Chapter 1: Introduction

by Alex Smith

Excavations upon the gravel terraces of the Upper Thames Valley continue to provide almost unparalleled levels of archaeological information, helping us to piece together the history of human habitation in this landscape. This volume presents the results of a programme of archaeological work carried out by Oxford Archaeology (OA) between June 1999 and April 2004 on a gravel terrace site north of Cotswold Community School on the border between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (Figs 1.1 and 1.3). In addition, the volume incorporates the results of excavations carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) between 2005 and 2008 on the periphery of the main site. The excavated areas are part of the larger Shorncote Quarry, which has been subject to previous archaeological investigation on a number of occasions (see below).

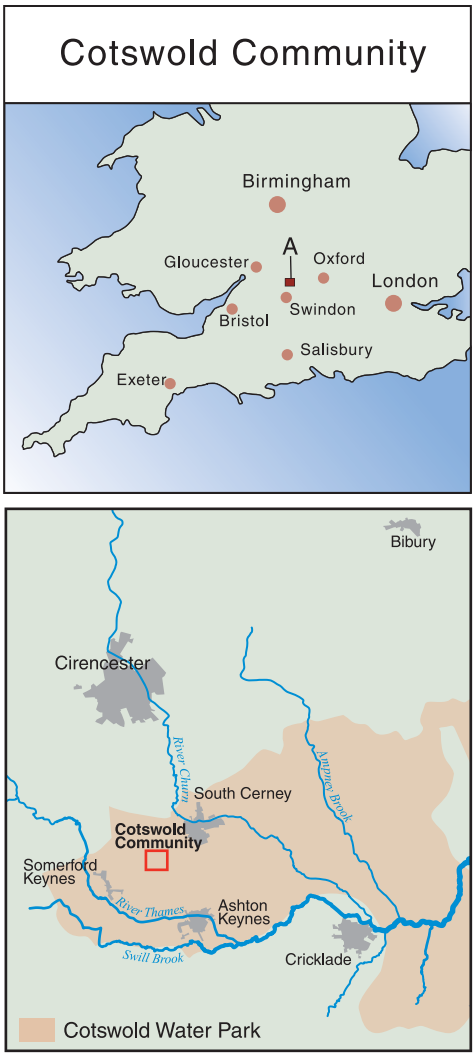

Fig. 1.1 Site location

Aerial photography (Fig. 1.2) and evaluation trenching had previously identified prehistoric and Roman activity across the site and the excavations revealed a number of highly significant discoveries, spanning the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The excavations over an area totalling *c* 37 hectares were part of a structured programme of archaeological mitigation in advance of sand and gravel extraction by Hills Quarry Products Ltd. The archaeological programme was secured by conditions attached to planning permissions by Gloucestershire and Wiltshire County Councils. The development site was initially evaluated by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Section (Parry 1988) and Wessex Archaeology (WA 1994). These works identified a prehistoric ring-ditch, a Roman farmstead with associated field system, and a small number of undated features that were believed to be prehistoric. Consequently, the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire County Archaeologists on behalf of their local Planning Authorities, indicated that archaeological mitigation was required in advance of sand and gravel extraction.

The excavations by OA were undertaken in four phases of work in 1999–2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003–4 (Fig. 1.3). In total, 6.9 of the 37 hectares were investigated in the 1999–2000 fieldwork programme, comprising three separate areas. The largest area measured 380 m x 160 m and lay south-west of the Roman farmstead identified by Gloucestershire County Council in 1988 (Fig. 1.4). This area had revealed few archaeological features in the 1994 evaluation (WA 1994). Second was a small area in the north-east of the extraction zone where an entrance to the site and tunnel were to be located. The final area extended south from this, east of the Roman farmstead, for 280 m, approximately 14 m wide to facilitate a conveyor line. This overall phase of field-

work revealed an unexpectedly high frequency of archaeological features compared to evaluation and air-photographic evidence. The activity ranged in date from the Bronze Age to the medieval period and included a prehistoric pit alignment.

In 2001, an area measuring 350 x 150 m was investigated, totalling 5.2 of the remaining 30.1 hectares (Fig. 1.3). This was located directly to the south of the large area investigated in 1999. The Wessex Archaeology evaluation in 1994 had revealed some prehistoric activity in this area, though failed to find a ring ditch located by aerial photographs in the centre of the site (RCHME 1976, SU09NW). Aerial photographs had also identified a Roman trackway in the east of this area (Leech 1977, 11; see Fig. 1.6 below). The 2001 excavations, like those of 1999, uncovered more archaeological features than anticipated from evaluation and air-photographic evidence. At this stage activity dating from the Neolithic through to the Saxon period was identified.

The 2002 programme of excavation targeted an area measuring 340 x 115–225 m, in total 6.2 hectares of the remaining 24.9 hectares (Fig. 1.3). This was located immediately to the south of the 2001 field-work site and once again uncovered a large number of archaeological features dating from the Neolithic to the Saxon period, including Neolithic and early Bronze Age pits and burials, a substantial late Bronze Age – early Iron Age settlement and a Saxon timber hall.

In 2003–4 an area measuring 300 x 150 m was investigated, totalling 4.5 hectares of the remaining 18.7 hectares (Fig. 1.3). This was located to the north-east of the 1999 excavation site. Late Bronze Age settlements had been excavated by Wessex Archaeology in 1992 and 1996 to the north and west of this area (Hearne and Heaton 1994; Hearne and Adam 1999), while to the north-east a Bronze Age timber-lined well, middle Iron Age features and Roman field systems were located in excavations conducted by OA in 1997 and 1998 (Brossler *et al.* 2002) (see Fig. 1.3).

Extensive crop marks in the southern part of this zone had been targeted by trial trenching in evaluations carried out by both Wessex Archaeology and Gloucestershire County Council. These confirmed the presence of archaeological features, thought to represent the remains of a Roman farmstead. Further north similar trenching had revealed possible prehistoric features and confirmed the existence of an L-shaped ditched enclosure and Roman trackway ditches previously noted from aerial photographs (Leech 1977, 11; Fig. 1.6). The 2003–4 season confirmed the existence of a dense concentration of Roman activity in the form of a farmstead, in addition to prehistoric settlement to the north.

The remaining phases of excavation were undertaken by TVAS in two main stages. In 2005, about 4 hectares were stripped and recorded to the east of the OA 2001 and 2002 excavation areas, while 7.6 hectares were investigated in 2006/7 to the north of this, just to the east of the Roman farmstead. Both of these phases lay to the east of the main Roman north-south trackway, and aside from part of a middle Iron Age settlement at the southernmost extent and the remnants of Roman field systems, very few archaeological features were encountered.

The final phase of excavation, undertaken by TVAS in 2008, was on a strip of land to the west and north of the Roman farmstead on the line of a public footpath between two quarried areas. The area was *c* 10 m wide and *c* 125 m in length for the north–south element and 62 m long for the east–west part. This revealed further sections of the prehistoric pit alignment and parts of a Bronze Age settlement encountered in OA's excavation to the east.

LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The excavation area at Cotswold Community is situated on former arable land on the border between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in the parishes of Somerford Keynes and Ashton Keynes, less than 5 km south of Cirencester (SU 031 960; Fig. 1.1). The site is immediately north of the Cotswold Community School and east of the village of Shorncote and is bordered to the north and west by other parts of Shorncote Quarry (Fig. 1.3). It lies within the Cotswold Water Park, a designated area of nature reserves, country parks and recreational zones spread over 40 square miles, created as a result of gravel extraction (Fig. 1.1).

The drift geology consists of an alluvial-derived first terrace river gravel of the Upper Thames Valley overlying Jurassic Oxford clay (SO Geological Map sheet 525 1: 63, 360) (Fig. 1.5). The land is level at approximately 90 m OD, rising slightly to 91.5 m OD in the north, within the 2003/4 excavation area. About 200 m east of the site the ground rises quite steeply towards Ashton Down, a north-south outcrop of Oxford clay which reaches a maximum height of 105 m OD. The River Thames lies *c* 3 km to the south, and although now much confused by the modern lakes, several tributary streams previously flowed south to meet it, while the Churn passes to the north-east, flowing east to join the Thames at Cricklade. The general flow of the landscape south towards the Thames, respecting Ashton Down, seems to have influenced the layout of all the main features in this area, in all periods.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Upper Thames Valley is well known for its wealth of archaeology, with aerial photographs revealing quite dense patterns of settlements and other landscape features (eg see Fig. 1.6). Large parts of the Valley have now been investigated archaeologically as a result of decades of gravel extraction, especially in the Cotswold Water Park area south and south-east of Cirencester. In recent years, many excavations in the region have been

published (eg Allen *et al.* 1993; Barclay *et al*. 2003; Jennings *et al.* 2004; Pine and Preston 2004; Miles *et al*. 2007; Powell *et al.* 2008), while archaeological syntheses have also been produced, both for the Thames Valley as a whole (Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick 2009) and for the Upper Thames in particular (Miles *et al.* 2007, chapters 13 to 17). As such it is not the intention here to provide anything more than a brief outline of the archaeology previously encountered in the near vicinity of Cotswold Community, while detailed analysis of various phases of activity within their local and regional contexts can be found in Chapters 2 to 4.

The area in the immediate vicinity of Cotswold Community is known to be rich in archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods. Previous archaeological work in the area, mainly to the north of the site (in other parts of the larger Shorncote Quarry), has included evaluations and excavations carried out by the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Unit (Parry 1988), Wessex Archaeology (Hearne and Heaton 1994; Hearne and Adam 1999) and Oxford Archaeology (Barclay *et al.* 1995; Brossler *et al.* 2002) (see Fig. 1.3).

Directly north and north-west of the current excavation area, a late Bronze Age settlement was excavated in 1992 and 1995–6, consisting of considerable numbers of circular houses, four-post structures, pits and waterholes, in addition to a Roman trackway and field system (Hearne and Heaton 1994; Hearne and Adam 1999). Excavations in 1997 and 1998 to the north-east of the Cotswold Community site, also revealed features of late Bronze Age date, including a circular structure and three waterholes (Brossler *et al.* 2002). In addition a middle Iron Age roundhouse, waterholes, posthole structures and field boundaries were revealed, along with a Roman trackway and field system. The trackway and field ditches are continuations of features encountered during the Cotswold Community excavations further south.

Further north-west, excavations in 1990 revealed a late Neolithic and Bronze Age cemetery comprising a Beaker ring-ditch and flat-grave inhumation and three other ring-ditches along with a number of Deverel-Rimbury cremation burials and a possible Neolithic U-shaped enclosure (Barclay *et al.* 1995). Iron Age settlement remains and elements of a Roman trackway and field system were also discovered.

Other concentrations of archaeological features in the near vicinity of Shorncote Quarry are shown by crop marks on aerial photographs, and include two substantial looking settlements of known Roman date located *c* 1.2 km to the east and 1 km to the south (Fig. 1.6). These were part of a particularly densely settled Roman landscape (discussed in Chapter 3) which also included settlements at Ash Covert and Neigh Bridge, the latter of which was subject to rescue excavations in 1986 and 1987 (Miles *et al.* 2007, 229). Other excavated sites in the area of Cotswold Community include the middle Iron Age settlement at Spratsgate Lane, 1 km to the west (Vallender 2007) and the middle Iron Age to late Roman settlement at Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes, 3.5 km to the south-east (Powell *et al.* 2008). Further east adjacent to the line of Roman Ermin Street was a site excavated at Latton Lands, which revealed evidence for a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age enclosure, extensive early and middle Iron Age settlements and later Iron Age /early Roman activity, including inhumation and cremation burials (Powell *et al.* 2009). The excavations also revealed the northern part of a scheduled Roman settlement and associated trackways. Additional excavation in this area in advance of the A419 road scheme revealed middle Neolithic flint scatters and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ring ditches from St Augustine's Farm South, a hexagonal middle Iron Age enclosure from Preston and various other mainly Iron Age and Roman enclosures and field systems at other sites along the route (Mudd *et al.* 1999).

SUMMARY OF SITE PHASING

The following provides a brief outline of the major phases of activity revealed by excavations at Cotswold Community. Detailed accounts can be found in Chapters 2 to 4, while an overall plan showing all phases is presented in the front plan at the start of the book.

Phase 1—Middle Neolithic (*c* 3400–3000 BC)

The middle Neolithic period saw the earliest human activity at Cotswold Community. This comprised a maximum of 13 pits within an area of six hectares in the south of the excavated area. The pits were organised as discrete features, in pairs or groups of three, and were assigned to this period primarily due to the presence of Peterborough Ware pottery. Typically for this period the pits also contained small flint assemblages, small amounts of animal bone, charred hazelnut shells and a stone axe.

The pits, whether isolated or in groups, are considered to represent occupation 'events' within a wider cycle of temporary occupation by mobile pastoralists. This may have been based on a wider pattern of seasonal occupation of favoured grazing. The duration of the occupation events is unknown although only six or seven episodes seem to be represented here in a period of *c* 400 years. Environmental evidence suggests this economy may have been based on cattle and was set in a background of open landscape, but with oak-hazel woodland available for exploitation nearby.

Phase 2—Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (*c* 3000–1500 BC)

Phase 2 encompasses two sub-phases; Phase 2a (late Neolithic) and Phase 2b (early Bronze Age). For the most part these were distinguished by pottery, late Neolithic pits containing Grooved Ware and early

Bronze Age features containing Beakers. However a number of pits could not be differentiated and were grouped simply as Phase 2.

Overall, the nature of the activity was similar to the middle Neolithic period, comprising mainly scattered pits and tree-throw holes. It is notable that almost all the pits assigned to Phase 2a were in pairs, whereas those in Phase 2b were more often in groups of three. This phase of occupation appears to have covered a wider extent than the previous phase, with features in the far north of the site, as well as in the southern area. This suggests a continuation of the seasonal pastoralist lifestyle seen in Phase 1. Environmental evidence also suggests this continued to be cattle based and that the overall landscape changed little from Phase 1.

At this time ceremonial monuments in the form of round barrows and a possible timber circle (though this could potentially be later)—as well as individual graves—appeared on the site, potentially indicating longer durations of occupation and changes in social organisation.

Phase 3—Middle Bronze Age (*c* 1500–1150 BC)

A dramatic change was seen at Cotswold Community between the early and middle Bronze Ages, distinguished by the development of seden-

Fig. 1.2 Aerial photograph of area prior to excavation showing location of cropmarks, looking east
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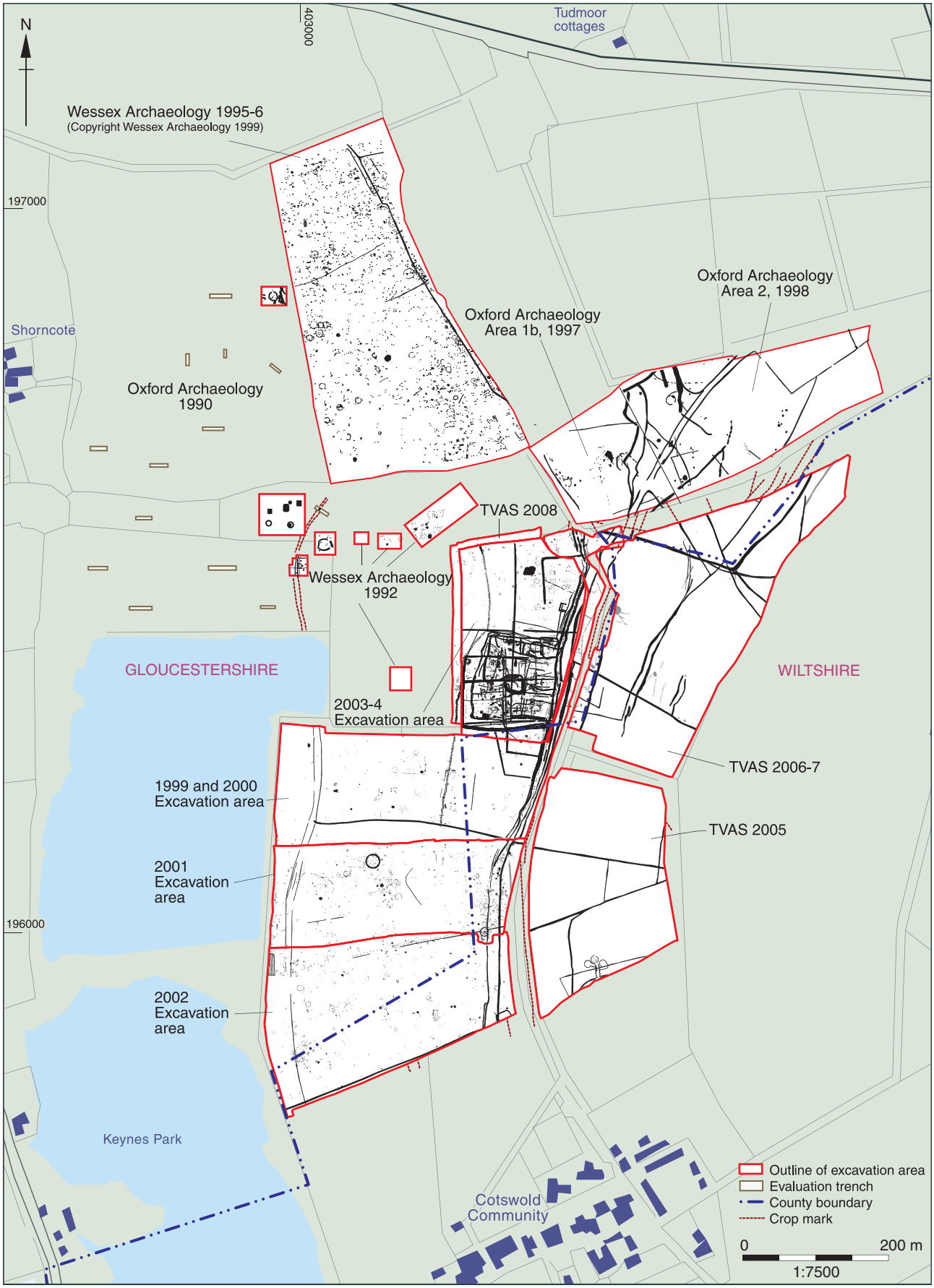


Fig. 1.3 Location of site in relation to other archaeological work in the immediate vicinity

tary settlements. These incorporated post-built roundhouses around focal waterholes, in addition to pits and further post-built structures such as enclosures and fencelines. A possible ritual enclosure was also found in association with a single inhumation burial, a cattle burial and a number of structured deposits in pits.

The artefactual assemblage was limited for this phase, with most deposits found in waterholes. However, evidence for metalworking was found in

Fig. 1.4 Aerial photograph of excavations in 1999-2000, looking west (© Crown copyright)

the form of a palstave mould from a possible hearth. Environmental evidence suggests arable agriculture was not adopted on the site to any significant degree and it is likely that it remained predominantly pastoral. However, the original woodland cover had been significantly modified indicating a well-established open grassland environment with few trees.

Phase 4—Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (*c* 1150–550 BC)

The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity was remarkable in terms of its scale, extending over an area of *c* 45 hectares when including previous excavations to the north. It comprised what appeared to be a series of shifting settlements incor-

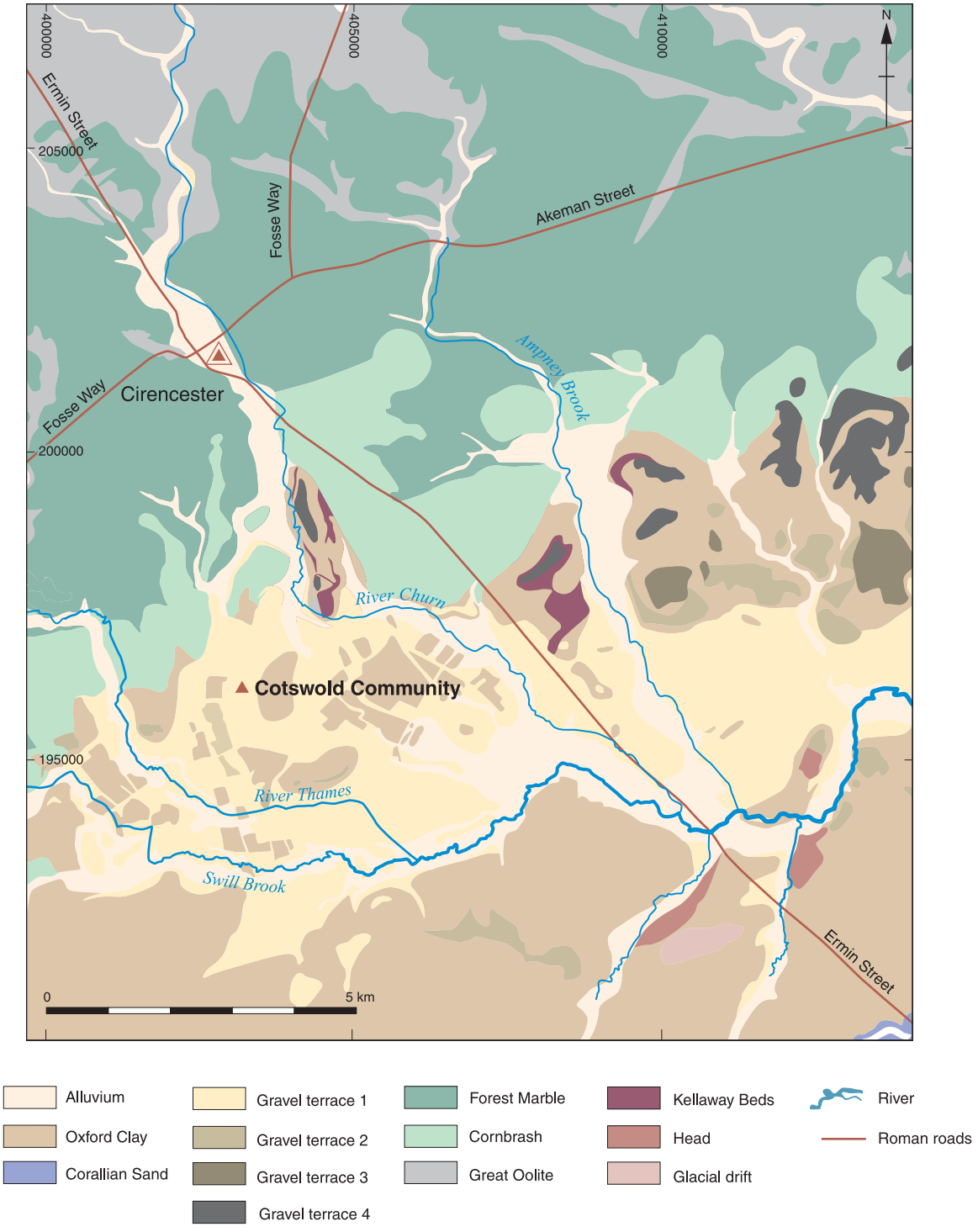


Fig. 1.5 Geology of the area around Cotswold Community. IPR/122-38CY British Geological Survey. © NERC 2010. All rights reserved

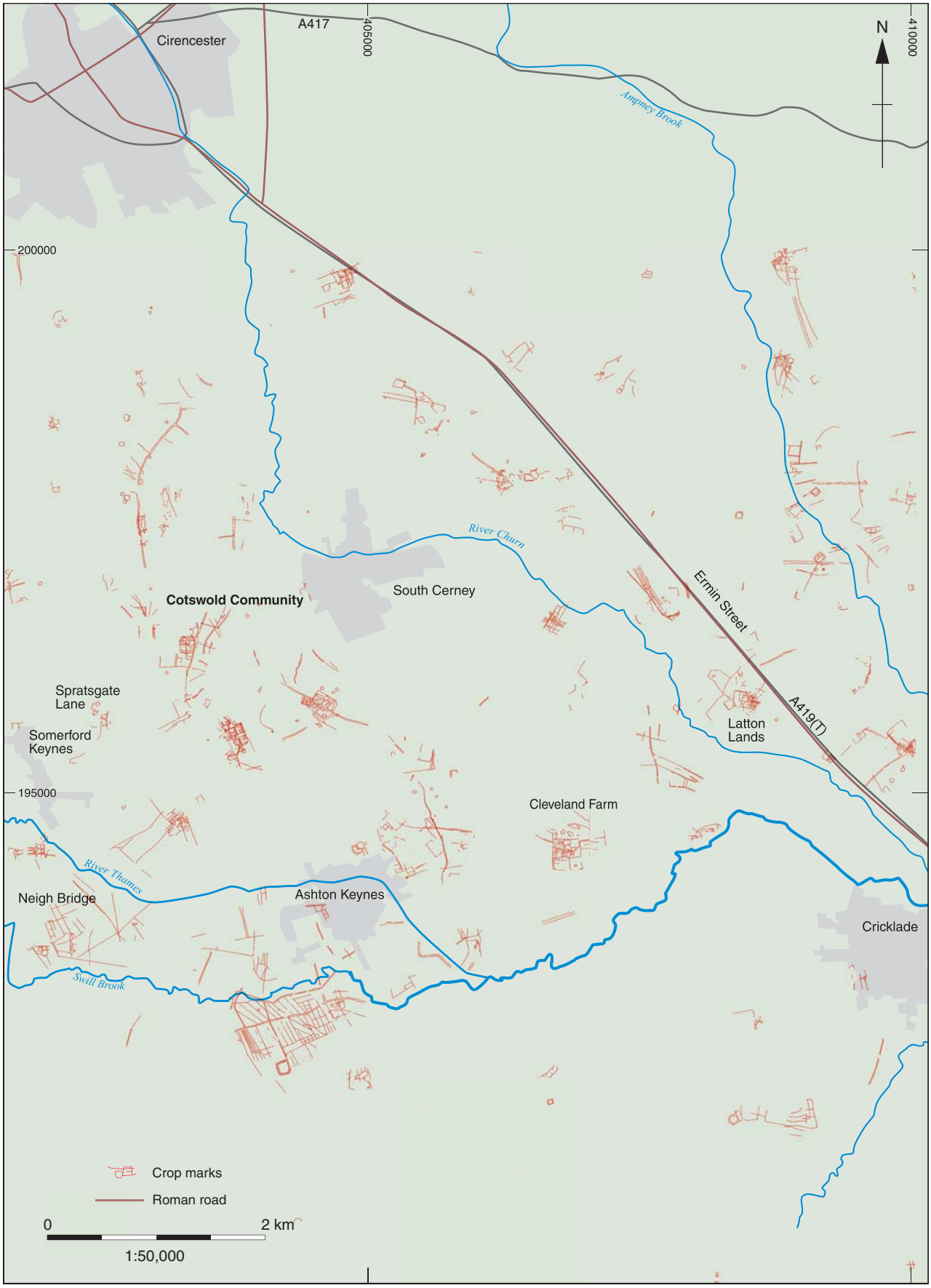


Fig. 1.6 Cotswold Community in relation to local cropmarks

porating roundhouses, waterholes, pits and postholes. None of the settlements were enclosed and waterholes tended to lie beyond the main focus of settlement. A new feature of settlement at this time was the presence of four-post structures generally thought to represent raised grain stores. One of the most remarkable features in this phase, and on the site as a whole, was the pit alignment consisting of two staggered lines of pits extending over 500 m.

The artefactual assemblage was again limited and dating scarce making the period difficult to subdivide. Environmental evidence was notably absent although evidence from nearby suggests this area had been extensively cleared by this time. Cattle again dominated the animal bone assemblage, although other species became more prevalent suggesting diversification. Overall, the evidence suggests a continuation of pastoral farming along with some small scale arable, and relatively short-lived settlements shifting across an area which was nevertheless subject to larger land divisions.

Phase 5—Middle Iron Age (*c* 400–100 BC)

In marked contrast to the preceding phase very little middle Iron Age activity was found on the site. Where features dating to this phase occurred they were located at the very eastern and southern edges of the excavated area, with some clear indications that settlement extended beyond these boundaries. Within the OA excavation middle Iron Age settlement was limited to a single roundhouse, represented by a penannular gully, in addition to a number of pits, postholes and linear features. The TVAS excavation to the east picked up a further three penannular gullies with associated trackway and enclosure ditches. Radiocarbon dates indicated that the activity to the east was later in date.

The site illustrates wider patterns of significant landscape reorganisation in the Upper Thames Valley at this time, with the open settlement of the preceding phase being abandoned in favour of more nucleated and formally bounded settlements. In other ways patterns from the preceding phase continued, including diversification of animal species and consolidation of landscape clearance. Evidence for arable production increased but remained small in scale.

Phase 6—Middle – late Iron Age (*c* 300–1 BC)

At some point in the middle to late Iron Age, the landscape underwent a dramatic re-organisation, with a focus of nucleated settlement concentrated on a higher area of gravel terrace in the north. The settlement comprised a small area of open domestic occupation, including three possible roundhouse structures and a waterhole, immediately south of a substantial palisaded enclosure, probably used to corral animals. The scant evidence for economic activities suggests a primary pastoral regime, with sheep and cattle being raised. The material culture associated with this phase is relatively poor, both in terms of quantity and status, though did include a rare late Iron Age continental brooch. Overall, the settlement is likely to have been a low status pastoral farmstead, probably of just a single household.

Phase 7—Late Iron Age – early Roman (*c* AD 1–125)

The late Iron Age to early Roman period saw a major transformation at Cotswold Community, although settlement continued to occupy the same higher area of gravel terrace. The earlier domestic buildings and stockades were dismantled and a new, much more substantial rectilinear ditched enclosure created, which encompassed nearly all of the features associated with this phase. Within the new enclosure, the settlement comprised pits/waterholes, animal pens and a small, central, multiply recut enclosure—all the elements considered essential for a farming unit of this period. Evidence for actual structures is limited to a single possible roundhouse and a sunken-floored building. This phase of settlement continued the predominantly pastoral economy of the middle-late Iron Age, although cattle now become more dominant than sheep.

The establishment of a Roman cavalry fort and subsequent founding of the city at Cirencester less than 5 km to the north in the mid to late 1st century AD does not appear to have caused any noticeable disruption to settlement at Cotswold Community, though a possible light military presence on site is attested.

Phase 8—Mid Roman (*c* AD 125–250)

The middle Roman period (2nd–3rd century AD) at Cotswold Community was the most intensive phase of activity, with major upheaval and landscape reorganisation. Two north-south aligned trackways were initially constructed, followed by significant adjustments to enclosure boundaries and the eventual formalisation of specific 'zones' within the well planned and maintained settlement. These zones appeared to relate to differing functions, including metalworking, crop processing and stock management. An area of domestic occupation was also noted, with slight evidence for a rectangular beam slot building. Despite the substantial increase in the number and range of finds recovered there is nothing to suggest any great leap in social status or deep-seated changes in personal lifestyle, with the general character of the finds remaining quite modest, albeit with a general low-level shift to more Roman styles of dress and culinary methods.

The presence of two corn dryers and evidence from charred plant remains indicate that cereal cultivation was starting to play a more important role in the site's economy, with a network of field boundaries seen to the east and north of the settle-

ment possibly defining a variety of paddocks and arable fields.

Phase 9—Late Roman (*c* AD 250–400)

The final Roman phase, dating to approximately the later 3rd and 4th centuries, saw a further reorganisation of the settlement and landscape, though the overall impression is of continuity in terms of site function, economy and status. The trackways and surrounding fields appear to have remained in use, though activity within the settlement contracted somewhat, becoming concentrated in the south and east. Domestic evidence became more visible during this phase with the appearance of stone footed buildings, walls, surfaces and a complex well structure. In addition there was a small cemetery centred upon an earlier Bronze Age ring ditch and a number of scattered graves. The environmental evidence indicated that the general trends of the 2nd and 3rd centuries continued, with increasing importance of arable over pastoral agriculture, though still essentially a mixed economy.

Occupation of the farm is thought to have ceased during the later 4th century, although maintenance of some of the field boundaries well beyond the Roman period is hinted at by correlation of medieval plough furrows with a number of Roman ditch alignments.

Phase 10—Saxon (*c* AD 450–850)

Following abandonment of the Roman settlement, human activity once more moved south in the early medieval period. Anglo-Saxon activity was located in three main areas, comprising a series of post-built structures and pits or waterholes to the north, a single structure and waterhole surrounded by a fenceline, and a large post-built structure to the south. It is not thought that these represent a significant focus for domestic occupation, but instead were a group of agricultural structures. Two isolated burials were also identified as Anglo-Saxon, radiocarbon dated to the late 6th and 7th centuries. A small assemblage of 73 sherds of early to middle Saxon pottery can be dated generally to the period *c* AD 450–850.

Phase 11—Medieval and post-medieval

At some point following the abandonment of the Saxon settlements the site was extensively ploughed leaving the remains of ridge and furrow. These features cannot be dated but something can be inferred about fields from their placement and alignment. A number of headlands were visible within this landscape, in addition to post-medieval field boundaries including a large county boundary ditch. Little of this can be precisely dated.

STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

This publication is presented in two volumes. Volume 1 provides an illustrated outline narrative of the archaeology of all phases, along with discussions of the activity within a local and regional framework. Summaries and selected illustrations of all finds and environmental categories are found at the end of each chapter, which serve to highlight the more significant aspects of the material evidence for human activity and landscape conditions. Volume 2 presents these specialist reports in full detail.

All specialist reports will also be available to download from the Oxford Archaeology website (http://www.thehumanjourney.net/).

LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

The archive from the site will be deposited with Corinium Museum, Cirencester.

Chapter 2:
Pastures old—From Neolithic hunter-gatherers to Bronze Age and Iron Age farmers

by Kelly Powell

INTRODUCTION

The material evidence, in the form of a small flint assemblage, shows that human activity at Cotswold Community dated back to the Mesolithic. This earliest activity is ephemeral in nature and cannot be viewed as absolute evidence for occupation but does illustrate the presence of humans in this area during the Mesolithic period. In addition to the more widely scattered Mesolithic flint, a coherent group of flint of this date was recovered from the single fill of a large tree-throw hole 7505, near the southern end of the site (Fig. 2.1).

No evidence was found for activity in the early Neolithic period, although a clear sequence began in the middle Neolithic, running through to the later prehistoric period and ultimately into the Roman and Saxon eras. As would be expected the Neolithic activity was restricted to pits and tree-throw holes. However, during the early Bronze Age there was a clear move towards ceremonial monuments and more structured burial rites. A transition to a more sedentary lifestyle is evident in the middle Bronze Age, while the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age is represented by roundhouse based settlements. This trend continued into the middle Iron Age, but this period is less well represented at Cotswold Community.

THE EARLIEST LANDSCAPE EXPLOITATION —MIDDLE NEOLITHIC (PHASE 1)

Due to the antiquity and often ephemeral nature of Neolithic features, dating can be problematic. At Cotswold Community features were dated to the middle Neolithic on the basis of pottery and flint. In particular, those pits containing Peterborough Ware pottery and associated pits in the same group were assigned a Phase 1 date, while the worked flint assemblage was also used to corroborate these dates and in some cases was used as the primary form of dating where distinctive objects (eg chisel arrowheads) were present, but pottery was absent.

Pits

The middle Neolithic activity comprised a maximum of 13 pits. Although these were relatively well dispersed, all were located in the southernmost part of the site, within an area of *c* 6 hectares (Figs 2.2 and 2.3). The pits fell into two main clusters in the north-east and south-west of this area, and—typical of the Upper Thames Valley—mostly occurred in pairs, with one group of three. Their dimensions are shown in Table 2.1.

A total of eight pits were clustered in the north-east. A group of three (8697, 8700 and 8701) were less

Table 2.1: Detail of Phase 1 pits

Pit No.	*Diameter*	*Depth*	*No. Fills*	*Shape in plan*	*Profile*
8033	0.81	0.32	2	Circular	Sloping sides, concave base
8666	0.8	0.28	1	Circular	U-shaped
8668	0.95	0.37	1	Circular	U-shaped
8697	0.94	0.25	3	Circular	U-shaped
8700	0.92	0.23	2	Circular	U-shaped
8701	0.76	0.14	1	Circular	U-shaped
8799	1.1	0.35	3	Sub-circular	Vertical sides, flat base
8859	1.4	1.1	6	Circular	Bowl-shaped
8864	0.6	0.35	1	Sub-circular	Bowl-shaped
9834	0.86	0.2	3	Oval	Bowl-shaped
9959	0.9 x 0.66	0.2	1	Sub-circular	Bowl-shaped
9961	0.8 x 0.64	0.24	1	Sub-circular	Bowl-shaped
10206	0.8	0.4	3	Sub-circular	Vertical sides, irregular base

than 1 m apart but appeared to form a pair and an ancillary third pit (Fig. 2.4). The pair comprised pits 8697 and 8700; the former produced Peterborough Ware pottery, but only crumbs were retrieved from the latter. Both contained small but noteworthy assemblages of worked flint and stone in addition to deposits of charcoal and charred hazelnut shells, with cattle bone from pit 8697. The charcoal from pit 8697 was mixed but also contained a sizeable amount of hazel wood suggesting hazel was not simply exploited for food. Hazelnut shell from pit 8700 was submitted for radiocarbon dating and produced a date of 3036–2914 cal BC (OxA-17612; 78.6 % prob), confirming the middle Neolithic phasing. Pit 8701 was slightly removed and smaller and produced a single flint knife.

A large toolkit was deposited within this group of pits. The flint assemblage from pit 8697 was varied

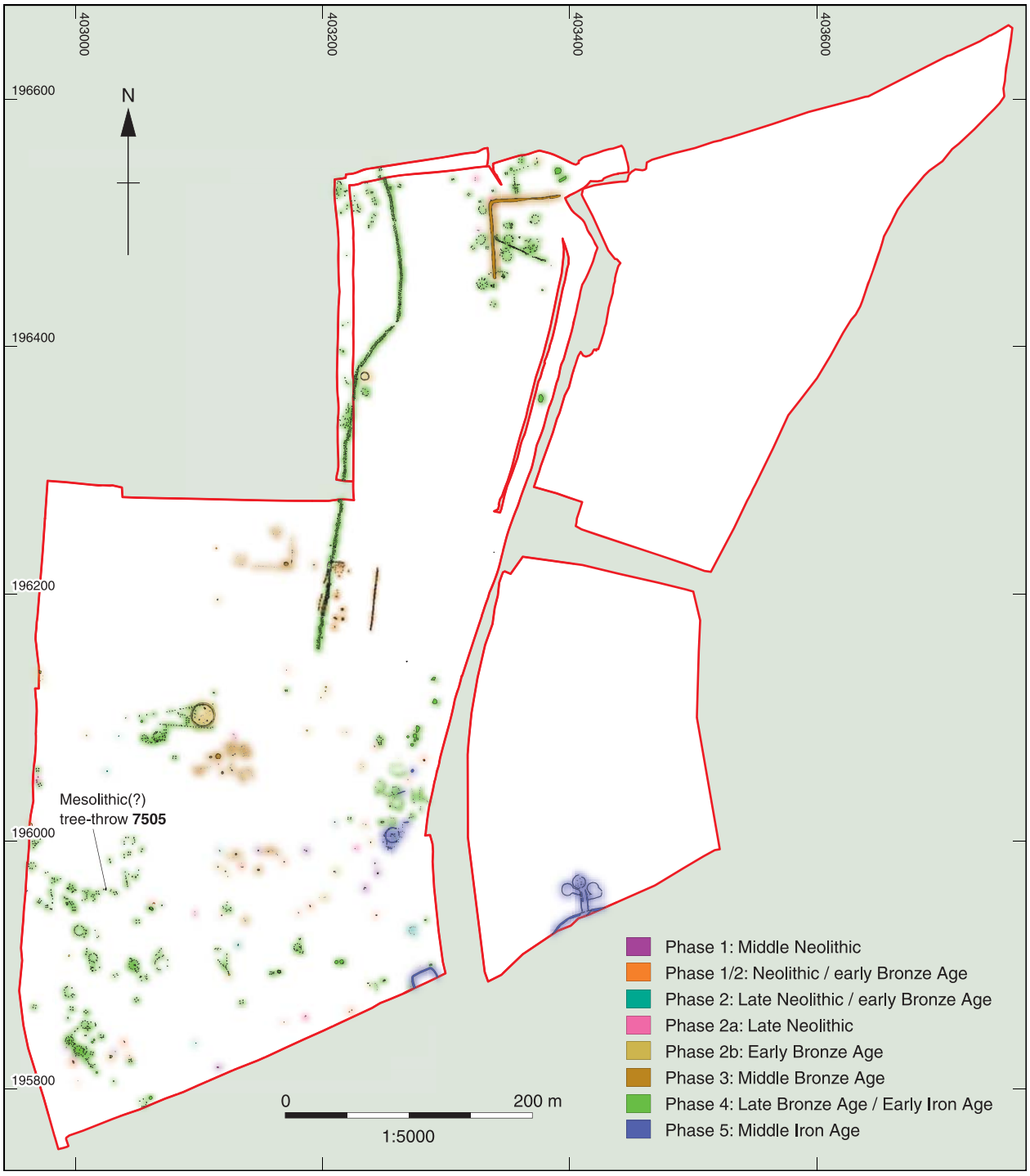


Fig. 2.1 Overview of prehistoric phases (1–5) at Cotswold Community

in composition, including scrapers, a fabricator, knives and blades, as well as flakes and a hammerstone/processor (SF 550; Fig. 2.4). Stone implements included the butt end of an axe (SF 526; Fig. 2.4), reworked at either end—possibly from use as a hammerstone (see Roe, this vol.). An additional flint scraper, flakes and chips were recovered from 8700.

Pits 8864 and 8799 were located to the north-east of this group, approximately 8.5 m apart (Fig. 2.3). Both produced Peterborough Ware pottery and flints, the pottery from 8799 including an unusual vessel with an incised spiral decoration (see Mullin, this vol.). Pit 8864 was cut into a tree-throw hole (8810), a typical feature of Neolithic pits in this area. Pit 8799 contained a flint assemblage which included scrapers and blades and the remains of charred hazel nut shell. One of the most interesting finds was a large portion of a scallop

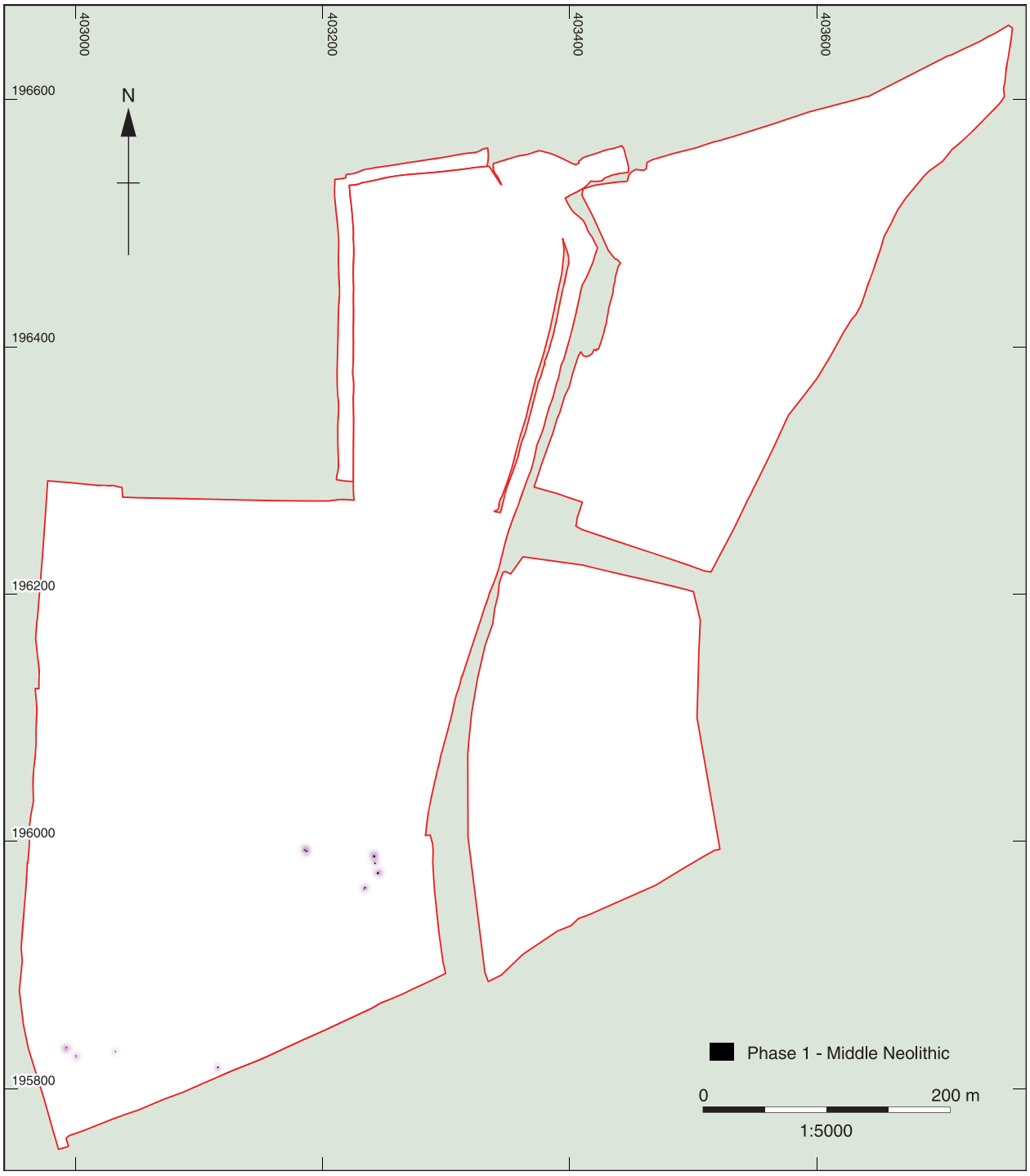


Fig. 2.2 Outline of middle Neolithic phase (Phase 1)

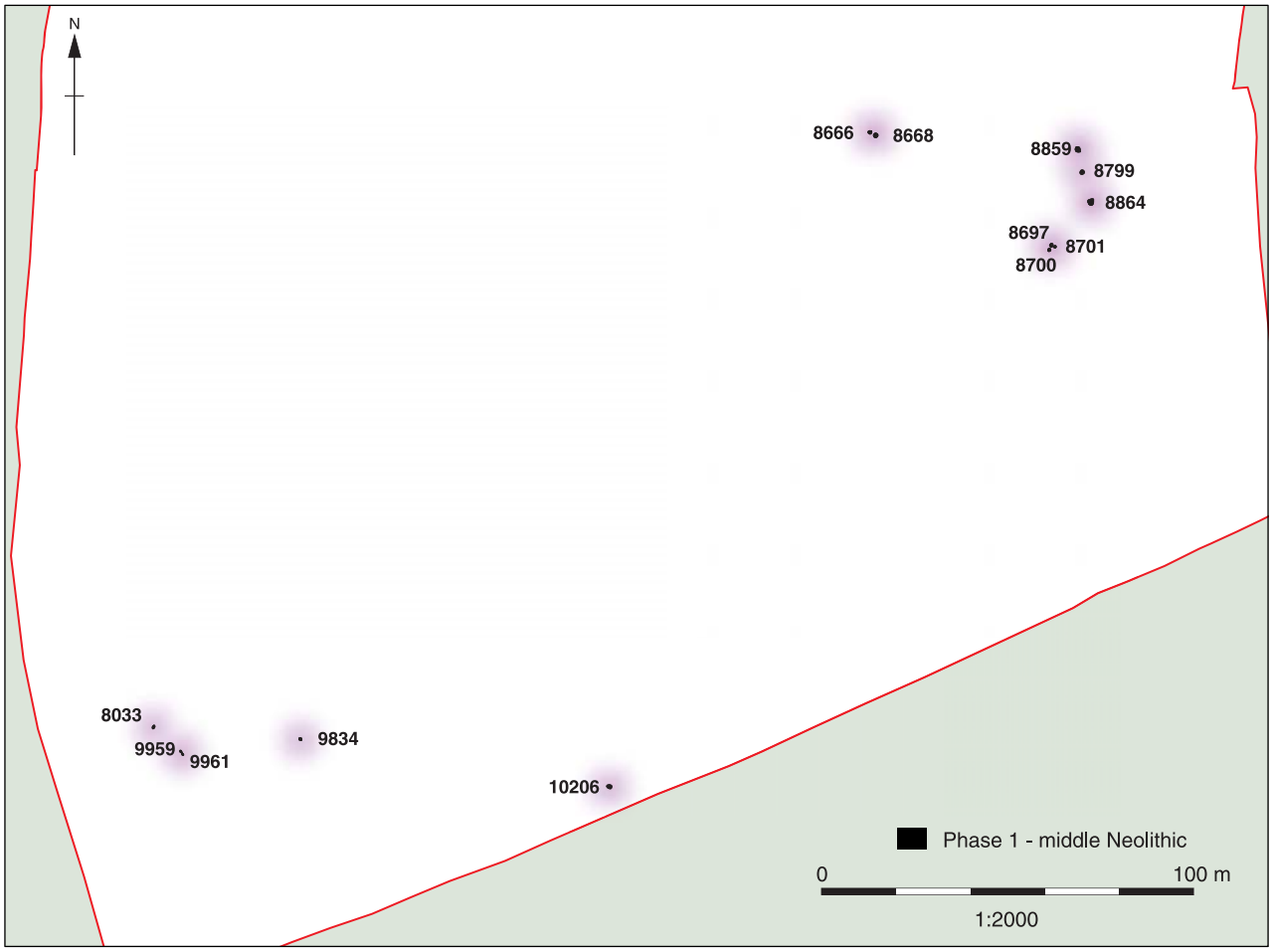


Fig. 2.3 Detail of middle Neolithic activity

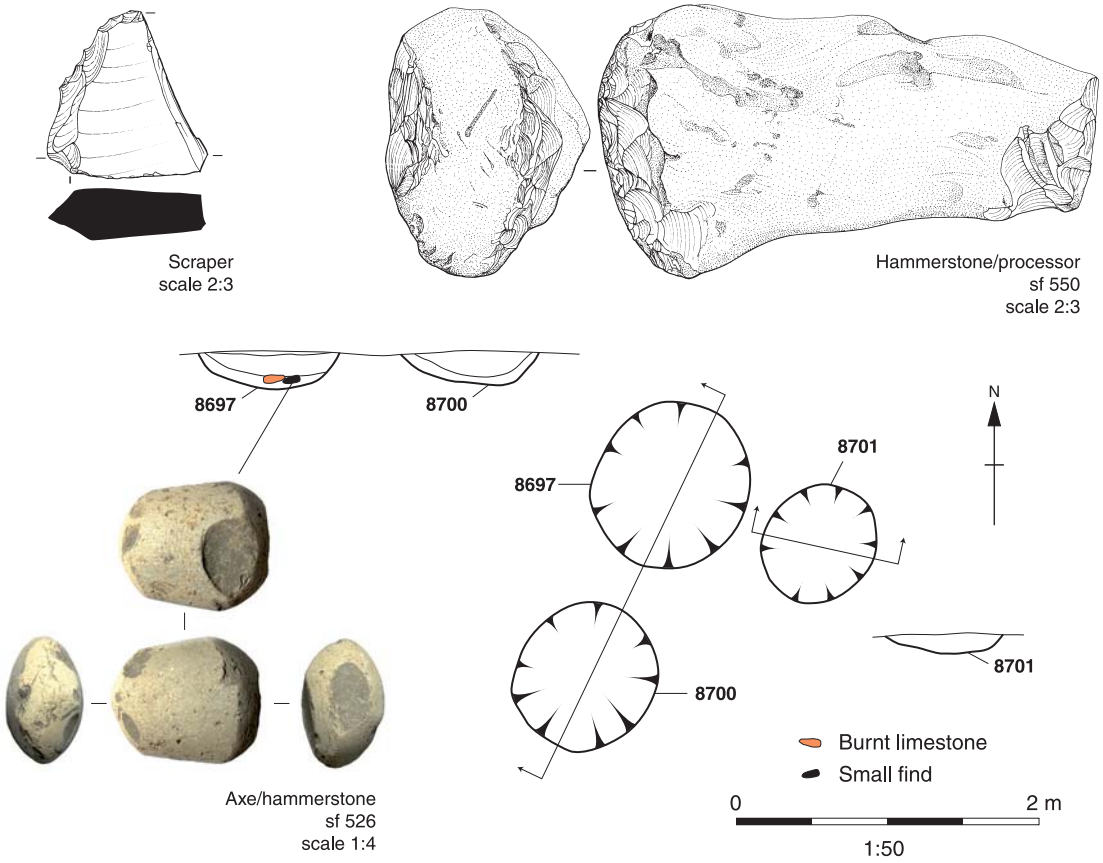


Fig. 2.4 Middle Neolithic pit group 8697/8700/8701 and associated finds

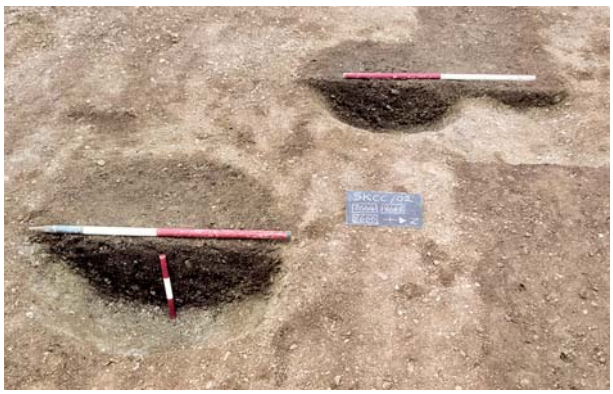
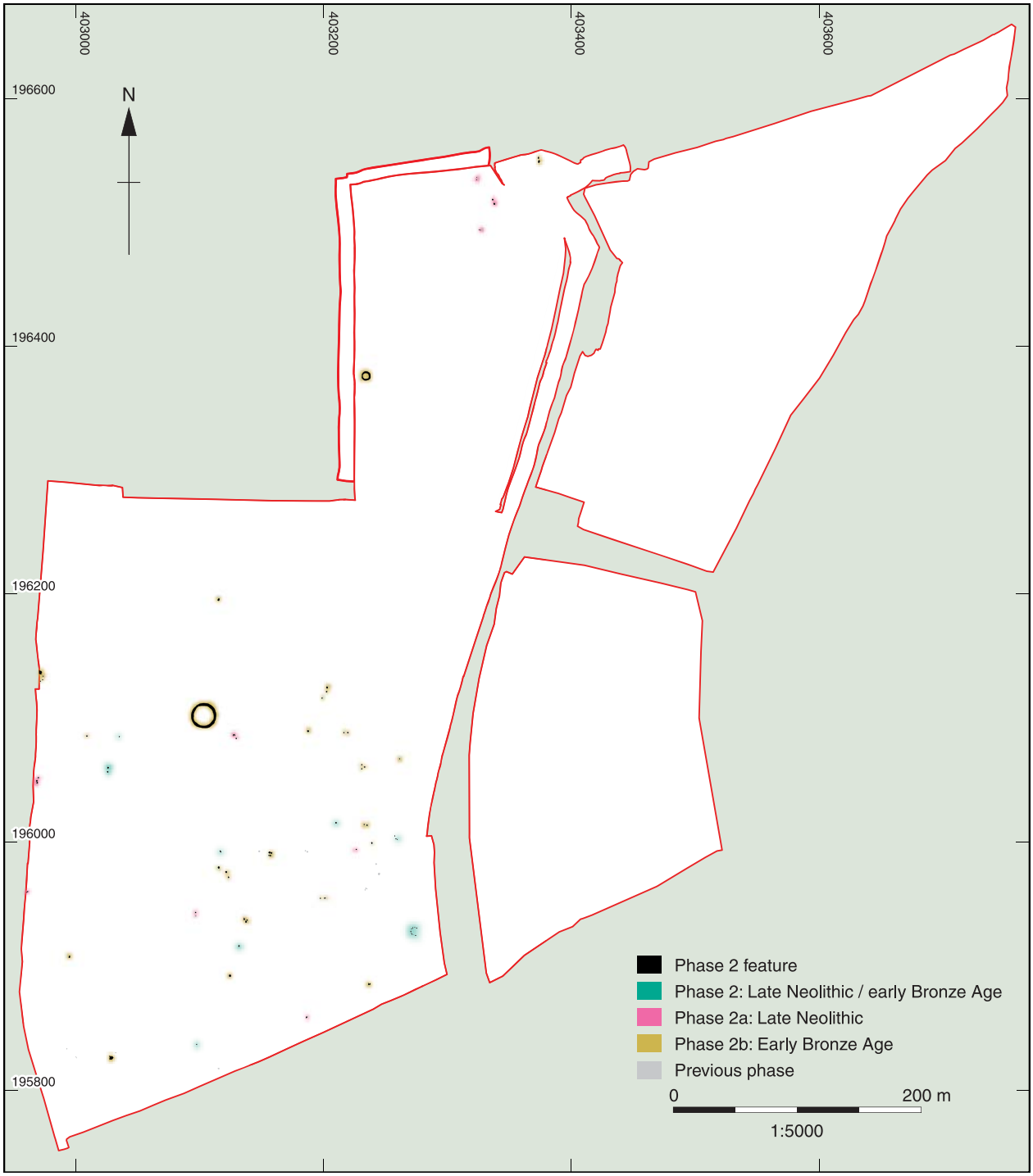


Fig. 2.5 (left) Photograph of paired middle Neolithic pits 8666 and 8668

Fig. 2.6 (below) Outline of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age phase (Phase 2)



shell from pit 8799. This was likely to have been used for tempering pottery and was probably quite difficult to source, suggesting it was included as a deliberate deposit. A third pit (8859) was located a further 4.5 m north. This did not produce any pottery or flint but a fragment of possible clam shell was recovered from the fill, suggesting this may have been related and therefore similar in date.

A further pair of middle Neolithic pits (8668 and 8666) was excavated approximately 60 m to the north-west, lying 0.6 m apart (Figs 2.3 and 2.5). Both features had single fills and middle Neolithic Fengate Ware came from pit 8666. Pit 8668 produced charred hazelnut shell but no flint was found in either.

The remaining middle Neolithic pits were located in the south-west corner of the site (8033, 9834, 9959, 9961 and 10206; Fig. 2.3). All were discrete features—with the exception of pits 9959 and 9961 which were paired—and all contained small amounts of Peterborough Ware (except 8033 and 9961) and worked flint. Pit 10206 was the only feature within this group to produce charred hazel nut shells and significant amounts of charcoal. The

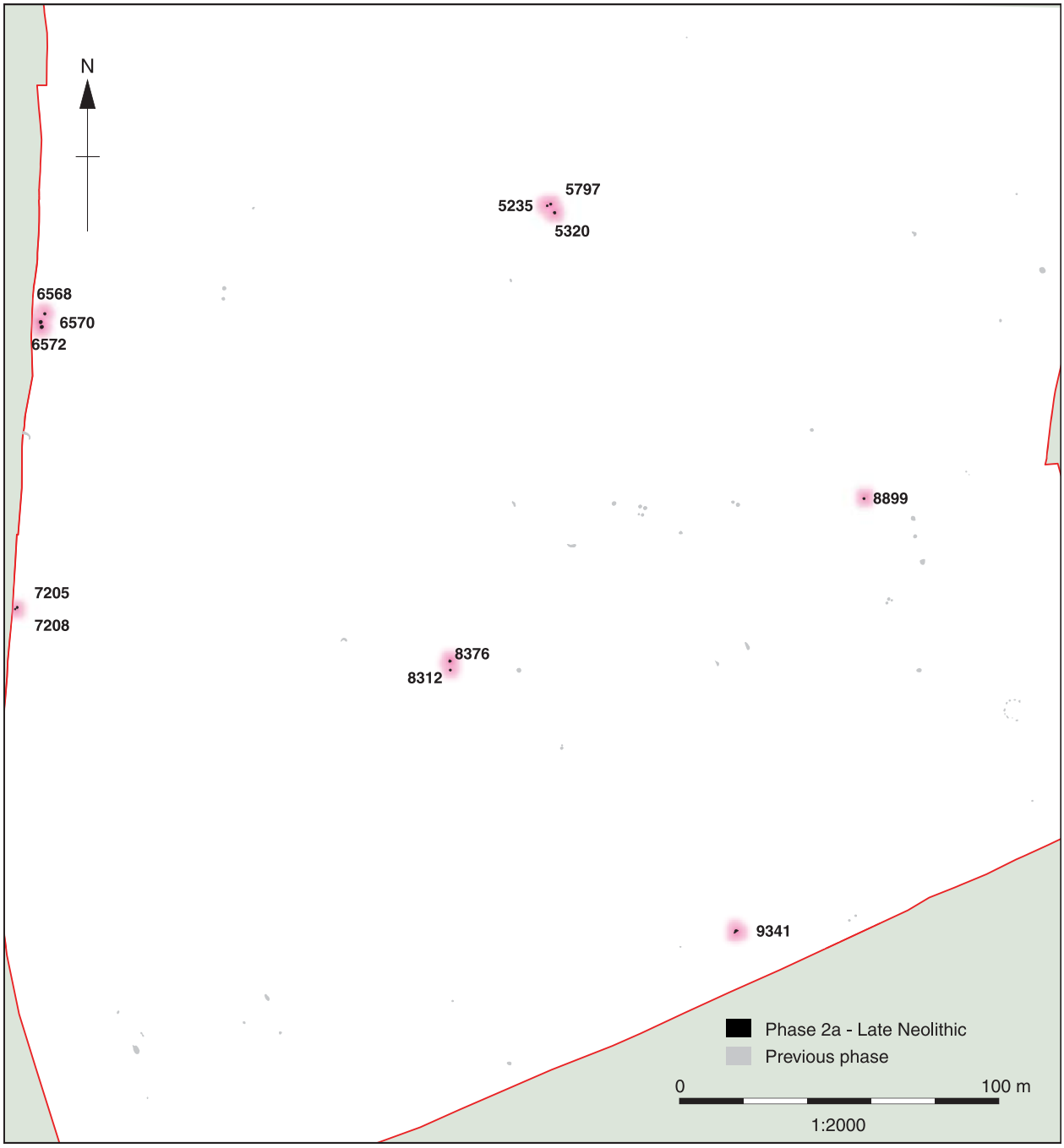


Fig. 2.7 Detail of late Neolithic activity (Phase 2a): southern features

flint assemblage within pit 8033 dated the feature and comprised a large number of flakes, a fabricator, a scraper and a chisel arrowhead. The assemblage from pit 9834 contained a scraper, a knife, two flakes and a notch whilst the group from 9961 comprised 62 burnt unworked flints. Burnt stone assemblages were also recovered from pits 9834 and 10206, presumably indicating cooking activity.

CLEARING THE LANDSCAPE—LATE NEOLITHIC – EARLY BRONZE AGE (PHASE 2)

The late Neolithic and early Bronze Age can be notoriously difficult to distinguish, often overlapping in time in the same region (Bradley 2007, 89). As such, they are grouped together here as Phase 2, but further divided into sub-phases 2a and 2b, corresponding to the late Neolithic and early Bronze Ages respectively (Fig. 2.6). This subdivision is based upon difference in artefact assemblages, in particular between Grooved Ware and 'Beaker' style pottery, in addition to the character of the flint assemblages. Radiocarbon dates show that features in these two sub-phases were very similar in time frame and may have overlapped chronologically, although there is a plateau in the radiocarbon calibration curve at this time and these dates may not be entirely accurate. A number of features could not be divided into sub-phase due to a lack of ceramic evidence, and these are discussed at the end of this section under a general Phase 2 heading.

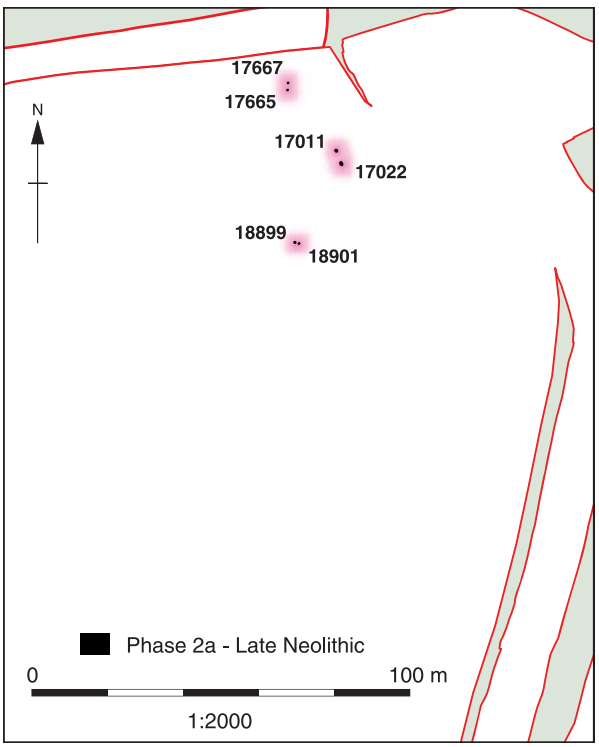


Fig. 2.8 Detail of late Neolithic activity (Phase 2a): northern features

Late Neolithic Phase 2a

Pits and tree-throw holes

The nature of activity appeared to continue from the middle into the later Neolithic, comprising mainly scattered pits and a single tree-throw hole, although almost all the pits assigned to Phase 2a were in pairs (Figs 2.7–8). This phase of occupation appears to have been dispersed over a wider area than the previous phase, with a group of pits in the northernmost part of the site (Fig. 2.8), as well as in the southern area (Fig. 2.7). Radiocarbon dating indicated that the pits in the southern end of the site were earlier in date than those in the north, tentatively suggesting an overall movement northwards.

The more southerly features in this phase included a number of paired pits, a discrete pit and a deliberate deposit within a tree-throw hole. As in the previous phase all but one contained one to three fills of clayey or sandy silt. The pits (summarised in Table 2.2) were mostly circular or sub-rectangular with varying profiles and most contained Grooved Ware pottery and worked flint. The flint assemblage comprised only flakes and chips with the exception of the group from tree-throw hole 9341. Much less environmental evidence was recovered from these pits than from the middle Neolithic examples.

Pits 8376 and 8312 were centrally located and just over 2 m apart. Pit 8376 had a slight projection on its northern side which contained a tightly packed deposit of cremated human bone (8377; Fig. 2.9). This was radiocarbon dated to 2760–2560 cal BC (SUERC-18833, 72.5% prob). The deposit was quite large, possibly containing the entire body, and it was also fully white indicating efficient combustion. Its position at one end of the pit suggests it may have been deposited in an organic container.

Pits 7205 and 7208 were located on the western edge of the site (Fig. 2.7), much more closely spaced at *c* 0.2 m and differing in size (Table 2.2). Pits 6570 and 6572 were *c* 85 m directly north of this, also just 0.5 m apart. These pits contained burnt stone and fragments of bone, possibly the remnants of meals. Pit 6568 to the north may also belong to this group although this is unattested.

Pits 5797 and 5320 were *c* 150 m north of 8376 and lay 2.2 m apart (Fig. 2.7). Only pit 5797 produced charred hazel nut shells, which were radiocarbon dated to 2760–2570 cal BC (SUERC-18835, 72.3% prob). When compared to the date from 8376 this illustrates broad contemporaneity of Phase 2a pits in this area. A further small pit, 5235, was located 0.6 m to the west of 5797. The pit produced no material evidence but association with this pair cannot be ruled out.

The single discrete pit assigned to this phase (8899) was closer to the eastern edge of the site (Fig. 2.7) and also produced fragments of burnt bone and stone. Its isolation appears to be unique in this phase, with the exception of tree-throw hole 9341

Table 2.2: Detail of Phase 2a pits

Pit No.	*Diameter*	*Depth*	*No. Fills*	*Shape in plan*	*Profile*
5235	0.6	0.16	2	Circular	Bowl-shaped
5320	0.7	0.17	2	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
5797	0.72	0.46	2	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
6568	0.6	0.2	1	Circular	Steep sides, flat base
6570	0.9	0.22	1	Sub-rectangular	Vertical sides, flat base
6572	0.9	0.21	1	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
7205	0.8 x 0.57	0.19	2	Oval	Sloping sides, rounded base
7208	0.4	0.14	2	Circular	Varying
8312	0.54	0.14	1	Circular	Sloping sides, concave base
8376	0.83 x 0.8	0.27	1	Sub-rectangular	Vertical sides, concave base
8899	1	0.3	3	Circular	Varying with even base
17011	0.9	0.2	2	Circular	Concave
17022	1	0.6	4	Sub-circular	Concave
17665	0.8	0.23	1	Circular	Concave
17667	0.6	0.12	1	Circular	Concave
18899	0.48	0.2	1	Irregular	Concave
18901	0.58	0.16	1	Sub-circular	Concave

Table 2.3: Detail of Phase 2b pits

Pit No.	*Diameter*	*Depth*	*No. Fills*	*Shape in plan*	*Profile*
568	1.4 x 0.84	0.14	1	Oval	Sloping sides, flat base
570	2.12 x 1.2	0.26	1	Oval	Sloping sides, flat base
2819	0.5	0.28	1	Circular	Sloping sides, flat base
2833	0.86	0.24	2	Circular	Sloping sides, flat base
2836	0.35	0.26	1	Sub-square	Vertical sides, flat base
2842	2.7	0.34	1	Irregular	Sloping sides, bowl shaped
4048	1.18 x 1.04	0.37	2	Circular	Bowl shaped
4390	0.63	0.21	2	Circular	Straight sides, flat base
4401	0.9	0.34	4	Circular	Sloping sides and base
4416	1.3 x 1.05	0.4	4	Sub-oval	Steep sides, concave base
4512	1.2	0.33	4	Circular	Sloping sides,flat base
4599	0.8	0.27	2	Circular	Concave
4602	0.7	0.23	2	Circular	Steep sides, flat base
4605	0.7	0.23	2	Circular	Sloping sides, concave base
4658	1	0.3	3	Circular	Steep sides, flat base
4764	0.75	0.34	2	Circular	Steep sides, flat base
4766	0.6	0.34	1	Circular	Steep sides, flat base
5076	0.92	0.23	2	Circular	Sloping side, flat base
5659	0.5	0.3	2	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
7622	1.05 x 0.95	0.15	1	Sub-circular	Sloping sides, rounded base
7624	1.3 x 1.2	0.23	3	Sub-circular	Bowl shaped
7972	1.5	0.45	3	Sub-circular	Near vertical sides, flat base
8066	1.2	0.35	3	Sub-circular	Bowl shaped
8134	0.65	0.35	2	Sub-circular	Vertical sides, flat base
8338	0.74	0.1	1	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
8717	0.75 x 0.6	0.35	2	Sub-oval	Near vertical sides, flat base
?8775	1.4 x 0.6	0.17		Sub-rectangular	Steep sides, flat base
9120	0.92	0.22	2	Circular	Near vertical sides, flat base
9121	0.6	0.26	2	Sub-circular	Concave
9122	0.5	0.15	2	Circular	Concave

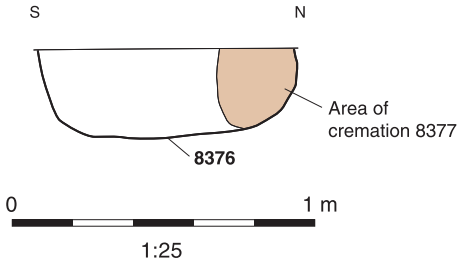
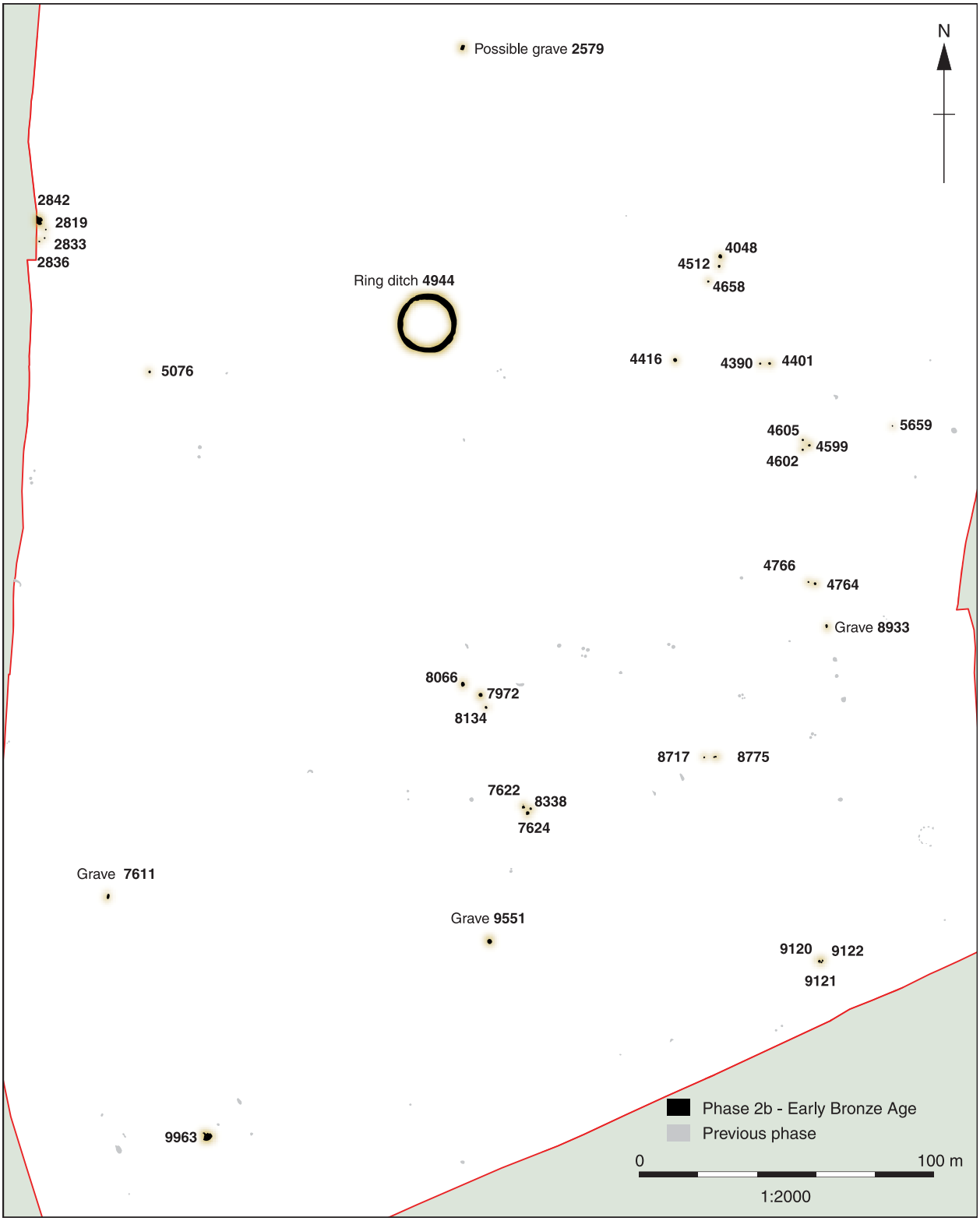


Fig. 2.9 (left) Section through late Neolithic pit 8376 with cremation 8377

Fig. 2.10 (below) Detail of early Bronze Age activity (Phase 2b): southern features



which produced a deliberate deposit of flint, stone and pottery. The flint assemblage from 9341 included a piercer, a scraper and a core on a flake accompanied by a possible stone pot boiler and a processor. Both these features produced late Neolithic pottery.

A further three pairs of pits were excavated in the northern part of the site, all within 40 m of one another (Fig. 2.8). The most northerly pair, 17765 and 17667 were 1.2 m apart; pits 17022 and 17011 were 20 m to the south-east and 2.4 m apart, whilst pits 18899 and 18901 were 23 m to the south-west and only 0.3 m apart. The pits measured 0.48–1 m in diameter and 0.12–0.6 m deep. Most were circular or sub-circular with concave bases. All contained Grooved Ware pottery, except 18899, the pottery from which was only identified as prehistoric. The latter was also the only pit not to contain worked flint.

The flint assemblage was predominantly flake-based, although pit 17011 also produced a scraper and a piercer and pit 17022 a scraper and a blade. The scrapers from this pair of pits were exceptionally large (see Lamdin-Whymark, this vol.). Pit 17665 contained an assemblage of burnt stone and pits 17665 and 18899 were noted as having occasional charcoal. Only pits 17022 and 17665 contained hazel nut shell fragments, the former in combination with a more significant charcoal assemblage. The nutshells from 17022 were submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 2575–2469 cal BC (OxA-17619; 95.4% prob). As outlined above, this indicates that at least part of the activity to the north was later in date than that to the south, possibly suggesting a temporal shift across the landscape.

Other paired pits were found close to this northern group but produced no dating evidence. As a result of the proximity of later Iron Age activity these pits remained unphased.

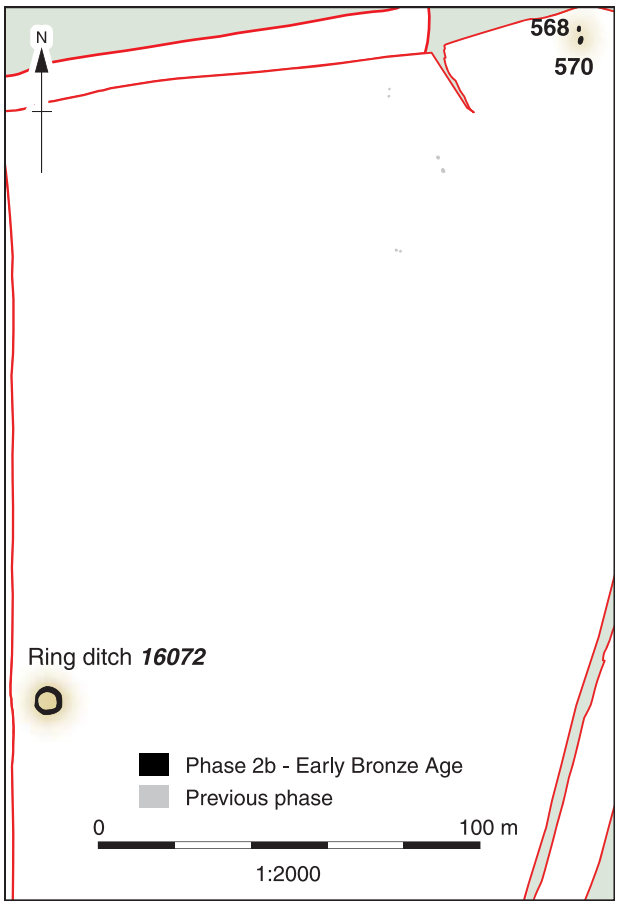


Fig. 2.11 Detail of early Bronze Age activity (Phase 2b): northern features

Early Bronze Age (Phase 2b)

The early Bronze Age sees both continuation and contrast in occupation activity. As in the preceding phases, occupation was mostly represented by scattered pits or groups of pits (Figs 2.10–11). However, this phase of activity also sees a change in the landscape with the emergence of funerary monuments and the advent of crouched inhumations accompanied by Beakers and associated artefacts. The early Bronze Age is distinguished by the appearance of Beaker type pottery and artefacts, and therefore features were assigned to this sub-phase on the basis of inclusion of this pottery and associated styles, or by association with features containing such pottery.

Pits and tree-throw holes

At least 30 pits were assigned to the early Bronze Age or considered to be possibly early Bronze Age (Table 2.3). The pits were arranged in groups of three, or in pairs, or occurred as discrete features. All the positively phased pits were located in the southern half of the site, the majority on the eastern side of this area (Fig. 2.10), although two possible early Bronze Age pits were revealed to the far north-east (Fig. 2.11). The southern pits varied in diameter from 0.5 to 1.5 m (with the exception of pit 2842) and in depth from 0.1 to 0.45 m (Table 2.3), containing one to four fills of predominantly clayey silt. Most were circular or sub-circular, tending to be bowl-shaped in profile or sloping with flat bases. Beaker pottery and varying assemblages of worked flint were recovered from the majority of the pits.

Groups

The most southerly groups of pits comprised features 9120, 9121 and 9122, which lay at a maximum of 0.15 m apart (Figs 2.10 and 2.12). All had a primary silting layer overlain by deliberate deposits containing large and significant assemblages of worked flint and stone. Pit 9120 was the richest in terms of artefacts and produced Beaker pottery as well as a multipurpose stone tool (SF 661—used as a hammerstone and polisher; Fig. 2.12) and over 20 flint flakes, eight scrapers, four knives, three blades or bladelets, two arrowheads as

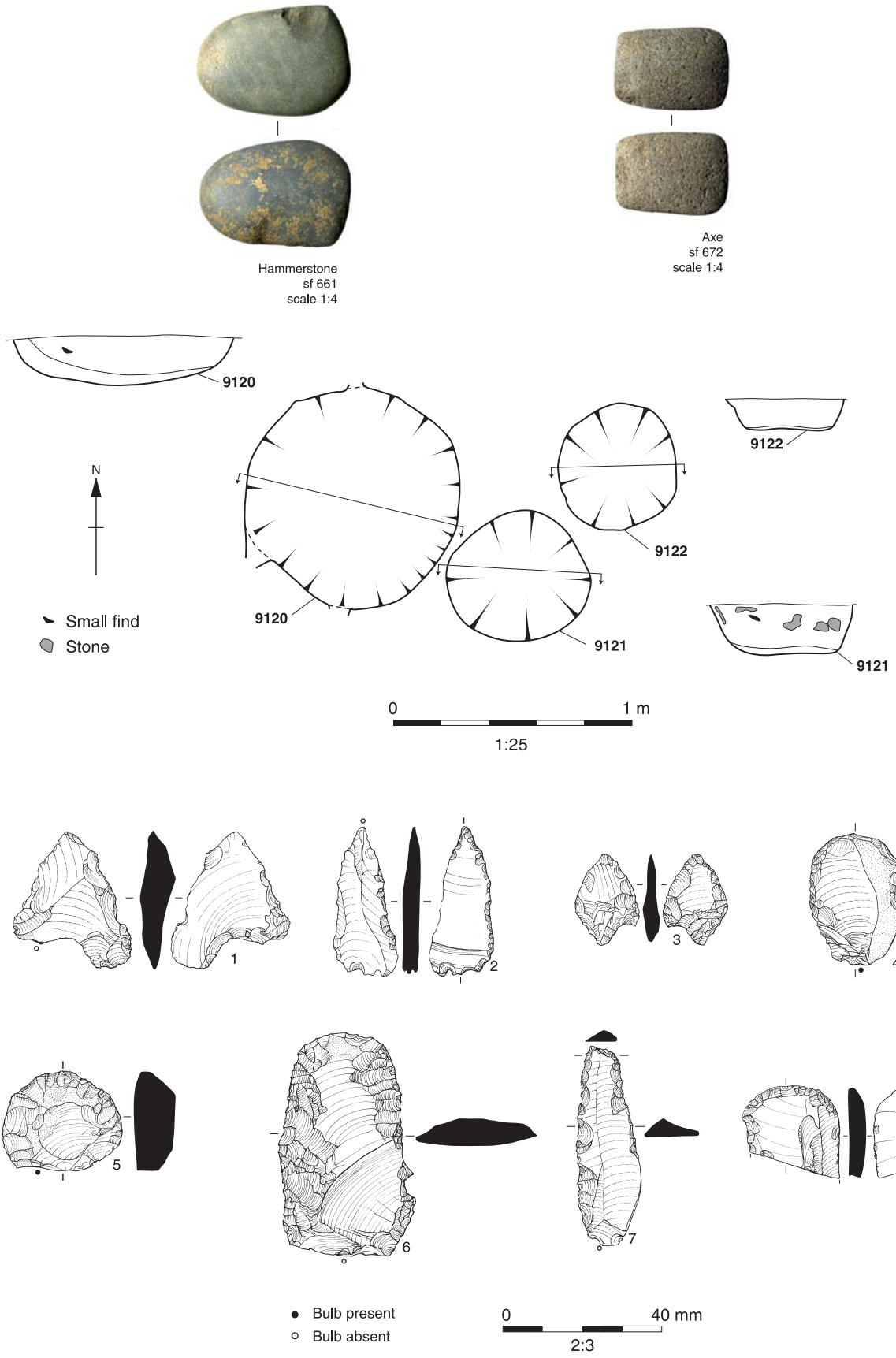


Fig. 2.12 Early Bronze Age pit group 9120 / 9121 / 9122

well as a core, a piercer and a notch. A number of the flint artefacts from this pit were exceptional including a plano-convex knife (Fig. 2.12, 6; see Lamdin-Whymark, this vol.). The other two pits produced smaller worked flint assemblages with a similar range of artefacts and pit 9122 contained Beaker pottery. A Neolithic axe, originating from Cornwall, was recovered from pit 9121 (SF 672; Fig. 2.12) (see Roe, this vol.).

A second group, comprising pits 4599, 4602 and 4605, was located 175 m directly north of this and arranged in a similar fashion, although spaced at approximately 2 m apart (Fig. 2.10). All were very similar in dimensions (Table 2.3), although only pit 4602 produced pottery, including fragments of a carinated food vessel and residual Grooved Ware. The worked flint assemblages were smaller within this group, mainly comprising flakes, although pit 4605 also produced a disc scraper and two multi-platform flake cores.

A group of three less closely spaced pits (8066, 7972 and 8134) were arranged in a staggered line approximately 140 m to the south-west, the distance between them 3.5–4.2 m (Fig. 2.10). All three pits contained Beaker pottery, worked flint and deposits of burnt stone. The worked flint assemblages generally comprised flakes and scrapers. Pits 7972 and 8066 also produced charcoal, hazelnut and other charred plant remains. In addition pit 7972 contained a human long bone shaft and small skull fragments. This does not seem to have been a formal burial and may have been deposited with domestic debris.

A further group of sub-circular pits was recorded *c* 35 m south of this, lying 0.7–1.4 m apart. Pits 7622 and 7624 were similar in form and finds; the third pit, 8338, appeared to be associated spatially, although pottery recovered indicated a later Bronze Age date. It is possible that the pottery was intrusive and the pit itself was early Bronze Age. The contents of pits 7622 and 7624 were very similar, comprising Beaker pottery and worked flint assemblages. Both also produced burnt stone, while charcoal and hazelnut shell were found in pit 7624.

Three pits (4048, 4512, 4658) in the north-east of the southern area may have comprised a small group (Fig. 2.10). Pits 4048 and 4512 were 2.25 m apart and produced prehistoric and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery, including possible Beaker. These pits also produced large assemblages of worked flint, similar to those from pits 9120–9122. The largest assemblage came from pit 4048 and included 29 flakes, five scrapers, two knives and an arrowhead, whilst pit 4512 contained 17 flakes, two scrapers and a hammerstone. Burnt stone was collected from pit 4048 and both features produced charcoal and charred hazel nut fragments. The richness of organic material from pit 4048 made it possible to radiocarbon date the feature to 2580–2460 cal BC (SUERC-18834, 95.4% prob). This date is similar to that obtained from late Neolithic pit 17022, although the artefact assemblage differs, illustrating the possible similarities in chronology of these two sub-phases. Pit 4658 was located *c* 5.5 m to the south-west and was of similar dimensions and morphology. It is unclear if this was part of the group.

A possible group was somewhat removed from the other activity of this sub-phase, on the western edge of the excavated area. This comprised small pit 2819, which contained Beaker pottery, and a number of other pits including 2842 and 2833 which may have been related.

Pairs

Only two definite pairs of pits were assigned to sub-phase 2b. Pits 4390 and 4401 were located in the north-eastern part of the southern area and were 2.35 m apart. Beaker pottery and cattle bone was retrieved from pit 4401; pit 4390 produced a flint knife and undiagnostic prehistoric pottery. Pits 4764 and 4766 were 75 m south of these, 1.6 m apart. Beaker pottery and a small flint assemblage including an unfinished arrowhead or blank came from pit 4764, although no material evidence was found in pit 4766.

A further potential pair was located *c* 60 m south west of this. Pit 8717 appeared to be a conventional early Bronze Age feature which produced Beaker pottery. Approximately 2.75 m east of this was feature 8775 which was recorded as a linear due to its association with slot 8777, but may have been two overlapping pits.

In the northern part of the site, Beaker pottery was also recovered from pit 570, which appears to have been a paired pit with 568 (Fig. 2.11). However both were larger than most other pits of this phase, and were removed from all other early Bronze Age activity, therefore this may have been a residual sherd.

Discrete features

Very few isolated features were assigned to sub-phase 2b (Fig. 2.10). Pit 4416 was located *c* 28 m west of pit 4390 and contained Beaker pottery and a possible pebble whetstone. Pit 5659, 45 m south-east of 4401, also produced Beaker pottery but no other dateable evidence.

More distant features included pit 5076, located approximately 180 m west of pit 4416 and containing Beaker pottery as well as flakes and chips of worked flint. A small amount of Beaker pottery was also found in tree-throw hole 9963 in the south-west corner of the site.

The emergence of funerary monuments—ring ditches 4944 and 16072

A significant change occurred in the landscape during the early Bronze Age, most clearly represented by the introduction of funerary monuments. This phenomenon was seen at Cotswold Community in the form of two ring

ditches, commonly perceived to be the ploughed out remains of circular round barrows originally delineated by the ditch (Fig. 2.13). These features seem to have appeared through contact with Europe at this time and often fall into small groups or cemeteries (Bradley 2007, 78). They can cover burials of single individuals and disarticulated remains, although none survived at the current site.

Ring ditch 4944 was located to the west of the densest concentration of early Bronze Age pits (Fig. 2.10) and was by far the larger of the two monuments, measuring 20 m in external diameter (Figs 2.13–4). The ditch itself had sloping sides and a flat base. At its maximum it was 1.95 m wide and 0.8 m deep but varied throughout, probably as a result of plough damage and other truncation. The ring ditch was surrounded by a dense scatter of later Bronze Age or Iron Age postholes and was cut by Phase 4 posthole alignments 6067 and 5600. The ditch contained up to six fills of silty clay or loam with a possible re-cut visible to the north-west, containing a further four fills. Much of the infilled material appears to be the result of natural slump and collapse of the bank or barrow. Excavated sections of the ditch produced few finds but the assemblage included a few small sherds of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery and worked flint, mainly comprising flakes but including a hammerstone, scraper and core.

A series of postholes on the interior of the ring ditch most likely pre-date the feature, with many of them appearing in pairs. These postholes may represent an earlier use of the space on which the barrow was constructed, possibly even a timber circle in its own right with an entrance to the north-west. Such a circle could have been contemporary with the barrow if the mound was placed centrally, with a gap between it and the ditch, although this does not account for the divisions within. An alternative interpretation of these features is that they represent the remains of a temporary structure used to construct the barrow.

Ring ditch 16072 was located nearly 300 m north-east of 4944 (Fig. 2.11) and was, in contrast, just 7.3 m in external diameter (Fig. 2.13). The ditch had been disturbed and heavily truncated by Iron Age ditch 17600 and Roman enclosure 17590, as well as being the focus for a late Roman cemetery (see Chapter 3). The remaining ditch was

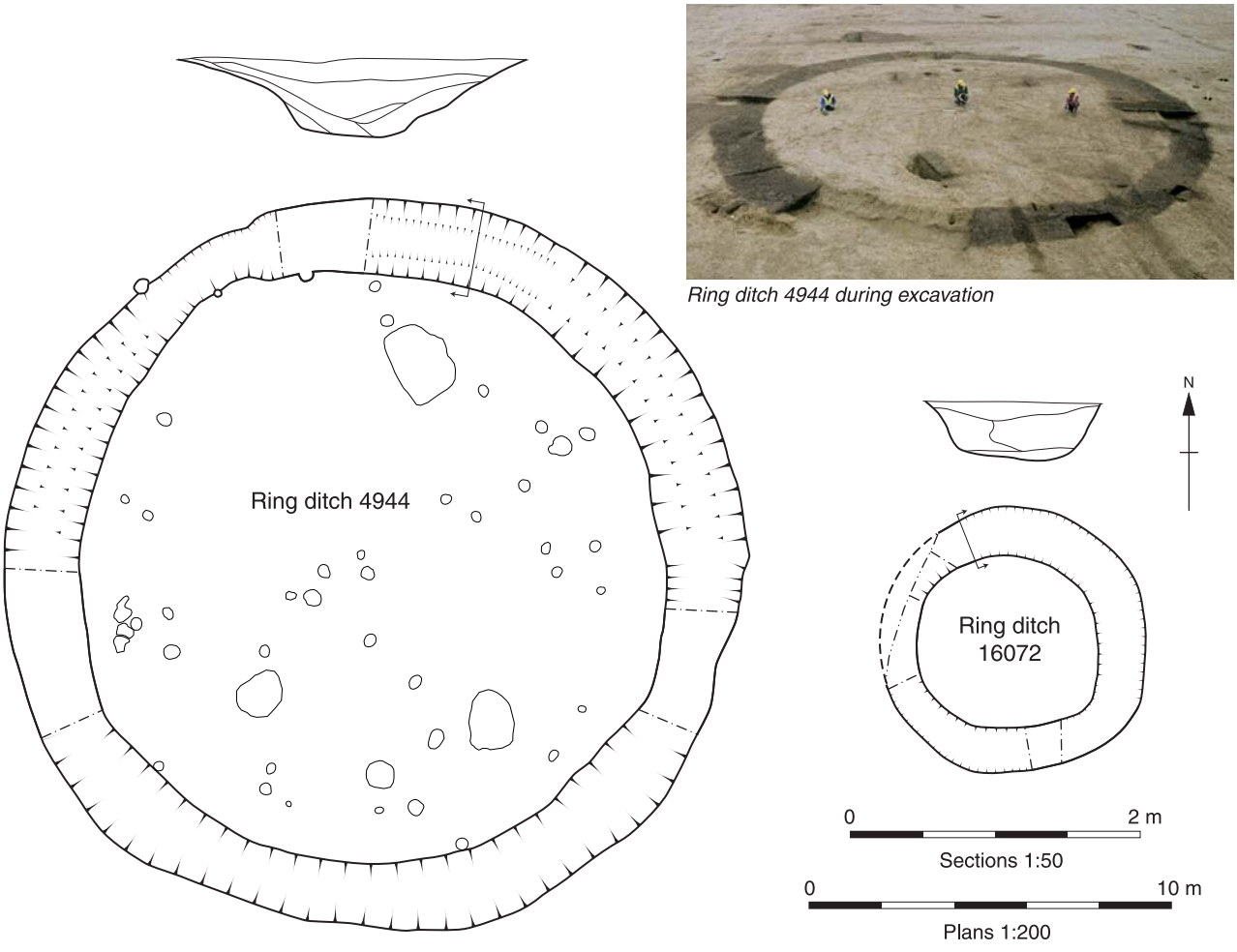


Fig. 2.13 Early Bronze Age ring ditches 4944 and 16072

up to 1.2 m wide and 0.5 m deep with slightly sloping sides and a flat base. The ditch contained up to four fills of silty sand, the upper fills possibly the result of backfilling. No finds were recovered from the feature, probably as a result of the truncation.

Beaker Graves

Further indications of a societal change at this time included the appearance of inhumation burials deposited alongside a specific set of grave goods, widely recognised as 'Beaker Graves' as a result of the inclusion of the distinctive pottery type. In total,

Fig. 2.14 Reconstruction of barrow 4944

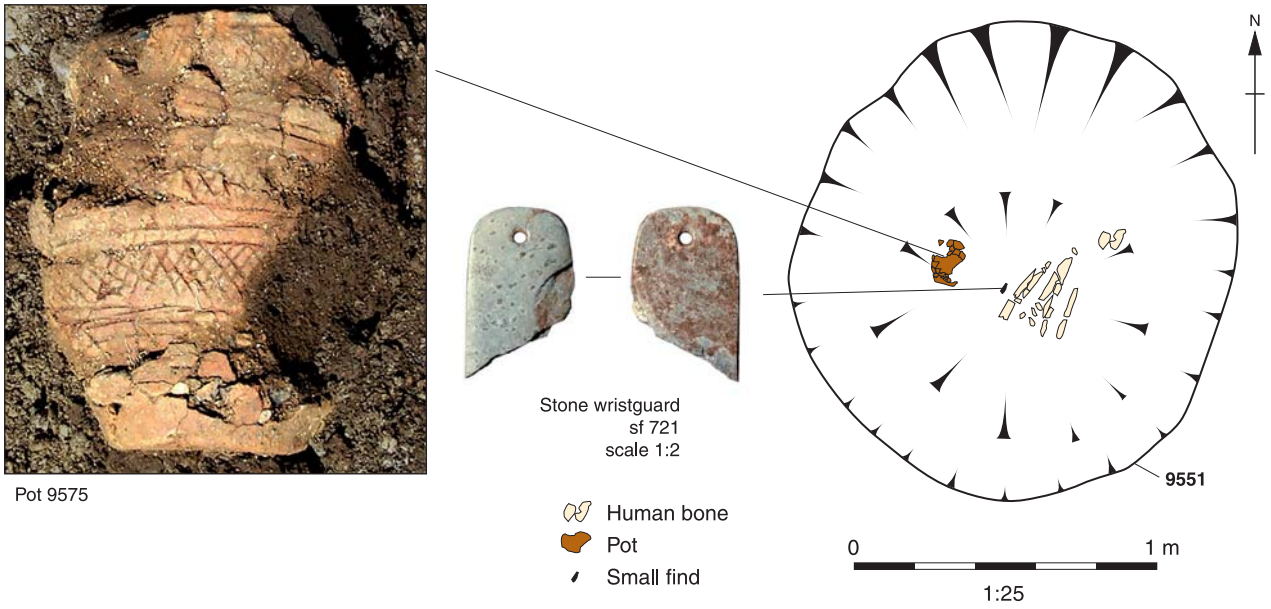


Fig. 2.15 Beaker Grave 9551

three Beaker burials and a further possible example were excavated at Cotswold Community.

The three definite inhumations were once more located in the southern part of the site, in the vicinity of the bulk of the contemporary pits (Fig. 2.10). Grave 9551 was located close to the southern extent of the excavated area and was the best preserved of the Beaker graves, although heavily truncated by ploughing (Fig. 2.15). The grave was sub-circular, measuring 1.6 by 1.48 m and surviving to 0.42 m deep. Approximately 10 % of the skeleton remained, mainly in the form of fragments of skull and leg bone. The body was crouched with the head to the east and the feet to the west, possibly laying on its left side, although this is uncertain. A near complete Beaker (9575) was located at the feet of the unsexed skeleton and a wristguard manufactured from an unusual type of stone (SF 721) was found further south-east (see Roe, this vol.).

Grave 7611 was located towards the western side of the site (Fig. 2.10) and was in very poor condition, with only 5% of the skeleton remaining. The grave cut was oval and measured 1.5 by 0.93 m and 0.28 m deep. The skeletal remains could only be identified as adult but no further information could be obtained as to burial rite. The corpse was accompanied by a Beaker (SF 424) as well as a backed flint knife, two flakes and a chip.

The third grave (8933) was 155 m to the north-east of grave 9551 (Fig. 2.10). The cut measured 1.16 by 0.77 m in plan and 0.4 m deep, and contained the remains of a poorly preserved unsexed adolescent. The grave was heavily disturbed by animal activity and no evidence of burial ritual was available. Fragments of beaker were found in the grave, along with two flint blades and two flakes.

A fourth possible beaker grave was excavated just over 300 m north of grave 9551 (Fig. 2.10). The feature (2579) was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 1.7 by 1.25 m, surviving to a depth of 0.4 m. No bone was found within the pit but a large sherd of beaker pottery and a single flint flake were recovered. The feature was located very close to Saxon building 2987 and may have been disturbed by this later activity. Although no bone survived, the feature resembled the previously described graves far more than the contemporary pits.

General Neolithic – early Bronze Age features

Phase 1 / 2 pits and tree-throw holes

A series of pits and tree-throw holes were assigned to the early prehistoric period but could not be more accurately phased (Fig. 2.16). These were predominantly identified on the basis of their worked flint assemblages and morphology (Table 2.4). The features were all located within the same area as the early Bronze Age pits and may belong solely to Phase 2.

Groups

A single group of four pits was tentatively identified as early prehistoric. The group was arranged in two pairs separated by just over 1 m. Pits 7960 and 7965 to the north were relatively large, measuring 1.25 m in diameter and 0.42–0.66 m deep whilst pits 8640 and 8650 were 0.7–1 m diameter and 0.17–0.23

Table 2.4: Detail of Phase 2 and 1 / 2 pits

Pit No.	*Diameter*	*Depth*	*No. Fills*	*Shape in plan*	*Profile*
4156	0.7	0.34	1	Circular	Vertical sides, concave base
4238	0.65	0.18	1	Circular	Sloping sides, flat base
4552	1.7	0.77	7	Circular	Sloping sides, flat base
4775	1	0.62	6	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
4860	0.7	0.13	1	Circular	Sloping sides, flat base
5550	1.05	0.21	2	Circular	Steep sides, flat base
6718	1.4	0.16	2	Circular	Sloping sides, concave base
7960	1.23	0.66	4	Circular	Sloping sides, flat base
7965	1.25	0.42	1	Sub-circular	Sloping sides, uneven base
8300	1.4	1.02	9	Circular	Sloping sides, concave base
8369	0.4	0.22	1	Sub-circular	Irregular
8371	0.9 x 0.82	0.26	1	Sub-circular	Steep sides, concave base
8640	1	0.23	1	Sub-circular	Sloping sides, flat base
8650	0.7	0.17	1	Sub-circular	Sloping sides, flat base
9088	1.1	0.62	3	Circular	Vertical sides, flat base
9069	0.7 x 0.64	0.25	3	Oval	Vertical sides, flat base
9324	1	0.55	3	Sub-circular	Vertical sides, concave base
9331	1.25	0.55	6	Sub-circular	Vertical sides, concave base
10228	0.79	0.18	1	Circular	Steep sides, concave base
10087	1 x 0.92	0.26	2	Oval	Sloping sides, flat base

m deep. Only pit 7960 had multiple fills which produced artefacts in the form of a small flint assemblage, as well as burnt stone. The remaining three pits did not produce any evidence and were phased by association.

Pairs

One pair of pits (9324 and 9331) was excavated near to the southern boundary of the site, close to early Bronze Age pits 9120–9122. The pits were 1.7 m apart and almost identical in form (1–1.1 m diameter, 0.55–0.6 in depth), similar to other contemporary features; pit 9331 produced worked flint flakes.

Discrete pits

Discrete pits which could be dated no more accurately than Phase 1 or 2 were scattered

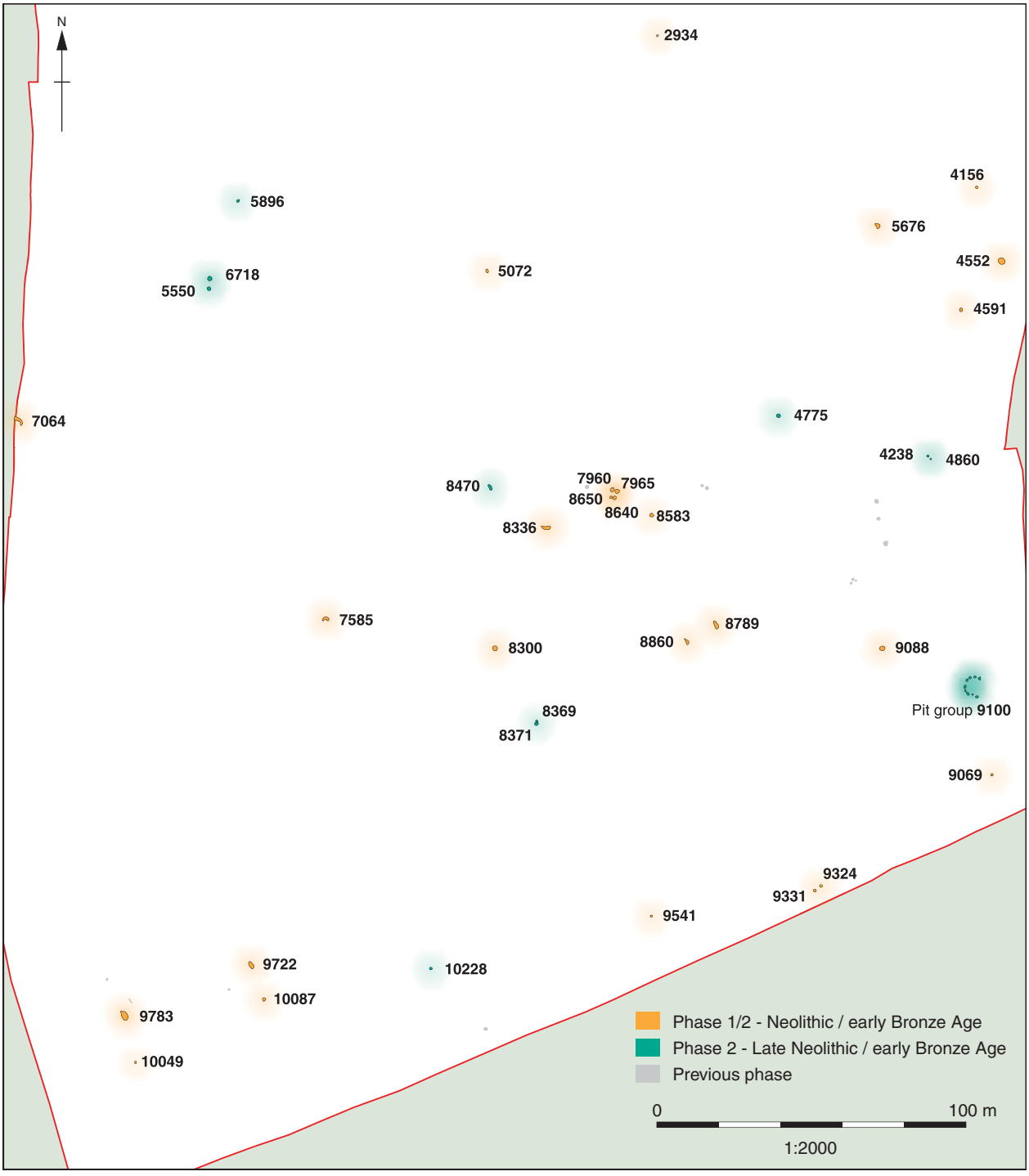


Fig. 2.16 Detail of remaining Neolithic/early Bronze Age activity (Phases 1/2 and 2)

throughout the area in which these phases were found. In the south-western corner of the site pit 10087 produced a flake-based flint assemblage. To the north-east of this pits 8300 and 9088 both contained multiple fills which produced flint assemblages. Pit 9069 in the south-east corner produced a sherd of possible Neolithic pottery. The feature was targeted for radiocarbon dating which produced a modern date, but it is likely that this was the result of contamination, possibly from modern agricultural material; its antiquity therefore remains ambiguous. Approximately 150 m to the north, pits 4552 and 4156 produced small flint assemblages, pit 4552 also produced burnt stone and cattle bone and pit 4156 contained pottery of prehistoric date. A very small pit (2934) *c* 125 m north-west is recorded as having produced Neolithic pottery, though this did not survive.

Tree-throw holes

A series of tree-throw holes produced small assemblages of worked flint as well as occasional deposits of burnt stone. These features were located in groups around identified early prehistoric pits. In the south-west corner of the site tree-throw holes included 9783, 9722 and 10049 in an area of known Phase 1 and 2b activity. Feature 9541, *c* 150 m to the east, also contained an assemblage of worked flint.

Further north, in an area of dense early Bronze Age features, tree-throw holes 7585, 8336, 8583, 8789 and 8860 all produced worked flint. More isolated features with dateable material in the northernmost part of this area included tree-throw holes 4591, 5072, 5676 and 7064.

Phase 2 pits and tree-throw holes

A number of features were assigned to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age, but could not be further subdivided into Phases 2a and 2b (Table 2.4; Fig. 2.16). Most contained pottery which could belong to either the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age, although some were dated on the basis of diagnostic flint assemblages. Although these features are discussed separately they should not be viewed as different to the features described in Phase 2 above.

Pairs

Pits 8369 and 8371 were located in the south of the site (Fig. 2.16), 18 m south of early Bronze Age pits 7622 and 7624. The pits were slightly different to previously described pairs in two ways, firstly there was a large disparity in size between the two (0.4 m and 0.9 m in diameter respectively), secondly the gap between them was only 0.1 m. Both contained single silt fills which yielded worked flint and cattle bones. Worked flint included a single flake from pit 8369 and an assemblage of flakes—including a knife, an unclassified item and four exceptionally large scrapers—from 8371; the latter also produced burnt stone.

Pits 4238 and 4860 were located on the eastern edge of the site (Fig. 2.16), both were circular and shallow, measuring approximately 0.7 m in diameter. Pit 4238 produced sherds of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery, a small varied group of worked flint including flakes and a scraper, and cattle bone; a predominantly flake-based flint assemblage was recovered from pit 4860.

A further pair of Phase 2 pits was located *c* 30 m south-east of early Bronze Age pit 5076 in the western part of the site, somewhat removed from other early prehistoric activity. Pit 5550 contained an assemblage of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery and a flint assemblage comprising ten flakes, three blades or bladelets, one notch, two scrapers and a knife. Environmental evidence included hazel nut shells and bone. Pit 6718, in contrast, contained no finds, but its location—1.9 m from 5550—and morphological similarity suggests these formed a pair.

Discrete Features

An additional isolated pit and two tree-throw holes were identified as belonging to Phase 2. Pit 10228 was located near the southern edge of the site, its single silt fill produced cattle bone and three flint flakes as well as a possible chert axe (SF 790; see Lamdin-Whymark, this vol.). Irregular tree-throw holes 8470 and 5896, within the area of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pits, also produced late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery. Contemporary pottery was recovered from a further pit, 4775, west of early Bronze Age pair 4766 and 4764, although the feature did not conform to the other early prehistoric pits and so its dating remains uncertain.

Timber circle? 9100

One of the most unusual features from Cotswold Community was pit group 9100, located in the south-east corner of the site (Fig. 2.16–7). This comprised the remains of a ring of sub-circular and oval pits measuring from 0.36 m in diameter to 0.96 by 0.5 m in plan, with sloping sides and concave bases (Fig. 2.17). The pits did not survive beyond 0.21 m deep with single clay silt fills, and had clearly been truncated by ploughing. All the pits contained postpipes 0.23–0.36 m in diameter, reaching to the same depth as the pits. Only pit 9101 was smaller and circular, with no internal posthole and was clearly different to the rest of the group.

A total of eight pits were visible, but the group was truncated to the east by Roman trackway 17615 and it is likely that it was originally a complete circle measuring *c* 7 m in diameter. Few finds were recovered from the pits, but the small assemblage comprised sherds of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery, late prehistoric pottery, a flint blade and a retouched flake and burnt stone. This group may be interpreted as a standing timber circle, examples of which have been excavated in the Thames valley at sites such as Spring Road

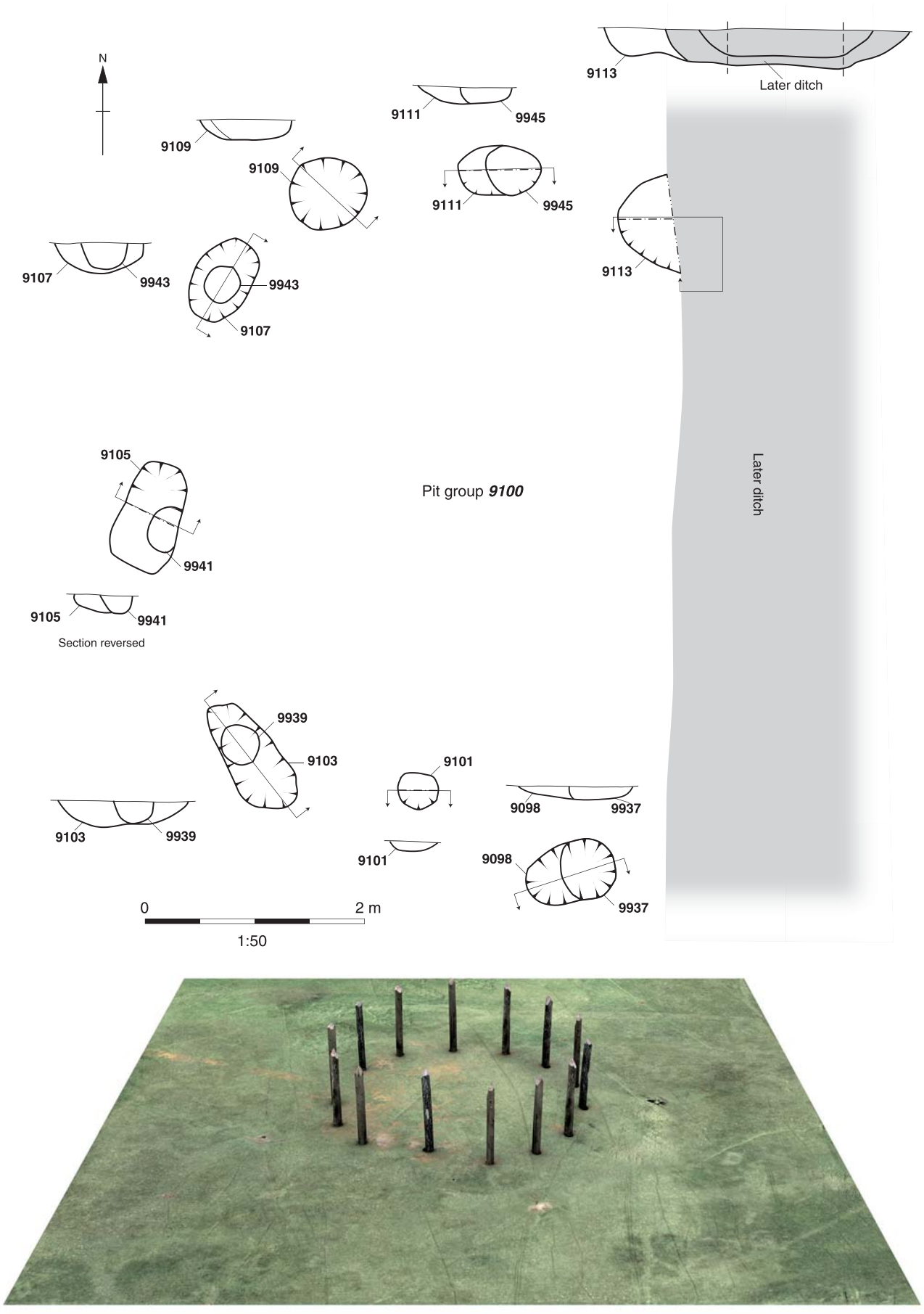


Fig. 2.17 Timber circle? 9100 and artist's reconstruction

Abingdon (Allen and Kamash 2008) and Gravelly Guy (Lambrick and Allen 2004). These features are of uncertain date and occur until at least the middle Bronze Age (R Bradley, pers. comm.), but are often a late Neolithic phenomenon. In this case, the timber circle has been tentatively assigned the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age but it could well be later. Such structures may represent ceremonial enclosures although there is no actual evidence of how they were used—at Cotswold Community the finds assemblage is minimal and the distribution sheds no light on function. The evidence for this feature is scarce and this classification is hypothetical, and is discussed in more detail below.

Discussion of the Neolithic and Bronze Age activity

The relative density of early prehistoric archaeology is one of the most striking elements of the multi-period landscape at Cotswold Community. Overall as many as 98 pits and tree-throw holes can be attributed to Phases 1 and 2, although several of these are difficult to assign more accurately. This activity adds significantly to current knowledge of this period in the local area and beyond. In general, earlier Neolithic settlement activity is rare in the Upper Thames Valley, becoming more widespread in the later Neolithic/early Bronze Age period, with activity discovered at sites such as the Loders (Darvill *et al.* 1986), Roughground Farm (Allen *et al.* 1993), Butlers Field (Boyle *et al.* 1998), Gassons Road (King 1998) and Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming). Where discovered this activity tended to be focussed on the lower gravel terraces, and thus Cotswold Community fits into this pattern.

The features belonging to Phases 1 and 2 at Cotswold Community are considered together here due to the largely similar and continuous nature of the activity and consequently the continuity in lifestyle this represented. In general, the pits occurred either isolated or more often in pairs and in groups of three; in one case a group of four has been tentatively phased early prehistoric, although this may be better considered as two pairs. In addition tree-throw holes were often used to deposit small artefact assemblages. The overall trends will be considered below following consideration of each phase and sub-phase individually.

Middle Neolithic c 3400–3000 BC

The middle Neolithic (Phase 1) has been identified at Cotswold Community primarily through the presence of Peterborough Ware pottery which originated *c* 3400 BC and is thought to have gone out of use by the late Neolithic (Gibson and Kinnes 1997). Middle Neolithic activity at Cotswold Community comprised a series of small pits within an area of 6 hectares. Although the pits appear to have fallen into two main groups to the south-west and north-east it is notable that they are isolated or fall into pairs, or groups of three. Each of these pits or groups contained a small artefactual assemblage with no apparent relationship to one another, such as pottery or flint knapping refits, suggesting they were the result of isolated 'events' rather than contemporary occupation. This assertion is further discussed below with regards to both Phases 1 and 2, however it is worth noting that if this interpretation is correct only six or seven episodes of activity are represented over a period of *c* 400 years.

Environmental data for this period in the Upper Thames Valley is generally limited as a result of poor preservation. However, some evidence was available from the pits at Cotswold Community in the form of charcoal and mollusca. Overall, the charcoal with its abundance of shrubby species—in addition to oak—suggested the landscape at this time was open, with mature oak-hazel woodland available nearby for exploitation. The latter was reinforced by the presence of shade loving mollusca from pit 8668. This corresponds to the environmental evidence from the same period at nearby Horcott pit, interpreted as a cleared area amongst woodland (Stafford forthcoming).

This phase is represented by pits alone, with no evidence for monuments. It is likely that the closest existing monuments of significance in this period were those in the cursus complex at Lechlade.

Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age c 3000–1500BC

The change between the periods termed middle and late Neolithic is marked by a change in monuments types in Britain as a whole, and is also recognisable on a smaller scale through the change in pottery style and flintwork. Peterborough Ware was replaced in the earlier 3rd millennium BC by Grooved Ware pottery, thought to have originated in Orkney but soon adapted elsewhere and widely distributed (Bradley 2007, 134). In addition a wider range of flint tools came into use.

The late Neolithic at Cotswold community comprised 17 pits and a single tree-throw hole which produced a deliberate deposit of flintwork, stone and pottery. Artefact assemblages were again small and indicative of single 'events'. Notably the pits in this phase tended to be in pairs or groups of three, which appeared to be organised as a coherent pair, plus one other pit. The groups were generally 100 to 150 m apart, suggesting they were not contemporary. The pits fell into two main groups, *c* 425 m apart, in the south and north of the site. Radiocarbon dating suggested the northern features were later in date, possibly indicating a change of preferred land to higher ground at this time. Overall, on the basis that each group represents an event, eight or nine episodes of activity were identified as late Neolithic, though a number of the more generally phased features may also have been late Neolithic in date.

A possible timber circle may indicate the beginnings of small monument building on the site

during the late Neolithic period, although this date is tentative and it could well be later. The presence of a single cremation burial is also notable and these are discussed below.

The early Bronze Age in Britain ushered in a further set of changes, represented by Beaker pottery and the first use of bronzes, generally associated with burials in round barrows and flat graves, which appeared to have resulted from contact with Europe (Bradley 2007, 142). At Cotswold Community this change is represented by the presence of Beaker pottery and the appearance of small burial monuments and individual burials with distinctive grave goods. Occupation evidence, however, remained in the form of pits with similar deposition records to the later Neolithic, and dating illustrates a possible overlap between the use of Grooved Ware and Beaker pottery. As many as 30 pits and a tree-throw hole were identified as probably early Bronze Age in date. These mainly occurred as groups of three, a number of pairs and a very few discrete features.

The pit groups were *c* 30–150 m apart and contained a range of artefacts indicative of a single occupation 'event'. All but two of these features were located in an area of *c* 11 hectares in the south of the site. In addition, three or possibly four flat graves and a ring ditch, thought to represent the remains of a ploughed out round barrow, were located in the same area. The two pits in the north of the site phased early Bronze Age are slightly anomalous and may simply contain residual pottery. However, the remains of a further small ring ditch 200 m to the south-west of them may indicate activity continued in this area after the late Neolithic. Up to 14 events were identified from the early Bronze Age, although a number of less well dated pits may also fall into this phase.

Environmental data for Phase 2 indicates that the landscape was similar to that in the middle Neolithic. Charcoal was dominated by shrubby species although the percentage of oak increased, possibly attributable to the presence of a cremation predominantly using oak as fuel. The snail assemblage is a combination of shade loving species and open country fauna again suggesting a cleared landscape amongst woodland. However, the assemblage from ring ditch 4944, which may be late in the period (see below), indicates a completely open environment.

Lifestyle and subsistence

Neolithic and early Bronze Age archaeology in Britain is generally dominated by stone and earthwork monuments, which seem to have played a role in public events and the treatment of the dead (Bradley 2007, 30). In recent years aerial photography has revealed crop marks indicating the landscape of the Upper Thames Valley was dotted with minor monuments (cf Leech 1977), either as isolated phenomena or falling into small clusters.

In contrast settlement activity from the same period is generally elusive and evidence for domestic buildings across southern Britain is limited. Recent discoveries have begun to redress this balance, indicating that settlement in this area is most often characterised by a few pits containing a small number of deliberately deposited fills with little evidence of natural silting. One or more of these fills is generally rich in charcoal and charred remains, particularly charred hazelnut shells. Artefact assemblages are often fragmented and abraded, many vessels represented by a single sherd and animals by a single bone (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming). It has been suggested that these pits may have been specifically dug to receive these deposits, possibly on abandonment of the settlement (Bradley 2007, 44).

The established view of early prehistoric lifestyle in the Thames Valley and southern England as a whole is one of non-permanent settlement and a high degree of mobility (see Brück 2000, 281; Lambrick 2009, 382–3). Evidence suggests groups of mobile pastoralists may have moved between a series of favoured grazing lands, probably in a seasonal or annual cycle, possibly settling long enough to cultivate temporary horticultural plots (Brück 2000, 281). As a result of the temporality of occupation domestic, dwellings may have been ephemeral enough not to leave a trace in the archaeological record, leaving only the remains of domestic refuse. The size of these groups is unknown but may have been as small as household units. It is clear that these mobile groups acted communally at times in order to construct large monument complexes (eg Stonehenge, Avebury, Dorchester-on-Thames) and presumably to gather at these complexes at specific times. For example, evidence from Durrington Walls suggests a midwinter culling of pigs which isotope evidence suggests were not local to the chalk (Lamdin-Whymark pers. comm.).

If one accepts this interpretation, the early prehistoric remains at Cotswold Community probably represent sporadic occupation of the site by pastoralists who regularly returned, possibly following the line of the river from communal places such as Lechlade in the earlier period and Dorchester in the later phase. As outlined above the majority of activity on the site was in the form of discrete, or small groups of pits and it has been argued that these represent single 'events' equating to seasonal or annual visits to the site. The alternative interpretation is that these pits were contemporary with one another, although this is not supported by the artefactual evidence which appears to indicate intentionally deposited self-contained toolkits and small scale domestic debris with no apparent refits between groups; the number of flints per pit in each event is also comparable, whereas the totals vary widely between events (Lamdin-Whymark, this vol.). In addition the pit groups are mostly *c* 50–100 m apart suggesting a lack of overall coherence. This implies low popula-

tion density for the overall period, with *c* 49 pits or groups of pits over *c* 1600 years.

The duration of each event is unclear; recent analysis of earlier Neolithic pit 'clusters' at Kilverstone (Garrow *et al.* 2005) has suggested that larger clusters containing more pits were a result of longer periods of occupation creating more complex patterns of deposition. Although the Neolithic varied from area to area a similar trend was seen at the site of Benson further down the Thames valley (Pine and Ford 2003). At Cotswold Community there is a small, but observable, trend of increasingly large groups over time, possibly indicating the length of occupation was increasing from the middle Neolithic through to the early Bronze Age.

However, ongoing wider research by Lamdin-Whymark may shed light on this. He has pointed out that the volume of isolated pits at Cotswold Community specifically is broadly similar to the combined volume of paired and grouped pits, suggesting that a comparable volume of material was buried during each event. It is unclear whether the pits in each event were open at the same time or were sequentially excavated and backfilled but this may demonstrate that pits were more frequently excavated during some events, rather than larger groups representing longer periods of activity (Lamdin-Whymark pers. comm.). He points out that the average number of flints per pit is three, suggesting that these may be very short-lived events. Consideration of the pottery from these features suggests that each event contains between one and six vessels, although the average falls at the lower end of this spectrum (1.7–2.8). This is interesting when compared with J D Hill's investigation of the rate at which pots are broken in the ethnographic record (1995, 129–31). He arrived at a figure of 5.4 vessels per year, although this ranged from 2.4–22. These figures were recently applied to the early Neolithic by Duncan Garrow (2005), although there are limitations with this ethnographic analogy. When applied to the activity at Cotswold Community this equates to an average of three months per event, or between one and seven months.

The pattern of paired, grouped and isolated pits was also found at a number of nearby sites including Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming). The majority of these features were middle Neolithic in date, although unlike Cotswold Community, earlier Neolithic features were also present. However, considerably fewer late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pits were found at Horcott, making Cotswold Community particularly significant. In general the pits produced similar artefacts to the current site, although much larger animal bone assemblages may reflect better preservation conditions at Horcott. The general pattern in the region, attested by archaeological investigation, is therefore one of short periods of seasonal occupation by mobile populations, possibly part of wider communal cycles.

The pit groups discussed here do not fit into the 'cluster' interpretation of longer duration of occupation, with pits potentially surrounding domestic dwellings, seen at sites such as Kilverstone (Garrow 2005). While this example is some distance away a similar pattern can be seen at Benson, near Wallingford (Pine and Ford 2003). Both these examples were early Neolithic sites, possibly indicating a change in lifestyle during the period. Although this research is in its infancy the archaeology at Cotswold Community clearly has the potential to explore wider issues of population movement, particularly in relation to large later Neolithic monument complexes.

Daily life—economy and exchange

On the basis that the seasonal inhabitants of Cotswold Community probably subsisted through grazing herds and/or flocks, the animal bone assemblage should be significant to the interpretation of the site. However, as with many sites of this date, bone has not survived well and animals are poorly represented. The minuscule animal bone assemblages from Phases 1 and 2 (see Strid, this vol.) are dominated by cattle or large mammal bones, with some suggestion of the presence of pigs or sheep in the later phase. This indicates that cattle were the predominant animal being grazed (or consumed) on the site, although only limited conclusions can be drawn from such a small assemblage.

At Horcott Pit cattle were also found to dominate the Neolithic and early Bronze Age faunal remains, although the assemblage did include sheep and pig in smaller quantities (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.*, forthcoming). The susceptibility of sheep to liver fluke suggests that cattle would certainly make a more suitable choice for pastoralists based on the floodplain, as at Cotswold Community, and may explain this difference. A single fragment of red deer antler was recovered, possibly indicating that the diet was supplemented by hunting wild animals. However, as the fragment was antler and not bone it may have been a chance find after shedding (see Strid, this vol.).

The utilisation of wild resources to supplement the diet was suggested by the presence of charred hazelnut shell in a number of pits. This is a typical feature of Neolithic and early Bronze Age occupation (cf Challinor forthcoming), thought to result from roasting of hazelnuts for consumption, and it has been suggested here that the nuts were collected opportunistically at the same time as collection of hazel wood for fuel (see W. Smith and Challinor, this vol.). Overall it appears that exploitation of local wild food resources was still important at this time in the Thames Valley. The charcoal record seems to indicate that shrubby species were used for domestic hearths whilst large woodland trees were reserved for special purposes such as cremation fuel.

Little is known about Neolithic and early Bronze Age cultivation. There are no physical signs of field boundaries or evidence of soil cultivation. What little evidence we do have is in the form of the pollen record, which is patchy (Lambrick 2009, 237), and occasional finds of cereals from contemporary features. In the Upper Thames Valley specifically, evidence of agriculture is scarce, with a single identified emmer seed from Horcott Pit (Challinor forthcoming), although free threshing bread wheat and hulled barley were recovered from Yarnton (Hey *et al.* forthcoming). Despite intensive sampling at Cotswold Community no cereal remains were found dating to this period and so little can be inferred about cultivation in general.

Some insight into the way of life of the seasonal inhabitants of Cotswold Community can be gained from study of the artefact assemblages. The worked flint was dominated by scrapers and flakes, but included knifes, arrowheads, piercers and notches. Each pit seems to reflect a range of activities including scraping hides, woodworking and plant working, all indicative of domestic habitation. For the most part flint tools appear to have been brought to the site in their finished state, although the presence of knapping debris in two pits suggests some production was carried out on site, as may be expected of a mobile population.

The presence of a number of Neolithic stone axes is worthy of note in terms of exchange networks (see Roe, this vol.). Axes were found from all sub-phases of this period and include stone from Graig Lwyd, North Wales and Cornwall as well as a possibly locally acquired chert axe. The distribution of stone axes was most extensive in the late Neolithic, with the majority derived from remote and inaccessible locations (Bradley 2007, 133) and exchanged in their finished form. The presence of axes from a number of origins is therefore not unusual. The mechanisms of how they arrived at Cotswold Community are unknown but the axes illustrate that the inhabitants of the Upper Thames Valley were part of a wider exchange network which may have included a number of other items, including the scallop shell from pit 8799. A Graig Lwyd axe was also found at nearby Yarnton in a pit with Peterborough Ware, similar to the Cotswold Community example (Hey *et al.* forthcoming), reinforcing the presence of early trade networks. The chert axe may also indicate that high quality items could also be produced locally.

Beyond the ordinary—structured deposition

As outlined above it is not uncommon to find deposits in Neolithic and early Bronze Age pits which appear to have been deliberately placed or at least selected for inclusion in the pit, 'lending symbolic meaning to the discarded remains of day to day life' (Lambrick 2009, 92). This is true of a number, if not most, of the early prehistoric features at Cotswold Community. As pointed out by Lamdin-Whymark (this vol.), the deposition of flints in particular was undertaken with a degree of formality, with artefacts intentionally incorporated and excluded. A number of particularly fine and complete artefacts appear to have been deliberately selected for deposition including the plano-convex knife from pit 9120 and several of the scrapers. The stone axes, often deposited with a degree of formality at the end of their lives, also fall into this category, as do the shell fragments from pits 8799 and 8859. In some cases there was no apparent functional reason to dispose of these objects which were still usable and in many cases obviously finely made.

The most notable examples of structured deposition from Cotswold Community tended to be within groups of three pits and most frequently from middle Neolithic or Beaker contexts. In each case the bulk of the finds are from a single pit within the group. This is exemplified by middle Neolithic pit group 8697, 8700 and 8701 (Fig. 2.4), in which the majority of the assemblage came from pit 8697 and included the Graig Lwyd axe, alongside a stone slab and a varied flint assemblage, as well as Peterborough Ware pottery, cattle bone, hazelnut shells and charcoal. In contrast neighbouring pit 8701 contained just a single flint knife. It is possible that the contents of pits 8864, 8799 and 8859 were also deposited in a structured manner; these included a similar, though less remarkable, set of finds which also incorporated a large fragment of scallop shell and a smaller fragment of possible clam.

Late Neolithic deposits were less obviously structured, although paired pits 17011 and 17022 produced interesting flint assemblages in combination with Grooved Ware pottery and charred hazelnut shells, which included two exceptionally large scrapers (Lamdin-Whymark, this vol.). Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is, however, Beaker pit group 9120, 9121 and 9122 (Fig. 2.12). In this case pit 9120 contained the richest deposit including a large and varied flint assemblage (see above), some of which was exceptionally fine, in combination with a reworked Neolithic Greenstone axe and Beaker pottery.

It is not possible to understand the thinking behind such deposition; however, it was clearly important to the Neolithic and early Bronze Age population to discard at least elements of their domestic debris in a certain manner, which at times included 'sacrifice' of precious objects. It is generally accepted that these depositions were made on abandonment of occupation, although Garrow's recent work (2005) has suggested that the pits at Kilverstone were dug in the same manner as later refuse pits, accumulating debris as required. It is unclear whether the pits were open concurrently or sequentially but if these deposits were related to abandonment it appeared to be important how many pits were dug and what was placed in each.

Ritual and religion

The rituals and beliefs of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age populations were further demonstrated at Cotswold Community through the construction of barrows, creation of flat graves and potentially the presence of a timber circle. As outlined above, 'religious' beliefs appear to have been key to society in early prehistory. This is evidenced by the construction of large monuments and landscapes which would have involved huge mobilisation of the essentially transitory population, most notably in the vicinity of this site at Lechlade and Dorchester-on-Thames. On a smaller scale burial monuments litter the landscape of the Thames Valley. Brück (2000, 281) has suggested this would have cemented the society through reference to common ancestry and shared beliefs.

Aside from the structured deposits discussed above, little evidence for ritual survived from the middle Neolithic, although two features are notable with regard to the later Neolithic. Firstly cremation 8377, from pit 8376, was radiocarbon dated to 2760–2560 cal BC (SUERC-18833, 72.5% prob). This type of burial ritual is rare for this period, more commonly the dead are found in the form of unburnt disarticulated bone or formal burials. The deposit suggested efficient cremation indicating that the process was probably undertaken with great care, although there are no known parallels to this in the Upper Thames Valley.

The presence of a timber circle on the site is tentative, as the dating evidence is scant and mixed. However such monuments are not unknown in the Thames Valley, dating until at least the middle Bronze Age, and can come in a variety of sizes from small post settings indistinguishable from houses to more grandiose structures in complex patterns (Bradley 2007, 119–120). This particular example is understated, as opposed to some of the more elaborate examples known. The purpose of timber circles is unclear; these monuments are often found in areas where henge monuments were rare (ibid., 132), and the two may have served similar functions, possibly as communal gathering places or 'public buildings'. These features can be accompanied by special deposits—although this was not common in the Thames Valley, as is the case here.

Truncation by the later Roman trackway makes further interpretation of the Cotswold Community timber circle difficult. In particular it is not possible to tell if an entranceway existed and if so whether it was aligned in a specific manner; the entrance at Woodhenge, for example, is aligned on the midsummer sunrise (Cunnington 1929).

At Cotswold Community ritual is much more clearly demonstrated in the early Bronze Age through the presence of barrows, surviving as ring ditches 4944 and 16072, and flat inhumation graves. Barrows are a common feature of this sub-phase in the Thames Valley and wider landscape, with many of them heavily ploughed so that only the encircling ditch remains. Barrows can cover or contain a single burial or the remains of a number of individuals and Bradley has recently suggested these features may simply be the burial places of local communities (Bradley 2007, 160). These monuments very often cluster together in small groups, although other examples—such as those at Cotswold Community—can be relatively isolated, or at least part of more widely dispersed cemetery groups. Earlier excavations in another part of Shorncote Quarry immediately to the north of the current site uncovered a barrow cemetery including three ring ditches, one of which contained a central burial, and a penannular ring ditch, recut later in the Bronze Age (Barclay and Glass 1995). In addition, a hengiform ring ditch and two further undated ring ditches were excavated to the east (Hearne and Adam 1999). Overall this makes the collection of monuments at Cotswold Community/Shorncote Quarry one of the largest in the local area. This is enhanced by the presence of three further ring ditches known from crop marks at Siddington *c* 4 km further north.

No burials remained within the two ring ditches excavated on the current site and these may have been ploughed away with the structure itself. A number of postholes and pits remained in the interior of ring ditch 4944, either related to its construction (see above) or else possibly representing the remains of heavily truncated graves. The two ring ditches varied in size from 4.76 m to 16.2 m in diameter, perhaps indicating a difference in date; Beaker ring ditches tend to be small, whereas after *c* 2150 BC barrows became more elaborate (Bradley 2007, 150, 178). However, this is hypothetical and in the absence of superstructure it is impossible to interpret these features further. It is notable that both ditches appear to be respected by later features, also observed in the cemetery to the north (Barclay and Glass 1995) suggesting that these were significant features in the landscape for hundreds or thousands of years.

A number of flat graves belonging to the Beaker tradition were also discovered. Flat graves and cemeteries are well known in the Upper Thames Valley and may have been a regional tradition (Barclay and Glass 1995, 48). Due to their often elaborate nature Beaker burials have been used to reconstruct social organisation (Bradley 2007, 119). However, at Cotswold Community, most were badly truncated and survival of the bone was poor, making interpretation limited. The majority of the burials contained a single Beaker and a single flint tool or a selection of tools. The exception to this was grave 9551 which also contained a wristguard of nephrite, the origin of which is unknown. Overall, the burials were typical of the tradition in terms of orientation and grave goods, although the presence of a wristguard is more unusual. This grave can be seen as belonging to the Low Carinated Beaker/copper dagger/wristguard complex as envisaged by Needham (2005, 204).

SETTLEMENT GENESIS IN THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE (PHASE 3)

The chronology of the Bronze Age has been subject to much academic debate in recent years, with the balance of argument resulting in a more frequent division into earlier and later Bronze Age (Bradley 2007, 181). The phasing of the middle Bronze Age is based mainly on the presence of metalwork and Deverel-Rimbury pottery, and this period is now viewed as a time of continuous change. However, specific developments can be related to the middle and late Bronze Ages specifically, and therefore this distinction has been kept here.

A dramatic change in society occurred between the early and middle Bronze Age periods, most visibly in the development of sedentary settlements. These are typified by post-built roundhouses and

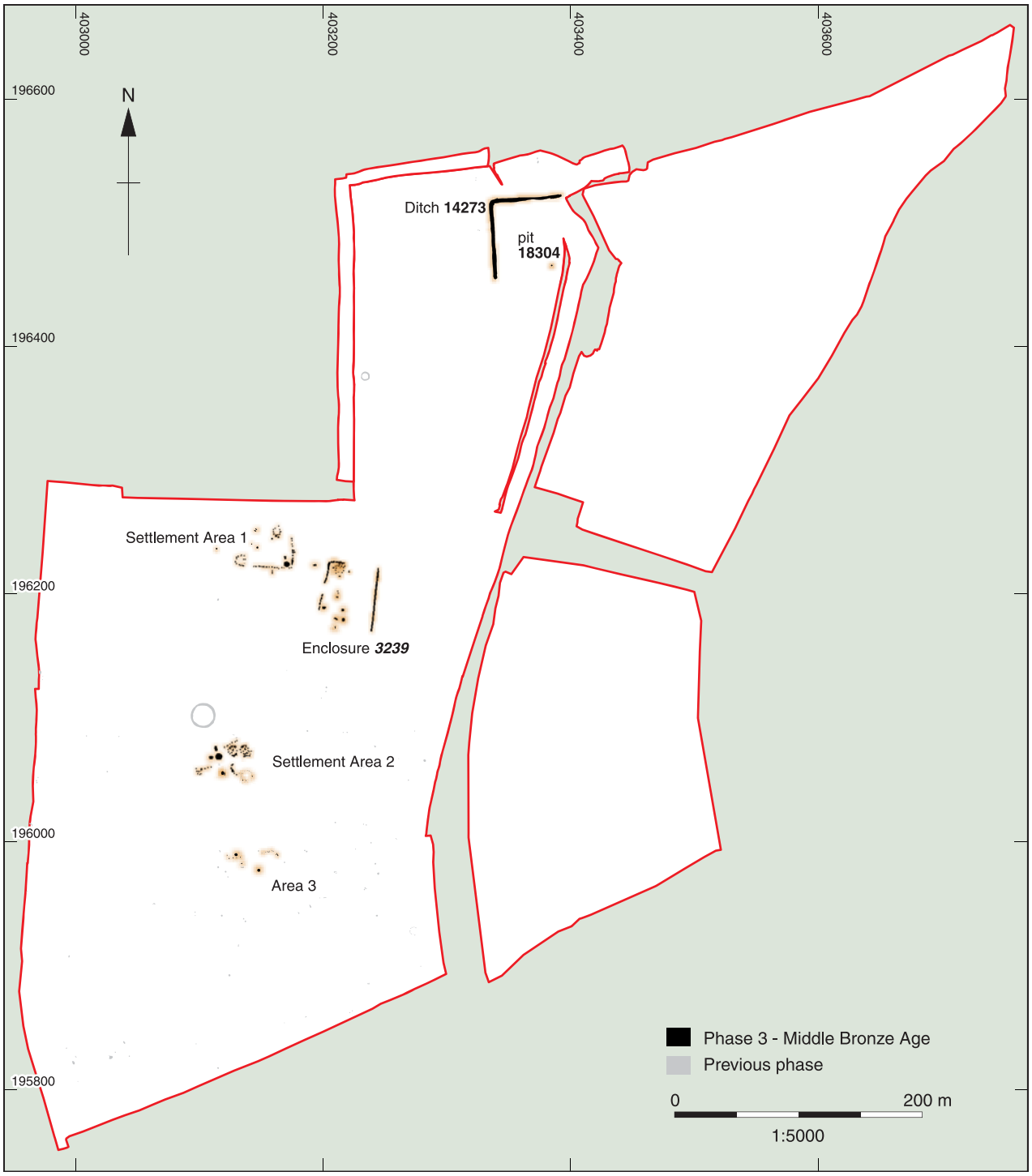


Fig. 2.18 Outline of middle Bronze Age phase (Phase 3)

pits dug to supply water to the settlement. Middle Bronze Age settlement is rare in this area of the Thames Valley, and therefore in order to confirm that the features at Cotswold Community were of this date a programme of radiocarbon dating was undertaken. As a result, we can accurately sub-divide this period at Cotswold Community, identifying at least two phases of settlement as well as continuing external activity throughout the period (Fig. 2.18).

Settlement Area 1: 1512–1400 BC (Phase 3a)

The earliest zone of settlement dating to the middle Bronze Age period was located in the centre of the site (Figs 2.18 and 2.19) and comprised a large L-shaped enclosure, two roundhouses and a focal waterhole. A number of discrete features, which may have been contemporary, were located within and to the east of the enclosure.

Enclosure 2986

The most striking element of this settlement area was L-shaped posthole alignment 2986 (Fig. 2.19). The feature measured 31 m along the east-west arm and 24.5 m north-south. The postholes were generally spaced at 1.5–2 m but were as little as 0.3 m apart in places. The postholes were circular with varying profiles and dimensions, measuring 0.11–0.46 m in diameter. No finds were recovered from the structure other than the occasional deposit of burnt stone. It is likely that at the time of use, such enclosures would have been bounded on the open side by a feature such as a bank, which has not survived.

A potential entranceway (2120), *c* 2 m wide, was located in the centre of the shorter arm and comprised two sets of double postholes within the line of the overall enclosure and two further postholes parallel to these, *c* 0.75 m to the east. All were similar in nature to the postholes in alignment 2986.

Roundhouses 2531 and 2532

Roundhouses 2531 and 2532 were located to the west and north of the L-shaped enclosure respectively. Structure 2531 measured 7 m across and comprised 14 structural or supporting postholes, ranging from 0.14–0.36 m in diameter. Roundhouse 2532 measured 6 m in diameter and consisted of 11 slightly larger postholes measuring 0.2–0.45 m in diameter, generally with two fills. Neither structure produced any finds. The roundhouses may represent two co-existent dwellings, whether both domestic or of differing functions, or two sequential dwellings. Given the difference in location between the two, the former explanation is more likely.

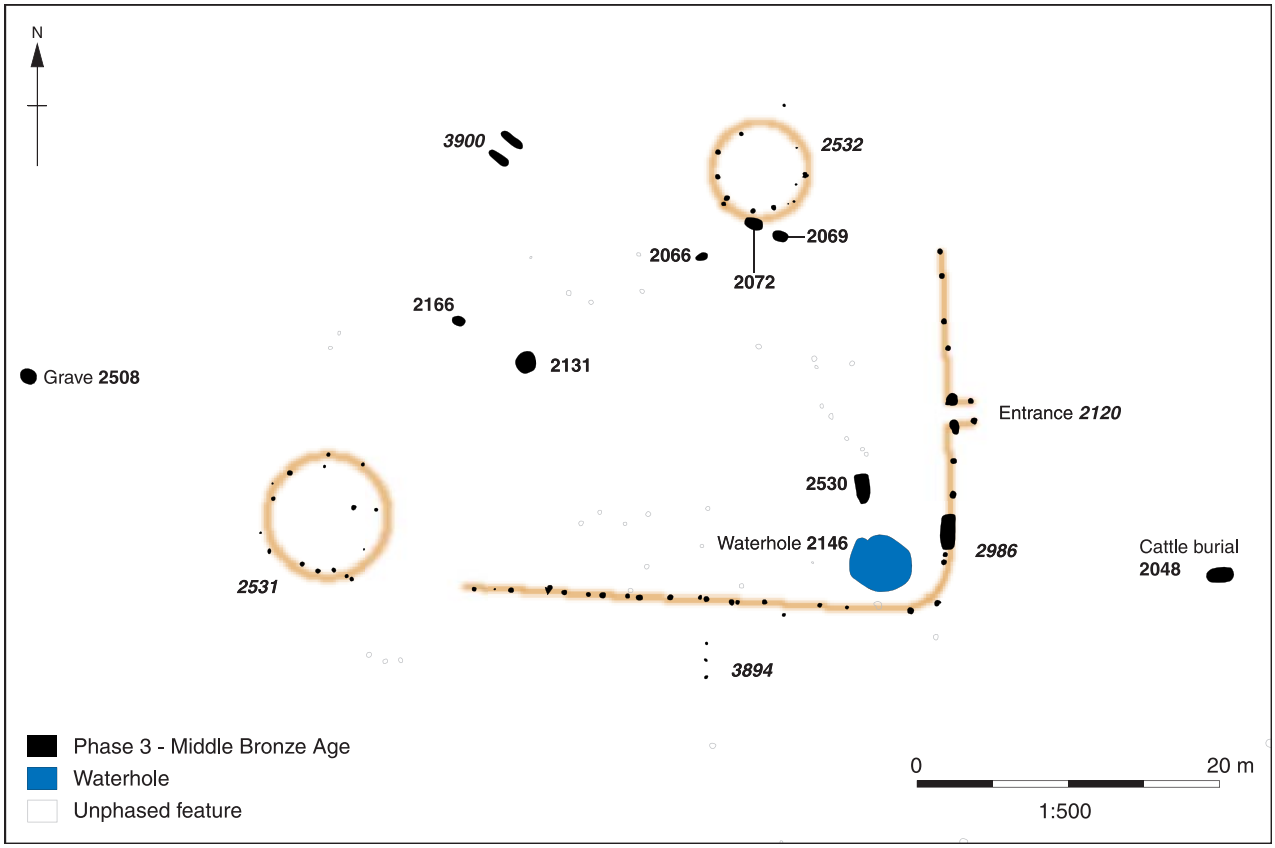


Fig. 2.19 Middle Bronze Age settlement Area 1

Waterhole 2146

Waterhole 2146 appeared to be a focal point for the settlement, located in the corner created by enclosure 2986 (Figs 2.19–20). The feature was approximately 4 m in diameter at the surface and 2.14 m deep, with 28 fills, mainly representing small scale dumping deposits along with natural slumping fills of sand and gravel. The upper fills appeared to represent longer periods of infilling, possibly post-abandonment. Most or all of the fills contained burnt limestone and several produced animal bone. The upper fills contained a sizeable flint assemblage including scrapers, a flake core and flakes, a number of which were retouched. A single backed knife came from one of the primary fills. Several sherds of pottery were recovered from fill 2075, interpreted as part of a middle Bronze Age bucket urn on site; analysis suggests this may be later in date (see Brown, this vol.). Charcoal from fill 2047, the third fill from the top of the waterhole, was submitted for radiocarbon analysis and returned a date of 1512–1416 cal BC (OxA-17608; 95.4% prob), confirming the middle Bronze Age phasing.

Pits and postholes

A number of discrete features were located within the enclosure that were likely to have been contemporary with the settlement, but none produced any dating evidence (Fig. 2.19). In particular three quite large pits may have been significant to the settlement. Circular pits 2166 and 2131 were *c* 10 m from roundhouse 2531, measuring 0.9 and 1.37 m in diameter and 0.2 and 0.62 m deep respectively. The pits were notable for their multiple fills (3 and 9) but lacked artefactual evidence, with the exception of a deposit of burnt flint and charcoal in the upper fill of pit 2131, possibly indicating the feature was used for dumping domestic refuse.

A further three shallow pits (2066, 2069 and 2072) were located close to roundhouse 2532. All were oval, measuring 0.5–1 m across and 0.15–0.3 m deep. These features may have been storage pits associated with the settlement, but were also impossible to date. Additionally, a pair of parallel slots (3900) *c* 12 m west of roundhouse 2532 may have been an early form of a type of structure also found in later Bronze Age and Iron Age periods, possibly a variation on four-post structures.

There were a number of scattered groups of postholes within the enclosure likely to represent contemporary settlement activity, though no dating evidence was forthcoming and no definite structures noted, with the possible exception of a fence line (3894) aligned southwards from enclosure 2986.

Grave 2508

An inhumation burial was located *c* 15 m north-west of roundhouse 2531 (Fig. 2.19). The body of a crouched, mature ?male (2511) had been placed in a

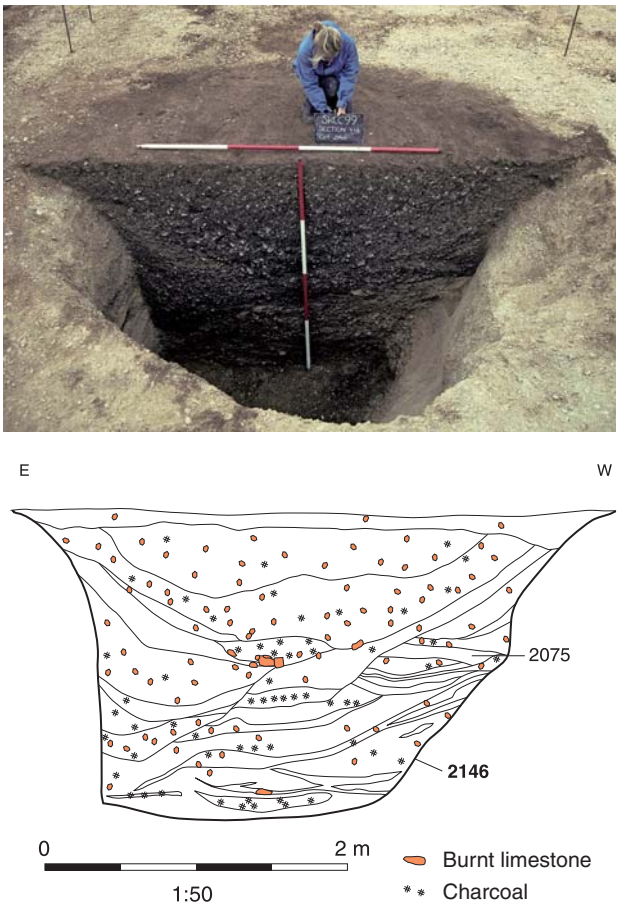


Fig. 2.20 Photograph and section through waterhole 2146

circular grave 1.1 m in diameter, surviving to a depth of 0.34 m. No grave goods were found accompanying the deceased and the feature remains undated. Its location and similarity to burial 3173 further east (see below) suggest this interment was middle Bronze Age in date, although this is not certain.

Settlement Area 2: 1412–1260 BC (Phase 3b)

The later area of middle Bronze Age settlement lay *c* 150 m further south, and unlike its predecessor appeared to have been unenclosed (Figs 2.18 and 2.21). At least four post-built roundhouses or structures were exposed, in addition to a number of small fencelines. As with Area 1, the settlement appeared to focus around a large waterhole.

Roundhouses/post-built structures

A series of posthole structures of varying form were found within the settlement area. Structures 5330 and 5331 were clearly identifiable as roundhouses (Fig. 2.22). The buildings were located to the north of the settlement area, alongside one another, and may represent two contemporary dwellings or sequential movement of a single habitation. Both

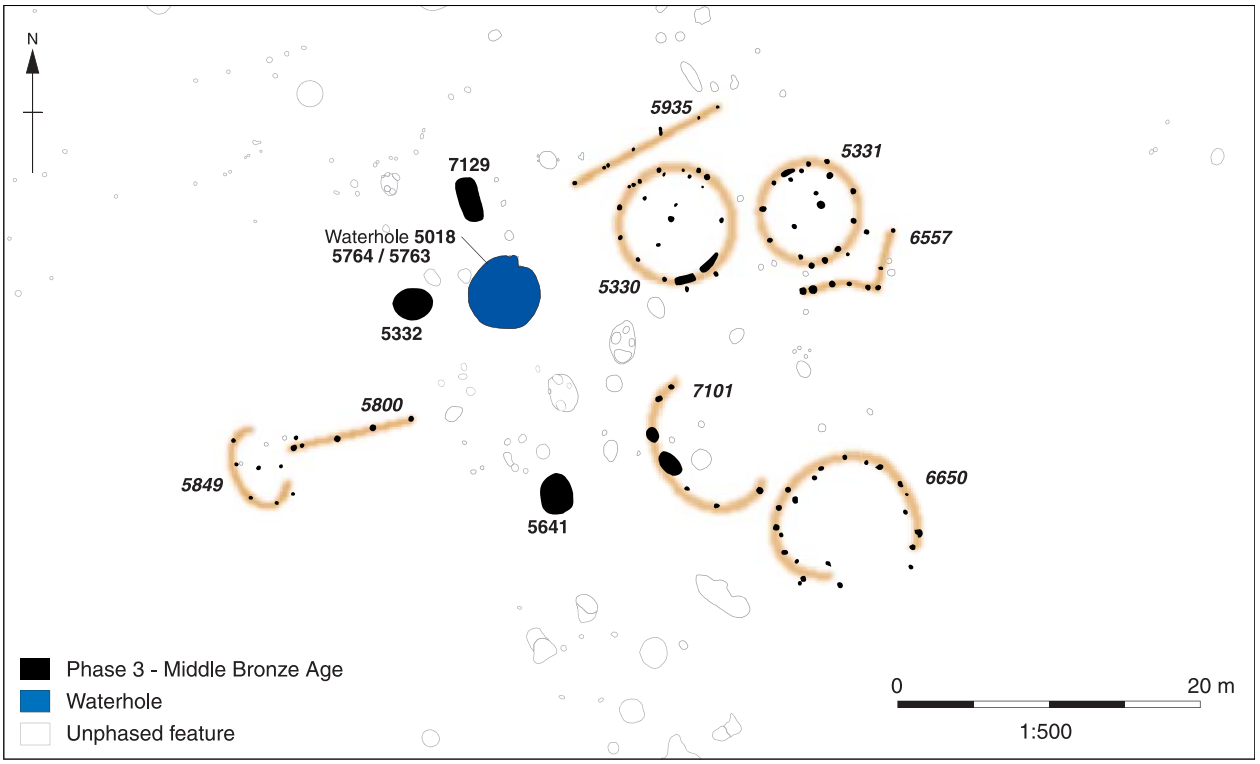


Fig. 2.21 Middle Bronze Age settlement Area 2

Fig. 2.22 Photograph of roundhouses 5330 and 5331

were typical of Bronze Age roundhouses in the Thames Valley, measuring *c* 7 m in diameter with porch structures to the south-east. The structures comprised over 20 postholes each, including a number which appeared to be ancillary to the main structure and some acting as internal supports or divisions. Both appear to have a central post or posts. The porch of roundhouse 5331 comprised two parallel alignments of postholes extending outwards over 3.6 m whilst roundhouse 5330 had an entrance consisting of two slots within the circular structure and parallel postholes *c* 0.4 m to the south-east. It is possible that these differences imply different functions for the buildings, although this may simply be a result of differing construction techniques.

The possibility of different functions is also suggested by the differing posthole morphology. The postholes belonging to structure 5331 were between 0.3 and 0.55 m in diameter (most *c* 0.4 m), with depth varying from 0.13 to 0.38 m and almost all contained two fills. In roundhouse 5330 the postholes were generally smaller (0.13–0.4 m diameter) and shallower, with less fills. Finds were scarce in both structures, comprising crumbs of prehistoric pottery from both and two worked flint flakes from roundhouse 5331.

Both roundhouses appear to have had fencelines associated with them, potentially acting as 'windbreaks', or property boundaries. An L-shaped alignment of postholes (6557) lay outside the entrance to roundhouse 5331, while a 12 m SW–NE alignment of postholes (5935) was located to the rear of structure 5330.

A larger circular structure (6650) was located 11 m south of roundhouse 5331, comprising a circular arrangement of 21 postholes measuring 9 m in diameter and apparently open to the south-east. It is possible that this gap (*c* 6 m) represented a form of entrance not visible in the archaeological record or that the building was indeed open. If the latter is true this potentially indicates use as an ancillary building rather than a dwelling. The postholes of structure 6650 were similar to those from roundhouse 5330 (0.2–0.4 m in diameter and 0.1–0.34 m deep), but no associated artefactual evidence was recovered. These D-shaped buildings are commonly found on later Bronze Age and early Iron Age sites, such as Yarnton (Hey *et al.* forthcoming) and have recently been discussed by Lambrick (2009, 153).

The remains of a further possible ancillary building *c* 9.2 m in diameter was excavated immediately north-east of structure 6650. Structure 7101 comprised five postholes and two pits arranged in a semi-circle; the component features ranged from 0.08 to 1 m in diameter but all survived to a similar depth. No artefacts were recovered from the group and its identification as a structure is fragile.

A collection of postholes (5849) in the south-western corner of the settlement area may have been another small structure. The group comprised up to 15 postholes in an oval arrangement measuring 4.2 m by 7 m. The postholes were generally much smaller than those in the structures detailed above (most below 0.2 m in diameter) possibly indicating an insubstantial structure such as a storage platform. A fenceline (5800) extended 8 m north-east from 5849 comprising four larger postholes, *c* 2 m apart, presumably associated with the structure. The combination of these features may indicate a complex related to stock management.

Waterhole 5018

The waterhole (5018) supplying Settlement Area 2 was located between structures 5330 and 5849 (Figs 2.21 and 2.23). The feature was recut at least twice with the final cut being *c* 4.8 m diameter; its full depth was not ascertained. There appears to have been deliberate backfilling in the upper levels, from which came substantial deposits of burnt stone, animal bone (mainly cattle, though including dog mandibles and red deer), middle/late Bronze Age pottery, worked flint and two fragments of fired clay, which were identified as possible pedestals or oven furniture.

A circular ring of stakeholes (5748) cut the waterhole and were discernible to the depth of the penultimate fill (4900). The stakeholes were in an oval

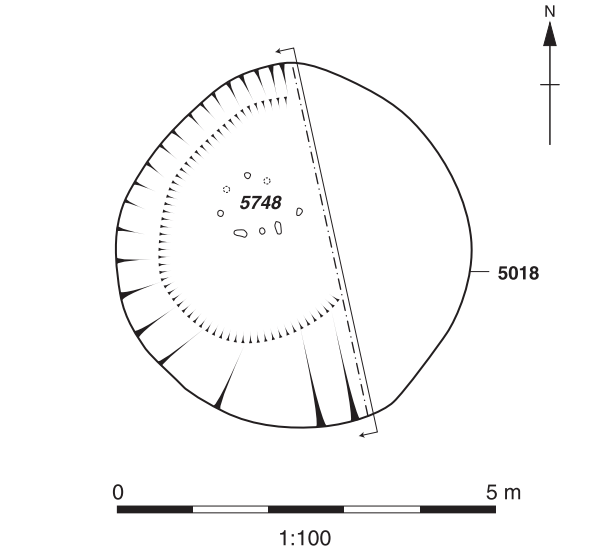


Fig. 2.23 Photograph and plan of waterhole 5018/5763/5764

arrangement, 1 m long, and individually measured 0.1–0.25 m in diameter. The function of this structure is unknown; it may have formed a superstructure above the waterhole, possibly for drawing water, although it could date to a time after the waterhole had fallen out of use. Charcoal from fill 4900 was sampled for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 1412–1262 cal BC (OxA-17611; 95.4% prob), illustrating the broadly sequential nature of Settlements 1 and 2.

The assemblages from within the waterhole would seem to have been made over a long period of time, the burnt stone and fired clay artefacts suggesting that they derived from domestic activity. It is clear that the settlement's inhabitants relied upon domesticated animals whilst enhancing their diet with wild game. The dog remains presumably illustrate the maintenance of these animals for hunting purposes rather than for food.

Pits and postholes

A number of pits and postholes were excavated within the area of Settlement 2 (Fig. 2.21). With the exception of pit 5332, which produced late prehistoric pottery, most could not be dated but are likely to have been contemporary with the features described above. Pit 5332, 2.3 m west of the waterhole, was also a substantial feature measuring 2.7 by 2.13 m and 1.5 m deep and containing seven fills. In addition to the pottery the pit also contained a flint flake and a multi-platform core.

Other significant but undated pits include features 5641 and 7129, south and north of waterhole 5018 respectively; the latter produced deposits of burnt stone. Several pits and postholes were found between the post-built structures and the waterhole, particularly in the area of possible structure 7101. These were unremarkable, generally under 1 m in diameter, and contained single fills; the only finds were burnt stone from four of the postholes.

A large cluster of undated postholes lay to the immediate north-west of the settlement, but these were not coherently organised or close enough to form a barrier around the settlement.

Area 3—Pits and posthole alignments

A third area of activity was excavated 60 m south of Settlement Area 2 (Fig. 2.18), comprising a widely spaced (13.5–20 m) group of three pits and two possible fencelines (Fig. 2.24). Pits 7959 and 8400 were similar in diameter (1.9–2.3 m), whilst pit 8467 was smaller at 1.05 m diameter; all were between 1.08 m and 1.4 m deep. Pits 8400 and 8467 produced middle Bronze Age pottery and pit 7959 late prehistoric pottery and fired clay. All contained residual late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery and worked flint including flakes, scrapers and blades, as well as small deposits of burnt stone. The worked flint assemblage from pit 8467 suggests an earlier Neolithic date, however the presence of well stratified middle Bronze Age pottery within the assemblage suggests this was also residual. Given the proximity of a number of earlier features this residuality is unremarkable.

The two possible fencelines (8484 and 8788) seem to have been associated with the pits. Fenceline 8484 comprised five postholes, 3–3.5 m apart, arranged in an L-shaped pattern *c* 9 m long, screening pit 7959 from the south. Structure 8788 consisted of up

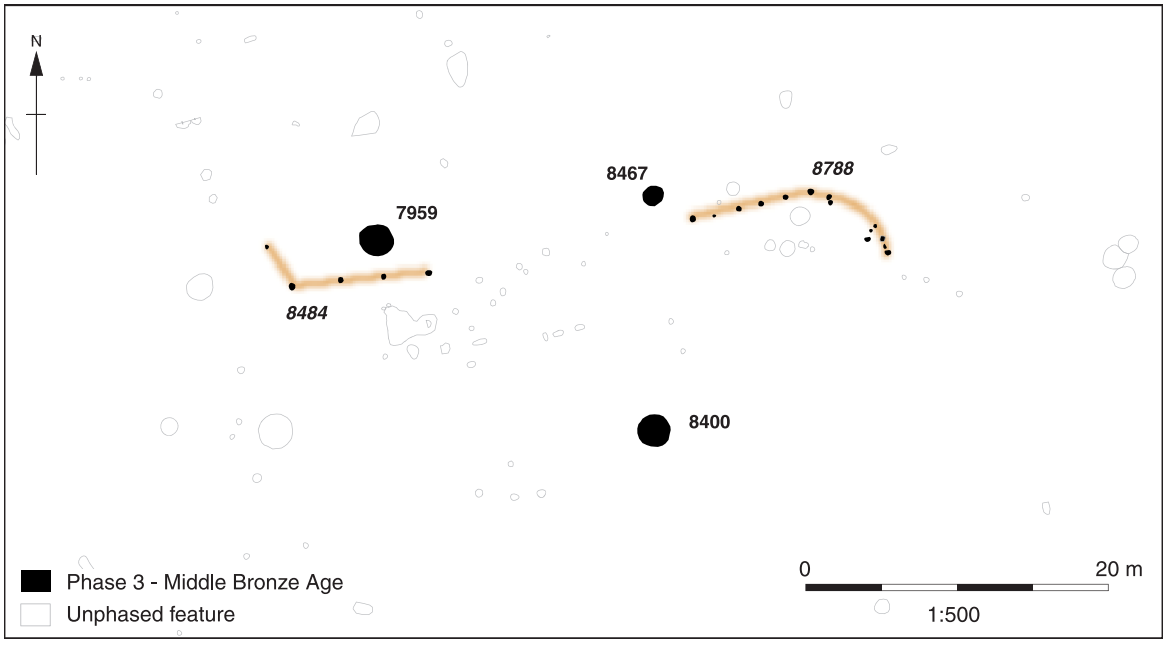


Fig. 2.24 Middle Bronze Age Area 3

to 18 postholes curving eastwards from pit 8467. None of the structures produced any finds and both are tentatively dated middle Bronze Age.

The purpose of this area is unknown. The deposits within the pits do not appear to be structured and they may be simple refuse pits, although their location some distance from the settlements is curious. It is possible that these features represent the remains of a further small settlement area, much of which has been truncated. A number of unphased pits and postholes in the area may have been related but are too scattered to interpret.

Enclosure 3239—Ritual space?

One of the most interesting features of the multi-period landscape as a whole is the apparent special significance of an area in the centre of the excavated site. In later periods this accommodated the southern extent of a significant prehistoric pit alignment, a pair of Roman graves and the outer boundary of a Roman settlement, ultimately becoming the post-medieval county boundary. The first indication of 'structured' use of this area is in the middle Bronze Age, in the form of enclosure 3239 and its associated burials and pits, which lay *c*

Fig. 2.25 Enclosure 3239 and associated features

30 m east of possibly contemporary Settlement Area 1 (Fig. 2.18).

Enclosure 3239 (Fig 2.25) was somewhat unusual in its own right. The feature comprised a series of segmented ditches and pits forming a three-sided enclosure open to the south. The eastern side of the enclosure appears to have been the most substantial, comprising three lengths of ditch, 50 m long in total. Each ditch terminus contained 1–2 postholes, possibly representing gate structures, while a small pit was situated between the northernmost ditches. The north-western part of the enclosure comprised a series of much smaller ditch segments (up to 2.1 m long), with a larger L-shaped segment of ditch forming the corner. A gap existed in the centre of the western side and the southern half was notably more truncated than the northern part. Overall the enclosure measured *c* 50 m x 40 m.

The ditches were deeper (up to 0.56 m) to the east and visibly V-shaped in profile. Up to four fills were found on this side, in contrast to the one or two in the western ditches. No finds were recovered from this feature at all, possibly suggesting it was not used for domestic activity.

The enclosure was phased on the basis of its relationship to the later pit alignment (3333), and more specifically pits 3122 and 3197, although it should be noted that this relationship is tenuous. Excavators suggested that the pits most likely cut the segmented ditches to the north, but the relationships were unclear and fills almost identical. A clear cut appears to have been recorded between pit 3122 and ditch 3125 and this has been taken to be accurate.

Fig. 2.26 Photograph of middle Bronze Age burial 3175

This is supported spatially, as a number of middle Bronze Age features clearly cluster within—or in the vicinity of—the enclosed area. What is particularly remarkable about this is the nature of these features, most if not all of which appear to have ritual significance. In addition the later pit alignment followed the same line as enclosure 3239 indicating this area had special significance.

In the far north-western corner of the enclosure a grave (3173; Figs 2.25–6) containing the remains of an adult female was excavated. The grave was aligned NE-SW, measuring 1.04 x 0.64 m and surviving to a depth of 0.18 m. The skeleton was fairly well preserved and was tightly crouched, laying on the right side. A sample of bone was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 1510–1400 cal BC (SUERC-18831; 95.4% prob) indicating that the grave was contemporary with Settlement Area 1 to the west. The placement of this grave within enclosure 3239, distanced from the settlement area, indicated a clear spatial division between the living and the dead. The pit alignment was later constructed through the gap between enclosure 3239 and this grave.

Other internal features included pit 2004, located *c* 47 m south of Grave 3173 (Figs 2.25 and 2.27). The pit measured 0.78 m in diameter and 0.32 m deep and contained four fills of sandy silt or clay. The upper fill of the pit produced burnt stone and a significant quantity of middle Bronze Age bucket urn, whilst the fill below (2006) clearly contained a special deposit comprising a complete Neolithic axe made of Cornish Greenstone (SF 33) and a quartzite hammerstone (SF 37) (Fig. 2.27). The axe was placed centrally in the pit with the cutting edge facing upwards and the hammerstone placed next to it.

Pit 3237 was 18 m north-west of 2004 (Figs 2.25 and 2.27) and was directly cut by the later pit alignment (pit 3285), suggesting it may also have had special significance. The pit was unusual in morphology, measuring 2.1 x 1.67 m and 1.81 m deep, containing 27 fills indicating gradual silting. The feature might have been a waterhole, although it was removed from the main settlement activity. In addition there was no evidence for the presence of water, and an absence of animal bone, as typically seen in contemporary waterholes. The pit did contain prehistoric pottery including residual late Neolithic/early Bronze Age sherds, burnt stone and worked flint, as well as fragments of fired clay. With the exception of three flakes the flint assemblage was recovered from the upper fills of the pit and included a tested nodule, a flake core and two blade-like flints. Shrub and hazel charcoal was found in a slightly lower fill; this was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of

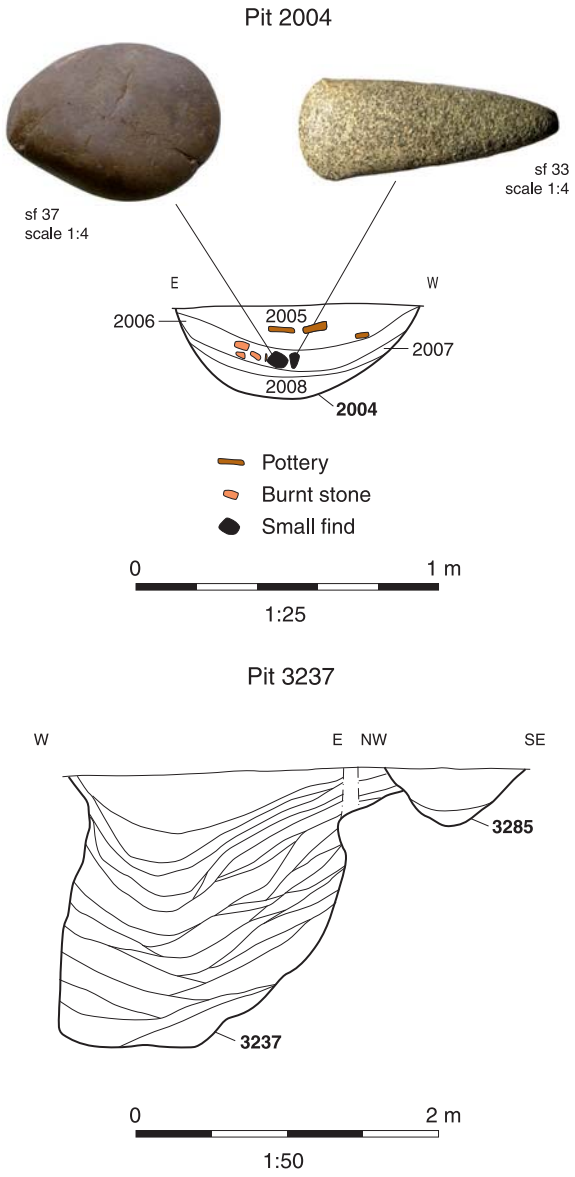


Fig. 2.27 Sections through middle Bronze Age pits 2004 and 3237

1376–1129 cal BC (OxA-17609; 95.4% prob). While there did not appear to be a structured deposit within the pit, it is an anomaly in comparison to contemporary features and its location suggests it may have had some ritual significance.

A third pit (3260) may have been contemporary with pits 2004 and 3237. Pit 3260, which was exactly 40 m south of pit 3237 (Fig. 2.25), was 1.8 m in diameter and 0.53 m deep. It contained four fills which produced very abraded prehistoric pottery; the upper fill contained an edge ground flint knife. Dating evidence for the pit was unclear; its nature and proximity to pits 3237 and 2004 may indicate a middle Bronze Age date. However, the pit was on the same line as the later pit alignment and cut a smaller pit or posthole (3806). If this was indeed part of the larger alignment it would preclude a middle Bronze Age date.

Few other features were found within the area enclosed by 3239, and none of these contained dating evidence. A group of postholes immediately to the east of grave 3173 may have formed a further L-shaped or rectangular enclosure, while smaller groups of postholes to the south formed no readily identifiable patterns, with the exception of an approximately square arrangement of four postholes. Two large pits in the southern area of the enclosure remained undated. These were all located in the western half of the enclosure even though this area was more truncated than the east. None of the features produced any artefacts. The evidence overwhelmingly supports the interpretation that this area had been set aside for ritual activity.

Beyond the bounds of this area an isolated cattle burial (2048; Figs 2.25 and 2.28) was found almost equidistant from enclosures 3239 and 2986, placed in a pit measuring 1.8 x 0.98 m. Its location suggests a middle Bronze Age date although this is unattested. The vicinity of this feature to the pit alignment may also indicate a Phase 4 for the burial, particularly as cattle burial is quite common in the early Iron Age in this area.

Middle Bronze Age activity in the north

L-shaped Ditch 14273

At around the same time that waterhole 5018, in Settlement Area 2, was falling out of use a substantial L-shaped ditch (14273) was constructed over 400 m to the north (Figs 2.18 and 2.29). Ditch 14273 was representative of a phenomenon seen elsewhere in the Thames Valley such as Frilford and Latton Lands (see Lambrick 2009). The ditch measured *c* 64 m along both arms and was 2–3 m wide, surviving to a depth of 1.5 m, with a V-shaped profile (Fig. 2.29). It contained up to 22 fills, predominantly silty sand with lenses of sandy gravel representing slumping deposits. These were often from the inside of the ditch, indicating the presence of a bank. Occasionally more fills with evidence of human activity were found, often near the top of the ditch, indicating that occupation began in this area after the ditch had been open and silting for a long period of time. This would

Fig. 2.28 Photograph of cattle burial 2048

suggest its original purpose was not as part of a domestic enclosure. Occasional burnt deposits were excavated, often containing burnt stones; radiocarbon dating of one of these deposits returned a date of 1408–1260 cal BC (OxA-17617; 95.4% prob), showing broad contemporaneity with Settlement Area 2.

The ditch cut Neolithic pits 17011 and 17022 at its corner and an undated rectangular pit (18091) near its southern end (0.74 m long, 0.98 m deep). The placement of the ditch in relation to the Neolithic pits is unlikely to be coincidental, suggesting the features were somehow still visible at this time and still held some significance.

The easternmost part of the east-west aligned arm of the ditch appears to have been recut in a later

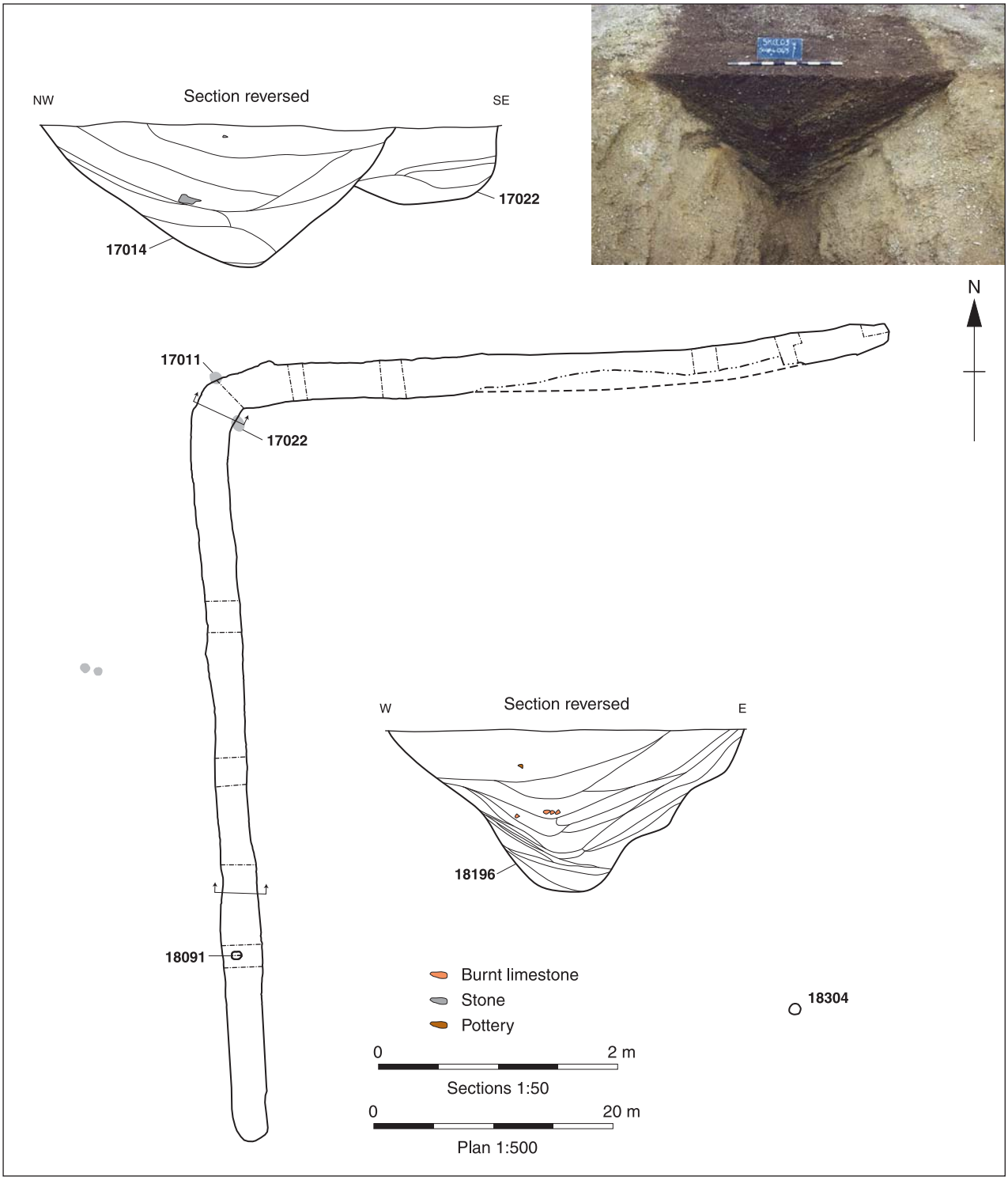


Fig. 2.29 Detail of middle Bronze Age ditch 14273

period; the recuts were shallower and wider and may represent re-use of the ditch for different purposes. This may have corresponded with the later settlement located within the enclosure formed by the ditch (see below).

Overall, the ditch contained relatively few finds considering its size. A total of ten fills produced small amounts of pottery dating from the Neolithic through to the middle Iron Age, necessitating elements of both residuality and intrusiveness. Such finds included a flint pounder or hammerstone and a number of burnt stone deposits. The most abundant evidence for human activity was the animal bone assemblage which weighed 2.9 kg overall. This mainly comprised cattle bone but also contained pig, sheep/goat and red deer, remarkably similar to the assemblage from waterhole 5018.

Industrial activity—Hearth? 18304

A further discrete pit was excavated in the northern area of the site, within the area partially enclosed by ditch 14273 (Figs 2.29 and 2.30). The pit measured *c* 0.9 m in diameter and was 0.57 m deep, containing four fills of clayey silt above a primary burnt clay lining. A second deposit of burnt clay (18301) was overlain by a layer containing most of a palstave mould and it is possible that this pit was originally used as a hearth for manufacturing metal objects. The pit also produced a flint flake, scraper and waste. The upper fill (18299) contained a large deposit of charcoal, mainly oak, ash and native shrub with some hazel, as well as fragments of later prehistoric pottery. The charred material was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 1212–1012 cal BC (OxA-17618; 95.4% prob), placing at least the final infilling of the pit quite late in the period, perhaps contemporary with the later Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement located within ditch 14273 (see below).

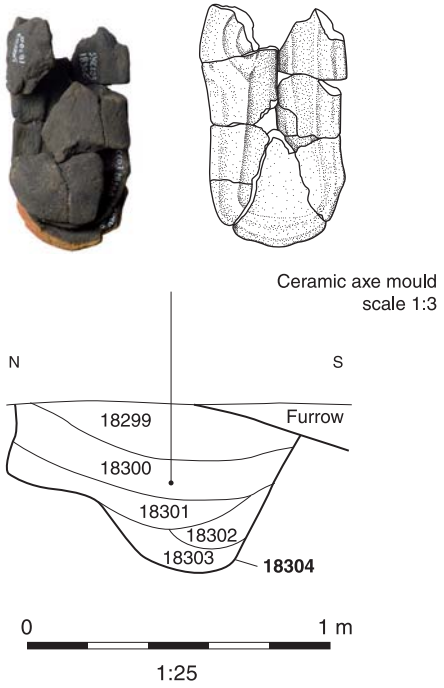


Fig. 2.30 Section through hearth or pit 18304 and Bronze Age fired clay axe mould

Discussion of the middle Bronze Age landscape

A dramatic change in society and lifestyle is clearly evident throughout Britain following *c* 1500 BC, ultimately resulting in a much more sedentary existence and intensification of land use (Lambrick 2009, 1). The physical outcome of this process was the appearance of more frequent, apparently permanent, farmsteads, in combination with advent of widespread agricultural practices and sometimes extensive field systems (eg Heathrow; Framework Archaeology 2006).

Settlements and individual structures were generally more substantial than in previous periods with roundhouses becoming the norm for domestic dwellings. Many settlements were enclosed at this time and artificial water supplies became significant to serve the more sedentary way of life. Artefacts such as pottery became more abundant, representing the trappings of a settled lifestyle. Many of these trends are identifiable at Cotswold Community.

Environment

The developments in society during the middle Bronze Age would seem to have had a huge impact on the landscape of the Thames Valley, with massive loss of tree cover and human induced changes in hydrology and sedimentology (Lambrick 2009, 1). Lambrick has suggested that settlements in the valley were located in a wide open corridor or string of large stretches of extensively cleared land winding through a more wooded landscape (ibid., 35). This can be seen in the charcoal record from Cotswold Community, which—although small—shows a much increased presence of light demanding species, suggesting the original woodland cover has been significantly modified (Challinor, this vol.). In addition, the molluscan assemblage comprised only open county species indicating a well-established open environment with few trees or ungrazed grassland (Champness, this vol.). The same results were obtained from samples in the earlier excavation of a middle Bronze Age cemetery in another part of Shorncote Quarry to the north (Barclay and Glass 1995).

Lifestyle and subsistence

The archaeological remains of middle Bronze Age date at Cotswold Community conform to the model of a dramatically changing population in a number of ways. A more permanent way of life is clearly demonstrated by two discrete areas of settlement, each containing at least two roundhouses. The

dating evidence from features within the settlements indicates that these were in use at different times and may represent a slight shift in settlement of a single household unit or small group. Settlement Area 1 was located in an area which had been previously ignored by the preceding Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age groups, in close proximity to what would become a significant ritual area. The reason for this is unknown but it may shed light on the choice of location. The settlement appeared to shift *c* 150 m to the south later in the period, evidently much closer to the early Bronze Age barrow (4944) which was located less than 20 m to the north-west of the settlement.

The settlements differed in a number of ways, most obviously in terms of enclosure, with Settlement Area 1 defined to the east and south by enclosure 2986, and possibly with a bank or above ground structure to the north and west, which did not survive. Settlement Area 2 appeared to be completely unenclosed, although a number of postholes existed around the site, which remain undated. The later settlement did contain a number of fencelines, also a feature of more permanent settlements, possibly dividing up the settlement or protecting the structures from the prevailing weather.

Both settlements contained roundhouses; those in Settlement Area 1 were located some 30 m apart, whereas roundhouses 5330 and 5331 in Settlement Area 2 were paired. It is unclear whether any of the other identified structures in Area 2 were roundhouses. Paired roundhouses became a common feature of later Bronze Age settlement in the Upper Thames Valley and a number of examples were found within the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement on this site (see below). One roundhouse is often more substantial than the other and a number of theories have been put forward as to what this signifies, including a domestic dwelling and an outhouse, and separation of activities or even sexes (Hearne and Heaton 1994, 49). However it is difficult to provide evidence for any of these theories.

Both settlements had focal waterholes, one of which had been recut twice indicating extended occupation. Most of the artefactual evidence for this period came from these features which appear to have been used for dumping domestic debris—possibly on abandonment. In contrast the smaller pits in each settlement were relatively sterile and may have been used for storage. Both the ethnographic record and experimental archaeology undertaken by Peter Reynolds (1979) has illustrated that pits can often be used to store grain and foster good conditions for this function. However it is unusual to find grain *in situ* and on the floodplain and lower gravel terraces this may not be practical (Lambrick 2009, 277). It is possible that these pits were used to store other things but it is difficult to tell.

The third area of activity is somewhat more elusive and may be evidence of a further settlement, though this seems unlikely. The fencelines in combination with a series of pits containing a few artefacts may indicate a protected storage area, although the location some 60 m from the nearest settlement makes this equally unlikely. In addition the presence of L-shaped ditch 14273 to the north is something of an enigma. Although these ditches are present throughout the Thames Valley their purpose is unknown. Lambrick (2009, 71) suggests they may have been parts of animal enclosures as their steep v-shaped profile would certainly discourage large mammals such as horses or cattle.

The artefactual assemblage from the settlements is limited, with a small assemblage of pottery largely derived from the waterholes and scattered pits. A minor amount of residual flint also appears to have been deposited in the waterholes, some of which was reworked. In addition, two fired clay 'pedestals' were recovered from waterhole 5018/5764. These were traditionally regarded as loom weights but are increasingly associated with ovens, hearths or kilns, indicating domestic or industrial activity (Poole, this vol.). The remaining finds assemblage was composed of burnt stone, presumably representing domestic refuse from cooking.

The animal bone assemblage was somewhat more substantial than the previous phases with cattle dominating but including sheep/goat and red deer as well as pig and dog in smaller quantities. This fits in with the overall animal bone record for this period in the Thames Valley and suggests that animal husbandry was focussed on cattle as providers of meat, dairy and traction (Strid, this vol.). Mutton, pork and venison probably constituted a minor part of the diet and sheep may have been kept for wool. As in the preceding phases the suitability of cattle to the floodplain is borne out by the animal bone record.

In contrast, evidence for arable cultivation is almost entirely absent from the middle Bronze Age occupation, with a single emmer seed identified from pit or hearth 18304, somewhat removed from the settlement areas. The plant remains from the wider region suggest barley was the main crop at this time, with spelt wheat being introduced. Therefore the minuscule evidence from Cotswold Community does not fit the norm. The lack of hazelnut shells suggests that wild foods were beginning to contribute less to the diet at this time, although the charcoal assemblage shows consistency in the use of shrubby species for fuel.

Overall the evidence seems to suggest that arable agriculture was not key to this settlement and no Bronze Age field systems are known to exist in the area, although limited cereal production may have been carried out nearby. It seems likely that pastoral farming remained the primary form of subsistence on the site. The lack of artefacts seems to indicate that settlement was not intensive and it is possible that the inhabitants still lived a partially mobile existence incorporating a permanent homestead to return to.

Few other middle Bronze Age settlements have been excavated in the immediate area with which to compare the site. Activity at Horcott Pit was limited to two pit groups, isolated pits and an animal burial, possibly indicating settlement was even less intensive and possibly transitory. As such, the settlement activity at Cotswold Community significantly increases our knowledge of the middle Bronze Age in the Upper Thames Valley.

Metalworking

One of the most remarkable middle Bronze Age finds from the site was the remains of a ceramic palstave mould (Fig 2.30), possibly in the context of a rare hearth base (Poole, this vol.). The significance of metalworking appears to have changed at this time, possibly in relation to the fact that British and Irish copper mines had gone out of use, leading to increased dependence on the continent. The occurrence of metalwork increased, although these objects were less associated with the dead (Bradley 2007, 186) and more commonly found in hoards and in water, especially in rivers such as the Thames. Metalworking debris and the ritual breaking or 'killing' of objects was often present within hoards (ibid., 187), and discoveries such as the mould from Cotswold Community may help to understand this phenomenon.

Charcoal recovered from the pit shows that oak was used as fuel for the process, although shrubby species were used for domestic fuel. High temperatures would be needed to work bronze, therefore oak would have been a suitable fuel, although this may also indicate that oak was still used for 'special' functions as seen in the preceding phase.

Middle or late Bronze Age axe moulds such as the Cotswold Community example have been found at a number of sites in the wider area, including Aldermarston (Bradley *et al.* 1980), Green Park (Brossler *et al.* 2004) and Roughground Farm (Allen *et al.* 1993). In the closer vicinity, examples have been recovered from excavations at Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming)— also in an isolated middle Bronze Age pit—and in an earlier excavation directly to the north of the current site, although this was dated to 900–700 BC (Hearne and Heaton 1994). Evidence such as this, in addition to the occasional collections of bronze scrap, suggests the existence of itinerant craftsmen visiting communities and producing implements as required (Poole, this vol.; Lambrick 2009, 215).

Ritual and religion

A further significant element of the middle Bronze Age activity at Cotswold Community was the posited presence of a ritual enclosure (3239), although it should be noted that both the phasing and the interpretation are tentative. As outlined above the enclosure was located in an area which was clearly important to the inhabitants of the site for many hundreds if not thousands of years. Its form is unusual for a feature of this period, in addition to which many of the features within or just beyond the enclosure clearly had a ritual function. Domestic evidence was not entirely lacking, although where present it was often placed in what appeared to be a structured deposit.

There is little evidence for 'ritual' enclosures or other structures dating to the later Bronze Age in the Thames Valley (Lambrick 2009, 331). However a slightly smaller rectangular enclosure was excavated at Church Lammas, Staines, with another enclosure on the interior, which was interpreted as ritual in nature (Hayman forthcoming). It is possible that the cluster of postholes in the north-western corner of enclosure 3239 also represents an internal structure, possibly of a mortuary nature given the proximity of grave 3173.

Treatment of the dead underwent significant changes at this time, the barrows of the preceding era generally replaced with urnfields, possibly reflecting wider social change (Bradley 2007, 186). In some cases the barrows were reused and occasionally modified, a phenomenon seen in earlier excavations at Shorncote Quarry (Barclay and Glass 1995), where a penannular ring ditch had been recut in this period and a Deverel-Rimbury cremation cemetery associated with it. A further two inhumation burials accompanied these features, one of which appeared to have been tightly bound, similar to skeleton 3175 (grave 3173). It is possible that these burials were related to the settlements described above, though it is not possible to prove this. Although not the norm, middle Bronze Age inhumation burials have been found in the Upper Thames Valley, and are often tightly crouched, suggesting the individual was securely bound (ibid., 49). The burials tend to be close to settlement sites, as with 3173 and potentially 2508. A further example of this was found at Corporation Farm, Abingdon where a double inhumation was located on the periphery of the settlement (Shand *et al.* 2003).

Further 'ritual' activity in the vicinity of enclosure 3239 included a cattle burial (2048) located *c* 10 m to the west. The burial is undated and may in fact be related to the later pit alignment, although a similar middle Bronze Age cattle burial was excavated at Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming).

The structured deposits that were common in Phases 1 and 2 appear to continue into Phase 3, most notably in pit 2004 (Fig 2.27) which contained the carefully placed axe and hammerstone. The presence of the complete Neolithic axe is significant and suggests the object had been curated for some time, possibly revered as an heirloom, although chance discovery should not be ruled out. The later deposition of Neolithic axes is not unknown and a complete stone axe was found placed on the base of a middle Bronze Age waterhole at Perry Oaks (Framework Archaeology 2006).

EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE – EARLY IRON AGE (PHASE 4)

The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age phase saw large-scale consolidation of settlement and accounts for the majority of the prehistoric activity on the site (Fig. 2.31). The two periods were not distinguishable at Cotswold Community, therefore they are considered as a single ongoing phase. Phase 4 includes the distinctive pit alignment (3333) and potentially four different areas of settlement comprising primarily post-built structures, post alignments, pits and waterholes. The bulk of activity was located in the south-west of the site, with smaller groups excavated elsewhere.

Unlike the previous phase, dating for the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age is relatively scarce considering the volume of archaeology, and has mainly relied on the pottery assemblage, ensuring

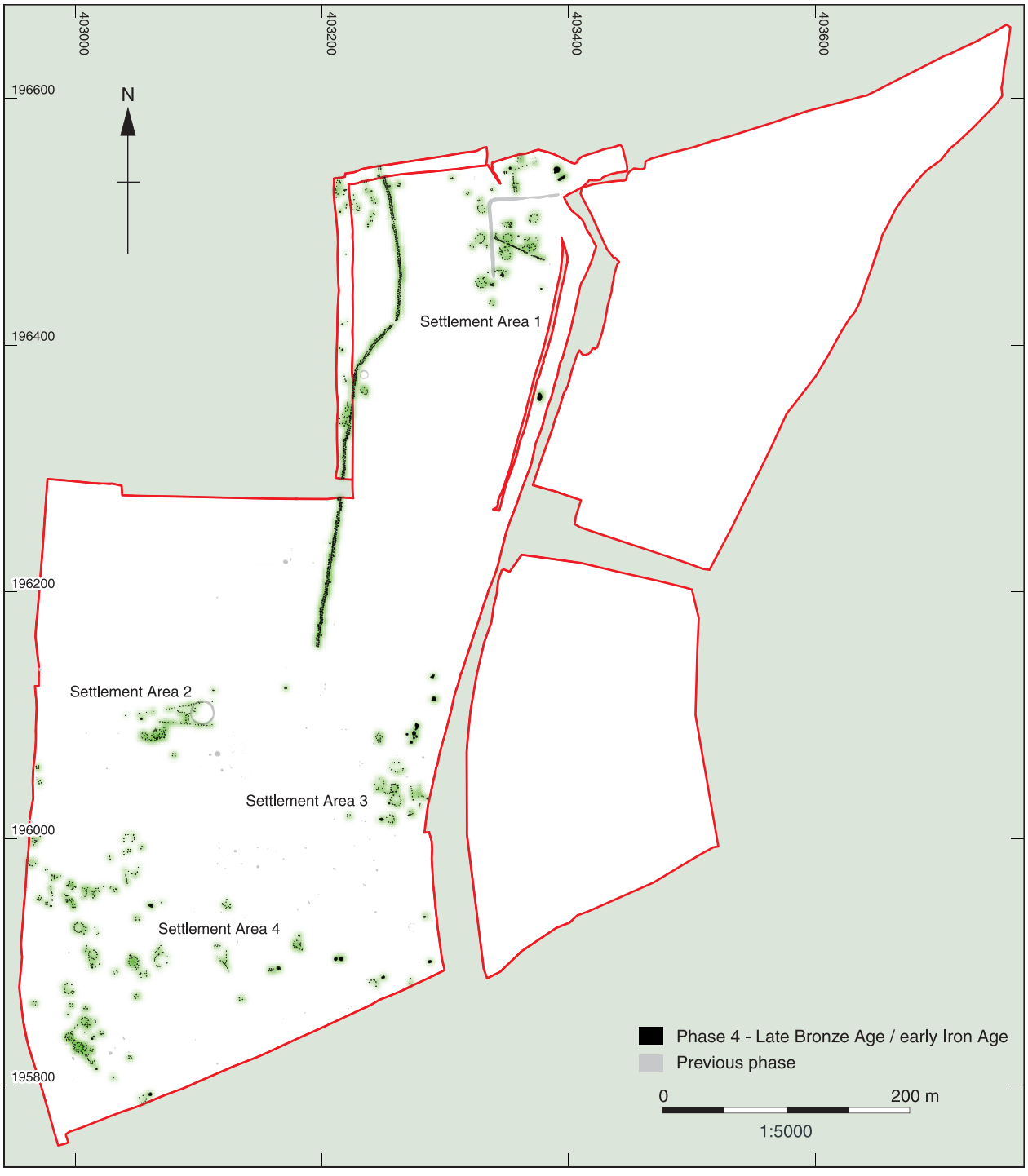


Fig. 2.31 Outline of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age phase (phase 4)

that it is difficult to accurately identify different sub-phases. The settlement has therefore been divided spatially rather than chronologically. Dating from pit 18304 (see Phase 3 above) fell into the middle-late Bronze Age possibly indicating that activity in the northern area of the site was the earliest. However, if this was the case, activity may have been quite long-lived in this area as dating evidence associated with L-shaped structure 3903 was early Iron Age. A single radiocarbon date placed a pit in

Fig. 2.32 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignment 3333

the south-western area (Settlement Area 4) firmly in the early Iron Age, and it is possible that activity moved south over time. It is equally possible, however, that the activity in Phase 4 represents a number of different groups, possibly settled concurrently.

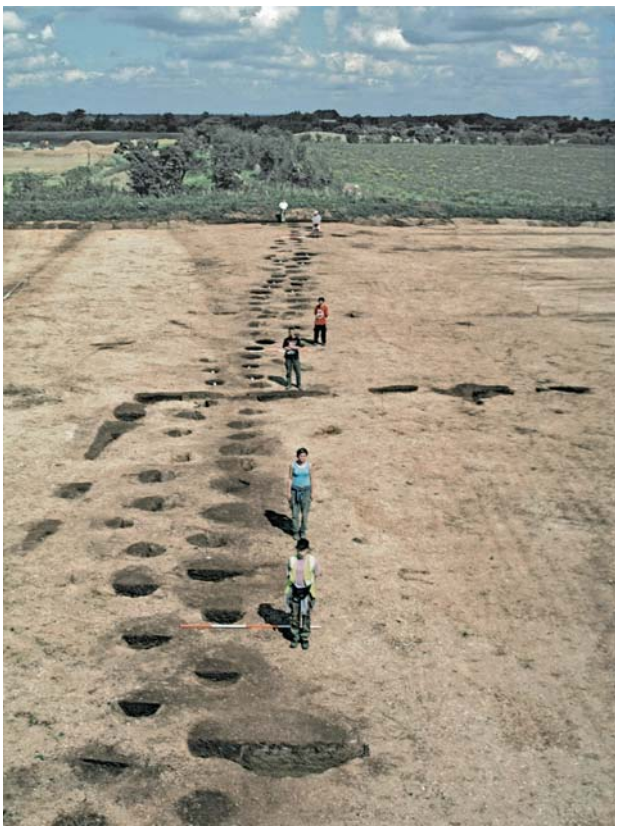
A number of the features in the south-east of the site contained pottery dated early or middle Iron Age. When considered alongside the fact that the bulk of middle Iron Age activity was focused in this area it is possible to suggest that activity moved in this direction during the Iron Age.

Dividing the landscape—the pit alignment

Pit alignment 3333 is certainly the most remarkable feature in this multi-period landscape (Figs 2.32–3). The feature comprised two staggered parallel lines of pits running approximately north-south deliberately curving around early Bronze Age ring ditch 16072. The pits extended over 400 m in the current phase of work but the northernmost extent was picked up by an excavation undertaken by Wessex archaeology in 1995–6 (Hearne and Adam 1999). The southern end of the alignment was clearly visible in the centre of the current site, giving a total length of over 500 m. Overall, 505 pits were excavated in the phases of work considered here, including those excavated by TVAS.

The creation of such a huge feature illustrates the large-scale division and consolidation of the landscape in this period, accompanied by numerous settlements. The nature of the pit alignment is such that the division would have been permeable rather than impregnable, with both people and animals able to cross the divide. A possible gap in the alignment, containing a single central posthole, was located *c* 35 m from the northern limit of the site (Fig. 2.32). Although damage by ploughing cannot be ruled out, this gap fell within an area of high ground, and settlement dating to this period was located either side of the gap, possibly deliberately.

The pits within the alignment ranged from 0.2–2 m in diameter (average 0.65–0.7 m) and 0.07–0.5 m deep (average 0.25 m) (see section, Fig. 2.33). The pits generally contained two or three (up to five) relatively sterile fills of the same sandy natural and silty clay as most other prehistoric features on the site. They were observably deeper to the north and where they coincided with a headland further south, which is probably simply a result of intensive ploughing elsewhere. The pits were notable for their lack of artefactual or environmental evidence. Of the 434 pits excavated by OA, a small quantity of possible early Iron Age pottery was recovered from pits 3056 and 3284, and further fragments of prehistoric pottery came from pits 3711 and 3401. These clustered around the southern end of the pit alignment, which seems to have been ritually significant in the middle Bronze Age period and also later in the Roman period. Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age



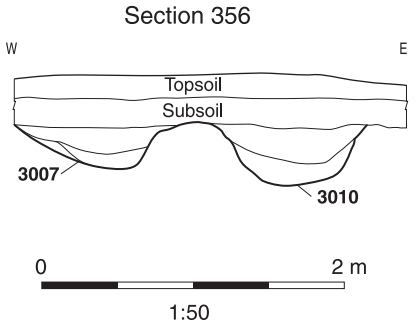


Fig. 2.33 Photographs and section of the pit alignment

pottery sherds also came from three of the pits excavated by TVAS further north (TVAS nos 4021, 4131 and 4121). TVAS pit 4121 produced an assemblage of 25 sherds of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date including two rims, possibly all from the same vessel (Taylor 2009, 3). Intrusive late Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from a further nine pits overall. Other finds included worked flint from 12 pits, though in all cases this comprised just a single flake, and the pits from which flint was recovered tended to be in clusters at different places in the alignment. Small quantities of burnt flint were recovered from eight pits and fragments of animal bone came from a further five pits.

Little environmental evidence survived from the pit alignment and so radiocarbon dating was not possible. The pit alignment clearly cut pit 3237 which was dated to the middle Bronze Age (1376–1129 cal BC OxA-17609; 95.4% prob). It was cut by enclosure 17600, which dated to the later Iron Age, as well as a number of Roman ditches.

The distribution of pit alignments in Britain extends along large areas of the English river gravels into the Welsh borderlands and northwards into Scotland. Few produced artefacts, but those that have indicate a date around the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age transition (Bradley 2007, 244). This is reinforced here by both the stratigraphy as well as the meagre pottery evidence.

Settlement Area 1

Settlement Area 1 was located in the north of the excavated site and was clearly separated into two distinct zones (eastern and western), divided by the pit alignment, along with a further zone to the south (Fig. 2.31)

Eastern settlement area

The eastern area of settlement was located within and around middle Bronze Age ditch 14273, *c* 50 m east of the possible gap in the pit alignment (Fig. 2.34). Evidence from ditch 14273 indicates that settlement was not established in this area until the ditch had significantly silted up. The origins of the settlement may also be related to the metalworking deposit found in pit 18304, dated to 1212–1012BC (OxA-17618; 95.4% prob) (see above). As such, this could be the earliest phase of activity dating to this period on the site, although the only pottery found within the features in this area was early Iron Age in date. This area was heavily truncated by ploughing; therefore the evidence was incoherent in places.

Roundhouses

Several roundhouses or similar post-built structures were located within the area enclosed by ditch 14273, with a further three to the west of the ditch. Ditch 14273 would still have been a feature of the landscape at this time and recutting of one arm is likely to date to this phase. Therefore it is possible that there was a distinction between the structures on the interior of the ditch and those outside, although this is not visible in the archaeological record. This group of roundhouses may represent a larger settlement than seen in the previous phase, or else several stages of a smaller habitation site. Overall, the identified roundhouses were similar to one another in form and size and were generally typical of roundhouses of this period in the Upper Thames Valley.

At least three structures on the interior of the ditch enclosure were clearly roundhouses belonging to this phase. Structure 14266 was located near the southern end of ditch 14273, with roundhouse 14267 *c* 8 m to the north and roundhouse 19862 *c* 15 m north-east. All three structures comprised 9–12 external postholes, with overall diameters of 7.9 m, 7.38 m and 7.3 m respectively. The external postholes generally measured *c* 0.2–0.4 m in diameter and up to 0.35 m deep. Internal central postholes were found in all three structures and were generally smaller; these may have formed central structures or internal divisions. The placement of two roundhouses close together on a similar alignment, such as structures 14266 and 14267, is a feature typical of this region. These may have belonged to small family units or the structures may have been sequential. A single residual flint flake was recovered from a posthole in structure 14267 but no other material was found from these buildings.

An arc of six similar sized postholes, open to the north, was excavated between roundhouses 14266 and 14267. This is unlikely to be the remains of a further roundhouse and may have formed an ancillary structure. Two rectangular pits were located within the area enclosed by the arc (19445 and 19447), which are likely to have been related to roundhouse 14266. The pits were clearly more substantial than the surrounding postholes (0.5 x 0.6 m and 0.15 m deep) but contained no artefactual evidence. They were very similar to a number of features excavated at the nearby site of Latton Lands (Powell *et al.* 2009), which were placed to the rear of roundhouses and contained articulated animal burials, possibly special deposits related to the construction of the house. Burials are absent from the pits north of roundhouse 14266, but may have originally existed and not survived.

A complete example of this phenomenon was found to the south of roundhouse 19862 to the east. Here an oval shaped pit (18686) measuring 1.5 x 0.8 m contained an articulated cow skeleton. An additional cow burial (18570) was found in an isolated location *c* 40 m east of roundhouse 14263 on the probable limits of the settlement. The burial was in the area of the later Roman trackway but may have originally been on the edge of a stream course likely to have been the eastern limit of the settlement. This stream course was noted in the course of the excavations to the north of the site, although its extent and nature were unclear. The graves

contained animals aged 1.5–3 years and were similar in size; both were very shallow.

A fourth probable roundhouse within the enclosed area, 17526, was located *c* 15 m east of 14266 and comprised eight large postholes or pits (0.4–0.66 m diameter, 0.11–0.22 m deep), most of which appear to have had smaller ancillary postholes (0.16–0.26 m diameter, 0.04–0.12 m deep) adjacent to them. The structure measured 6.17 m in diameter with an internal posthole and possibly a gap to the south-east, where an entrance may have been. The structure was noticeably different to those excavated in the vicinity, with a smaller diameter, but with larger individual elements. This may have been an ancillary building to roundhouse 19862, although the structure seems to have been cut by fenceline 14269, which may indicate an earlier date than the rest of the settlement, possibly even falling into the previous phase.

A number of less coherent posthole structures were also excavated within the enclosed area, which may represent the remains of roundhouses. Group 19691 appeared to have been a roundhouse, with a semi-circle of postholes surviving and the northern half seemingly truncated. An apparent porch structure was visible to the south-east and central

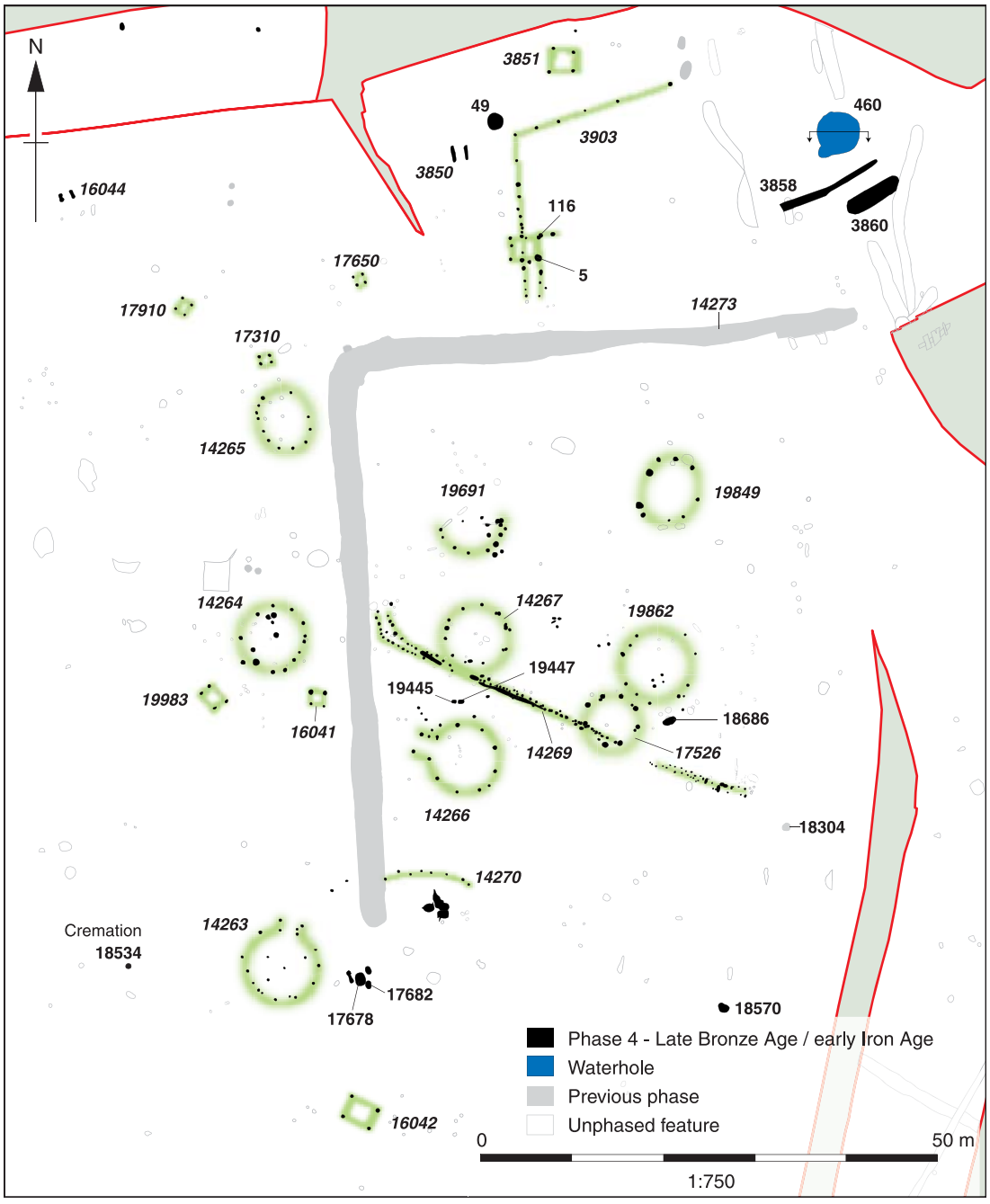


Fig. 2.34 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area: 1: eastern zone

postholes were found internally. The postholes within the structure were similar to those in other roundhouses, with larger features in the possible porch. This is a common feature of Bronze Age or Iron Age roundhouses and may be a result of constant replacement of porch postholes. Structure 19691 produced intrusive late Iron Age pottery, reflecting the density of later activity in this area.

A circular group of postholes and pits (19849) was located *c* 13 m north of roundhouse 19862, measuring 8.33 m across. This group could be considered too incoherent to form a roundhouse structure, although the possibility cannot be ruled out. Overall the group comprised 17 postholes and pits varying in diameter from 0.12 to 1.02 m, all were relatively shallow. Small amounts of cattle bone came from one posthole but no dating evidence survived.

An additional three possible roundhouses were excavated outside the L-shaped ditch to the west. Structures 14263 and 14264 were almost identical in overall diameter at *c* 7.85 m and located 27 m apart. Both comprised circular arrangements of 12–14 postholes and additional support postholes. In roundhouse 14263 these were quite consistent, most measuring around 0.2–0.3 m in diameter with one or two fills each. Four postholes were found internally but no evidence for an entrance survived. Structure 14264 had several very large postholes or pits within its circular structure as well as two more internally, measuring up to 0.69 m in diameter; the purpose of these large postholes/pits is unclear. No real evidence for an entrance was found, although a number of undated postholes were located directly to the west of the structure.

Structure 14265, *c* 17 m north of 14264, was smaller and more oval in shape, approximately 6 m in diameter. The structure was truncated to the north, probably removing some postholes, leaving eight external postholes and two internal features measuring 0.23–0.41 m diameter. Due to truncation the nature of this structure is unclear but a further group of postholes to the north may represent the remains of an entrance structure.

Fences and enclosures

A number of posthole alignments were interspersed among the roundhouses, presumably defining areas within the settlement (Fig. 2.34). The most significant of these was apparent fenceline 14269, which extended NW-SE for a minimum of 45 m, turning north for *c* 4 m at its western end to respect ditch 14273. The eastern end of the feature was truncated by a Roman trackway ditch, therefore its full extent is unknown. Spatially and stratigraphically the structure appears to have been one fenceline with a later re-alignment. Overall it comprised 129 postholes and three slots; the postholes were similar in size to those within the roundhouses, ranging from 0.12 to 0.6 m in diameter.

The construction of the fenceline would have been a significant undertaking and its location is worthy of note. The substantial fence would have divided up the area within the L-shaped enclosure, separating roundhouse 14266 from the other roundhouses described above. The fence truncated building 17526 and while this may have been an earlier structure it is possible that the fence was significantly later than these features.

A smaller fenceline (14270) was located at the southern end of ditch 14273 possibly cutting the north-south arm of the ditch. If this is the case the ditch must have silted up by the time of its construction, however the relationship between the two is unclear. The fenceline was a minimum of 9.3 m long and *c* 15 m at its maximum, the uncertainty lying in the continuation of the fenceline to the west of the ditch. The structure comprised a maximum of ten postholes, and seems to have partially enclosed two groups of pits to the south which may have been contemporary.

The northernmost group, which sat within the arc of the fenceline, comprised eight pits, some intercutting. The second group was located *c* 2 m west of roundhouse 14263 and contained six pits. The pits within each group varied significantly in dimensions from 0.24 m to 1.3 m in diameter and 0.05 m to 0.26 m deep and all had 1–2 fills with the exception of pit 17678, which produced a significant quantity of animal bone. A single blade-like flint tool was recovered from pit 17682 but no other material evidence was found in either group and their exact date is unknown.

To the north of enclosure ditch 14273 was a post-built L-shaped enclosure (3903), slightly removed from the bulk of the settlement activity. The structure mirrored both the middle Bronze Age ditch as well as the L-shaped fenceline (2986) from Phase 3 to the south. The enclosure measured 18–19 m along each arm, consisting of 36 postholes including a possible entrance and internal structure to the south. The postholes varied from 0.13 to 0.41 m in diameter and were up to 0.41 m deep containing 1-3 fills.

No features were found within the enclosed area other than a parallel line of postholes extending over 4 m at the southern point of the enclosure. A probable entrance structure was located directly north of this, comprising three north-south aligned postholes extending *c* 1 m to the west and three less coherently organised internal postholes or pits. Pottery recovered from postholes 116 and 5 within this entrance structure was dated to the early Iron Age.

A number of features were located to the east and west of the enclosure which may have been associated. This included a group of five postholes (3851) directly north of the enclosure, which appear have extended beyond the edge of excavation and may have been a structure. A relatively large (1.9 m diameter and 0.82 m deep) isolated pit (49) was located on the external corner of the enclosure, which contained four fills including a deposit of clay (62) but produced no finds. Just to the south-west of this was a slot structure (3850; see below).

A group of features to the east of the enclosure may shed more light on its function. Most notably waterhole 460 (over 5 m in diameter and 1.7 m deep), which contained the remains of once waterlogged fills, had been re-cut three times, indicating an extended period of occupation (Fig. 2.35). A large posthole (664, 0.5 x 0.65 m) cut the original waterhole fill and was itself cut by later re-cuts. It is possible that a depression mirroring this on the opposite side of the waterhole represents the remains of a further posthole indicating the presence of a superstructure. Several sherds of Bronze Age and early Iron Age pottery were recovered from the upper fill (461) of the first cut and lower fill (462) of the first re-cut of the waterhole. This feature appears to be the only water supply for the whole settlement and its location, removed from the main settlement area, is unusual.

Alongside the waterhole to the south were a *c* 11.5 m long gully (3858) and a 7 m length of ditch (3860). The features were undated but their proximity to the waterhole and unusual alignment in comparison to later activity in this area suggest they may be contemporary. Ditch 3860 contained up to six fills which produced only a cattle tooth and a large mammal bone. The feature is unusual and its purpose is unclear. Overall the presence of these features, in particular the waterhole and slot structure, may indicate a stock or agricultural function for enclosure 3903.

Four-post and slot structures

A total of six 'four-post' structures and two parallel slot structures were located in the vicinity of the eastern settlement. As mentioned above these were common in the Upper Thames Valley in the late Bronze Age and Iron Age and are commonly thought to have been grain storage platforms or similar agricultural structures. The four-post structures generally varied in size as shown by Table 2.5; only one structure was square, most being rectangular. Structures 16041 and 19983 were located within 5 m of roundhouse 14264 and structures 17310, 17650 and 17910 were within 14 m of possible roundhouse 14265 suggesting the structures were related. Structure 16042 was located south of the main activity and may have served a different function. A number of the structures appeared to have supporting stakeholes or postholes, possibly representing repairs. Structure 16041 was noteworthy in that two of the postholes were significantly bigger than their opposing numbers although the reason for this is unclear. None of the four-post structures were located within the enclosure formed by ditch 14273, possibly indicating a separation in function between this area and that to the west. No artefacts were recovered from any of the structures.

The slot structures (16044 and 3850) were located to the north and north-west of the settlement, and

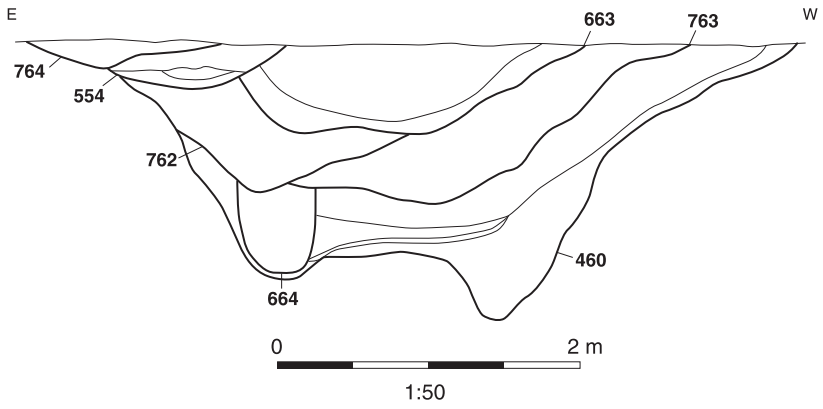


Fig. 2.35 Section through waterhole 460

Table 2.5: Detail of four-post structures in Phase 4, Area 1

Structure No	*Dimensions (m)*	*Posthole diameter (m)*	*Posthole depth (m)*	*No of fills per posthole*
16041	2.1 x 1.84	0.17–0.19/0.41–0.44	0.09–0.16/0.13–0.16	1
16042	3.65 x 2.77	0.3–0.5	0.12–0.25	2
17310	1.45 x 1.13	0.3–0.37	0.1–0.15	1
17650	1.3 x 1.3	0.15–0.23	0.04-0.14	1
17910	1.55 x 1.65	0.23–0.3	0.13–0.18	1
18111	2.34 x 2.47	0.3–0.4	0.15–0.2	2
18156	2.6 x 1.26	0.16–0.2	0.1–0.2	2
19983	2.68 x 1.68	0.26–0.6	0.06–0.34	1

Table 2.6: Detail of slot structures in Phase 4, Area 1

Group no	*Distance between slots (m)*	*Length of slots (m)*	*Width of slots (m)*	*Depth of slots (m*	*No of fills per slot*
3850	0.9	1.5	0.4	0.14–0.18	2
16044	0.96	0.92/1.02	0.35		
16045	1.3	1.2/1.4	0.35	0.18	2
16206	0.94	1.5	0.4	0.2	2
18098	1	0.9	0.4	0.1–0.5	2
18481	1.6–1.9	1.1–1.9	0.4	0.15–0.2	2
18510	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.14	2

comprised two elongated pits or slots, approximately parallel to one another. This type of feature is commonly found in the Upper Thames Valley in the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and is thought to be agricultural in function, similar to the four-post structures discussed above. However, their removal from the main settlement may suggest they were used in an unpleasant activity or one which had liminal significance, unlike the four-posters, which were close to the domestic habitation. The slots measured 1.4–1.8 m long and less than 0.5 m wide, with surviving depths under 0.2 m (Table 2.6).

Cremation 18536

An isolated cremation burial (18536) was found in small (0.5 x 0.15 m) circular pit 18534, located 12 m west of roundhouse 14263 (Fig. 2.34). The location of this feature suggests the cremation belonged to Phase 4 although no dating evidence was found. The deposit included the remains of a single individual, unurned and unaccompanied. Analysis suggests cremation was efficient and the bone had been carefully sorted afterwards.

Western settlement area

Several features within the wider vicinity of Settlement Area 1 may have been contemporary. Of particular note was a roundhouse and surrounding features in the far north-western extent of the site, much of which appears to extend beyond the site boundary and may be part of a larger complex (Fig. 2.36). The activity was located immediately west of the possible gap in the pit alignment discussed above, indicating it was separate from the eastern settlement, but perhaps not wholly removed. It is possible that this activity represents an area of differing function.

Roundhouse 18149

Roundhouse 18149 was truncated by the OA site boundary but picked up in the later TVAS excavation to the west (Taylor 2009). It is likely that this represented a continuation of the activity revealed in earlier excavations to the north (Hearne and Heaton 1994; Hearne and Adam 1999). The structure appeared to be 8.6 m in diameter and comprised eight postholes in the outer circle in addition to four internally and four in a possible entrance structure to the south-east. The postholes ranged in size from 0.24 to 0.45 m diameter and up to 0.34 m deep; all had two fills and postpipes were visible in postholes 18139 and 18130. The internal postholes included a central post (18142) and a structure or support mirroring the outer circle just inside the entrance. A number of postholes within the structure produced early Iron Age pottery.

Surrounding structures

An arc of postholes and slots lay to the east of the roundhouse, most of which appeared to form four-post and slot structures. Four-post structures included groups 18111 and 18156, the former measuring 2.2 x 2.2 m with postholes of 0.3–0.4 m diameter, and the latter 1.25 m x 2.5 m in size with smaller postholes (0.16–0.2 m). Structure 18156 was a less convincing structure although the postholes were of similar depth and content to 18111. Two postholes on the northern boundary of the site

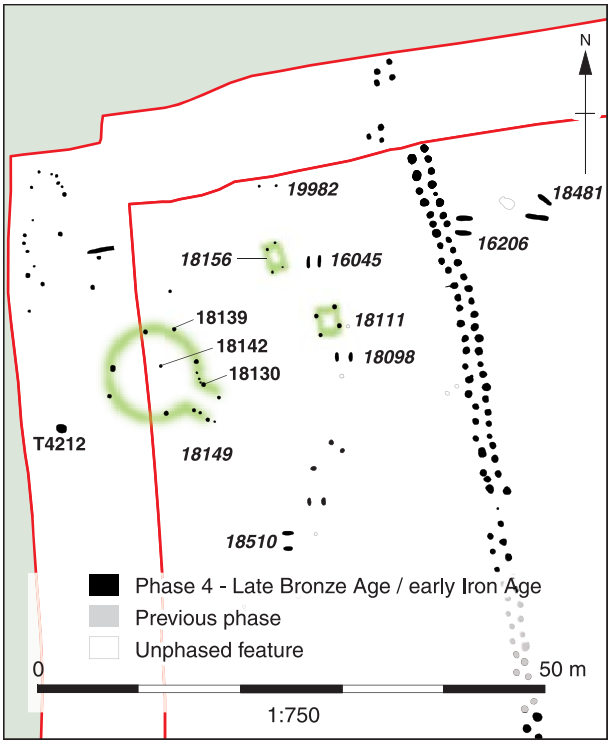
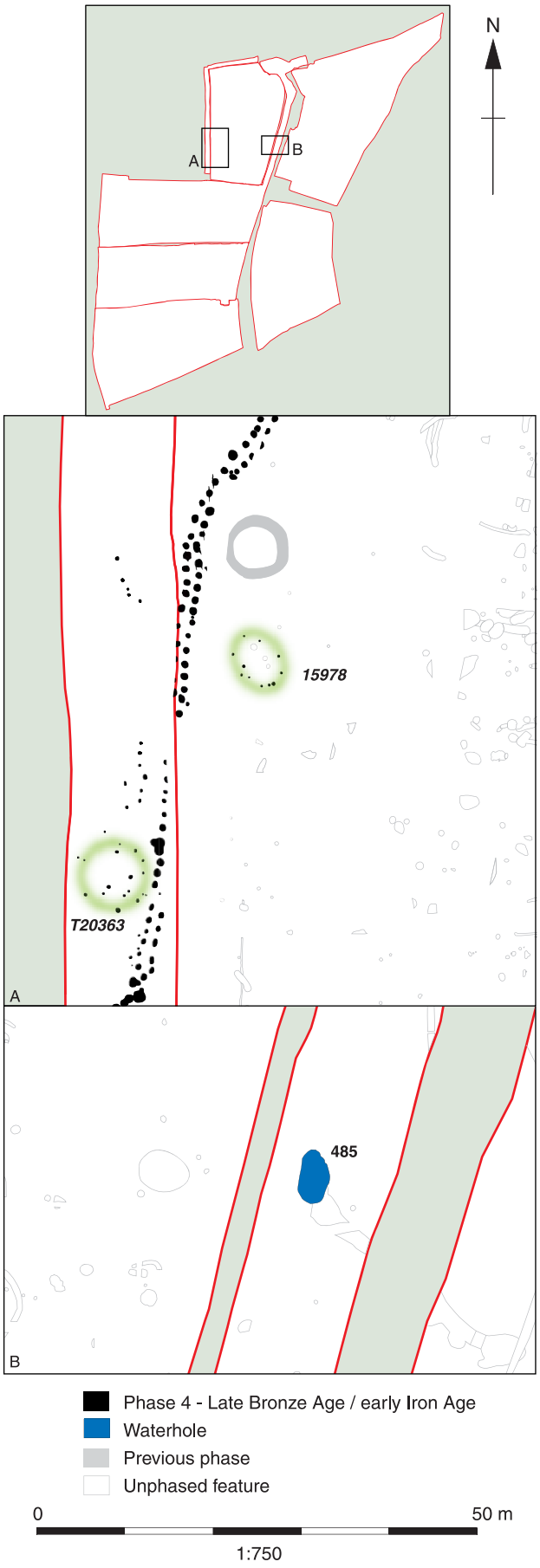


Fig. 2.36 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 1: western zone



(19982) may have been part of a similar structure, although no corresponding postholes were recorded in the TVAS excavations. Slot structures included 16045, 18098 and 18510, the details of which are outlined in Table 2.6. The structures were aligned both north-south and east-west. A further slot structure may have been located north of 18510 but was unexcavated, while two other slot structures (16206 and 18481) lay just to the east of the pit alignment. The slots in 18481 were in an unusual v-shaped arrangement. No finds were recovered from these features.

The TVAS excavation to the west located a group of postholes and a shallow gully north-west of the roundhouse structure, and a single pit further to the south-west (Taylor 2009). The postholes and gully were not arranged in a coherent pattern and their function is unknown. The pit (T 4212) measured 1.11 m in diameter and 0.2 m deep and contained a single fill which produced early Iron Age pottery and a small assemblage of animal bone.

Southern settlement area

Further elements of a settlement were found *c* 100 m to the south-west in the form of two possible roundhouses and *c* 80 m south-east in the form of a substantial but apparently isolated waterhole (Fig. 2.37).

Post-built structures 15978 and T20363

Two possible structures were located on the western edge of the site, both comprising somewhat incoherent arrangements of postholes which nevertheless had circular elements and may have been truncated roundhouses or similar. Group 15978 comprised 15 postholes and possible pits and was located immediately east of the pit alignment. The postholes were similar in dimension and form to those seen elsewhere in this phase (0.2–0.4 m in diameter, 0.14–0.35 m deep, 1–2 fills), but the overall diameter of the structure would have been just *c* 5 m and the only finds recovered comprised an early/middle Bronze Age pottery sherd (possibly suggesting an earlier date) and a chalk spindle whorl. A curving line of postholes was also found on the opposite side of the pit alignment which may have been related to the group.

Possible structure T20363 was excavated by TVAS in the footpath extension to the west of the site, *c* 30 m to the south-west of 15978, and comprised a group of postholes and/or pits (Taylor 2009). A potential circular structure with internal postholes was tentatively identified, measuring *c* 7.7 m in diameter. Overall the postholes measured 0.16–0.6 m in diameter and 0.4–0.34 m deep; none produced any material evidence. A possible fenceline or posthole alignment was located to the north of T20363.

Fig. 2.37 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 1: southern zone

Waterhole 485

An apparent waterhole containing a significant amount of early Iron Age pottery was located *c* 80 m south of the eastern settlement area (Fig. 2.37). The feature would have been completely isolated in Phase 4 and its purpose is unclear. The waterhole was approximately 4 m wide and 1 m deep and contained seven fills, some of which were still waterlogged. It had been heavily truncated by the later Roman trackway.

Settlement Area 2

A small and relatively isolated area of Phase 4 activity was identified based around early Bronze Age ring ditch 4944 (Fig. 2.38). The placement of the settlement indicated that this probable barrow was still visible and significant within the landscape during the later Bronze Age/early Iron Age. The complex comprised two long posthole alignments forming a funnel from the ring ditch, as well as associated shorter fencelines, two roundhouses, a possible four-post structure and a number of pits.

Posthole alignments 5600 and 6067 and associated structures

Alignments 5600 and 6067 formed a funnel-shaped enclosure based upon ring ditch 4944, surviving to lengths of 71 m and 42 m respectively. The two presumed fencelines were 18 m apart on the eastern side of ring ditch 4944 and ran towards each other on an approximate east-west alignment, with Structure 5600 appearing to terminate much further west. Although the difference in length may have been deliberate it may also be the result of differential preservation of the postholes; in addition, the westernmost postholes of 5600 do not appear to have been as regular and may not have been part of the original alignment.

In total 22 postholes remained within each structure, spaced approximately 2 m apart, although these distances decreased at the western end of structure 6067 and appeared to increase at the western end of 5600. The postholes were similar in both structures, measuring 0.15–0.38 m in diameter and 0.04–0.32 m deep. A single sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from a posthole in fenceline 6067.

A smaller fenceline (6107) extended southwards from 6067 for *c* 7 m, with posts spaced at similar intervals, while a further post alignment (*c* 2.25 m long) was placed at right angles to it. The postholes within these alignments were very similar to those in the larger structures and it is likely that the whole complex was contemporary.

Structure 5600 visibly cut the silted up ring ditch 4944 and it seems probable that the fencelines were created around the former monument. This relationship could indicate a ritual purpose to the alignments, although it seems more likely that the complex was used for stock management. It is possible that the two fencelines originally met or ran much closer together, enclosing an area which used the standing barrow as a barrier at its eastern end.

Significant clusters of postholes were excavated within the area bounded by structures 5600 and 6067, although their function is largely unknown. A six-post structure (5110) was identified *c* 1 m west of ring ditch 4944, measuring 6 x 2.6 m, possibly forming an animal pen if the area was related to stock management. A curving line of postholes (7113) was located immediately north-west of this structure indicating a possible interlinking complex. The postholes within these features were similar in dimensions to those in fencelines 5600 and 6067, though extending in diameter up to 0.46 m. A single sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from a posthole within structure 5110.

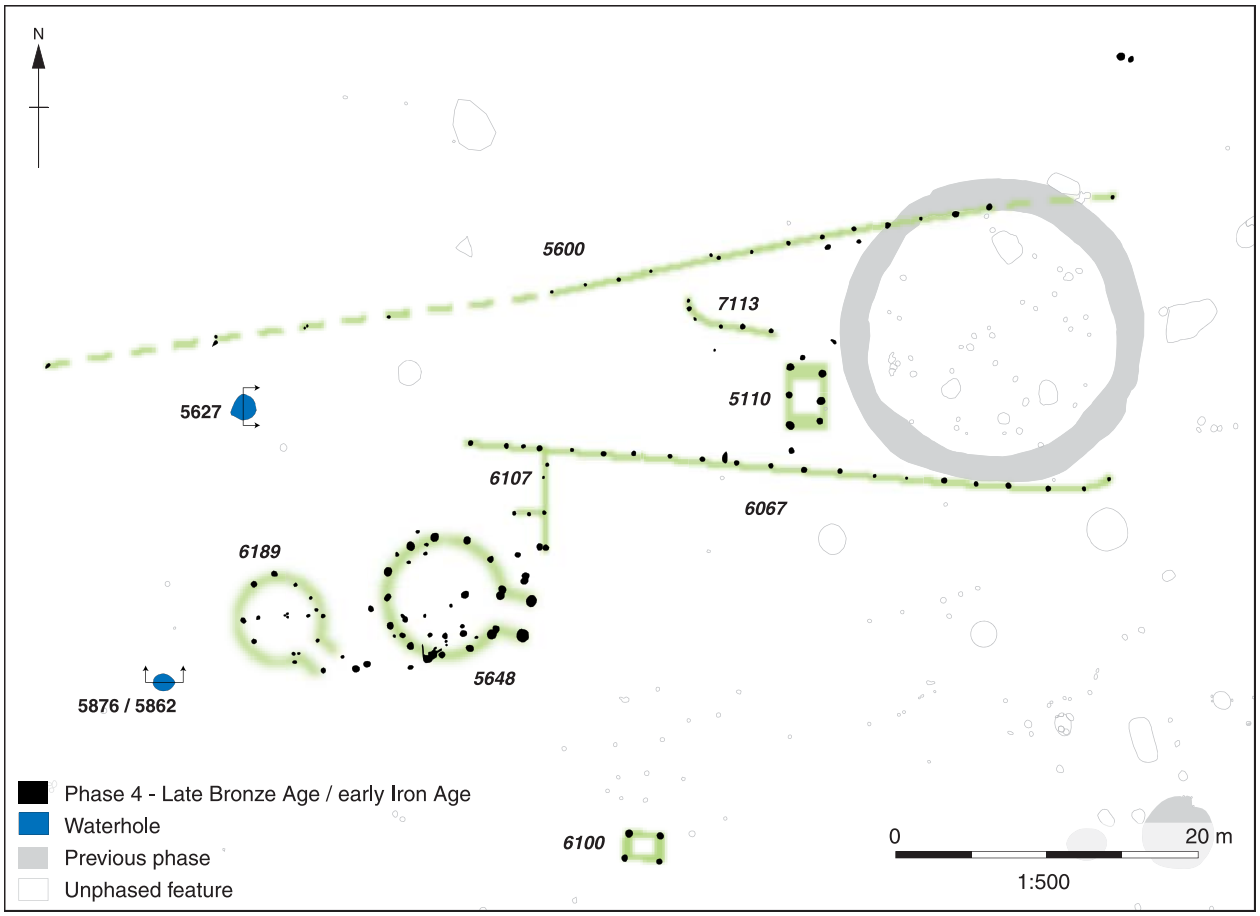
A large pit (5627) was located towards the western end of the long post alignments (Fig. 2.38). The pit, which measured 1.65 m in diameter and 1.46 m deep, was certainly of a depth to have had standing water, yet its steepness suggests it was unlikely to have been a waterhole for animal use, and perhaps functioned as a domestic well. The only find from its four fills were a core on a flake and a sherd of intrusive Roman pottery.

Roundhouses 5648 and 6189

The two roundhouses were located to the south of the funnel shaped enclosure and appeared to form a pair, one of which (6189) was much smaller and may have been an ancillary structure to the main dwelling (5648).

Roundhouse 5648 was somewhat more elaborate than the roundhouses described in Settlement Area 1 (Fig. 2.39). The structure appeared to have had both an outer ring of postholes and an internal posthole group in the southern half of the structure and produced an unusually large amount of dating evidence for a roundhouse of this period. The structure measured *c* 8.3 m in diameter, comprising 16 postholes in the outer circumference and south-east facing porch, with an additional 16 supporting and internal postholes. The individual postholes varied widely in morphology; the interior or supporting postholes measured less than 0.4 m diameter, all the circumference postholes were between 0.4 and 0.64 m diameter and the porch structure postholes were 0.75–0.8 m in diameter. The postholes survived to a maximum of 0.42 m deep with up to three fills.

Prehistoric pottery was found in 15 postholes, the majority late prehistoric, and some identified as early Iron Age (including a rare example of sandy ware bowl from posthole 5505; see Brown, this vol.). Additionally, late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery was recovered from five postholes and worked flint from three. It could be argued that these earlier artefacts were strategically placed around the structure, although this may be coincidence (Fig. 2.39). For example, Phase 2 pottery was



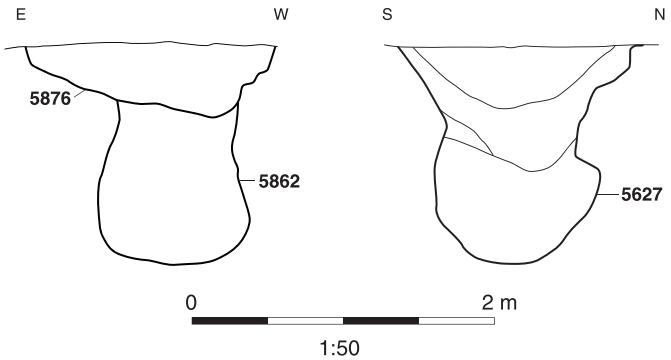


Fig. 2.38 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 2

found in both outer porch postholes and one of the inner porch postholes, as well as in postholes 5567 and 5583, mid-way around the wall circuit. Porch posthole 5505 also contained three flint flakes, and a single example came from posthole 5583. Flint working waste came from postholes 5563 and 5565 and a backed knife from 5607. In addition postholes 5514 and 5516 in the porch structure produced burnt stone. The earlier artefacts may be deliberately placed deposits, strengthening a ritual connection with ring ditch 4944, although the deposits may just reflect the earlier use of the landscape in this area.

Structure 6189 was located 4 m west of 5648 and was significantly smaller, measuring *c* 5 x 6 m (Fig. 2.38). Many of the postholes within this structure were smaller than those in roundhouse 5648; interestingly the postholes in the western side of the structure were generally larger (0.25–0.45 m diameter), with an extra fill, than those in the east (0.1–0.2 m diameter) though this may be a result of truncation. The postholes were also unevenly spaced, giving an overall appearance of an ancillary building rather than a domestic roundhouse. A possible porch structure was located to the south-east, although this was uneven and a large gap in the south of the structure may have formed an entrance. A group of postholes was located centrally within the structure's interior with a further posthole either side, potentially suggesting an east-west division. No finds were recovered from the structure.

Associated structures

At least one four-post structure (6100) was located 15.7 m south-east of roundhouse 5648, in the vicinity of a larger group of undated postholes, which may have formed further structures. The structure measured 2 m x 2.5 m, with postholes of 0.32 to 0.45 m in diameter and 0.12 to 0.22 m deep.

Late prehistoric pottery was recovered from one of two postholes (4067) located 9.5 m north-east of ring ditch 4944. These were similar in morphology to the postholes within the overall complex but their purpose as an isolated pair, *c* 0.2 m apart is unclear.

Pits/wells

An isolated feature was located 6 m south-west of roundhouse 6189, comprising two distinct cuts (Fig. 2.38). The earliest cut (5862) was bell-shaped, *c* 0.8 m wide at the top and excavated to a depth of 1.45 m. It is likely to have functioned as a well for the settlement. It was later recut as a much wider, shallower pit (5876), 1.65 in diameter and 0.45 m deep, the

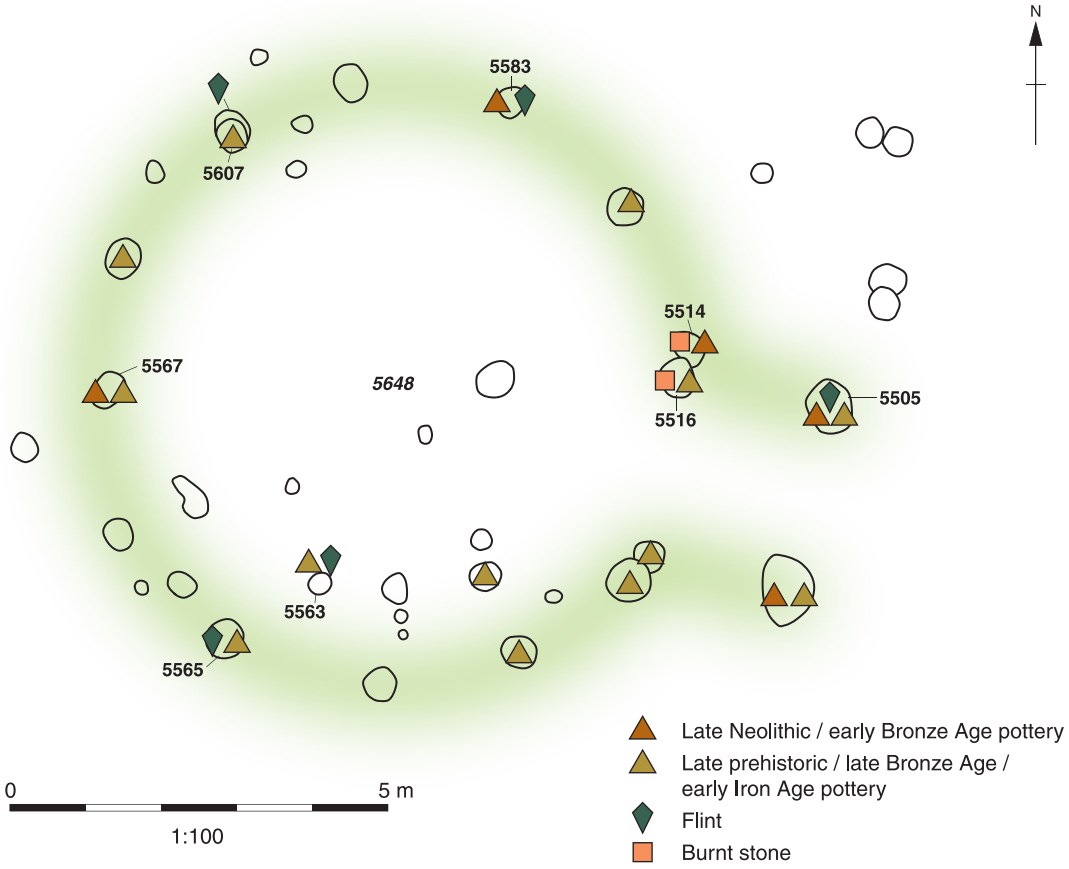


Fig. 2.39 Detail of roundhouse 5648 showing finds distribution

function of which is unclear. No dating evidence was recovered from the pit but its location suggests it may have been contemporary with the settlement area.

Settlement Area 3

A further discrete area of Phase 4 activity was excavated on the eastern edge of the site, 130 m east of Area 2 (Fig. 2.40). The archaeological activity in this area comprised a number of circular post-built structures, most in a linear arrangement, in addition to other posthole groups and a series of large pits and waterholes. The location and linear nature of this activity corresponds to the later Roman trackway which truncates the circular structures. It seems likely that this area was located on a very long-lived boundary, possibly a continuation of a stream course picked up in excavation to the north, as discussed above.

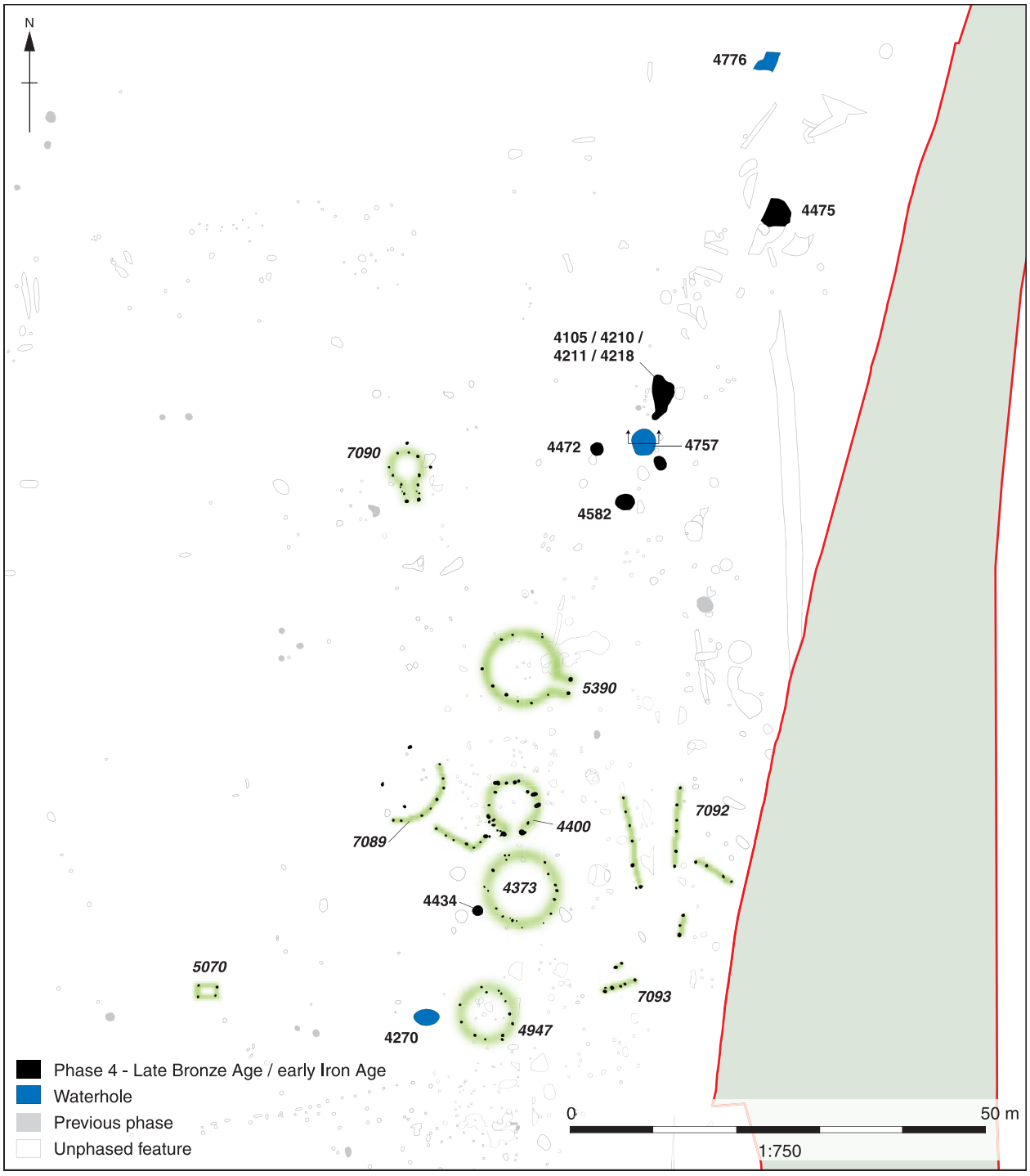


Fig. 2.40 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 3

Roundhouses

The roundhouses and other structures in this settlement were mainly located in the southern part of the area and again appeared to represent a small family unit rather than a large-scale nucleated settlement.

The southernmost structure within this discrete area was 4947, potentially a small roundhouse or ancillary structure, *c* 6 m in diameter. This comprised an outer circle of 11 relatively unevenly spaced postholes with a possible entrance to the south-east and a number of undated internal pits and postholes. Postholes varied from 0.14 to 0.5 m in diameter and were up to 0.2 m deep with single sterile fills. The internal pits were grouped towards the northern part of the roundhouse and were up to 1 m across but relatively shallow. The proximity of this structure to middle Iron Age house gully 4180 suggests it may have belonged to Phase 5, although waterhole 4270—immediately west of structure 4947 and presumably associated with it—contained early Iron Age pottery in addition to burnt unworked flint and animal bone. The waterhole was 3 m in diameter and 1.4 m deep with 11 fills.

Structure 4373, approximately 7 m north of 4947, comprised a circular arrangement of postholes and supporting stakeholes. The group measured *c* 9 m in diameter and the seven excavated postholes were 0.26–0.5 m in diameter and 0.1–0.3 m deep. No finds were recovered from the postholes and no entrance or internal features were found, but the group convincingly formed a circular structure. Its function as a domestic dwelling is reinforced by the presence of pit 4434 to the west of the structure, which produced an assemblage typical of domestic refuse. The pit was 1.44 m in diameter and 0.67 m deep with straight sides and a flat base, and contained four fills including a burnt layer. A small quantity of late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age pottery was recovered from the upper fill and prehistoric and residual late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery from the lower fills. The pit also produced cattle bone and burnt limestone.

Structure 4400 was located within a large group of postholes immediately north of 4373; the circular arrangement was smaller (*c* 6.8 m in diameter) and was truncated to the south-east by Roman trackway ditches, with a possible entrance to the south. The outer circle comprised a minimum of 12 postholes with two centrally placed internal postholes. The postholes were generally much larger than those in contemporary structures with a diameter range of 0.28 to 0.8 m and depths of 0.22 to 0.85 m, although all contained single fills. Very small sherds of prehistoric pottery and burnt stone were recovered from the postholes.

It is possible that this structure was different in function to the surrounding features as indicated by its variation in diameter and posthole morphology. A similar structure (17526) was found in Settlement Area 1 to the north (see above) and these may have had a common purpose. An apparent fenceline extended westwards from structure 4400 to an arc of eight postholes (7089). This was unexcavated but may have formed a semi-circular or D-shaped structure, open to the west, such as a workshop.

A further possible roundhouse (5390) was located *c* 10 m north of 4400. This area was badly truncated by both Roman and later activity and the posthole group was not clearly arranged. However, a circular structure *c* 7.6 m in diameter is likely, comprising a minimum of nine postholes, measuring 0.18 m to 0.42 m in diameter and 0.05 m to 0.14 m deep. The structure also appeared to have two interior postholes placed centrally and a possible porch structure to the south-east, reinforcing its interpretation as a roundhouse.

A small post-built structure (7090) was slightly removed from this complex, *c* 19 m north-west of structure 5390. The structure was slightly unconventional in form, appearing to have a circular element of only 4 m in diameter, adjoining a porch or corridor element to the south, 2 m wide and 2.3 m long. The posthole dimensions varied considerably from 0.28 m to 0.74 m in diameter and 0.1 m to 0.24 m deep and contained single fills which produced no finds. The size and form of this structure suggests that rather than being a small roundhouse it may have functioned as a store or similar. This was very similar to a structure excavated further north in another part of Shorncote Quarry, thought to be an ancillary structure (Hearne and Heaton 1994, 49).

Other post-built structures

A single four-post structure (5070), similar to those excavated in Areas 1 and 2 was located *c* 30 m west of roundhouse 4947. The structure measured 2 by 1.3 m with postholes consistently 0.32–0.33 m in diameter and 0.1–0.12 deep.

In addition, a posthole complex was situated to the east of the roundhouses. Group 7092 clearly formed a funnel shape composed of two rows of 6–7 postholes each 10–11 m long, ranging from 6.7 m apart to the north to 4.7 m apart in the south. Three postholes located further south on a similar alignment may have been an extension of this structure. Another posthole alignment extended from this 7.6 m to the east, possibly continuing beyond the site boundary. Group 7093 to the south comprised a group of 9 postholes also arranged in two rows. The postholes were similar in form and size to those within the nearby circular structures. These alignments bore some resemblance to the funnel shaped enclosure described in Area 2 and are potentially an extended complex of pathways or droveways for managing the movement of livestock.

Pits and waterholes

A series of large pits and waterholes was excavated to the north of the roundhouse complex within Area

3, following the apparent linear boundary but clearly separated from the domestic area. On the basis of spatial and artefactual evidence these are most likely to belong to Phase 4 and specifically relate to Settlement Area 3.

Pit 4582 (2.3 x 1.8 m and 1.24 m deep) contained a flint disc scraper and burnt stone, as well as cattle and sheep/goat bones but no pottery. The largely silted up pit was cut by a posthole, which was subsequently removed and the pit allowed to fully silt up. The upper layers contained residual Neolithic pottery, a flake and flake core, cattle bone and burnt stone. The depth of the feature suggests that it may have originally been dug as a waterhole, though this remains uncertain.

Feature 4757 was a waterhole, 3 m across and 1.5 m deep, containing 19 mixed fills (Fig. 2.41). These were rich with finds including residual late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery as well as late Bronze Age/early Iron Age sherds. The waterhole also contained worked flint including flakes, a scraper and a chip, burnt limestone and cattle bone. Pit 4472, 3.5 m west of this was 1.5 m in diameter and 0.9 m deep with six fills, also producing late prehistoric pottery.

A complex containing a number of pits and recuts was located immediately to the north of these features. This included 4218 (1.42 m diameter, 1.06 m deep), which may also have been a shallow waterhole, although the single homogenous fill was unlike the fill of contemporary waterholes and no finds were recovered. Adjacent to this was pit 4211, 0.98 m in diameter and 0.8 m deep, also with a single sterile fill. These were cut and completely overlain by shallow pit 4210 (2.12 m diameter, 0.58 m deep), which was in turn cut by pit 4105 (4.17 m x 2.38 and 0.15 m deep). The lower fill of pit 4211 and upper fill of pit 4105 both produced significant quantities of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery as well as animal bone and two flint flakes. The function of these wide but shallow features is unknown.

Some 20–40 m north of this group were two further discrete features, both heavily truncated by Roman trackway 17615, thus ensuring their full extent was unclear. Pit 4475 was *c* 3.5 m across and 0.62 m deep and contained a primary and main fill, which produced a sherd of prehistoric pottery, a flint scraper and a large mammal bone. Feature 4776, *c* 15 m north of this was a similar width (*c* 3.4 m), but much deeper, at 1.22 m, and would seem to have functioned as a waterhole. A reasonably large artefactual assemblage was recovered from its seven fills, comprising pottery identified as late prehistoric (including Bronze Age), a flint flake and unworked flint, burnt stone, fired clay and a large deposit of animal bone. The bone comprised mainly cattle but included some sheep/goat and both red and roe deer.

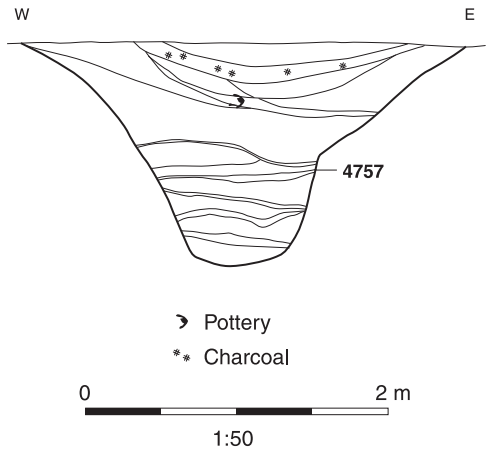


Fig. 2.41 Section through waterhole 4757

Settlement Area 4

The majority of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity was located in the south-west of the site (see Fig. 2.31 above). This comprised a substantial number of roundhouses in addition to smaller post-built structures of differing function, fencelines, waterholes and pits. As seen in Area 3, the roundhouses partly followed a linear arrangement which coincided with the western Roman trackway (5869), suggesting this was also a long standing boundary. In this area activity also spread further to the east and an interesting complex of structures forming an arc existed to the north. As such the settlement has been divided into spatial units accordingly.

Main settlement—domestic area

A total of ten possible roundhouses were excavated within Area 4, nine of which were in the main domestic zone to the south-west (Fig. 2.42). These may have been contemporary units forming a nucleated settlement, larger than those described previously. Alternatively the structures may represent a small settlement with a series of consecutive buildings, constructed and replaced over a long period of time, although no stratigraphy remained to clarify this.

Roundhouse complex 9830, 7209 and 8131

Three roundhouses were situated within a small complex in the far south-west, in addition to a series of interlinking fences, smaller structures and pits (Fig. 2.42). Roundhouse 9830 was the largest of the three circular buildings, measuring 7.9 m diameter, whilst structures 7209 and 8131 were 6.3–6.4 m across. All three buildings were circular with porch structures aligned in an identical manner to the south-east. Structure 7209 was located immediately to the rear of 9830 (Fig. 2.43), while 8131 was on the same alignment and parallel to 7209. Given their locations in relation to structure 9830 and their smaller dimensions it is possible that these were ancillary buildings. This is reinforced by the fact that the entrance to structure 7209 would have faced the rear of roundhouse 9830, allowing no light

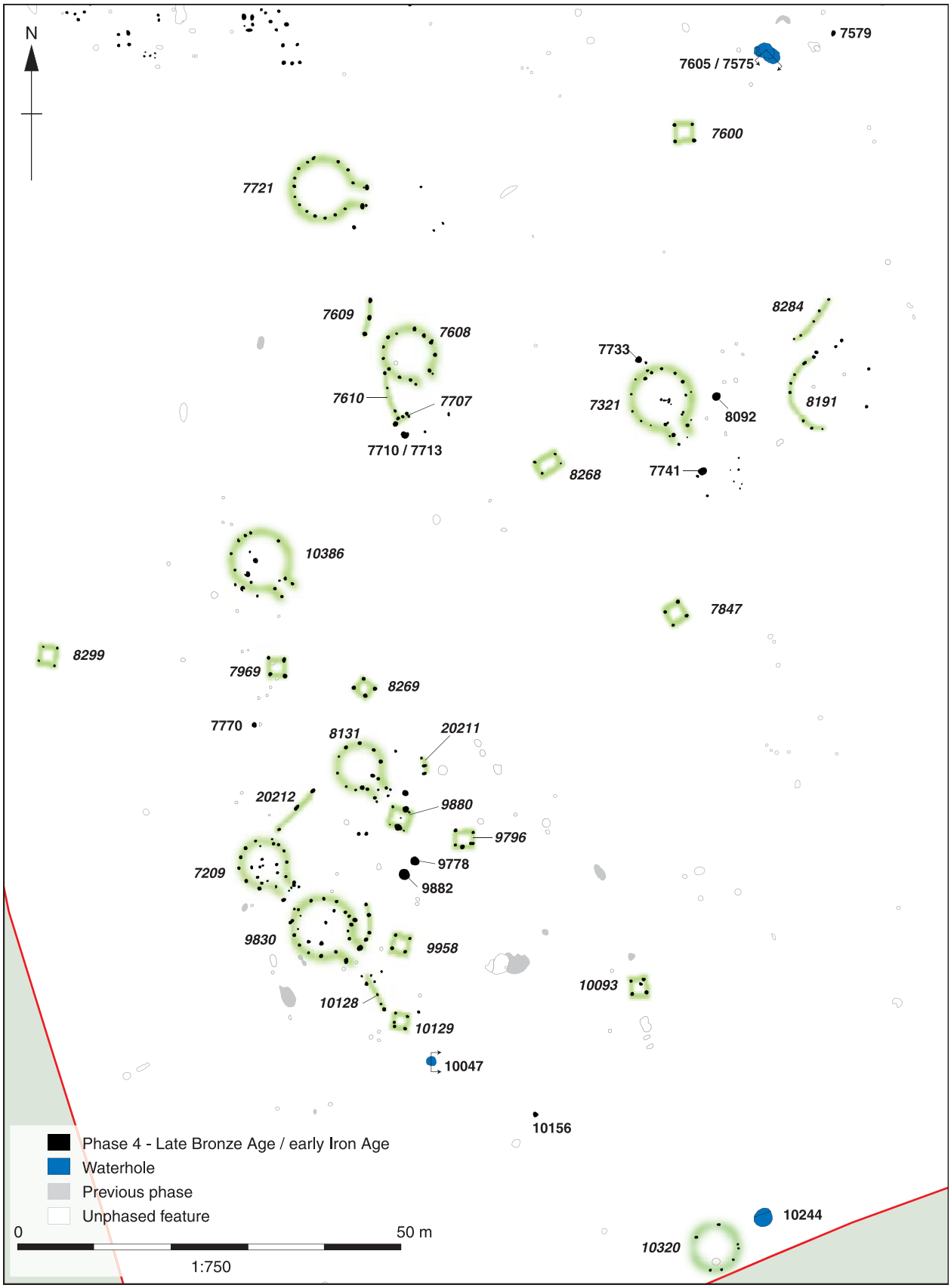


Fig. 2.42 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement area 4: domestic focus

into the building, unless the two were consecutive structures. A possible fenceline consisting of three postholes (20212) ran between structures 7209 and 8131 and a longer fenceline (10128) of up to 6 postholes extended south-east from building 9830 for *c* 9.6 m. This arrangement created a partially enclosed area, open to the south-east. Smaller divisions were represented by a fenceline curving around the eastern side of roundhouse 9830, possibly acting as a windbreak, and a short (2.4 m) alignment (20211) east of 8131.

Roundhouse 9830 comprised up to 29 postholes, including three internally. Those within the outer circle were generally *c* 1.6 m apart but many additional postholes or stakeholes appear to have been inserted within these, possibly indicating repairs or supports. Structures 7209 and 8131 consisted of 27 and 17 postholes respectively and both had extended porches up to 3.6 m long containing additional postholes to the typical four. Structure 7209 had *c* 10 interior postholes suggesting some kind of division or internal structures; these were absent from 8131.

Smaller post-built structures within the complex included groups 9796, 9958, 9880 and 10129, probably all variations of the four-post structures discussed above. These were generally 2–2.7 m square but with varying posthole dimensions, and all appeared to have more than four postholes, possibly representing extra supports. Structure 9880 included a central posthole and two pits, which appear to have been cut later, and its function is unclear. The structural postholes across this complex were all between 0.05–0.3 m deep and most measured between 0.2 and 0.4 m in diameter, although particularly large examples were found in structures 7209, 20211 and 20212.

Artefactual evidence was more plentiful within this complex than in many of the other features belonging to this period. Most of the post-built structures produced pottery dated to the early Iron Age, late Bronze Age/early Iron Age or late prehistoric period. In addition, middle Neolithic and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery came from roundhouse 9830. Worked flint was recovered from all the roundhouses and a number of the features yielded burnt stone. The only animal bone was found in structure 10128 and was identified as cattle. Fired clay came from an internal posthole within structure 9830, possibly indicating the presence of a hearth.

A number of pits were located within the complex area. Pits 9778 and 9882 to the east of roundhouse 9830 measured *c* 1.1 m in diameter but varied in depth (0.15 m and 0.64 m). No dating evidence was recovered but both contained burnt stone, up to 2.5 kg in pit 9778, suggestive of domestic refuse.

Pit 10047 was located to the south of the complex, and probably functioned as a well (Fig. 2.44). The feature was 1.3 m diameter and 1.5 m deep, with very steep sides and contained some deliberate

Fig. 2.43 Photograph of paired roundhouses 9830 and 7209

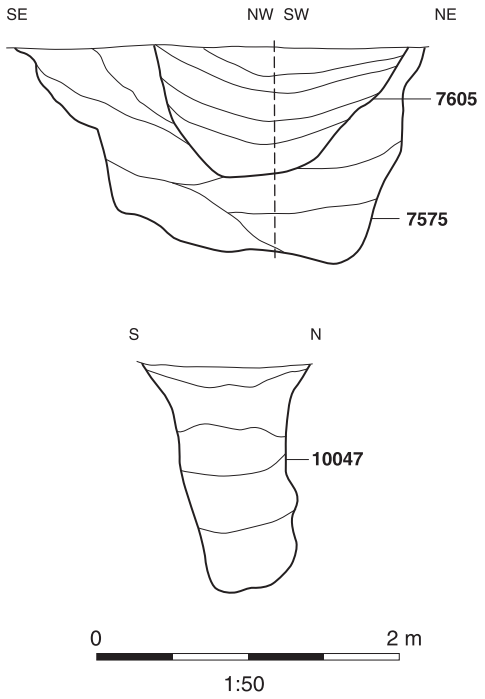


Fig. 2.44 Section through well 10047 and waterholes 7605/7575

dumped deposits. These deposits produced several sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and specifically early Iron Age pottery, in addition to two flint flakes and one fragment of fired clay. Charcoal from an upper fill (9974) of the pit/well was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 757–415 cal BC (OxA-17614; 95.4% prob) placing it firmly in the early Iron Age. The location of this feature in relation to roundhouse 9830 may indicate this was the main water source for the complex, which was later used for dumping refuse.

Isolated roundhouses

The remaining roundhouse structures within this area were mostly to the north of this complex with the exception of possible roundhouse 10320, which was situated on the southern boundary of the site (Fig. 2.42). Extensive truncation by modern ditch 10385 makes identification of this structure tentative, but the group comprised seven surviving postholes, 0.25–0.5 m in diameter and 0.1–0.27 m deep, which seem to be arranged in a circle 6.1 m in diameter. Immediately east of this structure was feature 10244, measuring 3.1 m in diameter and 1.3 m deep with a sloping northern side and containing five silting fills. It is likely that this functioned as a waterhole. Like roundhouse 10320 the feature was cut by modern ditch 10385 and contained only a crumb of prehistoric pottery.

A total of four definite roundhouses and a further circular structure were located north of the main complex (Fig. 2.42). The northernmost roundhouse (7721) was *c* 8 m in diameter and comprised up to 19 postholes including an entrance porch to the south-east. The structure was an exemplary later prehistoric roundhouse, forming an almost perfect circle with postholes evenly spaced at *c* 1 m, although the structure was missing a posthole where it was truncated by a medieval plough furrow to the north. The postholes varied from 0.2–0.4 m in diameter with the exception of the outer postholes in the porch structure which were 0.55 and 0.65 m across; all were 0.08–0.2 m deep. The postholes generally contained a single fill and five had postpipes. One of the porch postholes produced late prehistoric pottery.

Roundhouse 7608 was 17 m south-east of 7721 and was smaller at *c* 7.3 m in diameter, comprising 16 postholes with a possible small porch to the south-east. The postholes were evenly spaced at *c* 1.2–1.3 m, ranging from 0.16 to 0.55 m in diameter and up to 0.4 m deep. A series of postholes to the west of the structure appear to have formed two fencelines (7609 and 7610) running north and south. Fenceline 7610 (*c* 6.5 m long) to the south seems to have turned eastwards, forming an enclosed space adjacent to the roundhouse. Fenceline 7609 ran northwards for 5 m, comprising three postholes, *c* 1.5 m apart. Postholes belonging to both structures ranged from 0.18–0.5 m diameter and up to 0.28 m deep. Middle to late Bronze Age pottery was found in structure 7609. Pits 7707, 7710 and 7713 at the southern end of fenceline 7610, ranged from 0.5 m in diameter to 1 m x 0.55 m in plan; all were relatively shallow. The pits were probably associated with roundhouse 7608 and late prehistoric pottery was found in pit 7707.

Roundhouse 7321 was *c* 27 m to the east. The structure measured 7.9 m in diameter and comprised 24 postholes, some of which appeared to be extra supports for the main structure. The roundhouse also had a porch entrance to the south-east. Internally, three postholes or gullies and a stakehole seem to represent a central support or structure. The postholes were generally 0.3 m in diameter but ranged from 0.1–0.6 m; most were between 0.1 and 0.2 m deep. In total six of the postholes produced late prehistoric pottery, although only one sherd could be identified as early Iron Age.

Pits were located around the roundhouse (7733, 8092, 7741), which were probably associated with the structure, but no artefactual evidence was recovered. A group of postholes to the south-east may have been related but were not coherently arranged.

A further possible structure (8191) was located approximately 13 m to the east of this and may have been the remains of a truncated roundhouse. Overall 14 postholes survived as a semi-circular structure with a few further to the east. If this was originally a roundhouse it would have been over 11 m in diameter suggesting it would have been significantly larger than those discussed above. The postholes were generally 0.2–0.4 m in diameter and 0.04 to 0.46 m deep, indicating differential truncation levels. The only find recovered from the struc-

ture was a flint blade from posthole 8202. A fence-line (8284) was located on the north-western side of the group extending SW-NE for 7.2 m.

The remaining roundhouse (10386) was located just north of the main complex and appears to have been badly truncated by ploughing to the east and by Roman trackway 5869 to the west. The remaining structure was *c* 8.4 m in diameter and comprised 13 unevenly spaced postholes with four internal pits or postholes and a porch to the south-east. The postholes were 0.2 to 0.46 m in diameter and 0.08 to 0.35 m deep. A number of scattered postholes on the exterior of the building may also have been related to it. In total four of the postholes belonging to structure 10386 produced pottery dated early Iron Age or late prehistoric.

Four-post structures

In addition to the four-post structures within the complex discussed above, a further seven possible structures were located in the main settlement area (Table 2.7). The majority of the structures were consistent in size, falling between 2 and 3 m square with postholes of around 0.3 m diameter; depth varied according to truncation by ploughing. As outlined above, it is generally accepted that these four-post structures represented grain storage platforms, or similar, however it is possible that they had different functions represented by differing dimensions or forms. It is also possible that the groups discussed here were not always conventional four-post structures but surviving postholes in a larger truncated landscape of numerous posthole structures.

Fig. 2.45 Photograph of four post structure 8269

Of particular note were structures 7969 and 8269, north of the roundhouse complex, which consisted of remarkably large postholes (Fig. 2.45). A number also had extra postholes, possibly indicating the need for further support. Early Iron Age pottery was found in structure 7969 but no other finds were recovered from these features.

As noted above, a number of the four-post structures were located in the area of the roundhouse complex, while those structures which were beyond the bounds of this complex also appeared to cluster around it. In particular a line of four four-post structures were situated in an east-west alignment immediately to the north and a single structure was located to the south-east of the complex. Overall, this reinforces the idea that this was the focal point of the settlement. The integration of the four-post structures in the area of the roundhouses suggests that these were not separated from the domestic activity.

Pits and waterholes

The majority of pits and waterholes within this area of settlement were closely associated with individual or groups of roundhouses and are described above. However, a small group of features were more isolated. Most notable were large intercutting pits 7605 and 7575, located to the north of the main area, and which would appear on the basis of size and depth to have been waterholes (Fig. 2.44).

Feature 7575 was 2 m x 1.6 m in plan and up to 1.5 m deep with seven clay silt fills. This was cut by 7605 which measured 3.2 m long, 1.6 m wide and 1 m deep, containing five silting fills. Both features contained significant amounts of early Iron Age pottery, almost 2 kg from 7605 and a further 827 g

Table 2.7: Detail of four-post structures Phase 4, Area 4—domestic area

Structure No	*Dimensions (m)*	*Posthole diameter (m)*	*Posthole depth (m)*	*No of fills per posthole*
7600	2.8 x 2.6	0.36–0.44	0.08–0.16	1
7847	2.6 x 2.4	0.3	0.1–0.14	1
7969	2.65 x 2.5	0.45–0.52	0.25–0.32	1
8268	3.2 x 2.1	0.1–0.36	0.06–0.12	1
8269	2.25 x 2.25	0.42–0.46	0.13–0.27	1
8299	2.1 x 2	0.36–0.5	0.14–0.19	1–2
9796	2.75 x 2.35/1.85	0.26–0.51	0.26–0.4	1
9880	2.6 x 2.6	0.3–0.4	0.18–0.24	1–3
9958	2.3 x 2.25	0.35–0.6	0.2-0.28	1
10093	2.1 x 2.1	0.16–0.4	0.16–0.38	2–3
10129	2.15 x 2	0.33–0.4	0.17–0.2	1–2

from 7575. The only other finds recovered were a small flake-dominated assemblage of worked flint and a number of large mammal long bones indicative of domestic dumping. Two postholes (7606 and 7607) had been cut through the base of 7605 at the western end (not shown on section), presumably the remains of a superstructure used to retrieve water.

Other isolated features of note included small pit or posthole 7770 just south of four-post structure 7969 (Fig. 2.42) which produced late prehistoric pottery. Pit 10156, south-east of well 10047, also produced a small assemblage of early Iron Age pottery as well as fired clay identified as probably belonging to an oven structure.

Northern zone—working area?

In contrast to the main domestic area, the arc of features to the north did not contain any unequivocal roundhouses (Fig. 2.46). Instead the complex comprised a series of four-post structures, fencelines and less recognisable post-built structures. These appear to have been constructed around an open area, separated from the rest of the settlement, probably denoting separation of industrial/agricultural from domestic activity. Significantly, the area was located beneath a headland, preserving the archaeology, therefore this arrangement is not the result of truncation through plough activity.

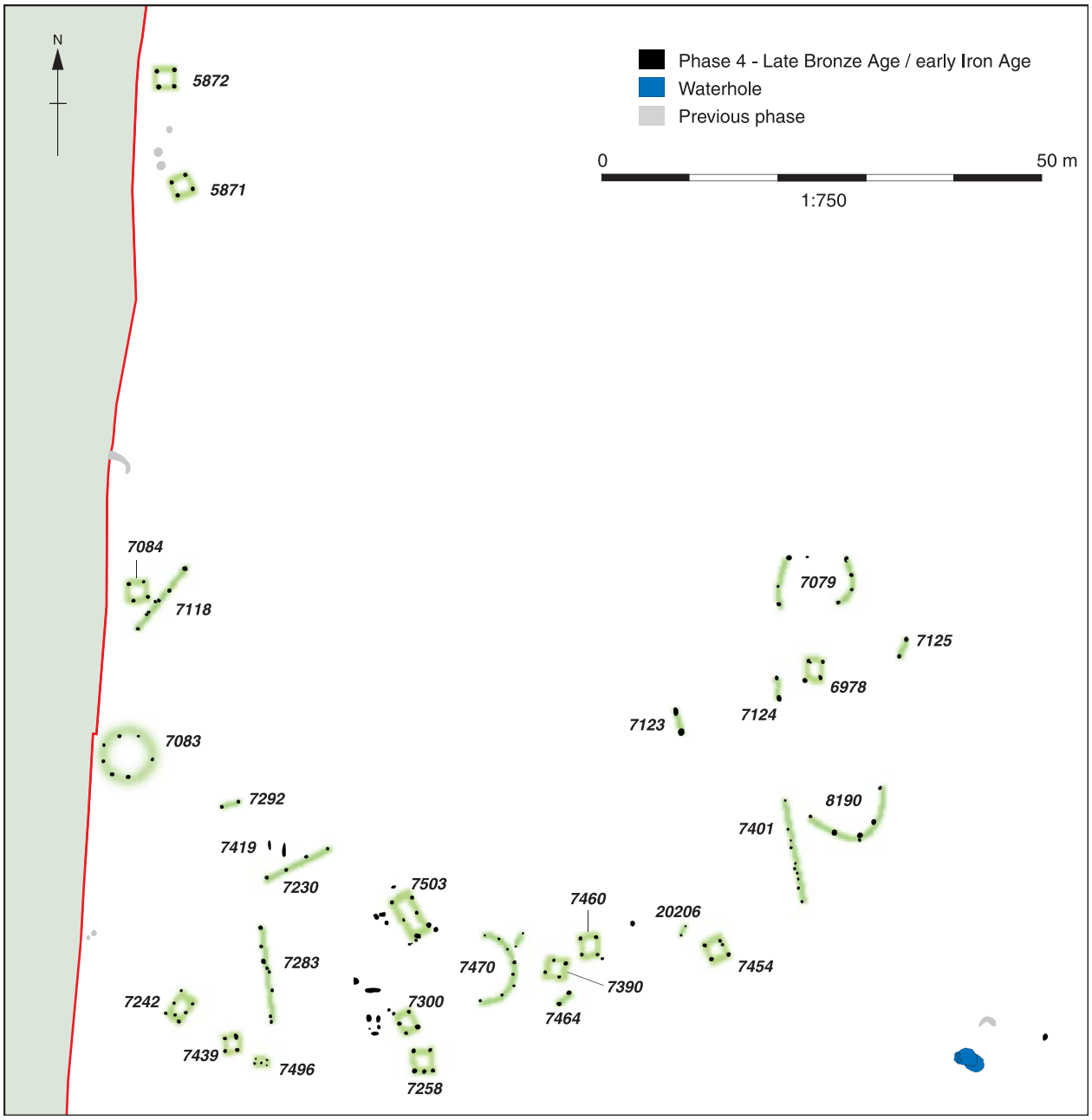


Fig. 2.46 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 4: northern zone

Semi-circular and sub-circular structures

A total of four sub-circular or semi-circular/D-shaped structures were spaced 20–40 m apart within the arc. As outlined above truncation in this area was minimal therefore these are not likely to have been the remains of ill preserved roundhouses. Each structure was unique in composition, varying from crescents to near circular features. It is proposed that these represented the remains of working structures, usually open to one side, or potentially stock management enclosures.

Structure 7083 was located on the western edge of the site and formed the most complete circle, *c* 6.8 m in diameter. The group comprised a maximum of nine postholes, evenly spaced at 1.8–2 m on the western side, and either open to the east or with large gaps. Group 7079 on the eastern side of the arc was also sub-circular, *c* 8.8 m across. The group comprised nine postholes in groups or alignments to the east and west, resembling a small enclosure fenced on both sides. Structures 8190 and 7470 were semi-circular, comprising seven and eight postholes respectively. Structure 8190 measured 8.75 m across and was open to the north, while structure 7470 was 7.74 m across, open to the west. A number of features surrounded these structures although the only close association appeared to be the presence of 12 m long fenceline 7401 immediately west of structure 8190, apparently separating it from the activity to the west.

The postholes within these structures varied significantly, the majority falling between 0.2 m and 0.3 m in diameter and 0.1 m to 0.2 m deep. However, the postholes within 7470 were notably smaller and those in structure 8190 were larger overall (0.28–0.5 m diameter). In the majority of cases the postholes contained a single fill, only one of which (within structure 8190) produced a sherd of early Iron Age pottery.

Four-post structures

A total of seven possible four-post structures were located within the arc of this northern zone, with two additional structures to the north-west. The structures were similar in dimensions, with the exception of 7439, which was smaller (Table 2.8). Most structures produced no finds, except 7439 and 7258, which produced worked flint flakes and a sherd of early Iron Age pottery respectively. Occasionally the structures had a fifth posthole, presumably for extra support.

Other post-built structures

Several of the post-built structures within this complex were without parallel elsewhere on the site and were at times incoherent in terms of layout. All these structures were grouped together in the centre of the arc. Structure 7503 appears to have been the largest of these, comprising 16 postholes within an area *c* 7 m x 4 m. No obvious pattern existed but it is possible that the group represented a six-post rectangular structure with extra supports at the corners and an ancillary feature to the north-west. The postholes within the group varied from 0.1–0.5 m diameter and 0.05–0.34 m deep suggesting the posts performed different functions. Two of the postholes produced early Iron Age pottery.

Group 7300 to the south was probably a rectangular structure, *c* 3.7 m x 2 m, which consisted of six postholes; a tree-throw hole to the north-east may have obscured a seventh posthole. Although the depths of the postholes varied, the diameters were consistent with a single structure (0.25–0.3 m). Group 7496 was located *c* 15 m west of this and comprised five postholes in a rectangular arrangement, 1.5 m x 0.8 m. The postholes were similar to those in the surrounding structures but were arranged closer together than most of the other groups. Group 7242, located north-west of this group, was also rectangular, measuring up to 3.5 m x 2.2 m and comprised two rows of three postholes and one posthole between the rows at the southern end. No dateable material was recovered from any of the structures.

Fencelines

A series of fencelines were located within the complex (Table 2.9), presumably delineating different areas. These appeared to predominantly surround the area of post-built structures within the centre of the arc. Feature 7401, described above,

Table 2.8 Detail of four-post structures in Phase 4, Area 4—northern zone

Structure No	*Dimensions (m)*	*Posthole diameter (m)*	*Posthole depth (m)*	*No of fills per posthole*
5871	2 x 2	0.37–0.38	0.31–0.33	2
5872	2.3 x 2.3	0.38–0.4	0.18–0.25	1
6978	2.7 x 2.3	0.18–0.44	0.24–0.34	1-2
7084	2.4 x 2.15	0.32–0.46	0.12–0.17	1
7258	2.85 x 2.3	0.35–0.5	0.2–0.36	2
7390	2.15 x 2.1	0.2–0.35	0.12–0.13	1
7439	1.8 x 1.7	0.25–0.3	0.14–0.23	1-2
7460	2.2 x 2.2	0.29–0.41	0.13–0.28	1
7454	2.5 x 2.3	0.15–0.28	0.08–0.17	1

Table 2.9: Detail of fencelines in Phase 4, Area 4—northern zone

Structure No	*No of postholes*	*Length (m)*	*Posthole diameter (m)*	*Posthole depth (m)*	*No of fills per posthole*
7118	8	13.5	0.2–0.64	0.05–0.18	1–2
7230	4	8	0.3–0.35	0.08–0.18	1–2
7283	10	11.2	0.2–0.5	0.06–0.24	1
7401	10	12	0.25–0.3	0.1–0.15	1

Table 2.10: Detail of two-post features in Phase 4, Area 4—northern zone

Structure No	*Length (m)*	*Posthole diameter (m)*	*Posthole depth (m)*	*No of fills per posthole*
7123	3.3	0.5–0.9	0.2	2
7124	2.9	0.2–0.54	0.3–0.46	1–4
7125	2.6	0.28–0.4	0.16–0.18	1–2
7292	2.4	0.46–0.48	0.33–0.34	2
7464	2.2	0.29–0.3	0.18–0.22	1
20206	2.1	0.2–0.28	0.07–0.08	1

bordered the area to the east; to the west fencelines 7230 and 7283 may have formed a composite barrier, although the alignment of the postholes in structure 7283 was erratic. Structure 7118 was on the western edge of the site, adjacent to four-post structure 7084 and apparently separating it from the bulk of the complex. Many of these posthole alignments were unevenly spaced but where even spacing was clear, this averaged at around 2 m.

An additional series of paired postholes were scattered throughout the complex (Table 2.10). These may be the remains of further post-built structures or features in their own right. These were generally spaced at between 2 and 3 m, possibly providing protection as small windbreaks or similar structures. The variation in the postholes within some pairs such as 7123 and 7124 suggests they were not structures. Overall, the artefactual evidence from posthole alignments comprised two flint flakes from structure 7118 and late prehistoric pottery from group 7292.

Slot structure

A two slot feature (7419) was recorded adjacent to fenceline 7230; the slots measured 1 m and 1.37 m, 0.43 and 0.23 m wide and 0.1–0.13 m deep. The lack of consistency between slots may indicate this was not a structure.

Eastern Zone

The area to the east of the main settlement contained a number of post-built structures of varying form, in addition to a series of large pits or waterholes (Fig. 2.47). Like the northern area this did not appear to be concentrated domestic activity and the zone may have been a further industrial/agricultural or stock management area.

Post-built structures

Of the post-built structures located in the eastern area, structure 9343 bore most resemblance to the roundhouse structures to the west. The group comprised up to 19 postholes, most of which formed a circular arrangement, 6.4 m in diameter, with a possible porch structure to the south-east and a number of internal postholes. The group was truncated through the centre by a medieval plough furrow, making its identification difficult. Three internal postholes to the east appear to be aligned, possibly forming an internal division. The postholes measured from 0.17 m to 0.5/0.6 m in diameter and up to 0.38 m deep, similar to other roundhouses of this period. Three of the postholes produced late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, with a particular concentration (467 g) in one of the internal postholes. A small group of postholes to the north-east of the structure may have been related to it.

Group 9975 was 60 m to the south-east and comprised seven postholes arranged in a semi-circle, open to the south-west, with a number of ancillary postholes in the vicinity. The distance across the gap was 7.15 m. The postholes were generally irregular or oval, measuring up to 0.7 m, suggesting this structure was different to others of this period. The group was heavily truncated by medieval and more recent ploughing therefore its original extent is unknown. No finds were recovered from the postholes. A large pit or waterhole (9157) was located *c* 5.5 m east of the structure and was 2.6 x 1.75 m in plan and *c* 1.5 m deep, containing six fills. The pit contained later prehistoric pottery as well as a sherd of residual middle Neolithic pottery.

Group 10392 was 60 m north-west of roundhouse 9343 and comprised up to 10 postholes, possibly

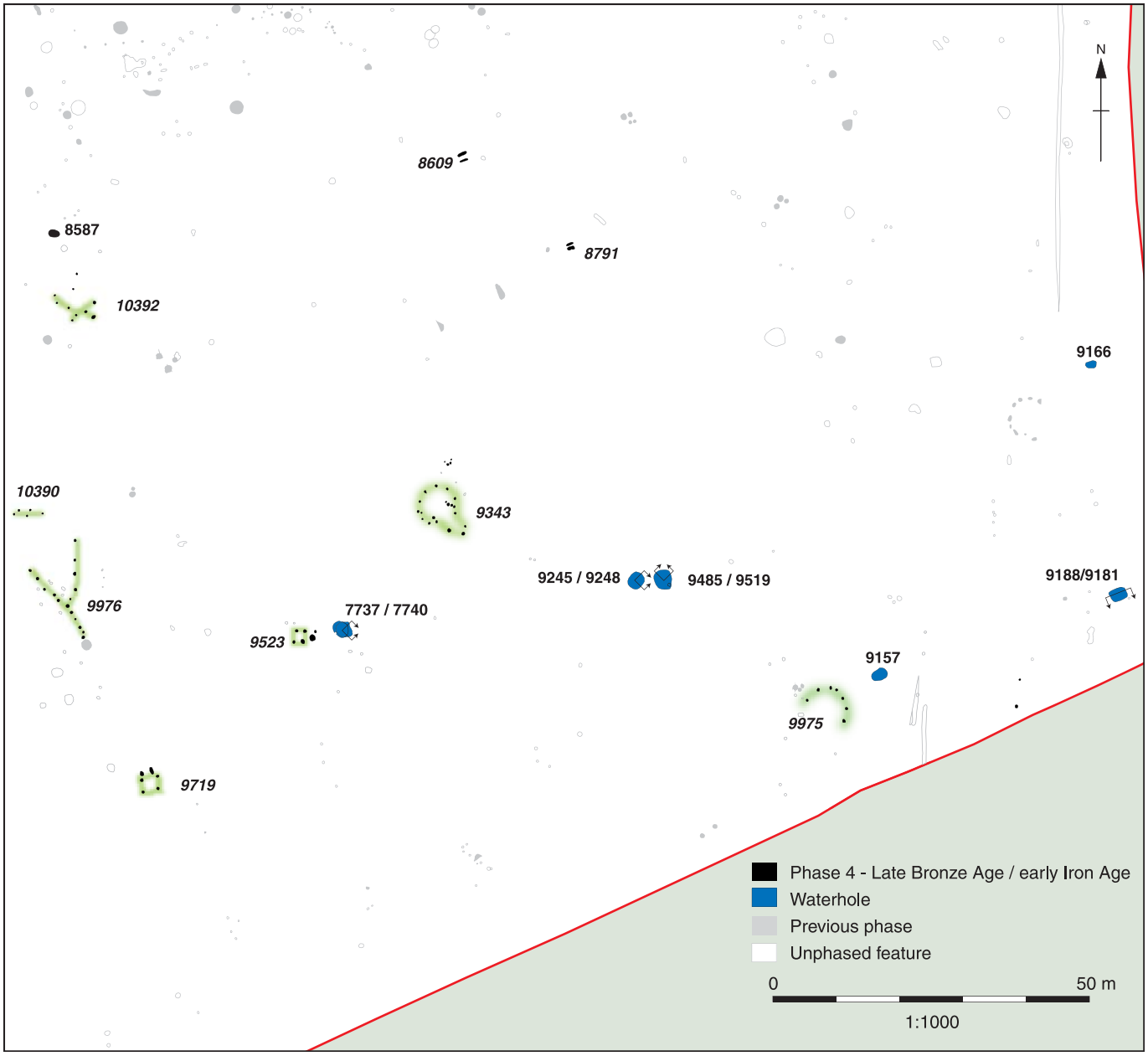


Fig. 2.47 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 4: eastern zone

arranged in a semi-circle with additional postholes to the south and north. The semi-circle was 6.6 m across, with postholes ranging from 0.21 to 0.54 m in diameter, all less than 0.3 m deep. One posthole produced a very small amount of prehistoric pottery and another some burnt stone.

More unusual collections of postholes included groups 9976 and 10390. Group 9976 comprised 23 postholes arranged in a Y-shape, extending for approximately 14 m NW-SE with an arm aligned north-south for a distance of *c* 10 m. The formation may be indicative of driving and enclosing animals. The postholes ranged from 0.15 to 0.56 m in diameter and up to 0.4 m deep. The southern end of the alignment is immediately north of Beaker Grave 9551 although it is unclear if this is deliberate (suggesting the grave was still a feature in the landscape) or coincidental. Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery was recovered from four of the postholes and a single flint flake from another.

Group 10390 was located just north of the mouth of the Y in 9976, the five postholes included in this group do not form a coherent pattern but their location suggests the group may be related to 9976. The features were all approximately 0.2 m in diameter and up to 0.35 m deep.

Four-post structures

Two possible four-post structures were located to the south and east of formation 9976. The assignment of 9523 as a four-post structure is tentative as the group is slightly irregular at 1.8 m x 2.2 m with

a further pit and posthole to the east, although the postholes were generally consistent in size (0.5–0.52 m diameter and 0.14–0.26 m deep). Group 9719 was 3 m x 2.3 m with two slots to the north. The postholes were 0.35 to 0.6 m in diameter but all around 0.3 m deep. Both structures produced later prehistoric pottery; in addition burnt stone was recovered from 9523 and fired clay from 9719.

Slot structures

Two possible slot structures (8791 and 8609) were excavated to the north of this area, measuring 1–1.6 m long and 0.35–0.6 m wide. Structure 8609 was typical of the two-slot structures described above. However 8791 is tentatively identified; slot 8775 (discussed in Phase 2) resembled two pits dug together and produced Beaker pottery whilst its partner had postholes at either end.

Waterholes

A series of discrete features were excavated within this eastern area including two separate groups of large intercutting waterholes. Features 7737 and 7740 were located immediately east of four-post structure 9523 (Fig. 2.48). The earliest cut, 7740, measuring 3.2 x 2 m across, was mostly truncated by later recut 7737, which measured only 1.6 m in diameter but was much deeper, at 1.95 m, and contained seven naturally silted fills. The recut produced late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery from two fills in addition to a large quantity (15.1 kg) of burnt stone, much of it from fill 7736.

A further pair of waterholes, 1.5 m apart were located *c* 45 m east of 7737 and 7740. Waterhole 9485 measured 3.16 x 2.66 m and 1.84 deep with an irregular profile (Fig. 2.48). The feature contained 11 silting fills and pottery from context 9506 was identified as early to middle Iron Age. The partially silted up waterhole was recut (9519) to 1.7 m x 0.78 m in plan and only 0.48 m deep, containing five silting fills which also produced prehistoric pottery. This recut is unlikely to have functioned as a waterhole. Waterhole 9248 lay just to the west and was 2.1 m in diameter and 1.5 m deep (Fig. 2.48). It was recut (9245) to 2.5 x 2.2 m in plan and 1.25 m deep, containing eight silting fills. Pottery from the latter was dated late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. An unusual amount of burnt stone had been dumped within the waterholes; over 45 kg from cuts 9485 and 9519 with 23 kg from context 9511 alone; waterhole 9245 contained 9 kg overall. Few other finds were recovered, these including a few probably residual flint artefacts and two large mammal long bones.

An additional two waterholes were located on the eastern edge of the site. Feature 9188 in the far south-eastern corner of the site was irregularly shaped, 2 m x 1.5 m in plan and up to 1.3 m deep (Fig. 2.48). It was filled by nine episodes of silting, and almost certainly functioned as waterhole. The feature was re-cut by 9181, a sub-rectilinear cut measuring 2.3 m x 2 m but only 0.6 m deep. This

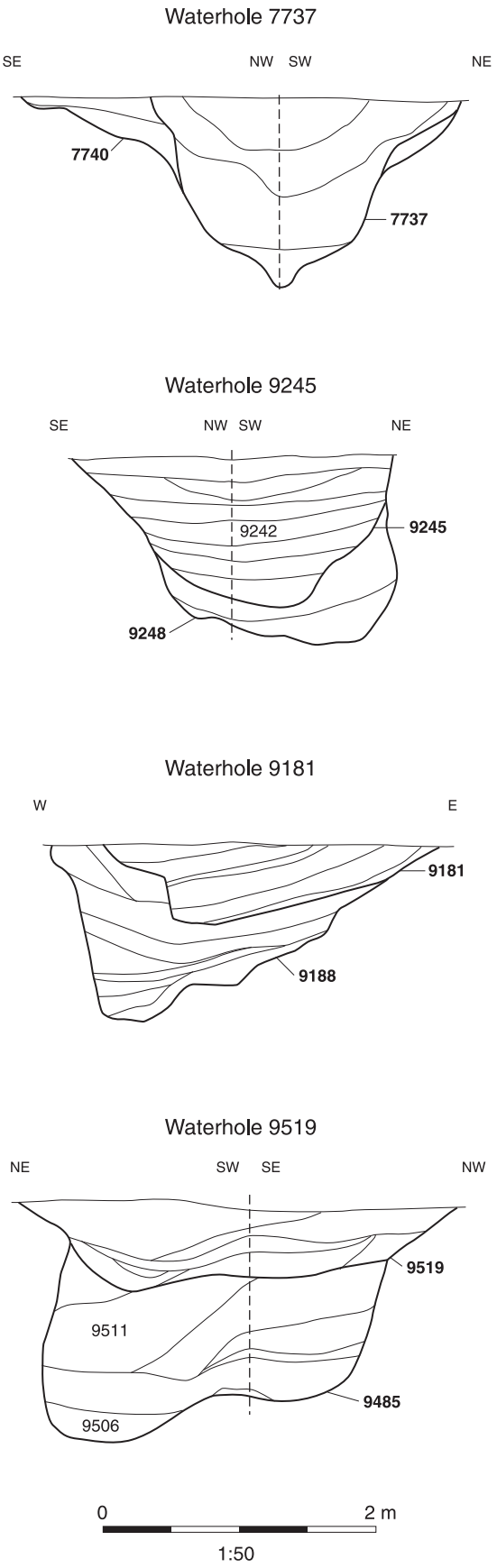


Fig. 2.48 Sections through waterholes 7737, 9485, 9248 and 9188

was filled by a further six silting episodes. Both cuts contained late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, a small amount of burnt stone and varying amounts of cattle bone. Waterhole 9166 was 35 m north of this and measured 2.6 m in diameter and 1.2 m deep with eight slumping and silting fills. These produced early to middle Iron Age pottery as well as a small amount of burnt stone and indeterminate bone.

The overall concentration of waterholes in this zone, together with the unusual post-built structures, may indicate that the area was used for agricultural activity, discrete from the main settlement.

Cattle Burial 8587

A single cattle burial (8587) was found close to posthole group 10392 (Fig. 2.47). Its proximity to this and to the apparent middle Bronze Age activity to the north make this feature difficult to phase, although such deposits are more common in the early Iron Age. The skeleton represented the remains of a young adult placed in an oval pit measuring 1.8 x 1.2 m, surviving to 0.26 m deep.

Discussion of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age landscape

The overall societal and physical changes discussed in Phase 3 became more established in late Bronze Age Britain and were accompanied by a series of overarching developments. These included increased agricultural production and diversification of settlements. This more intensive society supported a complex prestige goods economy based on control and exchange of metalwork. Towards the latter part of this period, over-exploitation of copper ores led to experimentation with iron and the advent of the 'Iron Age'.

The Upper Thames Valley appears to have been largely unaffected by these events and in the upper reaches it is difficult to distinguish the late Bronze Age from the early Iron Age, hence the phasing of this period. Here, highly dispersed settlements representing non-intensive pastoralism with small scale cereal cultivation continued largely unchanged through the early Iron Age and beyond (Lambrick 2009, 47). Evidence of iron working dating to the 10th century BC has been found at Hartshill Copse, in the Kennet Valley, but there is no evidence for the roasting and smelting stages of iron manufacture in the Upper Thames Valley before the middle Iron Age (ibid., 218).

The valley floor settlements of this period were largely unenclosed although defended communal places began to appear towards the end of the phase. Hillforts such as Castle Hill and Uffington were clearly defensive although they do not appear to have been used as permanent settlements and are increasingly interpreted as places for communal gathering, fulfilling economic, religious and political roles (Lambrick 2009, 358).

Environment

Despite intensive environmental sampling no charred plant remains, charcoal or mollusca were recovered from Phase 4 features. However land snail data from excavations in other parts of Shorncote Quarry suggested that the late Bronze Age landscape was one of open, dense grassland, not intensively grazed and with no sign of woodland (Allen 1999). Overall, this fits in with the known picture for the Upper Thames Valley at this time, in which most woodland had been extensively cleared and the human impact on the landscape was becoming increasingly apparent.

Lifestyle and subsistence

Taking into account the earlier excavations to the north (Hearne and Heaton 1994; Hearne and Adam 1999; Brossler *et al.* 2002) the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement at Cotswold Community/Shorncote is the most extensive dispersed settlement so far excavated in the Thames Valley, extending over 45 hectares without having defined its limits. The settlement activity falls into a number of specific clusters as described above and noted in the earlier Shorncote excavations, presumably representing shifting settlement of a number of groups. This activity appears to be entirely unenclosed with no sign of field systems, although part of the settled area is clearly delineated by the pit alignment indicating organised land rights (see Fig. 2.49).

Pit alignments have recently been discussed by Lambrick (2009, 61) who argues that such features were symbolic rather than physical barriers. Although there is deliberate intent to create subsoil boundaries, pit alignments would not have prevented people or stock crossing, even if the spoil was used to construct small banks either side. He argues that they were likely to have demarcated areas of political or social and economic control in an overt manner (ibid., 63), perhaps in this instance applying to grazing rights, and similar alignments have been excavated at Butlers Field (Boyle *et al.* 1998, 28) and Little London, Lechlade (Stansbie *et al.* forthcoming).

Relationships between areas of settlement and the pit alignment may be demonstrated in the north of the current area where different parts of the wider Settlement Area 1 were located on opposing sides of the boundary. However, settlement extended to the north and south of the pit alignment and this was clearly unaffected by the barrier. It is possible that this relates to chronology, the pit alignment representing an earlier or later boundary, but the paucity of good dating evidence makes this uncertain. It should be noted that above ground structures such as hedges may have further divided up the landscape, but no archaeological evidence exists for the presence of such features.

One notable pattern seen in the current excavation area, as well as in the area excavated by Wessex

Fig. 2.49 Artist's reconstruction of late Bronze Age / early Iron Age pit alignment

Archaeology to the north (Hearne and Adam 1999), was that settlement clusters often tended to coincide with the line of the later eastern Roman trackway (see Areas 1 and 3). Excavation revealed that this was the site of a relict stream course, which would explain its function as a long lived boundary. This would be particularly significant in this period as research suggests that following the middle Bronze Age the climate in the Thames Valley became much wetter and the water table rose considerably, reflooding old palaeochannels (eg at Yarnton; Hey *et al.* forthcoming). It is a recognised feature of this period that settlements were often located next to boundaries such as gravel terrace edges (Lambrick 2009, 67) and in this case probably an active stream. Settlement Area 2 was also located on the site of an earlier funerary monument, possibly deliberately located in this area out of respect for an ancient burial ground (ibid., 314).

Overall patterns within the settlement are difficult to discern, although each area contains a set of recognised and repeated features including roundhouses and ancillary structures, four-post structures, fencelines, waterholes and pits. The roundhouses did not differ significantly from those of the middle Bronze Age, most represented by simple post rings with a south or south-east facing porch or entrance (see Fig. 2.50). The majority fell into the 7–10 m diameter range although a series of smaller structures may be interpreted as ancillary structures, particularly in the 1995–1996 excavations to the north (Hearne and Adam 1999). These excavations also revealed three possible round-house gullies (ibid.; Brossler *et al.* 2002), more typical of the middle Iron Age in this area (see below).

A recurring feature on the site was the presence of semi-circular or D-shaped structures. In some cases these may have been the truncated remains of roundhouses, although this type of structure has been found elsewhere in the Thames Valley such as Yarnton (Hey *et al.* forthcoming). Lambrick (2009, 153) has recently pointed out that while these make sense as workshops they are rarely associated with craft related objects. It is possible in a landscape such as this that they represent structures associated with animal husbandry.

Four-post structures are a common feature of this period in the Thames Valley and beyond. These are usually square, although some are more rectangular (cf 18156). As outlined above these are generally interpreted as raised granaries, keeping grain dry and removed from rodents. A recently excavated site at Horcott Quarry (OA 2009) contained over one hundred late Bronze Age/early Iron Age four-posters in rows, many of which produced cereal grain and chaff supporting this interpretation. However, these structures may have served a series of functions and suggestions have included the storing of animal fodder, platforms for exposing the dead or even sleeping huts or saunas (Lambrick 2009, 271). No grain was found associated with the four-posters here, though it would only survive if charred (see below) and it is likely that in a predominantly pastoral area many were used for storing fodder. At Cotswold Community the structures were not found in rows and in some cases seem to be associated with roundhouses suggesting they belonged to individual households.

The fencelines and two post structures seen in the current excavation were also mirrored in the areas to the north and are likely to have served a number of

functions, including division of settlement areas, protection from the weather and stock management. The cluster of such structures and fencelines to the north of Settlement Area 4 was unparalleled in the northern area but is likely to represent a working or stock management area. The provision of a clear central area could support either interpretation.

One of the most interesting features of the Phase 4 settlement was the presence of numerous waterholes and wells. This is typical of late Bronze Age occupation in the Thames Valley, where artificial water sources were extensively developed, and as seen at Cotswold Community these often have midden type deposits in the upper fills, generally rich in burnt stone (Lambrick 2009, 279). The reason for this is unknown and, as pointed out by Lambrick (ibid.), deserves further investigation.

Some of the most notable of these features were found in earlier excavations in the north of Shorncote Quarry, including a rare timber lined well, a waterhole containing fragments of human skull (Brossler *et al.* 2002) and further evidence of water lifting structures in the form of associated postholes surrounding waterholes (Hearne and Heaton 1994). The waterholes within the current excavation area were less remarkable individually, although their location and morphology is worthy of mention. Many of the larger Phase 4 waterholes were removed from the settlement areas and often paired, particularly in the eastern zone of Settlement Area 4. These were generally filled with large quantities of burnt stone, possibly indicating some form of industrial function. In the 1992 Shorncote excavation further north, at least some of this type of activity was associated with metalworking. This is notable in the context of 'burnt mounds', large deposits of burnt stone recognised as a specific phenomenon of the late Bronze Age. These clearly represent activities involving indirect application of heat to the stones, however the nature of such activity is unclear (see Powell, *Burnt stone,* this vol.).

Few of the pits dotted around the settlement areas contained evidence which may be related to function, although many were at least eventually used as refuse pits for the settlements. Some of the larger features which were not clearly identified as waterholes may have been for flax retting (see Hearne and Heaton 1994), particularly considering the high water table in this area. Such activity was identified at Reading Business Park (Moore and Jennings 1992) and flax is commonly found on later Bronze Age sites, possibly representing the

Fig. 2.50 Artist's reconstruction of roundhouse

importance of linen prior to the Iron Age when sheep, and consequently wool became more significant (Lambrick 2009, 253).

In terms of the artefact and ecofact assemblage a number of things stand out across the settlement as a whole. Firstly as outlined above, no environmental data was recovered for the period at Cotswold Community despite the scale of the settlement and an intensive sampling strategy. While this may be a result of bad preservation it is notable that grain was recovered from both Phases 3 and 5, therefore this absence is probably genuine. Excavations by Wessex Archaeology north of this area produced limited barley and wheat grains (Hearne and Heaton 1994; Hearne and Adam 1999), typical of this period in the Thames Valley.

The animal bone assemblage was also quite small, although much of the bone from ditch 14273 may have been later dumps of material from Phase 4 Settlement Area 1 and therefore better attributed to this phase. The only identifiable animal species were cattle and sheep/goat (presumably sheep)—again cattle dominated suggesting that they were the basis of the pastoral economy. The assemblage indicates that younger cattle and sheep were slaughtered for meat whilst older cattle were probably kept for traction, dairy and breeding and adult sheep for wool and dairy (Strid, this vol.).

In addition, the artefact assemblage was both small and limited in range, lacking evidence for activities such as grain processing, textile working and other industries, which are standard for mixed farming settlements in the area. As with the environmental evidence, this may have been the result of post-depositional and particularly preservation factors, possibly a genuine absence, or a mixture of the two.

Overall, the combination of these factors suggests that animals remained the basis of the economy at Cotswold Community at this time and cereal cultivation was minimal. In general charred plant remains became more common during this period in the Thames Valley, and where absent it has been suggested that some sites were not involved with arable production at all, particularly on the lower gravel terraces (Lambrick 2009, 251–2). The other side of this more specialised economy may be represented by settlements with large numbers of four-post structures such as Horcott Quarry (see above) and sites with pit clusters such as Gravelly Guy, which Lambrick (ibid., 108) suggests were the 'bread baskets' of the Thames Valley. The lack of domestic trappings also suggests that the occupation was non-intensive or short lived, possibly continuing the more mobile, possibly seasonal patterns of earlier prehistory with perhaps two or three houses in use at any time (ibid., 97). Similar dispersed settlements have been found nearby at Latton Lands (Powell *et al.* 2009), Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming) and Yarnton/Cassington (Hey *et al.* forthcoming), which may be part of a comparable subsistence system.

Ritual and religion

Unlike the preceding periods little evidence of obvious ritual practices were found within the Phase 4 settlement, reinforcing the non intensive nature of the settlement. A single cremation was found within Settlement Area 1. This type of burial rite is not common during this period, with disarticulated cranial fragments and long bones more often found in domestic pits, near boundaries and in water. However, late Bronze Age cremations are not unknown in the Thames Valley and examples have also been found at Cassington West/Yarnton (Hey *et al.* forthcoming) and Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming), usually associated with settlements. The deposit itself indicates that the cremation was effective and human remains were carefully sorted from the pyre debris.

The only other evidence of ritual behaviour was the presence of a number of cattle burials thought to date to this period. It is likely that these were foundation deposits where associated with dwellings, as seen at Latton Lands (Powell *et al.* 2009), and possibly related to land division and rights elsewhere.

THE MIDDLE IRON AGE LANDSCAPE AT COTSWOLD COMMUNITY (PHASE 5)

In marked contrast to the preceding phase very little middle Iron Age activity was found on the site (Fig. 2.51). Where features dating to this phase occurred they were located at the very eastern and southern edges of the excavated area, with some clear indications that settlement extended beyond the boundaries. Within the OA excavation middle Iron Age settlement was limited to a single roundhouse, represented by a penannular gully, in addition to a number of pits, postholes and linear features. The TVAS excavation to the east identified three further penannular gullies with an associated trackway and enclosure ditches (Fig. 3.52). Radiocarbon dates were recovered from several of the roundhouse structures indicating that the activity to the east was later in date.

Roundhouse 4180 and associated features

Structure 4180 survived as a penannular gully, open to the south-east (Fig. 2.53). These features are typical of this period in the Upper Thames Valley, commonly interpreted as drip gullies surrounding middle Iron Age house structures. A series of postholes existed on the interior of the feature including a potential circular arrangement following the line of the gully, which may have represented the structure.

The gully itself had an internal diameter of 11 m, measuring 0.8–1.2 m wide and was of varying depth (up to 0.36 m) due to truncation by Roman trackway 17615 and later ploughing. The gully

appeared to be segmented to the north and east, leaving six segments in total, although this could have been the result of truncation.

The gully produced late prehistoric pottery in addition to residual sherds of Beaker vessel. Occasional worked flint included a spurred piece, a retouched flake and a burnt unworked flint, and most interventions produced burnt stone. Two contexts within the gully were of particular note. The southern terminus (4268) contained a large charcoal-rich burnt deposit including 38 kg of burnt stone, 254 g of pottery, a horse scapula, a mussel shell, a pierced stone and fired clay. Segment 4793, which would have formed the opposing terminal, also produced *c* 2 kg of burnt stone, a small oyster or bivalve, cattle bone and a possible stone rubber. These deposits contained unusual items, which may have been special deposits placed in the termini of the gully on construction or abandonment. Burnt material from terminus 4269 was submitted for

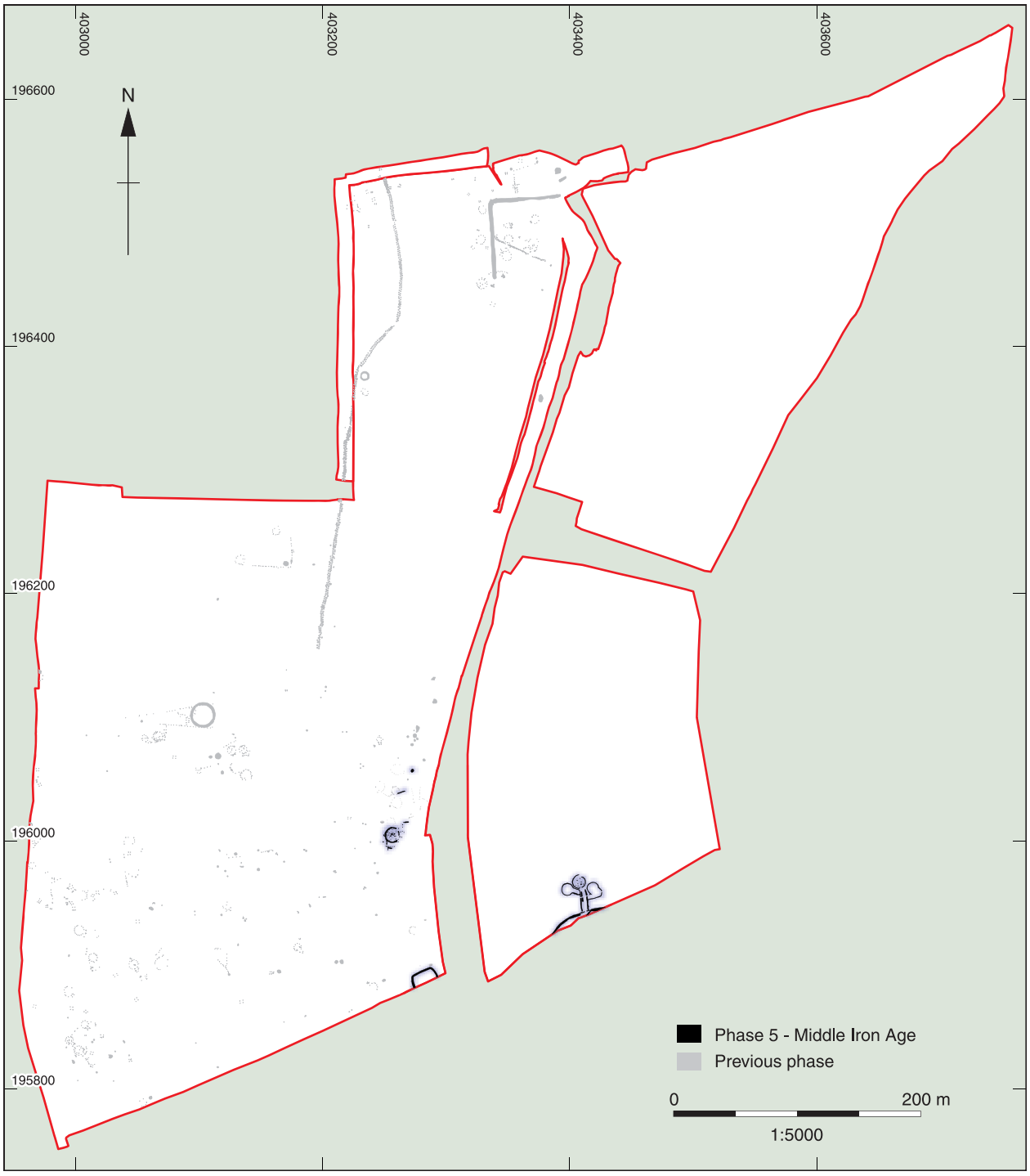


Fig. 2.51 Outline of middle Iron Age phase (Phase 5)

radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 386–206 cal BC (OxA-17610, 95.4% prob), confirming the middle Iron Age phasing.

Features within the gully included a series of pits, most containing burnt deposits and in some cases fired clay, suggestive of hearths. Intercutting features 4181 and 4186 were central to the interior of the structure, with 4554 0.7 m to the east and 4565 0.7 m to the south. The features were similar in dimensions at 1–1.2 m in diameter and all were between 0.23 and 0.35 m deep. Pottery recovered from the hearths was mixed but generally dated to the late prehistoric period; some specifically dated to the middle Iron Age. Pits 4181, 4186 and 4554 contained worked and burnt unworked flint and all contained burnt stone. Animal bone was recovered from pits 4181 and 4186 and a large assemblage, including medium and large mammal and sheep/goat, came from pit 4565.

Other internal pits included pit 4560, which was smaller at 0.5 m diameter and 0.12 m deep. Intercutting pits 4855 and 4853 in the south-east of the structure were up to 0.66 m in diameter but quite shallow. Pit 4855 produced late prehistoric pottery and 4853 contained 4 kg of burnt stone.

The internal postholes were generally consistent in size at around 0.2–0.3 m in diameter, although some were as small as 0.13 m across. There was no noticeable difference between the postholes around the circumference and those more central, and it is possible that the postholes represented a house structure and internal divisions. The slight nature of the postholes suggests that this may not have been a substantial structure. Only posthole 4988 contained dating evidence and this appears to be residual, identified as late Neolithic/early Bronze Age.

At least two pits within the roundhouse were Neolithic in date (see Phase 2), therefore not all the internal features can be assigned to the middle Iron Age with confidence. The mixed date of pottery recovered from features in this area also suggests

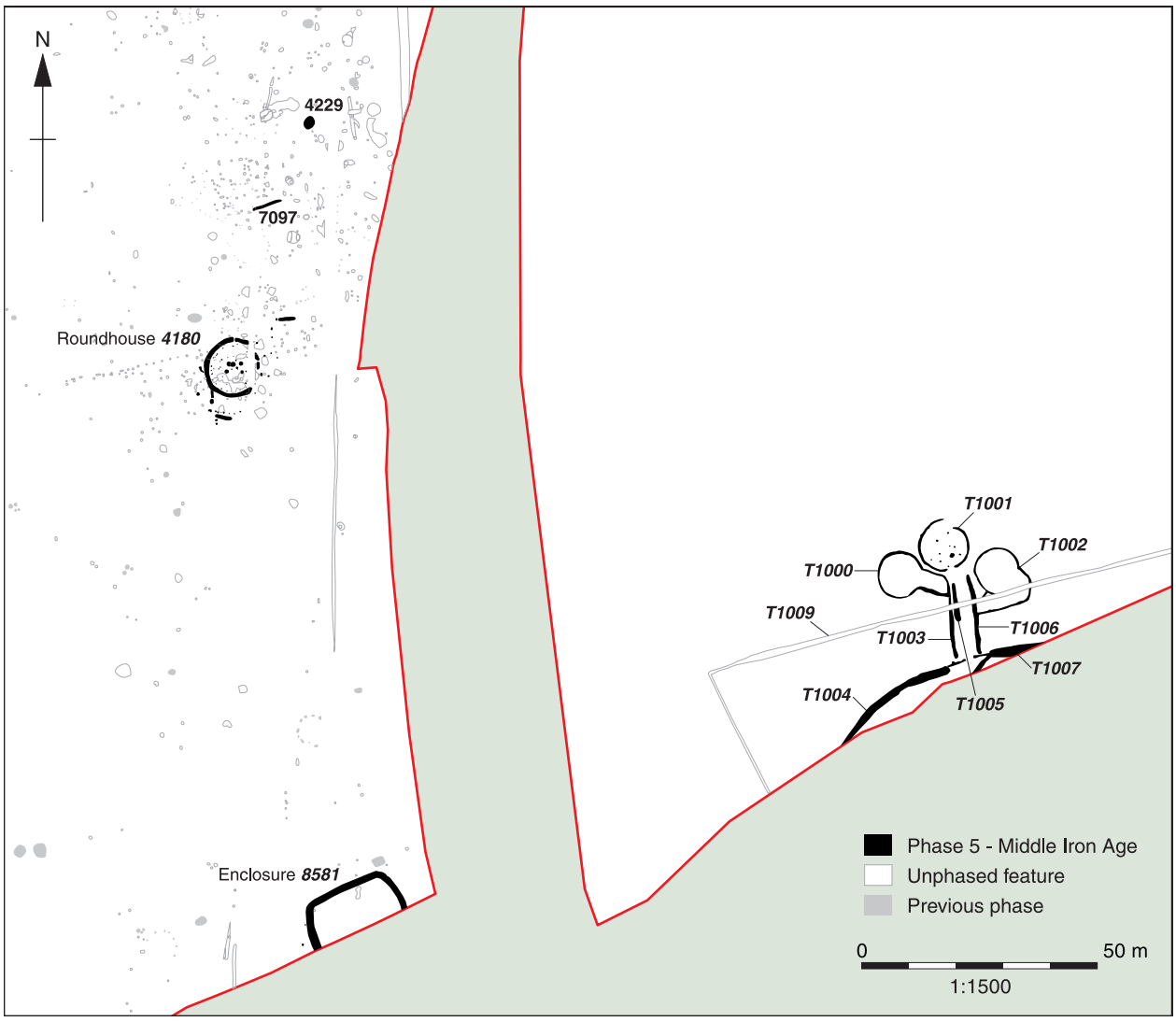


Fig. 2.52 Detail of middle Iron Age phase

that this location had been used for settlement over a long period of time.

A number of other features in the vicinity of roundhouse 4180 may have been middle Iron Age in date but produced no dating evidence. Most notably a slightly arcing arrangement of postholes (7122) was located immediately to the south of the structure and may have served as a windbreak or fenceline (Fig. 2.53). The postholes varied from 0.24 to 0.48 m in diameter and from 0.07 to 0.31 m deep. Further postholes to the south may have been an extension to this structure at a right angle, although a sherd of medieval pottery from one suggests they may have been later.

Slot 4724, which contained burnt stone, appears to have been truncated by the house gully, leaving 1.77 m in length exposed. Pit 4783 to the south (*c* 1 m diameter) may have been associated but contained no finds. The roundhouse gully also cut a pit to the west which produced no finds. A series of postholes to the north-east of the roundhouse varied from 0.17 to 0.65 m in diameter and 0.11 to

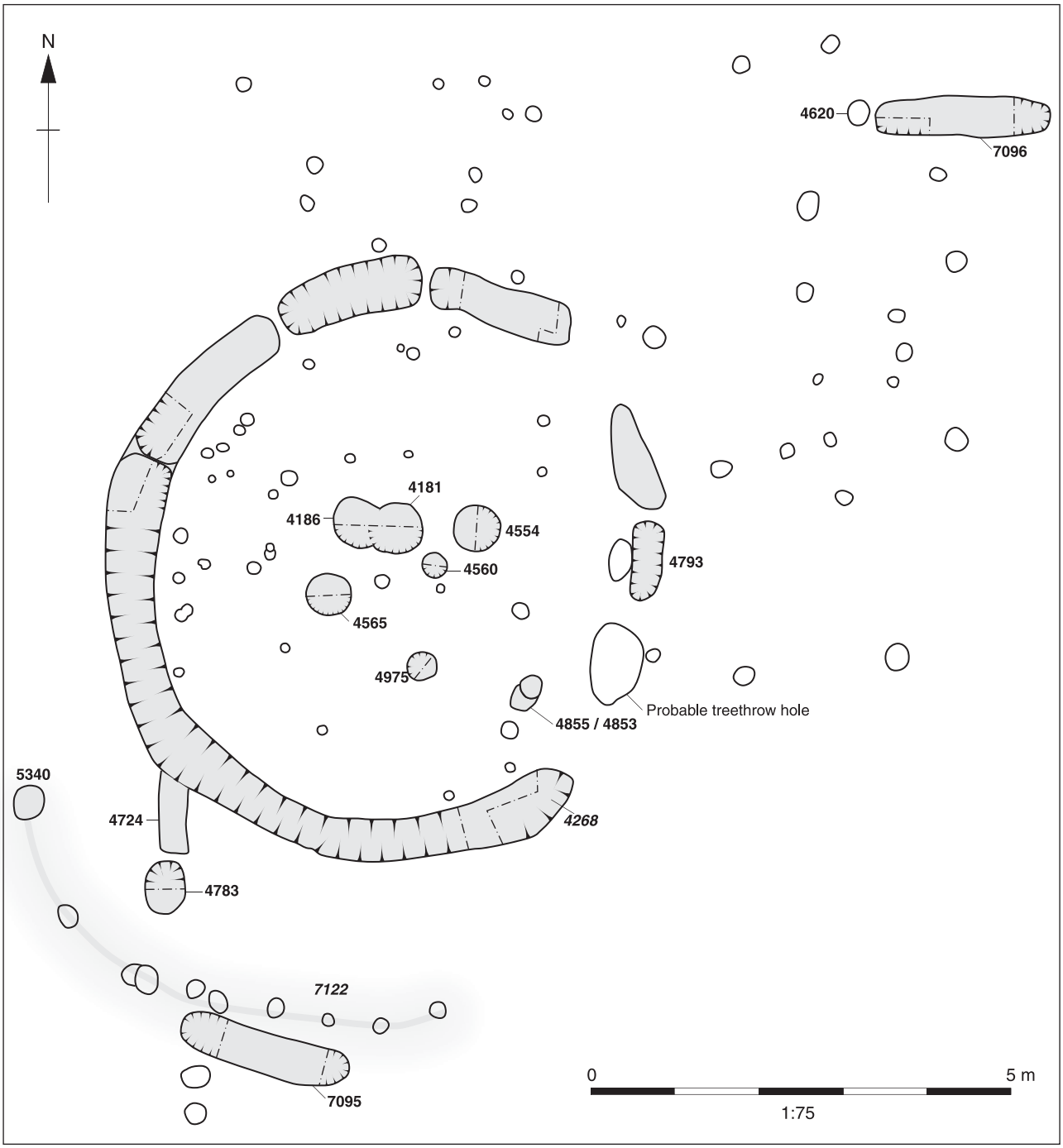


Fig. 2.53 Roundhouse 4180 and associated features

0.33 m deep and may have served different functions, although none of these features was positively dated to the middle Iron Age.

Only two pits outside of the roundhouse structure could be dated to the middle Iron Age. These were 5340, 2.3 m south of the roundhouse, and pit 4229, *c* 48 m to the north (Fig. 2.52). Pit 5340 was 0.63 m in diameter and 0.23 m deep and produced middle Iron Age pottery, burnt unworked flint, fired clay and burnt stone. Pit 4229 was sub-circular (2.8 x 2.47 x 1.17) and contained six fills, which produced middle Iron Age pottery, a worked flint flake, cattle bone and burnt stone.

A number of small lengths of ditch or gully in the vicinity of the roundhouse were also assigned to this phase. Linear features 7095, 7096 and 7097 were located 3.8 m south, 8 m north-east and 27 m north of roundhouse 4180 respectively (Figs 2.52–3). Details of the features given in Table 2.11 show that they were remarkably similar in form. All three features produced late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, with middle Iron Age pottery also from features 7095 and 7096. The linear features all contained burnt stone and animal bone, including red deer within 7095, and a large deposit, including cattle and sheep/goat, in 7096. Features 7095 and 7096 contained burnt unworked and worked flint and 7095 a small amount of fired clay. A posthole (4620) immediately adjacent to 7096 also contained middle Iron Age pottery. Feature 7096 contained a deposit of cremated bone (4366), which weighed 55 g only and was associated with other burnt material suggesting a cremation-related deposit rather than a formal burial. This may indicate ritual activity in this period. The purpose of these features is unknown but comparable ones were not identified in any other prehistoric phase.

Table 2.11: Detail of Phase 5 linear features

Feature No	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*No of fills*
7095	3.7	0.8	0.34	5
7096	3.7	0.8	0.36	3
7097	6.2	0.9	0.45	2

Enclosure 8581

Enclosure 8581 was located in the south-eastern corner of the site, extending beyond the site boundary (Fig. 2.52). The form of the visible part of the ditch suggests it may have been a sub-square enclosure. The enclosed area was *c* 22 m across, and 10 m was exposed before truncation by the edge of excavation. The ditch was generally 1.5 m wide and 0.42–0.65 m deep, containing two clay silt fills. Excavated sections of the ditch produced several sherds of late prehistoric pottery, some of which was tentatively identified as of early Iron Age date, in addition to burnt stone and cattle bone. A posthole and pit to the south-west of the enclosure may have been related but produced no dating evidence.

Although the pottery from the ditch may have been earlier, the morphology of this enclosure makes it far more likely to be middle Iron Age. This is supported by the increasing shift to middle Iron Age dating material in this area, as noted in Phase 4, and the similarities between this and the hypothesised enclosure to the east (see below).

Eastern complex *(based upon Oram and Ford 2007)*

Three further penannular gullies and an adjacent 'trackway' and enclosure were clustered together in the far south-eastern corner of the site, within the eastern extension excavated by TVAS (Fig. 2.54).

Roundhouses

The penannular gullies of the eastern complex were slightly different in character to roundhouse 4180, possibly indicating differing date or function. Gully T1000 had an internal diameter of 9.2 m with an entrance to the south-east, comprising an extension of the gully to form two parallel arms, 5–6 m in length. These in turn extended as far as—and in one case cut—adjacent ditch T1003, forming an uninterrupted circuit. The gully was on average 0.34 m wide and 0.11 m deep and produced 166 sherds of middle Iron Age pottery as well as burnt bone, predominantly from the extension gullies to the south-east. A radiocarbon date of 207–86 cal BC (KIA31997; 77.3% prob) was obtained from charcoal recovered from the gully (Oram and Ford 2007). No contemporary features were found within the structure.

Structure T1001 had an internal diameter of 9.8 m and comprised two opposing semicircular gullies, forming a rough circle with gaps to the north and south. It is unclear whether these gaps were genuine, although the difference in arc of the two gullies suggests that the two probably were originally interrupted (ibid.). The feature was slightly more substantial than gully T1000, measuring *c* 0.6 m in width and 0.3 m deep. Gully T1001 had a series of internal features including nine postholes and a pit. The postholes were not arranged in a recognisable pattern but probably represented an internal structure within the gully. On the basis of comparison with roundhouse 4180 it is possible that the pit was originally a hearth. Overall, the structure produced 70 sherds of Iron Age pottery and burnt bone fragments.

Structure T1002 was the smallest of the three features, with an internal diameter of 8.6 m. The structure comprised a penannular gully open to the south-east for *c* 4 m, but bounded by a continuous length of gully extending from the northern terminus and curving round to the west. This terminated at trackway ditch T1006, which cut the gully. A small length of gully also extended westwards from the south-western terminus and may have

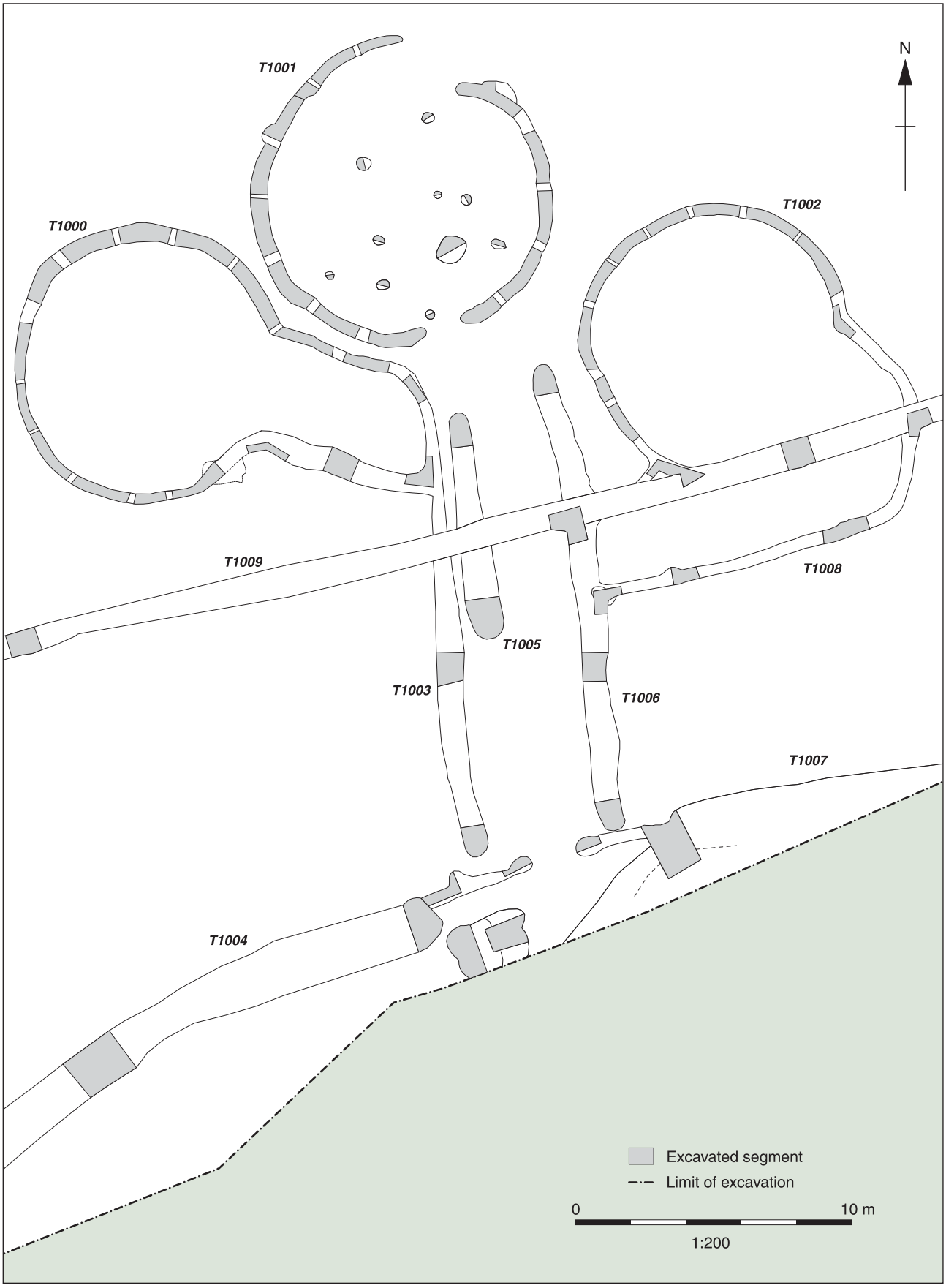


Fig. 2.54 Eastern middle Iron Age complex excavated by TVAS

formed an opposing entrance gully, although most of this feature was removed by later ditch T1009. The gully was *c* 0.44 m wide, 0.2 m deep and produced Iron Age pottery in addition to a large assemblage of burnt animal bone, particularly from the western side. Charcoal from this deposit was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 322–226 cal BC (KIA31996; 60.1% prob).

Trackway T1003/T1006

An apparent small trackway existed between the gullies, comprising two parallel ditches (T1003 and T1006) *c* 17 m long, although as outlined above, ditch T1003 was continuous with gully T1000. A third length of ditch (1005) *c* 8 m long was located adjacent to ditch T1003, possibly a recut on a slightly different alignment, although this is unclear. The main ditches were *c* 4 m apart and *c* 1 m wide and produced Iron Age pottery and animal bone; two small pieces of curved iron rod were also recovered from ditch T1003. The southern terminus of the trackway corresponded with the entrance to an apparent large enclosure, whilst the northern end stopped *c* 3 m short of gully T1001. The trackway was cut by structure T1000 and in turn cut structure T1002 indicating a clear sequence of construction.

Enclosure T1004/T1007

Parts of what may have been a substantial enclosure were located in the far south of the excavated area, continuing beyond the southern boundary of the site. These comprised two large curving ditches (T1004 and T1007) with a gap of *c* 9 m between them, leading through into the roundhouse trackway described above. The remainder of the postulated enclosure would have existed beyond the southern boundary of the site and its full nature is unclear. The ditches themselves were 1.6–1.8 m wide and 0.34–0.49 m deep; both contained small amounts of Iron Age pottery and animal bone. Two smaller gullies with a posthole at each end extended from either ditch terminus, probably representing an entrance structure. The gullies were 3.4–4 m long and *c* 0.5 m wide, reducing the entrance gap to 1.66 m wide. Within the entrance area a further length of ditch or gully butted the terminal of ditch T1007 at an oblique angle. The terminal of T1007 also cut a further ditch terminal or pit, and a pit was located immediately south of the terminus of ditch T1004. The nature of these features is unknown due to their location on the very edge of the excavation area.

Development of the complex

A general sequence of construction within this complex can be ascertained from the stratigraphy and dating. Most notably both the radiocarbon dates and the stratigraphy show that gully T1002 predated the small trackway, which was in turn cut by gully T1000. The relationship of structure T1001 to both the trackway and enclosure T1004/T1007 is unknown, although it is likely that the whole complex is broadly contemporary.

Obvious similarities exist between structures T1001 and 4180 to the north-west (although overall the structures within the eastern complex were more ephemeral in nature), and it is quite clear that both represented houses. All these features were very similar to the middle Iron Age structures excavated at nearby Claydon Pike (Miles *et al.* 2007). The radiocarbon dates from the structures either side of T1001 appear to indicate that this complex was in part later than structure 4180 and probably represents a shift in settlement or the construction of an entirely new settlement. The differing forms of gullies T1000 and T1002 may indicate that these were outbuildings, ancillary to T1001 and dating suggested that these were sequential, structure T1000 presumably replacing T1002. It is unfortunate that the enclosure represented by ditches T1004 and T1007 was located mainly beyond the site edge as its full nature cannot be understood. However, it is feasible to suggest that this was the northern tip of a large enclosure, possibly predating the Phase 6 enclosure 17600 to the north and post-dating enclosure 8581 to the west. The function of these enclosures remains largely unknown although they may have been related to stock management.

The complex was cut by ditch T1009 which extended roughly east-west for *c* 125 m and turned south at a right angle to the west, continuing beyond the site to the south (Fig. 2.52). The eastern part of the ditch was also lost beyond the edge of excavation, therefore the full nature of the feature is unknown. The ditch was *c* 1 m wide and 0.25 m deep and produced Iron Age pottery. It bore a striking resemblance to the Phase 6 ditches to the north of the site (see below), and it is possible that this feature post-dated the middle Iron Age complex but pre-dated nearby Roman activity, falling into Phase 6.

Discussion of the middle Iron Age landscape

The middle Iron Age activity at Cotswold Community is small scale compared to that of the preceding phase but illustrates the consolidation of the societal changes discussed above. The Upper Thames Valley at this time underwent a significant landscape reorganisation, with the open settlements of the preceding phase abandoned in favour of more nucleated and enclosed settlements. The greater density of features and finds within these settlements suggests a significant increase in intensity, duration and permanence of occupation (Lambrick 2009, 25). This is also reinforced by increasing replacement of domestic structures in the same location (Bradley 2007, 240). The wider landscape became one of organised mixed farming, somewhat more ordered and possibly more seden-

tary than the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age landscape. Most sites of this period have produced domesticates of varying species, along with carbonised cereal suggesting that arable production had increased significantly.

Environment

Environmental evidence from this phase at Cotswold Community indicates consolidation of earlier clearances, with little evidence of larger woodland trees. Charcoal from domestic hearths within roundhouse 4180 suggested that small branches from hedgerows were gathered for cooking and heat within the house, indicating a landscape where hedgerows were used for enclosure of land. The potential for continued grazing was suggested by the presence of thorny scrub which would withstand grazing whilst other plant species which cannot withstand grazing were absent (Challinor, this vol.). However, cereal (hulled barley and wheat), chaff and weeds associated with agriculture became far more abundant, suggesting that agricultural production had increased. This open agricultural landscape is similar to that hypothesised for Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming) and other sites within the Cotswold Water Park at this time (Miles *et al.* 2007).

Settlement

The small scale activity belonging to this somewhat short-lived phase makes interpretation difficult, but a number of interesting observations can be made. The middle Iron Age settlement activity on the site is clearly limited in comparison to the preceding phase, but the location of the activity on the peripheries of the excavation area potentially hints at involvement in a much wider landscape. Both enclosures 8581 and T1004/T1007 appear to have bounded further activity to the south. In addition, earlier OA excavations in the northern part of Shorncote Quarry (Brossler *et al.* 2002) uncovered further middle Iron Age activity including a house gully, numerous pits and waterholes, a possible industrial complex and an extensive field system which probably continued to the north. This may be an indication of the type of activity which once existed beyond the Cotswold Community site to the south.

At least two phases of domestic activity were present on the site and were well-dated. Both comprised roundhouse structures represented by penannular gullies, typical of the middle Iron Age in this region, as outlined above. The dates obtained for roundhouse 4180 and structure T1002 overlapped, but the former has an earlier start date and it is probable that this was the earliest middle Iron Age activity on the site. Roundhouse 4180 was located in the same vicinity and along the same long-lived boundary as Phase 4 Settlement Area 3, and may even have been a continuation of this activity. The structure was associated with very little contemporary activity and was unenclosed. In contrast structure T1002 was located within a complex of features which appear to represent a larger area of partially enclosed activity. This may indicate a chronological move towards enclosure and nucleation as discussed above. The date obtained from structure T1000 (207–86 cal BC (KIA31997; 77.3% prob) indicates that this more easterly activity probably continued to a later date.

Roundhouse 4180 and its associated features seem to represent a single household dwelling. The activity was typical of this phase in the wider region, although the presence of possible hearths is notable. The most interesting aspect of this cluster is the existence of possible structured deposits within the terminals of the roundhouse gully. The animal bone and burnt stone within these deposits presumably represent household debris, although the inclusion of marine shell and a worked stone object in both is unusual and suggests deliberate placement. These deposits are likely to have flanked the entrance, an area often afforded special significance both in the archaeological and ethnographic record.

The complex of structures to the east may represent a single dwelling with ancillary structures, one replacing the other as indicated by the radiocarbon dates. This arrangement of structures surrounding an extended track or pathway was also recently found at the nearby contemporary site of Spratsgate Lane (Vallender 2007) and may have served a specific purpose. Little can be surmised from this activity alone as it appears to be part of a much larger enclosed area. Similarly, enclosure 8581 is most likely to be connected to this activity but it is unclear how.

Overall, although limited, this activity seems to support the interpretations of Brossler *et al.* (2002, 82) of a constantly changing landscape of small farmsteads. The activity is paralleled in the wider area at sites such as Latton Lands, where a series of penannular gullies were cut by a major north-south boundary ditch and associated field system (Powell *et al.* 2009). At Claydon Pike a similar changing landscape of roundhouses and enclosures was excavated, notably with occupation debris concentrated in the gully terminals (Miles *et al.* 2007). Landscape reorganisation was also clearly evident at Horcott Pit where the preceding dispersed settlement was abandoned in favour of a large ditched enclosure containing a number of house gullies (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming). Recent excavations at Horcott Quarry also uncovered a further middle Iron Age roundhouse and a series of ditches (OA 2009).

Lifestyle and subsistence

In general, the artefact assemblage from the Phase 5 features was unremarkable and appeared to

represent typical domestic debris including animal bone, pottery and burnt stone. Artefact assemblages from contemporary sites, as discussed above, tended to be much richer, illustrating the continuing trend at Cotswold Community of relatively impoverished prehistoric assemblages. In contrast the site excavated to the north (Brossler *et al.* 2002) included a more varied artefact assemblage including loomweights, indicative of textile working, and briquetage from Droitwich, suggestive of trade in salt.

The animal bone assemblage was similar to that of preceding phases, although horse was present by this time and sheep became far more common in relation to cattle. This diversification in the faunal assemblage is normal during this period in the Upper Thames Valley. In general a more systematic approach to managing animals became evident in the middle Iron Age, with a distinction between meat and secondary products reflecting the broader social and economic changes (Lambrick 2009, 246). This is true of Cotswold Community where the patterns of the preceding phase continued. The increased presence of grain is also typical of this period, although the quantities represented here are fairly small in scale. It is likely, based on the records from this site and others in the region (eg Shorncote Quarry and Claydon Pike), that pastoral farming continued as the main form of subsistence, albeit with increased diversification. Arable production was likely to be small scale, with processing carried out by the household as suggested by finds of charred grain with domestic rubbish (Lambrick 2009, 158).

Ritual and religion

Little evidence of ritual behaviour was found in Phase 5 at Cotswold Community. With the exception of the possible structured deposits outlined above, only a single cremation deposit was recovered, from slot 7096. This is particularly unusual for this period, which is generally characterised by lack of formal burials and frequent finds of stray bones and partial bodies, suggesting that excarnation may have been common (Lambrick 2009, 315). Such finds are often associated with settlement boundaries or storage pits (Bradley 2007, 262) but are notably lacking from Cotswold Community.

The cremation deposit was not securely dated but was located in the fill of a middle Iron Age feature. The bones showed signs of incomplete cremation suggesting that this was not an important part of the rite, possibly fitting into the predominant excarnation ritual. A similar deposit of cremated human bone was recovered from a middle Iron Age pit at Horcott Pit. This was radiocarbon dated to cal AD 1–220, although this was not considered to be a reliable date (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming). Although this may represent opportunistic use of earlier features in the later Iron Age/Roman period it is possible that this cremation rite was a more established tradition in the middle Iron Age than previously thought.

THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM PREHISTORIC PHASES

Early prehistoric pottery *by David Mullin*

The pottery assemblage comprises middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware, late Neolithic Grooved Ware, late Neolithic/early Bronze Age Beaker and middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury forms. The assemblage is noteworthy in several respects.

Significant amounts of Peterborough Ware pottery were recovered from the fills of pits. The majority of this material was tempered with relatively local fossil shell, although a flint tempered vessel from pit 9959 (Fig. 2.55, 2) was probably imported from flint-rich areas to the south and east of the site. A variety of styles, including Mortlake (Fig. 2.55, 1) and Fengate, were identified and one vessel from pit 8799 carried an incised concentric circle or spiral decoration, which is without parallel in the Peterborough Ware tradition (Fig. 2.55, 3). A radiocarbon date from pit 8700 (3036–2914

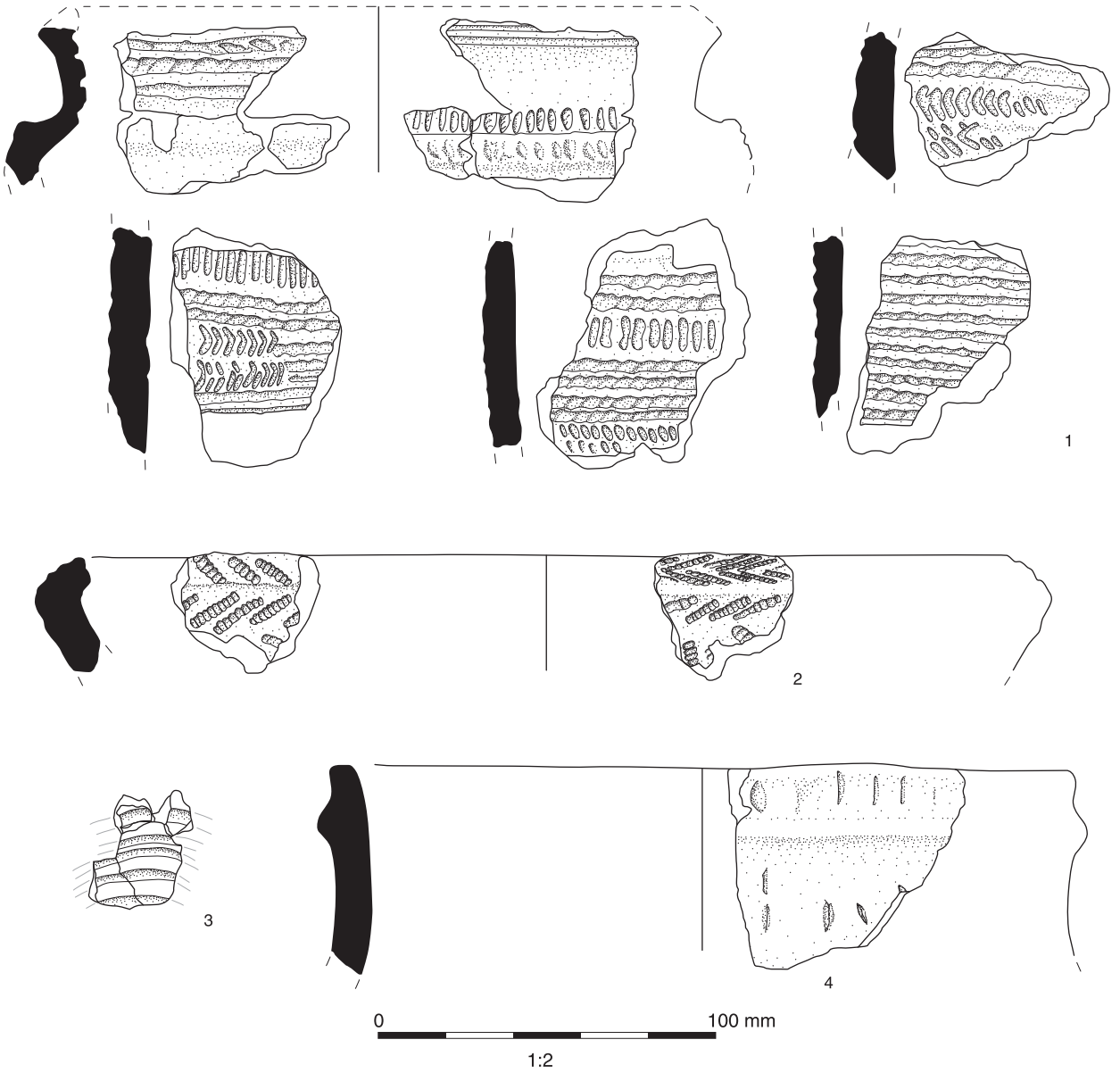


Fig. 2.55 Middle Neolithic to middle Bronze Age pottery from Cotswold Community

cal BC (OxA-17612; 78.6 % prob)) is one of only two from contexts containing Peterborough Ware in Gloucestershire and falls well within the range for Peterborough Ware within Britain (Gibson and Kinnes 1997).

The largest assemblage of Grooved Ware from Gloucestershire was recovered from this site (eg Fig. 2.55, 4), and is comparable in size to some of the larger assemblages from sites such as the West Kennet long barrow, Wiltshire (Piggott 1962) and Fir Tree Field, Down Farm, Dorset (Green 2000). This is also the largest assemblage of the Durrington Walls sub-style from Gloucestershire, a sub-style which is also uncommon throughout the Upper Thames region (Barclay 1999). A Clacton sub-style vessel from Cotswold Community (Fig. 2.56, 5) is the first of this style to be recognised within Gloucestershire, although small amounts are known from further down the Upper Thames Valley (ibid.). The radiocarbon date from pit 17022 (2575–2469 cal BC (OxA-17619; 95.4% prob)) is one of only two from Grooved Ware contexts within Gloucestershire, the other, from Roughground Farm (Allen *et al.* 1993), being broadly contemporary. Both dates fall within middle of chronology for Grooved Ware as currently understood (Garwood 1999).

Beaker pottery was recovered from 12 pits and three graves. The material from the pits was very fragmentary and abraded: no complete vessel profiles were present and individual pots were frequently represented by very few sherds. Whilst this may appear to represent poor preservation, it may also reflect the deposition of Beaker pottery as sherds within pit fills, resulting in chronologically mixed closed assemblages such as that from pit 7972. This pit contained fragments of at least four Beakers, represented by between two to seven sherds from each vessel. Some of the material (such as a cord impressed rim) appeared to be early within the Beaker sequence, but later material was also present potentially reflecting the curation of old material. The presence of grog in the fabric of Beakers from the site also draws attention to the recycling of old pottery into new Beakers, perhaps as a way of extending the life of particularly significant vessels and imbuing new pots with ancestral power (Woodward 2008, 295).

Fragmentary Beakers were also deposited with human remains, sometimes, as with pit 7972, with seemingly little formality. Grave 9551 lies at the other end of the spectrum, with a partial Beaker (although with a surviving profile) placed at the feet of a crouched inhumation within a grave (Fig. 2.56, 6). The Beaker from Grave 7611 was also fragmentary, less than half of the vessel being present. This was somewhat more than the 11 sherds recovered from Grave 8933, which, unlike the Beakers from the other two graves, was tempered with flint. This may, like the flint tempered Peterborough Ware, have been imported from an area where flint occurs naturally, such as other parts of Wiltshire or Dorset.

The Beaker burials from Cotswold Community join a small number of Beaker burials identified in Gloucestershire which include a number of sites in the Upper Thames region. These include two Beaker burials from Memorial Hall, Lechlade (Thomas and Holbrook 1998), where the Beakers also appear to have been broken before deposition in the grave. Beaker burials are also known from immediately to the north and west of the current site, in other parts of Shorncote Quarry, where a ring ditch and a grave contained a fragmentary and a very poorly fired Beaker (Barclay and Glass 1995).

The middle Bronze Age assemblage comprised large amounts of Deverel-Rimbury pottery, recovered from the fills of pits and waterholes (eg Fig. 2.56, 8). This material adds to that found from other parts of Shorncote Quarry (Barclay and Glass 1995) and Roughground Farm (Allen *et al.* 1993). Middle Bronze Age pottery remains rare from the region, however, and the large amounts of pottery from Cotswold Community form a regionally important assemblage.

Catalogue of illustrated vessels (Figs 2.55–6)

1. Upper part of a Mortlake style bowl with complex internally decorated rim. Fabric S1. Pit 10206 (10149)
2. Rim of Impressed Ware vessel with internal and external whipped cord decoration. Fabric F2. SF957. Pit 9959 (9660).
3. Basal sherd with incised concentric circles or spiral motif. Fabric S1. Pit 8799 (8797)
4. Grooved Ware vessel with fingernail impressed decoration. Fabric GL1. Pit 7972 (7971)
5. Grooved Ware, Clacton sub-style vessel. Fabric G1. Pit 5320 (5318)
6. Large part of a Beaker with zones of cross-hatched decoration. Fabric GL1. Grave 9551 (9575).
7. Comb-impressed Beaker with angle profile. Fabric G1. Pit 4401 (4393)
8. Barrel Urn. Fabric L1. Fingertip impressed decoration below rim. Pit 8400 (8404)

Late prehistoric pottery *by Lisa Brown*

The range of pottery utilised on the site during the late Bronze Age to middle Iron Age included late Bronze Age Decorated Ware jars and urns and distinctive early Iron Age fine geometric decorated bowls accompanied by coarse jars, progressing to a much more limited stylistic range of middle Iron Age ovoid jars. In contrast to the earlier prehistoric assemblage, the later prehistoric group is typical for the locality and the Upper Thames region in general, with few notable exceptions. An average sherd weight of only 6 g testifies to the fragmentary nature of the later prehistoric pottery, which hampered stylistic identification in many cases.

Late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age

The pottery of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age transition is dominated by a variety of calcareous fabrics of localised Jurassic origin. By the early Iron Age the range of inclusions extended to include fine quartz sand and small, well-sorted white flint, reflecting a wider procurement base that extended southwards and outwards from the site.

Late Bronze Age Decorated Wares (800–600 cal BC)

A small assemblage belonging to the Decorated Ware phase of the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age transition included bipartite jars with fingernail or fingertip decoration, cordoned urns, and jars in the Plain Ware tradition. Decorated Ware pottery was widely dispersed across the site, most often occurring in pits and ditches as an element of secondary refuse deposits or as odd residual sherds incorporated during the filling process.

Four vessels from L-shaped ditch 14273, indicate a probable late Bronze Age episode of filling, but fragments of two bipartite jars with fingernail decoration were residual

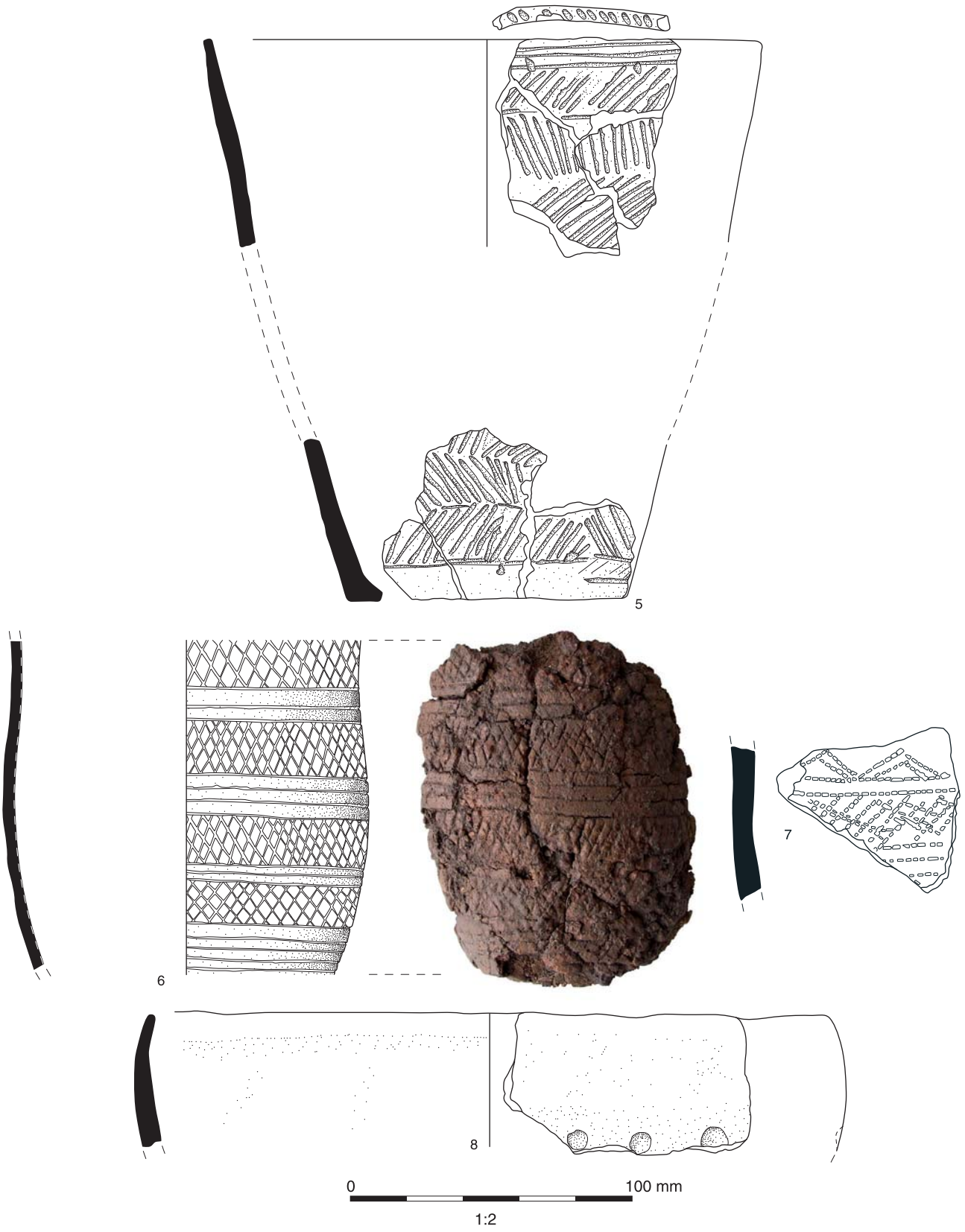


Fig. 2.56 Middle Neolithic to middle Bronze Age pottery from Cotswold Community

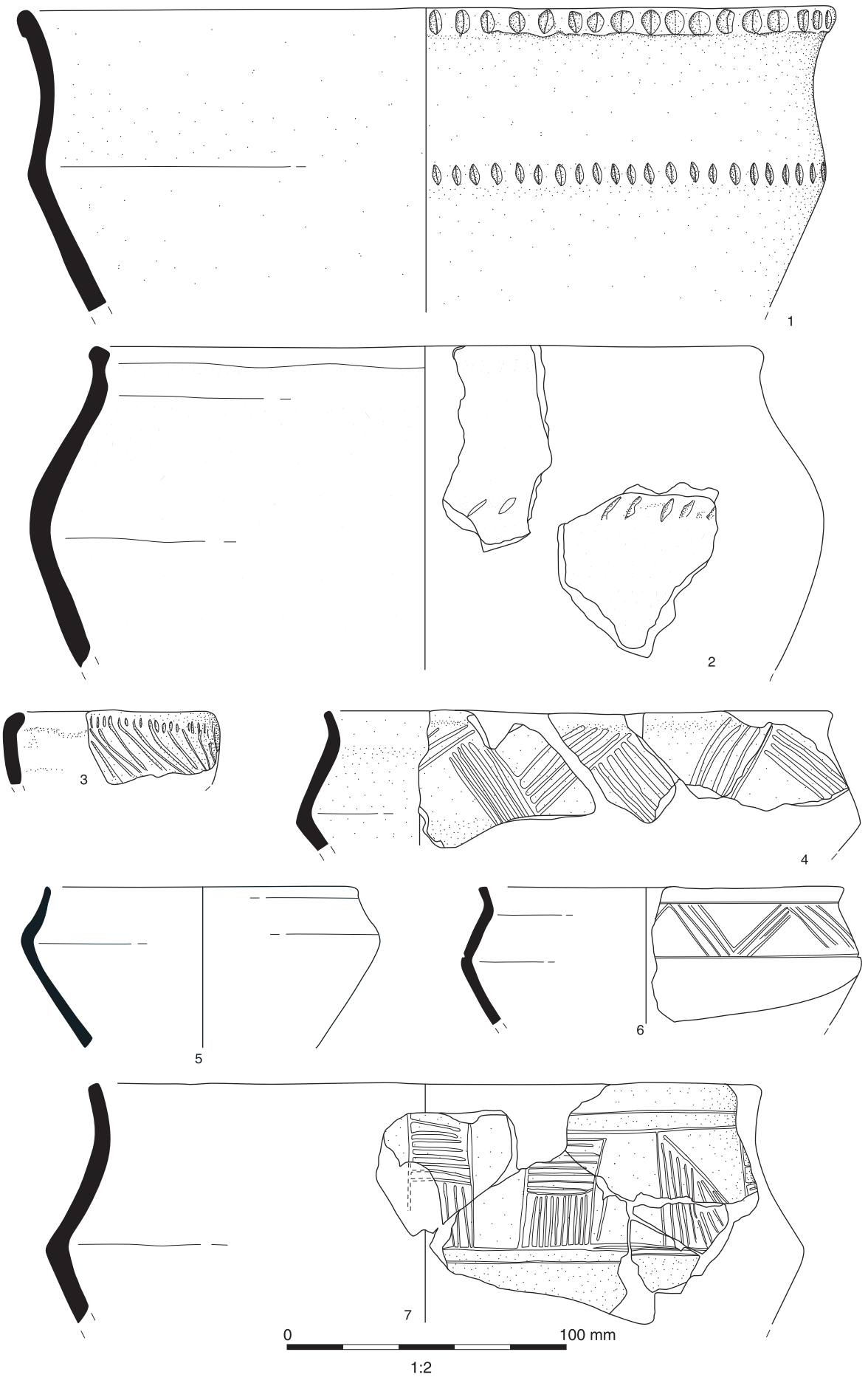


Fig. 2.57 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery from Cotswold Community

in pit 7605 (Fig. 2.57, 1–2), as were a cordoned urn with pinched decoration from ditch 17587 and a Plain Ware sherd from pit 18598.

The late Bronze Age pottery from Cotswold Community broadly resembles that found at Lechlade, some 20–25 km east of the site (Barclay 1998, 22–3; Hingley 1986, 36–42 and 1993, 28–31), apart from its more limited variety of fabrics. A late Bronze Age/early Iron Age assemblage from recent excavations at Horcott Pit included a similar range of finger-impressed jars in calcareous fabrics (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming).

Early Iron Age (600–300 cal BC)

Most of the early Iron Age pottery was recovered from features in Settlement Areas 1 and 4. Feature assemblages generally amounted to a only few sherds, but seven pits produced 20–24 sherds, and the fill of ditch 3860 in Area 1 produced over 70 sherds, most belonging to a large shell-tempered jar.

During the early Iron Age at Cotswold Community the suite of vessel forms utilised was mostly limited to fine, thin-walled (sometimes decorated) bowls and coarse jars with upright rims. Additionally, two examples of lugged jars were recovered. Surface finish is generally restricted to smoothing; burnished and red slipped sherds are uncommon, but several bowls are decorated with incised linear devices, including multiple chevrons and filled triangles and squares. This decorative style is typical for the region, and paralleled at Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming), Roughground Farm (Hingley 1993, fig. 31) and The Loders (Hingley 1986, figs 7 and 10).

A high ratio of bowls to jars (39 to 10) from the site can be explained partly by the greater ease in identifying bowl forms from very small sherds. Most were made in a fabric with sparse, fine shell inclusions. The apparent bias can be adjusted to some degree by comparing overall proportions of coarseware sherds (almost invariably representing jars) to finer wares. Nonetheless, the disparity is striking, as is the considerably superior preservation of bowls than jars. The average sherd weight of 12 g for bowls of this date is significantly high in contrast to the 6 g figure for all later prehistoric pottery and a mere 4.4 g figure for all prehistoric pottery. This may reflect some level of curation of these smaller, finer vessels but no complete bowls were recovered.

Early Iron Age intercutting pits 7605 and 7575 in settlement Area 4 produced 366 sherds, representing over 50% of the total from pits on the site. The group from pit 7605 had an unusually high average sherd weight of over 10 g. The 14 vessels from this pit included a unusual miniature pinched up bowl decorated with fingernail impressions and diagonal incised lines (Fig. 2.57, 3). It was made from a fine closed clay (N2) which probably derived from locally occurring alluvial deposits, and was fired. It may have been an apprentice or experimental piece, suggesting the possibility of on-site pottery production, but casual one-off manufacture by an unskilled adult or a child cannot be ruled out.

Three decorated carinated bowls in fine shell-tempered ware (Fig. 2.57, 7) and a coarse upright-rim jar were the only identifiable vessels within a highly fragmented assemblage of 117 sherds (315 g) from pit 9491. A small collection of 71 sherds (399 g) from pit 9931 was unusually diverse and included an upright rim finger-tipped jar, a flaring rim bowl in an oolitic fabric, a decorated carinated bowl in fine flint-tempered ware (Fig. 2.57, 6), and one of only two lugged jars from the site. The appearance of flint-tempered and sandy fabrics, along with the lugged vessel, suggests that his pit was filling in the latest stages of the early Iron Age.

Pit 4105 in Area 3 produced fragments of a flat base, a shouldered jar and a flaring rim bowl, all in fine shell-tempered ware, and pit 9181 in Area 4 contained two basal sherds in the same fabric. Small fragments of flaring rim bowls in similar fine crushed shell fabrics came from pits 4575, 4565 and 10047.

A posthole or small pit, feature 9422, associated with roundhouse 9343 in Area 4 contained a relatively large collection of 100 small abraded sherds. The only identifiable form within the mass of oolitic and fossil shell-tempered fragments was an upright-rim jar. This deliberate secondary deposit may have been a closing deposit after removal of a post, but was more likely levelling of a pit with waste material

Posthole 5505, the porch of roundhouse 5648 in Area 2, contained a rare example of a sandy ware bowl.

Middle Iron Age

Only 66 middle Iron Age sherds (402 g) were identified from the OA excavations (see vol. 2 for pottery from TVAS excavations). This small group is dominated by Jurassic fossiliferous shelly limestone fabrics, as was the case at Claydon Pike (G Jones 2007, 43), Thornhill Farm (Timby 2004, 107) and Latton Lands (Edwards 2009, 62). Although it is commonly noted that sandy wares largely superseded calcareous wares during the middle Iron Age (Duncan *et al.* 2004), this trend was not apparent at Cotswold Community.

Only eight individual vessels were identified. Ovoid jar fragments with simple undifferentiated rims in calcareous fabrics were recovered from pit 5340, close to roundhouse 4180, pit 4181, linear ditch 7096, and waterhole 9485 in the eastern zone of settlement Area 4 (Fig. 2.58, 9–10). Another ovoid jar with a slightly shaped rim in oolitic fabric L2 came from posthole 4620. The sole example of a straight-sided vessel was found in pit 4181 (Fig. 2.58, 8).

Catalogue of illustrated vessels (Figs 2.57–8)

1. Bipartite jar with fingernail impressed rim and shoulder. Fabric S2. Pit 7605 (7566)
2. Bipartite jar with fingernail impressed shoulder. Fabric S2. Pit 7605 (7568)
3. Miniature bowl with fingernail impressions below rim and incised diagonal lines on body. Fabric N1. Vessel formed by pulling up sides from knob of clay. Rougly smoothed. May be apprentice piece or work of a child. Pit 7605 (7568)
4. Carinated bowl with short flaring rim. Decorated with multiple diagonal lines. Fabric S3, fired to light orange. Pit 7605 (conjoining sherds from 7570, 7573, 7575
5. Small undecorated carinated bowl Fabric S3. Fired to light orange. Pit 7575 (7573)
6. Bowl with sharp carination and short flaring rim. Decorated with multiple diagonal incised lines. Smoothed surface. Fabric S3. Pit 9931 (8167)
7. Large, sharply carinated bowl with complex incised decoration of triangles and squares infilled with lines. Smoothed surface. Fabic AS1. Conjoining sherds from medieval furrow 9522 (9491) and pit 9488 (9489)
8. Straight-sided pot. Fabric S3. Pit 4181 (4182)

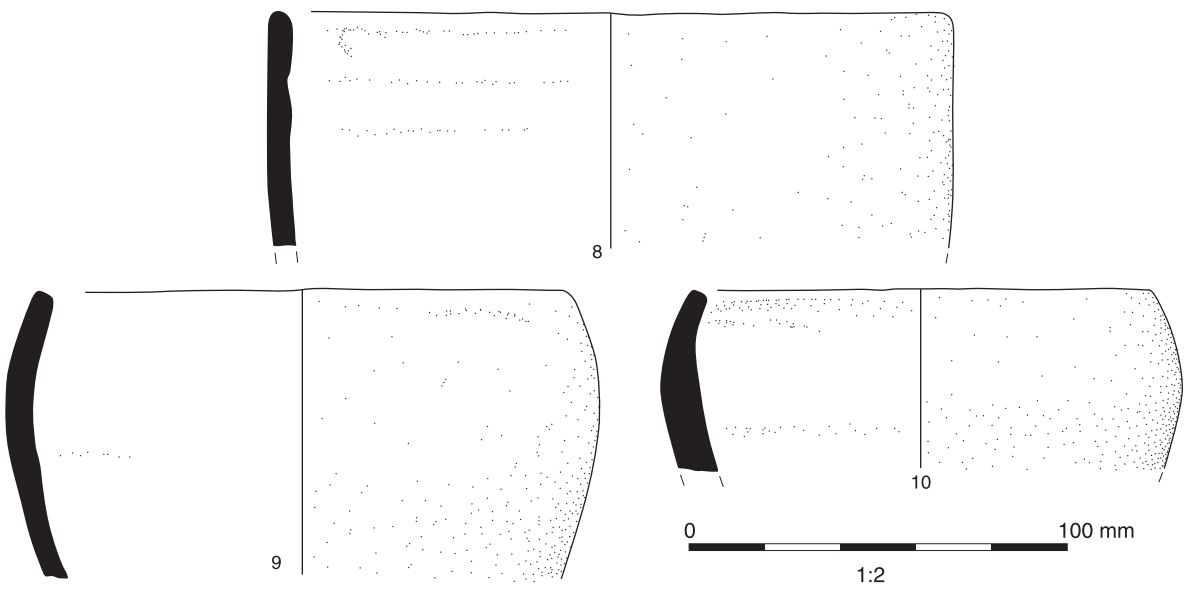


Fig. 2.58 Middle Iron Age pottery from Cotswold Community

9. Ovoid jar with plain rim. Fabric L3. Pit 4181 (4184)
10. Small ovoid jar. Fabric S3. Ditch 7096 (4366)

Worked flint *by Hugo Lamdin-Whymark*

The flint assemblage from Cotswold Community provides a valuable insight into early prehistoric activity on the gravel terraces away from flints sources. The light scatter of late Mesolithic flintwork reflects activity across much of the excavation area and is particularly significant as Mesolithic flint is relatively uncommon in the Cotswold Water Park. Substantial excavated areas of the local landscape have provided no evidence for Mesolithic activity and only a small number of flints were recovered from Thornhill Farm (Lamdin-Whymark 2004) and a single diagnostic flint came from Horcott Pit (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming). Therefore, whilst this small assemblage may only represent sporadic activity by a transient population, it provides some evidence for early human activity in the landscape.

Early Neolithic flintwork is notably absent and in contrast to the Mesolithic the landscape does not appear to have been occupied, even on an occasional basis. The middle Neolithic witnesses a considerable increase in activity with the deposition of flint, among other artefacts, in pits (see Table 2.12). This establishes a pattern of activity in the landscape that continues until the early Bronze Age.

Table 2.12: Early prehistoric features containing struck flint

	Feature type											
	Pit		*Tree-throw hole/ 'natural feature'*		*Posthole*		*Ring-ditch/ Pit circle*		*Burial*		*Finds reference*	
Phase	*No. of features*	*No. of flints*	*No. of features*	*No. of flints*	*No. of features*	*No. of flints*	*No. of features*	*No. of flints*	*No. of features*	*No. of flints*	*No. of features*	*No. of flints*
MN	10	71										
LN	10	72	1	6								
LNEBA	5	109			1	1						
LNEBA?							1	2				
EBA	17	317					1	10	2	6		
EBA?	7	15										
Neolithic/EBA?	5	20	3	17								
EP?	16	29	21	30	1	1					1	2
Prehistoric?	6	8										
Grand Total	76	641	25	53	2	2	2	12	2	6	1	2

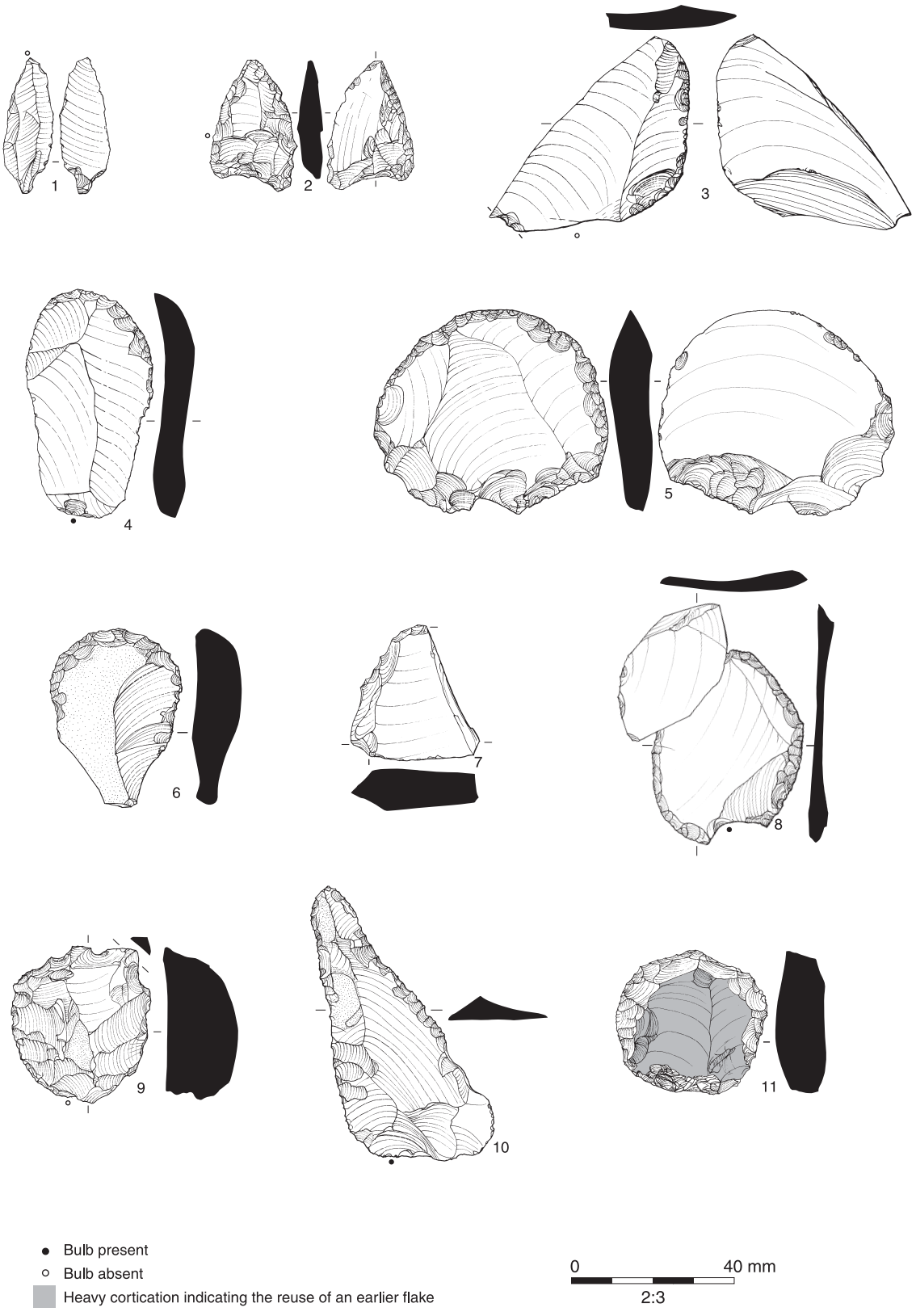


Fig. 2.59 Worked flint from Cotswold Community

Neolithic to early Bronze Age pits in the Upper Thames Valley frequently contain small flint assemblages, with often no more than a few flints, and so offer no potential for undertaking metrical and technological analysis. The Neolithic to early Bronze Age pits at Cotswold Community exhibit a similar trend with only 6.7 flints per pit, excluding chips. The presence of 49 pits containing flints, with a combined assemblage of 584 flints, allowed characterisation of both metrical and technological attributes of the assemblage.

The Neolithic population obtained their lithic raw materials from a variety of sources. Some of the flint originates from the chalk region to the south, whilst other pieces have been gathered from secondary sources, perhaps in a similar region. The absence of Bullhead Bed flint is notable, as this frequently occurs in later Neolithic flint assemblages further to the east, for example at Yarnton (Cramp and Bradley forthcoming). This may suggest the Bullhead Bed sources lie beyond the physical or social contacts of the community. The different raw materials also occur together in many of the Neolithic pit deposits and evidence of knapping was confined to one pit, with the exception of evidence for the conversion of flakes into scrapers. This indicates that the deposits in pits are not drawn from single events following collection of raw material from one source, but reflect more complex patterns of accumulation. The bringing together of different raw materials may result from the accumulation of tools and flakes as part of one or more personal toolkits, through patterns of movement or exchange. This may have occurred in disparate parts of the landscape, or within the site as the high proportion of cores recovered—as residual finds—perhaps indicates that knapping was spatially and/or temporally separated from activities resulting in pit deposits.

Negative refitting evidence suggests that the majority of the flints arrived as unretouched flakes or tools, but it is significant to the activities occurring around pit deposits that scraper manufacture debris was present in three pits and that in one of these cases the manufactured scraper was deposited in the same pit following use. Scrapers are the most common tool and scraping clearly represents an important activity frequently culminating in the creation of a pit deposit. The flake assemblage is also frequently well used and other tools include knifes, arrowheads, piercers and notches. Plant working is also indicated by the presence of few serrated flakes. The range of tools indicates that whilst scraping hides and/or woodworking with scrapers represent an important activity, a range of tasks are represented including hunting, plant-working and various cutting actions. This may reflect a broad range of activities that are associated with habitation. These deposits were, however, clearly constructed with some degree of formality and artefacts were both intentionally incorporated and excluded from deposition. The fine plano-convex knife in pit 9120 (see Fig. 2.12, 6) appears to have been deliberately selected as there is no functional reason for disposal and the same argument may be applied to many of the complete scrapers, other retouched tools and polished stone axes (see Roe, this vol.).

It is unclear if the Neolithic to early Bronze Age flint at Cotswold Community was exposed in surface deposits for a period before deposition, as has been identified on other Neolithic sites, for example at Kilverstone (Garrow *et al.* 2005). The flints were frequently well used and any edge-damage may have occurred in use rather than in a surface deposit. Moreover, as knapping was not associated with the pits, it was not possible to identify refitting sequences within or between pits. Pits that are paired or within groups have similar sized assemblages for each related pit in that group. This may reflect the sequential formation of pits following a similar temporal rhythm, provided that lithics are accumulating at a consistent rate. The variation in the size of assemblages between pit groups may either represent differing temporal patterns in deposition or in the rate of lithic accumulation. It is plausible that isolated pits, pairs of pits and groups of three or more pits may reflect differing durations of activity at the site. As such, pits may provide significant evidence for differing patterns of activity in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, with isolated pits most frequently encountered in the middle Neolithic, paired pits in the late Neolithic and groups of three pits in the early Bronze Age.

Catalogue of illustrated worked flint (Fig. 2.59)

1. Ring ditch 4944. Intervention 4946, fill 5007. SF 361. Tanged point with oblique proximal truncation. Mesolithic, residual in early Bronze Age feature.
2. Pit 4048, fill 4050. SF 100. British oblique arrowhead. Late Neolithic.
3. Pit 17011, fill 17013. SF 2139. Edge retouched flake manufactured on a flake intentionally broken at the proximal and distal ends. Middle Neolithic.
4. Pit 17011, fill 17013. SF 2152. Medium end and side scraper, horseshoe form with retouch around less than 180° of the perimeter. Middle Neolithic.
5. Pit 17022, fill 17024. SF 2414. End and side scraper, D-shaped with crude proximal retouch removing the bulb. Middle Neolithic.
6. Pit 8033, fill 8035. SF 727. Medium end scraper, kite-shaped. Middle Neolithic.
7. Pit 8697, fill 8695. SF 551. Unclassifiable scraper, intentionally broken into a quarter. Middle Neolithic.
8. Pit 4048, fill 4050. SF 145 and 147. Double-end scraper with intentional breakage of the proximal and distal ends as part of the manufacturing process. The distal end has been con-joined. Late Neolithic.
9. Pit 8687, fill 8685. SF 542. Disc scraper with spur on left distal and denticulated distal edge. Early Bronze Age?
10. Beaker grave pit 7611, fill 7612. SF 431. Backed knife. Early Bronze Age.
11. Pit 4582, fill 4578. SF 197. Disc scraper with slight nose on the left distal edge. The flake and retouch exhibit differing levels of cortication, indicating the flake was of considerable antiquity when it was modified into a scraper. Mesolithic/Neolithic flake modified and deposited in the later Bronze Age.

Worked stone *by Fiona Roe and Ruth Shaffrey*

Stone finds from Cotswold Community included four stone axes, part of a bracer or wristguard and two utilised pebbles as well as six processors, two whetstones and a spindle whorl. The non local materials used for three of the axes and the bracer have been identified by Rob Ixer. The axes are all made from materials known to have been in use for long periods of time, running into thousands of years. However, axes dating to the earlier part of the Neolithic sequence were not found at Cotswold Community.

Axe SF 526 was found in middle Neolithic pit 8697 (see Fig. 2.4). Thin sectioning has shown that the axe was made from the Group VII augite granophyre quarried at Graig Lwyd, Penmaenmawr, North Wales. Pit 8697 was one of a group of three pits with Peterborough Ware associations (see Mullin, this vol.), which fits with other known finds of this axe material. These include a fragment from an axe found with Peterborough Ware in a hearth at Yarnton, Oxfordshire (Roe forthcoming (a)) and Peterborough Ware associations in pits at Parc Bryn Cegin, Gwynedd (Kenney forthcoming (a) and (b); Williams forthcoming). Graig Lwyd stone was in use from the early through to the late Neolithic (*op cit)*, and was extensively utilised by the makers of Grooved Ware (Roe 1999 and forthcoming (b)).

There are no late Neolithic associations for axes at Cotswold Community, but an axe of chert (SF 790) came from pit 10229 of general late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date (Fig. 2.60). Chert was little used for making axes (Pitts 1996, 313), though one other artefact from Gloucestershire has been recorded, from Cherington (Clough and Cummins 1988, 153). This object may have been made from a pebble acquired from the local gravels.

Unusually, the other two axes found at Cotswold Community are from post-Neolithic contexts. Axe SF 672 (see Fig. 2.12 above), made from a uralitised gabbro from Cornwall known as Group I, came from one of a group of Beaker pits (9121). This axe is incomplete and the broken ends have been reworked into flat facets. A multi-purpose tool (SF 661) came from the same pit fill and consists of a fine-grained pebble, possibly rhyolite, which has a worn facet and has been further used as a hammerstone and a polisher (see Fig. 2.12 above). Group I greenstone, like Group VII, was utilised for a considerable length of time, with axes occurring particularly in Grooved Ware contexts (Roe 1999 and forthcoming (b)), while there are also some mace-heads and even a few battle-axes made from the same material (Roe 1979). Nevertheless, the stone artefacts from this pit fill seem to represent a tool kit and the axe appears to have been re-used, so that it may not be representative of the later use of the Group I greenstone.

Complete axe SF 33 was not thin sectioned but also appears to be made from a Cornish greenstone (see Fig. 2.27 above). It was associated in pit 2004 with sherds of middle Bronze Age bucket urn, and a quartzite hammerstone (SF 37; Fig. 2.27) came from the same fill. While stone axes found in Bronze Age contexts are uncommon, there are a few other examples and there is a good parallel with the complete axe, probably of Group I greenstone, which formed part of a seemingly 'placed' deposit in a middle Bronze Age waterhole at Perry Oaks, Heathrow Airport (Roe 2006). It would seem that stone axes were still being valued during the Bronze Age, either as artefacts currently in use or as heirlooms.

These axes fit well into the picture of what is known about the usage of stone axe materials locally. Nominally the most frequently used grouped axe material in Gloucestershire was the Group VI Langdale stone from the Lake District, with 29% recorded examples. This is followed in popularity by the Graig Lwyd stone (16.4%) and the Group I greenstone (13.7%).

The bracer, SF 721, is from an inhumation with a fragmentary Beaker that has characteristics of the Wessex/Middle Rhine variety (see Fig. 2.15 above) an association that is entirely typical of its kind. Identification of the fine-grained rock used to make the bracer has proved problematic. Bracers (or wristguards) are usually very

Fig. 2.60 Axe SF 790

carefully made artefacts, often found complete, and they are not as a rule thin sectioned. However the Cotswold Community one is damaged and incomplete, providing a useful opportunity for the removal of a slice, and microscopic examination has shown that the rock resembles a nephrite, consisting of a densely felted mass of amphibole fibres. It does not, however, compare with the continental variety of nephrite known to have been used to make axes (Pierre Petrequin, pers. comm.) and a source for the stone in the UK seems probable**.** At the time of writing a specific source has not been found and research continues. There are no known British sources of nephrite.

Nearly two dozen bracers made from this particular variety of stone have been recorded to date (Woodward *et al.* forthcoming) and these include an incomplete bracer from Wellington Quarry, Herefordshire (Harrison *et al.* 1999). There are no further finds from Gloucestershire, but flat bracers of comparable stone are known from only 40 km (25 miles) away in Oxfordshire, as for instance at Stanton Harcourt (Case 1963). Further comparable bracers are known from elsewhere, including in Wiltshire, where, for example at Roundway, near Devizes, a Low Carinated Beaker was found with a four-holed bracer (Needham 2005, 185, fig 5, 5; Woodward *et al*. forthcoming). It is possible to demonstrate a consistent story in the general area, with Beakers that should be early in the sequence. The Cotswold Community Beaker grave-group can be seen as belonging within the original Low Carinated Beaker/copper dagger/wristguard complex, as envisaged by Stuart Needham (2005, 204 and fig 12).

The remaining stone assemblage comprises mostly processors. Four pebbles of quartzite and one of flint were recovered from late Neolithic/early Bronze Age and middle Bronze Age contexts pit fills. These all have percussion wear around at least one end suggesting use as hammerstones or pounders. A sixth processor has wear more consistent with use as a rubber and was recovered from fill of middle Iron Age house gully 4180 (4794). Fragments from two saddle querns were recovered but both were found in residual Roman or Saxon contexts. A single pebble whetstone was deposited in a probable MBA-EIA pit fill 5180 and another natural or secondary whetstone was found in pit 1363; this is well used on both faces and edges with a pronounced groove on one side. A chalk spindle whorl was found in the primary fill of a probable MBA-EIA pit 5369.

Figure 2.60

SF 790, ctx 10229. Stone axe, fairly complete, though with chips missing from the blade end and some battering at the butt end. Some scratch marks on the polished surface; L 102, B max 70, D max 3.25 mm, 334 g. Light coloured, fine-grained stone, not thin sectioned but has the appearance of chert. Single fill of small, isolated pit 10228, with LN/EBA flints and bone but no pottery.

Burnt stone *by Kelly Powell*

Around 616 kg of burnt stone was recovered from 105 features assigned to prehistoric phases (1–5) at Cotswold Community. Burnt stone is characteristic of occupation debris and on gravel terraces is often brought some distance indicating its significance to everyday life (Lambrick 2009, 159). Its use to prepare food through a variety of methods is well documented (ibid.), therefore its presence on archaeological sites is often indicative of domestic activity. In addition, burnt stone is often found in association with industrial activity such as metalworking, possibly used, for example, to provide a stable surface for placing crucibles during casting (Hearne and Heaton 1994, 51).

Relatively small quantities of burnt stone were found in Neolithic contexts (Phases 1 and 2a), likely to represent small-scale domestic activity (ie cooking), though by Phase 2b (early Bronze Age) deposits had increased in quantity suggesting more intensive activity in any single occupation event.

Phase 3 (middle Bronze Age) produced by far the largest deposits of burnt stone by feature, especially from waterholes (5018 = 103.6 kg, 2146 = 76 k, 5763/4 = 50.1 kg). It is apparent that waterholes were focal points for the more intensive and sedentary way of life in this period.

Both the amount of deposited burnt stone and the average deposition per feature fell during the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (Phase 4), although continuity is seen in the presence of large dumps of burnt stone within waterholes (9485/9519 = 94.05 kg, 7737 = 15.1 kg, 9245 = 9 kg, 4757 = 2.3 kg). The reason for this fall in deposition is unknown but may be indicative of shorter periods of occupation in shifting settlement. What is notable is the huge deposit from waterhole 9485/9519, which was somewhat removed from the bulk of the phase 4 activity.

Burnt stone from Phase 5 (middle Iron Age) is limited by the small number of excavated features which belong to the phase, although a general increase in deposition can be inferred.

Burnt stone appears to be an essential part of everyday prehistoric life at Cotswold Community. For the most part this probably reflects the use of stone in preparation of food as 'pot-boilers', with many deposits coming from domestic areas. However, there are occurrences of up to 103 kg of burnt stone in a single feature which may be indicative of a more specialist and intensive use of heated stone. In some cases, potentially including middle Bronze Age waterholes associated with settlements, this may be a result of long periods of occupation. In other cases, most notably Phase 4 waterholes 9485/9519, features were removed from any settlement and the burnt stone deposits may indicate the presence of some form of industrial activity such as metal working.

The deposition of burnt stone is a recognised phenomenon in the later Bronze Age, sometimes in the form of 'burnt mounds' but also commonly found in the upper fills of waterholes and pits, though this is often under-reported (Lambrick 2009, 179). Similar deposits were found, for example, at Yarnton, within waterholes dating to the middle and late Bronze Age some distance from the main settlement (Hey *et al.* forthcoming). There have been a number of theories concerning the origin of these deposits including cooking places (O'Kelly 1954; Hedges 1975), baths and saunas (Barfield and Hodder 1987) and areas for washing fleeces and dyeing (Jeffery 1991).

The structural fired clay and clay objects
by Cynthia Poole

Small quantities of fired clay were found in Phases 1 to 5, most of it non-diagnostic, but probably derived from oven/hearth structure or furniture. Throughout the prehistoric period the absence of *in situ* ovens or hearths is notable—with only a single hearth or oven base (4181) identified in the middle Iron Age—and the density of fired clay for a site of this size is sparse. Diagnostic items

comprised middle Bronze Age cylindrical perforated pedestals and Bronze Age mould fragments.

The Bronze Age pedestals are spherical with flattened ends producing an elliptical profile. These have been traditionally regarded as loomweights, but evidence for suspension is lacking, and there is increasing evidence for their association with ovens, hearths or kilns (Woodward 2009).

Some of the Bronze Age mould fragments (from pit 18304) could be refitted allowing an identification of the manufactured objects to be made. It is clear that bivalve moulds were used, made in two parts, bound together and sealed with an outer wrap. Fragments from all sections were recovered and a minimum of two mould assemblies have been identified. Mould assembly A (see Fig. 2.30 above) is the best preserved with parts of the lower end of both valves and part of the outer wrap into which valve 1 fits. Mould assemblies B and C may be from opposite ends of the same mould. It is clear that mould assemblies A and B represent the lower blade end of a palstave, 33 mm wide narrowing to 25 mm at the loop, which is *c* 20 mm wide. The diagnostic fragment from mould assembly C consists of the haft end of the palstave with part of the groove to form the narrow flange; at the top the mould fragment flares out to form part of the gate, the section of the mould which acted as a funnel to aid pouring the molten metal and as a reservoir to ensure sufficient metal was available as it contracted during cooling.

It is rare to find such a concentration of mould fragments, and this deposit within a small pit associated with burnt clay may be significant. It is particularly uncommon for mould fragments to be found with associated evidence of industrial activity and evidence of hearth or furnace bases have rarely been positively identified in this country. Hearth bases may be difficult to identify since *in situ* burning would not necessarily be intense, as heat is directed upwards during the process, not to the hearth floor. However in the case of pit 18304 the sequence of lower layers of burnt clay with charcoal rich layers above containing the mould fragments suggests this pit may be the actual bronze working hearth.

This pit is situated peripherally and some distance from the main centres of Bronze Age activity on the site, suggesting that that this was small scale activity undertaken by itinerant craftsmen visiting each community and providing only a few implements as required. A further small group of moulds producing socketed axes dated to 900–700 BC was in another part of Shorncote Quarry to the north (Hearne and Heaton 1995) and suggests a similar level of production, though later in date. These small deposits contrast with sites such as Holborough, Kent (Boden 2005) or Springfield Lyons, Essex (Hedges and Buckley 1982), where large deposits of sword moulds have been found, possibly placed as structured or special deposits in ditches. Analysis of the bronze working crucibles and moulds from Dainton, Devon (Needham 1980) has also suggested large-scale metalworking was carried out intermittently here over a period of time utilising local clays.

Overall, the archaeological evidence of Bronze Age bronze working suggest different levels of production, including some more permanent centres, along with many sites with mould fragments from one or two objects, which may represent itinerant craftsmen serving the needs of a locality. The moulds from Cotswold Community are likely to fall into the latter situation.

Charred plant remains *by Wendy Smith*

Middle Neolithic/ early Bronze Age

A total of five samples from middle Neolithic/early Bronze Age (Phase 1–2) period pit deposits had limited charred plant remains, but were dominated by hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) nutshell. In all cases the nutshell was highly fragmented, therefore the weight of deposits was recorded and this was converted to whole hazelnuts using the calculation devised by Carruthers (Mithen *et al*. 2001, 227). Most of the resulting numbers were relatively small, 20 nuts or less, which could conceivably have arrived with hazel wood fuel or represent general household detritus such as accidental accumulation of hearth/ floor sweepings. It seems wasteful to 'accidentally' burn hazelnuts with hazel wood fuel; nevertheless, Challinor (this vol.) found that hazel wood charcoal was dominant in many of these deposits. This may be a combination of intentional collection of hazel nuts, as a wild foodstuff, combined with the use of hazel wood (possibly a managed resource) for fuel. Certainly, the recovery of the equivalent of 55 hazelnuts in pit 4512 is less easy to explain away and may well represent processing of hazel nuts, even though hazel wood charcoal was dominant in this assemblage.

The recovery of small quantities of hazel nutshells from deposits of this period is common in England and was a feature of Neolithic deposits at Windmill Hill causewayed enclosure, Wiltshire (Fairbairn 2000, 169). Intentional heating of hazel nuts is likely to have been carried out in order to ease processing, digestion and portability and as much as 25% of hazel nutshells are likely to have become charred during such a process (Mithen and Score 2000; Mithen *et al*. 2001, 228). Certainly modern experiments suggest that roasting hazelnuts greatly improves their palatability, producing a flavour quite similar to baked potatoes (eg Mears and Hillman 2007, 26).

An extremely limited range of weed/wild taxa were recovered from the middle Neolithic/early Bronze Age samples. As a result, it is difficult to make generalisations about cultivation conditions during these phases.

Middle Bronze Age/middle Iron Age

A single middle/late Bronze Age (Phase 3–4) pit deposit (pit 18304) produced only four identifiable seeds, one of which was a possible emmer (*Triticum* cf. *dicoccum* Schübl.) grain, the remainder were weed seeds. Unlike the earlier samples, this produced no hazel nutshell fragments. The middle Iron Age (Phase 5) samples produced small assemblages containing a mixture of cereal grain, cereal chaff and accompanying weeds of crop. Small quantities of hazel nutshell fragments were also recovered from two samples.

In the middle Iron Age, weed/wild plants formed a substantial portion of the assemblage, accounting for 35.1–54.2% of all identifications. Cereal grain (15.7–22%) and cereal chaff (6.8–11.2%) are much more abundant in these deposits than the middle Bronze Age deposit, with hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain and indeterminate wheat (*Triticum* sp.) glume bases recovered. However, the majority of material was quite fragmented and/ or abraded, therefore, identification to species level, especially of the wheat, was not possible. The small number and size of the middle Iron Age assemblage means that it is not likely to be fully representative of the range of agricultural activities taking place.

Charcoal *by Dana Challinor*

Neolithic/early Bronze Age

Charcoal from a number of Neolithic and early Bronze Age (Phase 1–2) pits and a late Neolithic cremation was fully analysed. The assemblage from the pits was very mixed in character, with a range of taxa present. Shrubby species were well represented; in particular hazel formed a large component, with a strong contingent of scrub/hedgerow-type species such as Maloideae (apple, pear etc.), blackthorn and buckthorn. Larger woodland trees such as oak or ash were less well represented. Oak forms less than 25% of the assemblage in the middle Neolithic samples; this rises to 36% in the late Neolithic sample from pit 17022 although the assemblage was generally very mixed, with similar percentages of hazel and blackthorn. The late Neolithic cremation 8376 was entirely dominated by oak as was the early Bronze Age pit sample from 7972, which also contained a quantity of ash. The apparent inconsistency of pit 7972 to the other pits may relate to a variation in activities.

Overall, the assemblage indicated a reasonably open landscape, although the quantity of hazel suggests that oak-hazel woodland was available and exploited for fuel use. The use of oak was limited indicating that hazel wood was a preferred fuelwood. The quantity of hazel charcoal also supports the suggestion by Wendy Smith (this vol.) that some of the charred hazel nutshells entered the archaeological record with the wood. It is likely that the charcoal assemblage reflects the exploitation of local resources for food gathering practices (ie the fuelwood was collected at the same time as the hazel nuts, apples, sloes etc.), and that the felling of larger woodland trees was reserved for other activities, such as cremations. Certainly, the late Neolithic cremation burial, in common with others of this date, was dominated by oak. The use of shrubby species for domestic hearths also seems to be consistent with the picture from other comparable sites (eg Horcott Pit, Challinor forthcoming).

Middle-late Bronze Age

Charcoal from this period (Phase 3–4) came from pit 3237 and waterhole 5018, possibly derived from domestic fires, as well as from possible Bronze working hearth 18304. Although the dataset is limited it shows consistency with the earlier utilisation of fuelwoods such as blackthorn, buckthorn and the hawthorn group as well as probable hazel. The increased presence of several light-demanding species in the charcoal assemblage (eg *Rhamnus cathartica, Prunus spinosa*) by the middle Bronze Age suggests that any original woodland cover may have been modified.

The sample from pit 18304 was dominated by oak. Interestingly, this pit was associated with metalworking, for which a high heat would have been necessary. Oak, either as wood or as charcoal, would have provided this and was apparently used as the main fuelwood, with a mixture of blackthorn, hawthorn type and alder/hazel branches used for kindling. This illustrates apparent context-related variation similar to the earlier periods, where oak is used for specific activities, such as metalworking, but shrub/hedgerow type trees are used for domestic purposes.

Middle Iron Age

The middle Iron Age (Phase 5) assemblage came almost entirely from pits/hearths (4181, 4554, 4565) from the interior of roundhouse 4180, providing evidence of domestic fuel use.

These samples were all very mixed with a wide range of taxa and a notable quantity of small diameter roundwood. Apparently, small branches from thorny scrub or hedgerows (featuring a range of trees like blackthorn, hawthorn group, buckthorn, field maple), were being gathered for cooking and heat within the house. The assemblage from the terminal fill of the ring gully (4180) was much the same, suggesting that it may have come from similar domestic debris.

The charcoal indicates consolidation of the earlier clearances, with little evidence for larger woodland trees, suggesting a landscape in which hedgerows may have been used for enclosure of land. In addition, the potential for the grazing of domestic animals is suggested by the strong presence of thorny scrub which could withstand grazing. Other light-demanding species, such as *Salix cinerea* or *S. caprea* (willow), might be expected if there were no pressure from grazing. The middle Iron Age pits at Horcott Pit produced similar charcoal assemblages (Challinor forthcoming) and the results are very much consistent with the picture for the Cotswold Water Park of an open agricultural landscape (Robinson 2007).

Animal bone *by Lena Strid*

Animal bone was recovered from prehistoric features dating from the middle Neolithic to the middle Iron Age (Table 2.13). The assemblage is considered here in two groups – the Neolithic to middle Bronze Age and the late Bronze Age to middle Iron Age.

The Neolithic to middle Bronze Age phases (Phase 1–3) produced 732 bone fragments from five species: cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries / Capra hircus*), pig (*Sus domesticus*), dog (*Canis familiaris*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). The middle Neolithic assemblage was very small, comprising bones from adult cattle and unidentified large mammals, whilst the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age assemblage was somewhat larger, but consisted mainly of bones indeterminable to species. Cattle was the predominant species and red deer was also present. Since the red deer bone is an undiagnostic fragment of antler, there is no direct evidence for deer hunting, as the antler may have been collected after shedding. These assemblages were too small for analysis and poor bone preservation from both the current site and the nearby Horcott Pit site (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* forthcoming) makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions regarding Neolithic/early Bronze Age animal husbandry in the area.

In the middle Bronze Age cattle were by far the dominant species, followed by sheep/goat and red deer. It seems likely that the animal husbandry was focussed on cattle as providers of beef and dairy products. Tooth wear ageing data suggests that the majority of animals were killed at 18–30 months of age, a prime age for meat production. Mutton, pork and venison contributed to a minor part of the diet. Judging by the surface structure of the bones, all sheep/goats and pigs were sub-adults/adults when slaughtered, but the poor bone condition is likely to have skewed the assemblage in favour of skeletally mature individuals. However, the main focus for sheep husbandry was probably wool.

Table 2.13: Animal bone by phase

SKCC	*1 MN*	*2 LN/EBA*	*3 MBA*	*4 LBA/EIA*	*5 MIA*	*Total*
Cattle	3	6	103	30	10	152
Sheep/goat (goat)			28	2	15	45
Sheep						
Goat						
Pig			5			5
Horse					1	1
Dog			2			2
Cat						
Red deer		1	10		1	12
Roe deer						
Deer sp.						
Fowl						
Rook						
Red kite						
Bird sp.						
Bank/field vole						
Frog						
Amphibian						
Small mammal						
Medium mammal		2	11	3	7	23
Large mammal	7	8	156	32	28	231
Indeterminate		65	325	16	235	641
TOTAL	10	82	640	83	297	1112
Weight (g)	191	217	5741	1405	1129	8683

The late Bronze Age to middle Iron Age (Phases 4–5) assemblage comprised 380 bone fragments, excluding fragments from articulated cattle burials. The species present included cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries / Capra hircus*), and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). Goats are usually present in very small numbers, making it likely that the majority of the sheep/goats are sheep. The most numerous taxa was cattle, similar to the comparative regional assemblages, although a significant change was seen following Phase 5 when sheep/goat became more common (see Chapter 3). Horses are notably lacking in the earlier Iron Age phases compared to other Upper Thames Valley sites. This may be due to pastures being at a premium and therefore prioritised to cattle and sheep. As is the case for most Iron Age sites, game contributed very little to the diet.

The slaughter pattern for cattle peaked at 1.5–3 years of age, comparable to other sites in the region. This suggests the younger surplus cattle were slaughtered for meat, and the older ones used mainly for traction, and secondarily for dairy products and breeding. A similar husbandry focus was found for sheep/goat, where surplus sheep were slaughtered for meat at an early age. Adult sheep yielded wool and dairy products for a few years before slaughter.

Overall, the livestock size at Cotswold Community was within the same range as livestock from other Iron Age sites. The small differences are most likely due to inter-site variations in age and/or sex ratios. Butchery marks could be observed on a rather small number of cattle and sheep/goat bones, consisting of knife marks deriving from disarticulation and filleting.

Special animal deposits

The prehistoric assemblage also contained four articulated cattle skeletons found at the base of pits. One of these burials is tentatively phased middle Bronze Age, two are late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and one could belong to either phase. Special animal deposits occur on many Iron Age sites, typified by unusual placement, for example at the base of pits and wells, and by body parts which differ from normal food waste by species and age group composition (Hill 1995; Wilson 1992, 342–5). However, these definitions do not guarantee exclusion of non-ritual deposits, as young animals in particular may represent natural mortality. Articulated corpses may also have been from diseased animals, whose flesh was not considered fit for consumption.

The cattle skeletons were found at the base of pits, although due to the shallow depth of these features (0.12–0.35 m) all were poorly preserved. The cattle were mostly complete, but lack parts of their peripheral bodies. The poor condition of the bones made it impossible to discern any butchery marks or pathological conditions. Pits 18570 and 18686 were situated in settlement areas, whereas pits 8587 and 2048 were outside settlements and therefore difficult to phase.

The cattle were between 1.5 to 3 years old at death, similar to the disarticulated cattle remains in the assemblage. In contrast, the cattle and horse burials at Latton Lands contained animals of a very young age (K Poole 2009). It has been argued that ritually deposited animals

often vary in species and/or age when compared to the disarticulated remains from settlement refuse (Hill 1995, 56; Wilson 1992, 344–5). However, the special animal deposits at Danebury include some adult sheep, the most numerous species overall at the site (Grant 1984, 221–3). At Cotswold Community, it is likely that the burial of apparently complete, valuable, animals indicates a special, or ritual, purpose. It is possible that the two burials situated in settlement areas represent foundation sacrifices, while the function of the peripheral burials may perhaps be associated with land divisions.

Shell *by Kelly Powell and Rebecca Nicholson*

Four fragments of marine shell were recovered from prehistoric features at Cotswold Community. The small assemblage comprised a fragment of possible clam from middle Neolithic pit 8859 and a large proportion of a scallop shell from pit 8799 as well as fragments of a painter's mussel shell and a further small oyster or bivalve from middle Iron Age house gully 4180.

The presence of shell in Phase 1 is particularly remarkable and its presence may indicate use as temper in pottery production. These fragments were placed in paired pits and may have been a structured deposit rather than simple disposal. The scallop shell may have been collected as a shell from the shore rather than specifically fished as a food item. Notably, the distance of the site from the sea shore suggests this is the product of a trade network during the middle Neolithic.

A freshwater mussel was also found from a late Neolithic pit at Roughground Farm, suggesting shells may have had some significance at this time. Robinson suggests the shells may indicate diet but may also have been used as scoops or items of personal ornamentation (1993, 15). Whilst the latter is not likely for the Cotswold Community examples the shell may have been used for a variety of functions and appears to have been important enough to deposit in a certain way.

The presence of the shells from middle Iron Age gully 4180 suggests that freshwater shell fish were being exploited in this period. It is unclear whether this is a case of local exploitation or longer distance trade. The presence of a similar type of shell at Roughground Farm in the Neolithic period as outlined above may indicate ongoing exploitation of freshwater mussels in the Upper Thames Valley.

Human Skeletal Remains *by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston*

Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age

A single cremation burial (8377) was recovered as a discrete deposit within late Neolithic pit 8376 (Phase 2a), probably originally contained within an organic container (see Fig. 2.9). The cremated bone was radiocarbon dated to 2760–2560 cal BC (SUERC-18833, 72.5% prob). The deposit weighed 1865 g, and thus, may represent the complete cremated skeleton of the individual (McKinley 2000). Although fragmentation was marked, the deposit contained larger fragments than were observed in the other cremation deposits. The element dimensions suggested an adult, but the lack of diagnostic landmarks precluded analysis of sex. The bone was fully calcined (white), indicating efficient and complete combustion of the corpse. Late Neolithic cremation burials are rare in the Upper Thames Valley, although a small cremation cemetery associated with the Dorchester-on-Thames henge complex is believed to be contemporary with the monuments (Atkinson 1951).

Three early Bronze Age (Phase 2b) inhumations were found, in addition to a single pit burial. Crouched skeleton 8965 was orientated south-north within shallow oval grave 8933 (see Fig. 2.10). Flint flakes and Beaker pottery fragments accompanied the skeleton. The bone was very eroded, with only 25% extant, making it impossible to confidently age or sex the skeleton, although general dimensions suggested an adolescent.

Adult skeleton (9553) lay in a partly filled oval pit (9551) (see Fig. 2.15 above). Bone preservation was very poor (comprising only skull and long bone fragments), but it was possible to ascertain that the skeleton was orientated west-east and was crouched. A complete Beaker pot was located in the foot region (see Fig. 2.56, 6), and an incomplete wristguard lay alongside the knees. Osteological assessment indicated a prime adult (26–35yrs), though the sex remained undetermined.

Skeleton 7612 within grave 7611 (Fig. 2.10) was accompanied by a near-complete Beaker pot. Bone survival was poor, comprising only long bone shaft fragments; osteological assessment indicated that this was an adult of unknown sex. Further human remains (7971) were recovered from early Bronze Age pit 7972, comprising a long bone shaft and small skull fragments, identified as an adult of unknown sex.

Overall, the Beaker inhumations lay in the crouched, lateral body position and north-south orientation characteristic of this burial tradition. Other examples known from the region include the mature female burial (206) from South Parks Road, Oxford (Boston *et al.* 2003), and Radley Barrow Hills, Oxon. (Barclay and Halpin 1999).

Middle Bronze Age

Skeleton 3175 was radiocarbon dated to the middle Bronze Age (1510–1400 cal BC (SUERC-18831; 95.4% prob)), whilst skeleton 2511 was also tentatively assigned to Phase 3. Female skeleton 3175 (aged 18–36 years) was buried within a grave cut (3173) inside enclosure 3239 (Fig. 2.26). The burial was oriented NE-SW, with the body tightly crouched on its right side. Skeleton 2511 was a mature adult male (45 years or more) interred within circular grave 2508 (Fig. 2.19). Body position was unclear due to poor bone preservation, but appeared to be crouched. The skull lay towards the north, suggesting the north-south orientation. The normative burial rite in the middle Bronze Age is cremation burial (Taylor 2001), so the presence of inhumations is particularly interesting.

Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age

An isolated unurned and unaccompanied cremation burial (18536) containing the remains of a single individual had been placed within the central fill of a small circular pit (18534) (see Fig. 2.34). The deposit was small (276 g) and was white and highly fragmented, suggesting effective cremation. The absence of pyre debris indicated careful sorting of the bone after cremation.

Although not regarded as the predominant funerary rite of this period, recent development of radiocarbon

techniques in dating cremated bone have revealed an increasing number of late Bronze Age cremation burials, not previously acknowledged in the literature. Local late Bronze Age cremation burials are known from Cassington, Oxon. (Hey *et al*. in prep.), whilst six small deposits of cremated human bone within late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pits are known from Butler's Field, Lechlade (Boyle *et al.* 1998), and one Iron Age example is known from Segsbury Camp (Boyle 2005).

Middle Iron Age

Cremation deposit (4366) within short linear gully 7096 (Fig. 2.53) weighed only 55 g. The remains were very fragmentary and bone colour was variable, ranging from dark brown/black through to light grey and white, indicating incomplete cremation.

In the Upper Thames Valley, cremated human bone is fairly rare in this period and probably represents a continuation of late Bronze Age practices. The low bone weight of deposit 4366—and association with burnt material—suggests that it did not comprise a formal cremation burial *per se*, but a cremation-related deposit, relatively common in later prehistory (McKinley 1997; 2000). Similarly, most cremated human bone deposits at Butler's Field, Lechlade, were very small (weighing from 2 g to 120 g; Boyle *et al.* 1998). Incomplete cremation (as seen from the range of bone colour) was a feature of both the Cotswold Community and Butler's Field deposits. This may signify changing attitudes to the act of cremation (eg less importance attached to complete combustion of the corpse), reduced availability of fuel and/or changes in pyre technology from the preceding period, when complete burning of the skeleton was ubiquitous.

Chapter 3: In the shadow of Corinium— the later Iron Age to late Roman period

by Alex Smith and Kelly Powell

INTRODUCTION

Throughout most of the prehistoric period at Cotswold Community human activity had been relatively dispersed and somewhat transient in terms of shifting location over wide areas. Yet at some point in the middle or late Iron Age, the landscape underwent a dramatic re-organisation, with the focus of nucleated settlement concentrated on a higher area of gravel terrace in the north. Here it was to stay right through to the late Roman period, creating a complicated sequence of overlying phases of activity (Figs 3.1–2). The reasons for this apparently fundamental change are unclear, but may have been partly due to worsening climate and a greater propensity for flooding at this time (Robinson 1992; see Champness, this vol.). However, if this was purely the case, then it may be expected that the settlement would have been located on the higher area of ground (*c* 0.5 m higher) immediately to the north (Fig. 3.3), and so it is likely that a range of environmental and socio-economic reasons came into play.

This chapter outlines the development of an agricultural community over 500 to 600 years, a period which in the wider context saw dramatic transformations of landscape and society, including incorporation into the Roman Empire. The town at Corinium (Cirencester) was established less than 5 km to the north of Cotswold Community and became one of the largest cities in Roman Britain, dominating the surrounding region. The complex relationship between urban and rural is crucial to our understanding of society at this time, and is explored to some degree within this chapter.

THE ORIGINS OF SETTLEMENT NUCLEATION IN THE MIDDLE-LATE IRON AGE (PHASE 6)

The first phase of activity in this northern area has been dated middle-late Iron Age (Fig. 3.4) as it is stratigraphically earlier than the more extensive late Iron Age/early Roman settlement, but clearly represents a shift away from the middle Iron Age activity to the south. Dating was scarce, comprising a few sherds of pottery which seem to indicate a native industry, uninfluenced by Roman culture, setting it apart from the succeeding phase. As a result of the long-lived sequence of activity in this area, many of the features dating to this phase were truncated, ephemeral and difficult to set apart. Therefore the following narrative outlines the major elements and tentatively suggests the form of the settlement, which comprised a small area of open domestic occupation immediately south of a substantial palisaded enclosure.

Settlement

A small settlement was located near the southern limit of the higher gravel terrace, comprising three possible roundhouse structures as well as a series of pits and a waterhole (Figs 3.5–6). The ephemeral nature of the evidence means that it remains uncertain if all of the possible roundhouses represented one contemporary household group, or a single dwelling that was rebuilt several times.

Roundhouse structures 11951, 19985 and 19986 (Fig. 3.6)

Structure 11951 was the most substantial feature indicating settlement during this phase. This comprised a gully in the form of an extended semi-circle, *c* 9 m across, open to the west. It is not clear whether the feature was originally a more complete circle, although a group of pits within the open area to the west (see below) does suggest that it remained open. The gully itself was *c* 0.3 m wide and only around 0.1 m deep, possibly as a result of truncation, although the feature may have been shallow during its time of use. No finds were recovered with the exception of a fragment of animal bone and intrusive Roman pottery, probably as a result of the later construction of a 'stack ring' (11904) on top of the gully. No evidence of postholes was found on the interior, although two were incorporated into the gully and another was located *c* 1 m from the possible north-western terminal of the gully. Pits 12147 and 12210 in the interior of the structure produced middle-late Iron Age and later pottery as well as small assemblages of animal bone, ceramic building material and oven

fragments. The latter, from pit 12210, may indicate that this was a domestic oven or hearth.

A series of pits and gullies appeared to cut structure 11951 to the east, although the relationship was not proven. Many of these features produced middle-late Iron Age pottery; the pits also produced a mixed animal bone assemblage and fired clay, while one gully produced a fragment of oven or hearth material. The features were possibly related to structure 11951, although their arrangement is unusual and their function is unknown.

A possible remnant of a comparable structure (19986) was located to the west of 11951. This comprised an unexcavated segment of gully, on a similar alignment surviving only as a soil mark. South-east of these features was a further penannular gully (19985) mostly truncated by later Roman features. This was also *c* 0.3 m wide and less than 0.1 m deep with a small opening to the west, at least 1.3 m across. The gully produced no finds.

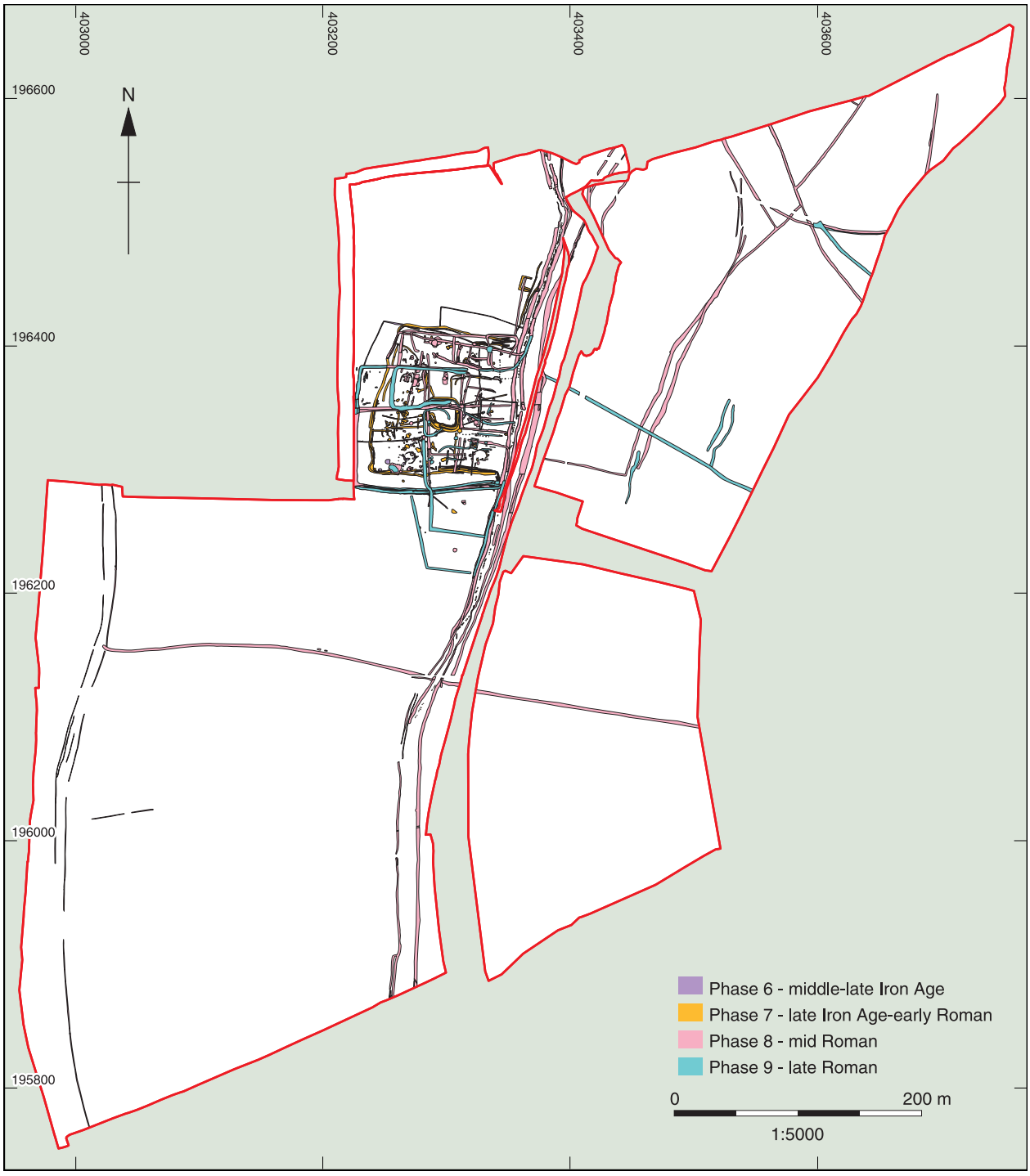


Fig. 3.1 Overview of later Iron Age and Roman phases (6–9) at Cotswold Community

Fig. 3.2 Detail of later Iron Age and Roman settlement (composite phases 6–9)

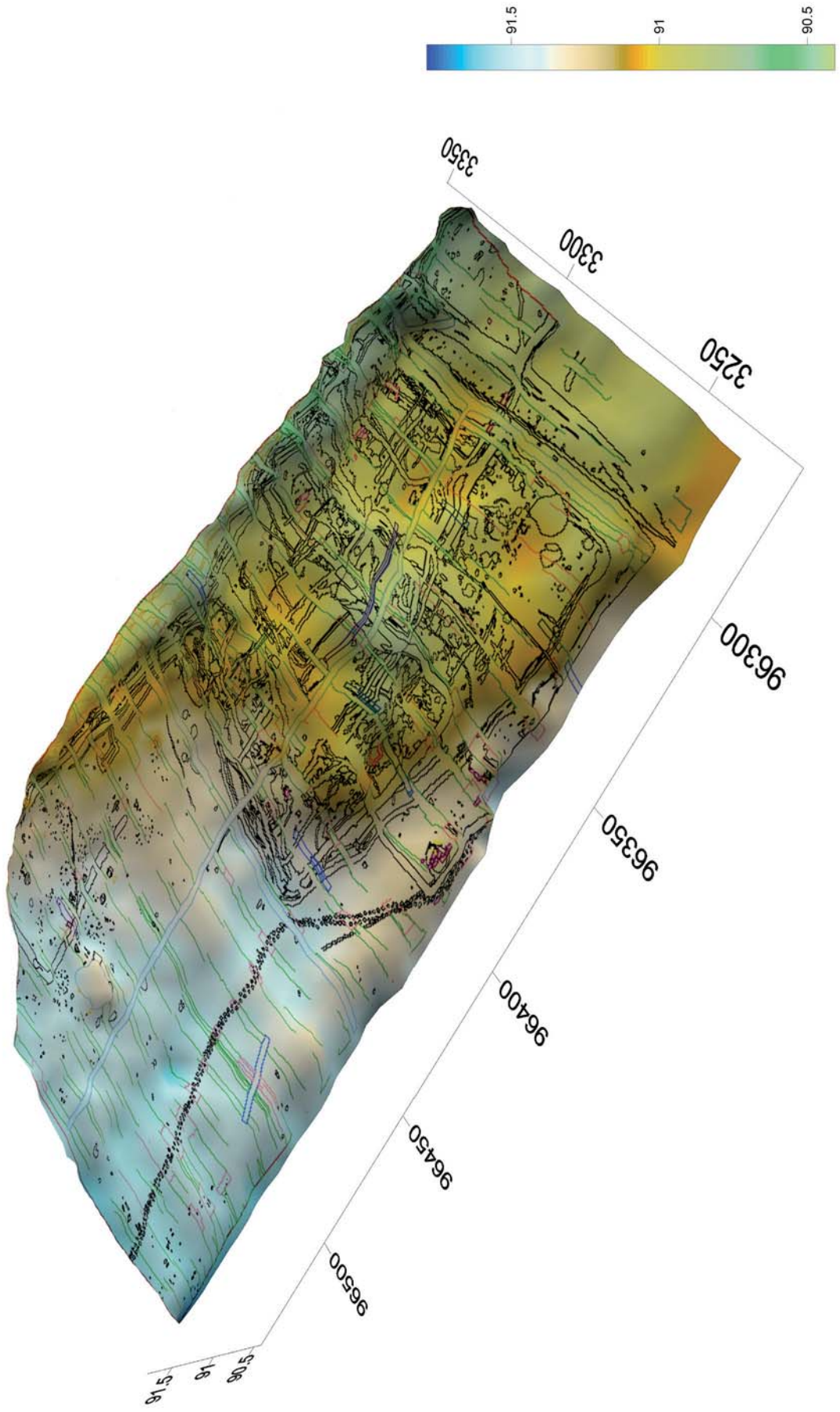


Fig. 3.3 Topography of the 2003 excavation area incorporating the Iron Age-Roman nucleated settlement

Waterholes, pits and gullies in the settlement area

A number of discrete features and groups of features were excavated within the area identified as a settlement site (Fig. 3.6). Features were dated middle-late Iron Age where they were directly associated with the structures or where pre-Roman Iron Age pottery was found within.

A 17 m length of gully (12181) was located east of Roundhouse 11951 and south of Enclosure 17600, curving away to the south-west before becoming aligned north-south. This was up to 0.6 m wide and 0.22 m deep and produced no finds, though it may have demarcated the eastern boundary of the settlement.

A series of features to the south-west of the structures included pit 10434, which was oval and vertical sided (0.95 x 0.75 m, *c* 0.7 m deep),

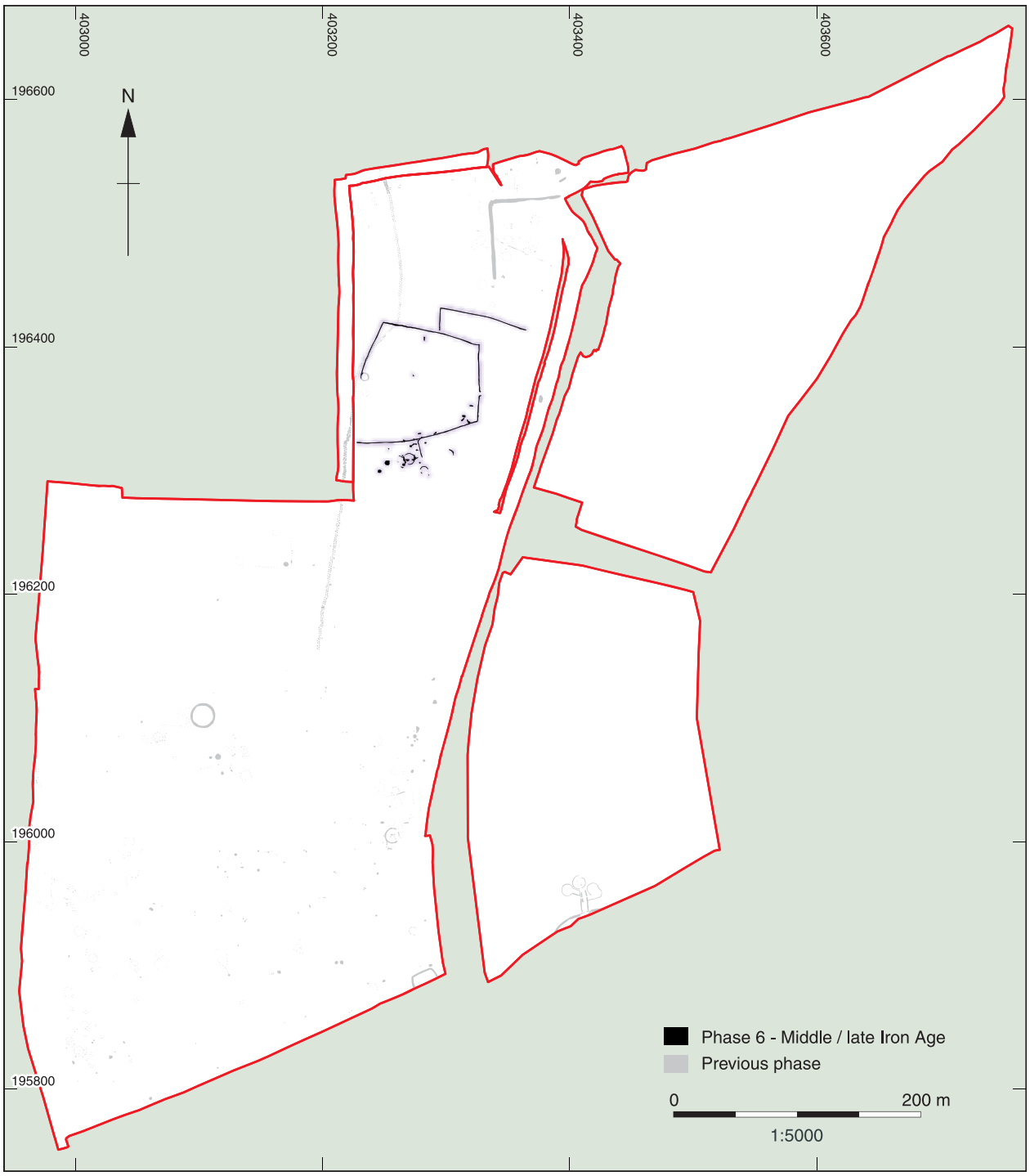


Fig. 3.4 Outline of middle-late Iron Age phase (Phase 6)

containing seven fills (Fig. 3.7). The pit produced a small assemblage of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery with a deposit of middle-late Iron Age pottery from the lower fill. The only other finds were a strip of copper alloy binding and a relatively large assemblage of animal bone, the majority of which was from the upper fill of the pit. Most of the bone was identified as sheep/goat or cattle although horse and pig were also present. This may have been a storage pit, the upper fill representing a dump of material prior to abandonment.

Pit 10434 was truncated by the cutting of waterhole 10426 (3 x 1.7 x 1.3 m). Finds from this feature were limited to a fragment of ceramic building material and a few sherds of middle-late Iron Age pottery. The waterhole was ultimately recut as 10420 and it is likely that these features provided water for the settlement over a long period of time. The latest incarnation of the waterhole (10420) was 3.5 x 1.25 m in plan and as deep as 10426. The feature was rich in finds, producing 2.5 kg of animal bone, similar in nature to that from 10434 and over 3 kg of mostly late Iron Age pottery. In addition, a fragment of oven structure, ceramic building material, fragments of iron and lead and reasonable quantities of charcoal (of hedgerow type wood; see Challinor, this vol.) were recovered from the feature. The most remarkable find from this phase as a whole was a complete La Tene III Gaulish Unguiforme brooch (SF 854) from one of the upper fills (10408) of the waterhole (Fig. 3.7). This artefact can be firmly dated to the late Iron Age but is an unusual form in Britain (see Powell, this vol.).

An additional pair of large intercutting pits

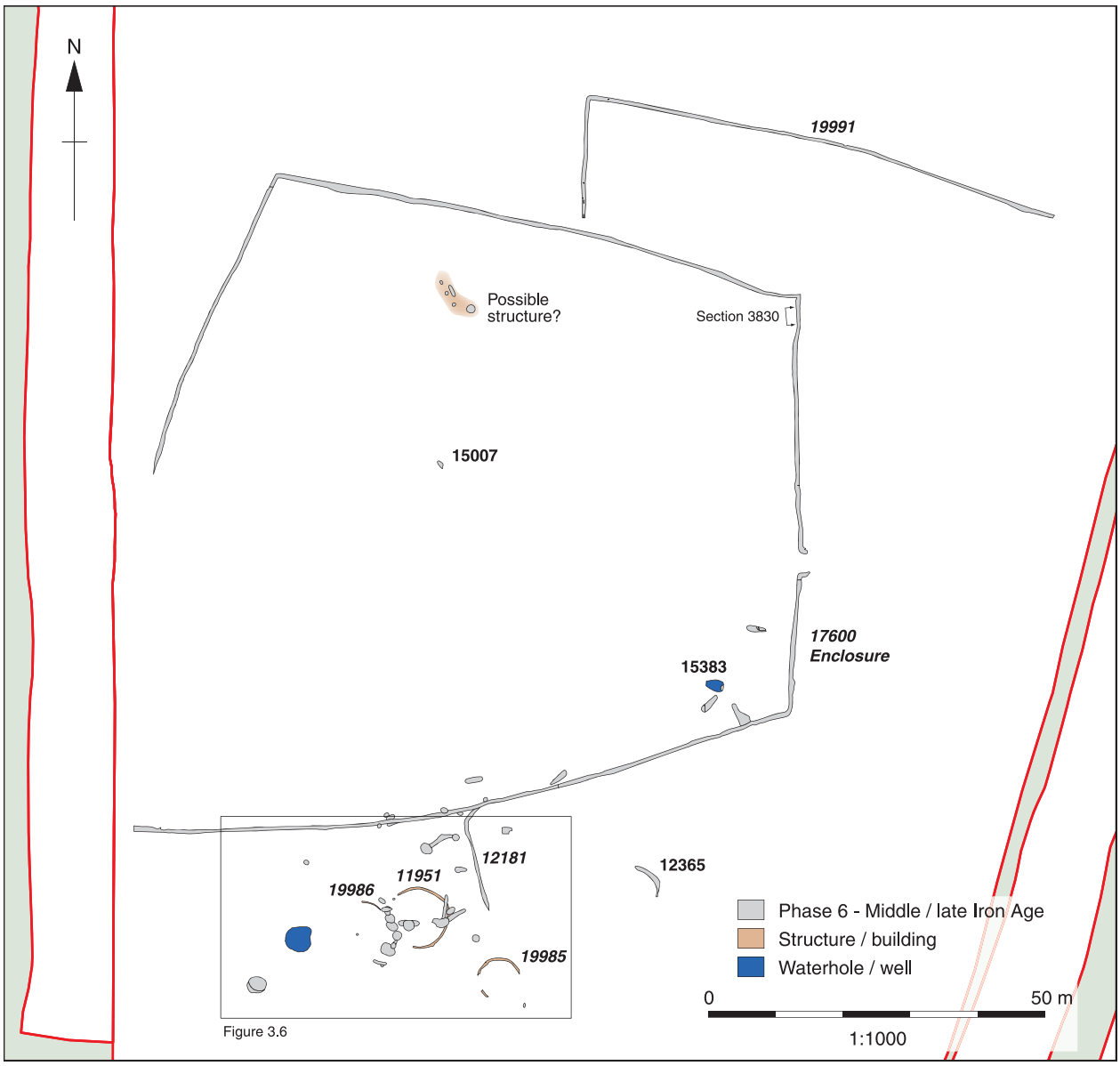


Fig. 3.5 Detail of middle-late Iron Age settlement and enclosure

(10679 and 10680) was located to the south-west of this complex (Fig. 3.6). Both were *c* 0.4 m deep but the later of the two pits (10679) was 2.2 m in plan, enlarging the earlier feature from 0.8 m in diameter. These features were much less finds rich than the group just described—pit 10679 producing only a small quantity of cattle bone and late Iron Age/early Roman pottery—and it is likely that they were storage pits.

As outlined above, a series of pits were associated with the possible roundhouse structures. Most notably an arc of 11 intercutting pits was located within the opening of Structure 11951, immediately east of posited structure 19986 (Fig. 3.6). The pits were circular and oval measuring between 0.6 x 0.2 and 1.8 x 1.15 m, all were between 0.2 and 0.45 m deep. All of the pits except one produced assemblages of pottery dated middle Iron Age to early Roman, most appearing to have been deposited in the later Iron Age. Most also contained animal bone assemblages of mixed species, largely cattle, sheep/goat and pig, although dog and horse were also present. Overall the features seem to represent rubbish pits, probably related to the settlement.

Other features in the vicinity which produced middle–late Iron Age or late Iron Age/early Roman pottery included pits, postholes and gullies. Many of these features also produced small, mixed assemblages of animal bone, fired clay and ceramic building material. The scale of the domestic area appears to have been relatively restricted, suggesting just a single household, though numerous other small undated features in the area may well have been contemporary (see below).

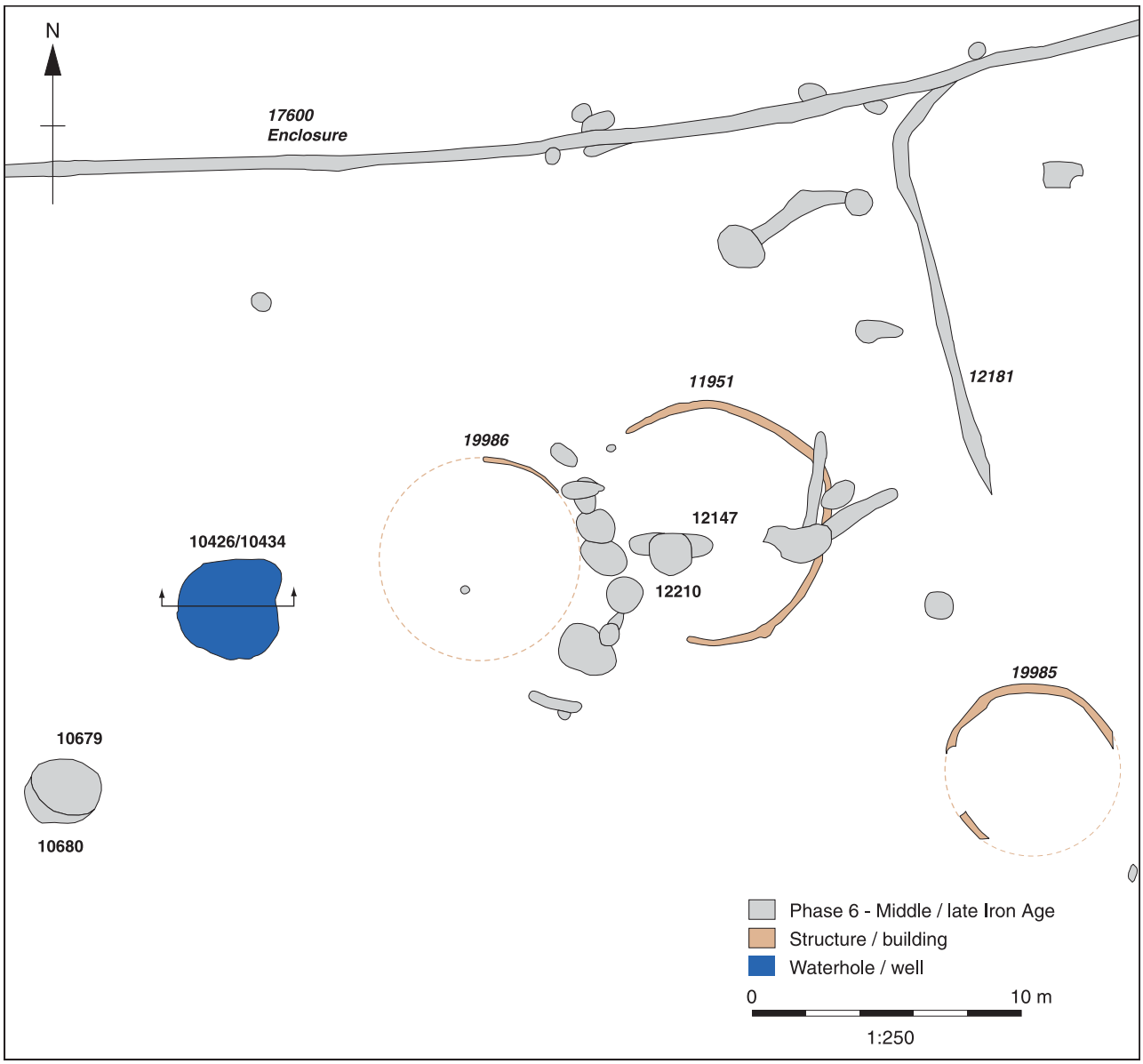


Fig. 3.6 Middle-late Iron Age roundhouses

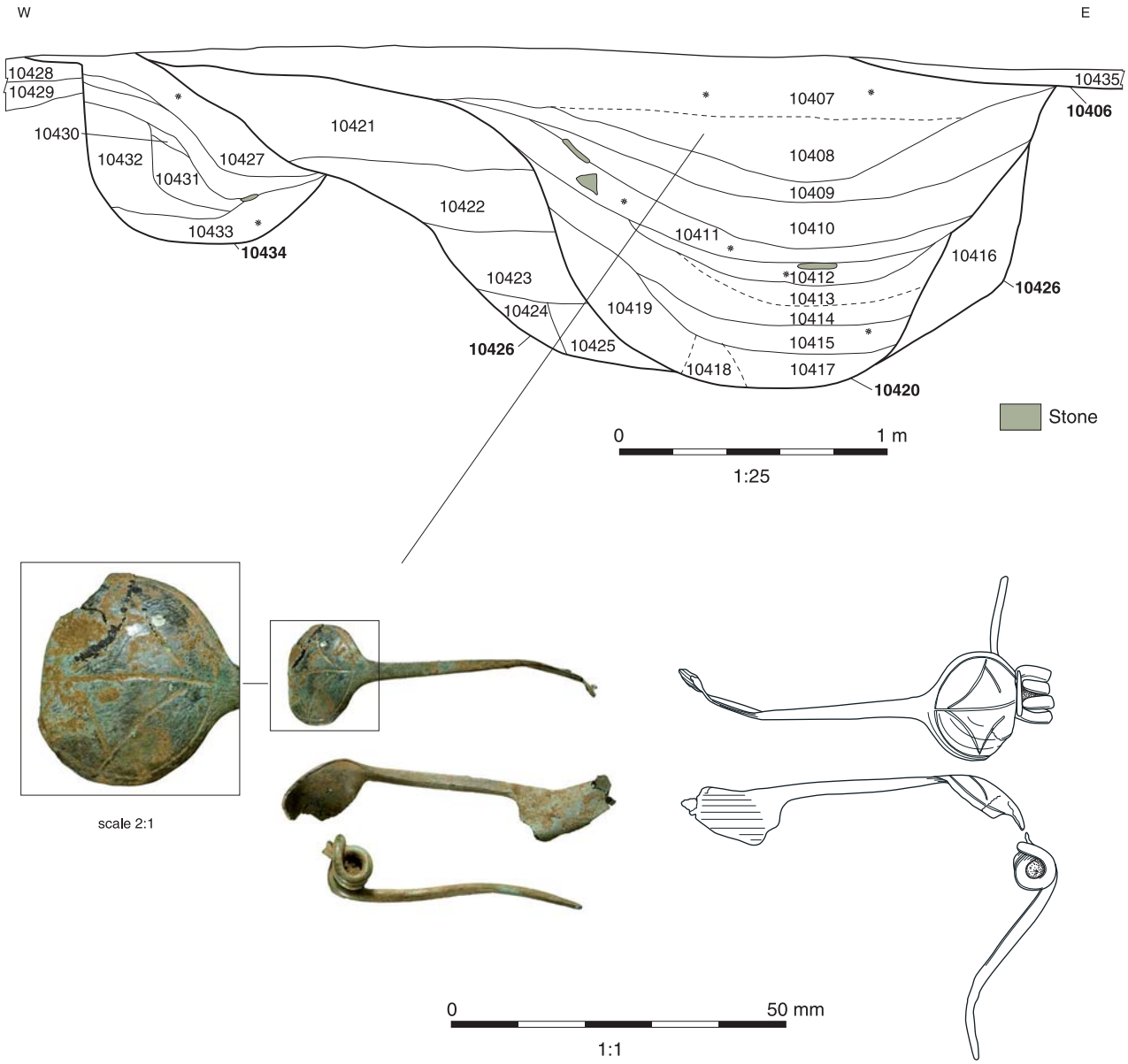


Fig. 3.7 Section through waterhole complex 10420/10426/10434

Palisaded enclosures

The most significant feature belonging to this phase was a large sub-square palisaded enclosure (17600), which lay immediately north of the settlement (Fig. 3.5). It cut the edge of ring ditch 16072 and pit alignment 3333 (suggesting that this was no longer a visible feature in this area: see below; Fig. 3.4) but was generally truncated by the remaining activity in this area. However, there were several features (pits and postholes all under 1 m in diameter/length and *c* 0.2–0.3 m deep) that were cut by the enclosure ditch within the vicinity of the settlement (Fig. 3.6). Very little activity in this area clearly predates this middle-late Iron Age activity and so it is likely that these features (which were devoid of finds, with the exception of one pit containing fragments of oven structure) were associated with the nearby settlement prior to the construction of the palisaded enclosure. If this is the case it suggests the enclosure was built subsequent to the establishment of the settlement, although this is tentative.

The enclosure was somewhat irregular, measuring over 100 m long on its western and southern sides but only 80 m to the north and 62 m to the east. It was largely truncated by later Roman ditches to the south-west. A possible entrance (2.9 m wide) was located at a central point of the eastern side, formed by turning the palisade ditch slightly to the east at either side, or placing postholes immediately east of the ditch.

Overall the ditch measured 0.4–0.7 m wide and generally 0.4–0.6 m deep with 1–5 fills, possibly dependent on level of truncation (see section, (Fig. 3.5); the northern side for example appeared to have more fills. Postholes were spaced at approximately

0.2–0.6 m intervals, cutting though the base of the ditch (Fig. 3.8), and were 0.3–0.5 m across with numerous postpipes. The scale and nature of construction of the palisaded enclosure would have required a large workforce and been a considerable undertaking, also requiring the preparation of a large amount of timber.

Remarkably few finds were recovered from the ditch although all four sides produced middle to late Iron Age pottery in small quantities. The only other artefacts recovered were a medium mammal long bone, an amorphous fragment of CBM and part of a fired clay object. These were all recovered from the southern side of the enclosure ditch in an area where the majority of the contemporary activity appears to have been located (see above). The lack of such activity within the enclosed area itself seems to suggest that the palisade was not constructed to protect the settlement and in fact may have been used for enclosing animals. This is particularly remarkable considering the effort that went into its construction.

A further extension of this enclosure (19991) was located immediately to the north-east and was roughly L-shaped with the shorter arm (min 19 m) aligned north-south and the longer arm (min 71.5 m) approximately east-west (Fig. 3.5). The ditch was slightly narrower at 0.35–0.5 m and the remains were very shallow with a single fill. Enclosure 19991 was found to have the same pattern of postholes within the ditch, although these were also slightly smaller. No finds were recovered from the enclosure.

Fig. 3.8 Photograph showing postholes of palisade enclosure 17600

Features within the palisaded enclosure

Surprisingly few contemporary features were discovered within the palisaded enclosure and these were mainly located in the south, closest to the settlement (Fig. 3.5). A number of mainly sausage-shaped pits, *c* 2.5–3 m long and consistently *c* 0.7 m wide, produced pottery ranging in date from middle Iron Age to early Roman, though other finds were minimal in quantity, including mixed animal bone assemblages and burnt stone.

A substantial pit/waterhole 15383 (4.5 x 1.6 x 0.88 m) was located in the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. Pottery from the base of the feature was dated middle-late Iron Age, whilst the upper layers (probably representing dumping episodes) produced late Iron Age-early Roman pottery. This feature contained the largest single assemblage of animal bone from this phase, in addition to significant quantities of burnt stone, ceramic building material and fired clay. Its function as a waterhole is not certain, though seems likely, and it may have been one of the main water sources for animals within the stockade.

Other contemporary features were located further north within the enclosure, including small oval pit 15007 (1.2 x 0.4 x 0.18), which produced middle-late Iron Age pottery and a cattle mandible; its purpose is unknown. A series of postholes and pits were also clustered in the north-western area of the enclosure, including a possible structure or fence line aligned NW-SE for a distance of 4.35 m. This could have functioned as a fodder stand. The features in this area contained small quantities of pottery and animal bone, but there is little indication of function.

Discussion of mid-late Iron Age developments (Phase 6)

The shift from relatively substantial, dispersed open settlement during the early Iron Age to more concentrated and defined areas of habitation and agricultural exploitation in the middle Iron Age has been discussed in Chapter 2. This process further intensified during the later Iron Age, with a shift in settlement location to a higher area of gravel terrace in the north, where it remained—despite being constantly modified—right up until the end of the Roman period. Such shifts of settlement focus in the later Iron Age are well known in the Upper Thames Valley, along with a renewed emphasis on enclosing areas of land and corresponding changes in house forms (see below) (Booth *et al.* 2007, 33; Lambrick 2009, 26).

The dating for this middle to late Iron Age phase of occupation (Phase 6), is based on ceramic chronologies which are difficult to refine further, especially as some essentially 'middle Iron Age' handmade pottery forms and fabrics are known to have continued in use until at least the early 1st century AD (Moore 2006, 74).

Nature of the settlement

The earliest phase of this northern settlement was relatively insubstantial, with only three possible roundhouses, not all of which are likely to have been contemporary (see Fig. 3.9). Although it is certainly possible that further domestic structures went unnoticed (with, for example the use of mass-walling construction techniques: see Lambrick 2009, 135), the overall area of pits, waterholes and gullies containing domestic material was somewhat limited, and so it is still likely to have only represented a single unenclosed farmstead. The continued use of roundhouses, however ephemeral they may be, into the later Iron Age is nevertheless of some significance, as it was a general characteristic of the Upper Thames Valley that such buildings had largely ceased to be built in an archaeologically-recognisable form by this period. Another exception, however, is at Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes, just 3.5 km to the south-east of Cotswold Community, where a number of roundhouses have been dated from the mid to late Iron Age (Powell *et al.* 2008). This undoubtedly represents a continuation of earlier building traditions, thereby demonstrating that developments in settlement form and architecture were far from uniform, even within the local landscape.

The area of domestic activity appears to have remained largely unenclosed, although a ditch to the east of the main roundhouse may have defined its eastern side to some extent. Its northern boundary formed part of the most striking feature from this phase of the settlement—a substantial palisaded enclosure, with a defined 3 m wide entrance facing east and a similarly constructed northern 'annexe'. The construction of this enclosure complex would have been quite a considerable undertaking, yet there were virtually no internal features except for a few pits, a small posthole structure and a substantial pit/waterhole in the south-eastern corner. Marshall (1991) had noted the presence of single large pits in the corners of mid to late Iron Age sub-rectangular enclosures in the Cotswolds, suggesting that they were 'silos' used for the storage of seed grain. In this case, however, the scale and form of the feature together with the low-lying nature of the topography suggests that it is more likely to have been a waterhole, and the overall enclosure related to stock

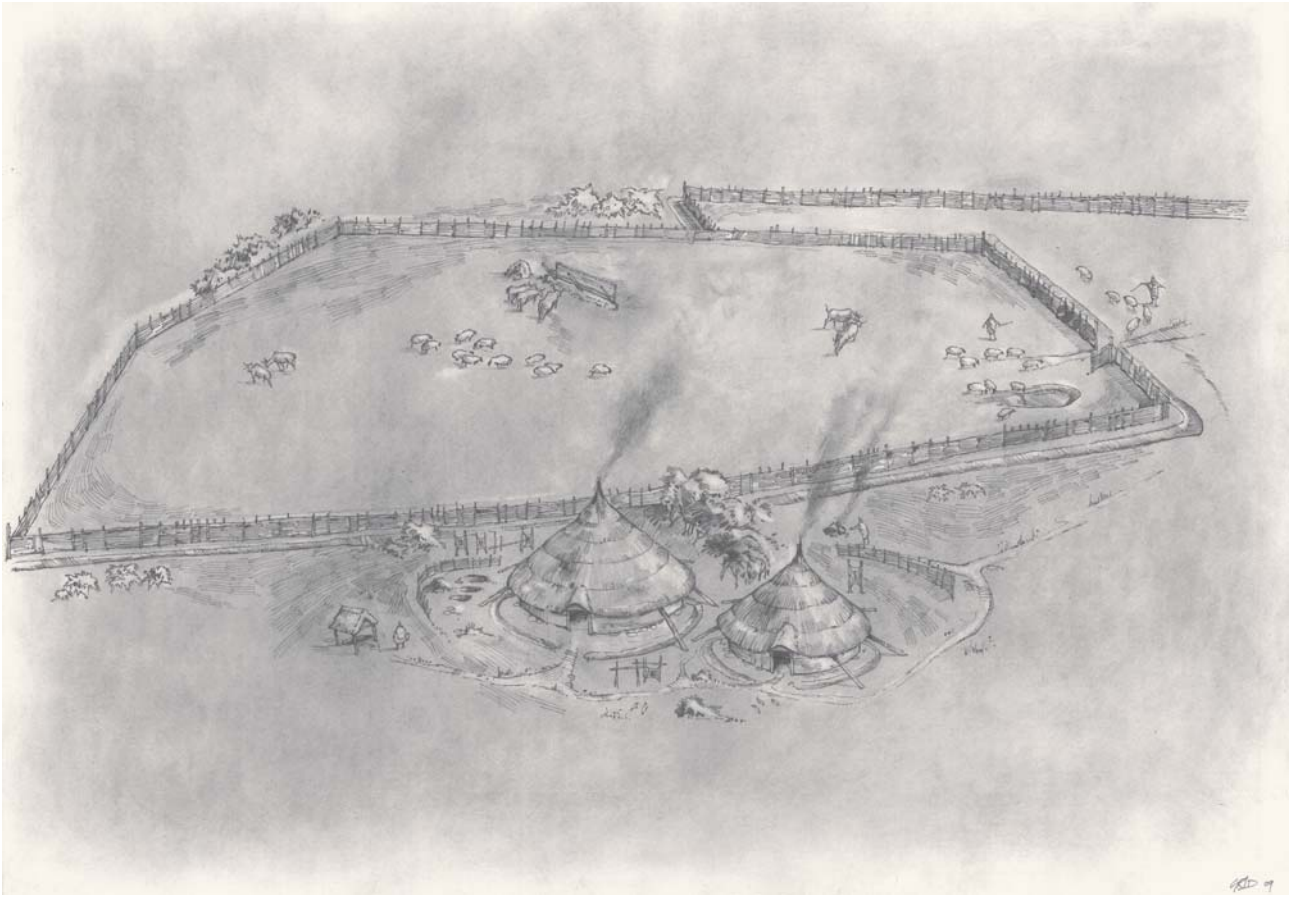


Fig. 3.9 Artist's reconstruction of middle-late Iron Age settlement

control, with the structure perhaps representing a fodder stand (see below).

There are few exact parallels in the local region, though a palisaded enclosure of about half the size—also with very few internal features—was excavated at Horcott Pit to the east, dated very tentatively to the early Iron Age (Lamdin-Whymark *et al.*, forthcoming). In a wider context, the Cotswold Community enclosure may be seen in terms of the many rectilinear 'household' sized enclosures (less than 1 ha) that start appearing in the region from the middle Iron Age onwards, especially further north in the Cotswolds (Moore 2006, 69, fig. 5). However, increasing excavation of these enclosures has indicated that they were not functionally homogenous, with some having virtually no apparent association with domestic activity at all (Lambrick 2009, 26).

Enclosure of some kind was noted at many mid to late Iron Age settlements in the Upper Thames, including clusters of heavily recut enclosures at Thornhill Farm (Jennings *et al.* 2004) Claydon Pike and Neigh Bridge (Miles *et al.* 2007) relating to livestock farming (see also Phase 7 discussion below), and apparent domestic enclosures at Cleveland Farm Ashton Keynes (Powell *et al.* 2008) and Latton Lands (Powell *et al.* 2009). Hingley (1984, 77–80) had previously supposed that the Upper Thames Valley was characterised by dense, open settlements (as opposed to more sparse enclosed settlements in the Cotswolds), and while this is still true to some extent, excavation of sites like these has demonstrated that the reality is more varied and complex. As Lambrick (2009, 130) has recently pointed out, the general distinction between 'open' and 'enclosed' forms of settlements encompasses a wide degree of variation, with great diversity apparent in the way that space within and around settlements was segregated. At Cotswold Community, the inhabitants of what appears to have been a relatively small, simple unenclosed farmstead clearly allocated some considerable resources into creating a substantial stockade enclosure, probably used to corral animals. They may even have chosen to express their status through this display of 'agricultural architecture', which was associated with a major source of wealth—livestock.

Economy and status

Unfortunately, little environmental material exists from this phase so the exact economic basis of the settlement is uncertain, with no positive evidence for arable agriculture and indeed no quernstones from this phase to even indicate the processing of grain. Charcoal from the waterholes did, however, indicate an open landscape with the presence of thorny scrub which could withstand grazing. Many settlements of mid to late Iron Age date on the lower gravel terraces of the Upper Thames Valley are believed to have operated specialist pastoral agricultural regimes (Booth *et al.* 2007, 278), and there is no reason to suspect that Cotswold Community was any different. However, the intensity of pastoral agriculture seen at sites like Thornhill Farm, and to a slightly lesser extent at Claydon Pike and Neigh Bridge, was not so apparent at Cotswold Community. Whether this was simply because it was a much smaller scale operation, or perhaps related to a different type of animal husbandry, is uncertain. The modest quantity of animal bone from this phase indicates an emphasis on sheep, as is quite usual for early and middle Iron Age sites. These animals seem to have been mainly used for meat, although wool and perhaps milk would have been important by-products. Cattle are also present in relatively significant numbers, and are more suited for such low-lying damp grassland areas. The slaughter age patterns suggest that most cattle were kept for meat as well as secondary products, such as dairy and traction—a typical pattern for the region at this time. It is notable that the presence of cattle increases substantially into the late Iron Age and Roman phases (7–9).

The material culture associated with this phase (stratified and unstratified), is relatively poor, both in terms of quantity and status. Pottery was typically dominated by local grog-tempered barrel-shaped and bead-rimmed jars, with just a single fragment of Dressel 1 amphora (see Fig. 3.55, 1) from the Campanian region of Italy hinting at wider contacts. Two silver Dobunnic coins, which could be contemporary with either Phase 6 or 7, were found in late Roman contexts and so may not have even entered the site until a later date. Of the few other metal finds, the only one of interest was the continental Unguiforme brooch from within the waterhole near to the roundhouses, which is the only indication of personal dress, and presumably entered the material culture of the settlement by similar mechanisms to the Dressel 1 amphora. Its discovery within the main waterhole of the settlement is suggestive of ritual activity, but there are no other obvious signs of 'structured' deposition from this phase of site. Overall, the finds indicate nothing more than a low status pastoral farmstead probably of just a single household, although as outlined above, their relative status among the local communities may have been expressed by other means, such as the large palisaded enclosure.

ENCLOSING THE SETTLEMENT—LATE IRON AGE-EARLY ROMAN DEVELOPMENTS (PHASE 7)

The late Iron Age-early Roman period saw a major transformation at Cotswold Community (Fig. 3.10). The relationship of this change to the Roman conquest is unknown but the two did not necessarily coincide, as the transformation probably occurred during the earlier years of the 1st century AD. Settlement continued on the same higher gravel terrace area as in the previous phase, though it moved slightly to the east and cut the palisade,

17600. The main enclosure in this phase comprised a much larger, multiply cut ditch with a corresponding inner enclosure and more substantial internal activity than the previous phase, including linear boundaries and pits. Unlike the previous phase, all domestic activity now appears to be confined within the main enclosure, though evidence for actual structures is elusive at best, which is quite typical for the region during this period. Externally, a small trackway seems to have been established to the north of the enclosure.

Settlement enclosure 19999

Enclosure 19999 was three-sided, presumably bounded by posthole alignment 16059 to the east (see below), and measured approximately 120 m north-south and 110 m east-west (Fig. 3.11). The

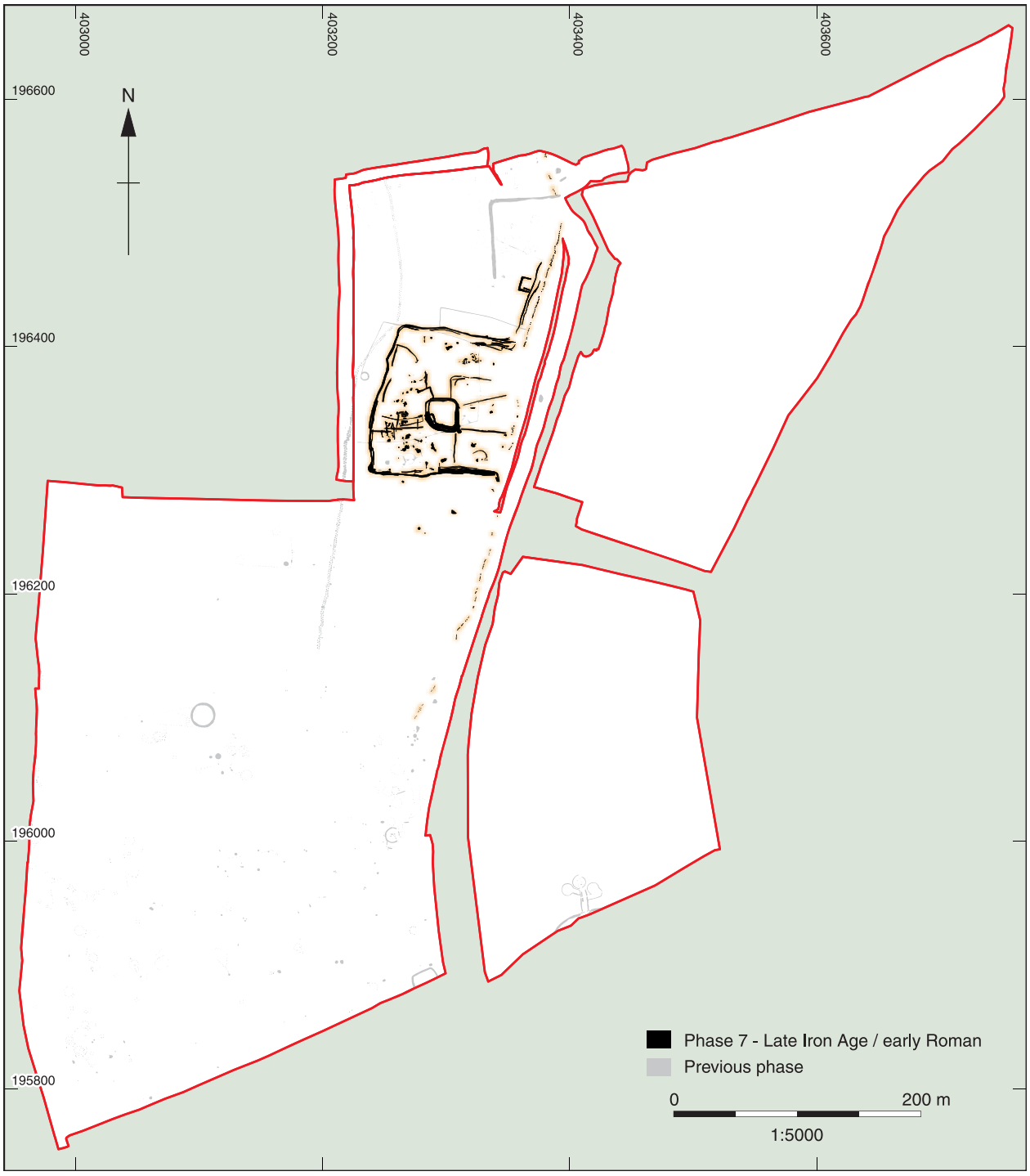


Fig. 3.10 Outline of late Iron Age-early Roman phase (Phase 7)

Fig. 3.11 Detail of late Iron Age-early Roman settlement

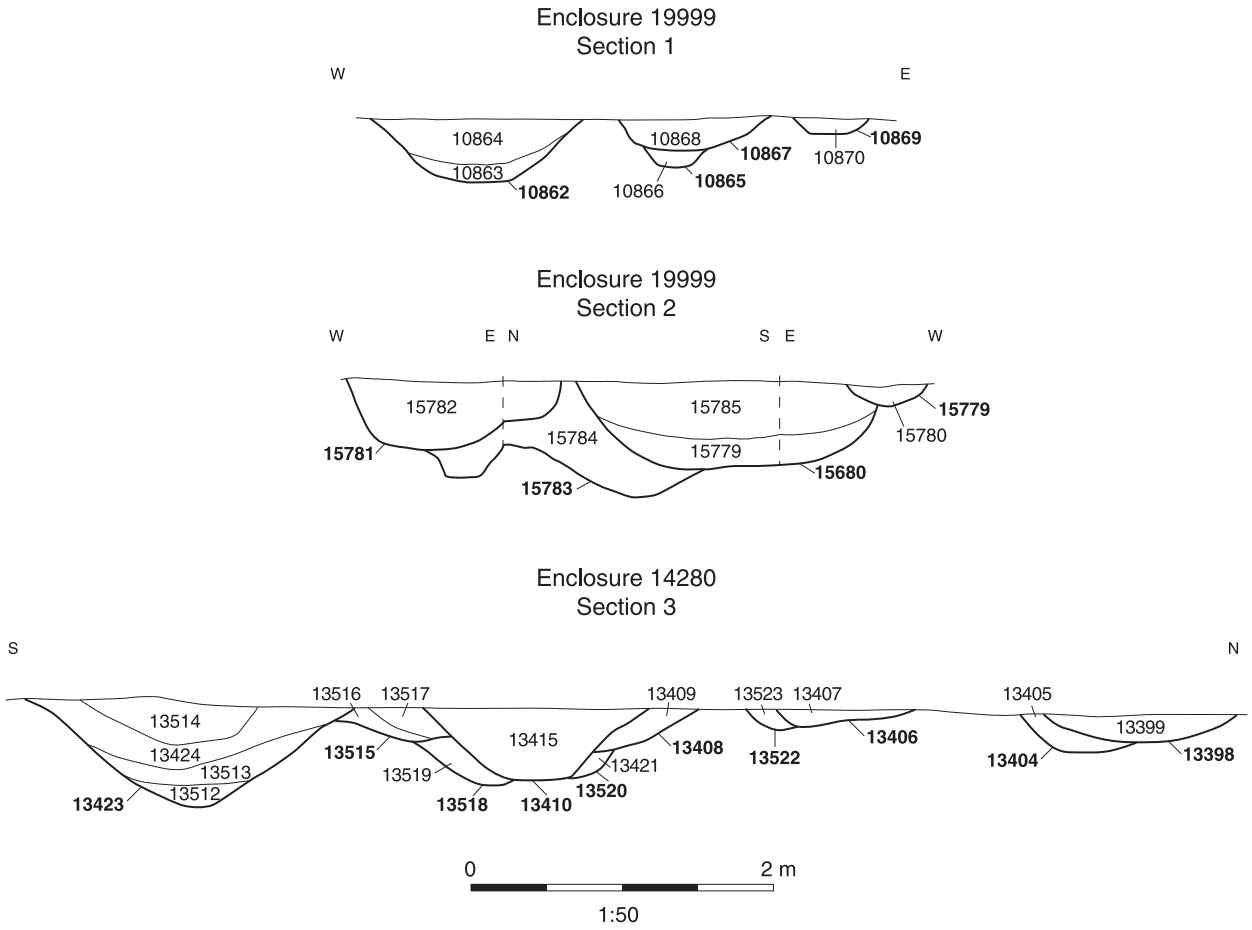


Fig. 3.12 Sections through enclosures 19999 and 14280

enclosure comprised numerous recut ditches and gullies; as many as 35 potentially separate cuts have been identified throughout the enclosure group. In the north-eastern corner the ditches appear to turn to the north, possibly leading into trackway 20358. In the south-eastern corner the ditches correspondingly turned to the south. In both cases the ditches and gullies petered out quite rapidly.

The recut ditches and gullies of the enclosure group varied greatly in size and nature, from 0.2 m to 1.8 m wide and 0.04 m to 0.65 m deep with both concave and v-shaped profiles, though few of the individual features had long fill sequences (Fig. 3.12). In general the smaller gullies appeared on the interior of the bigger ditches and many pre-dated the larger cuts. A number of large ditches can be traced around much of the enclosure, possibly representing a consolidation phase when larger boundary ditches were cut through the existing sequence.

The enclosure ditches overall produced a moderate amount of pottery, most dating to the early Roman period with some late Iron Age pottery and a small amount of late Roman pottery, presumably intrusive as a result of the large amount of later Roman activity in the area. In addition a small animal bone assemblage comprised mostly cattle but included pig, sheep/goat, horse and dog. Very small amounts of burnt stone, ceramic building material (including tegulae and brick) and metal objects were also recovered. The latter mainly comprised nails or unidentified iron objects, but a pin from a brooch or buckle was also found. The finds assemblage was small in comparison to the size of the enclosure, indicating little dumping activity; instead the boundary ditches appear to have been kept relatively clean during this phase.

A cluster of small ditches in the extreme north-east of the enclosed area are likely to have been associated with the enclosure itself. The ditches were on a similar alignment to the enclosure but were truncated by plough furrows and difficult to understand. They were at most 20 m long, up to 0.9 m wide and 0.42 m deep, although the majority were smaller than this. Small amounts of early Roman pottery were recovered, along with limited quantities of animal bone. A similar 20 m length of ditch (20092) was located *c* 10 m further south and may also be related, although it was heavily truncated by later features. The function of these ditches, as separate features to the enclosure complex, is unknown, but the intensive re-model-

ling could be associated with the definition of an entrance into the enclosure at this point.

Ditches 20071 and 20079 in the western part of the enclosed area may also have been related to the main enclosure ditches. Both were on a similar alignment but were truncated by later ditches so their full extent is unknown. Ditch 20071 produced middle-late Iron Age pottery whilst the larger assemblage from ditch 20079 was generally early Roman in date. Neither ditch produced large finds assemblages, with small amounts of cattle bone and ceramic building material from ditch 20071 and fired clay from 20079.

The eastern boundary—posthole alignment 16059

Enclosure 19999 appears to have been bounded on its eastern side by a north-south posthole alignment, 16059. The alignment extended for at least 400 m continuing to the north and south of the enclosure and other features belonging to this phase. The alignment pre-dated a middle Roman trackway, which may have removed a substantial fraction of it, so it is unclear whether the alignment originally ran the entire length of the site. The postholes varied from 0.2–0.65 m in diameter and up to 0.45 m deep and were interspersed with a number of larger pits. The postholes and pits were generally vertical sided and rounded at the base, presumably originally forming a fenceline or similar boundary. The fills of the alignment were almost completely sterile, producing only a residual flint flake and an unworked flint. The alignment is assigned to this phase on the basis that it is cut by the middle Roman trackway and bounds the late Iron Age-early Roman settlement, however it may represent a much longer lived boundary, probably on the edge of the stream course which periodically ran through this lower area of gravel terrace. The alignment appears to change direction slightly just north of the settlement, turning to the west exactly as the later trackway did, and it is likely that this posthole alignment or fenceline was a pre-cursor to the more substantial trackway.

Central enclosure 14280

Central to Enclosure 19999 was a smaller (ext *c* 28 m^2) but very similar enclosure (14280), likely to have been contemporary (Fig. 3.11). The enclosure was heavily truncated by later activity therefore its exact nature is not fully clear. However, the feature was clearly sub-rectangular and comprised a series of at least 12 intercutting ditches and gullies. Recuts to the south of the enclosure ditch were more numerous than those to the north and appear to have been within the late Iron Age to early Roman phase. The northern part of the complex was heavily truncated by middle Roman ditches cut along a similar alignment.

The ditches of enclosure complex 14280 were generally more substantial than those in complex 19999, measuring 0.3–2.3 m wide and 0.2–0.8 m deep (Fig. 3.12). As with the outer enclosure, only relatively sparse amounts of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery (0.75 kg) and animal bone were recovered from the ditches, the latter assemblage including cattle, goat and a significant amount of horse. Other finds include fragments of unremarkable ceramic building material and fired clay. A pit or extended ditch (13429) which protruded out of the south-east corner of the enclosure also contained early Roman pottery and animal bone as well as brick and an ovoid slingshot. It is notable that several more of these items were recovered from contemporary pits (see below).

There is no evidence of contemporary activity within the enclosure and no obvious sign of an entrance, although the latter is probably due to truncation by later activity. It is possible that the enclosure was used for stock rather than settlement but its function remains unclear.

A possible domestic zone and evidence for buildings

While domestic material has been found in many of the pits within the settlement enclosure (see below), direct evidence for habitation is either rare or absent. A single feature, gully 20014, may be representative of a domestic structure (Fig. 3.11). The gully was located in the south-eastern corner of enclosure 19999, and resembled the house gullies excavated to the west dating to the previous phase. A series of postholes seem to be associated with the eastern terminal of the gully, some of which contained Roman pottery, but little discernible evidence for a structure was found. The gully was close to groups of pits containing apparent domestic debris, including pottery and animal bone. The feature itself was 0.6 m wide and up to 0.2 m deep containing a small amount of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery as well as intrusive later Roman pottery from the upper fill. The only other finds associated with the gully were fragments of animal bone. The morphology of the feature and its location in relation to contemporary features suggests the gully may be evidence of habitation, however this is a tentative interpretation.

The 'roundhouse' gully appears to have been bounded to the north and west by ditches 20018 and 20046. East-west aligned ditch 20018 probably extended for *c* 37.5 m from enclosure 14280 and was relatively substantial, measuring up to 1.4 m wide and 1.2 m deep. The ditch produced a relatively large assemblage of pottery, over 600 g of which was late Iron Age-early Roman in date, with the remaining *c* 100 g being middle Roman, probably reflecting the continuation of use into Phase 8 (see below). Other finds included a mixed animal bone assemblage, fragments of tegula and fired clay and a copper alloy mount or plate. This assemblage may reflect the ditch's function as a boundary to the domestic zone of the settlement, a function that

seems to have continued right up until the late Roman period, when it was largely re-cut by ditch 20348 (see below).

Ditch 20046 was aligned north-south for a distance of *c* 24 m and was up to 1.3 m wide but only 0.38 m deep. The ditch was truncated to the north by late Roman well 15942, and contained a small pottery assemblage dating to the late Iron Age-early Roman period, along with just two fragments of animal bone.

The only other likely indication of a building from this phase was an unusual feature, 12053, located towards the southern boundary of enclosure 19999, just to the west of ditch 20046 (Figs 3.11 and 3.13). The feature was sub-rectangular and flat-bottomed, measuring 5.7 m by 2.1 m, but was only 0.25 m deep. It contained two fills through which four postholes had been cut—one each in the south-west and north-east corners and two in the south-east corner. Originally a posthole may have existed in the remaining corner although this does not survive. The feature contained late Iron Age-early Roman pottery, a sizeable assemblage of animal bone, mainly cattle, a fragment of tessera, fired clay and possibly part of a smithing hearth bottom. Unusually the feature also produced worked flint artefacts which must have been residual. The feature seems likely to be a sunken-featured building, not common in this region in the Roman period but known particularly from Kent and the south-east. It is possible that the feature is Saxon although the dating evidence points to it being early Roman or late Iron Age.

There are no other indications of actual buildings within this phase of the settlement, although there are a small number of postholes that may have formed structures of some kind. However, they do not form any readily identifiable pattern and so the form and scale of any possible structures remains unknown.

Internal divisions within the settlement

There were a number of ditches and gullies within the settlement enclosure that belong to this phase on the basis of ceramic and/or stratigraphic evidence (Fig. 3.11). In most cases the level of truncation has been quite severe so that it is very difficult to ascertain the function of these features, except to say that they probably formed a series of shifting boundaries within the settlement, defining different activity areas. Unfortunately, the nature of the evidence precludes any real understanding of what these activity areas may have been, though it can probably be assumed that they related to agricultural tasks such as stock control.

One possible boundary defining the south-western part of the settlement enclosure comprised east-west ditch 14088, which was at least 33 m long and up to 1.4 m wide. This may have been succeeded by ditches 19998 and 20074 to the north, the former cutting central enclosure 14280. A similar ditch (19997) lay *c* 14 m to the north and may represent part of another enclosure in the western part of the settlement. Very few finds were recovered from these ditches, comprising small amounts of pottery and animal bone, a single piece of slag and a fragment of rotary quern. However, a cluster of east-west and north-south ditches and gullies in this south-western zone did contain a significant assemblage of animal bone, mainly comprising cattle, along with a small amount of late Iron Age-early

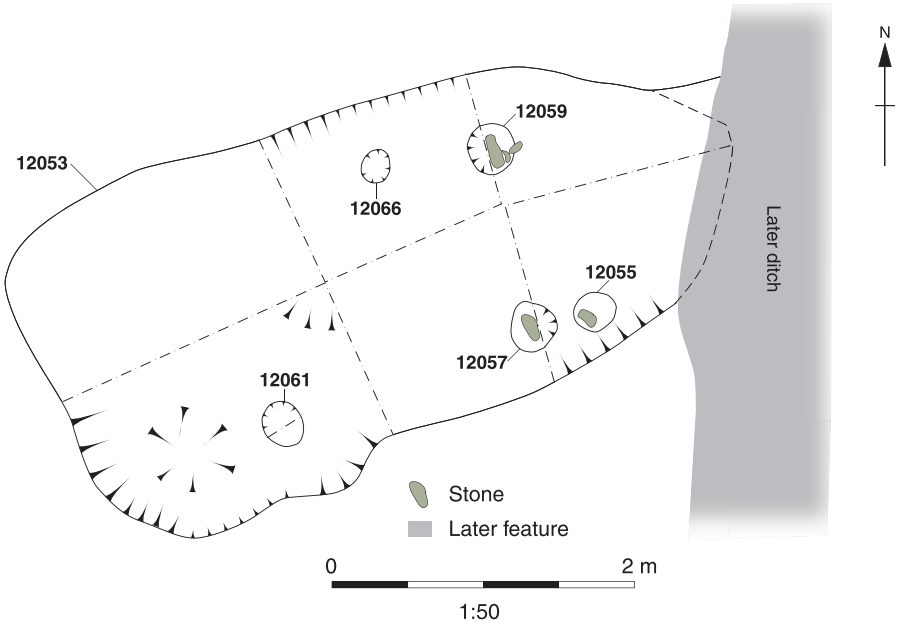


Fig. 3.13 Detail of sunken-featured building 12053

Roman pottery, ceramic building material, nails, burnt stone and oven fragments, hinting at domestic activity nearby. One ditch also produced a worked bone toggle or fastener (SF 1198).

Another potential enclosure further north is represented by curving ditch 20124, although there is no evidence for an eastern boundary. The ditch produced late Iron Age-early Roman pottery and a fragment of possible hearth.

On the eastern side of the settlement enclosure further ditches appear to define 'activity' zones. Narrow ditch 20011 ran ENE from central enclosure 14280 for over 35 m, probably defining an enclosure just to the north of the area of postulated domestic activity. It produced only a single sherd of late Iron Age pottery. It also seems to have been the southern boundary for another enclosure, with the western and northern sides defined by L-shaped ditch 16187, which produced late Iron Age-early Roman pottery, along with fragments of animal bone and ceramic building material. As with many of the enclosures in this phase, there does not appear to have been any obvious eastern boundary, although this may have been linked to the main settlement boundary—posthole alignment 16059.

Waterholes and pits in the settlement enclosure

Numerous pits and possible waterholes were excavated within the Roman settlement as a whole, with dating evidence suggesting that the majority of these were late Iron Age-early Roman. The pits assigned to this phase, are shown in Fig. 3.11.

The main concentration of pits was located west and south of central enclosure 14280, however smaller groups were located in the northern part of enclosure 19999 and in the south-east, possibly associated with the domestic focus. A small number were also directly associated with enclosure ditch complex 19999 itself.

Main body of pits/waterholes to the west and south

The majority of pits dating to this phase were located to the west of enclosure 14280, most in intercutting groups, with a number of discrete features also excavated in the south of the area. As would be expected, the pits displayed a great variety of shape and size, but were usually quite shallow at *c* 0.3 to 0.7 m deep.

The finds from the pits suggest that for the most part they contained domestic refuse accumulated over many years. These included variable quantities of later Iron Age-early Roman pottery, burnt stone, ceramic building material and animal bone, along with fired clay objects (sling shot, moulds, oven furniture etc), iron nails and a Colchester type brooch dating to the 1st century AD. One group of pits in the central western zone produced a slightly different finds assemblage, comprising reasonable quantities of fired clay (including pieces from an oven structure), burnt stone and slag, which seems to indicate that some form of industry was taking place in this area. It is notable that a corn dryer was constructed here in the middle Roman phase, possibly indicating continuation of function.

Two possible waterholes were located in this area of the settlement. The more southerly (12211) was 2.26 m across and 0.9 m deep, and contained a significant finds assemblage in its six fills comprising *c* 2 kg of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery and over 1 kg of animal bone, in addition to ceramic building material, a fragment of iron knife or reaping hook and fired clay. The latter included possible hearth structure, mould fragments (used for making vessels to be inlaid with enamel; see Poole, this vol.), oven furniture and an ovoid sling-shot. The northern waterhole (15257) was much larger (2.6 by 1.6 m in plan and 1.52 m deep), yet only produced 171 g of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery as well as an iron knife or cleaver (SF 1955; Fig. 3.59, 1). The relative scarcity of finds is probably indicative of its location further away from domestic activity.

Pits in the northern part of the enclosure

Groups of pits belonging to this phase were found in a band approximately east to west relatively near to the northern enclosure boundary ditch (Fig. 3.11). Those furthest west were quite shallow (0.13–0.39 m deep), though the maximum depth did get progressively greater towards the east, where some were over 1 m deep, suggesting that they may have functioned as waterholes. It is likely that the eastern pits were in use beyond the early Roman period and many produced sizeable quantities of burnt stone (over 4 kg) and smithing waste, which may suggest that industrial activities were taking place in this area.

A substantial pit (19814; 2.7 x 1.1 m) located towards the north-eastern corner of the enclosure produced a very large assemblage (3332 g) of animal bone, dominated by cattle and horse, as well as 15 kg of burnt stone, slag, oven furniture and an oven brick. The pottery from the pit generally dated to the late Iron Age-early Roman period, although a radiocarbon date of cal AD 127–255 (OxA-17620; 93.8% prob) was returned from a charred seed within upper fills. On the basis of the stratigraphic record it is likely that the pit was open during the late Iron Age/early Roman period (Phase 7), and was infilled just prior to the construction of complex 20000 in the early 2nd century AD (Phase 8).

Pits associated with possible domestic focus

A number of pits were located in the area of hypothesised settlement (see above). The majority of these were within an intercutting group *c* 4 m north-west of potential house gully 20014. This group comprised circular or oval pits measuring 0.75–2 m in plan and up to 0.5 m deep, which was later

truncated and obscured by the construction of late Roman building 14291. The features are likely to have been broadly contemporary and some produced late Iron Age-early Roman pottery, fragments of fired clay and ceramic building material. The latter may be related to the construction of the later Roman building 14291.

A few discrete pits were also located to the south and north-east of gully 20014, some of which contained reasonably large assemblages of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery along with animal bone and small quantities of burnt stone.

Beyond ditch 20018 in the enclosure to the north were three pits of this phase, including pit 19516 which produced an interesting finds assemblage of pottery, tegulae, fragments of fired clay oven structure, vitrified hearth lining and other debris, an oyster shell and an iron nail. Overall, this seems to suggest the feature had functioned as an oven or similar.

Waterholes/Pits associated with enclosure 19999

A possible waterhole (10495) was situated in the south-western corner of enclosure 19999, cut by later phases of the ditch complex (Figs 3.11 and 3.14). The waterhole was 3.67 by 1.44 m in plan and 1.64 m deep with a sequence of up to 38 fills, either dumped into the feature or naturally slumped. Nearly 1 kg of pottery was recovered from the fills suggesting a late Iron Age-early Roman date, while the feature also contained a large animal bone assemblage. In general this fitted into the overall pattern for this phase (a mixture of cattle, sheep/goat, pig and horse), though it is notable that the waterhole contained a significant amount of cattle bone including one phalanx with a hole drilled through it. The feature also produced 11 kg of burnt stone and slag.

A small number of other pits were cut into enclosure 19999, yet contained late Iron Age-early Roman pottery, so were probably contemporary with at least one phase of this feature.

Trackway and industrial area to the north of settlement enclosure 19999

A small trackway (20358) extended approximately north-eastwards from the settlement area, parallel to posthole alignment 16059 and partly truncated by later features (Fig. 3.11). The trackway comprised roughly parallel ditches, *c* 0.8 to 3 m apart, which extended for a distance of at least 60 m. Both ditches were insubstantial compared to later Roman features in the area, measuring *c* 1 m in width and only *c* 0.1 m deep. The trackway ditches produced no dating evidence but the western part was cut by middle Roman ditch 20106, while that to the east was cut by a series of features including pits producing late Iron Age-early Roman pottery.

To the west of the trackway, towards its recorded northern limit, was a small rectangular enclosure, 10480. The enclosure, measuring 11.6 m by *c* 8–9 m, appeared to be open to the east, fronting onto the trackway. A small length of ditch (20182) ran parallel to the southernmost arm. The features were all shallow with a maximum depth of 0.2 m, and at most 1.2 m wide.

The ditches of enclosure 10480 produced both late Iron Age-early Roman and later Roman pottery, in addition to a fragment of smithing waste and a fragment of iron strip. The enclosure ditches were recut and pottery from the later phases dated specifically to AD 170–250. A further piece of slag and two nails were recovered from the recut. It is ditch 20182 which is most interesting and perhaps sheds light on the function of the structure overall. The small length of ditch (*c* 5 m long) produced 1.7 kg of slag including vitrified hearth lining and coal with some objects tentatively identified as smithing waste. In addition 3 kg of burnt stone and an oyster shell were recovered from the feature. Overall it is likely that this was the location of a workshop, possibly that of a smith, positioned away from the main settlement adjacent to a trackway as would be expected of such liminal activity. Notably, a posthole (10539; not on plan) was cut into the fill of

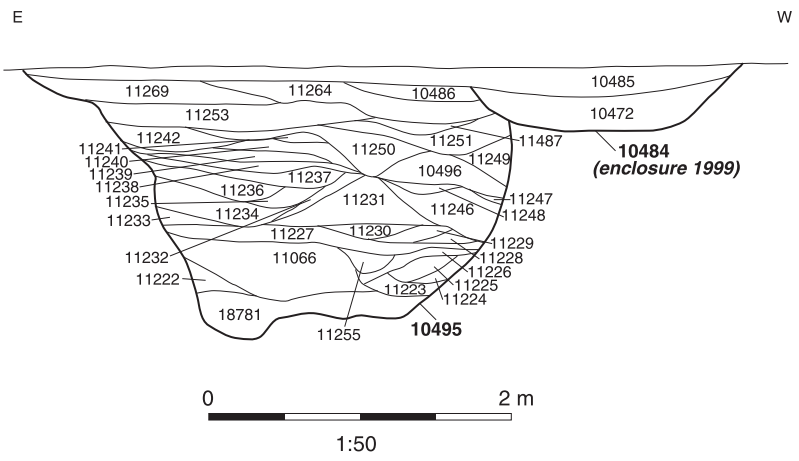


Fig. 3.14 Section through waterhole 10495

the recut of 10480 and a coin known as an Antoninianus dating to AD 260–295 was found within, suggesting this structure had some significance at a later date.

Pits south of enclosure 19999

A number of scattered features south of enclosure 19999 produced late Iron Age-early Roman pottery (Fig. 3.11). Feature 1708 also produced a moderately sized animal bone assemblage, which consisted mainly of cattle, as well as flue tile. This may have been a natural feature such as a tree-throw hole, re-used for dumping beyond the settlement. It is possible that the other features were related to animal husbandry taking place in the area.

Discussion of the late Iron Age—early Roman settlement (Phase 7)

The processes of settlement intensification and increased definition witnessed in the previous phase continued into the latest pre-Roman Iron Age, when quite a major transformation occurred. The earlier domestic buildings and stockades were dismantled and a new, much more substantial rectilinear ditched enclosure created, which encompassed nearly all of the features associated with this phase. The eastern boundary appears to have comprised part of a substantial fenceline, which continued north and south following the line of the later mid Roman trackway along edge of an old stream course, possibly fossilising an existing boundary line.

This transformation occurred at a similar period to major changes at other Upper Thames Valley sites, such as Old Shifford Farm (Hey 1996), Horcott Totterdown Lane (Pine and Preston 2004), Gravelly Guy (Lambrick and Allen 2004), Latton Lands (Powell *et al.* 2009), Thornhill Farm (Jennings *et al.* 2004) and Claydon Pike (Miles *et al.* 2007). In all these cases, however, the nature of settlement development was quite variable, with some, such as Cotswold Community and Old Shifford Farm, having a much greater emphasis on a well-defined settlement enclosure. At others, for instance Claydon Pike, such regular rectilinear enclosures around the settlement were not seen until the 2nd century AD, although there was an increasing emphasis on boundary definition throughout the 1st century.

The reason behind the increased emphasis on physical boundaries and enclosures at this time is not known, but may be partly associated with increased population and accompanying socio-political changes in the wider landscape. The boundary itself has been seen as a symbol of social exclusion and status in the context of Iron Age and Roman settlements, especially at times of social stress between communities (Hingley 1990). This was a period when substantial earthworks were being built at Bagendon just 9 km to the north, encompassing what seems to have been a major emerging political centre, and there is little doubt that the social hierarchy of the region was in some degree of flux. It may therefore have been the case that the quite striking rectangular enclosure at Cotswold Community was constructed as a deliberate symbol of status at this time, much the same as has been suggested for the earlier palisaded enclosure (see Phase 6 above).

Within the newly constructed enclosure at Cotswold Community, the settlement comprised pits, animal pens and a small multi-recut enclosure—all the elements considered essential for a farming unit of this period (Lambrick and Allen 2004, 211). The heavily recut central enclosure in particular is of a type that is well known in the Upper Thames occurring either singly, as in this case and at Hatford (Booth and Simmonds 2004) and Linch Hill Corner, Stanton Harcourt (Grimes 1943), or as part of a close-knit group as at Thornhill Farm and Claydon Pike. Their interpretation has varied according to the quantity and types of finds recovered from the ditch fills, but they are viewed as characteristic of pastoral settlements, or at least those including a significant pastoral element within a mixed farming community (Lambrick 2009, 118).

Some enclosures, such as at Roughground Farm (Allen *et al.* 1992), Yarnton (Hey and Timby forthcoming) and Gravelly Guy (Lambrick and Allen 2004, 175), are suggested as being associated with domestic occupation, either through structural evidence or domestic debris, notably pottery. No contemporary internal features were found within the central enclosure at Cotswold Community, and the quantity of associated pottery was fairly small (0.75 kg) considering its size, although successive rubbish deposits may have been cleared out with each recutting. Nevertheless, even taking this into account, compared with ceramic deposits of between 5.7 and 11.5 kg from smaller enclosures at Gravelly Guy, the lack of pottery does seem to indicate that the central enclosure is perhaps unlikely to have housed a domestic building. An alternative explanation as a specialist seasonal pen used in stock management (eg for young animals), as has been advanced for those at Thornhill Farm (Jennings *et al.* 2004, 147), Hatford (Booth and Simmonds 2004, 352) and Claydon Pike (Miles *et al.* 2007, 90), is perhaps more likely. If such was the case then the importance of pastoral agriculture is emphasised by the enclosure's position in the centre of the site, with all other zones leading off from it (see below).

If a domestic focus can be detected at all in this phase, it is quite poorly defined. As noted for Phase 6, evidence for domestic structures at this time is usually lacking, though here we do have slight evidence for a penannular gully (20014) to the south-east of the central enclosure, suggesting that the roundhouse form continued in use. This probable domestic zone was among the more

clearly defined areas in this phase, and appears to have maintained its function right through into the late Roman period when there was evidence for stone buildings here (see Phase 9 below). A slightly unusual sunken-floored structure (12053) lay just to the west of this zone, which no doubt served some ancillary purpose, perhaps including limited metal-working. Such structures are not common in Roman Britain, but two larger sunken-floored buildings were revealed in a late Iron Age/early Roman rural settlement at Cippenham, Slough in the Middle Thames Valley (Ford *et al.* 2003, 160–3) and two were found in the roadside settlement at Springhead, Kent, where they were associated with a storage function (Andrews *et al*., forthcoming).

Elsewhere, the settlement is made up of a number of small ditches, gullies, pits and a few waterholes, with a concentration of features in the western part of the enclosure. These formed no readily identifiable pattern and can be assumed to relate in the main to agricultural activity. One exception, *c* 40 m north of the main settlement and seemingly connected to it by a trackway, was a small enclosure which appears to have been connected with metal-working. Such small-scale industrial activity is unlikely to represent any more than subsistence-level manufacture and repair of essential tools, and its location of the periphery of the settlement is not unusual (eg Claydon Pike: Miles *et al.* 2007, 90). One interesting aspect of this metalworking was in the use of coal to supplement oak charcoal as a fuel source. The coal is likely to have come from the Forest of Dean, *c* 50 km to the west, indicating regional trade networks, perhaps the same networks that led to the prolific distribution of Old Red Sandstone querns in this region from the late Iron Age onwards (Roe in Miles *et al.* 2007, 145).

Character and economy of the settlement

Most features within the late Iron Age-early Roman settlement contained variable amounts of pottery, animal bone and burnt stone, with the overall quantity of finds recovered from this phase increasing in line with the general expansion and greater intensity of activity. The general character of the finds assemblage did not change to any great extent, although there was an expansion in the range of objects, including those which hint at a variation in culinary tastes such as iron cleavers, ceramic flagons and tankards, and a small number of samian cups and bowls from southern Gaul. A single quern-stone from this phase provides evidence for cereal processing, though this was presumably only carried out on a minor household basis.

Only one Colchester brooch was found stratified in a Phase 7 context, but of the 47 brooches in total found at the site, the majority dated to the early to mid 1st century AD (see Powell, this vol.), and therefore may have entered the settlement at this time. They are generally of a range typical for the Upper Thames Valley and—as with the finds as a whole—do not suggest particularly high levels of Roman influence (see below).

It was suggested above that this phase of settlement continued the predominantly pastoral economy of the middle-late Iron Age, although there are significant changes in the organisation of the site possibly relating to shifting methods of agricultural practice. The animal bone assemblage increased substantially from the previous phase, although most of the same domestic species are present, with the addition of very small quantities of domestic fowl. A further hint of widening culinary tastes comes with the two fragments of red and roe deer bone, which also suggests that some hunting was occurring in the vicinity. The main difference between the two phases is in the proportion of the main domestic species, with cattle for the first time becoming more dominant than sheep. This is in-line with other sites in the Upper Thames Valley, especially on the lower terraces and flood-plain where the large open areas of damp grassland are more suitable for cattle grazing (Ingrem 2007, 352). However, Cotswold Community does differ to some extent in that the most cattle were slaughtered over three years of age (as opposed to 15–30 months at Claydon Pike and Thornhill Farm; ibid., 353), suggesting either a more arable-dominated economy (with more older animals used for traction) or else greater levels of self-sufficiency, less dependent upon external trade (see Strid, this vol.). The preponderance of females (less useful for traction) in this late Iron Age/early Roman phase, together with the fact that the urban markets at Cirencester would not really have been established until the late 1st century AD, would suggest the latter to be true.

In considering the overall character of this phase of settlement, we must look at it not only in the context of the Roman conquest of AD 43, but also more specifically in terms of the Roman cavalry garrison established at Leaholm, Cirencester in *c* AD 50 (which was probably maintained until the early 70s), and the establishment of the town itself in the later 1st century (Wacher and McWhirr 1982, 66). Perhaps strangely there does not appear to have been any noticeable disruption to settlement at Cotswold Community at this time despite these momentous changes occurring less than 5 km to the north, and in this respect the site mirrors other rural farmsteads in the valley (Booth *et al.* 2007, 42). At Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes, there was little evidence for any social disruption throughout the 1st century although there was a settlement shift at some point (Powell *et al.* 2008, 29), while at Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes the settlement continued completely unchanged until radical transformation in the early 2nd century AD (Miles *et al.* 2007, 229). Further east at Claydon Pike there is also little indication of any disruption at this time, though there is some slight evidence for an increase in Roman style food consumption, with the presence of Dressel 20 amphora and imported mortaria, and

perhaps more interesting, a small assemblage of pre-Flavian military ceramics (Miles *et al.* 2007, 80). At Cotswold Community, two military fittings were recovered that also dated to the 1st century AD (though not definitely pre-Flavian) and could signify a transient military presence on site. Military objects have been found at many rural settlements in the Upper Thames Valley (including Claydon Pike and Neigh Bridge), usually dated to the Severan period (later 2nd/3rd century AD) and taken to imply a policing presence by dispersed units (Miles *et al.* 2007, 348). Whether the Cotswold Community finds indicate a similar policing presence during either the period of occupation of the cavalry fort, or after the main forces had left the area, is uncertain.

Despite the presence of the fort, it has been suggested (Miles *et al.* 2007, 385) that the indigenous political structure in this southern 'Dobunnic territory' remained largely unchanged during the early post-conquest years, effectively becoming another client kingdom. This was not to say that huge social changes did not occur under the influence of Rome, but just that this was more likely to have initially affected the upper echelons of society, rather than communities living in settlements like Cotswold Community. It was not until the area had been fully incorporated into the province and the major urban centre of Cirencester had become well established that significant changes started occurring across all social spectra in the Thames Valley (see Phase 8 below).

SETTLEMENT AND LANDSCAPE REORGANISATION IN THE MIDDLE ROMAN PERIOD (PHASE 8)

The middle Roman period (2nd–3rd century AD) at Cotswold Community was the most intensive phase of activity on the excavation site (Fig. 3.15). The period was clearly one of major upheaval and landscape reorganisation, as echoed at many contemporary sites in the area such as Thornhill Farm (Jennings *et al.* 2004), Ashton Keynes (Powell *et al.* 2008), Claydon Pike and Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes (Miles *et al.* 2007). Cotswold Community was no exception to this trend, as marked by the construction of two major north-south aligned trackways at the beginning of the phase, accompanied by large-scale landscape and settlement reorganisation. The latter took the form of significant adjustments to enclosure boundaries and the eventual formalisation of specific 'zones' within the settlement.

The nature of this phase of reorganisation, placed directly above the earlier settlement and in turn superseded by late Roman features, makes accurate dating almost impossible. The majority of middle Roman features produced very mixed dating evidence as a result of high levels of both residuality and intrusion. As such, smaller, less recognisable features are particularly difficult to date with certainty. However, dating evidence and stratigraphic relationships were extensively examined in order to assign features to this phase.

Overall, two sub-phases of activity were recognisable within the Phase 8 settlement, although not closely datable, and almost certainly representing a constant redevelopment of the settlement. Phase 8a (Fig. 3.16) in particular is probably just a short-lived modification of the northern part of Phase 7 enclosure, contemporary with the construction of the trackway ditches. Phase 8b (Fig. 3.17) on the other hand represents a far more widespread and long-lasting development, and it is to this phase that we can assign the majority of features dating to this period.

Phase 8a: Trackways and enclosure modification (*c* 2nd century AD)

At the beginning of the middle Roman period two major trackways were constructed in the east and west of the excavation area respectively (Fig. 3.15). These features may have begun their lives as similar entities, but the eastern trackway (17615) far exceeded the western trackway (5869) in size and presumably significance as the period progressed. The original eastern trackway at least appears to have been constructed prior to the reorganisation of the settlement enclosure, but was probably remodelled at this time.

Western trackway 5869

Trackway 5869 extended south to north over a distance of 515 m, continuing beyond the limits of excavation in both directions (Fig. 3.15; see discussion below). For most of its length the trackway comprised two parallel ditches, *c* 6–11 m apart, although the western ditch appears to have terminated or been truncated towards the south of the site, leaving a single ditch. The main ditches were not continuous when excavated, although it is difficult to tell whether they were originally single entities as they were often quite ephemeral (0.3–0.9 m wide, 0.04–0.7 m deep). The trackway ditches were mostly devoid of finds with the exception of residual flint and prehistoric pottery where the ditches truncated the late Bronze Age-early Iron Age settlement to the south, as well as a few sherds of middle-late Roman pottery.

A number of features were located alongside the trackway and may have been related, including a few pits which produced Roman pottery. An inhumation burial (7717) was cut into the ditch towards the south of the site, while another crouched burial (6683) was located further north immediately adjacent to the western ditch (see below). This burial was radiocarbon dated to cal 40 BC–AD 120 (SUERC 24764; 95.4% prob), although there was no direct relationship with the ditch so it remains uncertain whether it existed prior to the construction of the trackway.

The trackway may have formed the western outer boundary to the settlement complex, with at least one and possibly two ditches (including 2750, see below) leading off eastwards at right angles

Eastern trackway 17615

Trackway 17615 was located on the eastern edge of the main site and appeared to follow an existing boundary, possibly dictated by a stream course and represented in the previous phase by post alignment 16059 (Fig. 3.15). As with the post alignment, the trackway became the eastern boundary of the adjacent settlement area, though seemingly not of the overall landholding as field boundary ditches were revealed leading off from the trackway to the east.

The trackway ditches were far more substantial than those of 5869 and were recut several times, clearly existing as significant features into the late Roman period and possibly beyond. The excava-

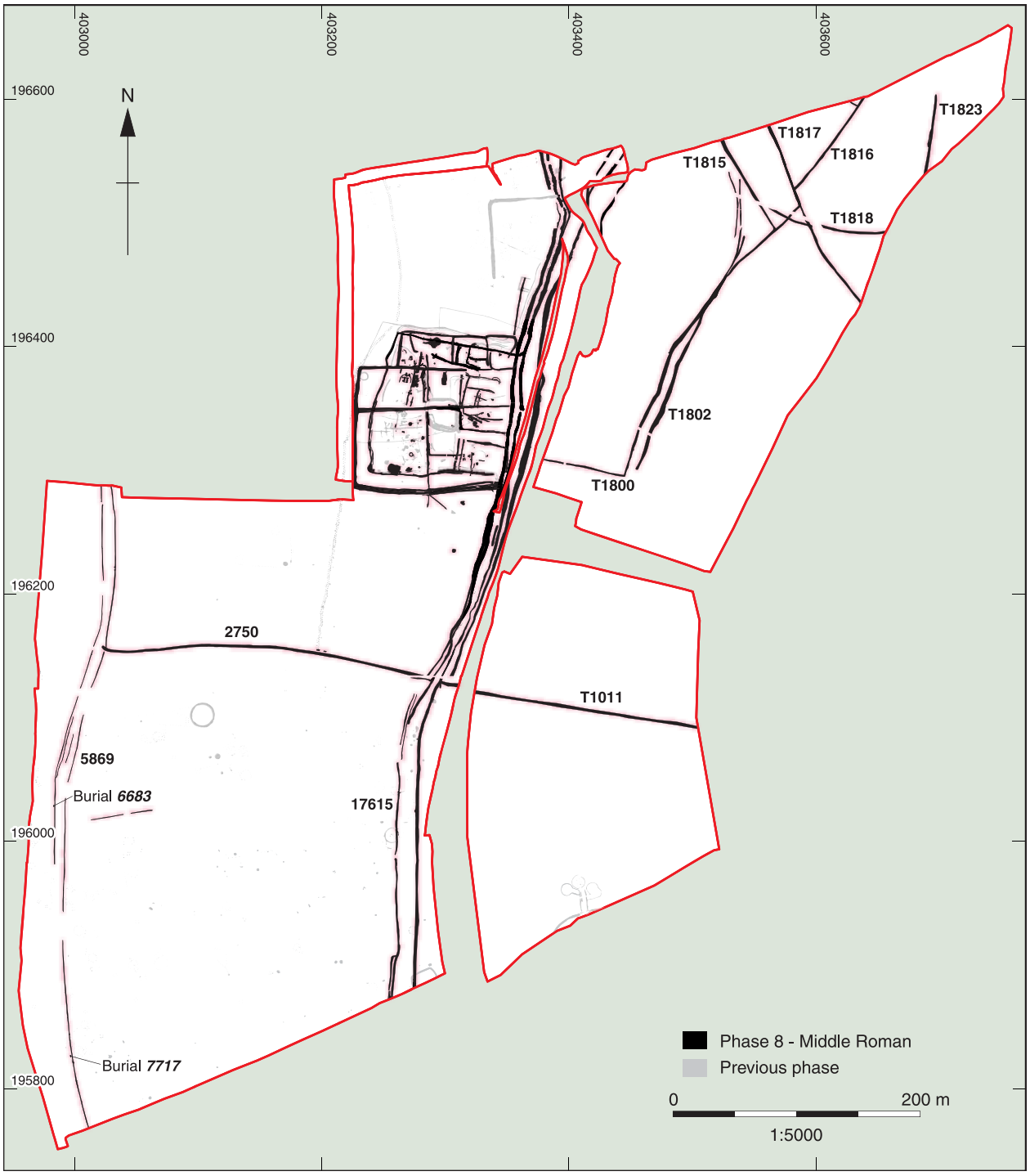


Fig. 3.15 Outline of mid Roman phase (Phase 8)

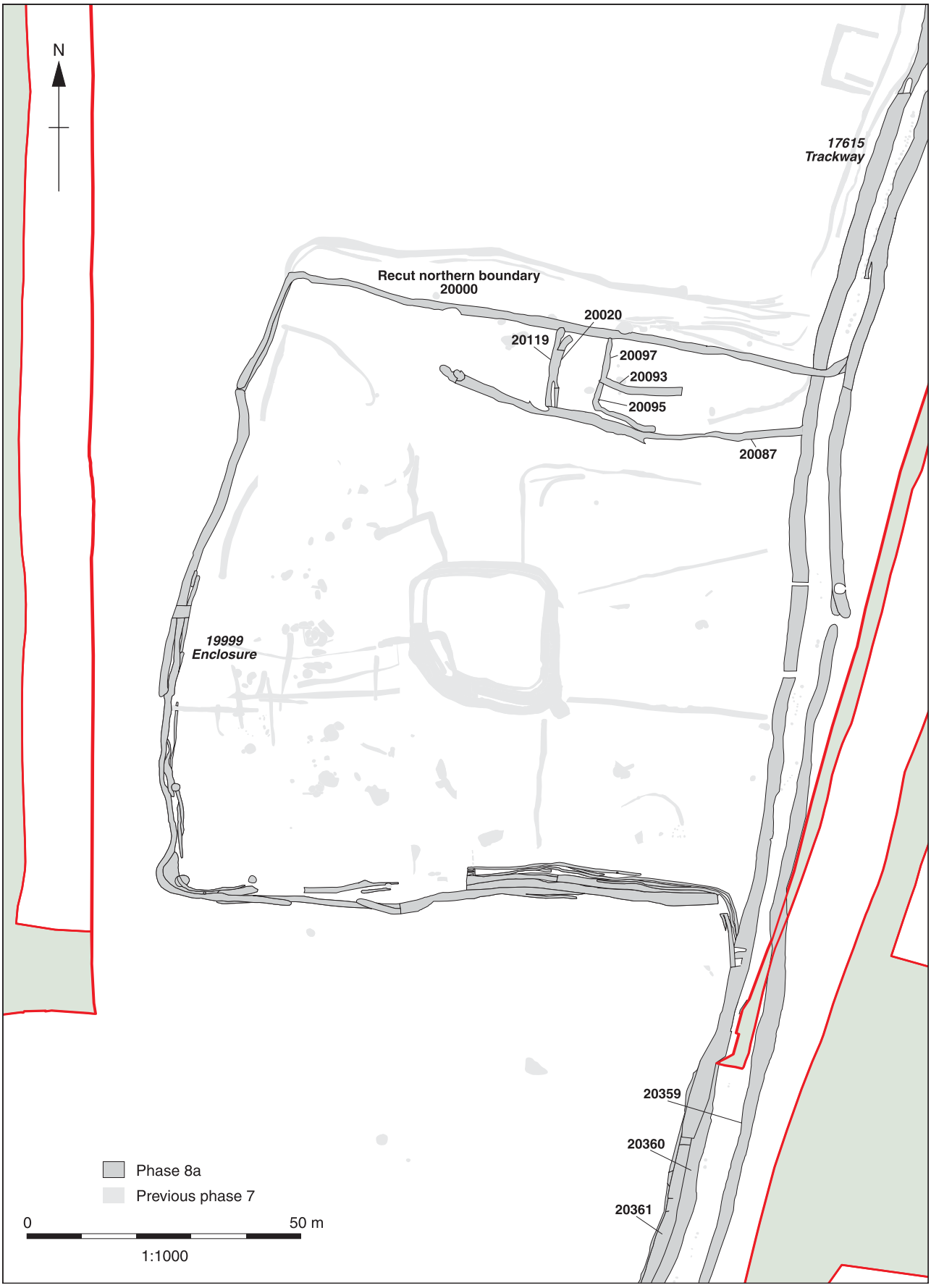


Fig. 3.16 2nd century settlement enclosure modifications (Phase 8a)

tions revealed nearly 700 m of trackway ditches, and its continuation for at least 600 m to the north was indicated by further excavations in Shorncote Quarry (Hearne and Adam 1999; Brossler *et al.* 2002). To the south, the trackway is seen as a cropmark on aerial photographs, heading towards what looks to be a substantial cropmark settlement just *c* 750 m south-east of the Cotswold Community site (see discussion below and Fig. 3.32).

Like 5869 the trackway appeared to have originally comprised two parallel ditches (groups 20359 and 20360; see Fig. 3.16), most parts of which were recut on many occasions, although in places a single ditch appeared to suffice. The ditches were aligned roughly north-south, and were *c* 15 m apart in the south of the site but gradually moved towards one another (as close as 3 m) to the north. The two main ditches were not continuous along their length, gaps possibly facilitating access to the trackway itself. Towards the south one such gap in the western ditch contained two ephemeral parallel gullies running on a similar alignment for up to 50 m.

Later ditches appeared to the east and west of the main ditches in the centre of the site (Figs 3.16–7); to the west, ditch group 20361 was ultimately incorporated into the existing trackway ditch and was probably a recut on a slightly different alignment. To the east, ditch group 20362 went on to form a substantial feature in it own right, running parallel to the existing trackway for a distance of *c* 450 m before continuing beyond the boundary of the site to the north-east. It probably represents the main eastern trackway ditch in this area, dug when the settlement enclosures were redeveloped in Phase 8b (see below).

Beyond the Roman settlement to the north the trackway ditches changed, with some turning slightly to the west; ditch 20359 also split into a series of ditches, presumably representing recuts on different alignments which separated at this point. Where the ditch continued on the same alignment it became segmented. The reason for this change is unknown, but this may be the place where several trackways diverged, heading in different directions and connecting the settlement with others nearby (see below and Fig. 3.32).

The ditches themselves varied considerably in size and nature, from 0.3 m to 4.24 m wide, although most were between 1 and 2 m, while depth of cut also varied from a few centimetres to 1 m deep, with an average of 0.2–0.6 m.

The trackway ditches contained few finds considering their extent and longevity. Small deposits of Roman pottery were recovered, generally dating after AD 125, while limited quantities of mixed animal bone, burnt stone and ceramic building material were found long the length. A trackway recut in the far north produced a spearhead of a long-lived type (SF 2; Fig. 3.58, 5) and rotary quern fragments were also recovered. Overall, it seems likely that the ditches were not used for dumping domestic debris from the settlement.

It is apparent that trackway 17615 was of great significance to the settlement at Cotswold Community, as illustrated by constant recuts and amendments to the feature over time. It is notable that to the south and north of the settlement the trackway ditches become fewer, smaller and less heavily altered, while the ditches also changed direction to the north of the settlement. This arrangement suggests that the placement of the trackway was clearly dependant on the settlement and not the reverse, and that as a result of this placement the trackway was a heavily used route with a need for constant maintenance.

Settlement enclosure ditches 20000 and 20087

At around the same time as the trackway ditches were dug, a modification of the northern settlement boundaries appears to have occurred (Fig. 3.16). This mainly consisted of recutting existing enclosure 19999 (see above) on the western side and taking a different line to the north, slightly reducing the enclosed area. This new ditch boundary (20000) extended over 100 m, and in addition a parallel ditch (20087) measuring *c* 67 m long was constructed 11–16 m to the south.

Boundary ditch 20000 was generally 1 m in width, up to a maximum of 1.75 m, and *c* 0.25–0.75 m deep. It contained pottery assemblages dated AD 125–200, along with a small and unremarkable finds assemblage including limited amounts of animal bone and ceramic building material, a possible floor stone, oven fragments, a nail and residual worked flint. The boundary was cut by a number of later ditches belonging to Phase 8b, as well as pits and waterholes likely to fall into the later sub-phase. In turn it cut a number of features belonging to Phases 6 and 7 as well as one of the original ditches (20360) of trackway 17615, although this may itself have been a later modification.

Ditch 20087 to the south was similar in nature, measuring 1.5 m wide and up to 0.6 m deep, with fills producing animal bone and ceramic building material as well as an assemblage of 2nd century AD pottery. The ditch appeared to terminate amongst a group of pits to the west and possibly cut the western ditch of trackway 17615 to the east, although this relationship was not certain.

A series of features was located between the two ditches and were probably part of this sub-phase of activity. This included intercutting ditches 20093, 20095 and 20097 as well as ditches 20119 and 20120, all of which appear to have sub-divided the area into smaller enclosures. All the ditches within this complex were relatively small, under 15 m long, *c* 1 m wide and up to 0.38 m deep. In most cases pottery dating of the ditches indicates they were filling after AD 125, while other finds included burnt stone, ceramic building material and animal bone as well as a fragment of iron sheet from 20093.

It is likely that within the main part of the enclosure, most Phase 7 features continued in use for a

short while, until the major transformations of the *c* mid 2nd century AD.

Phase 8b: Large-scale settlement reorganisation (*c* mid 2nd-mid/later 3rd century AD)

The second sub-phase of this period saw wide scale and dramatic reorganisation of the settlement (Fig. 3.17). In the first instance this was once again centred upon the northern area, but the reorganisation was extended, ultimately resulting in the creation of a totally new enclosure superseding 19999. This new boundary was significant and was clearly used into the later Roman period. Interior divisions within the enclosure divided it neatly into several areas, probably defining different activity areas.

Northern enclosures and waterholes

It is apparent that the alterations undertaken in the northern part of the enclosure, which saw the creation of boundaries 20000 and 20087, were short-lived. It is arguable that these features were inadequate for the functions assigned to them in a landscape becoming increasingly organised and delineated. Whatever the reason for their replacement, a series of approximately north-south aligned ditches (20002, 20004, 20005) and an east-west boundary (20003) connecting them together were constructed within this sub-phase, truncating their predecessors and creating at least three smaller enclosures. The enclosures were seemingly not constructed in a single phase and the ditches all varied in size, from 1.1 to 2 m wide and up to 0.7 m deep.

The western and central enclosures were the first to be constructed, being *c* 32 x 16 and *c* 26 x 20 m in size respectively. The western enclosure seems to have soon been remodelled, with ditch 20002 being infilled and the area expanding into more rectilinear form (*c* 25 x 40 m), probably as part of the major boundary changes of Phase 8b. The pottery assemblages from the enclosure ditches generally indicated a later 2nd century AD date, while other finds included animal bone, burnt stone, ceramic building material, fired clay and an unusual copper alloy medical or toilet implement (SF 2146; Fig. 3.57, 22). Interestingly, ditch 20004 also contained a small assemblage of metal working debris including vitrified hearth lining and smithing hearth bottom indicating that smithing was taking place in the vicinity of the ditch, possibly within one of the two enclosures formed by it. This implies continuity of function from the previous phase (see above).

A further clue to the function of these enclosures is provided by the large complex of intercutting pits and waterholes within the westernmost enclosure. Dating evidence indicates that these belong to the middle Roman phase, and are stratigraphically likely to be specifically of Phase 8b. The pits in this group were generally *c* 1 m in diameter and 0.4 m deep, while the two earlier waterholes were 3.96 and 3.5 m in diameter respectively and 1.21/2.08 m deep. The pits and waterholes contained small amounts of Roman pottery including some dating to AD 150–200, as well as fragments of ceramic building material and a small assemblage of animal bone and a fragment of blue/green window glass.

The latest waterhole (16074) was a very substantial feature, measuring 4.85 m across and 1.8 m deep and containing 30 fills. The feature produced nearly 4 kg of pottery, which seemed to fall into two groups dating AD 125–170 and AD 160–200, tentatively suggesting that the waterhole may have been recut at around AD 160–170. Over 800 g of animal bone was recovered, dominated by cattle, in addition to building material and nails.

In the south-western part of the expanded western enclosure, just north of ditch 17590, was an area containing many intercutting pits and gullies, most containing pottery of mid to late Roman date, along with brick and tile (including a reasonable amount of flue tile), slag, oven fragments and other pieces of fired clay, iron nails, burnt stone and a coin dated to AD 77–78. Overall, the finds suggest that this area was used for industrial purposes (ie metal-working) from time to time.

One particularly enigmatic feature just to the north of this group of features, and still within the western enclosure, was curving gully 20128, measuring *c* 7 m long and 0.5 m wide but only 0.1 m deep (Fig. 3.18). The gully was lined with stones and associated with two postholes (14149 and 14252). Finds from the gully included pottery dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD as well as a small assemblage of animal bone, ceramic building material, a single nail and an oyster shell. Posthole 14149, although small (0.4 x 0.1 m) also contained a small assemblage of pottery, animal bone, brick and tile, in addition to a number of nails and a possible hobnail. Of most interest was a very heavily corroded iron object which looked like a tanged tool with a flat back and a fishtail shape (SF 1840), similar to objects from Kingscote (Scott 1998, 200) and Gorhambury (Wardle 1990, 139). The function of this object—and of the feature in general—is unknown but may reinforce the concept of a working area.

At a later point in the overall sequence in this northern area, a further enclosure was dug to the east, formed by ditches 20005 and 20103, enclosing an area *c* 22 x 25 m (Fig. 3.17). The enclosure lay adjacent to trackway 17615, with the southernmost ditch (20103) cutting through the western trackway ditch (20360) to seemingly link up with the other (20359). Both ditches produced assemblages of pottery dating from the 2nd to 4th century, probably indicating that at least part of the enclosure was used into the late Roman period, as is also suggested by the presence of late Roman waterhole 14526 in this area (see below). However, a pit (14863) containing pottery dating AD 170–200 (along with 20 kg burnt stone, Ceramic building

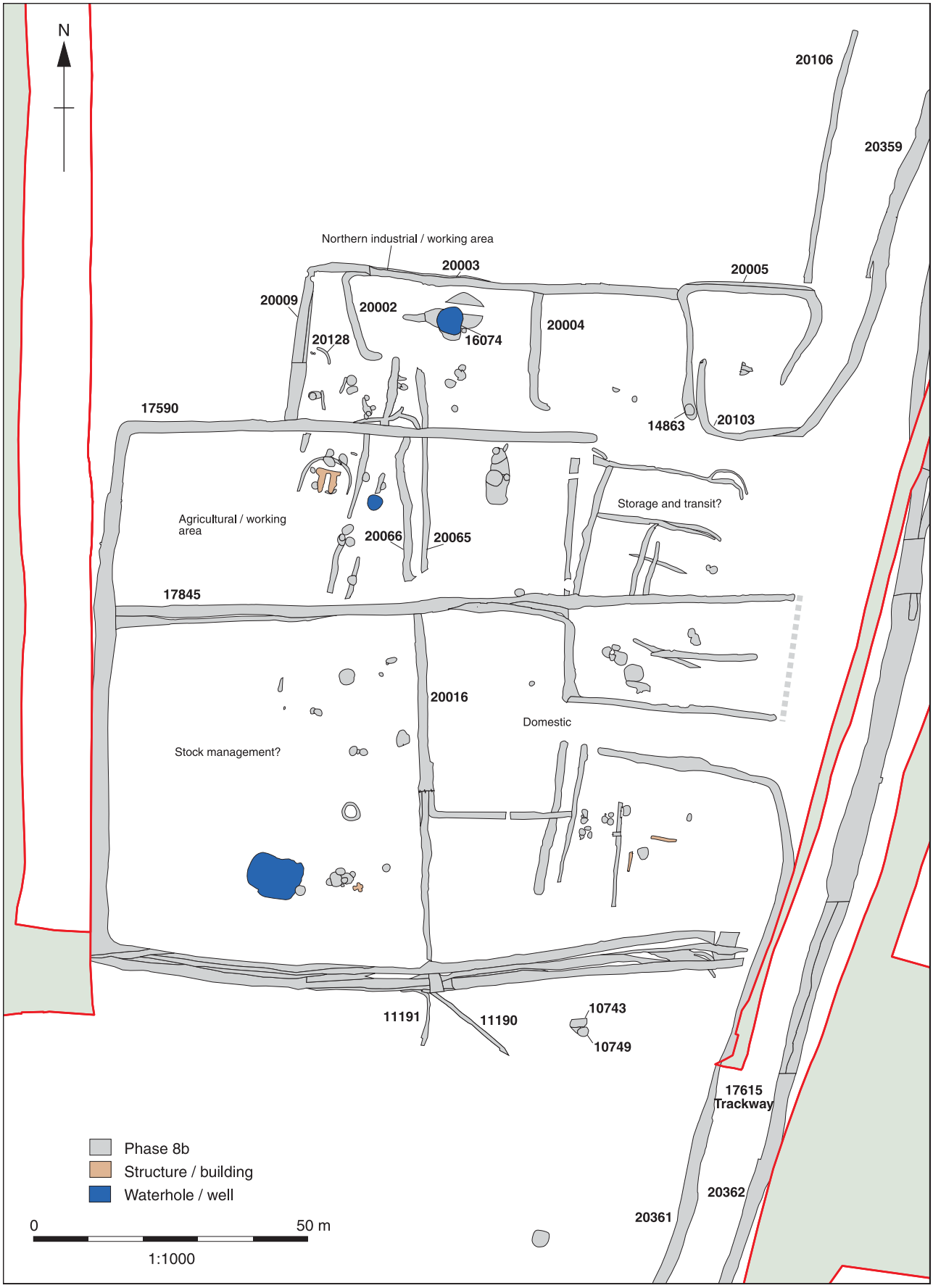


Fig. 3.17 Mid Roman settlement redevelopment (Phase 8b)

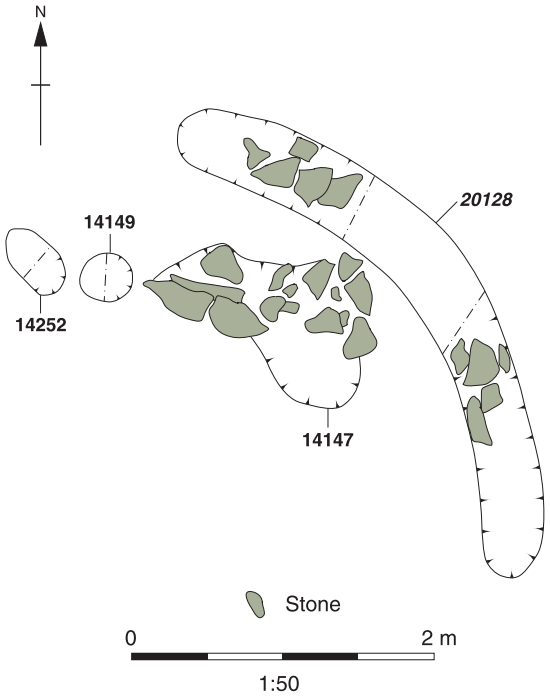


Fig. 3.18 Stone-lined gully 20128

material, fired clay, nails, animal bone and slag) did cut through ditch 20005 to the south of the late Roman waterhole, indicating successive modifications to the enclosure system. The enclosure ditches also produced sizeable deposits of animal bone, as well as ceramic building material in addition to ironwork including nails and possibly bootplates or small joiners dogs. Ditch 20005 produced a fragment of oven plate and a deposit of charred plant remains producing a rich assemblage of cereal chaff (sample 649; see W Smith, vol. 2), while ditch 20103 contained 7.5 kg of burnt stone and further metal working debris.

A single ditch (20106) extended beyond this enclosure to the north, cutting the earlier Phase 7 enclosure 10480. As discussed above, this enclosure (which was associated with metalworking) appears to have retained some significance into the later Roman period and it is possible that this ditch formed the western boundary (with trackway ditch 20359 forming the eastern side) of a wide 'droveway' leading into the northern settlement enclosure. At the point at which the ditch cut enclosure 10480 a fragment of copper alloy bracelet (SF 974) was recovered. Further cinder and undiagnostic slag were also found in the ditch as well as pottery dated after AD 150.

The western boundary ditch to this northern enclosure group was formed by ditch 20009. The ditch was *c* 27 m long and was quite substantial at around 2 m wide and 0.6 m deep. Its short fill sequence produced pottery again dating to AD 125–200, as well as brick and a large animal bone assemblage, dominated by cattle but including a large amount of horse bone.

Overall, the evidence suggests this northern area of the site was divided up and kept separately from the rest of the enclosure. The animal bone assemblage in this area was dominated by cattle and horse and the presence of the large waterhole complex may suggest use of the enclosures for specialist stock management. In addition the presence of sizeable amounts of metal working debris may indicate at least an intermittent industrial function for the area, located away from potential settlement zones.

Enclosing the main settlement

As outlined above, following or during these alterations to the north of the settlement complex a dramatic reorganisation took place to the south (Fig. 3.17). This resulted in the creation of rectangular enclosure 17590, which was a significant undertaking, as it measured 112 m west-east and 100 m north-south. The northern arm of the enclosure was slightly shorter, leaving a gap of 37.5 m between it and trackway 17615, and probably providing access to the northern enclosures. The trackway was once again utilised as the eastern boundary to the enclosure complex.

Unlike 19999, most of the enclosure itself comprised 1–2 main ditches, particularly to the north and west, although smaller recuts were excavated throughout. However, the enclosure ditch changed in nature in the eastern part of the southern arm, comprising numerous indecipherable recuts. This corresponds to the area of settlement in the late Roman period and it is possible that many of these recuts were actually late Roman adaptations of the enclosure. Also in this area were two gullies (11190 and 11191) curving southwards up to 19 m from the enclosure, which may have functioned as drainage ditches to divert excess water away from the main domestic zone (see Champness, this vol.).

As many as 30 possible cuts and recuts were identified within the enclosure ditch complex. These varied in profile and dimensions; the bigger ditches were up to 2.6 m wide and 1 m deep with as many as 12 silting fills, others were better described as gullies measuring just *c* 0.5 m wide and 0.2 m deep and containing a single fill. It is not possible to tell which recuts belong wholly to Phases 8 or 9, but the majority of the cuts are considered to belong to sub-phase 8b. However, deposits even within the larger original ditches show that they were used for domestic dumping and even possible ritual deposition into the late Roman period, as discussed below.

As a result the finds assemblages from the enclosure ditches are not easy to differentiate. Some deposits are clearly later dumping events, particularly in the south-eastern corner of the enclosure where the ditches appear to turn slightly to the south; these deposits will be considered in Phase 9.

Excluding these deposits, pottery dating strongly suggested that the enclosure was created between

AD 125 and 200, with some indication that this occurred around or just after the mid 2nd century. It is notable that the animal bone assemblages within the individual ditches were smaller where ditches did not have a later Roman influence. These were dominated by cattle and horse bones, although some of the ditches to the south-east produced larger quantities of sheep/goat or pig, while bird bone was also noted. Excepting the later deposits, the enclosure ditches also produced small assemblages of ceramic building material, burnt stone, oyster shell, slag, iron nails and copper alloy strips or binding. A number of more interesting copper alloy objects were recovered including a medical implement, possibly an unguent spoon (SF 1215; Fig. 3.58, 8).

Overall, the enclosure enlarged the area of settlement beyond the bounds of the late Iron Age-early Roman site and inside were created a series of internal boundaries which divided the settlement up into smaller zones, possibly relating to function.

Major internal boundaries and trackways

Ditch group 17845 ran east-west through the centre of enclosure 17590, and appeared stratigraphically to have been the earlier feature, although this was not certain and the two are most likely broadly contemporary. The group comprised two ditches (possibly an original cut and a recut on a slightly different alignment) which extended from the western to eastern edges of the site, probably representing a single boundary measuring *c* 126 m long, dividing the settlement into two unequal parts.

The ditches in the group were 1–2 m wide and *c* 0.2–1.2 m deep. All produced Roman pottery, most dating to the latter part of the 2nd century AD, indicating that the ditch was probably open from *c* AD 170. Other finds included moderate assemblages of mixed animal bone, including rook from 20022, as well as ceramic building material, fired clay and ironwork.

A number of spatial divisions within enclosure 17590 appear to have been located on either side of boundary 17845, creating four main zones within the settlement, in addition to the northern enclosures (Fig. 3.17). These took the form of substantial ditches, some of which appear to have formed smaller trackways, running from south to north.

To the south of ditch 17845 the main division comprised ditch 20016, which extended at least 62 m to the southern boundary of enclosure 17590, dividing the southern area into two approximately equal zones. The ditch varied in morphology along its length, measuring 0.8–1.75 m wide and was generally 0.4 m deep. An assemblage of pottery weighing 1795 g was recovered from the ditch, most indicating that it was filling during the later 2nd century. In addition it produced a large, mixed animal bone assemblage, burnt stone, ceramic building material, fired clay (including part of a hearth), a series of nails and hobnails and a copper alloy mount/pendant (SF 1481; Fig. 3.60, 3). The ditch was recut along part of its length, probably in the early 3rd century.

Aligned upon ditch 20016 to the north of boundary 17845 were parallel ditches 20065 and 20066, which seemed to extend across the northern ditch of the main settlement enclosure to the group of northern enclosures. The ditches were approximately 2–3 m apart, 0.8–1.6 m wide, with a maximum depth of 0.6 m. Pottery indicated they were infilled around the same time as ditch 20016 to the south (later 2nd century), while other finds included ceramic building material, possible fire bar fragments and an iron washer.

These ditches appear to have formed a small trackway funnelling activity to the northern enclosures and may have been used for stock management as well as everyday transit. They also served to divide up the overall enclosed settlement into smaller functional zones.

Zones within the settlement

A number of pits, waterholes, gullies, ditches and other features lay within the four zones delineated by the main internal boundaries, some of which further sub-divided these areas. Although many of these features also lay within Phase 7 enclosure 19999, and so may have predated the construction of enclosure 17590, it is thought on balance that most relate to the major reorganisation of the settlement in Phase 8b (Fig. 3.17). The general dating evidence indicates that they were in use during the later 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.

North-west zone—Agricultural/working area

The north-western zone appears to have been used as an agricultural working area as attested by the presence of a corn dryer and related features (Fig. 3.19). Structure 14400 was a double T-shaped corn dryer, probably used to dry out grain for preservation (Figs 3.20–1). The feature comprised two hearths or flues aligned north-south with stokeholes at the southern end and a further east-west aligned flue joining the two to the north. Each flue was constructed using roughly hewn limestone slabs measuring *c* 0.45 x 0.2 x 0.1 m, placed into a shallow construction cut (*c* 0.25 m deep) and held together with mortar. Up to three courses survived on excavation.

The north-south aligned flues measured 2.75 and 2.8 m long and 0.25 m wide. The stokeholes at each end were constructed using pitched limestone slabs and were heavily scorched, covered with *in situ* ashy deposits, and in turn overlain by a general layer of collapse indicating abandonment. The northern flue was larger overall (4.2 m long and 0.6 m wide) and was largely truncated or ploughed out at its eastern end. A single ashy deposit was found in this flue to the east. Charred plant remains associated with the structure were chaff rich; where

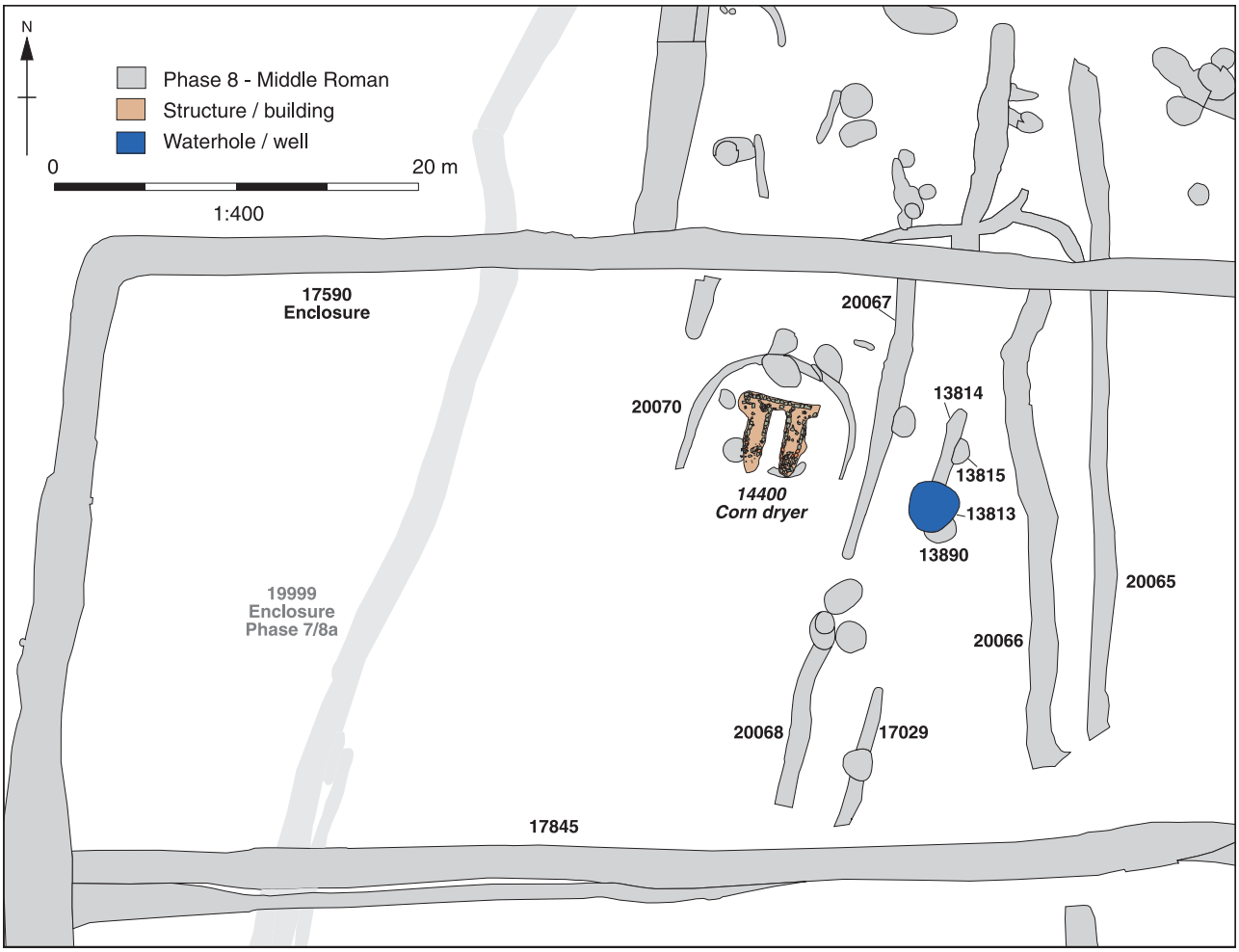


Fig. 3.19 North-west zone—Industrial/working area

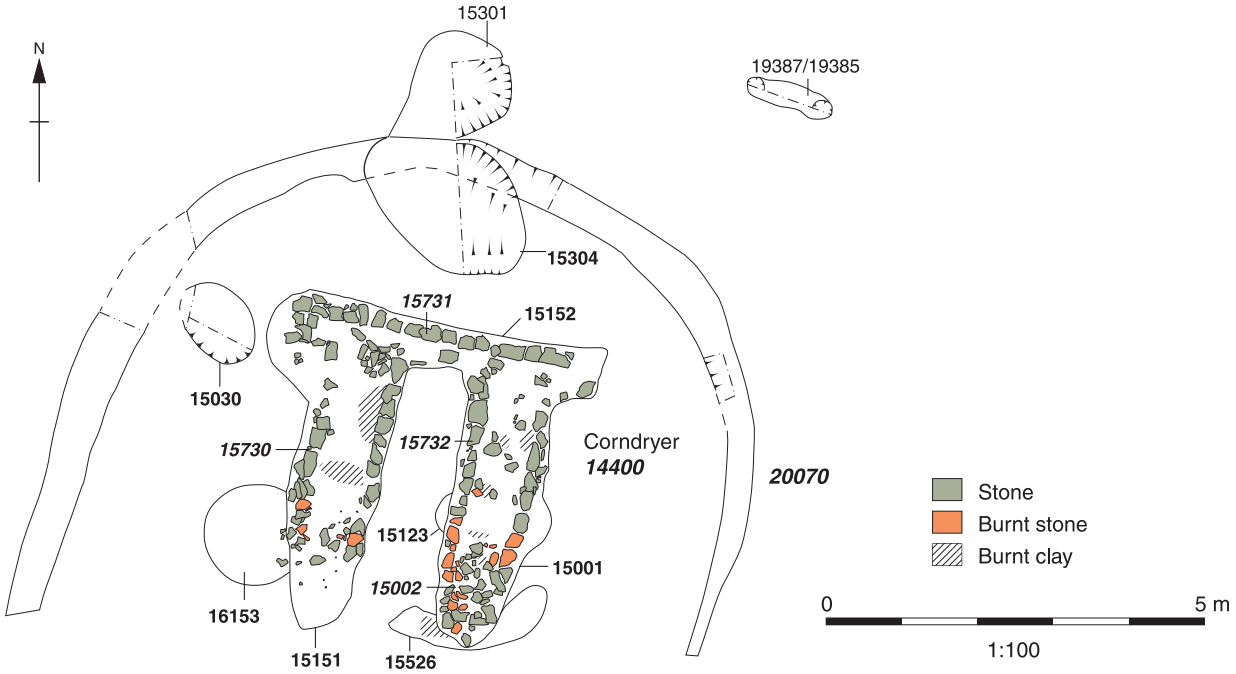


Fig. 3.20 Corn dryer 14400 and associated features

possible wheat was identified more specifically as spelt (see W Smith, this vol.). Charcoal was mainly identified as oak (Challinor, this vol.).

Deposits from within and around the corn dryer produced a moderately sized assemblage of mixed animal bone, a fragment of unidentified fired clay, pottery, a coin (possibly dated AD 41–96), a fragment of blue/green cast window glass and a copper alloy brooch from the eastern flue. The brooch was identified as a Nauheim derivative type dating to the later 1st century BC and was in very good condition (SF 1946; Fig. 3.56, 4).

Charred plant remains from the corn dryer were submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of cal AD 78–224 (OxA-17616; Prob 95.4%). Pottery from within the *in situ* deposits was generally dated to AD 125–200, indicating that the structure was in use during the 2nd century and may have continued into the following phase, though this is not proven. The presence of the 1st century coin and brooch within the structure is unexplained but may relate to dumping of midden material after the structure had gone out of use.

The corn dryer was located within a shallow curvilinear gully (20070) measuring 0.65 m wide and 0.2 m deep. The gully produced pottery dating to AD 125–250 as well as fragments of animal bone and fired clay. The southernmost parts of the feature were probably truncated by a medieval furrow.

A series of pits was located in and around the gully and corn dryer (Fig. 3.20). These varied greatly in form and dimensions, from 0.3 to 2.1 m in diameter and from just a few centimetres deep to 1.1 m. A number of the pits were cut by the corn dryer and may have preceded the structure or facilitated its construction, while others clearly cut through gully 20070. The pottery from all these features fell within the bounds of this phase (AD 125–200), while other finds included animal bone, fired clay, brick and tile and an iron nail. Other pits in this area produced similarly dated pottery, along with animal bone, burnt fired clay and a copper alloy ring which may have been a finger ring or fitting.

Fig. 3.21 Photograph of corn dryer 14400

Overall, the features did not seem to contain anything which directly connected them to the corn dryer, perhaps with the exception of some fragments of burnt fired clay and an oven brick, but their vicinity and relationships with the feature strongly suggest they were associated.

In addition to these features a series of ditches was dug on the same alignment as the corn dryer, appearing to separate the features from remaining activity to the east (Fig. 3.19). Ditches 20067 and 20068 formed a 30 m long division; it is unclear whether the pits between these ditches also belonged to this phase or the earlier period, but ditch 20067 clearly terminated at the north of this group. Ditch 17029 was parallel to 20068 at a distance of 2.75 m and was *c* 7.5 m long. Both ditches were on the same alignment as enclosure 19999, and may represent the remains of an earlier trackway leading to the Phase 8a northern enclosures, before being replaced during Phase 8b by the north-south trackway further east (20085, 20086; see above). The ditches were all around 1 m wide and at most 0.5 m deep and produced Phase 8 pottery, along with large deposits of burnt stone (up to 25 kg), presumably related to the activity taking place to the west. Fragments of tegulae, nails and fired clay were also recovered from the ditches.

A small group of intercutting features lay between ditch 20068 and 'trackway' ditch 20066, comprising three pits (13815, 13813, 13890) and a gully (13814) (Fig. 3.19). The shape of the complex suggests an industrial feature with a flue, though this is not supported by the finds. The latest feature stratigraphically was pit 13813 (3 m diameter by 1.5 m deep), which produced a pottery assemblage weighing 1320 g indicating a date of AD 150–200. Other finds were not extensive, comprising animal bone, ceramic building material, burnt stone and fired clay in small quantities. More unusual finds include a Colchester two-piece brooch (from gully 13814; SF 1779; Fig. 3.56, 3) and a complete quartzite whetstone. The function of the features remains elusive, although the size and depth of 13813 suggests that it may have been a waterhole.

South-west zone—stock management?

The area enclosed to the south-west (*c* 27 x 30 m at maximum extent) contained no linear features belonging to this phase, and instead was dominated by waterhole complex 11739/11760, and therefore presumably reserved for stock management (Fig. 3.22).

The waterhole complex clearly had its roots in the middle Roman phase but was recut and used throughout the occupation period, continuing into Phase 9 (Fig. 3.23). The original waterhole 11739 was roughly circular, *c* 4 m in diameter and *c* 2 m deep. The feature contained large quantities of residual pottery as a consequence of cutting through late Iron Age-early Roman enclosure ditch 19999. The remaining assemblage indicated a date of *c* AD

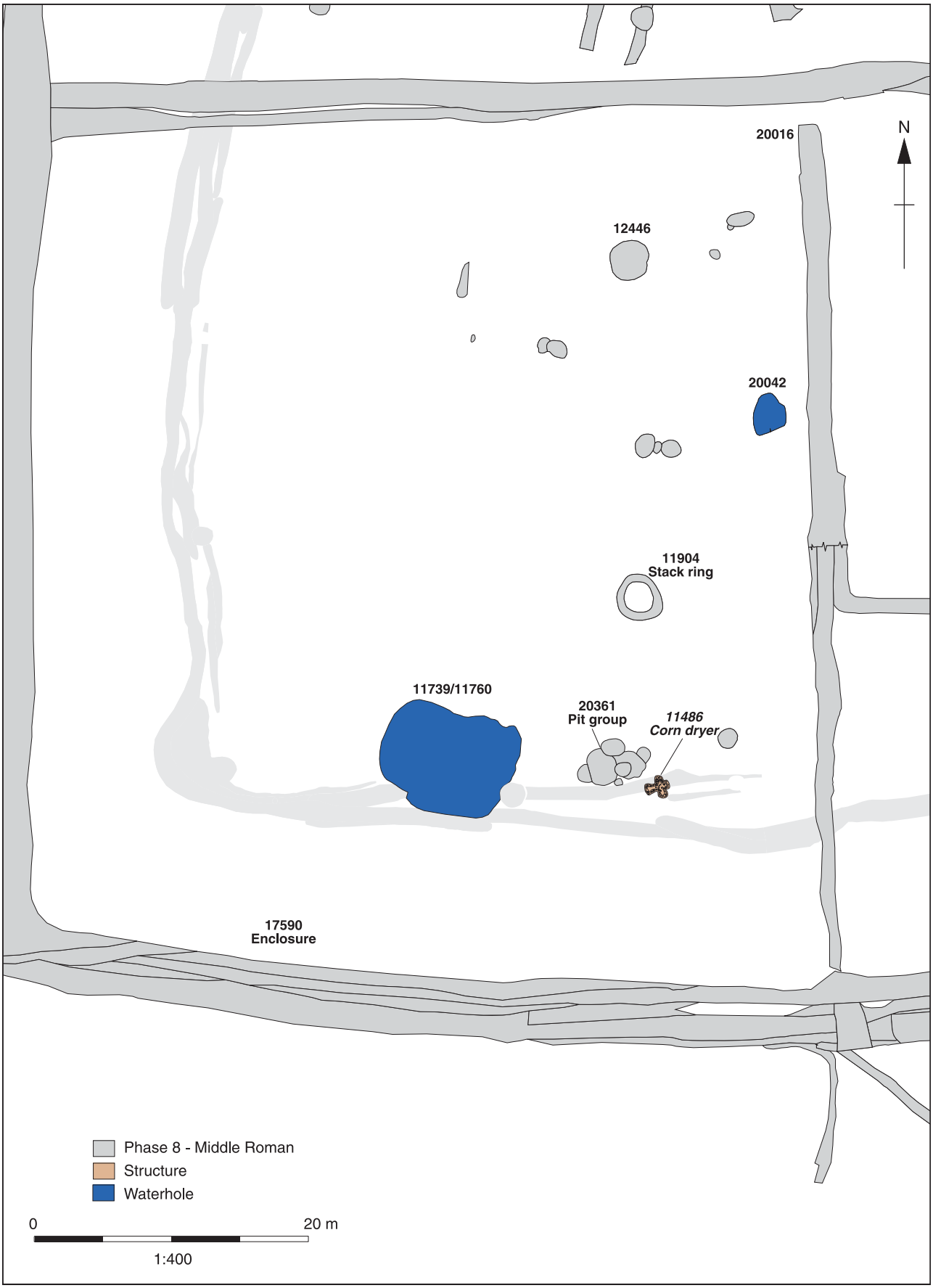


Fig. 3.22 South-west zone—stock management?

125–200. The waterhole appeared to have been lined with stone or contained a stone structure which had collapsed, represented by stone layer 11891 (Fig. 3.24). At some point a small pit, 12011, was cut into the waterhole, this contained a sherd of pottery dated AD 125–200 but no other finds and its purpose is unclear.

The waterhole was later recut as 11760 which was more oval in plan, *c* 5–6 by 8 m across, and 1.5 m deep. Pottery suggested that the waterhole was recut during Phase 8, possibly before AD 200, although a later component within the 2 kg assemblage was dated AD 240–410. In addition a coin dated AD 328 was recovered from the upper layer of the waterhole. This may be intrusive but may also indicate that the feature was open for a long period of time. The final recut of waterhole 11760 (12003) is likely to have dated to Phase 9 and will be discussed below.

The waterholes produced moderate to large, mixed assemblages of animal bone dominated by large mammals, in particular cattle and horse, as well as mixed brick and tile, residual flint and ironwork. The latter included nails as well as a collection of hobnails from 11760, possibly a discarded or deposited shoe. Feature 11760 also produced a small amount of fired clay and slag.

Approximately 6 m to the east of the waterhole complex a further group of eight intercutting pits was excavated (20361) varying from *c* 0.3 m to 2.6 m diameter and *c* 0.4 m deep (Fig. 3.22). The pits contained a mixed assemblage of pottery dating from the late Iron Age to the late Roman period, though predominantly this dated AD 125–200. Later pottery was recovered from a burnt deposit placed into a half silted up pit, possibly indicating that earlier pits were used for dumping. Most of the pits also produced small or moderate assemblages of mixed animal bone.

Immediately south-east of the pit group was a small corn dryer (11486; Figs 3.23 and 3.25), which appeared to cut enclosure ditch 19999. The structure was cruciform in shape, measuring 2.5 m x 2.3 m, and placed into a shallow construction cut. As with

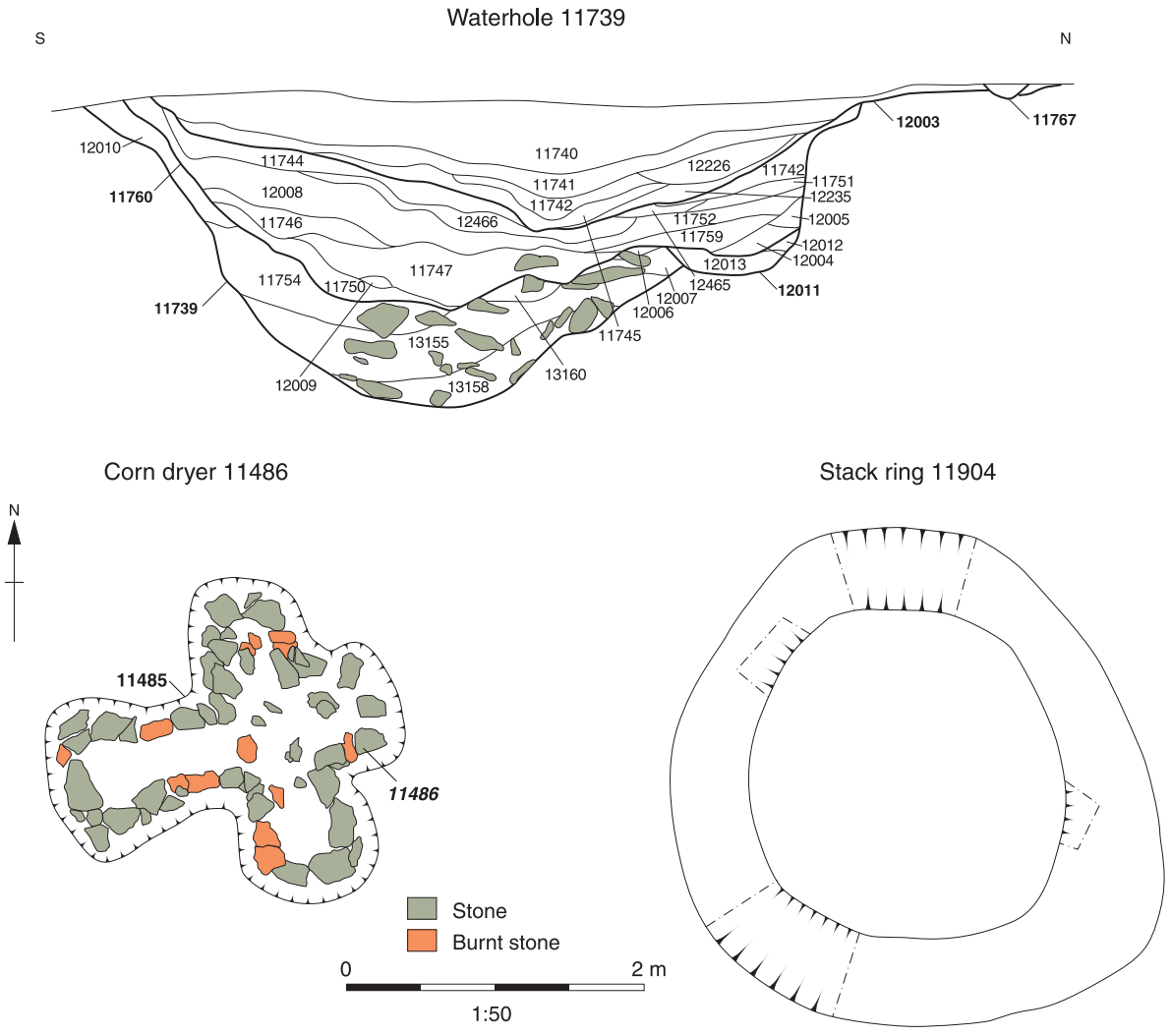


Fig. 3.23 Features in the south-west zone: Waterhole 11739, corn dryer 11486 and stack ring 11904

Fig. 3.24 Photograph of stone layer 11891 in waterhole complex 11739/11760

Fig. 3.25 Photograph of corn dryer 11486

structure 14400 (see above) the corn dryer was constructed of roughly hewn limestone blocks (*c* 0.06m–0.4 m long) bonded with mortar, although it was not as well preserved and the details of its construction and use are not as clear. The charred plant remains were identified as a mixture of cereal grain, chaff and weeds including hulled barley and possible spelt. No other finds were recovered from the feature and the date is not known. The corn dryer clearly post-dated the Phase 7 enclosure ditch 19999, and may have been contemporary with 14400, but it is possible that it dates to Phase 9.

Other features in this zone include a probable stack ring and a number of pits. The 'stack ring' (11904) lay *c* 12 m north-east of the waterhole and was defined by a small circular gully (*c* 3.3 m external diameter), cutting through Phase 6 house gully 11951 (Fig. 3.23). The feature was 0.4–0.8 m wide and 0.2 m deep and resembles others of this date found at Claydon Pike and Thornhill Farm thought to represent Roman stack rings (feature surrounding a hayrick—a stack of hay covered with thatch for preservation in the open air), although this interpretation is far from certain. Although slight in nature the gully contained a large assemblage of animal bone, as well as ceramic building material and pottery (dated AD 125–200). Hammerscale was also found in residue from this feature, which may call into question its function as a stack ring.

The remaining features dated to this or the subsequent phase in the south-west zone comprised a number of isolated pits, most located to the north-east (Fig. 3.23). One of these (20042) was large enough to be a possible waterhole, at 1.7 m in diameter and 1.5 m deep. This feature produced only fragments of ceramic building material and fired clay as well as a near complete Colchester two-piece brooch (SF 1682). Another substantial pit 12446 (2.7 m diameter, 0.9 m deep) produced a large fired clay assemblage, which comprised oven plates, oven wall and pedestal, as well as flue tile, all suggesting that the feature was an oven. The only other finds from the feature consisted of pottery and a large animal bone assemblage, mainly comprising cattle and horse but also roe deer. Much of the pottery was mixed, dating to both Phases 7 and 8.

North-eastern zone—storage and transit?

The developmental sequence throughout the eastern zones—and the north-east in particular—is far harder to discern, due in part to the much greater level of truncation by later features, and also to the fact that many of the boundaries appear to have been re-modelled on numerous occasions. There were a number of further sub-divisions in this zone, though all seem to respect the main east-west boundary ditch 17845 to the south (Fig. 3.26). To the west one such sub-division was defined by ditches 20065 to the west (see above) and 20064 to the east, enclosing an area *c* 25 x 28 m. As with ditch 20065, the eastern boundary (20064) appeared to be part of a small north-south-trackway (along with ditch 20062), and may have fulfilled a similar function of providing access to and from the northern enclosures. The trackway ditches were both around 1–1.5 m wide and 0.3–0.6 m deep, and formed a funnel widening from 1.4 m to the south to 5 m in the north. Pottery indicated construction around AD 160–170, while large amounts of later material suggested they may have been used (or at least infilled) during the later phase. A wall was constructed within 20062 in Phase 9 (see below). Ditch 20062 contained a large assemblage of animal bone dominated by cattle and sheep/goat, along with sizeable deposits of ceramic building material including flue tile, tegulae, tesserae and brick.

The only features of note within this sub-enclosure comprised a large intercutting group of 11 pits near to the northern boundary (14453), covering an area 10 m x 4 m, and with an obvious progression noted from south to north. Many of the pits were

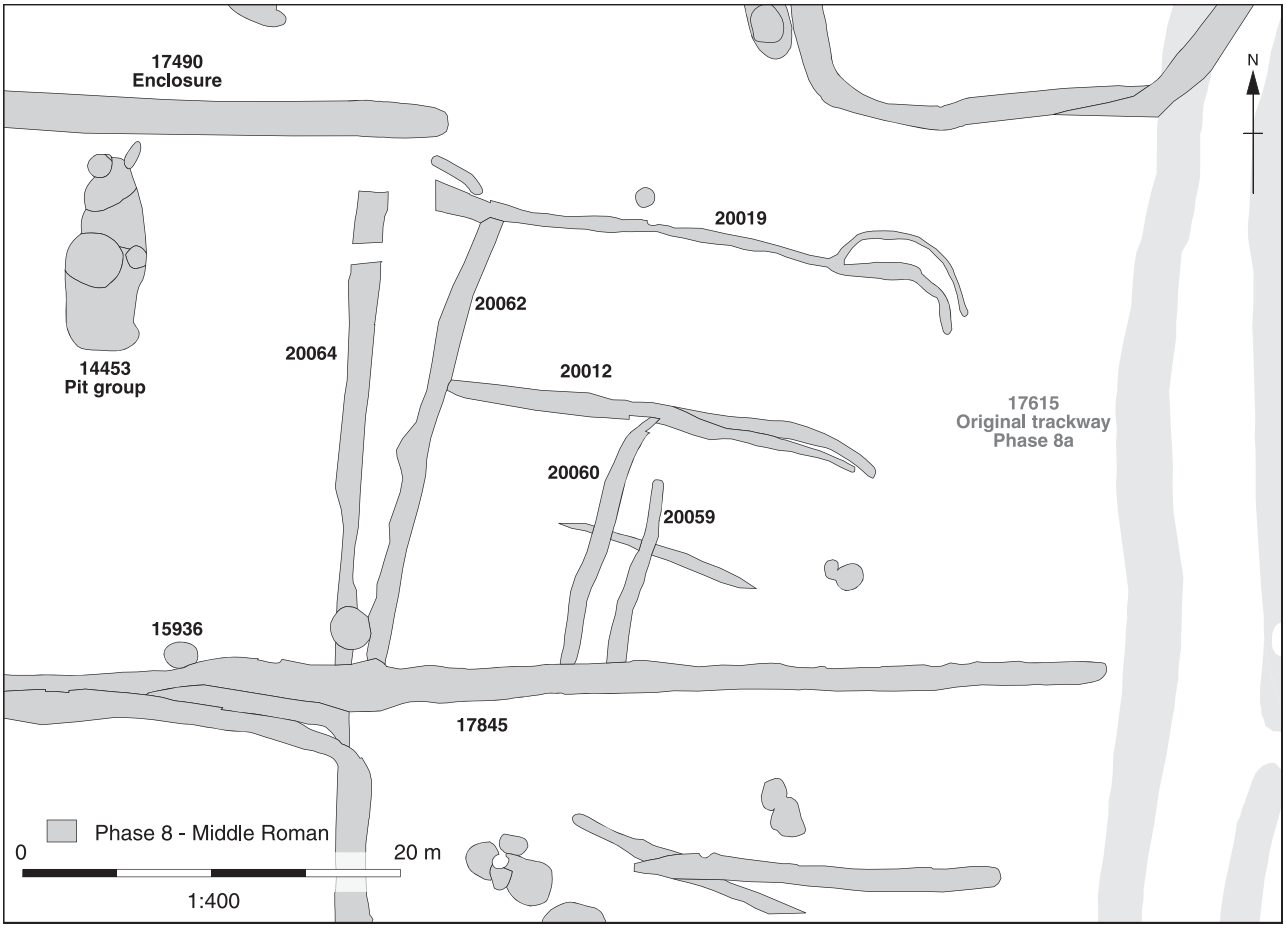


Fig. 3.26 North-east zone—storage and transit?

large in plan (over 3 m dia) but not correspondingly deep (*c* 0.6 m). The pits were notably lacking in finds, with small assemblages of pottery, all indicating a 2nd–3rd century date, along with ceramic brick and limited quantities of animal bone, which was dominated by horse.

The intercutting nature of the pits indicates that this area was used over a long period of time for the same function, while their size and shape coupled with the lack of finds may suggest that this was the main storage area for the settlement. Only one other feature dating to this phase was excavated within this enclosed area, a small pit 15936 (0.6 x 0.37 m) which produced pottery dated AD 100–300, as well as 7 kg of burnt stone and a fragment of tegula.

Further east beyond trackway ditches 20064 and 20062 lay an area adjacent to the main settlement trackway 17615, which may actually have been open to traffic passing along this route (see Fig. 3.17 above). Ditches 20019 and 20012 further sub-divided this zone into two smaller enclosures (*c* 8 x 25 m and 12 x 25 m), both remaining open to the east

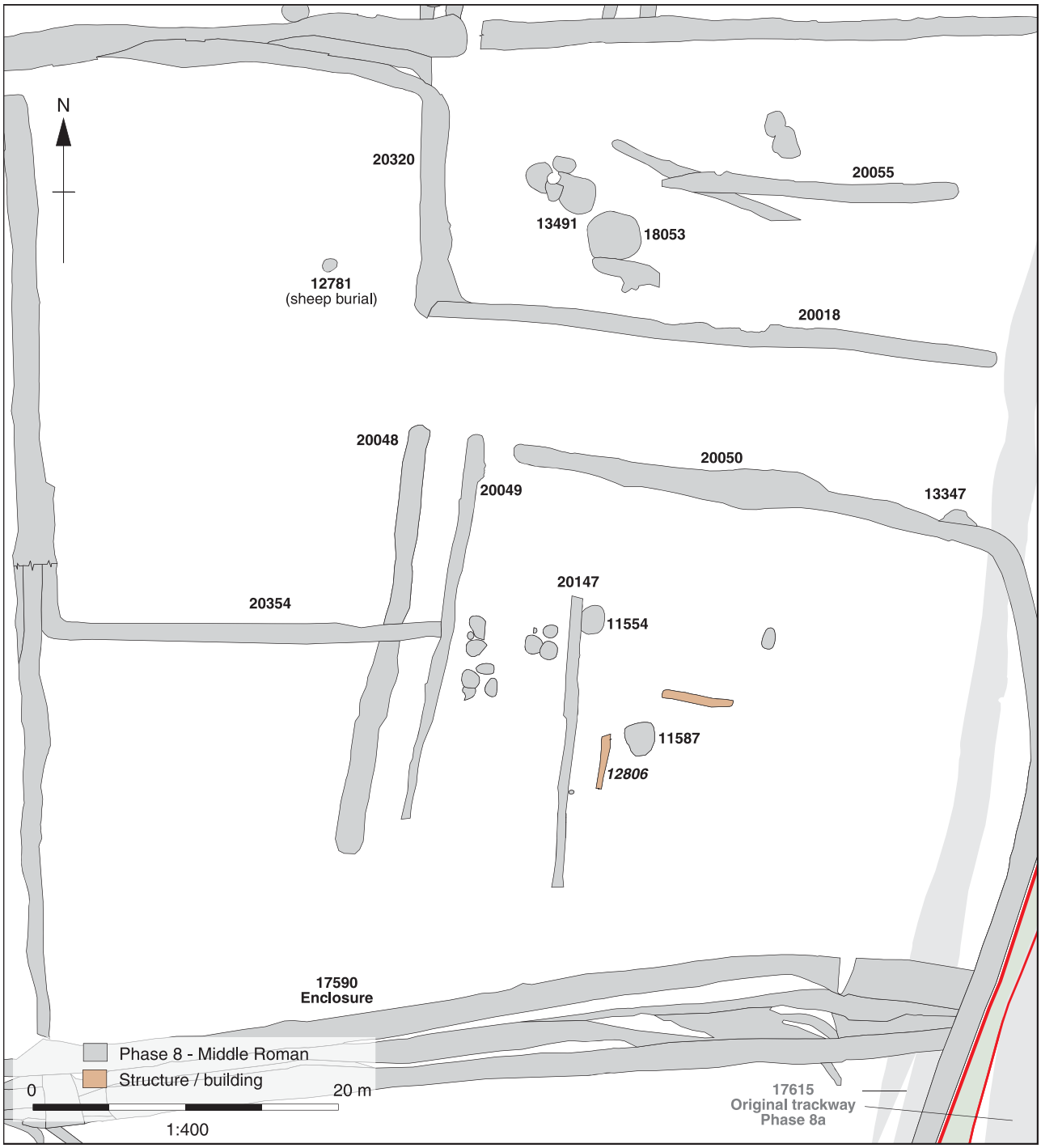


Fig. 3.27 South-east zone—domestic focus

towards the main trackway. Small pottery assemblages from the ditches suggest a later 2nd century date, while the few other finds recovered included an iron boot plate and a copper alloy pin or bracelet. Their function remains uncertain, but it is tempting to speculate that they served as holding areas for wheeled traffic coming in off from the main trackway into the settlement. At some later date within the middle Roman phase, the southern enclosure was divided by the insertion of two ditches (20060 and 20059), from which came a much larger finds assemblage including animal bone, tegula, fired clay and burnt stone. This was probably dumped material derived from the adjacent domestic area to the south.

South-eastern zone—a domestic focus

The south-eastern zone of the settlement is thought to have retained the domestic function of the previous phase, though there is only limited evidence for actual buildings (see below). The zone seems to have been divided into three or maybe four enclosed areas, with a possible entrance to the east by the main trackway (Fig. 3.27). This would have led into a wide (*c* 8 m) internal space that separated the northern and south enclosures and headed towards another enclosure at the western end.

The northern enclosure was *c* 35 x 18 m in size, with its southern boundary formed by ditch 20018, which appears to have continued in use from Phase 7 (see above), and was later recut in Phase 9 (see below). The western boundary comprised substantial ditch 20320 (0.8–1.6 m wide and up to 1 m deep), which contained up to 2 kg of 2nd century pottery, along with burnt stone, ceramic building material and an animal bone assemblage (*c* 1.5 kg) comprising cattle, horse, dog, pig and sheep/goat.

The enclosure contained a number of intercutting ditches and pits, although the stratigraphy of this area was particularly complex and therefore the exact sequence and function of these features remains uncertain. The main east-west aligned internal ditch (20055) was traced for *c* 25 m, with a definite terminal to the east and an uncertain western end. The ditch may have been intended as an internal sub-division and produced a small pottery assemblage dating AD 150–200, along with fragments of ceramic building material and animal bone.

Three groups of pits were revealed within this enclosure, all containing pottery dated to the 2nd century, with an emphasis on the later part. The pits varied in shape and size, though most were under 2 m in diameter and less than 1 m deep. In addition to pottery, other finds included the usual animal bone, ceramic building material and burnt stone (up to 24.5 kg from pit 18053), as well as fragments of fired clay oven or hearth and metalwork consisting of iron nails and an iron candle holder (SF 2239; Fig 3.60, 1). An articulated horse leg was recovered from pit 13491 (Fig. 3.28).

Fig. 3.28 Photograph of articulated horse leg from pit 13491

In the south-east corner of this zone was the largest enclosure, *c* 30 x 33 m in size, defined to the north by ditch 20050 and to the west by double ditches 20048 and 20049, with a gap in the north-west corner of 2 m. In Phase 7 this particular area was arguably identified as a domestic settlement area (see above), a function also noted in the late Roman period (see below). Although there are few obvious signs of domestic activity belonging to Phase 8 in this area, it is believed that continuity of a settlement focus is the most likely scenario.

Ditch 20050 itself varied from 1–2 m wide and was up to 0.5 m deep, with fills containing 871 g of pottery dating AD 150–200, a small, mixed animal bone assemblage, slag and a rotary quern fragment. A wide range of pottery forms was apparent from this ditch (including jars, bowls, cups, beakers and a fragment of Dressel 20 amphora), which may be expected in such a domestic zone. The ditch was also used to dump domestic debris in the later Roman period (see below). At its eastern end, the ditch cut through the earlier trackway ditch and turned southwards, forming the eastern boundary to the enclosure and probably continuing southwards as part of the remodelled trackway, although the stratigraphy in this area was particularly unclear. By the postulated 'entrance' into this domestic zone, the ditch cut a substantial pit (13347; 1.6 x 2.8 m across), which contained pottery dated 2nd to 4th century AD (including a flagon handle), and a small (child's?) copper alloy bracelet (SF 1739).

The western ditches, 20048 and 20049, ran parallel, 2–2.6 m apart, over a distance of *c* 28 m, and may have formed a small trackway to regulate movement within this zone. They appeared to terminate at the Phase 7/8a enclosure ditch 19999, though the relationships were uncertain, and could have originated in Phase 8a. Both were similar in form at around 1–1.5 m wide and 0.3–0.6 m deep, while pottery recovered generally dated mid to late 2nd century AD. Ditch 20048 also contained a large assemblage of animal bone dominated by cattle and sheep/goat, while ditch 20049 produced large deposits of ceramic building material, including flue tile, tegula, tesserae and brick, along with 14 kg of burnt stone, fired clay and cinder.

There are no indications of any buildings in the vicinity that are likely to have had heated rooms or tessellated floors, and so the range of ceramic

building material from ditch 20049 may have at least partly been used for a secondary function (see Poole, this vol. and discussion below). However, there is slight evidence for a building in the central part of this south-eastern enclosure in the form of two shallow gullies (11573 and 12806) arranged perpendicular around a substantial pit, 11587. Both gullies were truncated by later activity but were clearly less than 5 m long, *c* 0.7 m wide and up to 0.25 m deep. They produced Phase 8 pottery but no other finds, and were similar in form to the foundation slots of a structure at Claydon Pike, Fairford (Building 2), dated to a similar period (Miles *et al.* 2007, 105, fig. 5.9). There, the structure was an annexe to a large domestic aisled building, and could well have been roofed with tile, as was the main structure. It is therefore possible that some of the roofing tile discovered nearby at Cotswold Community could have been used in a structure based on 11573 and 12806, while the few fragments of coloured window glass dated 1st to 3rd century AD from the site may also derive from the building (see Cool, this vol.).

The 'internal' pit (11587) was 2.4 x 1.4 m across and 0.59 m deep and contained 2nd century pottery and animal bone. Its function, if related to the potential structure, remains uncertain. Another pit (11554) to the north-west also produced 2nd century pottery, along with burnt stone, but most other pits in this zone lay further west, separated from the potential building by a *c* 19 m length of north-south ditch (20147), 0.6 m wide and 0.2 m deep. This ditch presumably sub-divided the enclosure into functional areas, but finds from its fills were fairly minimal, including a small pottery assemblage (dated AD 125–200), animal bone, burnt stone, tile and a possible nail.

A total of 11 pits were revealed to the west of ditch 20147, all fairly close together but rarely intercutting. The majority of the pits were 0.4–1.2 m in diameter, although they did range from 0.34 m to 2.8 m, and all were between 0.2–0.8 m deep, with most being at the shallower end of this range. Pottery from these features was mixed, the majority was dated between AD 100 and AD 250, while additional finds include brick and tile, animal bone (including roe deer), burnt stone, slag, fragments of oven plate and smithing hearth, an iron strip and a copper alloy brooch pin. Overall, it appears that most pits were used for refuse disposal, while the four slightly shallower pits (grouped to the east) containing fewer finds may have had a differing function, such as storage.

The final main enclosure in this south-eastern zone lay to the west, with an entrance *c* 7 m wide in the middle of the eastern side. The original enclosure may have been quite substantial, at *c* 22 x 62 m, although it seems likely that east-west ditch 20354 was soon inserted, reducing the main enclosure to *c* 22 x 37 m in size. This modification also created a smaller area (*c* 25 x 22 m) to the south, possibly accessed by trackway 20048/9, although ditch

Fig. 3.29 Photograph of articulated sheep burial from pit 12781

20354 did appear to cut 20048, so possibly the trackway (if such it was) was not in use at this point. Aside from a single pit (12781), the larger area was completely devoid of features dating to this period, although the pit did contain an articulated sheep burial (Fig. 3.29), along with other animal bone, ceramic building material, fragments of smithing hearth bottom and 2nd to 4th century pottery. No features of this phase were located in the southern area and so the function of these areas remains unclear.

Outside of the settlement—dividing the landscape

As with Phase 7, although the vast majority of activity in this phase was confined to the settlement enclosure, there were features of middle Roman date spread across the excavated area, including extensive sections of field systems (Fig. 3.15).

Southern boundary

The southern extent of the settlement's landholding may have been marked by ditch 2750, *c* 140 m south of the main settlement enclosure. This appears to relate to the programme of large scale land reorganisation and definition represented by the construction of the trackways and field boundaries, far beyond the scope of the early Roman settlement area. It is notable that the southern boundary corresponds exactly to the southern extent of the late Bronze Age-early Iron Age pit alignment, 3333, indicating that at least this section of the alignment was still a significant part of the landscape and a boundary at this later date.

The western terminal of the ditch lay within a gap in the eastern ditch of trackway 5869, from where it extended eastwards across the site, up to the trackway 17615, before continuing further to the east beyond the limits of excavation (as ditch

T1011), a total of over 480 m. It may have terminated where the ground rises fairly sharply at Ashton Down, just to the east of the excavation area. The eastern trackway north of ditch 2750/T1011 showed far more evidence of intensive re-modelling, as would perhaps be expected if this signified the southern limit of the settlement's territory (see discussion below). The ditch was a substantial feature, measuring *c* 2 m wide and 0.3–0.6 m deep with a sequence of up to six fills. There was little pottery from the ditch, as would be expected this far from the main settlement, but the small assemblage was generally dated to the 2nd–4th century. Other finds included ceramic building material, fired clay and burnt stone.

Ditch 2750 cut a large pit, 2949, at its western end, 2.6 x 2.2 m across and 0.44 m deep (not shown on plan). This produced a single sherd of pottery dating AD 100–120, as well as a small assemblage of horse bones and an oyster shell. Several fragments of tile were recovered, mostly tegulae, but also a half box tile. The location of this pit is unusual and it may be related to the construction of the trackway.

Eastern field system *(based upon Weale and Preston 2009)*

During the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, the landscape around the Cotswold Community settlement became increasingly defined by ditched boundaries, creating a series of fields of various sizes and shapes that were constantly being re-modelled, presumably both as needs changed and as the ditches themselves may have silted up fairly rapidly in the damp, flood prone environment. The environmental evidence from these field ditches was unfortunately very poor and so their wider function remains uncertain, although they probably acted in a drainage capacity. They could have been accompanied by banks and hedgerows, and may have been used to define paddocks for livestock (see discussion below).

The sequence of field boundaries is understood at a rudimentary level and indicates that the land became increasingly parcelled during the middle Roman period (Fig. 3.15). Ditches T1817 and T1816 to the north-west probably represent the first stages of land division and can be traced further north in a previous excavation area, meeting up with both the main trackway as it swung to the north-east, and a large rectangular enclosure (Brossler *et al.* 2002; see Fig. 3.32 below). This land division was then extended southwards by ditch T1800, which was traced for *c* 310 m from north-east to south-west, and partially recut T1817. This created a large enclosed field just to the east of the settlement, which used trackway 17615 as its western boundary. The alignment of field ditches reflected that of the trackway (see above) and of the main topography of Ashton Down just to the east (see Fig. 3.32 below). Ditches T1815, T1818 and T1823 further sub-divided this and adjoining fields to the north. During the 3rd century, the main field was partly re-modelled by the cutting of ditch T1802, which ran on a similar line to T1800, but cut across it in the centre of the site, and veered further west towards the north.

The field ditches as a whole varied substantially in profile and size, from 1 to 3.2 m wide and 0.22 to 0.88 m deep, and many demonstrate a number of recuts, indicating regular maintenance during this phase. As would be expected, the ditches produced very few finds, with just a handful of pottery providing the dating evidence.

'Liminal' burials

The first indication of any formal human burial on site after the Bronze Age comprised an inhumation (6683) located 0.3 m west of trackway 5869, which was radiocarbon dated to cal 40 BC–AD 120 (SUERC 24764; 95.4% prob) (Fig. 3.30). The grave cut itself was north-south aligned, 1.1 m long and 0.8 m wide and survived to a depth of 0.3 m. The cut contained the remains of a crouched adult male lying on his left side; no accompanying grave goods survived. The relationship of the grave to the trackway ditch remains uncertain but the close spatial association suggests the burial may have been made at around the same time as the trackway was first laid out, around the start of the 2nd century.

At a somewhat later date two inhumation burials (graves 2217 and 3221) were made just to the north of southern boundary ditch 2750, aligned roughly east-west, end to end (Fig. 3.30) . The location of the graves is significant, placed on the edge of the bounded area as was the norm with Roman graves. In addition grave 3221 was placed exactly at the southern terminus of pit alignment 3333, with grave 2217 just to the east. As discussed in Chapter 2 this area appears to have been of some ritual significance since the middle Bronze Age at least, and this significance clearly continued into the Roman period.

Grave 3221 was the larger of the two (2.6 x 1.1 m) and contained the poorly preserved remains of a prime adult between 26 and 35 years old; the sex of the individual could not be ascertained. The body had clearly been placed supine inside a coffin, as attested by the presence of 11 iron nails. Two sherds of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery were recovered from the grave but were presumably residual.

Grave 2217 (2.1 x 0.64 m) contained the remains of a female aged 18–25, also poorly preserved. The body of the deceased had clearly been accompanied by a shoe or shoes as shown by the recovery of four hobnails, while five iron nails also indicate the presence of a coffin. Human bone from this grave was sent for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of cal AD 120–260 (SUERC-18832; Prob 92.2%), placing it in the middle Roman period. The date of this inhumation is unusually early within the context of known Roman burials in the Upper Thames Valley, where most belong to the late

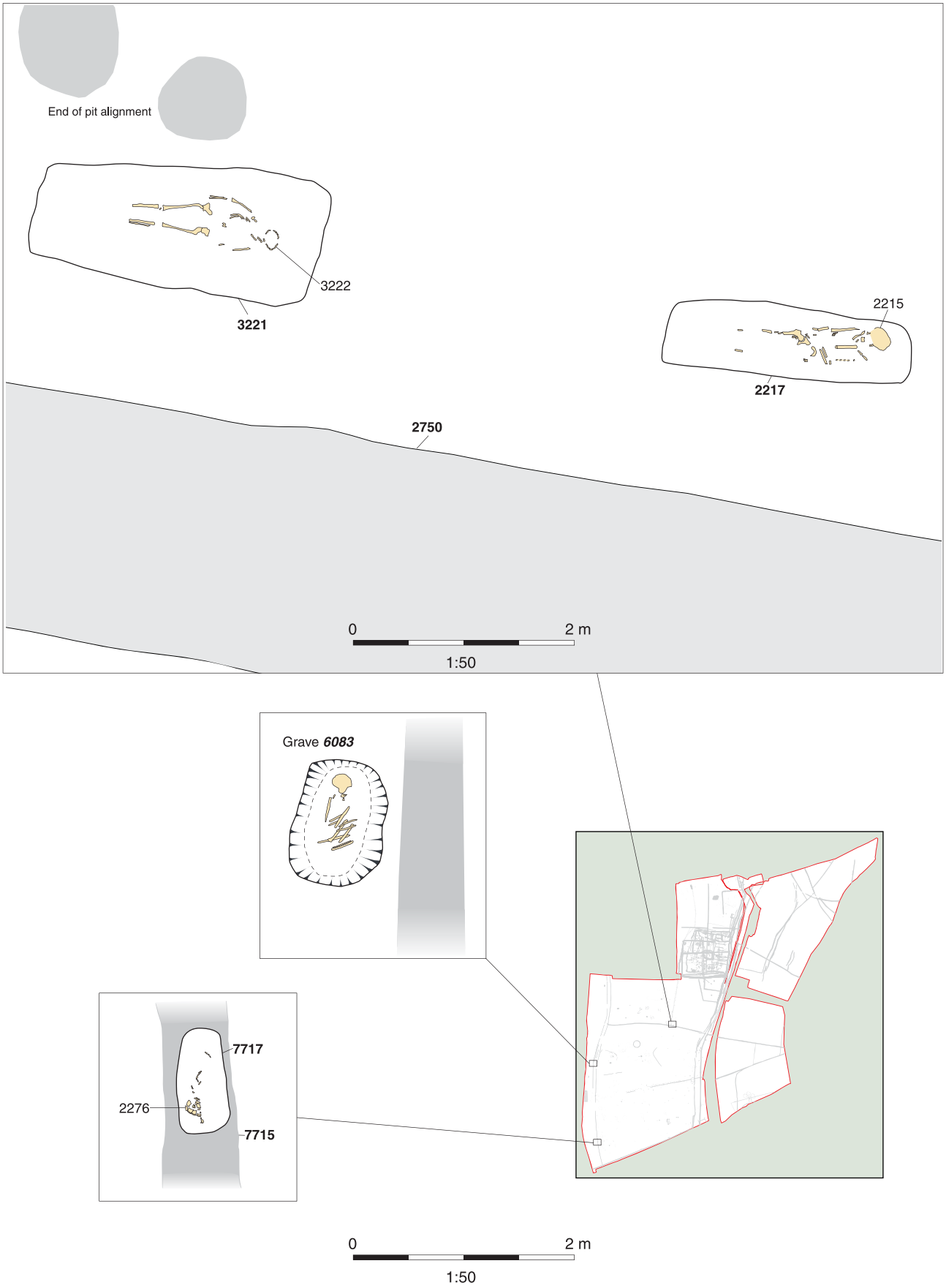


Fig. 3.30 Early-mid Roman burials

Roman period, as attested by the small cemetery groups on the Cotswold Community settlement periphery (see Phase 9 below).

These individuals were clearly selected for an unusual mortuary practice at this time, and this must be related to the 'special' location of the graves on the outer settlement boundary and in close association with the earlier pit alignment. The relationship between human burials and earlier monuments during the Roman period is well attested (Williams 1998) and is even more graphically demonstrated in the subsequent phase (see below).

Further evidence of human burial from this phase comprised a cremation deposit within a pit (1205) to the north of the settlement, accompanied by an unburnt cattle scapula and pottery fragments dated 2nd to 4th century AD (not illustrated). This is one of only two Roman cremation burials to have been discovered on site (the other dated late Roman, see below), and as with the inhumations described above, the unusual mortuary rite may mark out the individual as 'special' in some way.

A possible Roman inhumation burial (7717) was cut into the western trackway ditch towards the south of the site (Fig. 3.30); the skeleton was in a very poor condition but appeared to be of a juvenile. The body was aligned south-north, fitting into the trackway. The fill of the grave produced only residual prehistoric pottery and the skeleton remains undated, though is likely to be mid or late Roman.

Finally, the presence of two small deposits of disarticulated human bone should be noted, one (11814) in a south-eastern section of enclosure ditch 17590 and the other just to the south of this in large shallow pit 10743, associated with 2nd century pottery (see Fig. 3.17). Finds of human bone not in formal burial loci are not that unusual in Iron Age and Roman rural contexts (Boyle 1999, 51; Miles *et al.* 2007, digital section 4.1), and are thought to represent the retrieval of selected remains of individuals after excarnation (exposure of the body) away from the settlement. Interestingly, a group of hobnails came from adjacent pit 10749, perhaps representing the ritual deposition of another 'aspect' of the individual.

Discussion of the mid Roman settlement (Phase 8)

The middle Roman period (2nd–3rd century AD) saw widespread and fairly rapid developments in settlement and landscape throughout the Upper Thames Valley (Miles *et al.* 2007, 337, Booth *et al.* 2007, 52). This not only manifested itself in the abandonment of some settlements and establishment or transformation of others, but also in changed economic practices, communication networks and social systems. The root source of these quite fundamental changes lay with the region's total incorporation into the Roman state, with all the social, political and economic factors that this entailed. In particular, the establishment of the civitas capital at Corinium (Cirencester) just on the fringes of the Thames Valley by the late 1st/early 2nd century must have provided a significant stimulus for these developments. Being located just 5 km south of Cirencester, the farm at Cotswold Community was certainly not immune to such stimulus, and the general ceramic evidence points to substantial developments at this time.

Early 2nd century developments—the trackways

The first major transformations of this period at Cotswold Community were the construction of north-south linear trackways on either side of the existing settlement, with the eastern one following the line of the earlier fenceline and becoming integrated into the main enclosure. This was undoubtedly the primary trackway on the site, probably linking together other settlements close by (see below Fig. 3.32). To the north it diverged, with the right branch leading off towards a large enclosure (Brossler *et al.* 2002, 62), and possibly continuing to link up with the long section of trackway visible on aerial photographs leading up towards Cirencester. The left branch continued to the north-west and may also have linked with this main trackway, although it would have had to diverge sharply to the west. The western trackway was identified as a cropmark and in excavations (Barclay *et al.* 1995) up to 300 m further north but did not appear to continue into an area excavated in 1995–6 (Hearne and Adam 1999). This may signify that the trackway stopped abruptly south of this area, or possibly changed direction and continued to the north or west, perhaps even linking up with the main north-south trackway observed from cropmarks noted above.

The appearance of these trackways at this time mirrors the situation across the Upper Thames Valley, where many have been examined in large open area excavations and extensive networks revealed by aerial photographs (see Chapter 1, Fig. 1.6). Many of these trackways may merely represent a new physical definition of previous route ways connecting the various farmsteads in the valley, though it is likely that a substantial proportion were also newly created in the early part of the 2nd century AD. In either case their construction on such a scale and in a relatively short period of time would have been a massive undertaking, and not one seemingly performed on an *ad hoc* basis by the inhabitants of individual settlements. The impetus for their initial construction must surely have come from either wider collective communities or else members of the native elite, though the ongoing maintenance of the trackway ditches may well have been a more piecemeal local affair.

The reasons for the implementation of the trackway system were undoubtedly related to intensification of agricultural regimes and a resulting increase in population, helping with both

drainage issues and with definition of property boundaries (see below). Many new settlements were established across the valley at this time, and a variety of new farming practices adopted, including the management of hay meadows further east in the Claydon Pike/Thornhill Farm area (Miles *et al.* 2007, 360). The economic opportunities (and challenges of paying regular taxes) provided by incorporation into the Roman system would have required large scale changes in the way that land was organised, and the trackways were one aspect of this.

Settlement transformation in the mid 2nd century AD

Unlike the situation at some other sites in the valley, such as Neigh Bridge and Claydon Pike, it does not appear that the construction of the trackways was concurrent with any major transformation of the settlement. The northern boundary was re-defined, but otherwise it seems that the settlement continued as before, until around the mid 2nd century AD when it was completely remodelled, along with parts of the trackway in the vicinity (see Fig. 3.31).

Although the site was badly truncated, five zones could be discerned within this phase of redevelopment, marking a pronounced increase in physical differentiation within the settlement, although of course previous phases could have been sub-divided by features such as hedges. The functions that have been suggested for the various zones are quite tentative, but are based upon specific features and spatial characteristics, and to a slightly lesser extent the finds assemblages, as these are generally fairly homogenous, for the most part representing later dumping episodes.

The north-western area of the settlement, together with a group of enclosures to the north, would seem to have been general agricultural and industrial working areas, containing a large corn dryer and numerous pits, postholes and waterholes, with some features containing reasonable quantities of undiagnostic slag, metalworking debris and oven fragments. The location of such activities furthest away from the proposed domestic zone is entirely appropriate, seen for example within the 2nd/3rd century complex at Claydon Pike (Miles *et al.* 2007, 162). To the south of this zone was an extensive area of enclosed space—the largest in the whole of the settlement—which contained very few features, the most notable being a large waterhole, a small corn dryer (although this could belong to the late Roman period) and small circular gully interpreted as a possible stack ring. It seems most likely that this enclosure was used as an animal pen, although the

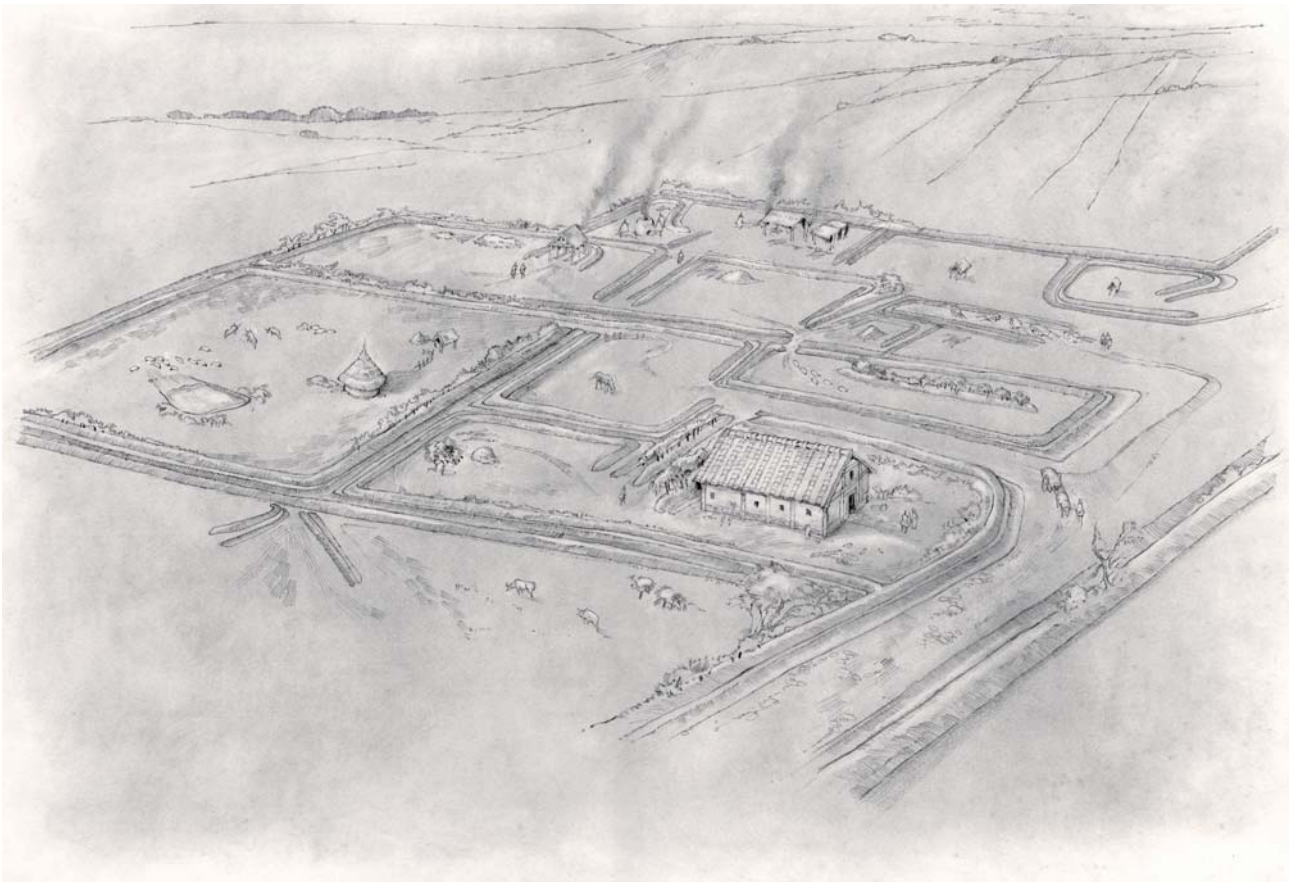


Fig. 3.31 Artist's reconstruction of middle Roman settlement

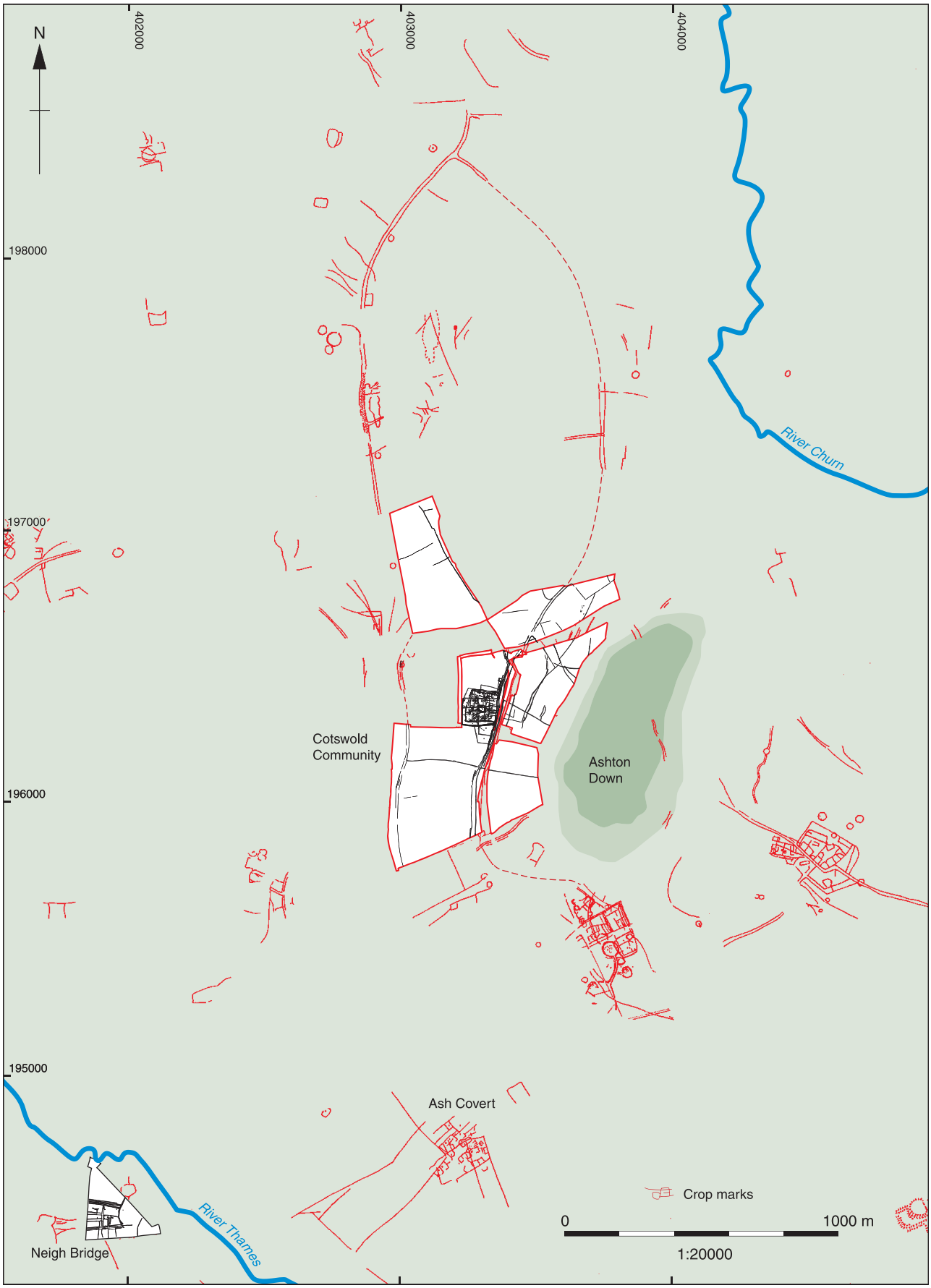


Fig. 3.32 Roman settlement and landscape around Cotswold Community

movement of animals in and out remains uncertain as no obvious breaks were found in the surrounding ditches.

The north-eastern zone within the settlement is subdivided into two areas and is probably the least certain in terms of function. The western part contained a large group of intercutting pits which it is suggested may have been related to storage, while further east were two smaller enclosures open towards the trackway and very tentatively interpreted as holding areas for wheeled traffic coming in off from the main trackway into the settlement. Although there is no explicit evidence for the use of wheeled transport—indeed, aside from the occasional linch pin such evidence is generally hard to find—it is assumed that carts would have been used on a regular basis for transporting agricultural produce. Certainly wheel ruts have been found in some sections of Ermin Street as well as in a trackway surface leading towards Ermin Street at Court Farm, Latton (Mudd *et al.* 1999, 126, 265). Wheel ruts were also noted from within Corinium itself (eg Simmonds and Smith 2008, 52), while part of an actual oak cart wheel was found from a waterlogged pit at Gill Mill, Ducklington, further east in the Upper Thames Valley (Booth *et al.* 2007, 314, fig. 6.18).

The final main zone in the settlement, lying to the south-east, is suggested as being at least partly domestic in nature, primarily as it was also the location of earlier and later domestic areas. Three smaller enclosures appear to front onto an open area, which in turn leads out onto the north-south trackway. The central western enclosure, where on a spatial basis one might expect a domestic dwelling to lie, contained nothing except a single sheep burial and so its function must remain uncertain. An 'empty' enclosed area at the heart of the Claydon Pike complex was suggested as being religious in nature (Miles *et al*. 2007, 164), but this interpretation was strengthened by the presence of architectural stone fragments, specialist ceramic vessels (tazze) and high proportion of fineware ceramic and glass vessels. Aside from the sheep burial there is nothing to suggest anything of a ritual nature at Cotswold Community, though the possibility should not be entirely ruled out. The enclosure to the north contained two lengths of ditch and a number of irregular pits, one of which (13491) contained the articulated leg of a horse, although it is perhaps unlikely that this was a ritual deposit as it had been gnawed by dogs. Other finds from pits in the enclosure are suggestive of domestic activity, probably redeposited from what is presumed to be the main area of habitation in the southern enclosure.

It is clear that the tradition of roundhouse construction (or at least with a surrounding drip gully) had now ceased at Cotswold Community, in line with most other rural settlements of the period, with a number of exceptions such as Ashton Keynes to the south-east (Powell *et al*. 2008, 31; see below) and Barnsley Park to the north-east of Cirencester (Webster 1981). Instead, there is slight evidence from the southern enclosure of a single rectangular beam slot structure, at least 7 x 8 m in size, which is not too dissimilar to the late Roman stone buildings in the same area (see below). It would be assumed that such a building would have been very modest and lacking any architectural pretensions, though the quantity of ceramic roof tile and small amount of window glass from this phase may suggest otherwise. However, it is not certain if any of this material was used as originally intended in this context, so the nature of any building must remain uncertain. In particular the reasonable quantity of box tile would surely not have come from this or any other known structure on site, and instead it has been suggested by Poole (this vol.) that most of the tile could have ultimately been derived from demolished buildings at Cirencester (see below).

The proposed building lay within an area which was more of less clear of any other sub-surface features belonging to this phase, and was bounded to the west by a length of ditch separating it from clusters of pits, seemingly used for refuse disposal. At Claydon Pike, a waterhole adjacent to the main domestic building provided waterlogged evidence for a range of fruit trees, herbs and shrubs growing the vicinity, but unfortunately such evidence is not available to suggest such a scenario here.

Overall, the mid Roman settlement appears to have been relatively well planned and well-maintained with a number of distinct functional areas, though still probably only representative of a single extended household. Virtually all of the settlement features were confined within the main enclosure, while beyond lay a system of field boundaries, all linked to the north-south trackways (see economic structure below). It is very difficult to judge the extent of any landholding associated with the settlement, but what is presumed to be the southernmost boundary (ditches 2750 and T1011) was observed stretching out on either side of the main trackway. The trackway was remodelled on a number of occasions to the north of this boundary—presumably within the territory of the settlement—which suggests that that the inhabitants had less inclination (or perhaps less resources) to maintain the trackway ditches outside of their immediate area of control.

It can hardly be fortuitous that this southern border was aligned exactly on the end of the early Iron Age pit alignment, especially as two rare mid Roman inhumation burials were located at the precise juncture of these features. This may suggest that the pit alignment was still visible, and perhaps still operating as a boundary of some kind. However, it was partly cut by the settlement ditches further north and so it may only have been visible towards its southern terminus (perhaps marked by a tree?), and still regarded as being of some significance for those living in the farmstead.

Social structure and economic regime

The 2nd and 3rd centuries AD represent the zenith of activity at Cotswold Community, with a substantial increase in the number and range of finds recovered. Nevertheless, despite this there is nothing to suggest any great leap in social status or deep-seated change in personal lifestyle as found for example at Claydon Pike, and instead the general character of the finds remains quite modest. As would be expected during this period, especially of a farmstead lying this close to Cirencester, there was a low-level shift to more Roman styles of dress (eg hobnailed shoes) and culinary methods (eg use of mortaria), but this appears to reflect little more than the ready availability of certain types of goods rather than a conscious desire to emulate a Roman way of life. At a household level, items such as lamps and candle holders start to appear (albeit singly), while kitchen/dining wares included increased proportions of beakers, cups, and flagons, although overall quantities were still very small. Furthermore, the absence of visible wear on cups suggests a general lack of Continental-style cooking and dining methods (see Biddulph, this vol.).

Aside from the wearing of hobnailed shoes and the general trend of fewer brooches, there is little to suggest that personal fashions changed to any great degree, although it is recognised that the later 2nd to 3rd centuries AD are often difficult to identify in terms of personal items (see Powell, this vol.). Two bone hairpins from mid Roman contexts may hint at changes in hairstyles, while the lack of metal hairpins (compared to eight within mid Roman contexts at Claydon Pike: Miles *et al.* 2007, 134) may be just due to a lack of financial resources. The only item of toilet equipment was a single possible unguent spoon.

If the material culture of the inhabitants appears not to have been overtly transformed, then what about the economic regime of the farmstead? Unfortunately, as previously stated, the environmental evidence from the site was quite poor, although in the mid Roman phase there were charred plant remains from within pits, ditches and two corn dryers. The presence of the corn dryers themselves provides evidence that crop processing was carried out on site, while also indicating that arable farming was starting to play a more important role in the site's economy. Chaff-rich assemblages of charred cereal remains suggest the presence of arable cultivation in the vicinity—notably of hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and spelt wheat (*Triticum* cf. *spelta* L.), which is quite typical for the region (see W Smith, this vol.). This may have been carried out on areas of slightly higher ground to the north (or even the higher clay outcrop at Ashton Down just to the east; see below), while the lower lying areas were essentially grassland or meadow used for grazing animals. The network of field boundaries seen to the east and north of the settlement may have defined a variety of paddocks and arable fields, with the ditches used to aid drainage, as the mollusc evidence from the eastern trackway and settlement enclosure suggested that this landscape was susceptible to seasonal flooding.

The faunal remains from the mid Roman settlement do not show any fundamental changes from the previous phase, with cattle still dominant, followed by sheep, horse and a small number of pig. Some slight variations do occur, however, with cattle being killed off at an older age, possibly associated with their increased use for arable agriculture, while sheep were also kept for longer, implying an increase in wool production (see Strid, this vol.).

Overall, it appears that the farm at Cotswold Community did undergo some kind of economic transformation in the mid Roman period, though the lack of any detailed environmental evidence from the previous phase ensures we must exercise caution. Nevertheless, it seems that a mixed agricultural regime was adopted, with land on the higher parts of the gravel terraces being opened up for arable use, undoubtedly helped by increased drainage systems and other new farming techniques. These changes are most likely to have been in direct response to the growth of Cirencester, with the farm acting within a wider community to adapt to new economic conditions.

The farmstead within the local settlement pattern

The economic relationship between the farm at Cotswold Community and the burgeoning town of Cirencester to the north is not an easy one to establish. The earliest civilian urban phase at this town dates to the Flavian period, although it was not until the first decades of the 2nd century that the main infrastructure was laid out, seemingly as a deliberately planned exercise (Holbrook 2008b, 138). By the mid 2nd century AD the town was thriving, with an array of public buildings including one of the first public market halls (*macella*) known in Britain, a substantial amphitheatre, and a defensive earthwork surrounding an area 96 ha in size (Holbrook 1994, 79; 1998, 94, 186).

The rapid growth of the town at this time would undoubtedly have encouraged significant migration of people from the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, the town would have required considerable resources and it is most likely that surplus agricultural produce (both arable and pastoral) was brought into the markets from the local region, which would in turn have led to great pressure to intensify agricultural production. Both these factors would have resulted in the many new or transformed settlements seen in the Upper Thames Valley like Cotswold Community, although interestingly the same patterns are not seen in the Cotswolds where the population was probably much more sparse (Holbrook 2008a).

Of course not all farms would have developed in the same way and certainly not all inhabitants may

have strived to embrace a 'Roman' way of life. As discussed above, the lifestyles and relative wealth of the people at Cotswold Community do not seem to have changed too dramatically, but they were nevertheless able to successfully adapt to the new economic reality. Part of this adaptation may even be seen with the quantity of ceramic tile found at the site, most of which is likely to have been sourced from a much higher status Roman site, maybe even Cirencester itself. It has been suggested (Poole, this vol.) that such material may have been part of refuse dumps brought to rural sites like this for sorting and recycling, with some parts being re-used here and others perhaps sold onwards. This would certainly account for the unusual quantity of voussoir tile and rare high status glass from later Roman contexts (see below).

Whatever the variability of the economic relationships between town and countryside, it is clear that Cirencester remained a powerful influence on the surrounding settlement pattern. Timby (1998, 434) had previously noted the concentration of occupation around the town, which far exceeded the smaller towns in the region. The number of cropmarks seen in the area (see Chapter 1, Fig. 1.6), many of which probably relate to Roman settlements, further emphasises this density, and also provide a glimpse of the intricate networks of trackways linking all these sites together.

In the immediate area (less than 2 km) around Cotswold Community, there were at least three significant settlements revealed by cropmarks, with the nearest two lying along the periphery of an outcrop of higher ground (*c* 105 m OD compared to *c* 90 m OD) at Ashton Down (Fig. 3.32). None of these settlements has received any systematic excavation (and two are now destroyed through quarrying), though Roman pottery was discovered from that to the east (Wilts SMR SU09NW300) and limited trenching of Ash Covet to the south revealed a large pit containing Roman pottery including amphorae (Wilts SMR SU09SW300). The eastern settlement has been described as a 'possible villa within a settlement area' (Wilts SMR), though the cropmarks do not readily conform to any known villa plan. In fact, it is interesting to note that despite the large scale excavations and extensive evidence of cropmarks, there are no indications of any villa in this part of the Thames Valley.

Without any further details it is difficult to understand anything of the relationship between these sites, though on form alone it seems that they were all well defined enclosed settlements similar to Cotswold Community, though on a slightly bigger scale. The eastern site was clearly built around a trackway which was revealed on either side, to the south-east continuing in the direction of the known Roman settlement at Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes (see below). To the west the trackway headed towards Ashton Down, maybe even crossing it towards the Cotswold Community settlement, 1.2 km away. There is also evidence for a branch veering off to the north and possibly following the periphery of the higher ground, while another trackway appear to link with the southern settlement *c* 1 km distant. Figure 3.32 provides a very tentative interpretation of the trackway configuration in this part of the landscape. It suggests that all three settlements surrounding the zone of higher ground at Ashton Down were closely associated, and may even have been part of a larger community linked by economic or social ties. The clay outcrop of Ashton Down is quite a marked feature within an essentially flat landscape (rising up to 15 m above the gravel terraces for a length of *c* 1 km) and may have been communal land of the three surrounding settlements, put to either agricultural or some other use. Further down the Thames Valley at Gravelly Guy, it has been suggested that prehistoric land use patterns of settlements arranged around a communal central area continued into the Roman period (Lambrick and Allen 2004, 482). The central zone was originally a funerary/ritual area in the early prehistoric period and was increasingly used for grazing over time, while arable land developed along the periphery (ibid.). Unfortunately, the lack of excavation of the two cropmark sites and on Ashton Down itself ensures that we do not know if there was a similarly long-lived arrangement in land-use here. However, it is likely that some kind of cohesion existed between the settlements, based upon social and/or economic connections, at least during the Roman period.

The closest excavated settlement to Cotswold Community was at Neigh Bridge, some 2.2 km to the south-west, adjacent to the River Thames (Fig. 3.32), which appears to have been quite different both in terms of spatial organisation and function (Miles *et al*., 2007, 229). As elsewhere, this site was clearly radically transformed in the early part of the 2nd century AD, when a seemingly low status pastoral farmstead was replaced by an aisled building complex and possible shrine, within quite an unusual arrangement of ditched boundaries. The site appears to have been associated with the distribution of ceramic tile from the kilns at Minety 4 km to the south, and as such had a very different economic basis from Cotswold Community. This would also probably explain the site's virtual abandonment by the early 3rd century, at about the same time as the decline in the tile industry, while activity at Cotswold Community continued on into the late Roman period.

Another nearby excavated site was at Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes, 3.5 km to the south-east, where the evidence suggests a higher status nucleated settlement, engaged in a broader range of economic activities than Cotswold Community (Powell *et al*. 2008). A general mixed agriculture economy was discerned, though specialisation is hinted at by the presence of over 100 quern fragments (as opposed to five at Cotswold Community), from which it was suggested that the

inhabitants were processing cereal from many different sites and redistributing it as flour (ibid., 43). Furthermore it was also suggested that animal hides were exported for tanning elsewhere (ibid.). The overall quantity of coins (1336) and imported goods indicates a relatively wealthy settlement, presumably with strong economic ties with Cirencester. Curiously though, domestic architecture seems to have remained very conservative in nature, with continuation of the roundhouse form and no evidence for stone founded buildings, though the nature of excavation may have obscured many details.

Settlements like Neigh Bridge and Cleveland Farm obviously filled certain economic niches and are part of the growing evidence for specialisation during the Roman period. The farm at Cotswold Community, on the other hand, appears to have operated a more typical mixed agricultural regime. However, although its inhabitants do not appear to have shown any great desire for (or could simply not afford) many symbols of Roman lifestyle, they were undoubtedly still an integral part of the Roman economic regime.

THE LATE ROMAN FARMSTEAD (PHASE 9)

The final Roman phase, dating to approximately the later 3rd and 4th centuries, saw a further reorganisation of the settlement and landscape (Fig. 3.33). The eastern trackway at least appears to have remained in use, while the surrounding fields seem to have become larger, with fewer of the subdivisions noted in the middle Roman period.

Activity within the settlement appears to have contracted somewhat, becoming concentrated in the south and east, although some continuing use of earlier ditches and waterholes across the site is evident. This contraction need not imply any decline in fortunes of the inhabitants, merely a restructuring process in order to deal with the new economic realities of the late Roman period in this part of Britain (see discussion below).

Domestic evidence became more visible during this phase with the appearance of stone footed buildings, walls and surfaces, as well as a complex well structure close to the buildings. In addition, as with many contemporary sites, burial becomes more discernible in the later Roman period and at Cotswold Community is represented by a small cemetery and a number of scattered graves.

The re-use and remodelling of settlement enclosure 17590

It is clear that many parts—if not the whole—of enclosure 17590 remained as a visible boundary into the late Roman period, with some parts being actively re-cut (Fig. 3.34). This remodelling was concentrated in the south-east corner of the enclosure, in the area which became the focus of this phase of activity (see below). All of these recuts produced large pottery assemblages with a clear element dating to AD 250 or 270 to 410, as well as significant amounts of animal bone. Like the Phase 8 features the latter were dominated by cattle although much pig bone was noted in one of the recuts. Other finds included burnt stone in varying quantities (up to 29 kg from one recut), ceramic building material, metalwork, oyster shell, slag and fired clay. The ironwork assemblages included nails and binding as well as hobnails, a joiners dog (SF 1292), a looped pin (SF 1291), a T-clamp (SF 1296) and a tool (SF 1315). Copper alloy objects included a strap end fragment. A coin dated AD 335–341 was also recovered. Among the most interesting group of finds from one of the recuts comprised very unusual and high status glass fragments paralleled with finds from Germany (see Cool, this vol.; Fig. 3.62). The most likely local origin for this material would be the nearby town at Cirencester, although how it came to be at Cotswold Community is uncertain (see discussion below).

The enclosure complex was also actively re-used in the north-west corner, far removed from the domestic activity, for deposition of cremation material. This will be discussed in detail below but indicates that the previous settlement boundary was not only maintained in the area of domestic use.

Smaller enclosures within the settlement

Although enclosure 17590 stayed in use to some extent, a series of new ditches was dug at this time, creating a number of smaller enclosures, most of which probably relate to agricultural activities (Fig. 3.34).

Enclosure 20006

Enclosure 20006 cut Phase 8 enclosure 17590 to the north and ditch 17845 to the south, creating a sub-rectangular enclosure measuring up to 59 m east-west and *c* 36 m north-south. The south-eastern section appears to have been lain out so as to leave a gap between it and enclosure 20007 to the south, suggesting that the latter was an earlier feature (see below).

Enclosure 20006 appears to have been open to the east, although a short section of wall foundation (13561), *c* 2.1 m long and 1 m wide was aligned north-south, approximately along the line of this eastern section, and may have formed a barrier (Fig. 3.35). The wall was composed of unworked stones measuring 0.1–0.5 m long and bonded with mortar and sand. The enclosure ditch itself was a substantial feature, generally over 3 m wide and up to 1.1 m deep, and, like the majority of features dating to this phase, produced large quantities of finds. These included 2.7 kg of pottery, generally dated AD 270–410, along with 13.7 kg of animal bone (dominated by cattle), 19 kg of burnt stone, a large assemblage of brick and tile (including tesserae), a

disc or counter, a whetstone, fired clay, an iron sheet and a single oyster shell.

The ditch was clearly used for dumping domestic refuse, although the exact purpose of the enclosure is unknown. No features dating exactly to this phase were excavated on the interior of the enclosure, although the ditch incorporated corn dryer 14400 at its north-west corner. This is likely to be deliberate and it is quite possible that the corn dryer was still in use.

Enclosure 2006 seems to have formed the northern boundary for the newly contracted settlement, and a section of ditch to the east (20356) may have formed an additional part of this boundary. The ditch appeared to begin *c* 9 m to the east of the terminus of enclosure 20006, on the same alignment, turning north when it reached the trackway and ultimately recutting trackway ditch 20359. Pottery dating indicated the ditch was probably in use after AD 250.

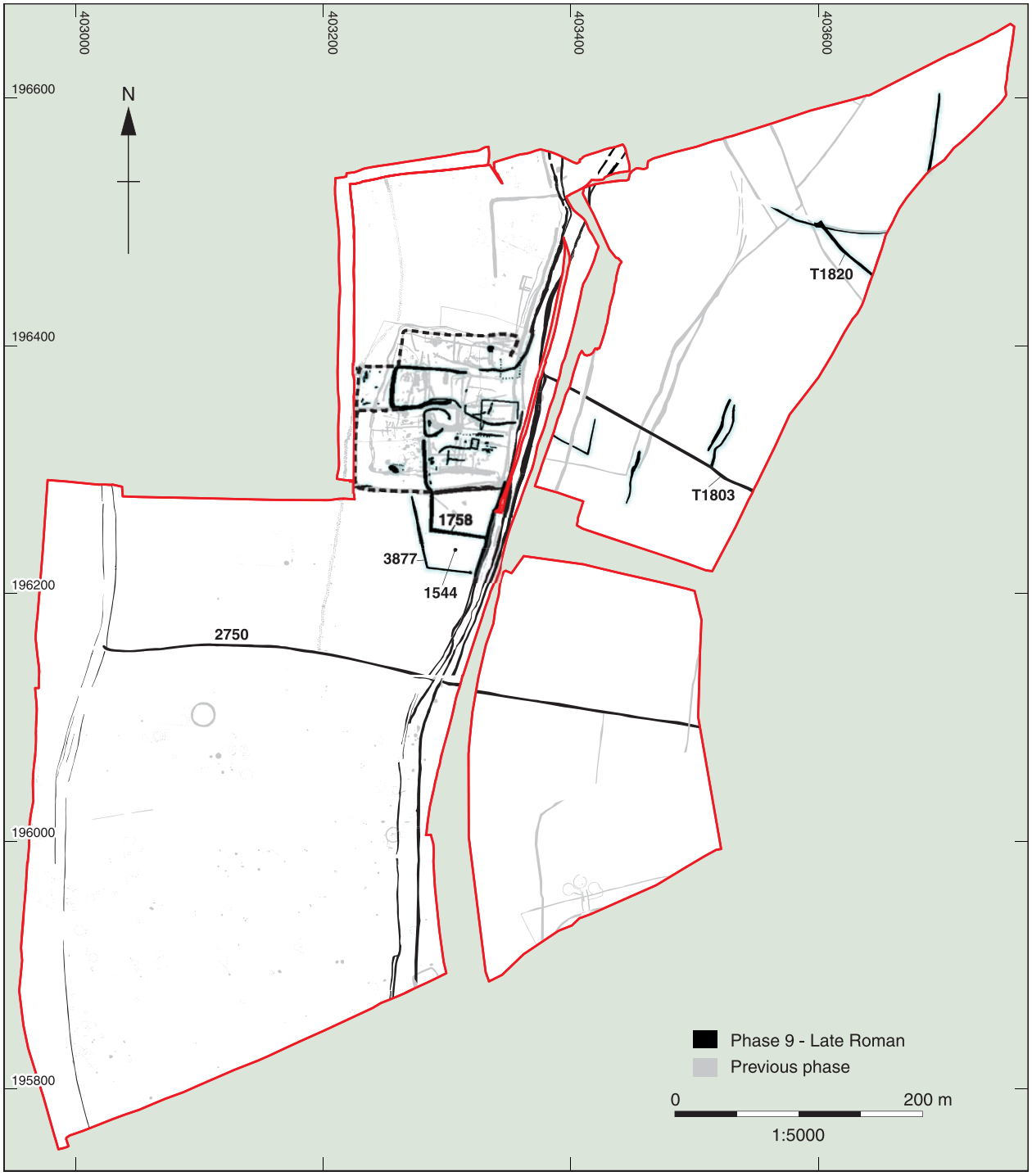


Fig. 3.33 Outline of late Roman phase (Phase 9)

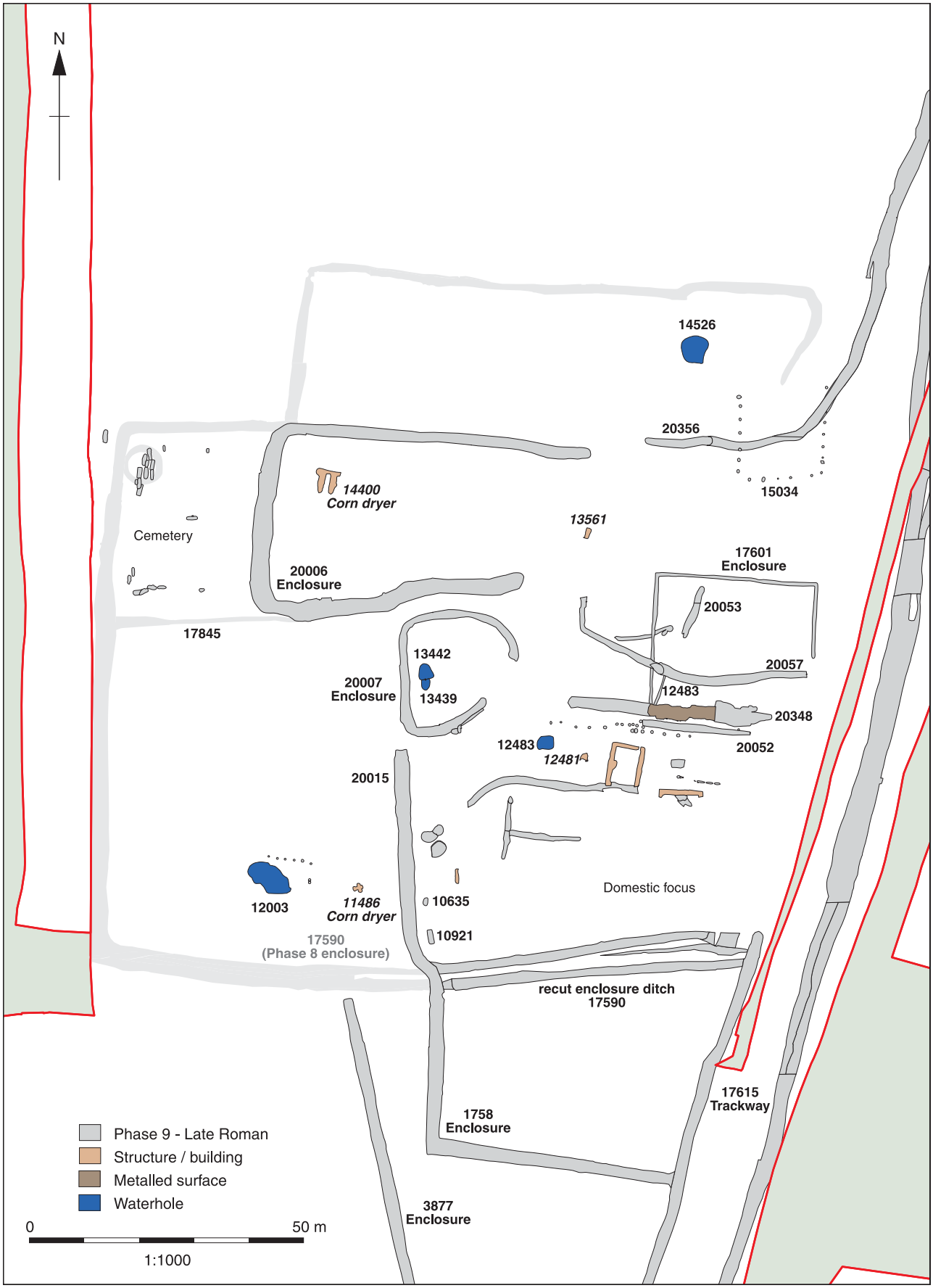


Fig. 3.34 Detail of late Roman settlement

Fig. 3.35 Photograph of wall foundation (13561)

Enclosure 20007

Enclosure 20007 lay to the south of enclosure 20006 and was much smaller, enclosing an area of *c* 19 x 15 m, with the ditches being 1–2 m wide and up to 0.78 m deep. It had a straight western side but curving arms to the east, leaving a gap of 8.8 m to the south-east. Excavated sections of the ditch produced a larger pottery assemblage than enclosure 20006, totalling 5 kg, and indicated a date of *c* AD 300–330 for infill of the ditch. The large assemblage of animal bone was again dominated by cattle and horse. Other finds included a significant amount of brick and tile, fired clay, iron nails, a ring fitting and oyster shell. A coin dating to AD 341–346 was found in the top fill of the ditch suggesting that the ditch had fallen out of use by the second half of the 4th century.

The only features within the enclosure were three intercutting waterholes (13439, 13440 and 13442) which cut Phase 8 ditch 20016. The earliest (13440; not shown on plan) was smaller than the other features at 0.6 m wide but still 1.52 m deep, so presumably still below the water table and functioning as a waterhole. The others were much larger (1.8 m and 2.68 m in diameter and both 1.92 m deep), with pottery dated as late as AD 250–330 in 13442 and AD 340–410 in 13439. Both waterholes also produced moderately sized assemblages of animal bone, large quantities of burnt stone and ceramic building material, while 13439 produced fragments of smithing hearth bottom and metal-work including an unidentified iron object and a Polden Hill brooch (SF 1771, Fig. 3.56, 9). Overall, these appear to be a succession of waterholes spanning the later Roman period and suggest that the enclosure is likely to have had a specialised stock function, possibly similar to the central enclosures within the previous phases (see discussion below).

Enclosure 17601

Rectangular enclosure 17601 lay on the eastern side of the settlement and was very different in character to many of the contemporary features, having a much slighter ditch, 0.4–0.6 m wide and 0.2–0.4 m deep. It enclosed an internal area of *c* 28 x 23 m and was open to the south. The pottery assemblage was very mixed but suggests that the ditch was open during the 3rd century AD, and as it appears to cut all other features except ditch 20057 (see below) it has been assigned to the late Roman period. The ditch also contained a moderate assemblage of animal bone (dominated by cattle), brick and tile. Within the enclosed area was ditch 20053, which measured just less than 10 m long, *c* 1 m wide and 0.4 m deep but produced 1143 g of pottery, some dated to the later 2nd century and some to the 4th century. A small assemblage of ceramic building material, shell and two nails were also recovered from the ditch.

The function of enclosure 17601 remains uncertain, but it was perhaps not in use for any great length of time as it was cut by east-west ditch 20057, which contained substantial amounts of 3rd and 4th century pottery, along with 1414 g of animal bone (dominated by cattle), a large assemblage of ceramic building material, a hearth fragment, slag, worked stone, a nail and copper alloy sheet. The function of this ditch is also uncertain, although it may have functioned as a trackway boundary along with ditch 20052 to move people into the central (but non domestic) area of the settlement, perhaps joining onto wall 13561. The presence of a metalled surface (12906) in this area could support this theory (see below).

The domestic focus

The late Roman period saw the most explicit evidence for domestic buildings of any Roman phase at Cotswold Community (Fig. 3.36). As before, the main zone for domestic activity was in the south-eastern part of the settlement, and this now comprised a masonry-footed structure, timber-lined well and variety of other pits and gullies, all enclosed by substantial ditches and/or fencelines, at least on the northern, western and southern sides. The eastern side appears to have lain open, although it could have been defined by a hedgerow.

Domestic zone boundaries

Defining the western boundary of the domestic zone was ditch 20015, which extended for a distance

of *c* 45 m southwards from the western side of enclosure 20007, before cutting enclosure 17590, which was recut in this period and formed the southern boundary (see above). A potential 3 m gap existed between ditch 20015 and enclosure 20007, possibly providing access to the west.

Ditch 20015 was *c* 2.3–2.8 m wide and *c* 1 m deep, with excavated sections producing a wealth of finds including over 3 kg of pottery. The date of the assemblage was mixed, reflecting the truncation of many earlier features, but the latest component appears to have dated to the later 3rd/early 4th century. The ditch also produced over 2 kg of animal bone, a large assemblage of ceramic building material, floor or roof stone and moulded stone. Ironwork included nails, hobnails, a possible knife (SF 1235), a possible stylus or modelling tool (SF 1289) and a bootplate or fastener (SF 1335). Other finds included a large quantity of metal working debris, specifically including smithing hearth bottom, vitrified hearth lining and hammerscale; fired clay fragments were identified as derived from hearth structures and 11 kg of burnt stone was recovered, all suggesting that industrial activity was taking place in the vicinity of the northern terminus of the ditch.

The presence of ditch 20015 seems to indicate that the main settlement area was reduced, leaving the zone to the west for other activities. The only feature belonging to this phase to the west of ditch 20015 was waterhole 12003 (see below), indicating that this may have been grazing land.

The northernmost boundary associated with the late Roman domestic activity comprised a shallow ditch, 20348, which cut through the earlier Phase 7/8 boundary 20018 (Fig. 3.37). It was 0.2–0.3 m

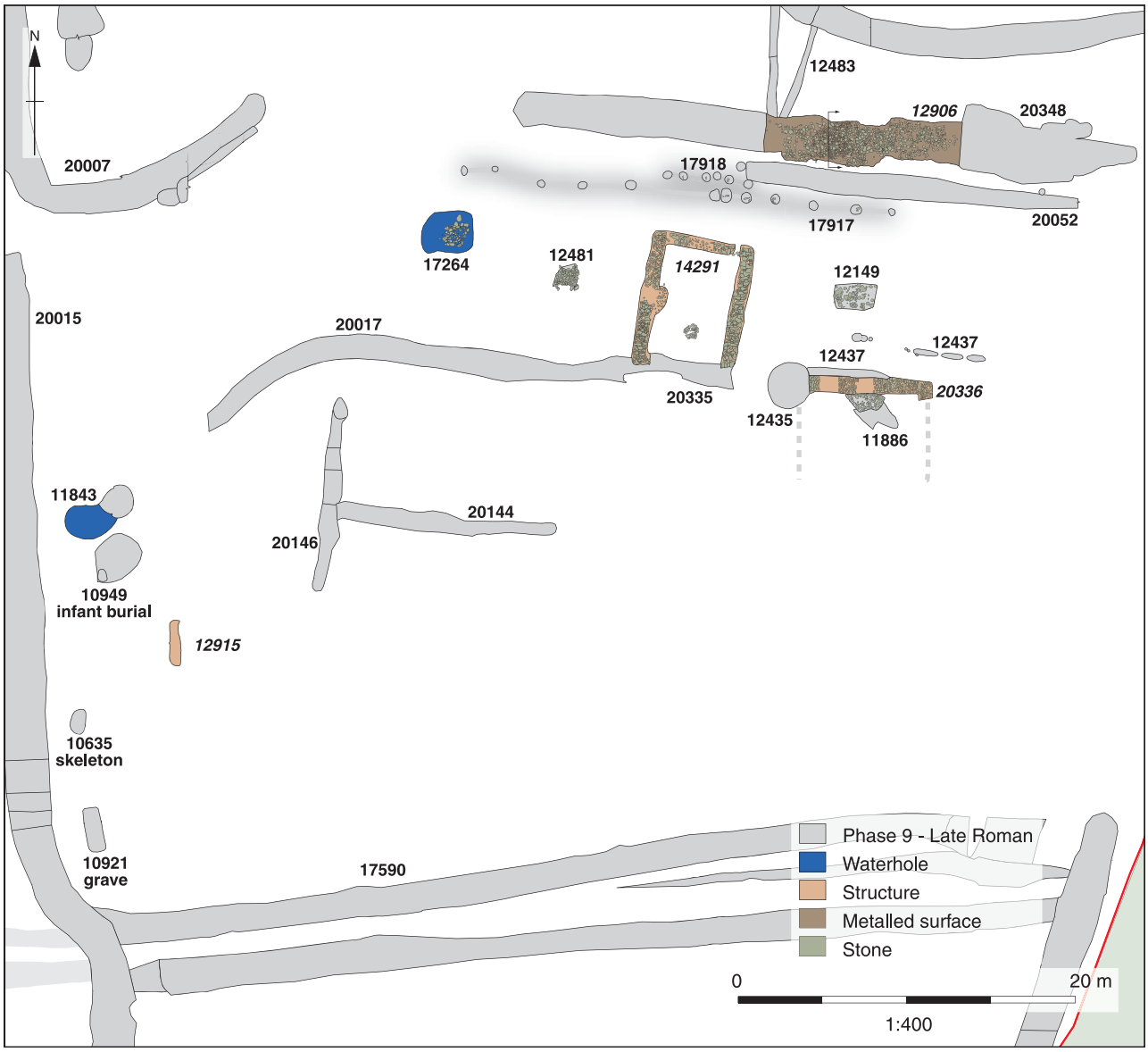


Fig. 3.36 Domestic zone within the late Roman settlement

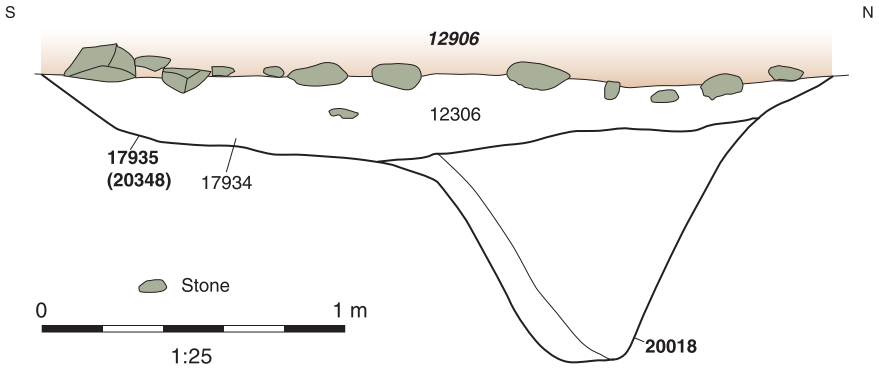


Fig. 3.37 Section through northern domestic boundary ditch 20348 and surface 12906

deep, 2–4 m wide, and filled with a layer of midden material (12306), probably brought in for use as hardcore from elsewhere on site as a foundation for surface 12906 (Fig. 3.38). As a result the layer contained a huge assemblage of diverse finds, possibly dating to all phases of the Roman period, including over 5 kg of pottery, the majority of which dated to AD 240–410. The remaining finds comprised over 8 kg of animal bone, a large assemblage of ceramic building material and fired clay—including possible course tesserae and a triangular oven brick—1218 g of oyster shell (25% of site total: see Powell and Nicholson, this vol.), a whetstone, slag including smithing hearth bottom, and a large assemblage of metalwork. Ironwork included a large number of nails, fragments of binding, strip or sheet, possible handle fittings, a hipposandal fragment (SF 1593), a hobnail, a possible tracer or chisel (SF 2085) and an unusual object which may have been part of a small anvil (SF 1587; Fig. 3.59, 7). Copper alloy finds included a trumpet brooch (SF 1572) and apparent metal working debris; lead sheet and debris were also found. Eight coins were recovered from the layer, dating to between AD 330 and 365, giving a *terminus post quem* for the layer.

The 'foundation' layer (12306) within cut 20348 was overlain by surface 12906, which comprised a regular layer of stone (Fig. 3.38). The feature was found to extend over 10 m in an east-west direction, and was 2 m wide, although it appeared that both ends had been robbed out. This may have formed some kind of pathway or yard area. Had the surface extended much further eastwards it could have been linked to trackway 17615, and may have formed part of an internal trackway leading towards the central enclosures within the settlement. A small length of gully, 12483 (0.5 m wide, 0.3

Fig. 3.38 Photograph of metalled surface 12906 looking south-west

m deep), extended 5.8 m north from the surface up to ditch 20057 (Fig. 3.36) and may represent some kind of barrier along this trackway. Its single fill produced pottery dating to the 4th century as well as tegulae fragments.

Immediately to the south of surface 12906 and on a parallel alignment was a further ditch, 20052, which was at least 20 m long, possibly extending further to the east, although later truncation by medieval furrows obscured this area. At its broadest extent the ditch was 1.44 m wide and up to 0.42 m deep; its western terminus was clearly square and the ditch was regular throughout, resembling a wall trench. As with many of the features dating to this phase of activity the ditch produced a very large finds assemblage, including over 5 kg of pottery, much of which dated to AD 300–350, which corresponds with the date of two coins of AD 341–346 and 351–353. A 2.8 kg assemblage of animal bone was of mixed species and included fowl. Other finds included a large assemblage of brick and tile including tesserae and the remains of a hearth with impressed circles (Fig. 3.64, 2). The ironwork assemblage included a large number of nails and other iron fittings including a bar or hinge (SF 1525), a possible loop headed spike (SF 1526), a ring (SF 2402), a wedge (SF 1524) and other unidentified objects. Copper alloy finds included one near complete bracelet (SF 2418; Fig. 3.57, 14) and a further fragment of bracelet (SF 1557). Additionally over 1 kg of oyster shell was recovered from the ditch. Once again this indicates that domestic and other rubbish was dumped within the feature, possibly during the habitation period, or maybe as an abandonment deposit.

Immediately to the south again were posthole alignments 17917 and 17918, which probably formed a fenceline (Fig. 3.36). The former potentially extended over 29 m, although the postholes at the western end were not as clearly defined. Alignment 17918 was located at the western end of 20052, extending west for *c* 5 m, and may have been a localised repair to the fence. The postholes were all generally between 0.3 and 0.5 m in diameter and 0.1–0.4 m deep, and appear to form a complex with ditch 20052 and 20348/12906, clearly separating the domestic area to the south.

The postholes produced only an occasional sherd of pottery, some of which dated to AD 250–410. Similarly, a coin from one posthole was dated AD 286–293. Other finds from the groups include a single nail and ceramic building material.

Structures within the domestic zone

A number of stone-walled or at the least stone-footed structures were assigned to this phase, most notably the remains of two buildings, 14291 and 20336 (Fig. 3.39). Structure 14291 comprised three sides of a rectangular building, missing the southern side which appears to have been robbed out following abandonment (Fig. 3.40). The structure measured 8 x 6 m, with the footings approximately 0.8 m wide and up to 0.5 m deep. The

Fig. 3.39 Late Roman buildings 14291 and 20336

building foundations comprised unfaced and unfinished pitched stone measuring from 0.1–0.4 m long placed in a herringbone construction and bonded with soil and gravel. Up to two courses were found *in situ*.

On the eastern side of the structure the foundations were overlain by a layer of silt and small stones, in turn overlain by further wall footings. This may be a form of construction but could represent two phases of building. A possible doorway existed in the centre of the north wall where the stones were very loose and not pitched. Postholes 18574 and 18588 were also cut into this wall at the point where the footings turn to the south and were probably part of the original construction rather than later additions. Posthole 18574 contained a burnt deposit (18252) and the surrounding stones were scorched possibly indicating there had been a fire in the structure at some point.

Pottery from the building was quite mixed in date, ranging from 2nd to 4th century AD, though the foundations did cut all other features so the building is presumed to belong to Phase 9. Other finds included a single nail and brick and tile, some retaining traces of mortar suggesting the upper parts of the structure were brick built. Of note was a fragment of quern (SF 2295), re-used as a whetstone from the eastern wall and an early hinged brooch (SF 2272) from the west wall.

In the centre of the structure a hole was cut into a silted up pit dating to the early Roman period. This contained an apparent foundation for a pillar or support in the form of a group of curved stones with mortar, some of which were faced. Following its abandonment the building was extensively robbed; a robber trench (20335) was excavated along the southern end of the building. This produced a large assemblage of animal bone, ceramic building material including flue tile, three nails, a piece of slag and half a saddle quern (SF 2264; Fig. 2.61). A large pottery assemblage was only broadly datable as 2nd–4th century, though none was specifically late Roman. A coin was dated to AD 270–295.

Structure 20336 lay just 3 m east of 14291 and may have been very similar to this building, but much less of it survived (Figs 3.39 and 3.41). Excavations found the wall footings of the northern side, measuring 8.1 m long, turning south only for a distance of 1.4 m before it was robbed or truncated. Building 20336 also comprised a pitched stone footing *c* 0.95 m wide and 0.24 m deep. The stones appear to have been larger than those used in 14291, as much as 0.34 x 0.85m; no bonding was apparent.

The only finds from this structure were a few nails from the construction cut and a small assemblage of pottery, which was generally of a later date than that from 14291, suggesting that the latter may

Fig. 3.40 Photograph of building 14291 looking south-west

Fig. 3.41 Photograph of building 20336 looking west

have been superseded by building 20336. The building cut through a series of features including pits which produced later Roman pottery, thus supporting this suggestion. The interpretation of the structure is limited by the level of truncation or robbing. About 4 m to the north of building 20336 was a dump of late Roman material in the top of earlier ditch 20050 (see Phase 8 above). This appeared to have been levelled off with an area of metalling (12149), which perhaps represents the remains of a yard surface, the rest of which had been truncated. The finds assemblage from this layer included a large assemblage of pottery dated AD 250–410, animal bone, ceramic building material, metalwork and a coin dated AD 364–378. The metalwork included iron nails, binding and possible bootplates as well as a copper alloy penannular brooch (SF 1490; Fig. 3.56, 7) and a pendant/mount (SF 1531; Fig. 3.60, 2).

Fig. 3.42 Photograph of stone structure 12481 looking north

The other stone foundations in this area were even less complete and we cannot be sure that they represent the remains of buildings, as opposed to just sections of wall. Structure 12481 was located *c* 4 m west of building 14291 and comprised a stone foundation placed in Phase 8 ditch 20049, in a cut 0.45 m deep and 1.4 m wide (Figs 3.39 and 3.42). In the base of the cut were three courses of stone, probably placed as levelling hardcore. These were overlain by a layer of mortar, in turn overlain by a layer of silt. Ultimately a single course of a wall, *c* 0.25 m wide, ran approximately north-south over *c* 1 m. The function of this structure is unknown but its proximity to structure 14291 suggests that it was probably related. The structure produced no finds other than fragments of flue tile and brick.

A further segment of wall (12915) was excavated *c* 30 m south-west of 14281 (Fig. 3.36). This was aligned north-south for a distance of 2.66 m, with some suggestion of a return to the east at the northernmost part. The wall was heavily truncated by modern ditch 19992 therefore its interpretation is uncertain, however, the wall appears to be very similar to structures 14291 and 20336 and may be the remains of a further building located within the enclosed area of the late Roman habitation zone. A few sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the structure overall dating 2nd to 4th century.

Well, ditches and pits within the domestic zone

There were a number of other features in this part of the settlement, some of which appear to have been directly related to domestic activity, notably well 17264, located *c* 10 m west of building 14291 (Figs 3.36 and 3.43–5). Waterholes had of course existed throughout the earlier settlement phases, but at this time special care was taken over the construction of a well, which must have supplied the domestic area with water.

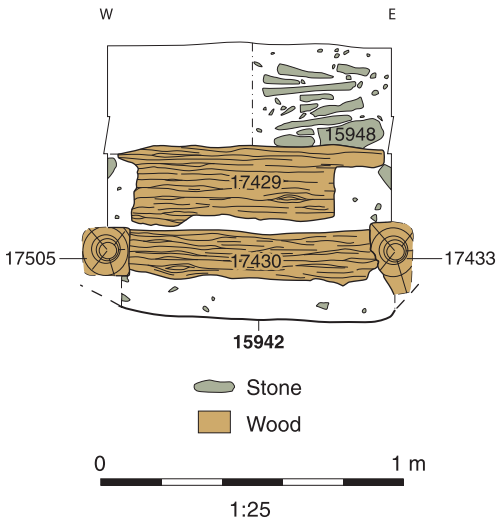


Fig. 3.43 Sections through late Roman well 17264

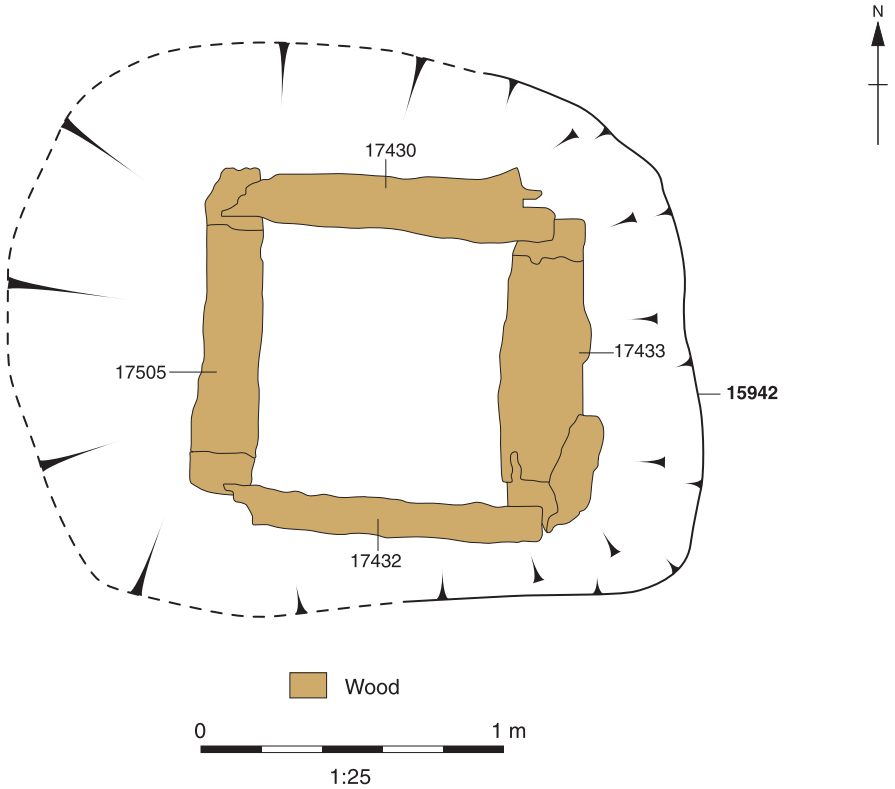


Fig. 3.44 Photograph of late Roman well 17264

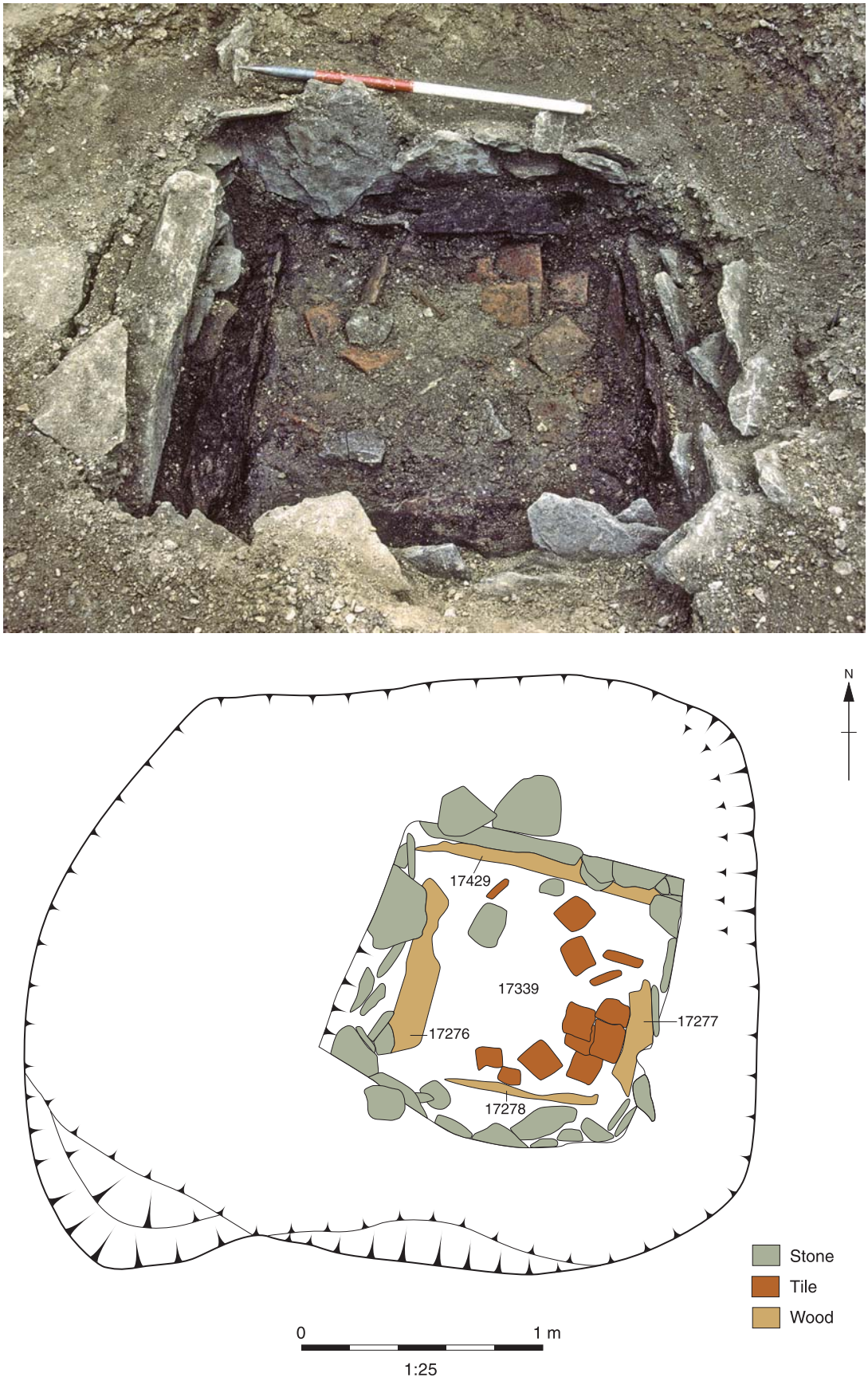


Fig. 3.45 Photograph of tile within late Roman well 17264

The timber structure was placed at the base of a cut (15942) 2 x 2.65 m across and 2.2 m deep, with stone packing around the outside. This packing material produced pottery dating to AD 300–50, as well as animal bone and a small assemblage of flue and voussoir tile. It is likely that this material was sourced from a midden. The remains of the square timber structure, preserved through waterlogging, comprised at least two planks on each side and measured just over 1 m^2. The timbers were fixed together using crude halved-lap joints, and no pegs or nails appear to have been used (Allen, this vol.). Within the well structure two silty waterlogged deposits remained *in situ* and were overlain by collapsed material, silting and dumping layers.

The *in situ* deposits produced a wealth of finds, mostly from deposit 17339, including pottery dating to AD 240–410. The animal bone assemblage included cattle, pig, horse, sheep and goat, probably domestic refuse. A total of seven coins were recovered from this fill and were mostly dated to AD 364–378 with one exception dated to AD 367–383. They are notable for two reasons; firstly the coins indicate that the well was open as late as AD 367, secondly a number of coins were corroded together suggesting they had been dumped as groups. These may have been votive deposits, representing the long-lived practise of throwing coins into watery contexts.

Perhaps the most unusual finds from the well, however, were the 31 kg of voussoir tiles, usually used in high status buildings, built into vaulted roofs to conduct hot air (Fig. 3.45). The presence of these finds on such a low status site is unusual and the most likely source of the material is the nearby town of Cirencester (see discussion below).

The collapse layers also contained a further 6 kg of voussoirs as well as pottery dated AD 240–410, animal bone, two nails and a hobnail. Above these an apparent deliberate dump of material (15944) contained a large amount of pottery dated AD 300–410 at the latest. Other finds included a mixed assemblage of animal bone, flue tile, a fragment of fired clay and a collection of iron nails and binding. Finally the silting fill, which accumulated following total abandonment of the feature, contained pottery dated AD 270–410, ceramic building material and a nail.

Other features in this zone comprised a number of ditches, pits and gullies, though in general there were fewer discrete features than in earlier phases (Fig. 3.36). A length of ditch (20017) extended westwards *c* 20 m from building 14291 before curving towards the south. This appeared to be on the same alignment as robber trench 20335 but was stratigraphically earlier. The ditch was 0.8–1.5 m wide and 0.2–0.5 m deep. It produced a large, mixed pottery assemblage, the latest date of which was AD 270–410, while other finds included a moderately sized mixed animal bone assemblage, brick and tile, nails and slag, including fragments of smithing hearth bottom. The purpose of the ditch is unknown but the presence of industrial material (mainly concentrated towards the western end) in this area is interesting and suggests that metalworking may have taken place much closer to domestic habitation than in previous phases (see discussion below).

Ditch 20144 (*c* 13 m long), *c* 8 m to the south, was on a similar alignment, and was late in the stratigraphic sequence, although it only produced pottery of 2nd–3rd century date, and so its attribution to this phase remains uncertain. Its western end was cut by ditch 20146, which was traced north-south for *c* 11 m, and contained pottery of similar date.

Of the relatively few late Roman pits in this area, the most noteworthy group were those truncated by and in the vicinity of structure 20336, including 11886, 12437 and 12435 (Fig. 3.36). The pits were between 2 and 2.4 m across and up to 0.9 m deep, containing mainly late 3rd and 4th century pottery as well as the usual tile, animal bone, iron nails, hobnails and slag. The truncation of these pits by structure 20336 reinforces the suggestion that this was a later building and the pits may have been contemporary with structure 14291.

A group of large pits was located to the south-west of the buildings, just within boundary 20015. The earliest of these stratigraphically was pit 11843 which measured 3.5 x 2.26 m in plan and was excavated to a depth of 1.44 m, and so probably functioned as a waterhole. The feature contained at least 16 fills which produced a finds assemblage including a large amount of pottery dated to AD 250–410, a moderately sized animal bone assemblage (mainly cattle and sheep/goat), tile, nails and oyster shell. The other pits were much shallower (*c* 0.4 m deep) and appear to be simple refuse pits located near the boundary of the settlement.

Outlying settlement areas

As mentioned above, it is likely that most of the Phase 8 enclosure boundary (17590) remained as a feature (possibly as banks and hedges) into the late Roman period, with small amounts of 3rd and 4th century pottery found in the upper fills of many excavated sections. However, the level of activity outside of the zones described above was greatly reduced, and it seems that the areas to the north and west now lay beyond the main settlement zone. However, a few features of this phase suggested that these areas retained some agricultural capacity.

Northern zone

The main late Roman feature to the north of enclosure 20006 was a substantial waterhole (14526), *c* 5 m in diameter and a minimum of 2 m deep, with at least 35 fills (Figs 3.34 and 3.46). Unlike waterholes/wells further south this feature did not produce a large and varied finds assemblage. A moderately sized assemblage of pottery with a significant component dating to AD 270–330 came

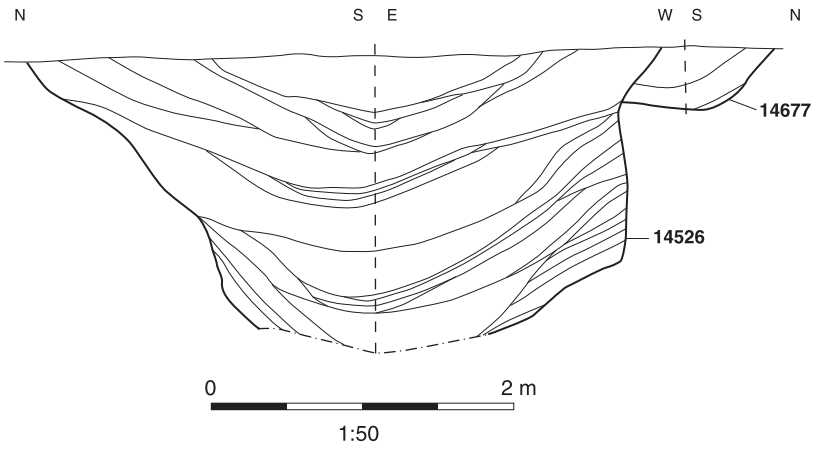


Fig. 3.46 Section of waterhole 14526

from the lower fills, suggesting this was a Phase 9 feature. The waterhole produced a large animal bone assemblage weighing over 4 kg which was dominated by cattle and horse. Other finds included tile, a fragment of oven structure and a few oyster shells. The location of this waterhole, beyond the main settlement area, may suggest that this feature was for livestock use.

The only other feature of note in this area was a posthole group (15034), which was cut by Phase 9 ditch 20356, and in turn appeared to cut other Phase 8 features in the vicinity. The group was arranged in a square (*c* 15 x 16 m) open to the north and comprised 22 postholes generally ranging between 0.2 and 0.65 m in diameter and up to 0.36 m deep. Pottery from the postholes could only be dated after AD 125 and the only other finds from the group include a small assemblage of burnt stone and fired clay from two postholes. Stratigraphically and spatially the group appears to be late and therefore it has tentatively been phased as late Roman, although its purpose remains unknown. It does have certain similarities, however, to the unusual three sided enclosure *c* 20 m to the south (17601; see above) and it is possible that both represent a short-lived phase of rearrangement between the major developments of Phases 8 and 9.

Western zone

As with the northern area, it is likely that much of the old western part of the settlement was now largely abandoned except for the provision of livestock, although in the north-west it also seems to have become a cemetery (see below).

Waterhole 12003, lying *c* 20 m west of ditch 20015, was the latest in the sequence of waterholes discussed within Phase 8 (11739/11760) but appears to date to the late Roman period (Fig. 3.34). The feature measured almost 10 m x 7 m in plan and was over 1 m deep, containing six fills. The waterhole produced over 5 kg of pottery, dating to AD 250–410 and further dating evidence was provided by the recovery of a coin dated AD 364–378 from an upper fill. A huge animal bone assemblage also came from the feature, dominated by cattle and horse, in addition to 14 kg of burnt stone, ceramic building material and oyster shells.

The presence of the well within the domestic area suggests that this waterhole complex no longer supplied the bulk of water for the settlement, and it is possible that it was used for grazing cattle. However, of particular note is the fact that a structure appears to have been built around the waterhole at some point during the late Roman period. This comprised a minimum of 10 postholes arranged in an L shape along the northern and eastern edges, possibly originally supporting a wind break around the feature.

Located just to the east of the waterhole was corn dryer 11486 (described above), which could potentially be of late Roman date.

Southern enclosures

Despite the apparent contraction of the old northern and western areas of settlement, new enclosures were built to the south, in slightly lower lying places where there had been very little trace of any previous activity (Figs 3.33–4).

Enclosure 1758 was appended on the southern side of the domestic zone, bounded to the north by the recut enclosure 17590. The *c* 45 m long eastern arm was formed by the western ditch of trackway 17615, which was partly recut at this time, while to the south the ditch was *c* 48 m long, placed just off an east-west alignment. In the west the ditch appeared to join with ditch 20015 further north, thus forming a *c* 78 m continuous boundary to the settlement.

The main enclosure ditch was noted in places to have cut an earlier ditch which was 1.5 m wide and 0.4 m deep. The extent and original date of the ditch is unclear as it produced only two sherds of Roman pottery. However, it does not appear to have been long-lived as it was subsequently recut, expanding

to 2 m wide and 0.6–0.8 m deep. The ditch was noted to have had near vertical sides and a flat bottom, making it a formidable feature.

The enclosure ditches produced a huge number of finds, many of which were recovered from a single dump near the terminus of the recut trackway which formed the eastern side. In total over 10 kg of pottery was recovered, with most dated after AD 250, and some components dated to AD 350–410, indicating the ditch may have been in use over a long period of time. The ditch also contained 16.6 kg of animal bone, once more dominated by cattle, 64 kg of burnt stone, 6.2 kg of ceramic building material and 230 oyster shells. A large assemblage of metal working debris included vitrified hearth lining, smithing hearth bottom and hammerscale, indicating that industrial activity had been carried out nearby. The fired clay assemblage also included fragments of hearth (Fig. 3.64, 1) and oven plates as well as a spindle whorl. Stone finds included limestone roof stones (Fig. 3.63, 1–2) and two shale bracelets. The metal work assemblage was extensive and comprised a series of nails and hobnails, iron and copper alloy binding, a possible iron blade, handle and chisel end, and a copper alloy ring. Two coins were dated AD 350–1 and 351–3.

It is clear that this enclosure ditch was heavily used for refuse disposal, and unsurprisingly the largest dumps of material were located around an area close to the domestic settlement. It is possible that these relate to a late stage, possibly even to abandonment of the settlement. No features were found within the enclosure that were thought to date to this period but the enclosure may have had an industrial or stock related function. The recutting of the trackway ditch to the east shows that this feature was still an integral part of the settlement.

Another enclosure (3877) mirrored 1758 to the south and west, forming an extended L-shape (Figs 3.33–4). The western arm of 3877 was 60 m long overall, extending further south than 1758 and turning to the east for a distance of 35.5 m, leaving a gap to the trackway of just 2 m. The ditch was up to *c* 1.8 m wide and 0.75 m deep, though unlike 1758 the finds assemblage was quite small, presumably as it lay further from the settlement.

A single feature (waterhole 1544) was located within enclosure 3877. This was 3.16 m in diameter and 1.7 m deep with a sequence of nine fills. It produced a moderate assemblage of pottery, mostly 2nd–3rd century in date, as well as nearly 5 kg of animal bone, dominated by cattle and horse, tile (including voussoir) and a single oyster shell. Although the pottery dating placed the pit in Phase 8 the location of the feature and the nature of the finds assemblage suggests a late Roman date.

It is likely that this enclosure was related to stock management. In particular the gaps left at strategic locations and the presence of a central waterhole are significant. The enclosure appears to form the southern boundary of the Roman settlement in this phase.

The wider landscape in the late Roman period

The general scarcity of dating evidence from the outer field systems ensures that it is difficult to say for certain which elements continued into the late Roman period (Fig. 3.33). The southern boundary ditch (2750) contained a tiny amount of 2nd–4th century pottery, in addition to pieces of medieval and post-medieval ceramics in upper fills, possibly indicating that the boundary continued in some form (probably marked by a bank and hedge) well into the post-Roman period.

The eastern field system appears to have been remodelled, possibly in the late Roman period, with most of the earlier sub-divisions giving way to a smaller number of linear ditches, perhaps defining larger areas of agricultural land. One of these to the south (T1803) was traced for *c* 200 m, joining up with the main north-south trackway at its western extent. This ditch was quite substantial at 2.7 m wide and 0.7 m deep, with a uniform V-shaped profile. Finds were minimal but included 3rd century pottery and a large piece of tegula. A number of shorter ditches appeared to be aligned off T1803, but formed no readily identifiable pattern.

Dealing with the dead—the late Roman cemetery and other burials *(featuring contributions by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston)*

In the late Roman period at Cotswold Community, as with many contemporary sites in the wider area, evidence for treatment of the dead became more tangible. In this case the excavation uncovered a distinct cemetery comprising two small groups of burials (Fig. 3.47) enclosed within earlier (but presumably still visible) boundaries on the north-western periphery of the late Roman settlement, a fairly typical location for late Roman burials (Fig. 3.48). There were also a number of less formal burials towards the south-east of the area, close to the boundary of the proposed habitation area.

Northern cemetery group

The largest group of burials in the cemetery was centred on the remains of an early Bronze Age ring ditch or barrow, 16072, and lay within the north-western corner of the Phase 8b enclosure ditch (Fig. 3.48). Association between Roman burials and earlier monuments is a well established phenomenon (see discussion below).

The northern cemetery group was heavily truncated by medieval ploughing but seems to have contained the remains of 12 individuals centred on the ring ditch and a further four outlying burials (Table 3.1). All graves were aligned north-south with the exception of 10561, an outlier to the south, which was aligned east-west. The burials centred on the ring ditch contained the remains of 11 adults and one child. The adults ranged in age from young

(18–25 years) to older (+ 45 years) and comprised five males and four probable females (see Dean and Boston, vol. 2). The remaining skeletons were not sexed. The infant was 1 month to 2 years old and was not identified to sex. Of the four outlying burials, two were prime-mature (26–45 years) males and two were probably infants, although no bone was recovered from grave 10553. Overall the skeletal remains were poorly preserved and the extent of skeletal survival varied from nothing at all to over 75% complete.

Fig. 3.47 Excavation of late Roman cemetery

Some clear patterns are apparent immediately in the distribution of the individuals according to age and sex, possibly reflecting their status among the living community. In particular, the infants and older males were all generally placed outside the main group, with the exception of infant skeleton 10464 (grave 10463), which was placed centrally within the ring ditch and must have been significant in some way. The other central burials included two older females (45 + years), which were placed one on top of the other in separate cuts (10521 and 10517) suggesting they were inhumed at different times. Similarly, graves 10450 and 10460 just to the north were also cut into one another, with 10450 almost completely truncating the earlier burial (10460). Both of these were young adults but only skeleton 10451 (grave 10450) could be sexed (female).

Overall the graves were between 1.6 and 2.3 m long, 0.6–0.9 m wide and 0.1–0.4 m deep. The exceptions to this were the childrens' graves which were 0.8–1.1 m long, 0.3–0.45 m wide and 0.1–0.15 m deep. In addition one of the graves (10494) contained a crouched individual and the grave cut was perceptibly smaller but truncated by ploughing so the full dimensions are unknown. The dimensions of the graves do not appear to have been related to the sex or age of the individual or the presence or absence of coffins.

The majority of the skeletons in this group were arranged supine and extended in the grave with the exception of the crouched skeleton mentioned above (10492 in grave 10494). In addition three skeletons were on their side, 10442 (grave 10441) and 10464 (grave 10463) on the left and 10562 (grave 10561) (Fig. 3.49) on the right.

Table 3.1: Summary of funerary data for northern cemetery group

Skeleton no.	*Grave*	*Sex*	*Orientation*	*Grave goods*	*Coffin nails*	*Position*
10439	10438	Male	S-N	None	Yes	Supine extended
10442	10441	Male	N-S	None	Yes	L-side extended
10445	10444	Female	N-S	Hobnails/Pot	Yes	Supine extended
10447	10449	Male	N-S	None	Yes	Supine extended
10451	10450	Female??	N-S	Hobnails	Yes	Supine extended
10461	10460	Unknown	N-S	None	No	Unknown
10464	10463	Unknown	N-S	Cu bracelet	Yes	L-side
10467	10466	Male	N-S	Hobnails	Yes	Supine extended
10470	10469	Male	N-S	Hobnails	No	Supine extended
10492	10494	Unknown	S-N	None	No	R-side crouched
10516	10517	Female	N-S	Hobnails	No	Supine extended
10520	10521	Female?	N-S	Hobnails	No	Supine extended
10498	10497	Unknown	N-S	None	No	Unknown
10504	10505	Male?	N-S	Hobnails	Yes	Supine extended
10562	10561	Male	E-W	None	No	L-side flexed

In total eight of the 16 graves contained nails which may be representative of coffins. In some cases these were arranged in a clear coffin shape around the body, (10444, 10438, 10466, 10505). Others contained single nails or a small number arranged at one end of the body (10463 (Fig. 3.50), 10450, 10441), these may represent a minimal or symbolic fastening or may be the result of poor preservation. The presence or absence of coffins appears to have no relation to age or sex of the interred individual. Grave 10561, the southernmost outlier, appeared to have a posthole cut into the central area of the northern edge of the grave. This may have originally held a grave marker which did not survive.

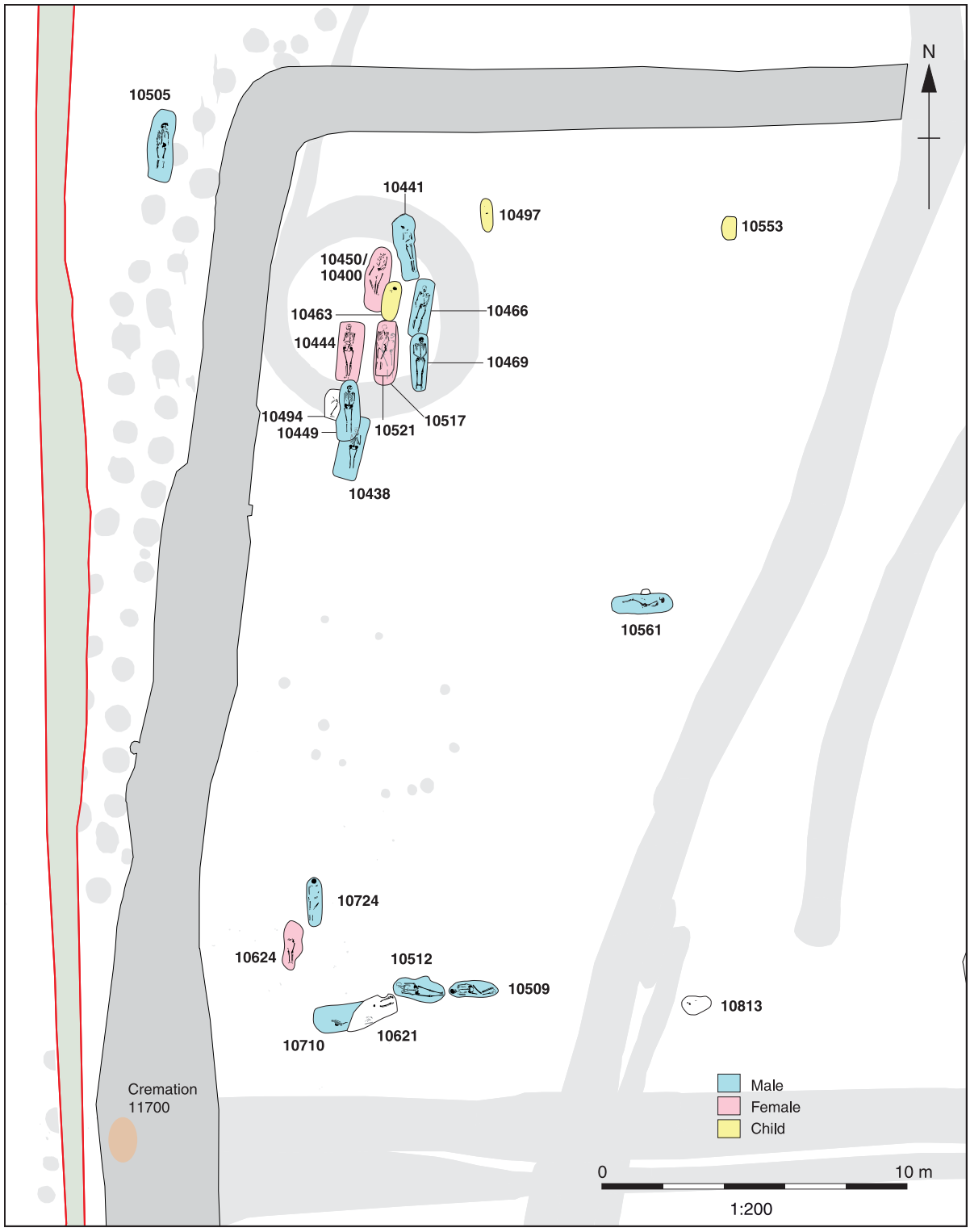


Fig. 3.48 Late Roman cemetery

Grave goods were scarce within this group and mainly comprised hobnails, representative of shoes interred with the dead. The number of hobnails per grave ranged from 2 to 155 and the majority were found in the foot area suggesting they were worn or placed on the feet of the deceased. The exceptions to this were graves 10444 and 10469 within which the hobnails were located next to the legs and feet respectively. The number of hobnails found does not necessarily correspond to the number of shoes as the number of hobnails per shoe varied depending on the style. The presence of two hobnails in grave 10505 may indicate poor preservation or shoes with very few hobnails. The large numbers in graves 10469 and 10444 may have indicated the presence of more than one pair of shoes, not unknown in Roman burial, although the patterning of the finds suggests only single pairs.

Fig. 3.49 Photograph of skeleton 10562 (grave 10561)

The only other definite grave good within this group was a pair of interlinked bracelets (SF 906) from infant grave 10463 (Fig. 3.50), one of which was clearly decorated with transverse grooves. It is notable that this was the central grave within the ring ditch, reinforcing the concept that this individual was special. The presence of the bracelet suggests the child interred within the grave was female.

Other finds from the graves included pottery in small quantities, much of which dated to the early Roman or late Iron Age periods and was clearly residual, probably entering the grave with backfill material. Possible exceptions to this are graves 10505, 10438 and 10444 which produced pottery dated to AD 125–410, 50–250 and 270–300 respectively, although the assemblages were probably too small to represent vessels interred with the dead. A fragment of tegula was recovered from grave 10517 but may also have been included with the backfill.

In order to date the cemetery two bone samples were submitted for radiocarbon dating. Skeleton

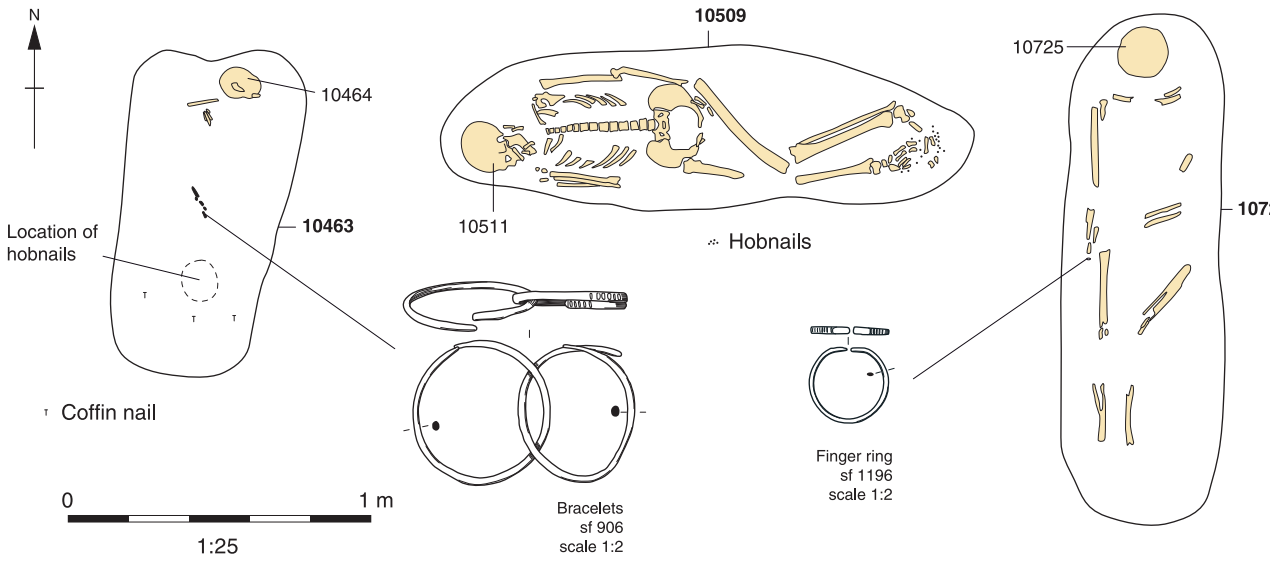


Fig. 3.50 Graves 10463, 10509 and 10724

10467 (grave 10466) (Fig. 3.51) was selected as a representative for the cemetery as a whole, whilst skeleton 10492 (grave 10494) was selected to determine whether this was an earlier burial due to its crouched position and apparent early stratigraphic position in the cemetery. The dates returned indicated that both skeletons were late Roman in date; skeleton 10467 was dated cal AD 214–355 (OxA-17650; prob 93.7%) and skeleton 10492 cal AD 244–382 (OxA-17652; prob 95.4%).

Southern cemetery group

The second group of burials, located *c* 15 m to the south, comprised a group of six inhumation graves and a single outlier to the east, with a contemporary cremation grave also in the vicinity (Fig. 3.48) (Table 3.2). As with the northern group, they lay just inside the Phase 8b enclosure complex, with the majority of the graves aligned east-west (Fig. 3.52) and two aligned north-south. The alignments are likely to

Fig. 3.51 Photograph of skeleton 10467 (grave 10466)

Fig. 3.52 Photograph of southern cemetery group

Table 3.2: Summary of funerary data for southern cemetery group

Skeleton no.	*Grave*	*Sex*	*Orientation*	*Grave goods*	*Coffin nails*	*Position*
10511	10509	Male	W-E	Hobnails	No	Supine knees flexed
10514	10512	Male?	W-E	Hobnails	No	Supine extended
10623	10621	Unknown	E-W	None	No	Supine extended
10626	10624	Female??	N-S	Hobnails	No	Supine extended
10711	10710	Male	E-W	None	No	L-side flexed*
10725	10724	Male	N-S	Cu alloy	No	Supine extended
10814	10813	Unknown	Unknown	None	No	Unknown
11700	-	Male?	-	None	No	Cremation burial

reflect their location adjacent to boundaries rather than having any deeper ideological meaning.

The outlying grave (10813) appeared to be that of a child at 0.93 m long and 0.47 m wide, but analysis of the bone suggests this is an adult of indeterminate sex and that the grave was badly truncated. All the remaining skeletons in this group were also identified as adults, and all were male with the exception of 10626 (grave 10624) which was probably female and 10623 (grave 10621) which was indeterminate. The individuals within this group ranged from young adults (18–25 years) to older adults (45 + years). It was the young ?female and older male who were set apart from the main group and aligned north-south.

Overall, the bone preservation of this group was also poor and skeletons were generally incomplete, ranging from *c* 10% to 50% with the exceptions of skeletons 10511 (grave 10509; Figs 3.50 and 3.53) and 10711 (grave 10710) which were in a more complete state (76–100% complete). The graves were similar in dimensions to those in the northern group; where complete 1.66–2.12 m long, 0.5–0.9 m wide and up to 0.2 m deep. Graves 10624, 10813 and 10621 were heavily truncated and therefore appeared much smaller, notably grave 10621 cut 10710. This truncation—in addition to the small number of graves—means that it is not possible to discern whether size of grave related to sex or age of the individual.

As with the northern group most of the individuals were arranged supine and extended. Exceptions were skeleton 10511 (grave 10509; Fig. 3.50) who was supine but with flexed knees and 10711 (grave 10710) which was on the left side and flexed. The position of skeleton 10814 (grave 10813) was unknown. Only grave 10813 produced coffin nails, arranged around the body. The remaining burials were either uncoffined or no evidence of coffins has survived.

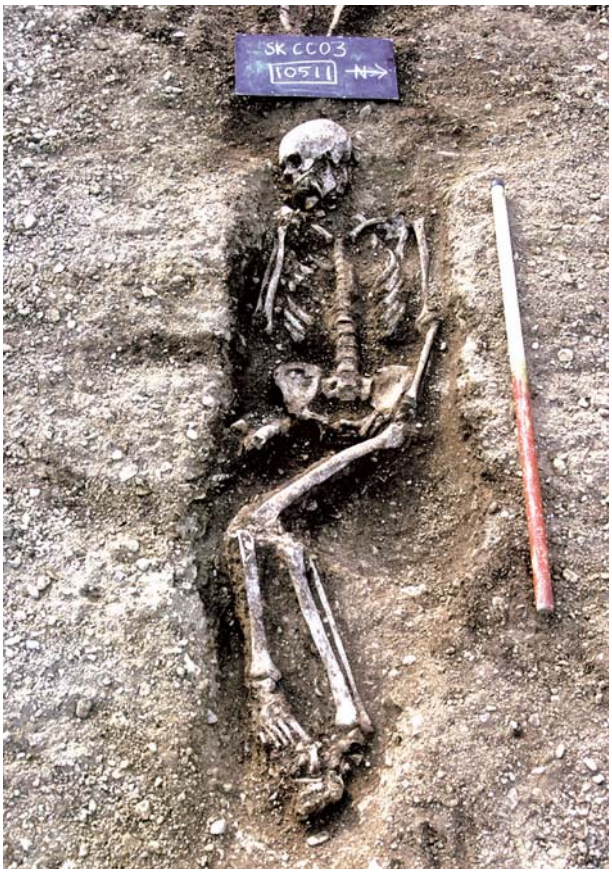


Fig. 3.53 Photograph of skeleton 10511 (grave 10509)

Again the grave goods from this group mainly comprised hobnails, ranging in number from 13 to 200. The individual within grave 10509 was clearly wearing shoes at the time of interment (Fig. 3.50). However, the hobnails from grave 10624 were found next to the left leg, and those from 10512 from the feet as well as next to the right arm and to the right of the head. Generally this suggests that the shoes were included within the grave as grave goods rather than being worn. One other grave good came from grave 10724 in the form of a copper alloy finger ring (SF 1196) (Fig. 3.50). The ring comprised an oval sectioned band with a central gap, the terminals of which were flattened with some decoration. Parallels from other sites (eg Gadebridge Park: Neal 1974) suggests the terminals may have originally been decorated with snake or lizard heads. No other finds were recovered from the graves.

A sample of bone from skeleton 10511 was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of cal AD 332–436 (OxA-17649; prob 90.9%). This suggests that overall the southern group was later in date than the northern group, although no other real differences were noted, with a few exceptions such as the lack of coffins in the south.

A cremation deposit (11700) was found within a recut of enclosure ditch 17590, approximately 7 m from the southern group of burials (Fig. 3.48). A sample of the charred seeds found within the deposit was submitted for radiocarbon analysis and returned a date of cal AD 243–384 (OxA-17615; prob 95.4%). This showed that the material was broadly contemporary with the cemeteries; therefore both rites were being carried out in the late Roman period at Cotswold Community.

The cremation deposit weighed 392 g and was tentatively identified as the remains of an adult male. The excavator noted that the surrounding cut was scorched and a number of burnt timbers were found within the deposit suggesting that this may have been an *in-situ* cremation, but this is not proven.

Other burials

Three burials of probable late Roman date (Phase 9) were located towards the south-east corner of the settlement just inside boundary ditch 20015 to the south-west of the main focus of settlement in this period (see Fig. 3.36 above) (Table 3.3). The burials were generally all along the same north-south alignment which roughly followed Phase 8 ditch 20016.

Grave 10921 was the most formal of these burials, cutting, but not completely within, Phase 8b ditch 20016 (Fig. 3.54). The grave contained the remains of a male aged 26–35 years old supine and extended. A

series of 18 coffin nails were found around the body suggesting the individual was placed in a substantial coffin, reinforced by the fact that the grave cut was 2.6 m long and 0.85 m wide. A total of 79 hobnails were found within the grave around the foot area of the individual, who was probably wearing shoes when interred.

Skeleton 10635 was found within ditch 20016 *c* 4.5 m north of 10921, with no formal grave cut, and appeared to be a male of similar age to the individual in grave 10921 (Fig. 3.54). However, the skeleton was found prone and extended with the skull between his legs and his hands behind his back—the only instance of such burial rites on site. Both prone burials and decapitation burials were not uncommon in late Roman rural sites, but the location and form of this burial in comparison to others on the site may suggest that the individual was interred this way for a particular social reason. A single hobnail found in the surrounding fill was probably associated with the body, but other finds from this context—including miscellaneous tile and pottery dating to AD 125–170—are more in keeping with the earlier ditch fill. Another possible indication that the individual buried in this ditch was 'different' from those within the main cemetery was provided by stable isotope analysis (Cheung 2009). This revealed that his δ13C value was elevated relative to the rest of the cemetery population (-20.01‰ as oppose to the mean 20.52‰), while his δ15N value was slightly depleted (9.5‰ as oppose to the mean 9.81‰). It was suggested (ibid., 108) that the enrichment in δ13C value was likely due to the consumption (albeit in limited amounts) of shellfish.

A further 7.5 m north the remains of a neonate (10949) were found within pit 10941 (Fig. 3.36). The pit itself may belong to Phase 8 and produced animal bone and early Roman pottery. The body was placed at the very southern edge of the pit without grave goods in a very informal manner.

Table 3.3: Summary of burial practices of other potential late Roman burials

Skeleton no.	*Grave*	*Sex*	*Orientation*	*Grave goods*	*Coffin nails*	*Position*
10635	-	Male?	Unknown	None	No	Prone hand behind back*
10922	10921	Male	N-S	Hobnails/pot	Yes	Supine extended
10949	-	Unknown	Unknown	None	No	Unknown

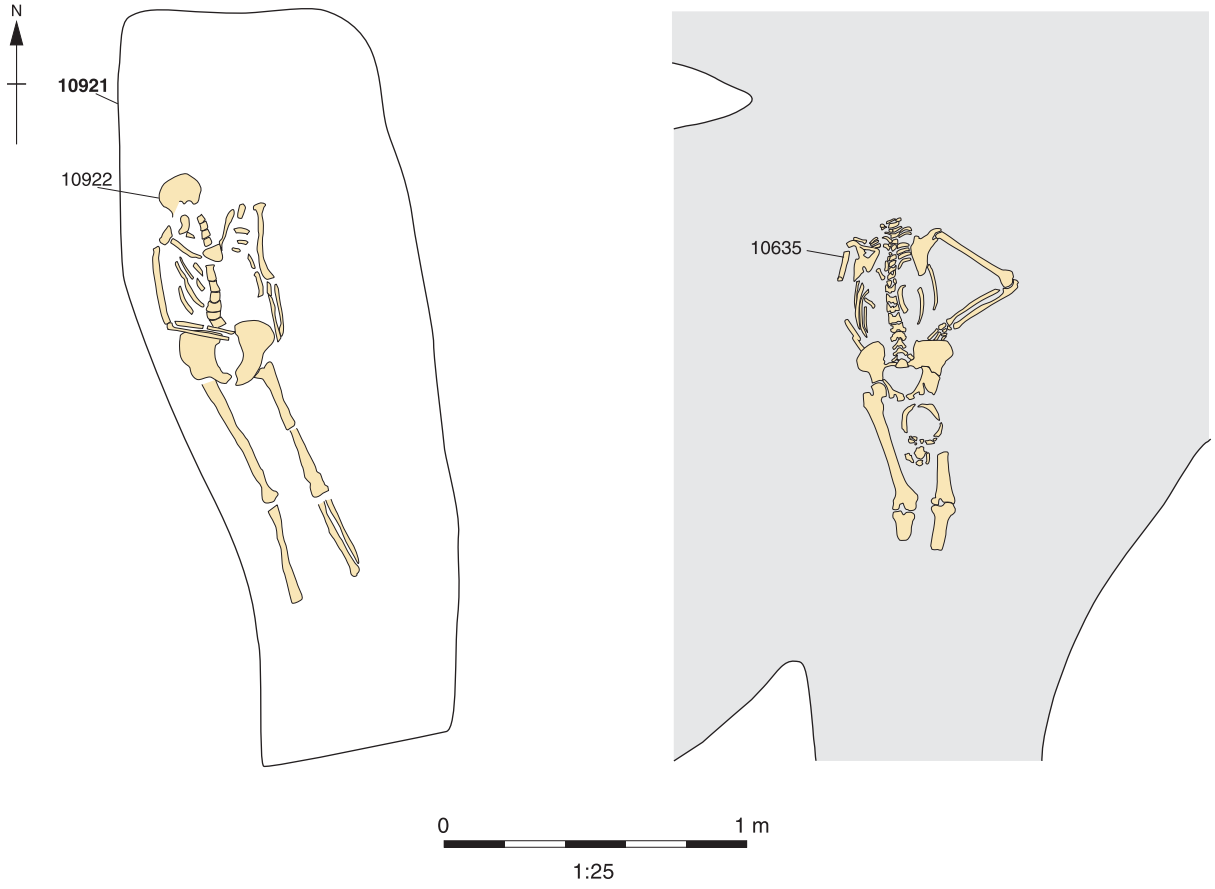


Fig. 3.54 Grave 10921 and skeleton 10635

This type of deposition of infants in pits and ditches close to the settlement is common in the Roman period and reflected the low status of neonates in society.

Discussion of the late Roman farmstead (Phase 9)

The later 3rd to early 4th century was in many ways a period just as dynamic and disruptive to the settlement pattern of the Upper Thames Valley as the early–mid 2nd century had been, though not necessarily for the same reasons. Again, a number of settlements such as Whelford Bowmoor, Stubbs Farm (Miles *et al.* 2007), Horcott Totterdown Lane (Pine and Preston 2004) and possibly Horcott Quarry (OA 2009) were abandoned, while others were either transformed (eg Claydon Pike and Yarnton) or newly established (eg Old Shifford Farm and Barton Court Farm; Hey 1996; Miles 1986). At Cotswold Community there was a major reorganisation of the settlement, though it is likely that many of the earlier boundaries were still utilised and there is little direct evidence for any significant changes in economy or lifestyle.

Perhaps the most significant change in terms of settlement structure was the introduction of rectangular masonry-founded walls and buildings, in addition to a timber-lined well to provide a clean water source. Although not common, buildings with stone foundations have been found on occasion in settlements across the Upper Thames Valley (see for example Booth *et al.* 2007, 57, fig. 3.10), though these were generally more complex and larger in size such as the 'cottage' style villa at Claydon Pike. Roman masonry buildings are known from Kempsford (Booth and Stansbie 2008) and Green Farm (Miles *et al.* 2007, 315) further east along the valley, yet little is known of their structure. A broadly comparable building at Horcott Quarry comprised (in its 2nd phase) a simple rectangular structure *c* 10 x 6 m in size, but this was associated with few finds that could elucidate the nature of its construction or status. At Cotswold Community, there was a reasonably large quantity of ceramic tile (and some stone roof tile) and some window glass from late Roman contexts, which suggest a well-made and presented building. However, as with the potential beam slot building of the mid Roman phase, it is unsure if the tile was actually used for its original purpose, or else incorporated into other structures such as hearths. On balance, however, a tiled roof (using a combination of ceramic and stone tiles) remains quite likely.

Whilst it cannot be said with certainty that these new structures signify a major increase in wealth or status, the occupants were clearly prospering at this time. As just expressed, such buildings are not common in the area, with none for example found at the larger and ostensibly wealthier nearby settlement at Cleveland Farm, though this could be more because of the nature of excavation there. It is quite likely therefore that the ability (and desire) to be able to be able to build such structures does reveal something of the increasing wealth and aspirations of the occupants. Furthermore, the fact that there is evidence for at least two (and probably more) buildings may suggest a slightly larger resident population, though there is still no reason to suspect the presence of more than one or possibly two households.

It remains uncertain whether the changes at Cotswold Community occurred as a single planned episode, or gradually over a period of several decades, but the latter is perhaps more likely. In particular, two open sided rectangular enclosures (one defined by a ditch, the other by postholes) located on the eastern boundary of the settlement appear to lie stratigraphically between the major Phase 8 and 9 boundaries and probably represent a short-lived modification, though for what purpose is unclear. The subsequent modifications comprised a re-structuring of the enclosures to slightly reduce the main area of activity. However, in many cases, the suggested functions for the earlier corresponding zones seem to have been maintained. It is likely that the corn dryers, for example, continued in use into the later Roman period, and indeed the southern corn dryer may only have been constructed in this period. The corn dryer to the north lay within a newly-defined enclosure, possibly bounded on the eastern side by a masonry wall. The reason for this is unclear, but as this fronted the main trackway, it could have been for reasons of display and status. To the north of the corn dryer enclosure, the previous industrial activity ceased and instead this area is now likely to have reverted to a stock enclosure, as the only feature of note was a substantial waterhole. Furthermore, a *c* 10 m wide droveway led into this enclosure from the north. In the south-west, the previous stock enclosure was maintained and a fence erected around part of the waterhole.

In the central part of the site was a curvilinear enclosure containing a successive series of deep pits which are likely to have functioned as waterholes. This is the third in a sequence of central enclosures (albeit of different form), which date right back to the late Iron Age/early Roman period (Phase 7), though it is uncertain if function remained constant. The waterholes suggest that this enclosure was related to specialist stock control.

The main domestic zone remained in the south-eastern corner of the settlement, and in addition to the stone founded buildings and well discussed above, there is some slight evidence that limited metalworking took place in this area. This represents a shift from earlier phases when such activity was situated well away from the domestic zone and seems to have been part of an increasing trend of nucleating settlement features in a single area. A similar scenario was witnessed at Claydon Pike, where nearly all later Roman activity was confined with the ditched and walled enclosure, possibly for reasons of greater security (Miles *et al.* 2007, 208).

Other major additions to the late Roman settlement comprised two successive enclosures, which were added onto the southern boundary. These would have lain on lower lying ground more prone to flooding, and with just a single waterhole, appear to have been further stock enclosures.

Burial practices

The final new element of the settlement at this time was a small inhumation cemetery which lay within the north-western corner of the mid Roman enclosure boundary that was obviously still a visible feature here as elsewhere. A total of 23 burials within two distinct groups were recovered, along with a single contemporary cremation burial and three further inhumation burials in the area of the domestic occupation. The largest group was obviously associated with the Bronze Age barrow, with 12 of the burials being cut through it. Prehistoric monuments are a well known context for Roman burials (eg see Williams 1998, 75), with plenty of evidence from the Upper Thames area, such as at Radley Barrow Hills (Chambers and McAdam 2007) and White Horse Hill, Uffington (Miles *et al*., 2003). At Cotswold Community, this was also demonstrated with the mid Roman burials at the end of the Iron Age pit alignment (see Phase 8 above). Both the pit alignment and Bronze Age barrow must have remained as important visible landscape features in the Roman period, and this perceived need for association with the past may have played a fundamental role in the creation and maintenance of identities within and between communities.

The buried individuals themselves were a variety of ages and sexes and can reasonably be interpreted as a 'family' group directly associated with the household(s) living within the settlement. Such small burial groups lying on the periphery of settlements are quite typical of the Upper Thames Valley and further afield, with, for example seven inhumations (in two small groups) found at Cleveland Farm (Powell *et al.* 2008, 41), ten at Coln Gravel, Fairford (Stansbie *et al.* 2008, 59) and ten at Claydon Pike (Miles *et al.* 2007, 201). At Cotswold Community, like most of the other sites, burials tended to be within coffins, and individuals were encountered in a variety of positions, though interestingly the only example of discrepant burial practice was a single prone and decapitated skeleton lying in a ditch away from the main cemetery. Such burial rites are not unusual within the Upper Thames Valley (Booth 2001), but the location and lack of a grave cut suggest that this individual was particularly singled out for special treatment, though for what reason is unknown.

Site economy and reorganisation of the local landscape

The environmental evidence specifically relating to the late Roman period was quite minimal but did not demonstrate any significant changes to the agrarian economy. Instead the general trends of the 2nd and 3rd centuries continued, with increasing importance of arable over pastoral agriculture, though this was still essentially a mixed economy. The apparent increase in areas given over to stock enclosure within and adjacent to the settlement (see above) may merely suggest the need for greater control and even protection for livestock at this time.

Trade with Cirencester is still implied, and perhaps reflected by the significant numbers of coins from the site, specifically during the middle third of the 4th century (AD 330–448). It is suggested (see Booth, this vol.) that this pattern is indicative of nucleated settlements, which may be reflected in the slightly increased area of domestic occupation, though as outlined above there is still little to suggest more than one or two households. The economic relationship with Cirencester is further indicated by the presence of large quantities of ceramic tile, specifically voussoir tile (used in high status buildings, built into vaulted roofs to conduct hot air), much of which was dumped in the timber-lined well. As suggested for the mid-Roman period, the tile (along with other objects such as the fragments of high status imported glass vessel) most probably derived from Cirencester and may have been brought to the farmstead at Cotswold Community as part of a recycling process whereby objects of perceived value were sorted from general rubbish deposits. (see Poole, this vol.).

The landscape surrounding the farmstead appears to have remained largely unchanged, though it is possible that the fields became more extensive, perhaps due to developments in agricultural efficiency. At least some parts of the main north-south trackway were recut in the late Roman period, and the spatial organisation of the site suggests that it was still very much in use. In other excavations in the Upper Thames the evidence for maintenance of the trackways into the late Roman period is less clear, with some trackways (eg at Claydon Pike, Thornhill Farm and Totterdown Lane, Horcott), appearing to have ceased in use by this time. This was undoubtedly part of the wider changes in landscape use, probably connected with settlement nucleation and the resulting need for fewer main trackways.

The late Roman farmstead within the wider community

The lack of excavation within the known Roman settlements immediately surrounding Cotswold Community ensures that their chronological relationship—including potential contemporaneity in the late Roman period— remains unknown. Although the highest density of Roman settlement in the region can be dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, any continuity into the late Roman period is more variable. Further south-west, for example, the

settlement at Neigh Bridge had been abandoned since the earlier 3rd century (Miles *et al.* 2007, 229), while at Cleveland Farm to the south-east there is evidence for a thriving late Roman population (Powell *et al.* 2008, 34). These developments within the Upper Thames Valley probably stem from an increased tendency for nucleation in the later Roman period, with fewer and larger settlements presumably being part of more extensive landholdings.

Further north in the Cotswolds, the late Roman period is also quite distinct, having been transformed from a relatively 'empty' landscape (or at least one in which there is little outward evidence for low status settlement) to one of the richest areas of villas in Britain. This contrasts sharply with the Upper Thames Valley, which has relatively few villas of any period, but there was undoubtedly a close relationship between these two regions. Holbrook (2008a) has suggested that it was entrepreneurs investing in more profitable and intensive agriculture in the Upper Thames Valley from the 2nd century onwards who eventually generated the wealth needed for the rapid growth of villas in the Cotswolds during the late Roman period. In this way, the richest members of local society could use the wealth derived from densely packed agricultural holdings in the Upper Thames to establish (or embellish existing) villas in the relatively sparsely populated Cotswolds. A crucial element in this relationship would have been the growth of Cirencester itself, which would have acted as a catalyst for economic growth in the valley (see Phase 8 above), while also being a social magnet for the villas themselves (eg see White 2007, 124 table 6.1). Furthermore, the particularly rapid developments towards the end of the 3rd century may have been stimulated by the town's likely elevation to capital of the newly created province of Britannia Prima.

Whether or not the occupants of farmsteads in the valley were under some measure of control from larger landholders living in Cotswold villas (perhaps as bonded tenants or *coloni*) is uncertain, but this must remain a distinct possibility. The extent of external control over much of the landscape in the valley at this time is suggested by the evidence for settlement abandonment in some areas and nucleation in others. White (2007, 147) has suggested that this represents people being forced by the changing economic circumstances of the late Roman period to relocate to villages or towns, while at the same time continuing to work the farmland. The evidence from Cotswold Community is largely inconclusive in this respect, but there is nothing to suggest any great social or economic changes that could be associated with direct external influence. No doubt the patterns of land use and ownership within the valley were quite diverse, with some areas becoming satellite parts of wider, wealthy agricultural estates, while others, perhaps including Cotswold Community, remained as small, relatively low status and largely independent farmsteads.

Abandonment of the late Roman farmstead

The exact sequence of the late Roman period is difficult to establish, but it seems unlikely that occupation continued on a sustained level to the very end of the 4th century. A number of deposits within the settlement produced large numbers of mixed finds including precious objects such as brooches and pendants. These may be representative of abandonment of the settlement, with large dumps thrown into nearby ditches, in particular the trackway ditch forming part of the southern enclosure (see Phase 9 above). The latest dating material for the Roman period on the site comprises a series of coins dated to AD 364–378 indicating that there was still activity here after AD 364, but maybe not much further beyond this. The absence of later coinage is also consistent with the relative scarcity of pottery assemblages from the second half of the 4th century. The lack of evidence for occupation from this time need not of course preclude the land from still being worked. Although there is no explicit evidence for this, the maintenance of some of the field boundaries well beyond the Roman period is hinted at by correlation of medieval plough furrows with a number of Roman ditch alignments (see Chapter 4).

On a broader scale, the apparent abandonment of the farmstead at Cotswold Community in the latter half of the 4th century is certainly not unprecedented, although many settlements with a late Roman phase did appear to continue until at least the start of the 5th century (Miles *et al*. 2007, 400, Booth *et al.* 2007, 80). At Cleveland Farm for example, late Roman pottery types extend up this period, while 5th to 8th century pottery hints at continued occupation (Powell *et al.* 2008, 34). The assemblage of finds from Neigh Bridge, Somerford Keynes, extends in date into the early 5th century (even though no features of late Roman date were revealed), while also including late Roman military objects. More conclusive evidence for continuity has recently been discovered at Horcott Quarry near Fairford, where radiocarbon dates indicated a cemetery in use from the 2nd/3rd to 5th/6th centuries AD, the later date range possibly contemporary with a large Saxon settlement (OA 2009).

The key to the longevity of most settlements in this region may well have been Cirencester itself, which has particularly strong evidence for continuing occupation into the 5th century and possibly beyond (Holbrook 1998, 140; Booth *et al.* 2007, 80). With Cirencester apparently remaining such a vibrant economic and political centre during the later 4th century, it does not seem likely that the abandonment of the nearby farm at Cotswold Community was linked to a general economic collapse. Instead, perhaps increasing pressures from taxation and the advancing rate of settlement nucleation (for greater economic profitability) finally forced the occupants to leave the farm, maybe even moving northwards into the city itself?

FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN PHASES

Late Iron Age and Roman pottery *by Edward Biddulph*

A total of 21,612 sherds of pottery, weighing 202,665 g, was recovered from the site. The pottery spanned the late Iron Age and Roman period, but was used and deposited in greatest volume during the middle and late Roman periods. This is evident from examination of the most reliable, well-dated, ceramic groups—that is, assemblages from stratigraphically phased contexts whose ceramic dates fall within the periods defined by those phases—which encompass almost half of all pottery collected from the excavations. Some 40% of pottery by sherd count was assigned to phased ceramic groups dated between the 2nd and first half of the 3rd century (Phase 8). A further 36% dated to the late 3rd and 4th centuries (Phase 9). The remaining 24% was retrieved from late Iron Age and early Roman phases (Phases 6 and 7).

In all phases, locally-produced coarse reduced wares dominated supply. During the late Iron Age (Phase 6), these arrived mainly in the form of grog-tempered barrel-shaped and bead-rimmed jars (Tables 3.4 and 3.5). The ware was supplemented by shelly and limestone fabrics and, from further afield, by Malvernian rock-tempered ware, all producing a similar range of forms. A Dressel 1 amphora from the Campanian region of Italy was considerably more exotic (Fig. 3.55, 1). Though undoubtedly rare on low-status sites, the occurrence is one of three or four known in the area and points to long-distance trade, or, perhaps more accurately, redistribution of high-status goods within southern Britain as a means of developing political or social

Table 3.4: Percentages of ware groups by phase. Quantification of phased ceramic groups by sherd count.

Ware status	*Ware group*	*Phase 6*	*Phase 7*	*Phase 8*	*Phase 9*	*Total sherds*
Fine and specialist wares	A amphora	<1	<1	<1	<1	31
	F fineware			<1	8	285
	M mortarium			<1	1	53
	Q white-slipped		<1	<1	<1	14
	S samian		1	2	1	121
	W whiteware			<1	<1	18
Coarse wares	B black-burnished			36	36	2530
	C calcareous			<1	1	36
	E late Iron Age/'Belgic'	91	54	4	3	1685
	G coarse-tempered	7	14	2	3	458
	O oxidised		7	10	9	813
	R reduced	2	24	44	38	3301
-	Total sherds	665	1577	3777	3326	9345

Table 3.5: Percentages of vessel classes by phase. Quantification of phased ceramic groups by estimated vessel equivalents (EVE).

Vessel class	*Phase 6*	*Phase 7*	*Phase 8*	*Phase 9*	*Total EVE*
A amphora	4			1	0.6
B flagon			1	4	2.29
C jar	96	89	66	57	66.93
E beaker		2	7	5	5.09
F cup		1	1	<1	0.42
G tankard		<1	1.09	1	1.36
H bowl		4	3	5	3.67
J dish/platter		3	17	22	16.07
K mortarium			2	5	2.43
L lid			<1		0.04
Z unidentified			<1		0.03
Total EVE	7.44	11.83	41.54	38.12	98.93

ties. Sandy reduced wares were introduced from the early 1st century AD (Phase 7). Most of the reduced wares were manufactured in North Wiltshire. They replaced grog-tempered pottery by the end of the century, but the repertoire was near identical. Forms included high-shouldered necked jars and oval-bodied medium-mouthed jars. Generally, the phase saw a more diverse assemblage: white-slipped and oxidised flagons from Wiltshire, tankards from the Severn Valley, and samian ware cups and dishes from south Gaul. A fine grey ware bowl from north Kent also belonging to this phase is a very rare occurrence in the region (Fig. 3.55, 2). The bowl is far outside the fabric's usual distribution within south-eastern Britain, and may have travelled as a personal possession, rather than arrived as a conventionally traded item.

North Wiltshire grey ware became much more important from the 2nd century (Phase 8) when grog-tempered ware, Malvernian rock-tempered ware and other wares of a late Iron Age tradition had all but disappeared. That said, the dominance of Wiltshire grey ware was checked by black-burnished ware from Dorset, and this motivated Wiltshire potters to produce imitation black-burnished ware in response. The Wiltshire potters matched their Dorset rivals for forms, with the same types of dishes and cooking jars recorded in both fabrics. Mortaria arrived from Cirencester, Mancetter-Hartshill, and Oxfordshire. Beakers were more numerous in this phase compared with Phase 7, and included bag-shaped vessels from the Lower Rhineland. Samian dishes, cups and bowls arrived from Central and East Gaul, while olive oil containers reached the site from southern Spain. Local pottery was squeezed further during the late Roman period (Phase 9). Dorset potters held on to their share of the market, and the Oxfordshire industry became more important. The latter was responsible for samian-like colour-coated bowls and dishes, which filled the gap left by the samian industry whose products were no longer reaching Britain. Oxford colour-coated wares were joined by products from the New Forest, Nene Valley, and Cirencester, closer to home.

The pottery cannot give a precise terminal date for settlement activity, but clearly the levels of pottery use and trade fell after AD 350. The latest Oxford colour-coated forms date broadly to the 4th century, and pottery arriving after 350 is confined to a cooking pot and thick-walled bead-and-flanged dish from Dorset and an oval-bodied shelly jar from Bedfordshire. Given these factors, ceramic deposition occurring during the second half of the 4th century involved a significant quantity of pottery that reached the site before AD 350. This is not so say that settlement activity did not continue for some decades afterwards, as undoubtedly it did, but that supply of new pottery had virtually ceased.

All indications provided by the pottery point to a low status rural settlement. A useful index is fine and specialist wares—samian, amphorae, mortaria, white wares, fine wares, and white-slipped wares—which tend to be poorly represented at lower status sites. The proportion of 2.9% by sherd count recorded at Cotswold Community among early and middle Roman phased groups and 11% in late Roman groups places the site well within the low status category, but the presence of mortaria, flagons, and samian suggest that its inhabitants were aware of continental style food preparation and dining. The settlement's proximity to the major urban centre of Cirencester presumably helped here, allowing occasional access to relatively

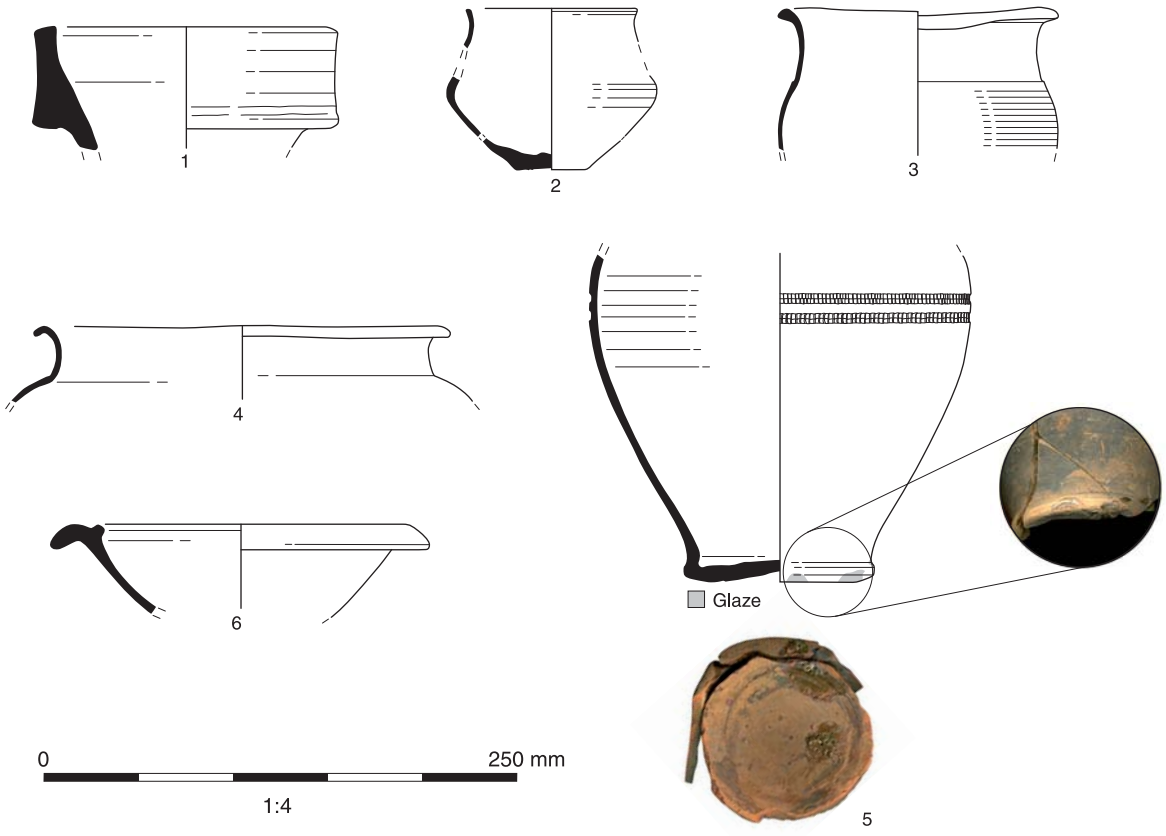


Fig. 3.55 Late Iron Age – Roman pottery from Cotswold Community

prestigious goods. (It should be noted that the absence of visible wear on samian ware cups and other forms at Cotswold Community suggests that the provision of continental ceramics at the site did not necessarily lead to continental-style cooking and dining.) Not all samian, of course, was valued equally; decorated forms were more expensive than plain forms and were better represented in towns and military sites. At Cotswold Community, 8% of samian was decorated. This is low—certainly when compared with the 25% recorded at Cirencester—but not altogether so; 10% of samian from the small town of Asthall was decorated, while a value of 6% was recorded at the Claydon Pike aisled building complex. Again, access to Cirencester's markets brought advantages to the inhabitants of Cotswold Community.

No kilns were uncovered during the excavations, but some of the vessels exhibited traits of wasters or 'seconds', and were possibly from a nearby kiln. The vessels were identified as jars in reduced, medium-sandy fabrics consistent with the range of North Wiltshire grey wares. A wide-mouthed necked jar (Fig. 3.55, 3) had a distorted rim that presumably sank in the kiln. A further six vessels—all oval-bodied necked jars—had distorted rims or body dents or other manufacturing imperfections (Fig. 3.55, 4). The seven vessels, with the exception of one from a mid Roman deposit, belonged to late Roman deposits, the range of dates pointing to manufacture during the first half of the 4th century. Given the uniformity of date, form, and fabric, the pottery is more likely to have derived from one source, if not a single kiln, than a group of kilns belonging to the same workshop. For all their faults, the vessels seem perfectly functional, and may still have travelled a reasonably long distance. However, the presence of a more local kiln site within the territory of the settlement and functioning in the late Roman period is equally plausible. Another manufacturing flaw was recorded on a North Wiltshire colour-coated ware vessel. The lower part of the jar-sized rouletted beaker had splashes of green glaze on the base and the external junction of wall and base (Fig. 3.55, 5). The glaze on the base was mixed with gritty or organic fragments and is likely to be accidental ash glaze. This was formed by hot wood and ash—present in the kiln chamber or drawn through the flue—settling on the vessel; the ash melted and became glassy.

A number of vessels had been burnt and scorched through use. Forms were largely restricted to black-burnished ware jars and dishes and Oxfordshire white ware mortaria. Another vessel, a white-slipped mortarium-like bowl (Fig. 3.55, 6) was similarly burnt externally on the top of the flange. There can be little doubt that the pots were used for cooking food on the hearth.The placement of the burning recalls instructions for recipes in *Apicius* that call for hot embers to be heaped on top of inverted vessels to create an oven or casserole (*testum*).

Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Fig. 3.55)

1: Cat. no. 12. Fabric A35, amphora (Dressel 1).
2: Cat. no. 16. Fabric R16, bowl HG
3: Cat. no. 80. Fabric R35, jar CM; distorted rim from waster or second.
4: Cat. no. 76. Fabric R35, jar CD; distorted rim from waster or second.
5: Cat. no. 95. Fabric F67. Lower part of jar-sized rouletted beaker with splashes of green glaze.
6: Cat. no. 53. Fabric Q20, bowl HC

Coins *by Paul Booth*

Two Iron Age silver units and 360 copper alloy Roman coins were recovered from excavations at Cotswold Community, although only *c* 10% of the coins could be assigned to phased contexts (Table 3.6). The assemblage is dominated by coins certainly or probably of 4th century date, mostly of the period AD 330–378.

Despite the fact that a very high proportion of it was

Table 3.6: Quantification of coins by identified date range

Date assigned	*Reece Period*	*No. certain*	*No. probable/ possible*	*Total*
Iron Age	1	2		2
41-65	2/3	2	2	4
69-79	4	2		2
41-96	2/4		1	1
97	5	1		1
118	6	1		1
145-146	7	1		1
138-161	7	1		1
183-184	9	1		1
1-2C			1	1
257-259	12	1		1
259-268	13	1	1	2
268-270	13	3		3
270-273	13	1		1
270-275	13	1		1
282-285	14	1		1
286-293	14	2		2
270-296	14?	2	1	3
260-296	14?	14	1	15
319-320	16	1		1
323-324	16	1		1
328	16	1		1
330-335	17	60	5	65
335-337	17	5		5
335-341	17	41	5	46
337-341	17	7	1	8
330-341	17	3	4	7
341-348	17	24	1	25
348-350	18	9		9
330-350	18	2	1	3
350-351	18	5		5
351-353	18	6		6
353-355	18	2		2
361-363	18	1		1
350-365	18	20	21	41
330-365	18		1	1
364-367	19	2		2
364-375	19	1		1
367-375	19	3		3
364-378	19	35	15	50
367-383	19?	1		1
383-387	20		1	1
388-402	21		1	1
4C		21	6	27
3-4C		5		5
TOTAL				362

unstratified, the assemblage is important in informing on the general character and chronology of the site, and also allows comparison with other assemblages from the region. In this last respect the size of the assemblage is important, because this is the third largest coin assemblage from a rural site in the area, exceeded only by a huge group of 1142 coins from Ashton Keynes (Wells 2005) and the finds from Claydon Pike, Fairford. In reporting on the latter and on other coins from Cotswold Water Park (CWP) sites Cathy King provided a very useful comparative summary of the material from those sites set within a wider regional context (King 2007a), while a convenient summary of Roman coins from Wiltshire has been produced by Moorhead (2001). In terms of numbers only three CWP sites, Neigh Bridge (Somerford Keynes), Claydon Pike and Leaze Farm (Lechlade) produced more than 50 coins, the totals being 278, 732 and 247 coins respectively, groups comparable to that from Cotswold Community in the use of a metal detector in their recovery. The smaller groups (which include 48 coins from the villa site at Roughground Farm, Lechlade, albeit a collection with no metal-detected component; King 1993) are not necessarily anomalous, however. Late-Roman sites elsewhere in the Thames Valley may also produce only modest assemblages, as for example at Yarnton, with 43 coins (Booth in Hey and Timby forthcoming), and the villa at Barton Court Farm produced only 58 coins if the probable dispersed hoard from Building 2 there is discounted (King 1986).

It is arguable, therefore, that the number of coins from Cotswold Community is significant in its own right: comparable with collections from sites which display a degree of nucleation (for example the larger groups mentioned above, as well as settlements associated with the major roads of the region), it supports the view that the site represented more than a simple farmstead. This conclusion is supported by Moorhead's data for Wiltshire (Moorhead 2001, 88, table 1), which show that of 13 assemblages with more than 200 coins all but one derive from nucleated settlements (including small towns) or villas with potential temple components.

While this interpretation is based essentially upon 4th century coins there is one particularly notable characteristic of the early coins from the site, which is the presence of four 'Claudian copies'. These are typically associated with military activity and are correspondingly uncommon on rural settlement sites. They are absent at CWP sites except at nearby Neigh Bridge, where five were recorded (King 2007c). Neigh Bridge certainly has an unusually high proportion of early coins in comparison with the other CWP sites, although this is not sufficient in itself to suggest a substantial military presence there (King 2007a, 341). The significance of these coins at Cotswold Community is even less clear, but their presence might suggest a short term military association with the site.

The marked differences in the size of the CWP assemblages may have been linked to functional and other variations within the broad category of rural settlements. Beyond this, however, there are other notable differences in their breakdown and the principal impression presented by these assemblages is their heterogeneity (King 2007a, 342), which is further reinforced by the Cotswold Community coins (Table 3.7).

The heavy emphasis of coin loss in the middle third of the 4th century is the most marked characteristic of the assemblage, with issues of 330–348 particularly prominent in comparison with most other major assemblages from the region. Low representations of 1st–2nd century material (not featured in Table 3.7) are characteristic of many rural settlements, although a few coins probably did circulate at Cotswold Community even at this time (see above). Later 3rd century coins were also scarce; they are fewer than at Leaze Farm, where King (2007b) observed that the representation of these issues was unusually low. Their relative absence at Cotswold Community does not seem to relate to diminution in the level of occupation, however. Relatively intensive activity, of whatever kind, was clearly maintained through the middle of the 4th century and beyond. Representation of issues of the House of Valentinian seems to be reasonably characteristic for the area, though it is less pronounced than at Claydon Pike and Leaze Farm, while Moorhead has noted an unusually high preponderance of this coinage across Wiltshire sites as a whole when compared with the British average (Moorhead 2001, 90–95), supported by the data from Ashton Keynes. This pattern is not followed precisely at Cotswold Community, but these coins are nevertheless sufficiently common to make the effective absence of late 4th century coins striking and presumably significant. This absence is matched at Barnsley Park, Ashton Keynes and Neigh Bridge, but this last site had little clear evidence of structural activity after the 3rd century and its apparent decline from the mid 4th century is evident in the scarcity of coins from AD 364 onwards. At Cotswold Community this trend starts later. The absence of coins of Reece's period 20 is not necessarily meaningful, since such coins are always uncommon, but the lack of issues of the House of Theodosius is probably more significant as they are relatively well-represented at other rural sites in the area, such as Claydon Pike and Leaze Farm

Table 3.7 Comparison of key later Roman periods of coin loss

	AD 260-296		*AD 330-348*		*AD 348-364*		*AD 364-378*		*AD 388-402*		*Total coins*
Site	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	
Cotswold Community	28	7.7	156	43.1	68	18.8	57	15.7	1	0.3	362
Neigh Bridge	54	19.4	36	12.9	45	16.2	10	3.6	1	0.3	278
Claydon Pike (all)	142	19.4	171	23.3	71	9.7	157	21.4	21	2.9	732
Leaze Farm	24	9.6	56	22.5	38	15.2	64	25.7	17	6.8	247
Wycomb 1	11	4.5	115	47.7	55	22.8	41	17.0	6	2.5	241
Ashton Keynes	352	30.8	230	20.1	107	9.4	319	27.9	10	0.8	1142
Barnsley Park	67	10.6	288	45.4	94	14.8	124	19.5	1	0.2	635
Cirencester excavations	732	19.3	797	21.1	536	14.2	412	10.9	777	20.5	3785

and particularly in nearby Cirencester (Reece 1998a). At Cotswold Community the lack of both the latest coins and of contemporary pottery might suggest a genuine diminution in the level of activity at the site, rather than just changes in the use of coin at this time.

Of all the sites listed by King in her comparative study of the CWP assemblages the group defined as Wycomb 1 (see Table 3.7) stands out as being quite strikingly similar to Cotswold Community in terms of the representation of the periods of peak coin loss. While this group is slightly problematical (Reece 1998b, 400) it is interesting that it should come from a nucleated settlement. Another very similar group, however, is that from the villa at Barnsley Park, which as analogy for the site type may provide a better parallel for Cotswold Community.

Small finds *by Kelly Powell*

This section provides a summary of the main catagories of late Iron Age and Roman small finds recovered from Cotswold Community, with the exception of structural material and grave goods, which are summarised seperately below.

Dress accessories and toilet implements

The dress accessories category was dominated by iron hobnails, originally from the soles of shoes, but also included as many as 47 brooches, 11 bracelets and 6 finger rings, as well as fragments of pin. The toilet implement category was much less well represented, comprising only a possible unguent spoon, an unusual item resembling a nail cleaner and a pair of tweezers.

Hobnails and bootplates were found across the site, including some interred with the dead, although most were indicative of occasional discarded shoes. Hobnails first appeared in Phase 8 and their deposition increased over time indicating increasing adoption of Roman footwear.

Many of the brooches were unstratified, although as brooches were subject to changes in fashion these were closely dateable and a number of broad trends can be identified. There was a strong pre-conquest presence in the brooch assemblage including a remarkable La Tene III Gaulish Unguiforme brooch (SF 854; see Fig 3.7 above). These brooches are thought to have been manufactured in the Languedoc region of southern France (Feugère 1985, 251), and this specific type was probably manufactured in the second half of the 1st century BC (ibid.). Such finds are rare in Britain, but have been found as near as Filkins in Oxfordshire (Hull and Hawkes 1987, pl. 73, 3687). The presence of an immaculate example in a waterhole on a low status settlement is peculiar.

Other stratified brooches in this group include a Colchester brooch (SF 1287) from Phase 7 pit 11614, a 'Nauheim derivative' brooch (SF 1946; Fig. 3.56, 4) from corndryer 14400 and an iron early hinged or strip bow brooch (SF 2272) dating to AD 25–70 within late Roman building 14291. Unstratified brooches included five simple Colchester brooches (see SF 2022; Fig 3.56, 1), a Langton Down brooch (SF 857; Fig 3.56, 2) and two further Nauheim derivatives.

The remaining brooches were also predominantly mid 1st century with only a handful potentially falling into the 2nd century AD and a distinct absence of the later types such as Knee brooches and crossbow brooches. Stratified examples of 1st/2nd century brooches include Colchester two-pieces, dated to the latter half of the 1st century AD recovered from Phase 8 gully 13814 (SF 1779, Fig 3.56, 3) and pit/waterhole 20042 (SF 1682). A Fowler type D2 penannular brooch (SF 1490; Fig. 3.56, 7) came from Phase 8 ditch 20050 and a Polden Hill brooch (SF 1771; Fig 3.56, 9) was found within Phase 9 waterhole 13439. A trumpet brooch (SF 1572) dating to the 2nd century AD came from pathway 12906. Unstratified brooches include a single Aucissa brooch (SF 2045; Fig 3.56, 5), six Hod Hill types (SF 1895; Fig 3.56, 8), three Polden Hill, four further trumpet brooches and a variant (Fig. 3.56, 12 and 13) and four T-shaped brooches.

The early plate brooch (SF 856; Fig. 3.56, 6) dating to the mid-late 1st century AD was unusual. An almost identical example was found in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (Hattatt 1989, 343 fig 202 no 1560) and a further example at Camulodunum (Hawkes and Hull 1947, PL XCVIII no 164). These form the only parallels to this brooch and the type may be a British variant (Hattatt 1989, 114). In addition two of the T-shaped brooches (SF 871 and 873; Fig. 3.56, 10 and 11) appeared to be south-western variants with fixed headloops, large headplates and sparse decoration. Both are crude and bulky, likely to be 2nd century in date and are of a type only found in south-western England.

Cool (2007, digital section 5.3) has noted a similar pre-conquest dominance and lack of later brooches at Somerford Keynes Neigh Bridge, suggesting that the impetus for brooch wearing was passing by the 2nd century in this area. However, the complete lack of later forms at Cotswold Community is remarkable.

From the later 3rd century onwards it became fashionable to wear bracelets, necklaces and finger rings. These object types are conspicuously few at Cotswold Community with a maximum of 12 bracelets and 6 finger rings. When compared with nearby sites this appears all the more unusual; at least 43 bracelets and 12 finger rings were found at Claydon Pike, although this discrepency may be influenced by the level of sampling.

Bracelets from stratified contexts included SF 974 from ditch 20106 and SF 1739 from pit 13347, the latter probably made for a child. SF 2418, from ditch 20050 (Fig. 3.57, 14) was near complete, missing only the pierced terminal, while SF 1557 from ditch 20052 was fragmentary and was formed by twisting two rectangular sectioned rods, or a length of rod folded in half. In addition fragments of two simple undecorated lathe-turned shale bracelets were recovered from fills of the late Roman enclosure ditch 20350.

In total five bracelet fragments were unstratified, two of these (SF 1969 and SF 859; Fig. 3.57, 16) come from the same object, although were found separately. The bracelet was decorated with snakes head terminals. An unstratified fragment of bracelet (SF 1266; Fig. 3.57, 15) was formed by wrapping a wire tightly around a shank, originally plated with a white metal. The remaining two fragments were an undecorated penannular bracelet and are not closely datable.

Finger rings were mostly unstratified except a single possible example from pit 15301, although this may have been a simple fitting. A total of five rings were unstratified all of which were different in form. SF 878 was constructed from a coiled strip decorated with herringbone pattern (Fig. 3.57, 18), SF 2057 was a rectangular sectioned plain ring, and the remaining three rings were of bezel and loop construction and were less complete. SF 2054 (Fig. 3.57, 17)

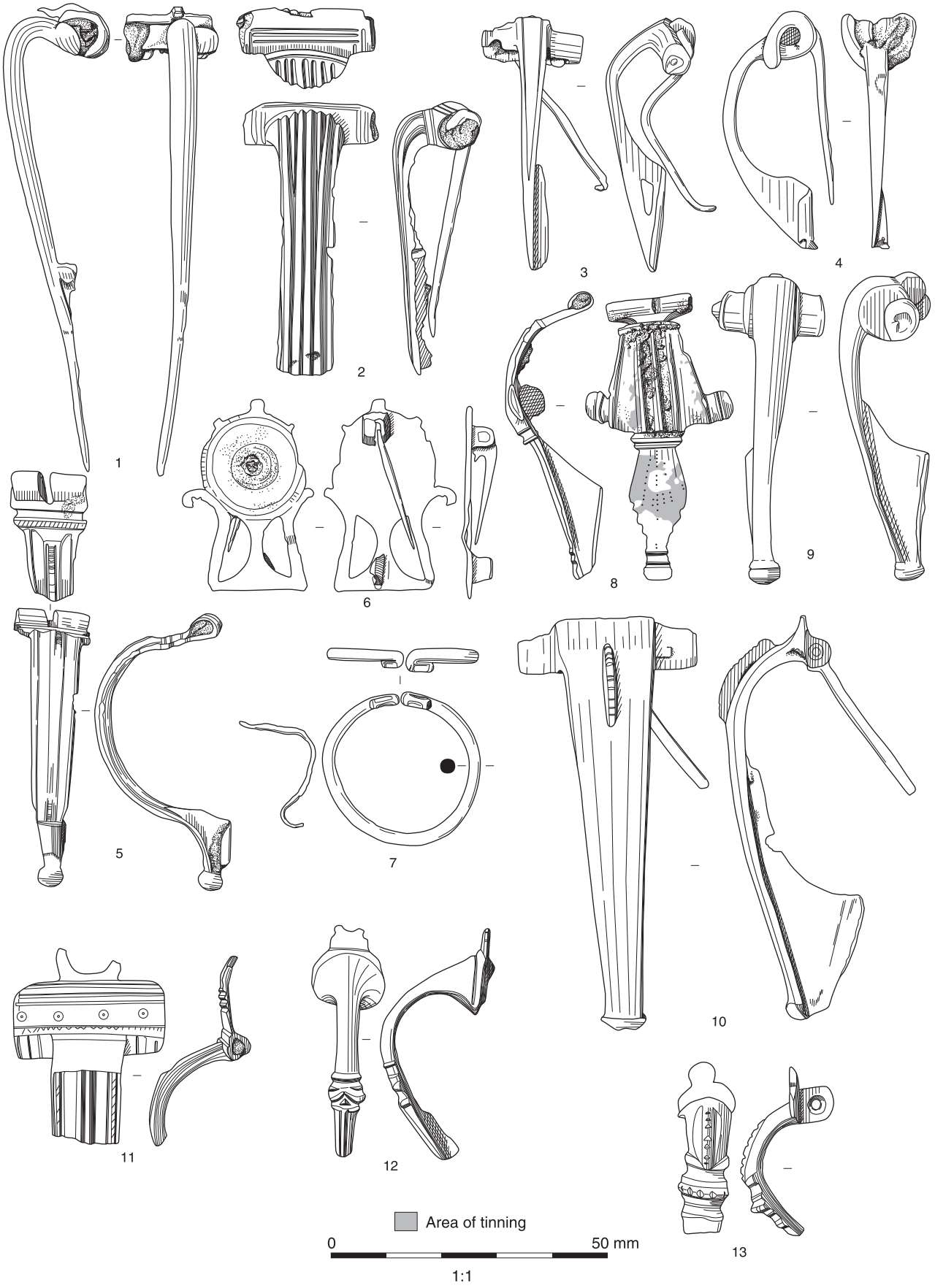


Fig. 3.56 Dress Accessories and toilet implements from Cotswold Community

survives as a fragment of loop and an oval shaped recessed bezel within. The design retains traces of glass or enamel.

The almost complete absence of necklaces and metal hairpins indicates that other forms of jewellery and Roman hairstyles were not adopted. It is not likely that this was a conscious decision and more likely was a question of affluence. A total of two glass beads and two bone hairpins (SFs 1248 and 1629; Fig. 3.57, 19 and 20) were recovered from the site. Bone was generally much cheaper than metal and this may indicate adaptation of the Roman culture in a more affordable way.

Toilet implements were represented by a possible toilet or unguent spoon (SF 1215; Fig. 3.57, 21) from ditch 20168 and a very unusual copper alloy object from a recut of boundary ditch 20003 (SF 2146; Fig. 3.57, 22). The latter object was a form of toiletry or medical implement although its exact nature is unclear, particularly as the three prongs remain so sharp. A single pair of tweezers (SF 2048) were also recovered, badly corroded but apparently complete.

Catalogue of illustrated dress accessories and toilet implements (Figs 3.56–7)

1. Brooch. Copper alloy. Colchester type a (Bayley and Butcher 2004) with straight bow. L: 85 mm, W: 17 mm (crossbar), 4 mm (bow). SF 2022, Ctx 15822
2. Brooch. Copper alloy. Langton Down type. L: 48 mm,

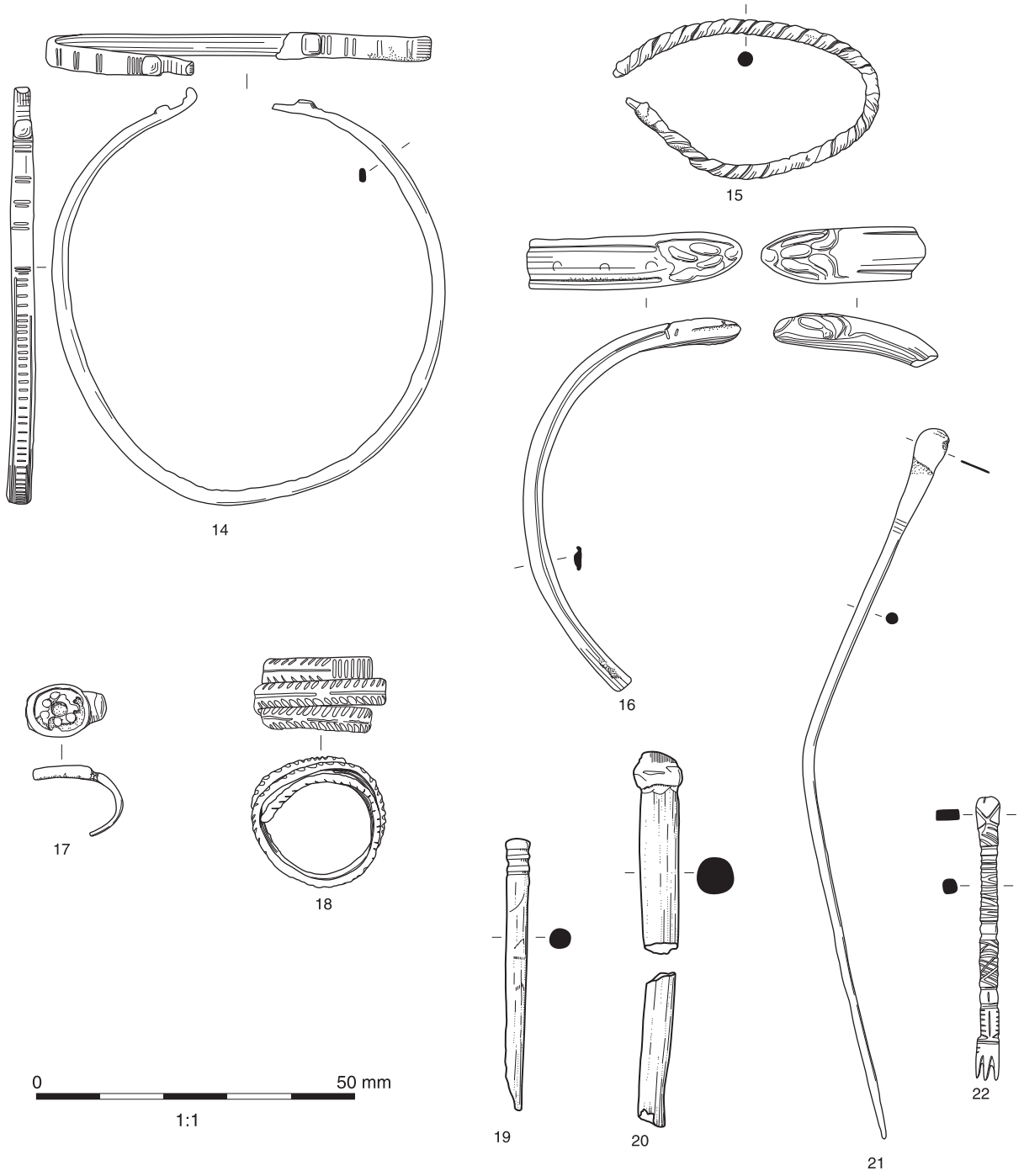


Fig. 3.57 Dress Accessories and toilet implements from Cotswold Community

W: 23 mm (crossbar), 10 mm (bow). SF 857, Ctx 10400
3. Brooch. Copper alloy. Colchester two-piece. L: 47 mm, W: 19 mm (crossbar), 6 mm (bow). SF 1779, Ctx 13894
4. Brooch. Copper alloy. Nauheim derivative. L: 43 mm, W: 3 mm (bow). SF1946, Ctx 15004
5. Brooch. Copper alloy. Aucissa type. L: 50 mm, W: 13 mm (spring cover) 9 mm (bow). SF 2045, Ctx 17844
6. Brooch. Copper alloy. Early Plate. L: 35 mm, W: 18 mm (foot) 18 mm (centre). SF 856, Ctx 10400
7. Brooch. Copper alloy. Penannular, Fowler type D2. W: 2 mm D: 28 mm. SF 1490, Ctx 12150
8. Brooch. Copper alloy. Hod Hill, Bayley and Butcher (2004) type a. L: 51 mm W: 16 mm (tube), 10 mm (bow) SF 1895, Ctx 14941
9. Brooch. Copper alloy. Polden Hill, Bayley and Butcher (2004) type b. L: 56 mm W: 21 mm (crossbar), 8 mm (bow) SF 1771, Ctx 13631
10. Brooch. Copper alloy. Developed T-shape, south western variant. L: 77 mm W: 34 mm (crossbar), 17 mm (bow) SF 871, Ctx 10400
11. Brooch. Copper alloy. Developed T-shape, south western variant. L: 42 mm W: 30 mm (crossbar), 14 mm (bow) SF 873, Ctx 10400
12. Brooch. Copper alloy. Trumpet, Bayley and Butcher type b. L: 42 mm W: 13 mm SF 945, Ctx 10456
13. Brooch. Copper alloy. L: 26 mm W: 9 mm SF 869, Ctx 10400
14. Bracelet. Copper Alloy. Allason-Jones and Miket (1984) type 1. D: 61 mm (ext) B: 4 mm SF 2418, Ctx 12155
15. Bracelet. Copper Alloy. Allason-Jones and Miket (1984) type 14/ Crummy cable type. L: 95 mm SF 1266, Ctx 11244
16. Bracelet. Copper Alloy. Allason-Jones and Miket (1984) type 6. D: 61 mm (ext) W: 8 mm B: 3 mm SF 859 and 1969, Ctx 10400 and 15445
17. Finger Ring. Copper Alloy. L: 14 mm W: 8-9 mm (bezel) SF 2054, Ctx 17844
18. Finger Ring. Copper Alloy. D: 20 mm (ext) SF 878, Ctx 10400
19. Incomplete pin. Bone. Crummy Type 2. L:32 mm + 29 mm SF 1248 ctx 11000
20. Incomplete pin. Bone. Crummy Type 2. L: 42 mm SF 1629 Ctx:11740
21. Possible Unguent Spoon. Copper alloy. L: 118 mm W: 5 mm (head) SF 1215 Ctx:10893
22. Toilet Implement. Copper alloy. L: 45 mm W: 3.5 mm B: 2 mm SF 2146, Ctx 17785

Military fittings and weaponry

A number of Roman objects from Cotswold Community could be classed as military or probably military in origin. These included two copper alloy mounts, a stud and a strap end probably all from Roman military attire, in addition to two iron spearheads. The fittings and one spearhead (SF 892) were all found unstratified in the area of the Roman settlement whilst spearhead SF 2 came from the eastern trackway.

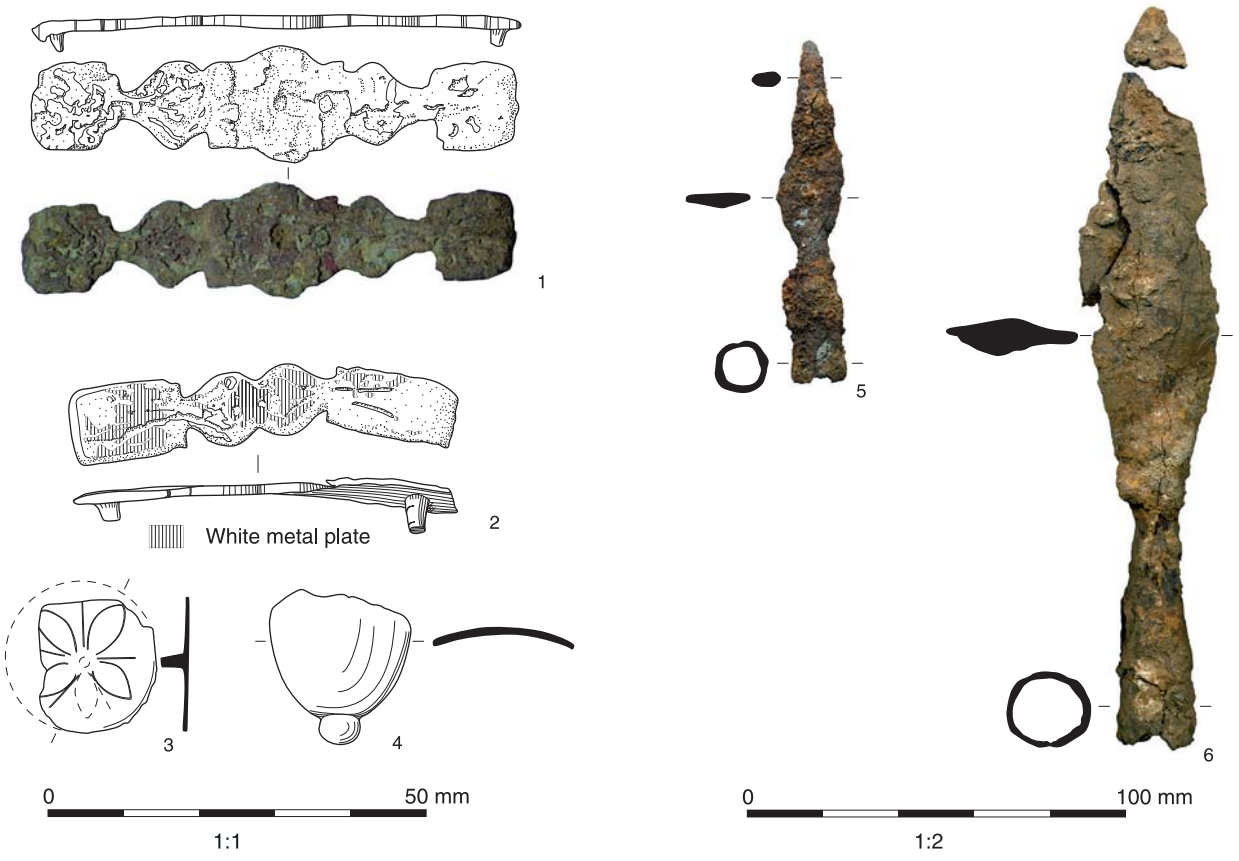


Fig. 3.58 Military fittings from Cotswold Community

SFs 1854 and 1759 (Fig. 3.58, 1 and 2) are object types firmly associated with the military and are commonly referred to as apron mounts. The decoration on the mounts appeared to be vine tendrils in relief, a theme which came into favour in the reign of Claudius. This would have been covered in silver foil and inlaid with niello using designs drawn from Bacchic imagery (Bishop and Coulston 2006, 121). Only SF 1854 had remains of the white metal. Similar objects are described by Bishop and Coulston (2006, 120 fig 70 no 1) Crummy 1983 (133 fig 151) and Griffiths (2001, 57 fig 3.4 nos 11 and 12).

SF 1979 (Fig. 3.58, 3) is a flat-headed circular stud presumably used in clothing or military equipment. X-ray revealed that the item was decorated with a peripheral groove and an incised pattern of quarters, each with a geometric floral design. Almost identical items have been found in Caerleon (Bishop and Coulston 2006, 109 fig 63, no 7) and Uley (Woodward and Leach 1993, 204 fig 151, no 4) and are described as coming from a military apron or belt. This, like the previous mounts, would have dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD and suggests some military presence on the site.

The remaining fitting, SF 1350 (Fig. 3.58, 4), appears to have been part of an amphora-shaped strap end. This item was late Roman in date and can be compared with items from Colchester and Winchester (Bishop and Coulston 2006, 219 fig 137 no 12).

The spearheads were somewhat different in character. SF 2 (Fig. 3.58, 5) consisted of a narrow leaf-shaped blade with rounded asymmetrical shoulders and a closed socket and was bent at the tip. Such items have a long life of use and although this example was comparable with Manning's Hod Hill group 1A (1985) the object is not necessarily mid 1st century AD. SF 892 (Fig. 3.58, 6) had a long blade and a closed socket, and was a Roman form with a long life (cf Manning 1985 pl76 V26).

The presence of military finds on a small rural settlement is curious but not unknown. Military objects have been found at Claydon Pike, Cleveland Farm (Wessex Archaeology 2007) and Kingscote amongst others. It is likely that these small groups of objects represent small scale policing of these areas.

Catalogue of illustrated military fittings and weaponry (Fig. 3.58)

1. Apron Mount? Copper alloy. L: 66 mm, W: (central) 15 mm (ends) 11 mm. SF 1759, Ctx 13816.
2. Apron Mount? Copper alloy. L: 52 mm, W: 9 mm. SF 1854, Ctx 14407.
3. Stud. Copper alloy. Military from belt or apron. L: 6 mm, D: 18 mm. SF 1979, Ctx 15445
4. Strap end? Copper alloy. Amphora-shaped but broken at wider end with circular knop at apex. L: 19 (remains) mm, W: 19 mm. SF 1350, Ctx u/s
5. Spearhead. Iron. Probable Hod Hill group 1A. L: 90 mm, W: 17 mm. D: 14 mm (socket) SF 2, Ctx 564
6. Spearhead. Iron. Similar to Hod Hill type 2. L: 195 mm, W: 34 mm. D: 20 mm (socket) SF 892, Ctx 10456

Equine objects

Evidence of transportation was found at Cotswold Community in the form of objects associated with horses. This category was not well represented on the site, although a number of clearly equine objects were recovered from Phase 8 and 9 features. These included two fragments of iron hipposandal wing (SF 1361 and 1593) and a possible snaffle bit (SF 1774). Hipposandals are considered to be a form of temporary horseshoe probably used when unshod animals were brought onto metalled roads (Manning 1985, 63). In addition, two possible horse pendants were found, but these objects may alternatively have been lamp reflectors and are discussed with the household objects category.

Tools

The majority of tools from Cotswold Community were knives or cleavers, with the overall range and number being typical of Roman rural sites. Most of the tools were found in stratified features and are therefore summarised here by phase in order to put them in their original context.

Phase 7

Iron tools from this phase include a knife or cleaver from waterhole 15257 (SF 1955; Fig. 3.59, 1), a knife or reaping hook from waterhole 12211 and a possible joiners dog or similar from pit 17640 (SF 2190).

Phase 8

Tools from this phase include a near complete Manning (1985) type 22 iron knife from pit 14334 (SF 1862; Fig. 3.59, 2) and a number of other objects that may have originally been blades of some kind such as a tanged iron object from ditch 20082 (SF 2233). An additional two iron objects may have been tools but were of unknown function. SF 2060 (Fig. 3.59, 3) from ditch 16252 resembled a possible punch or chisel, while SF 1840 from posthole 14149 appeared to be a tanged tool with a flat, fish-tail shaped blade.

Phase 9

A larger assemblage of tools came from Phase 9 features, including two probable knives from ditch 20163, (SF 1273; Fig. 3.59, 4) and ditch 20015 (SF 1235; Fig. 3.59, 5). The former was identified as a Manning (1985) type 11 or 13 (cf pl 54 Q39/42). Other tools included a possible fragmentary chisel end (SF 1442) from ditch 20350 and a further tracer or chisel (SF 2085) from deposit 12306 (ditch 20348). A possible carpenters wedge (SF 1524, fig 3.25 no 6) came from ditch 20052.

Ditch 20151 (a recut of ditch 17590) and ditch 20015 produced a number of objects which may have been tools of varying description, including a possible stylus or modelling tool (SF 1289), a possible punch type tool (SF 1315) and a broken joiners dog (SF 1292). An unusual item (SF 1587; Fig. 3.59, 7) recovered from deposit 12306 in cut 20018 (see Fig. 3.37) is similar to an object described by Manning as a pin (1985 137, PL70 S137) although here the head is much larger and the spike shorter and wider, and also has elements in common with objects from Shakenoak (Brodribb *et al.* 2005, 66 fig 1.35, no. 46) and Gadebridge Park (Manning 1974, 185 fig 78 no 955). It is possible that the object is a small anvil (Ian Scott pers. comm.).

Unphased

A number of unstratified items were also classed as miscellaneous iron tools including two knives or cleavers (SF 2029 and 2284; Fig. 3.59, 8–9), a further possible knife (SF 423), a blade fragment and a ferrule or socket fragment.

Fig. 3.59 Tools from Cotswold Community

Catalogue of illustrated tools (Fig. 3.59)

1. Knife/Cleaver. Iron. Either large type 11 knife (Manning 1985, l54, Q34) or Type 3 cleaver (ibid., l57, Q100). L: 249 mm W: 39 mm B: 4 mm SF1955, Ctx 15240
2. Knife. Iron. Manning type 22 (1985). L: 112 mm W: 16 mm D: 19 mm (socket) SF 1862, Ctx 14337
3. Possible punch or chisel. L: 205 mm W: 19 mm B: 9 mm (tang) SF 2060, Ctx 16252
4. Knife. Possibly Manning (1985) type 11 or 12. L: 143 mm W: 31 mm (blade) SF1273, Ctx 11281
5. Knife. Probably Manning (1985) type 14/15/16. L: 104 mm W: 17 mm, SF 1235 Ctx 10908
6. Wedge. Heavy with triangular section. L: 41 mm W: 30 mm B: 17 mm SF 1524 Ctx 12155
7. Fitting/anvil. Unusual object, rectangular sectioned bar at one end, perforated with sub circular hole, 8 mm diameter. L: 109 mm W: 27 mm B: 8 mm SF 1587 Ctx 12306
8. Cleaver/knife. Manning (1985) type 3 cleaver or socketed type 11 knife. L: 174 mm W: 40 mm D: 15 mm (socket) SF 2029 Ctx 16023
9. Cleaver/knife. Possibly Manning (1985) type 2 or 1b. L: 138 mm W: 40 mm D: 21 mm (socket) SF 2284 Ctx u/s

Household objects *by Kelly Powell*

Household objects such as vessel parts, handles, spoons etc are generally found on Roman habitation sites, although they were notably lacking at Cotswold Community. The only object assigned to this category with confidence was a socketed candle holder (SF 2239; Fig. 3.60, 1), found in Phase 8 or 9 pit 18061. In addition, a probable fragment of L-shaped lift key (SF 2471) came from Roman pit or posthole 19371, while a possible fragment of iron vessel fragment (SF 1540) and a copper alloy vessel handle (SF 867) were found unstratified.

Two of the most elusive objects found during the excavation (SFs 1481 and 1531; Fig. 3.60, 2–3) were also tentatively assigned to this category. The objects were found in different contexts separated by c 45 m (ditches 20016 and 20050) but were identical in form. Both were flat sheets of copper alloy c 1 mm thick, pelta-shaped with the addition of a defined fleur-de-lys pattern between the curving elements. Notably the crecent openwork design on the objects were the reverse of the usual pelta design. Neither object is complete and both are broken in similar areas, adding to the problem of identification. On first inspection the objects appear military in nature, but the combination of fleur-de-lys and pelta is rare in military equipment and in contrast a striking comparison can be made with the reflector from a copper alloy lamp discovered in Abbey Field, Colchester (N Nolan pers com). This is particularly interesting when considered alongside a similarly elusive item from the excavations at Claydon Pike. In the latter case the object was a copper alloy vine leaf also similar to a military pendant ultimately identified as a likely reflector (Cool 2007, 140 fig. 5.28 no. 31).

Catalogue of illustrated household items (Fig. 3.60)

1. Socketed candle holder. Three legs radiating from the base of apparent rectangular section, all feet appear to be missing or incomplete. L: 86 mm SF 2239 Ctx 18062
2. Lamp reflector/miscellaneous mount. L: 40 mm W: 44 mm SF 1531 Ctx 12150
3. Lamp reflector/miscellaneous mount, as SF 1531. L: 30 mm W: 45 mm SF 1481 Ctx 12096

Worked stone querns and whetstones
by Ruth Shaffrey

Five querns were recovered from late Iron Age and Roman contexts, including a quartzitic sandstone saddle quern broken almost exactly in half widthways (SF 2264; Fig 3.61), similar examples of which have been found during recent

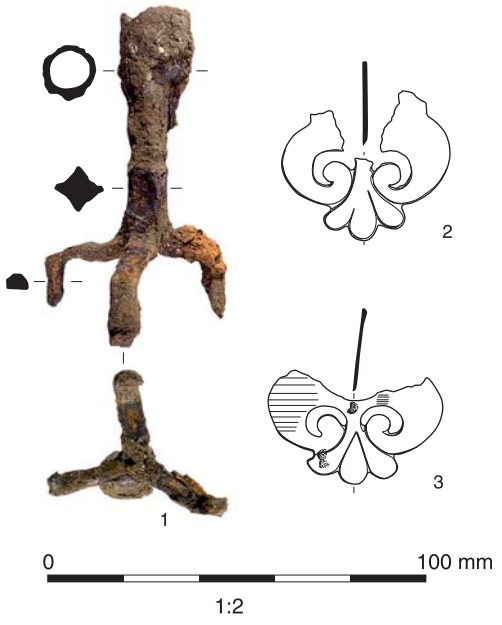


Fig. 3.60 Household objects from Cotswold Community

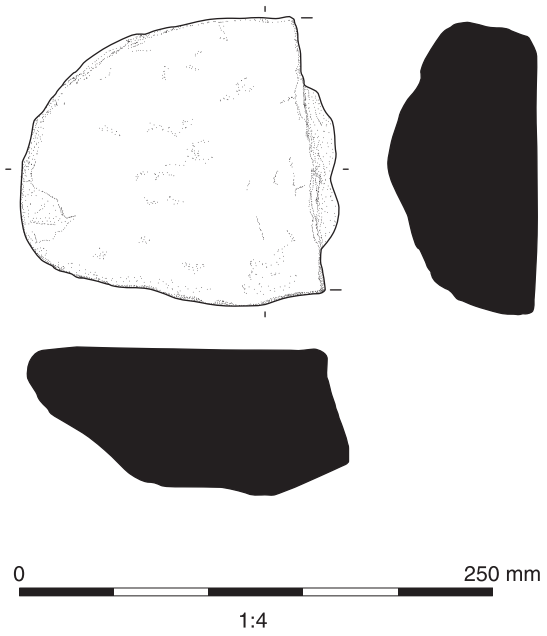


Fig. 3.61 Quern 2264

excavations at Junction 8 of the M1 (Shaffrey 2007) and at nearby Thornhill Farm, Coln Gravel (Shaffrey 2008, 57, fig. 10). None of the rotary querns survives sufficiently for anything to be determined about size or typology, but they include fragments of Sarsen, Old Red Sandstone and Lava. These materials are normal for the region (Shaffrey 2006).

Five whetstones were recovered from late Iron Age and Roman contexts; nothing unusual is represented. They include examples of primary whetstones of Kentish Rag, secondary reuse of slabs of Old Red Sandstone and use of naturally occurring quartzite pebbles.

Vessel glass *by H E M Cool*

With the exception of one vessel, the vessel glass assemblage is relatively typical of what is to be expected at a small rural site (Table 3.8). The strong colours (deep blue and dark yellow/green) are from vessels in use during the 1st century, the blue/green glass indicates a 1st to 3rd century date with the bottle element of that going out of use early in the 3rd century. There are also a small number of fragments of the greenish colourless bubbly glass that is typical of the 4th century. The poor showing of colourless glass (3 small fragments all from the same context) is noteworthy. Colourless glass is typical of good quality tablewares of the 2nd and 3rd century, and by the early 3rd century these were being used on many rural sites, but Table 3.8 suggests there was not much call for them here.

Many of the pieces are relatively undiagnostic body fragments whose forms cannot be identified with certainty. The 1st century pieces may both have come from jugs, while the commonest vessel type represented is the blue/green square bottle (Price and Cottam 1998, 194–8), whose main period of use was between the later 1st and early 3rd centuries. Where there is evidence of glass vessel use on early to mid Roman rural settlements it often takes the form of fragments from these containers. Presumably the inhabitants had a use for whatever was transported inside them, so the fact that they make up just over a third of the assemblage (by fragment count) here is not surprising.

The 4th century material includes a shoulder from a cylindrical bottle, a body fragment from an indented vessel (probably a truncated conical bowl (Price and Cottam 1998, 128-9) dating to the later 4th into 5th century), and fragments of conical beakers and hemispherical cups that dominate all 4th century assemblages (ibid., 117–9, 121–3).

None of the pieces discussed so far are particularly unusual, uncommon or unexpected at a site such as Cotswold Community. The same cannot be said for the three fragments found in the fill of a ditch forming part of Phase 8/9 enclosure complex 17590 (Fig. 3.62). This fill had a large assemblage of pottery dating to AD 300 onwards and the only other item of vessel glass was also of 4th century date judged by its colour.

The unusual fragments come from a blue/green vessel that has combined both hot-worked decoration and incised decoration completed after the vessel had been annealed (see Cool, Vol. 2 for full description and discussion). This is extremely unusual, especially as incised decoration appears to have been carried out between what would have been quite delicate rows of openwork trails. The only vessels known to the author displaying similar (but not precisely parallel) features are a small group from Köln in the Rhineland (Doppelfeld 1959; Harden *et al.* 1987, 252 no. 142) and one vessel recovered from the villa at Rapsley, Ewhurst (Harden 1968, fig. 28c). These vessels appear to date to the earlier 3rd century AD.

The incised decoration is freehand, which indicates a 4th century date, as demonstrated by the Wint Hill type bowls which generally show religious and hunting scenes (Harden 1960), and which are relatively common in Britain (Price 1995, 27). A much less common style of free-hand decoration is occasionally found on cylindrical cups of the late 2nd to 3rd century (for the basic undecorated type see Price and Cottam 1998; for the decorated ones see Fremersdorf 1970 Abb. 1-3, 5). To have incised decoration of this type on a blue/green vessel is also very unusual. Normally it is applied to properly decolourised glass or the green-tinged colourless glass of the 4th century.

The combination of the openwork decoration created by hot-working and incised decoration created by cold-working is, to the author's knowledge, unparalleled, and these fragments remain a great puzzle. They were undoubtedly deposited in the 4th century; and individual features seen on them can be paralleled amongst 3rd and 4th century vessels. The *comparanda* for them belong to the extreme luxury end of late Roman vessel glass, yet this vessel is blue/green, which is normally a sign of a relatively utilitarian vessel. The incised decoration too appears far from competent—though that, of course, is a value judgement. Nothing in the structures or the rest of the material culture from the site suggests that luxury glass, or even incompetent copies of luxury glass, is to be expected here; yet that is what we appear to have. All that can be done is to place them in the public record and to hope that future discoveries will cast more light on what is currently a unique vessel.

Table 3.8: The Roman vessel glass by colour and site period (fragment count)

Period	*Dark yellow/brown*	*Deep blue*	*Colourless*	*Blue/Green vessel*	*Blue/Green bottle*	*4th century green*	*Total*
7	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
8	-	1	3	3	4	-	11
8-9	-	1	-	1	5	2	9
9	1	1	-	6	2	5	15
11	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Unphased	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
Total	1	3	3	12	14	7	40

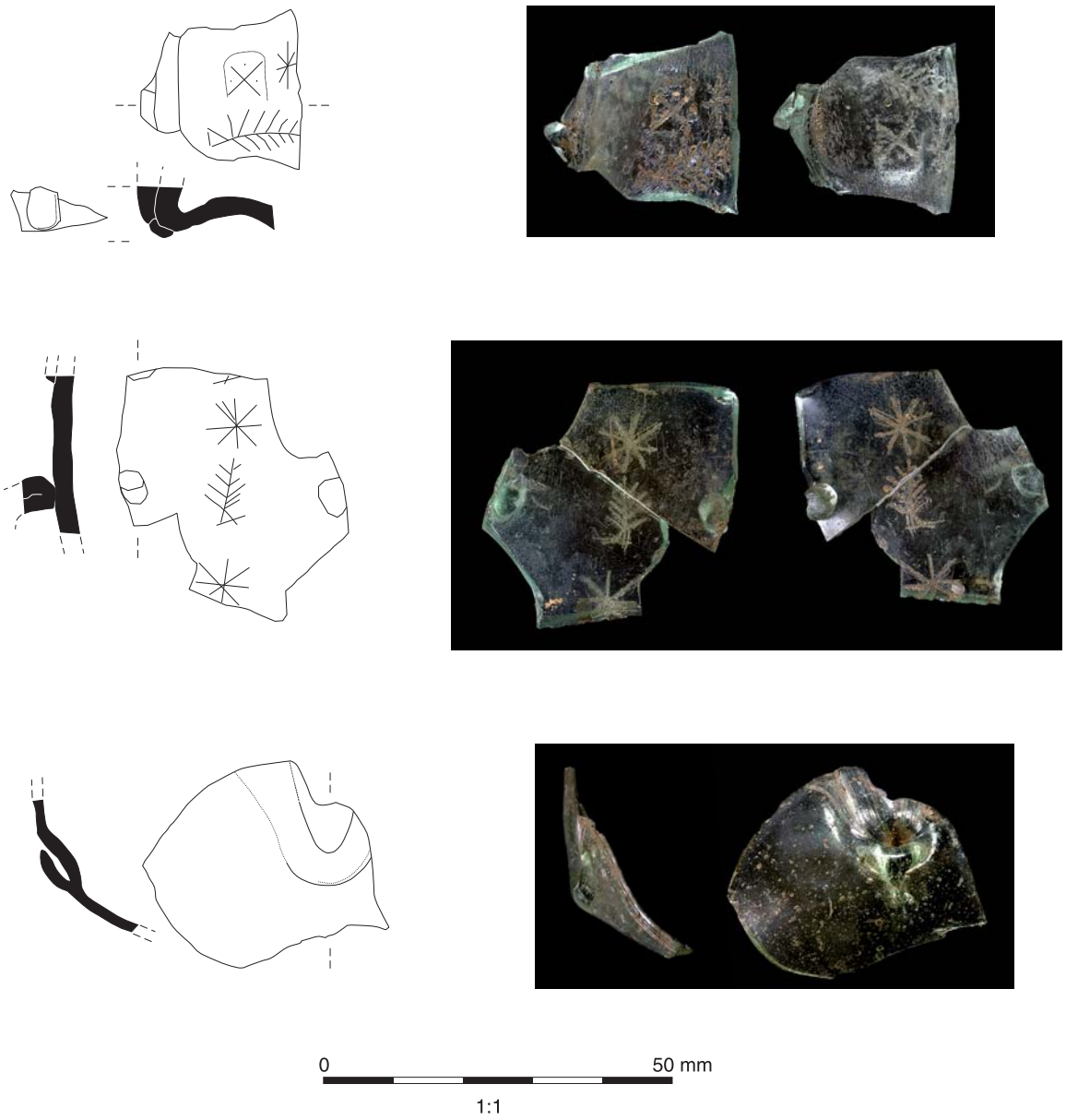


Fig. 3.62 Vessel glass from Cotswold Community

Window glass *by H E M Cool*

Roman window glass was recovered in contexts belonging to Phases 8 and 9 and in an unphased ditch fill. Most of this glass was of a cast matt/glossy type, which can be dated to the 1st to 3rd centuries, though there is also a smaller amount of thinner blown window glass, in use during the 4th century. The cast glass is in three different colours (blue/green, an unusual dark blue/green and colourless) indicating at least three different panes.

The differing date ranges of the two types suggests that there were glazed buildings in the vicinity during both Phases 8 and 9. To date there has not been sufficient systematic recording and reporting of window glass on rural sites to explore to what extent the provision of glazing can be viewed an indicator of high status. It is not uncommon to get appreciable quantities of blown window glass on 4th century villa sites, but fragments of cast glass are not unusual finds on early sites of lower pretensions. Cast glass has regularly been found during the excavations of the roadside settlement at Wilcote (Cool in Hands *et al.* 2004, 316) and a fragment was also recovered from Whelford Bowmoor (Price and Cool in Miles *et al.* 2007, 290). Producing blown panes is definitely the work of highly skilled, specialist craftsmen with the ability to blow glass. Experimental work has suggested that producing cast glass, though not necessarily pleasant for the workers, is relatively straightforward and would not need the degree of craft expertise (Taylor 2001; Allen 2002). It may well be, therefore, that it is the presence of the blown glass here that is significant, and that cast glass was more widely available to the general population. At present, however, this can only be speculation; but this small group from a not particularly pretentious site is a useful addition to aid the exploration of the use of glazed windows in the Romano-British countryside.

Buildings and structural material *by Kelly Powell*

As is typical of Roman settlement sites, 312 of the 694 stratified iron finds were nails (45%) and a further 36 objects were possible nails. Nails were used for a multitude of functions throughout the entirety of the Roman period, being far less labour intensive than previous methods of structural fastening. Where complete or near complete, the nails ranged in length from 19 mm to 103 mm, with an average of 59 mm.

Other objects in this category included a number of possible T-clamps (eg SF 1296 from ditch 20151), which are relatively common in ironwork assemblages and can be used for a variety of functions including fixing tiles (Manning 1985, 132). A possible iron looped pin (SF 1291) and another structural fitting (SF 1295; a strut or reinforcement or a form of binding) were also recovered from ditch 20151.

Overall, although not remarkable, this category of find was crucial to the Roman settlement as indicated by its ubiquity. There was a notable increase of objects assigned to this category over time, totalling 31% of the finds from Phase 9 features. This may relate to increased construction as indicated by the stone footed buildings.

Ceramic building material *by Cynthia Poole*

Nearly 200 kilograms of Roman brick and tile was recovered from the excavations. The assemblage comprised all of the most common tile forms: tegulae, imbrices and possibly ridge tile for roofing, a variety of bricks for walls, floors and hypocausts and a range of flue tiles for heating systems including half-box and voussoir, with several types and patterns of keying, including combed, scored and roller stamped (die 56: Betts *et al.* 1997).

Fabrics indicate that the vast majority of the tile was manufactured at the kilns at Minety, only a few kilometres south of the site, whilst the remainder came from other local production sites.

Tile occurred in contexts dated to all phases of the Roman period, though the largest quantities occurred in the middle Roman phase. The general character of the assemblage remains similar throughout all phases. All the material was fragmented with few large or substantial pieces. All the complete or near complete tiles were refitted from pieces broken in antiquity. The majority was found discarded in ditches or pits with virtually none occurring in features where it could have had a functional use. The site is interpreted as a relatively low status rural settlement, probably a farmstead or hamlet essentially dependent on agricultural activity. In such circumstances the expected picture would be an assemblage of brick and tile obtained or scavenged from a higher status settlement for use in small structures such as hearths, ovens and corn dryers. Brick and flat tile, especially tegula, are preferred for such use, whilst imbrex occurs in smaller quantity and box flue tile may be barely represented.

The site is half way between the town of Cirencester and the tile kilns at Minety, which supplied a high proportion of tile for the town (Darvill 1986). A network of trackways has been found in relation to rural settlements across the gravel terraces and it is likely that tile was being transported into Cirencester along roads or trackways in the area. This raises the question of whether these communities were involved directly in the tile industry or had some other symbiotic arrangement to supplement their income from agriculture. A variety of hypotheses may be proposed. One possibility is that they undertook seasonal work at the tileries, whilst another option is that they supplied transport for carrying tile into Cirencester, but in both cases one might anticipate some evidence of access to surplus tiles or seconds and preference for forms that might be of use on such a site, whether as a perk of the job or 'falling off the back of a cart' en route to Cirencester. Moreover, the tileries might be expected to control their own transport and distribution arrangements.

However, the transport of tile may be the key to understanding the assemblage. If carts were going into Cirencester full of tile, were they coming back empty or did they return with some other load. Is it possible the carters were collecting waste material that reached this site for sorting, reuse or disposal? The character and quality of the tile is atypical for a site of this type, in common with other finds assemblages recovered, and one may suggest that rubbish was brought here from Cirencester to be sorted or recycled in the same way that rubbish dumps are scavenged for anything with some value in the third world today by the poorest members of society.

Such an interpretation would fit the tile assemblage, which superficially is of a character that would suggest it originated from a high status settlement such as a nearby villa, though no such settlement has been found in the area, despite extensive archaeological investigations. Moreover, the assemblage is very heterogeneous, suggesting that it derived from different sources in terms of structures and date. In view of this, Cirencester is the nearest (*c* 5 km to the north) likely source for the tile, probably recovered from a range of buildings either during demolition or refurbishment. This is best exemplified by the group of voussoirs, which certainly appear to have been used for their intended purpose presumably in a bath-house with vaulted roof, before recovery during demolition. Whether the voussoirs dumped in the well represent the broken tiles from a much larger consignment sent for use elsewhere, or a small batch of material hoarded as something 'that might come in handy' ultimately only to be discarded, we shall never know.

The precise dynamics of the process must remain speculative: whether this was an official arrangement by the officials of Cirencester to dispose of the town's waste, or the initiative of enterprising tradesmen using transport which would otherwise be leaving the town empty to make some additional profit, in conjunction with poorer rural settlements of this sort cannot be recovered from the archaeological record alone.

Structural worked stone *by Ruth Shaffrey*

At least 14 definite roof-stones were recovered from Cotswold Community, plus at least a further 21 kg of the same fissile slabs (although without perforations or surviving worked edges). This quantity indicates that stone was used for roofing on buildings in the settlement, probably in conjunction with ceramic tiles, if these were actually used for this purpose (see Poole, this vol.). The majority of the roof-stones are made from types of shell-fragmental limestone, variable in their shell content but all fine-grained, well cemented and, unlike many of the limestones used for roofing in the region, not Oolitic. They are similar, however, to some of the stone exploited at nearby Claydon Pike (Roe 2007, 198). They are almost certainly of Jurassic limestone with a local provenance but

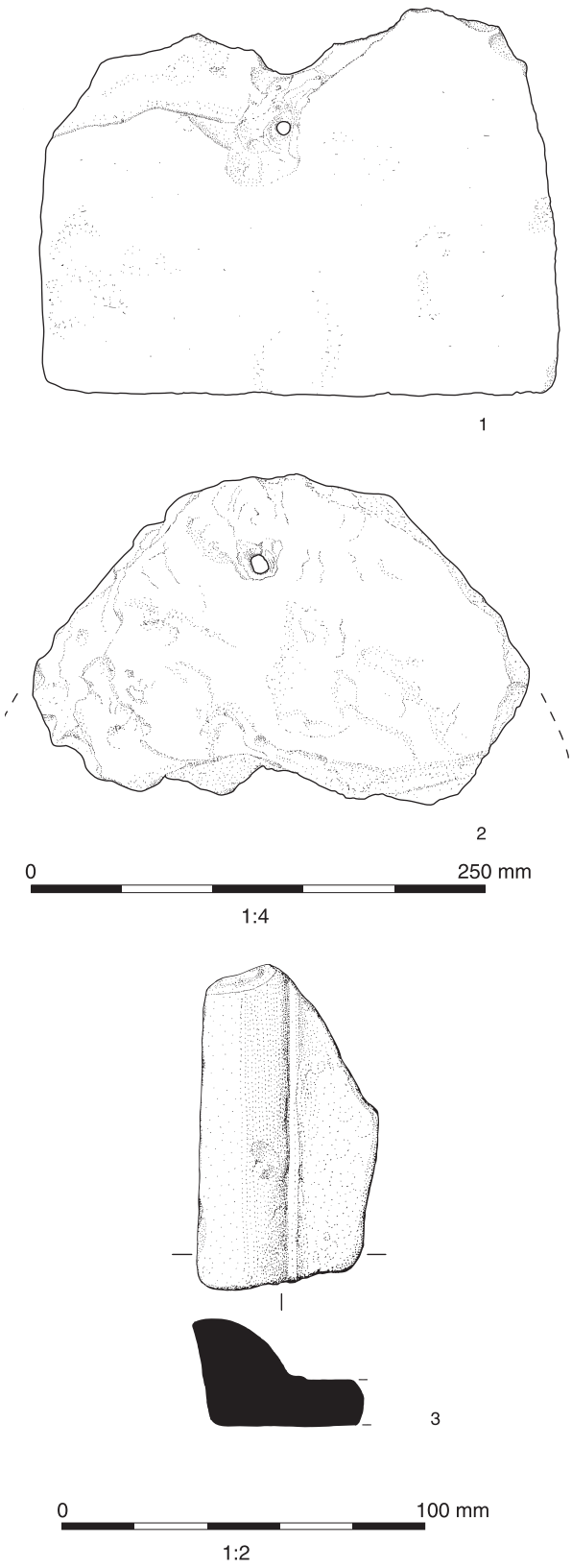


Fig. 3.63 Roman structural stone

the lack of a geological memoir for this area and the huge variability means it has not been possible to pinpoint a precise source.

Two of the roof-stones and a number of fragments are made of Old Red Sandstone (ORS). These could be evidence for roofing or, as is more likely given that ORS was mainly used for roofing in urban locations and on villas (Saunders 1998), they may simply represent the movement of waste pieces from nearby localities for whetting or similar purposes. Some fragments were certainly used in this way, while others appear to be worn on one side and may have been used in flooring. Although fissile stone slabs were recovered from late Iron Age through to Saxon contexts, all the definite roof stones are late Roman or Saxon in date. None were associated with specific buildings but it seems reasonably likely that these and the associated probable raw material were connected to the construction of the main buildings on site: 14291 and 20336.

Other items of interest include a crude probable pivot stone from the fill of Phase 8 rubbish pit 17393 (17946), located in the northern settlement zone. Little in the way of architectural adornments, such as the columns found at the villa at Claydon Pike, were found here—only a single moulded architectural fragment from the fill of late Roman boundary ditch 20015 (12023) and a fragment of possible trough (unphased context 943; Fig. 3.63, 3). The former is made from a pale reddish grey quartzitic sandstone which seems most likely to be from a sandstone dogger from the Kellaways Beds possibly at South Cerney (Torrens 1982, 77). The trough fragment resembles the edge of a tegula but seems unlikely to have been used in this way as no other evidence for stone roofing of the imbrex and tegula system is known.

Catalogue of illustrated structural stone (Fig. 3.63)

1. Roofstone with suspension hole. Shelly limestone. Ctx 1596 (Enclosure 1758)
2. Roofstone with suspension hole. Shelly limestone. Ctx 1596 (Enclosure 1758)
3. Fragment of possible trough. Coarse grained sandstone: coarse grained moderately sorted quartz sandstone with white cement, possibly calcareous. Measures 31mm high. Base is 13mm thick. Fragment measures >84mm long x >50mm wide. Ctx 943. Unphased

Fired clay *by Cynthia Poole*

The quantity of fired clay increased in the late Iron Age (Phase 6) heralding the greater density of material found in the early and middle Roman periods. Apart from a few diagnostic forms fired clay cannot be dated, though often an assemblage will have a combination of forms and characteristics that point to a certain period. In this case the fired clay assemblage is more 'Iron Age' in character than Roman.

The range of forms is more diverse than previously with oven plates or covers appearing for the first time in the early Roman period, together with unusual decorated hearth floors (Fig. 3.64, 1–2) and pedestals of tapered form (Fig. 3.64, 3). In the middle Roman period the same range of hearth and oven structure and portable furniture continue, but with the addition of perforated oven plates, triangular oven bricks and *ad hoc* firebars. Some of the forms continue into the late Roman phase, which otherwise sees a dramatic

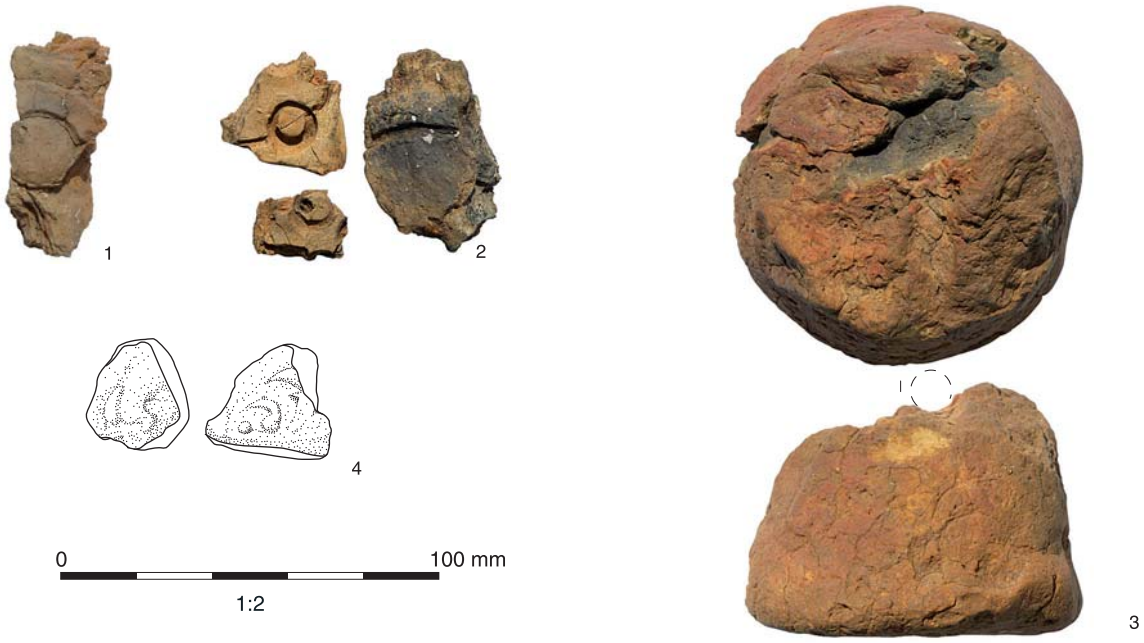


Fig. 3.64 Late Iron Age-Roman fired clay objects from Cotswold Community

fall in the quantity of fired clay, returning to the prehistoric levels and with little diagnostic material surviving. A pottery spindle whorl and four clay slingshots are the only small objects from the Roman period.

The assemblage during the Roman period as a whole is odd: certain items are almost certainly of Iron Age date. The slingshots and triangular oven bricks are comparable to those found throughout the Iron Age across southern England and the decorated hearth has more in common with decorated Iron Age oven covers than Roman structures. The occurrence of such material would not seem strange if there were clear examples in use during the Iron Age on the site, but most of these make their appearance in Roman period.

The rather archaic character of the assemblage may imply that the inhabitants clung to traditional native habits in the forms of ovens and hearths used. Alternatively, though some material must be contemporary with the settlement, much of the assemblage may have originated elsewhere: could this be the residue of rubbish or land clearance for new building works in and around Cirencester? The fired clay has suffered only low to moderate abrasion, and is unlikely to have survived any length of time, unless resting somewhere where it was protected from weathering and abrasion.

Material of definite Roman date comprises the two fragments of mould for metal vessels decorated with enamel inlay (Fig. 3.64, 4). Such finds are rare, with the large assemblage from Castleford Yorkshire (Bailey and Budd 1998) being the only major production centre identified in the country. At Castleford the moulds were in use *c* AD 100. The inlaid bowls themselves, though still uncommon, occur more widely in both Britain and continental Europe and are generally dated to the late 1st and 2nd centuries AD. British and European parallels are fully discussed by Moore (1978) and Bayley and Budd (1998). It has recently been suggested (Künzl 2008) that these inlaid vessels were produced as tourist souvenirs. One of the earliest discoveries in 1725 of this type of inlaid vessel was the Rudge cup, at Rudge villa, Wiltshire 60 kms (36 miles) to the south-west of Cirencester (via the Fosse Way and Aquae Sulis). The dot and lunate pattern on the Rudge cup is similar to the motifs on the mould fragments and it is tempting to see a link with the vessels produced in or near Cirencester. However, the mould fragments are from a secure Phase 7 (LIA-ERB) context (primary fill of waterhole 12211), so they are likely to be earlier than the 2nd-century Rudge cup with its links to Hadrian's wall. The decoration may indicate local native craftsmen were producing items with a similar strong Celtic influence. It is likely that this craft was practised in Cirencester producing items for visitors to the town, rather than at this site and adds to the theory that waste from Cirencester was being brought to rural settlements for sorting, recycling or manuring of fields.

Catalogue of illustrated fired clay (Fig. 3.64)

1. Hearth: decorated surface impressed with two concentric circles 21 and 38 mm diameter. Phase 9 (LR). Ctx 13149 (Enclosure 1758)
2. Hearth: decorated surface impressed with series of circles 18 mm, and 40-50 mm diameter. Phase 9 (LR). Ctx 12155 (Ditch 20052)
3. Pedestal: LIA-ERB tapered pedestal; base: 93 mm diam, centre: 70 mm diam; ht: 70 mm (total est. c. 140 mm); perforation 13 mm diameter. Ctx 2216 (posthole of possible Saxon building 3895)
4. Mould: mould fragments for enamel inlaid vessels with pattern of relief decoration Total number 7 fragments; weight: 66 g. Phase 7 (LIA-ERB). Ctx 12212 (Waterhole 12211)

Burnt Stone *by Kelly Powell*

A total of c 999 kg of burnt stone was recovered from 134 Roman features at Cotswold Community. As outlined in Chapter 2 burnt stone is found ubiquitously on archaeolog-

ical sites and usually represents domestic activity in the form of food preparation, or larger scale industrial activity. Following large scale deposition in the prehistoric period the use of burnt stone continued into the Roman period, gaining intensity in line with the scale of activity.

Only three Phase 6 features produced burnt stone, the majority (29.5 kg) from waterhole 15383 indicating continuity in the earlier trend of deposition in this feature type. From Phase 7 onwards burnt stone became widely distributed as settlement grew, probably relating to everyday activities across the site. The distribution of deposits in this phase indicates two areas of intense activity involving burnt stone. The first was located in the vicinity of the later corn dryer 14400 suggesting that this was already an 'industrial' area at this time. The second area was in the north-east of the settlement area focussing on a group of pits including 15630. Again this intensity may indicate an area of industrial activity.

The overall assemblage from Phase 8 was the largest from the whole multiperiod landscape, which is likely to simply reflect the intensity of activity on the site at this time. As in Phase 7, distribution continued to be focussed around corndryer 14400 (35.2 kg from this feature alone) and in the area to the north-east. It is unclear how stone would have been used within the corn drying process. Smaller deposits were also common around the posited area of domestic activity in the south-eastern corner of the settlement area. Phase 9 is characterised by a small number of very large deposits of burnt stone, some of which came from recognised dumps of varying material, possibly relating to abandonment.

The iron slag and industrial waste *by Lynne Keys and Kelly Powell*

Just over 64 kg of material described as slag was recovered during excavations, most of it undiagnostic. Before the medieval period activities involving iron could take two forms, smelting and smithing, the later divided into primary and secondary (see Keys, vol. 2 for details). There were no slags diagnostic of smelting in the Cotswold assemblage; the diagnostic slags (smithing hearth bottoms and some flake and spherical hammerscale) were derived from secondary smithing activity, that is the hot working, using a hammer, of one or more pieces of iron to create or repair an object.

At least 48 recognisable smithing hearth bottoms were recovered from features—mainly ditches. Despite these, no definite focus of smithing could be located, although both the northern enclosure ditches and structure 10480 to the north of the settlement were associated with reasonable quantities of undiagnostic slag. It is possible that, since only small quantities of slag were found within the main settlement and because smithing hearths were probably of the raised fire bed type and so had been demolished, there were no indicators to prompt sampling of layers for micro-slags (hammerscale flakes and spheres).

A large number of the metal objects from Cotswold Community were not possible to identify, however some resembled industrial, or more specifically, metalworking waste. This included a series of objects not thought to be iron working slag but apparently debris from the process. Such items were recovered from structure 10480, thought to be a possible iron working area, and also from scattered locations across the settlement. Copper alloy objects included an object of near diamond-shaped section with a central rib on one side and irregular herringbone pattern on the other side from ditch 20166 which resembled casting debris. Other indeterminate copper alloy lumps were also classed as industrial waste.

The majority of metalwork in this category was, however, lead, including drips and offcuts as well as slag deposits. Much of this was unstratified, therefore its date is unknown and may be predominantly modern. However, an unworked lump of lead ore with quartz crystals and sandstone attached came from ditch 20350. Its presence within this dump alongside offcuts and similar, appears to indicate some lead working and production in the immediate vicinity during the Roman period. Lead working was probably a less specialised industry at this time as a result of the widespread occurrence of the metal, and the fact that it is easy to work

It can be suggested that areas of the site at Cotswold Community were specific industrial areas, also attested by distributions of burnt stone (see Powell, this vol.). A number of more unusual and high status items which have been found on the site may point to recycling and reworking of scrap metal, which would also account for the large quantities of unidentifiable fragments recovered.

Worked wood *by Steven Allen*

Five archaeological timbers were recorded from excavations at Cotswold Community. These timbers were all of oak (*Quercus* spp) and formed part of the lining of a Roman well (17264) of late Roman date (Phase 9; see Figs 3.43–5 above). All of the wood has been preserved through burial in a waterlogged anoxic environment, but were in a generally poor condition.

The timbers formed the bottommost or 'ground tier' and part of the second tier of the well lining. The technique is reasonably well known (cf Carver *et. al.* 1978, 15) and would be described as a box-framed well (Wilmott 1982, 26). A construction pit (in this case 15942) is excavated and the lining is built in the base of the pit as a stack of jointed sub rectangular frames laid on face, one above the other. As the timber structure is built, the construction pit around the timbers is backfilled, leaving a wood lined shaft from which clean water may be drawn.

Much of the Cotswold Community wood structure has been lost, leaving only the lowermost timbers in the ground. As all of the original surfaces have been lost, little can be said about the shaping or jointing of the structure. All four timbers of the ground tier are boxed heart, cut from logs which were already of approximately the required size and simply squared. It is not known whether this conversion was sawn or hewn. A simple halved joint or lap was cut at each end. The north-south aligned timbers on each side (17433, 17505) were laid parallel with each other, with the cut joint facing up and the east-west timbers (17430, 17432) laid over them with their halved ends facing down, so as to engage with the halved joints in the first two timbers. No pegs or nails appear to have been used to secure the joints. These four timbers form a solid broad base for the remainder of the timber lining.

Only one timber (17429), the northernmost, survived of the second tier. This timber is different from the others in being cut from a halved log and laid horizontally on edge so as to maintain the same height, but with reduced thickness. None the less, simple laps were cut at each end in the same fashion as the ground tier and again no evidence of fasten-

ings was present. No trace of a housing for a corner brace was present in the upper edge of the timber.

Toolmarks and marking out lines are suggested on the wood record sheets compiled at the time. No physical evidence of these marks has survived and their presence and nature cannot be confirmed.

Charcoal *by Dana Challinor*

Charcoal samples were taken from a number of features dating from the mid/late Iron Age right through to the late Roman period. Charcoal from two waterholes dating to the mid-late Iron Age (Phase 6) indicated a similar situation to the middle Iron Age settlement further south (see Chapter 2), with consolidation of the earlier clearances, and little evidence for larger woodland trees, although there was an increased quantity of oak. As previously, the potential for the grazing of domestic animals is suggested by the strong presence of thorny scrub which could withstand grazing (blackthorn, buckthorn etc.).

There was no particular evidence for changes in woodland resources or exploitation in the late Iron Age/early Roman period (Phase 7), but there were too few samples to make a good comparison. There was evidence that oakwood, presumably as charcoal, was specifically used for iron metalworking (context 10481 to the north of the settlement) and that coal was also used as fuel in this context. The coal, in all probability, was collected from the surface coalfields in the Forest of Dean.

There was an increased exploitation of larger woodland trees for fuelwood in the middle and late Roman phases at Cotswold Community (Phases 8 and 9). The quantity of ash wood recovered may be significant as ash is a coloniser, which thrives in open areas. This may suggest that some woodland regeneration had taken place—at least to a small extent—in the late Iron Age or early Roman periods. Certainly, the predominance of scrub or hedgerow type species noted in the earlier periods is not as manifest. However, there are problems in using charcoal for environmental reconstruction, and it is likely that some selection of wood for fuel varied according to the activity or may have related to increased woodland management.

However, the evidence for context-related variation is not always consistent. Oak was selected for one cremation burial (1208), while hawthorn-group and ash were used for the other (11700). The assemblage from 11812 (late Roman southern enclousre ditch 20350), associated with iron-working produced a reasonably mixed assemblage, while corn dryer 14400 was entirely fuelled with oak. A lack of systematic selection of fuelwood is not unusual in domestic contexts of this period (Challinor 2003) and there are also similar cremation assemblages from nearby sites (Challinor 2007; Challinor forthcoming).

Charred Plant Remains *by Wendy Smith*

Thirteen samples were studied from middle to late Roman phases at Cotswold Community, six of which are from middle Roman corn dryer 14400. The samples fall into two groups: chaff-rich assemblages and relatively grain-rich assemblages. Only three samples produced assemblages with substantial quantities of charred cereal grain. Middle Roman pit sample <711>, was dominated by poorly preserved, indeterminate cereal grain, accounting for 53.4% of all identifications from this sample. Middle-late Roman corndryer 11486 (sample 588, context 11488) produced a mixture of cereal grain (46.9%), cereal chaff (22.8%) and weed/ wild plants (10.7%). Most of the cereal grain was too poorly preserved to be identified to genus, but both hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and possible spelt (*Triticum* cf. *spelta* L.) grains were identified. The middle-late Roman cremation burial (sample 604, context 11700) also produced a similar assemblage of cereal grain (44.8%), cereal chaff (22.5%) and weed/ wild plants (13.4%). Again, due to poor preservation, much of the cereal grain could not be identified.

All of the other samples (unphased Roman pit sample 685, context 18649; middle Roman ditch sample 551, context 10618 (group 20106); middle Roman ditch sample 649, context 15336 (Group 20005) and all corn dryer 14400 samples: samples 632, 634 637, 638, 640, 645 and 647) were extremely chaff-rich. Most of wheat (*Triticum* sp.) glume bases were too poorly preserved to be identified beyond genus level; however, where identification to species level was possible the majority of glume bases have been identified as spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.). One possible emmer (*Triticum* cf. *dicoccum* Schübl) glume base and one possible rivet/ hard wheat (*Tritcum* cf. *turgidum* L./ *durum* L.) rachis node were also recovered. The overall domination by spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.) and indeterminate wheat (*Triticum* sp.) may simply be a product of the consistent use of cereal chaff to fire middle Roman corn dryer 14400.

The range of weed/ wild taxa recovered from the middle-late Roman phase is fairly typical of the region. The recovery of corncockle (*Agrostemma githago* L.) and stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula* L.) is of particular interest as these taxa may be associated with the adoption of heavier ploughs (M Jones 1988; Straker *et al*. 2007). At Claydon Pike, stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula* L.) appears prior to the late Roman period and is certainly present in middle Roman samples from Cotswold Community. Unfortunately, there are no early Roman archaeobotanical samples to establish precisely when stinking chamomile appears in the weed flora.

There are also taxa indicative of lighter, well-drained soils, such as field madder (*Sherardia arvensis* L.) and scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum* L.), although these are only recovered occasionally and in small numbers. As has been interpreted for the results from Claydon Pike, the recovery of corncockle, field madder, scentless mayweed and stinking chamomile together does suggest that several different soil types were under cultivation. However, the recovery of both scentless mayweed—a plant typical of medium to light texture, well-drained soils—and stinking chamomile may simply be fortuitous, since stinking chamomile is very 'plastic' and occurs in a wide range of habitats (Kay 1971, 623).

As at Claydon Pike, plants of grassland and damp ground are frequently recovered at Cotswold Community, such as possible black medick (*Medicago* cf. *lupilina* L.), crested dog's tail (*Cynosurus cristatus* L.), eyebright/ bartsia (*Euphrasia* spp./ *Odontites* spp.), greater plantain (*Plantago major* L.), possibly hairy-tare (*Vicia* cf. *hirsuta* (L.) Gray), hoary/ ribwort plantain (*Plantago media* L./ *lanceolata* L.) and self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris* L.). Several taxa from Cotswold Community deposits that could occur in a range of habitats are also frequently noted in grassland such as dock (*Rumex* spp.), knotweed (*Persicaria* spp.), melilot/ medick/ clover (*Melilotus* spp./ *Medicago* spp./ *Trifolium* spp.), and vetch/ vetchling (*Vicia* spp./ *Lathyrus* spp.). A few taxa are indicative of damp to

wetter conditions, possibly suggesting seasonal flooding of grassland/ meadow. These 'wetland' taxa include common/ slender spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris* (L.) Roem. & Schult./ *uniglumis* (Link.) Schult.) and sedge (*Carex* spp.).

Overall, the range of cereals recovered from Roman phases at Cotswold Community and their associated weed/ wild taxa are fairly consistent with results from other sites in the Gloucestershire Upper Thames Valley (J Jones 2007; Straker *et al*. 2007; Robinson 2007). Although there are some differences between the various assemblages studied, certain taxa are commonly recovered and are likely to suggest that cultivation conditions (or possibly the type of areas selected for arable cultivation and the method(s) of cultivation) were broadly similar between these sites.

Animal Bone *by Lena Strid*

The Roman phase group is the largest in the Cotswold Community bone assemblage, comprising 14718 fragments (in addition to the 857 fragments from the initial mid to late Iron Age phase). The animals present are listed in Table 3.9.

Cattle are the predominant species regardless of quantification method, followed closely by sheep/goat (most of which are likely to be sheep). This inter-species frequency is common in the Upper Thames Valley, probably because pasture types are suitable for both cattle and sheep. Pig and horse are less numerous in the assemblages, although both species still probably played an important role in the economy of the settlement. There are a small number of adult dog and cat bones in the assemblage.

Domestic fowl are the only domestic bird species in the assemblage, although in very small quantities. Fowl are typically rare in rural non-villa settlements such as this, though it remains uncertain if this is related to a native British dietary habit excluding fowl, or if the fragile bird bones were disproportionately affected by taphonomic conditions.

Red deer and roe deer are also present in very small numbers, indicating that venison was a rare contribution to the diet. The only signs of antler working at the site are two shed antlers of red deer, presumably collected in the early spring. Rook may have contributed to the diet, whereas red kite possibly represents a natural death or a deliberate killing in order to protect the domestic poultry. The wild species in Cotswold Community and in the nearby comparative assemblages (including red deer, roe deer, hare, fox, badger, otter, polecat, weasel, field vole, water vole, shrew, mole, red kite, rook and frog), suggest a landscape with open fields, possibly interspersed with small woodlands. The nearby Thames would have provided wetlands along its banks.

The animal bones were generally in a well preserved condition. Butchery marks and pathological conditions could be observed on 76 and 36 fragments respectively. All domestic species, except cat, display butchery marks, which represent both kitchen and primary butchery waste. Skinning cut marks were found on cattle and dog. Cattle, sheep/goat and pig seem to have been subjected to a similar butchering process: the vertebral column and the ribs were chopped off transversally into smaller portions.

Table 3.9: Animal bone from Phase 6 to 9

Phase	*6*	*7*	*7-8*	*8*	*8-9*	*9*	*6-9*
	M-LIA	*LIA/ER*	*LIA/ER-MR*	*MR*	*MR-LR*	*LR*	*Total*
Cattle	107	256	50	453	189	498	1553
Sheep/goat (goat)	122	139	25	262	84	152	784
Sheep		13	1	6	3	3	26
Goat	3	1				3	7
Pig	39	34	9	57	46	58	243
Horse	15	58	8	174	62	151	468
Dog	1	3		11	10	9	34
Cat					1	1	2
Red deer		1		1	1	1	4
Roe deer		1		3			4
Deer sp.					1	3	4
Fowl		2			1	2	5
Rook				1			1
Red kite		3					3
Bird sp.	1	1	1		2	4	9
Bank/field vole						1	1
Frog				1		25	26
Amphibian					1	64	65
Small mammal				1		2	3
Medium mammal	132	146	29	308	111	235	961
Large mammal	186	522	35	746	467	949	2905
Indeterminate	251	769	120	1554	1278	4495	8467
TOTAL	857	1949	278	3578	2257	6656	15575
Weight (g)	10594	24503	3452	52115	25056	80121	185247

The long bones were disarticulated at the joints with cleavers or knifes, and then filleted, either split longitudinally or chopped off across the shaft. Longitudinal splitting would facilitate the extraction of marrow, an important source of fat and oil. Butchery marks on horse are rare, indicating that horses were only occasionally meat providers. This is the case in most contemporary sites in the region. While the horse bones in Cotswold Community displayed signs of marrow extraction and filleting, it is not known whether the meat was intended for humans or canine consumption.

Pathological conditions were found on cattle, sheep/goat, pig and horse. The pathological conditions on cattle predominantly consist of eburnation and asymmetrically extended foot joints, related to the use of cattle for traction, whereas the prevailing pathological conditions present in horse consisted of bone fusion and exostoses on the lower limbs. The pig and sheep/goat bones show a variation of pathologies, ranging from periodontal disease, fusion, malnutrition and possible fractures.

The slaughter age pattern also indicates that the cattle husbandry was focussed mainly on traction (ie most slaughtered over 3 years of age). This is in contrast to other rural settlements in the area (eg Ashton Keynes and Claydon Pike), where cattle were mostly slaughtered at 1.5–3 years of age, which is typical of meat production. However, the supply of cattle to urban markets—notably Cirencester—would have had a significant effect upon the patterns of many rural assemblages and this has to be taken into account. Cirencester is the only site in the area with a very high number of adult cattle, and it is possible that settlements such as Claydon Pike and Ashton Keynes sold their past-their-prime adult cattle (especially females that were less useful for traction) on-the-hoof to the urban markets. The preponderance of adult cattle at Cotswold Community might then suggest that this was a relatively more self-sufficient settlement, depending less upon urban trade, despite the fact that it lay much nearer to Cirencester. Alternatively, the economic emphasis may just have been more on arable rather than pastoral agriculture. Another possibility is that younger cattle were driven to Cirencester to be slaughtered for meat in the markets there.

Sheep were raised primarily for meat, with dairy and wool being of secondary importance. A shift in sheep slaughter ages between the early and the mid/late Roman period suggests an increased importance of wool. This change is also found in other Roman assemblages (Maltby 1998, 366). Pigs were primarily killed as sub-adults. Due to their high fecundity and lack of secondary products, this slaughter age pattern is common on virtually all sites where pig rearing takes place.

Despite the small numbers of bones suitable for sex estimation, a shift between the early-mid and late Roman periods could be discerned for cattle and pig, where females dominate the earlier phases and males the latter. Similar inter-period changes of cattle sex proportions have been observed in other rural settlements along the Upper Thames Valley. These have been linked to opposing sex shifts in urban assemblages, and it has been speculated that an increased focus on arable agriculture in the late Roman period made draught oxen more valuable, thus male cattle were retained on the farms and adult cows were sent to the urban meat markets (though see above).

There is a suggestion of a cattle and horse size increase in the assemblage throughout the Roman period, although due to the small number of measurements, this is tentative. Size increases are, however, known from several other sites (Dobney 2001, 38–39).

Land and Freshwater Mollusca *by Carl Champness and Elizabeth Stafford*

The molluscan assemblages retrieved during excavations at Cotwold Community have provided data on the local site environment for the various phases of activity represented on the site.

A small range of freshwater slum species of *Lymnaea truncatula* and *Anisus leucostoma,* from the mid to late Roman eastern trackway (17615) and settlement enclosure (17590), may indicate seasonal flooding of parts of the site. The abundance of *Pupilla muscorum* from the enclosure ditch may also indicate evidence of ground disturbance and a lack of vegetation cover around the settlement. The presence of *Vallonia puchella* that inhabit damper grassland environments, suggests that the enclosure ditch may have been seasonally filled with stagnant water for parts of the year and subject to drying out. This could be associated with the rise in the water-table and alluviation in the Upper Thames recorded previously at other sites during the late Iron Age and Roman periods, and potentially associated with an increase in land clearance for agriculture (Robinson and Lambrick 1984; Robinson 1992).

Marine shell *by Kelly Powell and Rebecca Nicholson*

In total, 769 fragments (4799 g) of marine or freshwater shell were collected from stratified Roman contexts. All the shell was identified as the native oyster *Ostrea edulis* L. with the exception of two fragments of mussel (*Mytilus edulis* L.). In both cases mussels could have been accidentally transported in mud or seaweed, with the oysters. Shells were fairly well preserved, although the left hand valves in particular tended to exhibit heavily eroded margins. Possibly because of this, no notches were observed on the margins of the shells and it is therefore not possible to infer the method used for opening.

A total of 3416 g of shell were from enclosure ditches and gullies, indicating that these features were used for dumping domestic debris. Pits and waterholes generally produced minimal amounts of shell all weighing less than 100 g. An increase of oysters throughout the Roman period is implicit with 61 g of shell recovered from Phase 7 features compared to 455 g from Phase 8 and 4359 g (87% of the total shell) from Phase 9.

The shape of the oyster shells tended to indicate a native population growing on the lower shore of a sheltered bay or estuary, possibly regularly harvested. In the more shell-rich deposits, similar numbers of right and left valves were generally present, suggesting discard of the entire shell in one place—itself an indication that oysters were not served on the half shell.

Overall it is clear that oyster became increasingly important in the diet of the inhabitants of Cotswold Community during the Roman period, although it probably remained a fairly minor component. Unfortunately marine shell has rarely been reported on, if collected at all during excavation, therefore it is difficult to compare this assemblage and assess its significance. Marine shell was recorded from the recently excavated site at Cleveland Farm (Wessex Archaeology 2007) which is broadly comparable to the

present site. The site produced a much smaller assemblage of 1025 g of shell from 56 contexts, the largest deposit of which was 125 g in weight. Other finds categories from Cleveland Farm were similar to those from Cotswold Community and this may indicate that the present site had an abnormally large marine shell assemblage, however this assumption would require further comparative data to be available before it could be substantiated.

Human remains: Osteological summary *by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston*

Twenty-eight inhumations of Roman date were excavated at Cotswold Community, of which 25 belong to the late Roman period, mainly within a cemetery in the north-west part of the settlement.

Poor bone preservation and small sample size limited the osteological potential. The assemblage was large enough to undertake limited demographic analysis, revealing that, like many contemporary groups, adult males predominated (50%), whilst adult females (21.4%) and subadults (17.8%) were under-represented. Lower mean adult stature (165.7 cm in males; 161.3 cm in females) and a higher cribra orbitalia rate (CPR 14.3%) suggested that this population suffered greater ill health in the first two decades of life than many British contemporaries, both within the region and beyond (Roberts and Cox 2003). Pathological conditions included trauma (including a malaligned femoral shaft fracture with associated osteomyelitis; a depression fracture of the frontal bone; a severe fracture and possible dislocation of the shoulder joint with associate osteoarthritis; and possible dislocation of the hip); spinal degenerative joint disease (CPR 14.3%), Schmorl's nodes (CPR 3.6%) and extra-spinal joint disease (CPR 13.3%). Dental disease was also present (TPR caries 18.4%; calculus (mostly slight) 66.9%; DEH 2.7%). One dental abscess and two cases of periodontal disease were also observed.

Grave Goods *by Kelly Powell*

A minimum of 1016 metal finds were recovered from 21 Roman inhumation burials and one cremation deposit. All but four of the objects were complete or fragmentary iron nails and hobnails. These objects generally represented coffins and shoes with few other grave goods.

Structural nails were present within 12 of the Roman graves including Phase 8 graves (2217 and 3221). The number and sptial arrangment of nails from most of the graves clearly suggest the presence of coffins. In most cases the nails are consistent in length within each grave, most over 70 mm long, therefore fastening relatively substantial coffins, and many have traces of mineralised wood. However, some graves had very small numbers of nails. These graves—and those totally lacking nails—may indicate burial without a coffin, although the absence of such finds may simply be a result of post-depositional processes or indicate that nails were not necessarily used as the main form of coffin fastening. Alternatives could include wooden pegs or joints or other organic fastenings.

A total of 16 of the graves and one cremation deposit yielded hobnails (Manning Type 10) originally integral to the soles of shoes, ranging in quantity from 1 to a minimum of 200. The hobnails were generally better preserved than many other iron objects, possibly as a result of their association with significant organic matter. As a whole the assemblage was unremarkable, but a selection of contexts warrant further discussion.

Assemblages from graves 10450, 10463 and 10517 were particularly small in dimensions (11–15 mm). In the cases of 10450 and 10463 this is noteworthy as the interred individuals were identified as a child and a young female, possibly indicating that the shoes and consequently hobnails were manufactured to fit the individual. It has been observed in other Roman cemeteries that children were provided with adult shoes and Philpott has argued that children were not supplied with shoes at all (1991, 169), therefore this observation is significant. In contrast, the hobnails from grave 10621 were abnormally long on average (up to 24 mm).

The presence of hobnails in Roman graves is normally viewed as evidence of interment of the individual either wearing shoes and/or with an accompanying pair of shoes placed in the grave. These are thought to have been included for use on the journey to the afterlife and appear commonly as grave goods from the 2nd century AD. The number of hobnails present within an individual shoe varied depending on pattern. However it is obvious that in some cases at Cotswold Community there are too few hobnails to constitute a pair of shoes (eg graves 2217, 10505, 10635). It is possible to suggest that this may be the result of post-depositional factors of preservation or in some cases truncation of, or by, another grave resulting in mixing of finds. Additionally, it has been suggested that a handful of hobnails were thrown into graves as a symbolic gesture (Salway 1981, 706).

The larger assemblages of hobnails (eg grave 10509) could indicate the Roman practise of burial with more than one pair of shoes (Philpott 1991, 168). However, excavations at Billingsgate Buildings in London found that well preserved shoes contained 100 nails each on occasion (Rhodes 1980). As no obvious arrangements of hobnails suggested multiple pairs of shoes at Cotswold Community we can only hypothesise that this is not the case. Various different arrangements or positions of hobnails were found at Cotswold Community, although the majority of individuals appear to have been wearing shoes at the time of burial. Hobnails were also recovered from cremation deposit 11700, indicating that the inclusion of shoes was also part of the cremation rite.

Only two other grave goods were recovered from the Roman graves; a finger ring from burial 10724 (SF 1196) and pair of interlinked expanding bracelets from juvenile burial 10463 (SF 906) (Fig. 3.50). The bracelets were suitable for a child, consistent with the skeletal analysis. The remaining objects from burials include a fragment of thick iron sheet (SF 886) which may have been a coffin fitting or nail fragment (grave 10449) and some unidentified iron fragments from samples from grave 10450.

Chapter 4:
The post-Roman landscape—
Saxon buildings to post-medieval field systems

by Anne Dodd and Kelly Powell

INTRODUCTION

Following abandonment of the extensive Roman settlement, human activity once again moved south in the early medieval period (Fig. 4.1). Anglo-Saxon activity was located in three main groups, comprising a series of post-built structures and pits or waterholes to the north (Area 1; Fig. 4.2), a single structure and waterhole surrounded by a fenceline further south (Area 2; Fig. 4.3), and a large post-built structure to the far south-east (Area 3; Figs 4.1 and 4.13). Two isolated burials were also identified as Anglo-Saxon.

Close dating of most of these features was not possible, as very few finds were recovered, though the two burials were radiocarbon dated to the late 6th and 7th centuries (see below), and a small assemblage of 73 sherds of early to middle Saxon pottery can be dated generally to the period *c* AD 450–850. A later dating for some aspects of the activity at the site is suggested by the presence of parts of 25 fired clay 'bun-shaped' loomweights, a type generally believed to have been in use from the 9th to the 12th centuries.

At some point following this, the site was extensively ploughed leaving the remains of ridge and furrow. These features cannot be dated but something can be inferred about fields from their placement and alignment. A number of headlands were visible within this landscape, in addition to post-medieval field boundaries, including a large county boundary ditch. Little of this can be precisely dated.

SAXON ACTIVITY (PHASE 10)

Area 1

A group of Saxon features was located within the southern boundary of the Roman settlement (Fig. 4.2). The features appear to respect the Roman trackway to the west, ditch 2750 to the south, and the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignment to the east. This suggests that the pit alignment, ditch 2750 and the trackway were long-lived elements of the landscape, certainly still evident as boundary features beyond the later Roman period. It is also a clear illustration of the re-use of at least part of the Roman farmstead, although evidence for actual continuity of occupation at the site is lacking.

Post-built structures

The bulk of the activity comprised groups of postholes in varying arrangements, representing the remains of a number of post-built structures. The state of truncation and patchy preservation of these groups means that it is difficult to understand their original form with any degree of certainty, although possible reconstructions have been suggested below and in the accompanying illustrations (Figs 4.3–6). There was very little finds or environmental evidence associated with these structures, and information about their dating and function is therefore minimal. The buildings have been assigned to Phase 10 for several reasons. Where found, the associated pottery was of early to mid Saxon date, and late 6th- to 7th-century radiocarbon dates were obtained from two burials in the vicinity. The structures lay to the south of an area of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement and it remains possible that some features in the vicinity are of this date. However, on the whole the distinctive alignments and rectangular shape of the proposed Saxon structures mark them out as a separate group.

Structure 2533 (Fig. 4.3) was the most regular of the group, comprising 14 postholes arranged in a sub-rectangular pattern, enclosing an area of approximately 8 x 4 m. The postholes were ovoid or sub-rectangular in form, measuring up to 0.4 x 0.6 m in plan but only 0.18 m deep at most. The only find from this possible structure was a fragment of amorphous fired clay.

Some 10 m to the west, structure 2987 (Fig. 4.4) comprised six clear postholes arranged in an approximately rectangular pattern. All the postholes were very shallow, measuring just a few centimetres in depth, but were quite irregular and varied in diameter from 0.2 to 0.6 m. A further three intercutting postholes lay to the north, but their relationship to the main structure, if any, is not

apparent. A single sherd of early-mid Saxon pottery was recovered from structure 2987.

Structure 3875 (Fig. 4.4), to the south of 2987, comprised six postholes, some recut, arranged in an approximately rectilinear shape, running SW-NE for up to 6.5 m. In addition, an elongated posthole or slot (2606) and two intercutting postholes (2634) were located to the north and may have been part of the group. The postholes in this group were generally smaller (*c* 0.2–0.3 m diameter) than those in structures 2533 and 2987, possibly indicating this structure had a different function. One of the larger northernmost intercutting postholes, 2634, produced three sherds of early-mid Saxon pottery.

Structure 3895 (see Fig. 4.2), 25 m east of 2533, comprised seven postholes spaced at 2.5–4 m intervals, and formed no coherent pattern, but may represent the remains of fencelines. Additional

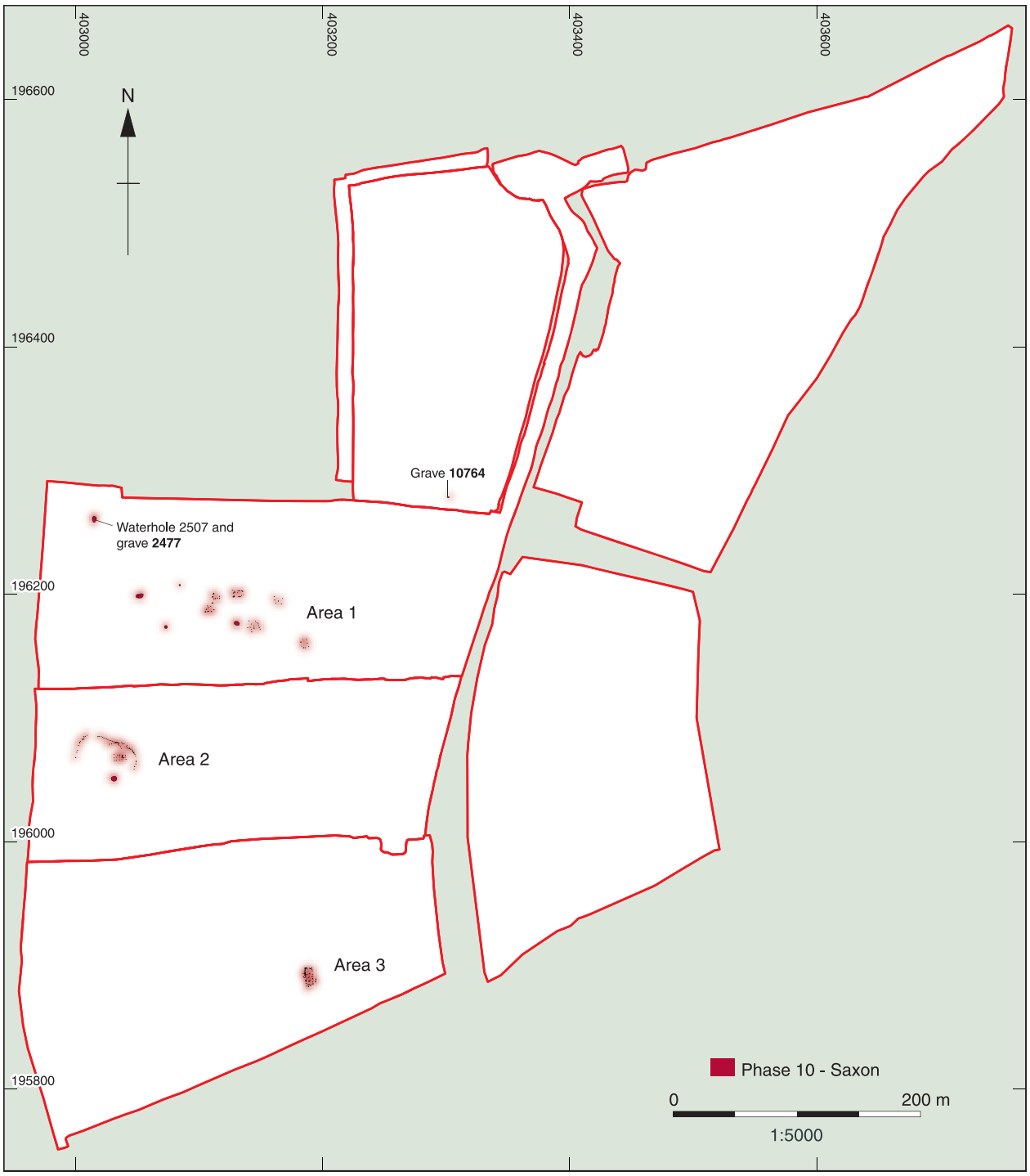


Fig. 4.1 Overview of Saxon phase (10) at Cotswold Community

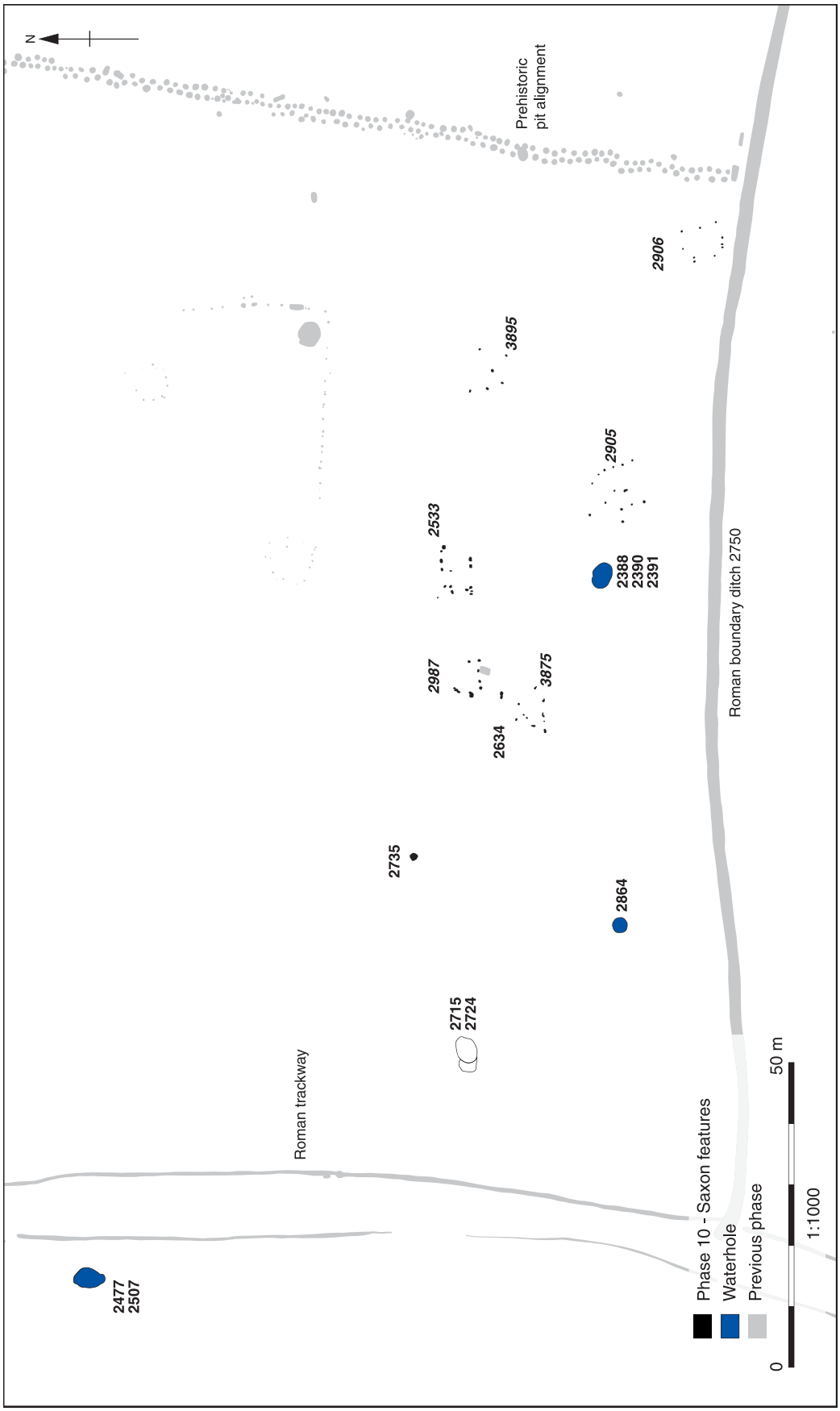


Fig. 4.2 Detail of Area 1

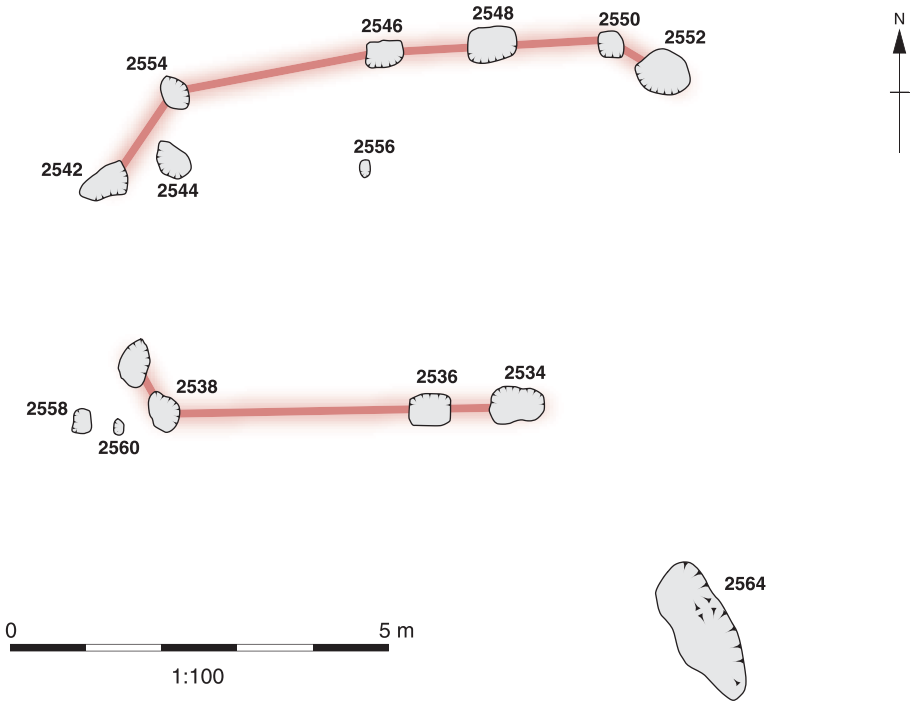


Fig. 4.3 Structure 2533

postholes within the vicinity of the structure may also have been associated with it. The postholes ranged from 0.2–0.4 m in diameter and up to 0.2 m deep, some containing multiple fills. One posthole produced 1.5 kg of burnt stone and a fired clay pedestal fragment from its single fill.

Structure 2905 (Fig. 4.5), *c* 20 m to the south-west, comprised 14 postholes, 0.15–0.4 m in diameter and mostly *c* 0.2 m deep; some had multiple fills, although none produced any finds. The consistent spacing and morphology of these lines of postholes suggests that what appears initially to be a rather incoherent group does indeed represent structural remains, and the most convincing interpretation is that they derive from two successive structures consisting of fences or walls demarcating three sides of a rectangular area, with the fourth south-east facing side apparently open.

Structure 2906 (Fig. 4.6) was a further 35 m south-west, in the area where pit alignment 3333 met ditch 2750, therefore presumably at the very edge of the settlement area. The group consisted of 10 postholes in a rather irregular sub-circular arrangement, *c* 6 x 5.5 m in area. The postholes were consistently 0.2–0.35 m in diameter and up to 0.25 m deep with 1–2 fills, but produced no finds.

Pits and waterholes

A small complex of pits or waterholes existed within the area of structures, *c* 8 m west of group 2905 (Fig. 4.2). This included pit 2388 and possible waterholes 2390 and 2391. Pit 2388 was at least 1.3 m wide and 0.4 m deep but was partially removed by 2391. The feature contained a single fill and produced no finds. Pit or waterhole 2390 was much larger at 3.54 x 2.95 m in plan and 1.48 m deep, appearing to be undercut to the south-east, with a sequence of eight silty sand fills. The feature produced a sherd of early-mid Saxon pottery as well as a possibly intrusive 17th-century sherd, though the latter identification is not certain. Both features were cut by pit or waterhole 2391, in turn measuring 3.94 x 2.95 m and 0.96 m deep and containing only two fills. This feature produced a larger finds assemblage including a moderately sized collection of animal bone made up of horse, cattle and pig, including a large quantity of skull fragments, along with Roman and early-mid Saxon pottery.

A smaller pit/waterhole (2864) was located 54 m to the west of this complex in a relatively isolated position (Fig. 4.2). The feature measured 2.4 m in diameter and 1.5 m deep with a sequence of 10 fills, most of which represented natural slippage. The finds assemblage was mainly recovered from the deeper fill in the top of the feature possibly representing a single event. This included further fragments of horse and cow skull, along with Roman and Saxon pottery, similar to material from feature 2391. It is notable that the waterhole was also undercut on the east side. A small copper alloy disc (SF 104) was recovered from the feature but may have been an intrusive modern object. A small pit, 2735 (0.96 m in diameter and 0.23 m deep) was excavated 33 m north of 2864, which produced a sherd of early-mid Saxon pottery from its single fill.

A further large pit which must have functioned as a waterhole (2715; 4.12 x 3.35 x 1.76 m) was

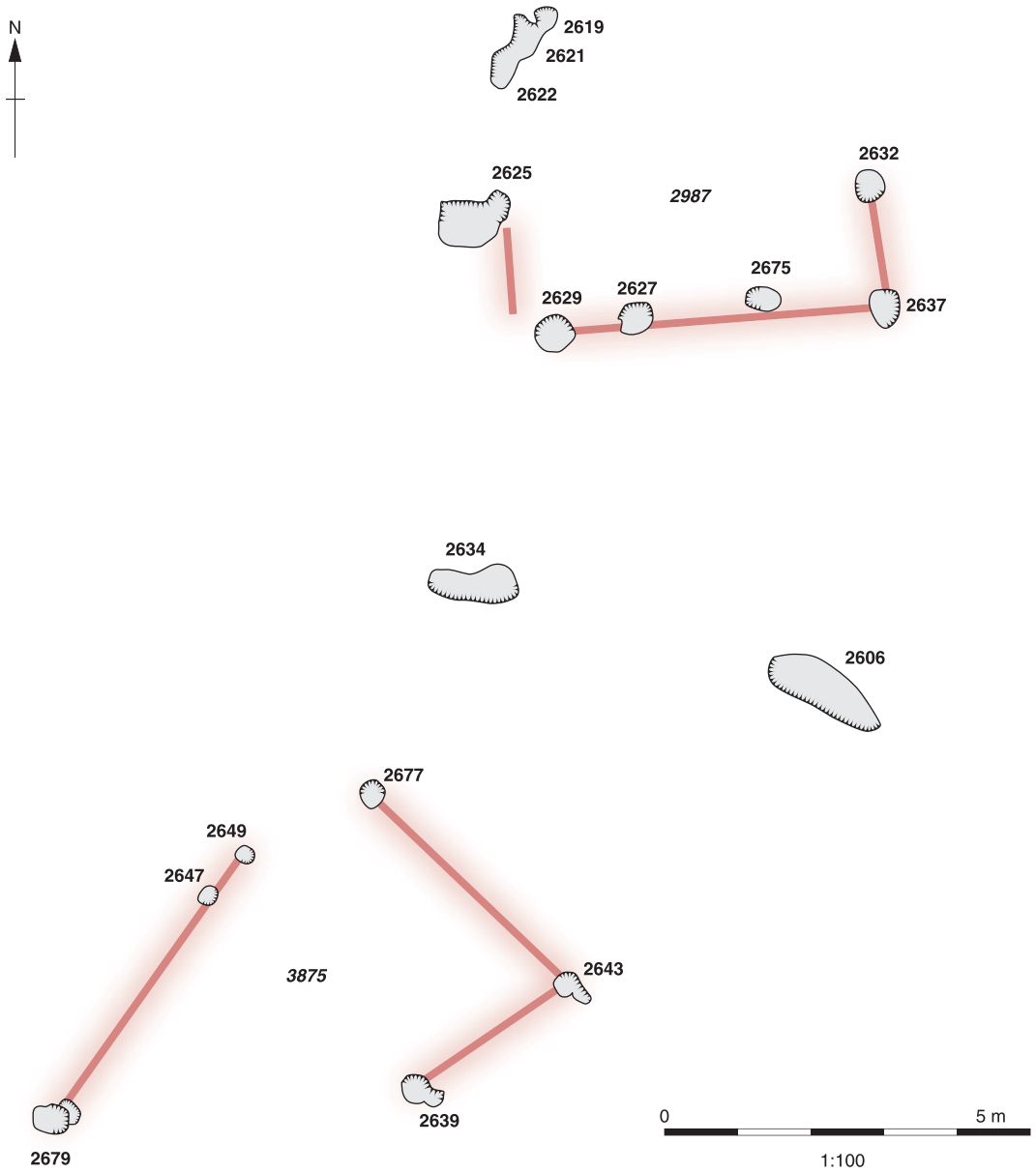


Fig. 4.4 Structures 2987 and 3875

located 30 m north-west of 2864, cutting a smaller pit 2724 (1.44 x 0.64) (Fig. 4.2). These features contained no dating evidence, with only a few fragments of animal bone from 2724, and worked flint and burnt stone from 2715. They were located in an area containing almost exclusively Saxon features but do not have the same characteristics as the Saxon features, being more cleanly V- or bowl-shaped. It is possible that they belong to either the Saxon phase or the middle Bronze Age, as represented by activity *c* 80 m to the east.

The only feature in Area 1 to be located outside of the apparent site boundaries was large waterhole 2507, which lay just beyond the western Roman trackway, over 100 m north-west of the main area of activity (Figs 4.2 and 4.7). The waterhole had been recut on at least one occasion (though not recorded as such on site), and bore striking similarities to 2390/2391. The original waterhole was *c* 1.9 m deep, and it was recut by a wider but shallower feature, 4.6 x 3.2 m in plan and 1.3 m deep. Together, the two cuts produced the largest Saxon finds assemblage from the site, including an animal bone assemblage composed mainly of cattle and horse, again with many skull elements present. Roman brick, tegula, roof tile and possible roof stone were also recovered (most within the later recut of the feature), in addition to a probable sandstone saddle quern and whetstone. Two iron objects included a possible blade (SF 82), while metalworking debris was also retrieved including vitrified hearth lining, charcoal and possible smithing hearth bottom. A large part of a single Saxon vessel came from the fill of the earliest cut (see Fig. 4.15 below).

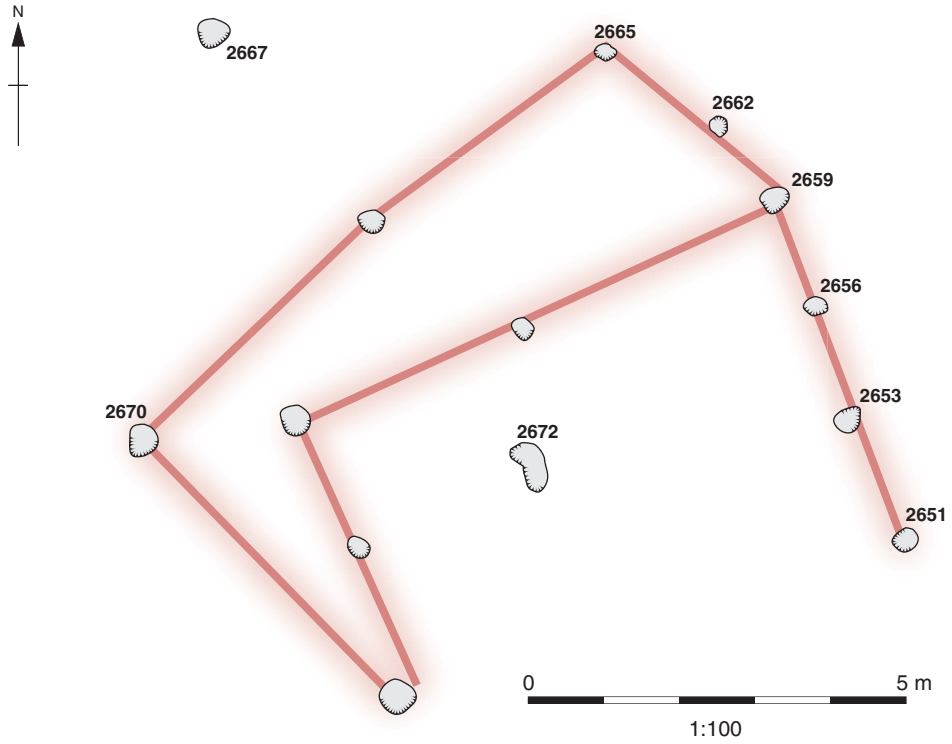


Fig. 4.5 Structure 2905

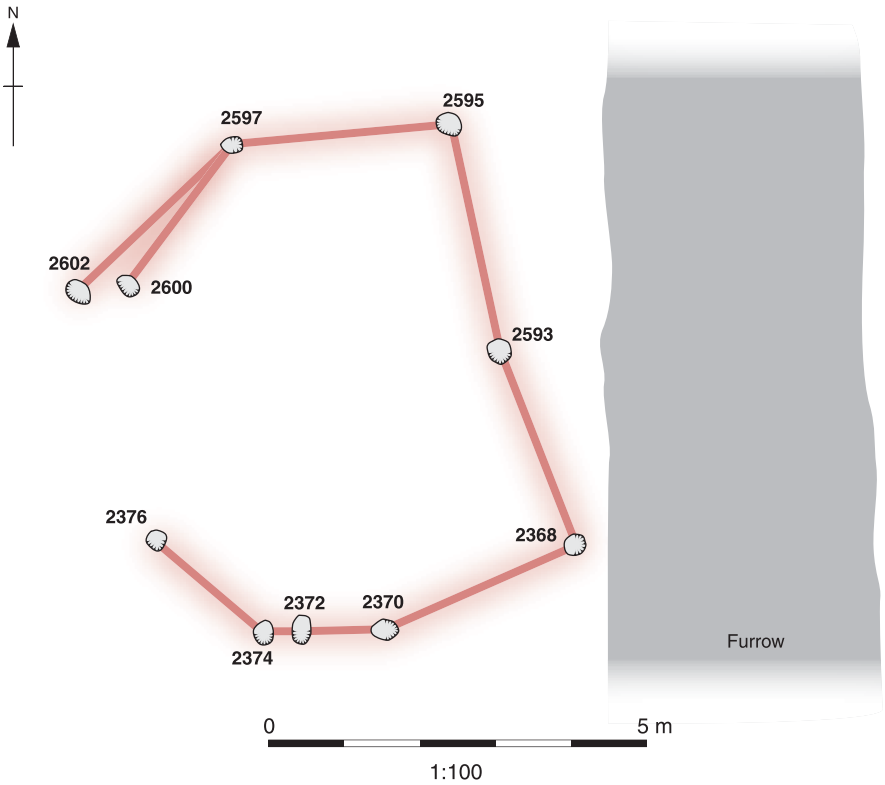


Fig. 4.6 Structure 2906

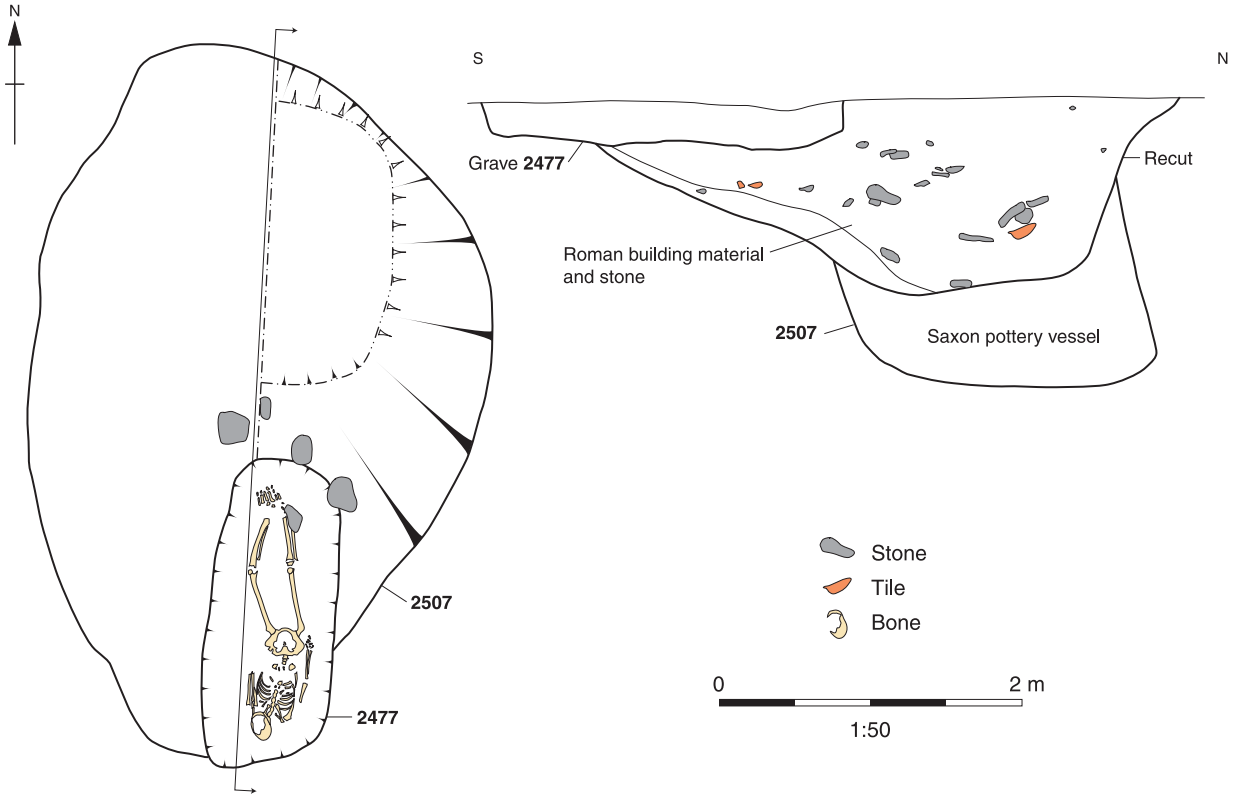


Fig. 4.7 Plan and section of waterhole 2507 and grave 2477

Grave 2477

Some time after the waterhole had silted up a grave (2477) was cut into the upper fill on the southern side of the feature, partially cutting the natural ground (Fig. 4.7). The grave was aligned north-south with the head of the individual to the south in a cut measuring 1.8 x 0.65 m and 0.3 m deep. The grave contained the extended remains of a male aged 26–35 years old. The left arm of the individual had been bent back so that the hand was resting on the cheek. A sample of bone from the skeleton was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of cal AD 635–690 (OxA-17648; prob 94.8%). The grave contained a fragment of burnt coal, possibly from the earlier waterhole or intrusive, as was a sherd of 17th-century pottery.

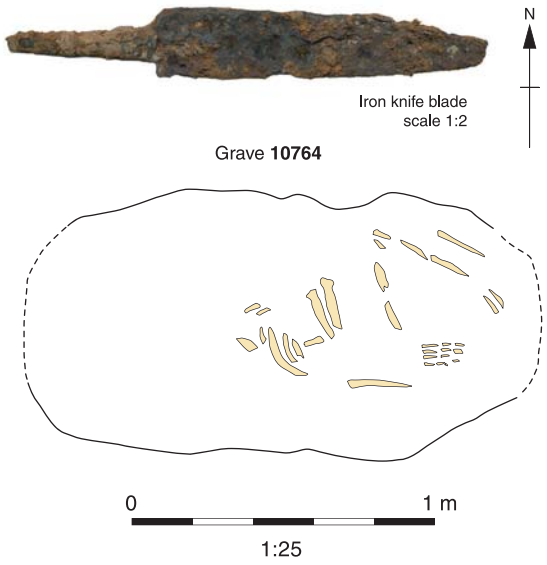


Fig. 4.8 Grave 10764

Grave 10764

A further isolated grave, 10764 (Fig. 4.8) was found over 150 m north-east of Area 1. The grave was placed within an outer part of the Roman settlement, beyond the inner boundary ditch. The east-west grave was 1.6 m long and 0.9 m wide containing the crouched inhumation of a female, aged 26–45. The individual was heavily truncated and little remained, but she was clearly facing the north and lying on her left side. The grave contained a short, tanged, iron knife (SF 2459) and a single hobnail suggesting continuation of Romanised behaviour. A sample of bone from the skeleton was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of cal AD 580–665 (SUERC-18830: prob 95.4%).

Area 2

The second area of activity was located *c* 135 m south-west of Area 1 and comprised a single post-built structure, surrounded on three sides by a fence of relatively close-set posts but apparently open to the south, along with a waterhole and potentially a number of smaller features (Fig. 4.9). The complex was located outside the Roman settlement boundaries, although the western side of the fenced enclosure appears to respect the Roman trackway, suggesting that this may still have been a significant element of the local landscape (see above).

Structure 6560 (Fig. 4.10) comprised a group of 22 postholes arranged in three roughly parallel lines; in total the postholes covered an area of some 9.7 x 3.75 m, although the width appeared to expand to 5.3 m in the west. The lines were spaced at *c* 1.6–2 m, with similar gaps between the postholes along each line. The postholes were generally between 0.2 and 0.4 m in diameter and up to 0.45 m deep, the majority with two fills. Only a few sherds of indeterminate pottery were recovered from the structure, and these may have been residual prehistoric.

The structure was bounded by curving fenceline 7099, which appeared to begin 9 m south-east of the corner of 6560, extending northwards for *c* 7.5 m before turning north-west for *c* 40 m; at its western end the fenceline once again turned south, terminating *c* 30 m from structure 6560 (Fig. 4.9). The fenceline was D-shaped, though open to the south, and it remains unclear whether it was originally a continuous line; gaps existed at either end of the northern part of the alignment, though it is possible that these are the result of truncation, particularly by medieval furrows. This appears less likely for the gap to the north-west, which is larger and not in an area of a known furrow, and may represent an entrance. Overall, the fenceline contained 61 postholes varying from 0.13–0.5 m in diameter, most falling within the range 0.2–0.4 m and 0.04–0.34 m deep. The majority contained a single fill. Postholes produced occasional sherds of prehistoric and Roman pottery, reflecting the multi-period landscape in which they were placed.

A secondary structure (7080) appeared to have existed in the centre of the alignment, which may also have been an entrance (Fig. 4.11). This comprised a slot placed within the alignment with two rows of postholes angling outwards from either end. A further group of postholes with no obvious arrangement and two further slots were also located between these two rows, although it is unclear if these were all part of the same structure. The postholes within this structure were all within

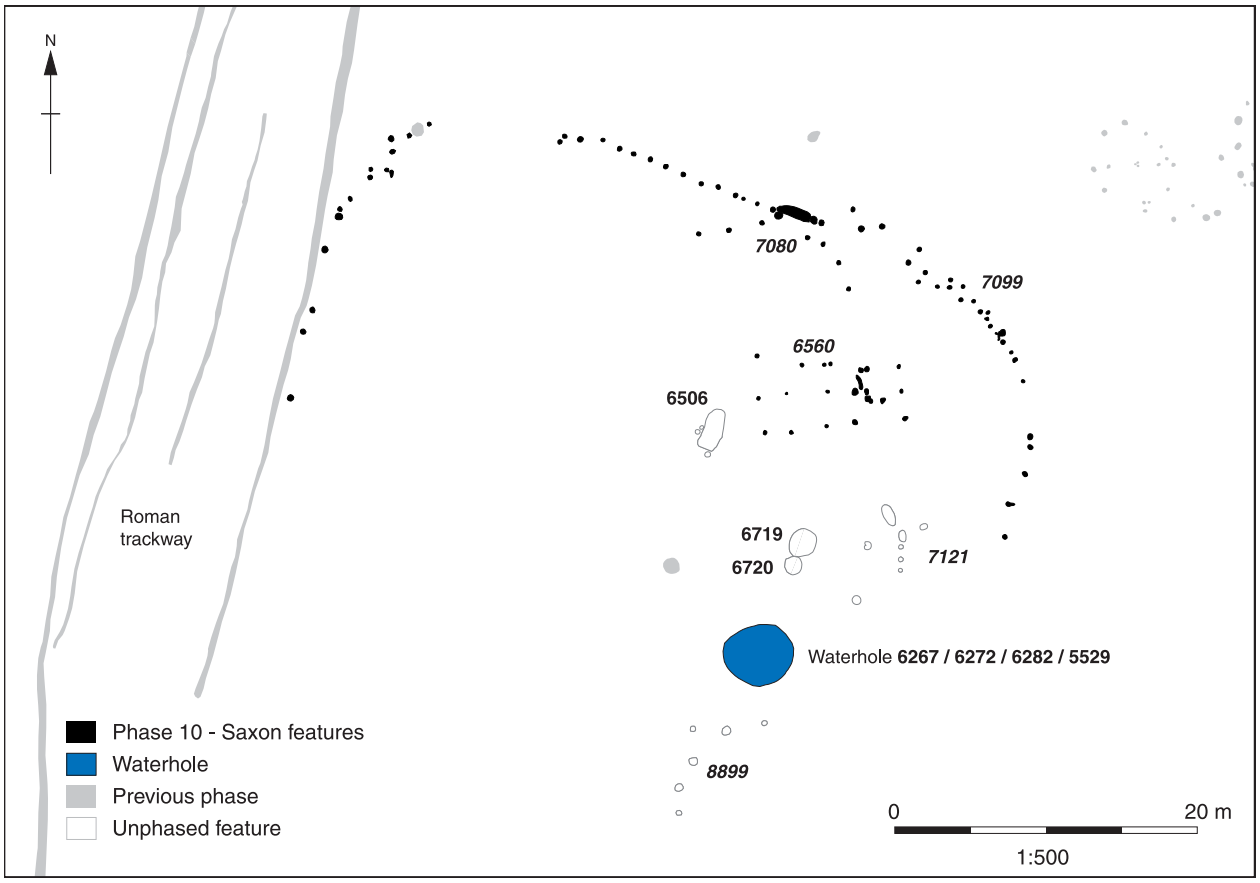


Fig. 4.9 Detail of Area 2

the smaller range of those in 7099 generally. The slots varied but were in the range of 1.3–2.3 m long and 0.5–0.75 m wide. None of the features produced any finds. It is possible that these features could have been part of an elaborate gateway into the complex.

The majority of the dating evidence from this area came from a large waterhole/pit complex *c* 12 m south of structure 6560 (Fig. 4.12). The earliest feature within this complex was waterhole 6267, the general form of which is unknown as most was removed by later features. The waterhole appeared to be *c* 1.6 m deep and was undercut to the south, as seen with other features in this phase. The feature contained a sequence of 14 fills, some of which bore evidence of having been waterlain. The only find

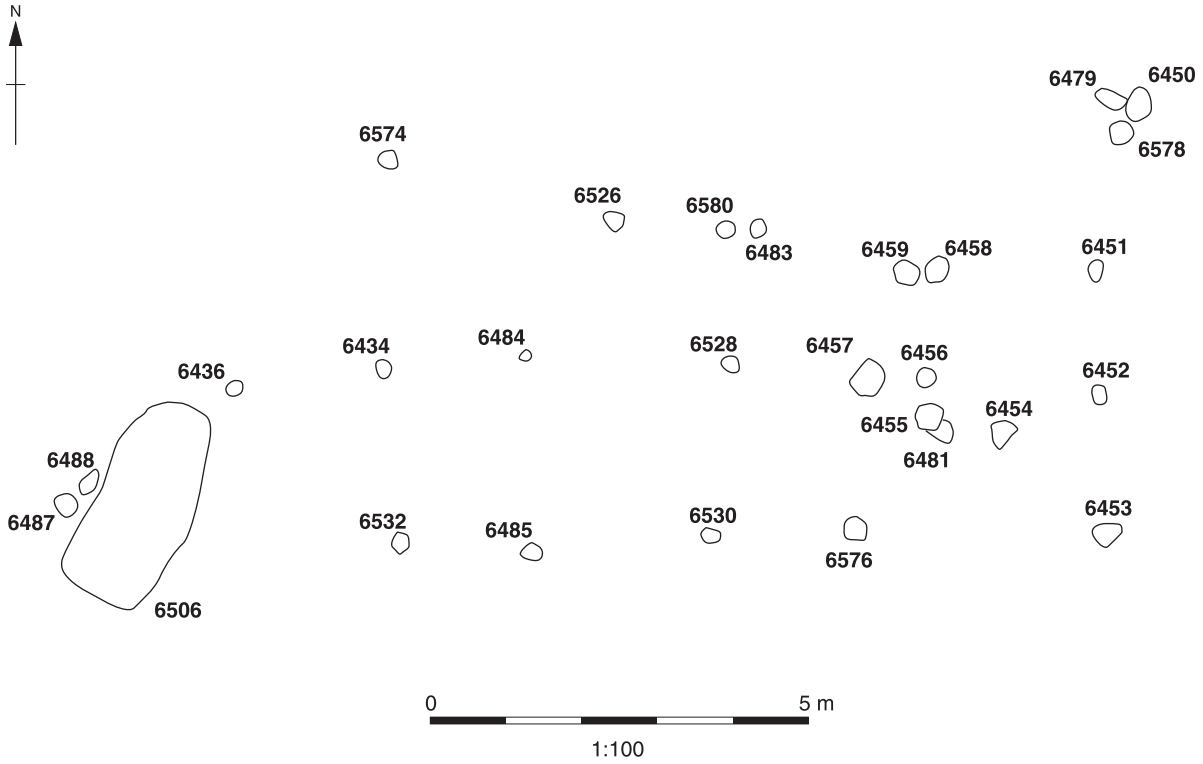


Fig. 4.10 Structure 6560

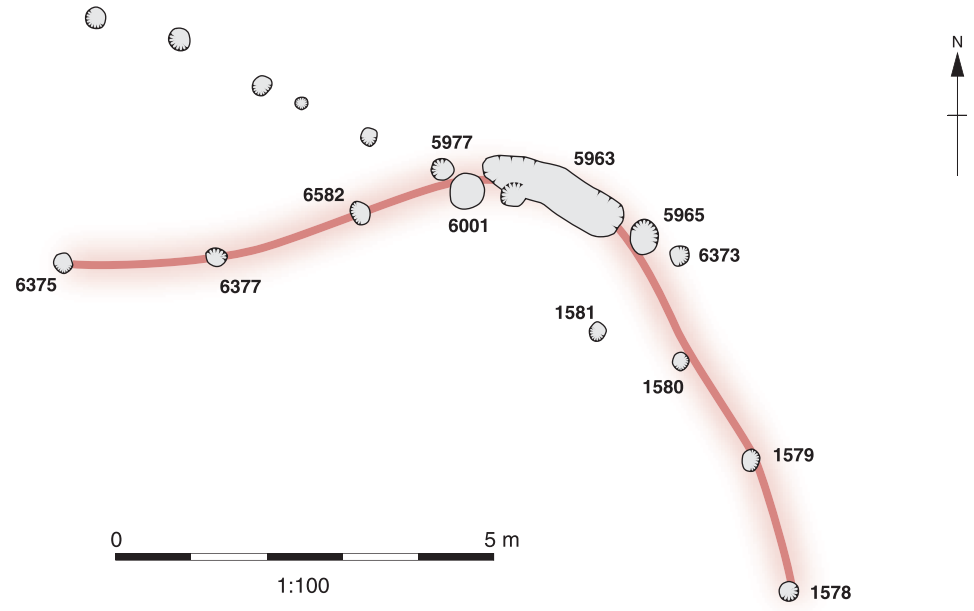


Fig. 4.11 Potential entrance structure 7080

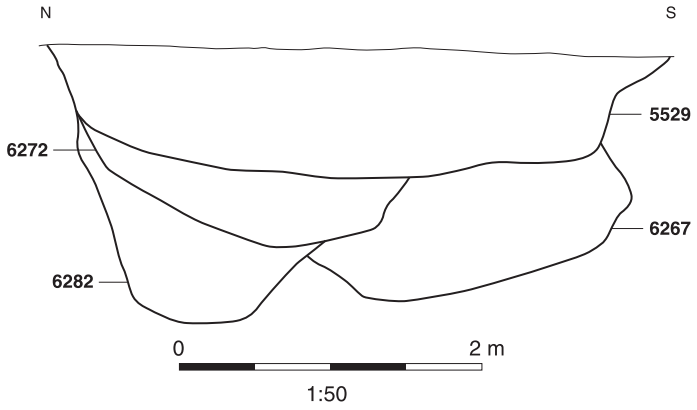


Fig. 4.12 Outline section of waterhole 6267/6272/6282/5529

from the waterhole was a fired clay loomweight or spindlewhorl in fragments.

Waterhole 6267 was recut on the north side as 6282, which existed to a depth of *c* 1.8 m and contained five fills which appear to have been rapid backfills. Once again the only find from this feature was a fragmented fired clay loomweight identified as a Saxon type. This feature was in turn recut as 6272, which measured 2.2 m in diameter and 1.3 m deep, and also appeared to have been rapidly backfilled. A further loomweight was recovered from the feature (Fig. 4.16, 3–4).

The final phase was recut 5529 which extended the feature to 4.1 m in diameter but was relatively shallow at only 0.85 m deep, and therefore may not have functioned as a waterhole. The cut contained 10 fills comprising backfill and natural slippage with a deeper upper fill containing the majority of the finds. These included Roman tile, two large sherds of early-mid Saxon pottery and a further five loomweights in pieces (Fig. 4.16, 1–2, 5). The significance of the presence of loomweights in each phase of this feature is unclear.

A number of smaller features within the settlement area may have been contemporary (Fig. 4.9). These included a sub-rectangular pit 6506 immediately west of structure 6560, cut by a single posthole with four more surrounding it. This feature is interesting as it resembles a small SFB (2.7 x 1.3 m in plan), potentially acting as an outbuilding to structure 6560. However, the depth of the feature (1.42 m), along with its narrowness and the lack of finds, makes this interpretation unlikely. It is notable that the pit has the same undercut profile seen in many other Saxon features on the site. The feature may have been ancillary to the structure, although the only find recovered from it was prehistoric worked flint waste.

Other possible Saxon features include paired pits 6719 and 6720, north of the waterhole complex and posthole groups 7121 and 6899 immediately to the east and south. However, none of these contained any dating evidence and the possibility that they were prehistoric cannot be ruled out.

Area 3—Structure 9435

The remaining Saxon activity within the excavated site comprised a totally isolated post-built structure (9435) located over 200 m south-east of Area 2 in the south of the site (Fig. 4.13). The structure as excavated comprised some 76 postholes arranged in a rectangular pattern, *c* 12 x 5.5 m, possibly representing a large timber 'hall'. The eastern side of the structure is a straightforward line of postholes spaced at 1–1.5 m, with an apparent porch structure towards the south-east corner. A clear row of similarly sized postholes probably represents the north wall of the structure. The western and southern walls are less clearly defined. The postholes in the north-west quarter had been damaged by medieval ploughing but it is clear that in this area numerous posts had been added along the outside of the projected principal wall-lines. A number of possible functions could be suggested for these posts, including strengthening and rebuilding of the wall in this area, and even perhaps supports for steps giving access to a loft. Two gaps of 2–2.5 m in width are apparent in the east wall, between postholes 9664 and 9661, and postholes 9470 and 9486. Given the generally good state of preservation of the postholes on this side of the structure, and the association of the southern gap with the proposed porch, it seems reasonable to assume that these gaps are real, representing doorways into the building, and not simply the effect of truncation. A number of postholes of varying sizes were recorded in the interior of the structure. The spacing of these is rather irregular for a line of aisle posts. However, several of the postholes appear to be set in rows at right-angles to the west wall at intervals of 2–2.5 m. The postholes were generally 0.2–0.5 m in diameter and 0.1–0.64 m deep, and many contained postpipes. The only finds from the structure were residual worked flints and a fragment of prehistoric pottery and a single sherd of Saxon pottery from posthole 9455.

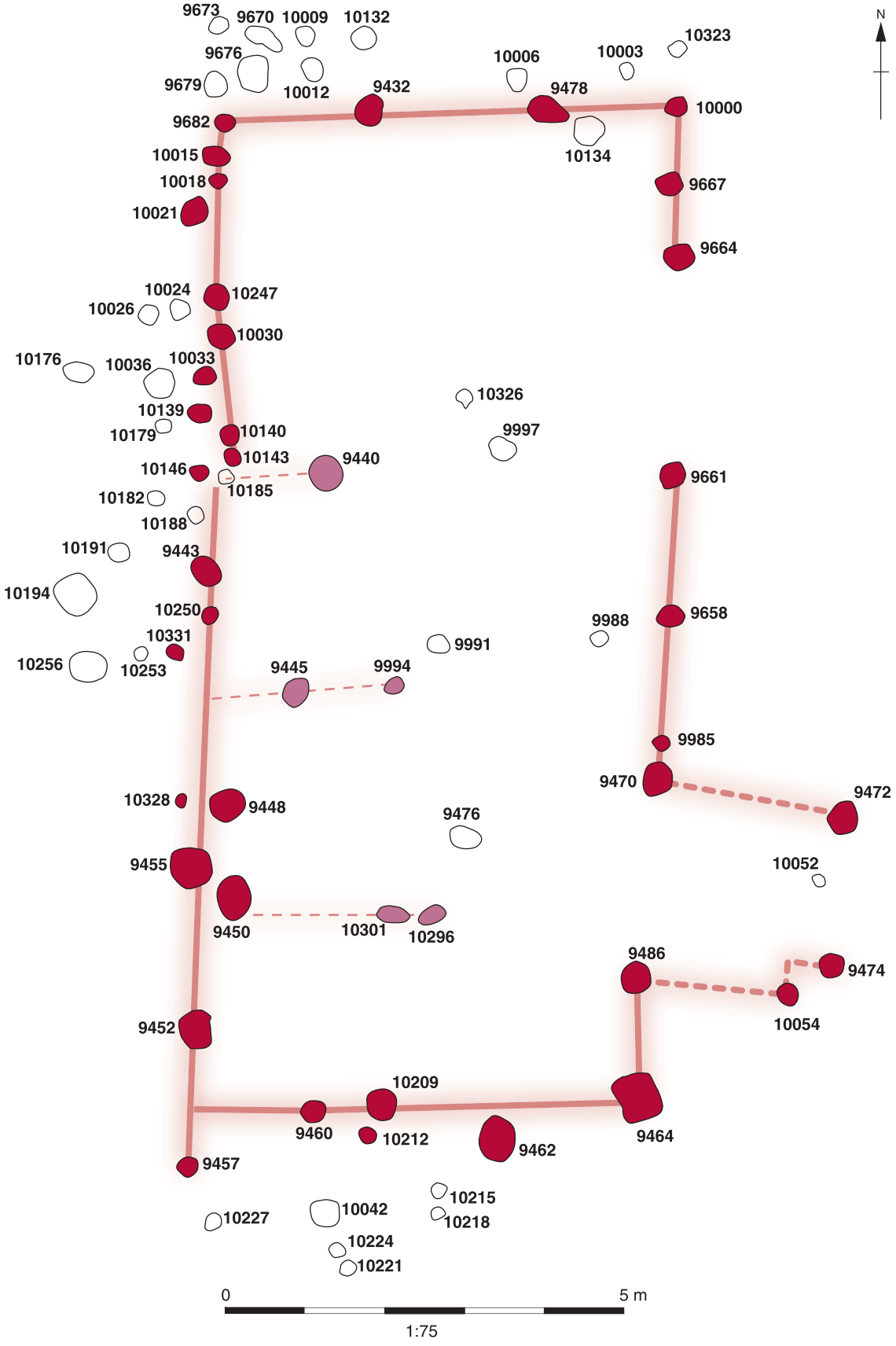


Fig. 4.13 Structure 9435

LATER MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY (PHASE 11)

The only real indicator of continuous medieval activity on the site took the form of two discrete sherds of pottery dating to the mid 12th century which were recovered from Roman trackway 17615 and ditch 373, which may have been either Roman or medieval. Otherwise medieval activity is limited to plough furrows (Fig. 4.14), the exact date of which is unconfirmed.

Field System

The site as a whole was comprehensively truncated by ridge and furrow ploughing on several different alignments, with five corresponding headlands, indicating an extensive programme of medieval or post-medieval strip farming (Fig. 4.14). This process greatly disturbed the earlier archaeological features, with survival of the prehistoric features notably corresponding to the location of headlands in places.

The continuity of the landscape over a significant period of time is illustrated by the headland adjacent to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignment (3333) and parallel with the later area of Roman settlement. This is now partly on the line of the county boundary between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in this area. The parishes of Kemble, Poole Keynes and Somerford Keynes (with Shorncote) were transferred from Wiltshire to Gloucestershire in 1892 (VCH Wilts v, 273–4), while the parish of Ashton Keynes remained in Wiltshire, so the county boundary in this location is clearly of no great antiquity. Further research into the development of the parish and field boundaries in this area was beyond the scope of the present project, but these results suggest a long history of re-use of boundary features stretching back over several millennia.

The plough furrows were archaeologically investigated in all phases of the excavation, both to understand them as archaeological features in their own right and to assess the extent to which they truncated earlier archaeological deposits. The furrows were found to vary widely in size, reaching up to 5 m wide; in general they were less than 0.3 m deep. A range of archaeological material was recovered from the furrows reflecting the multi-period landscape below; this included middle Bronze Age and early Iron Age pottery and worked flint in small quantities as well as one occurrence of burnt stone. The majority of the material was demonstrably Roman, including a large assemblage of ceramic building material, a single coin dated AD 138–161 and over 2 kg of pottery. Anglo-Saxon finds included fragments of loomweight. Other items included a moderate amount of animal bone, mostly cattle, a fragment of lava quern and a selection of metalwork, mainly nails and other fittings. Items which may have been contemporary with the furrows included five occurrences of 17th-century pottery (depending on the date span of the ridge and furrow process in this area) and the front plate of a decorated book clasp, although its presence on the site is a mystery.

In addition, two apparent post-medieval field boundaries were partially excavated during the investigation (Fig. 4.14). Ditch 19988 and corresponding parallel fencelines 19989 and 19990 extended roughly east-west across the southern area of the main Roman settlement, continuing beyond the western edge of the excavation area. An extremely similar boundary existed 280 m to the south in the form of ditch 7100 and fencelines 7654 and 8562, although the latter features in this instance were on the same alignment. Both of these boundaries related to the plough furrows; the northernmost was on the same alignment as the surrounding furrows, presumably dividing two fields, whilst ditch 7100 divided an area of furrows on different alignments and was clearly a significant boundary. The northern boundary was also on the approximately the same alignment as the modern county boundary.

Ditch 19988 and parallel fencelines 19989 and 19990 appeared to extend *c* 100 m from the western edge of the site before being truncated by a modern ditch. The features did not continue into the TVAS excavation to the east and therefore may have either genuinely terminated at around this point, or else turned north between the two excavated areas, continuing the approximate alignment of the county boundary. The ditch was consistently 0.8–1 m wide and only 0.14–0.3 m deep and produced 17th-century pottery as well as an iron nail and possible handle or rod. The accompanying fencelines were both located to the south of the ditch and may represent a single fenceline, recut at a later date. Both were composed of postholes of varying dimensions, ranging from 0.14–0.8 m in diameter and 0.04–0.45 m deep.

Ditch 7100 was similar in nature to 19988 in the main area of excavation, measuring 0.3–1.2 m wide and up to 0.35 m deep, becoming noticeably narrower at the western end. Within the OA excavation area the ditch extended for *c* 213 m with a gap of 41 m at the western end which may have been genuine or the result of poor preservation. The ditch was picked up in the TVAS excavation to the east, running the full width of the site for a further 202 m and continuing beyond the eastern edge of excavation. The ditch was larger towards the east, measuring up to 3 m wide and was clearly a significant boundary. The feature produced 17th-century pottery, post-medieval roof tile, an iron nail and a further nail or tang as well as residual flint and a small assemblage of burnt stone.

Posthole alignments 7654 and 8562 ran parallel to ditch 7100, presumably representing a fenceline, the different numbers referring to location either side of the gap to the west. Many of the postholes within the alignment were square, illustrating the different

methods used for posthole digging in this later period. Most were between 0.2 and 0.4 m across and up to 0.34 m deep and produced no finds. The fenceline appears to have petered out towards the east and was not picked up in the TVAS excavation.

A curving length of ditch found within the TVAS excavation (T1012) may also have dated to this period. The ditch extended northwards from the southern limit of the site and turned to the north-east after *c* 100 m, possibly joining or cutting ditch 7100. The ditch was *c* 2 m wide and produced fragments of modern pottery from its surface (Oram and Ford 2007, 5).

At the northernmost part of the site the county boundary ditch (777) was noted running roughly NE-SW through both the OA and TVAS excavation areas before turning at right angles to head north-east. The ditch was a substantial feature measuring up to 5 m wide in places, although it survived in the west to a depth of only 0.36 m. The boundary cut

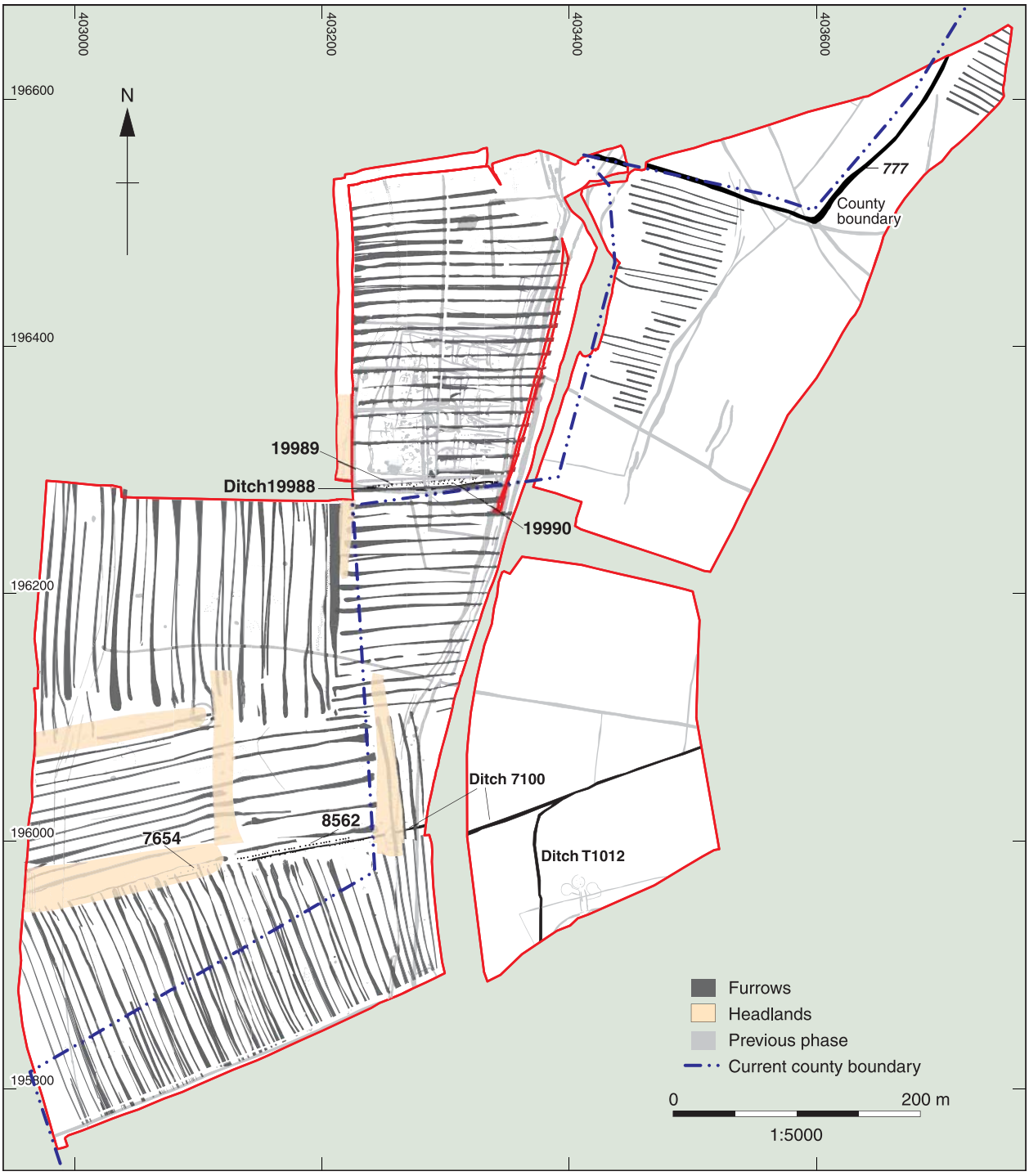


Fig. 4.14 Medieval/post-medieval furrow and field boundaries

every other feature it came across and was clearly post-medieval, although it seems to have a relatively modern line not seen in 19th-century maps (Weale and Preston 2009, 5).

DISCUSSION OF THE POST-ROMAN ACTIVITY

Dating

The Anglo-Saxon structures at Cotswold Community represent only the third rural settlement site of the period to have been excavated to date in Gloucestershire, the others being the early to mid Saxon settlement at Sherborne House, Lechlade (Bateman *et al.* 2003) and the recently discovered early Saxon settlement at Horcott, near Fairford (OA 2009). Moreover, Cotswold Community is the first substantial excavation of early to mid Saxon features on the low-lying floodplain terrace of the Thames rather than the higher and dryer Summertown-Radley gravels. As such, it is a very valuable addition to our understanding of the range, chronology and nature of Anglo-Saxon occupation in the Thames Valley, and it is perhaps not surprising that it has a distinctive character.

In broad terms, at least two main phases of activity can be proposed based on the (admittedly limited) dating evidence available. Two burials (graves 2477 and 10764) were found within the general vicinity of the Roman settlement and Area 1 of the Anglo-Saxon period. These dated to the period cal AD 635–90 and 580–665 respectively (see above). These dates are consistent with the small quantities of Anglo-Saxon pottery from the site, the great majority of which was of the organic-tempered handbuilt and undecorated tradition widely found throughout the Thames Valley and generally dated to the period *c* AD 450–850. Most of the assemblage came from a single vessel deposited within waterhole 2507 (Fig. 4.15), immediately to the west of the Roman trackway, into which grave 2477 was subsequently inserted.

A later period of use of the site may be indicated by the presence of numerous fragments of bun-shaped weights in the fills of waterhole 6560/6267/5529, which lay on the open, south side of the fenced enclosure 7099 in Area 2.

No dating evidence (apart from a single sherd of organic-tempered pottery) was recovered from the timber building at the south end of the site (structure 9435) and no contemporary structures or features were identified in the vicinity with which it might have been associated. It was, however, clearly earlier than the ridge and furrow. There was no obviously late Saxon pottery at the site. Three sherds of Cotswolds-type ware would conventionally be dated from the late 9th to the early 13th century, although the occurrence of this fabric at the recently excavated early to mid Saxon settlement at Horcott could imply an earlier start for this tradition (John Cotter, pottery assessment, in OA 2009). The remaining small quantities of medieval pottery from Cotswold Community are of the mid to late 12th century or later.

The nature of the activity

Sparse finds assemblages are characteristic of mid to late Saxon rural sites in the Thames Valley in general (Booth *et al.* 2007, 104). At Cotswold Community, however, there was so little material datable to this period that it seems very unlikely that this was ever a focus of domestic occupation. Only 73 sherds of early to mid Saxon pottery were recovered from the whole site, and only 82 fragments of animal bone. The only certainly datable metal find from Anglo-Saxon contexts was a single knife found in grave 10764. By comparison, over 21,500 sherds of pottery and over 14,000 fragments of animal bone were recovered from the Roman settlement.

Most finds on early to mid Saxon settlement sites come from the backfill of large cut features such as sunken featured buildings, pits and waterholes, and most of the limited assemblages from Cotswold Community were indeed from the backfills of the four large waterholes excavated in Areas 1 and 2. These do not, however, have the characteristics of general settlement debris (see below). No sunken featured buildings were identified at Cotswold Community, and in this respect the site is currently unique for the period in the Thames Valley. It is unlikely that this is linked to the site's chronology, since excavations elsewhere have shown that sunken featured buildings continued to be constructed on settlement sites as late as the 9th century. The construction and use of sunken featured buildings may simply have been impractical on a relatively low-lying floodplain terrace site, where the water table was clearly high enough to maintain waterholes. Some of the functions (such as storage) that are often attributed to sunken featured buildings may here have been transferred to above-ground structures. If we are right in suggesting that the site at Cotswold Community was not a focus for domestic occupation, then there may simply have been no need for anything else. Until more sites of this period are identified on lower-lying first terrace sites, it will remain difficult to assess whether the absence of sunken featured buildings at Cotswold Community is truly unusual, or whether it will prove to be a characteristic of sites of this type.

Area 1

The site had clearly suffered considerably from truncation by medieval ploughing, but enough survived of the structures in Area 1 for some tentative suggestions to be made about its nature and function. Only structure 2533 seems robust enough to have been suitable for human occupation, and the size and apparent pairing of the surviving postholes

suggests that it is likely to have been roofed. No obviously domestic features were identified within the building or its vicinity, however. Structure 2533 appears to have been broadly grouped with structures 3875, 2987 and 2905 around waterhole 2388/2390/2391, within and towards the southern edge of an enclosure formed by Roman trackways and ditches and the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignment (see Fig. 4.2). Other waterholes (at least one of which may in fact be prehistoric in date) were located to the west, within the enclosure, and just beyond the Roman trackway. Structure 2906 was located within the south-east corner of the enclosure, while structure 3895 may be the surviving elements of fences subdividing the enclosure into smaller areas. Despite the problems posed by truncation, most of the structures in this area had at least one side with no obvious postholes, suggesting either that they were open-sided, or that the open side was closed as required with a movable barrier made of hurdles or perhaps even rope. Although no direct evidence was recovered for their original function, it might be suggested that they represent a group of agricultural buildings, perhaps pens, open-sided shelters, and working/storage areas associated with some form of livestock husbandry. We might envisage, perhaps, an area where a herdsman guarded, fed, watered and managed cattle or horses grazing on meadowland. It is also not beyond the bounds of possibility that some form of small-scale gardening or crop raising, along with the rotting down of manure and compost, could have taken place within such open-sided enclosures. It is very much to be regretted that hydrological changes in the region appear to have affected organic preservation, and Anglo-Saxon environmental remains were simply too poorly preserved for sampling and analysis.

The fact that this activity appears to respect the boundaries of the former Roman farmstead implies that it was functioning at a time when the Roman boundaries were still very much in evidence in the landscape. This suggests a link with the two late 6th- to 7th-century burials found in the same area, and overall a date in the 7th century seems most likely for this phase of activity. Where the contemporary domestic focus lay remains unknown. There was no sign of Anglo-Saxon occupation within the main area of the Roman farmstead, and no Anglo-Saxon settlement has been identified in any of the other large-scale excavations in the surrounding area. Although there is clearly no evidence to support any argument here for continuity of occupation from the late Roman period, there are a number of interesting features connected with the site and the contemporary burials. Burial 10764, of a woman aged 26–45, was located just beyond a boundary ditch of the Roman farmstead. She had been placed in a crouched position, lying on her left side, and a single hobnail was found (along with an Anglo-Saxon type of knife) in the grave. The presence of the hobnail may, of course, have been entirely fortuitous, but neither hobnails nor crouched burials are particularly characteristic of the mainstream of Anglo-Saxon burial practices. Just west of the Roman trackway, a man of 26–35 had been buried in a grave cut into silted up waterhole 2507. What is particularly striking about this feature is the fact that a range of Roman material (brick and tile, a saddle quern, a whetstone, two iron objects and debris from iron smithing) had been deposited in the main fill of the waterhole, along with fragments of cattle and horse bone (including skull elements), on top of an almost complete Anglo-Saxon pottery vessel. The presence of the pot at the base of this sequence must mean that the deposition (and therefore presumably the selection) of the Roman material had happened during the Anglo-Saxon period of occupation of the site, and not earlier. Whether there is any link between this and the burial must remain uncertain, but the sequence is striking enough to suggest that some connection is likely.

We have noted above that there is no evidence in the immediate vicinity for the focus of this settlement. It is interesting to note, however, that a charter of 685 records the grant of an estate of 40 cassati (hides) at Sumerford to the new foundation of Malmesbury Abbey (S1169; Hooke 1985, 16–17). This has generally been associated with Somerford Keynes. Whether the charter in its present form is genuine or not, it does suggest the existence of an estate based on Somerford Keynes in the mid to late Saxon period, to which Malmesbury Abbey could plausibly have made a claim.

Area 2

Interestingly, the evidence from the fenced enclosure of Area 2 suggests the presence of a similar suite of features to those found in Area 1 (see Fig. 4.9). Once again, we have the association of an enclosure with a waterhole and a post-built structure that seems most likely to have been for storage, and very little evidence for domestic activity. Fenceline 7099 enclosed an area that was nearly 50 m in length, but it seems genuinely to have been open on its south side. This faced towards the Roman trackway, which the west side of the fenceline appears to have respected, suggesting that it was still visible as a landscape feature, and probably still in use as a trackway. The purpose of this enclosure is uncertain.

Amongst known Anglo-Saxons structures in the region, structure 6560—although not entirely regular in form—most closely resembles the proposed granary excavated at Yarnton, Oxon (Hey 2004, 124–7). The Yarnton granary had larger, squarer postholes, and was interpreted as a group of six- or nine-post structures rather than a single long granary. Either interpretation could be advanced for structure 6560, though it seems entirely plausible that the three rows of postholes could have supported a timber platform under a thatched roof, raised far enough off the ground to

deter vermin but without needing the load-bearing capacity of a full height building. No evidence was recovered for what was stored here, and it seems inherently implausible that valuable grain would have been left out in the midst of the fields for very long. It could perhaps be suggested that this structure was associated with the feeding of animals, or perhaps with the temporary storage for processing and drying of hay or grain. The presence of a number of fragments of bun-shaped weights in the fills of the waterhole to the south of the enclosure suggests a rather later dating than Area 1 to the north. Cynthia Poole suggests (this vol.) that these weights were in use from the 9th to the 12th century (Fig. 4.16). Although they are commonly described as loomweights, experimental results suggest that they would function poorly in that capacity, and may have had some other, but as yet unknown, use.

Area 3—Timber 'hall' 9435

This structure is a convincing example of an Anglo-Saxon post-built building of the type often referred to as a hall (Hamerow 2002) (see Fig. 4.13). Its apparently completely isolated position, however, and the absence of any evidence for a domestic focus in the vicinity, suggests it is unlikely to have been primarily for human habitation. The presence of two wide entrances (2–2.5 m in width), both on the east side of the structure, invites comparison with later medieval structures identified as animal and cart sheds. A number of postholes in the interior of the building could plausibly be seen as dividing the southern two thirds of the interior into partitioned spaces of approximately 2 to 2.5 m in width, and these would be appropriate for animal stalling. A larger open space at the northern end of the building, with a wide entrance, could suggest a use for the storage of a cart, perhaps along with tools and agricultural equipment. No evidence was seen for a central drain or staining of the interior to lend weight to the suggestion that this was an animal shed, but the structure had suffered from considerable truncation by medieval furrows. It is arguable that some of the postholes outside the north-western area of the building could have been installed to provide additional support for a loft with a stairway, and such a loft might have been used for the storage of hay or other animal feed. It remains difficult to see why such a structure would have been situated in this isolated position. Cattle, horses and agricultural equipment were valuable, but the use of this building for animal shelter and the storage of equipment might seem more plausible if estate servants stayed here to guard its contents and keep watch.

The wider context of the site in the mid to late Saxon period

The interpretations presented above suggest a picture of perhaps relatively intermittent, possibly short-lived, use of the site linked to agricultural exploitation—arguably of grazing land where animals were pastured. It is possible that the activity in the area was linked to an estate centred on Somerford Keynes in the mid Saxon period, although this suggestion relies on the evidence of a single surviving, and not certainly genuine, charter and numerous other possibilities remain perhaps equally likely.

What is beyond doubt is that this would have been a relatively insecure area to live during the mid Saxon period. It is possible that the area would have remained essentially dependent on Cirencester for some time during the 5th century, and possibly even into the 6th century. Large and characteristically Anglo-Saxon cemeteries have been found at Fairford and Lechlade, and may date from the 5th century onwards. Smaller cemeteries containing characteristic early Saxon grave goods have been found near Kemble, and a few more around Cirencester itself, but the impression remains of less intensive Anglo-Saxon influence and greater survival of Romano-British populations than further east. Paul Blinkhorn (this vol.) has commented that the organic-tempered pottery found at Cotswold Community is currently the most westerly occurrence of this kind of ware within the Thames Valley.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that the Upper Thames Valley Saxon king Ceawlin, leader of the Gewisse (later the West Saxons), fought three kings of the British at the battle of Dyrham in 577, and took control of Cirencester, Gloucester and Bath. Whether or not this is precisely true, it seems likely that the area did come under the political control of the West Saxons in the late 6th century, since they are found fighting battles against the Mercians for control of the area in the early 7th century. In 628, the West Saxon king Cynegils lost control of Cirencester to Penda of Mercia. For the next two hundred years the Upper and Middle Thames Valley were to be disputed between the Mercians and the West Saxons, with the Mercians in control for much of the time. The Cirencester area formed part of the Mercian sub-kingdom of the Hwicce, and the king, Berhtwald, who is recorded as granting the estate at Sumerford to Malmesbury, has been identified by Barbara Yorke (1990, 108) as probably a nephew of the late 7th-century Mercian ruler Aethelred, who ruled as a sub-king on the borders of the Hwicce and the West Saxons. As late as AD 802 the men of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (Hwiccian Mercia and West Saxon Wiltshire) fought a battle for control of the area at Kempsford, where they crossed the Thames. Resolution of these conflicts was only to come in the 9th century, when both Mercia and Wessex faced a greater common foe in the form of the Danish Viking army that ravaged the country from the 860s onwards. The Vikings are known to have moved on temporarily to Cirencester, in Mercia, after being defeated by King Alfred.

How far these political events affected the day to day lives of local inhabitants is uncertain. Both

Mercian and West Saxon rulers patronised foundations such as Malmesbury Abbey, for political as well as religious reasons, and high-level changes in political control need not have translated into direct effects on the daily running of estates. It is very likely, however, that estates in the area would have come under pressure to produce surplus, and agricultural specialisation has been seen elsewhere as a possible effect of this process. It is also likely that estates in the area would have suffered from intermittent raiding and requisitioning of supplies.

By the time of Domesday Book, what was to become the medieval settlement pattern of the region was probably largely in place. Although there is little direct evidence to prove it, it is likely that many of these developments took place from the 10th century onwards, a period during which the creation of small local estates—the forerunners of later manors and parishes—was very widespread. It is also clear that arable agriculture had become widely established in the area. By the mid 11th century, the area was divided between several estates, centred on Somerford Keynes, Shorncote, Ashton Keynes and South Cerney. All but South Cerney were at this time regarded as within Wiltshire. Sumreford was held by the Bishop of Lisieux and had been held by Alward in the time of King Edward. It is described as an estate of 10 hides (defined landholdings), with land for 7 ploughs. There were 5 hides in demesne (land retained by a lord for his own use), with 3 ploughs and 5 serfs; there were 14 villeins and 8 bordars (peasants tied to the land, with bordars generally being of a lower status) with 4 ploughs. There was a mill paying 10s and 100 acres of meadow, and woodland, 3 furlongs long and 2 furlongs broad. Shorncote (Schernecote) was a separate estate of 5 hides, held of the king by Humfrey the Chamberlain (a royal official with holdings in numerous counties). At the time of King Edward it had been held by Alward, presumably along with Somerford Keynes. There was land for 4 ploughs, with 2.5 hides in demesne, 2 ploughs and 3 serfs; there were 8 villeins with 2 ploughs. There were 50 acres of meadow and the pasture was 2 furlongs long and 1 furlong broad. Ashton Keynes, Essitone, was held by the church of St Mary of Cranborne, which had also held it in the time of King Edward. It was a much larger estate, rated at 20 hides, with land for 16 ploughs. Ten hides were in demesne with 2 ploughs and 5 serfs. There were 20 villeins, 12 bordars and 4 coscez ('cottagers') with 13 ploughs, a mill worth 5s, and 200 acres of meadow. This was the largest acreage of meadow recorded for the whole of Wiltshire. In addition the estate held pasture 1 league long and 0.5 league broad, and woodland 'of like extent'.

THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM THE POST-ROMAN PHASE

Pottery *by Paul Blinkhorn*

The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprised a mixture of early/middle Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval wares, with the bulk of the assemblage consisting of the last-named. Most of the assemblage was fragmented and scattered, but the Anglo-Saxon material included a partially complete hand-built vessel, along with other sherds of the same type, which are the most westerly finds of Anglo-Saxon pottery of the period in the Thames Valley. Generally, the partially complete Anglo-Saxon vessel aside, the assemblage is of poor quality, consisting of small, slightly abraded sherds, mostly all from different vessels.

Early/middle Saxon

The early/middle Anglo-Saxon assemblage is mainly made up from large sherds from the base and body of a single, incomplete vessel, which was noted in context 2525 of waterhole 2507 in Settlement Area 1 (Fig. 4.15). The rest of the assemblage comprises mainly single sherds from different vessels. Unfortunately, such pottery is very difficult to date accurately, unless decorated or accompanied by datable imports such as Ipswich ware or Continental wares. The Anglo-Saxons largely ceased decorating pottery in the early part of the 7th century (Myres 1977), but such wares were rare even when they were used. Usually, decorated wares only comprise around 3% of the pottery from settlement sites of the 5th and 6th century, such as Mucking in Essex (Hamerow 1993), and rarely occur in small assemblages. Thus, a small assemblage lacking decorated pottery, such as this one, cannot be given a date other than to within the broad early to middle Anglo-Saxon period ie AD 450–850.

The assemblage is of some importance however, as it appears to be the most westerly find of hand-built Anglo-Saxon pottery from the Thames Valley, and one of very few from Gloucestershire. It is certainly amongst the largest assemblages from the county, with most of the sites listed by Vince (unpub.) consisting of only a few sherds. The material is typical of the organic-tempered pottery tradition known from sites of both early and middle Saxon date along virtually the whole length of the Thames Valley, including Maidenhead (Blinkhorn 2002), Oxford (Mellor 1989, 198), Reading (Blinkhorn in press; Slade 1975; Underwood 1997) and Lechlade (Blinkhorn in archive). At Lechlade only 42 sherds of chaff-tempered pottery were recovered, while the site also produced dateable middle Saxon wares.

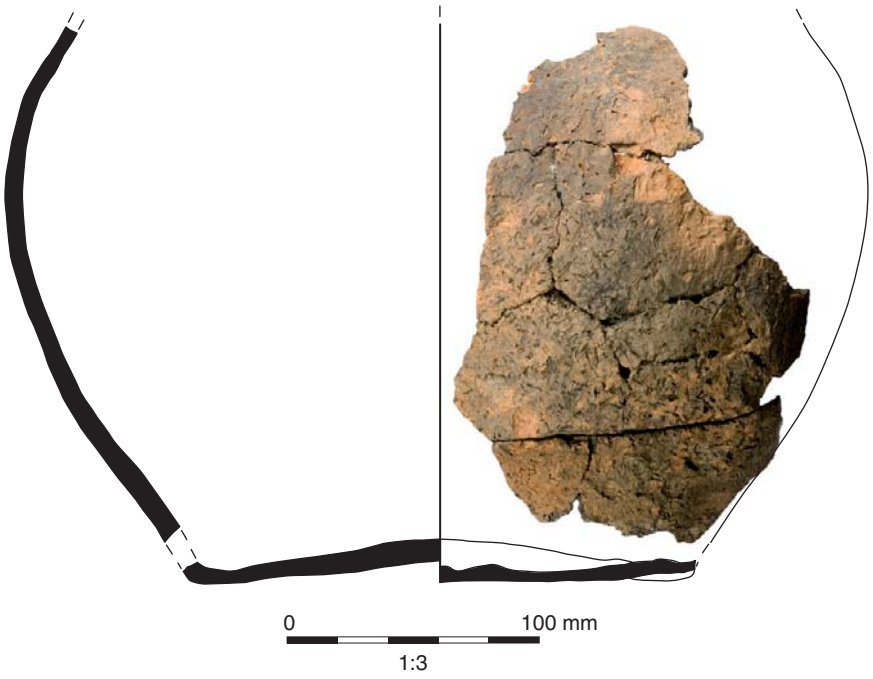


Fig. 4.15 Early/middle Saxon organic-tempered vessel from waterhole 2507

Medieval and later

The medieval assemblage is typical of sites in the region. It is dominated by products of the Cotswolds industries, particularly Minety-type wares, although most of the pottery of this type and date was redeposited in later features. Only a single rim was noted, from a jar, and all the bodysherds were plain apart from a single sherd with splashes of green glaze and fragments of incised decoration. This appears to be from a jug, and is a decorative scheme typical of such vessels. A single sherd of Newbury A/B ware was also noted, along with three sherds of Saxo-Norman or early medieval Cotswolds-type ware.

The post-medieval assemblage consisted almost entirely of Red Earthenwares, along with a single sherd of later English Stoneware. Very few rimsherds of the former were present, with those that were suggesting that most of the assemblage comprised large bowls (pancheons), which is typical of the tradition.

Small finds *by Kelly Powell*

The post-Roman metalwork assemblage was small, with only three metal objects recovered from non-funerary Saxon features; two from waterhole 2507 (SFs 78 and 82) and a third from waterhole 2864 (SF 104). The finds from waterhole 2507 comprised a 34 mm long fragment of iron strip (SF 82), possibly a fragment of blade, and another iron strip with a right angled corner at one end and a broken protrusion (SF 78). The object resembled part of a key but could be a fragment of a number of objects. SF 104 was a copper alloy disc, which appeared to be modern.

In addition, a near complete iron whittle tang knife (SF 2459) and a possible hobnail came from Saxon grave 10764 (see Fig. 4.8). The knife was 128 mm long and 18 mm wide with a short, tapering rectangular sectioned tang. It is of a typical Saxon shape (probably Böhner type C; Straight edge, back curving down to the point).

Burial with knives was common in the Saxon period, both for males and females. In the nearby cemetery of Lechlade females were predominantly buried with Böhner type A knives and at Berinsfield type B, although gender-specific preferences for knives may be unusual (Härke 1995, 74). Type C knives are chiefly 7th or 8th century and would fall into the later range of the radiocarbon date for this grave (AD580–665; SUERC-18830 95.4% prob). The knife falls into size group 1 (blade up to 99 mm long) usual in female graves, and was found beneath the left femur, possibly indicating it was worn at the waist.

The presence of a single hobnail from this grave is notable some two centuries after the accepted end of the Roman period in Britain. Hobnails, along with many other Roman artefact types, have been found in Saxon graves, for example at Stretton-on-Fosse in Warwickshire (Ford 2003), although it is debatable whether this single hobnail can be viewed as being associated with the body. The proximity of the grave to Roman features may indicate it was residual.

A total of five objects came from features assigned to medieval and post-medieval periods, comprising iron nails, other unidentified iron objects and a copper alloy button.

Unstratified metalwork from these periods was generally more recognisable, though still few in number. This material included two buckles (one type dated to AD 1575–1700), three buttons, two possible seals, a post-medieval coin weight, a copper alloy vessel handle and a possible key fragment. One of the most unusual items in the post-Roman assemblage is a book clasp (SF 829), found within a furrow. Only the front plate of the clasp survived, hooked at one end and scalloped at its wider end. The clasp was decorated with double ring and dot with open centres and incised lines at the hook end. This is almost identical to a similar item from Oxford (Allen 2006, 376 fig 14.3) and is likely to date to the mid 16th century.

Fired clay *by Cynthia Poole*

An absence of structural fired clay is not unusual in the post-Roman period. The only fired clay items found were bun-shaped weights, generally dated to 9th–12th centuries, all but one deposited through the fill of a single feature (waterhole sequence 6267/6282/6272/5529; see Fig. 4.12). These are normally interpreted as loomweights on the basis of rows of weights found at earlier Saxon settlements of 5th–6th century date such as West Stow (West 1985) and Pakenham (Plunkett 1999) in Suffolk, where they have been interpreted as representing the positions of looms. The weights used in those settlements are different in character, being annular made from a coil of clay with a symmetrical rounded or D-shaped cross-section, and are more regular in shape and size than the later form. Evidence from some sites such as West Stow (West 1985) and Willington (Elsdon 1979) indicate that this type were often used green and unfired. The early Saxon annular loomweight with an average weight of 200–450 g appears much better suited to function as a loomweight than the later forms. Weaving experiments have shown that loomweights need to be closely matched in weight and size (Mårtensson *et al.* 2007) and the width of the row of weights needs to be ideally very slightly larger than the width of cloth to be woven. The increasing size (450–700 g) found in middle and late Saxon weights is greater than the upper limit preferred in experiments, and together with the greater irregularity, on occasion asymmetric shape and consistent firing, calls into question whether these larger weights should be linked to weaving or some other function considered.

Catalogue of illustrated fired clay (Fig 4.16)

1. Loomweight: Phase 10 (AS) 5503 (5529) SF374A: 50% complete. Profile B Diameter: *c* 130 mm; internal diameter: 45-50 mm; height 58-65 mm; weight 337 g.
2. Loomweight: Phase 10 (AS) 5503 (5529) SF374B: 60% complete. Profile A Diameter: 115-120 mm; internal diameter: 60 mm; height 49-51 mm; weight 305 g.
3. Loomweight: Phase 10 (AS) 5938 (6282) SF364A: 50% complete. Profile C Diameter: 120 mm; internal diameter: 60 mm; height 51 mm; weight 265 g.
4. Loomweight: Phase 10 (AS) 5938 (6282) SF364C: 50% complete. Profile A Diameter: *c* 170 mm; internal diameter: 60 mm; height 57 mm; weight 352 g.
5. Loomweight: Phase 10 (AS) 5940 (5529) SF372: 40% complete. Profile A Diameter: 110 mm; internal diameter: 50 mm; height 51 mm; weight 283 g.

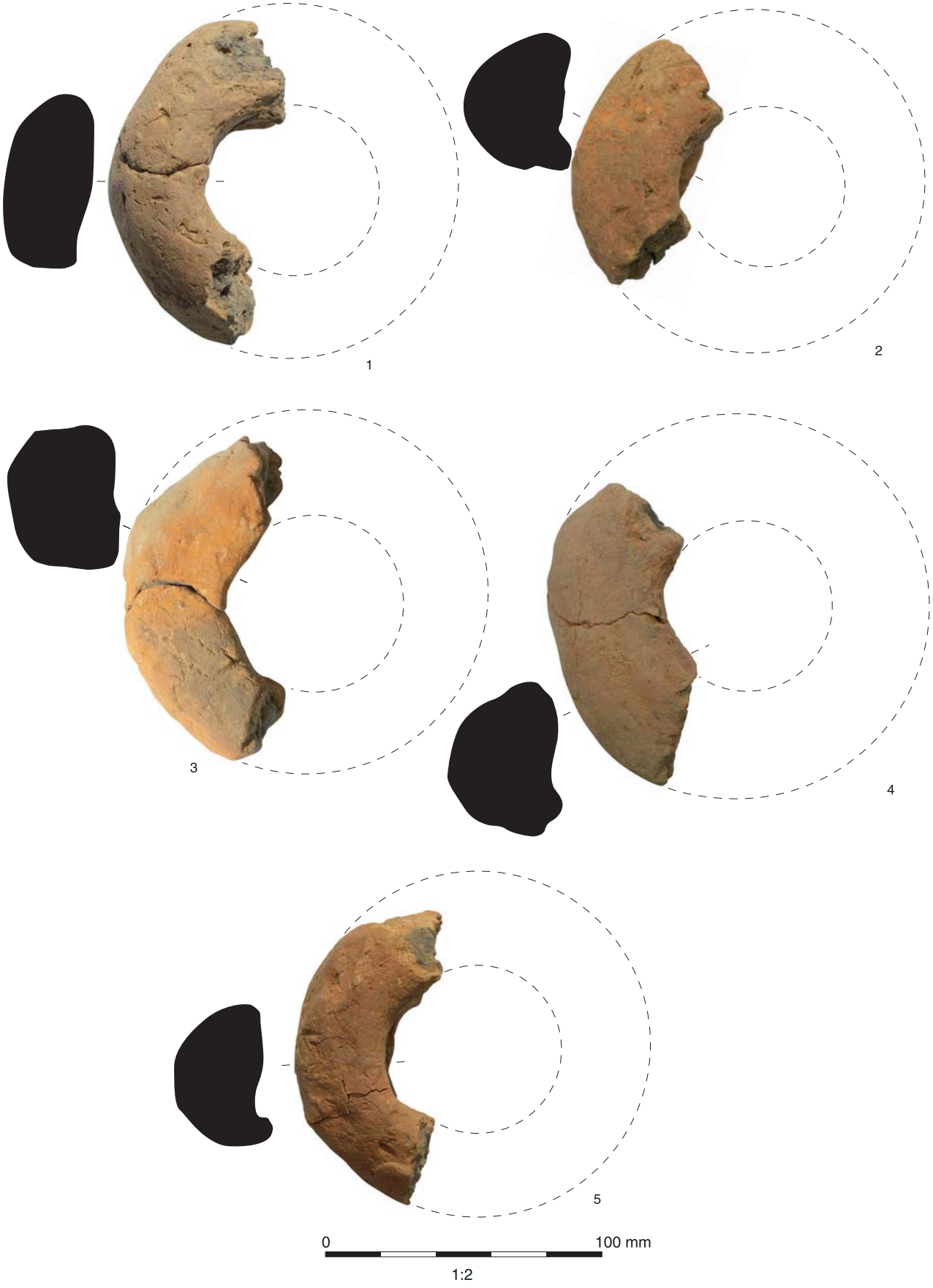


Fig. 4.16 Saxon loomweights

Worked Stone *by Ruth Shaffrey*

Very little worked stone was recovered from Saxon or medieval contexts. A single projectile, typical of Roman ballista balls, was found in a medieval posthole (8447). Saxon contexts produced three stone items, including a probable saddle quern fragment, a probable roof stone fragment and a small fragment of a natural slab shaped whetstone, all from the upper fill of waterhole/pit 2507 (2464). None of these are remarkable and all probably relate to previous Roman activity on the site.

Animal bone *by Lena Strid*

The Saxon assemblage contains 82 bones found in pits and a waterhole. Cattle and horse dominate the assemblage. Most bones derive from the skull and lower legs, suggesting a separation of butchery waste/kitchen waste disposal on the site. During the medieval period, most activity appears to have ceased, and the land used as fields and meadows. The few bones in the medieval assemblage were all found in the fills of furrows. The bones were likely taken from dung heaps at the settlements and deposited on the fields as fertiliser.

Human remains *by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston*

Only two burials could be attributed to post-Roman phases, both radiocarbon dated to the Saxon period. Crouched prime/mature adult female skeleton 10766 lay east-west within a shallow grave (10764), facing the north, the grave apparently aligned with the Roman settlement enclosure 17590. An iron knife lay beneath her left femur. Radiocarbon dating indicated a date of AD 580–665 (SUERC-18830: prob 95.4%). In terms of pathology, the individual was observed with slight periodontal disease, limited to the left mandibular molar region, while *Cribra orbitalia,* spinal degenerative joint disease (SDJD) and extra-spinal degenerative joint disease (DJD) were also identified.

Isolated prime adult male skeleton 2476 was buried in a grave (2477) cut into the top of waterhole 2507, to the west of Roman trackway 5869. The bone was radiocarbon dated to AD 635–690 (OxA-17648; prob 94.8%). This unaccompanied burial was oriented south-north, and lay in an extended supine position with one hand at its head. In terms of dental pathology, the skeleton was observed with slight calculus, medium caries and medium periodontal disease. No skeletal pathology was present.

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