

Chapter 7

The Late Iron Age and Early Roman Transition

By Dan Stansbie

INTRODUCTION

The settlement spanning the Late Iron Age, and extending into the early Roman period, defined here as spanning the period from the later 1st century BC/ early 1st century AD up to the early Flavian period, exhibited a marked difference in layout and structure from those that preceded it (Fig. 7.1). In common with other sites of the same period in the Thames valley, such as Gravelly Guy, Yarnton shifted from an open settlement defined by pit scatters and alignments of roundhouses, to an enclosed settlement defined by paddocks, ditched enclosures and trackways. The bulk of this settlement was situated to the east of the early and middle Iron Age habitation sites and no specific features of this date were identified from the Cresswell Field site.

LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN STRUCTURES

Summary

Only one structure dating to this phase of the site was revealed. This was a fence line, 1763, approximately 13 m in length and orientated NE/SW, which formed the south-eastern boundary of a possible track or drove way bounded to the north by ditch 386. However, the complete absence of buildings from this site in the past is unlikely, and it seems reasonable to assume that the evidence has not survived for some reason. There are several possible interrelated reasons for such lack of survival. The first is poor preservation; Thames valley sites situated on the gravel terraces are notorious for this and Yarnton is no exception, having suffered from ploughing and severe truncation. Gullies surrounding circular buildings would have to have been fairly deep to survive these conditions. In addition Reynolds (1979) has shown that postholes need not penetrate the subsoil in order to hold up circular buildings (see Allen *et al* 1984 for a discussion of this). There is therefore a good chance that buildings lacking fairly substantial house gullies would not have shown up during excavation. The second is the method of construction used. There are two methods of construction which, if used, would have left no evidence of the building under conditions of poor preservation. The first is sill-beam construction, which seems unlikely to have been used for roundhouses (Allen *et al* 1984), but may have been used for rectangular buildings, which Rodwell (1978) argues were dominant in the late Iron Age of south-eastern Britain (*cf* Allen *et al* 1984). The second is mass wall construction of turf or cob, which Allen argues was used at Mingies Ditch (Allen and Robinson 1993). It therefore seems likely that, although no positive evidence for buildings of this phase was found, buildings did originally exist on the site.

The Fence Line (Figs 7.2 and 7.3)

Fence 1763

A NE - SW orientated fence line 13.4 m in length located towards the southern limit of excavation. The postholes of which it comprised were roughly circular in plan with

diameters of 0.3 - 0.4 m, and depths of 0.08 - 0.2 m. Profiles were predominantly bowl-shaped, with one exception, which was flat based and steep-sided. Fills consisted of mid or dark brown silty loams containing 2 - 10% gravel. The scarcity of the finds recovered from the posthole fills, one scrap of pottery and one small bone, suggests secondary deposition rather than rubbish deposition.

LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN ENCLOSURES AND DITCHES

Summary

The late Iron Age / early Roman transition was defined by the laying out of a series of ditched enclosures, which were focused mainly to the south and east of the early and middle Iron Age settlements. Like the structures in the early and middle Iron Age phases, these enclosures were broadly divisible into three groups: a central group comprising three large sub-rectangular enclosures orientated NW-SE, several smaller circular enclosures which abutted them to the south-east, and several small square or rectilinear enclosures also abutting them to the south-east; a western group consisting of linear arrangements of ditches, which suggest rectilinear paddocks orientated east - west and abutting the central enclosures; and an eastern group comprising a substantial circular enclosure with several smaller circular enclosures abutting it to the north-east, and a stretch of linear ditch to its south-east.

The Central Group of Enclosures and ditches (Figs 7.1-2)

The central group consisted of seven enclosures/enclosure ditches, the largest of which (enclosure 175) was sub-rectangular and orientated NW-SE. Abutting this enclosure to the north-east was a second sub-rectangular enclosure (enclosure 236 / enclosure 793), smaller than the first and orientated NNW/SSE. Also abutting this enclosure, but this time to the south-west was a third sub-rectangular enclosure (enclosure 269 / 638), orientated north - south. None of these enclosures contained any evidence of structures, however, their size, positioning and shape relative to the other contemporary enclosures suggest that they formed domestic compounds. Contained within the first and largest of these enclosures, and situated in its far south-western corner was a smaller sub-circular enclosure (enclosure 205), which may have been contemporary with it. A second and more substantial sub-circular enclosure (enclosure 121) was positioned to the east of the northernmost sub-rectangular enclosure. This enclosure appeared rather like its counterpart to the south-west, apart from the fact that it was situated to the outside of the sub-rectangular enclosure with which it was associated. To the south-east of the southern-most sub-rectangular enclosure were the remains of several small paddock like enclosures (enclosures 386 and 331), orientated north-east/south-west and defined by two ditches and a fence line. To the north of the main sub-rectangular enclosures was an isolated stretch of linear ditch orientated north - east / south - west (enclosure 69). The function of this feature in relation to the rest of the late Iron Age / early Roman settlement was impossible to ascertain.

***Ditch 69* (Fig. 7.2)**

A short stretch of linear ditch orientated NW-SE and 0.5 m in length located towards the northern edge of the Yarnton excavation towards the north-east corner. A single

segment excavated through this feature showed it to be 0.4 m in width, and 0.7 m deep. No recuts were observed, and in profile it was U-shaped-open. Fills comprised non-gravelly material, with some greenish material. The scarcity of finds in the ditch fill, which consisted of a single fragment of cattle bone and one sherd of shelly ware suggests secondary deposition of material lying on the contemporary ground surface.

Enclosure 121 (Figs 7.2; 7.4)

A fairly substantial sub-oval ditched enclosure with a long axis of 9 m, a short axis of 7 m and a surface area of 50.3 m². Fourteen segments were excavated through this enclosure, representing 58% of its total length. No entrance was observed, however, one could have been located to the north - west where the enclosure was cut away by later ditches. One episode of recutting was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped. Width range was 0.93 - 1.7 m and depth range was 0.26 - 0.7 m; average width was approximately 0.82 m and average depth was 0.48 m. A considerable quantity of rubbish was recovered from the ditch fill comprising some 61 sherds (1043 g) of pottery, 50 animal bones, one slag fragment from a small sub-tuyère plate and abundant plant remains including cereals suggesting rubbish deposition, probably from a nearby domestic source. The pottery mainly comprises 'native' type wares with a small number of more Roman sherds suggesting a date between the mid and later 1st century AD.

Ditch 129 (Fig. 7.2)

A substantial segment of linear ditch orientated NW-SE located west of ditch 69. This measured up to 8 m in length, although its dimensions were not precisely established. Two segments approximately 1.9 m and 1.2 m in length were excavated through the ditch, representing approximately 25% of its extant length. The profile was U-shaped and varied between narrow and open. No recuts were apparent. Average width was 0.5 m and average depth 0.45 m. Fills consisted of homogeneous gravel free material, with some greenish fills. Finds recovered comprise 31 sherds (641 g) of pottery, 21 animal bones and one fragment of slag. The pottery consists of grog-tempered wares and Iron Age sherds.

Enclosure 175 (Figs 7.2; 7.5)

A wedge-shaped/triangular ditched enclosure orientated NW-SE, and measuring 50 m in circumference. Seventy-three percent of this enclosure was excavated in 37 segments, which revealed multiple cuts and a varied profile including flat to rounded bases, and steep to sloping concave sides. The width range of the enclosure ditch was 0.1-1.3 m, averaging 0.66 m, and the depth range was 0.18 -0.84 m, averaging 0.48 m. The ditch fills were a mixture of non-gravelly material, gravel-free material, silty loams with gravel, silt-sand, white clay patches, burnt material and a possible turfline, with some primary silting. No entrance to this enclosure was observed, however, given the layout of the extant enclosure it is likely to have lain to the north or east. Some animal disturbance of the fills was also noted. A large quantity of pottery, animal bone, several other finds, some charred plant remains and some metal working debris were recovered from the ditch fill suggesting rubbish deposition. Of the 399 sherds (5404 g) of pottery recorded, 50% comprised residual Iron Age wares. The remainder comprised grog-tempered wares with a small proportion of more Roman

types suggesting a likely date of infill in the later 1st century. A few later Roman intrusive sherds are also present suggesting some disturbance of deposits. The 125 fragments of animal bone include all the usual domesticates along with one dog, one hare bone and a broken up horse mandible possibly indicative of a special deposit (see Mulville below). Other finds include a flint flake, a saddler quern (SF 200), an iron nail, one loomweight fragment and one piece of fired clay and seven slag fragments, three of which are from plano-convex hearth bottoms.

Enclosure 205 (Figs 7.2; 7.6)

An oval or sub-oval enclosure orientated E-W. The ditches making up this enclosure measured approximately 12 m in circumference, with a long axis of 12 m and a short axis of 8 m, giving an approximate surface area of 15 m². No entrance to this enclosure was observed during excavation, however, its northern and eastern sides were severely truncated by overlying features. Multiple recuts are indicated by the section drawings, with a consequent variation in profile. The width of the excavated ditch segments (67% of the circuit) varied between 0.2 m and 1.5 m with an average of 0.65 m; the depth ranged between 0.18 m and 0.74 m with an average of 0.42 m. Ditch fills were mixed with some primary silting, and comprised non-gravelly, gravel-free, silty loams with gravel and greenish fills. It was unclear whether they formed through deliberate or natural infilling. The deposition of fairly large amounts of animal bone (80 fragments) and 36 sherds (306 g) of pottery in the ditch fill, along with one piece of metalworking slag and a rotary quernstone (SF 210) suggests modest rubbish deposition, presumably from a nearby structure. The pottery suggests a mid 1st century AD date but the assemblage is very small.

Enclosure 236 (Figs 7.2; 7.7)

A square/rectangular ditched enclosure orientated NW-SE, and made up of a series of ditches approximately 35 m in circumference, with a long axis of 16.5 m and a short axis of 15 m indicating an approximate internal surface area of 82.5 m². No entrance was observed, although later features would have obliterated an entrance on the north-western or north-eastern sides. Excavated ditch segments, comprising 35% of the circuit, indicated multiple recutting of this enclosure with mostly U-shaped profiles, although some variation was apparent. Ditch segment width range was 0.15 - 1 m (average 0.49 m); depth varied between 0.16 m and 0.6 m, average depth was 0.35 m. Fills were mixed, consisting of gravel-free, non-gravelly, silty loams with gravel, gravelly fills and some greenish material. The formation processes of these fills were uncertain. A series of pits and a possible ring-gully internal to this enclosure respected its western arm, and were possibly contemporary with it. The average depth of the ditch segments is a misleading figure as very few individual depths were recorded. An assemblage of some 103 sherds (1343 g) of pottery, 119 animal bones, two fragments of slag and some charred plant remains were recovered from the ditch fill. This material is possibly the result of rubbish deposition, but there is not a great deal of it considering the size of this enclosure and at least 86% of the pottery by count is redeposited. The remaining assemblage suggests a mid to late 1st century AD date.

Enclosure 269 (Figs 7.2)

A right-angled ditch group, possibly the remains of a rectilinear enclosure, the extant arms of which had a combined length of 27 m and were orientated NE-SW and E-W respectively. The axes of the (possible) enclosure measured 20 m x 12 m giving an approximate surface area of 24 m². No entrance was apparent, although the rounded western terminal of the east - west orientated southern arm, may be taken as an indication of an entrance. Excavated ditch segments comprising 1% of the circuit length showed three cuts, and a flat based profile with steep sides. Width range was 0.35-0.8 m and average width was 0.75 m, average depth was 0.41 m, depth range was between 0.26 and 0.57 m. The fills were mixed, comprising a light greenish brown sandy silty loam, a greenish brown sandy loam and a darkish brown slightly sandy silt loam. Twenty sherds of pottery of which 12 are Iron Age and 19 fragments of animal bone recovered from the ditch fill, may represent the secondary deposition of material lying on a contemporary ground surface.

Ditch 331 (Fig. 7.2)

A linear ditch 9 m in length, and orientated NW-SE and perpendicular to and north of fenceline 1763. Three ditch sections were excavated through this feature, representing 17.7% of its total length. No recuts were observed. The ditch profile was varied; in 331A it was dish-shaped, in 331B it was U-shaped-open and it was not recorded in 331C. Width range was 0.4 - 0.8 m and average width was 0.63 m; depth range was 0.14 - 0.2 m and average depth was 0.17 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there were some flecks of charcoal. A single sherd of grog-tempered Iron Age pottery was recovered from the ditch fill was probably redeposited, perhaps having eroded into the ditch from a contemporary ground surface.

Ditch 386 (Fig. 7.2)

Linear ditch measuring 23.45 m in length and orientated NE-SW, perpendicular to and crossing the NW end of ditch 331. In total 55% of this feature was excavated. The excavation of ditch segments revealed up to three or four cuts showing varied profiles, including flat and rounded bases, and sloping concave/sloping convex sides. Width range was 0.12 - 0.4 m, average width was 0.29 m; depth range was 0.15 - 0.36 m and average depth was 0.22 m. Fills were mixed with some primary silting, and comprised gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, silty loams with gravels and some greenish fills. Fill formation processes were uncertain. It should be borne in mind that data on depth of excavated ditch segments, and on fills was only partially recorded for this ditch group, and these data may, therefore, be viewed as unreliable. Fifteen animal bones and 17 sherds of pottery (145 g) and a single fragment of fired clay was recovered from the ditch fill.

Ditch 492 (Fig. 7.2)

A short stretch of linear ditch, 4 m in length and orientated NW-SE located within enclosure 175. A single segment was excavated through this ditch representing 17.5% of its total length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were apparent. Width in section was 0.3 m, and depth was unrecorded. Fills consisted of gravel-free material. This ditch was probably part of enclosure 205,

although this could not be conclusively demonstrated. Finds were scarce comprising just two sherds of Iron Age pottery and three fragments of animal bone.

Ditch 793 (Fig. 7.2)

A linear ditch 5.2 m in length, and orientated E-W located NE of enclosure 175. Three sections were excavated through this ditch representing 72% of its total length. Ditch profiles were U-shaped and open, and one recut was observed during excavation. Average width was 0.63 m and average depth was 0.43 m. Fills consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel. A rather substantial assemblage of 15 sherds of pottery and 14 animal bones (excluding three rabbit bones) for a relatively small ditch was recovered.

Hearth 852 (Fig. 7.2)

A small 'hearth' measuring 0.9 by 1.1 m and with a depth of 0.3 m was discovered during section cleaning immediately south of enclosure 121. Three layers were defined, the uppermost comprising coarse gravel with silty sand, the middle fill a finer, dark brown silty loam and the lower fill a black silty loam with abundant charcoal and slag. The eight fragments of slag included fragments of bellows protection block, two pieces of plano-convex hearth bottom and dense slag. Other finds recovered from the 'hearth' include the substantial part of a grog-tempered jar and three other sherds, and a flint core. The slight bowl-shape of the feature along with the metalworking debris might suggest this could have been the remains of a bowl furnace or similar structure.

Ditch 1508 (Fig. 7.2)

A ditch 3.6 m in length and orientated north-south located within enclosure 175. This feature was cut away at either end by ditches running obliquely to it. Three sections were excavated through the ditch, although it is not clear what percentage of its total length these represent, as their lengths could not be fully recorded. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 0.4 m, and average depth was 0.25 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material. Finds were limited to nine sherds of pottery all grog-tempered wares with a mid-1st century AD date and ten animal bones. The latter includes a red deer bone along with horse and ox.

Ditch 1585 (Fig. 7.2)

A short stretch of curvilinear ditch up to 0.85 m in length, and orientated east-west west of ditch 1508. This ditch was cut away at either end by later enclosures. Two sections were excavated through this feature, although it is not clear what percentage of its total length these represent. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and a single recut was observed during excavation. Average width was 0.4 m and average depth 0.39 m. Fills comprised non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel. Four sherds weighing 80 g and just three animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill.

Ditch 1600 (Fig. 7.2)

A short stretch of linear ditch 6.3 m in length, and orientated NW-SE. Three sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 76% of its total length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were observed. Width where recorded was 0.7 m, and average depth was 0.33 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material with flecks of charcoal. A scarcity of finds from the ditch fill, one potsherd and six animal bones, indicated that there was no concentrated rubbish deposition.

The Western Group of Enclosures

The western group of enclosures consisted of a series of short linear and curvilinear ditches, outlining the remains of several rectilinear enclosures, orientated east west, and lying parallel to one another. Two rectilinear enclosures, extending under the section to the north, and abutting the central enclosures to the east were fairly clear (1560, 1605, 1606, 1672, 1693 and 1697). These seem to have been sub-divided internally by a NE-SW running ditch (1697). To the south of these enclosures, and running parallel with them were a series of more ephemeral curvilinear ditches (373, 1399, 1481, 1490 and 1737), which may have indicated the presence of several enclosures, although these would have been more irregular. One of these curvilinear ditches (621) was possibly the remains of a ring-ditch.

Ditches 1560, 1605, 1606, 1672, 1693 and 1697 (Fig. 7.2)

A series of linear gullies possibly forming several rectilinear enclosures, aligned on a NW-SE axis. This comprised a central gully aligned NW-SE with several other gullies abutting it at right angles, and two isolated gullies forming a T-shape to the south east, which may have been part of a further enclosure. Part of these enclosures extended under the northern section. The low quantities of finds recovered from the fills of these ditches reflected their size, and probably resulted from secondary deposition. Collectively the four ditches produced just 51 sherds (938 g) of pottery, 13 animal bones excluding 11 intrusive rabbit bones, and one worked bone point.

Ditches 372, 579, 1399 and 1737 (Fig. 7.2)

A series of linear and curvilinear ditches forming an intermittent boundary extending in a NW-SE direction, possibly abutting enclosure 175 to the east. Ditches 372 and 1399 were orientated NW-SE, ditch 1737 was orientated NE-SW. A reasonably substantial quantity of pottery (95 sherds weighing 1508 g), one fragment of vitrified clay and 64 animal bones from the fills of these ditches suggests fairly concentrated rubbish deposition. Some plants remains had been preserved in ditch 372.

Ditches 373, 616, 621 and 1481 (Fig. 7.2)

Four short stretches of ditch, two of which were linear and two of which were curvilinear. The linear examples were orientated NE-SW, and ran parallel to the north-western boundary of enclosure 175. One of the curvilinear examples (616) was orientated NW-SE and the other was horseshoe shaped. A small quantity of four animal bones and three sherds of pottery came from the fills of these features, but not in significant enough quantities to suggest that there were no buildings in the immediate area.

Ditch 594 (Figs 7.2; 7.8-9)

A linear ditch 7.5 m in length, and orientated NNW/SSE lying immediately east of, and cutting the ring ditch of enclosure 390. Approximately 90% of this ditch was excavated in a single ditch segment, although its western edge proved impossible to locate. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were apparent. Average width was 3.2 m, and average depth was 0.2 m. The ditch fill yielded a large quantity of finds including some 145 animal bones, a fragment of human humerus, and 105 sherds of pottery weighing 1768 g, fired clay and six pieces of slag including two plano-convex hearth bottom fragments. A significant number of the animal bones are from ox, accompanied by horse and sheep/goat. Of particular note are some fragments from a horse forelimb possibly suggestive of a special deposit (see Mulville below). Also present was a worked piece of bone (SF 452).

Ditch 596 (Figs 7.2; 7.8-9)

A stretch of linear ditch 4.4 m in length, and orientated NE/SW lying at the south edge of, and cut by, ditch 594. One hundred percent of the extant length of this ditch was excavated. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were apparent. Average width was 2.1 m, and average depth was 0.82 m. Finds recovered from the ditch fills comprise nine sherds of pottery, twenty-one animal bones and three fragments of small plano-convex hearth bottom from metalworking.

Ditch 638 (Figs 7.2; 7.8-9)

A right-angled ditch 7.5 m in length, the longer arm of which was orientated NE-SW and terminated in the north end of ditch 594. The shorter arm was orientated NW-SE. A single section was excavated through this ditch representing 13% of its extant length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 0.85 m, and average depth was 0.78 m. Two fills were noted, a yellowish brown sandy loam with flecks of charcoal sealing a greenish-brown sandy loam. Few finds were recovered from the fill of this feature, just five animal bones and three sherds of pottery and these probably derived from secondary deposition.

Ditch 639 (Figs 7.2; 7.8-9)

A curvi-linear stretch of ditch 4.2 m in length, orientated NW-SE set adjacent to, and cutting ditch 594. A single section was excavated through this ditch. The ditch profile was U-shaped and narrow, and no recuts were observed during excavation. Average width was 0.5 m and average depth 0.4 m. Filled with a greenish-brown sandy loam. Five sherds of mid to late 1st century AD pottery and three animal bones were recovered.

The Eastern Group of Enclosures (Fig. 7.2)

The eastern group comprised several sub-circular enclosures, orientated north-east/south-west and situated to the south east of the central enclosures. The southernmost of these (391) was the most substantial, and had clearly been recut on a number of occasions. It

also underlay a similar enclosure dating to the early Roman period. To the north-east of this enclosure was a sequence of curvilinear ditches (359, 360 and 975) indicating the presence of several smaller sub-circular enclosures. The southernmost of these contained several miscellaneous stretches of linear ditch and a small ring ditch (923, 925 and 1000). To the south-east was an isolated stretch of linear ditch orientated SE-NW (2018). The function of the sub-circular ditches is not clear, although they may have been domestic. Their continuing use into the early Roman period certainly suggests that they were significant.

Enclosure 357 (Figs 7.2; 7.11)

A small penannular ring-ditch lying within the area enclosed by enclosure 391A. The enclosure had a long axis of 4.5 m, a short axis of 3.2 m and enclosed an area of 8.04 m. The entrance to the enclosure was not clearly identified, although a gap in the circuit to the north may indicate where it lay. No recuts were observed, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-narrow. Two segments were excavated comprising 65% of the total length. Width was 0.5 m and depth was 0.45 m, this did not vary through the two ditch segments. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material. The ditch fill was devoid of finds.

Ditch 359 (Fig 7.2)

A curvilinear ditch 21.5 m in length, possibly the surviving part of a sub-circular enclosure and possibly contiguous with ditch 975 (see below). The long axis of this enclosure measured 13 m; however, the short axis and the original surface area are unknown, as it may have been cut away to the south-west. Seven sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 24% of its total length. No entrance was apparent; however, it may have been situated to the west or south-west. No recuts were observed, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.58 - 0.9 m and average width was 0.7 m; depth range was 0.34 m - 0.6 m and average depth was 0.5 m. Fills consisted of gravel-free material and silty-loams with gravel; there was some charcoal in the ditch terminals. Finds of 10 sherds of pottery (132 g) with a *tpq* in the later 1st century and 29 animal bones from the ditch fill suggest rubbish deposition. Three residual flints were also recovered.

Ditch 360 (Fig. 7.2)

A curvilinear ditch 20 m in length, part of a circular enclosure which had been cut away to the west and lying immediately west of 359 which it cuts. The long axis was 10 m and the short axis approximately 7.85 m; surface area was approximately 78.55 m. Three sections were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 6% of its total length. No entrance was observed, however, it could have been situated to the west, where the ditch had been cut away by enclosures 391 and 293. No recuts were apparent, and the ditch profile was U-shaped open. Width range was 0.45 - 0.8 m and average width was 0.62 m; depth range was 0.31 m - 0.54 m and average depth was 0.46 m. Two basic fills comprising silty-loams with gravel, and non-gravelly material. The upper fill contained patches of dumped clay and burnt limestone. Seven sherds of pottery (125 g) and four animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill.

Enclosure 391A (Figs 7.2; 7.10-12)

The earlier phase of a substantial sub-circular enclosure, 18.5 m across with an approximate internal surface area of 268.8 m². Eight ditch segments were excavated, representing 20% of its total length. No entrance was apparent; however, it may have been situated to the south - east. The enclosure had undergone multiple remodellings making it difficult to discern the exact sequence of cuts or whether more than one ditch was extant at one time. There appear to be at least three recuts belonging to 391A (cf. ditch cuts 338, 346, 347) but possibly more. The ditch profiles were generally U-shaped. The width range was 0.64 m - 1.2m and depth range was 0.36 - 1.1 m; average width was 0.9 m and average depth was 0.8 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel. There was some primary silting and burnt material was noted in the lower fill of cut 347. Fifty-three sherds (1142 g) of pottery were recovered from the various cuts belonging to 391A. The sherds were relatively well preserved and generally dominated by fabric E80 (grog-tempered) with small amounts of fabrics E30, E50, C10, O18 and R10. Other finds comprised just eight animal bones along with three fragments of metalworking debris and a fragment of a saddle quern (SF 298), probably redeposited from ditch 995.

Ditch 498 (Fig. 7.2)

A stretch of linear ditch 3 m in length, orientated NW-SE lying to the north of enclosure 391. The alignment perpetuates that of ditch 925. A single section representing approximately 33% of its extant length was excavated. The profile of this ditch is unknown, and no recuts were apparent. Average width was 0.4 m, and fills were also unknown. The ditch fill was sterile although the very disturbed remains of an animal skeleton (not recovered) was found on the machined surface.

Enclosure 923 (Fig. 7.2)

A small oval ditched feature lying within the arc of enclosure ditch 360 and cutting linear ditch 1000 (see below). The feature has a long axis of 3 m, a short axis of 2.5 m and encloses an area of 2.16 m². Four ditch segments were excavated representing 50% of its total length. No entrance was observed, no recuts were apparent and the ditch profile was a narrow, stepped U-shape. The bottom of the feature was not fully excavated. The width range was 1.1 - 1.15 m and depth range was 0.55 - 0.58 m; average width was 1.1 m and average depth was 0.5 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly-material and silty-loams with gravel, interspersed with lenses of ash and burnt pottery. The quantity of finds from the ditch fill comprising 35 moderately well-preserved potsherds weighing 621g (fabrics C10, E30, E40, E80 and O18), 23 animal bones and a bone gouge (REF) suggests rubbish deposition. The pottery assemblage suggests a mid to later 1st century AD date for the fills with little evidence of redeposited material. The moderately high average sherd size for the group of 21.5g would suggest an assemblage that has not been subjected to much disturbance.

Ditch 925 (Fig. 7.2)

A shallow linear feature, 4.15 m in length and orientated north - west / south – east was investigated to the north-west of enclosure 923. Two opposing quadrants were excavated, representing 50% of its total length. No recuts were observed, and the profile was U-shaped open. Average width was 0.6 m and average depth was 0.2 m;

there was no variation in depth range and width range was unrecorded. Fills consisted of silty-loams with gravel containing some quartzite pebbles and limestone. A modest collection of 13 sherds (333 g) of pottery, mainly Iron Age with one transitional sherd of fabric E40 and four animal bones from the ditch fill represent the only finds.

Ditch 975 (Fig. 7.2)

A curvilinear ditch 11.53 m in length, orientated WNW-ESE on the same general alignment as 359, either as part of the same feature, or perhaps a later recut on a slightly wider arc. Ditch 975 was excavated in three segments representing approximately 35% of its total length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and there were two or more recuts. Average width was 0.7 m, and average depth was 0.34 m. Fills comprised mixed non-gravelly material, and silty loams with gravel. Some primary silting was in evidence. Finds of nine sherds (44 g) of pottery and eight animal bones from the ditch fill probably represent secondary deposition.

Ditch 1000 (Fig. 7.2)

A short stretch of linear ditch, 4 m in length and orientated east–west cut by enclosure 923. This feature was cut away at either end, and its original function was therefore obscured. Three ditch sections were excavated, representing 68% of its total length. No recuts were observed and the ditch profile was U-shaped-narrow. Width range was 1 - 1.1 m and depth range was 0.8 - 1 m; average width was 1 m and average depth was 0.9 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and gravelly fills; there was some primary silting. The fills were particularly rich in pottery, animal bone and charred plant remains. The 66 fragments of animal bone comprised 29% cattle bone accompanied by 20% sheep with some pig, horse and red deer. A pair of sheep mandibles were noted which might be construed as part of a special deposit (see Mulville below). Ninety-six sherds of pottery, weighing 1850 g, were recorded, of which 36 were Iron Age fabrics, the remainder in fabrics C10, E30, E40 and E80, typical late Iron Age types. Other finds include several fragments of fired clay oven plate (SF302) and a flint arrowhead.

Finds Distributions from the Ditches

The majority of the larger enclosure ditches contained relatively substantial assemblages of finds, mostly comprising animal bones and pottery. The quantities of animal bone and pottery from these ditches were fairly evenly matched, with the exception of enclosures 236 which contained a lot less material than 175 to its south. Both these enclosures produced substantial quantities of redeposited material, presumably the consequence of the proximity of the Iron Age settlement to the immediate west and the constant recycling of dug material. Metalworking debris and other finds were generally scarce, and plant remains were mostly confined to the larger ditches. The quantities of material from the smaller ditches were generally in proportion to their size. The finds from many of the larger ditches suggest deposition of rubbish, which may have derived from buildings or activity areas within the enclosed areas, although any such traces buildings or evidence of use of the areas were no longer visible at the time of excavation. Some ditches contained much

smaller quantities of material, which are more likely to have derived from secondary deposition.

LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN PITS

Summary

Fifty pits were assigned to the Late Iron Age/Roman Transition, once more being divided into six categories based on profile shape, and identical to those used to describe the early and middle Iron Age features. The majority of these features were circular or oval in shape, although there were possibly a few more amorphous examples than were seen in the earlier phases.

Distribution

The spatial distribution of late Iron Age / early Roman pits differed markedly from that seen in the earlier phases. They were much more dispersed than either the Early or Middle Iron Age features, and were spread out over the entire extent of the excavated area, including the parts of the site truncated by Roman enclosures. They were also no longer being used to define the settlement boundary, or clustering around particular buildings.

Description

Late Iron Age / early Roman pit diameter ranged between 0.34 m and 3.1 m and averaged 1.02 m, and depth ranged between 0.15 m and 1.4 m and averaged 0.49 m. Recorded original pit volume ranged between 0.010 m³ and 6.300 m³ and average original volume was 0.656 m³. There were 13 cylindrical pits, 20 pits classified as other, 13 bowl-shaped pits, 2 large shallow pits, 1 shallow saucer shaped pit and 1 undercut pit. Fills were represented by the usual five categories of material: 16 pits contained silty loams, 13 pits contained non-gravelly material, 16 pits contained gravel free material, 2 contained gravelly material and 3 contained material classified as “other”. The number of fills contained within individual features ranged between one and thirteen, although the majority contained between one and four fills, with only a small minority (four) containing between five and ten fills; as in the Early and Middle Iron Ages the average number of fills was three.

Discussion

In general the late Iron Age / Early Roman pits tended to be smaller than the early Iron Age and middle Iron Age ones, and proportions of the different pit categories to one another differed from that seen in the earlier phases.

Table 7.1 Pit dimensions by type (range for those where dimensions were recorded)

Dimensions	Bowl-shaped	Cylindrical	Large Shallow	Shallow Saucer	Undercut	Other
Breadth	0.34-3.1	0.6-1.8	1.2-2	0.9-0.9	0.7-0.7	0.37-3
Depth	0.15-1.2	0.4-1.4	0.15-0.35	0.2-0.2	0.96-0.96	0.16-0.9
Length	0.78-1	1-1.8	-	1.9-1.9	-	0.3-1.6

Cylindrical pits are no longer dominant, having been exceeded by pits classified as amorphous. It is possible however, that the more dispersed nature of the late Iron Age / early Roman pits lead to a greater degree of truncation in the Roman period, which biased the sample of cylindrical pits recovered by the excavation. Large shallow and shallow saucer-shaped pits were now much less common, and bowl-shaped pits were much more frequent, being equal in number to the cylindrical pits. It is clear that the substantial differences between the late Iron Age / early Roman pits and the early Iron Age and middle Iron Age pits are the product of a change in function. There were now proportionally fewer pits functioning as storage pits (four), and proportionally more pits dug for the deposition of material, (which were probably represented by the bowl-shaped, large shallow and shallow saucer shaped examples).

Table 7.2 Pit types

Cylindrical	Shallow Saucer	Bowl-shaped	Large Shallow	Other	Undercut
13	1	13	2	20	1

The relative proportions of fill types were similar to those seen in the Early and Middle Iron Age pits, with silty loams being particularly common, as was the case with the Early Iron Age features. Gravel free material was also very common, but non-gravelly fills were rarer than they were in the Early and Middle Iron Ages. The proportion of pits with gravelly fills, and fills classified as other was pretty much the same as it was for the earlier periods.

Table 7.3 Pit fill types

Silty Loams	non-gravelly	Gravel-free	Gravelly-fills	Other
16	13	16	2	3

Recuts of late Iron Age / early Roman pits were rare, only two were recut and these were recut only once. This compares to eight recuts each for both the Early and Middle Iron Ages. Redeposition was apparently rare with 28 pits exhibiting no signs of redeposition, 10 showing low levels of deposition, 9 showing medium levels, and 4 high levels. In terms of the proportions of pits exhibiting different levels of redeposition, these figures agree with those from the Middle and Early Iron Age features. Of the 50 late Iron Age / early Roman pits 10 contained identifiable evidence of primary silting, a comparable figure to that for the early Iron Age and middle Iron Age periods. Of these 10 five were under 0.8 m³ in volume, three were over 0.8 m³ and two were unrecorded. Only three pits displayed any evidence of deliberate backfilling, and two of these were very large at 6.300 m³ and 2.150 m³ respectively. Of the six pits which were over 0.8 m³ in volume, four contained rubbish deposits.

Artefact distributions (Fig. 7.13)

Animal bone

Out of 50 pits assigned to the Late Iron Age / early Roman period 29 contained deposits of bone of some sort, 28 of which consisted solely of animal bone and one, 1016, which contained human bone as well. Twenty contexts contained cattle bone, 16 contained sheep/goat, 18 contained sheep/pig and 14 contained cattle/horse. Twelve contexts contained pig bone, four contained sheep/goat bone, and four contained horse remains. The majority of those Late Iron Age / early Roman pits

containing animal bone contained the remains of one or more of these major species. Additionally, two pits contained the remains of dog, three pits contained the remains of rabbits, and two pits contained the remains of wild bird. The rabbit bones are assumed to be intrusive into Late Iron Age / Early Roman deposits. These additional species were more sparsely distributed in the Late Iron Age/early Roman than in the two preceding periods, and the range of wild animal species present in this phase is also narrower. These patterns reflect the generally sparser distribution of bone in this period, when compared to the two preceding periods.

Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits which contained bones deriving from a wide variety of different species were not as abundant as they were in the earlier periods. For example, only 13 of the 29 pits contained bones of cattle and cattle/horse, 14 contained bones of sheep/pig and sheep/goat and 11 contained bones of cattle, cattle/horse, sheep/goat and sheep/pig. Only 13 pits contained bones deriving from all of the major domestic species. However, this pattern does not seem to reflect the differential distribution of different species, so much as the general scarcity of bone in this period. Two pits contained the remains of wild animals, and in both cases these were represented by the remains of bird bone. Both of these pits (404 and 681) contained a range of bones from other species, and neither contained human or dog bone, although one contained some horse bone. Additionally there was no clear association between horse bone and dog bone, or between human bone and dog bone. Although the human remains located within pit 1016 were associated with domestic animal bone, it contained no horse bone. Both dog and horse bones were generally found within pits containing a lot of bone derived from other species. Of note is a dog skeleton from pit 1608.

The spatial analysis of animal bone distributions reveals that all of the different species were randomly distributed within the late Iron Age/Early Roman pit scatter, and there was no significant differentiation between species. Some species, ie horse and sheep were more sparsely distributed than others, and cattle bone seemed to be predominantly distributed in the eastern part of the site although the pits in which it was found generally contained bones from other species. The distribution of dog and human bone may be construed as peripheral, however it was also mixed in with the bones of other species. Wild animal remains were deposited in two pits located in the middle of the excavated area, which showed no obvious spatial patterning. In summary the distribution of bone within the late Iron Age / early Roman pits exhibited a dispersed pattern, which mirrored that of the distribution of the pits in general. The association of human bone, dog bone and horse bone seen in the earlier periods was not present in the Late Iron Age / early Roman phase.

Pottery

Of the 50 late Iron Age / early Roman pits 35 contained pottery. The pottery assemblage consisted of 331 sherds, and the average number of sherds per pit was nine. The plotting of mean sherd weight against sherd count revealed that the majority of pits contained small numbers of small and abraded sherds, and a few pits contained either large numbers of smaller sherds or small numbers of large unabraded sherds. This suggests that a minority of pits acted as the foci for concentrated depositions of material. However, as in the early Iron Age those pits containing deliberately deposited articulated animal carcasses, or parts of carcasses, did not

appear to contain significant amounts of pottery. Pit 714 contained one sherd of pottery weighing 17 g, and pit 913 also contained a single sherd weighing 13 g. It is also notable that a comparison of mean sherd weight with bone count, and sherd count with bone count suggests a disparity between contexts containing large amounts of bone and those containing large sherds or large quantities of sherds. A chart plotting mean sherd weight against bone fragment count for the Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits (Fig. 7.15) reveals three principle groups; one containing a low bone count but a high mean sherd weight; one with a high bone count but low to medium sherd counts and the third containing little bone and small sherds. The graphical comparison of sherd and bone fragment quantities revealed that they ranged fairly evenly between zero and 50, within those pits that contained both, but that the higher bone counts tended to concentrate in the pits with lower sherd counts. It would therefore seem that there were no Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits with large quantities of pottery or large fresh sherds, and large quantities of bone.

Table 7.4 Sherd characteristics for pits with deliberate deposits

Context	Sherd Count	Mean Sherd Weight
714	1	17
913	1	13

The spatial analysis of pottery distribution did however reveal some association between pits containing significant deposits of bone (in the sense that they contained wide ranges of species), and significant deposits of pottery. Those pits containing over 28 sherds of pottery tended to contain bone derived from all the major domestic animal species, additionally one contained dog bone and one contained some human remains. Pits containing between 10 and 28 sherds showed less strong associations with deposits derived from a wide range of domestic animals, however there did appear to be some association. In general the distribution of pottery within the Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits was relatively sparse in comparison to the earlier phases, and in this respect it mirrors the distribution of bone.

Plant remains (Fig. 7.15)

Six of the 50 Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits contained plant remains. Of these two were over 0.80 m³ in volume, and their average volume was 1.655 m³, whereas the average original volume of all the Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits put together was 0.656 m³. The Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits containing plant remains consisted of two types, cylindrical and bowl-shaped. There were four cylindrical pits and two bowl-shaped ones. Plant remains consisted of cereal grains, weed seeds and chaff, and with the exception of weed seeds the cylindrical pits contained the highest quantities of each. The cylindrical pits contained a greater proportion of chaff than cereal grains or weed seeds, and a greater proportion of weed seed than cereal grains. The bowl-shaped pits also contained a greater proportion of weed seed than cereal grain, but a greater proportion of cereal grain than chaff. Overall, as was seen in the Early and Middle Iron Age pits, there was more weed seed and chaff than cereal grain.

Table 7.5 Plant remains by pit type

Pit Type	Cereals	Chaff	Weed Seeds
Cylindrical	21	41	27
Bowl-shaped	19	9	27

Given the scarcity of deliberate deposits in the Late Iron Age/Early Roman phase the association of one pit, 913, containing plant remains with a deliberate deposit may be seen as significant. It is also important that the plant remains contained within this pit were numerous, comprising 25 weed seeds, 17 cereal grains and 9 chaff fragments. Two late Iron Age/early Roman pits containing plant remains also contained charcoal, however, the presence of burning in these deposits may well account for the recovery of the plant remains, the distribution of which may not therefore be very meaningful. The spatial distribution of plant remains followed the pattern seen in earlier phases, as the plant material tended to be concentrated in pits with animal remains derived from a wide range of species, and much of it also occurred in pits with significant deposits of pottery. For example, three out of the eight pits with over 10 sherds of pottery, and two of the pits containing over 28 sherds of pottery contained plant remains. In summary a pattern of recurring deposition of plant remains with animal bones and pottery seems apparent, with the greatest quantities deriving from the cylindrical pits, and in this sense the late Iron Age / early Roman deposits of plant remains are comparable to the early Iron Age and middle Iron Age ones. However, the late Iron Age/Early Roman deposits were scarcer than the deposits from earlier phases, and were more dispersed. In this sense they followed the pattern seen amongst the Late Iron Age/Early Roman pits in general.

Metal working debris (Fig. 7.16)

Very little metal working debris was recovered from the Late Iron Age/Early Roman phase, and its distribution was consequently very restricted. In total three fragments, two of unclassified dense slag and one fragment of hearth bottom, were recovered from three different pit types (300, 662 and 954).

Table 7.6 Metal working debris by pit type

Pit Type	No. of Fragments
Cylindrical	1
Bowl-Shaped	1
Amorphous	1

Metal working debris was distributed within the south - western and south central part of the late Iron Age / early Roman pit group. One of the pits (300) containing metal working debris lay to the south - west of a large rectangular feature (594) of unknown function. However, the quantity of material recovered was too small to draw any firm conclusions about the significance of this distribution. Pit 662 produced a fragment of hearth bottom.

Other Finds (Fig. 7.16)

Other finds were extremely sparse. Twelve late Iron Age / early Roman pits contained other finds but the majority of these comprised small amorphous fragments of fired clay or flint flakes. The majority of these pits were cylindrical, although a substantial minority were bowl-shaped. The remainder were either amorphous or undercut. The fact that the majority of small finds came from cylindrical pits may be seen as significant, as they were not the most numerous type of pit in this phase. The only pit with a bone object is that with the metal working debris (300). Pit 300 produced a bone leaze rod (SF 460) and a flint flake. Six further flints were recovered from pits

and it may be assumed that these were residual. A relatively high degree of residuality is evident therefore, something which is also seen in other phases, and is to be expected on a site with such a high density of features.

Draft