

Chapter 8: The Early Roman Period

By Dan Stansbie with a contribution by Paul Booth

INTRODUCTION

The early Roman period at Yarnton was characterised by the construction of more ditched enclosures, and the intensification of the land divisions which first emerged in the Late Iron Age/Early Roman phase (Figs 8.1-2). Enclosure 187 in the centre of the site was enlarged, and to its east several smaller enclosures were constructed, and frequently recut on slightly different alignments. To the south of these large circular enclosure 391, first constructed in the late Iron Age/ early Roman period, was recut on several occasions. The number of more ephemeral ditches and fence lines defining ancillary enclosures also intensified. To the east a substantial north - south orientated ditch, 2593, presumably defining a major land boundary was constructed. At the very eastern margins of the Roman settlement the truncated remains of two pottery kilns were found broadly dated to the early Roman period.

THE EARLY ROMAN STRUCTURES

Summary

There was no evidence of any substantial structures dating to the early Roman period. The only structural evidence consisted of a small area of stone spread (385), made up of limestone blocks. This was situated just to the north of a substantial circular ditched enclosure which occupied the south-eastern corner of the site. This absence of substantial buildings is surprising, given the obvious intensity of occupation shown by the numerous, and frequently recut ditched enclosures dating to this period. This lack of evidence may suggest that the buildings of this period were of mass wall or sill-beam construction, and therefore did not leave any trace in the archaeological record (See above chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of this).

Stone Spread (385) (Fig. 8.3)

Structure 385 consisted of a linear spread of limestone orientated east/west, and measuring approximately 2.7 m by 0.9 m. It was made up of closely packed limestone blocks the largest of which measured approximately 0.5 m by 0.24 m. Removal of the stones in the eastern half of the structure revealed an irregular bedding of yellow mortar. Beneath the stones in the south-east corner was a layer of reddish-brown gravel, possibly burnt. No finds were recovered.

THE EARLY ROMAN ENCLOSURES

Summary

The development of ditched enclosures begun during the Late Iron Age/Early Roman transition period continued and intensified in the early Roman period. These were divisible in a somewhat arbitrary fashion into two groups, a central group of oval and

sub-rectangular enclosures, and an eastern group comprising north/south running land boundaries.

The Central Group of Enclosures

The ditches making up the enclosures of the central group were more substantial than those seen in the late Iron Age/early Roman period, and some of the enclosures themselves were larger. A large oval enclosure, 187, orientated NE/SW and recut on numerous occasions, overlay the late Iron Age/early Roman sub-rectangular enclosures. Abutting this enclosure to the east, and also lying on a NE/SW alignment was a substantial right-angled ditch, 206, which may have been the remains of a similar enclosure, partially cut away by later activity. Abutting the right-angled ditch to the east, and seemingly contained within it were a series of enclosures (140, 166, 138, 214, 293, 427, 440, 727, 1050) some of which were sub-rectangular and some of which were oval in shape. This series of ditches defined two contiguous enclosure areas, both abutting the right-angled ditch to their west. It seems that these areas were initially defined by two linked sub-circular enclosures, and later by a series of shifting sub-rectangular enclosures which largely respected one-another. To the south east of these enclosures the sub-circular enclosure, 391, initially laid out in the Late Iron Age/early Roman was expanded, shifting slightly to the south-west. Numerous stretches of linear and curvilinear ditches to the south, north and east of the central enclosures indicated ancillary enclosures or paddocks, one of which cut the large sub-circular enclosure to the south-east. There were also at least two small ring-ditches to the north-east.

Ditch 5000 (Fig. 8.1)

Ditch 5000 located in the area excavated to the east of the main Yarnton site in the area of Saxon occupation was 13.5 m in length and orientated NW/SE. It was excavated in three ditch segments comprising 10% of its total length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open and no recuts were observed. The ditch was 0.4 m in width on average, and average depth was 0.2 m. There was a single fill which consisted of non-gravelly material with charcoal flecks and some iron panning. The ditch fill was devoid of finds

Enclosure 23 (Fig. 8.2)

Enclosure 23 was a small ring-ditch in the north-east corner of the excavated area. It measured 3.1 m in diameter and enclosed an area of 15.43 m². There was no visible entrance at the time of excavation. A single segment excavated through this ditch, represents 12% of its original length. The ditch profile was steep-sided and flat bottomed and no recuts were apparent. On average the ditch was 0.35 m wide and 0.28 m in depth. It contained a single fill consisting of gravel-free material. The ditch fill was sterile.

Enclosure 24 (Fig. 8.2)

Enclosure 24 was a small ring-ditch immediately west of enclosure 23. It measured 2.1 m in diameter, and enclosed an area of 10.9m². A single ditch segment was excavated through this feature, representing 11% of its total circumference. No entrance was apparent, there were no recuts and the ditch profile was U-shaped and

narrow. Average width was 0.24 m and average depth was 0.27 m. Fills consisted of gravel-free material. A small quantity of finds comprising just five sherds, some redeposited, from the ditch fill may indicate the secondary deposition of material lying on an adjacent ground surface.

Ditches 29 and 591 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 29 was a linear ditch 6 m in length and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the north-west by ditch 26, and to the south-east it ended in a terminal respecting the terminal of ditch 591, which continued on a similar alignment to the south-east. Fourteen percent of ditch 29 was excavated in three segments. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.4 m in width and 0.24 m in depth and was filled with a generally homogeneous non-gravelly material, with some coarser primary silting. There were no recuts. A small assemblage of five sherds of pottery and five animal bones recovered from the ditch fill may indicate secondary deposition.

Ditch 591 was approximately 7 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the south-east by ditch 42, and ended in a terminal to the north-west just short of the terminal of ditch 29, which ran on to the north-west. The ditch was excavated in two sections, representing 19% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, with no recuts. It averaged 0.75 m in width and 0.33 m in depth, and there were two fills which consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel, with some primary silting. A fairly substantial deposit of 62 sherds (1323 g) of pottery, 17 animal bones and one fragment of fuel ash slag was recovered. Most of the pottery comprises local early Roman fabrics with marked number of grey sandy sherds in fabrics R37 and R94.

Ditch 39 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 39 lay parallel to and some 6 m south of ditches 29/591. This was a linear ditch 8 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the north-west by ditch 34, and to the south-east terminated just short of ditch 826. Two segments were excavated representing 34% of its total length. The ditch was an open U-shape, averaging 1 m wide and 0.41 m deep, and was filled with a mixture of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel. There were no recuts. Seventeen quite well preserved sherds of pottery and eight animal bones, including one hare bone, may indicate small scale rubbish deposition.

Ditch 43 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 43 was a linear ditch 9 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It ran mid way between and parallel to ditch 39 and ditches 29/591, and was one of several short NW/SE running ditches in this part of the site. It was cut away at either end by ditches 807 and 1031. Two ditch segments were excavated through this feature, representing 13% of its total length. The profile was an open U-shape, and the ditch averaged 1.1 m wide by 0.37 m deep. There were no recuts. The fill consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there was some coarser primary silting. The ditch fills were devoid of finds.

Ditch 45 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 45 was a linear ditch 13 m in length, and orientated NW/SE possibly part of the same boundary as ditch 43. It was cut away to the north-west by ditch 1041 and ended in a terminal to the south-east. Five sections were excavated through this feature, representing approximately 19.4% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape in places and a narrow U-shape in others. The average width of the ditch was 0.5 m, and its average depth was 0.35 m. No recuts were observed. There was a single fill consisting of non-gravelly material. A small amount of pottery (15 sherds) and six animal bones may suggest rubbish deposition.

Ditch 51 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 51 was a right-angled ditch group, one arm of which was orientated NE/SW and the other arm of which was orientated NW/SE. It was probably part of a rectangular enclosure, which had been cut away to the north by later enclosures. It measured 17 m by 13 m, and the area enclosed was 221 m². Sixty two percent of the ditch was excavated in 27 segments. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.83 m wide and 0.79 m deep. There were two fills which consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, and greenish soils. There was some primary silting and fragments of charcoal. There was one recut. Some animal disturbance of the fill was also noted. The fill contained a very large assemblage of pottery amounting to some 741 sherds (9915 g) and a substantial quantity of 103 animal bones, as well as an iron nail, fragments of daub, some miscellaneous fired clay and one fragment of slag. This material was mixed in with fragments of charcoal and may have been the result of rubbish deposition from structures within the enclosed area. Plant remains from the ditch include a variety of weed seeds, cereals and chaff.

Most of the pottery comprises local Roman wares with very little evident redeposited material. Of note is one sherd of Dorset black burnished ware, two sherds of Oxon whiteware mortaria and a Oxon whiteware flagon Young (1977) form W2 amid a large quantity of grey ware. The pottery provides a broad 2nd-century date for the fill. The bone is dominated by cattle but with a range of other types including dog, pig, horse, sheep/goat and a single bird bone.

Ditch 55 (Fig. 8.2)

Enclosure ditch 55 lying to the north of enclosure ditch 51 forms three sides of a slightly irregular D-shaped enclosure. The ditch measuring 22 m in length was cut to the north-east by ditch 56 and to the south-west by a set of later enclosure boundaries. Fourteen segments were excavated through this ditch, representing 46% of its extant length. There was no discernible entrance, but the north-western and north-eastern sides of the enclosure had been cut away. The ditch profile varied between open and U-shape and narrow and U-shaped. The ditch was 0.79 m wide on average, and 0.48 m deep. No recuts were observed. There were several fills which consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there was also some greenish material. Finds of pottery (76 sherds weighing 1525 g), animal bone (47 fragments), charred plant remains and a fragment of fired clay from the ditch fill indicate rubbish deposition, possibly from buildings contained in the enclosure to the west. A single human finger bone was also recovered from context 846.

Ditch 58 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 58 was a very short stretch of linear ditch, 0.55 m in length and orientated NE/SW located towards the northern limit of the excavated area. The ditch was excavated in a single section, representing 100% of its extant length. It was an open U-shape, averaging 0.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep. There were no recuts. The single fill comprised non-gravelly material. Ten of the twelve sherds of pottery recovered from the fill are redeposited Iron Age pieces accompanied by two Roman grey wares. In addition eight animal bones came from this feature.

Ditch 59 (Fig. 8.2)

Enclosure ditch 59 located against the northern limit of the excavation was 12 m in length and orientated east-west. At its western end it was cut by an amorphous cluster of pits and to the east it turned south and ran on for several metres before being swallowed up in a cluster of poorly defined features. Five sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 14.5% of its extant length. The profile was varied, being mostly an open U-shape but with one section which was a narrow U-shape. There was at least one, possibly two recuts. The ditch was 0.65 m wide on average, and 0.28 m deep. The number of fills observed in the excavated sections ranged between one and four, and these consisted of non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel. Finds from the ditch fill comprising three potsherds, 18 animal bones and two possible loomweight fragments.

Ditch 74 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 74 lay within a zone of intercutting ditches to the north west of ditch 166, and may have formed part of a sub-circular enclosure including 166. It was 7.5 m in length and orientated WSW/ENE. Thirteen percent of the extant ditch was excavated in two sections. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width of this ditch was 0.56 m, and its average depth 0.25 m. The single fill consisted of a non-gravelly material. Four sherds of pottery and four scraps of animal bone from the ditch fill probably represent secondary deposition from an adjacent ground surface.

Ditch 78 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 78 was a right-angled ditch 7.5-m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It was cut away to the north-east by ditch 34 and to the south by ditch 30, but may originally have formed the north-western boundary of a sub-rectangular enclosure situated to its south-east. Three sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 23% of its extant length. The ditch was an open U-shape, averaging 0.9 m wide and 0.36 m deep. There were no recuts. There was a single fill, which was fairly mixed and consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and gravelly material. The fill contained some ten sherds of pottery, and one ox bone.

Ditches 84 and 95 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 84 was 2.5 m in length and orientated NNW/SSE. It was cut away at its northern end by a collection of substantial pits, and petered out at its southern end. It was also cut by a later ring ditch, and its function was therefore difficult to ascertain. A single section was excavated through this feature, representing 40% of its extant length. The ditch profile was V-shaped, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 0.56 m, and average depth 0.19 m. The single fill consisted of a non-gravelly material. The ditch was devoid of finds.

Ditch 95 was 7.45 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. At its north-western end it was cut by a curvilinear ditch, and it did not appear to continue on the other side of this feature. It terminated to the south east in a large pit, but may originally have curved around to the south and linked up with ditch 84. A single section was excavated through this ditch, representing 5% of its extant length. The ditch was 0.58 m wide on average, and 0.31 m deep. The profile was open and U-shaped and there were no recuts. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 93 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 93 was orientated NW/SE and was 4.4 m in length. It was cut away by later ditches belonging to enclosure 166 at both its north-western and south-eastern ends, and may have been part of an earlier phase of ditch 166 which lay to its east or possibly a continuation of ditch 160/756. Fifty percent of this ditch was excavated in three sections. The profile was an open U-shape, and averaged 0.91 m in width by 0.44 m in depth. There were no recuts. There were two fills which comprised non-gravelly material and silty-loam with gravel. A small concentration of material amounting to some 54 sherds of pottery weighing 991 g and eight animal bones, two of which were rabbit and therefore intrusive, in the ditch fill suggested a low density of rubbish.

Ditch 94 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 94 was a curvilinear ditch 5.5 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut to the south-east by ditch 30, and was impossible to trace at its north-western end. It may have been part of enclosure 166. This ditch was excavated in three sections, which represented 44% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and it averaged 1.4 m in width by 0.84 m in depth. The fill was fairly mixed and consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, some greenish soils and some orange/green/brown material. Pottery (24 sherds) and animal bone (11 fragments, of which four are intrusive rabbit) from the ditch fill suggested low level rubbish deposition.

Ditch 100 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 100 was a short stretch of linear ditch 2 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the south-east by ditch 94 and to the north by a large pit (1147). One hundred percent of the extant length of this ditch was excavated in three segments. The ditch was an open U-shape, averaging 1 m wide and 0.51 m deep. The ditch fill was mixed consisting of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; it had suffered some animal disturbance. The ditch fill was sterile.

Enclosure 138 (Figs 8.2 and 8.4)

Enclosure 138 in the central area of the site was a sub-rectangular ditched enclosure measuring 67 m in total, and orientated NW/SE. It measured 21 m NW/SE by 16m NE/SW, and the area enclosed was approximately 336 m². The entrance was possibly situated in the north-eastern corner, where there was a gap in the circuit. Ten segments were excavated through the ditch, representing 15% of its total length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 1.11 m wide and 0.61 m deep. There were multiple recuts (4-5 or more), and the fills consisted of a mixture of material with widely varying gravel content and some flecks of charcoal. There was some coarser primary silting to be seen in the base of the ditch. A substantial assemblage of pottery (129 sherds, 2582 g), animal bones, charred plant remains, a fragment of triangular loomweight, a brick fragment and fired clay was recovered from the ditch fill.

Most of the pottery comprises products of the local Oxfordshire industries with substantial quantities of grey ware accompanied by shelly ware and grog-tempered ware. The only fineware is a single sherd of mica-slipped ware and the only imports a small amount of Dorset black burnished ware. A sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated mortaria from one fill probably represents contamination. Of the 54 animal bones recovered 39% were from cattle with lesser amounts of sheep, horse and pig. Amongst the cattle bones was a complete torso, possibly a special deposit (see Mulville p. 00). In general the material suggests rubbish deposition and possibly the presence of buildings within the enclosure.

Ditch Group 140 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch Group 140 was a curvilinear ditch group immediately north-east of enclosure 138 measuring 18 m in length and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away at either end by later enclosure ditches, but may originally have formed the south-western boundary of enclosure 138. Three ditch segments were excavated through this enclosure, representing 14% of its original length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.73 m in width and 0.47 m in depth. There was one recut, and the ditch was filled with a generally homogeneous non-gravelly material. A small amount of pottery (15 sherds weighing 823 g), was recovered from the fill. Two very large sherds of grog-tempered storage jar may represent an in-situ vessel.

Enclosures 156 and 187 (Figs 8.2, 8.5 and 8.6)

Enclosure 156 was a very substantial oval enclosure in the central north area of the site overlain by enclosure 187. Both enclosures were orientated NE/SW. Enclosure 156 measured 33m NE/SW by 18 m NW/SE and 97 m in circumference. The area enclosed was approximately 594 m². No entrance was immediately apparent, however, the enclosure itself was clearly the product of repeated recutting and the entrance may well have shifted over time. Thirty-four ditch segments were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 36% of its total length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and the ditch had been recut at least once. It was 0.58 m wide on average, and 0.55 m deep. There were two fairly mixed fills consisting of a wide range of gravelly and non-gravelly material, with some primary silting, some burnt/ashy material and some greenish soils. There was also some animal disturbance. A relatively large assemblage of pottery (136 sherds, 2023g), animal

bone (148 pieces), and charred plant remains was recovered from the ditch fill along with two human bones and small metalworking debris. The animal bone assemblage is quite diverse with examples of hare, dog, horse, pig, sheep and cattle. The cattle or cattle/horse size bones account for 39% of the bone assemblage. The finds suggest rubbish deposition, possibly from buildings contained within the enclosure.

Enclosure 187 was a very substantial oval enclosure measuring 67 m in circumference, and with an enclosed area of 360 m². There was no discernible entrance however, and like enclosure 156 which it seems to have overlain, its final layout was the result of multiple recuts. Its entrance may therefore have shifted over time. Forty ditch sections were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 63% of its total length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and there was at least one recut. It was 0.81 m wide on average, and 0.74 m deep. There were several ditch fills which were mixed consisting of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and greenish material. A substantial finds assemblage including 280 sherds (4146 g) of pottery and 155 animal bones, charred plant remains and some metalworking debris was recovered from the ditch fill. Just over half the pottery by sherd count (51%) is Iron Age in date. This high level of redeposition is reflected in the quite low average sherd size for the group of 14 g and is perhaps not surprising given the proximity of the Iron Age settlement to the west and the constant redigging of the ditches. A Dorset black burnished ware flat-rim bowl provides a *tpq* of mid-late 2nd century. The animal bone is quite diverse with cattle, dog, goat, pig, sheep, hare and toad represented. A pair of cattle mandibles present might suggest a special deposit of some type (see Mulville below). The cattle and cattle/horse size bones dominate the assemblage accounting for 44.5%. Other finds include a quernstone and a worked bone object (SF381) and metalworking debris. The latter comprises fragments of fuel ash slag, a small sub-tuyère plate, fragments of lining vitrification flow and a fragment of a bellows protection block. This may indicate rubbish deposition from structures within the enclosure which did not survive at the time of excavation and suggests that metalworking was being carried out nearby.

Ditch 159 (Figs 8.2 and 8.7)

This was a right-angled ditch measuring 5 m in length cut by enclosure ditch 160 located north-east of enclosure 187. Its long axis was orientated E/W, and its short axis ran N/S. It was cut away to the north by a series of pits, and to the east by later enclosure ditches. Two sections were excavated through this feature, representing 12% of its extant length. The ditch profile an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 1 m, and average depth 0.6 m. The single fill comprised non-gravelly material. A small assemblage of pottery and four bones recovered from the ditch fill suggests secondary deposition.

Enclosure 160 (Figs 8.2 and 8.7)

Enclosure 160 was a curvilinear ditch 14.5 m in length. It was probably part of a circular enclosure that had been cut away by later activity to the south-east, and no entrance was apparent in the extant ditch. Thirty eight percent of the enclosure was excavated in five sections. In profile the ditch was an open U-shape, and there were no recuts. The ditch was 1.1 m wide on average, and 0.6 m deep. The fill was fairly mixed consisting of burnt clay, non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel.

There were also lenses of burnt ashy or charcoal material, and some greenish material. A moderately substantial assemblage of 36 sherds of pottery (959 g) and 54 animal bones (excluding 19 rabbit bones), from the ditch fill indicates rubbish deposition.

Ditch 163 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 163 was a linear ditch orientated NE/SW located between enclosure ditched 160 and 166. It ran for a distance of 3.5 m but merged with a various recut ditches at either end. It may well have been part of enclosure 160 situated to its north-east. Two segments were excavated through the ditch, representing 48% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. On average the ditch was 1.1 m wide and 0.33 m deep, with a generally homogeneous fill comprising non-gravelly material with occasional flecks of charcoal. Two small sherds of pottery and just five animal bones were recovered.

Ditch 166 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 166 was substantial right-angled ditch 20 m in length, which probably formed the south-eastern half of a sub-rectangular enclosure. The long axis of this enclosure measured approximately 16 m and the short axis approximately 15 m. The area enclosed was approximately 240 m². The ditch was cut away to the north-west, although a number of isolated ditches in this area may have been related to it. No entrance was observed during the course of excavation, but this may also have been cut away. Nine sections were excavated representing 26% of its original length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.7 m wide and 0.75 m deep. There were four to five recuts, and a corresponding number of fills. The fills were generally mixed with a varying gravel content, and some primary silting. They also contained some greenish material. A large quantity of 143 sherds (2344 g) of pottery, 130 fragments of animal bone, some charred plant remains, one fragment of metalworking debris were recovered from the ditch fill. The pottery mainly comprises local wares with grogged wares, grey and orange sandy wares. The only import is a sherd of *terra nigra* cup which may be redeposited or curated. The general *tpq* for the assemblage lies somewhere in the later 1st-early 2nd century. The animal bone includes examples of all the usual domesticates, ox, pig, sheep and horse. The material may represent rubbish deposition from a nearby structure, possibly within the enclosure.

Ditch 168 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 168 was a linear ditch 6.2 m in length, and orientated NNE/SSW. At its northern end it ran under the northern section of the excavated area, and at its southern end it was cut away by enclosure 187. A single segment was excavated through the enclosure ditch representing 12% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape with no recuts and measured 0.6 m wide on average, and 0.33 m deep. The fill was generally homogeneous and consisted of non-gravelly material. Finds were modest with just two potsherds and six animal bones.

Ditch 206 (Figs 8.2 and 8.4)

Ditch 206 formed two sides of probably what was a polygonal-sided enclosure encircling the area occupied by enclosure ditches 138, 427, 440 and 293. The extant

ditch measured 54 m in length, and was orientated NE/SW. At its north-eastern end it ran into an area of isolated ditches, and became untraceable; at its south-western end it turned to the east and was cut away by enclosure 391B. Any northern or eastern ditches would have been cut away by later enclosures. Thirty-five sections were cut through this ditch, representing 79% of its extant length. The ditch profile was predominantly an open U-shape, averaging 0.7 m in width, and 0.5 m in depth. There were six or more recuts, with a corresponding number of fills which were fairly mixed with a wide variation in gravel content. The fills contained some greenish material, and some evidence of burning. A substantial assemblage of pottery and animal bone, along with three fragments of metalworking debris and one bone small find were recovered from the ditch fill. The pottery comprising some 178 sherds (3448 g) includes a number of residual later prehistoric sherds, 42% by sherd count alongside local Roman wares. The Roman material was dominated by native grog-tempered wares accounting for a further 35% with Roman wares proper forming the remaining 23%. The latter provide a *tpq* for the group in the middle part of the 2nd century. The large collection of 250 animal bones is dominated by cattle but includes bird, dog, horse, pig, sheep and roe deer. Amongst the other finds a bone leaze rod (SF 454) and some fragments of fired clay. This probably represents the dumping of rubbish from structures to the east of the ditch, which did not survive at the time of excavation.

Ditch 214 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 214 was a slightly curvilinear ditch, measuring 6.6 m in length and orientated NE/SW. It was cut away to the north-east by ditch 293, and it ended in a terminal to the south-west 0.25 m short of ditch 206. One section was excavated through this ditch, representing 21% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.2 m in width and 0.25 m in depth. There were no recuts. The fill consisted of a generally homogeneous non-gravelly material which was devoid of finds.

Enclosure 293 (Fig. 8.2)

Enclosure 293 was a sub-rectangular enclosure measuring 52 m around, and orientated NW/SE lying within and broadly mirroring enclosure ditch 206. It measured 26 m NW/SE by 16 m NE/SW, and the enclosed area was approximately 416 m². Eighteen sections were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 29% of its total length. There was no discernible entrance. The profile was an open U-shape, and there were up to six recuts. At least two recuts can be seen to have effected realignments of the enclosure in which the south-western boundary ditch shifted by several metres. The ditch was 0.6 m wide on average, and 0.35 m deep. There were up to six fills of mixed material, including non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, and some orange/brown material. There was some coarser primary silting, and some animal disturbance. The ditch fill contained a large amount of pottery and a small amount of animal bone along with one iron hobnail. The pottery comprising some 100 sherds (820 g) was quite well fragmented with a few redeposited sherds. Although the bulk of the assemblage dates to the early Roman period there are at least five Oxfordshire wares (Young 1977, forms M18, P18, C22, C45 and C51) current from the second part of the third century suggesting either intrusive material of a later phase of infilling.

Ditch 340 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 340 was a curvilinear feature, 3.5 m in length located immediately south west of enclosure ditch 206. At both its northern end and southern ends it had been cut away by clusters of amorphous pits, and other features. It may originally have formed part of a small circular enclosure. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were apparent. The average width of this feature was 0.38 m, and its average depth was 0.12 m. It contained a single fill which consisted of non-gravelly material. Just two sherds of pottery came from the ditch fill, one of which was Iron Age and clearly residual, the other a grog-tempered early Roman sherd.

Ditch 341 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 341 was a 29 m length right-angled ditch, the main arm of which was orientated north/south. It turned east at its southern end to be truncated by an amorphous group of pits. It probably also turns at the northern end to have been cut away by ditch 206. It may have been part of a sub-rectangular enclosure, the eastern half of which did not survive. Five sections were excavated through this ditch, representing five percent of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.64 m wide and 0.27 m deep, and was filled with a generally homogeneous non-gravelly material. There were eight or more recuts. A relatively small assemblage of finds was recovered from the ditch fill comprising some 22 sherds (377 g) of early Roman pottery, 23 animal bones including one dog skull fragment. The form of the ditch combined with the relatively low incidence of finds suggests that the enclosure may have been a field or paddock.

Ditch 343 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 343 was a right-angled ditch measuring 22 m in length, one arm of which was orientated NE/SW and the other arm of which was orientated NW/SE broadly parallel to the original limit of excavation and east of enclosure 391. To the west it was cut away by later enclosures, and to the south it ended in a terminal; it may have defined an enclosure to its west. It was excavated in 10 sections, representing 82% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.64 m wide and 0.46 m deep, and there were five or more recuts. There were five or more fills consisting of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel. A small assemblage of 33 sherds (253 g) of fragmentary early Roman pottery, accompanied by 19 animal bones, charred plant remains and a piece of indeterminate fired clay came from the ditch fill.

Ditch 344 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 344 was part of a rectilinear ditched enclosure that had been cut away to the south and east which may have been contemporary in terms of layout with ditch 343. The extant enclosure ditch was 45 m in length and the enclosure measured 17.5 m east/west by 14 m north/south. The enclosed area was 210 m². The enclosure entrance was east facing and 13 m in width. Thirty nine percent of this enclosure was excavated in seven segments. The enclosure ditch was 0.5 m wide on average, and 0.55 m deep with a U-shaped profile. The single fill was mixed, consisting of greenish material, non-gravelly material silty-loams with gravel, and some gravelly

material, with some coarser primary silting and lenses of burnt material. Pottery, animal bone and one fragment of metalworking slag mixed with lenses of burnt material suggested rubbish deposition, possibly from structures within the enclosure. The 55 sherds (1080 g) of pottery are quite well preserved with an average sherd size of 19.6 g. The group is dominated by grog-tempered ware (fabric E80) but also includes several local grey sandy wares, a 2nd-century Oxfordshire mortarium (Young 1977, type M6) and an oxidised bowl (ibid form O42) of similar currency. The animal bone includes the usual range of domesticates and one dog mandible.

Ditch 345 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 345 was part of a small rectangular enclosure which had been cut away to the north and cut by ditch 344. The extant ditch was 12 m in length, and the enclosure measured 3.8 m from east to west. The enclosure entrance was orientated east. Three sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 43% of its extant length. The profile was a narrow U-shape, averaging 0.8 m wide and 0.65 m deep. There were no recuts. The fill was mixed consisting of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and some coarser primary silting. A small assemblage of 25 (311 g) potsherds and 20 animal bones from the ditch fill probably represented rubbish deposition. The pottery is more fragmented compared to that from 344 and can only be dated to the early Roman period.

Ditch 348 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 348 was a curvilinear ditch 7.5 m in length, and orientated north/south. It was cut away to the north by ditch 175 and to the south by a large amorphous pit scatter. This ditch was situated immediately to the west of enclosure 340, and may originally have been part of a small circular enclosure. Three sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 47% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. Its average width was 0.49 m, and its average depth was 0.24 m. There were two fills which were mixed, and comprised gravel-free material and non-gravelly material. A small assemblage of 16 sherds (201 g) of early Roman pottery, eight animal bones and one fragment of slag was recovered from the fill.

Ditch 365 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 365 was a curvilinear ditch 27.5 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It was probably part of a circular or penannular enclosure, which had been cut away to the east by ditch 343. The ditch ended in a terminal to the north-east, which may have indicated the position of the enclosure entrance. The putative enclosure measured 10 m NE/SW by 7 m NW/SE, and the area enclosed was 52 m². The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.49 m wide and 0.3 m deep. The single fill was generally homogeneous and consisted of silty-loams with gravel. There was a small amount of well fragmented pottery, 15 sherds (82 g) and nine animal bones recovered from the ditch fill.

Enclosure 391B (Figs 8.2, 7.11-7.13)

Enclosure 391B was a substantial sub-circular with similar dimensions to enclosure 391A in the south-east corner of the site. It was 68 m in circumference, with a

diameter of 18.5 m and enclosed an area of 268.8 m². The entrance may well have been cut away by later recuts. Fourteen sections were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 24% of its original length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.8 m wide and 0.5 m deep. There were no recuts. The fill was mixed, consisting of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, and gravelly material, with some greenish material and some primary silting. The recovered finds from the ditch comprise 64 sherds (1117 g) of pottery and 31 animal bones; a very modest assemblage given the size of the ditch. The pottery contains a high proportion of Belgic-type grog-tempered ware and grey sandy ware (fabric R37) broadly dating to the early Roman period.

Enclosure 391C (Figs 8.2; 7.11-7.13)

Enclosure 391C was a substantial oval enclosure 62.5 m in circumference. It measured 18 m east/west by 15 m north/south, and enclosed an area of 213.9 m². The position of the entrance was uncertain, although it may have been situated to the east or north-east. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 1 m in width and 0.5 m deep. The total number of recuts was uncertain, although there were more than five. The five or more fills were very mixed in character. These consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and gravelly fills, with some greenish material. Lenses of charcoal and deposits of burnt limestone were also encountered. A substantial amount of 243 sherds (4526 g) of pottery and 162 animal bones, along with a single human bone, a fragment of fuel ash slag, five fragments of fired clay triangular loomweight and an iron double spiked loop (SF410) came from the ditch fill. Charred plant remains were also recovered. The pottery despite a moderately high average sherd weight of 18.6 g contained a high incidence (25%) of redeposited Iron Age sherds. Belgic-type grog-tempered ware accounts for a further 46% and grey sandy ware (fabric R94) was also well represented. A single sherd of Oxfordshire white-ware mortarium was also recorded. Although cattle bones again dominated the bone assemblage pig bone also showed quite a marked presence.

Enclosure 391D (Figs 8.2; 7.11-7.13)

Enclosure 391D comprised two ditch sections which may have represented the final use of this enclosure. Together these measured 2.75 m in length. One was oriented north/south while the other was orientated east/west. In profile they were an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average ditch width was 2.4 m, and the average depth 0.41 m. Each contained a single fill of non-gravelly material. A moderately small assemblage of 25 sherds (340 g) of pottery and 17 animal bones came from the ditch fill; a fairly modest group given the size of the ditch.

Ditch 427 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 427 was a right-angled ditch 28 m in length, one arm of which was orientated NW/SE and the other arm of which was orientated NE/SW and lying between ditches 138 and 440. This ditch may have originally defined the southern and eastern boundaries of a rectangular enclosure, measuring 16 m NW/SE by 12 m NE/SW and enclosing an approximate area of 192 m². No entrance to this enclosure was observed during excavation, but one may have existed either to the north-west or the north-east, where the boundary ditches related to this feature may have been obliterated by later

enclosures. Eleven segments were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 40% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.5 m wide and 0.5 m deep. There were two or more recuts. The two or more fills consisted of a mixture of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, orange layers and greenish deposits. There was some primary silting, and some animal disturbance of the fills. Pottery and animal bone mixed with charcoal and charred plant remains found in the ditch fill probably represent rubbish deposition, perhaps from structures originally located inside the enclosure. The 93 sherds (3156 g) of pottery showed an average sherd weight of 34 g suggesting well-preserved material which has undergone relatively little disturbance. The assemblage is dominated by grey sandy Oxfordshire wares (fabric R37) and grey sandy grogged ware (fabric R94) and includes one white-ware globular beaker (Young 1977 type W37) of 2nd-century date. The animal bone, a total of 19 fragments includes examples of the usual domesticates.

Ditch 440 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 440 was a curvilinear ditch 40 m in length immediately north of ditch 427. It probably represented the north-eastern part of an oval enclosure, which had been cut away to the south-west and was orientated NE/SW. The extant enclosure measured 14 m NE/SW by 12 m NW/SE and enclosed an approximate area of 168 m². Twenty two segments were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 50% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.44 m wide and 0.4 m deep, and there were at least three recuts. There were three or more fills which were mixed, and consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, some red/brown material, and some greenish material. There was also some coarser primary silting. Pottery, animal bone, charred plants and two copper alloy artefacts came from the ditch fill mixed with lenses of charcoal and probably represented rubbish deposition. The 45 sherds (771 g) of pottery were quite well preserved and were largely local early Roman types. Although 63 animal bones are recorded, 23 of these are rabbit and presumably intrusive. Of note amongst the usual complement of species is one domestic fowl bone and one hare bone. The copper alloy items include a dolphin brooch (SF 160) of Neronian-early Flavian date and an early Roman stud (SF 161).

Ditch 586 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 586 was a short section of linear ditch measuring 0.9 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the south-east by enclosure 187, and ended in a terminal to the north-west. The ditch was excavated in a single section which represented 100% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and there were no recuts. There were three fills which were generally homogeneous, and consisted of a non-gravelly material. Just four sherds of pottery and thirteen animal bones were found in the fill.

Ditch 624 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 624 was an isolated stretch of linear ditch 4.4 m in length and orientated NE/SW located towards the south-west corner of the site. It terminated approximately 0.9 m short of a large pit at its northern end, and petered out in an area of amorphous

pits to the south. It was excavated in three sections, representing 100% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 0.62 m, and average depth was 0.24 m. There was a single fill which consisted of gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, and non-gravelly material. Pottery, nine animal bones and charred plant remains were recovered from the ditch fill. The pottery assemblage was substantial comprising some 105 sherds (1760 g) with fairly good sized sherds. Unlike many of the other groups the assemblage largely comprises reduced and oxidised local wares including two examples of late 1st to early 2nd-century oxidised wall-sided carinated bowls (Young 1977, form O42) with only a single Belgic type sherd.

Ditch 717 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 717 was a short stretch of linear ditch, 1.4 m in length and orientated WNW/ESE. It lay immediately to the north of enclosure 187, and ran parallel with one of its outside recuts. A single section was excavated through this ditch, representing 100% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and there were no recuts. The ditch was 0.7 m wide on average, and 0.38 m deep. The fill was of a generally homogeneous material. Ten sherds (107 g) of pottery and just three fragments of bone recovered from the ditch. The pottery comprised five Iron Age sherds and five early Roman native-type wares.

Ditch 727 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 727 was a right-angled ditch measuring 19 m in length, one arm of which was orientated NE/SW, and the other arm of which was orientated NW/SE. The western end is cut away by enclosure 138. Fourteen sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 45% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and there was at least one recut. The ditch was 0.56 m wide on average, and 0.34 m deep. There were at least two fills, which consisted of non-gravelly material, gravel-free material and silty-loams with gravel, with some primary silting. Finds from the fill comprise 43 sherds of pottery (362 g), 26 animal bones and one fragment of metal-working debris. The pottery comprises a mixture of native-type wares and grey Roman ware with a few residual Iron Age pieces.

Ditch 756 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 756 was a linear ditch 4.5 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away at both ends by later Roman ditches, but may have been part of enclosure 160. Two sections were excavated through this feature, and these represented 10% of its extant length. The profile was a narrow U-shape, and there were two recuts. The average width was 0.5 m, and the average depth 0.4 m. There were three fills which consisted of mixed non-gravelly material, with some primary silting. A small amount of pottery, ten sherds (154 g), and five animal bones from the ditch fills was not suggestive of rubbish deposition, but was probably secondary.

Ditch 785 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 785 was a linear ditch 5 m in length and orientated SW/NE. It petered out at both ends amongst the palimpsest of dense intercutting ditches that occupied the area

to the north-west of ditch 166; and it may have been part of an enclosure which included 166. Two sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 41% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 0.5 m, and average depth was 0.21 m. It contained a single fill, comprising silty-loams with gravel and non-gravelly material. Just three potsherds and four fragments of animal bone was recovered two of which were rabbit and thus intrusive.

Ditch Group 786 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch group 786 was 6.5 m in length and orientated NE/SW. It lay between ditches 785 and 787, which it cut. This group of features petered out at either end, amongst the series of intercutting ditches which occupied the area to the north west of ditch 166. It may have formed part of the north western boundary of an enclosure, of which ditch 166 may also have been a part. Three sections were excavated through it, and these represented 34% of its extant length. The profiles of these ditches were U-shaped and open, and none of them had observable recuts. The average width was 0.7 m, and the average depth 0.33 m. The number of fills contained in individual ditches ranged between one and four, and the fills comprised non-gravelly material. A modest assemblage of pottery (28 sherds) and two animal bones was recovered.

Ditches 787 and 788 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 787 was 6 m in length, and orientated SW/NE. Like ditch 785 and ditch group 787 it petered out at either end, amongst the series of intercutting ditches that occupied the area to the north west of enclosure ditch 166. It may also have been part of the same enclosure formed by ditch 166. Thirty three percent of the extant length of this ditch was excavated in two sections. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. Two fills were observed consisting of silty-loams with gravel and non-gravelly material. Eleven sherds of pottery and 19 animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill, but this was fairly dispersed.

Ditch 788 was a linear ditch 6.5 m in length parallel to ditch 787, and orientated NE/SW. It also petered out at both ends, but may have been a recut of the north-western boundary of an enclosure which included ditch 166. Two sections were excavated through this ditch representing 31% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.9 m wide and 0.65 m deep. There were five fills consisting of silty-loams with gravel, with some primary silting, some greenish material, and deposits of burnt limestone. A modest, dispersed assemblage of 13 potsherds, 19 animal bones and a fragment of metalworking debris came from the ditch fills.

Ditch 813 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 813 was a linear ditch 6.4 m in length, and orientated north/south. It was cut away to the north by ditch 260, and to the south by ditch 440. A single section was excavated through this ditch, representing 13% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and there were no recuts. The average width of the ditch was 0.45 m, and its average depth was 0.4 m. There was a single fill which was generally homogeneous, and consisted of non-gravelly material. Twenty-five (901 g) of well-

preserved pottery, including several sherds from early Roman shelly jars (fabric C11), and two fragments of animal bone came from the fill.

Ditch 825 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 825 was a right angled ditch 5.8 m in length, one arm of which was orientated east/west, and the other arm of which was orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the west by ditch 55 and to the east by ditch 826. Two sections were excavated through the ditch, representing approximately 46% of its extant length. The profile was a narrow U-shape, and there were no recuts. The ditch was 1 m wide on average, and 0.98 m deep. There were five fills which consisted of a mixture of non-gravelly and gravelly material, with charcoal flecks. Pottery (28 sherds, 624 g), 16 animal bones and a fragment of daub were found in the fill.

Ditch 828 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 828 was a linear ditch 2.1 m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away to the north-west by ditch 51, was cut by 343 and ended in a terminal to the south-east. Three sections were excavated representing 50% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.4 m wide and 0.37 m deep. No recuts were apparent. There were two fills consisting of non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel, with some primary silting. A small quantity of pottery (13 sherds) and two animal bones came from the fill.

Ditch 839 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 839 was a linear ditch 3 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It was cut away to the north-west by ditch 55 and to the south-east by ditch 727. The ditch was excavated in two sections, which represented 50% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.25 m wide and 0.17 m deep. There were no recuts. The fill was a mixture of gravelly and non-gravelly material. A small assemblage of nine animal bones and ten potsherds came from the ditch fill, along with two fragments of human bone.

Ditch 859 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 859 was 4.7 m in length and orientated NNW/SSE located some 10 m west of enclosure 391. In shape it was a standard linear ditch, with an exaggerated oval terminal at its northern end. At its southern end it petered out approximately 3 m short of the southern limit of the excavation. Two sections were excavated through this ditch, and this represented 31% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. Average width was 0.34 m, and average depth was 0.24 m. There was a single fill which consisted of non-gravelly material. The ditch fill contained a fairly substantial deposit of 39 sherds (1259 g) of well preserved pottery largely comprising 'Belgic' grog-tempered wares (fabric E80) and grey sandy wares along with three fragments of animal bone.

Ditch 879 (Fig.8.2)

Ditch 879 located to the east of 859 was 8.75 m in length and orientated north/south. In shape it was linear, but it had an irregular eastern edge, possibly caused by a series of pits which had been cut into it. To the north it ended in a terminal and to the south it petered out approximately 2 m short of the southern limit of excavation. Three sections were excavated representing 30% of the extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were apparent. Average width was 0.69 m, and average depth was 0.37 m. There were two fills which comprised gravel-free material, silty-loams with gravel and non-gravelly material. Two large, unabraded sherds of grog-tempered pottery were recovered from the ditch fill, along with two fragments of cattle bone and a single piece of sheep/goat size bone.

Enclosure 945 (Fig. 8.2)

Enclosure 945 was a small pennanular ring-ditch 8.7 m in length located immediately north-east of enclosure 391. It was excavated in five sections, which represented 32% of its original length. The entrance to this enclosure was orientated SSW/NNE, and was 0.95 m in width. Two postholes were cut into the natural between the ditch terminals, but these had no stratigraphic relationship with the enclosure ditch. The ditch profile varied between an open U-shape, and a narrow U-shape, and there was at least one recut but possibly more. Average width was 0.39 m, and average depth 0.15 m. There were four fills which varied from gravelly to gravel free. Six sherds of pottery and two animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill. This material may have come from whatever was inside the ring-ditch, but it seems too small to have enclosed a structure and more likely that these were stray finds incorporated into the fill through secondary deposition.

Ditch 948 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 948 was a right-angled ditch 13 m in length, one arm of which was orientated NW/SE, and the other arm of which was orientated NE/SW. It ran beyond the limit of the excavation to the south-east, and to the north-east it was cut away by a later ditch. Three ditch segments were excavated through this ditch, representing 22% of its extant length. The ditch profile was a narrow U-shape, averaging 1 m wide and 0.6 m deep. There were no recuts. There were three fills, which consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel, with some primary silting. Finds comprise nine very small sherds of pottery and five animal bone fragments.

Ditch 957 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 957 was 5.45 m in length and orientated east/west located to the north-west of enclosure 391. In shape it was linear, but had very irregular edges. Its southern edge appeared to be cut in places by an amorphous pit, and to the east it ended in a large oval terminal. To the west it petered out. One section was excavated through this ditch, representing 25% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were apparent. Average width was 0.6 m, and average depth was 0.22 m. The single fill, made up of gravel-free material, produced no finds.

Ditch 960 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 960 was a curvilinear ditch 1.65 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It ran parallel to the outer north-west edge of enclosure 391, and was cut away to the north by enclosure 206. To the south it merged with a group of amorphous pits. Thirty six percent of this enclosure was excavated in a single ditch section. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.52 m, and the average depth was 0.18 m. There was a single fill which consisted of non-gravelly material. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 964 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 964 was a linear ditch 0.81 m in length, and orientated north/south. It was cut by ring-ditch 945 to the south, and by a cluster of amorphous pits to the north. A single section was excavated through this feature, representing 100% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were apparent. Average width was 0.4 m, and average depth was 0.24 m. The single fill consisted of gravel-free material. No finds came from the fill.

Ditch 974 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 974 was a linear ditch 1.08 m in length, and orientated north/south. It ran at a right-angle to enclosure 391, which cut it to the north. To the south it was cut by ditch 1012. A single ditch segment was excavated through this feature, which represented 100% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The ditch averaged 0.45 m wide and 0.17 m deep. There was a single fill which consisted of non-gravelly material. A single sherd of Roman shelly ware and a fragment of unidentified animal bone came from the ditch fill.

Ditch 1001 (Fig.8.2)

Ditch 1001 was a linear ditch 1m in length, and orientated NW/SE. It was cut away by later enclosures at either end. A single section was excavated through the ditch, representing 30% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and there were no recuts. On average the ditch was 0.3 m wide and 0.22 m deep. There were two mixed fills which consisted of silty-loams with gravel and gravelly material, with some primary silting. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 1032 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1032 was a slightly irregular linear ditch 5.5 m in length, and orientated NNE/SSW. Located on the north-east edge of the excavated area it was cut away by ditch 1031 to the south, and was untraceable to the north. It is possible that it curved around to the east to form a small annular enclosure. One section was excavated through this feature, representing 14.5% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.4 m wide and 0.18 m deep. There were no recuts. The fill was a generally homogeneous non-gravelly material. Three large unabraded sherds of Roman pottery, one grog-tempered (fabric E80), one shelly ware (C11) and one grey sandy ware (R20), were found in the ditch fill.

Ditch 1050 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1050 was a linear ditch traceable for no more than 1.1 m, and orientated NW/SE lying east of enclosure 138. One section was excavated through this ditch, representing 100% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.25 m wide and 0.22 m deep. There were two fills consisting of non-gravelly material, and there were no recuts. The ditch fill was sterile.

Ditch 1067 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1067 was a curvilinear ditch 1 m in length, and orientated NW/SE possibly contiguous with ditch 74 located within enclosure 166. It was cut away at either end by later ditches. Three sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 100% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.37 m wide and 0.38 m deep with no recuts. The single fill consisted of a silty-loam with gravel. Five large sherds of early Roman Belgic-type ware and a single piece of sheep/pig size bone came from the fill.

Ditch 1152A (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1152A was a linear ditch traceable for a distance of 0.7 m, and orientated E-W, possibly art of enclosure 166. A single segment was excavated through this feature, representing 100% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, averaging 0.32 m wide and 0.19 m deep. There were no recuts. The single fill was generally homogenous and of non-gravelly material. Two sherds of early Roman Belgic-type ware and three intrusive fragments of rabbit bone came from the ditch fill.

Ditch 1266 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1266 was a linear ditch 5 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It was not traceable for more than 5 m, but may have been cut away by later ditches. Two sections were excavated, representing 28% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and there were no recuts. The ditch was 1.1 m wide on average, and 0.4 m deep. The fill consisted of non-gravelly material, and greenish material, with lenses of burnt material. This feature clearly formed part of a larger ditch and was probably part of an enclosure, but its relationships to surrounding features proved difficult to disentangle. The ditch fill contained three sherds of pottery two of which were quite large and unabraded.

Ditch 1268 (Fig. 8.2) **NEED TO CHECK LOCATION ON PLAN**

Ditch 1268 was a curvilinear ditch orientated NE/SW. It was not traceable for more than 5.5 m but may have been cut away by later ditches. Five sections were excavated through this feature, representing 100% of its extant length. The ditch sections formed two groups; an eastern group comprising 1268A and 1270A, which were both 1.2 m in length and lay parallel to one another; and a western group comprising 765A, 766A, and 792A which also lay parallel to one another and were 0.9 m in length. At least one recut was observed in section, but animal disturbance to 765A and 766A was heavy and there may have been more. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, averaging 1.1 m wide and 0.41 m deep. There were at least five fills, which consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel, with some primary silting. There was also some greenish material. The ditch sections making up

this enclosure lay to the south of enclosure 160, and may have been related to it. The ditch fills contained pottery, animal bone, and fired clay, possibly from a loomweight, but the assemblage was not particularly substantial and fairly dispersed. Amongst the 27 sherds of pottery (378 g) was a scrap of Dorset black burnished ware, several sherds of Belgic-type grog-tempered ware, grey sandy wares and six redeposited Iron Age sherds. The *tpq* of the group lies in the early 2nd century. The 26 animal bones include eight hare bones along with ox, pig and sheep/goat.

Ditch 1575 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1575 was a curvilinear ditch 4 m in length, orientated NE/SW located at the SE end of the area within enclosure 187. It was cut away at either end by later enclosure ditches (175 to the west and 217 to the east). It may originally have been part of a small sub-rectangular enclosure. Twenty five percent of this ditch was excavated in two ditch sections. In profile the ditch was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.25 m, and the average depth 0.2 m. There was a single fill consisting of gravel free material, and non-gravelly material. Four sherds of pottery, three of Iron Age date and one Roman shelly ware, and four scraps of animal bone, constitute the only finds.

Ditch 1576 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 1576 was a linear ditch 1 m in length, orientated NE/SW. It ran parallel to ditch 1575, and may also have been part of a small sub-rectangular enclosure. A single section was excavated through this ditch, and this represented 100% of its extant length. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.15 m, and the average depth was 0.2 m. The single fill consisted of non-gravelly material. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 1586 (Fig. 8.2)

A curvilinear ditch 2 m in length, and orientated NW/SE lying between and cutting ditches 1575-76. It was cut away at either end by large enclosure ditches, and may originally have been part of a small circular enclosure. Thirty percent of this ditch was excavated in a single segment. The profile was V-shaped, and no recuts were apparent. The average width of the ditch was 0.5 m, and its average depth was 0.31 m. There were two fills which consisted of non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel.. The only finds were two sherds of Roman shelly ware.

The Eastern Group of Enclosures

The eastern group consisted of three substantial ditches, two of which were right-angled, and one of which was slightly curvilinear were recorded during salvage work to the east of the excavated area. The most substantial of these was the curvilinear example (2593). This was orientated broadly north-south and ran under the section to the north, while petering out to the south-east. Immediately west of ditch 2593 were the remains of two pottery kilns. The other two ditches (2062, 2035) were less substantial than the first, and were situated to its west where they apparently defined the edges of paddocks or enclosures. It seems plausible, given the size and position of the first ditch, that it

formed a major land boundary of some kind. The second two ditches seem to have formed the boundaries of enclosures abutting the western side of this land boundary.

Ditch 2035 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 2035 was 11.2 m in length and orientated NNE/SSW. In plan it was linear but slightly irregular. At its north-eastern end it was cut by ditch 2593, and to the south-west it petered out approximately 2 m to the east of later Roman ditch 2032. Two sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 9% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.32 m, and the average depth was 0.14 m. There was a single fill which consisted of non-gravelly material. The ditch fill was sterile.

Ditch 2062 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 2062 was an irregular right-angled ditch, 21.8 m in length. Its eastern end terminated at the point where there was a large later Iron Age pit (2063), and to the south it ran under the southern edge of the excavation. It is possible that this ditch formed part of a major enclosure, associated with a substantial boundary ditch 2593 to its east, and was possibly a field or paddock boundary. The extant enclosure would have had a long axis of 14 m, a short axis of 11 m, and an approximate internal area of 154 m². The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width of the ditch was 0.55 m, and its average depth was 0.23 m. There was a single fill, which consisted of silty-loams with gravel. A single sherd of coarse greyware pottery and an ox tooth came from the ditch fill, confirming the impression that this was a field boundary and contained no structures.

Ditch 2528 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 2528 was a right-angled ditch 43.1 m in length. It ran north from a point approximately 3 m north of ditch 2062, before turning east and terminating approximately 2 m to the west of ditch 2593. This ditch may also have formed an enclosure associated with ditch 2593, and this enclosure would have had a long axis of 27.6 m, a short axis of 15.5 m and an approximate internal area of 427.8 m². Five sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 6% of its extant length. The profile was an open U-shape, and one recut was observed in section. The average width of the ditch was 0.98 m, and its average depth was 0.6 m. There were two fills which both consisted of non-gravelly material. Three sherds of pottery, including a large sherd of Dressel 20 olive-oil amphora, and three fragments of animal bone came from the ditch fill, indicating that this enclosure did not contain any major domestic structures and may have been a field boundary.

Ditch 2593 (Fig. 8.2)

Ditch 2593 was a large curvilinear ditch 92 m in length, and orientated north/south. This ditch formed a substantial land boundary to the east of the main Roman area of occupation. At its northern end it ran under the northern edge of the excavation and to the south it petered out. Twelve sections were dug through the ditch (not drawn), representing 12% of its extant length. The profile was mostly an open U-shape, but was narrow in places. At least two recuts were noted in a machine dug section cut through

the ditch about half way up its length, but there may have been more. The ditch varied between 3 m and 6.8 m in width, but the average width of the individual ditch cuts was 0.43 m, and their average depth 0.34 m. This ditch contained at least two fills, but possibly more and these consisted of silty-loams with gravel, and non-gravelly material. Fifty-two sherds of pottery (2735 g), 20 animal bones and one fragment of dense slag from metalworking came from the ditch fill. The pottery assemblage although not large for the size of the feature is notable for the large average sherd size, 52 g, suggesting material that has undergone little disturbance. The group comprising exclusively local wares is dominated by grog and sand-tempered ware (fabric R94) accompanied by fabrics R37, O11, E80 and E30. A single example of Oxfordshire colour-coated mortaria (Young 1977, type C97) is presumed to be intrusive, the assemblage otherwise suggesting a date in the later 1st-2nd century for the abandonment of this feature.

Finds distributions from the ditches

The majority of the finds from the ditches comprised animal bone and abraded sherds of pottery which probably represents the dumping of rubbish into the open ditches, combined with the secondary deposition of material that had been lying around on the ground surface. Most of the material came from the larger enclosure ditches, which generally contained quantities of finds in proportion to their size. Particularly heavy concentrations of artefactual and ecofactual material in ditches 138, 51 and 391 indicate that these enclosures may have contained buildings. The smaller ditches, some of which may have represented paddock or field boundaries generally contained less material and this is more likely to represent secondary deposition rather than dumping. However, there were some exceptions, particularly ditch 624, which contained a large quantity of pottery amounting to just over 100 sherds. A large quantity of metalworking debris including a fragment of furnace debris came from the fills of ditch 187, indicating that metalworking may have been carried out within the enclosure. Apart from this metalworking debris and other finds were generally scarce and plant remains were mostly confined to the larger ditches.

Metal small finds were recovered from seven ditches including a copper alloy brooch and stud from enclosure 440 and an iron loop from ditch 391C and nails from enclosure 293 and gully 51. A worked bone artefact came from enclosure 187. A saddle quern came from enclosure 187 and part of an Old Red sandstone rotary quern from gully 1048.

Articulated animal bone from ditch fills

Articulated animal bone from the ditches was limited to a cattle torso from enclosure 138 and articulating toes from enclosure 187. Possible special deposits include a pair of cattle mandibles from enclosure 187.

POTTERY KILNS *By Paul Booth*

The truncated remains of two pottery kilns (2525 and 2526), broadly of early Roman date, were revealed in the course of the salvage work at Yarnton. Situated some 20 m apart towards the eastern margin of the main focus of Roman settlement on the site

(Fig. 8.2), the kilns were of similar type, with double flues/stokeholes and a large central pedestal.

Kiln 2525 (Fig. 8.8)

This kiln was aligned east-west, with a maximum length of *c* 2.4 m and an internal width of *c* 0.8 m. The eastern part of the kiln, and particularly its eastern stokehole, cut a backfilled ditch (2524) of uncertain date, while the remainder of the structure was set in a shallow cut in the natural gravel subsoil. The central firing chamber was oval in plan, *c* 1.05-1.2 m east-west and *c* 0.8 m north-south. Within it was a central oval pedestal with maximum dimensions of 0.66 m x 0.42 m, surviving up to *c* 0.26 m above the level of the firing chamber floor. The pedestal was constructed above a slight rise in the natural gravel left in the base of the construction pit of the kiln. A thin band of ashy loam sandwiched between the gravel and the pedestal might just represent the remains of an earlier phase of kiln structure, but the on-site interpretation of this deposit as representing animal disturbance may be more likely.

Evidence of possible animal and/or root disturbance apart, the natural sandy gravel base of the firing chamber appears to have been lined with a thin layer of clay (poorly preserved in places) which was contiguous with the solid clay structure of the pedestal and with the clay walls of the firing chamber. The latter ranged typically from 0.16-0.22 m in thickness, of which a 15-40 mm thick surface zone was characteristically reduced to a pale grey while the remainder varied from pink to yellow in colour. The surviving lower parts of the channels to north and south of the central pedestal were of irregular U-shaped section, but the sides of the pedestal itself were fairly regular, sloping slightly to give a profile tapering from base to top.

At their east and west ends the kiln walls splayed slightly, with the result that the junctions between the firing chamber and the stokeholes were not clearly defined. The stokeholes thus had the appearance (in plan) almost of apsidal projections from each end of the kiln structure. Their approximate dimensions were *c* 0.5 m x 0.5 m for the west stokehole and *c* 0.7 m (east-west) x 0.55 m for the east stokehole. Both were fairly shallow, with bases sloping up gradually from the level of the base of the firing chamber. The openings between stokeholes and firing chamber were between 0.3 m and 0.4 m wide. While it is not particularly clear what form these openings took, some evidence for the reinforcement of the 'flue arch' is provided by the presence of two blocks of limestone up to 0.32 m x 0.24 m at the east end of the northern side of the firing chamber wall.

The lowest fills within the kiln (2525/11 to the east and 2525/4 and 2525/5 to the west) were perhaps disturbed deposits at the interface of the natural and the base of the structure, the first two consisting of sandy gravel with an admixture of ash, while 2525/5 may have represented either further animal/root disturbance or (just possibly) the fill of a stake hole. These deposits were sealed by the mixed clay, ash and charcoal layer interpreted as the main 'floor' of the firing chamber (2525/3 and 2525/8). Above this was the principal fill of the kiln and stokeholes, 2656/1, a layer of dark grey loam with ash, incorporating fired and unfired clay fragments (the latter defined separately as 2656/2) together with small quantities of pottery (13 sherds, 223 g). This fill had a maximum surviving depth of 0.16 m.

Some 29 fragments (991 g) of fired clay were recovered from the kiln structure and its fill. All but one of these were in heavily organic-tempered fabrics and were of variable thickness, in a range from 10-28 mm, generally with irregular surfaces. These characteristics are consistent with the use of these fragments as part of the temporary capping of the kiln structure. The one exception was a single fragment in an organic and sand-tempered fabric. This was a broken part of a squared object, with incomplete dimensions of 55 mm x 31 mm x 65 mm length. It may have been from a firebar, though its fragmentary nature makes this interpretation extremely tentative.

Kiln 2526 (Fig. 8.9)

This kiln was aligned north-south, with a maximum length of *c* 2.25 m and a maximum internal width of *c* 0.9 m. The central firing chamber was constructed above an oval pit of irregular profile, with maximum dimensions of *c* 1.45 m x 1.15 m and up to *c* 0.3 m deep below the level of the base of the kiln structure. The sterile silty loams, sands and gravels filling this presumed feature or group of features do not shed much light on its interpretation. It is possible that the pit represented an earlier phase of kiln activity from which any structural components had been completely removed, but the clean nature of its fills does not support this suggestion.

The extant structure of the kiln only survived to a maximum depth of *c* 0.12. The firing chamber was oval in plan, with a maximum width of *c* 0.9 m and an estimated length of *c* 1.1 m. The centre of this area was occupied by a substantial oval pedestal with maximum dimensions of 0.62 m x 0.42 m. The sides of the pedestal and the base and walls of the firing chamber were lined with a thin layer of clay (rarely more than 20 mm thick) fired to a blue grey colour. In parts of the base of the firing chamber this deposit did not survive and had presumably been worn away by repeated raking out of the kiln. At one point on the west of the firing chamber the heavily fired lining was backed by a thicker deposit - up to *c* 40 mm - of oxidised fired clay. This indicates that the firing chamber walls were more substantially constructed than would appear. This is very likely, and it is presumed that the upper parts of these clay walls would have been quite thick, as was the case in kiln 2525. It is less clear if the upper part of the pedestal would have been entirely of clay or if this feature would simply have had a clay capping - the former is perhaps more likely but the surviving core of the pedestal was of gravelly loam. The level of truncation of the kiln is such that the profile of the firing chamber walls and pedestal are unknown. The surviving fragments mostly sloped quite gently, but again it is presumed that chamber and pedestal sides would have been approximately vertical, as is indicated by the best preserved face of the pedestal, on its north side. The height of the pedestal and chamber walls is of course unknown, though slight hints that burning extended towards the core of the pedestal might suggest that the level at which this feature was truncated was not far below its top. It might therefore not have been much more than *c* 0.2 m high

There were small stokeholes to north and south of the firing chamber. Both were rounded in plan, with extant diameters of approximately 0.45 m for the southern stokehole and 0.7 m for the northern one. The base of the northern stokehole sloped up very gently from the base level of the firing chamber. Its relationship to a fairly well-defined but shallow, circular feature (2535), perhaps a posthole, is unclear, but 2535 may have been later than the stokehole. The southern stokehole (2536) appeared

to be deeper than the northern one and more rounded in profile (up to 0.2 m deep) with a dark grey clayey loam fill. It is possible, however, that the latter belonged to an earlier feature, though its description is the same as that of the fill of the rest of the kiln. The loam was sealed by 'a very thin crust of burnt clay', which might indicate a surviving floor sealing an earlier feature beneath the stokehole, but it might equally describe a smear of structural debris dragged across the kiln fill by post-Roman ploughing. If it is assumed that the deeper fill did belong to another feature, the southern stokehole would have been very shallow, which is consistent with its impracticably small surviving extent. In neither case was there any indication of a formal flue linking firing chamber and stokehole; both stokeholes appeared to open straight from the chamber wall, the openings being roughly 0.3-0.4 m across.

The principal surviving fill of both firing chamber and stokeholes (2526/A/1) was a dark grey clayey loam. This contained a mere five sherds (25 g) of pottery. The similar fill 2537/A/1, located in the eastern part of the firing chamber, produced a single sherd (27 g) of Oxford colour-coated ware that was clearly intrusive. A total of 37 fragments of fired clay, weighing 2137 g, was recovered from the fill of the kiln and from stokehole 2536. Almost without exception this material was from flattish pieces of variable thickness in heavily organic-tempered fabrics. These are interpreted as deriving from temporary capping of the top of the kiln. No significant fragments of permanent kiln structure or of other moveable kiln furniture were present.

Discussion of kilns 2525 and 2526

The structures

The Yarnton kilns are very similar in their overall size, plan and details of pedestal shape and of the relationship of the small stokeholes to the firing chamber. In view of these similarities there can be little doubt that the kilns are relatively closely contemporary, even though precise dating evidence is lacking. On this basis the discussion of characteristics of one kiln will be assumed to apply to both.

The presence of a small fragment of a possible firebar in kiln 2525 is probably significant. This suggests that the vessels to be fired were supported on firebars that stretched from the pedestal to a ledge in the firing chamber wall. This would have been above the level at which the kilns survived. The height of the top of the pedestal above firing chamber base level can be estimated as at least 0.25 m, and could have been rather more. The height of the firing chamber walls is, of course, unknown. The upper part of the kiln structure was presumably open and the load given a temporary capping each time the kiln was fired. The characteristic remains of this process, in the form of heavily organic tempered, rough flat 'plates', formed the majority of the fired clay recovered from the kiln fills and are widely encountered in Oxford industry production sites (Young 1977, 34, 37-8; Booth *et al.* 1994, 134; Booth and Edgeley-Long forthcoming).

The most striking characteristic of the Yarnton kilns is their twin flue arrangement. In the Oxford region this is unparalleled except probably at Kiln C at Overdale, Boars Hill (Harris and Young 1975, 16-17), assigned to the first half of the 2nd century, though here there does not seem to have been a well-defined central pedestal in the manner of the Yarnton kilns. Such a feature was very evident in kiln I at Hanborough (Sturdy and

Young 1977, 57-8), a kiln which, apart from having only a single flue, was in other respects quite reminiscent of the Yarnton examples, both in the use of firebars to provide a temporary floor and in the relatively small size of the stokehole area. This kiln is dated to the third quarter of the 1st century AD (ibid, 63).

Single chambered twin-flued kilns are well known in Roman Britain and occur in different places throughout the period (Swan 1984, 117-20). 1st and 2nd century examples, however, are particularly common in Wiltshire, being found in the Savernake and North Wiltshire industries. Central pedestals are not well-evidenced in these kilns, but did occur in kiln 4 at Savernake and may also perhaps be inferred for kiln 1 there (Annable 1962 WAM 58; cf Anderson 1979, fig 3). These provide some of the closest parallels for the Yarnton kilns and were probably broadly contemporary with them, being assigned to the later 1st century AD (Anderson 1979, 5).

As already mentioned it is likely that the load in the Yarnton kilns was carried on firebars. It is worth noting, however, that the only other local example of a twin flued kiln, Overdale (Boars Hill) Kiln C, is thought not to have had a raised floor, but rather the pots were stacked against the long central pedestal (Young 1977, 40-41). There is no direct evidence that this happened, but this technique had certainly been used in the adjacent Overdale Kiln B, in which the pots were recovered still stacked on the base of the firing chamber around a slight rise in the centre (Harris and Young 1975, 14-15 and Plate 1). Despite the use of two flues/stokeholes, however, the Overdale C kiln is in other respects quite dissimilar to the Yarnton ones (in proportions, size of flues, pedestal form and method of load support) and is therefore of little relevance as a close parallel.

Products and date

The quantities of pottery recovered from the kilns were very small indeed and allow neither precise characterisation nor close dating of the material being produced within them. This is discussed in detail elsewhere (Booth p.00-00 pottery report)

It is most likely, however, that the products were of a transitional character, falling at the point of change from the regional late Iron Age and early post-Conquest 'Belgic type' tradition to a more 'Romanised' technology, particularly with regard to fabrics. While its paucity is problematic, the material from Yarnton does have both general and specific parallels with pottery from Cassington kiln 2 (Case 1982, 134-6) and Long Hanborough (Sturdy and Young 1977). These characteristics, together with the structural similarities noted between the Yarnton kilns and Hanborough Kiln I, and the physical proximity of these sites, suggest that they can all be placed in the same phase of the developing regional ceramic tradition. On this basis the third quarter of 1st century AD dating applied to Hanborough Kiln I, or the slightly broader date for Cassington Kiln 2 'in the second half of the 1st century' (Young 1982, 146) may be applicable to the Yarnton kilns. While the evidence from the latter may be insufficient in itself to sustain such a close date it is, within its limitations, perfectly consistent with it.

THE EARLY ROMAN PITS

Summary

A total of 47 pits could be attributed to the Early Roman phase. However, these do not represent all the early Roman pits, as only 75% of pits were excavated and of the unexcavated pits a proportion were probably early Roman in date. In addition 15% of pits contained no clear dating evidence (see above Chapter 5). The early Roman pits were divided into six categories based on their shape in profile. These were largely the same as the categories used for the Iron Age period, except for the fact that there were no large-shallow pits, and there was a new category of rectangular pits. As seen in the earlier periods, the majority of these pits were circular or oval in plan.

Distribution

The early Roman pits mainly occupied the central and north-eastern part of the excavated area, forming a relatively dispersed scatter with a NE/SW axis. This distribution coincided with the main area of early Roman enclosures and ditches. There were very few early Roman pits to found in the main area of early and middle Iron Age occupation, on the western side of the excavation area.

Description

Pit diameter ranged between 0.23 m and 3 m, averaging 0.87 m, and pit depth ranged between 0.11 m and 1.44 m averaging 0.45 m. Recorded original pit volume ranged between 0.020 m³ and 3.360 m³, and averaged 0.354 m³. Variation in pit size was, therefore, relatively high, although not as high as that seen in the middle Iron Age, or late Iron Age/early Roman periods.

Table 8.1 Pit dimensions by type (range for those where dimensions were recorded)

Dimensions	Bowl-shaped	Cylindrical	Irregular	Rectangular	Shallow Saucer	Undercut
Diameter	0.23 –1m	0.4-1.3m	0.27-3m	1.05m	0.27-1m	0.9m
Depth	0.11-0.75m	0.34-1.44m	0.19-0.88m	0.33m	0.11-0.4m	1m

The majority of the early Roman pits were either bowl-shaped or irregular, although there were relatively substantial numbers of cylindrical and shallow-saucer shaped examples. It is notable that the numbers of cylindrical pits in comparison to bowl-shaped and irregular examples had declined in this period; and although this trend had begun in the late Iron Age/early Roman period, it is particularly marked here.

Table 8.2 Pit Types

Bowl-shaped	Cylindrical	Irregular	Rectangular	Shallow Saucer	Undercut
17	8	15	1	5	1

The number of fills contained within individual pits ranged between one and twenty, although the vast majority contained between one and four and only three pits contained between five and six. The average number of fills per pit was two. The majority of pit fills were gravel free (19), but there were a relatively high proportion of silty-loams (14), and some non-gravelly fills (8). Additionally one pit contained a gravelly fill, and the fills of five pits were very mixed.

There does not appear to have been any correlation of fill type with pit shape in the early Roman pits. In fact the most common fill in the majority of pit types was gravel-free, and those pit types which were not most commonly filled with gravel-free material were the least common categories. Recuts were very rare only one was recorded, and it may be assumed that this represents a real pattern or close to a real pattern. Nine pits contained identifiable evidence of primary silting, and of these two were over 0.8 m³ in volume. Four pits were recorded as deliberately backfilled, and all of these were over 0.8 m³ in volume.

Deliberate deposits were found in five pits, none of which were over 0.8 m³ in volume. Three pits were classified as storage pits on the basis of their morphology. This is substantially less than was seen in earlier periods, and reflects a shift away from below ground storage of grain. Redeposition was commoner in the early Roman period than in the Iron Age, with only 18 out of 47 pits exhibiting no signs of redeposition, 11 exhibiting low levels of redeposition, 15 with medium levels and 4 with high levels.

Artefact distributions in early Roman pits

Bone

One early Roman pit (1060), located in the north-west area of the site 5m south of the northern limit of excavations, contained a fragment of human skull and an unusually high number of right cattle femurs (a minimum of 12) (see Mulville below). Of the 47 pits assigned to early Roman period 30 contained animal bone. The assemblage consisted mainly of cattle and horse bone, but there was some pig, sheep, goat and dog. A pair of sheep mandibles and a partial pig burial was found in pit 57 (see Mulville below). Additionally one pit contained a hare bone.

Table 8.3 Species by number of pits

Species	No. of Pits
Cattle Bone	19
Dog Bone	1
Goat Bone	1
Horse Bone	5
Pig Bone	7
Sheep Bone	2
Cattle/Horse Size	14
Sheep/Goat Size	18
Sheep/Pig Size	14
Wild Animal Bone	1

Patterning among the animal bones from early Roman pits is not very evident. Of the 30 early Roman pits containing animal bone all 30 had bones of one of the major domestic species, and 10 contained bones of all the major domestic species. There seems to have been little differentiation between, or separation of, the different domestic species, and in these respects the distribution of bone in this phase was little different to that seen in the preceding phases. Far fewer pits contained dog, human bone or wild animal bone than in preceding periods, particularly the middle Iron Age, and none of these species was associated with one another. However, although horse bone, human bone and wild animal bone was not deposited within the same contexts,

it was clearly deposited in the same general area; namely the north eastern part of the site. Deposition patterns were, therefore, not entirely random.

Pottery

Of the 47 early Roman pits, 37 contained pottery. The total assemblage comprised 468 sherds, weighing 10.95 kg. The average number of sherds per pit was 13, and the average weight of pottery per pit was 283 g. Comparison of mean sherd weight against sherd count for the early Roman pits, revealed a pattern that is familiar from the preceding phases (see Chapters 5-7). On the basis of this analysis the pits were divisible into two groups, the larger containing small quantities of small sherds, and the smaller containing either small quantities of large sherds or large quantities of small sherds.

Three pits contained deliberate deposits of whole or partial pots. These were 67, 71 and 837. Pit 67 contained a substantial sherd of a reduced coarse ware; pit 71 contained a complete vessel also of a reduced coarse ware (cf Fig. 13.***) and pit 837 also contained a complete vessel (Fig. 13.***) in a fossil shell-tempered ware. Clearly these deposits of complete or partial vessels represent a small proportion of the pottery deposited in this phase, and in general little patterning was evident in the distribution of pottery.

Plant Remains

Five of the 47 Early Roman pits contained plant remains. Two of these were over 0.8 m³ in volume, and their average original volume was 1.048 m³. One of these pits contained charcoal, two contained deliberate deposits and three contained rubbish deposits.

Of the early Roman pits containing plant remains one was bowl-shaped, one was cylindrical and three were irregular. It is clear that plant remains were not evenly distributed through the different pit types. The cylindrical pit contained the largest amount of material, despite being outnumbered 3 to 1. The pits classified as irregular also contained a substantial amount of material, but the bowl-shaped pit contained very little.

Table 8.4 Plant remains by pit type

Pit Type	Weed Seeds	Cereals	Chaff
Cylindrical	129	32	273
Bowl-shaped	1	4	1
Other	251	77	72

Analysis of the spatial distribution and context of plant remains from early Roman pits is difficult, as the sample is so small. Given that only one of these pits was cylindrical in shape, it seems that they may not represent the remains of backfilled grain storage pits, which was the interpretation advanced for the early Iron Age pits. The depositional processes in this phase may have been more random, involving waste disposal or accidental loss. The presence of deliberate deposits of pottery, and burnt material may support this interpretation.

Metalworking Debris

Few fragments of metalworking debris were recovered from the early Roman pits, and its distribution was consequently limited. Four pits, 1216, 1387, 1082 and 1088, contained metalworking debris; seven fragments in total, four of which were fuel ash slag. The majority of material was recovered from cylindrical pits, two of which contained three of the slag fragments. Additionally one fragment was recovered from a rectangular pit, and one from a shallow saucer shaped pit.

Pits containing metalworking slags were mostly confined to the north-eastern corner of the early Roman pit scatter, although one pit was situated in the far north-western corner of the excavation area. All of these pits were clearly situated on the edges of the main settlement area. The incidence of fragments per pit was in all cases very low, generally between one and three fragments, thus probably representing a background scatter away from the source of the metalworking.

Small Finds:

Just three metal small finds and two stone quern fragments were recovered from the early Roman pits, with fragments of fired clay/ daub from five pits and redeposited flints in three (Table 8.5). The majority came from pits classified as amorphous, although a substantial minority came from bowl-shaped pits, and others came from rectangular, cylindrical and shallow-saucer shaped pits. It is clear that the number of cylindrical pits containing small finds had declined from the Iron Age, however this is possibly a reflection of the fact that there were less cylindrical pits; rather than a shift in the deposition practices of the inhabitants of the settlement. The small finds assemblage itself was more diverse than those recovered from the Iron Age pits, including one copper alloy brooch (SF 327 from pit 836), a scythe (SF 360 from pit 1192), an iron awl (SF 402 from pit 1622) and two quernstones. Of the quernstones one is a typical Iron Age saddle quern from pit 1082, the other represented by fragments of Niedermendig lava in pit 2071. A possible fragment of fired clay loomweight came from pit 1160. Once again this may merely reflect a change in the kind of artefact in use, rather than a shift in deposition practices. A small amount of flint was recovered, and it may be assumed that this was residual.

Distribution

Pits containing small finds were found in the eastern and southern part of the early Roman pit scatter, but appeared to peter out towards the west. There were no obvious patterns in the deposition of different classes of artefact, and no association between structures and small finds.

Table 8.5 Early Roman pits containing small finds

Context	Pit Type	Small Find	Material
308	Amorphous	Brick	Fired Clay
481	Amorphous	Miscellaneous	Flint
836	Amorphous	Brooch	Copper Alloy
1082	Rectangular	Quern	Stone
1088	Cylindrical	Daub	Fired Clay
1144	Bowl-Shaped	Daub	Fired Clay
1160	Shallow-Saucer	Miscellaneous	Fired Clay
1192	Amorphous	Scythe	Iron
1192	Amorphous	Daub	Fired Clay
1192	Amorphous	Flake	Flint
1192	Amorphous	Flake	Flint
1622	Bowl-shaped	Awl	Iron
2071	Bowl-Shaped	Quern	Stone

Draft