number of features. Many of these were medieval or post-medieval furrows, but more significant deposits represent occupation of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, Roman and Early Saxon dates. A few prehistoric struck flints and medieval pottery were also recovered.

Tackley, Street Farm, 22 Nethercote Road SP 4809 2068
David Sánchez

An archaeological recording action covering some 1.3ha revealed a Roman villa, the existence of which had first been signalled by the Tackley Local History group in 2011 and confirmed in an evaluation by Oxford Archaeology in 2012. Post-excavation analysis is ongoing but the chief results concern two building ranges, with at least four phases, one including a mosaic floor.

Thame, The Elms SP 7084 0557
Pierre-Damien Manisse

An archaeological excavation in two areas in advance of a care housing development targeted features identified in earlier evaluation, which had located linear features of Medieval date. Continuations of the ditches and further Medieval features were uncovered. In total, six ditches were identified, with a series of pits cut close to their course. Pottery recovered indicates a date of 13th-16th century, with limited evidence to suggest the one of the ditches was as early as 12th century. The coins and metal finds give a wider range date of site use as parkland, though most were recovered from the topsoil.

Thame, land to the rear of 4 East Street SP 7098 0570
Elspeth St. John-Brooks and Andrew Mundin

Observations were made on excavations for footings for a new house. Deep made ground deposits of 19th-20th century date were observed but the natural geology was not exposed. A single pit was probably the same date as the made ground.

Publication of potential interest to SMA readers:
(available from TVAS, email tvas@tvas.co.uk)

Andy Taylor, *Earlier Neolithic pits and Late Iron Age settlement at Littleworth Road, Benson, Oxfordshire*, TVAS Occasional Paper **29**

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, DEPT. FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Appleton Area Archaeological Research Project
(AAARP)
Jane Harrison and Trevor Rowley, with Katie Hambrook, Leigh and Gill Mellor, William Wintle and the Appleton with Eaton History Society

Introduction
This Project is investigating 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 which runs south-west from the heights of Boars, Cumnor and Wytham Hills.

AAARP is a multi-disciplinary research project rooted in community training and collaboration and has links to the teaching and research of Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE) and to the Oxfordshire Buildings Record. Volunteers trained under OUCDE's East Oxford Archaeology Project are involved in fieldwork, and in teaching and engaging new, local volunteers. The fieldwork includes test pitting and excavation, geophysical and topographical survey, field walking, and analysing and recording buildings. This is supported by place-name, documentary, map and historical research focusing on landscape and settlement change from the later prehistoric period to around AD 1450.

There has been little previous archaeological investigation in the AAARP area. It is not an area of gravel terraces and has therefore neither produced cropmarks nor been targetted for commercial gravel extraction. The only major excavations have been south and east of Tubney Manor Farm in advance of commercial sand extraction (Bradley and Hey 1993; Simmonds *et al* 2011). Most of the remaining archaeological records are antiquarian, stray finds and metal-detector discoveries.

The section of the Corallian Ridge on which Appleton, Eaton and Cumnor are situated lies within a large loop of the Thames – indeed this loop is its most northerly reach. As a result, the ridge and its associated passes command the approaches from south and west to crossings of the Thames into Oxford and further east. The Thames has always been a border, so this north-flung loop may often have been strategically significant. The Thames has been a boundary between Iron Age tribes, Romano-British territorial units, the early medieval kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex, briefly between the Danelaw and the south and west of the country, and finally in the English Civil War, thus providing a long-standing focus for interaction, conflict and negotiation.

The first AAARP fieldwork was undertaken at Appleton Manor – a moated site with a surviving 12th century hall-house – and included four test pits located close to the manor house within the moated area: these excavations and the known history of the Manor are described in Bond *et al* 2017.

Test Pits
Forty-six test pits have been dug, all within Appleton village apart from one in Eaton and two at Tubney Manor Farm. The pottery from the Appleton test pits seems to demonstrate that the village retained a relatively dispersed and poly-focal character until it coalesced into more-or-less its current shape during the 16th -18th centuries. Earlier immediately pre- and post-Conquest expansion had taken place north-west of the Eaton-Netherton roads from small foci south of the war memorial, around the present Plough pub and on the west side of the post-Conquest northern green (north of the current village shop). The Manor and the church (which has at least 12th century origins) seem not to have been the centre around which the village nucleated. Village growth south-east of the Netherton-Eaton roads was clearly constrained by the building of the 12th century Manor and laying out of the associated park, demesne land and fish ponds.

The two test pits at Tubney Manor Farm discovered evidence for the location and date of the deserted medieval village associated with a second moated manor site, while

the excavation in Eaton revealed earlier origins to a 17th century house in the village.

Geophysical and topographical survey

Several geophysical surveys have been undertaken with the most productive being around Tubney Manor Farm, which discovered elements of the deserted medieval village and associated enclosure or field ditches, and in the south of Appleton village where a probable Iron Age to Romano-British settlement site was revealed. This latter site has been field walked, metal-detected and investigated in one season of excavation in 2018. A second season will take place in 2019.

Topographical and geophysical survey west of the church of St Lawrence has begun to explore the surviving earthworks and below-ground signature of the early manor house of Besselsleigh.

Summary of excavation in the south of Appleton village

Excavation of two trenches in 2018 explored the wide enclosure ditch of a middle-late Iron Age farm, associated ditches and pits, and the gully and postholes of one of the roundhouses within the enclosure ditch.

Acknowledgements

The Trustees of AAARP are very grateful to the Council for British Archaeology for a generous grant from the Mick Aston Archaeology Fund. The Trustees are also very grateful for the essential work, enthusiasm and support of all the volunteers, local people, landowners and householders who are involved with the Project.

For details of any AAARP work and full interim reports ahead of further publication please contact: Jane Harrison janeharrison@clara.co.uk

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Long Wittenham, Sylva Foundation SU 5509 9371

Jane Harrison with William Wintle and Leigh Mellor

Excavations in **2017** in the south-west corner of a field belonging to the Sylva Foundation in Long Wittenham revealed a probable middle-late Iron Age roundhouse, with some slight evidence for Romano-British and possibly Anglo-Saxon activity, all truncated by medieval and later ploughing.

The 2017 excavations were the completion of a programme of archaeological works begun in 2014 under the auspices of the *Origins of Wessex Project* (Hamerow et al. 2013). In 2016, a small, high-status early Anglo-Saxon hall building had been excavated some 80m to the north in the same field (McBride, Hamerow and Harrison forthcoming). The 2017 excavation investigated a site in the south-west of the field, identified some time ago through cropmarks and pinpointed recently using geophysical survey (SMR 8519; see below). The cropmark suggested a sub-square enclosure ditch (c. 60m by 60m) around a circular ditch some 14m in diameter, with an entrance to the east. It had been interpreted as an Iron Age roundhouse with enclosure (Allen et al. 2010, 219). The site lies some 500m south-east of the Thames, at approximately 51mOD, on the second gravel terrace just east of the village of Long Wittenham.

Archaeological background

The site is part of a rich prehistoric and later archaeological landscape, dominated by the twin hills of Wittenham Clumps two kilometres to the south-east, and the town of Dorchester-on-Thames just over the River Thames from the Clumps (Allen et al. 2010, 8–14). An Iron Age hillfort is located on Castle Hill, the eastern of the Clumps, and Dorchester-on-Thames' history as a town begins with an Iron Age oppidum and runs continuously through the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods to the present day. Investigations around the hillfort have revealed Iron Age settlement, in particular at Hill Farm (Visitors' Car Park site), which provides an excellent comparison to the Sylva site (Allen et al. 2010, Ch. 5). During the Iron Age, the surrounding agricultural landscape was well-exploited, especially on the gravel terraces, where the lower terraces were dominated by pasture with arable located mainly on the upper terraces, along with grassland and managed woodland (Booth et al. 2007). People in the middle Iron Age Upper Thames Valley seem often to have lived in small dispersed farms, probably supporting single extended family units. The size and shape of associated enclosures, both around the domestic roundhouse and for fields and animals, varied hugely and the arrangement seen in cropmarks at the Sylva site is not unusual. Iron Age settlements with potentially contemporary phases within two kilometres of the Sylva site include Northfield Farm. Ahead of the planting of Neptune Wood in the field immediately to the south-east, Oxford Archaeology carried out limited excavation of archaeological features (Allen et al. 2010, Ch. 8). This included the furthest south-east corner of the likely Iron Age enclosure ditch around the Sylva site (Allen et al. 2010, 220). Small-scale excavation of that corner had dated the ditch, provisionally, to the early or middle Iron Age.

Summary

Only the gully of the roundhouse and other cut features survived, but the near-circular gully had been re-dug on at least two occasions, suggesting phases of use of the building. Each surviving and excavated gully terminal was packed with burnt animal bone and stone, along with pottery including near-complete vessels of middle-late Iron Age date. The entrance into the house's interior, through the break in the gully-ring, faced east. Two large postholes/pits within the entrance were probably large door-posts for the roundhouse. One of the postholes had been back-filled with organic material containing corroded fragments of copper alloy, either artefact fragments or scraps. Two smaller postholes found in what would have been the central area of the building were probably part of a central ring of posts. Both had been packed full of small mammal bones after the posts had been withdrawn. The western half of the gully had been much disturbed by later activity, which was probably Romano-British but not associated with any discernible contemporary structures within the excavation area. Metal-detector finds suggested some Anglo-Saxon activity in the

immediate vicinity, although no artefacts or features of the period were found during excavation.

Excavation results

The trenches were located using the 2015 geophysical survey by Adam McBride and William Wintle (Fig. 23) to explore the eastern arc of the circular gully/ditch, including the entrance (Trench 1: 10m north-south by 6m west-east), and the possibly more disturbed western curve of the ditch (Trench 2: 7.5m north-south by 4.5m west-east), with an extension from the south-east corner of Trench 2 joining with the western baulk of Trench 1 (Trench 2 Extension: 2m north-south by 9m west-east). The topsoil was stripped by machine (c. 0.35m deep), with a sample of the topsoil sieved and hand-searched. Thereafter all features were hand-dug, with all metalwork, suspected near complete pots, and collections of artefacts and ecofacts recorded in three dimensions.

Once the topsoil had been removed, the gullies and several other cut features were clearly apparent in Trench 1. All the gullies and postholes had been cut through the subsoil and into the sandy gravel/silty sand natural below. In Trench 1 the northern F[1008] and southern F[1009] arcs of the main gully, either side of the 3.4m wide entrance, and the more ephemeral recuts in the north and in the south, were all visible below topsoil, as were large postholes/pits [1003] and [1020] inside the entrance, and smaller postholes in the south-west of Trench 1, F[1030] and F[1031]. Concentrated deposits of pottery (all middle-late Iron Age), and often burnt animal bones and stones were eroding into the topsoil from the terminals of the gullies and these were recorded together, where possible, with the related finds still securely held within the terminal fills. The rich, organic fill of large posthole [1003] produced nine badly corroded copper alloy fragments. All the slots were dug as box-sections to reveal the gully profiles as the erosion of the sandy/gravelly sides into the gullies made discerning cuts in plan extremely difficult.

No clear cut features were immediately obvious in Trench 2; it was apparent that this arc of the gully and its interior and immediate exterior had been much more disturbed by both later activity and animal burrowing. Considerable quantities of hand-made nails were discovered in the north-western area of Trench 2 in the topsoil and subsoil, and plough-strikes were clearly visible running north-north-west to south-south-east across the trench, with a possible second set running north-east to south-west towards the southern edge of the trench. Ephemeral traces of the possible western arcs of the gullies, and an intersecting later ditch, were faintly visible in the south-east [2011] and F[2013]. A few

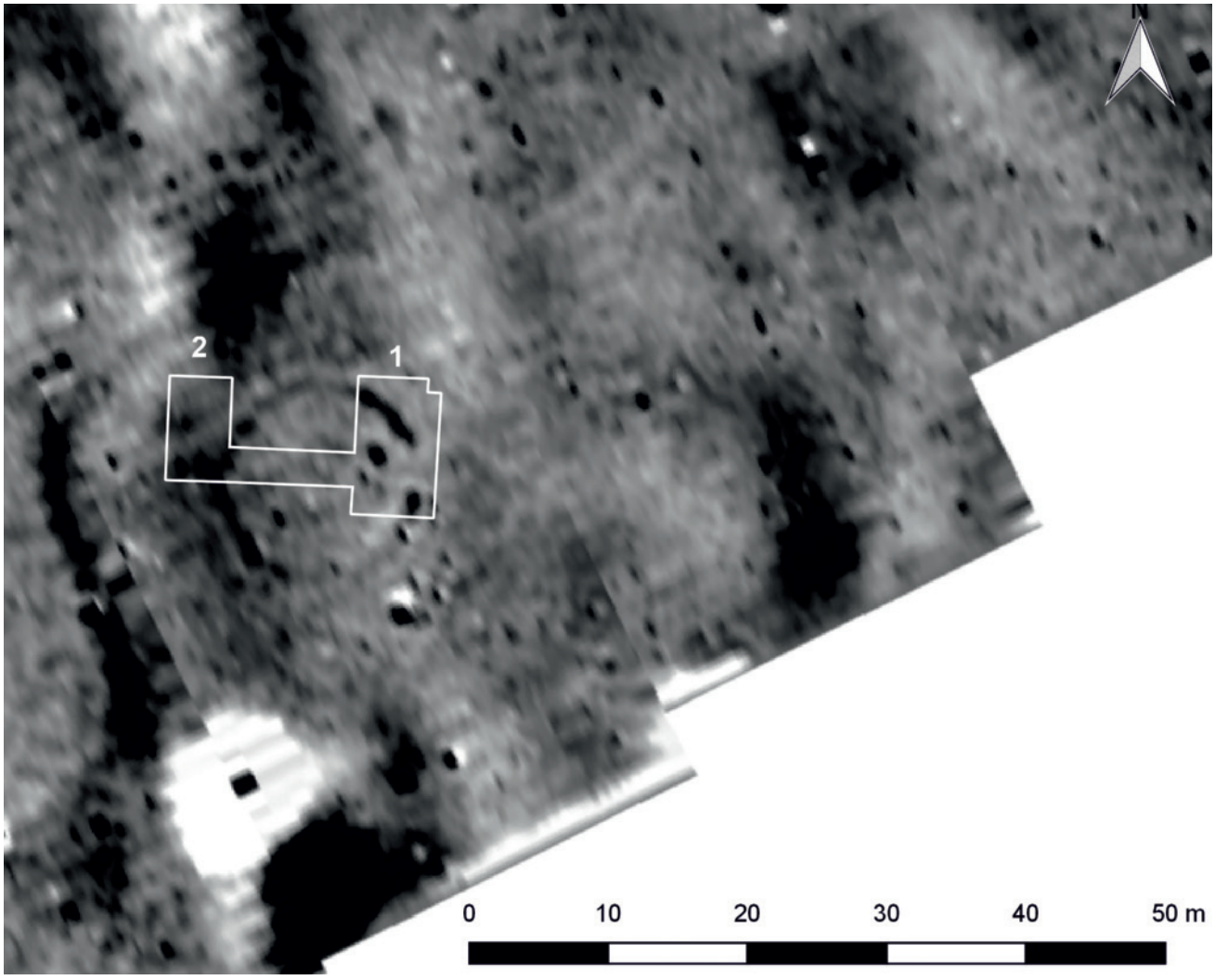

Figure 23: Long Wittenham, geophysical survey with 2017 trenches marked.

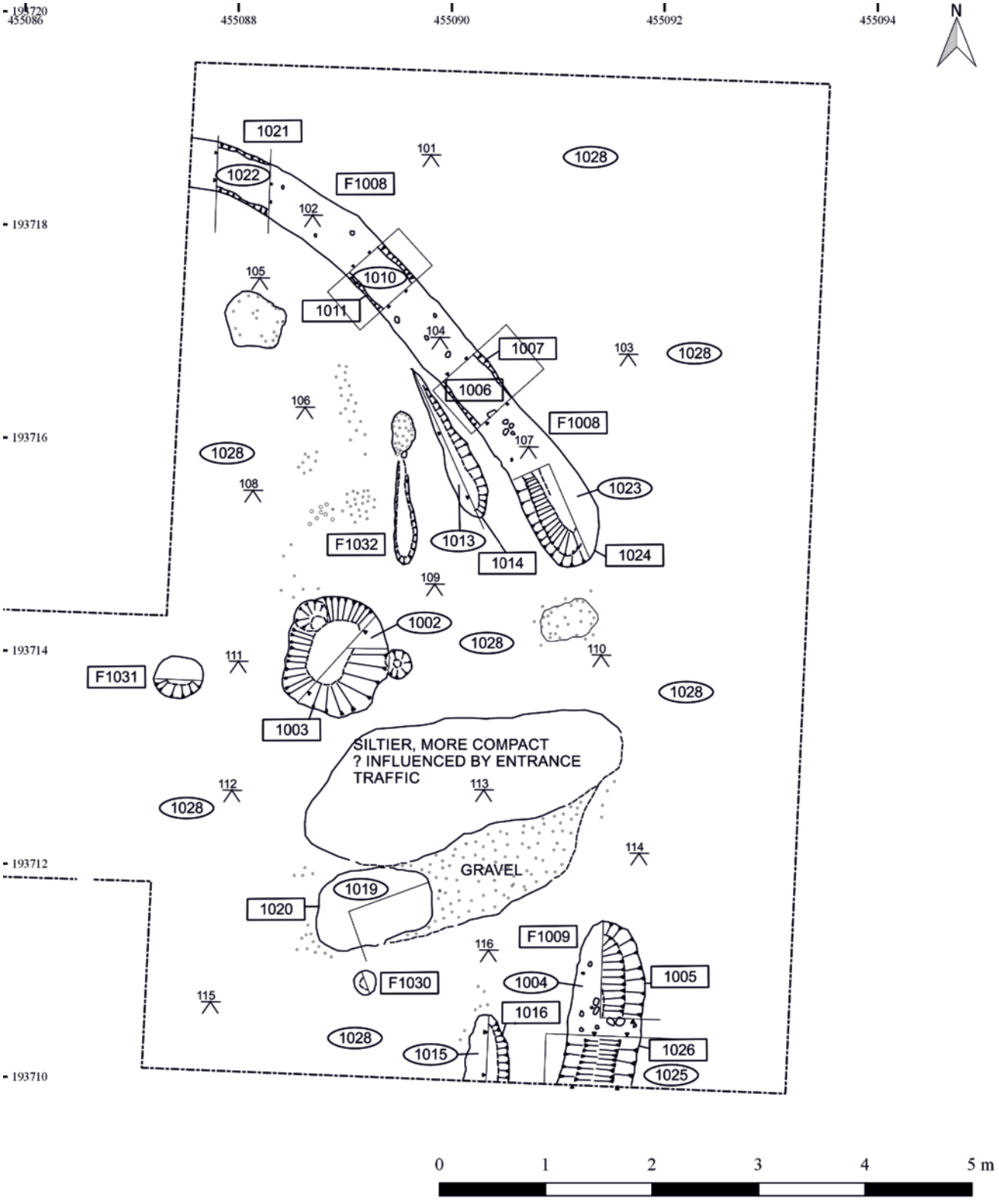

Figure 24: Long Wittenham, Trench 1 post-excavation plan

sherds of the pottery in the topsoil were Romano-British and medieval.

Almost all of the Trench 2 Extension was revealed as undisturbed sandy silt subsoil under topsoil, but two small postholes/pits were immediately apparent, in the eastern end of the extension [2005] and [2007]. These features were half-sectioned and then the two postholes fully excavated.

Trench 1: details (Figs. 24–26)

The widest and deepest gully/ditch F[1008] and F[1009], survived well despite truncation and erosion of the gully-sides. About 5.5m of its northern arc F[1008] were revealed, curving north-west to south-east. Across the entrance gap, 1.6m of the southern side of the gully F[1009] were also visible running near north-south. The gullies were wider at their terminals (c. 0.6m) narrowing to c. 0.3–0.45m; the

depth ranged between c. 0.3–0.4m, with the terminals being slightly deeper, suggesting the ditch may originally have been up to around 0.7m deep. The northern gully terminal [1024] was packed with burnt often fractured cobbles and pebbles, mixed with burnt animal bone fragments and pottery sherds. All the pottery was middle-late Iron Age in date: some of the sherds were large and relatively unabraded, and were from near-complete vessels. The southern terminal [1005] had suffered more erosion with a good deal of natural gravel and sand collapsed into the gully from the sides. The earliest fills were also packed with heat-fractured cobbles and pebbles, burnt animal bone and large sherds of similar pottery.

One slot was dug across the southern gully close to the terminal. The gully was here still over 0.5m wide with a gently concave base. The fill contained only a couple of small abraded sherds of Iron Age pottery and occasional burnt animal bone fragments. Three slots were dug across the northern gully at roughly one metre intervals. All contained just a few fragments of animal bone and some smaller fragments of pottery in their fills. Very occasionally, larger and complete animal bones were discovered. The fills in the body of the gully were thus markedly different from those of the terminals.

There was virtually no surviving horizontal stratigraphy and so it was difficult to know whether the more ephemeral gullies were later or earlier than each other and the "main" gully. Gully [1014], with a terminal 0.2m west of the northern arc of the main gully, survived only in a one metre stretch. It described a slightly different curve and may have been cut by and earlier than F[1008]. This surviving terminal was matched by a southern terminal, and 0.7m of gully [1016], disappeared north-south into the southern baulk about 0.4m west of the southern main gully F[1009]. Finally, there was a third, most westerly and most ephemeral northern gully F[1032], with no surviving southern counterpart: this feature may perhaps have been other than a ring-gully, although fragmentary pottery was found in its terminal. Around a metre of this gully survived running near north-south, 0.2m wide but barely 0.03m deep.

With its centre 2.4m south-west of the main northern gully terminal, large posthole/pit [1003] seemed most likely to have once held a substantial door-post. In which case large posthole/pit [1020], lying the same distance due west from the southern gully terminal, represented the opposing door-post. The entrance into the roundhouse between these posts would have been c. 0.8m wide. Both postholes had been disturbed, and although it was impossible to be certain in the sandy deposits, this may have been initially by re-cutting and finally by the withdrawal of the posts and backfilling of the pits, as well as later erosion.

Door posthole [1003] was 0.85m wide north-south by 0.95m north-south. It was only 0.3m deep but packed with charcoal-rich silt, with some burnt pebbles, animal bone and occasional smaller sherds of Iron Age pottery. The fill also contained nine badly corroded copper alloy fragments: there was considerable evidence for burning and the posthole had clearly been backfilled rapidly. Posthole [1020] was more sub-oval in shape, spread by erosion and disturbance to c. 2m west-east in width, but actually closer to just over a metre wide in that direction by 0.7m west-east. Like [1003] the posthole was around 0.3m deep. The possible post-pipe was humic dark silty sand similar to the fill of [1003] and contained fragmentary, burnt animal bone and occasional pottery, but no copper alloy fragments.

Two small postholes survived within the ring-gully: features [1030] and [1031]. F[1030] lay only 0.2m south of posthole [1020] and may have marked the beginning of the wall-supporting structure of the roundhouse. The posthole was 0.2m in diameter, survived only to 0.04m deep and produced no finds. Posthole [1031] was also similarly slight in depth and the same width, with no finds. This feature lay 0.8m west of doorpost [1003] on the western edge of Trench 1 and may have been related to two small postholes in Trench 2 Extension, although the lack of horizontal stratigraphy means this cannot be proved either way.

Although surfaces inside and outside the main gully were truncated there were observable differences between them. The inside surface was everywhere more gravelly and the path running between the gullies and the entrance postholes was decidedly more compact and siltier. This may have been the result of traffic in and out of the roundhouse affecting the lost entrance surface above.

Trench 2 Extension: details

The two small postholes noted above, [2005] and [2007], at the eastern end of Trench 2 Extension were notable for the small mammal bones packed into their surviving depth. [2005] was, like the other postholes, about 0.2m in diameter but over 0.2m deep. Its fill contained a great deal of fragmentary animal bone. Posthole [2007], less than half-a-metre south-west of [2005] had been recut although post-depositional processes obscured the cut sequence. This features was wider, at 0.32m, which was likely the result of the re-cutting, and also deeper at 0.52m. The sides were eroded and undercut and half of the fill comprised small mammal bones, predominantly sheep, with some pottery. These postholes along with F[1031] may have been part of a central partition or roof support inside the roundhouse, but may equally have belonged to a pre- or post-roundhouse structure, such as a four-post arrangement. Nothing further survived to indicate the character and use of the interior of the roundhouse.

Discussion

The excavation recorded the surrounding ring-gully of a middle-late Iron Age roundhouse, which may have been recut on at least two occasions, indicating more than one phase of occupation. The gully defined an enclosure about 14m in diameter, which is very similar in size to those excavated at Hill Farm and outside Castle Hill hillfort and therefore also similar in size to other middle Iron Age roundhouses in the Upper Thames Valley (Allen *et al*. 2010, 265 and 267–8). The roundhouse itself, if defined by its two doorposts was thus roughly 10m in diameter and very similar to Structure 532 in the Visitors' Car Park trench at Hill Farm (ibid. 268, 131 and 138). There were other similarities between the LW17 roundhouse and Structure 532 other than the diameters of both gully and roundhouse. Both had massive doorposts and an entrance gap facing east and c. 3.5–4.5m wide, with the suggestion of a ring of postholes defining the roundhouse; in both cases gullies of similar widths and depths were probably replaced at least once. Both also had possible internal rings of postholes in the centre of the structure. However, the gully terminals of Structure 532 were not packed with pottery and animal bone,

Figure 25: Long Wittenham, Trench 1 looking north

Figure 26: Long Wittenham, Trench 1 working shot

indeed there were no finds at all in the gullies as excavated (ibid. 134), although a small deep pit in the roundhouse interior produced a large deposit of animal bones and stones (ibid. 143).

Conclusion

Placed deposits in the terminals of Iron Age penannular enclosure gullies are not an uncommon phenomenon in the Upper Thames Valley (Allen *et al*. 2010, 269). However, as reported they have more commonly featured animal skulls rather than the pottery-dominated deposits at Long Wittenham. It was clear here, from the great concentration and contrast with the remainder of the gully fill, and the inclusion of near-complete pots that the deposits in the gully terminals were deliberate. This site is therefore particularly interesting for and perhaps only distinguished by the intensity of the deposition in postholes and gullies, and for the inclusion of copper alloy fragments in the door posthole backfill. These may all be closing deposits made at the end of the domestic use of a roundhouse of several phases.

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Warborough, Church Piece Roman Cemetery

William Wintle

Introduction

In **2015** magnetometer and earth resistance surveys were undertaken at Church Piece Roman Cemetery in Warborough. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument which is being damaged by badgers. The aims were to record the entire cemetery area through a magnetometer survey and estimate the extent of badger penetration by an earth resistance survey. This report provides the results of the magnetometer survey.

Church Piece is located about 700 metres to the north-west of the north of Warborough village and about one kilometre east of Dorchester-on-Thames, to the east of the river Thame. The cemetery lies on the first gravel terrace and is about one or two metres higher than the alluvial deposits in the field to the west, Priest's Moor, through which the river Thame flows. The underlying solid geology is Gault clay.

The cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure at Church Piece were first recorded by Allen (1938) and are visible in his figure 20 and plate XVII. The field was also photographed by St Joseph (1966, 122–123, Plate 59) who suggested the features might represent the site of a seventh century college of secular canons or cathedral buildings following the establishment of the first bishopric. The cropmarks were mapped by Benson and Miles (1974, 67–69, map 36; 91–93) based on the photographs of Allen and St Joseph. In August 1975 a lead coffin was brought to the surface during subsoiling and the area was subsequently investigated by four trenches (Harman *et al*. 1979).

In 1780 a stone coffin, possibly Roman, and containing human remains was found about 18 inches below the surface near Priests' Moor and near the river Thame (Field 1908; VCH Oxon 1939, 344).

The Magnetometer Survey

Two separate magnetometer surveys were undertaken using a single 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 eight 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 ArcheoSurveyor and are presented as block shaded images using a grey scale in figure 27.

The first survey detected the northern and part of the eastern boundary ditch of the main enclosure. The Roman cemetery is in the north of the main enclosure and is bounded in the south by two parallel ditches about 20 metres apart. It is possible the cemetery initially occupied only the northern part of the enclosure and was then subsequently extended further southwards (Harman *et al*. 1979, 8). In this gap between these two parallel ditches are three small circular features which may be of Roman date and associated with the cemetery. Alternatively, they may be earlier ring ditches, possibly associated with barrows.

The second survey revealed the eastern and part of the southern boundary ditch of the main enclosure. Of note in this area are a small rectangular enclosure attached to the east of the main enclosure and a possible building in the south-east corner of the main enclosure. In the centre-west is a small enclosure which is also visible as a cropmark.

The surveys allow a more accurate measurement of the principal features than was possible from aerial photographs and table 1 summarises some of these measurements.

The size of the three ring ditches is given by Harman *et al*. (1979, 8) as between 8 and 12 metres. The two western ring ditches have a diameter of about 10 metres and the smaller, eastern ditch has a diameter of about 6 metres.