

Chapter 9: The Late Roman Period
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INTRODUCTION

The settlement underwent considerable reorganisation at the beginning of the late Roman period. Nearly all the evidence of late Roman activity was confined to the Yarnton site with just a few enigmatic ditches on Cresswell Field (Fig. 9.1). The large early Roman oval enclosure (187), which had occupied the centre of the site on Yarnton was replaced with three smaller rectangular enclosures (averaging approximately 33 m x 16.6 m), one of which extended beyond the northern limit of the excavation. Abutting these enclosures to the south-east was a trackway defined by two parallel ditches aligned NE/SW; these were clearly recut on numerous occasions. To the south-east of the trackway in the area formerly occupied by a number of early Roman enclosures, a series of new ditched enclosures were constructed. However, these appeared smaller and more irregular than their early Roman counterparts, averaging approximately 11m x 8 m.

In the south-eastern corner of the site the substantial annular enclosure (391) had gone out of use, and it appears that it was not replaced. In the south-western corner of the site two substantial ditches were constructed. These may have defined the eastern and northern limits of a field measuring 35 m x 25 m and extending beyond the limit of the excavation to the west. To the east of the main occupation area the substantial early Roman north/south running ditch, and the two right-angled ditches had gone out of use. They were replaced with two parallel NNE/SSW running ditches approximately 20 m apart. Two ditches running at right-angles to these, subdivided the space between them into three, more or less equal rectangular areas. Together these ditches formed a series of north/south running rectangular enclosures. A third ditch also lying at right-angles to the north/south running ditches lay just to the south of the northern-most subdividing ditch, but did not extend all the way across the space created by them. A right-angled ditch, the longest arm of which was orientated NNE/SSW lay just to the east of these enclosures, and its returning arm was cut by the eastern boundary ditch.

To the west of the north/south orientated enclosures was a NE/SW running curvilinear ditch, which extended beyond the southern limit of the excavation, and petered out to the north; just short of the half way point between the southern and northern limits of the excavation. In the salvage area just to the south of the southern limit of the excavation the faint trace of a WNW/ESE running ditch was picked up. This may have been the return of the NE/SW running ditch, and together they may have formed the boundary of the south/eastern part of the settlement.

On Cresswell Field six segments of ditches in the north west corner of the site appear to be part of a broadly contemporary field system of post-Iron Age date (Fig. 9.2). The paucity of finds from these has made dating slightly problematic.

THE LATE ROMAN STRUCTURES

Summary

Only five, possibly six late Roman structures were revealed by excavation at Yarnton (Fig. 9.3). An ambiguous kidney-shaped depression filled with compact gravel, was situated in the south-east corner of the largest rectangular enclosure, just to the north-east of ditch 155. To the south-west of this, on the south-western side of ditch 155 was a possible four-post structure comprising three postholes. Directly to the east of these, among an area of intercutting gullies and enclosures was a post-built structure comprising a circular arrangement of postholes associated with a hearth and floor surface, and surrounded by short lengths of gully. The remaining three structures are all thought to be corn driers although one is very tentatively identified as such. A well-preserved T-shaped example was found on the far western side of the site, and a less well-preserved example on the eastern side of the trench. A third possible contender was found immediately east of the post built structure. As with the late Iron Age/early Roman, and early Roman phases it is unlikely that the relative lack of evidence for buildings reflects the real situation in the past. It is more likely that poor preservation combined with sill-beam or mass-wall construction has resulted in a lack of survival (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of this).

Structures

Kidney-shaped feature 491/494 (Fig. 9.4)

This was a kidney-shaped depression measuring 8.6 m by 3.9 m, filled with compact gravel and limestone, with some burnt material (491). A substantial amount of pottery (142 sherds, 2.7 kg), 86 animal bones, one splinter of human long bone, fragments of two quernstones (SF 224, 225 and 226), a slab of Forest Marble (SF 174) and an iron ferrule (SF 175) were recovered from the fill of this feature suggesting that it was used for the dumping of rubbish. The Roman pottery was moderately well preserved in terms of sherd size with an average weight of 19 g. A significant proportion of the assemblage comprised local grey wares but this is accompanied by Oxfordshire mortaria, (whiteware, white-slipped and colour-coated examples), Oxfordshire colour-coated wares and shelly wares ranging in date from the 2nd century through to the early-mid 4th century. Overall the assemblage suggests a *tpq* in the 4th century. The animal bone features a variety of animal species, notably sheep, sheep/goat, ox, cow, pig, horse, hare and rodent.

Structure 1356 (Fig. 9.5)

Structure 1356 was a post-built circular structure with a diameter of 8.5 m located towards the eastern edge of the excavated area. It was defined on at least three sides by short lengths of gully. During excavation the entrance was thought to be orientated south, but some limestone slabs possibly representing a threshold may indicate a second entrance to the east. Inside the building a floor surface measuring approximately 5.5 m by 6.5 m was partially preserved, and this was associated a hearth and some pits. Concentrations of finds in the fills of the surrounding gullies support a domestic function for the structure although its overall form was not very coherent. Amongst the finds from the ditches were 300 potsherds weighing 5.5 kg, 130 animal bones and two

fragments of metal working debris; one a fragments of blast furnace slag, the other a piece of fuel ash slag. A coin dated to the period AD 350-60 (SF 345) came from the floor surface (119) along with an iron nail. The pottery was moderately well preserved with an average sherd size of 18 g. A small amount of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware, and a sherd of Nene Valley colour-coated ware dates the group overall to the later 3rd - 4th century. The animal bone includes examples of most of the main domestic species along with a single bird bone.

(see also enclosure ditches 1031 and 1049 below)

Post-Built Structure 1768 (Figs 9.3; 9.6)

Structure 1768 was a post-built structure consisting of three post-pads (610, 702 and 775). It may originally have included a fourth post-pad, in which case it would have been rectangular and measured 4 m x 4 m. The post-pads consisted of limestone blocks measuring approximately 0.25 m x 0.16 m x 0.03 m, which were set into shallow saucer-shaped hollows. Circular postholes set into the post-pads averaged 0.86 m in diameter and were between 0.08 m and 0.36 m in depth. The fills of the post-pad hollows consisted of mid brown silty-loams with a 2% gravel content. A large, worn slab was recovered from post-pad 775. Five sherds of pottery came from the fills of postholes 610 and 775 with a sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware from each, along one fragment of fuel ash slag, a quartzite anvil stone (SF 193) and an iron file (SF 230).

Corn Drier 47 (Fig. 9.3)

Located in the north-east area of the trench south of enclosure 1093, this structure first appeared as a large irregular soil mark which when excavated revealed the badly truncated remains of a sub-rectangular structure approximately 4.5 m by 2 m in size with a scorched natural edge to the west. The fill comprised a homogeneous dark grey-brown sandy silt containing 32 sherds of pottery, 880 g in weight, 13 animal bones and an iron knife (SF 52). It is interpreted as a robbed out corn drier subsequently used a repository for rubbish. The pottery includes several later Oxfordshire sherds suggesting a 4th-century date.

Possible Corn Drier 64 (Figs 9.3; 9.5)

This feature lay immediately east of structure 1356 and appears to overlie the surrounding enclosure ditches 1027 and 1049. It was revealed as a shallow east-west trench *c* 2 m by 0.8 m lined with thin flat limestone slabs of irregular shape but averaging 0.07 m thick and 0.5 by 0.4 m in size. The sides and bottom were defined by a thin compact orange-brown layer of sand and gravel, probably burnt. One possible interpretation is that this was a robbed out corn drier with just a few surviving stones. An alternative suggestion is that it may represent the remains of a threshold associated with building 1356. Only three indeterminate sherds of Roman pottery and two animal bones were recovered.

Corn drier 522 (Figs 9.3; 9.7)

A T-shaped corn drier was found on the far western edge of the excavated area within the paddock area demarcated by ditches 304/1350/326. The structure was constructed of

flattish stones averaging 0.05 m thick and measuring 0.3 m by 0.7 m. There were three surviving courses at the southern end and six to the north. The stones were held in place with a yellow sandy mortar which had become burnt to a bright orange-red colour at the southern end. At 1 m from the southern end there was a fire pit cut 0.3 m into the natural with a slightly asymmetrical profile, deeper at the north end shallowing out to the south. Just beyond the structure to the south was a small ash deposit, possibly the result of raking out. Finds from the corn drier include 17 moderately large sherds of pottery, 654 g in weight with examples of Dorset black burnished ware, Midlands grogged storage jar and Oxfordshire mortaria, all indicative of a late Roman date and nine animal bones.

Finds from Late Roman structures

The ceramic assemblage recovered from the late Roman structures is fairly extensive, especially when compared with the material from structures of earlier phases. However, the majority of it came from 491/494, a cut feature, and this goes some way towards explaining the quantity of the assemblage. The five sherds recovered from post-built structure 1768 are fairly typical for a structure of this sort. The animal bone assemblage is also fairly large deriving mostly from cut feature 491/494, and gullies and a floor surface within building 1356. The animal bone is mostly undiagnostic; over half of it is classified as cow/horse size, sheep/pig size, sheep/goat size or unidentifiable. Metalworking debris and small finds were sparse but the presence of at least two quernstones in 494/491 is noteworthy. The nature of the assemblage suggests a good deal of redeposition and abrasion, however this may not have been as severe as noted in earlier structures which were mostly post-built.

Table 9.1 Summary of finds from the Late Roman structures

Structure	491/494	1356	47	522	1768	Total
Pot Sherds	142	300	32	17	5	166
Cattle bone	23	38	1	3	0	61
Horse bone	4	3	0	0	0	7
Sheep bone	0	1	1	0	0	1
Cow/Horse size bone	20	18	5	2	0	38
Sheep/Pig size bone	11	19	3	1	0	30
Sheep/Goat size bone	9	10	1	0	0	19
Pig bone	4	8	0	1	0	12
Wild animal	2	2	0	0	0	4
Unidentified animal bone	13	20	0	1	0	33
Total bone	86	119	0	0	0	205
Metalworking debris	0	2	0	0	1	3
Small finds	1	1	1	0	2	4
Stone artefacts	2	0	0	0	1	3

The Late Roman enclosures (Fig. 9.3)

Summary

The ditched enclosure system initially laid out during the late Iron Age/early Roman transition at Yarnton continued to develop through the late Roman period, although its organisation appeared to be considerably altered. For the sake of discussion the enclosure ditches are divisible into two groups. The first comprised a series of enclosures and a trackway, occupying the central and eastern part of the site, and the

second consisted of a group of linear ditches forming a boundary to the south and east of the settlement area. These replaced the large sub-circular and rectilinear enclosures of the earlier Roman period.

The Central Group of enclosures

The central group of enclosures overlay the main occupation area of the Late Iron Age/Early Roman and Early Roman settlement. It was organised around a central trackway defined by two linear ditches which ran south-west to north-east overlying the early Roman rectilinear enclosures, and under the section to the north. To the west of this trackway, overlying the substantial early Roman sub-circular enclosure, were three rectilinear enclosures which used the western boundary of the trackway as their south-eastern boundary. The most northerly of these was orientated north-east/south-west, and was delimited by a right-angled ditch to the south-west, and the trackway ditch to the south-east. This enclosure was the largest of this phase, and contained the unusual kidney-shaped feature described under structures. To the south west of this enclosure was a second rectilinear enclosure, much smaller than the first, and orientated north-west/south-east. It was defined by the trackway boundary to its south-east and the south-western boundary of the northern enclosure to its north-east; to its south-west it was delimited by a right-angled ditch which curved around to the north-east to form a north-western boundary. Abutting this second enclosure to the south-west was a third rectilinear enclosure, defined to the north-east by the south-western boundary of the central enclosure and to the south-east and north-west by linear stretches of ditch. It was open to the south-west. To the east of the trackway, and occupying the central-northern part of the site were a series of intercutting curvilinear ditches, the easternmost of which contained the remains of a building. Abutting these ditches to the north-east was a clearly defined sub-circular enclosure, which was relatively small and contained no apparent structures. Various miscellaneous stretches of ditch were to be found both to the west and east of the main occupation area. However, they were too ephemeral for any coherent interpretation to be made. To the south-west of the main occupation area, at the extreme western edge of the excavated area, several ditches represented the remains of a possible enclosure. These comprised two right-angled ditches, one of which possibly replaced the other, and a linear ditch. The right-angled ditches were situated in the south-western corner of the site, forming the southern and eastern boundary of the putative enclosure and were orientated north-east/south-west. The linear ditch formed the northern boundary, and was orientated east - west. To the south of the central area of enclosures was a substantial ditch (1013) which may have formed an east-west land boundary. This lay at an approximate right-angle to a NE/SW running ditch, which may have formed a north/south boundary to the east of the settlement.

The Late Romano-British enclosures

Ditch 25 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 25 was a curvilinear ditch 7 m in length, which may have been the northern boundary of a sub-circular enclosure. The majority of this ditch was orientated east/west, but it curved around to the south at its eastern end and was cut away by a large pit. At its western end it was cut away by ditch group 30, defining the eastern side of as possible trackway. Two sections were excavated through this ditch, and

these represented 45% of its extant length. The profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no apparent recuts. The average width was 0.6 m, and the average depth was 0.5 m. There was a single homogeneous fill. Seven sherds of pottery including a rim sherd from a Dorset black burnished ware jar and nine animal bones were recovered.

Ditch 28 (Fig. 9.3)

A short stretch of curvilinear ditch 9.5 m in length and orientated east – west some 9 m south of ditch 25. Four sections were excavated through this enclosure, representing approximately 60% of its total length, although it should be noted that this figure is based on incomplete data. A single recut was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 1.08 - 1.4 m, and average width was 1.2 m; depth range was 0.2- 0.38 m and average depth was 0.32 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there was also some greenish material and some primary silting. Finds comprise 21 sherds of pottery and eight animal bones. The former include several typical late wares, for example, Oxfordshire colour-coated wares, Dorset black burnished ware, Midlands pink grog-tempered ware and Roman shelly ware alongside a number of clearly redeposited sherds.

Ditch Group 30 (Figs 9.3; 9.8)

Ditch group 30 consisted of a series of linear ditches 44 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. To the north the ditches extended beyond the limit of the excavation, and to the south they petered out in the vicinity of ditch 166. They may have formed the eastern boundary of a track or drove-way, which may have been defined on the west by ditch 34. Eleven sections were excavated through this ditch, and these represented 21% of its extant length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open. There were at least six recuts in the north-east part of this ditch, four in the centre section and three to four in the south-west section. The average width of ditches in this group was 0.7 m, and their average depth was 0.35 m. There were a number of fills, which consisted of homogeneous non-gravelly material. Large amounts of pottery, animal bone and some plant remains came from the ditch fills, along with some metalworking debris including a small plano-convex hearth bottom and several other finds. This probably represented rubbish dumped from structures located in the enclosures lying to the east of the ditch. The pottery, some 708 sherds weighing 11.8 kg comprised a mixture of residual later Prehistoric and early Roman sherds alongside typical later Roman wares such as Oxfordshire and Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Dorset black burnished ware and shelly ware. Local grey sandy ware, in particular fabric R37, accounts for 35% of the total assemblage. The overall *terminus post quem* for the assemblage would appear to lie in the 4th century. The 150 animal bones include examples of deer, dog and hare alongside the usual domesticates. Amongst the other finds is one worked bone (SF 451), copper alloy pin (SF237), an iron nail, a fragment of daub and a fragment of triangular loomweight.

Ditch 34 (Figs 9.3; 9.9)

A substantial curvilinear ditch 20 m in length and orientated north - east / south - west. In part this formed the north - western boundary of a track or droveway running

through the northern part of the site curving round to almost meet ditch group 30 at its southern end. Ten percent of this ditch was excavated in four sections. One or two recuts were observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 1.2 - 1.9 m and average width was 1.6 m; depth range was 0.26 - 0.73 m and average depth was 0.6 m. Fills consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and gravelly fills. There were lenses of burnt/ashy or charcoal material and some primary silting. There was also extensive animal disturbance. Finds of pottery, 16 animal bones, and one fragment of dense slag came from the ditch fill, but this assemblage was far smaller than that from ditch 30 to east suggesting that the space to the north-west of this ditch was not occupied. Over half the 44 sherds of pottery (729 g) comprises sherds of Iron Age origin indicating a high level of residuality.

Ditch 35 (Fig 9.3)

A short stretch of linear ditch at least 1 m in length and orientated NNE/SSW. This feature lay parallel to enclosure ditch 34, and may have been a recut of it. Only one section was cut through this feature, and this represented an unknown percentage of its original length. One recut was observed in section, and the profile was U-shaped-open. The ditch cut was 0.48 m wide and 0.26 m in depth. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there was some animal disturbance. A small amount of pottery, just four small residual sherds, and four fragments of animal bone were recovered from the fill.

Ditch 42 (Fig. 9.3)

A stretch of curvilinear ditch 6.5 m or more in length and orientated NNE/SSW and lying to the south of ditch 25. Approximately 34% of this feature was excavated in four segments; two of which, 42B and 1345A, lay parallel to one another. A single recut was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. The width range of the latest cut was 0.3 - 0.6 m, and the average overall width was approximately 0.8 m. Depth range was 0.32 - 0.38 m, and average depth was 0.35 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material with some greenish fills. A modest assemblage of 15 sherds of pottery (337 g) including an Oxfordshire colour-coated mortarium and 10 animal bones came from the fill.

Ditch 46 (Fig. 9.3)

A section of curvilinear ditch with an extant length of 13.2 m, and a north - south orientation located to the south-east of structure 1356 and possibly contiguous with ditch 72 (below). Five sections were excavated through this feature, representing 18.2% of its extant length. A single recut was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. The width range of the latest cut was 0.1 - 0.56 m, with an average width of 0.34 m; the depth range was 0.18 - 0.52 m. Fills consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and gravelly fills; there was some primary silting. A modest assemblage of 31 sherds of pottery (391 g) accompanied by some plant remains was recovered from the ditch fill.

Ditch 56 (Fig. 9.3)

A semi-circular ditch 14 m in length, possibly a penannular enclosure to the west of ditch 46. This enclosure had a long axis of 8 m and a short axis of 5.5 m; its internal surface area was approximately 44 m². Two sections were excavated through the ditch, representing approximately 10% of its total length. The enclosure entrance was presumably situated to the north, although the gap in the ditch was large and it is difficult to be more precise. No recuts were observed in section and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.7 - 1 m and average width was 0.8 m; depth range was 0.34 - 0.4 m and average depth was 0.37 m. Fills comprised non-gravelly material with some greenish fills. A small quantity of 24 well preserved potsherds weighing 779 g including an Oxfordshire colour-coated mortarium and five animal bones came from the ditch.

Ditch 72 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 10.5 m in length, and orientated east – west possibly associated with ditch 46. Twenty five percent of this enclosure was excavated in six segments. A single recut was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.52 - 0.7 m and average width was 0.55 m; depth range was 0.15 - 0.39 m and average depth was 0.32 m. Fills comprised non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel and gravelly fills. There was also some greenish material, and some primary silting. A substantial amount of moderately well preserved pottery, (73 sherds, 1361 g) was recovered.

Enclosure 82 (Fig. 9.3)

An oval enclosure located immediately north of the ditches surrounding structure 1356. It measured 15 m in circumference, with a long axis of 7 m, a short axis of 4 m and a surface area of 238 m². Three ditch sections were excavated through this enclosure, representing 18% of its total length. The position of the entrance is unknown, no recuts were apparent and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width was measured slightly obliquely due to the positioning of the section, with this in mind width range was approximately 0.7 - 1.8 m, and average width was 1 m. Depth range was 0.36 - 0.6 m and average depth was 0.45 m. Fills comprised non-gravelly material. A modest collection of 27 sherds (985 g) of pottery came from the ditch fill, possibly representing rubbish deposition from a structure inside the enclosure. The pottery comprised large sherds with an average sherd weight of 36.5 g and featured at least two Oxfordshire whiteware mortaria and a Nene Valley colour-coated bowl.

Ditch 124 (Fig. 9.3)

A linear ditch 13.5 m in length, orientated north - west / south – east set at right-angles to the southern end of ditch group 30. Thirty percent of this feature was excavated in six ditch sections. No recuts were observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open with steep sides. Width range was 1 m - 1.6 m, and average width was 1.3 m; depth range was 0.48 m - 0.74 m and average depth was 0.6 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material. Amongst the 58 sherds (1273 g) of pottery was a sherd of Dressel 20 olive oil amphora largely accompanied by local grey sand and grog-tempered wares and a small quantity of animal bone suggesting rubbish deposition from structures to the north of the ditch.

Ditch 150 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 150 was a short stretch of linear ditch 2.2 m in length, and orientated north-south. It petered out to the north and south but if projected north would form a right-angle with ditch 124. A single section was excavated through the ditch, representing 41% of its extant length. The profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.6 m, and the average depth was 0.25 m. There was a single fill consisting of homogeneous gravel-free material. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 155 (Fig. 9.3)

A right-angled ditch, possibly forming part of a substantial rectilinear enclosure immediately west of kidney-shaped feature 474. One arm of this ditch complex was orientated north - west/south - east and the other north - east /south - west; together they measured approximately 30 m in length. Five ditch segments were excavated within this ditch group comprising a 23% sample, and revealing multiple recuts with variable profiles, including rounded-flat bases and steep-sloping concave sides. Width range was 0.4 - 0.68 m, and average width was 0.46 m; depth range was 0.44 - 0.82 m, and average depth was 0.57 m. Fill types consisted of mixed non-gravelly material, silty loams with gravel and greenish material. There was also evidence of some primary silting and animal disturbance. Forty-three potsherds (559 g) and fifty-two animal bones came from the ditch fill. The average sherd size at 13 g is quite low partly reflected in the presence of quite a high presence of redeposited material. The presence of colour-coated wares (Oxfordshire and Nene Valley) indicate a 3rd-4th century abandonment.

Ditch 162 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch to the south of ditch 34, the extant part of which was 4 m in length, and which was orientated SW / NE. Forty five percent of this feature was excavated in three sections. No recuts were observed in section, and the ditch profile was an open U-shape. Width in section ranged between 0.9m and 1.1 m, and averaged 1 m. Depth was only recorded for ditch section 1285A, where it was 0.67 m. Fills comprised non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel; there was also some greenish material. A modest assemblage of 20 potsherds weighing 644 g and 13 animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill along with a bone gouge (SF 350). Although the average sherd size was moderately high at 32 g most of the pottery appears to be of early Roman date with a large proportion of Belgic-type grog-tempered storage jar, residual Iron Age sherds and a piece of South Gaulish samian.

Ditch Group 184 (Fig. 9.3)

A right-angled ditch group mirroring and to the west of ditch group 155 and probably the northern and western boundary of a substantial rectilinear enclosure. This feature measured 38.6 m in length, and was excavated in nine segments comprising 34% of its extant length. The excavated segments revealed multiple recuts, possibly as many as 12, and ditch profile was consequently extremely varied, including rounded bases and sloping concave sides. Fills were mixed comprising non-gravelly material, silt

loams with gravel and greenish material with some primary silting. Fill formation processes were uncertain. Width range was 0.2 -1.15 m and average width was 0.66 m; depth range was 0.26 -0.76 m, and average depth was 0.52 m. A high incidence of finds recovered from the ditch fill, including some three fragments of metalworking debris including a small plano-convex hearth bottom which suggests that rubbish was being dumped in the ditch from structures inside the enclosure. The pottery assemblage comprises some 234 sherds (3274 g) with an average sherd size of 14 g. This is slightly on the low side indicative of disturbed material which is verified by the fact that 33% by sherd count is of Iron Age date and thus redeposited. The latest material includes wares from the Oxfordshire industry with colour-coated vessels including a mortaria, and whiteware mortaria. The animal bone assemblage consisting of some 164 fragments include dog and bird alongside the usual domesticates. Other finds include two copper alloy strips (SF 99 and 212).

Ditch 216 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 216 was a curvilinear ditch 7.61 m in length and orientated NE/SW. It was cut away to the north-east by ditch 217, but may have been part of a small oval enclosure, the remainder of which had been cut away by later activity. Fifty one percent of this ditch was excavated in three sections. The ditch profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.72 m, and the average depth was 0.42 m. There was a single fill consisting of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material and gravelly fills. An assemblage of 28 sherds (436 g) of pottery, 12 animal bones and plant remains from the ditch fill was not particularly substantial. As 69% of the pottery comprised redeposited Iron Age material most of the finds would appear to have derived from secondary deposition.

Ditch 217 (Fig. 9.3)

A linear ditch set almost perpendicular to ditch group 184, measuring approximately 18 m in length and orientated NE / SW. In profile this ditch showed steep sides and a flat base, with no signs of recutting. The width range of the excavated ditch segments, which comprised 22% of its length, was 0.5 m-0.9 m and the average width was 0.7 m. The depths of the segments and the nature of their fills were unrecorded. A moderately substantial assemblage of 64 sherds (824 g) of pottery and some metalworking debris. The latter includes a small sub-tuyère plate and a small plano-convex hearth bottom may suggest that metalworking was carried out in the enclosure to the west. At least 70% of the pottery comprised wares of Iron Age currency. A small assemblage of 56 animal bones was also recovered..

Ditch 222 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 222 was a relatively substantial linear ditch measuring 24.4 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It appears to have formed the north-western boundary of an enclosure, which was bounded to the south east by ditch 217 and to the north-east by 184. Four sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 16% of its original length. The profile was U-shaped and open, and one recut was observed. The average width was 0.8 m, and the average depth was 0.28 m. There were two fills, which were mixed and consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel. A small amount of 27 (287 g) sherds of pottery and 18

animal bones from the ditch fill may largely derive from secondary deposition. The latest material includes an Oxfordshire white ware mortarium dating to the later 3rd or 4th century. Other finds include a copper alloy Aesica brooch (SF 276), again a curated or redeposited find. A single fragment of metal working debris may derive from the same source as that from enclosure 217.

Ditch 258 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 258 was 8 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. It was cut away at its south-western end by a substantial pit, and ended in a terminal at its north-eastern end. It ran parallel to and north-west of ditch 222, and was probably associated with the use of the enclosures to its south west. Thirty two percent of this ditch was excavated in four sections. The profile was an open U-shape, and no recuts were observed. The average width was 0.4 m and the average depth was 12.5 m. There was a single fill, which consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel. A single large sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated dish, eight animal bones, including one hare bone and some plant remains were recovered.

Enclosure 279 (Fig. 9.3)

A linear ditch group orientated NE/SW and measuring 15 m in length running more-or-less parallel to the projected line of trackway ditch group 30. Excavated ditch segments comprising 68% of the total ditch length indicated multiple recuts, and a profile that varied between flat and rounded bases with sloping concave sides. Width range was 0.25 -1.3 m, average width was 0.65 m, depth range varied between 0.6 m and 0.9 m, and average depth was 0.73 m. Fills were mixed with some primary silting, and comprised gravel-free, non-gravelly, silty loams with gravel and some greenish material, they derived from uncertain formation processes. An assemblage of some 87 potsherds weighing 1361 g, and 32 animal bones from the ditch fill probably represent deliberate rubbish deposition although 34.5% of the sherds are of Iron Age origin and thus residual. The bone includes hare, horse, sheep/goat and ox. The latest pottery includes an Oxfordshire colour-coated beaker, whiteware mortaria and Dorset black burnished ware.

Ditch 304 (Fig. 9.3)

A linear ditch 19 m in length and orientated WNW – ESE towards the western side of the excavated area. It possibly forms part of the same enclosure as ditches 1349 and 1350 which may relate to ditch 326 to the south defining a paddock area (see 326, 1349/50 below). Three sections were excavated through this feature, representing 19.5% of its total length. No recuts were apparent in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.8 - 1 m and average width was 1 m; depth range was 0.08 - 0.4 m and average depth was 0.29 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and gravel-free material; there was some primary silting. A small amount of pottery, 16 sherds weighing 452 g, and 36 animal bones was recovered from the ditch fill along with some preserved plant remains. Other finds include a single fragment of metal working debris. The pottery contains some residual sherds mixed in with later sherds dating to later 2nd-3rd centuries.

Ditch 326 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 20 m in length located in the south-east corner of the excavated area. It was orientated north - south at its northern end, but curved around to the west towards its southern end. It may belong to the same phase of activity as ditches 304/1350 defining a paddock. Seven sections were excavated through this feature, representing 22% of its total length. A single recut was noted in section, and this seems to have run along most of the length of the feature. The ditch profile was open-concave. Width range was 0.6 - 1 m and average width was 0.65 m; depth range was 0.15 - 0.32 m and average depth was 0.22 m. Fills consisted of silty-loams with gravel and gravelly fills. Twenty-four quite fragmented potsherds and 17 animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill. At least half the pottery is redeposited Iron Age material, one of the later pieces being a large sherd from a Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware jar. A single fragment of vitrified clay was also recovered.

Ditch 332 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 332 was a curvilinear ditch measuring 13 m in length located some 4 m north of ditch 258. It was orientated NE/SW, and ran beyond the limit of the excavation to the north. There was a clear terminal at its south-western end. This ditch may well have formed part of an enclosure, the bulk of which lay beyond the northern limit of the excavation. Eight sections were excavated representing 54% of its extant length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and two recuts were apparent. Average width was 0.37 m, and average depth was 0.25 m. There were four fills comprising gravel-free material, non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel. A fairly substantial assemblage of 89 sherds of pottery weighing 3223 g, and 47 animal bones including the usual domesticates, from the ditch fill may indicate rubbish deposition from a nearby source although again a lot of the material derives from the underlying Iron Age deposits.

Ditch 536 (Fig. 9.3)

A short stretch of linear ditch 5 m in length and orientated SW/NE located immediately north of ditch 326. Fourteen percent of this ditch was excavated in a single segment. No recuts were noted in section, and the profile was U-shaped-open. Recorded width was 0.64 m, and depth was 0.1 m. Fills comprised silty-loams with gravel. No finds were recovered, possibly indicating that the enclosure which it defined was devoid of structures.

Ditch 559 (Fig. 9.3)

A 5.5 m length of linear ditch orientated N-S immediately north of ditch 536. Sixteen percent of this feature was excavated in a single segment. No recuts were noted in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-narrow. The ditch cut was 0.32 m wide 0.25 m deep. Fills comprised gravel-free material and non-gravelly material; there was some greenish material and some primary silting. A single sherd of Oxfordshire grey sandy ware pottery and five animal bones came from the ditch fill, possibly indicating that there were no structures in the immediate vicinity.

Enclosure 796 (Fig. 9.3)

An extremely short section of linear ditch 1.1 m in length and orientated NW/SE immediately west of enclosure 56 and possibly a continuation of ditch 1108 (see below). A single segment was excavated through this feature, and this represents an unknown percentage of the total length of the ditch. A single recut was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. The width of the cut was between 0.53 and 0.6 m, and its depth was 0.18 m. Fills consisted of silty-loams with gravel. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 826 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 18 m in length the terminals of which faced west and north - west. Five ditch sections were excavated through this feature, representing 15% of its total length. One recut was observed in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.5 - 0.8 m, and average width was 0.6 m; depth range was 0.14 - 0.3 m, and average depth was 0.25 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, and gravel-free material; there was some primary silting. Eleven sherds of pottery and six animal bones came from the ditch fill, perhaps indicating secondary deposition. In addition an iron hobnail, an iron ferrule (SF 469) and a splinter of human long bone were also recovered.

Enclosure 877 (Fig. 9.3)

A substantial curvilinear ditch 23 m in length, orientated NE – SSW and located in the south-east corner of the excavated area. Fifty-four percent of this feature was excavated in four sections. No recuts were apparent in section, and the ditch profile was U-shaped open. Width range was 0.8 - 1.5 m and average width was 1 m; depth range was 0.3 - 0.66 m and average depth was 0.35 m. Fills comprised non-gravelly material. A moderately good assemblage of pottery and 26 animal bones from the ditch fill may represent rubbish deposition. A coin dated AD 335-41 (SF 274) was also from this feature. The 56 sherds (416 g) of pottery include a small number of redeposited sherds alongside sherds of Dorset black burnished ware and Oxfordshire colour-coated ware also providing a *tpq* in the 4th century. Three dog skull bones featured amongst the 26 animal bones recovered.

Enclosure 996 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 15 m in length, possibly forming part of an oval enclosure on the far western side of the excavation. Six sections were excavated through this feature, representing 44% of its total length. No recuts were noted, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.55 - 0.94 m and average width was 0.8 m; depth range was 0.08 - 0.33 m and average depth was 0.3 m. A substantial assemblage of pottery and animal bone from the ditch fill, may suggest rubbish deposition, although the ditch did not appear to form an enclosure. A total 206 sherds (1695 g) were recovered but in well fragmented condition with an average sherd size of just 8 g. Most of the pottery is Roman in date with only three Iron Age sherds. Grog-tempered storage jar was well represented along with a small quantity of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware and whiteware mortaria providing a *tpq* for the fill of the ditch in the later 3rd or 4th centuries. The 54 animal bones are a mixture of sheep and cattle or sheep/goat, sheep/pig sized pieces, with single examples of horse and dog.

Enclosure 998 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 12 m in length, possibly part of a sub-rectangular enclosure located to the south-west of enclosure 56. Sixteen percent of this feature was excavated in three sections. No recuts were observed, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.4 - 0.65 m, and average width was 0.51; depth range was 0.17 - 0.32 m and average depth was 0.22 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there were also some burnt/ashy or charcoal fills. Twenty-six sherds of Roman pottery (469 g) and only five animal bones were recovered.

Ditch 1013 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 1013 was a substantial linear ditch located in the salvage area beyond the southern limit of the main excavation area. It was 69 m in length and was orientated SE/NW. This ditch lay at an approximate right-angle to ditches 2517 and 2550, and may have formed a major land boundary. Four sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 8% of its extant length. The profile was U-shaped and open. There was at least one recut. Average width was 1.51 m, and average depth was 0.64 m. There were at least two fills, consisting of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel. A fairly modest collection of material was recovered from the ditch perhaps suggesting it was not used for direct rubbish deposition. The 56 sherds of pottery were dominated by local grey coarse wares and shelly wares, with a single sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware from a miniature jar giving a later 3rd century to 4th-century *tpq*. The animal bone comprised just 14 pieces of which two were dog mandible fragments. In addition one fragment of slag was recovered and a slab of Forest Marble (SF 374).

Ditch 1027 (Fig. 9.3)

A linear ditch 9 m in length, and orientated NE/SW. This feature may have bounded an extended entrance leading to structure 1356. Seven sections were excavated through the ditch, representing 30.5% of its total length. A single recut was noted, and the profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.36 - 0.5 m and average width was 0.4 m; depth range was 0.14 - 0.24 m, and average depth was 0.2 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there was some primary silting. A small amount of 11 sherds (203 g) of Roman pottery and six animal bones were recovered from the ditch fill.

Ditch 1031 (Figs 9.3; 9.5)

A curvilinear ditch 16.5 m in length, probably part of a sub-rectangular enclosure surrounding the area containing structure 1356 (see above). The two arms of this enclosure were orientated NW/SE and NE-SW respectively. Ten sections were cut through the ditch, representing 43% of its total length. The entrance was probably situated to the south or south - west. No recuts were observed, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.48 m - 1 m and average width was 0.6 m; depth range was 0.26 - 0.48 m, and average depth was 0.32 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material, silty-loams with gravel, and gravelly fills. There was some primary silting, and some fills contained flat limestone slabs. A substantial assemblage of

animal bone and pottery, along with plant remains suggests rubbish deposition probably from the building to the south of the ditch. Amongst the 110 sherds (1446 g) of pottery were three sherds of Oxfordshire whiteware mortaria, nine sherds of black burnished ware and five sherds of colour-coated ware providing an overall *tpq* in the later 3rd-4th century. The animal bone of some 17 fragments is dominated by cattle.

Ditch 1034 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 4 m in length, and orientated east – west locate immediately north of curved ditch 996. Two sections were excavated through this feature, representing 65% of its extant length. Only one cut was apparent, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-narrow. The ditch cut was 0.5 m in width and 0.18 m in depth. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material. Eight heavily abraded sherds of Roman pottery from the fill indicates secondary deposition.

Enclosure 1049 (Figs 9.3; 9.5)

A penannular enclosure ditch 16 m in circumference immediately south of 1031 and possibly part of the enclosure enclosing structure 1356 (see above). This had a long axis of 6 m, a short axis of 5 m, and an internal surface area of 23.76 m². Fourteen sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 32.5% of its total length. The position of the entrance was uncertain, but may have been situated to the south or the east. A single recut was noted, and the ditch profile was varied being flat based in places and V-shaped-open in others. Width ranged was 0.3- 1 m and average width was 0.7 m, depth range was 0.2 - 0.52 m, average depth was 0.36 m. Fills were not fully recorded, but those that were comprised non-gravelly material and gravel-free material. A large assemblage of 166 sherds (3117 g) of pottery and 92 animal bones came from the ditch fill. This probably represented rubbish from the building immediately to the south of the ditch. Amongst the pottery were five sherds of mortaria, four sherds of samian, nineteen sherds of Dorset black burnished ware, eight sherds of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware and three sherds of Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware collectively suggesting a date of deposition from the mid 4th century on.

Enclosure 1062 (Fig. 9.3) (?CHECK LOCATION)

A rectangular enclosure lying just south-west of trackway ditch group 30. The perimeter of the enclosure measured 27.5 m; with a long axis of 8 m, and a short axis of 7 m. The internal surface area was in the region of 56 m². Six sections were excavated through the enclosure ditch, representing 19% of its total length. No entrance was apparent. One recut was observed, and the ditch profile U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.43 - 0.85 m, and average width was 0.6 m; depth range was 0.22 - 0.44 m, and average depth was 0.3 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material and silty-loams with gravel; there were some greenish fills and some animal disturbance. Pottery, 16 sherds weighing 481 g, and 8 pieces of animal bone from the ditch fill indicate a general lack of domestic activity beyond the trackway to the west.

Enclosure 1093 (Fig. 9.3)

Two sides of a rectangular enclosure, 12 m in length in the far north-west corner of the excavated area. The long axis of this enclosure measured 7 m, the short axis 5 m and the surface area was 35 m². The enclosure ditch was excavated in three segments representing a twelve percent sample. The position of the entrance was uncertain, however, the enclosure was open to the south - east. No recuts were noted, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width range was 0.3 - 0.7 m, and average width was 0.55 m; depth range was 0.3 - 0.1 m and average depth was 0.18 m. Fills consisted of silty-loams with gravel. Three sherds of grey coarseware pottery came from the ditch fill.

Ditch 1108 (Fig. 9.3)

A curvilinear ditch 17.5 m in length, possibly forming part of a circular enclosure together with ditch 796 on the same orientation and alignment as enclosure 56. Three sections were excavated across the ditch, representing 14.5% of its original length. The position of the entrance was unclear; however, the enclosure was open to the north. No recuts were observed, and the ditch profile was U-shaped-open. Width was 0.4 m where recorded, and depth range was 0.24 - 0.85 m, average depth was 0.45 m. Fills consisted of non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel. There was some primary silting. A small assemblage of 25 sherds (787 g) of pottery and 10 animal bones was recovered from the ditch. The pottery large comprised grog-tempered storage jar accompanied by at least one Oxfordshire colour-coated mortarium.

Ditch 1180 (Fig. 9.3)

A very short stretch of curvilinear ditch 5.5 m in length, and orientated north – south and possibly cutting enclosure ditch 1108. This feature was not excavated.

Ditch 1267 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 1267 was a short stretch of ditch cut into the myriad of features to the north-west of ditch 34, and was orientated NE/SW. It was 1.2 m in length and was untraceable beyond this distance. A single section was excavated through this ditch. The profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no recuts. There was a single fill which consisted of a silty-loam with gravel. A small amount of six abraded potsherds came from the ditch fill.

Ditch 1349 (Fig. 9.3)

A short section of ditch running parallel to ditch 1350 and both of which may be part of the same alignment as ditch 304 (see also ditch 326). It was 0.2 m in length and orientated NW/SE. The complete extant was excavated in a single segment. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no recuts. The average width was 0.3 m, and the average depth 0.1 m. There was a single fill of non-gravelly material. Only a single fragment of sheep/pig size bone came from the fill.

Ditch 1350 (Fig. 9.3)

A substantial linear ditch 17 m in length and orientated NW/ SE and possibly related to ditches 1349/ 304 and 326. Twenty eight percent of this feature was excavated in

seven ditch sections. No recuts were observed. The ditch profile was steep sided, flat based and narrow. Width range was 0.4 - 0.6 m and average width was 0.45 m, depth range was 0.35 - 0.6 m and depth range was 0.55 m. Fills consisted of gravel-free material, non-gravelly material, and silty-loams with gravel. A large assemblage of 75 sherds of pottery weighing 1072 g and 66 animal bones was recovered, along with a fragment of metalworking debris (small sub-tuyere plate), some fired clay and a bone object (SF 462) came from the ditch fill. This might suggest rubbish deposition from a nearby building although it should be noted that 65% of the potsherds appear to be redeposited Iron Age sherds. The presence of a few sherds of Dorset black burnished ware and local grey sandy wares provide an overall late 3rd – 4th century date for the fill. Two skulls, one cattle and one horse, lying parallel to one another appear to have been placed in the ditch and probably represent a structured deposition of some sort.

Ditch 2508 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2508 was a linear ditch 15 m in length and orientated NNE/SSW located in the far north-east corner of the excavated area adjacent to ditch 2509. It was cut away to the north by an amorphous feature, and to the south by a small pit. It ran parallel to ditch 2517. Nine percent of this feature was excavated in a single segment. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no recuts. The average width was 0.7 m, and the average depth was 0.3 m. The single fill was made up of homogeneous material. Seven large, fresh sherds of pottery, along with six animal bones and a fragment of fired clay came from the ditch.

Ditch 2509 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2509 was a linear ditch, which was slightly irregular on its eastern side. It was 7.5 m in length and orientated north-south. To the north it ran beyond the limit of the excavated area, and to the south it was cut away by several features including ring-ditch 2660 and pit 2662. A single section was cut through this feature, representing 10% of its extant length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and no recuts were observed. Its average width was 0.78 m, and its average depth was 0.23 m. There was a single fill which comprised homogeneous material. A relatively substantial quantity of 35 large unabraded sherds, along with a single fragment of sheep/goat size bone, came from the ditch fill.

The Eastern Group of Ditches

The eastern group of ditches consisted of five stretches of linear ditch, and a single right-angled ditch uncovered as part of the salvage work to the east of the main excavated area. Two of these ditches ran parallel to one another overlying a substantial early Roman boundary ditch, and were orientated NE/SW and probably forming an eastern boundary for the settlement. Two further ditches lay between these first two at right angles to them, forming regular subdivisions of the enclosed space. The right-angled ditch and an associated stretch of linear ditch were cut by the possible trackway ditches, and may have formed part of an earlier enclosure, or enclosures.

Ditch 2018 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2018 was a slightly sinuous ditch 20.2 m in length, which was orientated east-west but curved around to the south at its western end. It appears to form a field boundary linking parallel ditches 2517 and 2550. To the east it was cut by ditch 2550, but may have extended beyond it for a short distance before petering out. To the west it was cut by ditch 2517, and it did not appear to extend any further to the south or west. Four sections were excavated through this feature, representing 10% of its extant length. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no recuts. The average width was 0.35 m and the average depth was 0.8 m. There was a single fill which consisted of silty-loams with gravel. The ditch fill was devoid of finds.

Ditch 2517 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2517 was a substantial ditch on a slightly curved alignment running parallel to and approximately 22 m from ditch 2550. It was 96.6 m in length and orientated NE/SW. At its southern end it ran beyond the southern limit of the excavation, and it terminated to the north 3.2 m short of the northern section. Fourteen sections were excavated through this ditch, representing 8% of its extant length. The ditch profile was varied, being U-shaped and open in places and U-shaped and narrow in others. There was at least one recut. The average width was 1.3 m, and the average depth was 0.42 m. This ditch contained at least two fills, which consisted of silty-loams with gravel. Recovered finds comprise 78 sherds, 1713 g of pottery, 27 animal bones and one human calcaneum, a relatively scarce assemblage for a such large ditch and possibly supporting the premise that this was a boundary ditch away from any significant areas of occupation.

Ditch 2530 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2530 was a linear ditch 19.8 m in length, and orientated ESE/WNW set at right-angles to ditches 2517 and 2550 apparently forming a field division. It merged with ditch 2550 at its eastern end, and with 2517 at its western end. Six percent of ditch 2530 was excavated in a single segment. The profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no recuts. The average width was 0.5 m, and the average depth was 0.4 m. There was a single fill of homogeneous material. The ditch fill produced a single large sherd of Midlands pink grogged ware storage jar.

Ditch 2531 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2531 was a linear ditch 16 m in length, and orientated ESE/WNW running parallel to ditch 2530. At its eastern end it was cut by ditch 2550 which it did not appear to extend beyond, although it may have been related to ditch 2562. To the west it ended in a terminal. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and there were no recuts. The average width was 0.55 m, and the average depth was 0.43 m. There was a single fill of homogeneous material. The ditch fill was sterile.

Ditch 2550 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2550 was a substantial linear ditch, orientated NE/SW and 104 m in length. At its northern end it ran beyond the northern limit of the excavation, and it terminated to

the south in a large pit, which abutted the southern limit of the excavation. Twelve percent of this ditch was excavated in nine sections. The ditch profile was U-shaped and open, and there were at least two recuts, but possibly more. The average width was 1.7 m, and the average depth was 0.42 m. There were at least three fills, which consisted of silty-loams with gravel and non-gravelly material. A mere six sherds of pottery and five animal bones from the ditch fills suggests secondary deposition. However, the ditch was not extensively sampled due to the constraints of time.

Ditch 2562 (Fig. 9.3)

Ditch 2562 was a right-angled ditch 55.4 m in length, which was orientated NE/SW. At its northern end it ran on beyond the northern limit of the excavation. At its southern end it turned west, and was cut away by ditch 2550. The NE/SW arm of this ditch was 49.8 m in length, and the WNW/ESE arm was 5.6 m in length. A single section through the ditch showed it to have a V-shaped profile, with no apparent recuts. The average width was 0.36 m, and the average depth was 0.17 m. There was a single fill of homogeneous material. Just three heavily abraded sherds of pottery, three scraps of animal bone and a quartzite polisher (SF 284) came from the ditch fill. However, this ditch was not extensively sampled due to time constraints.

CRESSWELL FIELD

Ditch system (7697/7763, 7577, 7609, 7447 and 8039) (Figs 9.2; 9.10)

Six segments of NE-SW and NW-SE aligned ditches in the north-west corner of Cresswell Field, adjacent to the palaeochannel, appeared to be part of a broadly contemporary field system of post-Iron Age date. However, the spatial relationship between the ditches, and evidence of recutting, suggested that they represented several phases of this system. The fill of these features comprised an uncomplicated sequence of between one to three layers of sandy silts and clay silts. There was no evidence from the formation of the fills to suggest the existence of any banks.

The dating of this field system is slightly problematic. The finds recovered from the ditches consisted mostly of early Iron Age pottery, but also included a single sherd of late Roman pottery and a small fragment of Niedermendig lava quern. Although these few scraps of later material could easily be intrusive, stratigraphically the ditches were later than all of the numerous Iron Age features they intersected. The overall evidence therefore suggested that this ditch system was Roman or post-Roman in date. Spatial analysis identified that they shared a similar alignment to the Saxon timber hall discovered on the site (Hey forthcoming), and it could be observed that the southern limit of associated paddocks and fencelines adjacent to the hall appeared to be defined by one of the ditches in this group. However, the character of this ditch system was most similar to those of Roman date found elsewhere within the study area. It is, therefore, possible that the Saxon features were merely respecting, or were aligned, on an earlier Roman field system.

Finds distributions from the ditches

The majority of the finds from the ditches comprised animal bone and 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. The majority of the material came from the ditches defining the larger enclosure ditches and the trackway, which generally contained quantities of finds in proportion to their size. A particularly heavy concentration of artefacts in ditch 30 suggests that material was being dumped here from buildings contained within the enclosures to the west. These enclosures sometimes contained substantial assemblages themselves, indicating a lot of domestic activity in this area. The smaller ditches, generally contained less material and this is more likely to represent secondary deposition rather than dumping. However, there were some exceptions. Some metalworking debris came from the fills of ditches 217 and 222, indicating that metalworking may have been carried out within the enclosure which they defined. However, there was a lot of metalworking debris contained within early Roman ditches in this area and this material could well be residual. Apart from this metalworking debris and other finds were generally scarce and plant remains were mostly confined to the larger ditches. Of note was a small concentration of metal-working slag from the area within the later Iron Age-early Roman enclosure 391. This comprised some 13 fragments with examples of dense slag, a small sub-tuyère plate and vitrified clay.

Articulated animal bone from the ditch fills

Ditch 1318 (enclosure 1350) contained two complete animal skulls, one of a cow and one of a horse, which were found lying parallel to one another. In addition to this four sherds of late Roman pottery and a fragment of sheep/goat size bone came from the fill.

The Late Roman pits

Summary

Fifty four pits assigned to the Late Roman Phase (LRB) could be assigned to six different categories based on their profile. These categories did, however, differ slightly from those used for the preceding phase. They comprised: shallow-saucer shaped, pits classified as other, cylindrical, bowl-shaped, large-shallow and rectangular. In plan these features were mostly circular to oval, with one sub-rectangular example.

Distribution

The LRB pits formed a similar pattern to that of the ERB features, namely a linear but well dispersed scatter running through the centre and north - east corner of the excavated area, with a few pits in the south - west corner (Fig. 9.3). Unlike the ERB pits however, these features exhibited a certain degree of clustering, particularly around an abandoned Iron Age roundhouse in the south - west corner of the site, and in the northern half of the central Roman enclosure. Curiously they seemed to avoid the southern half of this enclosure. As with the earlier phases it is possible that some pits were truncated by enclosures, and that those pits recovered do not represent the complete former distribution.

Description

Pit diameter ranged between 0.28 m and 2.5 m and averaged 0.9 m, depth ranged between 0.12 m and 1.15 m and averaged 0.38m. Original recorded pit volume ranged between 0.003 m³ and 2.550 m³ and averaged 0.378 m³. In profile these features exhibited a greater degree of variation than they did in plan, with eight shallow, saucer-shaped pits, nineteen pits classified as other, ten cylindrical pits, twelve bowl-shaped pits, four large shallow pits and one rectangular example. Fills were divided into four categories: gravel-free of which there were 22 examples, fills classified as “other” of which there were eight examples, silty loams of which there were 13 examples and non-gravelly of which there were 11 examples. It is assumed that there was no correlation between pit shape and fill type, as none was observed in the Early Iron Age pits and it is felt that fill type is more likely to be related to underlying geology. The number of fills contained within individual features ranged between one and five; there was only one feature with more than four fills, and the average number of fills was two.

Discussion

In general the form and distribution of LRB pits was similar to that of the ERB phase, and may be seen as a development of trends which emerged in that phase and in the preceding Late Iron Age/Early Roman phase. The proportions of the different pit categories to the total number of pits seem similar to those of the earlier periods in many respects. The main difference being the continuing trend, which started in the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period and continued in the LRB for less cylindrical pits and more bowl-shaped ones. It can only be assumed that this reflects the declining importance of below ground storage. It is notable that the range of fills within this period was significantly less than those of preceding periods, and that there were significantly less pits with between four and 10 fills. When these figures are compared to the data on preceding periods, it is clear that there was a gradual decline in fill numbers from the Early Iron Age to the Late Roman period. Although it should be noted that the numbers of pits with substantial numbers of fills (over four) was never very significant, and that they have had a distorting effect on the overall figures. Recuts were rare, with two pits, (449 and 1095), containing one recut apiece, and although recuts of EIA pits are also considered rare, it is clear that the numbers of recut features declined into the Roman period. Redeposition was not widely noted in the LRB phase, 28 pits exhibited no signs of redeposition, 12 exhibited low levels, 10 exhibited medium levels and 4 showed high levels. This is a comparable level of redeposition to that recorded for the ERB and Late Iron Age/Early Roman periods, both of which showed a significant increase on the early Iron Age and middle Iron Age periods. Nine pits contained evidence of primary silting, and three of these were over 0.8 m³ in volume. These figures are comparable to those for earlier periods. Only two pits contained deliberate deposits of articulated animal remains, and neither of them were over 0.8 m³ in volume. Five pits showed evidence of having been deliberately backfilled, and of these two were over 0.8 m³ in volume. Given that only five out of 54 pits were this large, it is possibly significant that two of them were backfilled, indicating that larger pits were more likely to get backfilled. Only one pit was considered to have been used for grain storage on the basis of its morphology, and this reflects the general decline in the number of pits used for storage in the two preceding phases.

Late Roman artefact distributions

Bone

Of the 54 Late Roman pits, 30 contained deposits of bone, and one of these contained human bone. Horse bone was hardly more widespread, as it was only present in three pits. Pig and sheep bone were also rare, being found in five and two pits respectively. Cattle bone was more widespread, being found in 17 pits. Wild animal remains were found in five features, a figure much greater than that for the earlier period. Pits containing less easily identifiable animal remains were, more widespread. Twelve pits contained sheep/pig remains, eight pits contained cattle/horse remains and twelve pits contained sheep/goat remains. Only seven pits contained sheep/goat and sheep/pig remains, and only six contained cattle/horse and cattle remains. The number of pits containing bones derived from all the major domestic species in the LRB was only four. The number of pits containing bones derived from at least one of the major domestic species was 27, a figure which is easily comparable to figures from the earlier periods. Once more wild animals do not seem to be associated with humans or dogs, although they do occur in deposits with horse bone. However, these deposits all contained wide ranging assemblages. The single deposit of human bone was not associated with horse bone.

The spatial distribution of animal bone in the LRB phase was similar to that seen in the ERB period, in that it was fairly randomly distributed throughout the LRB pit scatter, and seemed to concentrate around the edges of the enclosures. There was no apparent spatial differentiation between the deposition of domestic animal bone, and that of wild animal bone. Once again deposits of bone concentrated in the north east corner of the site to the east of the ditched trackway, as well as around a disused round house situated in the south west corner of the site. There seems to have been no spatial differentiation in the deposition of different domestic animal species, rather as in previous phases certain pits seem to have served as the foci of deposition for a wide range of different species. The one pit containing human bone appears to have been situated some way to the east, away from the main focus of settlement.

Pottery

Of the 54 pits assigned to the LRB phase 34 contained pottery. The assemblage comprised 228 sherds, and the average number of sherds per pit was seven. The calculation and comparison of mean sherd weight (msw) and sherd count revealed the pattern which is familiar from earlier phases; whereby most features contained small amounts of abraded material, and some features either contained large amounts of abraded sherds, or small numbers of unabraded sherds. The first group appeared to comprise material of under 50 g msw, and under 10 sherds; the second group comprised either over 10 sherds and/or over 50 g msw. Thirteen pits belonged to the second group, and were therefore considered to contain significant deposits of pottery. Only one pit, (1084), contained a deliberately deposited animal carcass, and it also contained a significant quantity of pottery, ie. 32 sherds with a mean weight of 56 g. Interestingly this pit was something of an anomaly according to the criteria set out above, as it contained a large quantity of sherds which averaged over 50 g in weight. It was clearly a deposit of some significance. As was the case in the Early Roman phase, when pits containing significant deposits of pottery were compared to pits containing over 10 fragments of bone, there was apparently no great correlation. Of

the 13 pits with over 10 sherds of pottery or an msw of over 50 g, two, (1084 and 1095), contained 10 or more bone fragments, and of the pits with less than 10 sherds of pottery and an msw of less than 50 g, one contained 10 or more bone fragments. The pattern is clearly explained by a general scarcity of bone in the LRB, rather than the deliberate separation of bone and pottery at the time of their deposition.

Table 9.2 Pottery and animal bone from the LRB pits

Context	Sherd count	MSW	Bone count
48	8	16	2
49	7	105	3
76	3	11	9
104	1	33	0
126	1	46	0
134	2	15	38
147	4	100	1
325	7	24	3
333	1	49	0
449	12	73	1
454	22	126	7
515	4	186	1
516	2	19	0
518	5	189	1
545	2	7	3
612	13	20	1
670	8	14	5
771	3	11	1
773	1	14	1
774	2	16	1
778	3	5	3
883	4	11	3
885	5	8	2
886	6	79	1
1005	2	200	1
1035	24	35	8
1084	32	56	93
1095	19	21	15
1120	12	18	2
1123	5	23	0
1194	1	7	1
1236	5	21	0
1237	1	4	0
2527	1	26	5

The spatial analysis of pottery distribution within the LRB phase, revealed a pattern much the same as the analysis of artefact counts. The pottery distribution appeared fairly random within the pit scatter, with no particular concentrations of pottery-rich pits. Some of the pits containing significant amounts of pottery were the same as those containing animal bones from a wide range of species; 1095 was particularly significant in this respect. When compared with the phases preceding it, the LRB is much like the ERB. Its deposition patterns agree well with the Late Iron Age/Early Roman, particularly as regards the general scarcity of bone and its apparent lack of association with pottery, and the comparative lack of deliberately deposited animal carcasses. The lack of pit clustering in the LRB also agrees with the ERB and Late Iron Age/Early Roman, and contrasts with the early Iron Age and middle Iron Age.

In general then, there is a broad distinction in deposition patterns between the Early and Middle Iron Age and the Late Iron Age and Roman periods.

Plant Remains

Two of the 54 LRB pits contained plant remains, neither of these were over 0.8 m³ in volume and their average original volume was 0.3025 m³, whereas the overall average original volume of the LRB pits was 0.378 m³. These pits were both circular in plan, and one was clearly much larger than the other. In profile one was cylindrical and one was shallow saucer-shaped. The presence of the cylindrical example may be significant, although the size of the sample precludes any firm conclusions. The cylindrical pit contained more weed seeds than cereals, but more cereals than chaff, as did the shallow-saucer shaped pit. The proportions of different classes of plant remains in the two pits were, therefore, equal. The shallow-saucer shaped pit contained burnt charcoal and a deliberate deposit of articulated animal bone, and the cylindrical pit contained a rubbish deposit. Given that only two deliberate deposits were recorded for the LRB, the presence of one of them in a pit also containing plant remains may be considered to be significant. Spatially these pits also seemed to concentrate around the edges of enclosures, however, given that there were only two of them, and given that the concentration of enclosure ditches was so dense it is difficult to assert that this pattern has any significance.

Metalworking debris

Very few fragments of metalworking debris were recovered from the pits of the late Roman phase, and their distribution was limited. Three pits each contained a single fragment of slag. Two of these fragments were recovered from pits classified as amorphous, and one came from a cylindrical pit.

Two of the late Roman pits containing metalworking slags were situated on the north - eastern edge of the eastern pit scatter, the other was more central. The two eastern examples were clearly on the edge of the settlement area, but the other bordered a ditch defining the edge of a trackway running through the centre of the site.

Small finds

Only one metal small find and two stone objects were recovered from the late Roman pits. These comprise an iron punch from pit 516, three fragments of Old Red sandstone millstone from 670 and a sandstone quern from 2527. In addition small amounts of fired clay was recovered from three pits, (134, 1084 and 1095), and flints from three pits (134, 147 and 325). The majority of this material came from either cylindrical or amorphous pits, although one bowl-shaped and one rectangular pit also contained some material. As in the early Roman phase the proportion of cylindrical pits containing finds had declined

Late Roman pits containing finds formed two distinct spatial clusters; one in the north-east and north central part of the settlement area, and one in the south-west corner; a pattern which echoes the distribution of late Roman pits in general. There were no obvious patterns in the deposition of different classes of artefact, although it

must be acknowledged that the sample is very small. There was no association between small finds and structures.

Table 9.3 Summary of finds other than pottery and bone from the Late Roman pits

Context	Pit Type	Small Find	Material
134	Cylindrical	Misc	Fired clay
134	Cylindrical	Flake	Flint
147	Cylindrical	Scraper	Flint
325	Amorphous	Flake	Flint
516	Bowl-Shaped	Punch	Iron
670	Cylindrical	Millstone x3 frags	Stone
1084	Rectangular	Daub	Fired clay
1095	Amorphous	Daub	Fired clay
2527	Amorphous	Quern	Stone

Unphased Roman features

As in the Iron Age features there were a number of unphased Roman features. These comprised 23 pits, which have been divided into five categories similar to those used to define the phased examples. The categories are: bowl-shaped of which there were eight, other of which there were nine, large-shallow of which there were two, shallow-saucer of which there was one example and cylindrical of which there were three. The proportions of the different pit types to one another were broadly comparable to those seen in other phases, and to the unphased Iron Age features. However, there were far fewer cylindrical pits or pits classified as other. The original pit volumes ranged between 0.006 m³ and 2.7 m³ and averaged 0.293 m³. The volume range is broadly comparable to the equivalent ranges for the phased Roman pits, however, the average is somewhat smaller than those for the phased features. This is possibly due to a higher incidence of pottery in larger features, making them easier to date. Fills were divided into four types, as seen in the other phases, these were: non-gravelly, gravel-free, other and silty-loams. There were nine pits with non-gravelly fills, seven with gravel-free fills, four with fills classified as other and three filled with silty-loams. The proportions of the different fill types to one another were similar to the proportions seen among the phased pits, however there were relatively fewer gravelly fills and silty-loams.