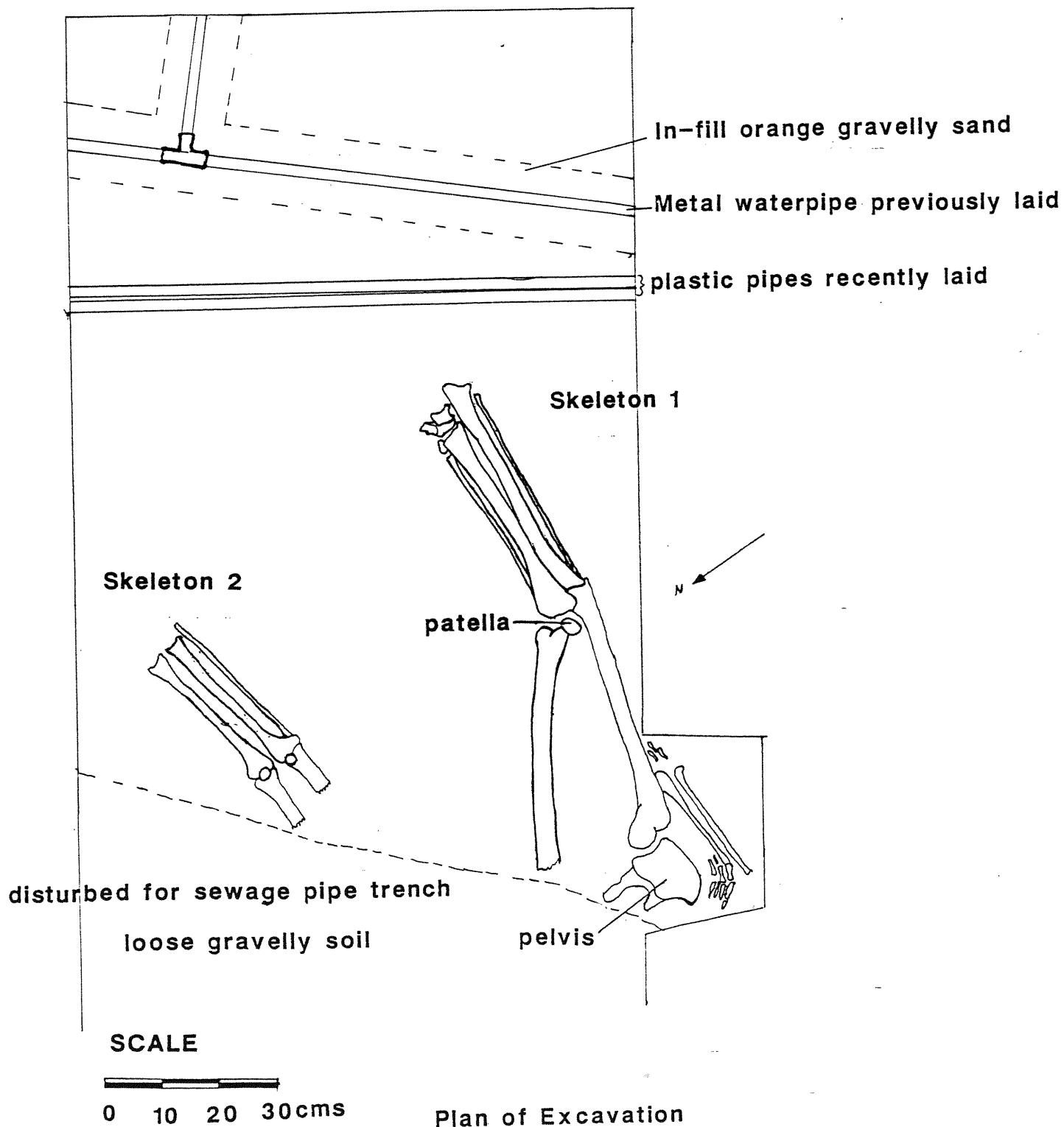
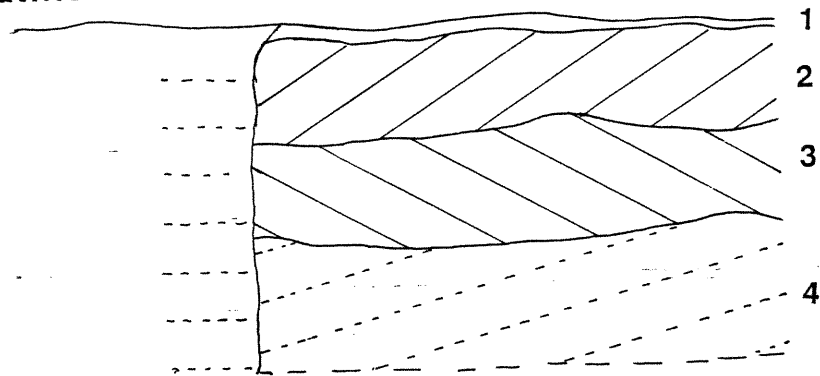
Stratification

Although the soil appeared very mixed, on closer inspection of the NW and SE sections there appeared to be 3 layers below topsoil.

1. Topsoil
2. This was modern rubbish layer with brick and rubble in brown soil.



Stratification of the bank on SE side of excavation, (nearest the house)

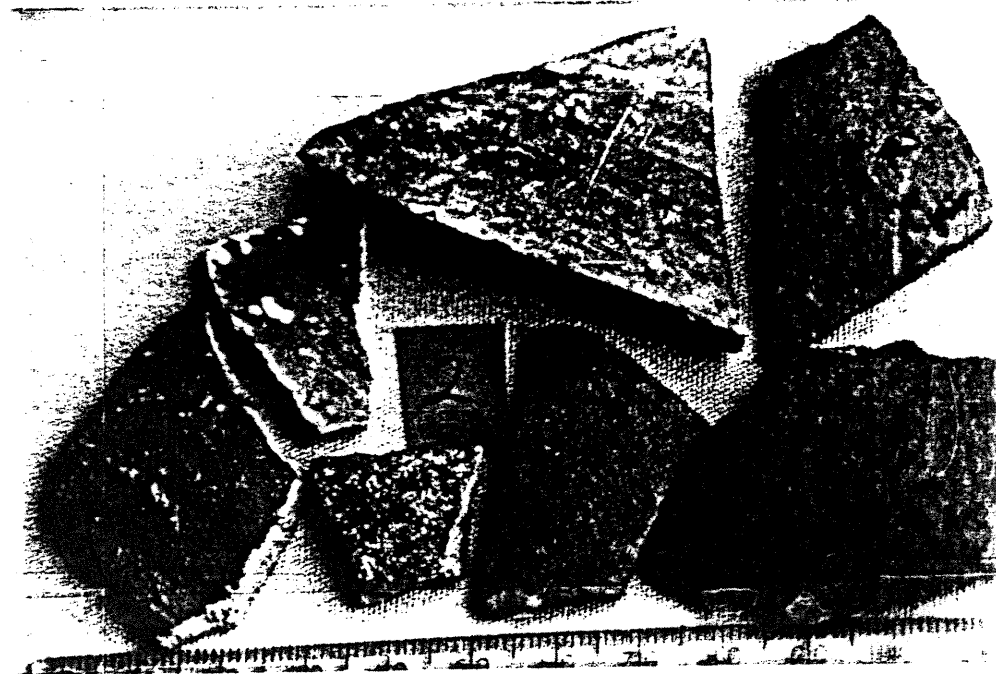


3. This was a light sandy gravel.

4. The lowest layer in which the

undisturbed bones appeared was a dark brown sandy clayey gravel with charcoal patches. The few roman pot sherds also came from this level.

It was then suggested that the excavation be extended in a northwesterly direction for another metre or so to see if the head area could be located. We found that we were able to trace the legs back to the pelvis of skeleton 1. Another pair of leg bones (skeleton 2) were uncovered, which were smaller but lying in the same direction as skeleton 1 (see drawings). Further tracing of either skeleton was prevented by a drain which had been laid to carry surface water. According to Mrs Maclean this had been cut several years earlier. It was about a metre wide and so it is possible that the rest of these individuals had been removed.



Conclusions

From the stratification of the site it appeared that layer 2 contained modern rubbish and layer 3 was also very disturbed. The soil of the strata containing the burials was more compacted though no formal graves were observed. At some time the churchyard could have possibly extended closer to, or even included the area of the house i.e. suggesting that it was larger than it is today. The Roman potsherds were so small and so widely distributed that it seems certain that they were residual material in the soil. It is therefore probable that the burials took place after the Roman period.

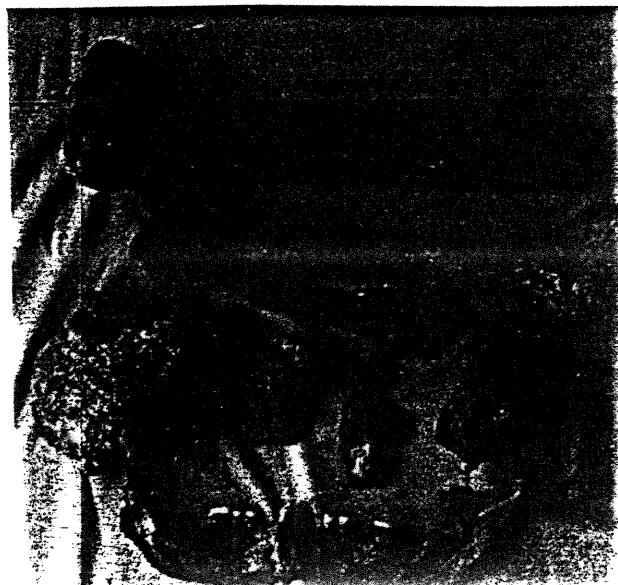
Pagan Saxon and Roman burials usually were accompanied with grave goods that the dead would need in the after life. Here there appeared to be none; the skeletons were lying in an east-west orientation, both these points would suggest a christian burial. Since there was a church in the vicinity as early as the late Saxon period, indications are that the burials were more likely to belong to the medieval period.



LIST OF FINDS

*Finds from Mrs Maclean
(precise location in her garden unknown)*

- 1 skull
- 1 top half tibia
- 1 base half humerus
- 1 lower half fibula
- 3 pieces skull
- 1 calcaneus

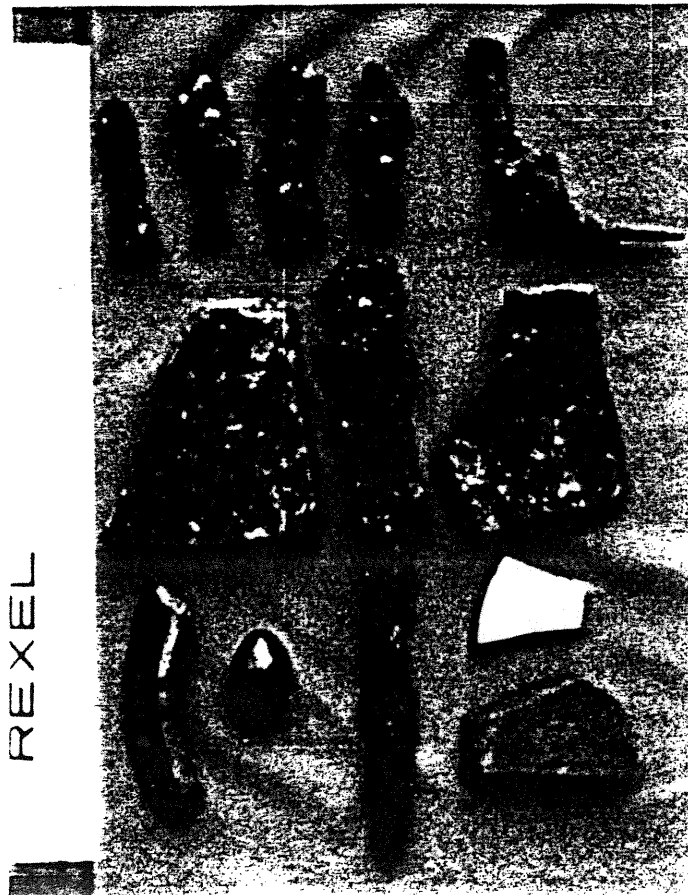


- 1 metatarsal
- 1 broken mandible with:
 - 2 molars,
 - 4 premolars
 - 3 incisors
- 1 right hip bone
- 1 left hip bone
- 1 small piece rib
- 8 animal bones
- 1 centre fragment femur
- 2 pieces skull
- 1 small fragment ulna
- 1 top vertebra
- 1 clavicle



Excavated finds from disturbed Layer 2

- 36 assorted fragments of bones and bones 3 encrusted nails
- 5 sherds
 - 1 P Med stoneware (bellarmine-type) sherd
 - 1 possible Med glazed sherd
 - 2 P Med glazed tile pieces
- 6 nails rusted
- 2 P Med pot sherd
- 1 Ro rim sherd
- 1 amber bead
- 1 modern pot sherd
- 1 modern tile sherd



REXEL

REXEL

Finds from Layer 3

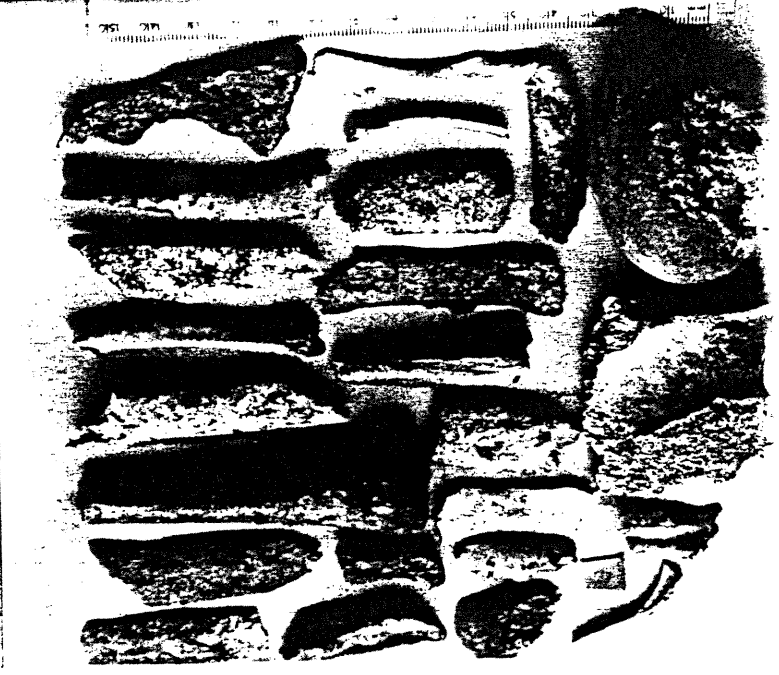
Bones:

- 3 Skull fragments
- 2 femur
- 1 beef marrow bone
- 1 condyle of a calf
- 1 calcaneus
- 3 metatarsals
- 2 tibia



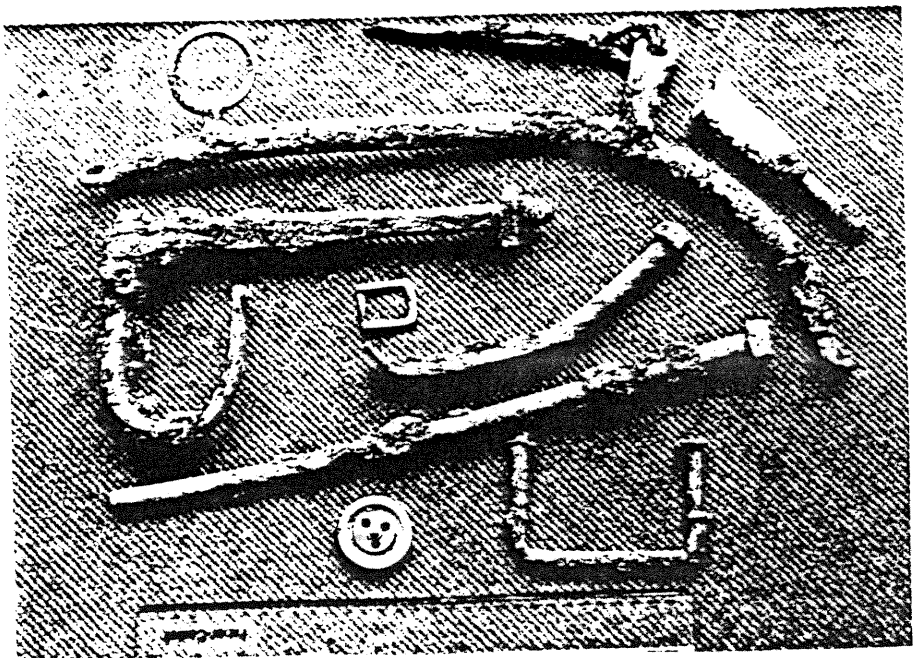
+4 metatarsals

24 animal bones



Metal objects:

- 1 part of hayme
- 1 unknown
- both parts of a gate catch
- 1 buckle loop
- 1 bolt (38cms long)
- 1 pulley wheel
- 1 D-shaped handle



Finds from Layer 4

Skeleton 1

arm radius (in 4 pieces)
 ulna
south hand (near knees)
 3 middle phalanx
northwest hand 4 metacarpals
 5 proximal phalanx
 1 middle phalanx
part of pelvis
left leg tibia in 2 pieces
 fibula (fragmented)
 talus
 calcaneus
 patella
 crumbled femur
right leg tibia (length 41cm)
 fibula (fragmented)
 medial condyle of the femur only
 femur in 5 pieces

Associated with Skeleton 1

2 piece of rib
5 foot/hand bones
3 fragments of pelvis
1 encrusted nail

Skeleton 2

right leg tibia
 fibula
 8cms lower femur
left leg tibia (30 cms)
 patella
 lower part of femur

Associated with Skeleton 2

5 toe bones
1 encrusted nail
1 fragment of "butchered" bone

Miscellaneous finds from Layer 4 not associated with either skeleton

7 Roman potsherds (see photos in text)
Miscellaneous corroded pieces of metal

I would like to thank Dr Jane Mackintosh
and Alison Taylor for all their help and
also Mrs Maclean who reported the find
and allowed the excavation to be carried
out.
 R. Desmond

