

Chapter 5: Junction 9

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SITE LOCATION

The excavation at Junction 9, the interchange of the M1 with the A5/A5183, was located on the north-western side of the junction at NGR TL 090 146 (see Fig. 1.2). It comprised a long, relatively narrow area that extended alongside the exit slip road of the southbound carriageway and measured *c* 440 x 25m, encompassing a total area of 1.03ha (Fig. 5.1). The site was situated on the northern slope of the shallow valley of the River Ver, and sloped down from 125m aOD at its northern end to 105m aOD at the south, where it levelled off somewhat (Fig. 5.2). The area of the excavation was bisected by a haul road that crossed it *c* 160m from the northern end.

The excavation was carried out in a series of stages. This presented particular problems in terms of recording, as it was not possible to see the site in its entirety during excavation or, in some instances, to establish the full extent of individual features. The long and narrow shape of the area investigated also had consequences for the interpretation of the features revealed. The most serious obstacle was presented by the temporary haul road that extended obliquely across much of the southern part of the excavation. This was eventually re-routed and the area beneath it examined at a later stage in the project. However, it is clear that some truncation of the archaeological features beneath this road had occurred, particularly as the density of features uncovered was substantially less than in the adjacent areas. This was confirmed by a small number of features that were partly uncovered adjacent to the haul road, but whose continuations within its footprint were not found when this area was stripped.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

Complex of prehistoric features in the central part of the excavation (Figs 5.3-5)

A dense scatter of pits and postholes, as well as four gullies, was exposed in the southern part of the excavation (Figs 5.3-4). Many of these features contained assemblages of worked prehistoric flint, including seven particularly large assemblages with 192-654 pieces. However, the majority of the flint consisted of knapping debris, with few chronologically diagnostic pieces, and consequently only 13 features could be assigned a more precise date. Ten of these datable assemblages were late Mesolithic in

character and three were late Neolithic. The dating of five of the pits with typologically Mesolithic flint assemblages and one with a Neolithic assemblage was confirmed by the results of radiocarbon determinations (see Chapter 9). Five pits contained fragments of pottery, but these were very small and are likely to be intrusive, as may be the cereal grain from pit 2070 that yielded a radiocarbon determination (NZA 32695) of cal AD 120-380 (95.4% confidence; or cal AD 130-330, 68.2% confidence).

The main concentration of features was located south-west of the temporary haul road and comprised a total of 69 pits, and also two gullies, of which all but eight of the pits were investigated by hand excavation. A rather sparser scatter of 42 pits and a single gully was exposed within the footprint of the haul road, but only 11 of these features were excavated. A further 22 pits were located east of the haul road, and six of these were sampled by hand excavation. A separate cluster of 12 pits was situated further north and may represent a separate area of activity.

The pits were typically circular or oval in plan, with moderate or steep sides. They were rarely of any great depth, and although the deepest pit had a depth of 0.6m, the average depth was 0.25m and few examples measured more than 0.35m deep. The larger examples were generally oval in shape and were 1.5-2m long, although they were no deeper than the smaller examples and typically had rather flat bases. The smaller pits were more frequently circular or sub-circular in shape and varied from steep-sided features to more shallow scoops, although the latter could be the truncated bases of pits that were formerly more substantial. It is possible that some of these features may in fact have been tree-throw holes rather than deliberately dug pits. Although the regular shapes and fairly straight-sided profiles of many of the features suggest an anthropogenic origin, some had more irregular forms, such as the banana shape of pit 2297 and, to a lesser extent, the D shape of pit 2094, which could be considered to be characteristic of tree-throw holes. Most of the pits were filled with a single deposit of orange-brown clay and flint gravel that was not dissimilar to the surrounding natural geology. This suggests that each pit was backfilled in a single event, and the absence of any primary fills or other accumulation of sediment in the bases of the majority of the pits indicates that, in most instances, this was done

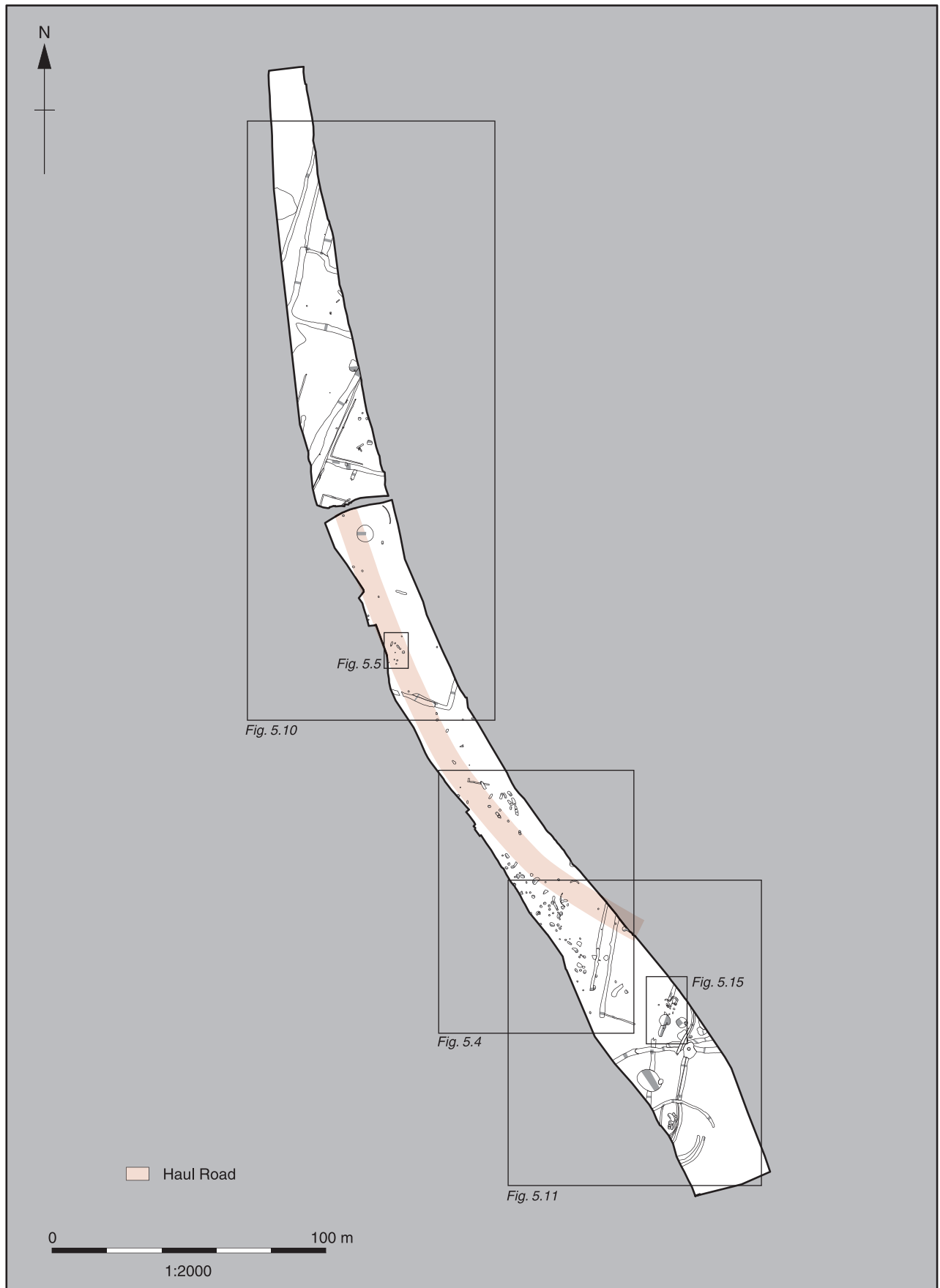


Fig. 5.1 Junction 9, all archaeological features



Fig. 5.2 Junction 9, view to the south along the northern part of the excavation



Fig. 5.3 Junction 9, prehistoric pits being excavated in the southern part of the excavation

when little time had elapsed following the digging of the feature.

Many of the pits may also have been dug as post settings. Indisputable evidence for this was limited to only a small number of features, but definite post-pipes were observed in the sections of three pits (2070, 2080 and 2182), and in two other examples (2078 and 2337) deposits of flint gravel were concentrated on one side of the feature and could conceivably have served as packing. A more tenuous post-pipe was identified in pit 2110. In addition, the middle part of the base of pit 2148 appeared to form a distinct socket, while a possible ramp on the northern side of the pit may have been intended to facilitate the insertion of a post. Indeed, the shape and dimensions of many of the pits would be consistent with such a function, although the plan of a coherent structure could not be discerned from their distribution.

The northern group comprised a cluster of 12 pits situated *c* 80m from the main concentration (Fig. 5.5). Two of the pits in this group were oval (2454 and 2510), but the majority were more circular and relatively small in diameter, and were generally of a size that would be consistent with them functioning as postholes. Only four pits were sampled by excavation, including one of the oval examples, and these were all found to be very shallow, the deepest measuring only 0.2m. Few artefacts were recovered from this group. Only two of the excavated pits yielded worked flint, comprising seven pieces from pit 2454 and three from pit 2450, and lithics were also collected from the surfaces of unexcavated pits 2506 and 2510. An assemblage of late Iron Age and early Roman pottery, amounting to six sherds (9g), was recovered from pit 2450, but the small quantity and sherd size are consistent with this material being intrusive.

Mesolithic features (Figs 5.4 and 5.6-8)

The seven pits (2064, 2090, 2094, 2096, 2100, 2110 and 2316) for which Mesolithic dates were estab-

lished were all located within the main concentration of pits (Fig. 5.4). With the exception of the sub-circular pit 2090 (Fig. 5.6), they were all oval in shape and toward the upper end of the range of sizes, with dimensions ranging between 1.6 x 1.15m and 2.9 x 1.7m (Fig. 5.7). Pit 2094 was the deepest, at 0.55m, but the others were all rather shallower, with depths of between 0.2m and 0.4m. This group of features included six of the seven pits that yielded particularly large flint assemblages.

Pit 2094 produced the largest assemblage, comprising 654 worked flints weighing 662g. This was a large pit, measuring 2.9 x 1.7 x 0.55m, and was recorded as having two main fills (2093 and 2162), although they differed only in the proportion of flint gravel inclusions and may in reality have been a single deposit. A total of 308 pieces of worked flint were recovered from the lower fill (2162) and a further 338 from the upper fill (2093). Six flakes were also recovered from a pocket of flint gravel near the surface of the feature (2154). The assemblage included two microliths, a number of narrow blades and bladelets and nine cores. The Mesolithic date of this assemblage was supported by a radiocarbon determination (NZA-32690) of 5230-4980 cal BC (95.4% confidence; or 5210-4990 cal BC, 68.2% confidence). A few charred fragments of hazel nutshell were also recovered from soil samples, as were some cereal remains, although the latter are likely to have been intrusive.

The next largest flint assemblage was the group of 409 flints from pit 2064. This pit was somewhat unusual in having a very gravelly deposit (2176) filling much of its southern half, overlain by a more conventional fill (2063) that occupied the remainder of the feature. A total of 53 pieces of worked flint was recovered from the earlier fill, but the majority of the assemblage came from context 2063, including a microlith, eight cores and more than 20 narrow blades and bladelets. Hazel nutshell fragments were again present, and a small quantity of oak charcoal was identified. Intrusive cereal fragments, in this case identified as spelt, were also

observed. A radiocarbon determination (NZA-32800) of 5290-4940 cal BC (95.4% confidence; or 5220-5000 cal BC, 68.2% confidence) was obtained for one of the fragments of hazel nutshell.

Pit 2100 was another flat-based, oval-shaped pit which measured 1.8 x 1.1 x 0.3m. It contained a single fill (2099) from which 356 pieces of worked

flint were recovered during hand excavation. This assemblage included some 15 blades and blade-like flakes, a single microlith and two core rejuvenation pieces. No soil samples were collected from this feature.

Pit 2316 was similar to pit 2100, but slightly smaller, and also possessed a single fill (2317). A

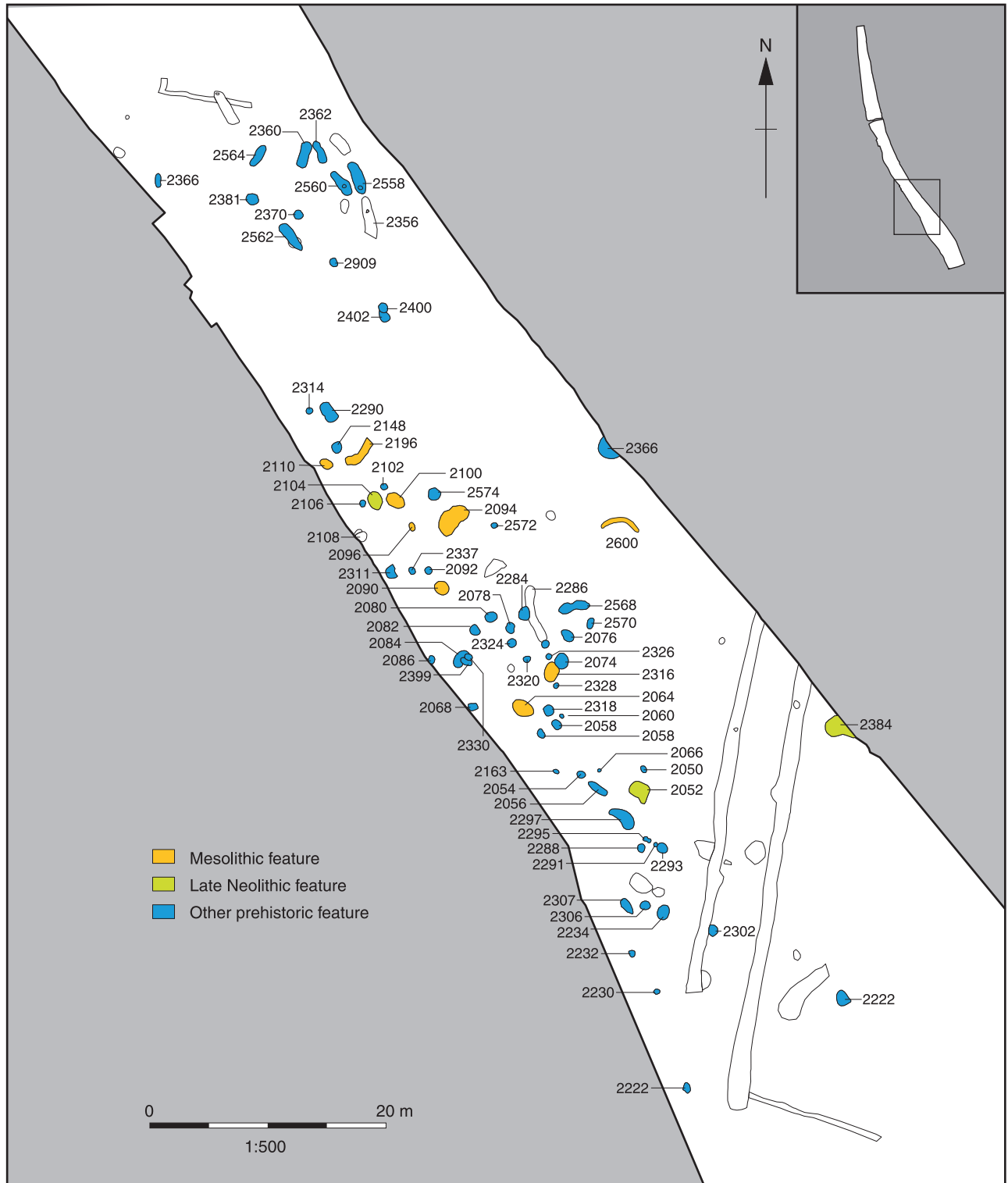


Fig. 5.4 Junction 9, plan of the main concentration of prehistoric pits in the central area of the excavation

total of 216 worked flints, including blades, bladelets, cores and a microlith were recovered, and sieving of soil samples resulted in the collection of fragments of hazel nutshell and oak charcoal. A radiocarbon determination (NZA-32692) of 5210-4930 cal BC (95.4% confidence; or 5200-4990 cal BC, 68.2% confidence) was obtained for one of the fragments of hazel nutshell.

Pit 2090 measured 1.8 x 1.25m, and at 0.4m deep was one of the deeper pits. Its fill (2089) yielded an assemblage of 226 worked flints, 12 of which were classified as blades and blade-like flakes, and are indicative of a late Mesolithic date.

Pit 2110 may have been dug as a post setting, as a possible post-pipe (2165) was identified, consisting of relatively stone-free soil that contrasted with the

more gravelly packing material (2109) around it. The post-pipe appeared to be associated with a socket in the otherwise flat base of the feature. The assemblage of 32 pieces of worked flint from this feature came from both deposits and included a Mesolithic obliquely blunted point and a blade, whilst a single-platform core came from the post-pipe.

The smallest of the Mesolithic features was pit 2096, which was sub-circular in plan, measuring 0.8 x 0.5 x 0.26m. It contained an assemblage of 56 worked flints, which again included blades and narrow flakes. Hazel nutshells were recovered from a bulk soil sample and one of these yielded a radiocarbon date (NZA-32691) of 5310-5000 cal BC (95.4% confidence; or 5230-5060 cal BC, 68.2% confidence).

A further six pits (2362, 2330, 2068, 2398, 2058 and 2299) each contained a microlith, but the lithic assemblage from these features included no other diagnostic pieces that would enable them to be attributed conclusively to the Mesolithic period. Moreover, in a single pit (2384) a microlith was associated with an otherwise late Neolithic flint assemblage.

Four curvilinear gullies (2196, 2287, 2356 and 2600) were identified within the pit complex, three of which produced lithic assemblages indicative of a Mesolithic date (Fig. 5.8). Gully 2287 was slightly curved and extended for a total length of c 5m. It was 0.8m wide and 0.3m deep, with a slightly irregular profile and a concave base. It contained a single fill of gravelly clay (2071) from which were recovered 187 worked flints, including four multi-platform cores and a small number of blades and blade-like flakes. The gully was cut half way along its length by pit 2284 and at its southern end by pit 2286.

The northern end of gully 2196 had been destroyed by the truncation associated with the temporary haul road. The surviving part of the feature was c 3m long and 0.6m wide, with a depth of 0.35m. It appeared to have silted up gradually, and contained a gravelly lower fill (2142) that was overlain by a main fill of reddish-brown clay (2195). An assemblage of 192 pieces of worked flint was recovered from this gully, including a microlith, ten blades and blade-like flakes, and two core-related flakes. Most of these flints came from the upper fill, from which a fragment of hazel nutshell yielded a radiocarbon determination (NZA-32689) of 5220-4850 cal BC (95.4% confidence; or 5210-4940 cal BC, 68.2% confidence).

Gully 2356 was located to the north of the main concentration of pits, on the eastern side of the haul road. It was c 5m long, 0.83m wide and 0.31m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It was filled with a deposit of gravelly clay that contained a total of 158 worked pieces with cores, bladelets and two microliths present. Two elongated pits or short lengths of gully (2358 and 2558) lay on the same alignment as this feature, and it is possible that they represented three segments of a segmented gully. Feature 2558 was not excavated, but feature 2358

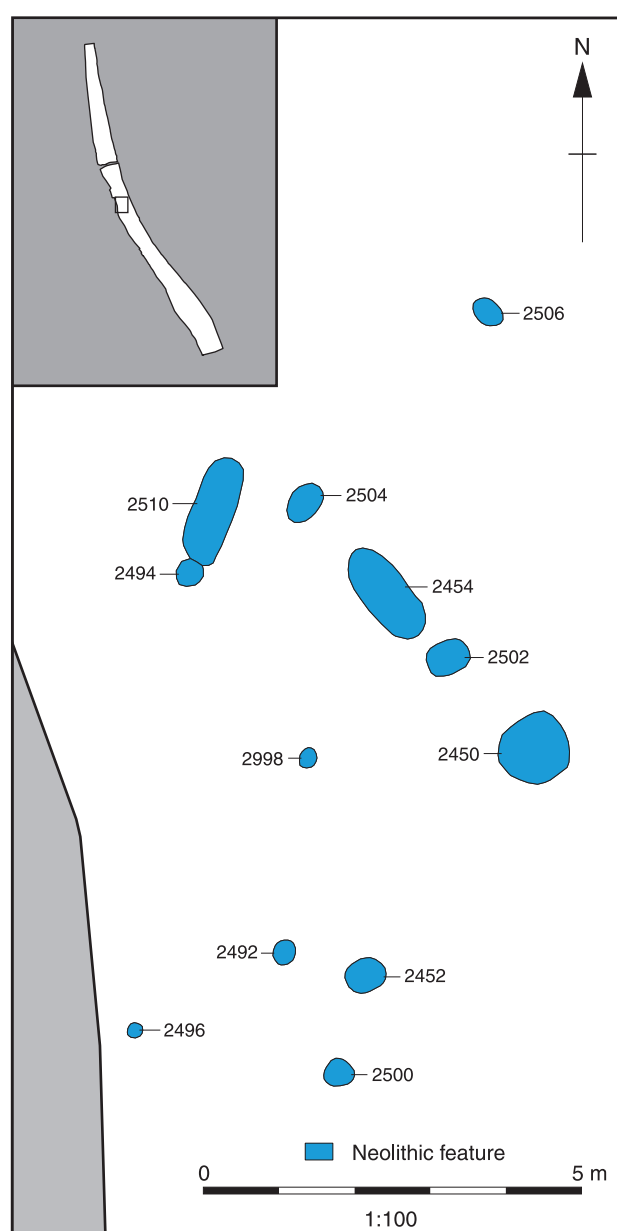


Fig. 5.5 Junction 9, plan of the northern group of prehistoric pits



Fig. 5.6 Junction 9, late Mesolithic pit 2090, viewed from the north-east

was found to have a similar profile to gully 2356 and was slightly shallower with a 0.25m depth. A total of 25 pieces of worked flint was recovered from feature 2358, as well as 18 collected from the surface of feature 2558, but none of these were chronologically diagnostic. However, several other elongated pits were situated in the immediate vicinity and it is possible that the shared alignment of these features with gully 2356 is merely fortuitous.

Gully 2600 measured 3.5m in length and was quite sharply curved. It had steep sides and a flat base and was 0.15m deep. It was filled with a single, homogenous deposit of silt and gravel from which no finds were recovered.

Late Neolithic pits (Figs 5.4 and 5.9)

Three pits within the main concentration were attributed to the late Neolithic period (2052 and 2104), as well as a third pit (2384) at the eastern edge of the excavation.

Pit 2052 was located towards the northern end of the main concentration of pits. It was somewhat irregular in plan and measured 1.7 x 1.1m. It was steep sided with a flat base and was the deepest of the three late Neolithic pits, with a depth of 0.5m. A thin layer of flint gravel, derived from the substrate into which the feature had been cut, lay across the base, to a depth of 0.08m, above which the remainder of the pit was filled with a deposit of silty soil (2051). This latter deposit contained a total of 204 worked flints including 11 scrapers, as well as 152 pieces of burnt unworked flint. The broad nature of many of the flakes from the pit and the presence of end and side scrapers suggests a late Neolithic date, and a radiocarbon determination (NZA-32683) of 2620-2340 cal BC (95.4% confidence; or 2570-2460 cal BC, 68.2% confidence) was obtained for a fragment of hazelnut shell from fill 2051.

Pit 2104 was oval in plan, measuring 1.6 x 1.1m, but was extremely shallow with a depth of only 0.15m. It contained a small assemblage (30 pieces) of worked flint including a late Neolithic chisel arrowhead (SF 2027).

Pit 2384 was only partly exposed at the eastern edge of the excavation and, like pit 2052, appeared to be irregular in plan. It measured at least 1.7 x 1.55m, but was only 0.2m deep. The assemblage of 69 pieces of worked flint recovered from its fill included six multi-platform cores indicative of a late Neolithic date.

Later prehistoric activity

A small quantity of late Bronze Age-early Iron Age and middle Iron Age pottery was recovered, suggesting that there was limited later prehistoric activity preceding the main late Iron Age-early Roman occupation phase. This pottery came from: the tops of two Mesolithic pits (2100 and 2316); a Roman pit (2108); an undated, pit within the complex of earlier prehistoric features; early Roman ditch 2736; and long-lived Roman ditch 2490. While the fresh character of a few of the sherds probably indicates that the activity from which they derive was located nearby, no features could be confidently assigned to this period.

Late Iron Age and Roman agricultural activity

The excavation revealed part of a complex of enclosures, trackways and associated boundary ditches representing an agricultural landscape that appears to have been in continuous use for several centuries, from the late Iron Age or early Roman period through to at least the later 3rd century. Although stratigraphic and ceramic dating evidence suggests periodic refurbishment of these features and alterations to individual parts of the

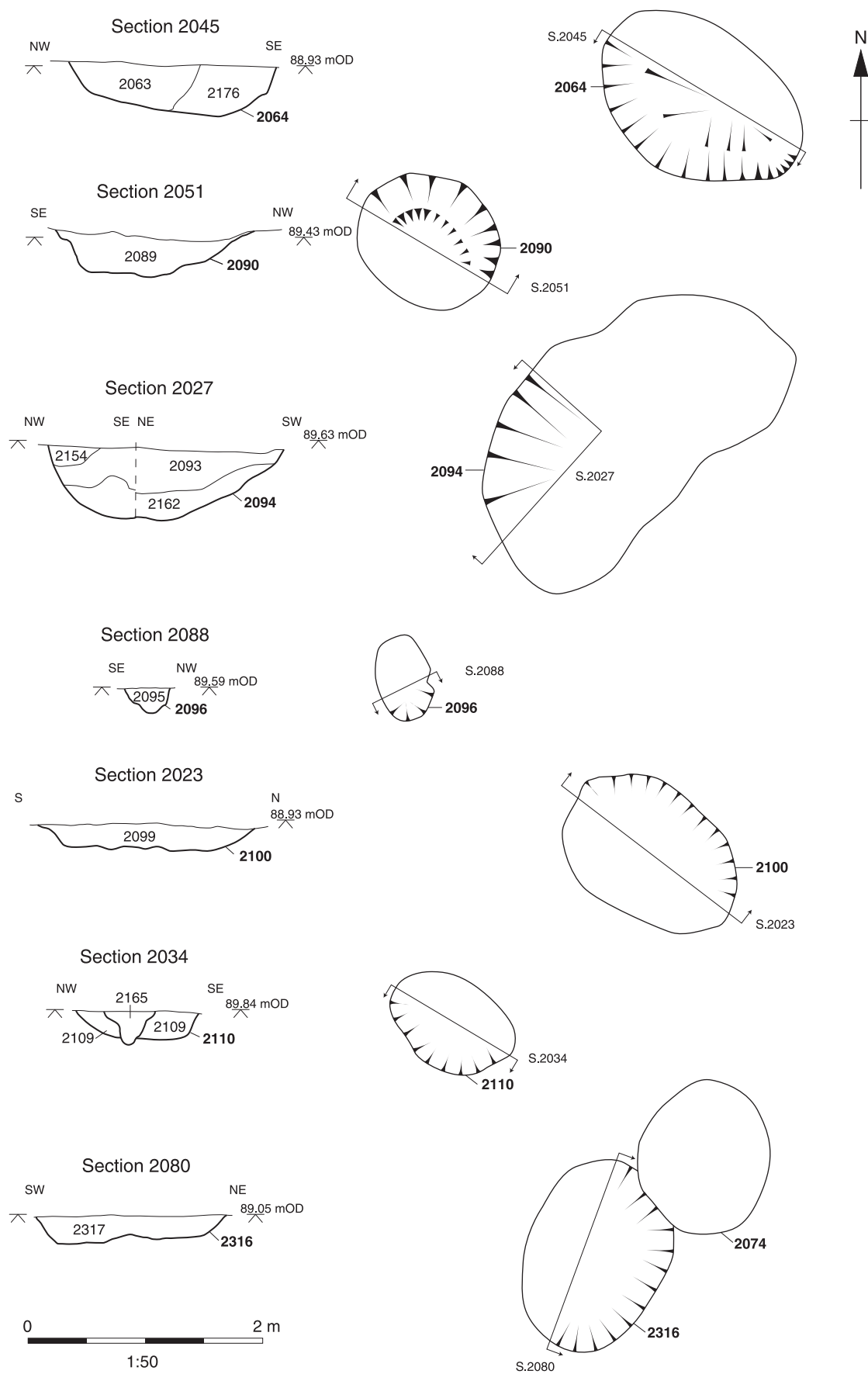


Fig. 5.7 Junction 9, detailed plans and sections of Mesolithic pits 2064, 2090, 2094, 2096, 2100, 2110 and 2316

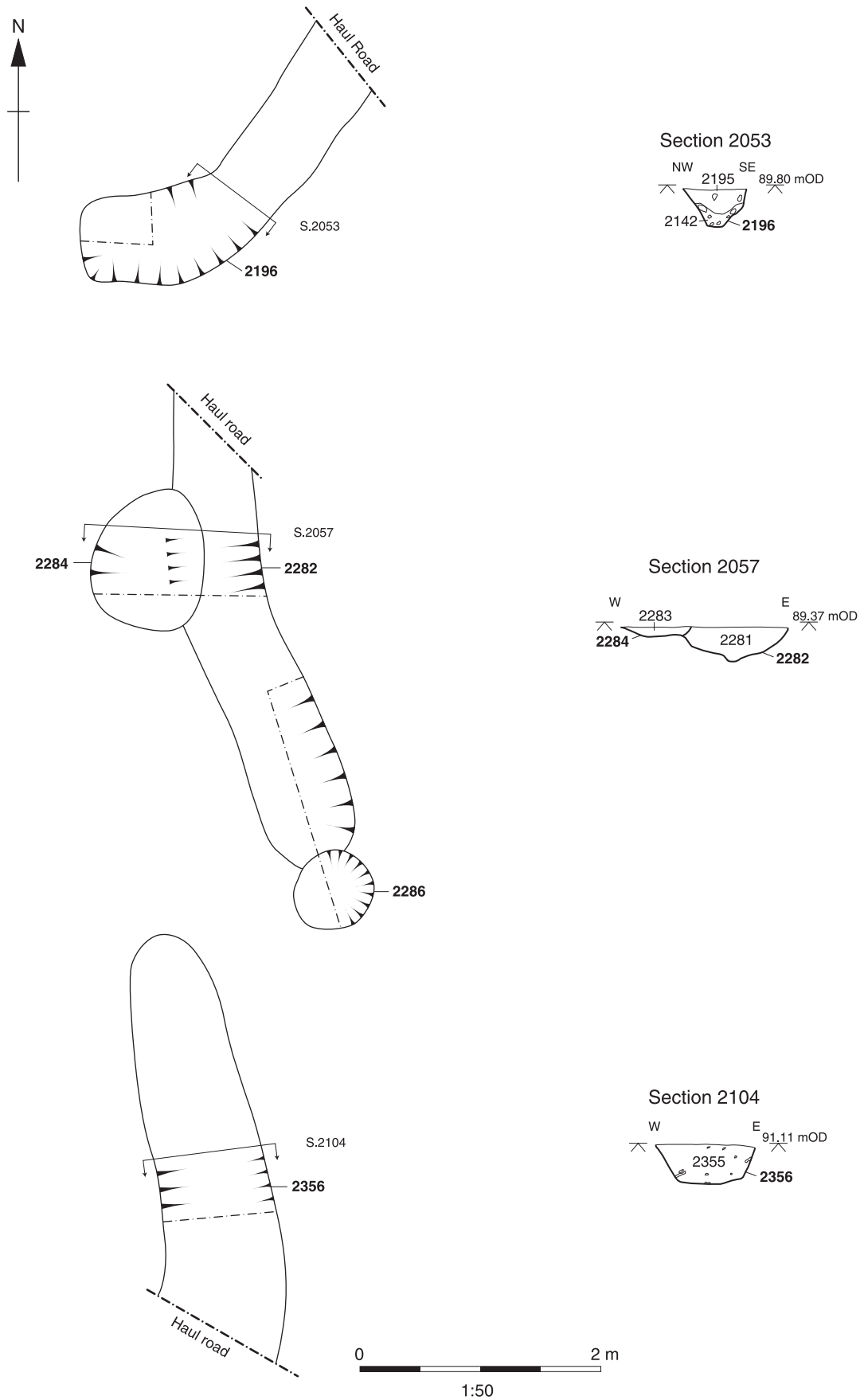


Fig. 5.8 Junction 9, detailed plans and sections of gullies attributed to the late Mesolithic period

complex, the basic organisation of the landscape remained essentially the same throughout its use. This system followed the NNE-SSW orientation of the original boundary ditches and this persistence between phases suggests that the boundaries were marked by above-ground features, such as banks and/or hedges, which continued to exist into subsequent phases, after the associated ditches had silted up.

The earliest phase of the field system (late Iron Age-early Roman) (Figs 5.10-11)

The initial phase of the field system comprised three principal boundary ditches (2188, 2739 and 2745/2747) that were laid out on the slope of the valley of the River Ver. These boundaries lay on roughly parallel NNE-SSW orientations and were

associated with a small number of ditches defining intervening subdivisions. The precise date at which these boundaries and associated features were first established is somewhat uncertain. The ditches which defined them were the earliest features in their respective stratigraphic sequences, but contained little or no artefactual material. Where pottery was present it consisted of fragments from 'Belgic', largely grog-tempered jars with a broad late Iron Age-early Roman date range, probably ending no later than AD 70. It is impossible to be certain whether these assemblages were deposited before or after the Roman conquest, although the absence of demonstrably Romanised types could be interpreted as indicating an earlier date. In two instances (ditches 2594 and 2749) sherds of post-conquest date were present, but these features may represent boundaries that were added after the

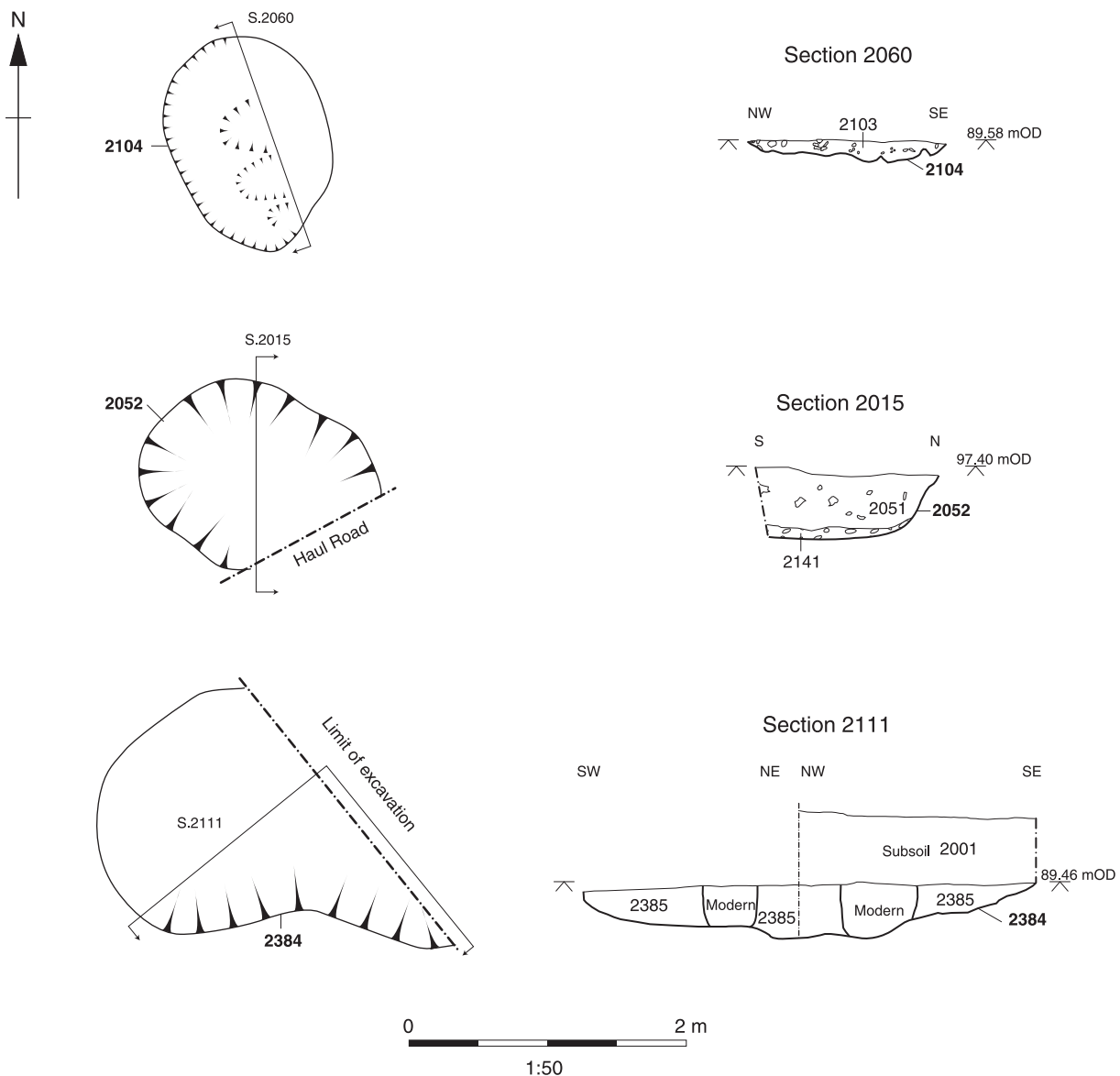


Fig. 5.9 Junction 9, detailed plans and sections of pits attributed to the late Neolithic period

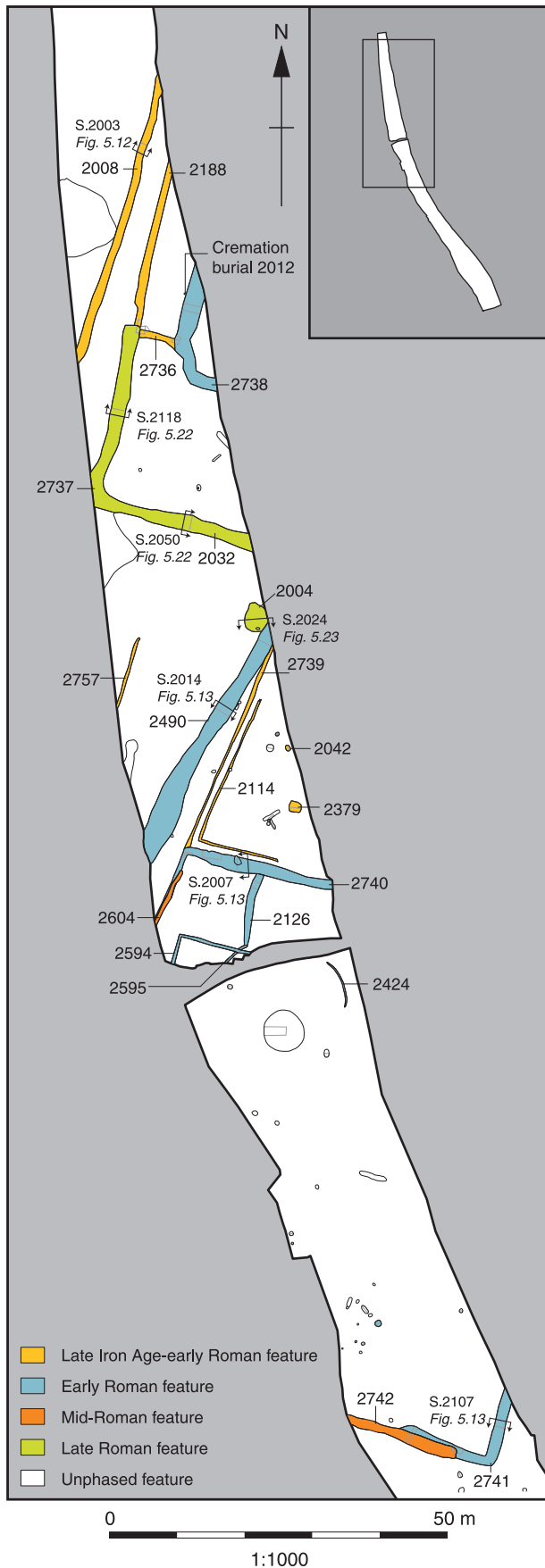


Fig. 5.10 Junction 9, late Iron Age and Roman activity (northern end of Junction 9)

main divisions had been established rather than necessarily indicating a post-conquest date for the entire complex.

Establishment of boundary ditches in the northern part of the excavation (Figs 5.10 and 5.12)

The most westerly of these boundaries was defined by ditch 2188, part of which was uncovered near the northern end of the excavation. The ditch was exposed for a length of *c* 25m, and continued to the north beyond the edge of the excavation. To the south it had been cut away by ditch 2737, which appeared to represent a redefinition of this part of the boundary during the later part of the Roman period. It is possible that ditch 2188 defined the eastern side of a trackway, the western side of which was represented by ditch 2008. Certainly the two ditches were approximately parallel, in addition to which they were of similar proportions, both measuring *c* 1.1m wide and 0.5m deep with V-shaped profiles. The putative trackway widened a little at its western end and very slight changes in the ditch alignments adjacent to the site baulk may indicate that the trackway branched or perhaps turned to the west, just beyond the excavated area. No finds were recovered from either ditch, but two small fragments of pottery dating from the late Iron Age or early Roman period were recovered from ditch 2736. This latter ditch extended ESE at right-angles to the two ditches (2008 and 2188) and may have been a return of ditch 2188, or a contemporary boundary that branched off it. This could not be confirmed, however, as the relationship between ditches 2188 and 2736 did not survive, having been cut away by the digging of ditch 2737. Ditch 2736 had also been truncated to the east by a second later Roman ditch (2738).

An isolated cremation burial (2012) was located *c* 5.5m east of ditch 2188. The burial had been substantially truncated by subsequent ploughing, with the result that only the lowest 0.05m of the base survived and the western half had been mostly destroyed. The fragmentary cremated remains, probably from a single adult individual, had been placed in a late Iron Age pedestal urn, of which only part of the base survived. The soil matrix around the bone fragments comprised clean reddish-brown silty clay (2013), from which only a few small flecks of charcoal were recovered through sieving.

The next major boundary was represented by ditches 2114 and 2739, which were not quite parallel with ditch 2188, but lay on a generally similar orientation *c* 30m to the east. These ditches were only 0.7-1m apart and were clearly too close together to have defined the sides of a trackway. They may instead have flanked a bank formed from their up-cast that was perhaps surmounted by a hedgerow. The dimensions recorded for ditch 2739 were rather varied, ranging from 0.76m wide and 0.56m deep at its northern end to a depth of only 0.27m further south, perhaps indicating some degree of differen-

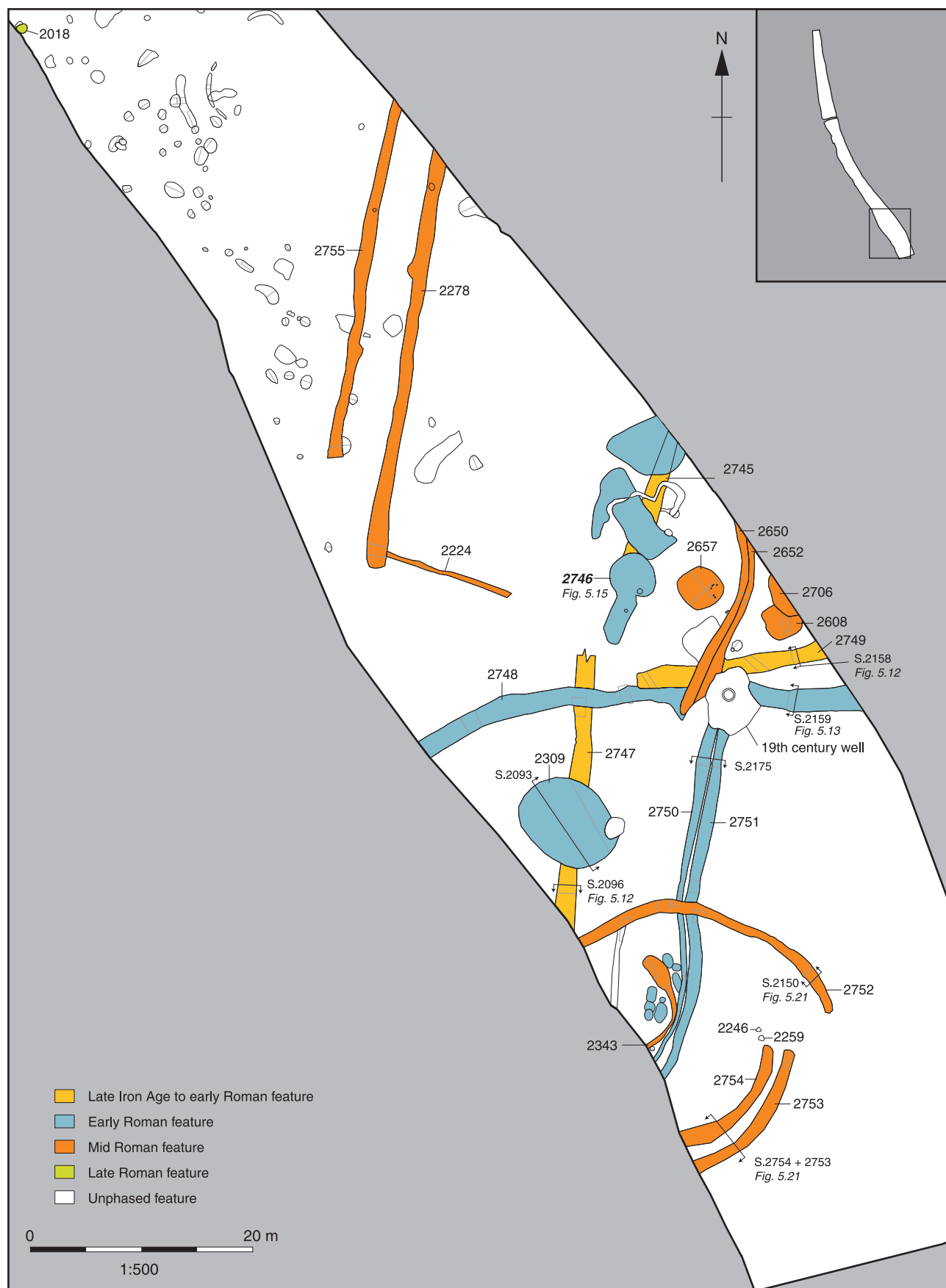


Fig. 5.11 Junction 9, late Iron Age and Roman activity (southern end of Junction 9)

tial truncation. The greatest of these depths would be consistent with those of the ditches defining the putatively contemporary trackway to the north-west. The ditch was exposed for a total length of *c* 33m and, like ditch 2188, continued to the north beyond the edge of the excavation, and was cut away to the south by a later ditch (2740) that may represent a redefinition of part of the same boundary. A small assemblage of very fragmentary late Iron Age-early Roman pottery, weighing 83g, was recovered from its fill. Ditch 2114 was considerably less substantial, measuring only 0.3m wide and 0.15m deep. It extended for *c* 22.5m, terminating or petering out within the site at its northern end and turning through a right angle to the east for a distance of 12m at its southern end, presumably to define part of an enclosure or other subdivision abutting the eastern side of the main boundary.

Two features located within the area enclosed by ditch 2114 contained pottery dating from the late Iron Age-early Roman period. Pit 2042 was a shallow scoop only 0.1m deep, which contained six small pottery sherds and a small amount of animal bone and sheep or goat teeth, while pit 2379 was somewhat more substantial, measuring 1.8m in diameter and 0.45m deep. A single pottery sherd was recovered from its fill (2380).

An unexcavated ditch (2757) was situated *c* 18m west of the boundary defined by ditches 2114 and 2739 on a parallel orientation and may therefore have been contemporary. The feature was exposed for a length of 11m, apparently terminating or petering out at its northern end and extending beyond the edge of the excavation to the south. No features in the central part of the excavation were attributed to this phase.

Establishment of boundary ditches in the southern part of the excavation (Figs 5.11-12)

At the southern end of the excavation, ditches 2745 and 2747 are likely to have defined a boundary contemporary with the initial phase of the principal boundaries in the northern part of the site, and on a similar NNE-SSW orientation. Ditch 2747 extended for *c* 24m from the south-west edge of the site. It is unclear if the ditch terminated or was simply obscured beyond this point. A similar alignment was maintained further north by ditch 2745, but this feature was heavily truncated by a series of irregular hollows and soil spreads, and at its southern end was completely removed by the later kiln/oven 2746 (see below). It is possible that ditches 2745 and 2747 were part of the same feature, but if so its line was lost just to the south-west of the kiln. Certainly they lay on approximately the same alignment, and both ditches were substantial features, measuring more than 1.5m wide and 0.7m deep. Ditch 2749 lay on an east-west alignment and is likely to have defined a boundary arranged at a right angle to that represented by ditches 2745 and 2747. It extended for *c* 17m from the eastern edge of the excavation

and terminated at its western end, 3.8m from ditch 2747. It was relatively insubstantial, with a depth of only 0.2m, and yielded a small assemblage of pottery.

Early Roman activity (c AD 43-120)

During the early decades of the Roman period, alterations were made to the existing field system. In the northern part of the excavation new ditches were dug that appear to have defined rectilinear enclosures lying on the same orientations as the earlier boundaries, and more extensive alterations were made to the boundaries at the southern end of the site.

Enclosure defined by ditches 2740 and 2741 (Figs 5.10 and 5.13)

Two L-shaped ditches (2740 and 2741) were established that appear to have defined the north-western and south-eastern corners of a large enclosure that measured at least 70 x 70m. The north-western corner was represented by ditch 2740, which extended for 22m from the eastern edge of the excavation before turning through a right angle to the south and extending for a further 12m, continuing beyond the western edge of the site. The latter part of the ditch lay on the same alignment as the earlier boundary, defined by ditches 2114 and 2739, and it is probable that the digging of the new ditch had removed the southern part of those features. The ditch was quite wide and flat based, measuring 1.5m across and up to 0.46m deep. It was

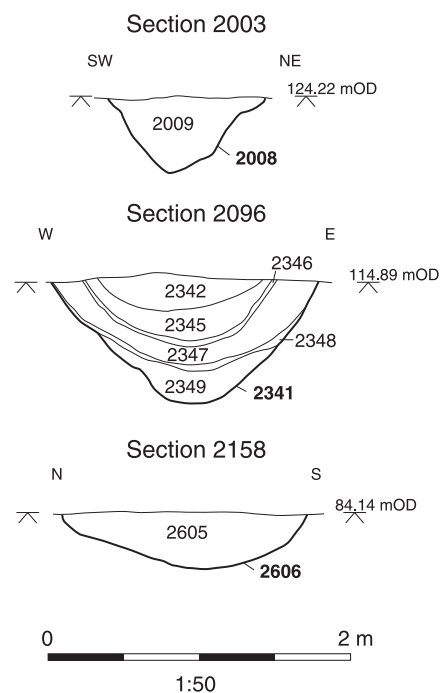


Fig. 5.12 Sections of late Iron Age-early Roman boundary ditches

recorded as having two and, in some places three fills, the earliest of which contained a lid in Verulamium region white ware suggesting that the feature was dug after *c* AD 50. The subsequent fills contained larger quantities of pottery indicating that the ditch had silted up gradually over the course of the 2nd century. Ditch 2741, which defined the south-eastern corner of the enclosure, extended for 11m from the eastern edge of the site before turning through a right angle to the west and then apparently terminating some 13m west of the turn. This left an opening measuring at least 8m, between the end of the ditch and the western edge of the excavation. This opening may represent an entrance into the enclosure or may have been blocked by hurdles or a hedgerow with no accompanying ditch. The ditch was of similar width to ditch 2740 and was 0.47-0.78m deep. The pottery assemblage recovered from ditch 2741 was much smaller than that from ditch 2740 and may reflect a shorter period of use, as at least part of the ditch was superseded by ditch 2742 during the 2nd century, whereas ditch 2740 continued in use.

Curvilinear gullies (2595 and 2424) within the enclosure (Fig. 5.10)

Two lengths of curvilinear gully, that may have defined or formed parts of one or more circular structures, were located in the northern part of the enclosure. Gully 2595 was a curving feature located immediately north of the haul road that bisected the excavation. The gully was exposed for a length of only 4.2m and continued beyond the excavated area into the footprint of the haul road, but did not extend into the area on the south side of this route. Fifty sherds (182g) of pottery were recovered from it and these included sherds that could only be attributed broadly to the late Iron Age-early Roman period that were mixed with pieces that date from the early decades of the Roman period. A similar curving gully (2424) was located *c* 12m to the east, to the south of the haul road. It was not certain whether these gullies were the remains of two separate structures or whether they were parts of a single, larger enclosure. Neither length of gully survived to a depth of more than 0.19m and it is possible that other portions of these features had been destroyed by truncation caused by more recent ploughing. No evidence was recovered from either gully to suggest that they were associated with domestic occupation, and they were not obviously associated with any other features.

Other features within the enclosure (Fig. 5.10)

The curvilinear gullies were not long lived, as feature 2595 was cut by a field boundary ditch (2594) which contained an assemblage of pottery dated to the early part of the Roman period. This was an L-shaped ditch that lay on the same orientation as the main enclosure and may have defined a

subdivision within it. The ditch was particularly steep sided and measured 0.6m wide and 0.6m deep. It may have been associated with a wide, but shallow, ditch (2126) with a 0.08m depth that branched off the south side of ditch 2740, and extended between this boundary and ditch 2594.

The only discrete and possible contemporary feature was a shallow, concave pit or scoop (2450) that was located in the southern part of the enclosure. It measured 0.9m in diameter, by 0.11m deep, and had a distinctly darker-grey fill than the prehistoric pits in this part of the site. It contained six small sherds of pottery (9g) including two of greyware, as well as a small quantity of ceramic building material.

Possible enclosure defined by ditch 2738 (Fig. 5.10)

Ditch 2738 may have defined the south-western corner of another enclosure. As exposed, ditch 2738 was L-shaped in plan, albeit with a curving rather than a right-angled corner. It extended north-south for 17.5m from the baulk at the edge of the excavation and turned to the east, extending for a further 7.5m before continuing beyond the same baulk. In doing so, it removed the eastern part of the earlier ditch 2736 and it was uncertain whether it followed an alignment initially established by that earlier ditch, or whether it represented an entirely new boundary. The new ditch was certainly more substantial than any of its predecessors in this part of the site, measuring up to 2.7m wide and 1m deep. The pottery assemblage from its three fills was small and consisted mostly of earlier material, but included a sherd from a greyware jar dated to after AD 120 from its uppermost fill, indicating that it remained open into the 2nd century.

Linear boundary ditch 2490 (Figs 5.10, 5.13 and 5.24)

A substantial linear boundary ditch (2490) was established adjacent to the western side of the enclosure defined by ditches 2740 and 2741. The ditch measured 2.55m wide and as much as 1.2m deep and extended across the entire width of the excavation. It diverged somewhat from the orientation established by the ditches of the earlier phases, but may have been intended to replace the boundary formerly defined by ditches 2739 and 2740, albeit on a slightly eccentric alignment.

The ditch was open for some considerable period of time, at least into the 3rd century, and appears to have been used as a locale for the dumping of domestic debris, presumably from nearby residential occupation. In contrast with the generally small quantities of pottery recovered from the other ditches, ditch 2490 yielded a very large assemblage of 2262 sherds (33kg), amounting to more than half the pottery from the Junction 9 excavation. Much of this material (more than 13kg) was recovered from a dump of charcoal-rich soil (2139), which also yielded an assemblage of charred plant remains that

may have derived from crop processing, cooking and other domestic activities. An iron disc (see Fig. 7.23.9) was a notable individual object from this deposit. Significant quantities of cultural material were also recovered from the subsequent fills, particularly the uppermost fill. The ditch also contained a small quantity of ceramic building material and was one of the few features from which animal bone was recovered, albeit not in large quantities, as well as an assemblage of metal finds that included a carpenter's gouge (SF 2047), an armlet (SF 2008), a copper-alloy bow brooch (SF 2011) and possibly part of a hipposandal.

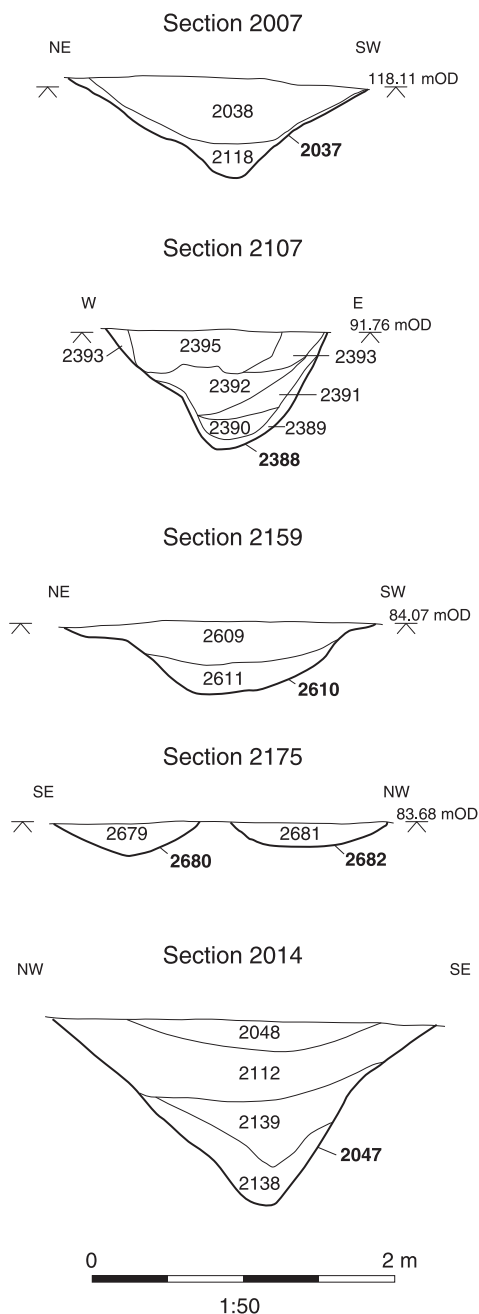


Fig. 5.13 Sections of early Roman boundary ditches

Reorganisation of the boundaries in the southern part of the excavation (Figs 5.10-11 and 5.13)

The boundaries that had previously been established at the southern end of the site did not continue in use into this period, as they were slighted by a series of new features. The principal element of the new arrangement was a slightly circuitous ditch (2748) that extended across the area of the excavation on an east-west alignment, and cut across the boundary that had previously been defined by ditch 2747. Ditch 2748 measured up to 2.2m wide and 0.4m deep, with steep sides and a flat base, and yielded an assemblage of 19 sherds (176g) of pottery, mostly small but including three slightly larger pieces from an oxidised curving-sided bowl that is unlikely to date from before c AD 70.

A pair of closely spaced gullies (2750 and 2751) extended south from ditch 2748. They may have been contemporary features that branched off the main boundary ditch, although the stratigraphic relationship had been destroyed by the construction of a modern well. The gullies, both c 1m wide and 0.2-0.3m deep, contained no artefacts, but they were both earlier than ditch 2752, which dated from no earlier than c AD 120. This, combined with the fact that they apparently respected the boundary defined by ditch 2748 and had a slightly curvilinear character reminiscent of that ditch, suggests that they date to the early Roman period.

Toward their southern end, the two gullies deviated slightly, apparently in order to bypass a group of shallow hollows (2212, 2214, 2248, 2250, 2252, 2333, 2339 and 2363). The dimensions of these hollows varied from a diameter of 0.5m, to 1.8 x 1.05m, but none was more than 0.18m deep, and they had similar dark brown fills. It is uncertain whether they were archaeological in origin or were natural features, such as tree-throw holes, but the deviation of gullies 2750 and 2751 indicates that they were in existence at the time the gullies were dug. A single small sherd of Nene Valley colour-coated ware recovered from pit 2248 may be intrusive.

Kiln/oven 2746 (Figs 5.11 and 5.14-17)

It is likely that during this phase structure 2746, which has been interpreted as a kiln or oven, and its associated features were constructed and used. The function of the structure provided something of a conundrum. It was rather too large for a domestic structure and was not situated within a domestic context, but neither was there clear evidence for an industrial use in the form of metalworking debris or ceramic wasters, or for a role in crop processing, as very few charred plant remains were recovered.

The structure was located a short distance north of ditch 2748, and had been dug into the fill of ditch 2745, which had clearly silted up by this time. The installation comprised a roughly circular pit, presumably the firing chamber, that measured 4m in diameter and 1.2m deep, with a flue 4.7m long



Fig. 5.14 Junction 9, kiln 2746, viewed from the north-east

and 1.7m wide projecting from its southern side. The flue sloped down from ground level at its southern end to a maximum depth of 0.7m where it joined the chamber. A pair of stone piers (2642 and 2709) had been constructed flanking the opening between the pit and the flue. These were formed from large, naturally occurring nodules of unshaped flint, and reddening of the lower nodules attested to the high temperatures reached within the structure. The base and the lower parts of the sides of the firing chamber were similarly discoloured, and the earliest deposit within it comprised a thin, 0.05m-thick, deposit of charcoal, presumably spent fuel from the final firing of the structure (2721). A similar deposit (2725) was located on the base of the flue, where it overlay a thin layer of chalk rubble (2726) and a deposit of purple, heat-discoloured soil (2730), which was situated amongst a sequence of localised deposits of naturally accumulated silt at the mouth of the flue (2727, 2729, 2731 and 2732). Deposit 2721 was immediately overlain by chalk rubble (2720). This may have derived from partial collapse of the rear, northern side of the firing chamber, or possibly indicates the use of the oven for lime production. Either way, evidence for further use of the kiln was provided by the deposition of a layer of red, heat-discoloured soil (2714), which spilled over into the flue, and a thin lens of

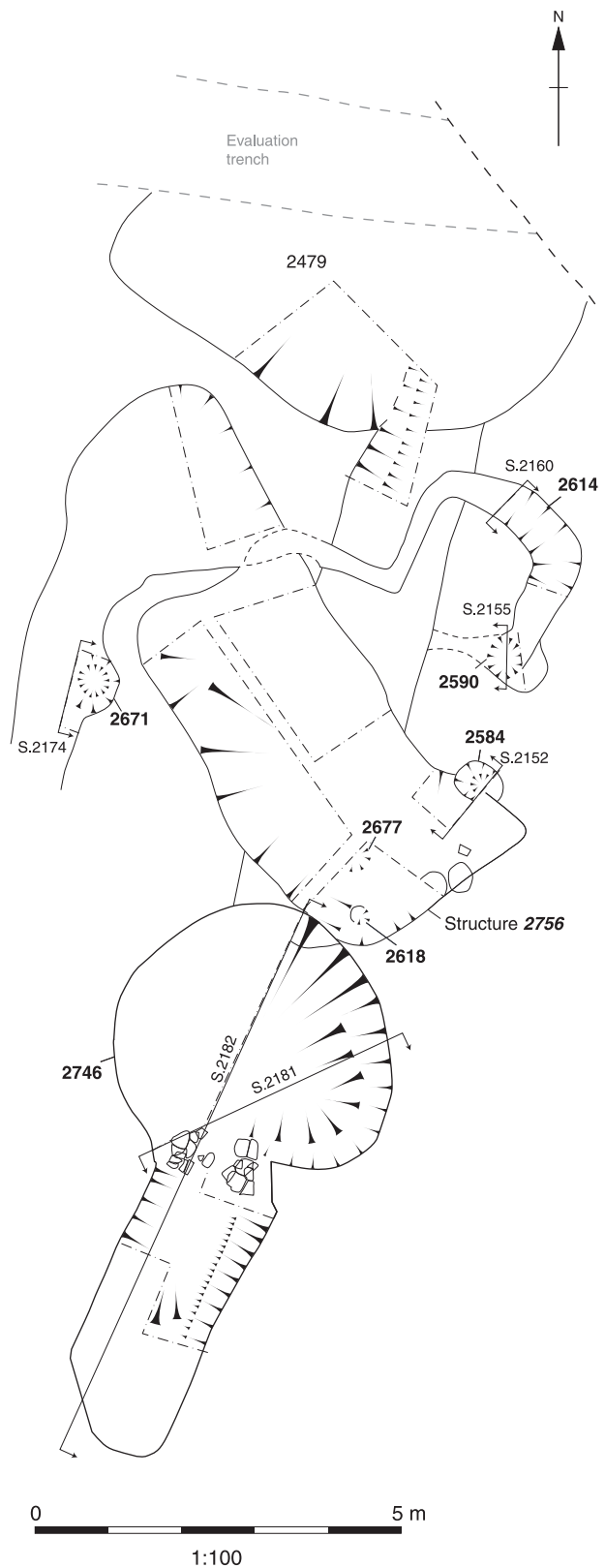


Fig. 5.15 Junction 9, detail plan of kiln 2746 and associated features

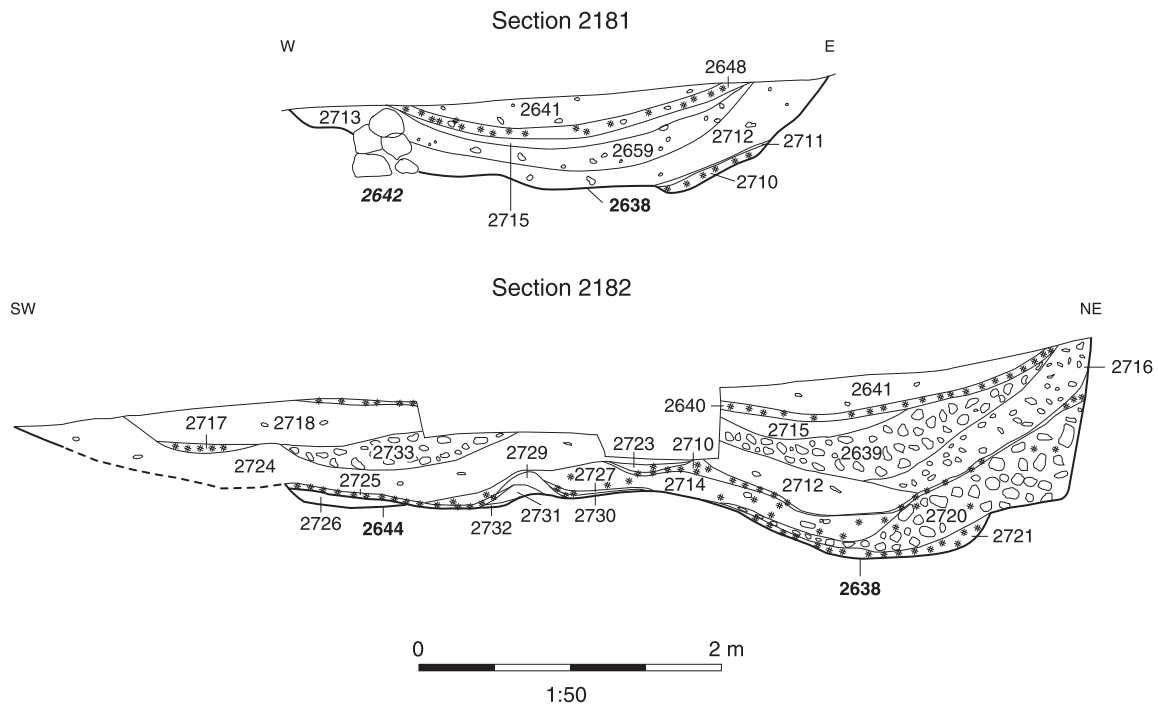


Fig. 5.16 Junction 9, section of kiln 2746

charcoal (2710) that was associated with a small patch of burnt silt (2723). The structure was subsequently backfilled with a sequence of layers that alternated layers of silty soil (2712/2724, 2715/2718, 2640 and 2641/2687) and dumps of flint gravel (2716 and 2639/2733). A layer of large flint nodules situated at the mouth of the flue (2722) may derive from part of the superstructure associated with the piers.

The kiln/oven is not well dated. Only two sherds came from deposits earlier than those associated with the backfilling of the feature, but the material is consistently early, including only one sherd certainly later than *c* AD 70 and two undiagnostic sherds of general 'Roman' date from the upper fills of the structure. While most of the pottery might

have derived from the ditch into which the oven was cut, the absence of any significantly later pottery suggests that it can be assigned to the early Roman period.

Post-built structure 2756 and other features associated with kiln/oven 2746 (Figs 5.13 and 5.18-19)

North of the kiln was a series of irregular hollows, a gully or beam-slot (2614) and a number of postholes and possible stakeholes, many cut into the upper fill of ditch 2745. It is likely that these features belonged to structures associated with the operation of the kiln, although it might have been expected that features of this sort would have been concentrated in the area at the mouth of the flue, rather than behind the kiln. Again, artefactual evidence provides no information about the nature of possible activity in this area and little definition with regard to dating. The relationships between the hollows and the structural features were somewhat obscure; the soil spreads filling the hollows appeared to overlie the postholes, but it was uncertain whether this indicated that the hollows themselves were later in date than the structures, or should be associated with their use.

Three postholes stood out on account of their unusual depth (2584, 2590 and 2671). Although none of these features measured more than 0.3m in diameter, all were more than 0.6m deep, and the deepest (2671) exceeded 0.85m. The lower part of each posthole was filled with a deposit of charcoal-rich soil, which was overlain in each case by a main



Fig. 5.17 Junction 9, section of kiln 2746, viewed from the south-east

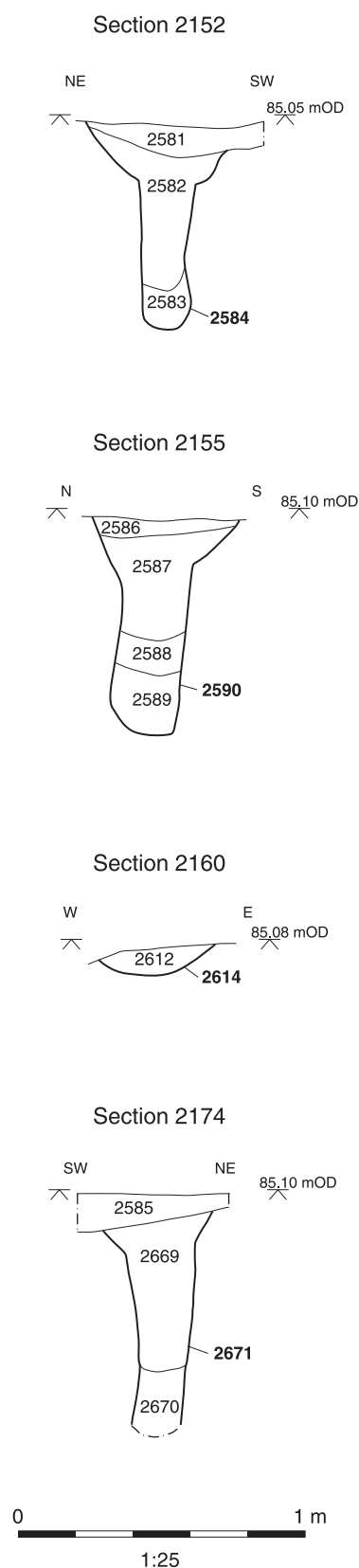


Fig. 5.18 Junction 9, sections of structure 2756

fill of clay and flint gravel. The similarities between these postholes leave little doubt that they were part of a single structure (2756). Their spatial arrangement would be consistent with their defining three corners of a rectangular, post-built structure with dimensions of $c 5.5 \times 1.75\text{m}$, the putative fourth corner of which would have been sealed beneath part of a soil spread that was not removed during the excavation. Although the precise function of the structure is uncertain, its position adjacent to the kiln and its orientation, which was square-on to the kiln, indicate that the two were associated. Posthole 2590 contained a small assemblage of 33 sherds (245g) of pottery with a date range of AD 70-120, and a similar date range was assigned to pottery from a short, sharply angled length of gully (2614) that joined with it. The stratigraphic relationship between these features was not established, but the gully may have served as a beam-slot associated with the structure. The remaining postholes and stakeholes formed no coherent plan.

Contemporary with these features, but located on the other side of ditch 2748, was a large waterhole (2309), which was only partly examined as its base was not reached. The weathered upper cone of this oval cut measured $8.7 \times 7.25\text{m}$, and the feature was at least 2.95m deep. The lowest fill encountered (2332) was a gravel deposit at least 0.75m deep. This produced a small quantity of animal bone and an assemblage of charred plant remains dominated by cereal chaff. Although no dating material was recovered from fill 2332, the overlying layer (2313) contained 14 sherds of pottery, including South Gaulish samian ware, not necessarily later than the early 2nd century. The uppermost fill, a dark clay deposit with few inclusions (2310), appeared to represent tertiary silting and contained no artefactual material.

Mid-Roman activity (c AD 120-200)

Modifications to the boundaries in the northern part of the excavation (Fig. 5.10)

Only minor modifications were made to the boundaries exposed at the northern end of the excavation during the 2nd century, presumably because the existing boundary features were still serviceable. Evidence was identified for the recutting of at least two parts of the ditch defining the rectangular enclosure that had been established during the early Roman period. Part of the western side, adjacent to the north-western corner was, re-dug as a 0.5m-wide gully (2604) which was 0.16m deep, and rather more substantial recutting was undertaken near the south-eastern corner. The latter excavation comprised the digging of a 1.7m-wide ditch (2742), which was up to 0.6m deep, that extended eastwards into the site for 17m, blocking the possible entrance through the original ditch before reaching a rather square-ended terminal short of the corner of the enclosure.

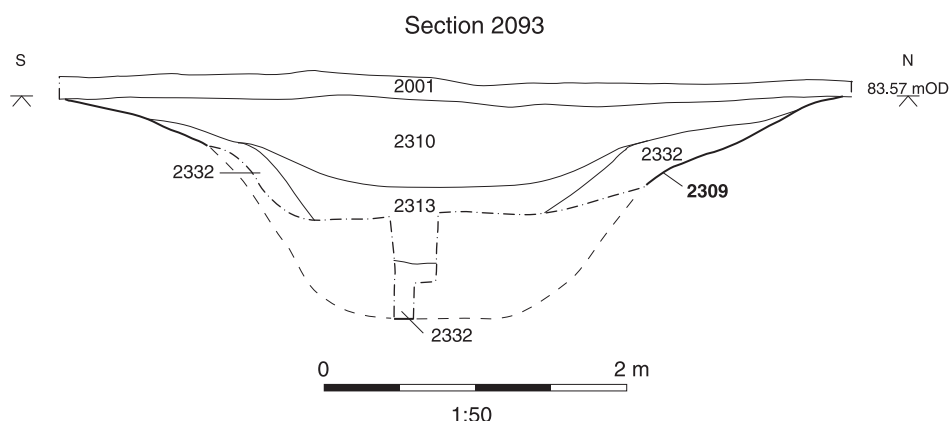


Fig. 5.19 Junction 9, section of early Roman waterhole 2309

Reorganisation of the boundaries in the southern part of the excavation (Figs 5.11 and 5.20-1)

In contrast to the northern part of the excavation, which appears to have been characterised during the mid-Roman period by a continuity of the existing boundaries, the area at the southern end was substantially reorganised during the 2nd century. The principal east-west-aligned boundary represented during the early part of the Roman

period by ditch 2748, was cut by a new north-south-aligned boundary, defined by a pair of gullies (2650 and 2652) that extended on a slightly curving alignment for 18m before continuing beyond the eastern edge of the excavation.

Some 30m west of this new boundary, a trackway was established, defined by parallel ditches, some 3.5-4m apart, which ran from the north-east edge of the site but possibly terminated within the excavated area. The western ditch (2755) was traced



Fig. 5.20 Junction 9, the 2nd-century circular enclosure at the southern end of the excavation, viewed from the south-west

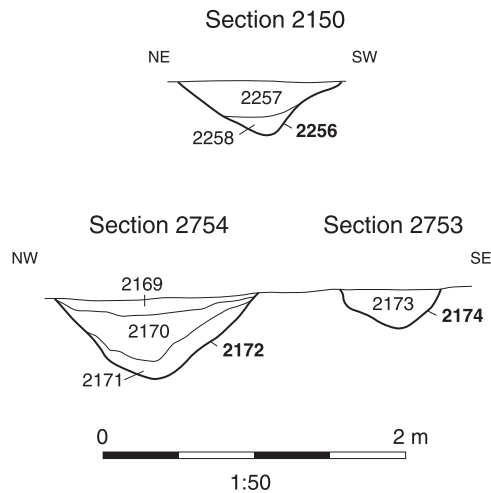


Fig. 5.21 Sections through the ditches of the 2nd-century circular enclosure at the southern end of the excavation

southwards for at least 33m, but then became less clear and was not identified in the later machine-cleared strip at the west edge of the site. The eastern ditch (2278) was similarly not seen in this area, but probably terminated at about this point, whereas the apparent absence of 2755 is not considered conclusive. A 12m length of narrow gully (2224) ran at right-angles to the line of 2278 and was apparently cut by it. Its eastern end was not identified. Both features produced pottery assemblages of 2nd-mid-3rd-century date.

Near the southern end of the excavation, three curvilinear ditches (2752, 2753 and 2754) may have defined an enclosure that cut across the boundary defined during the early part of the Roman period by gullies 2750 and 2751. The western part of the putative enclosure lay beyond the edge of the excavation, and consequently it could not be demonstrated conclusively that the ditches joined up to form a single enclosure, although they had similar fills of dark, charcoal-rich soil. However, from the evidence revealed within the excavation, they appeared to enclose a sub-circular area with a diameter of *c* 19m. The northern part of the enclosure was represented by a curvilinear ditch (2752) that was exposed for a length of 24m, while the southern part of the circuit was formed by two closely spaced ditches (2753 and 2754). The terminals of the northern and southern ditches were not aligned directly on each other, but were somewhat off-set, and defined an east-facing entrance, measuring 4m wide. A small pit (2246) adjacent to the terminus of gully 2754 might have been associated with an entrance into the enclosure, perhaps forming part of a gateway. The ditches themselves were of relatively small proportions, typically measuring *c* 1m wide and 0.3m deep. Another curving ditch (2343) may represent a subdivision within the enclosure. The

assemblage of charred plant remains recovered from ditch 2752 was dominated by cereal chaff, perhaps suggesting that crop processing was carried out within or close to the enclosure. Minimal pottery evidence was recovered, but was consistent with the suggestion that the ditches were broadly contemporary with each other and of 2nd-century date.

It was probably during this phase that the soil spreads filling the hollows associated with kiln/oven 2746 developed, since a 2nd-century date has been assigned to the relatively large group of *c* 65 sherds of pottery in soil spread 2488, a layer that sealed several of the postholes in this area. Further shallow pits or hollows were situated to the east of this area, none of which was more than 0.3m deep. Hollow 2657, which lay immediately east of the kiln, produced 232 mostly small pottery sherds dated to the 2nd century, and hollow 2608, adjacent to the eastern edge of the excavation, although not directly dated, was cut by an unexcavated pit/hollow (2706) which had 2nd-century pottery on its surface.

Mid-late Roman activity (3rd-4th century) (Figs 5.4, 5.10 and 5.22-4)

Artefactual material dating from the late Roman period was only recovered from features exposed in the northern and central parts of the excavation; indeed, in the southern part of the site no evidence was found for activity dating from after *c* AD 200. The features that could be attributed to the later period comprised a well and two ditches, the latter both apparently respecting the arrangement of the boundaries that had been established during earlier periods and representing modifications to the existing layout, rather than the

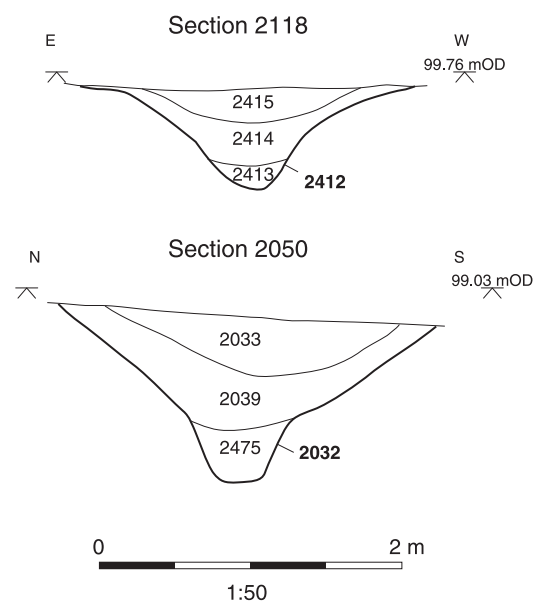


Fig. 5.22 Sections of late Roman boundary ditches

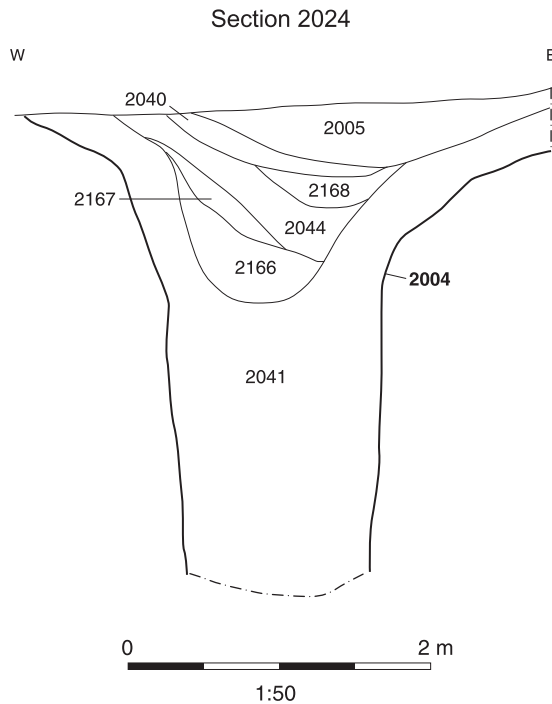


Fig. 5.23 Section of late Roman well 2004

imposition of a new scheme. This was exemplified by ditch 2737, which lay on the same alignment as late Iron Age-early Roman ditch 2188 and is likely to have been a deliberate recutting of part of the boundary that had been defined by the earlier ditch. The new ditch was much more substantial than its predecessor, measuring more than 2m wide and up to 0.65m deep, and produced a small group of pottery including four sherds from a Nene Valley colour-coated ware bowl dating from the first half of the 4th century. Ditch 2032 was

equally substantial and extended across the width of the excavated area from the southern end of ditch 2737. The relationship between the two ditches was partly obscured by the western edge of the excavation and was not investigated, but ditch 2032, like ditch 2737, yielded late Roman pottery from its upper fill, in this instance comprising Nene Valley white ware and a sherd from a late Dressel 20 amphora.

Well 2004 was recorded as having cut the western edge of ditch 2490, but in reality it is more likely that the two features were open at the same time. This is suggested by the dating evidence recovered from the well, which was contemporary with that from the upper fill of the ditch, and by the fact that the ditch was cut only by the weathering cone of the well, which may have formed through erosion of the upper part after the well had passed out of use, rather than by the well shaft itself. The weathering cone was quite substantial, giving the well a diameter of *c* 4m at the surface, but beneath this the well consisted of a simple earth-cut shaft measuring only *c* 1.2m across. The upper part of the well was excavated by hand to a depth of 1.2m and the shaft was then machine excavated to a depth of 3.2m, at which point the bottom had still not been reached. Most of the excavated part of the feature was filled with a thick, homogeneous deposit of orange-brown clay (2041), above which had been deposited a dump of flint and chalk (2166) and a final sequence of layers similar in character to the main fill, but containing varying proportions of flint gravel (2005, 2040, 2166, 2167 and 2168). Fill 2041 contained a pottery assemblage, weighing 0.8kg, with a similar composition to that recovered from ditch 2490, as did the uppermost fill (2005), which also produced four 4th-century Roman coins, the latest of which dates from AD 341-8.



Fig. 5.24 Late Roman boundary ditch 2490, viewed from the south-west

A single small pit (2108) dating from the late Roman period was located within the concentration of prehistoric features in the central part of the excavation, where it cut an earlier posthole (2182). The pit was oval in plan, with a maximum dimension of 1m, and had a 0.35m-deep concave, bowl-shaped profile. A deposit of silty gravel (2181) lay against the north-western side of the pit, overlain by a main fill of clay soil (2107) which, in addition to a residual assemblage of 84 pieces of worked flint, contained two late Roman coins, the later of which was an issue of Constantine dated AD 313-15.

JUNCTION 9 WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief to the south of the existing junction recorded a pit and a ditch terminal, both of Roman date. The pit (2904=2906), which was somewhat irregular in shape, measured 5.5 x 1.7 x 0.25m, contained an unusual bow brooch of 1st-century date (SF 2072; see Fig. 7.23.7) and a small quantity of pottery. The ditch terminal appeared to be the south-western end of a ditch aligned NE-SW, although the rest of the line of the feature could not be defined. A handful of sherds of late Iron Age or early Roman pottery was recovered from its fill.

