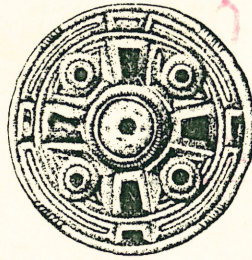


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Archaeological Field Unit

Prehistoric and Roman Activity at the New School Site  
London Road, Godmanchester  
An Archaeological Evaluation

Mark Hinman

April 1996

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No.123

*Commissioned By Backhouse, Brading Design*

**Prehistoric and Roman Activity at the New School Site  
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1996

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## **SUMMARY**

*Between 13/3/96 and 22/3/96 The Archaeological Field Unit (A.F.U.) of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological evaluation at the new school site on London Road (TL 5249 / 2699). The work was commissioned by Backhouse, Brading Design on behalf of The Ely Diocesan Board of Education and Cambridgeshire County Council and was carried out within the terms of a brief set by the County Archaeology Office.*

*A brief review of the historical, documentary, cartographic and archaeological information for the area to the south and east of Roman Godmanchester including the area currently facing development on the west side of London Road was undertaken prior to excavation. This study highlighted the high archaeological potential of the development area.*

*The evaluation trenches revealed the presence of Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age pits and ditches, in addition to a well preserved Roman roadside settlement dating from the late first through to the fourth century AD. Evidence for specialised industrial functions in addition to domestic and agrarian activity was revealed.*

*The preservation of stratified archaeological deposits and artefactual materials was exceptionally good, showing little disturbance as a result of ridge and furrow cultivation. Indeed it is only the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age animal bone which bears any sign of chemical degradation.*

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**New School Site, London Road, Godmanchester, an Archaeological Evaluation.  
GODLR 96. TL 5249 / 2699**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Between 13/3/96 and 22/3/96 The Archaeological Field Unit (A.F.U.) of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological evaluation at London Road, Godmanchester (TL 5249 / 2699). The work was commissioned by Backhouse, Brading Design on behalf of The Ely Diocesan Board of Education and Cambridgeshire County Council and was carried out within the terms of a brief set by the County Archaeology Office (Development Control / Louise Austin / Design brief for archaeological evaluation at London Road, Godmanchester, January 1996).

The development proposal for the evaluated area includes the construction of a new school, playing field and car parking area. Groundworks will also include service trenches and widening of the footpath along the western side of London Road.

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The geology of the area is based on the First and Second Terrace River Gravels of the Great Ouse valley. The land is presently under pasture and displays evidence of a well preserved Medieval / Post Medieval ridge and furrow system. The site covers an area of approximately 1ha which is rectangular in shape

**3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The history and development of the town of Godmanchester is excellently reviewed in a booklet by H J M Green entitled "Godmanchester", based upon over 40 years experience excavating and researching the town and its environs (Green 1977). Dr Waits summary (presented below) draws on this work whilst other information is derived from the Cambridgeshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), various development led evaluations, excavation reports, and maps held by the Huntingdon Record Office.

**3.1 Prehistoric and Early Historic Godmanchester to AD1100  
Dr Gerald A Wait**

Godmanchester is situated on the gravel terrace of the River Great Ouse which reveal a great variety and concentration of cropmarks dating to prehistoric and later times. Some of the most significant cropmark sites that have been excavated in the area are at Brampton and close by, at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester. River valleys were occupied early in prehistoric times as the rivers provided transport routes and the surrounding valleys had fertile soils which were easily cleared of vegetation for farming. Early prehistoric occupation around Godmanchester is indicated by flint tools in both Mesolithic and Neolithic forms. A Mesolithic camp, and a later, Neolithic farmstead, were located just east of the town by excavations in 1990 (Wait 1992). Contemporary with the latter is the extensive and obscure ritual complex of a giant enclosure and cursus recently excavated

near Rectory Farm (McAvoy, interim report in CCC SMR). A mortuary enclosure at the end of a *cursus* has been excavated just west of Brampton (Malim 1991). Bronze Age barrows (or ring ditches) at Brampton (White 1966) and at Rectory Farm (McAvoy op. cit.) have also been excavated. Many other sites, probably farmsteads, are likely to have been scattered over the four by one kilometre gravel terrace upon which Godmanchester sits, exploiting the light, free draining soils so amenable to early farming technology. Such sites are known only through collections of flint tools.

Later prehistoric settlement is relatively better understood, not least because Iron Age pottery survives much better than earlier pottery. One such farmstead has been sample excavated just east of the town (Wait 1992) and others are known from under modern Godmanchester by the appearance of the typical roundhouses and ditched enclosures encountered below Roman occupation.

### Roman Godmanchester

The Roman conquest of East Anglia is represented in Godmanchester by a legionary fort built c. AD 44, to command the two new roads (Ermine Street and the Cambridge to Leicester Road) where they crossed the River Great Ouse. The fort was abandoned within a few years as the frontier moved north, but an associated civilian settlement or *vicus* survived. During the Flavian period the *vicus* expanded and flourished. By the Hadrianic period (ca 117-38) a *mansio* and baths were designed and built in the centre of the town, near the central cross-roads. These were very large and elaborate buildings reflecting, in both their design and furnishings, the progressive Romanisation of the inhabitants. *Mansiones* were originally connected to the imperial postal service, providing overnight accommodation and fresh horses. This role later expanded to include facilities for other imperial travellers and later served as both a police post and a tax collection centre. The Godmanchester *mansio* as eventually built was one of the largest in Britain, at over 100 metres long, including stabling. The *mansio* was built around a colonnaded courtyard with bedrooms along two sides, along with kitchens, dining rooms, etc. Both *mansio* and baths were substantially built with masonry walls and were half-timbered above the ground floor. Floors were tessellated and walls were of painted plaster. Somewhat later (shortly after ca AD200) the town centre was redesigned and a formal *basilica* or town hall was built, indicating that Godmanchester may have achieved the formal status of *Vicus*, with a legal constitution and rights of self-government (possibly following an edict of Caracalla in AD214 which granted Roman citizenship to all free-born members of the community). The main building was of six bays, with an aisle on the east separated from the hall by an arcade. The new *basilica*, the *mansio* and the public baths were located in an *insulae* or small compound demarcated by ditched boundaries, and with them was a small temple apparently dedicated to a god named Abandinus, not known elsewhere and so possibly a local deity.

The general prosperity of the second century in Godmanchester was marred by a period of extensive flooding of land below about 10 metres OD. In the mid second century an extensive fire destroyed large tracts of the town and necessitated a massive rebuilding programme. This, plus continual resurfacing and up-grading of the principal Roman roads, required large supplies of gravel and sand, quarried locally from the underlying river terraces.

During the third century the town was enclosed within masonry walls some three metres thick, backed by a clay rampart, and pierced by gates where the roads entered the town. The wall was fronted by a ditch, reaching impressive dimensions where defending the gates. Later, during the fourth century, towers for defensive artillery were added at corners, and the external ditch re-cut. The

*basilica* and *mansio* were demolished, apparently at this time and following a disastrous fire, possibly as a source of masonry for the refurbished defences. In apparent contradiction to the provision of such effective defences, Green believes the town was less prosperous during the third century.

Also during the third century the pan-Empire custom of inhumation burial was adopted at Godmanchester, and large cemeteries were established, in typical Roman fashion, outside the town walls and along the roads approaching the town. Cemeteries are known from the following areas: along both sides of Park Lane, just west and south of the parish church, between Cambridge Street and Linden Road, along the Cambridge road, and with possibly the largest stretching from the west end of Pipers Lane south and east to Ermine street near Porch Farm. Burials associated with this latter cemetery have been exposed at Sweetings Road, Godmanchester

The *territorium* governed from Godmanchester as a *vicus* is unknown, but Green has speculated, on the basis of landscape features and artefact scatters, that it may have approximated to the modern parishes of Godmanchester and Offord Cluny. The town's prosperity was based on agriculture, though Green's excavations do document the practice of essential crafts like iron smithing and pottery production.

A massive fire of the end of the third century may have been the result of an attack and sack of the town. Civic buildings were never rebuilt, and although the town was certainly rebuilt and reoccupied it was in less elaborate style and on a smaller scale. Some of the fourth and early fifth century occupation is associated with early Anglo-Saxon pottery. The last resurfacing of Ermine street was in the fourth century, and is virtually unworn and covered with fourth century rubbish. Side roads and private homes continued to be maintained within the town.

### **Anglo-Saxon Godmanchester**

Fifth century occupation of Godmanchester is poorly documented; perhaps more a reflection of the state of archaeological excavation and interpretation than any true representation of the town's development. Coin issues and distinctive pottery styles cease ca AD400, and therefore ditches and pits which cut fourth century layers may date anytime from ca. 400 to 550 when more diagnostic pottery becomes common. However, stray finds of early and middle Saxon date do occur from many places within and around the town, and it is likely that the town continued to be inhabited. The late inhumation cemetery along Cambridge Road contains evidence of Saxon settlement. Middle Saxon pottery (e.g. Ipswich ware, dated ca. AD650-850) and settlement evidence appears to focus on the area around the Roman southgate.

### **The Danish Period**

Between 865 and 879 the area suffered raids by roving Danish armies, culminating in permanent occupation by Guthrum after 879. The army was based at Huntingdon, and was responsible for administering the district later called Huntingdonshire. Danish occupation is known from Godmanchester, and Green speculates that this was focused on a district enclosed within large ditches appended to the Roman walled area on both sides of West Street and along the river. In 917 Edward the Elder recaptured Huntingdon and Godmanchester, and refortified both places as strong defensive points controlling the Ouse. It was Saxon policy to appropriate land under Danish ownership to the Saxon/English Crown. This would appear to have occurred in Godmanchester. During this period the old Roman road (Ermine St) was abandoned through the town and the



hexagonal ring roads of East St (Cambridge St), the Causeway, London St and Earning St were laid out, as wall streets with internal lanes to aid in defence.

### **Early Norman Godmanchester**

Godmanchester appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as crown land held by Edward the Confessor, and it later became a self-governing manor responsible directly to the crown (chartered 1212). In 1086, Godmanchester had 80 villeins and 16 bordars with a total population of about 450 people. It also had three water mills - whose positions can still be plotted - based upon extensive water engineering works that may have originated in the Danish period.

## **3.2 Previous Archaeological Work In The Immediate Area**

For the location of the following sites in relation to the New School evaluation refer to Figure 1.

Between 1978 and 1983 Granville Rudd recorded the presence of a minimum of 60 bodies during the construction of housing estates at London Road Farm.

To the north a single Roman burial is noted on the SMR (2660A) at Porch Farm.

During 1993 Allison Dickens produced a desk top survey of land south of Duck End Farm TL 2480 / 6990. This survey covering an area of c 90ha concluded that the whole area was rich in archaeological remains, particularly those of the Roman and medieval periods although the presence of earlier deposits should not be discounted.

The Cambs. C.C. A.F.U. has conducted a number of excavations and evaluations in the vicinity of the current development:

GODLS 91      TL 2475 / 7015

During 1991 the Coroners Office alerted the Cambs. C.C. A.F.U. to the discovery of human remains on a building site in London Street. Remains of at least 13 individuals were recovered from the north end of the site in addition to several ditches and a pit all dated to the Roman period.

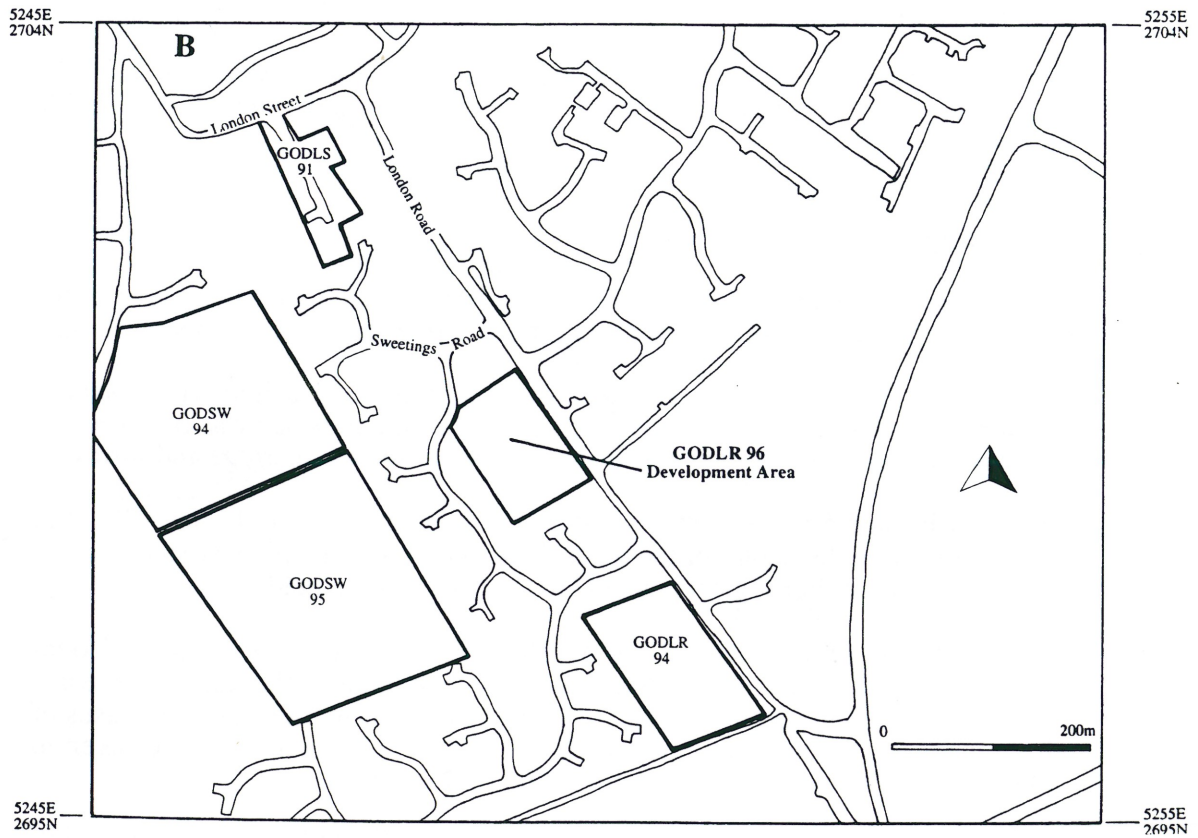
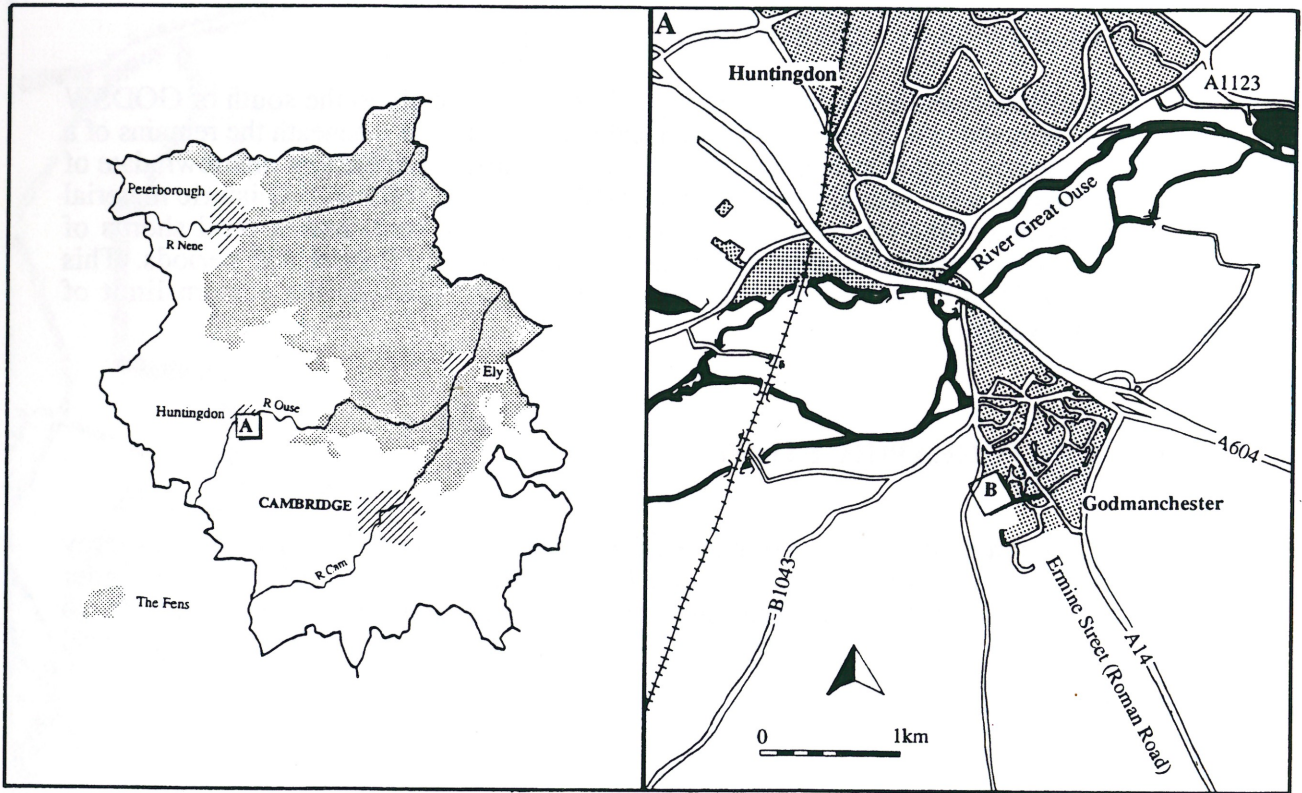
The true number of burials and the presence of any cemetery boundaries were not defined due to major disturbance caused by building work in progress.

GODLR 94      TL 2510 / 6974

An assessment of an area of approximately 1.6ha adjacent to the west side of London Road, c 0.5km south of the Roman town revealed only the presence of 19th Century field drains

GODSW 94      TL 2460 / 6980

An assessment of an area of approximately 2.6ha to the west of London Road revealed extensive post medieval gravel quarrying. However, inhumations and other archaeological features of Roman date were recorded (prior to their re-burial) at the northern end of the site in an area unthreatened by development.



**Figure 1** Site Location Plan

An assessment of an area covering c 2.5ha immediately to the south of GODSW 94 revealed a number of archaeological features surviving beneath the remains of a ridge and furrow system (SMR 10122). A number of ditches of unknown date of function were noted. In addition a small amount of residual prehistoric material was recovered comprising of worked flint flakes, tools and several sherds of abraded pottery dating from the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age periods. This material although unstratified was concentrated towards the eastern limit of excavation.

#### **4 CARTOGRAPHIC STUDY**

An examination of the Ordnance Survey map of 1881 and the Enclosure survey commissioned by B Sparrow in c 1830 clearly show the area currently under investigation to have been constantly in use as pasture / arable land with no evidence for any structures or trackways associated with the agricultural activity.(Figs. 2 & 3)

#### **5 METHODOLOGY**

##### **5.1 The Earthwork Survey**

A survey was carried out using a Zeiss Recelta 15 EDM / Theodolite and AIC Pro-Surveyor software to produce a contour plot and a plan of the visible earthworks.

##### **5.2 Trenching**

A series of five trenches (1-5) totalling 180m were located within the area of the proposed development aligned east west, roughly perpendicular to London Road.

The trenches do not cover the westernmost limit of the field as it was necessary to avoid a public footpath. The uniform alignment of the trenches was necessary to avoid any feature preservation bias that might be caused by the ridge and furrow.

Trenches 1,3 and 5 were located adjacent to the boundary with London Road in order to examine the nature of the roadside activity present whilst Trenches 2 and 4 examined the archaeological potential of the centre of the field.

Trenching was undertaken by a CAT 360 tracked excavator using a 2.00m toothless ditching bucket. All trenches were machined to the depth of clearly defined archaeological features and deposits. Selected sections and the bases of all trenches were cleaned and recorded. Selective excavation was undertaken to obtain representative dating and environmental evidence.

A total of 72 distinct features and layers were recorded (143 separate contexts), including cobbled surfaces, hearths, ovens, postholes, rubbish pits, industrial processing pits, and numerous boundary and drainage ditches.

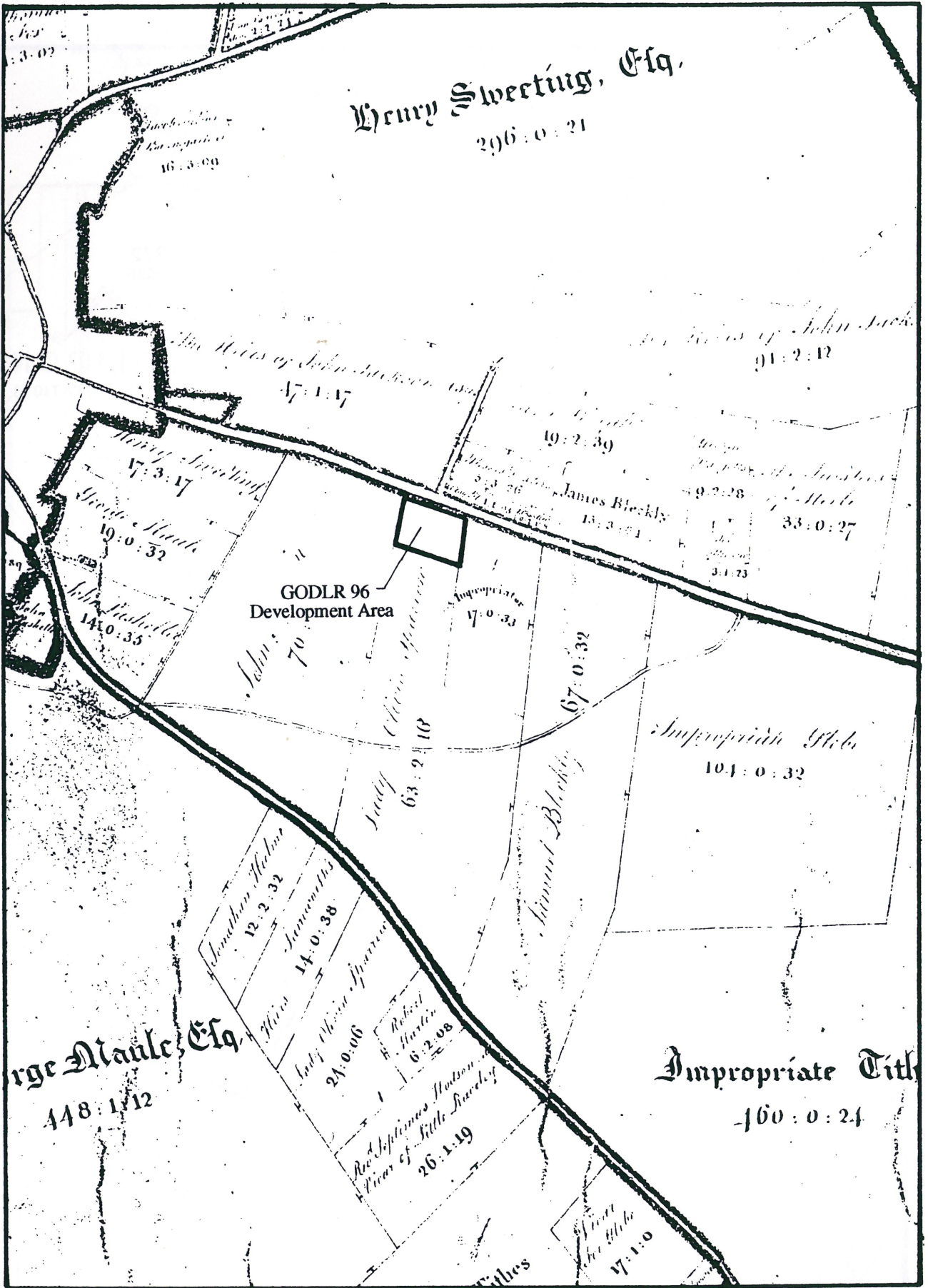


Figure 2 Enclosure Map 1830

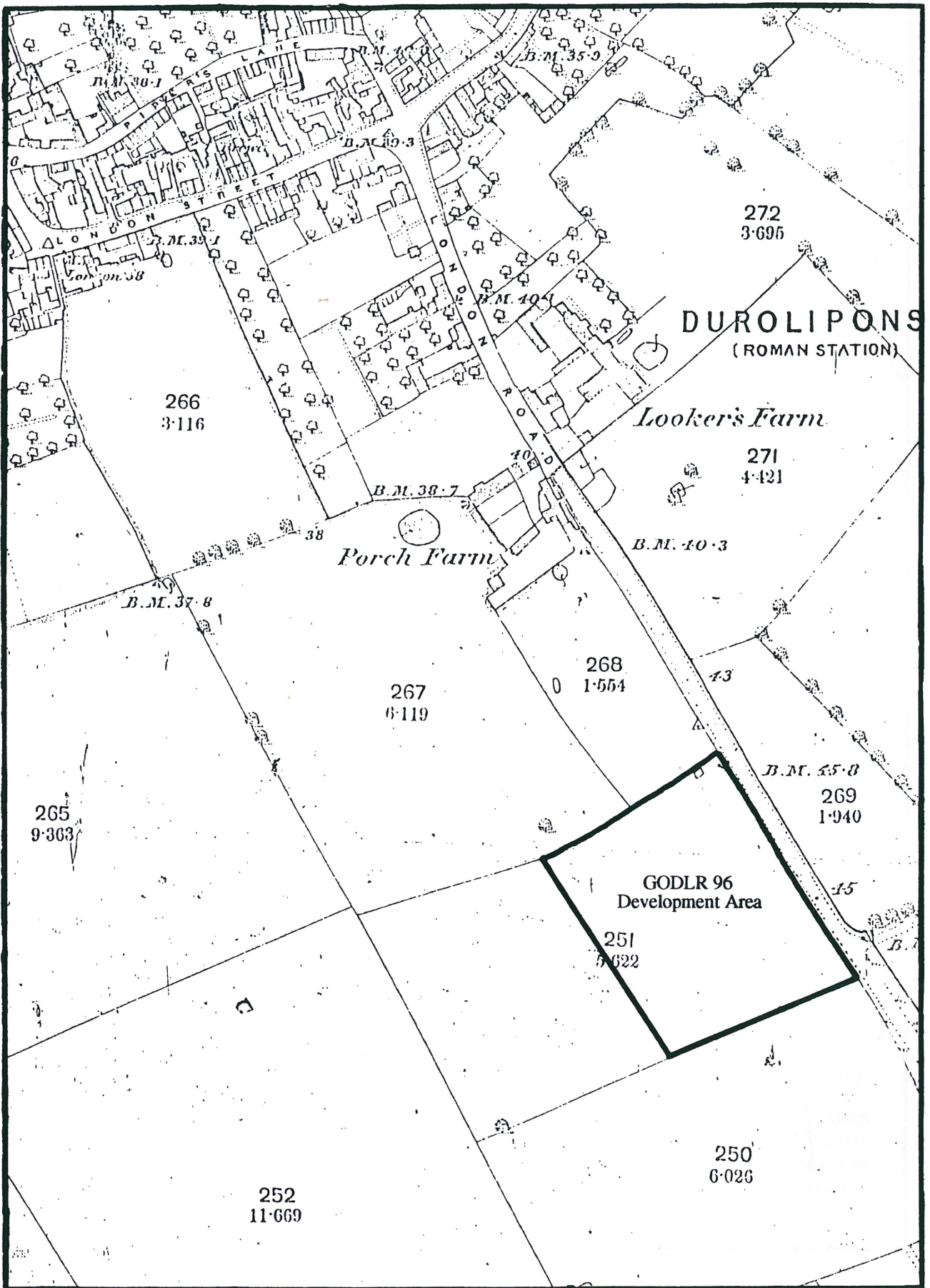


Figure 3 Ordnance Survey Map 1881

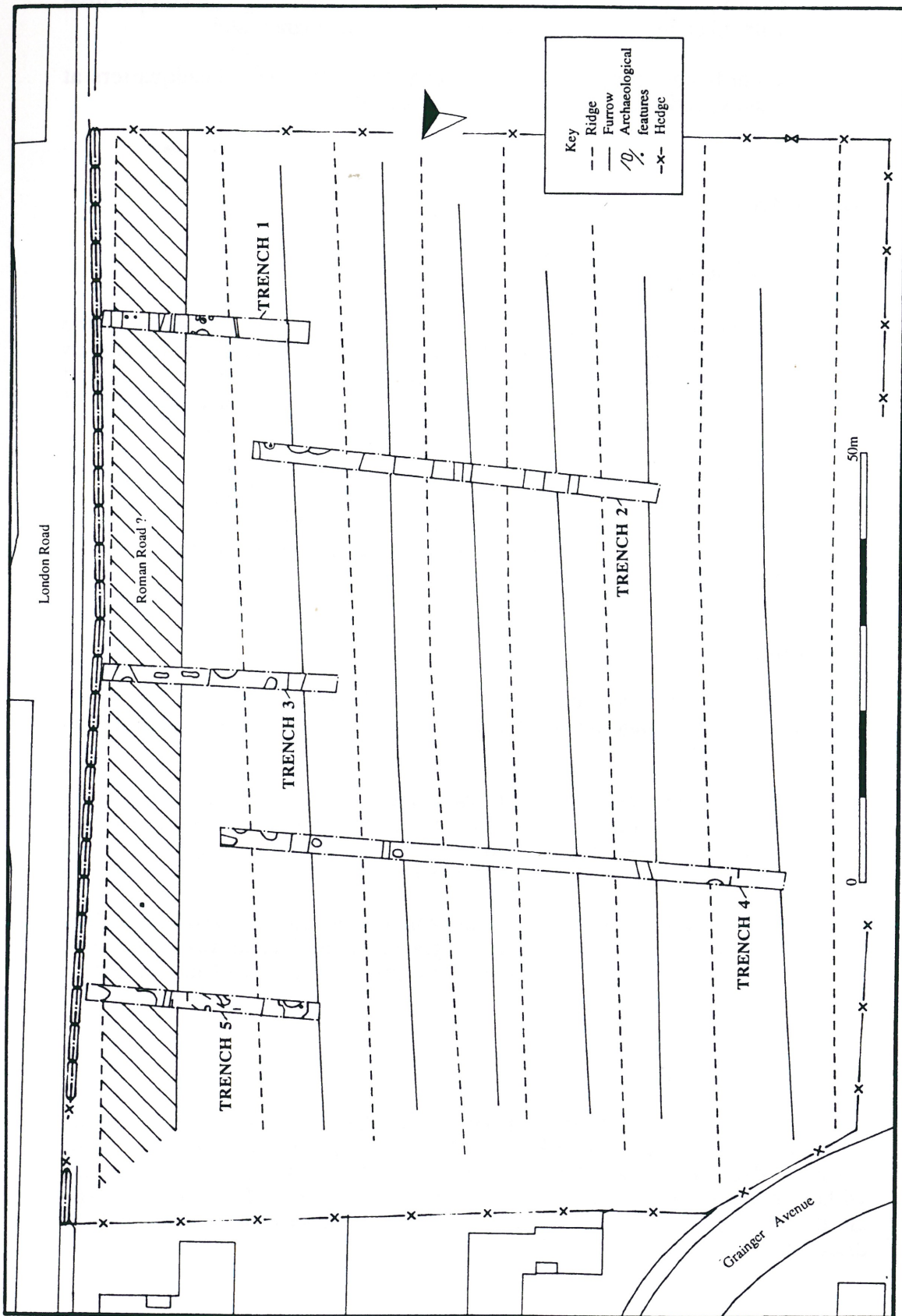


Figure 4 Earthwork Survey & Trench Location Plan

Additional artefactual information was gathered by the excavation team through a controlled scan of the spoil heaps by eye and with the aid of a metal detector

All features were recorded according to the Archaeology Field Units single context recording system to allow effective cross-referencing and comparative analysis with other sites excavated by the A.F.U. at Godmanchester.

All site records and artefacts are held currently at the AFU headquarters at Fulbourn and stored under the site code GOD LR 96.

## **6 RESULTS**

### **6.1 The Earthwork Survey**

The earthworks contour survey carried out by S. Bray and J. Roberts of the A.F.U. on 11-3-96 shows that the field is generally level although the relief rises slightly towards the east. This appeared to be a man-made feature, possibly a part of the ridge and furrow system or surviving evidence of the agger or bank of Roman Ermine Street which runs along the present line of London Road.

In addition, the survey highlighted the remains of a ridge and furrow field system characteristic of medieval and post medieval cultivation. The remnants of seven ridges (10m from centre of ridge to centre of ridge) aligned north south were recorded. No evidence of modern truncation through ploughing or quarrying was identified as a result of the survey. (Fig. 4)

### **6.2 Trenching**

All trenches revealed a considerable density of archaeological features and layers primarily Roman in date but with a notable prehistoric presence identified in trenches 2,3 and 4.

The topsoil, 1 a very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay maintained a fairly uniform depth of c 0.30m across the field whilst the underlying medieval / post medieval plough soil 14 was on average 0.40m deep with a maximum depth of c 1.00m being recorded in the eastern end of Trench 5.

The underlying naturally deposited subsoil of the area consists of a dark yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions and was sealed in all trenches to a varying degree by layers deposited as a result of human action during the Roman period.

### **6.3 Trench 1**

Trench 1 extended 22.5m east/west from the boundary with London Road, cutting through the presumed bank of Ermine Street and part of the ridge and furrow system. Machining reached a depth of 1.20m at the eastern end of the trench without reaching natural deposits and 1.00m to the west. The frequency and clarity of the archaeological deposits increases from west to east and will be discussed starting at the west end of the trench (Fig. 5).

TRENCH 1

Key  
 Burnt clay  
 Burnt clay flecks

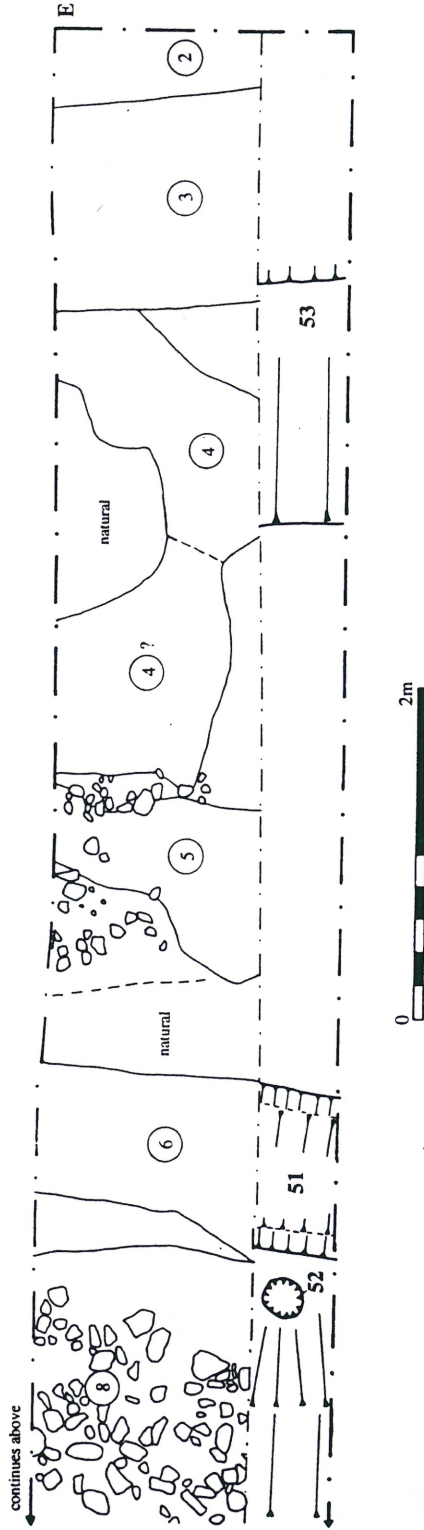
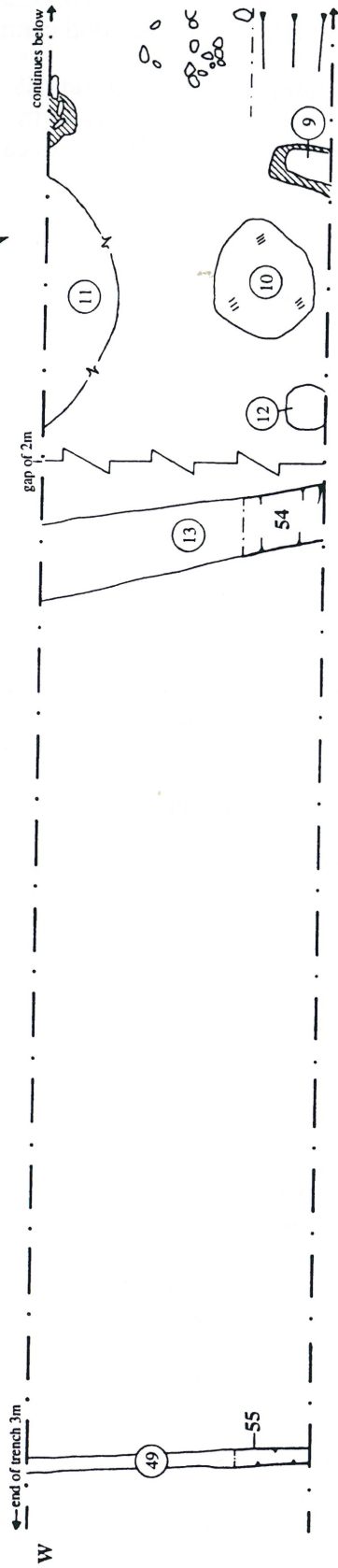


Figure 5 Trench 1 Plan



Feature **55** (49) to the west appears heavily truncated, only surviving to a depth of 6mm. Containing only one fragment of pottery and a residual flint flake this N-S cut may represent part of a fenceline or property boundary. This cut could not be traced within Trench 2 to the north. Finds date from the second century AD.

Lying 6m to the east on a similar alignment to **55** is ditch **54** (6), 0.26m deep, steep sided with a flat base. The increased intensity of activity to the east of **54** suggests that this may be a property boundary although further excavation would be required to confirm this.

Posthole **12** (unexc.), roughly square, side 0.30m with rounded corners is similar in size and shape to **52** to the east. The type of structure suggested by the presence of this posthole is at present unknown.

Pit **11** (unexc.), extending into the N limit of excavation is filled with a brown sandy silty clay with fragments of burnt clay suggesting contemporaneity with adjacent hearths **9** and **10**.

Hearth **10** (unexc.), is roughly circular, Dia. 0.80m contains burnt clay and charcoal and is likely to have been used for food preparation.

Hearth **9** (unexc.), extends into the S limit of excavation. The rectangular cut and presence of a reddish burnt clay lining suggests a more specialised function to that of hearth **10** although this function is at present unknown.

Compacted gravel surface **8**, width 2.00m, depth 0.12m, is set on a foundation of large flint cobbles. Aligned N-S the surface retains the suggestion of a slight camber and is similar in every respect to contemporary surface **5** to the east. Separating the two surfaces is drainage ditch **51** (6), width 1.06m, depth 0.33m, which appears to be contemporary although further excavation is required to clarify this relationship. Clearly the surfaces are constructed for heavy usage given the cobble foundations and the camber aids drainage into ditch **51** which dates from the third century AD. Given the limited width of the evaluation trench it is difficult to ascribe an accurate interpretation to these features although an area of hardstanding adjacent to Ermine Street or a building platform remain valid possibilities.

Compacted gravel surface **4** is the continuation eastwards of surface **5** differentiated by the lack of a cobbled foundation. Stratigraphically this is the earliest deposit exposed and finds date from the early second century AD. Although not excavated this surface was observed dipping into roadside ditch **53** (unexc.) along the eastern limit of excavation. It is likely that this deposit reflects the original construction surface for an early phase of Ermine Street. Ditch **53** and surface **4** are sealed along the eastern end of Trench 1 by the substantial remains of a heavily compacted clay bank comprising a core element **3** and weathered outer shell **2**. This bank has survived truncation by later ploughing due to its proximity to the hedgeline and remains upstanding to a height of c 1.00m. It appears to fill earlier ditch **53** suggesting a phase of repair and possible re-alignment of the roman road dated to the late second / early third century AD.

Overlying the clay bank **2** and apparently sealing all underlying features to a distance of c 13.00m from the eastern limit of excavation is a layer **15** of dark greyish brown sandy silty clay, partially truncated by the later ridge and furrow but still surviving to a maximum depth of 0.18m. Finds date from the second century AD.. but in this instance are likely to be residual.

## 6.4 Trench 1 Summary

At least two distinct phases of the roadside ditch and bank to Ermine Street were observed. The earlier phase of building took place in the early second century and the latter in the late second / early third century AD. The fact that the earlier ditch is infilled by the construction of the later bank suggests a partial re alignment of the Roman road.

Roadside activity consists of ovens and hearths of unknown function with associated rubbish pits. Evidence for possible structures in the form of postholes and cobbled surfaces or possible building platforms was also revealed.

The intensity of archaeological activity appears to decline significantly away from the road as domestic and possibly industrial features give way to boundary ditches.

An examination of the ceramic material collected from the spoil heap adjacent to Trench 1 shows the majority of the pottery dates from the second to third centuries AD.. although there is a notable first and fourth century presence not illustrated by excavated features. The presence of a trimmed base from a fourth century vessel may suggest a later aceramic Saxon presence (C. Going pers. com.).

## 6.5 Trench 2

Trench 2 is aligned east-west, offset from the road by c 17.00m and is 45.00m long, cutting through five distinct ridges of the medieval / post medieval field system.

Machining reached a depth of 0.55m at the eastern end of the trench and 0.65m to the west.

As with Trench 1 there is a marked increase in the number and variety of features towards the eastern end of the excavation which will be discussed starting at the western end of the trench. (Fig. 6)

### Prehistoric Features

The only known feature of a possible prehistoric date from Trench 2 is sub-rectangular pit **140** c 1.00m to the east of ditch **57** (139), sub rectangular in shape, length 0.90m x width 0.50m with rounded corners. Although no finds were recovered to suggest a date for this feature, the yellowish brown sandy silty clay fill is similar to that of other datable features in Trench 3 and Trench 4.

### Roman Period Features

Boundary ditch **56** (128), aligned N-S, width 1.07m, depth 0.30m, east side steeply sloping, west side near vertical, base uneven but roughly horizontal. No finds but alignment suggests a contemporary date with **57** to the east.

Boundary / drainage ditch **57** (124), (123), aligned N-S, width 2.30m, depth 0.40m, east side steeply sloping, west side stepped. The step on the western side of the cut contains a compacted gravel surface (124) The gravel contains occasional small iron fragments which are probably a deliberate inclusion to aid concretion. The purpose of such an internal path or surface is to inhibit erosion

TRENCH 2

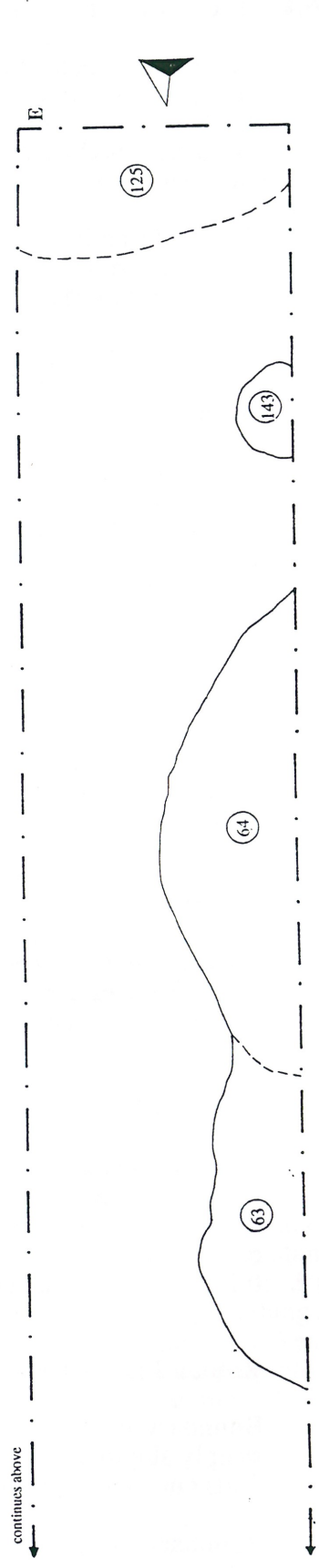
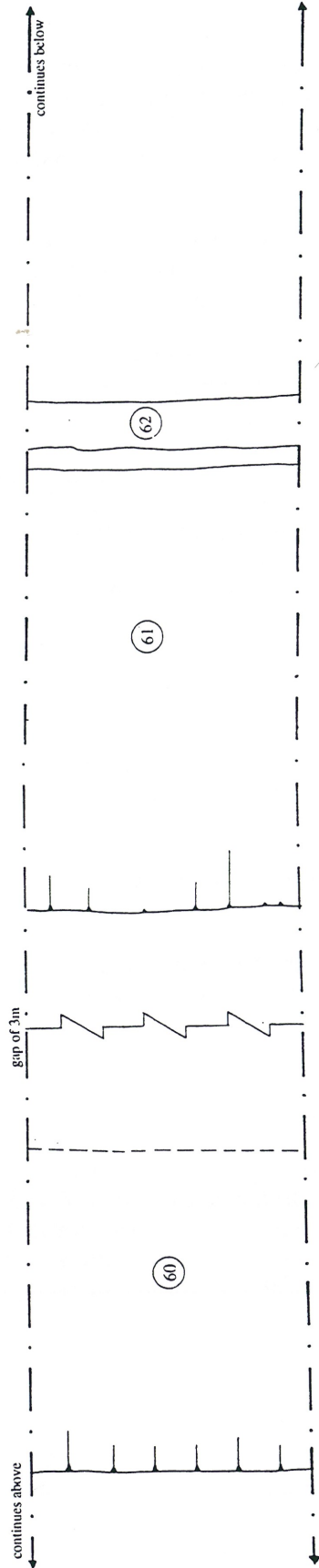
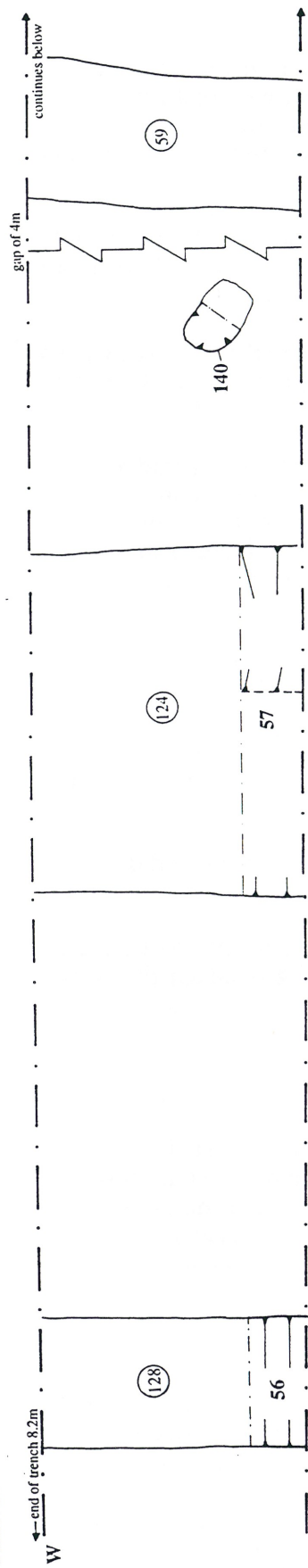


Figure 6 Trench 2 Plan

and aid general ditch maintenance although this practice is (to my own knowledge) more common within urban settlements. The degree of care taken with the construction of this ditch is not commensurate with a boundary / drain of a purely agrarian nature and is more likely to represent a settlement or property boundary. Fill (123) represents the silting up and dis-use of the ditch and contains occasional small, heavily abraded fragments of pottery dating from the second century AD.

Boundary / drainage ditch **59** (unexc.), width 0.75m aligned N-S.

Boundary / drainage ditch **60** (unexc.), width 2.00m aligned N-S. Finds date from the first to second century AD.

Boundary / drainage ditch **61** (unexc.), width 2.70m aligned N-S. Finds date from the first to second century AD.

Boundary / drainage ditch **62** (unexc.), width 0.30m aligned N-S.

Rubbish pits **63 / 64** (unexc.), extending into the southern limit of excavation. The relationship between the two intercutting pits was uncertain and the irregular shape in plan suggests the possibility of a larger pit group.

Posthole **143** (unexc.), irregular in plan and extending into the southern limit of excavation. Several medium sized flint cobbles were visible within the fill, possibly the tops of packing stones. No other associated postholes were visible within Trench 2.

Rubbish pit **125** (unexc.) extends into the N, S and E limits of excavation and appeared to contain substantially more frequent pottery inclusions than pits **63**, and **64** to the west. Finds date from the late third to fourth century AD...

## **6.6 Trench 2 Summary**

The majority of the features recorded in Trench 2 are boundary and drainage ditches dating from the first to third centuries AD. Whilst it is not possible to interpret phase and function from such a small sample area it is worth noting that none of these features are readily visible in any of the other evaluation trenches. This suggests that the evolution of property and enclosure boundaries is likely to be more complex than is readily apparent from the Trench plan.

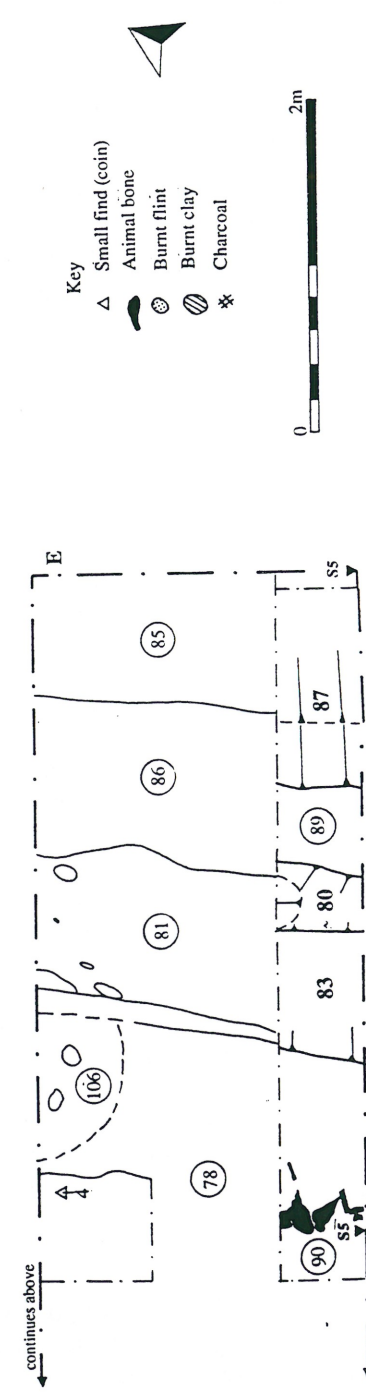
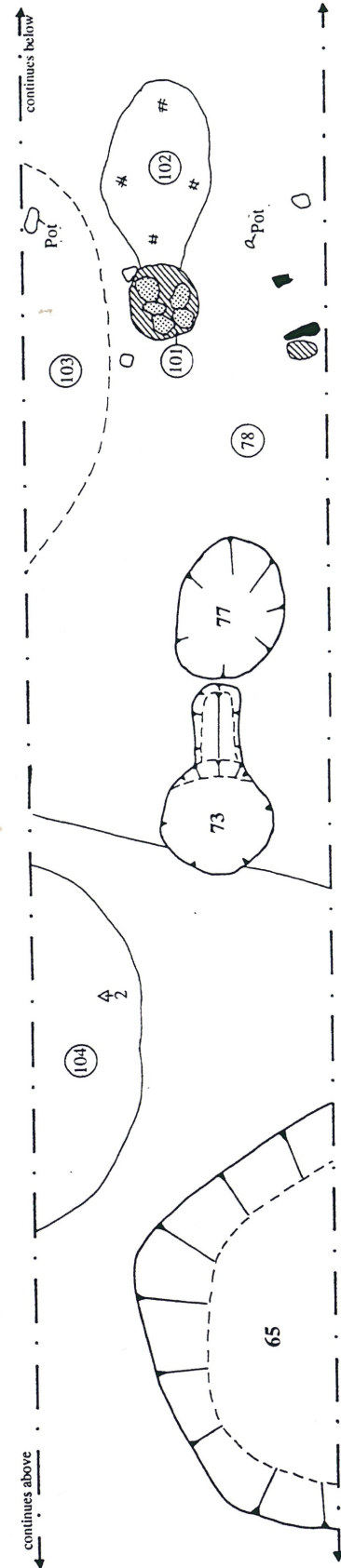
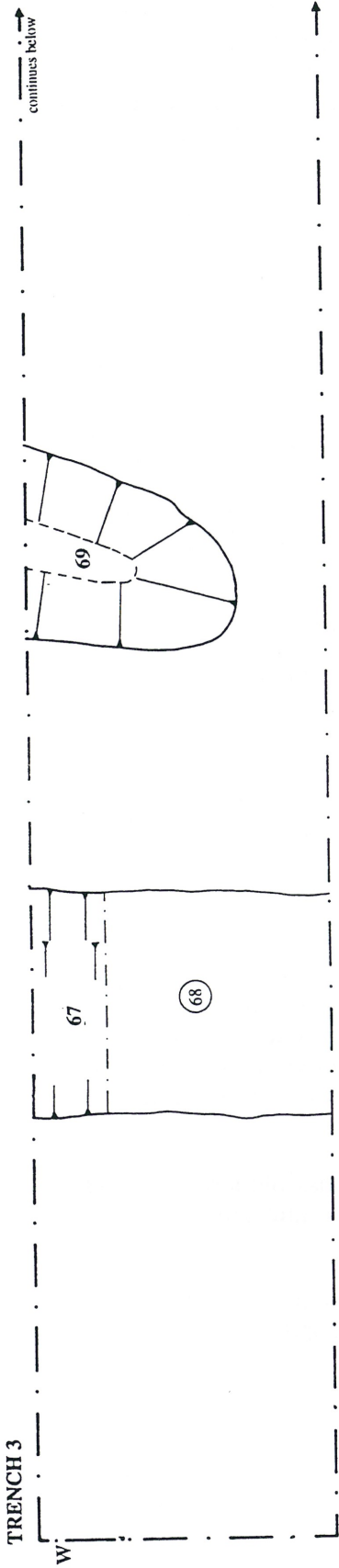
The presence of one posthole suggests the presence of a possible structure and rubbish pits indicate occupation of a domestic nature in the late third to fourth centuries AD.

An examination of the ceramic material collected from the spoil heap adjacent to Trench 2 shows the majority of the pottery dates from the second century.

## **6.7 Trench 3**

Trench 3 extended 28.00m east-west from the boundary with London Road cutting through the roadside bank of Ermine Street and part of the ridge and furrow system.

Machining reached a depth of 0.95m at the eastern end of the trench without reaching natural deposits and 0.85m to the west (Fig. 7 & 8).



- Key**
- △ Small find (coin)
  - Animal bone
  - Burnt flint
  - ◐ Burnt clay
  - ✱ Charcoal



Figure 7 Trench 3 Plan

TRENCH 3 SECTION 5

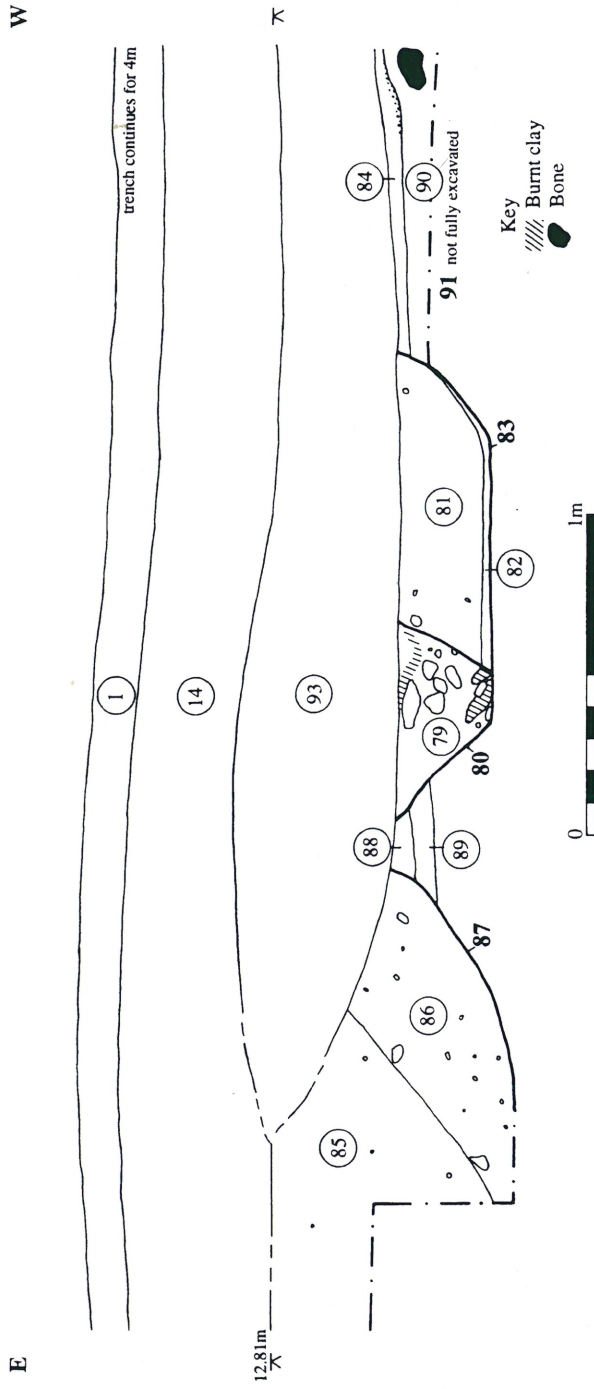


Figure 8 Trench 3 Detail of North Facing Section

## Prehistoric Features

Ditch terminal **69** (70), aligned N-S and extending into the N limit of excavation, width 1.15m, depth 0.65m with sides sloping steeply at *c* 60 degrees to the horizontal, base concave, width .10m. Fill (70) is a dark yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional worked flint flakes. Although the amount of worked flint on its own is insufficient to prove the date of this ditch its fill is noticeably lighter than the roman ditches in the area and the profile is the same as other ditches of late Neolithic origin excavated to the north east of Godmanchester (S. Kenny pers. com.).

## Roman Period Features

Boundary / drainage ditch **67** (68), (92), aligned N-S, width 1.50m, depth 0.57m, sides are concave and base is flat. Fills contain moderate amounts of pottery, occasional bone and slag. In plan this ditch appears to continue in Trench 4 as **137**. The finds date from between A.D.140 to A.D.170 and include an extremely rare example of a British made wine amphora from the Brockley Hill potteries.

Rubbish pit **65** (66), (94), possibly circular, extends into the southern limit of excavation. Maximum visible width 2.70m, excavated to a depth of *c* 1.00m below the natural sub soil before health and safety considerations prevented further work. Fills contained moderate to frequent amounts of pottery and bone of a domestic nature in a wide variety of types and forms. The presence of such a large domestic rubbish pit is clear evidence of habitation in the immediate area. Finds date to the second to third century AD.

Pit **104** (unexc.), possibly circular, extending into the northern limit of excavation. Fill consists of a mid grey brown silty clay containing occasional flecks of charcoal and burnt daub. Similar in every respect to pit **103** to the east.

Layer **78=84** depth 0.20m extends *c* 12.00m from the eastern limit of excavation. Consisting of a yellowish brown sandy silty clay this layer seals earlier pit **90** and is truncated by later ovens **73**, **77**, **101** / **102** and later pits **103**, **105** and **106**. This layer was only partially removed to gain an idea of its depth, so that the extent of underlying features and possibly earlier stratified layers is unknown. The depth of this layer may be a result of the partial erosion of the roadside bank visible in section at the eastern end of Trench 3. . Finds date to the second century AD.

“Keyhole” Oven **73**, (71), (72), (74), length 1.30m, max width 0.58m, depth 0.20m. The edges of the cut are discoloured dusky red, fill (71) contains occasional charcoal, burnt daub, burnt chalk and shell fragments. This represents the infilling of the oven after use whereas underlying fill (74) contains frequent charcoal flecks and fragments from the firing / use of the oven. . Finds date to the second century AD.

Hearth **77**, (75), (76), ovate in plan, length 0.70m, width 0.50m, depth 80mm lies immediately to the east of oven **73**. Apart from the obvious differences of shape and size, the fills of **73** contained a higher frequency of burnt bone and carbonised seeds suggesting a domestic / cooking function. This is supported by the analysis of the environmental sample (No. 6).

Hearth **101** (unexc.), roughly circular in plan, diameter 0.36m, packed with burnt flint cobbles set in a dusky red burnt clay matrix. Distinct in terms of construction from both oven **73** and hearth **77**, feature **101** and associated rakeout pit **102** suggest a variety of different activities taking place.

Rakeout pit **102** (unexc.), length 1.20m, width 0.76m, ovate in plan extending from the eastern edge of **101**, contains frequent charcoal and occasional burnt daub from the cleaning of the hearth.

Pit **103** (unexc.), similar in every respect to pit **104** which lies c 5m to the west.

Pit **105** (unexc.), contains a dark grey brown silty clay fill. Little of this feature is visible as it is truncated by oven **73** and runs into the southern limit of excavation.

Pit **106** (unexc.), contains a light grey brown sandy silty clay fill. Notable for the moderate inclusions of large slag fragments and occasional charcoal indicating use for industrial waste disposal. Truncated to the east by ditch **87** and extending into the northern limit of excavation.

Ditch **80**, (79), aligned N-S, width 0.55m, depth 0.37m. Contains a very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay fill with frequent patches of dusky red burnt clay and flint and limestone cobbles, particularly towards the base of the cut. The nature of the fill suggests that the ditch is used to dump the waste from hearths and ovens as it ceases to be maintained. Truncates earlier ditch **83**. Finds date to the mid second century AD.

Ditch **83**, (81), (82), aligned N-S, width unknown due to truncation to the east by ditch **80**, depth 0.30m. Fills contain occasional burnt clay and charcoal flecks. Finds date to the mid second century AD.

Ditch **87** (85), (86), (part. exc.), aligned N-S this may possibly be the continuation of ditch **53** in Trench 1. Although this ditch was not fully excavated it appears to have been partially filled by the eroding roadside bank to Ermine Street (85), the core of which is faintly visible in the eastern limit of excavation. Finds date to the second to third century AD.

Layer **88**, depth 50mm, truncated to the west by ditch **80** and to the east by ditch **87**. Consists of a greyish brown fine clay silt containing finely stratified ashy deposits. Represents occupational build-up over underlying surface **89**.

Layer **89**, depth 60mm, consists of compacted small to medium flint gravel forming a level surface. The ashy deposits within **88** may suggest the presence of contemporary ovens although no stratigraphic link can be made with the ovens present further to the west in Trench 3.

Pit **91**, (90), (part. exc.), depth and extent are unknown due to the presence of sealing layer **78**. Initial attempts to excavate a portion of this feature revealed the articulated skeleton of a cow or ox which has been left in-situ. The presence of this pit (dated to the second century AD.) is particularly important: it proves the survival of features sealed by roadside stratigraphy is excellent and that a first century (and earlier prehistoric) presence on the site is unlikely to become fully apparent until it is possible to excavate a much greater percentage of these deposits. Finds date to the second to third century AD.

Layer **93**, depth 0.40m (max.), consists of a loosely compacted very dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with moderate to frequent inclusions of flint gravel. This layer is present throughout the length of the trench becoming thinner to the west. It appears to seal all earlier Roman activity within the trench and may represent overspill and erosion from Ermine Street caused by a lack of maintenance. Although no features were noted truncating this layer within the trench this does not deny the possibility of their existence elsewhere in the development area.



Layer 95, difficult to define in section this deposit is probably part of layer 93 distinguished only by a greater degree of compaction.

## 6.8 Trench 3 Summary

Similar in many respects to Trench 1 to the south, the density of rubbish pits appears greater here and serves to highlight the presence of domestic activity associated with an extra mural roadside settlement. Whether this activity is contemporaneous with the industrial activity also present is uncertain and could only be determined as a result of further excavation.

The majority of features date from the second to third centuries although significant first century deposits would not necessarily be apparent due to the presence of later stratigraphy sealing such remains. Later deposits were not entirely removed during the evaluation due to time constraints.

An examination of the ceramic material collected from the spoil heap adjacent to Trench 3 shows the majority of the pottery dates from the second to third centuries AD.. although there is a notable fourth century presence. As in Trench 1 the presence of a trimmed base from a fourth century vessel may suggest a later aceramic Saxon presence (C. Going pers. com.).

## 6.9 Trench 4

Trench 4 is aligned east-west, offset from the road by *c* 17.00m and is 60.00m long, cutting through six distinct ridges of the medieval / post medieval field system.

Machining reached a depth of 0.95m at the eastern end of the trench and 0.55m to the west. (Fig. 9)

### Prehistoric Features

Ditch 135 (unexc.), aligned N-S, width 0.30m. The nature of the fill and the lack of any visible artefacts suggests a possible prehistoric date for this ditch.

Ditch 130 (129), aligned N-S, width 0.30m depth 30mm, base concave. The nature of the fill and the lack of any visible artefacts suggests a possible prehistoric date for this ditch although the degree of truncation is too great to allow a more definite interpretation.

Ditch 132 (131), aligned N-S, width 0.30m, depth 50mm, sides are concave, base is flat. The nature of the fill and the lack of any visible artefacts suggests a possible prehistoric date for this ditch.

Ditch 134 (133), aligned N-S, width 0.20m, depth 50mm. The nature of the fill and the lack of any visible artefacts suggests a possible prehistoric date for this ditch.

It is of course possible given the degree of truncation of ditches 130, 132 and 134 that these features may not date to the prehistoric period.

Pit 142, (122), (126), (127), oval in plan, length 1.20m, width 0.90m depth 0.35m, sides concave, base irregular. Primary fill contains frequent charcoal flecks and fragments, pottery, animal bone, flint flakes and two flint scrapers all of Late

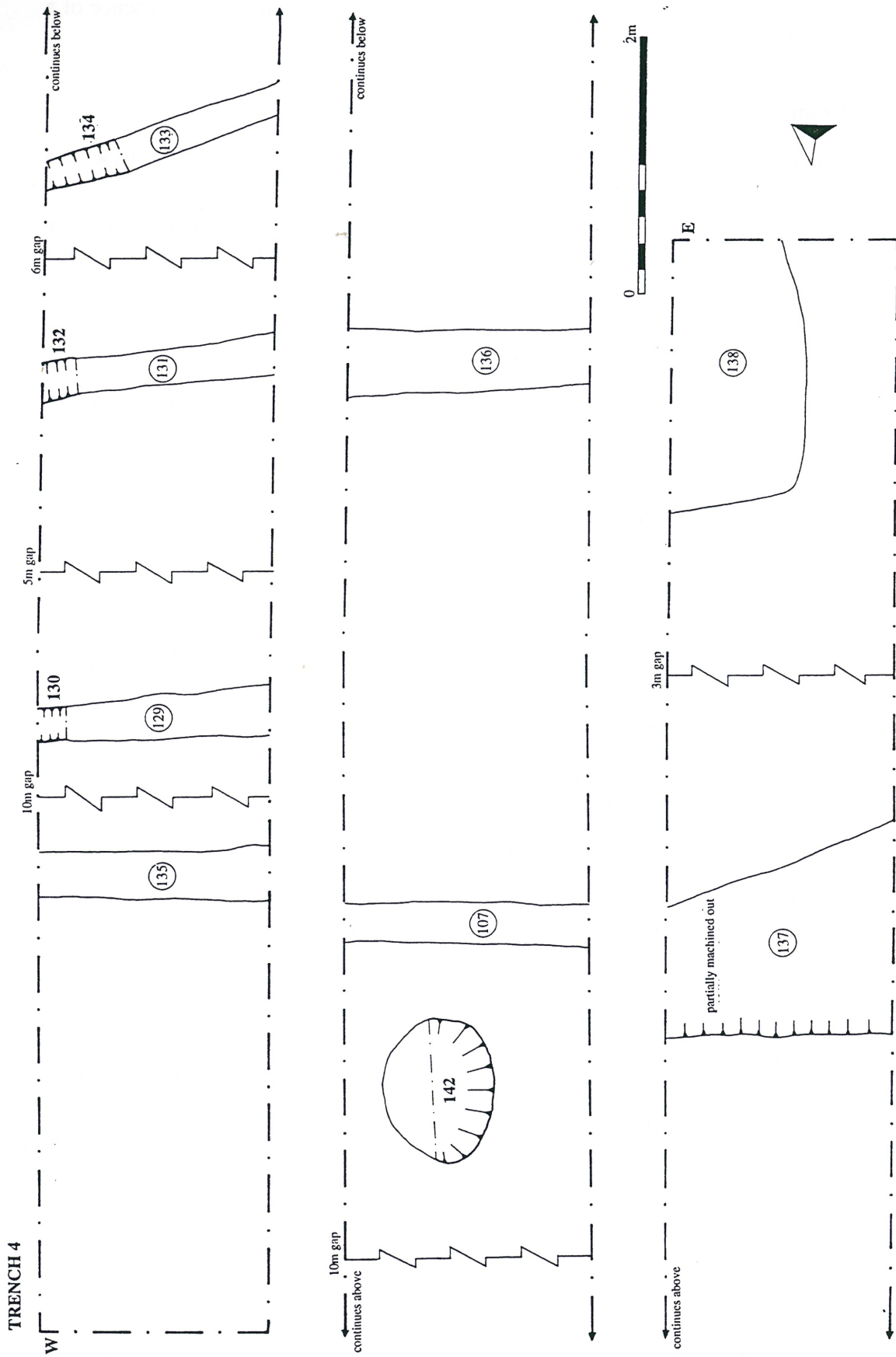


Figure 9 Trench 4 Plan

Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age date. Soil samples taken produced the remains of two wheat grains in a poor state of preservation. The broad range of materials within pit 142 suggests a domestic function and should indicate the presence of a settlement within the immediate area.

### **Roman Period Features**

Ditch 107, aligned N-S, width 50mm, depth 0.10m, identified as the base of a medieval/post medieval furrow filled with lower plough soil 14.

Ditch 136 (unexc.), aligned N-S, width 0.40m. The nature of the fill and the lack of any visible artefacts suggests a possible prehistoric date for this ditch although it is aligned with ditch 137 to the east suggesting a probable Roman date.

Ditch 137 (unexc.), aligned N-S, width 0.90m. In plan at least this appears to be the continuation of ditch 67 in Trench 3, dated to the mid second century AD.

Pit 138 (unexc.), extends into the eastern limit of excavation. Rubbish pit of uncertain function.

### **6.10 Trench 4 Summary**

Apart from several rubbish pits of a presumed Roman date at the eastern end of the trench the majority of features present are boundary and drainage ditches.

The notable exception is pit 142 containing pottery from at least 7 different Beaker or Grooved Ware vessels. The absence of rim sherds means that further comparative analysis will be required to positively assign this assemblage to a particular period. The variety of different vessels suggests a domestic function indicating the presence of a possible settlement within the immediate area.

An examination of the ceramic material collected from the spoil heap adjacent to Trench 4 shows the majority of the pottery dates from the second century AD. although there is a notable first and fourth century presence. A trimmed base from a fourth century vessel may suggest a later aceramic Saxon presence (C. Going pers. Com.). Also of interest is a fragment of a rare triple vase most commonly associated with religious sites such as temples. The finds density decreases from east to west as may be expected although there is still a significant finds presence to the western limit of excavation.

### **6.11 Trench 5**

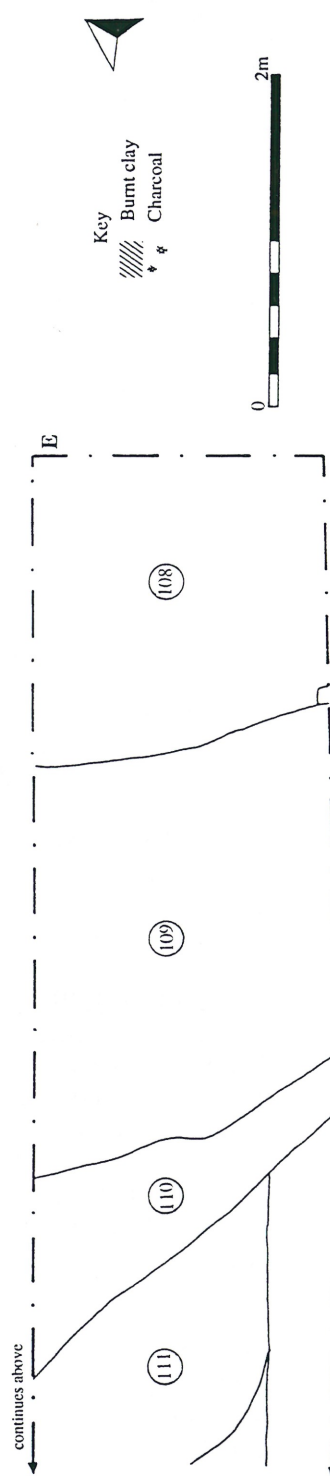
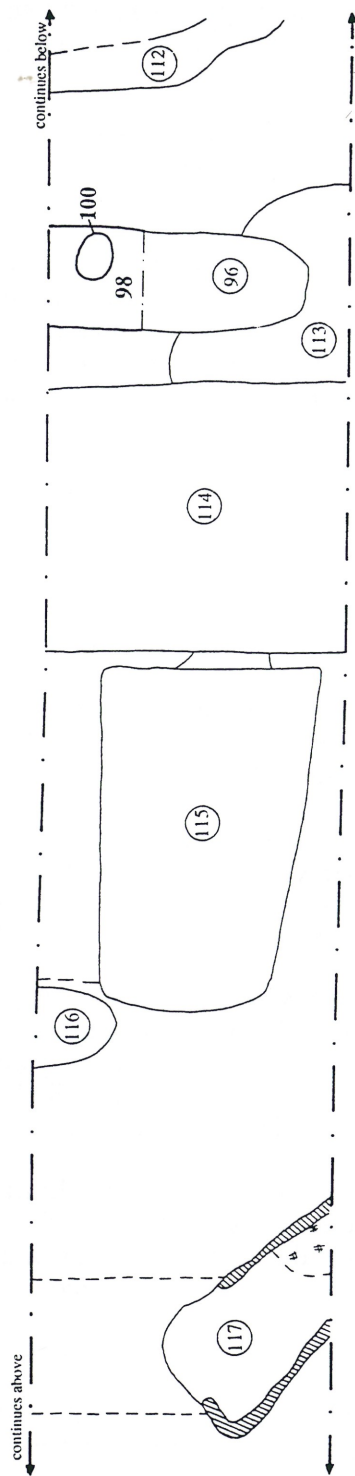
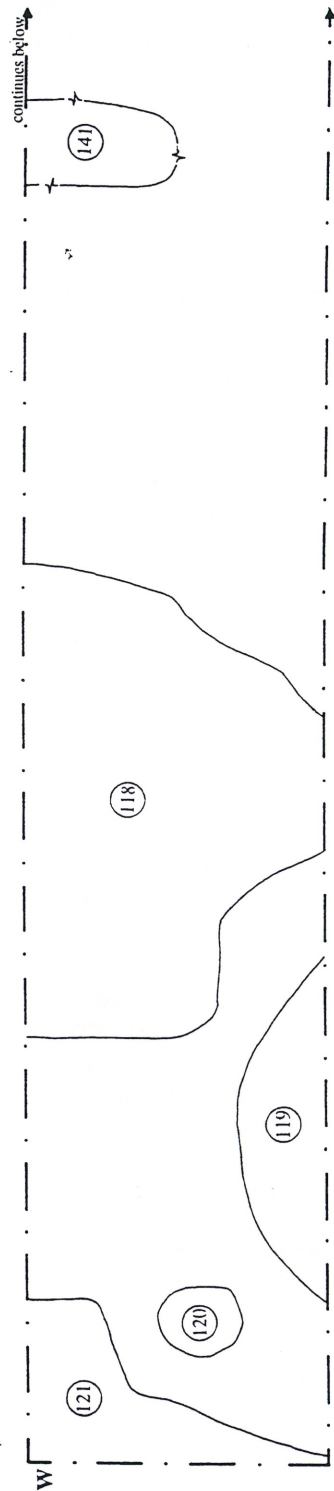
Trench 5 extended 25.00m east-west from the boundary with London Road cutting through the roadside bank of Ermine Street and part of the ridge and furrow system.

Machining reached a depth of 1.35m at the eastern end of the trench without reaching natural deposits and 0.85m to the west.

No features of pre-Roman date were noted within this trench. (Fig. 10)

Pit 121 (unexc.), extends into the western limit of excavation, fill consists of a mid to light grey brown silty clay. Fill is similar to that of 118 to the east.

TRENCH 5



Key  
 Burnt clay  
 Charcoal



Figure 10 Trench 5 Plan

Posthole **120** (unexc.), aligned N-S, sub rectangular in plan, length 0.42m, width 0.30m with a mid grey brown silty clay fill. Although only one posthole is present within the trench its size and alignment parallel to the road suggest the likely presence of a building.

Pit **119** (unexc.), extends into the southern limit of excavation, fill consists of a dark grey silty clay with frequent charcoal and daub flecks and fragments. Finds date from the second century AD.

Pit / pits **118** (unexc.), irregular in plan suggesting more than one feature although the top fill is uniform consisting of a mid to light grey brown silty clay. Fill is similar to that of **121** to the west. Finds date from the second century AD.

Pit / oven? **141** (unexc.), sub rectangular in plan, aligned N-S, with a mid to dark grey silty clay fill containing frequent burnt daub and charcoal. Excavation is required to clarify the function of this feature.

Furnace? **117** (unexc.), sub rectangular in plan, extending into the southern limit of excavation. Distinct from other ovens and hearths both in shape and due to the presence of a thick layer of burnt clay which appears to be lining the cut. The silty clay fill contains patches of burnt clay and charcoal. Excavation is required to clarify the function of this feature although it almost certainly industrial in nature.

Pit **116** (unexc.), extends into the northern limit of excavation, fill consists of a dark grey silty clay with occasional charcoal and daub flecks and fragments. Finds date from the fourth century AD.

Pit **115** (unexc.), trapezoidal in plan with evidence of a possible flue or outflow to the east which is either cut by or runs into ditch **114**. Fill consists of a reddish brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and daub flecks and fragments. The unusual shape of this feature suggests a specialised function, probably industrial in nature although excavation is required to establish this function. Finds date from the early second century AD.

Ditch **114** (unexc), aligned N-S, width 1.65m, fill consists of a very dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and daub flecks and fragments. Finds date from the third century AD. The primary fill of this ditch may well contain industrial residues associated with the use of **115** to the west.

Ditch **98** (96), (97), aligned N-S, width 0.60m, depth 0.16m, sides slope steeply gradually merging to form a flat base, southern end terminates within the trench. The fills consist of a very dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and daub flecks and fragments similar to the fill of ditch **114** to the west with which it may be contemporary. Finds date from the second to third century AD.

Pit **113** (unexc), extending into the southern limit of excavation, truncated by ditches **113** and **114**. The fill consists of a reddish brown silty clay with moderate charcoal and daub flecks and fragments similar in many respects to the fill of pit **115** to the west. Finds date from the first to second century AD.

Pit fills (109), (110), (111) and (112) represent the fills of a large group of rubbish pits extending into the northern and southern limits of excavation. Although the limits of individual pits were not defined a second to third century date has been ascribed to the ceramic finds. Of particular note is the presence of pottery sherds from several large vessels used for grain storage of a similar style to those found in pit **65** within Trench 3. Once again this would tend to indicate the presence of a barn or barns in the vicinity.

Layer **108** extends into the eastern limit of excavation and represents the outer shell of the clay bank adjacent to Ermine Street and is the same as **2** in Trench 1.

#### **6.12 Trench 5 Summary**

Although evaluation constraints did not permit the excavation of the vast majority of features within this trench it would seem that the intensity of domestic pitting and industrial activity is greater than within Trenches 1 and 3. Specific industrial processes are implied by the presence of a possible furnace and also trapezoidal pit **115**.

It is highly likely that structures or buildings of a domestic and possibly industrial nature are present in the immediate vicinity although only one substantial posthole was revealed within Trench 5.

An examination of the ceramic material collected from the spoil heap adjacent to Trench 5 shows a higher incidence of fourth century pottery than in any of the other trenches although the significance of this factor is at present unclear

## 7 DISCUSSION

The desktop survey suggested that the site had medium to high potential for Romano - British remains such as burials, early field systems, features belonging to the Roman Road, and some potential for earlier prehistoric activity. This potential was borne out by the evaluation.

Although the vast majority of the features revealed date to the Roman Period at least three features of an earlier prehistoric date were identified and partially excavated. Two pits and a ditch terminal appear to date from the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age and four other heavily truncated ditches at the west end of Trench 4 may also date to this period.

The nature and boundaries of the prehistoric activities revealed remain unknown. The contents of pit 142 suggest the presence of a settlement in the immediate vicinity. This may prove to be of considerable significance given the proximity of the development area to the site of the huge ritual Neolithic "horned" enclosure and cursus to the north east of Godmanchester at Rectory Farm (McAvoy *forthcoming*). It would appear that this unique monument acted as a focus of ritual activity for hundreds of years although any associated settlements have yet to be identified.

There is substantial evidence for a wide range of different activities during the Roman period. Industrial and domestic activity is concentrated in a band between 25m-30m wide extending along the western edge of Ermine Street which apparently lies directly below the line of present day London Road. This activity becomes less intense away from the road, giving way to boundary and drainage ditches of a more agrarian nature.

It is worthwhile noting that only one of the twenty-five recorded Roman period ditch segments can be traced directly between two trenches. This would tend to indicate a complex system of field and property boundaries, although further work is clearly required in order to gain an insight into the usage and development of the area as a whole.

As suggested by the earthwork survey a clay bank running alongside Ermine street has survived along the length of the eastern field boundary. Within Trench 1 it can be seen to be upstanding to almost 1.00m built upon and filling a ditch presumed to relate to an earlier phase of the Roman road. Provisional dating indicates that the bank was constructed in the early third century AD.

A provisional examination of the pottery recovered suggests that settlement commenced at the beginning of the second century AD. and continued through into the late fourth century, with the greatest finds density dating to the late second century. First century material is present, however, and is not likely to be fully represented in the evaluation results as many earlier features remain obscured by overlying second century stratigraphy.

The majority of the ceramics are commonly associated with domestic activity indicating the presence of an extra-mural settlement within the development area. The presence of a significant quantity of large storage jars within both ditch and pit fills is a good indicator that barns for the storage of grain are also present (C. Going pers. comm.). In addition the site has produced the first British made wine amphora found in Cambridgeshire. Produced for a limited period only by the Brockley Hill potteries in the mid second century AD. these vessels are extremely rare (C. Going pers. comm.).

The industrial activity present appears to be contemporary with the domestic and agricultural activity. The presence of metal working waste in the form of bronze and iron slag within pits, ditches and ovens indicates that smelting and possibly recycling are taking place. Many different types of oven and possibly one furnace in Trench 5 indicate a range of activities, although further excavation would be required to identify them.

The roadside sequence is particularly well preserved as it is sealed by a possible abandonment layer in the late fourth century which survives to a depth of up to c 0.30m particularly in Trench 3. Whilst no early Saxon features were visible during machining this does not deny the possibility of their existence. Several bases of fourth century pottery have been trimmed into rough discs and this practice is sometimes associated with a Saxon presence.

Twelve soil samples were taken from a range of features including ditch, pit and hearth fills. Cereal grains were generally poorly preserved although smaller seeds survived in slightly better condition. No waterlogged deposits were encountered although their presence cannot be entirely ruled out given the likelihood of wells and the unknown depth of the large rubbish pits.

## CONCLUSION

The site is situated in one of the last undeveloped pockets of land off Ermine street to the south of the core of the Roman town of Godmanchester. Remains of roadside extra mural Romano - British activity have been revealed in this location in an excellent state of preservation unlikely to be repeated along Ermine Street to the north. Excavation below the level of the medieval / post - medieval ploughsoil (Between 0.40m and 0.80m below ground level) as part of the proposed development will have a severe impact on the survival of archaeological remains in the area.

The hedge line bordering London Road would appear to lie over the roadside ditch and bank on the west side of Ermine Street which currently survives to within 0.30m of the present ground level in places. Removal of this boundary is likely to have a severe effect on the survival of the roadside sequence.

The greatest density of Roman deposits extends roughly 30m from the present Ermine Street boundary. However features extend across the site and the importance of placing these activities within the context of the surrounding environment cannot however be over emphasised. (Industrial and agrarian activities may be seasonal and carried out by a single community or part of a more complex series of processes).

The association of roadside activity with settlement, property and field boundaries increases the overall archaeological value of these features.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would also like to thank Oscar Aldred, Spencer Cooper and Scott Kenney for their efforts to excavate and record a considerable density of archaeological deposits within a limited time span.

This project was managed by Ben Robinson, the environmental analysis was conducted by Duncan Schlee, analysis of the faunal remains by Lorraine Higbee, analysis of the pottery by C. Going (Roman) and J Last (Prehistoric), and the report illustrations were prepared by Melodie Pace.

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## APPENDIX A

### **An assessment of the faunal remains recovered from New School Site, Godmanchester**

By Lorrain Higbee

A total of 4116g of animal bone was recovered from hand excavated features. All material recovered was analysed in order to determine species present, preservation and potential for further analysis. Fragmentary material was not identified unless it bore clear features typical of the particular species. Unidentified fragmentary material (UID) has been quantified by context in the appendix.

All of the typical domesticates are represented within the assemblage. These include cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*), pig (*Sus scrofa*), and horse (*Equus caballus*). The individual skeletal elements of these domesticates (with the exception of horse) have been separated into use/function categories (see table 1). The only other faunal element in the assemblage is a bird (*Ave*) represented by a single metatarsal.

Several cattle bones show clear signs of primary carcass dismemberment, these include cut marks on a proximal humerus (26), a metacarpal (29) ribs (15) and around the dorsal condyle at the back of the mandible (79). The position of butchery marks on the mandible from context (79) is consistent with detachment of the mandible from the skull, thus enabling the tongue to be removed easily (Maltby, 1979:38).

Pathological conditions are also only evident on cattle bones. Two metacarpals (both from (29) but different individuals) have exostosis, or new bone growth on the surface of the bone. On one this condition is only very slight, but on the other the exostosis is more severe and covers the distal diaphysis on both the posterior and anterior sides. The cause of exostosis is often indeterminable, but may be due to inflammation or infection which increases blood supply to the area. Enlarged entheses, or areas of bone where ligaments and tendons are attached has also been noted on cattle a metacarpal (29) and a phalanx prima (35).

In general the assemblage is extremely well preserved and only a few fragments have suffered slight physical and chemical weathering. Other fragments are either completely charred (black) or calcined (blush blue to white) indicating that the bone was defleshed when it came in to contact with fire. Unfortunately these fragments were too distorted to facilitate species determination.

## APPENDIX A FAUNAL REMAINS

Categ.	Skeletal Element	Use?Function
A	mandible, loose tooth, maxillar, & skull frags.	little meat value, however can be boiled for brawn
B	scapular, humerus, pelvis, & femur	most meat value, however scapular & pelvis can be treated as waste
C	radius, ulna, tibia	meat bones of less quality
D	metapodials & horn cores	bone tool & ornament manufacture
E	carpals & tarsals	little value except for brawn
F	phalanges & sesamoids	glue production
G	atlas, axis, sacrum, patellas, & fibula	little meat value

Fig.11 GODLR 96 Table 1: Faunal Remains Categories

Trench	Context No.	No. UID	Mammal	Category	Comments
1	6	5	s/g ?horse	D	Immature calcaneus
1	15	* 6			*2 rib frags. with clear cut marks
2	16		s/g	A & B	
2	17	1	cattle	A	c.21-24 months at death (Grigson, 1982)
2	18	1			
2	20	4	s/g cattle	A D	
1	26	2	cattle	D	Clear cut markson proximal humerus
1	27	3			
1	28	1			

Trench	Context No.	No. UID	Mammal	Category	Comments
3	29	5	cattle	A & *D	*2 complete metacarpals, 1 with large entheses, 1 with severe exostosis & cut marks
			pig	E	
3	30	6	?s/g	B	
4	34	2			
4	35	1	cattle	*F	*large entheses on posterior calcaneus
			?horse		
4	36	1			
4	37	1			
5	44	12	horse		phalanx prima
			cattle	B	complete femur the charred "stripes"
5	45	9	s/g	A	
			?cattle	C	
5	46	8			
5	48	2			
2	61		cattle	A	
3	66	* 8	cattle	D	*1 charred frag. metatarsus
			bird		
3	68	3	s/g	B	
3	71	2			
3	75	* 5			*all charred/calcined
3	75	3			
3	81	24	cattle	*G	*vertebrate frag. with cut marks
3	82	2	s/g	A	
			cattle	A & C	
3	79	2	s/g	B	
			cattle	* A	*numerous cut marks, probably due to removal of the tongue
3	84	12			
3	86		pig	D	
3	90	1	cattle	* A	*fragmenary skull & loose molar
3	92	6			
3	93	2			
3	94	1			
5	96	5	cattle	A	
			s/g	D	
5	97	1	cattle	A	
			?horse		?tarsal
2	123	3			
4	127				numerous frags. of very fragile bone

Fig.12 GODLR 96 Faunal Remains Catalogue

## APPENDIX B: ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

### An assessment of charred plant remains from Godmanchester, London Road (GODLR 96).

By Duncan Schlee

Twelve samples were taken from a range of features, including ditch, pit and hearth fills, excavated during the assessment. Samples 3 and 12 were 40 litre samples, the remainder were 10 litre samples. Samples were processed using a Siraf-type flotation machine, with flots collected in a 0.50mm mesh. Samples 4,10,11, and 12, are from features of Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age date, all the other samples are from Roman period features.

Sample no:	Context no:	Feature no:	Context type:	Sample size:	Trench no:
1	6	51	Ditch fill	10 L	1
2	15	-	Layer	10 L	1
3	66	65	Pit fill	40 L	3
4	70	69	Ditch fill	10 L	3
5	74	73	Hearth fill	10 L	3
6	76	77	Hearth fill	10 L	3
7	82	83	Ditch fill	10 L	3
8	107	-	Ditch fill	10 L	4
9	123	57	Ditch fill	10 L	2
10	122	142	Pit fill	10 L	4
11	122	142	Pit fill	10 L	4
12	127	142	Pit fill	40 L	4

Fig.13 GODLR 96 Environmental Samples Catalogue

## RESULTS

The floating fractions of the samples were sorted for charred seeds. All the samples contained moderate quantities of fragmented wood charcoal. Only five samples contained other charred plant macrofossils. Cereal grains were generally poorly preserved, puffed, distorted, and fragmented. Smaller seeds were generally slightly better preserved. The heavy residues were insufficiently dry at the time to enable them to be sorted, but they may contain evidence of the type of industrial processes carried

out on the site in the Roman period. Apart from wood charcoal, only two poorly preserved cereal grains were recovered from the fills of Bronze age pit [142].

### Sample 3

- 11 Indeterminate cereal grains (*Triticum* sp?).
- 2 Spelt wheat grains (*Triticum spelta*).
- 3 Bread wheat grains (*Triticum aestivum*).
- 4 Indeterminate legume seeds.
- 4 Indeterminate weed seeds.

### Sample 5

- 1 Unidentifiable cereal grain.

### Sample 6

- 7 Unidentifiable cereal grain fragments.
- 3 Emmer wheat grains (*Triticum dicoccum*).
- 1 Spelt wheat grain (*Triticum spelta*).
- 4 Knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*).
- 3 Fat Hen (*Chenopodium album*).
- 1 Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*).
- 4 Indeterminate grasses.
- 1 Spelt wheat glume base.
- 5 Indeterminate legumes.
- 15 Indeterminate weed.

### Sample 12

- 2 Wheat grains (*Triticum* sp.).

## INTERPRETATION

It is clear that there is a marked difference between the two hearth samples (5 and 6). Sample 5 was taken from a "keyhole" shaped hearth thought to have an industrial function. Sample 6 was taken from a circular hearth, thought to be of domestic function. The quantity and relative diversity of plants represented in sample 6 support its likely domestic function, the plant remains probably originating from the preparation of food and use of weeds etc. for fuel.

Sample 3, was taken from a "rubbish pit", and from the relative frequency of charred seeds, appears to have contained domestic debris.

The range and quantity of charred plant remains is not great and does not offer much scope for interpretation. However the general predominance of wood charcoal in relation to other plant remains in the other samples suggests that the majority of charred material originates from the disposal of cleanings from the numerous industrial features on the site.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The samples taken during the assessment are not particularly rich or informative, and themselves, do not justify further analysis. If further excavation is undertaken, however, a programme of selective sampling from the Roman features (especially hearths and

rubbish pits), is desirable in order to obtain data on the functions of the various hearths, ovens, and furnaces (and in addition, a better representation of the cereals and weeds represented on the site). A proportion of such samples may require more detailed analysis. An earlier phase of Roman deposits, which were not possible to excavate during the evaluation, will also require sampling, and plant remains may well be better preserved.

The Bronze Age features, although also not very productive in terms of charred plant macrofossils, are nonetheless significant and underrepresented in the region. Further sampling may prove more productive.

## APPENDIX C: PREHISTORIC POTTERY

### Prehistoric pottery from Godmanchester (GOD LR 96)

By Jon Last

The pottery examined came from two fills of pit 142 in trench 4, (122) and (127). The two assemblages are very different and all the decorated sherds came from the lower fill (127). At least 5 fabrics could be identified by naked eye for this context. All of them have grey cores, and are soft (easily scratched by fingernail) and rather friable. Fabrics 1-4 include decorated pieces.

1. Smoothed dark reddish brown surfaces, some grey interiors; sparse mineral grit < 2mm; 5-6mm thick. 5 decorated sherds of at least 3 vessels, with 1 join.
2. Uneven orange surfaces, some grey interiors; sparse mineral grit < 2mm; c 8mm thick. 2 decorated sherds, probably of 1 vessel.
3. Uneven orange surfaces, some grey interiors; sparse mineral grit < 5mm; frequent rounded voids, particularly on interior; c 11mm thick. 7 decorated sherds, probably of 1 vessel, with 3 joining.
4. Uneven surfaces, exterior off-white, interior grey; sparse mineral grit < 5mm; 8-10mm thick. 3 decorated sherds, probably of 1 vessel.
5. Dark orange surfaces; frequent flint grit; laminar. 2 plain body sherds only.

Decoration consists nearly entirely of straight grooves 1.5-3mm thick, although one (abraded) piece has possible coarse cord impressions. The motifs consist of groups of parallel horizontal lines framing bands of vertical lines, herringbone, V-shaped or diamond patterns.

Vessel shapes are apparently simple: while no rims are present, body sherds show a clear curvature but no changes of angle. Two flat bases are present (fabrics 3 and 4), both with an external horizontal groove directly above the base of the vessel.

The pottery has affinities with Beaker and Grooved Ware assemblages. These are not always easy to distinguish as later Beakers may have stylistic links with Grooved Ware (*Wainwright & Longworth 1971; Bamford 1982: 24*). Grooved Ware in this region is frequently grog-tempered but fabric alone is not diagnostic, although a vesicular structure, seen in fabric 3, and less frequently in fabrics 1, 2 and 4, is considered a common characteristic of East Anglian Grooved Ware (*Martin 1992: 44*). Vessel

shapes are also unhelpful: the lack of complex profiles would be more characteristic of Grooved Ware than Beaker but the absence of rims makes this inconclusive.

Beaker decoration is frequently comb-impressed but the sherds from Park Road, Brampton (Welsh 1993) are all incised. Grooves or broad incisions are rare but not unknown for Beakers, and the clear zoning of decoration in horizontal bands is a Beaker characteristic. On the other hand, while the assemblage lacks many Grooved Ware traits, such as cordons, herringbone patterns are common in Grooved Ware from sites such as Spong Hill in mid-Norfolk (Healy 1988), and the decorative motifs from Godmanchester are paralleled here (e.g. P205, P206, P213). In addition soft fabrics and the presence of vacuoles are more frequent among the Grooved Ware than the (small) Beaker assemblage at Spong Hill. However the absence of rims means further comparative work is necessary to positively assign these sherds.

Fill (122) includes a couple of plain sherds similar to fabric 2 and one dark-faced sherd that may be later prehistoric. The majority, however, are small, plain pieces with a variety of surface colours from orange to grey. They are essentially the same ware as fabric 5: all contain flint grits, generally < 2mm, but in some thicker sherds these measure up to 4mm. The only diagnostic piece is a small rolled and everted rim which could derive from a vessel of the Neolithic plain bowl tradition, although the stratigraphy is curious.

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## APPENDIX D THE ROMAN POTTERY

By Chris Going

The Pottery from GODLR 96 was scanned to provide dating evidence for report purposes and as an interim assessment of the material.

### Dating. Overall comments.

There was a little material which in its general characteristics could be assigned to the first century AD, but the overwhelming bulk of the pottery may be assigned to the second and perhaps the early third centuries AD, although some pottery datable to the late third and 4th centuries was noted.



Generally there was little material on the site which could be dated to after c AD 250, but the abraded state of the ceramics indicated that many context dates offered may be earlier than the real context dates, sometimes by a considerable margin. While no post-Roman, but pre-Norman material was observed during the scanning, there were some contexts ((26); (29); (34)) which produced pottery bases which had been trimmed down, presumably after breakage, to form reasonably symmetrical sherds. The conventional explanation is that they have been used a spindle whorls. This is unlikely. It seems more probable that these sherds were selected from the residual Roman pottery assemblage probably in the early post-Roman era, for talismanic purposes.

### **Supply.**

The overwhelming bulk of the material found, and certainly most of the coarse reduced wares, was made locally, either in kilns in the vicinity of Godmanchester itself, or from at most a days' transport away. The bulk of the shell-tempered wares probably came either from Harrold in Bedfordshire, or (less probably) from the Nene valley.

Wares from slightly more distant sources include bowls, mortaria, and flagons from the Brockley Hill potteries near St Albans in Hertfordshire, while some later Roman products, mainly jars, are identifiable as coming from the essentially later Roman production site at Much Hadham, also in Hertfordshire. Miscellaneous 'table' wares came from the potteries in the Nene valley close to Peterborough (near the Roman town of Durobrivae: this may also have been the source of some shell-tempered pottery), and perhaps Colchester.

In addition to Hadham, more distant sources of table ware in the later Roman period include the Oxfordshire potteries, and a few sherds were noted here (unstrat). A rare occurrence was a sherd of 'Black-Burnished 1' from Dorset. These potteries rarely marketed much into the east of Britain, partly because of pressure from the indigenous 'BB2' potteries. They did begin to penetrate the area in the 4th century however, and it is possible that this sherd is a 4th century import onto the site.

Continental imports were extremely rare: there were a few sherds of Spanish oil amphorae (including a plug of one -a Dressel 20 type- which had been trimmed down, from context (29)). The bulk of the continental imports comprised Samian, but there were few sherds of any intrinsic importance.

### **Material of interest.**

Unusual finds included sherds of Samian [from 29] which had been repaired with a mastic cement of some kind. Usually repairs were effected with lead rivets, although this writer has seen a sherd repaired with mastic from a site at Hinxton, near Duxford, also in Cambridgeshire. Also of interest are some sherds identified as from a Brockley Hill amphora. These are extremely rare and have only been noted at a handful of sites. This example is the first to have come to light in Cambridgeshire. They imitate in their shape a Continental amphora type used for the transportation of wine and there is little doubt that this is the commodity which was shipped in these British products. Its appearance here is a matter of considerable interest. Also from the Brockley Hill potteries is a Mortarium bowl, stamped with the name of its maker. This appears to read MINO. The name awaits clarification. Other pottery of interest included some sherds of ?two large shell tempered storage jars. The vessels seem abnormally large and indicate perhaps grain or other bulk storage in the vicinity.

In summary, an interesting assemblage of material which will complements the material found within the Roman town. The lack of later Roman pottery may be an indication that the site went out of use before the end of the Roman period but this is regarded as unlikely. It is more probable that the area saw a significant decline in use of pottery in the Roman period. A number of contexts produced burnt material. The condition of this pottery indicated a fire in excess of 800 degrees Fahrenheit, and if it has not been scattered from hearths, suggests a building conflagration in the second century.



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