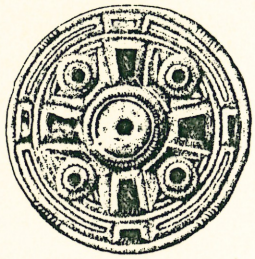

Archaeological Field Unit

Roman Cremations and Field System at Weybridge Farm, Alconbury

Malin Holst & Ken Welsh

1995

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 115

Commissioned By Mineral Resources Ltd

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Report No 115

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SUMMARY

In November 1994, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an archaeological evaluation on a large field at Weybridge Farm, Alconbury, as part of a proposal for gravel extraction of the area.

The site lies immediately north of the new A14 and Ellington Brook and to the west of the A1, between the villages of Brampton, Ellington and Alconbury, and straddling the Alconbury - Ellington parish boundary which follows the sinnous course of a relict stream channel.

The evaluation revealed an area of Roman activity on a headland in the northern, central part of the site. This was expressed by the discovery of several small ditches containing Romano-British material and a cremation burial of the same period (possibly 3rd century). Although this particular part of the site is not actually threatened itself by gravel extraction, it is thought that heavy machinery driving over any archaeological deposits could greatly disturb or destroy this valuable evidence.

Very little archaeological evidence was found in the lower area which will be affected by the immediate extraction developments. These consisted mainly of relict stream channels which were present in most of the trenches and are pre-dating the overlying early medieval alluvium.

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Roman Cremations and Field System at Weybridge Farm, Alconbury

1 INTRODUCTION

From the 28th October to the 9th November 1994, the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an archaeological evaluation at Weybridge Farm, Alconbury (TL 1795/7210). The work was carried out at the request of Mineral Resources Limited, who propose to extract gravel from the site, in response to a brief prepared by the County Archaeology Office (CAO).

The site, consisting of 33ha of arable land lies within the bounds of a single field. The southern boundary is formed by the Ellington Brook, a tributary of the River Ouse, the western boundary by a recently abandoned quarry, and the northern and eastern boundaries by water-filled ditches. Although the application covers the whole area, it is not proposed to quarry the north-central area as no viable gravels are present. The parish boundary, marked until the 1970s as a drainage ditch, departs from the line of the present Ellington Brook in the south-west corner of the site and meanders across it, before returning to the line of the Brook towards the south-eastern corner. It presumably follows a former course of the Ellington Brook. Much of the area, although not the central rise, is overlain by alluvial clays, in places up to 2m thick.

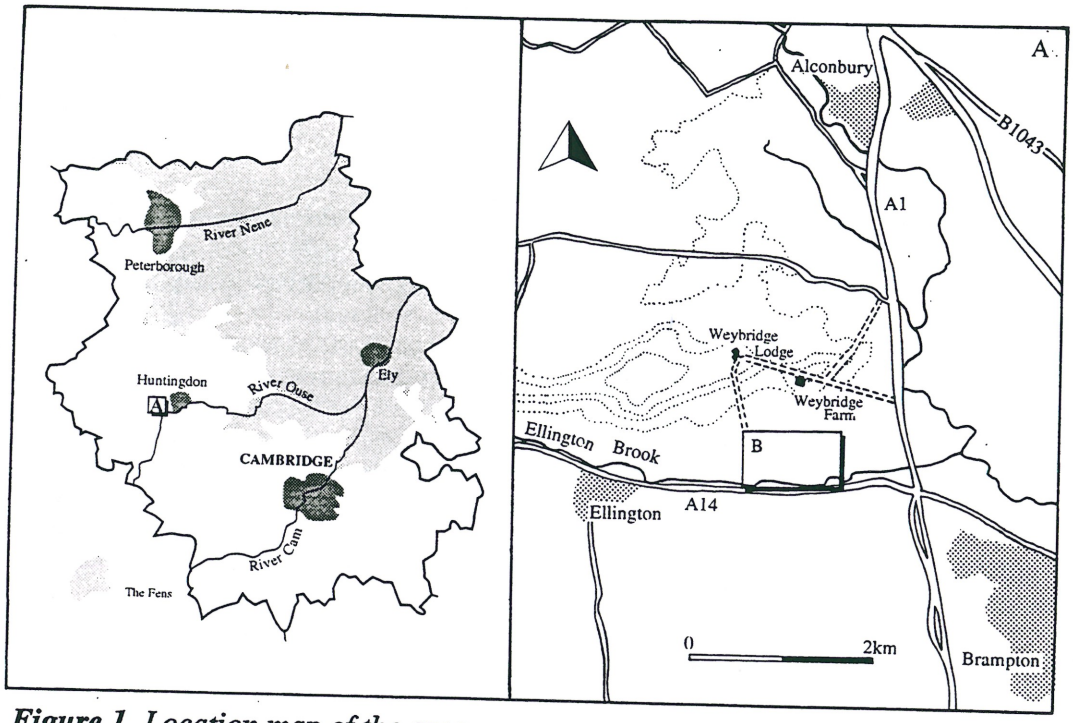

Figure 1 Location map of the area

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The area lies within the valley and flood plain of the Ellington Brook and is overlooked to the north and south by ridges running on an east to west alignment up to 30m above the brook.

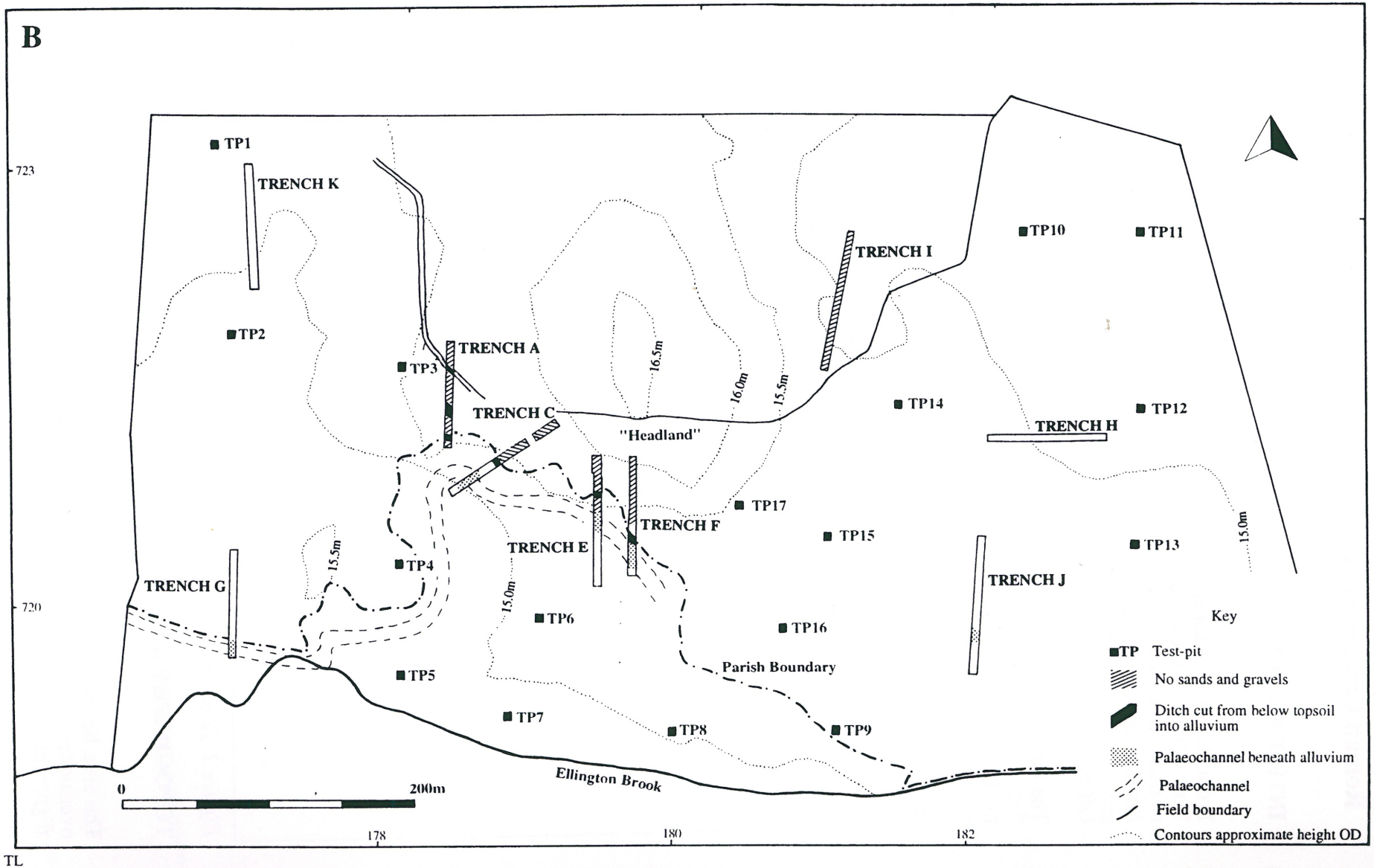

Figure 2 *Application area (33ha field) and Trench location plan with surface contours, showing natural as well as post-medieval/modern drainage features*

The area of the proposed quarrying is generally flat, at about 16m OD, but there is a slight rise, of about 1m above the surrounding area, in the north-central part of the field.

The underlying geology of the area is grey mudstones dating from the Upper Jurassic. These are overlain by the remnants of boulder clay and glacial gravels of the Pleistocene in the north-central section of the field (Geological Survey of Great Britain, (England and Wales) Sheet 187). In the rest of the area, and overlying glacial deposits, the mudstones are overlain by more recent, first and second terrace, river gravels laid down during the early stages of the formation of the present river system (ibid).

Much of the site is sealed by alluvial clays, associated with seasonal overbank flooding of the Ellington Brook and of its predecessor(s). It is thought that a large part of this alluvium was laid down during the medieval and post-medieval periods after woodland clearance had exposed surrounding upland areas to soil erosion. However, there is evidence, both here and elsewhere along the Ouse and its tributaries, that earlier periods of alluviation took place. Work at Huntingdon Racecourse, about 2.5km to the east, suggests several periods of alluviation, perhaps beginning in the neolithic (Macaulay forthcoming, and Welsh 1993). The slight rise in the north-central part of the site, roughly coincident with the area of glacial deposits, has no alluvial overburden.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Nearly all background information is taken from the desktop survey of the area (Malim 1994).

3.1 **Archaeological evidence** shows a rich and diverse landscape to the east of the application area along the terraces of the Ouse, and limited late occupation to the west, north and south, but with no direct evidence in the immediate vicinity.

Palaeolithic tools in fresh condition have been found on the Ouse Terraces near Brampton and Huntingdon, consisting of handaxes, scrapers, notches and flakes of "Middle Palaeolithic type, but none are known from Ellington Brook or in the immediate proximity of the application area. Faunal remains of both warm (Ipswichian) and cold (Devensian) periods have also been found along the Ouse, but not yet in clear association with artefacts (Reynolds pers. comm.).

Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology is concentrated to the east along the Ouse valley and its tributaries such as the Alconbury Brook. An extensive landscape of ceremonial/ritual monuments consisting of a cursus, henge(s), territorial boundary ditches and burial sites has been partially investigated north-west of Brampton (Malim 1990, Malim & Mitchell 1993, White 1969), whilst to the north of Alconbury Brook preliminary evidence suggests occupation and woodland clearance of the same period (Welsh 1993). Closer to the application area there is nothing known of this age, although further to the west ring-ditches and flints noted at Easton can probably be attributed to the Bronze Age. The paucity of evidence for these periods along the Ellington Brook and along the ridges to north and south would strongly suggest that this area was not a routeway and was not extensively occupied during the Neolithic and Bronze Age, indeed it was probably heavily wooded. However, the possibility exists that this pattern may be more a reflection of differential

collection of artefacts and unresponsive soils for air photography than a true indication of the density of activity.

Iron Age archaeology is similar in pattern to that described above with round-houses, occupation evidence and agricultural activities recorded north-west of Brampton (Malim & Mitchell 1993, Welsh 1993, White 1969), and further finds of domestic nature (pottery and bone) reported closer to the application area at gravel pits immediately north-east of Brampton Hut on the A1, in the tongue of land leading to the junction of Alconbury and Ellington Brooks. Finds further west are sparse and tend to occur where later Roman occupation is known. The pattern suggests settlement and farming on the easily tilled soils over river gravels, preference for settlement given to the slightly higher land such as that provided by raised gravel terraces, with advantage taken of the fertile flood plains for agriculture and grazing.

Roman archaeology is not dense in this area, although more finds from this period are recorded to the west, especially around Stow Longa, as well as a major area of agricultural processing close to Brampton in the same general location as earlier activity (Robinson 1991), and isolated finds are noted from gravel pits along the A1. Two Roman roads exist in the locality: Ermine Street, and a branch road heading towards Leicester from Alconbury (Fox 1923). As well as linking important settlements, particularly London and York, Ermine Street encouraged the development of many other settlements. Roman towns in Cambridgeshire, such as Godmanchester, which is 5.5km south-east of Weybridge Farm and Water Newton, north of Weybridge were built and thrived up to the fourth century AD. Roman burials and tombstones were positioned beside the roads, as has been seen through several excavations in and around Godmanchester, where large cemeteries were established outside the town walls and along the major roads approaching the town, such as along Ermine Street and the Via Devana (up to 180 individuals have been found during excavations in Godmanchester). The last resurfacing of Ermine Street was in the fourth century, which is virtually unworn and is covered with fourth century rubbish, suggesting a decline in the importance of the road and generally of Roman occupation in the area. However, these roads are 3kms to the north and have no direct relevance for the application area. There is no evidence to suggest a Roman route existed along the valley of the Ellington Brook.

No finds or sites of Saxon date are known from this area, although place-name evidence and Domesday clearly indicate Saxon occupation.

Medieval archaeology dominates the record, with several deserted/shrunken medieval villages (and sibling settlements), moated sites (probably of 13th-14th century date) and agricultural systems scattered to the north, west and south of the application area. To the east little medieval activity is apparent until the village of Brampton with its associated field systems. This pattern of archaeology is suggestive of expansion of settlement indicative of a rising population exploiting the land along the valley and either side of Ellington Brook, with a subsequent retraction due to a fall in population at a later date probably attributable to the Black Death in the middle of the 14th century. Historical and cartographic evidence suggests, that the application area was given over to meadowland beside Ellington Brook, and probably formed part of the Royal Forest of Weybridge ('Wabridge Forest') during Medieval times, this can be seen on maps dating to 1610, 1646 and 1672. King James' hunting lodge, which was built in the early seventeenth century, is located on the brow of the hill immediately to the north of the site (pers. comm, the owners of the lodge).

3.2 **Archaeological research** within the locality has been limited: Fox (1923) includes it within his archaeology of the Cambridge Region but has little to say about the area except by showing it as largely wooded on his maps; J.R. Garrood undertook several small excavations at Weybridge Farm and in gravel pits beside the A1 during the 1920s finding Iron Age and Roman artefacts, investigated the terrace and earthworks associated with the farm, and contributed to the Victoria County History on the subject of archaeology within the locality; larger scale excavations were undertaken by D.A.White, at Brampton in the 1960s, of Beaker burials and an Iron Age settlement; further gravel pit records of features with Iron Age pottery were made by Mark Alexander in 1985; Charles French conducted a desktop study and fieldwalking of the application area in 1990; large-scale excavations of a Neolithic mortuary enclosure and a Roman farm at Brampton were undertaken by Malim and Robinson in 1990-91, and in 1992 an evaluation excavation of Neolithic territorial boundary ditches and Iron Age settlement was carried out by Malim and Mitchell; Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age sites were evaluated at Huntingdon Race Course in 1993 by Welsh and Macaulay, forthcoming; an archaeological desktop study of Brampton Hut which identified the deserted medieval village of Harthay was conducted in 1994 by Simon Collcutt.

C. French's 1990 desktop study included the application area and the land east of it as far as the A1. He recorded a depth of 0.6-1m for clay alluvium over the area and attributed this to aggradation from early meanders of Ellington Brook stream system. Fieldwalking resulted in no finds, which could have been due to masking effects such as the presence of a crop of winter wheat and also alluvial overburden.

During excavation of the existing quarry in 1990-1993 the landowner, Mr. Turney, watched for archaeological finds but saw nothing.

4 METHODOLOGY AND CONSTRAINTS

Following the desk-top survey of the area (Malim 1994), a policy for field assessment of the site was established. Trenching was concentrated on the former line of the Brook, and on the edge of the rise as this was where it was anticipated that archaeological remains were most likely to be encountered, and where it was important to plot the edge of the sands and gravels accurately.

A total of nine trenches and seventeen test-pits (*Figure 2*), an area of 2735m^2 - a total of just less than 1% of the application area and 1.4% of the extraction area - were excavated using two tracked mechanical excavators with toothless ditching buckets, under close supervision of an archaeologist.

From past experience on similar alluviated gravel terraces, it was felt that double bucket-width trenches would be most appropriate. This served two purposes - firstly, it allowed better feature recognition; and secondly, it allowed the trench sides to be stepped-in, for safety reasons, in the areas of greatest alluvial cover.

Once opened, the trenches were selectively cleaned, planned and photographed.

Chosen features were excavated and recorded using the standard techniques of the Archaeological Field Unit.

Due to unstable trench sides and groundwater seepage problems the deeper parts of the trenches could not be worked in. Consequently, it was only possible to make measured sketches of the deposits revealed there.

5 RESULTS

In total, nine trenches were opened up (Trench A, C, E, F, G, H, I, J, K). The trench locations and trench names were assigned before any trenching was carried out. On site, however, it was found, that Trench B and Trench D would be located too far into the area which is not going to be developed, and were thus abandoned.

Where features were excavated, they were assigned context numbers for both cut and fill. Context numbers for cuts are shown in bold, eg **23**, fills and layers in normal type. Unexcavated deposits were assigned a single context number, used as a feature number (see Appendix 5 for a full list of contexts and essential details).

5.1 Trench A

Trench A was located to investigate ponds, springs and the line of the parish boundary, as represented on the OS maps. The ploughsoil was 0.25m thick. It overlay 0.45m of alluvium, a yellowish brown, very slightly silty clay. Several features were recorded, cut from below the ploughsoil.

Feature **48**. A linear feature, 7.5m wide, orientated from north-west to south-east. It was filled with a very dark brown, uncompacted, silty clay with frequent branches and roots.

Feature **49**. A linear feature, 10.0m wide, and 1.6m deep, 'u'-shaped, with a flat base, orientated from north-west to south-east. It was filled with a very dark brown, organic, silty clay with frequent branches and roots. At the base of the feature was a layer of very dark greyish brown or black, silty clay containing a fragment of peg-tile.

Feature **50**. A linear feature, 5.0m wide, orientated from east to west. It was filled with a dark grey, organic, sandy clay.

5.2 Trench C

Trench C was located to investigate the line of the parish boundary visible on the OS map as well as any potential archaeology on the headland. The topsoil in Trench C was 0.26m thick. Two different types of alluvium could be detected in Trench C, the upper part of which, 11, was 0.60m thick and consisted of a yellowish brown silty clay. The lower alluvium, 12, was quite different to 11, as it consisted of greenish grey silty clay with strong brown mottling.

Feature **51**. This feature was 1.10m wide and linear, orientated in a north-south direction. It contained a moderately compact greyish brown sandy silty clay.

Layer (37), up to 0.50m thick, was a yellowish brown sandy clay with brownish yellow mottling. It was overlaid by layer (11) at its south-west extent (see *Figure 3*).

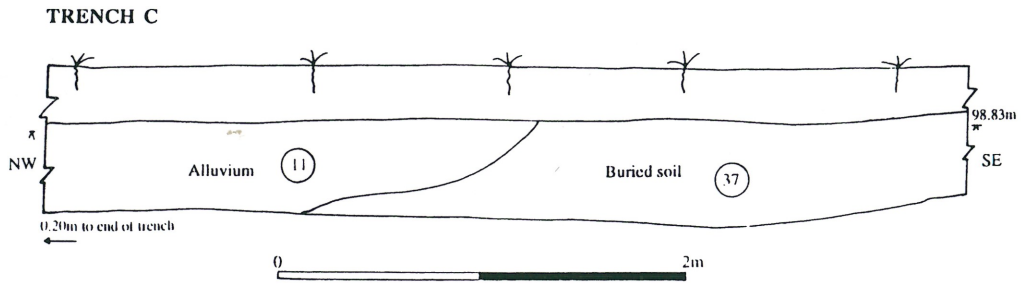

***Figure 3** North-west facing section of buried soil in Trench C*

Feature **62** was located at the north-eastern part of Trench C. It was 0.25m in diameter wide and 0.27m deep. It contained a greyish brown silty clay fill (52) and was sealed by 37.

Feature **63**. A linear feature, 8m wide, contained a bluish-grey very sandy clay (38, 40) and gravel (39). It was orientated in an east to west direction.

Feature **65** was of a 13m wide linear, filled with grey sandy clay .

5.3 Trench E (see *Plate 2*)

Trench E was located to evaluate the transition between the lower and higher areas of the field and to assess any archaeology located on the headland, as well as investigating the parish boundary on the ground, which is shown on the OS map.

The topsoil in Trench E was 0.20m deep. The thickness of the alluvium, which consisted of olive brown clay with few pebbles, varied greatly throughout Trench E. The northern part of the trench had no alluvial cover, as it is located on the headland in the northern centre of the site. The alluvium in the southern part of the trench was 0.60m thick and in the centre of Trench E, the alluvium was up to 1.60m thick. The northern part of Trench E contained a buried soil, equivalent to deposit 37 in Trench C and again overlain by alluvial deposits.

Feature **3** was a pit, located in the northern part of Trench E, which was 0.84m by 0.58m wide and 0.22m deep. It contained a very dark greyish brown silty clay fill, 10 (*Figure 7; section 2*). Two nearly complete Romano-British pots were found in the feature, one of grey ware and the other of general coarse ware, as well as two base sherds of a grey ware jar, all dating between the first -

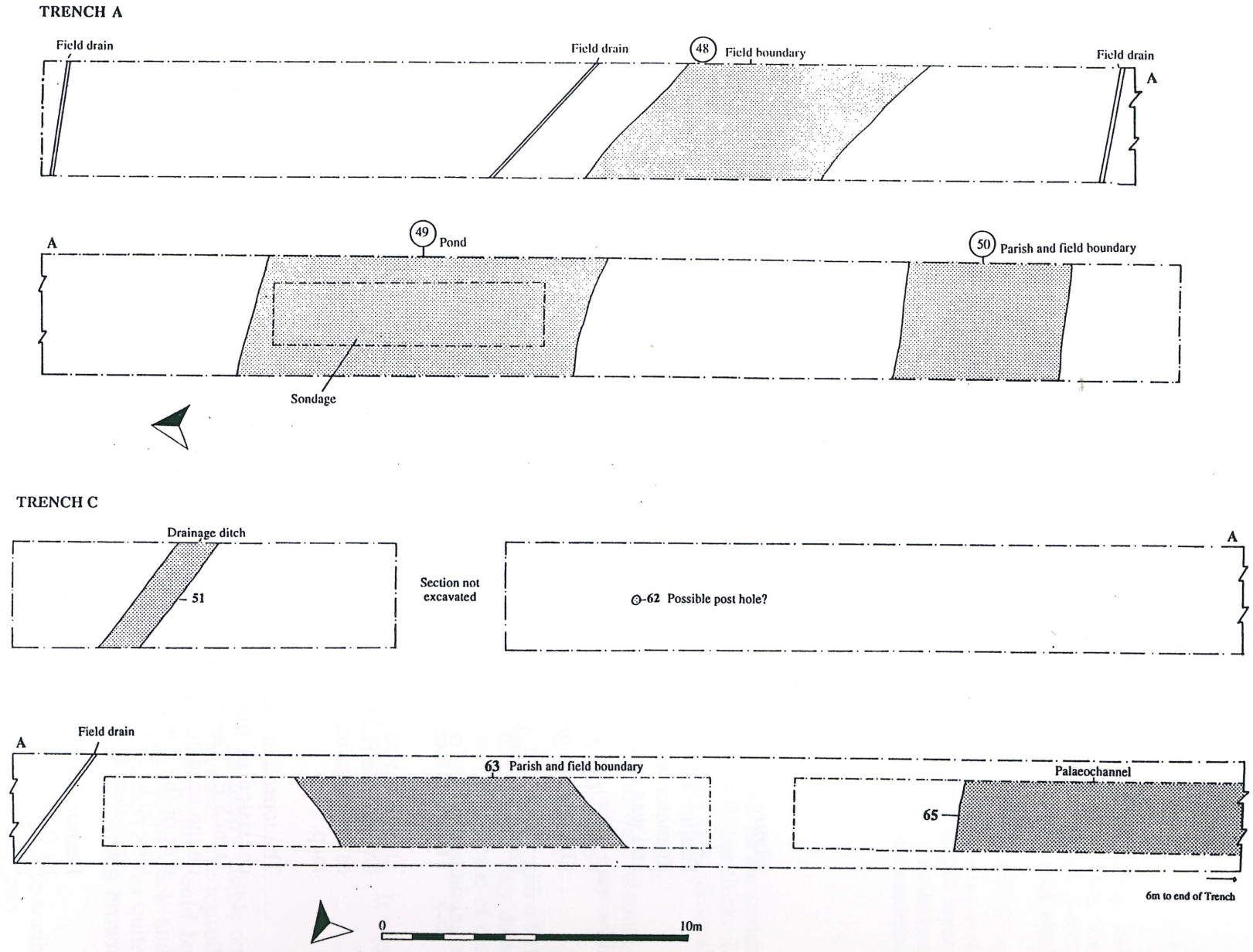

Figure 4 *Plan of Trench A and Trench C*

third century AD. Both pots together contained 986g of cremated human bone (*Figure 7; Plate 1*).

Feature **16** was a 0.30m wide and 0.075m deep feature, possibly a pit, with a rounded western end. It contained two fills, a red silty clay and a very dusky red silty clay with some charcoal, indicating burning in situ.

Feature **25** was in the alluvium in the centre of Trench E and consisted of a sub oval irregular feature, which was 1.50m by 0.80m in width and 0.10m deep. It was filled by a yellowish red and black slightly sandy silty clay, 24. Immediately next to the feature, also associated with a patch of burnt silty clay (26), was a deer antler.

Other patches of burning were noted along the south part of the trench at this level (within the alluvium) and were not given context numbers but were marked on the trench plan.

Feature **54** was straight sided and linear, about 15.5m wide and U-shaped, filled with a very dark brown silty clay. **54** was cut from below the topsoil into the top of the alluvium. It contained a large amount of roots.

Feature **55** was an 8.50m wide cut filled with very dark grey organic silty clay, which contained frequent roots and branches. **55** was cut from beneath the alluvium (see *Plate 4*).

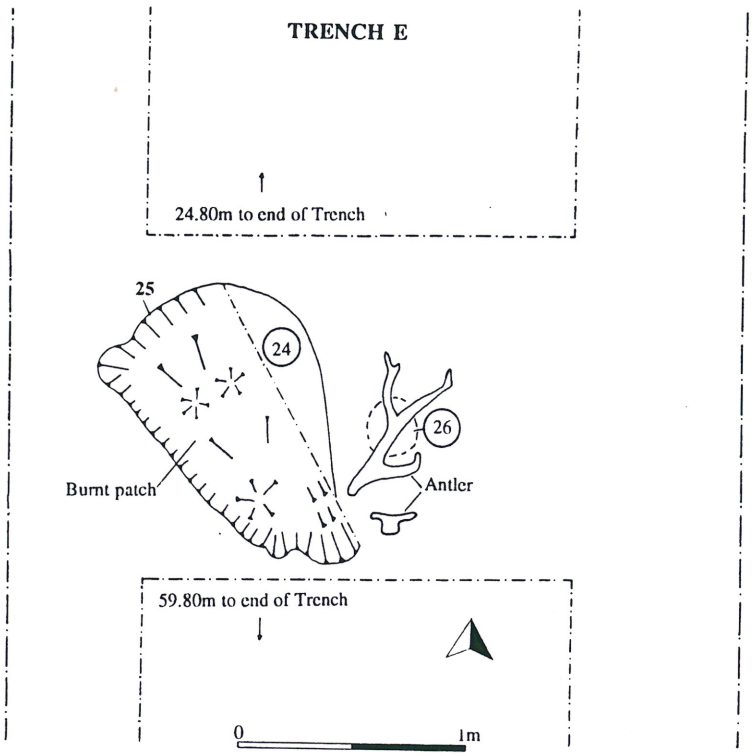

Figure 5 Antler in situ

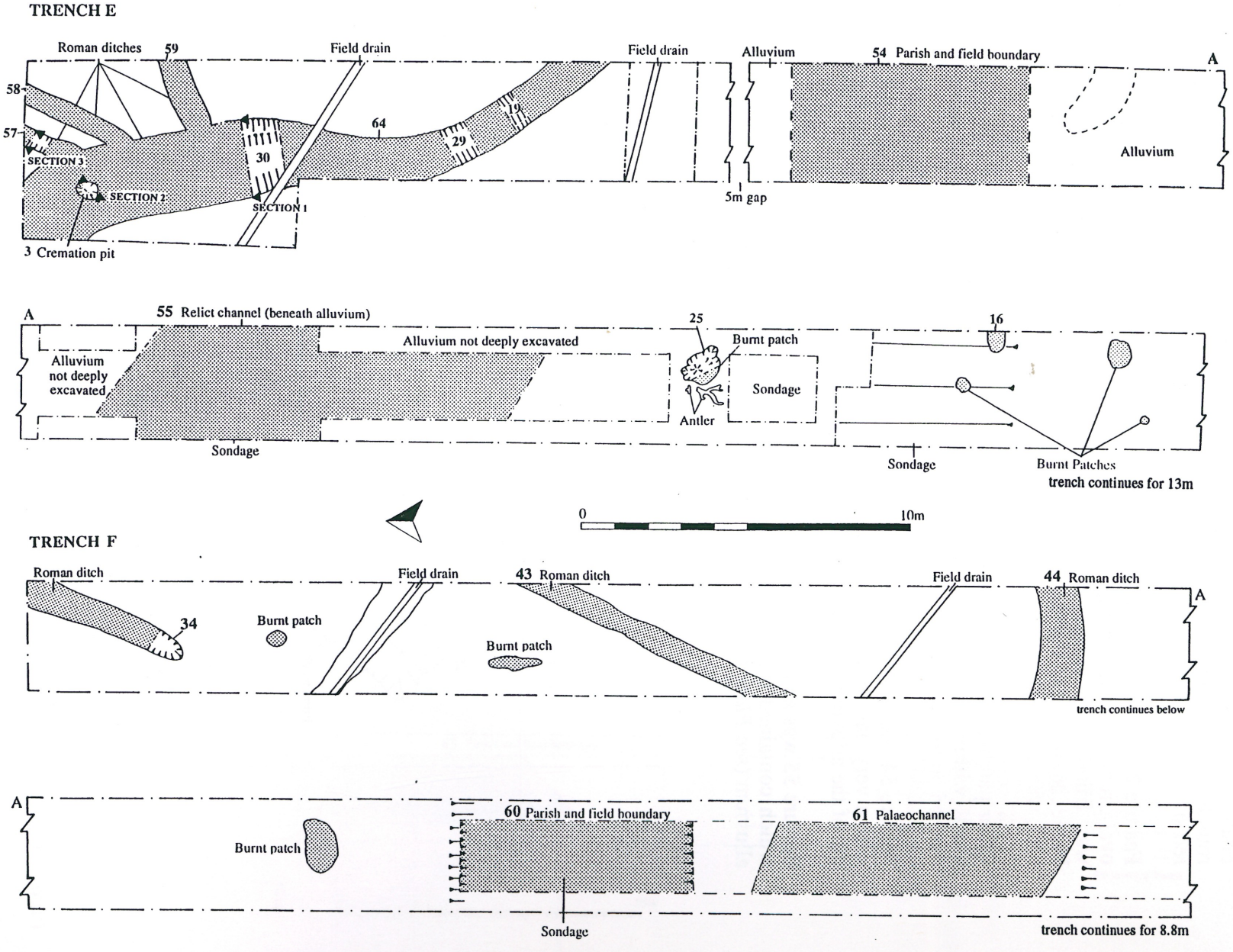

Figure 6 *Plan of Trench E and Trench F (Roman features and palaeochannel)*

Feature **57** was a linear U-shaped cut, 0.50m wide and 0.20m deep. Its orientation was north-east to south-west, and it contained one fill, 56, which was a yellowish brown slightly sandy silty clay (see *Figure 7; section of 57*).

Feature **58** was curvilinear and 0.50m wide.

Feature **59** was a 0.70m wide linear cut.

Feature **64** was a curvi-linear ditch, V-shaped in profile, in the northern part of Trench E. It was up to 2.40m wide and 0.35m in depth. The ditch was orientated from north-west to south-east. Three slots were excavated across the ditch, **19**, **20**, **30**. Each contained two fills, the upper one of which was a yellowish brown slightly sandy silty clay (17, 27, 47) and a lower greyish brown slightly silty clay which was very compact (18, 27, 47). Fill 18 contained forty pieces of grey ware pottery and one piece of oxidised general coarse ware, dating to between the second and third century AD. Fill 28 contained thirty-nine sherds of grey ware and sixty-seven pieces of oxidised ware pottery, dating to the third to fourth century. Fill 23 contained large quantities of pottery: Seventy sherds of general coarse ware, as well as three sherds of oxidised ware, one sherd of coarse grey ware, three pieces of Harold ware, three pieces of reduced ware pottery and two sherds belonging to amphorae all dating to the Roman period, to the third to fourth centuries AD.

5.4 Trench F

Trench F was located o investigate the parish boundary as represented on the OS map, as well as assessing the area which lies at the transition between the headland and the lower ground.

In the northern part of Trench F there was no alluvial overburden. However, the buried soil (37) observed in Trench C and E, was also present in the northern part of Trench F. The topsoil was around 0.25m deep. In the southern part of Trench F, however, the alluvium, a yellowish brown slightly silty clay (11) and a greenish grey silty clay (12), was up to 1.6m deep.

Feature **34** was 0.50m wide and 0.40m deep. The linear feature ran in a north-east to south-west orientation for 5m into the northern end of Trench F where it terminated. It contained one fill, a greyish brown sandy and gravelly clay, 35, and eight sherds of Roman pottery. These consisted of three sherds of Harold Ware, two pieces of reduced ware, two sherds of grey ware, and one sherd of grog-tempered reduced ware, dated to the third and fourth centuries AD.

Feature **43** was linear feature, 0.70m wide, and was orientated in a north-east to south-west direction, on the same alignment as cut **34**, but further to the south. The fill was a brownish grey sandy clay with some gravel.

Feature **44** was a 2m wide linear, running on an east to west alignment. It contained one fill, which was a brownish grey sandy clay with some gravel.

Feature **60** was a linear feature, 7m wide, orientated from north-east to south-west. It was filled with a dark grey, organic, sandy clay.

Feature **61** was linear, appearing as three features on the ground (as in Trench C), but all belonging to the same feature. It was orientated east to west and contained two bluish grey clay fills, 15 and 16 8.5m wide.

5.5 Trench G

Trench G was located to investigate the parish boundary in the south-west corner of the application area, to see whether a boundary ditch or palaeochannel occurred along the line of the parish boundary. The topsoil was 0.30m thick, and the alluvium in Trench G was up to 1m deep. Beneath this alluvium the following deposits were observed:

Feature **31** was located in the southern part of Trench G and consisted of a linear running in an east to west direction, which was 0.25m deep. It contained a greenish grey, organic, fine sandy clay. At the base of this feature was a thin deposit of very dark organic silty clay.

Deposit 32. Immediately to the north of **31**, on the bank of the channel, was a black silty clay deposit, 32, with charcoal, burnt flints and limestone fragments.

Deposit 70. Below 32 was a greenish grey silty sandy clay deposit, which was a lower alluvium. 70 was cut by **31**.

5.6 Trench H

Trench H was located to investigate the eastern part of the field and any archaeology located in this area. The topsoil in Trench H was 0.25m deep. The alluvium was very thin in Trench H, not exceeding 0.27m thick.

There were no features of archaeological significance in Trench H.

5.7 Trench I (see *Plate 3*)

Trench was located to investigate the north-eastern part of the field and the extend of the sands and gravels. The topsoil in Trench I was 0.23m deep and the alluvium was between 0.45 to 0.55m thick. The trench I was located on the headland in the northern centre of the site. The natural in this area did not consist of sands and gravels.

Trench I did not contain any features of archaeological significance.

5.8 Trench J

Trench J was located in a north-south direction in the south-eastern part of the field to investigate the blank area in this part of the application area. The topsoil in trench was 0.30m deep. The thickness of the alluvium varied from 0.70m on the southern and northern side of the trench to 1.70m in the centre of Trench J.

Feature **20** was located in the centre of Trench J and consisted of two irregular sub circular cuts, joining in the centre. The feature was 1.40m by 0.30m wide and 0.30m deep. It contained two fills, 21 and 22, which consisted of yellowish red sandy silty clay and dusky red sandy silty clay with charcoal, indicating burning in situ.

Feature **36** was linear, 2.30m wide and 0.50m deep, 'u'-shaped in profile, and orientated in a north north-west to south south-east direction, extending for almost 40m along the trench. It contained one fill, 33, which was a grey silty clay.

Feature **66**. This feature was linear, running in a east-west direction and around 15m wide. The base was very wide and generally flat. It contained three fills, an upper greyish brown sandy clay (67), a lower light grey sandy clay with orange mottling (68) and between them a thin band of dark grey and red mixed clay (69), which appeared to be a layer of burnt material.

5.9 Trench K

Trench K was located to investigate the most north-western part of the application area. The topsoil in trench K was 0.30m deep. The thickness of the alluvium varied between 0.70m to 1m from north to south.

Feature **41** was a 1.20m wide and linear, running in an east to west direction. It was filled with a bluish-grey sandy clay.

Feature **42** was a 2m wide and linear on an east to west alignment. Its fill consisted of a reddish brown sandy clay.

5.10 Test Pits

The test pits were located to investigate large areas as a supplement to the trench pattern. The topsoil of **test pit 1** consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.20m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.40m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 2

The topsoil of test pit 2 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.20m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown clayey sand and was 1m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 3

The topsoil of test pit 3 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.20m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.90m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 4

The topsoil of test pit 4 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.20m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay, the base of the alluvium was not reached at 0.90m depth. No features of archaeological importance were observed.

Test Pit 5

The topsoil of test pit 5 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.20m thick. The upper alluvium consisted of mixed bluish grey clay, mixed with brown, slightly silty clay, gravel and occasional stones. This layer was 0.20m

deep. The lower alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was not bottomed at 1.20m in depth. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 6

The topsoil of test pit 6 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.30m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.45m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was dark brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 7

The topsoil of test pit 7 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.20m thick. Beneath this was a bluish grey clay, mixed with brown, slightly silty clay, gravel and occasional stones. This layer was 0.25m deep. The lower alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.55m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 8

The topsoil of test pit 8 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. Beneath this was a layer, 0.20m deep, which consisted of very dark grey clay. The lower alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.45m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 9

The topsoil of test pit 9 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was not bottomed. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 10

The topsoil of test pit 10 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.40m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 11

The topsoil of test pit 11 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.63m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 12

The topsoil of test pit 12 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.48m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 13

The topsoil of test pit 13 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.50m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 14

The topsoil of test pit 14 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.25m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.55m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 15

The topsoil of test pit 15 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.30m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.42m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 16

The topsoil of test pit 16 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.30m thick. The alluvium was light olive brown slightly silty clay and was 0.50m thick. No features of archaeological importance were observed. The natural was yellowish brown clayey sand.

Test Pit 17

The topsoil of test pit 17 consisted of brown slightly silty clay and was 0.30m thick. Below the topsoil was a 0.25m thick buried soil, which consisted of yellowish brown fine sandy clay with occasional pebbles. The natural was very mixed. It consisted of strong brown sandy clay and clayey sand with lenses of gravel, lenses of reddish yellow and greenish grey mottled clay.

6 INTERPRETATION: NATURAL DRAINAGE PATTERN AND UNDERLYING TOPOLOGY

6.1 **Alluvium** recorded from trenching and test pitting was removed by machine under the control of an archaeologist. Over most of the site the alluvium was a homogeneous, yellowish brown clay, becoming gleyed at depth over the relict stream channels. In the south-west corner (Trench G, **31**), evidence for an earlier, distinct period of alluviation was recorded (see below **6.4**).

6.2 **Drains and underlying topography:** the removal of the alluvial overburden down to the surface of the underlying geology revealed a much more marked topography than is presently visible. The slight central rise proved to be a distinct 'headland' of glacial material, jutting out into the surrounding flood plain. Several straight ditches (**51**, 41, 42 and 45), mostly filled with blue clay, were evident beneath the alluvium to the north (Trench C) and north-west (Trench K) of the channel. While these may have been natural drainage channels, the sharpness of their edges indicated an anthropogenic origin, presumably as drainage ditches. A ditch **36**, filled with gravelly alluvial clay (33), was revealed in the south-east of the site (Trench J) and probably served the same function. At the southern foot of the headland (Trenches C, E, and F, **65**, **55**, **61**), the course of a relict stream channel ran within a relatively wide depression. In the southern part of Trench J a similar, but probably earlier Palaeochannel (**66**) was found, which is not represented on the OS maps.

6.3 **The relict stream channel**, approximately, although not exactly, on the line of the parish boundary as represented on the OS maps, had a basal fill of about 0.70m of dark silty clay containing occasional roots but little or no other distinguishable organic material. It was sealed by up to 2m of alluvial clay and up to 11m wide and 3.50m deep (see Appendix 6). From cartographic evidence it is known that the stream was redirected in the mid-nineteenth century, but was still visible from the air as a gradually infilling feature until it only showed as a soil mark in 1988. The more modern version of the stream as parish and field boundary was also found during excavation in Trench A, C, E, F (50, **63**, **54**, **60**).

6.4 **Earlier alluviation:** In the south-western corner of the site (Trench G), the relict stream channel **31** appeared to be cut into a very different earlier alluvial clay, 70, thus probably pre-dating the other Palaeochannels on the site (see Appendix 6). A spread of undated burnt material 32, consisting of charcoal, burnt flints and burnt limestone, was found on its northern edge and was sealed by a later alluvium, possibly resulting from feature **31** flooding. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that there were two distinct periods of flooding within the area.

6.5 **The remains of a pond** (49), filled in the upper part with a very dark brown organic silty clay, and in the lower part with a very dark greyish brown silty clay were found in the centre of Trench A. On the 1887 OS 25" the old and new courses of Ellington Brook are visible, as well as a spring and two ponds, supplying the northern most point of the old course of the stream with a water source (Malim 1994). The pond found during the excavation of the area is likely to be one of the features shown on the OS map. Branches and roots were found in the upper fill of the pond, the lower fill contained few pieces of post-medieval peg-tile. These features area quite obviously post-alluvial, as they are cut through the alluvium.

6.6 **Small hollows or cuts, filled with burnt clay,** were recorded within the alluvium in Trench E, G, I and J (**16**, **25**, 32, **20**) which were located in very different parts of the site (see *Figure 2*). All of them are slightly irregular and suboval and contain two fills, the upper one of which is a light red silty clay and the lower fill is a dusky red, frequently containing charcoal. One of these features also contained burnt flints and limestone fragments (32, Trench G). Another burnt patch (**25**, Trench E) was associated with an antler, probably of red deer. As there is not dating evidence or any trace of archaeological artefacts in these features, it is difficult to date the and determine their purpose.

Plate 1 *The cremation in situ.*

Plate 2 *Photo of the northern part of Trench E, showing in the foreground the relict channel and the rise up to the headland. In the background one can see the headland and an archaeologist excavating the cremation.*

7 INTERPRETATION :MAIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

7.1 **The edge of the central headland** (see **6.2** above) showed a buried soil (palaeosol, 37) beneath the modern ploughsoil (Trench C, E and F and Test pit 17). As the land dipped away towards the relict stream channel, this buried soil was overlain by the alluvial clay (see *Plates 2 & 3*). A series of ditches and other features, including two probable post-holes, **62** and **71** (unexcavated), defined themselves in the glacial sub-soil beneath the buried soil (Trenches C, E, and F, see *Figure 3)*. A small pit **3**, which was found to have been cut into a Roman ditch **64** (*Figures 6 & 7; Plates 1 & 2*), contained two pottery vessels and quantities of cremated human bone (986g) of two individuals (an adult and a child, see Appendix 1) as well as some charcoal (Trench E). Both pots were very different in ware: one consisted of fine grey ware, whereas the other was a hand made general coarse ware shell tempered pot. Both pots, as well as two sherds of a coarse ware jar, also found in the cremation pit, could be dated between the first - third century AD. Stratigraphically this pit was cut into the upper fills of ditch **64**(30) (*Figure 7 section 1*), which has been dated from pottery mostly found in its lower fills to between the third and fourth century. The overlap between the date of the pots used for the cremation (first to third century) and the pottery in the ditch fills (third to fourth century) suggests that the cremation must have taken place during the third century. Several nails and a possible pin were found in association with the cremation. Most of the nails are probably hob-nails, which were used in cobblery. There were three larger nails, which may have been in the wood which was used in the pyre. Additionally, some animal bone was associated with the cremation, as well as a large quantity of burnt clay and some burnt flints. Most of the animal bone is unidentifiable (see Appendix 4), because of its fragmented nature, but an ulna of a lagomorph could be identified. Due to the lack of large amounts of charcoal and associated burnt soil in the cremation pit, it is believed that cremation did not take place in situ, but at a different location, possibly especially designed for cremation purposes.

7.2 **The cremation pit** was cut into the upper fills of ditch **64** (*Figure 7*). Three slots excavated through this ditch (*Figure 6*) revealed large quantities of pottery in the lower fill of the ditch. In slot **19** forty sherds of a grey ware jar were found as well as one sherd of oxidised coarse ware. In the second slot **29** sixty-seven sherds of oxidised ware were found as well as thirty-nine sherds of a grey ware narrow necked jar. In the third slot **30** seventy sherds of a coarse ware shouldered, wide necked jar were discovered and several single sherds of different wares. The only upper fill of the ditch which contained any pottery was slot **29** (27). This fill contained ten sherds of grey ware and one sherd of oxidised ware. Two of the vessels were associated with small quantities of unburnt bone, which was first thought to be human, but on examination was found to be animal bone. All the pottery discovered in this slot dates to the third to fourth century AD (see Appendix 2).

7.3 **Three further ditches** in the northern part of Trench E, **57**, **58** and **59** joined with ditch **64**. Stratigraphic relationships were not clear but it would seem reasonable to assume they were all contemporary. Only one of these ditches was excavated and did not contain any dating evidence or other archaeological artefacts. The presence of three ditches in Trench F (two of which were parallel to each other) could suggest that field systems, or even a droveway may have existed in this area during the Romano-British period.

7.4 **Romano-British activity** indicated by these features suggest ditched field systems, on what would have been a prominent area of higher land jutting out

Plate 3 *General view of the topography. A photo of Trench I from the south which is situated on the headland hence little alluvial overburden. In the background the ridge with Weybridge Farm is visible.*

Plate 4 *This photo shows the thick alluvium deposit above a palaeochannel (55) from the south-east in Trench E.*

into the flood plain (see *Plate 3*). The stratigraphic relationship suggests that the area was not used for a short period only, but for a substantial amount of time, as some in-filled features have been truncated by the constuction of others. Due to the lack of dating evidence from the earlier features of this sequence, it is impossible to give a date to the earliest activity on site. However, the very abraded nature of some of the pottery in primary fills (eg. 28) suggests that second century pottery was present on site (perhaps as a result of manuring activities). The latest use of the area investigated suggests that there was a burial ritual element to the site (the cremations), which is enhanced by the presence of a large quantity of nearly complete pots in the underlying ditch fill of **64** and probably dates to the third century.

7.5 **Discussion on cremations** The cremation contained skeletal remains of two individuals, a child and an adolescent or small female (see Appendix 1). The cremated remains were mixed and placed in both pots. It is not known, however, whether the individuals were burnt on the same pyre, or merely buried together, or whether the infant was accidentally included as a residue of a previous cremation in the same location. Both skeletons were not represented fully in the burial, and this, as well as the deliberate crushing of the cremated bone before burial add to the difficulty in examining the human bone.

The cremation also included fragments of burnt animal bone, which consisted of lagomorph and some unidentifiable bones. These may represent a food offering, given to the deceased and placed with them on the pyre. Ann Woodward (1992, 95) has studied and compared twelve Roman inhumation cemeteries and found that ten of them contained graves in which animal bone was present, and thus concluded that this was a common ritual.

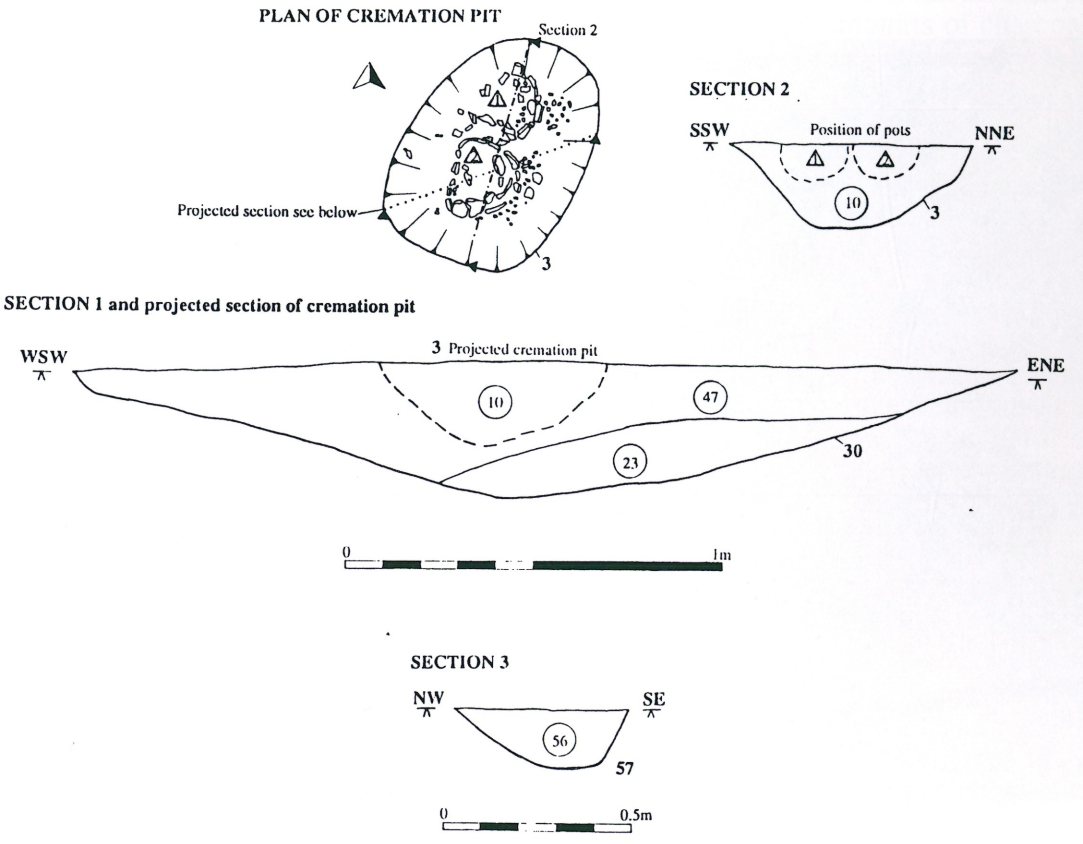

Figure 7 Cremation pit: plan, section, and profile of cut into 64 (projected)

Woodward also observed the large quantity of cemeteries containing graves with hob-nails (in eight of twelve cemeteries hob-nails were found). In fact, the most common types of Roman footwear were held together by hob-nails (*calceus, caliga, solea* and *carbatina*), attaching the upper part of the shoe with the inner sole and the lower soles, which were generally 5 thicknesses, although lighter versions of these shoes could have been stitched together (Charlesworth and Thornton, 1973, 150). Commonly, shoes had three to four rows of nails along the sole and another row around the edge. Some nailing patterns were more elaborate, or were designed to facilitate comfortable walking and anticipated research in to the optimum design for modern trainers (Bishop & Coulston, 1993, 100). Roman footwear is well known from both the archaeological and representational evidence, and it was found that women's, children's and men's shoes were generally very similar. Due to the rather small quantity of hob-nails in the cremation burial at Weybridge Farm, it is speculated that only the elder individual buried was wearing shoes.

Cremation was the most popular burial rite among the Romans at the time of the Conquest, and inhumation became adopted in the third century. Although most burials followed these general trends, exceptions are known. Inhumation, east to west orientated, was a custom practised mainly by followers of Christianity, which became the official Roman religion by the fourth century AD. People from Roman towns were customarily buried in large cemeteries along major roads leading out of the town, whereas the rural population could be buried in cemeteries of villas, or along roads in the nearby location, or also in isolated graves. The cremation discovered at Weybridge Farm probably belonged to a rural settlement, which was located within comfortable reach of the nearest major road (3km) and a large *vicus* (Godmanchester, 5.5km south-east of Weybridge Farm). They could either be part of a larger cemetery, or consist of an isolated burial. As the cremation burial did not contain any grave goods, it is thought that the individuals buried were of lower status, as the wealthy and distinguished are by and large buried with their grave goods. People who were less well off, would have been buried in their own domestic pottery.

The presence of burnt clay (848g) and burnt flint (304g) in and around the cremation pots, in comparison to the lack of any large quantities of charcoal and ashes is noticeable. It is thought, therefore, that the cremated bone was specifically picked out of the pyre after burning, instead of all the leftovers being scooped up - which would include ashes, charcoal and possibly some soil from beneath the pyre - and placing them in the urn. Consequently, it is believed that the burnt clay and flint were deliberate additions to the backfilling around the cremation burial, probably representing a funerary ritual.

7.6 **Dating of the alluvial deposits** is uncertain and probably varies from area to area. It is, however, generally believed that a major period of alluviation occurred during the medieval period and later when ploughing of uplands allowed downwash of sediments from the surrounding hills causing the rivers to carry a large clay element which was re-deposited during flooding (see *Plate 4*). A medieval date is assigned because the heavy clays of the surrounding upland could not be tilled until the introduction of heavy mould board ploughs in the medieval period. At Weybridge Farm the alluvium post-dates the Romano-British features described above.

7.7 **Soil samples for environmental analysis** were taken from the relict stream channel, from the burnt deposits, and from other features. None of these features contained any archaeologically valuable remains, such as seeds, grains, insects or molluscs (see Appendices 3 and 6). The only environmental remains found in the samples consisted of small roots and pieces of wood from the bed of one of the relict stream channels.

Dr C French visited the site and has produced a statement on the potential, in the event of further work, for reconstructing its environmental and land-use history (see Appendix 6). This would include establishing the temporal sequence of the alluvial and river channel phases, palynological (pollen) analysis of the primary fills of the relict stream, and micromorphological analysis of the buried soil, which may indicate changes of the local environment and land-use.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 **Conclusions:** A surprisingly rich assemblage of Romano-British remains was discovered in the area of the headland. Only six excavation slots through eight distinct features and the cremation pit produced 491 pot sherds of Roman date The area trenched was very small in comparison to the total of the headland, and we can therefore assume that substantial further archaeological remains survive in this area. The evidence so far gathered would suggest Romano-British agricultural activities on a seasonally wet area represented by the ditches and possible spread of pottery from manuring. This, perhaps marginal land was also used for burial purposes (cremations), but the large amount of late pottery suggests that a settlement cannot have been far removed from this area (further uphill).

8.2 **The impact of gravel extraction** on the application at Weybridge Farm will entail the total destruction of any archaeological remains in the immediate extraction area.

8.3 **Areas of archaeological potential:** Roman features found on the headland in the north central area (see 8.1 above) suggest it is likely to contain more archaeological remains, relating to the ones already revealed. However, it is believed that to the south of the headland there is little of archaeological interest.

No further archaeological investigations are needed at Weybridge Farm, *unless* gravel extraction itself will extend onto the headland, *or* heavy machinery is going to be driving across this area. Any large vehicles driving across the headland would churn up the soil and thus destroy the archaeological remains, which are situated less than 0.30m under the ground surface, or they may crush the archaeological evidence.

8.4 **The environmental potential** of the site as represented by the palaeochannel is not of particular value, unless it is directly associated with human activity, such as in Trench E. Potential analyses of buried soils and alluvial patterns are recommended in Appendix 6.

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APPENDIX 1

The cremated human remains

by Corinne Duhig, MA (Cantab)

Four groups of cremated human bone were received, labelled as 'cremation 1' and 'cremation 2' — that is, from pots 1 and 2 respectively, from Trench E, feature 3 — and 'beneath' and 'around' these two pots. The basic questions considered were the number of individuals present, their age, sex and any identifiable pathological conditions. In addition, analysis has been directed towards identifying what relationship, if any, there is between the four groups, to reconstruct the original deposition pattern. Methods used are those of Bass (1987), Steele & Bramblett (1988) and Ubelaker (1989), for general bone analysis, and of McKinley (1989) for cremations.

All groups contained extraneous material to the human bone: variously, burnt animal bone which was black in colour, charcoal, tiny fragments of flint and small adherent and loose pieces of iron, all of which were passed to the Finds Assistant. The human bone was predominantly white, with a few fragments being blue-grey, although some portions of pelvis and the inner cortex of many of the femoral shaft fragments remained black. This indicates that the cremation had been thorough, the pyre having been tended for several hours (approximately 7–8 hours needed for completion: McKinley 1989, 67) until the organic component of the bone was only retained in particularly inaccessible areas protected by a substantial covering of soft tissue, in the case of the pelvis (McKinley 1989, 66), or by the thickness of the dense outer bone layers in the case of the femur. A minimum temperature of 500°C is needed to get a body burning (McKinley, 1989, 65), and several anthropologists have calculated that prehistoric cremations reached 800°C or more (Stewart 1979, 66)

Total weight was 986 grammes. This is close to the average of most archaeological cremations, which range between 200 and 2000 g, with an average of 800 g. All areas of the body were represented, and the proportions are presented below for each group. In each case, the table shows the relative weights of different bone types, the percentages these represent of the total weight of identified bone and of the total bone including unidentifiable fragments. It was not practicable in the tables to divide up the long-bone fragments into those of upper and lower limb, because so little of the long-bone material could be precisely identified.

The largest fragment was from 'cremation 2': a portion of the cnemial crest of a tibia, refitted from three fragments and 6.5 cm long. The significance of material which refitted between groups 'cremation 2' and 'beneath' is discussed below.

Cremation 1

Weight 67 grammes (6.8% of the total weight of the four groups).
Fragments average 0.5 cm long, largest fragment 2.6 x 1.3 cm
One tooth root is that of a deciduous single-rooted tooth without any root resorption.
'Netted' appearance to cortex of one of the two rib fragments, possibly pathological change but probably post-depositional effect.

	weight (g)	*% of whole*	*% of identified bone*
skull	7	10.5	24.2
axial skeleton	1	1.5	3.4
limbs	21	31.3	72.4
all identified bone	29	43.3	–
unidentified	38	56.7	–
TOTAL	67	100.0	–

Cremation 2

Weight 687 grammes (69.6% of the total weight of the four groups).
Fragments average 2.0 cm long, largest fragment 6.5 x 1.6 cm.
A femoral shaft fragment and a tibial shaft fragment refit with two fragments from the 'beneath' group.
Eight long-bone shaft fragments are dense and 'chalky' in appearance, and include an extremely small, child-size, fibular shaft.
One tooth root fragment appears to be that of a deciduous tooth.
One long-bone shaft fragment has small area of extra-cortical new bone.

	weight (g)	*% of whole*	*% of identified bone*
skull	67	9.8	14.4
axial skeleton	20	2.9	4.3
limbs	378	55.1	81.3
all identified bone	465	67.8	–
unidentified	221	32.2	–
TOTAL	686	100.0	–

Around the cremations

Weight 37 grammes (3.8% of the total weight of the four groups).
Fragments average 0.5 cm long, largest fragment 3.4 x 0.9 cm.

	weight (g)	*% of whole*	*% of identified bone*
skull	4	10.8	33.3
axial skeleton	0	0.0	0.0
limbs	8	21.6	66.7
all identified bone	12	32.4	–
unidentified	25	67.6	–
TOTAL	37	100.0	–

Beneath the cremations

Weight 196 grammes (19.8% of the total weight of the four groups).
Fragments average 1.0 cm long, largest fragment 2.7 x 1.6 cm.
A femoral shaft fragment and a tibial shaft fragment refit with two fragments from the 'cremation 2' group.

	weight (g)	*% of whole*	*% of identified bone*
skull	19	9.7	22.3
axial skeleton	2	1.0	2.5
limbs	64	32.7	75.2
all identified bone	85	43.4	–
unidentified	111	56.6	–
TOTAL	196	100.0	–

Discussion

Two individuals are represented here. The younger is a child of between 18 months (when the root of the first deciduous single-rooted tooth, the first incisor, is completed) and 7 years ± 24 months (when the root of the last deciduous single-rooted tooth, the upper canine, begins to resorb at the advance of the permanent canine beneath: Ubelaker 1989, 64). The other probably-deciduous tooth, the small fibular shaft and many thin fragments of skull vault are presumably also from this child, and their size suggests that age at death would have been towards the lower end of the range given. Other fragments, notably those of skull vault, base and maxilla, femur and tibia, are quite large by comparison, although still small for an adult even with shrinkage of cremated bone up to 25% (McKinley 1989, 71, quoting Wahl 1982).

The second was an older individual and it is suggested that she was a small female or adolescent, but destruction of long-bone ends prevents examination of the epiphyseal areas to determine whether or not these had fused in life.

A fragment from 'cremation 2', apparently belonging to the larger individual, has a small area of extra-cortical new bone — bone which has developed on the surface of the long-bone shaft in response to infection, inflammation or other bone-producing disease (Ortner & Putschar 1985, 129–38). Such changes are extremely common in archaeological material because they are associated with so many local or systemic disorders, and it is often impossible to determine a more specific cause even when the whole skeleton is recovered; from this one fragment it is not possible even to speculate as to cause.

Archaeological cremation deposits rarely contain complete skeletons, their average weight of 800 g being low compared with modern cremations, which produce between 1600 and 3600 g of cremated bone from, obviously, complete bodies. This deposit clearly follows the same pattern, with selection of bones from all areas of the skeleton. McKinley's list of average weights for each body area are: skull 18.2%, axial skeleton 23.1%, limbs 58.7%; the results from this site are 16.4%, 3.9% and 79.7% respectively. The paucity of axial-skeleton fragments might be due to selection at the time of deposition

but is more probably due to their eradication or reduction to unidentifiable size — at least, unidentifiable to this researcher — by crushing, while the more robust limb and skull bones have survived better. The axial skeleton is commonly under-represented in any but excellent burial conditions (Duhig in press a and b).

Most of the material (69.6%) came from 'cremation 2', which also contained the largest fragments and the highest average fragment size. Both individuals were represented, however, so pot 2 was not exclusively for the older, larger person. The mixing of fragments from both individuals in both pots and the exceptionally low weight of 'cremation 1' suggests that both bodies were cremated together or their skeletons combined and the bone sample intended for deposition was put into pot 2, either with overspill into pot 1 or movement into it from later disturbance. It is also possible that the child remains were unintentionally included as residue from previous use of the pyre site. The refitting of two fragments from 'cremation 2' with two from beneath the pots, together with the small size of fragments around and beneath the pots, implies that the latter are seepage from the broken pot 2.

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APPENDIX 2

REPORT ON THE POTTERY

by Phil Copleston, BA DipIndArch AIFA

1 Introduction and Methodology

This site pottery assemblage has been examined with the primary aim of providing the excavators with dates and a basic interpretation for the site features. The main body of the report comprises a catalogue, context by feature, of the 491 pottery sherds. This is followed by a brief discussion of aspects of the pottery assemblage as a whole. It was felt unnecessary to illustrate any of the vessels at this stage, due to the sparse nature of the assemblage.

All fabrics and forms are of Roman date, and are described using normally accepted descriptions. No pottery of any other period has been identified.

1.1 *Roman Fabrics*

- Greyware (GW): light or dark grey coloured coarseware, probably local.
- Reduced Ware (RW): black, dark grey or dark brown coloured coarseware, probably local.
- Oxidised Ware (OxW): orange, light brown of buff coloured coarseware, probably local.
- General Coarseware (CsW): various colours in single vessel, clamp-fired, probably local.
- Colour-Coated Grey Ware (CCGW): grey fabric with dark grey slip.
- Harold Ware (HaroldW): soapy, shelly fabric, fired orange/brown to black, from kilns in Bedfordshire
- Amphora Fabric: Pinky/buff sandy fabric with creamy external surfaces. Imported from the Aegean, Mediterranean or Spain.

1.2 *Roman Forms*

- Jar (narrow-necked): tall, narrow-necked vessel, mostly for storage.
- Jar (wide-necked): tall, wide-necked vessel, mostly for storage or cooking.
- Amphora: thin or globular, narrow-necked vessel for storage and transport.

2 Pottery Catalogue

All vessels and fabrics are of Roman date AD. All are in good condition, except where noted for abrasion. The pottery is presented here by fabric, in context numerical order by feature.

The total quantity of recovered pottery consists of 491 sherds, having a total weight of 2759 grammes, and is present in six excavated contexts (plus two unstratified contexts) in two trenches. This is summarised in the seven tables below:

TRENCH E [3] - Cremation Pit within NW-SE curvilinear ditch					
Context No.	**Sherd Count**	**Weight (grams)**	**Description** (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	**Period Range**	**TPQ**
10 sf 1	148	573	146 GW medium size, narrow neck, shouldered Jar. Self-coloured fabric, fine inclusions. Rim, shoulder and body shds - prob full profile. Some abrasion, some ex breaks. *(Sherd group 1).* 2 GW Jar bse (part), self coloured fabric, with coarser quartz inclusions. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).*	1-3 C	-
10 sf 2	64	581	64 CsW Jar. Self-coloured fabric, some shell tempering, otherwise quartz/organic (leached), varigated orange-brown/red, with int. surface orange colour. Handmade. Body and base shds (no rim). Little abrasion. Some ex breaks. *(Sherd group 1).*	1-3 C	-

TRENCH E [19] - section through NW-SE curvilinear ditch					
Context No.	**Sherd Count**	**Weight (grams)**	**Description** (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	**Period Range**	**TPQ**
18	41	280	40 GW wide necked Jar. Rusticated dec. Self coloured fabric. Rim, body and base shds - prob full profile. *(Sherd group 2).* 1 OxCsW shd. Coarse quartz incl. *(Sherd group 3).*	2-3 C	

TRENCH E [30] - section through NW-SE curvilinear ditch					
Context No.	**Sherd Count**	**Weight (grams)**	**Description** (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	**Period Range**	**TPQ**
23	82	585	70 CsW shouldered, wide necked Jar. Grey CC ext and int. Rim, body and pedestal base shds. Slighted (holed) base. Almost complete pot (cremation urn?). *(Sherd group 1).* 3 OxW Jar. Dark grey/black surfaces. Ex breaks. *(Sherd group 3).* 1 CsGW body shd. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).* 3 HaroldW - 2 body, 1 base scraps. *(Sherd group 3).* 1 RW scrap. V. abraded. *(Sherd group 3).* 2 RW Jar. Ox int surfaces. Abraded and poss burnt. *(Sherd group 3).* 2 Amph body shds. Pinky/buff sandy fabric with creamy ext surface. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).*	3-4 C	-

TRENCH E [29] - section through NW-SE curvilinear ditch.					
Context No.	**Sherd Count**	**Weight (grams)**	**Description** (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	**Period Range**	**TPQ**
27	11	58	10 GW narrow necked Jar. Buff/brown int and ext slip coat (abraded int). Rim, neck and shoulder shds. Ex breaks. *(Sherd group 2).* 1 OxW Jar. Body shd. Grey/buff int slip coat. Slightly abraded. *(Sherd group 3).*	3-4 C	-
28	106	513	39 GW Jar. Self coloured. Carinated shoulder, plain, slightly flared rim. Rim, neck and shoulder shds. Some ex breaks. 3-4 C AD. *(Sherd group 2).* 67 OxW scraps. Body shds. Very abraded. Poss 1-2 C AD (?). *(Sherd group 2).*	3-4 C (but see description)	-

TRENCH E [unstrat] - spoil heap					
Context No.	Sherd Count	Weight (grams)	Description (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	Period Range	TPQ
46	27	101	26 GW shouldered Jar. Rim, neck and shoulder shds. Abraded. Appears identical with ctxt 10 sf 1 and prob same vessel. *(Sherd group 2).* 1 CsW Jar. Shell tempered. Rim with lid seating. Abraded. Prob 4 C AD cooking vessel. Poss rim from ctxt 10 sf 2 ? *(Sherd group 3).*	1-3 C	-

TRENCH E [unstrat] - machining					
Context No.	Sherd Count	Weight (grams)	Description (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	Period Range	TPQ
no ctxt	4	29	2 CsW Jar. Shell tempered. Rim and body shd. Abraded. Same rim form as ctxt 46 - prob same vessel. *(Sherd group 3).* 1 RW body shd. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).* 1 CCGW body shd. Brown/buff CC. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).*	1-3 C	-

TRENCH F [34] - section through N-S ditch with butt end.					
Context No.	Sherd Count	Weight (grams)	Description (Type, Form, Fabric, Sherds, Condition, Comments)	Period Range	TPQ
35	8	39	1 GW body shd. Self coloured. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).* 3 HaroldW body shds. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).* 1 RW grog-tempered shd. Abraded. Prob 4 C AD. *(Sherd group 3).* 1 GW scrap. Ox ext and int surfaces. Abraded. *(Sherd group 3).* 2 RW scraps. V. abraded. *(Sherd group 3).*	3-4 C	-

Shorthand Notes Used in Tables

GW = Grey Ware; RW = Reduced Ware; OxW = Oxidised Ware; CsW = General Coarse Ware (variously fired); OxCsW = Oxidised Coarse Ware; CsGW = Coarse Grey Ware; CCGW = Colour Coated Grey Ware; HaroldW = Harold Ware (shelly), Bedfordshire; CC = Colour Coat; Ox = Oxidised surface.

shd = sherd (general); rim = rim sherd; dec = decoration; int. = internal; ext. = external; ctxt = context; sf = small find; crem = cremation; C = Century (AD); TPQ = Terminus Post Quem (i.e. the earliest date after which it could be deposited); Ex = excavation.

3 Conclusions

All recovered Pottery has been washed, clean bagged and placed in a labelled storage box at Fulbourn. The following points are noted:

3.1 Range of Material

The Roman fabrics range from self-coloured and colour-coated greywares, to reduced, oxidised and general coarsewares (variously fired) and are probably local or regional, as well as shell tempered wares from kilns around Harold, Bedfordshire. Two sherds are typical of Amphorae fabrics.

The range of the excavated pottery is limited to Jar forms (excepting two abraded fragments of Amphora from Trench E, context 23). These are all small to medium size grey and coarseware food storage, preparation and cooking vessels types, of form and fabric usually associated with domestic assemblages of the Roman period. One vessel displays a lid-seated rim (Trench E, context 46).

Decoration is absent from the assemblage (other than surface treatments), except for one vessel with rustication (Trench E, context 18), and two with carinated shoulders (Trench E, contexts 23, 28 and 46).

3.2 Period of Material

As this assemblage is largely comprised of coarseware pottery, none can be specifically dated other than in general. The overall period range is from the first to fourth centuries AD, with the bulk of the material from the latter two centuries. Two vessels (Trench E, context 10, sf 1 and sf 2) appear slightly

earlier in fabric, manufacturing technique and form than the material that surrounds them, but this may be more of a product of generalised dating just mentioned above, and in 3.3 below.

3.3 Quantities of Material and Residuality

The total quantity of excavated pottery material is very small (just one quarter of a "box" full). No EVEs ("Estimated Vessel Equivalents") have been attempted, due to the fragmented nature of the assemblage. However, the MNVs ("Minimum Number of Vessels") based on fabric/form groupings (as represented in the Tables above), minus any identifiable probable cross-context matches, suggests a total of around 24 pots. No complete vessels were found.
Little comment can be made on residuality of the coarse pottery based on their relative dating, as this can only be generalised (as noted in 3.2 above). However, of the six contexts containing pottery, most included groups of sherds showing signs of abrasion. The following comments on residuality of the pottery are therefore based on sherd quantities per fabric by context, and the observed condition of those sherds, bearing in mind the incomplete excavation of most contexts. On this basis, it is possible to devide the assemblage into three groups, based on:

1. Probable primary deposition
2. Uncertain primary deposition
3. Residual

1. The first group of three larger assemblages of between 64-146 sherds stand out as probably having the greater significance. Substantial fragments of two vessels, a greyware jar and a handmade, coarseware jar (from context 10 - sf 1: 146 sherds of a finer GW Jar; and sf 2: 64 sherds of a CsW Jar, plus probable related fragments from Trench E machining and spoil heap), were found in association with cremated human bone. These vessels were recovered from a single, completely excavated pit, which was itself cut into a single ditch containing the remaining contexts from Trench E. A substantial fragment of a third jar, a coarseware grey colour-coated shouldered vessel (from context 23: 70 sherds of a CsW Jar), is also probably primary. As this came from the main ditch fill in Trench E, some sherds of this vessel may not have been recovered. These three groups of sherds probably represent fragments of once complete cremation urns, and may therefore not be residual.

2. A second group of five medium-size assemblages of sherds, ranging in quantities from 10-67 sherds, may also represent once complete cremation urns, some of which show signs of abrasion, some not. As these were recovered from less than 100% excavated contexts, some related sherds may have remained unrecovered. The recovered sherds are as follows: 40 sherds of GW rusticated Jar (unabraded) in context 18, 10 (unabraded) sherds of GW Jar in context 27, 39 (unabraded) sherds of GW Jar and 67 (fragmented and very abraded) sherds of OxW scraps in context 28, and 26 (abraded) sherds of GW Jar in context 46. These sherds therefore may or may not be residual to their contexts.

3. Most of the rest of the pottery is in eighteen small groups of between 1-3 sherds each. These are as follows: 2 sherds of a coarser GW Jar in context 10, 1 sherd of OxCsW in context 18, various scraps of OxW, CsGW, HaroldW and RW in context 23, 1 sherd of OxW in context 27, 1 sherd of CsW in context 46 and scraps of CsW, RW, CCGW, GW and HaroldW unstratified from Trench E and F. All, except the 2 GW sherds from context 10, were recovered from the main ditch in Trench E which was not 100% excavated. However, from their appearance, these small sherd groups may be residual within their contexts.

In conclusion, features from this site displayed little stratigraphic depth (most were only one or two contexts deep), and therefore the dating of features will largely be dependant on this pottery evidence. Unfortunately, only those sherds most likely to have remained in their primary contexts (as noted above) are particularly useful in this. The remaining contexts containing abraded sherds can only suggest broader date ranges for features. Based on the restricted nature of the pottery dating and the abraded state of many of the pottery groups and their likely residuality, the overall date of contexts within Trench E, is on balance probably later Roman. The same dating conclusions probably apply to Trench F for the same reasons, although all of the pottery is abraded from this part of the excavation.

3.4 Significance

This assemblage is generally not typical of domestic refuse, as the vessel population is almost entirely composed of jars of similar form and of a relatively coarse fabric. Three otherwise domestic looking pots, appear to have been utilised as cremation burial urns, which is common in this period. One of these (Trench E, context 23) also has a slighted body, in the form of a holed base, again a common feature of Roman cremation urns. The remaining sherds may once have been domestic in origin, but none now display outward signs of cooking residues or fire sooting and may therefore have been used or reused as cremation urns. Two reduced ware sherds indicate some fabric burning or extreme heating (Trench E, context 23) not typical of that normally inflicted during domestic usage, and suggestive of destruction in a fire. As note above, the vessels of greatest significance, are fragments of two jars (Trench E, context 10, sf 1 and 2) containing, and in association with, cremated human bone and other burnt artefacts.

In conclusion, this assemblage is typical of pottery used or reused for Roman cremation burials. Two vessels are positively associated with a cremation deposit (Trench E, context 10, sf 1 and sf 2), and a third (70 sherds of a coarseware jar, Trench E, context 23) has a deliberate hole knocked through the base, typical of ritual practice for this period. The remaining sherd groups may represent further examples of this usage, albeit residual. All the vessels are generally of one type (small to medium greyware/coarseware jars). Indeed, the excavated mono-type pottery assemblage profile (all similar jars, excepting two adraded Amphora sherds) largely excludes an alternative interpretation, with no pottery evidence at all for any domestic activity. Domestic pottery refuse from this period nearly always contains *some* sherds of other form and fabric types, quite absent here.

4 Potential for Further Analysis

Due to the small quantity of this assemblage, no further analysis is considered necessary at this stage, although comparison with pottery groups from similar sites in the region may be beneficial (not possible within current project constraints). Further fieldwork may also place this material within a wider context, warranting a review of the above analysis and interpretation.

APPENDIX 3

An Assessment of Environmental Potential

Duncan Schlee, BA, Msc

The assesment at Weybridge Farm was visited to ascertain the environmental potential of the deposits revealed. Cut features on the "headland" appeared to have low potential for the recovery of charred plant remains, but samples were taken for the recovery of bone found in association with whole pottery vessels within the cuts. Other features to the north of the relict stream channel, but off the higher ground (interpreted as drainage ditches), were also judged to have low potential for macrofossils. A relict stream bed was also scrutinised for the presence of waterlogged macrofossils: although slightly organic silt deposits were observed they did not appear to contain macrofossils. In situ waterlogged tree roots were observed within the stream bed deposits sealed by the overlying alluvium. Although the potential for the recovery of plant macrofossils was low, other forms of environmental analysis may prove more fruitful. In the event of any further work, column samples for palynological and soil micromorphological analysis, could be taken from the stream bed deposits. These could indicate changes in the nature of the local environment, vegetation, and land-use, before large scale alluviation occurred.

APPENDIX 4

Animal Bone Report

by Lorrain Higbee, BSc, MSc

Identifiable bone fragments

Context No	Trench No	Taxa	Bone	Number	Comments
10	E	Lagomorph	Ulna	1	
26	E	Red Deer ?	Antler	201g	
28	E	Lg Mammal	Rib	3	

The Size of the Assemblage

In this assemblage are in total 190g of animal bone, weighing in total and 201g of antler. Three different fills contained animal bone: the cremation pit fill 10 contained 13 fragments, one of which could be identified. Fill 23, the lower fill of ditch **64** contained 34 fragments, none of which could be identified and the lower fill 28 of another slot excavated through ditch **64** contained 143 small fragments, of which 3 were identified.

Potential for further analysis

All of the bone present is of a very fragmented nature, and therefore further analysis would not be appropriate.

APPENDIX 5

List of Contexts

Context	Description	Nature	Below	Above
1	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-
3	Cut	Cremation pit, Iron Age/Roman	10	Natural
4	Deposit	Natural, glacial deposit	7	-
5	Deposit	Natural glacial deposit	7	-
6	Cut	Field drain	Topsoil	8
7	Cut	Relict stream	8	5,4
8	Fill of [7]	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown fine sandy clay	6	7
9	Topsoil	Topsoil	-	-
10	Fill of {3]	Fill of cremation pit, 10YR 3/2 very dark greyish brown silty clay	Subsoil	3
11	Layer	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown slightly silty clay, upper part of alluvium	Topsoil	12
12	Layer	5GY 6/1 greenish grey & 7.5YR strong brown mottled slightly silty clay	11	13
13	Layer	5YR 3/1 very dark grey organic silty fine sandy clay	12	Nat. gravel
14	Deposit	2.5YR 5/8 red silty clay	Alluvium	15
15	Deposit	2.5YR 5/2 very dusky red silty clay	14	16
16	Cut	Shallow depression containing burnt material	15	Alluvium
17	Fill of [19]	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown silty sandy clay	Buried soil	18
18	Fill of [19]	10YR 5/2 greyish brown slightly silty clay	17	19
19	Cut	Rectlinear ditch	18	Natural
20	Cut	Shallow depression containing burnt material	22	Alluvium
21	Fill of [20]	5YR 5/6 yellowish red slightly sandy silty clay	Alluvium	22
22	Fill of [20]	5YR 2/5 black 2.5YR 4/2 dusky red sandy silty clay	21	20
23	Fill of [30]	10YR 5/2 greyish brown slightly silty clay	47	30
24	Fill of [25]	5YR 5/6 yellowish red and 5YR 2.5/1 black slightly sandy silty clay	11	25
25	Cut	Shallow depression containing burnt material	24	Lower alluvium
26	Antler	Nearly complete antler in alluvium	11	Lower all.
27	Fill of [29]	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown slightly sandy silty clay	Alluvium	28

Context	Description	Nature	Below	Above
28	Fill of [29]	10YR 5/2 greyish brown slightly silty cclay containing complete broken vessel ass. with human bone	27	29
29	Cut	Curvilinear ditch	28	Natural
30	Cut	Ditch running in N -S alignment	23	Natural
31	Deposit	5YR 3/1 very dark grey organic silty fine sandy clay	Alluvium	Nat. gravel
32	Layer	Midnight black charcoal and silty clay, dumped burnt material	Alluvium	Alluvium
33	Fill of [36]	2.5Y 5/1 grey silty sandy clay	33	Natural
34	Cut	Ditch with butt end,Romano-British?	35	Natural
35	Fill of [34]	Greyish brown sandy gravelly clay	Topsoil	34
36	Cut	Ditch running in N - S alignment	33	Natural
37	Deposit	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown very sandy clay, buried soil	Topsoil	Natural
38	Feature	Blueish grey very sandy and gravelly clay , relict channel in Tr C	Alluvium	Natural
39	Feature	Blueish grey very sandy clay and gravls, relict channel in Tr C	Alluvium	Natural
40	Feature	Blueish grey sandy clay with gravel on southern side, relict channel in Tr C	Alluvium	Natural
41	Feature	Blueish grey sandy clay, relict channel in Tr K	Alluvium	Natural
42	Feature	Reddish brown sandy clay, relict channel in Tr K	Alluvium	Natural
43	Feature	Brownish grey sandy clay with gravel, ditch, Tr F	Alluvium	Natural
44	Feature	Brownish grey sandy clay with some gravel, ditch in Tr F	Alluvium	Natural
45	Feature	Blueish grey slightly sandy silty clay	Alluvium	Natural
46	Fill of [3]	Spoil from machining cremation	Topsoil	3
47	Fill of [30]	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown slightly sandy silty clay	Subsoil	23
48	Deposit	Very dark brown loose silty clay backfilled field boundary	Topsoil	Alluvium
49	Deposit	Very dark brown organic silty clay Backfilled pond	Topsoil	Alluvium
50	Deposit	Dark grey organic sandy clay Backfilled ditch marking field boundary	Topsoil	Alluvium
51	Feature	Linear feature, N - S orientated	37	Natural
52	Fill of [53]	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	Subsoil	53
53	Cut	Stakehole or posthole	52	Natural
54	Feature	Dark brown silty clay, backfilled field boundary	Topsoil	11
55	Feature	Relic channel	12	natural

Context	Description	Nature	Below	Above
56	Fill of [57]	10YR 5/4 yellowish brown slightly sandy silty clay	Subsoil	57
57	Cut	Ditch running in a NE - SW alignment	56	Natural
58	Feature	Curvilinear feature, see 19, 29, 30	Subsoil	Natural
59	Feature	Linear feature	Subsoil	Natural
60	Feature	Linear feature, boundary ditch	Alluvium	Natural
61	Feature	Linear feature, relict channel	Alluvium	Natural
62	Feature	Posthole	Buried soil	Natural
63	Feature	Linear feature, boundary ditch	Alluvium	Natural
64	Feature	Curvilinear ditch	Topsoil	57, 58, 59
65	Feature	Palaeochannel	Alluvium	Natural
66	Cut	Palaeochannel	67, 68, 69	Natural
67	Fill	Greyish brown sandy clay	Alluvium	69
68	Fill	dark grey and red mixed sandy clay	69	Natural
69	Fill	Light grey sandy clay with orange mottling	67	68
70	Deposit	Alluvium	31	Natural
71	Cut	Possible posthole	37	Topsoil
TESTPITS				
TP1	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP2	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP3	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP4	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP5	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Deposit	Blueish grey clay and brown slightly silty clay		
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Deposit	Natural

Context	Description	Nature	Below	Above
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP6	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish dark brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP7	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Deposit	Blueish grey clay and brown slightly silty clay		
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Deposit	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP8	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	Very dark grey clay	Topsoil	Lower all.
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Upper all.	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP9	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP16	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Alluvium
	Alluvium	2.5Y 5/3 light olive brown slightly silty clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown clayey sand	Alluvium	-
TP17	Topsoil	10YR 5/3 brown slightly silty clay	-	Buried soil
	Buried soil	10YR 5/4-5/6 yellowish brown fine sandy clay	Topsoil	Natural
	Natural	7.5YR 5/8 strong brown sandy clay and clayey sand	Buried soil	-

APPENDIX 6

Weybridge Farm: Soil Assessment

CAI French

Observations

The assessment area is dominated by relict stream channels, thick deposits of alluvium and a large headland of higher ground in the northern central margin of the development.

On the basis of field observations, the following tentative sequence of valley aggradation and formation is suggested:

-a system of shallow, narrow meandering streams in the upper surface of the Pleistocene gravels, probably of late glacial date;

- the cutting of a substantial river channel meander system;

-limited channel migration and the infilling of various meander cut-offs of the channel system with alluvial silts and clays, accompanied by some overbank flooding and alluvial aggradation on its floodplain;

-the Romano-British occupation of the headland, presumably with an associated field system;

-the main period of alluviation (up to 1.5m) as a result of extensive overbank flooding.

In general, palaeosols are only in evidence on the fringe of the headland area. Elsewhere, fluvial reworking processes have caused severe truncation, or have only allowed the formation of raw or thin, immature soils which are now more or less unrecognisable due to later mixing processes.

Problems and potential

If a further phase of archaeological investigation was undertaken, it would be essential to :

1) more precisely establish the temporal sequence of the alluvial and river channel phases;

2) investigate the palynological record held in the primary fills of the main channel systems;

3) investigate through micromorphological analysis the palaeosols associated with the possible Romano-British use of the headland of higher ground; and

4) use of all of the above strands of evidence to reconstruct the environmental and land-use history of this valley system.

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