

## 5. THE MIDLANDS

By PAUL BOOTH

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

(1) **Newark**, *Newark sustainable urban expansion* (SK 82992 49326): a 16-trench evaluation revealed the remains of a Romano-British field-system close to those of an Iron Age settlement, north of Shire Lane.<sup>113</sup>

## SHROPSHIRE

(1) **Wroxeter and Uppington** (*Viroconium Cornoviorum*), *Wroxeter Roman city* (SJ 564 087): a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was conducted over an area surrounding the reconstructed Roman town-house, sited over the forum of Wroxeter, where noticeable ground movement and surface deformation has occurred over the last three years. The survey covered an area of 0.6 ha, including an adjacent field not apparently included within previous geophysical coverage at the site.<sup>114</sup> The new GPR results have provided some useful additional information on the area around the forum.<sup>115</sup>

## HEREFORDSHIRE

(1) **Leintwardine** (*Bravonium?*), *land adjacent to Seedley Lodge* (SO 4310 7430): evaluation recorded ditches, post-holes and pits likely to have been on the periphery of the Roman settlement. The site borders a Roman road and the features are consistent with roadside activity.<sup>116</sup>

## WARWICKSHIRE

(1) **Barford**, *land off Westham Lane* (SP 2681 6057): an excavation was undertaken within an area of cropmark enclosures and ditches. Several enclosures had been laid out during the late Iron Age to early Roman period. Activity continued into the Roman period, with further enclosures created, one of which was cut by a kiln. A rectangular building survived as a shallow beam-slot and lay adjacent to a stone-lined well. Three undated graves were found.<sup>117</sup>

(2) **Kineton**, *land east of Southam Road* (SP 3402 5138): excavation revealed an enclosed late Iron Age/early Roman settlement containing a probable roundhouse, stock enclosures and stock-handling pens. Boundaries beyond this seem to have been parts of a surrounding field-system. The site appears to have been remodelled during the mid- to late first to early second century.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Work by A. Tuck and O. Bachelor of Wessex Archaeology for CgMs Consulting. P. Bradley sent information.

<sup>114</sup> C.F. Gaffney, J.A. Gater, P. Linford, V.L. Gaffney and R. White, 'Large-scale systematic fluxgate gradiometry at the Roman city of Wroxeter', *Archaeological Prospection* 7(2) (2000), 81–99.

<sup>115</sup> Work by N. Linford and P. Linford of the Historic England Remote Sensing Geophysics Team. M. Jecock sent information. N. Linford and P. Linford, 'Wroxeter Roman City, Shropshire. Report on geophysical survey, March 2015', London, Historic England Research Reports Series 81/2015, unpub. report, <http://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15393>.

<sup>116</sup> Work by S. Sworn of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

<sup>117</sup> Work by J. Newman and D. Evans of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

<sup>118</sup> Work by S. Sheldon and R. Young of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

(3) **Shottery**, *land off Evesham Road* (SP 18250 54270): an evaluation revealed densely distributed features spanning the Roman period, with some evidence for late Iron Age activity. Features indicate settlement, agriculture and small-scale industrial activity. Several findspots of Roman material, including a coin hoard and a large deposit of pottery, have been recorded in the immediate vicinity.<sup>119</sup>

#### LEICESTERSHIRE

(1) **Enderby**, *Soar Valley Way* (SP 554 998): evaluation and excavation were undertaken further to work in 2012. The northern and eastern excavation area was occupied by a series of late Iron Age and/or early Roman ditches running from the west to converge on several ill-defined circular enclosures, perhaps representing small animal stock enclosures or pens. Subsequently, substantial Roman sand or gravel quarry pits were cut down into the natural water table; the waterlogged fills produced a pair of small, likely children's, leather shoes.

In the south-west corner of the site an elongated rectangular enclosure with a single ditch was revealed; this had a possible internal ditched subdivision and twin entrances on the southern side. A number of fragmentary, plough-truncated ditches, gullies and two possible hearths hint at internal occupation. These features suggest an early Roman date for the enclosure. A gravel-metalled road or trackway *c.* 5–6 m wide was aligned NNW–SSE, parallel with the southern side of the enclosure. It may have provided access to the Fosse Way which lies a short distance to the west, and appeared contemporary with three substantial flanking circular pit-like features. At least two of these are likely to have served as watering holes for livestock. The waterlogged, organic-rich deposits at the base of the larger, western pit, contained a shield constructed from layers of bark with a central boss formed from coils of stitched nettle fibres. Radiocarbon dates of 2245BP ± 29 (boss - SUERC-66150) and 2253BP ± 29 (bark - SUERC-66149) are statistically consistent and calibrate to between 395 and 348 cal B.C. and 316 and 208 cal B.C. Pottery recovered from these features indicates that they were out of use and being used for the disposal of domestic refuse by the earlier Roman period.<sup>120</sup>

(2) **Kibworth Beauchamp**, *land off Wentworth Close* (SP 68790 93430): evaluation found a Romano-British ditch below well-preserved ridge and furrow. This ditch was probably associated with those recorded during the construction of the Weir Road estate in 1965.<sup>121</sup>

(3) **Kibworth Harcourt**: (a) *west of Warwick Road* (SP 672 945): detailed magnetometer survey and trial-trench evaluation revealed enclosure ditches and pits dated from the late Iron Age through to the fourth century A.D.<sup>122</sup>

(b) *East of Warwick Road* (SP 673 941): detailed magnetometer survey and trial-trench evaluation revealed a series of enclosures lying either side of a track or driveway. Two pottery sherds of late Iron Age and Roman date came from an enclosure ditch terminal.<sup>123</sup>

(4) **Leicester** (*Ratae*): (a) *Bath Lane* (SK 58002 04684): excavation took place within the north-west quarter of the Roman and medieval walled town where previous evaluation had located a Roman wall running north-west to south-east with associated surrounding deposits. More of the wall was revealed, with mortar floor surfaces, a surviving section of north-east–south-west structural wall, a metalled surface, a linear feature and a large post-hole. No

<sup>119</sup> Work by S. Fairhead of Wessex Archaeology for CgMs Consulting Limited. P. Bradley sent information.

<sup>120</sup> Work by R. Kipling of University of Leicester Archaeological Services for Everards Ltd. J. Thomas sent information.

<sup>121</sup> Work by P. Daniel of Wessex Archaeology for CgMs Consulting. P. Bradley sent information.

<sup>122</sup> Work by A. Meadows and G. Hewitt of MoLA Northampton for Manor Oak Homes. J. Thomas sent information.

OASIS: molanort1-227266.

<sup>123</sup> Work by J. Walford and P. Clements of MoLA Northampton for Manor Oak Homes. J. Thomas sent information.



FIG. 20. Southgates, Leicester. Fragmented mosaic pavement.

evidence of the Roman or medieval town defences was found but a substantial gravel deposit on the northern edge of the site may have been the fill of a large ditch.<sup>124</sup>

(b) 53–55 *Oxford Street* (SK 5856 0393): excavation revealed a truncated sequence of Roman and later deposits. A boundary ditch ran perpendicular to the projected alignment of the *Tripontium* road, indicated by the intermittent survival of patches of metallised surfaces. Following disuse of the road a stone-lined well was dug. This contained an extensive assemblage of later Roman coins and disarticulated human remains.<sup>125</sup>

(c) *Southgates* (SK 5845 0430): excavation revealed the intersection of two Roman streets, both with thick, cambered gravel surfaces and drainage gullies. A number of large stone and timber buildings and boundary walls dating from the second to the fourth century lay along the

<sup>124</sup> Work by D. Clark of University of Leicester Archaeological Services for Leicester City Council. J. Thomas sent information.

<sup>125</sup> Work by S. Baker of University of Leicester Archaeological Services. J. Thomas sent information.

sides of the streets. In some areas these were very well preserved with intact floors and rare fragments of wall still surviving. The broken remains of a mosaic pavement were found in one building (FIG. 20), whilst painted wall-plaster still survived on the walls of another. The wide range of artefacts suggests that Roman activity in the area was predominately domestic in nature with some industrial activity in the vicinity in the later Roman period and sheds important light on a very poorly understood part of Roman Leicester.<sup>126</sup>

(d) *52 Western Road* (SK 578 037): excavation on the east side of Western Road revealed the southward continuation of the Roman cemetery first excavated at 40–46 Western Road in 2010–12.<sup>127</sup> A further 24 burials have been recorded, taking the total assemblage up to 83. Radiocarbon dates suggest that burial was taking place from the early second century to the late fourth or early fifth century. Many have grave goods or exhibit burial customs not previously seen in Leicester. Analysis is ongoing but stable isotope analysis of teeth and bone samples suggests that some of those interred were of non-local origin. One individual, a male aged 36–45, was buried with a highly elaborate belt set, comprising a belt buckle, belt plate and strap end of official character and of later fourth- or early fifth-century date (FIG. 21). The survival of the thin sheet bronze belt plate is remarkable.<sup>128</sup>



FIG. 21. 52 Western Road, Leicester. Late Roman belt set.

#### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

(1) **Brigstock**, *Bullymore's Lodge Farm* (SP 7633 6442): evaluation demonstrated that cropmarks previously identified within the site are the remains of an early Roman settlement. A small assemblage of pottery was recovered, along with charred cereals indicative of crop processing.<sup>129</sup>

(2) **Kettering**, *Cranford Business Centre* (SP 9036 7613): evaluation comprised 55 trenches targeted on the results of a geophysical survey. The dominant first- and second-century Roman features were a series of farmstead enclosures located both to the north and south of the A6.

<sup>126</sup> Work by M. Morris and J. Thomas of University of Leicester Archaeological Services. J. Thomas sent information.

<sup>127</sup> *Britannia* 44 (2013), 308.

<sup>128</sup> Work by R. Huxley and M. Morris of University of Leicester Archaeological Services for Jamie Lewis Residential. J. Thomas sent information.

<sup>129</sup> Work by J. Mordue of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

Other significant features included a very large pit containing a substantial assemblage of Roman pottery, glass and metalwork.<sup>130</sup>

(3) **Little Irchester**, *land off the A45* (SP 90836 66287): a 10.8 ha arable field to the south of the A45 was evaluated. This confirmed cropmark and geophysical evidence for a dense concentration of archaeological features in the south-west corner. The various ditches and gullies — including enclosures, trackways and related boundaries — probably reflect at least two phases of late Iron Age–early Roman settlement, the eastern limit of which was clearly identifiable. The remains of a pottery kiln indicate local production of black-coloured ceramics in the first century A.D. Other finds include two copper-alloy brooches, whilst charred plant remains are consistent with general settlement.<sup>131</sup>

#### PETERBOROUGH

(1) **Glinton**, *land adjacent to Peterborough gas compressor station* (TL 18529 97823): a middle to late Roman period settlement was uncovered in excavation at the south of the proposed development area.<sup>132</sup>

(2) **Peterborough**, *Oundle Road, Johnston's Press* (TL 1802 9731): excavation examined elements of the periphery of a later Iron Age enclosed farmstead and middle to late Roman linear farmstead. Eight late Roman inhumations were excavated. Four of these were of young adult males, one a young adult female, one a 40–45-year-old female, and two were adults of indeterminate gender. Four of the graves contained iron nails indicating the presence of coffins. The graves probably represent a small family burial area on the edge of a field-system.<sup>133</sup>

#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE

(1) **Abbots Ripton**, *Alconbury Weald* (TL 2010 7660): evaluation of land formerly occupied by Alconbury Airfield, just off Ermine Street, revealed a western focus of activity comprising a series of ditches and a large ditch or pit with metalworking debris at its eastern edge. Undated features in the eastern part of the site were mainly ditches.<sup>134</sup>

(2) **Caldecote**, *Caldecote solar farm* (TL 2170 5771): evaluation targeted features recorded in a geophysical survey which indicated the presence of ditched enclosures and associated features. These were shown to be largely medieval, although Roman metalworking waste was found, along with a Roman cremation burial.<sup>135</sup>

(3) **Cambourne**, *land west of Cambourne* (TL 303 601): a total of 148 evaluation trenches were excavated, revealing a sequence of activity from the middle Iron Age to the later Roman period. Up to five areas of mainly enclosed settlement with this date range were identified. Feature types included structural remains in the form of roundhouses and possible timber-built structures, middens, boundary ditches and metalled surfaces. Several of the settlement areas also showed evidence of craft industrial practices.<sup>136</sup>

(4) **Cambridge**: (a) *Addenbrookes 2040 Lands—land south of Dame Mary Archer Way* (TL 4632 5466): five trenches were excavated revealing a number of ditches which correspond to geophysical and cropmark evidence. Only one ditch contained datable (Roman) pottery, but the

<sup>130</sup> Work by L. Bush of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1859). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>131</sup> Work by M. Tenzer of Wessex Archaeology for Lark Energy. P. Bradley sent information.

<sup>132</sup> Work by G. Rees of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1822). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>133</sup> Work by R. Webb of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1807). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>134</sup> Work by R. Webb of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1876). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>135</sup> Work by D. Evans of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

<sup>136</sup> Work by C. Thatcher of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1862). K. Hamilton sent information.

morphology of the ditches and the cropmark evidence indicate that these features were extensions of Roman field-systems known to the north of the site.<sup>137</sup>

(b) *Shire Hall* (TL 44545 59290): excavation revealed deposits up to 1.78 m below the modern basement floor level, all of early Roman date except for a single undated ditch at the base of the sequence which may have been earlier. Three ditches, each aligned from north-east to south-west, appear to line up with the corner of an enclosure recorded in 1935 during the construction of Shire Hall and probably date to the mid-first century A.D.<sup>138</sup>

(c) *Westminster College, Woolf Institute* (TL 4433 5904): excavation uncovered a number of features spanning the late Iron Age to mid-Roman periods. These included a line of post-holes running north–south containing early Roman pottery and a series of intercutting ditches aligned (with one exception) north–south. In the northern half of the site were pits of various sizes and depths, one of which was probably a well dating from the first century A.D. Two coffined burials, probably of fourth-century date, were located in the south-western corner of the site.<sup>139</sup>

(d) *Land at Aylesborough Close* (TL 4482 6100): a small open area excavation was undertaken in the west of the site where evaluation in 2014 had identified Roman features. Two parallel ditches running north-west–south-east defined an early Roman trackway running perpendicular to Akeman Street. The small and predominantly late first-century pottery assemblage suggests that the trackway lay adjacent to an early Roman settlement.<sup>140</sup>

(5) **Chatteris**, *Wenny Road* (TL 4003 8567): an evaluation revealed two Iron Age gullies and a Roman ditch containing pottery and a loom-weight fragment.<sup>141</sup>

(6) **Cottenham**: (a) *land at Oakington Road* (TL 44161 66965): a 28-trench evaluation identified part of a rural settlement focused in the north-west of the investigated area, dating from the Conquest period to the fourth century A.D. Features included ditches forming enclosures and associated boundaries, pits, post-holes and a kiln which was left *in situ* pending open area excavation. One ditch contained two near-complete and seemingly placed pots with evidence of deliberate damage, which may have been an ‘opening’ or ‘closing’ deposit.<sup>142</sup>

(b) *Land off Rampton Road* (TL 4407 6739): 38 evaluation trenches were excavated revealing a network of ditches, pits, watering holes and gullies, components of a late Iron Age and Roman complex of interconnected rectilinear enclosures broadly arranged on a north-west–south-east axis. Possible structural remains included late Iron Age ring-gullies and Roman beam-slot structures or gullies. Pottery evidence indicates a long-lived settlement from the mid-first century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.<sup>143</sup>

(7) **Eaton Socon**, *land at 21–35 Great North Road* (TL 1691 5809): evaluation and excavation revealed boundary and enclosure ditches, a number of pits, and a fourth-century watering hole containing preserved wood and leatherwork. All the features recorded dated to the third and fourth centuries, although a number of boundary ditches aligned parallel with Ermine Street appeared to be earlier than the enclosure ditches which were more irregular and sinuous in form. The finds included several coins, large quantities of animal bone and ‘fresh’ sherds of pottery, including large parts of several vessels.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Work by S. Graham of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1752). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>138</sup> Work by G. Rees of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1766). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>139</sup> Work by S. Graham of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1809). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>140</sup> Work by S. Porter and T. Fletcher of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, for Keepmoat. T. Vitali sent information.

<sup>141</sup> Work by G. Rees of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1773). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>142</sup> Work by M. Jones and M. Hinman of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd for Persimmon Homes. T. Vitali sent information.

<sup>143</sup> Work by R. Atkins of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1864). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>144</sup> Work by J. House and M. Hinman of Pre-Construct Archaeology for Lidl UK. T. Vitali sent information.

(8) **Ely**, *Cam Drive* (TL 554242 281544): excavation revealed field boundaries and a system of cultivation strips. The field boundaries were orientated approximately east–west and some extended beyond the limits of excavation. The cultivation strips were aligned NNE–SSW and were heavily truncated. A single Roman cremation burial was also found.<sup>145</sup>

(9) **Fulbourn**, *Barleyfields* (TL 5213 5647): evaluation revealed an unusual late Iron Age apsidal enclosure and several Roman cremation burials and numerous ditches.<sup>146</sup>

(10) **Papworth Everard**, *land north-east of Papworth Everard* (TL 2885 6356): evaluation trenches uncovered a middle Iron Age to early Roman settlement located on a north-facing valley side extending over an area in excess of *c.* 100 m by *c.* 50 m.<sup>147</sup>

(11) **Soham**, *land at Fordham Road and Cherrytree Lane* (TL 6009 7215): evaluation trenching revealed a rectilinear arrangement of ditches forming fields and enclosures, probably of late first- to second-century A.D. date. The enclosures were probably associated with a known Roman settlement lying on the slightly higher ground north and north-east of the site.<sup>148</sup>

(12) **The Stukeleys**, *Alconbury Weald* (TL 230 750): excavation revealed late Iron Age and Roman features associated with the periphery of a settlement area spreading from the 2013 excavation area and comprising a possible stock enclosure, cultivation strips and a watering hole. Further evaluation at TL 1975 7684 revealed Roman ditches on the eastern edge of the site, which probably formed part of a field-system and relate to late Iron Age and Roman activity identified in open area excavations to the east.<sup>149</sup>

(13) **Waterbeach**, *land off Banold Road* (TL 5017 6598): a cluster of Roman pits was identified at the eastern edge of the excavation area, while to the west were several undated features including a gully and pits, along with a possible trackway and post-medieval ridge and furrow.<sup>150</sup>

#### BEDFORDSHIRE

(1) **Bedford**, *Manton Lane* (TL 0414 5099): a third season of test-pitting was undertaken in an area of known Roman settlement. The walls of two adjacent buildings with stone foundations were identified. The full extent of the buildings could not be determined, although one was at least 12 m long. The corner of the other building comprised a mix of *in-situ* stones and building debris. The ground within the interior of the building had been dug out to a depth of *c.* 0.5 m suggesting the presence of a hypocaust chamber, filled with large quantities of mortar, plaster and stucco — the latter is still a rarity in Roman Britain. Other building material included ceramic roof- and combed flue-tiles, painted wall-plaster, possible tesserae, limestone roof/floor-tiles and window-glass. Other test-pits revealed surfaces of gravel and stone and evidence for three other buildings in the form of large stones, extensive spreads of fragmentary mortar and a beam-slot. The latter was sealed by a stone surface, indicating at least two phases of activity.<sup>151</sup>

(2) **Shefford**, *land off Campton Road* (TL 13569 38787): excavation took place on a site close to a known late Iron Age/Roman settlement previously investigated by mainly piecemeal and

<sup>145</sup> Work by T. Phillips and S. Morgan of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1763). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>146</sup> Work by P. Moan of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1857). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>147</sup> Work by R. Atkins of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1831). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>148</sup> Work by M. Jones and S. Hogan of Pre-Construct Archaeology for CgMs Consulting. T. Vitali sent information.

<sup>149</sup> Work by R. Webb of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East reports 1765 and 1768). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>150</sup> Work by J. Fairbairn of Oxford Archaeology East (OA East report 1860). K. Hamilton sent information.

<sup>151</sup> Work by M. Luke, S. Cocking and E. Sayer for community project supported by Albion Archaeology. M. Luke sent information.

small-scale investigations.<sup>152</sup> The settlement comprised a series of rectangular ditched enclosures, at least one of which contained buildings, including one with aisles and heated rooms. A cemetery revealed by antiquarian investigations in the early nineteenth century (now presumed to be associated with the settlement) was thought to be located in the vicinity of the development area. A small number of late Iron Age/Roman features — a water hole and boundary ditches — were found, but no burials. The boundary ditches had been redug on a number of occasions and were perpendicular to ditches found in earlier investigations to the east; they presumably defined a field contemporary with the settlement. The work has confirmed that the main western boundary of the settlement probably lies immediately to the east of the development area, as suggested by the previous investigations.<sup>153</sup>

#### HERTFORDSHIRE

(1) **Buntingford**, *land at Luynes Rise* (TL 358 288): evaluation identified an area of late Iron Age and Roman field and enclosure boundaries, located on an east-facing slope extending down to the river Rib. The quantities of pottery in the ditches indicate settlement in the immediate area by the late first to mid-second century A.D. Two poorly dated, but possibly Roman, cremation deposits were present in one trench, associated with a cluster of other pits containing burnt residues that may derive from clearance of a pyre.<sup>154</sup>

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

(1) **Stoke Hammond**, *land east of Fenny Road* (SP 8822 2963): evaluation recorded a ditched enclosure system and associated features probably relating to a farmstead and corresponding with the results of a previous geophysical survey. The site was occupied from the first to fourth centuries A.D. There was evidence for cereal processing and animal butchery.<sup>155</sup>

(2) **Whitchurch**, *Aylesbury Vale* (SP 809 222): the remains of a high-status cremation burial of late second-century date, discovered during a metal-detecting rally, were excavated in 2014. The findspot is located close to a possible Roman villa site. The burial was placed within a wooden box. Grave goods included two samian ware cups, two samian ware dishes, a pottery flagon, two heavily fragmented glass vessels, a bronze jug with decorated handle, a bronze patera, an iron lamp-holder and two unidentified lead objects. The cremation urn contained an intaglio (a rare find in such a context) and remains of nailed shoes as well as the human remains, of an adult, probably female.<sup>156</sup>

#### OXFORDSHIRE

(1) **Bicester**: (a) *Bicester A41 Park and Ride* (SP 57065 21160): an excavation and watching-brief revealed a range of Romano-British features including cremation graves and cremation-related features. Ditches and gullies associated with drainage and agricultural activity are likely to be of a similar date, or earlier.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>152</sup> M. Luke, T. Preece and J. Wells, 'A Romano British aisled building and associated settlement south of Ampthill Road, Shefford', *Bedfordshire Archaeology* 26 (2010), 269–346.

<sup>153</sup> Work by M. Luke, B. Barker and B. Carroll of Albion Archaeology. M. Luke sent information.

<sup>154</sup> Work by M. Jones and M. Hinman of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd for CgMs Consulting for Bovis Homes. T. Vitali sent information.

<sup>155</sup> Work by D. Evans of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

<sup>156</sup> Work by C. Champness of Oxford Archaeology South for Buckinghamshire County Council. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>157</sup> Work by S. Fairhead of Wessex Archaeology for Thompson Habitats Limited, for Carillion Civil Engineering. P. Bradley sent information.



(b) *Graven Hill* (SP 5886 2083): 57 evaluation trenches were excavated in Land Transfer Area 1 (LTA1) within the greater development boundary at Graven Hill. In the northern part of the area three ditches produced moderate to large assemblages of pottery dated mid- to late second century. Related but undated ditches suggest the development of field boundaries or other small enclosures over a longer period. It is possible that this activity relates to a building of some pretension known beyond the development boundary to the WNW. The line of Roman Akeman Street, which survives as a roughly east–west-aligned hedge boundary, was investigated in its eastern part where the hedge lines had been removed revealing a limestone road surface set within a shallow terrace into the hillslope. No dating material was recovered.<sup>158</sup>

(2) **Charlton-on-Otmoor**, *Oxford to Bicester rail upgrade Site 26, Holts Farm crossing* (SP 5560 1720): evaluation in 2014 showed a concentration of late Iron Age and Roman features on a ridge of higher ground that occupied much of the evaluation area, mostly to the east of the railway. Subsequent excavation identified a long sequence of activity that extended from the middle Iron Age to the late Roman period. During the Roman period the site appears to have been on the periphery of a settlement, with a trackway and some of the associated paddock and field boundaries revealed.<sup>159</sup>

(3) **Dorchester on Thames**, *Discovering Dorchester Project* (SU 5774 9410): the training excavation in the allotments overlying the south-west quarter of the Roman town continued.<sup>160</sup> Early Roman (roughly mid-first century A.D.) cut features were overlain by a c. 0.25–0.30 m-thick layer of clayey loam, containing animal bone, pottery and parts of two copper-alloy brooches of first-century date. This deposit underlay the earliest gravel surface of the main north–south Roman road at the east end of the site. The road also sealed deposits interpreted by Frere<sup>161</sup> as belonging to one of a series of three north–south-aligned barrack blocks of the putative post-Boudican fort. A probable north–south timber slot lay adjacent to the western margin of an early road surface but there was no indication of related features or associated floor surfaces in the area immediately to the west. There are three principal road surface horizons, but these show a great deal of local variation and do not present a single consistent sequence. A notable feature was the presence within the second main road surface of two voids running at right angles across the road line. These appear to represent the location of planks set on edge about 0.10 m apart, packed around with large stones and overlaid by the gravel base of the road surface itself. Their interpretation is uncertain.

West of the road was a large oval feature about 8 m north–south and 5–6 m east–west and at least 1 m deep. The feature has fairly steep-sloping sides and a complex sequence of fills, most of which were apparently dumps, including burnt material, building material (including a substantial pile of plain plaster) and relatively large quantities of pottery, animal bone, iron nails and an assortment of other objects, including a sestertius of Faustina II, dated A.D. 175–80. This substantial feature occupies the middle of the space in the southern part of the site between the road and the second-century enclosure and building complex to the west, and may in origin have been broadly contemporary with the latter, although its uppermost fills continued to accumulate finds into the fourth century. The sequence of late Roman west–east ditches at the northern margin of the site was further examined. One of these, its steep and narrow V-shaped profile merging to a vertical-sided and flat-bottomed slot at the base, was shown to cut the road in the extreme north-east corner of the site.

<sup>158</sup> Work by S. Lawrence of Oxford Archaeology South for Graven Hill Village Development Company Ltd. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>159</sup> Work by S. Lawrence of Oxford Archaeology South for Chiltern Railways and Network Rail. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>160</sup> Work directed by P. Booth of Oxford Archaeology South who sent information.

<sup>161</sup> S.S. Frere, 'Excavations at Dorchester on Thames, 1963', *Archaeological Journal* 141 (1984), 94–8.

(4) **Grove, Monks Farm** (SU 406 909): the majority of dated features identified in evaluation were of the later Roman period, and suggest the presence of a small settlement in the central part of the site. Many undated ditches were also identified, as well as medieval features.<sup>162</sup>

(5) **Harwell**: (a) *Valley Park* (SU 5011 9026): evaluation identified an Iron Age to Roman double-ditched enclosure with internal ring-ditches, pits and post-holes. Evidence of intensive recutting and remodelling of the ditches was noted. A second late Iron Age to Roman enclosure with internal features and outlying ditch-defined plot or field boundaries was also present. A large number of ditches recorded across the site may belong to field-systems surrounding the enclosures.<sup>163</sup>

(b) *Land north of Grove Road* (SU 489 897): following the excavation of extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement remains on adjacent land, an evaluation revealed a single ditch dated to the Roman period, which along with three otherwise undated ditches, may have formed part of a field-system.<sup>164</sup>

(6) **Oddington**: (a) *north of Gallos Brook, Oxford to Bicester rail upgrade Site 20* (SP 5333 1508): excavation in 2014 revealed two phases of middle Iron Age settlement on the south side of the existing railway line, overlain by a series of early Roman boundaries. (b) *East of Brookfurlong Farm, Oxford to Bicester rail upgrade Sites 21 and 22* (SP 5365 1540): evaluation in 2014 located three probable field boundary ditches of Roman date.<sup>165</sup>

(7) **Oxford, 19 Between Towns Road, Cowley** (SP 544 041): evaluation immediately adjacent to one of the foci of the Oxford Roman pottery industry revealed only a late Roman pit, heavily truncated by modern features. The small pottery assemblage from this feature included a rare whiteware flagon face mask. The site may lie towards the south-east margin of the Cowley production site.<sup>166</sup>

(8) **South Leigh, Gill Mill Quarry Area 5a** (centred SP 3785 0745): several areas of the new quarry, lying north-west of the previously excavated nucleated settlement<sup>167</sup> were examined, revealing features mostly of middle Iron Age date. The only significant Roman feature, traced for c. 80 m in Area 5a, was a north-east–south-west-aligned ditch, of second-century date.<sup>168</sup>

(9) **Water Eaton, north of Water Eaton station, Oxford to Bicester railway upgrade Sites 9 and 10** (SP 5030 1220): excavation in 2014 revealed a group of rectilinear enclosures and boundaries originating in the first to early second century A.D. At least three enclosures were defined by shallow ditches but none lay entirely within the exposed area and it was consequently uncertain whether they were discrete enclosures or conjoined. In either case, they had evidently been constructed as part of a single planned arrangement, since they shared a common orientation. The absence of internal features and the relatively small artefactual assemblage associated with the enclosures suggests that they were not domestic in character and are more likely to represent stock enclosures. In the later second century

<sup>162</sup> Work by G. Thacker and J. Boothroyd of Oxford Archaeology South for Strutt and Parker LLP on behalf of Williams Grand Prix Engineering Ltd. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>163</sup> Work by A. Barber of Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.

<sup>164</sup> Work by S. Thompson of Wessex Archaeology for Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire. P. Bradley sent information.

<sup>165</sup> Work by S. Lawrence of Oxford Archaeology South for Chiltern Railways and Network Rail. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>166</sup> Work by P. Booth of Oxford Archaeology South for Latis Ltd. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>167</sup> See this volume, P. Booth, 'A probable cattle-handling settlement in the Windrush Valley, Oxfordshire: a brief summary of 25 years work at Gill Mill Quarry, Ducklington and South Leigh'.

<sup>168</sup> Work by Oxford Archaeology South for Smith and Sons (Bletchington) Ltd. P. Booth sent information.

the construction of a trackway and a series of rectilinear enclosures aligned on it replaced the earlier arrangement.<sup>169</sup>

(10) **Wendlebury:** (a) *College Farm barn, Merton footbridge and access track, Oxford to Bicester railway upgrade Sites 27, 28 and 29* (SP 5670 1780): evaluation immediately south of Merton targeted the projected line of the Roman road between Alchester and Dorchester-on-Thames. A concentration of second-century features possibly indicated settlement here. Remains at Merton footbridge dated from the second and early third centuries. Interpretation was hampered by the limited exposure of the features within the narrow confines of the trench, particularly in the central area.<sup>170</sup>

(b) *Langford Lane, Oxford to Bicester railway upgrade Site 31:* this was the most extensive of the railway upgrade sites and extended around the south and south-eastern sides of the Scheduled Monument of Alchester Roman town. It comprised four separate sites (Sites 31a–d) in two distinct areas. Sites 31a (SP 569 197) and 31b (SP 572 195) exposed part of the road that exited the south gate of the town and extended to Dorchester-on-Thames, as well as enclosures and fields on either side. Sites 31c (SP 577 201) and 31d (SP 578 202) exposed part of the trackway leading to the parade ground<sup>171</sup> south-east of the walled town and features associated with a spur road that branched off Akeman Street east of the town. A long, sinuous trench between the two areas uncovered only undated features.

South of Alchester (Sites 31a and 31b) two north-east–south-west-aligned ditches probably predated the north–south Alchester–Dorchester road, but the pottery recovered from one of them included second-century material, suggesting that the ditch was retained as a field boundary even after the road had been constructed over part of it in the late first century. Part of the metalled surface of the road survived, as did the flanking ditches, between which the road was 15 m wide. The fields and enclosures on either side of the road appear to have been laid out at the same time. A double-ditched boundary 3–4 m wide extended to the west of the road and may have defined a trackway between adjacent fields. The area north of the trackway was divided into two large fields. On the south side of the trackway a group of smaller enclosures were situated close to the road. West of this group lay a larger enclosure that was more similar to the fields to the north of the trackway. The arrangement east of the road was less clear, since this part of the excavation area was smaller, but appeared to comprise a group of conjoined rectilinear enclosures adjacent to the road, bounded to the rear by a ditch with larger fields beyond.

The road continued in use through the second century, during which time the flanking ditches were recut on at least two occasions, but only the southern ditch of the trackway was maintained as a boundary. Re-organisation of the field boundaries north of the former trackway included the construction of a double-ditched boundary and a complex junction of boundary ditches at the north-western edge of the site, corresponding with the evidence from cropmark features. South of the former trackway, the enclosures that fronted onto the road were re-organised, apparently to create a larger number of smaller enclosures with a boundary to the west and a curvilinear enclosure beyond. By the end of the second century some of the ditches that defined the enclosure complex had been infilled and a gravel surface laid over them. The latest feature in this area was a large pit of late second- to early third-century date. The enclosures on the east side of the road were replaced by larger units, represented by a double-ditched boundary aligned north–south and two similarly aligned ditches further east. No positive evidence was

<sup>169</sup> Work by S. Lawrence and J. Mumford of Oxford Archaeology South for Chiltern Railways and Network Rail. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>170</sup> Work by S. Lawrence of Oxford Archaeology South for Chiltern Railways and Network Rail. R. Shaffrey sent information.

<sup>171</sup> E. Sauer, 'The military origins of the Roman town of Alchester, Oxfordshire', *Britannia* 30, 289–97.

found for activity after the second century. The Alchester–Dorchester road presumably remained in use but the absence of later recuts suggests that the flanking ditches were not maintained. Whether this was true of the field boundaries on either side of the road is uncertain.

East of Alchester a group of shallow pits and shallow, slightly curvilinear ditches in the central part of Site 31d were dated to the late Iron Age. The ditches were aligned north–south but formed no coherent pattern. Features assigned a broadly mid-first-century date were probably contemporary with the military phase at Alchester and pre-dated the establishment of the civilian settlement and the Alchester–Dorchester road and associated features in Sites 31a and 31b. The most significant feature of this phase was a spur road, which extended away from the line of Akeman Street across the north-eastern end of the site on a north-west–south-east alignment. The part of the road exposed within the excavation area comprised a pair of flanking ditches that defined a metalled surface 10 m wide. Pottery from the basal fill of the western ditch indicated that the road was established between *c.* A.D. 43 and 80. A major, long-lived, east–west ditched boundary that crossed the south-western end of Site 31d appears to have been established during this phase. Other contemporary features comprised shallow pits and ditches in the central part of Site 31d that were similar to the late Iron Age/early Roman features in the same area.

Part of the trackway that led to the parade ground lying 215 m south-east of the site was exposed in Site 31c. It was defined by a pair of ditches 5 m apart but there was no evidence for metalling. The parade ground has been dated to the mid-first century but the pottery from the ditches dated predominantly to the second century and was presumably associated with the backfilling of the features.

Towards the end of the first century the western frontage of the spur road was developed, with the construction of several stone-founded structures and associated features and surfaces. Two lengths of wall appear to have formed a barrier alongside the roadside ditch. A break in the wall 11.3 m wide corresponded with the location of a pair of small square stone-founded structures that may have formed either side of a gatehouse. A metalled surface 3.25 m wide between the two structures may have been part of a carriageway and further gravel surfaces lay to the front and rear of the structures. Part of an adjacent larger structure at the south-eastern edge of the excavation area was interpreted as the rear (south-west) corner of a rectangular strip-building aligned end-on to the road frontage. The south and west walls of the building originally met at a rather oblique angle, as a result of which it had been necessary to demolish and rebuild the south wall. A few contemporary pits were located in the area to the rear of the buildings. The roadside ditches were recut at least once during the second century and the eastern ditch appears to have been particularly wide, with a fill of alluvial clay. It may have been deliberately altered to channel the Langford Brook alongside the road. Activity on the road frontage seems to have largely ended by the middle of the second century. The buildings were demolished and the road itself may have become disused, since no later recuts were identified. The only entirely new feature assigned to this period was a rectilinear enclosure ditch dug around the location of the probable strip-building, although it is uncertain if this was still standing by the time the ditch was established.

The southern edge of the metalled surface of Akeman Street was exposed at the north-eastern end of Site 31d, beneath the embankment that carries the modern Langford Lane. The only feature exposed in an evaluation trench here was a continuation of the spur road.<sup>172</sup>

[paul.booth@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:paul.booth@oxfordarch.co.uk)

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<sup>172</sup> Work by S. Lawrence and J. Mumford of Oxford Archaeology South for Chiltern Railways and Network Rail. A. Simmonds sent information.