

# Chapter 1: Setting the scene

## INTRODUCTION

This report describes and analyses the results of a programme of archaeological excavations and watching briefs carried out by Oxford Archaeology between July 2000 and April 2005 at Lankhills School, Winchester, Hampshire. These investigations were occasioned by the re-organisation of the school facilities and the preparation of part of the grounds for sale for redevelopment. Previous excavations carried out in the southern part of the school grounds between 1967 and 1972 had recorded a total of 451 burials forming part of a major late Roman cemetery (Clarke 1979), and the current investigations were designed to mitigate the impact of development on further areas of the cemetery.

The investigations reported on here were uniquely fortunate in being able to build upon the foundations laid down by the published account of the 1967-72 excavations. Clarke's report represented a landmark in Romano-British cemetery studies and set a standard for analysis of cemetery material that has rarely been equalled since. The Lankhills cemetery stood out for its degree of spatial organisation, the large number of burials accompanied by grave goods, and the identification of two 'intrusive' groups of people, one identified as deriving from the Danube region and the other as Anglo-Saxon. The exhaustive analysis and comparative study of the graves and their artefacts was not matched by analysis of the skeletal material, however, which was classified only in terms of age and sex, and the proportion of the burials that it was claimed could be assigned to sex was unusually high.

In a number of significant respects the position of Lankhills within Romano-British studies has not changed since the publication of Clarke's report. Despite the existence of a much larger body of data on burial, excellently synthesised by Philpott (1991), well-excavated and well-published cemeteries of any great size remain a relative rarity (Pearce 2008). The number of significant publications of continental cemetery excavations has also not been particularly large (Pearce 2002). The current report has, however, benefited from developments in cemetery studies in the time since Clarke's publication. The theoretical aspects of interpreting cemetery assemblages have received much attention (eg Morris 1992; Parker Pearson 1999), as has Roman burial archaeology both at a general level (eg Struck 1993a; Pearce *et al.* 2000; Scheid 2008) and also within a specifically British context, not least

Philpott's survey of Romano-British burial practice (1991). In addition the science of archaeological osteology has advanced significantly, enabling a more detailed analysis of the skeletal material to be undertaken than was possible when the report on the 1967-72 excavations was published.

The general approach of the current project has been to integrate the analyses of cemetery morphology, grave types and orientation, grave goods and skeletal remains as far as possible (see further below). The well-known constraints of developer-funded archaeology do not always allow much scope for detailed analysis of excavation results. In the present case, however, while there are several aspects of the study of the cemetery which it would have been desirable to pursue further than has been done here, the established importance of the site meant that fairly detailed analysis of the results of this work, in relation to a defined set of research questions, was anticipated from the inception of the project. It was essential that these analyses made reference, where possible, to the data from the earlier excavation, an exercise that has substantially increased the value of the more recent work and allowed direct comparison of the two areas of the site. In order to facilitate this OA has made use *inter alia* of an osteological dataset for the earlier excavations, kindly made available by Dr Rebecca Gowland, which uses more up-to-date ageing and sexing methodologies than those available at the time of the original publication (see Chapter 5). While post-excavation assessment and subsequent analysis were underway, further work adjacent to the south-east and east margins of Clarke's excavation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2007-8, revealing a further 56 graves. It has not been possible to take full account of this work here, but summary information has kindly been made available (Wessex Archaeology 2009).

## LOCATION AND SITE CHARACTER

Winchester is located at the southern edge of the chalk Downs of Wessex, where the valley of the River Itchen cuts southward through the western end of the South Downs (Fig. 1.1).

Lankhills Special School lies in the northern part of Winchester, in the triangle of modern development between the A272 Andover Road and the A33 Basingstoke Road at NGR SU 479 304. These roads follow the line of the former Roman roads leading

The late Roman cemetery at Lankhills, Winchester

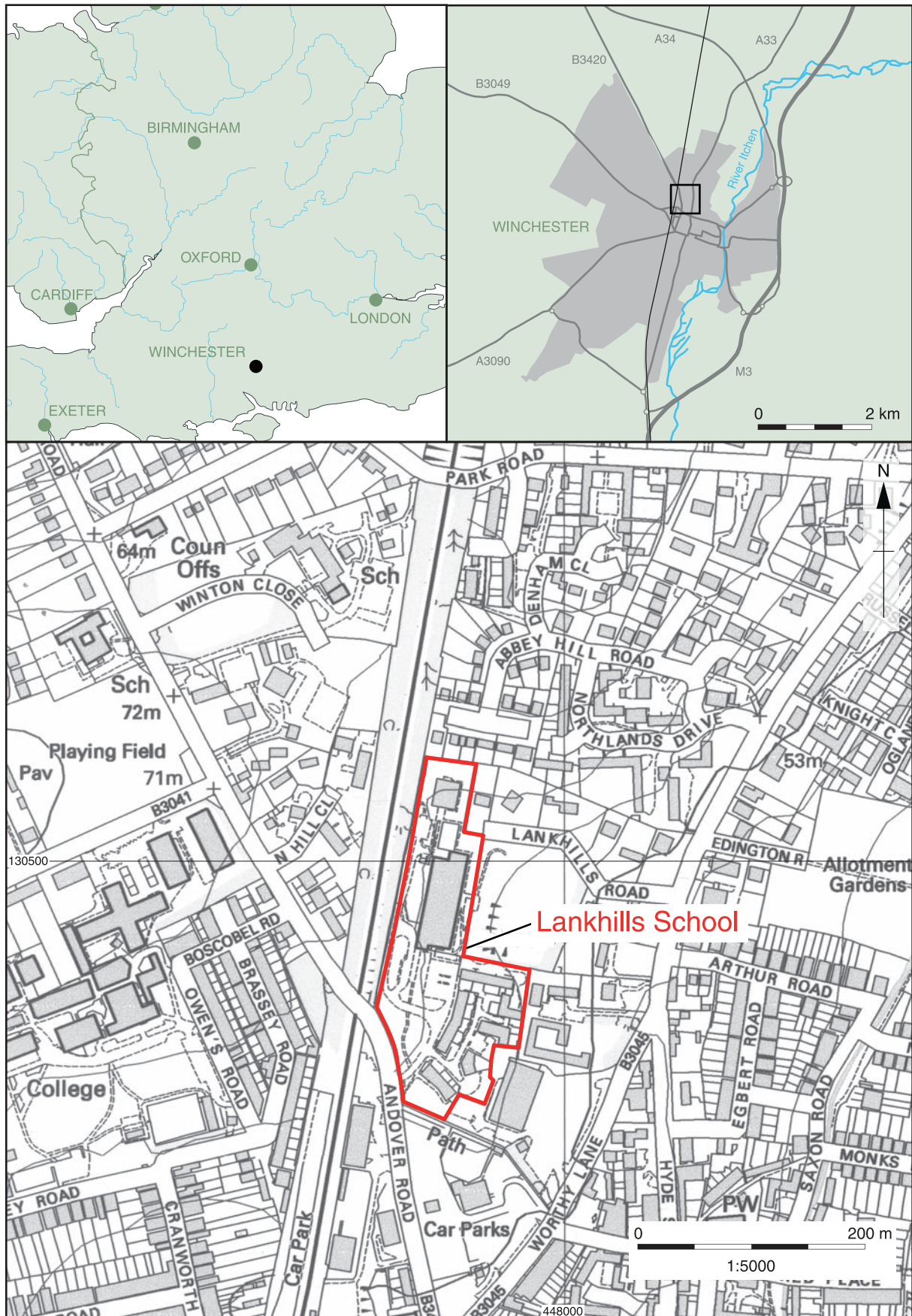


Fig. 1.1 Location of Lankhills School

toward Cirencester and Silchester respectively, running from the north gate of the Roman city of Winchester, c 450 m to the south of the site. The site of the school is on the western side of the Itchen Valley, on one of a series of undulating ridges into which the former downland of the valley side is

dissected by the shallow valleys of winterbournes and tributary streams. The grounds fall from west to east from 62 m OD to 56 m OD with the slope of the Itchen Valley, and from 61 m OD at the north end of the school to 58 m OD at the south end as it slopes into the valley of one of these tributary streams, the

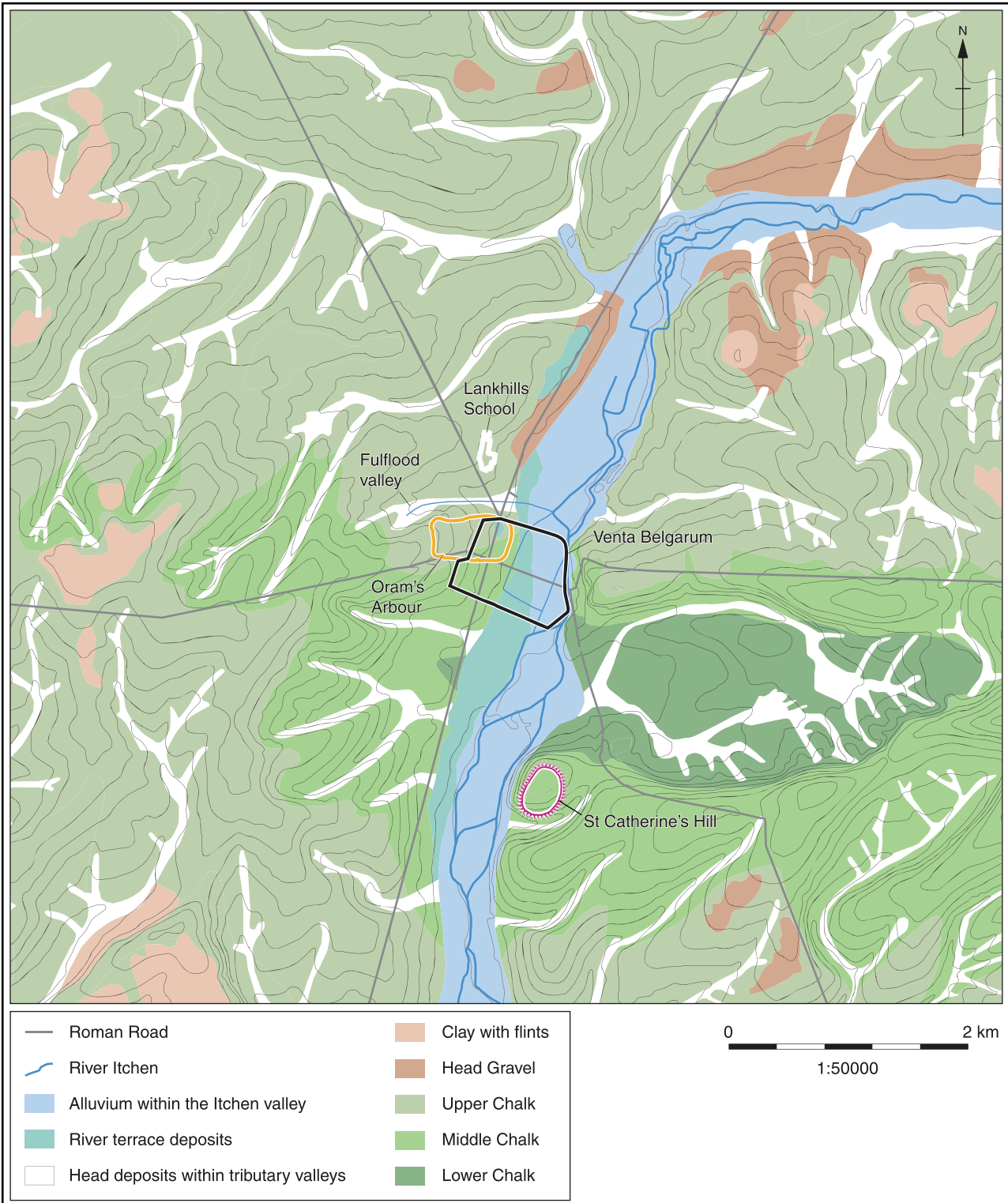


Fig. 1.2 The geology and topography of the Winchester area

Fulflood, now carried in a culvert. Beyond the Fulflood the ground rises again to the site of the Roman city, where the modern city centre now stands. The site is on the Upper Chalk that underlies most of the surrounding area (Fig. 1.2). Over most of the site area the chalk lay directly beneath topsoil and other modern deposits.

The school grounds encompassed an area of some 3.6 hectares and comprised a series of level terraces corresponding with existing and past buildings and the sports field. Some of these terraces were occupied by a mixture of modern and late 19th-century buildings. Contours recorded on the 1869 and 1898 Ordnance Survey maps indicate that the terrace in the north-east corner of the grounds had, in part, exploited a natural combe. Geotechnical investigations showed that the terraces in the north-western part of the site were the result of cut and fill landscaping, with made ground up to 1.5 m thick contributing to the steep terrace edges around the buildings and sports ground (SAS 1999).

The main area of excavation took place at the south-eastern end of the school grounds, around and beneath the site of a former dormitory building known as the School House (Fig. 1.3), the construction of which in 1961 had resulted in the initial discovery of burials on the site (Clarke 1979, 7-9).

The building consisted of four wings arranged around a small open courtyard, within which a

pond had been excavated. The School House stood on a flat terrace at 58.3 m OD, surrounded by small areas of lawns and pathways. The western end of the 1967-72 excavation had encompassed most of the lawn immediately south of the building. Some indication of the amount of landscaping involved in its construction is provided by the level of the terrace immediately to the north-west, which is some 1.5 m higher. From the terrace bearing the School House the ground slopes away gradually to the south and east toward stands of mature trees that defined the boundaries of the school grounds.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Winchester is one of the principal historic towns of southern England. Despite this, and a number of antiquarian observations, its Roman archaeology was not well known before the 1920s and systematic excavation did not begin until the late 1940s (Qualmann 1993, 67), undertaken by staff of the Winchester Museum and developing into the Winchester Excavations Committee programme initiated in 1961. This and subsequent work by the Archaeological Section of Winchester Museum Service has created an extensive and detailed archaeological database from which the origins and development of the town can be studied, although much work is still unpublished. Between the walled city and the site of Lankhills, observations made by



*Fig. 1.3 The south side of School House looking east and showing the excavation of Area 2 in 2000*

antiquarians during the suburban expansions of the 19th and 20th centuries and subsequent excavations have produced information on the cemeteries in this area which provides important background for the understanding of Lankhills. Again, however, this work, including relatively recent excavations (eg Teague 1999), has not yet been published in detail (Browne *et al.* forthcoming).

The Roman city of Winchester, Venta Belgarum, was established on a site that had been occupied from at least the middle Iron Age. Evidence has been found for settlement dating from the 3rd century BC onward extending over a large area of the western side of the Itchen Valley, as well as at the hillfort at St Catharine's Hill on the eastern side (Hawkes *et al.* 1930; Hawkes 1936; 1976; Biddle 1983, 108). The latter site was abandoned *c.* 100 BC, but occupation continued on the western side of the valley, with the construction during the 1st century BC of Oram's Arbour, a ditched enclosure encompassing an area of some 20 hectares. Although the density of occupation appears to have diminished following construction of the enclosure, the discovery of imported amphorae and many native and imported coins has led to the suggestion that it functioned as some form of central place or *oppidum*, perhaps with a key role in the communications network and functions associated with trade and religion (Biddle 1983, 108-9; Qualmann 1993, 74; Qualmann *et al.* 2004). Occupation of Oram's Arbour declined in the decades preceding the Roman conquest and it is currently unclear whether it was completely abandoned before the establishment of the Roman town.

Venta Belgarum appears to have begun around AD 50 as an unenclosed settlement on the west bank of the River Itchen and on one of a series of several tufa islands in mid-stream (James 1997, 30). This early phase of occupation is poorly understood, and although evidence has been claimed for a street layout in and outside the north-western corner of the later walled city on a different alignment to the rest of the street grid (Biddle 1983, 111) this has not been substantiated by more recent work. The town must have owed its origins to the presence of pre-existing routeways converging on a crossing point of the river, and to the significance the area had gained from the proximity of Oram's Arbour, regardless of whether the latter enclosure was occupied down to this time. The question of whether or not the town saw a phase of early military activity has been widely debated. The recent consensus seems to be against this (eg Wachter 1995, 291). The character of early timber structures at the George Hotel in the western part of the town (Cunliffe 1964, 22, 32) and of the early ditch at Lower Brook Street (Biddle 1975b, 296-7) is uncertain, but the incidence of early Roman fine wares at the former location (Cunliffe 1964, 58-60), and of coins of Gaius and Claudius to the north at Victoria Road (Kenyon 2008), suggest that the question should remain open. Consideration of

comparable developments at Chichester and Silchester is also relevant, however, and in both instances the evidence for significant early military establishments is considered to be limited (eg Magilton 2003, 161-2; Fulford 2003, 101). The settlement was transformed by a major programme of public works started in the Flavian period, including the construction of earth and timber defences enclosing the north, south and west sides, and a large public building believed to be the forum, which has been investigated in excavations at the Wessex Hotel and Cathedral Green (Wacher 1995, 293-5). Property boundaries and timber strip buildings dating from the same period have also been excavated at the Brooks (Zant 1993, 29-31). This sudden burst of development has been attributed variously to investment given as a reward to Cogidubnus, within whose kingdom Venta is likely to have lain, for his loyalty to the emperor, or to the settlement being awarded the status of *civitas* capital following the division of his kingdom on his death (Wacher 1995, 293). The latter view has been developed by Wilson (2006, 22-3, 30, 39-40) in the context of a recent discussion of early Romano-British urban defences although, as Esmonde Cleary (2003, 80) points out, in the absence of good evidence for post-conquest earthwork defences at Chichester and Silchester, the real significance of the Winchester earthworks is unclear. Winchester grew to be one of the principal cities in the province of Britannia, with the fifth largest walled area (Biddle 1983, 110), a population of perhaps 3-4000 (James 1997, 32; but see also below Chapter 8) and considerable suburbs (Wacher 1995, 301; Browne *et al.* forthcoming). The continued prosperity of the population is demonstrated by the construction of town houses with mosaic floors and hypocausts, the augmentation of the earthwork defences towards the end of the 2nd century, and the addition of a stone wall during the early 3rd (Wacher 1995, 296).

The character of the city changed significantly shortly after AD 350: the town houses went out of use and deposits of 'dark earth' developed across parts of the occupied area. However, these changes do not appear to represent abandonment as much as a change in the nature of occupation. The area of occupation, as reflected in the distribution of pottery and coins, actually seems to have increased at this time to incorporate the previously little-used western part of the city. Evidence for metalworking increased, as did the size of the city's cemeteries, and at some point during the second half of the 4th century bastions were added to the city wall (Biddle 1983, 112-3). These changes are difficult to interpret, but perhaps the role of the city changed from being principally an administrative centre to a densely occupied industrial centre, or a defended centre for the collection and storage of taxation in kind. The demise of the city may have occurred quite swiftly at the end of the 4th century or shortly after, when all evidence for occupation is thought to have

ceased, reflected most notably in the apparently abrupt cessation of burial in the city's cemeteries (Biddle 1983, 115).

**The cemeteries of Venta Belgarum**

Roman law forbade burial within urban areas, for reasons of hygiene and religion, and consequently cities were typically surrounded by a ring of

cemeteries. The cemeteries of Venta Belgarum are not particularly well understood, but areas of burial have been identified to the north, west, south-west and east of the city, broadly alongside the main roads leading into it (Fig. 1.4; Browne *et al.* forthcoming). The location of the Roman cemeteries outside the town has meant that they remained beyond the limits of Winchester throughout most of the historic period, and it is only with the development of the city's

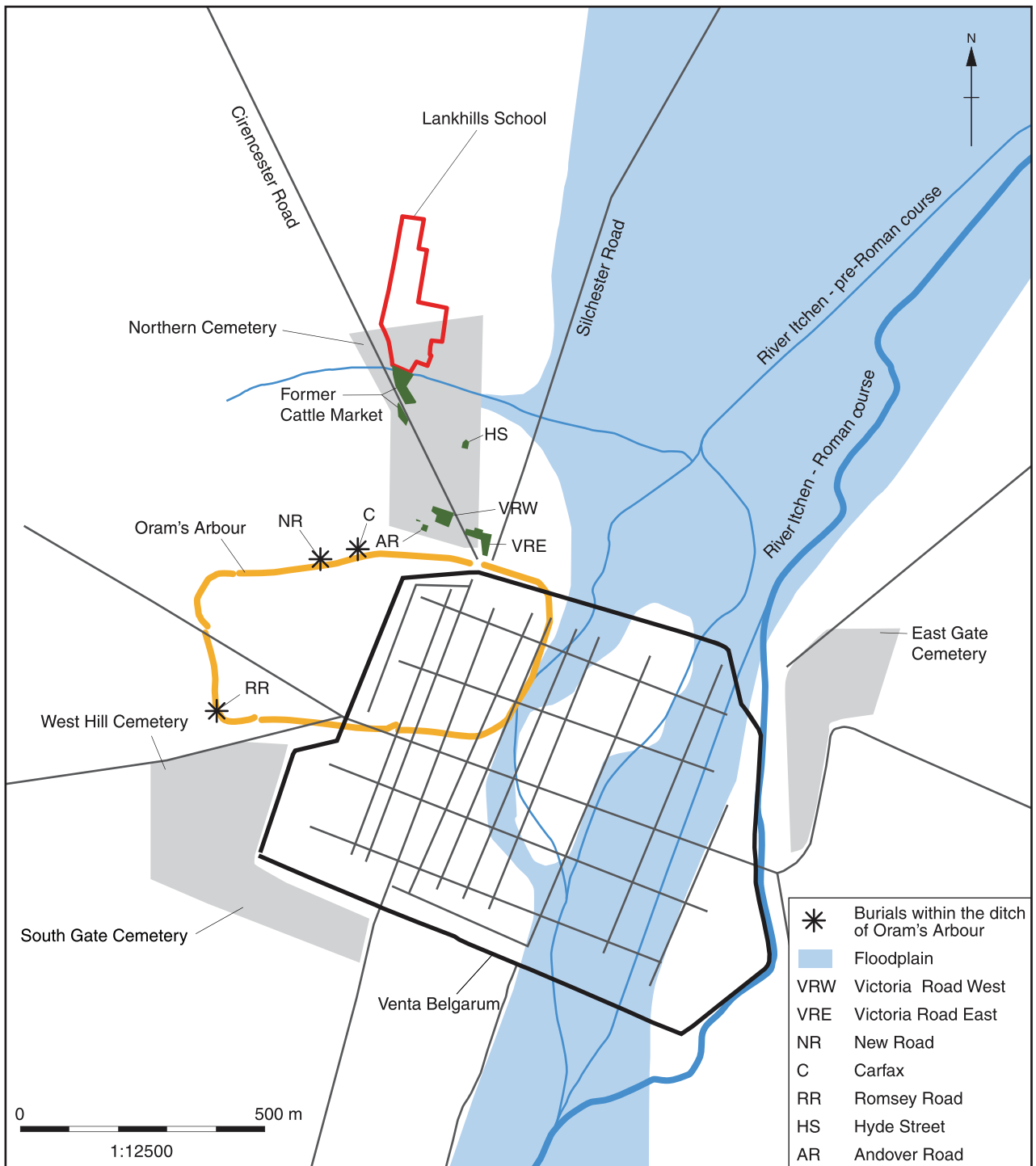


Fig. 1.4 The setting of the Roman town and its cemeteries (after Browne *et al.* forthcoming, 6)

suburbs during the 19th and 20th centuries that they have been built on. Sadly, although some observations were recorded, most notably through the work of Ward-Evans during the 1920s and 1930s (Qualmann 1993, 66), much evidence for the cemeteries was destroyed without recording. More recently the redevelopment of sites within areas occupied by the Roman cemeteries has provided an opportunity for formal excavations where burials survive (see Browne *et al.* forthcoming).

The northern cemetery, within which Lankhills is situated, is the only one of Venta's cemeteries that is reasonably well known. To the west, burials were inserted into the silted-up ditch of Oram's Arbour, and an area of burial has been discovered at West Hill on the road to Old Sarum. A small cemetery is known to the west of the south gate, along St James Lane, and a larger cemetery was sited outside the east gate. All the burials known in these cemeteries date from the later part of the Roman period, the majority assigned to the 4th century.

Clarke (1979, 5-11) has recorded in detail the discoveries of burials within the northern cemetery (an amended and expanded gazetteer will appear in Browne *et al.* forthcoming) and these will not be repeated here except to provide an outline of the development of the cemetery. The cemetery extended for c 450 m along the road to Cirencester, from the fork at which it separated from the Silchester road just outside the city's north gate as far as the site of Lankhills School. The burials lay mostly to the east of the road, with graves only recorded on the western side possibly at the site of the former Winchester Cattle Market, now a municipal car park immediately south of Lankhills School (Clarke 1979, 6), and more recently at Victoria Road and Andover Road (the Eagle Hotel). A small number of isolated graves have also been discovered further east, in the vicinity of the Silchester road, but these do not appear to form part of the cemetery and may be the burials of rural settlements or of wealthy individuals who chose to be buried separately. The cemetery appears to have originated as a much smaller area, located in the triangle formed by the junction of the Cirencester and Silchester roads, and to have been extended to the north over time as a larger area became necessary, particularly after the adoption of inhumation as the dominant burial rite during the latter part of the Roman period. This is demonstrated by the concentration of cremation burials, which are generally characteristic of the 1st and 2nd centuries (Jones 1987, 815-7), at the southern end of the distribution of burials. A group of early burials was uncovered at Hyde Street, where a total of 118 cremation burials and 99 inhumation graves dating from the mid 1st and 2nd centuries were excavated (Kjølbye-Biddle 1992, 215; these figures probably include a group of 9 or 10 cremations and three inhumation burials assigned to a 3rd-century phase, for revised figures see Browne *et al.* forthcoming). Several of the cremation burials along the street frontage were set

within four-post structures, and a masonry mausoleum with a vaulted roof was also excavated. During the late 2nd century this area was covered by extramural occupation, and the area used for burial moved further north. The rate of expansion of the cemetery is difficult to gauge as the conditions under which many of the observations were made did not allow sufficient detail to be recorded to provide an accurate date, but by the 4th century, when burial started at Lankhills School, the cemetery may have been continuous along the length of the road. It was also at this time that a secondary area of burial seems to have been opened to the west of the southern end of the Cirencester road, parts of which have been uncovered at Victoria Road and the Eagle Hotel site (Teague 1999; Browne *et al.* forthcoming).

### The post-Roman history of the site

During most of the historic period the site of Lankhills lay in open downland, and was still shown as such on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 1" map published in 1811, although plough scars were recorded during the 1967-72 excavations, indicating that the site had at some time been cultivated. The name Lankhills may derive from the former presence of lime kilns in the vicinity, probably of post-medieval date (Clarke 1979, 5), although no evidence for these structures survives. The London to Southampton railway, built in 1840, cut through this landscape, but passed to the west of the area of the cemetery and is not known to have disturbed any burials. During the Victorian period large detached villas were built on the valley slopes, including two on the later site of the school: Lankhills House in the northern part and Osbourne Lodge, later re-named The Beeches, to the south. The railway line defined the western boundaries of these properties, and subsequently that of Lankhills School, which was founded on the site in 1907. Lankhills House and The Beeches were retained for use as school buildings but have both been demolished since the 1967-72 excavations.

### The 1967-72 Excavation

Burials at Lankhills School first came to light during 1961 when human remains were discovered during the construction of a dormitory building known as the School House. Although the foundations were not generally deep enough to disturb the burials below, rescue observations were made during deeper excavations for a boiler room under the building and for service trenches extending to the north and west, which recorded both inhumation graves and cremation burials. With the presence of burials thus established, a programme of formal excavation was undertaken between 1967-72 in an area of lawn immediately to the south of the School House ahead of proposed extensions to the school buildings. Ironically, much of the proposed area of

building work was not eventually instigated and consequently the 1967-72 excavations disinterred the only non-threatened inhumations within the site.

In total some 451 graves and seven cremation burials were excavated, dated from AD 310 onward. The graves were carefully laid out with later graves rarely being dug through their predecessors, and with very few exceptions a fairly consistent west-east orientation was maintained. Burial appears to have progressed from west to east, eventually extending beyond a ditch and hedgeline that had defined the original eastern limit of the cemetery. The majority of burials were provided with coffins, and the cemetery was unusual in having a high proportion of graves containing grave goods. The excavations were particularly notable for the identification of two groups of burials interpreted as being intrusive among the native population on the basis of the provision and placing of grave goods buried with them. The first of these 'foreign' elements comprised 16 burials dating from AD 350-410 whose funerary rites were interpreted as originating from the Danube region, probably Hungary, and which Clarke interpreted as the graves of military or government officials (and their relations) sent to Britain in the aftermath of the unsuccessful rebellion of Magnentius (AD 350-3). The second group arrived later (AD 390-410) and were interpreted as representing the first arrival of Anglo-Saxons in the Winchester area. The identification of these intrusive groups has not been universally accepted (Baldwin 1985) and although recent isotope analysis of a sample of the skeletons has provided some support for the hypothesis, it has also suggested that the intrusive 'groups' may have been more diverse in terms of origin (Evans *et al.* 2006). The latest burials in the cemetery were characterised by shallower graves and a general sloppiness of excavation and positioning, interpreted as reflecting a breakdown in standards within the cemetery, before burial ceased abruptly at the start of the 5th century.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The present project was occasioned by the decision by Hampshire County Council, the owners of the site, to rationalise the school facilities. This re-organisation was to comprise relocation of the school buildings to the north-western part of the site as a single large block with a separate dormitory block, while the south-east quarter of the site was to be sold for residential development. Prior to application for planning permission, Archaeological Site Investigations (ASI) was commissioned to carry out an archaeological impact assessment (ASI 1999), which identified the potential for archaeological remains associated with the northern cemetery of Venta Belgarum to extend into the southern part of the site. Oxford Archaeology was commissioned to carry out archaeological mitigation of this area in the

form of two phases of excavation and associated watching briefs, starting in 2000. This main phase of the investigation was commissioned by ASI on behalf of Hampshire County Council and conducted according to a Project Design agreed with Hampshire County Council and based on a Design Brief prepared by ASI in conjunction with Hampshire County Council, English Heritage, Winchester City Council and Giles Clarke (OA 2000). In 2005, Laing Homes, who had by this time bought the south-eastern part of the site and begun redevelopment, commissioned a further small-scale watching brief during drainage works, including the excavation of a large soakaway.

## **Phases of investigation**

The excavation was carried out in a series of discrete stages (Fig. 1.5). The initial phase of work took place during July and August 2000, prior to the demolition of the School House, and comprised the excavation of six areas around and to the north of the building, and a narrow area located between the southern edge of the 1967-1972 excavation and the southern boundary of the school grounds, on the Andover Road frontage. This investigation was partly evaluative in nature, intended to establish the extent of the cemetery and thus of the area requiring further detailed investigation. The absence of burials in Areas 4 and 5, to the north of the School House, and the distribution of graves in the areas to the south, demonstrated that the northern limit of the cemetery lay within the northern part of the footprint of the building, and consequently a second, main phase of excavation was undertaken in 2003-4 following its demolition. In the period between the initial investigation and the main phase of excavation, a watching brief was conducted on groundwork carried out during the redevelopment of the central part of the school grounds during 2002 and 2003, but no archaeological remains were identified in this area.

A further watching brief was maintained during the demolition of the School House during September and October 2003 and the removal of its footings, prior to the main phase of excavation, which was carried out between November 2003 and March 2004. This main excavation also incorporated Areas 2, 3, 6 and 7 of the 2000 excavation into a single large area measuring c 50 m east-west by 40 m north-south and encompassing a total area of 1513 sq m, and was contiguous on its southern side with the area of the 1967-72 excavations. Area 1, which was excavated during the first phase of excavation in 2000, bordered the southern side of the 1967-72 excavations and extended for 36 m along the site's Andover Road frontage (Fig. 1.6).

This trench had an area of 135 sq m. Subsequent to this, drainage works carried out in April 2005 resulted in a further small-scale watching brief being commissioned by Laing Homes (who had by this time purchased the site), during the excavation



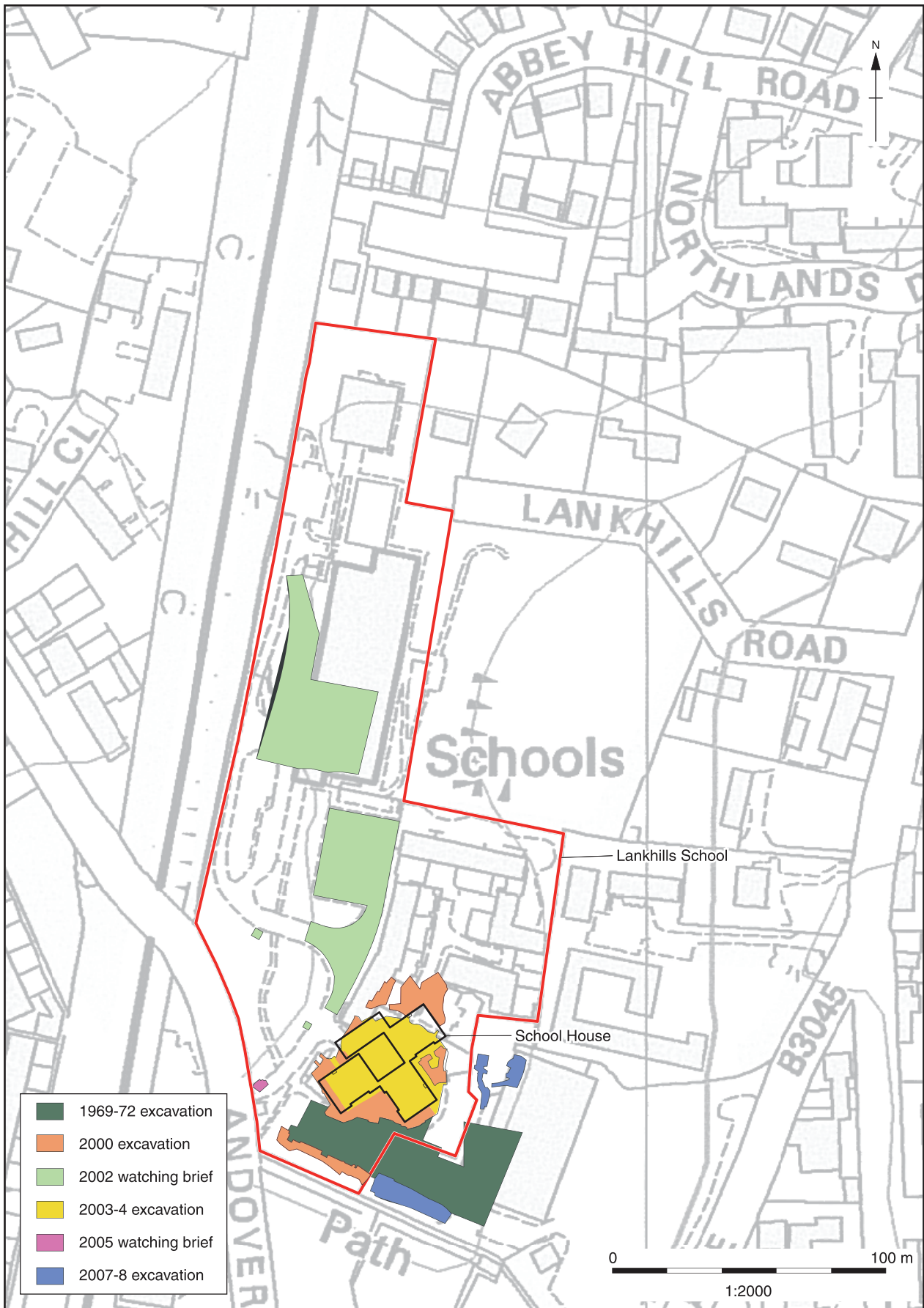


Fig. 1.5 Plan of Lankhills School showing the areas investigated



*Fig. 1.6 Area 1 excavation in 2000*



*Fig. 1.7 Area of 2005 watching brief*

Table 1.1: The excavation programme

Excavation phase	Excavation areas	Dates of fieldwork
1	Areas 1-7	27.7.00 - 31.8.00
Watching brief		4.3.02 - 11.10.03 (intermittent)
2	Main excavation area	27.10.03 - 19.3.04
Watching brief		5.4.05 - 8.4.05

of a soakaway. The watching brief comprised examination of a discrete area located 17 m west of the main excavation area, measuring 4.8 x 3.5 m (Fig. 1.7).

Subsequent to completion of the fieldwork a post-excavation assessment was undertaken (OA 2006), on the basis of which a research design and proposals for analysis work and final reporting were established. The principal issues to be considered in the course of the work are outlined below.

### Excavation methodology

During each phase of the investigation the modern overburden was removed under close archaeolog-

ical supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The fill of a former pump room within the northern part of School House was also emptied using the machine. Apart from this, the fills of service trenches and other modern intrusions were removed by hand. The entire site was cleaned by hand in order to define archaeological features (Figs 1.8 and 1.9).

Recording of inhumations was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of IFA Technical Paper No. 13 (McKinley and Roberts 1993). Each burial was assigned a group number. Each individual burial component, including the grave cut, grave fill, skeleton, coffin, coffin fill and some deliberately deposited grave goods, was issued a unique context number from a continuous running sequence. Pottery vessels, deposits of hobnails, and other grave goods were also assigned unique small find numbers. During the 2000 phase skeletons and associated grave goods were planned by hand at a scale of 1:10; in the 2003-4 excavation and the 2005 watching brief they were recorded by means of geo-referenced photography, from which digital plans were generated using a CAD programme. In addition to the standard context records skeletons were recorded using *pro forma*



Fig. 1.8 The central part of the main excavation area after cleaning in November 2003. Service trenches and other intrusions associated with School House can be clearly seen

sheets on which the preservation and completeness of the skeleton, the presence of individual bones, and body position were noted. A black and white and colour slide photographic record was made of each burial. An osteologist examined each inhumation *in situ* to make a preliminary assessment of age and sex. Bulk samples of soil from the abdomen, chest and neck areas of each skeleton were retained for sieving in order to recover any calcified soft tissues, calcified masses (eg gall bladder and urinary stones) or foetal bones. Samples were also taken from around the hands and feet to ensure complete bone recovery, and from around the head area to recover any teeth that had come loose from their sockets.

All cremation burials were subjected to full recovery to maximise the retrieval of cremated bone, charred plant remains and small artefacts. Each individual context, including the cut of the cremation pit, the cremation urn, the cremation deposit, and the backfill was given a unique context number and recorded on a *pro forma* sheet. Where sufficiently well-preserved, the cremation urn was lifted intact with the cremation deposit *in situ* for laboratory excavation by an osteologist. Un-urned

cremations were half-sectioned in order to record the distribution of archaeological components, followed by completion of the 100% excavation of the feature. All recording followed procedures detailed in the OAU Fieldwork Manual (Wilkinson 1992).

#### **Preservation of archaeological remains**

Archaeological features were found in the main excavation area and Area 1, and subsequently in the 2005 watching brief (see Fig. 2.1). No archaeological remains survived above the level of the chalk bedrock. The surface of the chalk was overlain by a variable depth of overburden that increased to the east to counteract the natural slope of the site and create the level terrace on which the School Building stood. A former soil layer (4) of clay silt 0.2 m thick was recorded across the eastern part of the excavation, overlain by levelling deposits composed of dumps of chalk and re-deposited topsoil (3). This made ground was up to 0.8 m thick at the eastern edge of the excavation (clearly visible in the section at the top of Fig. 1.9), but became progressively less thick to the west and eventually petered out toward



*Fig. 1.9 The south-east corner of the main excavation area after cleaning, showing grave cuts and the linear features on the east side of the cemetery*

the western edge of the footprint of the building. To the west of the School House the overburden comprised only a layer of topsoil (2) no more than 0.20 m thick.

In the main excavation area the chalk bedrock was penetrated by foundations and service trenches associated with the former School House, the depth of the intrusions varying across the site (Fig. 1.10). In the eastern part of the site the effect of these intrusions was minimal, as the raising of the ground level here to level the site had created a deeper buffer, but across much of the central and western areas footings and trenches were dug into the chalk substrate to a depth of 0.2-0.5 m. The most severe impact was located in the north-western part of the site, where basements associated with the north-west and south-west wings of the building had penetrated to a depth of up to 1 m, destroying all but the deepest graves in this area (Fig. 1.11). With the exception of these areas, however, the impacts of these modern intrusions were restricted to the lines of the foundation and service trenches, leaving most of the site unaffected.

#### AIMS OF THE REPORT

A series of aims and related questions to be addressed in the present report was identified in post-excitation assessment report (OA 2006) and set out under the following headings:

- The chronology of the cemetery
- The development of the cemetery
- Burial rites
- Artefacts
- The cemetery population
- The cemetery in its wider context

These issues, many of which are intimately linked, are not discussed in detail at this point, but many of them obviously related to questions raised initially by Giles Clarke's work as well as from subsequent thinking both about his conclusions and more recent work on Romano-British cemeteries. Key aspects of the interpretation of the cemetery established by Clarke that were targeted

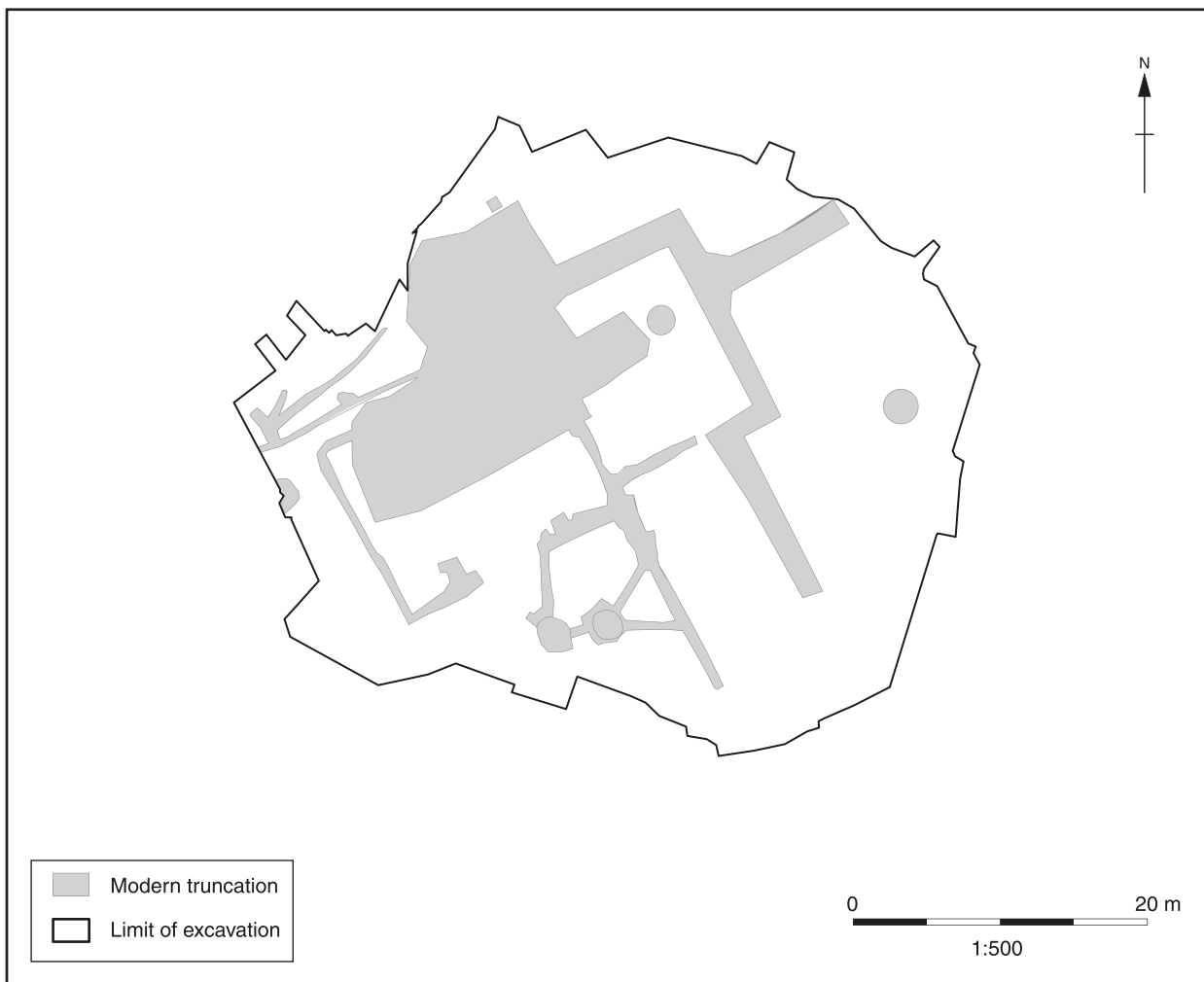


Fig. 1.10 Extent of modern disturbance in the main excavation area



Fig. 1.11 Overall view of site from the south after cleaning. Areas of deep disturbance relating to the former School House building can be seen in the top left

for reconsideration included the end date of use of the cemetery and the possibility of identifying normative and intrusive burial rites. An emphasis on the osteological material provided an opportunity to consider the cemetery population from a perspective not much considered in the earlier work on Lankhills and to integrate this evidence with that from the graves and associated finds to explore a range of aspects of urban life and social identities in late Roman Winchester. Among the many questions for consideration the issue of intrusive populations inevitably loomed large and in part lay behind the application of isotope analyses, but the questions of diet and origin that could be addressed by isotope work were considered highly desirable angles of research anyway. It is fair to say that, in relation to the high profile 'intrusive population' question, analysis started from a broadly sceptical position, but the existence and perceived importance of the question allowed consideration of a range of characteristics of the cemetery to an extent that might otherwise not have been possible.

Throughout this volume, specialist contributions are attributed to named individuals. The remaining, unattributed text is the work of one or both of the first two principal authors.

#### **A note on nomenclature**

The terms 'grave' and 'burial' are used more or less interchangeably in this report. When specific numbered graves are referenced, those from Giles Clarke's excavation appear in lower case (eg 'grave 106') while those from the OA excavation are in upper case (eg 'Grave 1846').

#### **ARCHIVE**

The finds, paper record and digital archive are to be deposited at Winchester City Museum under the accession code WINCM:AY21 for the main phases of work and WINCM:AY226 for the 2005 watching brief. Owing to increasing inaccessibility to microfilm services the basic digital archive will take the form of a pdfA scan of the hard copy records. These pdfA scans will be preserved on the OASouth archive server and a copy on disk will accompany the hard copy with the archive. Born digital data such as jpeg digital images and databases or geomatics data, which are not suitable for hard copy, will also be stored in this way. In time it is hoped that these digital archives will be made publicly available through the internet but in the interim anyone unable to access the hard copy or museum disk copy may approach OASouth for access.

