A Medieval Field System South of the High Street, Drayton

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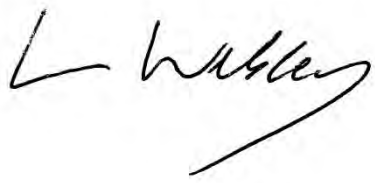

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A Medieval Field System South of the High Street, Drayton

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SUMMARY

An evaluation in 2014 and subsequent excavation in 2015 on land south of the High Street, Drayton revealed late Saxon ditches that may form part of a trackway, a medieval field system, and post-medieval boundary ditches. The latest evidence dates to the nineteenth century and relates to ancillary buildings belonging to Whitehorn's Farm. Postholes and pits and a midden deposit also uncovered are likely to relate to the medieval settlement, though the features were generally poorly dated.

INTRODUCTION

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological evaluation in October 2014 on the site of a proposed housing development at land south of High Street, Drayton, Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire, centred on SU 4770 9400 (Fig. 1). This was followed by an excavation in November 2015. Both phases of work were commissioned by Bloor Homes.

[INSERT FIGURE 1]

The village of Drayton is located in the upper Thames Valley on the Second Gravel Terrace of the Thames floodplain. Drayton is located *c.*2.5km west of a meander of the River Thames, and *c.*200m to the east of the A34. The site lies in the south-eastern part of the village. The High Street extends E-W along the site's northern edge, and the site is overlooked by numerous historic buildings situated on the street. The site is generally flat, with a mean elevation of 60m above Ordnance Datum (OD). Slight undulations are evident along the lines of former field boundaries and at the time of investigation, the site was under pasture and meadow. The area to the west is occupied by housing. To the east and south of the site lie open arable fields, though woodland also occupies part of the site's southern boundary.

A desk-based assessment identified the high potential of the site to contain archaeological remains of all periods.[1] A report on the archaeological evaluation was issued in 2015, [2] and a written

1 RSK, 'Drayton, Oxfordshire, Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment', unpublished report (2014).
2 Oxford Archaeology, 'Land South of High Street Drayton Oxfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation and

scheme of investigation was subsequently produced for a limited excavation.[3] The location of The results of both phases of work are presented in this report (Fig. 2). It should be noted that Evaluation Trench 28 did not fall within the area of the site subject to excavation.

[INSERT FIGURE 2]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Thames Valley in the vicinity of Drayton and Abingdon was an important focus for monument building during the Neolithic. The Drayton Cursus forms part of a complex of scheduled monuments (NMR ID 892010 and NMR ID 234114/ 1544850/ 656006)[4] located *c.*500m to the south-east of the site, near the parish boundary between Drayton and Sutton Courtenay. Numerous round barrows (most commonly of early Bronze Age date) are present in the vicinity.[5]

There are numerous Iron Age settlements in the vicinity of the site, including examples at Garford, Marcham, Abingdon, East Hanney, Radley and Frilford. The area continued to be intensively settled in the Roman period. An enclosed settlement and a field system of Roman date are known in Drayton *c.*100m to the south of the site, and ditches of potential Roman date were identified within the site itself. [6] Bronze Age activity and a late Iron Age and Roman farmstead has been recorded along Abington Road *c.*1km to the north of the current site.[7]

Anglo-Saxon activity in the area is well documented and several nationally important sites have been excavated. These include cemeteries at Abingdon, Milton, Frilford and Sutton Courtenay. The Saxon settlement at Sutton Courtenay, centred around Brook Farm, is a classic example of an early Saxon settlement with numerous sunken-featured buildings and several halls[8] and is situated *c.*1km to the south-east of the site. Peripheral activity related to this settlement extends to remains found at Smith's Farm *c.*200m to the east of the site boundary and south of the Drayton East Way track. There are also gravel pits of early Saxon date within 500m of the site, indicating quarrying in this period.

The earliest documentary evidence for Drayton comes from the *Abingdon Chronicles*, where

Watching Brief', unpublished client report (2015), https://library.thehumanjourney.net/3545/.

3 Oxford Archaeology, 'Land South of High Street, Drayton, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation. Unpublished client report (2015).

4 RSK, 'Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment'.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 R. Kennedy and R. Massey, 'Bronze-Age Activity and Roman Settlement at Abingdon Road, Drayton, *Oxoniensia* 82 (2017), pp. 263-97.

8 N. Brennan and H. Hamerow, 'An Anglo-Saxon Great Hall Complex at Sutton Courtenay/Drayton, Oxfordshire: A Royal Centre of Early Wessex?', *The Archaeological Journal* 172 (2015), pp. 325-50.

it is recorded that ten hides were granted by King Eadred to a thegn named Eadwold in AD 955.[9] The lands passed to Abingdon Abbey and then back into royal hands, and in AD 983 were given to Wulfgar and then Abingdon Abbey again by Aethelred II. Domesday records two parts to the parish which later became East Drayton and West Drayton manors.[10] In 1381 West Drayton became the property of New College in Oxford. It remained the property of New College until 1815. East Drayton Manor was held by Abingdon Abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries.[11]

Medieval buildings in Drayton include St Peter's church, which has Norman origins, and the mid-15th century Drayton Manor House, which is Grade II listed. Excavations at Manor Farm produced evidence of medieval settlement, including rectangular enclosures, stockyards and droveways of twelfth- to fifteenth-century date and aerial photographs show narrow property boundaries to the east of Abingdon Road also suggestive of medieval settlement.[12] This is recorded in the Historic Environment Record as a medieval shrunken village.

Enclosure continued throughout the post-medieval period and an Inclosure Act for Drayton was passed in 1810-11 for the remaining common land in the parish, demonstrating that only parts of Drayton were subject to early enclosure. The tithe map (1811) is accompanied by a key stating that the enclosures are not 'old enclosures'. However, they are distinctly medieval in appearance and are likely to have been based on boundaries extant since the medieval period in the fields on which the site is located and to the north, east, south and west. The majority of the site was historically covered with ridge-and-furrow, the distinctive traces of the medieval open field agriculture. Slight earthwork ridges survive on the site and geophysical survey revealed the former extant ridge-and-furrow within the site, preserving the outlines of individual strips within the former open fields. [13]

The sites of eight historic buildings are located in the northern part of the site, generally arranged fronting High Street with ancillary buildings to the rear. Three of these buildings remain. The former Whitehorn's Farm complex comprises a southern curtilage wall within which are the main farmhouse (listed building 1368070) and associated outbuildings. Beyond the group of buildings fronting High Street are the sites of two outbuildings, both of which are visible as scars on

9 Ibid.

10 D. Challinor, D. Petts, D. Poore, and D. Score 'Excavations at Manor Farm, Drayton, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia* 68 (2003), pp. 280–311.

11 VCH *Berks.*

12 Challinor et al., 'Excavations at Manor Farm'.

13 A.D.H Bartlett, 'Land Off High Street, Drayton, Oxfordshire. Report on Archaeological Geophysical Survey, Barlett-Clark Consultancy, unpublished client report (2014).

recent aerial photographs of the site.[14]

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The evaluation revealed parts of ditches across the site, though showed that the southern half of the site contained fewer archaeological features than the northern half, and those that were present were mainly the remains of ridge-and-furrow. In the northern half of the site, the evaluation identified ditches, postholes and a few pits. All the features were poorly dated; where present, pottery comprised one or two sherds only. This meant that phasing was problematic and many features remain unphased. Some phasing is based on spatial or stratigraphic relationships alone but even this has only been possible in a few cases owing to the scarcity of finds and the small areas investigated. Despite this, the scarcity of evidence from the prehistoric and Roman periods suggests that most, if not all, the ditches are part of a medieval or later field system.

Saxon and Early Medieval (Phase 1 and 2)

Ditches containing a small amount of early to middle Saxon pottery may be related to the early to middle Anglo-Saxon settlement at Brook Farm in Sutton Courtenay, but in any case point to activity of that period in the vicinity of the site. No features of early to middle Saxon date have previously been identified within the historic core of Drayton, but a settlement had been established there by the late Saxon/early medieval period. Ditches 5041 and 5141, which contained pottery dating to the *c.*900–1150, and ditches 5188, 5211 and 5214, dated by pottery to *c.*900–1250, may represent boundaries relating to the earliest period of settlement.

Medieval Boundaries (Phase 3)

The evaluation trenches and larger areas of excavation confirmed the presence of ditches that belonged to plots revealed in the geophysical survey. These plots extended south from the High Street, and the layout is largely preserved in the boundaries shown on the 1811 tithe map, although in some cases the locations of the ditches had shifted through time by way of successive recutting. The plots appear to be defined by a boundary ditch aligned NW-SE. The ditch is not perpendicular to the present line of the High Street, suggesting that the plots follow the line of an older boundary or trackway, perhaps of Anglo-Saxon or medieval date.

A trackway and earthwork boundary on a NNW-SSE alignment was recorded in the eastern part of the site (Trench 11), with pottery recovered from it dated to *c.*1150–1350. This boundary can

14 Oxford Archaeology, ‘Evaluation and Watching Brief'.

be seen on the geophysical survey as a positive and two negative anomalies, and excavation showed that it had been recut several times. This earthwork represents a medieval track, possibly with Anglo-Saxon origins. A modern ditch on same alignment indicates that the earthwork probably continued in use as a boundary, and possibly as a trackway, throughout the medieval period and into the post-medieval period to form one of the boundaries shown on the 1815 enclosure map.[15]

Other substantial boundaries were suggested by the geophysical survey and confirmed by the evaluation.[16] A ditched boundary aligned WNW-ESE extended across the investigation area, forming the southernmost extent of the field system. Ditches revealed in Trench 13 show that this boundary was probably redefined over a significant period, with five ditches on the same alignment. The ditch fills were not dated by finds, but their alignment suggests that they formed part of the medieval field system.

In Trench 9, a bank and boundary ditch revealed can also be seen on the geophysical survey. The ditch (902) contained pottery dated to *c.*1150–1350, and the boundary was still in use in 1815 when it was recorded on the enclosure map. A major boundary ditch (hereafter referred to as the major boundary ditch; Fig. 3) was defined by a series of ditches, which contained pottery spanning the period *c.*1150–1350. Interventions through this boundary suggests that the ditch moved slightly to the west during this period, which may represent an accidental consequence of recutting or a deliberate re-apportioning of land.

Ditches 5030 and 5035 to the east of the major boundary ditch appear to form the southern end of an enclosure. Though no dating evidence was recovered from them, the features can be identified as a plot recorded in the geophysical survey. The position of its western side, extending alongside the major boundary ditch, suggests that the plot has a medieval origin, possibly as a strip field. Postholes within the enclosure are likely to relate to a structure or a fenced pen, but given the absence of dating evidence these cannot be associated with the enclosure with certainty.

[INSERT FIGURE 3]

Settlement Evidence (Phase 3)

Features relating to medieval settlement were recorded in the northern part of the site. A curving ditch (5136/5110) containing a row of postholes, seen in the northernmost excavation area (Fig. 4), may represent part of a structure or boundary. Pottery recovered from the ditch points to a medieval date for infilling. A pit in Trench 8 (818) contained fragments of oven furniture and pottery from the same context dated to 1150-1350. This material presumably originated from a building close to

15 RSK, 'Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment'.
16 Bartlett, 'Geophysical Survey'; Oxford Archaeology, 'Evaluation and Watching Brief'.

the area of investigation. Further occupation debris was identified in Trench 28 as a spread of midden material. Environmental remains from the midden included free-threshing wheat, typical of medieval and later assemblages, but also comprised faecal concretions and bone fragments suggesting domestic waste and the presence of animals. Burnt sedge and rush identified in the midden sample may have originated from flooring material, possibly from nearby dwellings.

Ridge-and-Furrow (Phase 3)

The southern part of the site, south of the hedge line and stream, revealed few features and those that were recorded were mostly E-W aligned ridge-and-furrow. Only three N-S aligned medieval field boundary ditches were revealed (in Trenches 14 and 18) and these are almost certainly parts of those shown on the 1815 enclosure map. A thin scatter of medieval pottery and notable lack of post-medieval material from these features attests to the medieval origin for this field system and suggests that the land was not manured during the post-medieval period, perhaps being used for pasture instead.

Whitehorn's Farm

Trench 28 and the northern part of the excavation area revealed post-medieval yard surfaces and a building platform associated with the former Whitehorn's Farm complex. No datable artefacts were recovered from the building foundation layers, but it is clear from historic maps that the cobbled surface and wall foundation formed part of a north-south aligned ancillary building range shown in 1875.[17] On this map, the building appears to be a stable block, and the remains in Trench 28 are consistent with this. On architectural grounds the rear ranges of the farm complex were probably built in the 18th century, although the Grade II listed house (No. 24 High Street) has an early 19th century front range.[18]

Ditch 5190 truncated several medieval N-S aligned trackway ditches and contained a small amount of post-medieval pottery. This ditch can still be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1875, where it forms the southern boundary of the Whitehorn's Farm complex.

Undated Features

A significant number of features, among them ditches, pits and postholes, did not contain dating evidence and remain undated, though it is likely that many of them are broadly contemporary with

17 Ordnance Survey, First Edition (1875)
18 RSK, 'Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment'.

medieval remains on the site.

[INSERT FIGURE 4]

STRATIGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Almost all the dated features revealed in the investigations were medieval in date. The site was clearly divided spatially, with a greater density of features, including postholes, pits and ditches, in the northern part of the site, and far fewer features in the southern part (mainly characterized by lines of ridge-and-furrow).

The geophysical survey[19] showed anomalies suggesting field boundaries that extended broadly north-south from the rear of the extant properties on the southern side of the High Street, with a further possible boundary aligned NW-SE forming the southern extent of these fields through the northern part of the investigated area. These anomalies were targeted by evaluation trenches with the aim of identifying the date and duration of the field system (Fig. 2).

Roman

A sherd of pottery, dating to AD 150-410 though almost certainly residual, was recovered from ditch 5211 (Fig. 3).

Phase 1: Anglo-Saxon

In the eastern part of the area, Trench 11 was sited to investigate a possibly field boundary aligned north-south and defined by a shallow earthwork, *c.*12 m wide (Fig. 2). The trench revealed four ditches, all of which followed similar alignment to the earthwork. Ditch 1107 was the westernmost of the four and apparently the earliest in date. It measured 0.7 m in width and 0.28 m in depth and was filled by a dark green-grey silty clay. Two sherds of organic-tempered pottery of early to middle Saxon date were recovered from the ditch. Ditch 1109, which was cut by Phase 3 ditch 1105, was parallel with 1107 and may also belong to the Anglo-Saxon period, although no finds were recovered from it.

Phase 2: Early Medieval (c.900–1150/1250)

The earliest medieval features were dated by pottery to the tenth-twelfth century AD. Ditch 5041 (Fig. 3) measured 0.97 m in width and 0.68 m in depth. It contained two brown-grey sandy silt fills,

19 Bartlett, 'Geophysical Survey'.

the lower of which yielding a single sherd of pottery dated *c.*900–1050. Ditch 5141, immediately to the east of 5041, was 0.44 m wide and 0.21 m deep. Its single brown-grey sandy clay fill was dated by a single sherd dated *c.*AD 900–1250.

Both ditches were truncated by tree-throw hole 5143. The feature was circular in shape with an irregular profile, and contained 12 mixed silty and sandy fills from which a single sherd of pottery dated to *c.*900–1100 was recovered.

Two groups of closely intercutting postholes were situated close to these ditches and may have been related to them, perhaps representing fenced structures or similar, with the posts being continually replaced. However, no datable material was recovered from these postholes, so this is not conclusive.

A sequence of three N-S aligned ditches were revealed in the southern part of the excavation area. The easternmost ditch (5211) measured 1.2m in width and 0.7m in depth and contained two fills of light to mid yellowish brown silty sand. A single sherd of pottery from the upper fill was Roman in date. This is likely to be residual, although given that the ditch is the earliest in the sequence, a Roman date for the cutting of the ditch cannot be ruled out entirely. The western side of this ditch was cut by ditch 5188, which measured 1.05m in width and 0.74m in depth and contained four mid brown silty sand fills. A single sherd of pottery dated to 900-1250 was recovered from the lowest fill (5189), while the third fill contained five sherds of similar date. This ditch was in turn cut by ditch 5214, which measured 1.35m in width and 0.79m in depth and contained three mid brown and orange-brown sandy silt fills. A small amount of pottery from the upper fill dated to *c.*900-1250.

Phase 3: Medieval (c.1150–1350)

Activity in this period was characterized by a field system defined by ditches on a N-S and E-W alignment, small sections of which were exposed by the 2015 excavation and in several of the 2014 evaluation trenches.

Two ditches (1103 and 1105), both orientated NNW-SSE, were exposed in Trench 11. The ditches were spaced 3m apart on the eastern side of the earthwork and represent a trackway or double-ditched element to the embankment. Both ditches contained single fills which produced pottery dating to *c.*1150–1350. Trench 16 was positioned in order to trace the southern extent of these features. Three ditches were revealed, but all were undated and could not be clearly matched to those in Trench 11. However, pottery dated to 1150-1350 was recovered from the topsoil in this trench.

A single ditch in Trench 9 was assigned to Phase 3. Ditch 902 was aligned N-S and measured 0.83m in width and 0.29m in depth. It contained two brown-grey silty fills, the lower of

which (903) contained pottery dated to 1150-1350 and a small amount of animal bone. The ditch shared alignment with a probable field boundary identified by the geophysical survey.

To the north-west, a ditch (705/5053/5068/810) which measured up to 1.8m in width and 0.5m in depth was exposed in Trench 7 and the wider excavation area. The major boundary ditch was orientated N-S and contained up to three green-grey sandy clay fills. All the pottery recovered from three of the interventions dated between 1150 and 1350. Small amounts of animal bone were also recovered.

Two ditches to the east of the major boundary ditch, 5030 and 5035, may have formed an enclosure. The former had steep sides and a flat base and measured 0.6m wide and 0.46m deep. It was filled by brown-grey clay sand. Ditch 5035 had moderately sloping sides and a flat base and measured 0.75m wide and 0.35m deep. It was filled by a brown-grey sandy silt. A rectangular arrangement of eight postholes within the space defined by the ditches may be the remains of a structure or fenced enclosure. The postholes were all a similar size and depth, being up to *c.*0.5m wide and 0.4m deep. No dating material was recovered from any of the postholes.

Several features were situated immediately west of the major boundary ditch. These include ten probable postholes, a single pit (5084), and four ditch terminals. Given their proximity, the features may be associated with boundary ditch 705/5053/5068/810, perhaps representing sub-divisions and structures, but the paucity of dating evidence and limited size of the excavation area makes the connection uncertain. A small pit or posthole (818) was revealed in Trench 8, cutting into ditch 810. This may have been a posthole used to support a fence. The fill contained pottery dated to *c.*1150–1350 and 18 pieces of fired clay (145g) probably from the base of an oven or hearth.

A possible fenced enclosure ditch was revealed in the far north of the excavation area (Fig. 4). The ditch (5136/5110) measured 0.8m in width and 0.16m in depth and had steep sides and a flat base. Three postholes (5139, 5134, 5106), measuring between 0.5 and 1m wide, were found in the base of the ditch, and although none of these was dated, all were clearly part of the ditched feature. The latest pottery from the ditch backfill dated to *c.*1150–1350. Other linear features were recorded to the north and south of this feature. Ditch 5136/5110 cut ditch 5117 to the south, which itself cut ditch 5108. Neither 5108 or 5117 contained datable material, but were clearly earlier than 5136/5110, and may represent earlier phases of the fenced boundary. Ditch 5123 was situated in the northern part of the excavated area. It measured 0.95m in width and 0.3m in depth. A single sherd of pottery from the fill was dated to *c.*1150–1350.

Ditches 5119 and 5138 were the latest in the sequence of ditch recuts. The former was only partially revealed by the excavation, but was more than 1m in width and 0.64m in depth. The latter cut ditch 5136/5110 along its northern side and measured 1.8m wide and 0.32m deep. A single

sherd of pottery collected from the feature dated to *c.*1150–1350.

In Trench 28, in the far north of the site, a cess or midden deposit that underlay a sequence of eighteenth-nineteenth-century yard surfaces and building foundations associated with rear ranges of the former Whitehorn's Farm complex may have formerly filled a shallow channel. Dating evidence comprised nine sherds of pottery dated to *c.*1250–1400 and one residual late Saxon sherd. Environmental evidence recovered from the midden is suggestive of domestic waste and the stabling of animals, while charred sedge and rush seeds hints at the burning of flooring material.

Ridge-and-furrow traversed the southern part of the site on an E-W alignment.

Phase 4: Post-medieval

Two ditches, both on a WNW-ESE alignment, were exposed in Trench 12. The northernmost feature (1209) was cut along its southern side by ditch 1210, which contained pottery of eighteenth- to nineteenth-century date. Ditch 1209 contained no datable material, though the feature may have had its origins within the medieval field system.

The latest deposits in the recorded sequence were observed in Trench 28 and in the northern area of the excavation. These consisted of post-medieval yard surfaces and a building platform associated with the Whitehorn's Farm complex. A brick wall with stone foundations was cut through these layers (structure 2809). A surviving stub of this wall protrudes from the extant farmyard wall to the north. A cobbled surface (2803) was associated with the former building and was laid after construction of the wall. The surface was constructed with large cobbles of uniform size, laid in panels which extended on either side of the wall footing, presumably serving both as the floor of the building interior and a walkway to the west. While no artefactual dating evidence was recovered, the cobbled surface and wall foundation clearly formed part of a former north-south aligned ancillary building range shown on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map. Modern hard-standing was situated outside the former building to the west (the former yard surface), which was overlain by a layer of turf.

Ditch 5190/806 was revealed in the southern part of the excavation area and to the east, in Trench 8. It measured up to 2.2m in width and 1m in depth. No dating material was recovered from this ditch, but it cut ditches 5214 and 5188, which were of medieval date. The ditch aligns with a boundary shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1899, forming the rear of the farm complex.

POST-ROMAN POTTERY by JOHN COTTER

Introduction and Methodology

A total of 138 sherds of pottery weighing 2079g were recovered from 45 contexts. Most of these

contexts are from fairly superficial features, such as field boundary ditches and a few shallow pits. The pottery was recovered from two separate phases of fieldwork. The evaluation phase produced 82 sherds (876g), while the subsequent excavation produced 56 sherds (1203g). As these were catalogued and spot-dated at different levels of detail the report here will confine itself to sherd counts as the main type of quantification. Fuller details may be consulted in the site archive. Apart from some of the eighteenth-nineteenth century vessels, the condition of the remainder (mainly medieval) is generally poor and fragmentary and its main value is for dating purposes. Fabric codes referred to for the medieval wares are those of the Oxfordshire type series, whereas post-medieval pottery fabric codes are those of the Museum of London.[20] Ordinary domestic pottery types typical of south Oxfordshire sites are represented. These are summarised in Table 1.

[INSERT TABLE 1]

Description

The earliest piece is a fairly fresh sherd of local Roman grey ware (fabric R30). This survives as a shallow dish profile similar in form to black burnished ware dishes and datable to *c.*AD 150–410. The rim is warped (in plan) and it may possibly be a second from a local kiln.[21] This was the only pottery find from ditch 5211, but is likely to be residual. Besides this, a range of pottery from the early Saxon period to the early twentieth century is present. Most of the Saxon sherds however are residual in medieval contexts. The period best represented is the medieval period, particularly the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, and mainly perhaps the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

The earliest post-Roman type is a sherd of Anglo-Saxon organic-tempered ware (19g), which occurs on its own in context 1108, the fill of ditch 1107. This type has a very broad dating in southern England of *c.*400–800, but was commonest in the sixth and seventh centuries. There are two small sherds of late Saxon Oxfordshire shelly ware (OXB, *c.*775–1050) from two separate ditch contexts; though slight, these constitute the strongest evidence for some degree of late Saxon activity in the area. One of these (5196) occurs with fresh sherds of Kennet Valley A ware (OXBF) giving a date range of *c.*875-1250, but still feasibly within the late Saxon period. A few fabric types, all residual, span the Saxo-Norman (or late Saxon-early medieval) period. These include a sherd of Thetford-type ware (THET, *c.*850–1100), a wheel-thrown grey ware from East Anglia (1106), and two small sherd of St Neots-type ware (OXR, *c.*850–1100), a wheel-thrown shelly ware from the south-east Midlands (2806; 5155). Thetford-type ware is very rare in Oxfordshire, although a few sherds are known from Oxford. St Neots-type ware, in contrast, is fairly common at Oxford

20 M. Mellor, 'Oxfordshire Pottery: A Synthesis of Middle and Late Saxon, Medieval and Early Post-medieval Pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia,* 59 (1984), pp. 17–217; MOLA, 'Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery Codes', Museum of London Archaeology, https://www.mola.org.uk/medieval-and-post-medieval-pottery-codes

21 E. Biddulph, pers. comm.

particularly during the period *c.*950–1075.

Table 1 shows that the two Kennet Valley wares (OXBF and OXAQ) comprise the commonest medieval fabric types present, a combined total of 62 sherds (45% of the sherd total, or 67% of the 93 medieval sherds present). While these have been given various names in the past (e.g. SW Oxfordshire ware and East Wiltshire ware), they are really part of the same tradition of flint-tempered sandy wares produced along the Kennet Valley between east Wiltshire and Newbury in Berkshire. The earlier and coarser fabric, Kennet Valley A (OXBF), has late Saxon origins but is commonest at Oxford *c.*1050–1250; the later fabric, Kennet Valley B (OXAQ), with more limestone and less flint, is a development of the former, and very common at Oxford during the period *c.*1150–1350. Both fabrics commonly occur in the form of cooking pots and wide bowls (as here). On this site the distinction between the two fabrics (especially as small sherds) is not always clear and really just a question of degree. These are absolutely typical of sites in south Oxfordshire (e.g. Abingdon) and west Berkshire. On this site they probably represent activity from the eleventh century onwards and perhaps with a peak in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Other wares, common to the north in Oxford over this period (OXAC, OXY and Brill/Boarstall ware OXAM), are remarkably rare here. Their place was filled it seems by the Kennet Valley wares and a few cooking pots and glazed jugs in sandy Ashampstead-type ware (OXAG), probably from sources further east in Berkshire. The predominance of functional coarseware cooking pots and bowls and the scarcity of glazed and decorated jugs (tablewares) is typical of rural medieval sites.

There is a fairly small and unremarkable collection of post-medieval pottery (45 sherds), mainly common 'Victorian' tablewares, also a stoneware ginger beer bottle of *c.*1890–1940 which is the latest piece here.

OTHER CERAMIC FINDS by JOHN COTTER

Ceramic Building Material

Thirty-two pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 5602g were recovered. A probable Roman tile – the edge of a flat brick or tile – was collected as a residual occurrence in a medieval posthole (5015). Parts of the tile are worn and the piece may have been used as a rubbing stone. A small piece of peg tile from 710 is the only probable medieval item in the assemblage but cannot be dated any closer than the thirteenth-sixteenth century. The remaining CBM is all very late and includes small pieces of eighteenth-nineteenth-century roof tile and a complete domestic brick dating to the nineteenth-twentieth century. Three pieces of curved machine-made land drain from

context 907 date to the late nineteenth or twentieth century.

Fired Clay

A total of 18 pieces of fired clay weighing 145g were recovered from context 819, which also produced pottery of *c.*1150-1350. All the pieces (some joining) come from the same structure or object which is interpreted as the part of the base of an oven or hearth.[22] The pieces are flattish with the largest piece measuring 65mm across and with a maximum thickness of 22mm. The item is in a soft greyish-brown clay containing chalk inclusions. The upper surface, which is fresh and roughly wiped, is scorched dark grey. The underside is rough and has chalk adhering, probably representing the natural ground surface. There is a possible withy impression on the underside of the largest piece. Like the pottery, the date is probably medieval.

Clay Pipes

Some 83 fragments of clay pipe, weighing 230g, were recovered from the site. The assemblage includes two identical spurred bowls of London-style type AO28 (Atkinson & Oswald 1969) dating to *c*.1820-1860/70.[23] One bowl is complete with a pointed spur and maker's mark (RR) in relief capitals either side of spur. The initials are unknown among Oxford's pipemakers, and so may represent a previously unrecorded local pipemaker. Yellow-glazed mouthpieces from a minimum of nine pipes and a number of slender stems were also recorded. All are of similar date to the bowls.

WORKED STONE by RUTH SHAFFREY

A single piece of quartzitic sandstone containing shell fragments and measuring 78mm thick was recovered from post-medieval cobbled surface 5237. It has a curved worn face and was probably used for sharpening blades, but is not regular enough to be defined as a grindstone and presumably represents *ad hoc* usage.

WORKED FLINT by GERALDINE CRANN

Ten pieces of worked flint were recovered. All were residual in later contexts. A single blade from the subsoil within Trench 7 and a snapped flake with retouched notch from Trench 12 have technological features that indicate an early prehistoric date. The rest of the flint assemblage retains

22 C. Poole, pers. comm.

23 D. Atkinson and A. Oswald, 'London Clay Tobacco Pipes', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Third Series, 32 (1969), pp. 171-227.

no technologically diagnostic features that would enable it to be assigned to a specific period.

OTHER FINDS by EDWARD BIDDDULPH

Two iron objects were collected: an iron nail from Phase 2 tree-throw hole 5143 and an unidentified iron fragment from Phase 3 pit 5222. Three pieces of fuel ash slag were recovered from a fill of a Phase 2 ditch, 5041.

ANIMAL BONE by LEE BRODERICK

A total of 467 animal bones were recovered, of which it was possible to attribute 419 to phases of activity on the site. The best represented of these phases was Phase 3 (*c*.1150-1350), containing a little over half the assemblage (216 bones). A total of 162 bones were dated to the post-medieval period. There were 41 bones associated with the early medieval (Phase 2) layers of the site.

Among the periods outlined above, the majority of the animal bones recovered from the site dating to the early medieval period were from sieved samples, which accounts for the proportionally high number of small rodent bones recovered.[24] Beyond that, it is not possible to say anything substantive about the animal remains from this period, except that the three principal domesticates (domestic cattle, *Bos taurus taurus*), caprines (sheep, *Ovis aries*, and goats, *Capra hircus*), and pigs (*Sus scrofa domestica*) were all present. All the bones recovered dating to this phase of activity on the site were in good to excellent condition, and a third molar suggested that at least one of the caprines lived to at least 30 months.[25]

Although the material recovered from later periods was greater, there was still not enough to make any statistically valid interpretations of the data. It is worth noting that, in addition to the three species already mentioned, horse (*Equus ferus caballus*), herring (*Clupea harengus*) and domestic fowl (*Gallus* sp./*Numida* sp./*Phasianus* sp.) were identified in the assemblage from the *c.*1150-1350 (Phase 3) component. Some of the caprine remains showed evidence for very heavy butchery practices in excess of what would be required for normal butchery, and bones of each of the ungulate species had been gnawed by dogs. Only early fusing bones of domestic cattle (scapula and distal metacarpal) were recovered which might give any indication as to age, and so it is only

24 S. Payne, 'Partial Recovery and Sample Bias: The Results of Some Sieving Experiments', in E.S. Higgs (ed.), *Papers in Economic Prehistory* (1972), pp. 49–62.

25 A. Grant, 'The Use of Toothwear as a Guide to the Age of Domestic Ungulates', in B. Wilson, C. Grigson and S. Payne (eds.) '*Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites*', BAR British Series 109 (1982) pp. 91-108.

possible to say that at least one of them survived until at least two years of age.[26]

A metatarsal of a pig from this period was fused proximally and not distally, suggesting that that animal did not survive to 2 years and an unfused second phalanx similarly suggests that that animal did not survive to one-year-old. Two fused proximal radii of caprines (both right sided) suggest that among these animals some lived to at least 10 months.

The post-medieval assemblage was dominated by caprine remains. However, it must be noted that a large number of these originated from one animal. A post-medieval ditch (905) contained parts of an articulated sheep skeleton. The remains comprised thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, ribs and pelvis. Two segments of a medium mammal sacrum found in the same context may also have belonged to this animal. The end plates of the vertebrae were fusing or unfused, suggesting an age-at-death of 4-5 years.[27] Butchery marks were absent, suggesting that the burial may represent an animal that had been diseased or died of natural causes and whose flesh was not considered suitable for consumption.[28] A single cat (*Felis catus*) bone was also identified from this period and it is likely that the cat and dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) specimen included in the undated material were also from this period, being from an adjacent layer in the same feature.

CHARRED PLANT REMAINS by JULIA MEEN and REBECCA NICHOLSON

Ten samples were taken for the recovery of environmental remains. Five samples (four from late Saxon and medieval ditch fills and one from a midden excavated during the evaluation phase in 2014) were selected for full analysis of the charred plant remains they contained (Table 2). Of the remaining samples, four are from unphased posthole fills and a fifth is from an early medieval tree-throw hole. These were judged to be of lower importance for understanding the environment and agricultural economy of the site, and their contents given in summary only. Nomenclature for the wild seeds follows Stace.[29]

[INSERT TABLE 2]

The four ditch fills were fairly consistent in their assemblages, containing a mixture of cereal grain (usually free-threshing wheat, barley, rye and oats), chaff derived from corresponding cereals, a range of legumes and numerous weed seeds. Preservation of the cereal grains was

26 I.A. Silver, 'The Ageing of Domestic Animals', *Science in Archaeology* 2 (1969), pp. 283–302.
27 K.-H. Habermehl, '*Die Altersbestimmung bei Haus- und Labortieren*' (1975).
28 L.G. Broderick, 'Ritualisation (or The Four Fully Articulated Ungulates of the Apocalypse)', in A. Pluskowski ed.), *The Ritual Killing and Burial of Animals: European Perspectives* (2012), pp. 22–32.
29 C. Stace, *New Flora of the British Isles,* 3rd edn (2010).

mixed, with a high proportion classified as 'indeterminate' due to the extent to which they had become distorted upon charring. Although free-threshing wheats form the greater part of the grains identified to type, the extent of this dominance may partially be biased as the distortion and fracturing of many of the grains made recognition of the morphological characteristics associated with barley and rye, in particular, more problematic. Cereal chaff was also dominated by free-threshing wheat, although the abraded nature of these rachis bases made it difficult to ascertain whether these are of hexaploid (bread wheat) or tetraploid (rivet wheat) type. Small numbers of rachises of rye and barley were also present, as well as oat awn fragments.

The weed seed assemblages are typical of this date, with the small seeds of stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*) most numerous in all assemblages; this persistent weed became more common as heavier clay soils were increasingly cultivated and was notorious by the Saxon period.[30] Cornflower (*Centaurea cynaus*) occurs in two of the ditch samples, both dated to *c.*1150-1350. This species is believed to have been introduced to Britain in around the twelfth century and established itself as a common weed of arable fields. The presence of sedges (*Carex* sp.), spike-rush (*Eleocharis* sp.) and rushes (*Juncus* sp.) indicate the cultivation of wetter areas.

The sample from the midden was composed in part of iron-rich and faecal-like concretions, but also contained finds typical of domestic waste, including poorly preserved animal bone, a small fragment of a fish basioccipital (possibly from brown trout) and an unidentified fish cranial fragment. The flot included a large quantity of uncharred elder seeds, though charred seeds were also common, including free-threshing wheat, oats, and barley. Several grains of wild grasses, as well as legumes, including a possible bean (cf. *Vicia faba*), a pea or bean (*Pisum*/*Vicia* sp.) and a possible example of lentil (cf. *Lens culinaris*) were also recovered. Charred weed seeds included reed (*Juncus* sp.) and sedge (Cyperaceae including *Eleocharis* sp.), which may indicate the burning and incorporation of flooring material.

The five undated samples from postholes and a tree-throw hole were found to contain similar material and are therefore likely to be contemporary with the five quantified samples. The presence of galls of the wheat nematode *Anguina tritici,* confirmed in sample 501 and provisionally identified from samples 502 and 508, could indicate that the crop was growing under wet conditions.[31]

Overall, the assemblages are fairly typical of those found from this period in southern England and very similar to those recovered from the adjacent site of Manor Farm, Drayton.[32]

30 M. Jones, 'The Arable Field: A Botanical Battleground', in M. Jones (ed), *Archaeology and the Flora of the British Isles* (1988), pp. 86–91.

31 K. Hunter and R.A. Nicholson, 'Plant Macrofossils', in S. Teague A. Fairman and C, Champness, *Life in late Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval Southwark* (forthcoming).

32 R. Pelling, 'Charred Plant Remains', in Challinor et al. 'Excavations at Manor Farm', pp. 303–307.

Medieval ridge-and-furrow relating to open-field agriculture is documented across the area of the excavated site and its surroundings,[33] and the material from both Manor Farm and the current site presumably derive from the cultivation of these local arable fields in a mixed crop system. The presence of cereal chaff and seeds of arable cultivation suggest that cereal processing was occurring nearby, with waste material accumulating in the open ditches. The large seeds of field gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*) which were common in sample 501 are similar in size to cereal grain and would have been picked out at a late stage in processing; similarly, the branched seed heads of *Anthemis cotula* often persist through sieving.[34]

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33 Oxford Archaeology, 'Evaluation and Watching Brief'.

34 R. Pelling, 'The Charred, Waterlogged and Mineralised Plant Remains', in A. Dodd *et al.*, The Oxford Castle Excavations (forthcoming).

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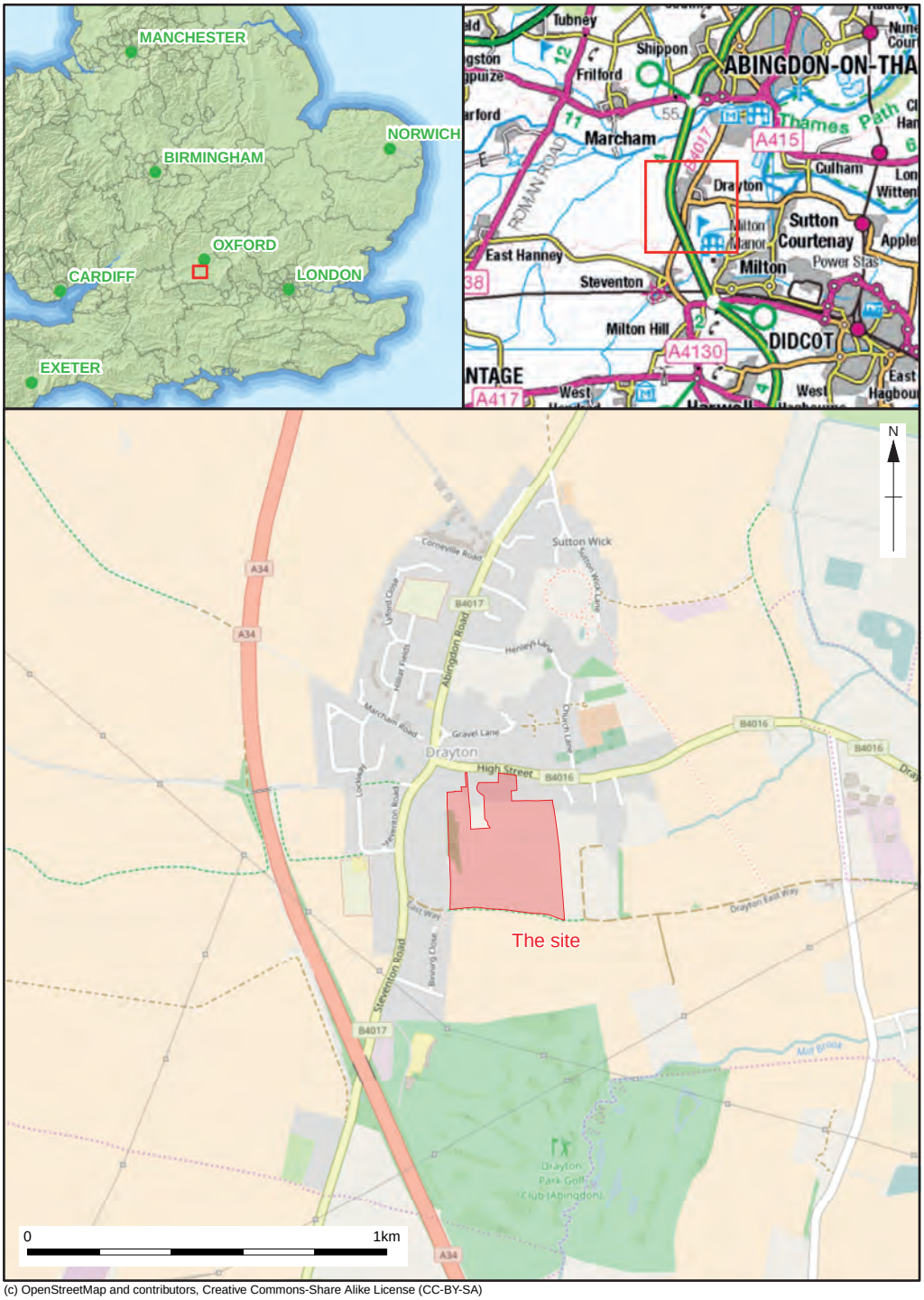

Figure 1: Location of the site

Figure 2: Evaluation trenches and excavation area

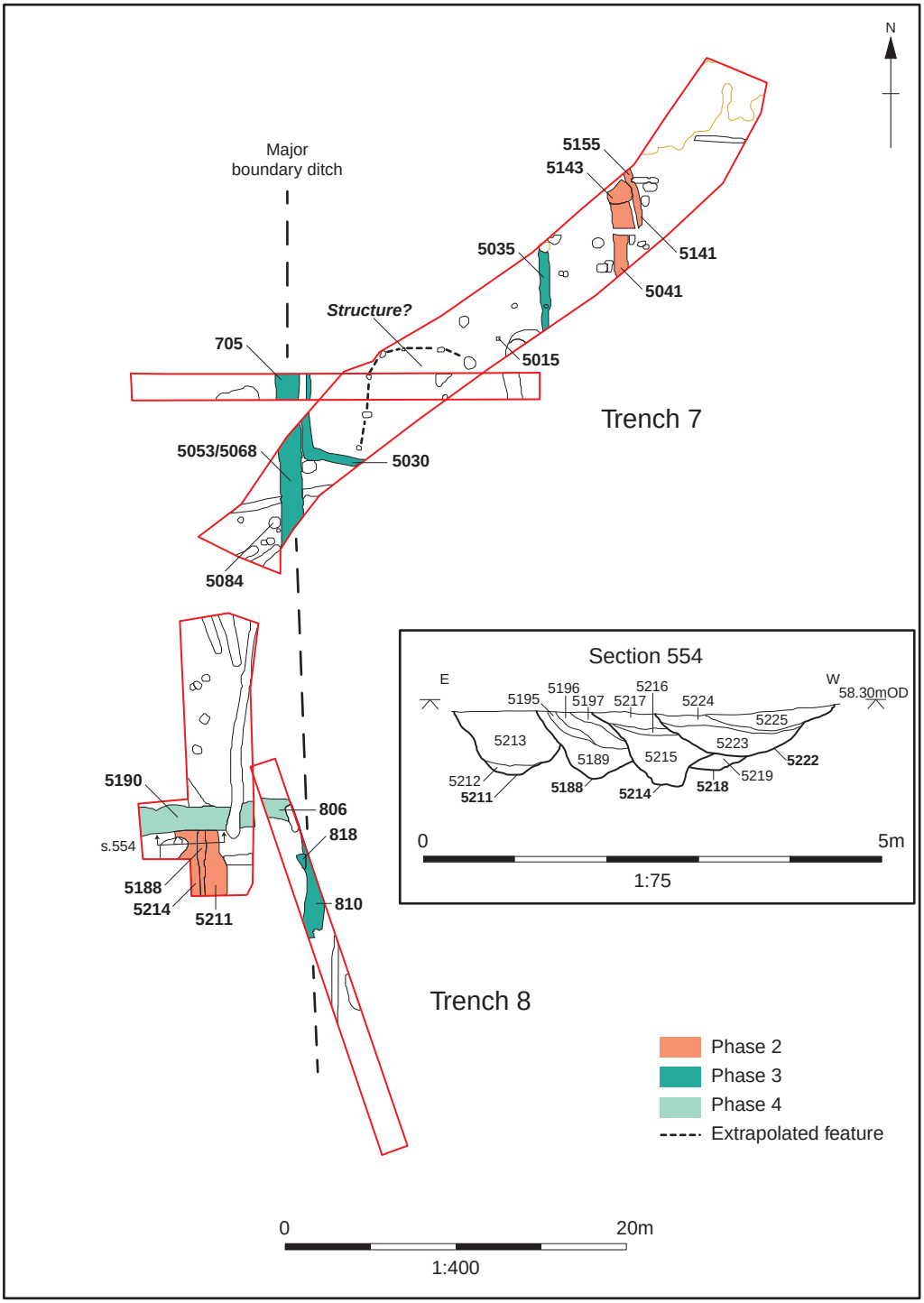

Figure 3: Plan of Trenches 7 and 8 and associated excavation area, and section through Phase 2 ditches

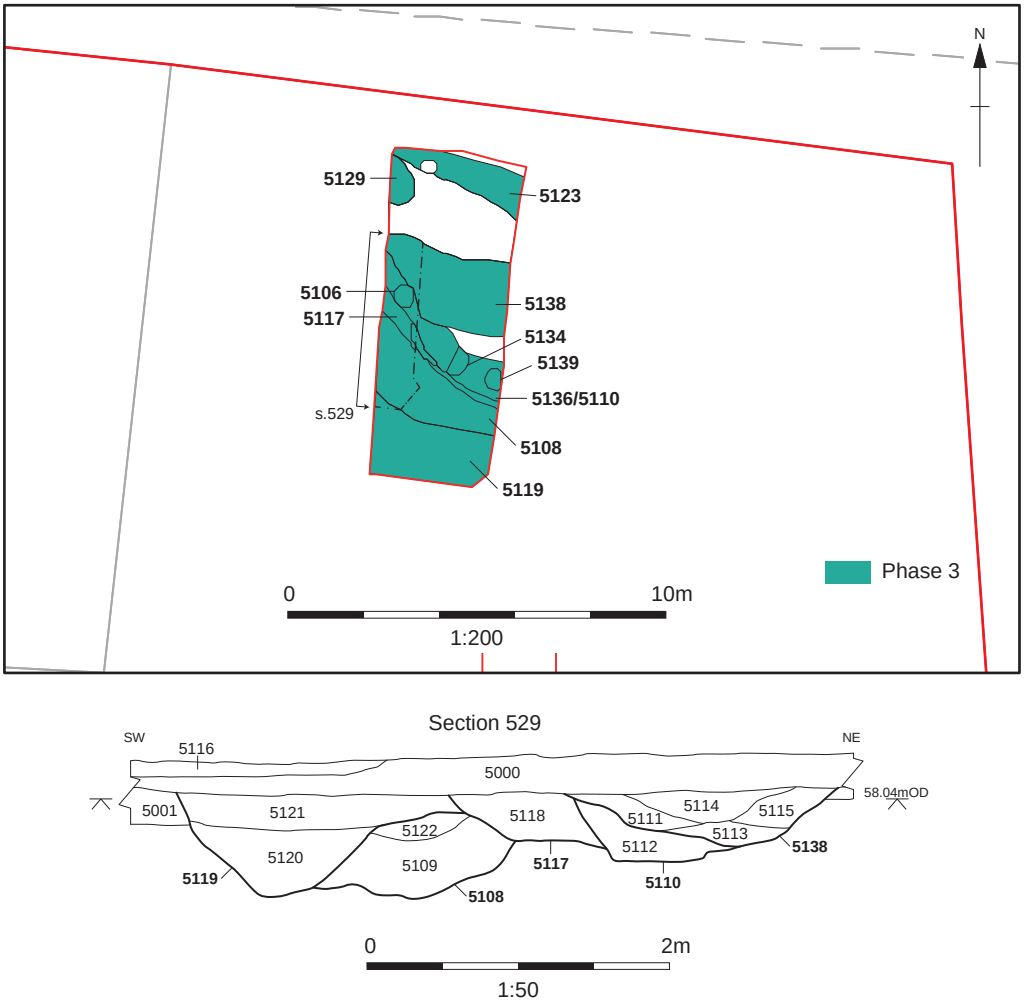

Figure 4: Plan and section of the northern excavation area

Fabric	Common Name	Date	Sherds
R30	Roman greyware	AD 150-410	1
ESAX	Early Anglo-Saxon	400-800	2
OXB	Late Saxon shelly ware (Oxon)	775-1050	2
OXBF	SW Oxon ware (Kennet Valley A)	875-1250	24
THET	Thetford-type ware (East Anglia)	850-1100	1
OXR	St Neots-type ware (SE Midlands)	900-1100	2
MISCM	Misc Unidentified medieval pottery	1000-1480	1
OXAC	Cotswold-type ware	1050-1250	1
OXAG	Ashampstead-type ware (Berks)	1050-1400	15
OXY	Medieval Oxford ware	1075-1300	3
OXAQ	East Wilts ware (Kennet Valley B)	1150-1350	38
OXBB	Minety ware (Wilts)	1225-1525	1
OXAM	Brill/Boarstall ware (Bucks)	1225-1625	1
KING	Kingston-type ware (Surrey)	1230-1400	1
PMR	Post-medieval red earthenwares	1550-1900	2
PMBL	Post-medieval black-glazed redware	1580-1750	1
WEST	Westerwald stoneware (Germany)	1590-1750	1
SWSG	Staffs white salt-glazed stoneware	1720-1780	1
CREA	Creamware (Staffs/Yorks)	1760-1830	5
PEAR	Pearlware (Staffs/Midlands)	1780-1840	4
TPW	Transfer-printed wares (Staffs etc)	1780-1900+	11
BONE	Bone china (Staffs etc)	1794-1900	3
REFW	Refined whitewares (Staffs etc)	1806-1900+	13
ENGS BRST	English stoneware with Bristol glaze	1835-1900+	4
		TOTAL SHERDS	**138**
		TOTAL WEIGHT (g)	**2079**

Table 1. Breakdown of pottery types from the site in roughly chronological order

Sample number			**1**	**500**	**501**	**502**	**508**
Context number			**2806**	**5042**	**5115**	**5137**	**5069**
Feature type			**Midden**	**Ditch Fill**	**Ditch Fill**	**Ditch Fill**	**Ditch Fill**
Date				**Late Saxon**	**Medieval**	**Medieval**	**Medieval**
Fraction analysed			**100%**	**100%**	**1/16th**	**100%**	**100%**
			40L	40L	38L	40L	40L
Triticum sp. (free threshing tetraploid/hexaploid type)	Wheat	grain	17	68	276	78	80
Hordeum vulgare	Barley	grain	2	7	28	2	11
Secale cereale	Rye	grain	1		5	1	7
Avena sp.	Oat	grain	4	8	26	5	14
indet cereal		grain	21	265	280	87	137
Triticum sp. (free threshing tetraploid/hexaploid type)	Wheat	rachis		61	41	19	41
Hordeum vulgare	Barley	rachis					4
Secale cereale	Rye	rachis			4	1	
Hordeum/Secale	Barley/Rye	rachis		8	2		
Avena sp.	Oat	awn			1F		6F
indet cereal		rachis		7	21	3	5
		detached embryo		1	8	5	3
		culm node		1	1	1	1
cf *Vicia faba*	Field/Celtic Bean	Seed	1	1F	7F	1F	4F
cf *Lens culinaris*	Lentil	Seed	1		1	1F	6
Pisum/Vicia/Lathyrus	Pea/Vetch/Garden Pea	Seed	1	2 + 1F	8	3	41
2mm legume		Seed		1		3	
1mm legume		Seed		1			
Ranunculus sp.	Buttercup	Achene				2	
Trifolium/Melilotus/Medicago type	Clover/Melilot/Medick	Seed	7	1	5	27	78
Prunus sp.	Cherry/Plum/Blackthorn type	Stone					1F
Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	Nut	3F			1F	5F
Malva sp.	Mallow	Nutlet					1

Polygonum sp.	Knotgrass	Achene					6
Rumex sp.	Dock	Achene	1	7	1	4	8
Stellaria sp.	Stitchwort	Seed			1		1
Agrostemma githago L.	Corncockle	Seed			1		
Chenopodium type	Goosefoot	Seed		9		2	4
Montia fontana L.	Blinks	Seed			1		
Primulaceae	Primrose family	Seed					1
Lithospermum arvense L.	Field Gromwell	Nutlet			12		
Plantago lanceolata L.	Ribwort Plantain	Seed		1	2	5	
Asteraceae	Daisy famiy	Achene	4	12	9	10	28
Centaurea cyanus L.	Cornflower	Achene			2		1
Anthemis cotula L.	Stinking Chamomile	Achene	14	61	31	42	78
Tripleurospermum sp.	Mayweed	Achene	1			1	16
Juncus sp.	Rushes	Seed	6	8	17	2	17
Cyperaceae	Sedges	Achene	1			1	
Eleocharis sp.	Spike-rush	Achene		1		1	1
Carex sp.	Sedges	Achene	1		3		
Poaceae	Grass (small)	Seed			4	23	12
	Grass (medium)	Seed	3	1	4	11	14
	Grass (large)	Seed			2	10	2
Indet					5		5
Anguina tritici	Ear Cockle				1	cf3	1
CHARCOAL			2	100	38	43	162

Table 2: Charred plant remains

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