Chapter 9
Excavations at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes

by Alex Smith

INTRODUCTION

The site at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes was originally identified by concentrations of surface finds, including an unusually large quantity of objects recovered from metal detecting (see below). Proposed gravel extraction at the site led to a rescue excavation being undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) between November 1986 and May 1987, and further intermittent salvage recording took place during the early stages of gravel extraction, up until Spring 1988.

Location and physical characteristics of the site

The site is located just to the south of Somerford Keynes village, within the Somerford Keynes parish in south-east Gloucestershire (NGR SU 019945; Fig. 9.1). It lies on the floodplain of the River Thames, which is located approximately 100 m to the north-east. It is now part of Neigh Bridge Country Park, within the western Cotswold Water Park.

Archaeological background (Fig. 9.1)

Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes is located within the westernmost part of the upper Thames valley, a region that has produced much evidence for archaeological activity from the Palaeolithic to the post-medieval periods (see Chapter 1). The site lies just over 6 km south of the Roman city of Corinium and 8 km west of Ermin Street Roman road, while in the more immediate vicinity are a number of known Iron Age and Romano-British settlements along with a series of undated sites known from cropmarks (Fig. 9.1). Lying 1 km to the south was a Romano-British settlement spread over 14 hectares, from which fragments of samian pottery were recovered (SMR 2404), while 1 km to the east was another Romano-British settlement which was partially excavated in 1971 (SMR 2406). Work by Oxford Archaeology at Cotswold Community 2 km to the north-east revealed an extensive Roman farmstead and trackway (OA 2003; 2004), while a further 1 km north-west of this is a probable Roman settlement as revealed by cropmarks (SMR 2368). Lying less than 1 km to the east and south-east of Cotswold Community were two further probable Romano-British settlements and trackways indicated by extensive areas of cropmarks (Wilts SMR 9580, 9584). Both sites were destroyed by gravel extraction without any archaeological investigation. Iron Age activity in the area is less well know, although a middle Iron Age settlement was partially excavated at Spratsgate Lane (SMR 2361) just 1 km north-east of the present site.

The Neigh Bridge site is located in the midst of this fairly dense pattern of Roman rural settlement. Its location near a crossing point of the Upper Thames may have contributed to the site's importance.

Excavation methodology

Excavations took the form of a salvage operation with very limited funding. Topsoil across the site (*c* 0.4 ha) was stripped mechanically, and a dense complex of soilmarks was revealed, covering an area of some 2.5 hectares (Pl. 9.1). A number of small trenches were excavated in order to gain a greater understanding of the archaeology as revealed from these soil marks. Some of these trenches were expanded as necessary, especially in the highest part of the site (Trench 5), which contained the most concentrated amount of archaeological features with the clearest stratigraphic sequences. Many of the lowest parts of the site to the north and east were subject to flooding and so excavation here was very limited. To the east of the site, near the River Thames, were visible earthworks which appeared to relate to the ditches on the main site (Fig. 9.2). A few trial trenches were dug in this area to observe this relationship but unfortunately no sub-surface features or finds were revealed.

Phasing and chronology

The archaeology of Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes comprised a mass of inter-cutting ditches, gullies and pits, along with at least one substantial aisled building (Fig. 9.2). Pottery from the whole site indicated occupation from the early-mid 1st to later 2nd or early 3rd century AD, and the phasing of features within the site is based upon this material. Small quantities of middle Iron Age pottery and later 3rd and 4th century coins and small finds do suggest activity of some kind before and after the main period of occupation, although none of these finds can be related specifically to any of the features. Trench 5 contained the most extensive archaeological deposits, and it is only in this area that it was possible to present a coherent

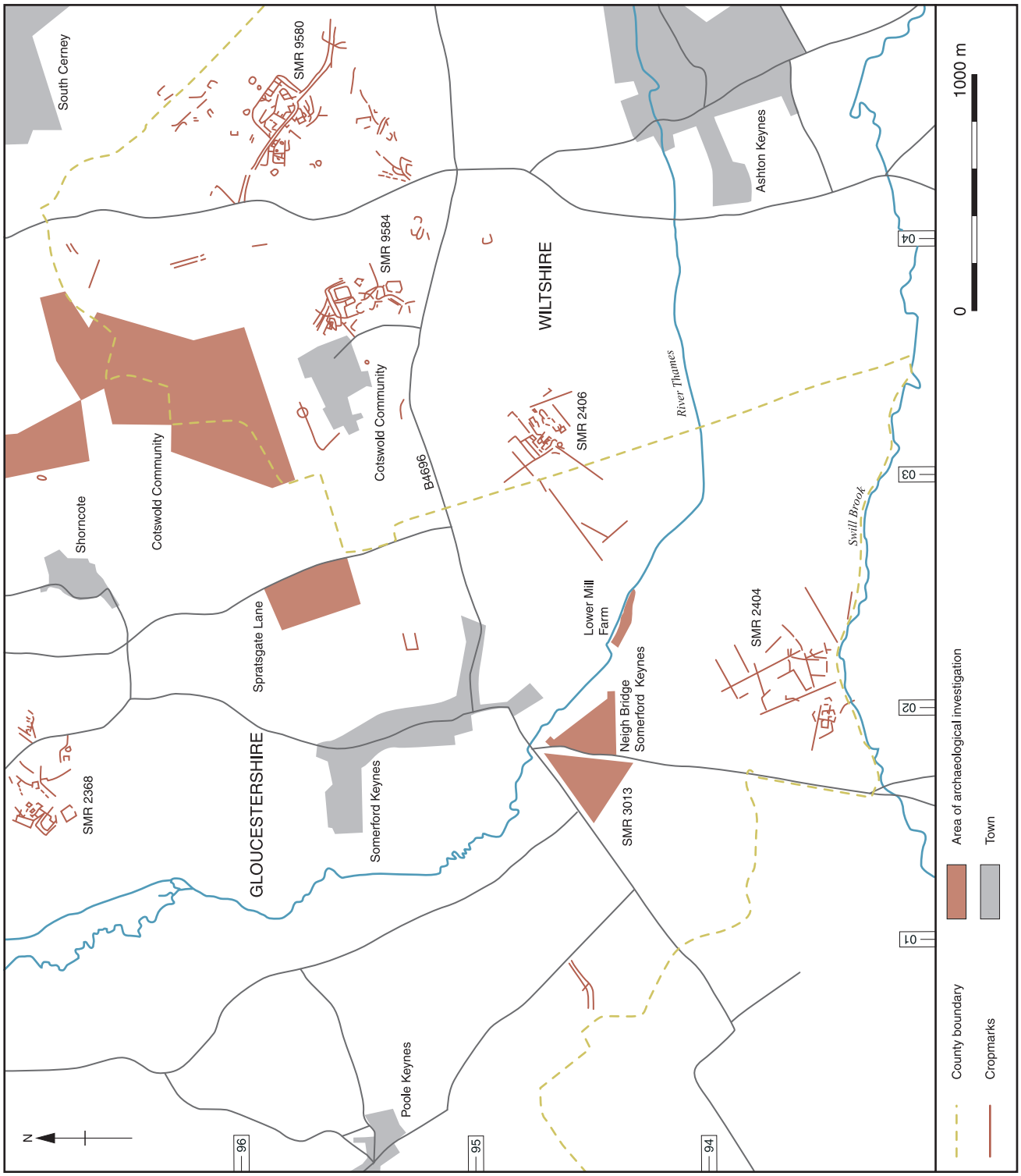


Fig. 9.1 Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes in relation to local archaeology

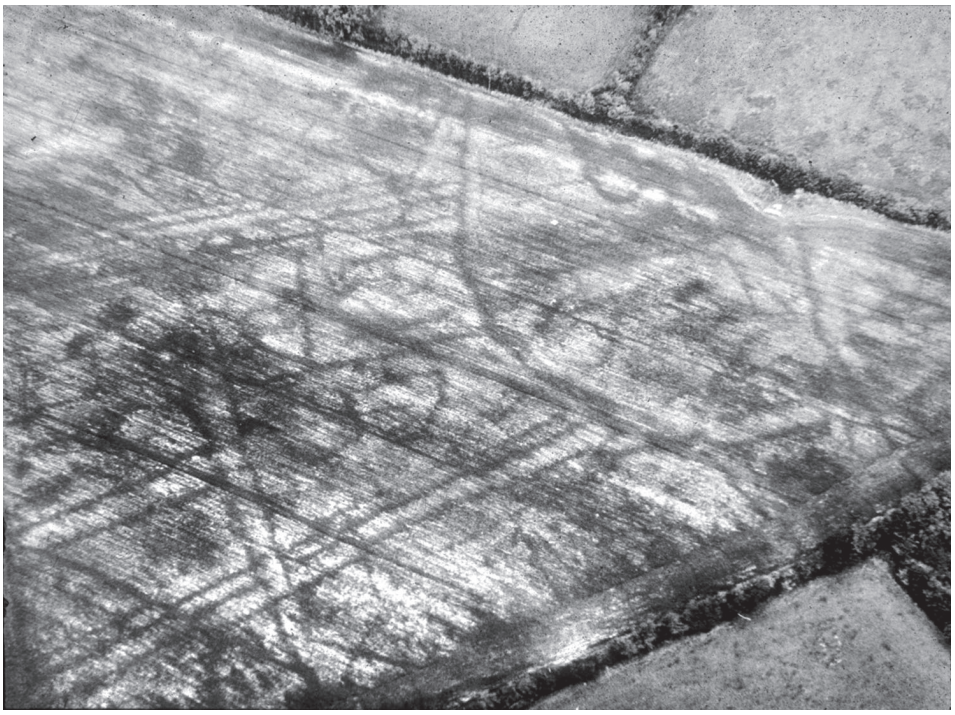


Plate 9.1 Aerial photograph of Somerford Keynes Photograph taken by Mark Millard. Reproduced with permission

system of phasing (Figs 9.3, 9.4 and 9.6). However, certain features from other trenches can be assigned to either Phase 1 or 2/3 with a reasonable level of certainty, based either upon pottery dating, or stratigraphic/spatial relationships with other phased features. The vast majority of small finds from the site were unstratified material from metal detecting, and many probably relate to areas that were not subject to excavation.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

Full archaeological descriptions of the features at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes can be found in Digital section 5.2.

Late Iron Age and early Roman activity: Phase 1 (Fig. 9.3)

The earliest phase of activity within Trench 5 comprised a sequence of sub-rectangular ditched enclosures and sub-enclosures, varying in size and form, belonging to the later Iron Age and early Roman period (early/mid 1st century AD to early 2nd century AD). The phase is defined as all those features lying underneath the Phase 2 Roman linear boundaries, and is thus made up of many different stratigraphic sequences, presenting a composite picture rather than a single defined phase of activity. There are a number of smaller ditches and pits from other trenches that contain higher quantities of 1st-century AD material, but these do not form any coherent pattern.

Enclosures

At least five major enclosures or sub-enclosures were revealed beneath the Phase 2/3 boundaries in Trench 5.

E 1: Enclosure 1 lay at the western end of Trench 5, and comprised two lengths of ditch enclosing an area *c* 22 m across, with a 2.4 m wide entrance in the west. The northern section ranged from 0.6 to 1.9 m in width and 0.2 to 0.4 m in depth, while the southern section was *c* 1.5 m wide and 0.4 m deep. Two iron nails were recovered from the enclosure ditches, and no contemporary features were located in the interior. Pottery recovered from the ditch fills indicated a general later 1st/early 2nd-century AD date.

E 2: About 13 m to the west of enclosure 1 lay enclosure 2, about 18 m across, with the north-eastern side outside of the trench limits. The enclosure ditch was generally V-shaped in profile, and 1.25 m wide by 0.5 m deep. It cut E 4 and probably ditch 142, although the relationship here was not always certain. Finds comprised a single lead weight and pottery of mid to late 1st-century AD date. The interior contained a number of pits and postholes (see B 2 below) and a small (*c* 3 m diameter) circular gully (147) containing mid to late 1st-century pottery, along with two residual middle Iron Age sherds, an iron knife and an iron nail. A reasonable quantity of animal bone was also recovered, including cattle, horse, sheep and pig. It is similar to features found at Thornhill Farm, Fairford and Claydon Pike, which were interpreted as 'stack rings', used to store animal fodder. These were dated from the middle Iron Age to the early Roman periods.

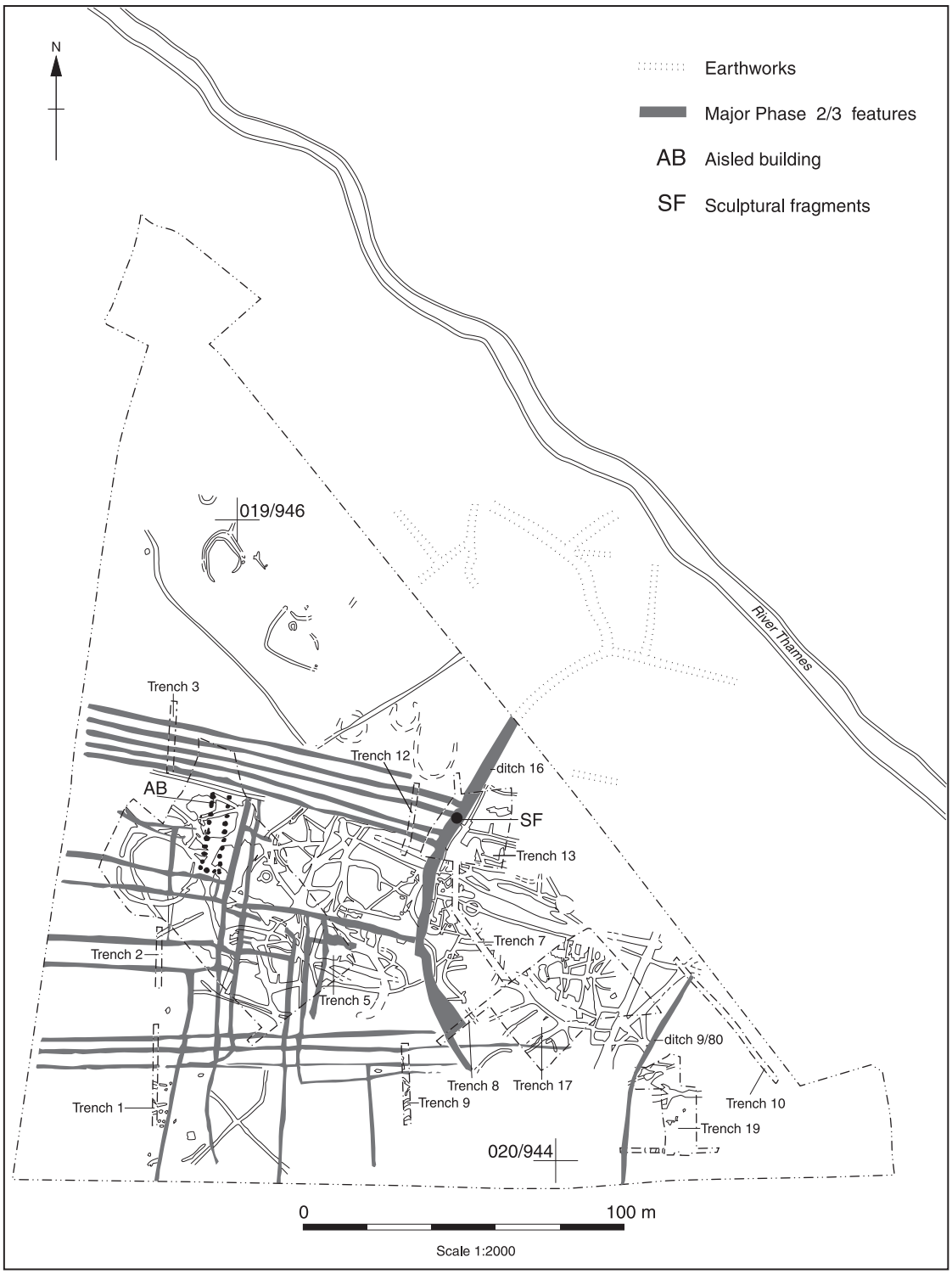


Fig. 9.2 Site plan showing trench locations

E 3: Enclosure 3 lay underneath the aisled building in the northern part of Trench 5, and enclosed an internal area *c* 12 m across. The enclosure ditch was approximately 1.5 m wide and 0.56 m deep. A shallow depression to the north-west obscured most features in this area, aside from part of the Phase 2 aisled building, and it is possible that the enclosure was open in this direction. The only finds comprised a small quantity of 1st-century AD pottery.

E 4: A possible sub-enclosure was positioned in the central part of Trench 5, consisting of a number of different cuts creating an area *c* 30 m across, with the south-eastern side apparently left open. It would seem to be one of the earliest major features in the trench, being visibly cut by E 2 and ditch 142, although the relationships with E 3 and E 1 were undetermined. The ditch contained a small number of finds, including two brooches (1st-mid 2nd century AD), a bracelet, a scoop, tweezers, an intrusive late 3rd-century coin, and a fired clay hearth plate. Pottery from the ditches ranged from early 1st to early 2nd century AD.

E 5: A possible sub-enclosure in the southern half of the trench is represented by a 16 m length of curving east-west ditch, with southerly extensions at the western and eastern ends. The southern side appears to have been left open. All parts were U-shaped and approximately 1.4 m wide and between 0.3 and 0.42 m in depth. An Iron Age Dobunnic coin and fragment of vessel glass were the only small finds from the feature. Pottery indicated a late 1st to early 2nd-century date.

Linear Ditches

In addition to the enclosures and sub-enclosures, there were a series of linear ditches in Trench 5 (Fig. 9.3). To the north, a shallow ditch (254/263) extended ENE-WSW for *c* 28 m and then turned south-east and was traced for a further 18 m. In the south was an arrangement of approximate north-south and east-west ditches (191, 169, 180, 166, 130), which may have formed part of a sub-rectangular enclosure (*c* 11 x 12 m). In the far south-eastern area of the trench lay a substantial ditch (123), orientated NNE-SSW and cut by enclosure 5. Another substantial ditch (142) lay to the north of this, running approximately NW-SE, and curving eastwards out of the trench.

Very few finds were recovered from any of these ditches, but these included copper alloy tweezers from 169, a brooch (mid-late 1st century AD) and Roman coin (AD 37-8) from 166, and a copper alloy finger ring, later 1st-century AD brooch (Fig. 9.12, no. 24) and 4th-century coin from 142. Pottery ranged from mid 1st to early 2nd century in date, with most coming from the earlier part of this range.

'Posthole structure' (B 2)

A possible posthole structure was located in the north-eastern part of Trench 5 within E 2 (Fig. 9.3). The 'structure' was approximately 10 m by 4 m in size, and lay on a SW-NE alignment. It does not relate to any of the Phase 2/3 linear ditch alignments, so the interpretation is far from certain. Ceramic dating evidence ranged from mid 1st to 2nd century and it is possible that it was contemporary with E 2 and the circular gully (147) lying just to the north.

The Roman complex: Phase 2 (early-mid 2nd century AD) (Fig. 9.4)

At some point in the early 2nd century AD, the Phase 1 features in Trench 5 were replaced by a more regular layout of east-west and north-south linear ditches forming rectilinear enclosures and trackways (Fig. 9.4). A substantial aisled building was also erected in this phase (Figs 9.5 and 9.5a, Pl. 9.2). Although much of the pottery was quite mixed, the general date range for features of this phase falls within the 2nd century, with a slight preponderance of early to mid 2nd-century material. There is some stratigraphic basis for dividing the phase into 2a and 2b (Fig. 9.4), although certain features (eg the aisled building) undoubtedly existed in both. It is not possible to date these sub-phases more accurately than the chronology given to the whole phase.

Phase 2a

Robber trench/beam slot 70 and gully 305

In the western part of Trench 5 lay a north-south robber trench or beam slot (70) extending for 22 metres, which may represent part of a substantial palisade. Throughout most of its length, it had steep sides with a roughly flat base, and was 0.8 m wide and 0.16 m deep. Stratigraphically, it cut all Phase 1 features, and was cut by the east-west trackway ditches 318 and 101. It may also have been cut by a curving east-west gully (305) orientated north-west, although the relationship is uncertain. To the north, both 305 and 70 were cut by Phase 2b gully 306. A copper alloy sheet and mid 2nd-century pottery were recovered from 70.

South-eastern ditches

A substantial east-west ditch (135) entered the trench from the east and ran for 24 m before being cut by one of the Phase 2b north-south trackway ditches (52). The ditch was between 1.35 and 1.7 m wide and 0.5 to 0.6m deep, and is likely to be broadly contemporary with north-south ditch 122 and east-west ditch 112, which ran parallel to 135, 5m to the south. The only finds recovered were a single fragment of fired clay and a small quantity of late 1st- to mid 2nd-century pottery.

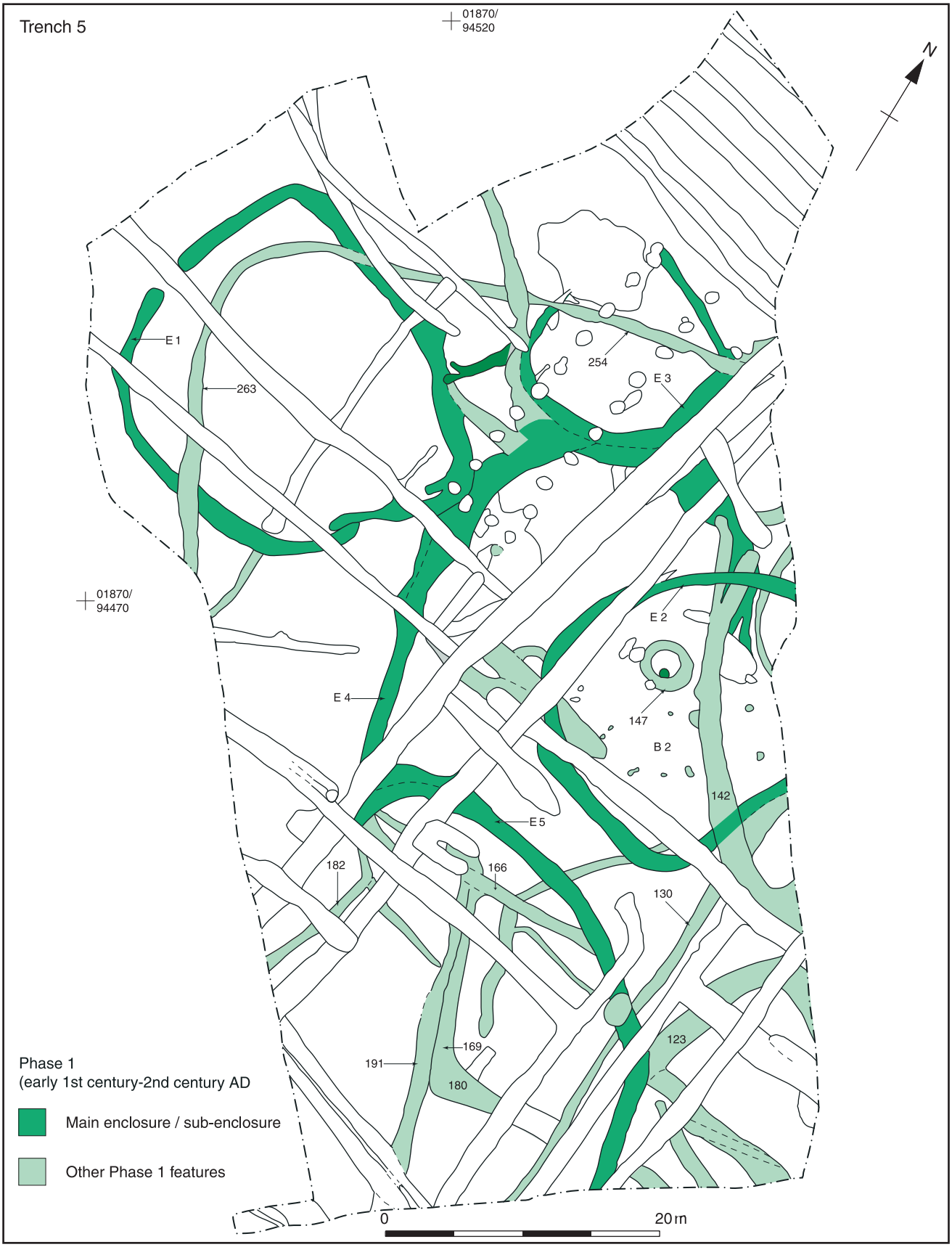


Fig. 9.3 Trench 5 Phase 1

Fig. 9.4 Trench 5 Phase 2

Phase 2b

Trackway ditches (52, 172, 318, 277/8, 101; sections 119, 101)

Two north-south ditches (52, 172) extended for 56 m through the middle of Trench 5, *c* 3 to 4 m apart, and it is suggested that they defined a possible trackway. They were between 1.4 and 1.7 m wide and 0.42 to 0.5 m in depth. Joining perpendicular to ditch 172 were two parallel east-west ditches (278/318 and 101), *c* 5 m apart, which may have formed another trackway. They ran for 34 and 39 m from the western end of the trench to apparently terminate at the north-south trackway, although no clear relationships were recorded. Ditch 278/318 was on average 1.5 m wide and 0.3 m deep, whilst the southern ditch (101) was more substantial, being up to 1.9 m wide and 0.5 m deep. It is quite possible that ditches 101 and 172 were still in use into Phase 3, although no longer functioning as part of trackways. Considering the length of the trackways, finds were quite scarce. The north-south ditches produced three Roman coins (one 2nd century and two late 3rd-4th century AD), a copper alloy tube, bone pin, iron cleat, and a lead weight. Finds from the east-west ditches included a 2nd-century AD copper alloy stylus and a copper alloy fitting. Pottery associated with both trackways was nearly all 2nd century in date, with fragments of early (AD 90-110) and later (AD 150+) samian.

Gully 306

Gully 306 was traced in an east-west direction for approximately 30 m from the western part of Trench 5, terminating at what must have undoubtedly been the outer wall of the aisled building, although no traces remain of this (see below). The gully was 0.94 m in width and 0.14 m in depth, and cut Phase 2a features 305 and gully/beam slot 70. Finds from the gully comprised tweezers, a fragment of window glass and early 2nd-century pottery.

General Phase 2 features

Aisled Building (Figs 9.5 and 9.5, Pl. 9.2)

Located to the north of ditch 318 and parallel with ditch 172 (Fig. 9.4) was a very regular alignment of postholes on a north-south orientation. All of the postholes were between 0.35 and 0.55 m deep (see sections, Fig. 9.5), 0.75 to 1.75 m in diameter, and formed a substantial aisled building, up to 27 m by 12 m in size (see Discussion below for reconstruction). Most of those on the south, east and west sides were about 1.5 m apart, while the north – where the entrance presumably lay – remained open (Fig. 9.5). Many of the postholes seem to have been replaced at some point, especially those along the western side. The postholes cut all other related features with the exception of shallow pit 260, which appears to have cut the north-east edge of posthole 257. Two stone-lined post-pits (310, 311) in the central interior of the building may have been part of the structure, though form no easily definable pattern, and 311 contained early to mid 1st-century pottery, so could well belong to Phase 1. Finds from within the posthole fills comprised two iron nails, a piece of glass, and fragments of a quernstone and whetstone. All postholes contained a small amount of pottery, most of it dating to the 2nd century AD and presumably part of the post

Plate 9.2 Aisled building looking south

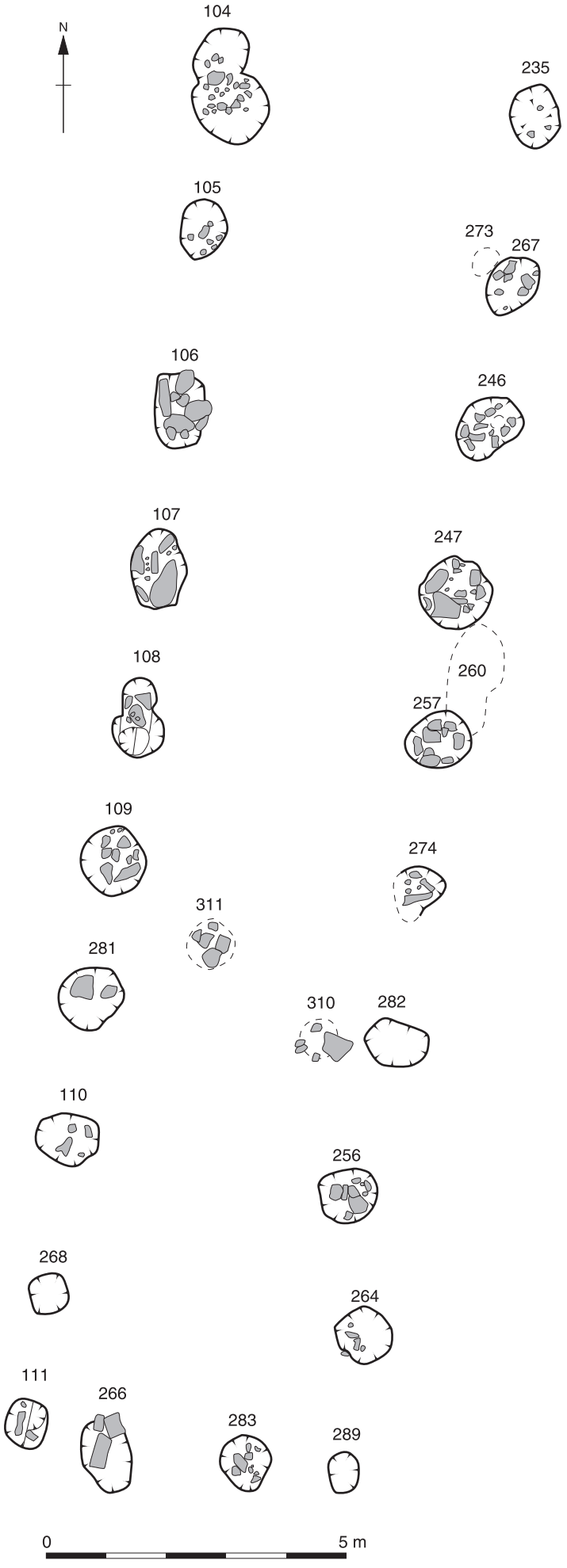
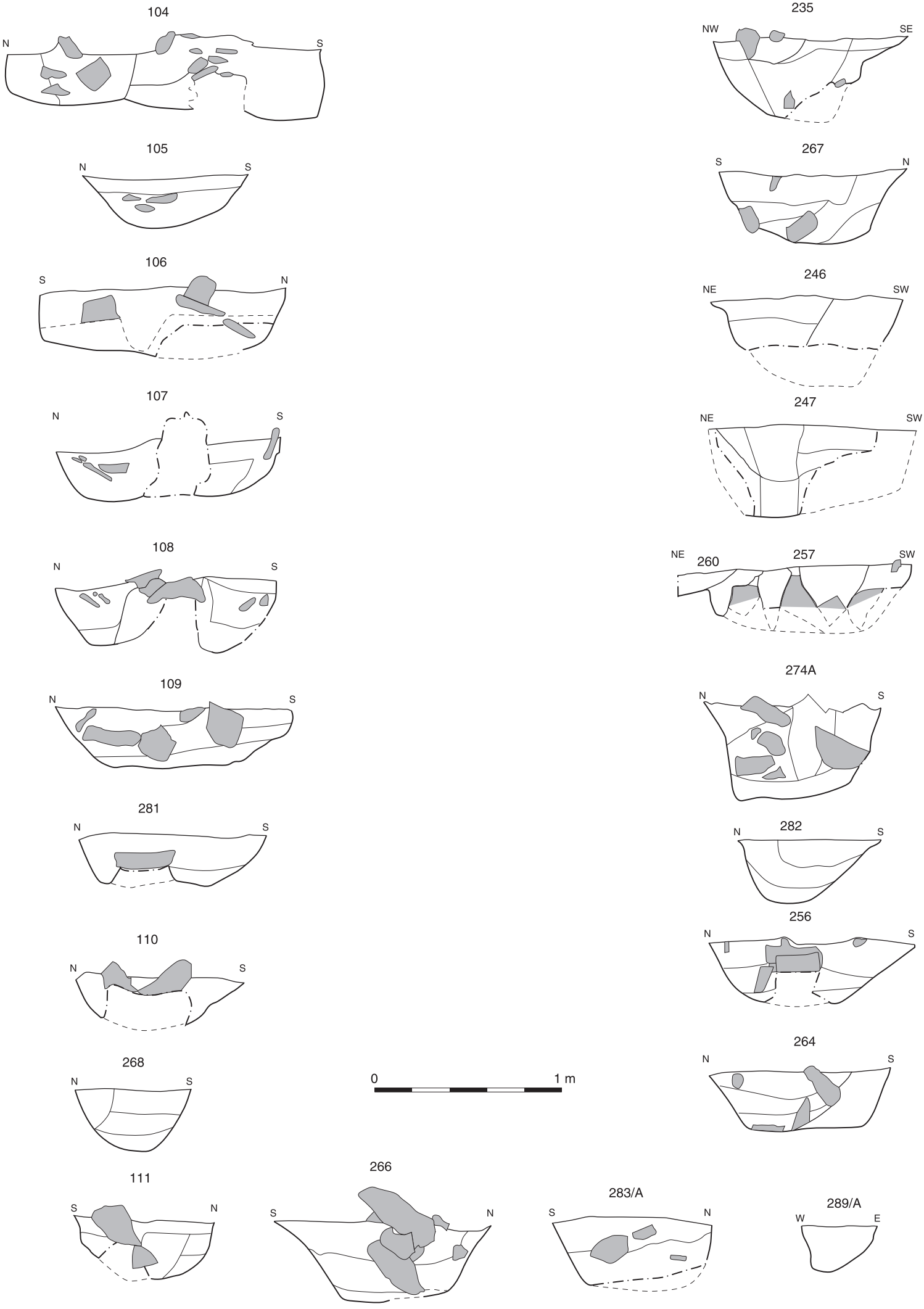


Fig. 9.5 Aisled building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274A
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packing. This assemblage included a small number of samian sherds, indicating a *terminus post quem* of AD 100-125 for the construction of this building.

Possibly related to the use of the building, was a substantial regular arrangement (12.4 kg) of ceramic roof tiles (301) lying over ditch 318 to the south. Although the majority of this comprised unidentifiable plain tile, there were also large quantities of definite tegulae and a limited amount of box flue tile. These looked to have been stacked against the exterior southern wall, and presumably relate to the later history of the building, in Phase 3 (see Discussion). In addition to this stack, much larger quantities (*c*100 kg) of mixed tile were found within a general layer (25) under the ploughsoil in Trench 5, lying immediately to the east of the aisled building. More ceramic tile was recovered within the ditches and pits in this area.

Northern parallel ditches

In the northernmost part of Trench 5 ran four parallel east-west ditches, lying between 2 and 2.5 m apart (Fig. 9.4). They were 1 to 2 m in width, but were not excavated in this trench. From the soil marks over the site, these ditches appear to run from the D-shaped enclosure, sectioned in Trench 13, and are probably 2nd century in date (see Parallel ditches below). In Trench 5 they appear to form the northern boundary of an enclosure around the aisled building.

The Roman complex: Phase 3 (mid 2nd-late 2nd/early 3rd century AD) (Fig. 9.6)

Around the middle of the 2nd century AD, many of the earlier features were overlain by a series of north-south and east-west oriented linear ditches, which probably represent a conscious revision and redefinition of the Phase 2 boundaries. It is likely that at least part of the earlier east-west and north-south trackways went out of use at this time, although the aisled building seems to have continued in use. New trackways appear to have been constructed. The phase is not well dated as most of the pottery was quite mixed. However, there is nothing in the stratified ceramic record that need be dated much beyond the later 2nd century AD, and so it is presumed that the ditches and building were largely abandoned by this point.

The 'corn-drier' and enclosure (Fig. 9.7, Pl. 9.3)

In the southern half of Trench 5, cutting through ditches 52 and 166 (Fig. 9.6), was a channel lined with several large flat pieces of limestone running around in a 'horseshoe' shape, about 4.2 x 3 m in size (Fig. 9.7). The slabs had traces of burning and there

Plate 9.3 Part of corn-drier structure 167, Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes

was a layer of burnt material on the base of the channel. Collapsed slabs in the east (167/C) suggest that the feature was originally covered over. The probable stokehole, which lay to the south east (section 167/B) led into the lined flue channel that was initially 0.32 m wide, but then broadened to *c* 0.8 m. The lowest fill within the flue lay underneath the slabs, suggesting that they represented a relining of the flue. Lining slabs were not present in all sections, having presumably been removed after the disuse of the structure. To the west (167/F), there is the clearest indication that the structure had more than one phase, as at least one later cut is visible. A pit in the north-western side may well have been an earlier stokehole, to be eventually replaced by the pit in 167/B, although this must remain uncertain. There were generally three fills throughout most sections of the feature, consisting of silty clay material with charcoal. The only small find recovered was a single iron nail. Pottery was quite mixed and ranged from late 1st to 2nd century in date.

Although not of the conventional T-shape, this feature was initially interpreted as a corn-drying oven. Physically, it can most easily be equated with Morris's 'rectangular' type drier found at sites such as Longthorpe in Cambridgeshire (Morris 1979, 101, fig.11). A more local parallel may possibly be found at Birdlip quarry in Gloucestershire (Mudd *et al.* 1999, 191), where an unusual elongated sub-rectangular pit with limestone blocks and a charcoal

Facing page: Fig. 9.5a Aisled building sections

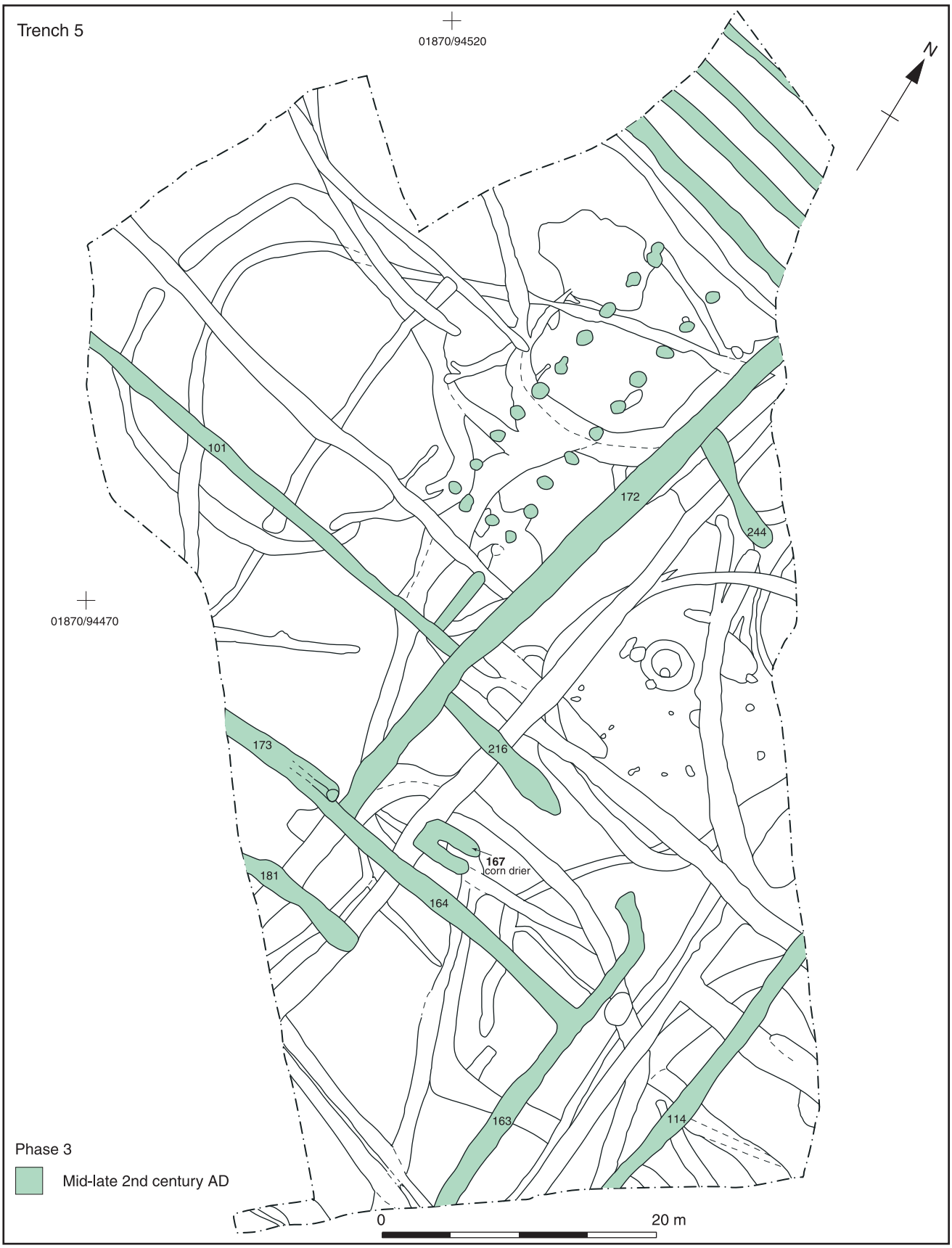

Fig. 9.6 Trench 5 Phase 3

spread resembles one side of the Somerford Keynes structure. However, the interpretation of the Birdlip Quarry structure remains uncertain (Mudd *et al.* 1999, 192). The principal argument against the Somerford Keynes structure being interpreted as a corn-drier is that the environmental samples only contained a single charred grain. It may therefore have been that this oven was utilised for a different purpose.

Structure 167 was positioned within the western side of a sub-rectangular enclosure (21 x 9 m) formed by ditches 163, 164, 216 and 172, with which it was undoubtedly contemporary. Finds from the enclosure ditches included four brooches (Fig. 9.13, no. 34), vessel glass, a copper alloy clothes fitting, a prehistoric metal smithing tool (Fig. 9.21, no. 3) and pottery of primarily mid to late 2nd-century date. A piece of slag was also recovered from ditch 163, which is slight evidence for some light industrial activity in the area.

Trackways

The southern ditch of the 'corn-drier' enclosure (164) appears to have formed part of an east-west trackway (5-6 m wide) which continued westwards as 173, and probably replaced the one further to the north. The southern ditch of this trackway (181; 0.9 m wide, 0.44 m deep) terminated 10 m into Trench 5, opening out onto a possible large rectangular enclosure. Both trackway ditches were seen to continue westwards to the edge of the site. Further to the east, a possible north-south trackway is suggested by ditches 114 (1.22 m wide, 0.54 m deep) and 163 (1.4 m in wide, 0.52 m deep). A piece of limestone masonry was recovered from 114, hinting at a structure within the vicinity.

Linear ditches

Ditches 172 and 101 appeared to continue in use, forming two sides of an enclosure surrounding the

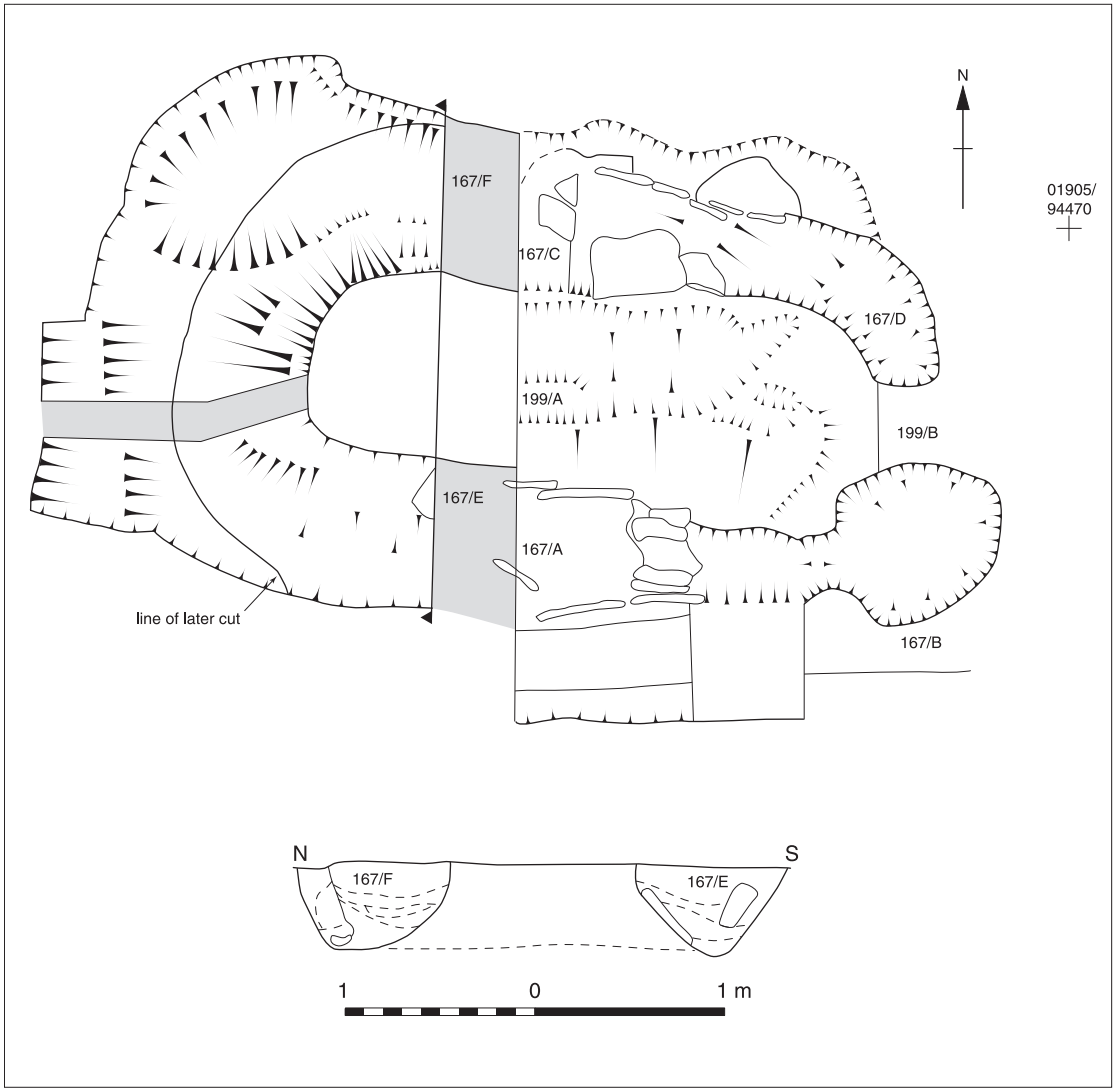

Fig. 9.7 'Corn-drier'

aisled building. Immediately south of this building lay north-south gully 320 (0.8 m wide, 0.5 m deep) which cut through the northern of the east-west trackway ditches (318) and terminated immediately to the north of the southern ditch (101). The function of this short length of gully is uncertain, but its proximity and shared alignment with the aisled building suggests some association.

Features from other trenches (Fig.9.2)

Enclosure ditch (16)

A major D-shaped enclosure ditch (16) was traced for just over 120 m within the eastern part of the salvage area (Fig 9.2). The ditch was partially excavated in Trench 13 and located further to the south in Trench 8. There were at least two major cuts with total dimensions being *c* 4.3 m wide and on average 0.4 m in depth. The ditch appears to have gradually silted up, although pottery recovered from all layers was generally 2nd century AD in date, suggesting that its entire period of use and abandonment lay within this period. Aside from pottery, the only finds comprised four pieces of stonework, two of which were sculptural fragments of the shield and eagle (see finds below; Figs 9.19-9.20), which were found on top of the north-western cut, just outside of the ditch.

Parallel ditches

Aligned approximately east-west from the northern and southern sections of the D-shaped enclosure were parallel rows of ditches (Fig. 9.2). Three of the northern ditches were excavated in Trench 13, and found to be contemporary with at least one cut of ditch 16. The ditches were between 1 and 1.4 m wide and from 0.2 to 0.28 m deep. None of these features had any associated finds to indicate date or function, although their relationship with ditch 16 indicates contemporaneity (ie 2nd century AD). However, it remains uncertain as to whether any or all were open at the same time, or if they represent a succession of northern boundaries for the site. The ditches were traced further west in Trenches 12, 5 and 3 (see northern parallel ditches above). Three parallel ditches were traced to the south, and partially excavated in Trenches 1 and 9. No finds were recovered. It is clear from the general distribution of metal detected finds from all periods, that these ditches defined the main areas of activity in the western part of the site.

'Inner enclosure'

At the far south-western corner of Trench 19, a short section of ditch (9/80) was partially excavated, although precise dimensions were difficult to ascertain due to waterlogging. The ditch was seen in the salvage area to continue curving round to the north-east towards the river and seemed to form part of a large 'inner' enclosure, traced for 70 m (Fig. 9.2). It is uncertain how it would have related to ditch 16 further west, but the recovery of late 1st- early 2nd-century pottery suggested that the two features could have been contemporary. However, the fact that there is no obvious spatial relationship (ie they are not concentric) may indicate that they did belong to different phases. Large quantities of 1st to 4th-century AD finds were recovered by metal detecting from topsoil in areas to the east of this 'inner' enclosure.

Features in Trench 17

Trench 17, located *c* 25 m east of Trench 5, was the second largest excavated area on site (Fig. 9.2). It contained a series of intercutting ditches, gullies and pits, although many of the relationships were unclear due a combination of shallow disturbed stratigraphy and problems of standing water. The chronological range of the pottery was quite similar to that of Trench 5 (1st-2nd century AD), with very little to suggest activity beyond the 2nd century AD. Only three stratified coins were recovered from features within Trench 17, two with a date of 1st-2nd century AD and the other belonging to the late 3rd century. Of the 52 small finds recovered from the Trench, 12 were brooches with a general 1st to mid 2nd-century AD date range. However, there were large quantities of late 3rd- and 4th-century small finds recovered by metal detecting in the vicinity of Trench 17 (see Fig. 9.9), which does point to late Roman activity of some kind in this area.

The spatial arrangement of ditches and gullies appears less regular than in Trench 5, and is difficult to reconstruct in a meaningful way. This, and the fact that the pottery appears to have been very mixed also ensures that accurate phasing of the features is not possible. Various layers of alluvial silt and gravel lay across the site, particularly obscuring features in the far eastern area. In the west was a layer of mid grey brown silty loam (34) containing much occupation debris (pottery, bone etc), including a small number of 1st- to 4th-century coins. A stone spread (427) was associated with this layer, being particularly concentrated in the tops of ditches. This may have been the remains of a metalled surface, perhaps relating to the late Roman activity at the site, although the layer is far too disturbed to be certain.

THE FINDS

A large finds assemblage was recovered from Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes, although a significant proportion of this was unstratified This is particularly pronounced with the metal small finds, many of which were found as a result of detectorist survey as opposed to by excavation (see below). Such differential methods of collection are undoubtedly a factor that has led to some pronounced discrepancies in the character of the different finds categories.

Full reports and catalogues on all the finds from this site can be found in Digital section 5.3.

Pottery (Fig. 9.8) *by Kayt Brown*

The assemblage comprises 10,183 sherds (*c* 100.2 kg) of predominately Roman pottery, with a small quantity of prehistoric material, largely residual in Roman features. The main assemblage can be dated from the mid-late 1st century AD to the late 2nd century AD. A small number of late Roman shell-tempered sherds suggest limited activity in the 4th century, although no features were assigned to this date.

Adverse soil conditions had a major impact on the condition of the assemblage; surface preservation is poor and many sherds displayed discolouring of surfaces hindering fabric identification. The average sherd size for the assemblage as whole is relatively low at 9.9 g, although there is variation in sherd size between the phases. Evidence of use is represented by sooting on the exterior of vessels, post-firing holes in a number of vessels, sherds with rivet holes and a number of lead rivets (see Cool below).

A quantification of fabrics by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs) is presented in Table 9.1. Full fabric descriptions are included in Digital section 5.3.

Pottery and phasing

A large proportion of the assemblage is unphased (37% by sherd count), and the bulk was recovered from Trench 5, which is also the only area to produce any reliable phasing information.

Although three broad phases were identified through the stratigraphy, in ceramic terms the distinction is not always clear. There is significant overlap in the wares represented in all phases, due partly to the narrow time span of activity at the site and longevity of some fabrics during this period, but redeposition of sherds, and in some cases curation of vessels are also likely factors. The intercutting nature of many of the features to produce pottery, particularly in Trench 5, has resulted in many features from different phases producing a quite homogenous range of wares, with dating, particularly between Phases 2 and 3 based largely on a small number of diagnostic forms. Pottery by phase is detailed in Table 9.2.

Most features within Phase 1, including the enclosure ditches, can be dated to the late 1st -early 2nd century AD. The 'belgic' type wares and early reduced coarsewares (such as Savernake) form the bulk of the material recovered in this phase. There is very little mortaria or samian and no British fine wares. Residual middle Iron Age material amounts to 60 sherds. There are a few features which may indicate earlier activity at the site, although the individual assemblages recovered from these features are small. Posthole 310 contained grog-tempered sherds and limestone-tempered sherds, a combination that is indicative of the early to mid 1st century AD at the nearby site of Thornhill Farm (Timby 2004). Ditches 117, 314, and gullies 315 and 316 also contained mid-late 1st-century AD pottery.

The ceramics from this Phase 1 are comparable in both range of fabrics and forms, to Thornhill Farm periods E-F (*c* AD 75-120), which also appears to be a phase of intensive occupation. At Thornhill Farm, however, the quantity of ceramics diminishes during the 2nd century (phase 2, Thornhill Farm period G). At Somerford Keynes there is an increase in the amount of samian and black-burnished wares, including in the latter instance straight-sided bowls/dishes with flat topped rims, dated from the early-mid 2nd century. In Trench 5 it was possible to further sub-divide this phase into Phase 2a and 2b, on stratigraphic grounds, although again this is not reflected in the ceramics from these features. Included within Phase 2 is the pottery recovered from the postholes of the aisled building (B 1), which is consistently 2nd century in date, with a small quantity of Belgic wares. Belgic wares continue to appear alongside later fabrics into Phase 3 and although redeposition is the most likely factor, the average sherd weights of this material remain high.

General discussion of the assemblage

The small number of possible Bronze Age and early Iron Age sherds hint at limited early activity in the area, with stronger evidence for activity at the site probably from the mid 1st century AD and certainly from the late 1st century AD. The assemblage from Somerford Keynes shows many similarities to a number of rural sites within the region. As at Thornhill Farm and to a lesser extent at Claydon Pike there is a late 1st century-early 2nd century component of the assemblage which still comprises a significant proportion of 'local' grog-tempered wares. At Thornhill Farm, grog-tempered material was still a dominant fabric, occurring alongside Severn Valley and Savernake wares in period E-F (AD75-120+). Elsewhere in the region such fabrics tend to decline in importance by the end of the Flavian period, in deference to Romanised wares. Although no quantified data exists for the assemblage from Ashton Keynes, it would appear that there is a similar range of material present during the late Iron Age/early Roman period. The occurrence of limestone-tempered fabrics is also well recorded at these sites and at a number of other rural sites in the region such as Watchfield (Laidlaw 2001, 255) and Faringdon, Oxfordshire (Bryan *et al.* 2004), Groundwell Farm, Wiltshire (Gingell 1982, 61) and Kempsford Quarry, Gloucestershire (see Biddulph, Digital section 8.4).

Unlike other sites in the vicinity, such as Claydon Pike, Ashton Keynes, and to some extent Kempsford, activity at Somerford Keynes appears to cease in the late 2nd-3rd century. Locally

Table 9.1: Quantification of pottery fabrics from Somerford Keynes

Group	*Ware code*	*Description*	*Sherd count*	*%*	*Weight (g)*	*%*	*EVEs*	*%*
Prehistoric								
	A	Sand-tempered	3	0.03	29	0.03		
	F	Flint-tempered	8	0.08	22	0.02		
	L	Limestone	58	0.57	274	0.27	13	0.2
	Q	Quartizite	2	0.02	12	0.01		
	S	Shell-tempered	52	0.51	437	0.44	35	0.5
sub-total			123	1.21	774	0.77	48	0.6
Late Iron Age/early Roman wares								
	E	Belgic' type fabrics	244	2.40	2649	2.64	174	2.4
	E10							
Organic-tempered fabrics			184	1.81	1691	1.69	157	2.1
	E13	Organic and grog	16	0.16	394	0.39		
	E20	Fine sand-tempered fabrics	22	0.22	190	0.19		
	E21	Fine sand-tempered fabrics	8	0.08	59	0.06		
	E30	Medium/coarse sand-tempered fabrics	37	0.36	447	0.45	77	1.0
	E40	Shell-tempered fabrics	36	0.35	242	0.24	24	0.3
	E50	Limestone-tempered fabrics	5	0.05	64	0.06	15	0.2
	E60	Flint-tempered fabrics	7	0.07	131	0.13	12	0.2
	E80	Grog-tempered fabrics	1217	11.95	13257	13.23	607	8.2
sub-total			1776	17.44	19124	19.09	1066	14.4
Fine & specialist wares								
Amphora		A		6	0.06	331	0.33	
	A10	Buff fabrics	4	0.04	233	0.23		
	A11	South Spanish (Dressel 20) BAT AM 1 & 2	18	0.18	2089	2.09	100	1.4
	A12	Fine buff (CAM186C) (FCP1.5) CAD AM	1	0.01	15	0.01		
	A30	Coarse oxidised	1	0.01	34	0.03		
Samian S			1	0.01	5	0.00		
	S20	South Gaulish (including La Graufesenque)	35	0.34	292	0.29	81	1.1
	S25	Montans MON SA	2	0.02	3	0.00		
	S30	Central Gaulish (Lezoux)LEZ SA	90	0.88	666	0.66	162	2.2
	S32	Les Martres-de-Veyre LMV SA	25	0.25	338	0.34	74	1.0
Fine wares		F		0.00		0.00		0.0
	F22	N. Wiltshire glazed ware	1	0.01	2	0.00		
	F50	Colour-coated fabrics	2	0.02	4	0.00	10	0.1
	F41	Lyon LYO CC	1	0.01	1	0.00		
	M	Mortarium fabrics	2	0.02	229	0.23		
	M10	Buff fabrics	12	0.12	98	0.10	10	0.1
	M22	Oxfordshire OXF WH	7	0.07	419	0.42	11	0.1
	M30	Oxidised with white slip	1	0.01	37	0.04		
	M31	Oxfordshire WC OXF WS	1	0.01	45	0.04		
	M32	Cirencester SOW WS	1	0.01	35	0.03		
	M50	Oxidised	2	0.02	196	0.20	5	0.1
White-slipped fabrics			Q		1	0.01	6	0.01
	Q20	Oxidised fabrics	17	0.17	144	0.14		
	Q21	Oxfordshire fabric OXF WS	6	0.06	34	0.03		
White wares		W		2	0.02	27	0.03	
	W11	Oxfordshire Parchment ware OXF PA	1	0.01	18	0.02		
	W20	Sandy white wares	12	0.12	105	0.10	25	0.3
	W22	Oxfordshire sandy	2	0.02	5	0.00		
sub-total			255	2.50	5411	5.43	478	6.6

Table 9.1: Quantification of pottery fabrics from Somerford Keynes (continued)

Group	*Ware code*	*Description*	*Sherd count*	*%*	*Weight (g)*	*%*	*EVEs*	*%*
Coarse wares								
	B	Black-burnished wares	173	1.70	1202	1.20	194	2.6
	B10	Black-burnished ware	181	1.78	1287	1.28	138	1.9
	B11	Dorset fabric DOR BB1	665	6.53	6144	6.13	1109	15.0
	B30	Black-burnished type/imitation fabrics	320	3.14	1808	1.80	291	3.9
	B31		93	0.91	603	0.60	80	1.1
	C	Calcareous-tempered fabrics	98	0.96	558	0.56	35	0.5
	C10	Shell-tempered fabrics	66	0.65	477	0.48	41	0.6
	C12	Coarse, abundant shell	47	0.46	550	0.55	71	1.0
	C20	Limestone-tempered fabrics	44	0.43	299	0.30	23	0.3
	C21		201	1.97	918	0.92	82	1.1
	O	Oxidised coarse ware fabrics	410	4.03	3249	3.24	209	2.8
	O10	fine fabrics	18	0.18	256	0.26	54	0.7
	O20	medium sandy fabrics	664	6.52	4841	4.83	417	5.6
	O21	Oxfordshire sandy fabric	2	0.02	11	0.01		
	O30	Wiltshire wares	381	3.74	3465	3.46	424	5.7
	O32	Fine, iron inclusions [FCP 10.7]	2	0.02	11	0.01		
	O40	Severn Valley wares SVW OX2	103	1.01	1515	1.51	70	0.9
	O50	Miscellaneous fabrics	32	0.31	87	0.09	15	0.2
	O60	Calcareous tempered fabrics	2	0.02	9	0.01		
	O65	distinct calcareous grits	15	0.15	89	0.09		
	O80	coarse tempered fabrics	118	1.16	2304	2.30	26	0.4
	R	Reduced coarse ware fabrics	834	8.19	8365	8.35	481	6.5
	R10	fine fabrics	41	0.40	299	0.30	10	0.1
	R20	sandy fabrics	7	0.07	88	0.09		
	R30	Medium fine fabrics	2764	27.15	20331	20.29	1129	15.3
	R31	organic and sand inclusions	1	0.01	26	0.03	7	0.1
	R35	North Wiltshire	164	1.61	1999	2.00	347	4.7
	R36	glauconitic North Wiltshire	7	0.07	96	0.10	12	0.2
	R37	fine, sandy, occasional black iron, grog and organic inclusions	11	0.11	86	0.09		
	R38	as R37 but with distinct grog	182	1.79	3491	3.48	108	1.5
	R40	Miscellaneous fabrics	19	0.19	302	0.30	5	0.1
	R70	Calcareous tempered fabrics	6	0.06	48	0.05		
	R77	Oolitic limestone [FCP13.6]	5	0.05	27	0.03	6	0.1
	R85	SW 'micaceous' wares	1	0.01	12	0.01		
	R90	coarse-tempered fabrics	188	1.85	5477	5.47	185	2.5
	R94	cf Savernake	149	1.46	4257	4.25	185	2.5
	R95	Savernake SAV GT	7	0.07	188	0.19	17	0.2
sub-total			8021	78.77	74775	74.60	5771	77.8
post-roman								
	Z20	Medieval fabrics	3	0.03	24	0.02		
	Z30	post-medieval fabrics	5	0.05	78	0.08		
sub-total			8	0.08	102	0.10		0.0
Total			10183	100.00	100186	100.00	7402	100.0

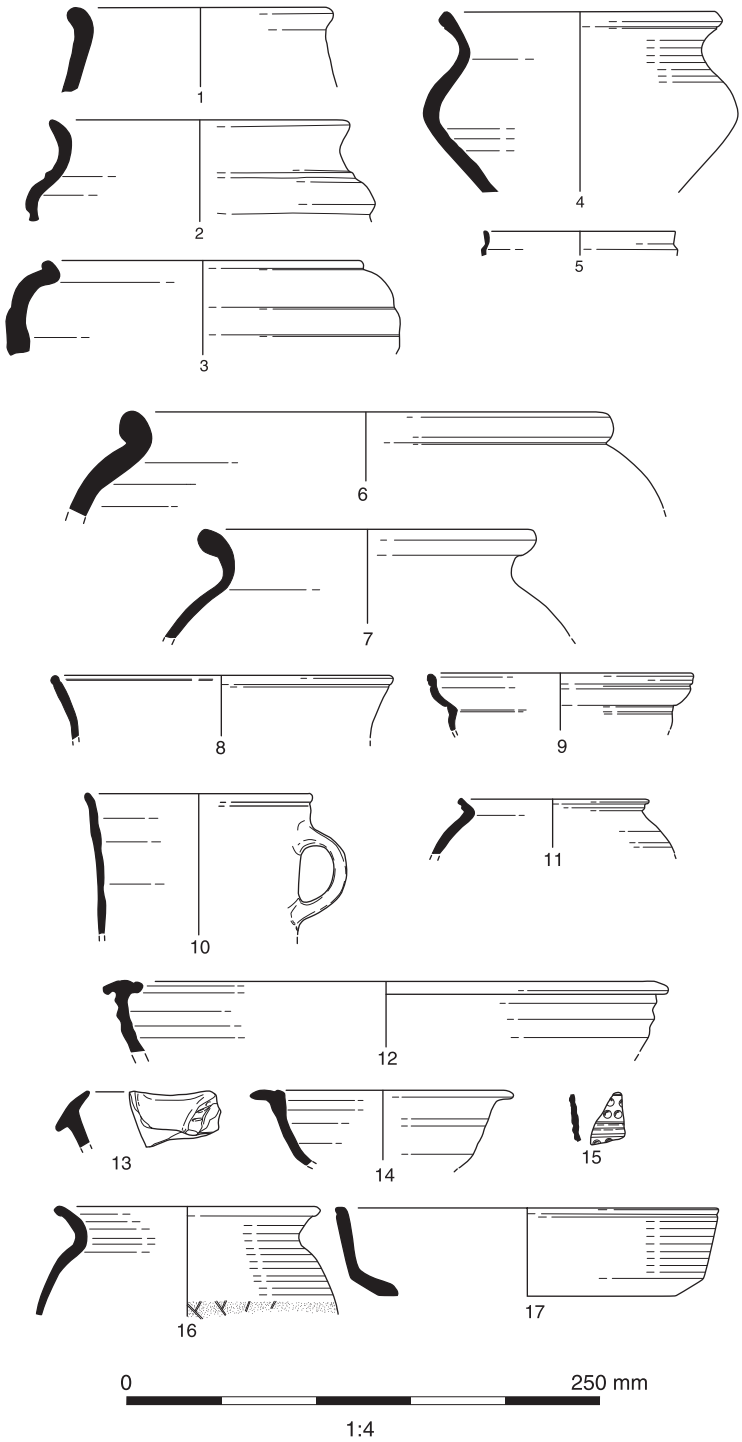

Fig. 9.8 Phase 1 and 2 pottery

Table 9.2: Total pottery by ware group and phase

Phase		Ware Group A	B	C	E	F	M	O	P	Q	R	S	W	Z	Total
0	Sherd count	5	528	169	734		6	723	30	15	1497	77	8	6	3798
	Weight (g)	138	4011	1501	7424		398	6845	225	134	15131	697	77	85	36666
1	Sherd count	6	133	168	565	1	3	156	61	3	442	10	1		1549
	Weight (g)	695	1125	644	5832	1	175	2011	342	16	4895	51	6		15793
1 or 2	Sherd count	4	16		37			21			92	6			176
	Weight (g)	705	105		235			329			1024	94			2492
2	Sherd count	2	156	19	85	1	1	164	8		214	23			673
	Weight (g)	82	1235	138	793	1	31	1486	56		2701	107			6630
2 or 3	Sherd count	12	381	62	166	3	15	526	17	6	1737	28	7	2	2962
	Weight (g)	1067	2452	249	2540	36	410	3860	110	34	16535	255	56	17	27621
3	Sherd count		218	38	189		1	156	8		404	9	1		1024
	Weight (g)		2116	270	2300		45	1275	57		4806	100	16		10985
total	Sherd count	29	1432	456	1776	5	26	1746	124	24	4386	153	17	8	10182
total	Weight (g)	2687	11044	2802	19124	38	1059	15806	790	184	45092	1304	155	102	100187

produced wares are the principal sources for the assemblage and in keeping with rural sites in the upper Thames Valley, the proportion of fine and specialist wares is low, at only 2.5% (by sherd count) and 5.5% (by weight – a higher percentage reflecting the presence of amphorae and mortaria sherds). Sites at Old Shifford Farm, Standlake (Timby 1995, 129) and Gravelly Guy, Oxfordshire (Lambrick and Allen 2004) both produced less than 1% fine and specialist wares, compared to the urban assemblage at Asthall where the figure is almost 7% during the same period (Booth 1997, 134). There is little evidence within the ceramic assemblage to indicate that it represents anything other than a rural, domestic assemblage, which would appear to be in contrast with the small find evidence (see Cool below). However there are hints, for example the presence of a Lyon colour-coated bowl, that the occupants at Somerford Keynes may have had access to luxury items, although the occurrence of all fine wares is severely limited. Combined with this, characteristically Roman forms such as mortaria, amphorae and flagons are all poorly represented within the assemblage, suggesting that Roman culinary practises may have had little impact on most of the inhabitants of the site. As on many rural sites of this period jars and bowls form the dominant vessel types. The presence of sherds from a triple vase and a tazza are the only elements of the assemblage that may indicate any form of ritual activity, but given the number of sherds involved this is a rather tenuous link.

Figure 9.8 presents a selected group of pottery from the site, from Phase 1 and Phase 2. All are wheel-thrown vessels unless specified. FS denotes 'featured sherd'.

Illustrated catalogue: Phase 1(numbers 1-5) and Phase 2 pottery (numbers 6-17) (Fig. 9.8)

1. FS 3083. Jar. Handmade. Out-sloping jar rim, fabric L2, context 315/A/1
2. FS 3079. Jar. Handmade. Cordon at base of neck and groove on shoulder, fabric E40, context 314/A
3. FS 3157. Jar. Fabric R90, context 324/B/3
4. FS 3159. High shouldered jar, fabric E10, context 324/B/3
5. FS 486. Lyon ware, rim of hemispherical bowl, fabric F41, context 130/C/1
6. FS 3450. Bead rim jar. Fabric R90, context 400/A/5
7. FS 3333. Jar rim. Fabric R94, context 400/A/3
8. FS 3392. Jar rim. Fabric O30, context 400/A/3
9. FS 3401. Bowl. Fabric O40, context 400/A/3
10. FS 3318. Tankard with single handle. Fabric O40, context 400/A/2
11. FS 3395. Beaker rim. Fabric O30, context 400/A/3
12. FS 3402. Reeded-rim bowl, Fabric O10, context 400/A/3
13. FS 3404. Bowl with spout. Fabric O10, context 400/A/3
14. FS 3461. Grooved flange bowl, fabric R30, context 400/A/5
15. FS 3530. Decorated sherd of North Wiltshire glazed ware. Fabric F22, context 407/C
16. FS 2251. Everted rim jar with faint burnished decoration on shoulder. Fabric E40, context 172
17. FS 2252. Straight side beaded rim dish. Fabric O80, context 172

Coins *by Cathy King*

A total of 278 coins was recovered from the site at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes ranging in date from the Iron Age and Roman Republic to the late 4th century AD implying a period of continuous occupation (Table 9.3). Unfortunately most of the coins are unstratified and many are in poor condi-

tion, although the overall pattern of coin loss can be determined.

There is a relatively high proportion of early coins, with 34% belonging to the years *c* 40 BC to AD 192. Of these, thirteen are British Iron Age pieces dated to between *c* 40 BC and AD 30 and one is a Republican denarius of 32-1 BC. The Iron Age coins are all Dobunnic or copies of Dobunnic silver units with one exception, a debased British LZ stater. The predominance of Dobunnic Iron Age coins at this site is unsurprising since they occur frequently in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Hereford and Worcester, and Avon and more sporadically further afield including outliers in Essex and Kent (van Arsdell 1994, 73-83). More problematic is the question whether these coins can be related directly to the Iron Age occupation of the site or whether they reached it in the early Roman period of occupation. Dobunnic silver while clustering in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Wiltshire had a wide distribution throughout Britain as noted above and virtually all finds turn up in post-conquest contexts (Sellwood 1984, 203).

The presence of pre-conquest silver on Roman sites in Britain is comparatively rare apart from those which are both early and/or military in nature (eg Hod Hill, Alchester, Cirencester), temples (eg Hayling Island, Harlow), and civilian sites with a military supply component like Fishbourne. The single Republican denarius is the only silver coin recovered from Somerford Keynes until the Flavian period when two genuine denarii of Vespasian occur as well as a plated piece datable to AD 69-96. It is unlikely that the Republican denarius reached the site before the conquest.

Early bronze coins minted before AD 44 or copied coins minted before AD 44 again tend to be comparatively rare on most British sites. The absolute numbers of the pre-conquest and immediately post-conquest coins from Somerford Keynes is small but, by analogy with other early sites, their presence together with that of the Republican denarius seems to suggest an early arrival at the site. Some bronze issues may be related to the invasion itself. Sauer has argued, for example, that a large number of coins of Caligula from military bases can be linked to their foundation date in the 40s and 50s (Sauer 2000, 49). Despite the presence of early coinage, there is no direct evidence of military presence at Somerford Keynes in these years and the earlier of two groups of military finds from the site have been dated to the later 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD (see Cool below). However, Somerford Keynes is not far from Cirencester where a fort was established in the 1st century AD and although it does not seem to have survived beyond the sixties, the coin loss pattern is not dissimilar.

The proportion of bronze coins recovered at Somerford Keynes in the Flavian period AD 69-96 is higher than that of the preceding period, although such coinage continued in circulation long after they were minted and it was only in the later 3rd century that they disappeared from use. The percentage of coins of 2nd-century date (AD 96-192) also remains relatively high (8.5%) at Somerford Keynes. Bronze coins of the 3rd century AD are extremely rare on British sites and none datable to the period AD 192 to AD 260 have been recovered from this site. There are, however, two denarii from these years.

The number of coins recovered from Somerford Keynes that were minted between AD 260 and AD 402 is much higher than those datable to the years before AD 260 and in this respect the site conforms to the general pattern of loss on British sites in the later period. Within these chronological parameters, however, there are periods when coin loss peaks: AD 260-96, AD 330-48, AD 348-60, AD 364-78, and AD 388-402.

Somerford Keynes is an interesting and somewhat unusual rural site in producing so much coinage from the years before AD 192 suggesting some sort of activity dating from the 1st century AD. In this aspect the coinage mirrors the picture provided by the finds assemblages (see below).

Table 9.3: Coins from Somerford Keynes

Period	*Genuine*		*Imitations*		*Total*	
	No	*%*	*No*	*%*	*No*	*%*
40 BC-30 AD	8	2.9	5	1.8	13	4.7
32-31 BC	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3
AD 36-68	7	2.5	5	1.8	12	4.3
AD 69-96	18	6.5	1	0.3	19	6.8
AD 96-138	5	1.8	2	0.7	7	2.5
AD 138-61	7	2.5	1	0.3	8	2.9
AD 161-92	6	2.1	1	0.3	7	2.5
AD 96-192	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.7
AD 36-192	23	8.3	3	1.1	26	9.3
AD 193-260	1	0.3	1	0.3	2	0.7
AD 260-86	17	6.1	2	0.7	19	6.8
AD 286-96	8	2.9	1	0.3	9	3.3
c AD 260-96	2	0.7	24	8.6	26	9.3
AD 296-315	3	1.1	0	0.0	3	1.1
AD 315-30	8	2.9	1	0.3	9	3.3
AD 330-48	24	8.6	12	4.3	36	12.9
AD 348-64	23	8.3	22	7.9	45	16.2
AD 364-78	10	3.6	0	0.0	10	3.6
AD 378-88	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3
AD 388-402	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3
c AD 330-64	1	0.3	1	0.3	2	0.7
c AD 260-402	9	3.3	7	2.5	16	5.8
Subtotal	185	66.3	89	31.5	274	98.3
Post-Roman	3	1.1	1	0.3	4	1.4
Total	188	67.4	90	31.8	278	99.2

Small finds (Figs 9.9 and 9.10-17) *by Hilary Cool*

A total of just over 1000 small finds was recovered from archaeological investigations at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes, excluding coins and stonework. With the exception of nails, these are listed by functional category in Table 9.4, with the personal ornaments, which formed the largest single group, further broken down in Table 9.5. Only 13% of the total came from the excavation, the remainder was the result of surface collection and metal detecting. The overall spatial distribution of this material was plotted (Fig. 9.9), although there is not enough information for detailed phase by phase analysis.

The collection is biased in several ways, primarily through the use of metal detectors, and the lack of X-radiography on the ironwork until very recently. Despite the many problems, however, the finds do tell a most remarkable story especially when compared to the evidence of the pottery and glass vessels, where there is much divergence, both chronologically and in terms of function and status. By far the majority of the identifiable finds were of late Iron Age to early Roman date. There was a little mid 2nd- and 3rd-century material and a slightly larger amount of late 4th- to 5th-century material. The brooches in particular give a picture of activity from at least the early 1st century AD and the presence of some Augustan forms even hint at the possibility of activity in the late 1st century BC. As can be seen from Table 9.6, at least a quarter of all closely dated brooches can be assigned to the period prior to the main period of activity as indicated by the pottery. Equally early items can be seen amongst some of the other categories such as the vessel foot (Fig. 9.15, no. 43) and the looped fitting (Fig. 9.16, no. 56). It seems highly unlikely that such a large corpus of material can all be the result of unusual long curation of objects.

The range of items present is equally at odds with the pottery and the glass vessel assemblage as far as the status of the site is concerned. While they suggest a modest rural establishment, the finds suggest wide access to resources and a range of activities that would indicate higher status occupation. Even allowing for the fact that the population of this area of the country were voracious

Table 9.4: The Iron Age and Roman small finds from Somerford Keynes according to functional categories

Function	*1*	*1/2*	*2*	*2 a*	*2 b*	*2/3*	*3*	*U/S*	*Total*
Personal	10	3	-	-	1	10	5	286	315
Toilet	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	38	42
Textile	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	3
Household	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
Tools	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	9	13
Weighing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
Writing	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	6
Transport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Buildings	14	2	1	1	4	20	6	1	49
Tools	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	9	13
Fasteners	3	-	-	-	1	6	1	61	72
Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Military	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	13
Religion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
Total	34	5	1	2	6	44	13	445	550

Table 9.5: Personal ornaments by phase

Simple name	*1*	*1/2*	*2 b*	*2/3*	*3*	*U/S*	*Total*
Brooch	8	3	1	8	4	255	279
Bracelet	-	-	-	-	-	14	14
Finger ring	1	-	-	-	-	12	13
Bead	1	-	-	1	-	1	3
Hair pin	-	-	-	-	3	1	2
Shoe cleat	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Buckle	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Total	10	3	1	10	5	286	315

Fig. 9.9 Distribution of finds from metal detecting

Table 9.6: Summary of the dated brooches

Date	*Brooch Name*	*1*	*1/2*	*2/3*	*3*	*U/S*	*Total*	*Subtotal*
3rd to 1st century BC	Involute	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Early to mid 1st century	Nauheim derivative	-	1	-	-	22	23	
	Strip bow	-	-	-	-	5	5	
	One piece	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Langton Down	1	-	-	-	11	12	
	Rosette	-	-	-	-	3	3	
	Colchester	-	-	-	-	13	13	57
Mid to late 1st century	Aesica	1	-	-	-	3	4	
	Eye	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Aucissa	-	-	-	-	3	3	
	Bagendon	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Hod Hill	1	-	3	-	23	27	
	Disc brooch	-	-	-	-	2	2	
	Penannular D5	-	-	-	-	2	2	40
Mid 1st to 2nd century	Colchester derivative	-	1	-	-	17	18	
	Dolphin	-	-	2	-	14	16	
	Polden Hill	3	-	1	-	36	40	
	Lower Severn T-shape	-	1	2	-	16	19	
	Plate-headed T-shape	-	-	-	-	2	2	
	Backworth trumpet	-	-	-	-	7	7	
	Chester trumpet	-	-	-	1	10	11	
	Headstud	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Keyhole	-	-	-	-	1	1	115
2nd century	Wroxeter	-	-	-	1	2	3	
	Plate-headed trumpet	-	-	-	-	3	3	
	Alcester	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Half disc and trumpet	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Plate	-	-	-	-	3	3	11
4th century	Crossbow	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Penannular	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Total		6	3	8	2	207	226	(226)

consumers of brooches and other ornaments, the amounts recovered at this site seem exceptional. Frocester Court (Price 2000), has produced a total of 101 brooches and brooch fragments; Kingscote a total of 196 (Mackreth 1998), but even these large numbers are small in comparison. Somerford Keynes has produced 279 brooches and brooch fragments, and amongst these disc brooches, penannulars and iron brooches are undoubtedly under-represented due to the sort of biases mentioned above.

It does not seem likely that metal detecting alone can account for this discrepancy, and a more plausible explanation is that the survey material came from a wider area and reflects areas of the site and types of activity that were not sampled by excavation. If the stratified and unstratified material is compared there are some grounds for thinking this might be a good explanation. Table 9.7 shows the brooches grouped in date categories according to whether they were stratified or unstratified. It is noticeable that the categories where more than 10% of the brooches are stratified reflect the dates suggested by the pottery. The earlier material is conspicuous by being overwhelmingly represented amongst the unstratified material.

A similar phenomenon may be observed if the functional categories are considered in the same light (Table 9.8). Excluding building materials, the unstratified material represents 13 categories, while only half of these are represented amongst the stratified material. Sometimes there is a noticeable difference between the precise types found stratified and unstratified. In the writing equipment, for example, the stratified material consists of styli which would not be unusual on an ordinary rural

Table 9.7: Summary of the stratified and unstratified brooches by date

Date	*Strat*	*U/S*	*%Strat*	*Total*
3rd to 1st century BC	-	1	0	1
Early to mid 1st century	2	55	4%	57
Mid to late 1st century	5	35	14%	40
Mid 1st to 2nd century	11	104	10%	115
2nd century	1	10	10%	11
4th century	-	2	0	2
Total	19	207		226

site. The unstratified material, by contrast, includes seal boxes which would be unusual. The unstratified finds are probably indicating, therefore, that occupation of a different status to that uncovered by the excavations, was taking place in the vicinity.

Another feature of the finds assemblage that suggests the site may be unusual, is the origins of some of the material. The detailed discussion of the types showed again and again that types with a very local distribution were present as might be expected on a small rural site. There are also, however, things that are either someway outside of their normal range or at the edge of the distribution. Amongst the early to mid 1st-century brooches, for example, there are five examples of Hull type 10D which Mackreth suggests is typical of the Atrebatic tribe and of Hull Type 12 which he suggests was a favoured form of the Durotriges. The Langton Down assemblage is also exceptional in the area. Slightly later in the 1st century we can note the presence of the dumbbell fitting and the dress fastener more typical of the north, later again there is the pelta and trumpet brooch. One might suggest that there is a strand of evidence that suggests people from outside the area were regularly attracted to the site, especially in the 1st century. A tentative suggestion is that the area was the location of a fair or some place of ritual activity.

Aside from the possible sculptural fragments of the Capitoline triad, there is no explicit evidence of any ritual activity either in the form of buildings, in the pottery types present or in explicitly religious finds. The types of finds assigned to the ritual category here are the sort of background 'noise' one gets on many sites. It may be noted, however, that the sort of items that are present in overwhelming numbers (personal ornaments, toilet articles) can often be observed being used as votive items on Romano-British religious sites (see Discussion below). Could this also be the explanation for the very high level of pottery repair and curation attested? In the absence of any contextual information for so many items, it will be difficult to come to any conclusion as to whether such a hypothesis is likely.

What is noticeable from the finds is that from time to time there was an 'official' interest in the site. Strangely there is no evidence of this during the peak 1st to mid 2nd-century occupation. It first becomes noticeable in the later 2nd to 3rd century when there are sufficient military items to suggest there may have been soldiers present on policing duty (Fig. 9.17; see Discussion below and Chapter 16). It also becomes apparent in the mid to late 4th century, although it is possible that this could be viewed as a fashion of the late civilian elite. Such an explanation seems less likely for the crossbow brooch (Fig. 9.15, no. 36), so on balance a late military or official presence in the vicinity can be postulated.

Figures 9.10-17 present a selection of finds from Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes.

Table 9.8: Comparison of stratified and surface collected material by function

Function	*Stratified*	*Unstratified*	*Total*
Personal	29	286	315
Toilet	4	38	42
Textile	2	1	3
Household	-	6	6
Tools	4	9	13
Weighing	-	6	6
Writing	3	3	6
Transport	-	3	3
Tools	4	9	13
Fasteners	11	61	72
Agriculture	-	4	4
Military	-	13	13
Religion	-	5	5
Total	57	445	501

Illustrated catalogue: Brooches (Figs 9.10-9.13)

All copper alloy unless stated

1. *25 SF 321. Involute*. C2-C1 BC. Length 29 mm. Trench 5
2. *U/S SF 984. Nauheim derivative*. Type Hull 11. Mid C1. Length 42 mm
3. *25 SF 536. Nauheim derivative*. Type Hull 11. Mid C1. Length 51 mm. Trench 5
4. *U/S SF 5042. Nauheim derivative.* Type Hull 10D. Mid C1
5. *U/S SF 154. Nauheim derivative*. Type Hull 10. Mid C1. Present length 49 mm
6. *U/S SF 5028. Strip bow*. Type Hull 12 +. Early to mid C1
7. *U/S SF 153. One-piece bow brooch*. Type Hull 19. First half C1. Length 44 mm, section of button 4.5 mm
8. *133 SF 719. Langton Down*. Type Hull 21. Mid C1. Length 61 mm. Trench 5, Phase 1
9. *25 SF 303. Colchester.* Type Hull 90. Early to mid C1. Trench 5
10. *U/S SF 217. Aucissa.* Type Hull 61. Mid C1
11. *U/S SF 161. Hod Hill*. Bent double. Type Hull 60. Mid C1. Length *c* 67 mm, width 16 mm
12. *U/S SF 150. Hod Hill.* Type Hull 62. Mid C1. Length 32 mm

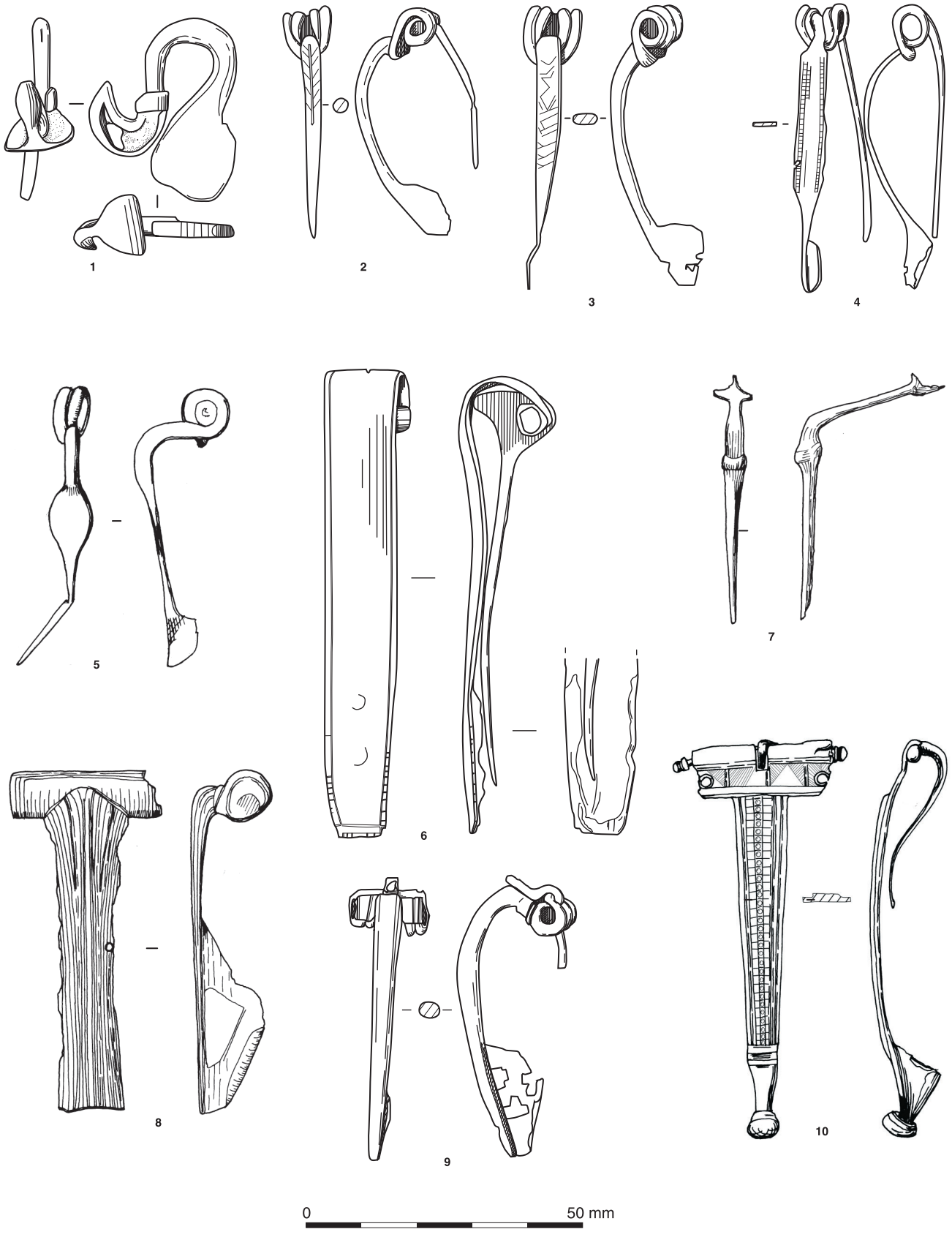

Fig. 9.10 Brooches (1-10)

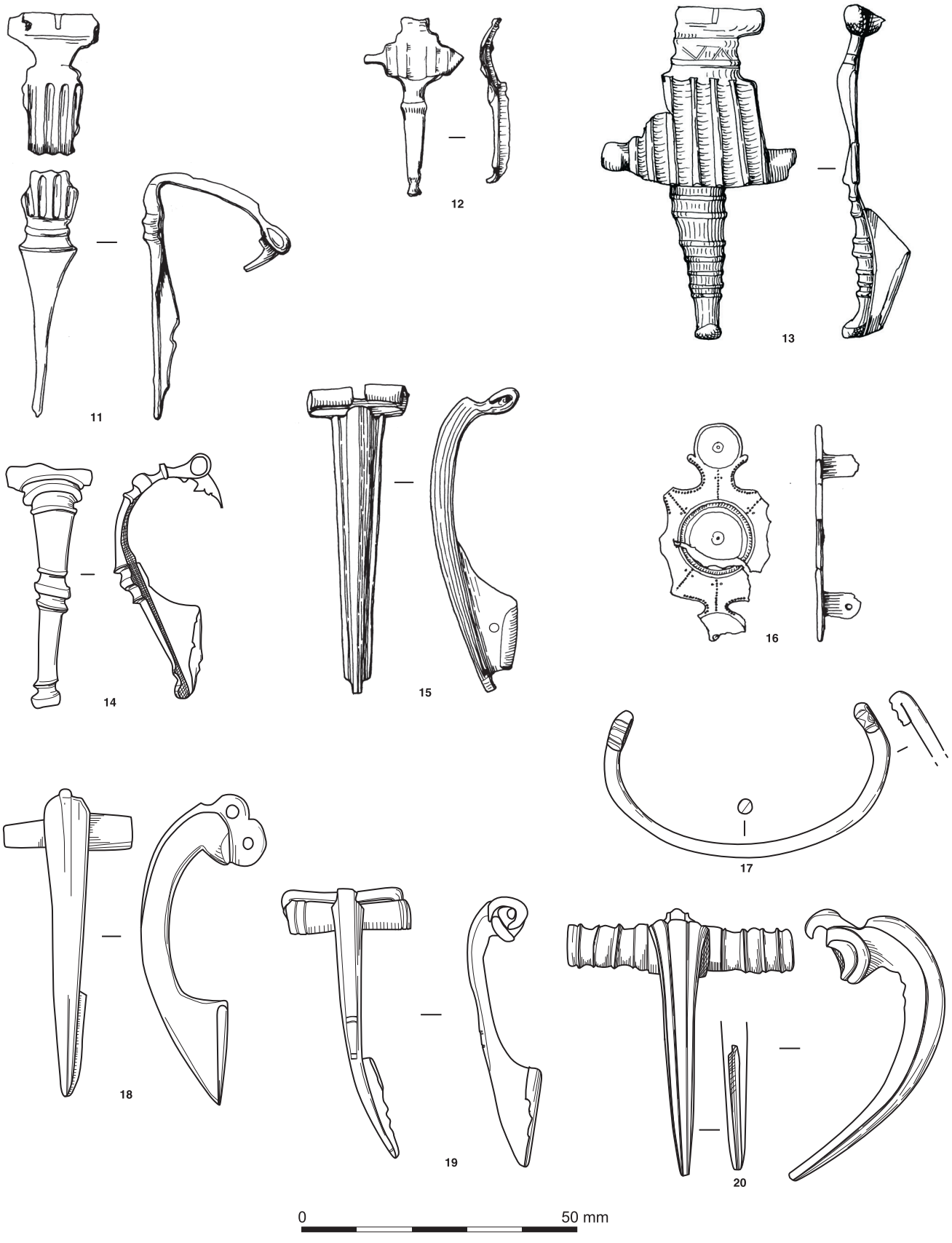

Fig. 9.11 Brooches (11-20)

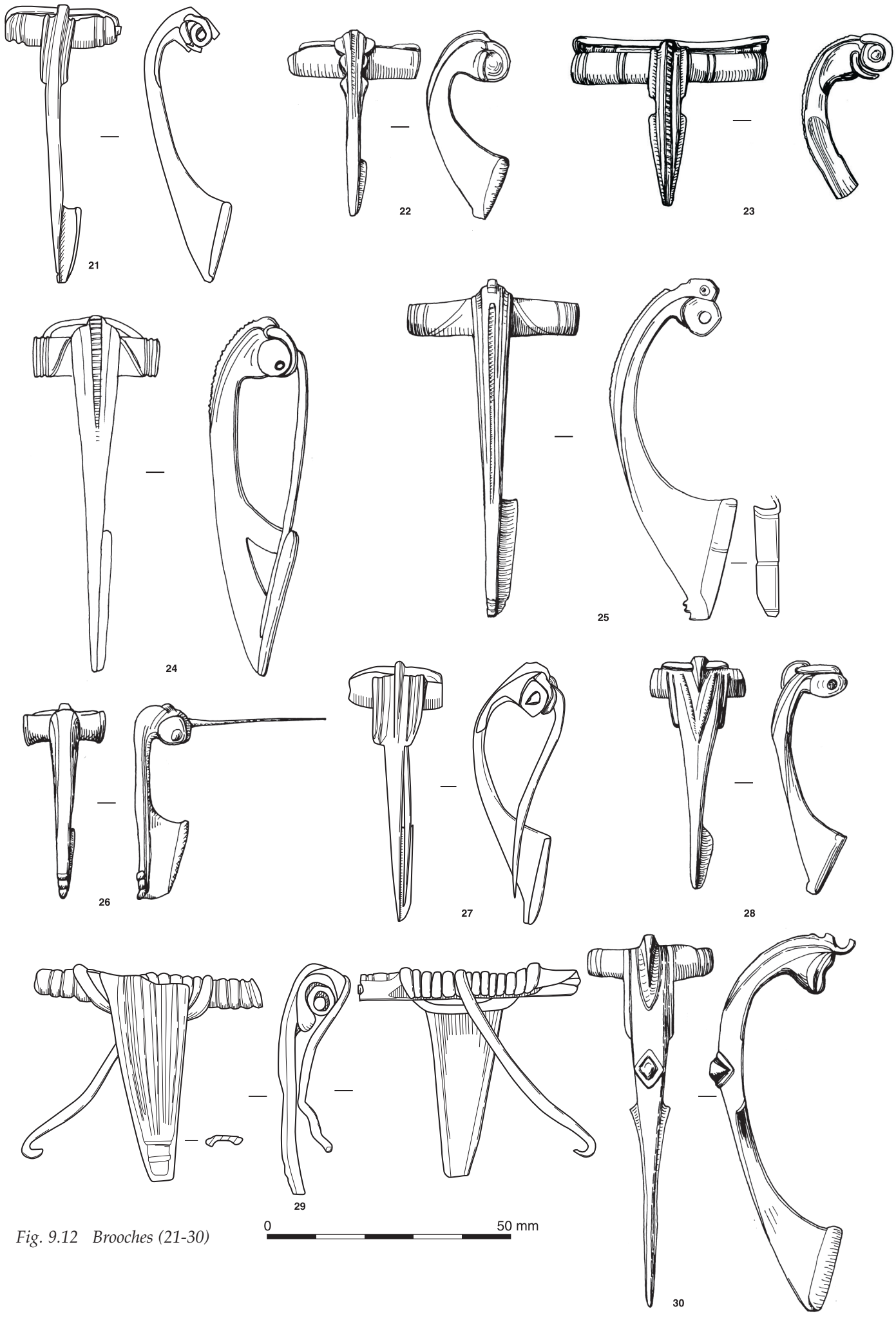

Fig. 9.12 Brooches (21-30)

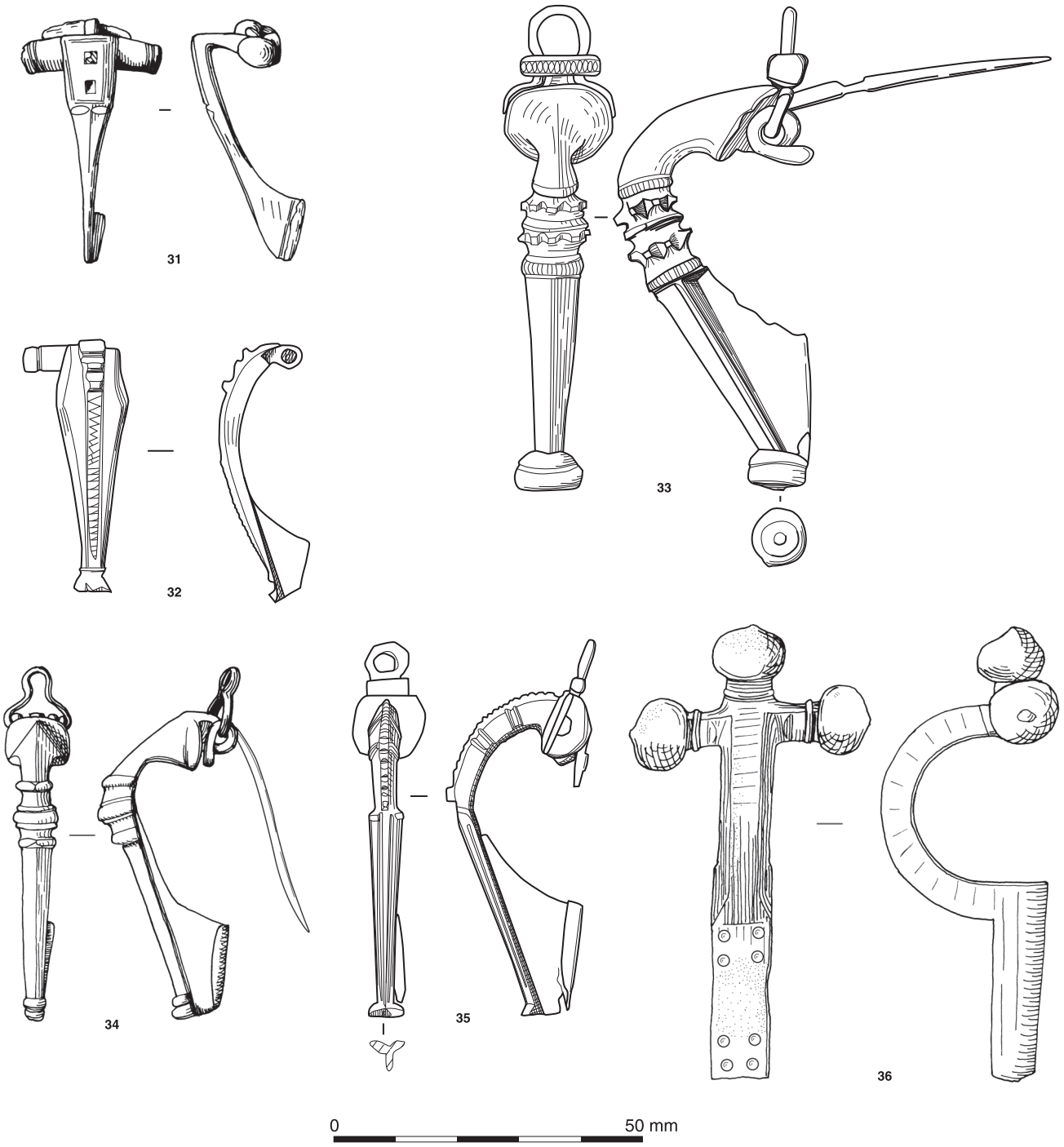

Fig. 9.13 Brooches (31-36)

13. *U/S SF 219. Hod Hill.* Type Hull 61. Mid C1. Length 62 mm, width spring cover 15 mm.
14. *400 SF 881. Hod Hill.* Type Hull 71. Mid C1. Length 44 mm, width of hinge cover 15 mm. Trench 17, Phase 2/3
15. *177 SF 793. Hod Hill.* Type Hull 70. Mid C1. Present length 56 mm, hinge width 17 mm. Trench 5, Phase 1
16. *U/S SF 197. Early disc brooch.* Mid C1. Present dimensions 38 x 19 mm
17. *U/S SF 5036. Penannular brooch.* Type Fowler (1960) D5. Present diameter 28 x 52 mm, section 3 mm
18. *U/S SF 60. Colchester Derivative.* Type Hull 93. Mid C1– into C2. Length 57 mm, width of spring cover 23 mm
19. *U/S SF 5117. Colchester Derivative.* Type Hull 93. Mid to late C1. Length 49 mm, width of spring cover 23 mm
20. *U/S SF 5006. Dolphin.* Type Hull 94. Mid C1. Length 50 mm, width 40 mm
21. *U/S SF 5018. Dolphin.* In 2 pieces. Type Hull 94. Mid C1 into C2. Length 60 mm, width 22 mm
22. *25 SF 317. Dolphin.* Type Hull 94. Mid C1 into C2. Length 38 mm, width 25 mm. Trench 5
23. *U/S SF 1173. Dolphin.* Type Hull 94. Mid C1 into C2. Present length 33 mm, width of spring cover 39 mm
24. *142 SF 790. Polden Hill.* Type Hull 98. 2nd half C1. Length 73 mm, width cylindrical spring cover 25 mm. Trench 5, Phase 1
25. *46 SF 556. Polden Hill*. Type Hull 98. Mid C1 into C2. Length 70 mm, width cylindrical spring cover 33 mm. Trench 8
26. *334 SF 723. Polden Hill.* Type Hull 98. Mid C1 into C2. Length 39 mm, spring cover 15 mm. Trench 5, Phase 1
27. *U/S SF 1146. Polden Hill.* Type Hull 103. Later C1 – mid C2. Present length 56 mm, width of spring casing 20 mm
28. *U/S SF 834. Polden Hill.* Type Hull 103. Later C1 – mid C2. Length 48 mm, width of spring cover 17 mm
29. *U/S SF 1138. T-shaped*. Type Hull 103, 104. Later C1-C2? Present length 42 mm, width of hinge 46 mm
30. *U/S SF 1178. Polden Hill.* Type Hull 100. Mid C1 -early C2. Length 65 mm, width 24 mm
31. *400 SF 741. T-shaped*. Type Hull 110. Later C1 – mid C2. Length 39 mm, width 20 mm. Trench 17, Phase 2/3
32. *U/S SF 5022. T-shaped.* Later C1 – mid C2. Length 41 mm
33. *25 SF 322. Trumpet.* Type Hull 158A. Later C1 – mid C2. Length 80 mm. Trench 5
34. *164 SF 770. Trumpet*. Type Hull 154 (Chester variant). Later C1 – mid C2. Length 59 mm. Trench 5, Phase 3
35. *U/S SF 969. Wroxeter type*. Type Hull 151. C2. Length 60 mm, width of head 13 mm. Trench 30
36. *U/S SF 216. Crossbow.* Type Hull 192. Mid 4C. Length 74 mm, width 38 mm

Bracelets and toilet equipment (Fig. 9.14)

37. *U/S SF 248. Penannular bracelet.* Cool Type 8B. C2. Diameter 45 mm, section at terminal 9 x 4 mm
38. *25 SF 310. Bracelet*. A very rare form. Diameter *c* 51 mm, hoop section 7 x 2 mm. Trench 5
39. *U/S SF 5138. Bracelet fragment*. This comes from a penannular bracelet with twisted back terminals. The inspiration is probably from finger rings with twisted back snake's head terminals. Cool Bracelet type 40. Present length 20 mm, maximum section 8 x 2.5 mm
40. *U/S SF 1094. Toilet implement.* This could be a nail cleaner such as those from Wilcote (Hands 1993, 38 no. 22, fig. 26; 1998, 60 no. 78, fig. 21) from a mid 2nd-century context (or possibly from a cosmetic spoon). Present length 42 mm, maximum section 5 mm
41. *U/S SFs 5026 and 5027. Tweezers and nail cleaner.* Tweezers complete. Length 61 mm, maximum width 6.5 mm. Nail cleaner C1? Present length 46.5 mm, maximum width 9.5 mm

Household objects, weights, writing equipment and tools (Fig. 9.15)

42. *U/S SF 198. Tankard Handle.* Handles of Corcoran (1952) Class V have been found on in 1st- to 2nd-century contexts. Present length 76 mm, maximum section 20 x 1 mm
43. *U/S SF 1055. Vessel fragment.* Pelta-shaped plate with central pointed projection and traces of three ring-and-dots. The shape of this item and the different treatments of front and back are consistent with this being the foot of a patera or bowl. They were used on the bowls belonging to the Hagenow style of jug and patera sets or the early to mid 1st century (Nuber 1972, 38) such as that from Snailwell (Lethbridge 1953, pl VII). Dimensions 35.5 x 15 mm, thickness 3 mm
44. *25 SF 346. Spoon.* Copper alloy with white metal coating. C4 (+). Length 161 mm, width of bowl 33 mm
45. *U/S SF 1045. Weight.* Lead. Probably a weight for a sextans (2 unciae) which should weigh either 54.58 g or 54.25 g (RIB II.2, 2). Diameter 23 mm, thickness 13 mm. Trench 30
46. *U/S SF 614. Weight*. Lead. Total length 75 mm, length of weight 60 mm, diameter 43 mm
47. *U/S SF 5040. Plumb bob.* Probably a leaded alloy. Length 30 mm, section 14.5 mm
48. *U/S SF 1106. Writing equipment?* Iron. Possibly a wax spatula used in the preparation of writing tablets. Present length 130 mm, length of blade 107 mm
49. *25 SF 575. File*. Iron. A variety of files are known in the Roman period. Those with finely cut teeth were metal-workers tools, though the very fine cutting seen here would appear to be unusually high (Manning *et al.* 1995, 249 no. 12). Length 162 mm, width 6 mm, thickness 5 mm

Fasteners and fittings (Fig. 9.16)

50. *U/S SF 835. Stud*. Square head with lug on each side; centre of head raised with four inlaid pointed ovals (possibly niello). C1. Head dimensions 20 x 21 mm, length 10.5 mm
51. U/S *SF 1109. Pottery rivet.* Lead. Maximum length 63 mm, maximum width 14 mm, thickness 29 mm. Trench 30
52. *U/S SF 1016. Rivet.* Lead. Length 60 mm, width 10.5 mm, maximum thickness 8 mm
53. *U/S SF 1022. Rivet*. Lead. Length 13 mm, maximum head diameter 10 mm
54. *U/S SF 1104. Plug*. Lead. Dimensions 22 x 14 mm, thickness 11.5 mm
55. *U/S SF 1030. Plug*. Lead. Diameter 55 x 46 mm, thickness 14 mm
56. *U/S SF 306. Fastener.* Hollow, toggle-shaped fitting with flat disc ends; small rectangular loop. This is a late Iron Age form whose use continued in the 1st century AD after the Roman invasion. The distribution is concentrated in the Severn Valley area. Length 29 mm, section 11 mm

57. *U/S SF 833. Terminal.* Pelta-shaped terminal; socket containing remnants of iron on underside. Copper alloy handles in the form of a fleur-de-lis for iron keys are quite common after the mid 2nd century (Crummy 1983, 126 no. 4161), but the pelta shape of this terminal suggests it may be of 1st-century date as it is very similar to military belt-buckles of that date (see Bishop and Coulston 1993, fig 59 nos 15 and 19). Length 37 mm, maximum width 30 mm, thickness 10 mm
58. *25 SF 290. Fastener.* Late 1– 2C. Length 19 mm, section (maximum) 9 mm. Trench 5
59. *U/S SF 1081. Fitting.* Possible holder for a cosmetic set. Length 32 mm, depth 31 mm, thickness 4 mm
60. *U/S SF 5015. Fitting.* Length 28 mm, width 13 mm

Military objects (Fig. 9.17)

61. *U/S SF 5078. Mount.* Hollow-backed rectangular mount with two integral rivets. A common find on mid 2nd to 3rd-century military sites and which may have been used as stiffeners on a variety of straps. This is an example of the normal form cf Catterick Site 273 (Mould 2002, 136 no. 6); South Shields (Allason-Jones and Miket 1984, 237 nos 3.877-8). Late C2 – C3. Length 27 mm, width 5.5 mm
62. *U/S SF 1054. Buckle*. Amphora-shaped. This seems to be the upper part of a large strap end. C4 into C5. Maximum width 33 mm, present length 21 mm, thickness of plate 2 mm
63. *U/S SF 1064. Plate*. Hawkes and Dunning (1961) Type IIA. Late C4 – C5. Width 39 mm, thickness 3 mm

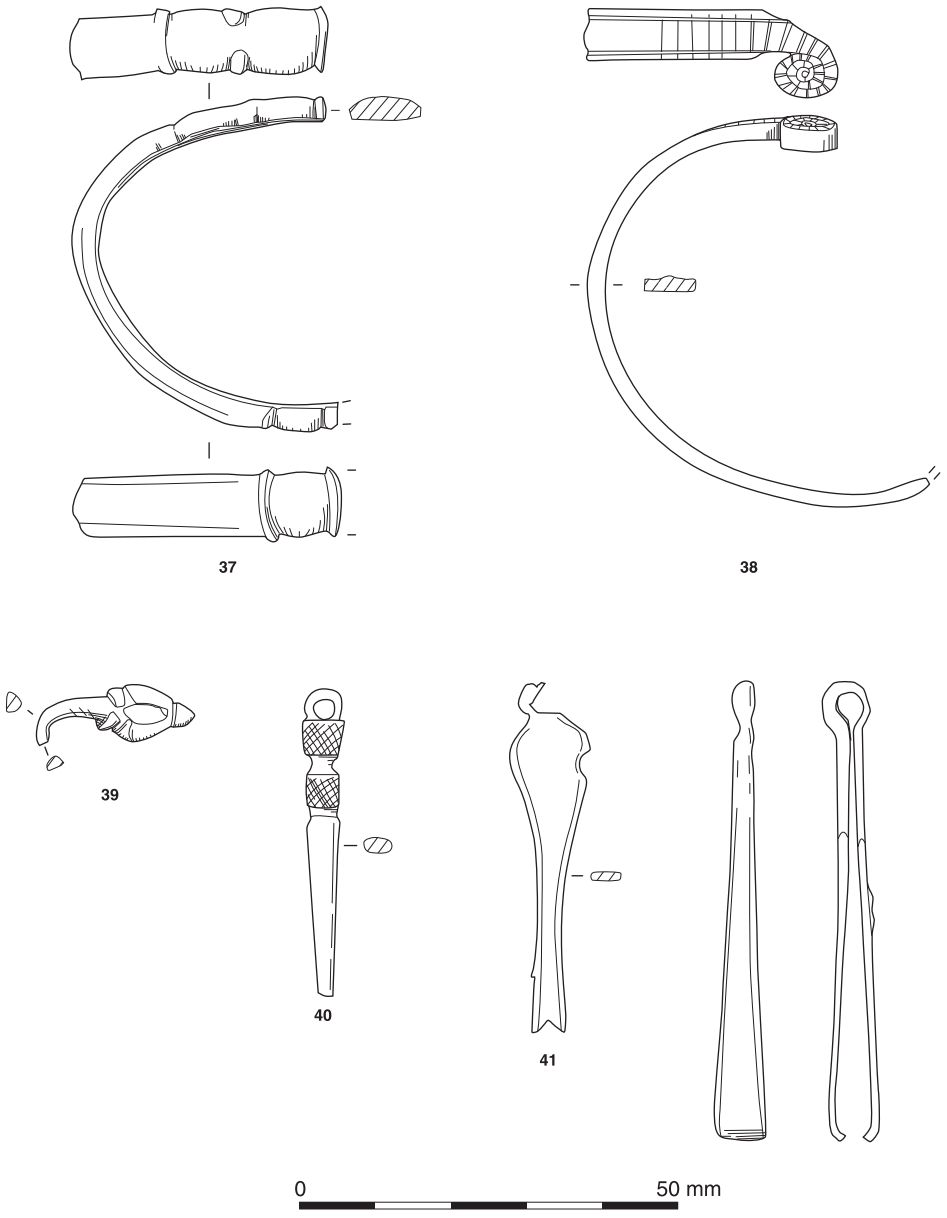

Fig. 9.14 Bracelets and toilet equipment

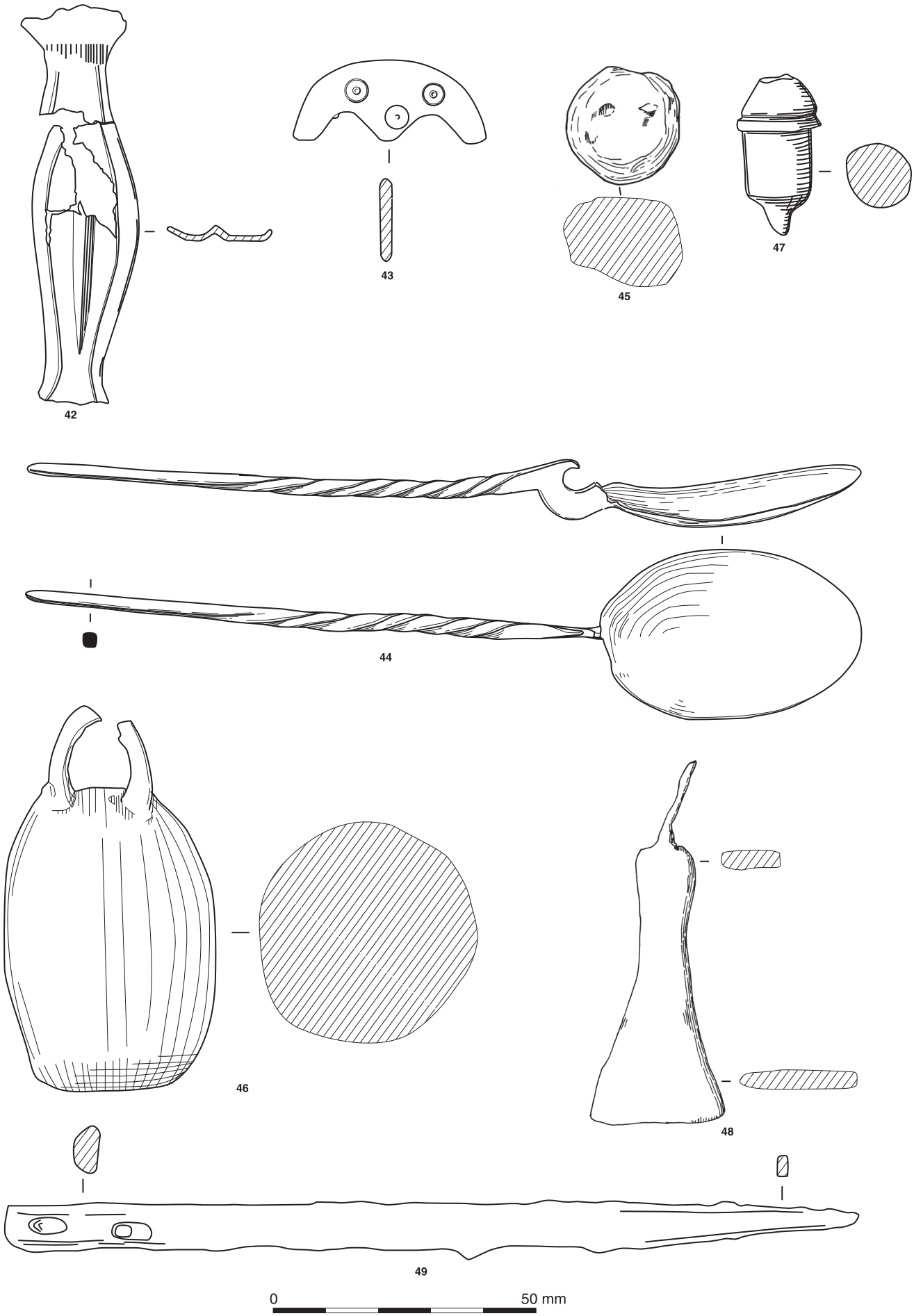

Fig. 9.15 Household objects, weights, writing equipment and tools

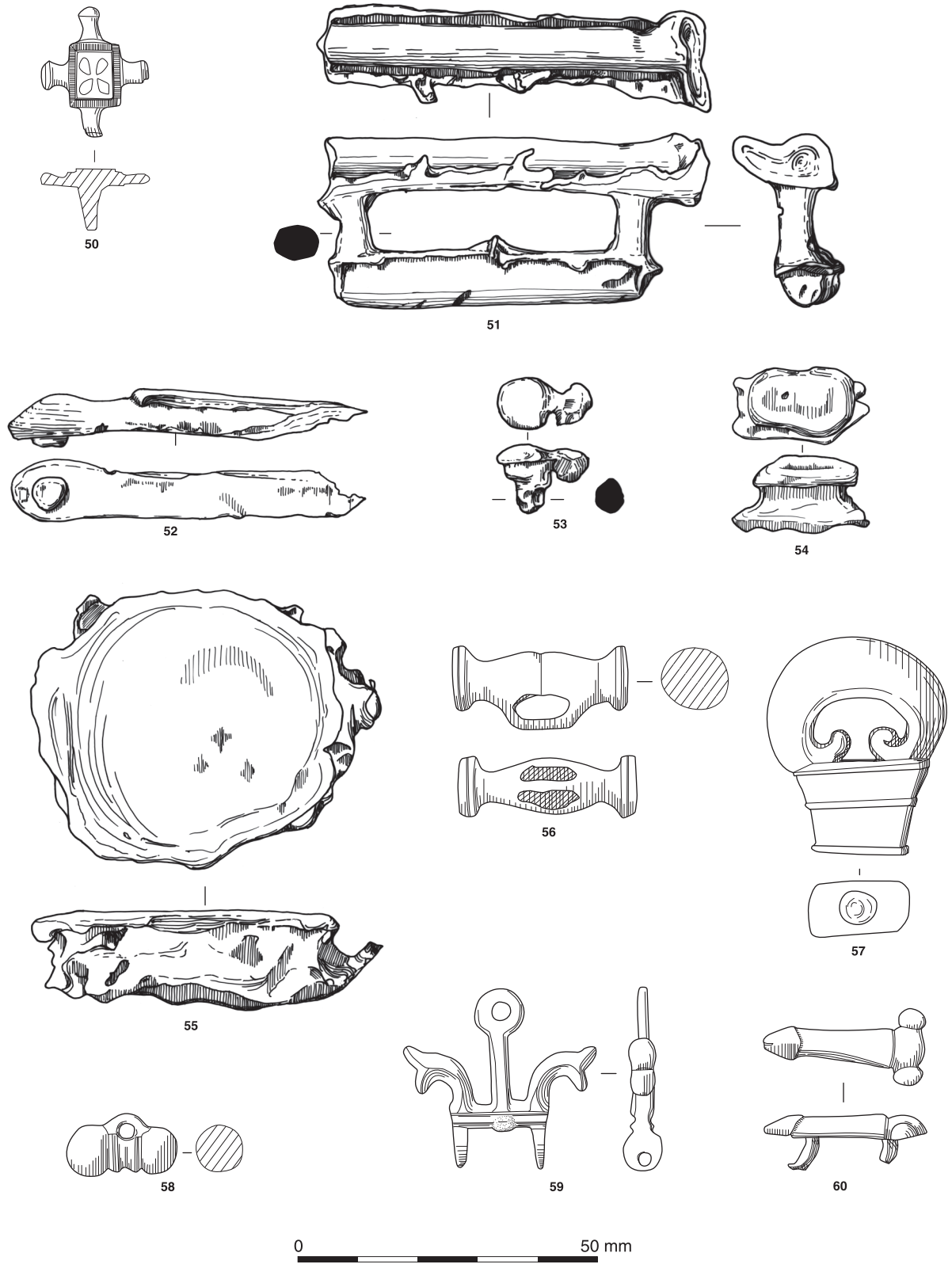

Fig. 9.16 Fasteners and fittings

Vessel glass (Fig. 9.11) *by Hilary Cool*

The excavation and survey produced a small amount of Roman vessel glass, the majority of it unstratified. Table 9.9 summarises the material by type and phase. The colours are indicative of a 1st to 2nd-century assemblage and the forms suggest a 1st to early 2nd-century date range. There is no indication of the presence of later 2nd century or later forms or colours of glass.

The fact that the assemblage is dominated by bottle fragments is typical of rural sites during the later 1st to 2nd centuries where whatever was in the bottles was clearly appreciated, and large bowls rather than drinking cups were favoured (Cool and Baxter 1999, 85). This small assemblage is typical of what might be expected on modest rural establishment of the 1st to 2nd centuries in this part of the country.

Illustrated catalogue: Vessel glass (Fig. 9.18)

1. *U/S SF 759. Prismatic bottle.* Blue/Green. Square or (less likely) hexagonal bottle; Lower body and base fragment. Base design – circular moulding with diagonal cross. Width of bottle 53 mm., diameter of circular moulding 35 mm, present height 15 mm. Isings (1957), Form 50; Price and Cottam 1998, 194-202. C1-C2 (mid C3).

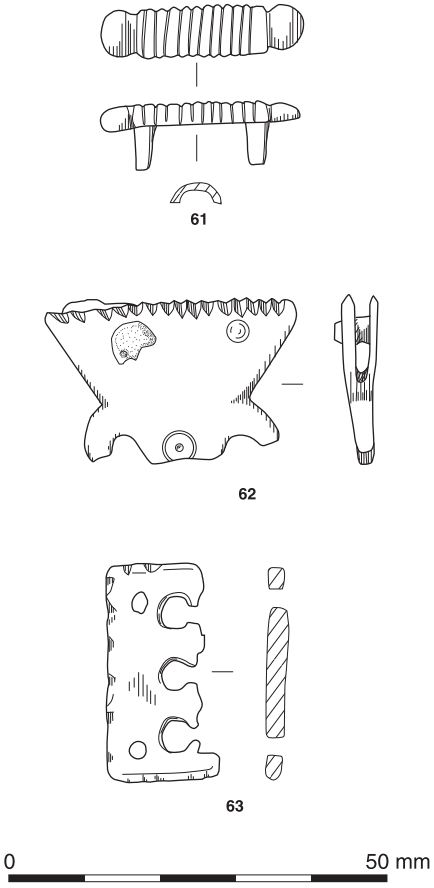

Fig. 9.17 Military objects

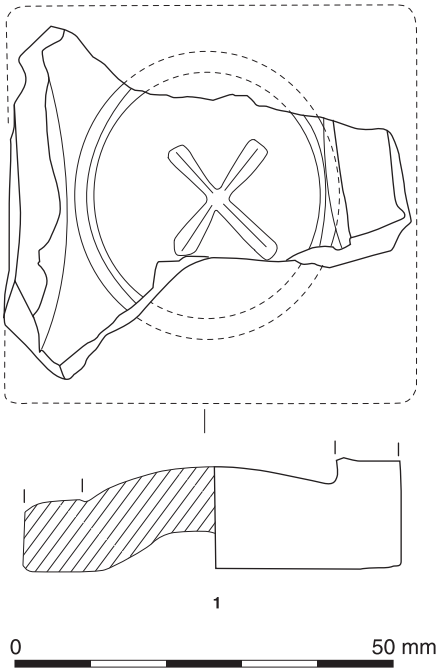

Fig. 9.18 Vessel glass

Table 9.9: Vessel glass by type and phase

Simple name	*1*	*1/2*	*2 b*	*2/3*	*3*	*Unphased*	*Total*
Pillar moulded bowl	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Collared jar	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Jug	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Body fragment	3	1	1	1	-	5	11
Cylindrical bottle	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Square bottle	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Prismatic bottle	-	-	-	1	2	3	6
Bottle	-	1	-	-	-	2	3
Total	3	2	1	2	4	17	29

Roman sculpture (Fig. 9.19-20, Pl. 9.4)
by Martin Henig

Two pieces of Roman sculpture, an eagle and a shield, were found during excavations at Somerford Keynes, carved in oolitic limestone with scatted, larger fragments of fossil shell (Figs 9.19-20, Pl. 9.4). They were recovered just outside of the large D-shaped enclosure ditch (see Fig. 9.2).

The bird is carved in the round with the plumage indicated on the left side of the body and on the wing (Fig. 9.19). On the right side the execution is more summary and in place of a wing there is an indication of what appears to be the end of some garment, perhaps the cloak from an accompanying statue of Jupiter. Although generally in good condition, the head of the eagle is lacking, together with its feet and any base on which the bird might originally have stood. Comparable examples from the Cotswolds have been found at Price's Row, Cirencester (Henig 1993, 56 no. 166, pl 41), and Cole's Hill near Spoonley Wood villa (Henig 1993, 56-7 no. 168, pl 41), although these are not as good quality. In both of these cases the sculptures seem to have come from a shrine, though admittedly none was associated with a Jupiter figure. However, the relationship of this god with his familiar has been demonstrated on many occasions, with a prime example being on the probable cult altar at Bath (Cunliffe and Fulford 1982, 10 no. 30, pl 9).

The oval shield is carved with a pronounced *umbo* and a rim (Fig. 9.20, Pl. 9.4). On its back side and covering the grip, drapery is carefully indicated. Behind it, less carefully delineated, is another fold of the garment. The shield is supported on a low base or ledge. Once again the attribute would have been positioned on the left side of a figure, because the well-carved drapery must have been visible from the front. The top quarter of the shield is lacking but otherwise what is left is in good condition. Although similar simple shields with prominent bosses are best known from the Cotswold region on votive altars of Mars, they are also associated with Minerva, as seen for example on votive reliefs from Lower Slaughter and Bath (Henig 1993, 29-30 no. 88, pl 24; Cunliffe and Fulford 1982, 9, no. 25, pl 7). The low drapery on the Somerford Keynes example strongly suggests that Minerva was the accompanying deity.

Figures of Jupiter and Minerva together with one of Jupiter's wife Juno would comprise the Capitoline triad, the major deities of Rome. It is *prima facie* likely that the eagle and the shield came from a representation of the triad, which has otherwise not survived. Such a grouping would indicate an official aspect to Somerford Keynes, although not necessarily military. The group appears to have been carved from stone derived from quarries in Roman Cirencester (see below), and were presumably the work of a highly skilled sculptor from this town. Although local sculpture is very hard to date with any certainty, the naturalistic cutting would certainly suit the late 1st or early 2nd century AD.

Worked stone (Fig. 9.21**)** *by Fiona Roe*

There are 15 worked stone objects from Somerford Keynes. A further seven pieces of monumental and architectural stone include a carved limestone eagle and shield, which are described by Henig above.

Grinding of corn was an essential occupation, and querns predominate amongst the objects, as might be expected (Table 9.10). One of the quern fragments (SF 875) may come from a saddle quern of possible middle Iron Age date, while one of the rotary quern fragments (SF 765) is a small and thick example that might fit into a late Iron Age/early Roman context. The remaining rotary querns of disc type (SF's 636, 637, 874) are typical of the Roman period, as was the fragment of millstone (SF 887). Other Roman items comprised mortars (SF's 281, 829), whetstones (SF's 483, 769) and a pot burnisher (SF 832). A more unusual item is a metal smithing tool or "cushion stone" (SF 812; Fig. 9.21, no.3), which is a type of artefact known to occur in Beaker contexts (Clarke 1970, II, 573, note 56), although recorded examples are few in number.

The materials used for the Roman objects are all

Table 9.10: Summary of worked stone objects and materials

Object	*Stone*	*Total*
Saddle quern	Lower Old Red Sandstone Brownstones	1
Rotary quern	Upper Old Red Sandstone, sandstone and quartz conglomerate	4
Millstone	Millstone Grit	1
Mortar	Jurassic limestone, shelly, some ooliths	2
Whetstone, rod	Kentish Rag	2
Whetstone, reused tile	Lower Old Red Sandstone Brownstones	2
Whetstone/polisher	Pennant sandstone	1
Pot burnisher	Quartzitic sandstone	1
Metal smithing tool	Cornish greenstone	1

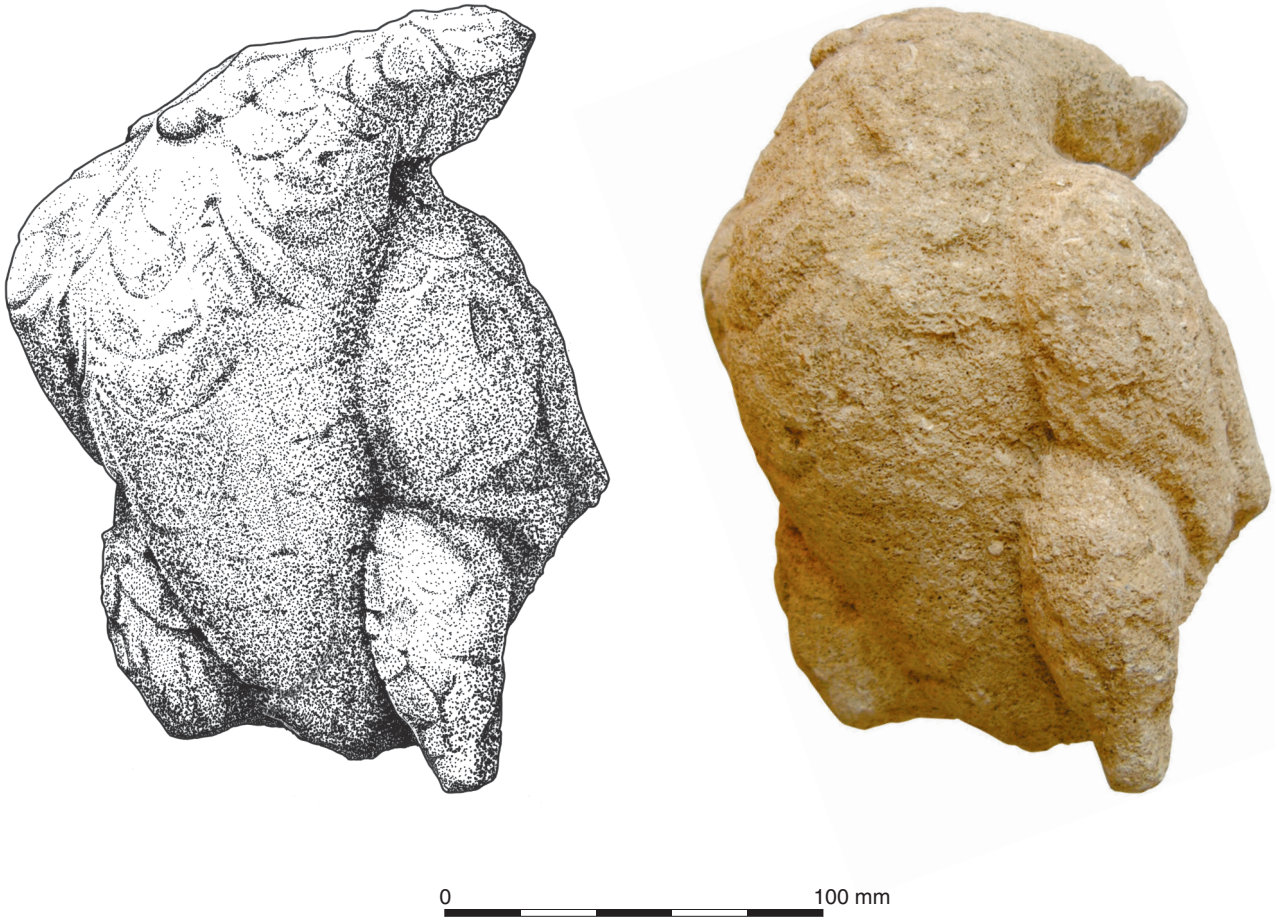

Fig. 9.19 Eagle sculpture

Plate 9.4 Shield sculpture

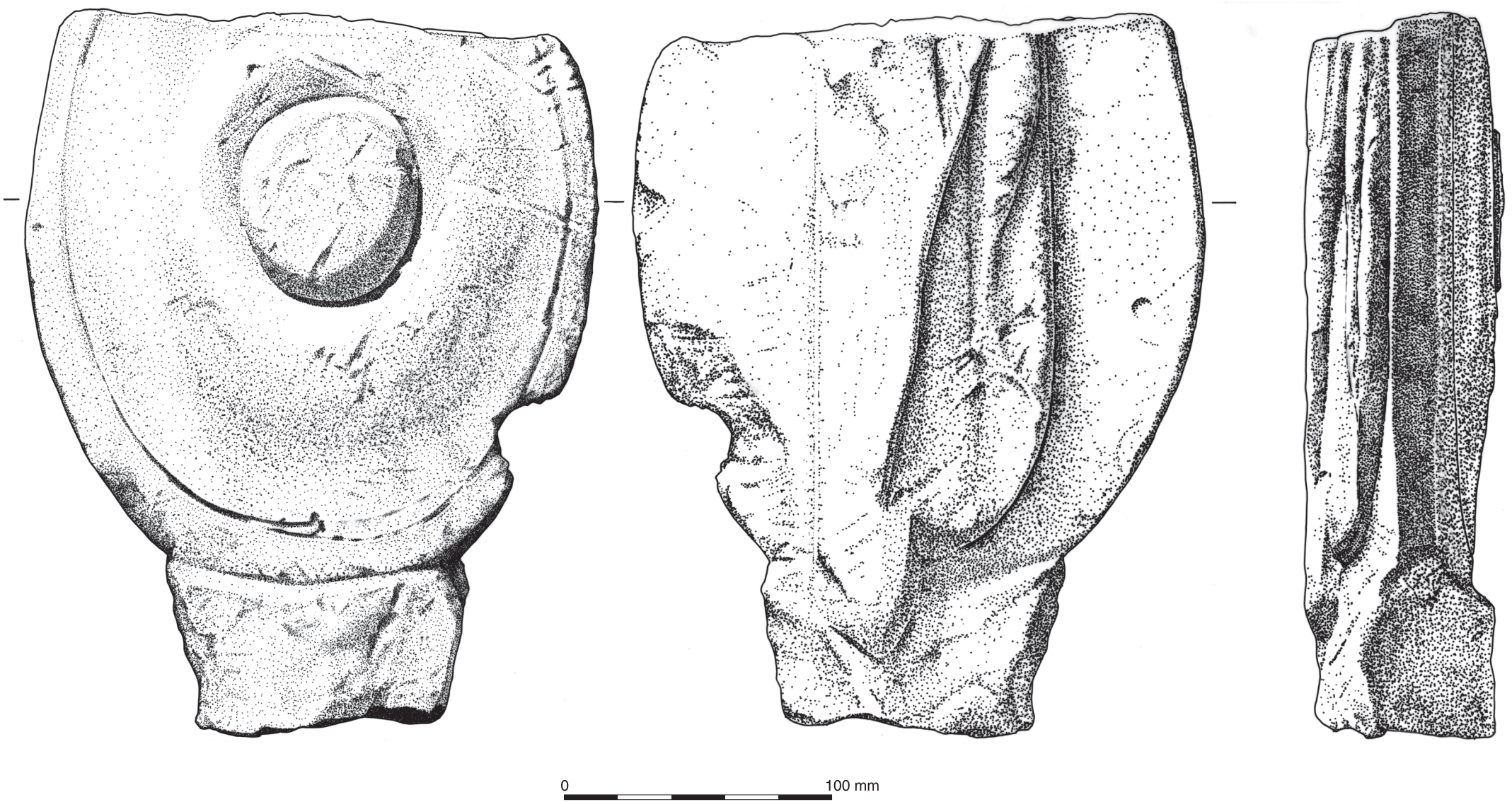

Fig. 9.20 Shield sculpture

typical of the region, rotary querns made from Upper Old Red Sandstone being particularly common on local sites, including Longdoles Field at Claydon Pike (see Chapter 2). Most of the stone for artefacts was brought in from outside the area (Table 9.11). The shelly and rather coarse-grained limestone used for the two mortars can be matched at the Roman quarries on the outskirts of Corinium, 6 km to the north (McWhirr *et al.* 1982, 31). The Forest of Dean was a significant source area, especially for the good quality stone needed for corn grinding, but also for whetstones. Other whetstones came from further afield, and ones made of Kentish Rag are well represented on other Gloucestershire sites, including Claydon Pike. These small items could have been easily distributed, but the millstone fragment represents considerable organisation in order to transport Millstone Grit from a source area near Sheffield.

Monumental and building stone

The monumental stone, in the form of an eagle and shield, is clearly of importance, but there is little stone that was clearly used for architectural purposes. Three unworked fragments are Jurassic limestone of varieties suitable for use as freestone, and so may have been utilised for carving, if not for building. A shaped limestone slab may represent paving, while Old Red Sandstone and Pennant Sandstone were Roman roofing materials.

Figure 9.21 presents a selected group of worked stone objects from Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes.

Illustrated catalogue: Worked stone (Fig. 9.21)

1. *25 SF 483. Whetstone.* Kentish rag. Rod type with rectangular cross section and trace of groove from original manufacture into bar; 41.5 x 26 x 15.5 mm, 25 g
2. *30/A SF 636. Rotary quern fragment.* Upper Old Red Sandstone. Upper stone with trace of handle slot in upper surface, small part of rim, grinding surface worn smooth; now 108 x 79 mm, max thickness 53 mm, 530 g
3. *164/H SF 812. Prehistoric metal smithing tool.* Possibly Cornish greenstone. Squared object with one smooth, flat face and four bevelled edges, uneven under surface, made from pebble, likely to be earlier prehistoric "cushion stone" or metal smithing tool; 68 x 66 x 43 mm, 365 g
4. *25 SF 829. Fragment of mortar.* Jurassic limestone. Weathered, flat base, sloping bowl; external diameter *c* 265 mm, thickness at rim 94 mm, thickness in centre 46 mm, 3 kg

Ceramic building material (Pl. 9.5) *by Leigh Allen*

A total of 678.5 kg of ceramic building material was recovered from the excavation at Neigh Bridge, and six different types of tile were identified, as shown in Table 9.12. Examination of the identifiable tile types revealed that there was only one distinct fabric present, although there was a great variation in the degree of firing. The material is almost certainly from the Minety kilns, Wiltshire (McWhirr and Viner 1978) only 12.5 km to the south of the site.

At least six examples of animal paw-marks were noted on plain tiles and bricks. These belonged to animals (small dogs mainly) that wandered over the

Table 9.11: Summary of sources for worked stone

Stone	*Source*	*Uses*
Local		
Quartzitic sandstone	Pebble, local river gravels	1 pot burnisher
Oolitic limestone with shell fragments		2 carved pieces
Shelly limestone, some ooliths	Corinium, Roman	2 unworked fragments
Fine-grained shell fragmental limestone	Quarries	2 mortars
		1 fragment paving or architectural stone
Oolitic limestone	Probably local, or just possibly from Roman quarries around Painswick	1 fragment
Imported		
Lower Old Red Sandstone Brownstones		2 whetstones
Upper Old Red Sandstone,		1 probable saddle quern
Sandstone	Forest of Dean	2 rotary querns
Upper Old Red sandstone, Quartz conglomerate		2 rotary querns
Pennant sandstone	Forest of Dean or Bristol Coalfield	1 whetstone or polisher
		1 fragment
Kentish Rag	Maidstone area of Kent	2 whetstones
Millstone Grit	Pennines around Sheffield	1 millstone fragment
Greenstone	Cornwall	1 prehistoric metal smithing tool

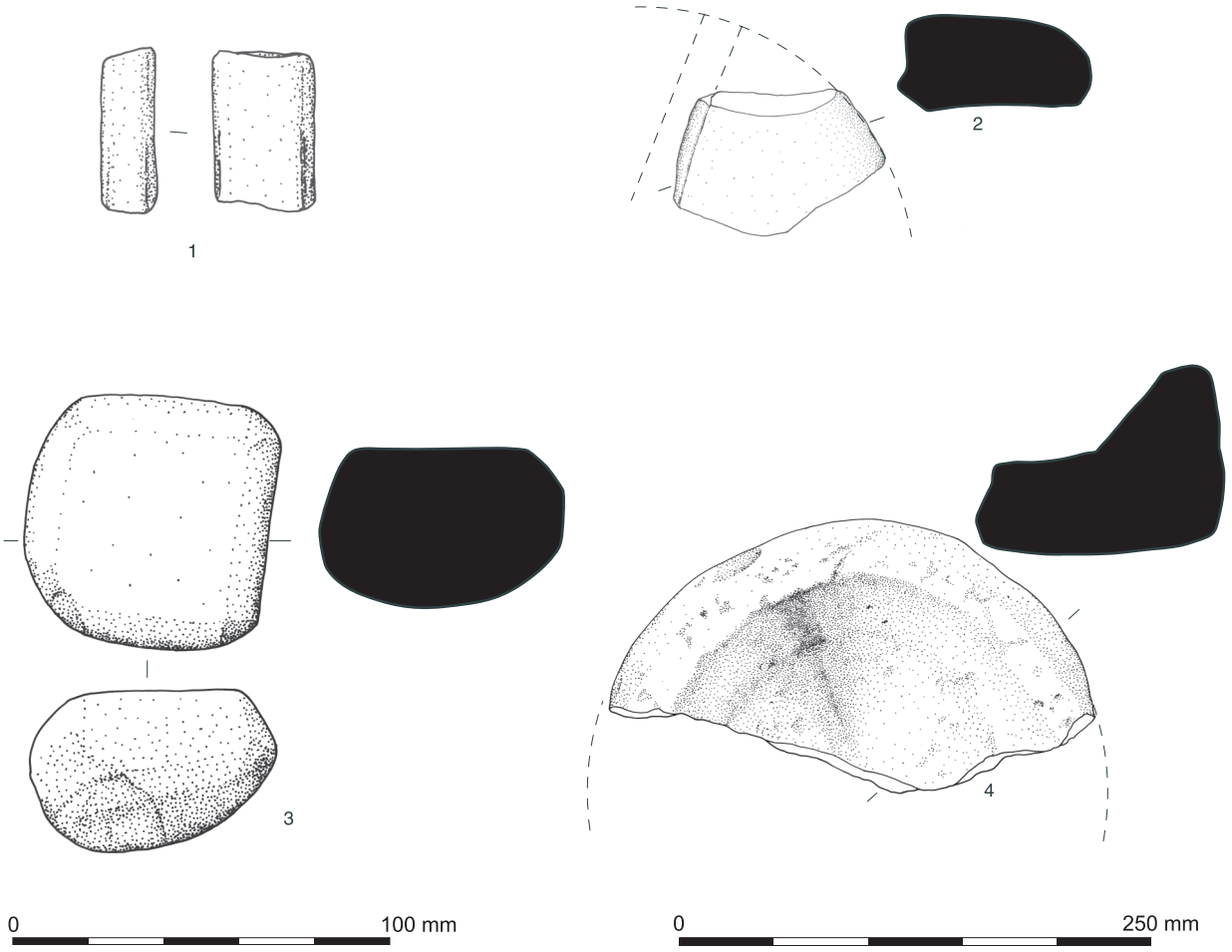

Fig. 9.21 Worked stone

tiles whilst the tiles were lying out to dry prior to firing. A large number of the tegulae fragments were marked at one end with a simple semicircular 'signature'.

A single fragment of plain tile from a surface deposit (437) near the edge of ditch 428 in Trench 17 bears the remains of the stamped letters FB (Pl. 9.5). This is probably a fragment from the TPF series of stamps many examples of which have been recovered from Gloucestershire in particular along the route of Ermin Street at Wanborough, Stanton Fitzwarren, Cirencester and Hucclecote and to the south and west of Ermine street at Minety, Easton Grey, Rodmarton and Bisley (McWhirr and Viner 1978, 365). The TPF series of stamps either appear on their own or with the additional letters A, B, C or P which probably denote different workshops of tilers. The letters are cut deeply into the tile and they have serifs, there are no stops and no frame around the letters unlike the stamps in the A, C and P series. A single example of a TFPB stamp has been recovered from Cirencester (McWhirr and Viner 1978). It is difficult to pinpoint a place of production with such a wide spread of material, but a single fragment of stamped TPF tile from Minety (McWhirr and Viner 1978) make it a good candidate.

Table 9.12: Ceramic tile types at Somerford Keynes

Tile type	*Weight (kg)*	*% of total*
Tegulae	108.1	15.93
Imbrices	29.8	4.39
Tubuli (box flue)	71.6	10.55
'Plain' tile	212.3	31.29
Brick	122.1	18.00
Miscellaneous	134.6	19.84

Overall, the ceramic building material assemblage from the site is large and was recovered from a well-defined area outside the walls of the aisled building in Trench 5. The assemblage is larger than that recovered from the site at Claydon Pike, although just over 32% of the assemblage is from unstratified contexts. The average fragment weight is 61.6g and the material is not particularly worn, although there are only a handful of complete examples. The roofing material (tegula and imbrices

together) makes up 20.32 % of the total assemblage; the floor tile in the form of large plain tiles and bricks makes up 48.87 % of the assemblage. This compares well with the quantities recovered from Claydon Pike where 25.10% of the total assemblage was roofing material and 48.6% flooring. At Neigh Bridge hypocaust material including fragments from box tiles and a number of complete pilae were recovered although it is not believed that the aisled building had any form of under floor heating. This hypocaust material makes up 7% of the total assemblage compared to 10.55% of the total assemblage at Claydon Pike where a heated building is known to exist in the late Roman period. It can therefore be assumed that if this building was not heated there is the remains of a heated building still to be found in the area.

The fact that the spread of tile respects the wall line of the aisled building could indicate that the tile was being stored outside or even up against the building, perhaps for the refurbishment of this building or for transportation elsewhere. There is some evidence for tiles being stacked up, but the lack of many complete examples and the general fragmentary nature of the assemblage imply that this tile spread is more a result of demolition than reconstruction.

Plate 9.5 Stamped tile

In addition to the ceramic building material discussed above, there were also four fragments of fired clay recovered from the site, comprising a tuyère, a fragment of kiln floor, a possible hearth plate and a unidentified fragment.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Animal bone *by Emma-Jayne Evans*

A total of 6282 fragments (77048 g) of animal bone and teeth were recovered from the site. The remains excavated were generally in good condition, although their fragmentary nature only allowed for the identification of 1639 bones and teeth to species. A list of all the species identified is shown in Table 9.13 and a full report is in Digital section 5.4.

During the late Iron Age and Roman period in southern Britain it would seem that cattle and sheep/goat were generally of relatively similar importance, with pig usually being present in low numbers (Hambleton 1999). Judging from both the minimum number of individuals and total fragment count, this is reflected in the results seen at this site, with no changes in species representation from Phase 1 through to Phase 2/3, with the exception of an increase in horse.

The remains of cattle from both the late Iron Age/Roman (Phase 1) and Roman (Phase 2/3) periods suggests that although cattle were being killed at the optimum age for meat production, many others were surviving to maturity, probably for secondary products such as traction, milk and manure. The idea that cattle were used for traction may be supported by certain palaeopathological conditions on a small number of bones from all phases.

Age at death of sheep/goat suggests that during Phase 1 a slight majority of sheep/goat were being killed at the optimum age for meat production, but many were being kept into adulthood probably for breeding and wool production. During Phase 2/3 there is an increase in the number of adult bones found, which may indicate a change in the use of sheep/goat from both meat and wool production to primarily wool production.

Table 9.13: Total number of bones identifiable to species and date

date	*cattle*	*horse*	*s/g*	*dog*	*pig*	*d. fowl*	*duck*	*red deer*	*roe deer*	*toad*	*unid*	*Total*
LIA/Roman	261	158	179	48*	14	1			1		1619	2281
Roman	438	141	296	9	43	1	1	4	2	1	2843	3779
Uncertain	13	5	10		1						127	156
Topsoil	5	3	4								54	66
Total	717	307	489	57	58	2	1	4	3	1	4643	6282

*39 fragments from one dog burial

At Somerford Keynes, as at Owslebury and Winnall Down in Hampshire (Maltby 1985b), horse was well represented during both the late Iron Age and Roman periods. Cut marks on the horse bones suggest that the inhabitants at Somerford Keynes may have exploited horses for meat as well as traction. The presence of osteoarthritis present on articulating horse thoracic vertebra may well indicate riding and/or traction. The withers heights calculated generally fall into those expected for both periods, which are roughly equivalent in size to small ponies.

It is likely that the pig remains at the site are the remains of pigs used for consumption. Butchery marks and age at death of pigs may support this. As pigs can produce large litters outside the usual seasonal cycles followed by cattle and sheep, a plentiful supply of pork is always available, therefore pigs are usually killed prior to full maturation (Dobney *et al.*1996).

The presence of dogs from both periods may indicate animals used as guard dogs or hunting dogs. There is no evidence that the dogs have been butchered. One dog burial is evident from the late Iron Age/Roman period, an adult dog probably disposed of by the inhabitants on its death.

Birds apparently provide very little to the diet of the population from both periods, although they

Table 9.14: Charred plant remains from ditch 164 (excluding charcoal)

Context		*Roman ditch 164/H*
Sample		*12*
Sample volume (litres)		*10*
Cereal grain		
Triticum spelta L.	spelt wheat	2
T. dicoccum Schübl. or *spelta* L.	emmer or spelt wheat	12
Hordeum sp. - hulled	hulled barley	3
Hordeum sp.	barley	3
Avena sp.	oats	2
Cereal indet.		116
Total cereal grains		138
Chaff		
Triticum spelta L. - glume	spelt wheat	1
T. dicoccum Schübl. or *spelta* L. - glume	emmer or spelt wheat	9
Cf. *Triticum* sp. - awn	wheat	1
Hordeum sp. - rachis	barley	1
Total chaff (excluding awns)		11
Weed seeds		
Caryophyllaceae indet.		1
Chenopodium album L.	fat hen	5
C. ficifolium Sm.	fig-leaved goosefoot	1
Atriplex sp.	orache	9
Vicia or *Lathyrus* sp.	vetch or tare	2
Polygonum persicaria L. or *lapathifolium* L.	redshank or pale persicaria	6
Fallopia convolvulus (L.) Löv.	black bindweed	2
Rumex sp.	dock	1
Odontites verna (Bell.) Dum.	red bartsia	1
Galium aparine L.	goosegrass	8
Tripleurospermum inodorum (L.) Koch.	scentless mayweed	2
Anthemis cotula L.	stinking mayweed	1
Eleocharis S. *Palustres* sp.	spikerush	5
Carex sp.	sedge	9
Gramineae indet.	grass	1
Weed seeds indet.		22
Total weed seeds		76
Total items (excluding awns)		225

may be underrepresented due to excavation and preservation conditions at the site. It is apparent that deer were only rarely exploited for meat.

Overall it is clear that there were not any major changes in on-site activity as far as faunal remains are concerned from the late Iron Age through to the Roman period, with the exception of the slight increase in the number of horses. It is clear that horses were treated differently from cattle, sheep/goat and pig, with the presence of more complete adult horse bones and only a few bones bearing cut marks, suggesting they were kept mainly for reasons other than consumption, such as traction and for riding. The evidence from the main domestic species on its own does not point to the site having been one of high status, with the meat from cattle and sheep/goat coming as much from young animals as older animals that had likely served their purpose for farming for their secondary products.

Charred plant remains *by Mark Robinson*

Twenty bulk samples, mostly of around 10 litres, were floated onto a 0.25 mm mesh to recover charred plant remains, and a number of those with the highest potential were analysed in full. Five samples were taken from different localities within the possible corn-drier (context 167), although the only charred remains from it other than charcoal was a single grain of *Triticum dicoccum* or *spelta* (emmer or spelt wheat). When corn-driers are used for cereal processing, either for the parching of spelt wheat spikelets prior to de-husking or for malting grain, this usually results in the presence of much processing waste amongst the ashes. In this case, there were copious quantities of charcoal from the oak used to fuel the corn-drier, but cereal remains were virtually absent. This raises the possibility that the structure was in fact a kiln with another purpose.

A substantial quantity of charred crop processing remains, particularly grain and weed seeds, was found in a section of Phase 3 ditch 164, where it formed the south-western corner of the 'corn-drier' enclosure (Table 9.14). *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat) predominated amongst the identified grain and chaff but hulled *Hordeum* sp. (hulled barley) was also present. While grain comprised 37% of the assemblage, weed seeds made up 60%. The most numerous weed seeds were from *Atriplex* sp. (orache), *Galium aparine* (goosegrass) and *Carex* sp. (sedge). The first two species are common arable weeds that grow on a range of soils. *G. aparine* is characteristic of autumn-sown crops. *Carex* spp. are marsh and wet-ground plants that sometimes spread into crops where the cultivated area extends up to marshy ground or has wet flushes in it. The high proportion of weed seeds in the sample suggested that the assemblage represented waste from a late stage of crop cleaning.

Table 9.15: Mollusca from ditch 252

Context	*Roman dtch: 252/A*
Sample	*10*
Sample weight (kg)	*1.0*
Lymnaea truncatula (Müll.)	2
Anisus leucostoma (Milt.)	4
Cochlicopa sp.	4
Vertigo pygmaea (Drap.)	2
Pupilla muscorum (L.)	12
Vallonia excentrica Sterki	3
Vallonia sp.	8
Zonitoides nitidus (Müll.)	1
Trichia hispida gp.	56
Total	92

Molluscs *by Mark Robinson*

A sample from Phase 2 ditch 252 in the north of Trench 5 contained many shells of terrestrial molluscs, particularly *Trichia hispida* gp., but including species characteristic of dry open conditions, such as *Pupilla muscorum* and *Vallonia excentrica* (Table 9.15). They probably lived on the general ground surface. There were also examples of the amphibious to slum aquatic molluscs *Lymnaea truncatula* and *Anisus leucostoma* that are likely to have lived in puddles of stagnant water in the ditch bottom. There were no shells of flowing water aquatic species as might be introduced by floodwaters and which were present in the alluvial sediment in the tops of some of the Roman ditches.

THE NATURE OF OCCUPATION AT NEIGH BRIDGE, SOMERFORD KEYNES *by Alex Smith*

Overall interpretative analysis of the archaeology at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes is hampered by a number of factors. Firstly, the excavations themselves were by necessity somewhat limited, and it is only in the largest trench on the highest part of the site that we have any coherent system of phasing. Another factor concerns the collection methodologies for the finds, which may well have led to the significant discrepancies with regard the nature of the different assemblages (see The Finds above). Nevertheless, what emerges is a picture of a multifunctional settlement which was probably established in the late Iron Age, although middle Iron Age activity almost certainly occurred in the vicinity. There was a radical transformation of the settlement in the early 2nd century AD, possibly as part of some widespread landscape re-organisation (see Chapter 16). It was located just 6 km south of the major urban centre at Cirencester, in an area with widespread evidence for contemporary settlement (Fig. 9.1), and provides an important contribution to our understanding of the socio-political and economic development of this part of the Upper Thames Valley.

Middle Iron Age activity

There is a small group of middle Iron Age pottery from the site which is enough to suggest some activity during this period. The limited extent of excavation could well mean that a middle Iron Age settlement focus did lie in the vicinity.

Late Iron Age and early Roman activity

Settlement organisation

The earliest recognisable phase of activity within the site comprised a sequence of sub-rectangular ditched enclosures and sub-enclosures, varying in size and form, which on ceramic evidence could be pushed back as far as the early 1st century AD, although most features seem to be dated to the post-conquest period (mid/late 1st to early 2nd century AD; Fig. 9.3). The nature of these enclosures can be readily paralleled at other sites such as Thornhill Farm (Jennings *et al.* 2004) and Claydon Pike (Phase 2; see Chapter 4), *c* 18 km to the east, where such features are characteristic of the later Iron Age and early Roman phases. There is no conclusive evidence for any domestic structures during this phase at Somerford Keynes, which again mirrors the situation at Thornhill Farm and Claydon Pike, and indeed is a common situation at many settlement sites in the region during the later Iron Age and Roman periods (Allen *et al.* 1984; Henig and Booth, 2000, 95; see Chapter 16). The only possible excavated structure from this phase comprised a group of postholes (B 2) within an enclosure, although these formed no readily identifiable pattern (Fig. 9.3). However, the arrangement is very similar to an example at Thornhill Farm in period E (*c* AD 75-120), in which a group of pits and postholes (S 202) lay within a sub-rectangular enclosure (Jennings *et al.* 2004, 49, fig 3.16). Both structures were also adjacent to small circular gullies, interpreted as possible stack rings used for animal fodder. Whether or not the Somerford Keynes posthole arrangement did represent a domestic structure of some kind, it is clear from the finds evidence that domestic activity (cooking, eating, crop processing etc) was occurring on site (see below).

In addition to a series of enclosures, of which only a small number were probably in contemporaneous use, there were a number of long linear ditched boundaries that clearly belonged to this early phase of the site. Such features are also a prominent component of the Phase 2 site at Claydon Pike, where they appear to come at the end of the sub-phasing sequence (see Chapter 4), demarcating the outer boundaries of the settlement. Although the stratigraphy at Somerford Keynes is inconclusive, it is possible that the long linear ditches may have served a similar purpose at a similar stage in the site's development.

Site economy

The late Iron Age/early Roman settlements at Thornhill Farm and Claydon Pike are regarded as largely pastoral farmsteads specialising in cattle husbandry (see Chapter 4). Although the ratio of cattle to sheep/goat may not be as high at Somerford Keynes, it is clear that they were a dominant part of the agrarian regime, and the site probably operated a similar kind of pastoral economy. As with Thornhill Farm and Claydon Pike, it seems that cattle were being reared, butchered and consumed on site, which points to a largely subsistence rather than commercial economy. An interesting difference lies with the age structure, which suggests that at Somerford Keynes a higher proportion of cattle may have been kept into adulthood for traction and secondary products such as milk and manure.

Unfortunately, we have no environmental evidence for the earliest phase of activity on site, and so it is not known if cereal crops were grown in the vicinity. No quernstones were actually recovered from Phase 1 contexts, although an unstratified rotary quern in Trench 17 was suggested as being of late Iron Age/early Roman date (see above), and therefore provides some evidence for crop processing on site.

The pottery evidence is consistent with that of a low status rural settlement, with a preponderance of local grog-tempered wares, mostly in the form of jars, similar to periods E-F (*c* AD 75 to 120) at Thornhill Farm. Only a very small amount of samian, mortaria and amphora hint at more Roman style culinary habits, but it is clear these were not widely adopted at this time.

The metalwork deposits

It is clear that the low status rural agrarian site described above is somewhat at odds with the exceptionally large and rich group of small finds found by metal detecting survey across the site, despite many of these objects being of definite 1st-century AD date. Chronologically the survey finds assemblage seems to have a greater emphasis on earlier material (late 1st century BC/early 1st century AD), and derives from a much wider geographical area than the majority of the stratified assemblage. Furthermore, there seems to be a genuine difference between the nature of those finds which came from stratified deposits and those that derived from metal detecting, with for example the former having only half the number of functional categories of the latter. As Cool has suggested (see above), the unstratified finds are probably indicating that occupation of a different status to that uncovered by the excavations, was taking place in the vicinity.

The finds themselves, which include large numbers of 1st- to early 2nd-century brooches and coins, do give some indication as to the nature of

this activity. Such an assemblage is typical of what may be expected within a late Iron Age or Roman religious site, with coins and personal ornaments being by far the most numerous types of deposited objects within temple sites in Britain (Smith 2001, 155). The preponderance of brooches is especially typical of late Iron Age/early Roman religious sites (Smith 2001, 69), and is in accordance with the general increase in such objects at this time, which has been termed the 'fibula event horizon' (Jundi and Hill 1998). Perhaps the best comparative example is at Harlow in Essex where large numbers of coins, brooches and other metal items were deposited prior to the construction of the Roman temple in the pre-Flavian period (France and Gobel 1985; Bartlett 1988). Indeed, there are now an increasing number of religious sites across Britain that seem defined by concentrations of finds, but without necessarily having any temple structures, such as Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire (OA in prep c), and the early phase at Chelmsford (Wickenden 1992). In Haselgrove's discussion of Iron Age/early Roman brooch deposition, he suggests a possible religious interpretation for a number of sites which yielded large quantities of coins, brooches and other metalwork, mostly as surface finds (1997, 66). Furthermore, many of these sites were near river sources or crossings, similar to Somerford Keynes (see below).

If it is accepted that the unstratified finds are likely to have come from a religious context – and it must be stressed that this still remains quite speculative – then it is probable that the actual location of this potential shrine was not too far from the area of excavations. A primary candidate would be an area closer to the river Thames, perhaps even in the vicinity of the river crossing, as an association between rivers and sacred sites, including ritual deposition, is well attested (Fitzpatrick 1984; Smith 2001, 150; see above). The finds may then have been redeposited within the area of the excavated site at a later stage, although at what period and for what purpose remains uncertain. It is likely to have been at some point during or soon after the Phase 2/3 reorganisation, as the overall spread of this material does seem to be bounded by the rows of parallel ditches to the north and south.

The nature of the Phase 1 settlement

The earliest recognisable phase of activity within the site is also perhaps the most problematic, as it is here that the evidence from the various finds assemblages are at their most divergent. The environmental and ceramic evidence from the excavations all consistently point to a low status rural settlement, probably operating a pastoral regime, whilst the unstratified small finds suggest a much higher status site, quite possibly with a religious aspect. Perhaps the best explanation for this is that the unstratified finds relate to a ritual site situated a little away from the main areas of excavation, and were subsequently redeposited at a later date. The main excavated settlement is certainly similar to a number of sites along the gravel terraces of the Upper Thames Valley, which were established in the middle or late Iron Age and continued until the early 2nd century AD, when many were either transformed or abandoned (see Chapter 16). Such transformation also appears to have occurred at Somerford Keynes.

Settlement reorganisation in the 2nd century AD

Settlement organisation

During the early 2nd century AD, the enclosures and sub-enclosures of the earlier settlement were replaced by a rectilinear system of ditched boundaries and trackways, along with a substantial aisled building (Fig. 9.2, Pl. 9.2). There appears to have been at least two main zones at the site, possibly representing different functional areas. To the east a substantial curvilinear ditched enclosure was dug, behind which lay a series of boundaries probably representing successive phases of an enclosure system. Nearly all datable features from this area indicated that activity was restricted to the 2nd century AD. Further to the south-east, another substantial curved ditch was located, which, if contemporary, may have acted as an inner boundary, although as this was not concentric this is far from certain. The western part of the site was defined to the north and south by parallel ditches running from the D-shaped enclosure, although it is uncertain how many of these were contemporary as dating evidence is slight. Between the two sets of ditches was an arrangement of trackways and enclosures. The two main trackways ran north-south and east-west, joining in the central area of Trench 5 where they formed part of an enclosure within which lay the aisled building (see below). Although the D-shaped enclosure and radiating parallel ditches are strikingly unusual within such a Roman settlement context, the general organisation of rectangular enclosures, trackways and an aisled building has very close similarities with the situation at Claydon Pike (see Chapter 5) and Roughground Farm (Allen *et al.* 1993).

In the mid to late 2nd century AD (Phase 3; Fig. 9.6), there is evidence for extensive redevelopment in site organisation, although the aisled building remained in use and it is unlikely that the general character of the site changed too radically. The principal alterations comprised the redefining of the trackways further to the south and east, and construction of a possible corn-drying oven within an enclosure in the centre of the site.

The aisled building

The aisled building at Somerford Keynes is quite an unusual example in the region, being relatively long and having two post settings at the southern end

(Fig. 9.5, Pl. 9.2). The outer walls were presumably constructed purely of timber, and a reasonable reconstruction based upon calculations by Mackreth (1996 66) would give overall outside dimensions of 10-12 m wide and 27 m long. It was therefore considerably longer (by 8-10 m) than either of the aisled buildings from Claydon Pike. One of the closest comparable examples is that found in 2001 excavations of the Birmingham M6 Toll road (OWA 2002) which was 30 by 9 m in size and also had an intermediate central post setting at one end. It was dated to the 2nd century AD.

Romano-British aisled buildings had a wide variety of functions, although previous analysis has indicated that many of the simpler structures of 2nd-century AD date were used as domestic buildings (Morris 1979, 61). Unfortunately there is no direct evidence for domestic occupation at Somerford Keynes as no floor surfaces survive, but it is certainly possible that at least part of the structure was used for such activity, as indicated by the amount of domestic finds from this phase. Part of the building may also have been used for tile storage, given the quantity and range of such material in the immediate vicinity (see below), although it must be said that only very small quantities of tile were actually found within the structure.

Site economy

There is a range of environmental and artefactual evidence from the site that provides some picture of the economy of the 2nd-century AD settlement, although the generally poor stratigraphic integrity ensures that there may well have been much mixing of finds within the different phases. This may in part account for why the animal bone assemblage in particular does not exhibit any major changes within the 2nd-century settlement, with the exception of the slight increase in the number of horses. It appears that the main domesticates continued to be used as part of the economic basis of the site, and there is nothing to suggest any particularly high status activity. The same is true of the pottery assemblage, which continued to be dominated by local coarsewares, and where characteristically Roman forms such as mortaria, amphorae and flagons are all poorly represented. A noteworthy point to make here however is that the amphorae came from more than one source, suggesting at least some limited adherence to Roman culinary tastes, and a wider geographical emphasis with regard to trade and supply. The environmental evidence from this phase suggests an open landscape with spelt wheat and barley grown in the vicinity, at least during the later 2nd century. Crop processing on site is indicated by a number of quern fragments, all of which are typical of Roman rural sites in this region. A fragment of millstone was also recovered. These are often found on larger Roman sites and point to more centralised crop processing (Shaffrey pers. comm.). The overall evidence may imply that whatever the nature of the dramatic physical changes in site organisation in the early 2nd century, most of the people living and working at the site continued much as before, at least in so far as their culinary habits were concerned.

A Roman tile depot?

Perhaps the most significant development as far as finds are concerned is with the Roman tile, of which comparatively large quantities were found both in unstratified and Phase 2/3 contexts. Most of the stratified and unstratified tile was recovered from areas immediately south and east of the aisled building, with some of it apparently stacked up in regular arrangements. This material may have lain within what was effectively a builder's yard. The variety of tile types suggests that they did not derive from the aisled building alone, and the fact that they all appear to be of one fabric does suggest that they came from a single tile production centre in the vicinity. Well known tile kilns were located *c* 4 km to the south at Minety, the products of which were spread throughout the Upper Thames Valley and Cotswolds, including Corinium and Claydon Pike (McWhirr and Viner 1978, 368). This seems to have been the source of the Somerford Keynes tile.

If the aisled building complex at Neigh Bridge was indeed some kind of tile depot, and this is far from certain, the products could quite possibly have been stored and distributed from the site, either by road or by river down the Thames valley to the east, assuming that this was navigable to shallow craft at this time (see discussion, Chapter 16). Although no definite Roman road is known from this area, it is possible that one may have followed the line of the current road just to the west of the site, which leads down towards Minety. Most of the known Roman settlements in the immediate locality (Fig. 9.1) have produced at least small quantities of tile, and although nothing is recorded of the fabric, a Minety source seems most likely.

There is still relatively little known about tile production and distribution in Roman Britain but it is likely to have been seasonal and possibly linked with farming (Brodribb 1987 139). Official interest in the industry is occasionally well attested, with the prime example being stamped tiles of the *classis Britannica* (Brodribb and Cleere 1988; Peacock 1982, 146). An official city brickworks is known at Gloucester operating from the early 2nd century AD, with tiles and bricks stamped with the letters RPG (REI PUBLICAE GLEVENSIUM) being found within the town and the area of its *territorium* (McWhirr 1981, 109). Aside from such official centres, the exact nature of tile production and distribution mechanisms remains generally uncertain. None of the tiles from Somerford Keynes show any sign of a stamp which may be linked to official production and it is perhaps likely that they were the products of civilian kilns, operating on a

seasonal basis. The only certain stamp found at the site is incomplete, but may have originally read TPFB (Pl. 9.5), part of a group of TPF stamps found throughout Gloucestershire, and thought to belong to varying workshops within a civilian brickworks (McWhirr 1981, 111; see Allen above).

Despite the lack of official stamped tile, there are grounds for suggesting some official presence at the site, even if this was only for limited periods and concerned with the centralised distribution of a number of products, of which tile was possibly one. The small finds belonging to the Phase 2/3 period were relatively scarce compared to earlier and later periods, but they did include a group of military equipment belonging to the later 2nd to 3rd century AD. Cool (see above) has related such equipment with the presence of soldiers carrying out policing and similar tasks (see wider discussion, Chapter 16). An official, although not necessarily military, aspect is also indicated by the presence of sculptural fragments of the capitoline triad, tentatively dated to the 2nd century AD. The worship of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva was especially prevalent among the army and in urban centres, although no certain examples of a *capitolium,* a joint temple to the three, have yet been found in Britain (Frere 1987 313). At Somerford Keynes, it is possible that such a shrine may have replaced or even complemented an earlier local religious focus near to the site (see above). Although the sculptural fragments were undoubtedly removed from their original position on site, it is unlikely that this was too far away, and therefore the substantial curved enclosure and unusual radial ditches be well be in some way related to the cult.

The control of all kinds of resources, including foods, metals and ceramic products, has been regarded as an essential factor of the military supply economy in Roman Britain, especially in the later 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD (Faulkner 2000, 54; see Chapter 16). The exchange systems are not always well understood, but it is likely that there were only relatively few directly controlled imperial estates such as that postulated for the fens in East Anglia (Finsham 2002). For the most part, there was probably a complex system of commercial negotiation between individuals throughout the social scale, which ensured that a steady supply of goods was maintained. The military and official objects from Somerford Keynes certainly do not indicate direct official control, or even that the site was run on behalf of the state. Nevertheless, it could well have been a part of the general state supply network, which was deemed important enough for a small scale policing presence to be established there at some point in the late 2nd to early 3rd century AD.

The nature of the Phase 2/3 settlement

It is clear that during the early 2nd century AD the site underwent a major transformation in form and function. The sub-rectangular enclosures of the previous farmstead were replaced by trackways, regular enclosures, and a substantial curving ditch with radiating parallel linear ditches branching off to the west. It is suggested that the site incorporated a depot possibly involved in the distribution of ceramic tile and other products. This seems to have necessitated a small, and probably intermittent, official presence on the site, an idea which is furthered by the likely presence of a *capitolium*. However, despite this, it does seem that the main residents of the settlement may have continued with relatively little disruption in day to day living, as agricultural practices were maintained and there is nothing to suggest much in the way of Roman style culinary habits. Occupation of the site appears to cease by the early 3rd century AD, perhaps associated with a decline in the tile-making industry, and there nothing to suggest further activity beyond this until the later 3rd or 4th century.

Late Roman activity

Although there does not appear to be any further structural phases within the site, the overall quantity of later 3rd- and 4th-century coins and small finds suggests continued activity of some kind in the area. Furthermore, the nature of the small finds indicates a continued official state presence. These finds include a group of late Roman military equipment, which although not an absolute indication of the presence of soldiers, do at least indicate the presence of an elite with late military trappings. Further indication of this lie with the mid 4th-century crossbow brooch, as such brooches appear to have been part of the regalia of late Roman officers and administrators (see Cool, above).

Unfortunately, there are no real indications as to the nature of occupation in the late Roman period, even if it did certainly seem to include an official element. The largest concentrations of late Roman small finds from the site occurred to the east of the large curvilinear enclosure (Fig. 9.2), and it is possible that the layer of metalling found sealing some of the features in Trench 17 could have represented a late Roman surface. The date range of the late Roman finds indicates that activity probably continued into the early 5th century AD (see Chapter 17 for a wider discussion of this period in the Upper Thames region).