Wilcote, Wilcote Manor Farm Barns SP 3691 1533
ANDREW MUNDIN

Observations were undertaken on the various works for a single new house. No archaeological deposits nor finds were encountered.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, DEPT. FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Appleton Area Archaeological Research Project (AAARP) Excavations at Broadmoor Field, Appleton

SP 4391 0133 centred
JANE HARRISON, LEIGH MELLOR and WILLIAM WINTLE

Introduction

Excavations in 2018 and 2019 in Broadmoor field near the village of Appleton recorded elements of an extensive, complex and long-lived, early-middle Iron Age settlement, with some slight evidence for Romano-British and early Anglo-Saxon activity. All the archaeological features were truncated by medieval and later ploughing. The work was undertaken by the AAARP (see previous article on the test pit programme), with local volunteers, and students from the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE).

The excavation site lies on the Corallian ridge south-west of Appleton and about 900m south of the Thames. The complex underlying geology belongs to the Hazelbury Bryan Formation of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. The field slopes gently south-east from *c*. 91m OD to *c*. 86m OD, with the trenches located at around 88m OD across the middle of the field.

Previous Archaeological Work

Considerable archaeological work has taken place on the Thames gravels north and west of the Thames and also at sand quarry sites in the Vale of the White Horse at Hatford and Stanford-in-the-Vale. Additionally, the prehistoric and Romano-British ceremonial and settlement site at Marcham-Frilford was excavated between 2001 and 2011 by the University of Oxford (Kamash *et al* 2012). The only major excavations of any kind in the AAARP research area were at Tubney Manor Farm ahead of commercial sand quarrying (Bradley and Hey 1993, Simmonds *et al* 2011). There has otherwise been little archaeological investigation in the AAARP area on the Corallian ridge where the geology is primarily clay or mudstone with sandstone and siltstone. The land has neither produced cropmarks nor been targeted for gravel extraction. Most of the archaeological records are antiquarian, stray finds and metal-detector discoveries.

The following summarises the most significant known archaeology for the relevant periods:

Iron Age: over thirty later Iron Age pits were located in the quarry excavation south of Tubney Manor Farm, just over a kilometre to the south-east of Broadmoor, indicating likely settlement. Iron Age seasonal settlement linked to exploitation of floodplain pasture was discovered when Farmoor reservoir, north of the AAARP area, was extended (Lambrick and Robinson 1979).

Romano-British: the nearest known archaeology is co-located with the Iron Age sites at Farmoor and Tubney Manor Farm. The sand quarry excavation recorded late Roman burials and Romano-British field boundaries. A little Roman pottery was found in AAARP test pits, but all very abraded, suggesting field scatters rather than the near proximity of settlement.

Anglo-Saxon: during the seventh century much if not all of the land in the area was granted to Abingdon Abbey at its foundation. Later, the Abbey held a grange and significant church at Cumnor. The sand quarry excavations at Tubney revealed a seventh century burial. AAARP test pits (AP17 TP10 and TP21) suggested earlier Anglo-Saxon activity around the Plough pub in Appleton, with the discovery of *in situ* post-holes and gullies containing pottery of the period.

Initial Survey 2017 and 2018

Five geophysical (magnetometer) surveys were undertaken in fields adjacent to South Lawn in Appleton in July, August and September 2017. The surveys were performed by William Wintle, Steve Nicholson, Leigh Mellor, Derek Chambers and Charlie McCarthy using a Bartington Instruments GRAD601 gradiometer. The grids were thirty metre squares and were walked in a clockwise "zig-zag" pattern with traverses one metre apart and readings taken four times a metre along each traverse. The magnetometer was set to a scale of 100nT with a sensitivity of 0.1 nT.

Of these five surveys in only one, Broadmoor field west of South Lawn, were archaeological features detected (Fig. 26). The magnetometer survey revealed ridge and furrow in the north and south of the field and a more complicated and interesting set of features in the middle. It appears likely that the ridge and furrow is continuous from the north to the south of the field in a gradual S-curve typical of medieval ridge and furrow. There is some variation in the spacing of the furrows, but they appear to be about 15 metres apart. The centre of the field contained what appears to be an Iron Age and/or Roman settlement with small fields or paddocks defined by ditches, and possible roundhouses defined by either foundation trenches or drip-gullies. The most obvious circular feature may have an entrance in the west. Usually entrances to Iron Age roundhouses are in the east or south-east.

Subsequent fieldwalking in October 2017, focused on the central area of geophysical anomalies, produced meagre results: one Iron Age sherd, two Romano-British sherds and 15 Medieval sherds, all small and in poor condition. However, one of two test pits excavated in June 2018 on the eastern field margin (AP18 TP37) contained sherds of early-middle Anglo-Saxon pottery recorded in a cut feature, possibly a posthole or gully.

Excavations 2018 and 2019

The four trenches were located using the 2017 geophysical survey (Fig. 26). Two trenches were excavated in September 2018 and two in July-August 2019. In 2018 Trench 1 (12m west-east by 8.5m north-south) was opened to explore the clearest circular ditch-like anomaly at its intersection with what appeared to be two linear north-south ditches. Trench 2 (ten metres north-west to south-east by six metres north-east to south-west) targeted the widest linear north-south feature where it intersected with narrower ditches. In 2019 a diffuse anomaly and selection of ditches and pits were explored in Trench 3 (max. 11m WNW-WSW by 24m NNE-SSW) and Trench 4 (13m west-east by 11m north-south) was opened over intersecting ditches including a wide west-east linear

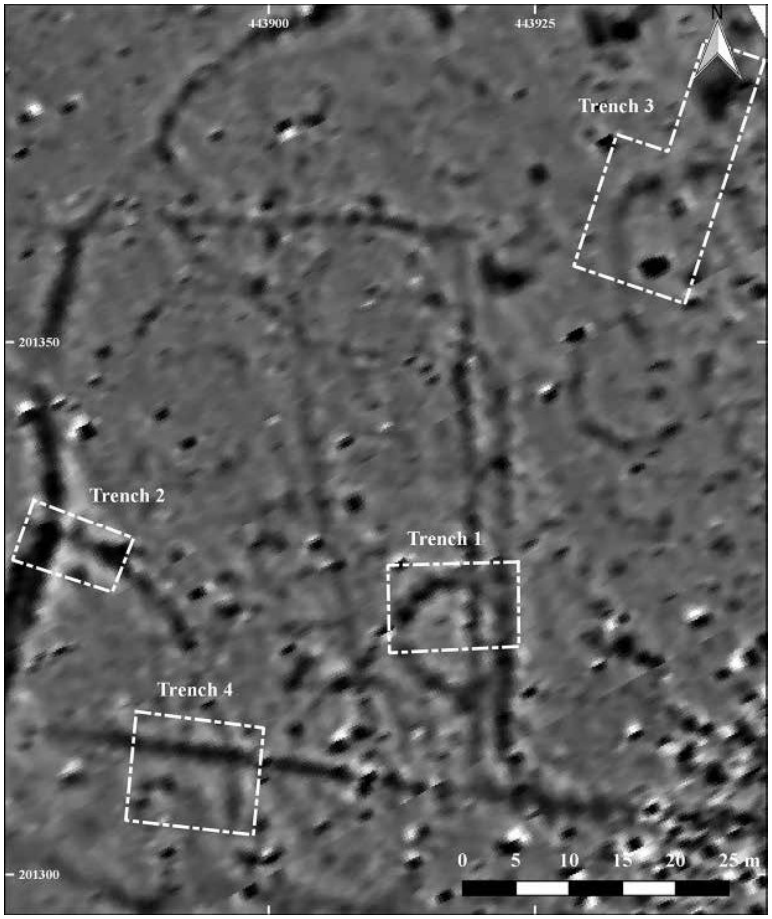

Figure 26: central area of the magnetometer survey of Broadmoor field with 2018 and 2019 trenches marked

anomaly and possible pits. The topsoil was stripped by machine, with a sample sieved and hand-searched. Thereafter all features were hand-dug, with metalwork, and collections of artefacts and ecofacts recorded in three dimensions.

All the features excavated in Broadmoor field were heavily truncated and hot, dry weather created challenging ground conditions in both years. However, the two seasons of work have revealed details of a multi-phase and complex early-middle Iron Age settlement, including: phases of roundhouse settlement, unenclosed initially but enclosed by a large ditch in a subsequent phase; field, enclosure and stock management ditches, with some suggestion of placed deposits in the probable enclosure ditch; evidence for pottery production; an extensive midden-related pit cluster; a large sub-rectangular enclosure; and a range of pits from large postholes to grain storage pits. The boundary ditch also produced an Iron Age weaving comb (Fig. 27) as well as considerable clusters of pottery. At least one substantial early Anglo-Saxon posthole was recorded. The site, as with the test pits in the village, was notable for the lack of Romano-British features; fewer than 20 sherds of abraded pottery of the period were found, all in the ploughsoil.

Figure 27: Iron Age weaving comb after conservation. Photo by Sarah Morton

Excavation Results

Trench 1

The machining and clean-up layer *c*. 0.35–0.4m deep comprised both upper and lower plough soils down to a compacted layer created by the ploughing in which archaeological features began to be visible. The circular drip-gully could be identified as a wide circular sweep of

darker fills with two broad linear darker features running N-S in the east of the trench (see Fig. 28). The broad linear adjacent to the eastern baulk comprised up to three closely set and intercut ditches, one of which may have been the drip-gully. The linear just to the west clearly intersected with the drip-gully and was either a single ditch, or a combination of drip-gully and ditch. All the upper fills of the cut features had been spread as well as truncated by the ploughing.

The roundhouse drip-gully, Stratigraphic Grouping [1031]: the drip-gully was investigated in three interventions: one in the west of the trench, which cut across the gully alone, one in the north centre, which looked at the drip-gully and a narrow likely enclosure ditch immediately to the north, and a third intervention to the south-east which looked at the intersection of the drip-gully with the western of the linear north-south ditches. There was no evidence for an entrance within the area of the trench.

The furthest west intervention revealed the full width of the recut drip-gully, running north-east to south-west (Fig. 29). A 0.4m width of the original gully [1010] had survived re-cutting after being backfilled with redeposited natural. The recut [1014], to the south-east, was 0.6m wide at its spread top, narrowing to 0.4m at its gently concave base; 0.4m of its depth survived. The fills of the gullies were initially indistinguishable, but the more disturbed upper layer contained sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery and fragments of poorly preserved bone, all found above the area of the later ditch. Below this layer, the fills could be distinguished as the later gully-fill was notably siltier and charcoal-rich.

In the central intervention the full width of the later drip-gully was not caught. The full width of the original ditch, here [1007], was recorded running near west-east, with a small segment of the recut ditch to the south. The fills could not be easily distinguished and the recut was only clear in section. The sandy Iron Age pottery came from both the original and the later gully, but mostly from the latter. The more disturbed upper layer in this intervention combined the fill of a narrow enclosure ditch just to the north [1009] with those of the two gullies. Most of the pottery – 22 sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery – and bone in that layer came from above the enclosure ditch.

The third investigation of the drip-gully was 1.75m to the east of [1007] where *c*. 0.8m of the later gully was sectioned. Here the west-east running drip-gully [1024] was beginning to curve south and was cut by western north-south linear ditch [1023]. The full width of the gully was not caught but again it survived to 0.4m in depth and was U-shaped in profile. The fill was initially indistinguishable from that of the linear ditch, but 12 sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery all came from around the drip-gully, while a single sherd of Iron Age grog-tempered pottery came from the south-east corner above the linear ditch. After less than 0.1m in depth the two features were easily separated. The fill of the drip-gully contained six further sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery.

Finally, it was also possible that the drip-gully was seen in the intervention furthest to the east and against the east centre baulk: ditch [1028] (part of SG [1016]; Fig. 28), may have encompassed a segment of the gully curve running near north-south as it was cut by one of the north-south linear ditches, or indeed may simply have been the drip-gully.

The linear ditches, Stratigraphic Grouping [1016]: the north-south ditches were investigated in two interventions, one in the east centre against the eastern baulk, and one in the north-east corner of the trench. The former slot revealed

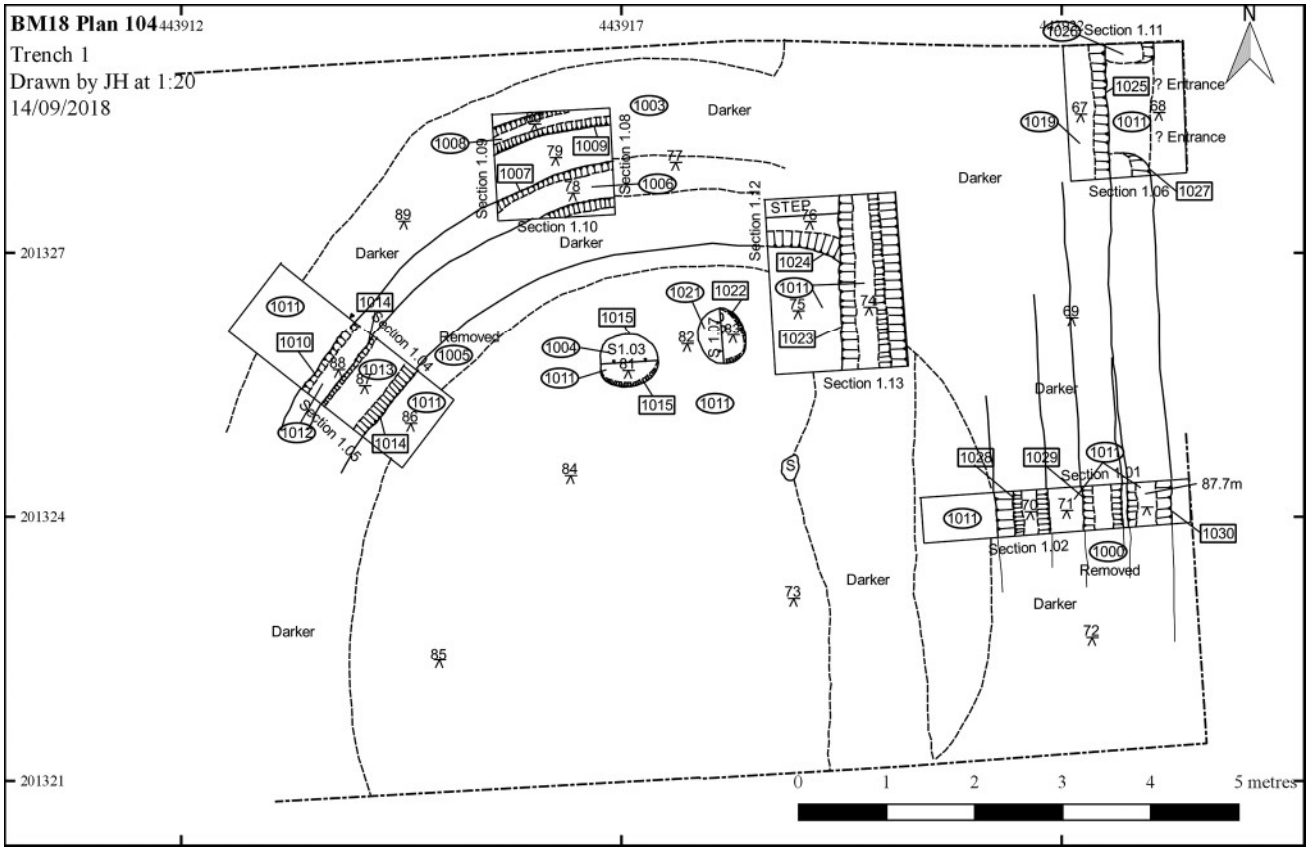

Figure 28: BM18 Plan 104, Trench 1 post-excavation

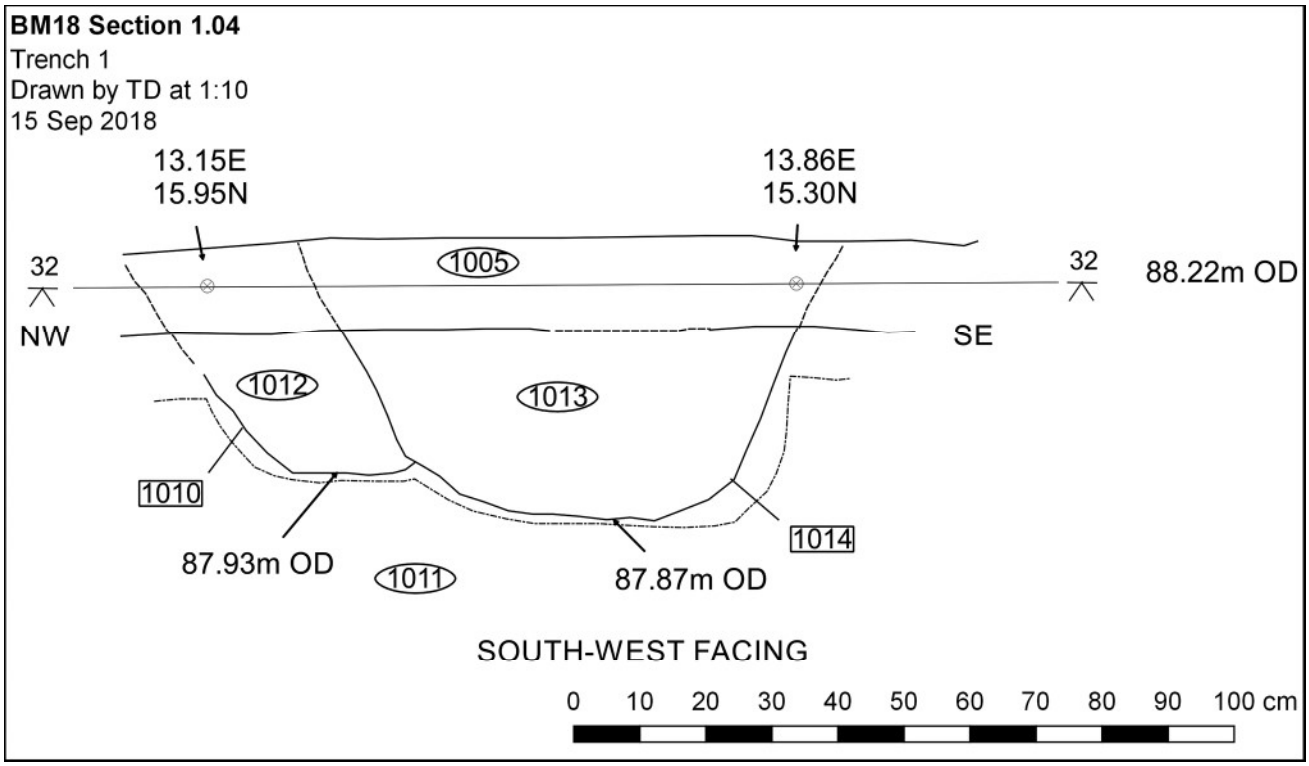

Figure 29: BM18 Section 1.04, recut roundhouse drip-gully

three cut features. The sandy silt fills of these linear features, dominated by redeposited natural, were indistinguishable and contained seven sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery and degraded bone. Cut feature [1028] in the west may have incorporated, or indeed been, the drip-gully, now running north-south, as discussed above. The truncated top was spread and *c*. 0.6m wide, the ditch/gully an open U-shape and 0.35–0.4m deep. [1028] may have intersected with [1029] immediately to the west, but the truncation of both features made it impossible to be certain. The middle ditch [1029] was a truncated open U-shape to the west but the eastern side was near vertical. This feature was *c*. 0.45m wide and slightly deeper at 0.45m and clearly cut the ditch to the east [1030]. That most easterly ditch [1030] was also U-shaped to the west but very gently sloping in the east, *c*. 0.5m wide, but shallower at 0.3m deep. On the geophysical plot these three ditches had merged to produce one anomaly.

Two of this group of linear ditches were seen again in the intervention in the north-east corner of the trench. Ditch [1025] was almost certainly a continuation of [1029] to the south, and in this intervention ditch [1025] also clearly cut [1027] to the east. Ditch [1027] appeared to be a continuation of ditch [1030] to the south. Here, the revealed length of ditch [1027] encompassed an entrance about 0.85m wide. Both ditch ends were rounded.

Enclosure/boundary ditch, [1009]: just north of the west-east running drip-gully [1007], as seen in the central north intervention, the full width and 1.3m WSW-ENE of a narrow possible enclosure ditch [1009] was investigated. This ditch was *c*. 0.45m wide at its truncated top resolving to 0.3m wide, with a v-shaped base and 0.3m of depth surviving. The lower fill was notably silty with very degraded pottery and bone that did not survive excavation. The upper fill comprised the spread and indistinguishable fills of the enclosure ditch and the drip-gully, but there were many more finds of Iron Age pottery and degraded bone over the enclosure ditch at this level. This ditch could not be detected with certainty on the geophysics plot.

Postholes, [1015] and [1022]: the truncated remains of two large postholes were discovered within and just over a metre to the south of the inside edge of the northern curve of the drip- gully. The western of the postholes [1015] was *c*. 0.65m in diameter with vertical sides, and 0.2m deep with a flat base. The silty fill contained only two large stones of likely post-packing. The posthole about 0.8m to the east [1022] was very similar in size and profile; its fill produced early-middle Anglo-Saxon pottery.

Discussion

The roundhouse drip-gully survived to a depth of *c*. 0.4m and was originally U-shaped and 0.4–0.5m wide; the backfill was mostly silty, organic and contained early-middle Iron Age pottery and bone. It had been recut once and would have created an internal enclosure about eight metres in diameter for the building. In the east the gully was cut by north-south linear ditch [1023], one of a group of four ditches, detected running for up to 50m north-south in the geophysics but appearing in the plot as two ditches: [1023] separately to the west and the three together in the east [1028]-[1029]-[1030] as one anomaly. The most westerly of the ditches [1023] produced a sherd of grog-tempered Iron Age pottery but the group of three in the east produced only sandy Iron Age pottery. It is hard to be entirely confident of the chronological relationship of this group of ditches with the roundhouse drip-gully. While ditch [1023] was definitely later than the gully, and [1028] may have cut, been cut by or indeed have been the drip-gully, the two most easterly ditches could be contemporary with, earlier or later than the drip-gully. All contained middle Iron Age pottery. It is possible that [1025]-[1029] and [1027]-[1030] were enclosure ditches for one or more of the phases of the roundhouse, with the stretch of [1030] in the north – [1027] – including an entrance into

the roundhouse's enclosure. A narrow likely enclosure ditch – perhaps for a paddock or small field – was captured in the north centre of the trench [1009] running west-east just north of the roundhouse, but had no stratigraphical relationship with the drip-gully and, although also middle Iron Age, could have been earlier, later or contemporary with the roundhouse. The only other features found were two large postholes. These had no horizontal relationship with the drip-gully and the only pottery found in posthole [1022] was early-middle Anglo-Saxon suggesting that both postholes were later features.

Trench 2

Based on the geophysical anomalies, the hypothesis was that the wide near north-south ditch might have been an enclosure ditch for one or more phases of the settlement, with the less significant ditches dug as paddock, stock control or small field boundaries. The machining and clean-up layer, 0.35m deep, comprised both upper and lower ploughsoil down to the compacted layer in which again archaeological features began to be visible. The large ditch could be discerned as a wide band of darker fill, cut across by a deep plough-strike; a large oval cut feature could be seen in the south of the trench, with another band of darker fill running from the eastern baulk to merge with the large ditch's fill. The latter resolved into set of curving and inter-cutting ditches. All the upper fills of these cut features had been spread as well as truncated by the ploughing.

The main enclosure ditch: two interventions were made across the ditch (fig. 5), one in the south and another against the northern baulk. In 2018 the aim was to date and characterise the large ditch, which appeared on the geophysics to narrow as it ran NNE as well as producing a weaker magnetic response; the intention is to return to explore further the relationship between the large ditch and the ditch/ditches approaching from the east.

The slot in the south explored the width of the re-cut ditch as delineated by the dark spread of fills. The upper 0.1–0.15m of fills were extremely dry and hard and excavated in a box section. Below that the fills were friable, humic and silty, and dug stratigraphically. The earliest ditch [2019] was originally 2.9m wide at this point, an open U-shape, 0.7m at its deepest in the west, rising to 0.5m in the east. This suggested the ditch was originally over a metre in depth. Widths of *c*. 0.25m in the west and 0.2m in the east of the original ditch fill had survived re-cutting and were notably humic, dark and silty. In the west the fill produced a considerable amount of slag, charcoal and burnt stone. The weaving comb (SF5; fig. 2) was found in this area, surviving as the fill was more amenable to preservation than those deposits dominated by natural. This area of fill also contained 11 sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery: some of the sherds were very large and sharp, and tended to be grouped in caches with animal bone and burnt stone. The western edge of the ditch may have been disturbed by a cut feature extending beyond the baulk but the boundaries between deposits were so diffuse in the upper layer it was impossible to be certain: the geophysics does suggest another linear feature running WNW from ditch [2019] at around the point that the slot was placed (possibly a continuation of ditch [2006] to the east of [2019]).

Ditch [2019] was back-filled and re-dug as [2005], in the same location, again as a fairly open U-shape and down to the base of the first ditch. However, the later ditch was only 2.4m wide and dug closer to the original eastern side so that the centre line of the ditch moved eastwards.

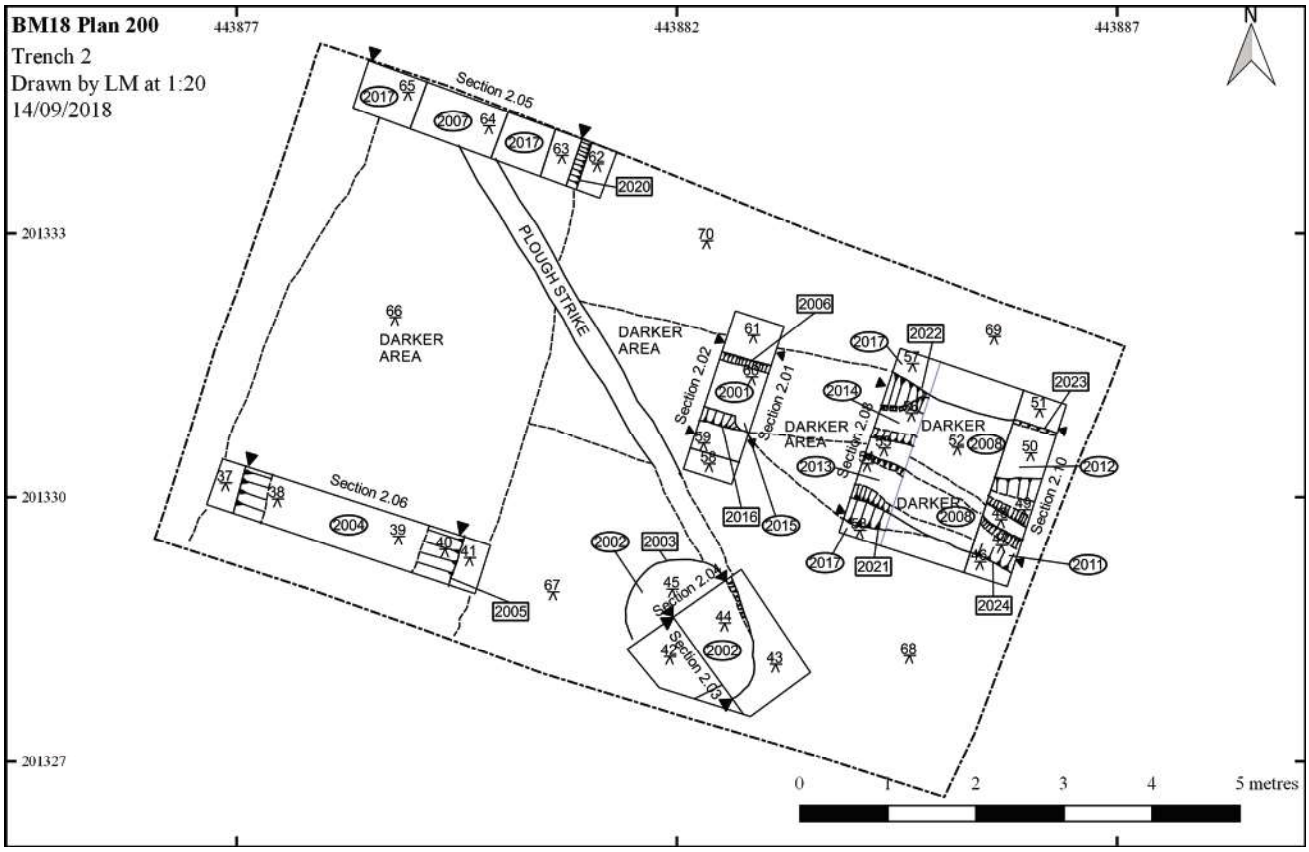

Figure 30: BM18 Plan 200, Trench 2 post-excavation

In the geophysics plot to the south of Trench 2 the large enclosure ditch does appear to bifurcate, possibly indicating that [2005] was a newly configured ditch although, in the area of Trench 2, dug in a similar location to a backfilled predecessor. The fill of the later ditch was not homogenous but composed of many dumps of material: humic sandy silt was interleaved with sandier lenses and streaks of grey clay, with charcoal flecks throughout. The fill also contained over 60 large sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery, again discovered in clusters with animal bone and occasionally burnt stone, rather than distributed more evenly through the fill.

The narrower stretch of ditch to the north of that just discussed above was investigated in a slot against the northern baulk. This stretch of ditch [2020] had not been recut or re-dug and was 2.4m wide, so correlating with the later ditch [2005] to the south in width. It had gently sloping sides with a concave base, about 0.7m deep, again echoing the later ditch to the south. The greatest contrast was in the fill of the northern stretch of ditch: the sandy silt was much more homogenous, contained very little charcoal and 31 sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery, none of them very large and dispersed throughout the fill, with only occasional bone fragments.

Large oval cut feature: south-east of the large ditch the south-east quadrant of a large oval cut feature [2003] was excavated. Its overall size was 1.75m NW-SE by 1.4m SW-NE and depth 0.7m, with near vertical sides and a flat base. The fill was not homogenous: the upper layer was humic silty sand and produced a small cluster of bone and over 30 sherds of sandy Iron Age pottery in the near centre of the feature. That upper fill merged with and was interleaved with a finely laminated greasy and ashy lower layer. The lower fill may have been cooking-related but contained no pottery or surviving bone.

Central and eastern ditches: these ditches were investigated in two areas, one in the north-east corner of the trench and another further west. All of the two-metre square area in the north-east was initially covered with darker deposit, and this was dug to a depth of 0.25m at which level the ditches could be discerned and excavated stratigraphically. The two ditches revealed were excavated in two narrower slots against the western and eastern baulks of the original intervention. In the upper layer most of the finds of 32 sherds of Iron Age pottery, burnt stone and possibly slag, seemed to come from the area above the southern ditch [2021]-[2024]. That ditch was possibly a paddock/field or stock run boundary: the western stretch [2021] was 0.4m deep (so closer to 0.8m deep originally), 0.4m wide narrowing to 0.2m with a flat narrow base. The east side sloped steeply, and the west side changed with a break of slope from a gentle to lower steep slope. To the east the ditch [2024] was a steeply sloping V-shape, 0.4m wide by 0.55m deep. The fills were dark humic sandy silts, contained animal bone, and produced three sherds of Iron Age pottery. This ditch was cut by the ditch to the north [2022]-[2023] and also appeared to be the feature seen in the geophysics curving from south to east across the field before intersecting with large ditch [2005]-[2020].

The northern ditch [2022]-[2023] cut ditch [2021]-[2024] and correlated on the geophysics with a shorter stretch of ditch running east-west into Trench 2. In the east, ditch [2023]'s south-east side sloped steeply to a gently concave base, the opposing side being long, gently sloping and undulating, possibly reflecting another intersecting cut feature at this point. The ditch was 1.4m wide at its top narrowing to 0.35m at the base, by 0.47m deep. To the west the ditch, here [2022], had steeply sloping, v-shaped sides and was 0.4m wide and 0.55m deep. This ditch may have been up to one metre in depth originally. The fills were very similar to the southern ditch and contained some sandy Iron Age pottery and animal teeth fragments.

The final investigation of the two near west-east ditches was made in a slot towards the centre of the trench. Here a wider and deeper ditch [2006] cut gully [2016]: these features appeared as one ditch on the geophysics. The gully was probably the continuation to the west of ditch [2021]-[2024], echoing the profile of that ditch, with steeply sloping sides and a slightly concave base. The fill contained one sherd of Iron Age pottery. The later ditch [2006] was the western continuation of ditch [2022]-[2023] and had a steeply sloping east side, a more gently sloped west side and an open v-shaped base. It was 0.7m wide at the top and 0.25m at its base and *c*. 0.45m deep. The fill produced eight sherds of abraded sandy Iron Age pottery.

Discussion

The wide anomaly running across the west side of the trench comprised two ditches, one the re-cutting [2005] of an earlier backfilled ditch [2019]. The later ditch may have continued northwards as [2020]; the original ditch may have linked with ditch [2016]-[2021]-[2024] curving away to the south-east to meet with the southern extension of large ditch [2005] to form a sizeable D-shaped enclosure. Ditch [2016]-[2021]-[2024] was also the earlier of the two ditches running near west-east across the trench. It is possible that ditch [2006]-[2022]-[2023] formed a large sub-square enclosure with the northward extension of enclosure ditch [2020].

The large oval flat-bottomed pit-like feature [2003] remains a puzzle, having dug like a sunken featured building. It was perhaps the base of a small wooden structure or possibly a large fire-pit, although there was perhaps neither sufficient charcoal nor ash for the latter to be the case.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located to investigate a spread of magnetic anomalies, along with possible pits and post-holes and a series of ditches, two of which appeared to be opposing ditch-arms creating a north-west facing entrance into a large, near north-south aligned sub-rectangular enclosure (Fig. 31). The northerly ten metres of the trench was six metres wide, the southern 13 metres wider at 11 metres. After the removal of ploughsoils to 0.35–0.4m below field-surface, the dark spread in the north could clearly be seen against the pale natural [3016], as could the pits. The sweeping arc of ditches, now obviously more than one cut feature, was partially obscured by two wide medieval furrow bases up to two metres wide running NNW-SSE across the trench, [3005] and [3013]. Two other furrow bases could be seen in the north of the trench and these furrows can be traced on the geophysics as paler bands blurring the other archaeologically-derived anomalies. As in 2018 the truncation of all the features ensured that stratigraphical relationships could only be discerned where features directly intersected, and not always then.

The northern pit cluster: the upper amalgamated and disturbed layer of this area of dozens of tightly intercutting

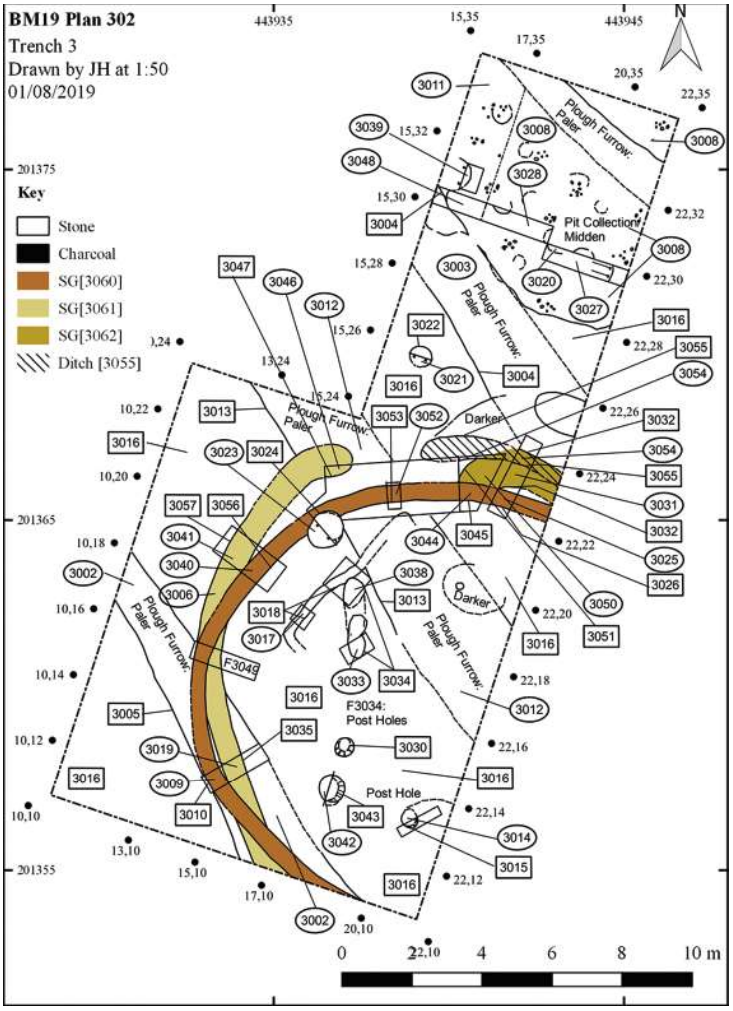

Figure 31: BM19 Plan 302, Trench 3 post-excavation

small pits was excavated first as one spit (3008), around six metres square in the trench and no more than 0.1m deep. From two slots dug west-east through the surviving depth of the pit cluster it was apparent that the pits were generally between 0.2m-0.6m in diameter and originally between 0.6–0.7m deep. As seen in section most were steep-sided with near flat bases, with a few narrower pits more v-shaped in profile. Below the more disturbed upper layer the cuts of a handful of pits could be detected in plan, and pit-profiles only really showed in section. All were intercutting at the level of truncation; separate bases emerged towards the bottom of the profile. Hence the appearance in the geophysics of one diffuse spread. The upper amalgamated fills and laminations, like the lower fills, were dark and humic, with fine clay lenses, and produced a range of abraded small sherds of probably Iron Age pottery and degraded bone, especially teeth. The lower fills were very similar, with neither concentrations of finds, nor better-preserved bone or pottery. The western slot revealed a collection of eight stake holes running into the natural below the pits. The midden area may have been fenced in various places as it developed, to keep livestock on or off, or the stakes may perhaps have been individual tethers for animals feeding on the midden-material.

Pits and postholes [3022], F[3034], [3030], [3043], [3015] and [3024]; gully [3018]: this section deals first with all the cut features seen separately from both the pit midden and the arc of ditches, and finally with the large likely grain storage pit [3024]-[3037] cut into the backfilled ditches in the west centre of the trench.

Pit or large **posthole [3022]** lay two metres south of the pit-midden and the same distance north of the arc of ditches. A depth of 0.4m survived of the circular feature, which was 0.8m wide at its spread top, narrowing to 0.6m. There were indications that a considerable post had been withdrawn from the west, and the posthole backfilled with predominantly natural. A very small amount of extremely degraded pottery and bone in the fill did not survive excavation. This posthole was very similar in size and profile to the two discovered in Trench 1.

In the centre of the wider southern part of the trench, an intercutting series of postholes and a meandering gully were investigated. The run of **postholes F[3034]** was very disturbed by both contemporary intercutting and post-medieval ploughing. There were at least four postholes running near north-south for *c*. 2.3m. Each intercut posthole was sub-oval and between 0.5–0.6m in diameter with between 0.1–0.3 m of their depth surviving. No finds were recovered from the fills. The most northern posthole cut a narrow, slightly meandering **gully [3018]** running 4.5m broadly south-west to north-east about 1.5m south-east of the ditch arc. This gully seemed to turn in a right angle at each of its ends before becoming shallower and so lost to later disturbance. It may have described a sub-square or sub-rectangular enclosure. The gully fill was more humic than the fill of the postholes, but again contained no finds; the

feature was 0.25–0.3m wide and at most 0.2m deep. It was impossible to tell if the postholes and gully were related or belonged to completely different phase(s) of activity.

Posthole [3030] three metres south and also within the ditch arc was revealed immediately beneath ploughsoil as packed with burnt stone. This stone layer was at most 0.4m deep and comprised half-a-dozen larger stones up to 0.4m long and many smaller ones; these were likely post-packing. The posthole was 0.6m in diameter and thus very similar in depth and size to posthole [3022] 11.25m to the north. One of the postholes in F[3034] also lay on a line between these two postholes. There were no finds other than the stones.

Posthole [3015] lay 2.5m south-east of [3030] close to the baulk. This feature had been heavily disturbed by post-medieval ploughing, like F[3034], but appeared to comprise a posthole 0.4m in diameter and surviving to a depth of 0.15m, possibly adjacent to the end of a narrow gully curving into the baulk to the east. The fill of the pit was very organic and produced a few small sherds of probable Iron Age pottery.

Pit kiln: the final cut feature not directly associated with the ditches was **pit [3043]**, just half a metre south of [3030], although it is impossible to say whether any of these features belonged to the same phase. The feature survived to a depth of 0.5m, was inverted bell-shaped, 0.9m in diameter at the top, narrowing to 0.64m about 0.2m from the top (Fig. 32). The sides were vertical thereafter with some undercutting in the SSW. The upper fill in the more open portion of the kiln was extremely black, orange and silty with clay lenses and considerable amounts of ash and charcoal, producing both crumbling sherds of reddened pottery and larger sherds of coarse pottery. Below that layer were at least five – and probably more – complete, upturned but crushed red and greyish black pots, interleaved with sherds of broken pot, ash, burnt stone, burnt clay and ash. A small whetstone SF4 was also found amidst the pottery. This feature was probably a pit kiln.

Grain storage pit: the outline of **pit [3024]-[3037]**, located a metre north-west of gully [3018] was initially obscured by the base of medieval furrow [3013]. The pit was also cut into the backfilled roundhouse drip-gully SG[3060], see below, curving near east. Before its truncation and spreading by ploughing the pit was 0.95m wide at the top (Fig. 33). Around 0.45m down from the surviving top, the pit narrowed to 0.75m wide before gradually widening back to 0.95m above a deeply concave base; the pit survived to 1.1m deep and so must have been *c*. 1.5m deep originally. The pit was probably recut [3024] to a depth of *c*. 0.35m: the upper, silty more disturbed fill of the recut contained degraded bone, and also pottery sherds and burnt stone found in small clusters. The lower, sandier fill of the original pit [3037] contained more, and more complete, animal bone, less pottery and more charcoal with depth. This may originally have been a grain storage pit.

Roundhouse drip-gully, Stratigraphic Grouping SG[3060]: the gully was the stratigraphically earliest of the ditches making up the group of curved features describing an arc across the wider southern sector of the trench, sweeping from the south-east corner, across nearly to the western baulk and back to the eastern side 12 metres to the north. The stronger magnetic signal of the earlier, larger ditch masked the course of the gully in the geophysics. The gully would have created a circular enclosure of *c*. 11.5m in diameter, the entrance presumably sited to the east and outside the trench.

To explore the various stratigraphical relationships the gully was investigated in five slots. In the south the gully, here [3010], was found cutting the earlier ditch [3035]; the gully was 0.2–0.4m wide and 0.2m deep, with gently sloping sides and a concave base. The fill contained a little degraded pottery and bone. Two metres north the gully, now F[3049], was recorded cutting more decisively into the earlier ditch but presenting an almost identical profile and fill. Another two metres north and the gully, here [3056], was caught swinging to the east, again clearly cutting the earlier ditch.

Figure 32: Pit [3043], looking north-west. Photo by Lynn Amadio

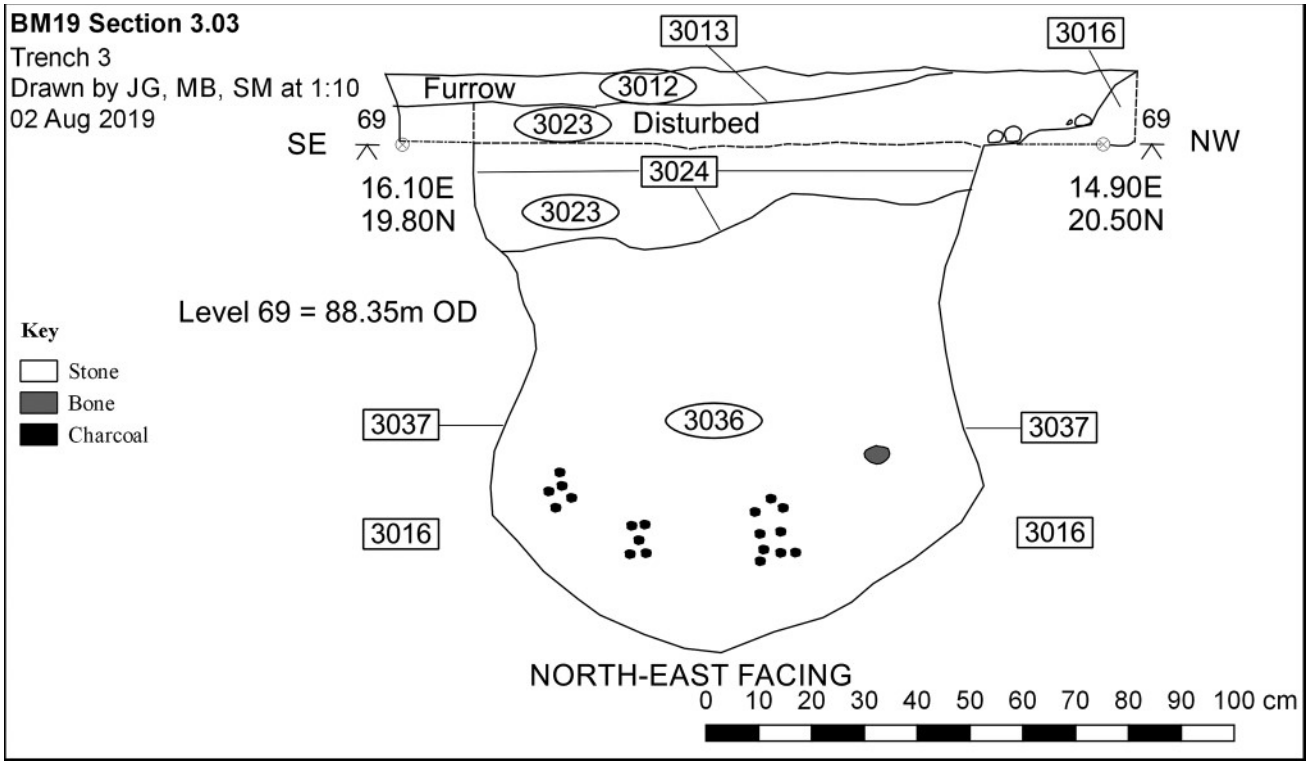

Figure 33: BM19 Section 3.03, probable grain storage pit

Survival was better here as the features were not as disturbed by later ploughing. The gully presented a similar profile but survived to a depth of 0.25–0.3m and a width of 0.5m. The fill contained more animal bone, burnt stone and sherds of Iron Age pottery, some of which were deposited in clusters.

The gully was picked up again four metres to the north-east, as [3053], running between the terminals of the earlier ditch. In this location the gully was again disturbed by a plough furrow and its profile and fill were identical to the furthest south profile, [3010]. The final exploration of the gully was a further two metres to the east close to the baulk. Here the gully was recorded, as [3045]-[3026], cutting what was probably the opposing ditch terminal for the earlier, wider enclosure ditch. Once again, the gully survived to 0.2m deep and up to 0.5m in width, with fills containing a small amount of degraded bone and coarse pottery sherds.

Although this gully created an enclosure around three metres wider than that discovered in Trench 1, the width, depth and fills of both of the probable drip-gullies were similar. The final specialist report will indicate whether identifiable pottery fabrics were also the same.

Enclosure ditch, western arm SG[3061]: this ditch ran around six metres north-east to south-west from a slightly curved terminal in the west centre of the trench, before straightening to run near north-south for about seven metres into the southern baulk. The ditch's geophysical response suggests it may continue for at least another six-seven metres, curving slightly to the south-east in the final two-three metres, thus possibly creating a sub-oval enclosure some 17 metres long by about 12 metres wide.

The western arm was explored in three interventions with a further section across the terminal end. In the southern slot the ditch, here [3035], cut by the drip-gully and truncated by furrow [3005], was recorded as a metre wide, but because of the furrow only survived to a depth of 0.2m. The sides were slightly sloping and the base near flat; the silty fill produced degraded bone and some coarse pottery fragments. Two metres north the ditch, F[3049], although the same width survived to *c*. 0.3m deep; the fill was similar but with more coarse pottery sherds. The large intervention two metres further north provided the best opportunity to characterise the enclosure ditch, here [3057]. Undisturbed by large medieval furrows, the ditch survived to 0.4m deep, suggesting it was not far short of a metre deep originally, and at least 1.2m wide at its top. The western side sloped more gently, with the eastern side a little steeper producing a slightly sloping but open and near-flat base. The upper fill had contained clusters of burnt stone, coarse pottery sherds and animal bone, including a boar's tusk; the lower fill produced only burnt stone. A quadrant of the curved ditch end was captured in section as [3047] but produced no notable finds. The end was shallower than the body of the ditch.

Enclosure ditch, eastern arm SG[3062] and ditch [3055]: the eastern ditch end was seen in two interventions close to the eastern baulk, here as [3032]-[3051]. The shallower terminal survived to 0.2m deep and the body of the eastern arm produced a very similar fill and profile to the western arm, being 0.4m deep and a metre wide with slightly asymmetric sides and an open and near-flat base.

The eastern arm of the enclosure ditch was cut by both the drip-gully and in the north by another ditch [3055], which ran west from the baulk for four metres before ending in a slightly curved terminal. This ditch could be detected in the geophysics within the trench but could not readily be reconciled with any geophysical anomalies continuing beyond the trench outline. The was very similar in size and profile to the drip-gully: 0.4m wide and 0.2m deep with a concave base. No finds were discovered in the small amount of fill excavated.

Discussion

Trench 3 allowed an exploration of the probable eastern edge of the settlement. The midden pit-cluster (3008) is characteristic of certain Iron Age settlements, but it was interesting to discover evidence for the fencing of, or animal tethering in, parts of the midden. The midden cannot be conclusively linked, before radiocarbon results are forthcoming, to any of the ditches or features to the south. One of the earlier phases of activity south of the pit-cluster was indicated by the 17m long, sub-oval enclosure, with a 3.5m wide entrance in the north-west. It was impossible to associate any particular use to this enclosure, because of the truncation of all the archaeology, but it is possible that kiln [3053] and some of the smaller cut features found within the enclosure were contemporary. In a later phase, a roundhouse was built across the north-western end of the backfilled ditches of the enclosure, and some of the posthole sequence F[3034] and posthole [3015] could have been part of the structure of the building. Finally, the backfilled drip-gully was cut by a grain storage pit [3024]-[3037]. Again, one or two of the cut features within what had been the roundhouse interior, such as narrow gully [3018], could have been contemporary with that pit. The two larger postholes, [3030] and [3022] might have been early Anglo-Saxon.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located to investigate a substantial near west-east linear ditch where it intersected with other curved ditches, and, in the south-west corner, a semi-circular arrangement of pits or postholes (Fig. 34). The trench was 12 metres west-east by ten metres north-south. After the removal of plough-soils to 0.35–0.4m below field-surface, the linear ditch could be clearly discerned, cut across by a medieval furrow, as could elements of the curved ditches, especially in the east of the trench, and some of the pits in the south-west. It was apparent from the outset that the pit arrangement and cut features south of the main ditch were more complex than suggested by the geophysics. However, all were also very truncated and disturbed, making it difficult to tease out relationships.

Linear ditch [4006] and intersecting ditches: the near west-east ditch ran across the full width of Trench 4 (Fig. 35). Its full profile was investigated against the western baulk, where the ditch was 1.6m wide at its spread, truncated top, narrowing to 0.8m wide at the bottom. The southern side had slumped, but the ditch was originally U-shaped and survived to 0.7m deep, so was originally over a metre deep. The fill produced fragmentary animal bone and teeth, some coarse pottery sherds and burnt stone.

Five metres to the east, this ditch cut **ditch [4039]** running near north-south. About 0.5m wide and surviving to a depth of 0.25m, the U-shaped ditch contained some degraded coarse pottery and animal bone. Ditch [4039] could not be traced south of the west-east ditch, here [4050], but may have been associated with similar gullies in that area, discussed below.

Three metres further east a second ditch intersected with [4006]. **Ditch [4010]-[4034]** was also cut by the larger west-east ditch, here [4036], had survived to 0.25m deep, was slightly wider than [4039] at 0.6m but similar in fill and profile to that ditch. However, ditch [4010] emerged clearly south of the later ditch, where a number of cut features intersected in the south-east corner of the trench. These features may have included pits/postholes, but the combination of truncation and later ploughing disturbance meant relationships were in general hard to clarify.

The intervention along the line of ditch [4010] one metre south of the later linear ditch recorded the profile of two ditches, [4019] and [4025]. **Ditch [4019]** running near north-south was the likely continuation of ditch [4010]-

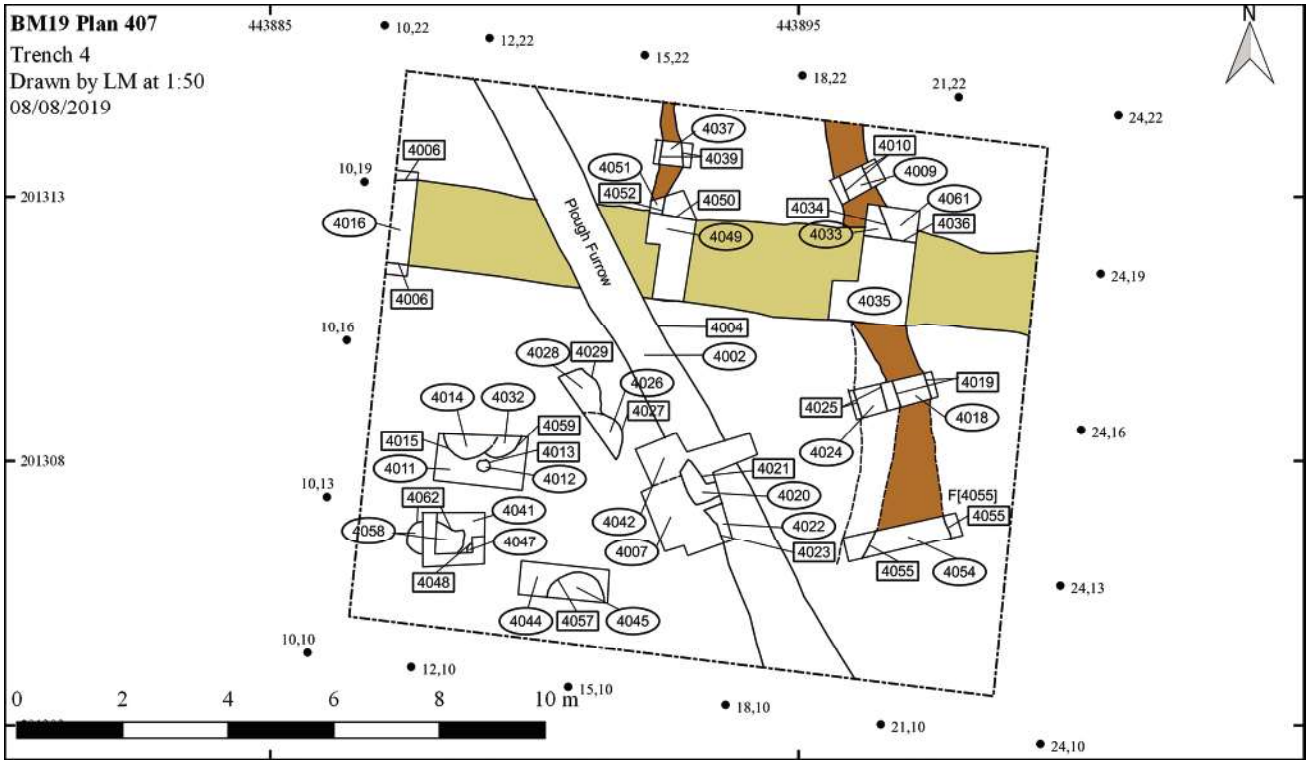

Figure 34: BM19 Plan 407, Trench 4 post-excavation

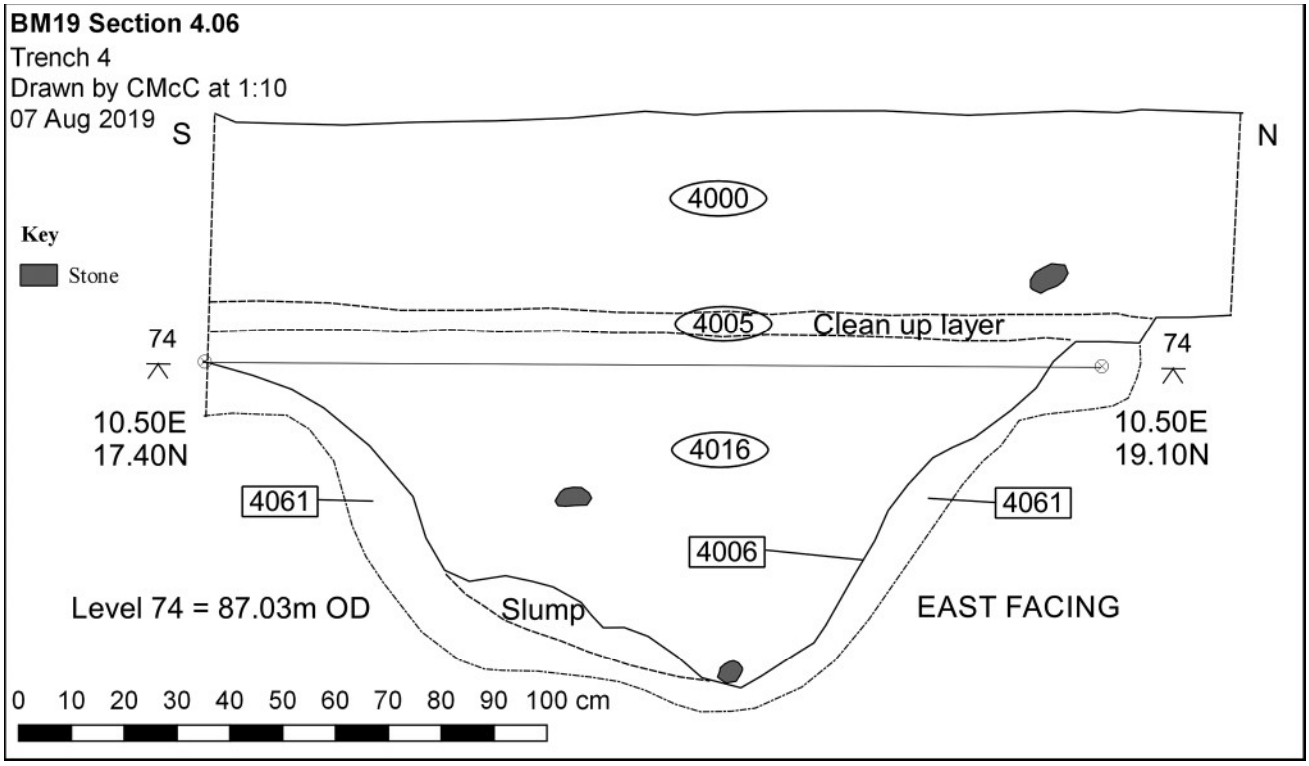

Figure 35: BM19 Section 4.06, large linear ditch

[4034], with a very similar profile and fill. **Gully [4025]** to the west was narrower at 0.45m and very disturbed and shallow. This gully appeared to be curving towards ditch [4019] and, although it emerged south of the large ditch, and was cut by it, could not clearly be traced north of that feature. These ditches were explored in another slot three metres to the south. At this point the narrow gully cut the larger ditch as it curved gently south-west **F[4055]**, and both had been cut by a later pit about 0.5m in diameter. The fills produced very occasional coarse pottery sherds, animal bone and burnt stone.

The central area of the trench south of the west-east ditch had been most disturbed by medieval and later ploughing [4004], but produced an intercutting pit and gully, and the largest collection in the trench of considerable sherds of likely Iron Age pottery. **Gully [4023]** ran south-east to north-west was steep-sided and around 0.2m wide and 0.25m deep, so similar in size and direction to gully [4025], some three metres to the east. It is plausible that both of these may have been roundhouse drip-gullies. Gully [4023] was distinguished by the quantity of pottery discovered in its fill, including near complete pots. To the north the gully was cut by **pit [4021]**, which was only partially excavated but was sub-oval 0.7m in diameter and *c*. 0.25m deep, with a fill containing some pottery, burnt stone, animal teeth and degraded bone. This pit was probably associated with those to the west, in particular pit [4062], discussed below.

Pit cluster of five elements in the south-west quadrant, including **pit [4021]** discussed above, **pit [4059]-[4015], pit [4029]-[4027], pit [4062] and pit [4057]**: the west central of the possible pits/pit clusters had appeared below ploughsoil as a pit with a posthole near-centre (fig. 1). On excavation it resolved into recut **pit [4015]** with posthole [4013] on its southern edge. The posthole was very shallow and *c*. 0.25m in diameter; above the level of truncation it had probably cut into the edge of the later pit of the pair. The earlier **pit [4059]** was small: *c*. 0.45m in diameter and 0.15m deep. The sub-oval pit that cut its western side was 1.2m in diameter but barely 0.1m in depth. The disturbed, slightly silty fill(s) containing some very fragmentary bone and were difficult to distinguish.

Intercutting **pits [4027] and [4029]** just to the north-east were similar. The earlier pit [4029] was a metre in diameter and 0.15m deep, with gently sloping sides and near flat base; the later pit [4027] cut the south-east quadrant of [4029], was 1.1m in diameter and a similar depth. Again, the only finds were animal bone including two jawbones, and there were hints of possible postholes. The fifth element in this cluster of pits lay just to the south of pit [4015] but on excavation of **pit [4062]** revealed a different character, more like pit [4021] just over four metres to the north-east. This pit was deeper at *c*. 0.3m, sub-oval with a diameter of 0.8m and vertical sides; the fill was much siltier, charcoal-rich and produced sherds of Iron Age coarse pottery. Just to the east, close to the southern baulk a fifth pit-related feature, **pit [4057]** was investigated. This pit was not intercut, was a metre in diameter and survived to 0.2m deep, with a gently concave base and gently sloping sides. The fill was silty, charcoal-rich and contained some larger sherds of coarse pottery.

Together these five pits/pit clusters were the features that produced the sub-circular arrangement of pit-like geophysical anomalies in the south-west corner of the trench. More may be discovered about their purpose with the final specialist and environmental reports.

Discussion

Despite the disturbance and truncation some phasing can be suggested for Trench 4. The near north-south ditch [4010]-[4019] was an early feature, cut by both gully [4025], a pit and the large west-east ditch. That curved ditch [4010]-[4019] is probably the southern end of a ditch investigated

in 2018, which was also likely earlier than a large enclosure ditch in that part of the settlement. There were two possible roundhouse drip-gullies [4023] and [4025] in Trench 4, in a subsequent phase, which were cut by the later circular arrangement of five intercutting pits and postholes, and by the large west-east ditch [4006]. It is not possible to say whether the pit circle was earlier, contemporary with, or later than the linear ditch. Thus, the area of Trench 4 may have begun as part of a stock/field enclosure system, then seen an unenclosed phase of roundhouse settlement, which was followed by the pit arrangement and the creation of a more enclosed phase, including the large linear ditch.

Conclusion

The AAARP surveys and excavations in Broadmoor field have revealed something of the character of a multi-phase, early-middle Iron Age settlement. Further details and more confident phasing will be added as final specialist reports and radiocarbon dating results are incorporated. The settlement clearly changed over time and shifted focus around the area delineated by the geophysical anomalies. A considerable number of roundhouses were part of the layout, with evidence for the re-cutting of encircling drip-gullies. The magnetometry was not able to pick up all the drip-gullies and their presence in Trench 3 and probably Trench 4 suggests there were even more buildings than indicated by the survey. In different parts of the field the roundhouses were both preceded by a large ditched enclosure (Trench 3) and succeeded by linear ditches and pits (Trenches 1, 3 and 4), indicating the dynamic layout and character of the settlement. There was evidence for enclosures, probably for small fields and gardens as well as for stock; and for midden management, pottery manufacture, grain storage, weaving and possibly metal-working. The settlement was both unenclosed and enclosed at different times in its occupation, before its apparent abandonment in the later Iron Age.

The evidence for Romano-British activity was slight, with no pottery in features and only a small battered assemblage from ploughsoils. The field may have been worked in the Roman period but there is as yet no evidence for nearby settlement. However, the earlier Anglo-Saxon pottery found in a posthole hints at the presence of structures of that period, with other cut features containing earlier Anglo-Saxon pottery discovered in test pits on the eastern field margin and 300m to the ENE by the Plough pub. In the medieval period the whole field was again being ploughed and appears to have remained under cultivation since that time.

Acknowledgements

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Figure 36: Trench 3 under excavation by OUDCE students and volunteers, looking north-east. Photo by Jane Harrison

to the Council for British Archaeology for a generous grant from the Mick Aston Archaeology Fund.

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Appleton Area Archaeological Research Project (AAARP): Test Pits in Appleton Village

SP 4428 0159, centred

Jane Harrison, Leigh Mellor and William Wintle

Introduction

The AAARP Project is researching an area around the village of Appleton which includes the settlements of Eaton and Besselsleigh, the deserted medieval village of Tubney and the deserted manor of Besselsleigh adjacent to the surviving church of St Lawrence. Appleton village lies south-west of Oxford on the Corallian Ridge. The first AAARP fieldwork was undertaken at Appleton Manor, a moated site with a surviving twelfth century hall-house, and included four test pits located close to the manor house within the moated area (Fig. 37). These excavations and the known history of the Manor are described in Bond *et al* 2017. Further fieldwork undertaken in 2017 and 2018 is summarised in Harrison and Rowley 2019.

The research area is topographically and geologically distinctive and archaeologically largely unexplored. The Project is seeking to understand the changing character of its past landscapes and settlement, focusing on the Iron Age to Medieval periods. Ultimately it will be exploring whether this area is distinctive within the Upper Thames Valley.

An important aim of the AAARP fieldwork is to understand and date the formation and development of the village of Appleton. Some indications of its later development can be discerned by studying historic maps such as nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps, the Tithe map and the 1831 Enclosure map. Such analyses may result in villages being assigned a likely settlement class according to the regularity of streets and house plots, the presence or absence of greens, and the number of focal points in the village (Roberts 1982, 5–14; Roberts 1987). In Appleton, as in many other villages, the surviving manor house and church are in close proximity. But this does not necessarily imply that this was the initial or primary focus of settlement and village development. Indeed, in Appleton this was almost certainly not the case.

Summary

In order to provide a framework for investigating its development of the village, around 40 test pits have been dug within the village so far (Fig. 37). The pottery collected from these test pits indicates that, before the Norman Conquest, Appleton was probably a scattered, linear distribution of dwellings and farms, rather than a village clustered round in the location of the post-Conquest church and manor. The pre-Conquest foci that have been discovered were around South Lawn in the south-west, the Plough Pub in the modern centre of the village, and perhaps the Appleton end of Eaton Road to the north-north-east (Fig. 38), which continued into the Medieval period and beyond. Even after the church and Appleton Manor were built, the village continued for some considerable time as a more dispersed, strung-out settlement. Evidence gathered thus far suggests that the village coalesced into near to its modern shape only in the later sixteenth to eighteenth centuries when the test pit results show, for example, the expansion of settlement along Park Lane and England's Lane.

The results from test pits excavated around Tubney Manor Farm and the deserted manor of Besselsleigh will be reported on next year when they can be analysed alongside other survey and excavation work.

Test pit pottery analysis by archaeological period (see Fig. 38)

Roman

The research area is notable for its absence of Roman archaeology, in stark contrast for example to East Oxford. No more than one or two small sherds of Roman pottery were found in any Appleton test pit. Similarly, although the morphology of the geophysical survey at Broadmoor field in Appleton might have suggested a Roman component, in two seasons of excavation only a few battered sherds have been discovered in ploughsoil (*see article below*). There may be evidence for field manuring but none as yet for settlement in the close vicinity.

Anglo-Saxon

Poorly surviving early-middle Anglo-Saxon pottery is rarely recovered from test pits, even when settlement is close by, yet sherds were found in a cut feature in test pit (TP) 37 on the eastern margin of Broadmoor field. A large posthole excavated in 2018 in the field also produced pottery of that period (*see article below*). Three areas were identified where test pit pottery indicated a likely later Anglo-Saxon component to activity: around South Lawn; around the Plough Pub (TPs 10 and 21) and possibly around the southern end of Eaton Road. None of the pottery from test pits excavated in and around Appleton Manor grounds suggested pre-Conquest settlement clustered round or immediately preceded its building.

Medieval

Despite the establishment of the Manor the settlement pattern continued to be relatively dispersed, and there is no evidence from test pits that Medieval building focused around the Manor site. For example, TP20 in the Manor's walled garden, and very close to the church, produced only one small sherd of possible Medieval pottery; the remainder was seventeenth-century to modern. Either no Medieval or only a slight Medieval component were found in TPs 5–7, 8, 14, 16, 26 and 46. The moated manor at Appleton, sited on low-lying and damp land, may have been one of a type identified as established on relatively unattractive ground and amidst more dispersed settlement (Aberg and Brown 1981; Bond *et al* 2017).

An interesting west-east split in evidence for the development of the village either side of the Netherton-Eaton

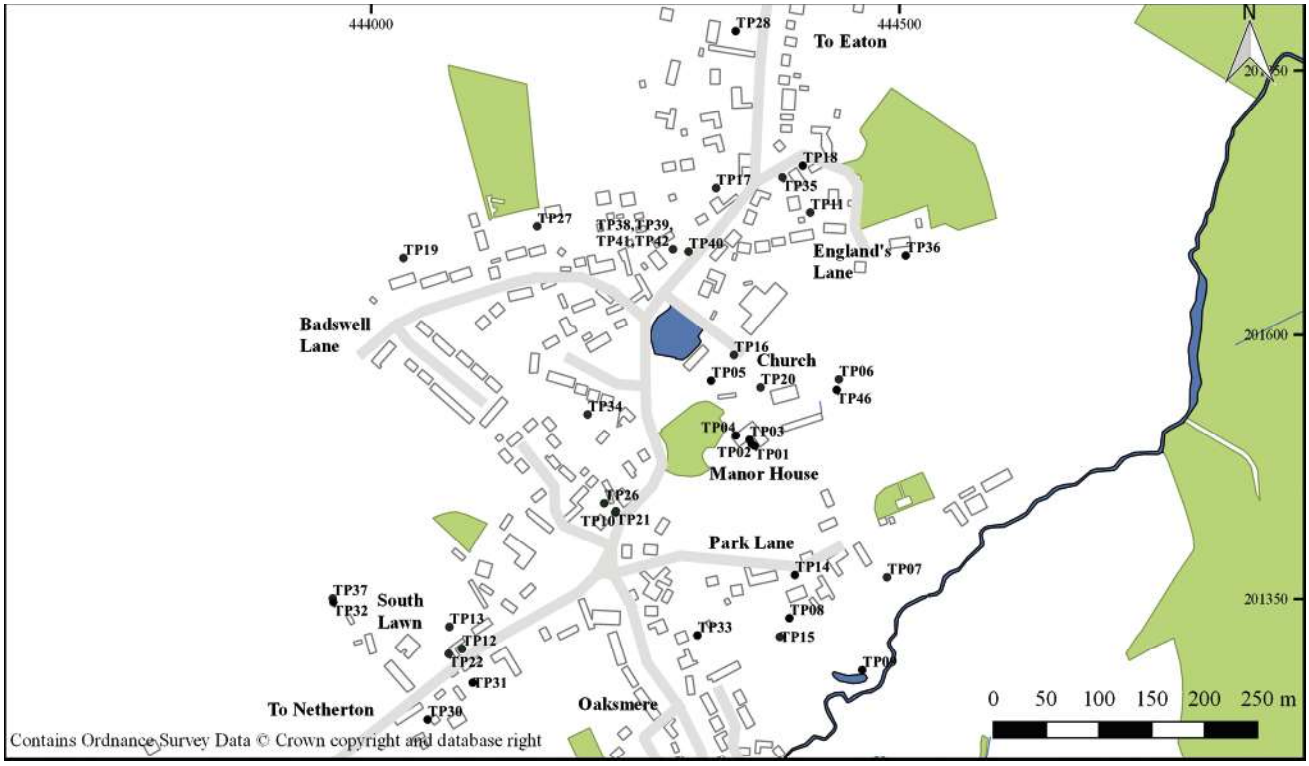

Figure 37: test pit locations in Appleton

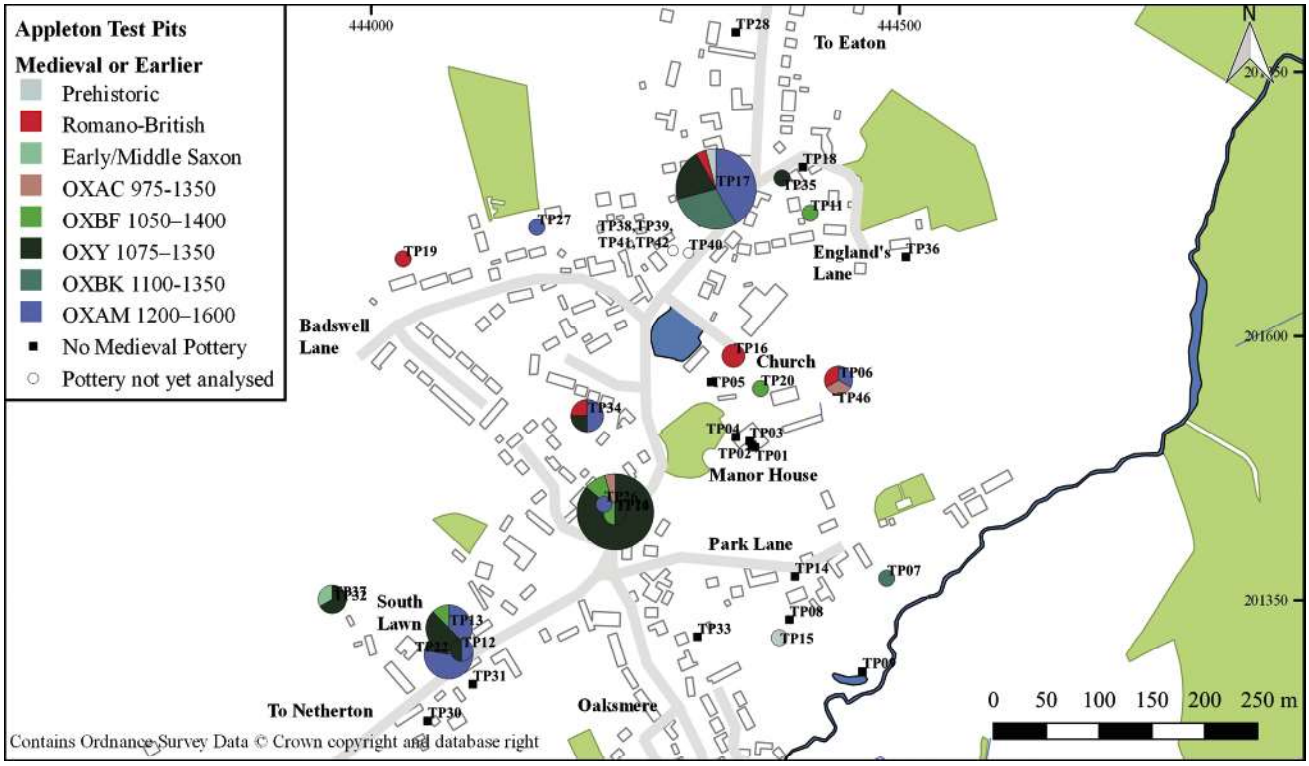

Figure 38: test pits 1–37 with full analysis of pottery collected

road is emerging. The Medieval farms and small hamlets seem to have been located predominantly on the higher, drier ground to the north-west of the line of these roads. Medieval pottery was unearthed in the grounds of South Lawn and in TP22 west of the road. But, on the immediately opposite side of the road, and so east of the road line, two test pits, TPs 30 and 31, produced no Medieval pottery at all, but interesting evidence for late eighteenth-nineteenth century cobbled farmyards and contemporary iron-working. TP33 at the village end of Oaksmere, and again east of the road line, produced no pottery pre-dating the seventeenth century.

Pottery from TPs 38–42 suggested the development along the west side what later became the northern village green happened predominately post-Conquest, and that the Medieval village may also have expanded from South Lawn northwards. TPs 18, 35 and 36 along England's Lane

Figure 39: test pitting in action in Appleton

indicated that the housing along that road only began to be established in the seventeenth century. Results from other test pits away from the main through roads, such as TPs 11, 19 and 27 support the idea that the Medieval village remained relatively linear and notably poly-focal.

Conclusions

These can only be interim hypotheses, but already the test pits are presenting new ideas about Appleton's village development. The village did not grow from a cluster round the location of the twelfth-century manor; the settlement pattern continued to be notably dispersed until at least the seventeenth century. There is no evidence for immediate post-Conquest village planning in Appleton. Rather, the village seems to develop organically outward from the various earlier foci: with no apparent drive for nucleation or radical re-organisation. Perhaps, in considering Appleton's past, closer attention should be paid to the village's name, which means either 'orchard place' or 'place that supplies apples'. Appleton is graced now by the remnants of many orchards, but the name is old, mentioned in a charter of AD942 and recorded in Domesday Book. Was pre-Conquest and later Appleton essentially a scatter of dwellings and farms, whose work focused at least in part on growing apples for local estates and communities? Future work will explore this and other questions.

Acknowledgements

The authors and the AAARP team would like to thank all the villagers who kindly allowed test pits to be excavated on their land, the Appleton with Eaton History Society and all the wonderful volunteers and students who dug the test pits, reported on them and cleaned the pottery. The Trustees of AAARP are very grateful to the Council for British Archaeology for a generous grant from the Mick Aston Archaeology Fund.

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Geophysical Survey and Test Pit Excavation at Chimney Meadows, Chimney 2019

William Wintle

Introduction

The nature reserve of Chimney Meadows is located south-east of Bampton on the north bank of the River Thames surrounding the hamlet of Chimney. It is the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT) largest nature reserve in Oxfordshire. Formerly a commercial farm, the natural landscape and wildlife has been restored since the Trust took over in 2003. Part of the site is a National Nature Reserve, owned by Natural England, and whose wildflower meadows form one of England's largest areas of unspoilt grassland.

A late Anglo-Saxon cemetery was investigated at Chimney in 1988/89 (Crawford 1991) and Roman pottery has been found in adjacent fields. Medieval ridge-and-furrow is visible in nearby fields. Settlement at Chimney is likely to have been centred on a restricted area of higher ground. The current settlement at Chimney is on the southern point of this area and overlies the late Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The deserted medieval village and chapel is assumed to lie to the east of the current Chimney settlement, on slightly lower ground. Three Oxfordshire HER numbers for Chimney are listed in table 1.

HER PRN	Name
951	Deserted Medieval Village
2457	Anglo Saxon Inhumation Cemetery
3073	Supposed Site of Chapel of Ease, Hamlet of Chimney

Table 1. Oxfordshire HER Entries for Chimney Meadows

In 1993 Dr Sally Crawford directed a field walking investigation to the north of what is now Chimney House in an area they termed 'Back' field. The field walking results were subsequently analysed by Elizabeth Anscombe, a student from Birmingham University, for a BA dissertation (Anscombe 1998). Her analysis demonstrated that over half the pottery assemblage by weight was of Roman date. The rest was predominantly medieval and post-medieval. More recently volunteers at BBOWT have collected sherds of Roman pottery from badger setts in Church Field, which lies to the east of Back Field. This suggests that the distribution of Roman pottery and other material extends further east than the area examined in 1993.

The main area of medieval settlement is believed to lie to the east of Chimney Farm and in the BBOWT fields West Cavets and possibly East Cavets. A glimpse of the medieval settlement in 1279 is given in the Hundred Rolls (Stone 1968, 76–77) where 16 tenants are listed holding 12 yardlands (approximately 360 acres).

The Magnetometer Survey

The magnetometer survey was undertaken using a dual-sensor Bartington Instruments GRAD601 gradiometer. The grids were thirty metre squares and were walked in a clockwise "zig-zag" pattern with traverses one metre apart and readings taken four times a metre along each traverse. The magnetometer was set to a scale of 100nT with a sensitivity of 0.1 nT. The results have been processed by TerraSurveyor and are presented as block shaded images using a grey scale in Fig. 40.

Church Field was surveyed in March and April 2019 and showed a settlement site each side of a wide track or lane running south-west to north-east. As it appeared the settlement should continue further to the south, the two small fields East and West Cavets were surveyed in September 2019. Unfortunately, these fields appear to have been deeply ploughed, probably in the 1960s or 1970s, in an attempt to improve drainage. This ploughing appears to have damaged the archaeology so that very little survives to be detected through a magnetic survey.

The survey of Church Field was undertaken with the aim of identifying potential Roman settlement. It is unclear from the morphology of the settlement whether it is Roman, medieval, or medieval overlying Roman. It was therefore

Figure 40: Chimney Meadows Geophysical Survey

decided to place two small test pits, each 1m by 1m in extent, over two of the ditches in order to obtain dating material.

The Test Pits

Test Pit 1 (CH19 TP1) was located over the large ditch on the western side of the track at a junction with another ditch which ran north-west. It was excavated in spits to one metre depth, with the final 0.2m dug in a smaller 0.5m^2 sondage. Below the topsoil, the fill was a homogenous sandy silt, changing only to a sandier deposit at the base of the sondage. No ditch cut was visible. This suggests the ditch was backfilled rapidly in one episode, and also that it was originally at least a metre deep and a metre wide in the location of the test pit. Pottery sherds, fragments of animal bone and teeth were found evenly distributed throughout the fill in small quantities, with over half of the ceramics being Roman greyware. The change in fill towards the base of the excavation indicated the bottom of the ditch was being reached and, at that depth, a near complete greyware jar was revealed (Fig. 41). The results suggest that the field had been the location of both medieval and Roman activity and that it had not been ploughed intensively enough in any period for a deeper ploughsoil to develop.

Test Pit 2 (CH19 TP2) was positioned 20 metres further north on a ditch within the settlement area and produced very similar results to TP1. TP2 was excavated to 0.7m in spits, with the final 0.05m dug in a 0.5m^2 sondage. The fill was also homogenous and silty, although it was becoming sandier at the base of the sondage suggesting the base of the ditch was being reached. This indicates that the width of the ditch was at least one metre but it may have been about 0.2m shallower than the TP1 ditch. The finds were also very similar to TP1 although less numerous.

Conclusions

The geophysical survey located a settlement whose morphology appears more similar to a medieval settlement than a Roman settlement. The two test pits have recovered Roman and medieval pottery, with the Roman predominating. The full analysis of the pottery is still outstanding. This suggests that parts of the medieval settlement may overly an earlier Roman settlement. It is hoped to do further geophysical survey in 2020 in an attempt to identify other elements of Roman or medieval activity.

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Figure 41: Greyware jar in Test Pit 1. Photo by Leigh Mellor

Figure 42: Excavating Test Pit 2

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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

Blackthorn to Piddington Embankment Works

SP 64829 17733 to SP 62538 20179

J. McCarthy

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to undertake archaeological evaluation of a 19.4 ha parcel of land located along the railway line between Blackthorn and Piddington in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The evaluation area is between NGR 462538, 220179 and NGR 464829, 217733. In addition to the evaluation, archaeological monitoring of a topsoil strip centred on NGR 463631, 218899 was undertaken for a proposed spoil storage area as part of the archaeological works. The archaeological works were undertaken between the 21 and 25 October, and on the 5 and 6 November 2019.

The evaluation consisted of the excavation of 23 archaeological trial trenches along the proposed route of a new access road either side of the railway. A total of 60 trenches were proposed for the scheme, 13 of which were identified as having existing site constraints which made excavation not feasible and a further 24 were inaccessible during fieldwork due to ecological constraints and/or flooding. The monitoring of the topsoil strip was within a 4000 m2 parcel of land to the north–west of the bridge rail crossing, within the field occupied by trenches 21 and 22.

A total of 15 trenches out of the excavated 23 uncovered archaeological remains, almost exclusively in the form of either drainage ditches or ridge and furrow. The central part of the scheme identified numerous parallel drainage ditches either side of the railway. No dating was recovered from any of the ditches however they all appear to follow the alignment of the surviving ridge and furrow, with some of the ditches clearly having been excavated into the existing furrows. The south–eastern area identified minor evidence of former ridge and furrow as well as providing an opportunity to record the surviving ridge and furrow present in the fields at the south-eastern most end of the scheme, north of the railway.

During the course of the archaeological monitoring for the spoil storage area, it was determined that there would be no impact to the archaeological horizon, as the excavations comprised the removal of topsoil only, leaving a 0.25 m buffer of subsoil to protect any potential archaeology. No archaeological features or deposits of Romano-British date, and so relating to the Roman road that follows the route of the existing A41, were identified during the course of the works.