

Archaeological Field Unit

**Romano-British Settlement Evidence at 31 Tunbridge Lane,
Bottisham: An Archaeological Evaluation**

S Kenney

2002

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A201

Commissioned by Upware Marina Ltd

**Romano-British Settlement Evidence at 31 Tunbridge Lane,
Bottisham: An Archaeological Evaluation
(TL 5442/6092)**

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May 2002

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Report No. A201

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SUMMARY

In April 2002, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on 0.138ha of land at 31 Tunbridge Lane, Bottisham, Cambridgeshire (TL 5442/6092). This was in advance of a proposed housing development.

Two trenches were opened by machine and found to contain archaeological remains. The features located included ditches, both large and small, a gully, a pit and a posthole. Roman pottery of 2nd- 4th century date was found across the site, but the majority came from a large ditch, which crossed Trench 1 running northeast-southwest. This substantial boundary had pottery, tile, building material, bone and glass scattered throughout the fills, and it may have a functional connection with other Roman settlement, a possible villa estate, found just to the south-east across Tunbridge Lane in 2000.

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**Romano-British Settlement Evidence at 31 Turner's Lane,
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1 INTRODUCTION

Between the 2nd and 8th of April 2002, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at 31 Tunbridge Lane, Bottisham (TL 5442/6092). The work was carried out at the request of Upware Marina Ltd, in response to a brief set by Andy Thomas of the County Archaeology Office (CAO) dated January 14th 2002. The evaluation was conducted in advance of a proposed housing development.

The site lies on the northeast side of the village. It is roughly rectangular in plan and 0.138ha in area.

The presence of archaeological remains was considered likely by the CAO on the basis of information contained in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). It records Roman and medieval finds in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Weather conditions during the fieldwork were fine, and there were no factors that are likely to have had an adverse effect upon context recognition. Accordingly, the confidence rating to be applied to the results is judged to be high.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on the Lower Beds of the Cretaceous Lower Chalk (BGS 1974).

The site lies at around 12m OD and is slightly higher than Tunbridge Lane.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Palaeolithic

Stray finds of hand axes have been made in the southwest of the parish (SMR 06257a, 06274) and at another unspecified location (SMR 07912).

3.2 Mesolithic

Two Mesolithic tranchet axes and a number of flint flakes were found just west of the church (SMR 06595).

3.3 Neolithic

Numerous Neolithic axes have been found around the parish. Several were uncovered near Lode, in the northwest (SMR 06520, 06573, 06575). Many more have been recovered from closer to the village itself, to the north (SMR 06610, 00208), the east (SMR 06556) and the south (SMR 06580). Flint flakes were found just to the east of the village (SMR 06531). Possibly Neolithic ditches are located to the north of the village (SMR 06605).

3.4 Bronze Age

Within Bottisham parish there are numerous barrows and other ring ditches, but these are almost all located in the southwest of the parish (SMR 06288, 06289, 06302, 06487, 06744, 06745, 06751, 06752, 06754, 06755, 06757, 09330, 09332). Three more barrows are located closer to the village to the northeast (SMR 06609), to the northwest (SMR 06553) and to the southeast (SMR 06626). Bronze Age flints were also found at the same location as the Neolithic ones mentioned above (SMR 06531). A barbed and tanged arrowhead was found just to the south of the development area (SMR 06591). Further probable Bronze Age flints were found close to the church (SMR 06598).

3.5 Iron Age

No finds of this period have been made from Bottisham parish.

3.6 Roman

In 2000, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust carried out an excavation on the site of the new Surgery, less than 100m away across Tunbridge Lane from the current development area. The excavation revealed evidence for a 'high-status



Figure 2 Location map showing the development area and surrounding SMR entries

farmstead', including extensive metalled yards, ditches, gullies and basemented structures. Pottery from the site was dated to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. Roman pottery was also found to the north of the development area (SMR 04133) and to the west (SMR 06586).

3.7 Anglo-Saxon

Several minor Anglo-Saxon artefacts have been found around the parish but none from within the village itself (SMR 06638, 06628, 06629, 06599). There is also a single pagan Saxon barrow amongst the Bronze Age ones in the southwest of the parish (SMR 06762a).

3.8 Medieval

The earthworks within Bottisham Park to the north of the site are the remains of a deserted medieval hamlet, possibly the lost settlement of Angerhale (SMR 00112, a, b, c, d, e, f, g). To the southwest of these earthworks, numerous medieval coins have been found by metal detectorists (SMR 03410, 06534-06548, 08131-08140, 08297, 08340, 08746, 08780). Holy Trinity Church at the southern end of the village largely dates from the 13th and 14th centuries but may have been founded earlier (SMR 06730).

3.9 Historical Background

The name Bottisham is first recorded in 1060 as *Bodekesham* and as *Bodichessham* in the Domesday Book of 1086. A straightforward interpretation of the name is '*Boduc's farm*'. The village seems to have originated as at least three hamlets, and more may have sprung up before they all finally merged into something like the modern shape.

The population of the parish at Domesday was 49; it had risen to 701 by 1891 and to 1920 in 2000, according to the County Council's own statistics.

4 METHODOLOGY

Two trenches with a total length of 40m were opened by a JCB using a flat-bladed 1.6m wide ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (see Fig 1). This constitutes a 5% sample of the development area.

The trenches were cleaned by hand, planned and photographed, and the features recorded using the AFU's single context recording system. The trenches were tied in three-dimensionally to the Ordnance Survey mapping.

Environmental samples were taken during excavation from deposits deemed likely to yield positive results. A metal detector survey of the trenches yielded several more Roman nails.

5 RESULTS

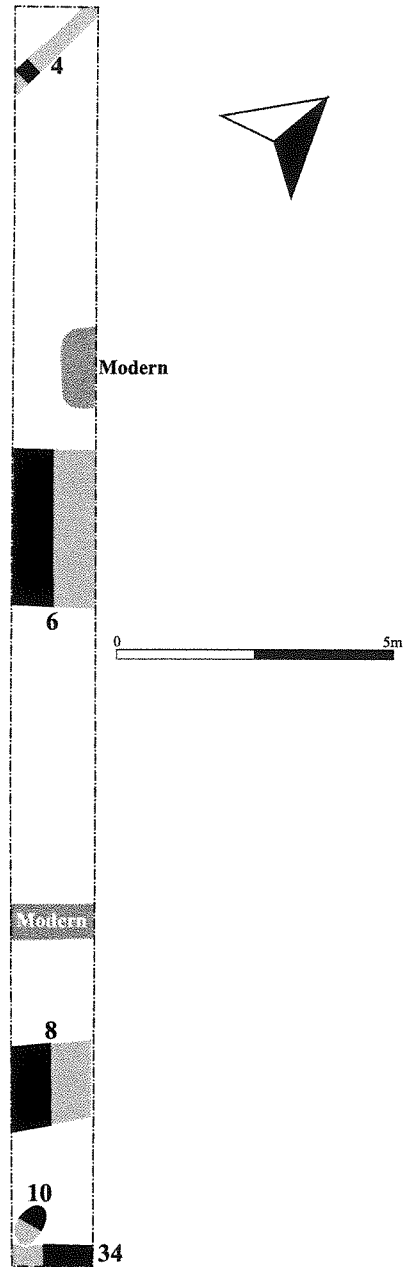
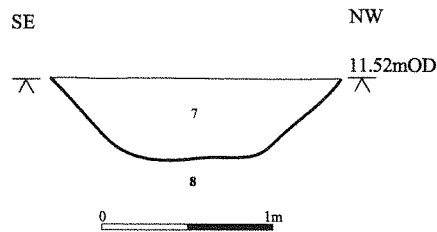
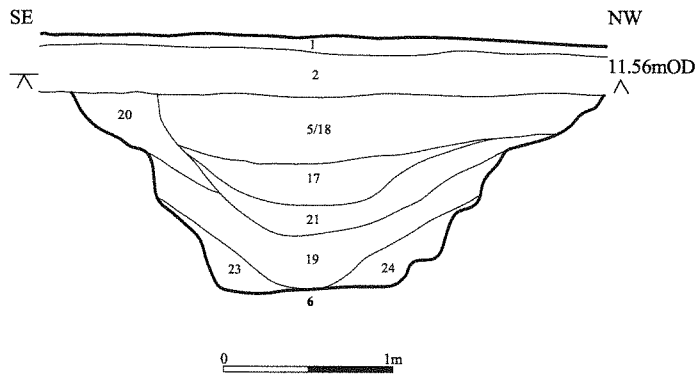
5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 23m long and was oriented NW-SE. It contained three ditches, a gully and a posthole. Up to 0.1m of modern demolition rubble 1 overlay up to 0.3m of dark greyish brown clay sandy silt topsoil 2, which in turn sealed the archaeology.

Gully 4 was 0.08m deep, 0.35m wide and at least 2.0m long, with a shallow concave profile. It was straight in plan, oriented N-S, and contained a single fill, 3, which was a dark grey sandy silt containing frequent subangular stones and occasional chalk flecks and lumps. No finds were recovered from this fill.

Ditch 6 was 1.2m deep, 3.3m wide and at least 1.6m long, with a basically wide, flat-based V-shaped profile, made somewhat irregular by changes in the underlying geology. It was straight in plan and oriented NNE-SW, and contained seven fills. The upper fill, 5/18, was a greyish brown silty clay containing occasional small stones, charcoal and chalk flecks. Animal bone, shell, worked flint and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 5/18. Below this was 17, a yellowish brown sandy silt with moderate chalk flecks smaller than those present in 5/18 and occasional small stones. Animal bone, shell, glass and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 17. Below this was 21, a brown sandy silt with moderate chalk lumps and charcoal, and occasional small stones. Several discrete lenses of bluish grey clay were present throughout this fill. Animal bone, shell, tile, worked clunch, iron nails, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 21. Below this was 20, a reddish yellow clay sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks. No finds were recovered from 20. Below this was 19, a very dark grey sandy silt with moderate charcoal flecks and ashy lenses, and occasional chalk flecks and small stones. Several discrete lenses of reddish yellow silty sand were present throughout this fill. Animal bone, tile, shell, worked flint, worked clunch, glass, iron nails and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 19. Below this were 23 and 24, which while being physically separate were stratigraphically equivalent and physically almost identical. Both were olive yellow silty sands, with 23 exhibiting a slightly greener tinge. Animal bone, shell, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from both 23 and 24, but only 23 contained tile.

Trench 1



Trench 2

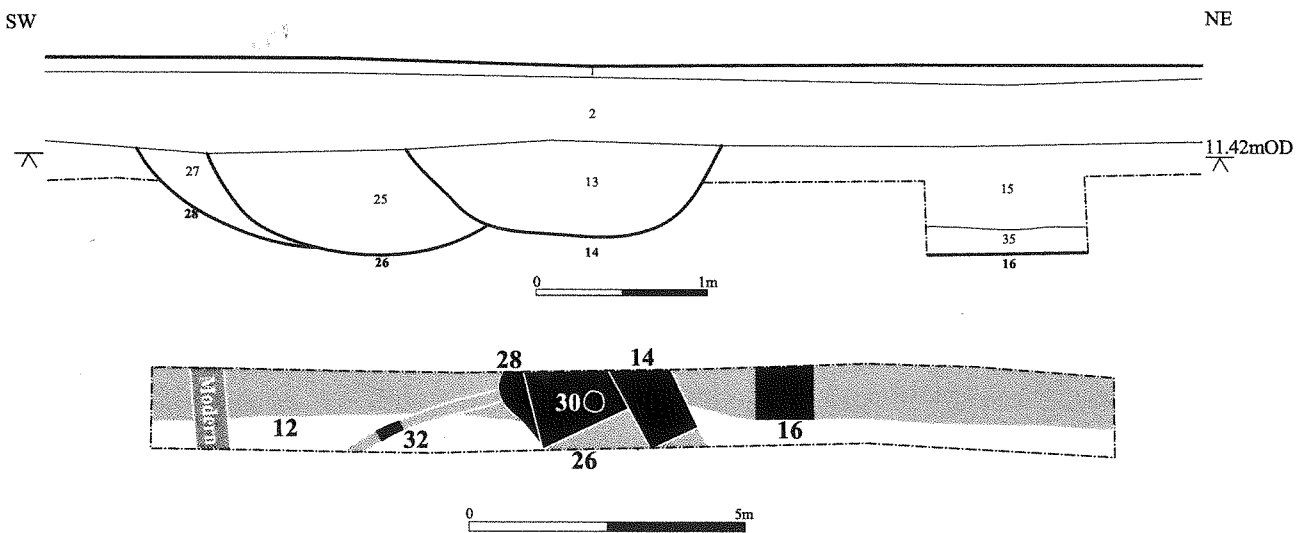


Figure 3 Trench plans and selected sections

Ditch **8** was 0.6m deep, 1.65m wide and at least 1.6m long, with a wide, flat-based U-shaped profile. It was straight in plan, oriented NE-SW and contained a single fill, 7, which was a greyish brown sandy silt with occasional small stones and chalk flecks. Animal bone, shell, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 7. A single sherd of Late Saxon pottery was also recovered from the fill, but this may be intrusive.

Posthole **10** was 0.7m long, 0.45m wide and 0.4m deep, It was oval in plan, oriented N-S and contained a single fill, 9, which was a greyish brown sandy silt with very occasional small stones and chalk flecks. A single piece of Roman pottery was recovered from the fill.

Ditch **34** was 0.15m deep, 1.05m wide and 17.5m long. It was straight in plan, oriented NW-SE and terminated to the east. The fill, 33, was a brown silty clay and was cut by posthole **10**. Animal bone, shell, tile, glass, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 33.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 17.5m long and was oriented NE-SW. It contained three ditches, one of which was quite large, a gully, a pit and a posthole. 0.1m of modern demolition rubble 1 overlay up to 0.5m of dark greyish brown clay sandy silt topsoil 2, which in turn overlay the archaeology.

Ditch **14** was 0.55m deep, 1.0m wide and at least 2.1m long, with a wide flat-based U-shaped profile. It was straight in plan, oriented NW-SE and cut the fill of ditch **26**. The fill, 13, was a very dark greyish brown clay sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks and small stones. Animal bone, tile, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 13.

Ditch **26** was at least 0.6m deep, 1.65m wide and 3.2m long, with a wide concave profile. It was straight in plan, oriented NW-SE and cut the fill of pit **28**. The fill, 25, was a very dark greyish brown clay sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks and small stones, and was cut by ditch **14**. Animal bone, tile, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from 25. the ditch appeared to be contemporary with posthole **30**, which was cut into its base.

Posthole **30** was 0.42m in diameter and 0.34m deep, and was roughly circular in plan. It contained a single fill, 29, that was indistinguishable from 25. No finds were recovered from 29.

Pit **28** was 0.55m deep, and at least 0.6m wide and 1.6m long. Its shape in plan was difficult to determine from the remaining part, but it may have once been subrectangular. The fill, 27, was a very dark greyish brown clay sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks and patches of reddish yellow sandy clay, and

was cut by ditch **26**. Tile and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from **27**.

Gully **32** was 0.10m deep, 0.26m wide and at least 3.2m long. It was slightly curved in plan, and oriented roughly N-S. The fill, **31**, was a brown sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks and small stones, and was cut by pit **28**. No finds were recovered from **31**.

Ditch **12/16** was at least 0.15m deep, 1.05m wide and 17.5m long. It was straight in plan, oriented NE-SW, and contained at least two fills. The upper fill **11/15** was a mixture of dark greyish brown and black sandy silt with moderate charcoal flecks, and occasional chalk and burnt clay lumps. Tile, worked flint, and Roman pottery that has been spot-dated to the 2nd-4th centuries were recovered from **11/15**. It was cut by ditch **14**. Below this was **35**, a black silt with frequent ashy lenses and moderate burnt clay lumps. Animal bone was recovered from **35**. Both **15** and **35** were sampled for environmental potential and the results are detailed in Appendix B.

6 DISCUSSION

Given the proximity of a high-status Roman site, it was not unexpected to find further evidence of occupation dating to this period in the development area. The type of features located during this evaluation might indicate field or estate boundaries at a greater distance from the settlement focus, however the finds assemblage tells a different story. The presence of so much domestic pottery, building material and even a small quantity of glass fragments from vessels, indicates the nearby presence of buildings. This is supported by the environmental evidence, which suggests a domestic level of grain processing was taking place nearby, if not actually on the site.

The slight difference in alignment of ditches **14**, **26** (Trench 2) and **8** (Trench 1) from the other ditches may indicate that they belong to a different phase of activity. It is tempting to see **6**, **34** and **12/16**, with their identical alignment, as belonging to an earlier Roman phase contemporary with the activity across Tunbridge Lane, and the shift of alignment as indicative of a fresh start following an episode of destruction and a period of disuse. Certainly there are far fewer artefacts in the features that are stratigraphically later, although the date range is broadly the same. The single piece of Late Saxon pottery from the fill of **8** may have been introduced by root or animal action, but the possibility that these features may belong to an entirely different period should not be ignored.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the site in advance of development. Information from the evaluation will allow an assessment of the proposed development's archaeological implications and to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy.

The project has been successful in achieving its objectives. Significant Roman archaeology has been identified that would appear to be present across the entire site. These remains seem likely to form part of a larger Romano-British settlement, probably directly linked to the nearby possible Villa estate excavated in 2000.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Upware Marina Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. Stephen Macaulay managed the project for the AFU, worked on site, and edited the report. Chris Montague worked on site and carried out a metal detector survey of the trenches.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas of the CAO who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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APPENDIX A

BOTTL02 Tunbridge Lane, Bottisham, Ceramic Report by Stephen Macaulay

The Pottery

An assemblage of almost entirely Roman pottery sherds was recovered from the evaluation at Tunbridge Lane, Bottisham. The total assemblage weighed 8333g and was comprised of predominately fresh unabraded sherds.

The pottery is derived from predominately local sources, namely Horningsea wares. The Horningsea component totals 4665g or 56% of the total assemblage. Other local or nearby sources include Hadham (Beds), Harrold (Herts) and Colchester (Essex) (coarse) wares. Interestingly the assemblage contains no Nene Valley wares (Identified in HAT 2000 Excavation). Exotic wares are entirely Samian both early South Gaulish and later Central Gaulish types.

The assemblage is dominated by coarse wares, and as identified above, these are derived from local sources. Notably no Nene Valley fine wares or any colour coat fabrics were recovered. A high percentage of the Horningsea coarse ware storage jars was decorated both interior and exterior, generally with lattice or combed styles. The only fine wares were Samian, with a Flavian Curle 11 bowl (1st C), however the Horningsea Coarse ware decoration is indicative of later 2nd-4th Century styles (inc chamfered bowl with acute lattice decoration).

Although the assemblage includes a number of bowls (Horningsea and Colchester), dishes (Samian), and a mortaria fragment, it is almost entirely comprised of medium and large storage/transport jars and cooking wares (Horningsea and Harrold). Tableware is notable by its absence, along with the fine wares as mentioned above.

The pottery is largely unabraded and well preserved with a high percentage of large sherds and rim fragments.

The pottery dates from the early 2nd- early 3rd centuries AD, at a time when the Roman fenland and fen edge was beginning to enter its most intensive stage of 'Romanisation'. There are examples of earlier 1st century wares and earlier forms and fabric, however the overwhelming Horningsea presence (with decorated forms) within the assemblage pushes the occupation of the site into the 2nd century. Although many of the pottery fabric and forms could be 4th century, the total absence of Nene Valley wares, in particular colour coat fabrics, would suggest that the assemblage was 2nd to early 3rd at a time before the Nene Valley pottery industry began to dominate the region. A proviso to this is that the assemblage contains very little fine wares of any period and that it has been derived from perhaps kitchen waste and not higher status locations.

In conclusion, the assemblage is large given the small number of contexts it is derived from. Although small elements of the collection suggest some nearby higher status activity, the assemblage described here is of coarse storage jars and cooking jar fragments, suggesting rubbish dumped from a larger settlement nearby.

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL WEIGHT	DATE RANGE	COMMENT
5	CGC bowl frag 7g, HOR RW inc decorated 315g, HOR BB2 copy 14g, HOR OX inc combed decorated 212g, HAR SH large jar 122g, UNS GW 15g & COL WW 29g	714g	Early 2 nd -4 th C	Dominated by large storage jars. Relatively unabraded
7	HOR WS 8g, HOR RW 61g, HAR SH 3g, COL WW 14g, UNS OX 43g, UNS GW 10g + Thetford ware 18g	157g	3 rd -4 th C	Includes Thetford ware (intrusive?) 850-1150 AD
11	HOR OX 7g, UNS OX 5g	12g	2 nd -4 th C	
13	HOR RW 36g, HOR GW 10g, HOR OX 18g	64g	2 nd -4 th C	Large storage jars
15	UNS OX	5g	Roman	
17	HOR OX 124g, HOR 36g, COL WW 32g, UNS GW 46g, UNS OX 43g	291g	2 nd -4 th C	Storage jar sherds
18	SGS Dr 30 cup 11g, HOR OX 158g, HOR RW 10g, UNS GW 153g inc dec., UNS OX 19g, COL WW mortaria 118g,	469g	2 nd -4 th C	Included 1 st C Samian Dr 30 cup frag.
19	SGS Curle 11 bowl with barbotine dec (Flavian) 148g, HOR RW combed & acute lattice dec. 993g, HOR BB 9g, HOR OX with scored dec. 974g, HOR WS (single lg storage jar) 230g, UNS GW (inc. lg single vessel) 248g, UNS OX 19g, COL WW inc mortaria 414g	4574g	2 nd -4 th C	Include 1 st C Samian bowl and late 1 st mortaria however dominated by later 2 nd C+ wares (Horningsea).
21	Samian lg, HOR RW 272g, HOR OX 283g, HAD OX incised dec.226g, UNS OX 40g, UNS GW 124g, UNS SH 74g + Stamford ware 3g.	1018g	2 nd -4 th C	Bowls and jars, includes Stamford ware (intrusive?) 850-1150 AD
23	HOR OX inc rouletted dec. 478g, HOR 28g	506g	2 nd -4 th C	Highly decorated coarse ware.
24	CGC 3g, HOR OX 166g, COL WW 16g,	204g	2 nd -3 rd C	Large storage jars
25	HAR SH 36g, HAD OX 4g, UNS SH 6g	46g	3 rd -4 th C	Entirely later shell tempered wares, but still large jars
27	CGS 19g, HOR RW 17g, HOR OX 30g	66g	2 nd -4 th C	
33	HOR GW inc chamfered bowl + acute lattice dec. 135g, HOR OX 20g, HOR RW 17g, UNS GW 15g, UNS OX 20g,	207g	3 rd -4 th C	Later dec. styles.

Descriptions: HOR = Horningsea, CGC = Central Gaulish Samian, SGS = Southern Gaulish Samian, COL = Colchester, HAR = Harrold ware, HAD = Hadham ware, GW = Grey ware, OX = Oxidised ware, UNS = Unsourced, RW = Reduced ware, WS = White slip, BB = Black Burnished, SH = Shell tempered, WW = White ware.

The Tile (Ceramic Building Material)

A total of 2272g of tile, brick and daub was recovered. This is a substantial assemblage given the small area and number of contexts the assemblage is derived from. The tile fabric is the usual hard fired buff red and red-brown with a grey core and is almost certainly locally produced. Tegulae (square roof tile) was recovered, along with box flue tile (hypocaust). There was large numbers of floor tiles (and worked stone cf) recovered as well. Much of the material has been deliberately dumped, along with worked stone, presumably following demolition activities nearby. There is also a high percentage of burnt building materials, which also seems to indicate that buildings had been demolished or otherwise destroyed nearby.

APPENDIX B

BOTTL02 Tunbridge Lane, Bottisham, Environmental Report by Rachel Fosberry

Three samples were submitted for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that may be present. The samples were mainly taken from Roman deposits that looked as if they might be particularly productive. Each sample of ten litres was processed by bucket flotation. Flots were collected in 0.5mm meshes and the residues were retained in a 1.0mm mesh. The dried residues were scanned by eye and artefacts including bone, pot etc were picked out and reunited with the finds collected by hand during the excavation. The flots were briefly scanned under a binocular microscope at low power (x 14).

All three samples contained large amounts of charred material. However, a substantial amount remains in the residue and secondary flotation is therefore recommended for maximum recovery.

Each sample contained large quantities of wheat grains identified as *Triticum spelta*.

Sample 1, context (15)

This sample contained numerous glume bases and light chaff. A few spikelet forks were also present. The cereal grains were quite distorted and mainly fragmented. Weed seeds were present including *Chenopodium* sp. and some grass seeds. A small amount of animal bone was recovered from the residue.

Sample 2, context (35)

This sample also contained numerous glume bases and light chaff. Several spikelet forks were noted. The grains were distorted but preservation was quite good. Some weed seeds were present and grains of oats (*Avena* sp) were identified. These may have been a contaminant of the main crop of wheat. A few small animal bones were recovered from the residue.

Sample 3, context (19)

This sample consisted mainly of numerous fragments of charcoal <5mm, frequent fragments of <1.5mm and a few larger fragments of <3cm. Numerous wheat grains were present with reasonable preservation. Only a few glume bases were noted. Weed seeds included *Chenopodium* sp. and *Lithospermum arvense*. Several small animal bones and a few larger bones were recovered from the residue. Oyster shells, Roman pottery, 6 large flat-headed nails and two copper brooch pins were also recovered.

All three samples showed good archaeobotanical potential. Samples 1 and 2 both contained crop processing waste that may give clues about agricultural practices. Glume + weed seeds + grain suggests fine cleaning of cereals prior to cooking, indicating that crop processing on a domestic level was being carried out in the vicinity.

The flots from all the samples merit further investigation. A full assessment is recommended.



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