

A ROMAN SETTLEMENT IN THE MENDIP HILLS: SUMMARY REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT FULWELL LANE, FAULKLAND, HEMINGTON, 2016

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SUMMARY

Excavation at Faulkland, Hemington, on the Mendip Hills recorded part of a rural Roman settlement. Small quantities of flints indicative of transient visits by Mesolithic or Early Neolithic hunter-gatherers were the earliest remains found. The earliest features comprised two adjacent enclosures which may have originated in the Late Iron Age/Early Roman transition period. Despite the absence of structural remains, associated pottery, animal bone, charred cereals and metal finds suggest occupation focusing on the later 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The enclosure ditches were filled in by c. AD 200, making way for a rectilinear field or enclosure system, which was probably later Roman in date although it lacked much evidence of occupation. Three burials (two inhumations and one cremation) produced radiocarbon dates supporting the Roman dating from the finds. The site was truncated by later quarry pits probably dating to medieval and/or later times.

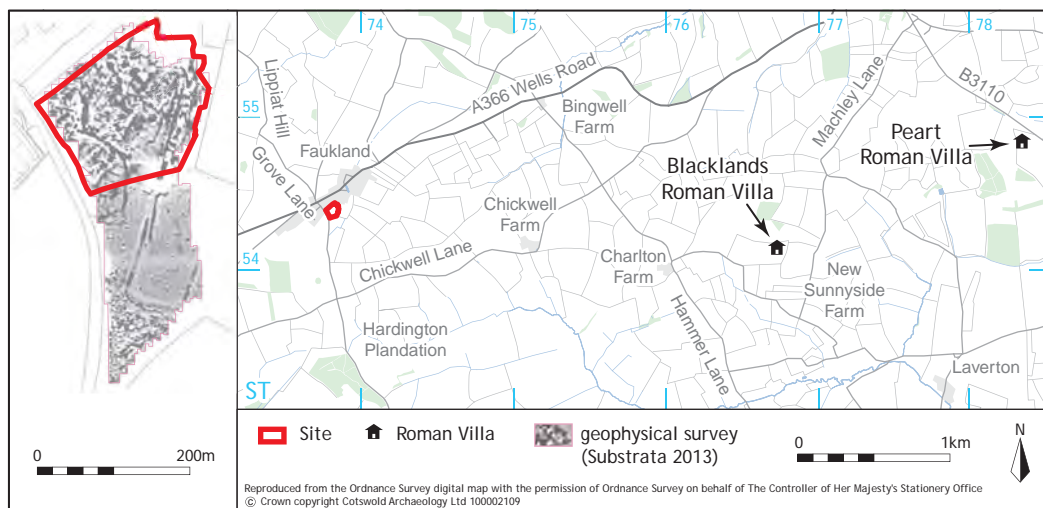
INTRODUCTION

During November and December 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an excavation at Land East of Fulwell Lane, Faulkland, Hemington (centred on NGR ST 7380 5435; Fig. 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of Ashford Homes (South West) Limited in advance of housing development. The site comprised a former paddock on the southern edge of the hamlet of Faulkland within the Mendips, an area characterised by limestone hills bisected by steep-sided stream and river

valleys draining into the Bristol Avon. The site lies at 150m AOD with the ground falling away gently to the north-east. The underlying geology is mapped as the Jurassic Forest Marble Formation (Mudstone) (BGS 2016), which formed a varied and broken substrate that had been selectively quarried in historical times. A spring on the south-eastern margin of the site caused drainage difficulties at the time of excavation.

A desk-based assessment of the site (AA 2013a) noted that Roman pottery and a skeleton within a stone coffin (Somerset HER 23653) were found in 1912 somewhere alongside Faulkland High Street immediately north of the site. An evaluation undertaken north-west of the site at the Faulkland Inn found Roman pottery in notable quantities but no cut features of this date, and also found small quantities of prehistoric flints (C. and N. Hollinrake 1991, 145). The Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society (BACAS) have undertaken extensive geophysical surveys 2km east of the site between Charlton Farm and Upper Row Farm (Oswin 2006; 2008), discovering Roman remains, including a possible villa at Blacklands. Peart Roman Villa lies 4.5km north-east of the site near Norton St Phillip and was partly excavated by BACAS in 2012 (Lewcun 2013).

A geophysical survey of the site (Substrata 2013), which included additional land to the south, revealed the presence of ditches and pits, with some of the former clearly defining enclosures (Substrata 2103; Fig. 1). A subsequent evaluation confirmed the presence of ditches and a few pits, although many were poorly defined due to the nature of the underlying brash substrate (AA 2013b). On the basis of these findings, excavation was required,



the results of which were assessed (CA 2016a). The present report is a summary of the findings, which are fully detailed in a typescript report (CA 2016b) forming part of the archive, and which is available through CA's website <http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/> CA report no. 16627.

RESULTS

Activity pre-dating the Early Roman settlement was restricted to residual prehistoric flints (including a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead) and a small quantity of handmade pottery probably dateable to the later Iron Age.

Early Roman settlement enclosures (AD 75–200)

Early Roman activity focused on two ditched enclosures, A and B (Fig. 2). The associated ceramic assemblage is largely dateable to AD 60/75–175/200, and two burials, one an inhumation and the other a cremation, were broadly contemporary. Most of the Roman pottery consists of local coarsewares, although there were some imported wares and a shale platter fragment. Other artefacts included a copper-alloy nail cleaner, an earring, an iron brooch and a fragment of a possible glass unguent bottle. The animal bone was dominated by sheep/goat remains (from which sheep were positively identified), with smaller quantities of cattle. These were primarily from meat-rich body elements, and

therefore the remains of food rather than butchery waste. A few horse, pig and dog bones were also present.

Enclosure A was defined by Ditches A, B, D, E and K. Its north-eastern side extended beyond the edge of excavation but it was pentagonal or hexagonal in plan and up to 43m across. Ditch C was contemporary and formed a smaller annexe. The ditches were substantial cuts with steep sides and flat bases; steep-sided terminals defined a number of entrances. Within the enclosure, Ditch L formed an internal boundary. The only other internal features were two steep-sided and flat-based pits, 15037 and 15041. The ditches contained a consistent fill sequence of primary silts overlain by stony bulk deposits suggestive of former bank material. A few tip lines suggested that these banks were present along the enclosure's interior. Roman pottery was found throughout the ditch fills and Ditch B also contained a possible copper-alloy earring (Fig. 6,1), an iron bow brooch (Fig. 6,3) and part of a whetstone, all found separately. Of these, the brooch is an early object, dateable to the mid 1st century AD. A soil sample from Ditch D produced charred cereal remains, dominated by spelt wheat, the main wheat grown in the region during the Roman period. Weed seeds from the sample probably derived from a mixture of grassland, field margins and arable fields.

To the south-west, Enclosure B was partially exposed. Further elements visible on the geophysical

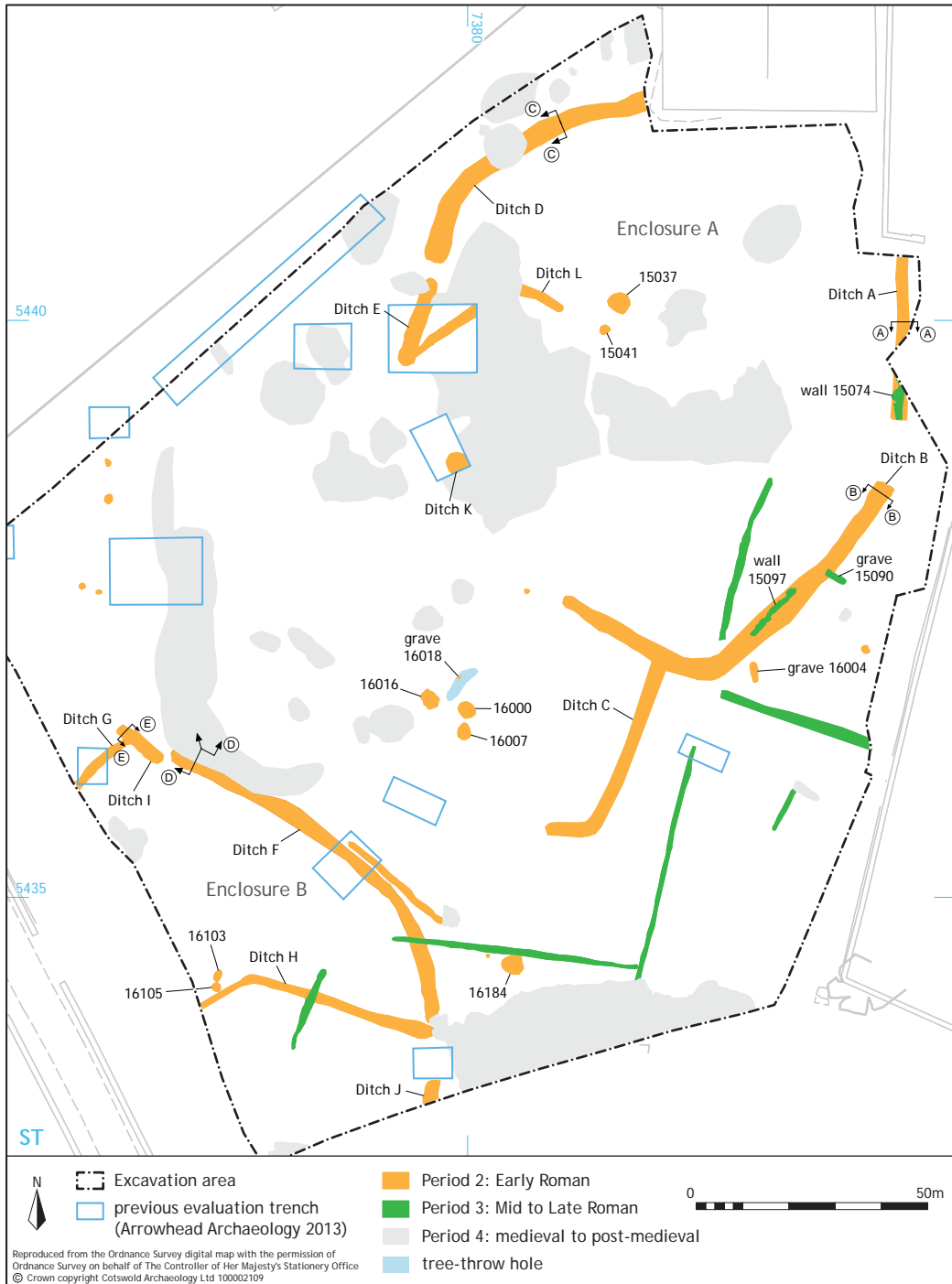


Fig. 2 Site plan (1:1500)

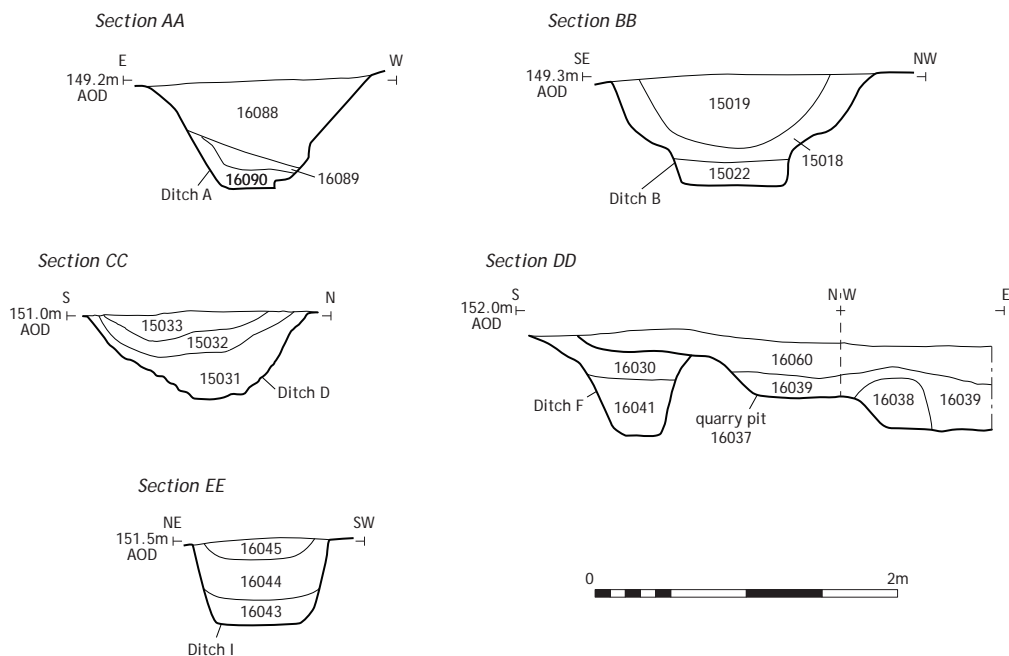


Fig. 3 Selected ditch sections (1:50)

survey plot suggest that it was comparable in size and shape to Enclosure A and it appears to have been of very similar date. It was defined by steep-sided, flat-based Ditches F, G and J with gaps between these providing entrances. Some modification was evident with Ditch I having been inserted to narrow the north-western entrance. Internally, Enclosure B contained Ditch H which divided the enclosure in a manner comparable to Ditch L within Enclosure A. Two steep-sided, flat-based, shallow pits (16103 and 16105) were the only other internal features, both containing some burnt clay. As with the Enclosure A ditches, the fills derived largely from stony bank material. As well as pottery and animal bone, Ditch F yielded a fragment from a glass unguent bottle, probably dating to the later 1st or earlier 2nd centuries AD.

The pottery from the enclosure ditches suggests that the enclosures ceased to be used by AD 175/200 and the bulk stony deposits would appear to represent deliberate slighting of the adjacent banks. Silt fills and possible turf lines above these backfills suggest that this backfilling left the ditches as remnant earthworks.

Pit 16184, east of Enclosure B, was steep-sided, flat-based and 0.4m deep. The natural substrate at

its base had been scorched and it was filled by a thin dark deposit, overlain by a stony clay backfill. It evidently contained a fire but its function remains uncertain.

Immediately east of Enclosure A, Grave 16004 contained the remains of a male aged at least 45 years at death (skeleton 16005; Fig. 4). He was of average height and had suffered from some tooth loss and possibly from arthritis, as well as a possible infection of his right foot that would have affected, but not prevented, his ability to walk. Bone from this individual was radiocarbon dated to 61–217 cal. AD (95.4% probability; SUERC-69027; Table 4), a date range compatible with the pottery from the enclosure ditches. To the west, Grave 16018 was cut into the fill of a tree-throw hole between Enclosures A and B. It was a small pit into which a South-east Dorset Black-burnished ware urn had been placed containing 374.1g of cremated human bone from an older adult of unknown sex. Horizontal truncation had removed part of the urn and potentially some of the cremated remains. Bone from this cremation burial was radiocarbon dated to 88–314 cal. AD (95.4% probability; SUERC-69029; Table 4) but the urn itself was not closely dateable.

Three pits (16000, 16007 and 16016) were found



Fig. 4 Photographs: grave 16004 looking south-west (0.4m scale) and grave 15090 looking south-west (0.4m scale)

to the immediate south-west of grave 16018. These were steep-sided and flat-based, and the base and lower sides of pit 16000 had been scorched. Both this and pit 16007 contained very small quantities of ironworking slag although the slag cannot be linked to the function of the pits.

Mid to Late Roman fields or enclosures (AD 200–AD 350)

Much of the activity post-dating the enclosures included the remains of two walls, a rectilinear field system and a burial. The walls (15074 and 15097) each survived as a single course of irregularly laid and unbonded limestone blocks set out along the centre line of backfilled Roman enclosure ditches. Two sherds of Dorset Black-burnished ware of 3rd or 4th-century date from wall 15097 provide the latest Roman period dating from the site. These walls suggest later Roman use or re-use of parts of the former enclosure boundaries but whether they originally ran the full length of the earlier boundaries is not known and an alternative possibility is that they were contemporary with the rectilinear field system. This survived as the fragmentary remains of a grid of small fields or enclosures along the eastern side of the site, defined by very shallow ditches. The only finds from these ditches were a few small sherds of Roman pottery, although the ditches were stratigraphically intermediate between the Early Roman ditches and the quarry pits. It is possible that the walls were associated with these ditches: whilst wall 15074 may have formed a field edge, wall 15097 at an angle close to a corner entrance to one of the fields could have enabled livestock to be funnelled to the left or right.

Grave 15090 was located within the same field as wall 15097 and had been cut through infilled Enclosure Ditch B. It contained the remains of a woman aged at least 55 years at death (skeleton 15091; Fig. 4). She had suffered from skeletal changes associated with age and activity and had lost most of her teeth before death. One of her bones was radiocarbon dated to 138–338 cal. AD (95.4% probability; SUERC-69028; Table 4), confirming the date of infilling indicated by the finds from the ditch.

THE FINDS

The pottery and shale vessel

by *E.R. McSloy*

Pottery amounting to 1532 sherds (18.37kg) was recorded. The overall composition of the assemblage is set out in Table 1. A small number of residual sherds in handmade limestone and shell-tempered fabrics provide evidence for later Iron Age activity. The Roman group was predominantly composed of reduced coarsewares (types LOC BS and GW1–7) and oxidised types (OX1–4), all of probable local manufacture. Approximately half of these comprise dark grey/black-firing fabrics (LOC BS/LOC BSc) comparable to material common in assemblages from Bath (Brown 2007: fabric SANDRW) and representative of an earlier-Roman tradition recorded across north-east Somerset and north-west Wiltshire. Jars are most common among types LOC BS/LOC BSc, with a smaller number of S-profiled, necked/shouldered and carinated bowls, tankards and beakers and carinated bowls (Fig. 5; nos 2–15). A small number of sherds in white-slipped fabrics (OXWS and SOW WS) are also probably local. Among the latter were the single examples of flagon and mortarium recorded from the assemblage, both from Ditch F. Small quantities occur in oxidised Severn valley ware (SVW OX2). This group, which includes tankard and jar forms, occurs in a pale fabric typical of products from the southernmost offshoot of this ware, known to have been made near Shepton Mallet (Webster 1976: 38).

Non-local British fabrics were primarily South-east Dorset Black-burnished ware, occurring mainly as jars (cooking pots) equivalent to Seager Smith and Davies (1993) Type 1, and dishes with flat rims (Type 22). The smaller quantities of Savernake ware (SAV GT), from north-east Wiltshire sources, were recorded primarily from Enclosure A as thick-walled storage jar sherds. Romano-British finewares are represented by a single beaker sherd in a pale orange fabric with a slightly lustrous dark brown colour coat (fabric CC). A north Wiltshire source is possible, although the rouletted decoration would be atypical (Anderson 1979).

Continental ware types amount to 28 sherds (1.9%), all of which consists of a mix of south and central Gaulish samian vessels, exclusively plain forms; dishes/platters Dr. 15/17, Dr. 18, Dr. 18/31, 18/31r and a single Dr. 33 cup. The single largest samian group (18 sherds) comes from Period 4 quarry pit (15043) which cut Enclosure A, Ditch D. The good condition of this group, which includes

TABLE 1 – POTTERY FABRICS SUMMARY, SHOWING SHERD COUNT BY PERIOD AND TOTAL QUANTITIES

Date	Fabric*		P.2	P.3	P.4	Total		
			Ct.	Ct.	Ct.	Ct.	Wt.(g)	EVEs
Late	LI	Handmade limestone-tempered	1			1	10	
Prehistoric	SH	Handmade fossil shell-tempered	7		3	10	75	
<i>Sub-total</i>			10		3	11	85	
Roman	GT	Grog-tempered	1			1	4	
Local/ unsourced	LOC BS	Dark grey/black-firing, sandy	385	9	67	462	4841	6.03
	LOC BSc	Dark grey/black-firing, coarser sandy	141			148	1616	1.30
	LOC BSm	Dark grey, fine sandy/micaceous	5			5	109	.25
	GW1	Pale-firing, fine sandy/micaceous greyware	23		8	31	524	1.22
	GW2	Medium coarse sandy greyware	335	22	46	403	4138	4.52
	GW3	Fine (silt-sized sand) greyware, micaceous	6			6	55	.05
	GW4	Coarse sandy greyware (polished quartz)	56	16	3	75	992	.97
	GW5	Finer grogged greyware (poss. Savernake?)	4			4	97	
	GW6	Greyware with common limestone and iron	2			2	41	
	GW7	Fine (silt-sized sand) greyware, not micaceous	7			7	63	
	OX1	Sandy oxidised	1			1	8	
	OX2	Fine oxidised, micaceous	4		2	6	121	
	OX3	Fine oxidised, not micaceous	4		1	5	17	
	OX4	Fine oxidised with spase flint	1			1	4	
	OXWS	Fine oxidised, white-slipped			1	1	5	
	SOW WS	Southwest white-slipped ware	7		1	8	141	
	SVW OX2	Severn Valley ware	19			19	216	.24
	WH	Whiteware	1			1	14	
Regional	SAV GT	Savernake ware	36		10	46	1412	.07
	CC	Colour-coated (North Wilts?)	1			1	4	
	DOR BB1	Southeast Dorset Black-burnished ware	221	14	24	259	3269	3.65
Imports	LGF SA	South Gaulish (La Graufesenque) samian	4		2	6	35	.16
	LEZ SA	Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian	4		19	23	562	.34
<i>Sub-total</i>			1264	61	184	1521	18288	18.8
Total			1271	61	187	1532	18373	18.8

* fabric codes in bold equate to NRFRC types (Tomber and Dore 1998)

TABLE 2 – POTTERY FROM ENCLOSURES A/B. SUMMARY QUANTIFICATION BY FABRIC

fabric	Encl. A						Encl. B						Encl. B (internal)												
	Ditch A		Ditch B		Ditch D		Ditch E		Ditch K		Ditch F		Ditch G		Ditch J		Ditch H		Ditch I		Total				
	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Ct.	Wt.(g)			
LI					1	10															1	10			
SH			4	45	1	6														2	11	7	62		
GT			1	4																		1	4		
LOC BS	1	4	212	2176	28	593	5	84	3	2	28	194	49	577			6	42	38	502	370	4174			
LOC BS _c			115	1152			1	16	2	13	6	59	8	249					6	70	138	1559			
LOC BS _m			5	109																		5	109		
GW1			14	351	3	53			1	8											2	12	20	424	
GW2			160	1901	12	136	1	11	11	109	47	426	5	65	1	10	8	42	68	800	313	3500			
GW3			2	30	3	20					1	5										6	55		
GW4			2	25					2	24	8	180					3	4	39	611	54	844			
GW5	1	9	2	84															1	4	4	97			
GW6			1	9	1	32																2	41		
GW7																							7	63	
OX1									1	8												1	8		
OX2					3	57																3	57		
OX3					1	2														3	14	4	16		
OX4			1	4																		1	4		
SOW WS											5	126										2	9	7	135
SVW OX2	1	7	5	32	1	7			3	28	1	4	1	28					6	107	18	213			
WH																							1	14	
SAV GT	1	34	24	748	1	56	5	277			3	51							2	51	36	1217			
DOR BB1	9	150	44	486	7	164	6	133	4	25	33	303	22	401	4	44	1	10	42	727	172	2443			
LGF SA													1	9						3	22	4	31		
LEZ SA											2	12								2	7	4	19		
CNG CC2																				1	4	1	4		
Total	13	204	593	7170	62	1136	18	521	27	217	13	1360	86	1329	5	54	18	98	22	3014	1180	15103			

joining sherds from a maximum of eight vessels, suggests that the pottery was directly redeposited from the ditch fills. The group comprises near exclusively central Gaulish vessels and Antonine forms (Dr. 18/31, 18/31r and 31). The forms present and two vessels of the Lezoux potter *Titus iii* (working c. AD 145–175), suggest a mid Antonine date.

The assemblage from Enclosures A and B and features of this phase presents consistently earlier Roman dating, containing nothing which needs date after AD 200. There are indications that the earliest activity dates to the later 1st century. Evidence for this comes from Enclosure B in the form of South Gaulish samian (LGF SA), including a Dr. 15/17 platter of pre-Flavian date from Ditch G, and Dr. 18 platters, probably of Flavian date, from Ditch I. Also from Ditch G is Black-burnished ware vessel no. 1, a form with pre-conquest ‘Durotrigian’ origins (Brailsford 1958) and present in Exeter from deposits dating before AD 100/120 (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991). Elsewhere, forms among the local black-firing wares support dating in the late 1st or earlier 2nd century range, AD 75–130/50. Necked/shouldered bowls from Ditches A, B and D (nos. 3–4 and 6–7), and beaker no. 8 and a carinated vessel, both from Ditch G are forms related to pre-Roman and transitional ‘Belgic’ classes. Similarly tankard no. 5, from Ditch D is closest to Durotrigian vessels (Brailsford 1958, fig. 1) in its having a footring base. Vessels including S-profiled bowl no. 12 are typically Flavian or earlier 2nd century.

Continued occupation associated with Enclosures A and B well into the 2nd century is evidenced by abundant quantities of South-east Dorset Black-burnished ware (Table 2), this type being widely distributed only after AD 120. The forms represented conform to early classes (before AD 200/220) and consist of jars, equivalent to Seager Smith and Davies’s (1993) Types 1 or 2 and flat-rimmed dishes of her Type 22. Individual vessels also support this dating including the unusual carinated bowl no. 2, from Ditch B. Comparable vessels are from Bath (Brown 2007, fig. 3.7, 9), Ilchester (Leach 1982, fig. 72, 238) and Exeter (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 168–9, fig. 64) where a mid or late 2nd century date is likely. Second-century (Central Gaulish) samian was entirely lacking from Enclosure A and present only as a few scraps from Enclosure B (Table 2). A Dr. 33 cup sherd from Ditch F is the only identifiable example, and is probably of Antonine dating.

Small quantities of pottery were recorded from

Late Roman features. Little among this group, all of which consists of reduced coarsewares (Table 1), is closely dateable. Two plain rimmed dishes in South-east Dorset Black-burnished ware from wall 15097 would however support broad 3rd or 4th century dating. For both Roman periods, indications of higher or special status are absent and the pottery is typical of domestic assemblages from the majority of lower-status rural sites of this period.

Illustration catalogue (Fig. 5)

- 1 Carinated bowl of unusual form (*cf.* Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 168, fig. 64, no. 30.1a; Brown 2007, figs 3.7-3.9, RP9 and 88). Rouletted rows at neck, girth and above carination. Fabric LOC BSm. Period 2 Ditch B.
- 2 Necked/shouldered bowl. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch B.
- 3 Large, necked jar. Wide shoulder cordon and scored cross hatch below. Fabric GW1. Period 2 Ditch B.
- 4 Necked/shouldered bowl. Fabric LOC BS. Period 4 pit 15043.
- 5 Beaker with tall neck and bulbous body (devolved butt beaker style). Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch G.
- 6 ?Bowl with high (carinated) shoulder and in-turned rim. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch G.
- 7 Tankard with footring base. Burnished lattice at neck and girth. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch D.
- 8 Necked/shouldered bowl with wide and narrow girth grooves. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch D.
- 9 Shouldered bowl with everted rim and neck cordon. Roller stamping to lower body. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch D.
- 10 Shouldered jar with everted rim and neck cordon. Roller stamping to lower body. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch G.
- 11 Beaker, tall-neck and everted rim. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch B.
- 12 Jar, neckless, with everted rim. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch B.
- 13 Dish/bowl, hemispherical with beaded curved flange. Fabric LOC BS. Period 2 Ditch B.
- 14 Jar (cooking pot) with everted rim. Repair holes at neck. Fabric DOR BB1. Period 2 Ditch E.
- 15 Jar with countersunk handles (*cf.* Brailsford 1958: Form 6/6a; Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, Form 24). Fabric DOR BB1. Period 2 Ditch E.

Samian catalogue (stamped vessels)

- i Titus iii, die 6a [T]ITIMA, Lezoux, c. 145–175 (Dickinson 2012, 252). Fabric LEZ SA2. Period 4 pit 15045. Dr. 18/31r, 2 x joining sherds (156g).
- ii Titus iii, die 6a? TITI[MA], Lezoux, c. 145–175 (Dickinson 2012, 252). Fabric LEZ SA2. Period 4 pit 15045. Dr. 18/31r. 1 sherd (96g).

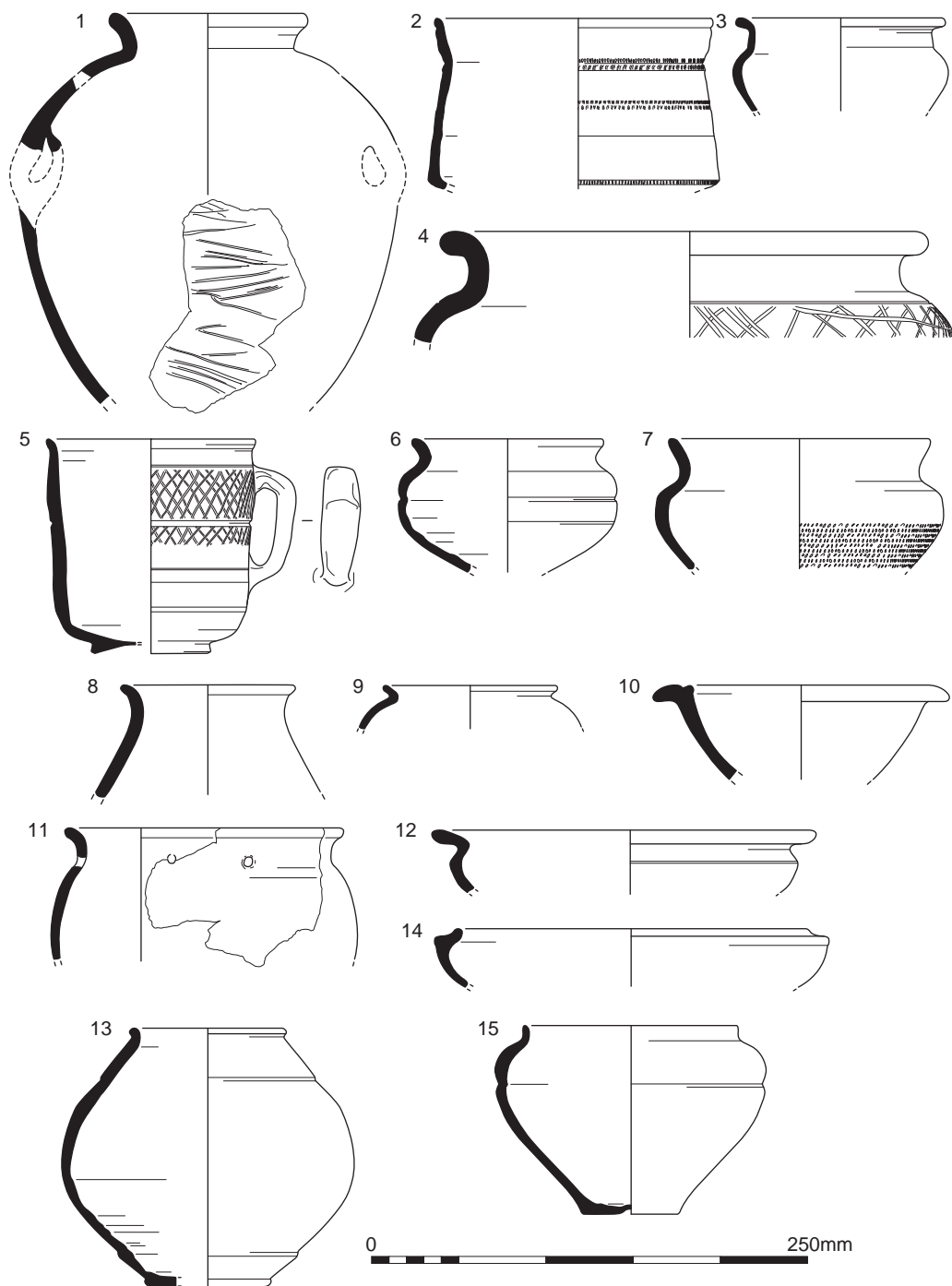


Fig. 5 Pottery drawings (1:4)



Fig. 6 Iron and copper-alloy objects, and shale tri-lobate platter handle (1:1)

A tri-lobate platter handle made of shale (Fig. 6, 4) was recovered from Ditch I. Shale originating from Kimmeridge, was used in the manufacture of lathe-made vessels from the Late Iron Age into the Roman period. Comparable handles are known primarily from the area close to the source of manufacture, including from Greyhound Yard, Dorchester (Mills and Woodward 1993). Together with one from Exeter (Bidwell 1979, fig. 75, no. 79), the Fulwell Lane example is amongst the furthest travelled

from its source, Faulkland being approximately 60km from Kimmeridge.

The vessel glass

by E. R. McSloy

A small fragment (1g) of Roman vessel glass came from the terminal of Ditch F (cut 16193, fill 16194). The fragment is of a greenish blue coloured glass and appears to derive from the lower portion of a small conical-bodied vessel, possibly an unguent

TABLE 3 – POTTERY VESSEL FORMS SUMMARY. QUANTITIES AS MAX. NO. VESSELS AND EVES

Fabrics (grouped) > Form	Sam. forms	GW	LOC BS	BB1	SAV GT	SOW WS	SVW OX	LEZ SA	LGF SA	Total	
		No./EVEs	No./EVEs	No./EVEs	No./EVEs	No./EVEs	No./EVEs	No./EVEs	No./EVEs	EVEs	%EVEs
flagon		1/-				1/-				-	-
beaker			2/47							.47	2.8
cup	Dr. 33							1/03		.03	<1
tankard		1/12	1/47				3/14			.73	4.5
jar		35/4.29	39/3.95	22/2.67	1/07		1/10			11.08	67.6
bowl	Dr. 31	5/1.18	8/1.32					4/-		2.50	15.2
dish	Dr. 18/31; 18/31r	6/59	1/07	5/41				6/31		1.38	8.4
platter	Dr. 15/17; 18		1/05						3/16	.21	1.3
mortarium						1/-				-	-

* Reduced types LOC BS/c/m and GW1-7 are grouped

bottle. The precise form of vessel is uncertain, although the profile and thickness (2mm) makes identification as a conical unguent bottle probable (Isings 1957, form 82b). On this basis dating in the later 1st or earlier 2nd century is considered likely (Price and Cottam 1998, 172–3).

The ceramic building material and fired clay

by Katie Marsden

Four fragments of Roman ceramic building material comprise two brick fragments from one of the Enclosure A ditches, a fragment of tile (probably tegula), from one of the Enclosure B ditches, and a small flake of residual brick/tile from a quarry pit fill. Five fragments of fired clay from Roman deposits are amorphous fragments or pieces preserving one smoothed surface.

The metalwork

by Katie Marsden

Thirteen metal objects were recovered. The majority were iron nails. A loop of round-sectioned wire with pointed terminals (Fig. 6, 1) from Ditch B accords with Allason-Jones' (1989) Type 3 annular form earrings. Also from Ditch B was an iron bow brooch of simple hinged type (Fig. 6, 3). Iron bow brooches are an early phenomenon, the majority of hinged examples probably of the mid 1st century AD. A copper-alloy nail cleaner (Fig. 6, 2) of Eckardt and Crummy's 'bone disc type' (Eckardt and Crummy 2008, 130) came from a quarry pit and is residual in its context. The disc-like bone terminal is missing, although the setting for this, and the characteristic lattice decoration to the upper shaft, are clear. Nail cleaners of this form date primarily to the later 1st and 2nd centuries (ibid., 130–1).

The slag

by E.R. McSloy and Katie Marsden

Small quantities of ironworking slag were recovered from Roman ditches H and F and from pits 16000 and 16007. The majority is hard, dense and of a dull or slightly lustrous grey colour. This material bears some resemblance to smelting-related slags but lacks the ropery texture associated with such free-flowing 'tap' slags. Only material from pit fill 16000 is of different character, being highly vesicular (bubbly) and pale grey/buff coloured. All material is regarded as indeterminate of process and might relate either to smithing or smelting and reflects low-intensity blacksmithing. The degree of dispersal in this assemblage suggests such activity

was not undertaken within the site.

The stone object

by Ruth Shaffrey

A whetstone fragment, made using very fine-grained slightly shelly limestone, was recovered from a ditch defining Enclosure A. It is the end portion of an oval-sectioned whetstone, which most likely represents a personal or household item, rather than a workshop tool.

The residual flints

by Jacky Sommerville

Sixteen worked flints were recovered, twelve from Roman deposits and the remainder from undated features. The assemblage consists of debitage comprising one blade and 15 flakes. Two flakes display evidence of soft hammer percussion and preparation of the striking platform on the parent core, techniques indicative of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic dating.

HUMAN REMAINS

by Sharon Clough

Skeleton 15091 (Grave 15090) was a female, 55 or more years at death. More than 75% of the skeleton was present and bone preservation was good. The stature was estimated from the left femur to be 1.57m ± 3.72cm (5ft 1.85 inches). Mean stature for females for this period (from 10 sites) ranged from 156–169cm with a mean of the means 160cm. The individual was therefore within the mean range for the period. The majority of teeth (21) had been lost a considerable time before death. The spine (in particular the intervertebral discs) showed evidence of degeneration, often associated with older age. The other joints such as hips, shoulder and hands also had evidence of the bony response to the degeneration of the joint.

Skeleton 16005 (Grave 16004) was a male aged over 45 years at death (possibly much older). Over 75% of the skeleton survived and the bone condition was good, although highly fragmented. The man's stature was 1.64m ± 3.27cm (5ft 4.5 inches), the lowest end of the mean stature for the period. Some of this individual's right foot bones (tarsals) were fused together, which would have prevented normal flexion when walking. This is likely to have been caused by infection getting into the foot joints.

Both skeletons had carbon and nitrogen isotopic values identified (Table 4). The femur was sampled

for analysis and it would be expected to have completely remodelled over 10 years and so reflects carbon and nitrogen intake in the last decade of life. The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ results for both skeletons were slightly different than expected; the carbon was higher and the nitrogen was lower. Carbon values from other Romano-British sites have ranged from 20.1–19.0‰ (Bonsall and Pickard 2015). Enrichment of carbon can suggest the presence of C_4 -based plants or marine foods in the diet. Since C_4 plants were not available locally in the Roman period in Britain (only as imported millet), these are unlikely to have been the source of the high carbon readings. Nitrogen values were lower than expected when compared to the average from other British Roman sites (9.6‰) (ibid.) although the reasons for this are not apparent from these data. Overall, these readings suggest that both individuals had a diet based mostly on plant-based sources, but also with fish/shellfish and meat.

A single grave (16018) contained cremated human bone (16052) within an urn. This was from a probably older adult of unknown sex. The total bone weight (374.1g) falls short of the expected weight for a cremated adult (1000–3000g) but the urn had been truncated and some bone may have been lost. However, partial burial of cremated remains is typical for the Romano-British period: complete collection of the bone does not seem to have been regarded as necessary and the collection and subsequent burial commonly did not include the remains in their entirety.

CARBON AND NITROGEN STABLE ISOTOPES

by Mandy Jay

Carbon and nitrogen stable isotope ratios were obtained from femur samples for both skeletons (Table 4). Cortical femur remodels over a lifetime and there is some evidence to suggest that, for a mature adult, the collagen analysed will reflect a lifetime signal, perhaps weighted towards adolescence (Hedges *et al.* 2007). The values obtained therefore provide a picture of averaged diet over the long-term. Isotope ratios from six other Romano-British locations across Britain showed a range of mean $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values between -20.1 to -19.0‰, with the mean $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values ranging from 9.5 to 11.1‰ (Bonsall and Pickard 2015). The results from the two individuals at Fulwell Lane provide $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values (-19.8 and -19.7‰) which fall well within these published mean ranges, but the $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values are

TABLE 4 – RADIOCARBON DATING RESULTS

The uncalibrated dates are conventional radiocarbon ages. The radiocarbon ages were calibrated using the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration programme OxCal 4.2 (Bronk Ramsey 2013) using the IntCal13 curve (Reimer *et al.* 2013).

Feature	Lab No.	Material	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	$\delta^{15}\text{N}$	C/N ratio	Radiocarbon age yr BP	Calibrated radiocarbon age 95.4% probability	Calibrated radiocarbon age 68.2% probability
Skeleton 16005 Grave 16004	SUERC-69027	Human bone: right femur	-19.7‰	8.8‰	3.2	1886 ± 29	61–217 cal AD (95.4%)	70–138 cal AD (68.2%)
Skeleton 15091 Grave 15090	SUERC-69028	Human bone: right femur	-19.8‰	8.0‰	3.2	1776 ± 29	138–200 cal AD (13.2%) 206–338 cal AD (82.2%)	225–261 cal AD (30.0%) 278–327 cal AD (38.2%)
Context 16052 Cremation 16020 Grave 16018	SUERC-69029	Cremated human bone	-21.3‰			1827 ± 29	88–105 cal AD (2.2%) 121–253 cal AD (92.1%) 303–314 cal AD (1.2%)	138–224 cal AD (68.2%)

lower (8.0 and 8.8‰). These values are very similar to some obtained from a rural cemetery at Horcott Quarry near Cirencester, which is approximately 70km to the north east (Cheung *et al.* 2012).

Animal ‘baseline’ data are not available from Fulwell Lane so it is not possible to consider diet in relation to the signal specific to this time and place. The data from Horcott Quarry do, however, show that human diets with these lower $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values are supported in the regional landscape and that there is no reason to believe that these individuals might be incoming migrants from a non-British environment. The $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values suggest a diet which was relatively low in animal protein compared to most people at the time, relying heavily on plant products. The rural Horcott Quarry population was suggested to have lived exclusively from their local resources and there is some evidence for Roman Britain that dietary levels of animal and/or marine-based protein are sometimes connected to status (e.g., Richards 1998). The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values from Fulwell Lane indicate that there was probably also a low-level inclusion of marine-based resources such as oysters, fish or *garum*, as is suggested across the

board for Romano-British populations (Müldner 2013), but the $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values show that the contribution from these resources would have been minimal, although probably a consistent and regular addition to the diet.

OTHER BIOLOGICAL REMAINS

The animal bone

by *Matty Holmes*

The small assemblage of animal bone was dominated by sheep/goat, in which sheep were positively identified, with cattle also common. A few bones of pig, equid and canid (probably dog) were also recorded. A predominance of upper limb bone fragments indicates probable food waste; butchery seems to have taken place off site. Most sheep/goats were in their first year or two when slaughtered. In contrast, the cattle had a more varied kill-off pattern with animals killed at a younger age for meat and others kept for traction or dairying. The high proportion of sheep/goat bones implies an ‘unromanised’ settlement (King 1984),

and the presence of cattle at all ages and new born sheep/goats suggests that it may have been a self-sufficient or producer site.

The plant macrofossils and charcoal

by Sarah Wyles and Sarah Cobain

A soil sample from Ditch D produced a rich plant assemblage dominated by cereals grains and chaff. The assemblage represents grain processing waste and the cereals were predominantly spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) with some emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*), barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and free-threshing wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aestivum* type). Spelt was the predominant wheat in Southern Britain during the Roman period (Greig 1991) and there are similarities with the assemblages at Cannards Grave (Hinton 2002) and Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet (Straker 2001; Jones 2012). The sample also produced weed seeds from species typical of grassland, field margins and arable environments. Charcoal was present in small quantities and consisted mostly of small twigs and smaller roundwood fragments, probably from brushwood bundles used for fires.

DISCUSSION

Leaving aside the small collection of worked flints and later Iron Age potsherds, firm occupation is first evidenced by the Early Roman enclosures A and B. Both enclosures seem to have been broadly similar, demarcated by ditches with banks along their inner edges. Enclosure A enclosed an area of 1580m² (0.16ha) with several points of access. Internal ditches suggest some division of space. No evidence of structural remains was present, but the site yielded waste from everyday activities that, along with the few personal items, is characteristic of domestic occupation. It is probable that at least one of the enclosures included a dwelling, perhaps built on sill beams or using cob walls which have left no trace of their presence.

The early start date for the occupation at Fulwell Lane, around AD 60, is of interest and one possible explanation for this is that the local economy had been stimulated by lead mining, which is known to have started in the Mendip Hills by AD 49 (Jones and Mattingly 2007, 184). However, the mines at Green Ore, the closest recorded, lie 10km to the south-west, and there is nothing to suggest an engagement with mining at Fulwell Lane. There is evidence that some ironworking was undertaken, but probably

only on a domestic scale, with no evidence that this was a specialism of the inhabitants.

The economic basis of this settlement therefore seems to have been agricultural. Sheep/goat (most probably sheep) were farmed, but also cattle, while the presence of young of both species suggests that they were bred and reared by the inhabitants. Butchery seems to have taken place off site, however, and the bones present were the remains of food. Leach (2001, 31) suggested that, mining aside, the Mendips were primarily used by pastoralists and had been extensively cleared of woodland by the Roman period in order to provide grazing. The Fulwell Lane settlement may fit this model, although the relative importance of arable production for the settlement is hard to gauge. There is certainly evidence for cereal processing and a varied local environment from the generally sparse charred botanical remains.

The finds show that the inhabitants of the farmstead had a wide range of contacts. At the Roman roadside settlement at Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet, the animal bone record suggested the importation of livestock on the hoof (Leach 2001, 320) and the inhabitants of Fulwell Lane may have been amongst the suppliers to such market centres, including perhaps the closer settlement at Camerton (Burnham and Wachter 1990, 295). Conversely, both the smaller market centres and the larger Roman towns would themselves have supplied people living in rural settlements, such as that at Fulwell Lane, with goods not produced locally, including pottery as well as luxury goods such as the possible unguent bottle (perhaps with contents) and some types of food. There is a suggestion from stable isotopes that the two inhumed individuals had unusual components in their diets, perhaps including marine food, which suggests wide-ranging provisions of basic foodstuffs. However, these indicators require much more research with comparable samples across the region.

The Early Roman enclosures were deliberately backfilled by AD 200 at the latest and the paucity of late Roman material suggests a movement away from this part of the site. Whether this represents a decision by the occupants themselves, or was directed by a landowner, is not known, but land re-organisation between the 2nd and 3rd centuries is apparent at other Somerset sites, and Holbrook (2011, 48) suggests that this development was probably widespread in the county east of the River Parrett. It is possible that the Fulwell Lane farmstead was associated with the villa at Blacklands, 3km to

the east, which may have been in existence in the 1st or 2nd centuries AD (Lawes 2006; WA 2007), and with whose fortunes it may have been closely linked. Alternatively, an unrecorded villa may have lain closer.

The abandonment of the early settlement may not have been unceremonious. Grave 15090, cut into a backfilled ditch of Enclosure A, certainly post-dates its abandonment and may represent the sort of closure burial seen on other Roman rural settlements where it is suggested that there was a continued native practice of marking the abandonment of a settlement by laying out graves (Holbrook 2011, 46). Cremation grave 16018 might similarly have represented a closure deposit. It had been cut into a tree-throw pit and, while perhaps mere coincidence, it is possible that the grave was deliberately sited to memorialise a tree that had been a notable part of the settlement's landscape.

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