



Stilton, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of the Results



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Summary

In June 2006 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at two sites near the village of Stilton in Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR 517200 290000), to investigate the site of a possible Roman pottery kiln located on a fen island, and Romano-British deposits identified over 1m below the current ground surface in a drainage ditch known as Stilton Dyke.

The project was largely successful in achieving its stated aims through the recognition of a Roman pottery kiln, a tile kiln and another kiln-like structure which appeared to form part of wider ladder settlement along a Roman road branching off Ermine Street. The wider settlement was identified through geophysical survey and the landscape study while the excavation was able to provide a date for the occupation between the early to mid 2nd century AD and the end of the Roman period.

The site was largely abandoned due to climatic changes and changes in sea level, but two inhumation burials and a large oval surrounding enclosure post-date the Romano-British settlement. One suggestion is that the oval enclosure was the site of a hermitage at this period, although no direct evidence was found to support this theory.

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Acknowledgements

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The geophysical survey was undertaken by John Gater, Jimmy Adcock and Claire Stephens of GSB Prospection. The field survey was undertaken by Henry Chapman, University of Birmingham, and landscape survey and map regression was undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage. The excavation strategy was devised by Mick Aston, Bristol University. The on-site recording was co-ordinated by Steve Thompson with on-site finds processing by Naomi Hall, both of Wessex Archaeology.

The excavations were undertaken by Time Team's retained archaeologists, Phil Harding (Wessex Archaeology), Raksha Dave, Kerry Ely, Brigid Gallagher, Ian Powlesland and Matt Williams with assistance from James Fairbairn, Sarah Henley, Ian Hogg, Gemma Tully and Steve Wadeson of Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit, and local archaeologist Yvonne Edwards. On-site pottery identification was carried out by Mark Corney, with small find identification by Helen Geake.

The archive was collated and all post-excavation assessment and analysis undertaken by Wessex Archaeology. This report was compiled by Steve Thompson, with specialist reports prepared by Lorraine Mepham (finds) with Rachael Seager Smith (pottery), Dr Matt Leivers (flint), Jessica Grimm (animal bone) and Dr Nicholas Cooke (coins). The palaeo-environmental report was prepared by Dr Chris J. Stevens. The illustrations were prepared by Kitty Brandon. The post-excavation project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Lorraine Mepham.

The work also benefited from discussion on-site with Ben Robinson, Cambridgeshire County Council Historical Environment Officer; Francis Pryor, Fens Specialist; Phil Harding, Helen Geake of Cambridge University and Mick Aston of Bristol University.

Finally thanks are extended to David Hicks and his family for allowing access to the Site for geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation.

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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological recording and post-excavation work on an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' on land to the east of Stilton, near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (hereafter the 'Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report documents the results of archaeological survey and evaluation undertaken by Time Team, and presents an assessment of the results of these works.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The Site comprises two areas, the first identified as a raised area of land surrounded by fenland and centred on NGR 517400 290300 (hereafter 'Site A'), the second located within the fenland flood plain in an area adjacent to Stilton Dyke, a large drainage channel, centred on NGR 516900 289820 (hereafter 'Site B'). The Site is located directly east of the town of Stilton, approximately four miles south-west of Peterborough and approximately twelve miles north-east of Thrapston.

1.2.2 Site A is located at an elevation of approximately 4.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and Site B at approximately 5.15m aOD, with the underlying geology at both sites being a mixture of Kellaway clay, cornbrash and alluvium (Videotext Communications 2006, 3).

1.3 Historical Background

Roman Arrival

1.3.1 Following the invasion of AD 43, the invading force encountered a large and relatively prosperous native population in the Nene valley.

1.3.2 The Roman road system in Britain originated in the 1st century AD as a military system centred on strategically positioned London. The roads linked London to the Romanised towns constructed in the native centres of the south-east and to the legionary bases and later towns to the north and west. The Roman government needed it to control areas using the commanders of the regional forts, but it was also necessary for the administration of the Roman army, government officials and soldiers to travel between the various forts on government business. The government therefore authorised the

construction of *praetoria*, a series of roadside accommodation sites for high ranking officials to eat, sleep and procure fresh transport for their journey. This system of roads and accommodation became known as the *cursus publicus*, literally ‘public passage’.

- 1.3.3 As part of the *cursus publicus*, military engineers laid roads through the region. A number of roads are located in the vicinity including Ermine Street (which passed through Stilton), linking London with the forts at Lincoln and York; King Street, leading from Ermine Street to Lincolnshire; and the Fengate which led from Ermine Street at Castor to the heart of East Anglia.
- 1.3.4 As well as the road network, the River Nene was navigable inland at high tide as far as the Fenland settlements and the Wash; the old course of the river runs approximately 7km to the east of the site. By the mid 2nd century AD a direct route to the northern markets was accessible by a canal system which linked the rivers of the fen edge with the Humber (Videotext Communications 2006, 3).

Settlement

- 1.3.5 A small fort called *Durobrivae* was erected at Water Newton, five miles north-west of Stilton, to guard the crossing point of Ermine Street and the River Nene. A second fort was identified following excavations in 1961 at Longthorpe, approximately five miles north of Stilton. The excavations revealed a fort dating to c. AD 50-65 (Videotext Communications 2006, 3).
- 1.3.6 The fort of *Durobrivae* grew as tradesmen and craftsmen supplied the Roman soldiers and travellers on Ermine Street and a *vicus* or small town grew around the fort. When the garrison withdrew from service to the north the military were replaced with a civil authority, with large scale colonisation and population growth occurring by the 2nd century AD. The growing population at *Durobrivae* provided a market for local industry and agriculture while the topography and geology provided ample opportunities to exploit the natural resources, this area being one of the most intensely farmed areas of Romano-British Britain (B. Robinson, *pers. comm.*).
- 1.3.7 During the Romano-British period the fen edges and areas of high ground within the fens were densely settled, with areas utilised for sheep grazing as well as arable farming and industrial activities such as salt production (B. Robinson, *pers. comm.*). Site B at Stilton would have been on the fen edges whereas Site A would have been situated on a fen island, higher than the surrounding area (Videotext Communications 2006, 4).

Pottery Industry

- 1.3.8 The Nene Valley was an area of continuous pottery production from before the Roman conquest, and there were a number of 1st to mid 2nd century AD potteries in existence. Around the mid 2nd century an important pottery industry specialising in colour-coated wares was established in the Lower Nene Valley, centred on *Durobrivae*. The Nene Valley potteries stretched westward towards Northamptonshire and along both banks of the river at *Durobrivae*, from Castor in the north to Chesterton to the south.

- 1.3.9 From the mid 2nd century onwards the Nene Valley potteries specialised in a variety of fine quality wares which reflected the presence of immigrant potters, perhaps from the Lower Rhineland, as some of the earliest colour-coated wares are very close in form, fabric, decoration and finish to prototypes from the Cologne/Rhineland region. From this period onwards the indigenous vessel forms and coarse greyware fabrics were produced alongside the fine table wares.
- 1.3.10 The establishment of the industry is likely to be connected to easily accessible natural resources, including a variety of clays and excellent transport links through the *cursus publicus* and the River Nene to the wider Roman landscape, while the ready market offered by *Durobrivae* must also have had a significant influence over the location of the potteries. The River Nene was the main form of transport for potters, bringing raw materials in, and taking finished products out. Many lesser potteries ran along the fen margins in the south and west (Videotext Communications 2006, 4; Swan 1984, 95).

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

- 1.4.1 Following the recovery of a quantity of 2nd and 3rd century pottery from a drainage channel near Stilton Dyke after it had been cleaned out by a farmer in 1983, the Nene Valley Research Committee carried out fieldwalking along a 100m long stretch of the drainage ditch and Dyke. Examination of the section of the ditch and Dyke revealed stratified Romano-British occupation layers sealed below c.1m of overlying alluvium. The finds recovered suggested an agricultural settlement, with evidence of a possible kiln in the vicinity in the form of wasters. The drain was further investigated in 1988 revealing a hearth and floor surface, and a number of kiln bars were recovered, indicating a kiln on the Site (Videotext Communications 2006, 4).
- 1.4.2 In 1992, a small excavation was undertaken to the west of Site B by students of Peterborough College, where a stone-lined cist containing two vessels (dated late 3rd to early 4th century) was identified, though no human remains were recovered. A cairn constructed over the body of an infant was also excavated.
- 1.4.3 In 2006 further sealed Romano-British layers were identified some 2m below the current ground surface at Site B, and the recovery of an almost complete Romano-British ceramic cheese press by a local resident of Stilton prompted the current programme of work.
- 1.4.4 At the same time at Site A a walk-over survey identified a number of Romano-British pottery sherds as well as material from a kiln superstructure, box flue tiles and *tegula* roofing tiles (Videotext Communications 2006, 6).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 A project design for the work was compiled by Videotext Communications (2006), providing full details of the research aims and methods. The aims of the project can be summarised as three simple questions:

- What is the extent and state of preservation of the archaeological remains?
- What was the function of the raised area at Site A?
- What is the chronology of the archaeological remains?

3 METHODS

3.1 Geophysical Survey

3.1.1 Prior to the excavation of evaluation trenches, a geophysical survey was carried out across the Site using a combination of resistance and magnetic survey. The survey grid was set out and tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid using a Trimble real time differential GPS system.

3.2 Landscape and Earthwork Survey

3.2.1 A landscape survey and analysis of the cartographic evidence was undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage. A summary of the findings are included here.

3.3 Field Walking

3.3.1 A field walking exercise (surface artefact collection) was carried out at Site A, undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council and led by Adrian Tindall (Head of Archaeology), Sarah Poppy (Historical Environmental Officer) and Philippa Walton (Finds Liaison Officer). The results of this survey are still being processed, and are not included here.

3.4 Evaluation Trenches

3.4.1 Six evaluation trenches of varying sizes were excavated after consultation between the on-site director Mick Aston and other specialists. Their precise locations were determined to investigate geophysical anomalies, or were positioned upon targets identified from cartographic analysis.

3.4.2 Trenches 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were positioned at Site A, and Trench 2 at Site B.

3.4.3 All trenches were machine excavated under constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the identification of significant archaeological remains, or where natural geology was encountered first. When machine excavation had ceased all trenches were cleaned by hand and archaeological deposits investigated.

- 3.4.4 The excavated up-cast was scanned by metal detector.
- 3.4.5 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Trenches were located using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. All archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:20 with sections drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum.
- 3.4.6 A full photographic record of the investigations and individual features was maintained, utilising colour transparencies, black and white negatives (on 35mm film) and digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeology revealed and the Site as a whole.
- 3.4.7 At the completion of the work, all trenches were reinstated using the excavated soil.
- 3.4.8 A unique site code (STIL 06) was agreed prior to the commencement of works. The work was carried out on the 6th-9th June 2006. The archive and all artefacts were subsequently transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury where they were processed and assessed for this report.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features, the full geophysical report (GSB 2006), the summary of the landscape and earthwork survey and details of artefactual and environmental assessments, are retained in the archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Geophysical Survey

- 4.2.1 Conditions for survey were good, the land being gently undulating and free from obstructions. Although low sugar beet stalks were present in Area 1, these did not significantly hinder data collection with either technique.

Magnetic Survey

Site A (Figure 2)

- 4.2.2 Anomaly (1) was a single discrete response, whose shape suggests an intact kiln, possibly with the flue or flues surviving. There are hints that it might lie at the corner of a broadly rectangular enclosure (anomalies (2) and (3)), but this interpretation is tentative. Excavation of (1) initially revealed only an area of intense burning which is unlikely to account solely for the magnetic response. Continued investigations uncovered parts of an intact kiln of tile/brick construction, of Roman date.
- 4.2.3 A second possible kiln-type response was located at (4). In addition, several stronger responses can be identified which may reflect associated activity. A

rectilinear ditch type anomaly is visible at (5); the magnitude of this response indicates a ditch filled with highly enhanced material, such as would be expected from a kiln site. There is an apparent break in the western arm of (5), but because of its position close to the grid/field edge, its significance remains uncertain. The northern arm of (5) becomes increasingly weaker and indistinct; anomaly (6) might indicate an eastern arm of the feature, forming part of a rectangular enclosure, but this interpretation is tentative. A trench placed over (4) revealed human skeletal remains overlying a kiln (the bodies will have produced no magnetic signal) while anomaly (5) was confirmed as a ditch.

- 4.2.4 South of (5), part of a second possible enclosure ditch (7) can be seen, although the responses are slightly less coherent. It is on a different alignment to (5)/(6) and may cross the latter, although at this point the anomalies are on the grid edge, making it difficult to assess any relationship between the two. Within (7) there is a general increase in the levels of background magnetic response and a number of truncated ditch and pit type anomalies have been highlighted which are probably archaeological (given the wider context), but whose precise function remains unclear.
- 4.2.5 Anomaly (8) has a form and magnitude suggesting an industrial feature such as a kiln, and as with (4) above, it is located adjacent to a strong rectilinear anomaly (9), suggesting a ditch filled with industrial waste. Anomaly (10) continues the rectilinear pattern and may represent the same feature, possibly part of a large rectangular enclosure.
- 4.2.6 The responses at (11), although strong, are not typical of an industrial feature - they are several orders of magnitude weaker than those recorded at (1), (4) and (8). However, the shape of the responses - a circle approximately 10m in diameter with a central 'pit' - clearly indicates an archaeological feature and warranted further investigation. Excavation revealed a kiln constructed of burnt stone rather than brick/tile and this accounts for the comparatively reduced magnetic response.
- 4.2.7 Linear anomaly (12) extends roughly east-west across the entire survey area. The magnitude of the response varies along its length; the further from the core of industrial activity, the weaker the magnetic response, indicating a difference in the ditch fill. A number of anomalies extend from (12) to the south, forming a pattern of rectilinear and curving enclosures, that could indicate settlement plots. A modern public footpath follows the line of (12) and it is possible that this Right of Way has its origins in antiquity.
- 4.2.8 The area to the north-west of (12) was magnetically quiet with few clear archaeological type anomalies detected. The faint anomalies at (13) and (14) may be of interest as they are on the same alignment as (12) and could represent associated (albeit peripheral) features. Several parallel trends have been highlighted but these are likely to reflect modern cultivation. The data to the southwest of (12) and its associated enclosures are also magnetically quiet. Although a few pit type anomalies and trends have been highlighted, they are difficult to define and interpret with any degree of certainty. Many of the trends could be the product of more recent agricultural activity.

- 4.2.9 Evidence of another phase of occupation at the site is provided by responses (15) and (16). The former is a short ditch type anomaly whose strength is attributed to the fact that it crosses the possible industrial feature (8) noted above. Anomalies (16) comprise narrow bands of magnetically ‘quiet’ (or possibly even slightly negative) responses. Together these form a roughly oval or egg-shaped enclosure with axes measuring 100m and 80m. Most of the area within the oval is dominated by the strong industrial and ditch type anomalies discussed above; however in the north-western quadrant, the level of magnetic response is reduced and a number of weak trends and pit type anomalies can be seen which might indicate features associated with the oval enclosure. Excavations confirmed the presence of a ditch and suggested a post-Roman, possibly Anglo-Saxon date for this feature, in which case some of the aforementioned weaker anomalies could be evidence for a post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon settlement.
- 4.2.10 Two roughly parallel truncated linear anomalies (17) and (18) extend northwards from (15). Again, the strength of the response is attributed to their relative proximity to industrial features. They could reflect ditches appended to the oval enclosure; however, there are hints that the responses extend across this feature. Anomaly 17 may continue as faint trends (?17) possibly forming part of a large enclosure to the north. The possible continuation of (18) is less clear; it may be represented by a short linear (?18a) or a barely discernible trend (?18b). The highly indistinct nature of these responses makes this interpretation tentative.
- 4.2.11 Several small scale ferrous anomalies or ‘iron spikes’ are scattered throughout the area. These are typical of small pieces of iron or other strongly magnetic debris buried in the topsoil and are usually assigned a modern origin. Given the wider archaeological context, in this case it is possible that some of these anomalies reflect pieces of unstratified iron, brick or other fired material of greater antiquity.

Site B (Figure 7)

- 4.2.12 Two broad parallel linear anomalies have been detected extending across this area. They could be archaeological ditches, although the form of the response seems more suggestive of natural features. There are hints of further possible ditch or pit type responses extending from the western putative ditch. The limited size of the survey precludes any firm interpretation.

GPR Survey

Site A - West

- 4.2.13 Little is shown in the time-slices below a depth of 0.5m. The lack of deep responses is illustrated quite obviously in the radargrams, as is the lack of any obvious structural features. An area of increased response has been noted and lies in the approximate position of the kiln structure, but it is nothing more than a spread of increased reflectivity. The most apparent features are those induced by agricultural intervention.

Site A - East

- 4.2.14 As with the western survey block, there is little to show in the time-slices of the kiln structures buried beneath. Again, ploughing striations are apparent and a relatively strong linear response is coincident with the magnetic ditch-type anomaly (5), discussed previously.

Site B

- 4.2.15 Within this area, GPR survey was limited to a small number of exploratory traverses in the bottom of the trench. The intention was to look for any structural remains, but the radargrams showed nothing.

4.3 Landscape and Earthwork Survey

- 4.3.1 Examination of the geological mapping, aerial photography and ground contours gave clear indications that the raised area was likely to have been surrounded by water or boggy ground from prehistory until the draining of Holme Fen in the 18th century. Its isolation as an island on the fen edge was probably reinforced by the bifurcation of a stream course running from the west into Holme Fen to the north and south of the slightly higher ground.
- 4.3.2 This stream has been straightened as a drainage ditch as part of the reclamation of the fen, but its original course and the fen edge particularly to the north can be traced on aerial photography and 19th century OS maps. The single stream west of the raised area was originally formed by two streams, one flowing east to west through Stilton, and one to the north of Stilton which forms the parish boundary. It was at the confluence of these streams where the pottery concentration at Site B was located. As the fens began to respond to changing sea levels further east, the slowing of the flows at this confluence and through the narrow channels either side of the island would have caused the fairly rapid sedimentation observed in the excavations.
- 4.3.3 During the helicopter flight during the programme, crop marks of what appeared to be a complex of fields and enclosures was observed at NGR 516800 290300. These appeared to indicate a late prehistoric or Romano-British farmstead located on the fen margin to the north of Site A.
- 4.3.4 Examination of aerial photography also indicates the ploughed-out remains of a road and Roman enclosures continuing the line of Fen Street in Stilton (a continuation of the now truncated arm of the crossroads). Although 19th century maps show this road taking a dramatic turn to the south, it clearly had continued on in antiquity to the fen edge. That the road and the plots are early in date is indicated by the fact that the plots are over-ploughed by medieval ridge and furrow. This ladder-like type of settlement along a roadside is paralleled at a number of other sites during the Roman period.
- 4.3.5 A late 18th century map shows that the route continued into the medieval and later periods heading along the fen edge to the north-east toward Yaxley, although by the 19th century it had been abandoned. It is likely that this route took advantage of a narrowing of the channel south of the raised area (visible in the ground topography) to lead onto the island via a land bridge which at most would have only necessitated a small wooden bridge to cross wet

ground on this side. The Roman period kilns and structures on this island could thus have been linked directly to the ‘mainland’ and Ermine Street.

- 4.3.6 Alignments visible in the geophysical survey indicate that a road or boundaries also head from this island toward the newly discovered crop-marked site to the north-west (centred on NGR 516800 290300), suggesting that during the Roman period the island was linked to a complex of fen-edge settlements close to Ermine Street. The proximity of the fen edge at Stilton along the arterial Roman road, together with a network of small farms and pottery kilns, would suggest that the origins of Stilton lie in a small roadside cluster-settlement focussing at the crossroads. This would have made an ideal economic base for distribution of products either by water or by road. It would have also provided access to the resources of the fens such as fish, reeds and peat.
- 4.3.7 As the fen edge silted up after the Roman period, the island would have retained its identity as a separate area possibly surrounded by bog and reeds, making it seem remote and inhospitable. This would have made it an ideal place to establish a hermitage or small monastic cell in the post-Roman/Saxon period.
- 4.3.8 No archaeological earthworks were observed at either location.

4.4 Evaluation Trenches

Site A

Trench 1 (Figures 2 & 3)

- 4.4.1 Trench 1 was targeted upon an area of high magnetic response identified in the geophysical survey as anomaly (1).
- 4.4.2 Following the removal of plough soil (101), subsoil (187) was identified. This sealed (102), which in turn overlay *in situ* archaeology. Pottery recovered from (102) dated broadly from the early/mid 2nd century AD to the end of the Roman period. The *in situ* stratified archaeology included features spanning a similar date range, but it is possible that some of the recovered material is residual and that features range in date from the Romano-British period to post-Roman and possibly Anglo-Saxon. Some features cut through abandonment levels of the Romano-British period and were clearly stratigraphically later. These later features show a clear re-orientation within the landscape when compared to the earlier features, identifying a distinct period of abandonment and realignment at a later date.
- 4.4.3 The earliest identifiable archaeology within Trench 1 comprised deposit (142/185) which overlay the natural geology (181). This deposit was potentially an old subsoil layer or occupation deposit. It contained a sherd of Nene Valley colour-coated ware (late 2nd century AD or later), and a number of sherds from the later Roman period. The layer was cut through by the construction cut for kiln Group (190).

- 4.4.4 The kiln had been sunk into the ground and was observed in a small sondage excavated through a large spread of highly fired red clay (132). The kiln was not completely revealed, and so the form and dimensions of the structure could not be ascertained. The kiln structure (182) was formed of tiles, and was recorded as seven courses with fired clay bonding. The wall of the kiln was straight, with no curve.
- 4.4.5 The internal structures within the kiln were also partly revealed in the small sondage. Two internal supports (183) and (184) were constructed in an identical manner to, and aligned with, outer wall (182). These were interpreted as supports for holding kiln bars in place or perhaps for tiles to be placed directly upon the supports for firing. Following its final firing, the kiln had apparently been cleaned out before abandonment, as no tiles remained within the furnace chamber.
- 4.4.6 The structure (190) was initially interpreted as a tile kiln rather than a pottery kiln on the basis of the straight external wall, and because of large quantities of tiles recovered from overlying deposits. Pottery kilns, however, are not always circular or oval in shape; Claudian/early Flavian kilns of the 1st century AD can be rectangular (Swan 1984, 83-5) and examples of 2nd to 3rd century rectangular kilns are known, for example, at Colchester, Essex and Brampton, Norfolk (*ibid.*, fig. XIX, 95, 122).
- 4.4.7 Following the abandonment of the kiln it was deliberately backfilled with material derived from the superstructure. Deposit (180) consisted of compact fired clay, including pieces of kiln structure and many tile fragments, and directly overlay internal supports (183) and (184) and wall (182). The superstructure of the kiln would have been dismantled after every firing to allow access to the fired tiles within, which would therefore generate a great deal of fired clay material discarded in the vicinity of the kiln. Two sherds of shelly ware pottery were recovered from (180), broadly dating from the early/mid 2nd century onwards. Deposit (180) was sealed by (132), a deposit also derived from the superstructure material, but this had been heavily damaged by later activity and spread across the original ground surface; it contained a large quantity of tile fragments. Spread (132), which contained pottery dating to the same period as (180), masked all evidence of the underlying kiln except for the evidence of burning and the high magnetic response generated by the kiln. A second spread of kiln superstructure material (171) was identified to the south of (132). This was an isolated dump of material, probably evidence of an earlier dismantling of the superstructure.
- 4.4.8 After the abandonment of the kiln the nature of site changed with the establishment of a post-Romano-British settlement. Two post-hole alignments were identified which clearly post-dated the demolished kiln, as several post holes cut through the spread (132). The first alignment, Group (188), consisted of postholes (103), (105), (107), (109), (111), (113), (115), (119), (125), (136), (143), (145) and (147) and formed a rough right angle with a second alignment, Group (189), which consisted of (151), (153), (155), (157 and (159). A number of other post-holes were identified (post-

holes (121), (123), (127), (129), (134), (149), (161), (163), (165) and (167)), but these formed no discernible pattern.

- 4.4.9 The majority of the post-holes (24 out of 29) cut through the earliest layer (142/185). Pottery recovered from a number of the post-holes was dated to the early/mid 2nd century onwards, but might be viewed as residual.
- 4.4.10 It is unclear whether post-hole alignments (188) and (189) form part of a post-built building or were simple fence-lines acting as land divisions or stock enclosures. There is no definitive evidence either way, but from the identification of charcoal-rich deposits concentrated within the confines of the post-hole alignments, it is possible that a post-built structure existed on the site.
- 4.4.11 Two distinct deposits were identified which appeared to be confined within the alignments; spread (133) was overlain by charcoal-rich deposit (131). The nature of these two deposits suggests activity within a structure, of a domestic rather than industrial nature. It would therefore appear that the post-built structure was constructed and occupied, with further post-holes being dug later. Deposit (133) produced pottery dating to the early/mid 2nd century onwards while (131) contained a number of sherds of grog-tempered pottery potentially dating to the 1st century AD, but these are presumably residual.
- 4.4.12 To the south of the possible post-built structure was a curving ditch (172). This ditch was identified through the geophysical survey (**Figure 2**: anomaly 16) and formed an oval enclosure encompassing the top of the raised area of land that represents Site A. Ditch (172) was identified in Trench 5 as (504) and in Trench 6 as (602). The ditch had straight sides and a flat base. It contained two fills; the lower (174) represented natural silting and showed possible evidence of localised flooding, with waterborne material deposited over some period of time resulting in a homogenous fill. The upper fill (173) indicated deliberate infilling through agriculture, potentially evidence of medieval ploughing. The ditch cut through (185), a natural colluvium deposit which overlay (142/182) towards the south of Trench 1.
- 4.4.13 The enclosure ditch encompassed the highest point of the fen island, and was clearly stratigraphically later than the Romano-British features. It therefore belonged to a period of occupation sometime after the abandonment of the kilns and the other structures, possibly post-Roman, although no dating evidence for this was recovered.

Trench 3 (Figures 2 & 4)

- 4.4.14 Trench 3 was positioned to investigate geophysical anomaly 4. The removal of ploughsoil (301), which contained pottery broadly dating to the early/mid 2nd century onwards and fragments of organic tempered kiln bars, revealed *in situ* archaeological deposits and features, including two inhumation burials.
- 4.4.15 The earliest structure identified was a possible kiln, Group (321), although its function and form is not fully understood. It was revealed in small sondage excavated through a thick demolition deposit of rubble and mortar (316).

Wall (312), roughly north-south aligned and curving to the north-east had been deliberately sunk into the ground within construction cut (317). The wall was constructed of roughly worked limestone blocks extracted from the local cornbrash geology and bonded with fired clay.

- 4.4.16 Wall (312) was associated with a compact limestone mortar floor (320) which butted up against, and sloped away from (312). The function of this structure is unclear, but the high magnetic response identified in the geophysical survey shows that the feature was subject to high temperatures, and this could be seen in the fired clay bonding of the wall.
- 4.4.17 Structure (321) underwent a change in function with the addition of wall (319), which overlay floor (320) and butted the eastern side of (312). Wall (319) was constructed of cornbrash limestone in a distinctive herring-bone style. This structure was no longer subjected to high temperatures as the clay bonding in (319) showed no evidence of being heat-affected.
- 4.4.18 Following the abandonment of the structure it was backfilled with deposits (313) and (314/315) which contained sherds of Central Gaulish samian (mid 2nd century) and Nene Valley colour-coated wares of the same period. These deposits were then sealed with what appeared to be wall collapse (316). Nene Valley colour-coated pottery (AD150 onwards) and several fragments of human bone were recovered from demolition deposits (313) and (316), suggesting that burial may have occurred here before the demolition, although this may be the result of subsequent ploughing of the graves (see below) and the corresponding mixing of deposits.
- 4.4.19 This period of demolition was potentially associated with ditch cut (305) identified to the west of spread (316). The ditch was filled with (306) limestone rubble, (307) mortar dump and (318). Fill (306) contained pottery dating from the mid 2nd century onwards and fragments of kiln bars. The feature was initially though thought to be the remains of a demolished wall, perhaps part of a larger building in which structure (321) was housed, although it appears it was actually part of the surrounding enclosure ditch. Ditch (305) was identified in the geophysical survey as anomaly (5), part of a rectangular enclosure.
- 4.4.20 Following the demolition, two inhumation burials, (302) and (308), were dug into demolition layer (316) and layer (322) respectively. Both graves were east-west aligned with heads to the west, and had suffered extensive damage through agriculture. During post-excavation analysis it became clear that there had been a minimum of five but potentially up to seven inhumations within Trench 3. Grave (302) contained individual (304) an adult female *c.* 25-29 years of age. Grave (308) contained an infant (310) *c.* 3-4 years old and a neonate (310a) *c.* 1 week old, and the potentially re-deposited remains of a second neonate (310b) were also recovered from Grave (308). Redeposited human remains were also recovered from demolition deposits (313) and (316), comprising fragments of a full term foetus and an adult and neonate respectively.

- 4.4.21 The burials certainly post-dated the Romano-British industrial activity on site although both contained residual pottery of the 2nd century or later and fragments of kiln bars from pottery production. Grave (302) yielded a coin dating to AD 337-50, which may also be residual. The graves potentially belong to the period when the large oval enclosure ditch was dug and a possible small settlement occupied on the fen island.

Trench 4 (Figures 2 & 5)

- 4.4.22 Trench 4 was positioned to investigate geophysical anomaly 11. Following the removal of ploughsoil (401), containing late 3rd to 4th century pottery, *in situ* archaeological deposits and features were identified. An arbitrary cleaning layer (402) was assigned as the underlying archaeology was exposed. Layer (402) contained potentially locally produced 2nd century pottery. The earliest deposit identified was (420), a possible occupation layer through which all archaeological features had been cut.
- 4.4.23 A third kiln was exposed and was recorded as Group (421). The kiln was sunk into deposit (420) within construction cut (405), but only the furnace chamber of the kiln was uncovered. This was tear-drop shaped, with the stoke-hole and flue believed to be at the north-western end.
- 4.4.24 The construction cut had been lined with irregular shaped limestone blocks (406) bonded with fired clay; a layer of clay (419) had then been applied to the internal structure and fired to form a smooth internal finish. Positioned on the base and roughly centrally within the furnace chamber was a free standing, roughly circular pedestal (418), which had also been coated with (419). The pedestal would have held kiln bars, which would have radiated around the structure to support pottery vessels and to allow hot air to circulate during the firing process. Examples of this form of kiln are known from the Lower Nene Valley (Swan 1984, 71, 96, fig. 11).
- 4.4.25 After the final firing of the kiln, it had been raked out and the kiln bars removed; no ash was recovered from the base and no clear kiln bar debris recovered from the backfill deposits. A few fragments of organically tempered fired clay were recovered from the backfill deposits, but these are ambiguous and if they were in fact kiln furniture no direct parallels can be found.
- 4.4.26 The kiln had been deliberately backfilled, with the earliest deposit (408) probably derived from old kiln superstructure which had been dismantled and discarded. Pottery recovered from (408) dated from AD150 onwards. Overlying (408) was (409), a grey silty deposit which contained ashy material, potentially from earlier rake-outs. Overlying (409) was (417), a silty clay of unknown origin and the final backfill deposit was (407), also derived from earlier kiln superstructures and containing early/mid 2nd century AD pottery.
- 4.4.27 To the south of kiln (421) were inter-cutting ditches which appear to have formed an enclosure around the kiln, creating a working area. Two earlier ditches, (410) and (413), were clearly replaced by a later and larger ditch (403).

4.4.28 Ditch (413) cut (420) and was filled with (414), which appears to represent natural silting. Ditch (410) was filled with (411), a mixture of deliberate and natural infilling, overlain by (412), a natural silting deposit. Post-hole (415) was uncovered at the base of (410), but it is unclear if it pre- or post-dated the ditch. These two ditches were replaced by ditch (403), which was filled with homogenous layer (404), a mixture of natural silting and deliberate backfilling. Layer (404) contained one sherd belonging to a pottery vessel in the local 'Romano-Saxon' tradition, dating from *c.* AD 240 to the end of the Roman period. The three inter-cutting ditches were seen from the geophysical survey to create an enclosure with the kiln located within it.

Trench 5 (Figures 2 & 6)

4.4.29 Trench 5 was targeted upon geophysical results and positioned to investigate the oval enclosure ditch (anomaly 16) which encompasses the top of the fen island, the continuation of ditch (172) identified in Trench 1.

4.4.30 The ditch, (504), was sealed by the ploughsoil (501). It had shallow concave sides and a concave base, a very different profile to ditch (172). It was filled with (503) a potential primary fill, the result of the initial excavation of the ditch and erosion of the feature edges soon after. This was overlain by (502) a mixture of natural silting and deliberate infilling, which contained undiagnostic Roman pottery.

Trench 6 (Figures 2 & 6)

4.4.31 Trench 6 was positioned to investigate the relationship between two geophysical anomalies - anomaly (16), the continuation of the oval curving ditch identified as (172) in Trench 1 and (504) in Trench 5, and a feature (anomaly 12), perhaps earlier, part of a possible ribbon settlement, or alignment of track-ways, which may relate to the Romano-British kiln structures and features already identified.

4.4.32 Archaeology was revealed under the ploughsoil (601), but no further excavation took place. The presumed earliest ditch (604) (corresponding to anomaly 12) was identified and cut layers (608) and (609). The upper fill (605) was cut through by (602), the continuation of (172) and (504) (anomaly 16); the upper fill was recorded as (603).

4.4.33 In the south-east corner of Trench 6 was stony deposit (606). Its stratigraphical relationship to the other features in Trench 6 is unknown, but it contained grog-tempered pottery of a Late Iron Age/early Romano-British ceramic tradition, and was the only area on site to produce only this material, unassociated with later material.

Site B

Trench 2 (Figure 7)

4.4.34 Trench 2 was positioned to investigate the Romano-British layers sealed beneath nearly 2m of alluvial deposits, which had been identified within Stilton Dyke.

4.4.35 The archaeology was sealed by several layers of alluvium and material build up: ploughsoil (201) and, in order, layers (202), (203), (204) and (205).

These repeated layers of alluvial silts overlay an arbitrary cleaning layer (206). Pottery recovered from the overlying deposits dated broadly from the mid 2nd to 5th centuries, and included Central Gaulish samian and oxidised wares possibly from the *Verulamium* region (Hertfordshire).

- 4.4.36 It was decided on-site that these deposits should be preserved *in situ* and so following the hand cleaning of the deposits no further excavation took place.
- 4.4.37 A number of archaeological layers were identified, which were interpreted as areas of trample and occupation debris, e.g. (208) and (209). Layer (207), another possible occupation layer, contained a variety of Roman-British pottery sherds including Nene Valley creamware, colour-coated ware and greyware. (211) was an earlier alluvial deposit below the occupation layers. Two possible cut features were identified - (210), a pit or post-hole, and (212), a possible foundation trench for a robbed out wall. Deposits (209) and (211) had several large iron nails pressed into the surface. These were identified as boat nails. The waterlogged nature of the deposits may be due to this area being flooded in the Roman-British period, but still utilised, perhaps as a wharf area before it became un-navigable by boat.

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Finds were recovered from all six of the trenches excavated, although only minimal quantities were recovered from Trenches 5 and 6. The assemblage is largely Romano-British in date, and relates to a pottery- and tile-making site. There is also a small amount of prehistoric and post-medieval material.
- 5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and totals by material type and by trench are presented in **Table 1**. Subsequent to quantification, all finds have been at least visually scanned in order to gain an overall idea of the range of types present, their condition, and their potential date range. Spot dates have been recorded for selected material types as appropriate (pottery, ceramic building material, glass). All finds data are currently held on an Access database.
- 5.1.3 This section presents an overview of the finds assemblage, on which is based an assessment of the potential of this assemblage to contribute to an understanding of the site in its local and regional context, with particular reference to the evidence for pottery and tile manufacture on the site, and the use of the site in the post-Roman period.

5.2 Pottery

- 5.2.1 The pottery assemblage is entirely of Romano-British date. Overall, the sherds survive in moderately good condition although the average sherd weight (21g) is artificially raised by the presence of numerous large, thick-walled sherds, especially from Trench 4.

- 5.2.2 The whole assemblage has been quantified by broad ware type within each context, and the presence of diagnostic sherds noted. Pottery totals by ware type are given in **Table 2**.

Continental and regional imports

- 5.2.3 The only Continental import is Central Gaulish samian, comprising pieces from a form 33 cup, a form 36 dish, a form 31 bowl as well as two vessels in the 18/31 series, all likely to be of 2nd century AD date, while regional imports are restricted to a single piece from a late Roman Oxfordshire colour-coated ware bowl. The two joining pieces of mica-dusted ware are from a bag-shaped beaker; while not common in this area, this fabric type has also been found at Caldecote, Bedfordshire (Slowikowski and Dawson 1993) and Normangate Field, Peterborough (Perrin and Webster 1990, 41). Amphorae are completely absent, perhaps a reflection of site function and/or status, while mortaria too are restricted to local products – although the three unassigned sherds are all in an unusual, slightly sandy fabric fired to a bright orange colour, the use of angular ironstone trituration grits suggest that these too are of local origin.

Local wares

- 5.2.4 The remainder of the assemblage consists of local wares predominantly spanning the period between the early/mid 2nd century AD and the end of the Roman period, although some of the grog-tempered wares and a few of the sandy coarseware sherds may be of 1st century AD date. In only one instance, however, the stony deposit (606) in the south-eastern corner of Trench 6, do these Late Iron Age/early Roman type sherds occur alone, without associated material of later date.
- 5.2.5 In addition to the distinctive Nene Valley grey, colour-coated and cream fabrics, many of the oxidised and reduced sandy wares may also have been made locally although alternative sources include kilns to the north and east of Cambridge (Hull and Pullinger 1999, 41, fig.VII.1), Caldecote (Slowikowski and Dawson 1993) and centres higher up the Nene Valley.
- 5.2.6 Most of the vessel forms are well paralleled locally (Perrin and Webster 1990; Dannel *et al.* 1999), but two bead rims from small, tubby, wheel-made jars with convex sides, both in sandy fabrics, are more unusual. One has a pre-firing perforation through the wall at about the point of greatest girth, although it is uncertain whether this took a handle or was functionally specific. Both were from Trench 4 - the ploughsoil and ditch (403).
- 5.2.7 All the fine flint with sand tempered sherds were from large, thick-walled storage jar forms which are unlikely to have been transported long distances. These sherds were found only in Trench 4.

Kiln wares

- 5.2.8 There is comparatively little evidence from the pottery itself to suggest which fabrics were being produced in the kilns investigated. Two groups of Nene Valley colour-coated ware sherds do show some indications of being 'seconds' (31 pieces including sherds from a narrow-necked flagon/jug with a triangular rim and a strap handle, in a soft-fired, orange fabric with a thin

brownish colour-coat from layer (207) and a group of soft-fired body sherds from demolition layer (313)) but none of the pieces show the usual signs of severe under- or over- firing generally associated with kiln waste.

- 5.2.9 By sheer weight of numbers, the most likely kiln products are the shell-tempered wares, representing 25%, 31%, 72% and 78% of the sherds from Trenches 1-4 respectively. Although commonly associated with the Jurassic Beds of the South Midlands, especially Harrold, Bedfordshire (Brown 1994), it is possible that these wares were also being made on other sites in the Nene Valley itself (Perrin and Webster 1990, 37). Although the Kellaways clay formation is relatively poorly fossiliferous, with only scattered bivalves and ammonites, shelly bands do occur within the overlying Kellaways sands, while the richly fossiliferous Lower Oxford Clay would also provide suitable raw materials for this fabric group (Chatwin 1961, 11).
- 5.2.10 Jar forms predominate, the smaller vessels with upright necks and undercut rims, the bodies sometimes rilled. Large storage jars represented by rims and body sherds were especially numerous in Trench 4 – large bowls (or oven/hearth covers) with a variety of wedge-shaped rims (Perrin 1999, fig. 74, 502, 506-13) were also found in this area. One shoulder sherd from a large jar (ditch 403) is decorated with raised bosses, a characteristic feature of ‘Romano-Saxon’ pots in this area, dated from *c.* AD 240 to the end of the Roman period (Roberts 1982). Smaller open forms included dropped- and drooping- flanged bowls and shallow, plain rimmed dishes. It may also be significant that almost all the shelly ware sherds were oxidised although no firing defects were noted.

5.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

- 5.3.1 With the exception of a single piece of post-medieval roof tile, all of the CBM is of Romano-British date. The distinction between this material and the fired clay (see below) is often ambiguous, particularly since a high proportion of the CBM is quite highly abraded. This abrasion has reduced the number of fragments identifiable to specific CBM type, but roof tiles (*tegulae*, *imbrices*), bricks and one box flue tile were recognised, while the remainder can only be described as ‘miscellaneous flat fragments’ (probably roof tile) or ‘miscellaneous undiagnostic’. A number of fragments showed signs of having been subjected to high temperatures, in some cases to vitrification, consistent with a kiln environment. Most of the CBM came from Trench 1.

5.4 Fired Clay

- 5.4.1 The fired clay recovered is also likely to be of structural origin, and could have formed part of kiln linings or superstructure. Five items of kiln furniture, comprising four organic-tempered bars from Trench 3, and part of a shell-tempered disc from Trench 1, are also present.
- 5.4.2 Prefabricated clay bars are characteristic features of the Lower Nene Valley kilns (Swan 1984, figs. XI, XII, plate 31), and are also known from the production site at Harrold in Bedfordshire (Brown 1984, fig. 49).

5.4.3 Five further fragments, all from Trench 4 and all in shelly fabrics, are more ambiguous. Three of these are rim fragments from large, circular, slightly convex objects (the only measurable example suggests a diameter of c.400mm). The rims are quite deeply grooved to create a 'bifid' profile. If these are items of kiln furniture no direct parallels can be found; they could, however, be shallow dishes or lids (see Brown 1994, fig. 36, nos. 276-8). Two more fragments from Trench 4, also in shelly fabrics, could also be vessel fragments, but are irregular and do not conform to any known vessel forms.

5.4.4 The undiagnostic fragments are either in sandy fabrics or are heavily tempered with organic inclusions (probably straw). The largest groups came from Trenches 3 and 4.

5.5 Stone

5.5.1 The three pieces of stone recovered may represent building material, and include one piece of micaceous sandstone which could derive from a roof tile.

5.6 Struck Flint

5.6.1 Twenty-two pieces of struck flint were recovered from Trenches 1 (10 pieces), 4 (8), 5 (2) and 6 (2). Raw materials are of generally poor quality; thin worn cortex suggests a gravel source, and the small size of some of the cores together with the re-use of patinated pieces suggests that suitable material was not easily obtained. Condition is generally good, with most pieces fresh and unabraded.

5.6.2 Datable pieces fall into two groups. Most of the cores and some flakes and blade/lets are late Mesolithic/early Neolithic. These came primarily from Trenches 1 and 4 and include rejuvenation, trimming flakes and cores on flakes (one burnt). Knapping in the general area is suggested, particularly by a *flanc de nucléus* from a bladelet core and what is probably the worked-out core itself in ditch (403). One core on a flake is a typical single platform bladelet core; the others are more expedient, with two or more platforms, and probably represent the maximum possible use of available material. One core (irregular multi-platform), a piercer, a scraper (on a pot lid) and three flakes are probably Early Bronze Age. These came from Trenches 4 and 6. The remaining pieces are not chronologically distinctive, and probably belong to one of these two periods.

5.6.3 All pieces were recovered as residual finds in later features and layers, and indicate Mesolithic/early Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity in the vicinity.

5.7 Glass

5.7.1 The glass recovered is all of modern date, and comprises window and vessel glass, including one complete bottle embossed with the words WALTER GREGORY'S ETHYLENE FLUID FOR CATTLE.

5.8 Slag

- 5.8.1 A single piece of ironworking slag was recovered from Trench 1.

5.9 Coins

- 5.9.1 Seven coins were recovered. All seven are copper alloy coins of the Roman period, and date to the 4th century AD. In general, the condition of the coins is poor, with many showing signs of corrosion as well as wear. Some of the coins examined came from topsoil deposits on the site, recovered as part of a metal detecting exercise, whilst a small number were recovered from stratified deposits. All seven coins were recovered from Trenches 3 and 4.
- 5.9.2 Two were minted in the first half of the 4th century AD. Objects 5 (Trench 3 topsoil) and 22 (grave 302) are both *Gloria Exercitus* issues of the House of Constantine. Both are corroded, and may be contemporary copies. Contemporary copies of ‘official’ coinage may have been struck to compensate for gaps in supply of coinage to Britain and to supply sufficient small change for the provinces needs. It is unclear whether these copies were officially sanctioned, if at all, but they are not uncommon as site finds, and seem to have circulated in the same fashion as officially struck coins.
- 5.9.3 The remaining five coins are all issues struck by emperors of the House of Valentinian, between 364 and 378 AD. All are common types and in poor condition. These point to continued activity on the site well into the second half of the 4th century AD. The absence of any later issues need not necessarily indicate that activity on the site ceased at this date, as supplies of coins dating between AD 378 and 402 to Britain were fairly sporadic, and they are less likely to occur in small assemblages from sites.

5.10 Metalwork

- 5.10.1 Apart from coins, the metalwork includes items of iron, copper alloy and lead.

Iron

- 5.10.2 The ironwork includes nails, other possible structural items (a double-spiked loop; a possible tie-strip); tools (one large chisel, two small chisels or punches, one awl); two knives; a hook and a horseshoe. Other objects remain unidentified at this stage, or comprise sheet, plate or strip fragments of uncertain function. Apart from the horseshoe (post-medieval), the identifiable objects are not particularly chronologically distinctive, and approximately half derived from topsoil contexts in Trenches 1, 3 and 4, although many are assumed to be Romano-British. A small strip fragment from grave (308) may be a coffin fitting, as may a sheet/plate fragment from grave (302).

Copper alloy

- 5.10.3 Apart from coins, three other copper alloy objects were recovered – a perforated sheet, probably a binding or fitting, a buckle and belt-plate with

traces of white metal plating, probably post-medieval (Trench 4 topsoil), and a very abraded pin head, probably Romano-British (Trench 5 topsoil).

Lead

- 5.10.4 The lead consists largely of waste pieces and folded sheet fragments, probably offcuts. There is one ring, possibly a collar or binding (Trench 4 topsoil) and a lead sphere, potentially a fishing weight from post-hole (165).

Human Bone

Introduction

- 5.10.5 Human bone was recovered from five post-Romano-British contexts. No artefactual material was recovered with the remains which, other than having the aforementioned *terminus post-quem*, are undated.

Methods

- 5.10.6 The condition of the bone was recorded following McKinley (2004, fig. 6). Age was assessed from the stage of skeletal development (Bass 1987; Beek 1983; Scheuer and Black 2000) and the patterns and degree of age-related changes to the bone (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Sex was ascertained from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Metric data was recorded where possible (Brothwell and Zakrzewski 2004); stature was estimated in accordance with Trotter and Gleser (1952; 1958); indices were calculated according with Bass (1987, 214, 233). Non-metric traits were recorded (Berry and Berry 1967; Finnegan 1978).

Results

- 5.10.7 A summary of the results is presented in **Table 3**; details are held in the archive.
- 5.10.8 The bone is in variable, though generally good condition but is heavily fragmented with incomplete skeletal recovery (**Table 3**). Despite the 0.22m surviving depth of grave (302) there appears to have been some disturbance to the burial with mixing of the upper and lower limb bones. The same was observed in the shallower (0.11m) grave (308).
- 5.10.9 A minimum of five individuals are represented within the assemblage including one young adult female, one infant, two neonates and one full-term foetus/neonate. One of the neonates was recovered as the 'foot sample' from grave (308) containing the recognised *in situ* remains of an infant. It is possible – given the quantity and concentrated location of the bone - that this represents the remains of an *in situ* burial not recognised at the time of excavation due to the shallowness and disturbed nature of the burial remains. Parts of a second neonate were also recovered from the same sample. Most of the major bones of the full-term foetus were recovered from a demolition layer (313) and these may, again, represent the remains of an *in situ* articulated deposit unclear at the time of excavation due to the disturbed nature of the deposit.
- 5.10.10 The stature of the adult female was estimated at *c.* 1.62-1.76m (5' 3 ¾" – 5' 5 ¾").

- 5.10.11 Moderate to heavy calculus deposits (calcified plaque) was observed in both the deciduous dentition of the infant and the dentition of the young adult. This suggests a diet heavy in carbohydrates and poor levels of dental hygiene (Hillson 1990, 287). The extensive periosteal new bone observed on the tibia shaft of the neonate (310a) is indicative of an infection active at the time of death, possibly being the cause of it.
- 5.10.12 A horse mandible was recovered from burial (304), lying over the left shoulder of the individual. Its possible significance is discussed further below (see Animal Bone).

Comment

- 5.10.13 The presence of at least one Late Romano-British mortuary deposit (probably a cenotaph) has been recorded to the west of the site, together with a cairn overlying an (?undated) infant burial (Videotext Communications 2006). The recovery of a further five individuals, four of them neonates/infants, suggest the presence of a more extensive grave group in the area, possibly – given the lack of grave goods and number of neonates – following the Christian rite. That the cemetery was not exclusively devoted to young immature individuals is indicated by the presence of at least one adult. In the absence of firm dating evidence for these graves, radio-carbon dating of at least one of the contexts would be advantageous to our further understanding of the rite and help set the cemetery within its geographic and temporal context in the area.

5.11 Animal Bone

Introduction

- 5.11.1 A total of 151 hand collected animal bones derived from Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. Conjoining fragments that were demonstrably from the same bone were counted as one bone in order to minimise distortion, and therefore specimen counts (NISP) given here may differ from the absolute raw fragment counts in **Table 1**. There may also be some discrepancies when bone is fragile and may fragment further after initial quantification. No fragments were recorded as ‘medium mammal’ or ‘large mammal’; these were instead consigned to the unidentified category.

Condition and preservation

- 5.11.2 The overall condition of the bone is fair, with some bones in good and some bones in poor condition. Only two bones were gnawed indicating that canid savaging was not a significant biasing factor. Only one calcined bone was found in fill (174) of ditch (172).
- 5.11.3 The low number of loose teeth (7%) corresponds with the low number of mandibles and maxilla found. The absence of loose but matching epiphyses or articulating bones indicates that the assemblage is probably reworked.

Species proportions

- 5.11.4 The assemblage is dominated by cattle, followed by sheep/goat, and a small proportion of pig (**Table 4**).

- 5.11.5 Besides the remains of the usual domesticates, the assemblage contained the remains of horse (Trench 6 topsoil; grave 304), mallard/duck (horizon 102), pike (grave 302) and an unidentified bird (grave 302). The bone identified as ‘mallard/duck’ might derive from domestic duck or from a wild duck of the genera *Anas*.

Population characteristics

- 5.11.6 The high number of ageable bones, measurable bones and bones with butchery marks in the assemblage can provide information on husbandry practices and phenotype of the animals (**Table 5**). None of the bones showed signs of butchery. This is likely to be a result of the small sample size.
- 5.11.7 The horse bone from Trench 6 topsoil provided a height at the withers of 135 cm, indicating a rather small horse. A search on ABMAP (Animal Bone Metrical Archive Project) resulted in equally small horses ($GL \pm 5$ mm) from the late Roman Bancroft Villa at Wolverton, Buckinghamshire; Roman Barksbury, Hampshire; and Roman London.
- 5.11.8 It was noted that many of the cattle and sheep/goat bones derived from juvenile/sub adult animals.
- 5.11.9 The right dental of a large pike was found in grave (302). Pike live in clear vegetated lakes, quiet pools and backwaters of creeks and rivers. This example might have been caught in the nearby rivers or in one of the ponds/small lakes in the fens.
- 5.11.10 One half of a horse mandible, recovered from burial (304), may represent a placed deposit (i.e. grave good) made over the left shoulder of the deceased. The deliberate inclusion of horse remains in Romano-British burials is rare (Philpot 1991, 200-206), but at least two cases were recorded at Boscombe Down Sports Field Site, Wiltshire (R. Seager Smith *pers. comm.*).

5.12 Marine Shell

- 5.12.1 Three oyster shells were recovered, all right valves (i.e. preparation rather than consumption waste).

5.13 Potential and further recommendations

- 5.13.1 The most significant element of the finds assemblage relates to the use of Site A for pottery (and possibly tile) production. Although no definite ‘wasters’ were recovered, and the three kilns partially excavated appear to have been thoroughly cleared out after their final firing, the high proportion of shell-tempered pottery wares encountered suggests that these constituted the kiln products. Partial evidence for the kiln structures themselves was excavated *in situ*, while further evidence for the ceramic superstructures and internal kiln furniture was also recovered. Overall, the evidence is comparable with other kilns in the Lower Nene Valley.
- 5.13.2 Other pottery wares, and other datable material (coins) indicates a date range spanning the Roman period, although with relatively little which pre-dates

the 2nd century AD. The relative scarcity of pottery finewares, however, and the restricted dating of the coins in the 4th century AD, limits the potential of the finds assemblage for close dating, and many contexts are dated merely as 2nd century AD or later.

- 5.13.3 There is no definitive artefactual evidence for post-Roman activity, despite the stratigraphic evidence. ‘Late’ contexts contained only Romano-British pottery. The presence of a vessel in the ‘Romano-Saxon’ tradition should not be misleading here – this could date as early as the later 3rd century AD and is not necessarily post-Roman.
- 5.13.4 Further detailed analysis is unlikely to refine the stratigraphic dating significantly, but publication of the potential kiln wares (with supporting illustrations) would be a useful addition to the evidence for pottery production in the region.

6 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken, one from the back fill (409), comprising possible rakings from Romano-British kiln (421). The second came from a possible post-Roman ditch (172). The samples were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals.

6.2 Methods

Charred Plant Remains and Charcoals

- 6.2.1 Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the presence of charred remains quantified (**Table 6**). Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).
- 6.2.2 The flots were generally small, and while the kiln samples contained relatively few roots, that from the ditch comprised about 50% roots that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement, reworking or the degree of contamination by later intrusive elements.

6.3 Results

Charred plant remains

- 6.3.1 The sample from the kiln contained some 20+ monocot root stems (grasses, rushes and sedges) and a single grass tuber. In terms of seeds of wild species the sample contained two of Brassicaceae (*Capsella* type), and single seeds of orache (*Atriplex* sp.), grass pea (*Lathyrus* sp.), great fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), clover (*Trifolium* sp.). In terms of cereal remains the only finds were a single grain of barley and a glume base of hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*).

- 6.3.2 In addition fragments of kiln lining were examined from context 409 which could be clearly seen to contain fragments of straw and possibly grass stems.
- 6.3.3 The sample from ditch 172 contained ten seeds of stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*). Some of the seeds were joined and it is possible that originally the seeds all come from the charring of a single seedhead. The sample also contained a single grain of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* sl), and one unidentified seed. Three silicified seeds of duckweed (*Lemna* sp.) were also recovered.
- 6.3.4 The samples from the kiln are of some interest in that they seem to indicate the use of grasses, and perhaps sedges, within the fuel of the kiln. While a single seed of fen sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) was recovered none of the distinctive saw-toothed stems were seen, although such fragile remains are often easily destroyed by charring. The significance of this species is that it was commonly harvested for use in ovens and kilns in historical times. The single glume base and barley grain is in keeping with the cultivation of spelt and to a lesser extent emmer and barley within the region during the Romano-British period (Stevens 1996; Murphy 1997; Monckton 1998), but otherwise there is little indication in the sample of the cultivation and processing of cereals.
- 6.3.5 The possible post-Roman sample from ditch (172) also showed little evidence of settlement or of cereal cultivation and processing other than the single grain of barley and seeds of stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*). Stinking mayweed is a weed of heavy clay soils and while it first appeared in the Romano-British period, it is during the Saxon and medieval period that it gained increased prominence (Greig 1991), when the introduction of heavier mouldboard ploughs facilitated the cultivation of previously unworked soils (Stevens with Robinson 2004). Duckweed is a common weed of ditches that contain standing water for at least some of the year.

Charcoal

- 6.3.6 Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 6**. The kiln 421 produced very little charcoal or evidence for fuel, although some small fragments of twig type wood were present. Ditch 172 was richer in wood charcoal, although no twig or round wood was seen.

Land molluscs

- 6.3.7 During the processing of bulk soil samples for the recovery of charred remains, shells of snails were noted, and recorded (**Table 6**) following the nomenclature according to Kerney (1999). No snails were seen in the ditch sample. The kiln did produce some shells of *Vallonia* sp., as well as single shells of *Carychium* sp. and one of *Cochlicopa* sp.

6.4 Potential and further recommendations

Charred plant remains

- 6.4.1 The charred plant remains have some potential to examine the use of fuel within the kiln, although as the material is re-deposited it may not directly

relate to the kiln's use. Given the small amount of material, further analysis has little further potential.

Charcoal

- 6.4.2 There is little potential for analysis and the selection of fuel given the small amount of material available, and there is some ambiguity whether the charcoal present relates to the kiln. The charcoal from the ditch sample may be related to the selection of wood for fuel, or to discrete burning events of perhaps the clearance of scrub around the ditch. Given the small amount of material and the uncertainty of the relationship between the charred material and the ditch there is little further potential.

Land molluscs

- 6.4.3 Land snails have the potential to examine the local environment around the kiln during its infilling. However, given the small number of shells there is little further potential.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 This programme of works was largely successful in identifying the date, character, condition and extent of the underlying archaeology of the land to the east of Stilton. At Site B large scale natural changes in the landscape contributed to the abandonment of and subsequent sealing and protection of the occupation areas identified in Trench 2.

7.2 Pre-Roman activity

- 7.2.1 The earliest activity identified at Site A dated to the Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic (*c.* 4000BC) from the recovery of diagnostic flint flakes and cores suggestive of knapping in the general area. This prehistoric activity continued with the evidence of a number of flakes from the Early Bronze Age (*c.* 2400-1500 BC). All prehistoric material was residual within later features.

7.3 The Roman period

- 7.3.1 The earliest pottery identified belongs to a late Iron Age/early Roman tradition which was current in the area prior to the increase in pottery production from the mid 2nd century AD. Datable pottery from Site A identifies that the earliest identifiable structures and features on the Site date from the middle of the 2nd century AD. This date correlates with the known population increase which occurs at *Durobrivae* and the establishment of the Lower Nene Valley potteries. The establishment of an industrial centre producing pottery and tiles at Site A could have been designed to exploit the new demand from *Durobrivae* and the wider area through the excellent trade links and communication routes provided by the *cursus publicus* and the navigable waterways.

- 7.3.2 Due to the evidence of continued activity and occupation of the fen island after the demise of the industrial activity there, a thorough investigation into

earlier features and structures could not be achieved. However, the evaluation was sufficient to show that the preservation of the underlying archaeology of the early periods was good as it had been sealed by later deposits and features, which unfortunately had not fared as well due to the impact of agriculture.

The kilns: pottery and tile production?

7.3.3 Three probable kiln structures were identified, of which one (in Trench 4) was certainly a pottery kiln, and one (in Trench 1) could have been a tile kiln. The kiln exposed in Trench 1 showed evidence of numerous firings from the sheer amount of dismantled superstructure debris spread across the trench, and the extent of the heating which had occurred within the kiln itself. This structure was initially interpreted as a tile kiln because of its apparently rectangular shape, and the amount of tile fragments recovered from overlying deposits. Rectangular tile kilns are known from a number of sites across Britain including the Roman fort at Caersws, Montgomeryshire, Wales and Holt near the Roman fort of *Deva* (Chester) (<http://www.cpat.org.uk/cpat/past/roman/roman.htm>). The pottery kilns of the Nene Valley industry have a tendency to be circular, oval or tear-drop shaped such as the kiln exposed in Trench 4, but rectangular pottery kilns are known from elsewhere (Swan 1984, 83-85, 92, 95, fig. XIX; R. Perrin *pers. comm.*).

7.3.4 It is unclear whether the kiln at Stilton was producing tiles for a particular market, such as *Durobrivae* and the wider Roman landscape, or for use in construction closer to the site. The geophysical survey showed a series of anomalies which could be interpreted as building structures, and it is possible that the kilns were only serving the buildings on the fen island itself. It is clear from the recovered material that roofing material, both *tegulae* and *imbrices*, bricks tiles and box flue tiles were being produced, but it is unclear where they were destined for.

7.3.5 The nature of the possible kiln identified in Trench 3 is uncertain. However it was clear that the feature underwent changes from the original design with the addition of a wall which appeared to seal off an area of the structure, and this seems to have corresponded to a change of use, with no subsequent evidence of subjection to high temperatures.

7.3.6 The kiln within Trench 4 was clearly a pottery kiln with a central free standing pedestal almost identical to other Nene Valley kilns excavated (Swan 1984, figs. XI & XII). In the absence of pottery which could be directly associated with the final firing, it is assumed, on the grounds of sheer quantity, that coarse shelly wares were being produced here, although the recovery of a few sherds of Nene Valley colour-coated ware 'seconds' are suggestive. Only a broad date range for the pottery and thus the life of the kiln can be given, from early/mid 2nd century to the end of the Roman period.

The settlement and its demise

7.3.7 The landscape study and the geophysical survey showed that the kilns formed part of a larger settlement to the north of the raised area of Site A, forming a ladder like settlement of lanes and enclosures orientated on a road

with the same alignment as Fen Street or the Fen Causeway, a road branch off Ermine Street just north of *Durobrivae* leading to Denver in East Anglia. The settlement was therefore well positioned, with roads and waterways linked to the major communication routes in Britain, for trade and the transport of materials, both manufactured but also raw materials.

- 7.3.8 Following the change in sea level to the east, the waterways would have been unnavigable and the area became prone to flooding. The evidence of a possible wharf at Site B, sealed by layers of alluvium, shows the effect of the changes in sea level and how such natural events could have forced the abandonment of the site, part of a wider retreat westwards and off the fens.

The post-Roman period: a possible hermitage?

- 7.3.9 Changes in sea level contributed to the abandonment of both Site A and Site B. At Site A it became increasingly difficult to access the fen island, but as the silting continued the inhospitable nature of the fen island could have provided a potentially ideal place for the location of a post-Roman hermitage or monastic cell. As the fen island became more isolated it would have been perfectly positioned for those wishing to seek an ascetic life, with the large oval enclosure ditch perhaps representing both a physical boundary but also a spiritual one separating a hermitage from the secular world outside.

- 7.3.10 No clear evidence of structures or features at this period was uncovered, and the size and scale of the later settlement is unknown. The surrounding enclosure ditch clearly cut through a ditch associated with the Romano-British ladder settlement, and therefore clearly post-dates it; Romano-British pottery found in the ditch, the only dating evidence, could be viewed as residual. Environmental samples taken from the enclosure ditch produced seeds of stinking mayweed, a weed which favours heavy clay soils, and which gained increased prominence during the Saxon period. Overall, the evidence is very limited and ambiguous, but it remains possible that there was a post-Roman settlement here eking out an existence on the periphery of society, exploiting previously uncultivated land in a fairly inhospitable landscape.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1.1 A short article, probably between 2000 and 3000 words with five or six supporting illustrations, based on the results and discussion presented in this report, in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* is suggested as an adequate level of publication. This would comprise a brief introduction detailing the circumstances of the project and aims and objectives; a results section detailing the structural remains recorded (with an emphasis on the Romano-British kilns and their products), with finds information integrated into the text as appropriate; and a brief discussion of the results, with reference to the original aims and objectives.

9 ARCHIVE

- 9.1.1 The excavated material and archive, including plans, photographs and written records, are currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code 62505 and site code STIL 06. It is intended that the archive will be transferred to the landowners on completion of the project. Copies of the report and the field data will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER).

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Table 1: Finds totals by material type and by trench (number / weight in grammes)

Material	SITE A						SITE B		TOTAL
	Tr 1	Tr 3	Tr 4	Tr 5	Tr 6	Tr 2			
Pottery	83/1041	594/10,479	209/9419	2/5	3/55	365/5354		1255/26,353	
Ceramic Building Material	259/20,804	15/2498	55/4484	-	-	4/485		333/28,721	
Mortar	-	3/954	-	-	-	-		3/954	
Fired Clay	15/976	115/1888	244/7829	-	-	7/154		381/10,847	
Stone	-	1/372	1/21	-	-	1/93		3/486	
Burnt Flint	4/33	1/1		-	-	-		5/34	
Flint	10/54	-	8/75	2/2	2/40	-		22/171	
Glass	-	-	-	-	-	3/140		3/140	
Slag	1/67	-	-	-	-	-		1/67	
Metalwork	29	15	24	1	-	5		75	
<i>Copper Alloy</i>	-	5	4	1	-	-		10	
<i>Iron</i>	18	11	9	-	-	5		43	
<i>Lead</i>	11	-	11	-	-	-		22	
Human Bone	-	33/2413	-	-	-	-		33/2413	
Animal Bone	125/730	22/720	38/448	-	3/232	8/337		196/2467	
Shell	1/12	2/20	-	-	-	-		3/32	

Table 2: Breakdown of pottery assemblage by ware type

Ware Type	No. sherds	Weight (g)
Central Gaulish samian	8	116
Mica-dusted ware	2	29
Oxfordshire colour-coated ware	1	16
Nene Valley grey ware	157	2206
Nene Valley colour coated ware	144	1345
Nene Valley cream ware	5	59
Nene Valley white ware mortaria	1	53
Unassigned mortaria	3	20
Shelly wares	728	18,576
Sandy wares (reduced)	146	2059
Oxidised sandy wares	38	631
Grog-tempered ware	14	161
Fine flint and sand tempered ware	8	1082
TOTAL	1255	26,353

Table 3: Human bone - summary of analysis results

context	cut	deposit type	quantification	age/sex	pathology
301		redep.	1 frag. u.	neonate	
304	302	inh. burial	c. 70%	adult c. 25-29 yr. female	calculus; hypoplasia; periodontal disease; Schmorl's nodes – T11-12; ossicle at lambda
310	308	inh. burial	c. 30%	infant c. 3-4 yr.	calculus
310a	308	?inh. burial	c. 25%	neonate <1 week	periosteal new bone – left tibia
310b	308	?redep.	2 frags. s.u.	neonate <1 week	
313		redep.?	c. 25% a.u.l.	full term foetal	
316		redep.	3 frags. s.l.	adult + neonate c. 1 mth.	

KEY: where all skeletal areas are not represented: s. – skull; a – axial skeleton; u. – upper limb; l – lower limb; T - thoracic

Table 4: Animal bone species list and percentages (NISP)

Species	n	%
Horse	2	1
Cattle	47	31
Sheep/Goat	31	21
Pig	6	4
Small mammal	1	1
Bird	3	2
Fish	1	1
Unidentified	59	39
Total	150	100

Table 5: Number of animal bones with the potential to inform on population characteristics & butchery

NISP	150
Age	24
Measure	7
Butchery	-
Pathology	-

Table 6: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Feature type/no	Context	Sample	size litres	Flot							Residue		analysis
				flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	Weed seeds uncharred charred	Charcoal >4/2mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm			
Trench 4				Romano-British									
Kiln 421	409	19	4	10 ¹⁵	C	C	-	A	0.2/02m 1	moll-t (C)	-		
Trench 1				Post Romano-British - Anglo-Saxon									
Ditch 172	174	20	28	50 ⁵⁰	C	-	-	C	8/4ml	-	-		

KEY: A** = exceptional, A* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (h) = hazelnuts, smb = small mammal bones; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs Moll-f = freshwater molluscs;

Analysis: C = charcoal, P = plant, M = molluscs, C14 = radiocarbon suggestions

NOTE: ¹flot is total, but flot in superscript = ml of rooty material. ²Unburnt seed is in lower case to distinguish it from charred remains

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench 1

Trench 1		Type:	Machine Excavated
Dimensions: 21.40x7.70m		Max. depth: 0.33m	Ground level: 4.64m aOD
Context	Description	depth (bgl)	
101	<i>Plough soil</i>	Current plough soil of arable field. Dark grey silty clay, heavily bioturbated	
102	<i>Layer</i>	Horizon layer, directly below the plough soil which seals the underlying <i>in situ</i> archaeology.	
103	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
104	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 103, dark grey brown silty clay.	
105	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
106	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 160, dark grey brown silty clay.	
107	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
108	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 107, dark grey brown silty clay.	
109	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
110	<i>Fill</i>	Upper fill of post-hole 109, dark grey brown silty clay.	
111	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
112	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 111, dark grey brown silty clay.	
113	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
114	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 113, dark grey brown silty clay.	
115	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
116	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 115, dark grey brown silty clay.	
117	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 189.	
118	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 117.	
119	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
120	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 119, dark grey brown silty clay.	
121	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
122	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 121.	
123	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
124	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 123, dark grey brown silty clay.	
125	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
126	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 125, dark grey brown silty clay.	
127	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
128	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 127.	
129	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
130	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 129.	
131	<i>Layer</i>	Dark grey brown/black silty clay. Deliberate dump of charcoal rich material, which overlies 133, potentially an occupation layer, which appears confined within post-hole alignment Group 189 .	
132	<i>Layer</i>	Mixed red brown clay deposit, demolition deposit. Result of kiln superstructure collapse into kiln structure Group 190 . Overlies 180.	
133	<i>Layer</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay. Large spread of material which is sealed by 131 and overlies 132. Material is concentrated to the north of post-hole alignment Group 189 .	
134	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
135	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 134.	
136	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
137	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 136, dark grey brown silty clay.	
138	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
139	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 138.	
140	Cut	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
141	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 140.	
142	<i>Layer</i>	Greyish brown silty clay layer, very similar to 185, and overlies the natural geology. Origin of deposit unclear, but is sealed by 132.	
143	Cut	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	

144	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 143, dark grey brown silty clay.	
145	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
146	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 145, dark grey brown silty clay.	
147	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole, part of Group 188.	
148	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 147, dark grey brown silty clay.	
149	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
150	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 149 dark grey brown silty clay.	
151	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
152	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 151 dark grey brown silty clay.	
153	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
154	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 153 dark grey brown silty clay.	
155	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
156	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 155 dark grey brown silty clay.	
157	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
158	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 157 dark grey brown silty clay.	
159	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
160	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 159 dark grey brown silty clay.	
161	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
162	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 161 dark grey brown silty clay.	
163	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
164	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 163 dark grey brown silty clay.	
165	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
166	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 165 dark grey brown silty clay.	
167	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post-hole part of Group 189.	
168	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 167 dark grey brown silty clay.	
169	<i>VOID</i>	<i>VOID</i>	
170	<i>VOID</i>	<i>VOID</i>	
171	<i>Layer</i>	Bright red, compact silty clay. Spread of kiln debris, which is likely to be derived from the superstructure which is dismantled after each firing.	
172	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of SE NW curving ditch, identified on geophysics as a large oval enclosure. Potentially post-Roman in date.	0.80m deep.
173	<i>Fill</i>	Dark brownish grey silty clay, upper fill of 172 derived from activity occurring around the feature and topsoil.	0.40m thick.
174	<i>Fill</i>	Mid greyish brown silty clay, natural silting event, potentially primary fill, occurring during and soon after the initial digging of the ditch.	0.40m thick
175	<i>Layer</i>	Rubble deposit of local stone, associated with deposit 176. Seals deposit 176. Possible infilling deposit.	-
176	<i>Layer</i>	Light yellow silty clay natural hill wash deposit which is filling natural feature, overlain by 175 and overlies 185.	-
177	<i>Layer</i>	Arbitrary cleaning layer, equal to 102.	-
178	<i>Fill</i>	Lower fill of post hole 109, light yellow silty clay.	
179	<i>Cut</i>	Construction cut for tile kiln, only partially exposed and so true nature of feature is unknown. Clear straight vertical cut identified with tile built kiln set into construction cut. Part of Group 190.	-
180	<i>Fill</i>	Red compact fired clay. Backfill/demolition deposit which overlies internal structure of kiln Group 190 . Overlies structures 182, 183, and 184, and sealed by 132.	0.30m thick.
181	<i>Natural</i>	Underlying natural geology.	-
182	<i>Structure</i>	Outer wall of kiln structure, Group 190. Constructed from red tiles, c.0.03m thick. All broken and so other dimensions unknown. Only partially exposed and so true nature unknown.	0.50m high max.
183	<i>Structure</i>	Internal kiln support structure constructed from red tiles identical to 182. Supports would have held kiln bars to allow movement of hot air through the kiln. Creates an air channel with 184.	0.20m high max.
184	<i>Structure</i>	Internal kiln support structure constructed from red tiles identical to 182. Supports would have held kiln bars to allow movement of hot air through the kiln. Creates an air channel with 183.	0.20m high max.
185	<i>Layer</i>	Identical to 142.	-

186	<i>Layer</i>	Natural colluvium/hill wash deposit which seals 185.	-
187	<i>Subsoil</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay subsoil layer below 101.	0.20m thick.
188	Group	Group of post-holes, which form a possible fence alignment.	
190	Group	Group number for Kiln structure. Comprised of 179, 182, 183 and 184.	-

Trench 2

Trench 2		Type:	Machine excavated.
Dimensions: 14.85x6.70m		Max. depth: 1.70m	Ground level: 5.15m aOD
Context	Description	depth (bgl)	
201	<i>Plough soil</i>	Current plough soil of field humic silty clay.	
202	<i>Layer</i>	Mixed brown silty clay layer, remnant of up-cast from clearing of ditch.	
203	<i>Layer</i>	Light yellow brown silty clay, thick alluvium/river wash deposit.	
204	<i>Layer</i>	Mottled brown and yellow silty clay alluvium/river wash deposit.	
205	<i>Layer</i>	Light blue alluvium/river wash deposit. Seals <i>in situ</i> Romano-British deposits.	
206	<i>Layer</i>	Arbitrary cleaning layer which sealed <i>in situ</i> waterlogged Romano-British archaeological deposits.	
207	<i>Layer</i>	Dark grey brown silty clay, revealed below 206. The importance of the deposit resulted in no further work being carried out with the aim of preservation <i>in situ</i> ; however the layer was badly disturbed by unauthorised illegal excavation activity.	
208	<i>Layer</i>	Dark brown/black silty clay layer. Nature of deposit is unclear as only cleaned. Potential occupation layer revealed below 206. The importance of the deposit resulted in no further work being carried out with the aim of preservation <i>in situ</i> ; however the layer was subsequently badly disturbed by unauthorised excavation activity.	
209	<i>Layer</i>	Similar to 208, trample, occupation layer.	
210	Cut	Cut of possible pit or post hole, not excavated.	
211	<i>Layer</i>	Light blue, cream silty clay deposit, alluvium deposit.	
212	<i>Cut</i>	Possible foundation cut of structure, linear in shape but unexcavated, contained fragment of dressed stone. Filled with 214. The importance of the deposit resulted in no further work being carried out with the aim of preservation <i>in situ</i> , however the layer was badly disturbed by unauthorised illegal excavation activity.	
213	<i>Fill</i>	Dark grey brown silty upper fill of 210 . Unexcavated	
214	<i>Fill</i>	Dark grey brown silty upper fill of 212 . Unexcavated.	

Trench 3

Trench 3		Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 17.70x3.40m		Max. depth: 0.25m	Ground level: 4.23maOD
Context	Description	depth (bgl)	
301	<i>Plough soil</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay current plough soil of arable field.	
302	<i>Cut</i>	Grave cut. 2.10m x 0.47m x 0.22m. E-W aligned and cuts layer 316. Contained skeleton 304.	
303	<i>Fill</i>	Dark grey brown silty clay deliberate backfill to cover burial 304 within grave cut 302 .	
304	<i>Skeleton</i>	Poorly preserved supine burial, damaged by ploughing.	
305	Cut	Possible robber cut which is aligned N-S, and contains possible evidence of the cleaning of robbed stone work.	
306	<i>Fill</i>	Large rubble dump within cut 305. possible remnant of unrecyclable material	
307	<i>Fill</i>	Light yellow/cream white/cream deposit of possible mortar, dumped following the cleaning of material being robbed to be recycled.	
308	Cut	Grave cut. Very shallow, and E-W aligned. Cuts 314.	
309	<i>Fill</i>	Dark grey brown silty clay deliberate backfill to cover burial 309 within grave	

		cut 308 .	
310	<i>Skeleton</i>	Fragmentary skeleton within grave cut 308 .	-
311	<i>Layer</i>	Light yellow clay layer which overlies wall 312, possible demolition debris.	-
312	<i>Structure</i>	Limestone built curving wall, from S- NE. 6 courses of roughly shaped cornbrash limestone within a yellow mortar with reddish fired clay. Butted by later wall 319. 312 belongs to a structure which has had two functions, both of these are unknown, due to the partial exposure of the feature.	-
313	<i>Layer</i>	Demolition layer of dark reddish brown silty clay, which overlies later wall 319.	-
314	<i>Layer</i>	Demolition layer of mid grey brown silty clay, equal to 315, and above 313.	-
315	<i>Layer</i>	Equal to 314.	-
316	<i>Layer</i>	Layer of cobbles, demolition deposit associated with possible kiln structure.	-
317	Cut	Construction cut for wall 312.	-
318	<i>Fill</i>	Dark greyish brown silty clay fill of 305 , nature unknown.	0.24m thick.
319	<i>Structure</i>	E-W aligned section of limestone walling which butts wall 312, and rests upon possible floor surface 320. Second phase of the structures use, something is blocked and the function changes.	-
320	<i>Structure</i>	Possible mortar floor layer which is associated with wall 312, and has 319 resting upon it. Nature of structure unknown.	-
321	Group	Group number for structure comprised of cut 317, walls 312 and 319 and floor surface 320. Structure shows two phases of use, both uncertain, due to the constraints of a small sondage.	-
322	<i>Layer</i>	Compact mid grey brown silty clay with occasional limestone inclusions, origin unknown.	-

Trench 4

Trench 4			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 11.80x3.50m		Max. depth: 0.25m	Ground level: 4.31m aOD	
Context	Description		depth (bgl)	
401	<i>Plough soil</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay current plough soil of arable field.	0.25m	
402	<i>Layer</i>	Arbitrary cleaning layer below 401 and above <i>in situ</i> archaeology.	0.05m thick.	
403	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of ditch, roughly NW-SE aligned and follows the alignment of two earlier ditches 410 and 413. Steep and straight sides with a flat base and cuts the upper fills of these two ditches. Enclosure for kiln activity.	0.58m deep.	
404	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of 403. Dark greyish brown silty clay, mixture of deliberate infilling and natural erosion.	0.58m thick	
405	Cut	Construction cut for kiln Group 421. Elongated oval and slightly teardrop in shape, slightly concave sides with concave base, contains internal lining 406, and central pedestal 418 for kiln bars to radiate around. Only combustion chamber identified, no stoke hole not identified.	-	
406	<i>Structure</i>	Irregular rubble internal structure of kiln, bonded with highly heated affected clay, and coated with a layer of clay 419, which is also highly heat affected. Set into construction cut 405 .	-	
407	<i>Fill</i>	Mid reddish brown compact silty clay, highly fired deposit of deliberate backfill, result of superstructure of kiln being thrown back into defunct kiln, upper deposit.	0.21m thick.	
408	<i>Fill</i>	Earliest backfill deposit of kiln Group 421 . Deliberate backfilling following the cleaning out of the kiln as no ashy material recovered. Mid reddish brown silty clay.	0.20m thick	
409	<i>Fill</i>	Grey silty clay band of material separating kiln backfill deposits 407 and 408. Potentially ashy backfill.	0.08m thick	
410	Cut	Cut of NW-SE aligned ditch which cuts through layer 420, and is filled with 411 and 412. Steep straight sides and 'V' shaped base. Earlier enclosure ditch for kiln activity area.	0.52m deep.	
411	<i>Fill</i>	Mid greyish brown silty clay lower fill of 410 . Possible mix of deliberate and natural infilling.	0.32m thick	

412	<i>Fill</i>	Mid greyish yellow silty clay upper fill of 410 , natural infilling of feature edges.	0.20m thick
413	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of ditch which runs parallel to ditch 410. Outer ditch of enclosure surrounding kiln. Contains upper fill 413. Unexcavated. Cut through by 403.	-
414	<i>Fill</i>	Upper fill of 413. Unexcavated mid greyish yellow silty clay.	-
415	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of post hole identified at the base of ditch 410, possible one of a series of posts forming a palisade fence around the kiln structure. Unclear stratigraphical relationship with ditch 410.	0.12m deep.
416	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of post-hole 415. Dark greyish brown silty clay.	0.12m thick.
417	<i>Fill</i>	Deliberate fill of kiln structure. Bewlo 409 and above 408. Light grey silty clay.	-
418	<i>Structure</i>	Central free-standing pedestal within kiln structure, used to rest kiln bars on to aid flow of air around kiln. Constructed of rough un-shaped limestone blocks, with fired clay bonding.	-
419	<i>Layer</i>	Heated affected clay lining to kiln Group 421	-
420	<i>Layer</i>	Mixed grey silty clay layer. Possible occupation layer through which archaeology is cut.	0.20m thick
421	<i>Group</i>	Group for kiln structure comprised of cut 405, internal wall 406, kiln lining 419 and central pedestal 418.	-

Trench 5

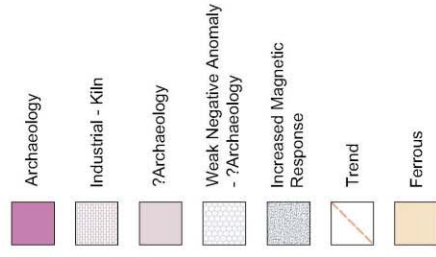
Trench 5			Type: Machine excavated
Dimensions: 7.28x1.40m		Max. depth: 0.75m	Ground level: 4.33m aOD
Context	Description		depth (bgl)
501	<i>Plough soil</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay current plough soil of arable field.	0-0.27
502	<i>Fill</i>	Secondary fill of ditch 504 . Dark brown silty clay, possible mix of deliberate and natural infilling.	0.13m thick
503	<i>Fill</i>	Lower fill of ditch 504 . Mid grey brown silty clay.	0.30m thick
504	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of curving enclosure ditch, identified in Trenches 1 and 6, shallow concave sides and concave base. Continuation of ?post-Roman enclosure ditch	0.43m deep.
505	<i>Natural</i>	Natural yellow bluish silty clay.	-

Trench 6

Trench 6			Type: Machine excavated
Dimensions: 5.40x4.60m		Max. depth: 0.40m	Ground level: 4.09m aOD
Context	Description		depth (bgl)
601	<i>Plough soil</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay current plough soil of arable field.	0-0.40m
602	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of N-S aligned AS ditch identified in geophysics and Trenches 1 and 5. Cuts 605, upper fill of 604. Unexcavated.	-
603	<i>Fill</i>	Mid brown silty clay upper fill of 602. Unexcavated	-
604	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of E-W aligned RB ditch which cuts 608 and 609. Unexcavated	-
605	<i>Fill</i>	Upper fill of 604. mid grey silty clay fill. Unexcavated	-
606	<i>Layer</i>	Stony deposit in SE corner of trench. Origin unknown.	-
607	<i>Cut</i>	Modern field drain.	-
608	<i>Layer</i>	Stony deposit.	-
609	<i>Natural</i>	Yellow natural silty clay.	-



Site and Trench Location Maps showing Geophysical Magnetic and Resistance Survey Area

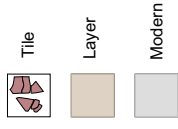


Geophysical data courtesy of GSB Prospection Ltd

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Trench 1 from the SW



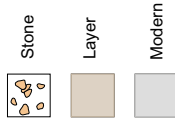
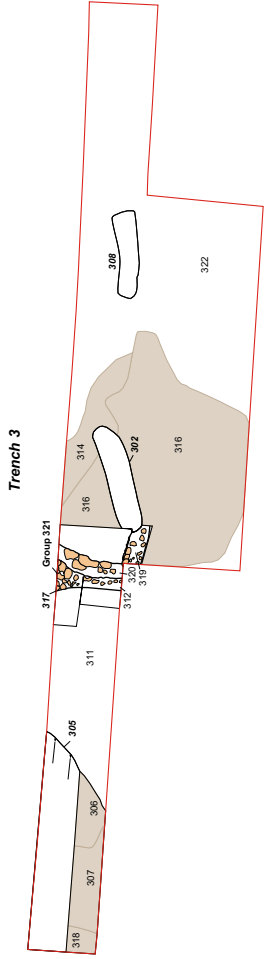
SE facing section Ditch (172)



Plan of Kiln structure Group (190) in sondage through layer (132)



Plan of Trench 3 from the west following the excavation of graves 302 and 308



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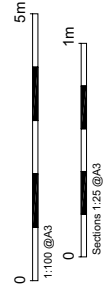
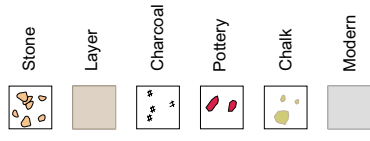
Plan of grave 308



Plan of grave 302



Possible kiln structure Group 321 revealed in sondage from north



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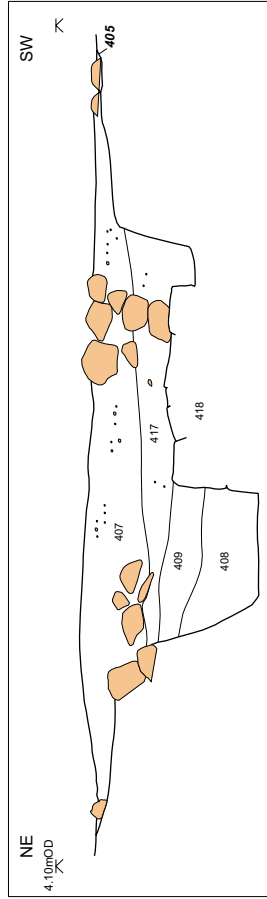
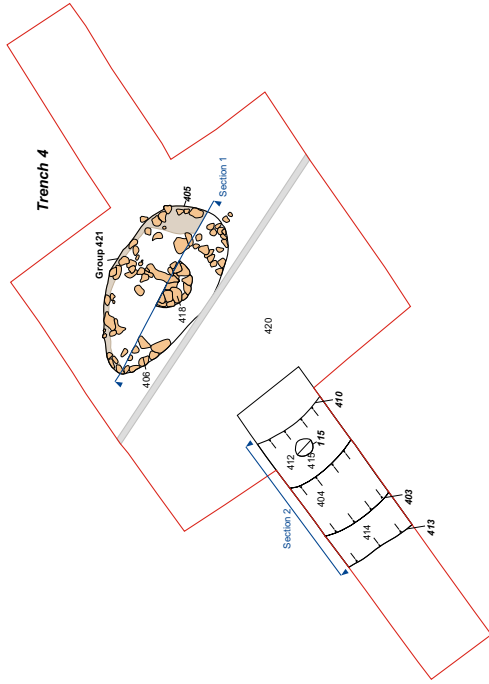
Post-excavation shot of kiln Group 421 from the NW



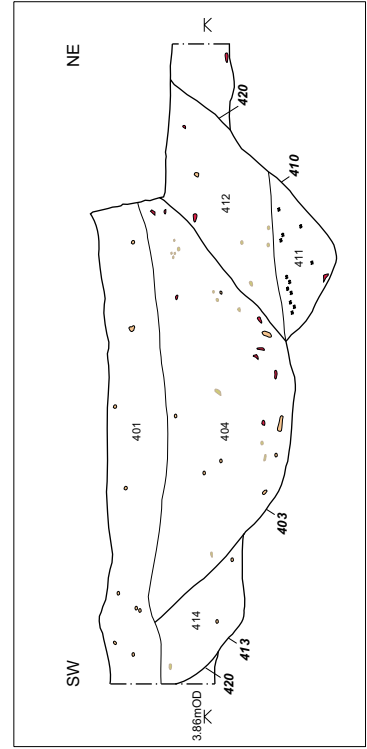
SW facing section of Group 421 showing free standing pedestal 418



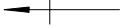
SE facing section ditches 413, 403 and 410



Section 1. SW facing section of kiln Group 421



Section 2. SE facing section ditches 413, 403 and 410



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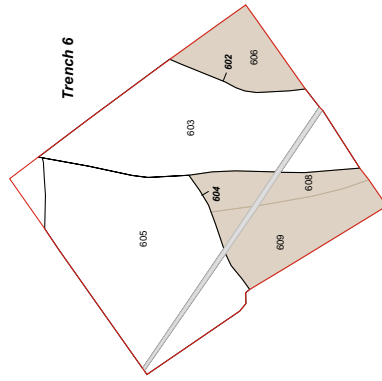
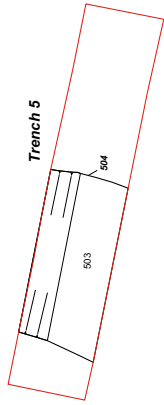
Trench 5 from the east

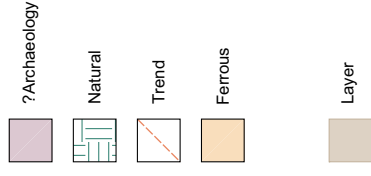


Ditch 504 from the south



Plan of Trench 6 from the east





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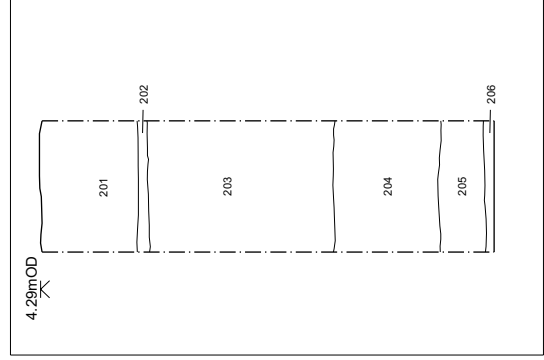
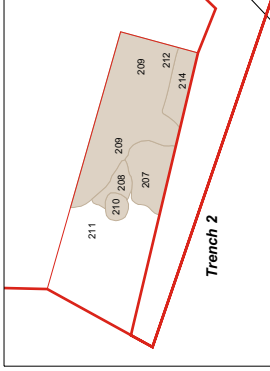
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Plan of unexcavated layers in Trench 2 from the west

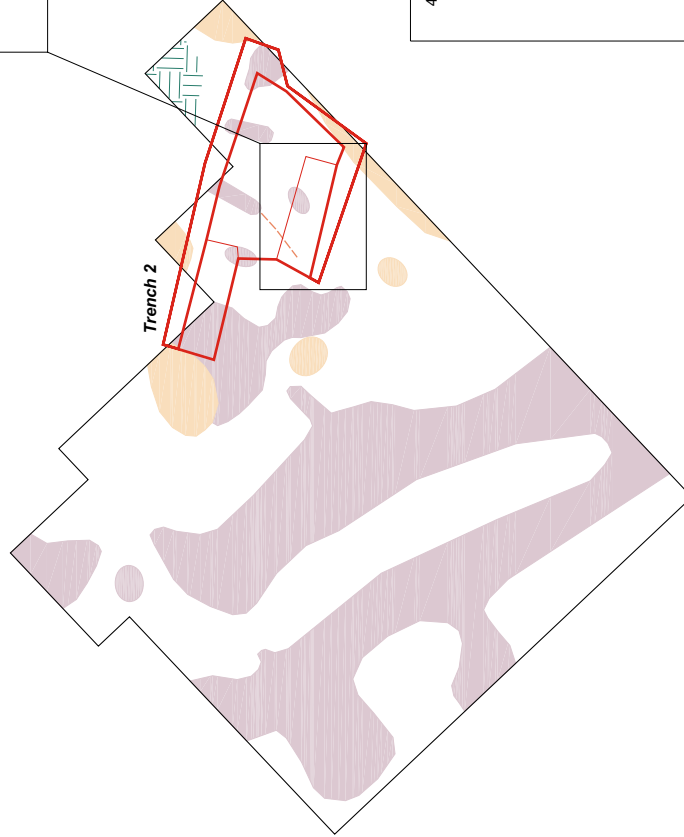


North facing representative section Trench 2



North facing representative section Trench 2

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