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Rushden Lakes, Ditchford Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Contents

Summary	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, topography and geology.....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 Aims	4
2.2 Methodology.....	4
3 RESULTS	6
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results	6
3.2 General soils and ground conditions.....	6
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits.....	6
3.4 The middle–late Iron Age settlement (Trenches 36–9, 45–6, 48 and 58)	7
3.5 Trenches 13, 15 and 19	8
3.6 Finds summary	9
4 DISCUSSION	10
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	10
4.2 Evaluation objectives and results.....	10
4.3 Interpretation.....	11
APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY.....	12
APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS.....	30
B.1 Pottery	30
B.2 Flint.....	33
B.3 Fired clay.....	35

APPENDIX C	ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS.....	36
C.1	Animal Bones	36
APPENDIX D	BIBLIOGRAPHY	41
APPENDIX E	SITE SUMMARY DETAILS	44

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Site location
Figure 2: Trench layout over geophysical survey results
Figure 3: Plan of Iron Age settlement (northern half)
Figure 4: Plan of Iron Age settlement (southern half)
Figure 5: Ditch and pit sections (Trench 45)
Figure 6: Ditch and pit sections (Trenches 38 and 39)
Figure 7: Ditch sections (Trenches 46, 48 and 58)
Figure 8: Ditch and pit sections (Trenches 36 and 37)
Figure 9: Plan of archaeological features in north-east of the evaluation
Figure 10: Ditch sections in north-east part of the site (Trenches 13, 15 and 19)

List of Plates

- Plate 1: Trench 45 facing east
Plate 2: Ditch 4505 facing north
Plate 3: Ditch 3807 facing south-east
Plate 4: Pit 3902 facing north-west
Plate 5: Trench 46 facing south-east
Plate 6: Ditch 4603 facing north-east
Plate 7: Ditches 3605 and 3607 facing north-east
Plate 8: Ditch 5802 facing north-west
Plate 9: Trench 13 facing south-east
Plate 10: Ditch/furrow 1904 facing north
Plate 11: Made-up ground of mixed clay in Trench 62
Plate 12: Part of middle-late Iron Age vessel in ditch 3807

Summary

A 50-trench evaluation was undertaken on arable farmland to the north of Rushden, Northamptonshire to inform on the archaeological potential within the investigation area.

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record reported the presence of a prehistoric settlement in the western half of the evaluation area. This was corroborated by geophysical survey which provided greater resolution of the settlement, increasing our understanding of its limits and layout. The evaluation established the presence and survival of several archaeological features associated with the settlement and provided dating evidence which placed it in the middle–late Iron Age, between the mid-3rd century and the late 1st century BC.

Further archaeological features, consisting of a few ditches and a pit, were encountered in the far eastern part of the evaluation area. Little could be discerned of their character and function, though the recovery of a small amount of Roman pottery suggests that they may have been features of this date.

The geophysical survey also identified ridge and furrow in the western half of the evaluation area, along with signs of modern disturbance and services. No evidence of any other archaeological features was established by the evaluation.

The route of a disused railway line, seen on historic maps, defines the northern boundary to the evaluation area. Evaluation trenches in this area encountered made-up ground relating to this former embankment.

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The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Steve Lawrence MCIfA. The fieldwork was supervised by Mark Gibson. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Markus Dyslewski and Aidan Farnan. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that processed the finds under the management of Leigh Allen, processed the environmental remains under the management of Rebecca Nicholson, and prepared the archive under the management of Nicky Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by LXB3 Partners LLP to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land between Ditchford Road and the Travelodge and A45 service area to the north-west of the A45 and Rushden, Northamptonshire.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken to inform on the archaeological potential of this site. A specification was discussed and agreed with Lesley-Ann Mather, County Archaeological Advisor (CAA) for Northamptonshire, establishing a scope of works to adequately inform on this potential. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by OA and approved by the CAA prior to the fieldwork commencing (OA 2017a). This WSI outlined how OA would implement the specified requirements.
- 1.1.3 The fieldwork was completed between 14th-24th August 2017.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The evaluation area sits on high ground overlooking the floodplain of the River Nene, which lies approximately 850m to the north (Fig. 1). Topographically, evaluation area reaches a high point of c 59m aOD within the southern limits of the boundary and slopes downward to c 46m aOD towards the floodplain to the north.
- 1.2.2 The evaluation area is centred at SP 93350 67510 and covers approximately 14ha. Currently, the land is under arable cultivation and is accessed from Ditchford Road which runs north–south along the western side of evaluation area. The A45 forms the southern boundary, opposite which lie retail parks and industrial estates on the outskirts of Rushden. Arable fields and meadows lay immediately to the north with large arable fields also present to the west of Ditchford Road. A Travelodge, roadside service area and restaurant borders the eastern side of the evaluation area with the recent Rushden Lakes retail development beyond. Nearby settlements include Rushden and Higham Ferrers to the south-east and east respectively, and Wellingborough, c 4km to the west.
- 1.2.3 The underlying bedrock geology of the evaluation area is varied (www.bgs.ac.uk). Much of the land is mapped as Northampton Sand Formation consisting of ooidal ironstone. There are interbedded patches of Stamford Member sandstone and siltstone and Wellingborough Limestone. A band of Rutland Formation mudstone protrudes into the evaluation area from its southern boundary. There are no superficial deposits recorded within the boundary. The overlying soils are recorded as part of the Banbury Association (544) and are described as brashy fine and coarse, loamy, ferruginous soils over ironstone (SSEW 1983).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following archaeological and historical background of the evaluation area is based on information gathered from the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) via the Northamptonshire County Council online interactive mapping service. The UID numbers given below refer to the Northamptonshire HER record number.

1.3.2 Additional evidence for archaeological features within the evaluation area boundary has also been revealed by geophysical survey (SUMO 2017) undertaken in advance of the evaluation, while the wider region is well known to have been the focus of considerable activity during the Iron Age and Roman periods. The following section provides brief summaries of this evidence.

HER Records

1.3.3 The HER records one entry within the evaluation boundary and several entries within 200m of this. Several cropmarks in the western half of the evaluation area, close to its southern boundary, highlight the presence of a possible prehistoric settlement defined by multiple enclosures (UID MNN4058). This settlement is associated with a long linear feature that leads from the north of the evaluation area, past the western edge of the settlement, and continuing south. Further cropmarks to the south of the A45 show this turning to the south-east and continuing for some distance (UID MNN120054).

1.3.4 A second linear cropmark recorded in the western half of the evaluation area is aligned parallel to the north–south ditch (UID MNN120055). It is not known whether the two were associated, though an adjacent feature interpreted as a ‘prehistoric hut circle’ may signify further evidence of settlement (UID MNN120073).

1.3.5 Another set of enclosures, also identified from cropmarks, lay immediately to the west of Ditchford Road and may also represent a settlement, though there is no dating evidence associated with this (UID MNN2189).

1.3.6 Approximately 250m to the north of the evaluation area, three closely positioned round barrows possibly form a Bronze Age burial ground (UID MNN1244).

Geophysical survey

1.3.7 A geophysical magnetometer survey was undertaken in July 2017 as part of this evaluation process (SUMO 2017). This identified the prehistoric settlement within the evaluation area, revealing further detail about its form and internal features. The settlement covered approximately 2ha and its features were well defined by the survey data. The long north–south field boundary previously seen as a cropmark is clear, as is part of a second north–south linear around 80m to the west. Together, these mark the approximate width of the settlement. They appear to have been conjoined by an east–west-aligned field boundary that formed the northern limit (Fig. 2).

1.3.8 In the southern part of the settlement, a large sub-rectangular feature encircles two smaller enclosures. In the northern part of the settlement, one sub-circular enclosure was flanked by two, slightly smaller, irregularly shaped enclosures, each of which appears to contain several pits and/or postholes. The remainder of the settlement was further subdivided by numerous linear and curvilinear features. Some of these may have related to structures, though the evidence is unclear. It is also uncertain how many phases of activity are evident.

1.3.9 The only feature probably associated with the settlement, but positioned externally to the field boundaries is a sub-circular enclosure located on the west side of the long north–south field boundary. The survey data suggests that this feature butted against the boundary and perhaps represents a holding pen for livestock.

1.3.10 Beyond the prehistoric settlement, the geophysical survey results show evidence of ridge and furrow across the western half of the evaluation area, along with other modern disturbances, such as gas pipelines and the former railway line. The eastern half of the evaluation area is largely obscured by numerous ‘spikes’. Typically, this pattern of results is associated with green waste manuring being spread over the field.

The Iron Age and Roman regional background

1.3.11 The wider area surrounding the evaluation area demonstrates considerable evidence of later prehistoric and Roman activity. Several Iron Age sites have been excavated within 5km of the evaluation area. Excavations in Higham Ferrers revealed a series of middle–late Iron Age enclosures and evidence for small-scale pottery production and some metalworking (Lawrence and Smith 2009, 33–40). At Victoria Park, Irchester, at least two settlements were dated to the middle–late Iron Age and late Iron Age respectively (Morris and Meadows 2012). The latter consisted of two enclosures, one of which contained a roundhouse while the other was interpreted as a shrine. Middle–late Iron Age features were recorded at Lime Street, Irthlingborough (Chapman *et al.* 2003), and late Iron Age industrial activity was discovered towards the western edge of Rushden, due south of the evaluation area (Woods and Hastings 1984). Excavations on the A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers Bypass (Mudd 2004) and at Ferrers College, Higham Ferrers (Carlyle and Flavell 2007) revealed evidence of settlement activity dating between the middle Iron Age and the early Roman period.

1.3.12 The Roman period heralded several important developments in the region. Irchester Roman town lay within 2km to the west of the evaluation area. The origins of this settlement are uncertain, but it may have developed as a vicus alongside a fort established in the mid-first century AD (Knight 1967). The civilian settlement was eventually enclosed by a bank in the late 2nd century AD, and later by a masonry wall that was remodelled in the 4th century AD. Late 19th-century excavations revealed the remains of a possible Romano-Celtic temple associated with the town (*ibid.*).

1.3.13 The current route of Northampton Road, just to the south of the evaluation area, may follow the line of the Roman road that runs east from Irchester. This road turns north at Higham Ferrers from where it broadly followed the course of the River Nene on its south-east side to a crossroads at Titchmarsh and eventually on to Durobrivae (Water Newton, Cambs.). Several nucleated settlements within 10km of the evaluation area are known to have developed along or close to this road, including Higham Ferrers (Lawrence and Smith 2009), Stanwick (EH 1995), Middle Sands and Mallows Cotton (Parry 2006).

1.3.14 Numerous villas are known to have existed along the Upper Nene Valley, reflecting investments of wealth at rural settlements after the 1st century AD. Excavated examples nearby include Stanwick (Neal 1989), Redlands Farm (OA 1992) and Wollaston Bypass (Chapman and Jackson 1992). The economic basis for this investment is uncertain, though the evidence for extensive vine-growing at Wollaston I and II on the upper slopes of the floodplain, located 4.5km and 7km to the south-west of the evaluation area, suggests that this part of the Nene Valley may have been favoured for large-scale grape-production during the Roman period (Brown *et al.* 2001).

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation is to investigate the archaeological features and test blank areas identified by the geophysical survey through targeted excavation. To do this, the general aims are to:

- i. establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains,
- ii. determine and confirm the character of any remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation or preservation,
- iii. determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise,
- iv. characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology without significantly impacting upon younger (overlying) deposits where possible,
- v. determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered,
- vi. recover suitable materials for scientific dating where appropriate,
- vii. make available the results of the investigation to inform subsequent development designs or mitigation strategies,
- viii. produce a factual report, full archive and HER data submission,
- ix. disseminate the results of the investigation at a level appropriate to their importance.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The evaluation investigated a 2% area sample of the evaluation area, involving the excavation of 50 c 30m by 1.8m trenches. The trenches were numbered from 13 to 62, so that they did not overlap with the results of an evaluation undertaken within the field immediately to the north-east of the current evaluation area (Fig. 2; OA 2017b).

2.2.2 Each trench was laid out prior to excavation using GPS. They were positioned to provide a spatial sample of the whole area while avoiding modern underground services.

2.2.3 Eight trenches (36–39, 45–6, 48 and 58) were positioned to investigate features relating to the prehistoric site recorded on the HER (see above). These were located using the results of the geophysical survey and were intended to establish the extent, date and the quality of preservation of the settlement features.

2.2.4 Three trenches (60, 61 and 62) were excavated across the now-disused railway line which extends along the northern boundary of the evaluation area to assess any previous impacts of this feature on the underlying potential archaeological horizons.

2.2.5 The topsoil (ploughsoil) and subsoils in each trench were removed in successive spits by a mechanical excavator using a 1.8m-wide toothless bucket. The resulting soils were stored along either side of the trenches at a safe distance from the edge. The spoil heaps were monitored for artefact retrieval. Machine excavation continued until the natural geology or the first archaeological horizon was reached, whichever came first.

- 2.2.6 Following mechanical excavation and in trenches where archaeological features were identified, excavation continued by hand and most features were recorded in both plan and section. Pits were subject to 50% sample excavation by volume, while linear features were sectioned as appropriate. In some trenches where numerous archaeological features were encountered, most notably in Trenches 45 and 46, only a selection of those features were sample excavated to fulfil the aims set out above. Features that were not excavated were planned and recorded.
- 2.2.7 Written descriptions and measurements of all features encountered were recorded on proforma context sheets.
- 2.2.8 All features were illustrated on trench plans which were drawn at a scale of 1:50. Linear feature and pit sections were drawn at 1:25. The level of each feature was recorded in metres aOD and marked on the section drawings.
- 2.2.9 A full photographic record illustrating in both detail and general context of the principal features has been created. The photographic record also includes working shots to illustrate the general nature of the archaeological work.
- 2.2.10 All context sheets, plans, sections and photographs are held in the project archive.
- 2.2.11 The trenches were backfilled following approval from Lesley-Ann Mather. The soil deposits were reinstated in reverse order and then tracked down to a level surface by machine.

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 the Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory presented 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. layer 1301 is a context in Trench 13, while ditch 3605 is a feature in Trench 36.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence varied between the trenches, and this partly reflected differences in the natural geology underlying the evaluation area. The bedrock geology has been outlined in Section 1.2.3 (see above), and primarily consists of ooidal ironstone, bands of limestone and mudstone, and patches of sandstone and siltstone. There were no superficial deposits found within the evaluation area, and the bedrock geology was generally overlain by sandy silt soils. Some trenches exposed soils richer in clay while others had higher stone contents, usually of ironstone or limestone. A lower subsoil was noted in several trenches, though this was not always present or was hard to distinguish from the overlying ploughsoil.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good and the trenches remained dry throughout. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology and correlated very well with the geophysical survey results.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 Archaeological features were encountered in two distinct parts of the evaluation area. All the trenches that targeted geophysical anomalies relating to the Iron Age settlement revealed archaeological features—these included Trenches 36–9, 45–6, 48 and 58. Trenches 13, 15 and 19 in the easternmost part of the evaluation area exposed several shallow linear features which may have been ditches or furrows. These were not originally identified on the geophysical survey and appear to have been masked by ferrous disturbance.
- 3.3.2 Trenches 60–62 lacked archaeological features, but did contain a layer of made-up ground of mixed clay that overlay the natural geology and was covered by the upper subsoil and ploughsoil. This layer almost certainly relates to the disused railway line that defines the northern boundary of the evaluation area.
- 3.3.3 Trenches 14, 16–8, 20–35, 40–4, 47, 49–57 and 59 were devoid of archaeological features. Several of these were targeted upon geophysical anomalies of uncertain origin in the western half of the evaluation area, including ridge and furrow strips and patches of likely modern disturbance around the entrance to the field. Owing to the absence of archaeological remains, these trenches will not be considered further in this report.

3.4 The middle–late Iron Age settlement (Trenches 36–9, 45–6, 48 and 58)

- 3.4.1 Eight trenches were located on geophysical anomalies relating to the Iron Age settlement (Figs 3 and 4). These were well distributed and oriented on different alignments to provide a representative sample of the area. All eight exposed archaeological features, all of which were ditches and pits and/or postholes.
- 3.4.2 Trench 45 revealed the densest concentration of features, cutting across the sub-circular enclosure and the irregularly shaped enclosure flanking its western side in the northern part of the settlement (Plate 1). Ditch 4505 of the irregularly shaped enclosure was the widest feature in the trench, measuring 2.44m across and 0.66m deep, though it was notably shallower on its WSW side (Fig. 5, Section 4501). The feature contained two fills, the lower of which consisted of a compact, mid-yellow silty clay with quantities of ironstone towards the base, while the upper deposit was a more friable, brown/grey silty clay (Plate 2). Three circular features were located on the western side of ditch 4505, two of these (4510 and 4512) appear to have been pits, and one (4507) may have been a posthole (Fig. 5, Section 4502).
- 3.4.3 Ditch 4514 formed the outer boundary of the adjacent, sub-circular enclosure, though this was narrower than its western counterpart, measuring 1.5m across. A second ditch (4520) was encountered about 5m to the east of ditch 4514. The two were similar in width, though neither were further excavated. A possible posthole (4516) was discovered between these two ditches, while a much larger, oval-shaped pit (4509) was located towards the centre of the enclosure. This feature measured 2m across and 0.48m deep (Fig 5, Section 4503).
- 3.4.4 Two ditches to the east of this area appear to represent further internal divisions within the settlement. Ditch 3802 formed a curvilinear feature related to another enclosure just to its north. Although over 2m wide, the ditch was fairly shallow measuring just over 0.3m deep. A sizable quantity of ironstone was encountered at the base of this feature (Fig. 6, Section 3801), while quantities of ironstone were also found in pit 3805 and ditch 3807 nearby (Fig. 6, Sections 3802 and 3803; Plate 3).
- 3.4.5 Pit 3902 was located beyond the main area of the settlement, north of the east–west field boundary identified by the geophysical survey (Plate 4). This was a large, flat-bottomed feature with vertical sides, measuring 2.3m across and almost 0.8m deep (Fig. 6, Section 3900).
- 3.4.6 Ditches 4607 and 4603 were located in the central part of the settlement area, and the position of these features appears to marry well with the results of the geophysical survey (Fig. 3; Plate 5). They were fairly substantial, particularly ditch 4607 which measured just over 6m in width, while ditch 4603 measured just over 2.5m wide (Plate 6). Ditch 4607 was not excavated, though it was noted to contain a similar mid-grey/brown silty clay to that found in the fills of ditch 4603, which reached a depth of 0.86m (Fig. 7, Section 4603).
- 3.4.7 In the southern half of the settlement, Trench 36 was targeted upon a sub-rectangular enclosure with an internal circular enclosure. The ditch relating to the outer sub-rectangular enclosure was encountered and planned, but not excavated. The internal enclosure was represented by ditch 3607, which was recut on its north-western side

by ditch 3605, which measured 1.44m wide and 0.34m deep (Fig. 8, Section 3603; Plate 7). The earlier ditch 3607 reached a comparable depth and, although only the south-east side survived, appears to have had a similar sloping profile. The fills of both ditches consisted of silty clay with subtle variations in colour and contained ironstone and limestone fragments with finds of pottery, animal bone and charcoal. A flat-based pit (3603), measuring just over 1m wide, was located on the eastern side of the internal enclosure ditch and was found to contain animal bones (Fig. 8, Section 3601/3602).

- 3.4.8 Trench 58 was excavated at the southern end of the settlement, locating ditch 5802 which formed part of the long north–south field boundary (Plate 8). The feature was 1.5m wide and 0.44m deep with sloping sides and a concave base (Fig. 7, Section 5800). It contained a compact, brown clay silt, but did not produce any finds. This ditch was then cut through by ditch 5804 (not seen on the geophysical survey results) which was aligned NE–SW. This ditch was fairly wide at 1.06m, but very shallow at only 0.1m deep, which suggests that it had been quite heavily truncated (Fig. 7, Section 5801).
- 3.4.9 Trench 48 targeted the enclosure located on the western side of the long north–south field boundary, situated external to the main area of domestic activity. The trench exposed ditch 4802 which, although slightly offset from the geophysical survey data, appears to represent the western side of the enclosure. The ditch was 1.24m wide and 0.5m deep with sloping sides and a concave base (Fig. 7, Section 4800). It contained two fills of orange/brown clay silt, the lower of which produced charcoal and flint, while the upper fill produced animal bones. Trench 48 did not extend far enough into the enclosure to establish whether it contained internal features.
- 3.4.10 Ditches 3705 and 3707 were excavated in the central eastern part of the evaluation area. These ditches were aligned parallel to each other on a broadly north–south axis. They were comparatively wide, measuring 2.7m and 2.3m wide respectively, but were noticeably shallower than most of the other ditches in the Iron Age settlement area (Fig. 8, Sections 3701 and 3702). Their profiles more closely matched linear features found in the far-eastern part of the evaluation area, and it is possible that these two features date to a later phase of activity (see below).

3.5 Trenches 13, 15 and 19

- 3.5.1 At the far eastern end of the evaluation area, Trenches 13, 15 and 19 revealed a small number of archaeological features (Fig. 9). Trench 13 contained north–south ditch 1303, a NE–SW ditch/furrow 1305, and pit 1307 (Plate 9). Much of the eastern side of ditch 1303 remained largely under the baulk of the trench, though it must have been greater than 1.5m wide (Fig. 10, Section 1302). Ditch/furrow 1305 was 1.75m wide, though it was not further excavated. Pit 1307 was 1.2m wide, but very shallow and appears to have been significantly truncated (Fig. 10, Section 1303). No finds were recovered from any of the features and it was notable that the fills of all three differed quite markedly, perhaps suggesting that they were not contemporary. However, the underlying natural geology in this trench also varied, which may have affected the composition of the fills.

3.5.2 Trenches 15 and 19 each contained single linear features which may have been ditches or furrows. Although it measured 2m wide, east–west ditch/furrow 1502 was very shallow, containing a deposit only 0.1m deep (Fig. 10, Section 1500). Ditch/furrow 1904 was 1.4m wide, but was slightly more substantial in depth, reaching 0.24m on its south-eastern side (Fig. 10, Section 1901; Plate 10). The latter was oriented NE–SW and appears to have aligned with ditch 1305, though differences between their fills suggest that they were not related.

3.6 Finds summary

3.6.1 Pottery from the evaluation was almost exclusively recovered from trenches targeted upon the Iron Age settlement (Trenches 36, 38, 39, 45 and 46). This largely consisted of Scored Ware ceramics which are fairly well dated to the mid-3rd–late 1st century BC (middle–late Iron Age).

3.6.2 Two fired clay artefacts were recovered from ditch fills in Trenches 37 and 45. The spindle whorl from pit 4509 is not closely datable, although it was associated with pottery dating to the middle–late Iron Age. The fired clay disc was recovered from ditch 3704 and is thought to date to the late Iron Age or Roman period. No other finds were recovered from this feature.

3.6.3 A single sherd (10g) of Roman pottery in an oxidised fabric was recovered from ditch 1502, while two sherds (57g) of Roman greyware were recovered from the ploughsoil in Trench 15. No closer dating was achieved from the analysis of these fragments.

3.6.4 A small group of worked flints was recovered from the evaluation. Most these were found in contexts relating to the Iron Age settlement and the ditch with Roman pottery. The dating of the material is largely early prehistoric and it seems likely that the finds were residual in these contexts.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken in generally dry weather, with overhead conditions varying between sunshine and cloud.
- 4.1.2 The excavated features were relatively easy to see against the underlying natural geology. However, it must be noted that there was considerable variation in the bedrock geology that was recorded across the evaluation area.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The evaluation established the presence of a middle–late Iron Age settlement previously known from cropmarks and a geophysical survey undertaken as part of this work. The trenches revealed enclosure ditches, several pits and some possible postholes that may relate to structures.
- 4.2.2 Beyond the Iron Age settlement, archaeological remains were encountered in the far eastern part of the evaluation area. These features, primarily ditches and a single pit, were not previously identified from cropmarks or geophysical survey.
- 4.2.3 Across the evaluation, it was clear that some features had been previously truncated and had suffered from later arable cultivation. Only a selection of the features discovered in the area of the middle–late Iron Age settlement were excavated to fulfil the aims of the evaluation and in order to preserve them for future more detailed investigation.
- 4.2.4 Features relating to the Iron Age settlement produced a sizable pottery assemblage that was consistent in form and fabric. The ceramic groups provided a relatively broad date range of the mid-3rd to late 1st century AD.
- 4.2.5 The middle–late Iron Age settlement is of regional archaeological importance. The geophysical survey results clearly reveal a large number of features relating to field boundaries, enclosures and possible structures, and the evaluation has shown that although some contexts have suffered from truncation, a considerable amount of the archaeology survives below the surface. The features were reached between 0.3m and 0.7m below the current ground level. The full extent of the settlement also lies within the evaluation area with few associated features shown to exist extending beyond the field limits. The character and date of the features encountered in the eastern part of the evaluation area are not well known.
- 4.2.6 Remains of the disused railway line along the northern boundary of the evaluation area were encountered in the form of made-up ground consisting of mixed clay (Plate 11). The construction of the former railway embankment was directly onto the underlying geology and is likely to have impacted upon, or removed, any potential archaeological horizons. However, the adjacent evaluation trenches also demonstrated that little potential is present along the northern boundary of the evaluation.

4.2.7 Although signs of ridge and furrow were identified in the geophysical survey data, these were not encountered as obvious furrows cut into the geology during the excavation.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 The results of the geophysical survey and evaluation trenches have corroborated the presence of a middle–late Iron Age settlement within the western half of the evaluation area. The settlement appears to have been set within a series of field boundaries. It covers an area of around 2ha and it consists of several enclosures, most notably a large sub-rectangular enclosure at its south-eastern end. The area within the settlement is clearly sub-divided by numerous linear and curvilinear ditches. The form of the settlement has some similarities with the Iron Age settlement at Higham Ferrers which consisted of a small, but fairly heavily defended enclosure with internal divisions (Lawrence and Smith 2009, 33–40).

4.3.2 The dating from the pottery assemblage suggests that the Rushden Lakes settlement ranged between the mid-3rd–late 1st century AD. It is impossible to know at this stage what parts of the settlement represent different phases of activity. The Iron Age settlement at Higham Ferrers included similar pottery types that were contemporary with the Rushden ceramics. This settlement had at least two phases of activity, though more refined dating was difficult to establish (Jackson 2009, 41).

4.3.3 The few features encountered in the eastern part of the evaluation are less easy to characterise (Trenches 13, 15 and 19). These consist of four ditches and one pit. None, however, were observed on the geophysical survey results, probably due to heavy green manuring across much of the eastern half of the evaluation area. The features also do not correlate spatially with some of the cropmarks seen in the eastern half of the evaluation area that are recorded on the HER.

4.3.4 It is notable that there is a low density of features in this area, which suggests that activity was not intensive and probably related to agricultural activities peripheral to a nearby settlement. Most of the features were not dated. Ditch/furrow 1503 produced a single sherd of Roman pottery, while another Roman greyware sherd was recovered from the overlying ploughsoil. These finds tentatively date the feature to this period, though it is uncertain whether the ditch was contemporary with the other features in the area.

4.3.5 Parallel ditches 3705 and 3707 were located in the area of the Iron Age settlement. However, their profiles were noticeably more shallow than other features in this area, being more similar to the ditch/furrows located in the eastern part of the evaluation area. Ditch 3705 produced a single fired clay disc which has been broadly dated to the late Iron Age or Roman period. It is possible that these two features relate to a later phase of agricultural activity, post-dating the middle–late Iron Age settlement.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 13						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench contains two linear features and a pit. The natural geology is mixed and varies across the trench.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1301	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
1302	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: light orange brown sandy silt	-	-
1303	Ditch	>1.5	0.36	Cut of ditch with flat base and moderately sloping sides	-	-
1304	Ditch	-	0.36	Fill of 1303: light orange brown clay sandy silt with occasional small stones and chalk	-	-
1305	Ditch/furrow	1.75	-	Cut of ditch/furrow	-	-
1306	Ditch/furrow	-	-	Fill of 1305 (unexcavated): mid-red/brown clay sandy silt	-	-
1307	Pit	1.2	0.14	Cut of a shallow, circular/irregularly shaped pit	-	-
1308	Pit	1.2	0.14	Fill of 1307: loose light white/orange sandy silt with occasional stones and ironstone	-	-

Trench 14						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of red/brown gravelly sand. Modern land drains present.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1401	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: friable mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
1402	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-brown/yellow silty sand	-	-
1403	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 15						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench contains a shallow furrow. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-orange/brown sandy silt with numerous stones.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1500	Layer	-	-	Natural		
1501	Layer	-	0.35	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	Pottery	-
1502	Ditch/furrow	2.0	0.1	Cut of shallow furrow or ditch with uneven base	-	-
1503	Ditch/furrow	2.0	0.1	Fill of 1502: soft, mid-orange brown sandy silt with occasional stones	Bone, pottery and flint	?Roman

Trench 16						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of ironstone in a silt clay matrix.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.26
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1601	Layer	-	0.26	Ploughsoil: mid-yellow/brown clay silt	-	-
1602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 17						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of mid-red/brown silty sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1701	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey clay silt	-	-
1702	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 18						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-yellow/brown silty sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1801	Layer	-	0.25	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
1802	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil: mid-grey/yellow sandy silt	-	-

1803	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
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Trench 19						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench contains one ditch/furrow. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-grey/yellow silty gravelly sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.6
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1901	Layer	-	0.25	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
1902	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil: mid-brown/yellow silty sand	-	-
1903	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
1904	Ditch/furrow	1.4	0.24	Cut of N-S ditch/furrow with uneven base, deeper on the eastern side	-	-
1905	Ditch/furrow	1.4	0.24	Fill of 1904: firm, mid-yellow/brown silty clay with occasional ironstone	-	-

Trench 20						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying two sections of natural. Field drain present.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.65
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2001	Layer	-	0.2	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
2003	Layer	-	-	Natural in NE end of trench: yellow sand	-	-
2004	Layer	-	-	Natural in SW end of trench: mid-red brown gravelly sand	-	-
2005	Layer	-	-	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-

Trench 21						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-brown/orange clay with ironstone, including a high concentration of ironstone at the NW end.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2101	Layer	-	0.24	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey clay silt with occasional ironstone	-	-

2102	Layer	-	0.21	Subsoil: mid-orange/brown clay silt with occasional ironstone	-	-
2103	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 22						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mottled yellow limestone and clay mix and bands of mid-orange/brown clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.48
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2201	Layer	-	0.24	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey clay silt with occasional ironstone	-	-
2202	Layer	-	0.24	Subsoil: mid-orange/brown clay silt	-	-
2203	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 23						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-brown/red silty clay sand with ironstone.					Length (m)	29.45
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.44
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2300	Layer	-	0.34	Ploughsoil: dark brown/grey silty clay with occasional ironstone	-	-
2301	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil: firm mid-grey/yellow silty clay with occasional ironstone	-	-
2302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 24						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of firm, light brown clay with patches of brown/red silty clay sand with some limestone. Modern land drain present.					Length (m)	29.5
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.24
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2400	Layer	-	0.24	Ploughsoil: moderately firm, dark brown/grey silty clay with some limestone	-	-
2401	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 25						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE

Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of firm, light brown/yellow silty clay with limestone.					Length (m)	29.5
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.24
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2500	Layer	-	0.24	Ploughsoil: moderately firm, dark brown/grey silty clay with some limestone	-	-
2501	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 26						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of light brown/yellow silty clay with limestone.					Length (m)	29.5
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.69
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2600	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: moderately firm, dark brown/grey silty clay with some limestone	-	-
2601	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil: firm, mid-grey/yellow silty clay with some limestone	-	-
2602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 27						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of limestone brash and patches of brown/yellow clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2701	Layer	-	0.23	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey clay silt with some limestone	-	-
2702	Layer	-	0.17	Subsoil: mid-orange/brown clay silt with some limestone	-	-
2073	Layer	-	-	Natural		

Trench 28						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of limestone rubble with a mid-brown/orange silt clay mix.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.29
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date

2801	Layer	-	0.29	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown clay silt with some limestone	-	-
2802	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 29

General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of ironstone with patches of blue/grey and brown/orange clay, becoming sandy at the NE end. Several field drains present.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.64	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2901	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey clay silt	-	-
2902	Layer	-	0.34	Subsoil: mid-orange/brown clay silt	-	-
2903	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 30

General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of mid-brown/yellow silty sand.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	2	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.4	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3001	Layer	-	0.4	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
3002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 31

General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-brown/yellow silty sandy gravel.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	2	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.5	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3101	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
3102	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-
3103	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 32

General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of ironstone with patches of orange/yellow silt clay.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	1.9	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.28	

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3201	Layer	-	0.28	Ploughsoil: mid-orange/brown clay silt	-	-
3202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 33						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-orange/brown clay with patches of brown/yellow clay and limestone brash.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.76	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3301	Layer	-	0.33	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown clay silt	-	-
3302	Layer	-	0.43	Subsoil: mid-orange/brown silt clay	-	-
3303	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 34						
General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of Cornbrash.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	2	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.3	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3401	Layer	-	0.2	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
3402	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil: mid-grey/brown silty sand	-	-
3403	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 35						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-yellow/brown silty sand with stones and patches of clay.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	2	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.37	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3501	Layer	-	0.28	Ploughsoil: friable, mid-grey/brown silty sand	-	-
3502	Layer	-	0.09	Subsoil: firm, mid-grey/brown silty sand with some stones	-	-
3503	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 36						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
				Length (m)	29.95	

Trench contains three ditches, one pit and some modern disturbance. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlay a natural geology of compact, mottled red/yellow clay.					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	NW 0.7 SE 0.38
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3600	Layer	-	0.32	Ploughsoil: light grey/brown silty clay	-	-
3601	Layer	-	0.38	Subsoil: compact, light red/brown silty clay	-	-
3602	Pit	1.04	0.24	Fill of 3603: light grey silty clay with some limestone	Animal bone	-
3603	Pit	1.04	0.24	Cut of pit with concave/flat base and fairly steep sides (overcut by machine)	-	-
3604	Ditch	1.44	0.34	Fill of 3605: compact, mid-brown/grey silty clay with some, ironstone and flint	Pottery, animal bone and charcoal	Iron Age

Trench 36 continued

3605	Ditch	1.44	0.34	Cut of NE-SW ditch with shallow sides and concave base; cuts NW side of ditch 3607	-	-
3606	Ditch	0.44	0.26	Fill of 3607: compact, light red/brown silty clay with some limestone and flint; fill cut through by ditch 3605	Pottery and charcoal	Iron Age
3607	Ditch	0.44	0.26	Cut of NE-SW ditch with moderately steep sides and a concave base; NW side cut by ditch 3605	-	-
3608	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 37

General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench contains two ditches. Ploughsoil and subsoil overlie a natural geology of compacted light yellow/brown silty clay.					Length (m)	29.95
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.63
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3701	Layer	-	0.36	Ploughsoil: soft mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
3702	Layer	-	0.27	Subsoil: compact mid-yellow/brown silty clay	-	-
3703	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
3704	Ditch	2.7	0.2	Fill of 3705: compact, light brown/grey silty clay with some ironstone	Fired clay	?LIA–Roman

3705	Ditch	2.7	0.2	Cut of NW-SE ditch with gently sloping sides and concave base	-	-
3706	Ditch	2.34	0.18	Fill of 3707: compact, light brown/grey silty clay	Animal bone	-
3707	Ditch	2.34	0.18	Cut of NW-SE ditch with gently sloping sides and concave base	-	-

Trench 38

General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench contains two pits and one ditch. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie the natural geology of orange/brown silty clay with ironstone.					Length (m)	29.7
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.54
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3801	Layer	-	0.36	Ploughsoil: dark brown/grey silt with some ironstone	-	-
3802	Ditch	2.11	0.31	Cut of ditch with a steep side and an undulating base (part of feature remained in section)	-	-
3803	Ditch	2.11	0.31	Fill of 3802: firm, dark brown/orange clay silt with ironstone	Pottery, animal bone and burnt stone	Mid-late Iron Age
3804	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil: orange silty clay with ironstone throughout	-	-
3805	Pit	0.31	0.18	Cut of small oval pit with concave base	-	-
3806	Pit	0.31	0.18	Fill of 3805: firm, dark orange/brown silt with ironstone	Pottery and animal bone	Mid-late Iron Age
3807	Ditch	1.28	0.24	Cut of NW-SE ditch with flat/uneven base	-	-
3808	Ditch	1.28	0.24	Fill of 3808: firm, dark orange grey/orange silt with ironstone	Pottery and animal bone	Middle-late Iron Age
3809	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 39

General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench contains one pit. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie a natural geology of stony, orange/brown sandy silt.					Length (m)	30.5
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3900	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
3901	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil	-	-

3902	Pit	2.3	0.8	Cut of sub-circular pit with vertical sides and a flat base	-	-
3903	Pit	2.3	0.3	Primary fill of 3902: soft, light brown/grey sandy silt	Pottery, animal bone and charcoal	Middle-late Iron Age
3904	Pit	2.3	0.28	Second fill of 3902: soft, mid-orange/brown sandy silt	Pottery, animal bone and flint	Middle-late Iron Age
3905	Pit	2.3	0.22	Upper fill of 3902: soft, mid-grey/brown sandy silt	Pottery, animal bone and flint	Middle-late Iron Age

Trench 40						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of yellow/brown sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4001	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
4002	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil: mid-yellow/grey silty sand	-	-
4003	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 41						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of mid-yellow/brown sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4100	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
4101	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 42						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of red/brown sand and Cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4201	Layer	-	0.25	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
4202	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-
4203	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 43						
General description					Orientation	W-E
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of red/brown sand and Cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.5
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4301	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
4302	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-
4303	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 44						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-brown/yellow sand and Cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.5
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4401	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
4402	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-
4403	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 45						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench contains two pits and two ditches. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie a natural geology of mid-brown/yellow sand and Cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4500	Layer	-	0.1	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
4501	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-
4502	Ditch	1.94	0.32	Upper fill of 4505: friable, mid-brown/grey silty clay	Pottery, animal bone and charcoal	Middle-late Iron Age
4503	VOID	-	-	-	-	-
4504	Ditch	2.44	0.34	Lower fill of 4505: compact, mid-yellow/grey silty clay with quantities of ironstone towards base	Pottery, animal bone and charcoal	Middle-late Iron Age
4505	Ditch	2.44	0.66	Cut of N-S ditch with concave/uneven base	-	-

4506	Pit/ posthole	0.48	0.12	Fill of 4507: loose, light brown/grey silty clay		-
4507	Pit/ posthole	0.48	0.12	Cut of shallow, sub-circular pit with concave base	-	-
4508	Pit	2.0	0.48	Fill of 4509: compact, mid-yellow/grey silty clay	Pottery, animal bone, flint, spindle whorl and charcoal	Middle-late Iron Age
4509	Pit	2.0	0.48	Cut of pit with flat base and sloping sides	-	-
4510	Pit/ posthole	0.46	-	Cut of sub-circular pit	-	-
4511	Pit/ posthole	-	-	Fill of 4510 (unexcavated): light grey/brown silty sand	-	-
4512	Pit/ posthole	0.34	-	Cut of sub-circular pit	-	-
4513	Pit/ posthole	-	-	Fill of 4513 (unexcavated): mid-brown/grey silty sand	-	-
4514	Ditch	1.5	-	Cut of NW-SE ditch	-	-
4515	Ditch	-	-	Fill of 4514 (unexcavated): light grey/brown silty sand	-	-
4516	Pit/ posthole	0.26	-	Cut of sub-circular pit	-	-
4517	Pit/ posthole	-	-	Fill of 4516 (unexcavated): light grey/brown silty sand	-	-
4518	Pit	2.5	-	Cut of irregular pit	-	-
4519	Pit	-	-	Fill of 4518 (unexcavated): light grey/brown silty sand	-	-
4520	Ditch	1.3	-	Cut of N-S ditch	-	-
4521	Ditch	-	-	Fill of 4520 (unexcavated): light yellow/grey silty sand	-	-
4522	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 46						
General description					Orientation	NNW-SSE
Trench contains three ditches and one occupation layer. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie the natural geology of mid-brown/yellow sandy clay.					Length (m)	29.1
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.5
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4600	Layer	-	0.23	Ploughsoil: soft, mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-

4601	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil: moderately compact dark yellow/brown silty clay	-	-
4602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
4603	Ditch	2.54	0.86	Cut of NE-SW ditch with sloping sides and concave base containing three fills	-	-
4604	Ditch	1.68	0.22	Primary fill of 4603: compact, mid-grey/brown silty clay	Pottery and animal bone	Middle-late Iron Age

Trench 46

4605	Ditch	2.42	0.41	Secondary fill of 4603: compact, mid-grey/brown silty clay	Pottery and animal bone	Middle-late Iron Age
4606	Ditch	2.12	0.56	Upper fill of 4603: compact, dark yellow/brown sandy clay	Pottery and animal bone	Middle-late Iron Age
4607	Ditch	6.05	-	Cut of N-S ditch	-	-
4608	Ditch	6.05	-	Fill of 4607 (unexcavated): compact, mid-grey/brown silty clay	-	-
4609	Layer	5.0	-	Layer below the subsoil interpreted as an occupation layer as some animal bone was found on the surface (unexcavated)	Animal bone	-
4610	Ditch	1.5	-	Cut of NE-SW ditch	-	-
4611	Ditch	1.5	-	Fill of 4610 (unexcavated): compact, mid-grey/brown silty clay	Animal bone	-

Trench 47

General description					Orientation	SE-NW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of very stony, orange/brown silty sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.27
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	 Finds	Date
4701	Layer	-	0.1	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown silty sand	-	-
4702	Layer	-	0.17	Subsoil: mid-brown/grey silty sand	-	-
4703	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 48

General description					Orientation	NE-SW
					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2

Trench contains one ditch. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie the natural geology of compact, orange/brown clay silt sand with some stones.					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4800	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: loose, mid-brown clay silt	-	-
4801	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil: moderately compact, brown/orange clay silt	-	-
4802	Ditch	1.24	0.5	Cut of NW-SE ditch with sloping sides and concave base	-	-
Trench 48 continued						
4803	Ditch	1.04	0.24	Lower fill of 4802: compact, light brown/orange clay silt	Charcoal and flint	-
4804	Ditch	1.24	0.27	Upper fill of 4802: moderately compact, mid-brown/orange clay silt	Animal bone	-
4805	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 49						
General description					Orientation	SE-NW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of light yellow/brown sand and Cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4901	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
4902	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 50						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of light yellow/brown sand and ironstone.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5001	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
5002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 51						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of light yellow/brown sand and Cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5101	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
5102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 52						
General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid-orange/brown sandy silt.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	2	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.36	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5201	Layer	-	0.16	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
5202	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
5203	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 53						
General description				Orientation	SE-NW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of stony, mid-orange/brown sandy silt.				Length (m)	30	
				Width (m)	2	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.32	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5301	Layer	-	0.14	Ploughsoil: friable, mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
5302	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil: firm, mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
5303	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 54						
General description				Orientation	SE-NW	
Trench devoid of archaeology but contains modern disturbance. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie the natural geology of orange/brown clay sand.				Length (m)	25	
				Width (m)	1.9	
				Avg. depth (m)	0.55	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5401	Layer	-	0.4	Ploughsoil: mid-grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
5402	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil: orange/brown clay sand	-	-
5403	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 55						
General description				Orientation	SE-NW	
				Length (m)	30	

Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying the natural geology of compact, red/orange clay silt and gravel.					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5500	Layer	-	0.35	Ploughsoil: loose, mid-brown clay silt	-	-
5501	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 56						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of compact, orange/brown clay silt.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5600	Layer	-	0.23	Ploughsoil: loose, dark brown clay silt	-	-
5601	Layer	-	0.13	Subsoil: firm, mid-orange/brown clay silt	-	-
5602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 57						
General description					Orientation	SE-NW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of compact orange/red clay sand with gravel.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5700	Layer	-	0.35	Ploughsoil: loose, mid-brown clay silt	-	-
5701	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 58						
General description					Orientation	SW-NE
Trench contains a ditch and a furrow. The ploughsoil and subsoil overlie the natural geology of compact, orange/brown silty clay.					Length (m)	35
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.48
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5800	Layer	-	0.2	Ploughsoil: loose dark brown silt	-	-
5801	Layer	-	0.28	Subsoil: mid-brown clay silt	-	-
5802	Ditch	1.5	0.44	Cut of NW-SE ditch with sloping sides and concave base	-	-
5803	Ditch	1.5	0.44	Fill of 5802: compact, mid-brown clay silt	-	-
5804	Ditch	1.06	0.1	Cut of a wide, shallow, NE-SW ditch	-	-

5805	Ditch	1.06	0.1	Fill of 5804: compact, brown/orange clay silt	-	-
5806	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 59						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil overlying natural geology of compact orange/red clay silt.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
5900	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: loose, mid-brown/grey clay silt	-	-
5901	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 60						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying a layer of made-up ground of mixed clay, atop of the natural geology of mixed red/brown silty sand.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	1.1
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
6001	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: mid-brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
6002	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown silty sand	-	-
6003	Layer	-	0.6	Redeposited natural: mixed clay deposit	-	-
6004	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 61						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying a layer of made-up ground of mixed clay, atop of the natural geology of mixed orange, grey and black clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	1.0
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
6101	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: brown/grey sandy silt	-	-
6102	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil: orange/brown silty sand	-	-
6103	Layer	-	0.4	Redeposited natural: mixed clay deposit	-	-
6104	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 62						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
					Length (m)	30

Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of ploughsoil and subsoil overlying a layer of made-up ground of mixed clay, atop of the natural geology of red/brown silty sand.					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	1.1
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
6201	Layer	-	0.3	Ploughsoil: grey/brown sandy silt	-	-
6202	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil: mid-yellow/brown sandy silt	-	-
6203	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
6204	Layer	-	0.7	Redeposited natural: mixed clay deposit	-	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Lisa Brown

Introduction

B.1.1 A total of 1053 sherds of prehistoric pottery weighing 11,312g was recovered during the evaluation. An additional three sherds (67g) of Roman pottery recovered from a ploughsoil layer and a furrow/ditch were recorded.

Methodology

B.1.2 The entire assemblage was examined and quantified (Table 1). Fabrics were classified at a fairly superficial level at this (evaluation) stage, but distinctions based on dominant inclusion type, in line with the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 2010) and vessel forms were recorded but not codified. In addition to sherd count and weight, and a record of conjoining sherds, levels of abrasion were recorded on a scale of 1–3 (1 being fresh; 3 being very abraded), and the presence of residues was noted. Some 25 sherds have been highlighted for future illustration.

Quantification

B.1.3 The prehistoric pottery came from the fills of four pits (3802, 3805, 3902 and 4509) and five ditches (3605, 3607, 3807, 4505 and 4603) in the following quantities:

Feature	Context	NOSH	Weight (g)	ASW (g)
Pit 3802	3803	13	341	26
Pit 3805	3806	1	6	6
Pit 3902	3903	96	1377	14
	3904	194	2765	14
	3905	83	1083	13
	<i>Pit 3902 total</i>	<i>373</i>	<i>5225</i>	
Pit 4508	4509	76	707	9
<i>Pit total</i>		<i>463</i>	<i>6279</i>	
Ditch 3605	3604	12	28	3
Ditch 3607	3606	1	1	1
Ditch 3807	3808	460	4312	9
Ditch 4505	4502	38	231	6
Ditch 4505	4504	10	48	5
Ditch 4603	4604	35	243	7
	4605	16	123	8
	4606	19	57	3
	<i>Ditch 4603 total</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>423</i>	
<i>Ditch total</i>		<i>1053</i>	<i>11,312</i>	<i>11</i>
Total		1516	17,591	

Table 1: Quantification of prehistoric pottery

B.1.4 The most productive features were ditches, which yielded 591 sherds (5093g) in contrast to the combined pit assemblage of 463 sherds (6279g). However, this total is biased by the very prolific quantity of sherds from ditch 3807, which alone produced 460 sherds weighing c 4.5kg—this is accounted for by 454 fragments from a single very large jar weighing 4236g (Plate 12). The pit assemblage was also dominated by a single feature group, 3902, which produced 373 sherds (5225g). Pit 4508 yielded just over 700g of pottery, but pits 3802 and 3805 in contrast contained very little pottery.

B.1.5 The condition of the pottery is fairly good overall, with an abrasion factor of 2 (moderate) assigned to most sherds. Large fresh sherds were present in some contexts, notably a deliberately placed vessel in ditch 3807 and some sherds from pit 3902. The average sherd weight (ASW) of the total assemblage is 11g, but much higher in some features, notably pits 3802 and 3902. In the case of the freshly broken and conjoining sherds of the single vessel in ditch 3807, the relatively low ASW of 9g signifies the degree of fragmentation, and is somewhat misleading if the vessel (or vessel part) went into the ditch complete and was subsequently crushed by the weight of overburden.

Fabrics and surface treatment

B.1.6 Four fabrics within two ware groups were identified. Most of the pottery incorporated fossil shell (SH1–SH3), which has been crushed and sorted to a range of grades. These all seem to be related, as the clay matrix is very similar despite the varying quantities and grades of shell. Many of the sherds also contain ferrous particles that may derive from the ironstones of the local Northampton Sand Formation. A very small but distinctive collection of hard-fired, oxidised sherds contain small pieces of grey weathered limestone in a very finely sanded, slightly micaceous clay. These sherds were recovered from pits 3902 and 4509 and ditch 4505.

Predominantly shell temper

SH1: Smooth, slightly soapy, finely sanded, slightly micaceous clay with common, ill-assorted inclusions of fossil shell 0.5 – 6mm. Occasional additional inclusions of red or black iron oxide minerals [679 sherds / 7072g]

SH2: Smooth, slightly soapy, finely sanded, slightly micaceous clay with common, well sorted inclusions of fossil shell 0.5 – 3mm. Occasional additional inclusions of red or black iron oxide minerals [204 sherds / 2157g]

SH3: Smooth, slightly soapy, finely sanded, slightly micaceous clay with sparse to moderate inclusions of finely crushed fossil shell 0.5 – 2mm. Occasional additional inclusions of red or black iron oxide minerals [133 sherds / 1535g]

Predominantly quartz sand temper

QUC: Very fine quartz sand, slightly micaceous, incorporating rare to sparse weathered limestone and rare red iron oxides. Invariably fires to pale orange, and is hard fired. [36 sherds / 540g]

B.1.7 The dominant fabric is the coarse ware SH1, accounting for about 65% by count and 63% by weight of the evaluation total. This fabric was used in the manufacture of (mostly) large, thick-walled jars. Surface treatment tends to be rough smoothing. The distinction between this fabric and SH2 is somewhat ill-defined, but sherd walls thickness is less and vessel sizes (where discernible) smaller in the case of SH2, and surfaces may be well-

smoothed. Fabric SH3, containing finely crushed and graded shell, was used in the manufacture of small, thin-walled vessels, frequently bowls, which generally have well-smoothed or burnished surfaces.

Forms and decoration

B.1.8 The assemblage is quite fragmentary, but it was possible to identify a range of bowl and jar forms. There are at least nine bowls, recovered from pits 3902 and 4509 and ditches 4505 and 4603. Each was represented by small fragments of out-turned or flaring rims, or carinated body sherds. All but one are in Fabric SH3, and all are burnished or smoothed. One has faint fingertip impressions on the carination and another shows very faint traces of shallow-tooled diagonal lines, but the latter is a particularly small fragment.

B.1.9 Jars were more common than bowls, with a total of 15 recorded. Vessel sizes range from very large, thick-walled jars with simple short rims to much finer forms in fabrics SH1 and SH2. The more complete examples of the smaller varieties include a shouldered jar with elongated rim, several quite fine ovoid forms that are generally well-smoothed, and small jars with straight walls and simple, sometimes flattened rims. Amongst smaller rim fragments is an elongated rim in SH2 from pit 3902 with fingertipping on the rim top. Pit 3902 also contained a single lug-handled ovoid jar in SH2 from—this feature produced the widest variety of vessels.

B.1.10 Decoration on the jars is almost entirely restricted to scoring, and this is apparent on 53 sherds. In the case of one straight-sided jar, scoring was found on the internal surface. In most cases, the scoring occurred as deep, vertical striations, especially on the large coarse jars. However, it can be quite lightly applied, in diagonal or curving patterns. Scoring is a very common feature of Iron Age pottery from the Northamptonshire region and the Midlands in general, sometimes in tandem with fingertipped rim tops (Knight 1984; Elsdon 1992) and may be decorative or functional (for ease of gripping/lifting), or both. Four body sherds in a variety of fabrics bore very faint fingertip impressions. These could be regarded as incidental marks left on unfired pots by handling them during production. However, with these four, and considering the particularly faint finger-tipping on the carinated bowl, they appear more likely to be deliberate.

Chronology

B.1.11 The range of vessel forms and fabrics appear to have close affinities with the small pottery assemblage from the Iron Age site at Higham Ferrers, most of which is shell-tempered, and included scored and globular jars and fingertipped rims. Jackson (2009, 41) dated this group to Knight's (1984) IA2 phase, or the pre-Belgic middle Iron Age, which spanned the mid-3rd century BC to the late 1st century BC or possibly a little later. Elsdon (1992, 89) dates the inception of Scored Ware to the 4th century BC, but notes that it was not common or widespread until the mid-3rd century BC, and on some sites the treatment persists into the first half of the 1st century AD. Considering that Scored Ware sherds occurred in all contexts that produced classifiable vessel forms at Rushden Lakes, the broad date range proposed for the much smaller Higham Ferrers assemblage is a starting point, although further stratigraphic sequencing and absolute dating at a later stage of work could allow for more precise ceramic dating.

B.2 Flint

By Mike Donnelly

Introduction

B.2.1 A small assemblage of 18 struck flints was recovered from this evaluation (Table 2). The flints were spread around eight contexts but most were located in the west-central part of the evaluation area and there was a good small assemblage of six pieces from pit fill 4508. The assemblage was generally in good condition and included several tool forms and core curation pieces of early date. Additionally, bladelets and well-fashioned regular flakes were also present suggesting that some form of early prehistoric focus might be in the immediate vicinity.

Methodology

B.2.2 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, 72–7; 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.

Description

B.2.3 Pit 4509, fill 4508, contained six flints in relatively good condition. Three of these had been heavily burnt but still displayed quite fresh edges. The assemblage consisted of three flakes, a bladelet, a microdenticulate on an inner blade, and an end-and-sides scraper on an inner flake. The scraper has very steep regular retouch at its distal end with far less steep retouch along its right and left edge, both of which are heavily damaged. This damage prevents us from establishing if the retouch was for hafting or if it is a multi-purpose tool. The microdenticulate has well-defined regularly spaced teeth along its right edge but has snapped. Both pieces display faceted platforms more commonly associated with later Neolithic knapping but are of forms that are more common in the early Neolithic.

B.2.4 Pit 3902 contained three flints: two flakes from fill 3903 and a core rejuvenation blade from context 3904. The rejuvenation blade represents an attempt to remove a series of step and hinge terminations from a core front and is clearly early in date, most probably Mesolithic or early Neolithic.

B.2.5 Furrow 1502 contained three flakes one of which showed signs of probable use. Another heavily utilised flake was recovered from the topsoil in this trench.

B.2.6 The remaining four flints consisted of a broken squat, complex scraper from the topsoil in Trench 46, an inner flake from ditch fill 4606, also in Trench 46 and two pieces from ditch fill 4802 in Trench 48. One of these was a regular inner bladelet with possible use along its

upper right margin. Only the bladelet can be broadly dated to the early prehistoric period. The scraper could also represent a broken complex tool form such as fabricator and is basically undiagnostic as are the flakes.

B.2.7 The flintwork from this evaluation indicates a limited presence here during prehistory. The clear majority of the flintwork was recovered from the west-central zone of the evaluation area. Trenches 39, 45, 46 and 48 all produced flints, many of which were early in character. The assemblage from pit 4508 is of most interest and may be contemporary with that feature. Alternatively, it may indicate that a buried soil may have existed here during later prehistory and had been reincorporated into many later features. This would account for the increased recovery of flintwork in this area. Early prehistoric flintwork was identified during an earlier evaluation at this site (OA 2017b). Any further work here would be likely to encounter more flintwork and may identify contemporary early prehistoric features such as pits that very often accompany artefact spreads and/or midden deposits.

Context	type	sub-type	notes	date
1501	Flake	Distal trimming	Heavy use, thin regular flake, early date likely	?EPH
1503	Flake x 2	Side trimming and inner		
1503	Flake	Preparation flake	Possible use	
3903	Flake x 2	Distal trimming and preparation	Preparation flake is a distal segment	
3904	Core rejuvenation blade	Inner blade	Probable core rejuvenation blade struck at 180 degrees to platform, numerous step and hinge terminal evident on dorsal surface	EPH
4508	Scraper sides & end	Inner flake	Heavily burnt and currently broken end and sides scraper, both areas of side retouch more for hafting/holding but heavily damaged, quite regular in form and faceted platform suggest later Neolithic date	L Neo
4508	Microdenticulate	Inner blade	Well defined teeth along right side, proximal segment and faceted platform, later Neo?	Neo
4508	Bladelet	Inner	Possible burin spall distal left	EPH
4508	Flake x 3	Inner x 3	Two heavily burnt, one very thin, regular and likely early in date	
4600	Scraper other	Preparation flake	Distal segment of complex squat scraper or fabricator, heavy steep irregular retouch	?Neo
4606	Flake	Inner	Distal segment	
4803	Bladelet	Misc. trimming	Possible use upper right, fine early prehistoric bladelet	EPH
4803	Flake	Misc. trimming		

Table 2: Summary of worked flint

B.3 Fired clay

By Cynthia Poole

B.3.1 Single pieces of fired clay were recovered from two contexts, 3704 and 4508.

B.3.2 Context 3704: this fired clay fragment consists of a slightly curved slab, weighing 37g, with one moulded, smooth, even, convex surface. The opposite face is less well preserved but has a smaller area of rough flat or concave surface. It measures 20mm thick, well fired, and made in a black sandy clay fabric containing small voids. It is probably a fragment of oven furniture, possibly part of a circular disc of the type commonly found in Oxfordshire and the East Midlands during the late Iron Age–Roman period.

Context 4508, SF1: a complete spindle whorl was recovered from this context. It has the form of a flat disc with convex smooth moulded surfaces and rounded edge. It is pierced centrally with a neat, cylindrical perforation, 10mm in diameter. It measures 48mm in diameter and 20.5mm high. It weighs 46g and was made in a fine sandy clay fabric, fired black-brown. The general shape and form is commonly found in most periods that produce clay spindle whorls.

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Animal Bones

By Martyn Allen and Lee Broderick

Introduction

C.1.1 A total of 1095 animal bone specimens weighing 5776g were recovered from 13 features. The assemblage almost exclusively derived from ditch and pit fills dating to the middle–late Iron Age (totalling 1080 specimens), though a few fragments were of possible Roman date. Overall, the assemblage was fairly well preserved and levels of recovery were good. The provenance of the animal bones was heavily biased towards a few features that produced larger quantities of material, notably pit 3902 and ditch 4603.

Methods

C.1.2 The animal bone assemblage was analysed by Lee Broderick in the Environmental Laboratory at OA South and this report prepared by Martyn Allen. Each fragment was counted and weighed, and specimens were quantified taking modern breaks into account. Specimens were identified to taxon and element where possible, using a modern reference collection. The side of the body and the zone present was recorded, the latter based upon the format of Serjeantson (1996).

C.1.3 Ageing data were recorded using evidence for epiphyseal fusion on the long bones, for which age estimates followed Silver (1970), and tooth wear patterns, from which mandible wear scores were calculated using Grant's method (1982). Evidence for pathology, butchery, burning, and gnawing were recorded at a basic level and quantified.

Taxa present

C.1.4 Cattle and sheep/goat remains made up the bulk of the assemblage (Table 3). Out of 89 sheep/goat specimens, 16 were identified as sheep and there was no evidence for goat. A smaller number of specimens from pig, horse, and dog were identified. Three mouse bones—a humerus, a femur and a pelvis—were recovered from the primary fill of pit 3902, though the remains could not be further identified to a specific species.

C.1.5 Only two bird bones were identified. These consisted of a possible magpie tibiotarsus from middle–late Iron Age pit 4509 and a goose radius from middle–late Iron Age ditch 4505.

C.1.6 Several bones from a frog or a toad, but almost certainly from the same animal, were recovered from middle–late Iron Age pit 4509.

C.1.7 The remainder of the assemblage consists of fragments of long bone, vertebrae and rib that could only be classified as large or medium mammal size. A small number of small mammal size specimens were present, though the clear majority of these indeterminate fragments are likely to derive from cattle and sheep.

Taxa	Middle–late Iron Age	Roman	no spot date	Total	%NISP
cattle	54			54	32.0
sheep/goat	70	2	1	73	43.2
sheep	16			16	9.5
pig	9			9	5.3
horse	3	1		4	2.4
dog	2			2	1.2
mouse	3			3	1.8
goose	1			1	0.6
cf. magpie	1			1	0.6
frog/toad	6			6	3.6
large mammal	125	1	5	131	-
medium mammal	435		4	439	-
small mammal	6			6	-
unidentified	349		1	350	-
Total	1080	4	11	1095	-

Table 3: Quantification of animal bones by period (spot date)

Provenance

C.1.8 Although the assemblage was fairly sizable in terms of the overall number of fragments recovered, the middle–late Iron Age assemblage derived from only seven features, consisting five ditch sections and two pits (Table 4). Pit 3902 produced the largest quantity of animal bones, totalling 489 specimens, followed by ditch 4603 (242 NISP), ditch 4505 (177 NISP) and pit 4509 (129 NISP). The remaining ditch features produced only small numbers of animal bones. Pit 3902 contained a range of skeletal elements from both cattle and sheep/goat, the latter being particularly prominent. Sheep/goat remains in this pit were dominated by tibia, radius and mandible specimens, though these tend to preserve better than other, less robust elements. Nonetheless, the pit appears to have contained the remains from at least nine sheep, according to zonal counts of the left tibia.

C.1.9 Although only a small number of features are represented, some general observations can be made on the variation between different context types. Cattle bones were more common in ditches overall, while sheep remains were more prevalent in pits. This pattern is also supported by the much greater proportion of medium-size mammal specimens also found in pits, most of which are likely to be from sheep. This variation could be attributed to two factors. Firstly, faunal remains that become buried in ditches may be left exposed to scavengers and the elements for longer than those that become deposited in pits, which may get backfilled and sealed comparatively quickly. This can bias against the bones from smaller mammals and other animals that become deposited in ditches, which tend to be less robust and may not survive as well as those from larger mammals such as cattle. A total of 28 specimens were found to have marks caused by dog gnawing. A roughly equal number of cattle and sheep bones, as well as one horse bone, was found to have been gnawed by dogs, though while most gnawed cattle bones were found in ditches, gnawed sheep bones almost exclusively derived from pits.

C.1.10 An alternative explanation for the variation in remains from different feature types is that there may have been differences in the ways in which these animals were processed and deposited. Having larger carcasses, cattle require more butchery and dismemberment than sheep/goats, and many elements deriving from the earliest stages of butchery may often become deposited in ditch features, perhaps located towards the periphery of the settlement. The relatively less intensive butchery of sheep/goat carcasses may explain why more of the skeleton gets deposited together in pits (see Wilson 1996).

Taxa	Ditch 3605	Ditch 3802	Ditch 3805	Ditch 4505	Ditch 4603	<i>Ditch</i> <i>total</i>	Pit 3902	Pit 4509	<i>Pit</i> <i>total</i>	Total
cattle		4		10	20	34	17	3	20	54
sheep/goat	1	1	1	7	12	22	41	7	48	70
sheep				2	2	4	9	3	12	16
pig				1	2	3	5	1	6	9
horse					1	1	1	1	2	3
dog					1	1		1	1	2
mouse							3		3	3
goose				1		1				1
cf. magpie								1	1	1
frog/toad								6	6	6
large mammal	1	4	6	5	46	62	56	7	63	125
medium mammal		1		9	96	106	230	99	329	435
small mammal					2	2	4		4	6
unidentified	24			142	60	226	123		123	349
Grand Total	26	10	7	177	242	462	489	129	618	1080

Table 4: Number of specimens from ditches and pits (middle–late Iron Age features only)

Ageing data

C.1.11 A total of fourteen sheep/goat mandible or loose tooth specimens provided dental wear data, though accurate mandible wear scores could only be calculated for four of these specimens (MWS 12, 13, 27 and 32). Individuals with MWSs of 12 and 13 died before they reached one year old, probably between three and 12 months (cf. Jones 2006, fig. 17). The individuals with MWSs of 27 and 32 were from animals that were probably slaughtered between two and three years old (ibid.). These data suggest that sheep were being culled at comparatively young ages.

C.1.12 Only four cattle mandibles provided ageing data from dental wear, though these were often missing teeth. One specimen had a third molar in advanced stage of wear and gave an MWS of 45, representing an adult animal probably over four years old (cf. Jones and Sadler 2012, 16–8). Two other specimens include a second molar in the earliest stage of wear and a deciduous fourth premolar, indicating the presence of younger animals.

C.1.13 Epiphyseal fusion data were too few to draw any firm conclusions about the age at death of livestock, though it should be pointed out that single neonatal and foetal sheep/goat humerus bones were recovered from middle–late Iron Age pits 3802 and 3902 respectively.

Livestock size

C.1.14 Two complete sheep/goat metatarsals from middle–late Iron Age deposits provided withers' heights of 596mm and 586mm, following the calculation of the greatest length of this bone multiplied by 4.54 (after von den Driesch and Boessneck 1974).

Butchery

C.1.15 Very few specimens exhibited butchery marks. These were restricted to cut marks found on four cattle bones—a metatarsal, a radius, an atlas and a pelvis—and two sheep/goat bones—an astragalus and a metatarsal. All the specimens were recovered from middle–late Iron Age contexts.

C.1.16 Of the cattle bones, the cuts on the metatarsal were undoubtedly made during initial skinning of the carcass. The cuts on the atlas were made at an oblique angle on the distal surface, possibly during decapitation. A cut mark on the ischium of the pelvis is likely to have been made when removing flesh from the flank of the animal. The low number and precision of the cut marks on the cattle remains suggest that considerable care and attention was given during the butchery of the animal.

C.1.17 Cut marks on the sheep/goat metatarsal would have been made during initial skinning of the carcass, while the oblique cutmarks on the cranial surface of the astragalus was aimed at dismembering the ankle joint.

Burning

C.1.18 A total of 24 specimens were found with burn marks. These were mostly from the mid–Iron Age pit 3902, though a few were also recovered from pit 4509. All the remains were either unidentifiable, or were mammal vertebrae and rib fragments.

Pathology

C.1.19 Only three bones showed signs of pathological conditions. These included a lesion on the proximal surface of a cattle radius that is consistent with osteochondrosis, a deep lesion on proximal surface of a cattle cuboid and a healed fracture on a rib from a medium-sized mammal. Overall, the livestock appear to have been fairly healthy and well looked after.

Discussion

C.1.20 Although the number of specimens identified to species is limited, the pastoral economy here undoubtedly centred upon the exploitation of cattle and sheep. Pigs were also identified, though pork appears to have made a more limited contribution to the diet.

C.1.21 Biometric data were limited and largely restricted to sheep/goat remains. Estimated sheep shoulder heights of 596mm and 586mm suggest that the animals at Rushden Lakes were potentially quite tall in comparison with most other Iron Age sites. It is possible that these two specimens relate to two particularly large animals (rams?) and do not reflect the normal distribution of the population. Sheep shoulder heights tend to average around 550mm (Allen 2017), and Hambleton (2008, 48–9) has suggested that they were fairly short, slender animals similar to modern unimproved breeds. However, heights of 600mm have been recorded from Iron Age specimens at Yarnton and Ashville, which perhaps point to the presence of taller sheep in the Upper Thames Valley.

C.1.22 The presence of foetal and neonatal sheep/goat remains provide evidence for on-site breeding, and some of these animals were culled prior to reaching the end of their first year. The killing of such young lambs may be related to sheep dairying, though the sample size is not large enough to confirm this, and there are other reasons why yearlings could have been slaughtered. The inhabitants may have preferred meat from very young animals, though for small-scale pastoralists, consistent slaughtering of yearlings is unlikely to have been a sustainable husbandry measure. While dairying is a possible explanation, with young male lambs being removed from their mothers at this age, it is possible that these animals were specifically selected for consumption at a special event. In contrast, there is no evidence that cattle were killed at an especially young age, and instead appear to have reached skeletal maturity and perhaps a little older in most cases.

C.1.23 Butchery marks were limited and restricted to small cuts. These are somewhat insightful, however, as they suggest that the butchery of cattle and sheep/goats was undertaken in a careful and attentive manner. With only minimal evidence for defleshing of raw meat and almost no evidence for marrow extraction, the butchery marks suggest that large joints of meat were prepared for roasting on the bone. This is also supported by the fairly numerous scorch marks found on several cattle and sheep/goat specimens.

C.1.24 Although limited in number, the presence of a few horse and dog bones indicate that these animals were present. Their comparative rarity, and lack of butchery marks, indicates that they were probably kept for transport, in the case of horses, and other working duties on the farm. The frequency of dog gnawing found on the bones of other livestock indicates that they regularly had access to carcass parts, and were perhaps fed leftovers.

C.1.25 The presence of a goose bone is likely to derive from a wild bird, suggesting that wildfowl infrequently contributed to the diet. The context of the possible magpie bone is less certain and may have derived from a natural death, though corvids are well known to be found in ritual contexts during the Iron Age (Serjeantson and Morris 2011).

C.1.26 The remains of frog/toad bones in pit 4509 and mouse bones in pit 3902 are likely to be examples of 'pitfall' victims. Although the mouse remains were not identified to species, its presence on a middle-late Iron Age domestic settlement is interesting. Native species of mouse, such as the yellow-necked mouse, are generally rare in prehistoric contexts, largely because they tend to avoid areas of human habitation. The house mouse, however, is different, as this species thrives on human settlements where there is often an abundance of food, particularly cereal grain. House mice are not native to Britain and zooarchaeological records suggest that they were, probably unintentionally, introduced in the middle Iron Age, as rare identifications have been made at Danebury, Hampshire (Coy 1984), and Gussage All Saints, Dorset (Harcourt 1979). It is possible that the mouse remains at Rushden Lakes derived from a native animal that became trapped in the pit; if, however, the bones derive from a house mouse it perhaps suggests that arable produce was being stored nearby.

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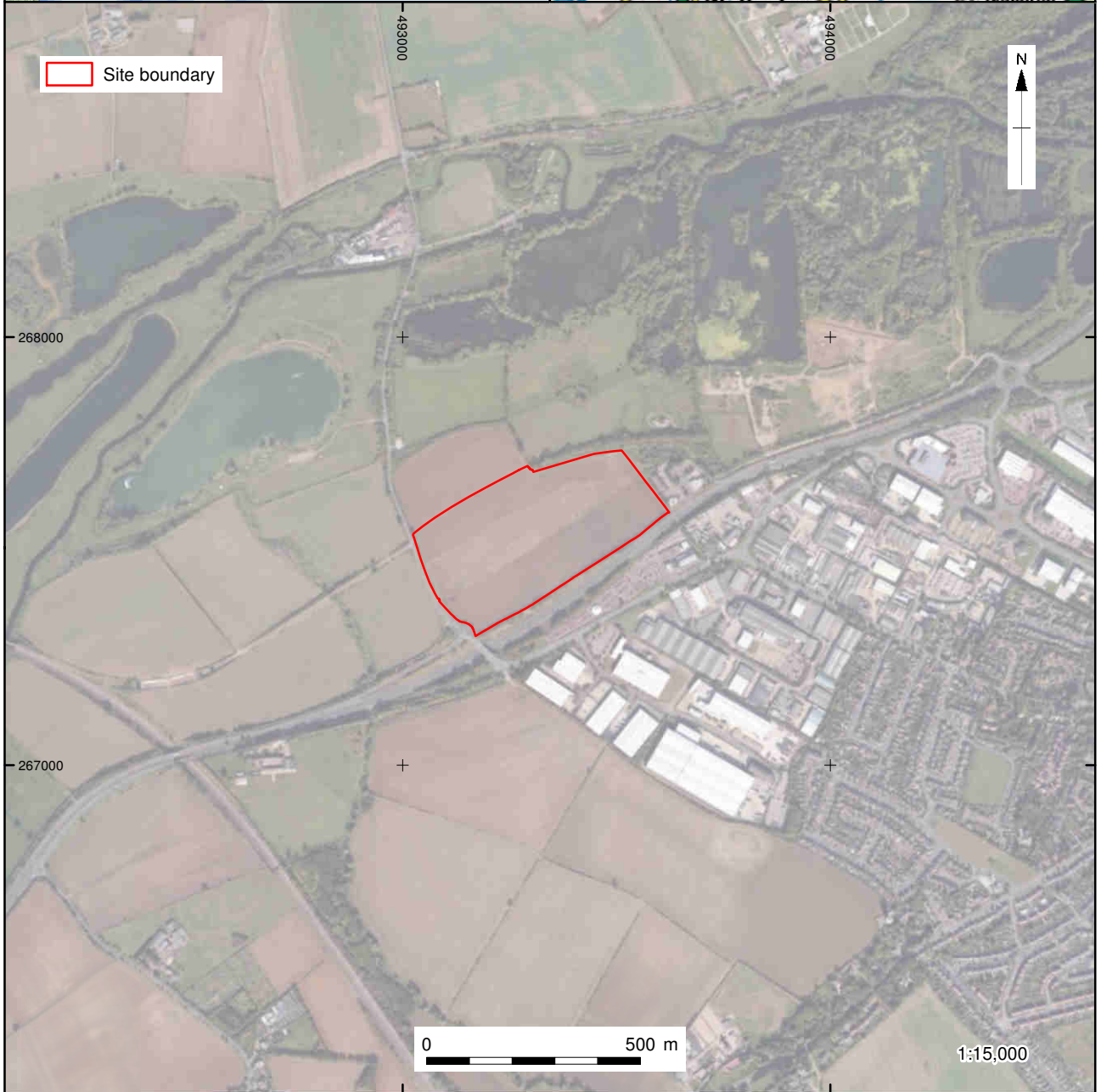
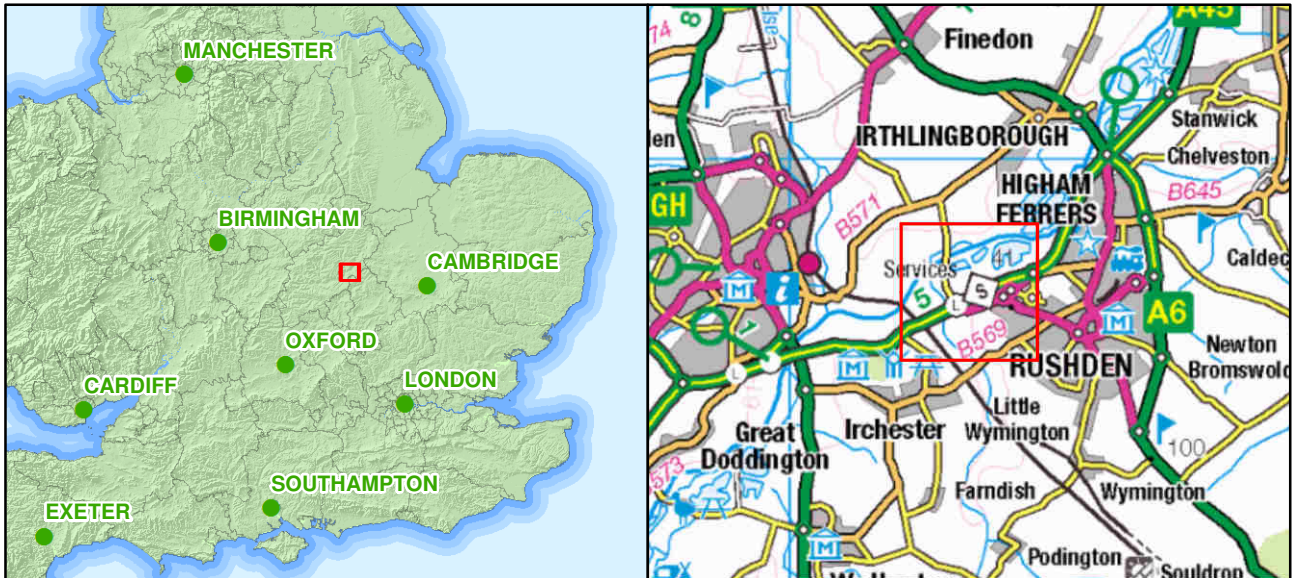
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APPENDIX E SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

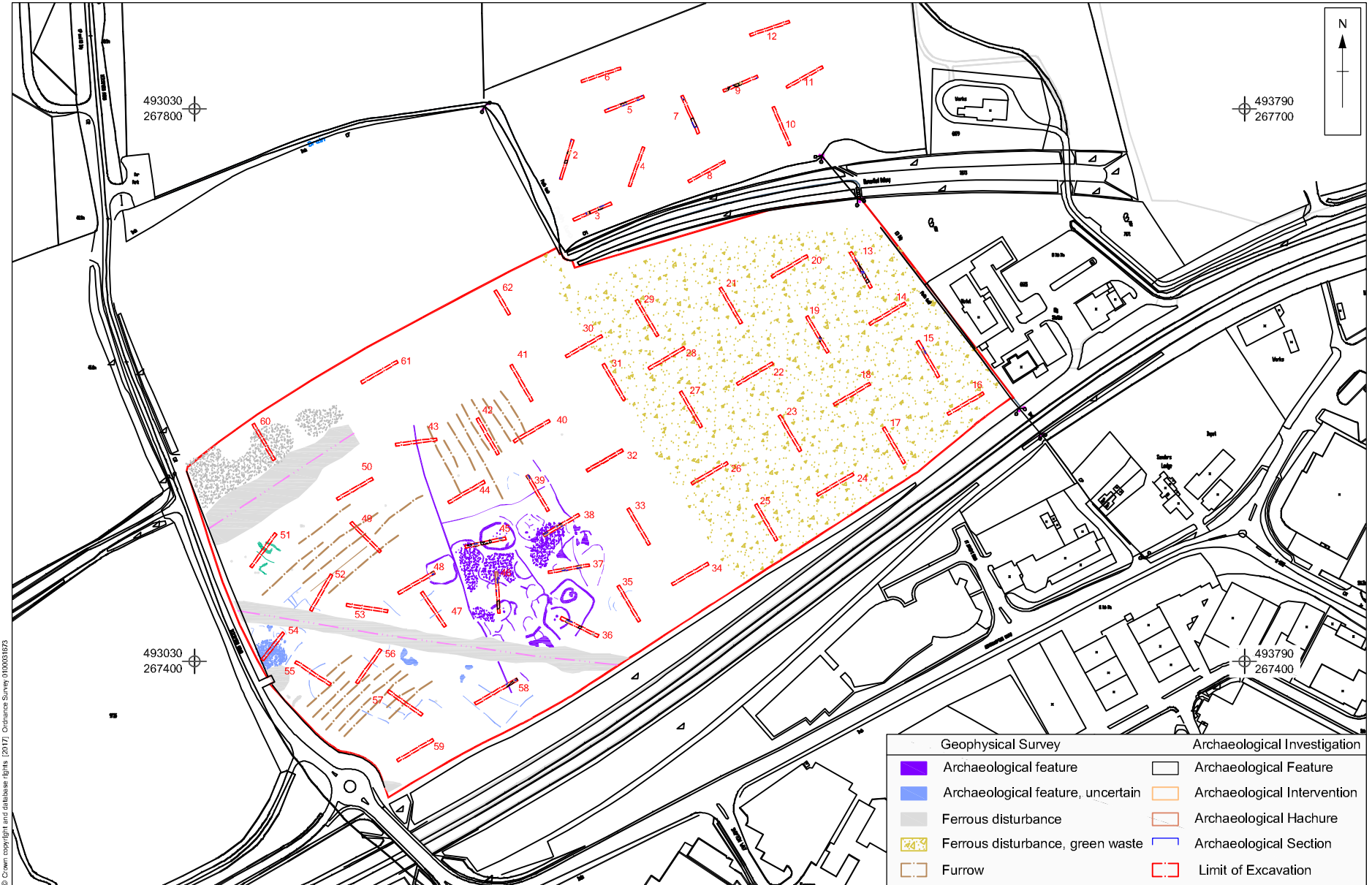
Site name:	Rushden Lakes, Ditchford Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire
Site code:	RULA 17
Grid Reference:	SP 9335 6751
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	14th-24th August 2017
Area of Site	c 14ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. There is currently no receiving museum in Northamptonshire although a receiving storage facility is expected to open in the near future. The site records will be held at OA until the store is open and receiving accessions.

Summary of Results: A 50-trench evaluation was undertaken on arable farmland to the north of Rushden, Northamptonshire to inform on the archaeological potential within the investigation area. The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record reported the presence of a prehistoric settlement in the western half of the evaluation area. This was corroborated by geophysical survey which provided greater resolution of the settlement, increasing our understanding of its limits and layout. The evaluation established the presence and survival of several archaeological features associated with the settlement and provided dating evidence which placed it in the middle–late Iron Age, between the mid-3rd century and the late 1st century BC. Further archaeological features, consisting of a few ditches and a pit, were encountered in the far eastern part of the evaluation area. Little could be discerned of their character and function, though the recovery of a small amount of Roman pottery suggests that they may have been features of this date. The geophysical survey also identified ridge and furrow in the western half of the evaluation area, along with signs of modern disturbance and services. No evidence of any other archaeological features was established by the evaluation. The route of a disused railway line, seen on historic maps, defines the northern boundary to the evaluation area. Evaluation trenches in this area encountered made-up ground relating to this former embankment.



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 Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA,

Figure 1: Site location



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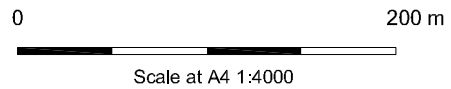
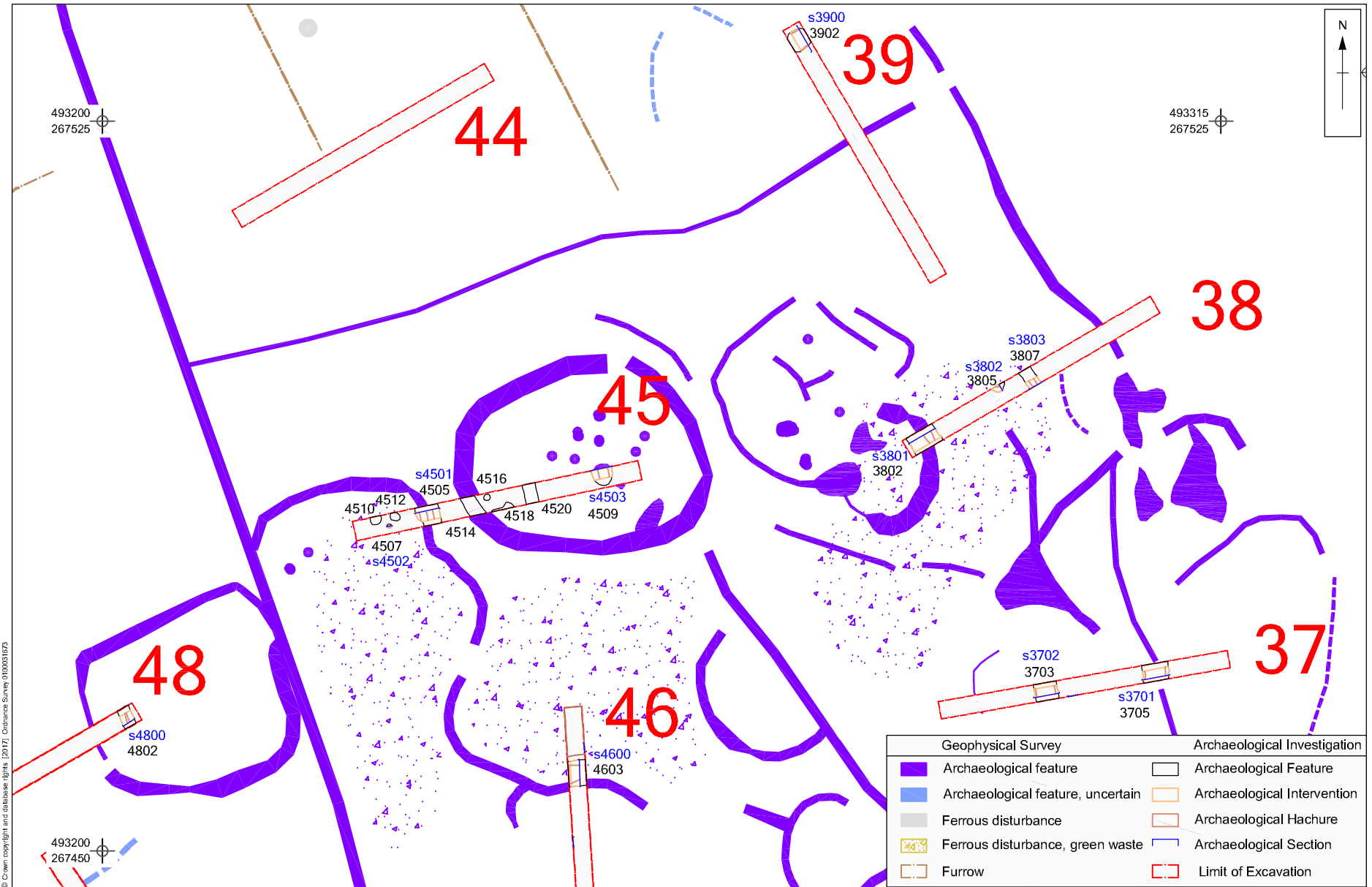


Figure 2: Trench layout over geophysical survey results



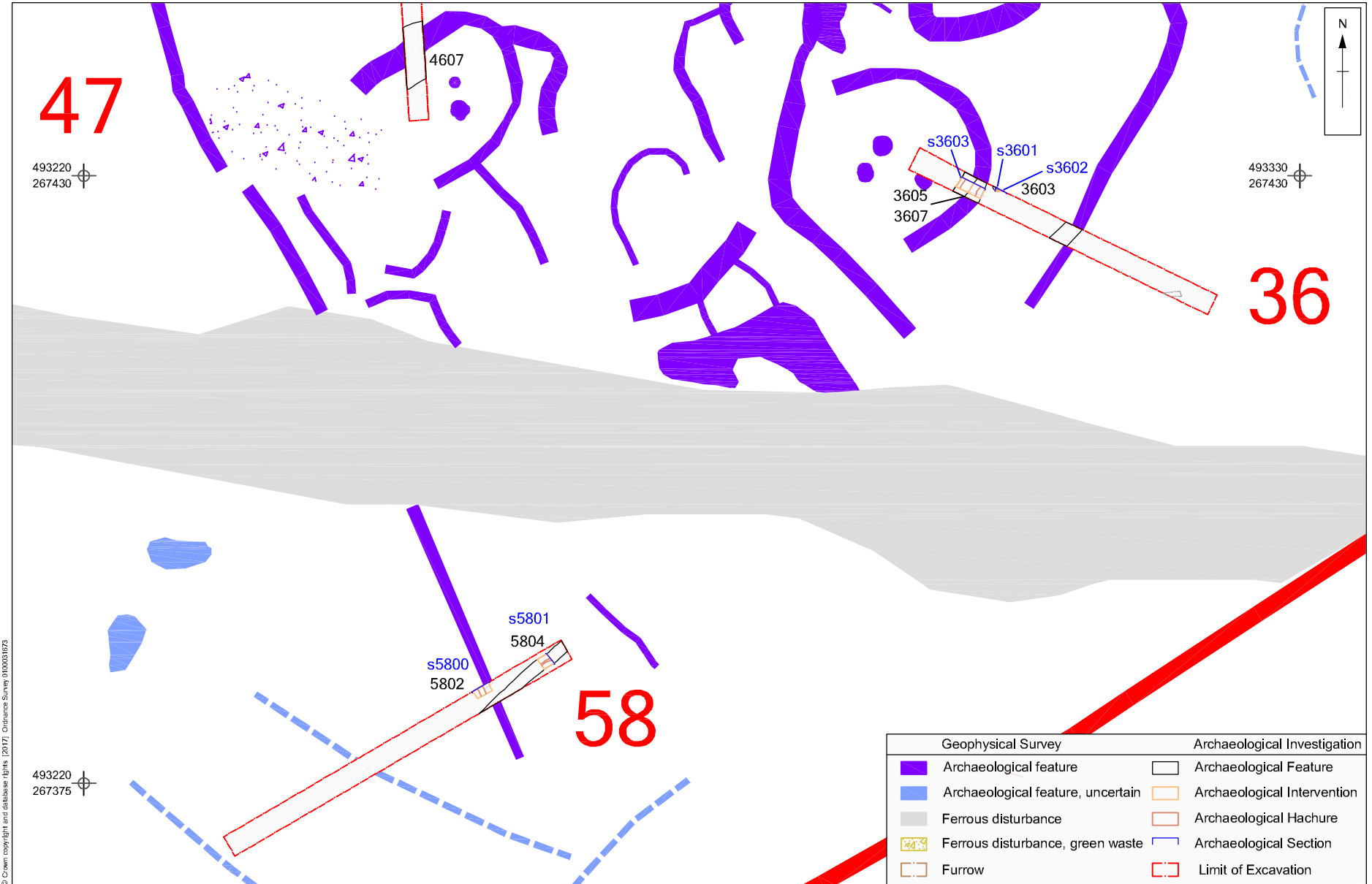
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0 50 m



Scale at A4 1:750

Figure 3: Plan of Iron Age settlement (northern half)



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Scale at A4 1:500

Figure 4: Plan of Iron Age settlement (southern half)

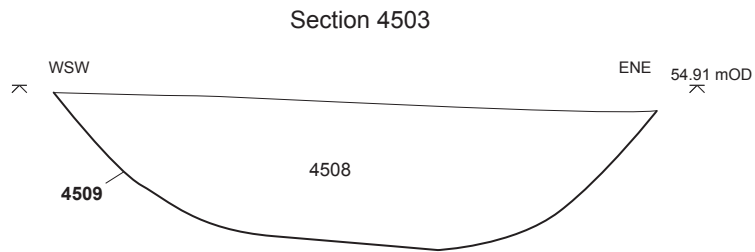
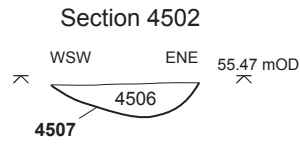
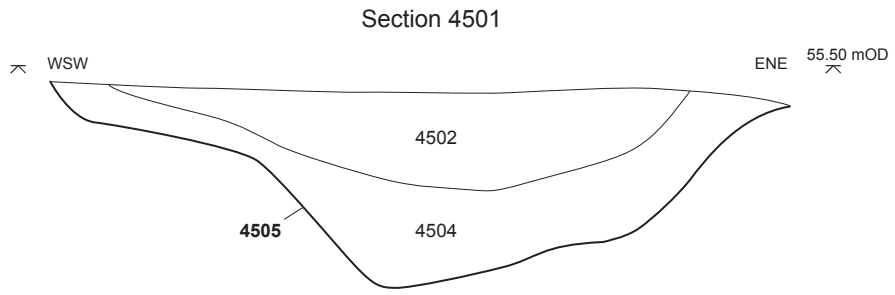
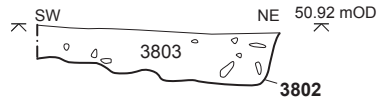
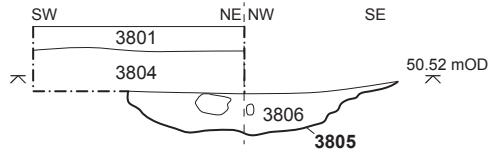


Figure 5: Ditch and pit sections (Trench 45)

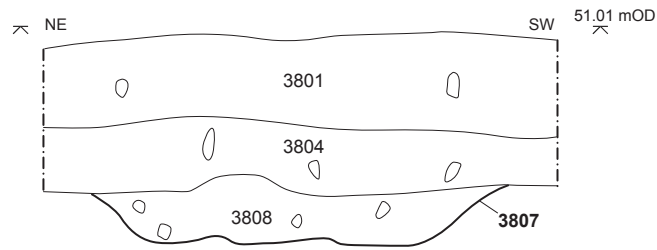
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Section 3802



Section 3803



Section 3900

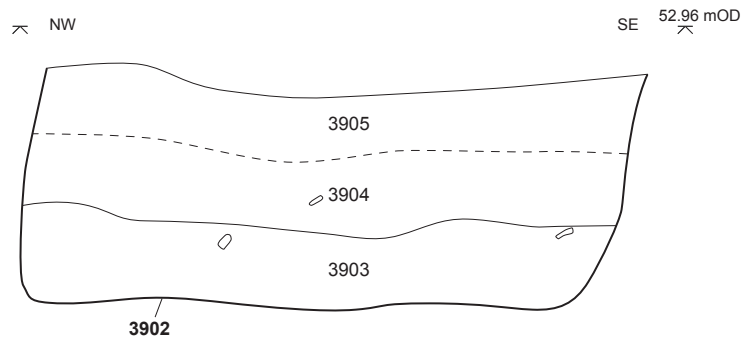


Figure 6: Ditch and pit sections (Trenches 38 and 39)

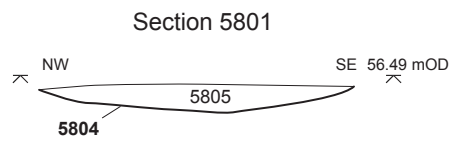
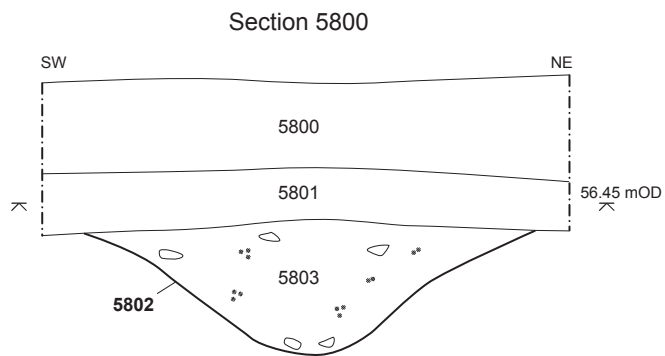
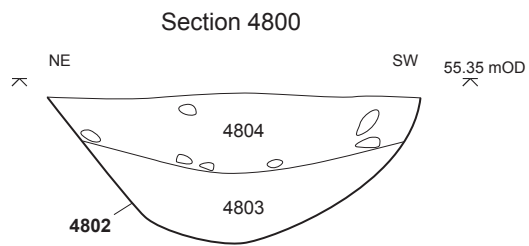
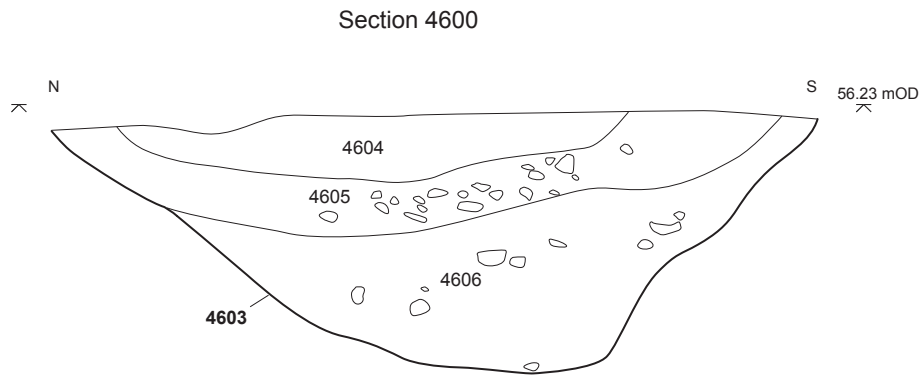
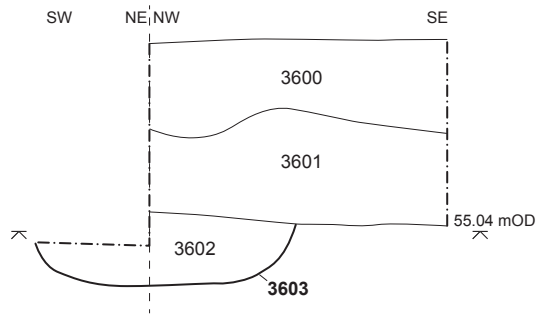
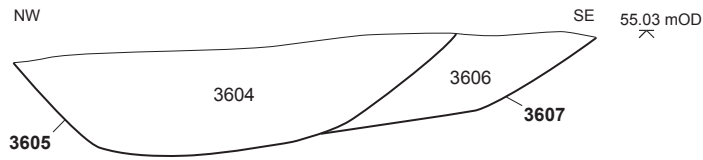


Figure 7: Ditch sections (Trenches 46, 48 and 58)

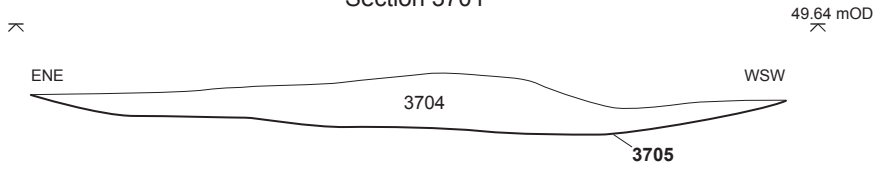
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Section 3603



Section 3701



Section 3702

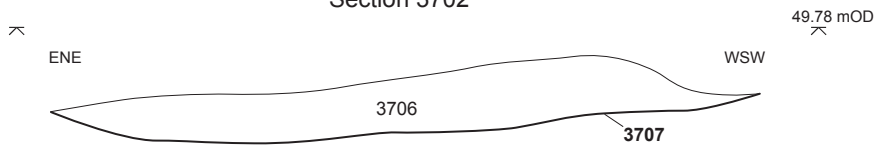
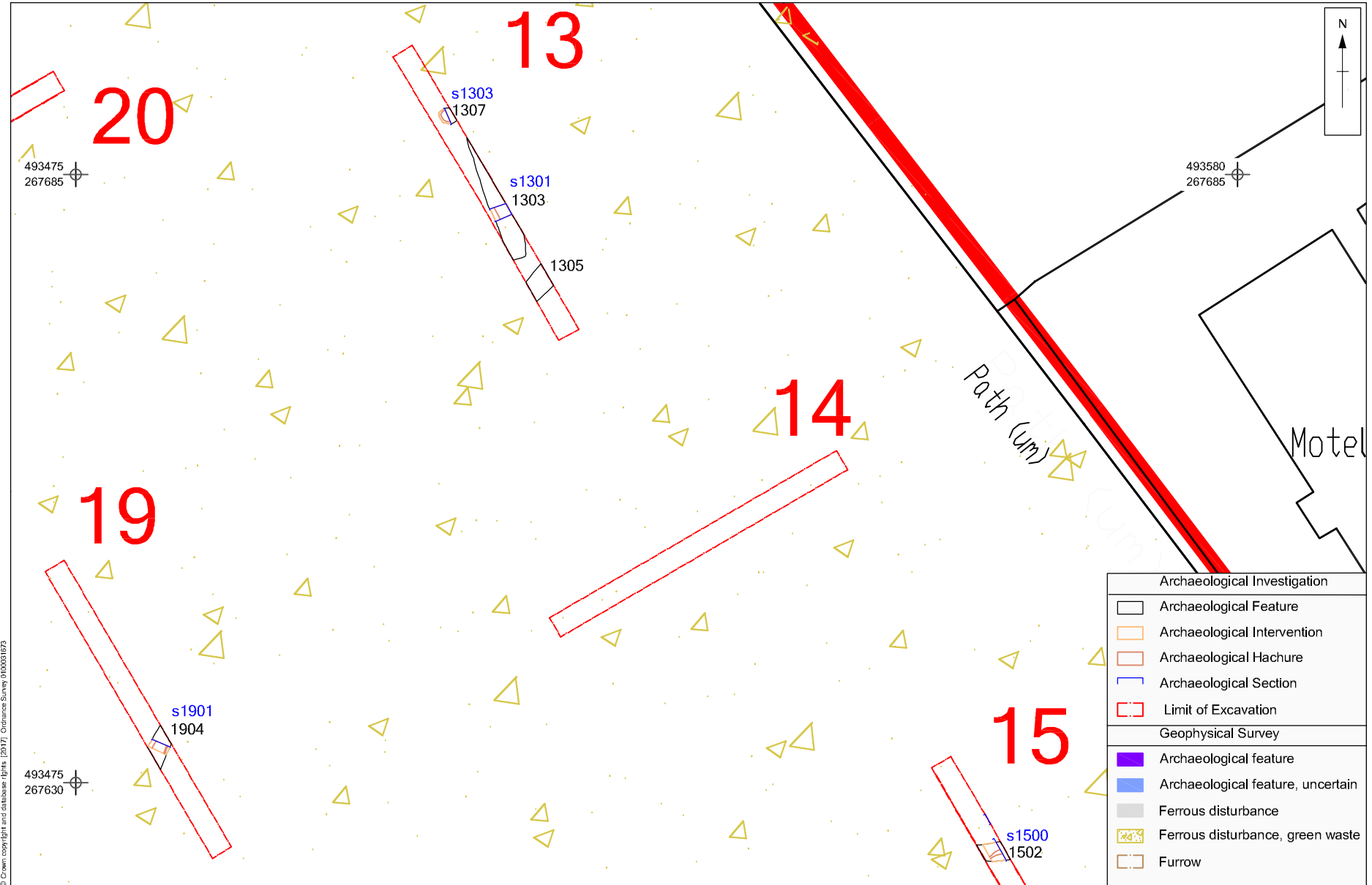


Figure 8: Ditch and pit sections (Trenches 36 and 37)



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0 50 m
Scale at A4 1:1250

Figure 9: Plan of archaeological features in north-east of the evaluation

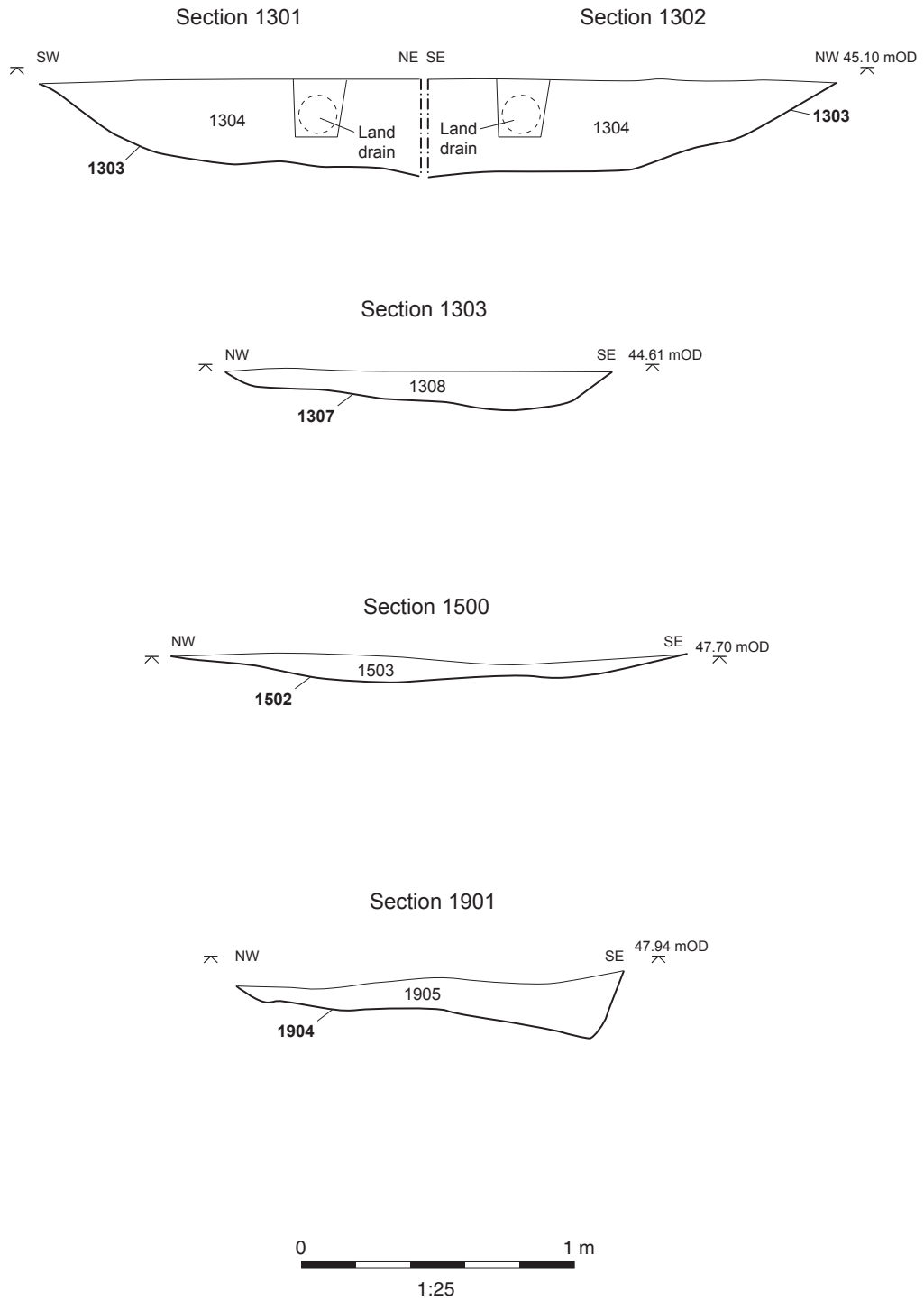


Figure 10: Ditch sections in north-east part of the site (Trenches 13, 15 and 19)



Plate 1: Trench 45 facing east



Plate 2: Ditch 4505 facing north



Plate 3: Ditch 3807 facing south-east



Plate 4: Pit 3902 facing north-west



Plate 5: Trench 46 facing south-east



Plate 6: Ditch 4603 facing north-east



Plate 7: Ditches 3605 and 3607 facing north-east



Plate 8: Ditch 5802 facing north-west



Plate 9: Trench 13 facing south-east



Plate 10: Ditch/furrow 1904 facing north



Plate 11: Made-up ground of mixed clay in Trench 62



Plate 12: Part of middle-late Iron Age vessel in ditch 3807



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