

# **Archaeological Excavation at Rokeby Primary School**

**Site Code: RURO18**

## **Summary Report**

**By John Carne**

Between Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July and Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook the excavation of an area measuring 30m by 30m at land adjacent to Rokeby Primary School, Rugby, Warwickshire, prior to the development of the site for sports pitches (Fig. 1; NGR: SP 50206 73422). The works were undertaken at the request of Anna Stocks, Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council, and in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Oxford Archaeology. The excavation area was targeted on NW-SE aligned ditch identified during the trial trench evaluation previously completed by OA. The ditch, which was only observed within one trench (Trench 16), contained the partial remains of a Roman pot dated to 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries A.D.

Overburden material was removed using a 20T 360° mechanical excavator to expose the archaeological horizon. In addition to the previously identified ditch of Roman date, a further NE-SW aligned linear feature and a number of other possible features of varying sizes were uncovered (Fig. 2).

A total six interventions were dug and recorded through the linear features and several of the other features were investigated.

The Roman ditch, 527, was 14m long, 1.1m wide and 0.4m deep with three distinct fills (Plate 1). It became gradually shallower before terminating within the excavation area, at which point it was only 0.28m wide and 0.08m deep (Plate 3). No artefacts were recovered from the interventions, so further excavation, equating to approximately 50% of the feature, was undertaken to aid artefact recovery but none were identified.

Upon excavation it became apparent that the larger, NE-SW aligned linear feature was formed of three intercutting ditches (Plate 2). Ditches 528 and 529 were present across, and extended beyond the limits of the excavation area. Ditch 528 measured 1.1m wide and 0.28m deep, and ditch 529 measured 0.25m wide and 0.08m deep. The third ditch, 530, entered the trench from the north-east baulk and terminated approximately 12m into the excavation area. The ditch measured 1.25m wide and 0.25m deep. There was no dating evidence from any of the ditches, although their alignment matches features identified as plough furrows and post-medieval field boundaries during the evaluation.

No other archaeological features were present, and investigation of the other features demonstrated them to be geological variations or the result of bioturbation (Plate 4).

The results of the excavation confirmed the presence of the Roman ditch recorded during the evaluation, the shallow nature of the features suggests they have been heavily truncated. The evaluation results identified a programme of cut and fill landscaping undertaken across the site associated with the levelling of the area to create playing fields during the construction of the original school in the late 1950s. The results of this excavation suggest that while archaeological remains are likely to have been present within the area, little to no trace has survived the previous landscaping of the site.



**Plate 1: Ditch 527, view to NW**



**Plate 2: Ditches 528, 529 and 530, view to SW**





**Plate 3: Terminus of ditch 527, view to NE.**



**Plate 4: Example of tested geological feature.**