Archaeological excavation of land at Oxford Road Bodicote Oxfordshire

Report No. 18/122

Text: Tracy Preece

Illustrations: Olly Dindol

Project Manager: Mo Muldowney
Site Code: OXCMS:2018:28
NGR: SP 4671 3731

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Archaeological excavation of land at Oxford Road Bodicote, Oxfordshire September 2018

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Quality control and sign off**:**

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Human remains:	Chris Chinnock BA MSc PCIfA
The animal bone and plant macrofossils:	Sander Aerts BA MA

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**OASIS No: molanort1-329605**	
Project title	Archaeological excavation of land at Oxford Road, Bodicote, Oxfordshire	
In 2018 MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Heritage (part of RPS) on behalf of Crest Nicholson to undertake a programme of archaeological excavation on land at Oxford Road, Bodicote, Oxfordshire. Although there was a small amount of worked flint of Neolithic date, no archaeological features are assigned to this period. The excavation revealed evidence for Iron Age, Roman and Saxon activity. The Iron Age activity comprised ditched enclosures while the Roman period remains were confined to a small assemblage of pottery. Evidence for Saxon occupation consisted of sunken feature buildings, post-built structures, associated enclosure ditches and three possible associated cremations. Only a small pottery assemblage was recovered from the Iron Age activity suggesting that these enclosures were not associated with settlement. Pottery, animal bone and personal objects were recovered from the Saxon features.		
Project type	Excavation	
Previous work	Trial trench evaluation (MOLA 2014)	
Future work	None	
Land use	Arable Field	
Monument type and period	Iron Age enclosure ditches, Saxon SFBs, post-built structures, pits, ditches and cremations	
Significant finds	Saxon pottery, silver gilt mount, knives, pin beater, bone needle	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Oxfordshire	
Site address	Land at Oxford Road, Bodicote	
OS co-ordinates	SP 4671 3731	
Area hectares	3.9ha	
Height OD	105-113m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services	
Project Design originator	CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)	
Supervisor	Paul Sharrock	
Project Manager	Mo Muldowney	
Sponsor or funding body	Crest Nicholson	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	March 2018	
End date	April 2018	
ARCHIVES	**Location**	**Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)**
Physical	Oxfordshire County Museum	Pottery, animal bone, flints, small finds, charred plant macrofossils and human remains
Paper	OXCMS 2018:28	Plans and sections on permatrace, client report
Digital		Mapinfo Plans, client report
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological excavation of land at Oxford Road, Bodicote, Oxfordshire, March to April 2018	
Serial title & volume	18/122	
Author(s)	Tracy Preece	
Page numbers	55	
Date	24th October 2018	

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ABSTRACT

In 2018 MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) undertook a programme of archaeological excavation on land at Oxford Road, Bodicote, Oxfordshire. Although there was a small amount of worked flint dated to the Neolithic, no archaeological features are assigned to this period. The excavation revealed evidence for Iron Age, Roman and Saxon activity. The Iron Age activity comprised ditched enclosures. Only a small pottery assemblage was recovered suggesting that these enclosures were not associated with settlement. Evidence for the Roman period was confined to a small pottery assemblage. Evidence for Saxon occupation consisted of sunken feature buildings, post-built structures, associated enclosure ditches. Six undated cremations lay adjacent to each other. Pottery, animal bone and personal objects were recovered from the Saxon features.

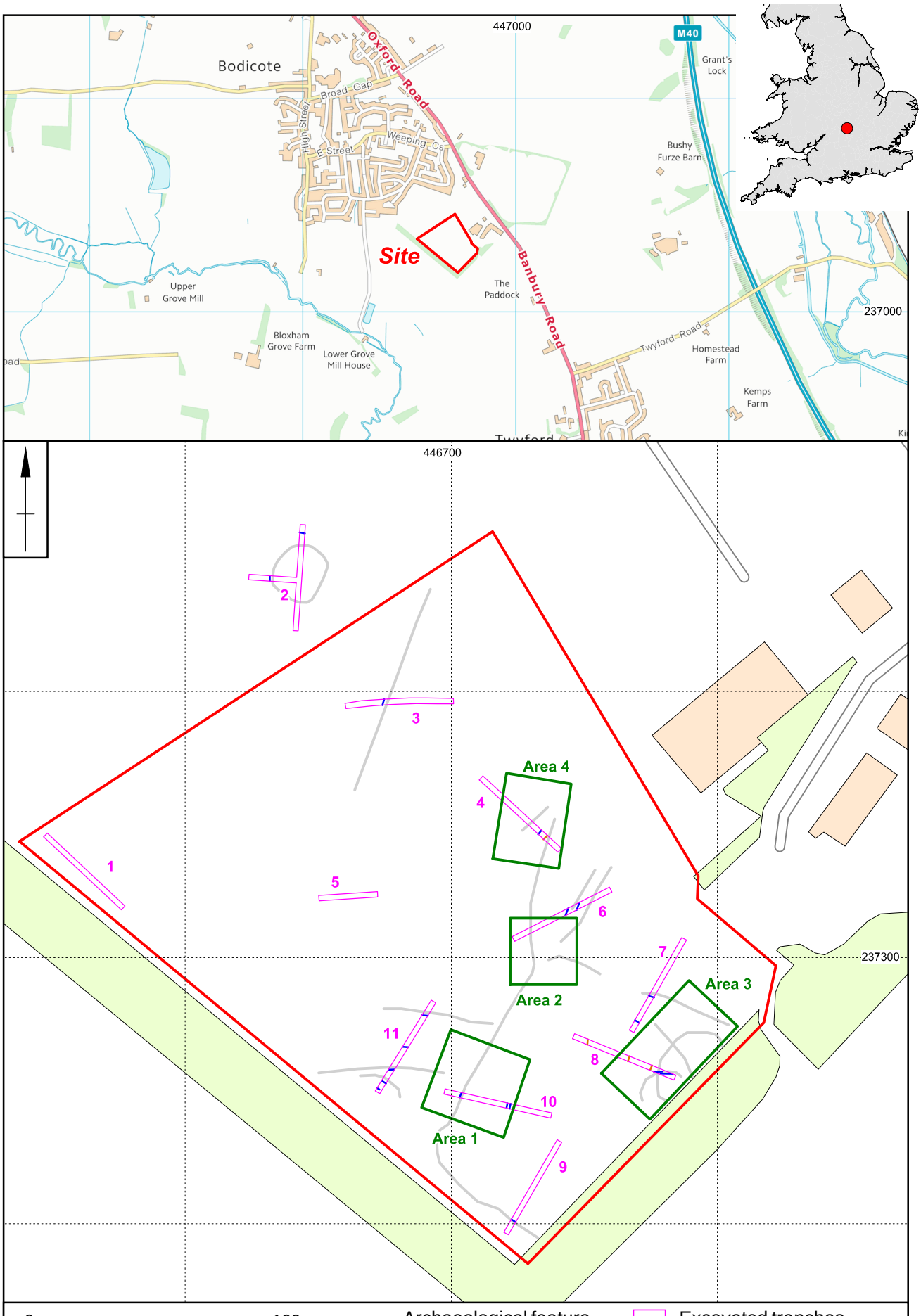
1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Crest Nicholson Midlands to undertake a programme of archaeological mitigation in advance of residential development on land at Oxford Road, Bodicote, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4671 3731, Fig 1). The works were managed by CgMs Heritage (part of RPS) on behalf of the client Crest Nicholson Midlands. MOLA would like to acknowledge the assistance of Harry Mockridge and the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist Richard Oram. A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced by MOLA (MOLA 2018) and the work was undertaken in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012). The archive will be deposited with the Oxford County Museum.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The proposed development area comprises the southern half of a field, *c*3.9 hectares in size on the south edge of Bodicote, Oxfordshire to the west of Oxford Road (A4260) (Fig 1). The area to the north is now a residential area built by CALA Homes representing the edge of Bodicote village. The west and south side of the present site are bordered by an established woodland belt. To the north-east is Cotefield Farm and subsidiary agricultural buildings and farmyard. The southern part of the field is largely flat and forms a plateau overlooking a dry valley which runs through the northern part of the site. The land lies between 105m to 113m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying solid geology consists of Middle Lias Marlestone with Middle Lias clays, silts and siltstones from the south-west (BGS 2018).



Scale 1:2000 Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical background

In the vicinity of the development area a number of sites are noted in the Oxfordshire Historic Environmental Record (HER). Roman occupation remains have been recorded 200m to the south (HBSMR 1747; SP 4693 3720). Extensive remains of burnt stones, Roman pottery and inhumations were observed and reported in Victoria County History Vol 1 and pottery was identified by the Ashmolean Museum. A cursus-like cropmark has been identified from aerial photographs (HBSMR 5700; SP 4733 3718) 600m south-east of the area.

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows three parallel field boundaries aligned north-east to south-west, possibly indicating a pair of narrow linear closes, which could be the result of early enclosure by agreement. At a right angle, aligned north-west to south-east, was another field boundary, which was depicted up to the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map.

2.3 Previous archaeological work

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in October 2010 by Northamptonshire Archaeology (now MOLA) on land immediately to the north of the current development area (Wolframm-Murray 2010). The earliest archaeological features uncovered during the trial trenching were two probable early to middle Neolithic pits. Iron Age activity was identified in two areas comprising ring ditches, gullies and pits. The concentration of late Iron Age pottery within these features suggested they were settlement related. Further ditches were identified in the central part of the site which appeared to represent late Iron Age boundary features. They were traced using cropmarks from Google Earth and confirmed through trenching. Although the features included domestic debris, there were few signs of occupational features associated with them.

A geophysical survey was undertaken in June 2014 (Wolframm-Murray 2014) within the development area which identified a group of positive linear anomalies representing archaeological features extending over much of the south-eastern end of the area (Fig 1). The principal element was a large sub-rectangular ditched enclosure within which were two positive curvilinear anomalies possibly representing intersecting enclosure ditches. There were also several smaller positive anomalies suggestive of pits along with several linear anomalies indicating ditches of unknown date and function. Remnants of medieval or early post-medieval ridge and furrow were also detected

The subsequent archaeological evaluation comprised eleven trenches which were targeted on anomalies identified by the geophysical survey (Wolframm-Murray 2014). The evaluation confirmed the presence of the anomalies and showed the enclosure ditches to be substantial. Additionally, two potential cremation burials were noted. However, these features were difficult to characterise to period due to the lack of datable artefacts.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The general aim of the work was to establish the character, date and function of any archaeological features and deposits.

Specific research aims for the investigation are based on the background data that exists for the site and include the following:

- To mitigate the potential impacts from the proposed development of the site through archaeological recording, analysis and dissemination;

- Refine the date, nature, character and extent of the activity on the development area;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Establish the form, function and understanding of the activity.
- Analyse, interpret and report on the findings from the fieldwork and attempt to date and phase the activity identified within the site.
- Establishing the presence or absence of other archaeological features which inform the history of the landscape of the proposed development area.

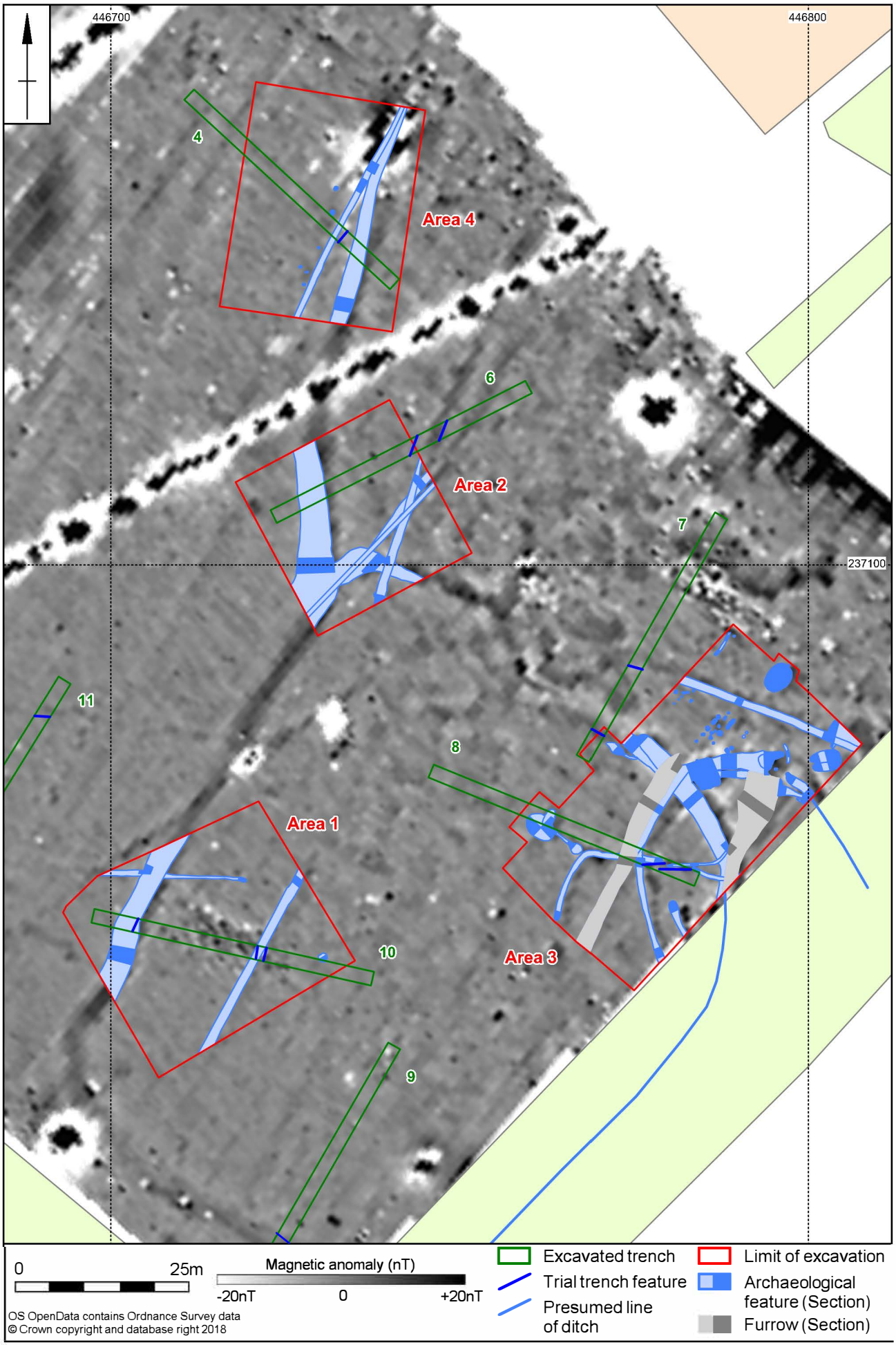
3.2 Methodology

Four separate areas (Areas 1 to 4) were investigated totalling 0.3625ha / 3,625sqm (Fig 2). These were designed to target key areas of interest revealed through the geophysical survey and subsequent trenching evaluation and also to avoid existing below ground services.

Removal of the topsoil and modern overburden was carried out by a tracked 360^{o} mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under constant archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the natural substrate or the first significant archaeological horizon.

The excavation areas were measured in and marked out, prior to the commencement of work, using Leica System 1200 GPS operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid. The spoil heaps and excavated areas were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

The location of all archaeological features and deposits was initially plotted by GPS. This was subsequently supplemented by detailed scale 1:50 plans of all archaeological deposits and features encountered following MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Thompson 2018), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and guidance: archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014a) and *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b).



Scale 1: 750

All features plan Fig 2

4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

4.1 Site chronology

The archaeological features discovered at Oxford Road, Bodicote show activity occurring from the Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods. The earliest archaeological remains comprise Iron Age ditches. There is a suggestion of a Roman presence by sherds of Roman pottery although no features are assigned to this period. The main phase of activity took place during the Saxon period and comprised sunken feature buildings, post-built structures, ditches and pits. Six pits containing cremated bone were also identified though these are undated. See Appendix 1 for detailed site chronology by area.

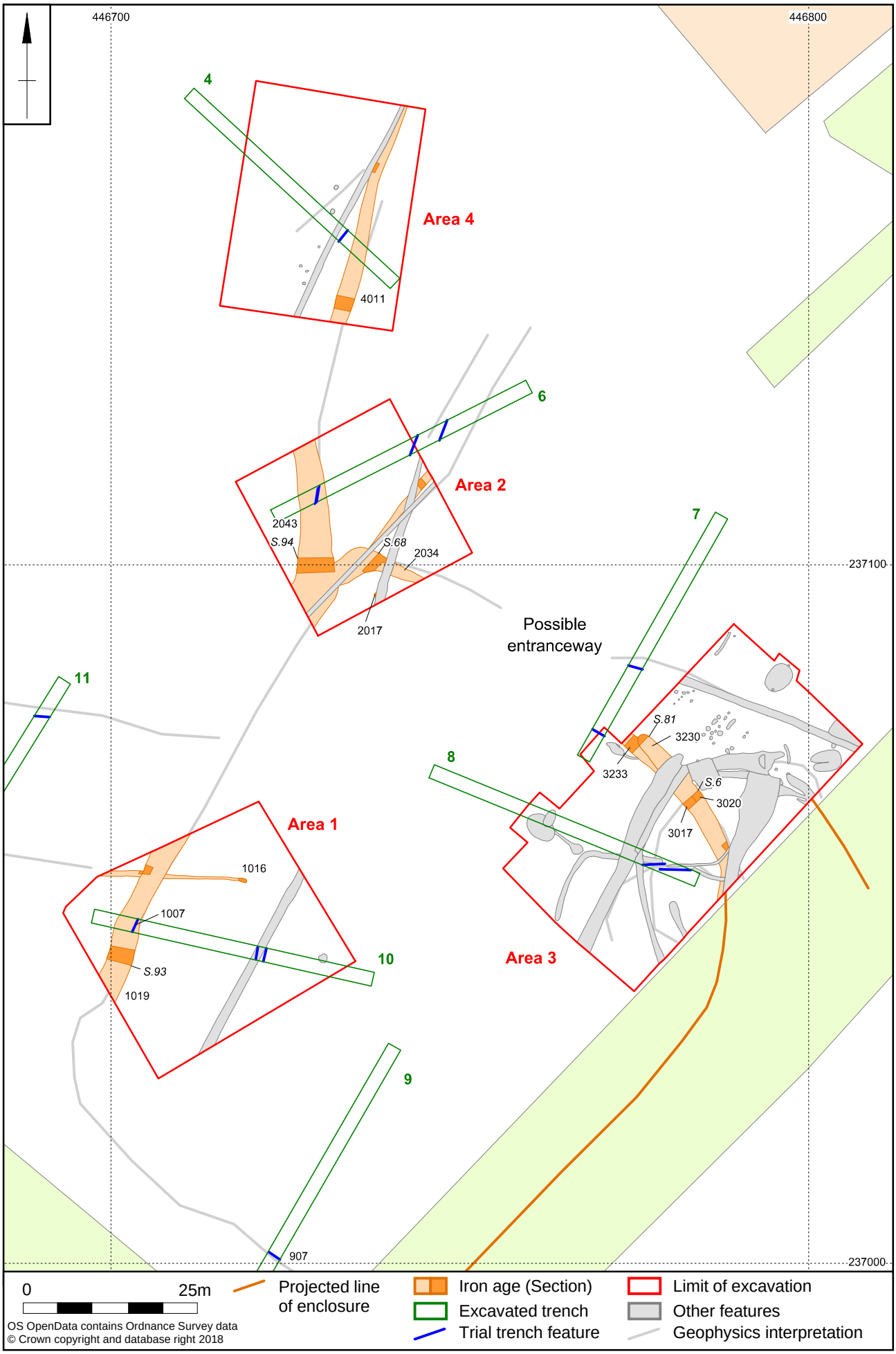
4.2 Iron Age

Activity during this phase comprised ditches that had previously been identified in both the geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation. Evidence for the earliest earlier enclosure system comprises a ditch that is assigned on stratigraphic evidence as it is truncated by subsequent activity (Fig 3). This ditch corresponds to a geophysical anomaly; the survey also identified another parallel feature just to the north which is likely to be another associated ditch.

Sections of the western and north-eastern sides of a large sub-rectangular enclosure were identified in the excavation. There is the suggestion of a north-east entranceway into the enclosure with one of the ditches terminating though no opposing terminal was identified within the limits of the excavation. The only associated feature comprised a single pit which would have been located within the interior of the enclosure.

4.2.1 Enclosure ditches

Substantial ditches [1019/2034/3233] defined part of the north-east and south-west sides of a large enclosure measuring 90m long and 75m wide (Fig 3). Ditch [1019] was aligned north-east to south-west and was visible for 25m defining the western limit of the enclosure. It was 3.50m wide and 2m deep with asymmetrical steep sides and a flattish base. Ditches [2034]/[3233] was aligned north-west to south-east and extended 75m to the south-east with a possible entranceway suggested by a terminal. To the north-west the ditch was 2.75m wide and 1.65m deep with steep sides and a flattish base (Fig 4). The southern limit of the enclosure was also identified in Trench 9 where it was 4.72m wide and at least 1m deep. It was infilled with a sequence of fills derived from natural silting, erosion of the edges while the ditch was open and backfilled material. A single sherd of Iron Age pottery and several worked flints were recovered from the upper fill.

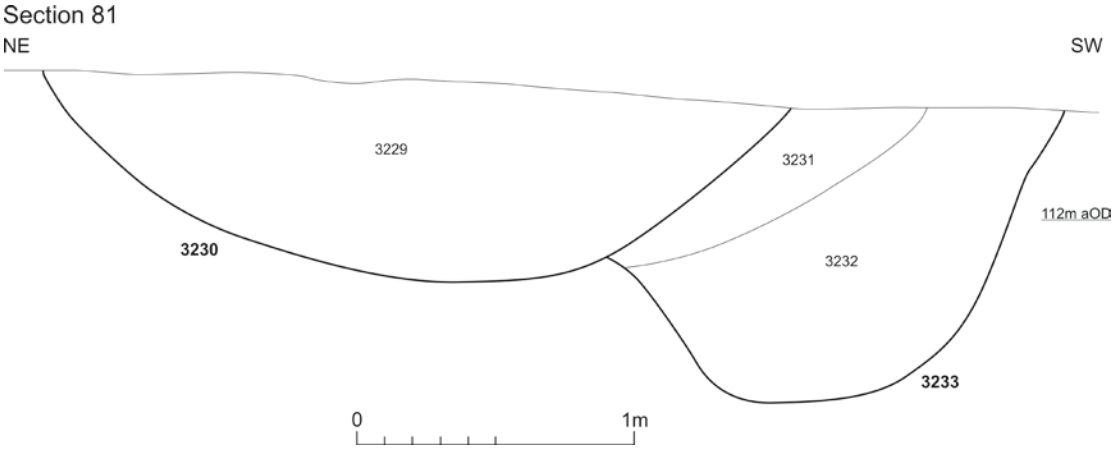


Scale 1: 750

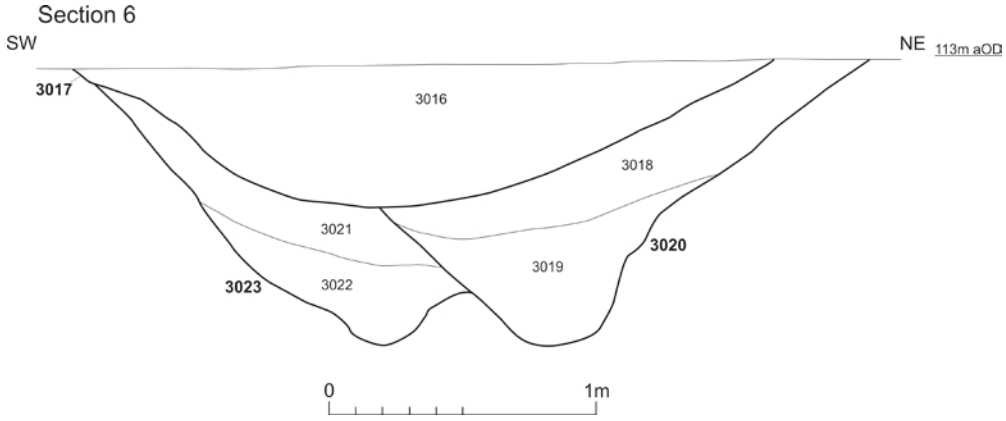
Plan of Iron Age features Fig 4

Ditch [2034], looking south-east Fig 4

To the south-east the ditch was *c*2m wide and 1.10m deep with a steep sided concave profile and flattish base. There was evidence for re-cutting of this part of the ditch with the original ditch [3233] being re-cut by ditch [3230] (Fig 5). To the south-east, the original ditch and re-cut was truncated by a third modification [3017] though this was not as substantial as the previous ditches (Fig 6). However, this would suggest that this enclosure ditch was likely maintained over a significant period of time. The infilling of the final re-cut [3017] contained 13 sherds of Iron Age pottery and a small assemblage of animal bone. All of these ditches were truncated by Saxon and medieval activity.



Section of ditches [3233] and [3230], looking south-east Fig 5



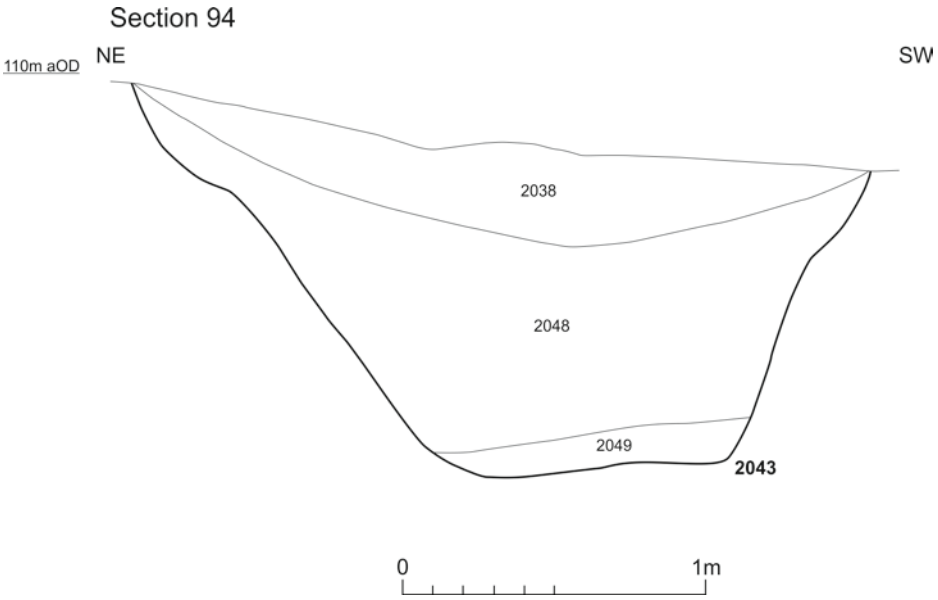
Section of ditch [3023], re-cut [3020] and final re-cut [3017], looking north-east
Fig 6

4.2.2 Other ditches

The earliest ditch [1016] to be identified was aligned east to west and visible for 22m (Fig 3). It terminated to the east and continued beyond the western baulk. It was 0.50m wide and 0.23m deep shallowing to 0.10m at the terminal with a concave profile and flattish base (Fig 7). This ditch was identified as a geophysical anomaly and also in the trench evaluation. A parallel ditch just to the north of it was investigated during the previous works which also corresponded to an anomaly. It was found to be 0.49m wide and 0.17m deep. No finds were recovered.

Ditch [1016], looking north-west Fig 7

A sinuous ditch [2043/4011] aligned north-east to south-west was visible for 75m and abutted the western side of the enclosure (Fig 3). This was a substantial ditch between 3.50m and 4.90m wide and 1.30m to 2.20m deep with asymmetrical steep sides and a flattish base (Fig 8). Initial infilling comprised light brown grey to orange brown clay that likely derived from natural erosion of the sides. Overlying this was an upper fill of mid grey brown silty clay occasional charcoal flecks from which a very small quantity of worked flint and animal bone was recovered.



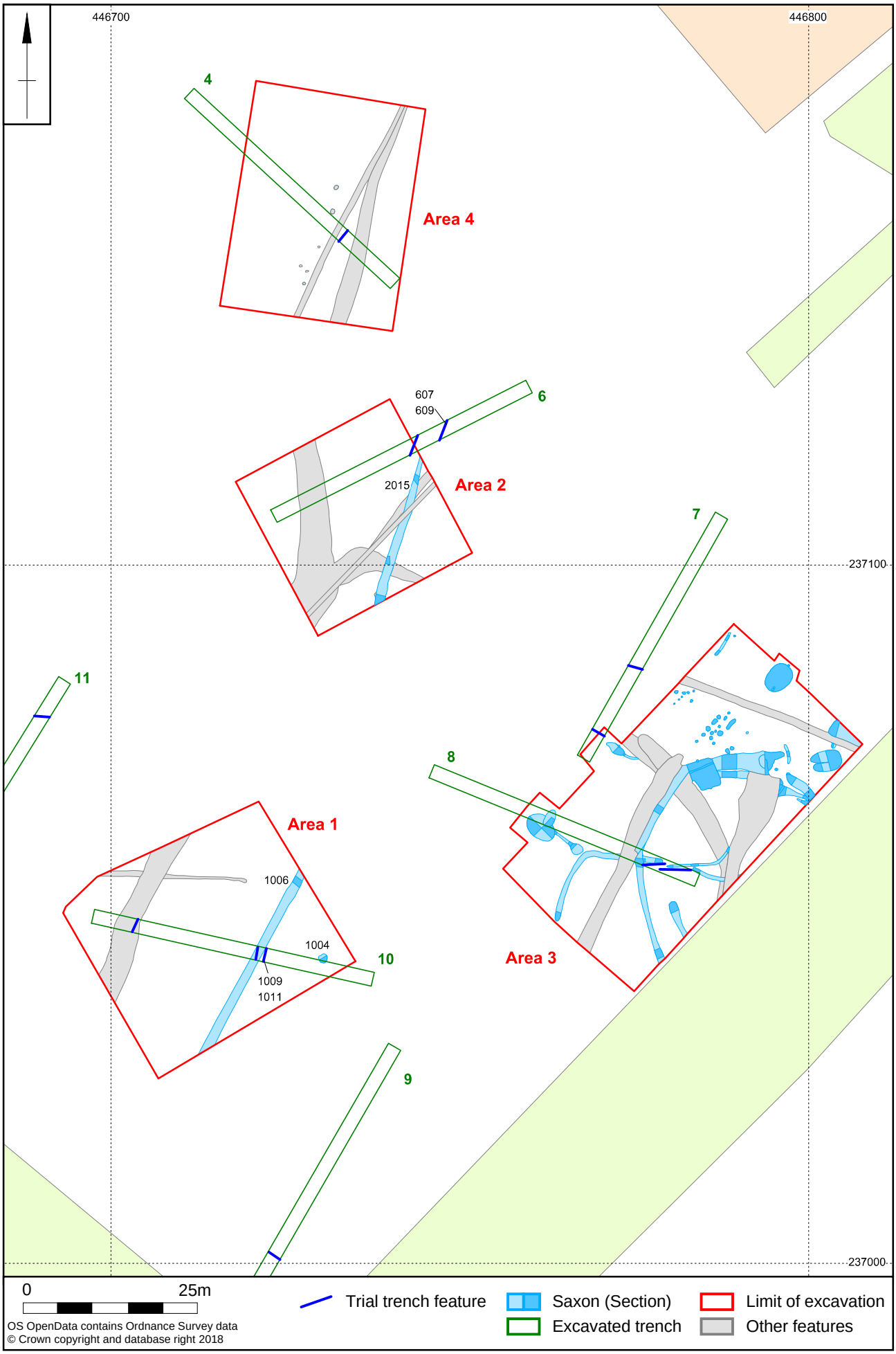
Section of ditch [2043], looking north Fig 8

Located *c*8m to the east was a smaller ditch [2012] orientated north-east to south-west (Fig 3). It was visible for 14m as it continued beyond the north-eastern excavation limit and may have abutted the enclosure ditch to the south-west. The ditch was *c*1.0m wide and 0.70m deep with a stepped U-shaped profile. It was infilled with mid brown grey sandy clay naturally derived lower fills overlain by upper red brown silty clay fills, none of which contained any artefacts (Fig 9). There was evidence for a recut [2006] that was 0.70m wide and 0.50m deep with a similar profile to the original ditch though more regular. A single worked flint was recovered from the lower fill of the re-cut.

Ditch [2012] and re-cut [2006] also showing shallower Saxon ditch [2015], looking south-west Fig 9

4.2.3 Pit

The only other contemporary feature within the enclosure was pit [2017] which would have been located within the interior of the enclosure, just 4m from the corner of the north-west limit. The pit was *c*0.50m in diameter as it was truncated by a Saxon ditch. It was 0.15m deep with a shallow concave profile and flattish base and was infilled with mid grey brown silty clay which contained no artefacts.



Scale 1: 750

Plan of Saxon features Fig 10

Scale 1:200 (A3)

446750

446800

237250

3080
3078
3235
3101
S.31
3088
S.27
3072
3068
3070
3074
3099
3066
3064
3076
3062
Post-medieval
3212
3113
3107
3249
3109
3111
3195
3115
3201
3203
3117
3215
3207
3205
3211
3209
3253
3255
S.65
3175
3050
3054
3169
3094
3098
3121
3124
S.42
3011
3051
3181
S.13
3133
S.32
3035
3033
Furrow
Furrow
Entrance
3147
3162
3193
3158
3047
3015
S.5
3137
3237
3027
3135
3007
3039
3004

0
10m

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Saxon (Section)
Limit of excavation
Other features

Close up of Saxon features

Fig 11

4.3 Saxon

A small assemblage of Roman pottery was recovered from ditches assigned to the Saxon period indicating that there that was some nearby activity although no features can be definitively assigned to a Roman phase. The main Saxon activity comprised three sunken feature buildings with a possible fourth, two post-built structures and a series of associated ditches and pits (Fig 10). High quantities of cereal remains suggest that one of the sunken feature buildings and a nearby post-built structure were associated with agricultural processes. The ditches formed an enclosure which one of the sunken feature buildings was situated on the edge of while the others lay just outside and likely functioned as an associated stock enclosure. Further ditches were located to the west may be the remnants of a droveway or boundary ditch on the western edge of the settlement.

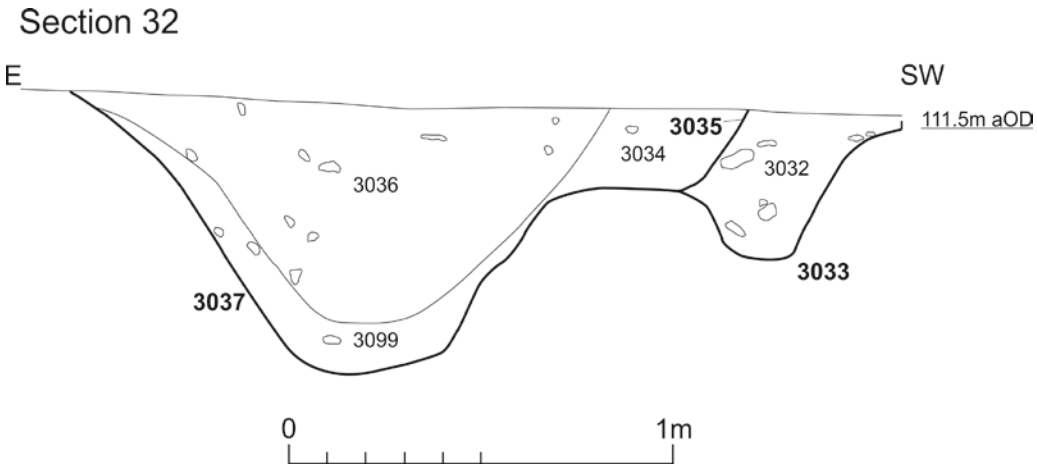
4.3.1 Ditches

A north-east to south-west aligned ditch [1006]/[2015] was identified that was visible for 90m before continuing beyond the excavation limits (Fig 10). It was *c*1.0m wide and generally 0.30m deep with a steep concave profile and base. Although no datable artefacts were recovered, part of the ditch truncated the Iron Age ditches (Fig 3). The ditch was infilled with mid red brown silty clay that contained a small assemblage of animal bone.

A series of ditches were identified close to the south-east excavation limit with several continuing beyond the baulk. Some of the ditches truncated the Iron Age enclosure ditch while others were truncated by furrows (Fig 11). These ditches defined the northern and western limits of a possible enclosure with associated internal ditches. Curvilinear ditch [3027] defined the western side of the enclosure. It was aligned south-east to north-west and appeared to abut perpendicular ditch [3015] before continuing on the other side where it was truncated by a furrow. The northern extent of the ditch appeared to terminate adjacent to SFB [3181] while to the south it continued beyond the excavation limit. It was *c*0.90m wide and up to 0.40m deep with a rounded V-shaped profile (Fig 12). Its mid grey orange silty clay infilling contained sherds of Saxon pottery and animal bone.

Ditch [3051] along with ditches [3035] and [3033] defined the northern side of the possible enclosure. Ditch [3051] was aligned east to west and was visible for 6m. To the west it appeared to abut SFB [3181] and to the east it was obscured by a furrow but part of its terminal could be seen just beyond. To the east of this were ditches [3035] and [3033]. Ditch [3033] was the earliest in the sequence and was truncated by ditch [3035] which was itself cut by ditch [3037], the latter being the most substantial (Fig 13). Two of the ditches [3037] and [3033] terminated within the area and it is presumed that the third ditch [3035] also terminated but this was obscured by a furrow though it was not seen extending beyond it. The terminals of ditches [3051] and [3033] may have defined an original north-east entranceway into the enclosure that was 3m wide. All of these ditches continued beyond the eastern excavation limit and were between 0.55m and 1.40m wide and 0.40m to 0.70m deep with rounded U-shaped profiles and flattish bases. They were infilled with mid grey brown clay from which a moderate quantity of animal bone was recovered along with a small assemblage of Saxon pottery as well as two residual sherds of Roman pottery which may be an indication that one of these ditches originated earlier than the Saxon activity.

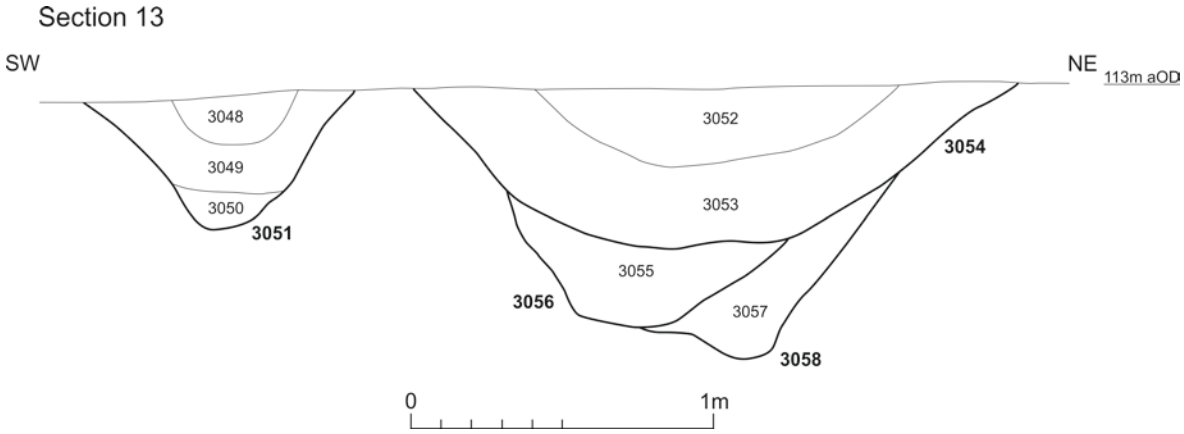
Ditch [3027], looking north-east Fig 12



Section of ditches [3037], [3035] and [3033], looking south-east Fig 13

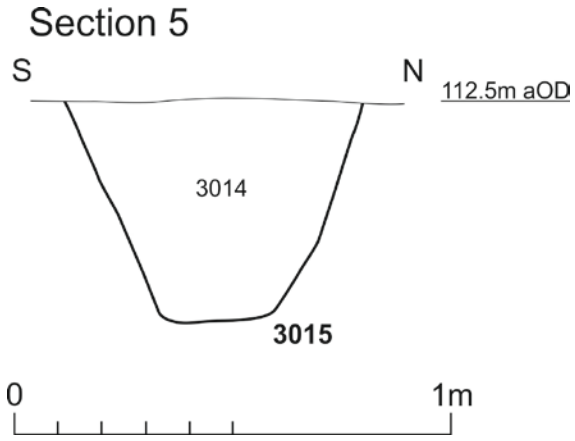
Ditch [3054], along with opposing ditch [3037] is a re-cut of the northern side of the enclosure. Although obscured by a furrow it is likely that its eastern terminal defined an entranceway more than 2m wide into the enclosure. As with parallel ditch [3051] its relationship to the SFB [3181] is unclear. There was evidence for an original ditch [3058] and two re-cuts [3056] and [3054] indicating that some of these ditches were modified and maintained over a significant period of time. The original ditch [3058] was at least 2m wide and 0.90m wide with a steep sided profile and slightly concave base (Fig 14). The first re-cut [3056] was very similar in size and profile to the original while the final re-cut was shallower though slightly wider with more of a concave

profile that was not as steep as the previous ditches. It had a pit cut into its upper fill that contained artefacts dating to the Saxon period.



Section of ditches [3058], [3056] and [3054], looking west Fig 14

On the southern side of the curvilinear enclosure, ditch [3015/3039] was aligned south-west to north-east before turning to the east and was visible for 20m (Fig 11). Where it turned at the corner it respected a drip gully associated with SFB [3193]. The ditch was generally 0.70m wide and *c*0.50m deep with a V-shaped profile and flat base (Fig 15). It terminated at either end with the eastern terminal forming a gap of *c*1m with the opposing terminal of ditch [3237]. This ditch was aligned east to west before turning to the north-east where it truncated the earlier Iron Age boundary ditch. Its continuation was then obscured by a furrow until it was located further to the north. This ditch was between 0.20m and 0.40m wide and up to 0.20m deep with a concave profile. No artefacts were recovered from the sterile mid grey brown silty clay infilling of these ditches.



Section of ditch [3015], looking west Fig 15

In the southern part of the enclosure, two internal ditches [3007] and [3135] were identified extending out from the south-east excavation limit before terminating to the north-east. Their opposing terminals created an entranceway 4m wide. Ditch [3007] was visible for 2m and was *c*1m wide and up to 0.60m deep with a V-shaped sides and a flat base (Fig 16). Curvilinear ditch [3135] was orientated east to north-west for 3m before terminating just before ditch [3237] leaving a small gap of 0.50m. It was 0.50m wide and 0.30m deep with steep sides and a flattish base. The sole infilling of these ditches contained small quantities of animal bone.

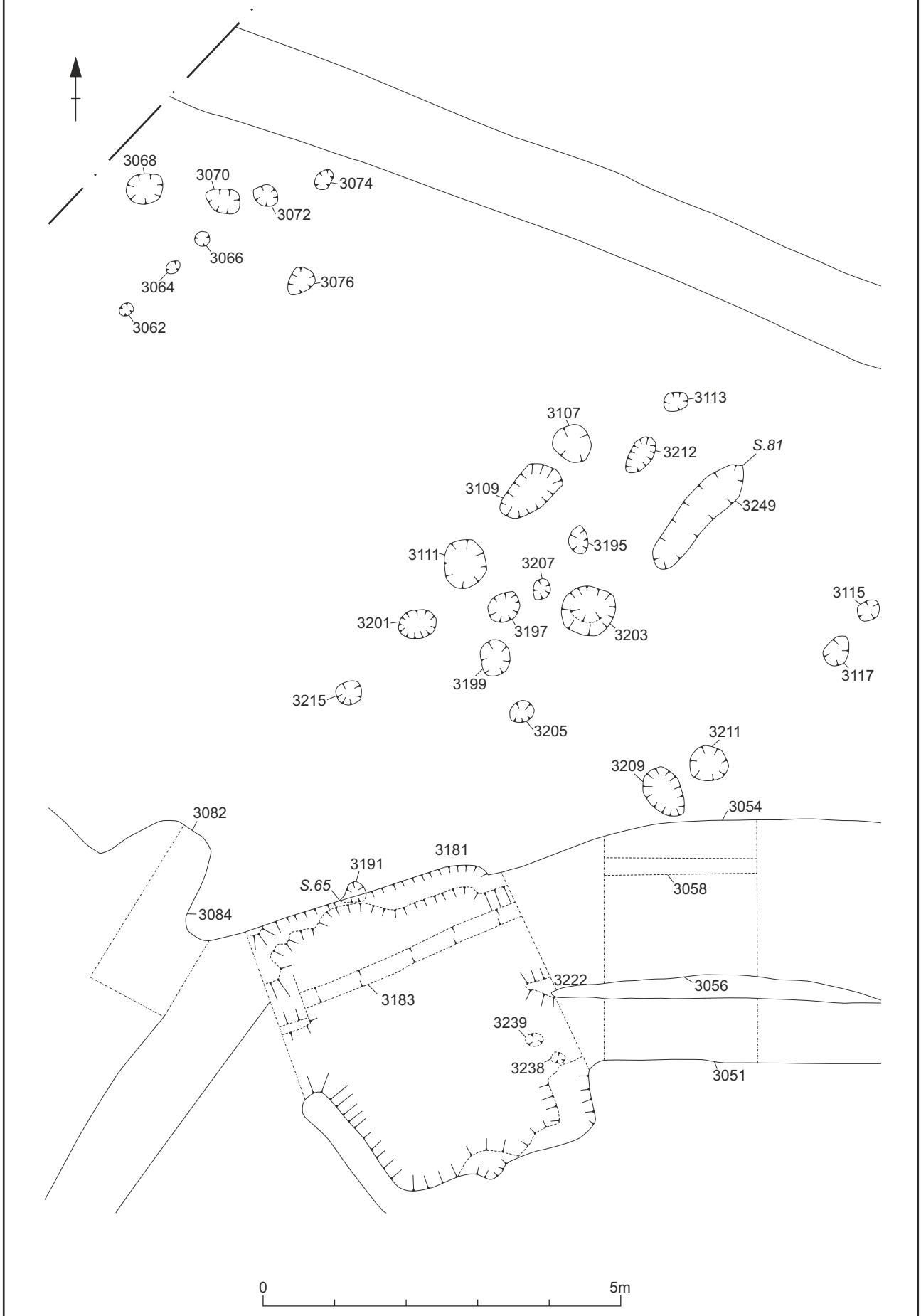
Ditch [3007], looking south-east Fig 16

4.3.1 Sunken feature buildings

Three sunken feature buildings with a possible fourth were identified (Fig 11). One of the SFB's [3181] was sub-rectangular in plan, while the remaining three were oval to sub-rectangular. They were of a similar size and depth with the exception of [3181] which had a more substantial layout in depth and profile than the others.

SFB [3181] was located towards the centre and comprised a sub-rectangular shaped pit (Fig 17). It measured *c*4.20m north to south by *c*3.2m east to west and was up to 0.65m deep with steep sides that were stepped and a flat base (Figs 18 and 19). It truncated the earlier Iron Age ditches and appeared to be sited on the northern edge of the circular ditched enclosure with contemporary ditches on either side. Two postholes were identified one on the south-east side and another on the north-west side. They were *c*0.40m in diameter and up to 0.30m deep. A large flat stone slab was located adjacent to two further internal postholes.

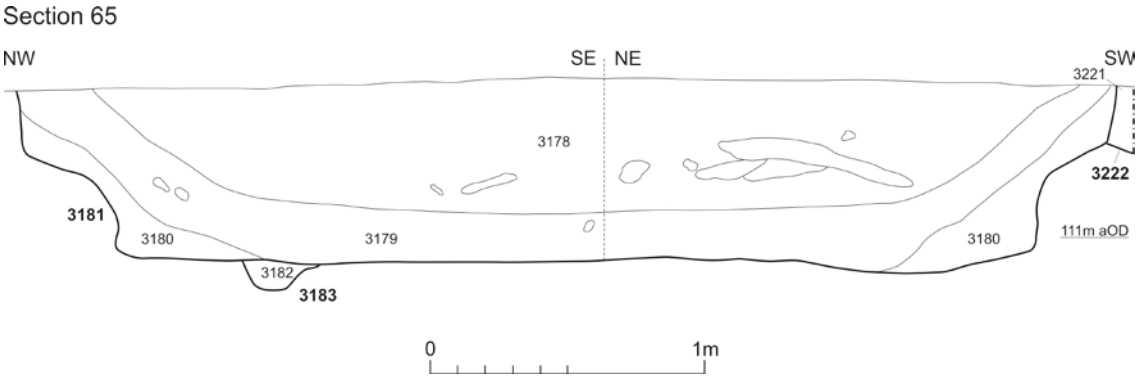
A naturally derived mid blue brown clay lower fill was located on the edges of the structure that contained a sherd of early to middle Saxon pottery and fragments of animal bone. Overlying this, the two upper fills comprised dark black brown clay silt that contained three sherds (47g) of early to middle Saxon pottery, a moderate assemblage of animal bone and one complete double-sided antler comb <SF16> (Fig 20) and part of a connecting-plate from another <SF 17> together with a wool-comb tooth and a nail <SF23> all typical of the 7th to 8th century mid Saxon period. Samples taken produced high quantities of grains consisting of bread wheat type grains and barley with the latter probably associated with brewing or possibly fodder.



Scale 1:75

Plan of SFB [3181] and post-built structures Fig 17

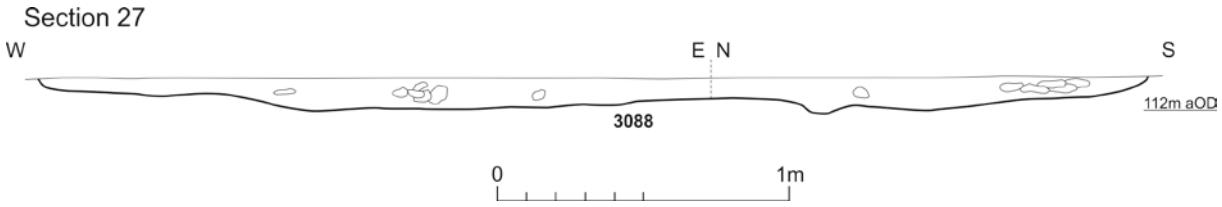
SFB [3181], looking north-east Fig 18



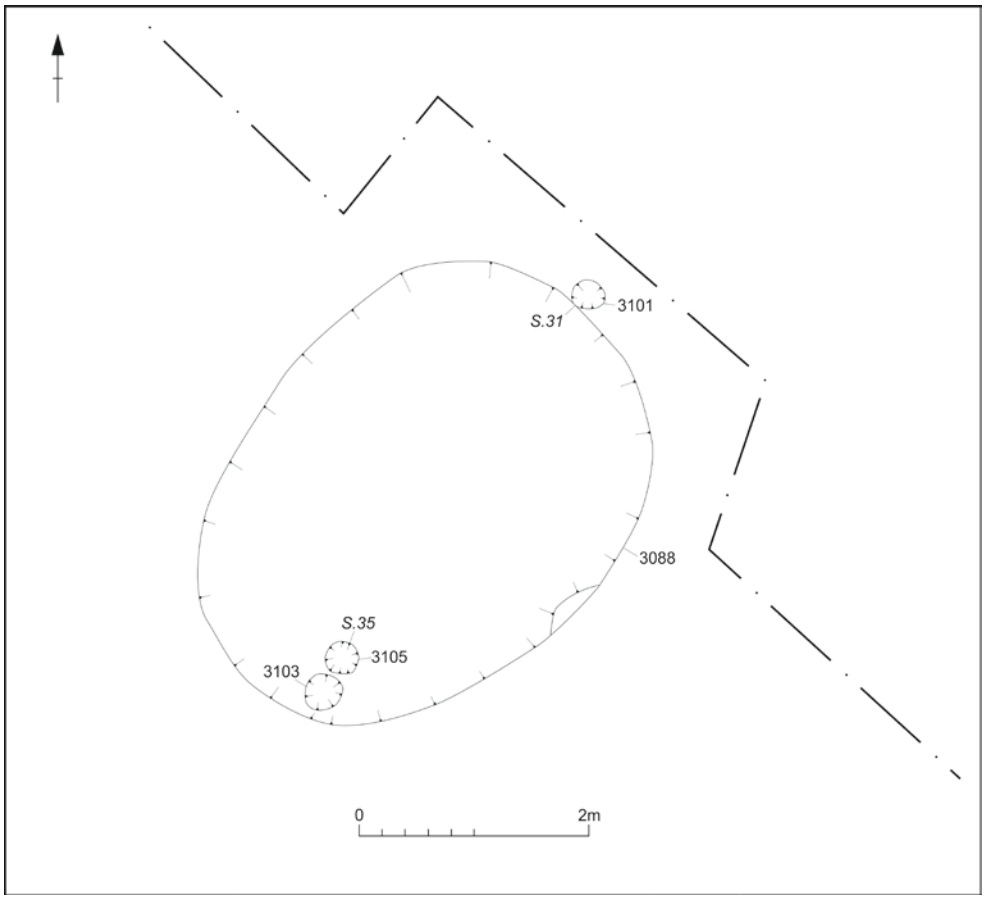
Section of SFB [3181] Fig 19

Comb SF 16, during excavation Fig 20

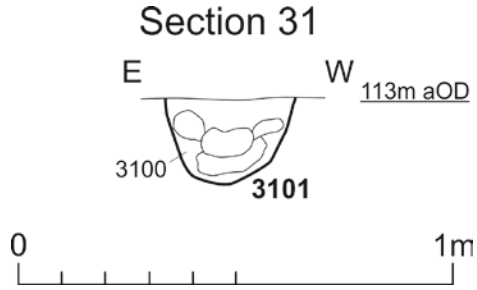
SFB [3088] was located adjacent to the north-east excavation limit and was aligned north-east to south-west. It was oval-shaped and measured 3.10m by 2.95m and 0.12m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base (Fig 21). Within the base there was evidence for postholes in the south-west half and another situated just beyond the north-east edge (Fig 22). The latter was a fairly substantial posthole [3101] being 0.40m in diameter and 0.25m deep with near vertical sides and a slightly concave base (Fig 23). It contained the remnants of stone packing material. A copper alloy hooked tag <SF15> dated to AD 650-1200 and a bone awl/needle <SF14> along with fragments of animal bone were recovered from the mid grey brown silty clay backfill. No pottery was recovered from the SFB. Sample 4 taken from the backfill of the sunken feature building contained moderate quantiles of grains including barley and bread wheat type.



Section of SFB [3088], looking north and east Fig 21



Plan of SFB [3088], fully excavated Fig 22



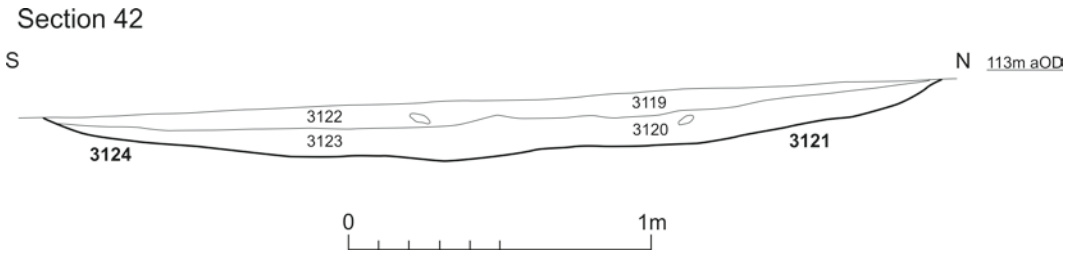
Section of posthole [3101], looking south Fig 23

SFB [3164] was adjacent to the south-western baulk and aligned north-west to south-east (Fig 24). It was oval in plan, 3.50m by 2.50m and up to 0.30m deep with steep sides and a flattish base. No postholes were identified within the base and it contained deposits of mid to dark orange grey silty clay which contained no artefacts. On the south-east side of the SFB was a shallow gully [3158] that may have acted as a drainage gully. It was visible for 2.50m on a north-west to south-east alignment before terminating to the south-east. The gully was *c*0.20m wide and 0.20m deep with a rounded v-shaped profile though it widened at the terminal [3047] to 0.70m and was 0.30m deep. No pottery was recovered from the infilling. On the north-east side of the SFB was a presumed pit [3162]. It was oval in plan, *c*2.50m in diameter and 0.25m

deep with a similar profile and infilling to the SFB and it is likely that it is associated with the structure rather than a separate feature.

SFB [3164], looking north-west Fig 24

Another presumed SFB [3121] was located in the eastern corner of Area 3, 10m from SFB [3088] and aligned roughly east to west (Fig 11). It was defined by a pit that was broadly oval in plan, 3.90m by 1.70m and up to 0.20m deep with concave sides and a flat base. However, the western side comprised two elongated ovals which were thought to be two separate pits though it is likely that this was all part of the same feature. Two thin deposits of mid yellow brown sandy clay overlain by mid red brown silty clay contained a single pottery sherd and a small animal bone assemblage (Fig 25).



Section of presumed SFB [3121], looking east Fig 25

4.3.3 Post-built structures

Immediately to the north of SFB [3181] were two clusters of postholes that defined post-built structures (Fig 17). The westernmost set of postholes was adjacent to the excavation limit and comprised a total of eight postholes (Fig 26). Six of these seemed to form a central row aligned north-east to south-west over a distance of 4m. They were spaced between 0.50m and 1m apart (centre point) with one being slightly offset which may have been a replacement. They ranged between 0.20m and 0.35m in diameter and 0.10m to 0.15m deep with steep sides and either concave or flattish bases. One of the postholes contained the remnants of ironstone packing material. Two larger postholes were positioned one on either side of the central row. They were *c*0.50m in diameter and up to 0.35m with similar profiles. All of the postholes were infilled with mid grey orange silty clay from which a single sherd of Saxon pottery was recovered.

Postholes defining a small post-built structure, looking south-east Fig 26

Located 4m to the south-east was another concentration of postholes that seemed to define a rectangular post-built structure 7m long and 5m wide (Fig 17). It consisted of seventeen postholes and an elongated pit in four rows, (two central and two outer) aligned north-east to south-west. Larger gaps on the north-east and south-west sides may have defined entranceways into the structure. The two central rows were made up of six postholes spaced *c*1m apart. They were generally smaller than the postholes in the two outer rows being *c*0.30m in diameter and up to 0.20m deep. Aligned with these were two further postholes and what appeared to be an elongated pit. The northern outer row comprised five postholes generally spaced 1m apart. They were 0.40m to 0.70m in diameter and 0.15m to 0.30m deep (Fig 27).

One of the postholes [3109] in the northern outer row of the post-built structure
Fig 27

Four further postholes defined the southern outer row also orientated north-east to south-west. They were between 0.30m and 0.60m in diameter and up to 0.40m deep. Several of the postholes produced samples containing high concentrations of barley and cereal grains similar to those recovered from sunken feature building [3181] which was located adjacent to this structure. The postholes were infilled with mid yellow brown silty clay. Saxon pottery sherds were also recovered from one of the postholes along with a small assemblage of animal bone.

4.3.4 Pits

A large sub-circular pit [3169] was cut into enclosure ditch [3056] (Fig 11). It was 2m in diameter and 0.60m deep with concave sides and base. It had been used as a rubbish pit as it was deliberately backfilled following the accumulation of an initial natural basal fill and some redeposited natural. Artefacts included several nails, a knife and the highest numbers of animal bone to be recovered from a single feature.

An elongated oval pit [3253] was located close to the centre of the north-west baulk. It was 3m long and 1.20m wide and 0.50m deep with steep sides and a concave base. On its south-eastern side was a small gully *c*0.25m wide and up to 0.20m deep with a rounded V-shaped profile. The pit may have been used for clay extraction perhaps in use with the construction of the nearby SFBs and the gully may have been an associated drainage feature. A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from the dark grey brown silty clay infilling of the pit.

Further possible quarry pits [3094] and [3098] were located in the north-east corner and maybe associated with the construction of the SFBs (Fig 28). Pit [3094] was more than 2m long and its continuation lay beyond the site's baulk. It was 0.50m deep with steep sides and a flat base. The mid grey brown silty clay fill contained a small assemblage of animal bone. A smaller pit was located 1m to the south which was 0.70m in diameter and 0.15m deep steep sides and a flattish base. Both of the pits were truncated by a post-medieval ditch.

Pits [3094] and [3098] truncated by post-medieval ditch [3009] Fig 28

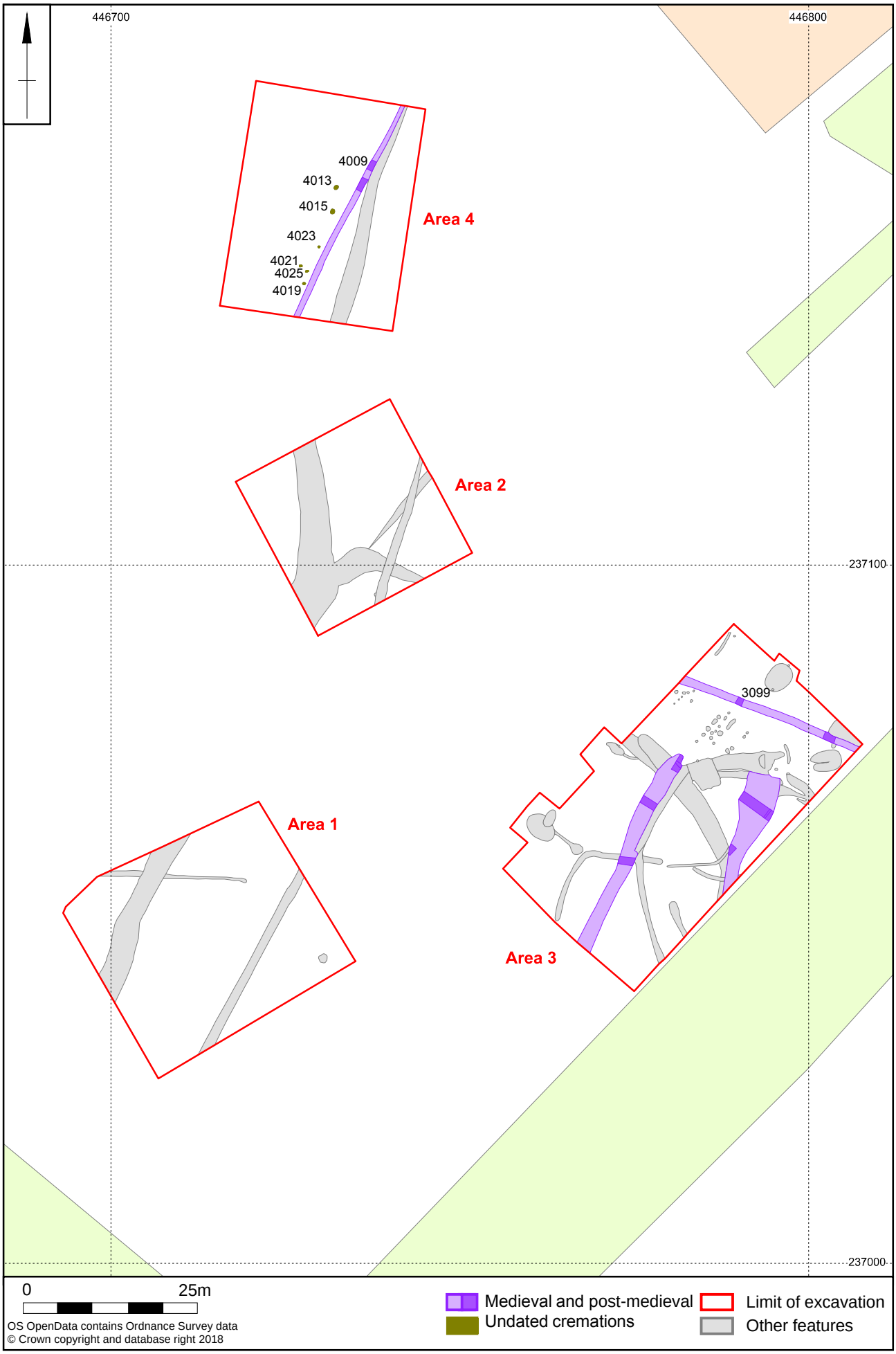
4.4 Undated

4.4.1 Cremations

Located close to the north of the excavation limit were six pits roughly aligned on a north-east to south-west alignment over a distance of 15m (Fig 29). They were found to contain quantities of cremated human bone of which three [4013], [4015] and [4019] contained significant amounts weighing between 45g and 393g. There was no evidence of the bone having being placed in associated vessels and no datable artefacts were recovered. The pits were *c*0.50m in diameter and up to 0.20m deep with steep sides and flat bases. Three further smaller pits [4021], [4023] and [4025] were 0.30m to 0.40m in diameter and no more than 0.10m deep with similar concave profiles. They contained very small quantities of bone weighing between 0.7g and 2.7g and it is unclear if it was deliberately placed material, possible token deposits or merely the effects of disturbance from the other nearby cremations.

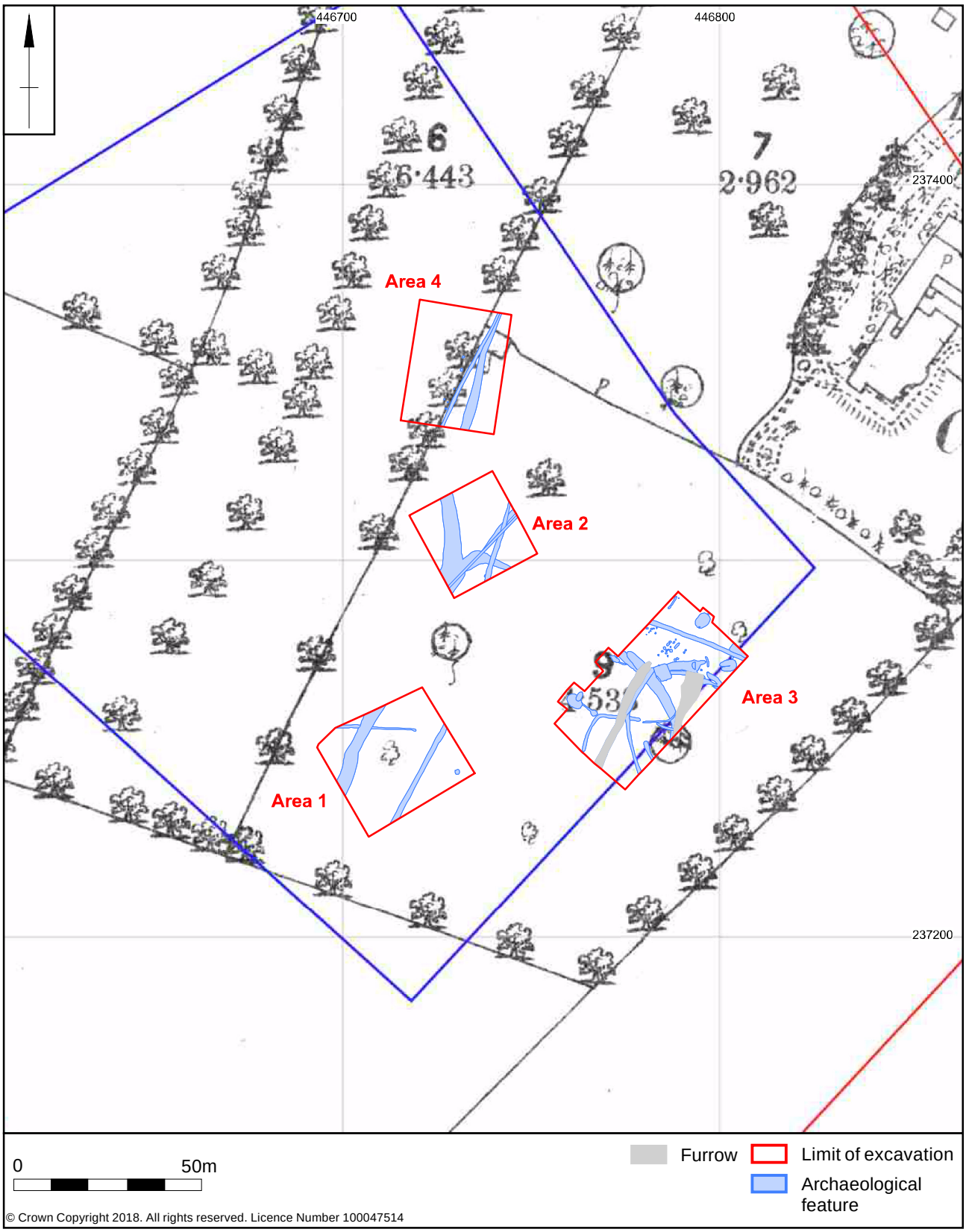
4.5 Post-medieval

Two ditches were identified that truncated the earlier Iron Age and Saxon activity and contained post-medieval pottery (Fig 29). One of the ditches [4009] aligned north-east to south-west corresponds to a boundary shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 30). It was 0.70m wide and up to 0.15m deep with a concave profile and flattish base. The infilling contained a single sherd of post-medieval pottery which was recovered from its dark yellow grey clay silt infilling. Ditch [3009] was orientated north-west to south-east and truncated the Saxon quarry pits [3094/3098]. It was 0.90m wide and 0.20m deep and truncated two pits. A sherd of 18th century pottery weighing 6g was recovered from the fill.



Scale 1: 750

Plan of medieval and post-medieval features Fig 29



Scale 1: 1500 Archaeological features overlying 1881 Ordnance Survey map Fig 30

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Worked flint by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

In total 25 pieces of worked flint were recovered. They included 19 flakes, two miscellaneously retouched flakes, three scrapers and one core fragment. All of the worked flint was recovered from ditches with the majority coming from ditches in assigned to either the Bronze Age or Iron Age phases (Table 1). During the preceding trial trenching evaluation, 56 pieces of worked flint was recovered dating broadly Neolithic to early Bronze Age. However, the majority of the assemblage was recovered from topsoil deposits with only three flakes and one blade recovered from ditches. The assemblage was dominated by flakes, flake/blade ration 45:9 (Wolframm-Murray 2014). Similarly scraper fragments and miscellaneously retouched flakes were recovered from the evaluation to the north (Wolframm-Murray 2010). The early Neolithic component was not as well represented beyond a soft hammer struck flake, whereas the evaluation assemblage revealed two serrated blades.

Table 1: Quantification of worked flint by context

Cut/Fill	Feature	Flake Whole/Fragment	Backed flakes	Scrapers Whole/Fragment	Core
2006/2005	Ditch	1			
2034/2022	Ditch	7	1		
2043/2038	Ditch	2	1	1	
3086/3085	Ditch	2		1	
3233/3231	Ditch	4			1
3233/3232	Ditch	2		1	
4005/4004	Ditch	1			
4009/4008	Ditch	1			
Total		**19**	**2**	**3**	**1**

The condition of the artefacts was good post-depositional damage consisting of occasional nicks to the edges. Patination was present on five pieces, one was white and the other pieces ranged from a partially patination to a full blue-white discolouration of the surface.

The quality of raw material was generally good. The flint was vitreous of mostly medium to dark grey to grey-brown colour, or a mid to light grey opaque flint. A mostly light to mid brown or occasional mid to dark brown, coloured cortex was present on eight pieces. The raw material is likely to have derived from fluvial and glacial sources.

One core fragment was present in ditch [3233]; the flake was detached at a right angle to the striking platform of the core. The assemblage was dominated by flakes, comprising 19 flakes of which eight were broken. Two flakes had miscellaneous retouched flakes, in both instances one lateral edge was backed with abrupt retouch. On one of the flakes the opposing lateral edge showed signs of utilisation.

Retouched tool forms are represented by one scraper from ditch [3233] and two scraper fragments from ditches [2043] and [3086]. The side scraper is retouched down one lateral edge of the distal portion of a flake. From one scraper fragment the semi-abruptly retouch convex distal end remains and from the other scraper fragment the abruptly retouched proximal end remains. The latter may have been a discoidal scraper.

The technological characteristics suggest a background scatter of broadly Neolithic to early Bronze Age date. This can be noted by the scrapers, the cores and the discoidal scraper. The general characteristics of the waste flakes and blades are contemporary.

5.2 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 77 sherds with a total weight of 633g. It consisted of a mixture of Prehistoric, Roman, early/middle Saxon and post-medieval material. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Prehistoric

Flint-tempered (FL) and shelly (SH) fabric types were identified which are typical of prehistoric pottery in the region. One large shelly sherd had a finger-tipped horizontal applied cordon with an incised, angular, zig-zag below, a decorative scheme which is typical of the Deverel-Rimbury tradition of the middle Bronze Age (Knight 2002, fig. 12.3). A flint-tempered sherd may be of a similar date, but could be as late as the early Iron Age. The sherds of SH from ditch [3017] are all from the same vessel. They are heavily fragmented, and undecorated. They could be of the same date as the decorated sherd, but shelly fabrics were also extremely common in the middle-late Iron Age in the area (e.g. Chapman 2010).

Roman

Nineteen sherds, weighing 144g were recovered from nine contexts located in features towards the south-east excavation limits around SFB [3181] and nearby ditches. The range of fabric types comprised grog-tempered (R90), fine Oxfordshire Reduced wares (R11) and coarse wares (O10) which are typical of sites in the area. Most of the sherds are small and somewhat abraded, other than the group from the sunken feature building [3186], which are all from the same vessel.

Early/middle Saxon

The pottery assemblage comprised 36 sherds weighing 283g with the majority deriving from the sunken feature buildings, associated postholes and ditches. The bulk of the assemblage comprised plain bodysherds, other than a jar rim. One of the sherds from ditch [3053] had fragments of vertical and horizontal lines of punched dots, and another, from ditch [3055] had traces of incised cordons. These are likely to be of early Saxon (5th–7th century) date, as decorated hand-built pottery was extremely rare after that time (Myres 1977). Most of the sherds are relatively small and appear to be the product of secondary deposition.

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	FL		SH		O10		R11		R90		FS		GR		OR		PMR		SWSG		Date
Cut/fill	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	N	W	
2034/2022	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	IA?
3009/3008	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	E18thC
3011/3010	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3017/3016	-	-	13	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	EIA?
3027/3026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3031/3030	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3037/3036	1	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	3	33	1	6	1	11	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3051/3049	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	E/MSax
3054/3053	-	-	-	-	2	16	2	2	-	-	2	40	-	-	1	26	-	-	-	-	ESax
3056/3055	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ESax
3068/3067	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3121/3119	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Rom
3127/3126	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3175/3173	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3181/3178	-	-	-	-	1	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	32	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3181/3179	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3181/3180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	21	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3189/3186	-	-	-	-	7	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3189/3187	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3209/3208	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Rom
3211/3210	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3213/3121	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
3224/3223	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Rom
3233/3232	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	E/MSax
4009/4008	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	16thC
Total	1	4	14	35	11	12	7	16	1	7	18	14	4	10	14	12	1	1	1	6	

5.3 **Small finds** by Tora Hylton

With the exception of a single Roman coin, the excavations produced a small but very interesting group of Saxon/early medieval finds. The majority were recovered from features sited on the eastern side of Area 3, while a further two finds were retrieved from Area 4. In total 20 individual small finds were recovered and the range of objects represented provides a brief insight into the nature of occupation and alludes to some of the activities that would have taken place. The artefactual evidence implies a rural community; however the presence of a silver gilt mount dating to the 8th century (Fig 32) suggests a community with some status. The assemblage includes personal items relating to dress and grooming and task specific tools which provide evidence for textile manufacture and ?leather working.

Table 3: Quantification of small finds

Material	Total
Silver	1
Copper alloy	1
Iron objects	14
Bone/antler	4
Total	20

Roman

A single Roman coin date was recovered from the upper fill of ditch [3037]. The coin is illegible and dates to the 1st-2nd century (pers.com. Nina Crummy).

Saxon and early medieval finds

The majority of finds were retrieved from Saxon/medieval deposits and are quantified in Table 4.

Table 4: Quantification of Saxon/medieval finds

Functional Category	Saxon/early medieval features	Medieval/post-medieval features
Personal possessions		
Costume-hooked tag	1	
Toilet equipment - combs	2	
Equipment and furnishings		
Structural nails	3	
Knives	2	
Misc. fittings-silver mount		1
Tools		

Textile working – comb teeth	5
Textile working – pin beater	1
?Leather working - awl	1
Miscellanea	
Iron	2

Personnel Possessions

This category comprises small portable items which would have formed part of a person's clothing (costume fittings) or been held by an individual for personal use (toilet equipment). They were recovered from Sunken Featured Buildings (SFB) and include a hooked tag and two combs

Costume fittings

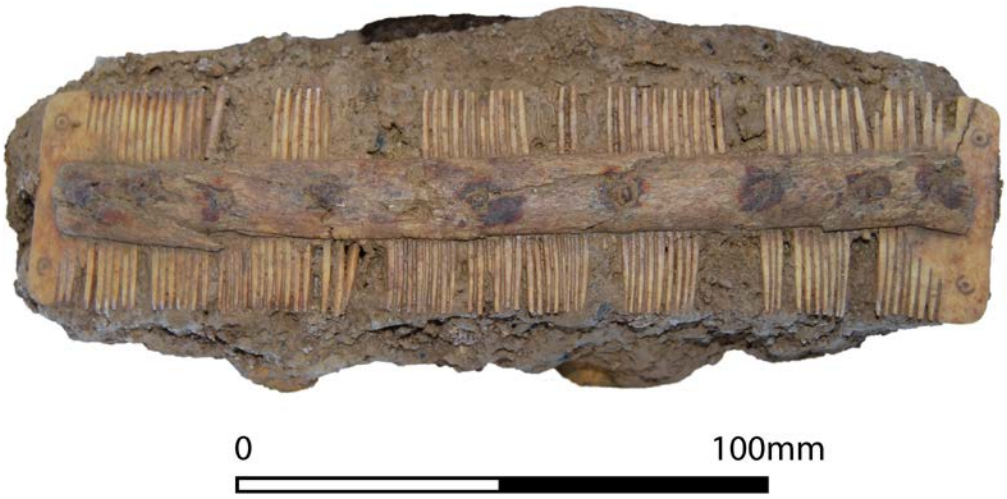
The only small find associated with dress is a copper alloy hooked tag <SF15>, a common class of Anglo-Saxon metalwork (Fig 31). It was recovered from SFB [3088] together with a bone awl/needle <SF14>. The hooked tag has been manufactured from sheet metal; it is triangular in shape with two attachment holes at one end and an integral hook at the other and it is similar in form to examples from Winchester (cf Biddle 1990, fig 148, 413-15). This form of hooked tag, typologically compares to Read's Class A, Type 1 (2008, 9) which dates to *c*AD 650 - 1200. Hooked tags are multi-functional and serve a range of uses, from an attachment for a purse to securing items of clothing (Backhouse and Webster 1991, 235). For a discussion on types and possible uses, see Thomas 2009 (17-22).

SF 15 Hooked tag, copper alloy. Complete. Sheet metal triangular (isosceles) shaped plate with two attachment holes adjacent to corners on short straight edge and an integral hook formed from the pointed end. L: 24mm W: 10.5mm.

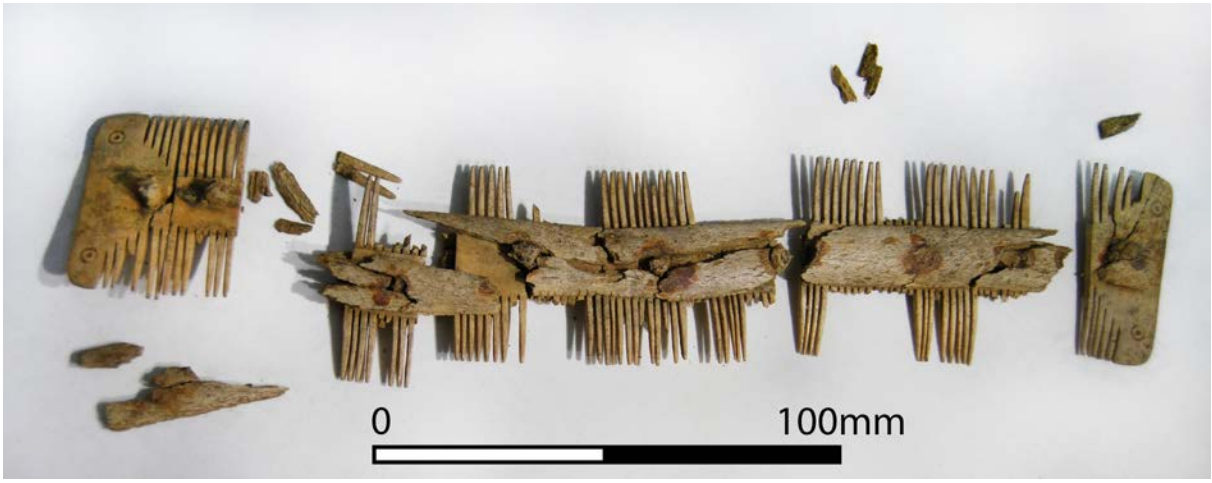
Hooked tag SF 15 Fig 31

Toilet equipment

One complete double-sided composite comb <SF16> and part of a connecting-plate from another <SF 17> were recovered from SFB [3181], together with a wool-comb tooth and a nail <SF23> (same SF number). <SF16> is fairly well preserved. The comb is elongated (L: 185mm) and rather narrow (W:41mm), this together with plain rectangular connecting-plates with squared terminals and a plano-convex cross-section are stylistic traits observed on Saxon combs dating to the 7th and 8th centuries (Dodd 2004, 297).



Comb SF 16, following removal from excavation Fig 32



Comb SF 16, following conservation cleaning Fig 33

Comb antler SF 17 Fig 34

SF 16 Comb, antler. Complete, although some teeth missing. Double-sided composite comb comprising two connecting -plates, two end-plates and *c*5/6 tooth-plates. The tooth-plates and end-plate are held in place by the connecting-plates (one on either side of the comb) and these are, in turn secured by nine iron rivets. The rivets are regularly spaced long the length of the connecting-plate (from each end the measurements are - 10mm between the 1st and 2nd rivet, 15mm between the 2nd and 3rd and 20mm between the centre rivets). The connecting-plate has squared terminals and a plano-convex cross-section; it measures c170mm in length, 9mm wide and *c*3-4mm deep. Tiny ephemeral cut marks on the upper and lower edges of the connecting-plate indicate that the teeth were sawn *in situ*; other than that they are undecorated. The end-plates are square with rounded corners and they are decorated with two ring and dots motifs, one sited in each of the four corners. The teeth cut into the end-plate are graduated; from then on they roughly remain the same length (*c*13-15mm). The comb has differentiated teeth, coarse teeth on one side (*c*5 teeth per 10mm) and fine on the other (*c*7 teeth per 10mm). Comb - L: 185mm W: 41mm Context (3189), SFB [3181].

SF 17 Comb, antler. Two small charred fragments of connecting-plate (do not join) from a double-side composite comb. Plano-convex cross-section, vestige of rivet hole on one piece and saw marks from the cutting of the teeth along one side on each fragment. On each piece the distance between the saw marks is different, 1mm and 1.5mm equating to 6 teeth per 10mm and 7 teeth per 10mm , this perhaps suggests that not only, each fragment represents a different side of the connecting-plate, but also, that the comb had two sizes of teeth. Measurements: 18 x 10 x 4mm; 10 x 7 x 3mm Context (3179), SFB [3181].

Equipment and furnishings

Silver mount

An incomplete cast gilded silver gilt mount of eighth century date was recovered from a furrow overlying the Saxon activity in Area 3, <SF22> (Fig 35). The mount comprises a rectangular plate, convex on the upper face, with a portion of one end missing due to an old break. The complete end has two circular perforations, one upper and one lower, one of which is partially missing along with the outer edge of the mount. It is 20.8mm long, 8.86mm wide, 1.08mm thick and weighs 0.9g.

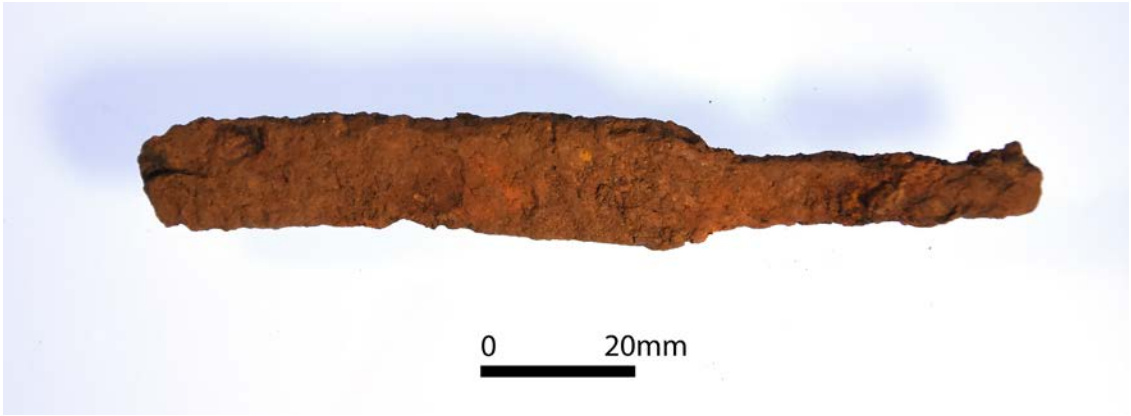
Silver gilt mount SF22 Fig 35

The upper face retains a large amount of gilding and is decorated with an interlacing motif, unclear due to loss and wear but possibly zoomorphic in nature. The mount has a raised, linear outer border and there are five short transverse lines at the complete end, between the perforations. The back of the object is concave and undecorated. The precise function of this object is unclear. However, its decoration compares well with other gilded silver metalwork from the mid Saxon period, ornamented in the so-called 'Mercian Style'.

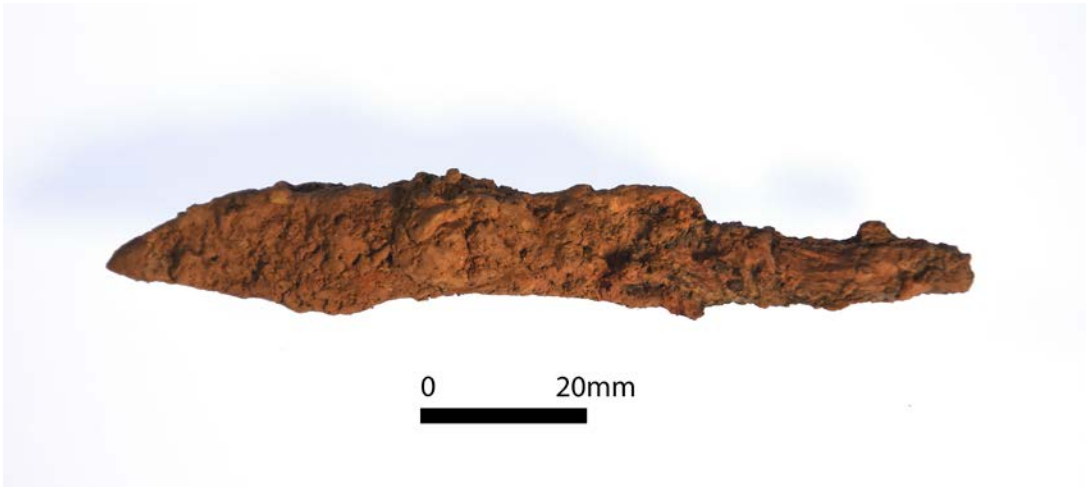
Knives

There are two whittle-tang knives with single-edged blades <SF1> <SF11> and they provide a small sample of the types that would have been in use during the lifetime of the settlement (Fig 36 and 37). Whittle-tang knives terminate in a tapered prong (the tang), on to which a handle of wood, bone or horn would have been hafted. <SF1> was recovered from ditch [3011] and <SF 11> from a pit [3169] which also contained the remains of fibre processing equipment (wool-comb teeth).

The knives represent different forms, based on the alignment of the cutting edge and the back of blade; <SF1> has a blade with a parallel back and cutting edge which tapers to the tip, this type is generally the most common form recovered on excavations of a similar date.. <SF11> is different it has a horizontal back which angles down to the tip of the blade and the cutting edge has a concavity adjacent to the tang, a sign of excessive sharpening. Since this knife was recovered with fibre processing equipment, it is possible that it was used craft activities rather than personal use.



Knife SF 1 Fig 36



Knife SF 11 Fig 37

SF 1 Knife, iron. Incomplete, tip of blade missing. Tang central to blade with sloping shoulder, back of blade and cutting edge parallel then taper to tip; displays signs of sharpening. Knife – L (incomplete): 114mm Blade – L (incomplete): 75mm W: *c*15mm Th: 4mm Tang – L: 39mm Context (3010), Ditch [3011].

SF 11 Knife, iron. Complete. Tang in line with cutting edge, stepped shoulder; back of blade horizontal then angles down to tip, cutting edge adjacent to tang is heavily sharpened creating a concavity; cutting edge adjacent to tip horizontal. Knife – L: 100mm Blade – L: 70mm W(near tip): *c*14 mm W (near tang): 11mm Th: 4mm Tang – L: 30mm Context (3165), Pit [3169].

Tools

The tools represented can be assigned to quite specific processes in the production of textiles, namely, the preparation of fibres to facilitate the spinning of yarn/thread (wool-comb teeth) and weaving (pin beater). In addition there is a pig fibula which may have been utilized as an awl for piercing leather.

Textile manufacture

There are no distinct concentrations of textile equipment which might indicate activity areas, however, three, possibly four wool-comb teeth and a knife with a distinctive blade were recovered from a pit [3169], presumably discarded. The remaining finds were recovered as single finds from the fills SFBs and ditches.

Wool-comb teeth

Four possibly six wool-comb teeth were recovered, 3 from pit (3169) <SF8-10>, 1 from SFB [3181] <SF23> and 2 from ditches [3011] [?fill 3085] <SF 2>, <SF13>. Wool-comb teeth are tapered spikes which would have been used as part of a wool-comb/heckle for preparing and carding, wool and bast fibres prior to spinning into thread. Wool-combs are well known from the 7th and 8th centuries and they comprise a rectangular wooden block which is bound by a perforated iron plate to which two rows of iron spikes were attached. Complete examples of the spikes from Bodicote range in recorded length from 108mm-113mm. They all have rectangular-sectioned terminals which measure c6mm-7mm wide and they taper to circular cross-section shanks (Dia *c*5mm) with a pointed terminal like those illustrated by Walton Rogers (2002, fig 1342, 6599). <SF 9> still retains a vestige of the original iron sheeting (binding) attached to the shank, *c*16mm below the head and indicating how deep the

spikes were pushed into the wooden block. It is more common to find the spikes/teeth from woolcombs or heckles, however, relatively complete examples are known from Coppergate (Ottaway 1992, fig 212, 2273).) and Wolverton Mill, Milton Keynes. For a discussion see Ottaway 1992, 538-40.

Pin beater

Pin beaters would have been used during the process of weaving to separate coarse threads that catch on each other when the shed is changed. Only one example is represented, a double-pointed pin beater <SF 32>for use with a warp weighted loom (Fig 38). It was recovered from the fill of a ditch [3051]. Although incomplete, only the terminals survive, this example would have measured in excess of 130mm in length.

Pin beater SF 32 Fig 38

SF 8 Comb tooth, iron. Complete. Tapered spike with circular cross-section, terminating in a rectangular-sectioned head. L: 108mm Dia (shank) : 5mm Dia (head): 6mm Context (3165), Pit [3169].

SF 9 Comb tooth, iron. Incomplete, point of tooth missing. Tapered spike with circular cross-section, terminating in a rectangular-sectioned head. Vestige of iron sheeting attached to the shank c. 16mm below the head. L (incomplete): 64mm Dia (shank) : 4mm Dia (head): 7mm Context (3165), Pit [3169].

SF 10 Comb tooth, iron. Incomplete, tip of spike missing. Tapered spike with circular cross-section, terminating in a rectangular-sectioned head. L (incomplete): 100mm Dia (shank) : 5mm Dia (head): 6mm Context (3165), Pit [3169].

SF 23 Comb tooth, iron. Complete but damaged. Tapered spike with circular cross-section, terminating in a square-sectioned head. Upper section bent, head burred. L: 113mm Dia (shank) : 5mm Dia (head): 7-8mm Context (3178), SFB [3181].

SF 32 Double-pointed pin beater, bone. Incomplete, comprising two non-joining terminals from the same tool (central section missing). Oval sectioned shafts tapering to broad, rounded points; evenly polished over the whole surface. Shallow worn oblique indentation *c*20-25mm from point, this was presumably caused by friction against the threads. (L: 66mm and 64mm Dia 11 x 8mm). Context (3049), Ditch [3051].

Other tools

Awl/needle pig fibula <SF 14> was recovered from SFB [3088] (Fig 39). With the exception of a knife cut perforation, the distal end appears unmodified. However the proximal end has been heavily trimmed to form a short, sharp point with a circular cross-section, measuring just 5mm in length. The nature of the point suggest that it may have been used an awl for ?piercing leather, rather than a needle.

Bone needle SF14 Fig 39

SF 14 Awl/needle, bone. Modified pig fibula, knife cut circular perforation through the distal end and proximal end sharpened to form short point (L: c6mm) which displays signs of wear. The surfaces above the point do not appear to display signs of wear. Possibly used as an awl ? L: 90mm Context (3087), SFB [3088].

5.4 **Slag** by Andy Chapman

Three contexts each produced single small rounded fragments of slag, with a total weight of 45g. Two contexts produced small pieces of ferrous slag, which may hint at iron smithing being carried out during this period, although the quantities are very small. A third context, undated, produced a single small fragment of fuel ash slag, characteristically highly vesicular with a low density. Fuel ash slag is produced by high temperature burning, but not necessarily metal working.

Table 5: Quantification of slag

Context/feature	Weight (g)/ fragments	Type
3010/ditch	25g / 1	Ferrous slag
3024/furrow	10g / 1	Fuel ash slag
3173/ditch	10g / 1	Ferrous slag
Total	**45g / 3**	

6 THE FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 The human bone by Chris Chinnock

Introduction

A small number of features produced deposits of cremated human bone. All of the deposits comprised small amounts of unurned material buried in pits. A total of six deposits were recorded. All came from a small cluster of features excavated in Area 4. No dating material was recovered and the deposits of cremated bone remain undated.

Methodology

The cremated skeletal remains were recorded onto an excel spreadsheet, following Museum of London methodology (Powers, unpublished MOLAS report).

All burnt human bone was examined in accordance with current guidelines (McKinley and Roberts 1993, Brickley and McKinley 2004). The total weight of each context was measured in grams; fragmentation determined by noting the largest fragment size and the average (mean) size of fragments within each context. Sieving separated the >10mm, >6mm and >2mm fractions, each of which was weighed. Identifiable fragments were separated by body area (skull, axial skeleton, upper and lower limbs) and weighed. The percentage of the sample within each fraction and body was calculated. The total weight of residue present was determined and the residue scanned for isolated identifiable bone fragments and artefactual remains. An estimate of the percentage of bone present within the residue was made to the nearest 5%. The composition of the residue was recorded with the presence of fuel slag, burnt stone and other material visually estimated as a percent of the total residue.

The presence of any animal bone and other intrusive material within a sample was noted. Where bone was so fragmentary as to prevent macroscopic identification, it was recorded as ‘unidentifiable to species’ and the possible inclusion of animal bone was noted.

The colour of the cremated bone fragments was described and an approximate percentage assigned for each colour present. Colour ranges from dark grey/black, through mid greys and blues, to light grey, white and off-white were recorded in the material.

Where possible, age was estimated using dental development and epiphyseal fusion data for juveniles (Gustafson and Koch 1974, Scheuer and Black 2000). Adulthood was defined by the complete fusion of the epiphyses (with the exception of the late fusing centres of the *os coxa* and medial clavicle) and/or the presence of complete third permanent molars. The late fusing epiphyses were used to enable estimation of young adulthood. Adult age at death was estimated from a combination of pubic symphysis (Brooks and Suchey 1990) and auricular surface observations (Lovejoy *et al* 1985). Dental attrition from permanent tooth wear was only used to infer adulthood (Brothwell 1981). Morphological characteristics of the cranium and pelvis were considered to establish an estimate of sex in adult remains (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994).

The MNI in each deposit was calculated from the presence of any repeated skeletal elements or obvious difference in age and sex. Total weight was not used to infer the presence of multiple individuals without supporting osteological evidence.

Results

A total of 504.5g of burnt human bone was recorded from six discrete deposits. A summary of the overall and average weights is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of cremated human bone

Context/Cut	Total weight (g)	Largest fragment size (mm)	Estimated mean fragment size	% bone identifiable to body area	MNI	Age	Sex
4012/4013	393.3	44	10	10.3	1	Adult	-
4014/4015	61.7	30.3	10	4.4	1	-	-
4018/4019	45.1	32.1	10	10.4	1	-	-
4020/4021	2.7	18.8	5	-	1	-	-
4022/4023	1	12	5	-	1	-	-
4024/4025	0.7	12.3	5	-	1	-	-

Although fragmentary, the burnt bone was relatively well preserved. The vast majority of the bone comprised fragments of the outer cortical bone. Very little of the more delicate, internal, trabecular bone had survived.

Minimum number of individuals

Each deposit of burnt bone comprised the cremated remains of at least one individual and no evidence of repeated elements were identified to indicate the presence of multiple individuals. Three of the cremations (4020), (4022) and (4024) contained no fragments definitively identifiable as human but are presumed to be so based on the character (size, morphology, fracture patterns etc) of the bone, which was observed to be very similar to the other deposits which did have identifiable fragments. Therefore, the MNI for the total assemblage is given as six. The total amount of cremated bone in each pit was also considered when determining the minimum number of individuals. The average weight of modern adult cremations has been shown to range from 1001.25g to 2422.5g with an average of 1625.9g (McKinley 1993, 285). The largest total amount (393.3g) of cremated bone came from deposit (4012) and as such none of the pits contained enough bone to suggest, on the basis of total weight alone, that multiple individuals were represented.

Demographic data

Of the six pits containing cremated human bone, only one (1/6: 16.7%) was estimated to contain the remains of an adult. This was based largely on the size and morphology of skeletal elements rather than specific age indicators. Whilst, fragments of teeth were observed throughout the assemblage, none survived sufficiently to allow for an estimation of age at death to be made.

The remaining nine deposits (5/6: 18.3%) of cremated bone could not be assigned to an osteological age category, due to the severe fragmentation and small quantity of bone available at analysis. Similarly none of the remains could be assigned to a biological sex category due to the absence of any sexually dimorphic skeletal elements.

Pathology

No pathological lesions were observed on any fragments of bone from any of the recovered deposits.

Pyre technology and ritual

The colour of burnt bone represents the degree of oxidation which occurs on the pyre and is a result of both the temperature and availability of oxygen during the cremation

process. Most of the cremated bone was a uniformly white/off-white colour indicating almost complete oxidation, and cremation at temperatures in excess of 600°C (Holden et al 1995 a and b). However, a number of contexts exhibited slight to moderate variability in colouration (Table 7). The presence of occasional charring of the bone suggested that some cremations may not have been as efficient as others. Cases which displayed colours ranging from black and grey through to blue/grey/white may be representative of differential burning environments within the pyre e.g. lower temperatures reached.

Table 7: Colour of the burnt human bone

Colour	Total
100% white/off white	4
95% white/off white, 5% mid blue-grey	2
Total	**6**

Fragmentation and dehydration

A maximum fragment size of 44mm was recorded from cremation deposit (4012). The estimated mean fragment size ranged from 5mm (three contexts) to 10mm (three contexts). Five of the deposits contained less than 100g of cremated bone; three of those contained less than 5g.

Longitudinal, transverse and spiral fractures were present throughout the assemblage and occasional warping of the bone was observed in some of the larger fragments of burnt bone. The implications of fracture patterns and bone warping can be difficult to interpret though research has suggested that the burning of dry bone produces longitudinal splitting that follows the stress lines of the bone and burning of fleshed bone tend to exhibit more warping, irregular longitudinal splitting and transverse fractures (Uberlaker 2015, 219).

All areas of the skeleton were represented, though not in all deposits. Throughout the assemblage fragments of the skull were the most readily identifiable. The distinctive lamination of the cranial vault and meningeal impressions enable even small fragments to be easily identified and explains the bias towards this area. There were a small number of tooth fragments present, though none were identifiable to the exact tooth position.

Discussion

A total of six deposits of cremated human bone were recovered from pits in Area 4. Whilst only small amounts of bone were present in all of the features, exceptionally small amounts were present in three of them. It is unclear whether these features simply represent small token deposits of bone in very small pits dug into the ground. All of the deposits were unurned and consequently the degree of fragmentation is particularly high. Without the protection of an urn/box or other container the bone may be subject to much higher rates of post-depositional fragmentation.

No evidence for multiple individuals was observed in any of the deposits though it must be noted that with such small amounts of bone it may possible for the partial remains of one cremated individual to have been deposited in several pits. For this reason the stated MNI of six may have overestimated the number of cremated bodies. Only a single unsexed adult could be determined from the assemblage due to the small amounts of bone and the high degree of fragmentation. No evidence of pathology was observed.

No artefacts or other dateable material was recovered from the pits and as such the deposits of cremated bone have remained undated. Both prehistoric and Anglo-

Saxon features have been identified on site, both of these periods at one time or another held cremation as part of the primary funerary tradition. However, the paucity of evidence from the site at Bodicote means making any firm conclusions about the date of the burials difficult. Should a radiocarbon date be deemed necessary in order to determine the period to which the deposits of cremated bone belong, a sample of fully calcined bone could be selected from one of the deposits following the relevant guidelines for the destructive sampling of human remains for scientific analysis (APABE 2013).

6.2 **The animal bone** by Sander Aerts

Introduction

A total of 1386 animal bone fragments were hand-collected during excavation, with an additional 277 being recovered via environmental sampling. The assemblage was analysed in its entirety to assess the present species, gain insights on animal husbandry on the site and evaluate exploitation by examining ageing, butchering marks and other taphonomy.

Methodology

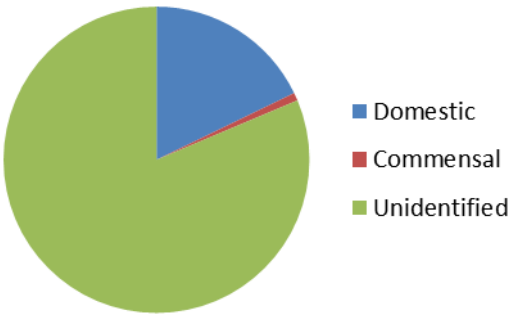
The animal bones were recorded using the NISP method (Number of Identified Specimens), where identification has been attempted on all remains with diagnostic features. Bones that could not be identified to species or genus were attributed to the categories of small mammal, medium mammal, large mammal or bird where possible. Sheep and goat (also referred to as ovicaprids) are recorded as one category due to the similarities in skeletal morphology.

The bones were identified using the MOLA Northampton mammalian reference collection, Schmid (1972) and Cohen & Serjeantson (1996) for bird remains.

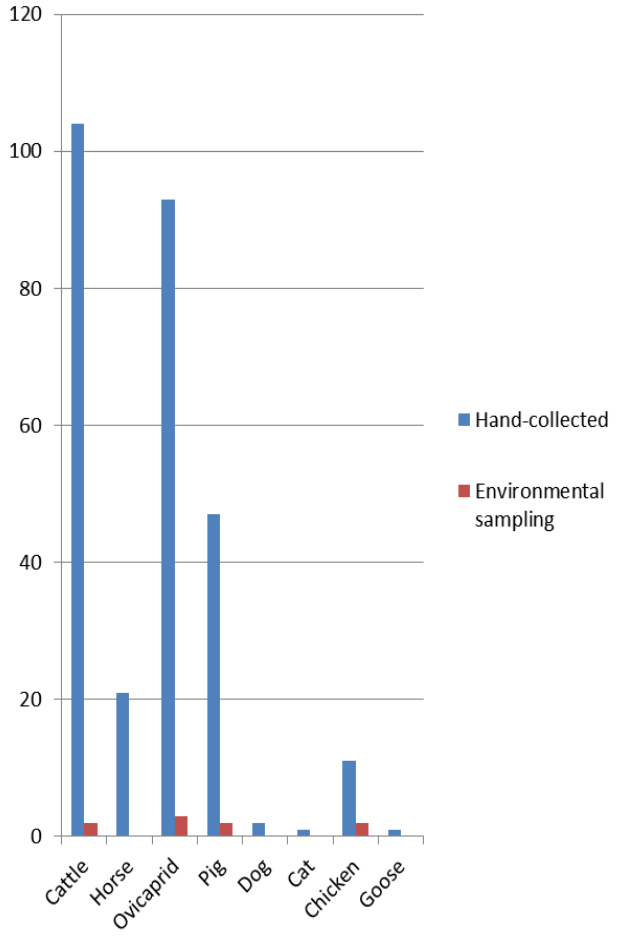
Ageing was attempted on mammalian mandibles containing at least the M3 and M2, using Grant's (1982) tooth wear stages. Due to the limited size of the assemblage, no attempts were made to sex the bones. All signs of gnawing, butchery and burning were recorded.

Identification and Quantification

The assemblage was moderately well preserved, with a total of 295 fragments, or 18% of the overall assemblage being identified to species or genus level (Fig 40). The identifications from the hand-collected and sieved materials are also presented (Fig 41).



The relative ratio of identified domestic taxa (NISP), identified commensals (NISP) and unidentified fragments Fig 40



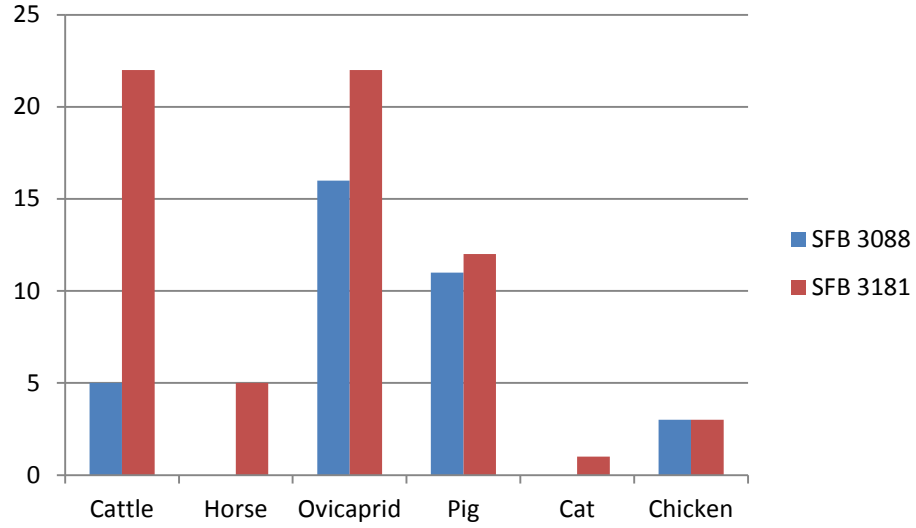
Number of identified domestic animal remains from hand-collection and environmental sampling Fig 41

Results

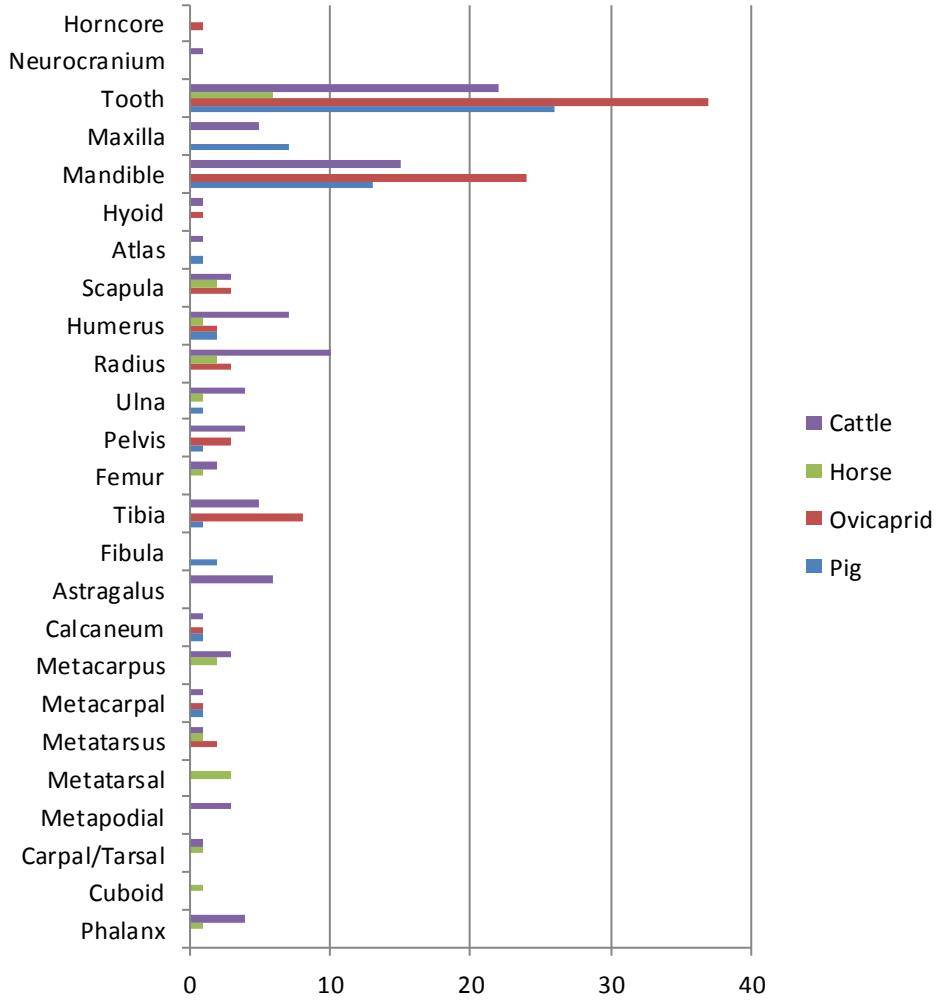
Cattle bones are the most common remains found on site, with a NISP of 106 in total, followed closely by sheep/goat remains with a NISP of 96. Other economic taxa include pig (NISP is 44) and horse (NISP is 21). Two other domesticates were represented in the assemblage. A few elements of dog were identified from (3010), fill of ditch [3011] and a single cat ulna was found in the fill of sunken feature building [3181].

Some remains indicate the presence and exploitation of fowl on the site. A number of chicken bones (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) were found, as well as a fragment from greylag/domestic goose *Anser* sp. It is likely that some birds were kept in the vicinity of the site for their eggs and meat. Shrew/mole, rodent and amphibian bones represent commensal animals being present around the site, some may be intrusive. The relative abundance of the cattle, ovicaprid and pig NISP have found to be in accordance with McKerracher's (2018) findings that in Anglo-Saxon assemblages cattle normally accounts for 25-65% of all remains, sheep/goat for 20-50% and pig for 5-35% in. Based on the whole assemblage of identified domestic taxa from both hand-collected and sieved materials, cattle accounts for 37% of the assemblage, ovicaprids for 35% and pig for 15% (excluding features with an Iron Age / Romano-British date). These taxa were all observed in sunken featured buildings 1 [3088], and

2 [3181], which show a relatively large proportion of ovicaprid remains (Fig 42). The representation of the domestic mammals per skeletal element is given in Fig 43.



Abundance of domestic taxa in sunken featured buildings [3088] and [3181] Fig 42



Representation of the domestic mammals per skeletal element Fig 43

Aging

Ageing was attempted on 11 mandibles deriving from cattle, pig and sheep/goat. The suggested ages of the individuals are given in Table 7. Individuals that are slaughtered at a younger age are more likely to be kept for primary products, and older individuals for secondary products. The presence of older cattle remains may point towards an increase in the use of plough oxen, a trend commonly seen in mid-Saxon assemblages (Hamerow 2012, 159).

Younger individuals were present in the form of an unfused cattle calcaneus found in (3231), fill of ditch [3233], and an unfused sheep/goat radius from (3173), fill of ditch [3135] suggest rearing of the animals on site.

Overall, the ageing dataset is too limited in size to draw hard conclusions on animal husbandry practices.

Table 8: Ageing of domestic mammals per context following Grant (1982)

Context	Cut	Feature	Taxon	Age
3010	3011	Ditch	Cattle	Old adult
3087	3088	SFB	Sheep/goat	6-12 months
			Sheep/goat	4-6 years
			Pig	14-21 months
			Pig	21-27 months
3165	3169	Pit	Cattle	Old adult
			Sheep/goat	6-12 months
			Pig	14-21 months
3173	3175	Ditch	Cattle	Senile
3178	3181	SFB	Pig	21-27 months
3179	3181	SFB	Pig	14-21 months

Taphonomy

Gnawing marks were present on a number of bones, including a horse femur from ditch [3037], cattle metapodial fragments from sunken featured building [3088] and pit [3169]. This is likely the result from dogs on site, such as the one found in ditch [3011], also implying the bones were exposed for some time before deposition.

Undiagnostic cut marks were found on large and medium mammal rib fragments from sunken featured building [3088] and pit [3169], as well as a large mammal pelvic fragment from pit [3253]. A small number of bones from various contexts showed traces of burning, but were too fragmented to be identified.

One sheep/goat mandible showed signs of periodontal disease, or gum disease, which is a bacterial infection that can affect the teeth and bones if not treated.

Conclusion

The analysis of the faunal remains has resulted in various observations about food processing on this site, as the vast majority appears to be the result of domestic refuse. Meat production was dominated by cattle, sheep/goat and pig meat. The diet was complimented by poultry, which are likely to have been kept for eggs and meat. No evidence for hunting of wild animals or the exploitation of fish has been found, although the latter can be the result of sample bias or insufficient preservation. Older

animals, such as cattle, may suggest that animals were kept for secondary products or their use as beasts of burden. No butchering marks were found on the horse remains and it seems most likely that the animals were kept for the transportation of goods and people.

Other domestic animals that were kept on site are dogs and cats. Dogs, widely viewed as pets in the Anglo-Saxon period, are likely to be responsible for the gnawing marks observed on various horse and cattle long bones. Cats may have been kept as pets and/or for mousing. None of the remains showed any traces specifically indicative of craft-working. However, since a bone pin-beater and antler combs were found (Hylton, this volume), this cannot be ruled out.

6.3 **Charred plant macrofossils** by Sander Aerts

Introduction and methodology

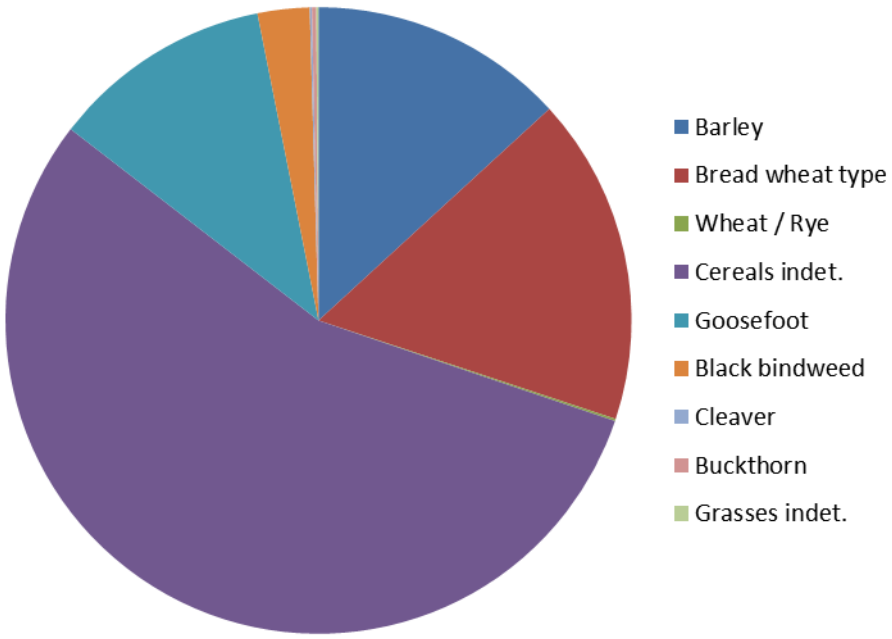
A total of 24 soil samples, comprising of 640 litres were selected for processing for the retrieval of environmental macro remains. The aim was to establish the preservation and abundance of (charred) botanical remains, specifically those relating to crop husbandry. The samples were bulk floated by MOLA Northampton and the flots were collected in a 500 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 40. Identifications were aided by the MOLA Northampton reference collection for cereal crops in addition to Bekker *et al* (2006).

Results

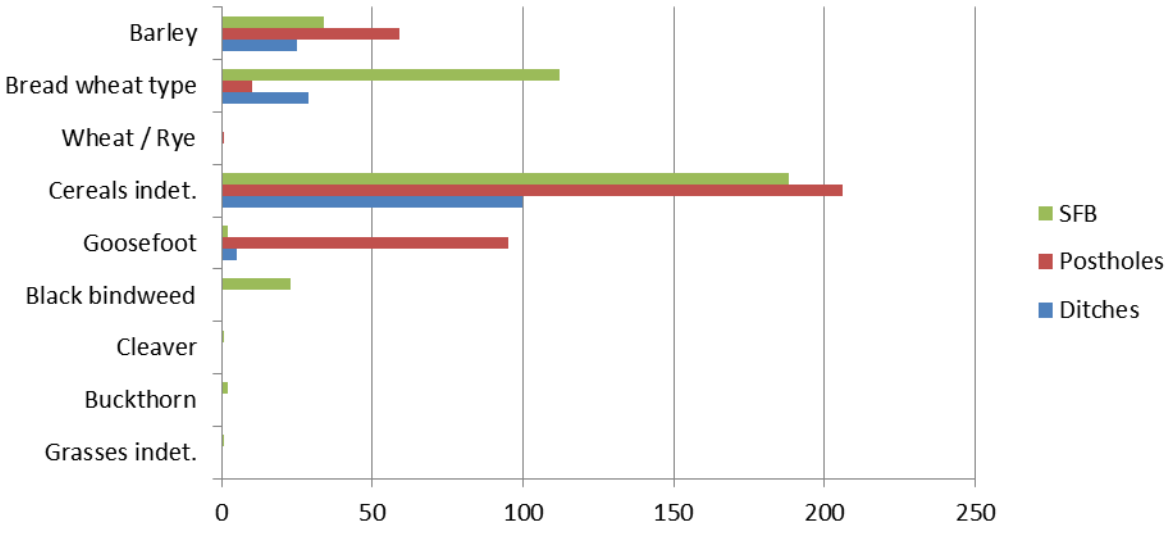
Cereal grains were present in all but 4 of the 24 samples, often accompanied by some common herbs, shrubs and/or weeds (Fig 44). The composition of the assemblage is fairly heterogeneous in diversity and derives from ditches, postholes and two sunken featured buildings, shown in Figs 45 and 46. All identifications per context are given in Table 8. The condition of the remains varies from poorly to moderately well preserved. These variations are the result of differences in heat during the carbonisation process, causing the starch in many remains to combust. This causes about 55% of the cereal grains to be unidentified. Typically bread wheat tends to suffer badly from distortion, so this may be interpreted as a clue to their variety (Boardman and Jones 1990).

The majority of the cereal grains were found in ditches, sunken featured buildings and an exceptionally rich posthole, [3211] that are dated to Saxon period (Blinkhorn, this volume). The assemblage consists of bread wheat type grains (*Triticum* cf. *aestivum*) and barley (*Hordeum* sp.). These observations seem to largely fit in with the agricultural developments of the Saxon period.

During the Saxon period, free threshing grain varieties became increasingly popular. Bread wheat largely replaced emmer (*T. dicoccum*) that was still widely in use during the Roman period (Hamerow 2012, 149). This reflects on the Bodicote, Oxford Road assemblage, as bread wheat type grains outnumber the barley grains, this is clearly visible in the comparison between the sunken featured buildings in Fig 43. These numbers imply that for sunken featured building 1 [3088] there are 3 wheat grains and 2 barley grains per 10 litres, whilst there is 9 wheat grains and 2 barley grains per 10 litres for sunken featured building 2 [3181]. Barley bread was considered to be less tasteful, implying that the barley is probably associated with brewing or possibly fodder (Hamerow 2012, 149).



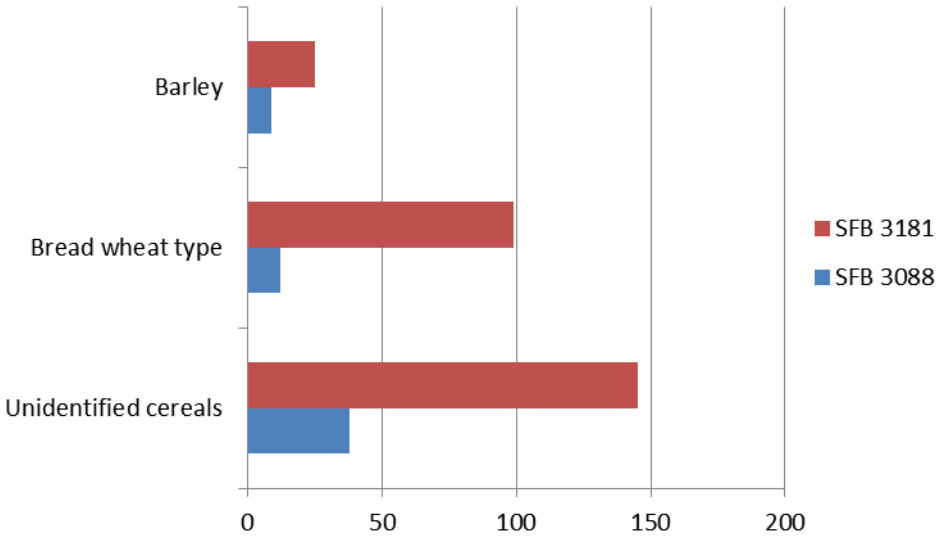
Relative abundance of archaeobotanical remains from environmental samples Fig 44



Absolute abundance of botanical taxa from sunken featured buildings, postholes and ditches Fig 45

Table 9: Identification of the archaeobotanical remains by context

Sample		2	3	4	12	16	18	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	45
Context		3036	3040	3087	3067	3075	3186	3179	3179	3194	3196	3198	3200	3202	3204	3206	3208	3210	3212	3214	3246	3232
Fill of		3037	3041	3088	3068	3076	3189	3181	3181	3195	3197	3199	3201	3203	3205	3207	3209	3211	3213	3215	3249	3233
Type		Ditch	Ditch	SFB	PH	PH	SFB	SFB	SFB	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	PH	Ditch
Volume		40	20	40	10	10	40	40	40	20	20	10	20	20	10	10	30	20	10	10	80	40
Crops																						
Hordeum sp.	Barley	3 (1)	18	9	-	-	-	1	23 (1)	-	-	2 (1)	2	2	-	-	2	41 (1)	2	1	5	3
Triticum cf. *aestivum*	Bread wheat type	2	25	12	-	1	1	2	93 (4)	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	2
Triticum/Secale sp.	Wheat / Rye	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Cereal indet.	Cereals	9 (3)	85	38	-	1	4 (1)	5	114 (26)	6	4	1 (1)	7 (1)	0 (1)	0 (1)	2	4	145 (4)	4	0 (1)	23	3
Other plants																						
Chenopodium sp.	Fat hen	1	-	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	43	1	11	24	-	7	-	-	-	1	3	4
Fallopia concolvulus	Black bindweed	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Galium aparine	Cleaver	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rhamnus cathartica	Buckthorn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poaceae	Grasses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



Absolute abundance of cereal crops from SFB [3088] and SFB [3181] Fig 46

The use of free-threshing species explains the lack of chaff in the flots (Boardman and Jones 1990). Threshing would have taken place elsewhere, before the grains were burnt and disposed of within the settlement contexts. This makes it difficult to interpret the involvement of the community with agricultural practises, or whether goods were imported (McKerracher 2018, 85).

A small number of small trees, herbs and weeds were identified. Goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) was observed from all types of features. The sunken featured buildings additionally contained black bindweed (*Fallopia concolvulus*), cleaver (*Galium aparine*), buckthorn which is potentially intrusive (*Rhamnus canthartica*) and an unidentifiable grass seed (*Poaceae* sp.). Black bindweed is commonly found on cultivated land, and may well be brought into the settlement with the cereals.

One posthole [3209] contained cereal grains, including bread wheat and barley, as well as a single grain that resembles either wheat or rye (cf. *Triticum/Secale* sp.), but the identification is inconclusive.

Conclusion

The Bodicote Oxford Road assemblage is dominated by free-threshing grains, in which bread wheat type and barley grains are dominant. The large amount of bread wheat grains is explained through a trend of favouritism towards this variety in the Saxon period, largely replacing emmer which had been common until the Roman period. Barley was likely to be associated with brewing, although fodder is a possibility.

The weeds and shrubs that appear contemporary with these cereal remains are goosefoot, black bindweed and buckthorn, which may have been brought in with the crops. These were found together in the context of a sunken featured building. The assemblage is very much in line with what can be expected. A large cereal assemblage shows a dependence on wheat-based products and potentially brewing. Goosefoot and cleaver are ubiquitous, black bindweed is indicative of arable land.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Overview

The excavations at Oxford Road, Bodicote have identified archaeological activity dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods with the main occurrence of activity during the Saxon period. When combined with the results of the previous geophysical survey and trial trenching evaluation, the archaeological remains investigated here show a landscape utilised from the Neolithic. Evidence for the Iron Age comprises a large ditched enclosure. There was pottery evidence for Roman activity but no features of Roman date. The Saxon period shows a greater increase in settlement of the area with the SFBs and post-built structures.

7.2 Prehistoric

Early prehistoric activity was only evident through a small assemblage of worked flint dating broadly to the Neolithic to early Bronze Age. The majority were recovered from the infilling of the Iron Age enclosure ditches. Two early to middle Neolithic pits were uncovered immediately to the north of the current site (Wolframm-Murray 2014) but no features or artefacts were discovered during the archaeological work on this site. A single residual sherds of middle Bronze Age pottery was found in one of the enclosure ditches but no features are assigned to this period. However, it is possible that an earlier ditched landscape was present in the vicinity.

The geophysical survey showed a large sub-rectangular enclosure and a substantial Iron Age enclosure ditch was identified during the evaluation. Several of the ditches investigated during these works were found to define parts of a large ditched enclosure, which when combined with the previous results was 90m long and 75m wide. The presence of a terminal suggests that there was a north-east enclosure entranceway but the constraints of the investigation area did not allow for an opposing terminal to be revealed. The low quantity of domestic material and lack of associated internal features such as buildings would suggest that its purpose was not of a domestic use but was utilised for livestock. The previous evaluation immediately to the north of the current development area identified a focus of Iron Age settlement activity which included ring ditches and associated pits and it is likely that this enclosure functioned as an outlying stock enclosure to that settlement.

7.3 Saxon

Although no archaeological features are assigned to the Roman period, the presence of a few sherds of Roman pottery within a small area close to the south-east limit would suggest that there was some activity of this date nearby. The majority of the pottery was residual in Saxon features or was recovered from ditches truncated by the Saxon activity indicating that there may have been some low-level activity associated with the ditches.

The Saxon activity is characterised by several sunken feature buildings, post-built structures and a curvilinear ditched enclosure. The nature of the settlement comprising a combination of post-built and sunken-floored buildings is typical of early and middle Saxon settlements. Pottery recovered from these features dates to the 5th-7th century AD implying that settlement originated in the early Saxon period. The presence of a small number of artefacts dating to the 7th to 8th century AD would suggest that it continued into the middle Saxon period with perhaps the main activity and development of settlement occurring during this period with the ditched enclosure and subsequently the sub-rectangular SFB which overlays the enclosure. The enclosure and therefore parts of the settlement clearly extend beyond the excavation limit of the present development site.

Both cattle and sheep were exploited as multi-purpose animals, not only for primary meat production but also as secondary products such as milk and wool production.

The scale of the site at Bodicote would place it towards the lower end of the size range and is likely to represent an individual farmstead. However, not all of the area was investigated due to a hedgerow and the limit of the area. Similar examples have been investigated at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, Oxfordshire which comprised seven sunken feature buildings and eight post-built structures (Miles 1986) and at Brixworth, Northamptonshire with four sunken feature buildings and five post-built structures (Ford 1995). The dating evidence for these sites showed occupation was established between the 5th-6th centuries AD and continued until the 8th-9th century AD.

Sunken feature buildings are a common feature of rural Saxon settlements. They are usually associated with rectangular, post-built structures which are often considered to have formed the main dwellings on Saxon settlements with the sunken-featured buildings, used as workshops (Tipper 2004). The latter commonly consist of a sub-rectangular pit with a flat base around 3m to 4m in size with posts used for supports. The base of the pit may form the floor level or in some cases as implied by the depth and surrounding ledge of SFB [3181] a planked floor may have been suspended. The lack of evidence for any primary occupation deposits on the base of the SFB reinforces evidence of a suspended floor raised up off the base of the pit. They are thought to have functioned as dwellings, workshops or storage sheds depending on associated assemblages found. The closest parallels in terms of form were at Dorchester on Thame Site F excavated by OA and Cotswolds. The dating for these was fairly broad but was within this predicted range (Richard Oram pers. comm.). Artefacts from Bodicote included knives, wool-comb teeth, slag, cereal grains and animal bone fragments. All of these materials indicate that a wide range of activities such as textile production and metal working may have been carried out and it is possible that each sunken building may have had its own industry/function associated with it.

The high quantities of grain may indicate that SFB [3181] may have functioned as a grain store and that if this structure had a suspended floor then the air space below would have created a good environment for the storage of grain (Tipper 2004). This may have formed part of an agricultural processing area along with at least one associated post-built granary based on the cereal grains recovered from the postholes from the post-built structures. It is also possible that these structures are not all contemporary. The obvious difference in shape and size of SFB [3181] being slightly larger when compared to the other surrounding SFB's which are very similar to one another would indicate that this may be the later structure on the site and it overlays the northern limit of the enclosure. Its proximity to an adjacent timber building may also be of significance and indicate a different function to the other SFB's. Quantities of ferrous slag in the vicinity of presumed SFB [3121] indicates that with iron smithing was likely taking place in the vicinity. At Brixworth, four sunken feature buildings and up to five possible associated post-built structures thought to represent a small community within an individual farmstead were identified (Ford, 1995). Evidence for iron working, animal bone and charred cereal remains comparable to Bodicote was recovered.

As well as the sunken-featured buildings, two rectangular post-built structures were identified. They comprised a smaller one that was 5m long and 3m wide and a slightly larger rectangular building 7m long and 3m wide. The postholes on the outer rows of the larger structure were of a fairly substantial size; presumably they would have provided the main support for a relatively large timber-framed building. Similar structures investigated at Brixworth ranged between 3.8m by 5.1m up to 5.2m by 8.6m. The smallest was 1.4m by 1.5m and was thought to be a raised granary. All of the structures with the exception of the smallest contained animal bone, two contained cereal grain and another evidence for metal working. The post-built

structures at Bodicote produced very little artefact evidence other than a moderate assemblage of cereal grains from the larger structure perhaps implying that it functioned as a barn. Settlements characterised by systems of ditched enclosures emerged in the mid Saxon period though they varied considerably in size and function. At Gamlingay, Cambridgeshire (Murray and McDonald 2005) and Cardinal Park, Godmanchester, (Gibson 2003), settlements comprising sunken feature buildings and post buildings saw the addition of associated ditched enclosures in the mid Saxon 7th century AD.

The appearance of ditched enclosures associated with settlements may have originated from an emerging need to keep livestock closer than they had been previously and to keep them away from buildings (Hamerow 2012). It is likely that the circular ditched enclosure of which the sunken feature buildings were positioned just outside functioned as a stock enclosure. Although the precise relationship between some of the ditches was unclear, in particular those obscured by furrows and evidence of re-cutting, it is likely that there are at least two phases of enclosures. The remnants of internal ditches show some control of movement within the enclosure of livestock. At Cardinal Park, six sunken feature buildings and three post-built structures were excavated together with two ditched enclosures. An associated droveway ran along the edge of the enclosures and it is possible that ditches [1006] and [2015] to the west may have defined this type of feature on the western edge of the Saxon activity.

The undated cremations could be associated with either the prehistoric activity or the Saxon settlement as both of these periods at one time or another held cremation as part of the primary funerary tradition. The Iron Age enclosure ditch lay close to the cremations and may be broadly contemporary. From the late Bronze Age throughout the majority of the Iron Age period the primary funerary tradition has remained largely archaeological invisible. Cremation does become more common in the later Iron Age period. However, it is also possible that they could be outlying Saxon cremations on the periphery of the settlement located 75m to the south-east. While cremation appears to have been less common than inhumation, significant numbers of cremations are known from some cemeteries. Associated cremation burials are commonly found immediately adjacent to settlement activity but also up to several hundred metres away. A middle Saxon settlement at Yarnton, Oxfordshire had burials located 100m to the west of the settlement (Hey 2004). At Didcot, Oxfordshire excavations uncovered two sunken-featured buildings and a small cemetery. The sunken-featured buildings contained small quantities of pottery dating to the 6th century and grave goods indicated that the burials, comprising a mix of inhumations and cremations occurred during the 7th century AD (Boyle *et al* 1996). The small number of burials at Bodicote may reflect the size of the settlement further reinforcing it as a small farmstead probably utilised by a single or extended family group.

The geophysical survey identified the presence of two distinct ridge and furrow areas, separated by the dry valley in the centre of the field of which remnants were revealed during the excavation. A northern set of furrows was north-west to south-east orientated and the southern furrows were north-east to south-west orientated. Post-medieval field boundaries or lines of trees lying between the field systems were identified. One of the ditches corresponds to a field boundary shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map and a previous ditch identified during the evaluation matches another located to the north-west.

Research frameworks address specific local and regional research agendas and the Solent Thames Archaeological Research Framework covers Oxfordshire (Hey and Hind 2014). It outlines that more research is needed on the way in which Saxon settlements were organised and functioned. Although the settlement at Bodicote provides a small number of SFB and associated features in a restricted investigation

area the construction of what may be seen as an elaborate SFB may be of significance. The control of access to space and closer control of livestock and crops, by the widespread creation of enclosures within settlement sites may also be of relevance. This site would certainly warrant further investigation and publication in a suitable journal such as Oxoniensia. Additional examination of the development and purpose of the site with possible refining of the phases would be undertaken. The function of the large stepped SFB would be further investigated using comparators from the region and further afield if deemed of relevant interest.

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APPENDIX 1: Site chronology by area

Period	Area	Description	Feature numbers
Early to middle Iron Age (700 BC to 200 BC)	1	Enclosure ditch	1016
		Enclosure ditch	1019
	2	Ditch	2006
		Ditch	2012
		Enclosure ditch	2043
		Enclosure ditch	2034
		Pit	2017
	3	Enclosure ditch	3233
		Enclosure ditch	3230
		Enclosure ditch	3017
		Enclosure ditch	3020
	4	Enclosure ditch	4011
Saxon (AD 450 to 1066)	1	Ditch	1006
		Pit	1004
	2	Ditch	2015
	3	SFB	3164/3162
		SFB	3181/3189
		SFB	3088/3101
		SFB	3121/3124
		Post-structure	3062/3064/3066/3068/ 3070/3072/3074/3076
		Post-structure	3111/3109/3107/3212/3113/ 3249/3195/3203/3207/3025/ 3209/3211/3117/3115
		Enclosure ditch	3039/3015
		Enclosure ditch	3027/3004/3147
		Enclosure ditch	3051/3133
		Enclosure ditch	3033
		Enclosure ditch	3035
		Enclosure ditch	3037
		Enclosure ditch	3237/3137
		Enclosure ditch	3054/3175
		Internal ditch	3007
		Internal ditch	3135
		Gully	3158
		Gully	3255
		Pit	3047
		Pit	3253
		Pit	3094
		Pit	3098
Medieval and post-medieval	3	Ditch	3099
		Ridge and furrow	3082/3090
	4	Ditch	4009
Undated	4	Cremation	4013
			4015
			4023
			4021
			4025
			4019