Chapter 2: Archaeological Description

Phase 1 – Late Neolithic, *c* 3000-2400 BC (Figs 6-9)

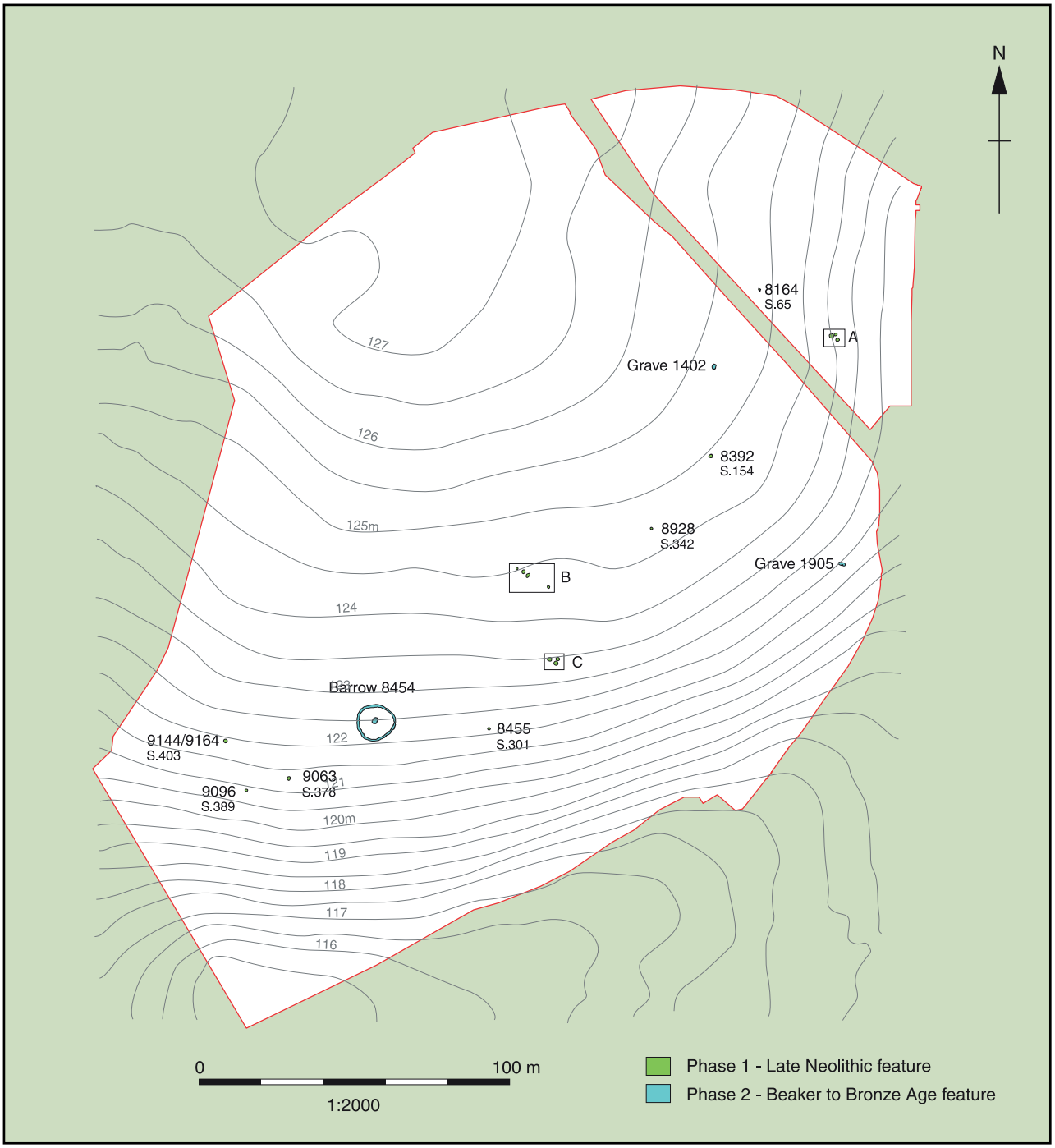
Evidence of Neolithic activity was confined to pits dug across the southern half of the site (Fig. 6). Eighteen pits have been dated to this phase by various means, including radiocarbon dating and a range of artefactual material (Table 1). The features were small and oval in plan and measured on average 1.14 m long, 0.91 m wide and 0.3 m deep. The pits varied in terms of profile but generally conformed to three broad types (Figs 7-9). Most were flat-based and steep-sided. These were relatively shallow (up to 0.25 m deep), but did include deeper examples; pit 9144, which cut similarly-profiled pit 9164, was 0.5 m deep (Fig. 9). Other pits were concave or U-shaped. All were dug through the natural cornbrash sediment, although where the admixture of small limestone nodules, silt and sand gave way to limestone bedrock, the pits tended to be more irregular, with stepped sides and uneven bases.

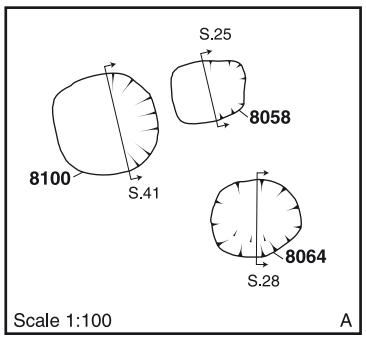
The pits were filled by silty or clay deposits that contained the remnants of burning from hearths and the like in the form of charcoal and burnt limestone. Most features contained two fills, but single fills and as many as four deposits were recorded. Where there was more than one fill, the bottom deposit tended to contain a higher proportion of cornbrash material, though it also held artefacts. That many of the fills contained objects of human activity suggests that the fills were formed primarily through deliberate deposition, perhaps from the clearance of near-by cooking or flint-knapping areas, rather than through natural silting. The pits contained a varied assemblage of finds that included Grooved Ware pottery, flint scrapers, bone pins, stone axe heads, antler fragments, and cattle and pig bone.

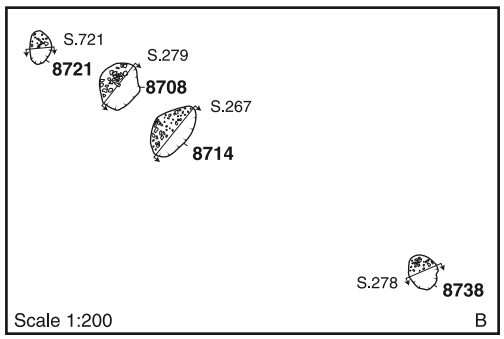
Though distributed widely in the southern half of the excavation area, the pits form at least four groups, each consisting of three or four features. These groupings do not appear to be chronologically significant, as radiocarbon determinations reveal no great differences in the periods of deposition. A nutshell fragment from pit 9100 (Fig. 8),

Table 1: Artefactual and dating evidence from Neolithic pits

Group	*Pit*	*Pottery (sherds)*	*Flint (no.)*	*Animal Bone*	*Charred plant remains*	*Other*	*Radiocarbon date*
8103	8058	21	14	pig, cattle, deer, goat	--	antler x2, bone pin tip	
	8100	--	72	pig, cattle, deer, sheep/goat	hazelnut shells	pierced stone, antler x2, hammerstone, axe flake	2863 to 2673 cal BC
	8064	286	80	pig, cattle, sheep/goat, deer	hazelnut shells, cereal grain	antler x1, bone ?spatula, bone pins x2	2856 to 2571 cal BC
9103	8813	59	505	pig, cattle, deer, horse, sheep/goat, ?aurochs	hazelnut shells	complete stone axe, bone pins x5, worked bone, antler x1	
	8930	3	145	pig, cattle, deer	charcoal	antler x3	
	9100	98	202	pig, cattle, sheep/goat, aurochs, deer	hazelnut shells, tuber, ?cereal, crab apple	bone pins x3, antler x1	3261 to 2922 cal BC (context 9101) 2859 to 2500 cal BC (context 9102)
n/a	8721	--	--	sheep/goat	--	no finds	
n/a	8708	--	--	--	charcoal	no finds	
n/a	8714	--	--	--	--	no finds	
n/a	8738	--	8	pig, cattle, deer	hazelnut shells	antler x1	
n/a	8164	17	81	pig	not sampled	--	
n/a	8392	69	117	pig, cattle, sheep/goat, deer, dog	hazelnut shells, ?tuber	--	
n/a	8455	305	136	pig, cattle, sheep/goat, dog	hazelnut shells	stone axe fragment	
n/a	8928	29	170	pig, cattle, sheep/goat	--	axe fragments x2, polished pebble	
n/a	9063	--	1	pig, cattle, sheep/goat, horse	--	--	
n/a	9096	144	84	pig, cattle, deer, sheep/goat	hazelnut shells, ?cereal	antler x4, hammerstone	2886 to 2665 cal BC
n/a	9144/ 9164	30	11	pig, cattle, deer, sheep/goat	not sampled	antler x2	







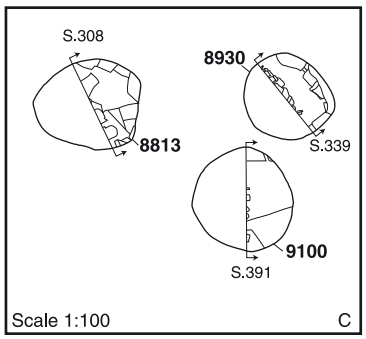


Fig. 6 Phase 1 and 2. Late Neolithic and Bronze Age activity

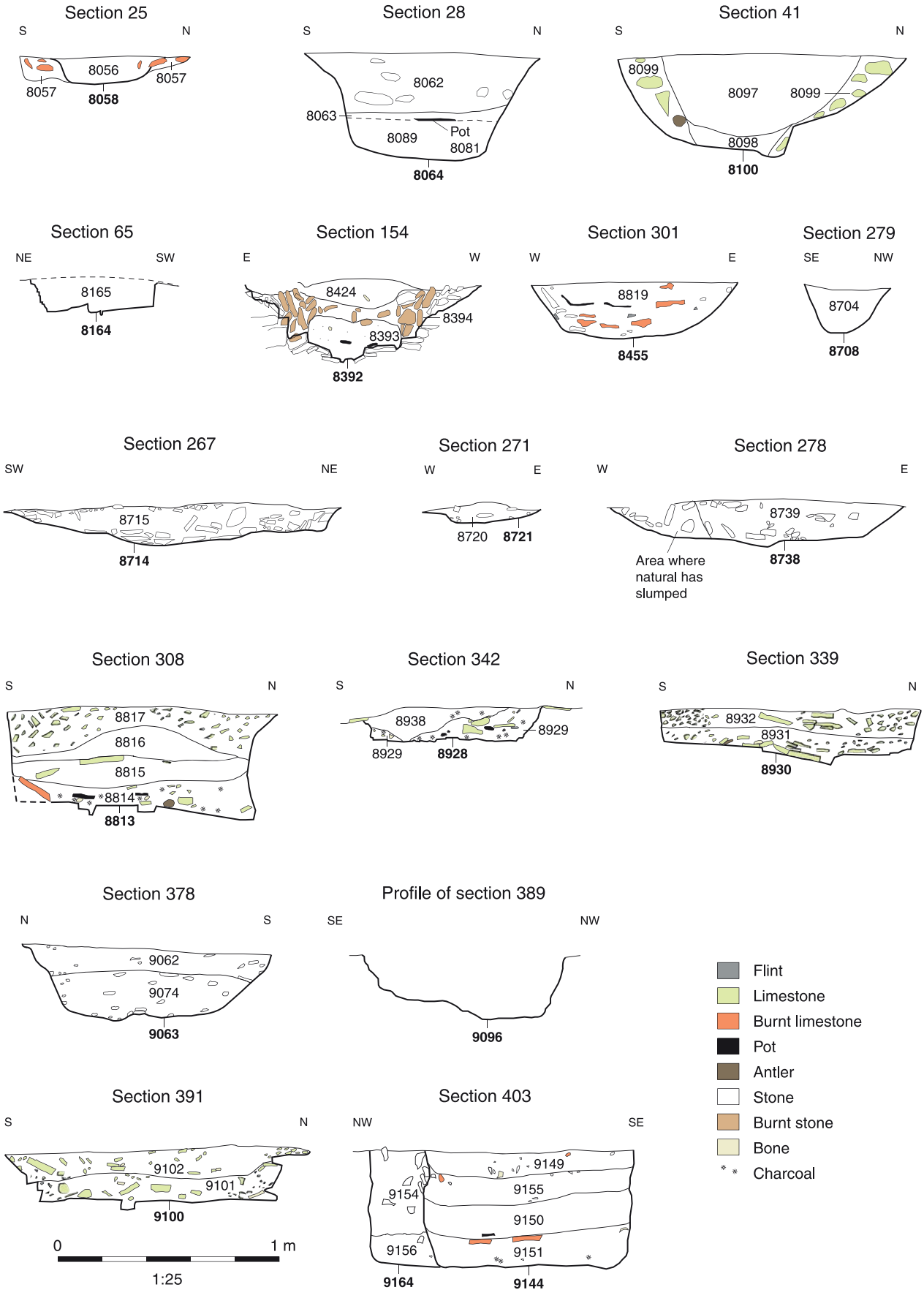


Fig. 7 Phase 1. Sections through Neolithic pits

Fig. 8 Neolithic pit 9100

Fig. 9 Neolithic pit 9144

grouped in the centre of the site with pits 8813 and 8930, was dated to 3261-2922 cal BC (95%; NZA-33224). Pit 9096, located near to pits 9063 and 9144 at south-western end of the site, contained a nutshell dated to 2886-2665 cal BC (95%; NZA-33151). At the far eastern end of the site, an antler fragment from pit 8064 and a nutshell from pit 8100 gave closely similar determinations of 2856-2571 cal BC (95%; NZA-33477) and 2863-2673 cal BC (95%; NZA-33140) respectively.

Phase 2 – Beaker to Bronze Age, *c* 2400-1400 BC
(Figs 10-14)

The archaeology of the Bronze Age was exclusively funerary in character. Group 8454, uncovered towards the south-eastern part of the site, was a ring-ditch enclosing a central grave that contained an inhumation burial (Figs 10-12). The ditch measured on average 0.65 m wide, 0.22 m deep, and formed a ring 12 m in diameter. Sections dug through the ditch revealed that feature was filled with a silty clay soil, although deposition was uneven; parts of the ditch were filled in single episodes while others – usually the deeper sections – received two, and occasionally three, fills. Small quantities of struck flint, pig and cattle bone, deer antler, and Bronze Age Beaker sherds were recovered from the ditch fill. Two postholes (8993 and 9011) were uncovered on either side of ditch. No dating evidence was recovered, but their arrangement suggests that they were associated with the ditch. The central grave (8588) was rectangular, measuring *c* 2.2 m by 1.3 m, its long axis aligned south-west/north-east. The buried individual (8656) was placed in the empty cut on its right side, with its head at the south end and its legs flexed (Fig. 12). Diagnostic traits on the cranium pointed to male, but the more accurate traits of the pelvis made identification as female more likely. Dental and pelvic elements indicated an age of 30-40 years old (Zochowski and Webb, Chapter 3 below). Strontium isotopes extracted from the teeth suggested a childhood in eastern or southern England (Lamb and Evans, Chapter 3 below). A Beaker was placed on the floor of the grave in between the legs and arms. The grave was backfilled with silty clay in three episodes; the final fill, 8589, contained 270 fragments of animal bone, including substantial portions of the skull and lower legs of a cow. These belonged to a so-called 'head-and-hooves' deposit representing the burial of a hide (see Strid and Nicholson, Chapter 6 below). Dating evidence places the burial in the early Bronze Age. Apart from the Beaker, a radiocarbon date of 2458-2152 cal BC (95%; OxA-20184) was obtained from the skeleton.

Another early Bronze Age grave (1402) (Fig. 13), found during the 2006 evaluation, was located at the north-eastern part of the site. In this case, however, the skeleton (1403) was dated to 2201-2031 cal BC (95%; OxA-20186), indicating that the burial was later than the burial associated with group 8454. The grave was very roughly circular, measuring 1.6 m across its widest extent. The skeleton, which was crouched with its head was at the north end, was fragmentary, but the diagnostic traits suggest that the individual was an adult female over 50 years old (Zochowski and Webb, Chapter 3 below). In contrast to skeleton 8656, strontium isotope results placed the childhood of individual 1403 in more south-westerly areas of Britain (Lamb and Evans, Chapter 3 below). A Beaker, incomplete on excavation, had been placed by the feet. Bone fragments from the redeposited remains of a juvenile burial were also recovered. Two fills were recorded: a layer of sandy clay, which had accumulated before the individual was interred, and a silty clay backfill. The upper deposit contained an area of charcoal that appeared to lie over the legs of the skeleton. Fragments of animal bone were also found within the grave.

A third grave, 1905 (Fig. 14), was later still in date. The skeleton provided a radiocarbon date of 1502-1415 cal BC (95%; OxA-20188), placing the burial at the start of the middle Bronze Age. The grave, aligned east-west, was rectangular and measured *c* 2.2 m long by 0.9 m wide. It appeared to cut an earlier pit (1907). The individual (1903) was laid in the empty grave supine and extended, with

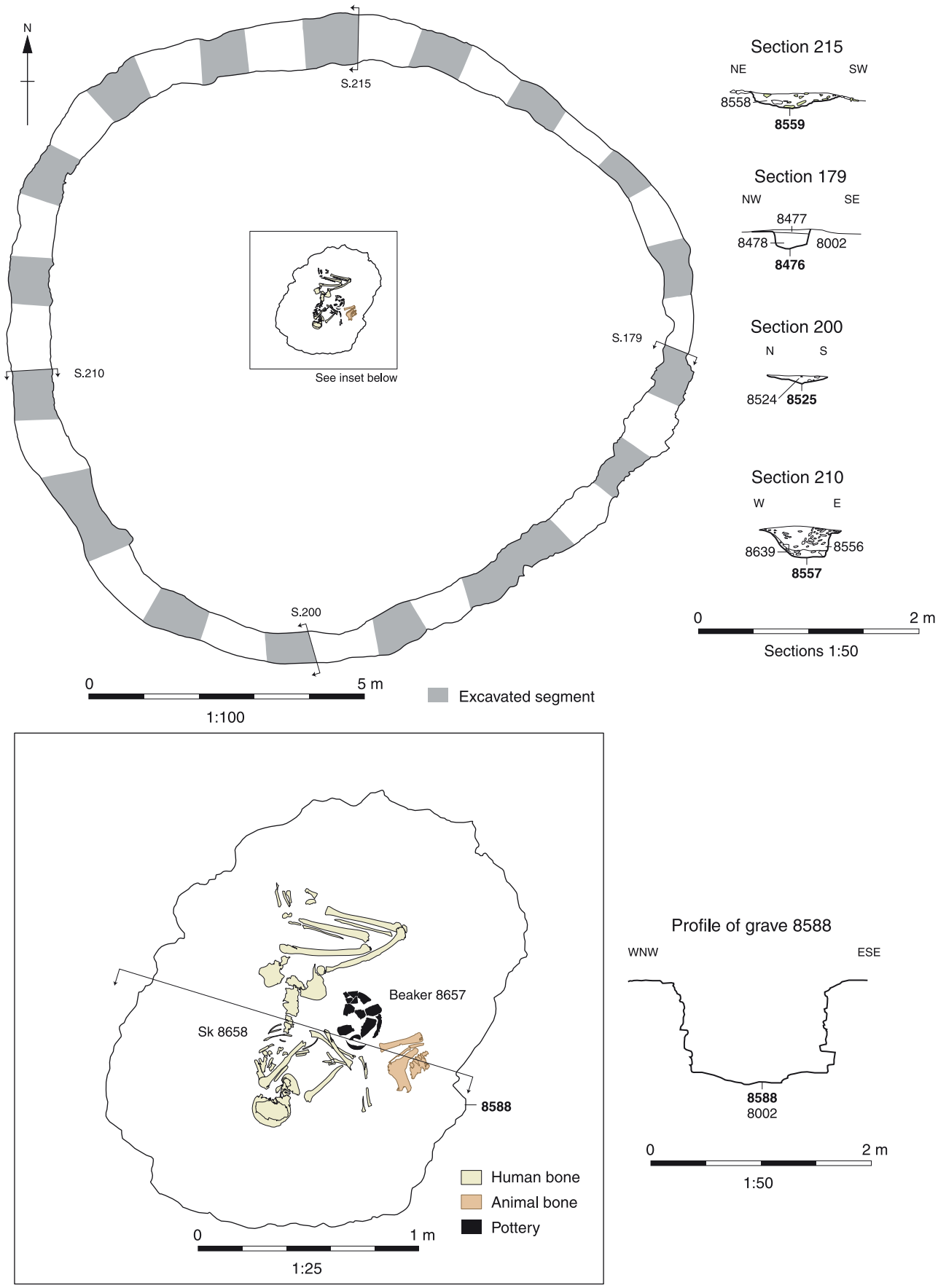


Fig. 10 Phase 2. Early Bronze Age ring-ditch and burial, group 8454

Fig. 11 Round barrow 8454

Fig. 12 Central grave 8588

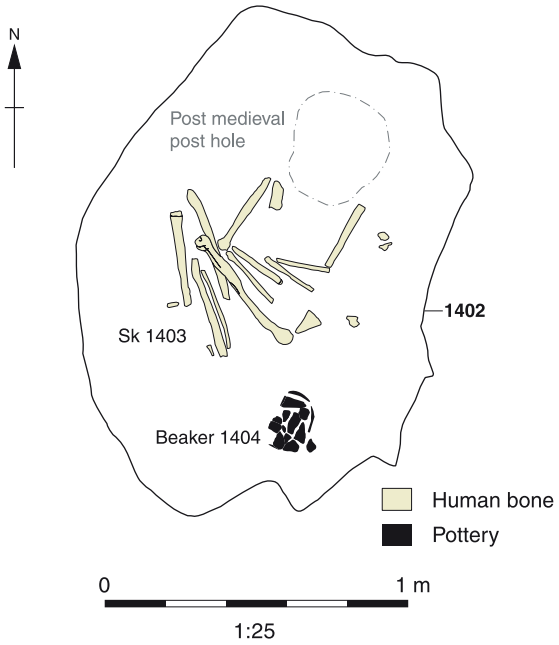


Fig. 13 Phase 2. Early Bronze Age grave 1402

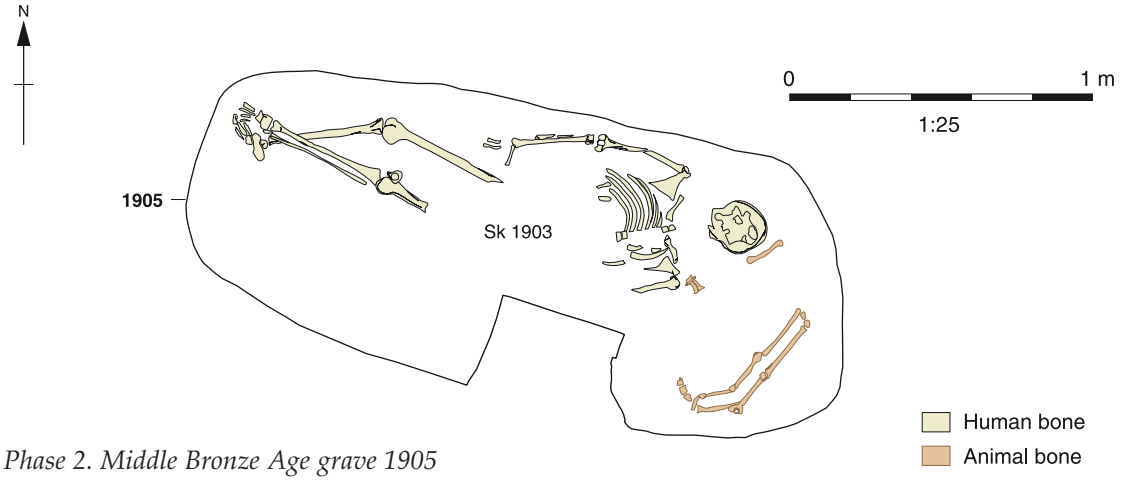


Fig. 14 Phase 2. Middle Bronze Age grave 1905

its head to the east. Evidence from the teeth suggests that the individual was aged 25-35 years at death, while cranial and pelvic traits indicate male. Grave goods were restricted to the hindquarters of a sheep or goat, which were placed next to the head.

Phase 3 – Middle Iron Age, *c* 400-200 BC
(Figs 15-17)

As with the late Neolithic phase, the middle Iron Age was characterised by pit digging, which was similarly widely distributed across the site, though concentrated in the southern half (Fig. 15). Nineteen pits were assigned to this phase on the basis of radiocarbon determinations or the pottery contained in the pits. The features measured on average 0.53 m deep and 1.7 m across. The deepest pit (8311) was 1.15 m deep and 1.5 m wide, while the shallowest (8140) was 0.16 m deep and 1 m wide. Four broad types were discerned. Cylindrical pits, or those with steep sides and flat bases, for example pit 8660 (Fig. 16, section 256), were

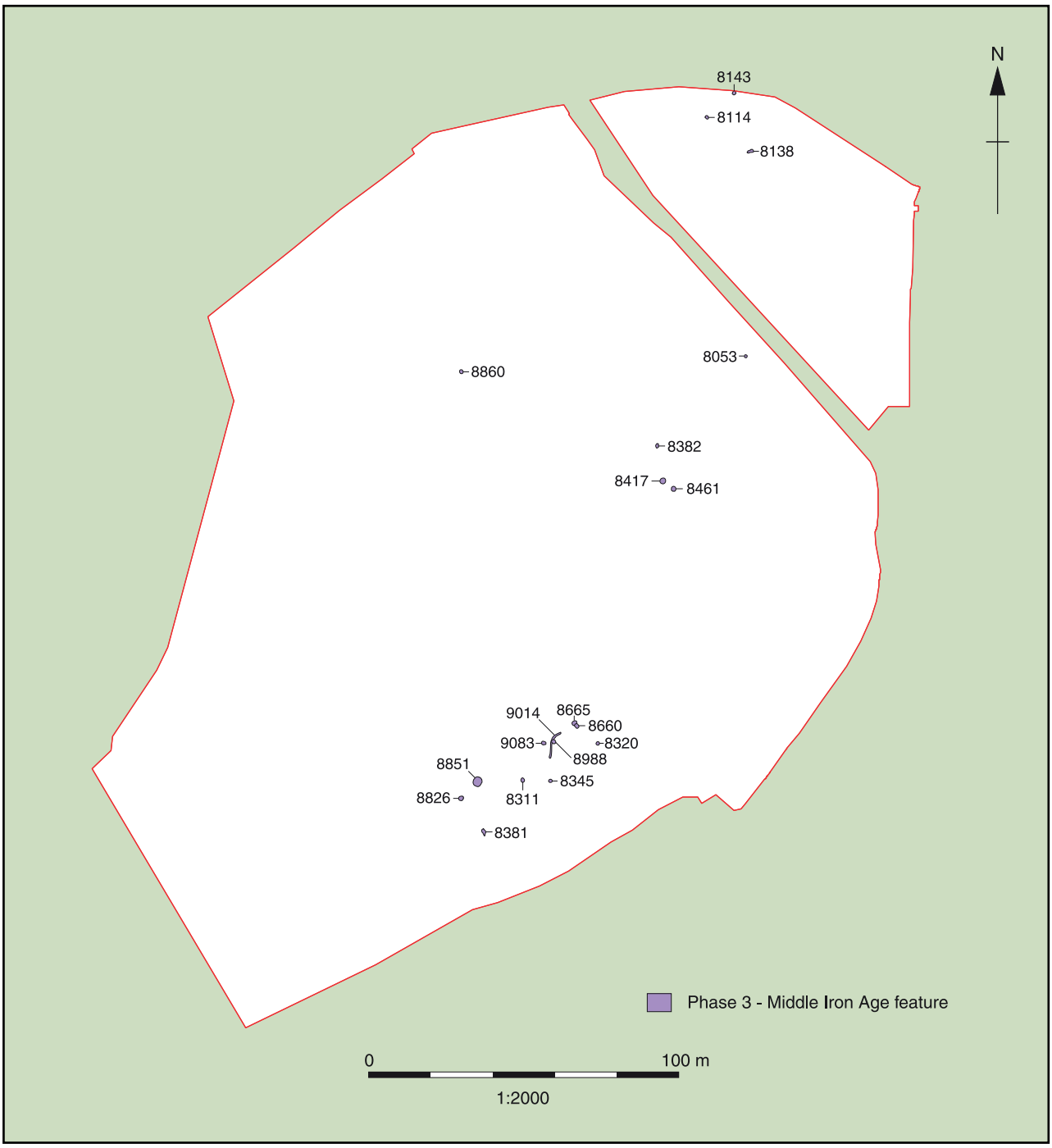


Fig. 15 Phase 3. Middle Iron Age activity

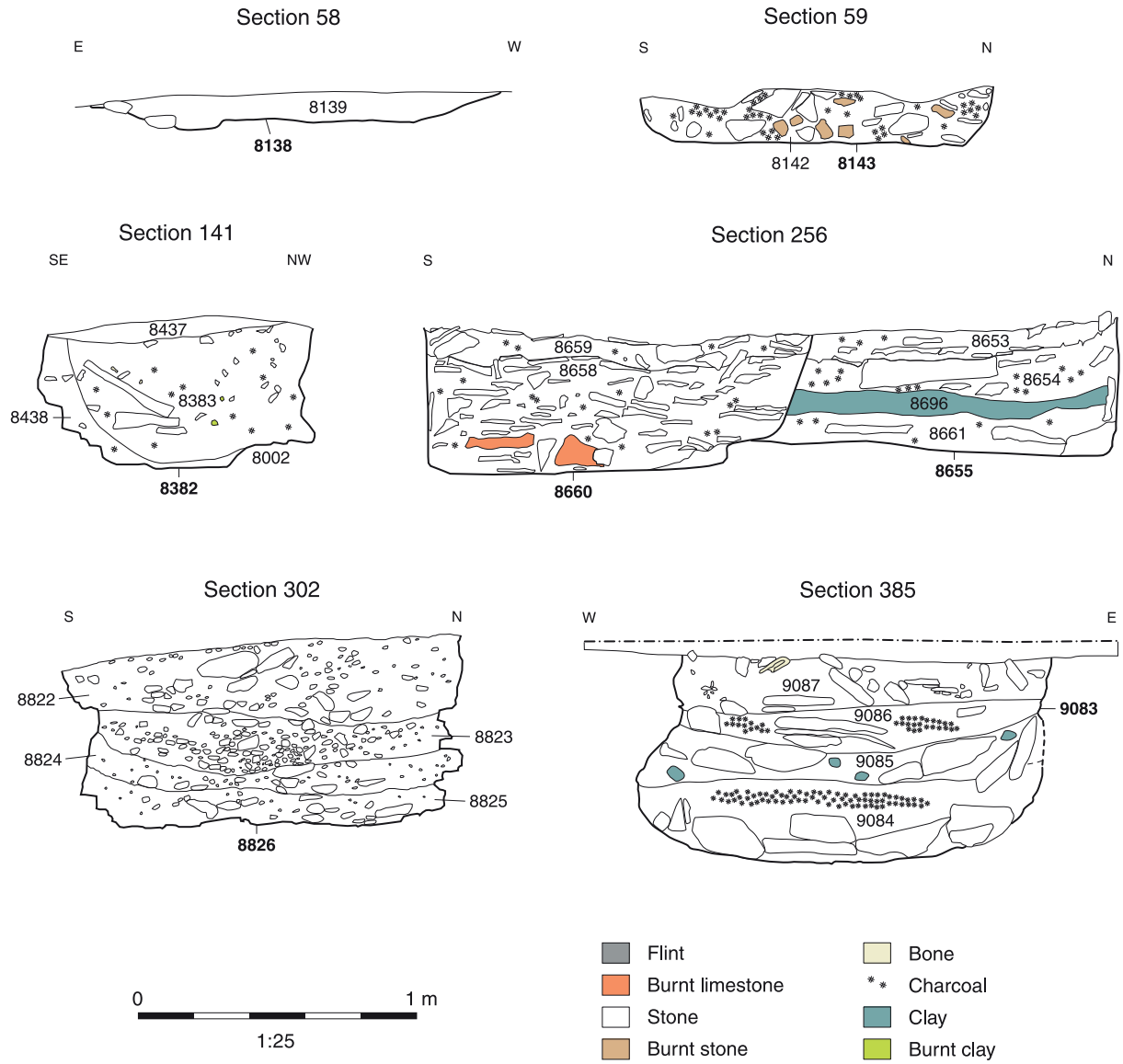


Fig. 16 Phase 3. Sections through Iron Age pits

commonest, followed by those with irregular profiles, which had been cut into solid limestone, among them pit 8826 (Fig. 16, section 302). One pit (9083) (Fig. 16, section 385), had concave sides and base, and was wider at the base than the surface, while a further three survived as little more than shallow scoops, for example 8138 (Fig. 16, section 58).

The pattern of deposits was also similar to that seen among the late Neolithic features. Pits were filled by up to four deposits (pit 8851 with its twelve deposits is exceptional), and overall, the deposits appear to represent deliberate infilling. The silty fills, with varying amounts of limestone, often contained evidence of human activity: charcoal and burnt stones from hearths, pottery and animal bone fragments. Pit 8851 (Fig. 17) contained the articulated skeletons of a dog and a crow or rook.

Fig. 17 Middle Iron Age pit 8851

The distribution and shape of the pits and the nature of the deposits naturally invite the conclusion that the features must belong to the Neolithic period. However, dating evidence confirms the later phasing. The crow or rook bone from the fill of pit 8851, on the southern edge of the site, gave a radiocarbon date of 394-209 cal BC (95%; NZA-33476). Another pit, 8143 (Fig. 16, section 59), at the north-eastern part of the site, contained charred grain that provided an almost identical determination of 396-208 cal BC (95%; NZA-33147). Both dates place the episodes of deposition in the middle Iron Age. The pottery present in the remaining pits gives further support for a middle Iron Age phase (Timby, Chapter 4 below; see also Timby 1999, 321-2; fig. 7.7). The fabrics were invariably shell- or limestone-tempered, and the forms included barrel-shaped jars and jars with upright and finger-impressed rims. It is worth noting, too, the paucity of struck flint from the pits. Just five flakes were recovered, compared with over 1,500 pieces from almost the same number of late Neolithic pits. There was a further difference between the Neolithic and Iron Age pits in terms of the animal bone recovered from them. The late Neolithic assemblage was dominated by cattle and pig remains, while the Iron Age assemblage was focused on sheep/goat (see Strid and Nicholson, Chapter 6 below).

No other type of feature was dated to the mid-late Iron Age. Pit 8988 cut curving gully 9014, which, though stratigraphically earlier, was not closely dated. However, it seems more likely that this gully belonged either to Phase 1 (late Neolithic) or to Phase 3 (middle Iron Age), rather than being of Beaker or Bronze Age date (Phase 2).

Phase 4 – Late Iron Age and Roman

Late Iron Age (Phase 4a), c 100 BC-50 AD
(Figs 18 and 19)

The late Iron Age saw the laying out of a ditched enclosure (Figs 18 and 19), located in the centre of the excavated area. The enclosure defined by ditch 8563 was generally oval, measuring some 20 m across its widest extent. It was open along its western side, and there were two short gaps or entrances through the ditch, creating three segments, which essentially defined the northern, eastern and southern sides of the enclosure. A spur was recorded on the east side of the ditch outside the enclosure. The dimensions of the ditch were variable, but the feature measured on average 0.8 m wide and 0.35 m deep (Fig. 18). The ditch was generally filled in two episodes of deposition along its length; terminus 8907 was unusual in having six fills. The deposition was a combination of natural silting and deliberate infilling to judge from the presence of charcoal, pottery and animal bone fragments. Charred grain from a fill of 8907 was radiocarbon dated to 90 cal BC-cal AD 64 (95%; NZA-33149). The dating is supported by some 370 fragments of pottery recovered from the ditch, which were dominated by grog-tempered ware and other late Iron Age fabrics. A small quantity of pottery of Roman date was also recovered, but this was intrusive or collected from upper fills, which had accumulated much later.

The ditch enclosed a number of postholes, which appear to have defined a building. Two groups of three postholes formed roughly-parallel alignments (9159, 9113 and 9135 to the south, 8780, 8767 and 9161 to the north). Another posthole (9157) in between the easternmost postholes may have been associated with the alignments. Another two postholes (9072 and 8614) were assigned to this phase (Fig. 18), but these were north-east of the main groups and appear to be unrelated to the structure. Indeed posthole 8614 lay outside the enclosure. None of the postholes contained pottery or other dating evidence, and so phasing is uncertain, although it is reasonable to suppose that ditch 8563 and the structure were contemporary. Postholes assigned to phase 4b (see below) were cut into a layer of dark silty clay soil (8844), while phase 4a posthole 9072 was sealed by the layer. If the phase 4a postholes were not associated with 8563, then they may well represent a phase of activity separating phase 4a ditch 8563 and phase 4b ditch 8918. The deposit 8844 contained limestone-tempered pottery dated to the late Iron Age and is assigned to Phase 4b.

Other postholes were recorded at irregular intervals within ditch 8563. The postholes were largely confined to the southern part of the enclosure and had been dug into the infilling, rather than the floor of the empty ditch, and therefore were later than the digging and use of the ditch. It is possible that they belong more properly to Phase 4b. The exception was posthole 9066, which had been dug into the edge of ditch cut 9038 and appeared to be filled with the same material that filled the ditch.

A grave (1104) containing an infant burial was cut into enclosure ditch 8563. The burial 1104, covered by a stone, was aligned north/south with the head to the south. The skeleton appeared to be supine, although the bones were displaced and so the exact position was uncertain. A radiocarbon date of 41 cal BC to 75 cal AD (95%; OxA-20187) was obtained from the skeleton. Given its stratigraphic relationship with the ditch, the burial was assigned to Phase 4a, though it may have been deposited at any time up to Phase 4d.

Late Iron Age (Phase 4b), c 100 BC-50 AD
(Figs 19-21)

Overlying the north end of the Phase 4a enclosure ditch 8653 was an irregular oval silty spread (8844). Postholes 8804, 8820, 8842, 9008, 9064, 9080 and 9133 cut 8844. It is tempting to view 8844 as an occupation soil or floor of a roundhouse defined by the postholes, although the stratigraphic relationship between the spread and the postholes would

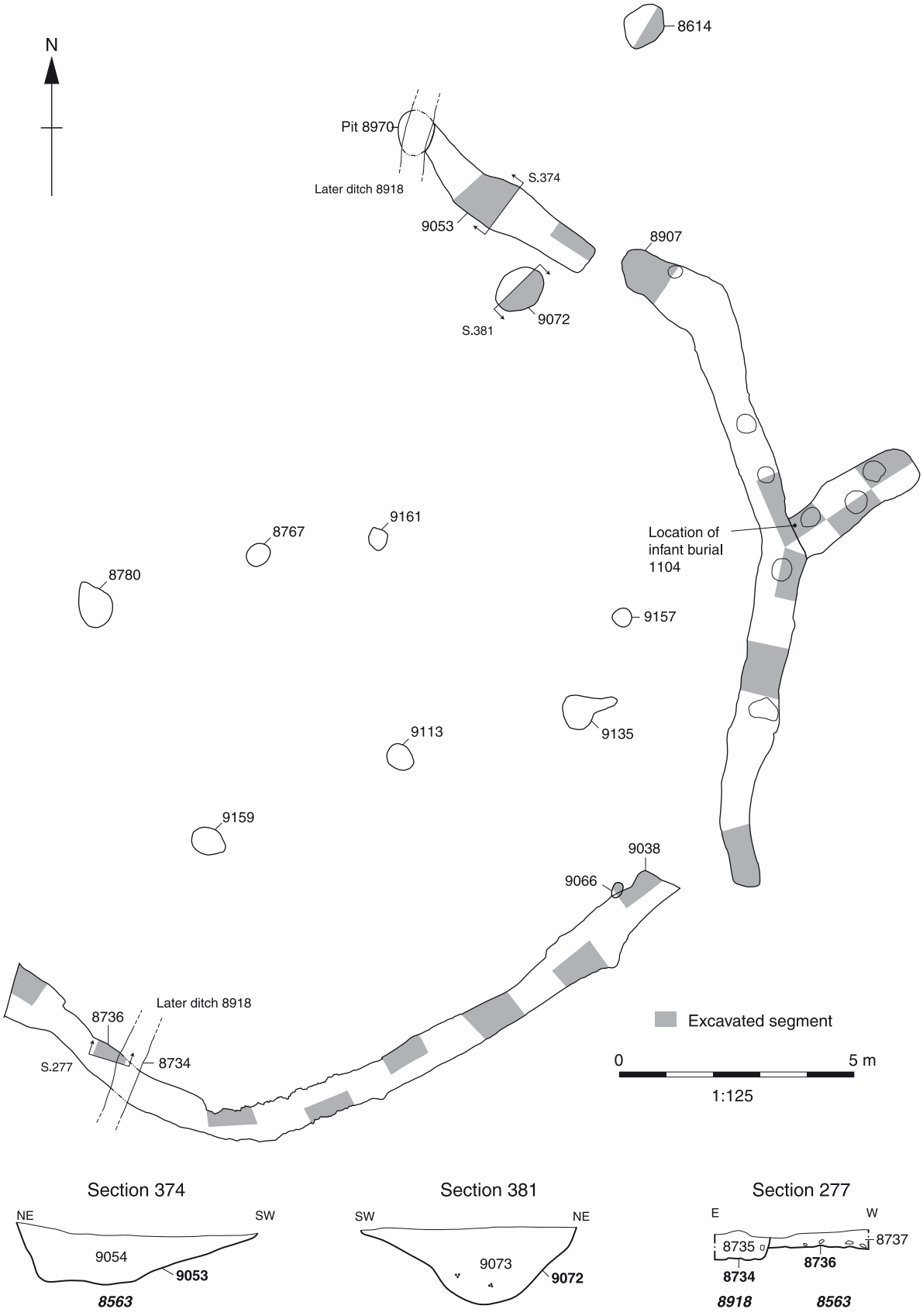


Fig. 18 Phase 4a. Enclosure 8563 and postholes

Fig. 19 Phase 4 ditches 8563, 8918 and 8413

seem to rule out this possibility. That said, the positioning of the postholes around the edge of the spread is noteworthy; the excavator suggested that the soil was a levelling deposit that prepared the ground for a structure. Like those assigned to phase 4a, these postholes did not produce strong dating evidence, but for stratigraphic reasons must post-date phase 4a.

Deposit 8844 and the southern end of the Phase 4a enclosure ditch 8563 was cut by gully or ditch 8918 (Figs 19 and 20, section 345; see also Fig. 18, section 277). Ditch 8563 had been largely infilled by this time, although it is possible that parts of it survived as a visible earthwork. Ditch 8918, in plan took the form of broad slightly irregular W, and extended on a roughly north-south alignment for some 50 m. It was examined with ten sections and was generally about 0.66 m wide and 0.17 m deep (Fig. 20). The profile varied from U-shaped to one with concave sides and a flat base, and was more irregular in areas of limestone bedrock (Fig. 20, sections 310, 320 & 345). Deposition was uniform throughout; the ditch was filled in a single episode. The presence of pottery and animal bone fragments suggests that the filling was to a greater extent deliberate. Twenty-seven sherds of pottery were recovered; a range of late Iron Age fabrics – limestone-tempered, sand-tempered and grog-tempered wares – were recorded. Vessels were confined to jars.

A grave (8723) 1 m long and aligned south-west/north-east was cut into the north end of ditch 8918. It contained a 40-45 year old male inhumation (8724; Figs 20-21). The skeleton was found in a contorted position, which may be due to the relatively small size of the grave, or may be the result of deliberate treatment and positioning of the body. A radiocarbon date of 181 to 41 cal BC (95%; OxA-20185) was obtained from this skeleton. This date is earlier than the date given for the filling of ditch 8918 and does pose a chronological conundrum. The layout of the skeleton offers a possibility that it had been redeposited, but given that the skeleton was more or less in its correct anatomical position, its preservation seems remarkable, even assuming an interval between original burial and relocation of a few years rather than decades. The stratigraphic relationship between ditches 8563 and 8918 (and between 8918 and grave 8723) is secure, though on the basis of the ceramic evidence, the chronological gap separating 8918 and 8563 need not have been particularly long. However, it strains the ceramic evidence to push the filling of ditch

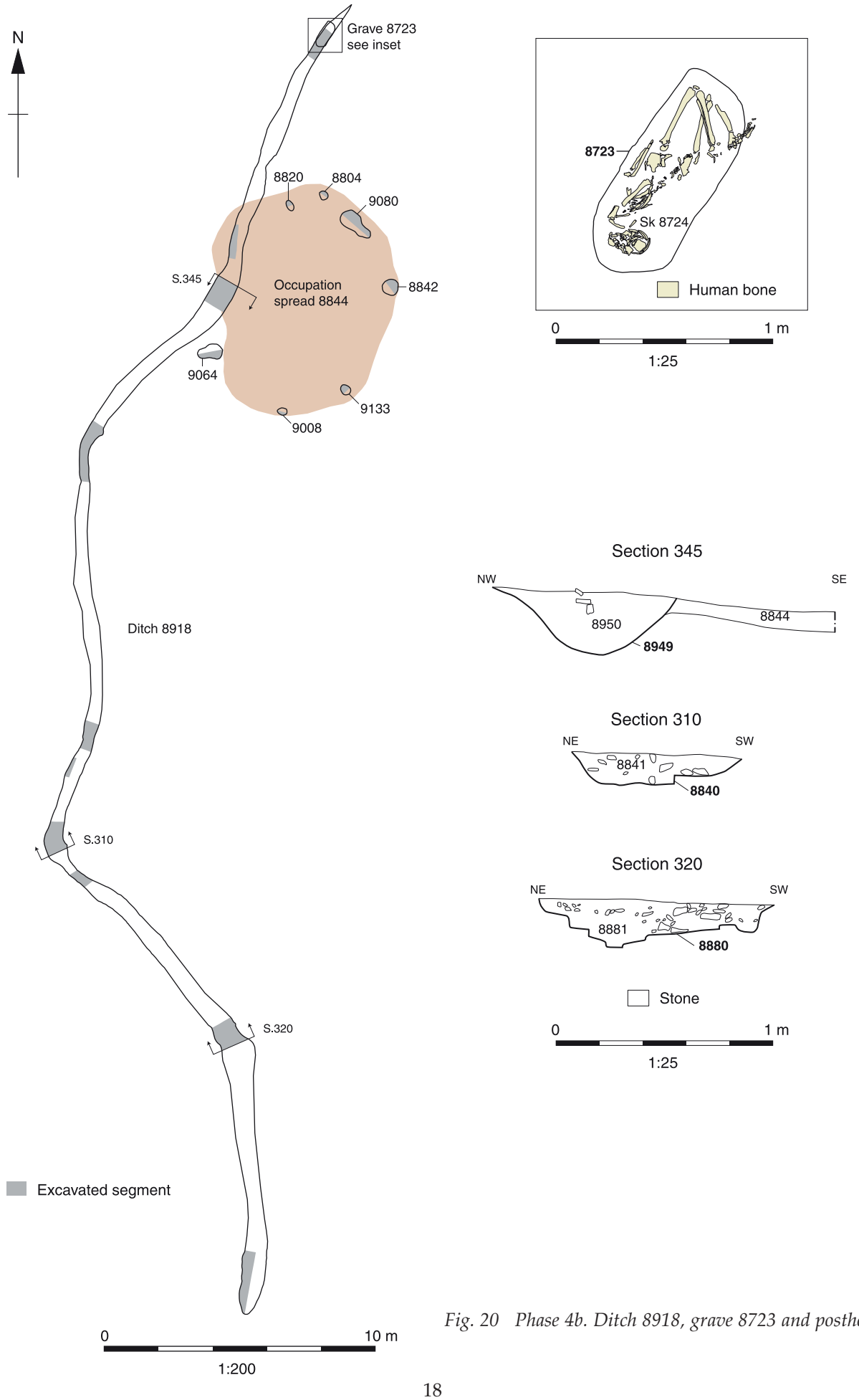


Fig. 20 Phase 4b. Ditch 8918, grave 8723 and postholes

Fig. 21 Burial 8724, Phase 4b

8918 (and 8563, for that matter) very far into the second half of the 1st century BC. The assemblage from the ditches was dominated by grog-tempered ware. While the introduction of grog-tempered ware in south-eastern Britain is traditionally dated to the late 1st century BC (cf. Thompson 1982), the Upper Thames Valley saw a later introduction, with grog-tempered ware enjoying its greatest currency during the first half of the 1st century AD (eg Moore 2009, 98). The dating of grave 8723 therefore remains problematic.

Late Iron Age/early Roman (Phase 4c), c AD 1-50
(Figs 19, 22-25)

The early/mid 1st century AD saw an increase in the area of land subject to enclosure with the setting out of a substantial ditch (8413) in the centre of the excavated area (Fig. 22; see also Fig. 19). The ditch, measuring on average 1.46 m wide and 0.41 m deep, curved round to form a semi-circle measuring some 80 m between the tips of its north and south arms. Neither 8511 nor 8665, respectively the north and south ends, was a terminus; the ditch simply petered out at each end. The ditch cut the northern end of Phase 4b ditch 8918 (Fig. 23, section 264), but did not replace it entirely; towards the south, 8413 followed the sinuous course of the earlier ditch, suggesting that 8918 was still visible as a ditch or earthwork. In profile, ditch 8413 had concave or steep sides and flat base, though was occasionally U-shaped (Fig. 23, sections 191, 264 & 409). It was filled with up to three deposits, usually silty clay, which contained varying amounts of pottery, animal bone fragments and charcoal, pointing to deliberate dumping. Some natural silting is likely, though; occasionally fills were devoid of finds or had accumulated into hollows created as previous fills settled. Pottery recovered from the feature gave a probable post-conquest, mid-1st century AD, date for the filling of the ditch. Grog-tempered ware, available as bead-rimmed and globular jars, remained the most important fabric, and was accompanied mainly by shelly and limestone-tempered fabrics and Savernake ware. Severn Valley oxidised ware and post-conquest sandy grey ware made a minor appearance. A copper alloy brooch (SF 10097), dated to the 1st century AD, was also recovered from the ditch.

The south arm of the ditch (8665) possibly continued further south (Fig. 22B). Ditch segment 8663 may originally have been part of the ditch, extending the ditch by some 4 m. The south arm (8665) was in any case recut by 8669. The recut measured 0.65 m wide and 0.2 m deep. Its single fill contained 44 fragments of grog-tempered ware. The end of the north arm (8511) of ditch 8413 was also recut by 8514, which had the effect of curling the end of the ditch inwards (Fig. 22A). The recut 8514 was a linear feature 0.6 m wide and 0.18 m deep. It may have continued as either ditch 8535 or 8536, but any relationship between these features was removed when phase 4d ditch 8537 was dug through all three (see Fig. 26).

Ditch 8536, which was 0.65 m wide and 0.06 m deep, cut pit 8448, which measured 0.7 m across its widest extent and 0.06 deep. The excavator suggests that the pit could have been a terminus for 8413, but though the edges of the feature were indistinct, there is nothing to confirm that it belonged to the main ditch. Ditch 8536 was in turn cut by ditch 8535. This was shorter than 8536, but was similar in terms of width (0.75 m) and depth (0.08 m). Feature 8521, which cut 8535, was described by the excavator as a pit, but could have been another ditch terminus. Feature 8516 similarly could have been part of one of the ditches in the sequence, possibly 8535 or 8536. The enclosure curled round further with the digging of ditch 8425. This was somewhat irregular in plan, but was on average 0.84 m wide and 0.13 m deep. Malvernian rock-tempered ware, fine grey ware and shell-tempered ware from 8535 suggest a 1st-century AD date for infilling of this ditch. Sherds of grog-, shell- and limestone-tempered wares in 8536, 8516 and 8425 all suggest a similar date.

A group of small round or oval features (8806, 8876, 8910, 8926 and 8936; Fig. 23, section 343), east of the southern arm of ditch 8413 were arranged

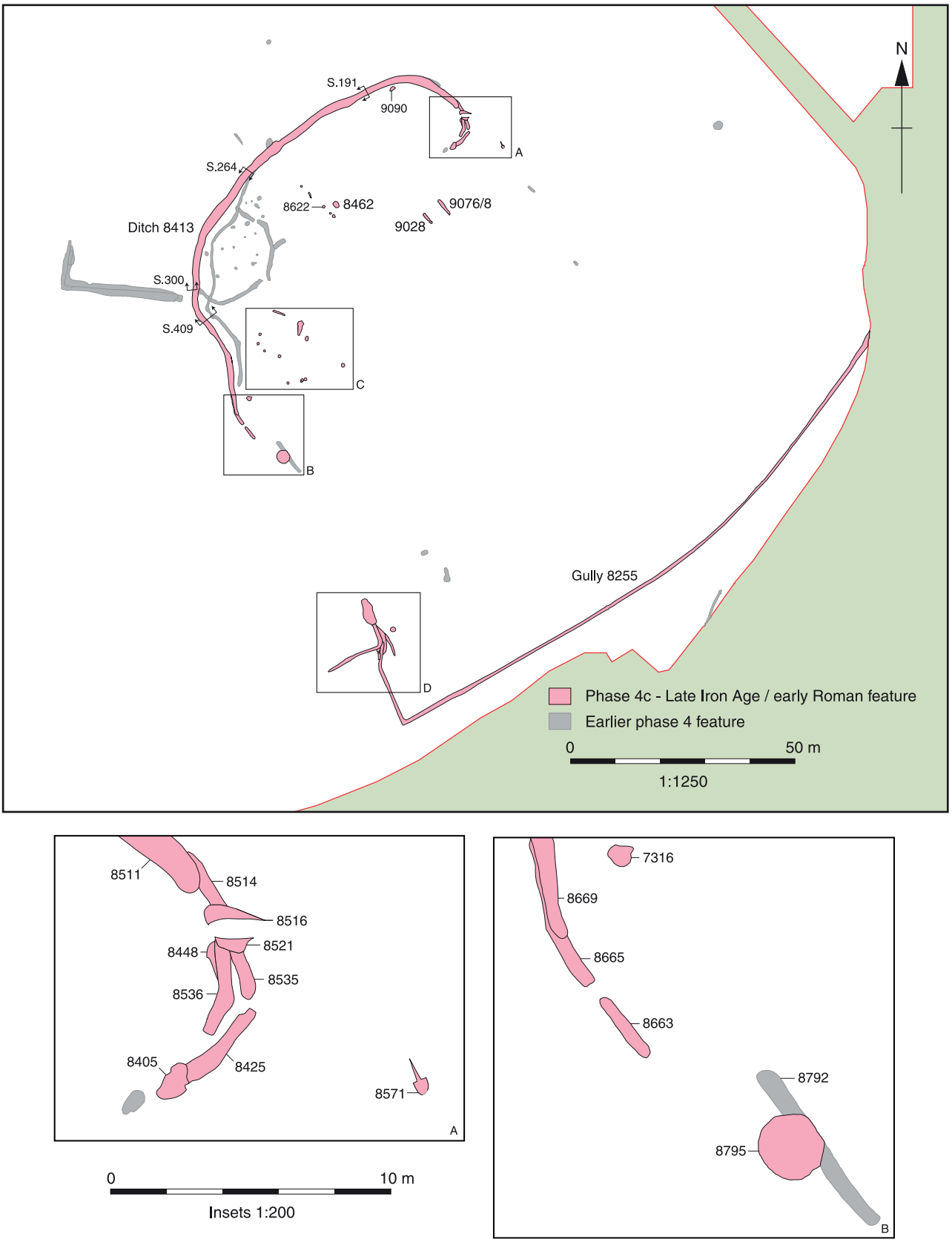


Fig. 22a Phase 4c. Ditch 8413, gully 8255 and contemporaneous features

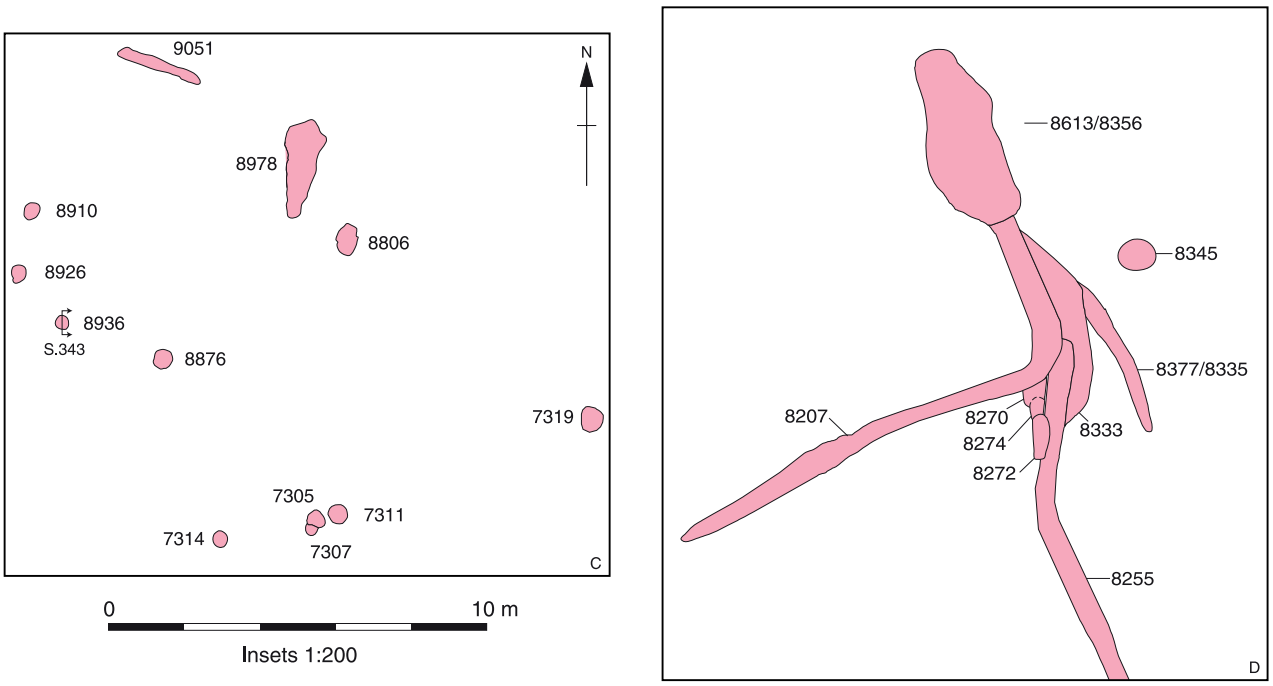


Fig. 22b (above, left and right) Phase 4c. Ditch 8413, gully 8255 and contemporaneous features

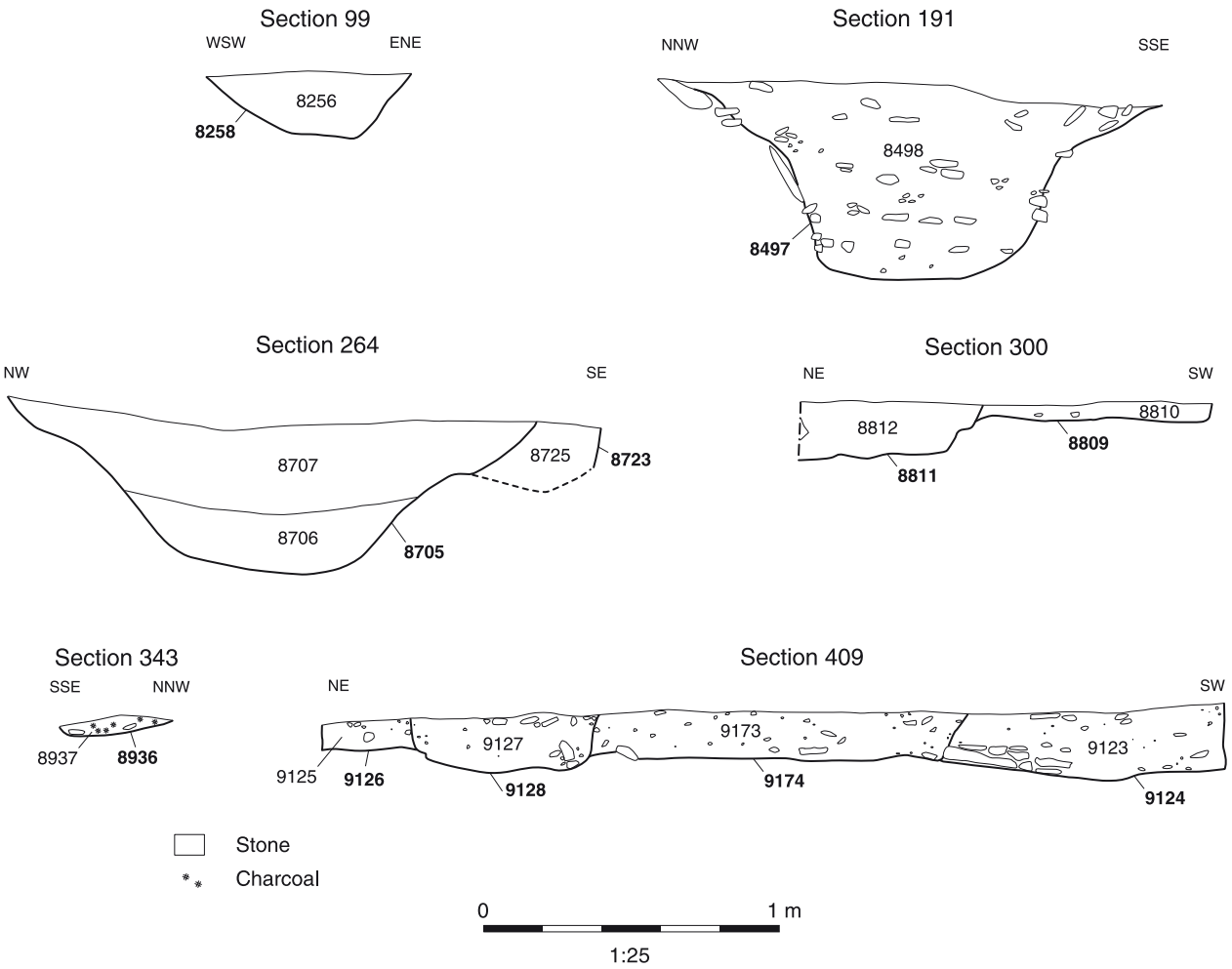


Fig. 23 Phase 4c. Sections through ditch 8413 (showing relationship with 8563 and 8918), posthole 8936, and ditch 8255

roughly in a ring 10 m in diameter (Fig. 22C). They were of similar size, averaging 0.16 m in depth and 0.65 m across their widest extents. The dimensions fall within the range offered by postholes recorded at the site, though the features lack the characteristic V-shaped profile of some of the postholes enclosed, for example, by ditch 8563, nor is there any trace of postpipes or packing. Feature 8876 contained limestone slabs in both of its fills, and it is possible that the slabs functioned as postpads. A near-complete upper stone from a rotary quern (Fig. 24) found in the lower fill of 8806 could have served the same purpose. The alternative view, offered by the excavator, is that the features were severely-truncated pits. The matter cannot be resolved conclusively, though given the arrangement of the features, a structure is tentatively preferred. The irregularly-shaped pit 8978 may have been associated with the features. Presumably it was not incorporated into any structure, but could perhaps have served as a pit for waste or refuse, although just a few pieces of animal bone, pottery and hearth remains were recovered from its fill. A nearby slot (8951) (Fig. 22C), 2.8 m long, 0.3 m wide and 0.09 m deep, was not well dated, but its association with the putative structure is possible, especially if it marked a drain or fence line. The quern provides useful dating evidence for deposition in 8806, as its design is certainly Iron Age. Grog-tempered pottery from feature 8806, as well as from 8876 and 8926, gives a late Iron Age date for the group overall. The dating evidence may place the group in phase 4a or 4b, but a phase 4c date is suggested on the basis of Roman-period sandy oxidised ware from slot 8951.

The southern part of the site was marked by a series of ditches and gullies. Gully 8377/8335 was located some 100 m south-east of ditch 8918 and is tentatively dated to Phase 4c. The gully was 0.4 m wide and survived to a depth of 0.04 m. No dating evidence was recovered from the gully itself, but it was cut by ditch 8333, which measured 0.24 m deep and 1.25 m across its widest extent. Ditch 8333 survived to a length of *c* 6 m, having been cut at its southern end by gully 8255 and to the north by pit 8613. The ditch was filled with two clay-silt deposits, which included pottery and animal bone fragments. The pottery was identified as Savernake ware, which dates from the mid 1st to early 2nd century. Ditch 8255 was a boundary ditch that ran parallel with the southern boundary of the site for some 135 m, extending beyond the north-western edge of excavation and turning north at its southern end to meet (and cut) 8333 (Figs 22 and 25). The ditch was examined with 21 interventions, which gave average dimensions of 0.71 m wide and 0.3 m deep. A single clay-silt deposit was recorded in most interventions. The deposit appeared to be colluvial in origin, having moved down the slope from the north, and consequently few finds were recovered. A single sherd of late Iron Age or early Roman grog-tempered pottery was collected.

Features 8270, 8272 and 8274 were a series of intercutting pits or heavily truncated ditches which were cut after ditch 8255 had been infilled. Feature 8270 was the earliest of these features, and was cut by 8274, which was cut in turn by feature 8272 which also cut 8255. As no dating evidence was recovered, their placement in phase 4c is uncertain (Fig. 22D). However, 8270 was cut by ditch 8207, which is assigned to this phase. Pit 8613/8356 (Fig. 22D) was roughly oval in plan and had a profile with steep sides and a flat base. The feature, 6 m long, up to 2.4 m wide and 0.94 m deep, contained four limestone-packed fills, which probably represent a number of episodes of deliberate backfilling. Pottery from the feature – a sherd each of grog- and limestone-tempered fabrics – dates these events to the 1st century AD. Function is uncertain, but given its irregular shape and size, the pit may have served as a quarry to extract the underlying natural cornbrash. The sequence of linear features ended with L-shaped ditch, 8207. It cut 8270, but its relationship with pit 8613/8356, which it met at its north end, was uncertain; 8207 does not appear in a section through the pit. The ditch measured on average 0.85 m wide and 0.14 m deep. A clay-silt

Fig. 24 Pit 8806 with quern, Phase 4c

Fig. 25 Ditch 8255, Phase 4c

deposit accumulated, probably though deliberate filling, during the Iron Age or early-Roman period. Animal bone fragments, charcoal and two sherds of shell-tempered pottery were recovered from the feature. There was no indication that the ditch continued northwards beyond the pit, although if ditches 8207 (or 8255) and 8413 were meant to connect in some way, then linear feature 8792, between 8207 and 8413, might provide evidence for this. Its alignment perhaps rules this out, although the ditch potentially fits with the others in terms of chronology; no dating evidence was recovered from 8792, but it was cut by a pit (8795) that contained exclusively late Iron Age pottery, including a high-shouldered jar in grog-tempered ware.

A number of miscellaneous features were assigned to phase 4c. The features were not well dated, but they fit a phase characterised by an expansion of land available for enclosure and occupation. These included two parallel gullies or slots, 9028 and 9076/9078 (Fig. 22). The former was 3 m long, while the latter was 4 m; both were approximately 0.6 m wide and 0.2 m deep, and were 4.5 m apart. Together the slots define the outline of a square or rectangular structure. Slot 9028 contained 300 sherds of pottery dominated by grog-tempered and limestone-tempered wares. Savernake ware was present and was also collected from 9076/9078. The pottery suggests a mid 1st century date for deposition. Pit 9090, (Fig. 22) which measured 1.4 m long, 0.7 m wide and 0.05 m deep, was dug next to ditch 8413. It was filled with a single fill that contained nine sherds of grog-tempered pottery. Another pit, 8642 (Fig. 22), was located further south. This measured 1.6 m long, 1.1 m wide and 0.3 m deep and contained 67 sherds of grog-tempered, limestone-tempered and Malvernian rock-tempered pottery, pointing to a late Iron Age or very early-Roman date. Posthole 8622 (Fig. 8622) was about 2.5 m west of 8642. Two sherds of grog-tempered pottery were recovered from its postpipe. The feature was in alignment with four other postholes, which, though containing no dating evidence, may have been associated, perhaps forming part of a wider episode of land division. Another line of postholes was revealed in an evaluation trench across the south end of 8413. The postholes (7314, 7305, 7307, 7311 and 7319) (Fig. 22C) may have formed part of a fence-line or internal division within the enclosure. Pottery recovered from a number of these features dates up to the mid 1st century AD.

Early Roman (Phase 4d), c AD 50-100 (Fig. 26)

There was further augmentation of enclosure ditch 8413 in the second half of the 1st century AD (Fig. 26). Ditch 9112 extended at right angles from the southern end of the enclosure ditch. It was *c* 10 m long and averaged 0.92 m wide and 0.34 m deep (excluding the bulbous west terminus). The ditch was filled in one or two episodes; the silty-clay deposits contained 41 sherds of pottery, mainly Savernake ware storage jar sherds, with a smaller proportion (ten sherds) of grog-tempered ware. A mid-1st century date for deposition is likely. It is tempting to link 9112 with ditch 8845, which, after a five-metre gap, forms a right angle with 9112 and potentially a corner of a small enclosure. Ditch 8845 was narrower at 0.6 m, but of comparable depth at 0.38 m. It contained a silty clay fill from which 15 sherds of grog-tempered and limestone-tempered pottery were recovered. On the whole, this assemblage seems typologically earlier than that in 9112, though is not necessarily out of place in the mid-1st century. After it had been infilled, ditch 9112 was cut by two pits, 8800 and 8887, which were filled during the second half of the 1st century. They contained pottery including Savernake and Severn Valley wares. Close by, two recuts (9166/9174 and 8688/8682) were made along the east edge of ditch 8413. Apart from being *c* 15 m apart, they differed in size – 9166/9174 was the larger, wider and deeper – and it cannot be demonstrated that they were originally part of a single recut. Grey ware from 9166/9174 gave a post-conquest date for deposition.

The northern end of 8413 was effectively extended with a series of ditches (Fig. 26A). Ditch 8537 was a curving feature *c* 13 m long, 0.91 m wide and 0.46 m deep. Its north end cut phase 4c features 8516 and 8521, and its south end cut the pit or heavily-truncated ditch segment, 8571. It possibly also cut 8578 and 8575, although the relationships are unclear. Ditch 8578, 9 m long, 0.46 m wide and 0.08 m deep, continued the extension, and the sequence was further lengthened with feature 8468, which measured 13 m long, 0.35 m wide and 0.09 m deep. None of the three ditch segments – 8537, 8578 or 8468 – had any direct stratigraphic relationship with one another, and it is possible that they were dug at the same time. The ditches may not have been in use for very long. Pottery recovered from their fills was dominated by limestone-tempered and grog-tempered wares, but included post-conquest material, such as a South Spanish amphora fragment, Savernake ware and fine oxidised ware. These date infilling to the later 1st century or later. Ditch 8606, a short slot up to 1 m wide and 0.2 m deep, has been placed in phase 4d on the basis of its proximity to, and alignment with, ditch 8468, though the pottery recovered from it comprised late Iron Age wares with no certain post-conquest material.

This period of ditch-digging was accompanied by quarry-digging. Group 8895 (Fig. 26B) consisted of nine intercutting pits, located inside the enclosure defined by ditch 8413 where there was an area of natural clay. It was not possible to ascertain dimensions for all the pits, but it is clear that they were variable in size. Pit 8760, for example, measured approximately 4 m long, 2.5 m wide and 0.25 m deep. Pit 9020 was 1.8 m long, 1.4 m wide and 0.3 m deep. That the pits were intercutting meant that there was a sequence – pit 9022 was one of the first pits to be dug, while 8752 (Fig. 26B) was one of the last – but

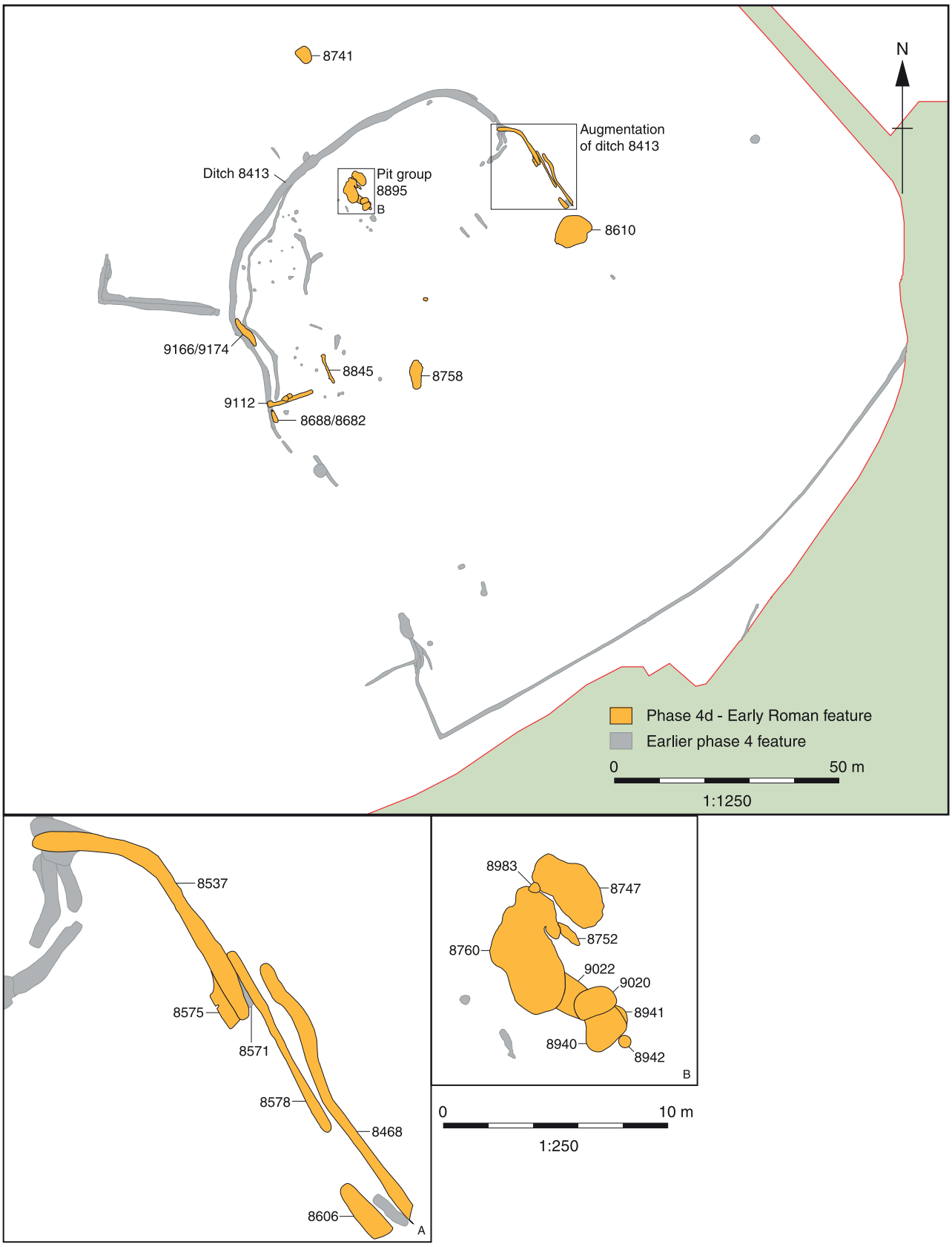


Fig. 26 Phase 4d. Augmentation of ditch 8413 and quarry pit group 8895

they were filled more or less at the same time with a deliberate backfill of redeposited clay mixed with limestone fragments and finds. The large assemblage of 285 pottery sherds recovered from the backfill was dominated by grog-tempered ware, but also contained Severn Valley ware, Savernake ware and sandy grey ware, indicating a date for deposition in the second half of the 1st century.

Another quarry pit (8758) was recorded some 30 m further south. This was sited to exploit the underlying cornbrash and limestone bedrock. Pit 8758 was 6.5 m long by 2.5 m wide and 0.36 m deep. Pottery recovered from the backfill included grog-tempered ware, Savernake ware and a very fine grey ware.

A third area of quarrying is represented by 8610, located *c* 45 m east south-east of group 8895, adjacent to the enclosure ditch extensions, 8537, 8571, etc. This was dug through cornbrash and measured 8.4 m across its widest extent and 0.46 m in depth. Its silty clay backfill included fine oxidised ware, putting deposition into the later 1st century. The pottery assemblage also contained post-Roman material, but this is probably intrusive, having been introduced with the filling of pit 8612, which was dug through the top of the backfilled quarry during the post-medieval period. Pit 8741, north of ditch 8413, was relatively small, though comparable to some of the pits in group 8895, and may also have been a quarry pit. The feature was 3.92 m long, 2.94 m wide and 0.97 m deep. It contained four silty-clay deposits with limestone blocks. Pottery retrieved from the pit included Savernake ware, fine grey ware, sandy grey ware and grog-tempered ware.

Late 1st-4th century AD (Phases 4e and 4f), c AD 80-400 (Fig. 27)

The site seems to have been almost totally devoid of activity between the end of the 1st century and the middle of the 3rd century (Phase 4e). Just one feature – cremation grave 8227 – was dated to the phase (Fig. 27) and was dug into the fill of the Phase 4b ditch 8918. The oval grave was 1.3 m across its widest extent and 0.16 m deep and contained charred cereal grain radiocarbon dated to cal AD 86-247 (95%; NZA-33144). A total of 673 g of cremated human bone was recovered. The highly-fragmented character of the bone allowed the individual buried to be identified only as an adult. The bone was found with other material that had been collected from the pyre. Charcoal fragments accompanied the grain, and a bone from a small animal was found among the human remains. Hobnails recovered from the grave indicate that a shoe or pair of shoes had been deposited. Over 1000 iron wood nails were also collected. These were typically small, most measuring up to 25 mm in length, and many were bent. It is likely that the nails belonged to a lightly-built wooden structure, probably a litter that supported the individual on the pyre (see Scott, Chapter 4 below). The location of the burial within ditch 8918 is potentially significant, as it may represent a continuation of the burial in ditches tradition characteristic of the Iron Age (Whimster 1981, 28), of which graves 8723 and 1104 are examples.

Evidence for activity in the late Roman period (Phase 4f) was similarly limited. Only ditch 8203, a field boundary, was assigned to the phase. The feature stretched across the south-western corner of the site and both ends extended beyond the edges of excavation. The ditch was examined with seven interventions. It was generally about 2.2 m wide and 0.9 m deep. In profile, the ditch generally had convex, almost stepped, sides, and a U-shaped base, which was occasionally more irregular where dug through the limestone bedrock, rather than the cornbrash. The ditch was filled with silty-clay deposits, often with limestone fragments present. Finds recovered from the feature, notably pottery and animal bone, suggests that some deposition was deliberate, although given their fragmentation (each pottery sherd weighed on average 3 g), it is not unlikely that the fills mainly entered the ditch through colluvial action and ploughing. The ditch is not well dated, although a late Roman date is preferred. There was no evidence of recutting. A bronze coin dated to AD 332-3 from the secondary fill suggests that deposits accumulated in the 4th century. Pottery from the feature was residual or broadly dated, but fragments of Dorset black-burnished ware cooking pots present in the assemblage potentially date to the late 4th century. No post-Roman ceramic material was recovered from the feature.

Features broadly dated to Phase 4

A number of features were could not be dated closely within the late Iron Age or Roman period. Typically, these were isolated features which contained at most a few sherds of late Iron or Roman-period pottery. While the evidence was not sufficient to assign features to a sub-phase, it suggests a date broadly within Phase 4.

Phase 4 features included gullies or ditches, pits and postholes. These did not form coherent patterns of activity (although it is possible that associated features had been removed by later ploughing), but suggested that a wider area of land around the central enclosures (see below) was available for occupation. Groups 8206 and 9104 (Fig. 27) were L-shaped ditches and formed more substantial features, but could not be closely dated. The features probably formed the corner of an enclosure (8206) and a subsequent recut (9104). The ditches were practically identical in size; they shared alignment and length and were similar in width (up to 1 m) and depth (up to 0.37 m). Neither contained pottery, but a late Iron Age or early Roman date seems likely given the appearance of the ditches and their proximity to more certain phase 4 enclosures.

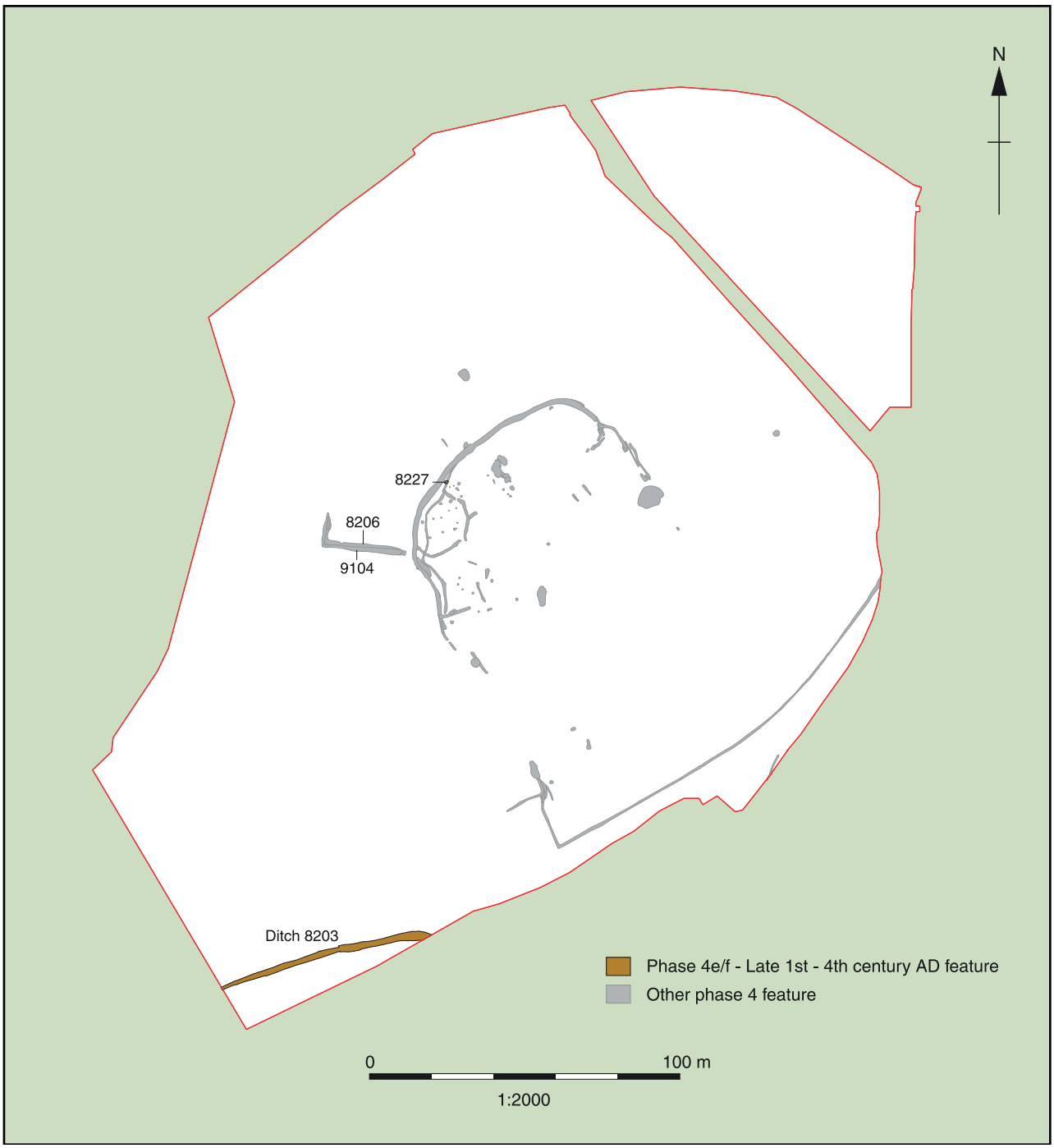


Fig. 27 Features dated to phase 4e and 4f, and broadly dated to Phase 4

Phases 5 and 6 – Medieval and post-medieval, *c* 1100-1800

No features were dated to the medieval period (Phase 5), although two residual sherds of medieval pottery were recovered during the evaluation. These were from a gully associated with a post-medieval hedgerow (Evaluation trench 10). The feature was one of a number assigned to the post-medieval period (Phase 6). Apart from the remains of the hedgerow, a sequence of three field drains, rubbish dumps and landfill along the northern edge of the site, and a modern fence line were identified (Fig. 3). The hedge line corresponded to a kink in the existing field boundaries to the south, which was identified on late 19th-century Ordnance Survey mapping; the hedge line would have been a northern continuation of this field boundary. It is therefore possible to demonstrate that the field system was altered, creating larger fields in recent history. The field drains were stone-lined in the earlier phases and segmented ceramic versions in the later phases; these post-dated the hedge line.