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A MULTI-PHASED SITE AT RNAS YEOVILTON, SOMERSET

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SUMMARY

In 2016 an archaeological excavation was undertaken by AC Archaeology Ltd on land at RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset. The excavation produced evidence for settlement dating principally to the Middle to Late Iron Age and the earlier Romano-British period. Limited evidence for Late Bronze Age activity was also present. The settlement evidence comprises penannular and curvilinear ditches and gullies, some representing possible animal pens, and one drip gully associated with a possible roundhouse. Evidence for post-built structures, refuse pits, rectilinear enclosure ditches, other linear field divisions and drainage gullies was also present. Two substantial wells of early Romano-British date were also revealed. Six Romano-British inhumation burials were present on the site, contained within five graves, as well as two unurned cremation burials of earlier Romano-British date. A moderate assemblage of artefacts was recovered, including Middle to Late Iron Age and Romano-British ceramics and, of note, an unusual, ornate La Tène II brooch of copper alloy, dating to the 3rd century BC. The site's overall character appears to be that of a rural agricultural settlement spanning the Middle Iron Age through to the middle Romano-British period, with little evidence of activity after the early 4th century AD until a series of features representing ridge and furrow cultivation of post-medieval origin was inserted across the site. The site is part of a complex of later prehistoric and Romano-British settlements in the vicinity.

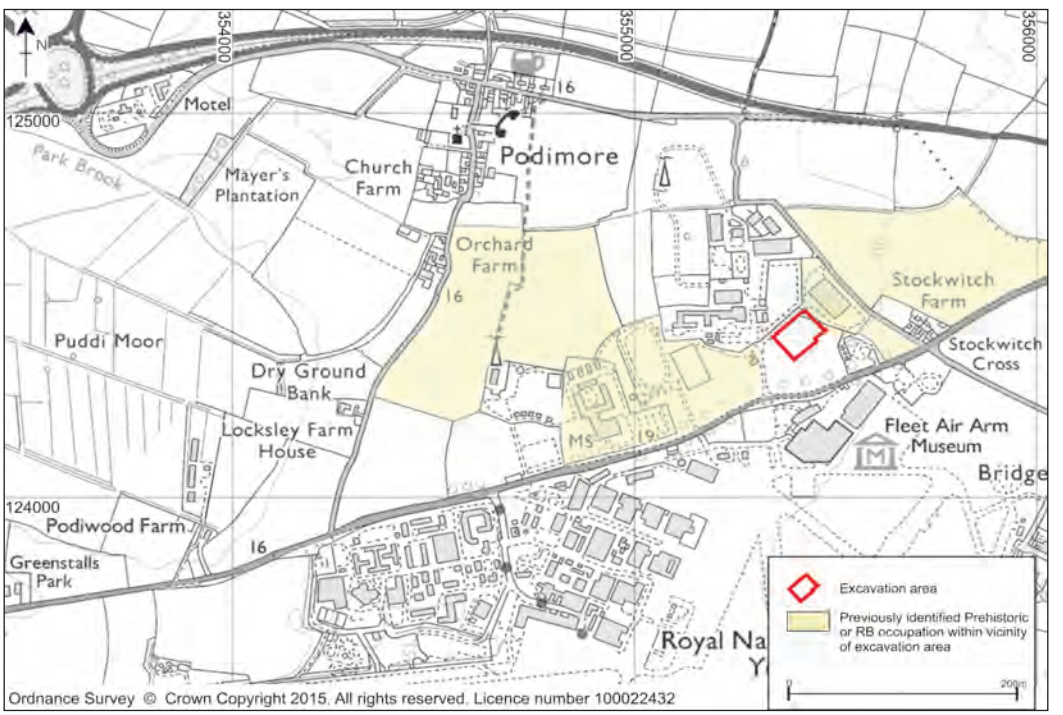

Fig. 1 Site location

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological excavation reported here was undertaken between July and September 2016, following a geophysical survey by magnetometer (TerraDat 2016). The excavation was undertaken on behalf of Galliford Try and their client, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on land adjacent to the existing RNAS Yeovilton base. RNAS Yeovilton is located some 1.5km north-east of Ilchester and 6km north of Yeovil in south Somerset and has operated as a naval air base since WWII (Fig. 1). The excavation area comprised a portion of a grass field, used for sports pitches and is bounded to the north and west by existing RNAS buildings, the B3151 and the Fleet Air Arm Museum to the south and a fuel depot to the east (NGR ST 5539 2442). The site is largely flat, at c. 20m above Ordnance Datum. The overburden deposits comprised a silty clay loam topsoil of c. 0.2m thickness, overlying a subsoil of grey brown silty clay, ranging in thickness from 0.1m to the east to 0.4m to the west. The natural sub-strata comprise Jurassic and Triassic mudstones of the Langport Member, Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Formation, overlain by river terrace deposits of sand and gravel (BGS 2021).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There is limited evidence for early prehistoric activity within the vicinity, although extensive cropmarks immediately to the north of the site suggest that a Bronze Age field system may be present within the Yeo Valley. Bronze Age features, representing pits of unknown function were recorded during a watching brief and excavation within RNAS Yeovilton in 1999 (Broomhead 1999). These features were located immediately to the north-east of the main excavation area.

Extensive evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity is known to exist throughout much of the immediate area, including a complex of field systems, enclosures and trackways. These features, identified from aerial photographs, are located to the north, north-west and east of

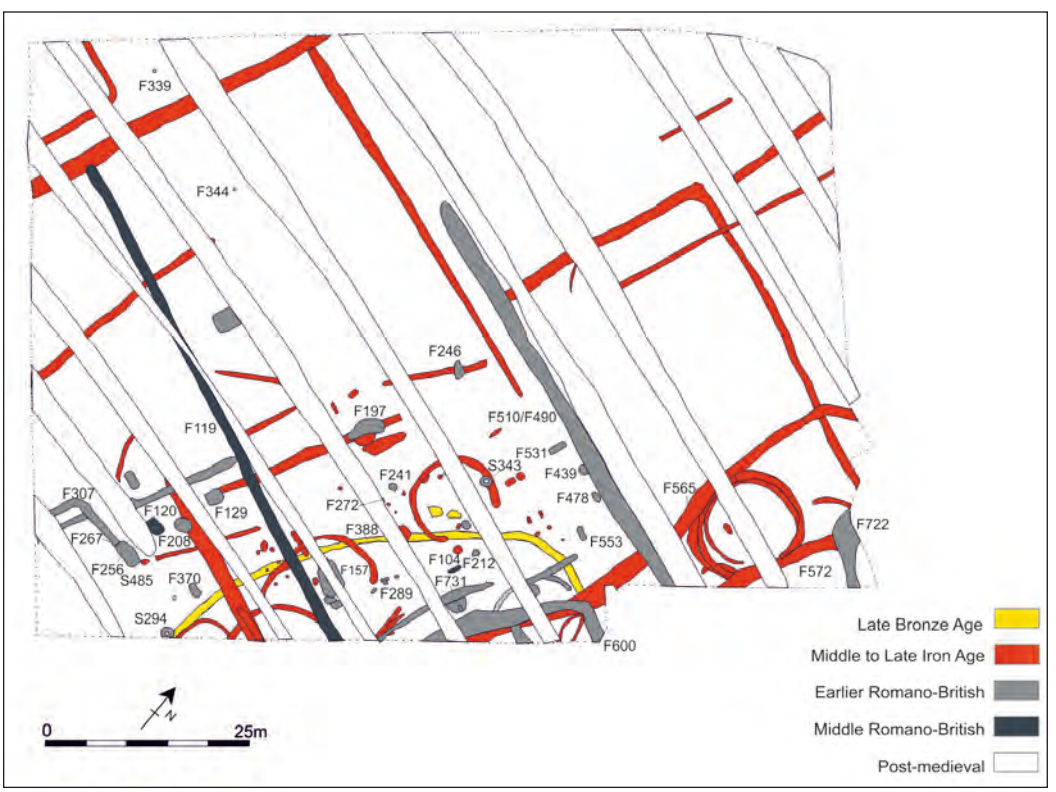

Fig. 2 All site features

RNAS Yeovilton and have undergone limited investigation. In the early 20th century, evidence for both Iron Age and Romano-British activity, including pottery and other artefacts, was identified in fields south of Podimore Road (Leech 1975). Later aerial photographs record cropmarks also indicative of this period, comprising probable enclosures and ditches which appeared to extend to the west and linking with those identified by Leech. Aerial photographs taken in both 1975 and 1990 to the north-east of the site, and just north of Bridgehampton Road, show further cropmarks including an enclosure with entrance (Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER) 54805). Further aerial photographs show, north-east of Stockwitch Lane (SHER 55111), an extensive area of small fields which may be associated with those north of Bridgehampton Road. Excavations 500m to the west, comprises evidence for a Late Iron Age and Romano-British farmstead, with associated paddocks and fields, partially arranged around a major trackway. Several roundhouses, stone-built rectangular houses, cobbled surfaces and several inhumation burials were also revealed on the site (Lovell 2006).

A military presence was established during the Early Romano-British period at Ilchester (*Lindinis*). This developed into a walled town continuously occupied into the 4th century and whose *vicus* encompassed some 20ha. A number of villa complexes dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries are known within 5km of the site, the closest of which lies some 4.4km to the south-west. Historic mapping indicates that the northern boundary of the excavation site preserves the line of 19th-century field system, which extends to the north and west of Stockwitch Farm. Medieval villages exist at Yeovilton, Podimore and West Camel (Ellison 1983), although the extent of their agricultural hinterland is not fully understood.

The TerraDat (2016) geophysical survey undertaken by Defence Equipment and Support revealed the presence of extensive magnetic anomalies of archaeological interest. Overall, the anomalies form a series of rectangular enclosures, whose longest axes are broadly oriented WNW-ESE. The densest concentration of anomalies lies to the south of the current excavation area, near the centre of the field, where a number of annular and curvilinear anomalies are consistent with settlement activity. The strength of the responses becomes markedly weaker towards the west in the vicinity of the current excavations, which is likely to reflect the increasing distance from the core of the settlement and the corresponding reduction in magnetic enhancement of the fills of the features, although traces of the enclosures can be seen as weak trends. The geophysical survey results are presented on Fig. 18 (below).

EXCAVATION RESULTS

The archaeological evidence present on the site includes a Late Bronze Age enclosure ditch with two cattle burials, followed by a period of abandonment, before settlement, agricultural and funerary evidence was present, principally from the Middle to Late Iron Age period (400 BC-AD 43) through to the middle Romano-British period (1st-3rd century AD). Following a further period of abandonment, there was extensive evidence for post-medieval agriculture (Fig. 2). The most intensive phase of activity comprised a series of penannular and curvilinear gullies of Middle to Late Iron Age date, partly overlain by a series of linear ditches, gullies and other features of both Iron Age and earlier Romano-British date. The latest phase of activity consists of a series of parallel, NW to SE aligned, linear furrows derived from post-medieval cultivation.

Late Bronze Age (Fig. 3 – plan)

The earliest phase of activity comprises a single ditch, feature F388 (Fig. 5a – section, below), which appears, from the adjacent geophysical, to represent part of an oval-shaped enclosure. Within the excavation area a length of 46m of this feature was exposed, with a maximum width of 0.9m and depth of 0.5m. A small quantity of Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from this feature. The south-east return of the enclosure had been truncated by later activity.

Two cattle burials contained in separate, adjacent pits, have assigned to this phase following radiocarbon dating (pits F132 and F254 – Fig. 3 inset). These had been buried outside the Bronze Age enclosure ditch and represent two young cattle deliberately situated in close proximity to each other, with their heads seemingly facing each other. The radiocarbon dates indicate that the two burials are likely to be broadly contemporaneous (see below). The absence of internal features within the enclosure indicates that this was perhaps an animal compound.

Middle to Late Iron Age (Fig. 4 – plan)

The first evidence for settlement on the site dates from the Middle to later Iron Age, and clearly forms part of a more extensive settlement pattern. Evidence for this activity comprises post-built structures, possible roundhouses, and other associated features. Linear features representing elements of former enclosures and field boundary ditches were also present. These features can be seen on the geophysical survey (Fig. 18, below) as part of a network, forming a regular pattern of linear and curvilinear boundary ditches,

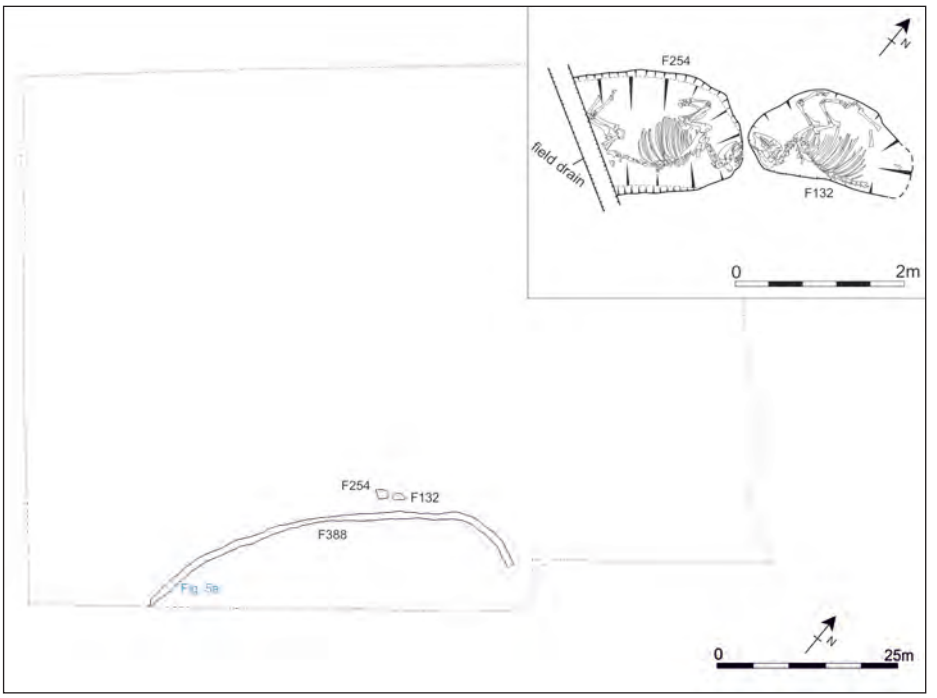

Fig. 3 Late Bronze Age phase

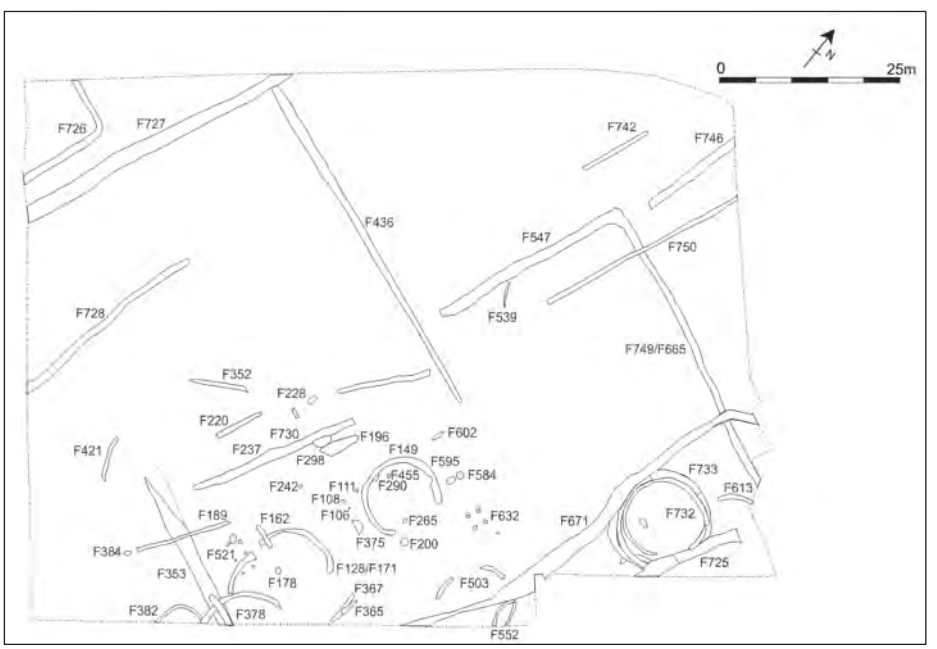

Fig. 4 Mid to Late Iron Age phase

some of which continue beyond the excavation area to the south and east.

Several ditches assigned to this period were intercutting, indicating that more than one phase of this activity was present within this period. The most substantial of these ditches, F671 and F725 correlate with the northern extent of a possible trackway that forms the boundary to a series of enclosures or paddocks revealed on the geophysical survey, most of which appear to contain roundhouses or circular pens. Where revealed, ditch F671 (Fig. 5b – section) was slightly meandering in plan and aligned approximately north-east to south-west continuing beyond the site limits. Within the excavation area a length of 60m was exposed, with a maximum width of 1.35m and depth of 0.55m. This ditch clearly post-dates the Bronze Age enclosure and had been partly truncated or re-cut close to its southern extent by a later ditch (F600) during the late 1st to early 2nd century AD, indicating that the trackway was an enduring feature within the site. Ditch F725 (Fig. 5c – section) was aligned approximately north-east to south-west and was exposed for a length of approximately 15m, continuing beyond the site limits to the south-west. Ditches F749/665 and F547 appear to form two sides of a rectilinear field boundary (Figs 5d-e – sections) that is partly overlain by the trackway. Excavation of these ditches revealed a maximum width of 1.8m and depth of 0.4m. Several less substantial ditches and gullies were also present, including F746 and F730 (Figs 5f-g – sections), all generally shallow with an average depth of 0.2m and width of 1.2m. These features are considered to represent vestiges of a field system.

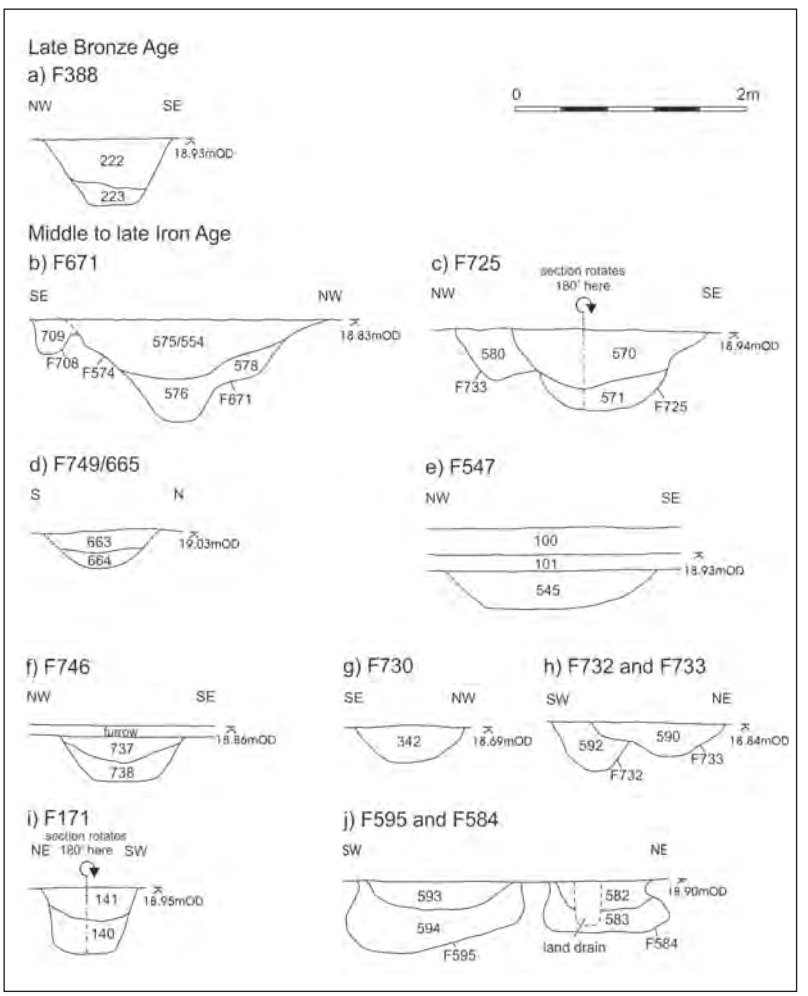

Fig. 5 Late Bronze Age and Mid to Late Iron Age sections

Fig. 6 General view of the site from the west

Evidence for ten curvilinear or penannular ditches or gullies was present across the south-east part of the site. The function of these features is unclear, some may represent parts of small animal paddocks or pens while others may represent drip gullies, features typically associated with roundhouse structures. The absence of internal features such as post holes or hearths makes this interpretation tenuous, but most display possible openings to the south-east and may have been hut locations. The most substantial of these features, F732/733 (Fig. 5h – section), represents a multi re-cut ring gully, with an entrance on the SE, and an overall diameter of 15m (Fig. 6). The outermost gully F733 had an average width of 0.6m and maximum depth of 0.4m, the innermost F732 was a maximum 0.45m wide and maximum 0.25m deep with an overall diameter of c. 10m. These features represent at least two successive phases of roundhouses. The presence of this feature within the course of the trackway in incongruous, and may once have lain beyond the limits of the track, as it is clearly cut by ditches F725 and F671.

Gully F149 (Figs 7a – plan, 7b – section) was the most complete of the curvilinear features, possibly representing a roundhouse position. It was up to 0.9m in width and 0.3m in depth, with an overall diameter of 10m. A break or entrance was clearly indicated by the presence of two terminals on the south-east side of this feature, with a gap between them of approximately 6m. Three further features representing small shallow scoops or pits (F290, 265 and 455) were also present within this feature, one of which was cut by F149. The Bronze Age cattle burials coincidentally lay within the circuit of this curvilinear ditch. The remaining curvilinear features were either only partly revealed within the site limits, or present as relatively short lengths in plan, as some had been largely truncated by later activity.

Twelve features representing pits or 'scoops' situated outside those features thought to represent enclosures or roundhouses were recorded. Some of these features contained quantities of material such as pottery sherds and animal bone that would suggest they represent refuse pits, notably features F595 and

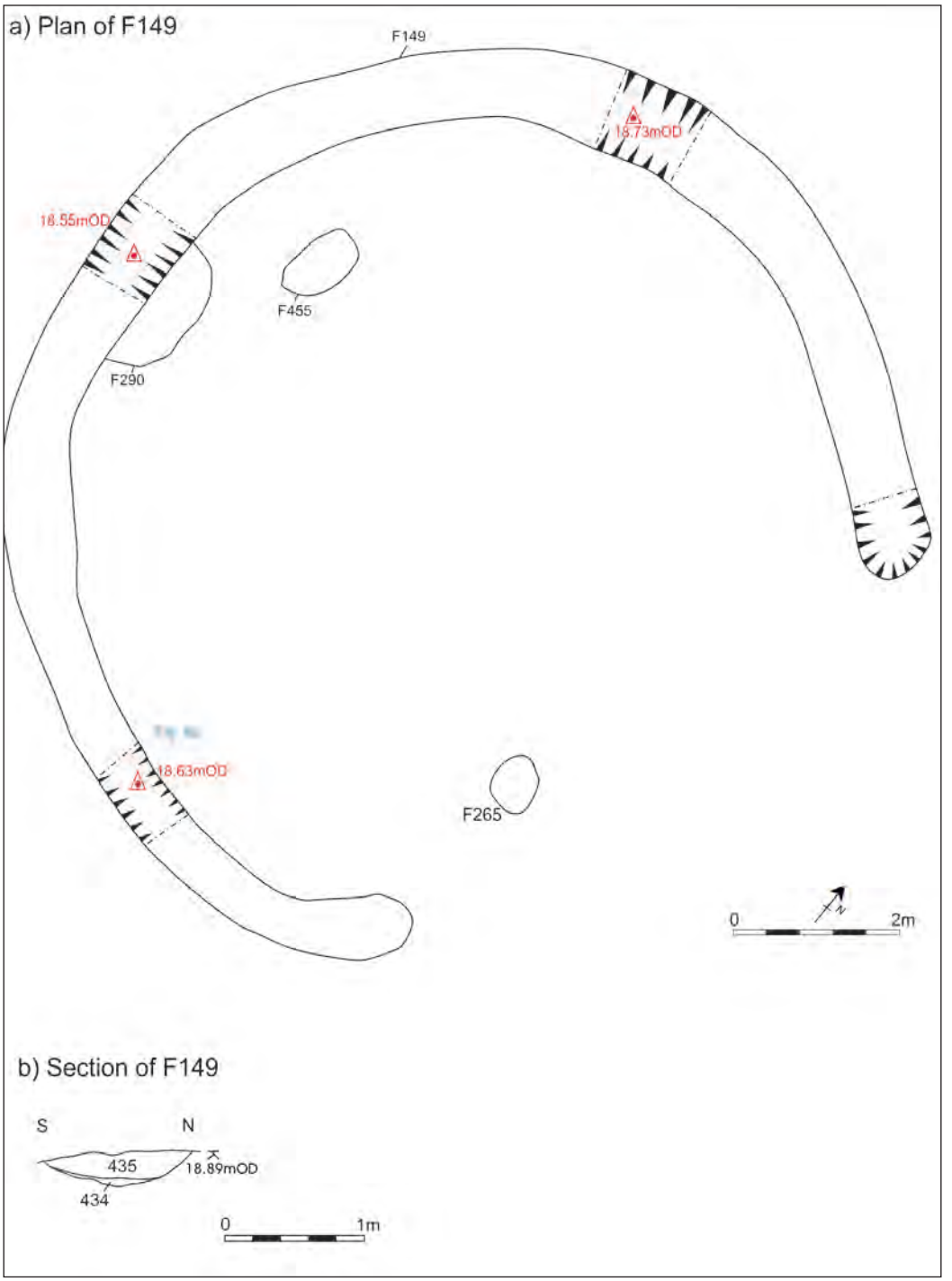

Fig. 7 Mid to Late Iron Age feature F149

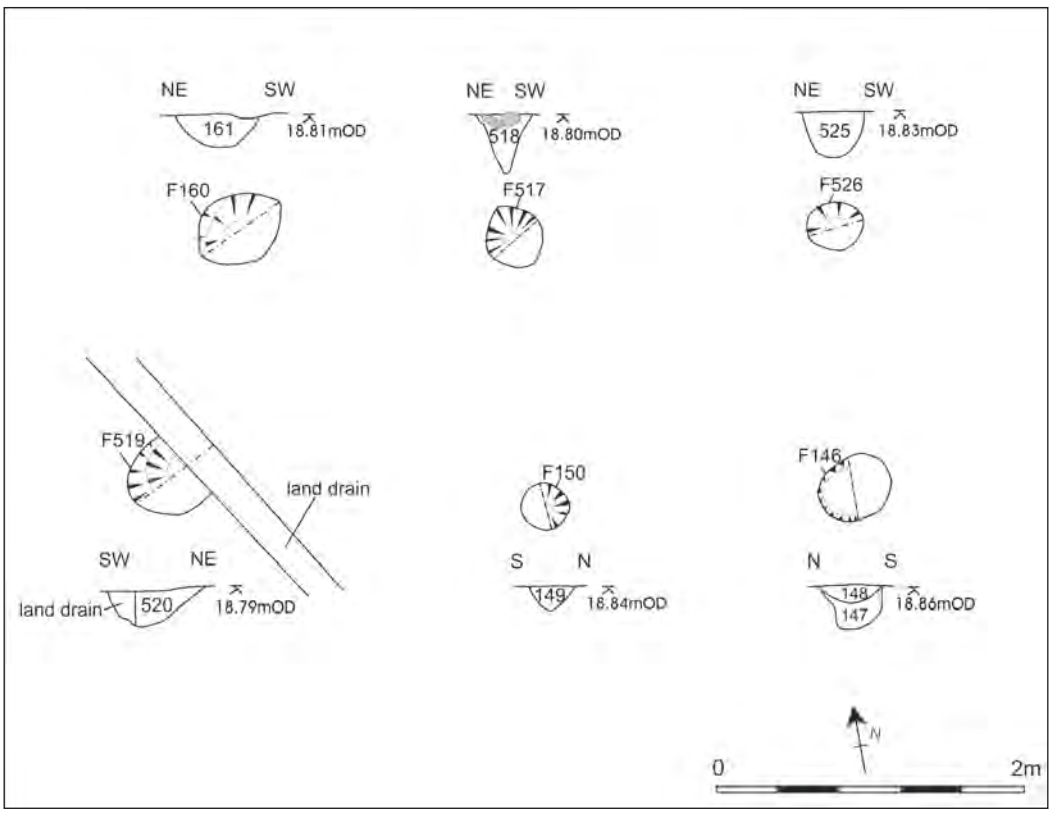

Fig. 8 Structure S521

F584 (Fig. 5j – section). Dimensions of this feature type ranged in diameter from 1.1m up to 2.3m and depths from 0.1m to a maximum of 0.8m.

Two groups of postholes present on the site represent small timber post-built structures, of undetermined function. Structure S521 (Fig. 8 – plan and sections) comprised six postholes arranged in a rectangular pattern and measuring 5 x 2.5m in plan. Structure S632 was also in a rectangular arrangement and measured approximately 5 x 2.5m in plan. The remaining few posthole features were generally randomly distributed across the site with no discernible pattern; later activity across the site may have removed other structural elements associated with these feature types.

Earlier Romano-British (late 1st to mid 3rd century AD) (Fig. 2 – plan)

This phase is characterised by linear features representing ditches defining a series of enclosures or field systems. It also includes other feature types such as pits, graves and structures. These archaeological features are less distinguishable on the geophysical survey to the south-east and may represent a shift in settlement activity. The identification of this phasing is based on the ceramic assemblage.

Ditch F510 (Fig. 9a – section) was aligned north-west to south-east and was approximately 30m long, continuing beyond the site limits to the south-east and terminated within the site at its north-west extent. Excavation of this feature revealed a maximum width of 2.1m and depth of 0.9m. This feature appears to have been partly truncated or possibly re-cut in the 2nd century AD by ditch F490. The extent of F490 was unclear and only revealed in plan along the length of ditch F510 to the north-west for approximately 15m, continuing beyond the site limits to the south-east. Where revealed it had a width of 1.6m and maximum depth of 0.7m. Ditch F600 (Fig. 9b – section) was aligned approximately north-east to south-west for 20m before turning sharply to the south-east for a further 5m, continuing beyond the site limits. Excavation of this feature revealed a maximum

width of 2.7m and depth of 0.8m. This ditch and a less substantial linear feature, F731 (Fig. 9c – section), appeared to form the northern elements of a trackway, shown more clearly on the geophysical survey results as continuing to the south, as well as branching off to the east; this is in part a continuation of the Iron Age track noted above. This trackway appears to form a principal boundary to a series of rectilinear enclosures. Ditch F722 (Fig. 9d – section) was on an approximate north-west to south-east alignment for 10m, before turning to the north-east beyond the site limits at its north-west extent. Excavation of this feature revealed a maximum width of 1.25m and maximum depth of 0.5m. Several insubstantial ditches or gullies were also present, all of which were generally shallow with an average depth of 0.2m and width of 1.2m. These features are considered to represent the vestiges of a ploughed-out field system.

Twenty features representing pits or 'scoops' have been attributed to this phase. Most of these features contained material such as pottery sherds and animal bone that would suggest they functioned as refuse pits, notably features F129, 157, 208, 212, 241 and 272 (Figs 9e-j – sections). More than half of these features produced pottery of solely mid-to-late 1st-century AD date. Dimensions of this feature type ranged in diameter from 2.1m up to 2.7m and depths from 0.2m to a maximum of 0.7m.

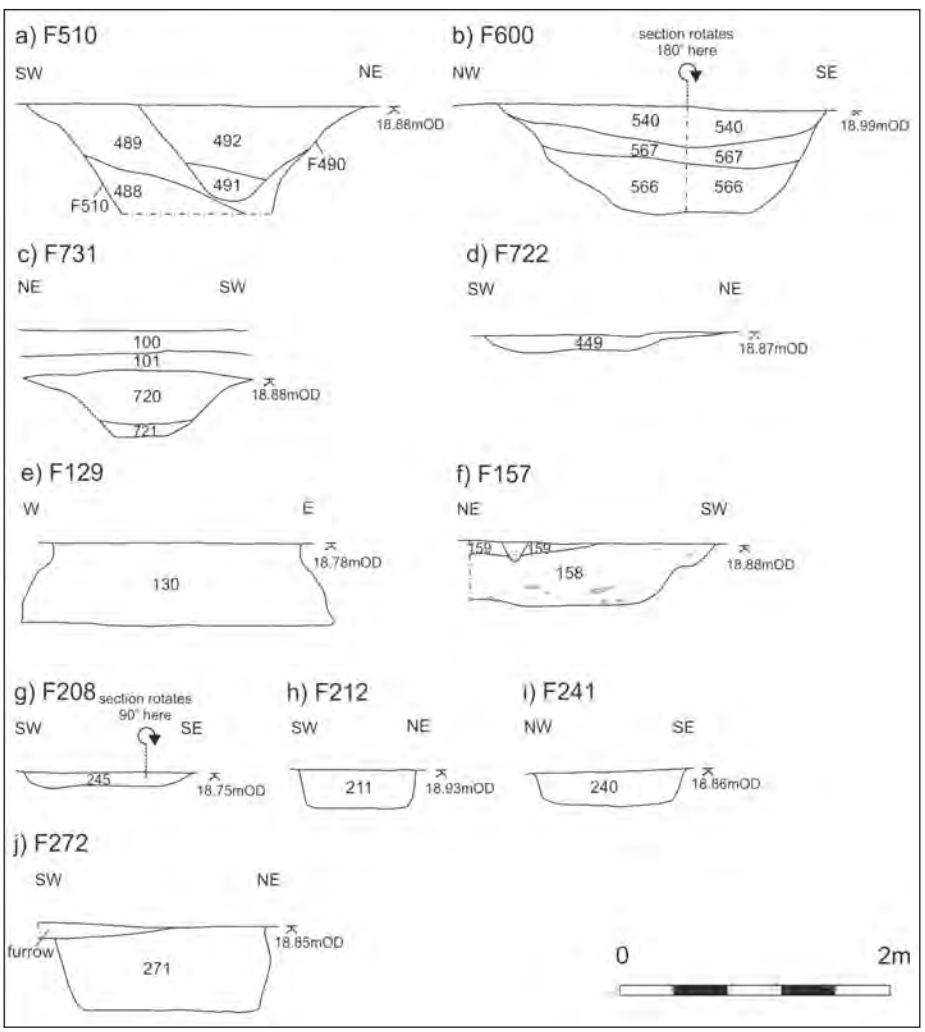

Fig. 9 Earlier Romano-British features

Well S294 (Fig. 10a – section) was the most substantial of the two wells revealed on the site. It had an internal diameter (shaft) of 0.5m and overall diameter of 1.4m. Hand excavation was undertaken to a depth of 1m before the remaining machine excavation revealed a depth of 4.1m to the base of the well's construction. The upper levels of the well had been lined with tabular and squared white Lias limestone pieces to a depth of 2.6m. The remainder of the construction was cut through natural Blue Lias clay. Excavation revealed that the well had been deliberately infilled in one episode and contained a single stony fill throughout, which contained a small quantity of 2nd-century pottery and animal bone (356).

Well S343 (Figs 10b – section, 11) had an internal diameter of 0.5m and overall diameter of 1.3m. Hand excavation was undertaken to a depth of 1m before

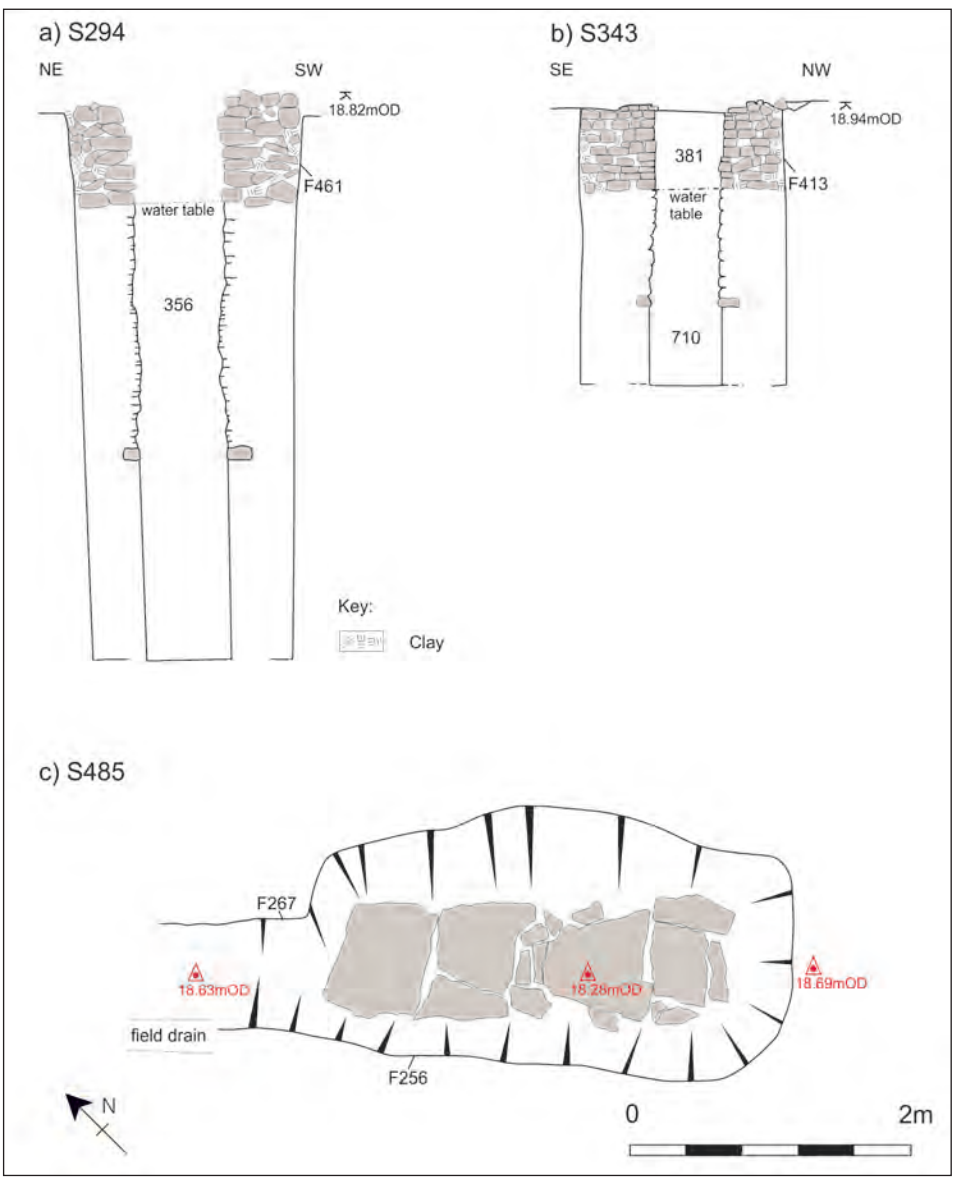

Fig. 10 Earlier Romano-British structures

Fig. 11 Well structure 343 viewed from north-west. Scales 1m and 0.5m

machine-excavation revealed a depth of 2.1m to the base of the well. Its construction comprised white Lias tabular and squared stone pieces up to the edges of the construction cut. Unlike structure 294, the well appeared initially to have silted up naturally, after being partially infilled with a deposit approximately 0.4m thick comprising a waterlogged peaty material containing quantities of small tree branch fragments and a piece of worked wood representing part of a post. A very small quantity of 2nd-century pottery was recovered from the upper fill (381). The differential fills and the shallow depth of this well may indicate that it replaced well S294, possibly in response to rising water levels.

Evidence for industrial activity was minimal. A single feature, F553, appears to represent the base of a former oven or furnace-like feature. However, this was only evident as an ill-defined area of intensely burnt/scorched natural gravels and covering an area of approximately 1.2 x 0.4m. A substantial rectangular pit, F256 (Fig. 10c – plan) measured 3.5m x 1.8m and was 0.5m deep with a stone-slabbed base. The profile of this feature and the nature of its main fill, comprising largely stone pieces, suggests that this feature was once stone lined, denoted Structure S485, with much of the stone deliberately removed at a later date. It is possible that it represents the remnants of a structure such as a water trough. A cluster of small features (F289), comprised five post holes each containing quantities of stone packing and appear to represent elements of a former post-built structure, although they formed no discernible pattern.

Three closely spaced graves were recorded alongside ditches F490 and F510 – F439, F478 and F531 (Fig. 12 – plans) – with an outlier (F246) to the north-west. Three contained a single inhumation burial in a crouched or flexed position and one of the graves, F439, contained both a female adult and infant inhumation (see Fig. 13). Grave F531 contained evidence of a coffin, indicated by the presence of a number of iron nails along the sides of the grave. A number of hobnails around the feet of the skeleton indicate the presence of footwear. No graves contained grave goods. Radiocarbon determinations are set out below. Two small cremation burials, in pits F339 and F344, were located towards the north-west extent of the site, away from the main focus of activity. Each had dimensions of between 0.3m and 0.4m in diameter and maximum depth of 0.1m. Neither had evidence to suggest they were contained in vessels.

Middle Romano-British (late 3rd to early 4th century AD) (Fig. 2 – plan)

Activity from this phase was seemingly limited, comprising a single ditch, F119 (Fig. 14a – section), a large pit, F120 (Fig. 14b – section), and an inhumation burial, Sk 103 in grave F104 (Fig. 14c – plan). The

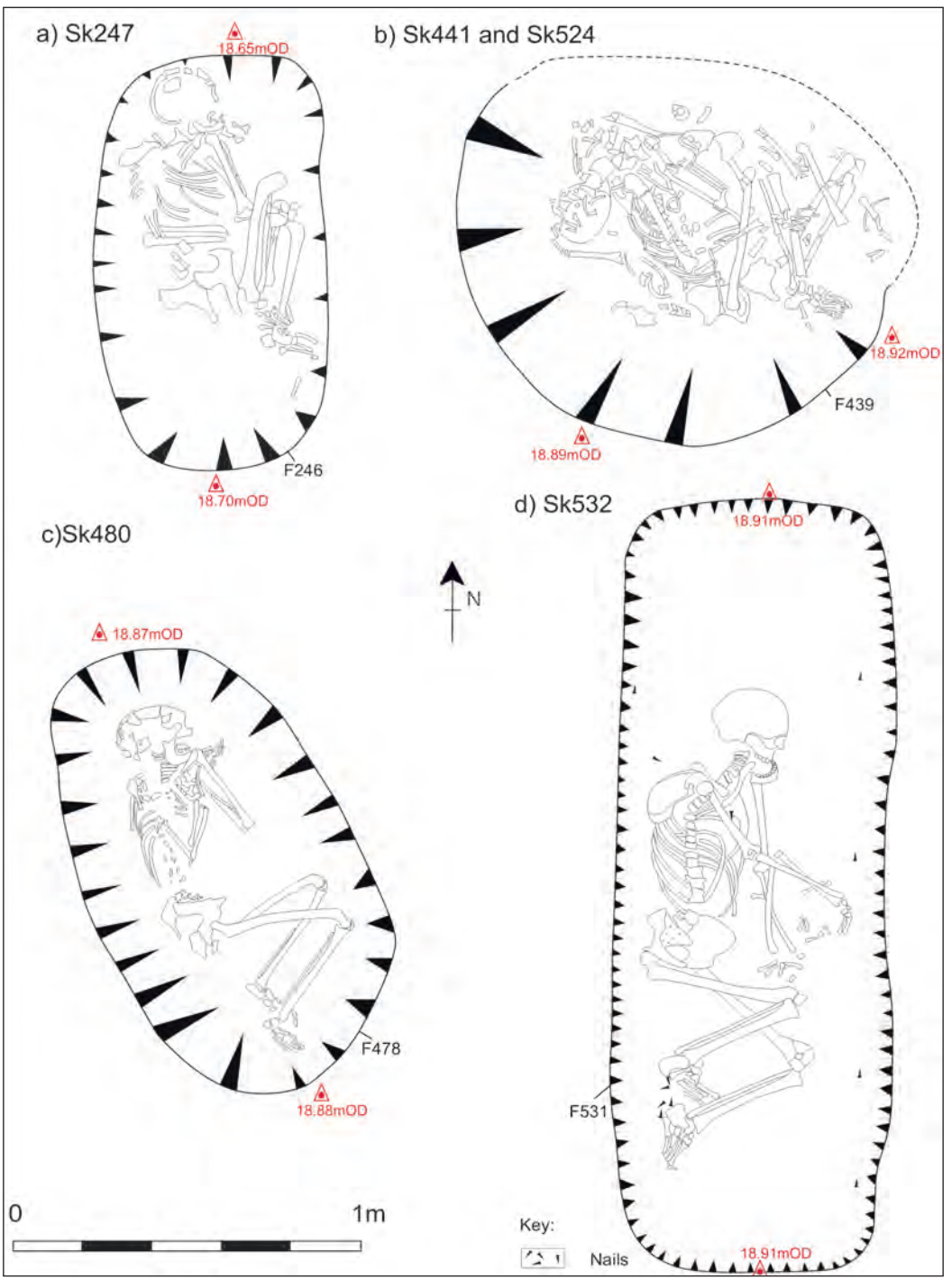

Fig. 12 Earlier Romano-British inhumations

Fig. 13 Grave 439 containing skeletons 441 and 524. Scale 1m

relatively high quantity of artefacts recovered from two of these features indicates that settlement activity at this date is underrepresented in the limited number of archaeological features present, and that more activity during this phase occurred just outside the excavation limits to the east and south.

Ditch F119 was aligned north-west to south-east, terminating towards the north-west, where it cut an earlier ditch. It was 68m in length with a maximum width of 1.2m and depth of 0.5m. Notably, this feature contained a dark humic fill along its length, which contained large quantities of domestic waste, including pottery and animal bone. This fill gradually became distinctly absent in finds and much lighter in its composition to the north-west where the feature terminated. This may indicate that the occupational debris contained within the feature clearly derives from outside the excavation limits to the south. Pit F120 had a maximum diameter of 2.3m and a depth of 1.1m. It contained a single episode of deliberate infilling, likely to have taken place sometime in the early 4th century. Grave F104, contained the severely-truncated remains of an adult male, with evidence for it being contained in a coffin given by the presence of a small quantity of iron nails. Unlike the earlier inhumations revealed on the site, this burial was laid out in a supine/extended position. There were no grave goods. A radiocarbon determination of 140-390 cal AD was obtained from this burial.

Post medieval

The remaining activity on the site comprised evidence associated with former agricultural practices of ridge and furrow of post-medieval date. This was represented by a series of shallow broad linear furrows, although no ridges survived. A number of the furrows were investigated revealing an average width of 2.5m and depth of 0.2m. A small quantity of 18th-/19th-century pottery was recovered. A series of land drains running across the site are also likely to be of a similar date.

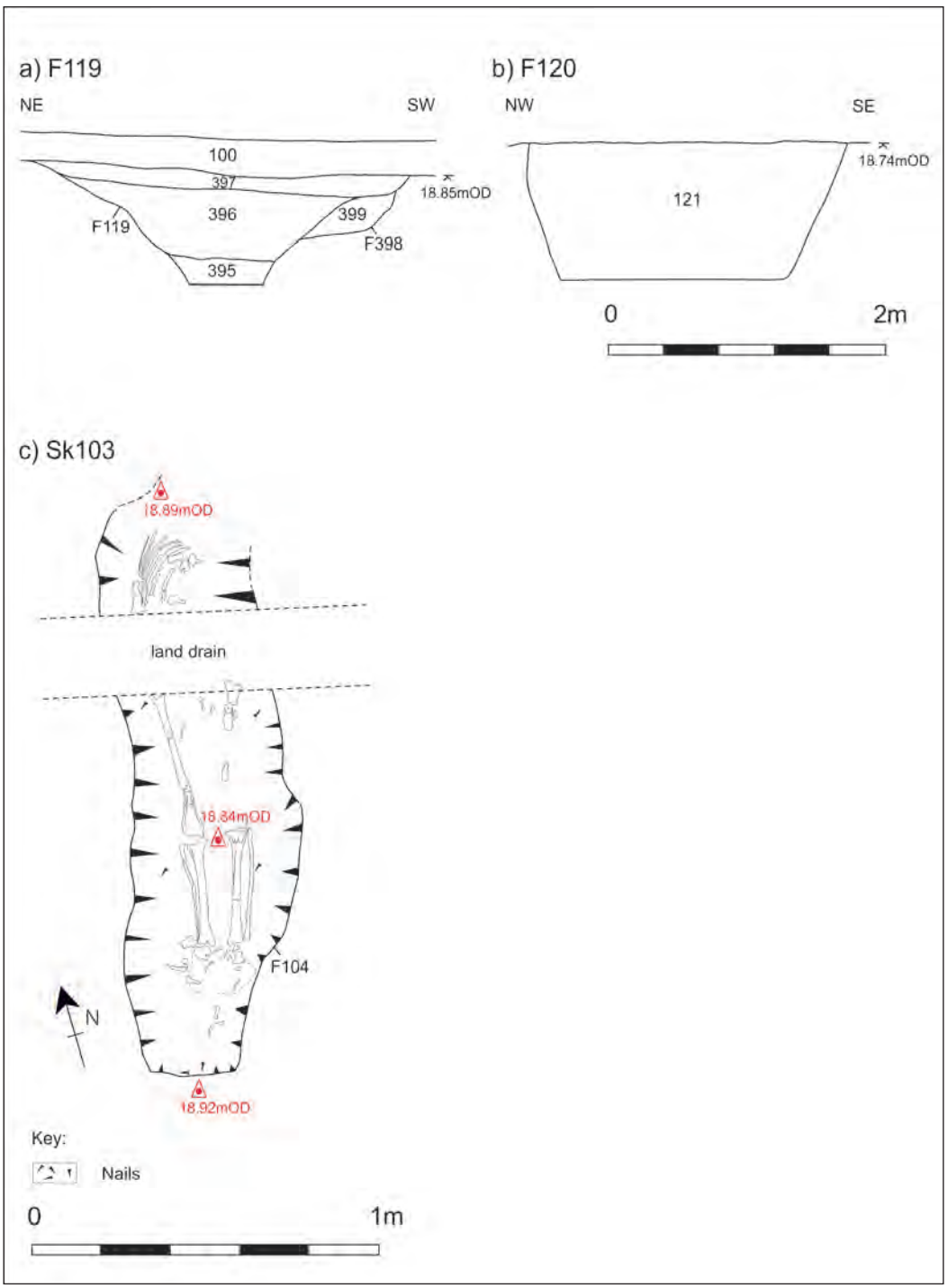

Fig. 14 Later Romano-British features

THE FINDS

Pottery
M. Corney

Introduction

The excavation recovered 3,661 sherds of pottery weighing 33.592kg with an average sherd weight of 9.2g. The majority of the assemblage, 90.94% by number and 84.53% by weight, is of Mid-Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date, is of local origin and largely derived from the fills of pits and ditches. In addition to the Iron Age material there is also a small group of 4th-century late Romano-British material.

Methodology

All of the material has been quantified by number, weight, EVE% by rim count and fabric groups. The Iron Age fabrics are cross-referenced to the local series devised for assemblages, notably from Hengistbury Head (Cunliffe 1987). The Romano-British fabrics are referenced to the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998) and local series. Full details of the ceramic assemblage are held in the project archive.

Mid-Late Iron Age

The Mid-Late Iron Age assemblage is the largest from the site and comprises 2,688 sherds weighing 20.743kg with an average sherd weight of 7.7g. The majority of the material is in moderately good condition with soft breaks and some evidence of abrasion. The majority of the forms are all typical of the Late Iron Age to Early Roman repertoire from the Wareham-Poole Harbour industry. The majority of the assemblage is typologically Late Iron Age in date.

Later Prehistoric Local and Regional Products

Sandy Fabrics

Hand-made sandy fabric groups dominate and are typical of the products of the Wareham and Poole Harbour region:

Q2 Common to abundant coarse quartz sand, well-sorted. Common Durotrigian Black Burnished ware fabric; equivalent of Hengistbury Head fabric A4b and present there in phases LIA1 and LIA2 (Brown 1987); Wytch Farm fabric Q2 (Lancley and Morris 1991) with sources in the Wareham-Poole Harbour area. This is the dominant fabric in the assemblage used for all jars, bowls and lids. External surfaces are burnished, some to a very high degree.

The surface colour in fabrics Q1 and Q2 normally ranges from dark brown to dark grey although all of the flat bead-rim jars, JC4, have uniform, oxidised external surfaces.

Flint-tempered Fabric

Hand-made and probably locally sourced from the chalkland some 25km to the east. Fabric F1 is scarce and only accounts for less than 1% by weight and number. Apart from one square-section rim, possibly from a saucepan pot, all of the assemblage in this fabric group comprises body sherds. The majority of the sherds in this fabric were recovered from the successive gullies of a roundhouse (F732, 733) and are of probable Middle Iron Age date.

F1 Moderate medium to coarse flint (mainly 2-4mm), irregularly sorted in a sandy clay matrix.

Shell-tempered Fabric

S1: Moderate coarse shell (mainly 1-4mm).
Hand-made and probably locally sourced Fabric S1 accounts for 2.1% by weight and 1.7% by number. The few rims are simple, square or slightly rounded, probably from saucepan pots of Middle Iron Age date.

Forms

The Late Iron Age assemblage is dominated by jars which form 87.92% of the assemblage by EVE (Table 1). The majority of the forms are in Fabric Q2. The forms find close parallels with the assemblage from Hengistbury Head (Cunliffe 1987). A complete JE4.2 jar with the base pierced after firing, was recovered from context 445.

TABLE 1 POOLE HARBOUR/WAREHAM LIA FORMS BY EVE%

FORM	EVE %
Jar JE4.1/2	66.54
Jar JD4.5	15.93
Jar JD4.41	5.45
Bowl BC3.3	5.04
Bowl BC3.11/12	5.76
Lid	1.28
TOTAL	**100**

Decoration

Jars JE4.1/2 may feature a zig-zag motif on the neck and burnished decoration on the body including acute lattice, irregular cross-hatch or wavy-lines. Impressed or hand moulded 'eyebrow' motif is also present, one on a jar of JE4.1/2 and one on a bead-rim bowl type BC3.3.

Earlier Romano-British

The earlier Roman assemblage comprises 636 sherds weighing 7,549g with an average sherd weight of 11.8g. The assemblage continues to be dominated by coarse wares from the Poole Harbour area (South East Dorset Black Burnished Ware 1). Fine wares, imported and local, are very rare and no amphorae are present.

South-East Dorset Black Burnished Ware 1 (SEDBB1)

The fabric is as defined by Tomber and Dore (1998, 129) and is the largest Romano-British fabric group, 73.46% by number and 73.64% by weight. SEDBB1 vessels represent 81.04% by EVE of the Romano-British assemblage.

Coarse Reduced Wares (CRW)

Wheel-made reduced grey, slightly micaceous sandy wares. The fabric group exhibits a range of colours from mid-grey to dark grey and probably represent both local and regional wares from unknown sources.

South-West Black Burnished (SWBB)

Three sherds of SWBB were noted, all from an everted rim jar.

Forms

The SEDBBI forms present are Type 1/2 everted rim jars, Type 20 dishes and Type 22, 23 and 36 bowls. A near complete type 23 carinated bowl in SEDBBI, probably copying a samian Drag. 29, was recovered from context (491), ditch F490, and a near complete Type 36 bowl in SEDBBI from context (680). The CRW grey sandy fabrics largely copy SEDBB1 types such as Type 2 everted rim jars and Type 20 dishes and 22 bowls. Also present are small quantities of Severn Valley Ware, all sherds being from tankards of 2nd- to early 3rd-century form (Webster 1976, 22-30). Fine wares and imports are rare with only very small quantities of South Gaulish and Central Gaulish samian ware, totalling 18 sherds, representing less than 0.5% of the assemblage by number. The earlier Romano-British assemblage is characterised by local coarse ware forms and fabrics with little evidence of access to specialised products, despite the close proximity of the site to the local market town at Ilchester. This suggests a low status agricultural settlement.

Later Roman

The later Roman assemblage is small with 305 sherds weighing 3,494g with an average sherd weight of 16.47%. The higher average sherd weight is due to 22 body sherds from a large Norton-Fitzwarren-type ware (NORT) storage jar from context 136. This group is dominated by SEDBBI products forming 86% of the late Roman assemblage. No fine wares are present.

Forms

The SEDBBI forms present are Type 3 everted rim jars, Type 20 and 25 bowls. The CRW grey sandy fabrics copy SEDBB1 Type 3 everted rim jars and Type 25.

Discussion

The assemblage features a small amount of Middle to Late Iron Age types represented by handmade vessels in a limited number of fabrics. The most common fabric is a hard fossil shell-tempered ware and forms include saucepan pots and simple plain rim jars. Flint-tempered fabrics are also present in smaller quantities with saucepan pots, simple square rim jars and slightly everted rim jars being noted. Each of these fabric groups and forms can be paralleled at South Cadbury hillfort (Barrett *et al*. 2000) and Ham Hill (Morris 1987; Brittain *et al*. 2013) and probably date from the 3rd century BC to the mid-1st century BC.

The majority of the assemblage is dominated by Late Iron Age to early Roman vessels, mainly derived from the Poole Harbour and early Roman Dorset Black Burnished industry. The most common forms are jars. The earlier Romano-British assemblage continues to be dominated by coarse wares from the Poole Harbour area (South East Dorset Black Burnished Ware 1) although grey sandy fabrics also occur. The latter are probably of local origin and largely copy BB1 types. Also present are small quantities of Severn Valley Ware, all tankards of 2nd- to early 3rd-century form (Webster 1976, 22-30). Early Roman fine wares are rare. Two samian vessels, a South Gaulish Drag. 37 from context (136), ditch F119 and a Drag. 18 from context (492), ditch F490

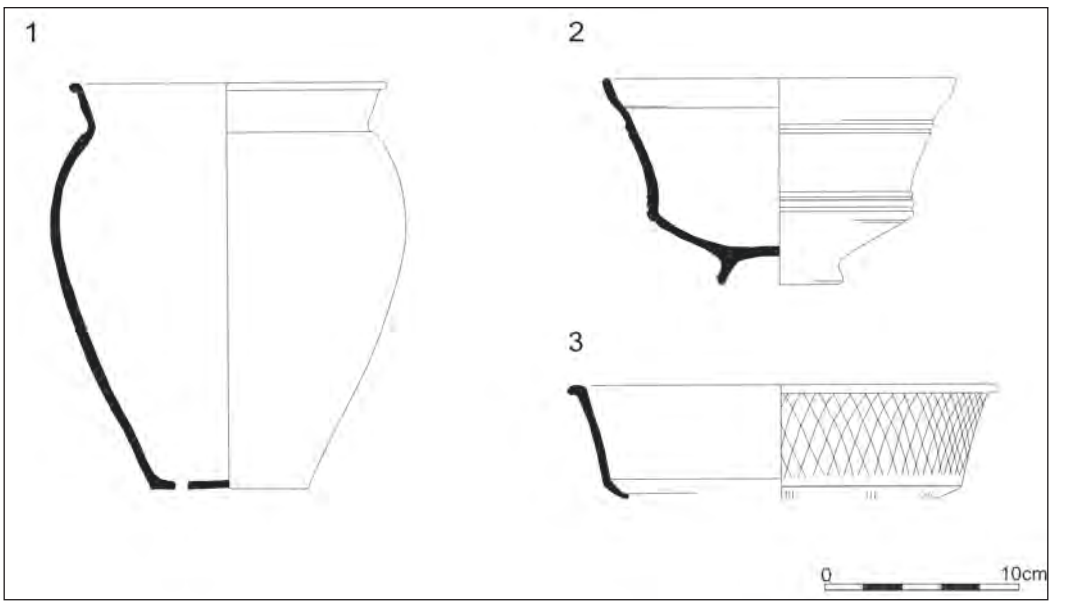

Fig. 15 Pottery vessels

have been repaired with lead rivets suggesting careful curation of prized possessions. One sherd of Lezoux Colour Coated Ware of 2nd-century date was noted from gully F307. Specialised Roman forms, such as flagons and mortaria, are also rare with only five mortarium sherds noted, probably representing two vessels – all of south-western origin.

The earlier Romano-British assemblage is characterised by local coarse ware forms and fabrics with little evidence of access to specialised products, despite the close proximity of the site to the local market town at Ilchester. There is a marked decline in later Roman activity. There is little evidence for 3rd-century activity, and 4th-century material, usually so abundant on rural Roman sites in the Ilchester area at sites such as Catsgore (Leech 1982) and Bradley Hill (Leech 1981), is sparse. Classic later Roman Black Burnished 1 types such the drop flange bowl Type 25 and Type 3 everted rim jars are present in only seven contexts – (118), ditch F119; (121), pit F120; (127) ditch, F119; (136), ditch F119; (268) ditch F267; (417), ditch F729 and (570), ditch F572. No later Roman fine wares such as New Forest or Oxford products are present. No late SEDBBI types or fabrics as defined by Gerrard (2010) are present. It is probable that activity on the site ceased by the early to mid 4th century.

The Illustrated Material

The majority of the forms conform to well-established regional type series from Hengistbury Head (HH) or Greyhound Yard (GY) and are referenced in the text. Three complete or near complete vessels are illustrated here (Fig. 15).

1. Context 445. Fill of ditch F353. Complete everted rim jar. Base pierced with three holes after firing. Fabric Q2. Late Iron Age to early Roman. Form HH JE4.2.
2. Context 491. Primary fill of ditch F510. Carinated bowl with pedestal base and two grooves above carination. SEDBBI. Form GY 36. Late 1st to mid-2nd century.
3. Context 680. Clearance horizon. Flat-rim bowl with chamfered base. Wall of vessel decorated with burnished acute lattice and underside of base with radiating burnished lines. SEDBBI. Form GY 23. Earlier to mid 2nd century.

Ceramic building material

A very small quantity of ceramic building material was recovered, comprising four fragments weighing 44g. All the fragments are small and could easily fall into the fired clay category were it not for the flat surfaces. All the fragments are made from an oxidised

bright orange, very abraded, fine fabric. Three fragments were recovered from early Romano-British contexts, while the fourth was recovered from a Late Iron Age feature.

Fired clay

Two hundred and twenty fragments of fired clay, weighing 1,466g, were recovered, the bulk of which came from Middle to Late Iron Age and early Romano-British deposits. All the fragments are of a fine clay matrix which is likely to be the local Lias stone, present naturally on the site. Many of the fragments are small and featureless but a small number have finger or daub impressions on their surfaces.

Metalwork and slag

Iron

Eighty-four iron objects were recovered from the excavation. Most of these are associated with Romano-British inhumation burials Sk103 and Sk532 and represent both coffin nails and hobnails. Grave F104 contained six coffin nails and a small quantity of hobnails; however, this grave had been truncated both at its head end and across its central area which probably removed any further nails that may have been present. Grave 531 contained 29 hobnails, at least 15 coffin nails and five cleats (studs). Both inhumations appear likely to have been contained in coffins and both buried with footwear, indicated by the presence of hobnails recovered from around the feet. The remaining iron objects are all mainly roofing nails and a number of unidentifiable pieces and were recovered from both early and later Romano-British ditch contexts.

Copper alloy

Six copper-alloy objects were recovered from the excavation, including five items of personal adornment or dress. Each was found in deposits dating from the early Romano-British phase, with the exception of Object 3, a possible brooch pin of later Romano-British date and recovered from pit F120, and Object 17, dating from the Middle Iron Age (discussed below). Object 5 comprises five small lumps of corroded copper alloy forming a single object and recovered from context (258) in pit F256. Object 8 comprises part of a poorly preserved bow brooch of 2nd-century AD date, recovered from context (369) in pit F370. Object 15, recovered from context (514) in ditch F572, is a probable ring fashioned from a bracelet fragment, although the terminals do not conjoin. Evidence for decoration is present on some parts of its surface but too poorly corroded to identify what it may represent. Object 13 is a coin recovered from context (540) in ditch F565, a dupondius of Hadrian (AD 117-38).

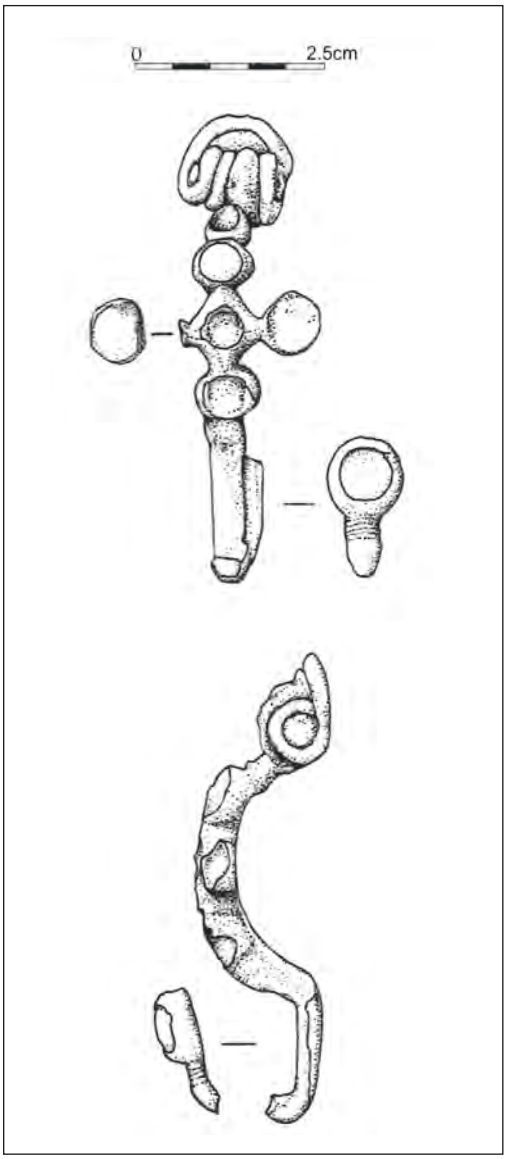

Fig. 16 La Tène II brooch

Object 17 (Fig. 16), recovered from context (658) in ditch F659, is an ornate early La Tène II brooch of copper alloy with coral and glass inlay. Now in three

pieces, the brooch is complete apart from the pin and is in good condition. The brooch comprises a cast, low arched, bow with cruciform projections, each terminating in circular, hollow bowls, all originally containing inlays. The uppermost bowl still contains an inlay, possibly of glass or enamel. The other three bowls retain traces of a white material, probably coral. The foot of the catchplate makes a 180º out-turn to meet to lower part of the bow, forming an open catchplate. The out-turned foot is decorated with incised transverse grooves and terminates in a bowl against the lower bow and retains traces of a probable coral inlay. The head of the brooch takes the form of a false spring of four coils with an external chord. As with other known examples of this type, the pin was hinged and the copper-alloy axial bar is visible. There is no evidence for decorative plates covering the axial bar terminals. Traces of iron staining on the false spring suggest that the original pin, probably of copper alloy, had broken and been substituted with an iron replacement.

The brooch is an unusual insular variant of the early La Tène II tradition within the British Isles. It belongs to Hull and Hawkes (1987) type 2Ba who describe the class as 'decorative forms, peculiar to Britain' (*ibid*., 143) where the design can be appreciated from the side or face on. Within this group, the Yeovilton example is of the sub-type 2Ba2 which are characterised by the use of coral inlays and highly ornate bows (Adams 2013). The most complete example known, still retaining its pin and coral stud inlay, comes from an Iron Age burial at Newnham Croft, Cambridgeshire (Fox 1923; Adams 2013, fig. 3.5). No two examples are the same and it is likely that they are individual creations.

A recent major study (Adams 2013) records only five examples of the 2Ba2 variant from the British Isles with find spots ranging from Barrow, Cumbria to Widworthy in east Devon (*ibid*., map 6.23). The limited dating evidence points to the latter half of the 3rd century BC, probably continuing into the 2nd century BC (Adams 2013, 112). The replacement of the original pin suggests that this brooch was a prized possession and been carefully curated, perhaps remaining in use until the early to mid-1st century AD when it was deposited in ditch F655.

Slag

Forty-six fragments of slag were recovered from 16 contexts across the excavation. Most of the slag is small, lightweight, vesicular, pale coloured fragments, formed from the reaction of wood ash and silica (sand). This may derive from domestic hearths. There are no concentrations of slag within any one feature, indicating that this material is likely to be redeposited from small hearths nearby. Most the slag was recovered from features of Middle-Late Iron Age date and the remaining fragments recovered from early Romano-British features.

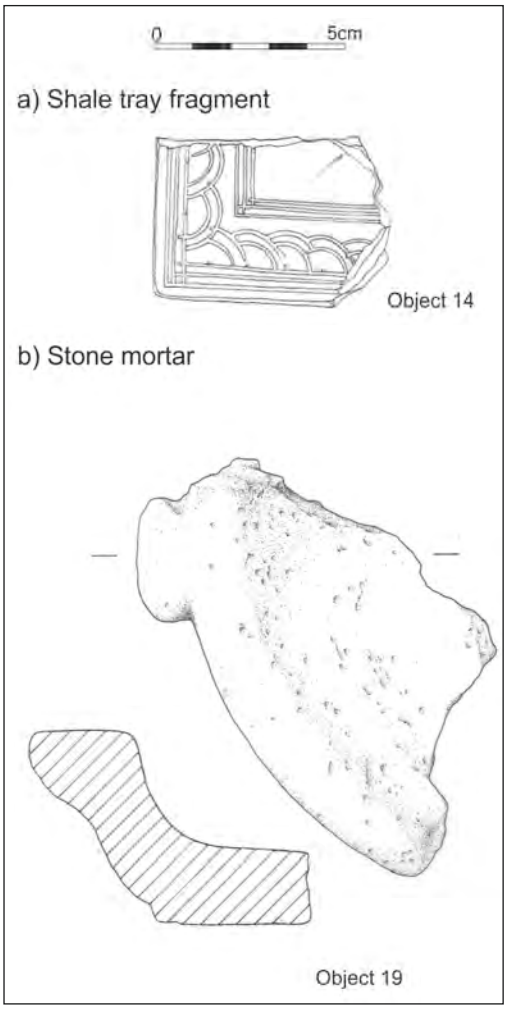

Fig. 17 a) Shale tray fragment; b) Stone mortar

Shale

Three fragments of shale were recovered, of which two were found in Late Iron Age deposits and are both plain and undiagnostic tabular fragments. The third piece, Object 14 (Fig. 17a), is a corner fragment from a tray, recovered from context (540) in ditch 565. This

piece is decorated with an incised border comprising a row of third concentric circles with bands of parallel lines either side. The compass point is visible on most of the circles. The piece which was recovered from an early Romano-British deposit and has parallels with a tray from Silchester (Lawson 1976, fig 11.A) which has a similar border style. The shale derives from the known beds at Kimmeridge, Dorset, where shale working industries are known from the Bronze Age and continued through into the Romano-British period.

Worked and burnt stone

Thirteen pieces of worked or burnt stone were recovered, of which most were natural pieces that show evidence of being heat affected. The burnt stone fragments are locally-derived Lias, and were recovered from Late Iron Age pit fills. None show any evidence of having been worked and possibly derive from nearby hearths. Three worked stone objects were recovered, including part of a limestone mortar. The mortar (Object 19) was recovered from early Romano-British context (410) in ditch F409 and is quite shallow, with a lug surviving on one side (Fig. 17b). A spindle whorl or possible loom weight (Object 18) was recovered from early Romano-British context (153) in pit F152 and a possible incomplete pot lid, with evidence of burning, was recovered from early Romano-British context (124) in ditch F122.

Glass

Three fragments of glass were recovered, two of which were unstratified and the other from early Romano-British context (513) in gully F512. All three glass fragments originate from vessels, but are undiagnostic and their forms are unknown.

Shell

Seven marine shells were recovered from six early Romano-British deposits. These comprise a mussel shell and five oyster shells. Most of the oyster shell are right valves with only one left valve present. Only two shells have diagnostic features, notches from where the shells have been opened.

Wood

Two pieces of wood were recovered from the primary deposit of early Romano-British well Structure 373 (fill 710). One piece represents part of a branch, while the other appears as a piece of broken stake or post.

TABLE 2 RADIOCARBON DATING RESULTS

Material	Context	Lab no.	Result BP	$\delta^{13}C$ (‰)	$\delta^{13}N$ (‰)	C/N ratio	Cal. BC/AD
Human bone, long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Sk103, grave 104	SUERC-89083 (GU52637)	1802 ± 27	-19.8	12.2	3.2	140-390 cal AD
Human bone, long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Sk247, grave 246	SUERC-93255 (GU54793)	1837 ± 24	-20.3	10.4	3.2	91-241 cal AD
Human bone, long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Sk441, grave 439	SUERC-89084 (GU52639)	1938 ± 25	-20.2	10.8	3.1	9-127 cal AD
Human bone, long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Sk480, grave 478	SUERC-89085 (GU52640)	1939 ± 25	-20.4	11.4	3.2	8-126 cal AD
Human bone, long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Sk524, grave 439	SUERC-89086 (GU52641)	1810 ± 27	-20.7	11.0	3.2	128-321 cal AD
Human bone, long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Sk532, grave 531	SUERC-89087 (GU52642)	1854 ± 27	-20.6	11.2	3.2	85-231 cal AD
Human bone (cremated) long bone fragment: *Homo Sapiens*	Fill (345) of pit 344	SUERC-89088 (GU52643)	1840 ± 25	-17.2	-	-	88-240 cal AD
Cattle bone, long bone fragment: *Bos Taurus*	Fill (132) of pit 133	SUERC-93253 (GU54791)	3027 ± 25	-21.4	7.7	3.2	1391-1208 cal BC
Cattle bone, long bone fragment: *Bos Taurus*	Fill (254) of pit 255	SUERC-93254 (GU54792)	3062 ± 25	-22.3	8.5	3.2	1409-1260 cal BC

Each of these have been identified as the species Prunus spinosa (blackthorn).

Radiocarbon dating
C. Coles

Nine radiocarbon dates were obtained, one from each human inhumation, one from a cremated human bone and one from each of the two cattle skeletons present. Long bone fragments were used in each case. All dated samples were assessed as suitable short-lived material and submitted to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC). The AMS radiocarbon date results are given in Table 2. Calibration of the results has been performed using the data set published by Reimer *et al*. (2013) and the program OxCal4 (online at: c14.arch.ox.ac.uk). The radiocarbon dating results were calibrated to a possibility of 95.4%.

Human remains
C. Coles

Summary

The remains of six human inhumations were recovered from five graves (Figs 10 and 11, above). The radiocarbon dates (see Table 2) show great variation in the calibrated dates between the 1st and 4th centuries AD, but phasing has been based on ceramic evidence. Four of the skeletons were in a crouched position, one was in a supine extended position and the other individual was unknown. Three females and a male are present, as well as a child of unknown sex, aged between 4 and 6 years old, along with an adult of unknown sex.

Two small, shallow, pits contained burnt bone. Context (340) contained 4g of burnt bone and (345) contained 30g of burnt bone. Both are considered to date to the early Romano-British period. The total weight of the cremated remains of an adult can be up to 2,000g or more (McKinley 1993); therefore, the cremated human bone from Yeovilton represents a very small fraction of the overall remains of an individual.

Methodology

The human remains were excavated by hand and then washed. Samples were taken from all graves, around the skull, abdomen, hands and feet to recover all small bones. Sex calculation was ascertained by skull and pelvis morphology based on Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). For age calculation in non-adults, tooth eruption and bone fusion was used (Scheuer and Black 2004). Many of the pelvic bones were badly damaged or missing meaning that calculating age of the adults was problematic. Very limited conclusions based on suture closure were used, with the exception of one individual where auricular surface was used as well. Both auricular surface and suture closure, as well as non-metric data, are also based on Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). A full skeleton catalogue is retained in the project archive. Samples selected for radiocarbon dating were all cortical long bone pieces.

TABLE 3 HUMAN REMAINS

Skeleton number	% survival	Burial position	Sex	Age	Pathology
Sk103	45%	Supine extended. NE-SW	Unknown	Adult	Periostitis on both femurs
Sk247	90%	Crouched on left side. N-S	Female	Adult (mature?)	Periostitis on femur and tibia. Hip and hand joint changes. Dental pathology
Sk441	90%	Crouched. NE-SW	Female	Adult (mature?)	Periostitis on both humerus and tibias. Vertebral, hip and hand joint changes. Dental pathology.
Sk480	70%	Crouched. NW-SE	Female	Adult (mature?)	Dental pathology
Sk524	60%	Unknown	Unknown	4-6 years old	None
Sk532	90%	Crouched. N-S	Male	35-45 years old	Joint disease in both hips, vertebral joint changes

Burial position and preservation

All of the inhumations were buried in a crouched position with the exception of Sk103 which was buried extended supine. Sk441 and Sk524 were commingled and may indicate a family relationship, perhaps mother and son/daughter. Sufficient of the female adult was articulated to indicate a crouched position, but the mixing of the two was such that the sequence of burial could not be determined. The preservation of most of the skeletons is good to average in terms of percentage survival, however the cortical bone survival is poor and there is some fragmentation.

Non-metric traits

Non-metric traits described here are detailed in Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). The only non-metric traits present were a mylohyoid bridge on the right mandible of Sk480, septal apertures on both humerii of Sk532 as well as extra ossicles at the bregmatic bone and lambdoid sutures on Sk532. Sk247 also had two zygomatico-facial foramen on the left zygomatic.

Pathology

Infection

Three of the skeletons showed signs of infection; both Sk103 and Sk247 had periostitial changes to the femurs and had changes to the tibia as well. Skeleton Sk441 had changes to the humerus and tibia. Periostitis is a non-specific infection of the outer layer of the bone which causes fine plaque-like new bone formation on the original cortical bone. This is a common condition throughout the Roman and other periods of history and could be caused by trauma or conditions such as ulcers (Roberts and Manchester 2010).

Joint disease

Skeletons Sk247, Sk441 and Sk532 all had signs of joint disease. Skeleton Sk247 had slight joint margin remodelling to the acetabulums and slight remodelling of the joint in the right hand including three proximal phalanges, two intermediate phalanges and three distal phalanges. Skeleton Sk441 had severe vertebral changes, including cervical vertebrae C3 and C4 which had completely fused. All vertebral bodies have pitting; the lumbar vertebral bodies show collapsing and joint remodelling. There was also joint changes on the hand phalanges of both left and right hands. Skeleton Sk532 has severe osteophytic changes to the acetabulums with a more severe change in the left hip. This individual also has degenerative pathology in the spine from the thoracic twelfth vertebra to the fifth lumbar vertebra. Lumbar vertebrae one to three are also in the process of fusing and there are also Schmorl's nodes present on most of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae. Schmorl's nodes are where the disc contents exerts pressure on the vertebral body surfaces (Roberts and Manchester 2010). Roberts and Cox (2003) noted that 14% of their studied Romano-British population had joint disease, with 4.8% having Schmorl's nodes. Heavy workload and age-related degeneration can cause these conditions.

Dental pathology

Three of the individuals had extreme dental pathology. Skeleton Sk441 had lost all teeth ante-mortem and the alveolar in both the mandible and maxilla had healed over almost completely. Skeleton Sk480 had four teeth lost ante-mortem; seven teeth had large caries and all teeth have extreme wear to the occlusal surface and one has minor calculus (calcified plaque). Skeleton Sk532 had lost one tooth (a second molar) ante-mortem and this is associated with a large abscess in the mandible. There are also large caries in the right third mandibular molar, extensive wear on all the teeth and slight calculus on all the teeth. Roberts and Cox (2003) notes that 8% of their studied Romano-British assemblage had ante-mortem tooth loss and 19% had caries; the Yeovilton assemblage is much higher than this but there are more mature adults present which will increase the likelihood of dental pathologies.

Cremated human bone

The size of the fragments from context 340 ranges from 5.6mm to 15mm; none of the pieces are identifiable to element. Age and sex analysis are not possible for this individual. The bone size for context 345 ranges from 6.4mm to 28.2mm. The only identifiable pieces are four long bone fragments and a premolar tooth root. The individual is an adult; however, due to lack of bone, no further ageing analysis is possible. Likewise, sex analysis is also not possible. No pathology was noted.

Conclusions

The small assemblage of skeletons found at Yeovilton are comparable to others from Roman Britain, in terms of burial orientation, pathologies and population demographic. Other local Romano-British cemeteries include five burials at Upton, Long Sutton, discovered

in 1900 (Parke 1944). Inhumation burials start to become more popular in towns from the middle 2nd century but in more rural areas cremation was still a common rite (Taylor 2001). These small features with burnt bone of very small quantities are also common in terms of percentages of the body present. Due to lack of identifiable elements, it is not possible to compare the individuals to the demographics of other cremation cemeteries.

Animal bone
C. Coles

Summary

Some 2,790 complete bones, or fragments, were recovered from the excavation (21,294g); 1,490 of the phased bones are identifiable to species, with 1,177 fragments of these coming from two near-complete cattle skeletons. The species represented on site are cattle, sheep/goat, pig, horse, dog, chicken, amphibian and small mammal, possibly shrew. The bones from the cattle skeletons are well preserved; the remaining bones have poor to average preservation.

Methodology

The bone was recovered through hand excavation and sieving. The mammal bones were identified using standard osteoarchaeological manuals such as Schmid (1972) and Hillson (1992). The chicken bones were identified using Cohen and Serjeantson (1996). MNI was calculated from the most frequently occurring bone for each species; zoning and left and right sides were also taking into account. For fusion analysis Reitz and Wing (1999) was used for cattle, sheep/goat and pig. Tooth wear was recorded using Grant (1982) and Payne (1973). Metrical sex estimation was calculated for cattle metacarpals using McCormick (1997). Pig canines were recorded for sex estimation. Measurements were taken according to Von Den Driesch (1976) using digital callipers and an osteometric board. Withers heights were recorded using the formulas of Fock (1966) for cattle and Teichert (1975) for sheep/goat. All data was recorded using a Microsoft Access database.

Results

TABLE 4 DOMESTIC SPECIES PER PHASE

Phase	Cattle		Sheep/Goat		Pig		Horse		Dog		Chicken	
	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI
Bronze Age	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Late Bronze Age - Cattle skeletons	1177	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middle - Late Iron Age	58	5	81	3	17	2	33	2	2	1	2	1
Early Romano-British	31	1	31	2	5	1	4	1	13	2	0	0
Late Romano-British	7	1	24	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
Total	1,274	10	136	6	22	3	41	4	15	3	2	1

Bronze Age bone

Two articulated cattle skeletons were found from contexts 132 and 254. These date to 1391-1208 and 1409-1260 cal BC, respectively. The cattle remains from context 132 are complete apart from a femur, a metatarsal, a patella and several phalanges. Several of the bones have chop marks, including vertebrae with neural arches chopped through, a radius with a chop mark to the proximal end and a metatarsal chopped through the distal end. The cattle remains from context 132 belong to an adult animal with all bones

fused; both third molars survive and have a mandible wear stage of 23 and therefore belong to an animal over the age of 50 months. A tibia and a metacarpal were measured for withers heights giving an average of 103.1cm.

The cattle remains from context 254 are complete minus a few missing phalanges. No butchery marks are present on any of the bones from context 254. The vast majority of the bones are fused, with several vertebral bodies still fusing at the time of death; cattle vertebral bodies fuse between 84-108 months. The third molar teeth were damaged, so accurate ageing is not possible, but all other teeth, including the fourth premolars, were erupted. It was possible to measure the breadth at the distal end of two of the metacarpals; these measure 51.7mm and 52.3mm respectively. Therefore, this animal is female. Five long bones could be measured for withers height calculation, giving an average height of 105cm. By the end of the 2nd millennium BC cattle were around 90-100cm tall at the withers (Serjeantson 2011). These two individuals are slightly taller than this, but not by a significant amount. A single cattle tibia was also recovered from context 295 (a ditch); this fragment is from an adult animal. No further information could be ascertained from this bone.

Middle to Late Iron Age bone

This phase produced 198 identifiable bones, including seven ribs from medium and large mammals. Cattle is the most dominant species based on MNI, with five individuals (58 bones). Long bones, loose teheth, mandibles, vertebrae, ribs, pelvis and foot bones are present. All the bones are from mature animals with the exception of four unfused bones. Three of the teeth can be analysed for ageing; one of these is 31-32 months, one 40-50 months and one over 50 months. These mature animals imply that cattle were being kept for secondary sources in this period. Four of the cattle bones were butchered; these are two humerii both with chop marks to the distal end, an ulna with knife marks on the side of the olecranon process and a pelvis with a chop through the acetabulum. Two of the cattle bones are measurable; these are a metacarpal with a breadth of the proximal end of 50.3mm and an astragalus with a lateral length of 54.5mm.

Sheep/goat is the second most dominant species based on an MNI of three with 81 bones; 34 of these are loose teeth, there are also mandibles, long bones, a calcaneus, pieces of pelvis and two vertebrae. A single femur is very small and porous and possibly from a neonate animal. A further five sheep/goat bones are unfused; these are a metacarpal from an animal under the age of 28 months, a radius from an animal under the age of 42 months, a tibia from an animal under the age of 24 months and two vertebrae from an animal under the age of 60 months. Two mandible wear stages were calculated, one from an animal aged 5-7 months and one from an animal aged 26-28 months. This mixture of ages of animals indicates breeding on site as well as animals being kept for secondary sources. None of the sheep/goat bones from this period had butchery marks. Ten sheep/goat bones could be measured, including a metatarsal with a length of 141mm, giving a withers height of 64.02cm. The measurements for the sheep/goat bones are comparable to other bones of the period including at Flagstones, Dorchester (Bullock 1991).

Seventeen pig bones were identified, with an MNI of two. The bones are scapulae, loose teeth, mandibles, long bones, a phalanx and a rib. All the bones are from adult animals apart from an unfused metacarpal from an animal under the age of 27 months and an unfused radius from an animal under 42 months. Two of the pig bones were butchered with diagonal knife cuts to the neck. A single pig canine is female.

There are 33 horse bones identified from this phase, an MNI of two. These are long bones, foot bones, loose teeth, scapula and a mandible. All bones are from adult individuals apart from an unfused distal femur. A single horse bone has butchery marks, this a first phalanx with a horizontal knife cut on the anterior surface. It cannot be ascertained whether horse meat was used for human consumption based on a single butchered bone. A horse metacarpal from this phase was measured and has a breadth at the proximal end of 43.3mm. This is comparable with horse metacarpals from the Middle and Late Iron Age at Flagstones, Dorchester (Bullock 1991).

The other bones from this phase are two dog bones (MNI of one), a mandible and a metapodial, both from an adult animal; no butchery marks are present and neither bone can be measured. Two domestic fowl bones were also found (MNI of one), a scapula and a humerus; neither were butchered. The humerus breadth at the distal end was measured as 15.6mm. Domestic fowl became much more common in the Late Iron Age reflecting the Roman influence which saw keeping fowl become popular across Europe (Poole 2010).

Early Romano-British bone

A total of 89 identifiable bones were recovered from this phase. Cattle and sheep/goat are equally dominant. Cattle has an MNI of two; there were 31 cattle bones recovered. Teeth, skull bones, pelvis, vertebrae, long bones and foot bones were all found. No neonate cattle bones were found and only a single vertebra is

unfused. A single cattle bone from the early Romano-British period had butchery marks; this was a femur with a chop mark to the proximal end. Two cattle bones are measurable. A tibia with a breadth at the distal end (BD) of 71.4mm is considered quite large for this period, but not the largest recorded which was a tibia having a BD of 76mm at Bancroft Villa, Buckinghamshire (Levitan 1990). An astragulus could also be measured; a greatest lateral length was 57.9mm and a greatest medial length is 52.5mm. This is also on the larger side for the Romano-British period.

Sheep/goat also has an MNI of two, with 31 bones. Long bones, teeth, skull and foot bones are all present. All the bones are fused with the exception of two very tiny porous neonate bones (a metatarsal and a tibia), a calcaneus with an unfused proximal end from an animal under the age of 36 months, and a tibia with an unfused proximal end from an animal under the age of 42 months. The presence of neonate sheep/goat bones on site implies there was possible breeding of animals occurring in this period. Four teeth can be analysed for ageing and these are two 26-28 months and two mature; this, alongside the fusion data, suggests that the rest of the animals were kept into maturity possibly for secondary sources. Only a single sheep/goat bone from this period has butchery marks; this was a femur with a diagonal chop mark to the distal end. None of the sheep/goat bones could be measured.

Five pig bones were recorded (an MNI of one); these are a loose tooth, two mandible fragments, a metatarsal and a scapula. The metatarsal and the scapula are both fused, and two mandible wear stages can be calculated as 23-25 months and as 25-27 months; these could be from the same individual with differing wear on the third molars. None of the pig bones had butchery marks or were measurable.

Four horse bones were recovered; these are three teeth and a metacarpal, which was fused. None of the horse bones were butchered and none could be measured. Thirteen dog bones were recovered (an MNI of two); these are teeth, mandibles and two femurs. The femurs were fused and none of the bones are butchered or could be measured. A single amphibian tibia, probably a frog or toad, and a common shrew mandible were also found from the early Romano-British phase; these were possibly included in the archaeological record by accident.

Late Romano-British bone

Thirty-five bones were identified from this phase. Sheep/goat is the most dominant species based on number of bones (24); these only had an MNI of one and are largely loose teeth with some long bones, mandibles and a vertebra. Several of the bones are fused, although a single femur had both proximal and distal end unfused and a radius with a distal unfused end. Two mandible wear stages can be calculated as 25-26 months and adult. None of the bones are butchered and only one was measurable, this a tibia with a BD measurement of 23.2mm. This is average for the later Romano-British period.

Seven cattle bones were identified: a long bone, a vertebra, a piece of pelvis, a loose tooth and a mandible. All the long bones present were fused. No tooth wear or measurements could be carried out. No butchery marks were noted.

Four horse bones were also identified: a loose tooth, two scapula pieces and a first phalanx. These are all from adult animals.

Comparisons

The Yeovilton animal bone assemblage is fairly small, resulting in limited information to be able to compare with other sites. The two cattle skeletons are of particular interest, though. These are mature animals, one with butchery marks and the other without. Whole cattle skeletons from the Bronze Age are not as common as from the Iron Age; however, there have been a number of sites across Southern England with partial or complete cattle burials for this period. These include twelve partial skeletons at Poundbury in Dorset (Morris 2008), a partial skeleton consisting only of vertebrae from Middle Farm, Dorset (Bullock and Allen 1997) and limb bones only from Shearplace Hill, Dorset (King 1962). Two partial cattle skeletons that were once believed to be complete, but damaged by modern ploughing action, were found at Old Sarum Spur, Wiltshire (Powell *et al*. 2005). These two cattle skeletons dated to 1600-1400 cal BC and one had a withers height of 1.1m, which is similar to the Yeovilton burials. Another complete cattle skeleton also damaged by plough action was found at South Lodge Camp, Wiltshire, associated with the Bronze Age enclosure (Legge 1991). Two complete cattle skeletons from the Late Bronze Age were also found at Crab Farm, Dorset (Papworth 1992); one of these was pregnant and was around 30 months old. There was a small butchery mark on the mandible of this individual. More recently, several complete cattle skeletons have been recovered associated with Middle Bronze Age farmsteads at Kingsmead Quarry, Horton, Berkshire (Chaffey *et al*. forthcoming).

One of the Yeovilton cattle skeletons has butchery marks. Morris (2008) notes that all major butchery processes are evident amongst the associated bone groups in his study. However, lack of butchery marks does not mean that no processing took place; skilled

butchers can process a whole animal and leave no cut marks (Morris 2008).

Cattle is the most dominant species based on MNI for the Middle to the Late Iron Age phase, but based on NISP sheep/goat is the most dominant. Sheep/goat bones formed a larger proportion of the assemblages in the Iron Age (Cool 2006). Pig levels remain consistently low for other sites throughout the Iron Age and Romano-British periods, as at Yeovilton (Cool 2006). Neonate sheep/goat bones recovered from both the Iron Age and Romano-British periods implies breeding on site for both phases. Based on butchery, age analysis and species present the collection from Yeovilton represents a normal domestic assemblage with the exception of the two cattle skeletons.

Environmental remains
W. Carruthers

Introduction

Seventeen bulk soil samples were recovered during the excavation from a range of domestic and burial features, including pits, ditches and graves. The samples were processed to assess the potential for environmental analysis. Bone remains (including human skeleton) are addressed separately above.

Methods

Samples was processed by standard AC flotation, using a siraf-type tank and 250 micron mesh sieve. After removal of the flot, residues were sieved over a 5.6mm, 2mm and 500 micron mesh sieve nest. Dried sample flots were then sorted under a stereo-binocular microscope (10-30 x magnification) for ecofacts, comprising charcoal, burnt and unburnt bone, terrestrial and marine molluscs, and charred plant macrofossils (CPM). Finer residues (2mm and 500 micron) were also scanned for ecofacts. The coarse residue fraction (5.6mm) was hand-sorted for artefacts and ecofacts using an illuminated hand lens. There were no waterlogged samples.

Results

The results indicate that environmental and radiocarbon dating potential from ecofacts was generally low, with small amounts of terrestrial and marine/estuarine molluscs present in most samples, and relatively low density of charcoal fragments and other CPM, ecofacts, including grain. Terrestrial molluscs were most frequent in two of the ditch fills (Features F510 and 725) possibly due to wetter ditch conditions. A moderate amount of possible marine/estuarine molluscs occurred widely in twelve of the 17 samples, indicating a nearby marine/estuarine environment or perhaps use of molluscs as an edible domestic resource. However, some mollusc material may also be fossiliferous, as fossils occurred occasionally throughout the samples.

Small trunk and branchwood charcoal fragments occurred in twelve samples. However, no charcoal was present in five samples and charcoal density was relatively low where it occurred, suggesting it represented background settlement material, rather than discrete concentrations. Only one ditch sample (context 491) contained a larger amount of small to medium-sized charcoal fragments perhaps indicative of domestic fuel or cooking waste. However, the amount and size of charcoal fragments was still relatively small and the potential for further wood charcoal analysis limited. In addition, no charred roundwood twigs suitable for radiocarbon dating were present in any of the samples.

The potential for environmental analysis of domestic plant use was also low, with most samples containing either an absence of charred grain/CPM or a low grain concentration, e.g. Sample 4 (context 144), which is likely to represent only background settlement material. A single, small concentration of c. 10 wheat/barley type charred grain was recovered from pit fill context (210), indicating some domestic use of cereal, but this is still a relatively low grain concentration.

In summary, the results indicate that environmental and radiocarbon dating potential was generally low across the site, with small amounts of well-preserved molluscs consistently present in most samples, but relatively low concentrations of charcoal and other domestic ecofacts, including grain.

DISCUSSION

The excavation results provide further evidence for extensive settlement at Yeovilton during the period from the Later Bronze Age into the later Romano-British period and provides some notable comparison with other local excavation results, particularly Lovell (2006), which lay almost contiguous to this site, to the west. The earliest evidence for activity on the current site was a single Late Bronze Age enclosure F388 which, with its external double cattle burial, comprises the only positive evidence recorded for activity of this date. While it is possible that later agricultural and settlement activities could have removed other associated features of this date, as were noted to the west, the intensity of landscape re-use here seems less of a factor than the astonishing

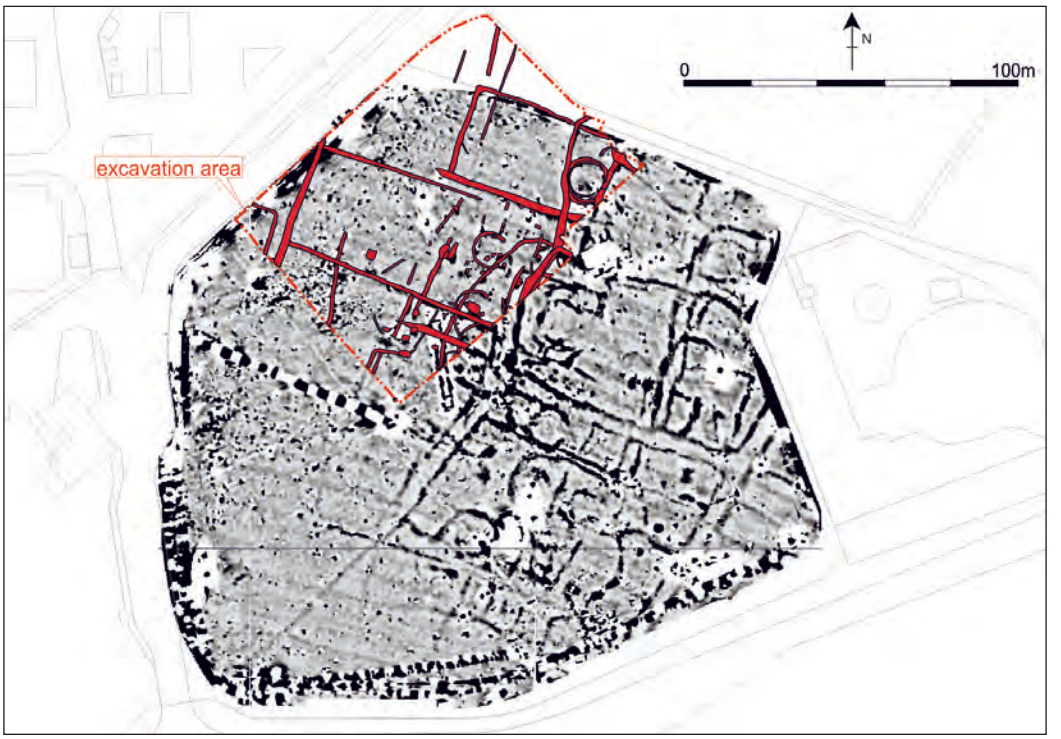

Fig. 18 Geophysical survey results

palimpsest that had to be unpicked by archaeologists on the adjacent site.

From the Middle/Late Iron Age, the morphology of the site comprised a complex of ditched enclosures representing field boundaries, and a trackway with a cluster of penannular ring gullies, considered to represent huts, animal pens or small paddocks. This can be seen continuing in the geophysical survey results of the area to the south beyond the excavated portion. The Middle to Late Iron Age phase of activity produced a quantity of pottery dating to the 3rd to the mid-1st century BC derived from settlement that included a number of huts across the south-east extent of the site, one representing several phases of possible roundhouse construction. Although devoid of internal features, hut(s) F732 and F733 revealed evidence for at least two phases of re-cutting of the drip gully implying that the site represents part of a well-established structure rather than a short-lived period of occupation. A quantity of predominately mid-1st century BC to mid-1st century AD pottery was recovered from this feature. Some of the remaining ring gullies may represent small animal pens or paddocks rather than drip gullies for houses, with some appearing in plan to be situated within field boundaries or enclosures. This settlement pattern of huts within enclosures also appears to continue outside the excavation area, as indicated by the geophysical survey (Fig. 18). Two rectangular post-built structures (F521 and F632), of unknown function, were also present within this phase of activity, but may represent grain or hay stores. With the exception of ring gully F149, all of the remaining features of this type had been truncated by both later Iron Age and Early Romano-British activity, suggesting a change of use or shifting of the settlement, possibly to the east and occurring sometime later within the Iron Age period.

This most intense phase of settlement is markedly more extensive and better preserved than on the Lovell's site, but confirms the trend of occupation shifting to the east noted at that site. During the Romano-British period the trend appears reversed; the current site is notable for its lack of any significant evidence for settlement, with few exceptions. The quantity and quality of pottery, animal bone, the presence of wells, human burials and a scatter of

pits are entirely consistent with the current site lying on the fringe of the farmstead recorded to the west. There is a marked decline in later Roman activity with little evidence for 3rd- or 4th-century ceramic material, usually so abundant on rural Roman sites in the Ilchester area such as Catsgore (Leech 1982) and Bradley Hill (Leech 1981). It is probable that activity on the site ceased by the early to mid-4th century AD.

The presence of Romano-British burials on the site, located alongside ditches, is again consistent with Lovell's observations. These were in an early tradition, interred in a crouched or semi-crouched position. By the middle of the Roman period, inhumation, usually crouched, was still the most common rite until Christian burial practices took over in the 4th century (Taylor 2001). Although none of the graves contained any dating evidence or grave goods and were situated a short distance away from each other, the results from C14 dating suggests a date range from the early 2nd century to the mid-3rd century AD, but the calibration of the dating in this period is rather broad.

The Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity revealed on the site can be further compared in the area to the site at Cannards Grave, near Shepton Mallet, where a similar Iron Age settlement was recorded (Birbeck 2002), with organised field systems oriented on the same or similar alignments. The lack of features or artefacts such as drying ovens and quern stones, both often found on sites of this nature and period and associated with arable activities, suggests that the primary land use was pasture.

Despite the agricultural nature of the Late Iron Age and Romano-British occupation of the site, the presence of the decorated shale, the La Tène II brooch and limited amount of finer pottery imports, attests to the higher status of occupation in the vicinity. The overall impression is that the area investigated at Yeovilton is clearly part of an extensive prehistoric and later Romano-British complex, further demonstrated both by the geophysical survey results immediately to the south-east and previous archaeological investigations to the north. Further extensive activity of this nature is known to be present in the vicinity to the north-west, north-east and south-east of the site from aerial photographs (SHER 54793, 55111 and 54805).

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