

# Naldertown, Wantage, Oxfordshire Archaeological Evaluation Report

July 2017

**Client: Thomas Homes Ltd** 

Issue No: 1 OA Reference No: 6755 NGR: SU 39213 88136





Client Name:	Thomas Homes Ltd
Document Title:	Naldertown, Wantage, Oxfordshire
Document Type:	Evaluation Report
Report No.:	1
Grid Reference:	SU 39213 88136
Planning Reference:	P15/V0979/O
Site Code:	WANA 17
Invoice Code:	WANA EV
Receiving Body:	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Accession No.:	OXCMS: 2017.105
OA Document File Location:	X:\w\Wantage Naldertown\Report
OA Graphics File Location:	X:\w\Wantage Naldertown\010Geomatics
Issue No:	1
Date:	July 2017
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# Naldertown, Wantage, Oxfordshire

# Archaeological Evaluation Report

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# **Summary**

On the 6th and 7th of July 2017, Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation comprising three trenches on land forming a proposed housing development at Naldertown, Wantage, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 39213 88136).

Archaeological features were present within all three trenches. Numerous ditches revealed during the investigation are likely to represent the remains of Roman enclosure and field systems. Stone roof tiles, ceramic building material, nails and large limestone fragments suggest that there may have been a structure or structures in the vicinity of the site.

A Victorian soakaway or well was also present and can be associated with a structure shown on the historic maps.

The eastern boundary of the site is formed by Ham Road, which follows the root of the former Roman road. The results of the evaluation may be indicative of a roadside settlement.



# Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Thomas Homes Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Hugh Coddington who monitored the work on behalf of Oxford County Council for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by John Boothroyd. The fieldwork was directed by Mark Dodd, who was supported by Chris Richardson and BJ Ware. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Benjamin Brown. Thanks are also owed to the OA staff who cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Leigh Allen, and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.



# **1** INTRODUCTION

## **1.1** Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Thomas Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed development for 31 houses, which will include the demolition of adjacent structures.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (planning ref. P15/V0979/O). Although the local planning authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions with Hugh Coddington, Principal Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, established the scope of work required. This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.
- 1.1.3 The work was carried out in accordance with the written scheme of investigation produced by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2017). The results of these works will be used to inform further mitigation if required.

# **1.2** Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the south of Challow Road A417, with Ham Road to the east, Naldertown and the St John Ambulance properties to the south, and domestic properties with grounds to the west (Figure 1; NGR: SU 39213 88136). The site is in the eastern part of Wantage, within the Vale of the White Horse, at the base of the Berkshire Downs.
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of 1ha of agricultural land, in use recently as both arable and pasture. The land is relatively flat with a slight slope from the northwest at 104m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) to 99m aOD in the southeast.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as sedimentary siltstone and calcareous sandstone of the Upper Greensand Formation, formed 94-112 million years ago (BGS 1971 map 253 and BGS, nd).

# **1.3** Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2014), and is summarized below.

## Prehistoric

1.3.2 There are remains of this period, particularly those of Bronze Age date and, to a greater extent, those of Iron Age date, within the wider area but none have so far been identified within 500m of the site.

## Roman

1.3.3 Evidence from finds (coins, pottery etc) and archaeological investigations demonstrate that the site is within a known Roman landscape. The course of Ham Road to the east is purported to be that of a Roman road and the majority of the recorded sites are east of the road. There is substantial evidence for activity in the Denchworth Road / Mill



Street area to the immediate northeast; this includes probable granaries and burials. Slightly further northeast an evaluation suggested Roman settlement activity and possible villa.

1.3.4 Although the activity could be confined to the eastern side of the Roman road, it is possible that it extends to the west into the site.

#### Saxon to Early Medieval

- 1.3.5 There are known Saxon and early medieval features within the wider area and Wantage itself is known to have had settlement activity in this period and is recorded in the Domesday Survey.
- 1.3.6 There is a known boundary ditch to the east of the site and this could mark the eastern extent of Saxon and early medieval occupation, but the area may have been part of the immediate hinterland of any settlement.

#### Medieval

1.3.7 The landscape appears to have persisted into this period, with finds and features known from the areas to the east but none within the site. Therefore, the site may have been within the wider agricultural landscape of the focused medieval settlement.

#### Post-medieval to Modern

- 1.3.8 The site remains a parcel of undeveloped agricultural land, as shown on various historical maps, through to the present day.
- 1.3.9 A small structure within the central part of the site appears to have been built in the later Victorian era and was demolished in the earlier 20th-century and this may be encountered within the works. The extreme northeastern part may also have traces of the rear gardens along Ham Road, which are seen to encroach into the site area.

#### **Geophysical Survey**

1.3.10 A geophysical survey undertaken in 2014 (Bartlett-Clark Consultancy 2014) identified anomalies indicative of possible linear features that may represent ditches, as well as cultivation marks, and other more general background and disturbance signals (Fig. 2).



# 2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

#### **2.1** Aims

- 2.1.2 The aim of the evaluation trenching was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains.
- 2.1.3 The specific aims were to:
  - i. assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
  - ii. inform formulation of further measures to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
  - iii. consider the site within its local, regional, and national context as appropriate, with reference to the Solent-Thames Regional Research Framework (Hey and Hind 2014);
  - iv. deposit the site archive with an appropriate museum, if relevant;
  - v. provide information for the local HER to ensure the long-term survival of the excavated data.

## 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The site specific methodology was as follows:
  - i. All trenches were located using a GPS system with a sub-50mm accuracy.
  - ii. All trenches were scanned with a CAT prior to and during excavation.
  - iii. Trenches were machined under close archaeological supervision, in even spits to the top of the natural geology, or first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
  - iv. Topsoil and subsoil were stored separately a safe distance from the trench edges (minimum 1m, dependent on ground conditions).
  - v. A sufficient sample of revealed archaeological features were excavated by hand.
  - vi. Finds were bagged by context and standard OA recording systems utilised (see Appendix A).
  - vii. Trenches were backfilled with the arisings in reverse order of excavation.



# **3 RESULTS**

# 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated e.g. pit 102 is a feature within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

## **3.2** General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence between all trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology of degraded mudstone was overlain by a subsoil deposit, which in turn was overlain by ploughsoil. The subsoil varied in depth, measuring 0.2m thick in Trench 1 and increasing to 0.5m in Trench 3 in the south-east of the site.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout. However, the dry weather meant that archaeological features, where present, were slightly ephemeral against the underlying natural geology.

## **3.3** General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were present in all three of the excavated trenches, increasing in density towards the south-east of the site (Fig. 2).

## 3.4 Trench 1

- 3.4.1 Ditch 104 was orientated on a north-south alignment. It measured 2m wide and 0.85m deep, with steep sides and a broad concave base (Fig. 3, section 100). It was filled with two deposits of yellow brown, clay silt and included a small quantity of Roman pottery, animal bone, ceramic building material (CBM), stone roof tile and a residual flint.
- 3.4.2 Pits 106 and 108 were located in the eastern half of the trench. They were both very shallow, just 0.1m deep, and contained deposits of light grey, clay silt (Fig. 3, sections 101 and 102). A small fragment of pottery and a piece of iron was recovered from the fill of pit 106. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery was located on the surface of pit 108.

## **3.5** Trench 2

- 3.5.1 Ditch 202 was recorded on a NE-SW alignment. It measured 2.6m wide, with slightly convex sides leading to a narrow concave base 1.1m deep. It contained a lower fill (203) of brown grey clay silt, overlain by a deposit (204) of brownish grey, slightly sandy silt (Fig. 3, section 200). Both deposits contained large fragments of imported limestone and Roman pottery. The lower fill also contained fragments of stone roof tiles, CBM and nails.
- 3.5.2 Pit 205 was located in the southeast end of the trench and extended beyond the southwest limit of the excavated area. It was sub-rectangular in plan with a length of at least



1.15m. The profile had steep sides and flat base, 0.8m wide and 0.26m deep (Fig. 3, section 201). Within the pit was a dark grey sandy silt, with fragments of light brown fired clay throughout. No finds were recovered from this feature.

3.5.3 Feature 207 was a circular soakaway or possible well. It measured 1.2m in diameter and was lined with red, unfrogged bricks, each measuring 220mm x 106mm x 75mm. The centre of the feature had been backfilled with a deposit of brown, clay silt. The south-eastern edge of the soakaway was overlain by a deposit of 19th-century debris (210) that was up to 0.4m thick and covered an area approximately 6.5m across in the south-east end of the trench. This deposit was also recorded sealing pit 205.

# 3.6 Trench 3

- 3.6.1 Several linear ditches were revealed in Trench 3 including 305, 307, 309, 310 and 312. Ditches 305, 307 and 309 varied in width between 0.4m and 0.98m and from 0.4 to 0.6m deep (Fig. 4, sections 300-2). They each contained single homogeneous deposits of grey, clay silt, with fragments of pottery and bone recovered from ditches 307 and 309.
- 3.6.2 Ditch 310 was located at the north-east end of the trench and measured 0.6m wide and 0.46m deep with steep sides and a concave base (Fig. 4, section 303). It contained a single deposit of dark grey, silty clay. It was truncated along its western edge by a broad shallow ditch, 312, which contained a lower fill of dark greenish grey, silty clay (313), overlain by a deposit of dark grey, silty clay (314). Several sherds of pottery and animal bone were recovered from deposit 314, including the articulated remains of a pregnant ewe.

# 3.7 Finds summary

- 3.7.1 A total of 77 sherds of Roman pottery and eight sherds of medieval / post-medieval pottery were recovered during the evaluation. The Roman pottery spans the whole period, though has a focus of the mid and late Roman periods. The pottery has a mean sherd of weight of 14g. However, some fairly large sherds were also present, in particular from context 203 and 308 (mean sherd weights of 38g and 22g respectively). Smaller average sherd weights were also present in several contexts, i.e. context 315 has a value of 2.5g and context 105 3g. This variation in size suggest that generally the assemblage has undergone multiple episodes of disturbance and redisposition, but that some of the pottery was deposited reasonably close to areas of original use.
- 3.7.2 Three sherds of Late Saxon shelly ware (*c* 775-1050) were recovered from context 314, fill of ditch 312. The adjoining sherds form part of the rim and shoulder of a jar or cooking pot. The rim has been decorated with a series of oblique notches or nicks probably made with a thumbnail, this is unusual for this type of pottery. This style of decoration suggests that the sherd is from the later part of the date range, i.e *c* 975-1050. The vessel also appears to have had an applied horizontal thumbed strip on its neck/shoulder junction, however, this has become detached.
- 3.7.3 The remaining five sherds of medieval / post-medieval pottery all date to the postmedieval period and represent various forms of Staffordshire ware. In additional to



the post-medieval pottery, two pieces of clay pipe were also recovered during the evaluation and have been dated to the late 17th to mid 18th century.

- 3.7.4 Three nail stem fragments were recovered from context 102, fill of ditch 104. Two nails were recovered from both contexts 105, fill of pit 106, and 203, fill of ditch 202. Pottery recovered from these contexts suggest that the nails are of a Roman origin.
- 3.7.5 Three fragments of Roman roof tile were recovered from three contexts in Trenches 1 and 2. A single fragment of tegula from context 102, fill of ditch 104, has burning on the underside indicating its reuse in a hearth of oven. The other two fragments appear to be fragments of imbrex. The fragment from context 214 is unusually thick and suggests that it may have been used in conjunction with stone roofing slabs. Three incised lines across the upper surface of the tile are likely to be the remains of some sort of graffiti.
- 3.7.6 The recovery of four pieces of stone roof tile from trenches 1 and 2 appear to support the interpretation that the ticker imbrex was used with stone tiles.
- 3.7.7 Two struck flints were recovered from ditch 104 and ditch 312. Although both flints are residual, being recovered from Roman features, they do suggest the presence of some degree of activity occurring during the prehistoric period.

## 3.8 Environmental summary

- 3.8.1 A total of 34 animal bone specimens, including two partial sheep skeletons, were recovered from ditches dating to the Roman period. Partial remains of a pregnant ewe in ditch 312 are suggestive of sheep-breeding at or near the site. Butchery marks on the calcaneus suggest the ewe had been skinned after death. The evidence for cattle butchery is consistent with the use of the cleaver. However, there was no evidence of axial splitting of long bones or other traits that might suggest the presence of specialist butchers.
- 3.8.2 No environmental samples were taken during the evaluation.



# 4 **DISCUSSION**

## 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The fieldwork was undertaken during a period of fine weather with generally favourable conditions that did not hinder the investigation. However, although the linear anomalies targeted by trenches 1 and 2 were confirmed as ditches during the evaluation, there was generally a poor correlation between the results of the geophysical survey and this evaluation. Consequently, there is little indication of the density or extent of the archaeological potential beyond the limits of the excavated areas.

## 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 The aims of the evaluation are listed above in section 2.

## 4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 The numerous ditches revealed during this investigation are likely to be the remains of enclosures and fields systems that originated during the Roman period. The deposits were not particularly rich in material culture and charred remains were particularly scarce. However, the stone roof tiles, nails and large limestone fragments do suggest that there was a structure close to the site, but not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of it.
- 4.3.2 The Victorian soakaway or well structure is likely to be the related to a structure indicated on early mapping and linked to the row of terraced houses situated to the south of the site.

# 4.4 Significance

4.4.1 It has previously been suspected that Ham Road (located along the route of a Roman Road) may have marked the western limit to the various areas of Roman activity recorded to the east of the site. The results of this investigation clearly demonstrates that there is evidence for Roman activity on the western side of the Ham Road. Given the increased density of remains towards the east of the site it is possible that they were related to a roadside settlement, perhaps linked with remains previously excavated at the Denchworth Road/Mill Street site approximately 100m to the northeast. Evidently, these remains are important in understanding and determining the extent of the Roman settlement in Wantage.



# APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1								
General description Orientation F								
Trench contained a ditch and two small pits. Consists of topsoil and Length (m) 3								
subsoil ov	verlying n	atural ge	ology of a	legraded calcareous bedrock.	Width (m)	1.6		
			Avg. depth (m)	0.38				
Context	Туре	Width	Depth	Description	Finds	Date		
No.		(m)	(m)					
100	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil	Pottery, clay	17C-18C		
					tobacco pipe			
101	Layer	-	Subsoil	Pottery	M1C-2C			
102	Fill	-	0.5 Fill of 104, light yellow		Pottery, Fe nails,	M1C-2C		
				brown, clay silt, flint	CBM, flint,			
					worked stone			
103	Fill	-	0.55	Fill of 104, yellow brown,	Pottery	M3C+		
				clay silt				
104	Cut	2.00	0.85	Ditch				
105	105 Fill - 0.1 Fill of 106, light grey, clay silt				Pottery, Fe nails	M3C+		
106	Cut	0.8	0.1	Pit				
107	Fill	-	0.1	Fill of 108, light grey, clay silt	Pottery	1680-		
						1800		
108	Cut	0.45	0.1	Pit				
109	Layer	-	-	Natural				

Trench 2						
General o	descriptio	n		Orientation	E-W	
Trench co	ontained a	a ditch, a	a post-medieval soakaway.	Length (m)	30	
Consists	of topso	il and si	ubsoil ov	verlying natural geology of	Width (m)	1.6
degraded	calcareou	us bedroo	ːk.		Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context	Туре	Width	Depth	Description	Finds	Date
No.		(m)	(m)			
200	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-
201	201 Layer - 0.20 Subsoil				-	-
202	202 Cut 2.6 1.1 Ditch				-	-
203 Fill - 0.42 I		Fill of 202, mid brown grey,	Pottery, Fe nails,	2C+		
			clay silt	CBM, worked		
				stone		
204	Fill - 0.56 Fill of 202, mid to light		Pottery	L2C-E3C		
			brownish grey, slightly			
sai				sandy silt		
205	205 Cut 0.8 0.26 Pit					
206 Fill - 0.26		Fill of 205, mid to dark grey,				
	sandy silt					
207	Cut	1.2	-	Soakaway (unexcavated)		
208	Str	1.2	-	Brick lining of 207, 220mm		
				x 106mm x 75mm		



209	Fill	0.75	-	Fill of 208, mid brown clay	
				silt	
210	Layer	-	0.42	Dumped deposit, 19th century waste, charcoal, clinker, tiles, bricks	
211	Layer	-	-	Natural	

Trench 3						
General o	descriptio	n	Orientation	E-W		
Trench co	ontained s	everal dit	Length (m)	30		
of topsoi	il and su	bsoil ove	Width (m)	1.6		
calcareou	is bedrock	κ.	Avg. depth (m)	0.66		
Context	Туре	Width	Depth	Description	Finds	Date
No.		(m)	(m)			
301	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
302	Layer	-	0.45	Subsoil	Pottery	M3C+
						and
						1820-
						1900
303	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
304	Fill		0.4	Fill of 305, light grey, clay		
	silt					
305 Cut 0.4 0.4				Ditch		
306 Fill 0.6		Fill of 305, mid grey, clay	Pottery	Roman		
				silt		
307	Cut	0.9	0.6	Ditch		
308	Fill 0.6 Fill of 309, mid grey, clay		Pottery	M-L2C		
				silt		
309	Cut	0.98	0.6	Ditch		
310	0 Cut 0.6 0.46 Ditch		Ditch			
311	311 Fill - 0.46 Fill of 310		Fill of 310, dark grey, silty	Pottery	Roman	
				clay		
312 Cut 2.4 0.41		Ditch				
313 Fill - 0.1		Fill of 312, dark greenish				
				grey, silty clay		
314	Fill	-	0.41	Fill of 312, dark grey, silty	Pottery, flint	M2C+
				clay		and
					975/100-	
						1050
315	Find	-	-	Context attributed to	Pottery	M-L2C
				articulated faunal remains		



# APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

## **B.1** Iron Age and Roman pottery

By Edward Biddulph

#### Introduction

- B.1.1 Seventy-seven sherds of Roman pottery weighing 1094g were recovered from the evaluation. The assemblage was scanned to identify diagnostic forms and fabrics, and to provide spot-dates. Fabrics and forms were assigned codes from OA's standard recording system for later Iron Age and Roman pottery (Booth 2014). Reference was also made to relevant typologies, specifically Young (1977) and Webster (1996).
- B.1.2 Several fabrics were identified, but it should be noted that the list presented below is not comprehensive, and more fabrics are likely to be identified with full recording. Codes in brackets are taken from the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998).
  - B10 Unsourced black-burnished ware
  - B11 Dorset black-burnished ware (DOR BB 1)
  - E80 Grog-tempered ware (SOB GT)
  - F51 Oxford red/brown colour-coated ware (OXF RS)
  - M22 Oxford white ware mortaria (OXF WH)
  - O10 Fine oxidised wares
  - O20 Sandy oxidised wares
  - P Prehistoric fabric (flint-tempered)
  - R10 Fine reduced wares
  - R30 Medium sandy reduced wares
  - R90 Coarse-tempered reduced wares
  - S30 Central Gaulish samian ware (LEZ SA 2)
  - W22 Oxford sandy white ware
- B.1.3 Forms identified during the scan included:
  - CD Medium-mouthed jar
  - CK 'Cooking pot'-type jar
  - Samian forms Drag. 37 (decorated bowl), Drag. 31 (dish)



#### Description of the assemblage

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Comments	Spot-date
101	2	14	?Flagon rim (O20), R30	M1C-2C
102	17	76	Body sherds E80, R30, O20, O10 (rouletted	M1C-2C
			body sherd from ?butt beaker)	
103	2	24	Body sherds R30, F51	M3C+
105	1	3	Body sherd ?W11	M3C+
203	13	500	R30 (CK – Young R27) rim and body sherds;	2C+
			another jar represented by body sherds	
204	2	50	Base sherds R10, S30 (mortarium)	L2C-E3C
302	7	79	F51 (bowl rim), body sherds R95, S30	M3C+
				(residual)
306	2	7	Body sherds R30 (external carbonised deposit	Roman
			and internal 'limescale')	
308	6	134	R30 (CD – Young R23) warped rim - ?second,	M-L2C
			B11 (CK) rim sherd, body sherds S30, P – flint-	
			tempered	
311	2	33	Body sherds R90 (?R95), R30	Roman
314	17	159	M22 (mortarium spout), R30 (jar rims), base	M2C+
			sherd S30 (?Drag. 31), body sherds W22	(residual)
315	6	15	B10 (CK), S30 (Drag. 37 body sherd), body	M-L2C
			sherds R90, R30	
Total	77	1094		

#### Table 1: Roman pottery from WANA17

B.1.4 The earliest pottery was a sherd of flint-tempered pottery from context 308. This may be later Bronze Age or early Iron Age, but is in any case residual, having been found in association with Roman-period material.

- B.1.5 Some 43% of the assemblage by sherd count belonged to context groups dated by pottery to the earlier Roman period (1st-2nd centuries AD). This included a flagon rim (possibly a ring-necked flagon) in a sandy oxidised fabric from context 101, grog-tempered ware from context 102, and black-burnished ware everted-rim 'cooking pots' and Central Gaulish samian from contexts 308 and 315. A base sherd from a samian ware mortarium in context 214 is likely to have been deposited after AD 170. Later 2nd century pottery, including an Oxford white ware mortarium spout and a fragment of a dish in Central Gaulish samian, was recovered from context 314. This was, however, found in association with late Saxon pottery and is residual.
- B.1.6 Two context groups (103 and 105) were spot-dated to the later 3rd or 4th century on account of the Oxford-industry fabrics they contained. More late Roman pottery was recovered from context 302, but this is likely to be residual, as post-Roman pottery was also collected.
- B.1.7 Pottery from context 203, comprising reduced ware jars, could not be dated more closely than 2nd to 4th century, while the groups from contexts 306 and 311 were dated more broadly still.

## Discussion

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- B.1.8 Overall, the pottery assemblage spans the Roman period, but has an emphasis on the mid and late Roman periods. It should be noted, however, that the small size of the pottery groups reduces the reliability of the dating, which should be considered to be *termini post quem* only.
- B.1.9 The assemblage was recovered from all three trenches and therefore distributed across the site. There is no clear chronological differentiation, with both earlier and later Roman pottery being found in trenches 1 and 3.
- B.1.10 The condition of the assemblage is mixed. The pottery has a mean sherd weight of 14g. Some fairly large sherds are present, particularly in contexts 203 and 308 (whose pottery has mean sherd weights of 38g and 22g respectively), though other groups are characterised by small sherds; context 315 has a value of 2.5g, for instance, while the value of group 105 is 3g. These values, coupled with the observation that some of the pottery is likely to be residual, suggest that the assemblage has generally undergone multiple episodes of disturbance and redeposition, but that some of the pottery was deposited reasonably close to areas of original use.
- B.1.11 A jar rim from context 308 was uneven and overfired, providing evidence of firing/manufacturing damage and hinting at local production. However, the form is consistent with Oxford-industry repertoire, and it remains possible that the vessel was traded normally, despite its faults.

## **B.2** Medieval and post-medieval pottery

#### By John Cotter

## Introduction

B.2.1 A total of 8 sherds of pottery weighing 83g were recovered from four contexts. This is of medieval and post-medieval date. Given the small size of the assemblage the pottery is simply described and spot-dated below. Fabric codes referred to for the medieval wares are those of the Oxfordshire type series (Mellor 1994) whereas post-medieval codes are those of the Museum of London (MOLA 2014).

## Description of the assemblage

#### Context (100) Spot-date: c 1710-1760 (possibly c 1710-1740?)

B.2.2 Two sherds (16g). 1x flat base sherd from a cylindrical tankard in Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware with a white slip (SWSL, c1710-1760). 1x body sherd from the wall of a second cylindrical tankard in Staffordshire brown salt-glaze stoneware (STBRS, c1690-1730). Both sherds in fresh condition. The finding of two tankards in the same context might suggest they derive from a nearby drinking house or drinking/eating area, but the sample is too small to be sure of this.

#### Context (107) Spot-date: c 1680-1800

B.2.3 One sherd (1g). 1x small body sherd from a drinking vessel (possibly a tankard) with fine horizontal reeding externally, in Staffordshire mottled brown glazed ware (STMO, c1680-1800).

Context (302) Spot-date: c 1820-1900



B.2.4 Two sherds (13g). 1x small sherd from the damaged footring of a bowl in Staffordshire-type yellow ware (YELL, c 1820-1900). 1x body sherd in post-medieval redware (PMR, c 1580-1900), this example probably 18th/early 19th century and with reduced greenish-brown glaze inside and outside over a light orange fabric with fairly coarse quartz inclusions (probably a local source).

Context (314) Spot-date: c 975/1000-1050? (Late Saxon)

B.2.5 Three sherds (53g). Joining sherds (probably fresh breaks) from a jar/cooking pot in Late Saxon Oxfordshire shelly ware (OXB, c 775-1050). Comprises two joining rim sherds and a neck/shoulder sherd. Plain, slightly thickened, flaring rim (diam 230mm, 12% of circumference). Unusually for this ware the rim has been decorated with a series of oblique notches or nicks probably made with the thumbnail. This resembles the continuous thumbed decoration commonly found on medieval cooking pots from the 11th century onwards. It occurs in some parts of England from as early as the late 9th century but is rare in Oxfordshire before c 1000, so the dating suggested for this particular vessels is late in the date-range for Late Saxon Oxford shelly ware, ie c 975/1000-1050. There is no published parallel for this type of rim decoration on OXB (Mellor 1994, fig. 6). In addition, the vessel appears to have had an applied horizontal thumbed strip on its neck/shoulder junction, but this has become detached, leaving a broad scar of contrasting light grey colour compared to the surrounding brownish external surface colour. Lower down there are traces of further decoration, possibly a row of deeply stamped circles or pits, again suggesting an 11th century dating. The external surface of the rim shows heavy sooting from use as a cooking vessel. The fabric is fairly soft and mainly dark grey with a fine sandy texture and with abundant very coarse fossil shell inclusions. The matrix also contains abundant fine mica and rounded black sand - probably glauconite (possibly suggesting a southern Oxfordshire source). The production site(s) of OXB is unknown but thought to be on the Thames somewhere to the north-west of Oxford.

# **B.3** Clay tobacco pipe

By John Cotter

## Introduction

4.4.2 A total of 2 pieces of clay pipe weighing 5g were recovered from a single context. The condition of the material is medium to fairly poor. Given the small size of the assemblage the pipes are simply described and spot-dated below.

## Description of the assemblage

#### Context (100) Spot-date: Late 17th to mid 18th century

B.3.1 Two pieces (5g): 2x stem fragments probably from separate pipes. Both with stem bore diameters in the c 2-2.5mm range.

# B.4 Metal finds

By Ian Scott



#### Introduction

B.4.1 The metal finds from this site are limited in number and comprise just eight hobnails and three nail stem fragments from context 102, parts of two nails from context 105 and two nails and length of iron bar from context 203.

#### Description of the assemblage

#### Table 2: Fe objects by context

Context	Description
Contaxt 102	1) Hobnails. Six hobnails, two hobnails heads. Fe. Not measured
Context 102	2) Nails. Three small nail stem fragments. Fe. Not measured.
	3) Nail, with a flat circular head and square section stem, incomplete.
Context 105	Fe. Not measured
	4) Nail, nail stem fragment. Fe. Not measured
	5) Nail, with flat circular head and square section stem. Probably
Contaxt 202	complete. Fe. L: 93mm
Context 203	6) Nail, with small T-head. Complete. Fe. L: 84mm
	7) Bar of square section, rather than nail. Fe. L: 92mm.

#### **B.5 Ceramic building material**

#### By Cynthia Poole

- B.5.1 A small assemblage consisting of three fragments (297g) of Roman tile was recovered from three contexts in trenches 1 and 2. The tile is recorded in the table below (Table 3). They were all made in the same reddish orange sandy fabric containing red iron oxide inclusions up to 5mm in size. This is essentially the same as sandy fabric C identified at Didcot Great Western Park and comparable with similar fabrics found elsewhere in the Thames Valley in Oxfordshire.
- B.5.2 The assemblage includes a fragment of flat tile (ctx 102), probably tegula, which has burning on the underside indicative of re-use in a hearth, oven or similar structure. One piece with a distinct curve is clearly imbrex (ctx 203). The third tile (ctx 214) is fairly flat though the underside is slightly concave and the form of the edge is typical of imbrex, suggesting this is of the same form. However, it is unusually thick, which suggests that it may be a purpose made ridge tile possibly being used in conjunction with stone roofing slabs. This tile has three thin incised lines across the upper surface. Though they could arguably be accidental, their character suggests something more deliberate possibly being the remains of some sort of graffiti.
- B.5.3 Whilst the tile can be dated as Roman it cannot be be closely assigned within this period. However, at Didcot all the thick ridge tile occurred in contexts of late Roman date, which is consistent with greater prevalence of stone roofing in the later Roman period. Whilst the primary use of the tile would have been as roofing, there is evidence of re-use and the small quantity suggests it is unlikely that any such buildings occurred in the immediate vicinity of the excavations.

Context     No.     Wt (g)     Form     Fabric     Th (mm)     Description	10	bic J.	Incenta e	of the certainie a	anang materia		
	Context	No.	Wt (g)	Form	Fabric	Th (mm)	Description

# Table 3: Record of the ceramic building material



102	1	119	Flat/tegula	C Coarse moulding sand	20	Fairly even top surface; rougher more irregular base surface with evidence of burning and sooting indicative of reuse.
203	1	57	Imbrex	C Medium moulding sand	20	Slightly irregular undulating top surface with patches of moulding sand and diffuse small area burnt grey. Part of end edge and underside fairly rough and sanded.
214	1	121	Imbrex/ridge	C Medium-coarse moulding sand	26	Thick fairly flat tile with flat edge with rounded arrises where the clay has been smoothed in over the edge. The surfaces have fired to a light creamy orange colour contrasting with the darker pinkish orange core. The exterior surface has three thin scored lines running lengthways at a slight diagonal to the edge. They are 10 and 24mm apart, the two closer parallel and the third diverging slightly.
Total	3	297				

## B.6 Stone

## By Ruth Shaffrey

B.6.1 A total of four pieces of stone were submitted for analysis. These comprise two small fragments of burnt shelly limestone (129g), possibly fragments of roofing (fill 102 of ditch 104) and two roofstones with crude nail holes of 6mm diameter, in a grey shelly limestone (2710g) (fill 203 of ditch 202). One of these is incomplete but measures over 250mm wide and must therefore be from a very large example. The other is a triangular shape with the perforation towards the flat end of the triangle and offset at one side.

# B.7 Flint

## By Michael Donnelly

B.7.1 A very small assemblage of two struck flints was recovered from this evaluation. The artefacts were catalogued according to OA South's standard system of broad artefact/debitage type (Anderson-Whymark 2013; Bradley 1999), general condition noted and dating was attempted where possible. The assemblage was catalogued directly onto an Open Office spreadsheet. During the assessment additional information on condition (rolled, abraded, fresh and degree of cortication), and state of the artefact (burnt, broken, or visibly utilised) was also recorded. Retouched pieces were classified according to standard morphological descriptions (e.g. Bamford 1985, 72-77; Healy 1988, 48-9; Bradley 1999). Technological attribute analysis was initially undertaken and included the recording of butt and termination type (Inizan *et al.* 



1999), flake type (Harding 1990), hammer mode (Onhuma and Bergman 1982), and the presence of platform edge abrasion.

B.7.2 The assemblage consisted of a side trimming flake and a retouched blade with odd ventral retouch at its proximal snap and a notch at its surviving upper left margin, possibly for hafting and also damage along its left edge. While blade-like in proportions, it does not display the very regular flaking pattern usually associated with carefully knapped early prehistoric blade industries and may well be later prehistoric in date. Both flints were recovered as residual finds in Roman ditches. Neither piece is diagnostic, although their presence here clearly shows some degree of activity here during prehistory.

#### Table 4: Flint assemblage by context

Context	type	sub-type	notes	date
102	Retouched blade	Inner	Notched and ventrally retouched blade with damage to left lateral margin	?EPH
314	Flake	Side trimming		



# APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

# C.1 Animal Bone

By Martyn Allen

## Introduction

C.1.1 The evaluation produced 34 animal bone specimens, including two partial sheep skeletons (each counted as one specimen). All the animal bones derived from ditch features, dating between the mid-1st century AD and the mid-3rd century AD. Overall, the assemblage was well preserved.

## Methods

- C.1.2 The animal bone assemblage has been analysed and recorded at the environmental lab at OA South. The fragments have been identified to taxon where possible, either to species or sub-species, such as cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*) or pig (*Sus scrofa*). Skeletal elements such as vertebrae, ribs and non-diagnostic long bone fragments have been assigned as either large mammal (e.g. cattle, horse), medium mammal (e.g. sheep, pig), small mammal (e.g. cat, mustelid) or micro mammal (e.g. rodents), based upon their relative size. The remains were identified to taxon with the aid of the comparative skeletal assemblage housed at OA South.
- C.1.3 The hand-collected remains were examined on a fragment-by-fragment basis, and have been quantified by taxon (NISP). Refitting fragments, and fragments which clearly come from the same element but have been fractured due to post-depositional activity, have been counted as single specimens. Element zones have been recorded according to Serjeantson's (1996) criteria.
- C.1.4 Dental wear patterns on cattle, sheep/goat and pig teeth have been recorded using the system of Grant (1982) to examine the relative age of the domestic animals. In addition to dental wear, epiphyseal fusion of long bones has been recorded, with estimated ages being applied using Silver's (1969) dataset.
- C.1.5 Where possible bones have been measured using the criteria developed by von den Driesch (1976), with measurements for horncores following Sykes and Symmons (2006).
- C.1.6 Butchery marks have been recording using the coding system devised by Maltby (2010).
- C.1.7 Sex differences have been established, where possible, using the morphology of the pelvis for cattle, sheep/goat and deer (Grigson 1982), observation root closure in pig lower canines, and the presence of medullary bone in bird long bones.
- C.1.8 Evidence for burning has been recorded as either partially burnt, black, grey or calcined. Gnaw marks have been noted, where present, while evidence for pathology has been recorded in detail.
- C.1.9 All data have been recorded in a Microsoft Access database and will be held in the project archive.



#### Results

#### Taxa representation

- C.1.10 The assemblage included remains of cattle, sheep/goat and horse (Table 5). The two partial skeletons—an adult and an in-utero animal—were both from sheep rather than goat, based on the morphology of several bones from the adult specimen. The in-utero specimen was assumed to be sheep based upon its association with the adult specimen.
- C.1.11 Apart from the partial skeletons, very little can be said about the assemblage in terms the economic importance of domestic livestock at the site, other than the fact that these three species were being exploited.

Table 5: Quantification of animal bones by spot date (\*includes two partial sheep skeletons inditch 312)

	mid-1st-	mid 2nd	mid–late		mid 3rd		
Таха	2nd C.	С.	2nd C.	2nd C.	С.	Roman	total
cattle	1	1	2	1	1	1	7
sheep/goat	1	5	1				7
sheep*		1	3				4
horse		1					1
large mammal	1	3			6		10
medium mammal		1	2				3
unidentified			2				2
total	3	12	10	1	7	1	34

#### Skeletal elements

- C.1.12 Cattle remains were represented by a range of elements, including mandible, scapula, radius, pelvis, astragalus and metatarsal.
- C.1.13 Sheep/goat remains were represented by radius, pelvis, femur, tibia and loose teeth specimens.
- C.1.14 Horse was represented by a single, complete tibia.

#### Ageing data

- C.1.15 Few ageing data were recorded. Apart from the in-utero sheep skeleton (see below), all the remains derive from skeletally mature animals.
- C.1.16 One cattle mandible had a fully erupted molar row with all the teeth present in wear. The specimen gave a mandible wear score of 43, which suggests that it derived from an animal aged around 6–10 years old (cf. Jones and Sadler 2012, 18, table 4).

#### Sex data

C.1.17 One sheep/goat pelvis specimen from ditch 312 (context 314) was from a male, based upon the morphology of the ilio-pubic ridge.

Biometric analyses



- C.1.18 Measurements were taken from the partial sheep skeleton and these are detailed below. Measurements were also taken from a sheep/goat tibia and a cattle astragalus, though little can be said about these results. The data will be kept in archive for further analysis if further excavation at the site produces more faunal material.
- C.1.19 A complete horse tibia provided an estimated withers' height (shoulder height) of 1325mm. Although withers' heights are not a fool-proof means of differentiating between horses, donkeys and mules, Johnstone's study of Roman equids found that donkeys tend to have withers' heights below 1300mm, while mules tend to be above 1400mm (Johnstone 2004, 251, fig. 6.21). A more recent survey of horse size in late Iron Age and Roman Britain has found evidence for increasing horse sizes after the Roman conquest (Allen 2017a in press). Iron Age horses at Gravelly Guy, Oxfordshire, did not exceed 1300mm in height, while those at Elms Farm, Heybridge, Essex, increased on average from 1260mm in the late Iron Age to 1337mm in the early Roman period, and reaching just shy of 1400mm in most consistent with early Roman horses at Elms Farm.

#### Butchery

- C.1.20 Six specimens included evidence of butchery. Marks found on the partial sheep skeleton are detailed below. The remaining specimens included cattle and horse remains, and one large mammal long bone fragment.
- C.1.21 Butchery marks on cattle bones were all made using a cleaver. These included an astragalus from ditch 309 that exhibited a superficial, horizontal chop mark at the proximal end, a mandible from ditch 312 that had several oblique chop marks along the lateral diastema, and a radius from ditch 305 had been obliquely chopped through the proximal end.
- C.1.22 The cattle butchery is consistent with processing methods commonly found at large Roman settlements. It must be noted, however, that there is no evidence of axial splitting of long bones, which is a common trait of specialist butchers operating in urban centres during this period (Maltby 2007).
- C.1.23 The horse tibia was complete and had not been butchered with a cleaver. Instead, this bone exhibited knife cuts around the proximal end, indicating that it had been dismembered in a different fashion to cattle carcasses.

#### Other taphonomy

- C.1.24 No evidence of burning was observed on material in the assemblage.
- C.1.25 One cattle metatarsal from ditch 202 had been gnawed by a carnivore, most likely a dog, at both ends of the bone.

#### Partial sheep skeletons in ditch 312

C.1.26 Two partial sheep skeletons were recovered from ditch 312. These included adult and in-utero individuals, which were probably associated with each other.



C.1.27 The adult sheep was represented by most of the posterior end of the carcass, consisting of parts of the trunk, the pelvis, upper and lower rear limbs, and tarsal bones (Table 6). It is possible that the skull and forelimb bones remain in section. However, it must also be noted that some evidence for butchery was noted on the skeleton (see below).

Element	left	right	not sided	total
skull				_
scapula				-
humerus				1
radius				-
ulna				-
metacarpal				
vertebra			29	29
rib			57	57
sacrum			1	1
pelvis		1		1
femur	2			2
patella	1			1
tibia	1	1		2
astragalus	1	1		2
calcaneus	1	1		2
naviculo-cuboid	1	1		2
tarsal			4	4
metatarsal				_
phalanx 1				_
phalanx 2				
phalanx 3	1	1		2
total	8	6	91	105

 Table 6: Quantification of bone fragments from adult sheep ABG in ditch 312 (context 315)

- C.1.28 Most of the bones from the adult individual had fully fused epiphyses, indicating that it was a mature animal. However, the proximal tibiae and the left distal femur were fusing at the time of death. Both of these bones undergo epiphyseal fusion between 36 and 42 months, indicating that the sheep was over three years old when it died.
- C.1.29 Four bones were complete enough for withers' heights calculations. The left and right tibiae and a calcaneus provided fairly consistent heights of 596mm, 595mm and 592mm respectively. An astragalus gave an estimated height of 557mm and may be an anomalous result. The withers' height is broadly average for sheep during the early Roman period in Britain (Allen 2017a in press).
- C.1.30 While much of the partial skeleton was found in articulation, evidence for butchery was found on the right calcaneus. This consisted of two very small knife cuts, no more than a couple of millimetres long, on the lateral aspect of the central part of the bone.

These marks suggest that the sheep had been skinned prior to deposition, though there is no evidence that it had been eaten.

- C.1.31 No part of the partial adult skeleton provided evidence of the sex of the animal. However, its association with the bones of an in-utero lamb almost certainly indicates that this was a pregnant ewe.
- C.1.32 The recovery of 46 fragments including 14 different bones from the lamb suggests that it was well preserved by the carcass of its mother, and had suffered little from postdepositional disturbance (Table 7).

Element	left	right	not sided	total
skull				_
scapula	2			2
humerus	1	1		2
radius	2	2		4
ulna	1			1
metacarpal			1	1
vertebra			12	12
rib			16	16
sacrum				_
pelvis		1		1
femur	1	1		2
patella				-
tibia	1	1		2
astragalus				Ι
calcaneus				Ι
naviculo-cuboid				-
tarsal				-
metatarsal	1	1		2
phalanx 1			1	1
phalanx 2				_
phalanx 3				_
total	9	7	30	46

Table 7: Quantification of bone fragments from in utero sheep ABG in ditch 312 (context 315)

C.1.33 All the bones were small and gracile, and none had not undergone epiphyseal fusion. The clearest indication that this was an in-utero lamb rather than a perinatal was indicated by the unfused shafts of the metapodials, a bone which fuses along its axial dimension before birth.

#### Discussion

- C.1.34 The small sample size of the animal bone assemblage precludes its potential for providing information about the pastoral economy of the site.
- C.1.35 The most notable aspect of the assemblage is the recovery of a pregnant ewe in ditch 312. This individual suggests that sheep-breeding was occurring at or near the site. The manner of its death is uncertain. It may have died from natural causes, such as disease,



and was buried thereafter. The developmental stage of the bones of the in-utero lamb suggests that the mother was not giving birth when it died. The butchery marks found on the calcaneus—a bone found in the ankle—indicates that the ewe had been skinned. Sheep and goat skins were regularly exploited in Roman Britain for a wide range of products, such as tents, covers and bindings, though cattle leather is thought to have been favoured for shoes (Allen 2017b in press; van Driel Murray 1998, 334). Although the ewe may have been deliberately killed for its skin, the fact that it does not appear to have been eaten perhaps suggests that the skin was taken from an animal that had died naturally, particularly if the meat was not thought to have been suitable for consumption. The fact that the ewe was pregnant also suggests that it was not deliberately killed.

C.1.36 The cattle butchery evidence is consistent with the use of a cleaver. However, there was no evidence of axial splitting of long bones or other traits that might suggest the presence of specialist butchers who were otherwise known to have been operating in towns (Maltby 2007; 2010). The butchery evidence from Naldertown is similar to that observed at other sites in Wantage, such as at Denchworth Road (Maltby 2001, 322) and Mill Street (Maltby 1996, 159). The discovery of knife marks on a horse tibia suggests that the skin of this animal was exploited, though its flesh does not appear to have been consumed. No evidence for horse consumption was found at other Wantage sites (ibid.).

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# **APPENDIX E**

# SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name: Site code: Grid Reference Type: Date and duration: Area of Site Location of archive:	Naldertown, Wantage, Oxfordshire WANA17 SU 39213 88136 Evaluation Two days, 6th and 7th of July 2017 0.91ha The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS: 2017.105.
Summary of Results:	On the 6th and 7th of July 2017, Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation comprising three trenches on land forming a proposed housing development at Naldertown, Wantage Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 39213 88136).
	Archaeological features were present within all three trenches. Numerous ditches revealed during the investigation likely represent the remains of Roman enclosure and field systems. Stone roof tiles, CBM, nails and large limestone fragments suggest that there may have been a structure in the vicinity of the site.
	A Victorian soakaway or well was also present and can be associated with a structure shown on the historic maps.
	The eastern boundary of the site is formed by Ham Road, which follows the root of the former Roman road. The results of the evaluation maybe indicative of a roadside settlement.



Figure 1: Site location

X:\w\Wantage Naldertown\010Geomatics\02 CAD\WANAEV\_Naldertown, Wantage\_2017-07-06.dwg(Figure 2)\*\*\*WANAEV\*benjamin.brown\* 28 Jul 2017



Figure 2: Trench layout and archaeological features overlying results of the geophysical survey















Figure 4: Trench 3 sections

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Plate 1: Ditch 104, looking north



Plate 2: Ditch 202, looking north-east



Plate 3: Ditches 312 and 310, looking north-west









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