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SUMMARY

In September 1997 Cotswold Archaeological Trust undertook a programme of field evaluation on behalf of Thames Water Utilities Ltd within the land-take area of the proposed Abingdon Reservoir scheme.

Trial trenching at four separate sites within the study area revealed well-preserved Iron-Age and Romano-British features beneath medieval and later ploughsoils. The evaluation findings broadly correlate with the results of preceding geophysical and fieldwalking survey, confirming the survival of extensive, multi-period, settlement remains within the areas examined.
GLOSSARY

ARCHAEOLOGY
For the purposes of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains, from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CONTEXT
The simplest level of excavated archaeological data, i.e. a context could be the cut of a ditch (shown as -[1]), or its fill (shown as (2)).

CROPMARK
A trace of a buried feature revealed by differential growth of crops, best seen from the air.

DAUB
Mud or clay mixed with dung, hair, etc, often used to weatherproof wattle panels of buildings, or build structures such as ovens.

HEADLANDS
Narrow strips of land lying at the edges of ploughed fields, sometimes still discernable as low earthworks. Set at right angles to the direction of ploughing these strips allowed a plough team to turn around without crossing adjacent ploughlands.

IRON AGE
The first period in which iron was the predominant metal. In Britain it is dated between c700 BC to the Roman conquest in AD 43.

MEDIEVAL
Taken here as the period from the Norman invasion in AD 1066 to approximately AD 1500.

NATURAL
Defined in archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, e.g. Lower Lias clay, river terrace gravels etc.

NGR
National Grid Reference given from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD
Ordnance Datum; used to express a given height above mean sea level.

PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL
The reconstruction of past environments based upon evidence recovered from preserved botanical and entomological remains.

POT-SHERD
A fragment of a pottery vessel.

PRN
Principal Record Number (used for entries on the County SMR)

RIDGE AND FURROW
Remains of cultivation of medieval or later date forming a corrugated surface.

ROMANO-BRITISH
Term used to describe a fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions with Roman culture, often abbreviated as ’R-B.’

SETTLEMENT
An area of habitation, perhaps surrounded by associated closes, paddocks, approach ways and other features which together constitute a complex of earthworks or cropmarks distinct from fields.

SITE
Sites may be defined as ‘windows’ onto the archaeological resource, e.g. an excavation, aerial photograph, or an old map. Any of these may reveal certain archaeological features (pits, ditches, etc) which can be classed as components, but not monuments.

SMR
Sites and Monument Record.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In July 1997 Cotswold Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Thames Water Utilities Limited (TWUL) to undertake archaeological evaluation of four sites within the land-take area of the proposed Abingdon Reservoir scheme, Oxfordshire (Figs. 1, 2). The CAT fieldwork formed one element of an extensive first phase of archaeological investigation across the study area, designed to investigate sixteen sites of known archaeological interest.

1.1.2 The programme of archaeological investigation was required in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance note 16: Archaeology and Planning, and was undertaken in accordance with the ‘Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation’ issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). The fieldwork also adhered to the specific terms and conditions for archaeological evaluation set out within the ‘Standard Specifications and Conditions of Contract’ and the ‘Particular Specifications and Technical Submission’ documents supplied by the client (TWUL 1997a, 1997b).

1.1.3 The objectives of all four evaluations were to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present so as to enable an assessment of their worth in a local, regional or national context to be made.

1.1.4 The fieldwork was monitored by Mr. Paul Smith and Mr. Hugh Coddington of the County Archaeological Service, Oxfordshire County Council. Day to day site monitoring was also conducted by Ms. Carrie M. Hearne of Wessex Archaeology as Managing Archaeological Consultant to Thames Water Utilities Ltd. Monitoring meetings were also attended by Mr. Kevin Mountain and Ms. Juliet Roper of TWUL.
1.2 Landuse, topography and geology

1.2.1 The proposed Abingdon Reservoir land-take encompasses a large area of land between the settlements of East Hanney, Garford, Marcham, Abingdon, Drayton and Steventon (Fig. 1). The four areas evaluated by CAT, all under arable cultivation, consisted of site 196 (plot 422, at Landmead Farm, E of the A338), site 407 (plots 429 and 1601, immediately N of the East Hanney to Steventon road), site 102 (plot 217, to the SE of Manor Farm, Drayton) and site 410 (plot 206, NE of Manor Farm) (Fig. 2).

1.2.2 The study area lies at the foot of the Berkshire Downs where the chalk and greensand geology of the scarp-foot zone gives way to Gault and Kimmeridge clay. These deposits are overlain by gravels and riverine alluvium before rising to the Corallian ridge that runs between Oxford and Faringdon.

1.2.3 The Grove Association soil types within the areas evaluated are characterised by calcareous, dark brown, medium to heavy clay-loam topsoils over grey and olive-grey clay-loam to clay subsoils (the 'Deep Grove' series), and by similar topsoils lacking part or all of the grey subsoil (known as 'Shallow Grove' types).

1.2.4 Topographically all four sites investigated lie on relatively low-lying ground at between 55m and 65m O.D. At site 196 low but discernible headlands, artificial embankments resulting from medieval and later ploughing, were apparent within the field.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The proposed reservoir scheme has previously been the subject of a detailed archaeological assessment carried out by Oxford Archaeological Unit for a wider environmental impact study commissioned by Thames Water Utilities Ltd.
1.3.2 Whilst it is not proposed to reiterate this archaeological information in detail here, in summary the study area lies in a region long recognised to be rich in surviving remains dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods (for instance Briggs et al, 1986, Fulford & Nichols (eds) 1992, Barclay et al 1997).

1.3.3 There is a proliferation of settlement sites on the gravel terraces of the region recognised from aerial photographic and fieldwalking survey, principally of later prehistoric and Romano-British date (Lambrick 1992). Numerous farming settlements dating from the Middle Iron Age to the early Roman period are known from the region, with a trend over this period towards nucleated, enclosed, complexes associated with an intensification of arable and pastoral agriculture. Excavated examples include Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (Parrington 1978) and Barton Court Farm (Miles 1984), the latter site demonstrating continuity of settlement from the Late Iron Age into the Roman period.

1.3.4 Until recently there has been less intensive archaeological investigation of the immediate study area vicinity, which lies between the small Roman settlements at Abingdon, Frilford and Grove. A number of rich farms/villas are now known from the area, recent excavations at Drayton having examined a series of large Roman arable fields with ditched boundaries on the gravel floodplain (Lambrick 1992).

1.3.5 The following sections detail the specific archaeological background of the four sites evaluated by CAT.
**Site 196** (plot 422)

1.3.6 Site 196 consists of an extensive cropmark complex, measuring at least 660m x 120m, stretching out on a N-S alignment. The cropmarks were identified through aerial photography first plotted in 1993, with extra detail having come from photographs taken in 1995. The cropmark plot has been partly confirmed by two geophysical survey transects, and from enhanced magnetic susceptibility results recorded in this area (Figs. 3 and 7). This cropmark complex represents a continuation of a cropmark complex, site 110, to the S.

1.3.7 The linear complex appeared to incorporate a N-S aligned double-ditched trackway, with a series of conjoined rectilinear enclosures lying immediately to its W and with a small number of E-W aligned ditches to the E. The cropmark plot appeared to reflect at least two phases of activity. Whilst some of the cropmarks were indistinct and difficult to interpret the complex appeared to include field system elements and other settlement-related features.

1.3.8 No fieldwalking data was available by which the likely date span of occupation could be assessed. However regional parallels in the morphology of the complex with sites excavated at suggested a likely late prehistoric or Romano-British date for the settlement.

**Site 407** (plots 429 and 1601)

1.3.9 Site 407 consists of an extensive cropmark complex, measuring at least 750m x 350m, stretching out on a broadly NE-SW alignment. The cropmarks were first detected through aerial photographic survey in 1995 (Figs. 4 and 8).

1.3.10 The cropmark complex incorporates an extensive linear system of conjoined rectangular and rectilinear enclosures. These enclosures, varying from approximately 11m x 8m to 120m x 120m in size, are presumed to have
agricultural and domestic functions. The largest enclosures, probably fields, lie at the outlying areas of the complex, particularly to the N. At the centre of the complex approximately 20 smaller enclosures are recognisable, averaging 30m by 18m in size. These probably represent paddocks, allotments or other ditched enclosures with a domestic function. A well defined circular enclosure, 12m in diameter, is also recognisable. This appears to open out into an outer rectangular compound, thought to be a later addition. A major trackway or boundary, in several areas plotted as a double-ditched feature, runs through part of the settlement, linking it to larger fields to the N.

1.3.11 Late prehistoric activity at site 407 is indicated from a small quantity of Iron Age pottery and worked flint recovered during fieldwalking, whilst later occupation is also identified from a concentration of Romano-British pottery noted directly over the cropmark complex. The morphology of the complex is again consistent with a late prehistoric and Romano-British agricultural settlement.

*Site 102* (plot 217)

1.3.12 Site 102 encompasses the recorded position of a human burial found in 1922 in association with Romano-British pottery, a ring and brooches. The Sites and Monument Record card (SMR no. 2669) gives the location of the inhumation at SU 46789399, but no other detail is recorded and the location of the finds is uncertain. A magnetic susceptibility survey revealed readings within the eastern half of the field considered high enough to be of potential interest, although a geophysical survey transect in the area of the putative burial location detected only NNE-SSW plough furrows. No fieldwalking data is available for this particular field (Figs. 5 and 9).

*Site 410* (plot 206)
1.3.13 Site 410 consists of a small coaxial cropmark complex, measuring approximately 170m x 160m, on broadly NW-SE and NE-SW alignments. The cropmarks were first detected through aerial photographic survey in 1996 (Figs. 6 & 10).

1.3.14 The cropmark complex incorporates at least six rectilinear enclosures either side of a NW to SE aligned ?double-ditched trackway. A sub-circular enclosure, possibly a hut circle, some 12m in diameter is apparent at the E edge of the cropmark plot and a second, more irregular, enclosure lies to the SW. To the S of the main group is a sub-oval enclosure, 5m by 5m, with a N facing entrance, and a curvilinear ditch may form part of a larger enclosure with a NW facing entrance.

1.3.15 A fieldwalking survey recovered dispersed finds from the area of the cropmark complex, including worked flint and both Iron Age and Romano-British pottery.
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Field evaluation was undertaken at sites 196, 407, 102 and 410 in accordance with the specification for archaeological works detailed within the 'Particular Specifications and Technical Submission,' prepared by Thames Water Utilities in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer (TWUL 1997b).

2.2 All evaluation trenches were opened under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5m or 1.8m wide toothless ditching-bucket. Excavation was halted at the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or, otherwise, at the top of natural geological deposits. All archaeological horizons revealed were then cleaned by hand and sample excavation of features undertaken, the sampling aiming to address the objectives set out in paragraph 1.1.3 whilst generally aiming to be minimally intrusive.

2.3 A strategy for palaeo-environmental sampling was implemented where dated, well stratified, and uncontaminated horizons were encountered so as to assess the environmental potential of the site. An assessment of the palaeo-environmental remains recovered is given in section 5.

2.4 All archaeological features and artefacts were recorded in accordance with the Wessex Archaeology standard recording system, using pro-forma recording and drawing sheets as detailed in their Fieldwork Recording Manual (Wessex Archaeology 1994). Since the evaluation records from the four sites will constitute part of one overall archive, a single primary numbering sequence was adopted. A table showing allocated and subsequently used sequential numbers is given in section 9 at the end of this report.
2.5 All photographic recording was undertaken using both monochrome prints and colour transparencies, with general site shots being taken in addition to feature-specific archive photographs.

2.6 All field drawings were compiled at scales of 1:50 (for trench plans) and 1:10 and 1:50 (for feature and trench sections). The paper archive and all recovered finds were marked with the Oxfordshire Museums Service accession number 1993.91 (abbreviated as 93.91) with the site code ARO 97 forming an ancillary, internal, CAT reference.
3. EVALUATION RESULTS

General

The following sections detail the evaluation results in consecutive site order i.e. the order in which they were excavated. For clarity these results are discussed in chronological order and refer to the individual targeted elements of each cropmark complex (rather than being organised on a strict trench by trench basis). Fuller descriptions of all features within each individual trench are given in Appendix I.

SITE 196 (Figs. 3, 7, 11-19).

3.1 Non-technical summary

3.1.1 Within the northern part of site 196 three ditches of possible Iron Age date were identified. One of these ditches may have formed part of a trackway, re-used in the Romano-British period. A series of NW-SE and NE-SW aligned gullies and ditches were probably of Roman date although their relationship with the Romano-British settlement is uncertain.

3.1.2 The evaluation also confirmed the presence of a well-preserved, multi-phased, Romano-British settlement. This settlement was aligned N-S, covered an area of at least 600m x 110m and consisted of a series of rectilinear enclosures lying immediately W of a trackway. The recovery of stone rubble from one of the infilled trackway ditches, together with painted wall plaster and high quality pottery, alludes to the presence nearby of a high status Romano-British building, probably a villa. The discovery of a grave also points to the presence of a cemetery in the northern part of the site.
3.1.3 A series of medieval plough headlands were also noted, beneath which the preservation of archaeological deposits was particularly good.

3.2 Evaluation Results

3.2.1 Seven trenches, 1.8m in width and measuring 420m in length, were excavated across the cropmark complex (Figs 3 & 7).

Natural deposits

3.2.2 The natural geological substrate of yellowish-white gravels with clay were encountered within all seven trenches. Its depth below ground level varied because of the medieval headlands which traversed the site. However the natural substrate ranged from approximately 0.3m in depth at trench 4 to 0.7m within trenches 5 and 6.

Iron Age activity

3.2.3 At the NE end of trench 4 two N-S aligned ditches, previously thought to be part of a Romano-British trackway were identified. Although the western of these ditches is Romano-British in date the other, [2113]/[2119], is probably of Iron Age origin. The aerial photographic plot suggests that this ditch turned to the E at its S end. It was of two phases, and although the earlier 0.25m deep ditch had been largely removed by a recut, its fill contained 5 sherds of Middle Iron Age (MIA) pottery. The recut [2119] was approximately 0.8m wide and 0.35m deep (Figs 15 & 16).

3.2.4 In trench 2 two E-W linear features previously detected by aerial photography were excavated. Ditch [2029] was 1.3m wide and 0.4m deep, with a fill which contained 13 sherds of Iron Age and one sherd of Roman pottery. It was also cut by a 0.58m deep pit [2031]. To the N ditch [2043] was of two phases. The earlier ditch had been almost totally removed by a recut, but was at least
0.56m deep. The recut [2007] was for a flat-bottomed linear ditch, 2.6m wide and 0.6m deep, the fill of which contained 5 sherds of MIA pottery. The function of these ditches is not known.

3.2.5 A small pit [2003], just 0.65m in diameter and 0.09m deep, and a curvilinear gully [2005], 0.55m wide and 0.2m deep, were excavated at the northern end of trench 2. A flint flake, probably of later prehistoric date, was recovered from the fill of gully [2005]. However, these features could equally be associated with the NW-SE aligned features or Romano-British settlement described below.

3.2.6 Iron Age activity within the northern part of the site is further confirmed by the presence of 12 residual Iron Age potsherds within the fill of the southern boundary ditch [2033] of Romano-British enclosure B in trench 2.

Romano-British activity

NW-SE and NE-SW aligned features

3.2.7 In trench 2 three NW-SE aligned gullies [2019], [2021], and [2023] were encountered. All three features had flat-bottomed profiles, varied in depth from 0.05m-0.09m and were cut by gully [2017] to the NW. Three sherds of Romano-British pottery were found within the fill of gully [2023] (Fig. 12).

3.2.8 Gully [2017] was one of five NE-SW aligned features in trench 2, the others being [2011], [2013], [2015], and [2025]. All were shallow features, varying in depth between 0.08m and 0.2m. Gullies [2015] and [2017] curved to the E at their NE end and gully [2025] ended in a NE terminal. Gully [2025] was cut by ditch [2027], although the relationship between gully [2011] and E-W aligned ditch [2043] could not be established. A single Romano-British potsherd was found in the fill of gully [2017].

3.2.9 At the southern end of trench 2 a NE-SW aligned gully [2038] was encountered. It was 0.85m wide and 0.35m deep and was perpendicular to,
and probably contemporary with, NW-SE aligned gully [2040] which was 0.6m wide and 0.11m deep. The fill of gully [2038] contained a single sherd of Romano-British pottery.

3.2.10 In trench 3 two further ditches, [2073] and [2074], were noted on a NE-SW alignment. The former was 0.55m wide and 0.14m deep whilst the latter, which was not excavated, was at least 1.7m wide (Fig. 13).

**The Romano-British settlement**

3.2.11 The Romano-British settlement consisted of a series of rectilinear enclosures flanked to the E by a trackway. The evaluation confirmed the validity and accuracy of the aerial photographic plot, with the trackway and enclosure ditches in the trenches generally no more than 3m to the E or N of their plotted positions.

**The trackway**

3.2.12 The trackway was examined within trenches 1 and 4, and its possible continuation as a single ditch in trenches 6 and 7. The trackway ditches identified in the evaluation were encountered approximately 3m to the E of their positions as marked on the aerial photographic plot.

3.2.13 At the eastern end of trench 1 trackway ditch [2308] was of at least two phases. The earlier ditch had been largely removed by a recut, although it is was no more than 0.6m deep with a fill (2310) which contained 21 sherds of 3rd-4th century pottery. The recut was 2.1m wide and 0.48m deep with a fill (2309) which contained 17 potsherds of 4th century date (Fig. 11).

3.2.14 At the NE end of trench 4 two parallel ditches, approximately 1.5m apart, were examined. The eastern ditch was probably of Iron Age date (see section 3.2.3) although the western ditch, [2111], was of Romano-British origin. This ditch was of two phases. The earlier was just 0.48m deep and had been largely
removed by recut [2109] which was flat-bottomed, 1.1m wide and 0.6m deep. The fill of this recut contained a single potsherd dating to AD 240-400, amongst a large 2nd century pottery assemblage (Figs 15 & 16).

3.2.15 Further to the S a single, large, linear ditch was noted on the N-S alignment of the Romano-British trackway. In trench 6 the ditch [2212] was 3.3m wide and 1.55m deep and contained at least four fills, the earliest of which (2217) contained traces of iron panning, indicating that the ditch had once held water. A large pottery assemblage predominantly of 4th century date was recovered from the ditch fills together with a rotary quern fragment, an *imbrex* fragment, a box tile fragment and approximately 20 fragments of stone rubble. These stones ranged in size from approximately 0.15m x 0.15m x 0.06m to 0.3m x 0.3m x 0.1m and represent demolition debris from a nearby building (Fig. 18).

3.2.16 At the E end of trench 7 linear ditch [2274] was not excavated, but was approximately 4.4m wide. Twenty-six sherds of pottery dating to between AD 240-400 were recovered from the surface of its fill (Fig. 19).

*Enclosure A*

3.2.17 In trench 1 a rectangular enclosure, measuring approximately 43m x 39m, appended onto the trackway ditch was examined. The western boundary ditch [2304] of this enclosure was detected approximately 2m to the E of its plotted position. It was 1.1m wide and 0.35m deep with a fill which contained three sherds of 2nd century pottery. The only other feature within the enclosure was a small elongated pit or posthole [2306], 0.05m deep, the fill of which contained slight traces of burning and four Romano-British potsherds (Fig. 11).

3.2.18 The validity of another possible enclosure, within and extending N of enclosure A is doubtful. The ditches relating to this feature, identified through aerial photography, are probably medieval plough furrows.
3.2.19 In trench 2 a rectilinear enclosure, measuring approximately 78m x 38m and appended onto the trackway ditch, was examined. In the southern half of the trench several ditches were identified and it is not always clear which ones correspond to those on the aerial photography plot. Towards the southern end of the trench a 0.9m deep pit [2036], the fill of which contained a single sherd of Romano-British pottery, had been cut by ditch [2033], which is assumed to be the southern boundary ditch of the enclosure. This ditch was approximately 3m wide and 1.1m deep, and its fill produced 12 sherds of Iron Age pottery and a single sherd of Romano-British date. The Iron Age pottery is assumed to be residual although a prehistoric origin for this ditch cannot be ruled out (Fig. 12).

3.2.20 Further features not previously detected within enclosure B included a 2.2m wide unexcavated ditch [2044] and another ditch [2027] which was 0.8m in width and 0.35m deep. The latter ditch cut NE-SW aligned gully [2025]. The former was directly adjacent to the southern boundary ditch whilst the latter was on more of a NE-SW alignment, indicating that it may belong within the group of features described above.

3.2.21 In trench 3 a rectangular enclosure, measuring approximately 43m x 36m, was examined. The northern and southern ditches of the enclosure were detected approximately 2m to the north of those on the aerial photographic plot.

3.2.22 The southern boundary ditch [2068] was flat-bottomed, 1.45m wide and 0.41m deep. The northern boundary ditch [2058] was also flat-bottomed, 0.9m wide and 0.34m deep and had been cut by grave [2056]. A single residual Iron Age potsherd was recovered from its fill (Figs. 13 & 14).
3.2.23 The evaluation also identified several other features within enclosure C. Ditch [2064], was 1.5m wide and 0.58m deep, aligned E-W and contained within its fill a single Iron Age potsherd among a small assemblage of pottery of 2nd century or later date. Three pits were also noted. Pit [2060] was not fully exposed but was at least 1.4m across and 0.11m deep. Pit [2062] was also not fully exposed but was at least 0.6m wide and 0.06m deep. Pit/posthole [2066] measured approximately 0.6m x 0.5m across and 0.06m deep.

North of enclosure C

3.2.24 A small area north of enclosure C was also examined in trench 3. Two features were found, namely ditch [2054] and grave [2056]. The former was aligned E-W, 1.1m wide and 0.45m deep, with a fill which produced a single Iron Age sherd in a very small pottery assemblage of possible 3rd century date. The grave, also aligned E-W, was 0.9m wide and 0.18m deep and cut through enclosure C boundary ditch [2058]. The grave contained an extended adult skeleton and a fill of dark grey-brown clay (2055). The skeleton was removed with the exception of the legs which remain in-situ under the eastern baulk of the trench. The left arm of the skeleton was straight and the right arm crossed the pelvis. Three potsherds dating to AD 240-400 were also recovered from the grave fill, together with a large iron nail from the area of the right shoulder (Figs. 13 & 14).

Enclosure D

3.2.25 At the S end of trench 3 and the SW end of trench 4 enclosure D, which measured approximately 40m by 40m in size, was examined. In trench 3 the northern boundary ditch [2070], which was approximately 3m to the N of its plotted position, was 2m wide and 0.62m deep, with a fill which contained Romano-British-pottery. In trench 4 the eastern boundary ditch which separated enclosures D and F, could be either [2127], which was flat-bottomed, 1.55m wide and 0.5m deep or ditch [2105]. This latter ditch was 2.7m wide and 0.8m deep with a fill which produced a moderate sized
assemblage of 4th century pottery together with an *imbrex* fragment and a fragment of stone roof tile. A soil sample from the ditch fill also produced moderate to high quantities of charred grain, along with charred weed seeds and wood charcoal. The combination of charred grain and weed seeds suggests that this is part of a partially processed cereal product, probably discarded as domestic rubbish. (Figs 13-16).

3.2.26 The evaluation also identified internal features within enclosure D, namely ditches [2103] and [2101] within trench 4. Ditch [2103] was aligned N-S, was 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep with a fill which produced a single Romano-British potsherd. Ditch [2101] was aligned E-W, flat-bottomed, 1.2m wide and 0.15m deep. The two ditches could well be contemporary, forming a further rectilinear feature within the larger enclosure.

**Enclosure E**

3.2.27 In the NE half of trench 4 enclosure E, which measured approximately 48m x 30m, was examined. Ditch [2111] formed the eastern boundary of this enclosure, and appeared to represent part of the double-ditched trackway before it became a single boundary ditch aligned with the trackway. The southern boundary ditch [2107] was flat-bottomed, 1.55m wide and 0.5m deep with a fill which contained three sherds of mid-late 3rd century pottery and a rotary quern fragment (Figs 15 & 16).

3.2.28 Several features were found within enclosure E. Pit [2115] was not fully exposed, but was flat-bottomed, at least 1.1m wide and 0.1m deep. Its fill contained six potsherds dating to AD 260+. Its relationship to adjacent pit [2117] could not be established. However, it was also flat-bottomed, 0.9m x 0.6m across and 0.1m deep with a fill which contained four Romano-British potsherds.

3.2.29 Gully [2139] was aligned approximately N-S, 0.9m wide and 0.1m deep. It had a fill of dark grey silty-clay (2129) which contained several pieces of flat
stone, measuring a maximum of 0.18m across, and three sherds of 2nd century or later pottery. Gully [2139] was cut by pit [2130] which was not fully exposed but which measured at least 0.7m x 0.5m across and 0.2m deep, and which contained a fill of a dark greyish-black silt (2131). The function of this feature is not clear but it could have formed part of a corn drier. Indeed a soil sample taken from the fill of pit [2130] contained hundreds of charred cereal grains.

3.2.30 Ditch [2123] was aligned N-S, flat-bottomed, 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep with a fill which produced two sherds of 2nd century + pottery. The function of this feature is not known.

Enclosure F

3.2.31 In trenches 4 and 5 enclosure F, which measured approximately 50m x 25m, was examined. In trench 4 the 2.3m wide northern boundary ditch [2140] was not excavated, and the western boundary ditch separating this enclosure from enclosure D to the W is described above. In trench 5 the southern boundary ditch may be ditch [2161], although it lies some 5m to the N of the boundary ditch marked on the aerial photographic plot. It was 1.7m wide and 1.06m deep with at least three fills. These produced a large pottery assemblage spanning the 2nd-4th centuries together with a small fragment of red painted wall plaster. A soil sample from the ditch fill produced a moderate quantity of cereal grains, but no weed seeds, suggesting that the processing of the grain was complete prior to discard as part of domestic rubbish (Fig. 17).

Enclosure G

3.2.32 In trench 5 enclosure G, which measured approximately 20m by 20m in size, was examined. The northern and southern boundary ditches were found just to the N of those marked on the aerial photographic plot. The northern boundary ditch [2157] was of at least two phases with much of the 0.7m deep original ditch removed by a recut. This recut was 1.35m wide and 0.55m deep with
fills which contained five sherds of 4th century pottery. The southern boundary ditch [2154] was also of two phases. The earlier had been largely removed by a recut but was at least 0.53m deep, with a fill which contained 16 sherds of 4th century pottery. The recut was 1.85m wide and 0.35m deep with a fill which contained 31 sherds of late 3rd-4th century pottery. No features were apparent within this enclosure.

The southern part of the settlement (enclosures H-J)

3.2.33 Trenches 6 and 7 were designed to evaluate activity in the southern part of the settlement where the trackway line appeared to continue as a single linear boundary ditch but where aerial photography had suggested that settlement features were far less intensive.

3.2.34 In both trenches the trackway ditch was observed, and is described above. In trench 6 the aerial photographic plot indicated an E-W aligned feature continuing to the E beyond the N-S boundary. Although the fill of this feature [2208] contained a small pottery assemblage dated to AD 300-400+ it is almost certainly a plough furrow. However, three E-W aligned features were apparent in this trench and these possibly relate to activity within enclosures west of the N-S linear. At the NW end of trench 6 the fill of a small ditch [2204], 1.12m wide and 0.26m deep, produced four potsherds dating to AD 350-400+. To the SE two parallel gullies [2205] and [2210] were also excavated. The former was 0.63m wide and 0.04m deep with a fill which contained four Romano-British potsherds. The latter was 0.64m wide and 0.1m deep and contained a few stones and further Roman pottery within its fill (Fig. 18).

3.2.35 At the southern end of the site the aerial photographic plot suggested that the linear ditch turned to the W and then returned to the N, crossing trench 7 and possibly forming another enclosure. This was confirmed by a geophysical survey carried out between trenches 6 and 7, after the completion of the evaluation, which clearly identified two further enclosures (I and J). However,
there was no indication of the western boundary ditch of enclosure J in trench 7, possibly because it was masked by a medieval headland. However, the evaluation identified two small parallel E-W aligned ditches in the E half of the trench and a large enclosure ditch in the W half of the trench, all of which appear to be unrelated to enclosures I and J.

3.2.36 In the E half of the trench were two segmented E-W aligned parallel ditches, which ran from the E end of the trench for a length of approximately 26m. Both ditches were of at least two segments, [2255/2266] and [2264/2254], represented by ditch terminals. These ditches were shallow, varying between 0.2m and 0.4m in depth. The fill of ditch [2255] produced six potsherds dating from AD 240-400 and the fill of ditch [2254] yielded 10 potsherds of 3rd-4th century date. Segmented ditch [2254] was also cut by a pit [2258] which, although not fully exposed, was at least 2.6m across and 0.7m deep with a fill which contained a single Romano-British potsherd (Fig 19).

3.2.37 The relationship between the segmented ditches and a large E-W aligned ditch [2273] which turned to the S at its eastern end is not known. The full dimensions of this ditch, which was apparent in the W half of the trench, were not established although it was at least 1.8m wide and 0.6m deep. Its fill contained an iron knife blade and a single Iron Age potsherd amongst a moderate sized assemblage of 3rd-4th century pottery.

3.2.38 At the W end of trench 7 ditch [2273] was cut by a shallow N-S aligned gully [2277] which was approximately 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep. This corresponds with a linear feature to the S of the trench recorded on the aerial photographic plot.

Medieval headlands

3.2.39 Medieval headlands were observed crossing trenches 2 and 5 from E-W and crossing trenches 6 and 7 from N-S. The ploughing patterns had the effect of creating artificial embankments which both covered and preserved the
Romano-British deposits beneath. In trenches 5, 6 and 7, the headlands consisted of a dark soil which produced residual Romano-British pottery, indicating that they are derived from disturbed Romano-British contexts.

3.2.40 In trench 2 the headland (2002) varied from 0.2m-0.5m in thickness and consisted of a mid-brown silty-clay. In Trench 5 the headland (2153) consisted of a dark brownish-grey silty-loam which covered the southernmost 27m of the trench, reaching a maximum thickness of approximately 0.5m (Fig. 17). A total of 45 residual potsherds dating to AD 350-400 were recovered from this deposit. In trench 6 the headland (2202) consisted of a mid-dark brown silty-clay and varied in thickness from 0.1m-0.5m. Ten sherds of possible 3rd-4th century pottery were recovered from this deposit. In trench 7 the headland (2252) consisted of a mid-dark brown silty-clay, and varied in thickness from 0.1-0.4m. The fill was very similar to the fill of ditch [2273] and the difference between the two was not clearly established.

Modern disturbances

3.2.41 Modern disturbances were confined to modern field drains observed in several of the trenches.

Soil sequence

3.2.42 A clay subsoil was observed in all of the trenches apart from trench 4. Details of the thickness in each trench are given in Appendix I, although the layer generally varied between 0.3 and 0.5m in thickness.

SITE 407 (Figs. 4, 8, 20-31)

3.3 Non-technical summary
3.3.1 Field evaluation at site 407 investigated an extensive, linear cropmark complex, represented by a series of rectilinear enclosures adjoining a N-S aligned, intermittently double-ditched, trackway or boundary. A focus of Middle Iron Age settlement features was identified within the centre of the site. However the cropmark complex appears to date principally to the Romano-British period as a broadly contemporaneous network of ditched enclosures.

3.4 Evaluation Results

3.4.1 A total of eleven trenches, totalling 455m in length, were excavated across the cropmark complex (Figs. 4 & 8). Seven trenches, 1.8m in width and totalling 325m in length, were sited within plot 429 with four trenches, 1.5m wide and totalling 130m in length, sited within plot 1601.

Natural deposits

3.4.2 The natural geological substrate of yellowish-white gravels with clay were encountered within all eleven trenches, at an average depth of 0.5m below existing ground level.

Iron-Age activity

3.4.3 Within trenches 6 and 7, towards the centre of the cropmark complex, a discrete focus of prehistoric activity was identified from a concentration of postholes, gullies and pits yielding Middle Iron Age pottery.

3.4.4 Running across the N-S arm of trench 6 an E-W aligned ditch [2512] was encountered. It was 1m wide and 0.5m deep with a v-shaped profile. Five MIA pot sherds were recovered from its upper fill (2513), together with fragments of burnt clay (Figs. 25, 26).
3.4.5 Immediately to the S of ditch [2512] a cluster of four postholes [2508], [2515], [2517] and [2522] were encountered. These averaged 0.5m in diameter and 0.30m in depth. Seven sherds of MIA pottery were recovered from fill (2509) of posthole [2508].

3.4.6 Running on a NW-SE alignment across the corner of trench 6 three intercutting v-shaped linear ditches were noted. The primary ditch of the sequence, [2537], had been largely removed on its NE side by a NW-SE aligned v-shaped ditch [2538], 1m in width and 0.40m deep. Ditch [2538] yielded three sherds of MIA pot and two sherds of R-B pot from basal fill (2539), with two further MIA sherds from secondary fill (2540).

3.4.7 Ditch [2537] was also cut on its SW side by an E-W aligned, steep-sided ditch [2549] which yielded no finds. The ditch, of unknown width, ran to a terminal to its E.

3.4.8 Ditch [2549] was in turn cut by a NE-SW aligned v-shaped gully [2519], 0.75m wide and 0.45m deep, which ran to a rounded terminal to the NE. The feature was sampled at two points along its length, yielding 35 sherds of MIA pottery from fill (2520) and a further 166 sherds of MIA pot and 1 intrusive Roman sherd from equivalent fill (2536). A soil sample taken from (2520) revealed quantities of charred cereal grain and wood charcoal, indicating the disposal as rubbish of partially processed cereal products.

3.4.9 A NW-SE aligned ditch [2510] was also noted, 0.75m in width, with a gentle v-shaped profile and flat base at a depth of 0.45m. Fill (2511) yielded four sherds of MIA pottery.

Circular enclosure M

3.4.10 Circular enclosure M was targeted by trench 7, the plotted position of the feature being found to closely correlate with that of a curving ditch [2571], recut as [2580].
3.4.11 The primary ditch of the sequence, [2571], had been partially cut away but was originally in excess of 0.90m wide and 0.60m deep, with a wide v-shaped profile and concave base. A posthole [2591, 0.15m in diameter and 0.20m deep, was noted cut into the base of the ditch, its fill yielding no dating evidence. The ditch was recut as a more irregular-sided feature [2580], 1.4m wide and 0.75m deep, yielding 17 sherds of MIA pot from fill (2573). Its uppermost fill (2572) yielded 40 sherds of MIA pottery and six sherds of ? intrusive 4th century pottery. Soil samples taken from fills (2573) and (2582) contained wood charcoal and crop processing waste in the form of charred cereal grains and weed seeds.

3.4.12 One edge of a pit [2574], 0.30m deep, and a posthole [2576], 0.25m deep, were noted approximately 7m to the W of the circular enclosure. Two further sub-circular pits were encountered immediately to its SE. Pit [2584] was 0.8m in diameter and 0.2m deep, yielding three sherds of MIA pot. Pit [2586] was 0.9m long, 0.65m wide and 0.2m deep, and produced no dating evidence.

3.4.13 Prehistoric features were also encountered in the vicinity of trench 1, where a cluster of shallow sub-circular pits were recorded at the E of the trench. Sub-circular pit [2360] was approximately 1m long and at least 0.65m wide, with steeply-sloping sides and a convex base at a depth of 0.44m. Seven sherds of MIA pottery were recovered from fill (2359). An oval pit [2362] at least 1.2m long and 0.5m wide with a concave base at a depth of 0.40m was also recorded. Two MIA sherds were recovered from its fill (2361). A third pit [2366] was also noted, 1.1m in length, 0.80m in width with gently sloping sides and a flat base at a depth of 0.12m.

3.4.14 Residual MIA pottery was also recovered within trench 3 fill (2422), trench 6 fills (2505), (2506), (2507), (2534) and (2539), and trench 8 fills (2603) and (2614).
**Romano-British settlement features**

*?Trackway/ linear feature A*

3.4.15 A major linear feature A, broadly N-S aligned, ran through the cropmark complex. The feature, characteristic of a double-ditched trackway, was targeted by trenches 1, 3 and 6 (Figs. 20, 22, 25 and 26).

3.4.16 In trench 1 its plotted position correlated with that of a major NE-SW aligned linear ditch [2358], some 3.9m in width, spanning the position of the plotted cropmark. The ditch was in excess of 1.2m in depth and had irregular but steeply sloping sides becoming near vertical at depth. A lower fill (2364) yielded 47 animal bone fragments, an upper fill (2357) yielding 51 sherds of 2nd-4th century pottery, 20 animal bone fragments and 1 roof tile fragment. A soil sample taken from (2364) contained only a small quantity of wood charcoal. No parallel ditch was present adjacent to [2358] to indicate it was part of a double-ditched feature at this point.

3.4.17 Within trench 3 a N-S aligned linear ditch [2418] was noted spanning the position of the E and W arms of the putative double-ditched trackway. Ditch [2418] was considerably narrower and shallower than ditch [2358] examined in trench 1, being 1.5m wide with steep-sides running to a concave base at a depth of 0.45m. A gravel-rich primary deposit (2422) yielded 10 sherds of 2nd-3rd century pottery, secondary fill (2423) producing four sherds of 3rd-4th century pottery whilst tertiary fill (2419) yielding a further 27 sherds of 3rd century pottery.

3.4.18 Within trench 6 the plotted position of the E ditch of the putative double-ditched trackway correlates with that of a repeatedly recut ditch [2535]/[2553]/[2531], running on a NW-SE alignment and turning to the SE to form the S boundary of enclosure L. The ditch lies 2m E of its plotted cropmark position.
3.4.19 The primary ditch of the sequence, [2535], was 2.4m wide with steeply-
sloping sides dropping to a broadly flat base at a depth of 0.8m. Fill (2534) 
yielded 50 sherds of 2nd century pottery, 35 fragments of animal bone, 26 
roof tile and fired clay fragments and an iron nail.

3.4.20 Ditch [2535] was subsequently recut as [2553], a steep-sided and flat-
bottomed ditch at least 1.7m wide and 0.80m deep. Fill (2532) yielded 40 
sherds of AD 350-400 pottery and four fragments of roof tile and burnt clay.

3.4.21 Ditch [2553] was replaced with a v-shaped ditch [2531], 2.9m in width and 
1m deep. It had by now having migrated 2.5m westward from its original 
position. Fill (2533) yielded 37 sherds of 2nd-4th century pottery and one 
burnt clay fragment.

Enclosure B

3.4.22 Within trench 1 the W arm of enclosure B, adjoining the putative double-
ditched trackway/linear boundary A to the E, was identified as shallow linear 
ditch [2354]. This NNE-SSW aligned u-shaped ditch was 1.6m wide and 
0.35m in depth. One residual MIA sherd was recovered from its fill (2353) 
(Fig. 20).

3.4.23 One additional feature was identified within the area defined by enclosure B, 
a NE-SW aligned gully [2356] which ran to a rounded terminal within the 
trench. The feature was 0.7m wide with irregular but gently-sloping sides 
dropping to a rounded base at a depth of 0.20m. No dating evidence was 
recovered from its fill. Whilst a Romano-British date is plausible for gully 
[2356] from its position within enclosure B the presence of Middle Iron Age 
pits a short distance to the E precludes certainty over its dating.

? Trackway or enclosure ditch C
3.4.24 The plotted E-W aligned ?double-ditched cropmark forming the southern boundary of enclosure C was targeted by trench 2. A pair of parallel ditches [2383] and [2385] were noted, some 4m S of the plotted position of feature C. Ditches [2383] and [2387] were 0.9m and 2m wide, with gently sloping sides and flat bases at depths of 0.35m and 0.3m respectively. One sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered from fill (2386). A trackway interpretation is uncertain given the narrow spacing between the two ditches (approximately 2m), and the way the two features appear to merge to form a single enclosure boundary to the N. Although relatively shallow features the two ditches [2383] and [2385] may best be interpreted as partly demarcating the large enclosure to the N.

3.4.25 Immediately to the S of the ?trackway a sub-circular pit cut [2387] was noted, at least 1.8m long, 0.90m wide and 0.20m deep. A linear ditch [2389], 0.5m wide and 0.35m deep was also encountered running on an E-W alignment to the S of [2387]. Although no dating evidence was recovered this feature was cut from above the level of subsoil (2382), which sealed all other Romano-British features.

Enclosure D

3.4.26 Within trench 3 the W side of enclosure D was defined by ditch [2418] of the ? double-ditched trackway or boundary A. A single additional feature was encountered within enclosure D, namely a major linear ditch [2416] 1.4m in width and 0.2m deep, immediately to the E of boundary ditch [2418]. The N-S aligned feature was 1.3m wide, with moderately sloping sides dropping to a concave base at a depth of 0.2m. One sherd of 2nd century pottery was recovered from its fill.

3.4.27 The eastern boundary of enclosure D as plotted correlates with the position of a sequence of intercutting ditches [2406]/[2408]/[2410] noted on a N-S alignment (Fig. 22). Gully [2406] was 0.75m wide with gently sloping sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.20m. No dating evidence was recovered
from its fill. Parallel gully [2410] was 0.6m wide with gently sloping sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.3m, and yielded 20 sherds of 2nd-3rd century pottery.

3.4.28 Both gullies were cut by a steep-sided pit [2412], at least 1m wide and 0.85m deep, from which 21 sherds of AD 100-300 pottery were recovered. Cutting across all three earlier features a N-S aligned gully [2408] was noted, 0.95m in width with steeply-sloping sides dropping to a vertical slot and flat base at a depth of 0.55m. No dating was recovered from its fill.

Area west of enclosure D

3.4.29 A N-S aligned ditch [2420] was noted immediately W of trackway/linear boundary A. The 1.1m wide feature had gently-sloping sides dropping to a concave base at a depth of 0.30m (Fig. 22). No dating was recovered from its fill.

Enclosure E

3.4.30 Immediately adjoining enclosure D, enclosure E was defined on its W side within trench 3 by the line of shallow intercutting ditches [2410/2408/2406] (Fig. 22). Its E edge was marked by a shallow ditch [2404] whose fill (2405) yielded 10 sherds of 2nd-3rd century pottery.

Enclosure F

3.4.31 Within trench 4 the E side of enclosure F was identified as feature [2433]. This NE-SW aligned ditch was approximately 2.1m wide with steep sides running to an irregular but broadly flat base at a depth of 0.4m (Fig. 23). Fill (2434) yielded seven sherds of 2nd-3rd century pot and one roof tile fragment.
**Enclosure G**

3.4.32 Within trench 4 no evidence was encountered for the putative sub-circular enclosure G plotted as an intermittent curving linear cropmark.

**Linear feature H**

3.4.33 Within trench 4 a linear ditch [2431] was encountered some 5m to the E of the plotted position of linear cropmark H. Ditch [2431], aligned N-S, was 1.3m wide with gently sloping sides and a flat base at a depth of 0.35m (Fig. 23). No dating evidence was recovered from its fill.

**Enclosure I**

3.4.34 Within trench 5 ditch [2470] was encountered in a position correlating with the eastern edge of enclosure I. The N-S aligned ditch was 1.5m wide with a steep v-shaped profile dropping to a concave base at a depth of 0.75m (Fig. 24). Its fill yielded four sherds of 2nd-3rd century pottery. Fill (2472) contained charred cereal grain, weed seeds and wood charcoal indicating disposal of crop processing waste.

3.4.35 An additional ditch [2464] was noted 5m to the W on the same alignment, within the area of enclosure I. No dating evidence was present and no other features were noted.

**Linear feature J**

3.4.36 Within trench 5 linear feature J was also targeted. A ditch [2468] was identified approximately 5m E of the plotted cropmark. The feature was found to have been cut from above the level of the subsoil. Although no dating evidence was recovered from its fill it is probably of medieval or later date.
3.4.37 A single posthole cut, [2466], highlighted activity within the possible enclosure. Posthole [2466] was 0.4m in diameter and 0.07m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from its fill.

*Enclosure K*

3.4.38 Within trench 6 rectilinear enclosure K was examined, identifying its northern boundary ditch and part of its eastern side. The N boundary of the enclosure correlates closely with major ditch [2504]/[2527]. This ditch, aligned NW-SE, was 3.95m wide with steeply sloping sides and was in excess of 0.75m deep (Figs. 25 & 26). Fill (2507) yielded seven MIA sherds, fill (2506) 29 2nd-3rd century sherds and fill (2505) five MIA sherds, 26 2nd-3rd century sherds, 17 animal bone fragments, 4 roof tile fragments and one residual later prehistoric utilised flint flake.

3.4.39 The eastern edge of enclosure K is plotted as being in part delineated by ditch [2531] of the ?trackway A/enclosure L, previously described, and being in part defined by a ditch running S from enclosure L and running around to abut circular enclosure M. A NE-SW aligned ditch [2524] was noted within trench 6, 3.5m in width, with steep-sides and an irregular but broadly flat base at a depth of 0.85m. This may conceivably represent the southern continuation of the eastern boundary of enclosure K. However the N-S cropmark, running S from the SE corner of enclosure L, could not be confirmed with certainty within trench 7. It may actually reflect an unexcavated N-S linear noted 5m W of its plotted position containing a modern land-drain.

*Enclosure L*

3.4.40 Within trench 6 the W side of enclosure L was encountered, corresponding with ditch [2531] described in 3.4.18 above. No features were encountered within the short length of trench 6 to the E of the enclosure ditch (Figs. 25 & 26).
**Linear marks N and O**

3.4.41 Within trench 7 the plotted linear cropmark N, aligned NW-SE, correlated with a shallow plough furrow from which a tile fragment was recovered. Linear cropmark O, aligned NW-SE, may reflect the presence of an adjacent second shallow plough furrow.

**Enclosure P**

3.4.42 The southern edge of enclosure P was identified within trench 8 as an E-W aligned ditch [2603], 2.5m in width with a broadly v-shaped profile and an irregular but broadly flat base at a depth of 0.75m (Fig. 28). Fill (2604) yielded 76 sherds of AD 240-340 pottery, 18 roof tile fragments and 50 fragments of animal bone. Fill (2605) produced two Romano-British sherds, with fill (2606) yielding 53 sherds of 2nd century date. A soil sample taken from (2605) contained charred cereal grain and wood charcoal to again highlight the disposal of crop processing waste on the site.

**Enclosure Q**

3.4.43 The northern side of enclosure Q was denoted by ditch [2603] described above. Within trench 8 no western enclosure ditch was present, but a modern land drain recorded in this position may represent the plotted cropmark.

3.4.44 The southern boundary of enclosure Q was represented by ditch [2616], which formed the northern arm of ?trackway S described below. An additional ditch [2613] was encountered within trench 9. Aligned broadly E-W, it was 2.3m wide with a steep v-shaped profile and a flat, slotted, base at a depth of 1.15m (Fig. 28). Fill (2614) yielded 70 sherds of 3rd century pottery, 36 animal bone fragments, 31 roof tile fragments, two iron slag pieces and a bone spindle whorl fragment.

**Enclosure R**
3.4.45 Within trench 8 no evidence was encountered for the eastern edge of enclosure R, a land drain probably accounting for the plotted cropmark feature.

*Trackway S*

3.4.46 Within trench 9 two parallel ditches were encountered, correlating with the plotted double-ditched trackway. The plotted northern ditch correlates closely with E-W aligned ditch [2622], which was at least 1m wide and 0.6m deep (Fig. 29). This was subsequently recut as ditch [2616], 2.4m in width with steeply sloping sides and a flat base at a depth of 0.9m. Fill (2618) yielded 27 sherds of 2nd century pot and two roof tile fragments.

*Enclosure T*

3.4.47 An E-W aligned, v-shaped, ditch [2619] was noted to the S of [2622]/[2616] within the area of enclosure T, lying approximately 5m south of the plotted position of the southern ditch of the trackway. Its narrow width of 0.85m and mere 0.3m depth appears to rule it out as an element of the trackway, which appears to be a single ditched feature. Fill (2620) yielded two sherds of Romano-British pottery.

*Trackway U*

3.4.48 Within trench 10 two features were encountered broadly correlating with the position of the paired ditches of trackway U. Ditch [2632] was aligned E-W and was 2.7m wide, with a gentle v-shaped profile becoming steeper with depth (excavation halting at a depth of 0.9m). Fill (2633) yielded 169 sherds of 2nd century pottery, 73 sherds of AD 240-300 pottery, 30 animal bone fragments, 12 roof tile fragments, and four iron nails. Fill (2634) contained 11 sherds of 2nd-3rd century pottery.
3.4.49 Two shallow features were noted further S within trench 9, approximately 4m apart, which may define the edges of trackway U. Linear depression [2635] was 2.15m wide and 0.2m deep, its fill yielded a roof tile fragment and 49 sherds of late 1st to 2nd century pottery. Feature [2637] was 3m wide and 0.2m deep, with gently sloping sides and a wide flat base. Its fill contained 58 sherds of 2nd century pottery.

Enclosure V

3.4.50 Within trench 11 a linear ditch [2658] was encountered in a position broadly correlating with the western arm of enclosure V. Ditch [2658], aligned N-S, was 3.3m wide with a v-shaped profile and concave base at a depth of 1.1m. N-S aligned ditch [2658] yielded one residual MIA pot sherd from fill (2661), with later fill (2657) yielding 51 sherds of 2nd-4th century pottery.

3.4.51 Within trench 10, within the area of enclosure V, a single pit cut [2639] was noted. The pit was approximately 1.3m long, 0.9m wide and 0.1m deep (Fig. 30). No dating evidence was recovered from its fill.

Enclosure W

3.4.52 Trench 11 targeted the area of enclosure W, this enclosure overlapping with but set out on a slightly different (?earlier) alignment to that of enclosure V.

3.4.53 The necessity of leaving a modern land drain in-situ within the N-S arm of trench 11 precluded an examination of the presence or otherwise of the northern enclosure arm of enclosure W. One N-S aligned linear [2653], with a v-shaped profile and concave base, was however encountered within enclosure W, possibly representing an internal subdivision. The feature may relate to the short, N-S aligned more westerly cropmark running across the E-W arm of trench 11. One MIA pot sherd from ditch [2653] may be residual but, give the different alignment of enclosure W, may allude to a rectilinear enclosure preceding the main Romano-British enclosure complex.
**Medieval and later ploughing**

3.4.54 Medieval or later plough furrows were encountered within trench 7.

**Modern or other disturbances**

3.4.55 Modern land drains were detected within trenches 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 11.

**Soil sequence**

3.4.56 All archaeological features were sealed by approximately 0.30m of gravelly-clay subsoil and by 0.20m of modern clay-loam ploughsoil.

**SITE 102**  (Figs. 5, 9, 32-33)

3.5 **Non-technical summary**

3.5.1 Fieldwork at site 102 investigated an area where an inhumation burial, associated with Romano-British pottery and jewellery, is reported to have been found in 1922. Magnetic susceptibility survey had detected enhanced soil readings in the eastern part of the field, but a geophysical survey transect encompassing the putative burial gravelly revealed only linear furrows reflected past ploughing patterns. No further burials were encountered during trial trenching but three linear ditches, of probable Iron Age or Romano-British date, were recorded.
3.6 Evaluation results

3.6.1 A total of four trenches, 1.5m in width and totalling 120m in length, were excavated in the area of the putative Romano-British burial (Figs 5 & 9).

Natural deposits

3.6.2 The natural geological substrate of yellow gravels was encountered within all four trenches, at an average depth of 0.35m below existing ground level. Three linear features of archaeological interest were noted cut into the gravels, and were sampled accordingly.

Iron-age and Romano-British features

3.6.3 Within trench 1 two N-S aligned parallel ditches [2705] and [2711] were encountered, approximately 11m apart. Ditch [2705] was 2.1m in width, with a v-shaped profile and was in excess of 0.70m in depth (Fig. 32). The feature yielded one MIA pot sherd and eight animal bone fragments from its single fill (2706).

3.6.4 Ditch [2711] was 1.5m in width with a gently sloping, more v-shaped, profile and a concave base at a depth of 0.55m. A single pot sherd of Roman date was recovered from its single fill (2712).

3.6.5 A third ditch [2722] was encountered within trench 2, aligned E-W counter to the orientation of ditches [2705] and [2711]. The shallow feature had a stepped profile with a 2.7m wide, 0.20m deep, cut graduating to a 1m ditch with gently-sloping sides and a flat base at a depth of 0.40m (Fig. 33). No dating evidence was recovered from its fill (2723).
Romano-British burials

3.6.6 No grave cuts or disarticulated human bone were encountered within trench 1 in the area of the putative recorded Romano-British burial.

Medieval and later ploughing

3.6.7 A total of nine medieval or later plough furrows were noted within the four evaluation trenches, all running on broadly N-S alignments. Two residual sherds of 2nd century pottery were recovered from furrow [2747] with a further Romano-British sherd coming from [2713].

Soil sequence

3.6.8 All archaeological features were sealed by approximately 0.10m of clay subsoil and by 0.25m of modern clay-loam ploughsoil.

SITE 410 (Figs. 6, 10, 34-43)

3.7 Non-technical summary

3.7.1 Trial trenching at site 410 targeted elements of a small coaxial cropmark complex. Evaluation confirmed the presence of most of the major features recorded on the cropmark plot, whilst identifying a considerable number of additional, principally smaller, features. Artefactual material alludes to a Middle Iron Age origin for the complex, a concentration of postholes, pits and gullies suggesting a settlement focus with adjoining paddocks and other enclosures. Romano-British settlement features associated with 2nd to 3rd century pottery were also noted across the site.
3.8 Evaluation results

3.8.1 A total of six trenches, 1.5m in width and totalling 260m in length, were excavated across the cropmark complex (Figs 6 & 10).

Natural deposits

3.8.2 The natural geological substrate of yellow gravels was encountered within all six evaluation trenches, at an average depth of 0.45m below existing ground level.

Iron Age settlement features

Enclosure A

3.8.3 Within trench 1 the NE boundary of rectilinear enclosure A, measuring approximately 44m by 22m, was examined. Its plotted position broadly correlates with the position of N-S aligned ditch [5023]. This was approximately 1.8m wide, with a steep u-shaped profile and a gently concave base at a depth of 0.7m (Figs. 34 & 35). Four sherds of MIA pot, one iron slag piece and six animal bone fragments were recovered from its fill.

Enclosure B

3.8.4 Immediately NE of enclosure A within trench 1 an adjoining enclosure B, at least 30m by 26m in size, was examined. Its SW boundary was marked by ditch [5023] described above, whilst its NE side appeared to be represented by three intercutting NW-SE aligned ditches [5011]/[5015]/[5013].

3.8.5 The earliest ditch of the sequence, [5011], yielded 13 MIA and three intrusive Romano-British sherds. It had been cut away on both sides but was at least 1.2m wide and 0.35m deep with a flat base.
3.8.6 Ditch [5011] had been cut away on its NE side by ditch [5015], which was 0.75m wide with gently sloping sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.20m. Fill (5014) yielded no dating evidence. On its SW side ditch [5011] was cut away by feature [5013], which was 1.5m wide with a v-shaped profile and narrow slot in its base at a depth of 0.40m.

3.8.7 Within enclosure B several smaller features, unrecorded on the cropmark plot, were encountered. One edge of a NW-SE aligned ditch [5021], at least 0.5m wide and 0.20m deep, was seen to terminate within the trench. Running parallel with [5021] a second NW-SE ditch [5019] was recorded, 1.4m in width, its steep v-shaped profile dropping to a flat base at a depth of 0.70m (Figs. 34 & 35). Fills (5016) to (5018) yielded 25 sherds of MIA pot.

**Enclosure C**

3.8.8 Immediately NE of enclosure B lay an adjoining enclosure C. This was approximately 20m by 30m in size as defined by the presence of a NW-SE aligned linear feature at the northern limit of the cropmark plot.

3.8.9 The SW side of enclosure C was defined in trench 1 by ditch [5011]/[5013] described above. Its NE edge was delineated by a NNW-SSE aligned ditch [5030], 1.25m in width with gently-sloping sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.70m. A soil sample taken from fill (5031) contained abundant charred cereal grain, charred legumes and wood charcoal, suggesting deliberately deposited crop-processing waste.

3.8.10 Within the area delineated by enclosure C a series of gullies and pits were encountered. A N-S aligned gully [5040], 0.25m in width, was noted but not sampled. A second N-S aligned linear feature [5044] was noted NE of [5040]. Although of possible contemporary date to the adjacent Iron Age features ditch [5044] was left unsampled, due to the presence of a modern field drain [5042] running centrally through it.
3.8.11 A further N-S aligned linear ditch [5004] was also noted, 1.4m in width with a steep v-shaped profile and a concave base at a depth of 0.75m (Figs. 34 & 35). Four sherds of MIA pottery and 28 animal bone fragments were recovered from its fill.

*Area north-east of enclosure C*

3.8.12 Immediately NE of the enclosure C ditched boundary [5029] an area of pitting was noted. Pit [5035] was at least 1m in diameter and 0.8m deep, and pit [5033] was approximately 1.2m in diameter and 0.70m deep. Fills (5036) and (5037) yielded nine sherds of MIA pottery.

*?Trackway D*

3.8.13 The NE-SW aligned ? double-ditched trackway D marked on the cropmark plot was examined within trench 2. The parallel cropmarks, approximately 5m apart, cross an area where five major intercutting features [5093]/[5090]/[5088]/[5086] and [5084] were detected (Figs. 36 & 37). Given limited evaluation sampling and the close proximity of the five intercutting features it remains uncertain which of the ditches actually relate to the plotted parallel cropmarks.

3.8.14 Ditch [5093], aligned NE-SW, was at least 2.8m wide with a steeply-sloping S side, a more irregular, stepped, N side and a flat base at a depth of 0.95m. Two sherds of MIA pot were recovered from the fill.

3.8.15 NE-SW aligned cut [5090] was at least 1.5m wide with gently sloping sides and an irregular, concave, base at a depth of 0.65m. Two sherds of MIA pottery were recovered from its fill.

3.8.16 Ditch [5090] was in turn cut by a NE-SW aligned ditch [5088] at least 1.3m in width with a steeply u-shaped profile and a concave base at a depth of 0.65m.
3.8.17 Ditch [5088] was in turn cut by a NE-SW aligned linear feature [5086], 0.80m wide, possibly a contemporaneous feature though a ceramic field drain (5087) lay centrally within the feature with no other recognisable cut for it.

3.8.18 Ditch [5084], aligned NE-SW, was also noted, at least 2.5m wide with gently sloping sides and an irregular but broadly flat base at a depth of 0.5m. Seventeen sherds of 2nd century pot were recovered from its fill.

?enclosure G (area SE of enclosure F, defined on SW side by linear K)

3.8.19 Immediately SE of ?enclosure F an adjoining enclosure G, approximately 20m wide and defined by features H and I was also examined by trench 2 (see below for description of a ?sub-division marked by linear feature K). No features were encountered within the area of enclosure G, other than two medieval or later plough furrows [5105] and [5103].

?putative trackway H

3.8.20 The NW-SE aligned ? double-ditched trackway H marked on the cropmark plot was examined within trench 4 (Figs. 40 & 41). Its plotted position lies within 2m of a NW-SE single ditch [5229], 2.9m wide and 0.85m deep, cropmark H thus appearing to reflect the presence of an enclosure ditch rather than a wide double-ditched trackway. No further features were encountered to the NE of [5229] to account for the parallel linear cropmark plotted at the end of trench 4.

?putative trackway I

3.8.21 The NW-SE aligned ? double-ditched trackway I marked on the cropmark plot was also examined within trench 4. Its position correlates with a single
NW-SE aligned ditch [5222], 2m in width with steep sides and a depth in excess of 0.9m (Figs. 40 & 41). This cropmark, as with feature H, also appears to reflect the presence of an enclosure ditch rather than a wide double-ditched trackway. Fill (5223) yielded seven sherds of 2nd century pottery and fill (5224) a further three sherds of the same date.

*Sub-circular enclosure J*

3.8.22 Within the SW half of trench 4 a single NE-SW aligned ditch [5225], 0.9m wide and 0.3m deep, was encountered (Figs. 40 & 41). Its position correlates with that of the NE arm of enclosure J but the absence of a continuation to the SW suggests that the feature may be either discontinuous or entirely absent here, with ditch [5225] possibly actually representing the NW-SE linear plotted as an intermittent feature through this area.

*Linear feature K*

3.8.23 Within trench 4 targeting of an irregular linear feature K revealed a NNW-SSE aligned ditch [5229], approximately 3.3m wide with a gently sloping W side, a near vertical E side and a flat base at a depth of 1m. This feature appears to mark a subdivision of enclosure G described above.

*Sub-circular enclosure L*

3.8.24 Within trench 3 the plotted SE arm of putative irregular sub-circular enclosure 3 corresponded with the position of a plough furrow [5163], with a further plough furrow [5174] noted to the NW (Figs. 38 & 39). However the presence of a concentration of postholes, gullies and pits in this area highlights a clear settlement focus in this area.

3.8.25 Lying SE of furrow [5163] posthole [5165] was 0.45m in diameter and 0.25m deep, yielding no dating evidence. An adjacent gully [5169] was noted at the SE end of trench 3, 0.5m in width and 0.15m deep. Five sherds of MIA pot
were recovered from its fill (5158), along with burnt stone and several clay
loomweight fragments. NE of furrow [5163] posthole [5159] was recorded,
0.35m in diameter and 0.25m deep. A soil sample from its fill revealed small
quantities of charred cereal grain, legumes, weed seeds and wood charcoal.
Posthole [5176], 0.2m in diameter and 0.25m deep, was also noted but
yielded no dating evidence. A NE-SW aligned gully [5161], 0.30m wide and
0.20m deep contained three sherds of MIA pot, and a sub-oval pit [5172],
0.3m wide, 1m long and 0.25m deep was also recorded, containing four
sherds of MIA pottery.

Linear feature M

3.8.26 Within trench 3 linear feature M was also targeted. A NW-SE aligned ditch
[5157] was noted approximately 3m NE of its plotted position. Ditch [5157]
was 1.5m wide with gently sloping sides dropping to a broadly flat base at a
depth of 0.4m. Three sherds of MIA pot were recovered from its fill.

Sub-circular enclosure N

3.8.27 Immediately NE of ditch [5157] a second NW-SE aligned ditch [5170] was
encountered, thought to represent one arm of the sub-circular enclosure N.
Ditch [5170] was 2.3m wide with a steep v-shaped profile and flat base at a
depth of 0.8m. No dating evidence was recovered. A posthole [5178] 0.25m
in diameter and 0.2m deep may represent a line of fencing set alongside the
ditch, but this also yielded no dating evidence. An undated NW-SE aligned
ditch [5155] was encountered immediately NE of ditch [5170], some 1.5m in
width with gently sloping sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.4m.

Sub-circular enclosure O

3.8.28 Within trench 5 two ditches were encountered, neither correlating closely with
the plotted position of the putative sub-circular enclosure O. NW-SE aligned
ditch [5294] was 1m wide with gently sloping sides and a flat base at a depth
of 0.4m. NW-SE aligned ditch [5296] was 1m wide with gently sloping sides and a flat base at a depth of 0.35m. Ditch [5296] may rather represent a continuation of a NW-SE aligned linear cropmark to the S. No dating evidence was recovered from either feature.

Romano-British features

3.8.29 Two Romano-British features were noted at the NE end of trench 1. One edge of a NW-SE aligned linear feature [5025] was noted, its fill (5026) yielding three residual MIA sherds and 16 sherds of 2nd century pottery. This had been cut by a later ditch [5028] on the same orientation, some 0.7m wide with gently sloping sides dropping to a flat base at a depth of 0.5m (Figs. 34 & 35). Nineteen 2nd century+ sherds, and 10 animal bone fragments were recovered from its fill (5026).

3.8.30 A NW-SE gully [5006] was noted, 0.5m wide with gently sloping sides and a flat base at a depth of 0.20m. Its fill yielded 18 Romano-British sherds and four residual MIA sherds.

3.8.31 A NNE-SSW aligned ditch [5009], 2.1m in width with gently sloping but irregular sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.65m.

3.8.32 One edge of a NW-SE aligned linear feature, [5046], was also noted at the NE end of trench 1. The unsampled feature was at least 1.2m in width.

Enclosure E

3.8.33 Immediately SE of the ?double-ditched trackway D an enclosure ditch E was also targeted by trench 2. The cropmark correlated with the position of an ENE-WSW aligned ditch, [5115], later recut on the same alignment as ditch [5118] and overlain by a medieval or later plough furrow [5113]. Ditch [5115] was at least 2.2m wide with gently sloping sides becoming near vertical at a depth of 0.45m. The ditch was at least 0.8m deep but its full depth could not be established due to safety constraints. Recut [5118] had a
wide u-shaped profile and broadly flat base at a depth of 0.5m (Fig. 36 & 37). Fill (5119) contained charred cereal grain, charred legume fragments and wood charcoal.

Enclosure F

3.8.34 Immediately SE of linear E the almost adjoining linear F, marking an enclosure approximately 12m by 16m in size, was also examined by trench 2. Its NW side was denoted by ditch [5115]/recut [5118] described above, whilst its SE side appeared to correlate with a NE-SW aligned ditch [5107], 2.9m in width and in excess of 1m deep (Figs. 36 & 37).

Linear feature P

3.8.35 Within trench 6 a NW-SE aligned ditch [5310] was noted, 2.6m in width with a steep v-shaped profile and a flat base at a depth of 1m. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from its fill (5311). Its position correlates closely with that of linear feature P, a straggling cropmark running NW across the southern part of the site before turning abruptly NE.

3.8.36 Ditch [5310] cut across an earlier feature [5318], 0.5m in width and 0.6m deep. Within trench 6 a u-shaped gully [5306], 0.5m wide and 0.6m deep, was also noted, together with pit [5304], 0.9m wide with gently sloping sides and a concave base at a depth of 0.3m. Two NW-SE ditches [5316] and [5315], 1m wide and 0.15m deep, and 0.6m wide and 0.15m deep respectively, were also encountered (Fig. 43)

Medieval and later ploughing

3.8.37 Plough furrows were encountered within trenches 2, 3 and 4 on NE-SW alignments perpendicular to the SW boundary of the field.
Modern or other disturbances

3.8.38 Modern land drains were encountered within trenches 1 and 2.

Soil sequence

3.8.39 All archaeological features were sealed by approximately 0.20m of clay subsoil and by 0.20m of modern clay-loam ploughsoil.
4. THE FINDS

4.1 The Ceramics, by Jane Timby

Summary

4.1.1 The four sites collectively yielded 2701 sherds of pottery weighing 38.4 kg. The assemblage is split between wares of Iron Age and Roman date, the former accounting for 20% by sherd count overall. There are no sub-Roman, Saxon, medieval or post-medieval wares present. The material is relatively well-preserved in that the sherds are fresh and colour-coated wares have retained their surfaces. This is also reflected in a moderately good overall average sherd size of c. 14g, typical of rubbish material that has not undergone serious ongoing disturbance. However, it is clear that some disturbance of material has occurred in the past as several groups are chronologically quite mixed.

4.1.2 The pottery was sorted into fabric groups and roughly quantified by sherd number and count for each excavated context. Diagnostic sherds were used where present to produce a spot date for each context. The data was entered onto an Excel spreadsheet using ware categories used by Wessex Archaeology. There is clearly quite a marked residual component present and therefore it would be unwise to place too much reliance on the dating of particularly small groups. It is unclear in some cases whether odd sherds of Roman pot in what appear to be mainly Iron Age groups should be regarded as intrusive, or reflective of Roman activity disturbing Iron Age deposits.

4.1.3 Summary information for each site is presented in the tables in Appendix I together with full details of quantities and dates by individual context.
**Iron Age**

4.1.4 A total of 550 sherds of handmade pottery of Iron Age date were present. Material of this date was associated with contexts at Site 196 trenches 2 and 3, and Site 407 trenches 1, 6 and 7, but the highest density came from Site 410, trenches 1-4. Most of the wares are in sandy fabrics including a number of glauconitic sand examples. A small number of flint and fossil-shell tempered sherds are also present. Vessel forms include large, poorly defined shouldered jars and slack-sided jars typical of the Middle Iron Age period of the area. At least two handles and one perforated base are present. There are no carinated or decorated wares. Similar material has been recovered from a number of sites in the region, for example Vineyards Farm, Abingdon (in prep) and Ashville Trading Estate (De Roche 1978).

**Romano-British**

4.1.5 The Romano-British assemblage is dominated by products of the Oxfordshire industries, particularly grey wares, largely dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries. Coarse and fine whitewares and colour-coated wares are also well-represented. The bulk of the wares date to the later Roman period but there are a few earlier products including roughcast wares, mica-slipped dishes and butt beakers some of which are likely to have been products of the Nuneham Courtenay kilns nearby (Booth 1994). Also of particular note is a copy of a samian dish in a local Oxfordshire greyware including barbotine decoration of the rim from Site 410 context 5116. Two semi-illiterate stamps on local colour-coated wares dating to the later 3rd/4th centuries are present together with an illiterate stamp on a local grey ware probably dating to the later 1st/early 2nd century. A small number (67 sherds) of samian wares is present together with odd sherds of Rhenish and Cologne colour-coat. Mortaria are limited to the Oxfordshire types and no amphora sherds were present.
4.1.6 Other coarsewares of note include local grog-tempered storage jars, a very small amount of Dorset black-burnished ware, soft pink-grogged ware and late Roman shell-tempered ware.

4.2 *Animal Bone, by Alistair Barber.*

4.2.1 The animal bone assemblage recovered from sites 196, 407, 102 and 410 was quantified and subjected to basic scanning to identify broad species representation, anatomical identification and the presence or absence of butchery marks.

*Site 196*

4.2.2 A total of 685 animal bone fragments, weighing 13.92kg, were recovered from site 196. Overall bone survival was generally good, although the material was largely small and fragmentary with much unidentifiable to species. However cow, horse, and sheep/goat species were all represented, with cattle and horse bones particularly prevalent.

4.2.3 In terms of anatomical representation teeth, mandible and cranial fragments were well-represented, along with vertebrae, phalanges, and metacarpals/metatarsals. This suggests that non-meat joints may have been leaving the site although some rib and longbone fragments showed some evidence of butchery, carrying chop or knife marks.

4.2.4 Whilst most sampled features yielded less than 10 fragments a larger assemblage was recovered from Iron Age ditch [2007] in trench 2. Further large assemblages came from several Romano-British features namely ditch [2029] in trench 2, [2064], and [2070] in trench 3, [2105], and [2109] in trench 4, [2154], and [2161] in trench 5, and [2212] and [2274] in trench 6.
Site 407

4.2.5 A total of 494 animal bone fragments, weighing 7.975 kg, were recovered from site 407. Overall bone survival was generally good, although much of the material was again small and fragmentary with much unidentifiable to species. Cow, horse, and sheep/goat species were all represented.

4.2.6 The anatomical range again was dominated by teeth, mandible and cranial fragments, vertebrae, phalanges, scapula, rib and longbone fragments (the latter showing particular evidence of butchery marks).

4.2.7 Most contexts again yielded relatively little bone material (under 10 fragments per sampled feature) but larger assemblages were recovered from ditches [2358] [2504], [2524], [2531], [2571], [2603], [2613] and [2632].

Site 102

4.2.8 A mere 8 animal bone fragments, weighing 31g, were recovered from site 102. These were principally recovered from plough furrow fills and all of the material was small, fragmentary and unidentifiable to species.

Site 410

4.2.9 A total of 272 animal bone fragments, weighing 5.456 kg, were recovered from site 410. Overall bone survival was generally good, although much of the material was again small and fragmentary with much unidentifiable to species. Cow, horse, pig and sheep/goat species were all represented.

4.2.10 Teeth, mandible and cranial fragments, vertebrae, phalanges, and scapula fragments were again well-represented. Rib and longbone fragments showed particular evidence of butchery marks.
4.2.11 Most contexts again yielded relatively little bone material (under 10 fragments per sampled feature) but larger assemblages were recovered from ditches [5004], [5035] and [5229].

4.3 The human bone, by Alistair Barber.

4.3.1 Skeletal remains of a single individual were recovered from trench 3 at site 196. The body is complete with the exception of the legs, which were retained in-situ on site beneath the baulk, and the overall bone preservation is good.

4.4 The worked flint, by Graeme Walker.

4.4.1 Three worked flints were recovered from the evaluation. Two flakes were recovered from Site 196, namely the fill of gully [2005] in trench 2 and the headland in trench 5. The remaining flake was recovered from Site 407, trench 6 context (2506).

4.4.2 None of the material is diagnostic, but is probably attributable to the later prehistoric period. All three pieces were struck from flawed gravel pebbles, probably obtained locally.

4.5 Other Finds by Emma Harrison
Ceramic Building Material

4.5.1 A small quantity of Roman tile (161 fragments, 7943g) and burnt clay (15 fragments 18g) was recovered from the evaluation. A single unstratified brick was also recovered from Site 407.

4.5.2 The majority of the tile fragments are small and not attributable to any particular form. Similarly the burnt clay consists of small formless fragments. However two fragments each of tegula, imbrex and box tile were recovered from site 196 and a further box tile fragment from site 407. Specifically, one of the tegulae was found lying in the ploughsoil near trench 4 and the other was recovered from headland (2153) in Trench 5. The imbrices were found in the fills of ditch [2105] in trench 4 and trackway ditch [2212] in trench 6. The latter also produced a box tile fragment. Another was recovered from site 407 (trench 7, context 2579).

The Stone

4.5.3 Five fragments of worked stone were recovered, three of which are quern fragments, one a roof tile and the other a building stone fragment.

4.5.4 A saddle quern or possible mortar fragment was recovered from site 410, trench 2, context 5119. It has a concave, smooth grinding surface. The base is also slightly worn as is common in saddle querns. The other two fragments were recovered from site 196 and are both rotary querns. One, recovered from ditch [2107] in trench 4, has a slightly worn face but no other distinguishing features. The other, recovered from trackway ditch [2212] in trench 6, is well shaped with vertical tooling visible on the outer edge, although the surface is quite worn. The grinding surface, which appears to be flat, is smooth, as is the opposite surface.

4.5.5 A single stone roof tile was recovered from site 196, from ditch [2105] in trench 4. A possible building stone fragment was also recovered from ditch
[2101] within the same trench. Similar stone fragments from the fill of trackway ditch [2212] in trench 6 were not retained.

The worked bone

4.5.6 A bone spindle whorl was recovered from site 407 trench 9 context (2614). It is made from the head of a small mammal femur. The maximum diameter is 40mm, the height 31mm and the perforation diameter 9mm.

Loomweights

4.5.7 Three loomweight fragments were recovered from site 410, specifically trench 5 contexts (5173) and (5185). The fragments are all small but are likely to be from triangular loomweights. Two, from the top of the weight, have part of a perforation present. The other fragment, from the body of the weight, has parts of two perforations. None of the fragments is large enough to indicate the overall size of the weights.

Metalwork

4.5.8 The small quantity of iron objects comprise 22 nails, 1 knife blade, 8 fragments and 4 unidentified objects. One nail was found near the shoulder of the skeleton in site 196. It is round-headed (diameter 20mm) with a square shank 29mm long. The knife was also from site 196, specifically the fill of ditch [2273]. It was in three fragments and has a minimum length of 154mm. One small fragment of copper alloy sheet with two perforations was also recovered from the fill of plough furrow [2208] in trench 6 (site 196).

Painted Plaster
4.5.9 One small fragment of red painted wall plaster (weight 1g) was recovered from site 196, specifically the fill of ditch [2161] in trench 5. An additional 5 crumbs were found in a soil sample taken from the same context.

The coins

4.5.10 Two coins were recovered from site 196. These have been examined by Dr. Peter Guest. One coin was found in the subsoil in trench 6 and the other was unstratified in trench 5. The former can be dated to the 1st or 2nd centuries and the latter to AD 320-21.
4.6 Table of finds per feature
5. **PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

5.1 **Introduction**

5.1.1 A total of 16 bulk samples were taken from three of the evaluation sites. Four are attributable to the Iron Age and 11 to the Romano-British period, with the remaining sample taken from a medieval headland. The purpose of taking the samples was to determine if and how biological remains were preserved on the sites and in what sort of features this preservation occurred. An assessment on what the remains indicated about past environment and subsistence, and their archaeological importance could then be made.

5.1.2 Biological remains from many sites dating to both the Romano-British period and Iron Age have been investigated in the Abingdon area during the last two decades (for example, Robinson 1981; 1992). Thus the nature of subsistence activity for these periods is relatively well understood, and provides a firm backdrop against which the data from the evaluation can be compared.

5.2 **Methodology**

5.2.1 All samples were taken by the excavation team from fills of negative features according to the guidelines outlined by Wilkinson (1994). All samples were of 10L size, a size that is standardly used by CAT during evaluations. The samples were taken in sealable, 10L volume plastic tubs and transported to the CAT offices for processing.

5.2.2 The samples were processed using the flotation technique (French 1971), using meshes of 250µm and 500µm for the flot and residue respectively. Both residues and flots were air dried prior to sorting as there was no waterlogged preservation. Residue fractions greater than 2mm were sorted by a CAT technician and all biological and artefactual remains removed. These were passed, along with the unsorted flots, to the author for further study.
5.2.3 The dried flots were scanned under a low power binocular microscope and the biological remains identified and quantified. Identification was, in the case of both plant and molluscan remains (the most abundant remain types found), most commonly to the genus taxonomic level, although occasionally, in the case of certain mollusc shells, species identifications were also made.

5.2.4 Remains from each taxonomic grouping were separately quantified, and counts from flots and residues of the same samples combined. The numbers quoted are exact counts if less than 50, are approximate to the nearest 10 between 50 and 100, and are estimates thereafter, i.e. ** c100-150. *** c150-300. **** >300. In all cases these counts are somewhat biased as residue fractions less than 2mm have not been sorted. This factor has been taken into account in the text that follows.

5.2.5 All scanned flots, biological remains picked from the residues >2mm and unsorted residue fractions are stored in the project archive, along with associated sample sheets and registers.

5.3 **Results**

**Site 196**

5.3.1 A total of six samples were taken from site 196, all but one being from contexts of Romano-British date. The samples are from a variety of features includes a grave fill (2050, sample 2850), a deposit adjacent to what was interpreted as a possible corn drier (2131, sample 2851), a medieval headland (2153, sample 2855), and ditch fills (2106, 2162, 2207, samples 2852, 2853, 2854).

5.3.2 The sample from the fill of grave [2056] in trench 3 contained no plant remains and only two mollusc shells (one each of *Cochlicopa* sp. and *Vitrea*
sp.), both of which have catholic environmental preferences. The gravefill has little potential for further study.

5.3.3 The medieval headland (2153) in trench 5 similarly contained few biological remains, and only two extremely eroded cereal grains, some modern roots, and eleven mollusc shells (seven of the burrowing species *Cecilioides acicula*) were found. The cereal grains appear to be part of a general spread of such remains across the site, as most samples contained at least two specimens. These remains are likely to have been re-worked from other features by a variety of processes. The rooting and presence of *C. acicula* also indicates possible modern contamination of the horizon. As expected the headlands have little potential for further bioarchaeological study.

5.3.4 The samples from the ditches all contain substantially more biological remains than noted in the samples discussed above. The sample from fill (2106) of ditch [2105] in trench 4 (sample no. 2852) contains moderate to high quantities of charred grain, along with charred weed seeds, wood charcoal and a mollusc assemblage dominated by open country species (*Vallonia* sp., *Candidula* / *Cernuella* sp.). The accompaniment of the charred grains by weed seeds suggests the botanical assemblage is of a partially processed cereal product, that was probably discarded as rubbish from domestic activity. The sample from the fill (2162) of ditch [2161] in trench 5 (sample 2853) also contains moderate quantities of cereal grains and a slightly more diverse mollusc assemblage. The cereal grains are likely to have been discarded in the same way as that suggested for sample 2852, although the apparent absence of weed seeds may suggest that processing may have been complete. The mollusc assemblage again indicates open country conditions, although the presence of *Aegopinella* sp. may suggest longer vegetation in the ditch itself. The fill (2207) of trackway ditch [2208] in trench 6 (sample no. 2854), contains only a very few cereal grains and a restricted mollusc fauna. The grains are likely to form part of a general site background as suggested for sample 2855 above, while the molluscs are too few in number to be of diagnostic significance.
5.3.5 The assemblages from the ditches are of variable environmental archaeological potential. The evidence from ditches [2105] and [2161] seems to suggest that they had a secondary use as a disposal area for domestic rubbish, and therefore that the remains in the samples could be used to reconstruct Romano-British subsistence practice.

5.3.6 The final sample (no. 2851) from this site was from the fill of a small pit [2130], suggested to be part of a corn drier. The biological remains seem to confirm this interpretation. The sample contained literally hundreds of charred cereal grains, accompanied by few other remains. Clearly these remains, and the deposit as a whole has considerable environmental archaeological significance for reconstructing past crop processing practice, as well as subsistence.

Site 407

5.3.7 Seven samples were taken from Site 407, five from Romano-British ditch fills and two from Iron Age ditch fills. All the Roman samples are from contexts dated to the third or fourth centuries on ceramic evidence. The quantity of biological remains was generally similar across all the samples, with no obvious difference between the Iron Age and Romano-British contexts.

5.3.8 All the samples except number 2856 from (2364) contained a small to moderate quantity of cereal grains. These are all likely to be part of the general site scatter as discussed above, with the possible exception of sample 2862 from (2605) which contained greater numbers of seeds and may therefore be part of a domestic rubbish deposit. Sample 2861 from (2364) contained a single charred legume seed, while samples 2858 and 2859 from (2472) and (2582) both included single examples of charred weed seeds. These assemblages are of moderate environmental archaeological importance as the remains are likely to have been largely reworked, although the charred remains in sample 2862 from (2605) may be of greater significance.
5.3.9 Varying quantities of mollusc shells were found in the samples. Shell preservation in samples 2856, 2858 and 2862 from (2364), (2472) and (2605) was moderate to good, and it is notable that these samples along with number 2861 include shells of freshwater species. The freshwater component comprises *Anisus* sp. and *Lymnaea* sp. (mostly *Lymnaea truncatula*), indicating that conditions in the ditch were locally damp and muddy - *Anisus leucostoma* and *Lymnaea truncatula* both inhabit shallow, still water, mud-rich environments. Other species from these samples also suggest damp conditions. For example *Carychium* sp. (probably *Carychium minimum*), *Zonitioides nitidus* and the Succineidae all live in marshy conditions. Otherwise the mollusc assemblages are dominated by species indicative of open country conditions. These latter shells are in the case of the ditches discussed above likely to have eroded in from outside showing that although the ditch microenvironment was damp, the area outside was not. There is no evidence from samples 2857 (fill 2520), 2860 (fill 2573) (both dating from the Iron Age) and 2861 (fill 2364) that conditions in the sampled ditches were particularly damp, although in the latter two cases shell preservation was poor.

5.3.10 The biological assemblages from the ditch fills in Site 407 show that conditions were substantially different to Site 196, where no evidence for damp conditions were found. This could be a factor of the topography, but could also be a result of a chronological change in the environment - it being notable that the Iron Age samples from Site 407 contained no molluscs indicative of wet conditions. If this chronological change in water table or flood frequency is indeed the explanation for the noted faunal differences it could have been the result of local changes in the environment, or even climatic change. It is tempting to equate these with those noted by Miles (1984) for the whole upper Thames in the late Iron Age / Romano-British periods, although this is perhaps stretching the evidence too far. The mollusc assemblages from the ditches are thus obviously of vital importance in understanding the local landscape at the time of utilisation in both the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.
Site 410

5.3.11 Three samples were taken from Site 410. One is from an Iron Age ditch fill, one from a Roman ditch fill and the other from a post hole of Iron Age date. The biological assemblages recovered from each are notably different.

5.3.12 Cereal grains were found in all three samples. Occurrence of such remains was in high quantities in sample 2863 from (5119) and 2865 from (5158) and low in sample 2864 from (5158), suggesting that the former two contain deliberately deposited domestic waste. However, what is most significant is that all three samples contained charred legumes, whereas none were noted in samples from the other sites. What the significance of this apparently spatially distinct and yet chronological continuous phenomena cannot be stated. It is also of note that charred weed seeds were not found in the two ditch fill samples, perhaps indicating that charring was of the stored grain product rather than of processing waste.

5.3.13 The mollusc data is also of considerable interest as the patterns observed at site 407 are continued at site S410, with the 2nd-3rd century sample, 2863 from containing shells indicative of mud rich aquatic environments and the Iron Age samples containing only dry land, open country species. However, in this case the number of shells are very small in the Iron Age contexts, and so this conclusion can only be tentative. It is also noteworthy that some of the freshwater species found in sample 2863 from (5119) are commonly found in rather more permanent and deeper water than species’ in samples from site 407, i.e. Aplexa hypnorum, Lymnaea peregra and Lymnaea palustris, perhaps indicating even wetter conditions than in later (3rd-4th century) contexts at the latter. As this interpretation is based on data from a single sample it cannot at present be considered as anything more than an extremely tentative hypothesis.
5.4 **Conclusions**

5.4.1 The data collected from samples from the three sites provides evidence for past subsistence and agricultural practice in the case of the plant remains and environmental changes in the case of the molluscs. Cereal grains were noted in the majority of the samples indicating that cereal formed a major part of both the Iron Age and Romano-British subsistence regimes. It is possible that a more detailed examination of the remains could indicate whether the emphasis on certain crop types varied over time. It is particularly notable that no crop processing debris, such as rachis, spikelet and awn fragments were found despite exhaustive search, while the only evidence for processing waste is the occasional presence of a charred weed seed. It is therefore likely that all the charred remains were ultimately derived from a grain product that had completed all processing stages.

5.4.2 The mollusc data is if anything more interesting. It appears to indicate that spatial and temporal changes occurred to the environment between the Iron Age and late Roman period. All the Iron Age samples contained only shells of terrestrial species, but on sites 407 and 410 samples from the 2nd century onwards also contain fresh water species. The same change cannot, however, be observed on site 196 where dry land species predominate throughout.

5.5 **Assessment**

5.5.1 The biological remains recovered from samples at all three sites are clearly of great significance in interpreting the archaeology of the sites. Cereal remains were found in greater numbers than had been expected and are likely in several cases to have been included in deliberately deposited domestic waste. These remains could potentially be used for reconstructing Iron Age and Romano-British subsistence. Should further work take place larger and more frequent
samples would need to be taken from the majority of negative features for the study of these remains.

5.5.2 The mollusc data is also of vital importance in indicating environmental change on at least two of the sites. The fact that no change was observed on the third is also of significance. Further, more detailed study of molluscs from dedicated samples of ditch sediments would be required if further archaeological work were to take place.
6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Site 196

General

6.1.1 Field evaluation at site 196 confirmed the validity of the majority of cropmark features plotted from aerial photographic survey, revealing truncated but still well preserved settlement remains dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Natural deposits

6.1.2 Natural deposits over the site generally consisted of whitish gravel and areas of grey-brown, greenish-brown, orange-yellow and yellowish-brown clays. The depths of the natural varied from 0.3m in trench 4 where there was no subsoil to a maximum of 0.7m as dictated by the headlands.

Iron Age activity

6.1.3 Three ditches of probable Iron Age date were identified. One of these may have flanked a trackway re-used in the Romano-British period. The other ditches were aligned E-W but their purpose is not known. No other features of Iron Age date were recognised although a flint flake was found within the fill of gully [2005] in trench 2.

6.1.4 The Iron Age material is significant in that it shows possible continuity in the use of the trackway between the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. The extent and nature of this activity to the W of this trackway is uncertain although the pottery distribution strongly suggests that it was centred in the northern part of the site around trench 2. No Iron Age material was recovered from trench 1 to the N and only three sherds came from trench 3 to the SW.
The only Iron Age material from trench 4 to the S came from the trackway ditch. A single residual sherd was also found in trench 7. The pottery included forms which are typical of the middle Iron Age of the region.

**Possible pre enclosure activity**

6.1.5 Several shallow gullies and ditches on a NW-SE or NE-SW alignment were found in trenches 2 and 3. However, the function of these shallow features is not known. A small amount of Roman pottery was found in the fills of some of these features although their relationship with the N-S aligned Romano-British settlement is uncertain.

6.1.6 It is nevertheless clear that the focus of this NW-SE and NE-SW activity is around trench 2, extending south-westwards into trench 3. There was no sign of any similar features further to the N in trench 1 or to the S in trench 4.

**The Romano-British settlement**

6.1.7 The Romano-British settlement measured approximately 600m from N-S and 110m from E-W, with a series of rectilinear enclosures on its western side. Its N-S aligned trackway was only recognisable over half the length of the settlement, the axis thereafter being defined by a single sinuous ditch. The northern boundary ditch of enclosure B crossed the trackway presumably terminating it at this point. The trackway was defined by a ditch on one side and superseded the former Iron Age track. In trenches 1 and 4 the trackway ditches were relatively shallow. However, in the southern part of the site (trenches 6 and 7) the ditch continuing the alignment of the trackway to the N was very wide and deep, and contained fills which reflect the existence of nearby domestic buildings.

6.1.8 Despite the fact that no clear evidence of structural remains, in the form of wall foundations or post-hole groups, was recovered from the evaluation, the presence of stone rubble, from the infilled trackway ditch in trench 6 indicates
that there must have been a structure of Romano-British date in the immediate vicinity. This is supported by the recovery of albeit small amounts of *tegula*, *imbrex*, box tile, stone roof tile and painted wall plaster. Indeed, the ditches in trenches 5, 6 and 7 contained a wealth of ceramic and faunal material indicating that domestic debris was being deposited from nearby habitation. The dark composition of the medieval plough headlands in trenches 5, 6 and 7, is also worthy of note. These headlands are probably made up from Romano-British occupation debris subsequently disturbed by the ploughing. The nature of the pottery and the presence of *tegula*, *imbrex*, box tile and wall plaster suggests that this settlement is of high status, perhaps even a villa.

6.1.9 The enclosures varied in size from nearly 20m by 20m (enclosure G) to 78m x 38m in size (enclosure B). None of these enclosures had evidence of settlement in the form of deep pits and foundation trenches. Indeed, apart from a few small pits and possible postholes in enclosures A, B, C and E and a few ditches the enclosures were largely devoid of habitation evidence. Because of the shallow nature of the small pits it is certain that the site has been truncated, almost certainty through medieval and later ploughing. However, even where parts of the settlement were well preserved under the medieval headlands there were few direct signs of habitation features. Given this it is probable that the enclosures were used for agricultural purposes, probably the keeping of stock. However, arable utilisation of the surrounding land is also indicated by the presence of the possible corn drying oven in trench 4, the recovery of rotary querns in trenches 4 and 6, and the charred grain from ditches [2105] and [2161]. The grain from ditch [2105] occurred with weed seeds indicating that the crop processing from this sample was not quite complete. It is probable that these enclosures served the possible villa described above and that the whole settlement complex is part of a villa estate.

6.1.10 There was little indication of any 1st century activity on the site. A second century assemblage was recovered from the western boundary ditch [2304] of enclosure A and corn drier [2129] in enclosure E but both assemblages
consisted of just three sherds. Similarly, two sherds dating to the 2nd century plus were recovered from ditch [2131] in enclosure E and a small, mostly 2nd century plus assemblage was recovered from ditch [2064] in enclosure C. Elsewhere, 2nd century pottery occurred only in residual contexts. Most of the remaining datable assemblages date to the 3rd or 4th centuries.

6.1.11 The presence of a Romano-British cemetery on the site is indicated by the grave in trench 3. The three potsherds recovered from the grave fill date to between AD 240-400. It appears unlikely that this grave exists in isolation but, from a single grave, it is not possible to accurately assess the extent and size of this cemetery.

Medieval and later ploughing

6.1.12 Evidence for medieval ploughing was noted from plough furrows in trenches 1, 4 and 6 together with extant headlands in trenches 2, 5, 6 and 7. The latter are visible today as slight but noticeable embankments. In trenches 5, 6 and 7 the headlands were made up of redeposited Romano-British material disturbed by the ploughing. Where they occur these headlands have protected the Romano-British deposits beneath from the destructive effects of medieval ridge and furrow and later ploughing. All trenches also possessed a thin subsoil which covered archaeological deposits, with the exception of trench 4 where the ploughsoil directly overlay natural deposits.
Site 196 summary

6.1.13 Fieldwork has identified later prehistoric activity on the site from the recovery of pottery of Middle Iron Age date. The majority of the ditched enclosures sampled date however to the Romano-British period, with the pottery assemblage spanning the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. The extensive, regular, linear network of fields, paddocks and smaller enclosures is a settlement type relatively little explored in this area, although paralleled at other sites in region.

6.1.14 Many of the features sampled were demonstrably artefact-rich, evaluation recovering a wide range of finds including pottery, human and animal bone, ceramic building material, worked flint, bone and stone.

6.1.15 The palaeo-environmental potential of sampled features varied but was generally good, with charred cereal grains and seeds noted across the site. These remains, mostly reworked from other features by a variety of processes, reflect partially processed cereal product probably discarded as rubbish from domestic activity. The molluscan remains, generally indicating open country conditions, are also of variable potential, those from the possible corn drier being of considerable importance for reconstructing past crop processing practice as well as subsistence.

6.2 Site 407

General

6.2.1 Field evaluation at site 407 confirmed the validity of the majority of cropmark features plotted from aerial photographic survey, again revealing truncated but still well preserved settlement remains dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.
Natural deposits

6.2.2 Natural deposits over the site generally consisted of whitish gravels and areas of grey-brown, greenish-brown, orange-yellow and yellowish-brown clays. The depth of the natural was on average 0.50m.

Iron Age activity

6.2.3 Two foci of Iron-age settlement-related features were identified at site 407. Within trench 1, at the northern end of the cropmark complex, three sub-circular pits dating to the Middle Iron Age were encountered. Further S, within trenches 6 and 7 towards the centre of the complex, a concentration of postholes, pits, gullies and ditches were identified alluding to the presence of structures and associated features of several phases.

6.2.4 The dating of circular enclosure M remains uncertain from limited sample excavation. A sizeable assemblage of MIA pottery (approximately 40 sherds) was recovered from the feature, its circular form characteristic of later prehistoric roundhouses and enclosures. In addition MIA pottery was recovered from one of two truncated pits lying immediately SE of the enclosure. However six sherds of late Romano-British pottery were recovered from the uppermost fill of the recut enclosure. Although these may be intrusive enclosure M is shown on the cropmark plot as abutted rectilinear enclosure K, from whose ditches quantities of 2nd to 3rd century pottery were recovered. Field evaluation has not demonstrated this abutting relationship, nor even the presence of the western boundary of enclosure K within trench 7, and the dating of enclosure M remains uncertain.

The Romano-British settlement
6.2.5 The Romano-British settlement measured approximately 750m from N-S and 350 from E-W, and consisted of a N-S aligned boundary ditch with a series of rectilinear enclosures on both its western and eastern sides. The enclosures varied in size from 11m by 18m to 120m by 120m.

6.2.6 Although an agricultural function for the overall complex of ditched enclosures appears certain, their individual useages remains uncertain. No internal features, such as clusters of pits or remnant building foundations, were encountered to indicate that any of the enclosures examined had contained domestic structures. The enclosures appear to represent a network of ditched fields, paddocks and smaller enclosures, the latter perhaps associated with pastoral management involving stock control for intensive care activities such as calving or lambing.

6.2.7 Although several cropmark enclosures appear to be intercutting and lie on slightly differing alignments the plotted complex nevertheless appears extremely regular, and may reflect one main phase of planned construction. Sample excavation of the ditched enclosures points to a long duration of occupation, reflected in the repeated recutting of silting boundaries and the wide date span of the recovered pottery.

6.2.8 In terms of the chronological range the large pottery assemblage from site 407 spans the 2nd to 4th centuries, with little or no indication of any 1st century activity on the site. Trackway U ditches [2635] and [2637], within trench 10, appear to represent the earliest Romano-British activity (having been abandoned in the early second century). Most of the ditched enclosures examined yielded 2nd to 3rd century pottery. The latest pottery comes from recuts of the main N-S boundary/putative trackway A and from adjoining linear enclosure C, containing 4th century pottery throughout its length where examined. This artefactual evidence suggests that the main N-S cropmark remained an important boundary or thoroughfare throughout the occupation of the complex.
Medieval and later ploughing

6.2.9 Evidence for medieval ridge and furrow ploughing was seen within trenches 1 and 4

Site 407 summary

6.2.10 Field evaluation at site 407 confirms the validity of the majority of cropmark features plotted from aerial photographic survey, identifying truncated but still well preserved settlement remains some of which survive in excess of 1.2m in depth. A number of previously unrecorded features were noted within several enclosures, whilst several plotted features were found to reflect the presence of either plough furrows or modern land drains.

6.2.11 Fieldwork has recorded later prehistoric activity on the site from the recovery of pottery of Middle Iron Age date from a number of pits, postholes, gullies and ditches. The overwhelming majority of cropmark features examined date however to the Romano-British period, suggesting a planned complex of regular ditched enclosures associated with settlement of 2nd to 4th century duration.

6.2.12 As at site 196 many of the features sampled were demonstrably artefact-rich. The evaluation recovered a wide range of finds including pottery, animal bone, ceramic building material, and worked flint.

6.2.13 The palaeo-environmental potential of the sampled features was variable but generally good, with charred cereal grains and seeds noted across the site and no obvious differences between Iron-Age and Romano-British deposits. These reworked remains reflect partially processed cereal product, probably discarded as rubbish from an associated settlement focus. The molluscan remains were also of variable potential, generally indicating open country and marshy conditions.
6.3 **Site 102**

6.3.1 Field evaluation at site 102 revealed truncated but still well preserved linear ditches dating to the Middle Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

*Natural deposits*

6.3.2 Natural deposits over the site generally consisted of whitish gravel and areas of grey-brown, greenish-brown, orange-yellow and yellowish-brown clays. The natural was on average encountered at a depth of 0.35m.

*Prehistoric and Romano-British activity*

6.3.3 Three linear ditches, previously unrecorded from aerial photographic and geophysical survey, were revealed by trial trenching. These ditched boundaries yielded a small quantity of Romano-British and prehistoric pottery, but close dating is made difficult by the paucity of artefactual material. The absence of artefact concentrations or of burial remains to support the putative recorded Romano-British inhumation from this area argues against the presence of a settlement focus in this area.

*Medieval and later ploughing*

6.3.4 An extensive pattern of N-S aligned plough furrows were noted across site 102.

*Site 102 summary*

6.3.5 Field evaluation at site 102 has highlighted several well preserved linear features, surviving up to 0.7m in depth, previously unrecorded from aerial
photographic and geophysical survey. Evaluation also confirmed the presence of extensive medieval or later plough furrows across the site.

6.3.6 Little artefactual material was recovered from site 102 during trial-trenching, suggesting the site lies some distance from focused settlement in this area.

6.3.7 The linear features examined had no recognisable palaeo-environmental potential and were not sampled for such analysis.

6.4 Site 410

6.4.1 Field evaluation at site 410 confirmed the validity of the majority of cropmark features plotted from aerial photographic survey, revealing truncated but relatively well preserved settlement remains dating to the Middle Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Natural deposits

6.4.2 Natural deposits over the site generally consisted of whitish gravels and areas of grey-brown, greenish-brown, orange-yellow and yellowish-brown clays. The depth of the natural was on average 0.40-0.50m.

The Iron Age settlement

6.4.3 The majority of the features sampled across the cropmark complex yielded pottery of Middle Iron Age date. A clear focus of structural remains were identified from pits, postholes and gullies in the vicinity of trench 3, alluding to settlement alongside a network of ditched agricultural enclosures.
**Romano-British settlement**

6.4.4 A resumption of occupation during the Romano-British period was reflected in the identification of a series of ditched enclosures of this date across the site. No structural remains or other features associated with associated settlement were encountered. In terms of the chronological span of the Romano-British activity no late Roman pottery forms were present, the assemblage rather indicating fairly intense activity within the early 2nd century.

**Medieval and later ploughing**

6.4.5 Plough furrows were detected within several trenches at site 410.

**Site 410 summary**

6.4.6 Fieldwork confirms the broad validity of the cropmark plot, revealing well preserved Middle Iron Age and Romano-British features surviving in excess of 1.2m in depth.

6.4.7 As at sites 196 and 410 many of the features sampled were demonstrably artefact-rich, yielding a wide range of finds including pottery, animal bone, ceramic building material, and worked flint, and stone.

6.4.8 The sample features indicate variable environmental potential, with several features containing reworked domestic waste. Molluscan evidence suggests dry land open country conditions in the Iron Age with damp-loving species present in the Romano-British period.

**6.5 Synthesis**
6.5.1 Field evaluation at sites 196, 407 and 410 has confirmed the presence of three extensive complexes of ditched agricultural enclosures dating to the late prehistoric and Romano-British periods. At site 102 further ditched boundaries of probable prehistoric and/or Romano-British date were noted.

6.5.2 There is a growing number of settlement sites recognised across the lowland river gravels of this area, although much work remains to be done to understand the pattern of settlement evolution in this area. A number of farming settlements have now been subject to archaeological investigation in the region, providing an emerging pattern for their form, economic basis, longevity and locations (Lambrick 1992).

6.5.3 The identification of Middle Iron Age occupation at sites 196, 407 and 410 and of subsequent Romano-British activity, with no clear continuity between these periods, appears to conform with a recognised pattern in this area. The transition from the Middle to Late Iron Age appears to see the frequent abandonment of MIA sites and a shift in settlement focus to new locations nearby, as at Gravelly Guy (Lambrick op.cit).

6.5.4 From the Early Iron Age there is evidence of the landscape filling up, associated with an intensification of agricultural productivity marked by the development of new crop species, improved processing, deeper ploughing, better drainage and more pastoral production. This is particularly recognisable from the Middle Iron Age with the provision of waterholes and of systems of ditched paddocks and small enclosures, specialised forms of settlement designed to maximise pastoral productivity. The cropmark complex of this period investigated at site 410 is characterised by a compact, coaxial, network of ditched enclosures with a habitation focus closeby, parallels between the morphology of Middle Iron Age settlement at site 410 with the layout of settlement at sites 196 and 407 during the Romano-British period, reflecting an enduring organisational response to similar agricultural needs for efficiently managed stock control.
6.5.5 Although large areas of the gravel terraces still remained unenclosed in the Late Iron Age a proliferation of ditched enclosures and fields are known in this region from this period. It remains rare for their usage to be known although they are generally regarded as associated with improved stock management, to control grazing and for other pastoral care.

6.5.6 The absence of definable Late Iron Age activity at sites 196, 407, 102 and 410 correlates with an absence of actual evidence of settlement on the floodplain, none of the excavated Middle Iron Age sites in the region sealed by alluvium having continued into the Late Iron Age. There rather appears to have been a common shift or relocation of existing farms in the Late Iron Age and early Roman period within a basically unchanged landscape structure.

6.5.7 The results of palaeo-environmental analysis from the evaluation are of particular interest, alluding to possible localised changes in hydrology between the Iron Age and late Roman period. The molluscan data identifies only terrestrial molluscs present at sites 407 and 410 during the Iron Age but reveals freshwater species present from the second century onwards. Some spatial as well as chronological variation is also suggested from the enduring presence of solely dry land species at site 196 into the Romano-British period.

6.5.8 Continued arable expansion almost certainly increased pressure on grazing land, a widespread investment in enclosed paddocks and fields continuing and from the late 1st century onwards the creation of droveways. The extensive networks of enclosures with double-ditched trackways at sites 196 and 407 fall into this pattern, both sites displaying a remarkable similarity of settlement form with N-S aligned coaxial linear settlement aligned along a trackway with enclosures predominantly laid off to one side. By the late Roman period many pastoral settlements appear to have been quite Romanised, this also being reflected at sites 196 and 407 from the artefactual assemblages.
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9. THE ARCHIVE

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