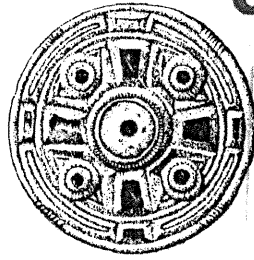


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Roman and Later Trackways and Boundaries
at 95/97 Low Road, Burwell:
An Archaeological Excavation

S Kenney

August 1996

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 116

Commissioned By Construct Reason Ltd

**Roman and Later Trackways and Boundaries at 95/97 Low Road, Burwell:
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August 1996

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SUMMARY

In May and August 1995, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted two phases of archaeological investigations on land at Low Road, Burwell, Cambridgeshire (TL5861/6682). The work was carried out on behalf of Construct Reason Ltd.

A high density of archaeological features was recorded at the eastern end of the site, dropping off rapidly to the west. The majority of these were possible palisade trenches or gullies, generally aligned north-south. A small number of linear features were found on an east-west alignment. None of the linear features seemed to form the outline of buildings. Several pits were also observed, and while it is not possible to ascribe them a definite function, it is certain that they were not for the disposal of domestic rubbish. A broad, shallow linear with a slight kink, running roughly N-S, has been identified as a Holloway, or sunken trackway. This may be the precursor to the path known as "The Leys", only a few metres to the east of the site.

Despite the concentration of archaeology, few finds were recovered, and thus dating the site is problematic. The assemblage consists largely of abraded Roman pottery, burnt flint, and some animal bone. A few Middle Iron Age sherds were the only non-Roman pottery recovered. Neither the pottery nor the flint could conclusively date the site, but it seems most likely that the features are late- or post-Roman.

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Roman and Later Trackways and Boundaries at 95/97 Low Road Burwell

1 INTRODUCTION

Between 2nd and 9th May 1995, the AFU carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 95/97 Low Road, Burwell (TL5861/6682). The work was carried out at the request of Construct Reason Ltd, in advance of a proposed residential development, and was in response to a brief set by the County Archaeology Office (CAO).

The site is rectangular, 0.42 ha in area, and consists of two adjacent plots, formerly separated by a fence. It lies on the western side of Burwell.

The presence of archaeological remains was considered highly probable by the CAO on the basis of information contained in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). It records a large Roman finds scatter immediately to the north, suggesting settlement (SMR 10953), and a medieval moat to the south-west within 100m of the site (SMR 01121).

Seven linear trenches with a total length of *c* 75m were opened by machine, and subsequently hand cleaned, photographed, and planned. A considerable density of archaeological features was present in Trenches A, B, and C, concentrated at the eastern end of the site. In the other trenches, features were identified in much lower density, and some appeared modern in character.

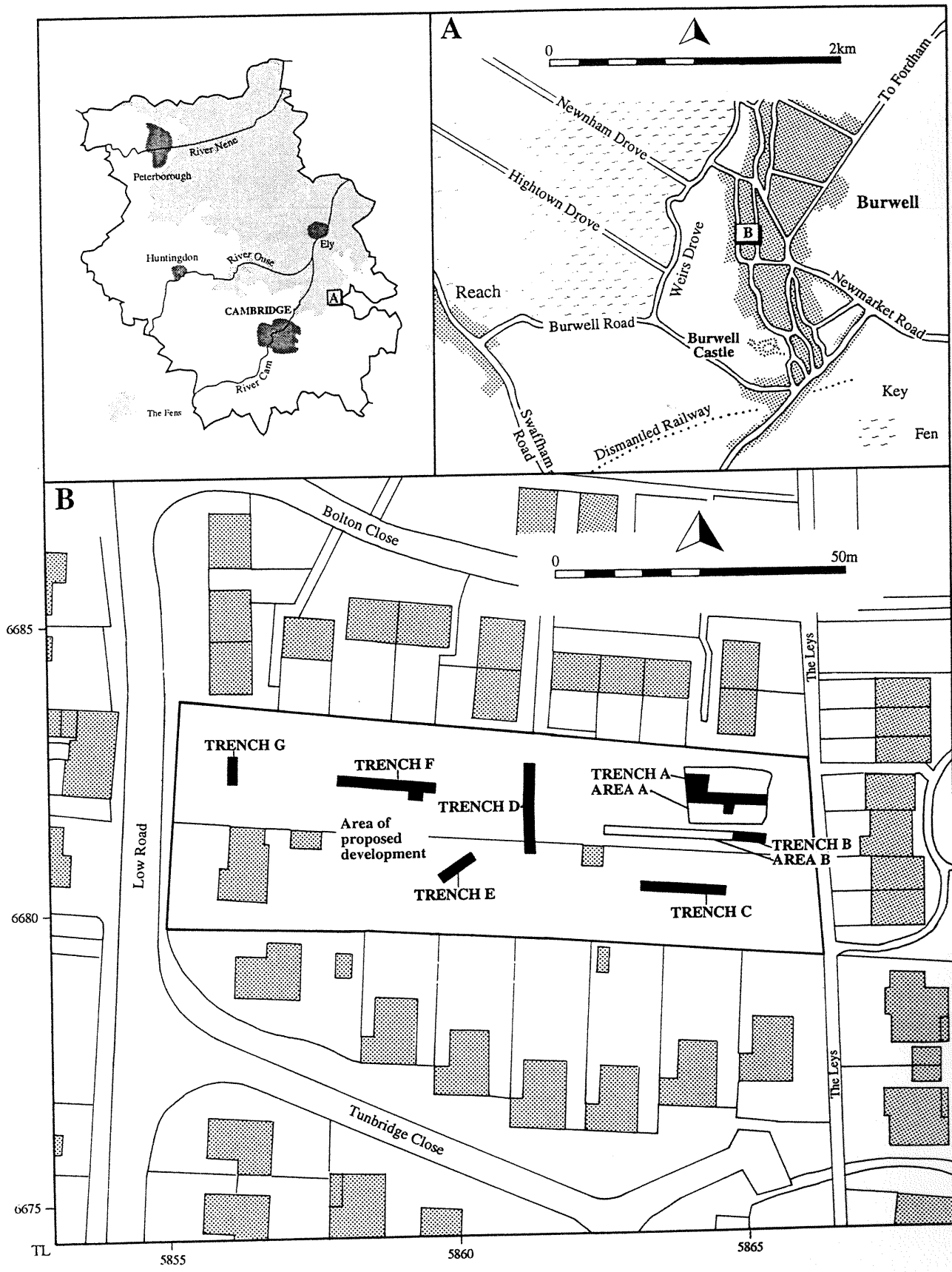
The density of features in the eastern part of the site was deemed sufficient to warrant further investigations, and a second phase of works was proposed, which would involve opening an area approximately 9x13m around evaluation Trench A. It was also suggested that extending evaluation Trench B to the west would be valuable in tracing any linear features further downslope towards evaluation Trench D.

This second phase was carried out from 21st August to 4th September. It revealed a greater extent of most of the features found in the evaluation, and also uncovered several new ones.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies on the Lower Beds of the Lower Chalk, described as Chalk Marl. To the southwest is an outcrop of Totternhoe Stone (called locally Burwell Stone, a form of clunch), upon which Burwell partly stands, and beyond that, the Upper Beds of the Lower Chalk extend towards Exning. The Totternhoe (or Burwell) Stone extends south-westwards through the Swaffhams, and is responsible for the springs around which all these settlements grew.

Burwell stands on gently rising ground at the southern edge of the Fens. Some of the southern part of the village, around Stevens Mill, is above 20m OD. The site, however, is on the western side of the village, within 500m of the Fen Edge, and slopes down towards it from a height of around 9m OD, to about 5.5m OD on Low Road itself.



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Figure 1 Location Map

Further west, in Adventurers Fen, there is an area which is below 0m OD. To the east, past Newmarket, and also to the south, the land rises, and in places, is above 100m OD.

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Historical Background

Lying some 13km northeast of Cambridge, and 5km northwest of Newmarket, Burwell, meaning 'the fort by the spring' (Reaney, 1943), is a village comprising three distinct areas of settlement. The southern part, known as High Town, was the original nucleus of the village. It contains St Mary's church, and the remains of Burwell Castle, which was under construction on the orders of King Stephen, when, in 1144, it was attacked by the rebel Geoffrey de Mandeville. Geoffrey was wounded by an arrow during the attack, and died later at Mildenhall. The rebellion failed upon his death, and since the castle was intended to defend against this threat, it was abandoned, unfinished.

At the North end of Burwell lies the area called North Street, containing St Andrews Church, and originally separated from High Town by a mile of open fields. Its sinuous main street probably derives from a track between headlands of the Medieval field system (RCHME 1972). The name is first recorded in 1351. North Street was joined to High Town by the track known as The Causeway.

Between these two, off to the west of the High Street, is the quadrangle of lanes known as Newnham. Bounded on the west by Low Road (formerly Newnham Street) itself, and on the east by the path called The Leys, which linked North Street and High Town, Newnham consists of five narrow lanes. Its layout is very regular, and it appears to be the result of deliberate planning. The name is first recorded in 1445-6, but the settlement is probably earlier (RCHME 1972).

3.2 Archaeological Background

3.2.1 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic

The earliest archaeological find that has been recorded from the area is a Palaeolithic axe (SMR 01775b) from the environs of the Castle.

Numerous examples of Mesolithic and Neolithic axes have been found, almost exclusively just to the west of the village, in the Fen itself. An exception is the Neolithic axe (SMR 06477), discovered slightly to the north of the site.

3.2.2 Bronze Age

A Bronze Age hoard (SMR 06475), including an axe and a spearhead, was unearthed in the grounds of St Mary's Church. Bronze Age occupation (SMR 06736a) was discovered northwest of Newnham, along with material from several other periods.

3.2.3 Iron Age

Iron Age ditch systems (SMR 06736b), were found at the same location mentioned above.

3.2.4 Roman

A hoard of Roman bronze vessels (SMR 06736), was similarly found in the same area. Roman remains (SMR 06807), were also found at the Castle, and the previously mentioned finds scatter (SMR 10953) was discovered just north of the site. A villa site, excavated in 1892 (SMR 06809), lies just to the southwest of Devil's Dyke (see below). The artificial waterway of Reach Lode (SMR 07896) extends from Reach village WNW along very much the same line as the Devil's Dyke. Although some sources suggest a Roman date for its construction (Fowler 1933, Taylor 1973), there is no firm evidence for this (Robinson 1992).

3.2.5 Anglo-Saxon

Despite the presence of a predominantly Christian, Anglo-Saxon cemetery (SMR 06764) on the east of the village, little occupation from this period has been recorded. It has been suggested that a fortified settlement existed at the core of what is now High Town, and that the line of the defences is preserved in the curving shape of the modern roads (RCHME 1972).

To the southwest of Burwell lies the extensive linear earthwork known as the Devil's Dyke or Ditch (SMR 07801). It is probably one of the ditches mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 902-5, but is usually considered to be 6th or 7th century in date. There is evidence to suggest that the Dyke was constructed along an ancient border, dating back at least as far as the Iron Age (Fox 1929).

3.2.6 Medieval

The remains of numerous Medieval habitations have been found. Of particular interest in the area around the excavation are the moated sites to the south (SMR 01121), and to the southwest (SMR 01122a) at Hall Farm. Nearby, Parsonage Farm is claimed to be all that remains of the Priory of St John (SMR 06864). To the east of High Town, Clunch pits are still evident, some containing lime kilns (SMR 10889). Evidence of 12th century houses and gardens was found beneath the spoil heaps of the unfinished Burwell Castle (SMR 01775). Later, the same area was probably also the location of the Manor House of the Abbot of Ramsey.

4 METHODOLOGY

Two areas were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (see fig. 1). The first, Area A, consisted of a 4m wide extension on the north side of evaluation trench A, and a 3.5m wide extension on the south side. The second, area B, consisted of a 21m extension westwards to evaluation trench B, originally 6m long.

The trenches were cleaned by hand, photographed, and base planned using a Zeiss RecElta 15 Total Station Theodolite with an internal data logger. The survey data was downloaded to, and manipulated in AIC's ProSurveyor v3.35, and the resulting drawings plotted.

At this stage the excavation strategy was reviewed on-site in consultation with the CAO. Once a strategy had been agreed, features were excavated by hand, and recorded using the AFU's standard system, including colour print, colour slide, and monochrome photography, plans at 1:20 or 1:50, and sections at 1:10.

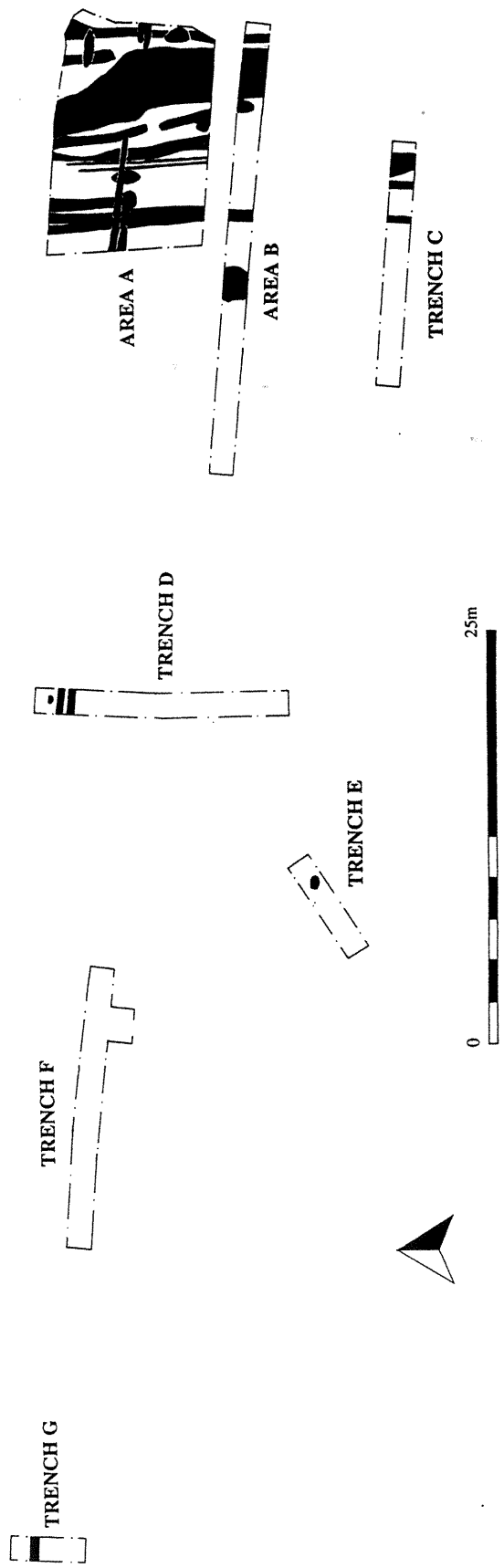


Figure 2 Extent of Archaeological Features

5 RESULTS

5.1 General comments

All of the features found in evaluation trench A were traced into the larger open Area A. The extension of trench B revealed the southward continuation of the linear complex on the western side of Area A.

No work was carried out on evaluation trenches C to G in the second phase, and any features left unexcavated after the first phase, were not investigated further.

In the descriptions which follow, if a feature has been numbered both in the evaluation and the main excavation, the latter takes precedence. Both numbers will be used, however, where appropriate, in the format: **5/113** (bold text denotes cut numbers). Note that the context numbers from the evaluation begin at 100, whereas those from the main excavation begin at 1. There is no duplication of numbers.

5.2 Area A

5.2.1 General comments

Area A measured approximately 9x13m. The topsoil was 0.1m deep, and the subsoil was 0.35m deep. Area A produced the greatest density of archaeological features, and the majority of datable material. The density dropped off dramatically westwards beyond Area A. Some of the stratigraphic problems encountered during the evaluation were resolved when a larger area was examined. However, many fills still appeared identical, and certain stumbling blocks remained, not least where no physical relationships existed.

5.2.2 The East-West Linears

Portions of five linear features aligned east-west extended into the area. All ran almost exactly east-west.

On the western side of Area A, two narrow linears ran very close to one another, without touching. It may be that truncation had removed any relationship. The northern linear, **5/113**, was 0.4m wide, 0.2m deep, and at least 6.9m long. It contained a single fill, **4/112**, and butt-ended to the east. It cut the fills of pits **58/122**, **120**, linear **75/102**, and 'Trackway' 56. Small sherds of abraded Roman pottery were recovered from the surface of fill **4/112**; animal bone and shell were recovered from within it.

The southern linear, **119**, was 0.5m wide, 0.14m deep, and at least 1.7m long. It contained a single fill, **118**, and butt-ended to the east. It cut the fill of linear **9/106**. A single sherd of abraded Roman pottery was recovered from the surface of fill **118**; burnt flint was recovered from within it.

On the eastern side of Area A, another pair of linears ran into the site, again, very close to each other. They appeared to be on the same alignments as **5/113** and **119**. A third, more cigar-shaped linear was revealed to the north.

This northernmost linear, **18**, was 0.5m wide, 0.04m deep, and 2.36m long. It contained a single fill, **17**. It cut the fills of linears **29** and **27**. Possible slag was recovered from fill **17**.

To the south, the northernmost of the pair of linears, **20**, was 0.36m wide, 0.04m deep, and at least 1.36m long. It contained a single fill, **19**, and butt-ended to the west. It cut the fill of linear **27**. Animal bone was recovered from fill **19**.

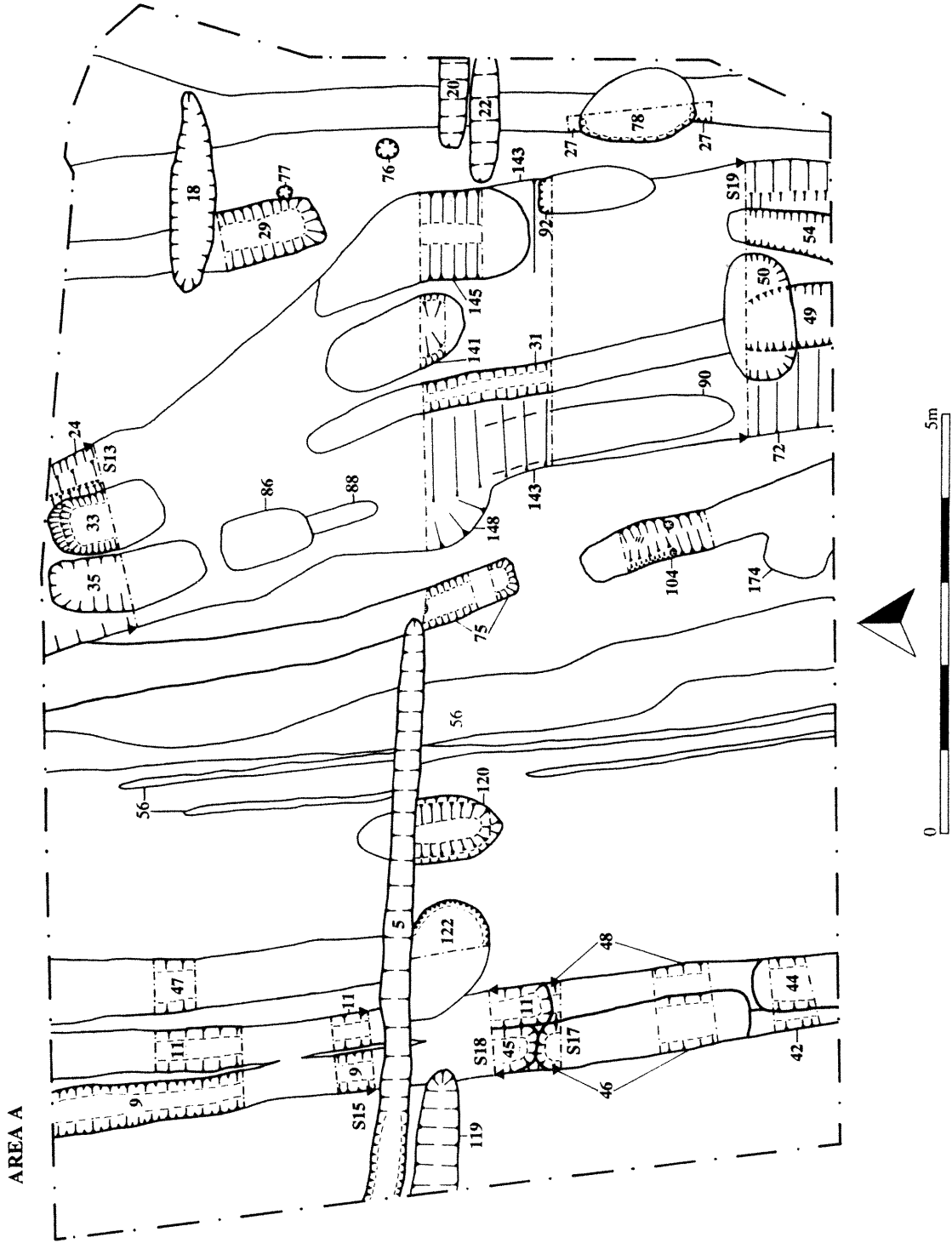


Figure 3 Features excavated in Area A

The other of the pair, **22**, was 0.36m wide, 0.09m deep, and at least 1.5m long. It contained a single fill, **21**, and butt-ended to the west. It cut the fill of linear **27**. Animal bone was recovered from fill **21**.

5.2.3 The Pits

Pit **58/122**, oval in plan, and oriented NW-SE, was 0.96m wide, 0.45m deep, and 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, **57/123**, and cut the fills of linears **11/108** and **47/110**. A single sherd of Roman pottery, along with burnt and worked flint, and animal bone, were recovered from fill **57/123**.

Pit **120**, oval in plan, and oriented N-S, was 0.76m wide, 0.35m deep, and 1.75m long. It contained three fills, **121**, **126**, and **133**, and was cut into the natural chalk. Sherds of Roman pottery, animal bone, burnt flint, and other burnt stones were recovered from fill **121**.

Pit **78**, oval in plan, and oriented NNW-SSE, was 0.9m wide, 0.5m deep, and 1.4m long. It contained a single fill, **79**, and cut linear **27**. Animal bone and worked flint were recovered from fill **79**.

5.2.4 The Broad North-South Linear

In the northernmost section (*fig 3*) across the broad linear, it was possible to see two phases of shallow ditch, apparently sealing earlier features. Whilst it was not clear that this was also the case in the middle section, the southern section showed strong similarities to the northern one. The broad linears were numbered separately in each section dug across them.

In the northern section, the recut, **24**, was 2.28m wide, 0.2m deep, and potentially more than 9m long. It contained a single fill, **25**, and cut the fill of ditch **84**. Burnt flint, other burnt stone, and animal bone were recovered from fill **25**.

Ditch **84**, was 1.7m wide, had a surviving depth of 0.15m, and was potentially more than 9m long. It contained three fills, **23**, **95**, and **96**, and cut the fills of pit **33** and linear **35**. Animal bone was recovered from fill **23**.

In the middle section, dug during the evaluation, and partially excavated by machine, two phases of ditch were not identified. The broad linear, **143**, was 3.5m wide and 0.5m deep, and apparently contained a single fill, **16/142**. Roman pottery and worked flint were recovered from fill **16/142**.

In the southern section, the recut, **72**, was 3.7m wide, 0.15m deep, and potentially more than 9m long. It contained a single fill, **73**, and cut ditch **51**. No finds were recovered from it.

Ditch **51**, was 2.9m wide, had a surviving depth of 0.15m, and was potentially more than 9m long. It contained a single fill, **55**, and cut the fills of pit **50** and linear **54**. No finds were recovered from it.

5.2.5 Features sealed by the Broad North-South Linear

In all three sections across the broad linear, it was apparent that features survived in the base. While it is clear that the majority of these features were earlier than the broad linear(s), it remains possible that certain ones were contemporary with it. The majority of these features were aligned NNW-SSE. Exceptions are noted in the following text.

At the northern edge of the area, two subrectangular features were observed. To the east, **33** was a near-vertically sided pit 0.72m wide, 0.85m deep, and 1.35m long. It contained two fills, **32** and **59**, and was cut into the natural chalk. A single sherd of abraded Roman pottery, burnt flint and other stone, and animal bone were recovered from fill **32**. Animal bone, oyster shell, burnt flint, and other burnt stone were recovered from fill **59**.

To the west, **35** was 0.62m wide, 0.06m deep, and 1.85m long. It contained a single fill, **34**, and was cut into the natural chalk. No finds were recovered from it.

South of 35, another similar subrectangular feature cut a short, narrow linear.

The subrectangular feature, 86, was 0.6m wide and 1.1m long. It was not excavated, and its depth is unknown. It contained a single observed fill, 85, and cut the fill of linear 88. No finds were recovered from it.

Linear 88 was 0.22m wide and 0.8m long. It was not excavated, and its depth is unknown. It contained a single observed fill, 87, and cut the natural chalk. No finds were recovered from it.

To the south of 88, a possible pit, 148, curved out to the west beyond the edge of 24/143/72. It was 0.3m deep, at least 0.45m wide, and at least 2.0m long. It contained a single fill, 147, from which no finds were recovered.

To the south of 148, linear feature 90 had a distinct southern butt-end, but faded out northwards, and could not be traced further. It was 0.6m wide and had an obvious visible length of 2.2m, but was originally probably more than 3.0m long. It was not excavated, and its depth is unknown. It contained a single observed fill, 89, and cut the natural chalk. No finds were recovered from it.

To the west of this, two linears were cut by a shallow scoop or pit base.

The possible pit base, 50, 1.50m long, 0.85m wide, and 0.14m deep, contained a single fill 036. It cut the fills of linears 31/131, and 49, and was aligned E-W. No finds were recovered from it.

The northern linear, 31/131, was 0.35m wide, 0.25m deep, and at least 5.8m long, butt-ending to the north. It contained a single fill, 30/132, and cut the natural chalk. It was aligned NNW-SSE, and the butt end curved slightly further to the west for the last 1.3m. Burnt flint and animal bone were recovered from fill 30/132.

The southern linear, 49, was 0.7m wide, 0.25m deep, and at least 1.0m long. It contained two fills, 52 and 68, and cut the natural chalk. It was aligned NNW-SSE. Any relationship between 49 and 31/131 was not discerned during excavation, and it is possible that they are the same feature. No finds were recovered from it.

Immediately to the east of 49, another linear entered area A from the south and butt-ended at the same northern limit as 50.

This feature, 54, was 0.5m wide, 0.13m deep, at least 1.25m long, and probably more than 4.5m long. It contained a single fill, 53, and cut the natural chalk. Iron Age pottery, including a rimsherd, was recovered from fill 53.

North of this was a small subrectangular pit.

This feature, 92, was 0.38m wide, 0.2m deep, and 1.0m long. It contained a single fill, 91, and cut the natural chalk. No finds were recovered from it.

North of this was a larger, comma-shaped pit.

This pit, 145, curving towards the west, was 1.05m wide at maximum, 0.4m deep, and 2.8m long. It contained a single fill, 144, and cut the natural chalk. No finds were recovered from it.

Between 145 and 31/131, was another small pit, with straight sides and rounded ends.

This pit, 141, was 0.8m wide, 0.2m deep, and 1.3m long. It contained three fills, 140, 151, and 153, and cut the natural chalk. Burnt flint and possible slag were recovered from fill 140.

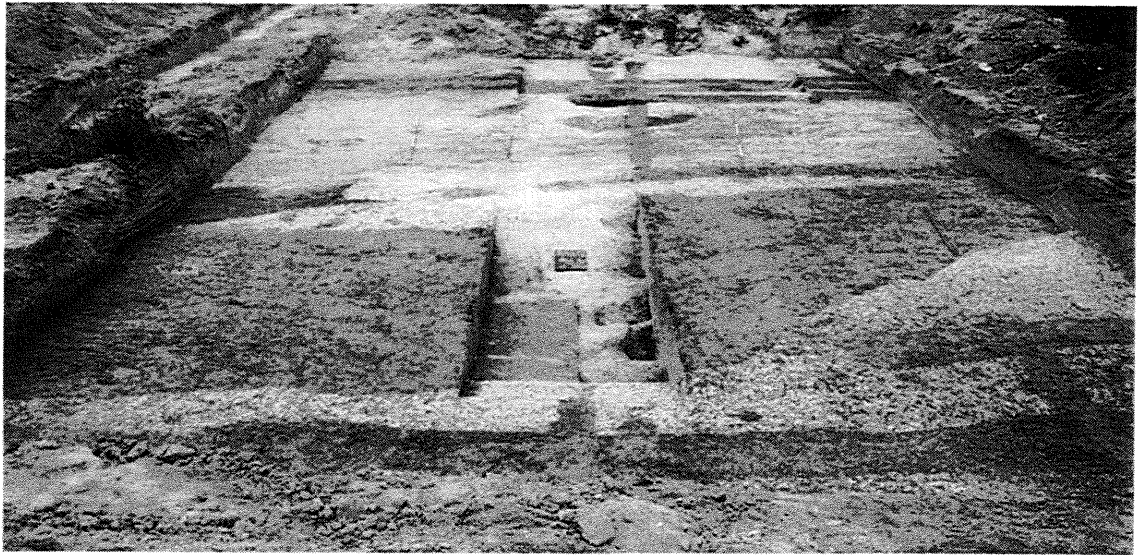


Plate 1 General shot of Area A from the east

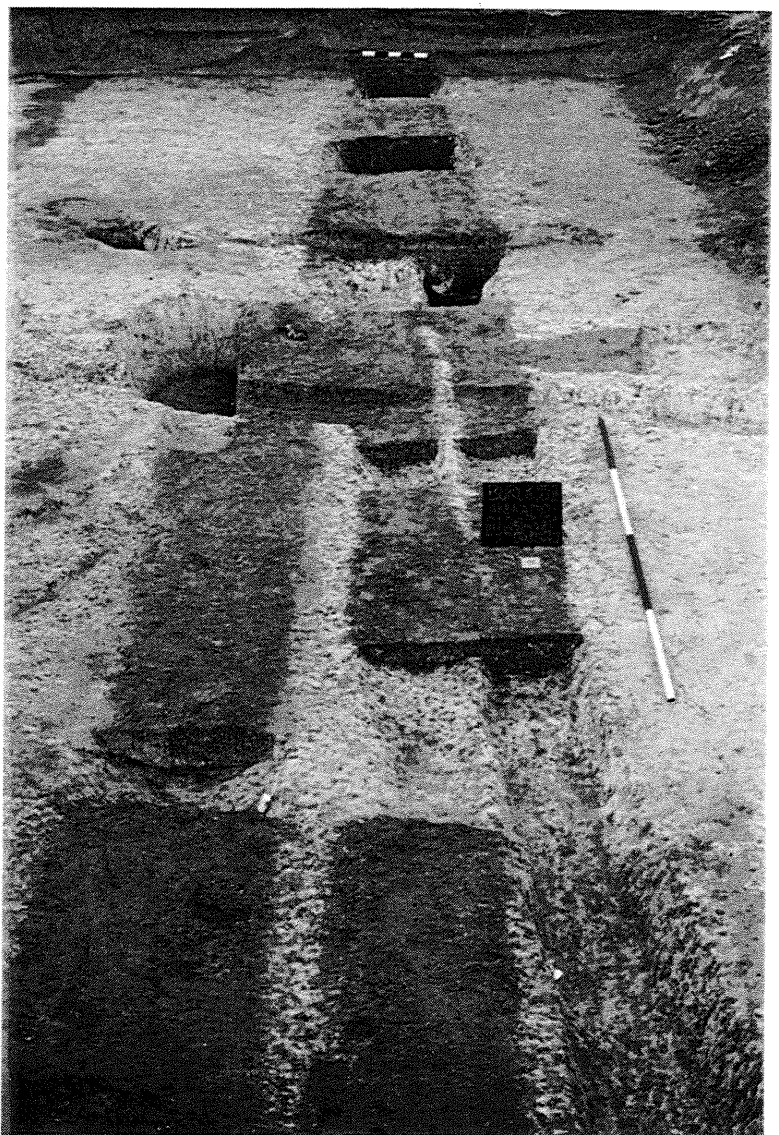


Plate 2 The palisade trenches on the west side of Area A



Plate 3 Northern section across the Holloway, showing pit sealed below



Plate 4 Southern section across the Holloway, showing linears sealed below

5.2.6 The Narrow North-South Linears

On the western side of Area A, two linear features were uncovered which ran parallel to one another from the north baulk for about 6m, and subsequently converged. Just to the east of these, a third linear paralleled them from the north, ending after approximately 4.5m.

The westernmost linear was composed of several segments, 9/106, 45, 46, and 42. The total length of all the segments was at least 10m.

The northernmost part, 9/106 was 0.5m wide, up to 0.24m deep, and at least 3.9m long. It contained a single fill, 8/105, and its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Small sherds of abraded Roman pottery, animal bone, and worked flint were recovered from fill 8/105.

South of the above, 45 was 0.5m wide, 0.35m deep, and at least 0.5m long. It contained two fills, 069 and 070. Its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Burnt flint and animal bone were recovered from fill 69.

South of the above, 46 was 0.6m wide, 0.35m deep, and 2.6m long. It contained two fills, 66 and 67. Its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Worked flint, animal bone, and small fragments of fired clay were recovered from fill 66. A single sherd of Roman pottery, and burnt stone were recovered from fill 67.

The southernmost part, 42, was 0.5m wide, 0.2m deep, and had a surviving length of 1.8m. It contained a single fill, 41. Its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Tiny sherds of abraded Roman pottery, animal bone, and burnt flint were recovered from fill 41.

The eastern linear was similarly composed of several segments, 11/108, 48, and 44.

The northernmost part, 11/108, was 0.5m wide, 0.1m deep, and at least 6.0m long. It contained a single fill, 10/107, and its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Roman pottery and worked flint were recovered from fill 10/107.

South of the above, 48 was 0.6m wide, 0.16m deep, and had a surviving length of 2.5m. It contained two fills, 64 and 65, and its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Worked flint was recovered from fill 64.

The southernmost segment, 44 was 0.6m wide, 0.4m deep, and 2.05m long. It contained a single fill, 43, and its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. No finds were recovered from it.

With all these segments of both linears, it was not possible to determine the stratigraphic sequence, due to the extreme similarity of the fills.

To the east of this complex lay another linear, 47/110, which paralleled 11/108. It was between 0.6 and 0.8m wide, narrowing to the south, 0.17m deep, and at least 4.0m long. It contained a single fill, 109, and cut the natural chalk. Burnt flint was recovered from fill 109.

To the east of this was the extremely shallow feature 56, which has been tentatively identified as a trackway. It consisted of at least two parallel grooves or ruts, no more than 0.05m deep, and 0.1m wide, in a very slight north-south hollow approximately 2.0m wide. The two most obvious grooves were 0.4m apart. No finds were recovered from it.

To the east of this, two linears entered the excavation area, and then butt-ended, one each from the north and south. The northern one, 75/102, was slightly curved to the east and had a squared butt-end. It was 0.45m wide, 0.1m deep, and at least 5.8m long. It contained a single fill, 74/101, and cut the natural chalk. Roman pottery, worked flint, burnt stone, and animal bone were recovered from fill 74/101.

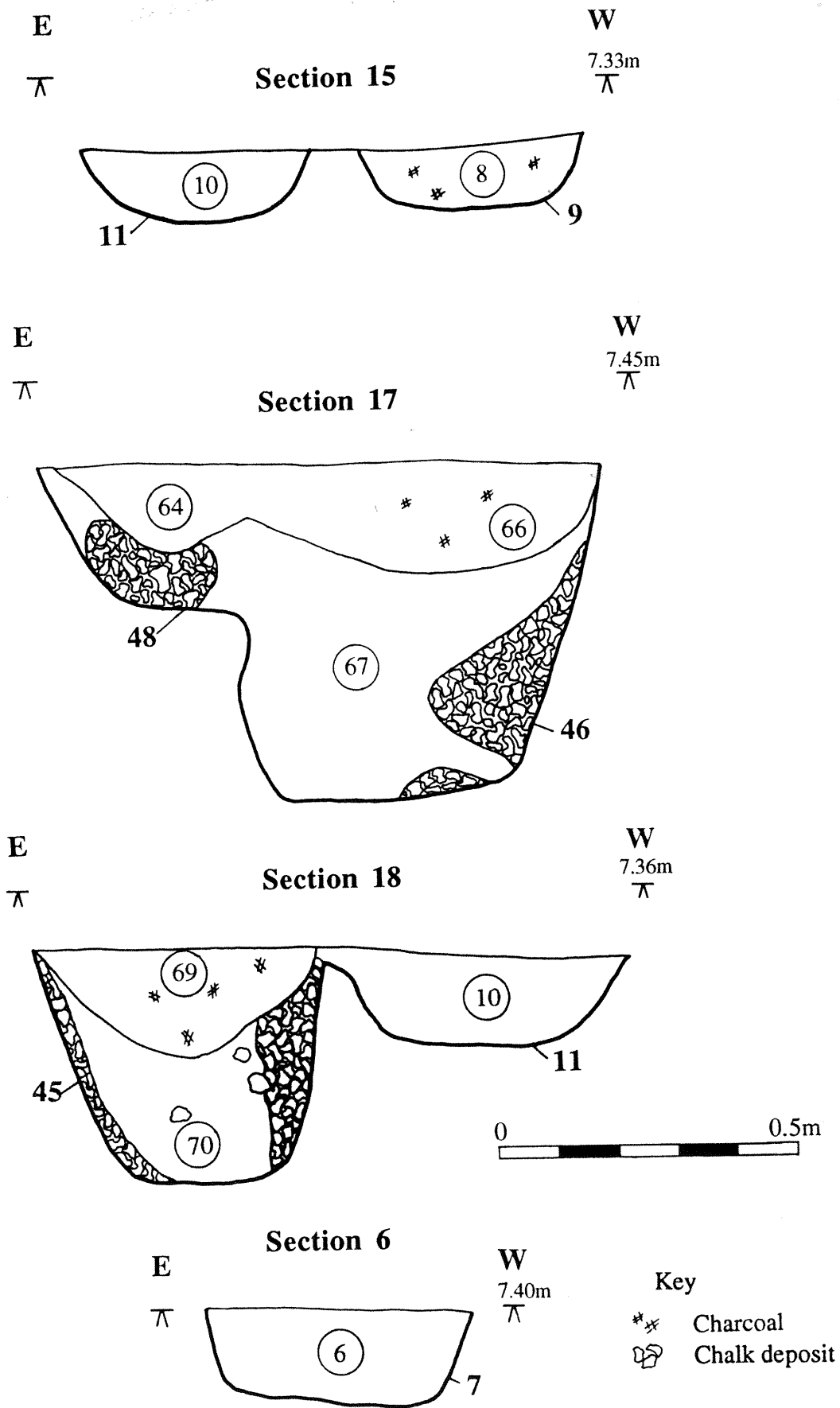


Figure 5 Sections 6, 17, 18 and 15 across the narrow N-S linears (section 6 is in Area B, not shown on fig. 3)

South of this, and with its butt-end separated from the above feature by a gap of 0.8m, was linear **104**. It was 0.5m wide, 0.1m deep, and at least 3.0m long. It contained a single fill, 103, and cut the natural chalk. Roman pottery, animal bone, and burnt flint were recovered from fill 103. On the southwestern side of **104** was a subrectangular protrusion, **174**. It was 0.8m long, at least 0.6m wide, and the fill was indistinguishable from 103.

East of the broad north-south linear, **29**, another slightly curved, narrow linear, entered the area from the north, and terminated in a squared butt-end. It was 0.68m wide, 0.25m deep, and at least 3.2m long. It contained two fills, 28 and 40, and cut the natural chalk. Burnt flint was recovered from fill 28.

At the far eastern edge of Area A was linear **27**. It was 0.45m wide on average, flaring out to 1.3m to the north, 0.3m deep, and at least 9.0m long. It contained a single fill, 26, and cut the natural chalk. Roman pottery, animal bone, and burnt and worked flint were recovered from fill 26.

5.2.7 The Postholes

Two subcircular features uncovered between the broad linear 24/143/72 and N-S linear 27, were assumed to be truncated postholes. The northern one, 77, was adjacent to the butt-end of 29, on its eastern side. It was 0.17m in diameter, 0.08m deep, and contained a single fill, 82. No finds were recovered from it.

The southern one, 76, was 0.21m in diameter, 0.13m deep, and contained a single fill, 83. No finds were recovered from it.

5.3 Area B

Area B consisted of evaluation trench B, originally 6m long, plus a 21m long extension to the west. The topsoil was 0.15m deep, and the subsoil was 0.35m deep. In Area B, archaeological features were recorded in plan, but most were not excavated. At the eastern end of the trench, the ditch complex recorded in Area A was present, continuing southwards.

The easternmost feature in Area B, **159**, was a narrow linear running N-S, probably corresponding to **27** in Area A. It was 0.5m wide, 0.25m deep, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, 158, from which no finds were recovered.

East of this, broad, shallow linear **161** ran N-S across the trench, probably corresponding to **24/143/72** in Area A, and similarly sealing several features. It was 3.0m wide, 0.4m deep, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, 160, from which no finds were recovered.

Slightly east of the centreline of **161**, narrow linear **163** ran N-S across the trench, probably corresponding to **54** in Area A. It was 0.7m wide and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single observed fill, 162, which was not excavated, and from which no finds were recovered.

Adjacent to the west side of **163**, a narrow linear, **171**, entered from the south and butt-ended. It was 0.55m wide and at least 0.95m long. It contained a single observed fill, 170, which was not excavated, and from which no finds were recovered. The stratigraphic relationship between **163** and **171** could not be determined.

Directly north of **171**, another probable linear feature, **167**, entered from the north, and butt-ended. It was 0.55m wide, and at least 0.25m long. It contained a single observed fill, 170, which was not excavated, and from which no finds were recovered.

Just to the west of the above, and not sealed by broad linear **161**, another linear, **169**, entered from the north, possibly corresponding with **104** in Area A, and butt-ended. It was 0.7m wide, and at least 1.0m long. It contained a single observed fill, 168, which was not excavated, and from which no finds were recovered.

Approximately 5.5m to the west, 7 was the continuation southwards of the linear complex on the far west of Area A. By this point, it had been reduced to a single cut.

7 was 0.6m wide, 0.2m deep, and at least 2.0m long. It contained a single fill, 6, and its stratigraphic relationships with the other segments remain uncertain. Worked flint and possible slag were recovered from fill 6.

Approximately 2.5m to the west of 7, a complex series of cuts, largely superimposed in the same place, were filled by the same deposit. Several of the cuts (3, 12, 14, and 15) appeared to be portions of pits, but 13 seemed to be a linear feature. It was not possible to determine in what order they were dug. They were all filled by 2, the overall dimensions of which were 2.0m wide, 0.58m deep, and at least 1.6m long. Roman pottery, animal bone, and worked flint were recovered from fill 2.

5.4 Trench C

Trench C was 14.5m long. The topsoil was 0.25m deep, and the subsoil was 0.5m deep. Archaeological features were present only at the east end of the trench.

Easternmost was a broad linear, 173, running N-S, which narrowed from 1.5m on the northern side of the trench, to 1.0m on the southern side. It was at least 1.6m long, and contained one observed fill, 172, which was not excavated, and from which no finds were recovered.

West of this was a narrow linear, 134, running N-S across the trench. It was 0.5m wide, 0.24m deep, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, 135, from which animal bone and burnt stone were recovered. Part of a small subcircular depression found in the base of 134 may be the remains of a truncated posthole. This feature, 137, 0.4m in diameter and 0.12m deep, was probably contemporary with 134. It contained a single fill, 136, from which no finds were recovered.

West of this was another narrow linear, 139, running N-S across the trench. It was 0.4m wide, 0.1m deep, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, 138, from which no finds were recovered.

5.5 Trench D

Trench D was 15.5m long. The topsoil was 0.2m deep, and the subsoil was 0.35m deep. Two shallow ditches were recorded at the north end which appear to align roughly with Cuts 5/113 and 119 in Trench A. A small elongated pit of unknown function lay immediately to the north.

The pit, 130, was oval, 0.5m long, 0.12m deep, and 0.3m wide, and was aligned roughly E-W. It contained a single fill, 129, from which no finds were recovered.

South of this was narrow linear 115, running E-W across the trench. It was 0.35m wide, 0.18m deep, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, 114, from which was recovered Mussel shell and burnt flint.

South of this was narrow linear 117, running E-W across the trench. It was 0.4m wide, 0.18m deep, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single fill, 116, from which no finds were recovered.

5.6 Trench E

Trench E was 6.7m long. The topsoil was 0.3m deep, and the subsoil was 0.05m deep. The trench contained a single small subrectangular feature, 155, 0.7m long and 0.6m wide. It contained a single fill, 154, which was not excavated, and no finds were recovered from it.

5.7 Trench F

Trench F was 17m long. The topsoil was 0.25m deep, and the interface with the natural chalk was very sharp. The east end of the trench contained a probable tree bole, subsequently occupied by rabbits. At 2.7m from the west end, the chalk had been cut away towards the west to a depth of 0.65m. Fragments of mortar and brick were present at the base of the cut.

5.8 Trench G

Trench G was 4.5m long. The 'topsoil' was 0.5m deep, but may be related to the cut seen in trench F. Trench G contained a single straight linear feature, 157, aligned east-west, 0.53m wide, and at least 1.6m long. It contained a single observed fill, 156. Fragments of mortar and modern brick were recovered from fill 156.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 General Comments

Over half of all the features uncovered during both phases of work on the site were linears of some description. The majority of these were not discrete within the area of excavation, though many displayed a single terminus. All of the east-west linears seen in trenches A and D exhibited similar, gently rounded profiles. In contrast, the narrow north-south linears seen in trenches A, B, and C had flat bases and vertical, or very steep, sides. The E-W linears could be interpreted as drainage gullies, whereas the N-S ones were probably palisade trenches.

Dominating Area A was the broad N-S linear, with its uneven edge, changing profile, and a distinct kink to the west about halfway across the area. Two phases of this feature were identified, the later being shallower and broader, the earlier phase steeper-sided and deeper. They may have been shallow drainage and/or boundary ditches, or alternatively, they might have been Holloways, sunken trackways between settlements. The narrow grooves grouped together as 56 may be wheel ruts from a separate phase, where the trackway has shifted slightly to the west.

Several pits, including features sealed by the broad N-S linears, were uncovered, but they contained little material which might aid in their interpretation. All were either ovoid, or subrectangular, and were of widely differing depths, but with similar flat bases, and near-vertical sides. The dearth of animal bone and pottery do not suggest a function as repositories for domestic rubbish. No industrial function could be ascribed, either by finds or morphology. Thus, it would seem likely that they were for clunch extraction or storage of some kind, although there is no direct evidence to support this.

Generally, the feature density drops off sharply to the west of palisade trench 9/46/42, which indicates that something to the east is being enclosed, defended, or otherwise demarcated. Area A is characterised by these N-S divisions, which were unlikely to have all been in existence at the same time, and which must therefore represent the restating and shifting over time of a single boundary.

The footpath known as "The Leys", is 10m to the east of the eastern edge of area A. It appears on early maps, and probably dates back to the founding of Newnham, but may be much older, a trackway between the two settlements that eventually joined, and became Burwell.

The majority of features in area A run parallel to the line of this path, and there may be some connection between these boundaries, and the establishing of a more formalised route between North Street and High Town.

There is certainly little evidence to suggest domestic occupation in the immediate area of the site, certainly not in the form of timber or stone buildings, and thus it seems likely that it was peripheral to a settlement. This is borne out by the boundaries, making the site a well-defined, if marginal area. Further investigations in the immediate area might reveal clues to the purpose of these enigmatic boundaries.

6.2 Dating

The major problems with placing the site chronologically are the extreme similarity of many of the fills, resulting in occasional stratigraphic uncertainties, and the dearth of reliably datable finds.

Most of the pottery recovered consists of small, abraded sherds of 2nd to 4th century Roman wares, and it is entirely possible that all these finds might be residual. The only other ceramics recovered were some sherds of unabraded black handmade pottery.

This has proven problematic to date, since the fabric (derived from a fossiliferous Gault clay) resembles both Middle Iron Age domestic pottery, and Middle Saxon Maxey ware, a proto-St. Neots Type ware. However, the diagnostic feature in these cases should be the form of the vessel, which in this case would be somewhat bulbous, with an inturned rim. This form is confidently attributable to the Middle Iron Age (Hill, Sperry, Woudhuysen pers. comm.)

Analysis of the flint recovered from the site shed no further light on the date, since the assemblage was poor and contained no artefacts, although this might be seen as evidence for an Iron Age date (see Appendix B).

On balance, the scant dating evidence suggests a late Roman date for the site, although the Holloway may well be later, as indeed may the whole site, if the pottery is seen as entirely residual.

Whatever the date of the site, it seems to be peripheral to a settlement, although the small quantity of domestic rubbish indicates that it could not have been too far away from one or more.

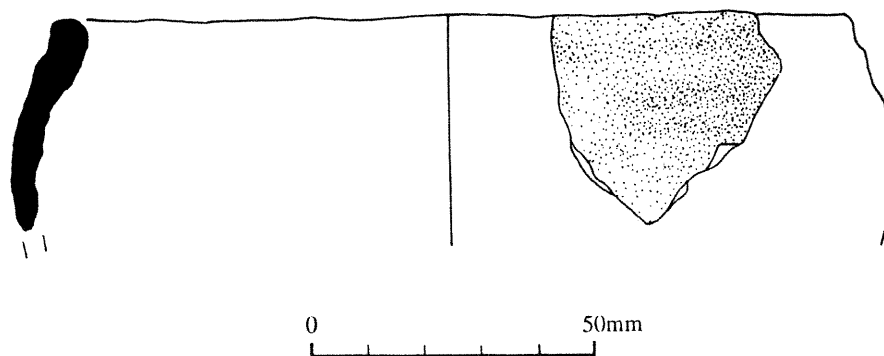


Figure 6 Rimsherd of Middle Iron Age pottery recovered from linear feature 54

6.3 Phasing

Since the dating evidence is so rarefied, phasing can only be achieved through stratigraphic means, deduction, and inference. The stratigraphy can be broken down into three broad phases of activity.

6.3.1 Phase 1

This earliest phase consists of all the narrow N-S linears and the possible trackway, 56. These could all be considered boundary features-palisades, fences, or small drainage ditches, and are probably the expression of a single land division shifting position, but not alignment, over time.

6.3.2 Phase 2

The middle phase consists of all the pits, although it is possible that one of the boundary features was still extant at the time that they were dug. The pits are generally oval or subrectangular, and of roughly similar size, the largest being only twice as large as the smallest. Most are oriented NNW-SSE, but no alignments seem to be formed by them. It seems that the importance of boundaries had waned by this time, however the function of these pits remains a mystery, and thus they do not shed further light on the obvious change in land use.

6.3.3 Phase 3

The latest phase consists of the broad N-S possible Holloway, and the E-W linears which butt-end on either side of it, obviously respecting the edge. By this point, the route northwards that became The Leys is established. This track still runs unbroken as a path, from the site of Burwell Castle at the southern end, at least as far as Newnham to the north. It would not be fanciful to suggest that the track had its origins in Roman times, when a substantial building stood on the Castle site (Lethbridge 1936, 131), and running towards an as yet unidentified second settlement at Newnham or beyond.

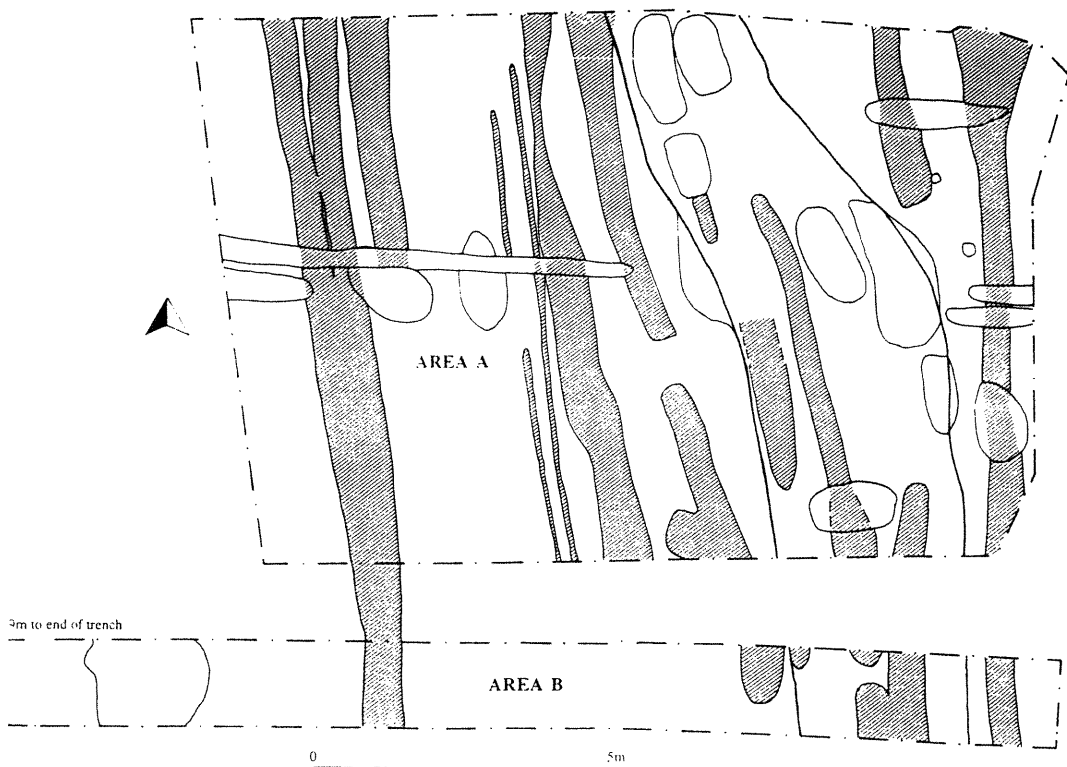


Figure 7 Phase 1

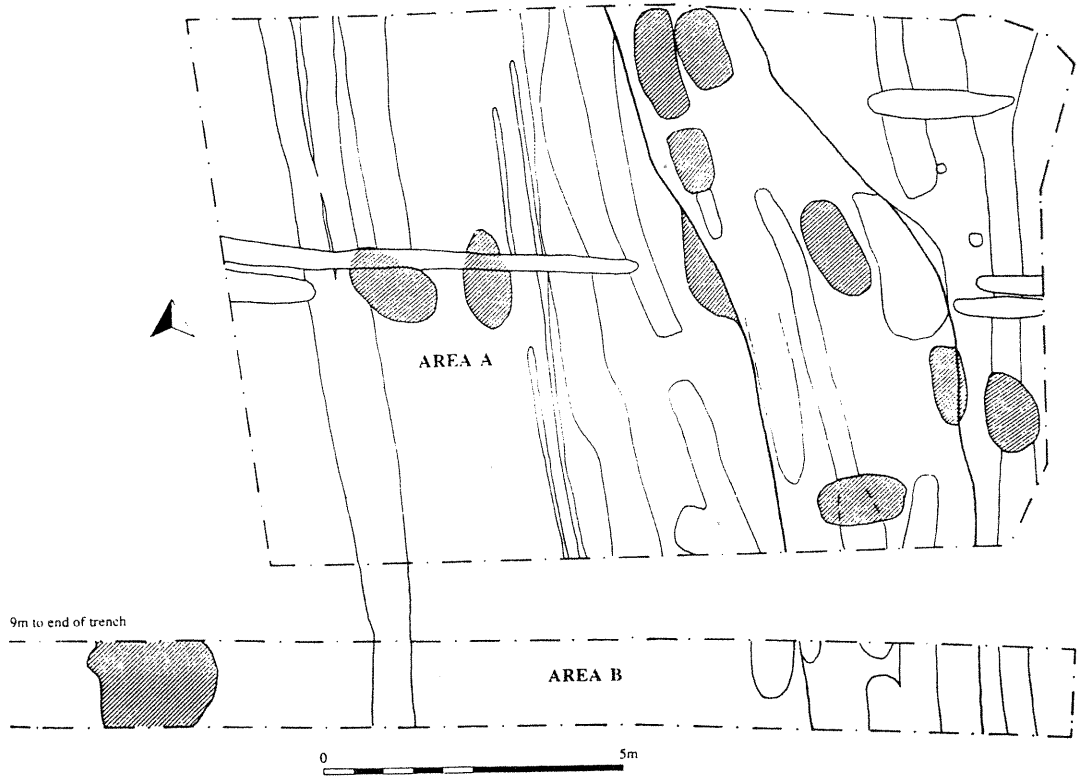


Figure 8 Phase 2

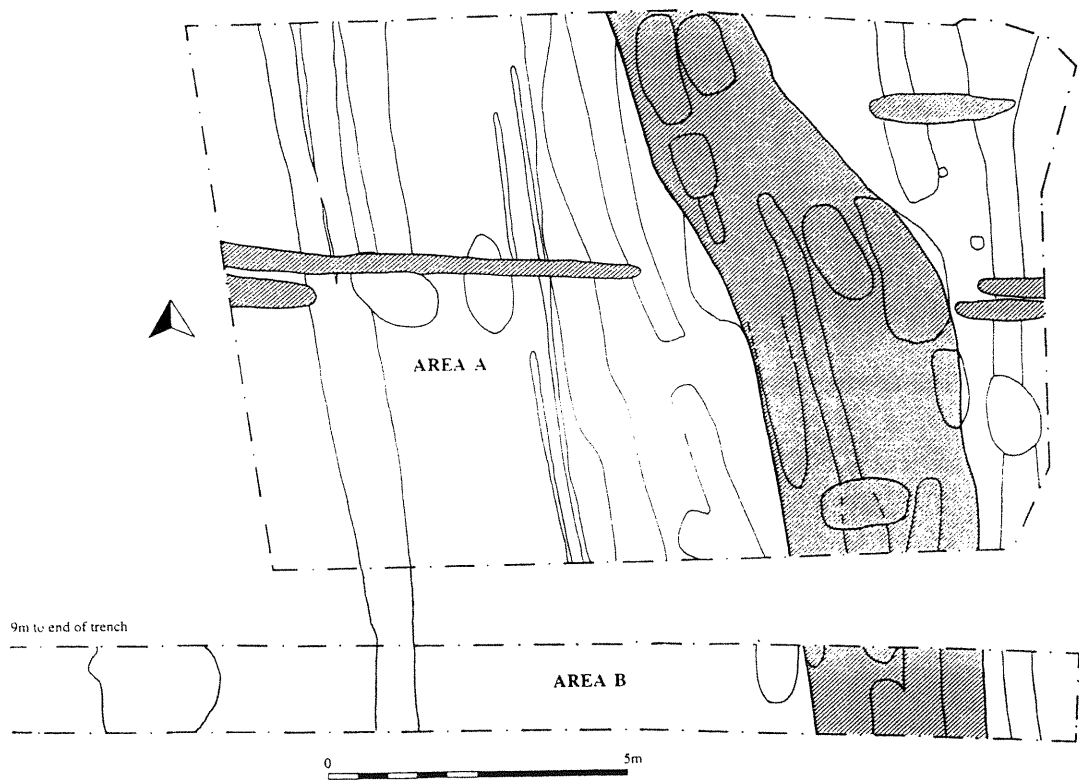


Figure 9 Phase 3

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Artefactual density was low across the entire site, and despite large-scale excavation of features, the eventual assemblage was small. There is therefore little chronological or economic evidence to aid interpretation of the site. Nevertheless, its very dearth of artefactual remains sets it aside from most archaeological sites, and enhances its rarity value.

It was clearly not a settlement itself, but the palisades suggest large scale construction for some other purpose, possibly stockholding, defensive, or even ritual. The density of features, and apparent longevity of use and replacement suggests that a large amount of effort was expended, which argues for the importance of the site. It is therefore essential that any opportunity that arises be taken to observe further archaeological remains that may reveal the core of the settlement, or shed light upon the nature of the site.

Any future archaeological investigation or watching brief in the immediate area, should take into account that a continuation of many of the linear features to the north, south, or east is a distinct possibility.

Service trenches in the area parallel to The Leys might present an opportunity to record any return to the east by the north-south linears, or continuation of the east-west linears. Small-scale geophysical survey of gardens and lawns in the adjacent area might yield data that could suggest the best places for test pits, if funds for further research became available. If, as suggested earlier, an area uphill and to the east if the site was once enclosed, evidence of settlement might be found there, beneath the greens of the housing estates,

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APPENDIX A

List of Contexts, Main Excavation Phase

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
1	Topsoil	10YR 4/1 dark grey sandy silty clay	-	150
2	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	150	3, 12, 13, 14, 15
3	Cut	?Circular pit	2	?Natural
4	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	150	5
5	Cut	Narrow linear	4	57/123, 74/101, 121
6	Fill	10YR 4/1.5 dark grey/dark greyish brown silty clay	150	7
7	Cut	Narrow linear	6	Natural
8	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	5/113	9
9	Cut	Narrow linear	8	Natural
10	Fill	10YR4/1 dark grey silty clay	58/122	11
11	Cut	Narrow linear	10	Natural
12	Cut	?Pit	2	Natural
13	Cut	Broad linear	2	Natural
14	Cut	?Circular pit	2	Natural
15	Cut	?Subrectangular pit	2	Natural
16	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	150	See 142
17	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	150	18
18	Cut	'Cigar-shaped' linear	17	28, 26
19	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	150	20
20	Cut	Narrow linear	19	26
21	Fill	10YR4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	150	22
22	Cut	Narrow linear	21	26
23	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	24	94
24	Cut	Broad shallow linear	25	23
25	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	150	24
26	Fill	10YR 4/1.5 dark grey/dark greyish brown silty clay	18, 20, 22, 78	27
27	Cut	Narrow linear	26	Natural
28	Fill	10YR 4/1.5 dark grey/dark greyish brown silty clay	18	40
29	Cut	Curving linear	40	Natural
30	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	143, 50	31
31	Cut	Narrow linear	30	?Natural
32	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	84	59
33	Cut	Subrectangular pit	59	Natural
34	Fill	10YR 7/1 pale grey chalk	84	35
35	Cut	?Subrectangular pit	34	Natural
36	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	51	50
37	Not used			
38	Fills	Natural silts		

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
39	Cuts	Natural root holes		
40	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	28	29
41	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	?150	?42
42	Cut	Narrow linear	?41	?Natural
43	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	?150	?44
44	Cut	Narrow linear	?43	?Natural
45	Cut	Narrow linear	70	?Natural
46	Cut	Narrow linear	67	?Natural
47	Cut	Narrow linear	71	?Natural
48	Cut	Narrow linear	65	?Natural
49	Cut	Narrow linear	68	Natural
50	Cut	Oval pit	93	30, 52
51	Cut	Broad linear	53	55, 93
52	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	50	89,92
53	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	73	68
54	Cut	Narrow linear	55	Natural
55	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	72	51
56	-	'Trackway'	5	Natural
57	Fill	See 123	-	-
58	Cut	See 122	-	-
59	Fill	10YR 7/1 light grey chalk	32	33
60	?Cut	?Subcircular pit	?	?
61	Fill	See 52	-	-
62	Fill	See 68	-	-
63	Cut	See 49	-	-
64	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	?150	65
65	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	64	48
66	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	?150	67
67	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	66	46
68	Fill	See 62	-	-
69	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	119	70
70	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	69	45
71	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	58/122	47
72	Cut	Broad linear	73	53
73	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	?150	72
74	Fill	See 101	-	-
75	Cut	See 102	-	-
76	Cut	Posthole	83	Natural
77	Cut	Posthole	82	Natural
78	Cut	Oval pit	79	26/81
79	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	150	78
80	Cut	See 27	-	-

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
81	Fill	See 26	-	-
83	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	150	76
84	Cut	Broad shallow linear	95/96	32, 34, 30/132, 85, 140, 144
85	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	84	86
86	Cut	Subrectangular pit	85	87
87	Fill	10YR 4/3 brown silty clay	86	88
88	Cut	Narrow linear	87	Natural
89	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	51	90
90	Cut	Narrow linear	89	Natural
91	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay	51	92
92	Cut	Subrectangular pit	91	Natural
93	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	51	50
94	Not used			
95	Fill	10YR 7/1 light grey chalk	23	84
96	Fill	10YR 7/1 light grey chalk	23	84

List of Contexts, Evaluation Phase

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
100	Topsoil	10YR 4/1 dark grey sandy silty clay	-	138, 150
101	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	5/113,	75/102, 84
102	Cut	Narrow linear	74/101	Natural
103	Fill	2.5Y 5/1 grey silty clay	?150	104
104	Cut	Narrow linear	103	Natural
105	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	5/113	106
106	Cut	Narrow linear	105	Natural
107	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	58/122	11/108
108	Cut	Narrow linear	10/107	?Natural
109	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	58/122	110
110	Cut	Narrow linear	109	Natural
111	Cut	?Posthole	107	Natural
112	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	150	5/113
113	Cut	Narrow linear	4/112	123, 121, 74/101
114	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	150	115
115	Cut	Narrow linear	114	Natural
116	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	150	117
117	Cut	Narrow linear	116	Natural
118	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	150	119
119	Cut	Narrow linear	118	Natural
120	Cut	Oval pit	133	Natural
121	Fill	2.5Y 4/1 dark grey and 2.5Y 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	5/113	126
122	Cut	Oval pit	123	10/107, 71/109
123	Fill	2.5Y 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	5/113	122
124	Fill	2.5Y 6/1 grey silty chalk	120	125
125	Cut	Natural feature	124	Natural
126	Fill	2.5Y 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	121	133
127	Cut	Stakehole	?132	149
128	Cut	Stakehole	?132	149
129	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	?150	130
130	Cut	Oval pit	129	Natural
131	Cut	Narrow linear	149	Natural
132	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	16, ?127	149
133	Fill	10YR 7/1 light grey silty chalk	?128	
134	Cut	Narrow linear	126	120
135	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	135	136
136	Fill	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown sandy silty clay	150	134
137	Cut	?Posthole	134	137
138	Fill	10YR 4/1 dark grey sandy silty clay	136	Natural
139	Cut	Narrow linear	100	139
140	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	138	150
141	Cut	Subrectangular pit	143	151, 152
142	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	153	Natural
			?150	143

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
143	Cut	Broad linear	142	55, 89, 91, 93, 132, 140, 144, 147
144	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	143	145
145	Cut	'Comma'-shaped pit	144	Natural
146	?Fill	?Root-hole	-	-
147	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	143	148
148	Cut	?Oval pit	147	Natural
149	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	132	131
150	Subsoil	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	100	2, 4, 6, ?16, 17, 19, 21, 25, ?41 ?43, ?64 ?66, ?73 79, 82, 83, ?150 112, 114, 116, 118, ?129, ?142
151	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	140	153
152	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	140	153
153	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	151, 152	141
154	Fill	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown silty clay	100	155
155	Cut	Subrectangular feature	154	Natural
156	Fill	10YR 5/2 greyish brown silty clay	1	157
157	Cut	Robber trench	156	Natural
158	Fill	See 26	-	-
159	Cut	Narrow linear	-	-
160	Fill	See 73	-	-
161	Cut	Broad shallow linear	-	-
162	Fill	See 53	?161	-
163	Cut	Narrow linear	-	-
164	Fill	See 52	?161	-
165	Cut	Butt-end of narrow linear	-	-
166	Fill	10YR 4/2 very dark greyish brown silty clay	?161	-
167	Cut	Butt-end of narrow linear	-	-
168	Fill	See 103	-	-
169	Cut	Butt-end of narrow linear	-	-
170	Fill	10YR 4/2 very dark greyish brown silty clay	?161	-
171	Cut	Butt-end of narrow linear	-	-
172	Fill	10YR 4/2 very dark greyish brown silty clay	?161	-
173	Cut	Broad tapering linear	-	-
174	Cut	Subrectangular ?pit	-	-

APPENDIX B

Flint Report (Potential for Analysis), 95/97 Low Road, Burwell Tim Reynolds, PhD

Summary

Excavations at Low Road, Burwell, during 1995 have produced an assemblage of 81 pieces from 21 contexts, weighing a total of 755g. A variety of materials have been recovered, which are typologically and technologically indistinct. There are no tools or cores present, and patination states vary. There is little potential for use wear or refitting studies.

1. Introduction

A total collection of 81 flints derived from 21 recording units, mostly described contexts. The total weight of the collection is 755 grammes. Most contexts yielded small numbers of items and are not particularly indicative of either activity or date; the largest assemblage from a single context (Trench A, unstratified), comprised only 22 pieces, which represents 27% of the total assemblage. Thus, no evidence for intensive reduction or lithic-based activity centres is present. Generally, the assemblage represents secondary associations created through discard. Retouched pieces are not present, and the bulk of recovered material from all contexts comprises knapping debris. A significant amount of burnt flint was also recovered (48% by number and 35% by weight), although this has not been processed in such a way as to be useful for thermoluminescence and is mostly unworked.

2. Typology

There are no distinct types present, hence the collection cannot effectively date the site.

3. Technology

There are two forms of reduction present, one producing blades/bladelets, the other producing chunky flakes. Both forms utilise the same raw material forms, and so the different techniques cannot be ascribed to this. Both sets of blank form could have been produced by a single reduction sequence.

The second form of reduction, producing chunky flakes, used informal cores. This process used hard hammers, and a significant amount of shatter results. Whilst occurring in many periods, this approach to flint reduction is commonest during Bronze and Iron Ages, the latter being most likely in this situation.

Platform types are dominated by plain platforms (19), with crushed (5), and cortical (2) as the next most frequent forms. Prepared platforms are absent. A few pieces exhibit lipping of the platform, indicating a possible use of soft hammers. Shatter fragments occur (27 pieces in total), which would again indicate roughing out and some reduction taking place on, or close to, site.

4. Condition

Edge conditions and patination states vary; the frequency of patination and the generally small size of individual collections would make use wear studies of limited value.

There are no pieces with utilisation or gloss.

There are two pieces with half-moon snaps showing some effects of trampling or soil movement; some recent damage is also present.

Refitting would not be particularly useful as associations seem to be derived from discard.

There are a total of 39 burnt pieces, none of which have been worked. No clear pattern is visible in the distribution of this material, and the frequency of burnt pieces is not especially high or low.

5. Raw Materials

The materials used in both reduction sequences are fresh chalk flint with a thin cortex cover.

6. Dating

Technologically, the collection could be of Iron Age date, but is not large enough for confidence in this attribution. Typologically, there are no clear type pieces.

7. Potential for Analysis

The individual sample sizes are small, and sample integrity seems to be low. Present assemblages are of limited value for further study.