

From hunter gatherers to huntsmen

A history of the Stansted landscape



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Principal authors

Nicholas Cooke, Fraser Brown and Christopher Phillpotts

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by Nicholas Cooke and Fraser Brown

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CD-Rom Introduction

The volume is accompanied by a CD-Rom containing the Framework Archaeology Freeviewer, specialists' reports, tables and illustrations. The Freeviewer GIS viewing software has been developed to enable readers to have access to more data than would be possible in a traditional publication. The monograph and Freeviewer are designed to be used together so that if more data are required in order to view the evidence supporting a particular argument presented in the text, it will be possible to consult the particular dataset via the Freeviewer. A range of pre-defined queries for each chapter of the monograph has been created (eg *Neolithic landscape, Overview of the post-medieval settlements*) to enable the user to explore further the archaeology of the Stansted landscape. In addition to these queries that are linked to the monograph more information can be accessed and explored through five other sections of the Freeviewer (*Landscapes, Excavation Methodology, Finds Distribution Mapping, Essex County Council Excavations and Supplementary Data*). Each of these sections is further subdivided to enable the user to explore the data. Filters can be applied to show different distributions of finds material by date, there is information on the environmental sampling and the user can access digital photographs and sections of features drawn on site. The contents of the CD-Rom are presented below.

It should be noted that much of the data within the Freeviewer are essentially primary data, in that they represent material and ideas generated on-site, without additional post-excavation analysis. As a result of this there may be the occasional discrepancy with the data as presented within this volume. A comprehensive Help File exists which can be accessed by pressing the F1 key or using Help option on the pull-down menu at the top of the screen.

Instructions for installing the Freeviewer

1. You will require Administrative rights on Windows Vista® and either Power User rights or Administrative rights on Windows 2000® and Windows XP® to install both the data and the software. If you do not have sufficient rights please see your local administrator.
2. Insert the CD-Rom in your CD Drive.
3. If Autoplay is enabled then the Framework Archaeology Installer will start. Otherwise double-click on the CD-Rom Drive letter in My Computer or select Autoplay from the right click pop-up menu.
4. Once the Framework Archaeology Installer has started, you should install the Framework Archaeology Freeviewer (menu option 1). Click the button to start the installation.
5. This starts a standard install program for the Framework Freeviewer. Follow the instructions of this installer. At the end of this process, you will then need to install the data.
6. Use the menu option 2 to start the installation of the data for the Stansted excavations and follow the instructions. You may need to be patient as this can take some time to complete. During the installation you will be prompted to

either accept the default location on your computer for the data or you can specify a location of your choice.

7. Once you have installed the data you can then exit the Framework Archaeology Installer by clicking the exit button.
8. Now you can start to explore the data using the Framework Archaeology Freeviewer. You will find a short-cut on the desktop to start the program. The Programs section of the Start Menu will also contain a folder called Framework Archaeology which contains short cuts to start the program and a link to the Help File. Help can be accessed within the program by pressing the F1 key or by using the Help option on the pull-down menu.

System requirements

- The program requires 12MB of disk space to install and once installed will take up 6MB of disk space.
- The data (varying by project) may require approximately 1.1GB of free disk space and will use approximately 600MB of disk space once installed for the largest Framework Archaeology project.
- You will require as a minimum a 1GHz processor or better
- The program is a Windows®-based application designed to run on Windows 2000®, Windows XP®, and Windows Vista® operating systems. It will also run on Windows 98® but with limitations.
- Running on Windows 2000® and Windows XP® you will typically require 256MB of memory. The program will run with less memory but with a performance impact.
- Since the program includes a Geographic Information System, you will find that using the program is more comfortable at higher screen resolutions. The program is designed to run on a minimum screen resolution of 800 by 600 pixels but a screen resolution of 1024 by 768 or higher will greatly improve your experience of the Framework Archaeology Freeviewer.
- User rights only are required on Windows 2000®, Windows XP® and Windows Vista® to run the software provided that the user has read and write access to the folder where the data are installed.

Data formats

The data are presented using the following data formats:

- Database attribute data are in Microsoft Access 2000® format (.mdb) and stored in the AttributeData folder under the project folder, Stansted.
- The mapping data are stored in ESRI® shapefile format (.shp) and stored in the SpatialData folder under the project folder, Stansted.
- Supporting images such as sections and digital photographs are in .jpg format and stored under Sections and Photos folders under the project folder, Stansted.
- The data can be directly accessed using your preferred Geographic Information Software if required.

Data Licence

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Summary

Between 1999 and 2004, Framework Archaeology undertook a series of large-scale archaeological excavations at Stansted Airport, Essex, the results of which are presented in this volume. Earlier excavations, undertaken by Essex County Council (the Stansted Project), between 1985 and 1991 have recently been published (Havis and Brooks 2004), and this volume integrates some of these results in order to present a history of the Stansted landscape.

It is clear that the natural landscape at Stansted has significantly affected the nature of human activity and inhabitation of the area. The post-glacial landscape is likely to have been a heavily wooded one, occasionally broken by natural clearings and small watercourses. The earliest evidence for human activity – a small number of flint tools and waste flakes – indicates that the area was occasionally visited by transient hunter-gatherers, perhaps as far back as 420,000 years BC, and more regularly in the Late Upper Palaeolithic and in the Mesolithic periods. The landscape was opened up slightly, with the introduction of small-scale agriculture, in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, although the excavated evidence suggests that hunting and gathering remained important.

The earliest evidence for permanent settlement in the area dates to the Middle Bronze Age, with domestic structures excavated on a number of sites, including an important enclosed settlement. Evidence for burial and ritual activities was also found. Radiocarbon dates provide a framework whilst analysis of the material recovered allows discussion of domestic and ritual aspects of daily life. The location and agricultural basis of these settlements was heavily influenced by the physical form of the landscape, its vegetation patterns and the poor agricultural potential of the heavy clays that covered most of the higher plateau. There appears to have been a

decline in the density of settlement activity in the Late Bronze Age, leading to a hiatus towards the end of the period.

Small-scale localised activity in the Early Iron Age was followed by increased settlement density in the Middle Iron Age, apparently associated with the first coherent enclosure of the landscape. This pattern continued into the Late Iron Age, with numerous settlements developing within an increasingly enclosed landscape. There is also clear evidence for settlement hierarchy, probably reflecting the development of more complex social and political structures. As in the Bronze Age, rituals surrounding the treatment of the dead played an important role, whilst more regular acts of deposition, predominantly in boundary ditches were part of daily life.

The affect of the Roman conquest on this Late Iron Age settlement pattern is examined in detail. Initially there was little evidence for significant change but over time more 'Romanised' pottery forms were adopted, there were changes in burial practice and settlements established in the Iron Age declined and were abandoned. This seems to have led to a significant depopulation of the area in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. An apparent resurgence in activity in the 4th century, associated with agricultural intensification may be linked to the creation of large agricultural estates; one site in particular appears to have been the agricultural hub for such an estate.

In the post-Roman period there was a major hiatus probably resulting in a large-scale reversion of much of the area to woodland. By the Late Saxon period, however, farmers were once more clearing areas of woodland for agriculture. Villages sprang up in river valleys and along the Roman road network, with outlying farms occupying favourable locations closer to the clay plateau. The post-*Domesday* landscape was an increasingly complex one, with parishes and manors divided and subdivided. Large areas were subject to forest law, or enclosed within deer parks, leading to increased pressure on agricultural land. One response to this was the campaigns of assarting undertaken by many of the manors in the area, clearing woodland for agricultural land. Evidence for medieval settlement, farming, and assarting has been revealed, along with the site of a medieval post-mill, probably built to process the crops for one of the manors. Increasing population and demand for land continued until the Black Death, which substantially reduced the rural population in the area.

The excavations also revealed evidence for the location of Stansted Park, and the nature and layout of the central hunting lodge in the late medieval and post-medieval periods. The deer bone assemblage recovered from the lodge site is consistent with the ritual 'unmaking' of deer carcasses, whilst a number of earthworks in the vicinity of the lodge suggest 'bow and stable' hunting was practised. Over time, however, the importance of the park and lodge seems to have declined, with some parkland leased for grazing, before the lodge was converted to a farmhouse, probably when the park was dis-parked. This farm continued to be occupied into the 18th century, when it was systematically dismantled and abandoned.

Résumé

On présente dans ce volume les résultats d'une série d'excavations archéologiques à grande échelle entreprises entre 1999 et 2004 par 'Framework Archaeology' à l'aéroport de Stansted, dans le comté d'Essex. Des excavations antérieures, menées entre 1985 et 1991 par le Conseil Général de l'Essex (le projet Stansted), ont été publiées récemment (Havis et Brooks 2004), et ce volume intègre certains de leurs résultats de manière à retracer l'histoire du paysage de Stansted.

Il est clair que le paysage naturel à Stansted a eu des effets significatifs sur la nature de l'activité humaine et de l'habitat de la région. Il est probable que le paysage post-glaciaire était couvert de denses forêts, interrompues çà et là par des clairières naturelles et de petits cours d'eau. Les témoignages d'activité humaine les plus anciens – un petit nombre d'outils en silex et d'éclats rejetés – indiquent que la région était occasionnellement fréquentée par des chasseurs cueilleurs de passage, peut-être dès les années 420 000 av. J.-C., et plus régulièrement au paléolithique supérieur final et pendant les périodes mésolithiques. Le paysage fut légèrement dégagé, avec l'introduction d'une agriculture sur une petite échelle au néolithique et à l'âge du bronze ancien, bien que les témoignages mis au jour confirment que la chasse et la cueillette restaient importantes.

Le plus ancien témoignage d'occupation sédentaire de la région date de l'âge du bronze moyen, des structures domestiques ont été excavées sur un certain nombre de sites, y compris une importante occupation fermée. On a également trouvé des témoignages d'activités funéraires et rituelles. Les datations au carbone 14 fournissent une ossature tandis que l'analyse des matériaux recouverts nous permet de discuter des aspects domestiques et rituels de la vie quotidienne. L'emplacement et l'origine agricole de ces occupations ont été fortement influencés par la forme physique du paysage, la répartition de la végétation et le maigre potentiel agricole des argiles grasses qui couvraient la plus grande partie du haut plateau. Il semble y avoir eu un déclin dans la densité de l'activité de ce peuplement à l'âge du bronze final, ce qui conduisit à une lacune vers la fin de cette période.

Une présence localisée de petite échelle à l'âge du fer ancien fut suivie par une augmentation de la densité du peuplement à l'âge du fer moyen, apparemment associée aux premiers efforts cohérents pour enclore le paysage. Ce schéma continua à l'âge du fer final avec le développement de nombreuses occupations dans un paysage de plus en plus cloturé. Il existe également des témoignages clairs d'une hiérarchie du peuplement, qui reflète probablement le développement de structures sociales et politiques plus complexes. Comme à l'âge du bronze, les rituels entourant le traitement des morts jouèrent un rôle important, tandis que des actions de dépôts plus régulières, essentiellement dans les fossés limitrophes faisaient partie de la vie quotidienne.

On examine en détail l'effet de la conquête romaine sur ce type d'occupation de l'âge du fer final. Au départ il n'y avait que peu de preuves de changements significatifs mais au fil du temps, on adopta des formes plus 'romanisées' de céramique, il y eut des changements dans les pratiques funéraires et les occupations établies l'âge du fer déclinerent et furent abandonnées. Cela semble avoir conduit à une importante dépopulation de la région au deuxième et troisième siècles ap. J.-C. Il se peut qu'une apparente résurgence de l'activité au quatrième siècle, associée à une intensification de l'agriculture ait eu un lien avec la création de grands domaines agricoles, un site en particulier semble avoir été le pivot agricole d'un tel domaine.

Pendant la période qui suivit la conquête romaine se produisit une lacune majeure qui eut comme résultat un important retour à la forêt d'une grande partie de la région. D'ici la fin de la période saxonne, cependant, les paysans défrichaient à nouveau les zones boisées pour l'agriculture. Des villages firent leur apparition dans les vallées fluviales et le long du réseau de voies romaines, avec des fermes isolées occupant les emplacements de choix plus près du plateau argileux. Après le Domesday, le paysage gagna en complexité, paroisses et manoirs étant divisés et redivisés. De vastes étendues furent soumises à la loi sur la forêt ou encloses dans des parcs à cerfs, ce qui entraîna une pression accrue sur les terres agricoles. Une des réactions à cet état de fait furent les campagnes d'essartage entreprises par un grand nombre des manoirs de la région, défrichant de la forêt pour en faire des terres agricoles. Des témoignages d'occupation, d'agriculture et d'essartage au moyen âge ont été découverts ainsi que le site d'un moulin à corps tournant post-médiéval, probablement construit pour transformer les récoltes d'un des manoirs. La croissance de la population et les besoins en terres se prolongèrent jusqu'à la Peste Noire, qui réduisit considérablement la population rurale de la région.

Les fouilles révélèrent également des témoignages relatifs à l'emplacement de Stansted Park, et à la nature et la disposition du pavillon de chasse central à la fin du moyen-âge et à la période post-médiévale. L'assemblage d'ossements de cerfs retrouvé sur le site du pavillon est en accord le rituel de 'découpage' des carcasses de cerfs tandis qu'un certain nombre de talus à proximité du pavillon donnent à penser qu'on pratiquait la chasse à 'l'arc et aux flèches'. Au fil du temps il semble toutefois que l'importance du parc et du pavillon ait décliné, certaines parties du parc étant louées pour le pâturage, avant que le pavillon ne soit converti en ferme, probablement quand le parc perdit son statut de parc. La ferme continua à être occupée pendant une partie du 18^{ème} siècle, date à laquelle elle fut systématiquement démantelée et abandonnée.

Traduction: Annie Pritchard

Zusammenfassung

Von 1999 bis 2004 hat Framework Archaeology eine Reihe großflächiger Ausgrabungen auf dem Flughafen Stansted in der Grafschaft Essex durchgeführt, deren Ergebnisse in diesem Band vorgelegt werden. Zwischen 1985 und 1991 von der Grafschaftsverwaltung von Essex durchgeführte Untersuchungen wurden kürzlich veröffentlicht (Havis and Brooks 2004), und einige der dort gewonnenen Ergebnisse werden bei der hier vorzulegenden Landschaftsgeschichte Stansteds berücksichtigt.

Es ist offensichtlich, daß auf die natürliche Umgebung Stansteds in bedeutender Weise durch menschliche Aktivitäten und Besiedlung eingewirkt wurde. Die nach-eiszeitliche Landschaft war vermutlich stark bewaldet, unterbrochen nur durch vereinzelte natürliche Lichtungen und Wasserläufe. Der früheste Nachweis menschlicher Aktivität – eine geringe Anzahl Flintgeräte und Abschläge – deutet an, daß die Gegend vereinzelt von durchziehenden Jägern/Sammlern frequentiert wurde, möglicherweise schon seit ungefähr 420.000 BC und vermehrt dann gegen Ende des Spätpaläolithikums und im Mesolithikum. Mit der Einführung kleinmaßstäbiger Landwirtschaft im Neolithikum und der frühen Bronzezeit wurde die Landschaft etwas gelichtet; die Grabungsergebnisse legen aber nahe, daß Jagen und Sammeln weiterhin von Bedeutung waren.

Der früheste Hinweis auf permanente Besiedlung datiert in die mittlere Bronzezeit. Aus diesem Zeitraum stammen Siedlungsstrukturen von einer Reihe von Fundplätzen, darunter eine wichtige eingefriedete Siedlung. Ebenso wurden Hinweise auf Bestattungen und rituelle Handlungen gefunden. Radiokarbondatierungen bilden ein zeitliches Gerüst für die Analyse des Fundmaterials, daß eine Diskussion der häuslichen und rituellen Aspekte des täglichen Lebens erlaubt. Die Lage der Siedlungen und ihre landwirtschaftliche Basis war stark geprägt von der Landschaft, den Bewuchsmustern und dem geringen landwirtschaftlichen Potential der schweren Lehmböden, die den Großteil der höheren Lagen des Plateaus bedeckten. Im Verlauf der späten Bronzezeit nimmt die Dichte der Besiedlung immer weiter ab, was am Ende der Periode zu einem Hiatus führt.

Vereinzelter, kleinräumiger Aktivität in der frühen Eisenzeit folgt eine Besiedlungsverdichtung in der mittleren Eisenzeit, die anscheinend mit der ersten zusammenhängenden Einfriedung der Landschaft einhergeht. Dieses Muster setzt sich mit der Entstehung zahlreicher Siedlungen und einer zunehmenden Einfriedung der Landschaft bis in die späte Eisenzeit fort. Es gibt nun auch deutliche Hinweise auf eine Siedlungshierarchie, die wahrscheinlich die Entwicklung komplexerer sozialer und politischer Strukturen reflektieren. Wie bereits in der Bronzezeit spielen Rituale im Zusammenhang mit der Behandlung der Toten eine bedeutende Rolle, während gewöhnlichere Deponierungen,

vornehmlich in Begrenzungsgräben, Teil des täglichen Lebens waren.

Die Auswirkungen der römischen Eroberung auf dieses spätereisenzeitliche Besiedlungsmuster werden eingehend untersucht. Zu Beginn der Periode gab es kaum Hinweise auf bedeutende Veränderungen, aber im Laufe der Zeit wurden vermehrt „romanisierte“ Gefäßformen übernommen, Bestattungssitten änderten sich und in der Eisenzeit gegründete Siedlungen schrumpften und wurden aufgegeben. Dies hat im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. scheinbar zu einer deutlichen Entvölkerung der Landschaft geführt. Eine offensichtliche Zunahme an Aktivität im 4. Jahrhundert, verbunden mit einer Intensivierung der Landwirtschaft, ist vielleicht mit der Einrichtung großer Landgüter zu verbinden; ein Fundplatz im besonderen scheint das landwirtschaftliche Zentrum eines solchen Guts gewesen zu sein.

Eine ausgeprägte Siedlungslücke in nachrömischer Zeit hat wahrscheinlich zu einer ausgedehnten Wiederbewaldung der Landschaft geführt. Spätestens in spätsächsischer Zeit (10.–11. Jahrhundert) wurde der Wald abermals für landwirtschaftliche Flächen gelichtet. Dörfer entstanden in den Flußtäälern und entlang des römischen Straßennetzes, während Einzelgehöfte an siedlungsgünstigen Stellen näher am Plateau mit seinen Lehmböden zu finden waren. In der Zeit nach Domesday stellt sich die Landschaft durch die wiederholten Teilungen von Dörfern und Gütern zunehmend komplexer dar. Große Bereiche unterlagen dem Waldrecht oder wurden als Hirschkarks eingezäunt, was zu einem zunehmenden Druck auf die landwirtschaftlichen Flächen führte. Eine Antwort hierauf waren die „assarting“-Kampagnen, die von vielen Gütern in der Region durchgeführt wurden, um Wald für landwirtschaftliche Nutzung zu roden. Es wurden Hinweise auf mittelalterliche Besiedlung, Viehhaltung und Rodungen („assarting“) gefunden, ebenso wie der Standort einer mittelalterlichen Bockwindmühle, die wahrscheinlich dem Mahlen des Getreides einer der Güter diente. Bis zum Ausbruch des Schwarzen Todes, der die ländliche Bevölkerung stark dezimierte, hielten Bevölkerungszuwachs und Nachfrage nach Land an.

Die Ausgrabungen lieferten ebenfalls Hinweise auf die Lage von Stansted Park wie auch den Charakter und Grundriß des zentralen Jagdhauses im Spätmittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit. Die bei diesem Haus gefundenen Hirschknochenfunde erlauben die Deutung einer rituellen Schlachtung der Hirschkadaver, während einige Bodenformationen in der Nähe des Jagdhauses als Hinweise auf Gatter- oder Gehegejagd gedeutet werden. Im Laufe der Zeit scheint die Bedeutung des Parks und des Jagdhauses zurückgegangen zu sein, und Teile des Parks wurden als Weide verpachtet, bis letztendlich das Haus als Bauernhof genutzt wurde, was wahrscheinlich mit dem Ende der Nutzung des Parks einherging. Dieser Bauernhof war bis ins 18. Jahrhundert hinein bewohnt und wurde dann aufgegeben und systematisch abgebaut.

Übersetzung: Jörn Schuster

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Site archaeologists

Perhaps the greatest thanks must go to the dedicated teams of site assistants on whose professionalism these projects relied, and who were often asked to work in unpleasant and occasionally near impossible conditions, but whose work forms an exemplary archive. The site staff who worked on the projects were M Andrew, C Anker, C Appleton, A Armstrong, P Axtell, M Bailey, R Bailey, D Bashford, R Bashford, S Beech, J Bond, C Bowden, V Bray, P Breach, H Brown, G Chaffey, B Charles, H Clark, S Clelland, G Cockin, M Collins, J Collings, G Couling, A Coupe, A Coutes, J Crawford, L Crawford, J Crisp, C Davies, M Dinwiddy, D Donoghue, J Eaton, P Fairclough,

T Fairclough, N Fitzpatrick, S George, C Gerson, E Gill, E Glass, A Gledhill, R Golding, J Guerrero Marin, K Guest, T Haines, D Hall, C Heatley, J Holt, K Hoskyn, D Houghton, R Kelleher, S Kelly, G Kendal, P Kent, M Kwong Ma, M Lacey, N Lambert, C Lane, S Laurie-Lynch, S Leech, R Lopex Roderiguez, D Maricevic, H Marriott, R Marsh, S McCann, P Mienie, F Minter, M Morley, D Mortimer, K Niven, D Norcott, L Norman, J O'Brien, M Orna-Ornstein, Y Palmer, J Patrick, D Patterson, I Pero-Hays, J Peters, M Peters, P Phillips, S Pickstone, H Pinto, A Platt, N Plunkett, M Pocock, K Proctor, R Radford, C Richardson, C Ridings, J Rolfe, J Rollingson, C Sampson, S Sampson, S Shrimpton, A Simmonds, S Skitterell, A Sole, A Stone, D Stone, M Stewart, S Sworn, G Thacker, M Thompson, V Tomolin, D Warburton, G Whale, G Wilson, M Wood and P Wooldridge. Without their hard work, this report would not have been possible.

Framework Archaeology Joint Venture Board and Management Team

Framework Archaeology is a joint venture between Wessex Archaeology and Oxford Archaeology. It was initially overseen by the then chief executives David Miles and Andrew Lawson, together with Peter Dawes and Simon Palmer. The agreement continued under the present chief executives, David Jennings and Sue Davies, with Clive Burrows succeeding Peter Dawes. Framework Archaeology is controlled by a management team comprising Bob Williams and John Dillon, and led by John Lewis.



CHAPTER 1
Introduction

by Nicholas Cooke, John Lewis and Fraser Brown

Introduction

This report presents the results of a series of archaeological projects undertaken in advance of redevelopment work at Stansted Airport, Essex between 1999 and 2004. These were undertaken to mitigate the effects of a series of developments within the Stansted Airport Limited (STAL) landholding, designed to improve facilities for passengers or to augment the infrastructure of the airport as part of expansion plans to increase the capacity of the airport to 15 million passengers *per annum*.

The Framework Archaeology excavations

In total, the evaluations and excavations detailed in this report covered some 33.68 hectares. The main areas concentrated on during these excavations lie to the west and south of the runway and terminal within the STAL landholding NGR 554000 223000 (Figs 1.1–3, Plate 1.1).

This fieldwork was commissioned by the airport operators BAA and undertaken by Framework Archaeology, a joint venture between Oxford Archaeology (OA) and Wessex Archaeology (WA), formed specifically to provide archaeological services to BAA.

The largest areas subject to detailed excavation (the Mid and Long Term

Car Park sites – MTCP and LTCP) lay in areas where new car parks were to be built, whilst other sites were undertaken in advance of work designed to improve the infrastructure of the airfield (the Long Border Road (LBR), Forward Logistics Base (FLB), Noise Pen (NP), Standby Runway and Ryan Air crew accommodation sites) (see Table 1.1), or as part of works associated with the improvements to the A120 to the south of the airport (the M11 Slip Road site (M11), the M11 Contractors Compound site and the Area 1A South Gate site (SG)). Not all of these projects identified archaeological features and deposits. Full assessments for all of the sites can be found in archive, along with details of the work undertaken at each stage of the project (Framework Archaeology 1999a–c; 2000a–d; 2001a–e; 2004a–c),

Figure 1.1: Site location

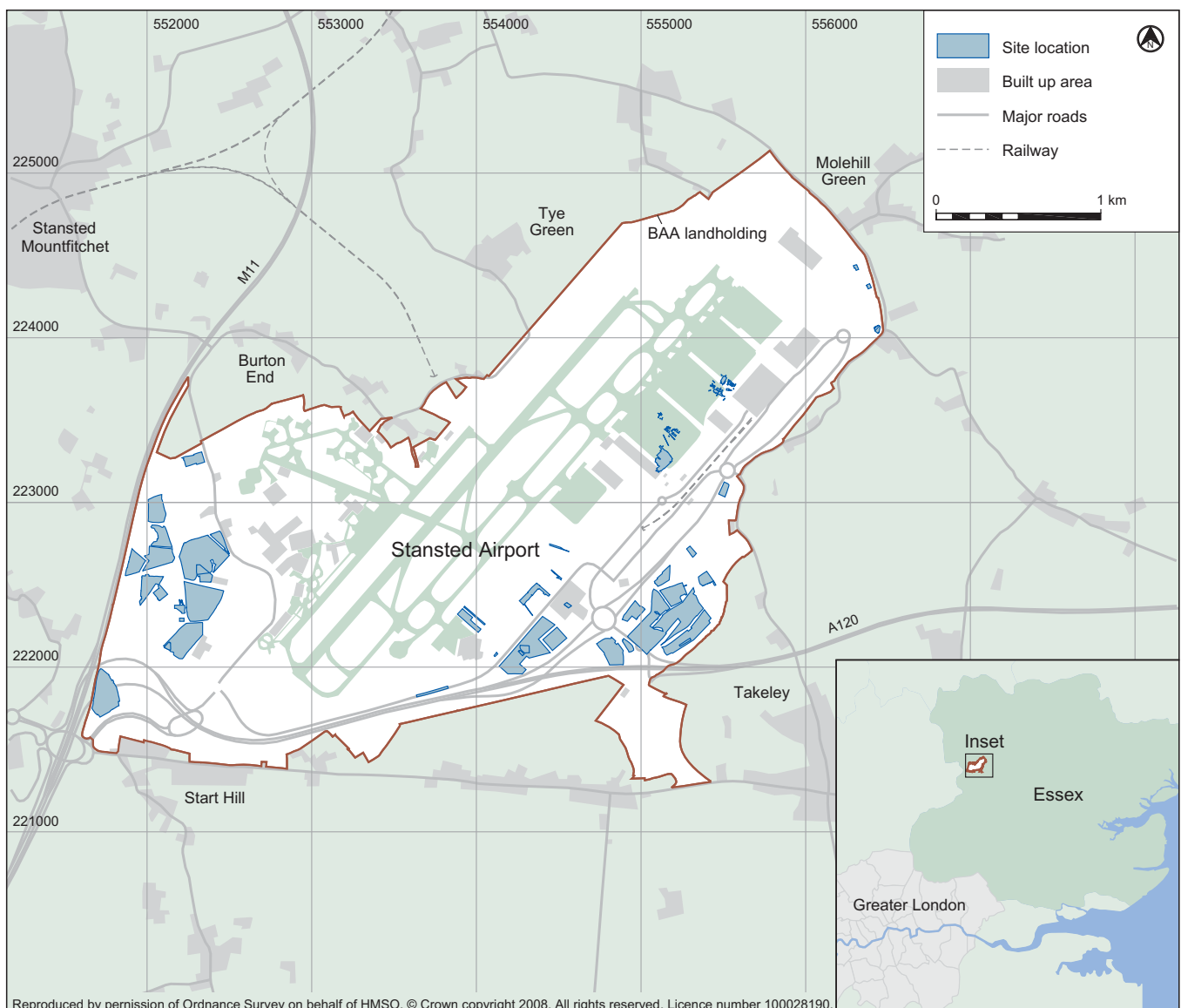




Figure 1.2: Stansted Airport from the air showing excavated areas (Photograph © BAA Limited see www.baa.com/photolibrary)

and these are only presented in summary here.

The majority of sites were subject to several levels of archaeological mitigation, usually involving a written desk-based assessment, evaluation (occasionally by fieldwalking as well as by trial trenching) and detailed excavation of archaeological remains. In two areas, test pits were deemed appropriate rather than trial trenches – as part of the initial work on the M11 Slip Road site, where their main purpose was to identify areas of land which had not been damaged by extensive quarrying during the mid 20th century, and on the Standby Runway site, where they performed a similar exploratory role and where the strictures of working ‘airside’ meant that larger trenches were impractical. In the case of the former, once areas of archaeological potential had been identified, these were subject to a second phase of evaluation involving a series of trial trenches.

Ref	Site name	Site code	Type	Date	Area	No. trenches
LTCP	Long Term Car Park Phase 1	BAACP99	Evaluation	1999		31
MTCP	Mid Term Car Park	BAAMP99	Evaluation	1999		92
LTCP	Long Term Car Park: Phase1	BAACP99	Excavation	1999	1.58 ha	
LTCP	Long Term Car Park: Phase 2	BAACP00	Excavation	2000	8.23 ha	
MTCP	Mid Term Car Park	BAAMP00	Excavation/ Watching Brief	2000/ 2001	13 ha	
LBR	Long Border Road	BAALB00	Evaluation/Excavation	2000	0.5 ha	9
n/a	Ryan Air Accommodation	BAARA00	Evaluation	2000	0.72 ha	3
FLB	Forward Logistics Base	BA AFL00	Evaluation	2000		26
FLB	Forward Logistics Base	BA AFL00	Excavation	2000	0.94 ha	
n/a	Standby Runway	BAASR00	Evaluation	2000		24 TPs
M11	M11 Slip Road	BAALR00	Evaluation	2000-1		12 + 21 TPs
LTCP	Long Term Car Park: Phase 3	BAACP00	Evaluation	2000-1		91
n/a	M11 contractors compound	BAARC01	Evaluation	2001		6
M11	M11 Slip Road	BAALR00	Excavation	2001	3.15 ha	
LTCP	Long Term Car Park: Phase 3	BAACP01	Excavation	2001	2.16 ha	
SG	Area 1A Southgate	BAASG03	Evaluation	2003		18
SG	Area 1A Southgate	BAASG03	Excavation	2003	2.7 ha	
NP	Noise Pen	BAANP03	Excavation	2003	0.7 ha	
Totals					33.68 hectares	252 Trenches 45 Test Pits

Table 1.1: Details of sites excavated by Framework Archaeology

As a result of this, the majority of the archaeological work was undertaken without significant time pressure from the developments themselves. The two exceptions to this were the Long Term Car Park Phase 2 (LTCP), where the density of archaeological remains encountered required a significant increase in the size of the excavation team in order to meet the timescale of the construction programme, and the southern half of the Mid Term Car Park (MTCP) site. Here the evaluation suggested that there were few archaeological features, and the area was subject to a watching brief. In this watching brief, it was not always possible to obtain a complete plan of the archaeological features and deposits revealed, or to investigate them thoroughly. The features were often excavated rapidly, with a view to retrieving as much information as possible prior to destruction.

Table 1.1 provides a summary of site names and abbreviations which are used in this report (eg LTCP for all of the Long Term Car Park sites). The location of these sites is also shown on Figure 1.3.

Previous archaeological work in the area: the Stansted Project excavations

The archaeology of the immediate vicinity of Stansted airport has been the focus of much archaeological work, largely as a response to the continued expansion of the airport in the late 20th century. In order to provide a co-ordinated approach to the archaeological work required in areas threatened by the expansion of the airport, the Stansted Project was formed in 1985 (see Havis and Brooks 2004 for the background to this project). This was an ambitious landscape project, co-ordinated by Essex County Council, designed to concentrate on the medieval landscape – at the time it was commonly held that the heavy boulder clays of the region remained largely unsettled until the medieval period, and the only known sites within the study area were the medieval manor sites at Colchester Hall and Bassingbourne Hall and a scatter of



Plate 1.1: The scale of the excavations - removing topsoil on the LTCP site

Roman pottery near the Hall Caravan site (Havis and Brooks 2004, 2).

An extensive programme of field-walking, combined with targeted excavations and watching briefs on threatened sites established that there was a great diversity of archaeological remains within the study area. This work was undertaken over six years and in total 31 sites were subject to archaeological investigation (Fig. 1.3, Table 1.2), with the results of the work being published in 2004 (Havis and Brooks 2004).

As a result of the ongoing work, and the increasing diversity of the archaeological remains recovered, the focus of the project rapidly changed, and it became a multi-period rural settlement project (Havis and Brooks 2004, 3). The earliest evidence for human activity in the area comprised small quantities of Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork, but the earliest archaeological features excavated belonged to the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age. Evidence for Middle and Late Iron Age settlement was recovered from a number of sites, with a major enclosed Late Iron Age settlement excavated on the ACS site.

Ref	Site name	Type
ACS	Airport Catering Site	Detailed excavation
BHS	Bassingbourne Hall	Rescue excavation
BLS	Bury Lodge	Rescue excavation
CCS	Costains Compound	Rescue excavation
CHS	Colchester Hall	Detailed excavation
CIS	Car park 1	Rescue excavation
CPS	Car park	Salvage
DCS	Duckend car park	Rescue excavation
DFS	Duckend Farm	Detailed excavation
GCS	Great Coopers	Detailed excavation
LBS A-C	Long Border A-C	Salvage
LCS	Little Coopers	Salvage
MGS A-C	Molehill Green A-C	Detailed excavation
RWS	Roundwood Social Club	Detailed excavation
SCS	Social Club	Detailed excavation
TAS	Thremhall Avenue	Salvage
TWS	The Wilderness	Detailed and rescue excavation

Table 1.2: Details of selected sites undertaken by the Stansted Project

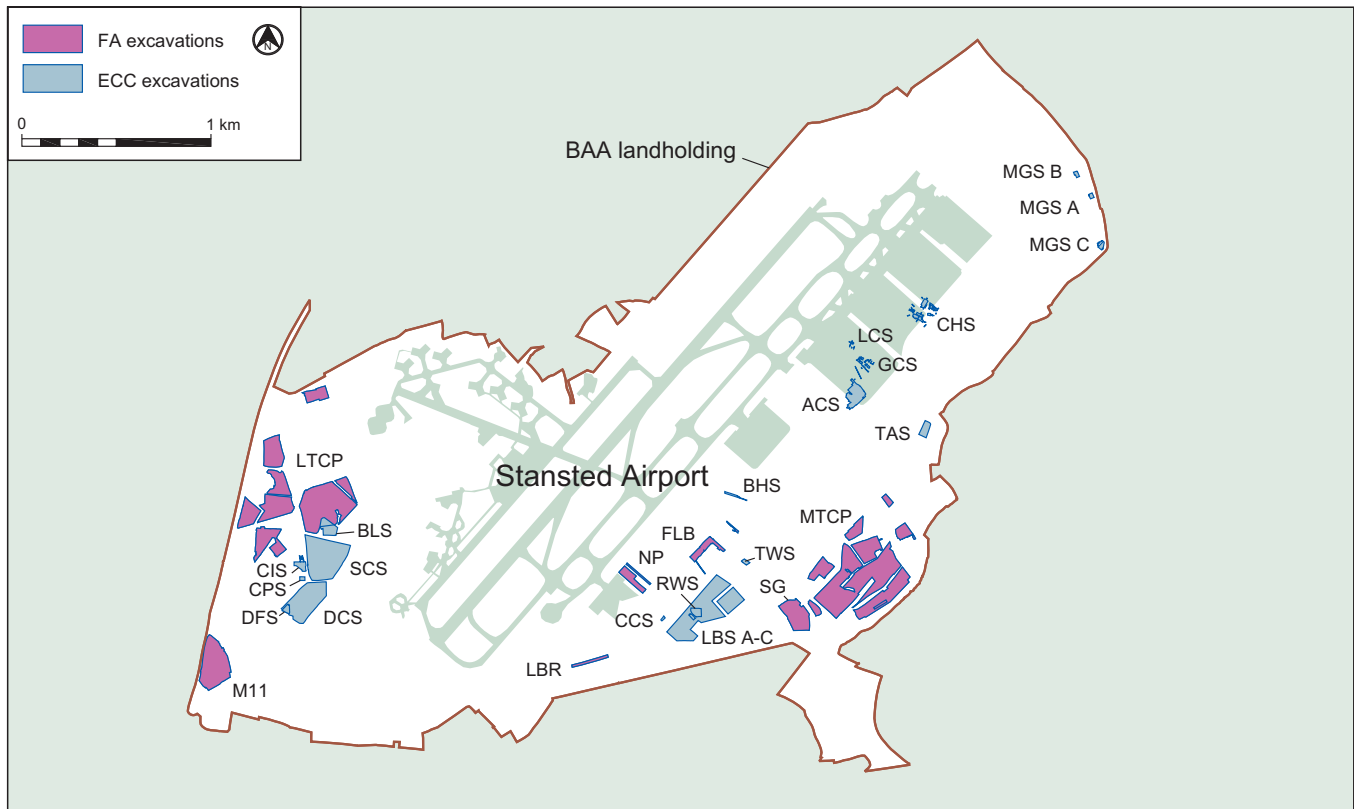


Figure 1.3: Major sites excavated by Framework Archaeology (1999–2004) and as part of the earlier Stansted Project (1985–1991)

Numerous Roman sites were identified and excavated including an important dispersed cremation burial cemetery on the DCS/DFS sites. Very little Saxon material was recovered, despite an extensive fieldwalking programme, but several medieval sites of the 12th and 13th centuries were excavated, including a largely complete medieval farmstead on the RWS site, whilst excavations were also carried out on the sites of the post-medieval manor houses at Bassingbourne Hall (BHS) and Colchester Hall (CHS).

Obviously the results of these excavations significantly altered our understanding of the inhabitation of the area in the prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval periods, and informed much of the Framework Archaeology work in the area. Indeed, a number of the sites excavated by the two projects were either adjacent or contained elements of the same archaeological landscape (Fig. 1.3). In the light of this, the post-excavation and publication of the recent work has been presented with a significant dilemma – how to integrate the results of the two programmes to present a coherent landscape history.

After much discussion, it was decided to digitise the plans of the sites excavated by the Stansted Project, in order that they might be viewed alongside the results of the recent excavation on the GIS system used in post-excavation and publication. For his help and advice during this exercise, we would like to thank Richard Havis, co-author of the Stansted Project, excavator of many of the sites and archaeological officer for Essex County Council. Wherever possible, the digitised features were also phased. No attempt was made however, to enter primary context information, or to re-assess any of the published material. Where appropriate, summaries of excavated features and sites have been included in this report in order to present the wider aspects of the archaeological landscapes of individual periods. It should be emphasised that these occur here in summary only, and the reader is directed to the recent publication of the Stansted Project excavations (Havis and Brooks 2004) for the full description and discussion of these excavations.

Archaeological approaches

The Framework Archaeology excavations at Stansted were undertaken using the same recording system and within the same academic framework as the recent excavations at Perry Oaks, Heathrow (Framework Archaeology 2006). The academic philosophy behind the excavation and recording strategy have been published elsewhere (see Andrews and Barrett 1998; Framework Archaeology 2006, 15–24) and are not rehearsed in detail here. The academic aims of the project were central to the genesis of the recording system and also to the approach taken to the archaeological features.

In summary, the primary aim of the fieldwork programme was the creation of narratives of inhabitation, which were subsequently further refined by off-site analysis. Emphasis was placed on the primary interpretations being made in the field by the excavation team, through the feedback obtained from the on-site GIS system. This allowed the development of a flexible approach to the excavation programme, with some features and

monuments subject to further investigation on the basis of initial interpretation and analysis. Interpretations focused on the changing form of the landscape, the processes operating across that landscape and the history of the landscape inhabitation, and formed the basis of developing narratives of landscape inhabitation. In this way analysis is undertaken on several levels, with the development of broad historical themes allowing individual events, decisions and practices to be viewed within both local and regional historical contexts.

Excavation, recording and analysis

The Framework Archaeology recording system and fieldwork methodology have also been described previously (Framework Archaeology 2000a; 2002) and are documented in the *Framework Archaeology Field Manual*. This section will summarise the definitions of the key concepts employed in excavation and post-excavation analysis, demonstrate how those concepts are used in the analytical process, and briefly describe the final product in terms of published output.

Figure 1.4: Schematic diagram illustrating the implementation of the recording system in relation to a Bronze Age barrow

Definitions

The following section defines the key concepts of *context*, *intervention*, *deposit*, *stratigraphic group*, *feature*, *entity* and *interpretative group* as used in the Framework Archaeology Database.

Context

Contexts are primarily sub-divided into cuts and deposits but also operate as a means of tracking all stratigraphic units on site. A context can be a stratigraphic unit or stratigraphic event, but the practice of excavation means that a context may represent a sub-division of a stratigraphic unit or event (eg where a deposit is excavated in two or more different locations each assigning different context numbers). This produces the need for the *stratigraphic group*. Within the Framework Archaeology recording system the value list for the *context type* therefore also includes SG (stratigraphic group), IG (interpretative group), and Void (context number not used).

Intervention

An *intervention* binds groups of contexts together. It is usually a cut or layer (taken here to include masonry and structural timbers) and it may contain other contexts, for example the fills of a cut. Here the intervention

will normally consist of at least two contexts, one for the cut and one discernible fill. The intervention must exist on the digital site plan and must represent an area of archaeological investigation. This is usually excavation but may on occasion be the result of a non-invasive recording method. The intervention is the primary method for producing artefact distribution plots within the Geographical Information System (GIS) and is the main method of displaying archaeological deposits three-dimensionally.

Deposit

The *deposit* is defined as a matrix that might contain finds or samples. Any context that might have produced a find or a sample, regardless of whether any were found or taken, is classified as a deposit. Each deposit is assigned to an intervention.

Stratigraphic group

The *stratigraphic group* provides a means of describing the structure of the site. It is used to link equivalent contexts exposed in separate interventions within the same feature. For example, a stratigraphic group would be used to link together the separate context numbers given to the cut of a ditch in each of the interventions excavated, provided that it can be

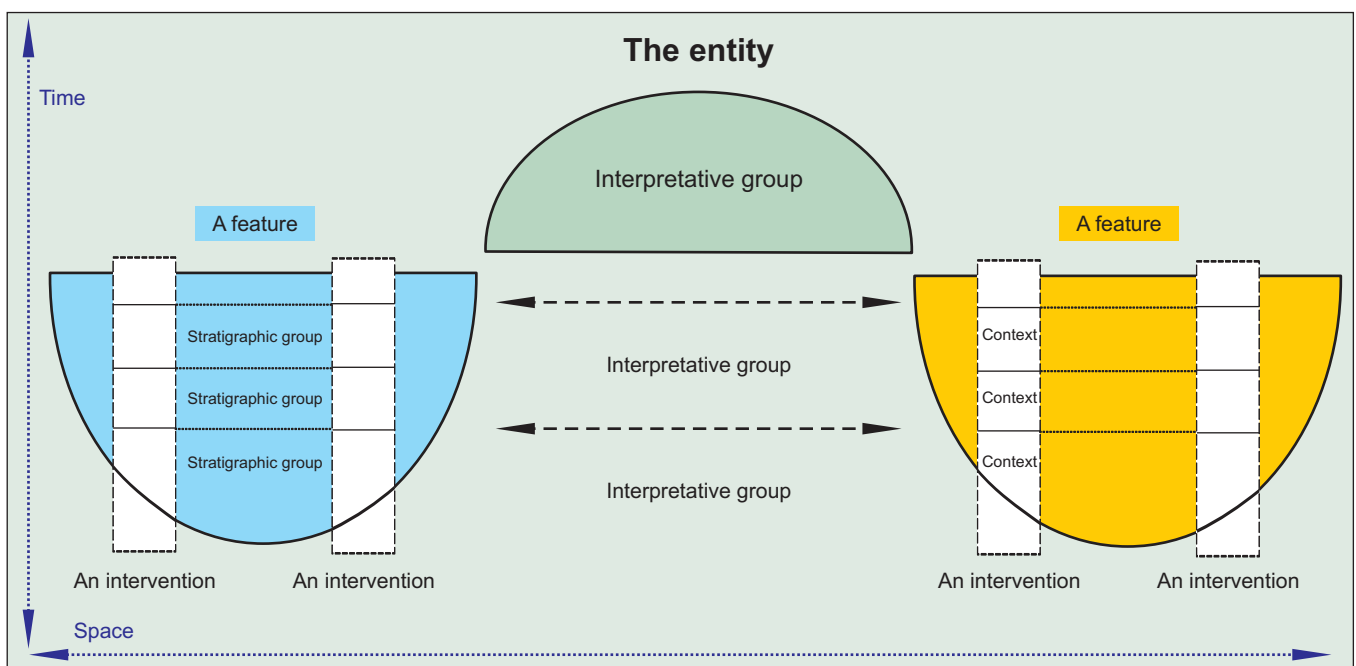




Plate 1.2: Digital surveying using a Total Station EDM

demonstrated to a reasonable level of confidence that they are stratigraphically equivalent. The same process would be applied to all fills within the ditch.

Feature

A *feature* is defined as one or more interventions that represent the remains of a past activity. It represents something that existed in the past, such as a ditch or a pit, which has been rediscovered through the process of archaeological investigation. The feature is defined through one or more interventions. It always consists of a stratigraphic group cut or a stratigraphic group layer and may contain other stratigraphic groups.

Entity

The *entity* is the basic tool of structural synthesis, a means of linking a group of related features together. For example, a number of postholes might form a structure or a number of ditches in an enclosure. This can be employed at an extremely detailed or a very

broad level (eg an entity linking all the features making up a Bronze Age landscape might contain hundreds of features). By definition, the entity includes all deposits within the assigned features. Not all features need belong to an entity, whereas some features may be assigned to more than one entity, depending on the analytical perspective.

Interpretative group

Interpretative groups can be used in one of two ways:

- To sub-divide entities into phases of time, which are defined as representing the construction of the entity, the use or disuse of the entity or the demolition of the entity. The distinction between disuse and demolition of the entity is defined by the visibility of the entity in the landscape. Disuse indicates that the entity was no longer used but still visible. Demolition indicates that the entity was no longer used and no longer visible in the landscape.
- To provide a method of linking deposits by a means unrelated to entities. An example would be the analysis of a landscape, which no longer exists as features, such as a Neolithic landscape where all features have been removed by later activity. Only Neolithic finds redeposited within later features would indicate the existence of such a landscape.

The decision to define interpretative groups within an entity depends on the perceived degree of analysis required. Not all entities will be subdivided into interpretative group time-slices. The diagram in Fig 1.4 shows how a Bronze Age barrow might be represented by *contexts*, *stratigraphic groups* and *interpretative groups* and as an *entity*.

Databases and GIS

In order to ensure that the information recorded on-site was available for study all context information was entered onto a system of bespoke databases on an on-site computer network. All finds were processed on

site and basic information, including spot dating also recorded on the database, as was basic information on samples taken and processed.

Digital survey of the sites using Total Station Electronic Distance Measurers (EDMs) was not only necessary to produce rapid and accurate plans of the vast areas stripped of topsoil (Plate 1.2), but also allowed site plans to be altered on a daily basis, with hand drawn plans on site scanned and appended to the digital plans.

Shape files created from these digital drawings could then be linked to the site databases using a Geographical Information System (GIS). The purpose of this was to allow all members of staff access to the ongoing results of the excavations in order to assist ongoing interpretation and to ensure a truly reflexive excavation strategy. In this way, it was possible, using information already recorded, to target further excavation in areas of particular interest. It was also possible using the GIS to produce initial phase plans and distribution plots of artefacts whilst still in the field.

Digital cameras were used alongside conventional manual SLR cameras using black and white and slide film in order to provide a complete photographic record. Digital photographs of individual features were linked to the database, allowing these to be viewed in conjunction with the digitised context information and alongside the scanned plans and sections. These records form the basis of the GIS system used in analysis and provided in digital format on the Freeviewer package accompanying this report.

Practical application

The on-going analytical and interpretive process required by the academic framework was largely achieved through a series of continuing dialogues starting with the machine excavation and survey of a site. Rapid production of site plans allowed for efficient identification of excavation priorities and appropriate targeting

of staff and resources. Initial excavation was targeted on characterising the archaeological resource, focusing on establishing the nature and chronology of the features concerned. Rapid turn around of the finds excavated and constant updating of the GIS system allowed a basic chronology of features to be determined, whilst further excavation was targeted on exploring stratigraphic relationships between features, thus providing a stratigraphic chronology with which to refine the dating provided by the finds. Throughout this process a continuous dialogue was maintained across the project, contributing to an ongoing and changing narrative of interpretation which informed the targeting of resources.

Advice on environmental sampling strategies and characterisation of deposits and soil formation processes was provided by a combination of visiting and on-site specialists, and a small proportion of samples was carefully selected for on site processing in order to inform decisions regarding further sampling. Identification of finds and interpretation of finds assemblages allowed the identification of particular areas of activity. These contributed to the ongoing narrative and occasionally identified issues which were resolved through further excavation.

Significant emphasis was placed on a devolution of responsibility to the excavators themselves, making the site staff primarily responsible for interpretation of features as well as largely informing the ongoing narrative, whilst supervisors and project officers maintained responsibility for the integrity of the archive and the ultimate direction of the project.

At the end of each excavation, the site archive (both paper and digital) was completed and checked, with any backlog cleared, and a suite of environmental samples selected for assessment. The checked archive was then used as the basis for the creation of a final narrative and proposals for analysis and publication, detailed in the Project Design Update Note 2 (Framework Archaeology 2004b).

Post-excavation analytical procedures

Once the plans for publication were approved, specialist work was commissioned, with a preliminary version of the Freeviewer package created, making a simple GIS available to all of the specialists working on the project. Analysis of finds and environmental remains inevitably took some time, given the size of the assemblages concerned, the nature of some of the work undertaken and the commitments of some of the specialists involved. Detailed feedback from the specialists contributed to the selection of material for further analysis or scientific dating, whilst team meetings of specialists with the authors allowed for wider discussions and exchanges of ideas which helped to refine interpretations and generate discussion. Once this analytical work was done, and final phasing undertaken using refined pottery dating and scientific dates, final analysis for publication was undertaken through the medium of the GIS.

Publication

The primary purpose of this volume is to present an interpretative history of the Stansted landscape as revealed in the excavations undertaken by Framework Archaeology between 1999 and 2004. In order to do this, it must also draw on a number of other sources, foremost amongst which are the results of other excavations in the area, such as those undertaken by the Stansted Project (Havis and Brooks 2004) or on the recent improvements to the A120 (Timby *et al.* 2007). Detailed studies of the historical and documentary evidence for the inhabitation of the area in the Late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods were undertaken in order to provide as complete a history of the area as possible.

Format

In publishing the results of archaeological fieldwork, archaeologists are always faced with a dilemma regarding how to combine historical narrative

with presentation of archaeological data. Traditional approaches have usually sought to combine a presentation of stratigraphic descriptions of sites with detailed analyses of finds and environmental material before culminating in a discussion of the interpretation of the history of a site and an analysis of the importance of a site within a regional or national context. This has the merit of presenting the data and historical interpretation, but does not always make for easy reading, particularly for the non-specialist.

Recently various attempts have been made to present the results of archaeological investigations in a manner which makes them more accessible to a wider (non-archaeological) audience. These have included large infrastructure projects such as the A120 road scheme (Timby *et al.* 2007) and the excavations at Perry Oaks and Terminal 5, Heathrow (Framework Archaeology 2006; forthcoming a). At Stansted the challenge has been to integrate the results of our excavations with the results of the Stansted Project excavations in order to allow a more considered assessment of the inhabitation of the landscape. As a result of this process of integration, it is possible to examine the results of substantial areas of excavation on both the western and south-eastern sides of the airport (Fig. 1.5).

Whilst this allows us to speak with confidence about the results of these combined excavations, it should be borne in mind that many of these areas occupy similar topographical positions – on the lower and upper slopes of shallow river valleys, and that there has been less work undertaken to date on the clay plateau or on the valley floors, both of which may have presented different opportunities to the valley sides and may have been exploited in different ways.

Synthetic landscape studies are inevitably easier to undertake where the detail of the archaeological data is published elsewhere, allowing for synthetic narrative to be unimpaired by the requirement to make data available for other archaeologists. This is an on-going problem, and not

The natural landscape details the formation of the Stansted landscape. It looks at the effect that successive glaciations had on moulding the landscape into its present form, characterises this landscape and its colonisation by wildwood in the years following the glaciation. Evidence for occasional early hominid and human activity within this landscape is also explored.

Hunter-gatherers examines the evidence for increasing levels of human activity in the area within the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. The nature of occupation is examined in detail through analysis of the distribution and character of artefactual remains. The likely impact of agriculture, so important elsewhere in lowland Britain at this time, is assessed, whilst the absence of the communal monuments which characterise much of our understanding of community life in these periods is also discussed.

First farmers describes the first evidence for sedentary inhabitation of the landscape, detailing both the nature of the enclosed Middle Bronze Age settlement found on the MTCP site and the wider pattern of Middle Bronze Age settlement. The chronology of the settlement is explored in detail, along with the implications this has for our understanding of Bronze Age domestic structures and settlements. The daily lives of the inhabitants are viewed through a discourse on the form of domestic and ancillary structures, the plan of the settlement and the evidence for their resource strategies. Evidence for specific practices linked to the physical landscape lie in the communal activities associated with a burnt mound and a barrow. The role played by acts of deposition both in the day-to-day routines of the population and in times of change (such as the apparent abandonment of the settlement on the MTCP site) is highlighted. The apparent decline of settlement and agricultural activity in the Late Bronze Age is discussed in the context of a revised chronology.

Enclosing the landscape covers the important changes in the landscape in the Middle and Middle/Late Iron Age.

Increased settlement density in this period is linked to the first major enclosure of the landscape. The significance of this enclosure is discussed in detail, along with its implications both for the use of the landscape and social relations between the different settlements.

Hierarchy in the landscape examines the increasing complexity of settlement and enclosure in the Late Iron Age, and how this was linked to the adoption of a mixed agricultural economy. The social and political networks which developed in the Late Iron Age are explored, along with the apparent development of settlement hierarchies. The cremation and burial of the dead and the deliberate deposition of selected cultural material, particularly within ditches are also examined.

A changing landscape examines the effects of the Roman Conquest on the area. Major changes are evident, with a number of settlements and cemeteries abandoned, and others reduced in scale and influence. Changes in burial customs and ritual behaviour are examined, as is evidence for shifts in agricultural practice.

Agricultural intensification explores the apparent decline in fortunes of the area in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, along with an apparent resurgence in activity in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. The increasing intensification of agricultural practice in this period is highlighted, with agricultural complexes geared to producing surpluses on three sites discussed as part of a wider agricultural network. The rapid decline of these settlements is highlighted and discussed within both within a regional and provincial context.

Feudal landscapes uses the surviving documentary evidence to create a picture of Late Saxon life in the area. From this it is clear that the post-Romano-British period saw significant regeneration of woodland in the area, predominantly on the heavy clays of the upper plateau. Within this context the evidence for Late Saxon settlement and field systems are discussed. Using the documentary sources it is possible to look at the agricultural landscape of

the area in detail as well as identify an increasing move towards the clearance of woodland in the medieval period. Excavated medieval sites, including a sub manorial settlement, farmsteads and a windmill are discussed in some detail and placed into context by further historical research.

The hunting lodge and deer park describes the origins of the park at Stansted Mountfitchet, and places it in a historical context. The importance of parks to the gentry, and their prevalence in the Stansted area is highlighted. Documentary evidence for the parks and parkers is discussed in detail. The excavated phases of the hunting lodge are also discussed, alongside a likely interpretation of some of the surrounding landscape features, whilst the animal bone evidence from the site points to the ritualised butchery or 'unmaking' of the deer after death. The gradual decline in popularity of hunting is reflected in changes to the park, with land leased out for meadows, before the area was finally disparked for use as farmland.

Within these chapters, several cross-cutting themes have been identified:

- The importance of the physical and in particular geological, landscape in influencing inhabitation strategies throughout history.
- The increasing importance of land ownership over time articulated through physical enclosure.
- The significance of woodland as a resource.
- The significance of ritual in articulating social scenarios, ranging from the placing of quantities of broken pottery and burnt foodstuffs in Neolithic pits to the division of a deer carcass according to social status and hunting prowess in the post-medieval period.

It is through discussion of these patterns and themes that we can explore the human inhabitation of the landscape, and ultimately suggest narratives for this inhabitation.



CHAPTER 2

The Natural Landscape

by Fraser Brown, Nicholas Cooke and Kate Cramp

The Stansted landscape

The physical character of the Stansted landscape would have greatly affected the way it was inhabited in the past. Whilst it would not have determined human behaviour, it would certainly have constrained what was possible and presented a diverse range of opportunities to those living in the area or passing through it. This landscape was already old before the first humans arrived, having been formed by a series of complex processes, each successive suite of interactions occurring within and acting upon the conditions established previously. Initially, the human impact was not pronounced and limited archaeological evidence exists before the Neolithic but the landscape was altered more significantly during later periods.

The Ice Ages

The form of the current landscape is largely a result of the last two Ice Ages. During the earlier of these, the Anglian glaciation (480–410,000 years ago, Marine Isotope Stage (MIS) 12), ice sheets covered most of modern day Essex and would have removed any trace of earlier hominid inhabitation (Fig. 2.1). The deposits beneath the ice (the Kesgrove Sands and Gravels) had originally been laid by an earlier course of the River Thames (Whiteman and Rose 1992). When the ice sheets retreated and melted in the warmer period that followed (Hoxnian Interglacial (410 – 380,000, MIS 11)), the materials that the glaciers had scoured up and brought with them were deposited and left behind above the gravels. This Anglian till (Lowestoft Formation) formed a blanket of boulder clay comprising a firm yellowish clay with chalk and flint inclusions, as well as Millstone Grit, sarsen and other erratics, today covering the uplands of north-west Essex and Hertfordshire. The effect of the erosion and deposition was to totally alter the landscape that had previously existed. The major river valleys of southern and midland England were completely changed (Buteux *et al.* 2004) and many of the Essex rivers found their modern courses (Wymer 1996, 2).

A complicated series of climatic fluctuations prevailed during the vast intervening period that separated the first and last Ice Ages (410–70,000, MIS 11–5). Major cold glacial and warm interglacial periods alternated in cycles, both being interspersed with minor colder and warmer episodes. Periodically, Britain would have been colonised by communities of plants, animals and occasionally early hominid hunters, although the coldest periods would have been too severe to sustain all but the hardiest of these species. Even in the cold periods, glaciers did not appear to have developed as far south as Essex, although, in the permafrost, periglacial conditions would have prevailed. During warm interglacial conditions sediments were deposited over wide floodplains by slowly flowing rivers. In the next cold stage, these would become fissured and pitted and blown by the arctic wind to form deposits of loess and cover sand accumulating over the tundra. Cold stage rivers would have been swollen to immense sizes by the influx of seasonal meltwaters, transporting huge amounts of boulders and sediment. They cut steep valleys and washed most of the warm stage sands and silts out to the coast. The alternating cold and warm climatic cycles and the associated cycles of fluvial activity led to the formation of 'staircase' terraces along the river valleys, each 'step' or terrace in the staircase corresponding to a single cold–warm climatic transition. All the time the landmass was gradually rising, as the overburden of sediment was eroded during each cold phase (Maddy 1997), so the oldest terraces are now the highest with progressively younger terraces at lower heights above the present rivers.

The final Ice Age, the Devensian (70–10,000, MIS 4–1), was actually characterised by a protracted sequence of cold and warm stages, culminating in the ice advance of the Last Glacial Maximum (30–15,000, MIS 2). At this time the glacier did not reach Essex, stopping approximately 80 kilometres north of Stansted, but the extremely cold conditions that prevailed around the ice margins were too harsh for



Figure 2.1: The extent of the Anglian and Devensian glaciations in relation to Stansted

most plant and animal species. During the Devensian Late Glacial (15–10,000, MIS 2) conditions became rapidly warmer apart from a minor colder interlude (the Younger Dryas) between c 11.5 and 10,000. As the ice sheets melted, the glacial meltwater would have charged the rivers, eroding much of the loess over-mantle and sculpting the valleys that characterise the modern landscape.

In the warmer climate that followed, vegetation swiftly recolonised and the whole of the Essex area would have been covered by wildwood. First came the tree species more suited to cold conditions – birch, aspen and willow, then pine and hazel, alder and oak, lime and elm, and finally holly, ash, hornbeam and maple (Rackham 1989, 21–2; cf Murphy 1996, 168–9, table 1, 178). This process may have taken up to 4500 years, and culminated in the Atlantic period when the stable climate allowed the wildwood to reach its climax. The make up of the wildwood varied from region to region, and the woodland at Stansted is likely to have been dominated by lime, with hazel, oak, ash and elm also common (Murphy 1996).

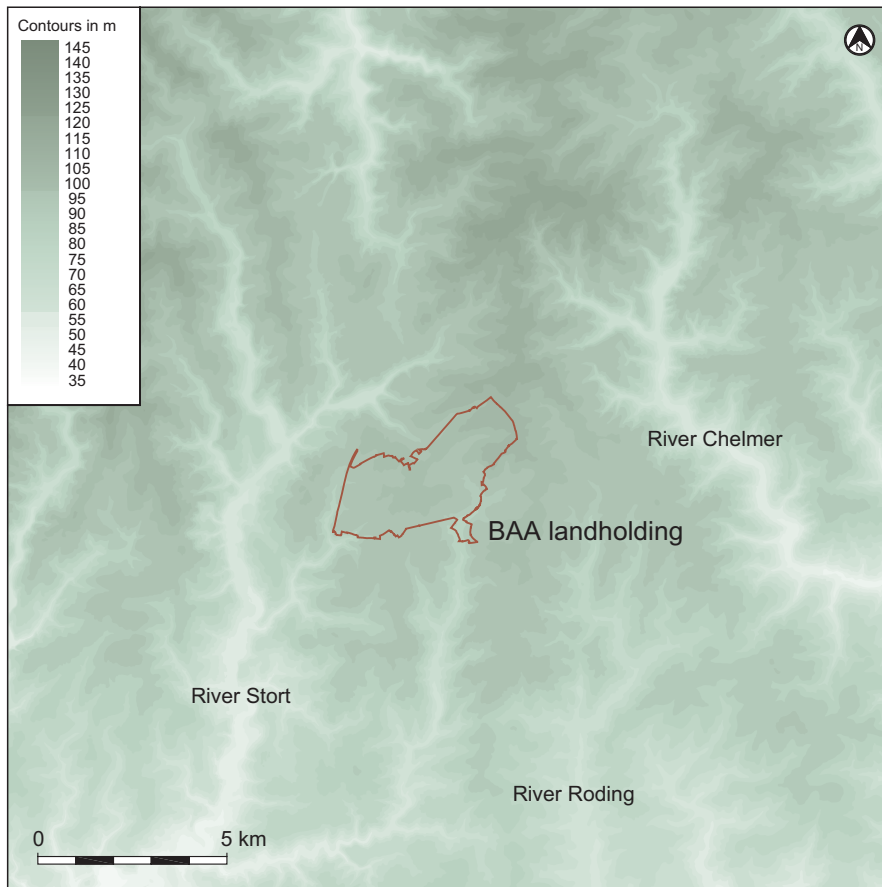


Figure 2.2: Topography of the Stansted area

The physical landscape

Stansted Airport, in the Walden uplands of north-west Essex, is located on a fairly flat, south-western projection of a plateau formed from boulder clay (Lowestoft Formation). The airport generally lies between the 95 m and 100 m OD contours, although the landform inclines to a maximum elevation of 110 m OD at the highest part of the plateau, approximately 3 km to the north-east (Fig. 2.2). Springs arise at the edges of the river valleys and within the plateau, draining through numerous tributaries that take run off water into the River Stort on the west, the River Chelmer on the east and the River Roding to the south. These rivers have had a major impact on the topography of the area, although the last of them, the River Roding, is the least substantial in this area. The land on either side of the plateau slopes away moderately steeply, dropping by as much as 40 or 50 m in places to the valley floors of the River Stort and River Chelmer, which are both at approximately 60 m

OD. Springs on the edges and upper slopes of the plateau feed numerous small tributaries of these rivers such as Stansted Brook to the north-west, Shermore Brook to the south and Pincey Brook to the east. These tributaries lie within small valleys originally cut by glacial meltwater through the boulder clays.

The geology within the valley bottoms and along the tributaries is highly variable, in contrast to the uniform boulder clays of the plateau (Fig. 2.3). Glaciofluvial deposits and head deposits of sands and gravels occur in the tributaries, as well as more recent alluvium. Some of these gravels, in small areas on the west and south-west of the airport, include Pleistocene deposits, the Kesgrove Sands and Gravels amongst them. The soils of the entire study area are classified by the Soil Survey as of Hanslope type (Jarvis *et al.* 1983). These derive from the chalky till and are characterised as predominantly being slowly permeable calcareous soils with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils.

The soils of the valleys of the River Stort and the River Chelmer, to the west and east respectively, are of the Melford type. Also derived from the glacial tills, these are deep well drained fine loamy over clayey, coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils, some of which have calcareous clayey subsoils.

Zones of opportunity

How the landscape would have influenced strategies of human inhabitation depends to some extent upon the kinds of societies in question. The landscape would have been used and experienced in different ways at various times in history as each generation inherited the legacy of their forebears. Despite this, the physical structure of the landscape would have had a bearing on human behaviour in all periods. The contrast between the river valleys and the uplands of the boulder clay plateau is perhaps the most obvious example of this. Stansted Airport was constructed on this upland plateau partly as it was relatively sparsely settled.

The valleys and their margins had proved more attractive for human settlement up until relatively recently but has this always been so? In very general terms it is possible to envisage a tripartite landscape comprising three broad zones of opportunity, each corresponding to particular kind of topography:

- river valleys and lower slopes
- upper slopes and plateau edges
- the upper plateau

Each one of these zones has different physical characteristics in terms of its geology, aspect, slope and elevation, hydrology and vegetation; and in any given period each zone will have been shaped by the way humans inhabited it in the past. The first zone, the river valleys and lower slopes, is at a relatively low elevation; it is amply watered by brooks and streams and has the most favourable agricultural soils. It is well suited to both agriculture and settlement, and the watercourses provide ready-made

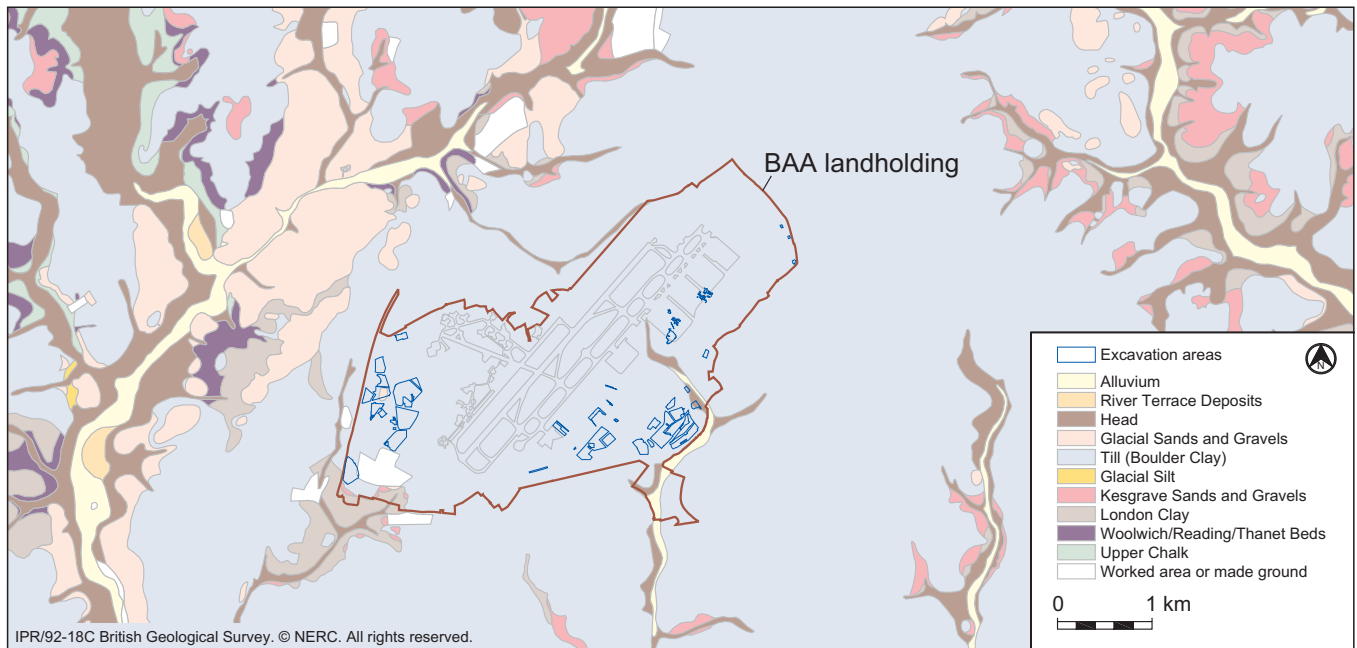


Figure 2.3: Geology of the Stansted area

communication routes. As such, it is likely to have been the first land to have been cleared and after the initial clearances of the Mesolithic and Neolithic the tree cover is unlikely to have been heavy. The known archaeological evidence suggests that settlements were seldom founded here, possibly because of the agricultural value of the land and the risk of flooding. Where settlements do occur, they are most likely to be associated with river or stream crossings.

The second zone, the upper slopes and plateau edges, is at a higher elevation on well draining slopes, the aspect of these possibly having a bearing on how the land is best used. In places, water occurs within rising springs and tributaries flowing from the plateau to the valley floors. Although this land contains less favourable soils, they are suitable for modern agriculture and so may have been exploited in the past. The known archaeological resource indicates that the edges of the plateau and terraces on the slopes were often favoured locations for settlement. These were probably cleared a fairly short time after the river valleys, and are only rarely heavily wooded. Burials, particularly those in visible monuments such as tumuli were often sited on the plateau edge and the springs and tributaries also seem to have been the focus of ritual activity.

The upper plateau lies exclusively on the heavy clays of the glacial tills, often above the 100 m contour, and is watered by the occasional spring. Although little controlled archaeological excavation or fieldwork has been undertaken in this area, there is scant evidence for settlement. Agriculture and the exploitation of woodland resources are likely to be predominant in the landscape use of this area, and historically this may have been of a different nature to that practised in the other two zones. In some periods woodland clearance might have been quite advanced but subsequent changes in how the land was used would have eventually led to recolonisation by trees and ultimately the regeneration of woodland.

Palaeolithic tools and landscape

Whilst complex Lower Palaeolithic sites are known from elsewhere in Essex (see, for example, Wymer 1996), the evidence from the recent excavations at Stansted is limited to two handaxes, one possible scraper and a small collection of less chronologically distinctive pieces that may be of Palaeolithic date, including a possible fragment from a third handaxe (Fig. 2.4.1–2; Cramp, CD Section 24). These less well-dated finds exhibit a distinctive ochreous staining, also seen on both handaxes but very

rare among the later flint assemblages from Stansted. Other find spots of Palaeolithic tools have been made in the Stansted area (Havis and Brooks 2004, 514, 516, fig. 335).

Both the handaxes and the possible scraper were found on the upper surface of the boulder clay, adjacent to a palaeochannel that crossed the MTCP site, on the upper slopes of the plateau overlooking the valley cut by Pincey Brook (Fig. 2.4). The artefacts are in reasonably fresh condition, showing slight signs of damage due to rolling prior to deposition and a distinctive deep ochreous staining. The handaxes probably date broadly to the British Middle Acheulean, somewhere between *c.* 420,000 and 210,000 (MIS 11–7) (D A Roe pers. comm.). The smaller of the two is ovate. The tip has been damaged and broken, both recently and in antiquity, which obscures a possible tranchet removal. The larger handaxe is pyriform (pear-shaped). A tranchet removal has been taken across the tip of one face, producing an almost cleaver-like edge. The longer working edge is located opposite an area of cortex, which may have been deliberately retained in order to provide an effective grip. The flint from which the handaxe is made is similar in appearance to Bullhead flint, normally distinguished by a thin orange band overlain by an olive green

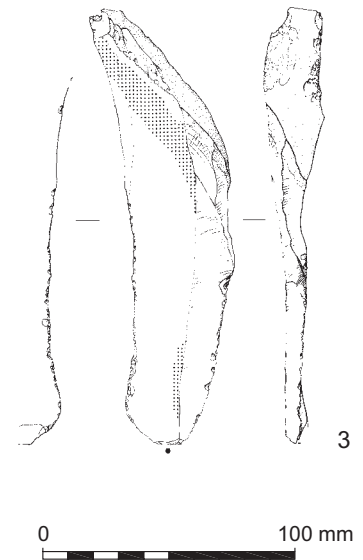
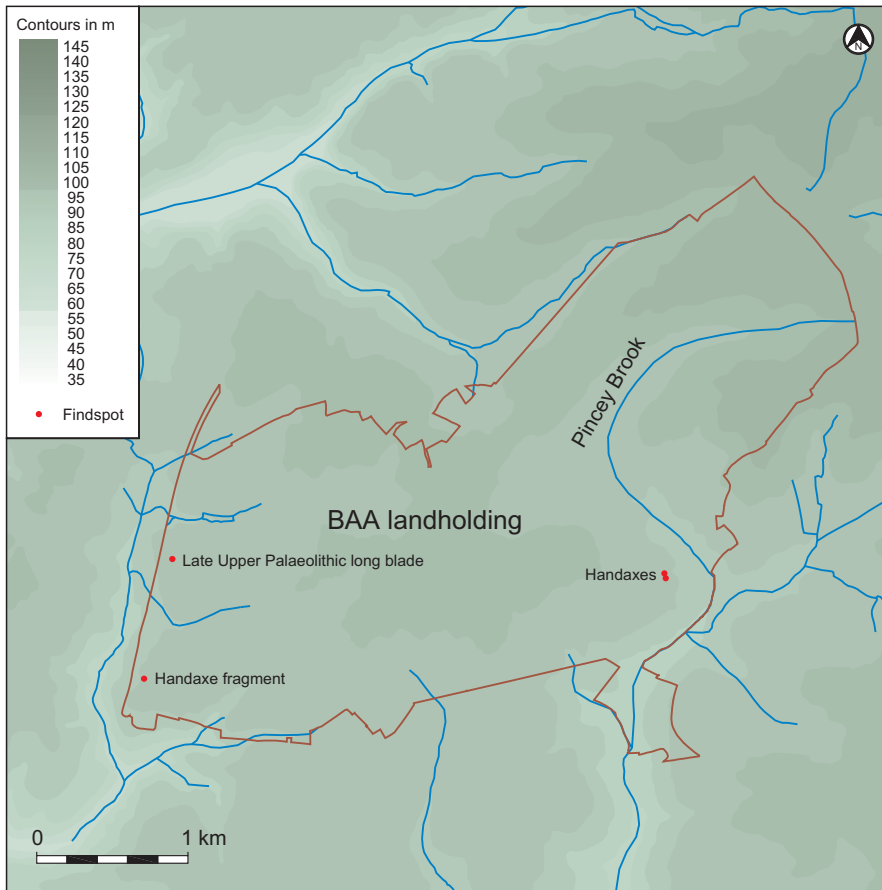
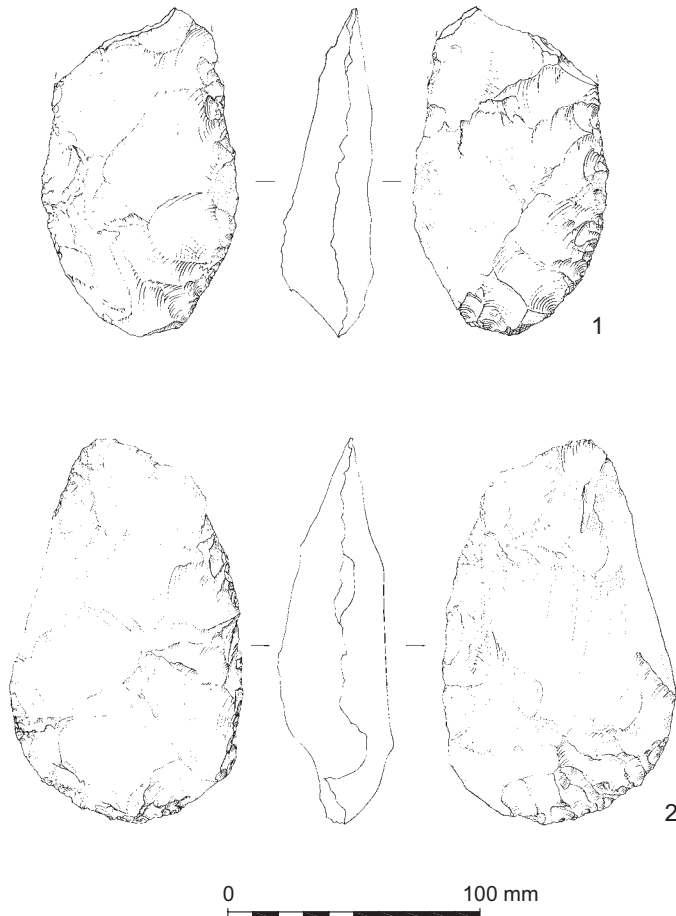


Figure 2.4: Palaeolithic tools found at Stansted: 1 – 2 Handaxes, 3 Late Upper Palaeolithic long blade

or greenish- black cortex (Shepherd 1972). In this case, however, the distinctive orange banding is not located immediately below the cortex but occurs in localised patches at some depth.



The handaxes would have been roughly shaped out of a flint nodule using a hard hammer (such as a quartzite cobble), and then shaped more finely using a soft hammer (such as an antler) as the tool neared its finished form. As functional items, handaxes probably had a wide application and may have been used as general tools for butchery, hide-preparation, plant processing and a range of other tasks (Fig 2.5). The possible scraper consists of a thick, disc-shaped thermal fragment. The retouch is irregular and undercut in places, more reminiscent of natural damage than the deliberate, systematic modification of a blank. Scrapers manufactured on thermal blanks only occur rarely in this period.

A possible handaxe fragment was found on the M11 site. It had been reworked and recently broken but it does have a similar ochreous staining to that of the handaxes from the MTCP site.

While none of these Palaeolithic flints was found *in situ*, their fresh condition implies that they have not been trans-

ported far from the point of their original deposition. The close grouping of the two handaxes from the MTCP site supports this.

The end of the Anglian glaciation marks the starting point for surviving evidence of human occupation in this part of north-west Essex. The Anglian glaciation not only moulded the landscape, but also removed any traces of earlier human inhabitation. The climate in the Hoxnian interglacial period would have been much the same as, or possibly warmer than, that of the present day. The landscape was recolonised by trees and other plants and a wide range of fauna would have shared the landscape many of which would have been hunted for food, furs, skins and other useful products. A wide range of vegetable foods would have supplemented the diets of these hunters, although no direct evidence for this survives.

The area around Stansted was probably heavily wooded. Occasional clearings, created by a fallen tree or by over-grazing perhaps, might have provided convenient open spaces for camps or butchery sites. Elsewhere, the dense undergrowth and tree cover would have restricted the movement of the hominid bands, and it seems likely that the less densely vegetated banks of streams and river courses were used as pathways to navigate the landscape. These rivers would also have provided an important source of fresh water, as well as food resources including wild-fowl and fish. Perhaps the handaxes were left behind as a small band of hunters followed the route of one of these streams, moving through the valley in pursuit of game.

The scarcity of evidence described above might give the impression that the area saw very little hominid activity during the Middle Pleistocene. However, hunter-gatherer groups would have left slight or non-existent traces as they moved through the landscape. Evidence from elsewhere in Britain however, and more locally in the Lower Thames Valley suggests that hominid occupation was widely (if thinly) spread across the region during the Hoxnian interglacial.



Figure 2.5: Using a handaxe

Late Upper Palaeolithic activity (12,000–10,000 BC)

One tool recovered from the western side of the airport points to human activity in the area in the Late Upper Palaeolithic period. This isolated long blade (Fig. 2.4.3) was found within the fills of a later tree-throw on the LTCP site.

Long blade technology first appeared in Britain around 10,000 in the Late Glacial period, following the last glacial maximum of the Devensian glaciation (*c* 18,000) when ice-sheets covered large areas of Britain and the landscape around Stansted was an almost uninhabitable expanse of arctic tundra and severe cold. At this time, *Homo sapiens* was the only remaining hominid species in Britain; *Homo neanderthalensis* was almost certainly extinct by this stage.

The blade is 170 mm long and 40 mm wide with distinctive crushing along its edges, a so-called 'bruised' blade or *lames mâchurées*, which is thought to have been caused by chopping antler (Barton 1986) or shaping

hammerstones. These versatile blades were probably essential items in the Late Upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer's tool kit.

Several long blade sites and individual find spots are known in Britain, mostly in the south and south-east (eg Barton 1989; 1995; Lewis 1991; Holgate *et al.* 2003, 126, figs 4.11–12), but finds of Upper Palaeolithic (30,000–10,000 BC) and Late Upper Palaeolithic (12,000–10,000 BC) material are rare anywhere in Essex (see Jacobi 1996 for a summary of the available evidence). The Stansted example may have been lost by a group of hunters following herds of red deer, horse, reindeer, elk or aurochs through the harsh, periglacial landscape that marked the close of the last glaciation in the area. The glacial meltwaters would have cut a number of the river valleys which define the modern landscape, including both the River Stort and the Chelmer. We cannot be certain where the long blade was lost, as it was hafted, retouched and reused, possibly as a sickle, probably in the Neolithic, before being finally discarded (see Chapter 3; Cramp, CD Section 24).



CHAPTER 3

Hunter-gatherers (c 8800–1700 BC)

by Fraser Brown, Kate Cramp and Matt Leivers



Plate 3.1: Woodland - showing how the Stansted plateau may have looked

Introduction

The first evidence for sedentary settlement and farming at Stansted does not occur until after 1600 BC, during the Middle Bronze Age but it is clear that the landscape had previously been occupied and altered. Finds of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age material have been made on many of the sites excavated, pointing to thousands of years of sporadic activity. Much of this material, particularly that dating to the Mesolithic, is thinly distributed across the landscape although some broad areas of activity were identified. Evidence for Neolithic activity within the landscape becomes a little more extensive with clusters of small pits, material deposited in

tree-throws and scatters of worked flint and pottery but there are no substantial occupation areas. Interestingly very limited evidence was found for Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity.

Site	Mesolithic flint
M11	2 burins (blades and end scraper)
LTCP	1 microlith, 3 tranchet axes (blades, blade cores, end scraper, piercer and a core rejuvenation tablet)
SG	1 microlith, 1 burin (blade cores, blades and end scraper)
MTCP	3 burins (blade cores and crested blades)
LBR	(blade core)
Stansted Project excavations	
DFS	2 microliths (conjoining blades, other debitage, crested blades and core tablets) (Healey 2004,38)
CIS	(blades and an end scraper on a blade) (Healey 2004,35)

Table 3.1: Mesolithic flints recovered from Stansted, less diagnostic pieces in brackets

Mesolithic chronology

Mesolithic chronologies rely on typological dating of worked flint artefacts and absolute dates. Characteristic flint-work of both Early (*c* 8800–7000 BC) and Late Mesolithic (*c* 7000–*c* 4000 BC) (Pitts and Jacobi 1979) was recovered from the excavations but as no large discrete assemblages were found, precise dating is difficult. No material suitable for obtaining radiocarbon dates was recovered; therefore typological comparisons have been used to provide dating evidence although there is insufficient material to allow a firm relative chronology to be established.

Absolute dates

There is currently only one radiocarbon date for Mesolithic activity in Essex (Hedges *et al.* 1989, 216). A piece of worked antler from a gravel pit at Fisher's Green, Waltham Holy Cross, gave a Late Upper Palaeolithic/earliest Mesolithic date of 9650–8800 cal BC (9790±100 BP, OxA-1427).

The Mesolithic evidence

During the Mesolithic period (8800–4000 BC) the climate became warmer and wetter prompting the growth of wildwood over much of Essex (Rackham 1989, 21–2; Plate 3.1). There is no direct evidence from the excavations at Stansted for this growth and the impact of Mesolithic inhabitation of the Stansted landscape is likely to have been minimal. The small quantity of diagnostic flints suggests that each episode of activity was not particularly prolonged or intensive. The sparse evidence consists of small scatters or isolated pieces of flint some of which, the microliths and

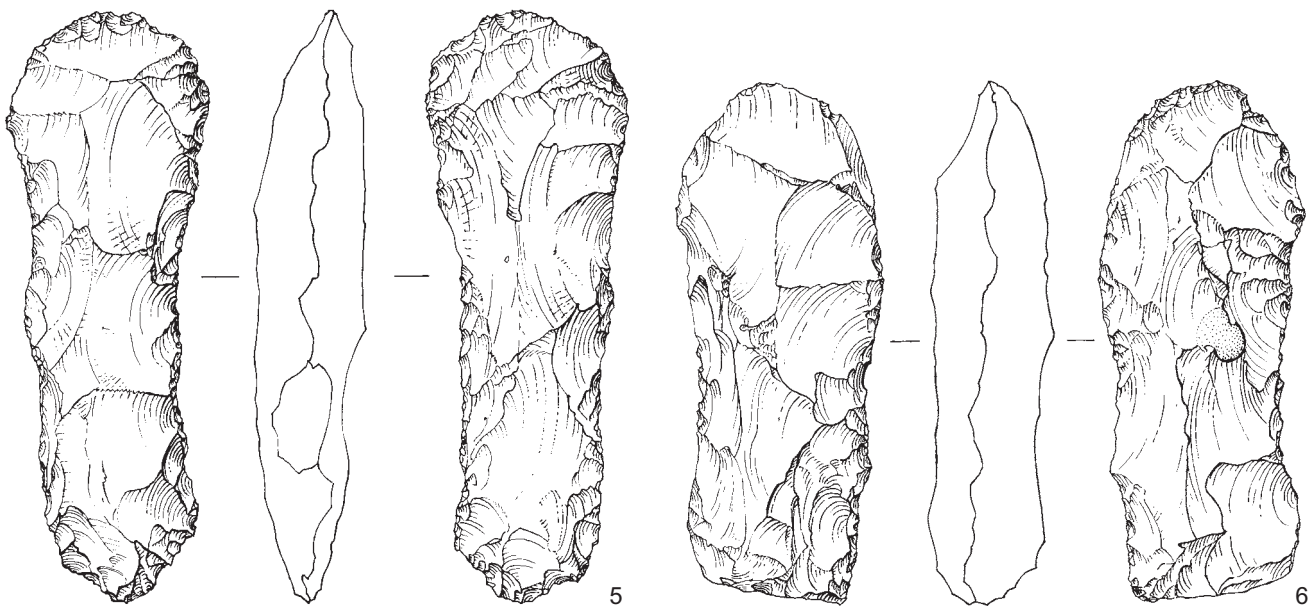
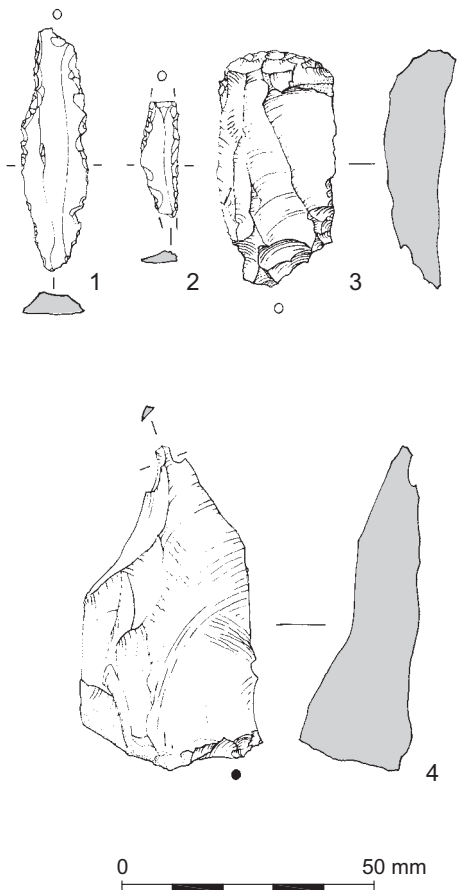
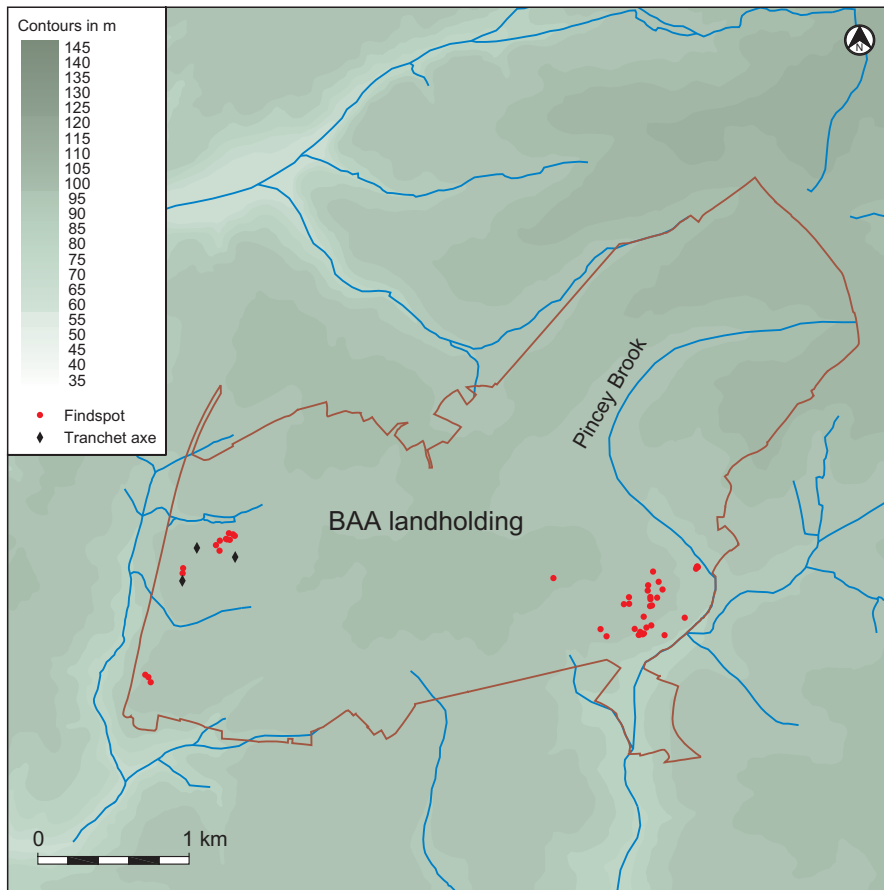


Figure 3.1: Distribution of Mesolithic flint and selected artefacts: 1 – 2 Microliths, 3 Scraper, 4 Burin, 5 – 6 Tranchet axes

tranchet axes, can be confidently dated to the Mesolithic period; whilst others have been dated less securely on technological grounds. None of this material was *in situ* being mostly recovered from the fills of later features or as surface finds.

Small quantities of diagnostic Mesolithic flints were recovered from four sites (M11, LTCP, SG and MTCP sites; Fig. 3.1.1–6). In addition to these diagnostically Mesolithic pieces, there are numerous blades, bladelets, blade cores and other flints that *may* belong

to a Mesolithic industry (Table 3.1). These include the blade cores from the MTCP, LBR and SG sites. The latter site also produced an end scraper made on a blade (Fig. 3.1.3) which is likely to be of Mesolithic (or perhaps earlier) origin.

Only two microliths were found; both are broad-blade types which, when dominant in an assemblage, are usually indicative of an Early Mesolithic date (Fig. 3.1.1–2). Two other microliths, one of broad blade and one of narrow blade form, were previously recovered from the Stansted Project DFS site (Healey 2004, 38). Blades, including some conjoining pieces, crested pieces and core tablets were also recovered from the DFS site. Three tranchet axes from the LTCP site might reflect limited Mesolithic tree clearance in the area (Fig. 3.1.5–6). Six burins were recovered (Table 3.1, Fig. 3.1.4), five of which came from adjacent sites to the west, overlooking a tributary of the River Stort.

Despite the small sample size, it is possible to make some general statements about the Mesolithic tool kit and what it reveals of activity at this time. The presence of microliths might point to hunting activity using flint-tipped arrow shafts, whilst the tranchet axes may relate to wood-working and the burins to a range of engraving or piercing tasks. This may be an oversimplification, however, as microliths could be hafted in almost unlimited combinations for different functions. At Thatcham, Berkshire microwear evidence has shown that microliths were used for a wide range of tasks other than as weapons for hunting (Grace 1992, 60–3). Axes could be used for scraping or crushing or even as objects for exchange.

A Mesolithic geography

All of the sites on which Mesolithic tools have been found occupy similar positions within the landscape although this is largely due to the location of the excavation areas, their positions on the edge of the plateau, near the spring line, overlooking one or more watercourses and would have been favourable to hunter-gatherer groups. Sites like these would have been well situated to enable hunting of animals in the woodland glades and near water sources, as well as providing access to a range of different plant habitats for the gathering of roots, nuts and berries for food and wood for fire.

Very little demonstrably Mesolithic material has been recovered from the boulder clay plateau itself. Only two microliths and a limited quantity of probable Mesolithic debitage were recovered from the Stansted Project DFS and CIS excavations (Havis and Brooks 2004, 13; Healey 2004, 35–7) and two from the OWA excavations along the A120 road corridor (Powell 2007). A few other Mesolithic find spots are known in the immediate locality of Stansted Airport (Havis and Brooks 2004, 314, 217, fig. 336). These occasional flints probably reflect short-term procurement visits rather than prolonged periods of exploitation. At Stansted, the presence of Mesolithic material along the edges of the river valleys suggests that these may have acted as both foci for hunting and gathering activities and as routes through the landscape. This typical location of sites or zones of activity can be matched across Essex (Jacobi 1980, 15 fig. 6; Jacobi 1996, 11, fig. 1) and within the region (eg Wymer 1977). The area was clearly visited during the Mesolithic but interestingly no substantial sites were established in the areas excavated. The sparse nature of the activity is quite surprising when seen in context of the activity within East Anglia as a whole.

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age chronology

At Stansted evidence for Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (*c* 4000–*c* 1700 cal BC) activity is characterised by scattered pits and tree-throws into which a range of artefactual material was deposited. Limited evidence for the surrounding environment in the form of charred plant remains and charcoal was also recovered from these features. These features are spread relatively thinly across the landscape (Figs 3.2–3).

Scatters of flint and pottery, mostly in later features, were also identified on a number of sites. A chronology can be established (Table 3.2) using the artefactual evidence, the available radiocarbon determinations and by comparison with recent reviews of the evidence (see for example Whittle *et al.* 2007, 334, table 15.2; Cleal 2004; Framework Archaeology 2006, 37). It should be noted that very little Grooved Ware and Beaker pottery was recovered and no Early Bronze Age Collared Urn is represented at all from the excavations.

Absolute dates

The available dates for Early Neolithic ceramics in Essex are summarised in Figure 3.4. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained from two pits and a tree-throw at Stansted. A piece of hazel (*Corylus*) charcoal from pit 323037 produced a date of 3760–3540 cal BC (4883±35 BP, NZA-20918), and a date of 3640–3370 cal BC (4741±35 BP, NZA-20960) was obtained from a charred hazelnut shell from pit 344278. Both pits were situated on the MTCP site on the eastern side of the airport. These two dates fit the pattern of the majority of dated Early Neolithic ceramics in Essex in suggesting a period of activity between *c* 3700 and 3300 BC. Only the date from Waltham falls within the first quarter of the 4th millennium, and only two dates from Orsett fall in the last quarter (Whittle *et al.* in prep).

On the M11 site a tree-throw (434068), one of a group containing worked flint and small sherds of sand-tempered pottery, contained charcoal that gave a radiocarbon date of 2570–2300 cal BC (3947±35BP, NZA-23238). This attests to activity at Stansted *c* 1000 years after the activity at the MTCP site.

Ceramic type	Calibrated BC date range
Carinated bowl	4000–3600
Undecorated Plain Bowl and decorated vessels	3600–3300
Peterborough Ware	3400–2500
Grooved Ware	3000–2000
Beaker	2400–1700
Collared Urn	2000–1500

Table 3.2: Date ranges of the main Neolithic and Early Bronze Age pottery types

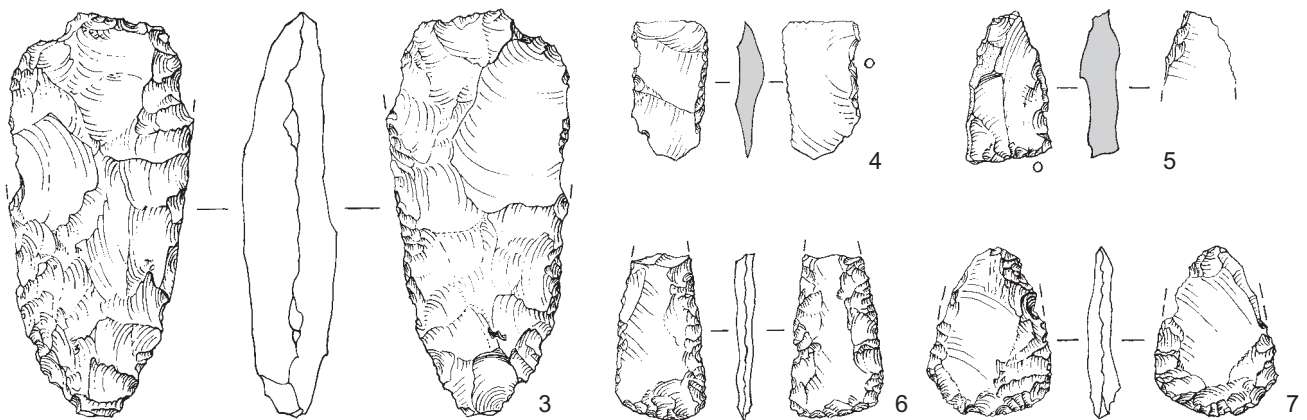
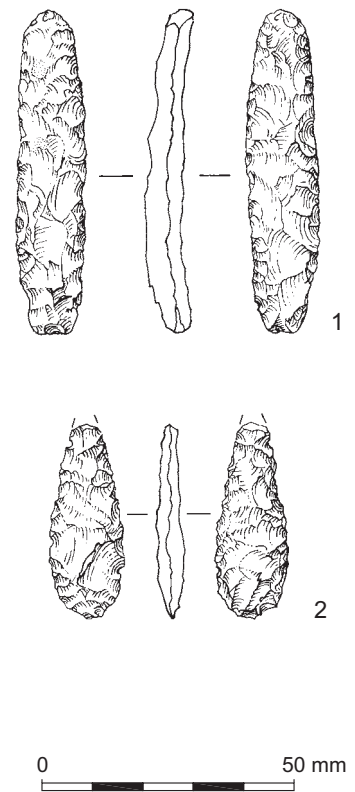
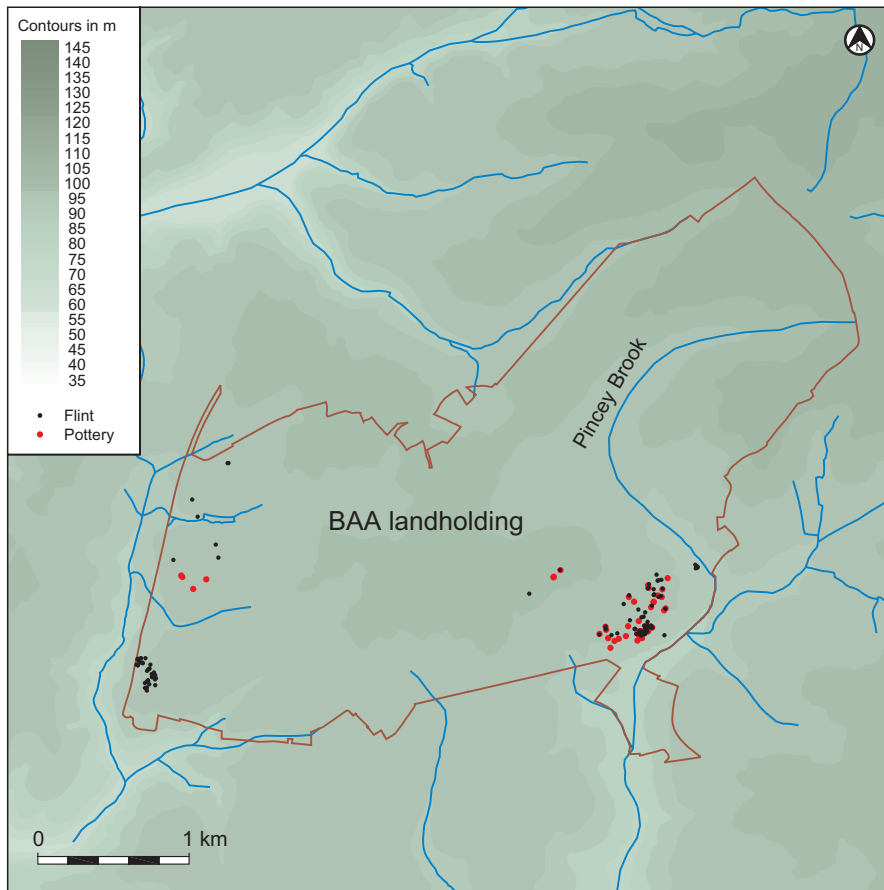


Figure 3.2: Distribution of Neolithic flint and selected artefacts: 1 Fabricator, 2 Leaf-shaped arrowhead, 3 Axe, 4 Transverse arrowhead, 5 Piercer, 6 Bifacially worked knife or arrowhead fragment, 7 Leaf-shaped arrowhead

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age pottery

Pottery spanning the period 4000–1700 cal BC was recovered from the excavations at Stansted (Table 3.3). The similarity of some of the Early Neolithic fabrics to some of those of the Late Bronze Age must be borne in mind and it is possible that further Early Neolithic sherds are included in the larger later assemblages; a problem encountered on other sites in Essex (Brown 1988, 264; Hedges and Buckley 1978, 259).

The majority of the pottery assemblage from Stansted dates to the latter part of the Early Neolithic, broadly *c* 3600–3300 cal BC. Only a handful of sherds dating to the Middle (3400–2800 cal BC) and Late (2800–2000 cal BC) Neolithic were recovered. However, Table 3.3 shows that that the date ranges for the major Neolithic ceramic types cut across and overlap these Early, Middle and Late divisions of the Neolithic. Thus if we focus on the date ranges for the major ceramic types in Table 3.3, and adopt the

approach advocated by Cleal (2004) we can be a little more precise in our chronology.

The very earliest Neolithic pottery, dating from *c* 4000–3600 cal BC (Carinated Bowl; Herne 1988) is not present at Stansted. Instead, the majority of the Stansted assemblage contains forms that appear to be slightly later, more akin to decorated assemblages with a date range of *c* 3600–3300 cal BC. In Essex these ceramics are typified by deep open bowls with rolled rims;

Date	Fabric	No. sherds	Weight (g)	Average sherd weight (g)
Early Neolithic Bowls c 3600 and 3300 BC	FL29	25	96	
	FL44	25	190	
	FL45	56	240	
	FL46	31	62	
	QU52	28	71	
Sub-total EN		165	659	3.99
Middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware c 3400-2600 BC	FL26	12	92	
	FL41	27	50	
	FL42	19	33	
Sub-total MN		58	175	3.02
Late Neolithic Grooved Ware c 2800-2200 BC		4	6	
Sub-total LN		4	6	1.5
Early Bronze Age types c 2400-1700 BC	GR4	1	4	
	GR5	17	29	
	GR6	1	1	
Sub-total EBA		19	34	1.79
Total		246	874	3.6

Table 3.3: Neolithic and Early Bronze Age pottery recovered from the Framework Archaeology excavations

carinated and closed forms are rarer, as are other rim forms (Hedges 1980).

Only a small quantity of Peterborough Wares (dating to the period c 3400–2500 cal BC) was recovered from these sites, notably 12 sherds, probably originally from the same vessel – a Mortlake-type pot which was recovered from the M11 site.

Late Neolithic pottery is represented by four very small, abraded sherds from a tree-throw on the MTCP site, which could be Grooved Ware and thus date from 3000–2000 cal BC. A little Beaker pottery (2400–1700 cal BC) was recovered from three sites but this was largely redeposited in later features and little really may be said of it other than it indicates some activity was occurring in the Late Neolithic–Early Bronze Age.

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age flint

The Neolithic flint was recovered from various sites (Table 3.4). The problems of correlating lithic and ceramic chronologies have been discussed elsewhere (Framework Archaeology 2006, 31) and the same problems apply at Stansted. Apart from singularly typologically diagnostic pieces such as arrowheads, it is generally difficult

to resolve lithic chronology other than in terms of Early or Late Neolithic (see above for definitions).

Diagnostic tool types such as axes and arrowheads were recovered together with technologically distinct debitage; less diagnostic, probable Neolithic, flint was also recovered. Few retouched forms were recovered from the Early Neolithic assemblage but high numbers of utilised pieces were recorded. Formal cores are almost entirely absent from Neolithic assemblages, even when knapping waste was present, presumably being retained for later use. This serves to illustrate that the character of the flint assemblage may have been influenced by the way the Stansted landscape was used; a restricted range of activities resulting in an assemblage not representative of the full technological repertoire. Both Early and Middle Neolithic arrowheads were recovered (Table 3.4), most of which came from topsoil, subsoil layers or were redeposited in later features suggesting that they were chance losses during hunting expeditions, rather than being deliberately incorporated into features.

Polished axe fragments and flakes were recovered from several sites, both previously (eg, Havis and Brooks 2004, 13; Healey 2004, 38); and from the

Type	No.
Early Neolithic	
Flakes	8
Blades	38
Core preparation flakes	2
Leaf-shaped arrowheads	3
Polished axe	1
Retouched flakes/blades	3
Scraper	1
Serrated flakes/blades	2
Sub-total	58
Late Neolithic	
Chisel arrowheads	2
Core	1
Flakes	3
Sub-total	6
Neolithic	
Unfinished arrowhead	1
Axe	1
Axe thinning flakes	2
Blades	64
Flakes	245
Core preparation flake	2
Cores/core fragments	22
Flakes from polished implement	2
Knives	2
Scrapers	8
Miscellaneous retouch	2
Serrated flakes	2
Retouched flakes	27
Sub-total	380
Late Neolithic - Early Bronze Age	
Flakes	59
Blades	3
Core preparation flakes	1
Core rejuvenation flakes	1
Cores/core fragments	23
Awl/piercer	1
Retouched flakes	5
Notched flakes	3
Discoidal knife	1
Scrapers	2
Miscellaneous retouch	3
Sub-total	102
Early Bronze Age	
Barbed and tanged arrowheads	3
Knives	2
Retouched flake	1
Scrapers	2
Miscellaneous retouch	1
Cores	4
Sub-total	13
Total	552

Table 3.4: Neolithic and Early Bronze Age flint recovered from the Framework Archaeology excavations

MTCP, LTCP, SG and M11 sites) (Fig. 3.3). Most of these are of a fine-grained, homogeneous, light or mid-grey flint, which is quite distinctive from the local gravel flint that was used for most of the other tools. These probably came from mined flint sources, such as Angmering or Cissbury (Sussex) (see Russell 2000, 13, fig. 1). Axes recovered from elsewhere in Essex have been provenanced to Sussex flint mines (Craddock *et al.* 1983).

Very little Early Bronze Age flintwork was recovered from the excavations and is limited to diagnostic forms such as barbed and tanged arrowheads and knives (Table 3.4). No closed deposits of Early Bronze Age material were found suggesting a sporadic use of the landscape. Barbed and tanged arrowheads were found during the fieldwalking undertaken as part of the Stansted Project (Havis and Brooks 2004, 519).

Distributions of Neolithic material

Although the excavations at Stansted recovered quantities of Neolithic flint and pottery, very little of this was recovered from contemporary features. There is no direct evidence for settlement, and our understanding of the Neolithic is shaped by our interpretation of a few small pits and apparent opportunistic deposition in tree-throws together with scatters of worked flint and pottery from later features. Very little environmental evidence was recovered which hampers our understanding of the surrounding landscape.

Three main concentrations of Neolithic material were identified (Fig. 3.3). Flint and small amounts of Neolithic pottery have been recovered from the contiguous MTCP and SG sites (Fig. 3.9), whilst a concentration of Neolithic flint tools was recovered from the M11 site, and a dispersed concentration of material from the western end of the LTCP excavations.

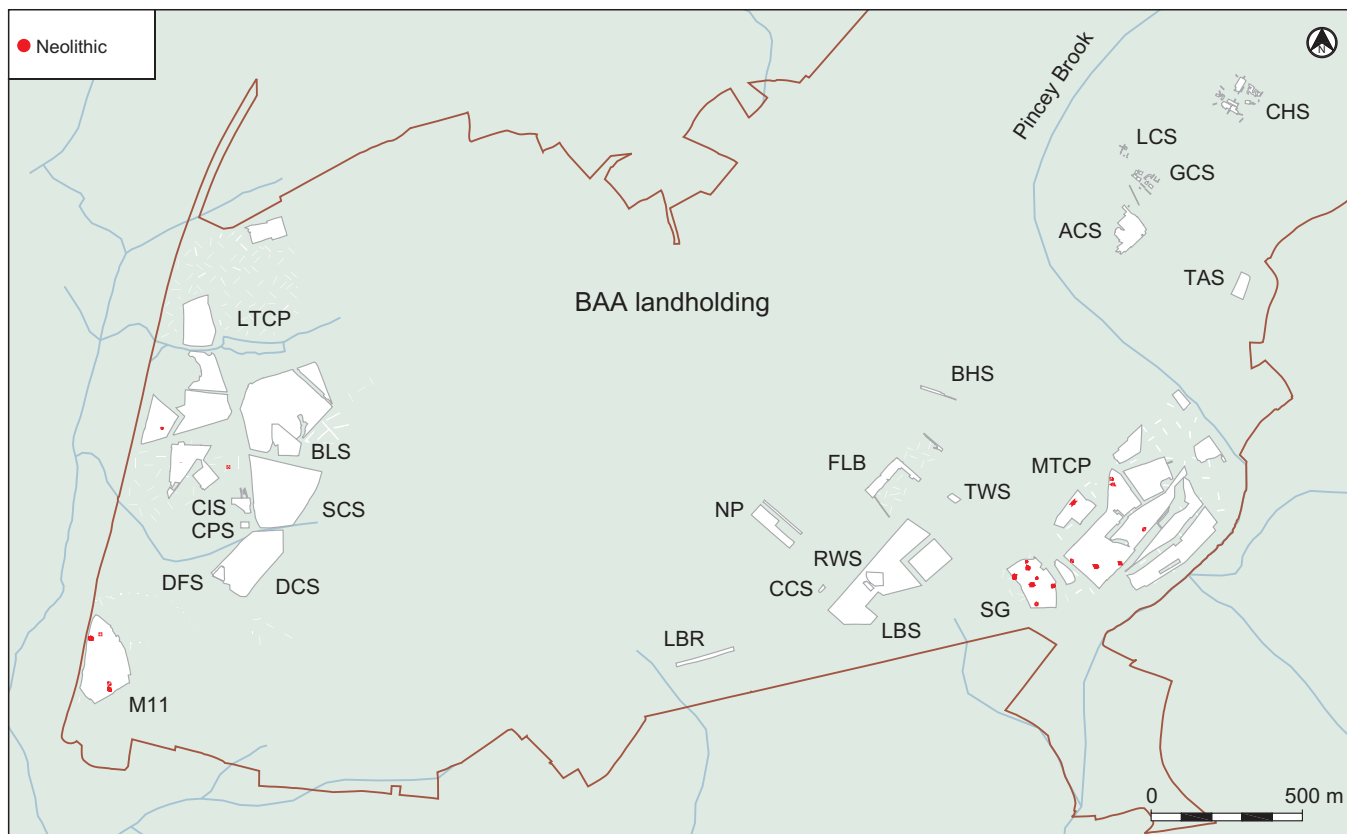
Neolithic flint tools from the Stansted Project excavations were confined to the SCS and DCS sites, both on the

western side of the airport (see above; Healey 2004, 38).

The excavations on the upper plateau recovered limited evidence for Neolithic activity. A small number of Neolithic flints were recovered from the FLB site. This is likely to have been the most heavily wooded area was clearly less intensively exploited than the plateau edges and valley sides.

The main foci of activity are similar to those of the Mesolithic, with the densest concentrations of activity on the western edge of the plateau and overlooking Pincey Brook (Figs 3.1-3). These sites were well positioned to afford access to the resources of both the river valleys and the wooded plateau. The floodplains would have been suitable for both hunting and small-scale agriculture, although there is almost no evidence of the latter. The woodland that dominated much of the area may have been used for grazing and hunting game, and could have provided timber for firewood and construction and a variety of plant resources. Limited quantities of domesticated cereals may have supplemented the essentially hunted, gathered and herded diet.

Figure 3.3: Neolithic features



Neolithic features

The LTCP site

Two pits 992002 and 995106 contained Neolithic material (Figs 3.3, 3.5). Of these, the former is less well-dated, containing only a single tiny sherd of Neolithic pottery. Pit 995106, however, contained 25 sherds from a single Early Neolithic vessel, as well as a substantial assemblage of undiagnostic flint flakes and chips, the condition of which is different to that of the pottery (see Cramp, CD Chapter 24).

A re-used Upper Palaeolithic long blade (see Chapter 2, Fig. 2.4), probably as a sickle, was recovered from an undated tree-throw (116024) (Cramp, CD Chapter 24). Although this re-use cannot be closely dated, it is most likely to be Neolithic.

Compared to some of the other sites the LTCP site produced only limited quantities of Neolithic flintwork, most of it redeposited in later contexts. Chronologically diagnostic types from elsewhere on the site include the butt end of a partially polished axe, later re-used as a core, which was found during fieldwalking.

Figure 3.4: Early Neolithic pottery dates from Essex

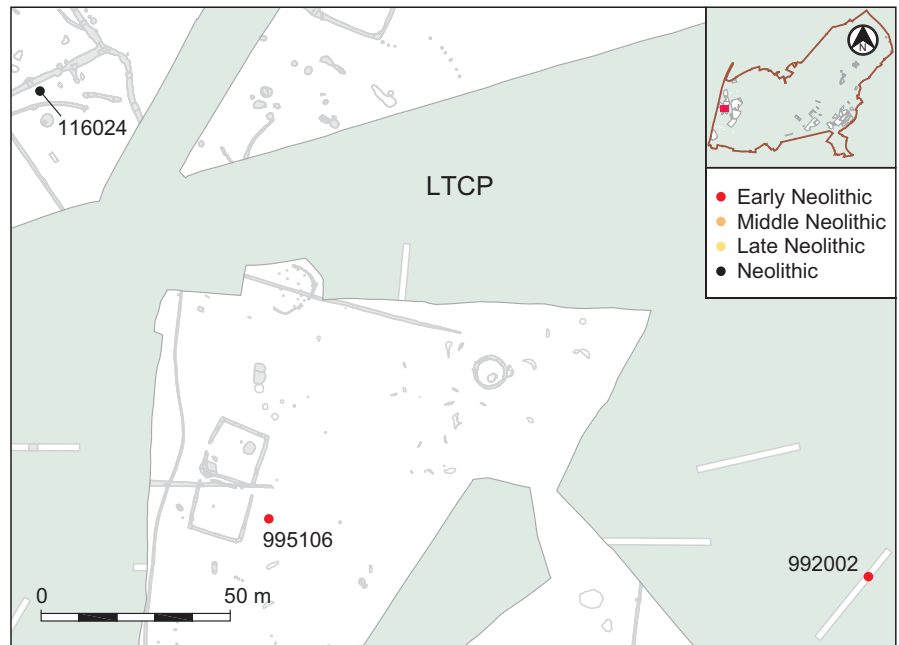
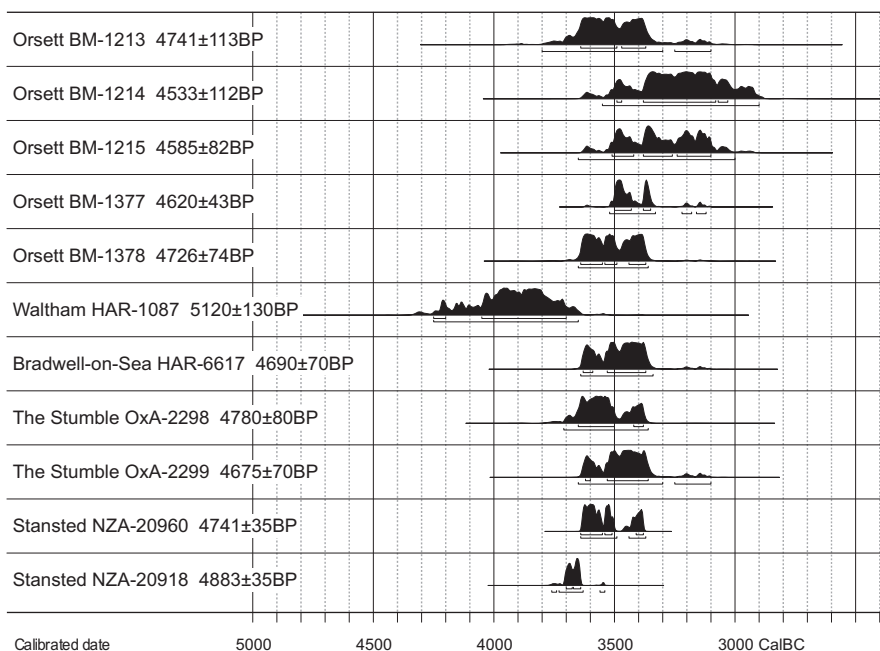


Figure 3.5: Neolithic features

The M11 site

Early Neolithic flintwork came from six tree-throws, four (434029, 434035, 434038 and 434068) on the north-western edge of the site and two isolated ones (429002 and 440004) close to the southern edge (Fig. 3.6). Charcoal from tree-throw 434068 produced a radiocarbon date of 2570–2300 cal BC (3947±35 BP, NZA-23238), suggesting that this feature, at least, was later in date.

The worked flint from the cluster of four tree-throws forms a coherent Early Neolithic assemblage indicative

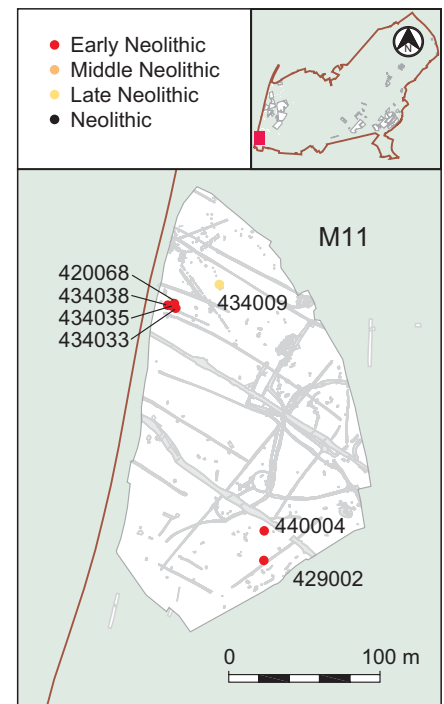


Figure 3.6: Neolithic features

of episodes of flint knapping in the area (or a single episode, given their proximity) (Cramp, CD Chapter 24). Material recovered was dominated by blades and flakes, although 434068 contained a conjoining blade from a polished implement.

Middle Neolithic pottery (Peterborough Ware) was recovered from pit 436070. This contained 12 sherds from a single Mortlake-type vessel (four decorated rim fragments

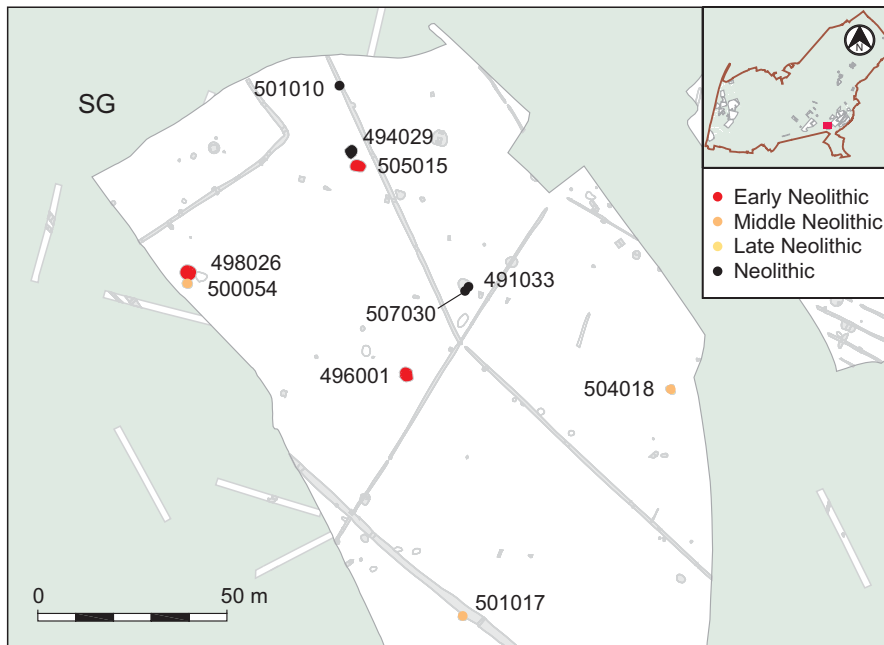


Figure 3.7: Neolithic features

and eight body sherds, including six decorated) (Leivers, CD Chapter 17). The pit was actually dug in the Late Bronze Age with the Mortlake sherds being incorporated in these later deposits. However it seems likely that they were probably initially deposited as a group nearby.

Pit 434009 was located to the north of the cluster of tree-throws (Fig. 3.6) and contained Late Neolithic flintwork; the composition which suggests an *in situ* dump of knapping waste. Refitting flakes and chips were found, along with a core, suggesting that knapping was performed directly into or very close to the feature. A knapping refit between one utilised burnt flake and one unburnt flake adds another dimension to the assemblage. There is no evidence for *in situ* burning in the pit, indicating that the flake was knapped, utilised and burnt, being deposited with the assemblage in the pit. Nine other flints have also been burnt, including the core.

Together these features point to flint working episodes on the site and deposition in small pits and tree-throws. The activity was possibly opportunistic although a pattern of clearance and settlement cannot be discounted. The evidence points to activity on the site over a prolonged period of time, with at least some redeposition of the material.

The SG site

At the SG site, a south-westerly extension of the MTCP site, a similar pattern of activity was represented. A series of tree-throws produced Early Neolithic pottery and flint (496001, 498026 and 505015), some of which could not be closely dated (494029, 501010, and 491033/507030 (stratigraphic group 504026)) (Fig. 3.7). None of these formed as obvious a cluster as those from the M11 site. Tree-throw 496001 contained 17 sherds of Early Neolithic Plain Bowl pottery, whilst tree-throws 498026 and 505015 produced 12 and 4 sherds respectively of a similar fabric. Small assemblages of worked flint were recovered from 496001 and 505015. Both are dominated by flakes, with only one retouched piece. Small quantities of core preparation flakes, chips and a single core fragment were recovered, suggesting that both were the focus of small-scale knapping activity. The remaining tree-throws contained undiagnostic flakes, one retouched flake (494029) and chips (501010).

Further evidence for earlier Neolithic activity from the SG excavation is indicated by the unstratified leaf-shaped arrowhead (Fig. 3.2.7). A collection of probable Early Neolithic flintwork, including a flake from a polished stone axe, was recovered from a later ditch (507032).

Two Middle Neolithic tree-throws (500054/501017 and 504018) contained small assemblages of pottery but the majority of the Middle Neolithic pottery (39 sherds) came from later features. Tree-throw 500054/501017 contained two small sherds of Middle Neolithic pottery and two sherds from a Mortlake-type rim and 13 plain body sherds from a second vessel came from 504018.

The MTCP site

Six scattered Early Neolithic pits (502/353011 (stratigraphic group 344278), 1209, 1738, 3204, 309228 and 323037) were excavated on the MTCP site (see Fig. 3.8). Two of these (1209 and 309228) were poorly dated, each containing a single small sherd of Neolithic pottery. Pits 1738 and 3204 contained small assemblages of material including struck flakes and sherds of Early Neolithic pottery. The remaining two pits, 323037 and 344278 are both worthy of more detailed examination and are discussed below.

Pit 323037

Pit 323037 appears to have been used as a hearth and was filled with a series of reddened layers of burnt soil (323038) and a charcoal-rich deposit (323036). Four abraded sherds of flint-tempered pottery, struck flints and burnt unworked flint were recovered from fill 323036. The flintwork is in a fresh, heavily corticated condition and is typologically consistent with a Neolithic date. A piece of hazel (*Corylus*) charcoal recovered from layer 323036 was submitted for radiocarbon dating, producing an Early Neolithic date of 3760–3540 cal BC (4883±35 BP, NZA-20918).

Pit 344278

Pit 344278 contained a sequence of fills, the earliest of which (344279) contained small amounts of animal bone, poorly preserved, abraded charred bread-type wheat (*Triticum aestivum*-type), two indeterminate cereals, 103 fragments of hazelnut shell and worked flints, and may have been a placed deposit. A charred hazelnut shell was submitted

for radiocarbon dating and produced a date of 3640–3370 cal BC (4741±35 BP, NZA-20960). This layer was sealed by a charcoal-rich deposit (507), which was in turn sealed beneath a finds-rich deliberate backfill (344280). Material recovered from this deposit included 98 sherds of Early Neolithic pottery and 307 pieces of worked flint. This flintwork is generally in much fresher condition than the pottery, which may reflect differences in the treatment of these materials prior to deposition.

The flint assemblage is blade-based, involving careful core preparation and reduction, with the presence of numerous chips and two partially worked nodules indicating that knapping waste was also present. Eight refitting sequences, each comprising 2–5 flakes, were identified. These were found both within and between the pit deposits. Several groups of the same flint type are present, but many pieces from the reduction sequence are clearly missing. No formal cores were identified – a recurrent feature of the Early Neolithic flint assemblages from Stansted. A limited range of retouched tools was recovered (five edge-retouched flakes/blades, four serrated flakes, an end scraper and a leaf-shaped arrowhead fragment). Evidence for burning was recorded on 27 flints, mostly flakes and blades but including three retouched pieces.

The pottery recovered from the upper fill of the pit comprised portions of six vessels, including three plain rims, one with a post-firing perforation. Each was from a different bowl, none of which was represented amongst the plain body sherds recovered from the same feature. Two belong to open bowls with necks above sharply carinated bodies, while the third appears to be from a neutral, undifferentiated vessel. Portions of three other vessels were identified in the less well-preserved plain body sherds.

Other finds from the pit comprised small quantities of burnt unworked flint, and animal bone. Few of the latter could be identified to species (four fragments of sheep/goat bone were identified in the upper fill).

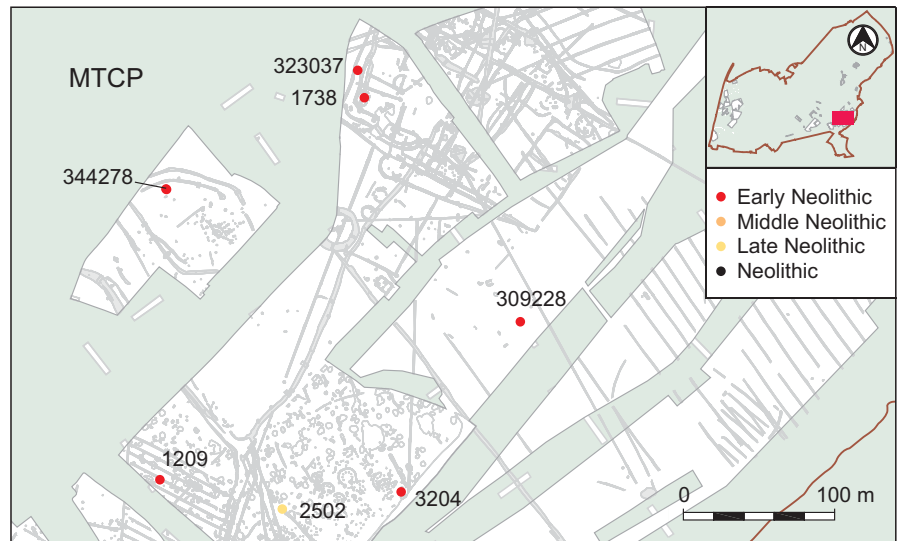


Figure 3.8: Neolithic features

Some of the bone had been burnt and may relate to cooking or feasting activity as may the charred grain and hazelnut shells.

The large volume and variety of cultural material recovered from the pit is in stark contrast with the small collection of flint and pottery from other Early Neolithic pits at Stansted. It appears to contain a sequence of deliberately selected deposits from many aspects of Neolithic life. The contrasting condition of the material is of interest and may indicate that several different processes were being employed prior to the final deposition of the material. Certainly selection of material was occurring; recent work in East Anglia has highlighted similar differences in assemblages from pit deposits (Garrow 2006; Garrow *et al.* 2006). The rationale behind these differences is unclear, although it may have involved a degree of ceremony and could have constituted an act of thanksgiving, or a closing act to a particular episode or activity.

The remaining evidence for Early Neolithic activity on the MTCP site consists of residual flints, which are found thinly scattered across the site in later features. Diagnostic pieces include one leaf-shaped arrowhead (Fig. 3.2.2), one flake from a polished implement and an incomplete polished axe with indirectly refitting flake (Fig. 4.17.2), which was found within a Middle Bronze Age waterhole (feature 309075).

Only five sherds of Middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware pottery were recovered from the MTCP site. Three sherds, representing two vessels, came from the fill of Middle Bronze Age tree-throw 320001. A third vessel comprised two sherds from the upper fill of Middle Bronze Age pit 316032.

A spread of apparently *in situ* Late Neolithic struck flint was recovered from a buried land surface (324033) on the east of the site adjacent to Pincey Brook. This comprised a localised area of undisturbed subsoil in a hollow containing an assemblage of over 60 struck flints including a transverse arrowhead, a notched flake and a spurred flake. The fresh condition of the flints, however, suggests that they were fairly rapidly covered following deposition and were not exposed to significant trampling and disturbance.

The only excavated Late Neolithic feature on the MTCP site was tree-throw 2502. This contained flint, abraded pottery, fired clay and occasional pieces of chalk and charcoal.

Zones of Neolithic activity

The previous descriptions have shown that the majority of the lithic and ceramic evidence points to activity in the 4th millennium BC. If we take the weight of Neolithic pottery as a crude indicator of the level of human activity, Table 3.3 shows that the peak of activity dates to between 3600 and 3300 cal BC.

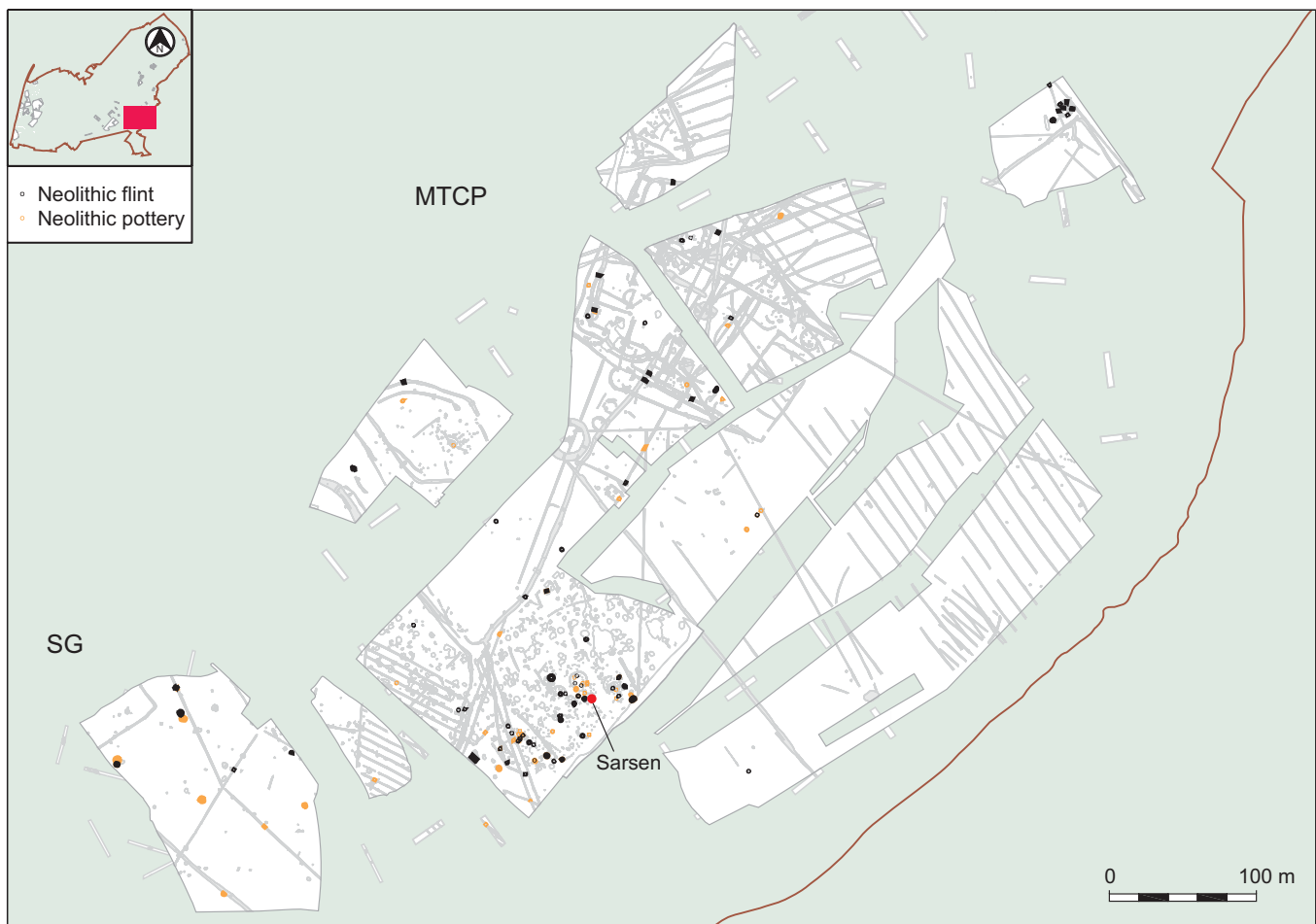


Figure 3.9: Neolithic pottery and flint

As already noted, the majority of radiocarbon dates Early Neolithic ceramics from Essex also fall within this period. In addition, an ongoing review of radiocarbon dates from Neolithic causewayed enclosures in Essex (Whittle *et al.* in prep.) suggests that most of these monuments were constructed and used over a short period of time in the 37th and 36th centuries cal BC.

At Stansted the scattered pits and utilised tree-throws dating to this period tended to occupy positions on the upper slopes of the river valleys. Access to freshwater, good visibility across the valley, well-drained soils, sufficient forest cover, a south-facing aspect, as well as less tangible factors such as religious, mythical or historical qualities, may have influenced the decisions of Neolithic groups in their use of the landscape.

Most of the features excavated were tree-throws, which may have been

used opportunistically. These were the only Early Neolithic features excavated on the M11 and SG sites. Pits were identified on the MTCP and LTCP sites although the evidence from the latter site is limited. Pits on the MTCP site stood out in terms of the quantity of cultural material recovered. The same range of material was represented, with the exception of the few charred grains, but the quantity and condition of the artefacts are different from those encountered elsewhere on the excavations. Heavily abraded body sherds were found with relatively unabraded rims. Elements of the flint assemblage were absent but short sequences of refitting pieces were identified.

Previous studies of Neolithic pits have highlighted their location within the landscape, the diverse nature of the deposits within them and identified some common themes of deposition (eg Thomas 1991, 59–64). Recent work in East Anglia on pit deposits has examined the nature and condition of

material deposited (Garrow *et al.* 2005; 2006; Garrow 2006) and parallels with the Stansted material may be drawn. Material in a similar condition to that from the pits at Stansted was found to have undergone a series of processes before final burial. The authors explore the processes, including exposure prior to burial, which may have produced these deposits (Garrow *et al.* 2005, 149–50). Many of these processes are pertinent to the evidence from Stansted.

It is not clear why these pits only occur on the MTCP and LTCP sites. It may indicate that there were differences between the activities undertaken on the MTCP and LTCP sites and other areas of the landscape. More redeposited Neolithic pottery and flintwork have been recovered from the western half of the MTCP and the SG sites than anywhere else (Fig. 3.9), possibly indicating that this area saw some form of semi-permanent settlement or that it was imbued with



Plate 3.2: The sarsen under excavation in Middle Bronze Age pit 320046

a particular significance. It would thus be entirely justified to interpret the material from the MTCP and SG sites as representing a period of repeated and persistent, but not continuous, occupation (Garrow *et al.* 2005, 156) within a forest clearing sometime between *c* 3600 and 3300 cal BC.

Within this context, it is worth considering the origins of the large sarsen boulder recovered from a pit in the Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site (Fig. 3.9, Plate 3.2). This is now on public display in Takeley (Plate 3.3). Although this was buried in the Middle Bronze Age (see Chapter 4), it lay at the heart of the Middle Bronze Age settlement, and it is tempting to see it as a significant feature in the Neolithic landscape, perhaps erected as a small standing stone. Whether erected as a standing stone or not, the sarsen boulder would have been a prominent feature at the centre of the Neolithic woodland clearing overlooking Pincey Brook (Fig. 3.10).



Plate 3.3: The sarsen in its current location in Takeley

Against a background of a probably seasonally occupied landscape in both the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic the sparse nature of Middle and Late Neolithic activity (3300–2000 cal BC) is of interest. The evidence that there is for Middle and Late Neolithic activity is very similar to the preceding period: limited deposition in pits and tree-throws and some scatters of flintwork and pottery in later features. An *in situ* deposit of Late Neolithic flint from the MTCP site may perhaps be the residue of a different type of activity. The lack of change in patterns of deposition suggests that landscape was used in much the same way as the in the Early Neolithic.

Evidence for activity around Stansted is relatively sparse (Holgate 1996, 17–18, figs 1–2; Havis and Brooks 2004, 518–19, fig. 337) with more sites located on the coast and around river valleys such as the Blackwater, Chelmer and Crouch. The limited evidence identified in the Stansted Project and also the excavations along the route of the A120 (Timby *et al.* 2007) indicate a similar sporadic use of the landscape as suggested by the evidence from the present excavations. It is clear that the boulder clay plateaus of the Stansted area were largely devoid of monuments which are characteristic of the Neolithic in southern Britain, and this is a pattern that continues into the Early Bronze Age (Holgate 1996, 17–18).

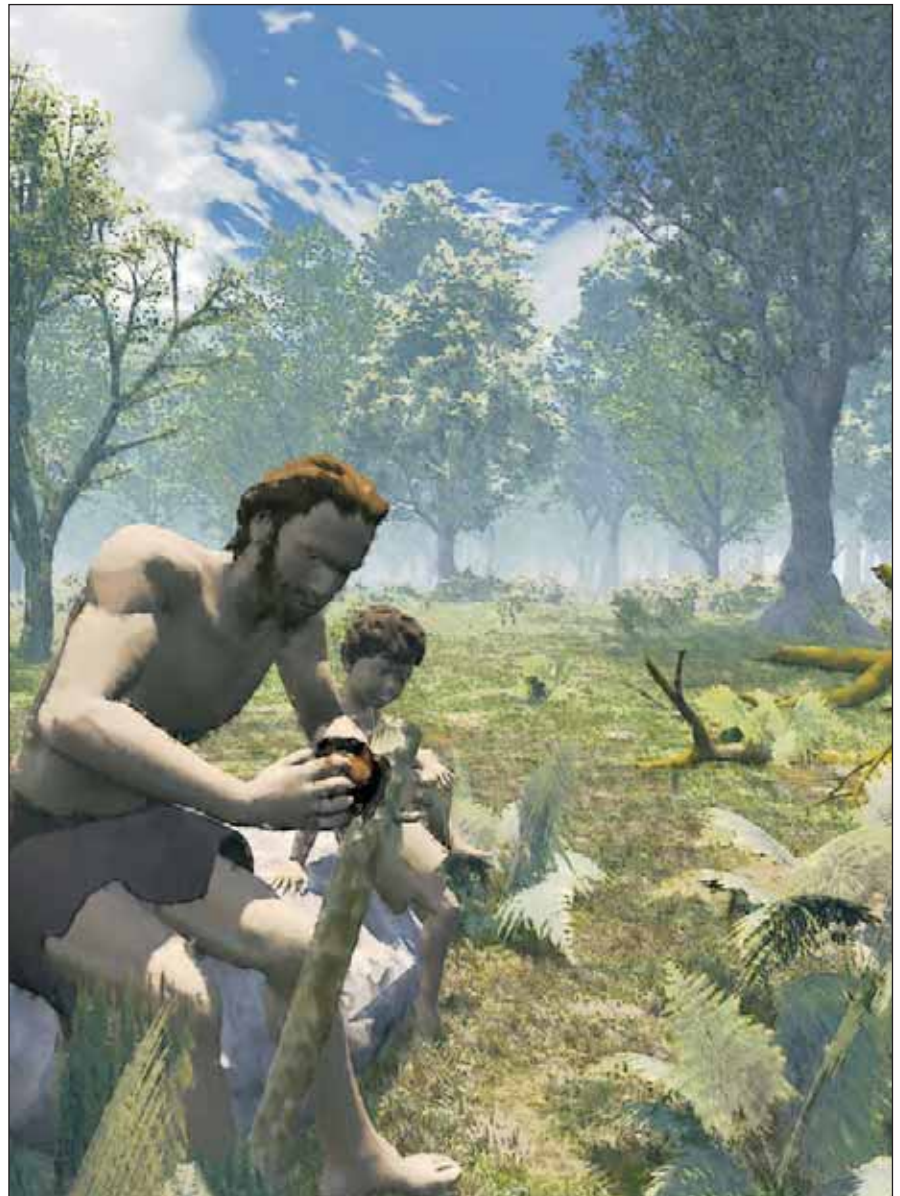
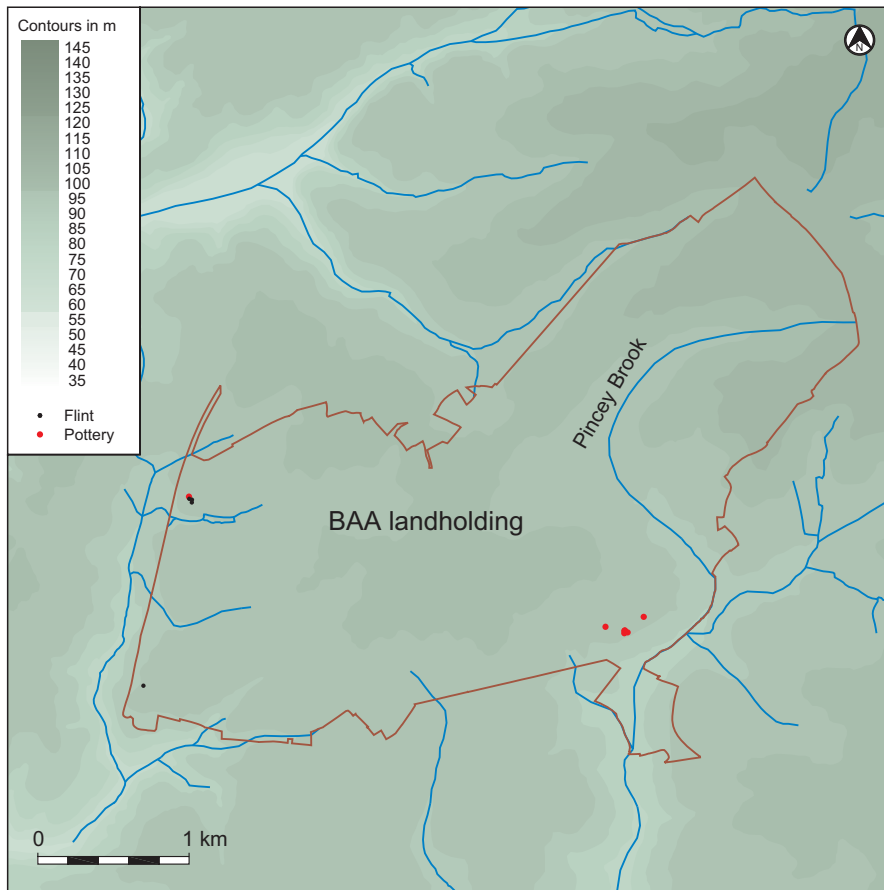


Figure 3.10: Reconstruction of the sarsen stone which may have lain at the centre of a small clearing, and appears to have been the focus of Neolithic activity



Early Bronze Age activity

Traces of Early Bronze Age activity are confined to small scatters of grog-tempered pottery and diagnostic flint tools on the LTCP, M11, SG and MTCP sites (Fig. 3.11). No Early Bronze Age features were identified. Unless the Early Bronze Age occupation at Stansted was of a particularly unobtrusive nature, the picture that emerges is one of a sparsely populated landscape, perhaps grazed by herd animals and explored by the occasional farmer, game hunter or wood cutter, but generally thinly inhabited.

The Early Bronze Age pottery assemblage entirely comprises a small number of residual sherds in later features (Leivers, CD Chapter 17). Four sherds of pottery came from the LTCP site (three grog-tempered and one Beaker) and a featureless grog-tempered body sherd came from the MTCP site. A total of 14 Beaker sherds came from the SG site. All are in poor condition, with some identified by fabric alone. A few are decorated with much abraded incised and impressed motifs.

Diagnostic Early Bronze Age flint tools include three barbed and tanged arrowheads and two backed knives all of which came from later deposits or features (Cramp, CD Chapter 24). The arrowheads, probably used in hunting, but perhaps also seen as status objects in their own right, often occur in funerary or 'special' deposits. Two examples came from the LTCP site and one from the MTCP site (Fig. 3.11.1–2). While barbed and tanged arrowheads are known to have persisted in use beyond the Early Bronze Age (Green 1980, 137–8), these probably represent chance losses during periodical hunting in the area.

Sparse Early Bronze Age flint was recovered from the Stansted Project and a Beaker was recovered from Stebbing (Kemble 2001, 19). Elsewhere in Essex, Early Bronze Age sites abound, particularly in the north-east of the county (Holgate 1996, 19, fig. 3). Bronze Age barrows are fairly common in Essex (Holgate 1996), with many recorded from aerial photographs, while numerous assemblages of Bronze Age and Beaker material have been found across the county. These include

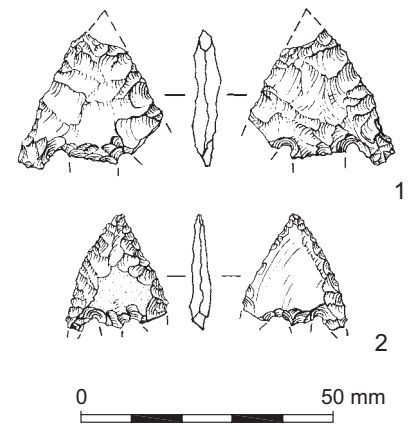


Figure 3.11: Distribution of Early Bronze Age flint and pottery from the Framework Archaeology excavations. 1 – 2 Barbed and tanged arrowheads

sherds of pottery, flint tools and bronze artefacts. Ring ditches of earlier Bronze Age date occur mainly in north-west Essex or on the river gravels of the Blackwater, Chelmer and inner Thames Valleys (Holgate 1996, 19 and fig. 3; Priddy 1981, fig. 34), while Beaker flat graves are also known from Orsett Cock (Milton 1986), Mucking (Jones 1973) and Thorpe Hall, Southchurch (Clarke 1970, 444 and 481). Two Early Bronze Age finds have also been made in the vicinity of Stansted Mountfitchet – an Early to Middle Bronze Age spearhead and a small Early Bronze Age cup. Both were recovered from the river floodplain.

Essex was among the first counties in England to yield evidence for Early Bronze Age domestic settlement, with sites recorded in the Stour and Colne Valleys and in the south and north-west of the county; many were also occupied during the Late Neolithic period (Holgate 1996, 20–4). The information is sketchy, however, and there is little evidence to support the presence of settlement on the boulder clay in this period (Holgate 1996, 24). The character and distribution of the finds fit a pattern of woodland resource exploitation suggested for boulder clay areas elsewhere in Essex (Holgate 1996, 24).

The paucity of Early Bronze Age material is somewhat surprising given the extensive evidence for both domestic and funerary monuments of this period in other areas of East Anglia (eg Bamford 1982; Gibson 1982).

Pathways and clearings

Prior to the Middle Bronze Age, humans had probably inhabited the Stansted landscape in a less intensive, even opportunistic way, perhaps only settling on a seasonal basis. Hunter-gatherers colonised the area in interglacial or post-glacial periods, probably in much the same way as did the plant and animal communities on which they subsisted. Their influence on the environment is likely to have been minimal, with the highly mobile nature of their subsistence patterns and largely ephemeral technologies leaving little tangible evidence.

Little perceptible change seems to have occurred in the Neolithic. There is no evidence for agriculture on any scale although some poorly preserved remains from a pit on the MTCP site indicate that the inhabitants had access to domesticated cereals although this material could have been brought to the site rather than reflecting cultivation in the immediate area. Wild foods continued to play a role in the diet of the inhabitants the surrounding landscape being exploited.

Deposition in tree-throws seems to have persisted with little change from the Early to the Late Neolithic suggesting that the landscape was used in similar ways over a long period of time. It may be that those living here were either marginalized and little affected by the social transformations taking place in other areas or that

this part of the landscape was itself marginal and the activities undertaken here were not of a kind to be ostensibly altered by changes in material culture over time.

It is likely that any agricultural activity was sporadic and concerned with stock rearing and herding rather than crop cultivation, probably associated with semi-permanent settlements which did not leave any substantive archaeological traces. The interaction between human opportunism on the one hand and natural agency on the other, would eventually have caused openings in the canopy and possibly allowed areas or pasture and heath to develop. However, this is likely to have been very localised at Stansted, where pollen evidence suggests little overall impact on the tree cover until the Middle Bronze Age (Wiltshire and Murphy 2004a, 77–8).

The character of the environment around Stansted and effect this had on the development of an indigenous Neolithic society seems to have had implications for the local culture. The area around Stansted contained none of the complex ritual Neolithic monuments (cursus monuments, causewayed enclosures or long mortuary enclosures) found elsewhere in Essex, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire (Holgate 1996, 17–18, figs 1–2). This is probably due to a number of complex and inter-related factors but it may reflect the cultural marginality of the area within the

region. Equally, it may have been influenced by the physical nature of the landscape itself. Neolithic monuments appear to have been used both as places of social intercourse and interaction, but also as physical expressions of concepts of landscape. In many cases, monuments seem to be associated with the clearance of surrounding woodland, their visibility within the landscape emphasising their relationship to it and perhaps control over it. Without the more widespread deforestation that happened elsewhere in Britain during the Neolithic, it is possible that the use of paths and clearances within the heavily wooded Stansted landscape replaced the monumentality of these other landscapes or acted in a similar fashion.

The landscape is likely to have changed little in the Early Bronze Age, although over time it is possible that woodland clearance opened up the landscape more, especially in the river valleys. Likewise, the Middle Bronze Age landscape at Stansted developed from a pre-existing Neolithic/Early Bronze Age landscape and probably involved the continuation of many of the same processes that were initiated at that time. Important places in the Neolithic landscape may have had a continued significance in the Middle Bronze Age. Indeed, this can be seen in the clear correlation between zones of Neolithic activity and the main areas of Middle Bronze Age settlement activity.



CHAPTER 4

First Farmers

(c 1700 BC–400 cal BC)

by Fraser Brown and Matt Leivers

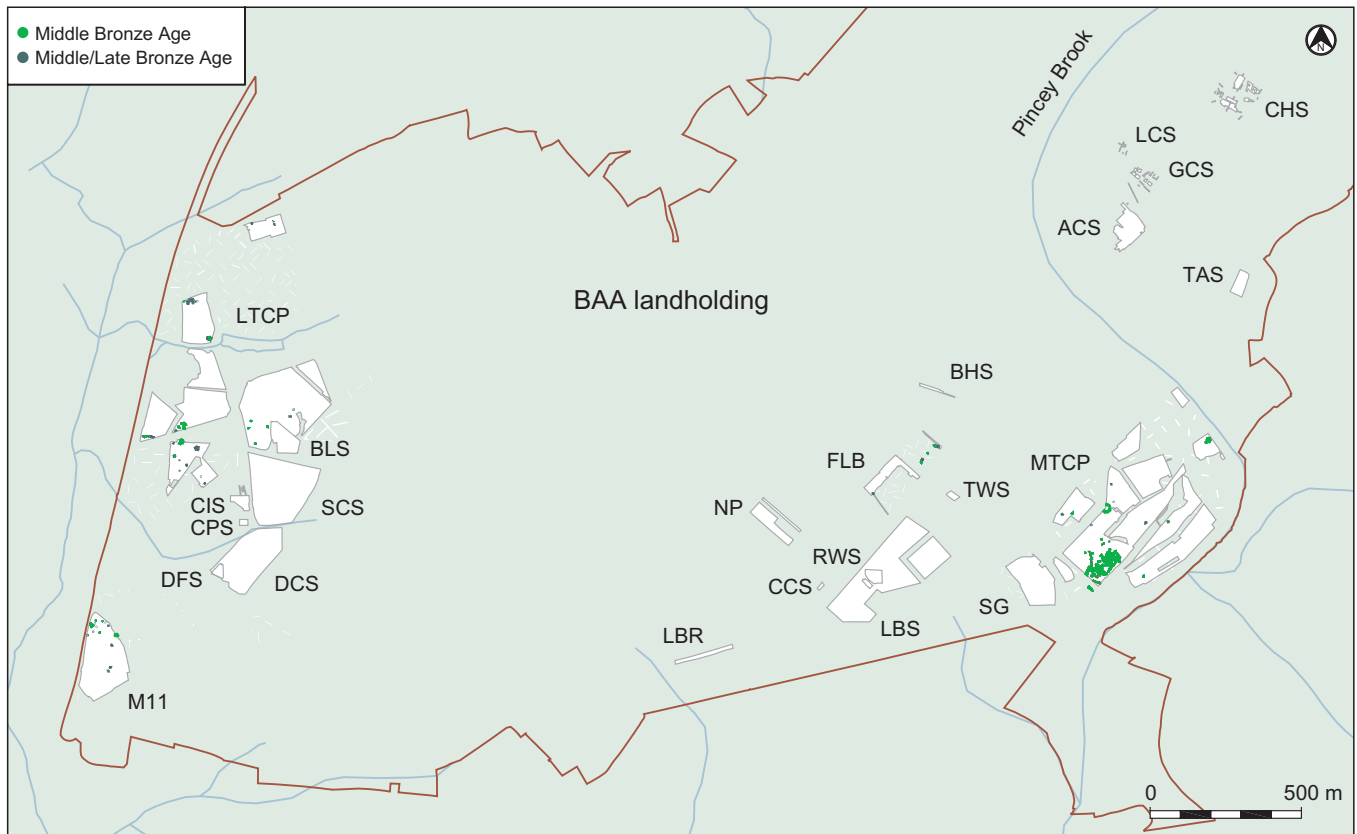


Figure 4.1: Middle and Middle/Late Bronze Age features

Introduction

This chapter will examine the evidence for settlement and funerary practices from the Middle Bronze Age through to the Middle Iron Age (c 1700–400 cal BC). At the start of this period the first permanent settlements within the Stansted area were established. This represents a substantial change to the settlement pattern. The changes in the use of the landscape from sporadic and opportunistic activity of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, outlined in Chapter 3, will be examined. A number of themes can be explored in the light of the evidence: life and death in the Bronze Age; material culture; and abandonment and change. These themes will enable the changes in time and across the landscape to be discussed.

The evidence comes largely from two main excavations (LTCP and MTCP sites) with the smaller excavations on the FLB and M11 sites also producing relevant data (Fig. 4.1). In addition evidence from five Stansted Project excavations (BLS, SCS, CIS, DFS and LBS sites) will be reconsidered against

the background of the results from the Framework Archaeology excavations. The excavated evidence consists primarily of up to five settlements composed of roundhouses and other structures, pits, waterholes, ditches and gullies. In addition to these well defined settlements a number of pits and other features have been found scattered across the landscape attesting the widespread use of the areas away from the main focus of occupation. One definite round barrow associated with cremated human remains, and two possible barrows and a burnt mound were also identified. The relationship of these features to the settlements and funerary practices will also be examined.

Chronological evidence is provided by a number of radiocarbon determinations and the analysis of the pottery fabrics. This combined evidence has allowed the period to be divided into four settlement phases. Other artefactual material provides an insight into domestic activities within the settlements and in the wider landscape. Environmental remains (pollen, charred plants, insects and

waterlogged wood) also allow some reconstruction of the landscape as well as providing some information on the economic base of the settlements.

Chronology

In order to fully understand how the Middle and Late Bronze Age settlements at Stansted relate to each other both spatially and temporally, a chronological framework has been established. This has relied on a combination of analysis of the pottery fabrics and absolute dates derived from a programme of radiocarbon dating, as no metalwork or other chronologically sensitive artefacts were recovered. Three Middle Bronze Age Ceramic Groups were established:

- Group 1–c 1700 cal BC–c 1500 cal BC
- Group 2–c 1500 cal BC–c 1300 cal BC
- Group 3–c 1400 cal BC–c 1100 cal BC

Additionally a Late Bronze Age and an Early Iron Age ceramic group were established, based on traditional ceramic typologies:

- Late Bronze Age Ceramic Group—*c* 1100 cal BC–700 cal BC

- Early Iron Age Ceramic Group—*c* 700 cal BC–400 cal BC

These were used together with the radiocarbon determinations to create four settlement phases:

- Settlement phase 1—*c* 1700 cal BC—*c* 1500 cal BC (Ceramic Group 1)
- Settlement phase 2—*c* 1500 cal BC—*c* 1300 cal BC (Ceramic Groups 2 and 3)
- Settlement phase 3—*c* 1300 cal BC—*c* 1000 cal BC (Ceramic Group 3, Late Bronze Age Ceramic Group)
- Settlement phase 4 —*c* 800 cal BC—*c* 400 cal BC (Late Bronze Age Ceramic Group and Early Iron Age Ceramic Group)

The first two of these settlement phases fit fairly comfortably within the date ranges traditionally assigned to the Middle Bronze Age. Settlement phase 3 spans the period traditionally assigned to the transition from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age, whilst settlement phase 4 covers the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age period. There is no evidence for settlement within the excavated area during the 10th and 9th centuries BC.

Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery

For the last quarter of a century, analyses of Middle and Late Bronze Age ceramic sequences in southern and eastern England have followed the model proposed by John Barrett, in which Deverel-Rimbury ceramics typifying the Middle Bronze Age are succeeded by post-Deverel-Rimbury traditions which continue into the Early Iron Age (Barrett 1980). The most recent synthesis of Bronze Age chronology places the floruit of the Deverel-Rimbury series between the 16th and 12th centuries BC, with post-Deverel-Rimbury beginning as a largely undecorated style in the 12th century BC; decoration becomes

prevalent by the 8th century BC (Needham 1996).

The Middle Bronze Age

Deverel-Rimbury assemblages tend to divide into three basic vessel types: the so-called Bucket, Barrel and Globular Urns. In Essex, Deverel-Rimbury ceramics fall primarily into two regional groups: Ellison's Lower Thames Valley grouping (Ellison 1975) in the centre and south and the Ardleigh group (Erith and Longworth 1960) in the north-east. In general terms, the two Deverel-Rimbury types are each associated with a different mortuary practice, with cremation cemeteries in the north-east containing large quantities of complete or near-complete Ardleigh-type vessels, while dispersed ring ditches in central and southern Essex are typified by vessels belonging to the Lower Thames Valley group. Ardleigh ceramics are very scarce on settlement sites, while Lower Thames Valley type assemblages are predominantly known from settlements (or at least non-funerary sites).

Ardleigh Group

Deverel-Rimbury assemblages of the Ardleigh group consist of Bucket-shaped and Globular jars. The former are typified by frequent fingertip rustication, 'horseshoe' handles and a high proportion of grog amongst the otherwise predominantly flint-tempered fabrics (Brown 1995b, 127). Radiocarbon dates for the type span the period 2200–1510 cal BC to 1510–1270 cal BC (at 98% confidence) at the Brightlingsea cemetery, and 1420–950 cal BC at Chigborough Farm (Brown 1995b, 128, 130), suggesting that this style at least began in the Early Bronze Age, and continued to the end of the Middle Bronze Age.

Lower Thames Valley Group

Vessels of this group belong more firmly within the main Deverel-Rimbury tradition. As a type, this material is unlikely to date before 1600 cal BC or become widespread prior to 1500 cal BC, with a *floruit* 1500–1150 cal BC (Needham 1996).

Dates for the southern central group in Essex span the range 1600–930 cal BC (Brown 1995b, 130–1). The jars of this group are plainer than the Ardleigh type, with decoration primarily consisting of rows of finger-tip impressions or applied cordons on the body, and finger impressions on the rim (Dacre and Ellison 1981, fig. 19.E3). Globular fineware vessels are a much less frequent component of assemblages, but do occur, and in Essex are sometimes replaced by stamp-decorated bowls (Brown 1995b).

The Stansted assemblage

At Stansted the Middle Bronze Age assemblage (3093 sherds weighing 27, 605 g) was more or less sandy and (with the exception of one fabric containing grog) tempered with crushed calcined flint in varying quantities. In addition to the three basic Deverel-Rimbury types (Barrel, Bucket and Globular), the assemblage contained a small number of anomalous sherds belonging to vessels of different forms. One rim and a dozen plain body sherds seem to belong to a small closed bowl. Four sherds are portions of metalworking crucibles.

The assemblage does not fit exclusively in either the Ardleigh or Lower Thames groups. Features of Ardleigh type include one vessel with complex impressed decoration, and a number of vessels with horseshoe cordons. Features suggesting a Lower Thames Valley assemblage include the very low incidence of grog temper, the prevalence of simple finger-tipping and/or applied cordons, and (indirectly) the predominance of settlement over funerary provenance.

Two explanations can be presented: one chronological, the other geographical. Given the possibility that the emergence of Ardleigh-type Deverel-Rimbury predates that of the Lower Thames Valley group by several centuries, it may be the case that a broad chronological distinction can be drawn in the Stansted assemblage. Alternatively the ceramics may be broadly contemporary, and the hybrid nature of the assemblage explained by

the peripheral location the site occupies in relation to the main distributions of both groups. In his discussion of the Deverel-Rimbury ceramics from Essex, Brown excluded the four known sites from the northern central part of the county, as 'the location of the sites makes it uncertain as to which group they belong' (Brown 1995b, 128, 133, no. 7). The Stansted material belongs to this anomalous group (which includes Shalford, Bocking, Braintree and Bulmer Tye), as does the group of sites excavated along the route of the A120 (Every 2007).

The Stansted assemblage spans the period 1700–1100 cal BC. This range begins rather earlier than would be expected for a Lower Thames Valley assemblage, and it is highly significant that the earliest dates (1690–1520 cal BC (3309±30 BP; NZA-23237) and 1610–1430 cal BC (3241±30 BP; NZA-23242)) are associated with material from the lower fills of the barrow ditch on the MTCP site. Fills immediately above those providing the dates contained the only Middle Bronze Age grog-tempered pottery from Stansted. Although the quantity of sherds is small, and the determination a *terminus post quem*, it is notable that this early date is associated with one of the indicators of Ardleigh-type ceramics, in a context that would be entirely usual for such vessels in the Ardleigh core area.

Pottery in direct association with these radiocarbon dates is in flint-tempered fabrics, comprising 25 plain body sherds of a coarse Bucket-shaped vessel (several of which have burnt residues on the interior). Eight sherds of a Globular vessel are in a similar early stratigraphic position.

The rest of the assemblage falls in the range of 1520–1100 cal BC, entirely within the range of both Ardleigh and Lower Thames Valley assemblages elsewhere in Essex (eg Brown 1995b; 1996), and this portion is clearly a domestic assemblage. One recurrent feature of the known settlement sites is placed deposits of ceramics in pits, rather than simple rubbish disposal (Brown 1996, 27), and the Stansted material conforms to this pattern,

indicating a further link with Lower Thames Valley type assemblages.

The Middle Bronze Age ceramic sequence

The series of radiocarbon dates from broadly Middle Bronze Age features provides an opportunity to refine the ceramic sequence. Correlating the dates with the associated fabric groups allows the formulation of a three-period chronology of Early–Middle Bronze Age.

- Group 1–c 1700 cal BC–c 1500 cal BC
- Group 2–c 1500 cal BC–c 1300 cal BC
- Group 3–c 1400 cal BC–c 1100 cal BC

Each period can be identified by a *fabric type assemblage*, the second and third of which add to the existing suite of fabrics. Group 1 clearly falls within the Early Bronze Age, but the associated ceramics belong unequivocally to the Deverel-Rimbury series. Accepting that the dates and ceramics are correct and contemporary, two possibilities arise: either Deverel-Rimbury begins early in the area or the true date of the deposit lies at the upper end of the range, towards 1500 cal BC.

Groups 2 and 3 are securely Middle Bronze Age, and contain the standard Deverel-Rimbury ceramic suite, dominated by large Bucket-shaped vessels with a much smaller quantity of Globular types. General trends observed through time include the slight increase in quartz-tempered fabrics, the thinning of vessel walls, and the proliferation of decorative techniques. Both Globular and Bucket-shaped vessels show form changes over time, both within fabric groups and with the new fabrics introduced at these times.

The Middle to Late Bronze Age

The emergence of Late Bronze Age ceramic traditions remains poorly understood in terms of the mechanisms through which the various Deverel-Rimbury traditions were replaced by the so-called post-Deverel-Rimbury

plain ware assemblages, and other less clearly understood traditions. The Stansted excavations have provided a number of ceramic sequences which include Deverel-Rimbury and Late Bronze Age traditions in closed and dated stratigraphic groups. These provide an opportunity to examine this change, to place it in a local chronological scheme, and perhaps to investigate the circumstances in which this change was taking place.

The Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age

Late Bronze and Early Iron Age traditions are generally understood in terms of the six-fold class division proposed by Barrett (1980, 302–3) of jars, bowls, small cups, dishes and lids in both coarsewares and finewares. In general Late Bronze Age assemblages in Essex are dominated by coarseware jars, with fineware bowls the second most common form. Very little of the pottery tends to be decorated. This is true across the county, with no suggestion of the regionalism evident in the varying Deverel-Rimbury traditions (Brown 1996, 28, fig. 2). Fabrics begin as predominantly flint-tempered, with an increase in sand temper through time. Late Bronze Age pottery is well represented in Essex (Brown 1996, 29), although most of the recently published assemblages come from the southern and central portions of the county, with a concentration around the Chelmer and Blackwater rivers (for instance Lofts Farm (Brown 1988), Broomfield (Atkinson 1995), Mucking (Bond 1988a), Springfield Lyons (Buckley and Hedges 1987a), and Great Baddow (Brown and Lavender 1994)). Late Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age evidence has been identified from excavations along the A120 (Timby *et al.* 2007).

The Stansted assemblage

The Late Bronze Age marks a decline in the quantities of ceramics recovered from the sites, both in terms of sherd numbers (2029) and total weight (14,632 g). There is however no clear-cut division: the Late Bronze Age ceramics begin to emerge from the

Deverel-Rimbury sequence in Middle Bronze Age Group 3, while recession of settlement apparent across the Stansted landscape in the 10th century means that only the very beginnings of the Late Bronze Age ceramic sequence are visible.

The assemblage comprises both flint-tempered and sandy fabrics. The flint-tempered fabrics are mostly coarse-wares, although there is some variation in wall thickness and surface finish within fabric groups. Sandy fabrics occur as both coarse and fine vessels, finewares in general having more effort expended over the preparation of temper, surface finish and (rarely) decoration. Most vessels are represented by a limited number of body sherds which preclude the assignation to form. Those vessels that can be identified by form appear to be fine or coarseware bowls or coarseware jars (Barrett 1980).

Stylistically the Stansted ceramics can be paralleled with the Broads Green (N Brown 1989) and Springfield Lyons (Brown 1987) assemblages dated to the 9th–8th centuries BC. The radiocarbon dates from Stansted do not, however, support such a chronology. There are currently two groups of dated ceramics, one beginning in Middle Bronze Age Group 3 and no longer apparent by the end of the 11th century (1260–1010 cal BC (2937±30 BP; Oxford-OxA-15389)); the second not emerging until the 8th century and continuing into the Early Iron Age (800–410 cal BC (2528±35 BP; NZA-23240 and 2490±30 BP; NZA-23239)). If short radiocarbon chronologies are used, the Late Bronze Age vanishes almost entirely, at least in ceramic terms. Only on the M11 site is there any indication of continuity in ceramic type. Here, Late Bronze Age fabric FL35 is dated to 790–410 cal BC (2490±30 BP; NZA-23239); predominantly Early Iron Age. This is the commonest of the Late Bronze Age fabrics and probably not very chronologically significant after its initial appearance. A very large proportion of assemblage groups on the M11 site contain large quantities of this pottery and although undated, these are likely to be transitional Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age.

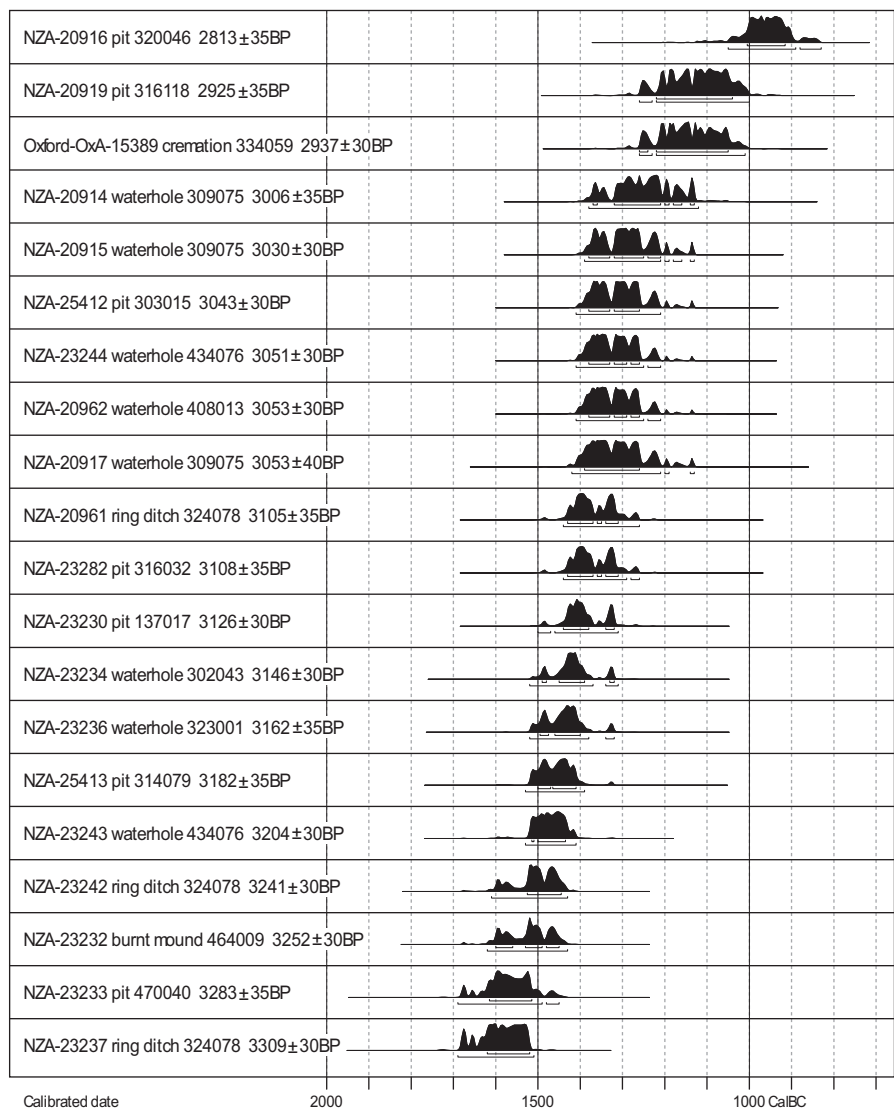


Figure 4.2: Bronze Age radiocarbon dates from Stansted

Absolute dating

A series of 20 Bronze Age radiocarbon determinations was obtained from the Stansted landscape (MTCP, FLB, LTCP, and M11 sites) (Fig. 4.2). These dates have been interpreted using Bayesian modelling and are discussed in more detail on the CD-Rom (Brown, CD Chapter 37). In addition two transitional Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age dates were obtained (790–410 cal BC (2490±30 BP; NZA-23239) and 800–520 cal BC (2528±35 cal BC; NZA-23240). The dates span the end of the conventional Early Bronze Age to the beginning of the Iron Age (Needham 1996). The determinations have a wide spatial distribution, occurring on both the east and west of the airport but the majority (14) came from the MTCP site,

predominantly from the features within the Bronze Age settlement.

At Stansted, the radiocarbon determinations from a burnt mound and a funerary monument, both associated with watercourses, date to the very end of the Early Bronze Age and seemingly continue into the Middle Bronze Age. The settlement features appear slightly later, however, suggesting that the permanent settlement of the Stansted landscape happened at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age.

This distinction may be too rigid, however, given the ambiguity of the radiocarbon date ranges and the

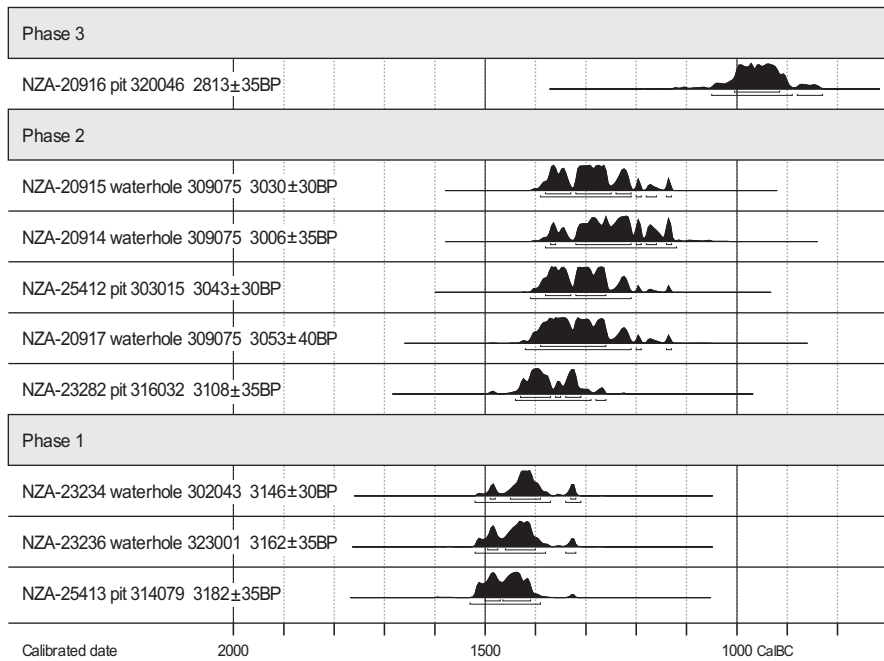


Figure 4.3: Radiocarbon dates from the Middle Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site

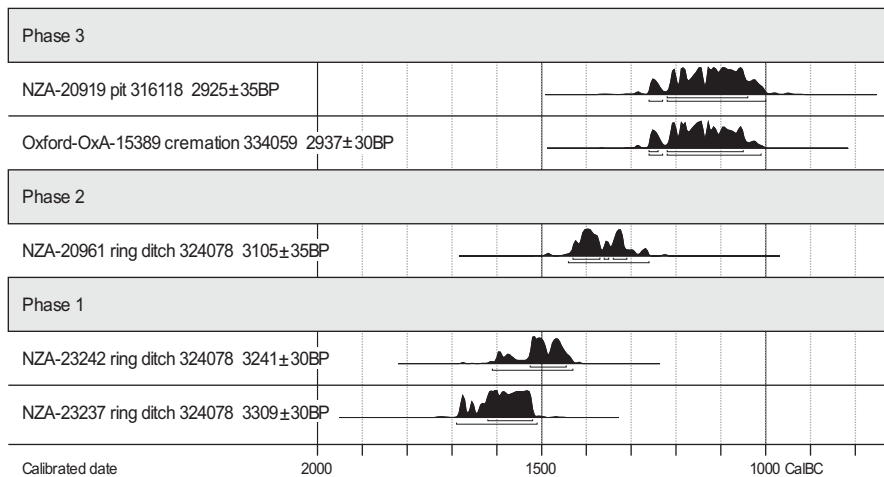


Figure 4.4: Radiocarbon dates from Middle Bronze Age non settlement features on the MTCP site

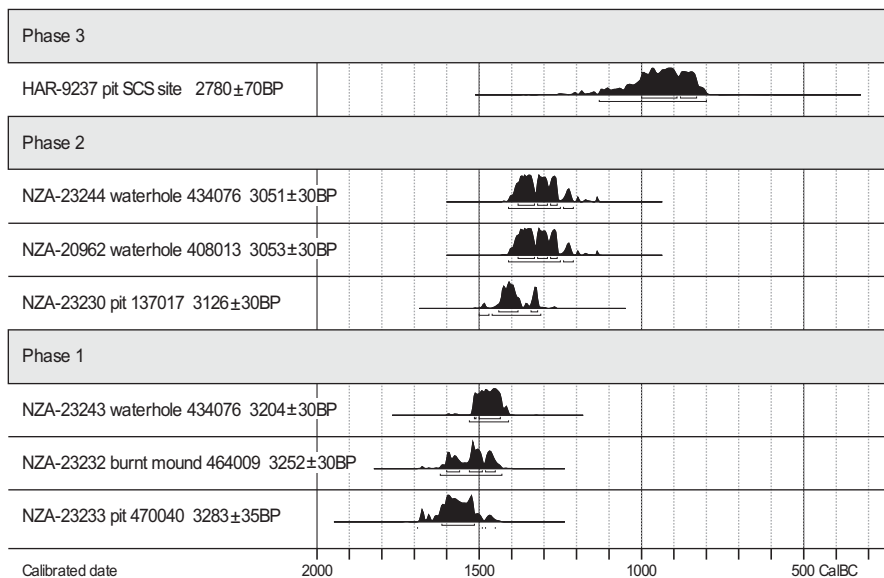


Figure 4.5: Radiocarbon dates from Middle Bronze Age features on other sites

stratigraphic differences between the deposits dated. It is possible that the practices of monument construction and deposition in watercourses were related in some way to the settling of the landscape. This is reflected in the phasing of Bronze Age activity at Stansted. Four phases have been defined on the basis of stratigraphic and radiocarbon evidence and can be equated with the ceramic typology outlined above. The funerary monument, burnt mound and earliest settlement features have all been assigned to phase 1 (Figs 4.3–5). This phase spans a maximum of 300 years, from *c* 1700 cal BC to *c* 1400 cal BC.

Within the settlement on the MTCP site, a second, later phase (phase 2) of house construction and waterhole digging replaced the first. This can be radiometrically dated and seems to correspond with developments in pottery fabrics and has thus been extended across the landscape (Figs 4.3–5). Phase 2 spans 200 years, possibly less, starting *c* 1400 cal BC and ending at *c* 1200 cal BC. It is notable that although the ring ditch of the funerary monument was silting up at this time, the monument appears to still have been in use. The settlement on the MTCP site was largely abandoned at the end of phase 2 but a number of other features in the wider landscape provided later radiocarbon dates, as did a pit within the area of the abandoned settlement (all assigned to phase 3; Figs 4.3–4). Phase 3, although probably much shorter, lasted no more than 350 years from *c* 1200 cal BC to *c* 850 cal BC, with the pit in the settlement late in this phase. With the exception of a pit on the SCS site, which may in fact be Early Iron Age (Fig. 4.5; Havis and Brooks 2004, 24), no other features in the wider Stansted landscape have yielded contemporaneous dates but other evidence implies activity at this time.

It is worth noting that because the radiocarbon technique can only provide probabilistic date ranges, it can imply that a phase of activity lasted longer than it necessarily did. While there was undoubtedly several hundred years of Bronze Age activity at Stansted, large periods of time could

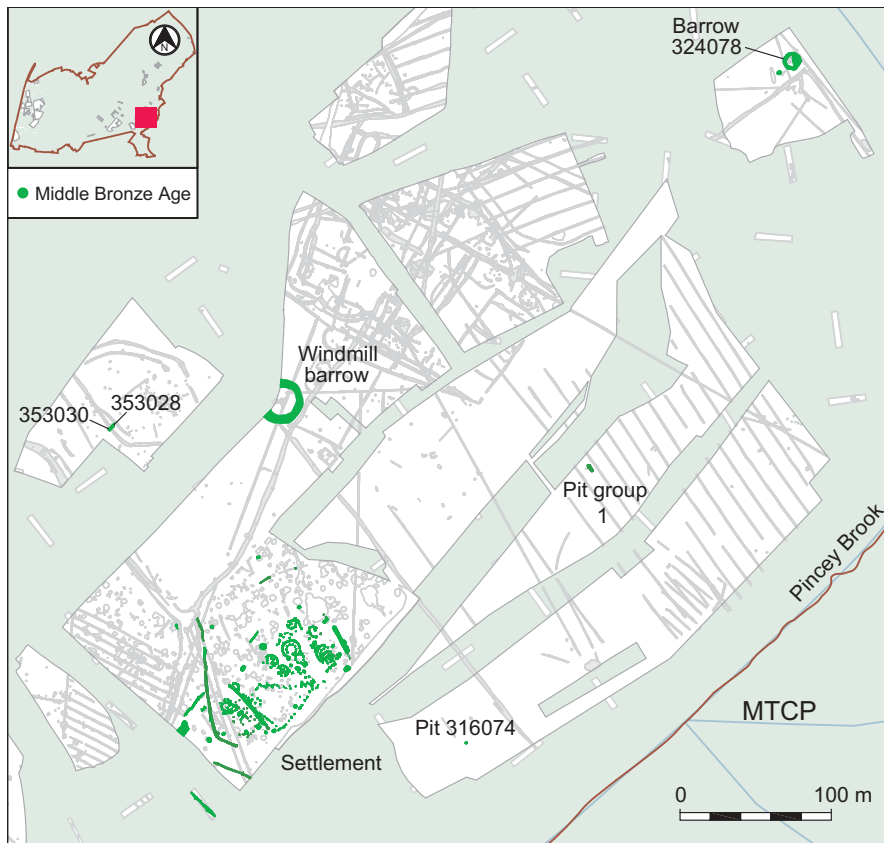


Figure 4.6: Middle Bronze Age features

have separated the isolated events for which evidence exists; there may have actually been more disjunctive than Figure 4.2 perhaps suggests. In the case of the settlement on the MTCP site, there is a good sequence of dates informed by archaeological evidence that suggests continuous occupation. We may, therefore, interpret the radio-carbon evidence, and perhaps prefer to believe that the settlement was more likely occupied for somewhere between 200–300 years in total, rather than the 500 years that is possible; the actual duration of each structural phase being around 100–150 years (for a more detailed consideration of this how this estimate was obtained see Brown, CD Chapter 37).

Middle and Late Bronze Age flint

The decline in craftsmanship from the end of the Early Bronze Age onwards is well established and numerous authors have outlined the characteristics of this late material (eg Fasham and Ross 1978; Ford *et al.* 1984; Holgate

1988; Brown and Bradley 2006; Young and Humphrey 1999). In summary these assemblages are composed largely of debitage including roughly worked cores or nodules. Secondary working is generally confined to edges which would have required retouching for functional rather than aesthetic reasons. Frequently unmodified edges were used for a variety of tasks which can be identified through low power usewear or microwear analyses.

Life in the second millennium settlements

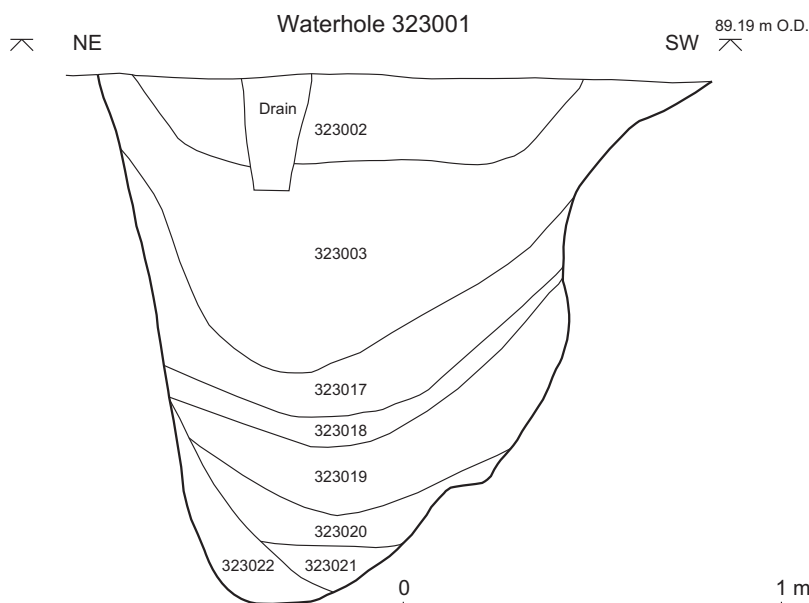
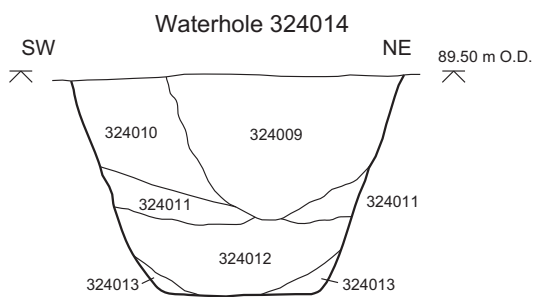
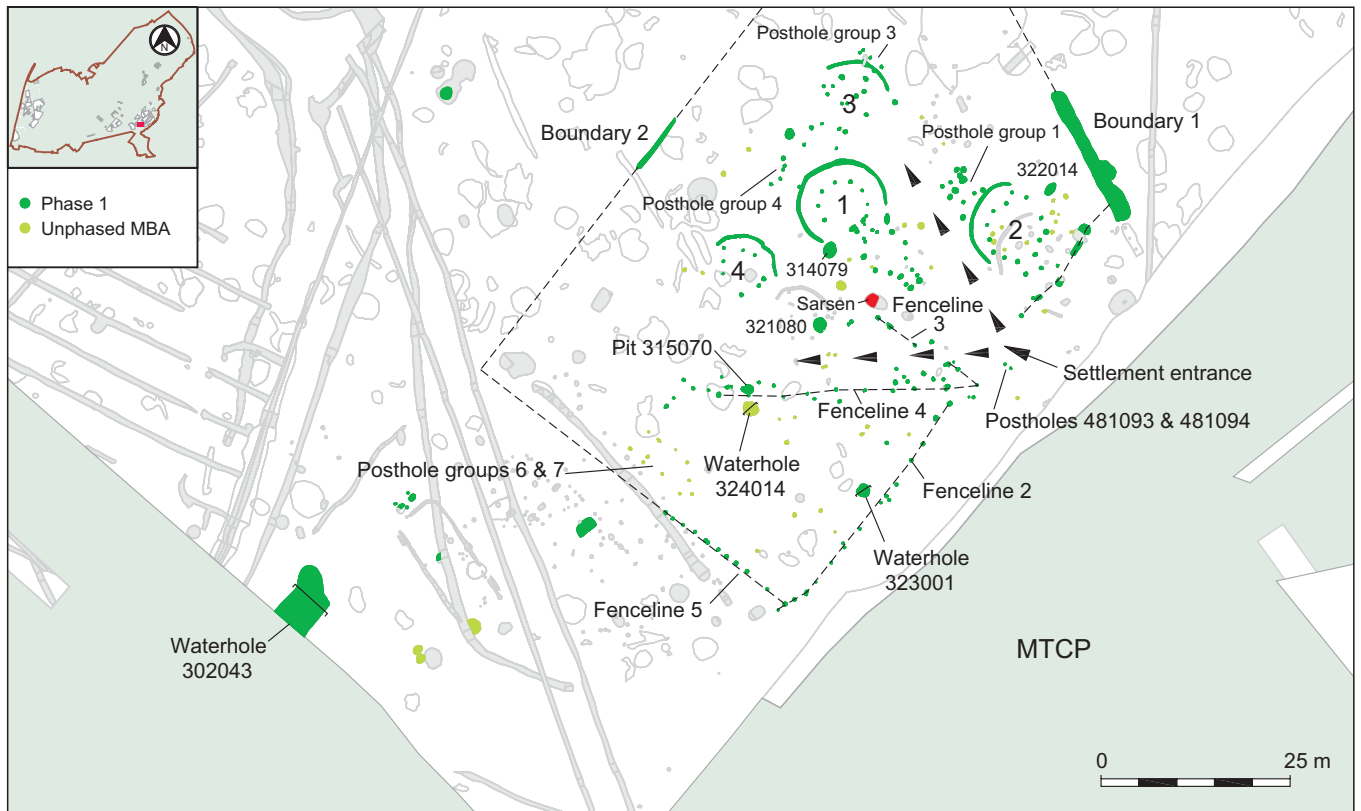
Against the chronological framework outlined above it is now possible to examine the settlements at Stansted to establish how and why these areas were occupied and farmed in the 2nd millennium BC. The development and final abandonment of these settlements is also considered. Most of the information comes from the substantial settlement on the MTCP site; additional evidence from the FLB, M11 and LTCP sites will be used where relevant.

The MTCP Bronze Age settlement (phase 1) c 1700–c 1500 cal BC

Excavations on the MTCP site revealed a small Middle Bronze Age settlement (Fig. 4.6) in an area that had previously been occupied during the Neolithic and also seen Mesolithic activity (see Chapter 3). It is possible that the sarsen stone acted as a central focus for this later settlement (Fig. 4.7). The settlement lay on a slight plateau on the slope leading down to Pincey Brook and was defined by a roughly rectangular enclosure with an entrance on its south-eastern side. Within the enclosure were roundhouses and numerous other settlement features. There is some evidence to show that the enclosure was subdivided by fencelines, possibly to corral stock or demarcate areas.

Settlement layout

The first phase of the settlement consisted of four roundhouses, numerous pits, postholes, waterholes and boundary ditches. A roughly rectangular enclosure, consisting of shallow ditches boundaries 1–2 and fencelines 2 and 5, defined the enclosure around the settlement although isolated pits, postholes and a waterhole were located outside this main area of activity (Fig. 4.7). The enclosure seems to have been fairly insubstantial, the ditches were shallow and irregular and fencelines formed the south-western and south-eastern sides. An entrance was located on the south-eastern side; two postholes (481093 and 481094) may have been used to narrow this fairly substantial gap with gates or wattle hurdles. Activity seems to have been concentrated around the central area of the enclosure close to its entrance. Fencelines 3 and 4 may have been used to corral stock into a relatively open area in the western part of the enclosed space. Nine postholes in two short lines (posthole groups 6 and 7), near fenceline 4 could not be closely phased but may represent structures associated with stock control. This area was relatively devoid of features other than pit 315070 and two waterholes (324014 and 323001). Outside the enclosure to the south-west was a very large waterhole (302043).



Anyone entering the settlement through the south-eastern entrance would find themselves in an area largely devoid of features (Fig. 4.7). Immediately in front of them would have been the sarsen and the porch of roundhouse 1, which lay roughly at the centre of the settlement. A second roundhouse (roundhouse 2) lay immediately to the right of its entrance, in the eastern corner of the settlement enclosure. The clear area may have allowed clear access to the settlement entrance, passing between roundhouses 1 and 2 towards roundhouse 3 in the northern corner of the enclosure.

Waterholes

The waterholes were substantial features between 1.18 and 1.78 m deep (Figs 4.7–8). The two waterholes within the settlement area were roughly circular in plan and steep sided. Another large steep sided pit with waterlogged deposits (321080) may also have been used as a waterhole. These features were more regular than waterhole 302043, located outside the enclosure (Figs 4.7–8, Plate 4.1). As might be expected, the lower fills of these features were generally devoid

Figure 4.7: Middle Bronze Age settlement (phase 1) showing the sarsen and sections through waterholes 324014 and 323001

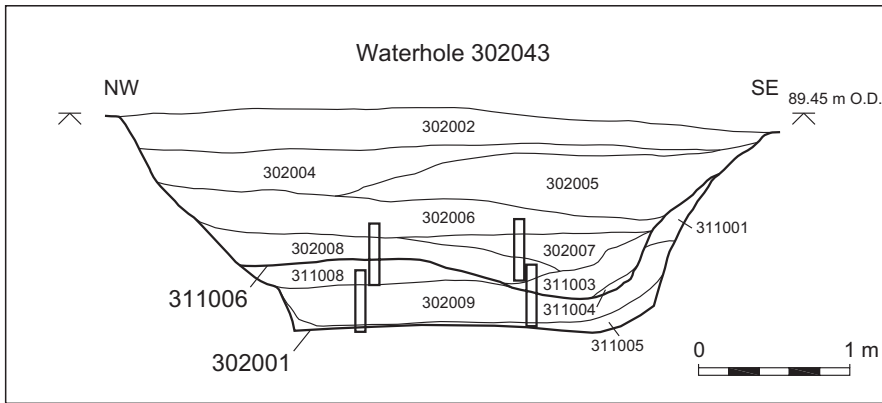


Figure 4.8: Section of waterhole 302043

of finds but charcoal-rich deposits and artefacts were recovered from their disuse fills. Some differentiation and possible selection of material was noted in waterhole 323001. A radiocarbon determination on a charred cereal grain in deposit 323003 produced a date of 1520–1320 cal BC (3162±35 BP, NZA-23236), relating to the disuse of the feature (Fig. 4.2).

Analysis of deposits in waterhole 302043 showed that the material had been trampled and may have been mixed with slurry, indicating that animals had access to this feature (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). Finds were not particularly common in the waterhole given its size, perhaps reflecting its peripheral location. A radiocarbon determination from charcoal within a dump towards the top (context 302004) dates the

disuse of the waterhole to 1520–1310 cal BC (3146±30 BP, NZA-23234) (Fig. 4.2). The differences in size, shape and contents of these waterholes may reflect differing purposes: those within the settlement were perhaps used for obtaining water for people, whilst the one located on the edge of the settlement may have been used for watering livestock.

Roundhouses and the habitation area

The four roundhouses were all circular or approximately circular in plan and associated with encircling arcs of gullies on their up-slope sides (Fig. 4.9). The most extensive gully was that around roundhouse 1, comprising two-thirds of a complete circle. These gullies appear to have been dug as drainage features. However the

provision of an extensive gully around roundhouse 1 seems to have been used to highlight its important position in the centre of the settlement. The buildings varied in size and plan, although some shallower postholes seem to have been truncated, in particular in roundhouses 3 and 4. Conversely, roundhouses 1 and 2 would seem to have been particularly well constructed leaving clear outlines. It may perhaps not be a coincidence that Roundhouses 1 and 2 would have been the first houses to have been seen when entering the settlement (Fig. 4.7).

The houses were of posthole construction, the rings of posts concentric to the outer gullies. These probably supported the weight of the roof, and the diameter of the structures ranged between 5.5 m and 7.6 m (Table 4.1). The space between the posts and the gullies varied between 1.2 m and 2.2 m. It seems likely that the walls of the structure lay in this space, probably close to the ring gullies (Reynolds 1993; Bareham 2005). The outer walls would have been made of hurdles covered with a thick plastering of daub, the less substantial upright posts of which would not have been driven deep enough to penetrate the subsoil (Reynolds 1993; Bareham 2005). No traces of subdivisions, internal floor surfaces or hearths survived. The buildings are likely to have been thatched with reeds or straw but there is no surviving evidence for these materials.



Plate 4.1: Waterhole 302043



Plate 4.2: Roundhouse 1

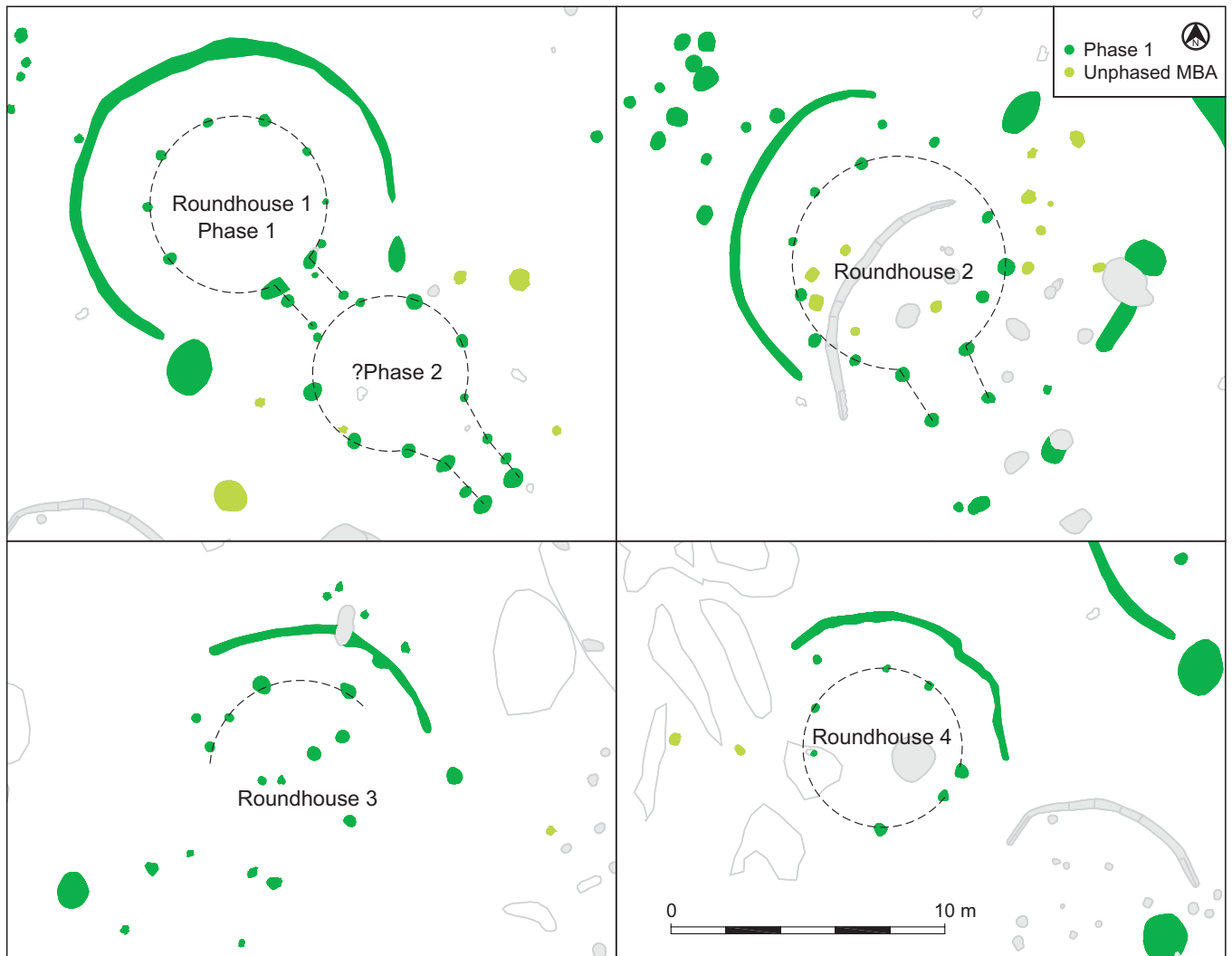


Figure 4.9: Detailed plans of the phase 1 roundhouses

Roundhouses 1 and 2 had well-built south-east facing porches. It was not possible to fully reconstruct the form of roundhouses 3 and 4 but paired postholes facing south-east in the latter structure probably represent door posts (Fig. 4.9). The location of entrances in the south-east or south has been noted in other Middle Bronze Age structures (Brück 1999, 155).

The form of roundhouse 1 is open to interpretation: a second circular structure with a slightly elongated porch may have formed an 'antechamber' into the house set within the ring gully (Fig. 4.9). An alternative interpretation

would see a rebuilding of roundhouse 1 further south-east, the resulting structure being slightly smaller. This possible replacement roundhouse also had a porch formed by six posts (Fig. 4.9). The replacement structure was slightly smaller than its predecessor but it retained its general overall form although no encircling gully was dug around it. The date at which the rebuilding of this structure occurred is not clear, neither are the reasons for it. Whatever the sequence of roundhouse 1 the positioning of the slightly smaller structure immediately adjacent is striking within the settlement. As will be seen below, the phase 2 roundhouses

appeared to replace the earlier houses but in slightly different locations (Fig. 4.10).

A number of pits and postholes were located around the roundhouses, some of which could only be broadly dated to the Middle Bronze Age although spatially many of these features are clearly associated with the structures (Figs 4.9). Pottery, flint, animal bone and charcoal were recovered from some of the pit fills. A radiocarbon date of 1410–1210 cal BC (NZA-25413, 3182±35 BP) was obtained on *Maloideae* charcoal from the lower fills of pit 314079 (Fig. 4.2). A small quantity of cereal processing waste was recovered from pit 322014. Clusters of postholes in the vicinity of the roundhouses may be the remains of less substantial working shelters or racks, frames and screens.

Roundhouse	Shape	Post-ring size	Gully	Porch
1	circular (two adjoined)	6.6 & 5.5 m dia (18 m total length)	Yes	Yes
2	circular	7.6 m dia	Yes	Yes
3	circular?	6? m dia	-	-
4	circular	5.5 m dia	Yes	-

Table 4.1: Details of phase 1 roundhouses

**The MTCP Bronze Age settlement (phase 2)
c 1500–c 1300 cal BC**

After a number of years of occupation, probably more than a century, the settlement enclosure was expanded and roundhouses 2–4 were respectively replaced by roundhouses 5–7, either in one event or in a piecemeal manner over time (Figs 4.3, 4.10). It is not clear when the rebuilding of roundhouse 1 occurred (see above). If it remained in use during the expansion of the settlement it would have been flanked on either side by roundhouses (Fig. 4.10).

The expansion took in the land to the north and south-west of the original settlement, with several new boundary ditches (boundaries 4/5, 6–8) being established, enclosing and subdividing this land. The roundhouses now lay within the southern half of a sub-rectangular enclosure measuring 90 m by 95 m, the northern half of which was largely devoid of features. An additional rectangular field seems to have been created adjacent to the south-west corner of the main enclosure. Many of the boundaries associated with the original settlement were maintained, whilst others were abandoned or

moved. Waterhole 309075 was sunk in the extended eastern corner of the settlement enclosure and more pits were dug across the area. In the south-west of the newly annexed area of settlement, two new roundhouses (roundhouses 8 and 9) were constructed. A number of pits and pits and post-holes were dug in this area, presumably associated with the roundhouses.

The enclosure ditches and fencelines

A number of boundaries were established around the expanded settlement,

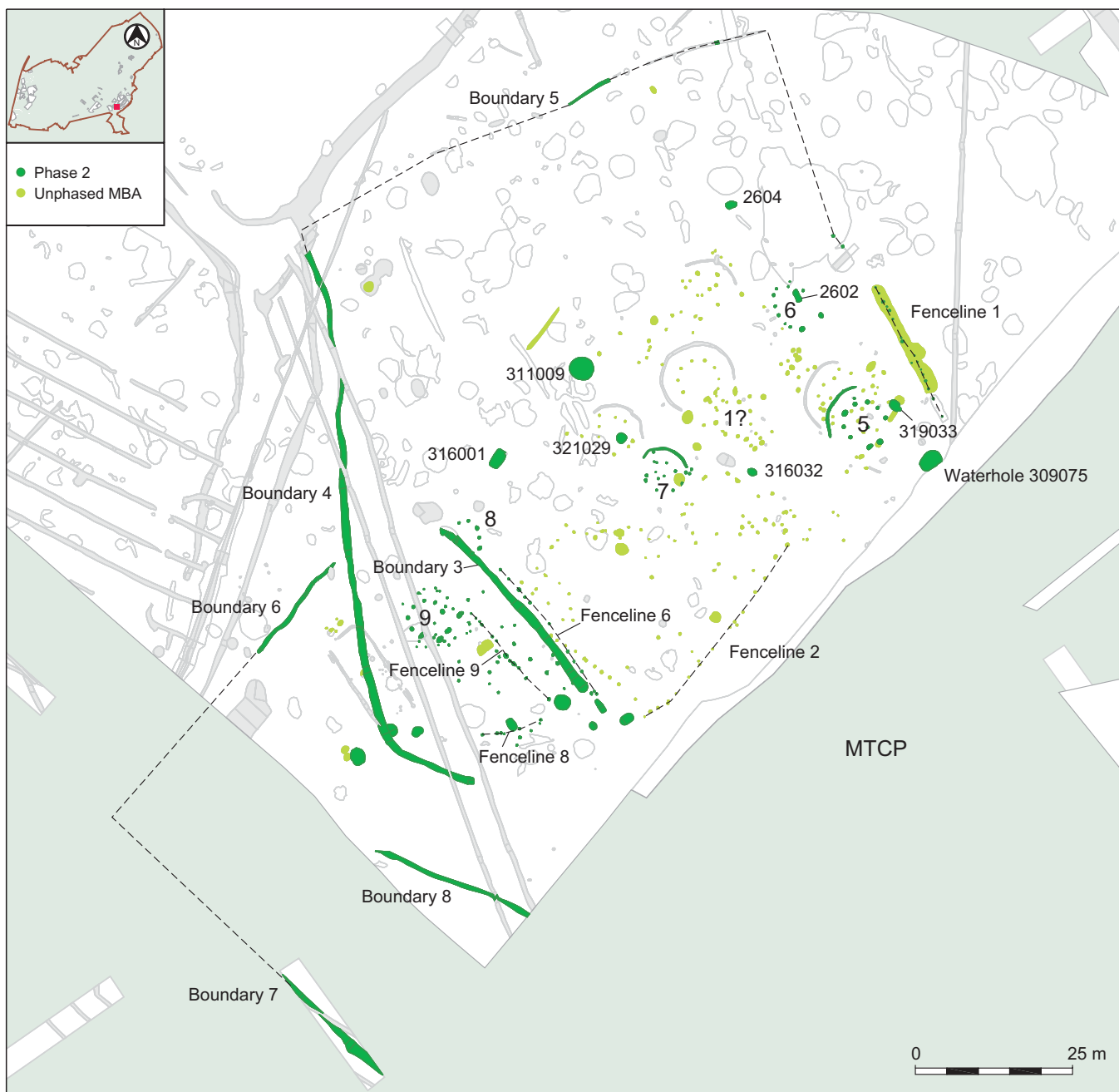


Figure 4.10: Middle Bronze Age settlement (phase 2)

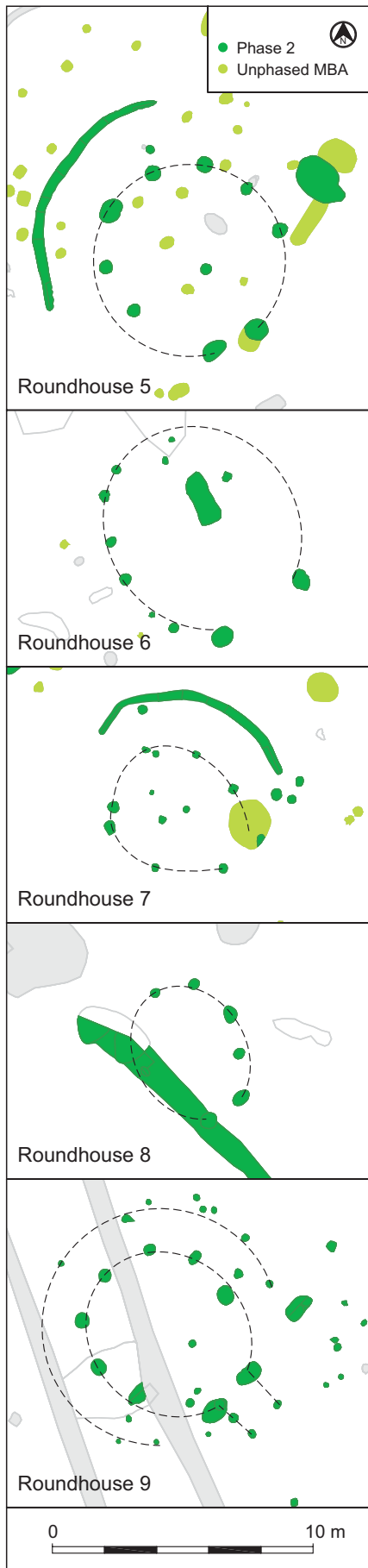


Figure 4.11: Detailed plans of the phase 2 roundhouses

some of which used existing fencelines and ditches. The eastern side of the enclosure, fenceline 1 was established along the centre of the phase 1 ditch defining boundary 1, which had at least partially silted up.

The western stretch of fenceline 2 continued in use, and was respected by both boundary 3 and Fenceline 6. The northern and western limits of the settlement were demarcated by boundaries 4 and 5. The area between boundaries 3 and 4 contained two short fencelines (8 and 9) which seem to have been used to divide up the space. Within this area was a well defined circular house (roundhouse 9) and a number of pits and postholes (Fig. 4.13). A smaller oval house (roundhouse 8) was located at the northern end of boundary 3. The roundhouse was clearly cut through boundary 3 indicating that at least the northern portion of this boundary had gone out of use by the time the building was constructed. This relationship reflects the complexity of the settlement development, the two broad phases of activity in effect concealing a more complicated sequence, and might suggest that roundhouse 8 is slightly later than the other structures.

Roundhouses and the habitation area

In most cases, the roundhouses within the original settlement were replaced by new ones constructed nearby (Figs 4.10–11, Table 4.2). Roundhouse 2 was replaced by roundhouse 5, roundhouse 3 by roundhouse 6 and roundhouse 4 by roundhouse 7. The replacement houses varied slightly in terms of their specific form but were constructed in much the same manner as the earlier buildings, although they were mostly oval in plan. It is uncertain whether these replacements occurred in a single planned event or

in a more piecemeal manner. In either case, there seems to have been a desire to maintain the same general pattern of the settlement. There could have been many possible reasons for rebuilding and it may simply have been that in time the structures fell into such disrepair that eventually it made more sense to rebuild them from scratch. On the other hand, it may have been customary or seemed appropriate to rebuild a single house or all the houses after a momentous event, such as the death of a household member (Brück 1999, 150–1). The fact that each house was replaced on only a single occasion may suggest that this was not a piecemeal reconstruction. Two additional houses (roundhouse 8 and 9) were constructed in the south-western extension of the original settlement. It is not known for certain whether these were contemporary with roundhouses 5–7 or whether they belonged to a later phase of activity; or indeed that they themselves were contemporaneous. The overall layout of the settlement does, however, suggest that all the phase 2 roundhouses were broadly contemporary.

It is not clear when roundhouse 1 was rebuilt, this partly depends on the potential longevity of this type of structure. Brück has argued that roundhouses could have a potential lifespan of 30–75 years and that substantial buildings may have survived for 100 years or more (1999, 149). Doubtless the underlying geology would have been significant in the longevity of roof supports and it is perhaps unlikely that the damp clays around Stansted would have been conducive to the preservation of timbers. If the rebuilding of roundhouse 1 was broadly contemporary with this phase of expansion of the settlement the structure would have had an even more prominent position, being

Roundhouse	Shape	Post-ring size	Gully	Porch
5	circular	7.75 m dia	Yes	Yes
6	oval?	8? x 6.2 m	-	-
7	oval	5.5 x 4.0 m	Yes	-
8	oval	5.75 x 4.45 m	-	-
9	oval	7.3 x 6.3 m	-	Yes

Table 4.2: Details of phase 2 roundhouses

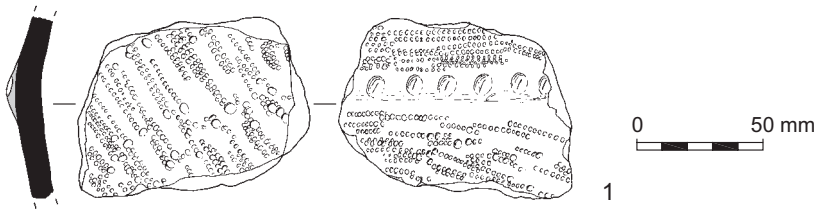


Figure 4.12: Sherd from a Middle Bronze Age Ardleigh vessel from pit 319033

flanked by roundhouses on either side. If however this structure had gone out of use there would probably have been a relatively open space between the roundhouses (Fig. 4.10).

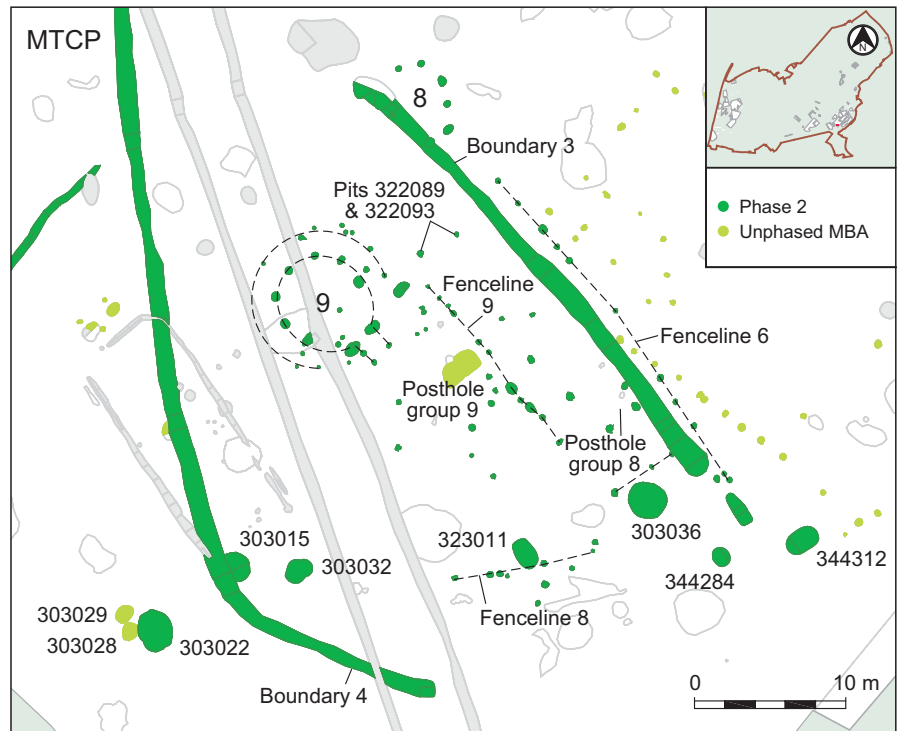
A number of pits, postholes and other features were associated with the roundhouses. Pit 316032, south of roundhouse 1, contained Neolithic pottery, worked flint and animal bone, a piece of which produced a date of 1440–1260 cal BC (3108±35 BP; NZA-23282) suggesting that the feature was Middle Bronze Age in date. Pit 319033 adjacent to roundhouse 5 seems to have contained a dump of finds including two sherds of an Ardleigh vessel, one of which is very large and highly decorated (Fig. 4.12). Other sherds from this vessel were also found in waterhole 309075. A shallow sub-rectangular hollow (2602) possibly lay within roundhouse 6. Small quantities of finds were recovered from it but its purpose is unclear. Pit 321029 was dug within the entrance of roundhouse 4, which had presumably been abandoned by this time. The sub-circular pit appears initially to have been left open, perhaps as a waterhole, silting naturally, before being used for dumping domestic debris including struck flint, pottery and animal bone. To the north-west of the roundhouses were a number of pits (316001, 311009 and 2604). These contained finds and charcoal-rich fills.

In the south-west corner of the main settlement enclosure were numerous postholes (posthole groups 8 and 9 and fenceline 9) arranged in a series of linear and curvilinear alignments (Fig. 4.13). They could feasibly represent a number of successive phases of activity but nevertheless appeared to be associated with roundhouse 9,

approaching it from the smaller entrance in fenceline 8. Enclosing a rectangular area (20 m by 6 m) adjacent to boundary 3, they could have formed stock corrals or garden plots. Further to the south-west, the settlement extension was, in contrast, relatively devoid of cut features and may have been used in a different way (Fig. 4.10).

A number of pits were also dug in this area of the extended settlement (Fig. 4.13). A single radiocarbon date on *Hordeum* (barley) from pit 303015 (1410–1210 cal BC (3043±30 BP; NZA-25412)), suggested it belonged to the second phase of settlement. The other pits were tentatively assigned to this phase on the basis of their location and the pottery within them. A number of large pits were dug along the edge of fenceline 8 (Fig. 4.13).

Figure 4.13: Features associated with roundhouse 9



Pit 303015 may have had some sort of wattle or hurdle basket retaining the edges of the feature. A variety of finds was recovered from the pits; notable amongst which is pit 323011. It contained fired clay, dumps of charcoal-rich material, and within a small circular pit cut into its silted fill was a quantity of cremated and fragmented human bone.

The inclusion of a quantity of cremated bone and an unburnt bone in this context is of some importance and provides a tentative link with the barrow to the north-east of the settlement site (Fig. 4.6). The inclusion of fragmentary remains within settlement and other non-burial contexts earlier in prehistory is well known and is a practice that continued into the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age (Brück 1995; Hill 1995).

Other pits contained a variety of finds: pottery, fired clay, including a fragment of a loomweight (344312), and animal bone. A large oval waterhole (309075) was dug in the south-eastern corner of the settlement (Figs 4.10, 4.18). It was deliberately backfilled when the phase 2 settlement was abandoned and a wide range of finds and environmental remains was recovered (Figs 4.14–15) (see below for further discussion of this feature).

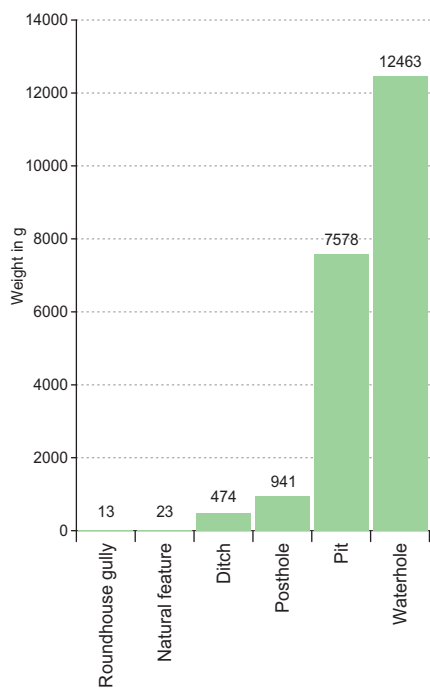


Figure 4.14: Weight (g) of Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery from the settlement by feature type

Life in the Middle Bronze Age settlement

The main components and the chronological development of the Middle Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site have been summarised above. Life within the settlement and how the surrounding landscape was exploited will now be examined.

Origins of the settlement: the link with the past

It has been noted above that the area of the Middle Bronze Age settlement had been visited during the Mesolithic and Neolithic and that the sarsen may have acted as a focus for this (Chapter 3). It is uncertain what form this activity took in both periods, it is likely to have been sporadic. The location was obviously favourable and repeated visits must be envisaged. How much of a link with the past there was is open to debate but this part of the landscape had been used fairly extensively prior to the establishment of the Middle Bronze Age settlement.

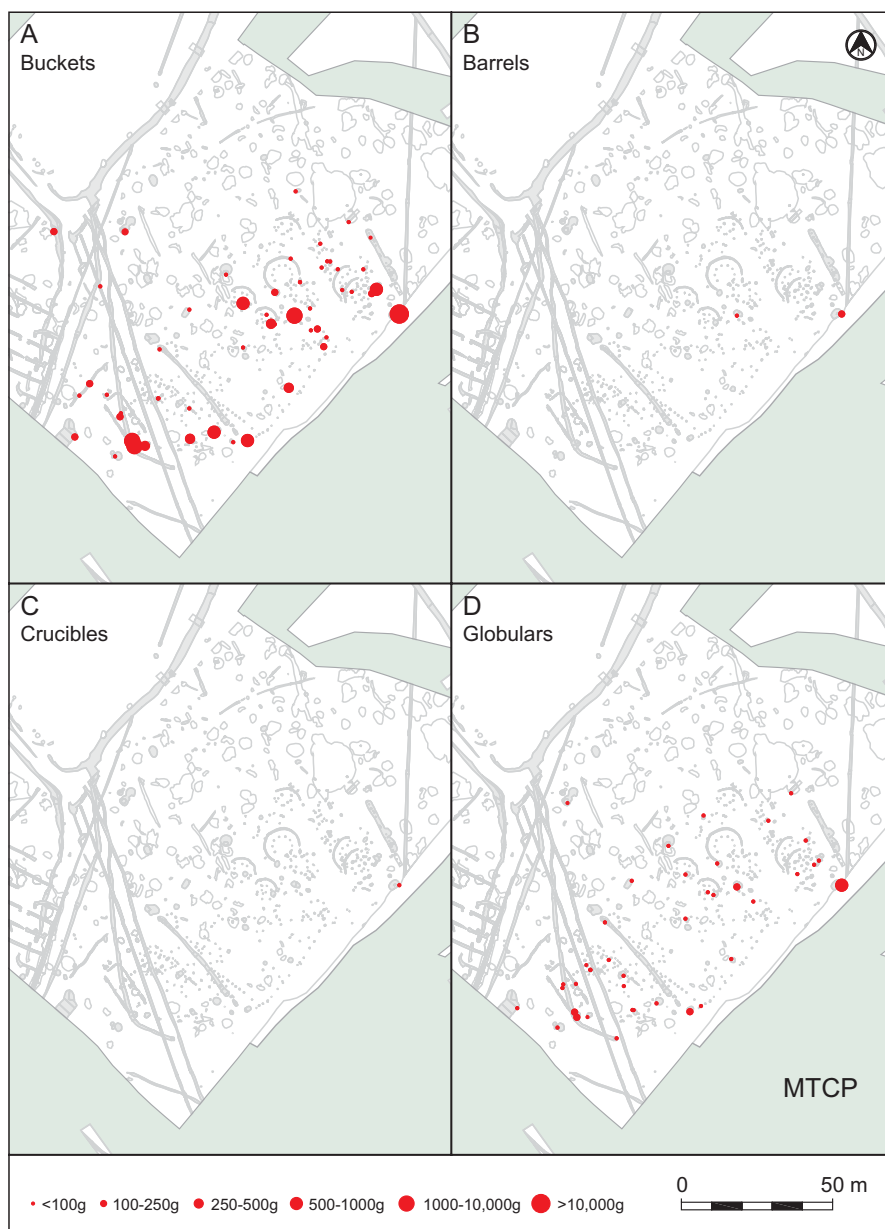


Figure 4.15: Distribution of Middle Bronze Age pottery in the settlement features

How people lived

The Bronze Age settlers living in the roundhouses of the settlement on the MTCP site were farmers. Their sedentary lifestyle was different from that of their forebears. They were firmly rooted to a particular place, the settlement in which they lived forming the base for their activities throughout the year (Fig. 4.16). Several roundhouses seemed to be occupied at any one time. From the outset, an enclosure bounded the roundhouses, restricting the movement of people and livestock, as well as stressing the unity of those living in them and distinguishing this place from the landscape in which it was set. Waterholes fulfilled the

practical function of providing water without the need to stray far from the settlement and, like permanent buildings and enclosures, were a long term commitment to one place. Differences in the contents of these waterholes suggest that those close to the centre of the settlement were used for people whilst the peripheral ones were used for animals.

By the Middle Bronze Age communities were establishing settlements, dividing the landscape and farming the land. The surrounding landscape would undoubtedly still have been important to these communities who would have exploited the local resources on a seasonal basis.

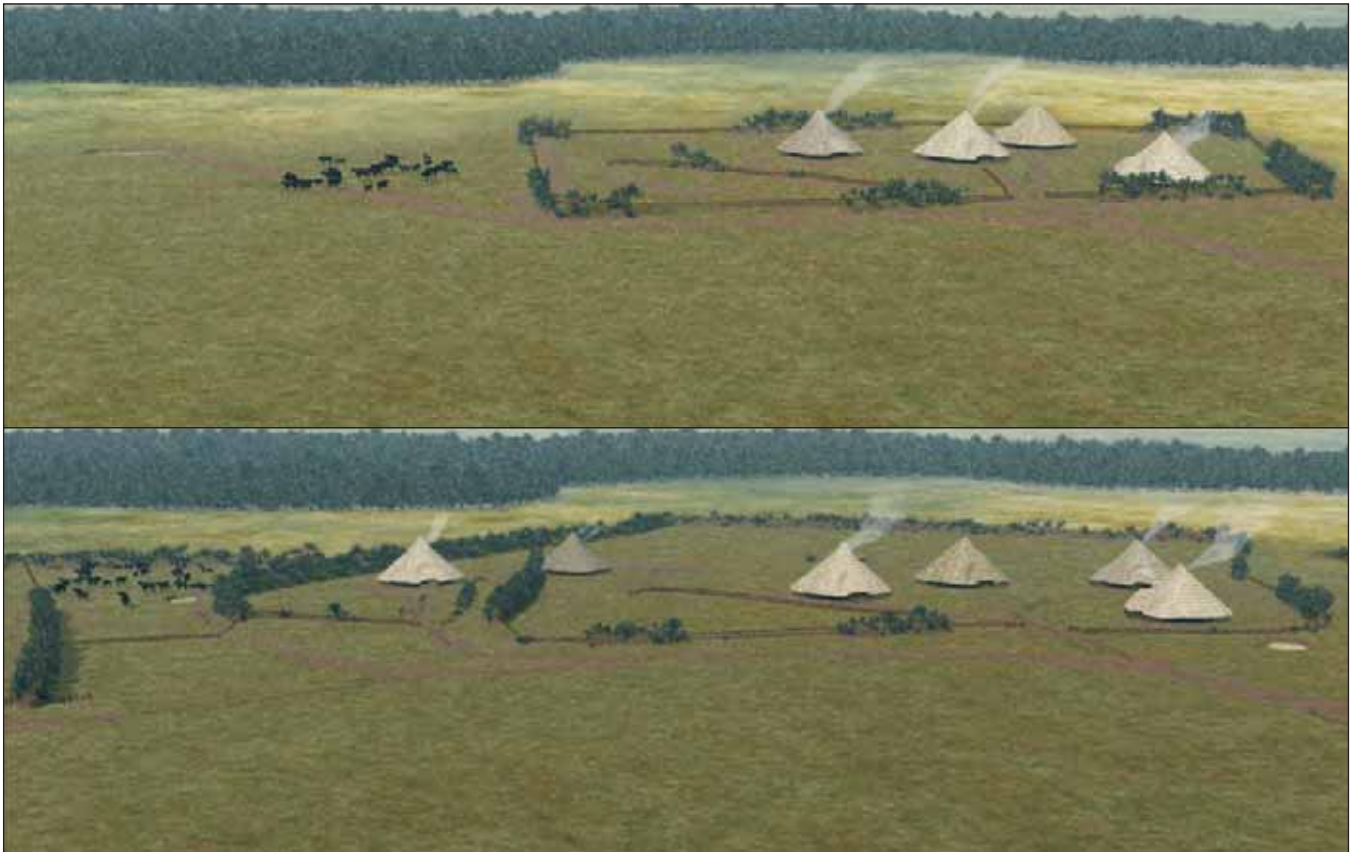


Figure 4.16: Reconstruction of the Middle Bronze Age settlement viewed from the south above: phase 1, below: phase 2

Interestingly at Stansted at this time there is no evidence for widespread division of the land, however the location of contemporary settlements or areas of activity can be seen to be divided by streams or brooks (Fig. 4.1), which may have taken the place of formal ditched boundaries. Thus a range of resources from the wooded plateau top, through the freer draining slopes of the valley side to the richer grazing of the valley bottoms were available within each landscape block.

Reference back to the past may have been made by the inclusion of the sarsen within the settlement area. Crucially, the emphasis of Middle Bronze Age architecture, in elaborating the domestic, was on the practices of settled, daily life and the closed community of the household that were central to social discourse at this time (Barrett 1991). In particular, the standardised design of prehistoric roundhouses has been interpreted by many commentators (eg Fitzpatrick 1994; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Parker Pearson 1996; Giles and Parker Pearson 1999; Bradley 1998) as

indicative of a shared conception of the universe, for which the domestic dwelling was a model. The organisation of space within the roundhouses, by orientating bodily movement and experience, structured and reproduced social relationships and the spaces created by the settlement architecture as a whole did likewise (Barrett 1994a).

In this way the settlement on the MTCP site can be seen as part of a tradition of settlement that was emerging in the south of England at this time (Brück 1999). The nature of the evidence means that there remains some ambiguity in the interpretation of the layout and phasing of the MTCP site. This is often the case with Middle Bronze Age settlements; Black Patch, East Sussex (Drewett 1982) being an obvious example of a site where conflicting interpretations have been advanced (Russell 1996). The debate frequently revolves around the contemporaneity of the roundhouses in the settlements, whether they constitute a single occupancy of the site by employing a greater number of dwellings or whether successive

occupancies utilising fewer dwellings are indicated. This can be further compounded by disagreements over whether all the structures were indeed dwellings or whether some fulfilled ancillary functions as storehouses, workshops etc. This has been important because different interpretations of settlement organisation and population size result in very different social models. The emergence at this time of ‘...close-knit extended families or clans’ (Russell 1996, 34) has been argued on the basis of settlements consisting of several roundhouses in occupancy at anyone time.

Joanna Brück (1999) in her review of southern English Middle Bronze Age settlements has made temporality and phasing a central concern in a slightly different way, with an argument that pivots on the potential longevity of a roundhouse. She proposes that most settlements had lifecycles resembling human biographies and settlements or phases of settlement were occupied for only a single generation. The settlement on the MTCP site at Stansted shares many of the characteristics of

those considered by Brück and her concept of settlement lifecycle fits the data well. However, if the interpretation advanced here is accepted, then, perhaps, Stansted has more in common with those settlements such as Down Farm, Dorset (Barrett *et al.* 1991) or Itford Hill, Sussex (Ellison 1978), which, she suggests, do not conform well to the single-generational model.

The roundhouses of the settlement on the MTCP site all adhered to certain architectural principles that have been commonly noticed at other settlements of this period (Brück 1999; 2000). They were formed of circular or oval, sometimes dual concentric, rings of posts, enclosed within encircling gullies, respecting south-east facing entrances that were often augmented with elaborate porch structures. The houses were generally organised on regimes of bilateral symmetry, around an axis that ran through the centre of the porches/entrances. The postholes flanking these porches tended to be the largest in the buildings. There were no surviving internal features such as hearths or pits associated with the use of the roundhouses. On occasion pits did occur within the area of roundhouses but these seem to have been dug after the houses had been dismantled. Outside the roundhouses there were some contemporary postholes, pits and other features indicating activities were occurring in and around the buildings.

There are few finds associated with the roundhouses that can be said to relate to their use. However, there is no apparent difference in the kinds of finds associated with them, nor is the finds assemblage from one particularly richer than from any of the others. It is not possible to assert from the finds evidence that any structure had a specialised function or that any roundhouse was an ancillary structure, subsidiary to another.

Roundhouse 1 was the best preserved and most complex structure. It was located adjacent to the sarsen stone in the centre of the settlement, being ideally positioned to receive those entering through the southern entrance

DR vessel type	Sherd count	Weight (g)
Coarseware Bucket/Barrel vessel	1860	19,137
Globular vessel	286	1279
Coarseware Barrel vessel	12	200
Crucible	3	27
Bowl	1	8
Uncertain form	51	189
Total	2213	20,840

Table 4.3: Deverel-Rimbury pottery from the MTCP settlement

in the enclosure. This may have been the important building in the settlement but nothing other than its form indicated anything other than a domestic dwelling.

Generally, as far as it is possible to tell from the surviving remains, the other roundhouses were not greatly different from each other in terms of size and complexity. There was some structural variation and some roundhouses (1, 2, 5, 8 and 9) seem to have been more robustly constructed than others. It is proposed that the well constructed roundhouses (1, 2, 5 and 9) were all used as dwellings at some point, and all the roundhouses may have in fact been used this way; roundhouse 8 may have either been a dwelling or, being much less complex, an ancillary building to roundhouse 9. Roundhouse 8 may have been an addition to this part of the settlement; it was certainly constructed after boundary 3 went into disuse.

It seems that there were perhaps as many as four or five roundhouses standing at any one time and there seem to have been two clear phases of activity - the dismantling of the buildings of the first phase and deposition of midden material in the postholes and waterholes of the settlement denoting a clear boundary between a second phase, where each roundhouse was replaced and another waterhole sunk. In each phase at least two or three roundhouses were probably dwellings. The settlement was organised around roundhouse 1, which was probably rebuilt in phase 2 (see above). The boundaries of the settlement were expanded in the second phase, and it may have become less focused, roundhouses 8 and 9 being distanced from the others. However, the same general spatial scheme was

retained throughout both phases. Phase 2 may subsume several episodes of activity and two roundhouses (8 and 9) in the western expansion of the settlement could either have been constructed at the beginning of the phase or at a later date within it. When the settlement was abandoned, the houses were again dismantled and the waterholes and postholes backfilled with midden material (see below).

The history of the settlement can, in Brück's terms, be conceived as a sequence of birth/construction, rebirth/reconstruction and death/abandonment, episodes of deposition separating and perhaps commemorating the various stages. In this way a lifecycle can be discerned and this may have been a metaphor employed by the Bronze Age farmers. Of course the construction history of the settlement may be more complex than the phasing suggests and the way buildings were used may have changed with the requirements of the community, but the general sequence still maintains.

The ceramic and radiocarbon evidence when considered together (Brown, CD Chapter 37) suggest that the settlement was occupied for at least *c* 150 years but probably much longer (*c* 300 years). Brück (1999) suggests that roundhouses may stand without major repairs for 50–100 years and that generations are considered as spanning 20–40 years. In light of this it may be wrong to imagine that roundhouse 1 stood throughout the whole history of the settlement. The damp soils would, however, not have been conducive to the long term preservation of posts and as there was no evidence for post replacement within the roundhouse it could be suggested that the more southerly of the roundhouse structures represents a later rebuilding. It would seem,

Feature Type	No. of flints in Bronze Age settlement features	% of total flint assemblage in Bronze Age settlement features	No. of struck flint tools (includes blade types but excludes pre-Bronze Age flints)	% of total flint tools assemblage (excludes pre-Bronze Age flints)	No. of pre-Bronze Age flints	% of total pre-Bronze Age flint assemblage
Gully	5	0.2	0	-	2	1.1
Ditch	28	1.1	0	-	4	2.1
Posthole	68	2.7	5	2	16	8.5
Pit	802	31.0	55	23	81	43.1
Waterhole	1644	65.0	176	75	83	44.2
Total	2547		236		188	
% of total flint assemblage				9		7

Table 4.4: Quantities of all flint and pre-Bronze Age flint by feature type within the MTCP settlement

however, that each phase of settlement clearly lasted longer than the 20–40 years suggested for a single generation.

We cannot be certain of who lived in the roundhouses but, taking a broader view of what we know about the complexity of Bronze Age society, we might imagine that the settlement was the home of an extended family or several closely related family groups. We cannot assume that these people had the same attitudes to family and personal space that we have today, and the settlement pattern could fit a number of different social models. However, it is evident that there existed some domestic differentiation and it would seem reasonable to assume that there was more than one household, in contrast to the other settlements in the Stansted landscape. It is possible that each dwelling housed a single family unit or, alternatively, lodging arrangements may have been dependent on age, gender and marital status.

Estimates of population are difficult to calculate but assuming that 2–5 roundhouses were occupied at any time and that each housed on average, five people, then the population might be expected to number 10–25 individuals. The barrow adjacent to Pincey Brook included the cremated remains of a minimum of four individuals: a newborn, an infant, a juvenile and an adult. Although there may have been more individuals buried originally (see McKinley, CD Chapter 27), this obviously represents a selection of people for burial within the monument. Small amounts of cremated bone and an unburnt human bone were

discovered in settlement features hinting at other funerary practices.

Evidence for economy is provided by the finds and preserved plant remains retrieved from the settlement and may be extrapolated from what is known about the landscape as a whole. The range of finds is entirely consistent with that expected from an agricultural settlement (Tables 4.3–4). The flints could have been used for a wide variety of cutting, scraping, graving, piercing and boring tasks as shown by the usewear analysis (Cramp, CD Chapter 24). Limited sequences of knapping refits show that flintworking was being undertaken in the vicinity of the settlement. The flint assemblage from the barrow provides evidence for procurement and initial working at or around this site; with prepared cores being removed for further working, presumably at the settlement. Some re-use of Mesolithic and Neolithic material seems to have occurred, for example a flint axe fragment deposited in waterhole 309075 had an indirectly refitting flake which was struck in the Bronze Age (see Cramp, CD Chapter 24, Fig. 4.17.2). Such instances of reworking earlier flint in the Bronze Age may have had connections with the past but equally may have just been opportunistic use of good raw materials. Pre-Bronze Age flint within waterhole 309075, for example (Figs 4.17, 4.22) may be unintentional inclusion but there seems to have been a relatively high number within this feature. This may be coincidental weathering of earlier material into the waterhole but may also represent collection, use and deposition of earlier flintwork.

The pottery would have been used for both the storage and consumption of foodstuffs and beverages. Textile production is indicated by bone points and loomweights, and rubbing stones, by their presence, demonstrate the grinding of grain to make flour. Animal bones from the settlement demonstrate that the inhabitants had access to a range of species – many of these such as cattle and sheep/goat were probably husbanded but others such as deer, aurochs and pig may have been hunted from the wild. Other wild resources were also exploited; evidence shows that sloes and hazelnuts were gathered. Perhaps this community deliberately chose to settle in a place where both the river valleys and the wilder woods of the boulder clay plateau were within easy reach.

Limited evidence for arable crops was recovered but the pollen suggests that cereals were grown in the vicinity of the barrow (see below, Huckerby *et al.*, CD Chapter 31) although the pollen could have come from nearby crop processing or from the deposition of grain material in the barrow perhaps associated with funerary activities (Carruthers, CD Chapter 29). A small quantity of burnt cereal (spelt and emmer wheat) was recovered from pit 322014 which seems to be the remains of piecemeal grain processing prior to cooking (Carruthers, CD Chapter 29). Environmental evidence suggests that both the barrow and the settlement were surrounded by lightly grazed pastures rather than arable fields, although rubbing stones occurred in the settlement, no querns were recovered, when these might be expected in numbers if crop processing was of primary importance.

The finds assemblage from the settlement was relatively large but there were no high status objects which might point to hierarchical divisions within the society. It might also be significant that, although some small enclosures were associated with the settlement, there was no evidence for extensive enclosure of the landscape, although, as discussed above, streams may have provided natural divisions. Elsewhere at this time, field systems

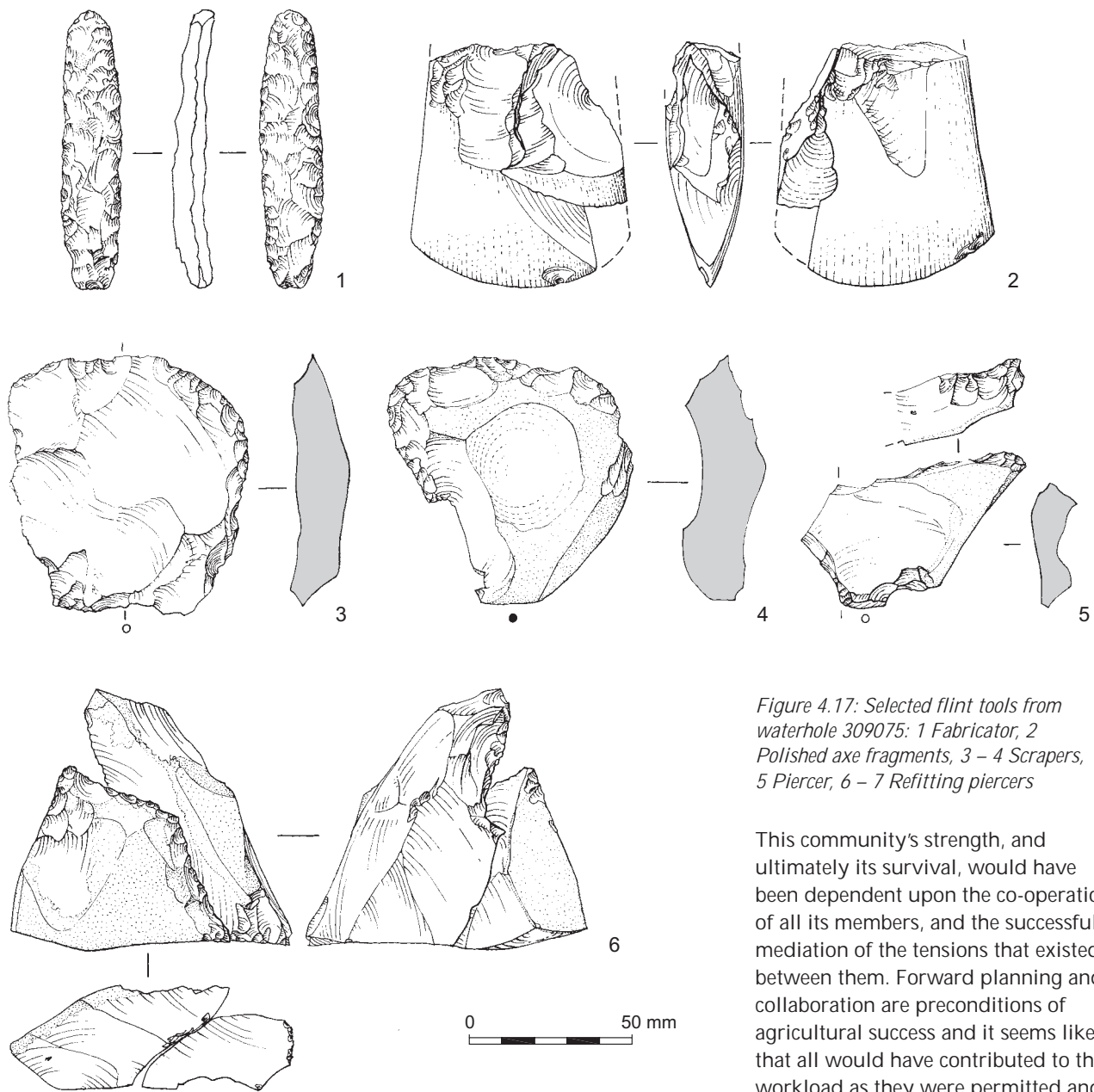


Figure 4.17: Selected flint tools from waterhole 309075: 1 Fabricator, 2 Polished axe fragments, 3 – 4 Scrapers, 5 Piercer, 6 – 7 Refitting piercers

This community's strength, and ultimately its survival, would have been dependent upon the co-operation of all its members, and the successful mediation of the tensions that existed between them. Forward planning and collaboration are preconditions of agricultural success and it seems likely that all would have contributed to the workload as they were permitted and able. Labour was probably organised along lines of age, gender and aptitude, as is the case with most communities of this scale the world over. The seasons would have largely determined the nature of the work, although any unexpected opportunities that arose would have been grasped and new challenges met.

It is likely that the religious and metaphysical beliefs upheld by the community would have informed every aspect of their day to day lives within the settlement. These beliefs seem to come to the fore at times of transition and uncertainty, articulated in acts of deposition. The material in the pits of the settlement and disused

have been found associated with settlements and in some instances in East Anglia finds were deposited in a formal manner (eg North Shoebury (Wymer and Brown 1995); Mucking (Bond 1988a); Fengate (Pryor 1980) and elsewhere (Yates 2001; Barrett 1989)). Ownership of land and livestock probably represented personal wealth but the lack of enclosure might suggest that the land was held in common. The relative status of individuals within the group perhaps determined differential control over and access to these mutually held resources.

Status in the community was probably subtly negotiated, depending upon

identity and alliances, being a combination of age, gender, lineage, circumstances of birth, personal wealth, fortune, friendships, skills, personality, biography and aptitude. It may have been expressed in many ways, some of them material and many of them archaeologically invisible – for example: physique, appearance, apparel and deportment. However, those objects that have survived (pottery vessels, flint tools, objects associated with textile production, stones for processing cereals, and animal bones) and the practices with which they were associated no doubt played a part in the construction of identity and were, therefore, implicated in the negotiation of status.

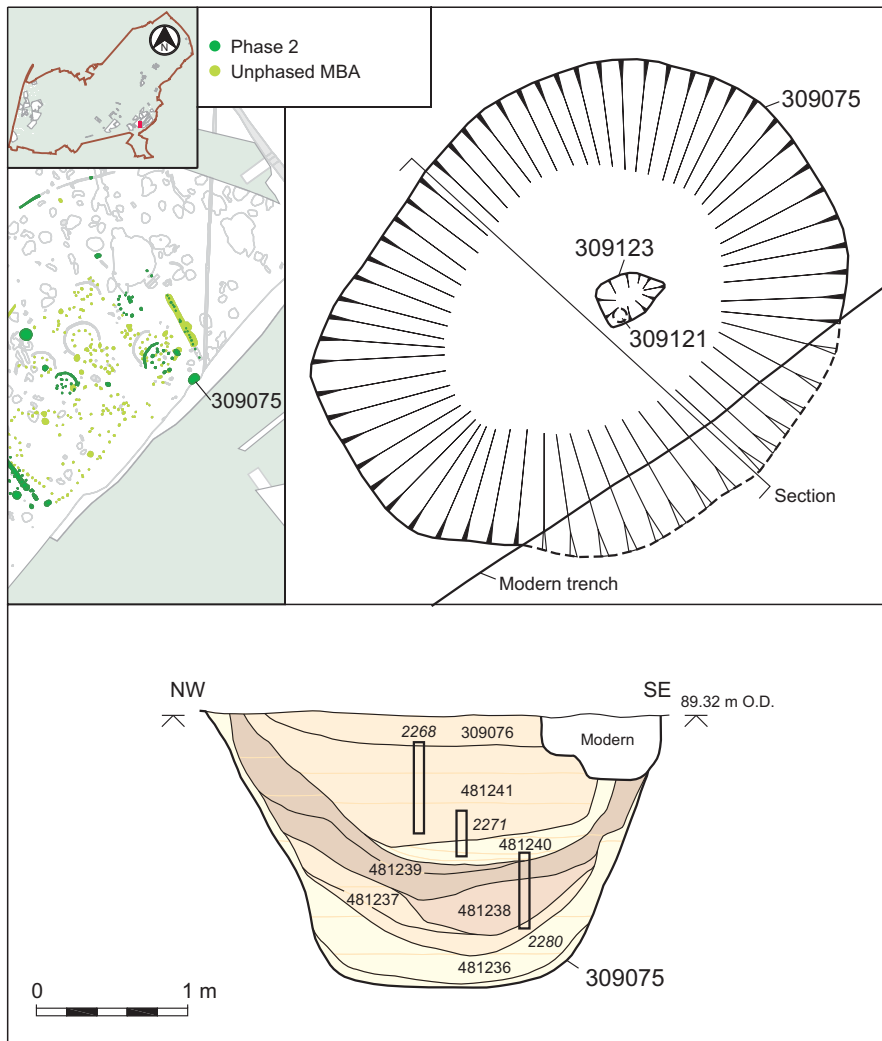


Figure 4.18: Waterhole 309075

postholes of the buildings may have been deposited in a piecemeal manner over its lifetime, as buildings were dismantled and pits were either dug to receive material or decommissioned. Alternatively, if it is accepted that rather than being replaced in a piecemeal manner, the buildings were constructed in two major events, one replacing the other, an episode of deposition in features could have marked a transition between one phase and the next.

The patterns of deposition imply that the settlement was generally kept fairly clean. Discarded finds (including flint, animal bone and pottery) and hearth rakings may have been stored in middens, presumably rich in organic material, which were probably used for fertilising crops. On occasion it seems that this material, possibly along with material generated during feasts or other such events, was deposited in the features of the settlement. This

happened as features fell into disuse and thus deposition denotes a change in function.

It may also be noted that it was often broken artefacts used in everyday life that were deposited in the settlement, and there was a concern with mixing different categories together. This may be paralleled and contrasted with practices of deposition at the round barrow by Pincey Brook. Prestige objects have been found deposited in the closing deposits of other Middle Bronze Age settlements (Brück 1999) but this was not the case at the Stansted. Settlements and cremation burials were apparently not bounded in separately buried urns as was the case at Ardleigh for example (cf Brown 1999). So it may have been a sense of shared identity that was emphasised in death and deposition, with any social schisms or inequalities that may have existed being masked.



Plate 4.3: Dump of pottery in waterhole 309075

Decommissioning the settlement

The large oval waterhole (309075) in the south-eastern corner of the expanded settlement (Fig. 4.18, Plate 4.3) was backfilled when the phase 2 settlement was abandoned. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained from the stratified sequence of deposits in the waterhole; all falling between the end of the 15th and the end of the 12th centuries BC (1420–1130 cal BC (3053±40 BP, NZA-20917); 1390–1130 cal BC (3006±35 BP, NZA-20914); and 1360–1120 cal BC (3030±30 BP, NZA-20915)). The stratigraphic sequence for waterhole 309075 is summarised in Table 4.5.

A particularly rich finds assemblage came from the waterhole (Plate 4.3, Figs 4.19–23, Table 4.6) including a number of unusual objects that were either very rare in the other features on the settlement or entirely absent. It would seem that, upon its disuse, which probably coincided with the decline or abandonment of the settlement, the waterhole became a focus for deposition. The quantities of material deposited and the character and composition of the artefactual assemblage make explanations of run-of-the-mill refuse disposal unlikely. Indeed, a detailed consideration of the finds assemblage shows that at certain points in the sequence, deposition was seemingly structured and does not merely constitute the random disposal of unsorted material.

Practices of abandonment

The waterhole was a significant feature within the settlement and became a focus for deposition, being backfilled with dumps of rubbish, when it fell into disuse – probably at the broadly same time that the settlement was abandoned (see above). These dumps were rich in burnt residues (charcoal, burnt clay and stone). Mixed within the deposits were the objects and materials used in the everyday life at the settlement – carbonised foodstuffs (cereal grains, hazelnut shells, sloe stones etc), pottery vessels, ceramic loomweights, flint tools, stone rubbers, bone points, animal bones and no doubt much else that being organic has not survived. Fragmentary human remains (a tooth and skull/maxilla fragment) point to possible ritual activities within the settlement and suggest a complex depositional pattern.

Although the material dumped into the waterhole might be considered rubbish attitudes in the Bronze Age to such deposits were probably very different (Brück 1995; 2001; cf Hill 1995; Chapman 2000); and it can be very difficult to distinguish the *rubbish* produced in everyday life from the *rubbish* produced by extraordinary practices. The deposition of materials into the waterhole would not in any

Group number	Type	Description
IG481235	Cut of waterhole	The original construction cut of the waterhole.
IG481236	Initial erosion	The initial erosion of subsoil from feature sides (0.3 m thick). Sterile and devoid of finds. Accumulating when the feature was in use or soon after it fell into disuse
IG481237	Charcoal-rich silting (I)	Layers of silting, intermixed with charcoal and other cultural material tipping into the feature from the north (0.3 m thick). Suggesting that the feature was no longer providing water. Either erosion material from the surrounding land surface or dumping of cultural material as silts accumulated within the feature as it was inundated
IG481238	Redeposited subsoil dump	Deliberate dump of redeposited subsoil in the southern side (0.35 m)
IG481239	Charcoal-rich silting (II)	Layers of silting intermixed with charcoal and other cultural material tipping into the feature from the north (0.1 m thick). These resemble and seem to have been derived from a similar process as IG481237
IG481240	Charcoal-rich dumps	A number (at least six) of successive dumps of thin charcoal-rich material (0.03-0.1 m), interspersed by dumps of redeposited subsoil - apparently intended to seal the charcoal-rich layers (total 0.3 m thick) A spread of broken pottery lay between this and IG481239
IG481241	Final silting	A period of slow natural silting in of the depression left in the top of the waterhole after it had been backfilled to approximately half its original depth (0.9 m maximum). It is probable that the periodic dumping continued as the feature silted up, but not in the same quantities as previously. The upper 0.2 m of this deposit may derive from later agricultural soil accumulating in this depression

Table 4.5: The stratigraphic sequence within waterhole 309075 (earliest to latest). Each deposit seals the preceding layer

practical way have facilitated life at the settlement. It would have deprived the settlement of a convenient source of clean water, and, as no other waterhole was sunk, may signal the intention to abandon it. However, it is possible that another waterhole was dug outside the area excavated which would have served the settlement. If filling waterhole 309075 was a deliberate act to signal the abandonment of the settlement it was done over a fairly lengthy period of time. The deposition of material into the waterhole may, therefore, have been a formal way of decommissioning the settlement.

Similar practices of abandonment, although not necessarily associated with waterholes, have been noted at other Bronze Age sites (eg Trethellan Farm, Cornwall (Nowakowski 2001); Eight Acre Field, Radley, Oxfordshire (Mudd 1995); Bradford's Brook, Oxfordshire (Cromarty *et al.* 2006, 223)).

The sequence in the waterhole shows that deposition was episodic happening over a prolonged duration, perhaps indicating that settlement abandonment or the acts commemorating it took place in phases. These acts may have been ongoing while the settlement remained permanently occupied or may have happened during periodic visits to a place that had already largely been abandoned. The earliest erosion deposits (IG481236) mark the beginning of this process. Most of the artefacts that comprised the small assemblage in this deposit may have fallen into the feature by accident.

The charcoal silts (IG481237 and IG481239) and the charcoal dumps (IG481240), were of a different order and in many ways resembled each other. These were all constituted in whole or in part by deposits deliberately thrown into the waterhole. However, while the materials present within the three deposits are broadly similar, there are notable differences between the assemblages, and the three deposits were also purposefully separated by interposed deposits. The deposits thus

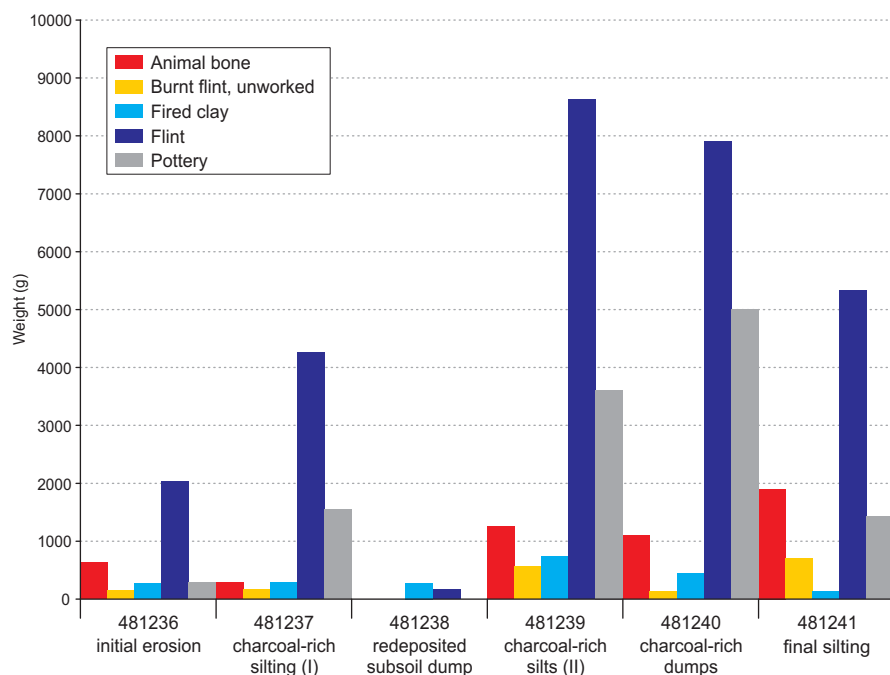


Figure 4.19: Relative quantities of different material types (g) within waterhole 309075

Interpretative group	481236	481237	481238	481239	481240	481241
Flint objects	→	→				
Bone points		→	→	→		
Loomweights		→	→	→	→	
Pottery			→	→	→	→
European polecat/ferret bones				→	→	
Sandstone rubbers				→	→	→

Figure 4.20: Deposition of unusual objects in waterhole 309075 over time

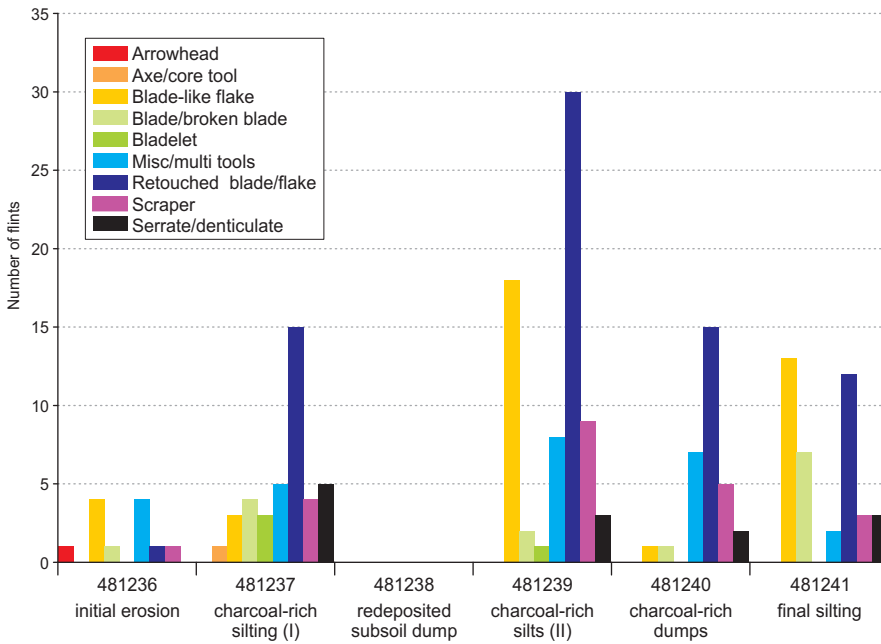


Figure 4.21: Relative quantities of flint tools in waterhole 309075

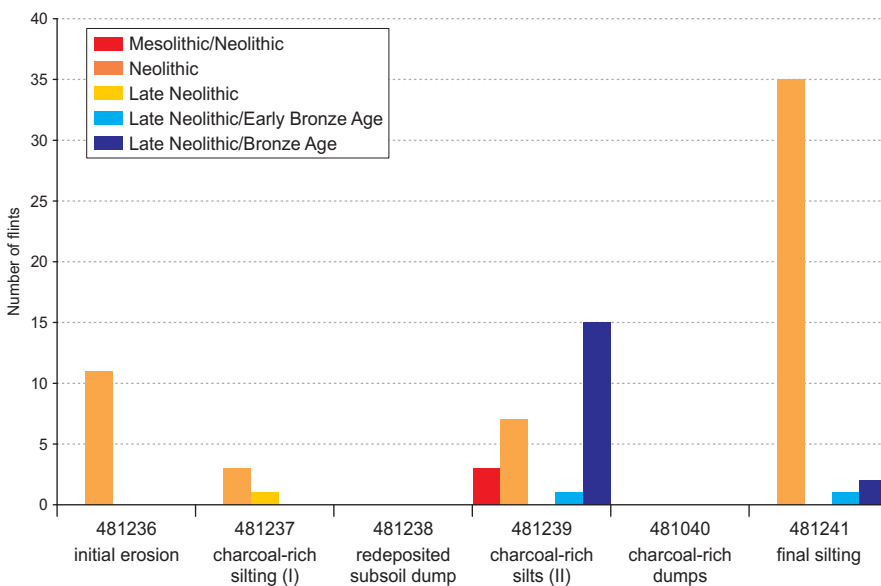


Figure 4.22: Relative quantities of early prehistoric flint in waterhole 309075

relate to at least three discrete episodes of deposition, with each episode probably commemorating a particular occasion or phase of decommissioning. In each instance it is possible that the deposits derived from feasting debris or were otherwise intentionally assembled. Alternatively, the bulk of the deposits may have been taken at random from, for example, a midden, and their characteristics are determined by the practices that had led to the creation of the midden in the first place. As the charcoal silts were thought to have accumulated gradually, other forms of deposition may have been coincident and ongoing, such as the pre-Bronze Age flints into the waterhole. However, what seems to be stressed in practice is the singularity of the dumps (IG481240):

- these were separated from the earlier silts by a dump of pottery
- they were deposited in characteristically complex sequence of thin deliberately dumped deposits, very rich in charcoal, apparently over a fairly short period of time
- the finds, particularly the ceramics, within them were of a different character to those within the silts
- the practice of depositing pre-Bronze Age flint was not evident in this deposit

It is suggested that the practices occasioning these latter dumps were not conceived as part of an ongoing practice of phased decommissioning, instead they were intended as marking, in a final explicit act, the abandonment of the settlement. After this time, the waterhole continued to be backfilled much more slowly, predominantly by a process of natural silting, over what could have been a considerable time. Deposition of artefacts still took place but this was less intense and did not comprise large deposits of burnt material.

Sediment analysis suggests that livestock remained in close proximity to the depression remaining in the top of waterhole 309075 and it may have

still seasonally held water being up to a metre deep. The fact that sherds from the same Ardleigh vessel as the one in the top of the waterhole were present in the upper deposits within a nearby pit (319033), might suggest that other settlement features remained partially open and visible at this time. It is likely that, rather than having been entirely abandoned, the area of the settlement was still visited.

The significance of the waterhole as a place for deposition was probably related to its function and the role played by water in the cosmology of those living within the settlement. Waterholes in Bronze Age settlements are commonly foci for deposition (eg Heathrow, Middlesex (Framework Archaeology 2006, 142–5) and Green Park, Reading (Brossler *et al.* 2004, 123–5)) and are key diagnostic features of Bronze Age settlement. The Middle Bronze Age barrow lay adjacent to Pincey Brook (see below) and proximity to water seems to have been major concern; indeed the ditch around the barrow may have been intended to hold water. As an element, water may, therefore, have been linked to concepts of life and death, perhaps playing a part in mediations between the dead and the living. This may find some resonance in the deposition of tools, derived from flint obtained from Pincey Brook and worked on the

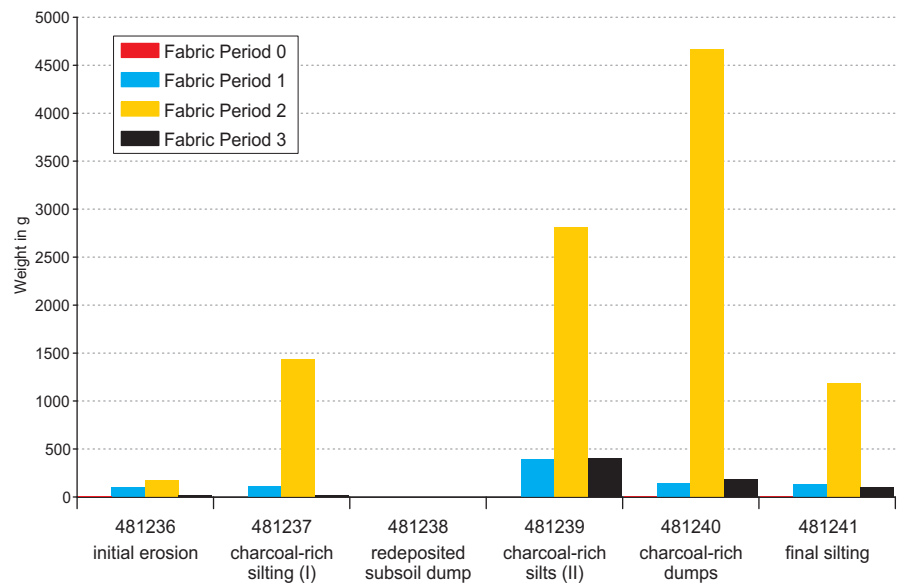


Figure 4.23: Relative quantities (g) of pottery in waterhole 309075 (grouped by ceramic fabric period)

barrow, being deposited in the waterhole within the settlement, when it was the dead from the settlement who were cremated and deposited in the barrow by the brook. As waterholes were a precondition of settlement (none existed outside the immediate area of the settlement and none is known to exist before the settlement was founded or after it was abandoned), it perhaps seemed natural that waterhole 309075 should play a key role in the abandonment of the settlement – mediating in its death.

Finds and features elsewhere on the MTCP site

Small quantities of Middle Bronze Age material were recovered across the MTCP excavations, often residual in later Iron Age and Romano-British features. However, in one or two instances, these may date the features in which they were found, including tree-throw (353028/353030) and pit (316074) (Fig. 4.6). This attests sporadic activity being undertaken outside the main areas of occupation.

Group number	Type of deposit	Object type and description
IG481236	Initial erosion	Neolithic flint arrowhead blank
		Neolithic flint fabricator made from a Mesolithic blade
IG481237	Charcoal-rich silting (I)	Neolithic polished flint axe and ?Bronze Age refitting flake
		Scraper made reusing a pre-Bronze Age flake
		Worked and polished bone point
		Loomweight fragments
		Human tooth (mandibular molar adult aged 20-30)
IG481238	Redeposited subsoil dump	
IG481239	Charcoal-rich silts (II)	Loomweight fragments
		Worked and polished bone point
		Sandstone rubber (for use with saddle quern)
		Human skull/maxilla fragment
		2 unusual barrel-shaped or sub-biconical pottery vessels
IG481240	Charcoal-rich dumps	European polecat/ferret mandibles (x3) and bones
		Loomweight fragments
IG481241	Final silting	European polecat/ferret mandible
		Ardleigh vessel (from same vessel as sherds in pit 319033)
		Metal working crucible
		Sandstone rubber (for use with saddle quern)

Table 4.6: The 'unusual' objects found within waterhole 309075

Scattered Middle Bronze Age settlement in the wider landscape

Evidence for Bronze Age settlement was recovered from three other sites across the Stansted landscape (FLB, M11 and LTCP sites). Varying levels of activity were identified but in some cases the excavation areas were limited and the full extent of these sites was not examined. It is therefore difficult to assess the size of some of these settlements. The evidence from each of the sites will be examined briefly below.



Figure 4.24: Bronze Age features

The FLB site

Another broadly contemporaneous Bronze Age settlement was partially revealed on the FLB site (Fig. 4.24). A single structure (roundhouse 10) was identified although it is likely that the settlement extended outside the sampled area and more structures may remain undiscovered. Roundhouse 10 was of probable gully and posthole construction, similar to the examples found on the MTCP site. The probable diameter of the gully would have been approximately 10–12 m. Adjacent to the roundhouse was a pit (408013) which contained Bronze Age pottery and flint, fired clay and animal bone. A radiocarbon determination on a charred hazelnut shell from the pit produced a date of 1410–1210 cal BC (3053 BP±30, NZA-20962). This is firmly within the Middle Bronze Age (Needham 1996) and compares well with radiocarbon dates from the phase 2 features from the Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site and a waterhole on the M11 site, west of the airport (see Brown, CD Chapter 37).

Other settlement features include a pit, utilised tree-throws (403048 and 405063) and a pair of poorly-dated ditches (403046 and 403017). They were not all contemporaneous but these may have formed enclosures or trackways within or bounding the settlement. However, it is difficult to assess the scale of activity represented here on the basis of the present evidence.

It is feasible that those living here were connected with the MTCP site. The two settlements were situated in topographically different zones and may have been economically interdependent, mutually benefiting from the different resources available in their immediate vicinities. Indeed, it is possible that a single community was spread between the two settlements, with different people habitually residing at one or the other depending on the time of the year, their affiliations and status within society and the kinds of tasks that they were engaged in at any given time.

The M11 site

Further evidence for Bronze Age settlement was discovered during excavations on the M11 site (Fig. 4.25). Here a pit scatter and two waterholes were identified with some other isolated features across the site. No contemporary structures were identified on this large excavated area but the Bronze Age features were located towards the edges of the site. It seems likely therefore that either the main focus of activity was not found on this site or that these features indicate peripheral activities in the landscape. Interestingly no enclosure ditches or trackways were identified suggesting that the landscape was open at this time.

A very large waterhole, a scatter of pits and a tree-throw were identified to the north-west of the site (Fig 4.25). The waterhole (426015) seems to have cut

an earlier pit (426014). Finds from the waterhole include a red deer antler pick, animal bone, sherds from one or more Deverel-Rimbury globular vessels and worked flint. A similar range of finds was recovered from the other pits and the tree-throw. A little emmer wheat and spelt spikelets together with a range of weeds seeds were recovered from pit 423049. These remains may originally have been deposited as burnt whole ears of grain complete with twining/scrambling weeds. The weed seeds suggest that at least some of this grain was autumn sown which would have suited the heavier clay soils (Carruthers, CD Chapter 29). This feature also contained a fragmentary quernstone which, together with the environmental remains, may suggest that cereal processing was occurring in the vicinity.

Another large waterhole was dug on the eastern side of the site (430084) (Fig. 4.25). It sloped down from the west towards the much deeper eastern end allowing access for people or livestock. A worked oak stake (426034) driven into the subsoil at the edge of the waterhole is probably the remains of a hurdle revetment. Other worked timbers from the base of the feature which may once have formed part of this revetment consist of an oak board, oak and maple offcuts, chips and fragments and an ash withy (see Allen, CD Chapter 26). A radiocarbon determination on the oak stake (426034), produced a date of 1530–1410 cal BC (3204±30 BP, NZA-23243), and a piece

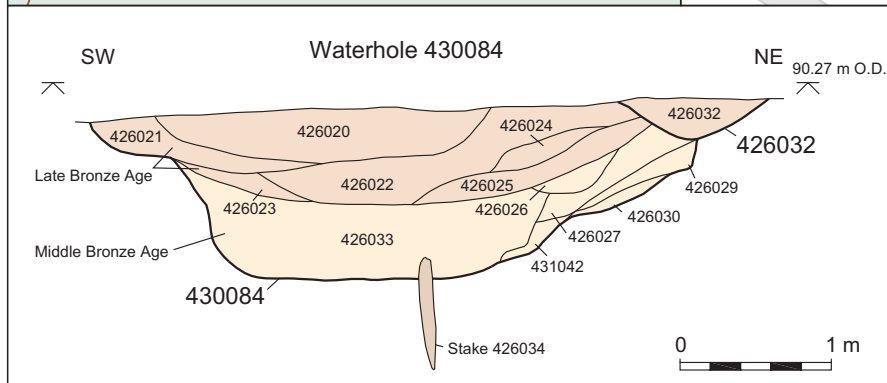
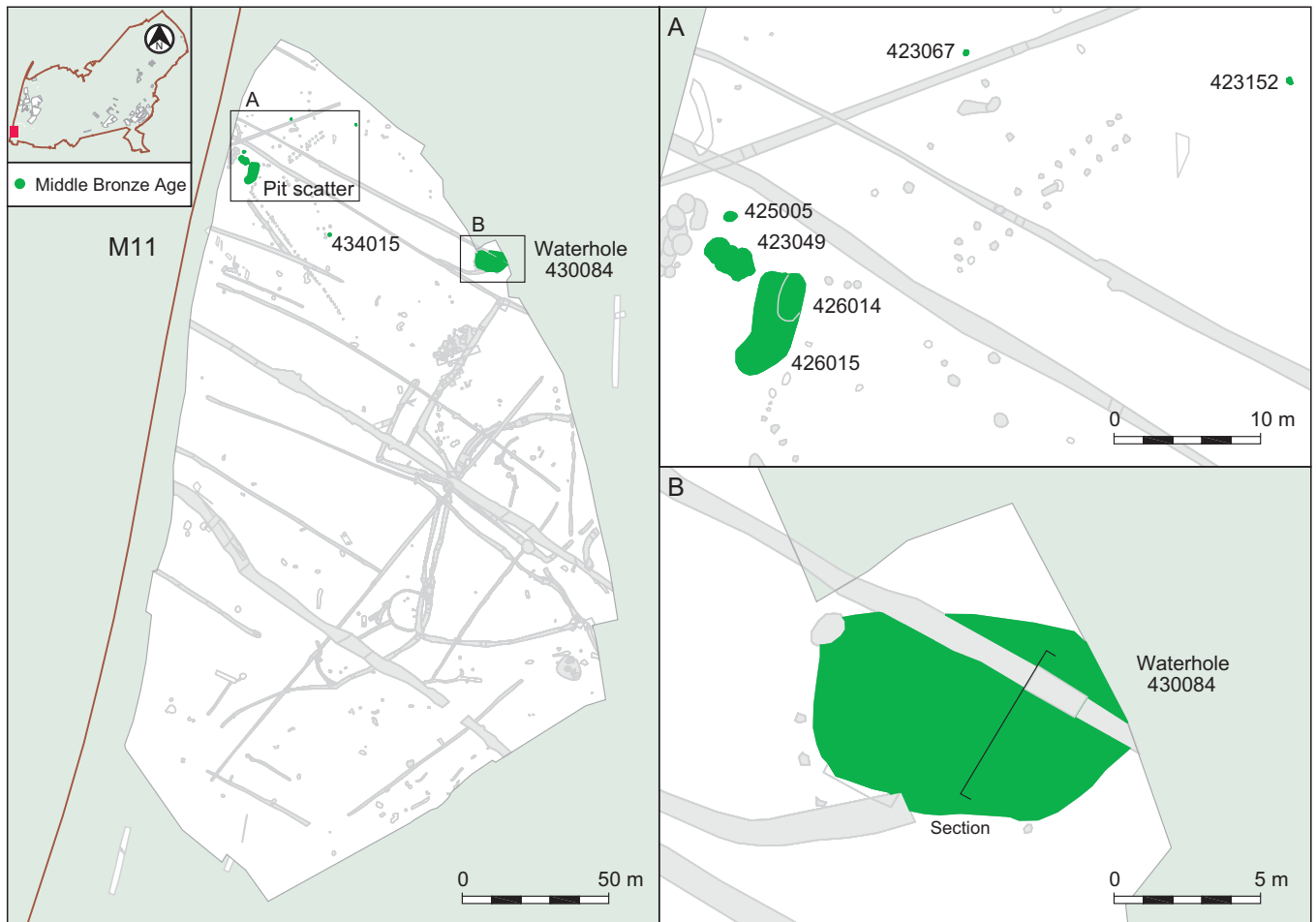


Figure 4.25: Bronze Age features, with a detail of waterhole 430084

Plate 4.4: Burnt mound deposits (foreground) and palaeochannel looking west



of worked maple (431035) from the bottom of the waterhole, 1410–1210 cal BC (3051±30 BP, NZA-23244). There is no overlap between these two determinations and the oak stake would seem to be older than the maple, even when the potential old wood effect is taken into account. The most likely explanation is that the waterhole was regularly cleaned and maintained over a fairly long period. The implied combined date range of 1530–1210 cal BC for the use of waterhole 430084 spans a very similar duration as the dates for the occupation of the settlement on the MTCP site (1520–1120 cal BC) (Fig. 4.3).

The LTCP site

Evidence for Middle Bronze Age settlement occurred widely over the area of the LTCP excavations on the western side of the airport. A roundhouse, a cluster of pits and an artefact scatter were found and there was a burnt mound deposit located near a river channel (Fig. 4.26, Plate 4.4). A segmented ditch also seems to have had its origins at this time although it was re-dug in the later Bronze Age (see below). A small ring ditch, located south-east of the roundhouse, may have been a funerary monument (Plate 4.5).

Activity seems to have been fairly widely spread across the area covered by the various LTCP excavations (Fig. 4.26). This may suggest differing zones of activity or it may just underline again the nature of the excavations; certainly between roundhouse 11 and the pit scatter there is ample room for further features to extend (Figs 4.26–7). Roundhouse 11 was of posthole construction and gully construction (Fig. 4.27). The segmented nature of the gully may have been the result of later ploughing. Inside the gully were two rings of postholes, the inner forming a slightly off-centre oval house with a porch facing south-east.



Plate 4.5: Bronze Age ring ditch 995060

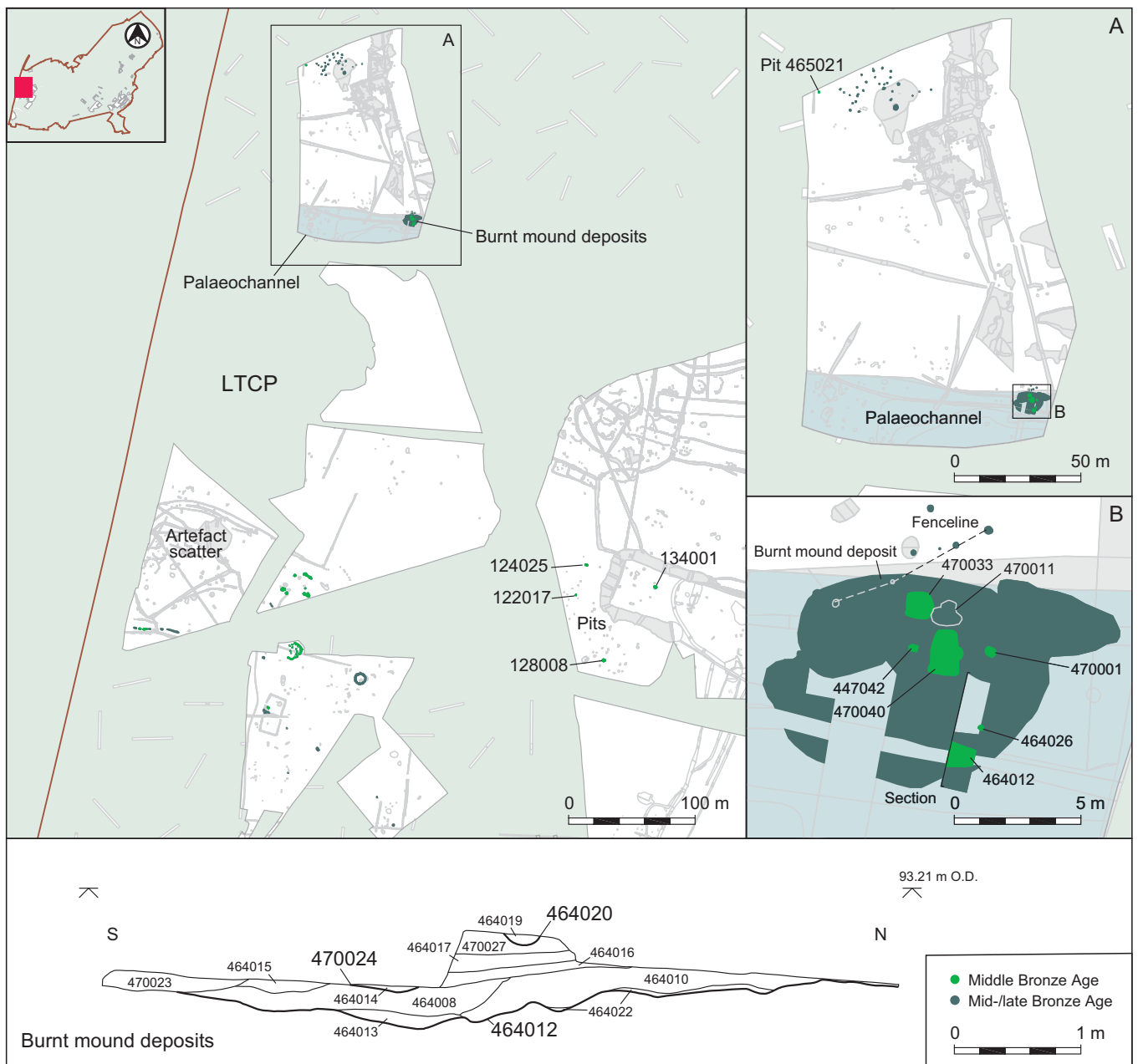


Figure 4.26: Bronze Age features, showing details of the burnt mound and associated features

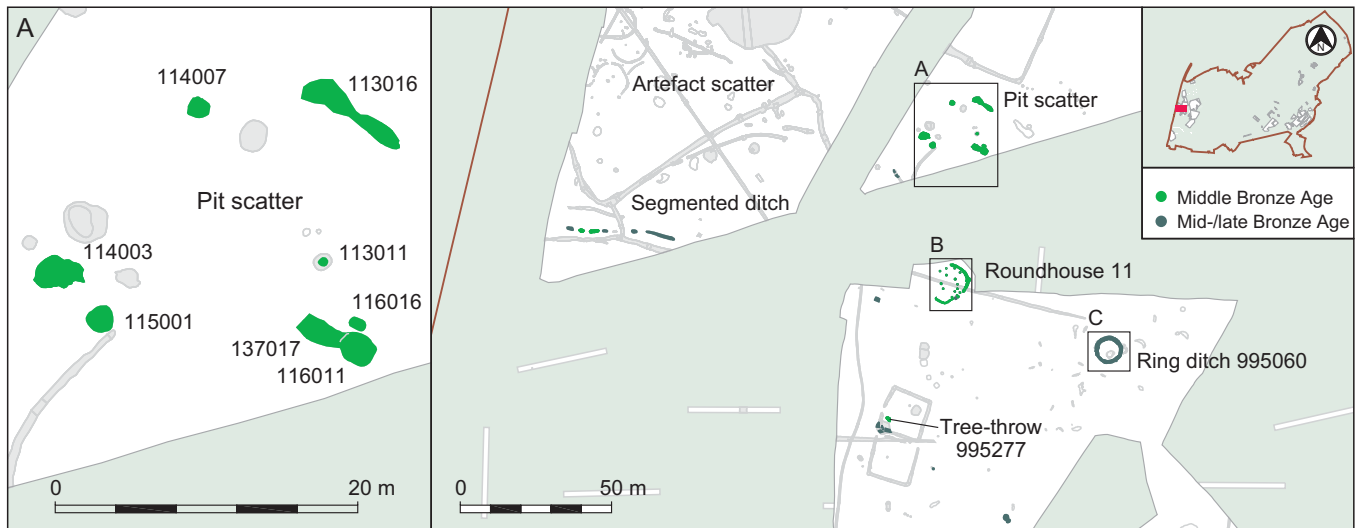


Figure 4.27: Bronze Age features showing the pit scatter, roundhouse 11 and ring ditch

Approximately 40 m north of roundhouse 11 lay a cluster of eight pits (13011, 113016, 114007, 114003, 115001, 116016, 116011 and 137017) which appear to be broadly contemporary with the roundhouse (Fig. 4.27). Middle Bronze Age pottery, worked flint and animal bone was recovered from the features and Late Bronze Age pottery also occurred in pit 116011. Some use-wear was recorded on two scrapers and a retouched flake indicating that some scraping tasks such as hide preparation or wood working were being undertaken (see Cramp, CD Chapter 24).

To the south and east a few small pits and a tree-throw (122017) were apparently Bronze Age in date. All of the features contained finds, mainly pottery, worked flint and some fired clay. Animal bone was also recovered from pit 134001 and tree-throw 122017. These scattered features may represent activities at the periphery of the settlement. A thin scatter of Bronze Age pottery and worked flints occurred as a residual component within the later features of the later Iron Age/Romano-British settlement (Fig. 4.26). The lack of Bronze Age features and the sparse nature of the redeposited finds suggests that there was only sporadic use of this area. A small pit (465021), on the north-western edge of the Mid-/Late Bronze Age settlement, dated by a single sherd of coarseware pottery, was located on the northern edge of the LTCP excavations (Fig. 4.26).

Burnt Mound

Situated in the south-western part of the LTCP site adjacent to a palaeochannel was a series of pits and postholes associated with a substantial burnt mound. The burnt mound seems to have accumulated through repeated use probably from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (see below). Later activity was also identified which may be contemporary with the late reworking of the round barrow on the MTCP site (see below).

A series of features was sealed under the burnt mound and these were probably associated with the activities that led to its production. The earliest evidence for activity consists of pit (470040) and two associated postholes (447042 and 470001). Two other features, pit (464012) and posthole (464026), are not as closely dated (Fig. 4.26). Another pit (470033) and an area of *in situ* burning (470011, Plate 4.6), further up the bank, may also be contemporary; although 470033 was filled with burnt mound material, neither feature was certainly sealed by it (see below).

Sub-rectangular pit 470040 was flanked by two postholes (447042 and 470001), which may have supported some sort of timber superstructure. The pit may well have been designed to hold water. Similar pits found associated with burnt mounds elsewhere have been interpreted as tanks or boiling pits

Two pits (995257, 995191) and a post-hole (995234) were located outside the structure and may have been associated with it. Worked flint, Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from postholes and the gully.

It is possible that an east-west segmented ditch 100 m west of Roundhouse 11 was contemporary with it, as it too contained both Middle and Late Bronze Age finds.



Plate 4.6: *In situ* burning 470011 and pit 470033 from the north

(eg Willington, South Derbyshire (ULAS 2000); Phoenix Wharf, London (Sidell *et al.* 2002, 27–9)). The pit was backfilled with approximately equal quantities of charcoal and burnt unworked flint together with some burnt clay (Plate 4.7). A single undiagnostic flint flake was also recovered. The charcoal was predominately oak and hawthorn/*Sorbus* group but a fairly wide range of other species was present. The fills of posthole 470001 contained a similar range of charcoal (Gale, CD Chapter 35). The deposits within the pit showed some variation, with burnt material more prevalent towards the top of the sequence. Approximately 2.6 m to the south of 470040 lay pit 464012 and posthole 464026. Neither of these features contained any finds and they were dated by the stratigraphy alone.

Immediately to the north of pit 470040 was a small area of burnt soil (470011) (Fig. 4.26, Plate 4.6). Just to the west of this was sub-circular pit 470033. This was filled with deposits of silt to approximately half its depth, which were then sealed below a layer of burnt flint, charcoal and clay. The only finds within the pit were several flint flakes. A line of ten postholes to the north may be the remains of a fence or revetment which extended along the edge of the river bank for 7.5 m.

Sealing these features and covering an area of 14.2 m by 8.5 m were amorphous spreads of burnt mound material 464022, 464010 and 464008. The size of the flint fragments was highly variable over the area of the spreads but did not exceed 0.1 m and the deposits varied in character and composition. The lowest deposit, 464022, appears to have eroded into

the channel from higher up the slope and contained around 20% burnt flint mixed with brown-grey silts and charcoal. This was sealed by 464010, a thicker deposit of burnt mound material comprising charcoal mixed with 80% burnt flint, which also seems to have eroded downslope into the channel. A single undiagnostic flint flake was also recovered from this layer. Deposit 464008 was possibly the latest deposit in the sequence, comprised 30% flint mixed with silt and charcoal and was sealed by the alluvial deposits that later accumulated within the channel.

It is uncertain whether the burnt mound deposits were genuinely *in situ*, post-dating the features (such as pit 470040) that they sealed, or whether the material had been first been stored in mounds and was only spread out over the area when the activity or activities ceased. A charred sloe (*Prunus*) stone from a spread of charcoal (464009) on the edge of the brook produced a radiocarbon date of 1690–1450 cal BC (3283±35 BP, NZA-23233) and charcoal from a pit (470040) that was sealed by the burnt mound gave a date of 1620–1430 cal BC (3252±30 BP, NZA-23232). The dates suggest that the activity generating the mound was taking place at some time in between the 17th and 15th centuries BC. The location of the burnt mound is typical for this type of feature and several recurrent features have been

identified: the rectangular tank, fence-line and position next to a palaeochannel as well as the deposits of burnt flint and charcoal. The relative paucity of finds can also be seen at a number of sites (Hodder and Barfield 1991).

It seems probable that the features sealed by the mound deposits were thus associated with the production of the burnt material. The discrepancy between the radiocarbon dates and the pottery indicates that the burnt mound material could have been produced over several centuries. However, it is perhaps most likely that the burnt mound was generated over a shorter time period in the Early–Middle Bronze Age. There was then a break in activity and the mound was only later spread out during the Middle–Late Bronze Age. The spreading out of the burnt mound may be compared to the remodelling of the Middle Bronze Age Barrow on the MTCP site (see below).

A variety of functions for these sites has been suggested including fulling textiles, treating hides, bathing and the production of steam for saunas (Barfield and Hodder 1987; Hodder and Barfield 1991). Whatever the practical function of these tanks and burnt mounds it is likely that they also acted as social and perhaps religious foci, in this respect they share as much in common with monuments as they do with settlement features.



Plate 4.7: Pit 470070



Plate 4.8: Barrow 324078 before excavation

Death and ritual in the Middle Bronze Age

Several funerary monuments were constructed in the Stansted landscape: a Middle Bronze Age barrow was constructed near Pincey brook, and a possible barrow (windmill barrow) was found on the north-western side of the MTCP site (Figs 4.6, 4.35). A possible Mid to Late Bronze Age ring ditch was located on the LTCP site (Fig. 4.27).

Middle Bronze Age barrow adjacent to Pincey Brook

A barrow was constructed in the floodplain near Pincey Brook (Figs 4.1, 4.6, 4.28), approximately 500 m to the north-east of the Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site. Today the brook lies a further 50 m to the west but it may have flowed closer to the monument in the past. The monument was circular with a central area approximately 8 m in diameter. Here there was a mound with a narrow berm between it and the ditch (Fig. 4.28 and Plates 4.8–9). It may also have had a low central bank although the evidence for this is tentative. Radiocarbon determinations from the barrow ditches show that the monument was constructed slightly earlier than the settlement (Figs 4.2, 4.4). This raises the interesting possibility that the settlement location was partly chosen because of its favourable position but also because of its proximity to the burial monument. Scattered Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork in the vicinity indicate that

this area was visited for some considerable time before the monument was built, and although tentative may suggest continuity of place. A few deposits of both cremated and unburnt human bone in settlement features seem to reinforce this connection (see above). Waterlogged deposits

in the barrow ditch contained environmental remains which have allowed the local landscape setting to be reconstructed. Burnt and worked wood from the mound and ditches may be the remains of the pyre structure.

Stratigraphy and chronology

A sequence of events can be identified as follows:

- clearance of surrounding area
- construction and initial silting of ditches (IG481070)
- cremation of bodies, burial of remains including pyre debris within mound
- sediment development within waterlogged ditch (IG481071)
- erosion of the central barrow mound (IG481072)
- final silting and slighting (IG481073)
- recutting of the barrow ditch (IG481074)

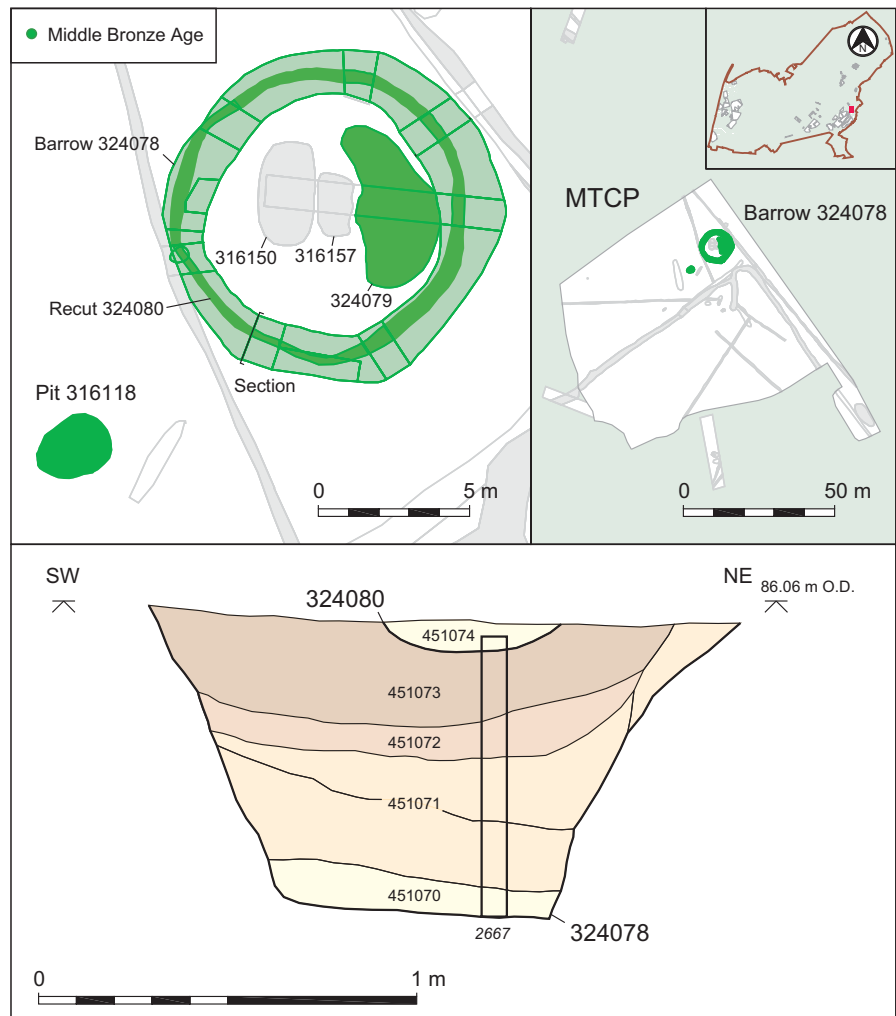


Figure 4.28: Middle Bronze Age barrow 324078



Plate 4.9: The barrow ditch

Tree-throws beneath the mound

Tree-throw 316150 contained worked Mesolithic and Neolithic flints. The cremated bone (from a subadult/ adult) recorded in its upper fill probably derived from mound material deposited into a depression in its upper profile. This and other tree-throws surrounding the barrow, contained burnt flint and comminuted charcoal, probably relate to land clearance pre-dating the monument.

Construction and initial silting (IG481070)

The barrow ditch (324078) had an internal diameter of approximately 8 m. It was flat-bottomed with fairly straight sides and had been cut through glacial tills into the underlying river gravels. It was most substantial on its north-eastern side measuring 1.7 m wide and 0.8 m deep. The material from the ditch was used to form a raised platform or mound (324079) and a bank around the outside of the barrow.

The primary fill (IG481070) of the ditch comprised grey silts and gravel. A number of charred timbers came from this deposit measuring 0.25 m to 1.4 m. These were on the base of the ditch (timbers 320133 between interventions 320111 and 320131 and an oak offcut in intervention 320150). The larger of these pieces of wood was worked (measuring 1.4 m), and may originally have been a structural timber before being re-used as fuel in the pyre, or may have been a structural component of the pyre (Plate 4.10). Oak and field maple were identified amongst this material (see Allen, CD Chapter 26). A radiocarbon date from the last of



Plate 4.10: Timber in the base of barrow ditch segment 320131

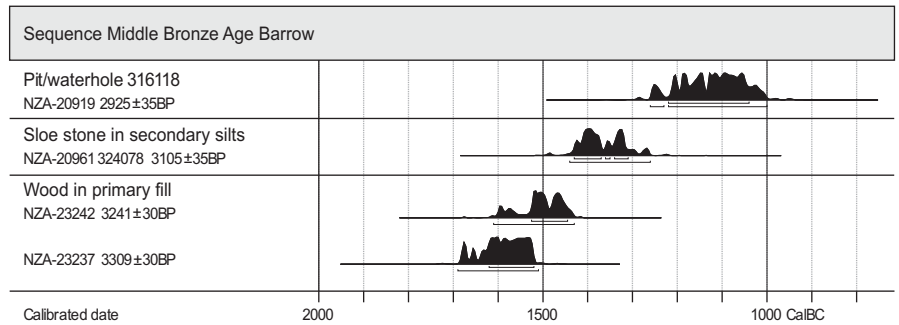


Figure 4.29: Radiocarbon dates from the Middle Bronze Age barrow and pit 316118

these produced a date of 1690–1510 cal BC (3309±30 BP, NZA-23237). Oak and elm wood chippings from this layer indicated that woodworking was taking place on the monument and may have derived from the construction of the pyre. The bark of one of the wood chips produced a radiocarbon date of 1610–1430 cal BC (3241±30 BP, NZA-23242). This provides a date for the construction of the barrow – the slightly earlier date for the timber may relate to much earlier growth before its use as fuel (Fig. 4.29).

Also from intervention 320131 an aurochs tibia was found together with many shattered skull fragments. It was not possible to tell if the latter were also aurochs (Bates, CD Chapter 32). However, this is an important late example of aurochs which are generally thought to have died out in the Early Bronze Age (Yalden 1999, 105). This is an interesting occurrence



Plate 4.11: Flint nodules in segment 320111

within the lower ditches and may have been a deliberate deposit, possibly of curated aurochs bones. It perhaps also reflects the lack of earlier settlement in the area allowing the survival of wild wood providing a suitable habitat for large species such as aurochs. A dump of flint nodules in the ditches may have been gathered ready for initial reduction (Plate 4.11).

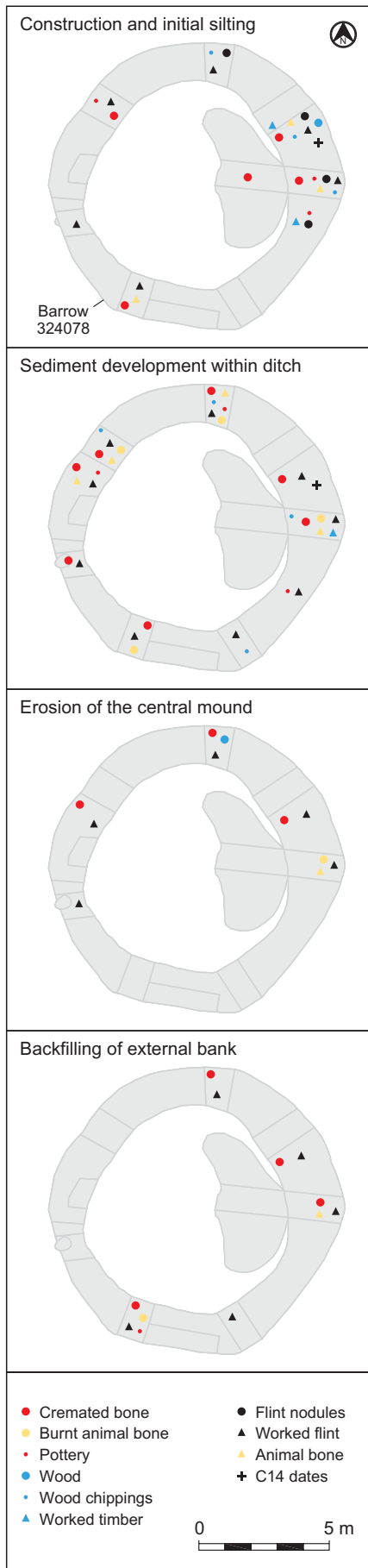


Figure 4.30: Distribution of material in the barrow ditch over time

The central mound

Within the surviving remnants of the central mound a large piece of carbonised wood and some fairly large fragments of cremated bone (subadult/adult) were recovered. The quantity of this material suggests that it had been gathered from a separate pyre site and then buried within the mound. There was no evidence for an *in situ* cremation below the construction of the mound. The mound probably extended almost to the edge of the ditch, with only a narrow berm separating them. Although the ditch was dug through gravel it was not incorporated in the surviving lower part of the mound.

Cremated remains

The cremated remains of a minimum of four individuals (a neonate, an infant, a juvenile and an adult) were found within the fills of the ring ditch. Cremated remains were found throughout the fills. The neonatal remains came predominately from the north-east (320131), the infant also from the north-east (320131, 320111) although some bone from the south may belong to this individual. The remains of the juvenile came mostly from the west of the ditch (309288), some remains from the north and south may also have belonged to this individual. The adult came predominately from the eastern part of the ditch (McKinley, CD Chapter 27). This material had weathered from the mound into the ditch over a period of around 200 years, however, apart from one exception none of the bone appears to be particularly worn or abraded. This would suggest that the deposits were rapidly incorporated into the ditch deposits and not subjected to further disturbance.

From the distribution of the cremated bone it is possible to say that activities were concentrated in the north, east and south of the mound with the remains deriving from individual cremations. Pyre debris may have been redeposited within the mound. Burials with or without redeposited pyre debris may also have been incorporated into the mound rather than

being dug into the underlying subsoil. The partially constructed mound may also have been used for the pyre although no direct evidence for this was found. Only a very small amount of human bone was found and it is possible that the remains derive from a larger number of individuals although no obvious duplicate bones were noted (see McKinley, CD Chapter 27).

Sediment development within waterlogged ditch (IG481071)

After the initial construction of the barrow it is likely that scrub recolonised the mound. The ditch remained open and permanently waterlogged, with plant communities developing within it. In-washed silts (IG481071), interspersed with layers of organic material up to 0.2 m thick, accumulated in the standing water. The upper fraction of this deposit indicated increasingly fluctuating water levels. Organic preservation was at its best within the northern circuit, where the ditch was deeper and the barrow lay closer to the brook. Inclusions and finds within the sediment suggest the mound remained fairly stable, possibly being retained behind a revetment of some kind. The silts were generally rich in charcoal and contained cremated human bone and other burnt residues (Fig. 4.30).

A radiocarbon determination from a charred sloe stone, from a deposit (320137/SG324067) towards the top of IG481071, produced a date of 1440–1260 cal BC (3105±35BP, NZA-20961). This is later than the date associated with the bark chippings at the base of the ditch (see above) but the wide range of the determinations mean that 320137 could feasibly have formed very shortly after the chippings were deposited or as much as 350 years later (see Fig. 4.29). What is clear is that the barrow was still in use when 320137 accumulated and this activity was contemporary with the occupation of the nearby settlement as the date compares well with those retrieved from the phase 2 features there (Fig. 4.2).

Discrete episodes of woodworking on the barrow mound were identified

from the different deposits of wood from around the ditch. Wood chippings from field maple and a thin offcut of alder were found within intervention 320111 in the east of the barrow, willow chippings from intervention 316119 and oak and alder chippings occurred within interventions 309238 and 316101. Several of the chippings from intervention 309238 were charred. Use-wear on some the worked flints recovered showed they had been used for woodworking (Cramp, CD Chapter 24).

Erosion of the central barrow mound (IG481072)

Erosion of the mound, presumably reflecting the decay of a revetment structure used to retain it, led to the deposition of silts (up to 0.35 m thick) in the barrow ditch. This was most pronounced in the north-east, where the mound was more substantial. The barrow ditch seems to have remained more or less permanently waterlogged and anaerobic conditions prevailed, although organic preservation was not as good as it was lower in the sequence. Cremated bone, charred material and finds were recovered from this layer.

Final silting and slighting (IG481073)

The final element to the silting of the ring ditch seems to represent a combination of silting and deliberate infill. In some of the interventions excavated, the poorly sorted nature of this deposit suggested that it was deposited rapidly, probably to level up the ground by filling the ditch. There was some evidence in the northern and eastern circuit of the ditch that the material used to fill the ditch had been deposited from the outside of the ditch, hinting that the barrow may also have had a low external bank.

Recutting of the barrow ditch (IG481074)

Some time after the original barrow ditch (324078) had been completely filled it was recut (324080) (Fig. 4.31). This secondary ditch was much less

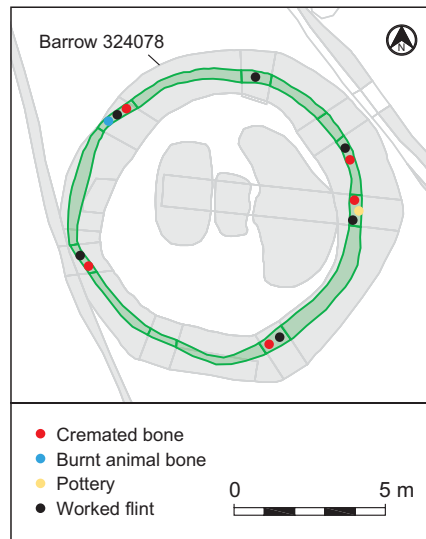


Figure 4.31: Distribution of material in the recut barrow ditch

substantial measuring 9 m in diameter but only 0.45 m wide and 0.3 m deep. It was also slightly offset within the top of the original ditch. The blue-grey deposits within the recut were markedly different in character to the fills within the original barrow ditch and appeared alluvial in nature deriving from overbank flooding. Cremated bone, burnt animal bone, pottery and worked flint were recovered from the ditch (Fig. 4.31).

The barrow and its environment

Analysis of barrow ditch fills indicates a high water table in this area with peat-like deposits forming soon after its construction, although the land immediately surrounding the barrow was pasture rather than marsh. The base of ditch would have been permanently waterlogged in the Bronze Age and at times the mound must have almost been an island. Insect and organic remains were well preserved; aquatic insect taxa confirm that the ditch held stagnant water. Initially, it was fairly free of vegetation, as waterlogged plant remains do not occur in any abundance in the lowest deposits. Preserved wood chippings (elm, oak, alder, willow and field maple) in these lower deposits show that woodworking was taking place on the monument and a number of charred timbers (oak and field maple) occurred within the ditch, as did roundwood from glossy buckthorn. In

time, despite the continued use of the barrow, aquatic and marginal plants, such as crowfoot (*Ranunculus subg. Batrachium*), water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and duckweed (*Lemna* sp.) became established. Rising values of pollen within the sediment sequence support this impression, and include pondweed (*Potamogeton*), sedges (Cyperaceae), meadowsweet (*Filipendula*) and bulrush/bur-reed (*Typha angustifolia/Sparganium*-type).

The insects suggest human settlement was absent from the immediate vicinity of the barrow (Robinson, CD Chapter 36). However, activities relating to the episodic use of the monument are indicated by the presence of charcoal, flint and burnt flint, and charring of the peat formation. Disturbance of the ground is also indicated by the preserved seeds of nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and docks (*Rumex* sp.).

The identification of water plantain suggests that the environment of the barrow ditch was nutrient-rich. Analysis of the sediments (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30) detected traces of dung, indicating the presence of animals in the locality and the insects show that the barrow was set amidst pasture. Open grassland plant taxa were not frequently recovered which may indicate that such heavy grazing was occurring that many of the plants could not set seed. The periodic flooding of the area may also have limited the growing season. Thistle achenes (*Cirsium/Carduus* sp.) were present in small numbers – this type of unpalatable weed can become abundant on well-grazed pastures. The pollen evidence confirms that the landscape was predominantly open with occasional areas of scrubby woodland (alder and hazel). Cereal pollen suggests that there was some arable cultivation in fairly close proximity to the barrow, although this contrasts with that from the insect fauna, where very few beetles from arable or disturbed ground were recorded.

A few hedgerow, scrub or woodland plant remains were present in the barrow ditch. The earliest deposit produced an alder seed (*Alnus glutinosa*)



Figure 4.32: Reconstruction of a pyre being lit on the mound. Note the water filling the barrow ditch

and possible sloe stone fragment (*Prunus* sp.). These may indicate small areas of alder woodland or hedgerows nearby as, unless carried by humans or animals, these remains are unlikely to travel far from their parent trees. Later deposits contained bramble seeds, Rosaceae thorns (rose/bramble and hawthorn/sloe), a possible maple seed fragment and elderberry seeds. Some of these are from edible fruits, but the thorns obviously represent woody material that had fallen into the ditch or been brought onto the site. This could indicate that, in time, scrub

became established around the monument or alternatively that the material was being brought here as cut branches for leaf fodder.

Discussion

The barrow was built adjacent to Pincey Brook, in a place that had been previously used in the Mesolithic and the Neolithic periods. The construction of the monument may slightly pre-date the Middle Bronze Age settlement but, by the time it had been constructed, the land here had already largely been

cleared of trees. It remained in use during the currency of the settlement. The relationship of the monument to the settlement is of some interest; it seems likely that the settlement was built with regard to the position of the barrow. The occurrence of cremated and unburnt human bone in settlement features is also of importance here. Different funerary practices may be evidenced by this deposition or it may simply reinforce the connection of the settlement and burial monument.

The setting of the barrow can be contrasted with the location of the settlement, which was higher up the plateau, and the brook was evidently highly influential in its siting. The high watertable of the floodplain would have had profound repercussions for the physical character of the monument, as well as the way it was used and considered, and, in its structure, the barrow seems to make overt reference to its environment. The barrow ditch and mound were more substantial on the north-east; being closer to the brook, this part of the monument would have been wetter and more susceptible to waterlogging and, therefore, more difficult to dig. As such, the greater size of the ditch here was, likely to have been a deliberate effect. At times, when the water-table was at its highest, the mound must have resembled an island, with the ditch perhaps being designed to flood. Consequently, it must have been from the direction of the settlement that the monument was intended to be most easily approached. In its location and architecture, then, the barrow seemed designed, at once, to include and pay homage to the adjacent brook.

The barrow mound served as a place for cremation or the disposal of cremated remains (McKinley, CD Chapter 27). It is not possible to tell who was cremated on the monument, but selection is certain as only four individuals were certainly identified (although it is possible that other individuals are represented amongst the remains; see McKinley, CD Chapter 27). Whether they were selected because of their status, the circumstances surrounding their deaths or for other



Plate 4.12: Aerial view of the windmill barrow, note the change in direction of the Late Iron Age boundary ditch

reasons is uncertain. The remains encompass newborn to adult. The discovery of charred timbers in the ditch is important and may represent part of the pyre structure (*cf* McKinley 1997c, 135, fig. 4), which was incompletely burnt and then dumped into the barrow ditch.

It seems that the barrow was a communal monument, rather than being associated with any particular individual, or at least in time it came to be considered in this way. Despite holding the funerary ceremonies of the community, the monument was also a familiar feature of the landscape: the mound probably being a relatively dry and pleasant place to sit when tending the herds, manufacturing flint tools from nodules obtained from the adjacent brook or when engaged in other activities best suited to this location. The connection with everyday tasks such as flint knapping link a place of death with the living world and the settlement.

The earlier parts of the barrow sequence are well dated but it is more difficult to be precise about its later chronology. It was probably constructed sometime in the 16th or 15th centuries BC and remained in use until at least the mid-15th, possibly the mid-13th centuries BC, after which time the mound started to degrade. The slighting of the external bank into the barrow ditch and the subsequent recutting of the ditch cannot be precisely dated, although it is possible that this happened towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age; the wider implication of these acts is considered in more detail below.

Windmill barrow on the MTCP site

At 95 m OD, approximately 180 m north-east of the Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site, there was a large ring ditch measuring 29 m in diameter. Evidence for a medieval windmill was found (see Chapter 9, Fig. 9.23) but the relationship of this ring ditch to a Late Iron Age or Romano-British ditch may suggest that an earlier Bronze Age barrow was originally sited here. Ditch 306045 appeared to kink around the ring ditch suggesting the presence of an earthen mound (Plate 4.12). The evidence is tentative as the construction of the medieval windmill has destroyed any earlier evidence and no Bronze Age finds were recovered which might help to substantiate this argument. If a barrow had been constructed here, it was sited on a gently sloping plateau above the valley leading down to Pincey Brook. As such, it may have been visible from the opposing side of the valley and was in a contrasting position to the Middle Bronze Age barrow adjacent to the brook, which may have been a prime concern in the choice of location.

Ring ditch on the LTCP site

Approximately 50 m to the south-east of roundhouse 11 was a circular ring ditch (995060). It was 8.9 m in diameter, 0.7–0.9 m wide and 0.36–0.42 m deep (Fig. 4.27). It was flat-bottomed with fairly steep sides. There was no surviving bank or mound associated with the ring ditch but it is likely that

an earthwork once existed and has been removed by later ploughing. It is not well dated, a little undiagnostic worked flint came from the lower and the upper fills of the ditch and some very small sherds of Late Bronze Age, Middle Iron Age and Romano-British pottery in the upper fills of the ditch. No evidence for function was recovered but it is likely to have been a prehistoric monument although no burials were found. Morphologically, the ring ditch is similar to the Middle Bronze Age barrow on the MTCP site, having a similar profile and of a comparable size (see above). Rather like the windmill barrow on the MTCP site, ring ditch 995060 was sited just below the crest of a hill, on a gently sloping plateau overlooking a valley, positioned so as to be clearly visible from the slopes on the other side of the valley and the valley floor.

The wider landscape in the Middle Bronze Age

Analysis of pollen cores taken from the Stansted Brook to the north-west of Stansted Airport shows that during the Early Bronze Age the area was well-wooded, particularly with alder, hazel, lime, willow, oak, elm and pine. By the Middle Bronze Age (*c* 1600 cal BC), the clearance and agricultural exploitation of the landscape in the vicinity seems to have intensified (Wiltshire 1991). Evidence from features on several of the Framework Archaeology sites are in broad agreement with this picture. The lower fills of several features contained some clearly residual pollen forms which probably derived from the exposure and reworking of the glacial tills as a result of the clearance of woodland.

Taking the structural and environmental evidence as a whole, the Middle Bronze Age landscape appears to have been a mixture of surviving woodland on the boulder clay plateau providing opportunities for hunting game and gathering wild fruits and nuts, with lightly grazed grassland over much of the remaining slopes (Carruthers, CD Chapter 29). The animal bone evidence is poor apart from the assemblage from the MTCP settlement but suggests the

husbanding of animals and the hunting of deer. An important find is the aurochs bone from the Middle Bronze Age barrow on the LTCP site. It may represent a deliberate deposit in the barrow ditch possibly of curated bone. If the bone was not curated it represents a late survival of aurochs in the area. The settlements appear to have been located on the boundary between several different vegetation types, so that grazing, arable cultivation and sources of fuel and water would all have been in close proximity.

The range of larger woodland trees represented were probably oak (charcoal and worked wood), and elm (worked wood), with the smaller trees/shrubs hazel, field maple and hawthorn/*Sorbus*-group growing as an understorey. Analysis of the charcoal recovered from Middle Bronze Age features suggest that oak, the hawthorn group and blackthorn probably had a wider distribution in the landscape than, for example, ash, elm, maple, alder, willow or poplar and hazel. Waterlogged remains of worked wood from carpentry and structural use include elm, field maple, alder, and oak (Allen, CD Chapter 26).

It has already been shown that the area adjacent to the barrow on the MTCP site was predominately open. It was not possible to determine precisely how heavily wooded the plateau was without further environmental evidence but the fact that pollen from features at the FLB and M11 sites also produced low tree/shrub percentages suggests that the landscape was predominantly open (Huckerby *et al.*, CD Chapter 31). It is also uncertain to what extent livestock was allowed to range free or with herders, combining woodland browsing with grazing the grassy slopes, but there was little archaeological evidence for divisions within the landscape at this time, although it is possible that streams provided natural divisions within the landscape.

The valleys probably retained some areas of alder woodland on the wetter ground, judging from the pollen, worked wood and charcoal evidence. In areas of the valley bottom where

the soils were less heavy than the plateau clays but not permanently wet, small areas of arable cultivation would have been possible. Little information about the precise location of the arable fields was identified from the few charred weed seeds that were recovered but cereal pollen was recorded in the sequences.

A fairly comparable range of species was recorded from prehistoric and Roman contexts at Thorley, south-west of Stansted (Gale in prep.). It is interesting, therefore, to compare these landscapes with that at Grange Lane, a Middle Bronze Age–Late Iron Age site to the east of Stansted, where the emphasis was on cereal production. Here the pollen record indicates that there was predominantly open grassland during this period, with the sparse woodland supporting only a narrow range of taxa (oak, pine, hazel and alder) (Druce 2007).

The insect taxa from the barrow by Pincey Brook included scarabaeoid dung beetles, suggesting that surrounding open grassland was grazed, and only a few woodland dependent species were identified. The insect assemblage from a waterhole (430084) on the M11 site contains no evidence for nearby settlement activity and contrasts with that of the barrow, containing more woodland dependent species. The insect and waterlogged plant remains suggest a period of abandonment but animals continued to water here. The woodland taxa in the waterhole were of a scrubby nature and scrub perhaps re-colonised the area around the barrow by Pincey Brook in its later history. The high ratio of hawthorn group and blackthorn charcoal in other Middle Bronze Age features generally supports the idea that some previously cleared areas reverted to thorn scrub.

The presence of rubbing stones in the features of several sites (but particularly the M11 site), cereal and some arable weed pollen in all of the waterlogged features studied, and several charred emmer, spelt and barley remains, suggest that cereals were being grown locally, rather than being brought into

the area. In particular, the deposit of emmer and spelt spikelets or ears in pit 423049 (M11 site) suggested that these were locally grown crops. Arable cultivation was probably not taking place on a large scale, however, since very little charred cereal processing waste or accidentally burnt grain was recovered. It is interesting to note that spelt and emmer remains occurred in equal numbers, since spelt was a newly introduced crop in the Middle Bronze Age, being recorded in small quantities on sites mainly in southern England (Carruthers, CD Chapters 29 and 34).

Despite the lack of structural remains from the M11 site, the finds suggest a nearby settlement, as does the presence of waterholes. It seems likely though that the remains uncovered represent activity at the periphery of a settlement (see above). The geology was slightly sandier here and this may have meant that the cultivation of cereals was possible – hence the finds and environmental remains. So, there may have been some specialisation of the settlements on the slopes of the plateau and differentiation between them, influenced by the constraints and opportunities engendered by the specific character of the local environment.

The enclosed settlement on the MTCP site is not typical in the Stansted landscape. Other Bronze Age roundhouses, structurally similar to those on the MTCP site have been excavated at the FLB and LTCP sites and activity is widely attested by pits and other features dispersed over the landscape. It seems likely however that the main focus of activity was not revealed on the M11 or the FLB sites. Settlement is also scattered across the LTCP sites. Generally, however, people seem to have lived in small, scattered household groups (*cf* Ellison 1978, 36) rather than clustering together in enclosed settlements. Indeed, although similar settlements to the MTCP site are known from the south of England (*cf* Brück 1999; Rudling 2002), no other such settlements have as yet been fully excavated in the Stansted region (Brown 1999, 26–9). Evidence for Middle Bronze Age settlement in Essex is relatively scarce and most frequently

found in the south-east of the county (Brown 1999, 26–7). Many of these sites lack the structures found at the MTCP site and excavations along the A120 Middle Bronze Age activity consisted of scattered pits, postholes and a few ditches (Powell 2007, 20). It is also interesting to note that there need not have been an expansion of settlement throughout the period; the frequency of settlement sites seemingly remained the same and the most complex settlement, on the MTCP site, was founded at the beginning of the period.

The size, complexity and longevity of the settlement on the MTCP site and the richness of the finds assemblage found here, might suggest that it enjoyed some social or political status in relation to the other settlements established in its immediate surroundings. However given the limitations of the other excavations noted above this interpretation is tentative. The arrangement of roundhouse 1 and the settlement entrance implies that visitors from outside the settlement were received, perhaps on occasion with some formality. Contact would almost certainly have been maintained between the various settlements and they may have been to some extent mutually interdependent. Just as they were connected to each other, the settlements at Stansted were probably linked by extensive social networks to other communities living in distant places. These links may have been traced through shared lineages and may have been organised at a scale that encompassed the wide-ranging ancestral geographies of the Early Bronze Age (Barrett 1994b, 145).

Certain objects and materials that were not locally obtainable may have been exchanged via these networks. At the local scale, communities on the plateau might have exchanged livestock and the products of husbandry or woodland commodities (eg venison or timber) for cereals with those living in the river valleys. Exchange need not have always meant the permanent transfer of material goods, it could also have meant sharing resources and exchanging services and labour with neighbours. At a wider scale, it would only

be through extended trading contacts that geographically restricted resources like bronze could have been acquired. There may have been more than simple economic motivations for the exchange of prestige goods, and this practice could have promoted inter-group cohesion and otherwise worked to structure the social field (Rowlands 1980).

The political prominence of the settlement on the MTCP site probably came to fore in the maintaining of external relations. It may have acted as the physical locus for the redistribution of traded commodities or the production of artisan goods. It was possibly a focal place, at which the resources of the local community could have been pooled prior to exchange and been a point of congregation for social or ceremonial gatherings. Its role as a meeting place might account for the greater quantity and variety of finds than at other sites, although the material is still relatively low status.

The settlement on the MTCP site was founded in close proximity to two barrows and contained the sarsen stone; LTCP roundhouse 11 was constructed adjacent to a ring ditch. The burnt mound on the LTCP site was no longer accumulating at this time but still seems to have been a significant part of the cultural landscape. These monuments were relicts of an earlier geography and were seemingly an important consideration in the siting of settlements. The imposition of the settlements on these earlier schemes, even when rendering them redundant, took the monuments into account and these continued to be important in new ways. In settling the landscape this community drew on pre-existing histories to establish new relations between each other and the land. Of course not all the settlements need have been established at the same time. Yet, what is clear, is that settlements did not just exist in relation to each other and the topography but also the places that had been important and modified in the past, even if these had now been collectively re-imagined.

The manner in which Middle Bronze Age settlers may now have used

monuments is perhaps best illustrated by the barrow adjacent to Pincey Brook. This was built in a place that had been previously visited in the Mesolithic and the Neolithic periods and would have provided a different range of resources including plants, fish, birds and other animals than other parts of the landscape. It was probably broadly contemporary with the settlement. The barrow might be contrasted with the settlement in several ways: it was adjacent to water within the floodplain, the settlement was on the plateau; the barrow was for the dead, the settlement for the living; the barrow was in a place where raw materials were acquired and worked, the waste being left behind, whereas the settlement was the place where these resources were used and where tools were deposited in a rather different way.

These contrasts, and the subtle ways they were employed in practice, helped to map out the relationship between the Bronze Age community and their landscape and orientate them within it. The interrelationship between the settlements and the other important places around them, were lived out daily in moving between them. The settlements may now have been the primary locus for the negotiation of social relations but the barrows extended this discourse out of the roundhouses, helping to situate them within their environment. Monuments also helped these settlers to orientate themselves in time, especially during funerary rites at the barrow. They were a means of constructing new forms of lineal biography, rooting the common history of a closed community to a particular place (Barrett 1994b, 151–3); the community was fixed in death by cremation and dispersal at the barrow as they were in life by their settlement.

The pits excavated in parts of the landscape away from the settlements, for example those scattered over the LTCP site, may have been the sites of everyday activities. On the other hand, deposition in them may have been enacted at certain key times, perhaps during meetings between different communities when pacts were made or disputes reconciled. These explicit acts



Figure 4.33: Late Bronze Age settlement with details of the roundhouses and other features

were performed against a background of routine activities such as tending herds, coppicing trees and gathering wild resources that helped create the familiar landscape and made sense of people's lives as well as their relations with the land.

The Bronze Age settlers at Stansted established and maintained new forms of tenure without the need for extensive formal enclosure of the landscape but as discussed above natural features may have been used. They did this through the creation of knowledge about their place in the world and relations to each other at times of deposition in pits and at the local monuments but also, perhaps more importantly, in their daily lives in the settlements and in the pastures and woodland copses that surrounded them. They may have been able to do this without field systems because of the nature of the landscape and their modes of subsistence but also because of their good relations with each other. They must have been successful in mediating disputes by employing social mechanisms that did not centre on digging ditches and by drawing on a shared understanding of biographies fixed in relation to place that did not require the enclosing of areas of land.

Middle–Late Bronze Age (phase 3) *c* 1300–*c* 1000 cal BC

A number of features on the MTCP and the LTCP sites seem to date to the end of the Middle Bronze Age period. They have produced radiocarbon dates that are later than those from the settlement on the MTCP site and, on occasion, contain pottery that appears to belong to the Late Bronze Age. The settlement on the MTCP site itself seems to largely have been abandoned by this time, the only pottery of Late Bronze Age type retrieved from this area coming from the top silts of features. The small settlement on the LTCP site consisted of roundhouses, pits and other features.

There are some problems using Late Bronze Age pottery fabrics to date this activity because of their long currency at Stansted (potentially between *c* 1200–*c* 400 cal BC; see Leivers, CD Chapter 17). However, the distribution of Late Bronze Age pottery, when all the sites are considered, suggests a south-western shift in the main focus of activity across the study area, even though it is difficult to argue on this basis for dense settlement anywhere within the excavated areas. Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from five sites but only in any quantity

from the MTCP and LTCP sites. When comparison is by site, rather than by the assemblage as a whole, the decrease in quantities from Middle to Late Bronze Age can be seen on the FLB, LTCP and MTCP/SG sites.

It seems that the landscape to the east of the airport was still inhabited but was now used in a less intensive manner. There may have been people living further to the west, but there is no securely dated evidence for permanent settlement at this time. The only possible settlement is indicated by two roundhouses and associated features on the LTCP site (Fig. 4.33). It may be that the population had moved their settlements from the boulder clay plateau entirely—moving back down into the lowland river valleys, for example (see for example the results from the Stansted G2 Project; see below (Framework Archaeology forthcoming)).

The LTCP site

A small Late Bronze Age settlement comprising two roundhouses (roundhouse 12 and roundhouse 13) and a scatter of pits, postholes and other features was located 120 m to the north of the Middle Bronze Age

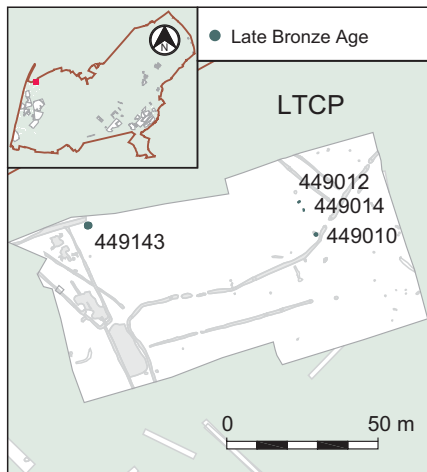


Figure 4.34: Late Bronze Age pits

burnt mound (Fig. 4.33). The dating of this settlement is ambiguous, relying on a few sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery, on balance, it seems likely that it lies in the earlier range of the currency of those ceramics (*c.* 1200–900 cal BC).

Roundhouses 12 and 13 were circular or oval in plan and of post-built construction; both had south-east facing entrances flanked by door posts. The lack of ring gullies may indicate that the area was well drained. Roundhouse 12 would originally have been approximately 10.5 m in diameter. Roundhouse 13 measured 8 m by 7.4 m and was an irregular oval in plan. The only finds from roundhouse 12 were a few undiagnostic struck flints and an intrusive fragment of iron in posthole 463022, whilst the postholes of roundhouse 13 contained flint flakes and a very small sherd of Beaker pottery. Although these roundhouses are poorly dated, the scatter of Late Bronze Age features associated with them suggests that they date to this period. However, a barbed and tanged arrowhead and another small Beaker sherd from pit 913084 suggests some earlier activity. It is not impossible that roundhouse 13 is Beaker in date (see Chapter 3).

A scatter of 17 small circular pits or postholes was located south of the two roundhouses and was probably associated with them. These included a line of posts that may be the remnants of a fenceline. Finds from these features were generally rare; five flint flakes occurred within pits/postholes 461005,

459049 and 459059 and three sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery, from at least three different vessels, within pits/postholes 459046 and 461007. The most substantial pit (913804) lay slightly south of the others. Finds from this uppermost backfill comprised animal bone and Late Bronze Age pottery. A redeposited small Beaker sherd and a barbed and tanged arrowhead were also recovered (see above).

Sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery were also retrieved from deposits in the Burnt Mound to the south of the settlement and from alluvium (463027) sealing the mound deposits. It is possible that the burnt mound was levelled at this time (see above).

Approximately 325 m north-east of the settlement were four small pits of probable Late Bronze Age in date; three were clustered together (449012, 449014 and 449010) and one was situated further west (449143, Fig. 4.34). All of the pits seem to have silted naturally, pit 449143 contained a deposit of charcoal-rich material. Worked flint, some very fragmentary animal bone and some Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from the pit fills.

The MTCP site

Activity on the MTCP site is slight consisting of a few pits, postholes and scatters of pottery. Environmental evidence suggests that this landscape was still grazed although perhaps not as intensively as previously. No trace of the permanent dwellings that might be expected if people were living here all year round were identified. During the period 1200–900 cal BC, there is evidence that suggests the landscape was still valued. This takes the form of formal deposition in pits and also the structural modification and continued use of the barrow by Pincey Brook.

Pit 316118

A large oval pit or waterhole (316118) had been dug approximately 5 m south-west of the barrow by Pincey Brook (Fig. 4.35). It had a similar sequence of deposits as the barrow ditch (324078), suggesting that it was

more or less permanently waterlogged (Fig. 4.33). The upper fill in the pit (316113) may have been deliberate backfilled. A charred sloe stone from 316114 produced a radiocarbon date of 1260–1000 cal BC (2925±35 BP, NZA-20919), suggesting that this layer accumulated towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age. It most probably post-dated waterhole 309075 located in the Middle Bronze Age settlement to the south-west, and seems to have been dug or at least allowed to silt sometime after the nearby settlement had largely been abandoned. Interestingly, the gleyed deposit in the pit would seem to have developed sometime after the superficially similar gleyed deposit (324067) within the barrow ditch (see discussion of IG481071 above). It is, therefore, possible that the pit was backfilled at the same time as either the mound and bank were slighted (IG481073) or the barrow ditch was recut (IG481074) (see Fig. 4.2).

Pollen from the fill of this pit provides a similar picture of environmental conditions as seen in the lower fills of the barrow ditch. Grassland or open ground dominated the landscape around the feature, with some cereal cultivation. There is evidence for wet, open ground in the immediate area with some hazel copses (alder and field maple also being present). Towards the upper part of the sequence, an increase in pollen from field maple (*Acer campestre*-type) and hazel in both this pit and the barrow show some evidence for scrub regeneration—perhaps indicating the land was less intensively grazed.

The fills of the pit contained many flecks of charcoal. Some burnt animal bone also occurred within 316114. Burnt and worked flint occurred throughout the pit fills and included a little residual Mesolithic and Neolithic material. The majority of the flint was Bronze Age in date and comparable to that from the barrow.

Pit group 1

A small group of four pits were identified approximately 150 m north-east of the settlement (Fig. 4.35). From

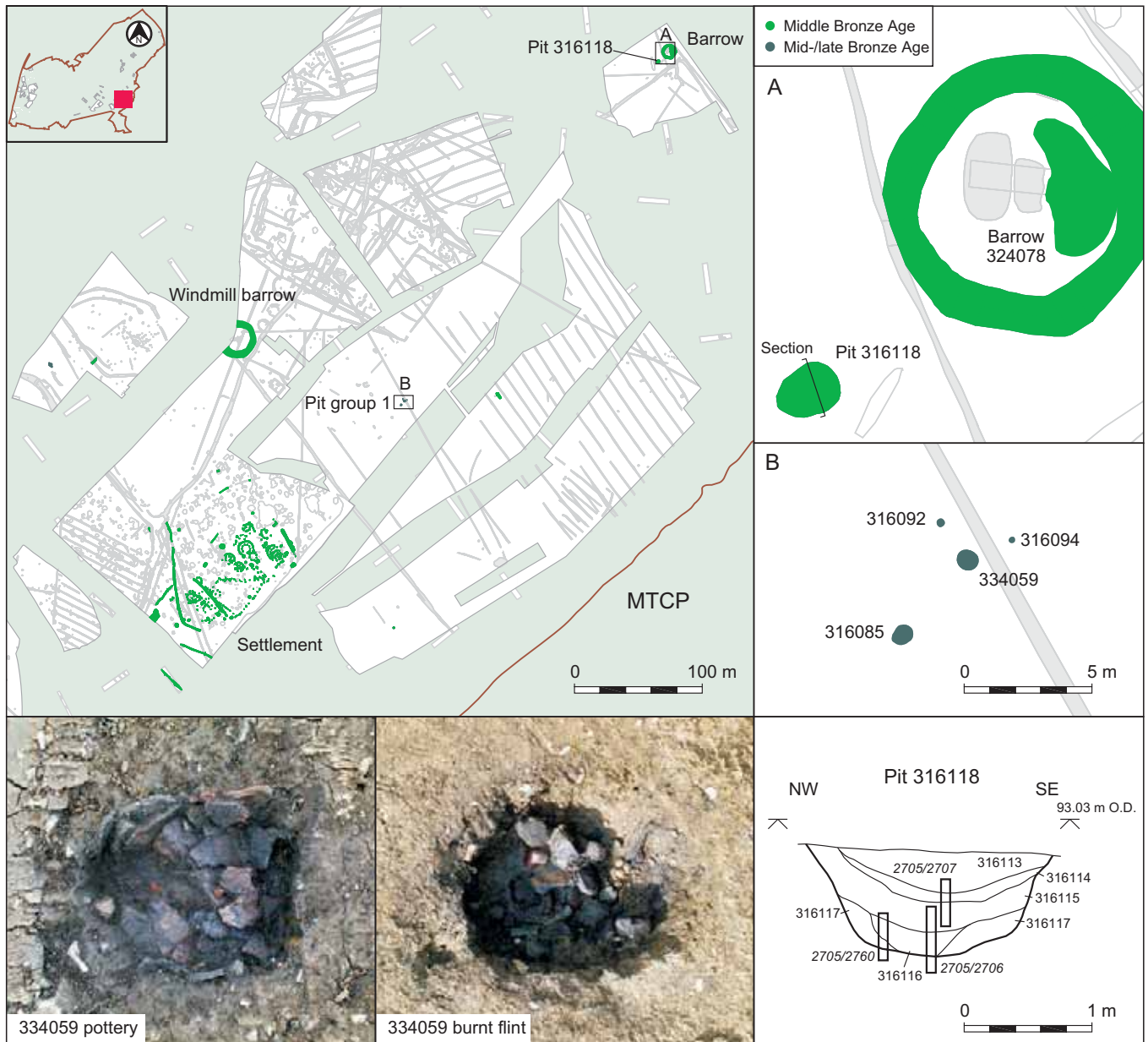


Figure 4.35: Windmill barrow, pit 316118 and pit group 1

this position, the area of the settlement and the Middle Bronze Age barrow would both have been visible, as would the putative Windmill barrow.

Two of the pits (316092 and 316094), were very small and may actually have been postholes. They were both backfilled with very dark silts containing much cominuted charcoal. Between these pits lay a larger bowl-shaped pit-334059. Backfilling this pit were deposits of burnt material and pottery. Covering its base was a deposit of silt (334064 and 334066) containing some charcoal and unburnt animal bones including cattle, pig and dog. Also within these deposits was a single

small sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery, a flint chip and several pieces of burnt unworked flint. A dump of burnt unworked flint (334063) sealed the silts on the base of the pit. Amongst the unworked flint there were fragments of fired clay, possibly originally a loom-weight. There were also several flint flakes, chips, a very fine Mesolithic/ Neolithic flint fabricator and two small sherds of pottery from different vessels. The animal bone included cattle, red deer, dog and pig and sheep/goat. Sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery from several vessels had then been placed on edge around the sides of the pit and more sherds were piled up in layers on top of the dump of burnt flint (334063).

Around and sealing the pottery were undifferentiated deposits of silt (334060-2 and 334065) mixed with charcoal and fuel ash. Within these deposits were a few tiny fragments of human bone (adult/subadult, older than 13 years of age); several pieces of worked flint; four fragments of sandstone rubbers; a possible whetstone; and animal bone fragments including cattle. A radiocarbon date from the cremated bone provided a date of 1260-1010 cal BC (2937±30 BP, Oxford-OxA-15389).

Lying 3.6 m further south-west, was a similar bowl-shaped pit (316085). The backfilling sequence within this pit was not as complicated as 334059,

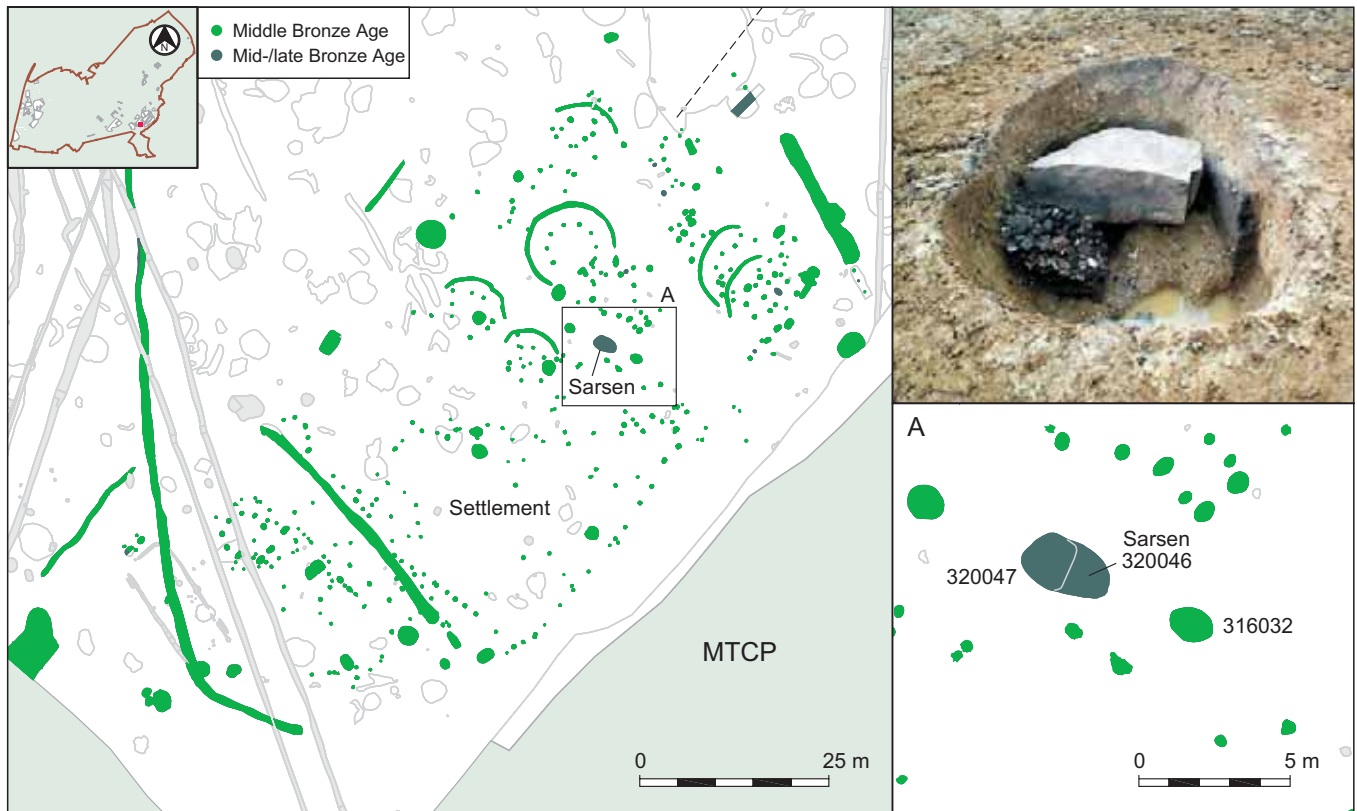


Figure 4.36: Pits 320046 and 320047 showing the position of the sarsen

comprising only two deposits of charcoal-rich silt. Sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery from several vessels were scattered throughout the deposits, as were several struck flint flakes, a worked nodule, a core fragment, a stone rubber. Animal bone was present but was too fragmentary to identify, except for five sheep/goat teeth.

These pits do not seem related to any settlement and indeed probably post-date the latest activity from the Middle Bronze Age settlement on the MTCP site to the south-west. They are contemporary with pit 316118 associated with the Middle Bronze Age barrow and it is possible that they were broadly contemporary with the recutting of the barrow.

The burial of the sarsen

Perhaps several centuries later than the pits described above, at the very end of the Middle Bronze Age, a large oval pit (320046) was excavated in the centre of the abandoned Middle Bronze Age settlement (Fig. 4.36). Into this pit was placed the sarsen stone (320058). The pit had probably been

excavated specifically to accommodate the stone, which fitted snugly within it when laid flat (Fig. 4.36).

Pit 320046

Just before the stone had been lowered into the pit a deposit (320060) of charcoal-rich silt had either accumulated or been dumped into it. This deposit contained no datable pottery but did include several scraps of animal bone and flint working waste. A charred sloe stone from the deposit yielded a radiocarbon date of 1050–830 cal BC (2813±35 BP, NZA-20916), dating the placement of the sarsen, which could not have occurred prior to this time. The pit then seems to have remained open for a time as the edges eroded and silts (320059 and 320061) accumulated around the stone. These silts contained flecks of charcoal, a small sherd of Middle Bronze Age pottery and a flint awl.

Pit 320047

A second pit (320047) was dug north of the first, truncating deposit 320061 and partially revealing the sarsen stone by slightly undermining it. The second

sub-rectangular pit was similar in size but deeper than pit 320046 (Fig. 4.36). A small irregular depression existed in the base of the pit. Filling this and extending across the entire pit was the primary fill (320048), derived from the eroded edges of the open pit and silts washed in from the surrounding ground surface. It contained no finds but was flecked with charcoal. Above this were charcoal flecked silts (IG481069), which had washed into the pit as it remained open. Sealing the silts on the east only, a compact deposit of burnt flint nodules (320053) had been dumped into the pit, coming to rest in a layer that butted the sarsen stone and extended under it where it had been undermined. Sealing this was a dump of charcoal-rich silts (IG481067) that also extended around the sarsen in the adjacent pit (320046). A second much smaller sub-rounded sarsen with a broken, flattened face lay within these deposits, on the western side of the pit. Above the dumps was a thick, silty deposit (IG481068), which had slowly washed from the surrounding area into the open pits, building up around the sarsen until it was buried.

Finds were most frequent in the backfills (IG481067) and the silts (IG481068) above the dump of flint nodules (320053). The assemblage included a large amount of worked flint—predominantly flakes, with a small number of tools (a scraper, spurred pieces and a notched piece). There were quantities of animal bone from domestic and wild species: cattle, sheep/goat, pig, red and roe deer. The lower deposits and the backfills contained large amounts of Middle Bronze Age pottery and Globular vessels. The uppermost deposit (IG481068) contained the largest pottery assemblage which also included a single small sherd of Late Bronze Age and one of only two sherds of barrel-shaped vessels that were retrieved from the site (the other coming from waterhole 309075).

The finds in the pit could easily date to the Middle Bronze Age and are typical of the assemblages from other features within the settlement. However, the radiocarbon date from the earliest part of the sequence described above, indicates that the first of the pits was excavated and the stone placed within it at a much later date than the other dated activity at the site, probably after the settlement had been abandoned.

Discussion

All of the pits discussed above were located in different parts of the landscape and varied greatly in form and presumably function. They all appear to post-date the abandonment of the settlement on the MTCP site as a permanent place to live but indicate the continuation of activity, for at least a century and probably longer, in and around the place where the settlement was once located. These features are probably not direct evidence for farming and settlement but rather for formal practices, expressive perhaps of certain complex beliefs, which may have been commemorative in nature. The deposition of materials in waterhole 309075 played an important role in the decommissioning of the settlement on the MTCP site; it would seem that after the settlement had been abandoned, materials continued to be deposited in pits for other reasons.

The sarsen stone may have been of symbolic importance throughout the life of the settlement. Although it is possible that the stone had been brought to this place, it was probably already here before people settled on a permanent basis and may have been a landmark used by visiting Neolithic and Early Bronze Age groups (see Chapter 3). In this way its status as a significant entity would have pre-dated the settlement. This status would have been enhanced or might have changed during the lifetime of the settlement, as many events and activities probably took place at or around the stone, perhaps utilising it. It is impossible to pinpoint exactly what the stone meant, and it probably meant different things to different people. Yet it almost certainly occupied a central place within the cultural life of the settlement because of how the community understood it collectively and because of what it was to individuals as a result of their particular experiences.

The burial, partial exhumation and reburial of the stone seems to have been undertaken with a degree of ceremony. Not only would a concerted effort be required in order to bury the stone, the place of burial was either remembered or marked in some way. The burial of the stone may have been necessary because of associations it evoked or because of powers that were attributed to it. The act of burial had a certain finality, it removed it from this world and marked a transition between states. However, soon after it had been buried, there seems to have been a desire to employ the stone once more in practices involving the deposition of burnt flint nodules and charcoal dumps. These deposits could have derived from activities undertaken in another part of the landscape entirely, and are similar to those that were often accumulated in burnt mounds at waterside locations in the Bronze Age (see above). Along with the charcoal and burnt stone were struck flints (including pre-Bronze Age tools), animal bone and pottery. The vast majority of the pottery is Middle Bronze Age and seems too early to be current at the time implied by the radiocarbon date. The finds were

probably incorporated with midden materials that were collected or exhumed from the settlement, or perhaps elsewhere, and redeposited in the stone pit. This recalls the acts of deposition within waterhole 309075 when the settlement was abandoned.

The burial of the stone in the 9th and 10th centuries cal BC may have been associated with the final abandonment of this part of the landscape, which had only been infrequently visited but was still economically important, and the old settlement would probably still have been visible. The partial exhumation of this stone indicates that this was a prolonged exercise, and the redeposition of ancient materials shows a concern with the past. This might perhaps be seen as an act of propitiation or atonement, an attempt to placate the ancestors who remained associated with this place and to avert future misfortune by ensuring that they were left behind. Through these acts of continued deposition, the present and the past might have been brought together in the context of the pit to ensure success in the future.

The deposition in pit group 1 may perhaps be understood in a similar way, as purposive acts commemorating an important event or articulating and discursively working out some other concern. Despite cremated human bone being present in pit 334059, these pits do not appear to be *in situ* cremation burials and the inclusion of this material may have been unintentional. These deposits are typical of the period and can be paralleled at a number of sites (Bück 1995, 247–1, table 1, fig. 1). As with the stone pit, deposition involved the collation of apparently mundane materials that today might be categorised as *rubbish* (broken pottery and animal bone), with those which seem more unusual (the cremated human bone and already ancient flint fabricator). The pottery and burnt stone was largely kept separate and carefully arranged, indicating deliberate structure within the deposit. The *rubbish* could have been the by-product of feasting or could have simply derived from settlement middens. However, the animal bone,

which is almost exclusively representative of butchery waste (the heads and feet of animals, with the exception of a single sheep/goat scapula), shows a greater degree of selectivity in the elements present than was found in the settlement midden deposits. None of this material has been burnt and the lack of major meat-bearing joints suggests that they had been removed elsewhere.

Pit 316118, adjacent to the barrow, is rather different to the other pits and contained relatively few finds. Significantly, this pit was probably silting and being deliberately backfilled at around the same time as structural modifications were being made to the barrow (the external bank being slighted and the ditch being recut). These modifications are paralleled at this time on the LTCP site, by the spreading out of the burnt mound, which was also in a watercourse and of similar antiquity to the barrow (see above).

Just as deliberate deposition in features can denote changes in state, the explicit manipulation of architectural features can reflect and commemorate consequential matters and important historical events. These architectural alterations perpetuate changes in state by recreating anew the environmental conditions within which life is experienced. It seems likely that in changing the structure of the barrow and slighting the burnt mound, reference was being made, in a different sphere, to similar concerns addressed by deposition in other parts of the landscape. It may even have been the case that these acts were all directly or indirectly associated with the same concerns: those factors that remain archaeologically invisible but perhaps provided the background to the abandonment of the settlement on the MTCP site as a permanent residence and, ultimately, what may possibly have been the complete abandonment of the landscape for a period of several hundred years, throughout the latter part of Late Bronze Age.

The Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age (phase 4) c 800–c 400 cal BC

Despite the apparent abandonment of some of the excavated settlements in the Late Bronze Age, the Stansted area saw continued settlement and activity in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age period; nearly all the evidence for this being on the western side of the airport. Despite problems in dating this period closely (due to a combination of relatively poorly understood pottery sequences and the problems with radiocarbon dating caused by a plateau in the radiocarbon curve) it is clear that there the area continued to be settled and farmed. As most of this activity is concentrated on the western side of the airport, it is possible that settlement was gradually encroaching onto the plateau from the river valleys.

A small number of features could be dated with some certainty to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age on

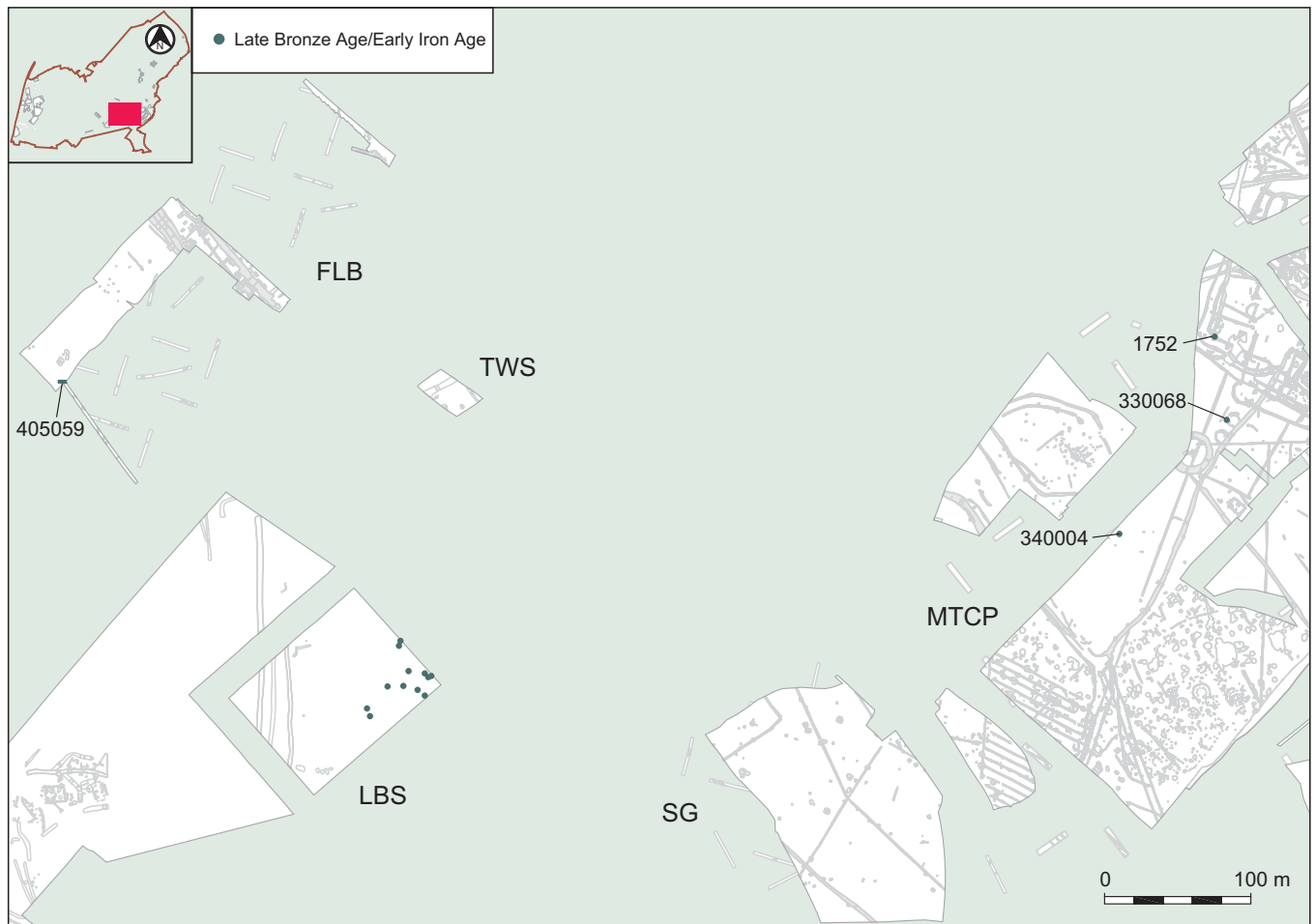


Figure 4.37: Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity



Figure 4.38: Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity

artefactual evidence. To the south-east of the airport, features of this date were excavated on the SG, MTCP, FLB and LBS sites (Havis and Brooks 2004) (Fig. 4.37). To the west of the airport, a Late Bronze Age settlement was excavated on the LTCP site (Fig. 4.38), whilst features were also excavated on the M11 site and, previously, at BLS, SCS, CIS and DFS. Because of the difficulties in establishing a coherent chronology, the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age periods are treated as a continuum here, and described together.

The MTCP and SG sites

Three pits on the western edge of the MTCP site contained Late Bronze Age (330068) and Early Iron Age pottery (1752 and 340004) (Fig. 4.37), although only pit 340004 produced any quantity (59 sherds, 109 g). A scatter of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery

was recovered from the SG and MTCP sites, mostly as a residual element in later features.

The FLB site

A short section of ditch (405059) on the south-western edge of the FLB site was dated to the Late Bronze Age on the basis of several sherds of pottery from its fill (Fig. 4.37). Other finds from it included two pieces of struck flint, one of which was possibly Neolithic in date.

The LTCP site

There is evidence for activity continuing in the same area as roundhouse 11 on the LTCP site (Fig. 4.38). It is unlikely that the roundhouse itself was still standing at this time but a number of pits were scattered around the area and finds occurred as a residual component of the assemblages retrieved from later

features including ring ditch 995060. Late Bronze Age pottery occurred in association with roundhouse 11. Scattered across the site was a series of pits, postholes and a hearth. Finds of Late Bronze Age pottery, flint and animal bone were recovered. Residual Late Bronze Age pottery and struck flint also occurred in the ditches of a Late Iron Age mortuary enclosure (see below). Finds within the pit 995014 comprised sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery and in pit 995018 were sherds



Figure 4.39: Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity on the Stansted Project sites

of Early Iron Age pottery. A short 20 m segment of north-south oriented ditch (150070) in the north-east of the site contained several sherds of Early Iron Age pottery and no other finds (Fig. 4.38). This may have been a precursor for the north-south aligned ditches that were established in the Iron Age along the eastern side of the site (see below), and thus indicate the antiquity of this boundary.

A small cluster of discrete features, 50 m to the south boundary of this, has been dated to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Fig. 4.38). Four postholes probably

comprise two two-post structures rather than a four-post structure. A fairly large sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery came from posthole 137002, in its south-east corner.

Approximately 3.5 m west of the two-post structures were two shallow pits or postholes. The only find in 106048 was a very small sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery, whereas 106045 contained several sherds from a Late Bronze Age bowl. The deposits within the features seem to have been dumped into them and contained large amounts of charcoal and fired clay.

The Stansted Project excavations

Five Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age sites were identified (BLS, SCS, CIS, DFS and LBS) (Havis and Brooks 2004, 13–24). The first four of these lay to the south and east of the LTCP site. These extended over a distance of 500 m (north-east-south-west, in the order cited) along the break of slope between the valley slopes to the west and the plateau to the east (Figs 1.3, 4.38, 4.39).

In general, the features revealed at these sites bore some resemblance to

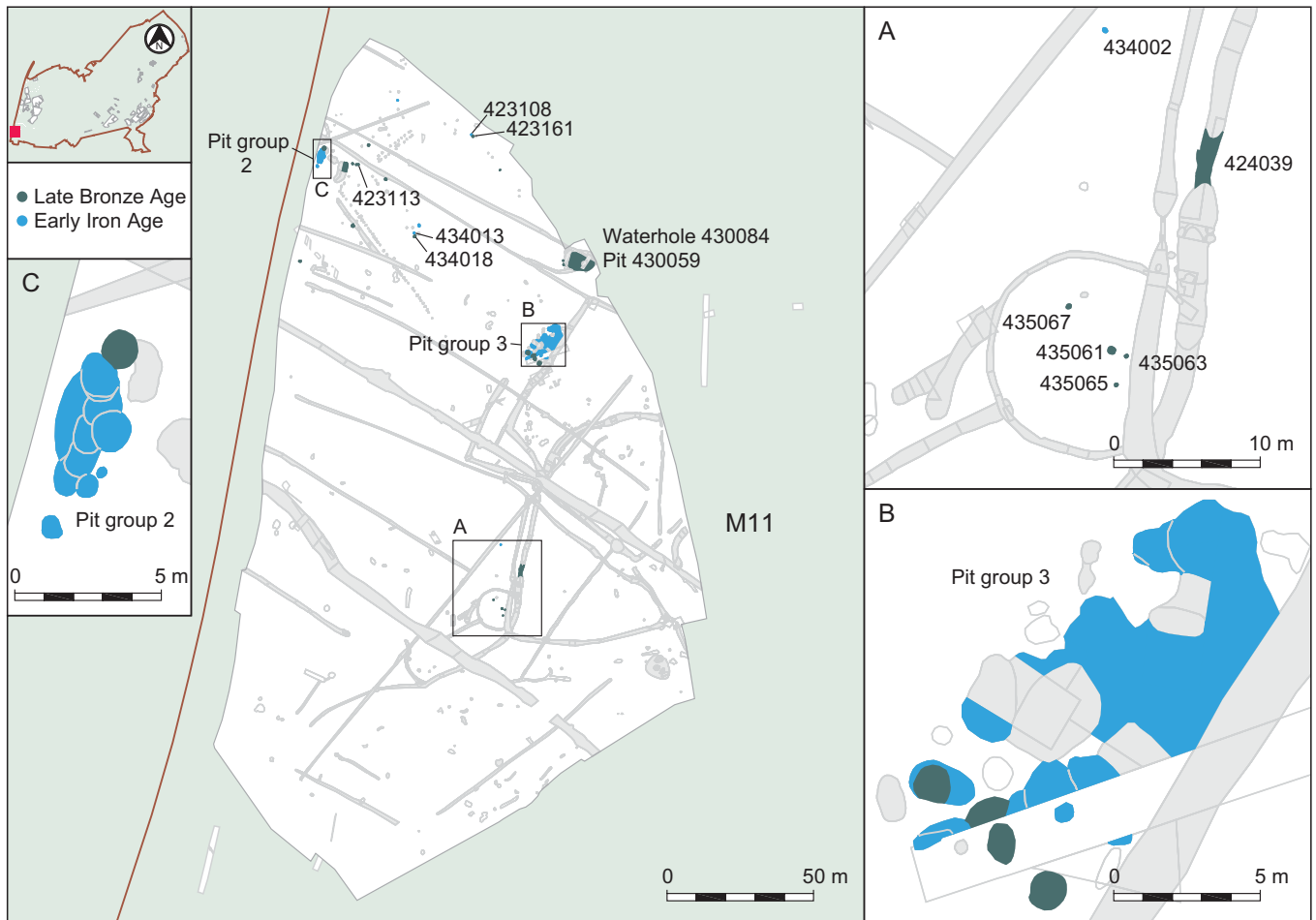


Figure 4.40: Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age features

those encountered on the LTCP site. In particular the scatters of small pits and postholes over the SCS, DFS and BLS sites can be compared to those from the LTCP site. However, good evidence for settlement was rather elusive; certainly nothing bearing any similarity to the Late Bronze Age settlement located in the north of the LTCP site was discovered. Two small rectangular posthole structures were located on the SCS site, but these are likely to be ancillary buildings rather than dwellings (Fig. 4.39). A cluster of postholes on the BLS site might also have been structural but whether they constitute a dwelling of any kind is also debatable (Fig. 4.39). However, two categories of Late Bronze Age feature occurred on the sites excavated by the ECC that were not encountered on the LTCP sites. The first of these, located on the SCS, CIS and DFS sites, were very large pits, some of which intercut and had been recut on several occasions (Fig. 4.39). The pits were rich in finds, with pottery being particular-

ly abundant in those on the SCS. The second category of feature was small pits that had seemingly been dug in order to contain a single ceramic vessel that had often been placed upside down. These unusual features were found at the SCS, CIS and BLS sites.

At 95 m OD, on the eastern side of the airport in the north of the LBS site, was a small collection of 11 pits and postholes. These contained burnt debris and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. This shows some use of the landscape between the MTCP and the FLB sites at this time.

Radiocarbon dates associated with charcoal in two small pits on the SCS site provide a likely date range for this activity (Havis and Brooks 2004, 24). The earliest pit was associated with a date range between 1130–800 cal BC (2780±70 BP, HAR-9237), the latest pit with a date range between 790–410 cal BC (2490±70 BP, HAR-2936). The pottery within both pits would,

however, suggest that they both belong at the end of this range, namely at the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition (Brown 2004, 41).

The M11 site

Late Bronze Age pottery was found in relatively small quantities (1027 sherds, 9147 g) on the M11 site. Here this material was found exclusively with Early Iron Age pottery (Leivers, CD Chapter 17). Radiocarbon dates (790–410 cal BC; 2490±30 BP; NZA-23239 and 800–520 cal BC; 2528±35 cal BC; NZA-23240) associated with these vessels suggest that they continued in use into the Early Iron Age.

A number of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age features were found (Fig. 4.40) including a series of large, intercutting pits containing quantities of pottery, and small pits containing complete vessels, sometimes inverted. There were also a number of small pits and postholes scattered widely



Plate 4.13: Pit 423161 containing a truncated pottery vessel

over the area but nothing that was certainly structural.

In the northern part of the site a large waterhole (430084, Fig. 4.40) is known to have been in use during the Middle Bronze Age because of radiocarbon dates associated with timbers at its base (see above). By the Late Bronze Age this waterhole was abandoned and, after it had started to silt-up, was backfilled with dumps of subsoil and organic material that formed dark spreads filling the depression left in the top of the feature. These spreads contained a fairly large assemblage of Late Bronze Age pottery, a fragment of quernstone, animal bone, including cattle bone, and struck flint. A sub-rectangular pit (430059) which also contained Late Bronze Age pottery was subsequently dug through these spreads.

Approximately 50 m west of the waterhole there were a number of small pits, several of which contained Late Bronze Age pottery. A small pit or posthole (434061) on the east of this area contained a single sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery. About 15 m north-west of this pit were two adjacent pits (423161 and 423108). A near complete pottery vessel had been placed upside down in the base of 423161 (Plate 4.13). This may have originally been complete when deposited, with the base being removed by ploughing some time later. The pot almost completely filled the pit, but within the subsoil backfill were a number of struck flint flakes. Pit 423108 had been backfilled with compact grey silt containing some burnt unworked flints; it is possible that it was originally a posthole, perhaps marking the position of the buried pot. The only finds within this

pit were a flint core, a chip and several sherds of pottery from a different vessel to the one in pit 423161. A small pit or posthole (423132) lay 30 m north-west. It contained a little worked flint and some small sherds of pottery.

Another pit (423017) lay 20 m south-west of pit 423132. The backfill of this pit was rich in charcoal suggesting it was a deliberate dump and the finds within this deposit comprised worked flint and several sherds of pottery. Approximately 8 m south of this pit were three pits in a group (423113, 423154 and 436060). On the base of pit 423113 was a layer of burnt daub (423158) which may have been burnt *in situ*. Sealing this was a layer (423114) of pottery sherds all from a single complete vessel (Plate 4.14). The pit was then sealed with a dump of charcoal-rich silt (423115) containing several struck flints. A radiocarbon date from maloideae charcoal in deposit 423158 gave a date range of 790–410 cal BC (2490±30 BP, NZA-23239), suggesting a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date for the pit, confirming the date range implied by the pottery.

Pit 423154 was filled with a single dumped deposit of silt mixed with fragments of charcoal. This contained several sherds of a PDR vessel similar

to that within pit 423113 and a number of struck flints. Pit 436060 also contained charcoal-rich dumped deposits within which were several struck flints and a single sherd of pottery of a similar type to that in the other two pits. An isolated pit (423143) lay 9 m south-east of this group of features. It was filled with a charcoal-rich dumped deposit that contained struck flints, loose teeth and scraps of bone from cattle and sheep; and large number of sherds from a pottery vessel.

Pit group 2

In the west of the site was a series of 10 intercutting pits (pit group 2) arranged in a north–south alignment, 8 m long overall (Fig. 4.40). Seemingly, the earliest pits (436102–7 and 436070) were dug progressively south–north, each backfilling before being cut on its northern edge by the next. The last pits in the sequence (436073, 436088 and 436091) were superimposed on their predecessors, whilst pits 436097 and 436099 were probably associated but not intercutting. The pits were generally sub-circular and ranged between 0.3 m and 1.2 m in diameter and 0.13–65 m in depth. The lower fills comprised material that had eroded into the the pits, the upper fills usually contained greater quantities of charcoal and were



Plate 4.14: Pottery sherds in pit 423113

deposited by a mixture of dumping and natural silting. Sealing all of the pits was a generic layer of dark, charcoal-rich silt (436085), apparently deposited after the last pit had been dug and they had all largely silted-up.

The pits contained varying amounts of worked flint, pottery and animal bone but, as a whole, produced a rich finds assemblage. The worked flint was typical of a Bronze Age assemblage, mainly comprising struck flakes, chips, cores and tested nodules. Where it could be identified, the fragmentary animal bone was cattle or sheep/goat. The pottery assemblage included the occasional Middle Bronze Age sherd but was predominantly of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date, comprising a range of vessels, probably constituting a transitional assemblage. The layer sealing the pits (436085) contained struck flint flakes; scraps of animal bone, including sheep/goat bone; and a fairly large and diverse pottery assemblage mainly comprising sherds from a number of vessels of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date and a single coarseware sherd that is probably Middle Bronze Age in date. Maple charcoal from an upper dump (436092) in one of the latest pits in the sequence (436091) gave a radiocarbon date of 800–520 cal BC (2528±35 BP, NZA-23240), confirming the date range implied by the pottery.

Approximately 40 m south-east of pit group 2, two small sub-circular pits (434013 and 434018) were identified (Fig. 4.40). Pit 434013 contained sherds of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery and all three pits contained assemblages of struck flint. The fills of the pits were charcoal-rich and had been dumped into the features.

Pit group 3

A second group of intercutting pits (pit group 3) lay 100 m south-east of the pit group 2 (Fig. 4.40). It is difficult to be certain how many individual pits there were in this group because of the manner in which the pits intercut and the homogeneous nature of the fills but at least 20 pits were identified within an area 15 m by 9 m. On the

south-eastern periphery of the pit group, a series of eight intercutting pits (442010–32) resembled pit group 2, progressively extending in a north-east–south-west line out from the main focus of the pitting. The pits varied widely in size and shape being between 0.65–4 m in diameter and 0.11–1.25 m in depth. The lower fills appear to have mainly formed as material eroded in from the sides and edges, although lenses of silt were interspersed with the erosion deposits and may indicate some dumping was also taking place. Sealing all the pits at the centre of the group was a dumped generic layer of dark charcoal-rich material (444009). Finds from the pits and spread include horse, pig, sheep/goat and cattle bones. Struck flint flakes were present but they were far less frequent than they were in pit group 2. The pottery assemblage from the pits was large and diverse comprising sherds from a range of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age vessels, apparently a transitional assemblage of similar date to that within pit group 2.

A small isolated pit (434002) was located approximately 70 m south of pit group 3; it contained a number of sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery and fragments of struck flint in charcoal-rich fills. A scatter of struck flint and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery sherds occurred in many of the later enclosure ditches in the east side of the site hinting at further activity in this area.

A landscape in transition Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

There is, unfortunately, very little environmental evidence available from the excavations to provide a characterisation of the wider landscape in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age period. This may partly be due to the nature of the excavated features—there were no waterholes or other water-logged features identified in the area. Charcoal from the excavated features includes a similar range of woodland species as was recovered from Middle Bronze Age contexts. A very small number of charred cereal grains of indeterminate type and several charred

hazelnut shells were recovered from pits on the M11 site. There were only seven identifiable fragments of animal bone indicating the continued husbandry of cattle and sheep/goat. There is no evidence to suggest that the range of resources had diminished but it is not possible to compare data for the reasons described.

There was no evidence for settlement on the FLB, MTCP or SG sites during this period, very few features were identified and none of these was structural, all being small isolated pits. Similarly, there were no radiocarbon dates and very few finds, so, as suggested above, the burial of the sarsen stone at the start of the Late Bronze Age might have occurred when the landscape of the plateau edge on east of the airport was largely abandoned. The few pits containing Early Iron Age pottery are perhaps, then, the first signs of recolonisation or an intensification of land use, which was to find greater expression in the Middle Iron Age. The evidence therefore attests sporadic use of this area of the landscape perhaps indicating that the main settlements were located elsewhere at this time (Stansted G2 Project; see below).

The evidence for settlement on the western side of the airport is little better and might attest to a similar pattern of settlement as was suggested for the Middle Bronze Age/Late Bronze Age transition (see above). The only possible structures were the enigmatic clusters of postholes found at the M11, LTCP, BLS and SCS sites.

The lack of waterholes in the landscape, alongside the absence of houses, might argue against permanent settlement. That being said, the clusters of intercutting pits excavated in both of the M11 and SCS sites indicate a sustained history of land use and have produced very large ceramic assemblages. The pottery vessels include large storage jars suggesting some permanent or semi-permanent occupation. It must be concluded that the finds and stratigraphic evidence is contradictory and, on balance, some settlement is probably implied here.

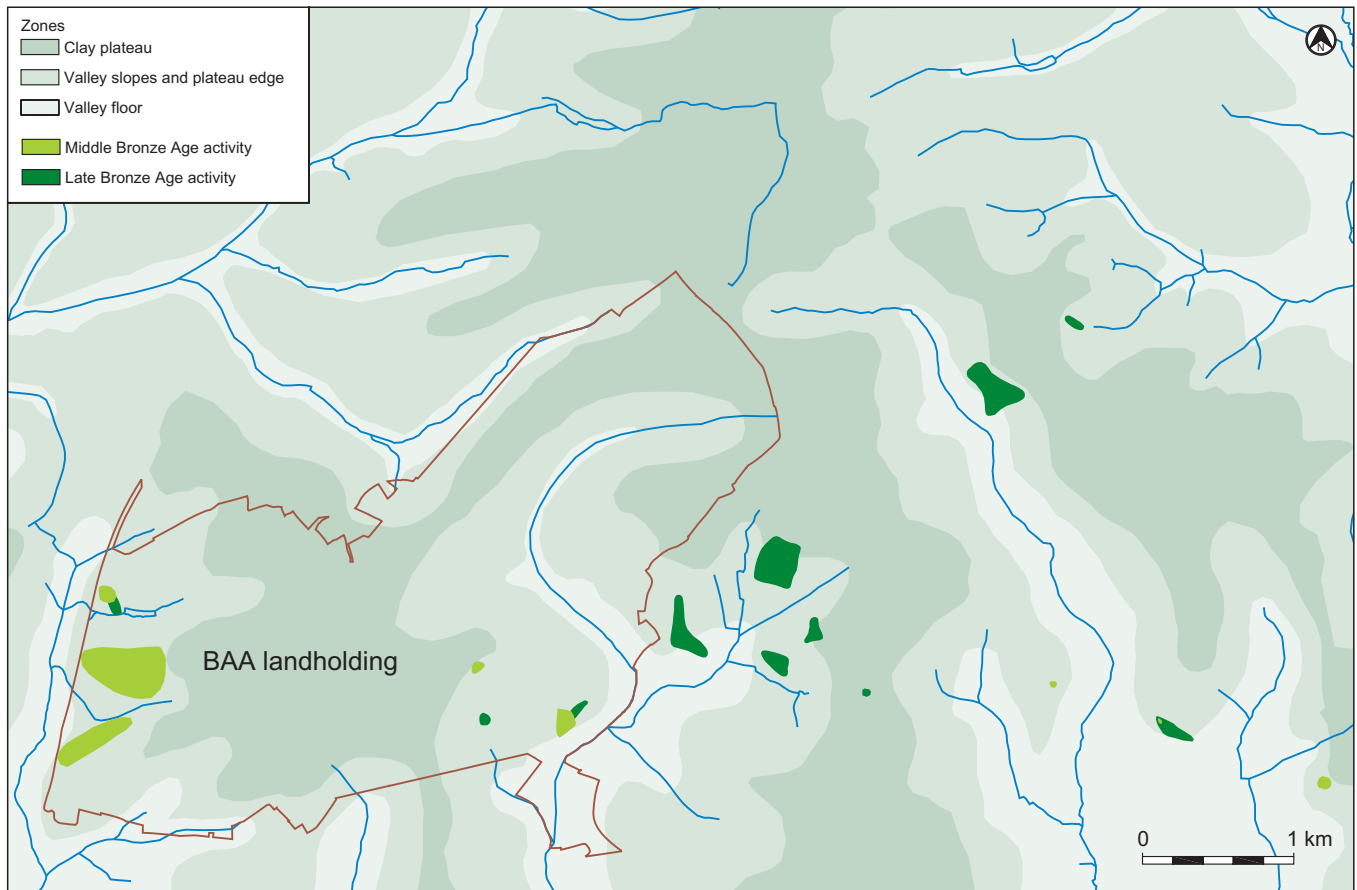


Figure 4.41: Bronze Age activity in the wider landscape

The majority of features dating to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age comprise pits scattered in a thin distribution over the landscape and perhaps clustering at the M11 site and in the south-east of the LTCP/SCS sites. Pottery of this period frequently occurs in the same locations as Middle Bronze Age pottery, as a residual component in later features. This either suggests that some Late Bronze Age ceramics were actually transitional Middle/Late Bronze Age in date or that there was an overlap of fabric types in the two periods and continuity in land use. The problems in dating these ceramics have been discussed elsewhere (Leivers, CD Chapter 17).

In three places, however, Late Bronze Age pottery clusters in different locations to Middle Bronze Age pottery suggesting new foci for activity. It occurs in two pits and in Late Iron Age ditches in the extreme north of the LTCP site; it clusters in the south-east of the LTCP site, when Middle Bronze Age pits containing contemporary

pottery lie further to the west; and it occurs alongside Early Iron Age pottery on the M11 site. On the M11 site, intercutting pits containing Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery occur adjacent to Middle Bronze Age pits in the west of the site, and pottery of a similar type was dumped in a dis-used Middle Bronze Age waterhole further east. However, pottery and pits also occur in the east of the site, where evidence for Middle Bronze Age activity is not as pronounced. Middle Bronze Age pottery was conspicuously absent from the Stansted Project sites where Late Bronze Age pottery and Early Iron Age pottery was retrieved in quantities.

The practice of deposition in pits at significant places in the landscape continued throughout the Late Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age. This may have been for similar reasons as during previous centuries – being concerned with negotiating access to resources. However, certain changes took place in this tradition, whole pots were now occasionally deposited in small pits

and large intercutting pits, into which broken pottery was deposited, were perennially dug in the same spot, re-inscribing certain places in the landscape that sometimes already had long histories of use; both practices were evident at the M11 and SCS sites.

When, for whatever reason, the terrace and slopes ceased to be intensively occupied in the Late Bronze Age, it is possible (in the absence of conclusive evidence) that the woodland regenerated to some extent. A population that had migrated to largely settle in the river valleys, began making concerted incursions back up onto the slopes and the plateau at the end of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

There is no evidence to suggest that the lives of those Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age farmers were greatly different to those of their Middle Bronze Age predecessors, although there were changes in the ways the landscape was inhabited and people probably lived in a different part of it.

In these conditions, they may have practised alternative forms of subsistence and organised their societies differently. Without more evidence it is not possible to comment further on this, although it is likely that the domestic sphere continued to be the primary locus for social reproduction. New forms of artefacts entered currency (although, at Stansted, this is only indicated by the pottery) and traditions, such as the deposition of pottery, were adapted to fulfil the needs and expectations of society at the time.

Recent work undertaken in the area—both on the improvements to the A120 to the south of the airport (Timby *et al.* 2007), and large-scale fieldwalking and trial trenching in support of the environmental statement for the Stansted Generation 2 Project (SG2) (Framework Archaeology forthcoming b) — have identified further areas of Middle and Late Bronze Age activity to the south and east of the airport (see Fig 4.41). The evidence from these fieldwork projects further supports the pattern established for Bronze Age activity at Stansted. Most of the areas of Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age activity (Fig 4.41) lie on the slopes of the boulder clay plateau, usually

separated by small streams. There is little substantive evidence for activity which might be indicative of settlement on either the plateau itself or within the small valleys cut by these small streams. Whilst we cannot at present be certain that all of the areas show here represent settlements (at the time of writing (July 2007) the Stansted G2 work is only in its preliminary evaluation phase) the patterns which emerge also suggest that there may be a shift in the location of settlements in the Late Bronze Age. We have to show some caution here, as the bulk of the sites to the east of the airport have yet to undergo detailed excavation and analysis. However, it is clear that most of the sites identified to the east of the BAA landholding are closely associated with Late Bronze Age pottery fabrics, with very little Middle Bronze Age pottery found. In the light of this, two scenarios present themselves — that these sites were occupied during the 10th and 9th centuries BC, when we have little or no evidence for settlement at Stansted, or that they may prove to be associated with Early Iron Age pottery, and mark the recolonisation of the landscape at this time. Only further fieldwork can resolve these questions.

This chapter has summarised the evidence for Middle Bronze Age to Early Iron Age activity across the Stansted landscape exploring themes of settlement and burial. Structural evidence has been used to interpret the settlements help understand their phasing. Artefactual and environmental analyses have provided important insights both into the daily lives of these settlers but also the surrounding landscape. Evidence from more recent fieldwork has also provided extra material which will in due course enable a more detailed picture to emerge.

In Chapter 5 the increasing occupation and settlement of the Stansted landscape will be explored. The first landscape divisions in the form of trackways and boundaries appear at this time. These appear to link together the scattered settlements binding them into a greater community entity which may provide evidence for larger social and political groupings than has been seen earlier.



CHAPTER 5

Enclosing the Landscape
(c 400 BC–100 BC)

by Nicholas Cooke

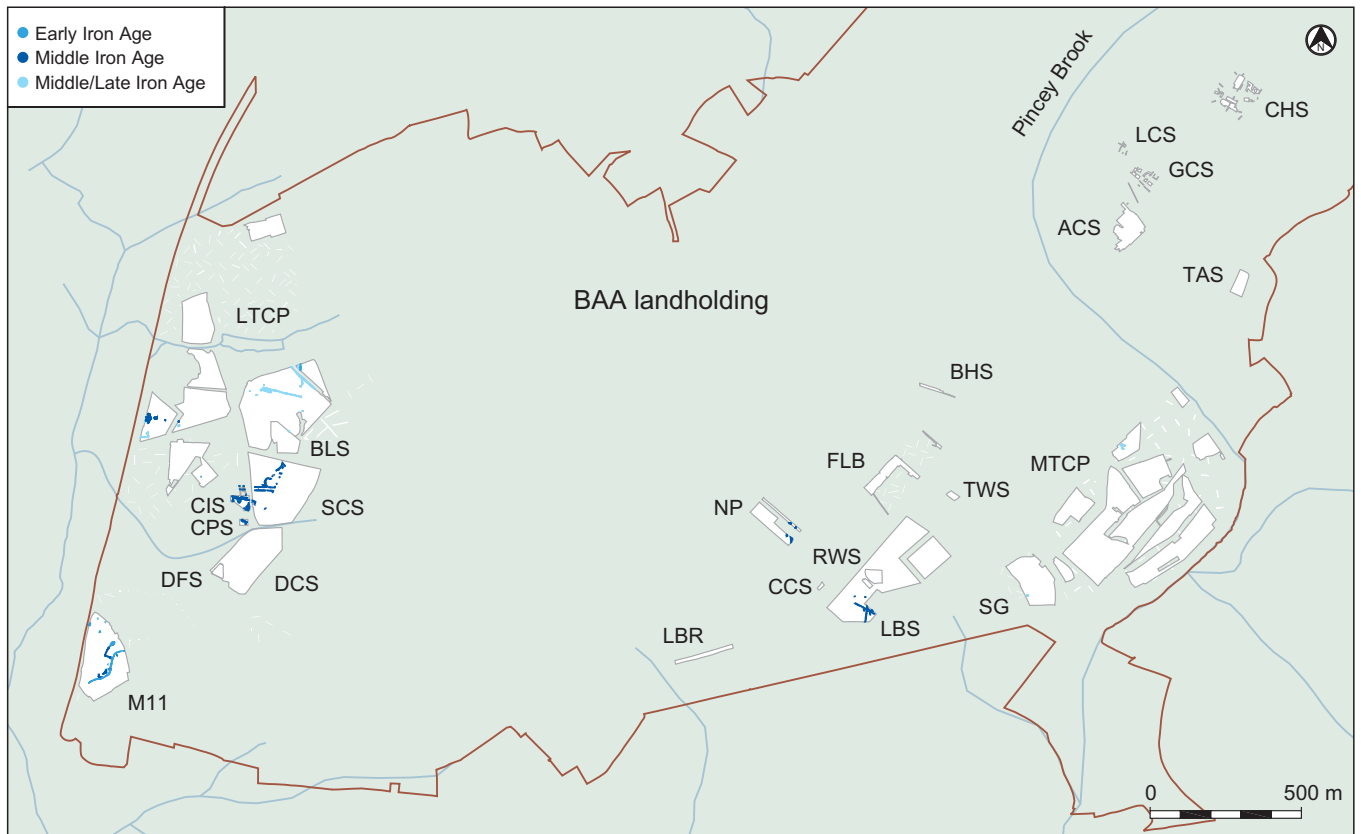


Figure 5.1: Early-Middle Iron Age features

Introduction

Middle Iron Age activity was identified at a number of sites across the Stansted landscape (Fig. 5.1). Despite the difficulty in identifying earlier settlements, Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age activity seems to have focused on the western edge of the boulder clay plateau. This settlement pattern continued into the Middle Iron Age, although there are notable differences, such as an increased density of occupation and the greater importance of bounding the landscape. The latter represents the first significant enclosure on a wide scale, a move which may reflect changes in agricultural strategies as well as a desire to formalise land ownership.

Three Middle Iron Age settlements were excavated – the LTCP, M11 and NP sites (Fig. 5.1), in addition to two settlements revealed on four Stansted Project sites (CIS/CPS/SCS and LBS sites; Havis and Brooks, 2004, 24–33). Two main concentrations of occupation and settlement are evident – one aligned along the western edge of the plateau, incorporating settlements on

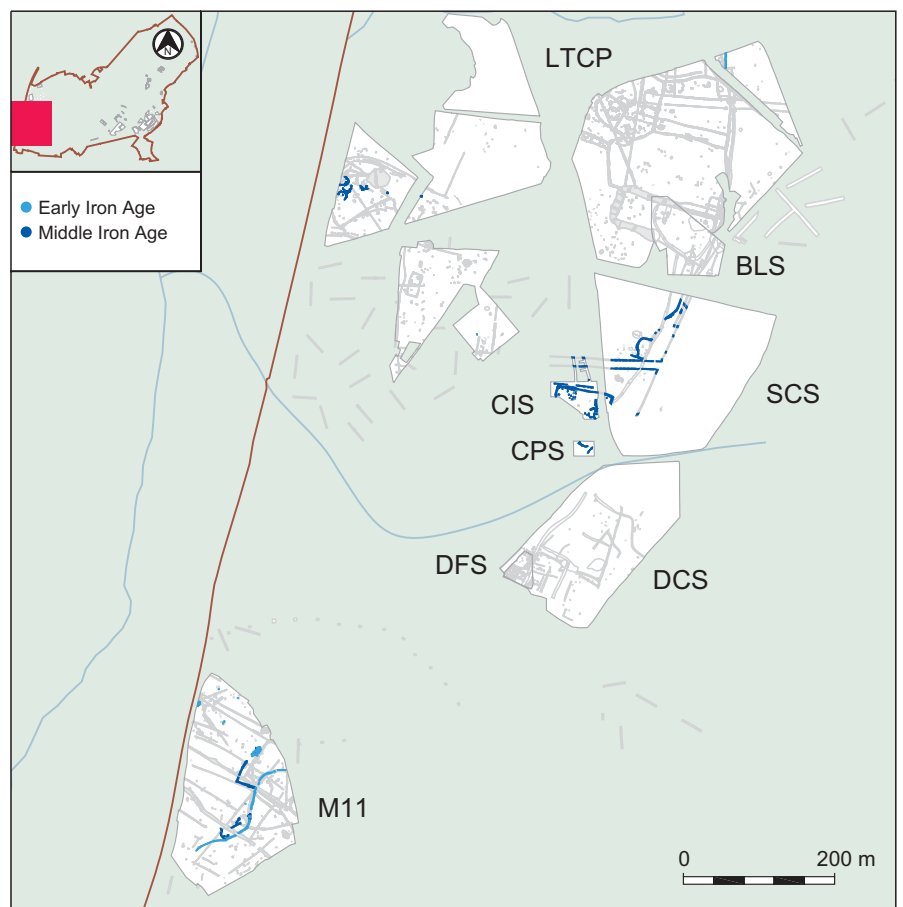


Figure 5.2: Early-Middle Iron Age activity on the western edge of the plateau

the M11, CIS/CPS/SCS and LTCP sites (Fig. 5.2), and the second located on the south-eastern side of the plateau above Pincey Brook, comprising features excavated on the NP and the LBS sites (Fig. 5.1). Both concentrations are characterised by small dispersed settlements, each consisting of a small number of roundhouses, and a few other settlement features. Trackways and boundaries were associated with some of these, whilst others divided up the wider landscape.

Chronology

Other than ceramics few datable artefacts were recovered and only a single radiocarbon determination was obtained (see below). A chronological framework has, therefore, been established by using the ceramics recovered. By the Middle Iron Age, pottery fabrics were exclusively sand-tempered. This pattern is seen across Essex, with sites in the north lacking the glauconite temper found in the south of the county (Sealey 1996, 50). The Middle to Late Iron Age transition is difficult to identify ceramically, and an arbitrary division in terms of the change from sandy- to grog-tempered fabrics has been used to separate the Stansted material. Amongst the quantities of featureless body sherds are some which support the Middle Iron Age date indicated by the fabrics through comparison of forms present in larger assemblages. The primary comparanda are from Little Waltham (Drury 1978), with other parallels amongst the assemblage from Woodham Walter (Rodwell 1987). The majority of identifiable vessels are rounded or shouldered jars or bowls. Bases are flat and simple; no footring or pedestal forms were noted.

Although there is an overall pattern to this change, with the grog-tempered gradually replacing the sandier-tempered Middle Iron Age fabrics, it was clearly a gradual one, and both were in use contemporaneously. The use of grog-tempered fabrics in the Late Iron Age continued, culminating in the adoption of the potter's wheel to throw pots in the 1st century BC. These developed forms continued in use after

the Roman conquest, and were commonly in use in the second half of the 1st century AD, after which time they were replaced by forms characteristic of the early Romano-British period.

Absolute dates

A single radiocarbon determination was obtained on charcoal (ditch fill 435074, M11 site) producing a date of 400–200 cal BC (2255±40 BP, NZA-23240).

Settlement on the western side of the plateau

The settlements on the western edge of the plateau all occupied similar locations within the landscape (Fig. 5.1, Plate 5.1). All lay on the upper slopes of the valley, below the edge of the plateau. Each lay on a west or south-west facing slope, and were well positioned to exploit nearby sources of water – although the settlement on the CIS, CPS and SCS sites lay the furthest away from the valley floor, a small spring rises to its east, and feeds a small brook which flows westwards close to the southern edge of the excavated site. Each settlement is a slightly different form, with the settlement on the LTCP site apparently unenclosed, whilst that on the M11 site was closely associated with a boundary ditch, and the previously excavated complex on the CIS, CPS and SCS consisted of an

enclosed settlement associated both with a major boundary and trackway (Havis and Brooks 2004, 24–33).

The M11 site

Activity on the M11 site continued unbroken from the Early Iron Age into the Middle Iron Age. Some of the latest features dug in pit group 2, which had its origins in the Early Iron Age, contained no pottery other than sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery (notably pit 424007 and postholes 436001 and 436003). Quantities of Early Iron Age pottery were recovered from the fills of the earliest Middle Iron Age ditches on the site, possibly indicating an early origin for these features (Fig. 5.3). These ditches (433055 and 425017 – which may terminate at pit 435079) form a sinuous boundary aligned roughly south-west to north-east across the site, apparently following the contours of the slope. The ditch did not extend as far as the western edge of the site, terminating some 30 m away. A gap in this ditch, c 9.5 m in width, lay north of 435079. This ditch remained open for a considerable period of time, with sherds of both Middle and Late Iron Age pottery recovered from the upper fills. A little charcoal from intervention 424035 included scrub/hedgerow taxa (hawthorn/*Sorbus* group) and willow/poplar, purging buckthorn, oak and ash (Gale, CD Chapter 35).



Plate 5.1: Excavating the Middle Iron Age settlement on the LTCP site

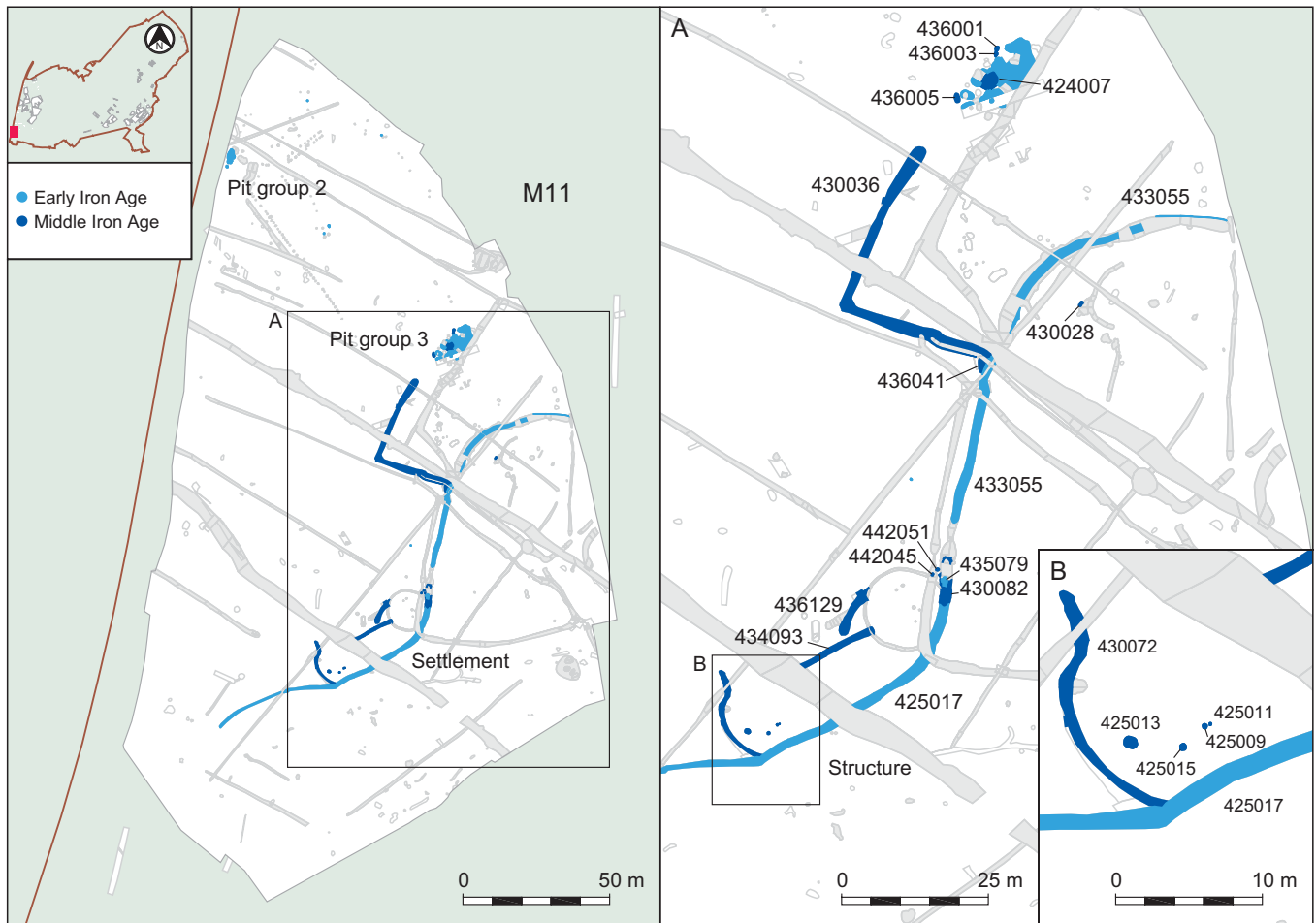


Figure 5.3: Early Iron Age activity and Middle Iron Age settlement

This boundary became the focus of much of the Middle Iron Age activity in the area (Fig. 5.3). Towards its western end, a curving ditch (430072) was dug, probably to enclose the space occupied by a structure, possibly a roundhouse (Fig. 5.3). There is little evidence for the form of this structure, although two postholes (425009 and 425015) may represent doorposts. A small hearth (425013) and a stakehole (425011) would have been located within the roundhouse if contemporary.

Several short stretches of ditch were dug (434093, 436129, 430082) around ditch 425017. Ditch 430082 may have modified access to the original causeway where a small pit and posthole (442045 and 442051) may have related to a gate structure here. Charcoal recovered from the fills of 435074 (ditch 430082) produced a radiocarbon date of 400–200 cal BC (2255±40 BP, NZA-23240).

Further north an L-shaped ditch (440036) was dug. It was orientated WNW and traced for approximately 27 m before it turned NNE and continued for a further 30 m towards pit group 3 before terminating. Together with ditch 433055, this formed an open-ended enclosure, the function of which is uncertain but may have been used to pen animals.

Most of the features described above are dated either by association with the sandy-tempered Middle Iron Age fabrics (see Leivers, CD Chapter 17) or on stratigraphic grounds. However, it has also been possible to identify a Mid-/Late Iron Age phase of activity, largely associated with the use of grog-tempered pots (Fig. 5.4). This comprised a roundhouse (roundhouse 14) and a group of pits probably associated with it.

Roundhouse 14 consisted of a ring gully (435059), with a south-easterly facing entrance. There were no traces

of internal postholes. The roundhouse within the gully was probably around 10–12 m in diameter. A hearth (430042) and posthole (425011) within the structure may be contemporary. Charcoal fragments of hawthorn/*Sorbus* group and blackthorn were identified from the hearth (Gale, CD Chapter 35). A group of poorly dated pits lay to the north-east of the ring gully (442057, 442062 and 442066), whilst three further pits may also belong to this phase of activity (430028, 436005 and 436041, Fig. 5.4), although only the latter is well dated by pottery.

A small assemblage of Middle Iron Age and Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery came from the site; some of which was residual in later features (Fig. 5.5). Only two significant groups of Middle Iron Age pottery were recovered – 39 sherds (587 g) from pit 424007 and 57 sherds (308 g) from ditch 425017 (intervention 434085). The material from 424007 came from an apparent dump (424005), which also included animal bone



Figure 5.4: Middle Iron Age settlement

including pig, red deer, cattle and sheep/goat. Residual Early Iron Age pottery was also recovered.

Other material from this deposit includes 19 sherds (157 g) of Late Bronze Age pottery and a further 30 sherds (391 g) of Early Iron Age pottery. Much of this material may have derived from pit group 3. Interestingly, no residual flintwork was recovered from this deposit, in contrast to the layer that sealed it (424006), which contained both residual flintwork and pottery.

The dump of material in ditch 425017 (434085) was incorporated in the primary fill (424086). As well as Middle Iron Age pottery, it also contained 34 sherds (325 g) of Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery and a few fragments of fired clay and animal bone. Other finds from the Middle and Mid-/Late Iron Age features included small quantities of animal bone (including cattle, horse, sheep/goat, pig and red deer), residual struck flints, burnt unworked flints and fragments of fired clay.

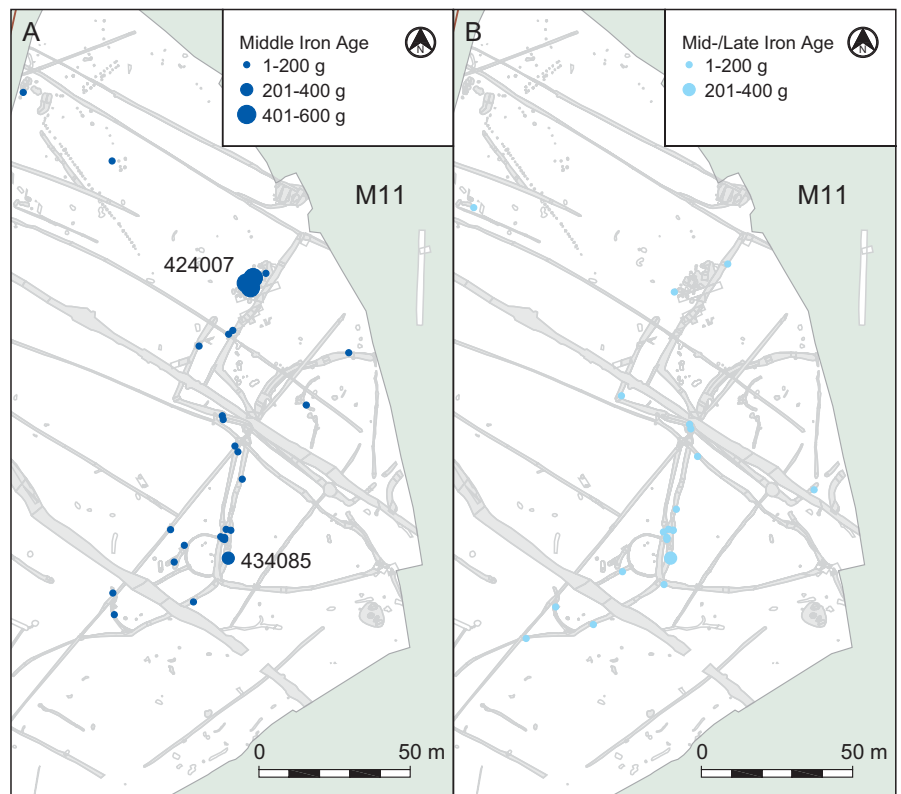
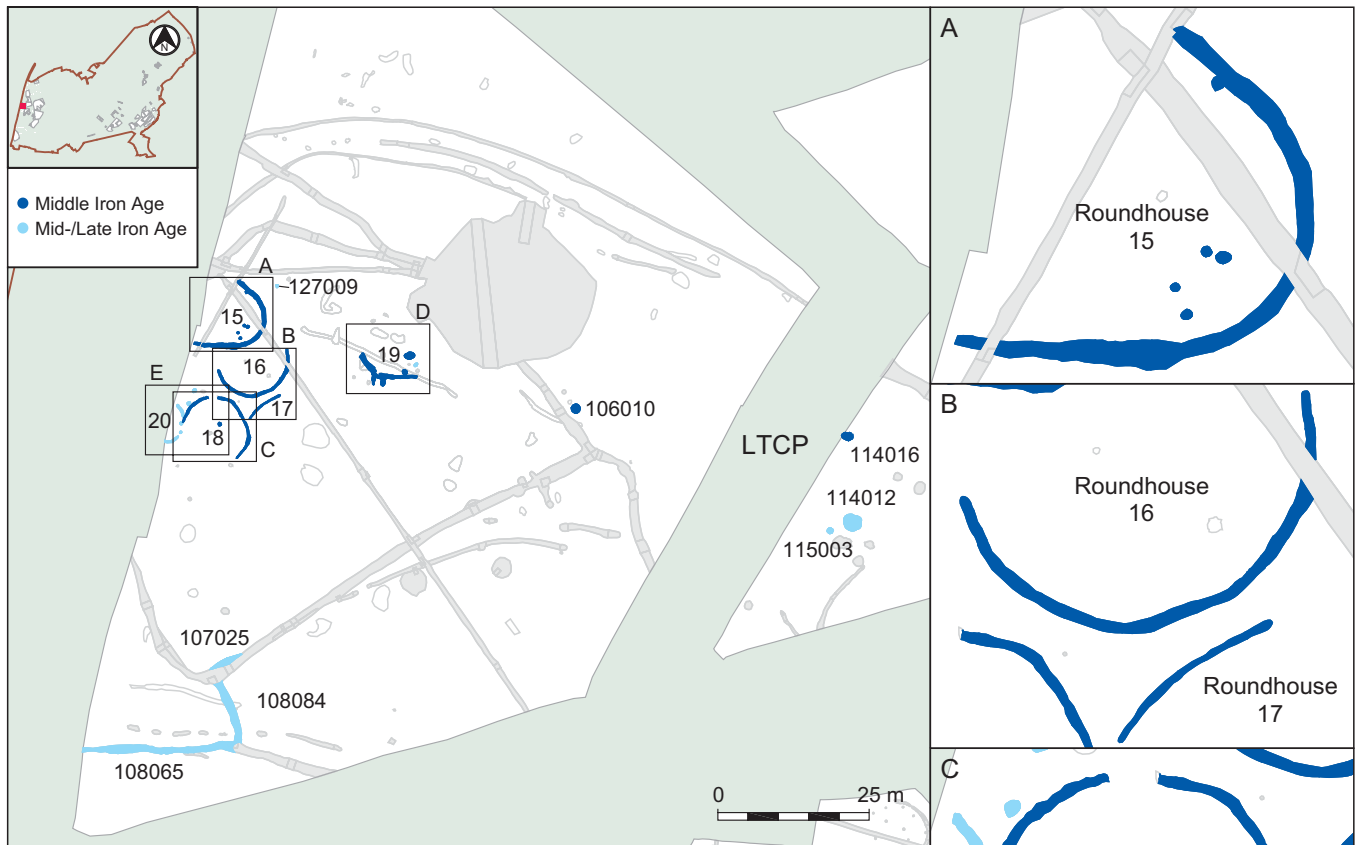


Figure 5.5: Middle and Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery distributions by weight (g)



The LTCP site

A more substantial settlement was excavated at the western end of the LTCP site (Fig. 5.6, Plate 5.2). It is unclear why this site was settled in the Middle Iron Age as no evidence for Early Iron Age activity was recovered although dispersed Bronze Age occupation was identified on the site (see Chapter 4), suggesting that the location was favourable. It is possible that the community simply moved away, choosing to re-settle in the Middle Iron Age.

Settlement activity is represented by roundhouses, consisting of shallow ring gullies, with little evidence for structural postholes. These clustered together at the western edge of the site, and were clearly not all contemporaneous. All were associated with the sandy-tempered Middle Iron Age wares, and fragments of a clay slab or 'Belgic' brick came from pit 109011 (Jones, CD Chapter 21). The characteristics of the roundhouses are summarised in Table 5.1. Construction techniques were similar to the Bronze Age houses discussed in Chapter 4, consisting of ring gullies with

post-built houses inside. Evidence for door posts and porches was identified; there appeared to be a greater diversity of door orientation than previously although the alignment in several houses could not be determined (Table 5.1). Some rebuilding or remodelling of houses seems to have occurred. The gully and porch of roundhouse 15 were probably not contemporary or were remodelled at some stage and the gully around roundhouse 19 was also redug (Fig. 5.6).

The position of this small group of roundhouses on the edge of the excavated area with only a few features identified to the east may indicate that the main focus of the settlement lay further west. Roundhouse 20 was added to the settlement in the Mid-/Late Iron Age. It was similar in form to the earlier houses but at 7 m diameter it was considerably smaller (Table 5.1). Two postholes to the north, 130001 and 130003, may have formed part of an associated structure or fenceline. A few pits (114012, 115003 and 122006) and a series of shallow ditches (107025, 108065 and 108084) were also dug at this time (Fig. 5.6). The ditches may have formed

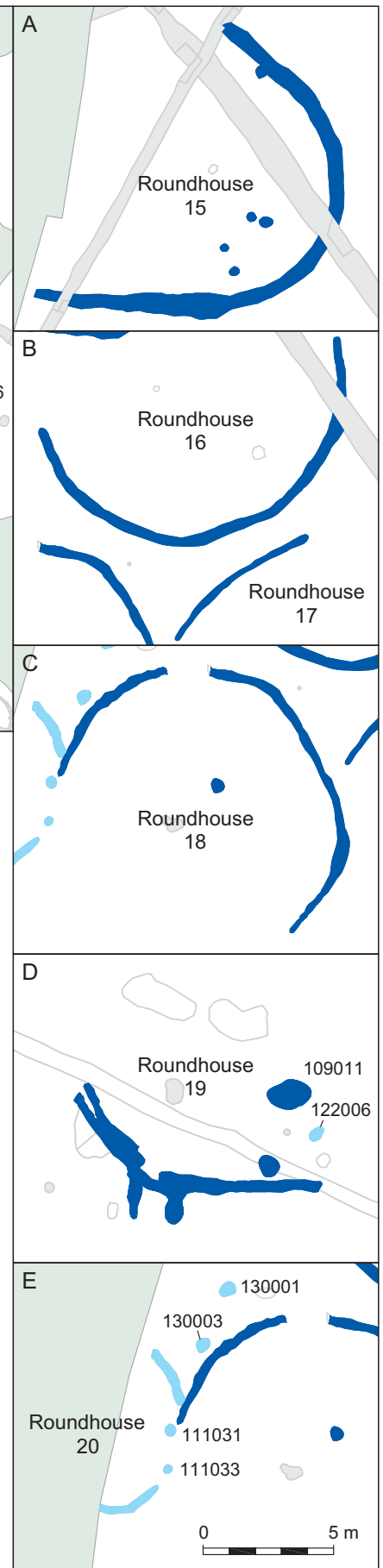


Figure 5.6: Middle Iron Age settlement

part of an enclosure; few finds were recovered but included some pottery, animal bone and fired clay.

Further east Mid-/Late Iron Age activity was identified on the eastern half of the LTCP site. Here, a series of stratigraphically early features was associated with grog-tempered pottery (Fig. 5.7). A number of these were substantial linear boundaries, the earliest of which was ditch 109136. This poorly-dated ditch was aligned north-west to south-east. No finds were recovered from the three interventions excavated, and it is dated on stratigraphic grounds alone. It was fully silted when cut by a ditch 150053/109145, which was aligned roughly north-south, and probably formed part of a boundary complex excavated on the CIS and SCS sites by the Stansted Project (see below).

Ditch 109145 was redug in the Late Iron Age, but the earlier cut and truncated fills could be seen in some interventions (notably intervention 132006). The northern continuation of the boundary (150053) was not redug in the Late Iron Age, but silted naturally and contained quantities of Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery. After silting, it was cut by a short stretch of ditch 150071.

A trackway aligned WNW-ESE was also contemporary. The northern side was defined by a segmented gully (102100, 102102, 102104, 109151 and 121117). The southern gully (102096) was much less extensive, and defined a central track 8 m wide. These gullies were probably supplemented by banks

and hedges, which may have extended the southern boundary further to allow movement across the major north-south boundary. A similar trackway was excavated on the CIS and SCS sites (Havis and Brooks 2004) (Fig. 5.7).

One deposit of particular note came from the shallow gully (102096) forming the southern extent of this trackway. A charcoal-rich deposit close to the base of intervention 114056 contained the remains of a burnt timber buried in close association with three broken pots (including a jar and a bowl) and a number of animal bones, including cattle mandibles. This seems to have been a deliberately placed deposit.

Six contemporaneous features were excavated – pit 136129, pit/waterhole 140064, a tree-throw (143044), a ditch (112101) and two postholes (102001 and 139028). These were scattered across the site (Fig. 5.7). Feature 140064 was a deep pit, possibly a waterhole, and had a complex sequence of fills although only a small quantity of pottery was recovered from it. Pit 136129 and tree-throw 143044 lay close to the western end of the driveway. A pot containing a charcoal-rich deposit was recovered on the base of the former, together with a spindlewhorl. The pot was not complete at the time of deposition, as many base and rim sherds are missing. Accompanying these were eight sherds from a second vessel. The deposit was sealed with a layer of burnt material containing a burnished body sherd and a fragment of a plain upright rim of a third vessel (Leivers,



Plate 5.2: Recording a Middle Iron Age roundhouse

CD Chapter 17). Tree-throw 143044 was poorly-dated and ditch segment 112101 and posthole 139028 were dated on stratigraphic grounds alone. Posthole 102001 contained a number of sherds of Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery.

The absence of rubbish pits and other discrete features associated with the settlement meant that only small quantities of finds were recovered, including Middle Iron Age and Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery. From the distribution of the pottery (Fig. 5.8), it is clear that there is a spatial separation of the ceramics, the Middle Iron Age pottery largely focused on the settlement at the western part of the site, whilst the Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery predominantly came from the boundary ditches, trackway and features to the east. Small

Framework Archaeology	Date	Internal diameter of gully (m)	Structural postholes?	Hearth	Doorway alignment
Roundhouse 14	Middle/Late Iron Age	13	None	Yes	?South-east
Roundhouse 15	Middle Iron Age	12+	Probable porch	None	South-east
Roundhouse 16	Middle Iron Age	11.5	None	None	Unknown
Roundhouse 17	Middle Iron Age	Uncertain	None	None	Unknown
Roundhouse 18	Middle Iron Age	11	?One possible	None	?North
Roundhouse 19	Middle Iron Age	Uncertain	Porch structure	None	South
Roundhouse 20	Middle/Late Iron Age	?7	Door posts	Uncertain	East
Roundhouse 21	Middle Iron Age	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Unknown
Roundhouse 22	Middle Iron Age	?10	None	None	?East
Roundhouse 23	Middle/Late Iron Age	11.4	None	Yes	?South-east
Stansted Project					
CIS site	Middle Iron Age	15	One posthole	None	North-west
LBS site	Middle Iron Age	7	One central posthole	None	Unknown

Table 5.1: Middle Iron Age and Mid-/Late Iron Age roundhouses



Figure 5.7: Mid-/Late Iron Age activity on the eastern half of the LTCP site

quantities of the latter also occurred in areas of Late Iron Age settlement and activity, indicating that there was obviously some overlap between these fabrics and those of the Late Iron Age.

Small assemblages of animal bone were recovered from both Middle and Mid-/Late Iron Age features including cattle, pig and sheep/goat, with small quantities of deer, dog and horse. Other finds from these features included residual struck flints, burnt unworked flints, and fragments of fired clay.

The Stansted Project excavations

A Middle Iron Age settlement within a palisaded enclosure and boundary complex was revealed to the south of the LTCP site (on the CIS, CPS and SCS sites – see Fig. 5.7). Three structures were identified within the palisaded enclosure (Havis and Brooks 2004, 24–33).

The enclosure was accessed through a gateway on the northern side associated with a post-built gate structure. Within this enclosure lay a single roundhouse of gully construction with a north-westerly facing entrance. A second curving gully may have represented a later rebuild of the same structure or an internal division. As with the roundhouses on both the M11 and LTCP sites, there was little evidence for structural postholes associated with this building. The remaining buildings within the enclosure comprised two four-post structures, both ≈ 3 m square. There were few other features within the enclosure, apart from a small number of postholes and two ‘fire pits’.

The enclosure lay to the west of a substantial north–south boundary, probably a continuation of that excavated on the LTCP site to the north. A substantial trackway aligned west–east was traced for 120 m. This was similar in form to that excavated on the LTCP site, with a central track 9 m wide, defined by segmented gullies. The line of this trackway was revealed further to the west in the CIS excavations (Figs 5.2, 5.7) and at the southern end of the LTCP excavations (see Chapter 6, Fig. 6.2).

To the north-west of the junction between the trackway and the north-south boundary lay a second smaller, enclosure. It was less regular in form, and its function is unclear. Further to the north, two other ditches were excavated, roughly parallel to the main boundary. These may relate to the boundary or possibly remodelling of this feature. Many of these features remained open and visible into the Late Iron Age.

Much of the activity on the CIS, CPS and SCS sites is associated with the classic sandy-tempered Middle Iron Age fabrics which have been identified both on the M11 and LTCP sites. The animal bone recovered from the settlement included cattle, pig, sheep/goat and horse, red deer and dog. There was sufficient material to suggest that cattle were the dominant species in the Early/Middle Iron Age, but that sheep/goat were more common in the Middle Iron Age (Hutton 2004a, 54-57).

Middle Iron Age settlement on the south-eastern edge of the plateau

The sites on the south-eastern side of the plateau – the NP and LBS sites (Stansted Project) – provided further evidence for Middle Iron Age activity. Mid-/Late Iron Age activity was also identified on the MTCP and SG sites.

The NP site

The small-scale excavations on the NP site revealed further evidence for Middle Iron Age activity on the plateau itself. This took the form of two curvilinear gullies, probably belonging to roundhouses (roundhouses 21-22), two ditches, a pit and a tree-throw (Fig. 5.9). As with the other settlements identified there were very few peripheral features. Pit 508021 lay just to the north-east of roundhouse 22. It was filled with charcoal, animal bone and pottery, presumably from the settlement. Middle Iron Age finds were also recovered from tree-throw 508013 and ditches 509001 and 509003 (Fig. 5.9).



Figure 5.8: Middle and Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery distributions by weight (g) on the LTCP site

The LBS site

Middle Iron Age features were excavated on the LBS site (Fig. 5.9), 370 m south-east of the NP site. These comprised a ring gully defining a roundhouse, 7 m in diameter, associated with three boundary ditches and a series of small pits or postholes. Very little cultural material was associated with this settlement (Havis and Brooks 2004, 30).

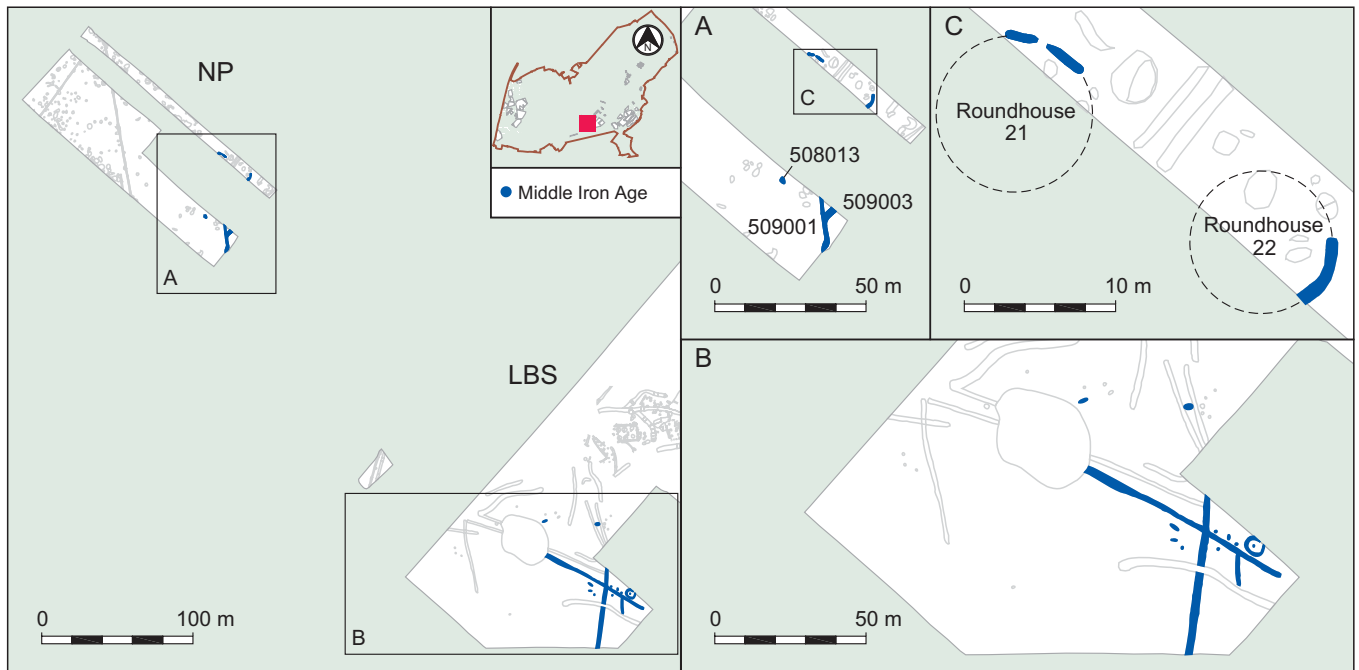
The MTCP site

The earliest phase of the Late Iron Age settlement on the MTCP site is associated with the grog-tempered Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery (Fig. 5.10). Settlement evidence is slight, with a single incomplete penannular gully (310134, 349186, 367012), from a roundhouse

(roundhouse 23) and a short stretch of ditch. A hearth (367018) was located inside the roundhouse. The only other feature of this date is a short stretch of ditch (344108) to the north-west of roundhouse 23. It is poorly-dated, but probably relates to the use of the roundhouse although its purpose is unclear. The Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery from the MTCP site came largely from later features – including Late Iron Age ditch 323025, which contained 59 sherds including five crucible fragments.

The SG site

A single pit (504011) on the SG site could be dated with confidence to the Mid-/Late Iron Age (Fig. 5.10). The deposits at the base of this pit appeared to represent dumped material possibly of domestic waste



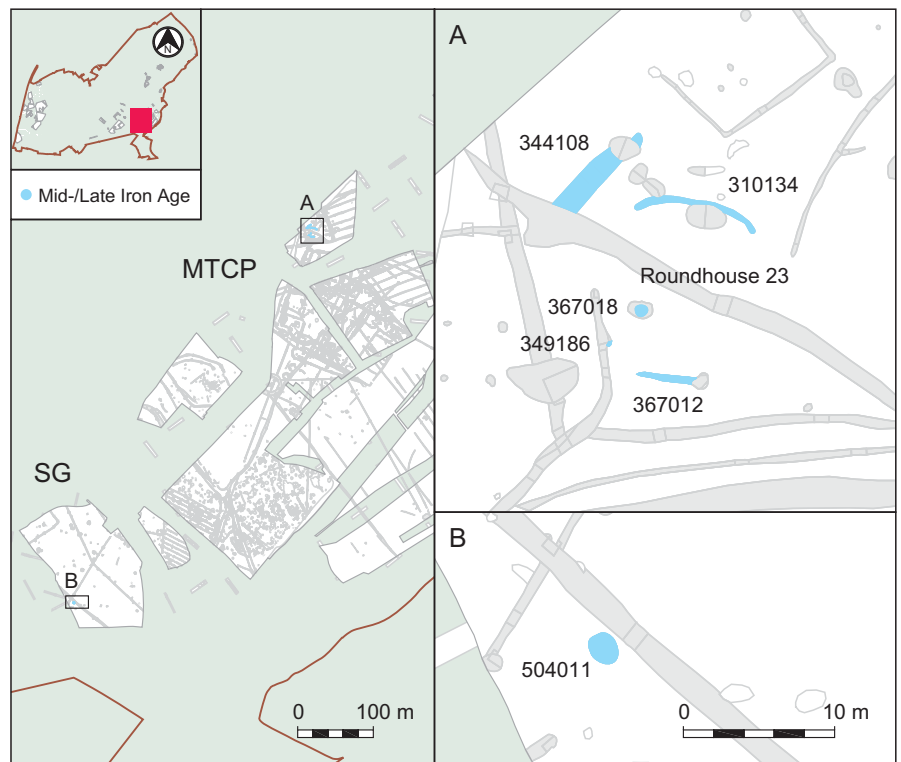
Top:
Figure 5.9: Middle Iron Age settlement

Right:
Figure 5.10: Mid-/Late Iron Age settlement

or from a midden and included at least five vessels, including rim and body sherds from a large coarse Scored Ware jar of 4th century BC date and characteristic of the East Midlands, were recovered (Leivers, CD Chapter 17).

Settlement and landscape change in the Middle Iron Age

The Middle Iron Age represents the first opportunity to look at a coherent settlement pattern within the Stansted landscape since the Late Bronze Age. Here, the pattern is one of small – possibly familial – settlements distributed within an increasingly enclosed landscape. Whilst there is no evidence to indicate that all of the settlements excavated were in use contemporaneously, some show evidence for continuity of settlement that extends across the transition between the grog-tempered pottery of the Middle Iron Age and the grog-tempered fabrics of the Mid-/Late Iron Age. Indeed, three of the foci of Middle or Mid-/Late Iron Age settlement saw continued activity in the Late Iron Age.



The increasing importance of landscape division and enclosure in the Middle and Mid-/Late Iron Age associated with these settlements is also significant. The pattern of enclosure on the western side of the plateau suggests the division of the landscape into large blocks. There is no evidence for the sub-division of these into fields, but the provision of trackways indicates a need to facilitate movement, probably of both people and animals, through the landscape. A number of

similar major boundaries and driveway complexes have been identified in the Late Iron Age landscape, and it is entirely possible that these originated in the Mid-/Late Iron Age, or even the Middle Iron Age. Many of these were dug along the edge of the plateau separating it from the valleys and slopes. The trackways on the other hand appear designed to allow access to the plateau whilst controlling movement through the slopes and in and around the settlements and valley sides.

These settlements housed small farming communities. The preference seems to have been for unenclosed settlement, with only the settlement on the CIS site being completely enclosed. Although there is little other evidence for any social differentiation between the inhabitants of these settlements in terms of settlement size, structures and material culture, the enclosure of this settlement within a gated palisade might represent an explicit statement of status. Equally, as the only settlement excavated directly adjacent to a trackway, perhaps this was the only settlement likely to suffer repeatedly from the privations of straying animals.

Many of the settlements appear to comprise single or paired roundhouse structures, occasionally associated with four-post structures. Where there is evidence for more than two structures, for example, on the LTCP site, it is likely that more than one phase of activity is represented. Structural evidence for the roundhouses is limited but construction methods do not seem to have changed substantially from the Middle Bronze Age. Few houses had internal structures such as hearths. The gullies encircling most of the roundhouses are likely to have served a drainage function on the heavy clay soils (*cf* Drury 1978).

The characteristics of the Middle and Mid/Late Iron Age roundhouses from all of the excavations are summarised in Table 5.1. The majority range in internal diameter from 10 m to 15 m, with only two outside this range. None of the excavated examples have convincing evidence for structural postholes apart from door or porch posts, even where other shallow features such as hearths survive. The architecture of these roundhouses does not seem to require the use of posts set in deep postholes (with the exception of some door posts), but probably combined mass walls with a timber framework which supported the weight of the roof without the need for deep postholes to anchor it.

The alignment of many of these roundhouses is not always clear, although the majority are probably aligned east

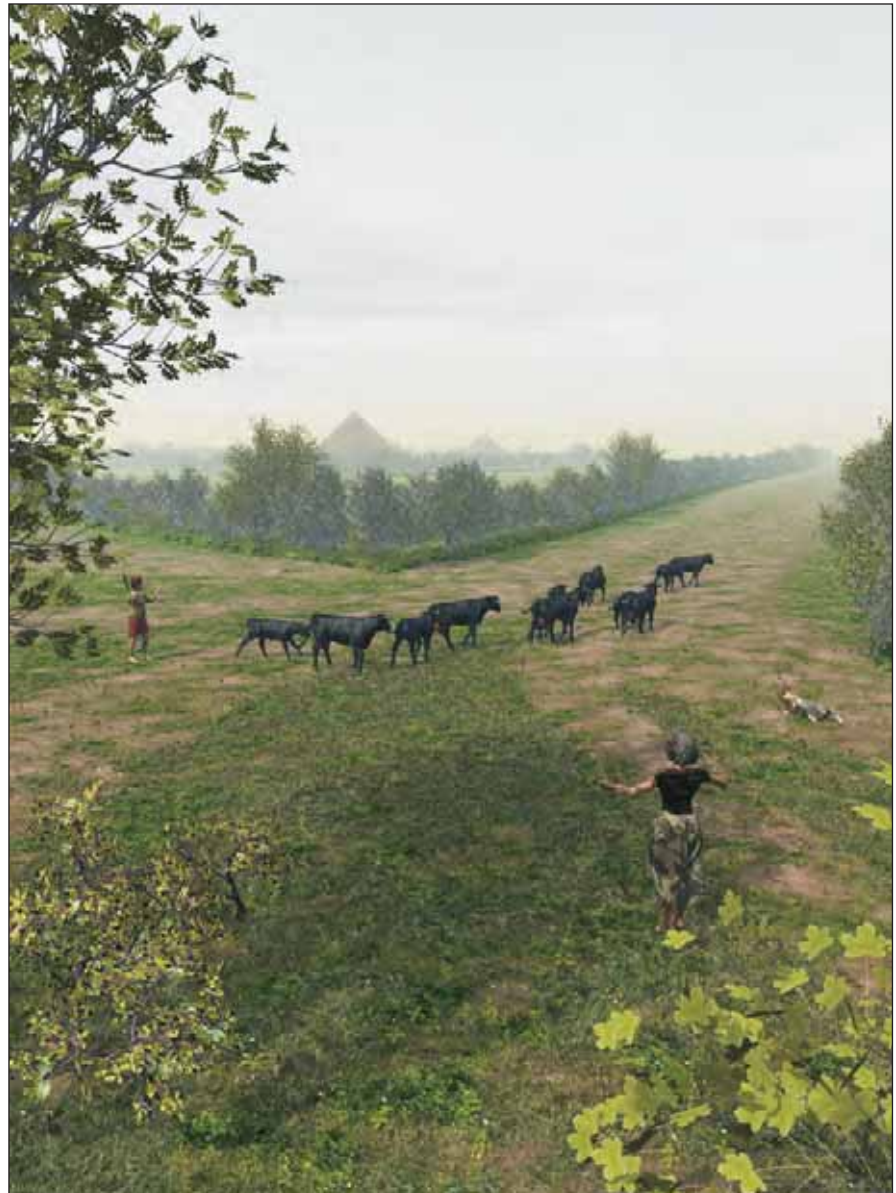


Figure 5.11: A reconstruction of Middle Iron Age farming – animals being herded down the trackway on SCS site

or south-east (Table 5.1). This pattern is common elsewhere in lowland Britain. This would have ensured direct sunshine entering the structure for the longest portion of the day, and may also have had cosmological importance (Fitzpatrick 1997a; Oswald 1997).

The small quantities of material recovered from each of these settlements can only provide limited information about the day to day lifestyles of the inhabitants. The pottery recovered represents utilitarian wares, mostly representing material broken and lost during routine use. Only two examples of pottery being used in placed deposits were found. The burial of the whole pot containing charcoal-rich

material accompanied by a spindle-whorl in pit 136129 has close parallels in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age placed deposits on the M11 site (see above). A second placed deposit came from gully 102096 (intervention 114056). It comprised at least three broken pots, including a jar and a bowl, buried with a dump of disarticulated animal bone (cattle mandibles, sheep/goat, pig and frog/toad bones) and a burnt timber. From these, it is clear pottery continued to play an important role in acts of deposition in the Middle and Mid-/Late Iron Age.

Where the Middle Iron Age animal bone could be quantified, it appeared to be dominated by cattle and sheep/

goat. Pig also formed a substantial proportion of the animal bone found. Smaller quantities of horse and dog bone were present, whilst the small amount of deer bone probably represents animals hunted in nearby woodland. A similar pattern was recorded from the Stansted Project excavations, where the main domestic species were cattle, sheep/goat, pig and horse, with cattle dominant in the Early/Middle Iron Age and sheep/goat in the Middle Iron Age (Hutton 2004a). Small quantities of dog and deer were also found. Animals seem to have been central to the inhabitants of these settlements. The trackways associated with the boundaries on the edge of the plateau may have been built to allow animals to be driven up to the plateau to forage, or down to sources of water, whilst keeping them off land used for crops, or pasturing other animals.

Crops may not have formed an important part of the agricultural economy. Charred plant remains from Middle Iron Age contexts on the CIS site included very small amounts of emmer wheat, spelt and some barley, whilst the absence of evidence for crop processing suggests that these assemblages represented final processing of material for consumption rather than immediate arable farming (Murphy 2004d, 68). A few poorly dated rubbing stones for use in conjunction with saddle querns were recovered from the SCS, CIS and CPS sites (Major 2004a, 34). A further four such rubbing stones were recovered from the Framework Archaeology excavations (Shaffrey, CD Chapter 25). In the light of this, the evidence suggests that animal husbandry was at the core of the agricultural activity of these plateau edge settlements, with crops being brought on to these sites after partial processing for domestic use.

Woodland continued to form a significant element in the landscape, utilised for the opportunities it allowed for fuel, food and foraging for both cattle and pigs. Quite a wide range of species were used for fuel (Gale, CD Chapter 35). This diversity may indicate that both mixed woodland and hedgerows were used as fuel sources.

Whilst the recovery of animal bone, charred plant remains and charcoal can be used to reconstruct the basic elements of the economy and landscape, we have little evidence for a social context. The organisation of the landscape and distribution of settlements hint at a higher level of organisation than previously seen from the Middle and Late Bronze Age settlements. The modest size of the Middle Iron Age settlements suggests that they housed small family units, but the wider landscape organisation, including the construction of the extensive boundary and driveway complexes, may have been co-ordinated by an authority figure such as a tribal or religious leader. None of the settlements excavated to date hint at any degree of differential status, although the settlement on the CIS and CPS site was enclosed by a palisade. The absence of any funerary deposits and limited evidence for other structured deposits prohibits interpretation of wider ritual aspects of life.

In a local context these settlements can be paralleled with sites excavated along the A120 (Powell and Biddulph 2007, 73–80) and within Essex (eg Mucking, Little Waltham, Wendens Ambo (Going 1993, 19; Drury 1978; Hodder 1982; Sealey 1996)). Both enclosed and unenclosed settlements were identified along the A120, many of which share similar characteristics to the Stansted sites. Structural evidence in the form of roundhouses and four-post structures were also revealed (Powell and Biddulph 2007, 74–75). Limited artefactual and environmental material was recovered but the evidence points to small agricultural settlements (Powell and Biddulph 2007, 73).

In this chapter we have described how, from 400 BC onwards, occupation and settlement of the Stansted landscape increased in intensity to levels that had not been seen since the end of the Middle Bronze Age (c1000 BC). Most importantly, the small settlements of the Middle Iron Age are accompanied by the first indications of landscape division by boundaries and trackways. As discussed in Chapter 4, in other regions of Britain (such as the Thames Valley or the Fen edge) this sub-

division occurs at the start of the Middle Bronze Age from c 1700 cal BC onwards. At Heathrow, in the Thames Valley, it has been suggested that the Middle Bronze Age division of the landscape was the product of the fragmentation of a large community into individual family groups, each of which demarcated their landholdings with boundary ditches (Framework Archaeology 2006, 105–8). However, at Stansted, we believe a different historical process lies behind the first division of the landscape in the Middle Iron Age. Although the boundaries and trackways divide the landscape up into large blocks, they also start the process of linking together the scattered settlements into a larger community and landscape entity. Evidence for this interpretation is slim, but it is worth noting that the settlements and mixed agricultural system of the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age appear to have functioned perfectly adequately without boundaries in an open landscape. Furthermore, once the first boundaries do appear in the Middle Iron Age, the blocks of land they define are not repeatedly sub-divided into smaller fields, as occurs in other areas during the Bronze Age. This may be explained by the particular agricultural regime of the area at the time, but it also suggests that the main trackways and boundaries were to order the landscape on a much larger and longer distance scale. Thus the origins of the landscape division from 400 BC onwards may mark a shift away from the social system of the previous 1000 years, which consisted of individual settlements within an open landscape, occupied by people who negotiated access to land and resources and did not require formal boundaries. In its place, we may be witnessing start of the first large scale organisation of the Essex clay lands into a much larger and cohesive social and political grouping.

In the following chapter we will see how this process of landscape division intensified during the Late Iron Age and lasted well into the Romano-British period; a time when we know of the existence of large, powerful tribal groupings in this region.



CHAPTER 6

Hierarchy in the Landscape
(c 100 BC–AD 60)

by Nicholas Cooke

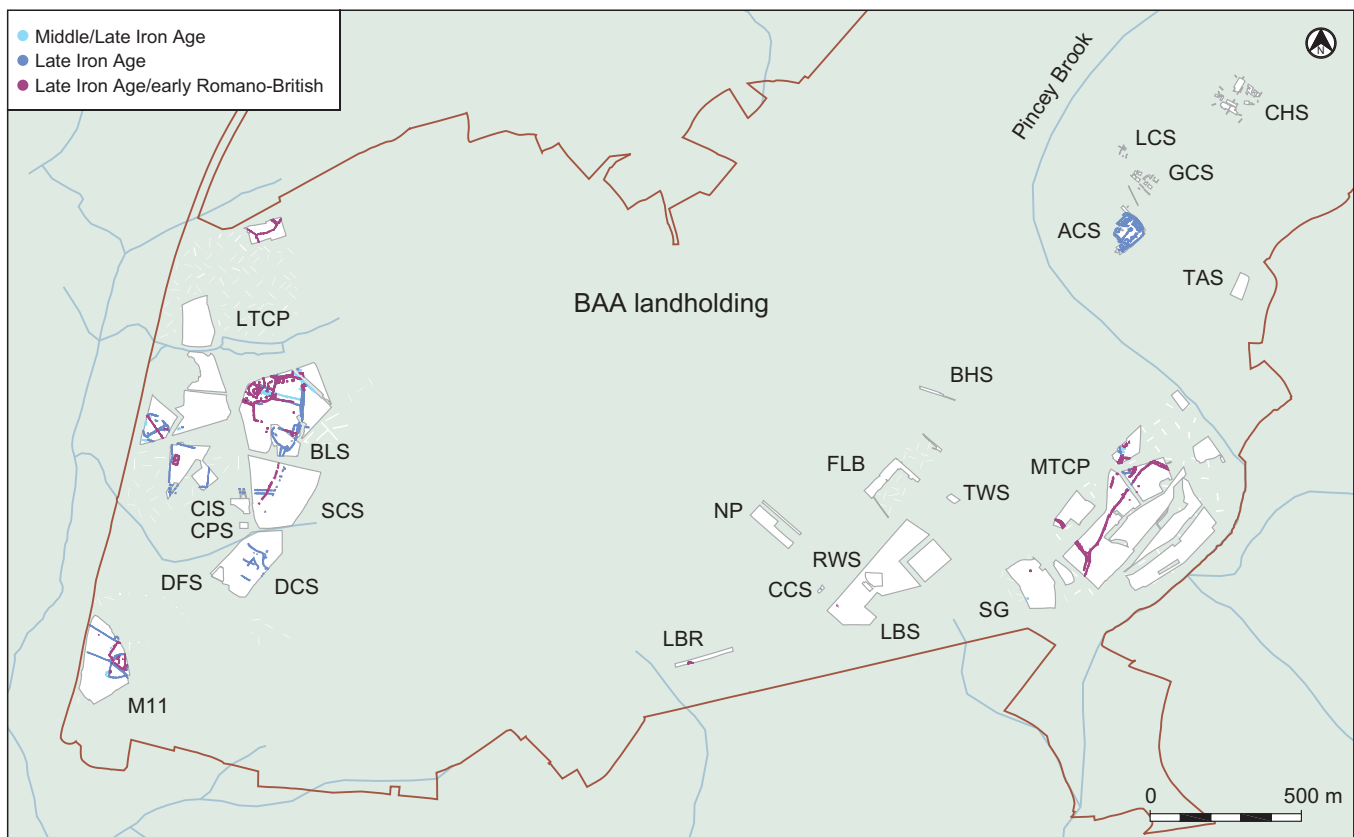


Figure 6.1: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British

Introduction

Major changes in land use occurred in the Late Iron Age (*c* 100 BC – *c* AD 60), probably associated with the adoption of a more mixed agricultural system. Four major foci of settlement dating to this period were excavated together with associated enclosures, mortuary enclosures, fields and an oval enclosure (Fig. 6.1). Emphasis seems to have been placed on defining the landscape and space in which people lived with physical boundaries in the form of ditches and banks (probably topped by hedges). As well as defining settlement space, these features were used to define and control access to certain areas of land for agricultural use and may also have had a symbolic function. Large fields were created on the LTCP site incorporating trackways for moving stock around the landscape, whilst major landscape divisions of this date were excavated on all of the sites. The trackways incorporated into these boundary systems highlight the continued importance of movement through the landscape.

Evidence for Late Iron Age to Early Romano-British settlements was identified across the Stansted landscape (Fig. 6.1), with concentrations of activity on the eastern and western sides of the airport. This may however be due in part to the location of the excavation areas and it is acknowledged that there are sample biases. Some of these settlements developed out of earlier ones: the Middle Iron Age settlement on the LTCP site was enclosed by a boundary ditch, whilst the settlements on the M11 and MTCP sites both shifted slightly in the Late Iron Age. All of these settlements are a similar form, with roundhouses, other structures and features set within irregular enclosures. These settlements were associated with the system of boundaries, fields and trackways.

In this chapter several themes will be examined: settlement and status, enclosing the landscape, burial practices and acts of deposition. The evidence from the various excavations will be presented together with a discussion of these themes. The status of the settlements will be examined by

looking at the layout and composition of these settlements together with artefactual and environmental evidence. Information from the burial record is of particular pertinence here although there are problems associated with inferring status from burials. We will look at how the landscape was divided and what caused the change from the Middle Iron Age where only relatively limited evidence for landscape division was found (see Chapter 5). Burial practices and formal acts of deposition will also be examined.

Chronology

One of the main problems faced in analysing these settlements is chronological. The sandy-tempered pots of the Middle Iron Age were superseded by grog-tempered fabrics, a change which broadly marks the beginning of the Late Iron Age. The picture at Stansted is confused, as in much of the region, by the adoption of wheel-thrown pottery forms prior to the Roman conquest (Sealey 1996, 55–7). Some of these are non-local imports, usually from continental

Europe, whilst others are local fabrics and forms, using imported technology. The manufacture and use of these pots pre-dates the Roman invasion, and continued in use after the conquest. Although providing a precise chronology for their use is problematic, these pots were probably in use at Stansted between *c* 20 BC and *c* AD 70 (see [Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18](#)). Towards the end of this phase, their use is supplemented by the gradual adoption of 'Roman' forms of pottery, both imported and manufactured within Britain. Unfortunately only small quantities of dated metalwork and coins were recovered, and pottery forms the main source of dating in this period.

Using a combination of pottery data and the stratigraphic sequence three phases of activity have been identified covering the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. The first of these, the Late Iron Age, comprises stratigraphically early features, some of which contain early grog-tempered wares. The fills of these features often contain the wheel-thrown grog-tempered pottery characteristic of the succeeding period. Features in this phase were probably created between the turn of the 1st century BC and *c* 20 BC. The second phase of activity, the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British transition is closely tied in with the use of the wheel-thrown and grog-tempered fabric of the same date. Features in this group were probably dug between 20 BC and AD 50/60. Few of these contain diagnostically early Roman forms of pottery, except in their upper (disuse) fills. The final phase, the early Romano-British period, largely comprises stratigraphically later features and those containing early Roman pottery forms and fabrics. Features in this phase may date from *c* AD 50/60 until early in the 2nd century, perhaps as late as AD 120. Inevitably, this represents an over-simplification of the likely sequence. However, the broad phasing is likely to be correct on stratigraphic grounds alone, and where such judgements can be made, is supported by the dating evidence.

Hierarchy and change

The following section examines the evidence for settlement from the individual sites (principally MTCP, LTCP (eastern and western settlements and oval enclosure), M11 and ACS), and explores how the landscape was divided up in the Late Iron Age and early Romano-British period. It can be seen that some of the settlements developed from existing Middle Iron Age ones although some slight shift has been noted in some cases. Other new settlements were established and new boundaries were created. Reworking of existing boundaries, perhaps to re-emphasise social or political allegiances was also undertaken. Artefactual evidence suggests most of these settlements were relatively low status agricultural communities depending on the local resources. There is limited evidence for the importation of goods other than on the ACS site, which in many ways stands out as being different to the other settlements at Stansted. Certain strands of evidence do point to a slightly more complex situation, for example some of the pottery vessels in some of the cremation burials have been found elsewhere in high status burials (see below).

Enclosure and settlement

The system of Late Iron Age boundaries and enclosures developed out of that established in the Mid-/Late Iron Age, but was more complex, incorporating both existing and new settlements (Fig. 6.1). Many elements of the Late Iron Age boundary system were also reworked in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British transitional phase. In the light of this, and the chronological blurring of these periods, it is easiest to see all of these changes as part of a developing pattern of enclosure *c* 100 BC– *c* AD 50/60.

The main areas of settlement and activity lie to the west and east of the plateau, with very little on the plateau itself although this may simply be the result of the location of the excavation areas. To the west, a major boundary system was identified along the edge of the plateau. This appears to mark



Plate 6.1: Late Iron Age enclosure ditch under excavation on the LTCP site

the eastern extent of settlement and enclosed fields. Elsewhere, settlement on the MTCP site was associated with a similar boundary, as indeed the ACS site may also have been.

Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement on the western edge of the plateau

The excavations on the western side of the airport, many of which are virtually contiguous, provide us with the clearest picture of the settlement pattern in this period (Fig. 6.2). Enclosed settlements on the LTCP and M11 sites and a large oval enclosure on the BLS and LTCP sites lay in close proximity, linked by fields and boundary ditches. Small cemeteries have been excavated, associated with settlements and the major linear boundaries.

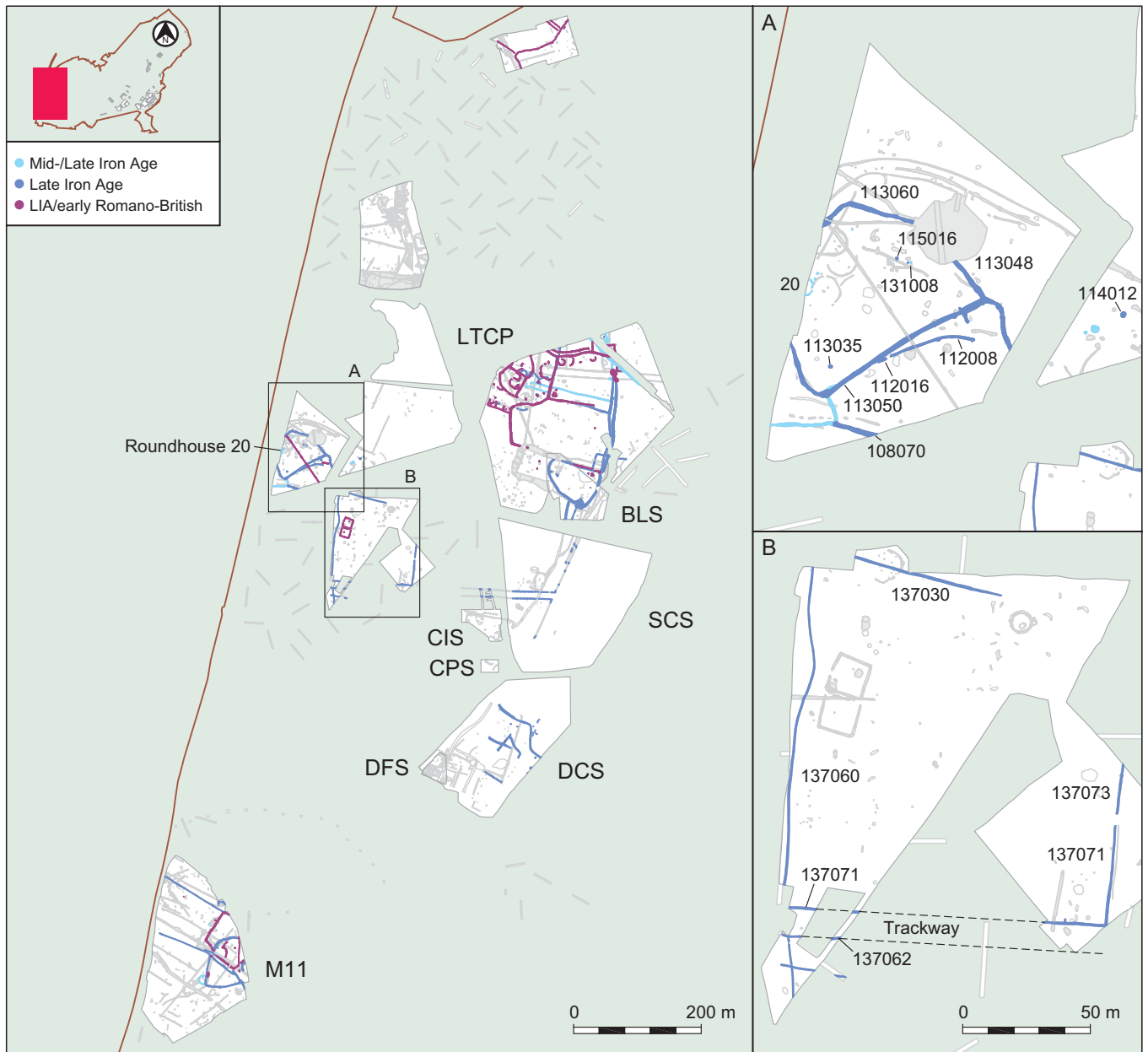


Figure 6.2: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity on the western edge of the plateau

The western settlement on the LTCP site

The unenclosed settlement established in the Middle Iron Age on the western edge of the LTCP site clearly continued to be occupied into the Late Iron Age (Fig. 6.2, Plate 6.1). Roundhouse 20 contained sherds of the grog-tempered Mid-/Late Iron Age pottery. In the Late Iron Age the settlement was enclosed by a roughly trapezoidal enclosure (ditches 113048 and 113060; Fig. 6.2).

The enclosure ditch was fairly substantial with a U-shaped profile. No entrance was evident, although this may have lain in one of the

unexcavated portions of the circuit. The pattern of silting within the ditch suggested that it was augmented by an internal bank. This ditch silted over some time, and incorporated sherds of the wheel-thrown Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, small quantities of briquetage and a clay bead or spindlewhorl (Jones, CD Chapter 21). This probably originated from the settlement, indicating continued occupation into the 1st century AD. Three discrete features within the enclosure (pits 113035 and 115016 and posthole 131008) relate to this occupation, and all three contained pottery. To the east of this enclosure was pit 114012 which also dates to this period of activity.

To the south-east of the settlement enclosure lay a secondary enclosure, bounded by shallower ditches (113048, 108070), and open to the west. An interrupted ditch (112008, 112016 and 113050), appears to be associated with a spur projecting from ditch 113048. It probably represents a late re-alignment of the northern side of the enclosure, possibly to facilitate movement of stock, and may mark the location of a causeway across the enclosure ditch.

Further south-east lay a much larger, almost square enclosure or field (Fig. 6.2). This was bounded by four insubstantial ditches (137030, 137060, 137071 and 137073). To the south there

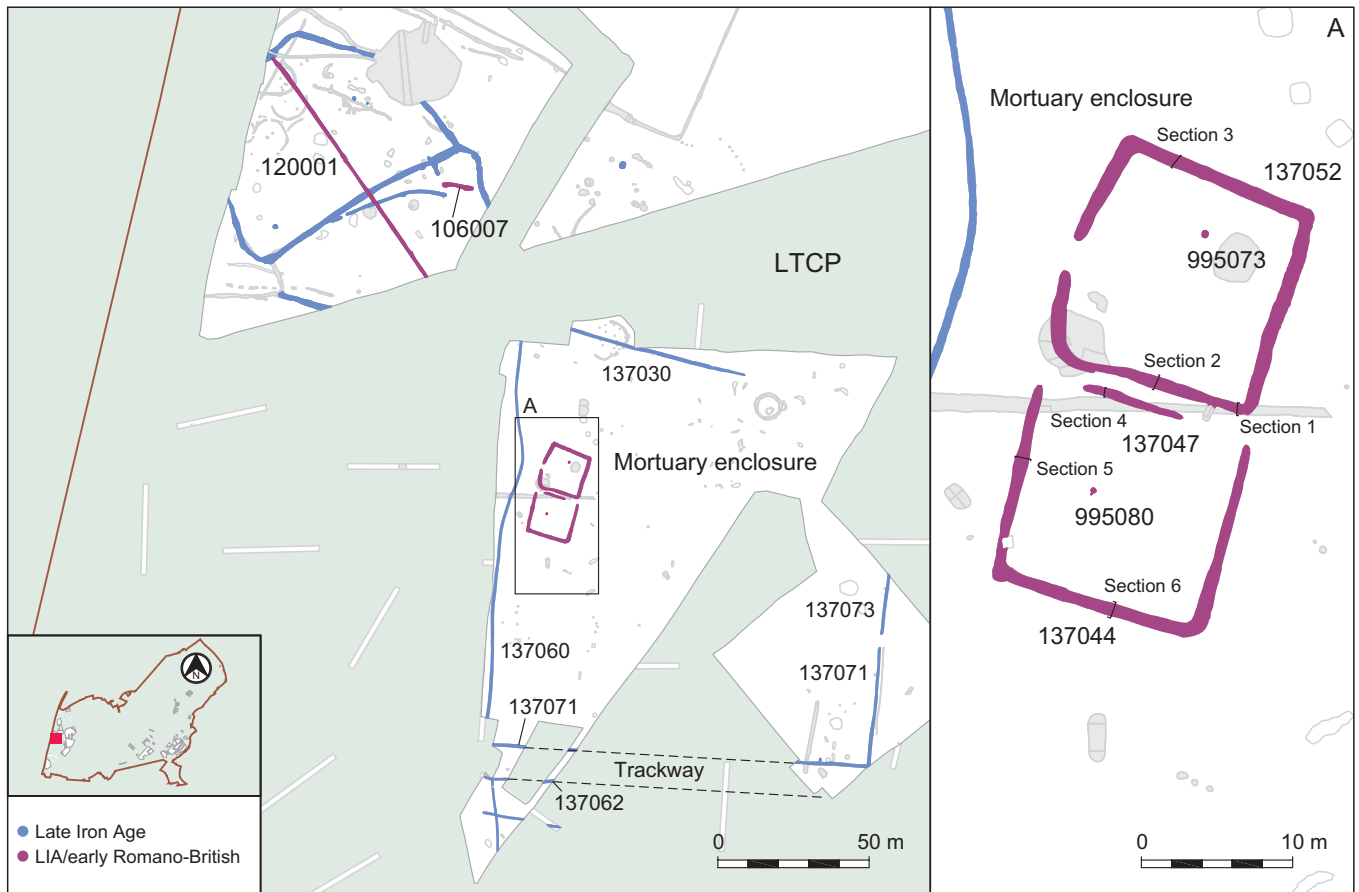


Figure 6.3: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity on the western settlement

was a trackway, 10–11 m wide, formed by ditches 137071 and 137062. This trackway was identified on the earlier SCS excavations to the east (Fig. 6.2). The dating of this trackway is somewhat problematic. The Stansted Project excavations suggested a Middle Iron Age date, largely on stratigraphic grounds, and that it was no longer in use by the Romano-British period (Havis and Brooks 2004, 30). The few finds from the trackway and square enclosure ditches on the LTCP site included small sherds of Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery as well as residual sherds of Neolithic, Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery.

The western settlement on the LTCP site was abandoned towards the end of the period in which the wheel-thrown Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery was in use. Quantities of this pottery were recovered from the ditch fills of the settlement enclosure, as well as from the fills of ditch 120001, dug across the middle of both the settlement

and the secondary enclosures (Fig. 6.3). A fragment of a plain copper alloy bracelet was recovered from the fills of ditch 120001 (Scott, CD Chapter 14). The dearth of early Roman pottery strongly suggests that it was abandoned prior to its widespread adoption in *c* AD 50/60.

Mortuary enclosures

Associated Late Iron Age/early Romano-British features include a short stretch of gully (106007) and a pair of mortuary enclosures in the square field to the south-east (Fig. 6.3, Plate 6.2). It is tempting to link these to the western settlement although they may have served other settlements in the area. They took the form of two enclosures or cells, approximately 13 m square, defined by shallow U-shaped gullies. The northern cell was defined by gully 137052 and appears to have had a north-western entrance. Pottery from the gully suggests that the enclosure ditch remained open into the Romano-British period. A single urned cremation burial was set off

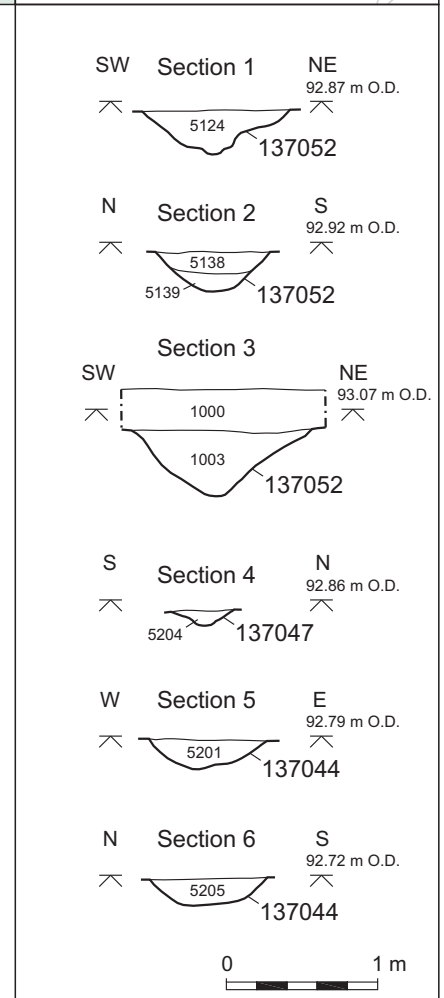




Plate 6.2: The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British mortuary enclosure associated with the western settlement on the LTCP site

centre within this enclosure (995073). The cremated bone of an adult over the age of 35, probably female, was placed along with bone from an unsexed infant or juvenile within a pedestal-based urn, probably made between 20 BC and AD 70. The burial had been disturbed by later ploughing, and some elements of the vessel and burial may have been scattered. The remains of an unburnt pig mandible and teeth were found mixed in with the cremated bone.

The second square enclosure (137044) was located immediately south of

137052 (Fig. 6.3). A short section of ditch had been dug across the open end of this enclosure (137047); it is unclear whether either of the gaps in this circuit was intended as an entrance. A single burial (burial 995080), originally urned, was again set off centre within the enclosure. The cremated remains were that of an adult over the age of 18 (possibly female); a small quantity of burnt unidentified animal bone was also recovered. Similar to mortuary enclosure 137052 the pottery recovered suggests that gully was open into the Romano-British period.

The eastern settlement on the LTCP site

A second Late Iron Age settlement was established further to the east, close to a number of Mid-/Late Iron Age features (Figs 6.2 and 6.4). This settlement was occupied from the Late Iron Age into the late 1st or early 2nd centuries AD, during which time many Late Iron Age features were recut or truncated, and it is difficult to define the exact layout of the settlement. The main area of inhabitation seems to have been a small irregular enclosure (Fig. 6.4) containing a single Late Iron Age roundhouse (roundhouse 24). The eastern and southern sides of this enclosure were formed by ditches 109168 and 109166. These were substantial ditches, in places over 1 m deep, and supplemented by an internal bank. There seems to have been an easterly facing entrance, partially closed by 156003, a shallow ditch which may have been a later addition. The southern limits of the enclosure are uncertain, although they probably followed the same line as the enclosure ditches of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British enclosure (see below). Micromorphological analysis of the fills of ditch 109166 identified phosphate-rich chalky and iron-stained clay slurries indicative of concentrations of animals being kept in the

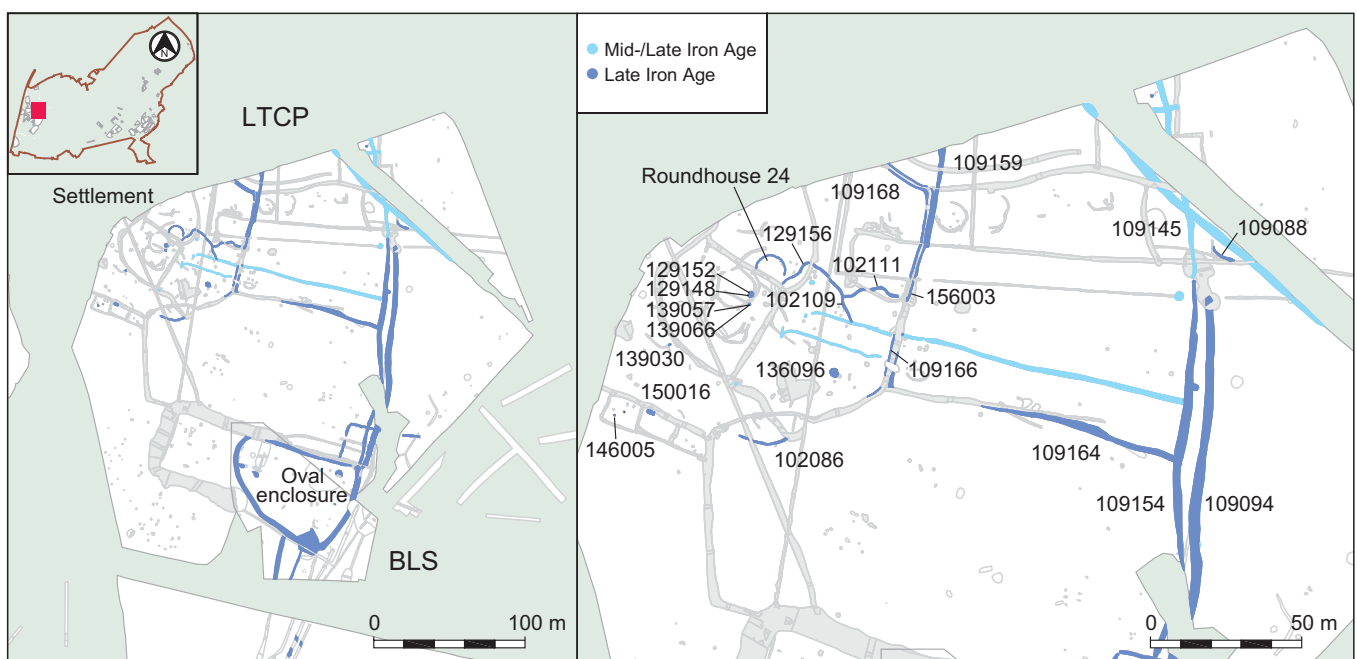


Figure 6.4: Late Iron Age activity on the eastern settlement

vicinity; some *in situ* trampling was also identified (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). Gully 102086 may have been associated with this. Roundhouse 24 was defined by a circular gully (129158, see Table 6.1 for details) although no trace of an internal structure was found.

To the south-west of roundhouse 24 two pits and three Late Iron Age post-holes – 129148, 129152, 139057, 139063 and 139030 were located. To the south, pit 136096 seems to have been used for rubbish. The only other features of note within the enclosure were three shallow meandering gullies – 102109, 102111 and 129156. These drainage features silted slowly and contained small quantities of domestic material.

Fields and enclosures

To the east of this settlement lay a roughly rectangular field (Fig. 6.4), its western edge was formed by the enclosure ditch (109166/156003) and ditch 109159. Ditch 109154 was dug to extend the line of Mid-/Late Iron Age ditch 109145, which may still have

been a feature in the landscape. A second ditch, 109094, roughly parallel to 109154, recut another Mid-/Late Iron Age ditch (132006). These ditches re-emphasised the linear boundary system first established in the Mid-/Late Iron Age, and extended as far south as the large oval enclosure (Fig. 6.4). An earlier trackway (see Chapter 5) seems to have been partly redefined in the Late Iron Age (ditch 109164) and seems to have been associated with this field system. Micromorphological analysis of sediments from this trackway (109089) showed evidence for the movement of animals, being formed by trampling and containing mixed deposits incorporating humic waste and dung (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). Very little evidence was recovered for Late Iron Age activity to the east of this boundary. The only other Late Iron Age feature of note in this area was a shallow curving gully (109088) to the north of ditch 109094, which may have formed part of a ring gully around a building. Further to the north, Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from tree-throw 136165.

The expansion of the eastern settlement

The settlement expansion towards the end of the 1st century AD was associated with the wheel-thrown pottery that characterises the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British transition. The ditches of the enclosed settlement were recut and additional ditches dug, structures were built, a new field was created and a small cemetery within a mortuary enclosure was established (see Fig. 6.5).



Plate 6.3: The LTCP eastern settlement enclosure ditch under excavation

Western settlement LTCP	Date	Diameter of gully (m)	Structural postholes?	Hearth	Doorway alignment
Roundhouse 20	MIA/LIA	?7	Door posts	Uncertain	East
Eastern settlement LTCP					
Roundhouse 24	LIA	9.4	-	-	?South-east
Roundhouse 25	LIA/ERB	?12	-	-	Unknown
Roundhouse 26	LIA/ERB	c 13	-	-	?East
Five post structure	LIA/ERB	c 8.5	Yes	-	Unknown
Roundhouse 27	LIA/ERB	9	-	-	?North-west
Roundhouse 28	LIA/ERB	8	-	-	?South-east
M11					
Roundhouse 30	LIA/ERB	c 11	-	-	Unknown
ACS					
Circular structure 504	LIA	7.8	Yes, including door posts	-	South
Semi-circular structure 522/524	LIA	11.5	Yes	Yes	South
Circular structure 550	LIA	15	Yes, including door posts	-	South-east
Circular structure 734/758	LIA	13	Door posts	-	East
Semi-circular structure 40	LIA	n/a	-	Yes	Unknown
Circular structure 48	LIA	10	One	-	?North-west
Circular structure 21 and 25/486	LIA	11	Yes, including door posts	-	?North-west
Gullies 412, 619, 623 and 665	LIA	n/a	Uncertain	-	Unknown
Semi-circular structure 416/700	LIA	n/a	?one	-	Unknown
Circular structure 426/434	LIA	7.2	Probable door posts	Yes	West
Circular structure 408	LIA	10.8	Probable door posts	-	South-west
Circular structure 52	LIA	10.6	Three	-	Uncertain
Semi-circular structure 228	LIA	n/a	-	-	Uncertain
Semi-circular structure 245	LIA	n/a	-	-	Uncertain
Semi-circular structure 33/484/628	LIA	n/a	Four	-	Uncertain

Table 6.1: Details of phase 1 Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/Romano-British roundhouses

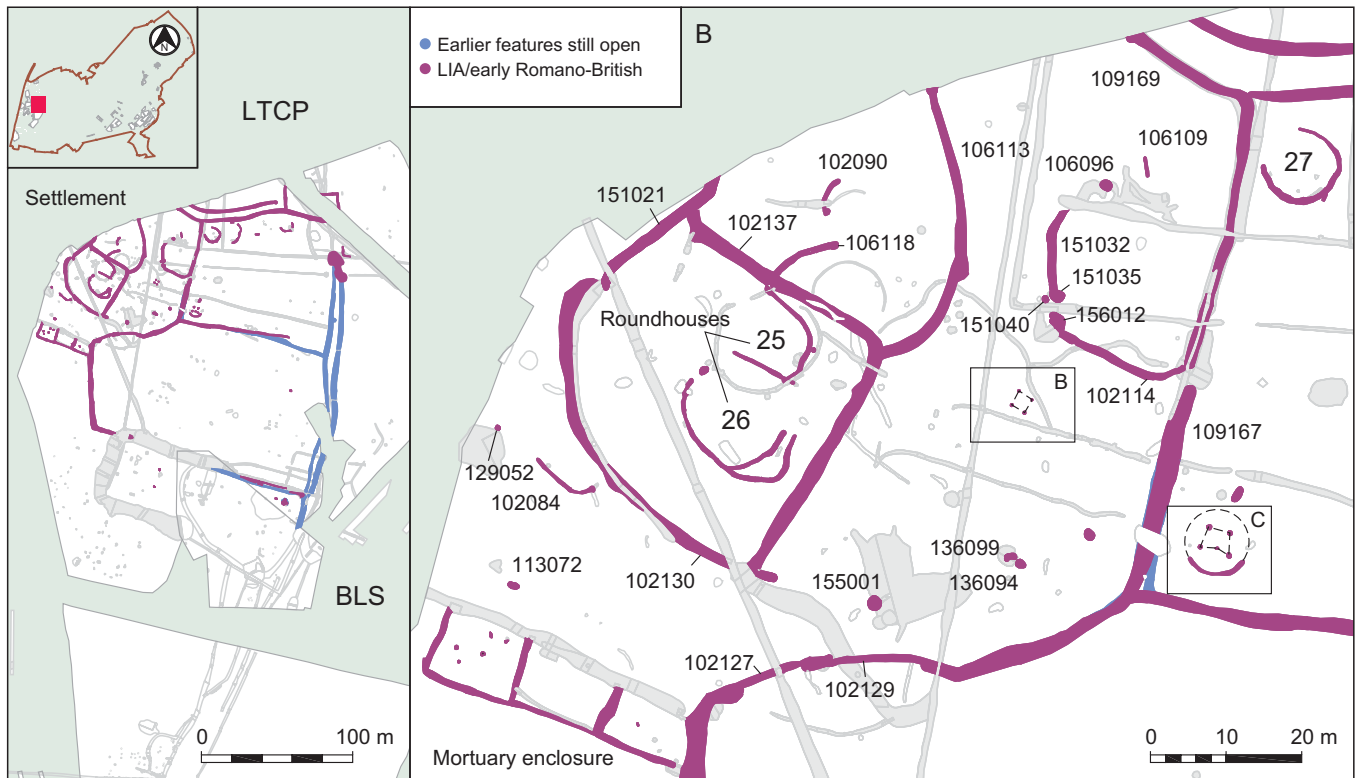


Figure 6.5: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity on the eastern settlement

Age precursor. Within this lay a pair of newly created smaller enclosures (Fig. 6.5, Plate 6.3) which formed the core of the settlement. The southern-most comprised two ditches (102130 and 102137) and was a roughly sub-rectangular enclosure containing two buildings which seem to have been rebuilt a number of times (roundhouse 25 and roundhouse 26). This enclosure probably originally had an entrance to the north-west which was later closed by ditch 151021. Small amounts of domestic debris (pottery, fired clay (including a clay slab or 'Belgic' brick) and animal bones were recovered from these structures (Jones, CD Chapter 21). A La Tène III brooch was recovered from the fills of ditch 102137 (Scott, CD Chapter 14).

The second enclosure was smaller and roughly oval in shape. It was defined by ditch 106113. A curving length of gully, 102090, may well have partially encircled a building with an internal diameter of 6–7 m. This might indicate the presence of a small building, perhaps an ancillary structure. Gully 106118 was also probably a drainage feature, although not necessarily associated with a structure.

A number of pits, gullies and postholes lay within the outer enclosure (Figs 6.5–6, 106096, 135039, 136094, 136099, 151035, 155001, 156012, 129052, 151040, 102084 and 106109). Most of these are dated by grog-tempered wheel-thrown pottery and the exact function of many is unclear. Two other gullies, however (102114 and 151032) appear to have been dug to create a small sub-enclosure, open to the north, on the western edge of the outer enclosure. A single four-post structure was identified; it was approximately 2 m square. The postholes (143035, 143037, 143039 and 143041) were all very shallow, with the deepest measuring 0.11 m.

Mortuary enclosures

Three mortuary enclosures lay to the south-west of the enclosed settlement and were probably a later addition (Figs 6.5–6). The enclosures were smaller than those excavated further west (Fig. 6.3), with the largest measuring 11 m by 10 m. All three were defined by shallow gullies, but no entrances or causeways were apparent. The earliest of the three appears to be the western-most (102078), which also contained the most burials – the upper fills of

The ditches of the earlier settlement enclosure were recut (ditches 109169 and 109167). Together with ditches 102127 and 102129, these form the eastern and south-eastern edges of the enclosed area. Another ditch orientated east–west probably formed its southern boundary, but this was redug in the early Romano-British period (see below) and no trace of the Late Iron Age ditch survives. At less than a metre in depth, this enclosure ditch was less substantial than its Late Iron

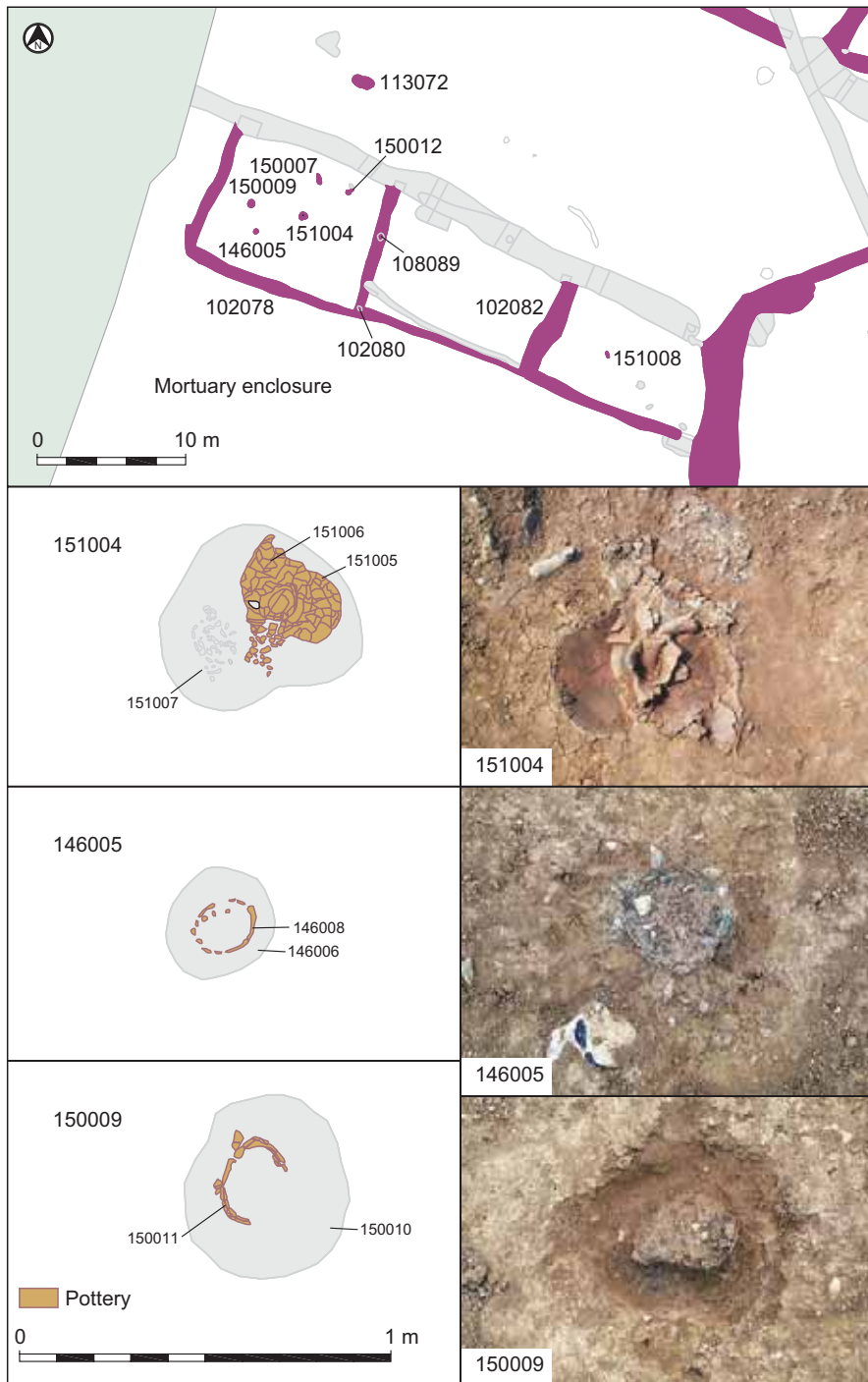


Figure 6.6: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British mortuary enclosures and cremation burials associated with the eastern settlement

Burial	Sex	Age	Pyre goods	Urned	Ancillary vessel	Comments
146005	?	Adult/ sub-adult	Iron nails - re-used structural timbers on pyre?	Yes	None	
150007	?	Adult	Iron nails, fragment of cremated animal bone	Most bone unurned	1 vessel	Badly damaged by land drain
150009	?	Adult	None	?Yes	None	Plough damaged
150012	?male	Adult	Iron nail shank	None	None	
151004	?	Adult c 23-45 y	None	None	Pedestal-based urn	Central burial in enclosure. Whetstone in burial

Table 6.2: Burials within mortuary enclosure 102078

102078 were cut by T-shaped gully 102082, which defined the later enclosures. Two postholes (102080 and 108089) dug through the fills of 102078 may indicate that although the gully had silted, the boundary still existed, perhaps in the form of a fence.

Five burials were located in the westernmost mortuary enclosure (146005, 150007, 150009, 150012 and 151004); all had been placed into shallow scoops. Of these, 151004 appears to have been primary, whilst the others may be satellite burials. Details of the cremation burials may be found in Table 6.2 and McKinley, CD Chapter 27. Some grave goods accompanied these cremation burials including a small whetstone from burial 151004, and a fragment of cremated animal bone from burial 150007 may indicate the remains of a food offering on the pyre. Possible evidence for the reuse of structural timbers for the pyre was also identified in the form of iron nails (McKinley, CD Chapter 27).

Although many of the cremation burials excavated on the site were badly truncated, there are some differences between pots used as funerary containers and those in use on the settlement. Four of the five identifiable vessels are jars, as might be expected, but some are forms not found on the settlement sites, predominantly the pedestal-based jars (see Table 6.3). Although only two examples are recorded, both of the burials concerned, burials 995073 and 151004 were both central (and therefore possibly primary) burials within mortuary enclosures.

These 'pedestal jars' are closely associated with the adoption of cremation burial as a funerary rite in southern Britain (see Thompson 1982) and occur in some high status burials. At King Harry Lane in *Vérolanium*, however, only 2 of the 26 examples occur within mortuary enclosures, and neither is a central burial. One, however, did lie at the centre of one of the 'family groups' of burials identified, in one of the richest burials in the cemetery (Stead and Rigby 1989, 175-6). Pedestal urns were also found in three of the cremation

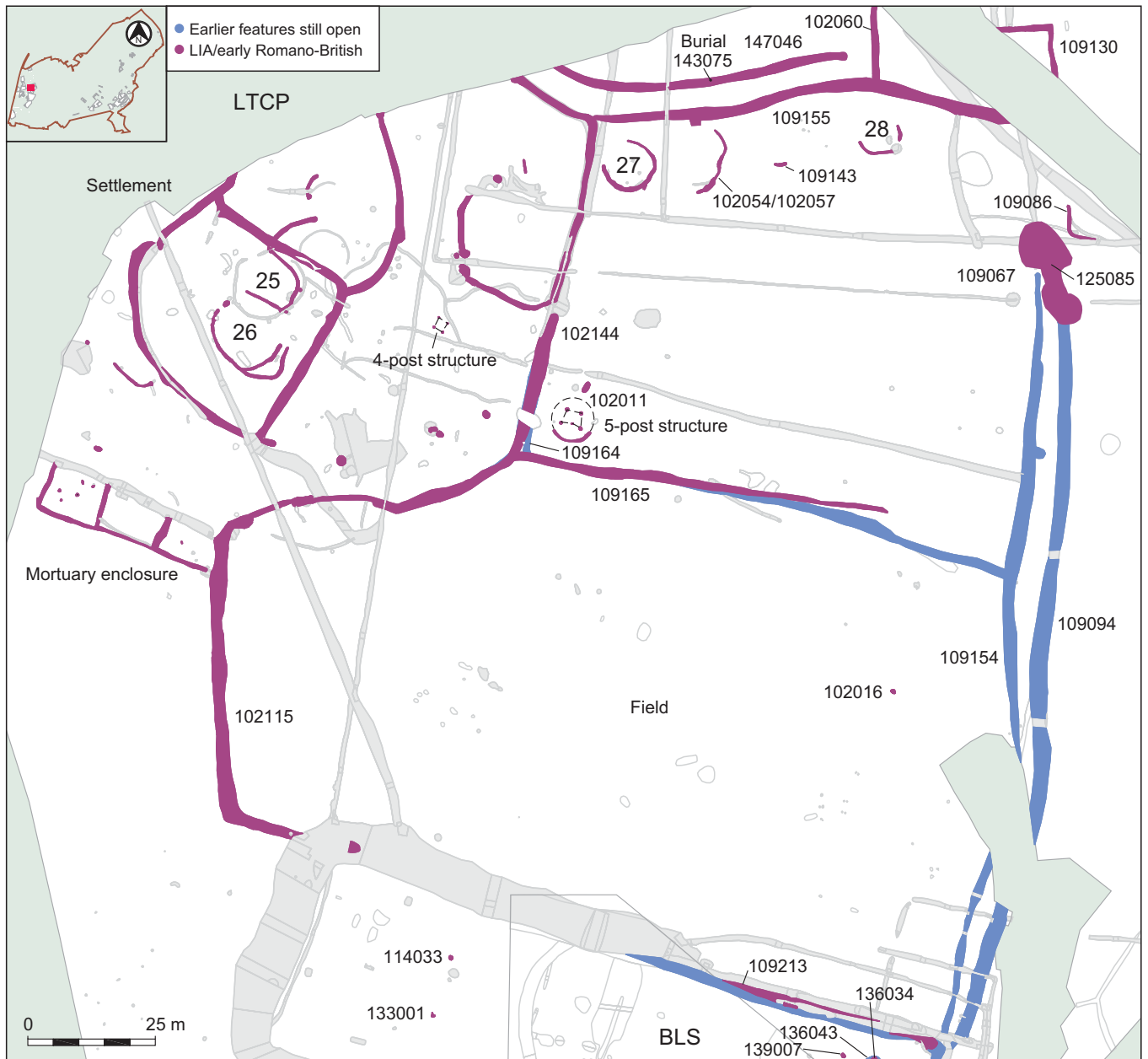
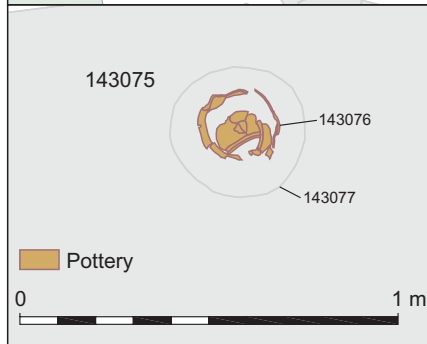


Figure 6.7: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British fields and detail of cremation burial 143075



burials (burials 1–3) excavated at Hinxton (Hill *et al.* 1999). All of these were central burials within a small circular ring ditch accompanied by other vessels. Five pedestal bases were, however, recovered from the settlement on the ACS site at Stansted, suggesting that their use may not have been exclusively funerary.

Later fields, enclosures and buildings

The late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD saw further development of the fields to the east of the main settlement (Fig. 6.7). The field immediately to the east was reworked, with some of the ditches recut (notably 109165)

Pottery type	Description	Urned	Accessory vessel	Settlement
CAM 204	Pear-shaped urn with hollow, trumpet-shaped pedestal base	1	1	-
CAM 254	Saucepan-shaped cooking pot with rim thickened internally	-	1	11
G21	Braughing jar	-	1	15
G	Jar form	?1	-	160

Table 6.3: Types of vessels used in cremation burials on the LTCP site compared to those in adjacent settlements



Figure 6.8: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British roundhouses from the eastern settlement

and a new northern boundary dug, linked to a trackway (109155 and 147046). Fragments from a La Tène III or Nauheim derivative brooch came from the fills of ditch 109155 (Scott, CD Chapter 14). A single unurned cremation burial (143075) was dug into the fills of 147046, the northerly of the two trackway ditches. The remains of an adult female, aged *c* 25–45, accompanied by a Braughing jar in a grog-tempered fabric (20 BC and AD 70) were recovered. Burnt and unburnt animal bone mixed in with this deposit point to food remains both on the pyre and as grave goods.

The settlement expanded into the field to the east, with evidence for at least four (and possibly as many as six) structures within it (Fig. 6.7). Most of these lay along the northern edge and comprise two circular structures (roundhouses 27 and 28) (Fig. 6.8). Two curving gullies (102054 and 102057) may represent further structures as may a short stretch of gully (109143) 10 m further east. A five-post structure was located in the south-western corner of the field. This structure was roughly trapezoidal in plan, comprising four larger corner postholes (145001, 145003, 145004 and 145005), with a smaller posthole set slightly off centre of the line between the southern pair (145002). The southern side of the structure was partially enclosed by a curving gully (109080).

Four- and five-post structures have been interpreted as ancillary buildings possibly used as granaries or for storage although there is little direct evidence for their use and a range of possible functions should be envisaged (Ellison and Drewett 1971, 185; Drury 1978, 124; Allen *et al.* 1984, 98; Lambrick and Allen 2004, 145). Comparable structures have been identified at the ACS site (Havis and Brooks 2004, 99, fig. 72), along the A120 (Powell 2007, 72, fig. 2.37), at Little Waltham (Drury 1978) and elsewhere in Essex. It has also been suggested that such arrangements of posts were structural and formed roof supports for circular buildings (Allen *et al.* 1984, 100; Lambrick and Allen 2004, 145–6; Miles *et al.* 2007, 64). The association of a gully with some examples, as the Stansted structure may add further support to this (*cf* Framework Archaeology 2006, 180–1, fig. 4.8).

Just to the north of the five-post structure there was a pit (102011) in which the skeleton of a dog had been placed (Plate 6.4). Burials of articulated animal remains, including dogs, in Late Iron Age contexts are often interpreted as ‘structured deposits’ buried as part of a ritual (Hill 1995). This may have been the case here, although the absence of any material other than the skeleton might indicate the burial of a much loved animal.

Apart from the structures, there was little else of note within the field apart from a substantial area of flint cobbling, 109067, (laid over the back-filled termini of ditches 109094 and 109154). The cobbling was probably laid to provide an area of hardstanding over the backfilled ditches, and was associated a posthole (125085) and L-shaped gully 109086. The latter may have replaced Late Iron Age gully 109088 (see above, Fig. 6.4) in defining a building. A series of ditches and gullies to the north of the field, (102060 and 109130) point to further landscape division in this area.

A second, larger, field was created further to the south with some new ditches being dug but also utilising some existing boundaries (Fig. 6.7). To the south, the boundary is less clear being obscured by a later ditch. The only contemporary feature within this field is hearth 102016, which is well dated by pottery. In the absence of an associated structure, this feature remains somewhat enigmatic. These two fields were probably associated with the oval enclosure (see below).

Plate 6.4: Dog burial 102011



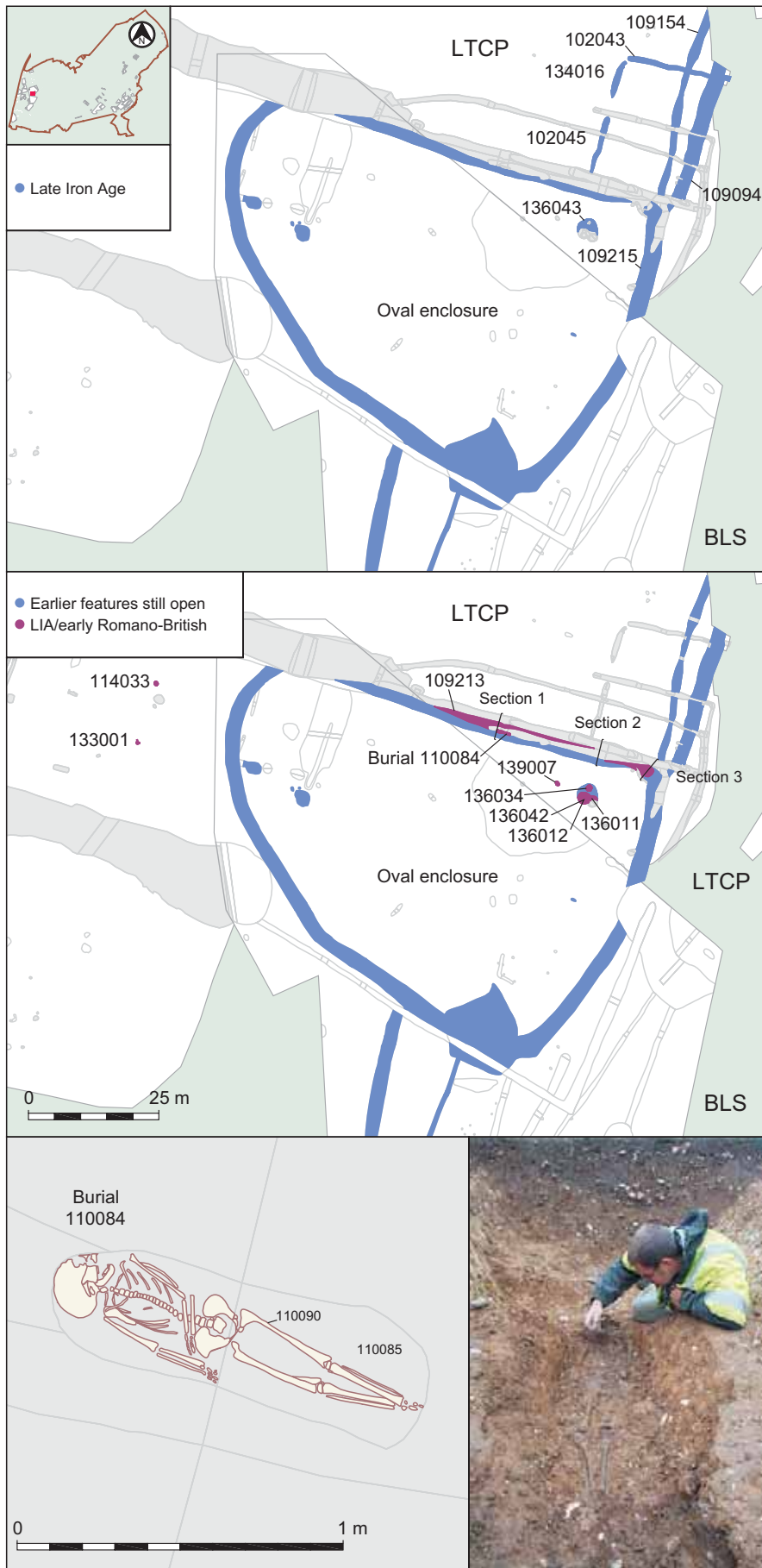


Figure 6.9: The Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British oval enclosure with a detail of inhumation burial 110084

The oval enclosure on the LTCP and BLS sites

A substantial oval enclosure was found on the LTCP and BLS sites. It was examined as part of the Stansted Project (Havis and Brooks 2004) and again during the recent Framework Archaeology excavations. It was a focus for activity from the Late Iron Age, through to the 2nd century AD, and was later enlarged in the late Romano-British period. Despite considerable effort made to enclose this area and maintain it relatively little evidence exists for the activities being carried out there.

The Late Iron Age oval enclosure

Much of this enclosure was excavated as part of the Stansted Project, although part of the northern enclosure ditch and the north-eastern corner were examined during the excavation of the LTCP site (Fig. 6.9). Three interventions were dug across the south-western ditch (ditch 3). Most of the pottery recovered dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, but the primary fills contained Late Iron Age material (Havis and Brooks 2004, 255 and fig. 163). To the south, two ditches aligned north-south were also dated to the Late Iron Age. These form a continuation of the major north-south boundary excavated to the south. A similar picture has emerged from the LTCP excavations, although there is a clearer chronology of the enclosure. Numerous interventions excavated through the enclosure ditch identified a complex sequence of recutting and cleaning episodes (Fig. 6.10). The original Late Iron Age ditch (109215) was steep-sided with a flat base, and 1.0–1.60 m deep. An internal bank is also suggested by the silting pattern recorded in several interventions.

Little direct evidence for settlement was found within the enclosure. A few pits and a single posthole contained Late Iron Age pottery, but no structures were identified. Only one pit within the oval enclosure definitely dated to the Late Iron Age (136043). It was a large circular pit, the earliest in a complex sequence of intercutting features.

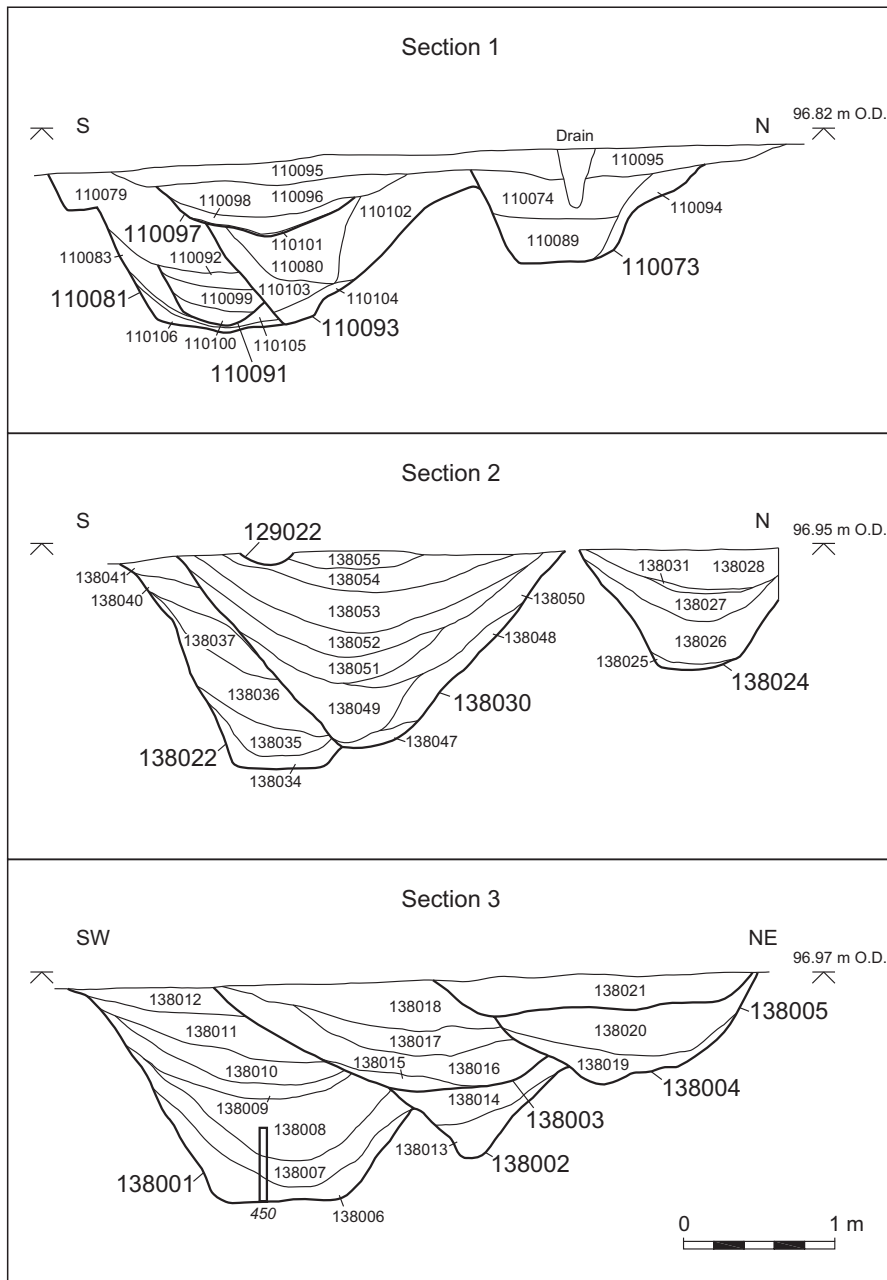


Figure 6.10: Sections through the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British oval enclosure

This enclosure was interpreted as a possible stock enclosure (Havis and Brooks 2004, 255). The lack of features within the enclosure and the probable associated fields from the recent excavations accords with this interpretation.

The only other Late Iron Age features of note in the area of the oval enclosure are three shallow ditches (102045, 134016 and 102043). These appear to form two sides of a small Late Iron Age enclosure. This must have been short lived, however, as the ditches had silted before being cut by Late Iron Age ditches 109094 and 109154.

The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British oval enclosure

The Late Iron Age enclosure ditch (109215) continued to silt up after the adoption of the wheel-thrown grog-tempered pottery somewhere between *c* 50 BC and 20 BC (Fig. 6.9). One episode of cleaning of this ditch was identified (intervention 110091). A shallow grave (110084) was dug in the partially silted base of the ditch. The burial was of a juvenile 9–12 years old (Fig. 6.9). It was aligned west–east, with the head to the west. The body was placed on its back with legs extended. The right arm was extended by the right side, whilst the left arm was flexed across the abdomen. The skull rested on its left side. There were no grave goods accompanying the burial, but a few sherds of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery were found. Analysis of the skeletal remains suggests that the lengths of the long bones are short for the age of the child (age determined by tooth eruption patterns). This may indicate that the child had had a poor diet, lacking in protein, an interpretation supported by the levels of calculus build up on the teeth (McKinley and Egging, CD Chapter 28).

Much of the northern ditch of the enclosure was redug in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (109213). This recut was generally less substantial than the original ditch, but still took the form of a deep V-shaped ditch (Fig. 6.10, Plate 6.5). It was presumably associated with a remaking of the internal bank.

The small number of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British features



Plate 6.5: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British oval enclosure ditch

revealed within the enclosure concentrated in the north-east corner, and comprised a group of largely intercutting pits (136011, 136012, 136034, 136042 and 139007). Finds recovered from these comprised a mixed domestic assemblage of pottery, animal bone and fired clay. Metalworking debris from 136012, however, suggests smithing in the vicinity (Keys, CD Chapter 16).

Two small pits lay to the west of the enclosure (114033, 133001, Fig. 6.9). Pit 114033 was recut at some stage (114035). All of the features contained Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery.

Boundary features on the CIS and SCS sites

To the south of the LTCP and BLS sites Late Iron Age activity was identified on the CIS and SCS sites (Fig. 6.11). A number of ditches interpreted as a trackway and associated boundary system, dated to the Mid-/Late Iron Age (Havis and Brooks 2004, 30 and fig. 23). The trackway, aligned roughly west-east, corresponds to that identified on the LTCP site to the west, and tentatively dated to the Late Iron Age (see above, Fig. 6.2).

This ditch complex had been abandoned by the Romano-British period, when a more substantial Roman ditch was excavated a short distance to the west. This ditch continues the line of a Late Iron Age ditch excavated on the BLS site to the north (Fig. 6.2).

Boundaries and burials on the DCS site

Rescue excavations on the DCS site revealed a number of Late Iron Age boundary ditches and cremation burials (Fig. 6.11). The nature of this excavation, predominantly carried out under watching brief conditions, made it difficult to identify features. However, a substantial sinuous north-west to south-east boundary ditch was identified (5, 241 and 316) (Havis and Brooks 2004, 265 and fig. 170). Large quantities of Late Iron Age pottery were recovered from it. To the east of this lay a group of nine postholes, possibly representing the remains of a structure, although no clear plan could be determined.

Other Late Iron Age ditches lay to the south-west (ditches 38, 44, 92 and 193), although their full extent could not be clarified further. A small number of Late Iron Age pits was also excavated,

mainly along the line of ditch 5/241/316, although some lay close to the eastern edge of excavation.

Perhaps the most significant Late Iron Age features on the site were a roughly linear group of five cremation burials (1–5, Havis and Brooks 2004, 195, fig. 129), four of which were heavily truncated. In addition two heavily disturbed deposits (6 and 7) to the south-west of the linear group were probably of Late Iron Age date. The cremation deposits are summarised in Table 6.4.

Settlement on the M11 site

Late Iron Age settlement activity on the M11 site focused on the area directly to the east of the Mid-/Late Iron Age roundhouse and boundary ditches (see Chapter 5). The later settlement consisted of two irregular enclosures set either side of a central boundary ditch, aligned roughly north-west to south-east. Modification of the enclosures occurred in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period and a few settlement features including a roundhouse were identified in the northern enclosure (Fig. 6.12). Otherwise evidence for activity was generally sparse with a few scattered features.

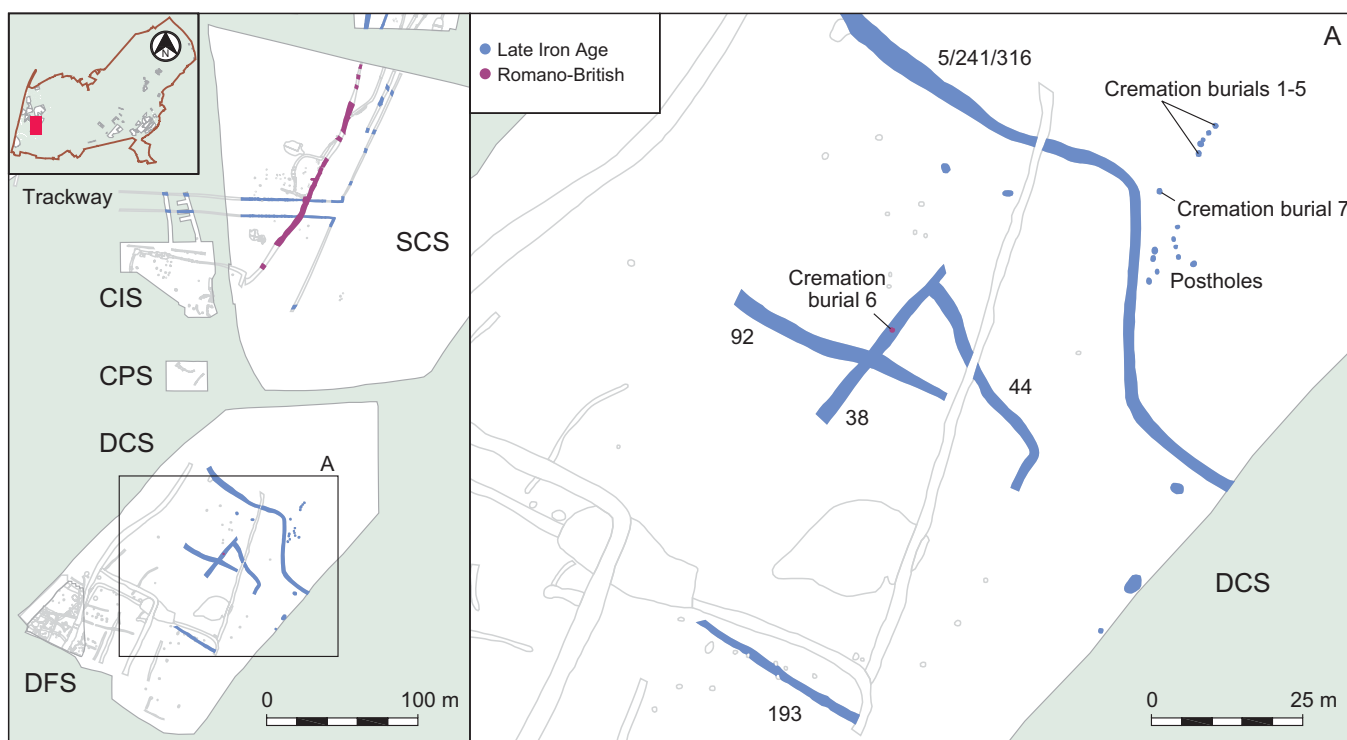


Figure 6.11: Late Iron Age and Romano-British features

Cremation (original ctx no.)	Age	Grave goods	Urned	Ancillary vessel	Comments
1 (19)	-	Three brooches (Langton Down, fragmentary rosette, fragmentary Colchester)	?	-	Badly disturbed. Sherds from a grog-tempered vessel, cremated bone found outside vessel
2 (21)	-	-	-	-	Badly disturbed. Sherds from a sand and grog-tempered jar, cremated bone found outside vessel
3 (23)	Adult	-	Grog-tempered jar	Butt beaker in a sandy Romanised ware	-
4 (54)	-	-	?	?	Sherds from two grog-tempered vessels including a burnt pedestal urn
5 (171)	-	Iron chains, iron ring and numerous iron bindings or cleats	Grog-tempered bowl	2 jars, a wide mouthed cup and 2 incomplete bowls (all grog-tempered)	Most complete cremation
6 (40)	-	-	?	-	Cremation cut into top of LIA ditch, sherds of three grog-tempered jars found with a little cremated bone
7 (56)	-	-	?	-	A small quantity of cremated bone found in association with sherds from a pedestal based vessel, a jar and at least two other vessels

Table 6.4: Details of cremation burials on the DCS site

Associated with these enclosures were two ditches (439038 and 441025), which may have formed part of a larger enclosure or field system. A small pit (431040) lay to the north of ditch 441025, and was partially cut through a Late Iron Age layer (431044) which formed in the hollow left by an earlier Late Bronze Age waterhole.

The two enclosures were closely associated with the line of boundary ditch 439038. The southern enclosure was roughly triangular and formed by ditches 439038, 425025 and 430052. A probable western entrance was later closed by the digging of gully 424024.

The picture to the east is less clear. The last cleaning of ditch 439038 appears to

have cut across the eastern entrance. Where the original line of the enclosure ditch could be established (441076), it appears to have had an eastern entrance 10 m wide. However, access was restricted by ditch 440042, dug roughly parallel to ditch 439038, some 5 m distant. At its north-western end the gap between the two was reduced to some 0.80 m by a change in alignment

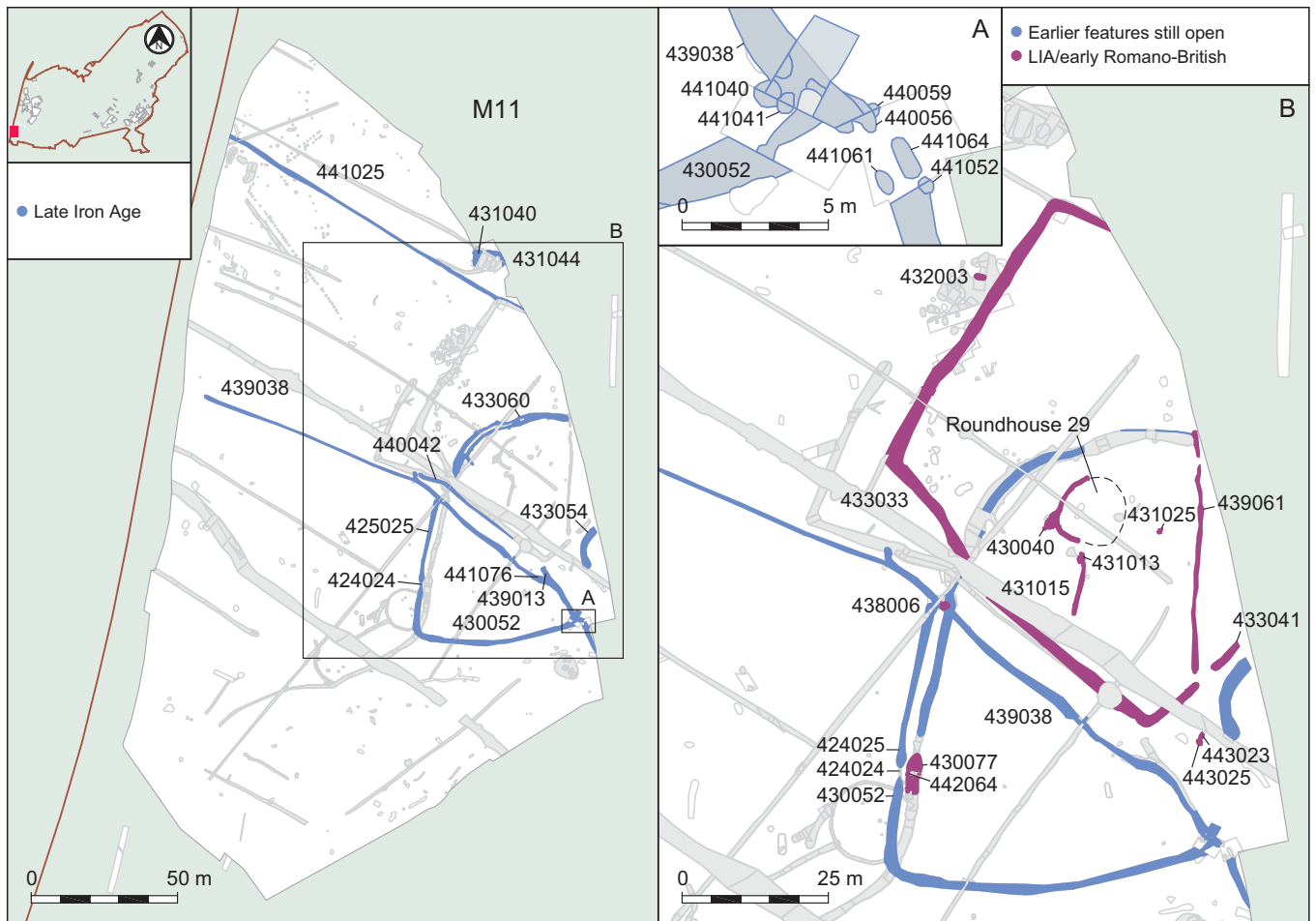


Figure 6.12: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity

of ditch 440042 and a projecting spur of 439038. A similar arrangement probably existed at the south-eastern end of ditch 440042, where 439013, projected from the line of ditch 441076. This series of features may have been designed to act as a stock-management system.

A series of small pits were dug in the south-eastern corner of this enclosure (440056, 440059, 441040 and 441041). These contained few finds, and all are dated by stratigraphic association only. To the south of these, three similar pits (441052, 441061 and 441064) were dug along the line of ditch 439038. Two, 441052 and 441064, were dug after the ditch had silted up, whilst 441061, was cut by the ditch. There is little evidence for the use of these features as few finds were recovered from them and they clearly do not belong to the same phase of activity.

The form of the northern enclosure is unclear as it extended beyond the excavated area, although the surviving ditches, 433054 and 433060, suggest that it may have been D-shaped. The curve of 433054 suggests that there was an entrance in the south and there may have been another in the north-western corner of the enclosure. Unfortunately both of these areas were affected by later truncation hampering interpretation.

Neither of the enclosures contained structural evidence for settlement. The quantities of domestic material recovered (pottery, animal bones, and fired clay) do suggest some domestic settlement in the vicinity. However, the distribution of these does not favour one enclosure above another (Fig. 6.13).

Further activity in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period focused on the northern enclosure but a little remodelling of the southern enclosure took place and a few other features were dug (Fig. 6.12). Many of the Late Iron Age features were still open, including ditch 438039, which remained a visible boundary. A short stretch of ditch (430077) was dug across the western entrance of the southern enclosure, presumably to close it. Once silted, this ditch was cut by a small pit, 442064. A second, deeper pit (438006) was dug into the largely silted ditch in the northern corner of the enclosure. The steep profile of this pit suggests that it may have been lined, perhaps with wicker or timber, and may have acted as a sump or a waterhole.

The earlier D-shaped enclosure remained in use but it was sub-divided by ditch 439061. A placed deposit in ditch 433054 (intervention 439047) comprised two sheep jaws, a pot burnisher and a fragment of a clay



Plate 6.6: Placed deposit 433042

slab (Plate 6.6). Roundhouse 29 was constructed at this time although other than an encircling gully there is little evidence for its form (Fig. 6.12). A few pits, a hearth and a short stretch of gully were also contemporary with this phase of activity.

Other modifications at this time include the creation of a large rectangular enclosure around the D-shaped enclosure. It was defined by ditches 433033 and 433041 and had an entrance in its south-eastern corner. In the terminal of ditch 433041 there was a deposit of disarticulated animal bone including a horse skull, cattle, sheep/goat and pig bone, placed in the partially silted ditch on top of a layer of chalk nodules and associated with a fragment of burnt quernstone (Plate 6.7). Another apparent deliberate deposit of large

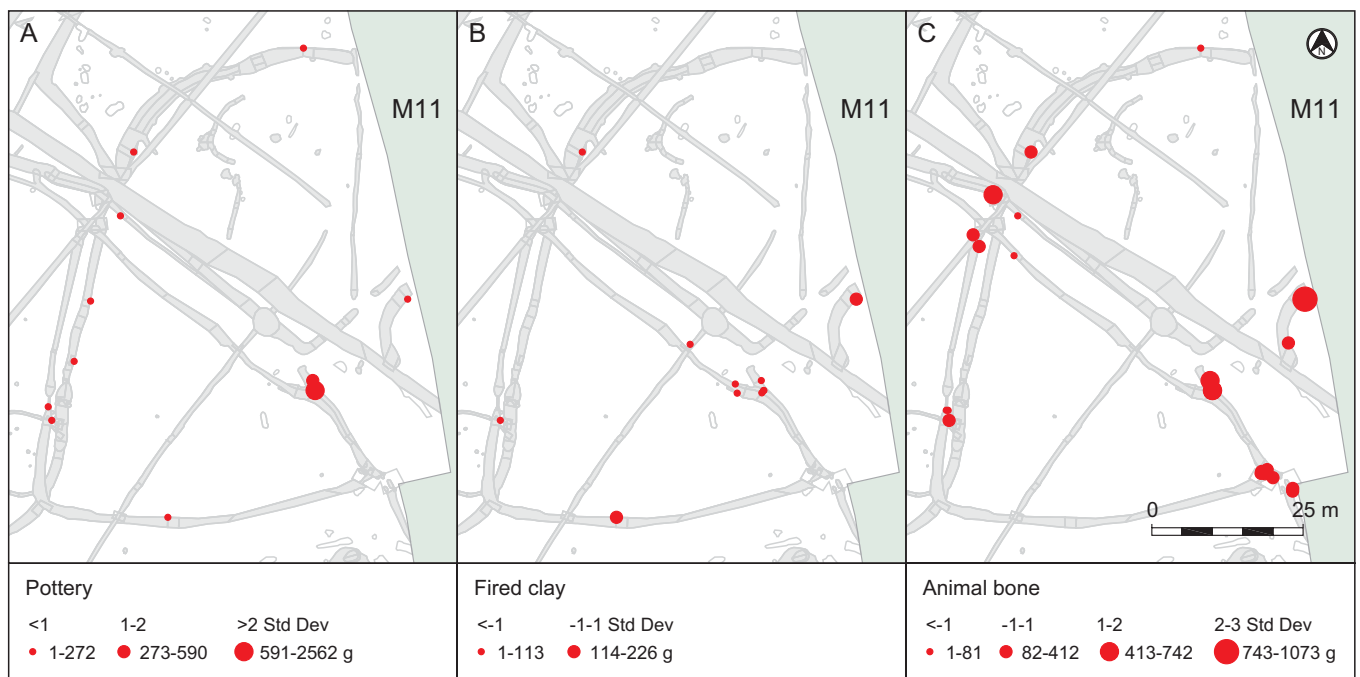


Figure 6.13: Distribution of selected finds from Late Iron Age features



Plate 6.7: Placed deposit 439050

quantities of animal bone (cattle, horse, sheep/goat and pig) together with ironworking debris including the base of a smelting hearth was recovered from intervention 433026 (ditch 433033) close to the entrance of the enclosure. A puddingstone rotary quern, an unusual find in pre-Roman context, was also recovered from ditch 433033 (Shaffrey, CD Chapter 25). The emphasis of deposition close to the entrance may be important here.

Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement by Pincey Brook

A substantial enclosed settlement was found on the ACS site, above the Pincey Brook (Havis and Brooks 2004, 79–188) (Fig. 6.14), and another, smaller settlement and major boundary were excavated on the MTCP site. Other features of this period were excavated on the SG, LBR, CCS and LBS sites. It is difficult to interpret the remains found on a couple of the sites (eg LBR and CCS) given the relatively limited excavation areas. Whilst these do not form as coherent a block in terms of the wider landscape as those on the western side of the airport, they can tell us much about the nature of settlement, agriculture and ritual in the area, as well as allowing the ACS settlement to be put into its local context.

Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement on the ACS site

The ACS site lay on the eastern side of the valley cut by Pincey Brook, on a low headland formed by a curve in the course of the stream (Fig. 6.14). An area of just under a hectare was excavated and has been fully published (Havis and Brooks 2004). It is only summarised here. It should be noted, however, that the alignments used in the original report, based on a notional 'site north' will have changed slightly with the digitisation of the site on the Ordnance Survey grid.

Early activity on the site consisted of a rectangular post-built structure and associated pits. A substantial enclosure was then constructed within which there were a number of roundhouses, a rectangular structure and other settlement features. The layout of the roundhouses was clearly planned and



Figure 6.14: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity

a number of them were rebuilt. The rectangular structure at the centre of the settlement has been interpreted as a shrine or temple (Havis and Brooks 2004, 79, 533, fig. 56). The settlement appeared to have been relatively short-lived with three periods of activity identified:

- Phase 1a. *c* 75–50 BC
- Phase 1b. *c* 50–25 BC
- Phase 2. *c* AD 40–75

The earliest activity on site consisted of a rectangular six-post structure (6 x 4 m), associated with three pits. Pottery recovered from both the post-holes and pits indicates a date of 75–50 BC or earlier for the construction and use of these features (Havis and Brooks 2004, 79, fig. 57).

Subsequently a substantial enclosure was constructed. Open country land snails from the enclosure ditch suggest that it was constructed in grassland. It was roughly 80 m square with V-shaped ditches that were substantial enough to be regarded as defensive. A berm, *c* 5 m inside the edge of the enclosure ditch and the structures, suggests that there was an internal bank although no definite evidence for this was found. Pottery from the lower fills of the enclosing defensive ditch suggests that these were forming in the mid-1st century BC. A less substantial concentric ditch was revealed immediately to the north of the enclosure ditch but its function could not be determined. A ditch projecting from the south-eastern part of the enclosure ditch may have served as a drainage feature (Havis and Brooks 2004, 86). Land snails from the enclosure ditch confirm the presence of some standing water.

Within the enclosure were found two divisions and a series of roundhouses. All of these were constructed between 75 and 25 BC when the settlement appears to have been abandoned. Much of this dating relies on the small assemblages of pottery from shallow gullies and postholes and the stratigraphic relationships between features. Some

of these structures had associated post-holes, hearths and other features. Several of the structures had more than one phase of construction. Structure 550, was the largest at some 15 m in diameter, and the latest in a sequence of three buildings. A coin hoard was recovered from the fill of the ring gully itself, comprising cast ‘potin’ coins, probably manufactured between *c* 90 and 50 BC, and deposited before 30 BC (Havis and Brooks 2004, 104).

In the centre of the enclosure was a rectangular structure measuring 10 x 7.5 m. Built around 50 BC, and remaining in use into the early Romano-British period, this has been interpreted as a shrine on the basis of its form, location within the settlement, and associated acts of deposition in the early Romano-British period (Havis and Brooks 2004, 533). Outside the main enclosure there were a number of circular structures and a Late Iron Age pit complex.

Limited later activity (*c* AD 40–75) was identified and consisted of pit digging, the refilling of the enclosure ditch and the demolition of the central building. A ditch was also dug. A considerable number of 1st century AD brooches and an intaglio were also deposited (Havis and Brooks 2004, 79).

The artefactual evidence suggests that a wide trading network was drawn upon and that the settlement may have been of some status. As well as the coins noted above, a small number of other Late Iron Age coins were identified, including further cast ‘potin’ coins. Two struck bronze coins of Cunobelin probably relate to Period 2 activity on the site (van Arsdell and Northover 2004, 115–20). Metalwork includes a number of Late Iron Age brooches (Major 2004b, 121–6), a finger ring, a small bracelet and a decorative disc. Ironwork was dominated by fragments of bars, strips and thin sheet, alongside brooches, knives and leather-working awls (Major 2004c, 133–5).

A single fragment of rotary quern was recovered from the site, along with a few possible fragments of saddle querns and rubber stones (Major 2004d, 135). Other worked stone

items included eight fragments of shale vessels, which are rare in Essex. Approximately 18 probable Late Iron Age spindlewhorls were recovered mainly in the south-eastern half of the site (Major 2004e, 169). The fired clay assemblage included fragments of triangular loomweights, clay slabs and ‘Belgic bricks’ (*ibid.*, 173).

The pottery assemblage included a significant group of imported amphorae sherds, all from early forms (Dressel 1A and Dressel 1B). Amphorae appear to have been prized objects in the Late Iron Age, both for their contents and in their own right. The amphorae fragments from Stansted are all made of Italian fabrics, and the absence of sherds from the Spanish amphorae which superseded these supports a date for the abandonment of the settlement in *c* 25 BC, as does the absence of ‘Gallo-Belgic’ pottery, which might be expected from a site of similar size and status occupied after this date. None of the coins recovered date to the late 1st century BC.

The animal bone assemblage was dominated by cattle, sheep/goat and pig, with sheep/goat the most important. Small quantities of wild animals such as deer, hare and birds, whilst other domestic species such as dog and horse were also present (Mainland 2004, 176–87). Concentrations of pig bone clustered around the rectangular ‘shrine’. Sheep/goat were primarily kept for meat, although the presence of mature animals suggests they were also kept for wool and possibly milk. Both younger and elderly cattle were present, indicating that these were kept for dairy and draft animals as well as for meat.

Elements of the settlement’s economic base can be examined. Spelt wheat was the main cereal present, with smaller quantities of emmer, bread wheat and barley. Cereal grains formed the main component of the assemblage, with chaff and weed seeds rare. It is likely that the grain used on the site was grown elsewhere, probably on the lighter soils at the edge of the plateau of glacial till. The material recovered was consistent with the domestic

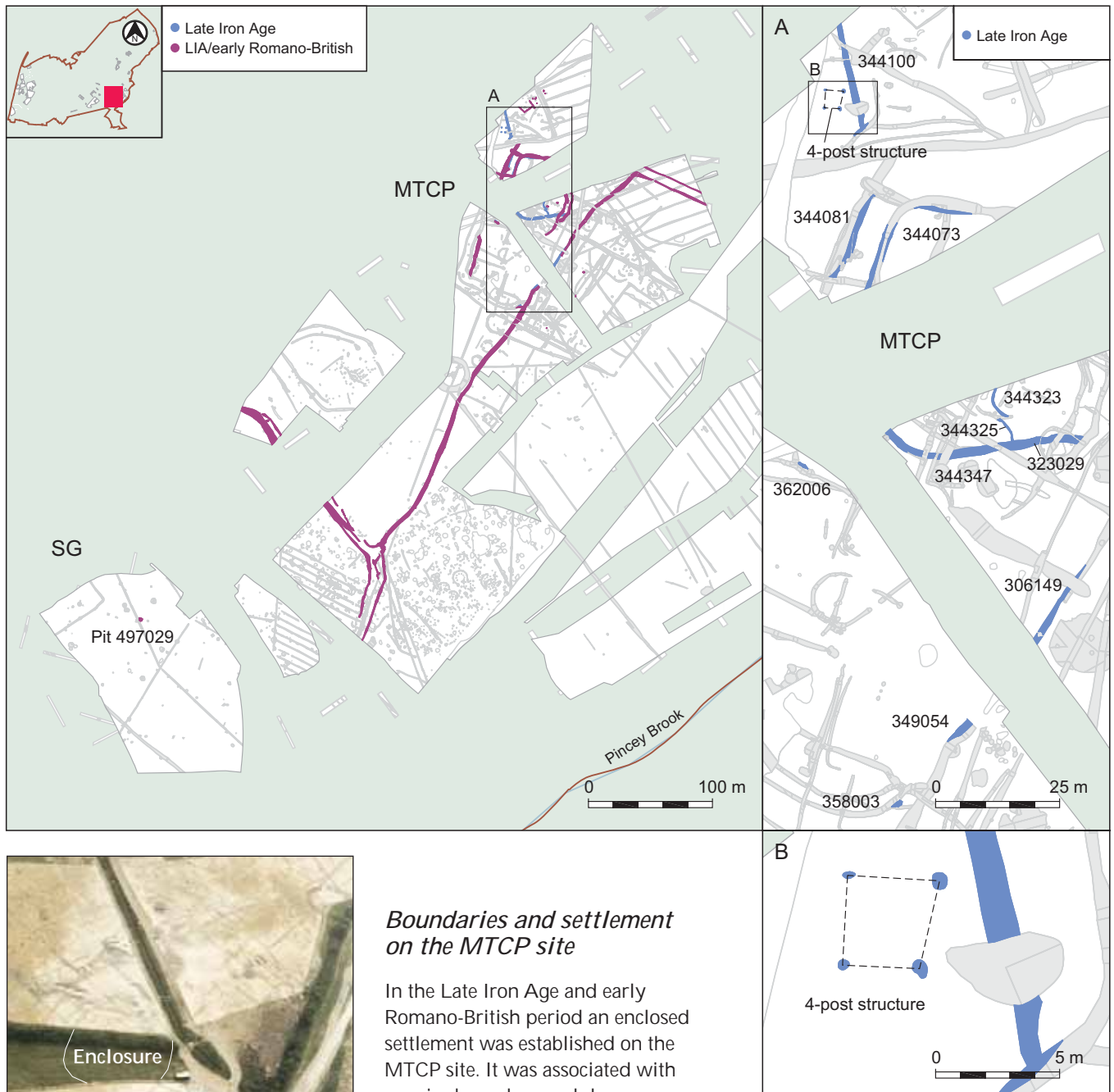


Figure 6.15: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Roman activity

Boundaries and settlement on the MTCP site

In the Late Iron Age and early Romano-British period an enclosed settlement was established on the MTCP site. It was associated with a major boundary and droveway complex which extended north-east to south-west across the site (Fig. 6.15, Plate 6.8). There was some evidence for structures and other features within the enclosure but a substantial area in the centre of the enclosure was not excavated (Fig. 6.15). Although the foundation of the settlement appears to pre-date the introduction of the grog-tempered wheel-thrown pottery, many of the earliest features contain pottery of this type in their lower fills, suggesting that they had not been open long prior its introduction. This suggests that the settlement was probably founded in the middle of the 1st century BC.

Late Iron Age activity

Late Iron Age activity focused on a roughly rectangular enclosure which measured 48 m north-south, and probably approximately the same from east to west (the line of the eastern boundary is obscured, Fig. 6.15). The enclosure ditch (344347 and 344073) was a substantial U-shaped ditch measuring up to 0.85 m deep. There was evidence for an internal bank although no trace of an entrance was found. A truncated stretch of ditch (344081)



Plate 6.8: Aerial photograph of the LIA settlement on the MTCP site under excavation looking south

preparation and consumption of processed crops (Murphy 2004, 337–9).

Land snail shells from the enclosure ditch suggest that it contained some standing freshwater, whilst open country snails suggested the surrounding area was grassland.

parallel to the north-western edge of the enclosure, c 5 m away, possibly defined the north-western edge of a track.

Evidence for earlier occupation consisted of a curving gully (344325), possibly associated with a structure, which was cut by the enclosure ditch. The enclosure also cut through an earlier pit (323029).

Amongst the finds recovered from the fills of the enclosure ditch were a number of fragments of human skull (intervention 323025). These were part of the skull of an adult, of unknown sex, over the age of 25 (McKinley and Egging, CD Chapter 28). This may have been redeposited from pit 323029. The absence of any other human bone indicates that it is unlikely to represent a disturbed burial. Disarticulated human bones are fairly frequently found on Late Iron Age sites, both in 'structured' or ritual deposits, and as apparently discarded material (Wait 1985, 88; Carr and Knüsel 1997; Fitzpatrick 1997a, 82). Nothing about the context in which this bone was found suggests that its deposition formed part of a ritual act. It does serve as a reminder, however, that whilst cremation burials and occasional inhumations, form the most archaeologically visible mortuary rituals, other practices, such as excarnation were occurring but are less visible archaeologically.

A single structure was located within the enclosure, perhaps a replacement for 344325. The structure consisted of a curving gully (344323), no other features were associated with it.

A shallow Late Iron Age ditch (306149 and 349054) to the south of the settle-

ment enclosure may mark the genesis of the major boundary system which was to influence the layout of the landscape for the centuries to come. The extensive recutting of this ditch in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period makes it impossible to ascertain its original extent. Only a short stretch of ditch escaped this reworking, perhaps to allow easy access across the boundary from the enclosed settlement.

Another shallow ditch, aligned north-south, was dug to the north of the settlement enclosure (344100). Very little material was recovered from its fills, and it is unlikely to have bounded a further area of settlement. A four-post structure to the west of it probably represented an ancillary building. The only other Late Iron Age feature on the site is a heavily truncated gully, 362006, to the south-west of the enclosure.

The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement

The enclosed settlement continued in use throughout the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (Fig. 6.16). The western, northern and eastern enclosure ditches were recut or cleaned out (344070 and 344370), whilst the southern ditch (334347) was allowed to silt up. A later re-alignment of the eastern boundary of the enclosure (344362) extended further to the south, hinting at settlement expansion in this direction. A short stretch of this later ditch was recut twice (initially as 360016 (not illustrated), and then 344366).

There was no direct evidence for any buildings within the enclosure in this phase, although much of the centre of the enclosure was not excavated, and

quantities of domestic material were recovered from its fills. As on other contemporary sites the artefacts were an undistinguished group comprising utilitarian pottery, butchered animal bone and fragments of fired clay. Pits 360020 and 360044 both lay inside the enclosure. These were small, shallow oval pits, apparently backfilled with domestic waste.

Ditch 344081 was redug in this period (344085), and may have been associated with a shallow gully (330296), which was parallel to it. Ditch 344085 was fairly substantial, but did not remain in use for long. It was probably deliberately backfilled. Subsequent activity in the area (still associated with wheel-thrown grog-tempered pottery) involved two parallel ditches being dug on a north-west-south-east alignment (344076 and 344087).

The southern of the two, 344076, was dug perpendicular to the north-western ditch of the settlement enclosure, and continued beyond the edge of the site. It was a shallow ditch, with a U-shaped profile, and only 0.42 m deep at its deepest point. Ditch 344087 was similar in form, but slightly deeper at 0.60 m. It was recut or cleaned out three times (344089, 344091 and 330315)

Two pits and a short stretch of gully were dug in the area between these two ditches. The larger of the pits, 344078, may have been a waterhole. To the south-west ditch 344154 may mark the northern extent of a secondary enclosure. This remained in use as a boundary for much of the early and mid-Romano-British period. Pit 344140 is also contemporary.

Burial	Sex	Age	Pyre goods	Urned	Ancillary vessels	Comments
332009	Male	Adult 40+	-	-	-	A few sherds of pottery and some pyre debris
330020	?Female	Adult 35+	-	-	-	A few sherds of pottery
330010	?	Adult	-	-	-	Badly truncated
328012	?	Adult/subadult 13+	Nauheim derivative brooch and a badly damaged two piece brooch	?	-	Remains of a pot found near cremated bone
328020	?	?	-	?	2 platters and a beaker	Possible cenotaph. 3 pots found on base of feature, c1 g cremated bone which probably came from a later cremation
328026	-	-	-	-	-	Badly truncated. Shell-tempered pottery recovered but no cremated bone. Possible second cenotaph
330036	?	Adult	-	Yes	4 grog-tempered vessels including a jar and a beaker	Vessels very fragmentary

Table 6.5: Details of Late Iron Age/Romano-British cremation burials

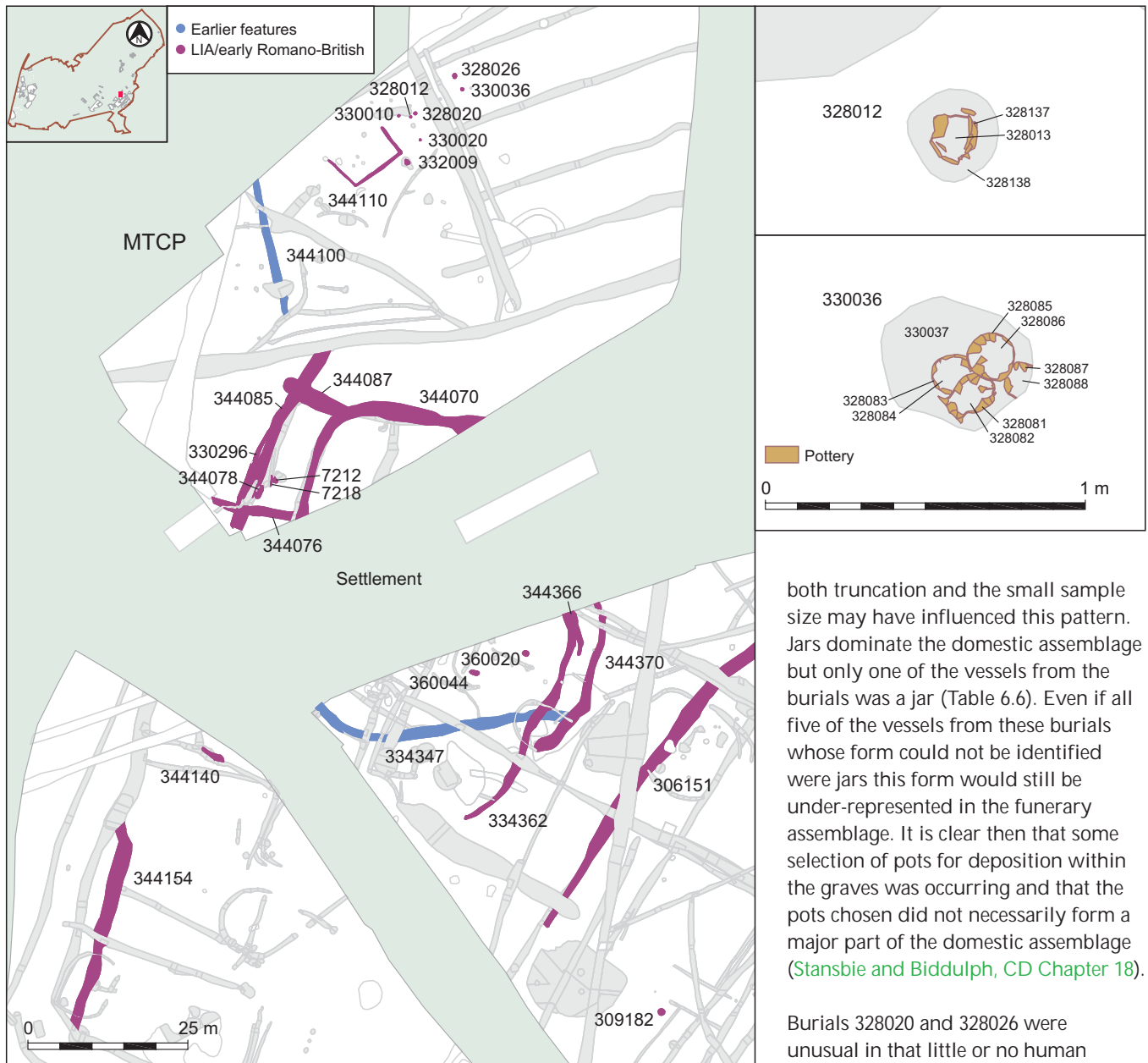


Figure 6.16: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement and cremation burials

The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British cremation burials

A small cremation cemetery was established to the north of the settlement enclosure (Figs 6.15–16). This was associated with a small rectangular enclosure 344110 (9 x 4.8 m), defined on three sides by a shallow U-shaped gully. It is not clear whether this represents a structure or a mortuary enclosure. Seven cremation burials associated with vessels or sherds of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery were situated outside this rectangular enclosure (Fig. 6.16). These were all placed in shallow scoops. Few accompanying artefacts were recovered

but these included brooches and pottery vessels, the former were probably burnt on the pyre (see Table 6.5 for details). The vessels from the cremation burials do show some apparent differences from those associated with the settlement and boundaries although

both truncation and the small sample size may have influenced this pattern. Jars dominate the domestic assemblage but only one of the vessels from the burials was a jar (Table 6.6). Even if all five of the vessels from these burials whose form could not be identified were jars this form would still be under-represented in the funerary assemblage. It is clear then that some selection of pots for deposition within the graves was occurring and that the pots chosen did not necessarily form a major part of the domestic assemblage (Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18).

Burials 328020 and 328026 were unusual in that little or no human bone was recovered (Table 6.5), possibly suggesting that these were cenotaphs. Similar Late Iron Age or early Romano-British examples are known from Westhampnett, West Sussex (Fitzpatrick 1997b, 213–4) and a possible example was recovered from excavations along the A120 at Strood Hall (Biddulph 2007a, 120; McKinley 2007, 136).

Pottery type	Description	Urn	Accessory vessel	Settlement
CAM 218	Deep, carinated bowl, with bulge between cordons on shoulder	?1	None	-
A	Platter	None	2	1
G19.4	Jar, with a tapering or concave neck, everted bead rim and a narrow shoulder cordon	None	1	1
H	Beaker	None	2	2
G and subdivisions	Jar forms	None	None	101

Table 6.6: Types of vessels used in cremation burials on the MTCP site compared to those in adjacent settlements

This small cemetery probably contained the burials of a number of individuals from the nearby settlement, although some selection was practiced as only adults or sub-adults were buried here. Further activity occurred in the early Romano-British period when three cremation burials placed in the enclosure (see Fig. 7.6).

Late Iron Age/early Romano-British enclosure and boundary system

The settlement enclosure and the nearby cemetery were closely associated with a major boundary and trackway complex that crossed the site from north-east to south-west (Figs 6.15, 6.17).

The large boundary ditch (306151) was identified close to the south-eastern edge of the settlement enclosure. It appeared to have been a recut of a far less substantial Late Iron Age ditch (306149, see above). Certainly ditches 306151 and 306045 appear to have been dug along the line of the earlier ditch. Both terminated to the south of the settlement area, leaving a gap of at least 10 m in the boundary close to the settlement. These ditches became narrower and shallower towards their termini, suggesting that they were primarily designed to act as a barrier but that this function was less important in the vicinity of the settlement.

From the gap adjacent to the settlement, ditch 306045 was orientated south-west (Fig. 6.17). Initially it was shallow, measuring 0.31 m deep, becoming more substantial as it continued to the south-west, measuring between 1.0–1.2 m. A bank was on its northern side.

The alignment of this ditch deviated markedly to avoid an area where a medieval windmill was later constructed (Fig. 6.17, Plate 4.12, see Chapter 9, Fig. 9.23). The reasons for this kink in the ditch alignment are not clear but it has been tentatively suggested that there may have been a Bronze Age barrow situated here (see Chapter 4).

The ditch continued to the south-west for 250 m, and at its south-western end it was linked to a trackway by a further short stretch of ditch (308012). The

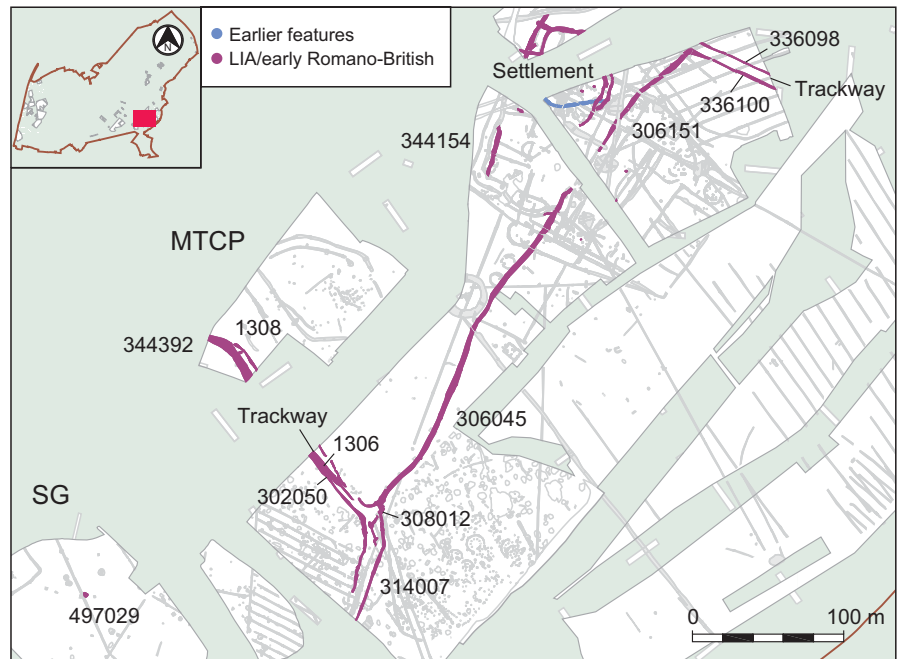


Figure 6.17: The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British enclosure and boundary system

trackway controlled access across the boundary. The south-western stretch comprised two ditches (314007 and 302050) defining a central track 8–10 m wide. Initially, 302050 was a fairly insubstantial feature (324045) but was later reworked and widened slightly. This track curved to the north as it approached the junction with 306045.

At this point the track narrowed to 5–6 m and continued to the north-west. This is the only trackway that continued through the Late Iron Age boundary systems and on to the boulder clay plateau, and the only one to have been at least partially cobbled. Initially the continuation to the north-west comprised a central hollow way (1306) bounded by a pair of ditches (302050 and 1308), and further to the north-west (344392) there is evidence that it had been metalled. Unfortunately, time constraints and bad weather meant that this feature could not be investigated in detail. As a result, this northerly section is not well dated, and

the possibility that it is Roman cannot be discounted. A few small features lay to the south of the boundary ditch.

A second major boundary ditch, 306151, was aligned south-west to north-east (Fig. 6.17). It was very shallow at its south-western end, close to the terminus, but it became progressively deeper further to the north-east, reaching a maximum depth of 1.38 m. This ditch was traced north-east for 90 m before it converged with a trackway. It is not clear whether the boundary continued further to the north-east, beyond the edge of excavation.

Cremation burials and enclosures on the LBR, LBS and CCS sites

Excavations in the eastern area produced scattered evidence for Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity. This consisted of cremation burials (LBS and CCS sites) (Havis and Brooks 2004, 265, 270), an enclosure on the LBR

Site	Cremation	Age	Grave goods	Urned	Ancillary vessel	Comments
CCS	1	Adult	-	Cremated bone placed in a large cooking pot	5 vessels all in poor condition	-
LBS	17	-	-	-	-	Badly truncated, comprised a scatter of cremated human bone and pottery
	23	-	-	-	-	Badly truncated, comprised a scatter of cremated human bone and pottery

Table 6.7: Details of cremation burials

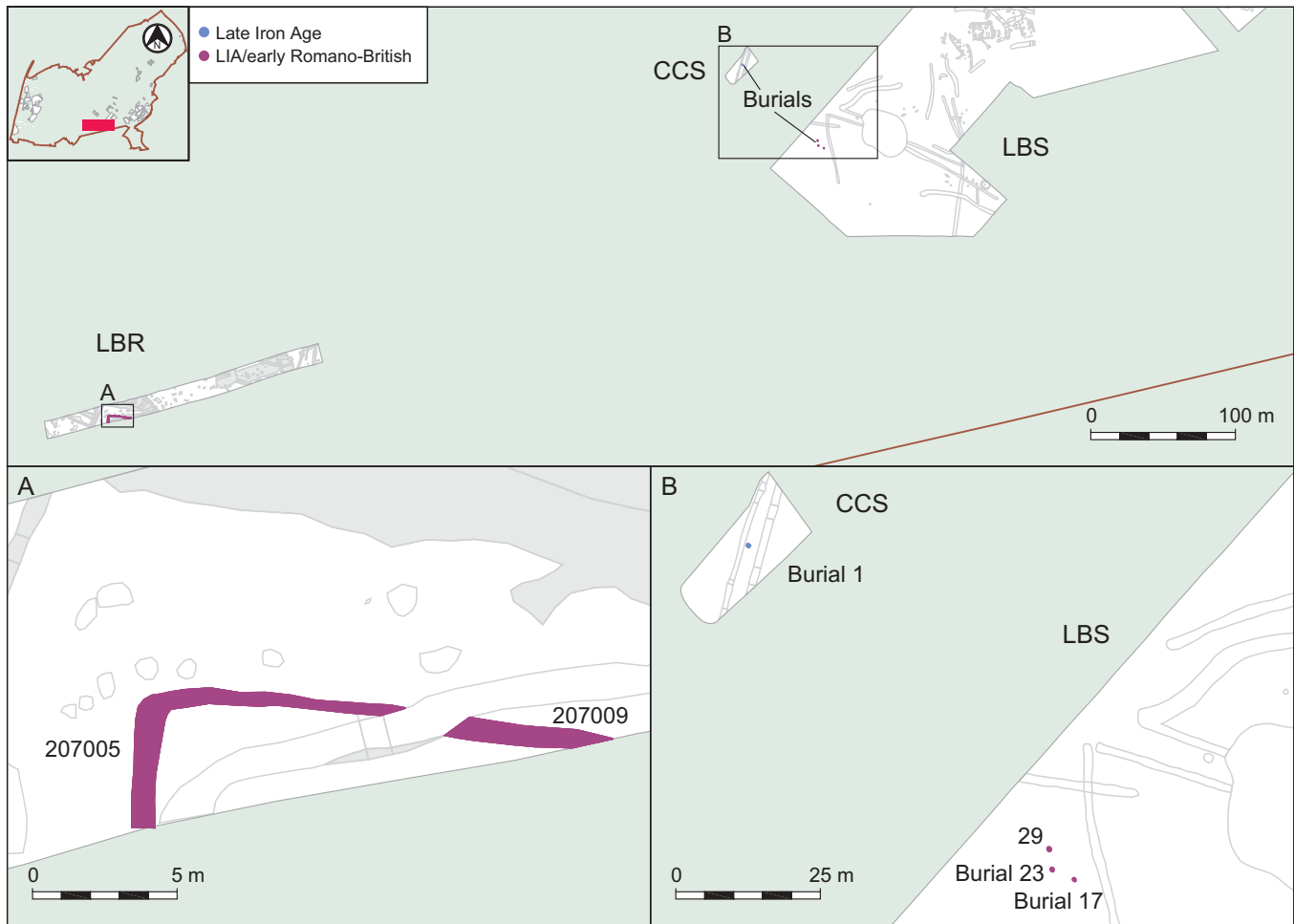


Figure 6.18: Late Iron Age/early Romano-British features

site and an isolated pit or tree-throw on the SG site (Figs 6.15, 6.18). The cremation burials on the SG site (17 and 23) had been badly truncated; burial 1 was accompanied by five pottery vessels (Table 6.7). A single posthole or pit (29) was found near burial 23.

Excavations on the LBR site identified the north-western edge of a Late Iron Age/early Romano-British enclosure (Fig. 6.18). It was defined by a shallow U-shaped ditch (207005), which seems to have silted and then a phase of remodelling occurred (207009). Only a short section of this Late Iron Age/early Romano-British remodelling survived a major cleaning or recutting episode in the early Romano-British period. A small section of these ditches was excavated and it was not possible to determine whether they enclosed a field or a settlement.

Interpretation of some of this activity is hampered by the relatively small areas excavated. However these sites provide

evidence for Late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity. Whether or not these represent settlements or merely sporadic activity in the landscape is unclear. The burials may relate either to the MTCP or ACS settlements or possibly to any activity around the LBR site. However given the limited evidence recovered it is difficult to speculate further.

Boundaries, settlement and society in the pre-conquest period

The evidence for settlement, formalisation of the landscape through increased division, burial and ritual activities has been presented above. In the light of the themes identified at the beginning of the chapter we can examine the evidence and place it within its regional context. It can be seen that the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British periods are characterised by a greatly intensified use of the landscape, with numerous small

settlements, some using previously occupied sites, whilst others were newly built. Some differences in the settlements can be seen and evidence for social differentiation can be noted from the burial evidence. The most likely explanation for the intensification is that it resulted from an increase in the local population. Population growth and increased settlement density have been identified as characteristic of this period, and associated with greater opportunities for agriculture afforded by the introduction of iron tipped plough shares, the use of new cereal types more suited to heavy soils and improved climatic conditions after c 400 BC (Haselgrove *et al.* 2001, 29).

Agriculture

There were major changes in the agricultural base of these settlements. Arable agriculture now formed an important part of the economy, perhaps for the first time, as the evidence for the Middle Iron Age is

inconclusive. Spelt wheat was the dominant cereal with emmer and hulled barley also forming an important component. The weed seeds from the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period however, suggest that this arable agriculture was still largely confined to the lighter soils of the valley floors and slopes. The presence of other weeds characteristic of nutrient depleted soils (such as small-seeded weed vetches) may indicate that the soils of the river valleys were being over-farmed. It is possible that arable yields were poor because any manuring of fields was inadequate (Carruthers, CD Chapter 34). Similar signs of over farming were identified from Late Iron Age/early Romano-British deposits on the A120 excavations (Carruthers 2007), where the associated weed assemblages also indicated that little arable agriculture appears to have been undertaken on wetter heavy soils.

Animal husbandry continued to form a vital part of the agricultural economy. Animals were kept for meat, milk, wool and as draft animals. Cattle and sheep/goat were the main meat animals. Some animals were slaughtered at prime age for their meat, leaving a high percentage unslaughtered as breeding populations from which milk and wool could also be obtained. Small quantities of pig bones suggest that they were butchered relatively young. Small quantities of horse, dog, and deer bones were also found, the latter were probably hunted.

The absence of good pollen assemblages for the period precludes a detailed assessment of the wider environment, although it seems likely that the clay plateau was less wooded than in earlier periods. There is some limited evidence for the variety of species available from nearby woodland and hedges from the charcoal recovered from hearths and cremation burials. Oak and ash were the dominant woods used as fuel for the funerary pyres, but oak heartwood was scarce and most of the fragments comprised narrow roundwood. This may indicate a scarcity of large timbers, as largewood would have been the most suitable for a pyre

(Gale, CD Chapter 35). The roundwood suggests that coppicing may have been practiced in order to manage valuable woodland resources. Roundwood was also recovered from domestic assemblages. The range of other species used for the pyres and domestic fuel were shrubby species such as hazel, hawthorn/*Sorbus* group, willow/poplar, field maple and blackthorn. These could have come from the trimming of hedgerows, from woodland margins or areas of scrub (Gale, CD Chapter 35).

There can be little doubt that the majority of settlements excavated were predominantly agricultural in nature. Only one of the sites of this date excavated (ACS site) differs in terms of its layout and associated material culture, but even here it was thought likely that the animal bone recovered represented a combination of domestic and butchery waste (Mainland 2004, 187) and that the domesticates were being bred and reared on the settlement itself. In contrast to this, however, the charred plant remains suggested that the cereals used on the site (predominantly spelt, with smaller quantities of emmer and bread wheat) were processed prior to their arrival on the site. Here too, the composition of the weed assemblage pointed to cereals being grown on the lighter soils on the edge of the clay plateau (Murphy 2004a, 338).

Whilst there is little doubt that there is increased settlement density noted both at Stansted and elsewhere in the region (see Bryant and Niblett, 1997, for settlement density in Hertfordshire and the north Chilterns), the precise reasons for this, and its extent, are difficult to postulate. There can be little doubt that the population had expanded by this period, whilst the evidence from the charred plants suggest that crop yields might be falling due to over farming or under manuring, and also that there was little effort made to introduce arable practices to the heavy clays of the plateau. In other words, the expanding population was being fed using much the same techniques as had generations of their predecessors. The poor agricultural land of the clay plateau forced a continued reliance on

animal husbandry, whilst an increasing population appears to have relied on farmland which may have been farmed intermittently since the Bronze Age. It may have been the tensions inherent in this relationship which led to the increased need for boundaries to define areas of settlement, agriculture, woodland and common land.

Enclosure

As well as acting as physical boundaries, these enclosures structured the daily lives of the people. A loosely enclosed landscape had become one in which engaging in daily tasks involved the negotiation of these barriers. Movement was now constrained, and the division of the landscape inevitably would have led to altered perceptions not only of the landscape as a whole, but also individual enclosed elements of that landscape. In other words, whilst there is always likely to have been a difference in the way people lived their daily lives in different zones of the landscape, with the river valleys and clay plateau inevitably farmed in different ways, this formalisation of these areas is likely to have influenced peoples' perceptions of that landscape and the way in which they continued to use it. Whilst in many cases these responses are not likely to have left their mark in the archaeological record, there is some evidence that boundaries, and in particular linear boundaries, increasingly became a focus for the deposition of cultural material and even of the dead. There is clear evidence for the deposition of animal bones, particularly cattle, favouring ditches above any other type of feature (Bates, CD Chapter 32). At the ACS site cattle bones were more commonly found in ditches whilst pig bones dominated the central shrine (Mainland 2004, 187). Elsewhere differential deposition of animal bone has been noted; the reasons for which are complex but may include the butchery and disposal of large mammal carcasses towards the edges of settlements (Maltby 1996, 19).

This pattern of increased enclosure of land is one which has been remarked on elsewhere, including on the nearby A120 excavations, on sites such as East

of Little Dunmow Road, although here it was interpreted as likely to represent a local rather than a widespread re-organisation on the landscape (Powell 2007, 69–70). On a wider scale, Bryant and Niblett (1997) have highlighted a number of settlement complexes of this date in Hertfordshire and the north Chilterns where large tracts of agricultural and settlements are enclosed. Although the settlements they refer to are both more extensive and of higher status than the Stansted examples, there are a number of parallels worth highlighting, particularly in the way boundaries were used to divide the landscape. At *Verlamion*, for example, settlement seemed to be confined to the plateau edge, with the lower slopes and valley floor cut off from the settlements by ditches and evidence for agriculture in the river valleys (Bryant and Niblett 1997, 273–4), whilst at Baldock the enclosure of the landscape incorporates a number of multiple parallel ditches similar to the example excavated on the LTCP site at Stansted, some of which are apparently linked to settlement enclosures (*ibid.*, 278).

Further afield, work in the Thames Valley and Wessex area has identified large tracts of largely unenclosed land associated with both enclosed and unenclosed settlements and trackways, the organisation of which appears to have been determined at a local rather than a regional or ‘tribal’ level (McOmish 2001, 79). Here, changes in settlement and boundary morphology were interpreted as being important in establishing successful social groups (*ibid.*, 75).

The formalised division of the landscape at Stansted using boundary ditches inevitably leads to considerations of the nature of settlement and the relationships between the inhabitants of the different settlements. Our dating tools are too imprecise to allow us to establish whether the entire system was laid out to incorporate existing settlements and zones of the landscape in one event by an authority figure or group, or whether boundaries developed organically through a process of negotiation and agreement, or even through a combination of the

two. Such questions go to the heart of the nature of Iron Age society. This expansion and formalisation of the landscape is a pattern noted elsewhere (Bryant 1997, 27–8).

Whatever the motivations and influences behind their construction, it would seem that these ditches became an accepted part of the inhabitants’ world. Some became foci for acts of deposition, in which selected material was incorporated into the ditch fills, whilst others were cleaned out and reworked. Once it had been established, however, there appears to have been little attempt to alter the nature of the enclosed landscape. Where new ditches were dug, the intent seems to have been to enhance or subdivide existing boundaries and enclosures, in some cases to provide increased space for expanding settlements.

Settlement and status

All of the settlements occupied in the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British periods were enclosed. Three of these developed from small settlements in the Middle Iron Age (on the LTCP, M11 and MTCP sites). The western settlement on the LTCP site showed direct evidence for continuity, where a Mid-/Late Iron Age roundhouse was enclosed in the Late Iron Age. Similar continuity of settlement has been postulated for two of the Middle Iron Age sites excavated at Highwood Farm and East of Little Dunmow Road on the A120 (Powell 2007).

A comparative study of the oval enclosure on the LTCP site and all the enclosed settlements at Stansted highlights the differences between the ACS site and the others (Figs 6.19–20). The ACS site clearly shows a degree of planning in its layout, with a large enclosure enclosed by a substantial ditch, and the central shrine apparently respected by successive phases of roundhouses.

The size of the enclosing ditch itself is only matched by that of the oval enclosure on the western edge of the plateau. None of the settlements on



Figure 6.19: Reconstruction of the settlement on the ACS site

the LTCP, MTCP or M11 sites were afforded so substantial or so well planned an enclosure. Indeed, examination of the layout of these suggests that they may have developed in a more *ad hoc* fashion, with enclosures expanded and subdivided as required, a theme less evident on the ACS site where only the later sub-division of the northern corner of the enclosure hints at similar behaviour.

The scale of the settlement on the ACS site is also unparalleled elsewhere. On each of the other sites excavated, there is rarely evidence for more than one main roundhouse in use at the same time, whilst on the ACS site numerous structures were occupied contemporaneously (Figs 6.19–20). There was also a highly organised and planned interior layout to this site. This latter aspect of the ACS site may also be paralleled at Fison Way, Thetford, where an enclosed Iron Age and early Romano-British settlement of some importance was established (Gregory 1991, 189–201).

The characteristics of the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Romano-British roundhouses are shown in Table 6.1. From this it is clear that most of these can be divided into two groups based on the diameter of the ring gully. Nearly half of those for which the diameter could be recorded (8 out of 17) had diameters of between 7 m and 10 m, whilst a further eight had diameters ranging between 10 m and 13 m. Only one roundhouse, circular structure 550, was larger, with a diameter of 15 m. This was clearly an important building within the ACS settlement, and it was within the ring gully of this structure that the hoard of potin coins was found (see above).

These roundhouses are similar in form to their Middle Iron Age predecessors. Debate continues over whether the shallow stretches of encircling gullies represented gullies to help with drainage or whether they are the remains of shallow wall trenches. The gully surrounding circular structure 550 for example, was interpreted as representing a wall trench (Havis and Brooks 2004, 99), whilst others have been interpreted as drainage gullies. A particularly well preserved roundhouse excavated on the East of Parsonage Lane site incorporated two ring gullies. The inner, slightly polygonal gully, probably housed a series of straight wall plates whilst the smaller outer gully was probably for drainage (Powell 2007).

None of the structures excavated on the Stansted sites has convincing evidence for structural postholes. Where postholes have been recorded, they relate to porches or door posts. Given these survivals, it seems unlikely that many other postholes have been completely destroyed.

Roundhouses such as these were the dominant form of domestic buildings from the Bronze Age onwards, and analysis of well-preserved Iron Age examples from Wessex and the Western Isles suggest that they physically defined the patterns of everyday life, with 'task zones' in some areas (Giles and Parker Pearson 1999). Domestic tasks seem to have been undertaken in the southern half of the house with more private activities such as sleeping in the north. There was usually a central hearth and movement into the house probably progressed clockwise (sunwise) around the hearth, through the domestic space and into the private space. In this way, activity zones may also have acted as metaphors for agricultural calendar or even for people's lives (Giles and Parker Pearson 1999).

The scale and layout of the ACS settlement clearly sets it apart from other sites in the area. The space afforded to the central rectangular structure, with the domestic and ancillary structures crowded into the margins of the enclosure, clearly highlights its significance.

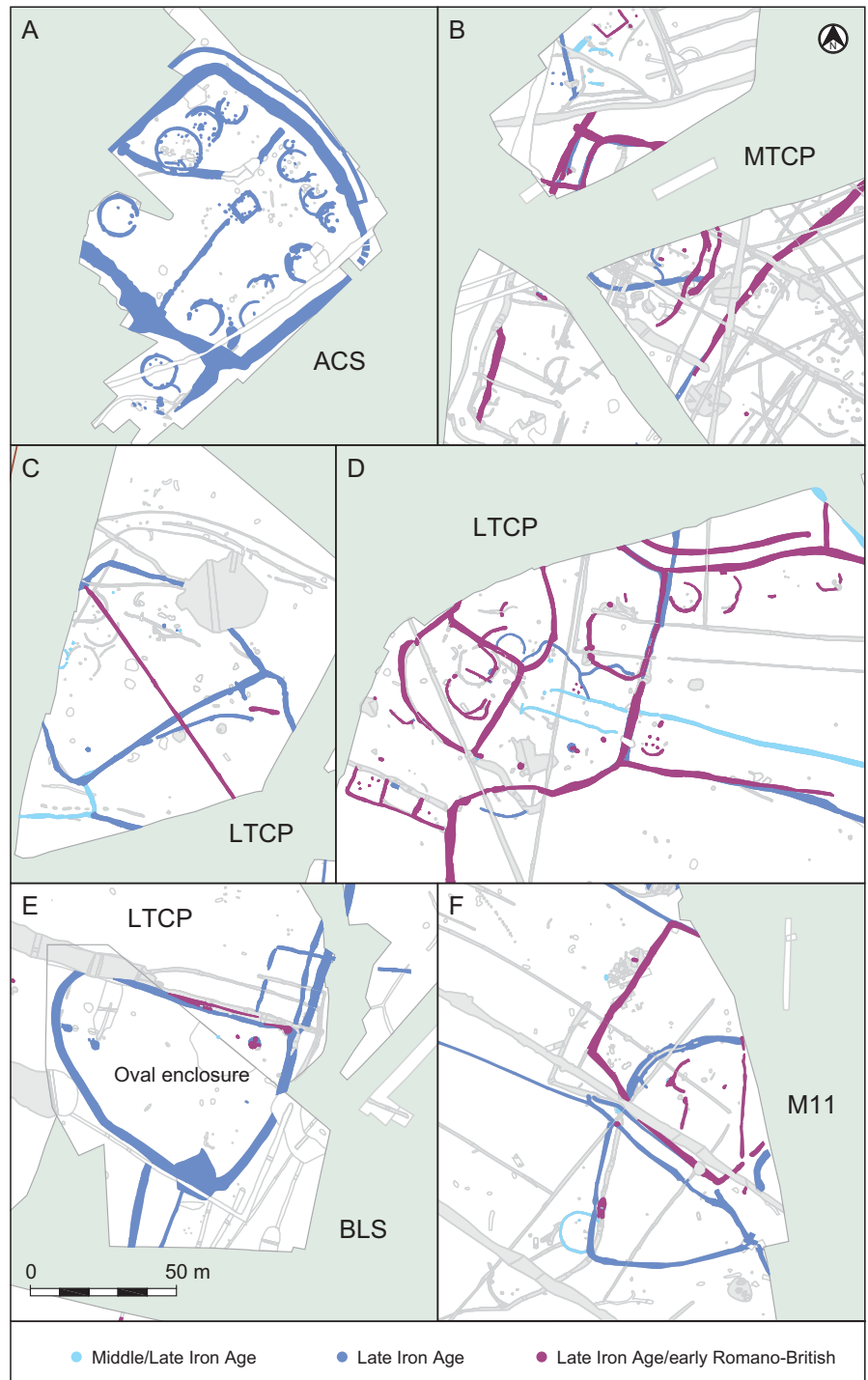


Figure 6.20: Comparative plans of settlements

No similar structures to this have been identified elsewhere in the area. Havis and Brooks suggested that this structure functioned as a shrine or temple on the basis of its form, position within the settlement and its direct association with a number of pits containing placed deposits in the early Romano-British period (2004, 533). A possible rectangular structure at East of Little Dunmow Road on the A120 excavations could conceivably have

been a shrine (Powell 2007, 60) although there is no substantive evidence to support this. Comparative examples of shrines are summarised by Havis and Brooks (2004, 532–3, see also Wait 1985, 154–90) and include Danebury, South Cadbury, Heathrow and Little Waltham (Drury 1980a).

The structure from the ACS site at Stansted meets most of the criteria defined by Wait (1985) and Downes

Material	ACS	LTCP (W)	LTCP (E)	LTCP Oval enclosure	M11	MTCP
Locally made pottery	x	x	x	x	x	x
Amphorae	x					
Shale vessel	7					
Brooches	2	2		1		2 (in a burial)
Potin coins	51					
Struck bronze coins	2					2
Bracelets	4	1				
Finger rings	1					
Iron tools	14			2		
Quernstone	1	1		1	2	
Loomweights	80 pieces					
Spindlewhorls	18	1				
Briquetage	752 g	6 g	69 g	39 g, 2 pieces	6 g	142 g
Clay slabs	6924 g	396 g	95 g	394 g, 1300 g	716 g	
Metalworking debris				x	x	

x = present but not quantified Red= material from BLS site

Table 6.8: Elements of material culture found on the six enclosed sites studied

(1997) for the identification of a shrine, namely that the form and construction of the building should differ from domestic structures, it should face east, and be isolated or set apart from areas of settlement and should not be associated with domestic artefacts or features.

The inhabitants of the ACS settlement had access to a wider set of cultural material through trade than the rest of the sites studied. This might indicate that they were afforded higher status in contemporary society. Table 6.8 below shows the presence or absence of different items from each of the six enclosed sites. From this it is clear that there a number of elements of material culture found on the ACS site which are not paralleled elsewhere on the enclosed sites (sherds of Republican amphorae, shale vessels, potin coins, finger rings, iron tools and loomweights). In addition other categories of material culture (spindlewhorls, briquetage and clay slabs) were much more numerous on the ACS site. Obviously the proportions of material recovered may reflect different excavation strategies for these sites, and might be misleading. However, given that only three sections were hand excavated across the enclosure ditch on the ACS site, and that most of the material recovered from the other sites was recovered from ditches, if anything the assemblage from the ACS site might be an under-representation.

Despite this, it is clear that a wider array of material was in use on the ACS site, some of it, such as the sherds of amphorae and the shale vessels probably representing 'high status' material. The amphorae from the site form an important group of Dressel 1A and 1B sherds. These were made in Italy in the Late Republican period, and used to transport goods, predominantly wine (Williams 2004, 168). Amphorae appear to have been valued in their own right in Late Iron Age contexts (Havis and Brooks 2004, 533), and are often found in assemblages containing other high status goods. A number have been found in rich Late Iron Age burials, for example at Baldock, where a Dressel 1A amphora was buried in a grave alongside two bronze bowls, two bronze covered wooden tripod vessels, a bronze and iron cauldron and a pair of iron fire dogs (Stead and Rigby 1986). Indeed, the presence of at least one amphora in a grave became one of the criteria on which the wealthy 'Welwyn-type' burials of the 1st century BC were defined (Stead 1967, 44).

Shale vessels, although not unusual in the Late Iron Age, are rare in Essex, and the size of the assemblage from the ACS site is likely to reflect the status of the inhabitants (Major 2004d, 137). The nearest outcrops of shale lie to the west in Bedfordshire, although the extensive deposits at Kimmeridge in Dorset were also widely exploited. Shale vessels are

also occasionally found in wealthy burials (Kennet 1977). There is also some evidence for craft specialisation on the ACS site, with significant assemblages of loomweights and spindlewhorls suggesting that spinning and weaving was undertaken, probably in the south-eastern half of the site (Major 2004e, 169–73). A single small spindlewhorl from the western settlement on the LTCP site represents the only evidence for textile manufacture on the other sites excavated.

The presence of briquetage and slabs associated with making salt on so many sites so far from the coast is interesting. It seems unlikely that salt was transported in the briquetage troughs in which it was made, but traded as blocks. The quantities of material recovered from Stansted seem unlikely to have arrived in the area accidentally. In this context, the suggestion that briquetage may have acted as salt licks for animals may have some merit (Sealey 1995).

There is no evidence for metalworking on the ACS site, although evidence for small-scale metalworking has been recovered both from the oval enclosure on the LTCP site and from the M11 site. Despite this, it is clear that in all other respects, the settlement and shrine complex on the ACS site is clearly sufficiently different in form, layout, scale and material culture for it to be regarded as having higher status than the other settlements excavated to date. It is uncertain whether this is a reflection of the inhabitants themselves or the importance of the shrine structure. The continued use of the shrine on the site after the abandonment of the settlement as a focus for deposition indicates that it certainly played a role in the importance of the site.

The remaining settlements at Stansted all appear to have been fairly low status agricultural ones, probably representing family units. They differ little in scale from their Middle Iron Age predecessors except that the landscape was more extensively enclosed. With the increasing division of the landscape came a more diverse array of contacts and relationships beyond

the immediate locale, as can be seen in the finds assemblages recovered from many of the sites. Similar patterns have been noted elsewhere locally – the use of continental finewares on the East of Little Dunmow site highlights the wider trade networks accessible to such sites. (Powell 2007).

The settlement on the ACS site appears to have been largely abandoned by *c* 25 BC (Going 2004, 139–40). Although the chronology of the remaining sites is less precise, most appear to have continued in use into the 1st century AD (although this is not clear with regard to the western settlement on the LTCP site). All used the grog-tempered wares which dominated the pottery assemblages from *c* 20 BC onwards. It is not clear, against this background, why the ACS settlement should have been abandoned at a time in which other settlements were clearly thriving. It may be that the motivation behind this abandonment may have been political rather than economic. The sites at Stansted lie within the area thought to be occupied by the tribe known as the *Trinovantes*, but close to the border with their powerful western neighbours the *Catuvellauni*. It has been suggested that the River Stort may have acted as the boundary between these tribal groups (Branigan 1987). Given the proximity of the ACS site to this boundary, the possibility that the settlement was abandoned as a result of political tensions between these tribes cannot be discounted.

Acts of deposition

A number of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British boundary and enclosure ditches were the focus for acts of deposition (Plates 6.9–10). Animal remains were frequently afforded special depositional status, especially major domesticated species such as cattle, sheep and pigs, whilst a recurrent association was recorded between horse and dog (both ‘trained’ animals) at Danebury (Fitzpatrick 1997a, 82). Burial of animal bones in liminal boundaries, often accompanied by midden material with its potentially regenerative properties, may have acted as propitiatory offerings.

The tendency to dispose of animal bone in boundary ditches at Stansted has already been noted (see above and Bates, CD Chapter 32), with cattle bone in particular treated in this fashion (Figs 6.21–3, Plates 6.9–10). This itself may represent a pattern of structured deposition but may also simply represent disposal of carcasses away from the settlement (Maltby 1996, 19).

As a result of this, deposits of disarticulated animal bone alone have not been considered as structured depositional acts, especially as no major concentrations of unaccompanied bone occur. Deposits of articulated animal



Plate 6.9 (top): The excavation of a placed deposit of animal bone

Plate 6.10 (right): Placed deposit of animal bone in enclosure ditch 147045

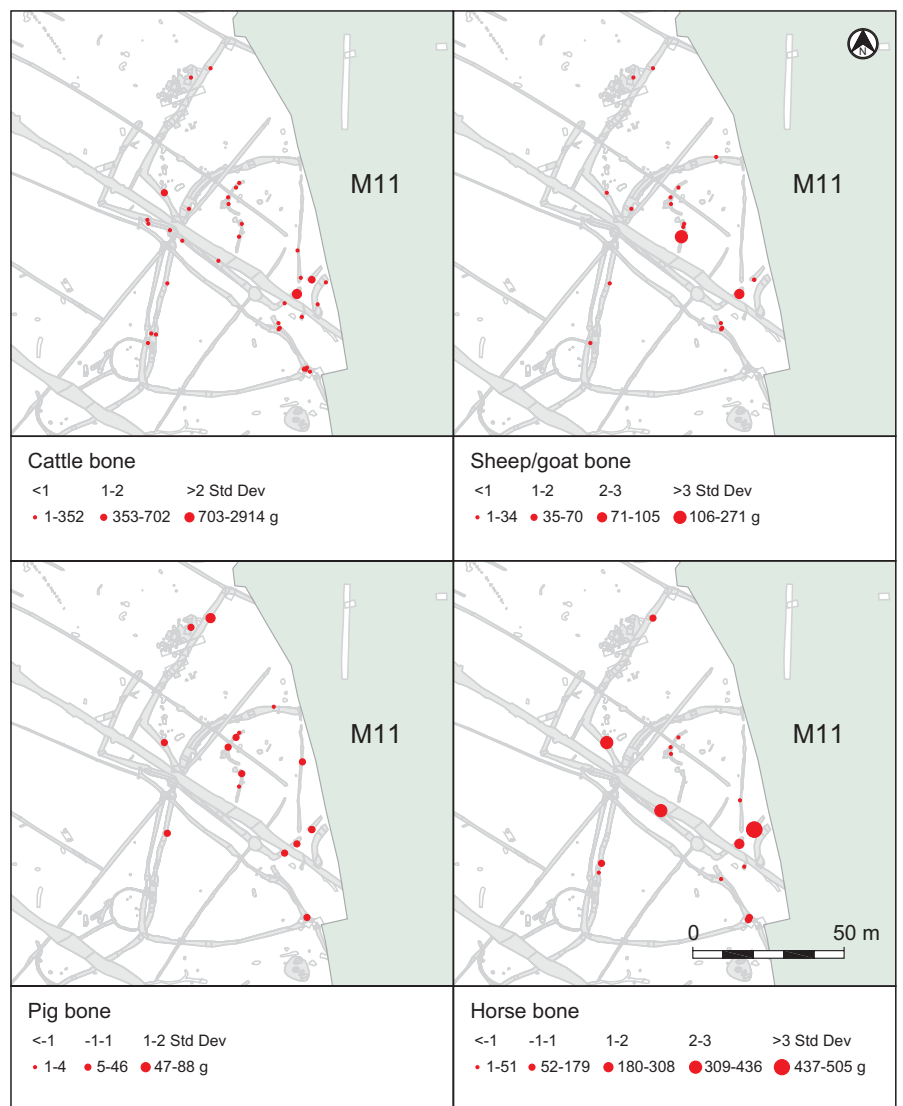


Figure 6.21: Animal bone distribution by species

bone, such as the burial of a dog in the upper fills of pit 102011 do occur, but these are rare.

Identification of placed or structured deposits at Stansted has relied on the presence of a combination of different artefact types and their distribution both within a deposit and within a feature. These artefact types include:

- Complete or nearly complete pots
- Articulated and disarticulated animal bone
- Metalworking waste
- Worked stone artefacts
- Chalk nodules and other non-local stones

Whilst this interpretation took no account of the feature or intervention type (ie pit, ditch or ditch terminal), or even the position of the deposit within the silting sequence of a feature, some patterning is evident. Deposits considered to be deliberate acts are summarised in Table 6.9.

From this it is clear that ditches were favoured for acts of deposition, with deposits found both in the terminals of ditches and along their length. Deposits seem to occur throughout the fill sequences of features – on the base of newly dug features, after periods of natural silting and in the very last deposits within features. Although we are only dealing with a few such deposits, it is possible to suggest some general patterns of deposition.

All three deposits placed in newly dug features incorporated one or more complete or nearly complete pottery vessel (108024, 361002 and 441009) and only one (361002) may have been buried along with other cultural material.

Animal bone, both articulated and disarticulated, appears to have formed an important element of most of the deposits placed in partially silted ditches. Cattle bone dominates these assemblages, although horse appears to have been significant. Skulls and mandibles seem to have been relatively common elements (Fig. 6.23). Only one of these deposits (433052) contained a complete pot, although complete pots may have been amongst the fragmented assemblage associated with deposit 433028. These deposits also contain the most diverse range of materials incorporated within them.

The two deposits in the top of features (444011 and 434001) both included complete pots. The latter also contained a number of pieces of animal bone.

Although the sample size is small, there seems to be some indication that the burial of pottery vessels is appropriate for newly dug features or for 'closing' deposits for features, whilst a wider array of material (including material associated with the wider economy of the settlement (food animals, draft animals, crop processing, metalworking and pottery manufacture) was deposited whilst ditches and the settlements they enclosed were still in use. This suggests that different material may have had different associations whilst buried in these placed deposits.

There is a direct association between these acts of deposition and enclosure ditches (in particular the boundaries which separated areas of settlement (or 'living') from areas likely to be used for agricultural purposes, or, in the case of deposit 147045, from an area associated with the dead. The latter is a particularly large deposit, and its location in the segment of ditch closest to the contemporary mortuary enclosures cannot be by chance.

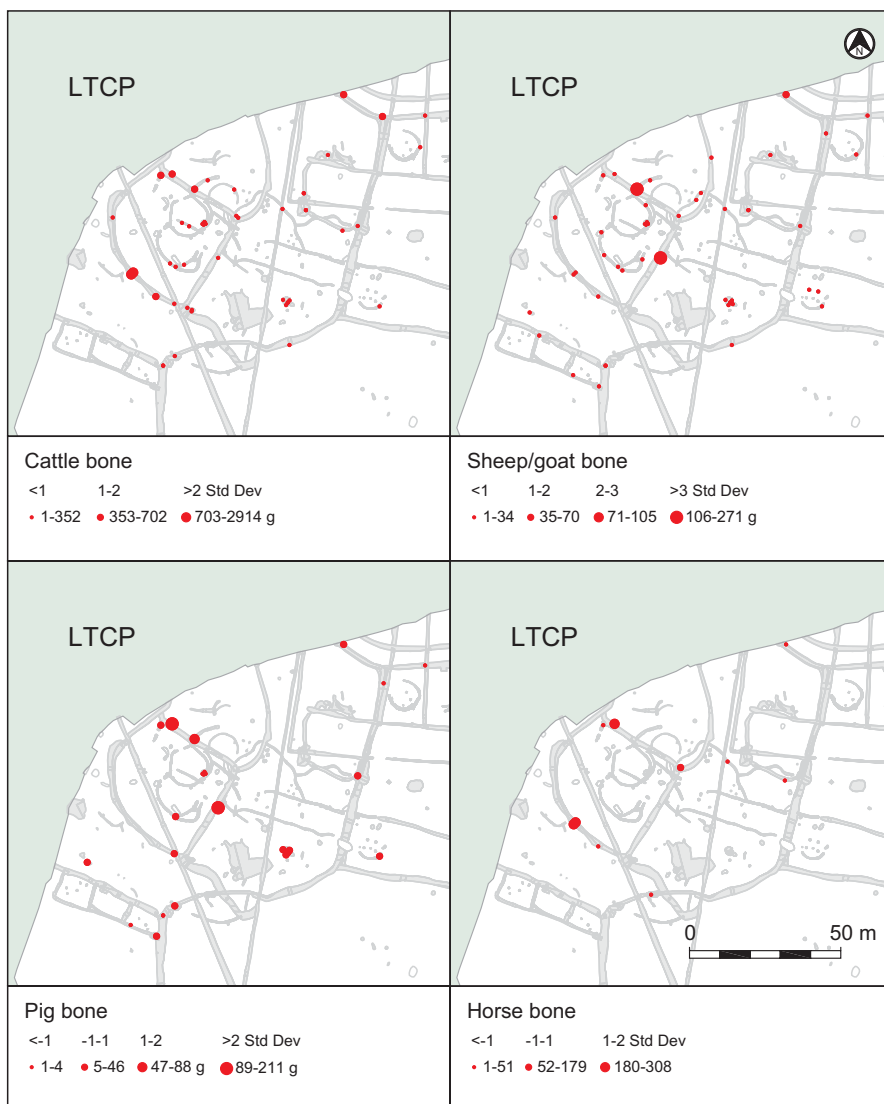


Figure 6.22: Animal bone distribution by species

However, these bones only occur in one level of the fill sequence of this ditch, suggesting that the deposition of this material was only considered necessary for a short period of time. Indeed it is possible that much of this material was dumped in a single event. These acts of deposition seem to represent individual actions of burial designed to mark the construction, use and abandonment of particular features using appropriate materials to the stage of the features cycle. They probably represent acts of negotiation, whether of propitiation or offerings, presumably in order to ensure future success for the settlements.

One final act of deposition which deserves consideration within this context is the burial of a juvenile, aged 9–12, in grave 110084 (Fig. 6.24). This was dug into the partially silted Late Iron Age oval enclosure ditch. This is the only burial from the excavations at Stansted of a child or juvenile, and takes an entirely different form to the other archaeologically definable traces of burial. A second find of human bone from the enclosure ditch on the MTCP site – fragments of an adult human skull – may have formed a placed deposit, but was not associated with any other unusual cultural material. This burial or placement of ancestors on the boundaries of settlement and wider boundaries ensures tradition and continuity, and possibly reaffirms differences between ‘social’ and ‘natural’ worlds (Fitzpatrick 1997a, 83).

Site	Deposit numbers	Description
LTCP	108024 (intervention 108023, LIA ditch 113048)	2 grog-tempered cooking pots placed on the bottom of a newly dug ditch
	147045 (intervention 147015)	A major dump of animal bone (over 6 kg) 3 m in length in a partially silted ditch. It included articulated and disarticulated bone, predominantly cattle with smaller quantities of horse and sheep/goat. It was dominated by mandibles, vertebrae and ribs
MTCP	361002 intervention 361005, Late Iron Age/early Romano-British ditch 344070	A silty ware bowl, placed on the base of the feature and sealed by a deposit containing further sherds of pottery and horse, cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones
M11	433028 intervention 433026 LIA/ERB enclosure ditch 433033	A large quantity of animal bone (predominantly cattle, but also including horse, pig and sheep/goat) buried with a number of unworked flint nodules, numerous sherds of pottery (a cheese strainer, two jars and a carinated bowl), and metalworking debris (smithing hearth bottom, vitrified hearth lining and cinder) in a partially silted ditch
	433042, LIA/ERB enclosure ditch 433041	Deposit 433042 was placed in the partially silted ditch terminal. It comprised a large quantity of animal bone—predominantly cattle and horse bone, but with very small quantities of pig and sheep/goat. The horse bone included a skull, placed on its (right) side, laid on a layer of chalk nodules. Other finds from the deposit included a handful of sherds of pottery, over 50 worked flints and a burnt fragment of broken quernstone
	433052 intervention 433048 LIA ditch 433054	A complete LIA grog-tempered round shouldered jar was placed on its side in the fill of partially silted ditch. Associated material comprised animal bone, including a fragment of skull from a medium sized mammal
	434001 intervention 434004 EIA/MIA ditch 433055	A complete grog-tempered pot was placed upright in the almost completely silted ditch
	439050 intervention 439047 LIA ditch 433054	This deposit lay on top of the primary fill and comprised two sheep/goat jawbones lain back to back, adjacent to a round quartz pot burnisher and a fragment of clay slab
	441009 intervention 441010, LIA/ERB ditch 433033	A largely complete LIA/ERB jar came from the primary silting
	444011 intervention 444010 LBA/EIA ditch 424039	This deposit was buried in the very top of intervention 444010. It comprised a grog-tempered LIA pot laid on its side together with a number of animal bones including a cattle skull fragment and a large fragment of horse pelvis

Table 6.9: Details of placed deposits

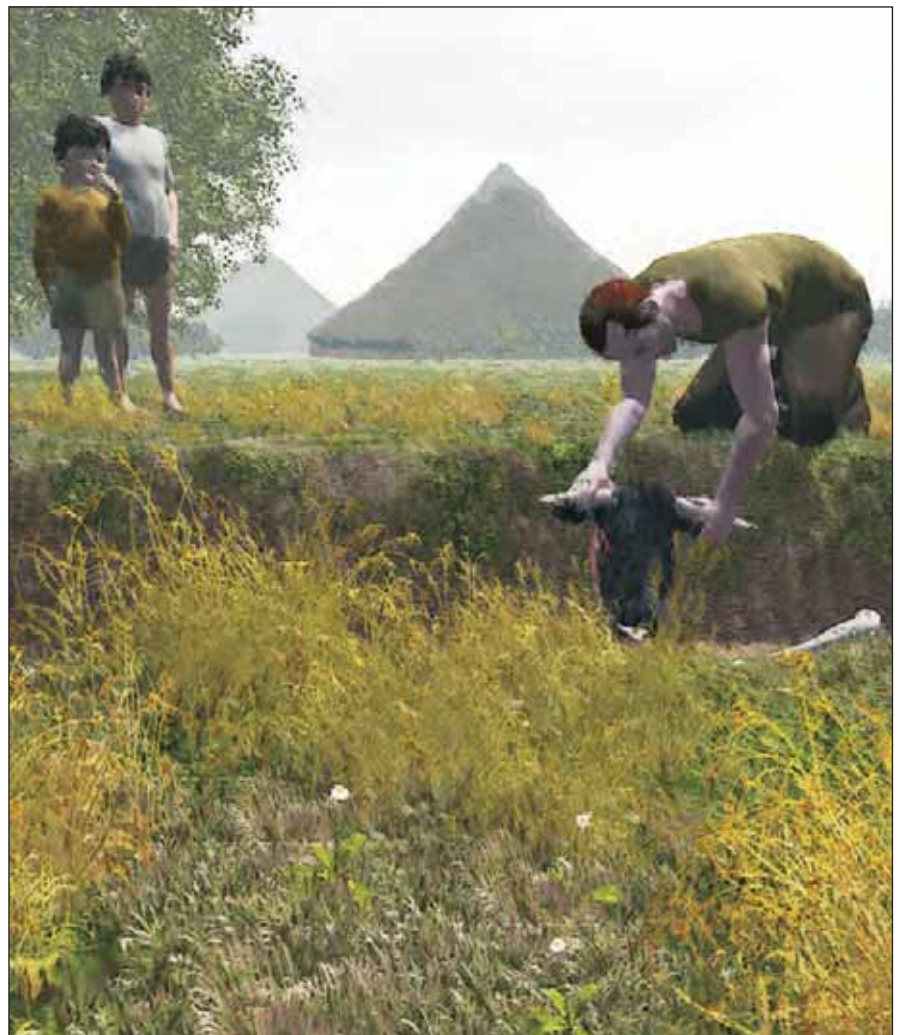


Figure 6.23: Reconstruction of an act of deposition in the settlement enclosure ditch on the LTCP site

Burial in the landscape

The majority of the pre-conquest burials comprise small deposits of cremated human bone, often either urned or buried with accompanying grave goods. This, however, is likely to represent the burial rite afforded to a minority of the population only. Excarnation by exposure is likely to have been the predominant mortuary rite of Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age (Carr and Knüsel 1997, 167). The presence of disarticulated remains and partially decomposed material buried in pits on settlements in Late Iron Age contexts points to the continued use of excarnation in the Late Iron Age (Fitzpatrick 1997a, 82) alongside other burial rites (Fig. 6.24). The cremation burials at Stansted belong to the group of Late Iron Age burials originally known as 'Aylesford-Swarling' burials and now known as 'Aylesford-type' burials (Birchall 1965; Fitzpatrick 1997b, 208–9). These burials are largely confined to the east and south-east of England, with few recorded in the west, and are characterised by the burial of a quantity of human bone, often in a pottery vessel, and often accompanied by grave goods (Whimster 1981, 147–59; Fitzpatrick 1997b, 208 and fig. 115). These are often found in small cemeteries or as isolated graves, although larger cemeteries are known, such as Westhampnett in Sussex (Fitzpatrick 1997b) and King Harry Lane in *Verulamium* (Stead and Rigby 1989). The chronology of these burials has been subject to much debate, but recent work suggests that the early phase of 'Aylesford-type' burials (the richly furnished 'Welwyn-type' burials) were probably start in the 70s BC or earlier, and that the developed rite continued into the 1st century AD (Fitzpatrick 1997b, 208).

The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British cremation burials provide an opportunity to examine three groups of burials within a wider landscape. Although the sample size is limited, we can make some general observations about these burials; they are summarised in Table 6.10.



Figure 6.24: Reconstruction of the burial of a young girl in the oval enclosure ditch during the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period on the LTCP site

The age and sex of a number of the individuals buried in the three groups could be determined with varying degrees of success. Where age could be determined, the dead were predominantly adults, with a single adult/subadult from the LTCP site being the sole exception. Fewer individuals could be sexed, but both men and women appear to have been among the burial population of both the cemetery associated with the eastern settlement on the LTCP site and the cemetery on the MTCP site. Studies on the much

larger group of Late Iron Age burials from King Harry Lane, *Verulamium* suggested that men were more likely than women to have been cremated and buried in this fashion (Pearce 1997, 176), whilst conversely at Westhampnett, more individuals could be sexed as female than male (Fitzpatrick 1997b, 221) although on both sites only a minority of the dead could be sexed. The small number of cremation burials from all three Stansted sites and the probability that all members of the population were not being disposed of

in the cemetery (with immature individuals absent) makes any assessment of demography impractical (McKinley, CD Chapter 27). It seems likely, however, given their location, that these cemeteries probably served individual settlements or farmsteads.

Using the information from these cremation burials, it is possible to partially reconstruct the mortuary rites associated with cremation burial, based on the sequence for Iron Age mortuary ritual suggested for Westhampnett (Fitzpatrick 2001, 27). It is important to note, that the level of truncation suffered by some of the burials on the DCS site may have affected the material recovered – no pyre debris or animal bone was recovered from any of these cremation burials.

Death and preparation for cremation

The mourning process is likely to have begun with the preparation of the dead for cremation. This may have involved dressing the dead in a fashion appro-

priate to their age, sex and status. At least one of the brooches from the recent excavations appears to have been burnt on the pyre, and may indicate that the body was clothed at burial. Material would have to be gathered for the construction of the pyre itself. Experimental research on pyre structures has demonstrated that approximately one tonne of wood is required to consume an adult human body (McKinley 1994a). Whilst this may have involved wood derived from nearby woodland (with oak apparently favoured because of its burning properties), some of the wood is likely to have derived from dismantled structures judging from the presence of iron nails in the pyre debris of a number of burials (see above). Other preparations are likely to have included the slaughter of animals – a number of the burials on the LTCP site included cremated animal bone – the construction of the pyre and the selection of goods to accompany the body. This culminated in the transport of the body and goods to the chosen site and preparing the pyre for the cremation process.

Cremation and burial

The cremation pyre was lit, presumably with attendant ceremonies. No evidence for any pyre sites has been found at Stansted, although some are known from elsewhere in Britain. At Westhampnett, pyre sites were closely linked to the cemetery (Fitzpatrick 1997b, 18–35), but at Stansted, enough of the landscape surrounding the cemeteries has been excavated to indicate that the pyre sites probably lay some distance away. The pyre was then left to cool, possibly overnight, before the cremated human bone was collected. Not all of the cremated bone was recovered for burial, but elements from all of the main body parts appear to be represented (McKinley, CD Chapter 27). Token quantities of the pyre goods may also have been recovered for burial (such as the brooch from grave 328012 or the burnt pedestal urn sherds in burial 54, and burnt animal bone from a number of burials).

Table 6.10: Summary of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British burials

Site	Burial	Within mortuary enclosure	Associated with mortuary enclosure	Within ditch	Associated with boundary ditch	Age	Sex	Urned	Vessels	Metalwork	Animal bone	Pyre debris	Comments
LTCP	995073	Yes				?	?	Yes	-	-			Central burial. Pedestal urn
	995080	Yes				?	?	Yes	-	-			Central burial. Damaged pot
	151004	Yes				25-45	?	No	1	-		Yes	Central burial. Pedestal urn
	146005	Yes				Adult/subadult	?	Yes	-	-			Damaged pot
	150007	Yes				Adult	?	No	1	-	Yes	Yes	Damaged pot
	150009	Yes				Adult	?	Yes	-	-			Damaged pot
	150012	Yes				Adult	?Male	No	-	-		Yes	-
	151008	Yes				Adult > 30	?	?	1	-	Yes	Yes	Jar
	113072		Yes			Adult	?	No	1	-	Yes	Yes	Saucepan-shaped cooking pot. Animal bone includes pig and sheep/goat
143075			Yes		25-45	Female	No	1	-	Yes	Yes	Braughing jar. Burnt and unburnt animal bone	
DCS	19				?Yes	?	?	No	1	3			3 brooches
	21				?Yes	?	?	No	1	-			Jar
	23				?Yes	Adult	?	Yes	1	-			Jar used as cinerary urn, butt beaker
	54				?Yes	?	?	2	-				Burnt pedestal urn. 2nd vessel also burnt
	171				?Yes	?	?	Yes	5	7+			Bowl used as cinerary urn, 2 jars, wide mouthed cup and 2 incomplete bowls. Iron chain, ring and numerous iron cleats
	40			Yes		?	?	?	3	-			3 jars
	56				Yes	?	?	?	5	-			Pedestal-based vessel, jar and 2 other vessels. Very badly truncated
MTCP	332009		?Yes			Adult >40	Male	No	-	-	Yes	Yes	Some pot sherds. Unburnt animal bone
	330020		?Yes			Adult	?Female	No	-	-			Some pot sherds
	330010		?Yes			Adult	?	Yes	-	-			Damaged pot
	328012		?Yes			Adult >18	?	?	1	2		Yes	Deep carinated bowl. 2 brooches, 1 burnt on pyre
	328020		?Yes			?cenotaph		No	3	-			2 platters, 1 beaker
	328026		?Yes			?cenotaph		No	1	-			Damaged pot
	330036		?Yes			Adult	?	No	4	-			Jar, beaker and 2 damaged vessels

In some cases pyre debris was also selected for burial. Evidence from other Late Iron Age sites, in Britain and on the continent, point to further activities on the pyre site, including raking over and mixing the pyre, smashing pots on the pyre and the curation of some of the cremated remains in shrines (Fitzpatrick 2001).

The material selected for burial was then transported to the chosen site, along with any accompanying grave goods. A small grave was dug, usually no larger than was necessary to house the items chosen for burial. The items were then placed in the grave, which was then backfilled, and probably marked, after which formal mourning may have ceased.

Much of this process has left us with little or no traces in the archaeological record at Stansted. However, the excavated remains can provide information about differences in burial rite between the cemeteries and settlements. The absence of data concerning the age and sex of the deceased does slightly hamper such analyses, although studies of the 'Aylesford-type' burials at both King Harry Lane and Westhampnett indicated that the choice of grave goods was unrelated to the sex of the deceased (Pearce 1997, 178; Fitzpatrick 1997a, 221).

The decision to provide a cinerary urn for the cremated bone appears to have played a major part in the other decisions regarding the furnishing of the grave. The proportions of urned, unurned and damaged burials on the different sites can be seen in Table 6.11. The latter group comprise graves containing both cremated bone and the remains of pottery vessels, but which were too truncated to establish whether they were urned or unurned.

Table 6.12: Proportion of grave goods in Late Iron Age/early Romano-British burials

Burial type	Accessory vessels	Metalwork	Animal bone	Pyre debris	Average no. of vessels per grave
Urned burial	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	0	0	1.625 (1.16 if burial 171 excluded)
Unurned burial	9 (75%)	1 (8%)	4 (33%)	6 (50%)	1.16
Damaged burial	5 (100%)	1 (20%)	1 (2%)	2 (40%)	2.40
Total (24 graves)	16 (67%)	3 (12%)	5 (21%)	8 (33%)	1.625

Site	Urned burial	Unurned burial	Uncertain	Total
LTCP	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	10
DCS	2 (29%)	2 (29%)	3 (42%)	7
MTCP	1 (14%)	5 (72%)	1 (14%)	7
Total (percentages)	7 (29%)	12 (50%)	5 (21%)	24

Table 6.11: Proportions of urned and unurned burials

Fewer than half of the burials appear to have involved the use of cinerary urns, even allowing for those graves which were badly disturbed. In only three cases could the form of the cinerary vessel be determined. These were a pedestal urn, a bowl and a jar. In some cases (such as burial 151004) the distribution of cremated bone within the grave suggested that the cremated bone had been buried in an organic container such as a bag.

Urned burials were rarely accompanied by other grave goods. Only two of the seven urned burials recorded were accompanied either by grave goods or by pyre debris. Both lay on the DCS site – burial 23, which also contained a butt beaker and burial 171, where two jars, a wide mouthed cup, two incomplete bowls, an iron chain, iron ring and numerous iron fittings accompanied the burial.

The unurned burials were often accompanied by grave goods or dumps of pyre debris only one of the 12 was unaccompanied. The proportions of grave goods buried with urned, unurned and damaged burials can be seen in Table 6.12. From this, it is clear that vessels were common in both urned and unurned burials, whilst animal bone and pyre debris are only found in the unurned burials and in damaged burials. However, the sample size is small, and the figures can be distorted (note the effect of burial 171 on the average number of vessels in urned burials).

It is also evident that there are marked differences in the levels of furnishing between the different cemeteries. The burials on the LTCP and MTCP sites

are far more modestly furnished than those on the DCS site (Table 6.13). For the purpose of this analysis, the absence of pyre debris and animal bone from the DCS site should be ignored, as it may not truly reflect the original contents of the graves.

Three of the cemeteries – two on the LTCP and one on the MTCP sites appear to have served particular settlements. All three of these cemeteries lay slightly upslope of their respective settlement. Only the burials excavated on the DFS site cannot be identified with a particular settlement. With this in mind, it is useful to examine the location of these burials and their associations. All were located within the same broad landscape zones as the settlements – the upper slopes of the river valleys. Those adjacent to settlements are largely associated directly or indirectly with ditched enclosures, which certainly on the LTCP site appear to have acted as mortuary enclosures, with the single exception of burial 143075 on the LTCP site.

On all three sites, pottery vessels were the most common grave goods, with an overall average of 1.625 vessels per grave (including vessels used as cinerary urns). On both the LTCP and the MTCP sites, some of the vessels used in burials cannot be paralleled in the assemblages from adjacent settlement sites, although some occur on the ACS site (see above). The vessels which appear to have been chosen specifically for burial include pedestal urns, a bowl, platters and beakers. Unfortunately we have no evidence for a settlement directly associated with the burials on the DCS site, although

pedestal urns, bowls and a beaker were all used as grave goods, alongside jars.

The burials on the LTCP site are remarkably modestly furnished, with no grave containing more than one vessel and small deposits of pyre debris containing cremated animal bone. This need not reflect on the wealth or status of the deceased, however. There has been much debate in recent years over the extent to which the grave goods reflect the social status of the dead either directly, as a reflection of the wealth of the individual, or indirectly as indicative of the size of an individual's social network (Millett 1993) if at all (Fitzpatrick 2001, 15–17). Whilst it is not necessary to rehearse these arguments here, it is important to recognise that an individual's wealth or standing in the community is not likely to be directly reflected in the goods in their grave. It may be that wealth or status was not reflected in funerary rites at all, or that any such display was not reflected in the context of burial.

It may equally be that position within a cemetery was a sign of status or wealth. There are five square or rectangular ditched 'mortuary enclosures' forming the focus of burial for the two settlements on the LTCP site. Similar mortuary enclosures are known from other Late Iron Age sites in southern Britain, including King Harry Lane (Stead and Rigby 1989). At King Harry Lane, seven such ditched enclosures were excavated. The cemetery was probably in use from 15 BC through to approximately AD 60, after which time burial became much more infrequent (Stead and Rigby 1989, 83–4). Not all of the cremation burials were associated with the mortuary

enclosures, but those that did tended to cluster around prominent central burials within these enclosures (Stead and Rigby 1989, 80). A number of these focal graves were well furnished, but a good proportion were not (Millett 1993). Three graves on the LTCP site at Stansted can be considered to be 'central' burials within three of these enclosures (graves 995073, 995080 and 151004), which may have been regarded as a privileged position. Two of these were buried with pedestal urns – the only graves in which these occurred. The western cemetery, comprising a pair of mortuary enclosures, did not remain in use for long, and may even have been superseded by the eastern, but our dating tools are not sufficiently accurate for this to be determined. More cremation burials were associated with the mortuary enclosures of the eastern cemetery, with a number apparently clustering around 151004.

The cemetery on the MTCP site appears to be less coherently organised, with all the burials to the east of a possible funerary enclosure or structure. There are no obvious focal burials, and the choice of grave goods buried with the deceased is more varied, and the grave goods themselves more numerous. One grave contains two brooches, whilst two of the unurned burials contained more than one pot.

The cremation burials on the DCS site are not associated with any mortuary enclosures. Instead these well furnished burials were loosely aligned along Iron Age boundary ditches in the area, although only one, burial 40, was directly dug into the fills of a ditch. Although no evidence for animal

bone or pyre debris was recorded from these graves, this may be a result of the truncation these graves suffered and their rapid excavation. It is not clear whether these graves were buried here in order to associate them with the boundary complex, or whether this place was important for other reasons.

Although the number of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British burials from Stansted is small, they can provide us with a glimpse of the rituals which surrounded death and burial, as well as demonstrating that these rites differed from settlement to settlement, and there was far more individuality in each small cemetery than might be expected. Using the evidence carefully, we can perhaps provide a counterbalance to some of the larger or more richly furnished burials of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British transitional period, by characterising the funerary rites of a rural landscape. Here, the location of both cemeteries seems to have been important, perhaps referencing areas of settlement, and agriculture, and, in a world in which boundaries and enclosure were becoming increasingly important, perhaps marking a boundary between the living and the dead.

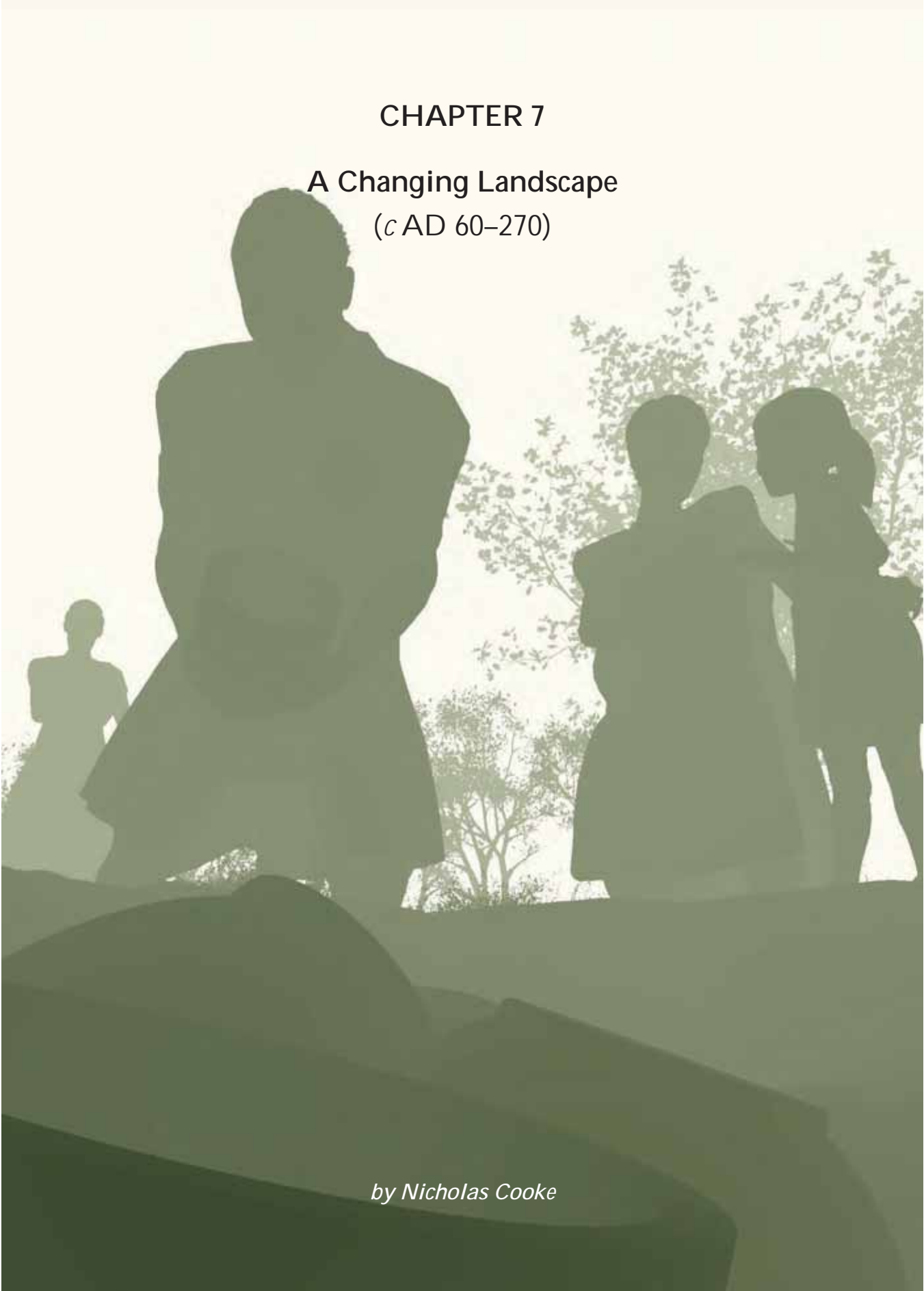
In this chapter we have examined the evidence for settlement and burial across the Stansted landscape in the Late Iron Age and early Romano-British periods. Examination of the artefactual and environmental remains has allowed us to reconstruct how people lived and what the surrounding landscape was like. In Chapter 7 we shall look at the Romanisation of the landscape and how the settlements changed, as well as looking at changes in burial practices.

Site	Grave type	Accessory vessels	Metalwork	Animal bone	Pyre debris	Average no. of vessels per grave
LTCP	Urned burial	0	0	0	0	1
	Unurned burial	4 (80%)	0	3 (60%)	4 (80%)	0.8
	Damaged burial	1 (100%)	0	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1
DCS	Urned burial	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	0	0	4
	Unurned burial	2(100%)	1 (50%)	0	0	1
	Damaged burial	3 (100%)	0	0	0	3.33
MTCP	Urned burial	0	0	0	0	1
	Unurned burial	3 (60%)	0	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1.6
	Damaged burial	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	0	1 (100%)	1
	Total (24 graves)	16 (67%)	3 (12%)	5 (21%)	8 (33%)	1.625

Table 6.13: Proportion of grave goods in burials on the different sites

CHAPTER 7

A Changing Landscape (c AD 60–270)



by Nicholas Cooke

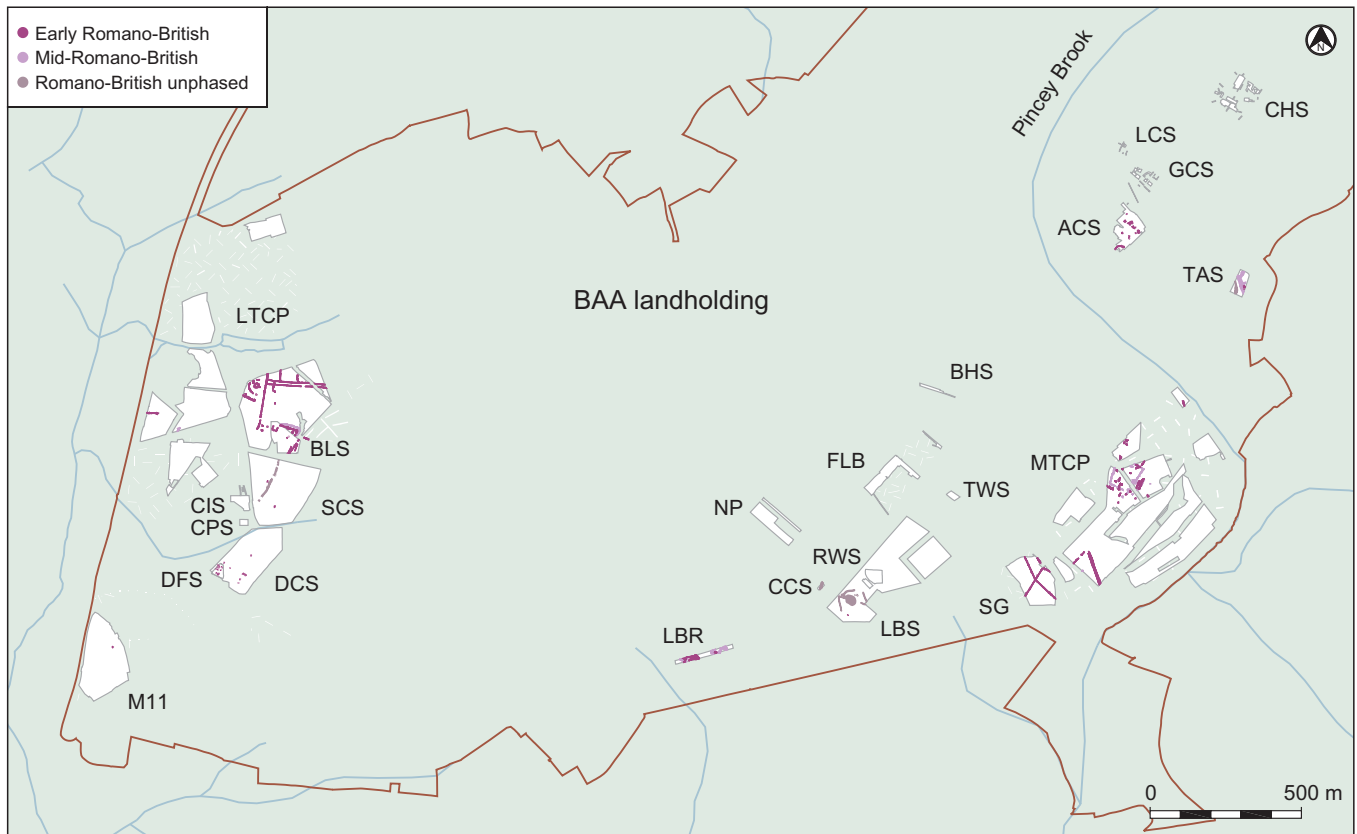


Figure 7.1: Early and mid-Romano-British features

Introduction

The transition from the Late Iron Age to the early Romano-British period at Stansted is not easy to define archaeologically. As has already been seen, transitional pottery fabrics and forms, first manufactured in the latter years of the 1st century BC continued in use after the initial invasion of AD 43. Fortunately the picture at Stansted is helped slightly by the dearth of imported pottery during the first half of the 1st century AD. Thus, the first new pottery forms and fabrics can be assigned with some confidence to a post-conquest phase of activity. However, the inhabitants of the Stansted landscape appear to have been conservative in their approach to the adoption of new pottery forms and fabrics, judging from the continued use of transitional types alongside 'Roman' forms and fabrics. The adoption of these 'Romanised' pottery forms and fabrics is closely associated with some major changes in the landscape, particularly on the western edge of the plateau (Fig. 7.1).

In this chapter landscape and settlement changes will be explored together with the evidence for continuity of occupation. The evidence for the Romanisation of these settlements, their inhabitants, burial practices and customs will also be discussed. Changes in agricultural practices will be examined. The main settlements occupied at this time are the eastern settlement and the oval enclosure on the LTCP site and the MTCP site. Isolated early Romano-British features were excavated on the SCS site. At the ACS site a number of ritual pits were dug within the abandoned settlement apparently focusing on the central Late Iron Age/early Romano-British shrine. Burials were being made in several cremation cemeteries to the east and west of the plateau; isolated examples were also identified. The western settlement on the LTCP site and the settlement on the M11 site both appear to have been abandoned by this time but there was contemporary activity on the BLS, LBR, TAS, CCS and LBS sites (Fig. 7.1).

Chronology

The chronology for the early and mid-Romano-British period at Stansted (which probably dates from *c* AD 60/70 to *c* 260/270) relies on a combination of dating from pottery, coins, metalwork and stratified deposits. On some sites phasing was difficult, especially where later settlement truncated earlier features.

Early Roman pottery

The early Roman pottery at Stansted is dominated by coarseware pottery, with few fine wares. It contains some grog-tempered fabrics and includes forms which may be assigned to Hawkes and Hull's *Camulodunum* typology (1947), suggesting some overlap with the grog-tempered pottery of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period. The assemblage is dominated, however, by grey wares and black-surfaced wares, which parallel closely, both in form and fabric, the 1st and 2nd century assemblage recorded on the DCS site from the Stansted Project excavations (Wallace

et al. 2004, 303). In contrast to this earlier assemblage, the early Roman pottery does include some Hadham white slipped ware, although it too lacks any Hadham oxidised ware. Fine wares are scarce, and confined to a small amount of south and central Gaulish samian and a barbotine decorated cup in central Gaulish glazed ware (Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18).

Mid-Roman pottery

Identifiable mid-Roman fabrics and forms are scarce from both the recent excavations and those undertaken by the Stansted Project, and often occur in later contexts (Biddulph and Stansbie, CD Chapter 18; Wallace *et al.* 2004, 310). The main fabrics in this group remain black-surfaced wares, Hadham grey wares and grey sandy wares although the ranges of forms differ. Continental and regional imports are far more prominent when compared to coarse wares, although this may be a function of the small size of the group. They include a range of beakers, cups and bowls in east and central Gaulish 'Rhenish' wares, Colchester colour-coats, Colchester buff wares and samian wares. Apart from the greater number of imports, one chronological indicator which separates this group from the early Roman material is the presence of Hadham oxidised ware, although this still only occurs in small amounts (Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18).

Coins

Very few coins of the 1st–early 3rd centuries have been recovered from the excavations (Cooke, CD Chapter 13), limiting their usefulness for dating purposes.

Metalwork

Numerous items of metalwork have been recovered from the excavations. Brooches and other items of personal metalwork such as bracelets are most useful for dating purposes. The brooches from the Stansted Project excavations are dominated by types of the 1st century AD – predominantly Colchester type brooches, but with some Hod Hill, Nauheim derivatives,

Aucissa and simple Gallic types (Major 2004b, 121–6). Most of these came from the ACS site and the cemetery on the DCS and DFS sites. Fewer brooches were recovered from the recent excavations, although these include Colchester, Hod Hill and an Aucissa type brooches and a single Dolphin brooch. Other datable items of metalwork include fragments of early broad flat bracelet types and a button and loop fastener of the 1st or 2nd century AD (Scott, CD Chapter 14).

The early and mid-Romano-British period on the LTCP and BLS sites

The settlements on the LTCP site and the oval enclosure on the LTCP/BLS sites provide an interesting contrast in the post-conquest period, with two falling into disuse, whilst the third apparently thrived.

The western settlement

The western settlement on the LTCP site appears to have been abandoned prior to the adoption of early Roman pottery forms or fabrics, although the enclosure ditch had not completely silted up, and quantities of Roman pottery were recovered from its upper fills (Fig. 7.2). These were recovered in sufficient quantities to indicate that it was probably still in use as an enclosure. A single ditch, 108053, was dug in this area, although its function is unclear, and only small quantities of finds were recovered.

The eastern settlement

The expanded Late Iron Age/early Romano-British eastern settlement on the LTCP site contracted significantly in the late 1st century AD (Fig. 7.2), with the area to the east newly enclosed to form a large field associated with a trackway.

This re-organisation reduced the eastern settlement to a single roundhouse (roundhouse 30) located in the centre of the earlier irregular enclosure (Fig. 7.2). The original enclosure ditches were still partially open, and the associated banks were no doubt still intact.

Some attempt was clearly made to maintain elements of these, with both ditches 102134 and 109170 representing recutting episodes linked to maintaining these boundaries. Roundhouse 30, an irregular ovoid gully, was probably built to replace roundhouse 26. The gully was incomplete but it is uncertain if these gaps to the north-east and north-west corresponded with an entrance. There were no traces of any postholes or other structural features.

This phase of settlement coincided with the recutting of the ditch forming the northern boundary of the three Late Iron Age/early Romano-British mortuary enclosures (Fig. 7.2). Initially this took the form of a fairly shallow ditch with a U-shaped profile (102071), which was allowed to silt naturally. After this ditch had largely silted, its eastern end was cleaned or recut (102074). Both ditches contained fairly typical assemblages of domestic waste, with little evidence for any structured deposits. The only unusual element in the fill sequence of either feature was the construction of a small hearth (150028 – not illustrated) in 102074 after it had silted almost completely. This was a small bowl-shaped hearth, with a clay lining, which appears to have been sited to take advantage of the shelter afforded by the dip in the ground formed by the silted ditch. Hammer-scale from the hearth indicating that it was used for high temperature welding (Keys, CD Chapter 16). Charcoal from the hearth was similar in character to the non-industrial contexts comprising oak, hawthorn/*Sorbus* group and ash (Carruthers, CD Chapter 34).

A series of discontinuous ditches (102088, 102148 and 135033) to the north of roundhouse 30 were also dug in the early Romano-British period. These may mark the line of palisades or small boundaries associated with the settlement. Amongst the finds recovered from these was a pair of copper alloy tweezers from 102088 (Scott, CD Chapter 14).

A few features were associated with this phase of settlement, including a shallow scoop (134057), pits 104005, 143019 and 147021 and posthole

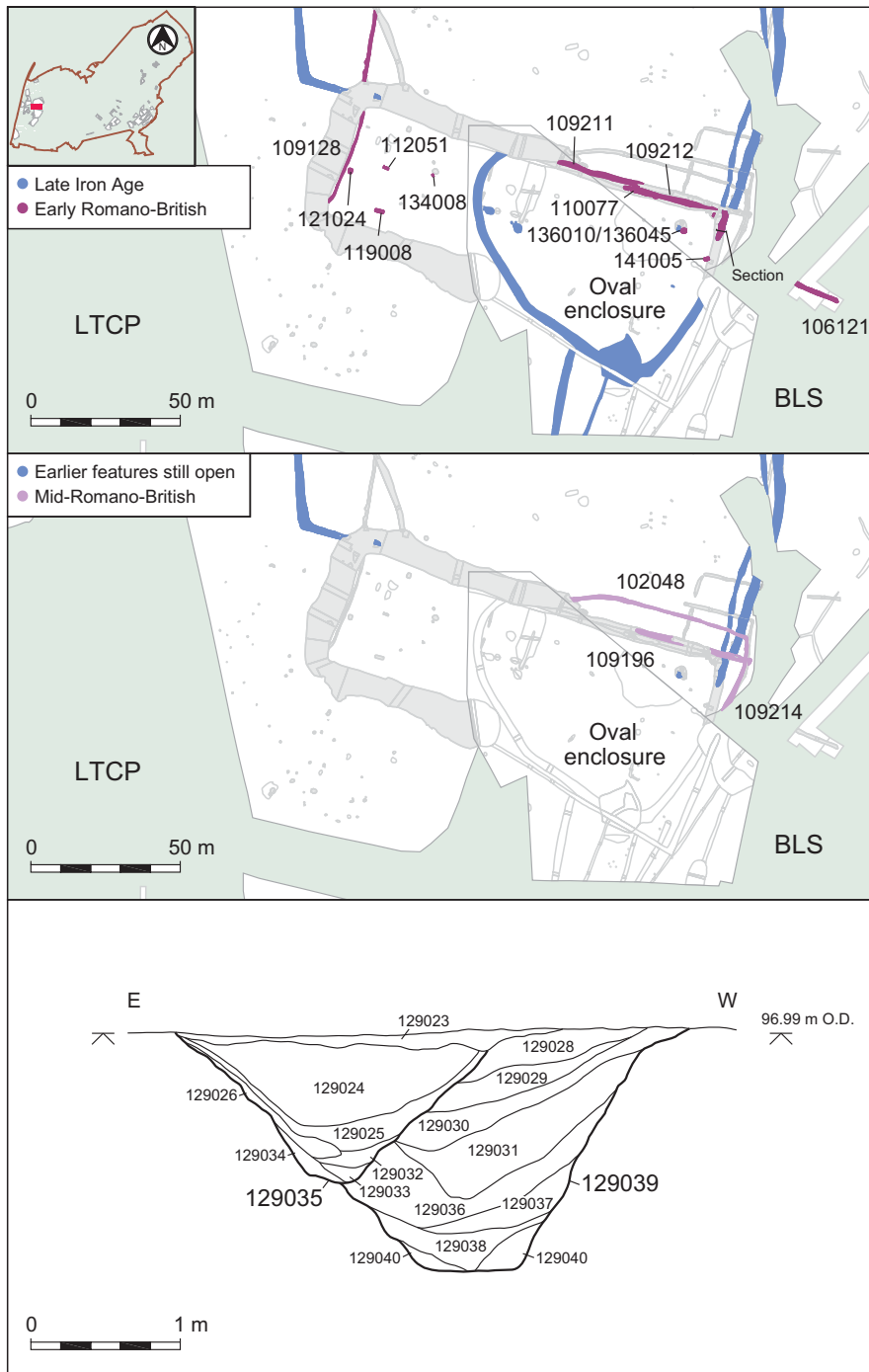


Figure 7.3: The oval enclosure in the early and mid-Romano-British period

The trackway extended for some 200 m to the edge of the site, beyond the apparent extent of enclosure in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period. This suggests that the early Romano-British period saw an expansion of enclosures onto the heavy clays of the plateau, perhaps associated with a reduction in woodland and the introduction of new farming methods.

The oval enclosure in the early Romano-British period

This re-alignment of the landscape is likely to be linked to activity in the oval enclosure, which was remodelled in the early Romano-British period (Fig. 7.3). Unfortunately, most of the enclosure was excavated under rescue conditions as part of the Stansted Project, and it was not possible to explore features which lay under the extensive areas of later cobbling. Despite this, it is likely that the interior of the oval enclosure contained a small early Romano-British settlement, perhaps a farmstead, and a number of features were found during the BLS excavations (pits and a gully, Havis and Brooks 2004, 255).

eastern corner, close to ditch 109154 and another approximately 3 m from the western end of the trackway. Although this field is likely to have been used for primarily agricultural purposes, a small number of features were located within it (pits 102009, 102013, 107055). Small amounts of domestic debris were recovered from these features.

The area to the north of the trackway appears to have been divided into two unequal fields by ditch 102065, which was aligned roughly north-south. The

smaller western field was accessed from the trackway across a narrow causeway at the western end of ditch 109089. It is not clear whether the trackway afforded access to the larger of the two fields. Ditch 109093 may have been a subdivision of this larger field, but equally may not be early Romano-British at all – it is dated solely on the presence of two sherds of early Roman pottery in its fills. The position of entrances in the corners of the fields may suggest the presence of sheep grazing on the rougher pastures of the clay plateau.

Three more pits were excavated as part of the recent excavations (136010/136045 and 141005). Pit 136010 was in the north-eastern corner of the enclosure where there was a number of Late Iron Age intercutting features. Pit 136010 was apparently backfilled, before being redug as pit 136045. This was deliberately backfilled with a sequence of dumps, the lowest of which was a charcoal-rich deposit containing large quantities of charred cereal grain – predominantly emmer/spelt wheat. The third pit, 141005, was little more than a shallow scoop.



Plate 7.1: Feature 119008 before excavation



Plate 7.2: Feature 119008 after excavation

The recent excavations established that there was a complex sequence of recutting and cleaning of the northern and north-eastern boundary of the oval enclosure dating from the Late Iron Age (see Chapter 6). This pattern continued into the early Romano-British period, with the digging of a substantial ditch (109212) along much of the length of the northern ditch. This deep ditch had a U-shaped profile and was allowed to silt, and subsequent attempts at re-establishing the boundary (ditches 109211, 109214 and 110077) were on a smaller scale.

All of these ditches contained mixed assemblages which appeared to be domestic in origin, including pottery, butchered animal bone, quantities of fired clay and occasional pieces of residual material. Ironworking continued within the oval enclosure in the early Romano-British period.

Hammerscale was recovered from the fills of ditch 109214 (context 129025, intervention 129035), indicating smithing nearby. This ditch lies close to the focus of ironworking in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (Keys, CD Chapter 16) possibly indicating some continuity of use of this space.

There was evidence for crop processing on a fairly large scale within the enclosure recovered from intervention 129035 through ditch 109214 (Fig. 7.3). Here, the lower fills of the early Romano-British recut of the earlier enclosure ditch comprised large quantities of dumped charcoal-rich deposits included charred cereal grain, predominantly emmer/spelt wheat but some barley and oats were also found. The quantity of spikelets recovered from this material suggests that these grains were accidentally burnt during the parching of the cereals during crop processing (Carruthers, CD Chapter 34).

As well as the enclosure of tracts of land to the north and north-east, there is also evidence that land to the east and south-east was also enclosed at this time. Three early Romano-British ditches were excavated to the south-east of the oval enclosure on the BLS site (Havis and Brooks 2004, 255 and fig. 164). Two of these, 186/201 and 116 were roughly parallel to each other, 14 m apart, and aligned NNE–SSW. The third, ditch 114, lay on a slightly different alignment (north-east to south-west), and may well be related to ditch 106121 on the LTCP site, which lay perpendicular to it (Fig. 7.3). These ditches may form the north-western corner of another field, whilst 186/201 and 116 are likely to be unrelated but may form part of a slightly different enclosure system, perhaps functioning as a trackway.

Further evidence for activity in the vicinity of the oval enclosure was recovered immediately to the west (Fig. 7.3). This activity was bounded to the west by a shallow gully, 109128. Any direct relationships either physical or stratigraphic that this gully had with other elements of the landscape were destroyed by a later ditch.

Four early Romano-British features lay between this gully and the oval enclosure. Two features, pit 121024 and posthole 134008, were unremarkable. One of the other two features, 112051, probably represents the remains of a kiln or oven. It appeared to comprise a flue and chamber, both containing substantial amounts of burnt material, associated with four stakeholes (112053, 112055, 112057 and 112059). The latter probably represent the remains of structural elements of the oven or kiln, although they do not form a clear pattern. The second feature, 119008, is more enigmatic. When first revealed, it appeared to comprise a large irregular spread of burnt material and cremated bone (c 2.3 m long and 0.50–0.60 m wide). This was excavated in spits, revealing a concentration of bone at the eastern end of the spread (Plates 7.1–2). Analysis has indicated that the cremated bone is exclusively animal bone, with sheep/goat the only species identified (Bates, CD Chapter 32). Removal of this burnt deposit revealed a grave-shaped feature (119008), aligned ENE–WSW. It had been dug and left open to silt up naturally, and sherds of pottery were amongst the few finds recovered from the fills. It is not clear what function this feature performed, or why, once it had been allowed to silt, it had been covered with a deposit of cremated animal bone and burnt material. It is possible that this may have acted as a cenotaph although, the absence of any placed deposits within the feature itself makes this less likely.

The 2nd and 3rd centuries AD

Most of the activity in the area in the 2nd and 3rd century AD focuses directly on the oval enclosure, although the fields established early in the Romano-British period were presumably still in use (Fig. 7.2). As noted above material of this date is scarce in the wider Stansted landscape, and rarely occurs in contemporary features.

The limited evidence for activity at this time comprised two ditches and a pit. The pit, 147017, lay some distance to the north-west of the oval enclosure. Finds from 147017, which appeared to

have been at least partially deliberately backfilled, included animal bone (horse, cattle, sheep/goat and dog) as well as numerous pottery sherds. The presence of sherds of a bowl in a Much Hadham red colour coated fabric suggests that this feature was open after AD 200.

Ditch 109196 was the final cleaning or recutting of the northern ditch of the oval enclosure (although 109214, the early Romano-British recut of the north-eastern side of the enclosure was at least still partially open at this time). This was still a substantial feature, at over 0.85 m deep. Pottery from this ditch suggests that it was open in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD. The assemblage of animal bone from the fills included all the main domesticates, and suggests that the site retained both a domestic and an agricultural function.

Ditch 102048 was dug after ditch 109196 had silted up. It appears to have been dug as part of an expansion of the enclosure, although it was not a substantial feature, with a U-shaped profile and reaching a depth of just over 0.50 m at its deepest point. This expanded enclosure probably continued to house a settlement, as quantities

Group	Cremation original ctx no.	Age	Grave goods	Urned	Ancillary vessel	Comments
1	36 (2044)	?	-	Jar	-	Badly plough damaged
	37 (2045)	?	-	Grog-tempered pedestal urn	2 vessels	-
	38 (2046)	Juvenile	-	Jar	3 vessels	-
2	39 (2474)	Adult	-	-	-	Found in a charcoal-lined pit ?placed in an organic container
	40 (2476)	Adult	Iron nails	-	Jar	?placed in an organic container
	41 (2478)	?	Iron nails	-	-	?placed in an organic container
	42 (2480)	?	Iron nails	-	-	Small quantity of cremated bone
	43 (2482)	Adult	Iron nails	-	-	?placed in an organic container

Table 7.1: Details of cremation burials from the SCS site

of animal bone, fired clay and pottery were all found. The only well dated mid-late Roman sherds were those from a dish in a black-surfaced ware fabric, likely to date to after AD 230. This suggests that the feature was open in the mid-late 3rd century AD.

Early and mid-Romano-British activity on the SCS site

A number of features from the excavations on the SCS site are likely to date to the early Romano-British period (Fig. 7.4). These comprise two groups of cremation burials and a ditch, 2028, which was traced for some distance across the site. Its dating is uncertain, and relies largely on the recovery of Roman brooches from its upper fills (Havis and Brooks 2004,

273). It may be that, as with so many ditches in the vicinity, that this one was first dug in the Late Iron Age, and the upper fills were formed in the early Romano-British period. Certainly the two brooches, a Hod Hill and a Colchester type, both of which date to the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period, would suggest this.

Three 1st-century burials (36–8) were excavated to the west of the line of this ditch, whose position may have influenced the choice of site for burial. A second group of cremation burials lay further to south and east of ditch 2028 (Fig. 7.4). As with the three cremation burials to the north, these probably date to the post-Conquest period (see Table 7.1).

Date	Cremation (original context no.)	Associated with boundary ditch	Age	Sex	Urned	Wooden box	Vessels	Metalwork	Animal bone	Other grave goods	Comments
DCS 1st century AD	19 (58)		?	?	?	-	-	-			Damaged pot
	33 (60)		?	?	No	-	-	-			Unfurnished. Dated by association
	35 (122)		?	?	No	-	-	-			Unfurnished. Dated by association
	34 (126)		?	?	No	-	-	-			Unfurnished. Dated by association
DCS Late 1st century - early 2nd century AD	23 (156)	Yes	?	?	?	-	2	-			Jar and miniature jar
	20 (158)	Yes	Adult	?	Yes	1	3	-			Braughing jar (cinerary urn) and 3 miniature jars
	29 (187)	Yes	Adult	?	Yes	-	-	-			Damaged pot
	30 (191)	Yes	?	?	?	-	1	-			Damaged pot
	21 (207)	Yes	Adult	?	Yes	-	1	-			Hadham grey ware jar (cinerary urn) and Hadham white slip ware vessel
	31 (213)	Yes	?	?	?	-	1	-			Damaged pot
	22 (215)	Yes	?	?	No	-	2	-			Braughing jar and flagon
	24 (251)	Yes	?	?	No	1	2	-			Central Gaulish samian dish and buff ware flagon. Copper alloy lock plate
	25 (247)		?	?	No	1	21	1	Yes	Yes	Cremated bone on pewter tray, five copper alloy vessels (a jug, an amphora, 2 <i>paterae</i> and a bowl), 5 glass vessels (2 bottles, a bowl, a flask and a cup) a set of 8 samian vessels (most apparently unused), a colour-coated beaker, a carrot amphora, an iron lamp and hanging arm, a bone handled knife and the rear leg of a pig
	26 (249)		Adult and juvenile	?	No	1	10	1		Yes	Wooden casket with copper alloy fittings and handles, a bronze mirror (apparently in a wooden box), a pair of hobnailed shoes, a glass bottle and bowl, 5 samian vessels (apparently unused), a colour-coated beaker and 2 incomplete vessels one of which is a flagon

Table 7.2: Summary of the early Romano-British burials



Figure 7.4: Early Romano-British features and burials

These burials clearly point to continuity in the burial rite in the post-conquest periods, although the burial rite differs in each group. They were all urned burials, accompanied by other pottery vessels placed as grave goods. The second group were much more modestly furnished, with cremated bone usually placed in the grave in an organic container such as a bag or box (Table 7.1). Iron nails accompanying many of these burials

may have been associated with larger wooden containers. Only one was accompanied by any surviving grave goods – a single jar, although any organic materials will not have survived (Table 7.1). The internal coherence in the burial rite of each of these groups suggests that they represent small cemeteries for different groups of the population, perhaps even different social or even religious communities.

Dispersed cremation burials on the DCS and DFS sites

Approximately 28 early Romano-British cremation burials were excavated on the DCS and DFS sites (Havis and Brooks 2004). Many of these were found on the large DFS site and were excavated under watching brief conditions. As a result a number of the graves were truncated, and whilst all of the graves were carefully

excavated and recorded, there was not sufficient time to investigate many of the other features on the site thoroughly. Consequently, many of the boundary features in the area cannot be closely dated.

Burials on the DCS site

Fourteen burials are likely to date to the early Romano-British period (Fig. 7.4, Table 7.2). They can be split into three groups on the basis of their location and date. The first, poorly-dated, group comprises the four outlying burials (19, 33–5). Three of these were unurned and unfurnished, and are dated by association, whilst the fourth was badly damaged, although 1st-century pottery was recovered.

A group of eight late 1st- and early 2nd-century burials was made along the line of Late Iron Age/early Romano-British ditch 193 (20–4, 29–31; Fig. 7.4). These comprised a mixture of urned and unurned burials, and where the age of the dead could be determined, they were adults. All were moderately well furnished, with at least one

pottery vessel, either a cinerary urn, or an accessory vessel. In two graves the cremated bone and grave goods were placed inside wooden boxes (Table 7.2).

Further south lay the two richest burials from the site (25 and 26, Havis and Brooks 2004, 216–31). These clearly form an important element within the funerary rites practiced. It is not clear how these graves relate to surrounding landscape features; they appear to respect an adjacent late Romano-British ditch. It has been suggested that both graves may have been covered by turf mounds (*ibid.*, 254, 537).

Burial 25 was a very well furnished unurned burial within an oak box, measuring 1.40 m by 1.0 m. The cremated bone itself was placed on a pewter tray in the centre of the grave with the other grave goods arranged around it. The grave goods (Table 7.2) suggest that the burial dates to the early–mid-2nd century AD.

Burial 26 lay 10 m south-west of burial 25. It had been damaged by ploughing and earth moving machinery.

Cremated bones from an adult and also from a possible juvenile were recovered together with a range of grave goods (Table 7.2) probably dating to the early–mid-2nd century.

These two rich burials can be paralleled elsewhere in north-west Essex and Hertfordshire (*ibid.*, 253–4, fig. 160).

Burials on the DFS site

A further 14 early Romano-British burials were excavated on the DFS site (Fig. 7.4). These can be divided into broad spatial and chronological groups (see Table 7.3).

The pre-Flavian and 1st-century burials tend to cluster in the northern half of the site. Both urned and unurned burials were present, and all of those which could be aged were adults, with both men and women represented. A range of grave goods accompanied many of the burials (Table 7.3).

Metalwork was recovered from the graves, including brooches and a toilet set, as well as numerous pieces of heat

Date	Cremation (original context no.)	Age	Sex	Urned	Wooden box	Vessels	Metalwork	Animal bone	Other grave goods	Pyre debris	Comments
DFS Pre-Flavian/1st century AD	10 (171)	Adult	? Male	No	-	2	-				Beaker and platter
	9 (345)	Adult	? Female	No	-	9	3			Yes	3 brooches, flagon, a 3 handled <i>lagena</i> , a <i>terra nigra</i> carinated cup, a bowl, 2 platters, a dish, a jar and a butt beaker. Covered in charred planks
	8 (347)	Adult	?	Yes	-	1	1				Jar (cinerary urn) and butt beaker copy. Nauheim derivative brooch
	13 (400)	?	?	No	-	7	5+	Yes	Yes	Yes	Cremated bone placed on a flat object such as a tray decorated with copper alloy discs and strips. Colchester type brooch, 4 complete copper alloy corrugated discs and fragments of others, numerous fragments of copper alloy (some distorted by heat), 2 platters, 2 miniature jars, a jar, a <i>terra nigra</i> carinated cup and a <i>terra rubra</i> pedestal beaker and bones from a chicken. Burnt and distorted bone toggles were also found. The grave appears to have been covered in burnt planks
	11 (433)	Adult	?	Yes	-	-	1				Butt beaker copy (cinerary urn) and iron bow brooch
	12 (505)	Adult	?	No	1	5	4+	Yes	Yes	Yes	Colchester brooch (distorted by heat), copper alloy toilet set (a wooden box), iron clamp and plate, fragments of copper alloy sheet and rivets, 5 pottery vessels (3 platters, a carinated cup and a butt beaker) and a number of burnt fragments of bone toggles. Animal bone includes pig and chicken bones
	32 (563)	?	?	No	-	-	9			Yes	Burnt Colchester type brooch and fragment of burnt curved copper alloy and iron object
DFS Late 1st century – early 2nd century AD	18 (131)	Adult	?	Yes	-	5	1				Colchester type brooch, jar (cinerary urn) and a flagon, a miniature Braughing jar, a samian cup, a platter and a carinated bowl
	16 (163)	Adult	Male	?	-	2	1				Colchester type brooch and fragments of a Braughing jar and a small jar or beaker
	17 (313)	Adult	? Female	No	1	2	3	Yes	Yes		Wooden casket with metal fittings, toiletry set, 2 pottery vessels (a flagon and a squat beaker), 3 glass beads, the right half of a young sow's skull and the bones from the right side of a chicken
	14 (331)	Adult	?	No	-	3	-				Samian platter, carinated cup and a bottle
	28 (445)	?	?	?	-	2	-				Braughing jar and samian bowl
DFS Mid-late 2nd century AD	15 (555)	Adult	?	No	-	4	-	Yes			4 pottery vessels (2 samian platters, a two handled flagon and a beaker), the right half of a young boar's skull and the bones of a complete chicken. The grave was covered with a layer of burnt planks
	27 (343)	Adult	?	Yes	-	2	-				Braughing jar (cinerary urn), globular beaker and a bag-shaped beaker

Table 7.3: Summary of the early Romano-British burials

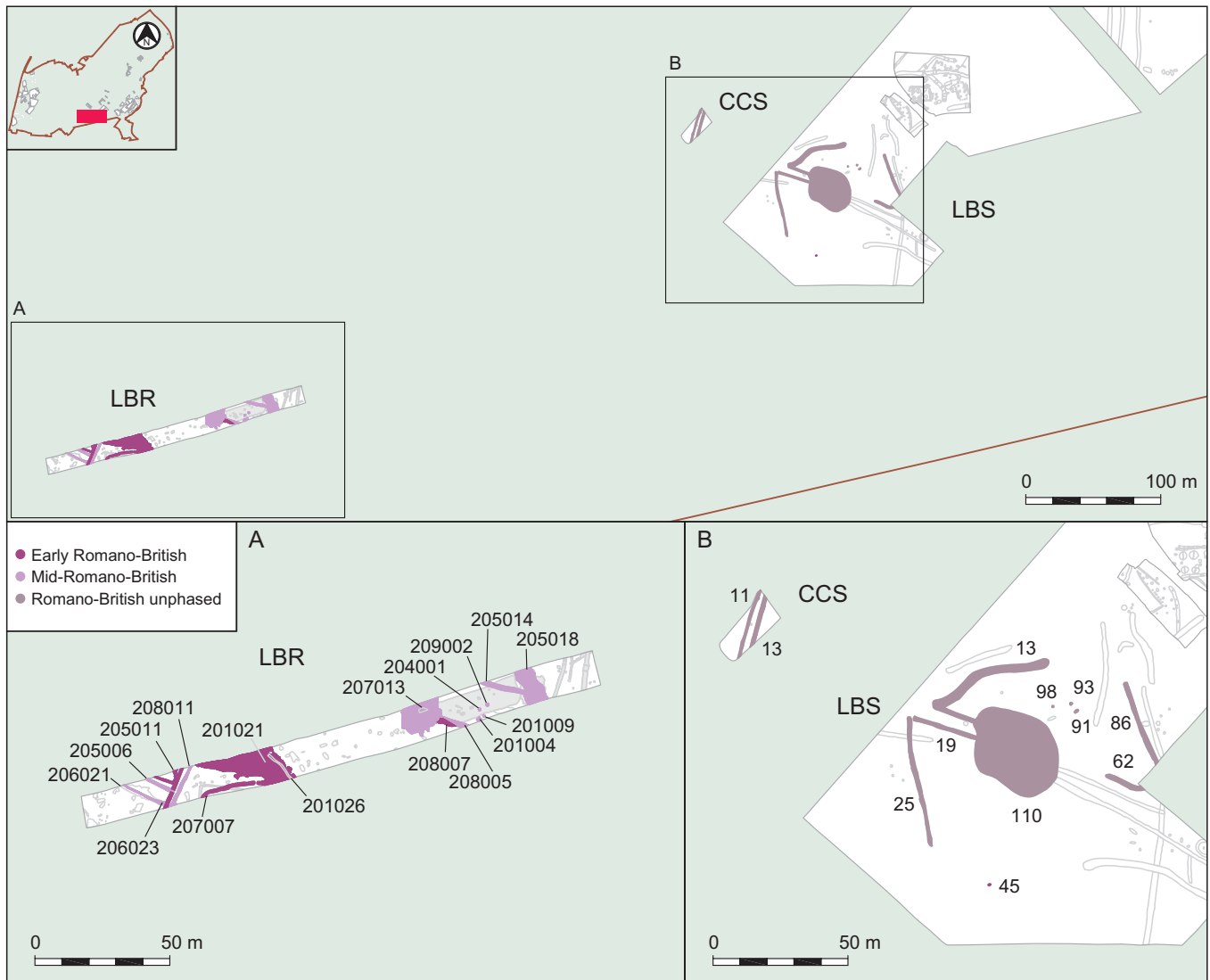


Figure 7.5: Early and mid-Romano-British features

damaged metalwork and fittings for a flat object (possibly a tray) and a wooden box. It is clear from damage on a number of the metalwork items (as well as the bone toggles recovered from burials 12 and 13) that some of the grave goods had been placed on the pyre. Three of the graves were clearly the best furnished (burials 9, 12–13). All contained substantial quantities of pottery, including platters and cups or beakers, whilst animal bones, came from cremation burial 12. The use of a flat object such as a tray in burial 13 can be paralleled on the DCS site (burial 25), which is slightly later in date. Two burials of this period – graves 345 and 400 – appear to have been covered with a layer of burnt planks, perhaps from the pyre.

Six cremation burials dated to the late 1st- and early 2nd-centuries AD were

excavated in the southern half of the site, and included a cluster of four graves (15–18). These show a similar range of practices to those of the earlier period and five of the six burials were of adults. Pottery vessels and metalwork were the most common forms of grave goods (Table 7.3). Chicken and pig bones were also recovered from two including a complete carcass.

The latest grave from the cemetery (27) continues the burial tradition. It was an urned burial of an adult. The cremated bone was placed in a Braughing jar and accompanied by two beakers (Table 7.3).

The burials from the DFS site appear to represent a single burial tradition, with particular elements of burial rite evident in graves across the cemetery and over time. Some of the general patterns of deposition match those established in

the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period, although the graves from the DFS cemetery are generally better furnished. Throughout the early Romano-British period, the burials on the site include a number of well furnished graves, although none with quite the array of grave goods recovered from graves 25 and 26 on the DCS site.

Romano-British activity on the plateau – the LBR, LBS and CCS sites

The early Romano-British period appears to have seen a significant expansion of activity onto the clay plateau with evidence for activity on the LBR site, whilst nearby excavations by the Stansted Project revealed further evidence for Roman activity (Fig. 7.5).

The LBR site

Although limited excavations were undertaken on the LBR site it provides important evidence for early and mid-Romano-British activity on the clay plateau. The early Romano-British activity on the site appears to have developed around the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British enclosure (Figs 6.18, 7.5).

Ditches to the west of this enclosure (205011) probably represent a rectilinear field system, the eastern boundary of which is aligned roughly north-east to south-west. Material recovered from the fills of these ditches included animal bone, oyster shell, fired clay and pottery, all suggesting settlement in the vicinity. Amongst the pottery were a number of sherds of fineware, including 1st-century South Gaulish samian ware.

To the north of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British enclosure lay a curving stretch of hollow way (201021). Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine the relationship between this and either the field system or the enclosure within the bounds of the site. This hollow way appears to have been constructed as a track- or roadway in the early Romano-British period. It was aligned roughly north-west to south-east, ditch 201026 has been interpreted as a drainage gully. It was lined with well-laid chalk and chert cobbles (Plate 7.3–4) in order to provide a firm surface. Many of the cobbles towards the base of the slope showed signs of wear, suggesting that this had been subject to the greatest use. Some areas also showed signs of patching using different materials. Very few finds were associated directly with this surface,



Plate 7.3: Cobbled trackway

although pottery was recovered from the layers which formed in the hollow both during its use and after its abandonment. The lowest of these layers, accumulating whilst the feature was still in use, suggests a date during the 2nd century AD, but it was abandoned some time in the 3rd or 4th century.

The pottery from the fill of the drainage ditch (201026) is poorly-dated, and cannot help to refine this date range further. This ditch appears to have been allowed to silt up naturally towards the end of the period in which the trackway was in use.

The only other early Romano-British feature was a short stretch of ditch aligned roughly north-west to south-east (208007) located north-east of the hollow way (Fig. 7.5). Small quantities of Roman pottery were recovered, along with some animal bone.

The ditches forming the field system to the west were also silting up in the 2nd century AD and a new boundary system was established on a similar alignment (ditches 205006, 206021, 206023 and 208011). Not all of these ditches are necessarily contemporary. The earliest was clearly ditch 206021. This probably silted fairly quickly, and was redug as 206023. A possible trackway, defined by ditches 208011 and 205006, was also established at this time. None of the pottery from these ditches is particularly diagnostic, but some 2nd-century material was found. A fragment from a rotary quern or millstone made of millstone grit came from ditch 206023 (Shaffrey, CD Chapter 25).

There were further phases of mid-Romano-British activity from the eastern half of the site, the earliest of which consisted of two parallel ditches (205014 and 208005), approximately 15 m apart. Material recovered from these is typically domestic, and includes 2nd- and 3rd-century pottery, animal bone, a few oyster shells and fragments of fired clay. A latchlifter was recovered from ditch 205014 (Scott, CD Chapter 14). Four features within the space between these two ditches may belong to the same phase of activity (201004, 201009, 204001 and 209002). Two of



Plate 7.4: Excavating the trackway

these, 201004 and 204001, were shallow scoops in the natural subsoil packed with flint nodules; 201009 and 209002 were postholes. All may have been structural although it was not possible to discern any coherent plan.

A second phase of mid-Romano-British activity in this area was associated with two large ditches or pits (205018 and 207013). They were aligned NNW–SSE, and were roughly 30 m apart. It was not possible to establish, within the bounds of the site, whether 207013 was a ditch or a substantial pit. Some of the deposits suggest that these features may have been designed to hold or drain water. Small assemblages of 3rd-century pottery and animal bone were recovered from both features. Pollen from 205018 indicated the surrounding area was predominately pasture with some arable cultivation and very little woodland nearby (Huckerby *et al.*, CD Chapter 31).

The silting of these two features appears to mark the end of Romano-British activity on the site; although a very small amount of late Roman pottery was recovered no features could be assigned to this phase.

The LBS and CCS sites

The earlier excavations on LBS and CCS sites (*c* 400 m ENE of the LBR site) revealed further evidence for Romano-British activity (Fig. 7.5). The small excavations on the CCS site revealed a

trackway (ditches 11 and 13). Material recovered from ditch 11 included quantities of 2nd-century pottery, probably from a disturbed cremation burial. Other Roman pottery was recovered from both ditches (Havis and Brooks 2004, 265). It seems likely that this trackway belongs to the mid- or late Romano-British period.

Rapid excavation in advance of landscaping on the LBS site also revealed Romano-British features. These comprised a series of ditches (13, 19, 25, 62 and 86), postholes (91, 93 and 98) and a large oval feature, probably a pond (110); none of which could be closely dated. Material recovered from the latter included several Roman brooches and a finger ring (Havis and Brooks 2004, 270–1).

A single early Romano-British urned cremation burial was excavated on this site (45). It was accompanied by four accessory vessels and two fragmentary copper alloy brooches (a Colchester type and a Langton Down brooch) were placed in the urn along with the burnt bone (*ibid.*).

Early and mid-Romano-British settlement on the MTCP and SG sites

The Late Iron Age/early Romano-British settlement on the MTCP site continued to be occupied in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, and even expanded slightly. The cemetery continued in use for some time, and then appears to have been abandoned in favour of a newly established cemetery nearby. Within the wider landscape, the major boundaries established early in the 1st century continued in use, and were augmented to the east by the construction of a new trackway, whilst further afield, a substantial series of rectilinear fields appear to have been laid out on the SG site (Fig. 7.6).

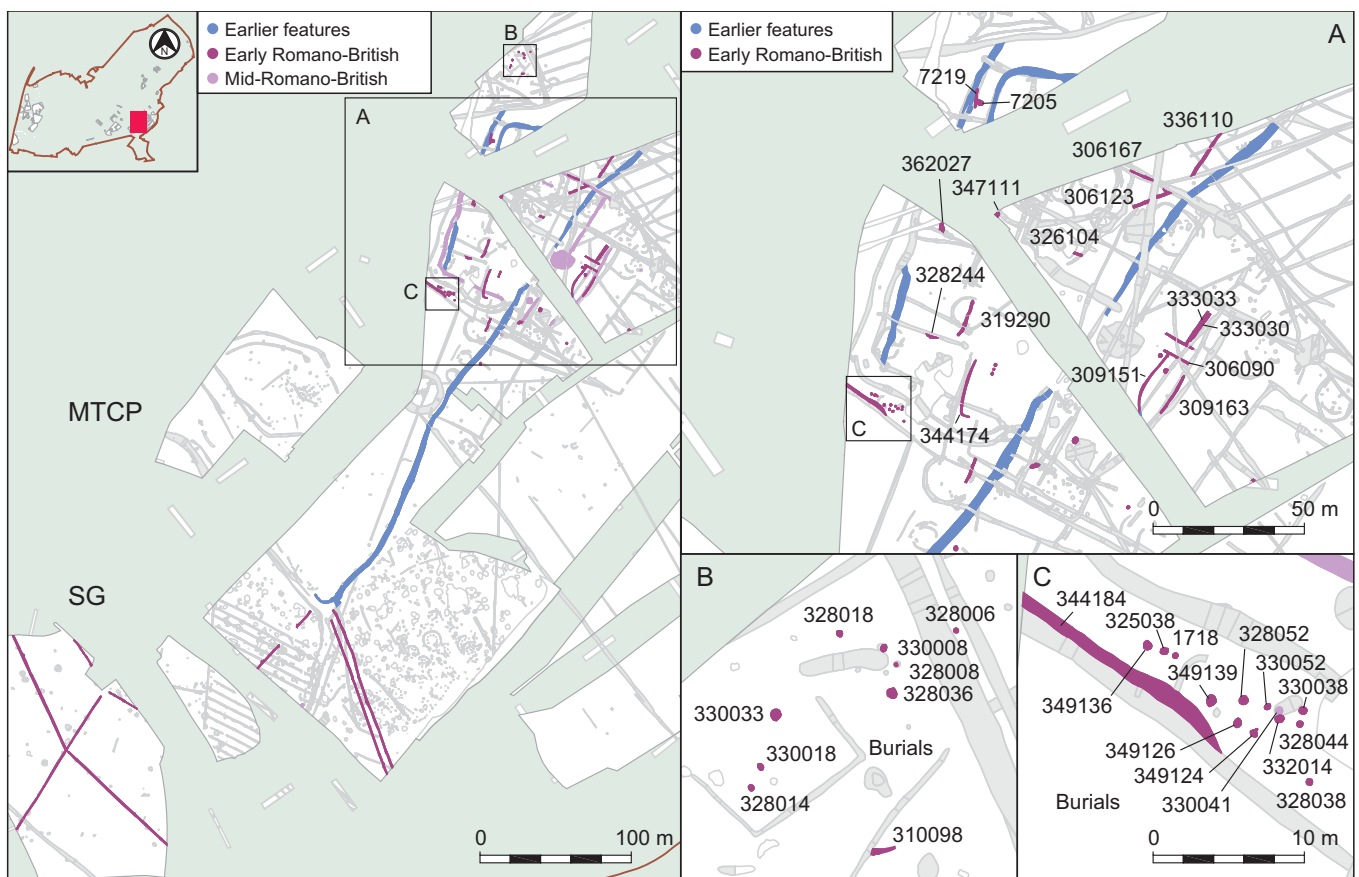
The early Romano-British settlement (c AD 60–c 120)

The early Romano-British settlement itself is hard to define. The main focus still appears to have been the irregular enclosure on the MTCP site (Fig. 7.6). The expansion of the settlement area to the south appears to have continued, although this was not formally defined

by new enclosure boundaries. Many of the features of this date are heavily truncated by later ones, and it is not impossible that the mid-Romano-British enclosure represents a reworking of an early Romano-British enclosure.

There were a small number of features in the immediate vicinity of the earlier settlement including a number of short stretches of ditches or gully (7219, 306123, 306167, 310098, 326104, 336110, 347111 and 362027) and a pit (7205). None of these is particularly informative although all contained material consistent with domestic settlement. A number of items of early and mid-Roman metalwork were recovered from the site. Household items include a spoon bowl, a cleaver and a fragment from an iron vessel, possibly a frying pan. Personal items were also common, and include a large decorated button and loop fastener, brooches, bracelet fragments, hairpins, elements of toilet sets (including tweezers and a fragmentary nail cleaner) and numerous hobnails

Figure 7.6: Early and mid-Romano-British features



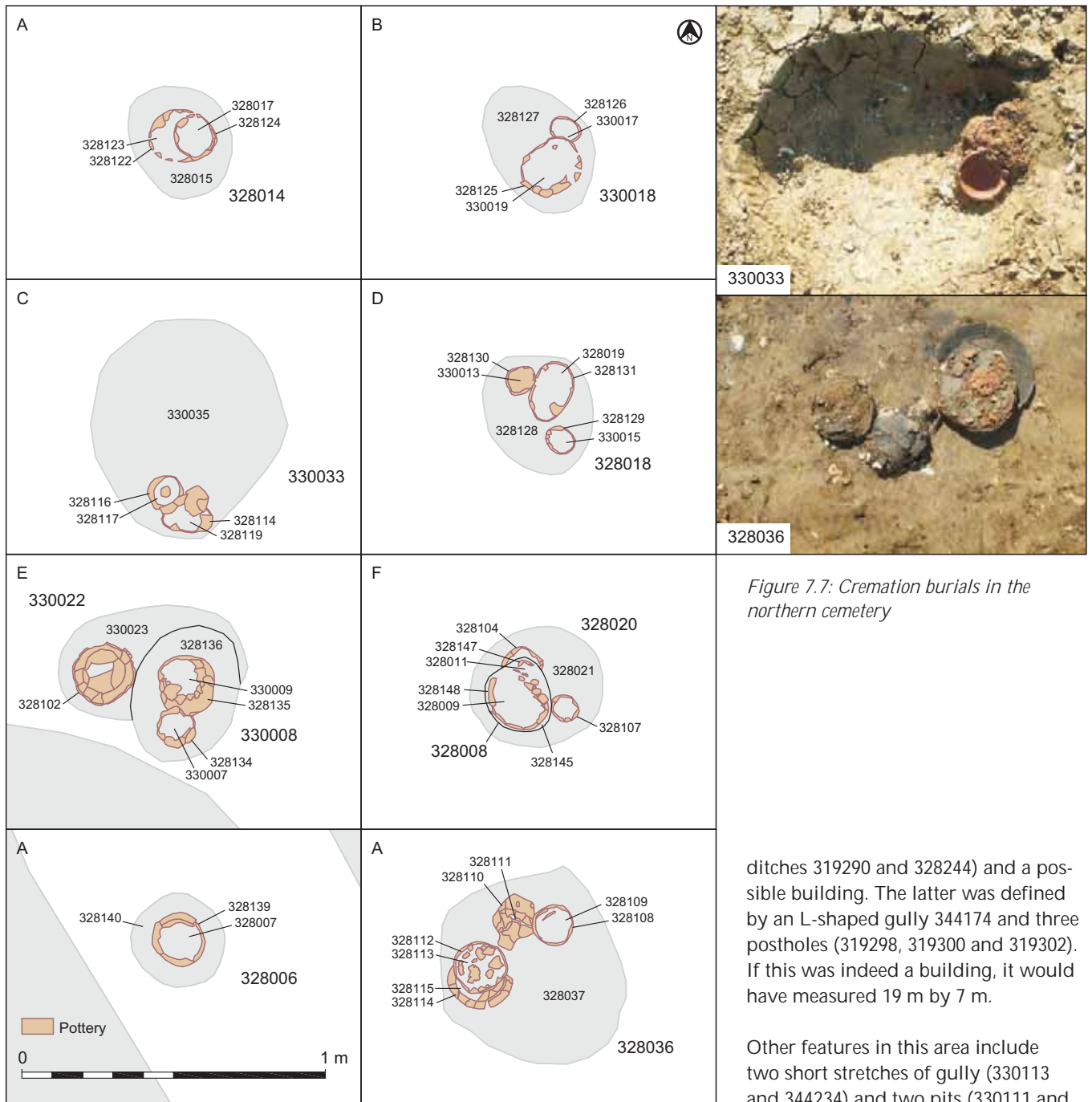


Figure 7.7: Cremation burials in the northern cemetery

ditches 319290 and 328244) and a possible building. The latter was defined by an L-shaped gully 344174 and three postholes (319298, 319300 and 319302). If this was indeed a building, it would have measured 19 m by 7 m.

Other features in this area include two short stretches of gully (330113 and 344234) and two pits (330111 and 330145); they are poorly dated.

(Scott, CD Chapter 14). It is clear from this assemblage that the settlement continued to thrive in the early and mid Romano-British periods.

An unusual complex of gullies to the south of this may represent the south-eastern extent of early Romano-British settlement (gullies 306090, 309151, 319163, 333030 and 333033). These appear to define a short stretch of trackway or an entrance. Four pits were excavated in the area (1736, 6411, 309169 and 330145). All contain animal

bone and pottery, whilst small quantities of oyster shell were also recovered. A deliberate dump of charred spelt spikelets together with some straw and hay was recovered from the fill of pit 330145.

To the south-west, the settlement appears to have extended as far as the line of ditch 344184, which also appears to have acted as the boundary for a newly established cemetery (see below). Features in this area include a possible sub-enclosure (defined by

The northern and south-western cemeteries

The cemetery to the north of the settlement continued in use into the early Romano-British period (northern cemetery). Eight cremation burials of this date were excavated (Figs 7.6–7). Three of these appear to have been buried within the area defined by the earlier Late Iron Age/early Romano-British rectangular enclosure (328014, 330018 and 330033) (see Chapter 6, Figs 6.15–16).

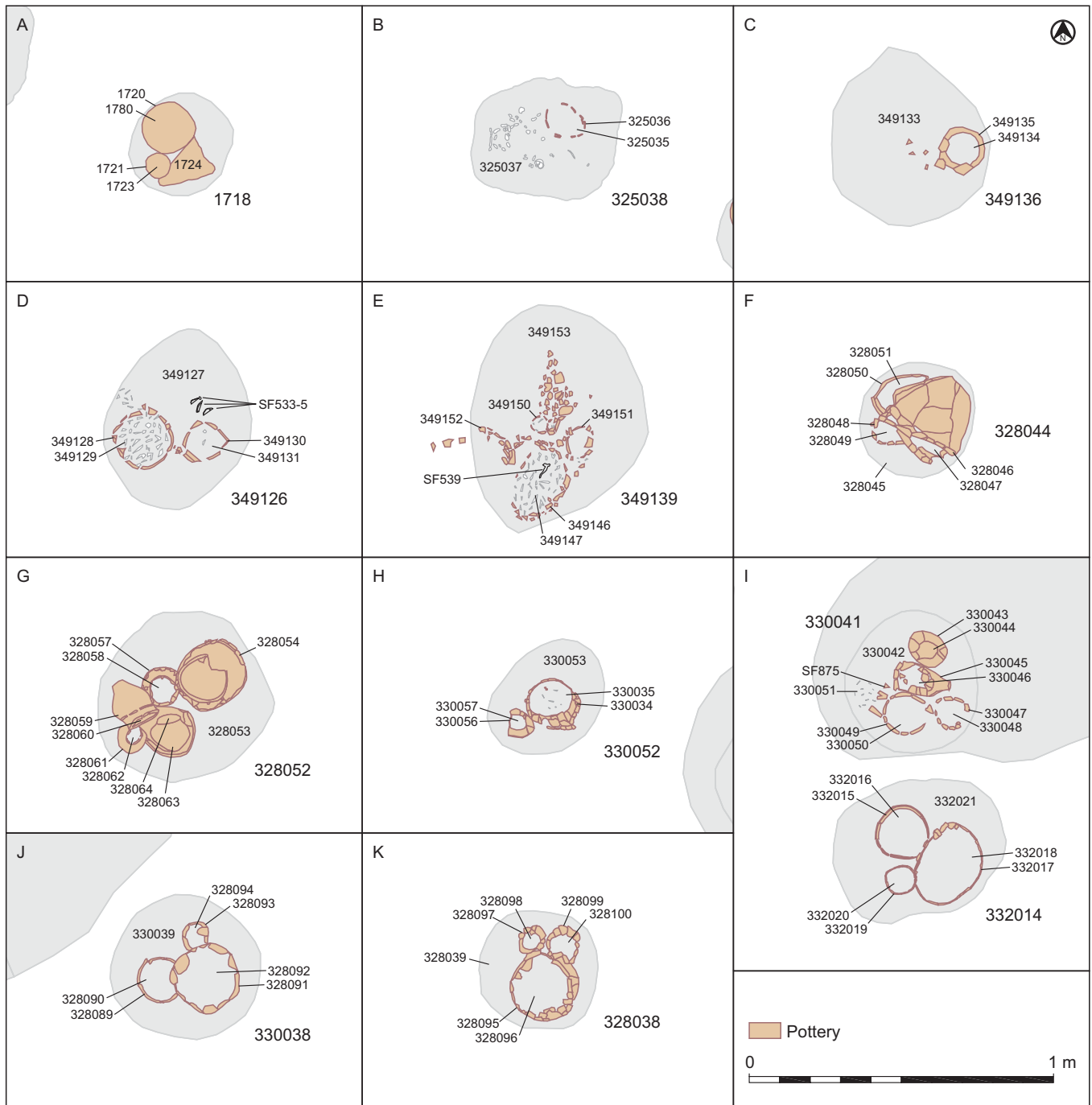


Figure 7.8: Cremation burials in the south-western cemetery

A second cremation cemetery was established close to ditch 344184 in the south-west (south-western cemetery) (Figs 7.6, 7.8–9, Plate 7.5). It comprised 13 burials, one of which (330041) dates to the mid-2nd century. There appears to be little significance to the spatial distribution of these graves, three were in a roughly linear arrangement (1718, 325038 and 349136), there was a loose group further south-east of this and the final cremation lay immediately south of this group (Fig. 7.6). The burials are

summarised in Table 7.4. The south-western cemetery was first established in the pre-Flavian period, when the northern cemetery was still in use, and the two cemeteries continued in use contemporaneously, until burial ceased in the early or mid-2nd century AD.

It can be seen that both males and females were buried in these cemeteries although only a small proportion could be confidently sexed. All age ranges were buried but adults dominated

(Table 7.4). Interestingly only two infants or neonates were buried and these were both found with adults (burials 328008 and 332014). The bones from 332014 were also unburnt perhaps suggesting some difference in burial rite was afforded to this infant. It is not known in which settlement these individuals lived but it can be seen that there was some continuity of use in the northern cemetery from the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (see Chapter 6). Some spatial organisation



Figure 7.9: Selected cremation burials from the south-western cemetery



Plate 7.5: Early Romano-British cremation burials in situ on the south-western cemetery

can be discerned within the groups: in the northern cemetery burials 330033, 330018 and 328014 were made within a rectangular enclosure with the remaining burials outside (Fig. 7.6). In the south-western cemetery three possible rows of burials were noted, (row 1 – 349136, 325038 and 1718; row 2 – 349139, 349126 and 349124; row 3 – 328052, 330052, 332014 and

328044). Whether these rows reflected age, gender or status is difficult to establish. Where it was possible to establish there were males and females adults and subadults. One of only two infant burials was included in row 3 (332014). Burial 349124 was unurned all of the others were urned and only a couple of burials were accompanied by grave goods (Table 7.4).

Cremation	Sex	Age	Grave goods	Urned	Ancillary vessels	Comments
Northern cemetery						
328014	?	Adult	-	-	Grog-tempered carinated bowl, black-surfaced ware carinated beaker	-
330018	?	Juvenile/subadult	-	-	Black-surfaced ware jar	Truncated
330033	?	Adult	Burnt and unburnt pig bones	Hadham grey ware jar	South Gaulish samian cup and a redware flagon	Feature larger than required to hold grouped cremation and grave goods. Sherds of grog-tempered pottery and Hadham grey wares
328018	?	Adult	-	Butt-beaker	2 ancillary vessels	Truncated
330008	?	Adult	-	Grog-tempered jar	Fine grey ware jar	-
328008	(a) Male (b) ?	(a) Adult/subadult (b) Adult + infant	-	(a) Redware butt-beaker (b) Hadham grey ware jar	-	Shallow feature cut into top of cenotaph. Fragments from a Beaker and a narrow-necked jar/flagon
328006	?Female	Adult	-	Black-surfaced ware jar	-	-
328036	Female	Adult	Copper alloy pin	-	Redware jar, Black-surfaced ware beaker and plain walled platter, white slipped fine grey ware butt-beaker	Cremated bone spread on grave floor, pots and pin accompanying it
South-western cemetery						
1718	?	Adult	-	-	Hadham grey ware jar and a sandy grey ware vessel	Badly damaged. Cremated bone concentrated in one area, possibly placed in a bag
325038	Female	Adult	-	-	Sandy grey ware vessel	Heavily truncated
349136	?Male	Adult	-	-	South Gaulish samian ware platter	-
349124	?	Adult/subadult	-	-	-	-
349126	?	Adult	3 Colchester brooches	Hadham grey ware jar	Grog-tempered vessel	Dump of pyre debris accompanied the burial. Ancillary vessel badly damaged
349139	?	Adult	Colchester brooch (burnt) fragments from other copper alloy and iron objects, lump of burnt glass and burnt animal bone	Sandy grey ware beaker	Colchester buffware vessel, an early Colchester colour coated ware hemispherical cup and a badly damaged black-surfaced ware vessel	Dump of pyre debris accompanied the burial
328044	?Male	Adult	-	Grog-tempered jar	Grog-tempered beaker, Black-surfaced ware platter	Fuel ash buried in grave
328052	?Male	Adult	Burnt animal bone	Grog-tempered jar and grog-tempered tall jar with corrugated shoulder	Grog-tempered jar, redware butt-beaker, grog-tempered platter	Cremated bone from same individual placed in two vessels
330052	?	Adult/subadult	-	Grog-tempered ?jar	Black-surfaced ware jar	Truncated
330014	(a) Female (b) ?	(a) Adult (b) Neonate/infant	-	Verulamium region ware vessel	Silty grey ware, Central Gaulish samian ware dish	Unburnt bones from a neonate or infant accompanied the burial. Vessels badly damaged
330038	?Male	Adult	Burnt and unburnt animal bone	Storage jar	Black-surfaced ware beaker and sandy grey ware platter	A single bone from another adult/subadult (?incidental inclusion?)
328038	?	Juvenile/subadult	Burnt immature animal bone	Grog-tempered jar	Grog-tempered high shouldered jar, grog-tempered butt-beaker and grog-tempered necked jar	-
330041	?Female	Adult	Copper alloy two piece brooch	Grog-tempered jar	Coarse red-surfaced grog-tempered ware butt-beaker, a black-surfaced ware butt-beaker, a grog-tempered lid and a silty grey ware beaker	A number of sheds of another black-surfaced ware beaker were recovered from the backfill, possibly from a fifth accessory vessel. Brooch was placed adjacent to a discrete patch of cremated bone, which may have been within an organic container

Table 7.4: Details of early and mid-Romano-British cremation burials from the MTCP site

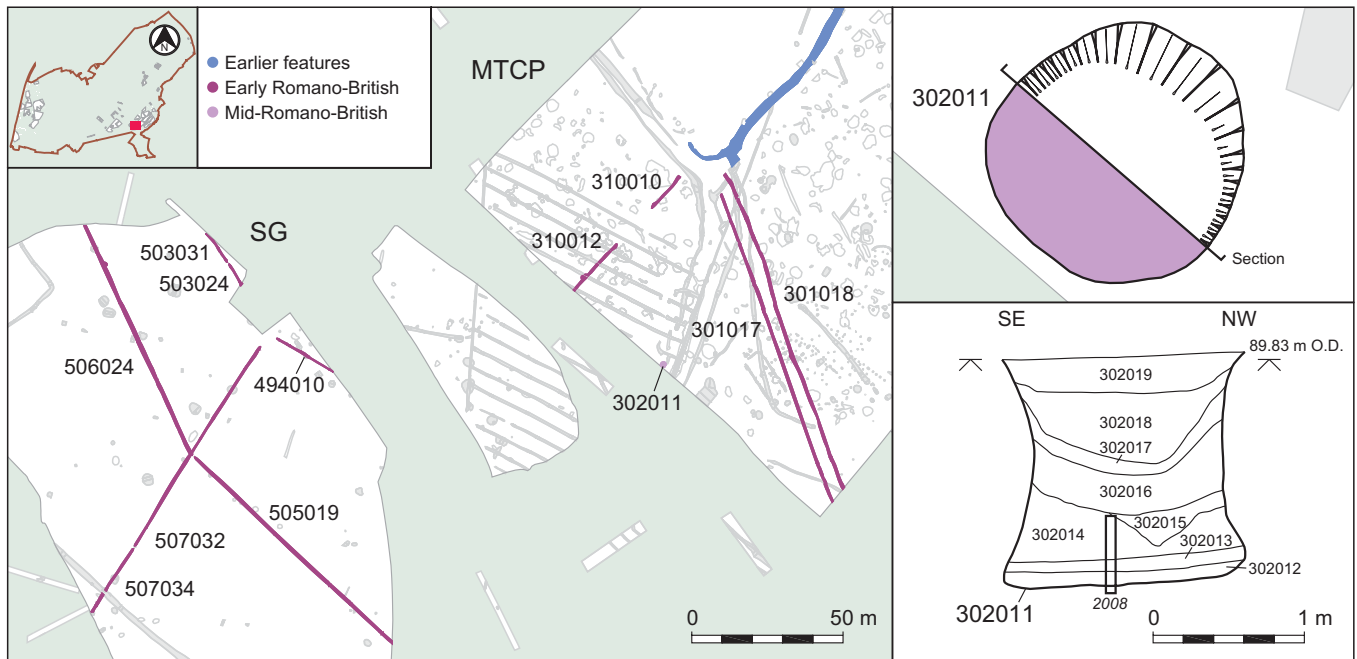


Figure 7.10: Early and mid-Romano-British boundaries and trackways with a detail of pit 302011

Boundaries and trackways

The major linear boundary established in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period remained open although stretches of the ditch closest to the settlement appear to have been filled by this time. At the south-eastern end of this ditch a new field system was established, along with a new trackway linked to the hollow way first used in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period (Fig. 7.10).

The irregular field system established on the SG site (defined by ditches 494010, 503024, 503031, 505019, 506024, 507032 and 507034) is poorly dated, although the few finds recovered suggest that they were open in the early Romano-British period. This system may have been tied in to the main boundary and ditch complex by ditches 310010 and 310012.

A new trackway, aligned roughly north-west to south-east, was created. It was defined by two parallel ditches (301017 and 301018) approximately 3.30 m apart. It may have been a modification of the earlier boundary and trackway complex.

A single mid-Romano-British feature (302011) was excavated in the vicinity of these fields and trackway (Fig. 7.10). This was almost certainly a waterhole

used to provide water to these fields. Only small quantities of pottery were recovered but it suggests that the feature was in use during the 2nd century, and probably abandoned later in the 2nd or 3rd centuries.

The mid-Romano-British settlement (c AD 120–270)

The expanding settlement was enclosed in the mid-Romano-British period, probably during the 2nd century (Fig. 7.11). This new, roughly rectangular, enclosure lay to the south of the Late Iron Age settlement. It enclosed an area 90 m by 70 m. No traces of any internal structures could be identified, but the artefactual

evidence points to continued settlement activity on the site at the time. Expansion of this settlement in the 4th century has largely destroyed any remains of the earlier settlement.

The enclosure itself was defined by a number of ditches – 306147, 306166, 344159, 344186 and 344227. None of these was particularly substantial, the majority having a U-shaped profile and they were rarely more than 0.50 m deep. The only exception to this was 344159, which was deeper, reaching 1.25 m in places. A folded rim from a glass cylindrical or prismatic bottle, a common form in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, was recovered from ditch 344159 (Mephams, CD Chapter 23).

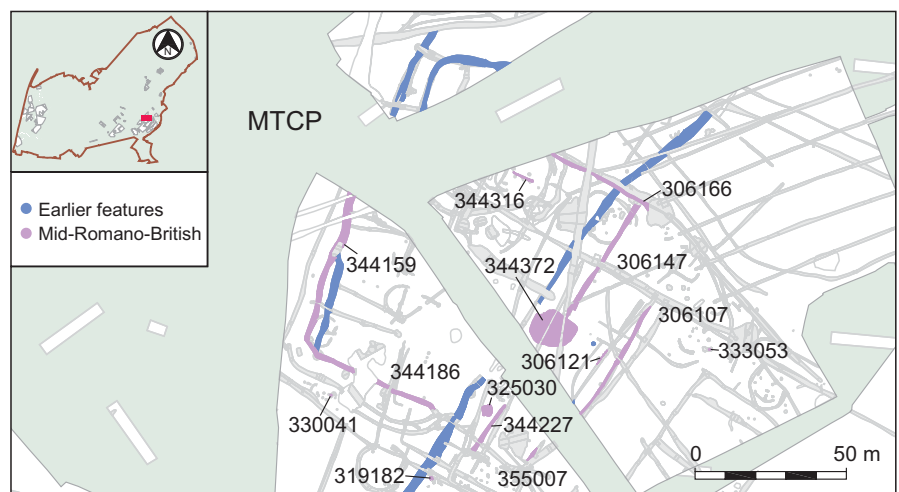


Figure 7.11: Mid-Romano-British settlement

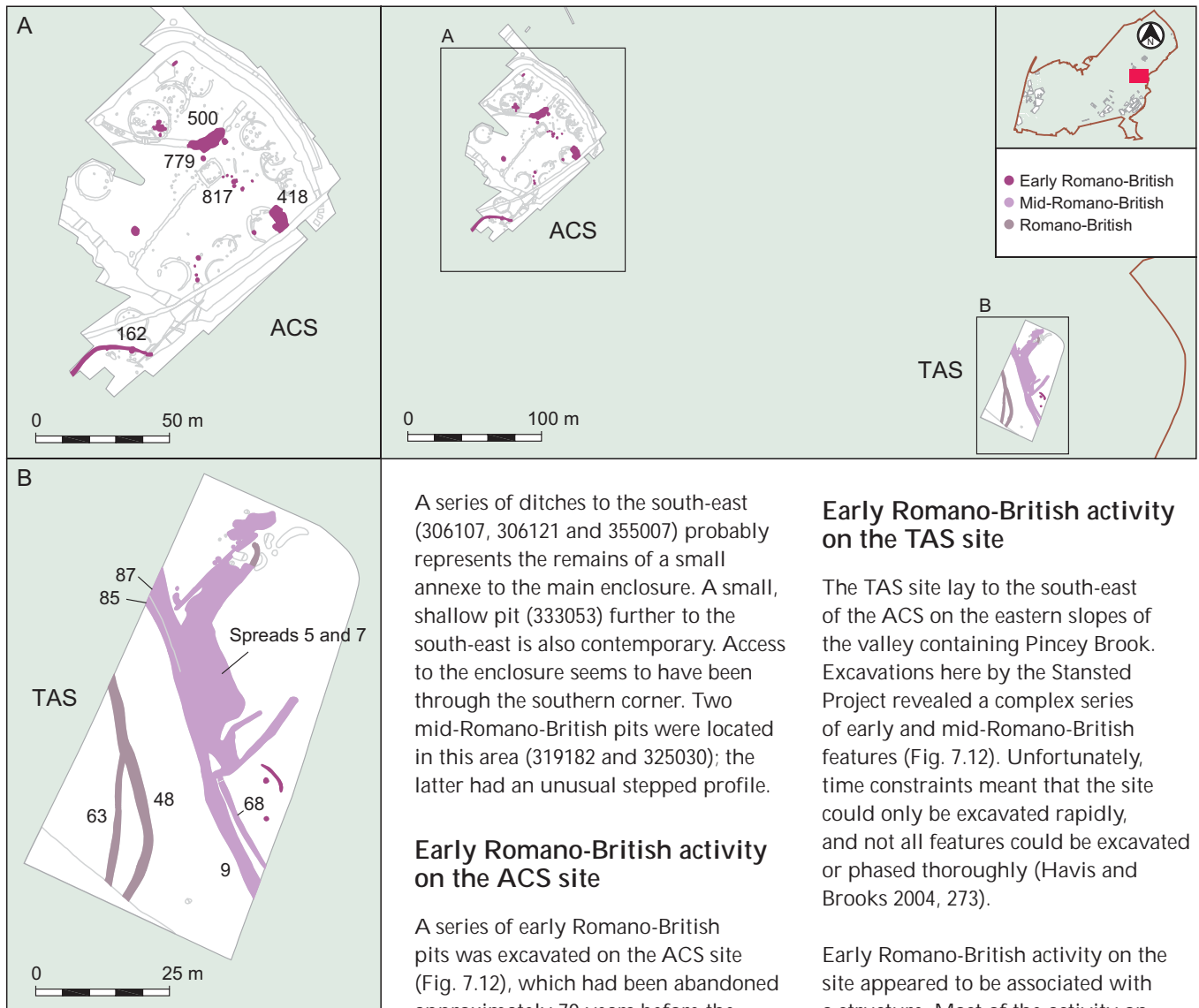


Figure 7.12: Romano-British activity

Very little evidence was recovered from within the enclosure itself, although a short stretch of gully (344316) may have been associated with a building, or may have been some form of internal division. The main feature associated with the enclosure was a substantial waterhole (344372) dug into its south-eastern side. The stratigraphic relationship between this feature and ditch 306147 could not be determined due to later truncation, but they may have been contemporary, with the ditch draining into the waterhole. Coins recovered from the upper fills of the waterhole indicate that it has gone out of use by the last third of the 3rd century.

A series of ditches to the south-east (306107, 306121 and 355007) probably represents the remains of a small annexe to the main enclosure. A small, shallow pit (333053) further to the south-east is also contemporary. Access to the enclosure seems to have been through the southern corner. Two mid-Romano-British pits were located in this area (319182 and 325030); the latter had an unusual stepped profile.

Early Romano-British activity on the ACS site

A series of early Romano-British pits was excavated on the ACS site (Fig. 7.12), which had been abandoned approximately 70 years before the Roman conquest (Havis and Brooks 2004, 115). These included a number of large intercutting pit groups (418 and 500), each of which appeared to have been backfilled in a single event. A number of brooches were recovered from pit group 500 and other contemporary pits also contained metalwork. In particular pits 779 and 817 were interpreted as containing votive deposits including two brooches, an intaglio and an anthropomorphic figurine. The animal bone from these pits showed a concentration of pig bone and skulls in the vicinity of the former shrine (Mainland 2004, 187; Havis and Brooks 2004, 534). The enclosure ditch was backfilled at this time and other activity was also occurring as evidenced by a curving stretch of gully (162). These deposits may have been a remembrance of the earlier importance of the place.

Early Romano-British activity on the TAS site

The TAS site lay to the south-east of the ACS on the eastern slopes of the valley containing Pincey Brook. Excavations here by the Stansted Project revealed a complex series of early and mid-Romano-British features (Fig. 7.12). Unfortunately, time constraints meant that the site could only be excavated rapidly, and not all features could be excavated or phased thoroughly (Havis and Brooks 2004, 273).

Early Romano-British activity on the site appeared to be associated with a structure. Most of the activity on the site, however, dated to the mid-Romano-British period. This was defined by ditches (9/85 and 68/87). To the south-west of this boundary was ditch 48, which was less well dated, but certainly Roman. For much of its length ditch 48 was parallel to 9/85, and the two probably formed the extent of a trackway 10 m wide. Ditch 48 cut an earlier, poorly dated, Romano-British ditch (63).

The main focus of mid-Romano-British activity lay to the north-east of ditch 68/87. Here a large number of features appeared to be masked by spreads of 'dark soil' (5 and 7). Excavation of the northern extent of these spreads revealed a series of pits and a long stretch of gully with a number of associated postholes. The quantity of material recovered suggested contemporary settlement in the vicinity.

The post-conquest landscape

There were clearly significant changes to the settlement pattern in the Stansted area in the early and mid-Romano-British periods. The marked decline in the levels of settlement, particularly on the western edge of the plateau, seems to indicate a major depopulation of the landscape. This seems to be accompanied by an opening up of the landscape, with the first evidence recorded for agricultural exploitation of the heavy clay soils of the boulder clay plateau. Increasing numbers of burials were being made at this time although these do seem to be selective and not representative of the whole population. This may indicate that there was a settlement shift rather than depopulation of the area, with old burial grounds continuing to be used.

Changes in the settlement pattern in the post-conquest period

Several of the settlements occupied in the Late Iron Age which adopted the grog-tempered pottery of the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British transition were significantly affected by changes which took place during the second half of the 1st century AD. Some sites, such as the settlement on the M11 site and the western settlement on the LTCP site, were abandoned prior to the introduction of the new Romanised forms of pottery.

Elsewhere, the eastern settlement on the LTCP site contracted significantly at this time. Only one early Romano-British roundhouse was occupied, and the dearth of animal bone, pottery and other finds reflect its decline in scale. Although the finds assemblage recovered is consistent with a small domestic settlement, a comparison with the contemporary settlement on the MTCP site highlights the dearth of metalwork and glassware from the site (Scott, Mephram, CD Chapters 14, 23).

There are no certainly post-conquest burials in the cemeteries on the LTCP site, and whilst some of those ascribed a Late Iron Age/early Romano-British date (see above) may post-date the conquest, this would require a degree

of conservatism in the selection of vessels for burial which is not seen in any of the other cemeteries in the area (Havis and Brooks 2004). This decline in the fortunes of the eastern settlement appears to have been terminal, with no evidence for the continued occupation of the site much into the 2nd century AD.

Of the four settlements occupied in the Late Iron Age or Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period on the western edge of the plateau, only one, that within the oval enclosure, appears to have thrived in the post-Conquest period. Here, the enclosure ditches were redug and the enclosure appears to have been central to a new enclosure and trackway system established in the early Romano-British period. Evidence for settlement within the enclosure itself is frustratingly difficult to assess although metalworking and large-scale crop processing were occurring and this together with pottery and animal bone confirm its continued use. It seems to have continued to be a fairly low status settlement, however, with few finewares and none of the evidence for personal and functional metalwork that has been found elsewhere. A field system lay to the east, and may reflect a wider clearance of the boulder clay plateau for agricultural purposes.

This expansion is mirrored elsewhere, with a field system and associated trackway established on the LBR site, and a number of newly dug ditches and pits, as well as a pond on the LBS site. Both of these are situated on the heavier boulder clays and point to increased activity in this area. The pottery assemblage from the LBR site, whilst small, points to a moderately successful settlement nearby, with quantities of both early and mid-Roman finewares recovered.

The settlement on the MTCP site continued to expand in the early Romano-British period. Whilst there is little difference in the types of pottery used on this site compared to the other sites in the area, the presence of glass vessels in small quantities along with both personal and functional metalwork point to a thriving, if fairly low

status settlement. Quantities of oyster shell from the site indicate that they were able to supplement their diet with food from some distance away. This settlement clearly remained in use into the 3rd century, although the pottery associated with this activity is difficult to quantify.

A similar pattern of fairly wide-scale settlement dislocation has been noted on the sites excavated as part of the A120 road scheme (Biddulph 2007a). Here, some sites (East of Little Dunmow Road and Highwood Farm) appear to have been abandoned early in the second half of the 1st century AD, whilst activity on the Valentine Cottage site had probably ceased by c AD 70 (Biddulph 2007a, 109), other sites (Strood Hall) appear to have been newly laid out in the second half of the 1st century AD. Continuity from the first half of the 1st century AD to the second half was identified at the Rayne Roundabout site (Biddulph 2007a, 110). The evidence from Stansted confirms that this dislocation of the pattern of settlement in the post-conquest period extends beyond the 'Stane Street' corridor defined by Biddulph (2007a, 108). Whilst there was clearly a tendency for *de novo* settlement to focus on the newly built road (as was clearly the case at Great Dunmow), this alone cannot explain the significant numbers of sites which appear to be abandoned early in the second half of the 1st century AD, regardless of their proximity to the line of the road. Evidently there was considerable upheaval in the countryside in the immediate post-conquest period, some of which may be attributed to changes in social and political networks as a result of the conquest. These changes seem to have led to a less densely populated landscape in the early Romano-British period, judging from the evidence from the sites around Stansted.

Only one early or mid-Roman structure has been identified on the three early Romano-British settlements, the roundhouse within the eastern settlement on the LTCP site. A second circular structure was excavated on the TAS site as part of the Stansted Project. It seems likely that buildings of this

date may have been built that did not leave any discernable trace – perhaps with mass walls. A similar absence of structural evidence was noted on the substantial early Romano-British settlement at the Strood Hall site (Biddulph 2007a, 83, 111).

Agriculture

All three of the early and mid Romano-British settlements show evidence for mixed farming regimes. This is borne out by the environmental remains and animal bone (see Carruthers, CD Chapter 34; Bates, CD Chapter 32). Trackways, fields and waterholes were maintained. The trackways and boundary systems would have been used to move people and animal across the landscape, the fields were probably used for keeping livestock. Waterholes would have been vital also for the settlements. New trackways were dug on both the LTCP and MTCP sites (Plate 7.6). These would have been used for moving draft animals through the landscape, whilst the scale of the trackway on the LTCP site suggests that it would have been used for herds of animals.

Cattle bone dominates the animal bone assemblages with smaller quantities of sheep/goat and pig. Butchery waste shows that animals were slaughtered on site. Slightly less than half were butchered at around three years of age, with the remainder being kept as dairy and draft animals (Bates, CD Chapter 32). The evidence from the small numbers of sheep/goat and pig bones recovered is less clear.

Small quantities of horse and deer bone, along with a single cat bone were also recovered (the latter from the MTCP site). There was evidence for butchery of some of the horse bone, with both chop and filleting marks recorded. The deer are likely to have been hunted, and their continued presence in the faunal assemblage implies local areas of woodland.

Evidence for cereal production comes from a variety of sources – the presence of small numbers of quern or rubber stones on the settlement sites excavated, material accidentally



Plate 7.6: Early Romano-British trackway on the MTCP site looking north

charred during processing and from pollen recovered from suitable deposits.

Direct evidence for the growth of cereals can be seen in the presence of cereal pollen from ditch 202005 on the LBR site. The real significance of this lies in the location of the sample. The recovery of evidence for both cereal and some weeds associated with arable farming in the pollen assemblage might suggest that the Romano-British period saw arable farming on the heavy clays of the boulder clay plateau, although the possibility that this pollen derives from nearby processing activities cannot be discounted (Huckerby *et al.*, CD Chapter 31). The high levels of grassland pollen indicate, however, that much of the immediate area was probably grassland, probably used for grazing. Tree pollen from these samples is rare, and suggest that the surrounding area was not heavily wooded at this time.

Charred plant remains recovered from both the MTCP and LTCP sites point to cereal processing on a large scale, with the presence of spikelets in charred assemblages on both sites suggesting that accidental charring of plant remains occurred whilst crops were being parched as part of their final processing. Initial processing of crops appears to have been undertaken elsewhere. Similar spikelet-rich deposits were recovered from the East of Little Dunmow Road site on the A120 (Biddulph 2007a). Both emmer and spelt

wheat were still being grown during the early and mid-Romano-British periods on various sites around Stansted, although spelt was clearly the most common cereal grown for human consumption (Carruthers, CD Chapter 29). This concurs with the evidence from the Rayne Roundabout site, where spelt was clearly dominant in a mid-Romano-British assemblage (Biddulph 2007a).

The early Romano-British period seems to have seen an expansion of agricultural activity onto the boulder clay plateau and an increase in the levels of arable production. This must be linked to improved agricultural techniques, possibly including manuring. Evidence from all of the sites of this period point to arable farming, initially of both emmer and spelt, and latterly of spelt. The preliminary processing of these crops appears to have taken place apart from the main areas of settlement, with final processing taking place within the settlements. No doubt some of this processed cereal was used to supply the needs of the individual settlements, although it is likely that the primary intention of this intensification was to produce surpluses of cereals, perhaps for trading in local centres such as Great Dunmow and Bishops Stortford. There is insufficient evidence from the animal bone assemblage to suggest that animal husbandry was also geared to producing surpluses for sale and export, although this seems to have been the case in the late Romano-British period (see below).

Acts of deposition

There is some continuing evidence for acts of deposition in the early Romano-British period, although this is largely confined to the deposition of items of metalwork and animal bone (predominantly pig) in a series of pits dug in the vicinity of the abandoned shrine on the ACS site (Havis and Brooks 2004, 534). The absence of other similar acts of deposition from any of the early or mid-Romano-British sites may partially result from the later truncation many of these sites suffered, but does seem to reflect a genuine decline in these practices. This may be linked to the significant changes in the settlement pattern and density in the area, and there may be some significance to the choice of the site of an earlier shrine for the only acts of deposition of this date. The choice of the ACS site for ritual activity would seem to have been an essentially conservative action, looking back to the past and venerating those beliefs and one cannot but speculate that this was done as a reaction to the major upheavals taking place in the rural landscape at the time.

Early and mid-Romano-British burial practice

Virtually all of the evidence for early and mid-Romano-British burials consists of cremation deposits, the exception being the unburnt infant bones, interred with an adult cremation burial, in the south-western cemetery on the MTCP site. Whilst the two small cremation cemeteries on the LTCP site apparently fell into disuse in the early Romano-British period, burial continued in the dispersed cemeteries on the SCS, DCS/DFS and CCS sites and in the two cemeteries on the MTCP site. This affords us an opportunity to examine mortuary rites and burial practice over time and across a number of sites.

In common with the earlier burials, few of these cremated individuals could be sexed, although both sexes were present in the burial population. Of the 62 individuals identified in these burials, 7 (11%) were possibly or probably male, a further 7 (11%)



Figure 7.13: Reconstruction of a Romano-British cremation burial on the MTCP site

possibly or probably female and the remaining 48 (78%) were unsexed. Adults dominate the assemblage with 36 examples (58%), 5 (8%) were juvenile, 2 (3%) infants/neonate and the remaining 19 (31%) could not be aged. The presence of two infants/neonates represents the first evidence for their inclusion within the burial population in the Stansted area. In both cases, however, these were incorporated alongside the burial of an adult and may have been undertaken for specific reasons. In neither case was the infant or child the primary burial in the grave.

As with the earlier cremation deposits the early Romano-British burials point

to a sequential mortuary ritual, with the body being prepared, construction of the pyre and selection of appropriate goods for cremation prior to the actual burning. As before, the pyre site appears to have been distant from that of burial. Once the pyre had been allowed to cool, selected elements were chosen and transported to the burial site, after which the pyre site may well have been subject to further activity such as raking over. The inclusion of small bones such as those from the hands and feet in some cremation burials suggests that the deposit was recovered whole and then winnowed to extract the bones (McKinley, CD Chapter 27; McKinley 2004b, 300–1).

The selected materials were then buried in the grave, usually accompanied by a further set of (unburnt) grave goods.

Less than half of the burials were urned (Table 7.5). There appears to have been a general trend over time, with urns more common in the pre-Flavian burials than in the late 1st- or 2nd-century burials.

The pre-Flavian period saw an increase in the levels of grave goods accompanying urned burials (Table 7.6). Pottery was used to accompany over 80% of all urned burials of this period, with an average of just under three vessels buried in a grave including the cinerary urn. In contrast to this, less than half of the unurned graves were buried with accessory vessels, and the average number of vessels is also less, at two vessels per grave. Similar quantities of metalwork, animal bone and pyre debris seem to have been buried with the urned and unurned burials, although the figures for animal bone and pyre debris should be treated with caution as a number of the cremation burials from earlier excavations were both truncated and rapidly excavated, and such data may have been lost or not recorded.

Site	Date	Urned burials	Unurned burials	Uncertain	Total
SCS	1st century	3 (37%)	5 (63%)	0	8
DCS	1st century	0	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4
	Late 1st/early 2nd century	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	10
	Pre-Flavian	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	0	7
DFS	Late 1st century	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	6
	Mid-late 2nd century	1 (100%)	0	0	1
CCS	1st century	1 (100%)	0	0	1
MTCP (N)	Pre-Flavian/1st century	3 (75%)	1(25%)	0	4
	Late 1st/early 2nd century	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0	4
	Pre-Flavian	4 (100%)	0	0	4
MTCP (SW)	Late 1st/early 2nd century	3 (43%)	4 (57%)	0	7
	Mid-2nd century	0	1 (100%)	0	1
	Uncertain	0	1 (100%)	0	1
Total %		23 (40%)	29 (50%)	6 (10%)	58

Table 7.5: Proportions of urned and unurned burials

A single unurned burial was contained within a wooden box.

There are a number of site specific patterns which can also be seen (Table 7.6). The two groups of burials on the SCS site were treated very differently for example, and presumably represent separate practices.

Urned burials of this date were less common than unurned burials on the DFS site, and were clearly less well furnished than the unurned burials. Indeed, the unurned burials from the DCS site were exceptionally well

furnished in contrast to those from the other sites. Although the numbers of graves of this period were small, the two cemeteries from the MTCP site both favoured urned over unurned burials, with those from the newly established south-western cemetery were slightly better furnished.

There was an increase in both the numbers of furnished graves and the levels of furnishing within some of them during the late 1st and 2nd century (Table 7.7). All of these graves, both urned, and unurned were provided with accessory vessels. The overall

Site	Grave type	Accessory vessel	Metalwork	Animal bone	Pyre debris	Wooden box	Average no of vessels per grave
SCS	Urned burials	3 (100%)					3
	Unurned burials	1 (20%)					0.20
	Damaged burials						
DCS	Urned burials						
	Unurned burials						
	Damaged burials	1 (100%)					1
DFS	Urned burials	1 (50%)	2 (100%)				1.5
	Unurned burials	4 (80%)	4 (80%)	2 (40%)	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	4.6
	Damaged burials						
CCS	Urned burials	1 (100%)	1 (100)				4
	Unurned burials						
	Damaged burials						
MTCP (N)	Urned burials	2 (66%)					2
	Unurned burials	1 (100%)	1 (100%)				4
	Damaged burials						
MTCP (SW)	Urned burials	4 (100%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)		3.75
	Unurned burials						
	Damaged burials						
All sites	Urned burials (13)	11 (85%)	4 (31%)	1 (7%)	3 (23)		2.84
	Unurned burials (14)	6 (42%)	5 (36%)	2 (14%)	4 (29%)	6 (42%)	2
	Damaged burials (1)	1					1
Total	28 burials	18 (64%)	9 (32%)	3 (11%)	7 (25%)	1 (4%)	2.39

Table 7.6: Furnishing levels in pre-Flavian graves

Site	Grave type	Accessory vessel	Metalwork	Animal bone	Pyre debris	Wooden box	Average no of vessels per grave
DCS	Urned burials	3 (100%)				1 (33%)	2
	Unurned burials	4 (100%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)		3 (75%)	2 (8.75)
	Damaged burials	3 (100%)					1.33
DFS	Urned burials	2 (100%)	1 (50%)				4.5
	Unurned burials	3 (100%)	1 (33%)	2 (66%)		1 (33%)	3
	Damaged burials	2 (100%)	1 (50%)				2
MTCP (N)	Urned burials	2 (100%)					2
	Unurned burials	2 (100%)		1 (50%)			2
	Damaged burials						
MTCP (SW)	Urned burials	4 (100%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)		3.25
	Unurned burials	4 (100%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)		2.5
	Damaged burials						
All sites	Urned burials (11)	11 (100%)	3 (28%)	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	1 (9%)	2.91
	Unurned burials (12)	12 (100%)	4 (33%)	5 (42%)	1 (8%)	4 (33%)	2.25 (4.83)
	Damaged burials (5)	5 (100%)	1 (20%)				1.6
Total	28 burials	28 (100%)	8 (29%)	7 (25%)	3 (9%)	5 (18%)	2.39 (3.5)

Table 7.7: Furnishing levels in late 1st- or 2nd-century graves (numbers in italics include rich graves 247 and 249)

average number of vessels also increased, to 3.5 vessels per grave, but here the figures are badly skewed by the inclusion of the two richest graves from the DCS site (25 and 26). If these are excluded, the average number of vessels is identical to that of the earlier period. In general, the levels of other forms of grave furnishing were similar as well, with approximately a third of the graves containing items of metalwork, and a quarter containing burnt or unburnt animal bone. The only other group of some significance is the graves associated with wooden boxes.

Looking at the individual sites themselves, it is clear that burials in the cemeteries on the DCS and DFS sites are generally no better furnished than the rest of the contemporary graves on the sites around Stansted. They are, however, set apart by a small number of well furnished graves, including burials 247 and 249. There are also a number of other aspects to the funerary rituals on the DCS and DFS sites that are not paralleled on other local sites – such as the use of

wooden boxes as containers for funerary assemblages, the covering of graves with charred planks and the provision of halves of pigs' skulls and a halved chicken as grave goods.

Four of the five burials within large wooden boxes contained unurned deposits of cremated bone along with grave goods. The primary function of these boxes seems to have been to protect the burial, including the associated grave goods. In doing this, these may effectively have replaced the functional requirements of a cinerary urn. All the wooden boxes were found on the DCS or DFS sites.

The array of vessel forms from these early and mid-Romano-British graves shows a greater diversity than was evident in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British graves. Jars are still common, and popular as cinerary urns, but other vessels were increasingly used as accessory vessels. Table 7.8 shows the numbers of differing vessel types that could be identified on the individual sites. The choice of vessel

for cinerary urns seems to have largely been a practical one, with beakers, butt-beakers and jars used. These share some common characteristics such as a large capacity and a suitably wide opening. The single pedestal urn used as a cinerary urn appears to have been made some time before its deposition in the grave, a phenomenon discussed further below.

A wide variety of accessory vessels were buried in these graves. Open necked forms such as jars were still common on most of the sites, although the small group of miniature jars only occur on the DCS and DFS sites. These do not occur in any of the contemporary cemetery assemblages and appear to have been selected for use in these burials alone.

The majority of the vessels provided as grave goods (rather than as cinerary urns) are functionally associated with drinking, either as containers for liquids or as drinking vessels. This is in marked contrast to the wider settlement assemblage (Stansbie and

Site	Open necked forms			Closed necked forms			Drinking vessels			Eating vessels			Other
	Jar	Pedestal Urn	Miniature Jar	Flagon	Bottle	Amphora	Beaker	Butt-Beaker	Cup	Platter	Dish	Bowl	Lid
SCS	2 (2)	1 (1)							1			1	
DCS	4 (2)		4	3		1	2		8	1	2	2	
DFS	7 (3)		3	4	1		6	4 (1)	5	12	1	3	
MTCP (N)	5 (3)			1			2	2 (1)	1	1		1	
MTCP (SW)	11 (6)			1			4 (1)	4	1	5			1
Total	29 (16)	1 (1)	7	9	1	1	14 (1)	10 (2)	16	19	3	7	1

Table 7.8: Types of vessels used as accessory vessels and cinerary urns (numbers of cinerary urns shown in parentheses)

Biddulph, CD Chapter 18). These include the closed necked forms, of which simple flagons are the most common. Drinking vessels were also common, with large numbers of beakers and cups present (although the numbers of the latter are disproportionately influenced by burials 25 and 26 on the DCS site). Platters, dishes and bowls in various fabrics were common, with platters the most frequent.

Recent work on pottery assemblages in Essex cemeteries has suggested that site status can be determined by the types of pottery vessels selected for deposition (Biddulph 2005). This suggests that jars and beakers were common grave goods on cemeteries associated with 'settlement sites' whilst cups were more common on 'high status' burial sites, whilst some (such as flagons and the use of samian vessels) are common on both. This pattern is broadly applicable to the cemeteries of this date at the Stansted sites, where the majority of cups were recovered from the DCS and DFS cemeteries, both of which contained well-furnished burials, whilst a higher proportion of jars were recovered from the cemeteries on the MTCP site. Beakers seem to be more universal in their appeal. Biddulph's work also highlighted that samian vessels seem to occur in both 'settlement' and 'high status' cemeteries (2005, 34).

It is clear that the pottery vessels used in these burials do not closely reflect the assemblages on the known settlement sites in the area. There is an element of selection, with a higher proportion of finewares, drinking and eating vessels than on the adjacent settlements. This is a pattern recognised in other cemetery assemblages, and it is clear that cemetery assemblages do not mirror domestic assemblages (Biddulph 2005, 36). Stansbie and Biddulph, characterising the cemetery assemblages:

'The contrast between the funerary and non-funerary assemblage highlights well the complexity of inferring status from pottery. On an ostensibly low to moderate status site we have a funerary assemblage that taken in

isolation on the basis of functional vessel types could be seen as indicating moderate to high status. Clearly the significance of the choice or number of vessels deposited for social status is a complex issue and other non-ceramic grave goods may be a surer indicator of wealth. Suffice it to say that it is not necessarily the case that higher numbers of ancillary vessels, or a wider range of functional types of vessel meant that the occupant of the grave had a higher social status' (Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18).

A small number of the graves contain vessels made some considerable time before their deposition. Once again this is a phenomenon recognised elsewhere (Biddulph 2005, 38). These include both of the early-mid 2nd-century wealthy vessels on the DCS site, which both contained apparently unused samian vessels of the second half of the 1st century AD. Other anomalies include the vessels in burial 330041. Here, the five vessels included a coarse red-surfaced grog-tempered ware butt-beaker, a black-surfaced ware butt-beaker and a grog-tempered lid, both probably made during the pre-Flavian period, alongside a black-surfaced ware beaker of a type manufactured in the mid-late 2nd century. A number of other graves, predominantly of the late 1st century also contained grog-tempered vessels which may also have been manufactured some time prior to their burial, although these vessels probably continued being made until the Flavian period. It seems clear from this that some of the vessels selected for burial were chosen some time before their deposition, and removed from everyday circulation in order to ensure their survival. The motivation for this is unclear, but it does indicate that at least some of the vessels buried in these cemeteries were chosen with great care indeed.

Where metalwork has been found in graves, it generally comprises copper alloy brooches. Some of these show signs of having been damaged on the pyre, and perhaps formed part of the funerary garb of the deceased, whilst others show no such signs, and

may point to the provision of further clothing for the deceased at burial. Examples of different sets of clothing – possibly representing different 'social personae' – forming part of funerary assemblages has been noted in late Roman contexts (Cooke 1998). In some cases, more than one brooch is placed in a grave, with up to three brooches in some graves.

Animal bone, both unburnt and burnt, was recovered from a proportion of the graves. These may represent the remains of food offerings, both on the pyre and at the time of burial. Where species of the animal could be determined, pig and chicken were common, with some indication that young animals were favoured. These are amongst the most common animals chosen for burial in cremation burials (Philpott 1991, 196). The survival of animal bones serves to highlight the possibility that other foodstuffs are likely to have been placed as offerings on the pyre and in the grave, although the chances of such organic remains surviving in an archaeologically detectable fashion are slim. This may, however, be linked to the increased provision of containers for liquids and drinking and eating vessels in early Romano-British graves. Not all of the animal bones in these graves are likely to represent food offerings however – the two longitudinally split pig skulls from the DFS site point to a different sort of offering.

In general, the cemeteries excavated on various sites across the Stansted landscape appear to have served a relatively poor group of rural communities who appear to have done their best to provide suitable funerary rites for their dead, and in doing so, selected pottery vessels that reflected well upon them. This is certainly true for the burials directly associated with settlements (the MTCP cemeteries), and also for the majority of the burials excavated on the SCS, DCS, DFS and CCS sites. However, a small number of graves on the DCS and DFS sites are markedly better furnished, whilst two (burials 25 and 26) are undoubtedly the burials of wealthy individuals.

These wealthy burial rites appear to have their origins in the better furnished pre-Flavian burials on the site – burials 9, 12 and 13. These were substantial graves, two of which were covered with burnt planks. All three contained sizeable pottery assemblages incorporating a range of different vessels (Table 7.3). All three also contained metalwork including brooches, a boxed toilet set in one grave and fittings for a (?)tray. Two also contained material which had been burnt on the pyre, including bone toggles, probably from clothing (Table 7.3).

Later 1st century developments of the same rite can be seen in burials 15 and 17 (Table 7.3). These were both protected – by a wooden box with metal fittings and by a series of charred planks respectively. Both were less well furnished than the pre-Flavian graves, but both contained pottery vessels (beakers in both and platters in another), split pigs skulls and chicken bones. One contained a copper alloy toilet set.

The best furnished graves were the latest – graves 25 and 26 (see above, Table 7.2). The former was protected by a wooden box. A rich assemblage of artefacts was buried with the bone (Table 7.2), which highlight the wealth of the individual. Burial 26 was slightly less well furnished, but it still contained a very varied range of artefacts (Table 7.2). Despite the obvious wealth of these two graves, it is clear that they represent the ultimate development of a burial rite which has its origins in the pre-Flavian period.

The continuity of burial on the DCS/DFS and the MTCP sites from the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period into the mid-2nd century emphasises the importance of these sites in the eyes of the settlements they served. On both the LTCP and MTCP sites, however, the use of cemeteries in this period is inextricably linked to the fortunes of the adjacent settlements. The absence of any evidence for an associated settlement for the DCS/DFS sites makes this harder to judge, but continuity in both burial and rite suggest a similar link. The wealth of some of these burials suggests that

the community this cemetery served had the resources to provide very ostentatious burials for at least a small number of its inhabitants. There is no evidence for continued burial on any of the sites after the mid-2nd century. On the MTCP site, where there was a contemporary settlement, the decision to cease burial in the associated cemeteries does not seem to have been linked to an abandonment of the settlement.

A mid-Roman hiatus?

The problems in identifying and phasing mid-Roman features has been discussed briefly above, but is worthy of further consideration. On most of the sites excavated, the quantities of identifiable mid-Roman pottery are less than for preceding periods, even on sites where there appears to have been continuity of settlement or use. So marked is this change that in discussing on the supply of Roman pottery to the sites excavated as part of the Stansted Project, Wallace *et al.* commented both on the high levels of mid-Roman pottery found residual in later features on the BLS site, whilst also suggesting that there was ‘ceramic poor phase’ and that the DFS site may even have been aceramic for much of the Romano-British period (2004, 310–2).

There is clear evidence on the MTCP, LTCP and LBR sites for continuity of use through the mid-Romano-British period, with two of the sites in use well into the late Romano-British period. On both, however, problems of phasing arise both from the levels of truncation suffered from later Roman features (hence the high levels of residuality recorded) and from the problems in identifying forms and fabrics of an early to mid-3rd-century date (Wallace *et al.* 2004, 310). This is not, however, solely a local problem. Going’s study of the apparently cyclical nature of the Romano-British pottery industry highlights a number of periods in which pottery industries appear to have been in recession, one of which lies in the early 3rd century (1992). During these recessions, pottery production and supply seems to have suffered significantly, and it should

not be surprising that rural sites farming marginal land such as those excavated at Stansted, reflect these problems in their ceramic assemblages.

The effects of the conquest and ‘Romanisation’ – the wider landscape

The effects of the Roman conquest on the inhabitants of the Stansted landscape appear to have been both numerous and complex. Not all will necessarily have left traces in the archaeological record, but their impact is likely to have been profound.

Stansted appears to have lain close to the boundary between the *Catuvellauni* and the *Trinovantes*, two of the most prominent tribes of the pre-conquest period in southern Britain. The border seems to have been the River Stort, with the land to the east, including Stansted within the territory of the *Trinovantes*. There can be little doubt from historical sources and the distribution of coinage issued by different rulers that these tribal groups had distinct identities. The inhabitants of the small farms excavated at Stansted were at the lower end of a hierarchical network led by powerful figureheads. We cannot be certain how this network operated, or how it affected the thoughts and actions of these farmers and their families, although they may have been bound by almost feudal ties to a member of an upper class which might include nobles, warriors and priests. This may have worked along the lines of a clan system, with smaller, possibly family based units (or clans) nominally belonging to a tribe ruled by a single leader (Millet 1990, 18–21). This system was sufficiently robust to provide the chieftains who led it with the wealth and authority to wage war on a fairly large scale.

There were also increasingly developed political and economic contacts with the European continent, both with tribal groups in North West Europe and with the emerging power of Rome. These contacts are likely to have influenced the adoption of developed cremation burial rites and

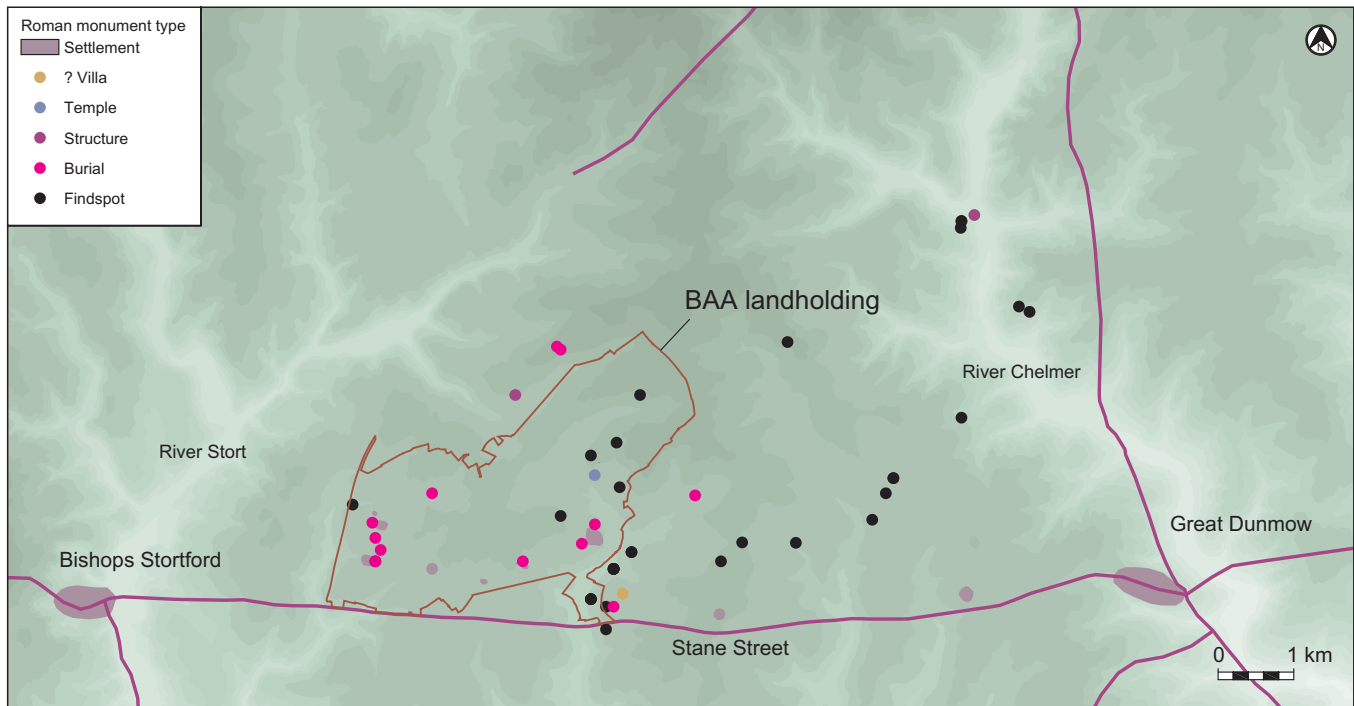


Figure 7.14: The wider Romano-British landscape

new technologies, such as the wheel thrown grog-tempered pottery which characterises the ceramic assemblage. Many of the pre-conquest tribal leaders were nominally 'client kings' of Rome, probably receiving some inducements for their loyalty whilst often sending sons or other family members to Rome for the dual purpose of acting as guarantees of good behaviour and education in the ways of empire (Creighton 2001, 4–5).

Although much of this is unlikely to have had a significant impact on the inhabitants of the Stansted area, it would have impinged on their lives in many ways. The establishment of wider trade networks allowed the purchase of goods such as salt and new forms of pottery and access to status and exotic goods from further afield as well as new ideas and traditions. This can be seen in the presence of amphorae from the ACS site, briquetage (salt containers), recovered on many of the sites and in the adoption of new forms of pottery and burial rites. This increasing sophistication of social, political and economic networks which started in the Late Iron Age can be seen as the beginnings of the process which resulted in the 'Romanisation' of the post-conquest of inhabitants of the area.

By the Late Iron Age the population of the area was clearly expanding rapidly placing added pressure on the agricultural land available to these settlements. Indeed there is evidence for over farming in the area. Animal husbandry continued to be important. There is no evidence from any of the sites excavated for the production of agricultural surpluses for trade or exchange. The evidence points to subsistence level farming and consumption.

There are a number of significant changes to the patterns of settlement, enclosure and agricultural economy in the second half of the 1st century AD. There appears to be a fairly major dislocation of the settlement pattern, associated with a decrease in the population on the excavated sites. This appears in some areas to have been allied to the construction of new boundary systems for surviving settlements, probably linked to increasing exploitation of the poorer soils of the boulder clay plateau. There is evidence for fairly large-scale crop processing on the early and mid-Romano-British sites in the area, with spelt becoming increasingly favoured as a crop. This intensification of arable farming was probably designed to produce a surplus for trading. A similar pattern

of intensification and generation of surpluses was noted on the contemporary A120 sites (Biddulph 2007a).

Unfortunately the animal bone assemblages from the Stansted sites excavated are small, and do not afford the opportunity to assess whether there was a similar drive towards intensification in animal products, although there is clear evidence from the later Romano-British period for beef production at a surplus (see below). This intensification of agriculture and production of surpluses does not appear to have significantly affected any of the surviving or new settlements in material terms, although some fragments of glassware, metalwork and finewares were recovered from the MTCP settlement (with slightly higher proportions in the associated cemeteries). The settlements seem to have benefited little in terms of wealth from the agricultural surpluses produced.

We have to be careful in any assumption that the natural expression of wealth or status is likely to have been through the purchase of 'Roman' goods and materials rather than more traditional 'Iron Age' values (perhaps including the accumulation of large herds of livestock or displays of

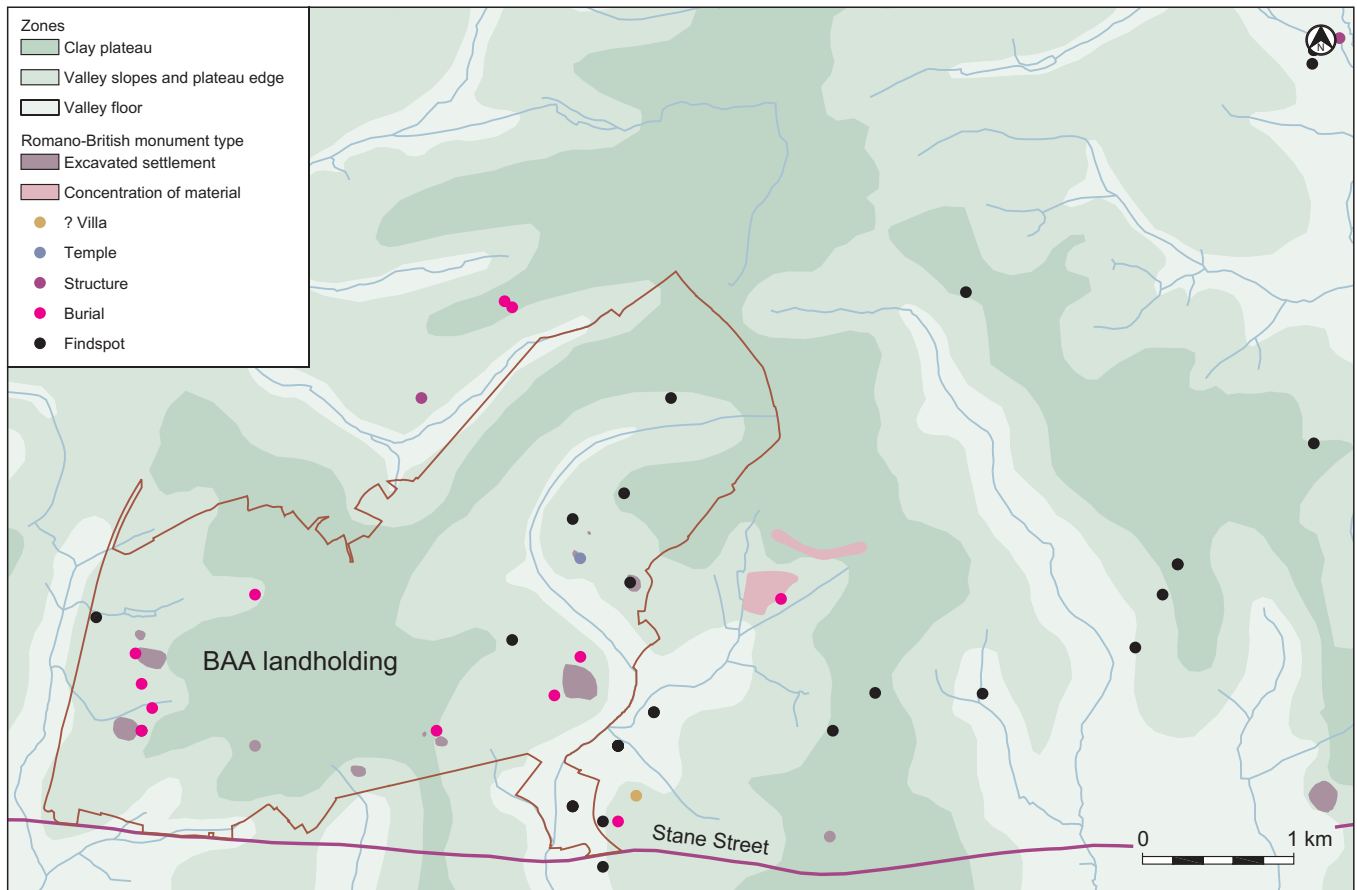


Figure 7.15: Romano-British activity in the Stansted area

conspicuous consumption both in acts of deposition and the disposal of the dead). However, we have little evidence for such expressions. The small amount of animal bone recovered does not suggest increased pastoralism – if anything the evidence suggests that arable farming was becoming increasingly important at this time – whilst there is little evidence for conspicuous consumption in either votive acts or in burial in the post-Conquest period.

There can be little doubt that the construction of Stane Street and the development of the small towns at Bishops Stortford and Great Dunmow would have also had a major impact on the surrounding area (Fig. 7.14). From this figure, it is clear that the majority of the known settlements in the area lie fairly close to the line of Stane Street, but that the topography and geology of the land continued to inform the choice of settlement location. Most of the settlements, burials, and even findspots tend to lie on the margins of the shallow valleys cut by streams and

rivers. Only the two major centres in the local area – the small towns at Bishops Stortford and Great Dunmow, appear to partially occupy river floodplains, probably growing up around bridges or fords over the Rivers Stort and Chelmer respectively.

This pattern is further borne out by ongoing work being undertaken as part of the Stansted G2 Project (see Fig 7.15). This work has identified two further areas of Romano-British activity in the immediate vicinity. The largest of these almost certainly represents another rural settlement, and also seems to have had a small cemetery associated with it. This lies on the valley slopes, occupying a similar position to the rest of the settlements excavated to date. A smaller area of activity to the north-east of this, situated on the edge of the clay plateau may represent activity peripheral to this settlement, rather than a second settlement, but only further excavation will be able to determine this further.

It is clear that these settlements, whilst continuing to occupy favourable locale in the landscape had access to a much wider range of trade networks and markets as a result of the Roman conquest – a fact evident in the more diverse material culture excavated in these settlements. Stane Street itself, linking the important pre-conquest centres of Colchester (*Camulodunum*) to the east and Braughing to the west, would have been particularly important in enabling access to markets and improving communications. A network of minor roads linked the market centres along Stane street with other towns and with centres of production and consumption. Goods were transported to these markets for sale, taxes were collected, and material such as pottery and metalwork bought. In this way, the farmers of the Stansted area had access to new forms of pottery, metalwork and other goods, although inevitably their ability to take advantage of these markets would have been limited by their ability to pay.

The absence of any early Roman coinage from the Stansted sites suggests that the new coinage was little used within the settlements themselves, although presumably money was required for purchasing goods at market and for paying dues such as taxes (Cooke, CD Chapter 13).

These settlements may have continued to operate within a hierarchical network, perhaps producing surpluses directly or indirectly for a larger

landowner. We do not yet clearly understand the nature of land ownership in the early Romano-British period, or its effects on the rural landscape. However, the Roman pattern of control was generally one predicated on encouraging existing hierarchies and social networks to flourish under Roman rule. Local noblemen were afforded positions of status in the newly created province, and encouraged to participate in the local government of areas through bodies

such as town councils. It is men such as these who were probably responsible for the first villa estates in the area, and may have controlled tracts of land either directly or indirectly. It may also have been individuals from such a family who chose to continue to bury their dead with increasing extravagance in their ancestral burial ground on the western edge of the plateau, culminating in the wealthy burials on the DCS/DFS site.

CHAPTER 8

Agricultural Intensification (c AD 270–400)

by Nicholas Cooke

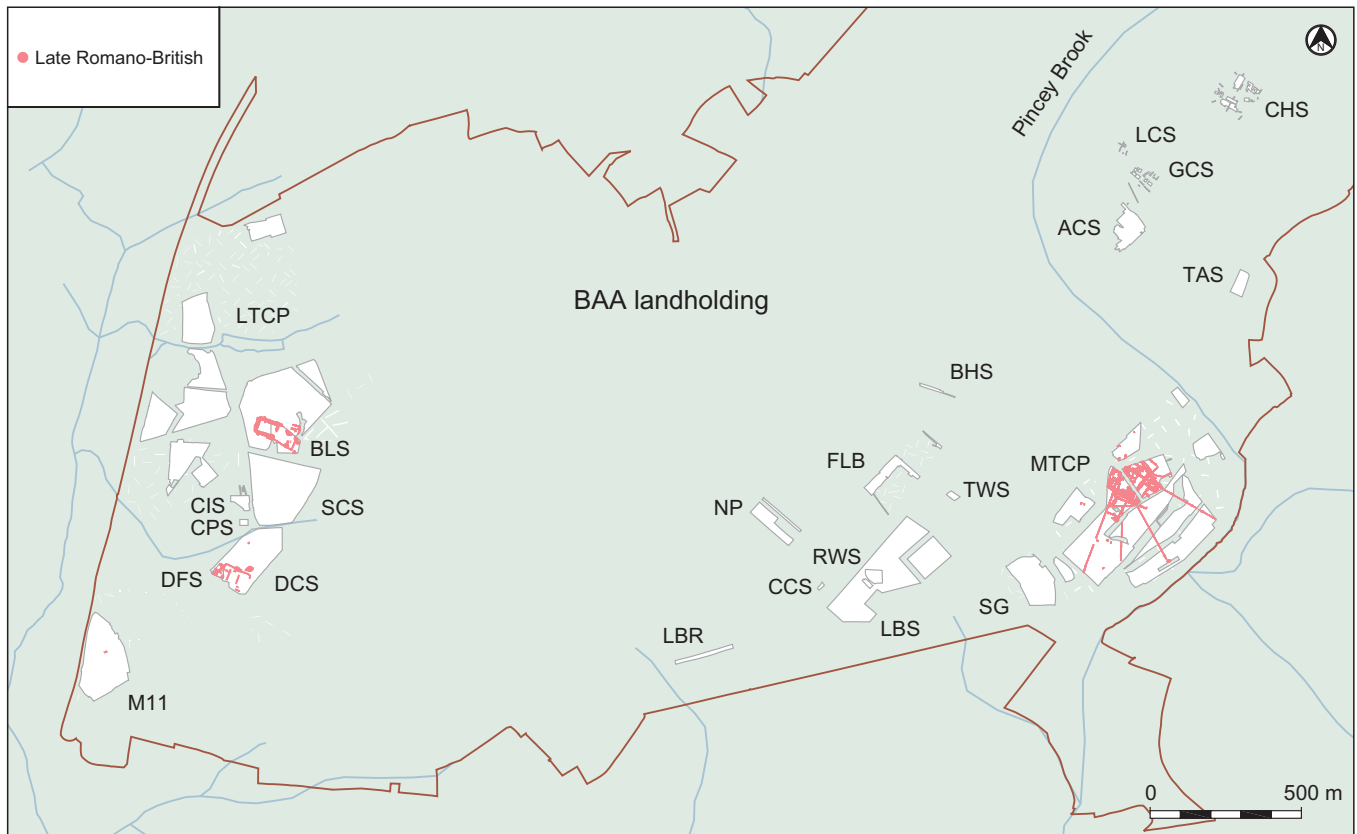


Figure 8.1: Late Romano-British features

Introduction

The late 3rd and 4th centuries saw further changes to the pattern of settlement and agriculture in the area. The somewhat dispersed settlement pattern seen previously changes quite markedly with settlements concentrating in three main areas in this period: the oval enclosure on the LTCP/BLS site, the MTCP site and a new enclosure complex was established on the DCS/DFS site (Fig. 8.1, Plate 8.1). The final silting of features on the LBR site in the mid-late 3rd century probably represents the end of activity in that area.

This chapter will examine the changes within the settlements and then explore the pattern of landscape enclosure. The evidence for changes in agricultural practices and burial practices will also be presented. The reasons behind the changes in the landscape and individual settlements are likely to have been complex but the drive towards the production of agricultural surpluses linked in some cases to the development of large farmed estates may be central here.

Chronology

The chronology for the late Romano-British period relies on the dating provided by coins and ceramic assemblages together with the stratigraphic sequence.

The late Roman fabrics from these sites are dominated by Hadham oxidised wares, with the main forms being bowl-jar forms, along with bowls and dishes. Other fabrics recorded on the recently excavated sites include late shell-tempered ware, Nene Valley colour-coated ware and Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware. The vessels forms in these fabrics are similar to those recovered from the DCS and DFS sites on the earlier excavations (Wallace *et al.* 2004, 306–8). Other similarities with this earlier assemblage include the dearth of continental imports, the presence of Portchester ‘D’ ware and the small amounts of Rettendon-type wares (Stansbie and Biddulph, *CD Chapter 18*). Notable absences from the pottery assemblages from all sites are Alice Holt grey wares, although only small amounts of these are known in the area (Wallace *et al.* 2004, 312).



Plate 8.1: MTCP site from the air. Note the darker fills of the late Romano-British settlement features

A total of 347 coins was recovered from the MTCP site, of which six are either Late Iron Age in date or can be dated to the 1st or 2nd centuries AD; the remainder date to the late 3rd or 4th century. Many of these were found in the dark spreads which filled the later Romano-British features on the site (probably material initially forming in dumps in and around the settlement and incorporated in the tops of these later features by ploughing) and cannot be relied on as dating tools. However, sufficient numbers were recovered *in situ* for a fairly detailed chronology to be established (Cooke, *CD Chapter 13*).

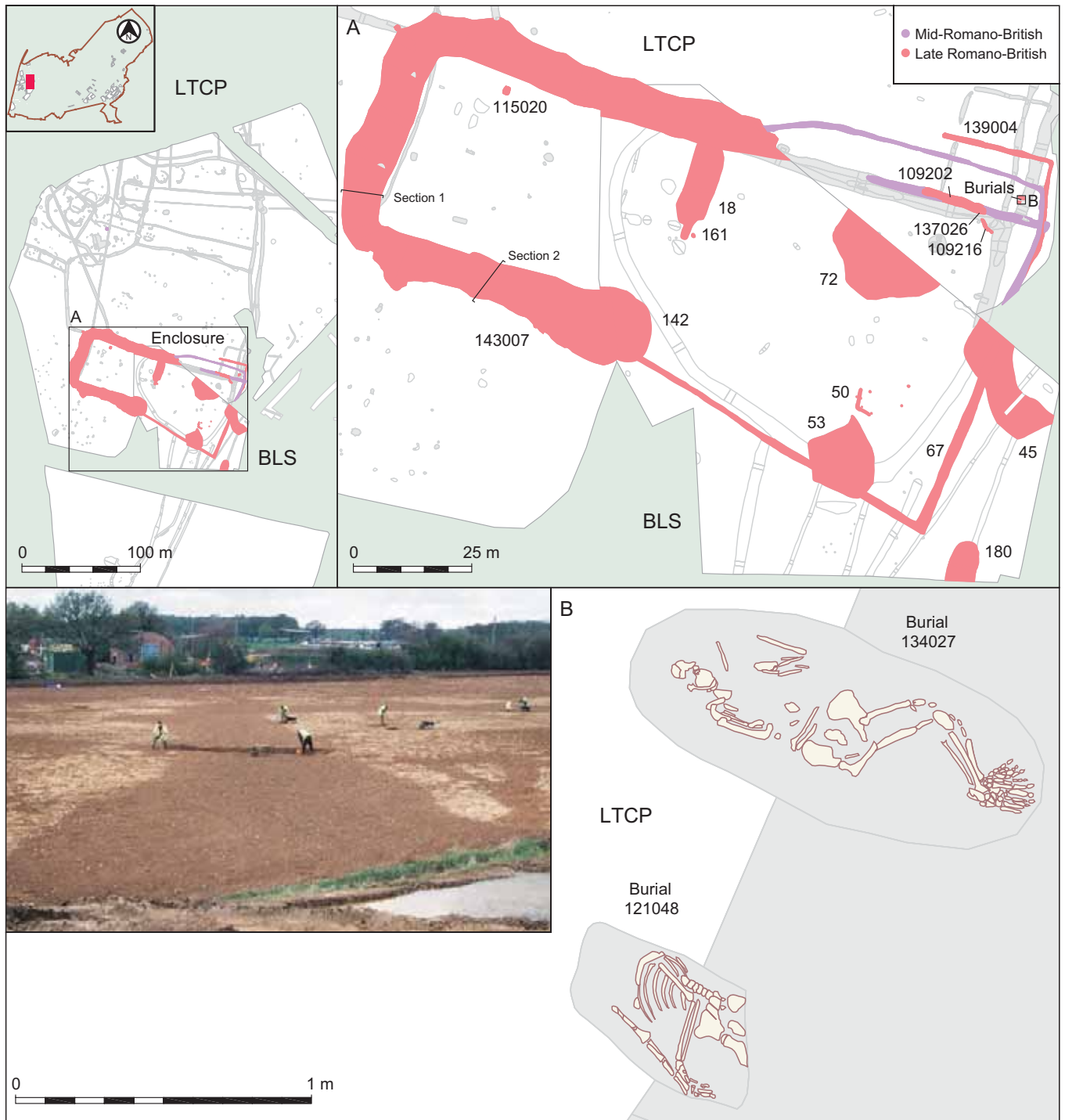


Figure 8.2: Late Romano-British enclosures and burials 121048 and 134027

A single late 3rd-century coin was recovered from the excavations on the LTCP site, complementing five coins from the earlier BLS excavations (one 1st, one 2nd and three 3rd-century coins (Havis 2004, 273)). A further 23 identifiable coins were recovered from the enclosure complex on the DCS and DFS sites, all of which were dated to the 4th century (Havis 2004, 273).

Enclosure on the LTCP and BLS sites

The oval enclosure established in the Late Iron Age/early Romano-British period on these sites finally appears to have become redundant in the 3rd century. The ditches were allowed to silt up and activity expanded further to the east and south-east (Fig. 8.2). This initially took the form of the laying of substantial areas of flint and sandstone cobbling (53, 45, 72 and 180). Cobbled area 53 appears to have been levelled

using pieces of sandstone, broken quern and pieces of storage jar, whilst the centre of cobbled area 72 was laid much more neatly (Havis and Brooks 2004, 256). Both of these may have supported timber structures. The only other feature of this date was a small pit (161).

The 4th century saw further activity on the site with the digging of new enclosure ditches. To the east, the area of earlier cobbling was enclosed by a new ditch (1 and 67, 139004) forming a roughly trapezoidal enclosure covering

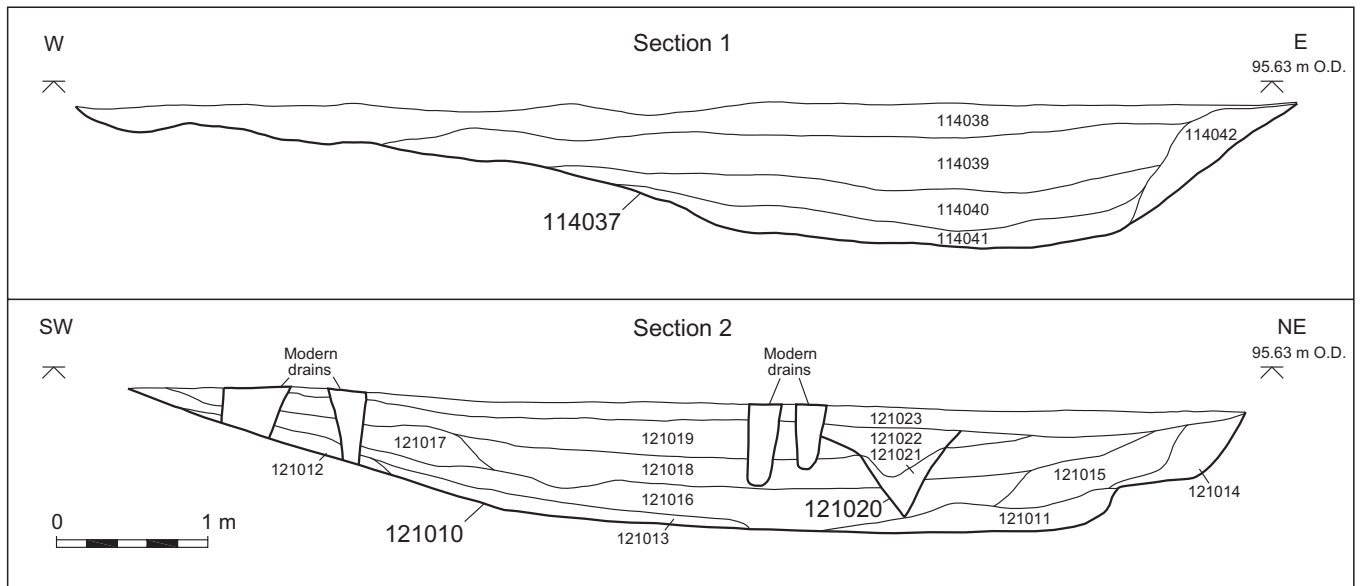


Figure 8.3: Sections through the late Romano-British enclosure ditch

0.45 hectares. This appears to have been accessed from the north. Continued recutting of some lengths of the earlier oval enclosure ditch (109202 and 137026) indicate that it was still partially visible as a boundary, and may also have marked internal subdivisions of the 4th-century enclosure.

Two inhumation burials were located in the north-eastern corner of this enclosure (121048 and 134027, Fig. 8.2). Both of these were buried in extremely shallow graves, and the former was severely truncated. Both were aligned roughly WNW–ESE, with the head at the western end of the grave. Neither of these graves is closely dated, but the hobnails in 134027 and the nature of the burials suggest a late Romano-British date.

Burial 121048 was that of a juvenile (probably 10–12 years old) of unknown

sex. Truncation had removed much of the skull and the lower limbs of the skeleton, although the body appears to have been buried lying on its right hand side, with both wrists placed together to the left of the torso. It is likely that the legs were flexed. No grave goods were recovered from this grave.

Burial 134027 was of an adult over the age of 25 (possibly a male), it lay to the north of burial 121048. The body had been laid on its back, with the legs flexed to the left hand side. The left arm appears to have been flexed at the elbow, with the left hand placed by the skull, whilst the right forearm was flexed across the midriff. Twenty-six small hobnails were recovered from the eastern end of the grave and probably represent the remains of a pair of shoes. It is not clear whether these were originally placed on the feet or not.

The only other contemporary features within this trapezoidal enclosure were a probable structure associated with a L-shaped gully (50) and a short stretch of curving gully (109216, Fig. 8.2). The two arms of gully 50 both measured approximately 5 m and contained quantities of Roman tile in its fill. A series of small postholes in the area probably represent the remains of a small timber building, although its exact form could not be determined.

To the west lay a second, smaller rectangular enclosure covering 0.22 hectares. This appears to have been entered from the larger enclosure to the east, with the two divided by cobbled area 18 (Fig. 8.2). It was bounded by a substantial ditch (142 and 143007). In places this ditch was over 10 m wide and up to 1 m deep. It had a shallow profile, and was deepest towards the interior of the enclosure (Fig. 8.3). Two segments of ditch (121040 and 140022 (not illustrated)) along the line of the northern edge of this enclosure may reflect the presence of an earlier ditch on this alignment, later recut.

The enclosure ditch had a natural silting sequence largely comprising layers which formed in a body of standing water, micromorphological analysis of these deposits showed much animal trampling, with little evidence for crop processing activities (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). Pollen from the fills of the enclosure ditch revealed a high proportion of herbaceous



Figure 8.4: Late Romano-British activity

species, particularly grasses, with very low percentages of tree and shrub pollen and fern spores, suggesting that there was very little woodland in the catchment area. Some cereal pollen was present (including barley (*Hordeum*-type) and wheat and/or oats (*Avena/Triticum*-type)) along with herb pollens characteristic of arable fields. Many of the other herbaceous pollen types found are characteristic of waste ground and waysides, suggesting that there was waste and bare rough ground around the site. (Huckerby *et al.*, CD Chapter 31).

Finds recovered from this feature included quantities of animal bone and pottery, a latchlifter (Scott, CD Chapter 14), as well as fragments of three different millstone grit millstones (Shaffrey, CD Chapter 25). Given the lack of this material elsewhere these finds may be significant, possibly pointing to the presence of a mill in the area although no structural evidence was recovered.

There were very few internal features within this western enclosure. Pit 115020 was a deep steep-sided rectangular pit which appears to have silted naturally. Finds from this feature include fragments of animal bone, sherds of pottery, and a single fragment from a glass vessel with trailed decoration (Mephams, CD Chapter 23), and a fragment from an iron vessel, possibly a frying pan (Scott, CD Chapter 14). Cobbled area 18 also dates to this period, and may have been either a platform for a structure or a yard surface (Havis and Brooks 2004, 256).

Finds from this included sherds of pottery, hobnails, pieces of shale bracelet, fragments of hipposandals and snaffle bits and pieces of quernstones (Major 2004c; 2004d). Tile was also recovered from cobbled surface 18 (Major 2004f, 313). Given the finds of horse equipment this area may have been a stable or an associated yard surface.

Two small pits were dug into the upper deposits in the enclosure ditch (112064 and 147001). These are tentatively phased to the late Romano-British period, but could be later.

Late Romano-British activity on the DCS/DFS sites

Excavations on the DCS and DFS sites revealed part of a late Romano-British enclosure complex (Fig. 8.4). The northern end of a large rectangular enclosure (ditches 29, 72, 175) was excavated on the DCS site. This was apparently subdivided by gullies 110 and 230, and further subdivided by two rows of large postholes to the north-west of 110. Gully 230 lay parallel to the two richest 2nd-century burials on the site (25 and 26, see Fig. 7.4), and may have been aligned on the mounds thought likely to have covered them. Two large spreads of cobbling were also excavated (185 and 243). Cobbled surface 243 was laid after the enclosure ditch had silted, perhaps to consolidate the ground in this area (Havis and Brooks 2004, 265–7).

More detailed excavation on the DFS site identified the north-eastern corner of a second enclosure (Fig. 8.4), defined

by ditches 242, 354 and 499, with 242 replacing an earlier ditch on the same alignment (390). Numerous gullies and pits were excavated within this enclosure, along with a corn drier or rectangular structure (*ibid.*, 269).

Ditches 181 and 187 were also late Romano-British in date, with the former apparently linked to the enclosure on the DCS site. A number of ox skulls were recovered from the lower fills of ditch 181. These were thought to be the remains of butchery waste rather than a ritual deposit (*ibid.*, 270). Numerous other features on the site included pits, gullies, hollows and postholes. No clear evidence for any structures was recorded.

Pottery from these two sites included late Roman shell-tempered ware, Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware and Hadham ware, with small amounts of imported material, including amphora, southern British coarseware and a single sherd of marbled *c ramique   l' ponge*. Other wares were noticeably absent, such as Alice Holt, or occurred only in small amounts (Portchester 'D' wares, flint-tempered Rettendon-type wares and late black-surfaced wares). The pottery suggests that this site was occupied for most of the 4th century, reaching a peak in the second half of the century (Wallace *et al.* 2004, 309–12).

Twenty-three coins were recovered, the latest of which were issues of the House of Valentinian (AD 364–378). The absence of any coins later than this might point to a decline in activity on

the site in the last quarter of the 4th century AD, or at least a decline in the importance of coins on the site after this time.

Quantities of roof tiles and box flue tiles found on both sites point to the presence nearby of buildings with tiled roofs and a hypocaust system, perhaps close to the DFS site (Major 2004f, 313). Quantities of baked clay (predominantly daub, some of which bore wattle impressions) from the sites are likely to represent structural material.

Environmental remains included assemblages of material associated with the large-scale processing of spelt, indicating that this took place on the site. These were thought to represent the remains of the final stages of crop cleaning or malting, probably associated with the 'corn drier' structure excavated on the site (Murphy 2004a, 338).

The late Romano-British complex on the MTCP site

An extensive complex of late Romano-British features was excavated on the MTCP site, with numerous buildings and enclosures constructed and reworked between *c* AD 240 and the last quarter of the 4th century (Fig. 8.5). Fortunately there is sufficient accuracy in the stratigraphic phasing of the site and the chronology of the artefacts recovered to split this into five phases of activity each spanning roughly 30 years. Sporadic activity to the north and west of the main excavated areas included pits, postholes and material within tree-throws (Fig. 8.5).

Phase 1: c AD 240–c 270

This phase represented a re-organisation and expansion of the mid-Roman landscape (see above), associated with significant changes to the wider landscape (Fig. 8.6). Although many of these features are poorly-dated, their stratigraphic relationships make their phasing more certain.

One of the main features of this phase was the re-ordering of the landscape to the south and south-east of the settlement enclosure. This involved

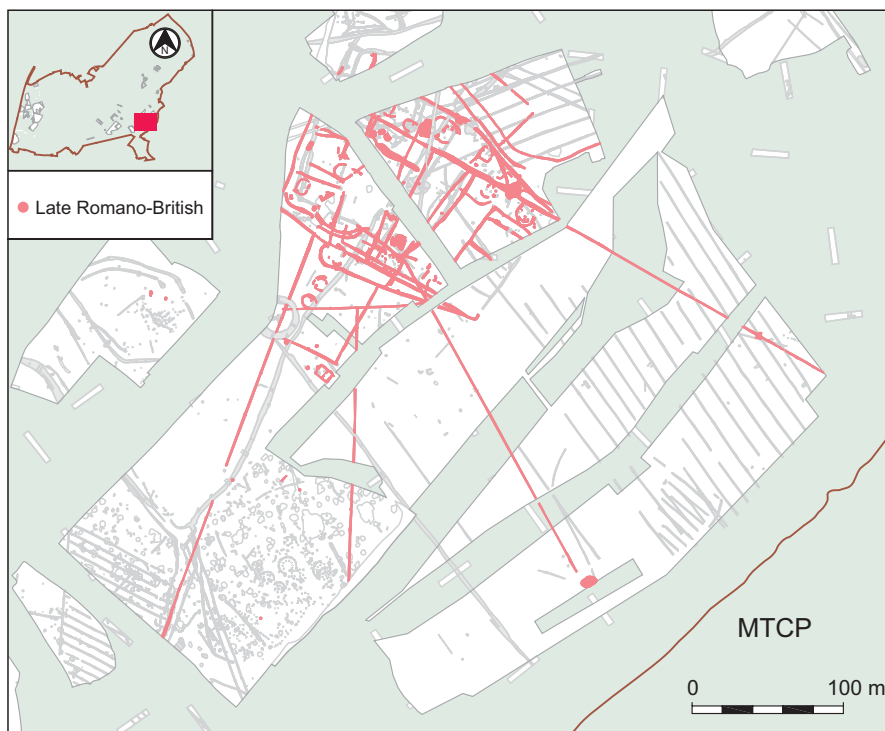


Figure 8.5: Late Romano-British features

the digging of four ditches radiating out from the settlement enclosure like the spokes of a wheel (Fig. 8.6).

This complex of ditches formed two large fields, with the western field subdivided into three by ditch 344016 (aligned west–east) and ditch 344011/302055/102 aligned north–south. The accuracy of the surveying used in laying out these radial ditches, which take no account of the topography of the area, is remarkable. The rationale behind this re-alignment of the landscape in this fashion is unclear, although it clearly highlights the importance of the settlement enclosure as the hub of agricultural activity.

There were very few features directly associated with these fields, apart from a substantial waterhole (346005) located at the southern end of ditch 344294. It was rapidly excavated under watching brief conditions, and is not well dated, although its association with the late Romano-British field boundary strongly suggests it is contemporary.

To the north-east of the settlement ditches 336107/336112 and 336104 probably represent the boundaries of another field and an associated

trackway; the full extent of which was not revealed in the excavations (Fig. 8.6).

The settlement enclosure itself clearly developed out of that bounding the 2nd- and early 3rd-century settlement. Indeed, the main enclosure boundaries represent direct reuse of the earlier enclosure (344159, 344215, 344186, 306166 and 306147 (Fig. 7.11)). Some of these features remained open, whilst others appear to have been redug or cleaned out. The substantial waterhole in the centre of the southern half of the enclosure (344372) remained open during this period, although it was beginning to silt up. No traces of any buildings within this complex were identified, although truncation may have been a factor here. A new, south-easterly, annexe to this enclosure was dug, bounded by ditches 344215, 355007/344256, 306117 and the continued line of 306136.

Evidence for at least three contemporary buildings was recovered, all located outside the main enclosure. Two of these (Late Romano-British rectangular building 1 and Roundhouse 31) lay to the south and south-east (Fig. 8.6). Late Romano-British rectangular building 1 lay within a small triangular field created by ditches 316049, 344016,

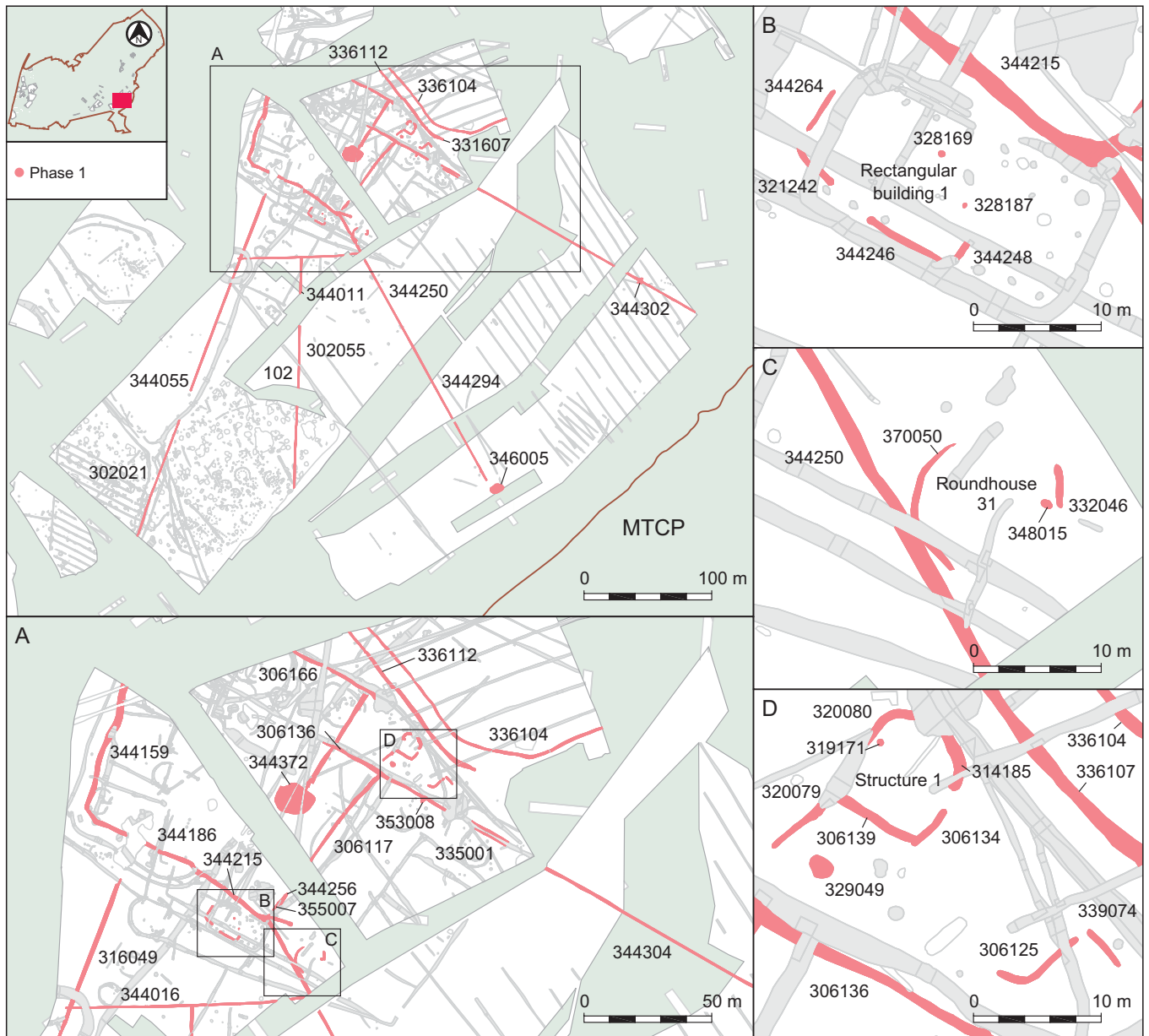


Figure 8.6: Phase 1 settlement

344250 and 344186/344215. It was approximately 15 m long and at least 6 m wide, aligned roughly north-west to south-east (Fig. 8.6). The western and southern walls were defined by shallow gullies (344264, 321242 and 344246) whilst a short stretch of the eastern wall survived as gully 344248. These gullies probably held horizontal timber cill beams on which the walls rested. There was a doorway in the southern wall between 321242 and 344246. Two small postholes within the building (328169 and 328187) may also relate to the roof of this structure. The width of the entrance suggests that this may not have been a domestic structure but may have had an agricultural function.

Roundhouse 31 lay immediately to the east of ditch 344250 (Fig. 8.6). It comprised two surviving gullies (370050 and 332046) defining a roughly oval area 11 m wide. A single posthole, 348015, probably relates to this structure. Although the dating evidence is poor, its stratigraphic relationships suggest that it is contemporaneous with ditch 344250.

The third structure, late Romano-British structure 1 lay to the east, between the boundary of the main enclosure and the western edge of the trackway formed by ditches 336104 and 336107 (Fig. 8.6). This structure was sub-rectangular in plan, with a slightly curved north-eastern end with

its longest axis aligned roughly north-east to south-west. It was defined by a series of shallow gullies (306134, 306139, 314185 and 320080). Internally it measured approximately 8 m by 7.5 m. It is not clear whether these gullies contained timber cill beams or whether they acted as drainage features, although the fact that 314185 appears to have cut the fills of 306139 suggests that the latter is more likely. The building had a well defined south-easterly facing entrance. Pit 319171 contained a placed deposit of a cattle skull, placed upright on the base of the feature and covered by a number of flint nodules. A single sherd of pottery was also recovered from this pit.

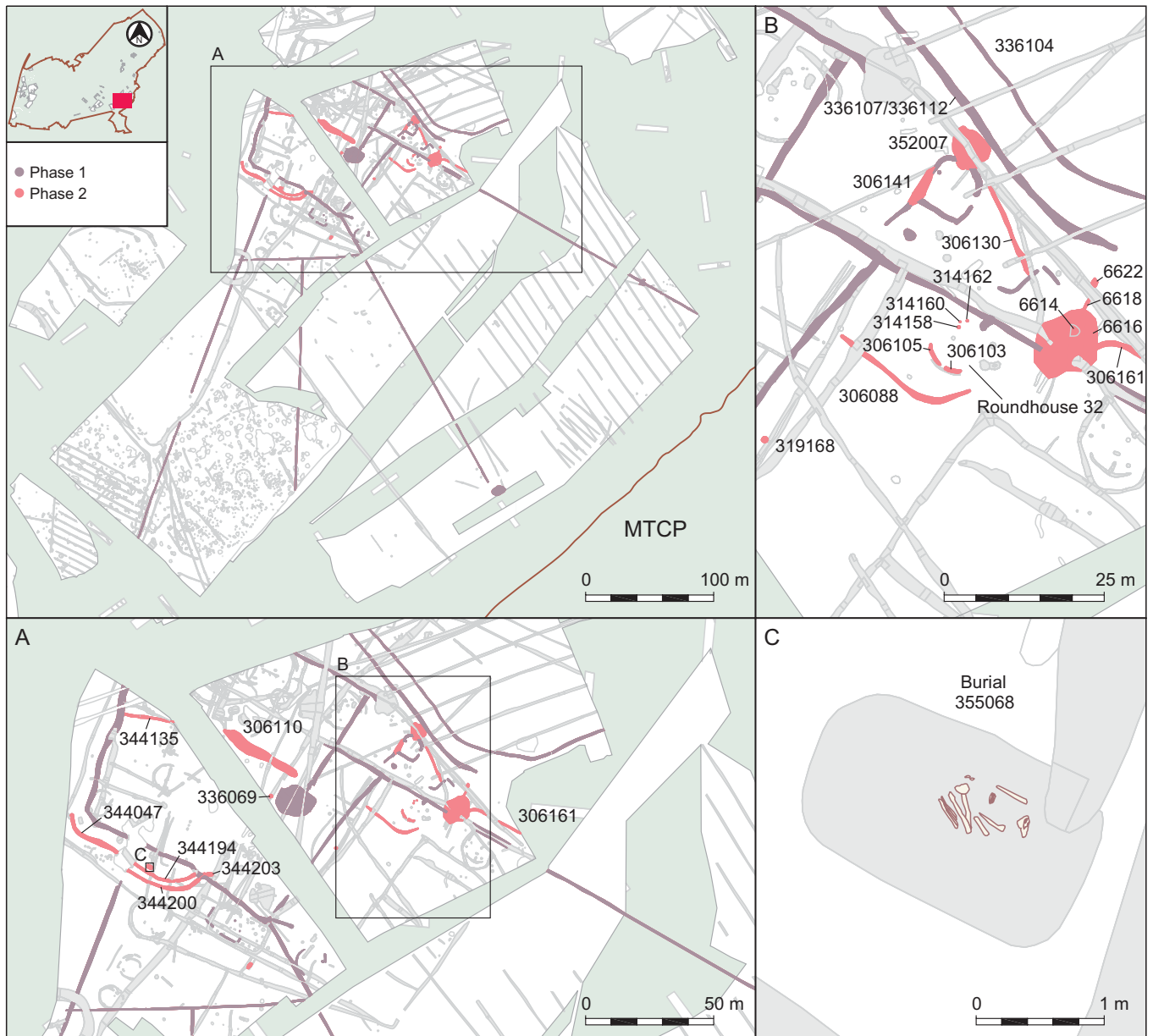


Figure 8.7: Phase 2 settlement

Other features associated with this structure include gully 320079 and pit 329049. Further to the south-east lay two more gullies (306125 and 339074) which may represent the remains of another structure.

Phase 2: c AD 270–c 300

Most of the features dug in phase 1 remained in use into phase 2, including the re-aligned field system and the main enclosure ditches, as well as all of the buildings and structures. The main changes involved additions to and subdivisions of the settlement enclosure.

Two parallel ditches were dug on the south-western side of the enclosure

(Fig. 8.7). A short recut of its south-eastern end (344203) extended across the line of the earlier ditch. These parallel ditches probably formed a small track leading into the main enclosure from the area of the earlier cremation cemetery to the north-west. A single inhumation burial – 355068 – lay nearby (Fig. 8.7). It was a badly disturbed inhumation burial, of an unsexed adult, aged 17–25 years old. The grave was aligned north-west to south-east, and the burial appears to have been crouched with the body lain on its left hand side with the knees drawn up to the chest. The head lay at the south-eastern end of the grave. There were no grave goods with the burial, and the dating of the grave

relies on its spatial relationship with the nearby ditch and its stratigraphic relationship with a later ditch.

This period saw evidence for activity within the main enclosure itself. Ditch 344135 appears to have acted as an internal subdivision, whilst a hollow way or path, 306110, crossed the enclosure, terminating close to the substantial waterhole (344372), which was in its final phase of silting. A single contemporary pit (336069) lay close to this waterhole, whilst a second lay outside the south-eastern boundary of the enclosure (319168).

There was further activity to the east of the enclosure (Fig. 8.7). Late Romano-

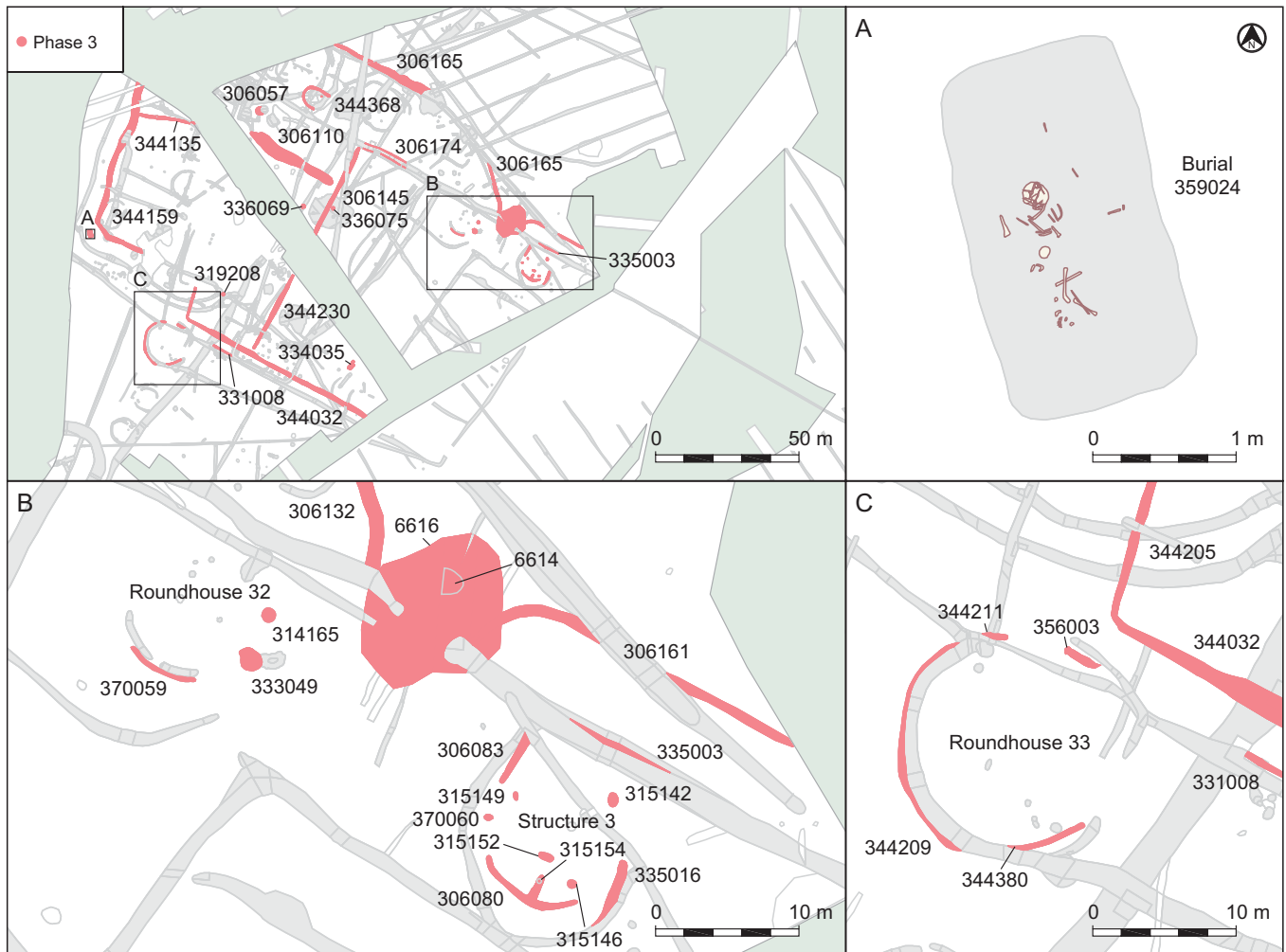


Figure 8.8: Phase 3 settlement

British structure 1 probably remained in use at the beginning of this phase although pit 306141 was dug through it at some stage. A dump of domestic material, including much burnt daub, was placed in the shallow hollow. This may have been material derived from the demolition of the building.

To the south of this lay a newly built roundhouse – roundhouse 32. This lay in a small sub-enclosure, the eastern boundary of which was formed by ditch 306130, whilst to the west it was enclosed by a newly dug ditch – 306088.

Roundhouse 32 was defined by two stretches of curving gully (306103 and 306105). These both lay on the south-western side of the structure, which probably had a diameter of 9 m. Three postholes in the vicinity (314158, 314160 and 314162) may be associated with this building.

Access to this new structure was afforded by a causeway across the boundary ditch (306136/335001) to the south-east (Fig. 8.7). This entrance was flanked by two newly dug ditches, 306130 and 306161, which may have served to channel traffic towards the entrance. Gully 6618 may have been dug with a similar purpose in mind. Over time, constant use of this route created a large hollow (6614/6616) where the entrance crossed the line of the earlier ditch and bank. Attempts to consolidate this area included the construction of a crude cobbled layer on the base of the hollow. The construction of this entranceway and its flanking ditches suggests that the predominant flow of traffic was from the east or south-east, although the nearby trackway (336104 and 336107/336112) may also have allowed access from the north. Slag including smithing hearth bottoms and vitrified hearth linings were recovered from 6616 (context 6615) (Keys, CD Chapter 16).

Phase 3: c AD 300–c 330

In the early 4th century the main enclosure was remodelled and a new enclosure to the south-east was created (Fig. 8.8). Some elements of the earlier enclosure were retained, notably the northern and north-western boundary (344159), whilst some of the earlier internal features remained in use (notably ditch 344135 and hollow way 306110, although the latter was silting up at this time).

An inhumation grave (burial 359024) was dug outside the north-western enclosure boundary (Fig. 8.8). It was the burial of a juvenile, probably 6–8 years old, but was badly disturbed. The burial appears to have been in a wooden coffin – a number of iron nails were noted in the corners of the grave during excavation. The body appears to have been lain in a lightly flexed position on its right hand side, with the head to the northern end of the grave

(which was aligned approximately north–south). A deposit of food offerings was made, probably outside the coffin, and included cattle and sheep/goat bones, together with a Much Hadham red colour-coated ware narrow necked flagon dated to the 4th century.

The north-eastern boundary of the earlier enclosure was redug (306165), and probably continued as far south-east as ditch 306132, which remained in use at this time. Evidence for continued activity in this earlier enclosure took the form of a newly built structure (late Romano-British structure 2), two small pits (319208 and 336069) and a larger pit or waterhole (306057). Late Romano-British structure 2 consisted of a curvilinear ditch (344368) associated with a single posthole (6212). This defined an ovoid space measuring approximately 7 m by 6.5 m which may have contained a circular or sub-circular structure with a south-east facing entrance.

A new, roughly square enclosure was laid out to the south-east of the earlier enclosure (Fig. 8.8). This was defined by newly dug ditches or recuts of earlier ditches (306145, 306174, 335003, 344032 and 344230), and was dug through the site of the earlier rectangular building. A short stretch of ditch, 331008, aligned parallel to the south-western boundary ditch may represent a stretch of narrow trackway, 2.8 m wide. The south-eastern extent of this new enclosure was not identified, but probably followed the same line as the later enclosure (see phase 4 below). This new enclosure measured approximately 80 m x 80 m (0.65 ha). It utilised the entrance (via hollow 6614/6616) and flanking ditches (306132 and 306161) established in the earlier phase. Two new structures were built either side of this entrance way – roundhouse 32 and late Romano-British structure 3 (Fig. 8.8). Roundhouse 32 replaced roundhouse 31; its gully was recut (370059), and the structure itself was probably of similar dimensions to the earlier building. Two large postholes, 314165 and 333049 probably held posts for a south-easterly aligned doorway. Slag was recovered from posthole 333049 (Keys, CD Section 16). Late Romano-British

structure 3 was roughly circular, with a diameter of 9 m and was of posthole and gully construction (315134, 315142, 315146, 315149, 370060 and 306080).

A short projection from the gully, terminating at posthole 315134, may mark an internal division within the structure. Slightly off set from this gully was a hearth, 315152. Two stretches of gully outside the structure, 306083 and 335016, probably acted as drainage features. Ten glass beads were recovered from the gully surrounding late Romano-British structure 3 (Mepham, CD Chapter 23).

It seems clear, however, from the quantities of iron smithing slag recovered from the vicinity of these two structures and the nearby trackway, that smithing was occurring on the site, possibly using the hearth in late Romano-British structure 3. Apart from these two buildings, there is little evidence for other activity within this enclosure but there were contemporary two pits (334035 and 336075). Both of these contained small quantities of domestic debris.

A single large roundhouse (roundhouse 33) was built to the south-west of the enclosed area (Fig. 8.8). This was the largest structure on the site at this time at around 15 m in diameter, and may have been the main domestic building. No internal or structural features were associated with this building.

Phase 4: c AD 330–c 360

The middle decades of the 4th century saw a re-arrangement of these enclosures into a single large, subdivided enclosure, aligned north-west to south-east and covering a larger area than the earlier enclosures (Figs 8.9–10). Most of the earlier structures may well have remained in use during this period. The main enclosure was now roughly rectangular, and bounded by ditches 309203, 344375, 344026, 344151, 344182, 344207 and 370047. A small annexe to the north-east was enclosed by ditches 306165 and 314194. None of these was a substantial feature, and presumably they were further emphasised by low banks and fences or hedges. In total,

the overall area enclosed (including the annexe, measured approximately 1.5 hectares.

Access to this new enclosure was through a gateway in the north-eastern ditch of the annexe to the main enclosure between ditches 306165 and 314194 (Figs 8.9–10). Traffic using this route eroded a substantial hollow in the gap between the ditches (333062). The area immediately to the west and north-west of the enclosure ditch contained three structures (late Romano-British structure 2, 4 and 5). Late Roman structure 2 continued in use from the earlier phase. Late Romano-British structure 4 was roughly oval measuring 16 m by 13.5 m (Plate 8.2). No structural features were identified, and the gully is likely to have been dug as a drainage feature. Two of the three gaps in the circuit of this gully are likely to be caused by later truncation, and the building probably had an entrance facing south-east. Late Romano-British structure 5 lay on the edge of the excavated area, and only the south-western corner of the structure could be determined. The three gullies revealed (344314, 360042 and 370058) suggest that the building they enclosed was rectangular or sub-rectangular, and measured at least 9 m by 7 m.

The only feature associated with these buildings was a moderately sized pit, 6508, which appeared to contain much burnt material and other finds which suggested nearby domestic activity (pottery, animal bone, fired clay and oyster shell).

This annexe was separated from the main enclosure by ditches 306174 and 344375. The former was a recut of an earlier enclosure ditch on the same alignment (309214), and was later heavily truncated by a further recut in the late 4th century. As a result of this, its extent could not be determined. Whilst there is little doubt that it probably extended across the area excavated, it is also likely that it was crossed by a causeway or bridge, allowing access to the main enclosure to the south-west.

The north-western end of the main enclosure was subdivided into at least

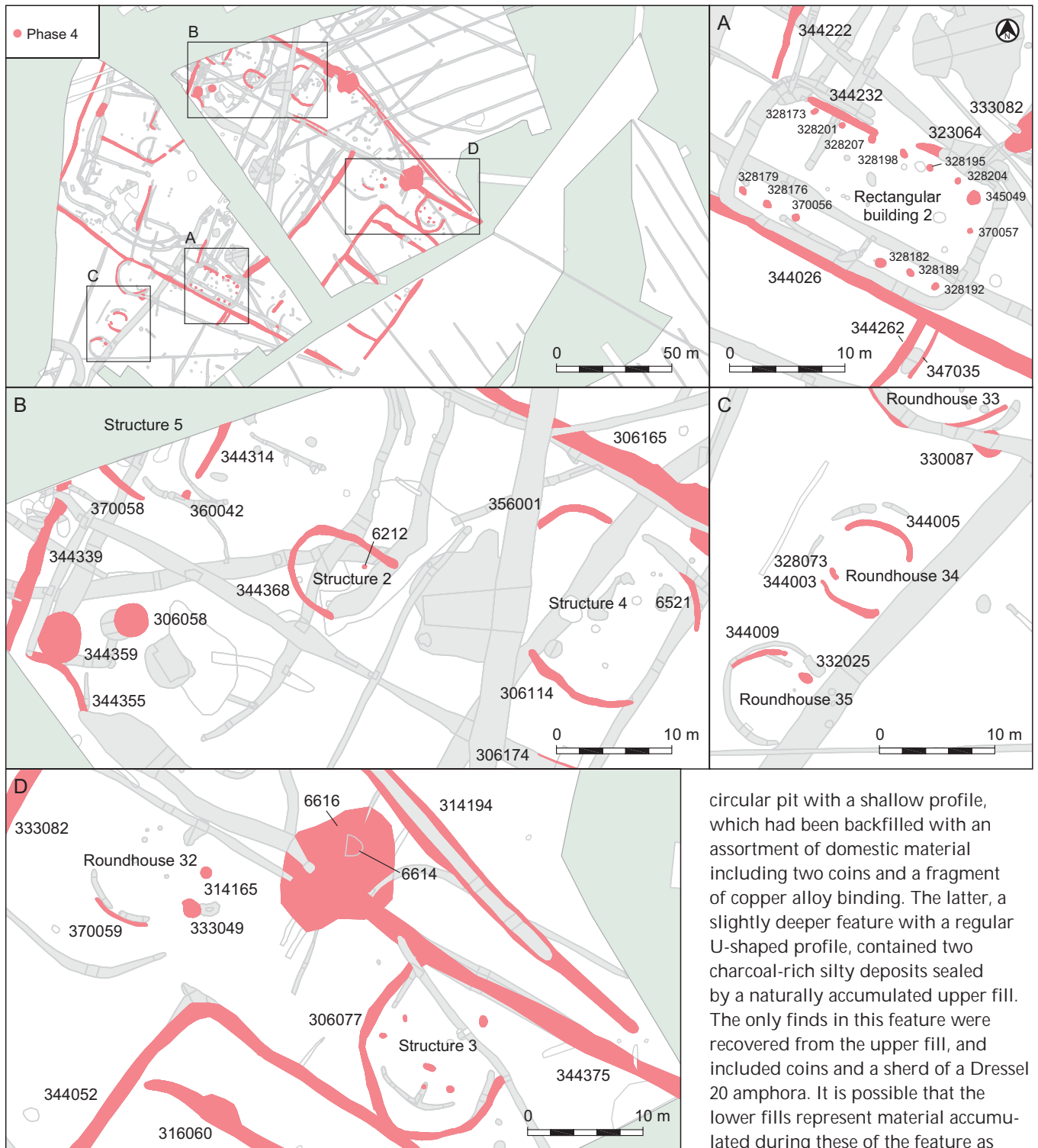


Figure 8.9: Phase 4 settlement

three different areas by a series of ditches (344112, 344116, 344122, 344124, 344176 and 344339; Figs 8.9–10). These sub-enclosures may have served different functions. A truncated gully excavated within the central sub-enclosure (gully 344132) may represent the remains of a structure, whilst a deep ovoid pit excavated within the same area (344170) contained a substantial

quantity of domestic material (animal bone, ceramic building material, pottery, oyster shell and fired clay).

A second possible structure lay further to the east – curving gully 344355 may have defined the north-eastern edge of another roundhouse. This was directly associated with two large pits (306058 and 344359). The former was a regular

circular pit with a shallow profile, which had been backfilled with an assortment of domestic material including two coins and a fragment of copper alloy binding. The latter, a slightly deeper feature with a regular U-shaped profile, contained two charcoal-rich silty deposits sealed by a naturally accumulated upper fill. The only finds in this feature were recovered from the upper fill, and included coins and a sherd of a Dressel 20 amphora. It is possible that the lower fills represent material accumulated during these of the feature as a cess pit, but the absence of any waterlogging or mineralisation makes such an interpretation tentative.

The central portion of the main enclosure was not obviously subdivided, although gully 344222 may have been more substantial originally. The only significant structure within this area was a substantial rectangular building (late Romano-British rectangular building 2) against the south-western

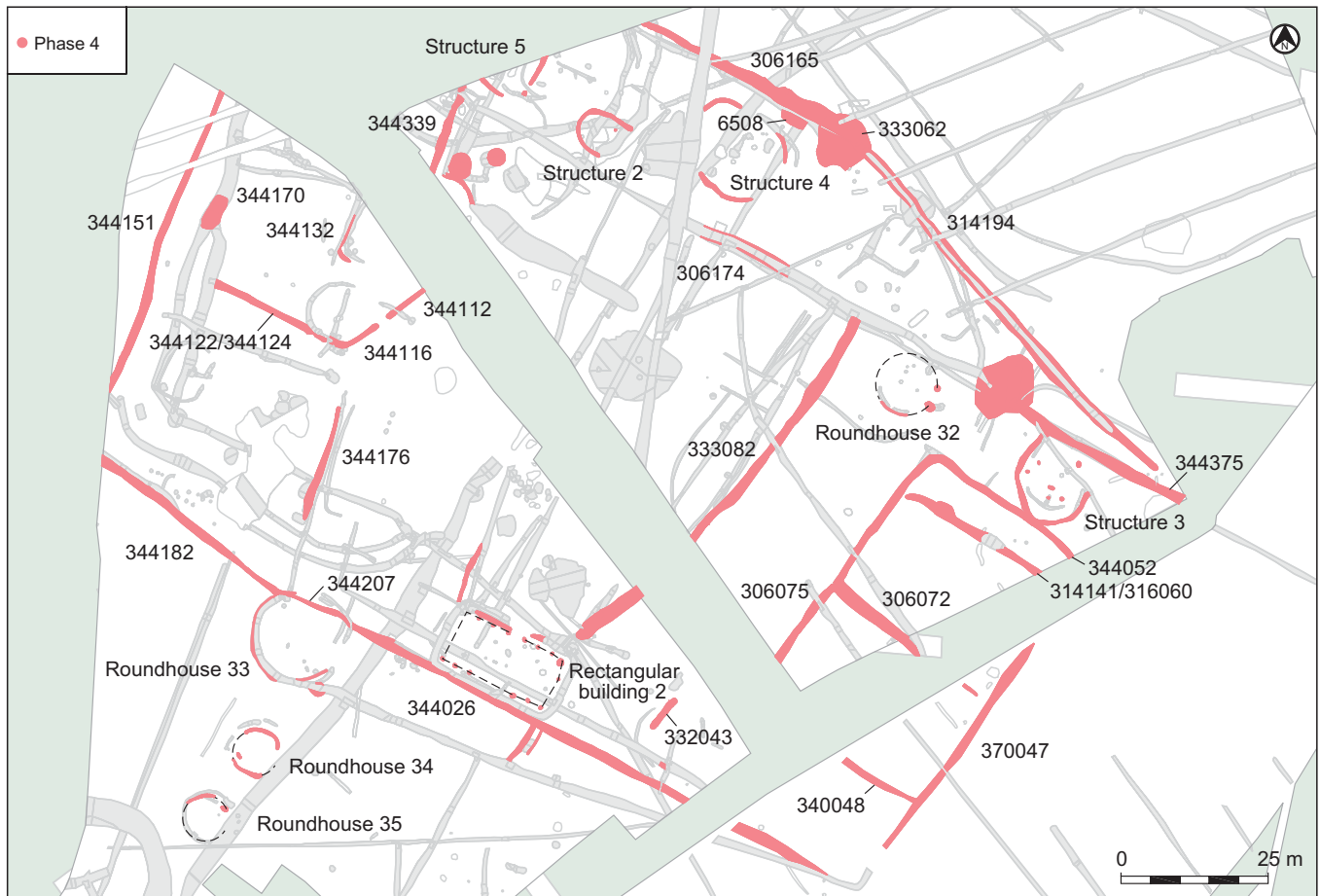


Figure 8.10: Phase 4 settlement enclosure

edge of the enclosure (Figs 8.9–10). This was the largest building in this phase, and stands apart from the other features on the site for its form and construction techniques. It was rectangular, measuring 18.5 m by 9.5 m internally, and aligned north-west to south-east. The roof structure was clearly supported on a series of timber posts adjacent to the longitudinal walls of the building. The south-western group of posts comprised two sets of three posts set 2.5 m apart on the same alignment (328176, 328179 and 370056 to the north-west and 328182, 328189 and 328192 to the south-west), with a gap of 8 m between the north-western and south-eastern groups. Six posts (of a probable eight) were excavated along the north-eastern side of the structure (328173, 328195, 328198, 328201, 328204 and 328207). The two 'missing' posts would have lain in the northern and eastern corners of the building. These posts appear to have lain directly inside the line of the walls of the building, perhaps obtaining a measure of support in this fashion.

Gully/beamslot 344232 probably marks the line of one of these walls, and may have been dug for a timber cill beam or to provide support for a mass wall. On balance, the size of the building probably favours a timber cill beam and timber-framed construction, as there is little evidence for posts used in the construction of either of the gable ends to the building (posthole 370057, a very small posthole which may not belong to this phase of building, is the only feature which might support a gable wall). The whole building was probably surrounded by a shallow gully (as it was in the later period) to prevent surface water from damaging the base of the walls. Evidence for this comes in the form of 323064, a stretch of drainage gully which was not recut in the later period. The locations of the north-western terminus of 323064 and the south-eastern terminus of gully/beamslot 344232 suggest that there was a doorway in the north-eastern side of the building between postholes 328198 and 328207. It is not clear whether there was a second,

larger doorway on the opposite side of the building (somewhere between postholes 328182 and 370056).

It is not clear whether this building ever acted as a domestic structure, or whether it served another purpose. A large circular setting for a hearth was excavated in the eastern corner of the building (345049). Very similar timber buildings have been found at Barnack, Cambridgeshire, Landswade, Exning, Suffolk and Denton, Lincolnshire (Simpson 1993, 124–6, fig. 91). Regular spacing and planning of these buildings seems to have been a recurrent trend (Morris 1979).

The south-eastern third of the main enclosure was separated from the rest of the enclosure by ditch 333082, which extended from the north-eastern boundary of the enclosure in a south-westerly direction before terminating within approximately 3 m of late Romano-British rectangular building 2, presumably to allow easy access from the building to this enclosed



Plate 8.2: The eastern boundary of the late Romano-British settlement under excavation. Looking south-east towards Pincey Brook

area (Figs 8.9–10). The main point of access seems, however, to have been through the entrance into the earlier enclosure (6616). Although ditch 314194 had effectively cut this off it could still be accessed via the north-eastern annexe. To the west of this entrance, roundhouse 32 continued in use into this period, as did late Romano-British structure 3 to the south, although the encircling gully, which had silted up, was recut as gully 306077.

The remainder of the south-eastern subdivision was given over to a series of smaller enclosures, perhaps corrals for stock or draught animals, defined by ditches 306072, 306075, 314141/316060, 344026, 344052, 370047, 370048 and 370049. A short stretch of gully, 332043, may form part of this complex.

Three buildings lay to the south-west of the main enclosure (Figs 8.9–10). The largest of these, roundhouse 33, probably continued in use from the previous period, although gully 344207, forming part of the boundary of the main enclosure, must have lain close to the walls of the structure. A shallow pit dug close to the entrance to this structure, pit 330087, contained an assemblage of domestic rubbish.

Two smaller roundhouses, perhaps ancillary buildings, lay to the south-west (roundhouses 34 and 35). Both of these roundhouses were reworked

or rebuilt in the late 4th century (see below). The structures were defined by gullies and a shallow oval pit (332025) was associated with roundhouse 35.

Phase 5: c AD 360 onwards

The final phase of Romano-British activity on the site saw minor changes to the main enclosure and the construction of new structures and repairs or modifications to others (Fig. 8.11).

The main entrance to the enclosure appears to still have been through the annexe to the north-east. Some of the enclosure ditches in this area were redug, notably ditch 314197 and the main enclosure ditch – 306175 – whilst three newly dug ditches (336049, 336052 and 336087) probably mark the extent of a further field or enclosure to the north-east (Fig. 8.11).

Only one of the buildings in use in the earlier phase (late Romano-British structure 4) shows evidence for continued use in this period. Both of the other structures in this area probably fell into disuse, although gullies 344318 and 344320 may have partially enclosed a circular structure built as a replacement for late Romano-British structure 5.

Late Romano-British structure 4 appears to have continued in use largely unaltered during this period, although the north-eastern stretch of

the encircling drainage gully was recut (306112). An agricultural purpose for this building is indicated by the insertion of a large oven or kiln (308022) in the floor of the structure. This was probably a drying oven, which were common in Romano-British agricultural contexts and have been interpreted as ‘corn drying ovens’. Here, samples taken from the oven itself and associated features suggest that it was primarily used for drying a variety of crops, including spelt, bread wheat and peas.

Two pits within the building probably relate to the use of this drying oven. Pit 334013 contained charcoal-rich fills, from which quantities of processed emmer/spelt wheat, animal bone and fired clay were recovered. Pit 319140 appears to have been dug in order to contain some of the dismantled superstructure of the kiln. The pit was dug and rapidly backfilled with a dump of material including fired clay and charcoal.

A large pit to the west of this structure (338037) was probably initially dug as a waterhole – the lower deposit was heavily gleyed, and clearly formed in a body of standing water. The upper fill, however, probably represents material dumped into the pit, either during the demolition of the adjacent structure or ploughed in to the hollow as part of the first post-settlement agricultural activity on the site. A coin of the House of Valentinian, suggests that this abandonment happened in the final third of the 4th century or later. A subsequent pit, 352001, cut in to the top of this upper fill, may belong to this phase, or could be a later feature.

The final phase of activity on the site also shows evidence for the use of some of the subdivisions of the main enclosure for specific tasks. The north-western end of the main enclosure was subdivided into three. The westernmost of these three subdivisions contained a new building associated with a complex of large pits (Fig. 8.11).

This sub-rectangular area was enclosed by two newly dug ditches, 344142 and 344179, and apparently entered either through a 4 m gap in its north-eastern

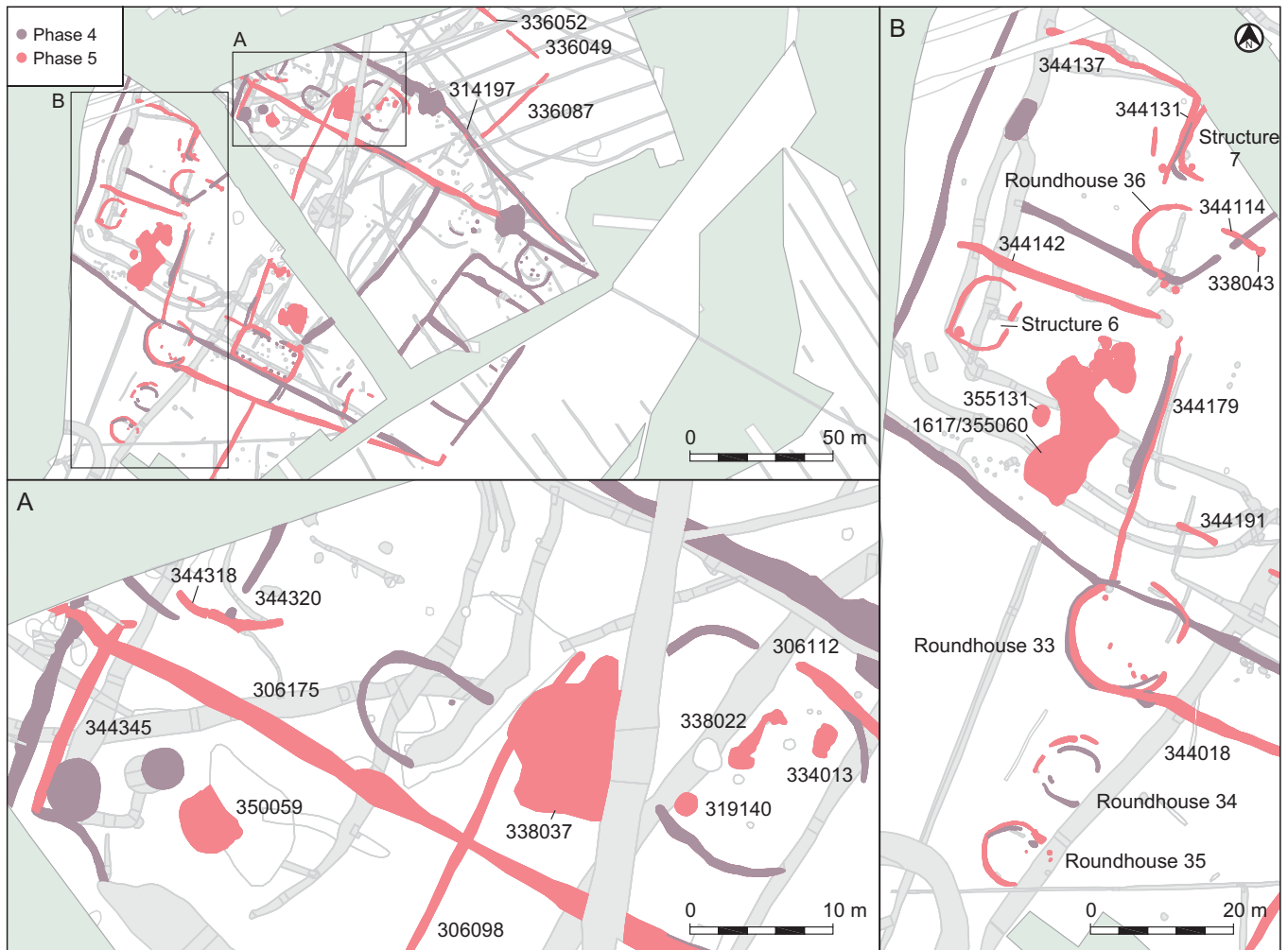


Figure 8.11: Phase 5 settlement

corner or a 3 m gap in its northern corner. A sub-rectangular structure, late Romano-British structure 6, lay in the northern corner. This building was defined by two gullies (344145 and 344148) which enclosed a roughly rectangular area 9.8 m by 6.7 m, aligned north-east to south-west. Two gaps in the circuit enclosed by these gullies in the south-east and eastern corner of the structure may mark the location of entrances into this building (although, given its location, the former might seem the more likely). The gullies themselves generally display a very distinctive steep-sided and flat-bottomed profile, and probably would have held the walls of the building. This is also suggested by the proximity of pit 328303, which appears to be contemporary with gully 344145. Quantities of pottery, animal bone and fired clay were recovered both from the gullies and the pit. Posthole 328283, which cut the fills of gully 344145, is unlikely to be related to the use of the structure.

The other focus of activity in this area was a complex of intercutting pits dug in the south-eastern half of the area. Although it was not possible to completely excavate all of these pits, it is clear that most date to the second half of the 4th century, with those that could be closely dated all being back-filled in the last third of the 4th century.

A substantial pit at the south-western end of the group (1617/355060) seems to have been dug as a waterhole, and was initially allowed to silt naturally. As it fell into disuse, however, it was increasingly used for dumping material, and in particular animal bone. Pit 350031/350050 in contrast appears to have been a shallow scoop, and may have been a working hollow. To the north-east lay a series of intercutting pits (350020, 350024, 350026 and 350029) whilst an oval pit (355131) lay to the west. Two of these were shallow scoops (350026 and 350029), whilst the remaining three were more

substantial, steep-sided pits (350020, 350024 and 355131). The function of these features is unclear – they may even have been dug to provide boulder clay for use as daub – but they appear to have been backfilled with dumps of waste material. Incorporated within the fills of pit 350020 were a number of articulated animal bones. These were the remains of four butchered cattle skeletons (Bates, CD Chapter 32).

A second sub-rectangular enclosure lay to the north of ditch 344142 (Fig. 8.11). The northern and eastern extent of this was defined by ditches 344131 and 344137. The enclosure was open to the south-east, and was probably associated with two buildings which lay immediately to the south-east (roundhouse 36 and late Romano-British structure 7). Roundhouse 36 would probably have had an internal diameter of around 9 m. Its location within the corner formed by the earlier enclosure ditch (344116) suggests that



Plate 8.3: Roundhouse 36 before excavation, looking south-west

it was built whilst that enclosure was still visible, and may indicate that it had an eastern facing entrance (Plate 8.3). Four postholes cutting the fills of both these gullies – 319249, 319255, 319285 (recut as 319279) and 344118 – may not be directly associated with the use of this roundhouse.

Late Romano-British structure 7 appears to have been rectangular and would have been at least 7 m long and 3 m wide, possibly even larger. Posthole 349174 is unlikely to have been a structural element of this building, but may have been associated with it. This structure seems to have been a re-build of an earlier structure represented by gully 344132 (see above).

A line of three postholes aligned west-east impinged on the south-western end of this building (349165, 349171 and 349176). Although not evenly spaced, these lay roughly perpendicular to a short stretch of gully – 344126. Together, these may represent the remains of a later structure.

A further gully, 344114, to the south-east was associated with a single posthole (338043). There is insufficient evidence to suggest that these might have formed part of a structure.

Most of the area of the third subdivision of the north-western end of the main enclosure was not excavated. It was, however partially defined to the south-east by a new ditch (344345). A short distance to the south-east of this lay a newly dug well (350059). This had clearly been provided with an organic lining, which decayed *in situ*, to keep the water clean and prevent erosion of the sides (Fig. 8.11). Pottery and coins from the fills of this well date to the second half of the 4th century.

The central building in the main enclosure – late Romano-British rectangular building 2 – remained relatively

unaltered in this period (see Figs 8.11–12, Plate 8.4). The gully surrounding the building, probably dug to provide drainage, was recut (344239). This encircled much of the building, leaving a 6.5 m wide causeway to the north-east which presumably corresponded to the main entrance into the building. This gully clearly silted in some places, and a short stretch of it was recut in the north-western corner (344236).

A large waterhole, 344268, was dug some 5 m to the north-east of this building. This was irregular in plan, at over 10 m long and 6 m wide. It had a regular profile, however, with moderately steep sides and a concave base, some 1.28 m deep. It had been allowed to silt naturally, with the lower fills showing the characteristic signs of gleying common in deposits formed in anaerobic conditions in bodies of standing water. After it fell out of use as a waterhole, it was used as a cess pit which was then subsequently sealed by a dumped charcoal-rich layer. The upper fills of this waterhole were truncated by a shallow irregular pit, 347051. This contained no datable material and may be later Roman or post-Roman in date.

Further to the north lay a large number of relatively small intercutting pits, of which ten (328227, 328230, 328236, 330151, 330153, 330155, 347053, 347060, 351014 and 351016) are likely to date to this period. These were all covered in a homogeneous dark deposit containing much late Romano-British material,



Plate 8.4: Late Romano-British rectangular building 2, looking south-east

which was probably incorporated within these features by later ploughing. The function of these pits is not clear – they contain few finds, and no evidence for use either as waterholes or cess pits. Indeed they contain relatively sterile fills. Two patches of compact non-local stones were excavated in this area, but it was not clear whether these represented structural features or not. These pits may have been dug to extract boulder clay for structural use.

A single isolated pit (344254) lay close to the eastern corner of late Romano-British rectangular building 2, slightly truncated by the surrounding gully. This was steep-sided with a flat base. Its function is unclear, although the material which accumulated within it did include some domestic waste.



Plate 8.5: Cattle skulls placed in pit 321226

A few of the features in the central area cut the fills of the gully around this building, and may either represent a later phase of activity on the site or be post-Roman in date. These include a possible late phase of subdivision of the main enclosure, in the form of ditches 344191, 344224 and 344244.

Given that the termini of 344191 and 344224 both appear to respect the likely location of the corner of the building, it seems likely that these do represent the last Roman phase of subdivision on the site.

Pit 321226 also cut the silted up drainage gully surrounding late Romano-British rectangular building 2. This elongated oval pit was relatively deep, at 0.69 m deep, with steep sides and a concave base. This pit was open long enough for a primary fill to rapidly form before a structured deposit was placed in the base of the feature (Plate 8.5). This was composed of three complete cattle skulls (including a short horned female and a medium horned bull) and a sheep/goat skull, all of which had been inverted (Bates, CD



Figure 8.12: Phase 5 buildings



Plate 8.6: Rectangular building 3 from the south-east

Chapter 32). The animal skulls appear to have been covered with two successive dumped deposits including other animal bones and sherds of pottery dated to the second half of the 4th century, which included 12 further cattle bones, including feet bones, mandibles, long bones and horn cores (Bates, CD Chapter 32). It is tempting, in the light of the relationship between this pit and the silted ditch around the rectangular building, to view this as a special deposit, perhaps placed to negotiate the abandonment of the building, and perhaps, the settlement as a whole.

There were no significant changes to the layout of the south-eastern end of the settlement enclosure in this period (Figs 8.11–12), although both roundhouse 32 and late Romano-British structure 3 may have fallen into disuse by this time. Two shallow gullies perpendicular to each other (344030 and 348018) were excavated close to the south-western edge of the enclosure (the newly dug 344018). A small pit (346020) was associated with gully 344030; it contained large parts of a single deep bead rimmed dish in Hadham ware (Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18).

The south-western boundary of the main enclosure is the only one to alter significantly in this period. A newly dug ditch, 344018, incorporated the largest roundhouse, roundhouse 33, within the main enclosure (Fig. 8.12). Although there is little evidence that

this building had remained in use during the previous period, the encircling gully was recut, initially as 330089 and 344022. This recutting retained the causeways left by the earlier gully, with gaps to the north and south-east. Much of the circuit of the ring gully was recut by 344018. A number of internal features within the roundhouse date to this phase, including five postholes (316046, 328077, 330076, 330078 and 330080) and a small hearth (355047). The latter lay slightly off-centre.

A new rectangular enclosure was laid out around roundhouses 34 and 35, defined by ditches 344013 and 349118 (Fig. 8.12). Both of these roundhouses remained in use during this period, and were enclosed by newly dug or recut penannular gullies (the former by gullies 328071, 330066 and 344001 and the latter by gully 344007). A pit at the end of gully 344007 (pit 332022) and three postholes – 330074, 332008 and 332080 were also associated with roundhouse 35. A single pit lay within the newly enclosed area – pit 349140. This was probably dug as a well or waterhole.

A single building lay to the south-west of these roundhouses, outside the enclosed area (late Romano-British rectangular building 3), along with three pits (1508, 357017 and 357032) (Fig. 8.12, Plate 8.6). Late Romano-British rectangular building 3 was a two roomed building defined by a series of shallow gullies (344270, 349066 and

349091). It was aligned roughly north-west to south-east. Internally this building measured roughly 9 m by 6.3 m. A gap in the south-eastern wall of the western room may mark a doorway. The gullies defining this building mark the lines of the walls, which appear to have been built on cill beams tied in to upright posts. This building is poorly dated – only residual prehistoric flint-tempered pottery was recovered, and the dating of this structure relies on material recovered from pit 357017, which was cut through the beamslot at the north-western end of the building. The lower fills of this pit were charcoal-rich. Finds recovered from these included sherds of late Roman shell-tempered pottery, animal bone, oyster shell and fragments of fired clay.

Unphased late Romano-British features

A small number of outlying late Romano-British features could not be closely phased. To the south-west of the settlement (Fig. 8.13), these included two pits (320008 and 341012), a short stretch of gully (344281) and a hearth (324002). Of these, pit 321042 and hearth 324002 are of particular interest. The former was probably dug as a waterhole, partially cut through the fills of a Late Iron Age/early Romano-British ditch. It was deliberately backfilled with a dump of material containing both charcoal and fired clay. The latter appears to have been used as an iron smithing hearth. All are dated by the presence of late Roman pottery.

A second group of late Romano-British features lay to the west of the settlement (Fig. 8.13). These comprise three pits, 356077, 356085 and 356089, one of which (356077) probably functioned as a waterhole. All three are dated by late Roman pottery, and also contained animal bone.

Two poorly-dated stretches of ditch to the north of the settlement complex are also likely to date to the late Romano-British period (ditches 344063 and 344104) as both contained small assemblages of late Roman pottery.

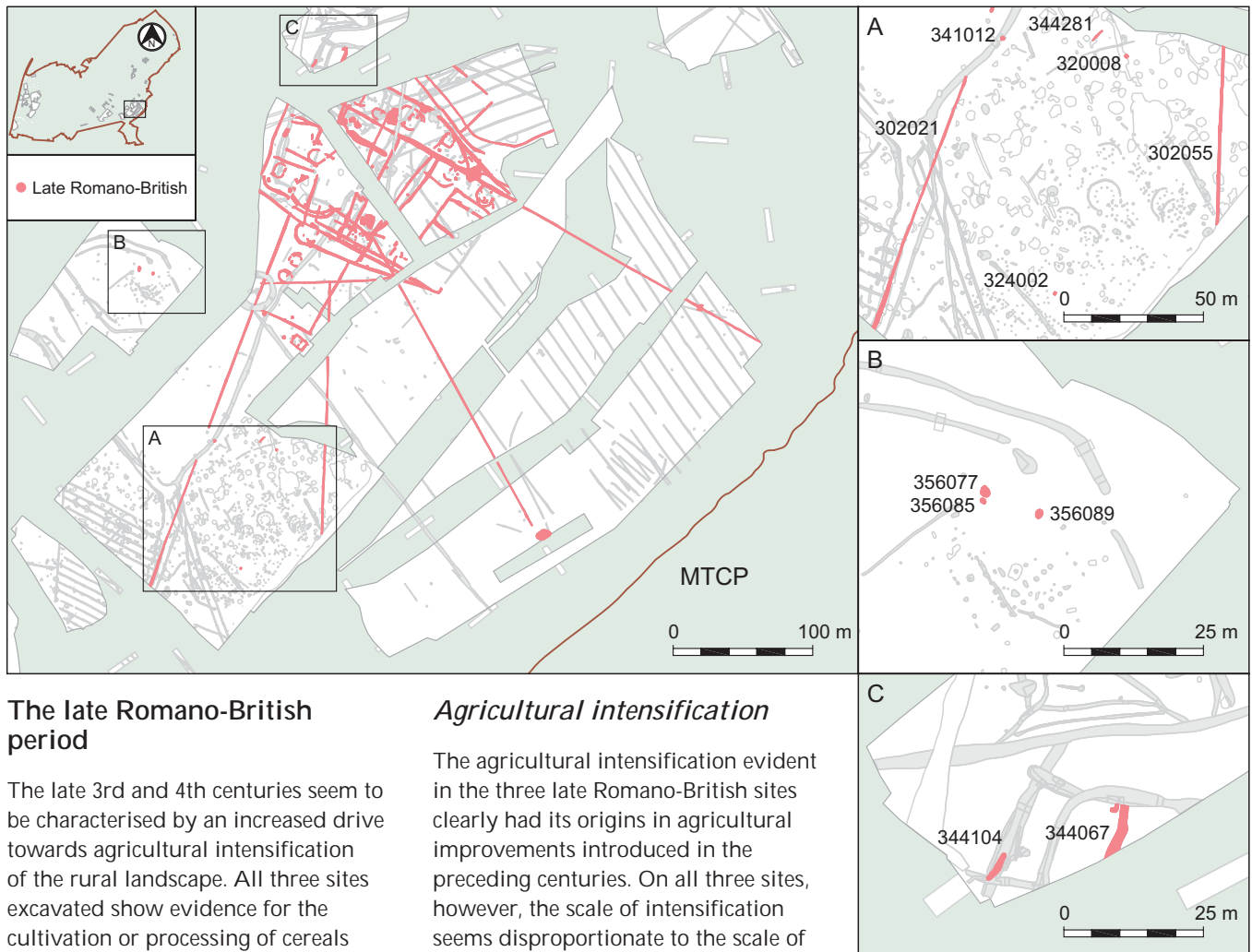


Figure 8.13: Poorly phased late Romano-British features

The late Romano-British period

The late 3rd and 4th centuries seem to be characterised by an increased drive towards agricultural intensification of the rural landscape. All three sites excavated show evidence for the cultivation or processing of cereals (predominantly spelt) and other crops, whilst the evidence from the LTCP and MTCP sites also suggests that there was an emphasis on cattle husbandry, with butchery on site and the removal of the main meat-bearing joints off site.

All three of the sites of this date also saw at least one phase of major re-organisation generally associated with the enclosure of the areas concerned with agricultural processing, and on the MTCP site there is evidence for a contemporary large-scale re-organisation of the surrounding landscape based on this enclosure. Structural remains from the MTCP site took a variety of forms, ranging from roundhouses akin to those in use prior to the Roman conquest to well-built rectangular buildings, albeit with mass walls and untiled roofs. This curious mixture of building styles raises questions as to the nature of the activity, and how it related to the wider Roman world of villas, roads, market towns and large cities.

Agricultural intensification

The agricultural intensification evident in the three late Romano-British sites clearly had its origins in agricultural improvements introduced in the preceding centuries. On all three sites, however, the scale of intensification seems disproportionate to the scale of the settlements, if indeed these sites can be seen purely as settlements.

The limited evidence obtained from palynological analysis of soil samples from late Romano-British contexts suggests that trees and woodland were not an important part of the landscape surrounding either the LTCP or MTCP sites. This need not imply a complete clearance of trees and woodlands from the clay plateau – indeed the speed of the apparent regeneration of the woodland of the plateau in the post-Roman period (see Chapter 9) suggests that some areas must have remained.

Despite this, it is clear from the charred weed seeds found in association with deposits of cereal processing waste, that areas of the clay plateau had been cleared for use as arable farmland. These heavy clay soils would also have supported grassland suitable for the grazing of stock, and there can be little doubt that they were also utilised in this fashion.

All three sites continued to have a mixed agricultural base, although with more evidence of specialisation in the animals kept and crops grown. On the LTCP/BLS sites, it seems clear that the immediate environs of the enclosure were given over to grazed grassland and meadows, with occasional areas of rougher ground. The land to the immediate north of the LTCP site dips down to a small brook running roughly east–west and is well suited to meadows and pasture. Indeed, this land was amongst that let out for meadow in the post-medieval period (Chapter 10). On the site itself, sedimentological analysis of the fills of the large enclosure ditch show that, as well as containing a body of standing water, it was subject to heavy animal trampling (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). Cattle, sheep/goat and pig remained important elements of the economy here.

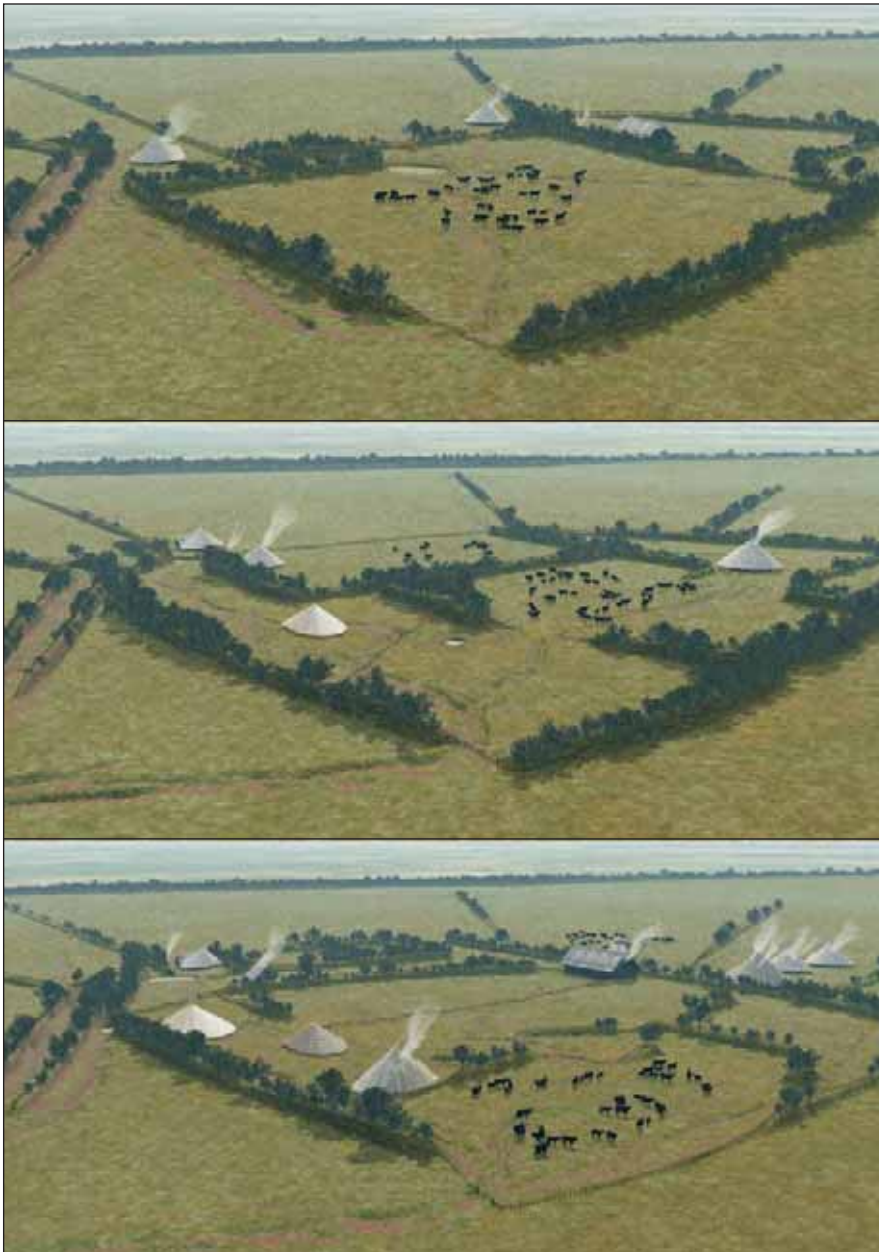


Figure 8.14: Reconstruction showing the development of the late Romano-British settlement, viewed from the north-east: top - phase 1, middle - phase 3, bottom - phase 4

Pollen from the ditch fills indicated that these were not the only focus of agricultural activity on the site, however; the pollen indicates that cereals, and in particular barley, were being grown nearby. Other pollen included weeds characteristic of arable fields, small quantities of wheat and/or oats and a wide variety of tree and shrub species – the latter probably derived from hedgerows surrounding the fields. It is possible that the barley was intended for use as animal fodder, and that the main thrust of the activity on this site was related to animal husbandry. Barley is well suited to the wetter conditions that would have prevailed

on the clay plateau. The dearth of evidence for wheat (and in particular spelt) production on the site is intriguing, given the predominance of the crop on both the DCS/DFS and the MTCP sites. This is made all the more unusual by the presence of a number of broken fragments of millstones; none of this type was found elsewhere and, although a little tentative, these could suggest the presence of a mill (presumably animal powered) associated with the large enclosure. In the light of these contradictions, it is perhaps best to see these sites as part of a wider network of agricultural activity, rather than as self-sufficient or independent

entities. In other words, whilst the area surrounding the LTCP site may not have been used for growing cereals to a surplus, cereals grown elsewhere may have been milled on the site.

Both the DCS/DFS and MTCP sites seem to have been involved with the processing of large quantities of spelt wheat. Charred material was recovered from deposits associated with corn drier structures on both sites, indicative of the final stages of crop cleaning and processing.

On the MTCP site it was possible to identify deposits of cleaned grain and chaff-rich deposits (the latter, a by-product of this final cleaning, was probably also being used as fuel). The assemblage of spelt recovered contained remarkably little evidence for relict crops and weeds, implying that spelt was being cultivated on a much larger and more closely cultivated scale than previously (Carruthers, CD Chapter 34). Similar patterns of spelt processing were identified from a number of the sites on the nearby A120 excavations from the early Romano-British period onwards (Carruthers 2007). Other crops evident on the MTCP site included bread wheats, emmer, oats, rye, peas and flax.

The weed assemblages from the samples on the MTCP site are as important as the cereal assemblages in informing us about agricultural practice. Weeds such as stinking chamomile (indicative of heavy, damp, clay soils) and small-seeded vetches suggest that arable crops were being grown on the boulder clay plateau. Despite being difficult to plough, the clay soils can be rich in nutrients, and would have suited the cultivation of both spelt and bread wheat well (Carruthers, CD Section 34). A decrease noted in the quantities of leguminous weeds noted may also indicate that the fields were being manured.

The proportion of animal bones recovered from the MTCP site suggest that there was an increased concentration on cattle as the main stock animal. As before, the profile of the age of cattle at death suggests that they were being

kept for meat, dairying and draft, with a peak of slaughter at or just before 3 years of age. Almost half of the individuals that could be aged were killed at or before this point.

Analysis of the skeletal elements present in the cattle assemblage indicated that there is an over-representation of bones from the rear feet and the skull, implying that some meat was removed from the site on the bone (Bates, CD Chapter 32). Butchery practices appear to have changed slightly from the earlier period, with heavier chop marks on the butchered bone. Filleting marks were also in evidence, as were marks caused by the removal of the hide. It seems likely that much of the meat and secondary products were not directly consumed on the site, but produced as surplus for trade.

Analysis of pollen recovered from late Romano-British deposits on the MTCP site suggests that there was little woodland in the vicinity of the settlement, but the immediate environs were dominated by grassland for grazing and fields of cereal crops. Charcoal used in the domestic and industrial hearths and ovens on the site comes from a similar array of species to that noted in earlier periods, although fast grown roundwood present in some of the samples may indicate that the sources of wood were being more intensively managed, whilst some wood is likely to have been cut from local hedgerows.

Settlement morphology and status

All three of the late Romano-British sites excavated show evidence for agricultural intensification. In order to facilitate this, all three saw fairly major phases of expansion. The settlement on the LTCP/BLS sites, which had its origins in an oval enclosure first laid out some 40 years before, was re-modelled, with the construction of a substantial ditch around a new western enclosure. Although its function is uncertain, the construction of this feature would have involved a great deal of labour.

The internal layout of the settlement itself is hard to determine, although

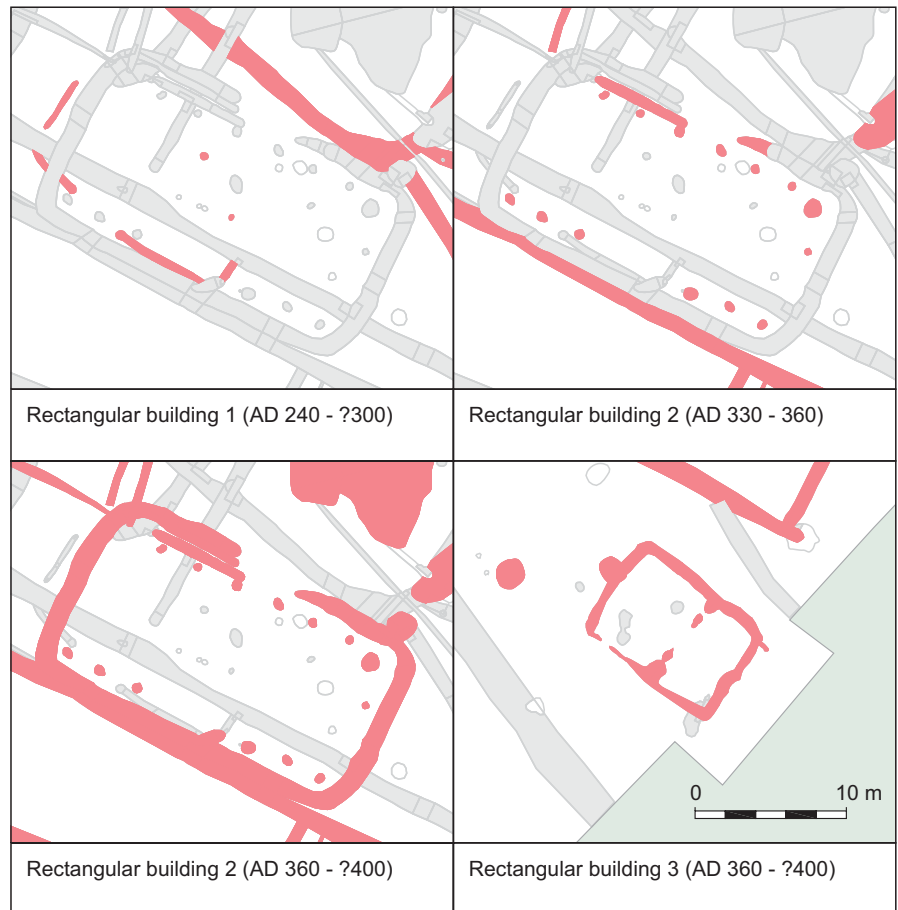


Figure 8.15: Comparative plans of late Romano-British rectangular buildings

most of the structures appear to have lain in the eastern enclosure, in the vicinity of the areas of cobbling excavated on the BLS site. There is little evidence for activity within the large enclosure ditch, although millstones recovered from its fills might point to the presence of a mill in the vicinity. Neither is it possible, from the excavated remains to study the domestic architecture of the enclosures. Although the areas of cobbling may mark the locations of buildings, it is not possible to define these further, whilst the only other candidate for a structure – gully 50 and its associated postholes (Fig. 8.2), do not form a coherent plan although they are associated with quantities of Roman roof tile.

There is no evidence for re-enclosure of the land coincident with the expansion of the enclosure, and it seems likely that the settlement continued to use the fields laid out in the mid-Romano-British period, although there may have been further clearance and expansion onto the plateau beyond the excavated areas.

The material recovered from the LTCP/BLS sites indicates that the enclosure functioned as an agricultural settlement; quantities of domestic pottery and items of adornment (such as shale bracelets) were also recovered suggesting a community of low to moderate status. The dearth of coins from the site is intriguing, given the prevalence of coin use elsewhere in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. This may indicate that the inhabitants had little use, if at all, for coinage, further reinforcing the impression that the main emphasis of this site was on production rather than consumption.

Although the Romano-British settlement on the DCS/DFS site was not fully examined, and some elements of it were excavated under watching brief conditions, certain generalisations may be made. It appears to have been newly constructed in the late Romano-British period, although the possibility that it developed out of an earlier settlement cannot be discounted. In plan, elements of the enclosures (and in particular the subdivision of the south-eastern enclosure into three) is reminiscent of



Figure 8.16: Comparative plans of late Romano-British roundhouses

the settlement enclosure on the MTCP site. Elements of the economy of both sites are similar in that both appear to have processed large quantities of cereals, predominantly spelt, using corn driers. Both seem to have been low to moderate status settlements, judging from the pottery recovered, although both appear to have prospered as agricultural producers.

There is much more detail concerning the development and layout of the complex late Romano-British settlement on the MTCP site. Initially developing out of a mid-Romano-British settlement enclosure on the same site, this rapidly expanded to become the focus of the surrounding landscape. As part of this expansion, the land to the south-west, south and south-east (predominantly land sloping gently down towards Pincey Brook) was enclosed with a series of radial ditches, the layout of which was not influenced by the topography. Whilst we cannot be certain how long these new fields were in use for – the ditches silted rapidly, and only one episode of cleaning or recutting was identified, but associated hedges may have survived for much longer – their association with the expanded settlement enclosure stands as a statement of ownership and control over the physical landscape.

The evidence both in terms of the number of features in each phase and the material recovered indicate that activity in the late 3rd century was less intense than that in the 4th century. These increasing levels of activity required the redefinition of the enclosed area and construction of new buildings on numerous occasions. In some cases this seems to have been undertaken to provide subdivisions of the main enclosure for specific activities. The distribution of iron slag for example suggests that smithing was primarily focused on the two buildings on either side of the entrance to the phase 3 enclosure, whilst the dumping of butchered cattle bones in the north-westernmost subdivision of the main enclosure in phase 5 may point to butchery in this area, and processing of the crops appears largely confined to the annexe to the north-east.

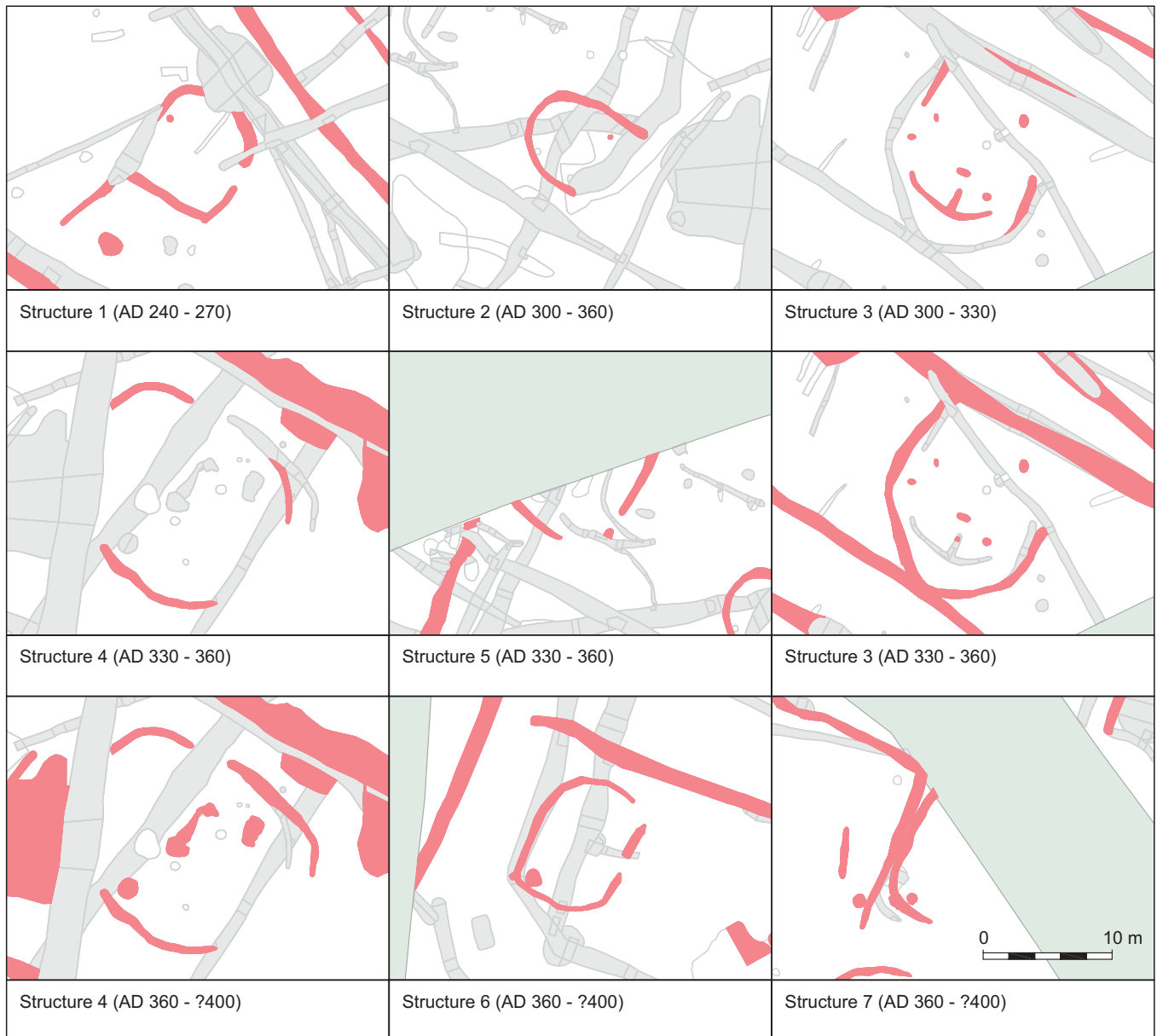


Figure 8.17: Comparative plans of late Romano-British irregular structures

The choice of building forms within the settlement is intriguing. Although the buildings which form the focus of the successive enclosures are generally rectangular (late Romano-British rectangular buildings 1 and 2), with timber-framed walls and supporting posts, few of the other buildings in the complex follow this pattern (Fig. 8.15). Rectangular buildings were in use alongside both irregular structures and roundhouses.

All of the late Romano-British rectangular buildings on the site were built on the same alignment, with their long axes aligned north-west to south-east, generally along the same lines as the enclosures with which they are associated. There is little evidence for

internal subdivision, apart from in late Romano-British rectangular building 3, where the wall trenches survive and indicate that the small building was divided into two rooms. Unfortunately it is uncertain whether any of these structures acted as domestic or agricultural structures, or even whether they performed both functions. The finds assemblages from the structures across the site are generally mixed, and rarely specific to the function of the building (with the exception of the crop-processing material from late Romano-British structure 4 and the spread of iron smithing slag around roundhouse 32 and late Romano-British structure 3). Given that late Romano-British rectangular structures 1 and 2 appear to be

central to particular phases of activity, these might be more likely to represent domestic structures, especially given the presence of a hearth in the latter. Comparative buildings are well known (see for example Morris 1979), and similar structures were identified at Barnack, Cambridgeshire (Simpson 1993).

Circular structures are more common on the site, with a number clearly following the pattern common on pre-conquest settlements. Similar roundhouses have been excavated elsewhere in post-conquest sites elsewhere in the region, but commonly date to the 1st or 2nd centuries, for example Strood Hall (Biddulph 2007a), Heybridge (Black 1997) Orsett Cock (Carter 1999, 33).

Later examples are also known from Strood Hall, which was probably in use between the late 2nd and mid-3rd centuries (Biddulph 2007a) and a 3rd-century roundhouse from Lower Cambourne, Cambridgeshire (Wright *et al.* in prep.). A 3rd- or 4th-century curvilinear gully at Parsonage Lane may be a structure, but could equally be a circular enclosure (Biddulph 2007a). Although not common, late Romano-British circular buildings are known from a number of sites in Britain, including the Stanwick and Redlands Farm villas in Northamptonshire (English Heritage 2004; Keevill and Booth 1997) where these were built of stone. These seem to have served both as domestic structures and as agricultural buildings.

None of the roundhouses from the Stansted sites shows evidence for the use of earth-fast posts in its construction (Fig. 8.16), apart from the doorposts associated with roundhouse 32 and a scattering of small postholes within roundhouse 33 in its final phase, which may not relate directly to the structure itself. As with the rectangular buildings, it is not possible to establish the role these buildings played from the finds assemblages, except where particular concentrations of industrial or agricultural waste have been found. It is probably more likely, however, that the largest roundhouses (roundhouses 32 and 33) functioned as domestic dwellings than the two smaller structures (roundhouses 34 and 35), which may have been ancillary or agricultural buildings.

The remaining structures on the site (late Romano-British structures 1–7) form a disparate group (Fig. 8.17). Some probably represent drainage gullies around structures, (late Romano-British structures 2 and 4 for example) and any irregularity in plan need not imply similar irregularity in the structure. Others, such as late Romano-British structures 5, 6 and 7 are roughly sub-rectangular in plan, and the features excavated probably supported timber cill beams or mass walls. Only the first phase of late Romano-British structure 3 shows evidence for both wall footings and a surrounding gully.

These slightly irregular structures appear to be associated more often with areas of specialised industrial or agricultural processes, and may therefore be less likely to have served as domestic structures.

Despite the evidence for increasing activity on the site, with larger enclosures and more structures built over time (presumably also indicating an increased population) and indications that the site was producing both spelt wheat and beef at a surplus, there is little evidence that the inhabitants translated this into material wealth. The coin evidence from the site shows healthy levels of coin use throughout the late Romano-British period until the final quarter of the 4th century, after which coin use on the site appears to fall away. The pottery assemblage however, is characteristic of a settlement of low to moderate status (Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18) and although small quantities of glass were recovered, there is little evidence that the late Romano-British activity on the site represents anything other than a low status settlement.

Late Romano-British burial

Four late Roman inhumations were excavated at Stansted – two on the MTCP site, and two more on the LTCP site. The former lay in fairly close proximity to the location of an earlier cremation burial cemetery, whilst the latter lay in the corner of a late Romano-British enclosure. There appears to have been a shift away from the cremation of the dead towards inhumation burial across the western empire in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries, although cremation burial continued as a minority rite (Cooke 1998, 246). This shift may reflect an increasing desire to preserve the corporeal form after death, perhaps reflecting the growing popularity of Christianity and other Eastern cults, whose beliefs in physical resurrection and life after death may have been reflected in attempts to preserve the corpse (Philpott 1991, 238).

The late Romano-British period in Britain also saw a shift towards the use

of large extra-mural cemeteries such as those excavated outside the walls of Colchester (Crummy *et al.* 1993), London (Barber and Bowsher 2000), Winchester (Clarke 1979) and Dorchester (Farwell and Molleson 1993), whilst the practice of burying in small rural cemeteries appears to have declined. Despite this general trend, small cemeteries or groups of late Romano-British inhumation burials have been excavated in rural areas. These often take their alignment from features in the landscape such as field boundaries, trackways, roads, and buildings. The four graves at Stansted fit this rural pattern – both of the graves on the MTCP site probably take their alignments from adjacent ditches or boundaries, and may represent the final phase of use of the cremation burial cemetery in the vicinity, whilst both of the graves from the LTCP site took their alignment from the boundaries of the enclosure in which they lay.

Three of the burials were buried with their legs flexed, whilst the fourth lay in a crouched position. Extended burials are more common than flexed or crouched burials in late Romano-British burials (Cooke 1998, 224) although flexed burials were recorded amongst the peripheral cemeteries in the cemetery at Poundbury near Dorchester, which probably pre-date the establishment in the 4th century, and have also been recorded on a number of rural sites (Philpott, 1991, 58–9). Only one of the four graves – burial 359024 on the MTCP site – appears to have been buried in a coffin. This is only one of two graves to contain grave goods – in the form of a pottery flagon and a number of animal bones, including cattle and sheep/goat bones (presumably the remains of offerings of food). The only other grave goods in these four graves are a group of hobnails, presumably the remains of a pair of shoes, in grave 134027. Their location at the eastern end of the grave suggests that they may have been worn or placed adjacent to the feet.

Unfortunately the small number of burials and the poor condition of the bone make it difficult to draw conclusions on the health or lifestyle

of the dead, but eburnation on the bones of the adult male in grave 134025 might be indicative of osteoarthritis (McKinley and Egging, CD Chapter 28). Neither is it possible to speculate with confidence as to why these burials were made so close to areas of busy agricultural activity and settlement, or indeed why these individuals were chosen for burial here. What is clear is that some care seems to have been taken over their burial – the coffin and grave goods in two of the graves all point to this.

Acts of deposition

A number of apparently structured acts of deposition were noted on the MTCP site, and may indicate a continuation of a tradition which had its origins in the Late Iron Age period. Identification of these is, however, less straightforward than in the Iron Age, as the deposits are largely focused on deposits of animal bone. Given the amount of butchery on the site in this late Romano-British period, it is difficult to establish whether certain deposits, including articulated remains, are indeed deliberately placed deposits, or discarded butchery waste in the absence of associated material. In the light of this, it is useful to examine the context in which these deposits occur to establish whether there is likely to have been some significance to the place or time of the act of deposition, and their location in relation to the distribution of all animal bone from the site.

Plotting the distribution of animal bone (by weight) from the site, it is clear that there are a number of statistically significant groups from the site shown as 1347–2077 g and 2078–7620 g on Fig. 8.18. Ten interventions contained assemblages of animal bone which might be regarded as statistically significant.

The most convincing examples of animal bone being used as part of a practice of deliberate deposition come from pit 321226 and ditches 306175 and 314194. Pit 321226 contained three inverted animal skulls accompanied by a dump of domestic rubbish, whilst animal bone recovered from the upper

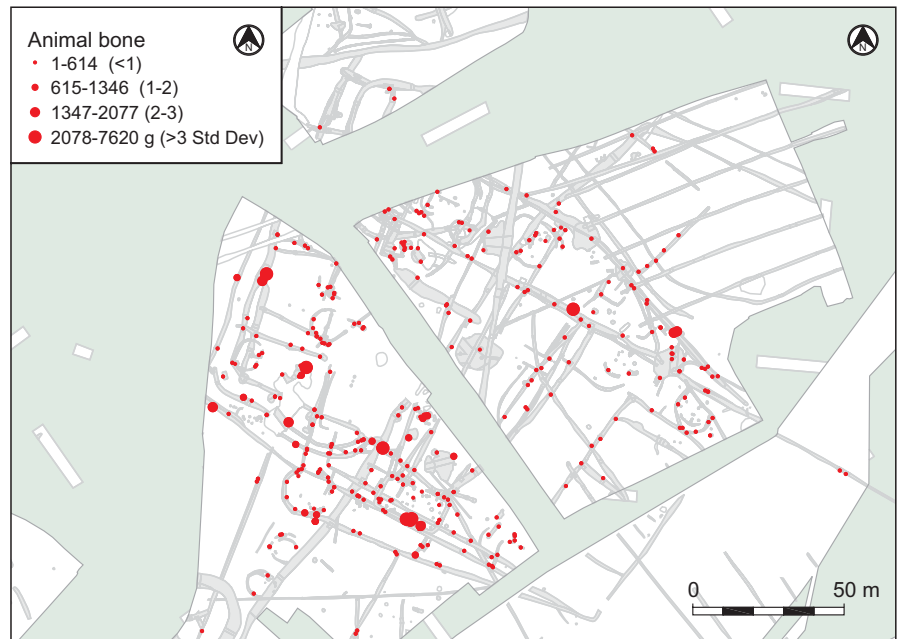


Figure 8.18: Animal bone recovered from the late Romano-British settlement

fill of an adjacent intervention through ditch 344239 (deposit 321210, intervention 321206) appears to be dominated by cattle mandibles. It is possible that these events represent an act of ‘closure’ associated with late Romano-British rectangular building 2. The deposit in ditch 306175 (deposit 326062, intervention 326058) comprised a horse skull placed upright, whilst that in 314194 (deposit 6611, intervention 6624) comprised two cattle skulls, two leg bones and a pelvis). Both deposits were made in the top of the largely silted late Romano-British enclosure ditches in the eastern half of the enclosure.

Articulated animal bones were recovered from pit 350020 (predominantly cattle feet) and ditch 344215 (part of an articulated cattle spinal column, along with at least one scapula,

mandibles and ribs) in context 325031, intervention 325032. All of these articulated remains may represent the remains of primary butchery waste (Bates, CD Chapter 32), and are less likely to represent placed deposits.

Other substantial deposits of animal bone were recovered from ditches 344170 (both interventions 319317 and 319319 contained substantial deposits of animal bone throughout their fill sequences, with cattle, sheep/goat, pig, dog and horse all present) and 344182. In the latter, deposit 359031 (intervention 359027) contained a mixed deposit of disarticulated bone, including both cattle and dog bones. Pit 1617 also contained a mixed assemblage of animal bone, particularly in its upper fills. Cattle, horse, pig and sheep/goat bones were all present.

Placed deposits	Description	Comments
Group 1 Ditch 1617 Ditch 319317 Ditch 319319	Mixed assemblage of disarticulated animal bone, comprising many species and many different elements represented found throughout the fills of the feature	Accumulation of butchery waste and/or domestic waste
Group 2 Pit 350020 Ditch 325032	Articulated cattle bone confined to single deposits (other animal bone within the features does not appear to belong to these deposits)	Possibly representing special acts of deposition or more likely disposal of butchery waste
Group 3 Pit 321226 Possibly associated with 321206 Ditch 6624 Ditch 326058	Deposits of cattle skulls and a horse skull, as single deposits within a pit and ditches. Mandibles, long bones and pelvis also present but other animal bone rare	Likely to represent deliberate deposition of selected elements possibly associated with final use or abandonment of features

Table 8.1: Details of late Romano-British placed deposits from the MTCP site

From this it is clear that the statistically significant assemblages of animal bones fall into three distinct groups (Table 8.1). It appears that these acts of deposition, where recognisable elements of species important to the economy of the site were selected for deposition, were probably undertaken to negotiate the final abandonment of the settlement. It seems somehow appropriate that after some 350 years of incorporation within the Roman empire, the inhabitants of the settlement chose to articulate this in a fashion which would have been deemed entirely suitable by the late Iron Age farmers on the site.

Absentee landlords or enterprising locals?

The intensification of agriculture evident on all three of the late Romano-British sites appears not to have materially benefited their inhabitants. Despite the presence of occasional exotic imports in the pottery assemblage and the evidence for the occasional use of glassware, all of the settlements appear to have remained firmly low to moderate status. Perhaps the best indicator of this lies in the pottery, which is dominated by locally produced wares, predominantly from the nearby Hadham kilns, whilst jars dominate the assemblage (another characteristic of low status sites). There is an increased diversity of continental and regional fineware in this period, but this reflects the greater diversity of finewares available at this time than any increase in the social status of the inhabitants ([Stansbie and Biddulph, CD Chapter 18](#)).

There seems to be an inherent contradiction in the initial expansion of these sites associated with a drive for agricultural surplus (both through arable farming and animal husbandry) and the apparent continuing success of the agricultural economy (judging from evidence for the generation of these surpluses) and the apparent absence of any improvement in the lot of their inhabitants. Although it seems possible that they chose to spend their wealth in a different or unconventional fashion, which has left little record in

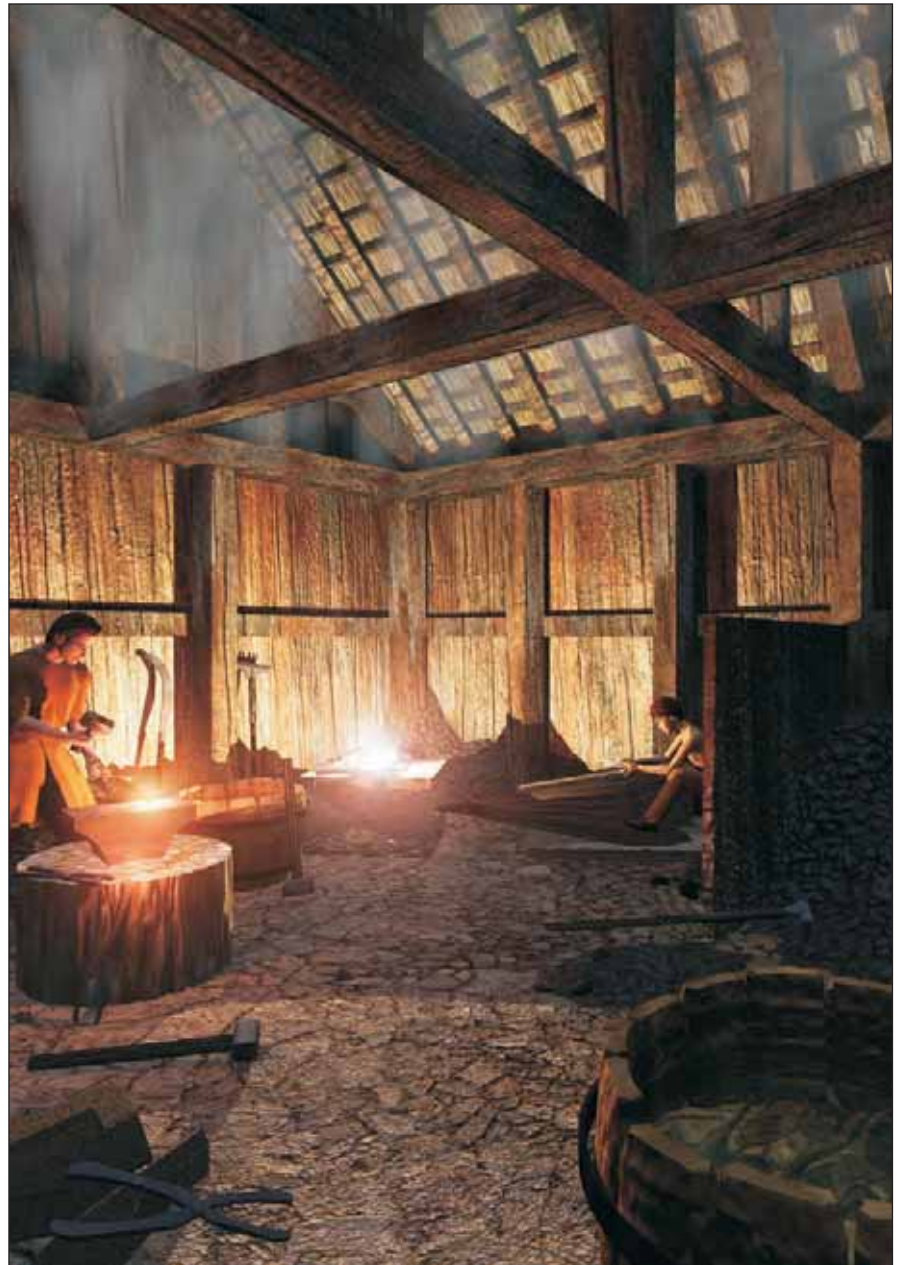


Figure 8.19: Reconstruction of late Romano-British smithing on the MTCP site

the immediate archaeological environment, the most likely answer is that the main beneficiary from their hard work is likely to have been a large local landowner. There are hints from both the LTCP/BLS site and the MTCP site that these might belong to wider agricultural enterprises, such as the provision of a mill in the proximity of the former when the main focus of the immediate landscape appears to have been on animal husbandry, whilst a small smithy on the MTCP site may have served a wider estate (Fig. 8.19). By the late Romano-British period, villas and their estates in the region, which had reached their apogee in the 2nd

century were now in a state of decline. The 'economic crisis' of the 3rd century had badly affected the province, and whilst there is evidence from western Britain for thriving and expanding villa estates in the 4th century, with mosaics, hypocausts and new building ranges on many villas, there is little similar evidence from eastern Britain (Going 1996, 104).

Despite this there is evidence from some sites for an increase in agricultural productivity in the region, with re-modelling of field systems, and improvements and expansion in of both arable and pastoral farming

(Going 1996, 104). This is certainly the case on the three sites excavated at Stansted. These changes may be linked in some cases to the development of *latifundia*. These were large agricultural estates which apparently developed out of the crisis of the 3rd century, when large tracts of land were purchased by largely absentee landlords and farmed intensively for profit. It is possible that any, or indeed all of the late Romano-British sites at Stansted belonged to similar such agricultural estates, although of the three, the enclosure at the MTCP site, with its constant expansion and re-organisation is the most likely to have belonged to an estate, perhaps even acting as a hub for agricultural activity over a wide area.

Decline and fall

The enclosures on the LTCP/BLS sites differ from their counterparts on the DCS/DFS and MTCP sites in that they appear to have been abandoned much earlier, with little evidence for activity on the site after the mid-4th century. Dating for this abandonment relies on the pottery, as there appears to have been little coin use on the site, but the absence of fabrics and forms in use on both of the other sites confirms the likely abandonment of the site.

In contrast, the DCS and MTCP sites appear to have reached their apogee in the mid 4th century, with increased levels of pottery use on both, and an expanded settlement on the MTCP site

divided into different working zones and containing numerous buildings and structures. Coins were commonly used on both sites, and large quantities of pottery were used. From this point, however, it took less than 50 years for both sites to apparently fall into disuse. None of the coins from either site can be dated any later than AD 378.

Whilst coins from the following decade are rare in Britain, coins from the last issues common in Britain (those of the House of Theodosius issued between AD 388 and 402) might be expected in so large an assemblage (Reece 1991). Their absence from both sites suggest that they were abandoned before these issues were in circulation. This dating is supported by the pottery evidence, where the abundance of late Roman shell-tempered wares in proportion to the Oxfordshire colour-coated wares indicate that the MTCP site is unlikely to have continued in use until the end of the 4th century. On balance it seems probable that both the DCS/DFS settlement and that on the MTCP site were abandoned at some point between *c* AD 378 and *c* 390.

We cannot be sure why either site was abandoned – there is insufficient evidence from either to point to a decline in their fortunes – but it is clear that these were not isolated occurrences. Not only were many rural sites in the region in decline, but most urban areas were as well. Pottery recovered from the nearby Strood Hall site suggested continuation into the second half of

the 4th century, although the latest coin from the site was minted before AD 337, and occupation is unlikely to have continued beyond the AD 360/70, whilst other sites such as the Rayne By-pass and Rayne Roundabout appear to have fared little better (Biddulph 2007a). Towns appear to have been in a similar state of decline – of the local towns, only Great Chesterford appears to be provided with stone built defences, as late as AD 390, whilst elsewhere centres such as Chelmsford, Braintree and Great Dunmow were losing their urban character (Wickenden 1996).

With increased political and economic uncertainty in the late 4th century, and in the context of an apparent downturn in regional fortunes, it is unsurprising that agricultural settlements on marginal land, such as those excavated at Stansted, should fare poorly. Where there is evidence for economic prosperity in the local region, this appears to focus on the sheep rearing economy to the west, around Great Chesterford (Wickenden 1996, 93). We cannot know whether they ceased to be economically viable settlements, or whether they were abandoned as the result of the collapse of larger estates. Whatever the reason for it, their abandonment was total – there is no evidence for continued activity on either site, and it is clear that much of the land they farmed was left largely uncultivated, allowing a major reforestation of the area in the centuries which followed.

The background of the page is a monochromatic, green-tinted illustration. It depicts a rural landscape at dusk or dawn. On the left, a large windmill with four lattice-patterned sails stands on a grassy hill. In the center, two figures are silhouetted against the bright sky; one appears to be carrying a bundle on their back while walking up a slope. To the right, a larger figure is shown in profile, bent over and working in a field of tall grass, possibly harvesting. The overall mood is quiet and laborious.

CHAPTER 9

Feudal Landscapes (AD 600–c 1350)

by Nicholas Cooke and Christopher Phillpotts

Introduction and historical sources

The abandonment of the late Romano-British sites on the LTCP, MTCP and DFS sites, apparently late in the 4th or early in the 5th century marks the beginning of a hiatus in our understanding of the inhabitation of the landscape. Extensive programmes of fieldwalking, evaluation and excavation have failed to find any convincing evidence for post-Roman settlement or agricultural activity prior to the Middle Saxon period. This suggests that there was a massive depopulation of the landscape. This abandonment of a heavily farmed landscape is likely to have culminated in the regeneration of woodland cover over much of the land no longer farmed.

It is only during the Late Saxon period that there is convincing evidence for the widespread re-occupation and farming of areas of the landscape, and even then on a less intensive scale than was evident in the Iron Age or Romano-British periods. One of the aims of this chapter is to examine the evidence for the Saxon division and organisation of the landscape in order to assess whether it has its origins in late Romano-British land divisions, or whether it was created *de novo*. Using the documentary evidence, it is possible to demonstrate the presence of large estates in the Middle Saxon period, which gradually fragmented in the Late Saxon period, and ultimately formed the basis for many of our modern administrative districts.

There can be little doubt that the landscape of the Stansted area was dominated by large tracts of woodland both before and after the Norman conquest. It was also one of the most populous and intensively farmed areas of Essex and yet large tracts of land were given over to deer parks. We shall explore the tensions inherent in the relationships between landholders, tenants and agriculture of woodland in order to place the excavated medieval farms and mill in a wider historical context. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the Black Death and the effects it had on the relationships between landlords and their tenants,



Figure 9.1: The areas covered by the documentary study

changes which were to have far reaching implications.

The extent of the excavations provides a rare opportunity to undertake a documentary study of the medieval landscape across a broader area than is normally possible in connection with archaeological investigations. The two parishes of Stansted Mountfichet and Takeley have been selected as a study area for detailed research and analysis, using manuscript and cartographical sources at the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Bod Lib), the British Library at Euston (BL), Essex Record Office at Chelmsford (ERO), the National Archives at Kew (NA), Lincolnshire Archives at Lincoln (LA), Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies at Hertford (HALS), and New College in Oxford (NCO).

Parts of both of these parishes lie within the BAA landholding. A wider study zone of 20 parishes was selected for the analysis of *Domesday Book* entries and other early medieval source material such as Anglo-Saxon charters, in order to set the detailed study area into a local context at this period. The 20 parishes are Bishop's Stortford (in Hertfordshire), and Manuden, Farnham, Ugley, Birchanger, Elsenham,

Stansted Mountfichet, Takeley, Henham, Pledgdon, Broxted, Chickney, Tilty, Great and Little Easton, Great and Little Canfield, Great and Little Hallingbury and Hatfield Broad Oak (Essex; Fig. 9.1).

The search of the catalogues of various repositories often encountered confusions between Stansted Mountfichet and the several other Stansteds and Stansteads in Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Suffolk, particularly with the manor of Stansted Hall in Halstead (as in the Bodleian Library *Summary Catalogue*, for example). The study area is relatively well-documented in the medieval period, but with sporadic and uneven survival of evidence between the component manors of the two parishes.

Registers and cartularies record grants of land to some of the monastic lords of the manor in the area. The cartulary of St John's Abbey in Colchester is available in print (Moore 1897). It includes documents relating to Colchester Hall manor in Takeley, which can be supplemented by a collection of 42 late 12th- and early 13th-century original charters at Essex Record Office. Eight of them do not appear in the cartulary (Macaulay and

Russell 1940; ERO D/DRu/T1/1–41). A 15th-century register of Tilty Abbey properties in Takeley and elsewhere is now only available in an early 20th-century translation, because the original was destroyed in 1918 (ERO T/B 3/1). The early charters of Waltham Abbey are also available in print, but the volume does not contain details of its holdings in Takeley (Ransford 1989). A survey of this manor in 1621 is held in Lincolnshire Archives and refers back to tenant holdings in the 14th and 15th centuries (HD Manorial, microfilm copy at ERO T/A 374/2). Particularly notable amongst the surviving documentation is the substantial cache of early medieval deeds relating to the manor of Warish Hall in Takeley in the archives of New College (NCO 12588–12652, 12882–13165). These deeds are uncatalogued except by date, and have never before been exploited for historical study, although a few of them are available in print (Delisle 1908; Brunel and Salter 1910; Salter 1929). New College also holds a run of late medieval court rolls relating to its manor in this parish (NCO 3697–3702), and an early 14th-century custumal, which details the conditions of tenure in the manor (NCO 13121). From Stansted parish, the late medieval manorial court rolls of Thremhall Priory survive at Essex Record Office (ERO D/DWv M14–19). Records of the secular manors of Bassingbournes in Takeley, and Stansted Hall, Burnells and Bentfieldbury in Stansted have not survived so plentifully. The earliest surviving court roll of Bassingbournes dates from 1490 (ERO D/DB M63). The records of all of these manors can be supplemented by the collections held in the British Library and the National Archives.

The few surviving medieval manorial accounts from the study area are held at the National Archives. It is not possible to trace the economic fortunes of a manor accurately by deriving profit and loss figures from the levels of *total receipts* and *total expenses* entries on the manorial accounts. These totals do not take into account the values of livestock, grain and other assets retained from year to year. The purpose of drawing up the accounts was to

determine the liability for payment by the lord of the manor's officials, not to assess the profitability of his manors. As it is more usual for the accounts of ecclesiastical lords and aristocratic families to have survived than those of the lesser lords of small estates, there is a bias in the available evidence across the country. They also contain more information about production than about the consumption of produce. Manorial accounts include evidence for crops grown and livestock kept on the demesne lands, directly managed by the lords and their officers, but no information about the more extensive lands of the manorial tenants. However, the proportions of grain and animals are likely to have been similar on the holdings of the tenants, who had to pay their 'best beast' as a heriot when inheriting a customary tenancy and a portion of their crops as tithes, grown in the same fields as the demesne crops (Dyer 1988, 13–14, 27). Recent studies of the 14th century suggest that the demesne sector was representative of the arable husbandry of the whole population (Campbell 2000, 402). These accounts provide a detailed picture of the practice of agriculture in the late medieval period, but they only survive sporadically for the study area.

Manorial court records also provide evidence for the ways in which the land was organised and used for agriculture, the holdings of the tenants, and the activity of the local land market. The time limitations of the research programme have confined the consideration of the court rolls to the period before 1400.

In the absence of more comprehensive documentation of the study area, understanding the medieval context of the excavated remains has required a process of landscape analysis to place the sites investigated into a sequence of landscape development. This analysis identified areas of former settlement, common fields, meadows, assarts and woodland. The original boundaries of medieval parks, and other large units such as demesnes and areas of assarts, can often be traced on much later maps. These land units often had rounded corners to save on the length

of their enclosing embankments and paling fences. Medieval boundaries ran along sinuous lines, which can be distinguished from the straight lines of the post-medieval landscape; later divisions abut rather than cross them. The names of fields recorded in deeds and tithe apportionments provide clues to their history, function and form in earlier centuries. Where two or more adjacent fields had the same name, each sometimes distinguished by a term such as *great* and *little*, or *lower*, *middle* and *upper*, they originally formed parts of a larger field, which may have been part of the manorial demesne lands, a common field or a park. Former park interiors are also indicated by such field names as *park* and *launde* (Emmison 1947, xi; Cantor 1982, 81; Hunter 1999, 91; 2003, 14, 16, 28, 37).

Cartographical material of dates considerably later than the excavated evidence has been taken into account, because post-medieval boundaries can often assist in elucidating medieval conditions. Field boundaries and field names changed little in rural Essex over several centuries; the countryside depicted in north-west Essex by the Chapman and André county map of 1777 (Fig. 9.24) is not markedly different from the medieval landscape, and many road and field names survived the intervening centuries. Some of the 18th-century estate maps also show components of a surviving medieval landscape pattern. Estate maps for land holdings within the study area exist from the 18th century onwards, and can be supplemented in the 19th century by detailed plans prepared for several proposed canals and railways. There is an enclosure map for Stansted Mountfichet, but not for Takeley; there are also tithe maps for both parishes. The tithe maps have formed the basis for plotting the landscape analysis of the area.

Various thematic strands have emerged from both the excavated evidence and the documentary sources. A concluding section briefly discusses these. A narrative of the developing relationship between the landscape and its inhabitants can be constructed by weaving together these strands.

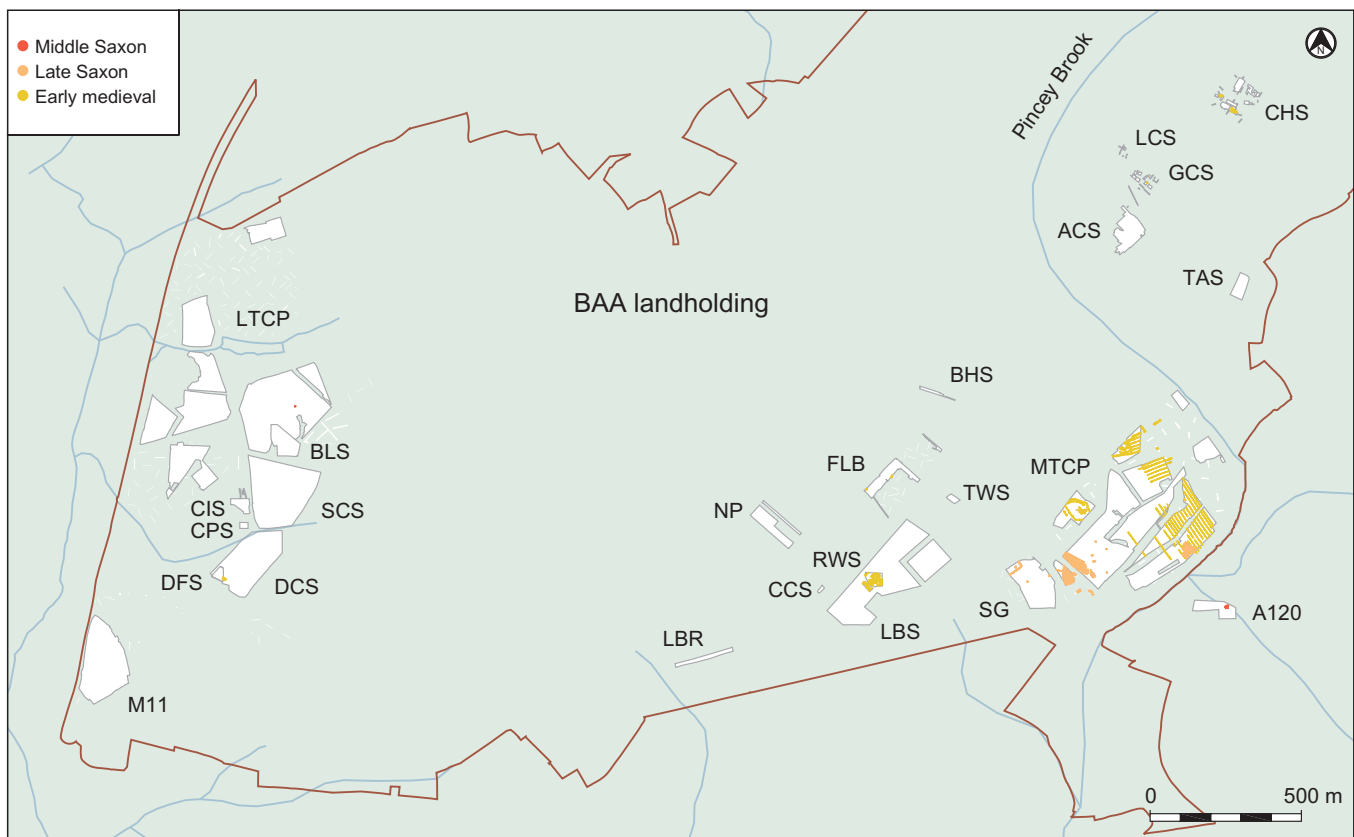


Figure 9.2: Saxon and early medieval features

The post-Roman 'hiatus'

There is little indication that any Romano-British division of the Essex landscape survived the Saxon centuries to be represented in *Domesday Book* manorial assessments, as is suggested by the common five-hide units recorded in 1086 in counties like Cambridgeshire and Middlesex (Darby 1971, 220). The excavation results suggest that there was no continuity of occupation of the landscape in the study area between the end of the Romano-British period and the Late Saxon period. However, there may have been an element of continuity to the west at Bishop's Stortford, where the Roman road of Stane Street crossed the River Stort. Here a large terrain estate persisted throughout the Saxon centuries from the time of Roman dominance, and probably from a Late Iron Age origin. It became a property of the Bishops of London in the 11th century. Early Saxon settlement was drawn to areas which had remained clear of woodland since the late Romano-British period. It was only in the major river valleys that there was continuous occupation and land

exploitation from the 5th and 6th centuries onwards (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 34; Williamson 2004, 37–8, 103–4).

It is not clear if these Saxon period terrains should be regarded as surviving Romano-British estates, Saxon tribal home-lands of the migration period, Early Saxon embryonic kingdoms, or Middle Saxon multiple estates, or indeed all of them. The organisation of the landscape of the Saxon kingdom of Essex into these units was partly based on pre-existing Romano-British estates and partly on new tribal groupings, both of which can be suggested from place-names and 8th-century charter evidence.

Across the landscape to the east of Bishop's Stortford there was a general withdrawal from agriculture in the Saxon period. There was a retreat from the heavier clay soils after a dramatic fall in population in the 5th and 6th centuries, in favour of the more easily worked free-draining soils. The distribution of Early Saxon settlements in Essex was less dense than that of its Romano-British predecessors. They lay in a dispersed pattern, each consisting

of only a few households. Early Saxon settlements tended to drift within the same locality; it appears that they were regarded as temporary, and that they were necessarily deserted by their communities in favour of fresh sites. This implies that a shifting form of agriculture was practised, which periodically required new ground to be broken in, as old fields became exhausted or choked with weeds (Taylor 1983, 121; Muir 2000, 192; Williamson 2004, 13, 29–33, 119). The Stansted Project found only two pits containing 6th–7th-century pottery, and a scatter of residual Saxon pottery and concluded that settlement had shrunk back towards the western side of the project area (Havis and Brooks 2004, 346).

Middle Saxon settlements shifted to more permanent sites; they probably operated a more stable and intensive form of agriculture, based on heavier ploughs able to cope with a wider variety of soil types. Communally-held tribal lands were replaced by the land-ownership of individuals. Society became more hierarchical, allowing the development of embryonic kingdoms and multiple estates. Tribute and

taxation burdens were allocated amongst the new landowners (Williamson 2004, 118–19, 122). These are common factors which have emerged in settlement studies, but are still little understood. The movements of settlement are likely to have taken place within the boundaries of the existing land-units, including surviving Romano-British estates. The mechanism by which these shifts of settlement occurred is unknown, but in the context of the division of the landscape into a series of estates, they are likely to have been seigneurially directed.

Both Early and Middle Saxon settlements probably lay on the periphery of the study area, but outside the archaeologically investigated areas in the south part of Stansted parish, and the west and south parts of Takeley parish. The later landscape history of the excavated areas suggests that there was a general regeneration of unmanaged woodland here which covered the abandoned farms of the Romano-British period. It was probably used as wood pasture (English Heritage 1989, 17; Hunter 1999, 67; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 34; Williamson 2004, 58, 104). In north Hampshire, north Middlesex, south Hertfordshire and south Essex there was a similar regeneration of woodland in the post-Roman period, masking previously-farmed landscapes (Hooke 1989, 128; Williamson 2004, 109).

This impression of regenerated woodland is reinforced by the evidence of place-names. Some of the place-names of the study area suggest clearings from the woods in the Middle and Late Saxon periods, most prominently in the name of Takeley itself, meaning *Tæcca's clearing*. The initial piece of land reclaimed by Tæcca from the woods may have been opened up from the surviving routeway of Stane Street in the vicinity of the site of Takeley church. The name of Stansted means *stone-place*, and is probably related to Stane Street, both appellations deriving from the stone causeway on which it ran, suggesting the importance of the route in the Saxon period. The name of Birchanger means birch wood (Morant 1768, ii 576; Reaney 1935, 533, 535). Substantial areas of woodland survived in south central part of Takeley parish at Priors Wood and on the south-eastern boundary of Stansted parish at Taylor's Wood until the 19th and 20th centuries.

The inclusion of settlements and estates in the written evidence of Anglo-Saxon charters dating from the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries can imply the continuity of an occupied and exploited landscape throughout this time-frame. However, there are only a handful of surviving charters which relate to the wider study zone. They all date from the 1040s or later, and concern property in Ugley, Henham

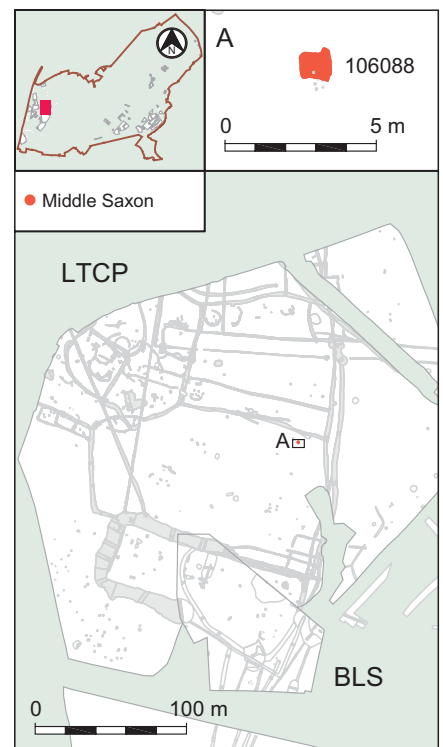


Figure 9.3: Middle Saxon feature 106088

and Broxted, all to the north of the study area. King Edward the Confessor's confirmation of the estates of Ely Abbey, including Broxted, may be partly spurious, and the charter of Wulfwin son of Alfwin concerning Ugley is no longer extant (Hart 1957, 27 no. 56, 28 nos 59, 60; Sawyer 1968, 314 no. 1051, 429 no. 1531).

There is very little archaeological evidence for activity in the area in the Early and Middle Saxon period. One



Figure 9.4: Middle Saxon building excavated on the A120 road scheme

feature on the LTCP site hints at activity in the 7th–9th centuries (Figs 9.2–3). Hearth or oven 106088 comprised a roughly oval setting of stakeholes associated with a sub-rectangular hollow containing charcoal and fired clay, sealing episodes of *in situ* burning. The feature was undated, but did not appear to fit in with known settlement patterns on the site, and a sample of charcoal was submitted for radiocarbon dating. This produced a date of cal AD 680–890 (1244±30 BP NZA-23231) suggesting that the oven was probably in use in the Middle Saxon period. No associated features or finds were found.

The only other contemporaneous evidence for settlement in the area was recovered from the A120 excavations to the south of Stansted Airport (Fig. 9.4). Here, on the Takeley site on a north-facing slope overlooking Pincey Brook, and facing the MTCP site, there was a post-built structure (Hardy 2007a, 153, fig. 4.2–3). It was a rectangular building, measuring 12 m by 5.9 m, the only find from which was a fragment of Romano-British tile. Charcoal recovered from the fill of one of the postholes gave a date of cal AD 670–880 (1245±35 BP NZA-19589).

Late Saxon farming

Evidence for Late Saxon activity was excavated in the form of a single rectangular building and associated pits located on the MTCP and SG sites, along with two sets of strip fields. This building is dated by early 11th- and 12th-century pottery. It is associated with sherds of St Neots Ware, which had a wide distribution across the east and south Midlands, and is occasionally found in north-east Essex, although this it is not previously known elsewhere at Stansted. It has a broad date range of late 9th–12th centuries, with a *floruit* in the 10th century.

Late Saxon building and its environs

The main area of Saxo-Norman activity excavated lay at the western end of a slight plateau on the south-facing slope above Pincey Brook (Fig. 9.5). Here the ephemeral remains of a single building (Late Saxon building 1) were excavated, defined only by traces of burnt wattle and daub walls, probably associated with a timber-framed superstructure (Plate 9.1). Traces of shallow beamslots were identified, filled with charcoal, occasional sherds of pottery and large quantities of burnt daub, some bearing the impressions of timber wattles. The building was rectangular, 15 m by over 6 m. No traces of any internal floor surfaces or hearths were found, although a series of small postholes and stakeholes may be associated with the use of the building (Fig. 9.5). Charcoal from the burnt remains of the building was dated to cal AD 900–1160 (1022±30 BP, NZA-23235).

This building or hall probably acted primarily as a residence, although it may also have been partially used for stabling. No traces survive of any doorways or entrances to the structure (the ‘missing’ south wall is more likely to have been removed by later ploughing, as it lay closest to the edge of the slight plateau, and was covered with thinner topsoil and subsoil deposits).

Tellingly perhaps, this building only survived in an archaeologically visible manner because it was burnt down

(Plate 9.1). Had the burnt traces of the walls not survived, it is unlikely that the other features in the area would have been interpreted as being associated with building and settlement. A small number of other features in the vicinity have been dated to the Late Saxon period on the basis of their association with diagnostic pottery or their association with the building.

A number of postholes lay within the building but none is well dated. These may represent the remains of divisions or structures within the building, but there are no clear patterns in their distribution. Small pit/posthole 307030 may also be associated with the building. To the north-west, a group of seven postholes (308043, 308045, 308047, 308050, 315044, 314045 and 370046, Fig. 9.5) may have formed a roughly rectangular ancillary structure, although they are poorly-dated.

Three pits (305011, 315051 and 315055) outside the north-western end of the building are also likely to be Late Saxon (Fig. 9.5). Although none of these contained Late Saxon pottery, the first two both contained substantial dumps of burnt daub, some bearing wattle impressions. These dumps of daub are likely to be related to the destruction of the hall. A fourth pit (317001) lay to the north-east of the possible ancillary structure. This shallow steep-sided, flat-bottomed pit had silted naturally and was poorly-dated, but did contain a knife of Saxon form (Scott, CD Chapter 14).



Plate 9.1: Late Saxon building 1 looking north, with Strip field 1 in the distance

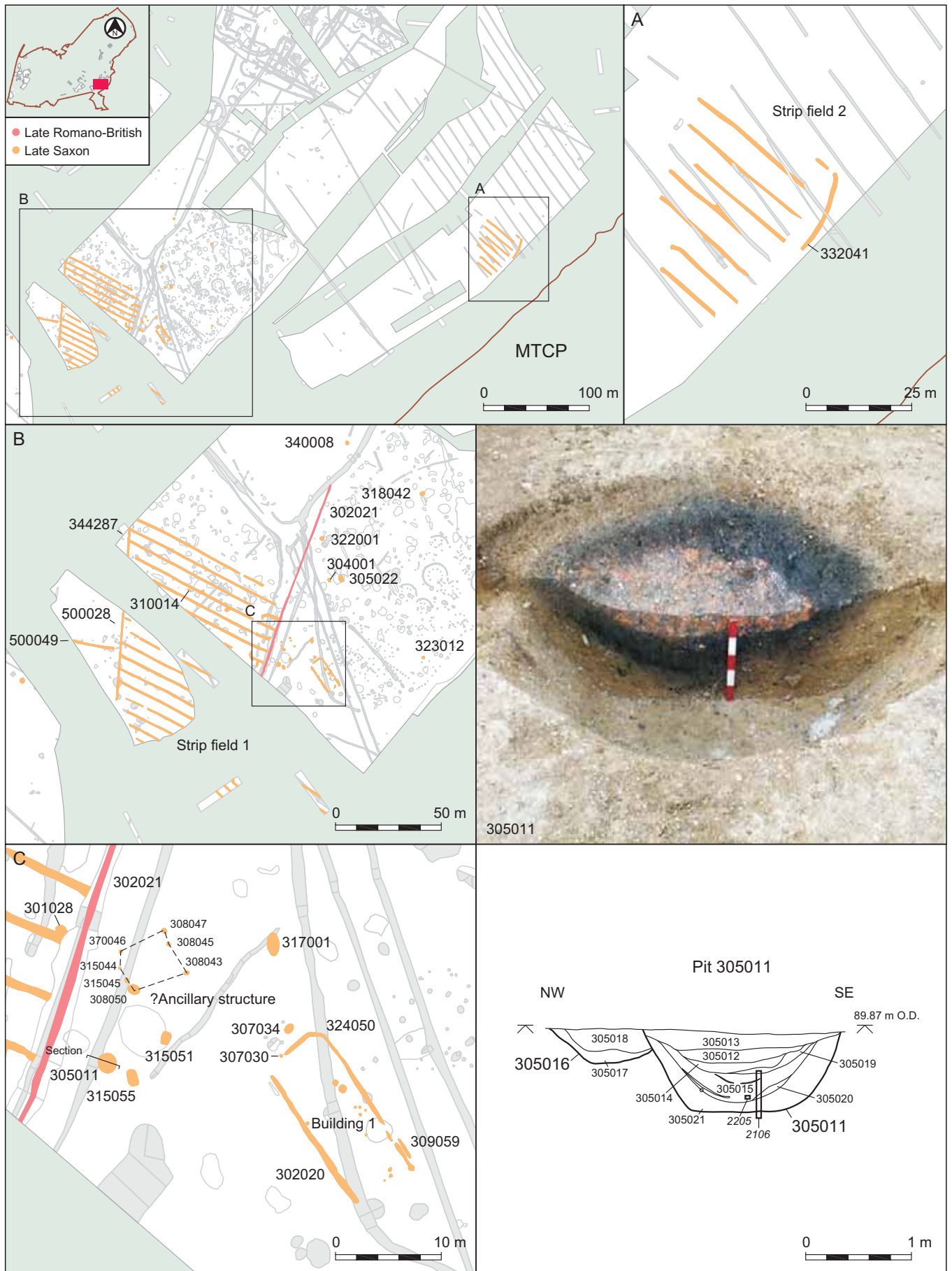


Figure 9.5: Late Saxon settlement

The sequence of fills in pit 305011 was subjected to detailed sedimentological analysis (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). The lowest deposits examined (305015 and 305021) are iron-stained calcareous fills containing gravel and occasional charcoal. They also contained small amounts of phosphate and cob fragments. Further up the sequence (context 305019) there is an increase in organic matter and slightly higher concentrations of phosphate. Earthworm-mixed deposits comprised a fine charcoal-rich anthropogenic soil which probably included burned debris, and abundant daub materials including charcoal-rich poorly burned calcareous material, alongside strongly burned clay loam and examples of chalky cob-like material. Burned chalk was also present.

This use of chalky till-based cob can be paralleled elsewhere (eg 12th-century Templar Crossing Temple, Essex, (Macphail 1995); medieval structures in Norwich (Macphail 2001; Shelley 2005); middle Saxon West Heslerton, North Yorkshire (Macphail *et al.* forthcoming a); it has also been used at the experimental site of middle Saxon West Stow, Suffolk (West 1985)), and is likely to have been used widely in Essex.

A scatter of Late Saxon features lay further to the north (Fig. 9.5), all of which contained pottery. One of these, pit 305022, appeared to have acted as a tank and was clearly originally revetted. There was little in the fills of this pit to indicate its function, with the only material recovered indicative of nearby domestic activity – charcoal, fired clay, pottery and animal bone. A smaller pit nearby, 304001, probably had a similar function, and also had an organic revetment. The fills contained quantities of pottery, animal bone and fired clay.

Another large pit lay to the north (322001). This also seems to have been revetted and was used as a well. Fired clay, charcoal, pottery and animal bone were recovered from the fills.

Two other pits in this area also contained Late Saxon pottery – 318042 and 340008. The former was a deep

oval pit, probably a waterhole. The function of 340008 is less clear, with an initial secondary fill sealed by a charcoal-rich dump of material, probably derived from a hearth. Late Saxon pottery including seven jar rims, thickened and/or lid-seated (the same forms occurred in both St Neots ware and the local shelly ware) was recovered from this feature. Why so many wells or waterholes were needed in a relatively small area is unclear.

Strip fields

A system of narrow strip fields (strip field 1) to the west and north-west of Late Saxon building 1 probably dates to this period (Fig. 9.5). This comprised a series of 18 shallow parallel gullies, approximately 5–6 m apart, aligned north-west to south-east. The western extent of this strip field was defined by a shallow ditch – 344287/500028 – whilst its south-eastern edge respected the line of a late Romano-British boundary (ditch 302021), which was clearly still visible when this field system was laid out. These shallow gullies probably represent an arable or horticultural field system, and may have acted either as drainage gullies (they run down the prevailing slope towards the building) or as bedding trenches for plants. The fills of the ditches surrounding the fields contained few finds, and none that help with dating them closely. The association with the late Romano-British boundary provides an earliest date for its construction, and its spatial relationship with the area of Late Saxon activity suggests that the two are contemporary. An associated ditch to the west of this system (500049), aligned roughly east–west, contained a substantial quantity of Late Saxon pottery from several vessels. A tree-throw (310014) containing similar pottery within the field system itself may point to clearance as part of this farming regime.

A second, smaller field system identified during the watching brief on the MTCP site lay to the east (Strip field 2). This lay on a similar north-west to south-east alignment, and comprised a series of seven parallel ditches 5–6 m apart (Fig. 9.5). The southern extent

was partly bounded by curving ditch 332041, but the other edges were not well defined. This system was excavated during the watching brief, and was not thoroughly investigated; it is poorly dated. However, this strip field, as well as being similar in nature to Strip field 1, was truncated by a more extensive strip field system, thought likely to date to the early medieval or medieval period (see below).

Similar field systems have been recently found along the line of the A120 Stansted Airport to Braintree road scheme (Timby *et al.* 2007), where strip fields were excavated at Warish Hall and Blatches sites. The former lies approximately 2 km to the east of the MTCP site. Here, a series of parallel ditches 5–6 m apart were overlain by a second set 8–10 m apart. Both were interpreted as being Romano-British in date on the basis of two sherds of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery (Biddulph 2007a, 81). At Blatches, approximately 12 km to the east, a similar series of five ditches aligned east–west and a single north–south ditch, dated to the early 13th century. These were interpreted as raised cultivation beds (Hardy 2007a, 161).

Late Saxon enclosure

The corner of a large enclosure and a number of Late Saxon features further to the west of Strip field 1 point to further settlement and activity in the area (Fig. 9.6). Two sides of the enclosure were identified (ditch 499020); the longer southern ditch was 48 m long, whilst the eastern side measured 18 m. This was a relatively modest enclosure ditch, a little over 1 m wide, and only 0.45 m deep at its deepest point. It was filled with naturally accumulated deposits interspersed with dumps of domestic debris including charred remains and occasional pieces of daub.

A soil sample taken from one such dump of material (context 500031, intervention 500030) contained numerous poorly-preserved cereal grains, dominated by free-threshing bread-type wheat (*Triticum aestivum*-type) with no hulled wheat grain or

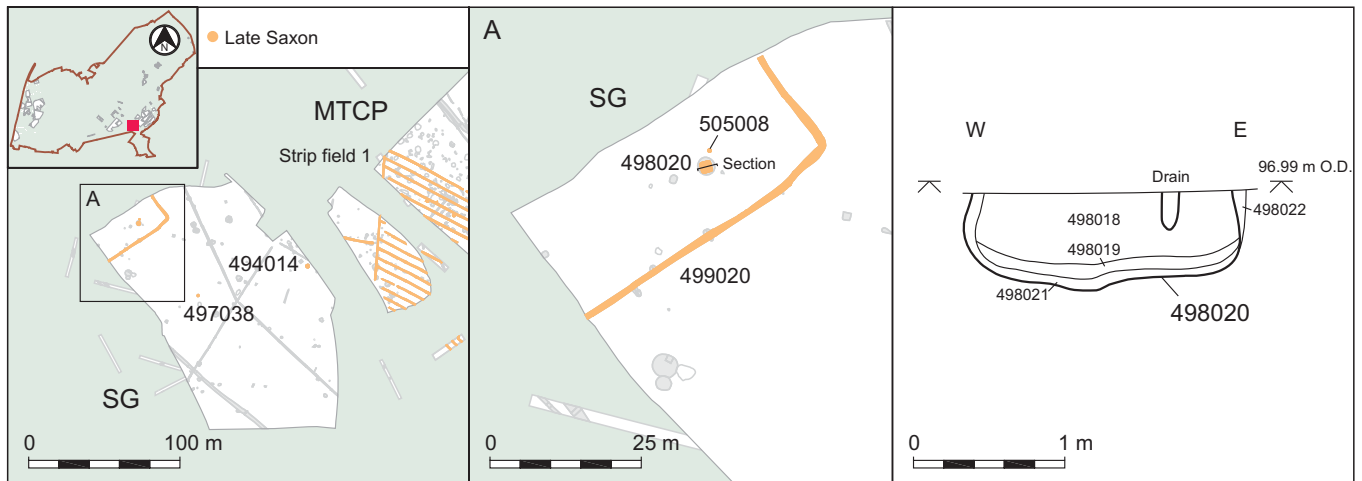


Figure 9.6: Late Saxon features

chaff. This deposit also contained the best dating evidence for the formation of this deposit – 15 sherds of Roman pottery. However, because the charred plant remains were atypical for the period (hulled wheats – both emmer and spelt wheat – were the dominant cereals in the Iron Age and most of the Romano-British period in southern England), a grain of *Triticum aestivum* was submitted for radiocarbon dating. This produced a date of cal AD 940–1040 (1054±30 BP, NZA-25415), confirming a Late Saxon date for the deposit.

Two other Late Saxon features lay within this enclosure (Fig. 9.6). Pit 498020 was a substantial circular pit, with evidence for a sub-square wooden lining. The lowest fill was a green silty clay typical of a cess deposit and contained pottery, daub and animal bone. Mineralised human faecal remains, that confirm its use as a cess-pit, were also recovered from this layer. The upper fills produced poorly-preserved charred cereal grains including bread-type wheat and some emmer/spelt wheat grains and a glume base. A fragment of Pomodieae charcoal from the cess at the base of the feature (layer 498021) produced a date of cal AD 720 – 880 (1219±30 BP, NZA-26251). Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) seeds were present probably spreading from an adjacent processing area (see below) into the cess pit. The date recovered from the base of this feature suggests that the area was a focus for Saxon activity as early as the 8th or 9th centuries.

The mineralised human faecal material provided direct evidence of the Late Saxon diet. Species found included frequent cereal bran fragments, some legume seed coat fragments including pea remains (*Pisum sativum*), and a few fruit seeds including apple/pear (*Malus sylvestris*/*Pyrus communis*) and blackberries (*Rubus* sect. *Glandulosus*). Straw or rush stems were often embedded in the faecal concretions and had probably been used as toilet paper or deposited, alongside charred material, to reduce smells (Carruthers, CD Chapter 34).

Immediately adjacent to pit 498020 was a small posthole (505008), which is likely to be of a similar date. This contained a charred deposit of flax seeds, amongst which were seeds of lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*). Both these plants have medicinal uses and nutritional value but linen is produced from flax and lady's bed straw can be used as a dye, so textile manufacture is perhaps implied. Other activities may have been occurring including the preparation of medicines, as a single opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) seed was also recovered.

Two other features of this date lay to the south-east of the enclosure: pits 494014 and 497038. These both contained quantities of daub and pottery mixed into deposits of dumped charcoal. The finds and environmental evidence from the pits suggest nearby settlement. It seems likely that dwellings, the evidence for which did not survive, were dispersed around the edges of the fields.

Samples from pit 494014 contained grains from four cereals (wheat, barley, oats and rye), although the dominant cereal was free-threshing bread-type wheat. A small amount of chaff was present, but weed seeds and other types of burnt waste were fairly common. The assemblage was indicative of mixed domestic waste, perhaps originating from a domestic hearth. Foodstuffs included processed cereals and legumes (such as pea, Celtic bean; *Vicia faba* var. *minor*) spilt during preparations for cooking, fruit stones (including sloe; *Prunus spinosa*) and nutshells (*Corylus avellana*). The peas and Celtic beans appear to be present as crops and suggest legumes were an important part of the diet. Other species identified included material used for tinder and fuel such as hay (spike-rush, grasses, small weed vetches) and animal bedding/fodder (cultivated vetch; *Vicia sativa* cf. ssp. *sativa*). Charcoal from this deposit provided a date of cal AD 810–1030 (1101±45 BP, NZA-25414).

The processing waste dumped into ditch 499020 and the presence of the cess pit points to the enclosure containing a small agricultural settlement. Evidence for both the agricultural nature of this settlement and the diet of its inhabitants was recovered. The agricultural regime was a mixed one, although the small quantities of animal bone recovered from features of this date can tell us little about these practices. Only a small proportion of the animal bone recovered could be identified to species, although bones of

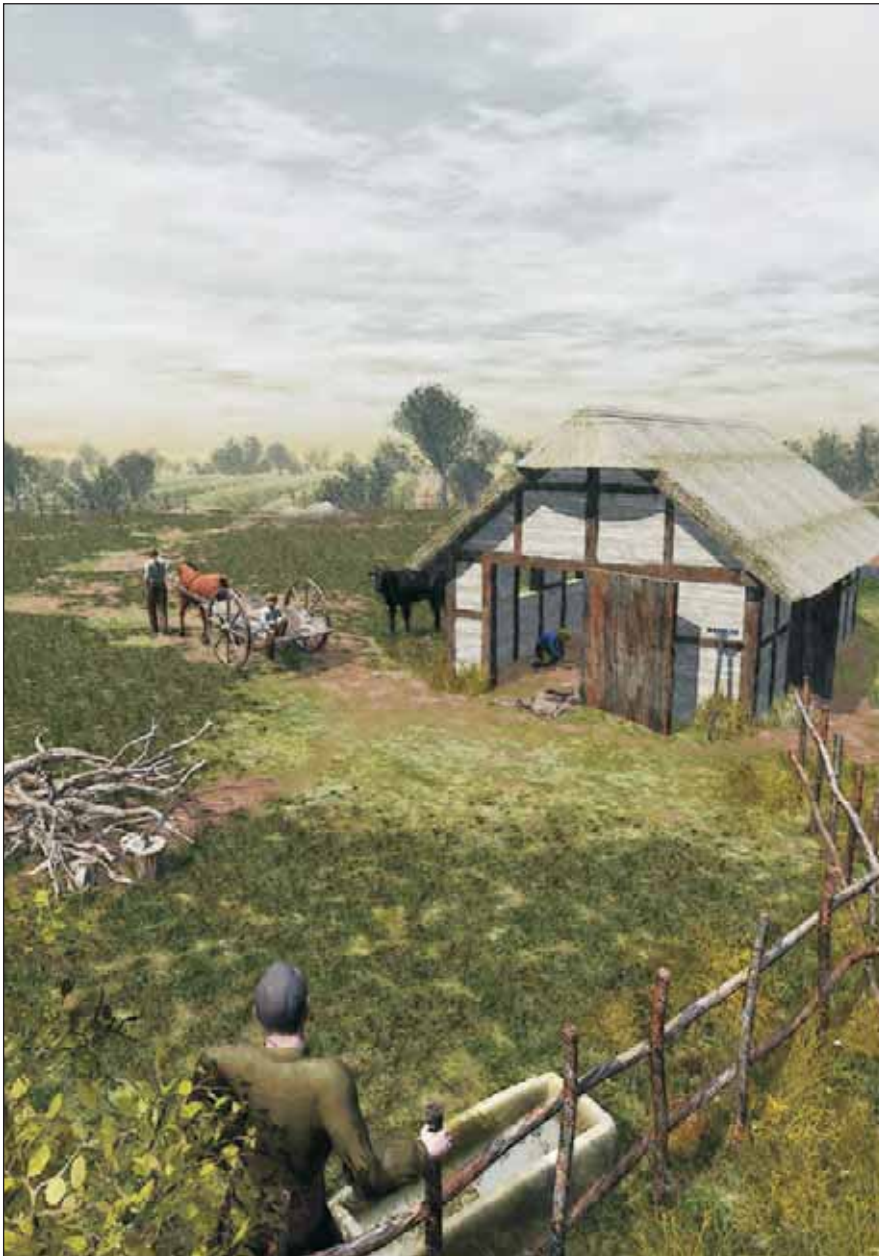


Figure 9.7: Reconstruction showing Late Saxon farming on the MTCP site

horse, cattle, sheep and pig were all present, along with a single heron bone.

The distribution of Late Saxon features on both the MTCP and SG sites appear part of a single, albeit dispersed, settlement existing on both sides of the field system described above (Fig. 9.7). These features probably represent farmsteads associated with Bassingbourne manor (see below). The chance survival of a single building shows that such structures would have left little trace archaeologically unless burnt and not subsequently truncated by ploughing. The distribution of domestic assemblages, wells, water

tanks and the cess pit points to a number of different areas of settlements, perhaps each focusing on a building similar to that excavated. These may have been individual family smallholdings. The focus of this activity on the south facing slopes above Pincey Brook is intriguing. This settlement lies 900 m to the north of the line of Stane Street and 700 m to the north-west of the Holy Trinity Church at Takeley. The current church, built in the 12th century, may occupy the site of an earlier, Late Saxon church, whilst the use of Roman tiles in its construction may also hint at earlier occupation in the vicinity.

Late Saxon landscape and settlement

It is likely that the parishes of Stansted Mountfichet and Takeley formed parts of a much larger estate in the Middle Saxon period, which also included the later parishes of Rickling, Quendon, Ugley, Henham (including Pledgdon), Elsenham and Birchanger, and the sections of Manuden parish lying to the east of the River Stort, recorded by *Domesday Book* as a berewick of Stansted (Fig. 9.8). The areas of these later parishes probably formed components of a large multiple estate, bounded by the Stort to the west, the Roding to the east and Stane Street to the south, and incorporating a variety of landscape types for comprehensive agricultural exploitation. This form of large terrain estate in England was similar to the *maenor* of early medieval Wales, and may therefore have derived from a Romano-British model (Muir 2000, 122–5). There was usually a chief settlement and a minster church at the centre of each estate. Shadows of the multiple estate arrangements can therefore be traced not only in the later hundred and parish boundaries, but also the territories of 7th- or 8th-century minster churches (*parochiae*), and medieval manorial structures.

By the 10th and 11th centuries the larger Middle Saxon estates and the *parochiae* of the minster churches in Essex had been broken up, as land was taken out of them to grant by charters to bishoprics, monasteries, royal officials and local thegns. The new smaller estates evolved into manors and the tenurial landscape developed towards the manorial structure which can first be traced in detail in the *Domesday Book* survey. The lords of the new estates established proprietorial churches close to their manor houses as one form of manorial asset, and in the 11th and 12th centuries these developed into parish churches, the boundaries of their new parishes often co-terminous with those of the existing manorial estates (Muir 2000, 76–7, 123; Hunter 2003, 7).

Analysis of the parish boundaries within the Stansted multiple estate

suggests a chronological sequence for its division. The boundaries around Elsenham and Takeley follow stream courses and sinuous lines across the landscape, and also the Roman road; they were probably drawn when these areas still formed the wood pasture components of the estate, before they were opened up for arable cultivation. The boundaries of Stansted with Manuden, Birchanger, Ugley and Pledgdon include lines of rectangular indentation, a pattern characteristic of the division of the strips of open fields and furlongs which had already been established before the formation of the parishes; they probably date to the 10th or 11th century (Fig. 9.8).

Field names in late medieval and early modern deeds indicate that the field systems of Stansted and Birchanger, consisting of large open fields cultivated in common in strips, originated before the great Middle Saxon estate was divided into individual manors. *Stonyfeld* lay in both parishes (Morant 1768, ii 579b; BL Add Charter 65171; HRO Cassiobury 8234, 8235). The northern part of the parish boundary included a series of angular steps, indicating that it had been drawn through an area already under cultivation, and followed the edges of furlongs within the open fields. The southern part of the boundary followed sinuous curves, and was probably drawn through an area which was still wooded (Havis and Brooks 2004).

A large enclosure around the site of the manor house of Bassingbournes, consisting of the fields later called Ireland, Island or Irons Ley, and Knight's Pasture, appears to have existed before the formation of the parish boundary between Stansted and Takeley, and was accessed by a road from Stansted through Burton End. It represents another node of early clearance from the woodland, extending south-eastwards from Stansted. Most of the area must still have been wooded at the time when the boundary was drawn.

These manors extended their areas of cultivation in the Late Saxon period by clearing areas of woodland, whose trees and scrub had recolonised land

previously exploited for agriculture in the Romano-British period. This process of clearance was called assarting (Williamson 2004, 58–9). At Stansted the advance of cultivation appears to have been from the site of the manor house and church southwards towards the line of the Roman road of Stane Street, forming areas of manorial demesne land. These can be identified as two large lobed areas on either side of Bury Lodge Lane, one of which later became incorporated with Stansted Park. In Takeley clearance was expanding outwards from several initial nodes corresponding to the later manorial centres of Colchester Hall, Waltham Hall and Warish Hall, and also from settlement areas around the church (perhaps the original *Tæcca's Ley*) and in the south-western corner of the parish (Takeley Street), both adjacent to Stane Street. The Bassingbournes fields were colonised from the border with Stansted, a process probably begun in the 10th century. The excavation of one of the early Bassingbournes fields (strip field 1) also suggests that it utilised the line of a late Romano-British ditch as its south-eastern boundary. It seems unlikely, however, that this represents continuity of agriculture throughout the Early and Middle Saxon centuries.

These Late Saxon tenurial changes were accompanied in many areas by the concentration of settlements into large villages and the formation of open field systems, although the relative chronology of these various elements is uncertain. Settlement nucleation may have come first in c 850–1050, transforming the pattern of settlement from dispersed hamlets to individual villages in some estates. These villages appear to have been created by the lords of the estates, and the rising numbers of the population were moved to them in order to make agricultural arrangements more efficient. The movement was most marked in areas with extensive meadow land and those most suited to grain production, already cleared of much of their woodland. In these estates it was necessary to mobilise large amounts of labour at short notice to mow the hay and harvest the corn while the weather



Figure 9.8: The Middle Saxon estate of Stansted and its divisions

was favourable. It was easier to organise the tenants for these labour-intensive operations when they lived in nucleated villages. The changes were facilitated by stronger lordship in the manorialised estates, and enabled them to respond to increased burdens of royal and ecclesiastical taxation (Muir 2000, 182, 184, 205; Williamson 2004, 15–16, 19, 67–8, 174, 182–3).

In the study area nucleation occurred at the large polyfocal village of Stansted Mountfichet. Around it the subsidiary hamlets of Burton End and Bentfield End developed to the south-east and west respectively. It is not certain when they originated: they may have been the relics of a dispersed pattern of settlement which preceded nucleation, or they may have been early medieval secondary hamlets associated with assarting and the creation of sub-manors. There may have been elements of both. The south-east part of Stansted parish, including the two lobes of demesne land and the excavated area, was probably regarded as lying in the fields of Burton End or Button End, written as *Boveton* in the 15th and 16th centuries (BL Add Charters 37641(2), 65171); and Buffton, Buffen or Burton End in the 17th century (ERO D/DHt/T249/8 and T392a; D/DMd 124). The earlier form of the name might imply an original connection with pastures for oxen.

In the more wooded Takeley and most of the other parishes of north-west Essex the settlement pattern was more dispersed and lower in density, consisting of a series of hamlets called *tyes*, *ends* or *greens* linked by a network of green lanes. These dispersed settlements were formed with the clearance of woodlands and grouped around grazing greens and strings of meadowland along the stream valleys (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 40–2; Hunter 2003, 8, 9; Williamson 2004, 54, 91, 101–2, 173–4; see Fig. 9.21). The Takeley hamlets which survived the late medieval period were called Mole Hill Green, Bamber Green, Jacks Green and Smith's Green (Reaney 1935, 535–6). There were similar small settlements at Duck End in Birchanger, and at Gaunts End, Tye Green and Greensted Green in Elsenham. Each of the hamlets probably had its own field system.

This is the settlement context of the rectangular building on the MTCP site (Late Saxon building 1), and the apparently contemporary Late Saxon enclosure. They probably both represented farmsteads associated with Bassingbournes manor.

The move to settlement nucleation was often accompanied by the development of common field systems, or was closely succeeded by it in the early 10th century. These field systems consisted of large open fields divided into rectangular furlongs of individual parallel cultivation strips, worked in common by the lord and tenants, whose strips were dispersed evenly in the fields. These strips were orientated and designed to provide the best drainage. On the clay lands they were often long, high and narrow to provide water furrows at frequent intervals. There were no baulks left between the strips, but at each end were turning spaces for the ploughs, called *headlands*, *gores* and *butts*. Sometimes these were also ploughed, after the completion of the strips. The fields were planted in sequences of crop rotation, and depended on manuring by communal sheep flocks during fallow periods. The common fields resulted in ridge-and-furrow patterns in the landscape,

created by the use of the fixed mould-board plough pulled by teams of up to eight oxen. The open fields often overlaid abandoned Romano-British farms, and the dispersed and shifting pattern of Early and Middle Saxon settlement. Stock enclosures developed at the same time, and enclosed meadows were also allotted to tenant households. These developments have been linked to a rising population, the processes of manorialisation and feudalisation, and more efficient estate management. They occurred earliest on royal, episcopal and great monastic estates. The changes may have been largely driven by a requirement to increase production to cope with greater taxation burdens imposed by royal authority, including the need to collect Danegeld (Hall 1988, 102–3; Reynolds 1999, 155–6; Muir 2000, 205–8; Williamson 2004, 6, 15–16, 70, 119–22).

Large open field systems of this type developed in a salient of land which extended into north-west Essex as an outlier of the Midland-type system of agriculture. This salient extended southward from Saffron Walden and reached as far as Elsenham parish, the northern and western parts of Stansted and the northern part of Birchanger. It was associated with nucleated villages in the main valleys, although with a large number of outlying hamlets (Emmison 1947, xi; Poos 1991, 54; Hunter 1999, 91; 2003, 9, 35, 39 and fig. 4a; Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 34, 50; Williamson 2004, 104; Havis and Brooks 2004). As Stansted lay just within this salient it had large open fields alongside smaller demesne and tenant enclosures. Its common fields lay in the northern and western parts of the parish, at North Field, South Field, Nether Field, Great Well Field, Stoney Field and Bargate Field. Four acres in Stoney Field (*in campo petrosa*) were included in a grant by Richard de Mountfichet to Thremhall Priory in about 1240 (ERO D/DWv/T1/3). Strips were conveyed in these open fields in the later medieval and early modern periods (Morant 1768, ii 579; Muilman 1770 iii 25; BL Add Charters 37642, 65171; ERO D/DA T359; D/DHt/T249/4 and 8; HALS Cassiobury Collection 8234, 8235). Some parts of the system

remained to be enclosed in the 19th century, or survived as late as the tithe commutation survey of 1842 (ERO D/CT 328A nos 636–7; Q/RDc 36B).

By contrast in the south-eastern part of Stansted parish and in Takeley, including all the area investigated by excavation, and over most of Essex, the form of open-field agriculture which developed in the 10th century consisted of series of small strip fields enclosed with hedges and ditches, set in a surrounding landscape of woodland. Some of these fields had originated in the Romano-British period, but it was the development of Late Saxon ploughing technology which allowed these heavy soil areas to be re-opened to agriculture. There was one series of fields for each hamlet or township, rather than for each parish or manor. Crop rotation and fallowing were probably practised on an intra-field basis, between the individual furlongs rather than between whole fields (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 40–2; Hunter 2003, 4, 25, 39 and fig. 11; Williamson 2004, 5, 107–8, 119–20; Havis and Brooks 2004).

One of the larger of these township fields in the study area lay within the later Great Field, Mill Field and Pond Field, and can be associated with Bassingbournes manor. This may have been called Westfeld in the early 13th century (BL Additional Charter 28380). It was developed by thrusts into the woodland south-eastwards and north-westwards from the original manorial enclosure towards the Pincey Brook. This re-opened a zone of Romano-British farming. Meadowland was established along the line of the Brook. The furlongs of this township field were represented in the excavations by strip field 1 and strip field 2, and it was associated with the farmsteads represented by Late Saxon building 1, and the Late Saxon enclosure. The south-eastern boundary of strip field 1 re-used a late Romano-British ditch, and the south-eastern side of strip field 2 had a curving boundary alongside the meadows of Pincey Brook. A similar township field lay at Catley Field on the east side of Warish Hall manor, a name which implies woodland

clearance. It was later represented by several fields of this name, and also contained the furlongs White Shot and Gun Shot (ERO D/CT 342A nos 399, 399a, 403, 404, 435, 439, 440). Elements of the furlongs of this stripfield were found in the excavations along A120 route (Timby *et al.* 2007). The other Takeley manors developed small strip-field systems as their clearance of woodland progressed.

The range of crops grown on these fields can be expected to be similar to that found in the later medieval period, with an emphasis on wheat and barley, lesser amounts of oats and rye, and small areas of peas and beans grown largely as animal fodder. Excavations at the Middle–Late Saxon settlement at Wicken Bonhunt in Essex found that the local economy was based on wheat, barley, oats, peas and beans (Reynolds 1999, 140). The animals kept in the surrounding stock enclosures are likely to have been the same range known from the 11th century (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: *Domesday Book animals in the wider study zone in 1066 and 1086*

Manor	Date	Horses		Cattle		Pigs		Sheep		Goats		Donkeys	
		1066	1086	1066	1086	1066	1086	1066	1086	1066	1086	1066	1086
Bentfieldbury		2	3	1	14	50	40	80	30	0	0	0	0
Birchanger		0	2	0	6	0	28	0	0	0	36	0	0
Broxted		0	2	0	16	0	0	0	70	0	0	0	0
Canfield (<i>Warene</i>)		1	1	8	15	100	50	200	70	0	9	0	0
Canfield (<i>Vere</i>)		2	3	7	8	20	30	80	100	0	0	0	0
Chickney		2	3	103	6	20	30	60	100	24	30	0	0
Easton (<i>Warene</i>)		0	1	0	23	0	20	0	70	0	0	0	0
Easton (<i>Mortagne</i>)		1	1	8	8	120	120	60	60	10	10	0	0
Elsenham (<i>fitzWaleran</i>)		2	2	8	8	60	60	220	220	0	0	0	0
Elsenham (<i>Gernon</i>)		1	1	7	1	8	18	16	0	20	0	0	0
Farnham		4	2	15	0	40	17	60	30	0	39	0	0
Hallingbury (<i>Swein</i>)		2	2	6	7	24	13	30	50	30	32	0	0
Hallingbury (<i>d'Auberville</i>)		1	1	3	8	30	80	40	120	0	0	0	0
Hatfield Broad Oak		0	3	0	40	0	195	0	193	0	0	0	0
Henham		3	8	8	7	80	100	160	80	0	0	0	0
Manuden		0	1	8	5	20	33	80	44	20	8	0	0
Pledgdon		2	0	2	0	0	66	300	200	0	0	0	0
Stansted Mountfichet		0	2	8	16	20	60	140	120	40	24	0	5
Takeley (<i>St Valéry</i>)		0	3	0	4	0	30	0	28	0	50	0	0
Takeley (<i>Eudo Dapifer</i>)		1	2	14	20	30	43	80	103	30	40	0	0
Takeley (<i>Gernon</i>)		2	1	12	3	20	38	16	10	0	0	0	0
Tilty		0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ugley		2	4	5	3	50	22	160	80	50	20	0	0
Totals		28	48	223	258	692	1093	1782	1778	224	298	0	5
Percentages		0.95%	1.38%	7.56%	7.41%	23.47%	31.4%	60.43%	51.09%	7.59%	8.56%	0%	0.14%

The *Domesday* landscape

The manorial structure of the tenurial landscape in the wider study zone can first be traced in detail in the *Domesday Book* survey of 1086, which also refers back to conditions at the end of the reign of Edward the Confessor in 1066 (Williams and Martin 2002, 372, 970–1, 977, 982, 984, 995–6, 1003, 1006, 1008, 1010–11, 1014–16, 1018, 1021–4, 1027, 1035, 1039, 1041, 1046–7). At the end of the Saxon period in 1066, there were two manors within the area of the later Stansted Mountfichet parish: the main manor of Stansted, with a berewick or outlying farm in Manuden, which was within the hundred of Uttlesford; and the smaller manor of Bentfieldbury, which lay in the half-hundred of Clavering. Both were held by unnamed freemen. In Takeley there were three manors: a three-hide manor was held by another unnamed freeman, while two smaller manors were held by Thorkil and Wulfmaer. There was no one dominant landowner in the wider study zone at the end of the Saxon period in 1066, although Earl Harold held the large manor of Hatfield Broad Oak to the south of Stane Street, and Broxted had been granted to Ely Abbey

by King Edward the Confessor. Most of the other manors in the area were held by unnamed freemen, and some named free women, the most prominent of whom were Eadgifu the Fair, the owner of Stortford, and Æthelgyth the widow of Thurstan son of Wine, who held Henham (Hart 1957, 28 no. 59).

After the Norman conquest both of the Stansted manors were given by William the Conqueror to the Norman lord Robert Gernon, who held them in demesne at the time of the *Domesday* survey. Stansted was then assessed at six hides, with another hide in a berewick at Manuden, and consisted of arable land, meadows, a mill and probably a church, and enough woodland to feed 1000 pigs. Bentfieldbury was assessed at five hides, and similarly had arable land, meadows and a mill, and woodland for 200 pigs. Gernon held another adjacent demesne manor at Takeley, and a manor at Elsenham was held by his tenant Peter (Williams and Martin 2002, 1018, 1021). In Takeley the freeman's manor had passed to Robert Gernon, Thorkil's manor to the Abbey of St Valéry in Picardie, and Wulfmaer's manor to Eudo the Steward. They all had arable

land and meadows, and woodland to feed 20 pigs, 600 pigs and another 600 pigs respectively. The Abbey had a half-share in a mill, and Eudo probably had a church (Williams and Martin 2002, 984, 1006, 1018). Robert Gernon was therefore the most prominent secular landowner in the area, holding the Stansted manors and parts of Manuden, Elsenham and Takeley. The abbot of St Valéry held manors in Birchanger and Takeley, and the bishop of London had bought Eadgifu's property in Stortford and Hallingbury. King William had taken over Earl Harold's holding at Hatfield Broad Oak.

Land measurement of manors in Essex *Domesday Book* was in numbers of hides, the basis of the tax called the geld. Statistical analysis has suggested that the hidage assessments in the county were accurately based on all the economic resources of a manor rather than just the arable land, but that meadowland was regarded as exempt from taxation, or even as tax deductible. The numbers of livestock and the renders from mills also appear to have been omitted from the calculations of value (Darby 1971, 220, 228–9; McDonald and Snooks 1985a, 363, 367, 369, 371–2; 1985b, 555). Nevertheless, the Takeley manors were probably lightly assessed for their area, because they were still heavily wooded.

In the 11th and early 12th centuries manors often built proprietary churches close to their manor houses, and these developed into parish churches. The limits of their emerging parishes were based on the boundaries of the manors, and the church-manor complexes might be expected to form the main bases of settlement. A number of these churches in the wider study zone contained re-used Roman fabric.

There was probably a church at Stansted by 1086, as a priest is recorded amongst the *Domesday Book* tenants (Williams and Martin 2002, 1018). The parish church was certainly built by the early 12th century, on the site of a Roman building, which was found during the restoration of the church in 1887 (RCHM(E) 1916, 275; ERO TZ197/19). It contains a font which

'is ornamented with rudely-formed sculptures, and bears undoubted marks of great antiquity'; in fact it is early 13th century in date (Wright 1835, ii 160; RCHM(E) 1916, 276). The nave of Takeley church was probably built in the 12th century, incorporating some Roman brick and tile (RCHM(E) 1916, 299). It originally had an ovoid churchyard, suggesting that it had originated as a Saxon church (J and N Watkiss pers. comm.). It was reached by lanes from the north-east and from Stane Street to the south. The nave and chancel of Elsenham church are early 12th century, and Roman tiles were used in the tower and south porch when they were added in the 15th century (RCHM(E) 1916, 82–3).

The positions of the churches at Stansted, Takeley and Elsenham were all isolated from the later medieval settlements they served. This implies that there had been a general shift in settlements in the early medieval period, not dissimilar to the movements of earlier periods (Taylor 1983, 124, 128–30). The churches of Stansted and Elsenham were adjacent to their manor houses, but the church of Takeley is not near any of the sites of the five manor houses of the parish. This suggests that the original settlement area named Takeley was abandoned at a relatively early date. There are crop marks in Church Field to its north-west (J and N Watkiss pers. comm.). By the 15th century the manors of Bassingbournes, Waltham Hall and Colchester Hall all held land adjacent to the church (ERO D/DB M63 mm 1, 4).

The arable capacity of the wider study zone appears to have been under-used in 1086, although north-west Essex as a whole was the most intensively cultivated part of the county, as it included the salient of Midland-type open-field agriculture (Darby 1971, 223 fig. 58, 232). There had been an overall reduction in the number of ploughs working the land on most of the manors in the two decades since 1066. At Stansted there had been four demesne ploughs, which were reduced to two, then increased again to three, while the tenants had maintained ten

ploughs. At Bentfieldbury the three demesne ploughs had been retained but the number of tenant ploughs had dropped from seven to six, and then again to four. On the three Takeley manors all the ploughs had been retained, totalling 14 between the demesnes and the tenants (Williams and Martin 2002, 984, 1006, 1018). At Hatfield Broad Oak the reduction of the tenant ploughs from 40 to 31½ was explained in the *Domesday Book* entry as happening 'in the time of all the sheriffs and through the plague', that is because of animal disease (Darby 1971, 221; Williams and Martin 2002, 970).

The meadowlands lay along the stream valleys in the wider study zone. These provided grazing until the late winter, after which the grass was allowed to grow until the mowing of hay in June or July (Grieg 1988, 121). The manors to the north of Stane Street did not have extensive meadowland. Stansted had 20 acres, Bentfieldbury 16 acres, and the three Takeley manors 20, 24 and 16 acres (Williams and Martin 2002, 984, 1006, 1018). The length of the medieval perch varied and is not directly convertible to the modern hectare (Rackham 1989, xii; for a further explanation see Chapter 10). Larger areas of meadow were recorded to the south of Stane Street.

Pastureland was not plentiful in Essex. Its extent was not usually stated in the *Domesday Book* entries for manors in the wider study zone; neither Stansted or Takeley were credited with pastures. At Hatfield Broad Oak there was pastureland which rendered nine wethers annually and provided the service of ploughing 41 acres (Darby 1971, 244–5; Williams and Martin 2002, 970).

At the time of the *Domesday Book* survey in the late 11th century, the area of Stansted Airport was still one of the two most densely wooded parts of Essex, the other lying in Epping Forest (Rackham 1989, 33; Hunter 1999, 67; Havis and Brooks 2004). There were large tracts of woodland and wood pastures, which were used to feed great numbers of pigs during the pannage season from Michelmas (29 September) to Martinmas

(11 November). They provided underwood for fuel and timber trees, but they are unlikely to have been intensively managed or coppiced (Stamper 1988, 132–3; Williamson 2004, 54–6). *Domesday* woodland in Essex and other counties was generally measured by the number of pigs it had the capacity to support; it is questionable whether these numbers represented real pigs or were a notional measurement. The round figures of some of the larger entries indicate that they are estimates, but some of the smaller entries have very precise figures, which appear to be counts of real pigs. Some manors even had pigs on their demesnes but no woodland recorded. The number of demesne pigs recorded on a manor was usually less than the stated capacity of its woodland (Darby 1971, 232–3, 256). This was always the case in the wider study zone in 1066, when demesne pigs accounted for 8.67% of the capacity of the woods, where comparable figures are available. In 1086 the demesne pigs exceeded the capacity of the woods only in the smaller woodlands of Manuden, Pledgdon, and Robert Gernon's manor of Takeley, but accounted for 16.41% of the overall capacity. However, this does not take into consideration the much larger numbers of tenants' pigs, which were not counted by the *Domesday* surveyors, and which would also have been fed in the manorial woodlands. It therefore seems probable that by 1086 the woods were used for pannage at least up to the estimated capacity of numbers of pigs stated in the survey.

As Essex was covered by *Little Domesday Book*, the entries for each manor include the numbers and types of farm animals present in both 1066 and 1086. These details from the wider study zone can be compared to later records and related to the percentages of species in the animal bone assemblages recovered during the excavations (Table 9.1). Between 1066 and 1086 the numbers of pigs were increased, but there were fewer sheep. The Normans had started to keep more horses, and Robert Gernon had introduced a few donkeys at Stansted Mountfichet, an unusual

addition. Analysis of *Domesday* valuations suggests that horses were not kept as a source of income, but presumably for riding purposes, and that the numbers of livestock as a whole counted little towards the valuation of a manor (McDonald and Snooks 1985b, 555). After a hard day's riding a Norman lord liked to come home to a good pork supper, rather than the mutton stew of the foot-slogging Saxon thegn.

The local population of Stansted Mountfichet and Takeley in 1086 can be estimated from the numbers of tenant households recorded on the manors in *Domesday Book*. There were exactly 100 tenant households in all five of the manors, including those of two priests at Stansted and Eudo's manor in Takeley, accounting perhaps for 500 persons. *Villeins* had been the most numerous amongst the tenants in 1066, but they were being rapidly overtaken by *bordars* in 1086, when the villeins formed 33% of the population and the bordars 52%. Villeins, who were tenants of a lord, whose rent involved working on the lord's demesne lands for one or more days a week, and occasionally longer during ploughing and harvesting, farmed a virgate of land (probably approximating to 30 acres or just over 16 ha of arable land, along with a share of common meadow- and pastureland as well as some rights to the woodland), whilst bordars were tenants of much smaller farms. The number of slaves was declining (Williams and Martin 2002, 984, 1006, 1018). These figures are consistent with Essex as a whole, where the population was generally increasing over these two decades. The changes may indicate that half-virgates were becoming the normal land-holdings of Essex peasants instead of full virgates. The two parishes lay in the most densely populated part of the county (Darby 1971, 226–7, 229 fig. 60).

In the Late Saxon and early Norman period there was a tendency by manorial lords to impose heavier burdens on their tenants and to reduce the status of those who were counted as free (Williamson 2004, 45). By 1086 there was no mention in the wider study

zone of the freemen and sokemen (the highest class of free peasants) who had held manors or parts of manors in 1066. They had presumably been downgraded or had been driven from the area. Many freemen and sokemen disappeared between 1066 and 1086 in Essex, accounting for only 7% of the population at the time of the *Domesday* survey. Some evidence from the county suggests that they became villeins and bordars (Darby 1971, 225–6).

Medieval agriculture was subject to advances and retreats. The clearance of woodland was still actively proceeding in the late 11th century in the wider area. Where the value of a manor noted in *Domesday Book* rose between 1066 and 1086 it is likely that more land had been taken into cultivation during these two decades. The tenants called bordars, who formed such a rapidly rising proportion of the local population, also seem to have been associated with the advancing agricultural frontier. However, neither of these types of evidence can be regarded as definitive. The value of Stansted manor increased from £8 to £11, and the number of bordars there rose from four to 18. The woodland of the manor probably lay mostly in the southern part of the parish, between the open field area and Stane Street, and is not stated to have changed in size. The value of the Abbey of St Valéry and Eudo the Steward manors at Takeley also increased, and the number of bordars rose on all three Takeley manors. There was also an increase in value at Bentfieldbury, and of neighbouring manors at Birchanger, Elsenham, Henham, Ugley and Pledgdon. The number of bordars rose at Robert Gernon's other manors of Bentfieldbury and Elsenham, and other manors at Elsenham, Henham, Ugley and Pledgdon. The area of woodland is noted as decreasing by 40% on the Takeley manors of St Valéry and Eudo the Steward, by 50% on one of the Birchanger manors and 25% on another, by 23% at Elsenham, and by 20% at Ugley. However, there were generally no more ploughs operating on these manors in 1086 than in 1066, either on the demesnes or in the hands of the tenants (Rackham 1989, 33;

Williams and Martin 2002, 971, 984, 1006, 1016, 1018, 1021, 1023, 1027, 1041; ERO TZ197/19). This suggests that most of the assarts were being made piecemeal by the tenants rather than by the lords, and that the new land was initially turned over to pasture. It has been suggested that the woods were being turned into unproductive waste rather than assarts (Darby 1971, 234–7), but this does not accord with the later history of these parishes or with the patterns in the landscape.

The post-Domesday landscape – assarts and forests

Both of the parishes in the study area comprised a number of manors and settlements in the medieval period, each with its accompanying field system. The manorial framework provided the context in which later medieval landscape changes took place. Robert Gernon's descendants at Stansted changed their name to Mountfichet, and this name also became attached to the main manor. The Mountfichets continued to hold the manors of Stansted and Bentfieldbury for another four generations. They served the Crown as Sheriffs of Essex and Hertfordshire, and as keepers of the royal castle at Hertford (Morant 1768, ii 576–7; Wright 1835, ii 157). In 1202 King John gave Richard Mountfichet a hundred deer from Windsor Forest to stock his park at Langley Marish in Buckinghamshire (Cantor 1982, 75–6). The Mountfichets built a ring-and-bailey castle at Stansted to serve as the headquarters of their estates. This lay to the east of the village, and was one of a series of Norman castles in the area (Wright 1835, ii 157; RCHM(E) 1916, 276–7; Havis and Brooks 2004).

Following the death of Richard Mountfichet in about 1258, the two Stansted manors were divided with his other lands between the heirs of his three sisters: Bentfieldbury passed to the Playz family, the descendants of Philippa, while the main manor of Stansted passed to the Bolbecs, who were descended from Margery. This manor too was divided in the latter part of the 13th century between the



Figure 9.9: Plan of Bassingbourne Hall estate in Elsenham, Takeley and Stansted Mountfichet parishes belonging to Sir Peter Parker c1804. (from ERO D/DU 726/1) A larger version of this map is available on the [CD-Rom](#)

four daughters of Hugh de Bolbec: Philippa, wife of Roger de Lancaster; Margery who married first Nicholas Corbett and then Ralph or William of Grimsthorp; Alice the wife of Walter or Roger de Huntercombe; and Maud, who married Hugh de la Vall. The lands of Alice were bought by Robert Burnell, bishop of Bath and Wells, and Chancellor of England (1274–92). He also acquired the temporary tenure of Maud's share for the term of the life of Hugh de la Vall, who died in 1302. Burnell's family continued to hold Alice's lands as the separate manor of Burnells in the 14th century, and it descended to the Hungerford family in 1420. The shares of Philippa and Margery eventually passed to Philippa's son John de Lancaster, who also received the reversion of Maud's share on the death of Hugh de la Vall. These three parts formed the manor of Stansted Hall, which was thus three-quarters of the original manor of Stansted. In 1320 John de Lancaster sold the reversion of this manor (following the deaths of himself and

his wife) to the Vere earls of Oxford, the greatest land-owning family in Essex. In the 15th century the Veres also acquired Burnells by purchase, and Bentfieldbury by the marriage of John earl of Oxford to its heiress Elizabeth Howard (Morant 1768 ii 577–8; Wright 1835, ii 157–8; *FFE* ii 199; *CIPM* i 226; iii 46, 106, 118; iv 47; vii 25; x 465, 518; xiii 93; xv 290; xvi 294; xvii 33; xviii 59; xx 204; xxi 218; *CIM* v 92–3; vi 6–7; NA C143/190/17; C147/146).

Other parts of Stansted manor and the rectory of the parish church were granted to Thremhall Priory, an Augustinian house dedicated to St James the Apostle founded by the Mountfichets in the south part of the parish near Stane Street in the mid 12th century. Only a few moats and fishponds survive from the Priory precinct (Morant 1768, ii 579–80; *VCHE* ii 163–4; RCHM(E) 1916, 276; Rackham 1989, 64). Augustinian houses were often founded on sites secluded from towns, but surrounded by enough agricultural land for their support, and not in the remote wilder-

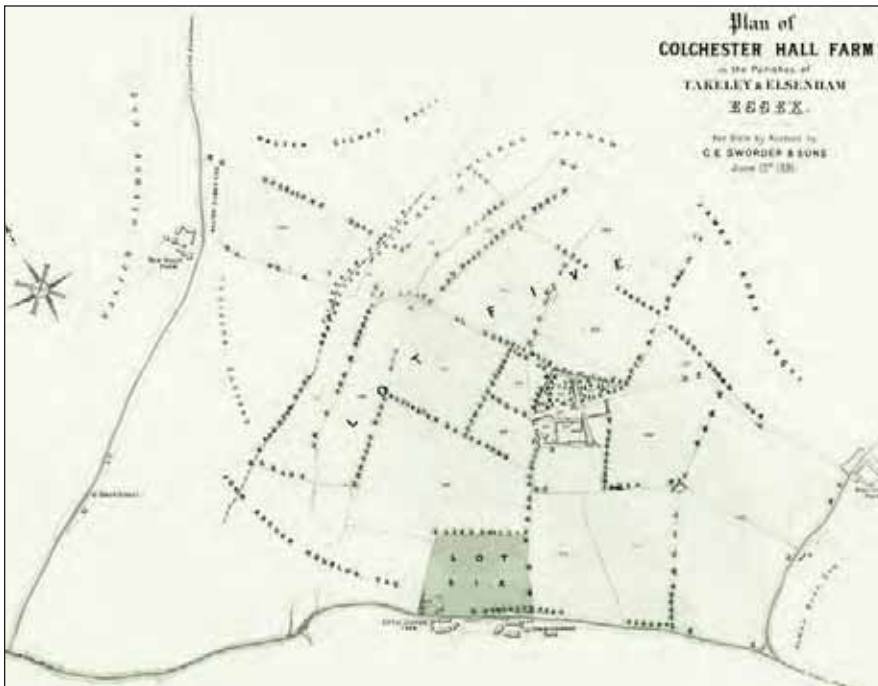


Figure 9.10: Colchester Hall Farm and manor of Colchester Hall, property of W R Hawkes, 1891 (from HALS E441-447). A larger version of this map is available on the [CD-Rom](#)

nesses favoured by the Cistercians. The canons probably cleared the land of trees around the Priory; assarting was an activity particularly associated with Augustinian houses in the 12th and 13th centuries. In the 12th and 13th centuries the Priory acquired gifts of land in the parishes of Birchanger, Stansted and Takeley. It also bought the advowson of Stansted church from John de Lancaster in 1305, which it appropriated in 1342. At this time the community comprised twelve canons and two secular priests, and claimed it had high hospitality expenses because of its position on Stane Street (Morant 1768, ii 580; *VCHE* ii 164; *FFE* i 241; BL Harley Charter 45.A.8; ERO D/DWv/T1/3 and 6; NA C143/12/19; C143/29/12; C143/51/15). The Priory conceded its rights to the advowson of Takeley church to Colchester Abbey in 1231 (*FFE* i 88; Moore 1897, 561–2). To the south of Stane Street it held lands including a rabbit warren in the middle of Hatfield Forest, which was therefore regarded as an adjunct of Stansted parish (Morant 1768, ii 579; Muilman 1770, iii 17). It held these lands until its dissolution in 1536. The advowson of the Priory was attached to the main manor of Stansted and descended with the manor of Stansted Hall to the Vere family (*VCHE* ii 163; *CIPM* x 523; xiii 103; xviii 61; *CIM* v 93).

The five medieval manors of Takeley parish were Waltham Hall, Colchester Hall, Takeley Grange, Warish Hall and Bassingbournes. The first four of these manors belonged to monasteries and the first three were held by these institutions until the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s. Parts of Takeley also came into the ownership of Thremhall Priory in Stansted parish, and were regarded as part of its manor, held as 1/16 or 1/24 of a knight's fee (*CIPM* iv 81; x 466). It is not entirely clear how these five manors descended from the three manors recorded in the *Domesday Book* survey of 1086. There is likely to have been some fluidity in their early boundaries.

Waltham Hall in the north part of the parish was so called because it belonged to Waltham Abbey in the medieval period. It is thought to derive from Robert Gernon's manor of 1086, and included parts of the area called *Cherchfeld* to the south-east of Takeley church, perhaps the original area of clearance in the parish (LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 2–10). It is not clear who donated the manor to the Abbey nor when, but the gift was confirmed by King Henry II. Henry III granted the Abbey a market and a fair here, but nothing more is known of it. Edward III made a grant of free warren in the

manor. After the dissolution it passed to the Heigham and Miller families (Morant 1768, 572; Wright 1835, ii 151; Ransford 1989, i; *CChR* i 427).

The manor of Bassingbournes lay in the west part of the parish of Takeley and included the most substantial excavated areas (Fig. 9.9). This also derived from Robert Gernon's manor in Takeley. The initial sub-tenants of the Mountfichets here may have been the family called *de Takeley*, who married into the Hauvilles of Colchester Hall. The first of the Bassingbournes acquired his rights in the manor from his wife Albreda in about 1200; in 1240 Albreda was entitled to an annual rent of £40 and a pair of gilt spurs from her son Alexander de Bassingbourne. In the 13th and 14th centuries the manor was held by the Bassingbourne family as sub-tenants from the Playz of Bentfieldbury in Stansted, as a quarter of a knight's fee. The Playz were followed as overlords by their descendants the Vere earls of Oxford (Morant 1768, ii 574; *CIPM* iv 81; vii 26, x 466; *FFE* i 33, 136). The manor also owed a token annual rent of a garland of roses to Stansted Hall manor, and a rent of 3 shillings and suit of court to Burnells manor, suggesting that Bassingbournes originated as a dependency of Stansted before it split into its component manors (ERO D/DB M63 m6).

Takeley Grange in the north-east part of the parish was composed of lands held by Tilty Abbey in the medieval period. It is not entirely clear who granted these lands to the Abbey, but it seems likely that they derived from Robert Gernon's manor and were granted by the Litlebury family. Tilty certainly had 14 acres of land here by 1248 (Morant 1768, ii 573; *VCHE* ii 134; *CChR* i 359; *FFE* i 170).

The manor of Colchester Hall in the north-west part of the parish was so called because it was held in the medieval period by the Abbey of St John at Colchester (Fig. 9.10). It is thought to derive from the *Domesday* manor of Eudo the Steward, who founded the Abbey in 1091 and certainly endowed it with two-thirds of the tithes of Takeley. In 1198 Richard I

confirmed the grant of a virgate of land here by Ernisius the priest. A large part of the manor lands were granted to the Abbey by the Hauville family, who were tenants of the Crown by the sergeanty tenure of keeping the king's falcons, perhaps in association with the forest status of the area in the 12th century. The Ambly family was the overlord of the Hauvilles at Takeley, and later of the Abbey for part of the manor. Another part of the manor was held from the Playz family of Bentfieldbury as a quarter of a knight's fee. Some of the area around Takeley church belonged to this manor (LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 12); the Hauvilles granted the advowson of the church to Colchester Abbey in 1209, and were also licenced to have their own chapel dedicated to St Mary at the manor house in the early 13th century (Morant 1768, ii 572–5; Dugdale 1830, iv 601–2, 609; Moore 1897, 346, 359–60, 632–4; Macaulay and Russell 1940, 68–73; Ransford 1989, I; *CChR* i 424; *CIPM* iv 81, x 466; *FFE* i 136). Pieces of 12th-century worked stone have been found at the site of Colchester Hall in residual contexts (English Heritage 1989, 19). In 1238 Colchester Abbey came to an agreement with the canons of Waltham about their lands in Takeley (Moore 1897, 538–9). This manor also passed to the Heigham family after the dissolution (BL Additional Charter 27345).

Another manor in Takeley called St Valéry's, St Wallerice or Warish Hall in the south-east part of the parish was held by the Abbey of St Valéry in Picardie, an alien priory (Reaney 1935, 535–6; Fig. 9.11). This is the only Takeley manor which is certainly identifiable in *Domesday Book*, as two and half hides here (considerably larger than the *Domesday* assessment) had already been granted to the Abbey by William the Conqueror in 1068, in commemoration of the launching point of his expedition to conquer the kingdom of England and as a thank-offering for the favourable wind which took him there (Hart 1957, no. 85, and Brunel and Salter 1910 no. xiii, from NCO 13121; Delisle 1908, 574 no. v and Salter 1929, no. 27, from NCO 13152). King Henry I confirmed and perhaps

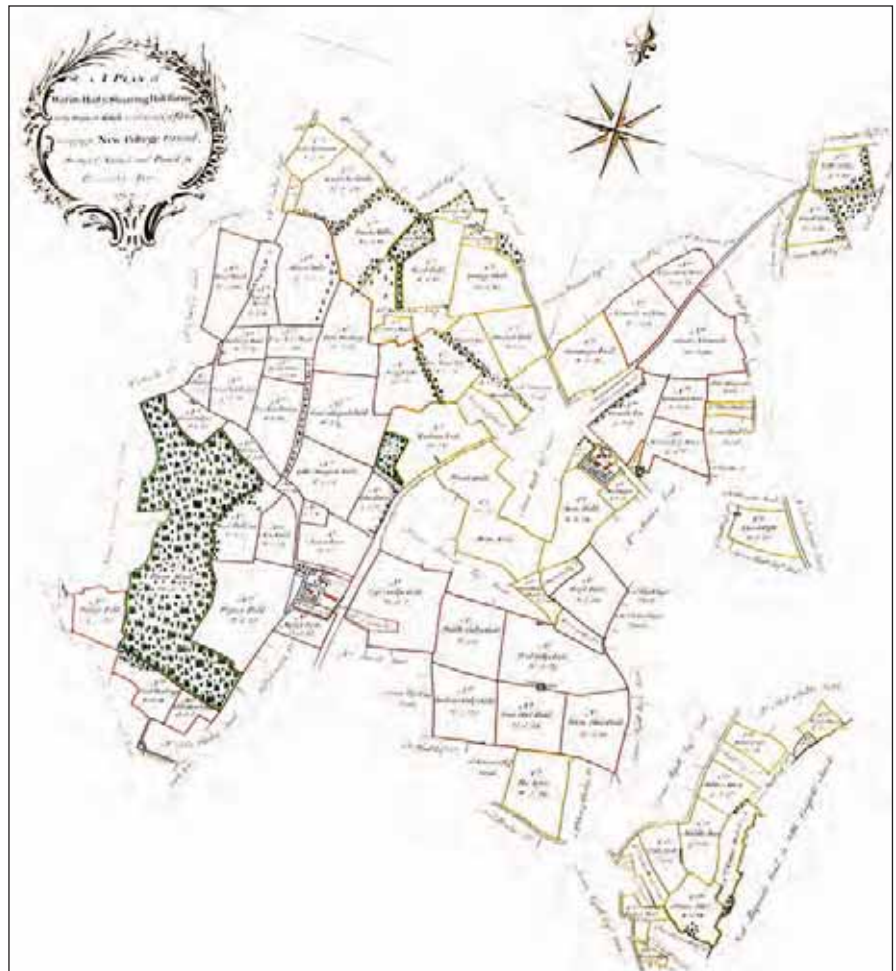


Figure 9.11: Map of Warish Hall and Shearing Hall Farms, Takeley, by E J Eyre 1767 (from NCO 5608). A larger version of this map is available on the [CD-Rom](#)

extended the Abbey's holdings here (Delisle 1908, nos x and xi, and Salter 1929 nos 28 and 29, from NCO 12897 and 12903; *CIM* ii 266; NCO 9745 f27v). The Abbey founded a cell here called Takeley Priory, served by a Prior and one monk. The Prior acted as the Abbey's proctor general for the management of its possessions in Essex and Middlesex, and collected its rents in England. The Priory was equipped with a hall in 1293, and several other buildings, a garden, a courtyard, a dovecote and fishponds in 1308 and 1324. Like the Abbey's other possessions at Birchanger and elsewhere in these two counties, Warish Hall was subject to periodic confiscation by the Crown in the 14th century. It was given back to the Priors in return for an annual payment to the Crown. It was eventually purchased by William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, and granted to his foundation of New College at Oxford in the 1390s (Morant 1768, ii 573;

Brunel and Salter 1910, 3–4; *VCHE* ii 199; BL Additional MS 6164 188–90; NA SC6/1125/10 m1; NCO 3777, 9745 f5v, 13165).

A large part of the county of Essex was designated as royal forest by the Norman kings to serve as a hunting reserve. Deer were introduced into Hatfield Forest in about 1100 (Rackham 1989, 2). Robert Gernon is noted in *Domesday Book* as taking the swineherd from the royal manor of Writtle near Chelmsford and making him forester of the king's wood after King William came to England (Darby 1971, 234; Williams and Martin 2002, 972). Gernon's great-grandson Richard Mountfichet (died 1203) was the keeper of the Forest of Essex for King Henry II and King John; the office was hereditary in the family in the 12th century. His son Richard was appointed Justice of the royal forests in Essex by Henry III in 1236 (Morant 1768, ii 576; Rackham 1989, 58).

Stansted and Takeley parishes were probably both within the royal forest in the 12th century. This meant that they were subject to forest law, which restricted hunting activities and forbade the assarting of land for cultivation without the grant of a royal licence. In a confirmation of property granted by King Henry I to the Abbey of St Valéry in the 1120s or 1130s, he stated that no forester of the king should interfere in the woods of the abbot and monks which lay within the forest, but that they should have all the royal powers and liberties in these woods (Delisle 1098, 576, from NCO 12903). In 1204 the men of Essex purchased the disafforestation of the area to the north of Stane Street from the Crown for 500 marks and two palfreys (Lidell 1987, 110). Hatfield Forest was thenceforward confined to the south side of Stane Street. The removal of forest law from this part of the county released areas of woodland for the processes of assarting and emparkment, further stimulating the movement to internal colonisation (Fig. 9.32). These processes were often associated with moated sites in the former forest areas, but these sites are less frequent in the parts of Essex which remained within the forest (Cantor 1982, 77, 80, 142; Hunter 2003, 9; Havis and Brooks 2004). King Henry VI finally gave up his forest rights in Hatfield in 1446 (Rackham 1989, 72).

Over the two and a half centuries after the *Domesday Book* survey, the extension of arable and pasture land at the expense of woodland continued the Late Saxon expansion as the population increased (Taylor 1983, 192; Rackham 1989, 33). The advancing frontiers of cultivation progressed at different rates within the tenurial framework of the different manors of the area, each manor taking its own direction on the initiative of the lord or the tenants, or of both. The method of assarting usually required the initial removal of trees and undergrowth followed by the digging of a ditch around the new pasture, meadow or arable field, supplemented by a hedge or fence with one or more gates. The land was often allowed to lie fallow for several years before sowing with oats or rye. An

inducement for tenants to make assarts was that they were held in severalty, free of any labour services due to the lord of a manor, or communal arrangements with other tenants. The lord would receive entry fines and annual rents from assarts. Heriots on the death of a tenant or the transfer of a holding were not payable on assarts (Dyer 1988, 24–5; Williamson 2004, 189).

Former assarts can be recognised on later maps by series of fields forming lobe shapes, or intruding into wooded areas. Loops of enclosed fields were accessed by lanes and focused on manor halls and farmsteads (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 42). Former assarts are also indicated by field names such as *Stocking*, *Ridding*, *Ley* and *Breche*, and variations on them. Assarts were called by several different names, perhaps indicating different types or different stages in the process, beginning in the Late Saxon period. Variations on *Ridding* are certainly common in Essex by the mid-13th century (Lockwood 2006, 91). *Beche* seems to be a local variant of *Breche*. *Burnthouse Field* probably indicates clearance by fire. There are also field-name elements indicating former woodland such as *Grove*, *Wood*, *Bushy* and *Frith* or *Thrift*.

Monasteries were also involved in these colonising endeavours. The combination of continuity of tenure and accumulated property meant they were ideally placed to invest in the advance of the frontier of cultivation. The concentration of monastic manors in south-east Stansted and Takeley parishes probably accelerated these movements here in the 12th and 13th centuries. The manors of Takeley Priory, including Warish Hall in Takeley itself, all increased considerably in value in the period 1291–1324, probably because of increases in the areas of arable land (VCHE ii, 199).

Campaigns of assarting took place within both the monastic and the secular manors of the study area, and were probably most often under the direction of their lords. This movement re-colonised a former Romano-British agricultural landscape which had been

allowed to lapse (Rackham 1989, 33). Later map evidence suggests that there were two main areas of assarting to the south of the two former demesne enclosures at Stansted (Fig. 9.12). The canons of Thremhall pushed northwards into the woodland from Stane Street through Bushy Leys towards Stocking Wood, and annexed the new lands to the Prior's demesnes (HALS H480). Further to the east, the lords and tenants of Burnells and Bentfieldbury manors thrust south-eastwards into the Gage Wood and Taylors Wood area, forming a series of long fields with parallel sinuous hedges (Havis and Brooks 2004, fig. 243, 6d). Gages became a copyhold tenancy of Burnells manor, and land at Burton End belonged to Bentfieldbury manor (ERO D/DA T358; D/DMd 123, 127–9, 134, 153).

In Takeley parish assarting spread outwards from the manorial centres. Bassingbournes manor pushed out from its initial enclosure and the Great Field/Mill Field/Pond Field complex north-eastwards beyond the Pincey Brook to create new large arable fields at Galley Field and Regell (later written Ridgall or Ridgewell). It also extended to the south-west to form smaller new fields and meadows in the Round Wood area. It also expanded south-westwards on the Stansted side of the boundary, where the lord and tenants of Bassingbournes had pasture rights in Gage Wood in the 15th century (ERO D/DB M63 m1).

Meanwhile Thremhall Priory was pushing eastwards in a series of steps along the north side of Stane Street from the parish border to form Takeley Field (ERO D/CT 342A no. 520) and the surrounding smaller fields. It also held land on the west side of Priors Wood in the centre of the parish, which it opened up to cultivation. Here it had three fields called *Hoofeldes* or *Prioursfeldes*, which it leased out in 1482 (ERO D/DBa T1/221). The Priory also had a field called *La Redyng* of uncertain location (ERO D/DWv M14 m3).

In the 12th century William son of Adeliz de Takeley granted five acres of

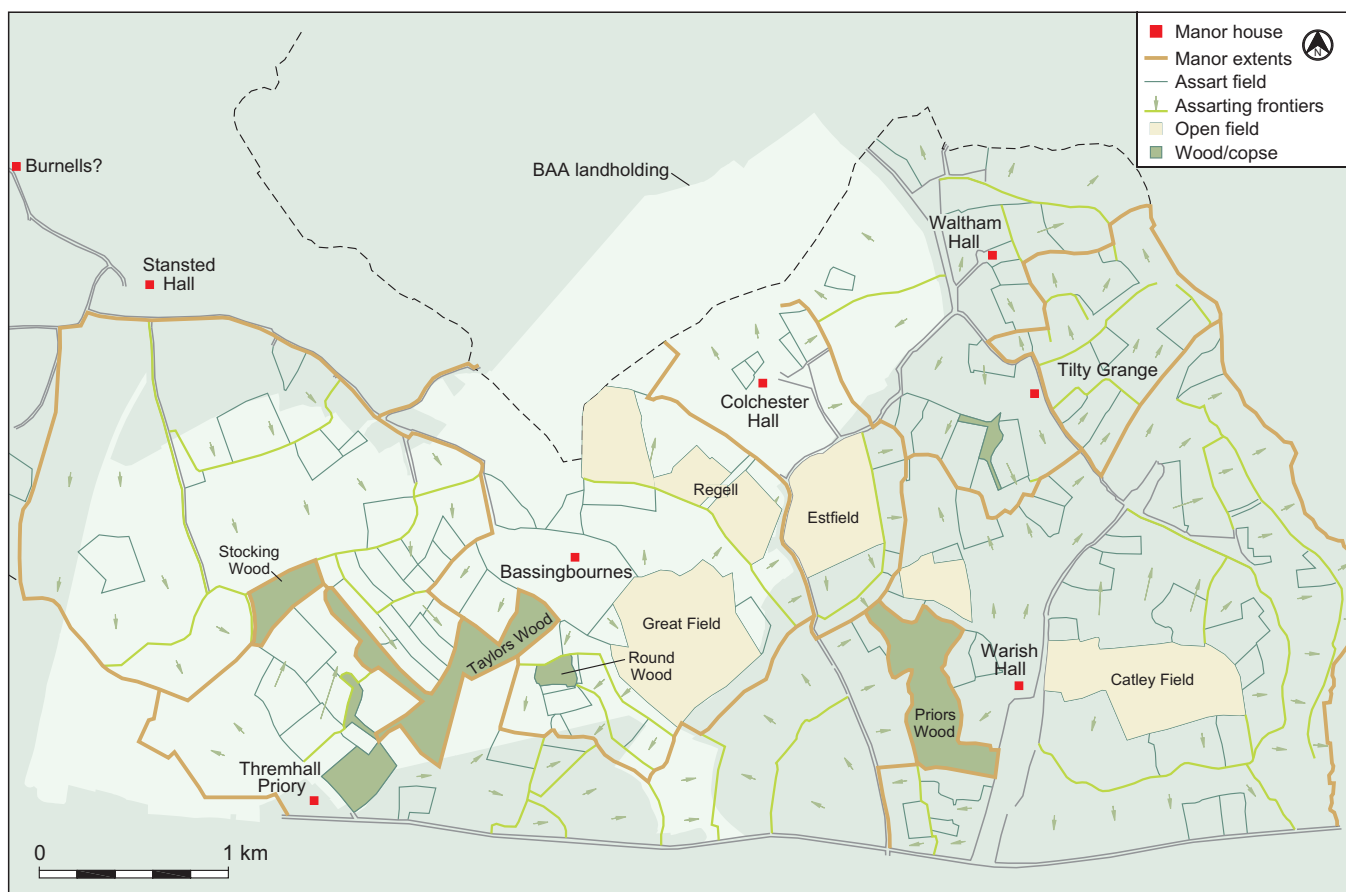


Figure 9.12: Assarting by the manors in the 11th to 13th centuries. A larger version of this map is available on the CD-Rom

assart in Takeley to Colchester Abbey, and William de Hauville granted the tithes of his assart in the wood of Takeley to the Abbey, probably on the north-west side of Priors Wood. He and his overlord William de Ambli confirmed the grant in *c* 1211 (Moore 1897, 339, 352).

Colchester Hall manor cut further slices into Priors Wood from the north-west side, in two successive campaigns, forming the large arable Estfeld (later called Mill Field) and smaller fields and meadows by the early 13th century (Moore 1897, 349). It also cleared land across the headwaters of the Pincey Brook to the north-western border of the parish. Just across the boundary in the early 13th century Matilda de Say granted Thomas de Elsenham 11 acres of assart in her wood of Elsenham, in return for 40 shillings *per annum* and an annual rent of a pound of cumin. William de Boclande also granted 8 acres of assart in Elsenham parish, adjacent to the boundary with Takeley at *Aldbredenehach* (Moore 1897, 373–4,

377). Colchester Hall manor had fields called *La Leye*, *Slicstanesleye*, *Skulesleghe* and *Newenhale*, whose positions are now uncertain and whose names indicate assarting activity (Moore 1897, 339–41, 351, 354, 361–4, 368, 370, 632; Macaulay and Russell 1940, 77–9).

Waltham Hall also cleared land up to the northern parish boundaries, where *Horsefrith* lay between the north end of Mole Hill Green and the Elsenham boundary, and struck southwards into the central Priors Wood as far as Great and Little Newlands and Bushy Leys. It also had land in *Reding*, *Reden acre* or *Redons*, *Horseleez* and *Grongebeche* (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; SC2/173/33 m8; LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 22, 26, 32, 42–6, 56).

The activities of Tilty Grange cannot be discerned so easily, but it probably extended to the north-east to reach the headwaters of the River Roding, in the direction of its home abbey. Here it had a field called *Tiltybeche* (NCO 12888) and it formed a park stretching to the parish boundary. The Abbey cartulary

records 12th-century grants by William de Hauville of land in *Horsefrith* and by William fitz Hugh in *Longeredyng*, and the 13th-century grant of an acre of land in an assart in Takeley, near the road which ran from Stane Street to the land formerly of Roger de Canfield (ERO T/B 3/1 ii, 299, 301, 305).

The manor of Warish Hall expanded in all directions, taking in parts of Priors Wood from the south, where there were fields called Great and Little Readings; from the north as far as Great and Little Oxleys; and to the north-east as far as Bush Readings and Ten Acres Ley. In this sector it established its sheep runs. The enclosure called *Stanhardiscroft* (later represented by Bigneyfield, Wood Pastures and New Field) to the west of the manor house must have been cut out of the east side of Priors Wood by the 13th century, when it was the subject of conveyances; it may have been cleared by the manorial tenant William le Lung (NCO 9745 ff 25 and 28, 12951, 13008, 13011). The manor also pushed out from the large arable



Figure 9.13: 11th- and 12th-century activity

field of Catley northwards to the Thrift Field, Breach Field and Sheering Hall area, and then beyond into the lands called Northwoods. In *c* 1219–1231 Abbot Riquier of Saint Valéry granted four acres of assart in the manor wood at *Nortwud* to Peter son of Robert of Canfield, next to the assart he had already bought from Robert de Clirete, for a money rent. In *c* 1252–1273 his successor Abbot Gilles granted Walter Lenvoysie the increase of the assarts next to the house at Northwood, and brushwood at Flexmere between two other assarts (Brunel and Salter 1910, nos I and II from NCO 12955, 13162). Two acres of assart in Northwood were mentioned in a rental of the late 13th century (NCO 9745 f36). The manor expanded southwards to Stane Street, where there were fields called *The Leys* and *La Stokette*; the line of Hole Lane divided two phases of assarting (ERO T/A 316 no. 697; NCO 12618, 13141). It also thrust eastwards to the Roding stream in two stages, the line of Nether Street forming the intermediate boundary. There were fields between Northwoods and Nether Street called *Wodegrove*, *Grovecroft* and *Litlredyngge* in the 14th century (NCO 12960–1). In a rental of 1302 several pieces of land in the manor are described as *huchas* land, perhaps meaning land cleared by

burning (NCO 9745 ff 36v–39v). By 1325 the manor had developed a second large arable field called Pirleye containing at least 82½ acres, which lay to the north of Priors Wood (NA SC6/1125/10). It may have been the same as *Apeltonefeld*, mentioned in the same year (NCO 12612).

Late 11th- and 12th-century settlement

These campaigns of woodland clearance and the subsequent farming of the cleared land are likely to have significantly changed the nature of the landscape. With the newly created farmland came new settlement and occupation, such as the enclosed 11th- and 12th-century settlement excavated on the MTCP site, in one of the first areas of woodland cleared in and around the medieval manor at Bassingbourne.

The absence of any of the early medieval sandy wares amongst the pottery assemblage from the Late Saxon settlement on the MTCP site demonstrates that it was no longer in use by the turn of the 12th century. Instead, there appears to have been a shift in the focus of activity in the area. The apparently dispersed Late Saxon settlement was succeeded by an

enclosed settlement further upslope (Fig. 9.13). The pottery recovered from this settlement, whilst incorporating elements of the earlier assemblage associated with the Late Saxon period (predominantly St Neots ware and locally made shelly wares) also included these sandy wares, which were largely locally made (fabric 13st), and dominated by jar forms.

The enclosed settlement on the MTCP site

This new settlement comprised two large timber halls set at right angles to one another within a diamond-shaped ditched enclosure. For at least part of its circuit, this enclosure was defined by double ditches, but it is unclear whether these were contemporary or not. The stretch of double ditches on the south-western side of the enclosure may also represent the line of a droveway or trackway.

The northern circuit of this enclosure was defined by a deep outer ditch (317030). Four sections excavated across this established that it was steep sided, with a flat base, and that it had been allowed to silt naturally. The partial inner circuit (363018) was less substantial, with a less regular profile.

This too had silted naturally. It followed the course of the outer ditch fairly closely, but at its eastern end terminated just before pit 357069.

Of the two ditches forming the western boundary of the enclosure, the inner ditch, 353032, was the more substantial. In character, it was similar to 317030, with steep sides and a flat base. It too had been allowed to silt naturally. The outer of the two ditches on the western side of the enclosure (363026), was much less substantial or regular. All four of these ditches were dated by small quantities of pottery in their fills.

The two most substantial ditches enclosed an area of at least 0.37 hectares (some 0.75 of an acre), although the exact extents could not be determined because they lay beyond the edge of the site. There was at least one, eastern, entrance through this enclosure ditch, flanked by two postholes (370001 and 370002), which probably held posts for a gate or entrance structure.

Early medieval building 1

Two large post-built buildings lay within this enclosure. These were built at right-angles to one another, and

were probably contemporary. The westernmost (early medieval building 1) was aligned roughly north-west to south-east, measuring 12 m by 5.5 m (Fig. 9.13). The roof would have been supported by two lines of posts. The eastern row of posts was later replaced by a wall apparently resting on two sill beams, laid in two shallow beamslots. A later phase of postholes could have represented a further strengthening or rebuilding of this wall. Traces of the gable end walls were scarce, although 370023 probably marked the line of the southern. A line of five small postholes some 1.5 m from the eastern wall of this hall probably represent the line of a further wall, perhaps of a corridor or a lean-to structure.

There is little clue as to where the entrance to this building lay, although it probably accessed the southern half of the building in order to avoid the large central hearth excavated in the middle of the northern half of the building (354081). This hearth is likely to have lain in the middle of a communal hall. The remainder of the building would have been given over to domestic accommodation. A posthole cut through its burnt fills but was probably dug after the hearth had gone out of use.

There were no signs of any internal divisions within the buildings, and despite the survival of the sunken central hearth, no traces of any floors were identified (although these may have simply been beaten earth floors). It seems likely that this building was predominantly domestic in nature. Pottery from the building, the beamslots and many of the postholes was largely early medieval sandy wares, although Stansted wares, shelly wares and inclusion free wares were also present. Small quantities of St Neots ware (the pottery associated with the Late Saxon settlement to the south-west) from postholes 917 and 354091 – both belonging to the earliest phase of construction – suggest that the earliest occupation on the site can probably be dated to the transition between these pottery fabrics. The vessel forms represented are predominantly jar forms, although a sherd of a bowl/dish was found within the upper fill of 926 (layer 905).

Early medieval building 2

The second building (early medieval building 2) lay immediately to the west (Fig. 9.13). This was similar in form and size, approximately 12 m by 5 m, with both long sides of the building

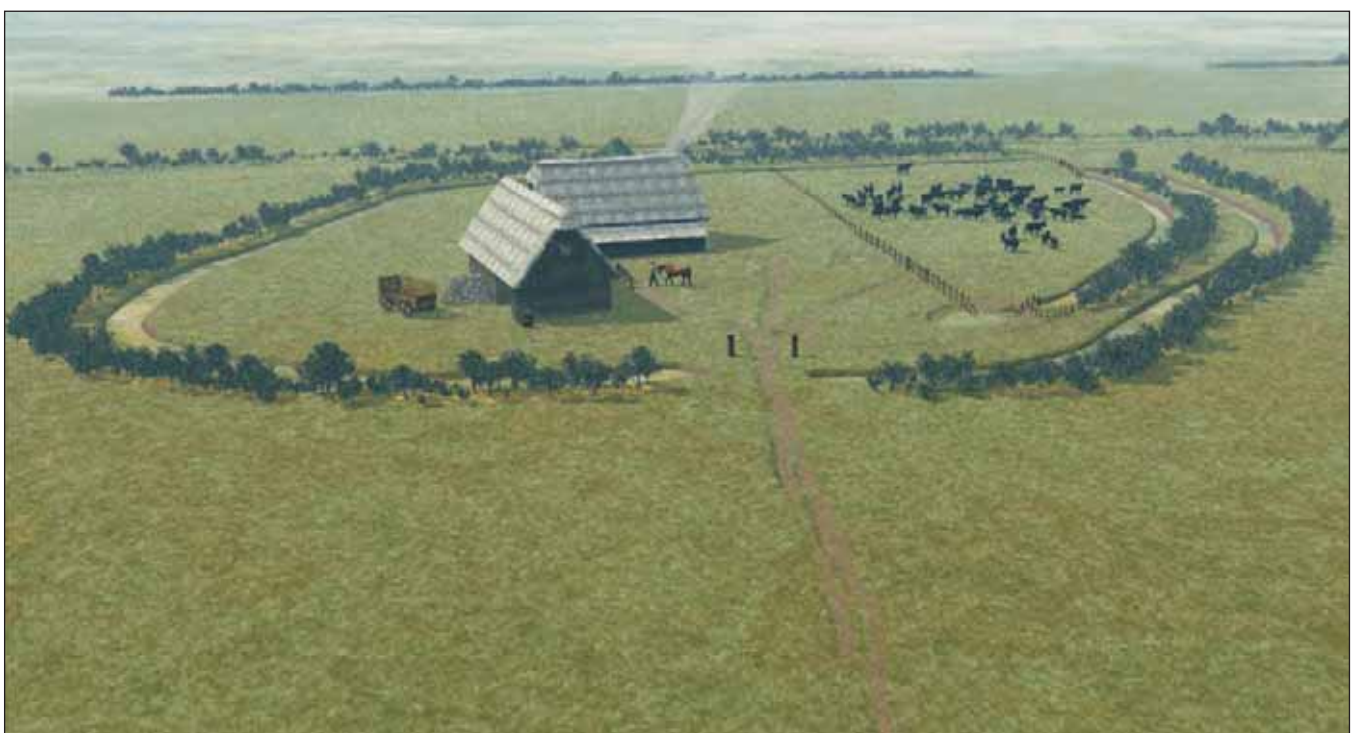


Figure 9.14: Reconstruction of the early medieval enclosure on the MTCP site

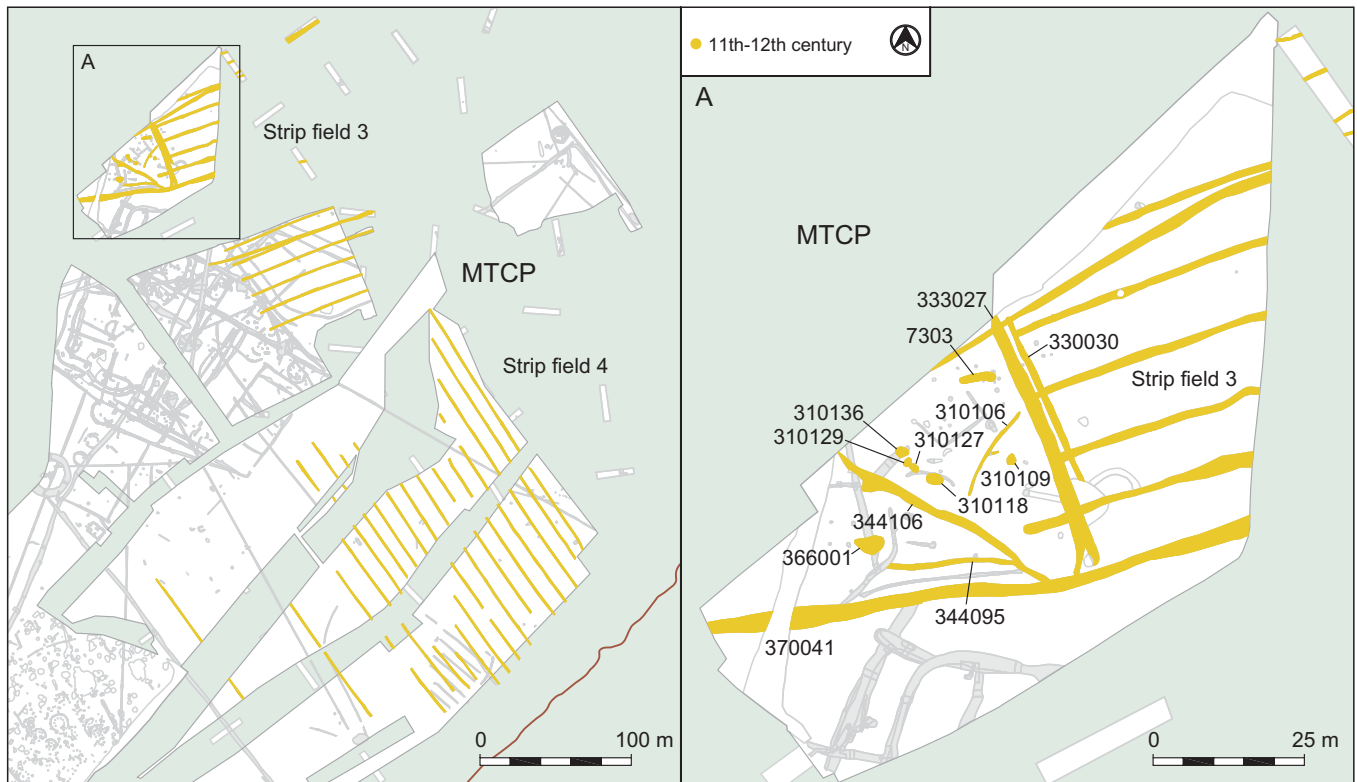


Figure 9.15: Early medieval strip fields and outlying features

defined by a row of six postholes. These were substantial postholes, and almost certainly held the posts supporting a roof structure – those at the eastern end were smaller in size, but had suffered significant localised truncation.

Central posts at either end of the hall mark the line of the two gable ends of the structure. Two gaps at the northern end of the lines of postholes forming the long axes of the building probably indicate the location of two wide entrances into the building. A line of three postholes, which ran parallel to the north-western wall of the building, may represent a small extension or lean to structure on this side of the building. Only two internal postholes were identified and excavated, but neither seem to form part of an internal subdivision. The size of these entrances and the absence of a central hearth suggest that the building was not used as a domestic structure. Small quantities of residual Roman pottery were recovered, but no early medieval pottery was found. This building was probably used as a barn, possibly to house domesticated animals, harvested crops and tools or equipment.

The layout of these buildings suggests that they were in use at the same time, and the evidence for the use of one as a domestic structure and the absence of similar evidence for the second suggests that they formed part of the same complex (Fig. 9.14). Pit 357069, which lay to the north of the buildings may have been a waterhole or well supplying this complex, but unfortunately prevailing ground conditions made it impossible to excavate and record this feature fully.

An elongated oval pit, 357057, lay nearby (Fig. 9.13). This had steep sides and an undulating base, and contained a dark silty fill. This contained a small assemblage of animal bone, pottery and a fragment of a whittle tang knife of a type commonly used in the Saxon period (Scott, CD Chapter 14).

There was further evidence for 11th- and 12th-century activity on the MTCP site beyond this small compound. Two substantial systems of poorly-dated field systems, to the east and south-east of the settlement respectively, probably date to this period, alongside a cluster of well dated pits to the north-east (Fig. 9.15).

Strip fields

A series of ditches aligned roughly ENE–WSW formed strip field 3. The western extent of these appeared to respect the slight plateau occupied by the earlier Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement on the site (see above). From here they ran down the prevailing slope towards Pincey Brook in the valley bottom. Only ditch 370041 continued further to the west, perhaps indicating that this represented a more significant boundary. This is reinforced by the later cutting of ditches 333027 and 330030 to the north of this ditch, re-affirming the western edge of the strip fields. The field system ditches lay some 10–12 m apart. Several of the ditches intercut indicating more than one phase of activity.

Micromorphological analysis of samples taken from the fills of one ditch (intervention 327001, ditch 336090) of this strip field system suggests that the ditches were designed to act as drainage features for the poorly-drained soils. The pattern of silting indicated that they saw periods of slow drainage where standing water led to some *in situ* gleying and

leaching, and necessitated the maintenance of these ditches through cleaning (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30).

The other strip field complex (strip field 4) lay to the south, and was roughly perpendicular to this. This also comprised a series of parallel drainage ditches some 10–12 m apart running down the prevailing slope. A total of 16 ditches was recorded, mainly under watching brief conditions, and there would clearly have been more, perhaps as many as 24 in the entire system. Towards the eastern ends of these fields, four of the drainage ditches cut across the infilled ditches of an earlier strip field system (strip field 2).

Neither of these sets of strip fields was well dated. Pottery recovered from both systems was dominated by residual sherds of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman pottery, although stratigraphically both field systems truncate the fills of late Romano-British features. Further confirmation of a medieval date lay with the truncation of strip field 3 which is likely to date to the Late Saxon period. We cannot be certain that these strip fields are contemporaneous with the enclosed settlement on the site, but they clearly must date to the medieval or early post-medieval period. It seems most likely that these were in use in the 11th and 14th centuries, and are either associated with the use of the enclosed settlement or the adjacent windmill (see below).

Similar field systems have recently been excavated elsewhere in Essex, with examples excavated in nearby Takeley (Barker 2003) and at two sites (Warish Hall and Blatches) on the A120 road scheme although the dating evidence for these was limited (see above, Timby *et al.* 2007).

Early medieval pits and butchery

A series of early medieval features lay to the west of strip field 3 (Fig. 9.15). Here, the area appeared to have been subdivided by a number of shallow ditches or gullies – 310106, 344095

and 344106. The latter two ran down a gradual slope to ditch 370041, and probably acted as shallow drainage features. Dating was provided by 11th and 12th century pottery. This pottery assemblage was dominated by early medieval sandy and Stansted wares, with smaller quantities of shelly ware. All of the identifiable vessel forms were jars.

A number of other discrete features in this area were also early medieval in date. Pit 366001, a deep steep-sided pit, was probably originally dug as a waterhole. After a period of gradual silting, rubbish was dumped into it. These deposits included a dump of organic-rich material (360004), analysis of which showed it to consist of an unprocessed deposit of cereal which had been burnt at a high temperature. Incorporated within this were free-threshing wheat grains, chaff, straw nodes and weed seeds. The latter contained abundant seeds of stinking chamomile, the presence of which probably indicated that these cereals were being grown on the heavy clays (Carruthers, CD Chapter 34).

A line of four pits lay to the north-east (310118, 310127, 310129 and 310136). All contained early medieval pottery and quantities of animal bone. The animal bone assemblage from the largest feature (310136), predominantly recovered from layer 310139, was indicative of butchery waste providing evidence for processing cattle carcasses (Bates, CD Chapter 32). A deposit of yellow clay was placed over this material (310138), possibly used to seal the deposit, implying that the cattle bones were still fresh when placed in the pit.

Pottery recovered from these pits consists primarily of the early medieval Stansted-type sandy ware variant. Vessel forms represented comprise almost exclusively jar forms, with thickened and/or lid-seated rims, and there is one dish. Also present are a single dish in sandy/shelly ware, and a possible Frogs Hall type jar or pitcher rim. The similar proportions of fabric types in these pits suggest that they may represent dumping within a very limited timespan.

Two other early medieval features, probably both natural were located in the vicinity (7303 and 310109). Feature 7303 contained an assemblage of early medieval pottery.

Chronology of the settlement and farming on the MTCP site

The dating of this settlement relies entirely on the presence and absence of various types of early medieval and medieval pottery fabrics and forms. In the light of this, the small size of the pottery assemblage should be taken into account. Despite this, the pottery recovered can at least give us a broad idea of the dates during which the settlement was occupied.

The first occupation of the settlement seems to date to the mid-/late 11th century (Mephram, CD Chapter 19), judging from the presence of some sherds of early medieval St Neots-type ware in the fills of the earliest phase of postholes in early medieval building 1. This may indicate some overlap in occupation between this settlement and the Late Saxon settlement further down the slope, although the one may also have replaced the other.

The bulk of the pottery from the settlement and the associated pits located to the east is early medieval Stansted-type sandy ware, with some inclusion free fabrics and sandy fabrics. Small quantities of 'transitional' wares, such as the possible Frogs Hall kiln wares, from the pits suggest that the settlement continued in use into the late 12th century.

The absence of any of the later 13th- or 14th-century fabrics found associated with the nearby post-mill structure and the main phase of medieval activity on the FLB site indicates that activity directly associated with the enclosed settlement is unlikely to have continued much into the 13th century. The field systems associated with this settlement may well have continued in use after this time, as did the post-mill.

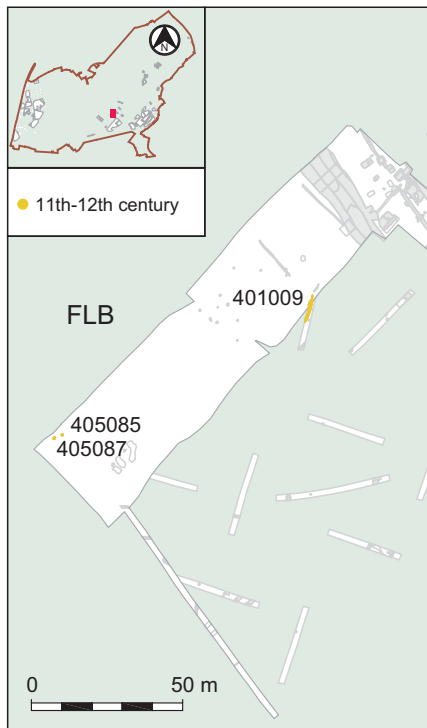


Figure 9.16: 11th- and 12th-century activity

Activity on the FLB site

Three 11th- or 12th-century features were excavated on the FLB site (Fig. 9.16), a shallow gully (401009) and two pits (405085 and 405087). The main phase of activity on the site dates to the 13th and 14th centuries, and these features point towards an earlier phase of activity on the site, although they lie beyond the main area of later activity. Their purpose is unclear, and they are predominantly dated by the presence of small quantities of early medieval pottery in their fills.

The wider landscape

The manors and their assarts provided the context for the 11th- and 12th-century enclosed settlement excavated on the MTCP site, with its surrounding double ditches and eastern gateway. The enclosure focused on a domestic hall, early medieval building 1, and the agricultural barn, early medieval building 2, linked at a right angle by covered ways. This was probably a farmstead of Bassingbournes manor. A document of 1194 records an agreement between William son of Helias de Takeley, who probably held Bassingbournes, and Ankerwyke Priory in Buckinghamshire, by which

William granted three virgates of his land in Takeley to the Priory. It is confirmed with a green wax seal depicting a building with a central door and louvre, and a cross at each gable end, which is perhaps how early medieval building 1 appeared (BL Campbell Charter x 7).

The enclosure was associated with a field system, two furlongs of which were represented by the excavated strip field 3 and strip field 4, in use in the 11th–14th centuries. These succeeded the Late Saxon strip fields 1 and 2, a change which probably reflects the reorganisation of the fields of Bassingbournes manor and their crop rotation into something like a Midland-type three-field system, following the extension north-eastwards into Galley and Regell Fields.

A similar reorganisation may have taken place in Catley Field, the main open field of Warish Hall manor, following its development of further arable areas. Here the A120 excavations found a strip field aligned east–west, overlying a previous arrangement of strips aligned north–south (Biddulph *et al.* 2007). There is little evidence for the crops that were grown in these arable fields at this period.

In the mid-12th century William son of Adeliz de Takeley granted land to Colchester Abbey in return for membership of the fraternity of the Abbey, payments of money and three measures of wheat. In the early 13th century William de Hauville assigned two-thirds of his tithes of hay in Takeley to the Abbey; it already held two-thirds of his corn tithes there (Moore 1897, 341, 353).

Since demesne arable strips were usually intermingled in the common fields with the strips of the free and bond tenants, they must also have grown the same crops in similar proportions. However, demesne land could also be in large enclosed fields, separate from the strip fields, particularly in the boulder clay country of north-western Essex. Arable land was usually the most valuable component of these demesnes (Campbell 2000, 65;

Williamson 2004, 108). Relatively little attention was paid in medieval agriculture to weeding crops, and environmental samples of plant remains from medieval sites normally contain a rich weed flora. Raising a variety of crops gave some insurance against the failure of a particular crop in any one season. As barley and oats were normally sown in spring, and wheat and rye in autumn, the work of ploughing, manuring and sowing was spread more evenly over the year. This made the utilisation of tenants' services and the rotation of crops easier. Wheat and rye were often cultivated together as *maslin* or *mancorn*, and oats and barley were grown together as *dredge* (Greig 1988, 111–12, 114; Langdon 1988, 99). Grain yields were low in the medieval period, averaging about eight bushels per acre for wheat, about four bushels of which was surplus available for sale.

Manuring fallow fields by folding sheep on them was an integral part of the open field system of agriculture, especially on the lighter soils, the sheep acting as mobile muckspreaders within moveable folds made from hazel hurdles. The sheep of whole villages were controlled in this operation by communal shepherds (Williamson 2004, 79, 107, 133–4).

The *Domesday Book* survey implies that teams of oxen were used to draw ploughs in the 11th century, although only demesne teams may have used eight oxen, the tenants ploughing with smaller teams (Williamson 2004, 158). There is little other evidence of the livestock that was kept on these manors in the late 11th and 12th centuries. At the beginning of the 13th century William, son of William de Takeley, granted a house and land to a bond tenant in return for money and a horse (BL Additional Charter 28380). William de Hauville's tenants in Colchester Hall manor at this time included Richard the Pigman (Moore 1897, 357, 371). Like many manors, Warish Hall was entitled to customary rent in kind from its bond tenants, consisting of capons and hens at Christmas and eggs at Easter (BL Additional MS 6164 p190).

It was necessary to move livestock around from common grazing to enclosed pasture fields, and to follow grazing on the stubble after the harvest. Small greens and grazing areas were linked by a network of hedged lanes, wider driftways and roadside commons (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 42; Williamson 2004, 162, 176). This network is clearly evident in the pattern of lanes which ran across south-eastern Stansted and Takeley parishes in the medieval period. It includes several long triangular greens which probably served as stock funnels, at Burton End in Stansted, and at Hall Green, Mole Hill Green with Green End, Smith's Green, Fewell's Field and Bamber Green in Takeley. Comparative triangular greens in the Norfolk fens have been discussed by Silvester (1988). Most of this network of lanes had been established by the 13th century and is mentioned in deeds of that period, including the road through Bamber Green and Mole Hill Green ('from Cumbewelle to Newport', or to Little Canfield) (NCO 12596); the road from Broxted through Mole Hill

Green to Elsenham (NCO 13042); the road from Smith's Green through Fewell's Field to Broxted (NCO 12951, 13008, 13011, 13126); Portstrate (Moore 1897, 340, 374); Hole Lane (NCO 12597–8, 13141); and Nether Street (NCO 13159). The road from Hatfield crossed a branch of Pincey Brook at *Wastelebrigge* (NA SC2/173/34).

Rights of way were often reserved and specified in medieval land transfers in Takeley, or quarrelled over subsequently. They were often specifically stated to be for driving (animals) and carting (ERO D/DRu M4; LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 60; NCO 9745 f38, 12601, 12608, 12887, 12921, 13024, 13126); or for fetching water from a well (NCO 12623). Sometimes the width of the lane or road was specified, such as 3 ft (0.91 m) (Moore 1897, 355), 9 ft (2.74 m) (NCO 12602–3, 12919) or 16 ft (4.88 m) (LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 2–3). Some of the lanes were called green streets or green ways, such as Cherkway leading to Apeltonefeld (NCO 12612), *le Grene Strete* leading to *le Redyng* (NCO

13141), the Cumbewelle–Newport road (NCO 12916, 12926), and Mole Hill Green (NCO 12953, 12957).

Most of Essex had scattered meadows in small enclosures, forming ribbons of meadowland along the valleys of tributary streams (Williamson 2004, 173–4). Areas of meadowland can be identified from field-names on later maps. Descriptions and abutments in contemporary charters suggest that the Stansted and Takeley meadows were long and narrow, strung out along the stream valleys (see Fig. 9.17). Some of the rents for meadows in Bassingbournes manor consisted of old renders in kind, suggesting that they had been established by the 12th century or earlier. Pool Mead, adjacent to the excavations on the MTCP site, owed an annual rent of half a pound of wax, and the tenant of Brookings Mead near the north-west boundary of the parish paid one goose (ERO D/DB M63 mm 1, 6). In 1349–51 the manor of Warish Hall had 20 acres of demesne meadow, less than the 24 acres recorded here in the *Domesday* survey (NCO 13087).

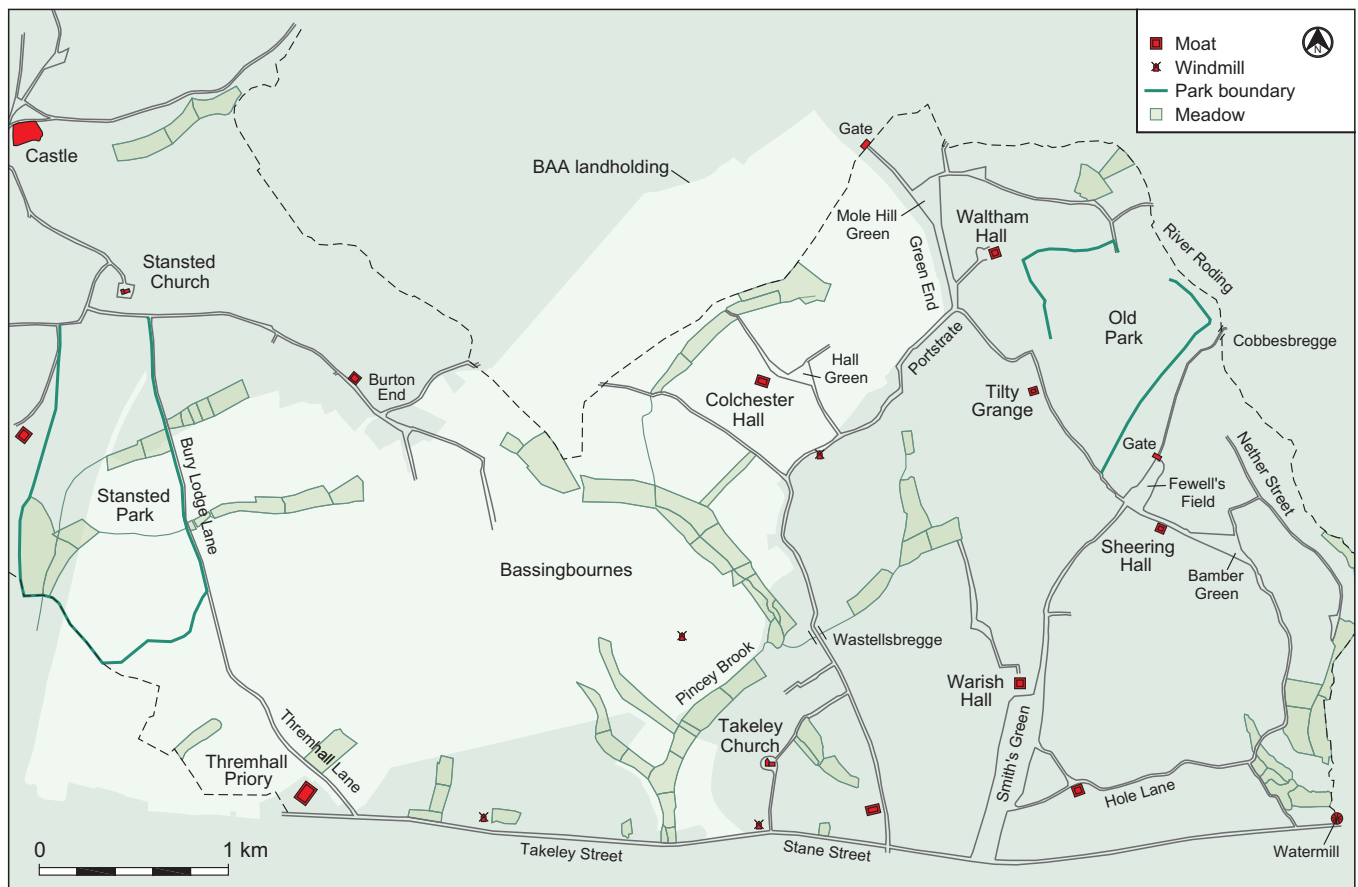


Figure 9.17: The infrastructure of the medieval landscape: roads, streams and meadows

Woodlands were bordered by ditches and entered by gates. In the mid- or late 12th century William de Hauville granted to the Abbot and monks of Saint Valéry the ditch which divided his land from the circuit of their wood called *Ho* (the west side of Priors Wood) (NCO 12942). In the late 13th century the Abbot's tenant Walter Nicole was licenced to make a ditch between his land at Gommage and the common land in Northwood to preserve his hedge there from destruction by animals (perhaps deer), for which he paid an annual rent of two capons (NCO 3697 m5d, 9745 f37, 13137). In 1324/5 the Abbey's manor made 3 furlongs (201 m) of water-course at the cost of 6d, and another 7½ furlongs (503 m) by using the works owed by the tenants (NA SC6/1125/10 mm 1, 1d); it is not clear whether these watercourses were boundary ditches or mill leets. In the 12th century Tilty Abbey lands were adjacent to *Brochesved Hache* (ERO T/B 3/1 ii, 301). In the 13th century the road from Morells Green to Elsenham passed through *Aldbredenehach* into Elsenham Wood at the parish boundary (Moore 1897, 377). In 1327 the road to Broxted left Fewell's Field by a gate at *Northwodehach* (NCO 12966–7). Thremhall manor had a gate at *Westfeld Hache* in 1372 (ERO D/DWv M14 m2). Waltham Hall manor had a gate at *Mellehache* where its tenant the Abbot of Colchester repeatedly failed to scour out his ditch in the early 15th century (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; SC2/173/32 m5d; SC2/173/33 m8).

There is no evidence at this period for the management of woodland by coppicing or other forms of exploitation, or for the sales of timber and wood. The woods were probably used as wood pastures because of the lack of other available pasture in the area. In the late 12th century William de Hauville conceded the tithes from the pannage of pigs in his wood at Takeley to Colchester Abbey and the grant was confirmed by his son William in c 1211 (Moore 1897, 347, 352). Tenants of Warish Hall manor paid for pannage at the standard rate of one penny a year for a pig, and a half-penny for a piglet (NCO 9745 f36v, 13093).

12th- and 13th-century farming

The population is known to have been generally rising throughout the 12th and 13th centuries. Evidence of widespread plague epidemics is not known from 13th century England, but the most serious famine of the century occurred in 1258. Grain yields fell as a result of a period of bad weather, and prices consequently rose. This was coupled with sheep murrain, leading to heavy losses. However, there is no evidence that there was cattle-plague at the same time, and therefore the famine was not so severe as those of the early 14th century (Kershaw 1973, 29). Therefore settlements are more likely to have been founded than abandoned during this period.

At Round Wood a small settlement was excavated in the Stansted Airport project in the 1980s, consisting of three buildings interpreted as a house, a kitchen and a granary (see below). This settlement was occupied in the 13th century, but was abandoned in the 14th century (Hunter 1999, 124). It probably represents a stage reached by Bassingbournes manor's advance of cultivation south-westwards in the 13th century. Other 13th century farm sites were found at Mole Hill Green in Takeley and Duckend Farm in Birchanger (English Heritage 1989, 19–20).

The largest holding in each manor was the lord's demesne or home farm, consisting of arable land in the open fields, meadows in the stream valleys, and pasture. In the 12th century demesne lands were often leased out by their lords, but in the late 12th and 13th century there was a movement to the direct management of demesnes to grow agricultural produce for a cash market (Williamson 2004, 46). The area around the LTCP site appears to have formed part of the demesne land of Stansted manor, which had been cleared from the woodland in the Late Saxon period. Another compact block of demesne land lay on the east side of Burylodge Lane. The demesne lands of the five Takeley manors were probably less extensive and not so compact. In 1294 the manor

of Warish Hall had 280 acres of demesne arable land (NCO 13165).

The leguminous crops of peas and vetch were cultivated extensively in England from the 13th century onwards to replace nitrates in exhausted soils, suppress weed growth and improve fodder supplies. There is insufficient evidence to discern crop rotations in the study area at this period. In 1302 the tenants of Warish Hall manor owed reaping services in fields of wheat, oats, peas and beans (NCO 9745 f38v). In 1324/5 the manor seeded Pirleye Field with wheat and Catley Field with oats and some beans (NA SC6/1125/10 m 1d).

In the 12th and 13th centuries work horses called *stots* or *affers* partly replaced oxen as the main draught animals. They were faster and more adaptable than oxen, but more expensive to keep as they ate a diet of oats and hay, whereas oxen could be fed hay alone. The introduction of horses depended in part on the amount of meadowland available (Campbell 2000, 123, 126, 133; Williamson 2004, 158, 196). The replacement of oxen by horses tended to occur in places where there was a shortage of meadowland, as in the study area, but the heavy soil may have required the continued use of large plough-teams.

In the 13th century Tilty Abbey, like other Cistercian monasteries, sold considerable quantities of wool to Italian merchants. The sale of a particularly large wool-crop for 340 marks is recorded in 1288 (*VCHE* ii, 135). It is likely that the Abbey's grange in Takeley played a part in the husbandry of its sheep flocks at this time.

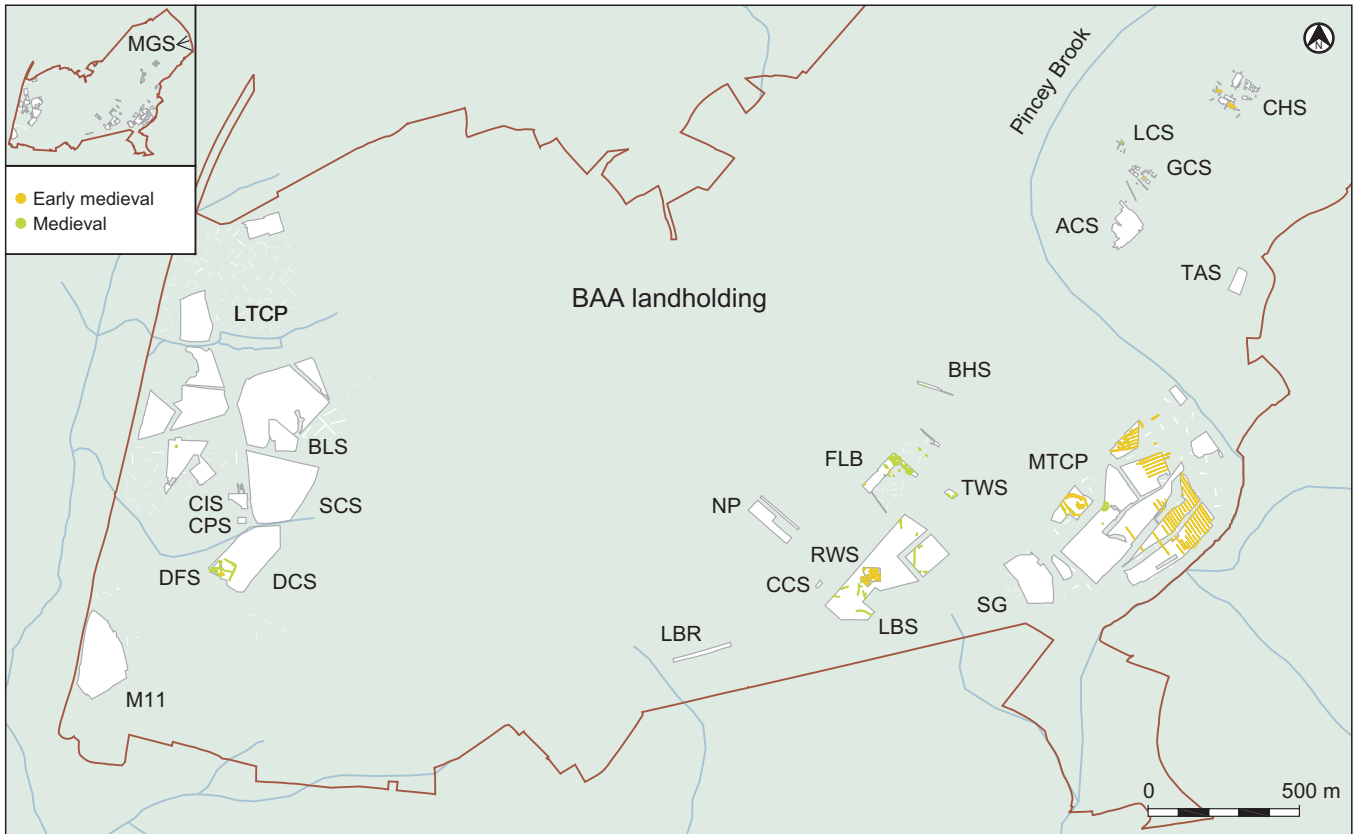


Figure 9.18: Early medieval and medieval features

Medieval sites excavated on the Stansted Project

A number of medieval sites were excavated as part of the Stansted Project, including an important 12th- and 13th-century farmstead on the RWS site but an enclosure was identified on the DCS and DFS sites and further activity was found on the CHS site (Havis and Brooks 2004). Excavations by Framework Archaeology identified a post-mill on the MTCP site and medieval activity on the FLB site.

The DCS and DFS sites

Excavations on the DCS and DFS sites (Fig. 9.19) revealed part of an enclosure containing a rectangular building (Havis and Brooks 2004, 368). Pottery dated the occupation to the 12th and 13th centuries. The main enclosure was subdivided by a number of smaller ditches and gullies. A short stretch of fenceline was associated with the rectangular building. A substantial assemblage of animal bone was recovered, which was dominated by cattle bone, with dog and horse bones also present in significant quantities.

Sites surrounding the RWS site: the LBS and TWS sites

A number of medieval features were excavated on the sites immediately surrounding the RWS site (Fig. 9.20) and a series of ditches and discrete features on the LBS A site to the south-west, whilst further features were found on the LBS B and LBS C site further to the east. Finds from a series of features on the LBS B site contained quantities of medieval pottery and peg tile, along with quantities of stone.

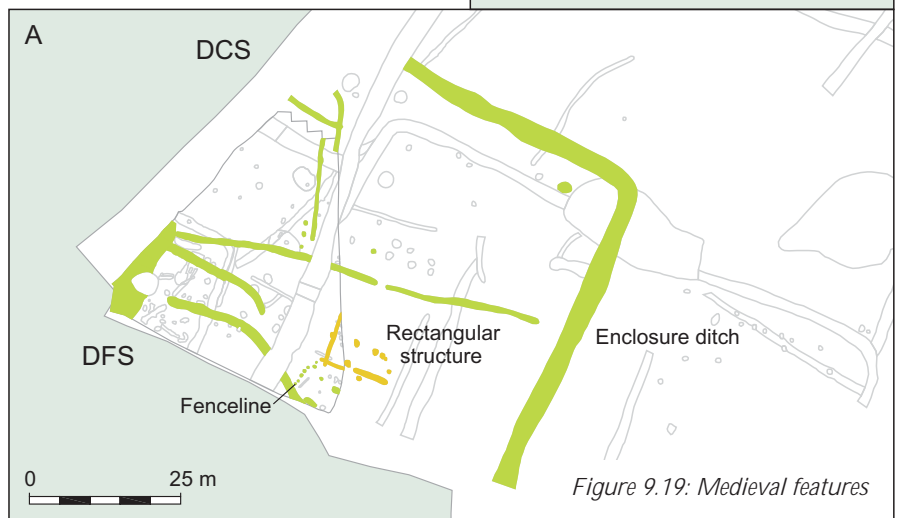
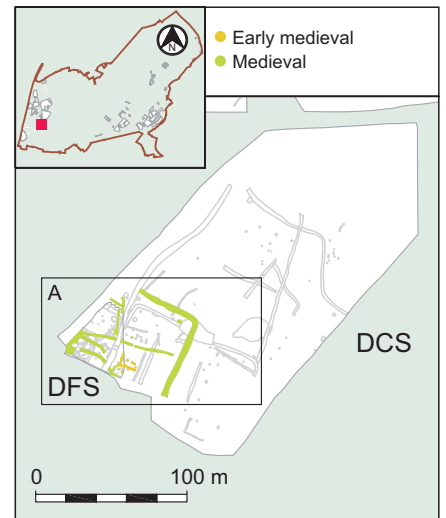


Figure 9.19: Medieval features

Two gullies and a group of postholes on the LBS C are probably medieval. The latter may represent two sides of a post-built structure (Havis and Brooks 2004, 374). The small excavation on the TWS site revealed four medieval features, all containing material dating to the 13th–14th centuries (*ibid.*, 390).

The RWS site

Detailed excavation on the RWS site revealed a medieval farmstead (Fig. 9.20) comprising four timber buildings and a series of enclosure ditches. Material recovered from this settlement suggests that it was occupied in the 12th and 13th centuries (*ibid.*, 380–90). These buildings were post-built, sometimes gullies were associated. Buildings 440 and 56 were substantial measuring 14 m by 9.5–10 m. Building 5 was slightly smaller at 11 m by 7 m. Buildings 440 and 5 had hearths. A small extension at the eastern end of building 56 is suggested by four post-holes. Pottery of 13th century date was recovered, the quantity of bowls from building 56 suggested dairying was being carried out (Walker 2004a, 423). The form of building 1093 was uncertain but it may have been open sided.

The pottery from the site was predominantly coarse wares, although

some finewares (London-type ware, Hedingham, Kingston-type and Mill Green wares) were found. Vessel types included cooking vessels, dishes, bowls, jars and jugs. Although finewares were present, these need not imply a high status for the site, whilst the presence of a number of bowls may point to dairying.

Eight silver or cut ‘short cross’ pennies were recovered. Other metalwork found included copper alloy (buckles, buckle plates, strap ends and a fragment of horse harness) and iron objects (knives and fasteners/fittings). Three worked stone items were also found, including two whetstones, whilst the worked bone items included a chess piece.

The small assemblage of animal bone included horse, dog, cattle, fallow deer, goose and fish. Analysis of charred plant remains produced evidence for arable farming, with bread wheat and rivet-type wheat dominant, but smaller amounts of barley and oats present. These seem to represent assemblages of semi-cleaned assemblages of grain. It seems likely that some of the hearths excavated were used to finally process cereal crops. The weed seeds recovered suggest that these were being grown on heavy clay soils. Peas, horse beans

and vetches were also grown (Murphy 2004b). Snails recovered from the fills of ditches on the site included a number of woodland species, and may indicate that the site was a relatively short lived assart, and that it was recolonised by woodland on its abandonment (Murphy 2004c, 458).

The CHS and MGS sites

Excavations on the known site of the manor of Colchester Hall (CHS) by the Stansted Project revealed the remains of a timber structure and a possible length of moat dated to the 12th and 13th centuries (Fig. 9.21). The timber structure comprised a series of shallow gullies interpreted as beamslots for timber sills which supported the structure. An irregularly-shaped hollow excavated adjacent to the building also contained quantities of 12th and 13th century material (Havis and Brooks 2004, 368).

Excavation on three small sites (MGS A, B and C) close to Molehill Green identified a number of medieval features (Fig. 9.22). On the MGS area, a series of gullies and discrete features was associated with quantities of medieval pottery, possibly representing the remains of at least one timber structure. Another structure, comprising

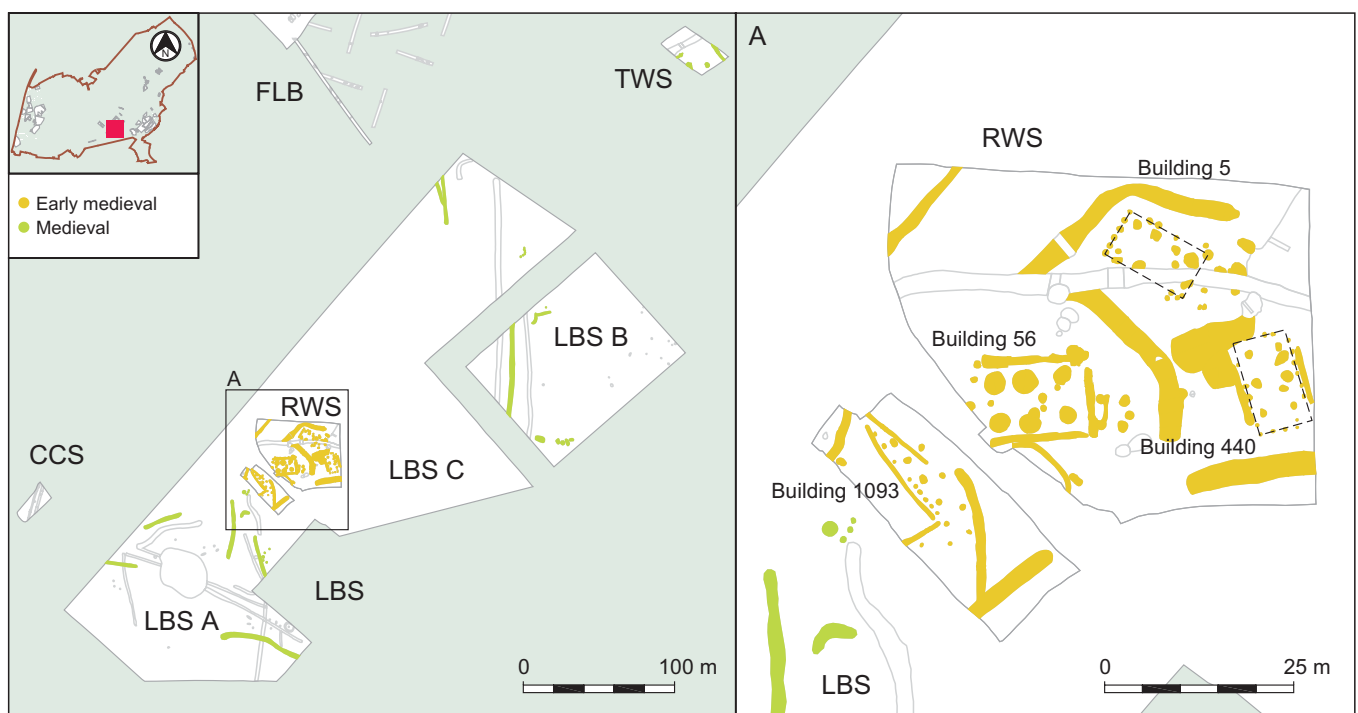


Figure 9.20: Medieval features with a detail of the medieval farmstead excavated on the RWS site

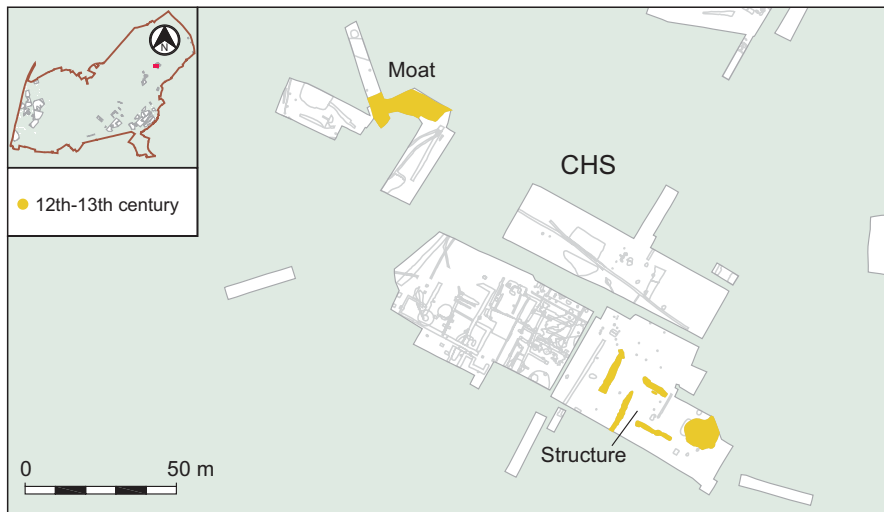


Figure 9.21: Medieval features

two parallel gullies and two probable hearth bases associated with large amounts of medieval pottery was excavated on the MGS B site (*ibid.*, 376).

A moated site was identified on the MGS C site (Fig. 9.22), inside which was a settlement that has been dated to the 13–15th centuries. The complex of features excavated are hard to interpret but the quality and quantity of material recovered indicated the presence of a domestic complex on the site (*ibid.*, 377–80).

Post-mill on the MTCP site

The latest medieval activity on the MTCP site took the form of a post-mill, along with a small number of other features (Fig. 9.23). The post-mill was sited on high ground overlooking the valley of the Pincey Brook on three sides to maximise the available wind. It also appears to have been built on a pre-existing mound, possibly that of a Bronze Age barrow (see Chapter 4). Apart from the post-mill, the only other contemporary features were two drainage ditches dug on either side of the existing medieval trackway, west of the earlier settlement enclosure (ditches 353022 and 363020).

Medieval post-mills

Early medieval windmills took the form of post-mills, where the mill itself could be rotated around the post using the tailpost to the rear of the mill in order to face the prevailing wind

(Watts 2002, 109–10). Although numerous examples have been excavated there is little evidence for the form of the superstructure. Some medieval representations of these mills have survived, usually depicting the machinery housed in a simple weather boarded structure with a gabled roof and four sails.

This superstructure was supported on a single central post, usually 4.5–6.5 m long and 0.85 m wide, which was stabilised at its base by a pair of horizontal cross-trees and four raking struts known as quarter bars (Watts 2002, 108). This sub-structure was often partially sunk below ground or buried in a mound of earth to provide the structure with added stability. Often these mounds were thrown up around the sub-structure of the mill, whilst others appear to have re-used earlier mounds such as prehistoric barrows. Mill mounds were generally flat-topped, and ranged in diameter from 11.5 m to 24 m. Often they were surrounded by a wide, shallow quarry ditch, interrupted by one or more causeways, usually located away from the prevailing wind to provide points of access unhindered by the sails.

A number of medieval post-mills have been investigated archaeologically. As might be expected these excavations have largely been confined to investigating the characteristic cross-shaped ‘footprint’ and any associated mounds and quarry ditches. Occasionally, traces of the timber cross-trees and quarter

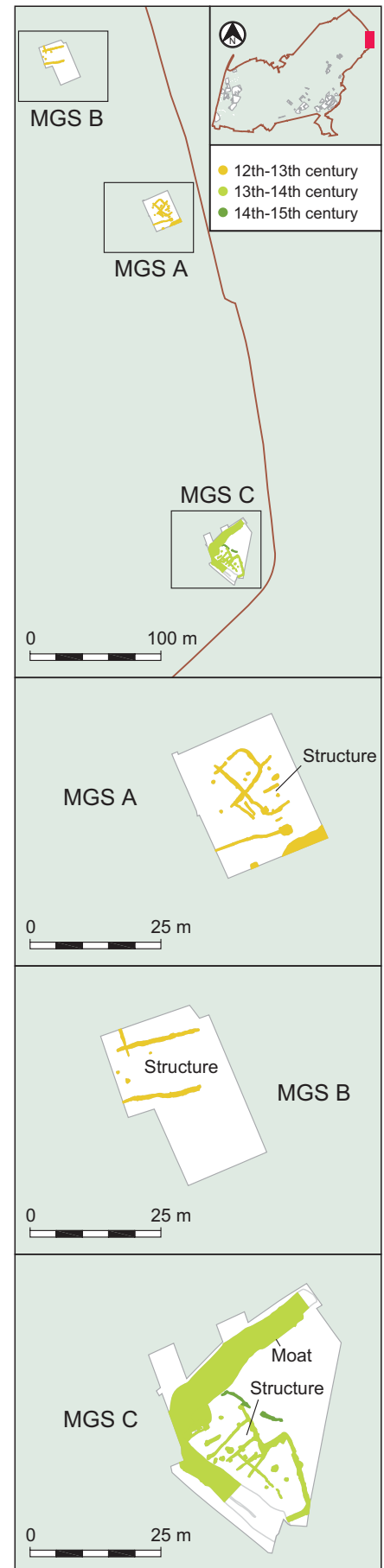


Figure 9.22: Medieval features

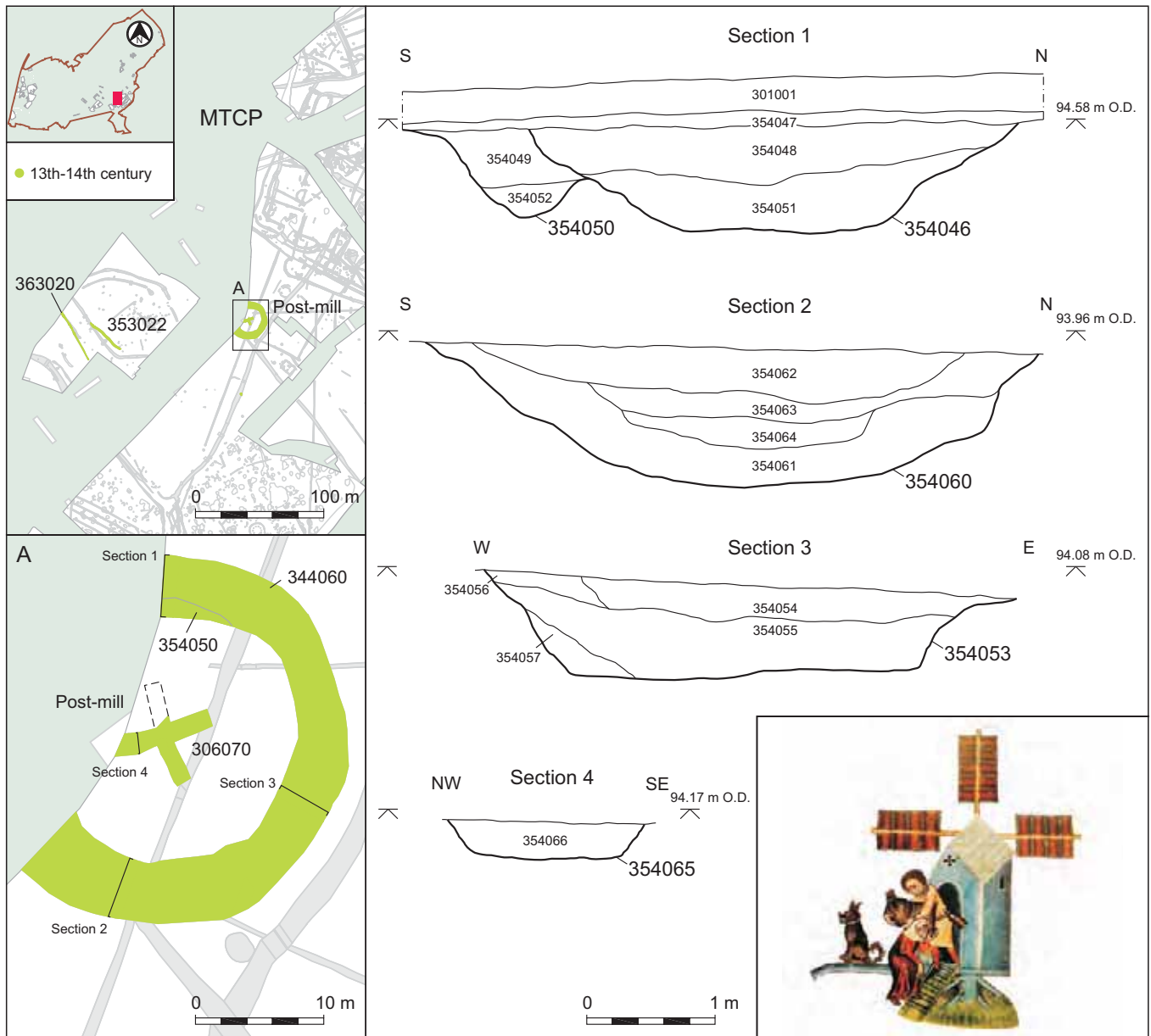


Figure 9.23: The post-mill and other 13th- and 14th-century features. The inset shows a post-mill depicted on the Luttrell psalter

bars have been identified, but the massive centre posts are usually absent, presumably removed for reuse. Many of the excavated examples have been dated through associated artefacts to the 13th and 14th centuries, a period which saw a massive growth in the construction and use of these mills (Watts 2002, 108–9). These were less common after the Black Death, although mills of this type remained in use well into the post-medieval period.

The post-mill on the MTCP site had the characteristic cross-shaped foundation trench. The complete form of this foundation could not be revealed because of the proximity of a modern hedgeline, but judging from the

excavated elements, the cross arms of the frame are likely to have been 8 m in length. This is smaller than the 9–10 m recorded on the recently excavated post-mill at Clobbs Wood (Hardy 2007b, 165–9, pl. 5.1, fig. 5.6). The MTCP foundation trench had vertical sides and a flat base, and was 0.30 – 0.40 m deep, considerably shallower than that at Clobbs Wood, which was well over 1 m deep (Hardy 2007b, 166, fig. 5.6). The presence of a substantial earth mound around the base of the post on the Stansted post-mill, supplemented by earth dug out of the encircling ditch would have significantly enhanced its stability, and obviated the need for a deep foundation trench.

The ditch surrounding the post-mill was substantial (Fig. 9.23), varying in width between 4 m and 5 m and being over 1 m deep in places. It enclosed a roughly ovoid area with a maximum width of approximately 19 m. This ditch was cleaned out or recut at some stage. There was no sign of a causeway across the ditch by which the mill could be accessed, although this may have lain in the unexcavated area.

Chronology of the post-mill

The dating of this post-mill relies on pottery recovered from the fills of both the original ditch cut (354050), its recut (344060) and the foundation trench. Pottery from 354049, the upper fill of

the former, included sherds of sandy orange ware and Harlow ware, both of which have a date range from the 13th to 15th or 16th centuries.

The pottery recovered from the recut was also dominated by these, but also contained a sizeable element of earlier pottery, predominantly sherds of early medieval sandy wares of the 11th and 12th centuries. A few sherds of medieval coarseware (date range: 12th–14th centuries) Hedingham fineware (late 12th–13th centuries) and London type ware (mid-12th–mid-14th century) suggest that the ditch was silting up in the 13th and 14th centuries. Small amounts of residual Roman pottery were also found. Two small sherds of post-medieval red earthenware pottery (16th century onwards) may be intrusive, or may date the final silting of this ditch. Pottery was also recovered from the cross-shaped foundation trench itself. This comprised a small assemblage of both sandy orange wares and Harlow wares.

This small but diverse assemblage suggests that the post-mill was first built late in the 12th or early in the 13th century. The sherds of medieval coarseware and small quantities of finewares suggest that the mill remained in use throughout the 14th century, but there is little in the pottery assemblage to suggest continued use after this date. This post-mill seems to have had a similar history to that excavated at Clobbs Wood, which appears to have been in use for a short time in the 13th and 14th centuries (Hardy 2007b 167–8).

It is not clear how much overlap there was between the use of the post-mill, with its origins in the late 12th or early 13th century and the enclosed settlement to its north-west, which appears to have been abandoned at the same time. It is possible that the two were linked, perhaps with the land changing hands at this time leading to a change in use. There is no evidence that there were any associated storage

or domestic buildings constructed alongside this, and it is tempting to suggest that there was some contemporaneity between the settlement and the mill. The absence of any of the medieval orange sandy or Harlow ware fabrics from the former, however, makes this unlikely.

Manors and mills

In the 11th century Stansted, Bentfieldbury and Takeley all had water-mills. Stansted's water-mill lay on the west side of the parish well beyond the excavated area (Williams and Martin 2002, 1018). Its ownership was divided between the manors of Stansted Hall and Burnells in the late 13th century (*CIPM* iii 46, 106). It was part of a landholding called Derbies by the 15th century, and later known as the manor of Whelpstones (Reaney 1935, 534; NCO 10183). Takeley's water-mill lay in the manor of Thorkil in 1066. By 1086 its ownership was divided between the manor of the



Figure 9.24: The Chapman and Andre Map of 1777

Abbot of St Valéry in Takeley and William de Warenne's manor in Canfield (Williams and Martin 2002, 984, 996). The mill lay at the extreme south-east corner of the parish where Stane Street crossed the River Roding; the *agger* of the Roman road probably acted as the dam of the mill-pond. References to watercourses in the 13th-century court rolls of Warish Hall manor may refer to the leets of this mill (NA SC2/173/30 m8). In 1324 the mill paid an annual rent of 26s 8d to the manor (NA E106/7/3).

Manorial tenants were normally obliged to grind their corn at the lord's mills, for which they paid a toll called *multure*. This right of *multure* may have originated before the Norman conquest, and the claim of lords to compel their tenants to use the manor mills was certainly established by the 13th century. Fines might be imposed in the manor courts for breaking the lord's monopoly by using other mills or by using hand-mills for grinding at home. Mills were therefore not only a source of seigneurial income but also a symbol of seigneurial authority, and as such were sometimes targeted for burning in peasant revolts. In the later medieval period this obligation of suit of mill was often commuted to a regular money payment, or was avoided by truculent tenants (Holt 1988, 36–9, 45; Fryde 1996, 32).

Windmills were first introduced into England in about 1185 and were becoming common by the 1190s. They may have been invented in East Anglia. They were manorial assets in which lords of the manor invested, especially in areas where there were few water-mills. They were used to supplement the work of water-mills, rather than to replace them (Holt 1988, 20, 34). By the 13th century there were also mills independent of seigneurial control owned by free tenants. These independent mills had no rights of *multure* (Holt 1988, 54).

There are known to have been other windmills in Takeley parish, and there may have been one in each of the manors. The excavated mill is likely to have belonged to Bassingbournes

manor, and the arable fields on its east side were later known as Mill Field (*Melnefeld*) (ERO D/CT 342A nos 358–60). To the north-east Colchester Hall manor also had a windmill. Before 1213 William de Hauville granted the fields of the manor called *Estfeld* and *Newenhale* (perhaps the same) to Colchester Abbey, except for the mills which lay within them (Moore 1897, 349, 354). This windmill still existed when the tithe commutation survey was drawn up in 1838. To its south lay another Mill Field in the 15th century, part of which was later called Windmill Field (ERO D/CT 342A nos 287, 289–91, 297, 300; D/DRu M3 m1). The mill of Waltham Hall manor is also mentioned in a court roll of 1271 (NA SC2/173/30 m8). A 13th-century deed of Richard Mountfichet was witnessed by Robert son of Richard Michael of *Westmelne* (BL Additional Charter 37640). Another *Mellefeld* and a *Mellecroft* were in Thremhall Priory's manor (ERO D/DWv M14 mm 1, 2, 2d; D/DWv M15 mm 1, 2, 3).

Windmills appear in Takeley on the county map by Chapman and André of 1777 at the Colchester Hall mill site and close to Takeley Street (Fig. 9.24). The latter is also shown on a map of Hatfield Broad Oak in c 1825 (ERO D/DZI/49). Another windmill and Windmill Field lay in the village of Takeley Street close to the south-west corner of the parish in the 19th century, and probably represented Thremhall Priory's mill (ERO D/CT 342A no. 514). There was another windmill on the borders of Stansted and Elsenham parishes, to the north-east of Tyrell's or Mill wood in the 1830s and 1840s (ERO Q/RUm 1/53, 1/73, 2/8). In Great Canfield parish a post-mill stood from the 15th century to about 1900 (Eland 1949, frontispiece; see Fig. 9.25).

There were one or more Miller or Mellere families amongst the Takeley tenants of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, who presumably derived their name from the operation of these mills. Peter the Miller and Robert Miller occurred in the early 13th century (Moore 1897, 361, 363; ERO T/B 3/1 ii 299), Henry le Meller in 1346 and Henry Moriz Mellere in 1349



Figure 9.25: The windmill at Great Canfield

(NCO 12629, 12631), Robert Meller in 1348 (NCO 12630), Thomas Meller in 1372, 1383/4, 1387 and 1392 (ERO D/DRu M4; D/DK T129; D/DWv M14 mm 3, 4; NCO 12636, 12638, 12999), Nicholas Meller in 1399, 1401, 1413, 1414 and 1421 (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; SC2/173/34 m3; NCO 12888, 12924–5, 13021), his son Thomas in 1401 and 1438 (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; NCO 13134), Thomas's wife Cristina Mellere in 1404 (NA SC2/173/32 m5d), John Mellere in 1409, 1414, and 1465 (Reaney 1935, 536; NA SC2/173/33 m8; SC2/173/34 m3; NCO 12642), John, Thomas and William Meller in 1468 (NA SC2/173/38 m2), William, Thomas, John and Henry Meller in 1485/6 (ERO D/DRu M3 m1), Henry Miller in 1490 (ERO D/DB M63 mm 1, 4) and John Miller in 1511 (NCO 12646).

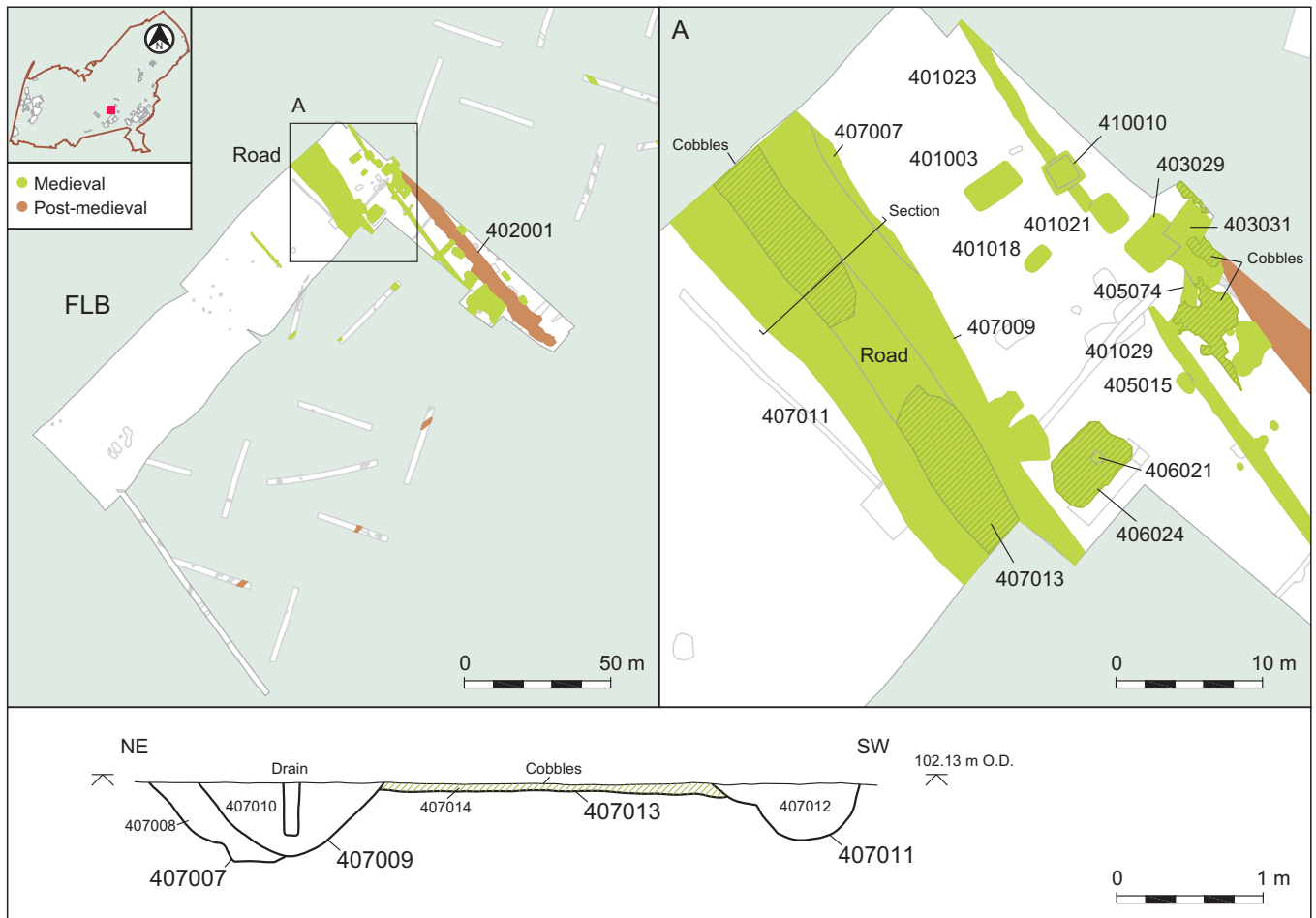


Figure 9.26: Medieval and post-medieval features

13th–15th-century settlement on the FLB site

The limited excavations undertaken on the FLB site revealed evidence for medieval settlement, clusters of industrial pits, and a medieval trackway.

Chronology

The dating provided by pottery recovered from the features on the site is key to establishing a chronological sequence on the site (Mephram, CD Chapter 19). Detailed analysis of the pottery forms and fabrics suggests that the site was occupied between the early 13th century and the 15th century. The early use of the site pottery on the site was characterised by a predominance of sandy orange wares, consisting almost exclusively of medieval Harlow ware. Vessel types in this fabric included jars and jugs, with a few bowls or dishes. Many of these were glazed, often with either white-slip under the glaze, or white slip-painted decoration. Other fabrics

in this period included sherds of a Rouen-style jug and of London-type ware, all of 13th century date. Many of the features containing pottery of this date also included small quantities of residual early medieval fabrics. These point to earlier activity in the vicinity, probably during the 12th century.

Later features also contained large quantities of Harlow ware, which incorporated new forms, such as jars with squared, neckless rims, alongside small quantities of redwares, a sherd of Surrey whiteware and a single sherd of Saintonge polychrome. Abandonment of the site no later than the 15th century is indicated by the absence of any diagnostically later sherds, such as the early German stonewares (such as Raeren) which are ubiquitous on 16th-century sites.

Using a combination of the pottery dating and the stratigraphic relationships it is possible to suggest two broad phases of activity – one dating to the 13th century, and the second to the

14th and probably into the 15th. Much of the residual 12th-century material occurs in the earlier features.

Early activity on the FLB site

Amongst the earlier features on the site was a medieval cobbled road or trackway, the remains of at least one building and a series of pits and ditches (Fig. 9.26). A fairly complex sequence of features and deposits was excavated.

The medieval trackway

The cobbled road (402012/407013) was aligned north-west to south-east (Fig. 9.26). It was made up of heavy unworked flint cobbles pushed into the upper surface of the boulder clay subsoil to form a crude surface (407014). This surface varied in width from 3.5 m to 4 m where its full extent was exposed. Some of the flint cobbles showed signs of wear confirming that the surface was used by traffic, although no specific concentrations or patterns of wear were identified.

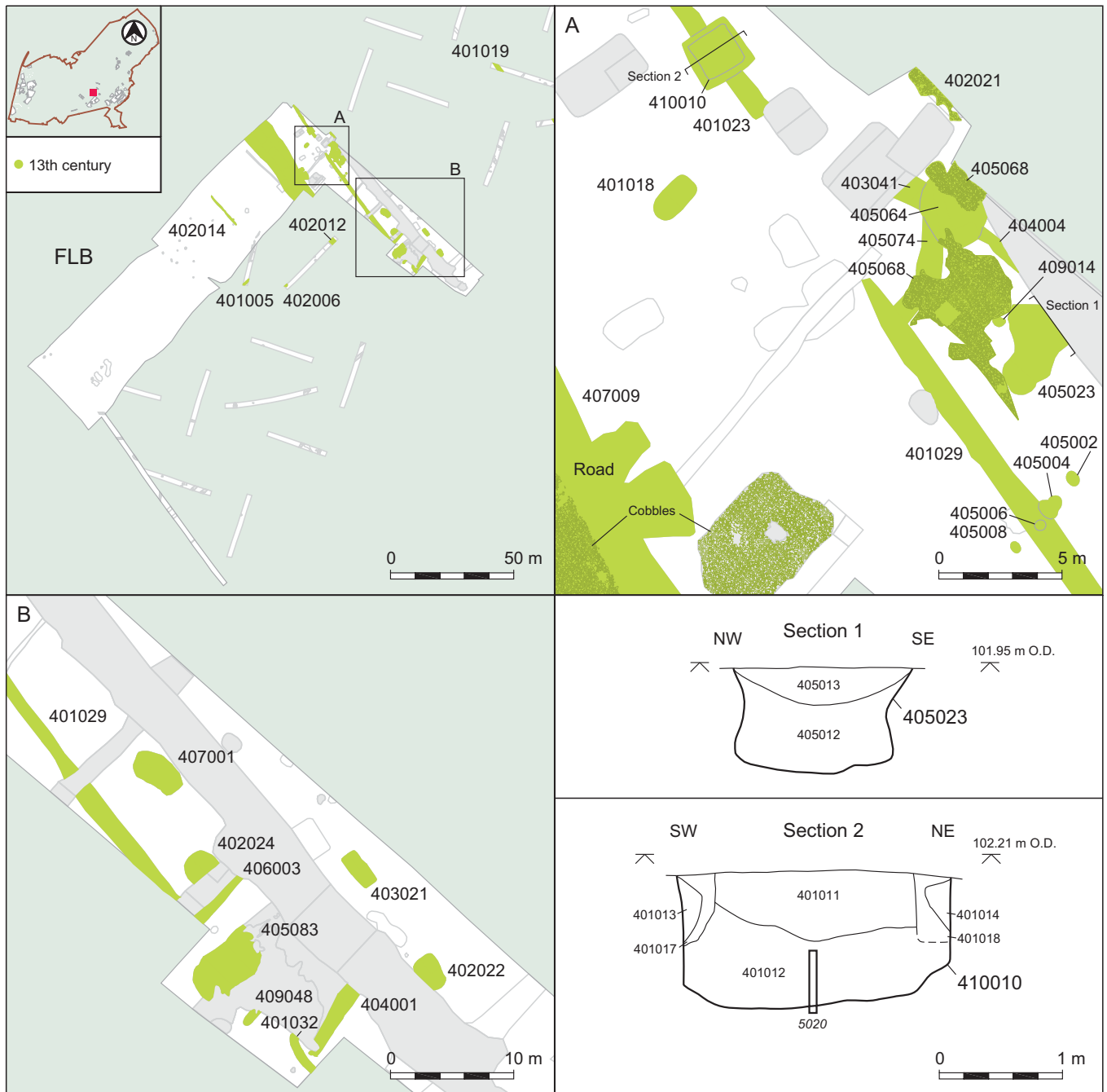


Figure 9.27: 13th-century features

This track was flanked for much of its excavated length by two ditches, presumably dug to help with drainage (ditches 407007 and 407011). These ditches show some signs of periodic maintenance, with ditch 407007 clearly recut as 407009 after having silted up. It is possible that 407011 saw similar cleaning or reworking, but that this removed all traces of the earlier silting sequence. Small quantities of pottery were recovered from layer 407010, the fill of ditch recut 407009; four sherds of medieval coarseware dating 12th–14th centuries.

The metallated road or track may originally have been laid in the medieval period, running between Takeley to the south and Burton End to the north. The stretch excavated would have lain to the west of the land surrounding the manor house at Bassingbourne.

Another ditch, 401029, was parallel to this road and its associated drainage ditches. The only datable material from this was a single sherd of medieval pottery, dated to between the 11th and 13th centuries. The gap between this ditch and 401023, which continued the boundary further north may have

Plate 9.2: Post-medieval ditch 402001



allowed access through it. A second medieval ditch on the same alignment lay some 30 m further to the east (401019/408009, Fig. 9.27). The former contained sherds of early medieval sandy ware and medieval coarseware, suggesting that the fill dates to the late 12th–14th centuries. A substantial post-medieval boundary (ditch 402001, Fig. 9.27, Plate 9.2) followed the same alignment further to the east, emphasising the longevity of this boundary in the landscape. Indeed, it is possible that the latter was a reworking of a medieval ditch on the same alignment.

Most of the activity lay to the east of the trackway, with only two shallow gullies (401005 and 402014), a possible floor surface (402012), and a tree-throw (402006) to the west (Fig. 9.27). There were two main foci of activity to the east, both comprising groups of deep pits.

The largest of these lay close to the causeway across ditch 401029/401023, and comprised five pits and associated features (Fig. 9.27). Two gullies in this area, 405074 and 404004, may have performed a drainage function unrelated to these pits – certainly both pre-date pit 405064, which was dug through their fill.

The three pits to the east of ditch 401029/401023 were all fairly similar in form. All were large irregular pits (403041, 405023 and 405064) with thick well sorted silty clay fills, probably representing eroded subsoil deposits. The nature of these fills suggests that they formed in a watery environment, whilst the occasional inclusions of domestic material such as pottery or burnt daub indicate that they were associated with a nearby settlement. Not all of the pits were open at the same time, with 405064 probably being dug after 403041 had silted up. They probably acted as waterholes or possibly even as water tanks (Fig. 9.27). The pottery recovered from these is dominated by jars and jugs, with smaller numbers of dishes. This reflects the overall pattern for the site. To the south of these, a line of four small postholes (405002, 405004, 405006 and 405008) may represent the remains of a

fenceline or small structure erected after ditch 401029 had silted up. Animal bones (including cattle, sheep/goat, horse and red deer) and fired clay were also recovered from the fills of these pits.

Pit 401018 was altogether more regular than the pits to the east. It was a carefully dug sub-rectangular pit with rounded corners, near-vertical sides and a flat base. Although the absence of waterlogged deposits precluded the recovery of any mineralised remains, the silty nature and greenish tinge of the fills within it suggests that it functioned as a cess pit. Animal bone (including red deer), fired clay and sherds of pottery were also recovered.

Nearby lay 410010, a square pit. This had clearly been wood lined, with the wood rotting *in situ* (Fig. 9.27). Both of the fills of this feature accumulated in water, and it had clearly been used as a tank. A substantial assemblage of pottery was recovered, including medieval and early medieval fabrics. The latter form an interesting group, and indicate the presence of an earlier phase of settlement, probably dating to the 12th century nearby. Amongst these are groups of early medieval flint-tempered fabrics and transitional fabrics, with the only identified forms being jars. The medieval sherds included sherds of a jug and a dish. Other finds from the pit included animal bones and fragments of fired clay.

Cobbled surfaces

Two areas of heavy flint cobbling (405068 and 402021, Fig. 9.27) were associated with these pits. Both appear to have been laid late in the sequence of use of these pits – 405068 sealed the upper fills of 405064, and had slumped slightly in this area with the compaction of the fills. Both areas of cobbling were poorly defined, but may have acted as areas of hard standing for use as working surfaces or as yard surfaces associated with buildings. No traces of the latter were recovered, although a large quantity of pottery (predominantly Harlow ware in a range of forms – jars, jugs and a dish) was recovered from the small area of

cobbling in 402021. Other pottery from this area included a sherd of an anthropomorphic aquamanile (Fig. 9.28) from occupation layer 405069 (sealed by the cobbling in 405068).

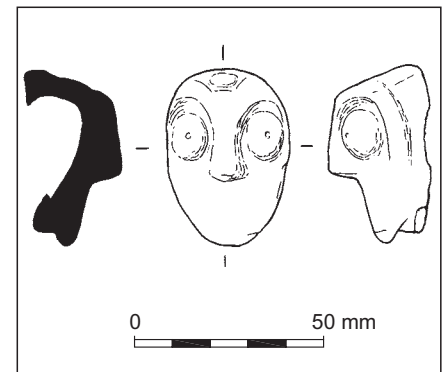


Figure 9.28: The anthropomorphic head of the aquamanile from the FLB site

The second group of features lay 30 m to the south-east, and comprised a further series of pits and gullies (Fig. 9.27). Ditch 401029 appears to have respected ditch 406003, which was perpendicular to it. Certainly there is no evidence for a continuation of the former further south. Ditch 406003, which was itself later recut, continued beyond the edge of the excavation to the south-west, whilst to the north-east it either terminated or altered alignment, although truncation by later ditch 402001 prevented this being established (Fig. 9.26). A second similar ditch on the same alignment (404001) lay 13 m to the south-east. It too continued no further north-east that the later post-medieval ditch 402001. These two ditches were probably associated, and may even have formed two sides of the same enclosure, the north-eastern side of which was subsequently truncated.

Two pits lay in the area to the east of 401029 and to the north of 406003–407001 and 402024 (Fig. 9.27). The former was a deep sub-rectangular pit, whilst the latter was sub-circular and shallower. Neither contained any specific evidence for their function, although the depth of 407001 hints at it being used as a well or waterhole. Both were filled with a mixture of natural deposits and dumped deposits, some of which incorporated pottery and fired clay, with some animal bone in 407001.

Two small gullies and a large irregular pit lay to the south of 406003. The former, (gullies 409048 and 401032) were shallow, and both filled naturally, although sherds of coarse pottery were recovered from the latter. The large irregular pit (405083) may have been used as a quarry for clay, perhaps for use as building material. The boulder clay of the area is admirably suited to us as cob or as a component of daub (Macphail and Crowther, CD Chapter 30). This pit was left open for some time after it was dug allowing a primary fill to form, before more rapid backfilling events, possibly including dumping episodes. Small quantities of domestic material (animal bone, pottery and fired clay) came from these fills.

Two sub-rectangular pits lay to the east of post-medieval ditch 402001 (403021, 402022, Fig. 9.27). These were both

shallow features, of uncertain function, and both filled with a single gradually accumulated silt clay fill containing small quantities of pottery.

Later settlement on the site

Similar activity continued into the 14th and possibly the 15th century. The road or track probably remained in use (with a horseshoe of a type introduced in the late 13th–mid-14th century and common throughout the late medieval period found on top of the surface), and the settlement thrived, with areas of flint cobbling lain to provide surfaces both within and outside buildings, and a number of large sub-rectangular pits were also dug (Fig. 9.29).

There were two main areas of activity, separated by two parallel ditches (402016 and 406004). The southerly

of the two, 406004, was a recut of the earlier ditch on the same alignment (see 406003 above) and did not continue further east than the line of post-medieval ditch 402001. Ditch 402016 did however continue further to the north-east, and may have separated the two areas of activity. The space between these two ditches may have been used as a trackway leading to land to the north-east, although it does not appear to have been metalled.

There is clear evidence for settlement on the site in the form of two buildings – one to the south of ditch 402016 and one to the north (Figs 9.29–9.30). Both were defined by areas of neatly laid cobbling (medieval building 1 and medieval building 2).

Figure 9.29: 14th- and early 15th-century settlement



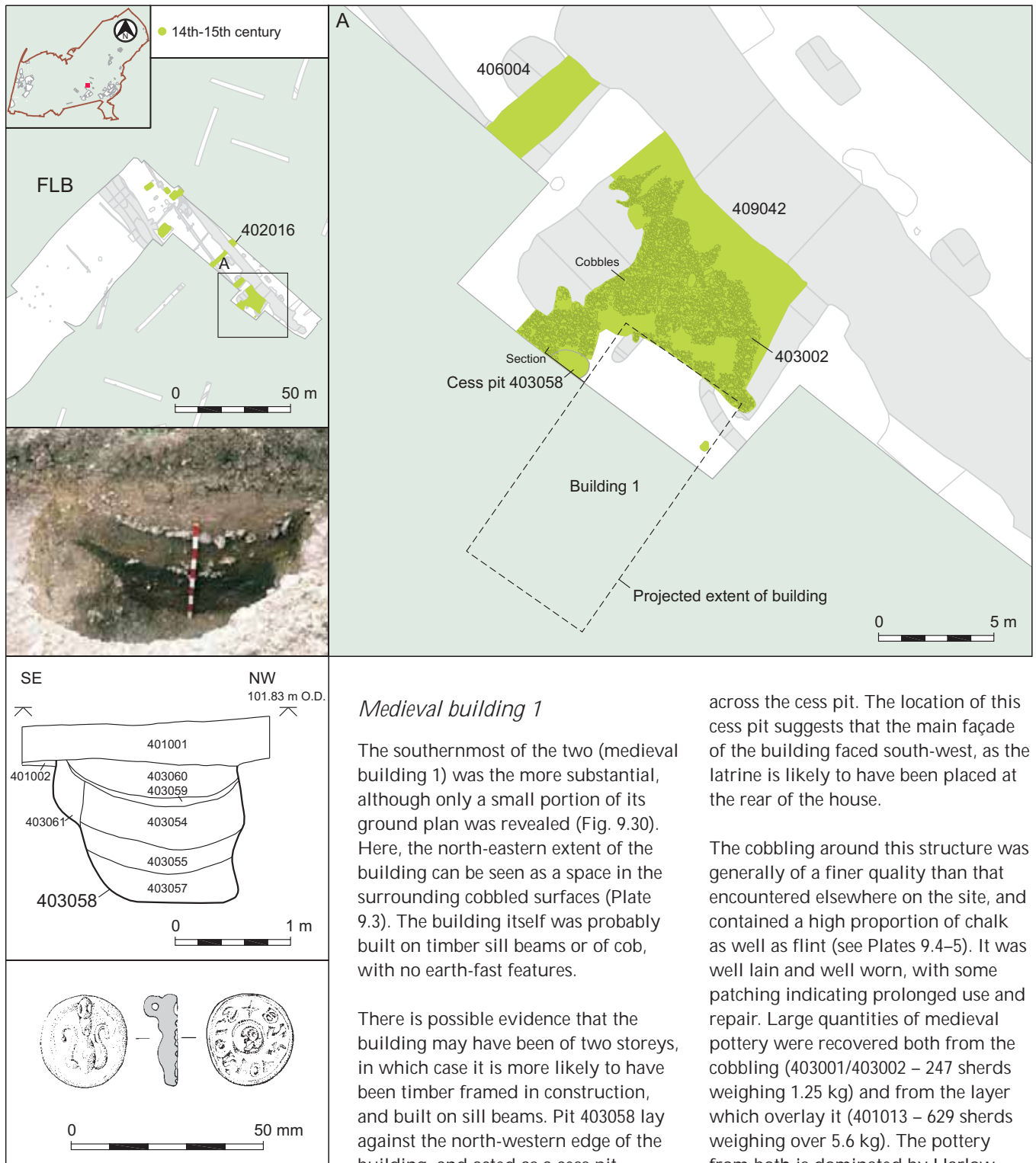


Figure 9.30: Medieval building 1 and associated features, including cess pit 403058. The lead seal matrix (bottom) was recovered from the cobbling adjacent to the building

Medieval building 1

The southernmost of the two (medieval building 1) was the more substantial, although only a small portion of its ground plan was revealed (Fig. 9.30). Here, the north-eastern extent of the building can be seen as a space in the surrounding cobbled surfaces (Plate 9.3). The building itself was probably built on timber sill beams or of cob, with no earth-fast features.

There is possible evidence that the building may have been of two storeys, in which case it is more likely to have been timber framed in construction, and built on sill beams. Pit 403058 lay against the north-western edge of the building, and acted as a cess pit, probably for a garderobe at first floor level. The lowest fills of this feature (403055 and 403057) were both organic-rich silts and comprised decayed cess mixed with some charcoal and fired clay and presumably represent the last use of the feature (Fig. 9.30). Once these deposits had accumulated, the pit was deliberately backfilled (403054). At this stage the building was still in use, as a cobbled surface (403059) was laid

across the cess pit. The location of this cess pit suggests that the main façade of the building faced south-west, as the latrine is likely to have been placed at the rear of the house.

The cobbling around this structure was generally of a finer quality than that encountered elsewhere on the site, and contained a high proportion of chalk as well as flint (see Plates 9.4–5). It was well laid and well worn, with some patching indicating prolonged use and repair. Large quantities of medieval pottery were recovered both from the cobbling (403001/403002 – 247 sherds weighing 1.25 kg) and from the layer which overlay it (401013 – 629 sherds weighing over 5.6 kg). The pottery from both is dominated by Harlow ware fabrics, with the only other significant fabric comprising medieval coarseware. Jugs and jars dominate the assemblage. Animal bones from these deposits included cattle, sheep/goat, fallow deer, horse and pig, and a small number of oyster shells were also found. Numerous household artefacts were also recovered including a copper alloy finger ring, two buckles, an annular brooch, a key, a hinge pivot,



Plate 9.3: Medieval building 1 and surrounding cobbles



Plate 9.4: Excavating a medieval cobbled surface on the FLB site



Plate 9.5: The cobbled surface associated with medieval building 1

a lead seal matrix (Fig. 9.30), a broken scale tang knife, three horseshoes, a socketed barbed arrowhead and nails (Allen, CD Chapter 15). All of these suggest that the building was essentially a domestic structure, whilst some of the objects, notably the brooch and the lead seal matrix, indicating inhabitants of some status.

Medieval building 2

Four large sub-rectangular pits were dug (401003, 401021, 403029 and 403031) close to the earlier pits, whilst a small sunken floored building (406024 – medieval building 2) was built close to the road (Fig. 9.29).

As with medieval building 1, the load bearing walls of medieval building 2 left no traces below ground. Instead, the only evidence for a building is the presence of a sunken floor (406024). This comprised a large shallow sub-rectangular feature, 5.7 m by 3.8 m, and 0.52 m deep. It had shallow sloping sides and a flat base. A cobbled surface (406019) was laid over the sunken area; it predominantly comprised medium-sized flint cobbles with a smaller proportion of chalk inclusions (Fig. 9.29). This was a fairly rough surface, and had little wear or patching. It was sealed by a mixed deposit that probably accumulated during the use of the floor and after the structure fell into disuse. The pottery from both the cobbling and the layer which sealed it is dominated by sherds of Harlow ware vessels.

It is not possible to speculate from the remains found whether the sunken floor represents the extent of the entire building in this spot or whether it was part of a larger structure, no other traces of which now survive.

Four sub-rectangular pits were excavated to the north of this building. As with their 13th century predecessors these comprised a mixture of deep and shallow pits. Of these four, pits 401003 and 401021 were both shallow (Plate 9.6), whilst intercutting pits 403029 and 403031 were both over 1.5 m deep. The former both contained slowly accumulated silty deposits possibly indicating their use as tanks or waterholes. Pits 403029 and 403031, however, both appear to have been deliberately filled with dumps of material incorporating domestic waste. The function of these pits is unclear, although the most likely explanation is that they were dug as tanks to hold liquid, possibly as part of an industrial process. The deliberate backfilling of 403029 and 403031 may

reflect the potential danger that these may have offered the inhabitants of nearby buildings had such deep pits been left open to silt up naturally.



Plate 9.6: Pit 401003 from the south-east

Status and economy in the 13th century

Settlement on the site in the 13th century probably developed from nearby activity or occupation in the 12th century. Its location may have been influenced by the construction of the trackway, which cannot be dated any earlier than the 13th century, although it may have replaced an earlier track.

The site itself almost certainly represents a domestic settlement, although the large number of pits excavated, many of which may have acted as tanks, may also indicate some industrial activity on the site. Although there is only limited evidence for buildings on the site in the 13th century, the quantities of pottery and other domestic waste recovered clearly indicate a small settlement of some affluence. This is borne out by the features and material associated with medieval building 1.

The character of the pottery assemblage is exclusively domestic, with some pretensions to status, in the form of the aquamanile (Fig. 9.28) and the Saintonge ware. Despite this, non-local finewares are not common – most of the pottery comes from the local Harlow-based industry, including both kitchenwares and glazed fineware jugs. Similarly high proportions of Harlow ware were recorded on two sites previously excavated at the airport (LBS and The Wilderness; Walker 2004a) There is a fairly restricted range of vessel forms,

dominated by jars (presumably multi-functional) and jugs, with very few specialist forms present.

Although only a small quantity of metalwork was recovered from the site, and much of that is what might be expected on any domestic site, the presence of the lead seal, annular brooch and copper alloy ring do hint at some wealth. The recovery of a socketed arrowhead from one context associated medieval building 1 may also point to some hunting being carried out.

Only small quantities of animal bone were recorded from the site – too few to allow detailed analysis. The presence of the major domesticates – cattle, sheep/goat and horse, along with some red deer bone is what might be expected from a small rural settlement with access to woodland, whilst no significant waterlogged, charred plant remains or charcoal-rich assemblages worthy of analysis were recovered to allow for a more complete reconstruction of the environment and economy of the site.

Early 13th–15th-century settlement

In the 14th century the manor of Stansted Hall passed to the Vere family. The manor of Bentfieldbury passed to the Howard family at the end of the century, and was inherited by the Veres in the 15th century. They also bought the manor of Burnells late in the century (Morant 1768, ii, 577–8; NA DL29/41/803; E326/6293). Thremhall Priory retained its home manor in Stansted and Takeley parishes, but in 1375 there was a quarrel in the house between Richard de Branketre and John Takeley about who should be Prior; this required the intervention of the Archbishop of Canterbury (NA SC1/56 no. 46).

Waltham Abbey, Colchester Abbey and Tilty Abbey retained their Takeley manors in the late medieval period. The Crown held these manors during ecclesiastical vacancies. As an alien monastery, the Abbey of St Valéry had its priory at Takeley temporarily

confiscated by the Crown at various times in its perennial struggle with the Abbey's overlords the French kings, as in 1324/5 and 1348 (NA C270/17/21; E106/6/8; E106/7/3; SC6/1125/10 and 11; NCO 13001). As the Hundred Years War continued into its sixth decade, St Valéry's English properties became more trouble than they were worth and so the Abbot sold them to William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, in 1391. He used them to endow his foundations at Winchester College in Winchester and New College in Oxford. The Middlesex manors passed to Winchester College; Warish Hall and the other Essex manors became the property of New College (*VCHE* ii, 200; Brunel and Salter 1910, nos vii–xi from NCO 13151, 12905, 12906, 12894, 12895, 12914, 13020; NCO 9745 ff 48v–55). Bassingbournes manor was retained until the end of the medieval period by the Bassingbourne family, as tenants of the Playz, the Howards and the Veres of Bentfieldbury (Morant 1768, ii, 574). A manorial court was held there by Henry VII's Exchequer officials in January 1490 (ERO D/DB M63).

A common phenomenon in the late 13th and early 14th centuries was the emergence of sub-manors, although it is not clear why this should have taken place. Sometimes these were established as secondary settlements within existing arable fields. Manorial lords appear to have created sub-manors by sub-infeudation to pass on the burdens of military tenure. They also added to their local political support and most immediately produced money fines (Muir 2000, 181; Williamson 2004, 46). Some of these so-called manors may never have held courts of their own, and were therefore not true manors in the legal sense.

The Stansted manors had fragmented in the late 13th century by division between co-heiresses. Some of the fragments were re-united as Stansted Hall, but Burnells emerged as a separate manor in the 14th century. This was a small manor rather than technically a sub-manor; it was held in chief from the Crown by the service of a tenth of a knight's fee. The former demesne lands of Stansted to the east

of Bury Lodge Lane were divided between the manors of Stansted Hall and Burnells. The common field strips in Stoney Field and Bargate Field were also divided between these two manors (HALS Cassiobury Collection 8234). Tenants' holdings in these two manors, and in Bentfieldbury, were transferred at three separate manorial courts. The manorial court of Burnells was supposedly held at the castle of Stansted until its demolition, and then transferred to an 'old house' near the bridge into Stansted town (Muilman 1770, 20).

All five of the Takeley manors were small manors with their own manor houses and manorial courts. In the 14th and 15th century Warish Hall manor developed a sub-manor at Sheering Hall. This first emerged as a composite landholding in the hands of Geoffrey and Margaret Sheryng in the early decades of the 14th century. In 1328 Geoffrey bought *Newelonde* from the Bassingbournes (NCO 12624). In 1329 he purchased the lands formerly held by John de Sampford, entrusted a few years earlier by his widow Sarah to John de Welde of Laver, comprising 120 acres of arable, 6 acres of meadow, 3 acres of pasture and 3 acres of wood (*FFE* ii 220; iii, 8). He also bought 8 acres at *Girmergisland* adjacent to Fewell's Field and other customary lands from John Gyrmargy (NCO 13137). After Geoffrey's death, the manor was occupied by Sir Thomas de Hemenhale, but Margaret Sheryng was able to recover it, and subsequently sold it to John Hokkeley and his wife Elizabeth in 1375 (NCO 13138). The Hokkeleys sold the manor to William Bennebury in 1422, by which time it had grown to a total of 188 acres (*FFE* iii 273; NCO 3721, 12975). For the remainder of the 15th century it was held by the Bennebury family, which added other pieces of land to it, including the lands of John Bernard in 1428, 9 acres in Norwood by an exchange with New College in 1436 for the same area in the Leys next to Catley, and the 5 acre holding of John Tipswayne in 1442 (ERO T/A 316 no. 697; NCO 12647, 12962, 13160). Much of this land was held from the manor of Warish Hall by customary tenure, and the services and rents of capons due from it to the

parent manor lapsed and were discontinued during the course of the century (NCO 3698 mm 1–3, 3721, 13137, 13144). William Bennebury's widow Margaret leased the manor to her son William the younger in 1459, reserving for herself the newly-built end of the manor house and two corner stables (NCO 12595). William Bennebury the younger fought for the Lancastrians in the Wars of the Roses in 'dyverse confliccions and bataill'. He later fled the country and was outlawed in 1473 for high treason and felony, when the manor was granted by Edward IV to Walter Matthew (Morant 1768, ii, 574; NA C1/55/120–21). However, William later recovered the manor; his son Nicholas Bennebury still held it in the 1520s (*FFE* iv, 280; NCO 12646, 13091, 13144). Although it was called a separate manor in the 15th century, there is no evidence that Sheering Hall had its own manorial court. In the post-medieval centuries Warish Hall and Sheering Hall were tenanted as two separate farms from New College, and paid rents in money, wheat and malt. In the 19th century Sheering Hall Farm measured more than 253 acres (NCO 1503, 1575; see Fig. 9.11).

The division of manors to form sub-manors is often linked to the digging of rectangular moats, and prominent tenants might also build moated houses. The manor houses of Thremhall Priory, Colchester Hall, Waltham Hall, Tilty Grange, Warish Hall and Sheering Hall were all on moated sites, which probably appeared at the peak period of moat construction in c 1200–1325. The excavation of the moats of Colchester Hall found that they had been repeatedly scoured out until the 19th century. The apparent semi-circular moat on the east side of the site of Bassingbournes manor house was a ha-ha associated with the 18th-century house of John Kendall; in the tithe survey it is called Ha-Ha Piece (RCHM(E) 1916, 276, 300–1; English Heritage 1989, 18; ERO D/CT 342A no. 351; Fig. 9.9). After the abandonment of the Waltham Hall manor house site, the manorial courts were held in a farm house at the south end of Green End. The courts of Warish Hall manor house continued to

be held at the house built on the site of Takeley Priory in the post-medieval period (Morant 1768, ii, 572–3; ERO D/Y 1/1/77/1). On the Chapman and André county map of 1777 the farm called Fanns is mislabelled as Warish Hall (Fig. 9.24). In the later medieval period several other moated houses were established in the study area, including those at Smith's Green and Jack's Green. There are a number of moated sites still extant, which are presumably medieval in origin, but some of them may be 17th century in date (RCHM(E) 1916, 300–1).

This clayland area of Essex is one of the greatest concentrations of moated sites in the country. Moats provided a degree of defence, and more in the form of psychological reinforcement. They protected livestock and stored crops from wild beasts and robbers; supplied water for the livestock to drink and to extinguish the inevitable fires in the wooden buildings; and they could be stocked with fish and swans. Most of all they symbolised the exclusive qualities of their owners and were therefore an indication of status; this mark of social position filtered down the ranks of society from the aristocracy to the lesser knights and gentry by the 13th and early 14th centuries, and reached the freemen and more prosperous peasants by the late 14th and early 15th century (Cantor 1982, 138–43).

The 13th–15th-century settlement found on the FLB site almost certainly belonged to the manor of Bassingbournes. As the buildings (medieval building 1 and medieval building 2) lay just within the primary enclosure of this manor (Fig. 9.31), as later represented by Ireland Ley and Knight's Pasture (see above), they may have formed a part of the core manorial structures. This may account for the high-status domestic artefacts found in association with them. Typical Essex tenant holdings of the late medieval period had 2–5 buildings, entirely timber-framed with wattle-and-daub walls. Kitchens and bakehouses were normally separate buildings. Halls were 12–16 ft (3.66–4.88 m) wide, and two or more bays long. Cross-wings, partitions, chambers and solars were being added

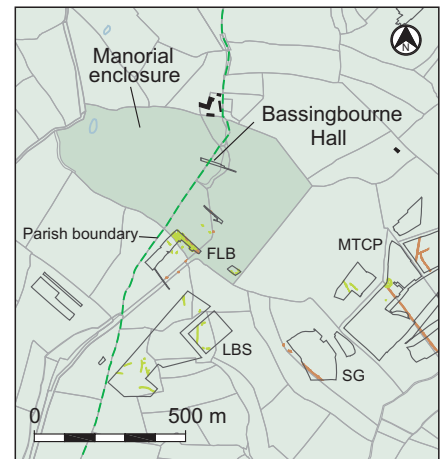


Figure 9.31: The FLB site and the manorial enclosure surrounding Bassingbourne Hall

at this period. The increasing structural elaboration reflects the rise in living standards of their occupants, in contrast to the cottages and rooms sub-let to poor labourers and craftsmen (Poos 1991, 73–88).

Some details of contemporary buildings in Takeley provide some points of comparison. A deed of 1384 permits the grantee to mend his grange at Hangyng Croft in Takeley with roofing and daubing (ERO D/DK/T129). In the manor court of Thremhall Priory in 1388/89 Richard and Matilda Hankyn took the tenancy of a holding called Petits in Takeley, and were provided with sufficient timber to build houses. In the same court in 1393 John Litfot was permitted to repair *Gardinerestement*, which consisted of a domestic house with chambers annexed to it, a bakehouse, a grange, a building called Longehous, a chamber which had been knocked down next to the gate and a cart-house, all surrounded by an enclosure of walls and hedges (ERO D/DWv/M15 mm 2, 3). Repairs to the sub-manor house of Benneburys or Sheering in 1527/28 included carpentry work on the groundsills and wall-studs, and daubing its walls. The carpenter also rebuilt the end walls of the barn and kitchen, and put new groundsills in the kitchen. The buildings were roofed with tiles; bricks, lime, sand, laths and nails were also used in the renovations (NCO 13091).

Some late medieval industrial pits were found at the FLB site, but there is little sign of industry in medieval Takeley.

Reference	NA SC6/1125/10	NA C270/17/21
Date	1324/5	1348
Wheat	117	50
Barley	-	3.5
Oats	100	30
Dredge (barley/oats)	8	-
Beans	5.25	-
Peas/pulses	-	12
Meadow	-	16

Table 9.2: Takeley: acreage of demesne crops sown

The names of some of the 13th- and 14th-century tenants indicates that there was pottery-making and tanning taking place within the parish (Moore 1897, 357; Macaulay and Russell 1940, 80; LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 49, 53; NCO 9745 f37v, 12935–6, 12942, 12953, 12957). In 1388 Thremhall manor had a field called *le Tyl pecces* (ERO D/DWv M15 m3). Warish Hall manor had a toft called *Pothoushawe* in 1379, and a field called *Postumfeld* or *Pottersfeld* in the 15th century, perhaps to be related to the two 12th–14th-century pottery kilns found at the A120 site 40 (NCO 3698 m5, 3721). A field next to the Bassingbournes manorial enclosure was called Brick Kiln Field at the tithe survey, but had previously been called Dovehouse Field (ERO D/CT 342A no. 354). There was also a Kiln House Field adjacent to the site of Waltham Hall manor (ERO D/CT 342A no. 75).

Similarly there is little evidence of trade between the study area and places at a distance. In c 1200 Fulco the Merchant of Stortford held land in Takeley (BL Additional Charter 58458). In 1271 cloth appears to have been sold there, and the wife of Simon Gorremothe forestalled the market (NA SC2/173/30). When the manor of Warish Hall was in royal hands in 1324/25 wheat was sent to Tilebridge, and then by boat to London, where it was delivered to the Sheriff of Essex for the king's use. Other wheat and beans was delivered to the other nearby St Valéry manors of Widdington and Lindsell (NA SC6/1125/10 mm 1, 1d). In the early 16th century wheat was sent from Takeley rectory to Woodstock (ERO D/DCe A17).

Reference	NA SC6/1125/10	NA C270/17/21	NCO 13087	NCO 13087	ERO D/DCe A17
Date	1324/5	1348	1349/50	1350/1	c1500
Wheat in stock	593.5	32	-	-	184
Wheat sold	16	-	384	368	-
Barley in stock	-	-	-	-	320
Oats in stock	794.5	48	-	-	-
Oats sold	-	-	384	96	-
Beans in stock	75	16	-	-	-
Beans sold	15	-	-	-	-
Peas/pulses in stock	-	24	-	-	78
Peas sold	-	-	56	16	-

Table 9.3: Takeley: crops in bushels

A few surviving manorial accounts show what crops were being grown on the demesne lands of some of the Takeley manors in particular years, and what livestock was being kept (Tables 9.2–4). In October 1324 the demesne equipment of Warish Hall manor included three iron ploughs. In the grange were 20 quarters of wheat and 3 quarters of beans, but no oats, hay or forage. The manorial servants included four ploughmen, a reaper, a carter, a cowman and a pigman; his 15 pigs were all slaughtered for the king's larder (BL Additional MS 6164, 190, 192; NA E106/7/3; SC6/1125/10 mm 1, 1d). In 1348 the equipment included one plough with all its equipment, an iron-bound cart, two hay-carts, a pair of harrows, a spade, a shovel and a dung-fork, a winnowing fan and a quernstone. There were also 40 planks made from demesne timber and a ladder. Wheat, oats, beans, peas and malt were in store (NA C270/17/21).

By the later medieval period the lords of the manors were exploiting and occasionally over-exploiting the woodlands. The manor of Bentfieldbury, as held by the Playz family in 1269, 1303 and 1327, included an area of cut woodland called *Tailz* near Thremhall Priory, measuring 80 or 100 acres in extent, and including brushwood and pasture. Before his death in 1302 Giles Playz stripped this wood of timber trees and underwood, to the extent that there would be nothing left for sale for three years (*CIPM* i 226; iv 80; vii 25). In the late 16th century this woodland was called *Tales Woode* (NA REQ2/88/29); it is to be identified with Taylors Wood on the south-east boundary of Stansted parish (see Fig. 9.33). In 1308 the manor of Warish Hall had

20 acres of wood, producing commodities worth *6s per annum* (NCO 13165). In 1324 it had 40 acres of woodland from which no profit could be derived because they had been wasted (BL Additional MS 6164, 190; NA E106/7/3). In 1402/3 the manor sold 4 acres of wood to Robert Cokeston and Thomas Flemynge for £10 (Miller 1991, 409). The woodlands of the manor were still retained in the hands of New College and producing underwood for sale in 1473–5, when the demesne arable, pasture and meadow lands had been leased out to a farmer (Thorold Rogers 1882, iii, 712). By contrast tenants were fined for cutting down trees on their bond holdings, as in the case of Thremhall Priory's tenant William Payn in 1371 (ERO D/DWv M14 m3); and on demesne land, as in the case of Warish Hall's tenant John Nel for an oak at Northwood in 1401 (NCO 3698 m3).

Reference	NA SC6/1125/10	NA C270/17/21
Date	1324/5	1348
Horses	1	-
Plough-horses	12	6
Cart horses	2	-
Oxen	6	4
Bulls	1	1
Cows	10	12
Bullocks	4	4
Calves	5	-
Boars	1	-
Sows	2	-
Pigs	15	11
Hoggets	30	-
Piglets	9	-
Ewes	-	88
Lambs	-	30
Geese	-	10
Peacocks	4	-
Chickens	-	5

Table 9.4: Takeley: livestock on the demesne

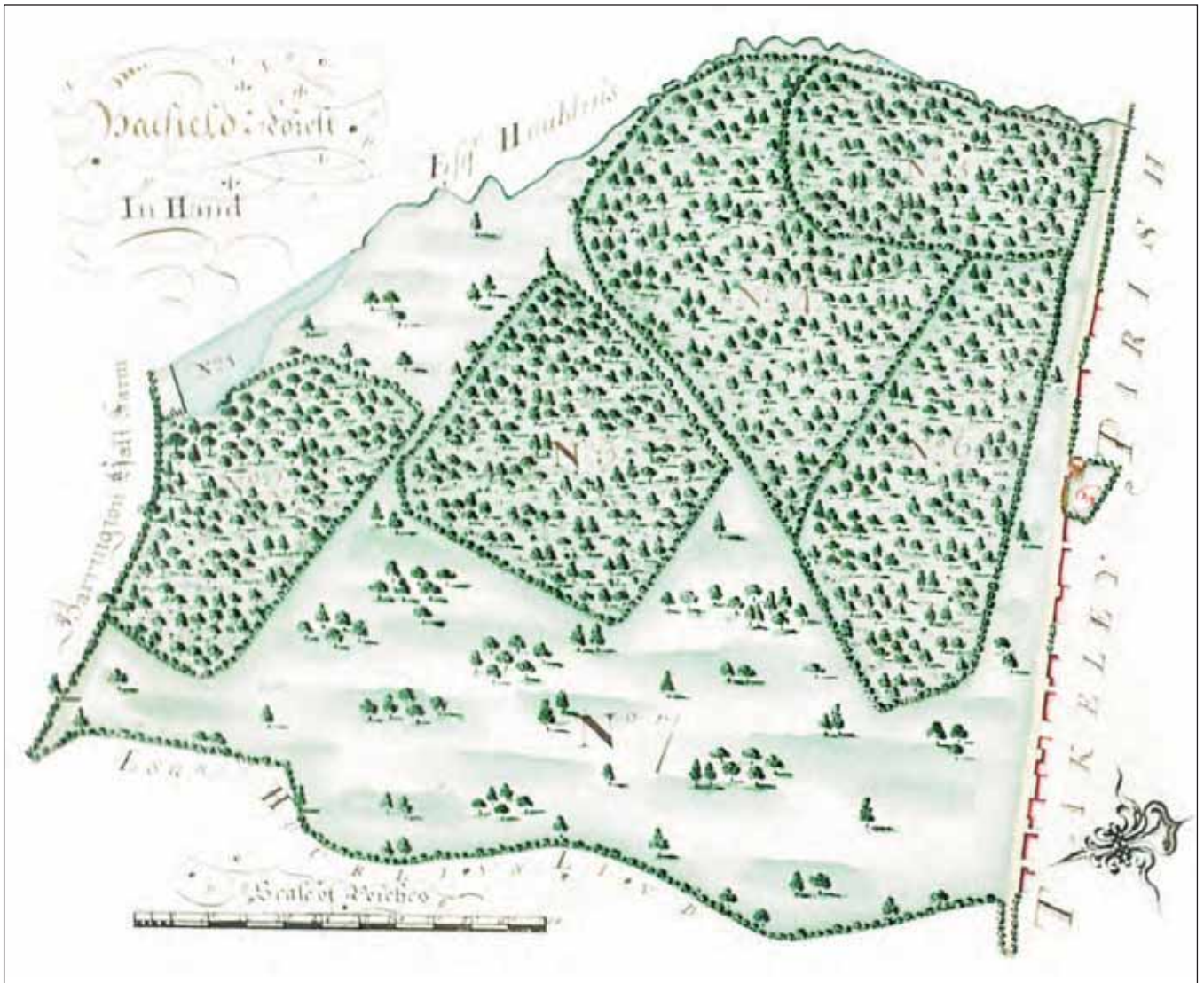


Figure 9.32: Wood Row Quarter, part of Hatfield Forest to the south of Takeley Street 1766 (from ERO D/DQ 14/38)

The villein tenants of the manors had holdings which each consisted of a series of cultivated strips in the common fields, allotted doles of meadow land and rights of pasture, in return for services performed for the lord of the manor on his demesne lands. The work services due from the tenants to the lord were regulated by customs which varied from manor to manor. Tenants paid a fine called a heriot to the lord when they inherited their holdings, normally consisting of their 'best beast'. In Takeley the burden of services appears to have been relatively light, due to the multiplicity of manors and the scattered pattern of settlement. Many of the tenants held land in several of the manors. The Takeley custumal of the early 14th century specifies terms under which the Warish Hall tenants held their tenancies, but is not

very specific about the works to be rendered in the manor: tenant holdings were virgates or half-virgates and could not be sold without licence; a tenant who commuted his service works to a money payment, remained servile in status; widows were entitled to their late husbands' holdings as their 'free bench', but women and girls were not allowed to marry outside the manor without licence. It was stated that all tenants with horses were obliged to do one day's ploughing in Whitsun week (Brunel and Salter 1910, no. xiii, from NCO 13121; some of the terms are repeated at NCO 9745 f36).

The services due were not often specified in land transfers. In the 13th century Walter Lenvoisie as a free tenant of Warish Hall manor was obliged to bring his plough to two

free boon-works of the manor for four days each year (Brunel and Salter 1910, no. ii, from NCO 12955; NCO 13141). In 1294 the Prior of Takeley claimed from John Malepete the work of two men at the free boon-work and harvest service for half a virgate of land (NCO 13029). In rent rolls of the late 13th century and 1302 the Prior's tenants owed the service of finding men to work for both the 'dry boonwork' and the 'boonwork with ale', mowing hay, weeding the fields and gathering nuts, ploughing and reaping at harvest time, sowing and fallowing (NCO 9745 ff 34–39v). In 1376 John Parker held a messuage and 16 acres of land (probably a half-virgate), and was liable to reap 4½ acres at three boon-works in the harvest, to provide three men to heap hay without any dinner, and to do carrying service with his

horse at Whitsun if he was forewarned by the lord (NCO 13093). In 1423 John Hokkele owed a day's ploughing and sowing on the demesne land each year for 16 acres of customary land (NCO 3721). Similar services were owed by tenants of Waltham Hall manor in 1398/9 (LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 23).

The surviving manorial extents, accounts and rentals include mentions of numbers of days of work to be rendered by tenants, and their monetary value. In 1324 two of the Warish Hall tenants owed 98 works between them a year, and another owed five works every fourth week, each work being worth a half-penny (BL Additional MS 6164, 190; NA E106/7/3). In the following accounting year 11 tenants did a day's ploughing and sowing at the wheat season, and some of the other works owed were used for digging a watercourse (NA SC6/1125/10 mm 1, 1d). At the Prior's court held in 1376 many of the tenants did not turn up to acknowledge the services that they owed (NCO 13093). At this time Thremhall Priory tenants owed threshing services (ERO D/DWv M14 m3). In the late 15th century the works owed by each of the Colchester Hall tenants generally consisted of reaping 1 acre of wheat at the harvest, and helping to make hay in a 3 acre meadow (ERO D/DRu M3).

By the 13th century areas of manorial waste were regarded as part of the property of the lords of the manors, but tenants had common grazing rights on them. Customary rents of poultry and eggs were often due from tenants in return for these grazing privileges (Stamper 1988, 135; Williamson 2004, 92). The tenants of Warish Hall owed 29 hens and 39 capons at Christmas, and 12 eggs at Easter (BL Additional MS 6164, 190; NA E106/7/3; SC6/1125/10 m1). In the late 13th century one tenant paid an annual rent of one ploughshare and small sums were collected for *wardsilver* (NCO 9745 ff 34v–39v). In the 15th century the widow of John Cowper also paid one ploughshare (Thorold Rogers 1882, iii, 711). Thremhall Priory tenants also owed capons (ERO D/DWv M15 mm 1,

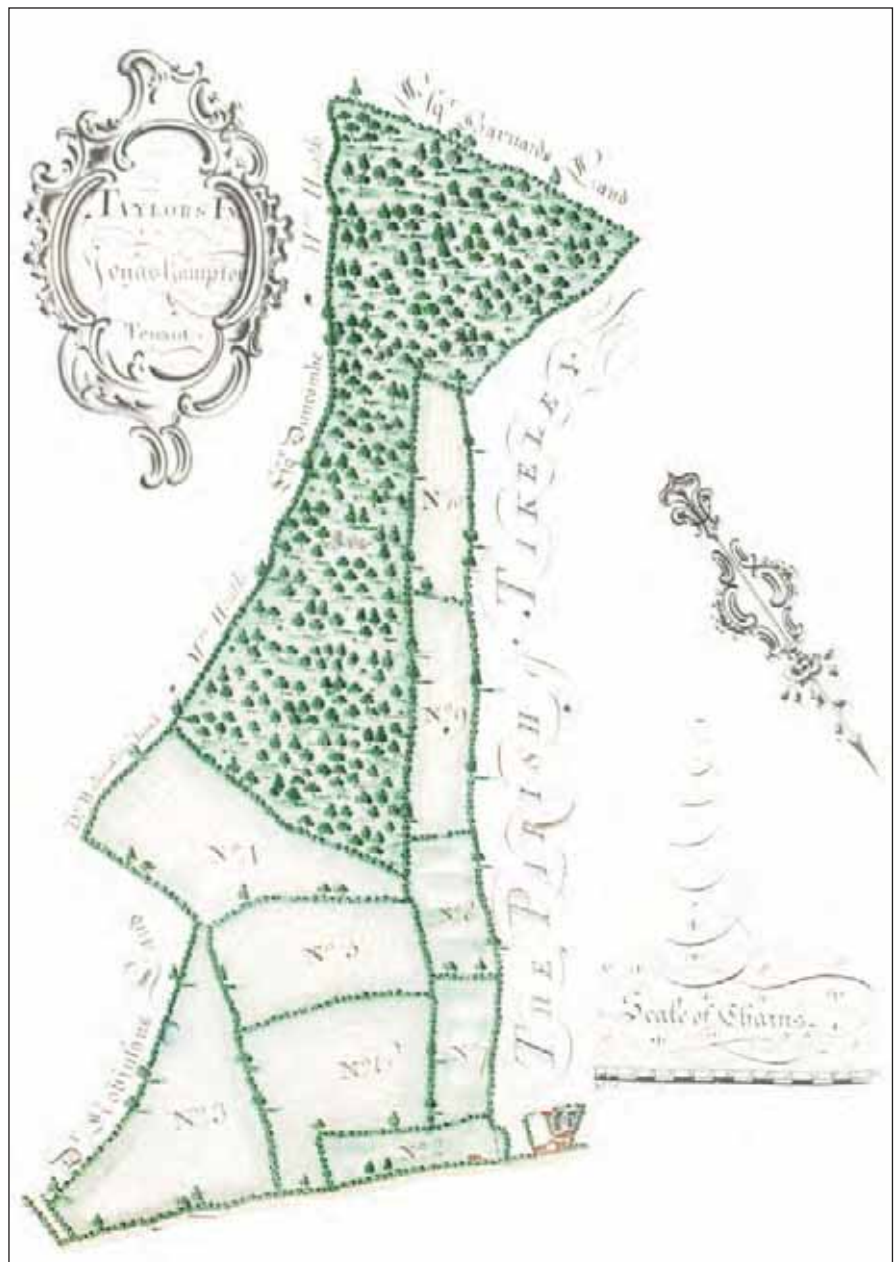


Figure 9.33: Plan of land on Taylor's Farm, Takeley 1766 (from ERO D/DQ 14/38)

3). In the 15th century the descendants of the villeins became customary tenants, their title to their lands being registered in the manorial courts as copyhold land.

The inhabitants of the manors were divided into geographical associations called tithings. These tithings originated in groups of 10 householders who stood security for each other's conduct; they were each represented by an elected tithingman, and their actions were reviewed at the view of *frankpledge* which was normally held at the same time as a manorial court. The fines of the court and the right to

impose a tallage on the villeins were also sources of annual profit to the lord of the manor. Warish Hall tenants were obliged to pay a tallage to the Abbot of Saint Valéry when he visited England, theoretically every three or four years (Brunel and Salter 1910, no. xiii, from NCO 13121; NCO 9745 f36v). The Colchester Hall customary tenants owed a recognition payment of 70s and a palfrey to each new Abbot of Colchester on his creation (NA SC6/1107/15).

Throughout the 13th century the population of England had continued to rise until it reached critical levels.

After 1280 the balance between population levels and food resources was delicate enough for the English to be described as 'calamity-sensitive'. It was the poorer sections of society that were likely to suffer high mortality in periods of bad harvests and high corn prices. The year 1294 was one of famine in East Anglia. Crops were destroyed in the fields by heavy rains and fungus, and the price of corn rose six-fold (Kershaw 1973, 37; Rawcliffe 1999, 14).

The most widespread famine of the period was in 1315–1317, which resulted from a series of bad harvests and was accompanied in 1316 by an epidemic of an enteric type, which may have been typhoid. Contemporary chroniclers recorded the great mortality amongst the poor in this year, and the large numbers of burials in all cemeteries. There was an unprecedented inflation in grain prices, which lasted until a better harvest in 1317 halved the price levels. Alongside the famine was a sheep murrain, which was followed in 1319 by a disease which wiped out large numbers of cattle and oxen. Starvation was therefore compounded by epidemics of animal disease, which remained prevalent until 1322. As more cattle died, the price of livestock escalated, and the means of restarting arable production was lacking. There may have been an overall loss in the human population of about 10% in these years, and many peasant smallholders abandoned their landholdings, becoming vagrants and refugees. Over the next few decades the level of population was unable to recover fully, and it was to suffer a more lasting reduction in the greater mortality of the Black Death in 1348–9 (Kershaw 1973, 10–14, 29, 46, 49–50; Rawcliffe 1999, 14–15). The Warish Hall account of 1324/5 noted that there had been a great frost for 14 days that winter (NA SC6/1125/10 m 1d).

The Black Death and its effects

The manorial economies of the study area suffered a general agricultural decline in the 14th and 15th centuries. Like most parishes in England the

fortunes of Stansted and Takely began to change with the transformation of climatic conditions and the increase in population late in the 13th century. The shock to the agricultural economy often led to the shrinkage of cultivated areas and settlements, a retreat from marginal land, and the abandonment of direct exploitation of demesnes by manorial lords.

The wave of pestilence called the Black Death arrived in England in the summer of 1348, and devastated the population of the towns and countryside for the next 18 months. There were later visitations of the plague in 1361–2, 1369, 1374–1379 and 1390–1393, which had more long-term effects on the capacity for recovery. Calculations from demesne grain yields suggest that there was a fall of about 40% in the English population between 1300 and 1375, a figure consistent with the estimates from the Poll Tax returns (Campbell 2000, 402).

In Essex after the Black Death the surviving manorial tenants commuted their labour obligations into money payments and became copyholders. The tenants' services came to be changed into cash payments at different times in different manors; this appears to have been accomplished relatively early on the small manors of Takeley parish, but not without difficulty. In 1294 after prolonged negotiation and arbitration Prior John of Takeley agreed to commute the labour services of John Malepete to Warish Hall manor for an annual payment of 2d; the agreement could still be revoked by either party (NCO 13029). In 1336 Prior Andrew of Takeley claimed that his tenant William Wychard was a bondman of Warish Hall manor and evicted him for refusing to do services; Wychard then brought an action for trespass against him. When the Prior went to Stratford-at-Bow with his attorneys and servants to defend the case they were attacked in their lodging by Wychard's London friends and fled across the Thames to Kent, fearing to appear before the justices. Strangers came and lurked in the woods at Takeley, asking menacingly about the movements of the Prior and his people,

and then killed his manorial steward half a league from the Priory. Eventually Wychard was found not to be a bondman, but the perpetrators of the assault were ordered to be placed in Colchester Castle gaol (*VCH* ii, 199; CPR 1334–8 365; NA SC8/296/14796).

In the general shortage of labour which followed the reduction of the population, the balance of advantage swung to the tenants against the lords. Hired labour was often substituted for customary service, which became more difficult to enforce on reluctant peasants sulking and skulking over their work, prone to petty acts of obstruction and insubordination. The remaining labour services were commuted to money payments and emancipations were sold to bond tenants. As a result the diet of the poorer sections of society improved, and ale consumption *per capita* also increased (Fryde 1996, 32, 128, 134; Campbell 2000, 430–1). Mass death had its compensations for the survivors.

The impact of famine episodes, the Black Death and later plagues in the 14th century on settlement patterns and land-use can be traced directly in manors with surviving court rolls of the appropriate dates: those of both Thremhall Priory and Warish Hall begin in 1356/7. Tenants of Thremhall Priory were convicted of charging high wages under the Statute of Labourers in 1357, and lost their holdings. There were refusals to do labour services on the manor in 1368–72. The lord's pound was also broken into, and his hedges broken down (ERO D/DWv M14 mm 2–6). Several tenants of Warish Hall manor were refusing to do their customary services at harvest and hay-making in 1399 (NCO 3698 m1).

In these circumstances many manors found it difficult to find tenants to work the customary holdings. Houses and lands were deserted. Tenants were fined for allowing their buildings to become ruinous, as manorial lords tried to preserve this asset for a future when there might again be a good supply of willing peasants (Fryde 1996, 32, 123). Lords frequently ordered their bond tenants to undertake repairs, but

nevertheless redundant tenants' houses were abandoned, as at the house, kitchen and granary excavated at Roundwood (English Heritage 1989, 20; Hunter 1999, 124; Havis and Brooks 2004). Waltham Hall manor could not find a tenant for the holding of John Bumpsted and his daughter Margery, who probably both died in plagues in 1347/8 and 1362/3 respectively, nor for the holding of Robert Tonym in 1363/4 (LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 22, 40). Several cottages in Warish Hall manor were in the hands of the Prior of Takeley in 1356 for lack of tenants (NCO 3697 m19). Thremhall Priory ordered William Payne and Simon Osebern to mend the houses and barns on their bond tenements in 1357, and William Payne and John Wastel in 1368–1372. John Robot's house remained unoccupied after his death (ERO D/DWv M14 mm 3–6d). Thomas Shayl and Hugh Stacy were fined for their neglect of *Gardinerestement* in 1399 (ERO D/DWv M15 m1). Warish Hall manor ordered Thomas Jekke, John Pakeman, Peter Baker, William Hervey and John Parker junior to repair their ruined tenements in 1377–1380 and 1389, and John Reynham in 1393–4 (NCO 3697 mm 1, 3, 5d, 6d, 12, 17). In 1398/9 John Cowper refused to take on his father's holding in Waltham Hall manor under the old services and rent, although he was soon persuaded to do so (LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 39–40). The manor also fined John Park and Isabell Macchyng for not repairing their bond tenements in 1401; John Gyppe, Richard Flemmyng and Isabell Macchyng in 1409; and John Gyppe and John Dane in 1414 (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; SC2/173/33 m8; SC2/173/34 m3). The materials of the abandoned buildings were often re-used to extend the houses of the more successful tenants, which now acquired additional rooms and subdivided spaces. The farmsteads of free tenants were more likely to survive intact (Taylor 1983, 199).

The inhabitants of the former farmsteads of Bassingbournes manor at Roundwood and the MTCP site were probably drawn into the settlement of Takeley Street, or deliberately resettled there, although it probably lay wholly

within Thremhall manor. Here the houses all lay on the north side of Stane Street in Takeley parish, and the earliest surviving building elements date from about 1350 (RCHM(E) 1916, 301; J and N Watkiss pers. comm.). The settlement was called *Takleystrete* by 1495 (Reaney 1935, 536). The jury at the manorial court of Bassingbournes in 1490 found that Thomas Benet, the recent farmer of the manor, had failed to thatch the buildings and had broken down the walls and palisades of two enclosures, causing damage to the total value of 13s 4d (ERO D/DB M63 m1). It is possible that the structures neglected by Benet included medieval Buildings 1 and 2 excavated on the FLB site.

The more prosperous peasants took advantage of the shortfall of tenants caused by death and migration after the Black Death to increase their land holdings. These tenants leased or bought the deserted holdings of their neighbours, and consolidated their strips in the open fields; they also leased portions of the demesne land from the lords of the manors (Hunter 2003, 10, 16). In 1348 and 1349 Matthew Palmer, the rector of Little Canfield, bought up the landholdings of Peter Bret and others in Takeley, and sold them on to Walter and Matilda de Coleshull in 1356 (NCO 12630–4, 12953, 12957). On Thremhall Priory manor in 1369 and 1388 tenants were taking over the lands of their dead cousins without warrant, and taking up vacant holdings on 10 or 12 year leases (ERO D/DWv M14 mm 5d, 6; D/DWv M15 m3). On Waltham Hall manor in 1399/1400 no legitimate heir could be found to the holding of Joan Seler, which was therefore granted to Nicholas Meller; and in 1409 no heirs claimed the vacant tenements of John Balard and Stephen Ode, so they were both granted as a customary holding to John Pounte (NA SC2/173/33 m8; LA HD Manorial: Waltham Hall Survey 1621, 23, 56). On Warish Hall manor from the 1390s to the 1440s John and William Laver were buying up the small fields of their neighbours (NCO 3698 m1, 12602, 12604–5, 12885, 12919, 12930).

These successful and surviving tenant families formed a 'peasant aristocracy' by the 15th century. It was difficult in the depression of the middle decades of the century for families to establish themselves at a permanently higher status, but their prospects improved after *c* 1470 (Fryde 1996, 165). Two of these successful peasant aristocratic families in the study area were the Parkers, the hereditary park keepers of Stansted, and the Mellers of Takeley. Manorial lords resisted this trend to a fluid market in customary land. In 1468 John Meller sold 2½ acres of land in Waltham Hall manor without going through the correct procedure in the manorial court, and they were confiscated; in the resulting quarrel he hit the Abbey's cellarer with a bill-hook and was fined (NA SC2/173/38 m2).

Lords moved away from direct exploitation of their manors and began leasing out their demesnes in the second half of the 14th century, especially the major landlords with many manors. At first this was a temporary expedient, intended to be reversed when conditions became more favourable again, and demesnes were let with their livestock and seed-corn. However, in the first third of the 15th century landlords were unable to maintain the rents at the levels they had first set, and longer leases were made at reduced rates. There was a severe agricultural depression in the four decades following 1430; in north and central Essex only half of the pre-Black Death levels of rent could now be obtained for leased land. As the lease arrangements became more permanent, most labour services due from the tenants were abandoned. However, some manors continued with the direct management of their demesnes until the second half of the 15th century, relying on the customary labour of their tenants. This often applied to the small ancestral estates of resident squires and the manors of religious institutions, which liked to retain demesnes as a means of household supply (Fryde 1996, 76, 113–14, 121, 146; Campbell 2000, 436).

As far as can be known from the surviving evidence, direct management of most of the Takeley and Stansted manors had been abandoned by the 15th century. As an alien house, the Abbey of Saint Valéry had farmed out all of its Essex manors except its English headquarters at Takeley Priory before 1350 (NCO 13087). The manor at Takeley was leased out in 1470 to Thomas Kyng for a term of ten years at an annual rent of £8 13s 4d. The accounts of the manor in 1473–1475 list a series of arrears due from the rent-collector of New College and his predecessors there, largely because the rents of some tenancies had been lost some decades previously (Thorold Rogers 1882, iii, 712, 714–15). The College leased out Warish Hall manor in 1508 on a five year term, still for £8 13s 4d *per annum* (ERO T/A 316 no. 698). Nicholas Meller was the leaseholder of Waltham Hall manor in 1401 (NA SC2/173/31 m8d). Colchester Hall manor was leased out for £6 13s 4d *per annum* to William Lacy in 1421/2 and 1423/4, and at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries for £7 7s 8d *per annum* (Morant 1768, ii, 573; Dugdale 1830, iv 611; NA SC6/1107/15). Bassingbournes manor was leased out to Thomas Benet before 1490 (ERO D/DB M63 m1). The Veres were leasing out the Stansted demesnes in 1442/3 and 1475, and both Stansted and Bentfieldbury manors in 1488/9 (ERO D/DPr/138 and 139; NA DL29/41/803).

Some lords and their agents took short-term measures to recover the value of their manors. These drastic steps were akin to asset stripping. Matthew Palmer, the rector of Little Canfield who held the custody of the Essex manors of the Abbey of Saint Valéry on behalf of the Crown from June 1348 to February 1351, appears to have pillaged whatever could be taken away from Warish Hall manor in the aftermath of the Black Death. He sold an acre of timber trees, and cut down maple, ash and oak trees, taking them away with the manor's horses. He broke the moats and took away the fish to put in his moats at Canfield. He sold off what was probably the entire demesne crop of wheat, oats, peas and

hay for two years; he appropriated the fines of the manorial court and heriot payment of horses and cows (NA C270/17/21; NCO 13087, illegible portion supplemented by notes at ERO T/P 21). In 1389/90 Maud, the countess of Oxford, felled oaks and maples in the woods of Stansted manor to the value of 100sh, drove out two bond tenants, demolished two bond tenements and allowed three others to fall down for lack of repairs (*CIM* vi 6–7).

After 1350 legumes were increasingly substituted for grains in two and three-course crops rotations, and more fodder crops were grown on demesne arable lands. There was a movement to pasture at the expense of arable; sheep were increasing their numbers at the expense of cattle and there was an increased emphasis on pigs. In Essex the disappearance of ploughing and carrying services performed by the customary tenants increased the tendency for horses to replace oxen as draught animals. Livestock were less frequently transferred between the various estates of one lord than at the start of the 14th century; pigs were the most likely animals to be sent to the lord's main household for slaughter (Campbell 2000, 133, 166–7, 431, 435).

In the years 1357–1401 the demesne lands of Thremhall manor were growing wheat, barley, oats, dredge, peas and beans, and fruit in the garden (ERO D/DWv M14 and M15). In 1459 the Benneburys were growing wheat, barley, oats, peas, beans and hay at Sheering Hall manor (NCO 12595). There is little evidence of the field systems and crop rotations which were operating in the study area in the late medieval period. In 1421/22 the farmer of Colchester Hall manor was given an allowance in his account for 30 acres of land which were counted as fallow (NA SC6/1107/15 m 1d). In Warish Hall manor the large arable field of Catley had been divided into several portions by 1477 (NCO 3721). Most of the fields in Takeley were specified in contemporary conveyances as being enclosed with hedges and ditches, even when they were quite small.

The animals kept by the manorial tenants appear as heriots paid for their tenements at their death, which were generally horses and foals, cows and calves, as at Warish Hall manor in 1349–1351 (NCO 13087) and Thremhall manor in 1393 (ERO D/DWv M15 m2). Tenants also did damage to their lords' crops and pastures with their animals, which included horses and foals, oxen and cows, ewes, pigs and geese on Thremhall manor in 1369, 1371 and 1372 (ERO D/DWv M14 mm 2d, 3, 4); on Warish Hall manor in 1356, 1377–1394 and 1399–1401 (NCO 3697 mm 1–19, 3698 mm 1–3); and on Waltham Hall manor in 1401, 1414 and 1468 (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; SC2/173/34 m3; SC2/173/38 m2). In 1388 John Hokkele, the cowman of Bassingbournes manor, trespassed on the demesne pastures of Thremhall manor (ERO D/DWv M15 m3).

Settlement, woodland management and agriculture from the Late Saxon period until the Black Death

Shifts in settlement patterns

The pattern of settlement in the study area altered at certain pivotal points. The Early and Middle Saxon patterns were sparser than their Romano-British predecessors, and were wholly absent from the excavated parts of the study area. In the Late Saxon period there was settlement nucleation in the context of the emergence of smaller manorialised estates and the establishment of open field systems. While this took place in the north-west part of the study area in Stansted parish, over Takeley parish and the south-east part of Stansted a dispersed pattern of settlement emerged.

The pattern was extended in the early medieval period by the founding of secondary hamlets associated with assarting. The late medieval period witnessed the shrinkage of settlement as the population was reduced by a series of famines and plagues. In the study area this led to the abandonment of some of the smaller early medieval settlements in the excavated areas.

Agricultural advance and retreat

There is a recurring theme of regeneration, exploitation and clearance of woodlands. The cultivated area was extended and reduced in each period in response to population changes. In the study area there was an almost complete withdrawal from agriculture in the post-Roman centuries, leading to the general regeneration of woodland. The area of the arable and pasture fields was increased by campaigns of assarting from the 10th to the 13th centuries at the expense of the woods, spreading outwards from the initial nodes of the manorial centres. Irregular enclosures on the boundaries of manors arose from piecemeal expansion of the cultivated area by assarting at times of population pressure. In the late medieval centuries some arable land was converted into enclosed pastures.

Relationships between landlords and tenants

Settlement nucleation in the Late Saxon period probably resulted from pressure by landlords on their tenants. Saxon thegns and their successors the Norman knights, and the medieval minor gentry, were always concerned to make the most profitable use of their limited landed resources (Muir 2000, 188–9, 200). These pressures did not apply in the south-east part of Stansted and in Takeley, where the tenants of the numerous small manors retained a degree of independence free of onerous service requirements.

The reduction of the population in the Black Death and the subsequent outbreaks of plague tended to swing the balance of advantage from the landlord to the tenant. This led to better standards of living for the surviving tenantry; more variation in prosperity and the size of peasant landholdings as the most successful families increased their stake in the land; and the ending of direct management of demesnes and the extraction of labour services from the tenants.

The background of the page is a monochromatic, light green-tinted illustration. It depicts a hunt in progress. In the foreground, a large stag with prominent antlers is running towards the right. Two dogs are running alongside it, one in front and one behind. In the middle ground, two riders on horseback are visible. The rider in front is blowing a horn. The background shows a line of trees and a bright sky. The overall style is that of a silhouette or a high-contrast, low-key photograph.

CHAPTER 10

The Hunting Lodge and Deer Park (c AD 1350–1800)

by Fraser Brown and Christopher Phillpotts

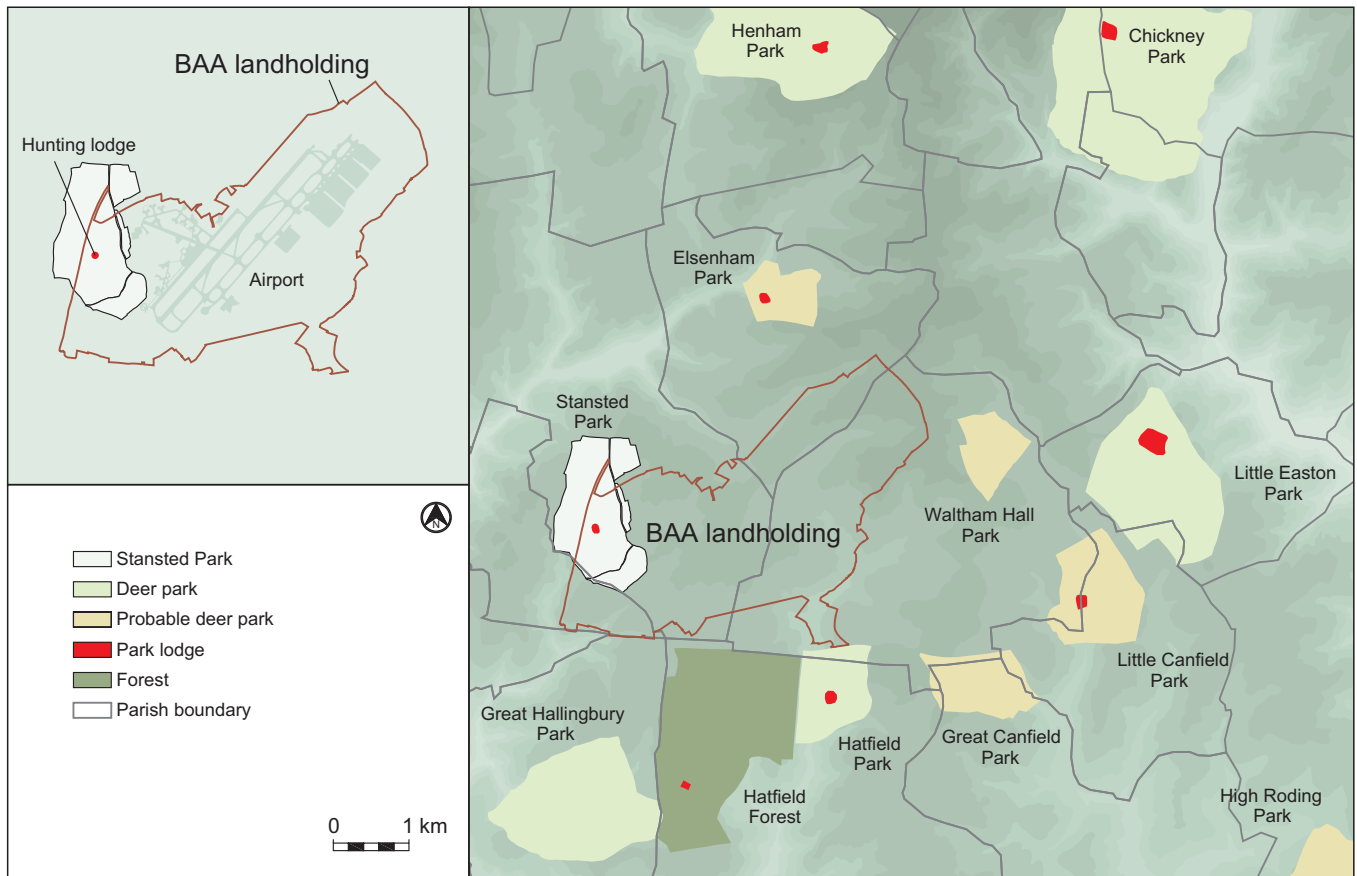


Figure 10.1: Parks and forests in the Stansted area

Introduction

'All physicions sayth that Venson ... doth ingendre colorycke humours; and of trueth it doth so: Wherefore let them take the skynne, and let me have the flesshe. I am sure it is a Lordes dysshe, and I am sure it is good for an Englysheman, for it doth anymate hym to be as he is: whiche is stronge and hardy. But I do advertyse every man, for all my wordes, not to kyll and so to eate of it, excepte it be lawfully, for it is a meate for great men. And great men do not set so moche by the meate, as they doth by the pastyme of kyllynge of it.' Andrew Bordes *Regyment or Dietary of Helth* (Furnivall 1868, 210–11)

We have seen above that one of the effects of the Black Death was to loosen the control that landowners had over their tenants. This led to significant improvements in the conditions of many of the tenants, who were able to negotiate reductions to the onerous duties they previously owed landlords as well as access to larger areas to farm. Despite this, large areas of land

still remained directly in the hands of the manorial landowners, including the large tracts of prime land given over to deer parks (Fig. 10.1).

In this chapter we will examine one such deer park, Stansted Park, which lay on the western side of the airport (Fig 10.2). Excavations on the LTCP site uncovered the structural remains of a number of buildings directly below the modern topsoil (Plate 10.1). The buildings stood within extensive areas of cobbled surfaces on a gentle west-facing slope.

These represent the remains of a medieval and post-medieval hunting lodge, which lay at the centre of an extensive deer park. In this chapter we will examine the importance of parks and the deer they contained as an expression of the power and control of the landowner, and we will describe how this importance declined, culminating in the disparkment of Stansted Park in the 17th century, a fate shared by many of the other parks in the area. After this, the parkland was given over to farming, and the lodge buildings were extended to form the core of a farm complex, before being abandoned in the 18th century.



Plate 10.1: The hunting lodge site under excavation

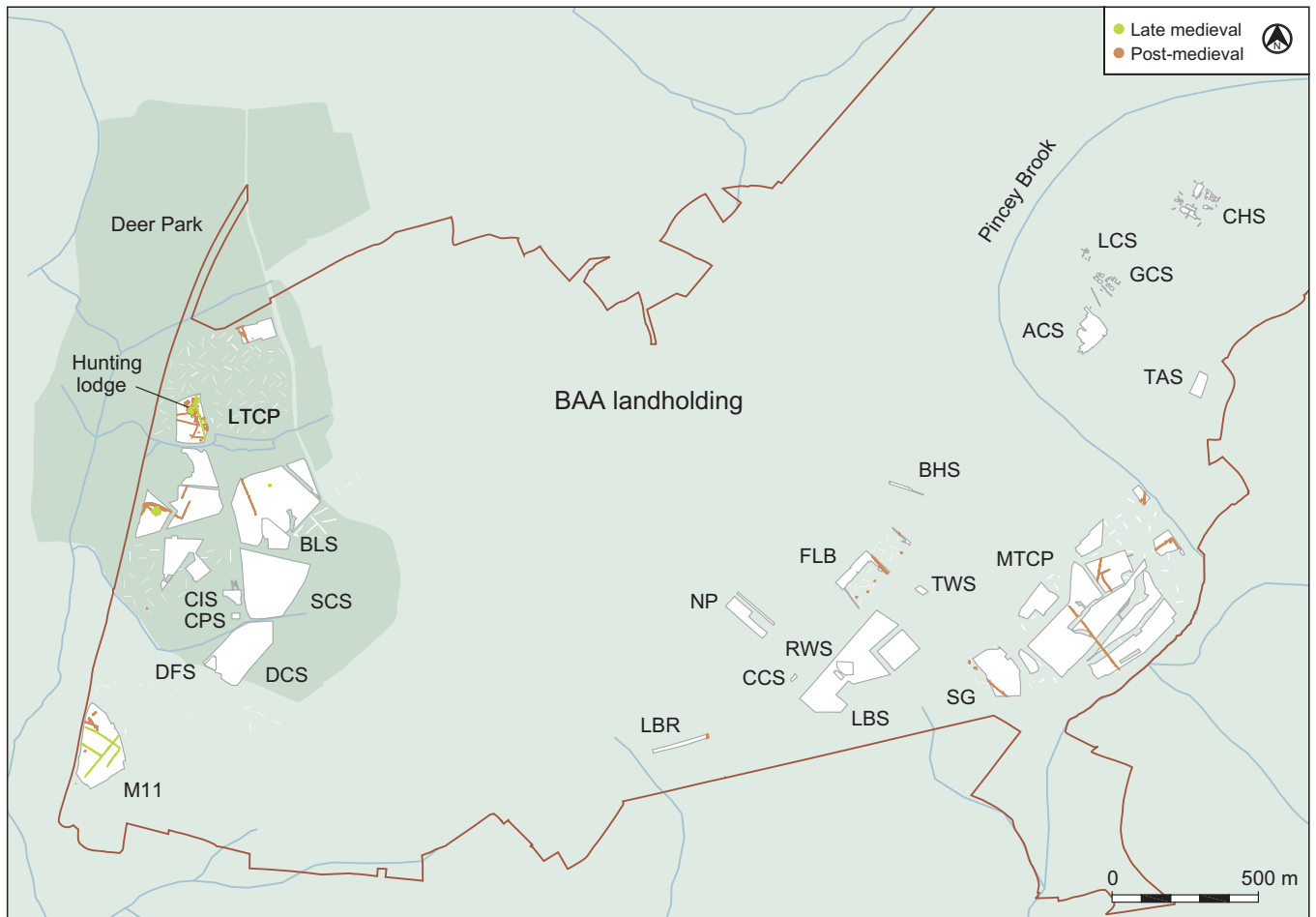


Figure 10.2: Later medieval and post-medieval features

Parks, forest and fallow deer

A large number of deer parks were established by manorial lords in the area of north-west Essex in the 12th and 13th centuries. The words *park* and *forest* had very specific meanings in the past and very different implications for the way that land was managed but both had a similar purpose – the exclusive ownership of areas of untamed landscape and all the plants and animals within them. Woodland and wild game were important resources; they provided food, fuel and building materials and could be profitable sources of revenue. Deer were particularly prized, providing venison – an especially valuable commodity that was only available to those social classes that controlled the means to produce it.

When the Normans invaded England they brought with them a set of traditions and attitudes that were very different to those that had gone before. William the Conqueror implemented

systems of jurisdiction and governance in order to help him administer his new domain in the manner he deemed appropriate. These included a new set of statutes subjecting certain regions to Forest Law, which was heavily biased towards the king and had the intention of prohibiting hunting of certain species of game, particularly red deer, wild swine and hares – all of which were deemed noble beasts (Almond 2003, 61–71). Previously, Anglo-Saxon kings were fond of venison and had high regard for professional hunters, and in a few places such as Writtle in Essex, employed skilled officials, whom the *Domesday Book* records as *forestarius*. There was, however, no Anglo-Saxon word for ‘forest’ and kings did not seem to exceed the usual sporting rights of landowners (Rackham 2003, 179). The principle of Forest therefore expressed a doctrine foreign to the English, that all land was ultimately the property of the Crown, and William used these new laws to assert his right to keep deer on other

people’s land as well as his own (Rackham 1989, 38).

The medieval word *forest* therefore had a very different meaning to its modern use, rather than being a place of trees: ‘a forest was an area of rough land on which the king or some other magnate had the right to keep deer and to kill and eat them’ and it need not have been more wooded than any other area (Rackham 1989, 38). The motivation behind the new laws was financial and although the Anglo-Saxon chronicles 1087 said of William in his obituary that he ‘loved the tall deer as if he were their father’ (Davies 1926, 26), William saw deer not merely as a royal hobby but as a means of subsidising the court. By the time of the *Domesday* survey in 1086 the Forest system was still in its infancy and only 25 Forests existed (Rackham 1989, 38). However, by the 13th century it is estimated that while only about 3% of England was physical forest over one-third of the country was subject to Forest Law (Bazeley

1921). This expansion largely happened under the reign of Henry I (1100–1135), when the fallow deer were probably introduced for the first time (Rackham 2003, 177). A number of forests were established in Essex including Writtle, Epping (anciently Waltham), Wintry (satellite to Epping), Hainault, Kingswood and Hatfield, which lies just south of Stansted (Fig. 9.32). In the 13th century the whole of Essex was Forest in the technical sense and it was first referred to as such in 1130 (Rackham 1989, 41).

A *park* differed from a Forest in having a perimeter fence to retain deer and being a wholly private property, and in not being subject to any special laws or administration. Parks usually formed part of a large- or medium-sized manorial estate and were owned by anyone who could afford them – nobility, gentry, bishops and religious houses. It was common for greater nobles and prelates to have a number of parks for hunting. Parks often lay adjacent to the precincts of manor houses and were entered directly from them. They were therefore developed from manorial demesnes and adjacent areas of uncultivated woodland. The management of a park and its deer was overseen by a park keeper or parker, living in a lodge normally sited at the highest part of the enclosure. Lodges were generally fairly modest structures, but might have a *standing* attached to them as a viewing platform to watch the progress of the hunt (Roberts 1988, 73–77; Hunter 2003, 9, 26).

The oldest known park is Anglo-Saxon, at Ongar (Essex), known from a will of 1045 and was probably for the keeping of red deer (Whitelock 1930, 82). The *Domesday* survey mentions 33 parks including Ongar and the king's park at Rayleigh in south-east Essex (Rackham 1989, 43). Generally, however, parks were a Norman innovation arising from the introduction of fallow deer. They were slower to proliferate than forests, although many were established in 12th century when they needed no special permission in areas where Forest Law did not apply. In Essex, as parks conflicted with Forest Law, permission for emparkment was

more systematically sought from the king than elsewhere (Rackham 1989, 43–4). By the 13th century Pipe and Close Rolls frequently mention licences to empark or enlarge parks and gifts of deer from the king's forests to stock and restock them (Rackham 2003, 191).

Rackham (2003, 191) estimates that at their heyday, *c* 1300, there were about 3200 parks in England, of an average size of 200 acres (*c* 81 ha), which amounts to a total emparked area of 640,000 acres (*c* 259,000 ha = 2% of the country). Parks were much more strongly correlated with woodland than Forests, often occurring where *Domesday* recorded large numbers of swine or less intensively used woods. Conversely, where woods were absent or intensively used parks were fewer in number or absent entirely. Essex abounded with parks by 1300, at which time 159 are recorded in the county (one for every 9.6 square miles (or *c* 25 square km)), second only in density to Hertfordshire where there were 90 parks (one for every 7 square miles/18 square km) (Rackham 2003, 191). Within a 10 mile/16 km radius of Hatfield forest, an area including Stansted, there were at least 30 parks making it 'probably the most parky part of all England' (Rackham 1989, 44; Fig. 10.2). In close vicinity to Stansted, references to parks at Great Canfield, Little Easton (two), Little Hallingbury, Great Hallingbury (two), Hatfield Broad Oak (two), Henham, Scete Park (near Colchester Hall in Takeley), as well as Stansted Mountfichet have been found in Close and Patent Rolls, *Inquisitions Post Mortem* and charters from the 12th century (Ryan 2004a, 360).

Like woods or forests, parks could be either uncompartmented with pollards and large timber trees or compartmented with near-normal coppice woods, protected by fences during regrowth. As there was no risk that livestock would damage mature pollards and timber trees, the land could be simultaneously grazed and used for timber production, whereas in parks of the latter type barriers such as fences and hedges segregated the livestock from areas planted with young coppice. Severe grazing

pressure in uncompartmented parks often turned them into 'parkland' in the modern sense, that is, largely comprising grassland with a scattering of big trees (Plate 10.2). Emparkment was one of the main causes of the reduction of woodland in England during the medieval period, and woodland was certainly less prominent in the surveys of established parks than it was in the specifications of licences granted for emparkment (Rackham 2005, 195).

Parks were synonymous with fallow deer but some specialised in other species, the earls of Oxford kept a park for wild swine at Chalkney Wood, Earls Colne (Rackham 1976, 143); at Bere Regis Dorset roe deer were kept; at Guildford Park red deer (Calendar of Close Rolls); and in the early 17th century James I had a hare park at Swaffam Bulbeck, Cambridgeshire (RCHM(E) 1972). Fallow deer were easier to manage than other deer species and were well adapted to the wood pasture habitat of the medieval deer park, being inclined to remain in one place and being predominantly grass-feeders. They may have been briefly introduced by the Romans but did not persist into the Anglo-Saxon period (Chapman and Chapman 1975). Their conquest of Sicily in 1060 exposed the Normans to Classical and Islamic traditions, including the practice of keeping oriental beasts in parks – fallow deer were originally natives of the Levant and the Near East. They were introduced to the Norman estates of England, probably during the 12th century, along with other species such as rabbit and pheasant, as a means of producing meat from poor agricultural land. This enterprise was pursued with vigour and even today there are more fallow deer in England than on the continent (Rackham 2003, 177). In time deer and venison became so valuable and so closely linked to status that no expense was spared in rearing them, and this became an end in itself.

Parks were principally used to produce deer, but also provided grazing for other animals and sometimes also supplied wood, timber and hay.



Plate 10.2: Fallow deer in a parkland environment

The one indispensable feature of a park was a sturdy perimeter fence to confine the deer. This usually took the form of a park pale – a palisade made from cleft oak pales, driven into the ground and fastened by a rail – although hedges were also used (Rackham 2003, 191). The pale was expensive and could involve considerable outlay, the high cost of fencing being the reason for the characteristic shape of many of the oldest parks (a rough rectangle with rounded corners). Nazeling Wood (Essex) was emparked in 1542 at the cost of £132 – for which £26 was required for paling and £38 for the transport of ‘posts, pales and rayles’ which could not be made locally. The ‘mayking of a launde’ [grass clearing] by grubbing out trees cost £54 and two buildings in the park – a lodge and a watch tower or ‘standing’ – only £14 (Shirley 1867). The replacement of pales was often to be performed by the lord’s tenants as a labour service, although often this was not the case in practice, with tenants being fined and contractors instead undertaking the work (Rackham 2003, 193). Because park boundaries were primarily concerned with keeping deer in rather than out, any associated ditch usually lay on the inside rather than the outside of the pale.

A deer park was a troublesome and precarious enterprise, requiring a

balance to be struck between the requirements of the deer and woodland, and constant maintenance of fences and barriers. However, deer in parks were more easily managed than in forests, as they could be located and caught with ease and there was less likely to be disputes of ownership with others whose crops the deer had eaten. A well managed park was a much more efficient producer of venison than a forest, with the largest parks the most economically efficient – where the risk of starvation was less and the cost per head of the pale was reduced. Parks less than 50 acres (*c* 20 ha) in extent were therefore really just status symbols (Rackham 2003, 193). The relative efficiency is illustrated by records referring to the royal park at Havering in Essex which was 1100 acres (445 ha). Between 1234 and 1263 Henry III ordered an average of 44 fallow deer annually from it. From the forests of south-west Essex, ten times the area and some of the more important venison forests, he got only 40 fallow and four red deer a year (Rackham 1978).

Estimating the numbers of deer in any particular park is problematic. In the Victorian period E.P. Shirley (1867), an authority on parks, recommended one fallow deer per acre (two bucks and one doe per 3 acres), although actual numbers varied between ½ and 2 deer per acre. However, as deer get little

sustenance from woodland (included in the acreage) the actual numbers of deer per acre of grassland will have been higher. It is also likely that different husbandry practices were employed in the medieval period. Other estimates based on medieval documents (Birrell 2006) are more conservative, estimating that a park of 100–200 acres (40.5–81 ha) could sustain 50–100 deer. Statistics exist for four and a half years between 1515 and 1519 at Framlington Park, East Suffolk (Cummins 1988, 260ff; Rackham 2003, 193) demonstrating that the number of deer per acre could be much higher, but at a greatly increased risk of disease and malnutrition.

Parks, forests, and venison were embedded in the chivalric, feudal and juridical systems of the time and consequently were administered via a complex combination of legislation, rights, propriety and mutual bonds of duty and allegiance. Symbolism played an important part in this, especially the symbolic currency of venison, which was enhanced through restricted access. Parks and forests had an economic basis and this may have been their initial inspiration but, fundamentally, they were geared to the production of a restricted commodity for conspicuous consumption by the few. Activities such as hunting and game such as venison became synonymous

with 'nobility' as they were deemed by their nature to be 'noble', and only a noble had legitimate rights in this respect. If one was not a noble (or at least one of the land owning gentry), venison could only be received as a gift, bought on the black market or stolen. Forest and parks were places where special rules applied, in which all echelons of society might interact but where rank governed how one might behave and what one's legitimate entitlements were. As landscapes, they embodied the attitudes and relations that underpinned medieval society at large and, in practice, the blood rituals of hunting reinforced these by making them explicit.

Stansted deer park

There is some documentary evidence for a park at Stansted (Fig. 10.3). In 1184/5 Henry II fined Gilbert Mountfichet for making a hunting park from his wood in Stansted (PRS xxxiv 18–19). This was probably because the land still lay within the royal forest, as it was not otherwise necessary to obtain a royal licence to empark. There was a park mentioned as part of the holding of Philippa de Lancaster at Stansted Mountfichet in 1294; it was afterwards attached to the de Veres' manor of Stansted Hall. It was said to be 200 acres in extent in 1360, but estimated at 80 acres in 1371 and 1388. In this latter year it produced no income, but was worth only the value of the enclosure and the support of the wild animals it contained (*CIPM* iii 106; x 518; xiii 93; *CIM* v 93). In 1330 Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, received a grant of free warren to hunt on the demesne lands of his manors, including the newly acquired Stansted Hall (*CChR* iv 190). It is likely that the park was in existence from the end of the 12th century onwards, for even if Gilbert was not allowed to retain his park while Forest Law prevailed one would surely have been founded after disafforestation at the beginning of the 13th century.

A combination of documentary sources and map regression analysis suggests the probable extent of this *park* and archaeological excavations have

sampled much of the central and southern part of it, with the lodge at its centre. The pattern of field-names with a *park* element, as recorded in the 19th-century tithe apportionment for Stansted Mountfichet parish (Fig. 9.12) suggests that the initial area of the medieval park occupied the former demesne land enclosure on the west side of Bury Lodge Lane; there were later extensions to the south, and perhaps also to the north-east. The pattern of field boundaries on the tithe map suggest the limits of the original park and its extensions, and also of the demesne and assart units to their east (ERO D/CT 328A and B; Fig. 10.3). An early 18th-century deed describes the former park as 'the grounds, lands, tenements and hereditaments enclosed within the late pale or ditch surrounding the Park' (ERO D/DA T360). The park is known to have bordered the demesne lands of Thremhall Priory to the south (BL Add Charter 55465). To the south-west the park was immediately adjacent to the parish boundary with Birchanger; in 1443 two strips of arable land in Birchanger parish were described as abutting *Stanstedes park* on their north side and east ends (BL Add Charter 65171). The park was watered by two streams running from east to west. There were strips of meadow land along the northern stream, and at the confluence of the two streams to the south-west of the excavated site. The course of the southern stream was traced in the hunting-lodge excavation.

The manors of Burnells and Bentfieldbury, on the east and south-east of the Stansted Estate, were too small to develop parks, and none is mentioned in *Inquisitions Post Mortem* relating to them. The area of former demesne land to the east of Bury Lodge Lane included land which belonged to Burnells and Bentfieldbury manors, resulting from one of the divisions between co-heiresses; and this area did not lie within the medieval park of Stansted.

To the east of the excavated site, Bury Lodge appears to have lain outside the medieval park area, despite its name. It may be identifiable with the bond tenement of Burres, which lay ruined

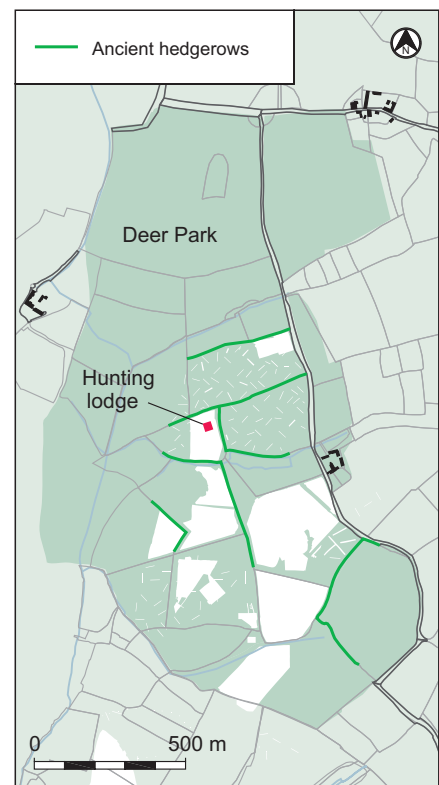


Figure 10.3: Stansted park, hunting lodge and surviving ancient hedgerows (pre-1600)

in 1393 (*CIM* vi 7), but the date of the first buildings there is unknown. Adjacent to it was a series of fish-ponds of probable medieval date, a common feature on the boundaries of parks (ERO Q/RDc 36B).

As was typical, the park was sub-rectangular in shape with rounded corners (Fig. 10.2). Adjoining the vill at Stansted Mountfichet on the south, it occupied half of the demesne holdings of the estate. The area of the original park suggested by map regression analysis supports the documentary evidence from 1360 suggesting that a total of 200 acres was enclosed. An acre was the approximate area that could be ploughed in half a day. In the medieval period it was not a fixed unit and like other contemporary units of landholding could fluctuate wildly in actual area. The original medieval park enclosed an area of 129 hectares or 322 modern acres. The modern acre is based on the 16½ ft perch, there being 120 perches to an acre. However, the length of the medieval perch varied and a 21 ft perch is common (Rackham 1989, xii). This gives an acre that is 62% larger than the modern acre and 129 hectares equates to just over 198 acres

based on the 21 ft perch (very close to the 200 acre estimate of 1360). This does not, however, explain the subsequent 1371 and 1388 estimates for the park enclosure of 80 acres. This latter figure seems much too small for the physical extent of the park and the estimate might only include land of a particular type, pasture for example.

In the north-east part of Takeley parish field-names indicate that there was another park established here in the medieval period. A group of fields was later known as the Old Park, and there are also two Park Leys and a Park Spring (ERO D/CT 342A nos 83, 84, 97, 186). There was also a family called *ad Parcum* or *at Park* in this area in the 13th–15th centuries (NA SC2/173/31 m8d; NCO 12610, 13040, 13042). The park is probably to be associated with the manor of Tilty Grange. Its boundaries are uncertain and it is not known how long it remained in use. It seems unlikely that it survived the dissolution of the monasteries, but it may have been disparted after the Black Death, when many parks were converted into leased pastures or opened up for arable exploitation (Cantor 1982, 77; Stamper 1988, 146).

By *c* 1200 there was a park in William de Hauville's manor of Colchester Hall, where he granted 80 acres of land to Colchester Abbey before 1208. He gave *Estfeld* to the Abbey instead of these 80 acres before 1213. It may be the same as *Sceteparc* which William also gave to the Abbey at this time, with adjacent pieces of land. It is not clear where this park lay, but it was next to Warish Hall land and a road ran along its west side (Moore 1897, 339, 348–51, 354–6, 359). This description would fit the park in north-east Takeley, but this seems too far from Colchester Hall. In the court records of Waltham Hall manor in 1404 and 1409 the Abbot of Colchester was fined for not scouring out 4 perches (20.1 m), 6 perches (30.2 m) or 6 perches (40.2 m) of ditch at *Michel Park*, and 2 perches (10.06 m) at *Lytylpark*, while Cristina Mellere had a tenement called *Parkes* which was out or repair (NA SC2/173/32 m5d; SC2/173/33 m8). Tenants of Colchester Hall manor in 1485/6 paid small rents

for *Lytle Parke Grounde* and *Great Parke Grounde* (ERO D/DRu M3 m1).

Most of the hunting in the Bishop of Winchester's parks in Hampshire was done by the Bishop's verderers and knights huntsmen. At Highclere Park in 1373/4 and 1374/5 men were paid for blocking the *brackes* around the circuit of the park, presumably as part of the process of the hunt. Deer were poached from the park during the episcopal vacancies of 1279 and 1318. In 1347/8 the park was restocked with deer by the generosity of Edward III from his parks at Lokhampstead and Odiham, and of the earl of Lancaster from his parks of Hungerford and Weston. Various people hunted deer in the park in 1531/2, with and without the bishop's permission (Phillpotts 1996, 51–2).

The park environment

Most parks were established in existing woodland not least because the fallow deer was thought to be a sylvan species. In truth they are actually grazers and parks included *launde* or grassland clearings, not least because it made the deer easier to catch. The evidence from field names and boundaries described above suggests that the land was cleared in Late Saxon times before it was emparked but the documentary reference to the park in 1184/5 conflicts with this, suggesting that it was established in woodland. Seemingly, not all of the park could have been grassland or under the plough at this time, perhaps being wood pasture or containing stands of trees. A map dating to *c* 1575 depicts the partially disparted park at Stock, Essex and gives some idea what the wood pasture environment within a deer park might have been like.

A recent hedgerow survey carried out around the airport (Penny Anderson Associates forthcoming) has identified a number of ancient hedgerows (pre-1600), a great many of which coincide with the perimeter pale or are within the confines of the former park (Fig. 10.3). If they are indeed this ancient, then these hedges would have already been in existence by the time the

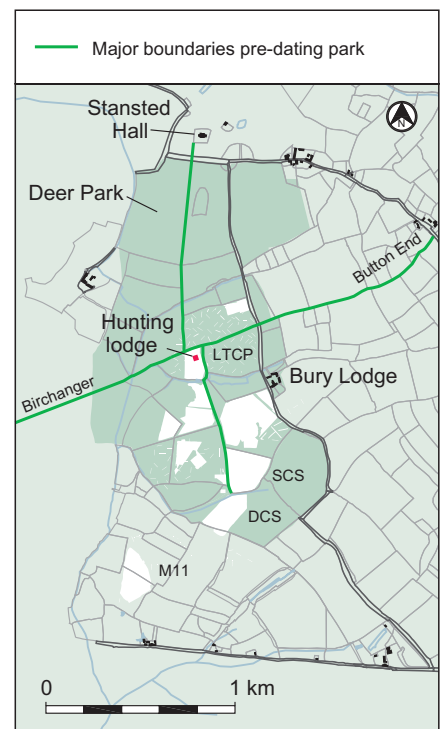


Figure 10.4: Major boundaries, possibly predating the formation of the park

hunting lodge was built, certainly in its later phases, confirming that to some extent the park was compartmented. These compartments would have formed the basis for the later system of land allotment depicted on the Tithe Map of 1843.

A very straight east–west boundary, was located uninterrupted through both the area of the park and the demesne holdings between the settlements at Birchanger and Button End (Fig. 10.4). In both the park and the demesne holdings, the patterns of enclosure appear to differ to the north and south of this line. A second straight boundary ran north–south through the long axis of the park, from Stansted Mountfitchet until the southern park pale, then possibly onwards towards Blunts Cottages on Stane Street. These boundaries may have also been major routes through the park and the cross formed by them apportioned it in to four roughly equal quarters, with the hunting lodge sited at the central intersection. The field in which the hunting lodge was found was an unusual shape, its form suggesting that it may have been an original enclosure surrounding the lodge. Five other boundaries radiated southwards from it, two of them planted with



Figure 10.5: Later medieval and post-medieval features

demonstrably ancient hedgerows. Of the five, three followed the course of a brook, whereas two others (funnel 1) were thought to relate to the north-south movement of stock within the park (Fig. 10.5). The Tithe Map shows areas of meadow in 1843 and documentary records make reference to land in the park being leased out as meadow in the 16th century (see below). The meadows relate to the local hydrology, lying adjacent to the watercourses that flow through the park, and were probably the same in the medieval period. The different varieties of land in the park were likely to have been segregated to keep out stock from any haymaking fields or new coppice, so the boundaries between them might also be medieval and ancient hedgerows exist along several of these.

Several boundary features that do not conform to the lines of present day boundaries were excavated within the confines of the park, at some distance from the hunting lodge. One of these (102069) occurred in a field in the

south-east corner of the park and intersected at a perpendicular with a surviving hedgerow along the north of the field. As this cut through Iron Age and Romano-British features on a markedly different alignment to them, it was interpreted as being medieval or later despite the earlier finds within it (Fig. 10.5). Other ditches approximately 300 m further to the west defined the route of a trackway in the park (post-medieval trackway). These skirted a large pond (103027) just to the south, which was radiocarbon dated to cal AD 1440–1640 (365±40 BP, NZA-23281) from samples of articulated horse bone in its basal fill. The ditches and trackway they define were probably contemporary with the pond. Although they contained no good dating evidence, they cut earlier Iron Age and Romano-British features.

Trees within the hedgerows include hornbeam, maple, English elm, ash and oak. Nine of the oaks, mainly in the east-west ditch directly north of the hunting lodge and the boundary

along the eastern pale, are veteran trees (in excess of 200 years old), with trunks over 5 m in girth and 1.5 m in diameter. Nearly all of these are old pollards indicating past management. In one hedge within the area of the park, in addition to a pollarded veteran oak, stand a number of ash trees that were coppiced in the past as well as a pollarded hornbeam. The veteran pollards could feasibly be contemporary with the later phases of the hunting lodge and, even if these particular trees are not old enough, they most likely continue a tradition of woodland and hedgerow management practiced within the deer park.

A proportion of the land within the park was likely to be meadow and some of it pasture, this was how the land was used until recent times but, hedgerows aside, it is largely unknown to what extent the park remained wooded. It would have made economic sense to keep certain large trees within the park for timber and pollards for small wood, so areas of wood pasture may have been encouraged. The land on the south of the park bordering the Thremall assarts may still have been wooded and an area known as Round Coppice remained so until recent times. The apparent antiquity of the enclosure around the lodge suggests that this at least was likely to be relatively clear of trees by the time the lodge was built and a number of deer drives had been created within the park by the 16th century. Documentary references allude to perquisites for the grazing of cattle and horses within the park (see below) and it might be expected that these were commonly pastured in this enclosure and those others in the immediate vicinity of the lodge. In time, unless actively encouraged by compartmentation, grazing would have made the park generally less wooded.

The environmental evidence from the excavations within the park is largely inconclusive but pollen evidence from a waterhole (134059) within the deer park, dating to the late 14th–early 15th centuries, suggests nearby grassland with large standard trees, particularly oaks, as might be expected in parkland.

Maple, ash and hornbeam pollen also occurred but not in large quantities, while hedgerow species including hazel, dogwood, hawthorn, holly, poplar and willow provide evidence confirming that boundaries subdivided the park at this time. A variety of cereals and weeds indicative of arable cultivation were present, the pollen probably deriving from the farmland in the adjacent demesne holdings rather than the park itself. However, there was no evidence for peas, hemp or flax, which would usually be expected in medieval features and occurred in other medieval samples from the Stansted excavations. Pollen from a 17th–18th century feature (464035 Fig. 10.32), adjacent to the brook beside the hunting lodge, produced similar results, except pea pollen was present, as were wetland species such as bulrush, meadowsweet and pondweed, which might be expected given its location. Waterlogged plant remains from the pit also confirmed that the surrounding area was prone to periodic flooding. Peas and a variety of grains were identified as charred remains from early post-medieval contexts within the hunting lodge, but the presence of these only indicates consumption at the site rather than production within the park. Waterlogged wheat, barley, oats and rye, as well as grape pips and damson/bullace stones were recovered from a 17th–18th well (improved well) associated with the hunting lodge, indicating the consumption of some luxury foods at this time.

The animal bone from the hunting lodge included many deer bones, largely fallow deer but roe and red deer were also present. The latter were not common in the surrounding countryside (Rackham 1989, 44) and were probably bred within the park. Tradition has it that the daughter of one of the 17th century owners of the park was apparently killed by a 'stag' implying the presence of red deer (see below). Other wild or semi-wild species include heron, pheasant, fox, rabbit and possibly wild boar. Except for chickens, which were almost certainly reared at the lodge, the bones of domestic species such as cattle, horse, pig, goose and sheep or goat can

only indicate consumption at the site, although some of these animals were undoubtedly kept within the park.

The de Veres

By the 15th century the de Vere family, earls of Oxford, had acquired control of the disparate parts of the original manor of Stansted. They were powerful landowners in Essex, owning Hedingham Castle and a great mansion at Earls Colne. The estate remained in the hands of the de Veres until 1582–4 when the profligate 17th earl Edward parted with it along with many other of the family's estates.

They were known to have enjoyed hunting and Robert the 6th earl was granted the right of free warren on his estates in 1330. In 1392 another Robert, the 9th earl, whilst exiled to France was fatally injured by a boar while out hunting. Stansted was one of a number of parks owned by the family, others including Castle Camps in south-east Cambridgeshire (Rackham 2003, 159) and Chalkney Wood, Earls Colne, which was dedicated to keeping the wild boar (*ibid.*, 250). Despite their great wealth and numerous possessions, it is likely that the earls would have hunted at Stansted on occasion. It was under them that the hunting lodge was built, the park expanded and a system of deer drives established; these latter would not be required for routine culling for meat and suggest hunting by the nobility.

Medieval parkers

There is no evidence for a hunting lodge on the excavated site prior to the 15th century. The Parker family had extensive landed interests in Birchanger and Takeley. The members of the family therefore appeared as parties and witnesses to local transactions between the 13th and the 15th centuries.

Robert and Benedict *Parcarius* occurred in the reign of King John (1199–1216) (BL Harley Charter 45.A.8); Michael le Parker and Benedict le Parker in *c* 1240 (ERO D/DWv/T1/3); Benedict le Parker of Stansted occurred alone in *c* 1234

and *c* 1240, before 1237 and 1258, and in 1261 and 1262 (*FFE* i 241, 254; Macaulay and Russell 1940, 79, 85; Moore 1897, 368, 370, 373, 375; BL Additional Charter 37640); Robert le Parker in 1332 (NCO 12619); John le Parker of Stansted in 1336 (NCO 10168); Robert and John Parker in 1369 (ERO D/DWv M14 m5d); Robert Parker in 1371 and 1375 (*CIPM* xiii 93; HALS Capell Collection M189); John Parker in 1376 and 1380 (Macaulay and Russell 1940, 86; NCO 13093); John Parker and his son Nicholas in 1423 and 1429 (HALS Capell Collection M151; Cassiobury Collection 8234). John Parker was deceased by 1438 (NCO 13134), but his widow Joan Parker and their son Nicholas appeared in 1443 (BL Additional Charter 65171; HALS Cassiobury Collection 8235). A Robert Parker was deceased by 1490 (ERO D/DB M63 m1), and John Parker was a witness in 1492 (NCO 13136).

In the reign of Henry III (1216–72) Richard Mountfitchet granted to Benedict the Parker of Stansted and his heirs forever, for their homage and service, 7 acres of land lying in a corner of his park in Stansted, for a money rent of 35d *per annum* (BL Add Charter 37640). Benedict le Parker and his wife Joan were active in the 1260s, and held 26 acres of land outside the park in Stansted and an acre of meadow in Takeley, as tenants of the Prior of Thremhall. They rented a messuage and 30 acres of land in Birchanger to Robert de la Launde, who may also have been a park officer (*FFE* i 241, 254). John de Lancaster, as lord of the manor in the early 14th century, granted Robert Parker and his heirs a messuage and 8½ acres of land in Stansted, with the keeping of the park and certain profits from it (noted in an *Inquisition Post Mortem* of 1417 at *CIPM* xx 205). This grant is likely to have been an extension of the previous arrangement with Benedict. In 1371 Robert Parker was the park-keeper in fee by inheritance, and was allowed pasture for five cows, a mare and a foal in the park every year, and free fuel for his house (*CIPM* xiii 102). In 1375 Robert Parker of the park of *Stanstede Munfychet* was a party to a property transaction in Hadham (HRO Capell M189).



Figure 10.6: Later medieval hunting lodge and enclosure with detail of pond 466001

The later medieval hunting lodge (phase 1)

The earliest archaeological evidence for a hunting lodge comprised a single boundary ditch, 11 pits, 54 postholes, occasional midden or surface deposits and a pond (Fig. 10.6). These were sometimes directly below the modern topsoil and others sealed by later surfaces and deposits. They were cut into a 0.2 m deep layer of sterile subsoil (448002) that sealed a Bronze Age horizon above the natural glacial tills. Generally, the phase 1 postholes and surface/midden deposits were only revealed upon the removal of the layers and cobble spreads associated

with the later occupation of the site. The pond and ditch, however, were visible from the outset. The former, being at the edge of the settlement focus, was not obscured by later activity and the latter was retained as a feature of later phases.

It is difficult to make clear sense of the layout of the earliest lodge from the archaeological remains, as the methods of construction used left little trace in the subsoil and a great deal of disturbance was caused by the later phases of the hunting lodge being built on the same site. All structural remains of this early phase of activity would have been dismantled, and many of

the layers and cut features associated with it removed or truncated. Consequently, a very partial outline is all that remained. In order to aid the interpretative process, a 5 m square grid was established across the site allowing the spatial location of finds recovered during the initial cleaning, when it was not possible to be certain of a secure stratigraphic provenance.

It is difficult to closely date the earliest phase of activity, as there are generally few finds within the features of this period. Most of these occurred within the pond and the midden deposit rather than the structural postholes, which contained virtually no finds.

Both the midden and pond remained in use for a long period of time, and contain much later material in addition to these earlier finds. Despite this poor dating evidence, it is clear that there is an early phase of activity on the site likely to date to the later medieval period, probably from at least the 15th century.

The lodge building

The later medieval hunting lodge comprised a single post-built hall (Fig. 10.6). The structure was sealed by the cobble spreads and occupation deposits of later phases, but was not directly associated with any finds or dating evidence. The hall was rectangular in plan (8 m by 5 m), with the longest axis aligned approximately north–south.

The western side of the structure was the best preserved – the eastern and northern sides of the structure were not as well defined. Two postholes in the centre of the building may have provided further structural support. No internal floor surfaces survived. Postholes to the south may have formed a fenceline associated with the hall (phase 1 fence).

On the basis of such slight evidence it is difficult to form a clear impression of what the lodge building may have looked like at this time and there are no surviving analogues within the Stansted area today. The building would have most likely been fairly rudimentary with earth-fast posts forming walls clad in timber or infilled with wattle and daub panels. It may have been thatched or been roofed with timber or tile and the floor would have been of beaten earth or timber planks. The hearth would have been in a central position in a bay open to the roof, smoke escaping through the rafters. There may have been attic rooms at one or both ends of the hall accessed via ladders. Structurally, from what is known archaeologically, there is nothing that distinguishes the lodge building from the other domestic structures of similar date excavated at Stansted.

Ground surface/midden 457014

Just to the north of the lodge and slightly overlapping the outline of the building, was an amorphous layer of darker soil, deposit 457014, which may have been a midden. This was probably contemporary with the building. It was partially sealed below a post-medieval cobbled surface and a later building and it sealed an area of earlier cobbles (457015). A number of sherds of medieval Harlow ware (of 12th–late 15th-century date, see below) which possibly date the earliest lodge, were collected from the layer, as well as intrusive post-medieval sherds.

The later medieval enclosure

The later medieval hunting lodge lay within a roughly rectangular fenced enclosure (later medieval enclosure), defined by 30 surviving postholes. Where stretches of fenceline could be clearly seen, they comprised settings for sturdy wooden posts some 2–3 m apart. The gaps between these would probably have been filled with wattle or hurdle panels. The enclosure measured approximately 25 m by 13 m and was orientated roughly east–west.

The phase 1 boundary ditch (see below) probably defined the eastern extent of the enclosure and a number of postholes (446031, 446033, 446035 and 459067) lay alongside it. A causeway 1.7 m wide probably allowed access to the pond (466001) to the south-east (Fig. 10.6). The southern side of the enclosure may not have been fenced. A line of five posts (446013, 446014, 449123, 468028 and 468030) to the east of the lodge building, may have subdivided the enclosure. Other postholes scattered within the enclosed area and further to the north may represent the remains of other structures or enclosures, but no clear patterns could be identified.

Finds were very scarce within the postholes precluding clear interpretation of these structures. Small quantities of deer (including fallow) as well as cattle and horse bones came from these features.

Eleven pits were widely dispersed to the north and east of the enclosure and have been assigned to this phase on stratigraphic grounds alone. They varied in form and dimensions; none contained any finds.

Later medieval pond 466001

A large pond was partially revealed at the eastern edge of the excavation area, 55 m to the south-east of the later medieval enclosure (Figs 10.6). It appeared to be sub-rectangular in plan and survived to a maximum depth of 1.16 m. Its full extent was not revealed and it was truncated by a post-medieval pond to the north. The deepest section was steeply stepped downwards into a rectangular pit (approximately 1.5 m x 5 m), which may originally have been timber-lined.



Plate 10.3: Later medieval and post-medieval ponds

The fills within the pond indicate that it was regularly cleaned. Despite this, one deposit (466003), relatively early in the sequence and accumulating during the use of the pond did contain several fragments of pottery – one small sherd of post-medieval redware and several sherds of decorated medieval Harlow ware.

The later medieval pond was adjacent to an entrance in the phase 1 boundary ditch (Fig. 10.6, Plate 10.3). It was backfilled, probably just prior to the construction of the phase 2 hunting lodge, although some of the upper fills in this feature are likely to have been deposited later. The pond was filled with successive dumps of redeposited natural subsoil – possibly that which was upcast when the pond was first dug and lenses of in-washed silt between the dumps. All of these deposits were relatively devoid of

cultural material apart from occasional small fragments of tile or charcoal flecks. The upper deposits within the pond were of a very different character. They were much darker, suggesting a higher organic component and contained greater numbers of finds. These denote a final episode of levelling in the backfilled feature and, being particularly rich in finds, were probably deposited during the occupation of the hunting lodge in phase 2. The assemblage comprised redware pottery, including many white slip decorated wares and a brown glazed cup; medieval Harlow ware and black slip decorated redwares were both notably absent. A rowel spur with a long neck, which was fashionable in the late 15th or early 16th century, a 'forker' arrowhead and the socket of another arrowhead, a small fragment of a scale tang knife handle, a horse-shoe, a barrel padlock and a key were also recovered; all of which are late medieval/early post-medieval types.

The later medieval finds

Despite the difficulties in defining the late medieval phase of activity on the site, an assemblage of late medieval pottery was retrieved, the distribution of which is clearly associated with the phase 1 hunting lodge. The assemblage is dominated by sandy-tempered Harlow ware pottery, dated to the later medieval period (*c* 1175–*c* 1500). This formed a small portion of the overall assemblage recovered from the site, but clearly clustered in the vicinity of the later medieval hunting lodge (Fig. 10.7). The majority of these sherds in the immediate vicinity were recovered from midden 457014 (probably associated with the use or the demolition of the later medieval hunting lodge) layer 459029 (the fill of a post-medieval hearth). A small assemblage of Harlow ware was also found in the lower fills of the later medieval pond, 466001 (see above).

Early post-medieval redware occurred alongside the later medieval pottery in both layer 457014 and the pond. Similarities between the two suggest that the medieval Harlow industry continued into the post-medieval peri-



Figure 10.7: Distribution of Harlow ware pottery near the phase 1 hunting lodge

od. Certainly the vessel forms (jugs, bung-hole vessels, handled jars) and decorative techniques (white slip painted motifs) seen here on the two types are directly comparable (Mephram, CD Chapter 19). As all sherds of Harlow ware occurred here together with post-medieval redwares; it is difficult in this case to determine whether they are therefore residual finds, or whether their co-occurrence with redwares marks a definite 'transitional' late medieval/early post-medieval ceramic phase, since the two types are likely to have had at least some chronological overlap in the later 15th century. The latter alternative seems the most likely.

None of the metal artefacts was recovered from later medieval features, although there are a number of items which could potentially be of this date. These include a late medieval key, a buckle in a 14th–15th-century style and a horseshoe of a style current between the 12th–13th centuries, all found in later deposits (Allen, CD Chapter 15).

The best evidence for 15th-century occupation takes the form of a number of copper alloy Nuremberg jetons. The earliest of the Stansted examples imitates similar jetons struck in Tournai

in the first half of the 15th century and came from the primary fill (466026) of a phase 2 enclosure ditch (466020), just north of the phase 1 lodge building. It is feasible that it was originally lost in this area when the lodge building was occupied. Two others bearing an early form of 'rose/orb' design probably date to the end of the 15th century and respectively came from the topsoil and from the top of phase 3 cobble surface 472004, neither of which can therefore be located closely. In all, seven 15th- or 16th-century jetons were recovered from the site, suggesting that some form of accounting or bookkeeping was taking place (Cooke, CD Chapter 13).

None of the animal bone could be assigned to this phase with certainty. However, it is likely that a residual element from the later medieval phase made up a proportion of the later assemblages.

Despite the difficulties in identifying finds and archaeological features or deposits of this date, it is clear that a post-built building within an enclosure forms the earliest structural phase of the hunting lodge complex. The presence of medieval Harlow ware associated with the structure suggests

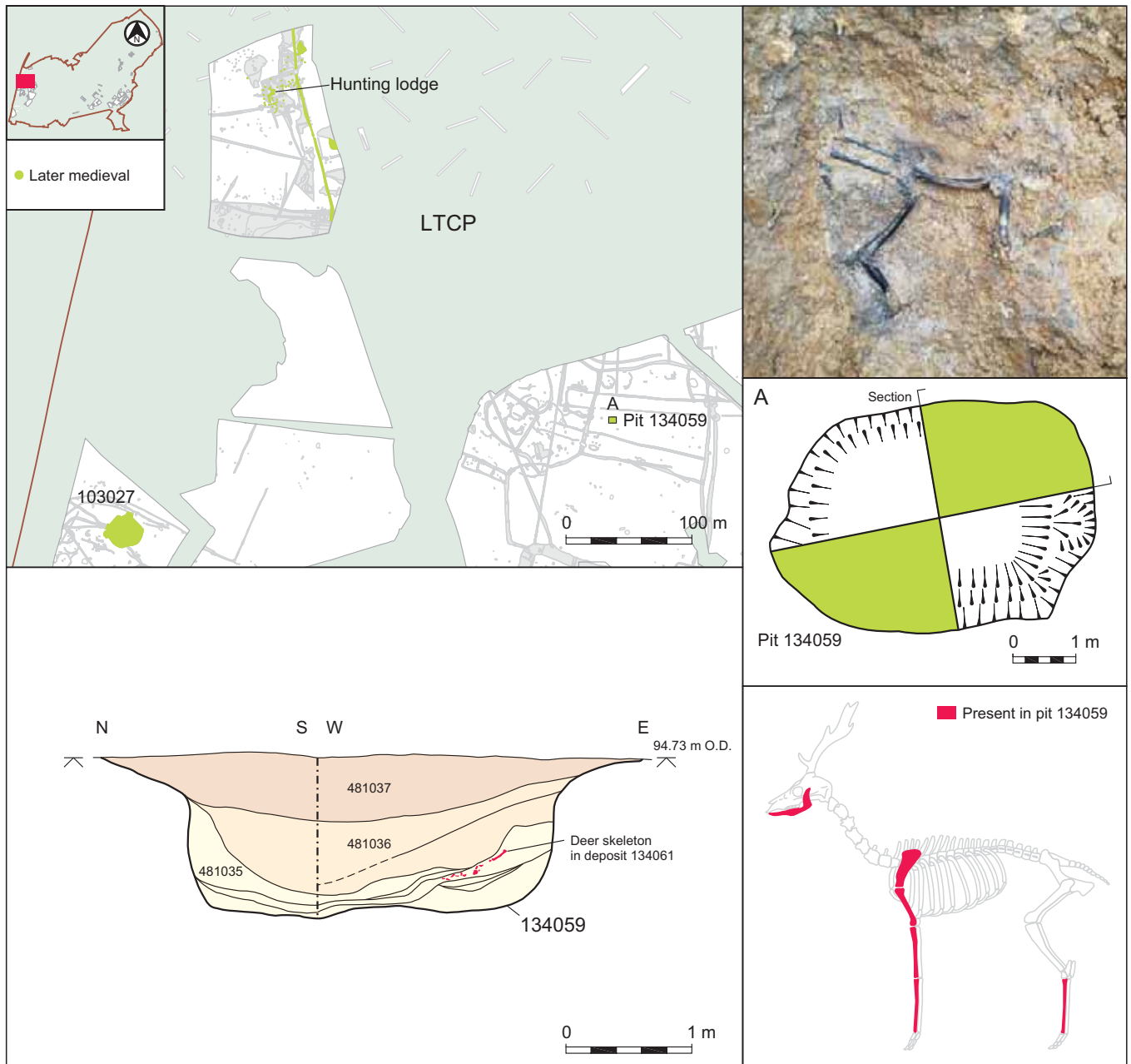


Figure 10.8: Pit 134059, showing articulated deer bone in situ and body parts represented

that it was first established on this site in the 15th century, a date supported by the jetons. Finds from the backfilled pond and from later phases of the lodge, suggests that the first lodge was demolished by the beginning of the 16th century.

Medieval poaching ?

There is some evidence that poaching was taking place within the deer park. A large sub-rectangular pit (134059) was located approximately 350 m south-east of the hunting lodge (Fig. 10.8); it was probably a waterhole for watering livestock within this part

of the deer park. It was steep-sided and flat-based. It was filled with a series of deposits including some that had accumulated in standing water (IG481035), showing that it was almost permanently waterlogged. Deposit 134061 contained fragments of waterlogged wood and the partially articulated skeletons of at least three adult and one neonatal fallow deer, which had been dumped into the pit (IG481036, Fig. 10.8). It is likely that the deer carcasses were dumped into the waterhole whilst the feature was still in use but the waterlain deposits (IG481037) seem to have accumulated after it had been abandoned; the carcasses having made it unusable.

The pit contained a number of residual sherds of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery. Fallow deer are generally considered to have been introduced by the Normans (Rackham 1989, 47). A bone from one of the articulated skeletons was radiocarbon dated, producing a result of cal AD 1330–1450 (497±30 BP, NZA-23750).

The manner in which the deer had been butchered contrasted with the butchery practices seen within the bone assemblage at the hunting lodge (Bates, CD Chapter 32) and the method used to dispose of the carcasses (in a functioning waterhole, which was then

left open) was also unusual. The unusual treatment of these deer hints at illicit hunting in the park. There are three stages to butchering ('breaking' or 'unmaking') a deer, firstly it is cut open ('undone'), then it is skinned ('fleaned') finally it is cut up ('brittled') (Almond 2003, 77). Deer were usually brittled in a prescribed manner, where the carcass was jointed and quartered (*ibid.*, 77; Cummins 1988, 41), the aristocracy ritualising a practice that took the common sense way of unmaking the deer as its basis (Almond 2003, 81). Both methods would have resulted in a similar signature but the skeletons in this pit did not quite match this profile, suggesting that other considerations governed the dismembering of the deer in an abnormal manner or that the butchery was undertaken by one unskilled in this.

At least two of the skulls had been removed and, as no antler was found, this may also have been taken. The pelvises of two of the deer remained and most of the forelegs were present, often in an articulated state, hind legs were present but were neither as numerous or articulated. The spines also seem to have been mostly removed. The head and the chine (spine) were inferior joints but would seem to have been taken along with the sides and, as it is unlikely that inferior joints would have been taken at the expense of better cuts, the evidence points to most of the carcasses being removed. The haunch was the most favoured part of the deer and was usually removed on the bone, so hind limbs would not be expected at the site of a kill – however some of them were present here. One of the fore limb bones bore evidence for filleting, so, rather than being jointed, meat may have been taken off the bone. This might also account for the presence of hind limbs, some of the meat from these being filleted and some removed as joints.

The bone from all phases of the hunting lodge included fore and hind legs, suggesting both were commonly consumed and that the deer were either butchered on site or meat was stored as joints (Fig.10.8). This

contrasts with the pit where the kill was butchered *in situ* and meat was filleted from some of the hind limbs and most, or all, of the fore limbs, possibly to make it more portable. This certainly indicates conflicting practices which might be explained by the clandestine nature of poaching and the logistical requirements of the poachers.

Perhaps poachers killed several deer, hurriedly butchered them so as to make the meat more portable and disposed of the evidence in a waterhole; either to conceal evidence of the misdemeanour or out of rebellion or spite. Deer are likely to have grazed here, as they were driven towards the lodge from this field. Interestingly a large barbed and tanged 'broadhead' arrowhead, a form commonly used in the Middle Ages and early post-medieval period for hunting large game, was retrieved from the top of the backfill (114038) of a large Romano-British ditched enclosure in this field. This place possibly lent itself to poaching because it was far enough away from the lodge and out of sight beyond any trees lining the brook for poachers to have avoided detection. A quick escape would have been possible, out of the park to the east and into the demesne lands rented by the tenants of the manor, some of whom may have been amongst the poachers.

Legislation and poaching

In romantic representations of medieval poaching, the oppressed peasant risks life and limb to take a deer from the park or forest of his Norman overlord. In reality things were probably rather different. Irrespective of gender all of medieval society, noble and serf, were likely to engage in hunting to some extent (Almond 2003, 167). Status determined what game could legitimately be taken and this was the subject of various legislative acts at different times in history. Forest Law protected only the rights of the king and although in theory poaching was a capital offence, in practice, depending on the circumstances of the crime, one was more likely to be either pardoned, fined or imprisoned (Rackham 1989, 59).

Throughout the medieval period several attempts were made to restrict or outlaw any hunting by the lower orders and were hotly contested. Wat Tyler, during the peasants revolt of 1381, specifically solicited from Richard II commonalty rights to hunt (Keen 1977, 166), whereas in 1390 the same monarch was responsible for implementing the Game Laws restricting these rights to those who held property worth in excess of 40 s (the upper yeomanry, gentry and nobility). In effect the Game Laws revoked the ancient rights of all to take game from the common land and made hunting the privilege of the upper classes rather than the contended monopoly of the crown (Almond 2003, 94). However, implementing these laws was problematic and the infrequent number of prosecutions after 1400 suggest that it was ineffective in controlling poaching (*ibid.*, 142).

The Forest Laws fell into semi-abeyance during the 14th and 15th centuries and as the Forest courts (or *eyres*) met evermore infrequently they lost their efficacy in protecting the royal venison (Almond 2003, 139). Under the Tudor monarchs royal authority was re-asserted and a number of Game Acts were passed, trespasses against which were at various times punished as felonies or capital offences. Poaching was often equated with civil unrest, perhaps understandably given the incidence of organised, large-scale deer poaching and the destruction of game and deer parks in the riots and rebellions of this period. Elizabeth I was less severe, making game offences misdemeanours but by the 17th century restrictive game legislation, informed by the principle of the absolute and unqualified rights of private property, outlawed hunting to those who were not of the gentry, with even common lands and waste being affected (*ibid.*, 139).

Poaching from private parks, commons and forest alike was, however, widespread in all these periods, motivated by necessity in times of hunger, a fondness for venison and, no doubt, the joy of hunting and of acting illegally. There was a black market for venison

(Birrell 1996, 85), which, being a 'noble' meat, was not freely available to all. Poached venison would have been relished at times of celebration such as Christmas and at all times could have been exchanged as gifts amongst the lower orders in an imitation of the acts of aristocratic patronage. However, illicit hunting was certainly not restricted to the lower classes and there is good evidence for the involvement of the aristocracy and clergy in poaching expeditions (Almond 2003, 130). Lords were known to lead several of the armed gangs that engaged in organised poaching, either taking the king's deer from the forests or even raiding each other's estates in acts of bravado and as a surrogate for out and out war. Whether undertaken by a lone peasant taking a deer from a park at night or a noble band raiding the royal forest, poaching was as much a part of life as legitimate hunting. In practice it helped maintain the status quo, especially between the nobility and lesser gentry, the former having a superfluity of venison and the latter too few to satisfy their desires.

The Tudor hunting park

The de Veres continued to hold the Stansted manors for most of the 16th century. A survey of the Essex possessions of the earl of Oxford in 1563 states that the manor of Bentfieldbury, and the manor house and demesne lands of Stansted Hall, were leased out to farmers. The park and woodlands were retained by the earl, however (ERO D/DU 65/72).

The earls of Oxford extended Stansted Park in the second or third decade of the 16th century. At around this time, possibly slightly earlier, the parker's lodge within the deer park was rebuilt within a ditched compound associated with a number of deer drives (or *hayes*) (Fig. 10.9). The expansion is apparent from a case in Chancery in 1593, which Nicholas Ray of Thremhalls brought against Richard Franke about access along Thremhall Lane, later called Bury Lodge Lane. Ray's witnesses maintained that the lane was a private road which had previously belonged to the Prior of Thremhall as Ray's

predecessor, whereas Franke and others had used it as a public cartway from Hatfield Forest to Stansted church. The Prior had kept each end of the lane closed with a large and a small gate. The earl expanded his park on the Thremhall side by exchanging some land with the Prior and others, so that the park gate was moved southwards by 'about a flight shoot and a half', having formerly stood 'more within the Park' (BL Add Charter 55465). It appears that the earl included the field and wood to the south of the medieval park within the new park boundary (nos 756 and 757 on the tithe map), and probably diverted the lane to run around it. The field name evidence suggests that he also took in more land on the east side of the lane at its northern end (Fig. 10.9). In total the park grew by approximately 43 hectares (about 100 modern acres), expanding from an original area of 129 hectares to 172 hectares.

Until this time Bury Lodge, to the east of the excavated site, appears to have lain outside the medieval park area but was now drawn into the park upon its eastward extension, thereby acquiring its name. The historical accounts possibly referring to the Bury Lodge are not definitive but it would seem to have been owned by the earls of Oxford.

The county historians of Essex describe the manor house of Burnells as adjacent to the bridge near Stansted town, and serving as the venue for the manorial courts after the demolition of the castle. They also describe the position of the manor house of Bury Lodge (Morant 1768, ii, 578; Muilman 1770, iii, 20; Wright 1835, ii, 158). It is unclear whether there was a separate manor of Burylodge in the early 16th century, or if this became an alternate name for the manor of Burnells. An *Inquisition Post Mortem* of the earl of Oxford in 1513 refers to the manors of 'Bentfieldbury, Stansted, Bury Lodge, etc', while another of 1526 mentions the manors of 'Stansted Mountfychet and Bury Logge' (NA C142/28/83; C142/45/7). The survey of 1563 lists the manors of 'Stansted Montfychet, Burnell and Bentfieldbury' (ERO D/DU 65/72), while conveyances by the de

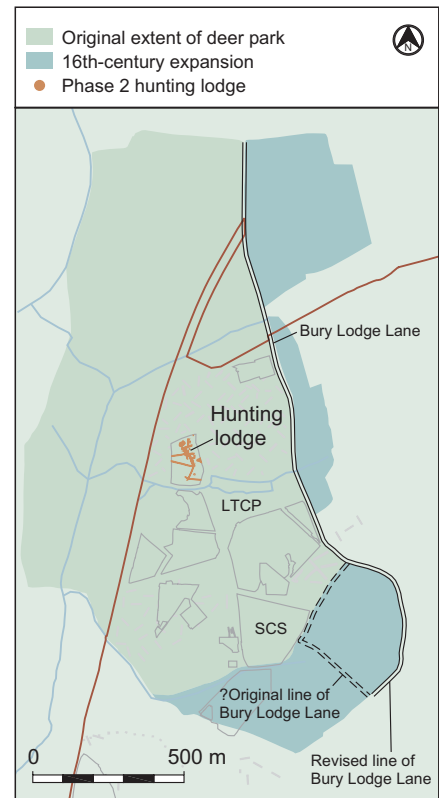


Figure 10.9: Extent of the original deer park and areas of 16th-century expansion

Veres in 1548 and the Huberts in 1592 described the manors of the parish as Stansted Mountfichet, Bentfieldbury, Burnels and Burylodge (*FFE v 9*; vi 92). A conveyance of 1704 lists 'the manors and lordships of Stansted Mountfichet alias Stansted Hall, Burnells and Beneield Bury, and the manor or messuage and farm of Bury Lodge with its appurtenances in the parish of Stansted', suggesting that the separate manorial status of Bury Lodge was dubious (ERO D/DA T360). It is also not unusual to find the term 'manor' incorrectly attached to an estate which in fact had no manorial court. A deed of 1516 mentions *Buriloggefelde* as an abutment (BL Add Charter 37641(1)). The buildings of Bury Lodge include two weather-boarded barns, of unknown date (RCHM(E) 1916, 280).

In the 16th century the parkland setting of a great house was often enhanced at the expense of the manorial demesne land, to increase its amenity and prestige value (Hunter 1999, 143, 148; 2003, 10; Havis and Brooks 2004). It was common for the functions of a manor house to move from a village centre to a lodge in a park (Hunter

1999, 121) in response to an increasing desire for privacy and distance from one's social inferiors (Munby 1977, 142). Stansted was not the seat of the earls of Oxford, the park was only one of a number owned by them in Essex and they leased out Stansted Hall at this time. It is of course possible that the earls occasionally stayed in the house they had built for their parker or, indeed, even used Bury Lodge as a *pied-à-terre* within the park.

Essex had many parks at this time and was occasionally frequented by the Tudor monarchs – both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were very fond of hunting in parks and made it fashionable. The park remained a symbol of social rank and, as forms of hunting such as coursing and bow stable became evermore popular (Cummins 1988, 47; Almond 2003, 83ff; Lasdun 1991, 24 and 35). Hunts within the parks were as much about recreation, tournament and display as meat procurement. The lords and ladies were likely to be active participants and set piece forms of hunting were designed to enhance the drama and spectacle for the audiences viewing them (Lasdun 1991, 35). This probably accounts for the system of deer drives or *hayes* established at Stansted at this time, leading towards the hunting lodge from the field or *parrox* in the south-east of the park (see below). That these features were constructed suggests the park was on occasion the setting for the earls of Oxford's hunting parties rather than simply being an asset supplying them with meat and timber. Towards the end of the 16th century England commenced 'The Great Rebuilding' (Hoskins 1953), replacing and reconstructing much of its rural vernacular architecture. The demand for timber from parks reached a premium and was further fuelled by the burgeoning requirements of incipient industry in addition to shipbuilding, as Henry and Elizabeth expanded the navy (Schama 1995, 153; Lasdun 1991, 37). Despite these practical considerations the Tudor deer park embodied a heightened aesthetic, lacking only water to become what in the 18th century would be recognised as landscape gardens (Switzer 1718, 273).

The 16th-century parkers

Records exist giving us the names of the various 16th-century parkers (Syblay, Josselyn and Browne), who possibly lived in the excavated hunting lodge in the centre of the park. This would have served as the headquarters of the earl's hunting activities at Stansted, and was presumably visited by the earl and his guests during his hunting parties. However, as the position of parker was seemingly a rather profitable or prestigious sinecure at this time and as the parkers held other properties, it is possible that they did not permanently reside at the lodge, which might instead have been kept by their deputies.

In 1542 a quarrel arose over the office of Keeper of the park. The earl of Oxford had apparently granted it by a letter patent to a royal servant, Thomas or John Josselyn, but, as he complained to his brother-in-law John Gates, he was unable to dislodge the previous holder Syblay, who regarded himself as Keeper for life. With the collusion of the earl's local officers, the keys were taken from Josselyn's deputy, who was threatened with imprisonment and the loss of his copyhold. The king wrote to the earl and ordered him to admit Josselyn to the Keepership, or to send his 'doers and counsellors' before the royal council to explain their actions. The fees of the office were specified as the profits and produce as previous

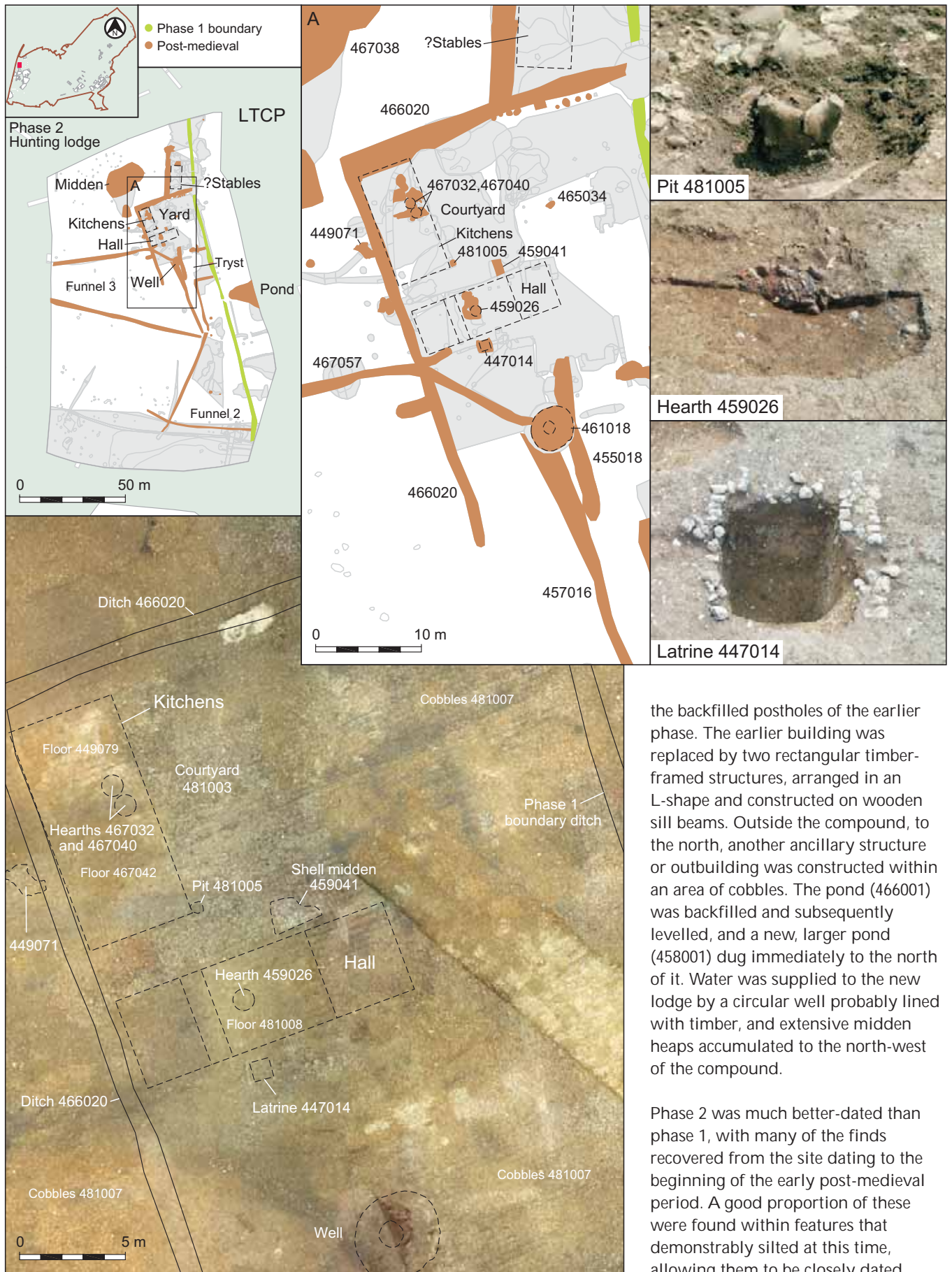
Keepers had had them, together with a buck and a doe each year, the pasturing of two geldings, and 4d per day (*LPH Addenda i(2)* 520 no. 1524, 529 no. 1551; NA SP1/243 f276; SP1/244 f13). In August 1543 Edmund Jerningham reported to Sir Thomas Darcy of the King's Privy Chamber that the earl of Oxford was threatening to dispark his park at Stansted, presumably to avoid the controversy (*LPH Addenda i(2)* 542 no. 1602). Nevertheless in a list of 1544 detailing horses which John Gates had pastured in Essex, one called Great Coll was kept in Stansted Park, suggesting that Josselyn had succeeded in gaining his Keepership (NA SP1/245 f3). The Josselyns also held the manor of Manuden and lands in Hallingbury (*FFE iv* 128). In April 1546 the earl granted the two offices of Keeper of the park and bailiff of the manor at Stansted by letters patent to Wystane Browne esquire, at fees of 60s 10d each *per annum*. He was still receiving these fees in 1563 (ERO D/DU 65/72).

The early post-medieval hunting lodge (phase 2)

During the late 15th or early 16th century there was a major programme of construction at the hunting lodge (Fig. 10.10, Plate 10.4). The fenced enclosure was replaced by a regularly-defined ditched enclosure integrated into a system of drives or droveways which radiated out from it. Extensive areas of flint cobbling were laid, sealing



Plate 10.4: Phase 2 kitchens under excavation viewed from the north



the backfilled postholes of the earlier phase. The earlier building was replaced by two rectangular timber-framed structures, arranged in an L-shape and constructed on wooden sill beams. Outside the compound, to the north, another ancillary structure or outbuilding was constructed within an area of cobbles. The pond (466001) was backfilled and subsequently levelled, and a new, larger pond (458001) dug immediately to the north of it. Water was supplied to the new lodge by a circular well probably lined with timber, and extensive midden heaps accumulated to the north-west of the compound.

Phase 2 was much better-dated than phase 1, with many of the finds recovered from the site dating to the beginning of the early post-medieval period. A good proportion of these were found within features that demonstrably silted at this time, allowing them to be closely dated.

Figure 10.10: Phase 2 hunting lodge and associated features

The new hunting lodge

Two buildings (phase 2 hall and phase 2 kitchens) were constructed to replace the later medieval hunting lodge when it was demolished (Fig. 10.10). These were not built on earth-fast foundations and have had to be interpreted from surviving floor surfaces, the odd structural feature and from the edges of the cobble surfaces which respect them. As such, a good approximation of their dimensions and ground plan can be made but some ambiguity exists. The buildings were both rectangular and of similar size, being arranged in an L-shape around a cobbled courtyard (481003). Other less well constructed cobbled surfaces (481007) lay on their east and to the west, beyond the perimeter ditch. To the south of the buildings, a square (10 m x 10 m) area of darker soil that was not cobbled could have been a small garden plot (481004).

Hall

The first of these buildings, phase 2 hall, had to be interpreted from the line of courtyard 481003, which respected it, and from soil discolorations indicating floor surfaces. The building was orientated east-west and measured 5.1 m wide, between cobble spread 481003 on the north and latrine 447014 on the south. It is harder to be precise about its length but it was at least 11 m, as a ditch 466020 bordered the building on the west and an oyster shell midden (459041) respected its northern side. A central hearth (459026) lay equidistant from the north and the south walls of the structure (Fig. 10.10). It may originally have been square in shape and as only its base survived it may have been a much more impressive feature. It had been backfilled with refuse, probably when the phase 2 hall was demolished, and truncated a posthole (481001) associated with the later medieval hunting lodge. The latest finds might relate to the demolition of the phase 3 farmhouse. They included a fragment of clay pipe stem, Staffordshire pottery, a large assemblage of medieval Harlow ware and black slip decorated redware, as well as a number of copper alloy pins

and some worked flint, including a barbed and tanged arrowhead.

The ground inside the building was not cobbled and was slightly different in colour and texture from the area outside it. Generally, there were no obvious packed clay deposits like those in phase 2 kitchens (see below), so the floor would have been of beaten earth, covered with planks or mats or, in places, could have been of timber planks raised on joists. Remnants of a yellow packed clay floor (481008) did survive surrounding the hearth, indicating that this area may have been better surfaced than the rest of this building and was unlikely to have been planked. Deposit 457029 was a general spread of discoloured soil inside the building containing a fragment of clay pipe stem, sherds of black slip decorated redware, Westerwald and Cologne/Frechen stoneware (17th century) and probably related to the demolition of the structure.

The latrine

A latrine pit (447014), was immediately south of the building (Fig. 10.10). It was 1 m square and 1.1 m deep. Three sides were roughly kerbed with large flint nodules set in three rows, each c 0.3 m wide. The northern edge was not kerbed and would have butted the southern wall of the building. The natural glacial tills on the sides and base of the pit were stained green with degraded cess and may originally have been revetted with wattle panels, although no evidence for these survived. The pit contained a deposit (447012) of fine green-grey silty-clay, which had accumulated within the latrine during its use (IG481025). A robust, long bladed knife with an octagonal bone handle lay on the base of the latrine and may have accidentally fallen into it (Fig. 10.20.11). This was the largest knife recovered from the site and may feasibly have been a personal hunting weapon. This fill also contained a fragment of Purbeck Marble mortar, a fairly high status object, and the carcasses of several mature cockerels were dumped near the top of the deposit. The latter could have been gaming cocks as all retained their spurs (Bates, CD Chapter 32).

Pottery within the lower fill (447012) of the latrine included white slip decorated redware and a sherd of Raeren stoneware which date the last use of the feature. The levelling deposit (IG481026) in the top of latrine contained fragments of a redware tankard and a sherd of Cologne/Frechen pottery. The bowl of a clay pipe also came from the surface of this fill but relates to the later demolition of the phase 3 farmhouse (see below).

All the finds from the phase 2 hall relate to its abandonment and do not date its construction or use. The pottery from the latrine and the hearth suggest it was demolished no earlier than the first few decades of the 17th century and the majority of the finds from layer 459029 agree with this. The fragment of clay pipe in this latter deposit (c 1660–1690) is too late to date the demolition of the structure and probably derives from later activity.

Kitchens

The second building (phase 2 kitchens) was orientated north-west to south-east along its longest axis and lay 2.3 m to the north of the phase 2 hall, a westward projection of courtyard (281003) filling the intervening space (Figs 10.10–11). Its western side was in line with the western end of this latter building, so that together the two buildings formed an L-shape. Like the hall, this building had no earth-fast foundations and was probably built on timber sills. It could only be identified from internal packed clay floor surfaces (449079 and 467042) and from an external courtyard (281003), which it respected its eastern side and south-eastern corner.

Over most of the interior of the building a layer of trampled silt or a beaten earth floor (467042) sealed the underlying subsoil (448002). Above this was a square area of light yellow clay (449079) that measured 7.7 m x 4.8 m and formed a compacted floor. Patches of this floor also survived along the eastern edge of the building at its south end. The floor survived particularly well in the north-eastern corner of the building where it was scorched by



Figure 10.11: Phase 2 kitchens looking south

the intense heat from fires set in two hearths (467032 and 467040) (Fig. 10.11). Associated with the hearths was a small pit or depression (446011) containing a charcoal-rich layer (467029). Layer 467029 and back-filled depressions 446011, 449079 and 449078, in the floor of the kitchen and probably associated with its use – all contained redware pottery. As a whole, this pottery assemblage is similar in date to that from the phase 2 hall but of coarser type, perhaps reflecting the different status of the two structures.

Figure 10.12: Distribution of the early post-medieval kitchen vessels from features of all phases

West of the kitchen, a roughly square stone setting (449071), comprising tightly packed, large (0.1 m x 0.1 m) flint nodules (Fig. 10.11), may have been the base for a timber step bridging the ditch (466020) (see below) aligned alongside the building. This probably provided access to a door in the building, just south of its centre. In a small circular pit (481005) in the south-east corner of the building, where the internal floor surfaces met cobble surface 481003, was the partial skull of a young fallow deer or priket (Fig. 10.10). This was incomplete but the cranium, orbits and pedicles (where the antler joins the skull) survived and a mandible, probably

from the same animal, was associated with it. The skull appeared to have been deliberately buried in the pit.

Discussion

Reconstructing the lodge buildings from such slight and incomplete evidence is problematic and the interpretation offered below is highly conjectural, especially when discussing the upper storeys. However, several documentary sources exist referring to hunting lodges and the fairly rudimentary structures they describe seem to broadly agree with the archaeological evidence for the buildings at Stansted. In 1342–3 Edward III had a timber lodge transported from Stoke Poges Park and re-erected in Ditton Park in Buckinghamshire, to provide accommodation for the parker. It was roofed with 33 crest tiles and 700 flat tiles, and the walls were daubed with sand and earth. Two further chambers and a latrine were added. An upper chamber, boarded with oak planks, was reached by a flight of external stairs with a tiled roof, which was brought from Stoke (NA SC6/760/19). The late 14th-century lodge of the bishop of Winchester at Highclere in Hampshire was made with wattle and daub walls founded on sill beams, and was roofed with tiles; it was sited in its own hedged and ditched enclosure. It had a hall and a chamber and several other rooms. A brick chimney had been added by the early

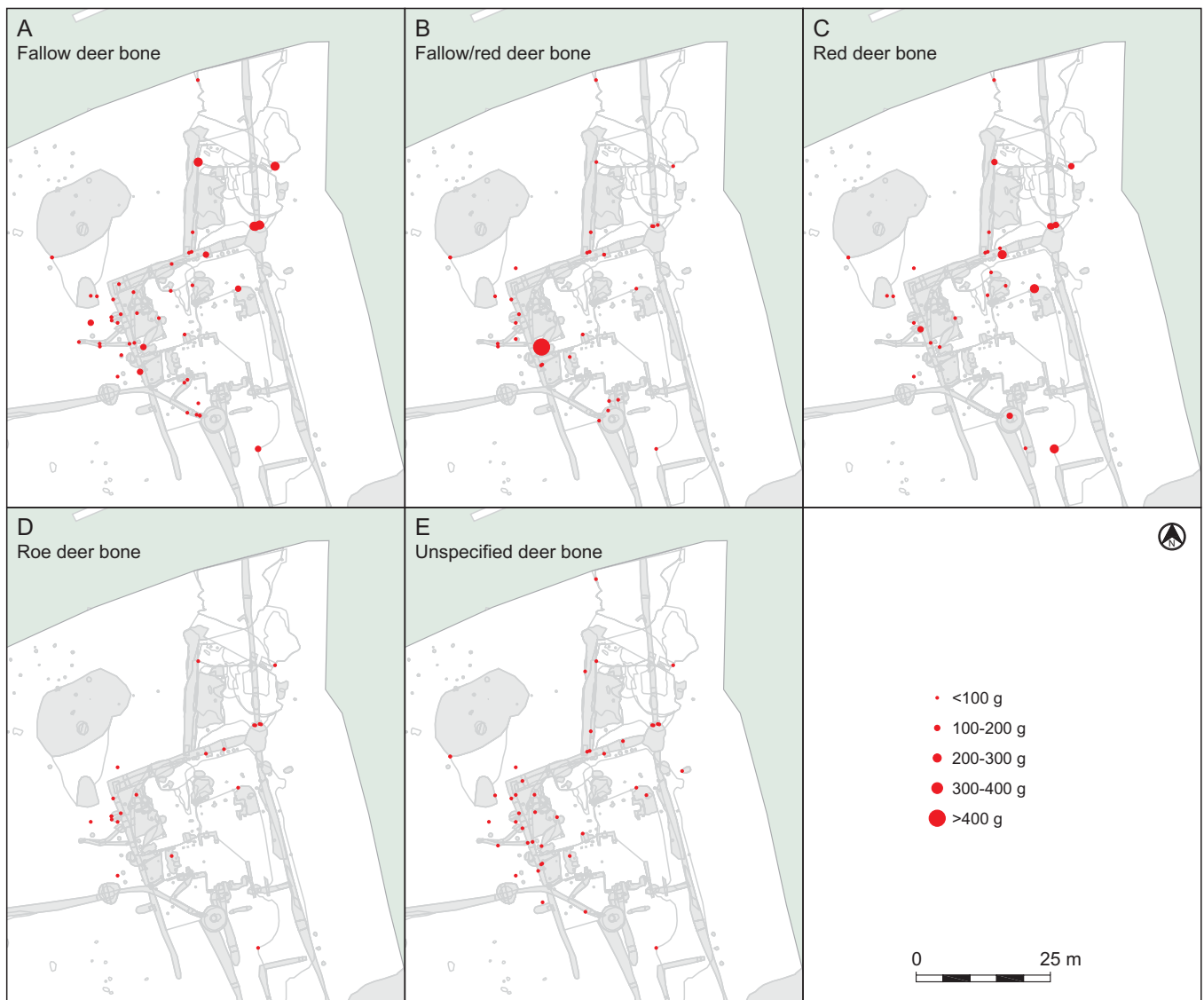


16th century (Phillpotts 1996, 54). Much nearer to Stansted, a hunting lodge was built in the middle of Hatfield Forest, probably by Henry VIII in the early 16th century for his forester. The original lodge was a Wealden-type house measuring 33 ft by 17 ft (10.06 m x 5.18 m), consisting of a parlour, a hall, and a screens passage leading to a buttery and pantry. A viewing platform is thought to have been above the parlour at one end, the point from which the maximum area of the forest could be viewed. This served as a grandstand from which important guests could look down upon the ceremony of the hunt. Later additions to the lodge, and the demolition of one end, altered the layout of the original structure (Rackham 1989, 175–9).

Figure 10.13: Distribution of the deer bone from all phases of the hunting lodge

The phase 2 kitchens are thought to be ancillary to phase 2 hall, and possibly included service quarters. The position of the hearths at the northern end of the building supports the interpretation of this structure, as does pottery found in the general area, which includes a dripping dish, a chafing dish and several cistern bungs, all of which would have been used in a kitchen (Fig. 10.12). Heron bone from a small pit 466011 and domestic bird bone from hearth 467032 and spread 467029 also suggest the preparation of food. It is perhaps significant that a great proportion of the animal bone assemblage from the site, including antler and deer bone, was from around the kitchens, especially to the south and west; no doubt indicating the preparation of carcasses in this area prior to cooking (Figs 10.13–14).

An existing example of an external kitchen of this period, 'The Bakehouse', is known locally at Flemings Hill Farmhouse, Broxted (HER 37391). This building was originally timber-framed and single storied, open to a steeply pitched, ceramic tiled roof (Essex County Council 2004). Stenning (2004, 467) interprets an outbuilding of Great Coopers Farmhouse, Coopers End, Takeley as a 16th-century detached kitchen or service range that was moved to this site in the 17th century and continued to be used as such. The 17th-century building had a brick chimney stack but this may not have been a feature of the 16th-century building. Noteworthy modifications to the 17th-century building included the insertion of a raised floor three feet above ground level and a small garret room in the roof space. The kitchens at Stansted were likely to have been



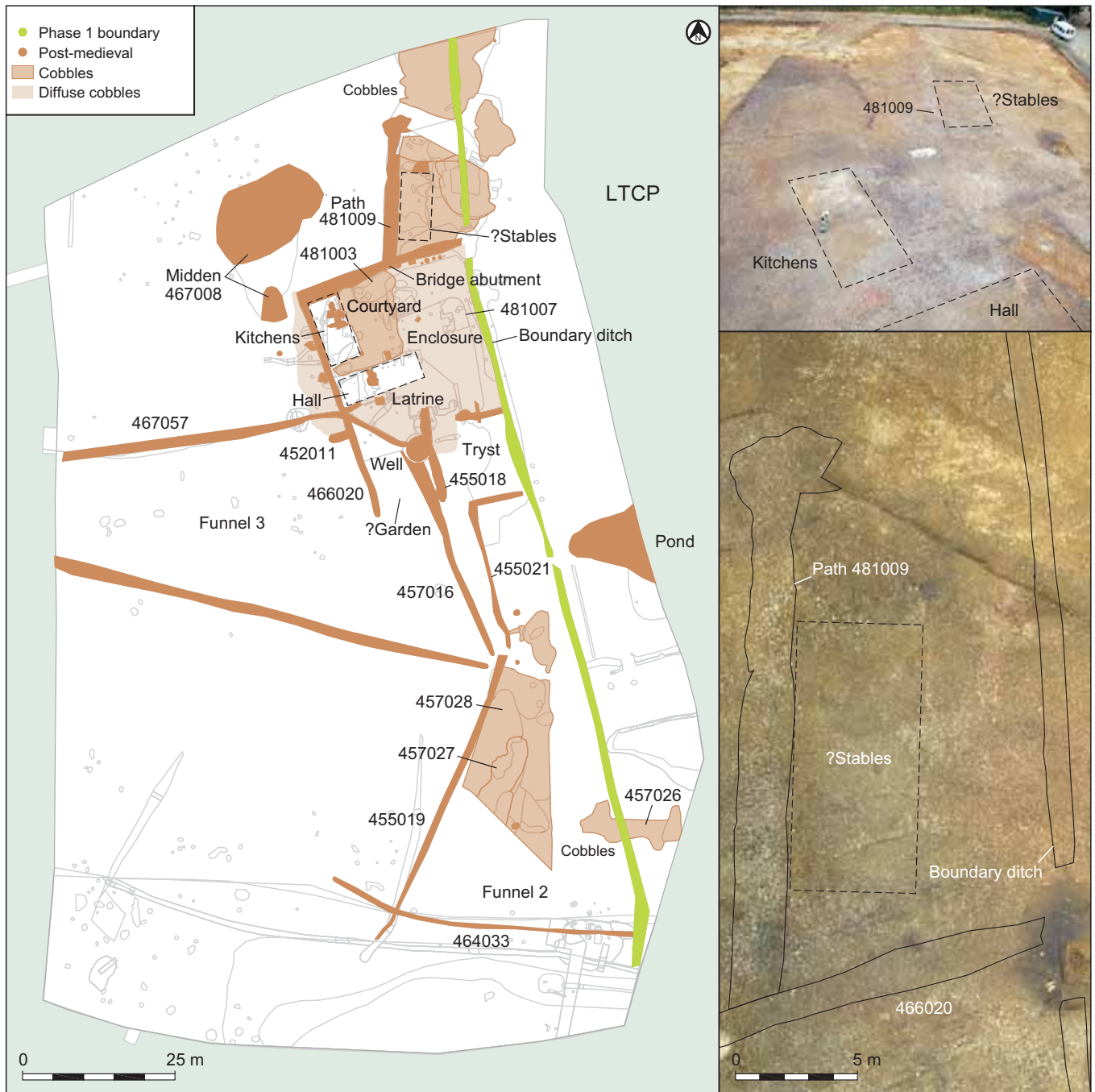


Figure 10.14: Phase 2 enclosure and the hunting lodge buildings

constructed in a similar manner to these structures. The position and arrangement of the twinned hearths in the north of the structure, which were probably ovens or cooking ranges, is reminiscent of the hearths found in the building interpreted as a gatehouse at King John's Hunting Lodge, Writtle (Rahtz 1969, fig. 13, 31, 30–32). Rahtz suggested that these may have been served by a smoke hood; as the Stansted hearths were at the end of the building, and there is no evidence for a brick chimney stack, it is possible that this was also the case here.

The latrine and centrally positioned hearth associated with phase 2 hall, suggest its higher status as a domestic residence. The size and shape of this latter building are in keeping with a timber-framed, three bayed hall, possibly with a jettied upper storey, sometimes called 'Wealden houses' (Harris 2003, 30–50). These are 'middle class' structures, of a vernacular form widely known throughout this part of Essex and Hertfordshire, that are usually occupied by merchants or wealthy farmers and would therefore have been appropriate for a parker's

lodge. Indeed, the lodge in Hatfield Forest (noted above) provides a very good example of what the Stansted hall might have been like as does the image of the 'The Keepers house' depicted on the map of Stock deer park (c 1575) (Smith 1996, pl. 3). Wealden houses widely conform, despite some architectural variation, to a formal layout that subdivides the residence between higher and lower status ends (often two storied) either side of a hall in a central bay, open to the roof and heated by a centrally located hearth. This arrangement usually reflected the

social divisions existing between master and servant, with the symbolic and practical division of space within the building being informed by and structuring the way it was habitually used. However, as the phase 2 hall was intended as a hunting lodge, its design and the categorisation of internal space may have differed from the normal layout in similar but purely domestic buildings.

On an everyday basis the parker would have been master of the house but when his lord and guests were visiting he would have had to assume a subordinate role. So, on the one hand, the building was a residence and part of a small holding housing the parker, his family and retainers, on the other, it would have had to help the parker fulfil his duties in administering the park and the hunt. This would have included throwing banquets during and after the hunt and entertaining the guests, hence the requirement for a separate kitchen and service range. Other idiosyncrasies in the form of the structure might be expected and could bear testimony to its function.

The low status end of the hall was probably in the west, closest to the kitchens. This usually contained a pantry (for bread) and a buttery (for beer), although this part of the building may have been put to another use here, given the commodious size of the kitchens. Servants often lodged in upper storey chambers at the low end but, as this was a hunting lodge, guests or even the parker and his family may have slept in these instead. The servants might then have either slept in the kitchen or in the lower storey rooms if the pantry and buttery were elsewhere. A ground floor service passage in the low end would have facilitated communication between the residence and the southern half of the kitchens, according well with the kitchen hearths being at their northern end. The open bayed hall would have been east of the service passage, the hearth being in the centre of the room, perhaps displaced slightly to the west, the high table standing on the east side of the hearth and the latrine adjoining the room on the south. The high status

end of the hall would then have been at the east of the residence, with the solar (the private room or parlour) expected on the ground floor and the bedchamber in an upper storey above it. The latter would normally be for the head of the house and may have been occupied by the parker (if he was not instead ensconced at the west of the lodge, and the high chamber reserved for any wellborn guests who may have stayed at the lodge overnight). The chambers in the upper storeys at either end of the hall would most likely have been accessed by ladders located in the rooms beneath them.

The latrine is an unusual feature to find in a rural vernacular site and may attest to the higher status of those frequenting the lodge, although examples are known from other 'middle class' buildings of this period. Famously, a latrine accessed from the upper-storey chamber, at the high status end of 'Bayleaf' Farmstead (a Wealden house reconstructed at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton (www.weald-down.co.uk)) projected out over a pit excavated at ground level and a possible example of such a latrine has been found at the LBR site (Havis and Brooks 2004). However, this would not seem to be the arrangement at the Stansted lodge, as the latrine pit was against the outside wall on the south of the structure, opposing the hearth. As the bay containing the hearth was likely to be open, to let the smoke escape through the rafters, an upper storey in the centre of the structure would be unlikely. The only way the latrine pit could have been served by an upper storey latrine would have been if a smoke hood surrounded the fire and a passage ran down the southern side of the jettied upper storey but as this unusual arrangement would have detracted from the hall and does not fit well with central position of the hearth, it is considered unlikely. Instead, the latrine may have been accessed from ground level, through a door off the hall. The stone kerbing would then perhaps have helped support a wooden seat, and the latrine may have been enclosed within its own, timber or wattle chamber.

The unusual association of the latrine with the hall rather than the higher chamber might relate to the building's function as a hunting lodge in addition to a domestic residence. The hall, from which the latrine was accessed, would have hosted feasts and revelries enjoyed by the hunting party, members of which may have required a private privy and would not have wanted to climb a ladder to a privy in an upstairs bedchamber. At King John's hunting lodge, Writtle, rectangular cess pits (130 and 871) were located in the north-east corner of the main hall and were thought to be contemporary with it (Rahtz, 1969, fig. 26, 52 and 55). These were screened off from the main hall by wooden partitions and were probably latrines, providing some confirmation that the Stansted arrangement may have been a recurrent feature of hunting lodge buildings.

The dating evidence for these two structures is slightly ambiguous, mostly relating to the demolition and abandonment of the structures rather than their use. The pottery in the use deposits within the kitchens is not of a particularly diagnostic type and does not provide precise dating. The presence of the imported stonewares and black slip decorated redwares strongly imply that these buildings stood into the early part of the 17th century but perhaps not much later.

The phase 2 enclosure

A rectangular ditched enclosure replaced the fenced phase 1 enclosure surrounded the phase 2 kitchens and phase 2 hall, (Fig.10.14). The phase 1 boundary ditch formed its western side, suggesting this was still open and in use at this time. Ditch 466020 defined the northern and eastern sides of the enclosure, bordering the phase 2 hall on the west and the phase 2 kitchens on the north side, lying directly adjacent to both these buildings. It was of similar proportions to the phase 1 boundary ditch. A set of timber steps supported on cobble setting 449071 bridged the ditch on the west, leading to a door in the kitchens. At its centre, in the north of the compound, the ditch was probably crossed by a

timber causeway, as it was from this direction that the hunting lodge was formally approached along a cobbled path (481009). As in phase 1, the phase 2 enclosure was open towards the south, from which direction a number of drives or droveways led into it (Fig. 10.15). The ditches enclosing the compound probably helped it drain and would have been augmented with another sort of barrier, to keep out deer and vermin and pen in livestock. This was perhaps a hedge or fence, on a bank formed of upcast earth from the ditch, although no evidence for this was found.

Finds from the phase 2 enclosure ditches were especially numerous adjacent to the buildings. The assemblage from ditch 466020 included animal bone, shell, brick and tile, iron and copper objects such as pins, lace tags, buckles and knives, pottery and a copper alloy jeton. The latest pottery in ditch 466020 was black slip decorated redware, only occurring in the upper backfills deposited when the ditch was

levelled. This was of similar early 17th century date to the latest pottery associated with the phase 2 hall and phase 2 kitchens. The ditch was probably regularly cleaned and was older than the finds imply, those in the lower deposits accumulating towards the end of its use. These mainly comprised post-medieval redware (including sherds with a white slip decoration) and some residual sherds of medieval Harlow ware, the former consistent with the early 17th century date implied by a copper alloy buckle from primary fill 466021 and a knife from secondary fill 466022. The knife has a bolster and a plain handle that is hexagonal in section like the one from latrine 447014.

A copper alloy jeton dating to the first half of the 15th century was retrieved from primary ditch fill 466027, adjacent to phase 2 kitchens. The jeton appears earlier than the majority of the pottery assemblage, and, like the medieval Harlow ware pottery, was probably residual having been lost during phase 1 before the ditch was dug.

A small projection (452011) off the side of ditch 466020, back filled at the same time, contained a redware chafing dish of 16th–17th-century form in upper deposit (452012). A primary fill (459015) in phase 1 boundary ditch on the east of the enclosure contained several copper alloy pins, a tile, a lace tag and a few sherds of pottery including several from a Cologne/Frechen stoneware and a single sherd of post-medieval redware. Another small sherd of Cologne/Frechen with an applied medallion came from a backfill deposit (449094) in this ditch. In date these broadly agree with the finds from ditch 466020. Animal bone was noticeably less frequent on this side of the enclosure.

The layout and components of the hunting lodge complex at Stansted bear some comparison with King John's hunting lodge at Writtle, Essex (Rahtz 1969), although the latter was both of higher status and earlier than the Stansted lodge (the Stansted lodge being established at about the time

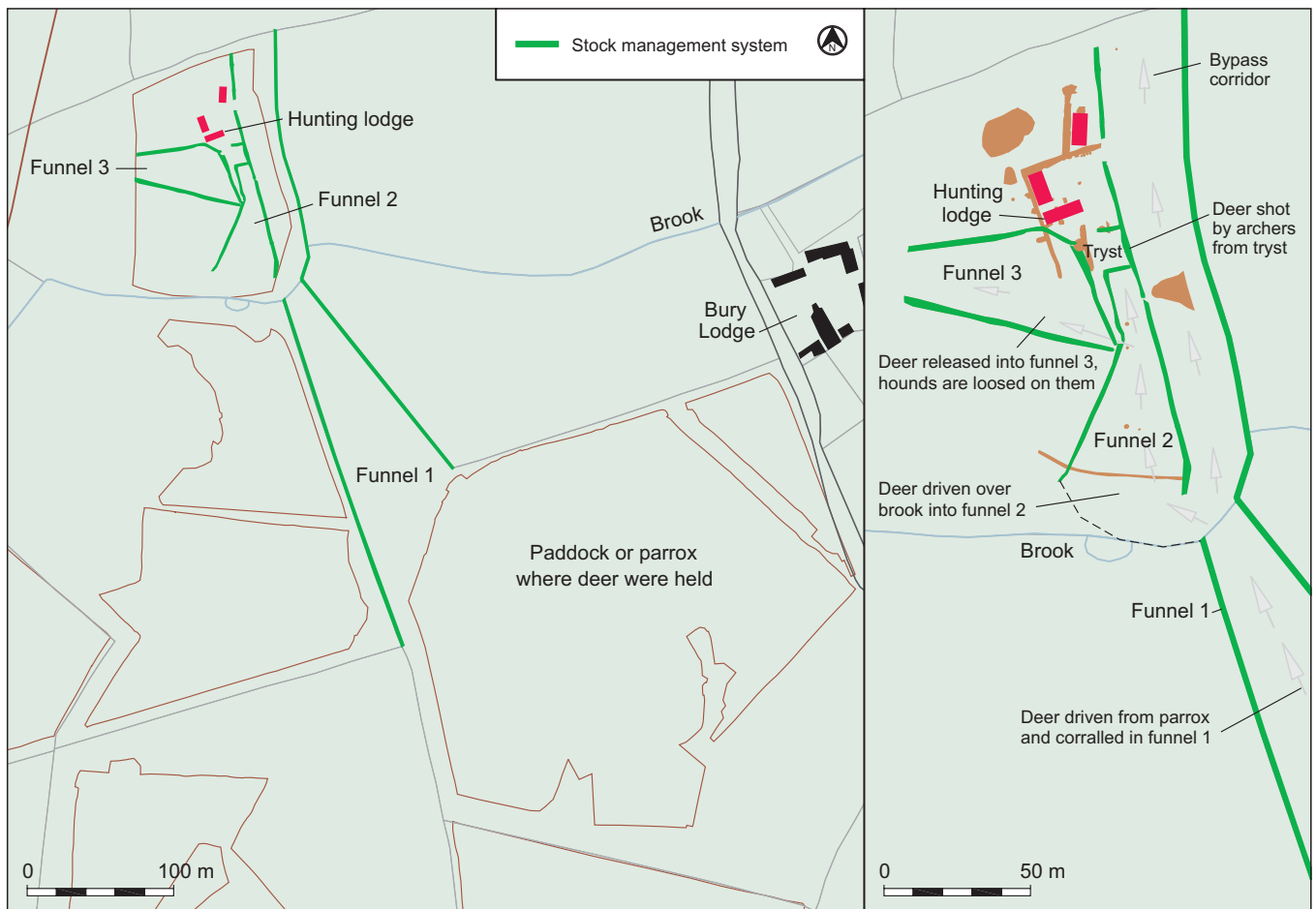


Figure 10.15: Stock management system to the south of the lodge

Writtle was abandoned). The first apparent discrepancy is the comparative difference in size of the two enclosures, Writtle was moated whereas Stansted was not and the enclosed area at Stansted was approximately 900 m², whereas the area enclosed at Writtle was much larger at 4545 m² (*ibid.*, 20). Stansted had fewer structures, which were far less substantial or impressive, and those indicative of Writtle's royal status (the gaol, chapel and gatehouse) were conspicuously absent. However, despite this both sites shared halls, separate kitchen ranges and large courtyards and overall the Stansted lodge appears to be a scaled down version of the one at Writtle.

King Henry VIII's lodge in Hatfield Forest is closer to Stansted in distance and time, but has not been excavated, so the existence of early ancillary structures is unknown (although a number of outbuildings dating from the middle of the 18th century still stand, including a butchery equipped for hanging deer (Rackham 1989, 180)). The boundaries of the present day gardens and paddocks may not bear any relation to the original compound but the Hatfield lodge was set inside a bigger enclosure, confined within a ditch and bank and known to exist by 1608 (*ibid.*, 180), that is very similar in size to the field in which the Stansted lodge was sited. Like Stansted, this enclosure contained a pond and may have been a paddock where the animals owned by the parker were usually grazed.

The cobbled surfaces

During phase 2 extensive areas both inside and outside the hunting lodge compound were covered with cobbled surfaces, comprising packed nodules of flint (Fig. 10.14). These nodules varied greatly in size ranging between 0.01 m and 0.20 m and probably originated in the local glacial till deposits, and came from streams or were quarried. There was no evidence of a borrow pit within the area excavated, so the cobbles may have been brought onto the site from elsewhere. The make-up of the cobbled surfaces was very variable, some areas being better surfaced than others, suggesting that they were augmented,

repaired and mended episodically. Fragments of roof tile compacted into the cobbles were likely to be have been incorporated when they were mended, whereas finds from on top of them are likely to relate to later phases of activity. It was particularly difficult to identify and isolate the phase 2 cobbled surfaces from later repairs and extensions, as these also utilised the same local flint. The cobbles occurred in three areas of the site: to the north of the compound (phase 2 cobbles (north)), within and around the ditched enclosure (phase 2 enclosure cobbles) and in association with the ditches of the enclosure system to the south of the compound (phase 2 cobbles (south) Fig. 10.14).

The phase 2 cobbles (north) covered an area measuring *c* 37 m x 21 m, extending both sides of the phase 1 boundary ditch. Variations in the composition of the surface suggest that different areas of cobbling were laid at different times, although no clear sequence could be reconstructed. The ditch and cobbles are likely to be broadly contemporary, with the surface probably continuing to be repaired into phase 3 once the ditch had silted. The densest area of cobbles was concentrated on the area to the west of phase 1 boundary ditch and it may be that the cobbles on the east of the ditch were extended in this direction during this later phase.

On the western edge of the cobbled surface a 2 m wide, linear band of densely packed, robust cobbles could be discerned amongst the general spreads. This defined a path (481009) leading into the main compound and probably denoted the formal approach to the lodge from the north (Fig. 10.14). The relationship between this path and the northern perimeter ditch (466020) around the compound could not be determined but it is likely that the ditch was open when the path was in use, implying the existence of a timber causeway across the ditch at this point. Opposite the path, aligned along the southern edge of the ditch, were a number of postholes, 0.4–0.55 m in diameter and 0.12–0.36 m deep (phase 2 bridge abutment), possibly being footings for the causeway. Immediately

to the east of the path, north of the enclosure, a darkly-coloured rectangular area, measuring approximately 4.6 m wide and 9.6 m long, was not as densely cobbled as elsewhere and was respected by the surrounding densely packed cobbles. This probably represents the outline of a building (phase 2 stables) associated with the lodge, the absence of sub-surface features suggesting it was constructed on sill beams. A substantial structure such as this on the periphery of the compound could have been stables, a barn or another kind of outbuilding. Finds from the surface of the cobble spreads in the general vicinity of this building were functional in character (see below) and support the suggestion that this area was occupied by ancillary buildings such as stables, dairies and places for storage (Fig. 10.14). There is some indication from the distribution of the finds, the high frequency of nails recovered from this area and subtle variations in the cobbles that other buildings may have stood here, although they could not be defined with any confidence.

The phase 2 enclosure cobbles, in and around the area of the compound, were similar to those in the north, varying widely in compaction. A more regular, sub-rectangular area (481003), near the hall and kitchens, was noticeably more robust and densely packed. This measured *c* 14 m x 7 m and was probably a metallised courtyard associated with the buildings that were probably standing when it was laid. Heavier use had been worn away and dislodged the cobbles in the north-west of this courtyard, at the point where path 481009 entered the enclosure over a timber causeway. The courtyard had been lain on top of a pre-existing land surface (457014) and cobbled surface (457015) associated with the phase 1 lodge.

Less obvious cobble surfaces (481007) occurred within the eastern, the central-southern part of the compound and outside the compound to the west of enclosure ditch 466020. As in the north, they were probably mended and extended over time. These cobbles were less robust or densely packed and

were presumably not subject to such heavy wear. Rather than being formally laid, they were probably deposited in a fairly haphazard manner when the ground was in danger of becoming too churned up. There were no cobbles where the buildings stood or within the probable garden (481004).

The phase 2 cobbles (south), lay approximately 25 m south of the ditched enclosure, in and around the enclosure ditches associated with deer drives on the south of the lodge (see below). Two areas of cobbling (457027 and 457028), covering a roughly triangular area measuring 35 m x 20 m, were within the area flanked by the ditches of funnel 2 (Fig. 10.14). Further cobbling (457026) lay 5 m to the east of the 457027, either side of phase 1 boundary ditch. The relationship between this area of cobbles and the ditch was difficult to determine but they were probably broadly contemporary. The surfaces here were highly variable suggesting repeated and episodic deposition.

Deer drives and stock management

A series of ditches to the south of the compound appears to form three funnels (funnels 1–3) designed to channel movement towards the hunting lodge from the south (Fig. 10.15). The southernmost funnel (funnel 1) was not excavated but converging field boundaries depicted on the 1843 Tithe Map concentrate on a point just to the east of the present day bridge over the shallow east–west brook (Fig. 10.15). The funnel probably has early post-medieval origins – its western arm defined by the phase 1 boundary ditch, which was certainly in use during phase 2.

On the north bank of the brook, slightly displaced to the west, was the flared end of funnel 2. Stock from funnel 1 could either be directed along the brook into this second funnel or diverted around the hunting lodge on the east. A ditch (464033) crossing the flared end of funnel 2 probably served as a drain (Fig. 10.15). Funnel 2 continued northwards for a total of 77 m. It was

40 m wide at its southern end, rapidly narrowing to 10 m at its northern end, where it straightened into a 25 m long corridor, 10 m wide. The end of this corridor was closed by a right-angled turn in the western ditch 455021, separating the corridor from a small (10 x 10 m) square enclosure (the *tryst*), on the south side of the phase 2 enclosure. The third funnel (funnel 3) lay to the west of funnel 2 (Fig. 10.14). Its flared eastern end measured 40 m wide and it continued westwards for 65 m, tapering until it was only 15 m wide where it continued out of the excavated area.

Causeways leading out of the funnels in the east and west were probably blocked or opened as required. One, in the eastern ditch defining funnel 2, led to the phase 2 pond (458001). In the west, another narrow causeway granted access to funnel 3 and thence onwards to the west or northwards into the phase 2 enclosure, or alternatively, northwards via a corridor between ditches 457016/455018 and 455021 into the *tryst*.

The complex arrangement of ditches described above is unusual and probably relates to stock management within the deer park. The hunting lodge, being at the centre of the park, was ideally sited to control movement through it. This is thought to primarily concern the management of fallow deer but could also relate to other livestock put out to graze in the park.

The ditches would have provided a permanent framework that could have been augmented with other fixed or temporary barriers such as gates, timber causeways, screens, fences, hedges or nets known as *hayes* (Cummins 1988, 57), which do not necessarily leave an archaeological trace. As such, the enclosure system had the potential to be used in a much more flexible manner than the ditches imply and it is assumed that dogs and people, placed at strategic points, would have helped direct and co-ordinate the movement of stock through the system.

Bow and stable hunting

It is likely that the enclosure system was designed with two main functions in mind: the corralling of deer herds so that they could be moved and husbanded or so they could be hunted. The arrangement of the funnels would have been particularly well suited to coursing or bow and stable hunting (Cummins 1988, 47). As a contemporary French commentator disdainfully put it:

‘Killing a beast in a park is not hunting; if it is in a park it is caught already. It is not to be wondered at that the English ladies kill them with the bow, for the poor beast go where they want them to go, of necessity (Pannier 1877, 5–6).

The hunting lodge probably hosted large bow and stable hunts, during which the lord and his guests would have been able to kill numbers of



Figure 10.16: Hunting ‘*par force*’



Figure 10.17: 'Bow and stable' hunting

fallow deer from the relative comfort of convenient archery stands located in the tryst at the south of the phase 2 enclosure or stationed outside and along the *hayes* (Figs 10.15–17). Animals not destined to die in this manner could either remain corralled in funnel 1 or filtered out through funnel 3 in the west. Rather than a means of escape, this western funnel may have provided an opportunity for sport of a different kind. *Fewterers* (huntsmen with greyhounds) stationed in or around the funnel would be ideally positioned to unleash their hounds on deer fleeing in this direction, bringing them down in sight of spectators gathered at the lodge.

Hunting

There were two principal types of noble deer hunting: hunting *par force* and *bow and stable* (Cummins 1988, 32). The first of these involved chasing the prey on horseback with dogs until it was physically too tired to evade its pursuers and was forced to turn 'at bay' and make its final stand. This was considered to be the most noble form of hunting by continental connoisseurs. Hunting *par force* provides very mobile and exhilarating sport, the hart was the quarry of choice and in England forest, being more extensive, provided the best terrain.

The second form of hunting, bow and stable, involved beaters driving the game towards hunters armed with

bows waiting in hiding at shooting stands (or *trysts*). As the prey was directed towards them the hunters would shoot, usually wounding the deer and unleash dogs such as greyhounds to bring them down. Bow and stable hunting was particularly popular in England, where it was not considered inferior sport to hunting *par force*. When Henry VIII grew too fat to ride he restricted himself to bow and stable hunting in his many parks. He favoured a crossbow, despite his dismay at the demise of the longbow, which he vaunted as the real weapon of a sportsman. Queen Elizabeth I was fond of hunting and liked to shoot deer to the accompaniment of her court musicians (Lasdun 1991, 35). Being more sedentary, bow and stable hunting could be a spectator sport, as the action reached a climax in one place. In Tudor Britain large numbers of animals were often slaughtered in spectacular displays of conspicuous consumption. Deer corralled in an enclosure or *parrox* were released into specially built courses confined within *hayes* (fences, hedges and nets), while spectators viewed from stands as they were shot and brought down by hounds. In 1537 Henry VIII commissioned a course at Hampton Court, which was one mile long and a quarter of a mile wide (*c* 1.6 x 0.4 km) (Lasdun 1991, 24).

The Stansted deer drive is the same in principle but smaller in scale to the one at Hampton Court but no evidence for a stand was found and the lodge itself

acted as the focus of the hunt. The lodge and enclosure features were an apparatus of power, like a stage, that would have enabled the earls of Oxford to direct and manipulate events in a way that demonstrated their status and allowed them to emphasise or detract from the status of others. Hunting parties, it must be remembered, were as much arenas for political as physical tournament and in this environment the illusion of hunting prowess could be created and awarded. By channelling movement in particular ways, by influencing the timing of proceedings and creating diverse situations the enclosure ditches were designed not only to control animals but also to enhance the drama of the hunt by helping manage the spectacle orchestrated by the lord. For example, the most impressive buck may have been held in reserve and released into the funnel only when the lord or a favoured guest took their place at the archery stands, so that they should have the honour of the kill.

Midden 467008

Approximately 5 m north-west of the stockade area there were two large amorphous spreads of dark organic sediment (467008) that contained numerous finds and were joined by more diffuse deposits (Fig. 10.18). These deposits were revealed directly below topsoil having evidently been truncated by later agricultural activity, and sealed subsoil. These are probably the surviving remnants of a substantial midden heap, where rubbish from the hunting lodge was dumped. The larger northernmost spread measured approximately 19 x 12.5 m and the southernmost 5.7 m x 4 m. The distance between the two spreads was 4.9 m and they were apparently concentrated areas of dumping within what had once been a single continuous midden. Post-depositional mixing of the midden deposits gave them a homogeneous appearance, all of the sediment being discoloured black by decayed organic matter and comminuted charcoal. It is likely that the finds within these deposits had also been mixed and it was unfortunately not possible to separate them stratigraphically.

The finds included pottery, animal bone, oyster shell, corroded fragments of iron and a fragmentary copper alloy vessel. Finds, including brick and tile fragments, pottery, animal bone, iron buckles and strips and a copper alloy pendant, lace tag and mount, were recovered from the surface immediately surrounding the midden and might have originated from it. The midden deposits were particularly rich in finds which, on the basis of artefact typology, are considered to be contemporary with the phase 2 hunting lodge, dating from the end of the 15th to the later part of the 16th century. The metalwork is not particularly datable but the pottery included large quantities of white slip decorated and unglazed redware, which are likely to be of this date, as well as more closely dated types such as a moderately large sherd of Beauvais slipware bowl and a sherd of Raeren stoneware. There was also a single tiny, probably intrusive,

17th–18th-century sherd of black glazed redware pottery. The middens probably ceased to be used by phase 3.

The moderately large animal bone assemblage included various elements from a range of species that were presumably processed or consumed on site but only two bones showing evidence of butchery. Fallow deer bones were frequently present and one red deer bone also occurred, the other bone came from domestic species including cattle, pigs, horses and sheep or goats.

Pond 458001

When pond 466001 was backfilled, a second larger post-medieval pond (458001) was dug to the north of it (Fig. 10.18). It was not fully exposed in plan, but was probably teardrop-shaped. At its widest point the pond measured approximately 13 m, it was at least 12 m long and was a maximum of 1.2 m

deep. The lower deposits (IG481021) were silts deposited in standing water and accumulated during the use of the feature. Above these were a number of deposits (IG481022) that showed no evidence for being permanently water-logged but probably accumulated as the feature silted naturally during phase 3. There was nothing within the pond to suggest its function, although it could have been both decorative and used to water livestock.

Timber-lined well (IG481029)

A well was sunk to provide the lodge with fresh water, 10 m south of the phase 2 hall, on the other side of the probable garden plot (481004) (Figs 10.14, 10.18). The well was oval in plan measuring 2 m x 1.4 m and was 2 m deep. It may originally have been lined with timber or wattle panels to revet the sides but there was no evidence for these and they may have

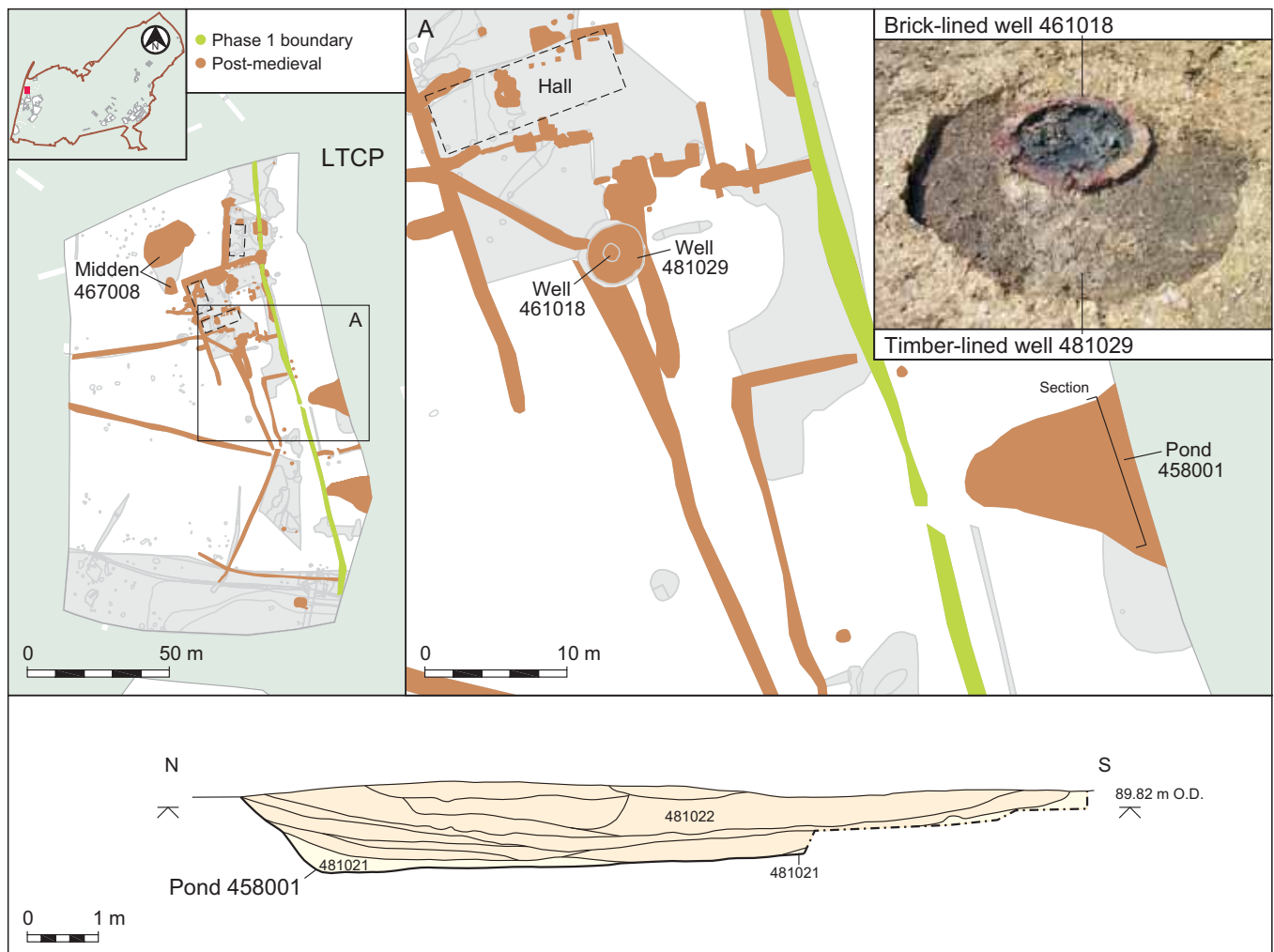


Figure 10.18: Post-medieval features

been removed in the course of renovations during phase 3. A thin black organic-rich deposit (461026) at the base of the well contained sherds of Raeren pottery (*c* 1500–1610) and black glazed redware (*c* 1600–1750), which suggest that the well was last cleaned out in the early decades of the 17th century. It was at this time that the phase 2 hunting lodge was demolished to make way for the substantial farmhouse constructed in phase 3, the well being reconstructed as part of these renovations (see brick-lined well below).

Features in the wider parkland

Apart from the poachers' pit (134059 discussed above), a number of other features occurred within the park at a distance from the hunting lodge (Fig. 10.19). It is not entirely certain whether they belong to this phase but this would seem likely.

Surfaces

Approximately 330 m north-east of the hunting lodge buildings were areas of densely packed flint surfacing (449140 and 449154) that either indicated the location of buildings or areas of hard standing (Fig. 10.19). These were associated and evidently contemporary with a ditch (449164) that defined a trapezoidal enclosure. In the north, this enclosure joined an east–west drainage ditch (449166) approximately 5 m to the south of the hedgerow forming the modern field boundary. Some of the cobbled surfaces lay within the area of the trapezoidal enclosure, although a sub-rectangular surface lay outside and its southern end. A ditch (447046) flanked these cobbles on the west and may have been associated with them. As the cobbles within the trapezoidal enclosure sealed ditch 447046, it may originally have been an earlier boundary feature in the area, only being kept open along some of its length when the cobbles were laid.

No datable finds were recovered from any of the features except ditch 449166, which contained some post-medieval peg tile fragments. The dating of the other features was based on their apparent contemporaneity with this

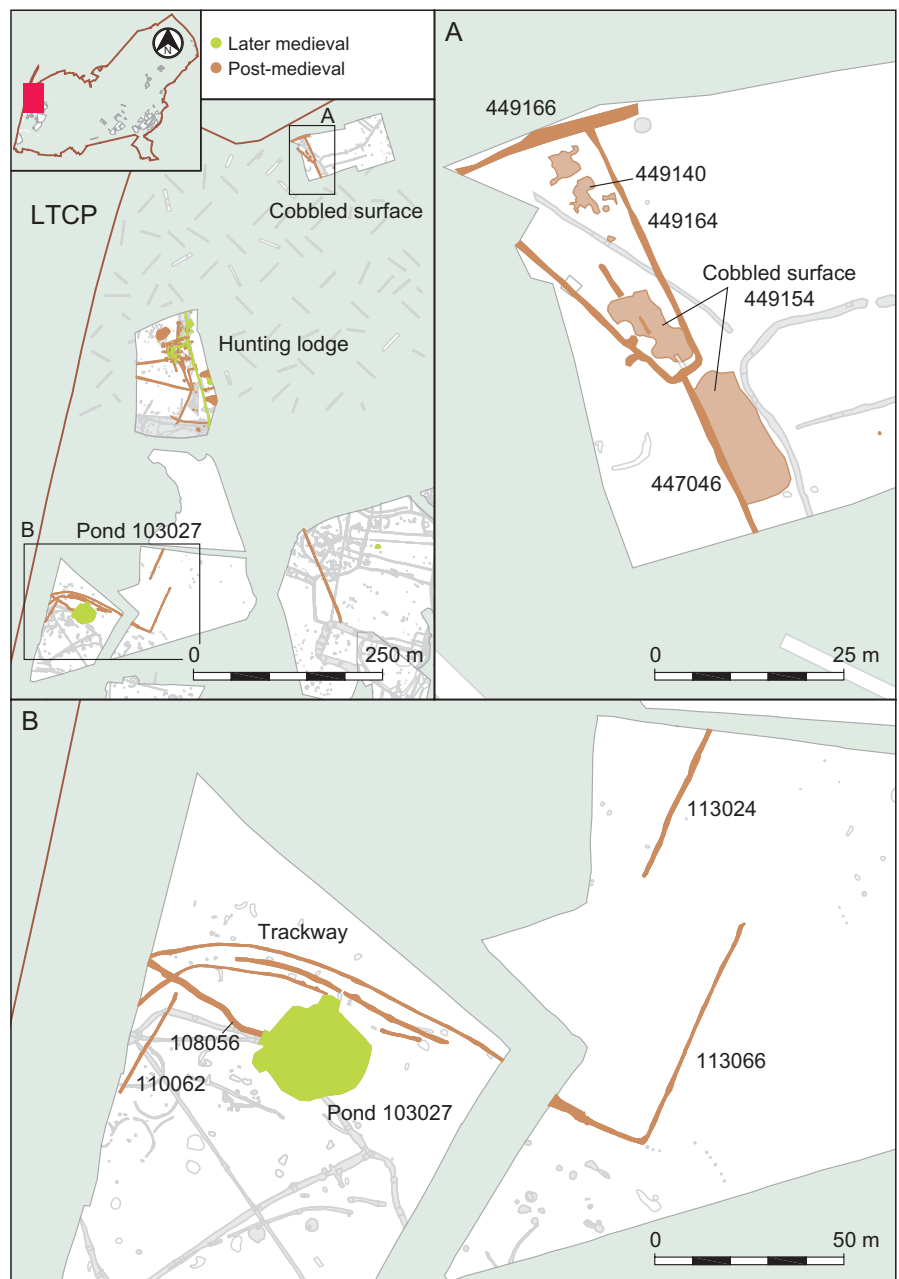


Figure 10.19: Cobbled surfaces to the north-east of the hunting lodge and pond 103027

ditch and the fact that they occurred at a high stratigraphic horizon, below the topsoil and above the subsoil that sealed the prehistoric features in this area. The most likely explanation for the enclosure and the cobbles is that they formed an area of hard standing adjacent to the trackway and may have been associated with the harvesting of hay from the meadow to the north.

Pond 103027

Adjacent and probably contemporary with the post-medieval trackway in the south-west of the park was large (23 m diameter and 1.10 m deep) sub-circular

pond (103027, Fig. 10.19). This truncated a number of the ditches in the area, which were of Iron Age and Romano-British date. One of the ditches in the post-medieval trackway, was truncated by ditch 108056, which led northwards and downslope from the pond and may have been associated with it, although the relationship between the pond and the ditch could not be determined.

A slot excavated through the pond located at its base in its centre several cattle bones and a number of semi-articulated horse skeletons, some of which had been butchered. Neither

the pond nor the ditches flanking the trackway contained any other datable finds. One of the articulated horse bones provided a radiocarbon date of cal AD 1440–1640 (365±40 BP, NZA-23281), implying that the pond was open when the deer park was still in use. It would doubtless have provided water for livestock within the park but why the butchered remains of horses should occur here remains a mystery. The pond was likely to have been abandoned when the butchery waste was dumped within it.

Chronology

A large assemblage of pottery and other finds relates to the occupation of the phase 2 hunting lodge some of which occur as residual finds in later features. Large middens developed during the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries when the site was used as a hunting lodge. These middens were levelled during the redevelopment of the site when a farmhouse was constructed in phase 3. Most of the pottery and animal bone occurred in the area of the lodge buildings, within the north-west of the enclosure or in the area of the middens immediately to the west, very little occurred in the cobbled area further to the north (phase 2 cobbles (north)), where metal objects of a functional nature were common. This suggests that the two areas were used in different ways.

The finds assemblages from the midden 468007 and the top of pond 466001 contained post-medieval redware pottery and some imported ceramic types including Beauvais slipware and Raeren stoneware, as well as animal bone and metal finds such as arrowheads, knives and buckles. The finds from middens 458027 and 455008 probably also accumulated during the occupation of the hunting lodge and contained similar ceramic assemblages. All these assemblages indicate the occupation of the lodge in the 16th century. Other finds from the site confirm this dating, for example a coin of Elizabeth I (minted 1601–2), a residual find in phase 3 pit 459005, and a number of jetons. The latter were generally not well-stratified but

concentrated in the area of the kitchens and included two of late 15th century and three of early 16th century date and one which could not have been struck later than 1635.

The metalwork assemblage contained many examples of objects which could be of 16th century date but often similar styles persisted into the 17th and 18th centuries, so they have limited use for dating. The metalwork included structural fittings, items of personal dress, horse gear, tools and objects associated with hunting. Spurs and arrowheads of 16th and early 17th century date occurred in the top of pond 466001, in a phase 3 ditch (467028), which had probably been backfilled with material from midden 467008, and from the area of the phase 2 cobbles (north). These, like many of the metal buckles and other items of horse gear, such as harness fastenings and crotal bells, probably date to the use of the hunting lodge. Several knives without bolsters (a 17th century innovation) and therefore likely to be of 16th century date were recovered but only one within a well-stratified context (ditch 467028). A dagger chape was recovered from the topsoil and a riveted plate from a brigandine (a segmented armoured tunic) came from the phase 2 cobbles (north). Both of these could be dated to the 15th or 16th century.

Much of the animal bone assemblage including the deer bone is thought to derive from this phase of activity and tended to concentrate around the area of the kitchens or the middens to their west.

The finds assemblage therefore appears to confirm the stratigraphic evidence, that during phase 2, in the late 15th–16th centuries, the site was occupied by a hunting lodge replacing the phase 1 lodge. Many phase 2 features contained disuse and levelling deposits associated with the final occupation of this hunting lodge and its demolition to make way for the redevelopment of the site during phase 3. The finds assemblage from hearth 459026, latrine 457014, the timber-lined well, the funnels of the deer drive (funnel 2 and funnel 3), the phase 2 enclosure

ditches and the various deposits associated with the phase 2 kitchens all contained finds of a slightly different character to the assemblages described above. Redware pottery, Raeren and Cologne/Frechen stonewares were still recovered but other types such as black slip decorated redware and metropolitan slipware also occur for the first time. They were sometimes in association (ditch 466020) with knives with bolsters or buckles of a style dating to the 17th century. The clay pipe assemblage as a whole seems to post-date the middle part of the 17th century (Higgins, CD Chapter 22). In some instances small fragments of clay pipe were retrieved from the back fills of phase 2 features but in no instance were these from particularly well stratified contexts and, as most of this clay pipe dates from the later part of the 17th century onwards, it is most likely to be intrusive relating to later phase 3 activity. Therefore, the evidence in the disuse deposits of the phase 2 features, particularly the pottery and the absence of clay pipe, points to the demolition of the phase 2 hunting lodge during the first few decades of the 17th century and it had almost certainly been replaced by the phase 3 farmhouse by the middle of the century.

Life at the hunting lodge

Through documentary sources a great deal is known about the hunting lodge, the parkers and the hunting that was undertaken within the park (see above). The parkers were fairly well off and some had other landholdings outside of the park - the Josselyns also held the manor of Manuden and lands in Hallingbury, for example - and it is not clear whether the parkers actually resided at the hunting lodge itself. The excavations have provided a wealth of information relating to day to day activities and life within the hunting lodge (Fig. 10.20). Artefacts recovered included jetons indicating that accounting took place on the site, presumably associated with the administration of the park, and might provide some evidence that one of the parkers was in residence. The parker was normally personally responsible for protecting the earl's deer, organising and overseeing

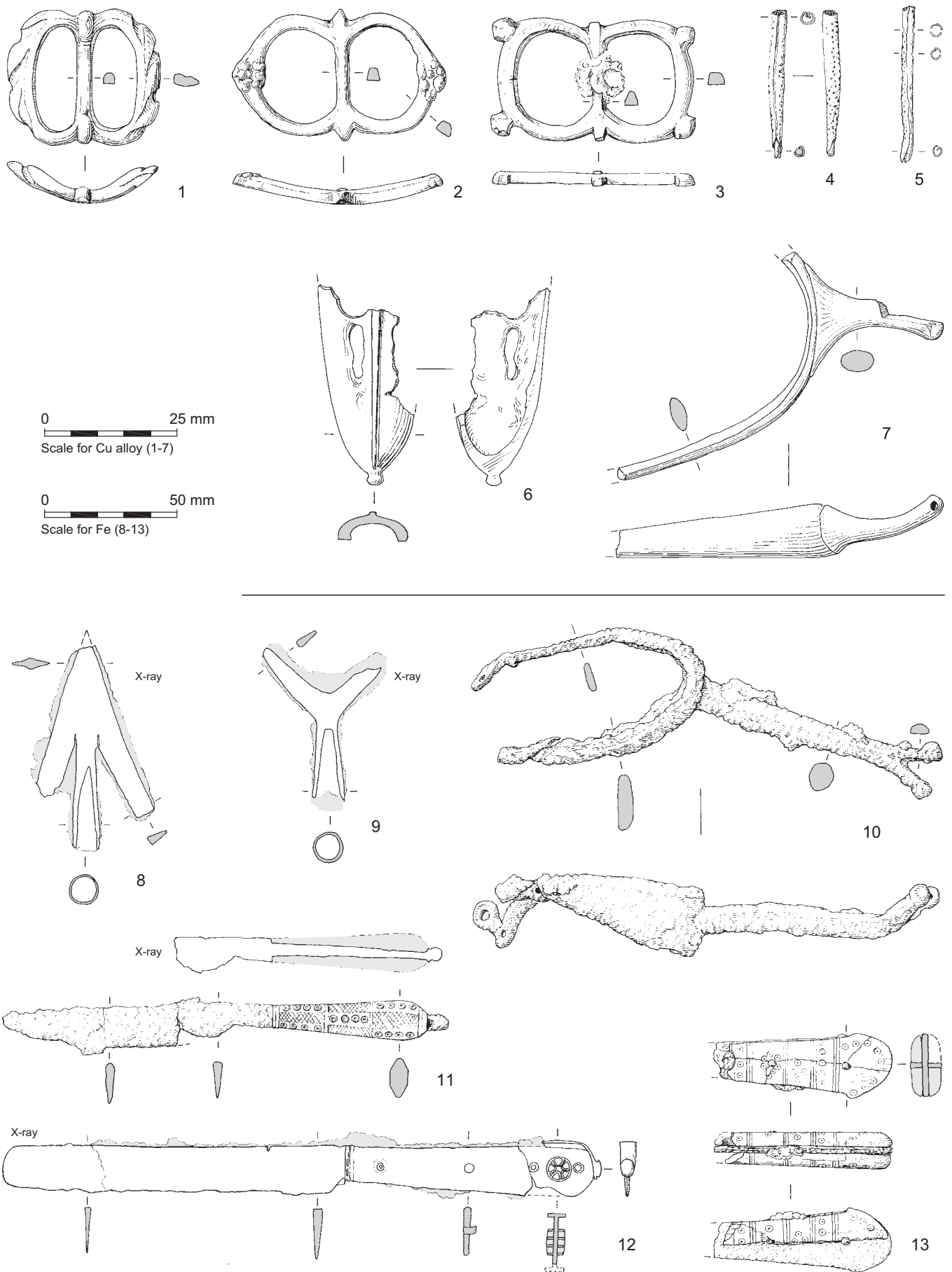


Figure 10.20: Selected artefacts recovered from the post-medieval hunting lodge: 1-3 Buckles, 4-5 Lace tags, 6 Dagger chape, 7 Spur, 8 'Broadhead' arrowhead, 9 'Forker' arrowhead, 10 Spur and 11-13 Knives (see [CD-Rom Chapter 15](#) for details)

any formal hunts and for the administering the day to day running of the estate; he and his family may have been required to entertain the earl and his guests at short notice. It is likely that the lodge would have hosted after-hunt feasts where the fresh kill could be consumed, along with other produce farmed there.

Finds

The finds recovered are not of high status and the assemblage is generally workaday. The pottery is usually of a coarse type with few imports, comprising a mixture of utilitarian and tablewares. The coarse redwares occur in a restricted range of forms – jars (multi-functional vessels, probably used for cooking and storage, amongst other things), dripping dishes, pipkins and skillets, bowls and dishes (including larger forms probably used for dairying processes), jugs, bung-hole jars or cisterns (for brewing and/or liquid storage) and chamberpots. The emphasis of this group of wares is in the everyday activities of food storage and food preparation, with a level of self-sufficiency in terms of dairying and brewing. Tablewares are represented by a few smaller redware drinking vessels (cups and mugs). The black slip decorated redwares also seem to represent small, thin-walled drinking vessels (mugs and cups, possibly some tygs). The metropolitan slip wares include jugs, jars and two chafing dishes (dishes used for keeping food warm at table). Finer wares are very sparsely represented, vessels for display and for the serving and consumption of drink (bottles, jugs, mugs and cups) are indicated by the small quantities of stonewares (earlier German types, such as Raeren and Cologne/Frechen wares).

The low proportion of finewares at the lodge is notable and a similar absence of high quality or 'luxury' goods has been noted amongst the rest of the material assemblage, including the glass and metalwork. Comparable sites of this type and date are rare, but a hunting lodge at least partly contemporaneous at Littlecote, Wiltshire, produced a much wider range of luxury items including pottery

finewares, glassware, metal objects and interior fixtures and fittings (Wessex Archaeology 2002). The ceramic and glass assemblage at the Stansted lodge is fairly typical of what might be expected at a farm of this period; rustic wares for the serving of food and beer. This is perhaps unsurprising as it was the home of the parker (or his deputy) not a nobleman. The lodge was likely to have been visited by the earl's hunting parties, but was unlikely to have been stocked with luxury goods on a daily basis and visits need not have been frequent. Stansted was one of a number of parks owned by the earls and not in the immediate vicinity of their seat at Earls Colne, 32 km to the east. Indeed, the nobles might have valued the unpretentious rustic charm of the lodge and it may have been an integral part of the hunting experience. Venison may have tasted at its best when consumed in the smoky hall, cooked in the farmhouse kitchens and washed down by quantities of home brewed beer from rude beakers. A certain pride may have been derived from 'roughing it' or the simple pleasures may have been deemed most appropriate after a hard day's sport on the hunting field.

Luxuries such as wine or drinking vessels could have been brought by the nobles if they were required but the former would then have been consumed and the latter taken away when the visitors departed. Two fragments of drinking vessel came from the ploughsoil and as they were probably associated with the lodge, might have been the property of noble visitors. One is a 16th- or 17th-century plain foot in colourless glass from a goblet the other fragment is also in colourless glass, but with applied *vetro a fili* spiral trails marvered into the surface and probably derives from an early 17th-century squat beaker. This latter type, of relatively small size, is thought to have been used for wine and spirits and is not a form commonly found in England.

The metalwork assemblage is consistent with a functional hunting lodge and, like the ceramics, is fairly utilitarian. It includes articles of a domestic nature,

building fittings and the horse gear and tools one might expect at a farm. There are very few domestic finds or agricultural tools in contrast with the large number of equestrian finds, knives and arrowheads; presumably reflecting the specialised nature of the site. These latter are particularly concentrated in an area north of the main lodge complex, which was probably the location of the stables and other ancillary buildings, and where pottery was rare. The knives are predominantly of a type that might be expected at table rather than belt daggers but one in latrine 447014 was particularly large and robust and could feasibly have been for hunting. Other than the arrowheads no specialised hunting weapons such as spears or garnitures (sets or knives specifically for butchering game) were recovered. This is unsurprising as the nobles would have looked after their hunting gear so they were not likely to have been lost or left at the lodge. A dagger chape was found in the topsoil in the field north of the lodge where a copper alloy spur was also recovered, both may have been lost by those hunting in the park. A plate from a brigandine (a segmented suit of armour worn concealed under the doublet) occurred at the lodge and might likewise have had a noble owner.

The 12 socketed arrowheads included four broadheads with long barbs, six 'forkers' with crescent-shaped heads and two unidentifiable types. The broadheads were associated with the hunting of large game (Jessop 1996, 199) and one was found within a field in the south-east of the deer park where deer were believed to have been kept. The predominant arrowhead type was the large forker, the function of which is a subject of some debate. It has been suggested that they were used to hunt small game and in particular birds (Jessop 1996, 199) but this contradicts the evidence for hunting at the lodge, which suggests fallow deer were probably the principal prey hunted with bows. Others suggest that large forkers may have been used for hamstringing large game (Alm 2001, 44). The arrowheads could have been affixed to projectiles shot from either

long bows or crossbows, as both were commonly used in England for hunting at this time.

A large number personal dress items such as buckles, buttons, lace tags and fastenings and a number of others such as thimbles, pins and a needle that might be associated with the maintenance of clothing was also recovered (Fig. 10.20). Two of these buckles (Fig. 10.20.2–3) are almost identical to examples from the *Mary Rose* which are securely dated to no later than July 1545 (Klein 2005, 104, fig. 2.83, 81A2528 and 82A5069). Hunting clothing that was by its nature robust but subject to heavy use and would have required frequent repair. Although a certain amount of ostentation might be anticipated in the dress of the nobility, the recovered dress items are not especially lavish and did not include any expensive jewellery. Seemingly, most of those at the lodge would have worn functional clothing, whether it be the parker, his family and servants or noble guests. One metal shoe patten was recovered that would have been used in muddy conditions to preserve the shoes of the wearer.

With the exception of nails, a very small number of structural items was recovered from the excavations. The assemblage comprises hinge pivots, plate hinges, hasps, staples and a handle. This probably indicates that the metalwork was salvaged from the building prior to demolition and that the nails were not considered worth retrieving and, having been removed from structural timberwork, were discarded. Nails were frequently recovered in the area immediately north of the lodge and may relate to the dismantling of the stables and ancillary structures in this area at the end of phase 2. The tools comprise a very small number of mainly horticultural/agricultural implements, including a spade shoe, three fragments from large curved blades, probably sickles, and the arm from a pair of shears. These could well have been used for maintaining the small garden associated with the lodge or possibly for pollarding and other jobs within the park.

Animal bone

Cattle, sheep and pig evidently formed a significant part of the diet for the lodge occupants, and were bred and slaughtered at the site, which is consistent with the documented activities of the park keepers who were known to have had grazing rights for horses and cattle within the park (see above). Of the deer, fallow deer were the most prevalent species but red and roe deer appear in smaller quantities. Other species present include horse, dog, chicken, bantam, domestic goose, heron, pheasant, fox, rabbit and possibly wild boar. Many of the bones exhibited evidence for butchery. Oyster shells also occurred, probably being imported from the east coast.

Ample evidence for horses is provided by the quantity of equestrian gear recovered and stables probably lay to the north of the main compound (see above). A number of the horse bones bore butchery marks and although horses were not used for human consumption at this time, they may have been used to feed dogs kept at the site. Dogs would be expected at a hunting lodge or even a farm of the period but only two bones were found. However, the marks left by dog gnawing are apparent on a number of bones, demonstrating that dogs were indeed present. No kennels were identified, so only a few dogs were likely to have lived at the lodge, possibly staying in outhouses, the kitchens or the hall and other hounds were probably assembled with their owners as required.

The wild fowl were probably caught within the park or nearby, crescent-headed arrowheads were recovered from the site (see Allen, CD Chapter 15), and this may also have been true of the rabbits but these could also have been bred in local warrens and brought to the lodge. The chickens and possibly geese were likely to have been kept at the lodge. Evidence for possible cock fighting was recovered from the site (see above), providing more evidence for sporting pursuits at the hunting lodge. A number of bones might possibly have come from wild boar – these were generally thought to have been

almost extinct in the wild by this time and could have been kept within the park. However, the earls of Oxford were known to keep boar at their park at Chalkney Wood, Earls Colne (Rackham 1989, 44–5), so they may have originated there and been brought to Stansted as carcasses.

As a whole the deer bone assemblage suggests that roughly a third to a half of the meat consumed at the site was venison, fallow deer being the most abundant with red and roe deer occurring in smaller quantities. Even so the number of deer actually represented in the assemblage is likely to have been a minuscule fraction of the deer bred at the park over the years. The deer park covered 429 modern acres of largely grassland, estimating one deer per acre (Shirley 1867; Rackham 1989, 193) or one deer per 2 acres (Birrell 2006) there would have been the potential to keep 200–400 deer in the park at any one time. It is estimated that approximately 9% of the deer population could be taken annually without causing undue stress to the deer population so Stansted had the potential to yield 20–40 deer annually. The phase 2 hunting lodge is estimated to have been occupied for 100–150 years, so clearly a very large number of deer would have been butchered at the site over that time. Figures from 1431–2 (before the Stansted park was expanded) suggest that the household of John de Vere consumed 36 deer from his parks (Woolgar 1992–3), which was probably only a proportion of the entire yield.

Although the sample is small, there are apparent biases in terms of the anatomical parts represented at the site. It is suggested that this was the result of hunting practices associated with the ritual unmaking of the deer and conventions governing the apportioning of the meat. The ritual of the ‘unmaking’ of the deer followed the kill in a hunt, and was normally carried out at the kill site. Hunting manuals explain how the deer were skinned, disembowelled and butchered, this practice was based on common sense considerations of butchery but the aristocracy invested it with further

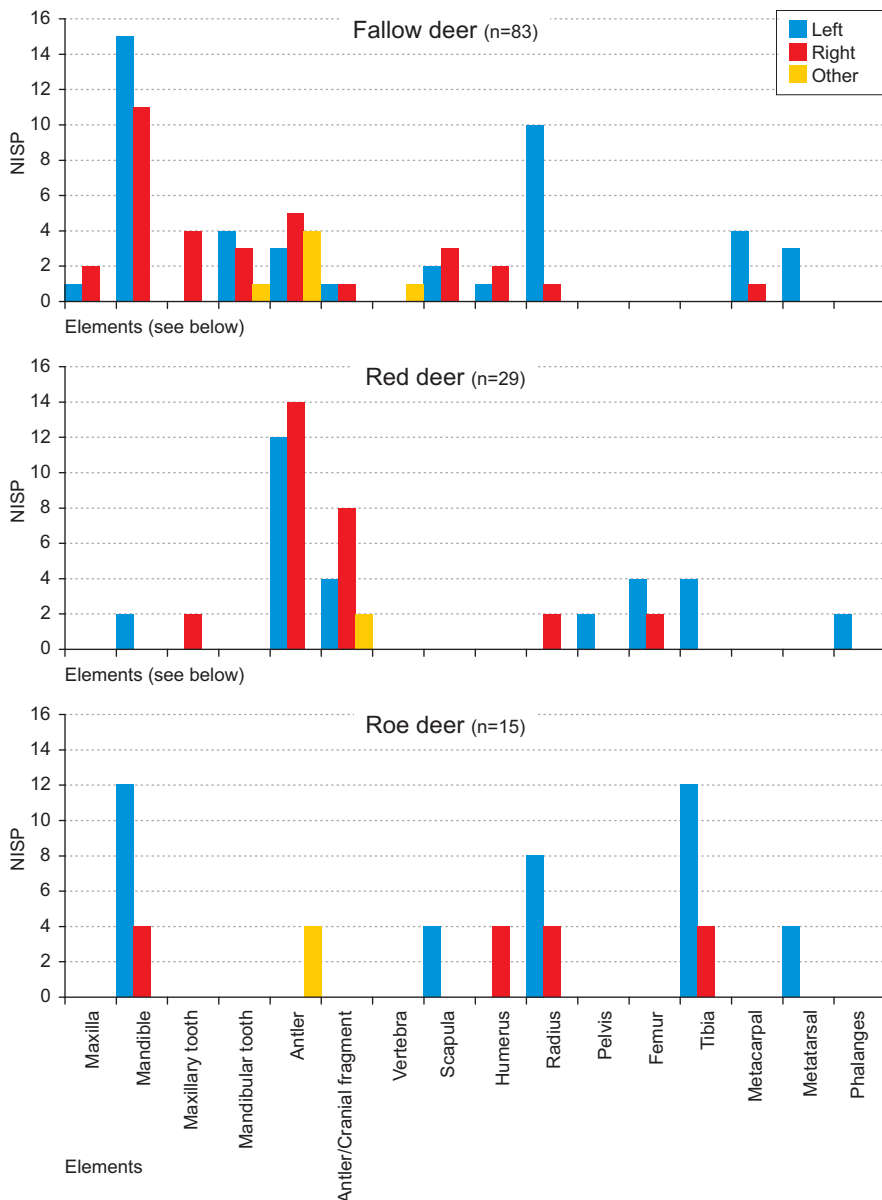


Figure 10.21: Proportions of deer bones recovered from the hunting lodge by species

significance (Cummins 1988, 41–4; Almond 2003 75). Body parts were gifted to hunt members in a ceremonial fashion according to their social station, which should therefore be apparent in the anatomical parts of deer represented at the consumption sites of those of differing social status (N. Sykes pers. comm.). Specifically, during the unmaking, the hunting hounds received much of the offal, the left upper shoulder was gifted to the forester or parker, and the right upper shoulder went to the best hunter or breaker of the deer. The historical sources can differ over the specifics of the hunter's/parker's award (cf Cummins 1988 180; Almond 2003 75) but the salient point is that only

two-thirds of the venison, namely the sides and hind legs, would have been transported to the lord's residence or gifted to other members of the social elite (N. Sykes pers. comm.).

Figure 10.21 shows the anatomical parts represented by each deer species at the site, separated by left and right side. It is noticeable that no confirmed identifications of fallow deer femurs and tibias (hind leg bones) were recorded; according to the practice described above these would have been removed to a higher status site. Out of 27 scapula, humeri and radii (front leg bones), there are only seven recorded from the right side of the body (Fig. 10.21). The gifting of the

forester's portion of the left fore limb also appear to hold true for this species, and in some instances the 'best hunter's' portion is also found at the lodge. The presence of three metatarsals, potentially butchery waste of the hind limb, may suggest that, in some cases, this ritual took place within the vicinity of the lodge. The anatomical parts of other deer species, although less common, clearly indicate the presence of the hind limb at the site. This may suggest differential treatment of red and roe in comparison to fallow deer. These animals may represent the buck and the doe owed to the park keepers on an annual basis as part of their fee. Alternatively, they may represent animals associated with the entertainment of the upper social classes when the lodge was used as a base for their hunting activities.

The animal bone clusters in the area of the kitchens and the middens, and is particularly noticeable with deer (Fig. 10.13). This probably indicates the preparation of the joints for cooking and consumption but the butchery of the carcasses might also have been undertaken here. No evidence for a butchery site was found elsewhere and certainly not within the *hayes* where the deer were shot. Butchery marks on deer bones were scarce. Efforts were being made to retrieve antler and that it apparently had some utility and possibly financial value. The majority of the antlers from the site, where they can be identified, are naturally shed from the live animal and had been collected and brought from the park to the lodge, possibly forming an additional income for the parker.

The lodge was in many ways similar to a large country farm of the period, albeit of a specialist nature, and functioned as a small-holding as well as the hub of the deer park. Evidence suggests that animals apart from deer were raised within the park for consumption at the lodge and brewing and dairying took place on site. The parker was a paid official charged with the administration of the earl's park and the protection of the deer within it, and he no doubt shared in any profits he was able to make. One of his duties

would probably have been to organise and oversee hunts within the park, receiving a share of the highly prized venison for his services. He would have been a fairly important individual in the local area and records show that at least one of the 16th-century parkers held land elsewhere. As well as profit, the position of parker offered opportunities for social advancement for anyone lucky enough to secure it and there is evidence that it was highly sought after. Much of the evidence for those living in the buildings was lost when the site was demolished for renovation during the 17th century but, by the standards of the time, life was fairly good.

The decline of the Park in the 17th century

It appears from a case in the Court of Requests in 1585, that by the 1570s at least 80 acres of land in the park had been leased out as meadows and pastures to a local farmer (NA REQ2/182/25). Another case in the

same Court, concerning land in the park in the 1590s, states that the park was in lease to John Glascock (NA REQ2/88/29). In 1582–4 financial difficulties forced Edward earl of Oxford to sell the manors to Edward Hubert, one of the Six Clerks in Chancery. His son Sir Francis Hubert sold them in 1615 to Sir Thomas Middleton (Morant 1768, ii 578; Wright 1835, ii 158). The purchase of the Stansted Estate by a family from the gentry rather than the nobility probably had implications for the way the estate was managed. Previously, it had been only one of a number of properties held by the earls of Oxford in Essex and they did not reside there. In contrast, Sir Thomas was to make Stansted Hall his country seat and it is likely that he focused much of his energy on the estate, perhaps reversing the recent decline to which the historical sources point. There is some evidence that the park continued to be stocked with deer and the excavated building may still have been used as a hunting lodge for a time.

The Middletons

Sir Thomas Middleton (1556–1631) acquired the Stansted estate in 1615. He was a very prominent London merchant, a wealthy man who was Lord Mayor of London until 1613 and, being involved in The Virginia Company of London, helped to finance Sir Walter Raleigh's exploration. Three of his four wives were from wealthy Essex families. A very elaborate monument to Sir Thomas, depicting him in a suit of plate armour with gilt studs and a red robe and trimmed with fur is set against the south wall of the chancel of the church of St Mary the Virgin near to Stansted Hall. Next to him is another tomb to his daughter Hester Salusbury, dressed in full hunting regalia, who was said to have been killed by a stag in Stansted Park (*Kelly's Directory* 1882; Tricker 1994, 8; Plate 10.5).

This tragic accident indicates that the deer park was still likely to have been used as such at this time and if the use of the word 'stag' not 'buck' suggests it was stocked with red deer presumably alongside fallow deer. After Elizabeth I it was not unusual for women to take active roles in hunting, and it would seem that Hester was a keen hunter. To be killed by a stag is unlikely to occur as a result of a random accident or in the course of normal pursuit. It means that she would have been engaged with the animal at close quarters, perhaps having been accorded the difficult honour of dispatching a stag that turned 'at bay' to make its final stand (Almond 2003, 74). This would normally be achieved with a bow or a sword while the hounds confronted the deer, sometimes after it had been hamstrung by a huntsman, although in this instance it would seem things did not go to plan and the stag did not give up without a fight.

The Middletons were the owners of the Stansted manors throughout the 17th century. Thomas Middleton (died 1668) built the new part of Stansted Hall, which had 31 hearths in 1662 and 1671 (ERO Q/RTh 1 and 5). He also made improvements to its grounds 'and made it a convenient and elegant seat'.



Figure 10.22: Location of the Stansted deer park and hunting lodge within Chapman and Andre's map of Essex 1777



Plate 10.5: The tomb of Hester Salusbury, Stansted Mountfitchet church

In 1704 another Thomas Middleton conveyed the house, the manors and his other properties to trustees (ERO D/DA T360). The Stansted manors were sold after his death in 1715 to Thomas Heath of Mile End, who died in 1741. He was followed by his son Bayley Heath (died 1760), and his grandson William Heath of Stansted Hall (Morant 1768, ii, 578–9; Muilman 1770, 21–2; Wright 1835, ii, 158–9).

It is not clear how much of the park may have remained in use for hunting in the 17th century, and how much had been turned over to tenant farming, and therefore the extent to which the excavated building still functioned as a hunting lodge. It may have taken its

place in the scattered farmsteads of the district. There are a number of moated sites in the area, which appear late medieval in origin, but which may equally be 17th century. To the north-west of the excavated site is Parsonage Farm, and to its north-east at Burton End is Wurmans Farm. These both have 17th-century houses surviving. There is a series of other 17th-century timber-framed houses at Burton Bower and Burton End (RCHM(E) 1916, 277, 279–80). These structures have brick chimney stacks rather than detached kitchens, as cooking had now moved inside the dwelling house (Poos 1991, 75). Wills and deeds of the tenant farmers of Burton End in the 17th and 18th centuries mention halls, parlours,

dairies and upper chambers, bedsteads and chests, granaries, outhouses and orchards (ERO D/DA T358; D/DHt/T249/8; D/DMd 125). Local houses had 1–5 hearths in 1671 (ERO Q/R Th5).

Stansted Park had been disparked by the time of the conveyance of 1704 (ERO D/DA T360) and the excavated building does not appear on Chapman and André's map of Essex in 1777; nor is the park shown. Bury Lodge and its ponds are depicted however (Fig. 10.22). This was a common fate for the medieval parks of Essex. Part of the deer park at Stock had been disparked by c 1575 and the lodge had been removed (Emmison 1947, ix and plate vii). During the 17th century the number of parks in Essex fell from 50 to 24, based on a comparison of the county maps of John Norden in 1594 and John Oliver in 1696, although the smaller parks do not seem to be shown. Only those parks which formed the settings of great houses were likely to survive; the remainder were turned into tenant farms, producing a rental income instead of requiring expenditure for maintenance (Hunter 1999, 148; 2003, 10, 29).

At Stansted Mountfitchet the formal grounds around Stansted Hall survived and were available for late 18th century improvement. The changes of this period created wood-pasture parkland around the great houses, with managed and newly-planted woodlands, and grazing for improved breeds of cattle and sheep; this formed a landscape similar to that of the earlier deer parks (Hunter 1999, 154, 157; 2003, 13, 30). The grounds at Stansted Hall were the subject of a survey by Humphrey Repton in 1791. He drew up one of his *Red Books* to propose enhancements for the setting of the house. These changes were implemented and involved moving the road to its present curved course to the south-west of the Hall, cutting into the remaining part of one of the common fields, to take it further away from the house (ERO TA 229/1; T/M 285). Repton was associated with improvements or proposed improvements at 20 estates in Essex (Hunter 1999, 158).

The post-medieval farmhouse (phase 3)

The final phase of the complex developed out of the previous phase, although a great deal of remodelling took place and the re-orientation of the lodge buildings imply that the first hall was demolished to make way for the second, grander, building sometime in the mid-17th century (Fig. 10.23). This probably occurred after the Stansted Estate, of which the park and the lodge remained part, changed hands from the earls of Oxford to the Middletons. The buildings of the lodge were concentrated around the courtyard or the area south of it towards the brook, with some of the phase 2 stables in the area north of the enclosure being abandoned. This refocusing and realignment may be due to a new trackway being established on the east of the lodge. The ditches of the phase 2 enclosure were allowed to silt up, ultimately being levelled with the existing cobbled surfaces subsequently extended across them.

Modifications and modernisation of the complex

The phase 2 hall was, in all likelihood, demolished and a new larger building (phase 3 farmhouse) built to replace it. The phase 2 kitchens, on the west of the courtyard, may have been extensively modified, although it is also possible that it was demolished and a new building erected on the same spot (phase 3 barn, Fig. 10.23).

Farmhouse

Construction methods change with fashion and, for what was probably the first time, bricks were used in the construction of the phase 3 farmhouse (Figs 10.23–24). Some of these survived as foundations, allowing the outlines of the building to be inferred with some degree of confidence. The T-shaped building was fairly symmetrical although a small outward projection at the junction of the east and the west wings on the south of the building unbalanced it slightly. The east wing of the lodge, aligned north–south, was the longest, at 21 m, whilst the building



Figure 10.23: Phase 3 buildings and features on the site of the hunting lodge

measured 16 m from front to back. Each of the wings was just over 5 m wide; the east wing was roughly twice the length of the west. The front of the building lay to the east. The phase 2 courtyard 481003, immediately to the north of the west wing, was now incorporated into an extended area of cobbling (472004). The phase 3 garden (481015) (incorporating phase 2 gardens 481004) surrounded the rear of the building on the west and south-west and a brick-lined well replaced the timber-lined well of the earlier phase (Fig. 10.24). The main entrance

to the building was probably in the east wing and the cobbled surfaces (472004) in this area had been extended over the phase 1 boundary ditch. A north–south trackway probably lay outside the excavation area on the east, perhaps beneath the present day asphalt trackway. It would have continued southwards over the brook, possibly over the same place it is bridged today, and the new lodge building was realigned so that the front of it faced onto the trackway.

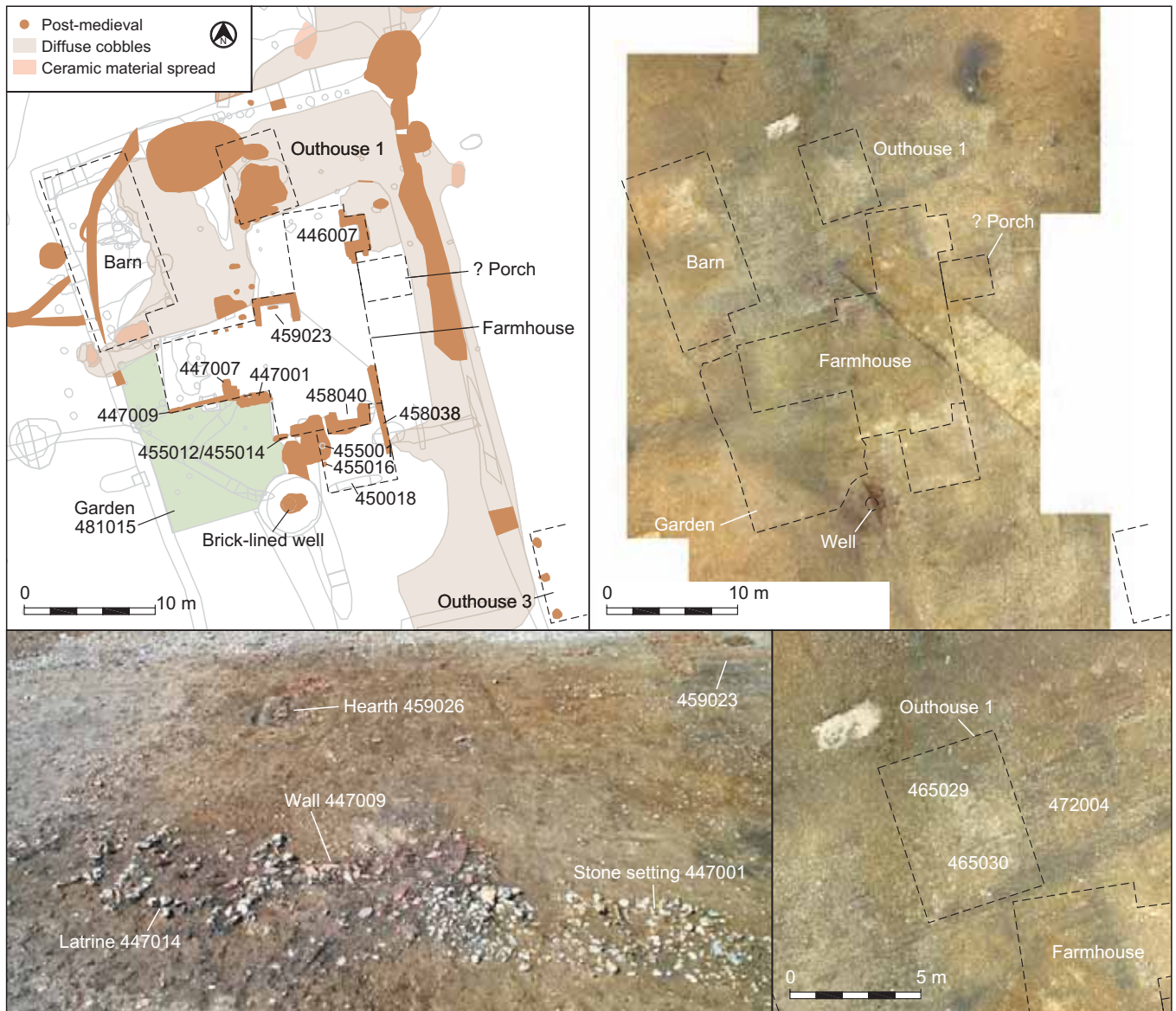


Figure 10.24: Detail of the phase 3 buildings

The most obviously visible features of this phase are the remains of three brick chimney breasts (Plates 10.6–8). Two of these were on the outside of the new building, and may have been later additions, although this is considered unlikely. Chimneys were common features of ‘middle class’ buildings from the 17th century onwards in Essex and reflected a desire for heating in the increasing number of more private rooms (Gibson 1998, 29).

The first of the chimneys (459023) was sited on the south-east of courtyard 481003 broadly corresponding to the north-eastern corner of phase 2 hall (Plates 10.6–7). This was constructed of bricks bedded three courses deep. The walls of the chimney breast were ≈ 0.5

m thick and, below ground, were built of broken re-used bricks, all handmade and of various sizes, laid in irregular courses and bonded with clay. The interior area enclosed by the chimney breast measured ≈ 1.6 m east–west by 1.4 m north–south. The ground here was red, scorched and oxidised by intense burning, although the lack of ash or charcoal implies the fire was set upon tiles or stone flags lining the base of the chimney that were robbed when it was demolished. Indeed, the bricks of the eastern half of the chimney breast had been robbed.

The chimney breast served a room in the western wing of the phase 3 farmhouse and backed onto the courtyard 481003 (Fig. 10.24). The line

of a wall, probably bedded on a timber sill beam, was indicated by a row of five small brick pads (phase 3 wall 1) on which the sill beam would have sat. This was the northern wall of the west wing that stretched for 7.5 m approximately westwards from the chimney breast and continued until cobble surface 465001, which recessed slightly appearing to respect the north-west corner of the wing. Interestingly, the line of this wall did not correspond at all well with the southern edge of courtyard 481003, which had respected the northern side of phase 2 hall. The western wall of the west wing was only vaguely indicated by the change in colour between the black soil of the phase 3 garden (481015) to the west and the lighter soil on the interior of

the west wing. This wall was 5.5 m long, as it was presumed to intersect with its southern wall (447009). Wall 447009 survived as a shallow linear cut (4.2 m long) containing tile and blacker soil that extended through the top of the backfilled phase 2 latrine (447014), where it was clearly visible displacing the cobbles of the kerbing surrounding this feature. This wall would also have been founded on a timber sill and was parallel with the northern wall of the wing.

At its eastern end wall 447009 was aligned with the inside (northern) edge of a rectangular setting of large cobbles (447001), laid up to three courses deep (Fig. 10.24). This unusual feature was probably designed to be load bearing, providing a firm foundation for a structurally heavy part of the building. The position of the setting, projecting out of the side of the building, suggests that it could have been to a timber stair tower, the staircase being accessed from the inside of the building. A building of the size and status of the phase 3 farmhouse might be expected to have had at least two storeys by this period, as is implied by the presence of external chimney stacks, although the stone setting (447001) is the only direct evidence for stairs.

Approximately 2.5 m south-east of the stone setting there were two shallow rectangular features (455012 and 455014). They were both filled with a similar mixed deposit of compacted yellow clay, mortar and silt with small chalk inclusions and were thought to be robber trenches removing the foot-

ings of structural features. Robber trench 455012 cut through the backfill of ditch 455018, which, like the other Phase 2 enclosure ditches south of the lodge, had fallen into disuse by this time. It is likely that a light timber wall stretched between the west end of 455014 and the stair tower supported by 447001, although no evidence for this remained. After a gap of 1 m, further to the east of 455012, was a brick chimney breast (458040), the gap most likely being occupied by a door leading into a room on the south of the chimney. In total the length of the wall from the west of 455014 to the east of chimney breast 458040 was 4.3 m.

The walls of chimney breast 458040 had been almost entirely robbed and only a few bricks, one course deep, remained *in situ*, but from the dimensions of the robber trench they would once have been 1 m thick. The surviving bricks were handmade and generally re-used and broken. The internal rectangular area enclosed by the chimney where the hearth would have been measured 1.8 m east-west and 0.9 m north-south. The soil in the hearth was not oxidised, so the fire may have been set in a raised grate or stone flags, bricks or tiles used to line the base of the hearth, these were later robbed. Opening to the north, the hearth would have heated a room on this side, although the warmed bricks of the chimney would also have heated the room on its south side. The chimney breast and the doorway on the west together measured 5 m, extending across the entire width of the eastern wing.



Plate 10.6: Chimney breast 459023



Plate 10.7: Chimney breast 459023 under excavation

The southern room was defined on the west by a 4 m line between the eastern end of 455012 in the north and a robbed wall (450018) that enclosed the room on the south. Two postholes (455001 and 455016), probably door posts either side of a 1 m wide doorway, lead west out to the brick-lined well and the Phase 3 gardens (481015, Fig. 10.24). The west wall of the room was likely to have been of light construction made from timber, wattle and daub or lath and plaster as it left no other trace. The robber trench indicating southern wall 450018 was 4.3 m long. This wall was most likely to have been of brick, although nothing other than mortar, silt, broken tile and other debris was recovered. In the south-east corner of the room there was a puzzling 1.8 m gap, where 450018 did not meet up with the robber trench (458038) of the brick wall along the east face of the east wing. The cobbled surfaces (472004) in the east intruded slightly into this area, so the gap is unlikely to have arisen due to recent truncation and might instead indicate a lighter construction or door in this corner, although both would be unexpected and it may simply be that the bricks at the corner were not in a foundation trench. The brick construction of the east and south walls of this room contrasts with the lighter construction methods on the west of the room and the building generally. This is probably a product of an ostentatious desire to use more expensive and impressive brickwork on the parts of the lodge visible from the trackway to the east, when other forms of cladding or in filling sufficed for the hidden rear of the structure.

The robber trench of wall 458038 probably extended along the whole of the east face of the building, it was very ephemeral and must be inferred over most of its length. It could, however, be clearly traced for 6.7 m on the east of chimney breast 458040. Here it was largely filled with silt, mortar, chalk and brick fragments, although in a small area a single course of rough-shaped bricks survived, which were of varying sizes ranging from 0.05–0.15 m across and 0.05 m deep. It is not possible to tell whether the timber framed building was entirely faced in brick or whether it was only used for the lower storey.

On exactly the same line as wall 458038, a further 8.3 m north, was another chimney breast (446007, Fig. 10.24, Plate 10.8). This lay at the north-east corner of the east wing, on the front of the building. A surviving short stub of wall off the south side of the chimney breast indicated the continued alignment of the front of the building. However, no evidence for a wall or a robber trench could be detected further to the south in the 1 m area between the chimney breast and the earlier evaluation trench. This gap probably marks the position of the main entrance into the building, also suggested by a roughly 3 m square area immediately to the east that was relatively free of cobbles (472004) and which may have been occupied by a timber porch. The surviving foundations of the chimney breast were of a different construction to the other chimneys, being of large (< 0.2 m diameter), irregular flint nodules laid in courses (Plate 10.8). It is not certain if the foundations were constructed entirely of this material, as they had been robbed out, the cut being filled was mortar, silt, brick and tile fragments. That they were largely of brick construction is possible and it is almost certain that the chimney itself was made of brick. The walls of the chimney breast were 0.7 m thick on the north and east but much more substantial to the south, at 1.2 m thick. The hearth, which faced into a room on the west, was unlike the other hearths in the building being deep and square (measuring 1.3 m x 1.3 m). The thickness of the south wall, in which a niche

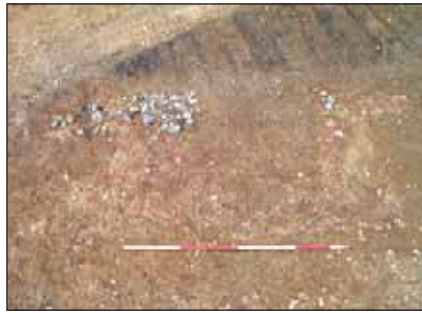


Plate 10.8: Chimney breast 446007

seat could have been set, and the depth of the hearth may indicate that this was an inglenook fireplace. There was no evidence for scorching and the floor of the hearth must originally have been lined with stone flags, brick or tiles, with the fire probably set on a grate.

No traces of the north-west corner of east wing survived, but the western wall probably aligned with the eastern side of chimney breast 459023 described above (Fig. 10.24). The area within the east wing was relatively free of cobbles and the western wall was misaligned with the cobbles on the edge of courtyard (481003). The absence of bricks within this wall probably indicates that it was not visible from the trackway, or that the trackway did not continue to the north of the lodge.

Outhouse 1

Just north of the east wing of the phase 3 farmhouse was the remains of another small building that was either adjoined to the end of the wing or stood as a separate outhouse (Fig. 10.24). The latter is considered more likely, as a passage between this structure and the end of the east wing would allow easy access between the courtyard (481003) and the area to the front of the building. The outhouse survived only as patches of pale yellow mortar flooring (465029), intermixed with fragments of brick and soil from the demolition of the building, above a raft of broken ceramic roof tile (465030) that was superimposed on cobbled surfaces (472004). The relationship between the cobbles and the presence of brick dates the outhouse to phase 3, with the tile levelling probably deriving from the modification and demolition of the phase 2 lodge. The remaining

floor deposits were rather amorphous but the building appeared to be on roughly the same alignment as the east wing of the phase 3 farmhouse, measuring approximately 4 m north–south and 2.8 m east–west. The finds associated with the floor layers offered no clue as to the specific date or function of this structure.

An area of cobbling (472004), roughly 11 m by 10 m, to the north and east of the east wing and surrounding the phase 3 outhouse (1) may have been a public outer courtyard, established when the lodge was rebuilt (Fig. 10.24). The cobbles of this courtyard sealed the deposits that backfilled phase 1 boundary ditch and in time subsided into it, the resulting depression being levelled with a deposit of broken roof tiles (453023). The lodge was now more commonly approached from the south than the north, along the trackway on its east.

Barn

The phase 2 kitchens were apparently modified or demolished and reconstructed as a slightly larger building, possibly a barn (phase 3 barn, Figs 10.23, 10.25). Prior to this, a number of ditches (phase 3 renovation ditches), possibly serving a short lived drainage function, were dug in this area while the renovations were undertaken. One of these ditches (467038) and a small gully (467046) clearly cut through the earlier hearth deposits and floor surfaces of the phase 2 kitchens and another (467025) cut through the stone setting (449071) of this earlier structure. The perimeter ditch (466020) on the north and west sides of the phase 2 enclosure appeared to have been backfilled at around this time and the upper fills of the phase 3 renovation ditches were very similar in character, suggesting that they were levelled at the same time or only slightly later. No stratigraphic relationships could be determined between the ditches where they intersected and the finds within them belong to broadly the same period. Indeed, two rim sherds of porringer one from deposit 466035 in ditch 467038 and one from deposit 467022 in ditch 466020 conjoin,

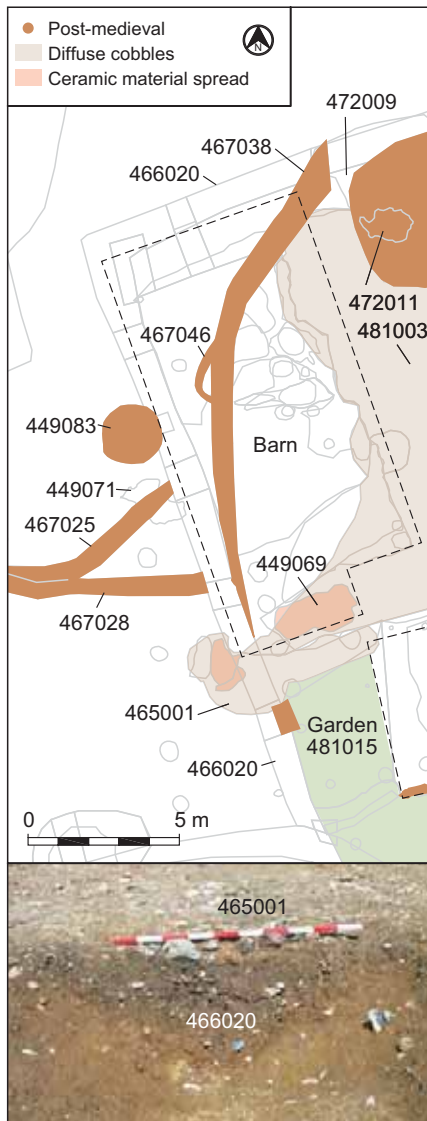


Figure 10.25: Phase 3 barn and associated features

indicating both features were open at the same time. A circular pit or depression (449083) was filled with midden material and dates to this phase of activity.

The relative lack of black slip decorated and metropolitan redware in these ditches, when compared to the backfills of the phase 2 enclosure ditches is surprising, when both were thought to have been backfilled at the same time. However, the unglazed redware within ditch 467038 might have been displaced from the floors within the building and may relate to earlier activity. Likewise, the majority of the finds came from the interventions in the west end of ditches 467025 and 467028, in the area of the Phase 2 middens (467008), which were

probably used to backfill the ditches here. Ditch 467028 is dated by sherds of a mid-17th century metropolitan slipware sgraffito vessel. Earlier finds comprised unglazed and slip decorated redware, including imitation Raeren and a cistern bung, both likely to be 16th century, as well as two knives and a long neck rowel spur. One of the knives has a scale tang, and cannot be closely dated within the period, the other has a whittle tang without a bolster and like the spur may date to the 16th century. The upper backfill deposit in ditch 467025 contained a moderately large assemblage of unglazed and white slip decorated redware and a sherd of Martincamp Flask (late 15th–mid-17th century in date). A depression just outside the north-east corner of phase 2 kitchens may be associated with their demolition or modification and contained a moderately large assemblage of redware and black slip decorated redware, within deposits 472009 and 472011, suggesting a 17th century date.

Linear dumps of tile and flint nodules in the upper fills (467052 and 467053) of the western ditch (466020) contrasted with the northern part of the ditch where the fills were much siltier and contained less debris (Fig. 10.24). It is likely that much of this debris was derived from the modification or demolition of the lodge buildings at the end of phase 2 (see phase 2 enclosure for a discussion of the finds in these ditches). The robust nature of these levelling deposits suggest that they acted as foundations for the sills of a timber frame building (phase 3 barn) that superseded the phase 2 kitchens, the western wall of which extended along the line of the backfilled ditch. An L-shaped deposit of robust flint cobbles (465001) provides further support for this, measuring 5.5 m long east–west, 3.2 m long north–south and being approximately 1 m wide, it formed a path connecting the courtyard (481003) and the garden (481015). Sealing the backfills of perimeter ditch 466020, the path appeared to respect the south-east corner of a building. Like the phase 2 kitchens, the phase 3 barn bordered cobbled courtyard 481003 in the east, and was

approximately 6.4 m wide, 1 m wider than its predecessor. It probably extended no further than the earlier kitchens in the north, whilst to the south-east a rectangular projection elongated it slightly. The projection measured *c* 2 m long x 4 m wide and was indicated by cobbles (465001) and a dump of tiles (449069), confined within it and relating to the final abandonment of the phase 3 barn. The barn was therefore approximately 13.5 m in maximum length.

The building was likely to have been of timber frame construction on wooden sill beams and may have been roofed with ceramic peg tiles. There is no evidence of hearths or chimneys replacing those of the phase 2 kitchens, implying that this was no longer its function and nor was it a residence. Instead, being in the western, less public part of the complex, it may have been a barn or stables on the edge of the courtyard, replacing the earlier phase 2 stables. The decline and relegation of separate service buildings is a commonly noted phenomenon in the region (Gibson 1998, 30).

Discussion

There is some evidence for the internal arrangement of space within the phase 3 farmhouse and it is possible to speculate on how this may have been organised (Fig. 10.26). However, this must remain largely conjectural as no internal partitions or floor surfaces survive and virtually all the structural fixtures have been robbed out. The phase 3 farmhouse was much larger than its predecessor, being roughly twice the size, and having many more rooms than the phase 2 hall. This was typical of the 17th century when houses tended to have more private rooms than those of the medieval period. The building was very probably constructed over two or more storeys, floored attics being common by this time (Gibson 1998, 29), although, regionally, single storeys with attics still occurred (eg Coopers End, Takely, Stenning 2004, 467). The phase 2 kitchens were enlarged during phase 3 and converted or rebuilt as a stables, a barn or outhouses (phase 3 barn), while the

kitchens were relocated to the phase 3 farmhouse. This probably accounts for the T-shape of the latter structure, the rear (west) wing housing the service quarters and the grander east wing, at the front of the building, housing the everyday living quarters.

This arrangement had implications for the construction of the building. The building was timber framed, with the public front of the house being faced with brick, as it was visible from a trackway to the east, whereas the less prominent rear of the structure was of lighter construction clad with timber or infilled with wattle and daub. It is not possible to determine from the evidence whether the building was faced entirely in brick or whether the upper storeys were of lighter construction. It was very probably roofed with ceramic peg tiles that occurred commonly in the demolition deposits dating the end of this phase and which suggest a hipped rather than gabled roof (Jones, CD Chapter 21). Likewise, occasional finds of window glass and lead came suggest glazed windows, as might be expected in a building of this status and three fashionable brick chimney stacks,



Figure 10.26: Interpretative plan of rooms in phase 3 farmhouse

two of which were prominent at the front of the house, served to further emphasise its aspect. The floors within the building may have been tiled, although few floor tiles were found during the excavations, suggesting that they had been comprehensively robbed out or that other materials were used in their place.

The brick chimneys are the best indicators of its internal organisation. They were slightly unusual in their location, as buildings of this period commonly incorporate a central chimney stack (Gibson 1998, 29). The first chimney (459023), at the junction between the east and west wings in the north, was probably the kitchen hearth. This would have been used more frequently than the other hearths in the building and it was indeed scorched to a greater degree. Further confirmation that the kitchens were located here, in the east of the west wing, is provided by the footings for a hand pump (447006), in the south wall that delivered water from the improved well (see below). The kitchens were ideally located, at the rear of the house, with easy access to the gardens (481015), the inner courtyard (481003) and the main living area. Adjoining the kitchens, at the west end of the west wing, were probably other service rooms associated with food storage and preparation such as the pantry, buttery and dairy. Servants' chambers were likely to be located above the west range in an upper storey, the external stair tower (447001), next to the pump on the south-east of the kitchens, providing access.



Figure 10.27: Reconstruction of the phase 3 farmhouse complex

A chimney stood at either end of the east wing. The fireplace (446007) in the north of the east wing was a large grand structure, possibly an inglenook with a niche seat, a feature that might be expected in the hall or parlour. The location of this room, away from the service quarters at the front of the house might also support this interpretation. The hall would therefore be the first room encountered when entering the building via the porch on the front of the structure to the east. The southern extent of the hall would probably align with the north wall of the west range, meaning that it measured approximately 8 m north–south by 5 m east–west.

The third fireplace (458040), at the south end of the east wing, probably served the general living room that occupied most of the remainder of the east wing. It is possible, however, that a lobby or an internal staircase separated the living room from the hall providing access to the upper storeys of the east wing. The rooms in the upper storey were probably chambers for the family living in the lodge at this time and would also have been used to accommodate their guests; an attic would have possibly separated these from the roof.

A narrow service passage can be conjectured, at the rear of the east wing, leading south from the hall, granting access to the putative stairway and separating the living room from the kitchens (Fig. 10.26). This ended in a room, possibly a vestibule, between the kitchens, the stair tower and the living room at the south of the lodge. The doorway on the immediate east of the fireplace (458040) in the living room would then lead out of this vestibule into the room behind the fireplace at the south end of the east wing. As this room was warmed by the chimney from the living room fire and had easy access to water from the nearby brick-lined/improved well it may have been a scullery or laundry. It should be noted that, unlike the phase 2 hall, no evidence for a latrine was found within this phase of the lodge, however, ceramic evidence (see below) suggests that chamber pots were commonly used. Middens were also

conspicuously absent and it must be assumed that waste materials were stored outside the excavation area or carted off site entirely.

After its initial construction the phase 3 farmhouse was probably subject to additions and piecemeal alterations and does not therefore typify 17th century design, although such development is a common characteristic of buildings at this time (*cf* Great Coopers Farmhouse, Coopers End, Takeley (Stenning 2004, 461–78); the Forest Lodge, Hatfield Forest (*cf* Rackham 1989, 172–81). Colchester Hall (Stenning 2004, 465) may have been subject to alterations and additions over the years but an 1877 inventory (ERO Sale Cat B992) listed for the property also gives a fairly good idea of what the phase 3 farmhouse may have been like:

Colchester Hall 1877 Inventory

‘...The residence contains entrance hall, sitting room, parlour, brewhouse or kitchen in which there is a pump of water, dairy and five good bedrooms. The farm premises include two double and single barns with asphalt threshing floors, stable for six horses, nag stable, chain house, piggeries and fowl houses, granary, cow house, cattle and implement sheds, three yards for stock, garden and 130 a[cres] 0 r[ods] 17 p[erches] arable and pasture land...’

On the available evidence it is difficult to be certain about the exact form of the building, but an educated guess can be made about its internal organisation (Figs 10.26–7). It is apparent that like its predecessor it was organised around principles that recapitulated a social order formalising the relationship between master and servant. However, there also seems to be an enhanced concern with creating public and private spaces, the former often being accentuated and embellished *à la mode* with more expensive or ostentatious architectural features and materials. Increasingly, the functional aspects of the complex, largely at its rear, were kept distinct and separate from the more genteel parts of the structure at its front. This might reflect the changing

nature of social relations in society at large and also the status of the occupying family who by this time may have been influential members of local society in their own right. The complex was possibly still used as a hunting lodge at the beginning of this period but later lost this designation and was almost certainly simply a prosperous tenant farm by the end of it.

Pit 459005

Just to the north-east of phase 3 farmhouse, a large pit (459005, Figs 10.23, 10.28), 5.5 m long, 3.8 m wide and 1.8 m deep, had been dug through the intersection of the backfilled phase 2 enclosure ditches 466020 and phase 1 boundary ditch. The function of this feature is uncertain although it could have provided water for activities on the opposite side of the lodge building to the brick-lined well (see below), as it just penetrated the permanent water table and contained very sterile lower deposits (IG481039). The fills of the feature from the middle of the sequence upwards included much structural debris, cess and domestic rubbish (IG481040), suggesting the pit was backfilled at about the time the building was finally abandoned. Pottery of a late date confirms this impression. A large deposit of fairly sterile subsoil (IG481041) sealed the rubbish and levelled the pit on its east side, although the relationship between the subsoil dump on the east and the back-filled debris declining steeply from the west implies the existence of a large midden on the west of the pit. None of the finds within this feature relates to its use and are discussed below.

The brick-lined well (IG481030)

When the hunting lodge was rebuilt at the start of Phase 3, the phase 2 timber-lined well was modified, being deepened and lined with bricks (Figs 10.18, 10.24). This occurred in two stages: firstly a 2 m deep, brick-lined shaft was sunk in the base of the original well cut so that the well was now 4 m deep in total. This shaft was narrower than the timber-lined well, the outer diameter being 1.20 m and the diameter inside the brick lining being 0.95 m.

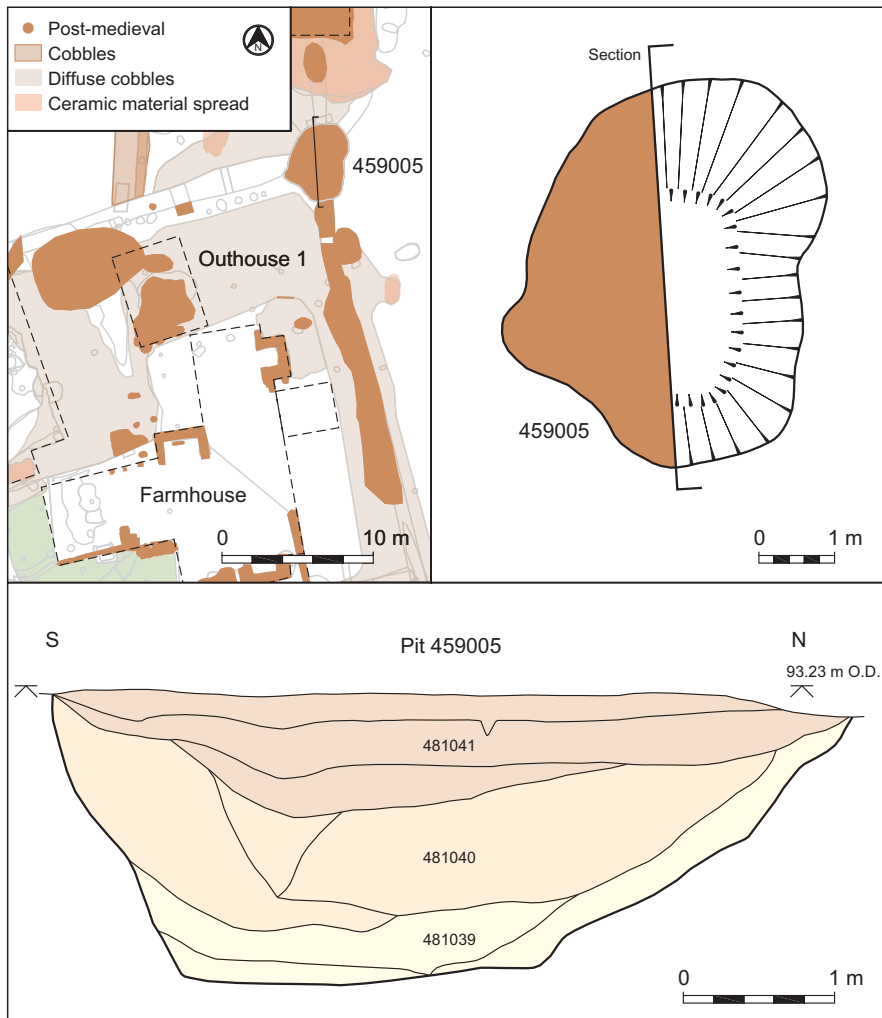


Figure 10.28: Pit 459005

The bricks, unlike any others used on the site, were of trapezoidal shape, being well-fired and handmade. They measured approximately 65 mm thick, 125 mm wide and 205 mm long on the outside edge but tapered so that they were only 175 mm long on the inside edge. They were unbonded but fitted closely together due to their unusual shape and were laid in a cross-stretcher pattern. When laid, each course of 17 bricks (one brick wide) formed a ring defining the inner shaft and it is estimated that at least 60 courses of bricks would have been required to line the entire well shaft. The shape of the bricks meant that they formed a very strong continuous arch that would have been highly resistant to external pressure, creating an effective revetment capable of retaining the sides of the well without the need for cement bonding. The lowest course of bricks was laid on top of a timber frame (461042) at the base of the shaft (Allen, CD Chapter 26).

This frame was roughly rectangular with curved edges and comprised four 0.1–0.16 m thick sections (461031–461033, 461040), all of elm, that had been joined together and fastened with willow and maple pegs. The carpentry was very simple with four plates (two larger and two smaller) being joined to their neighbours by simple half laps fastened by single pegs (Fig 10.29). The shoulders on the laps of the two smaller elements (461032 and 461040) were sawn and the waste hewn away. The stops on the



Figure 10.29: The timber frame within the post-medieval brick-lined well

laps of the larger elements (461032 and 461033) would not allow their shoulders to be sawn and surviving marks show these were cut with a chisel or small hewing tool. The frame appears to have been fastened together before being placed in the ground as the outer edges and some of the protruding ends of the laps have been hewn away with an axe of over 114 mm blade width, to avoid fouling the edges of the construction shaft for the well. The inner edges of the timbers have also been hewn, this time with an adze with a 65 mm blade width, probably to conform to the circular lining which was to rest above it.

It is not immediately clear how the timber frame operated within the well, it may simply have been placed on its base and helped to prevent subsidence by providing a firm footing for the bricks lining the shaft. Or it may have played a more active role, functioning



Plate 10.9: The brick-lined well, timber frame and wooden pipes

not only as a structural component but also as a tool used in sinking the shaft. The joints of the elm frame were cut with the overlapping sections uppermost, so as to be able to withstand pressure from above, so it would still have retained its shape and been a good support for the brick courses it supported even if it was undermined and the earth below it dug away. It would, in theory, have been suited to the method described below, so it is at least possible that this was employed.

Well digging was a skilled job and the use of specially shaped bricks to line this example probably indicates that it was built by experienced professionals. Rather than simply digging a deep and unsafe hole it is possible to ensure that the sides of the well are retained behind bricks as the shaft is deepened. This technique involves building up courses of bricks on top of a sturdy platform in the shape of a ring, not unlike the timber frame found here. The soil below the frame is then carefully excavated to undermine it to the depth of a course or so of bricks. The frame and the bricks above it sink as one, coming to rest on the base of the deepened shaft. More brick courses

are then added and the excavation deepened as before. This process continues until the desired depth is reached and the well-digger at its base can be hoisted out from the middle of the lined shaft. Thus the frame and the lowest brick courses, which started near ground level at the beginning of excavations, eventually come to rest upon the base of the well shaft, well below ground surface, by the time excavations have ceased.

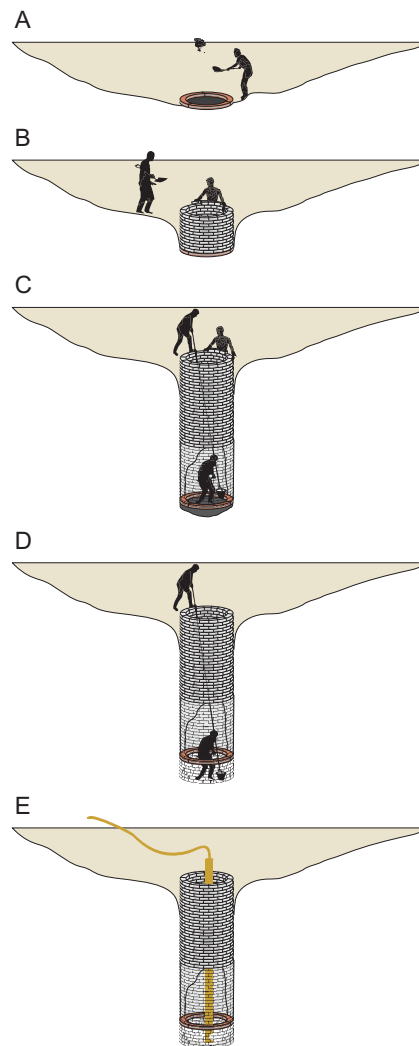


Figure 10.30: The construction of the post-medieval brick-lined well

After the newly sunk shaft had been completed, the upper 2 m of the well shaft was built upwards as a tower within the wider cut of the timber-lined well. This tower gradually widened so that the outer diameter was approximately 1.1 m and the inner diameter 1.35 m in diameter. It was constructed against the western side of the timber-lined well and the space left between the brick shaft and the edge of the pit

(required so that the bricklayer had space to work) was back filled, as the brick courses were laid, with the clay (461015) recently upcast from the shaft. This deposit contained redware and black glazed redware (c 1600–1750) that also occurred in the organic silt (461026) at the bottom of the original timber-lined well, suggesting that brick-lined well directly succeeded it at the beginning of the 17th century. It is possible that the bricks of the well continued above ground forming a superstructure, although all trace of this would have been removed when the well was robbed out. It is perhaps significant that the robber cut (361014) in the top of the well was so large, being just under 5 m in diameter compared to a well shaft that was only slightly over 1 m in diameter, and some kind of brick or stone well housing is implied. Water was probably drawn out of the well by hand using buckets and possibly a counterbalance or some kind of winding mechanism but again no evidence for either of these survived.

Improved well (IG481031/2)

The brick-lined well, initially constructed in phase 2 (see above, Fig. 10.18), was altered and improved during this phase (the improved well). It was deepened and then equipped with a pumping mechanism that allowed water to be delivered directly into the kitchens (Figs 10.29–31). These improvements probably took place sometime after the construction of the phase 3 lodge.

The shaft of the improved well was deepened by 1 m and the extension lined with bricks (461036) (17 courses, one brick thick), which were built in incremental courses, wedged under the timber frame (461042) as the shaft was gradually deepened. At the end of this process, gaps between the bricks and the timber frame, resulting from irregularities in the coursing, were plugged with insertions of ceramic roof tile (461039). The handmade bricks were different to the specialist bricks used in the phase 2 construction, being rectangular rather than trapezoidal in shape. On average they measured 215 mm long, 11 mm wide and 6 mm



Plate 10.10: Pipe for the improved well

deep, were unbonded and laid in a cross-stretcher pattern. They jutted out below the timber frame slightly and because of their shape defined a polygonal rather than circular shaft. It is thought that bricks similar to these would have been used in the construction of the lodge building.

Once the well shaft had been deepened, an oak pipe (461030) was lowered into the bottom of the well (Plate 10.9). The pipe was constructed in sections, two of which were found preserved *in situ*. The lower section of pipe was made from a large oak timber, octagonal in cross section, measuring 1.66 m long, and 0.25 m in diameter. The lower end of this had been hewn off square to the axis of the timber, whereas the uppermost end tapered over 0.4 m to a circular cross-section, slightly wider than the 0.057 m diameter hole bored lengthways through the centre of the timber. At the lower end, the bored hole had been plugged with a round-wood willow bung, 0.075 m long, 0.054 m in diameter, fastened in place by a single iron nail. Also at this end a rectangular socket has been cut into one face, 0.10 m from the stoppered end, deep enough to intersect with the central bore. This socket would allow water to enter the tube and be drawn up by the pumping machinery whilst

keeping the entry point for the water above the base of the well where silt and debris might otherwise have clogged the tube. The nail holes present around the periphery of the socket indicate the former presence of a filter plate, a perforated lead or copper alloy sheet nailed in place to stop debris being sucked into the tube. Neither the plate nor the nails were apparent on excavation, suggesting that the pipe was re-used.

The second length of pipe (461029) was not as well preserved as the first, the uppermost portion being above the permanent water table. It survived to a length of 0.85 m and was 0.28 m in diameter, the central bore being up to 0.1 m in diameter. Like the first section, this was octagonal in cross-section but at the lower end was encircled by a reinforcing iron hoop or collar. This end fitted snugly over the top of the tapered lower pipe, in which position it was found, so that together they formed a continuous tube (Plate 10.10). It is likely that the uppermost end of this pipe would have been tapered like the first and that at least one more section of timber would have adjoined it.

The well may have been covered when in use and was probably surmounted by a pumping mechanism. It is suggested (although other arrangements are possible) that a branching lead pipe would have joined onto the timber pipes, one leading to a spout adjacent to the well, so that water could be drawn directly from it, and the other leading via a buried lead pipe to a second pump in the kitchens of the lodge. Evidence for the second pipe and the pump in the kitchens was found during the excavations (Fig. 10.31).

Finds within the well date its abandonment and the demolition of the phase 3 farmhouse in general and are discussed in the demolition and abandonment section below.

An L-shaped pipe (presumably made of lead) ran from the top of the well towards the kitchen buried within a shallow ditch (481016) (Fig. 10.31). This was robbed when the lodge was abandoned. The point where the pipe

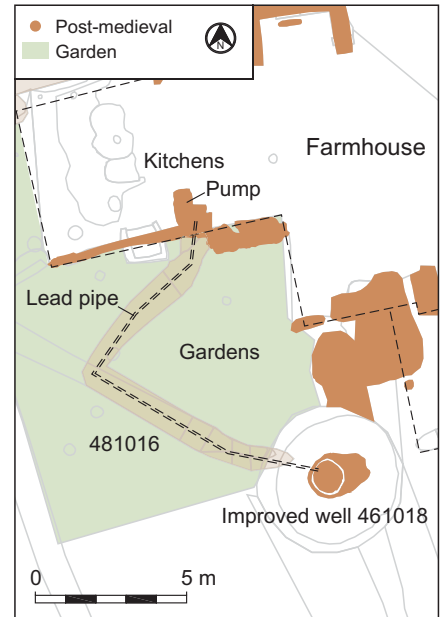


Figure 10.31: The improved well and pump setting in the phase 3 building

ended was coincident with a rectangular brick setting (447006), which was thought to have housed the timber pedestal for a hand pump inside the kitchens. The setting comprised bricks in a random bond, bedded on clay, that were 23.5 m long, 0.11 m wide and 0.04–0.06 m thick. The bricks were



Figure 10.32: Ancillary buildings and features

generally one course deep but around the edge of the setting they survived up to three courses and may originally have been taller. The timber pedestal probably slotted into the rectangular slot created in the centre of the setting. Associated with the setting was another sub-rectangular cut (453024) that was backfilled with mortar and debris. The relationship between 447006 and 453024 could not be determined but they were possibly contemporary. If this was the case then 453024 could have housed a tank positioned to collect over-spilling water, there being no

evidence for a drain in the kitchen or indeed anywhere else in the building.

The presence of a hand pump in the kitchen was probably something of a luxury and indicates that the lodge was still of some status even if it was no longer the parker's residence at this time. A similar hand pump, admittedly later in date, is listed in an inventory (ERO Sale Cat B992) of 1877 as being in the kitchens or brewhouse at Colchester Hall, which was within the area of the airport and has since been demolished (Ryan 2004b, 465).

Ancillary buildings and features

Evidence was found for a number of outhouses (Fig. 10.32). They could have been used for a range of functions including the storage of tools and produce and for keeping animals such as chickens.

Outhouse 2

A small structure was sited 15 m to the north-east of the phase 3 outhouse (1) (see above), in the area of phase 2 cobbles (north) (Fig. 10.32). This too was probably an outhouse of some description. It comprised a raft of broken ceramic roof tile (457005) superimposed over the backfilled phase 1 boundary ditch and the earlier cobbled surface. The sub-rectangular spread of ceramic tile (11 m north-south by 8 m east-west) defined, on four sides, a central rectangular area of brown silt (457004) (5.2 m north-south by 4.6 m east-west), probably the outline of the building. The tiles extended 4.6 m beyond the building in the south and may have surfaced a small yard associated with it. Metal objects including an iron ring, copper alloy mounts, an iron wedge and a spade shoe associated with this building suggest that it might have been a tool store or workshop. The only dating evidence was the late 16th-17th century spade shoe, as the only pottery associated with the building was a sherd of undiagnostic post-medieval redware. As there was little later cultural material in the area, the phase 2 stables alongside path (481009) had possibly fallen into disuse and been abandoned by this phase, although this cannot be established for certain.

Outhouse 3

Approximately 11.5 m to the south-east of the phase 3 farmhouse, three post-holes (46805, 46807 and 468010) were arranged on the same north-south orientation (Fig. 10.32). They occupied an area that was relatively devoid of cobbling, just inside the limit of the excavation. Without extending the excavations eastwards it is difficult to be certain but this was possibly the site

of a small out building or barn (phase 3 outhouse (3)), adjacent and to the west of the trackway. The postholes had been deliberately backfilled with the same distinctive fill, comprising a light silt with many chalk inclusions that contrasted with the surrounding subsoils, probably when the structure was demolished.

Pond 458001

It is likely that the phase 2 pond (458001) excavated in on the south-east of the lodge remained open and in use during phase 3, with a number of deposits accumulating naturally (IG481022). These showed no evidence for being permanently waterlogged but the water level in the pond undoubtedly fluctuated with the seasons, and it may have acted as a dew-pond. Deposit 458020 contained a fragment of glass from a 17th century or later wine bottle. The upper deposits in the pond (IG481024) were probably deliberate dumps of subsoil designed to it pond when it fell into disuse at the end of this phase. Unfortunately there was no cultural material in these deposits to date them closely. A layer of clinker (458011) in the top of the pond probably indicates that it survived as a depression until relatively recently when it was eventually levelled.

Outhouse 4

Two parallel brick walls (457019 and 457021) were located to the south of pond 458001 and to the west of the trackway (Fig. 10.32, Plate 10.10). These could have been the footings for a timber barn (phase 3 outhouse (4)) or some other large structure that was either contemporary with the phase 3 farmhouse or post-dated it, unfortunately the finds evidence was equivocal. The northernmost wall (457021) survived only as a short (0.5 m) length, the rest having been removed by robber trench 457022 that suggests the wall was originally at least 12.5 m long and was backfilled with mortar and other debris. The surviving bricks were unbonded and only one course deep, comprising one and a half bricks placed lengthways across the foundation cut to form a wall footing.



Plate 10.11: Wall 457019

The southernmost wall (457019) was more complete but had still been heavily robbed; robber trench 446039 indicates the line of this wall. This wall was at least 14.2 m long. The unbonded bricks survived up to three courses deep. They were laid in random courses and were very disturbed over most of the length of the wall line. The construction cut (457018) containing 457019 continued off to the south, with the wall lying inside its eastern edge. It contained a silty-clay with many chalk inclusions (457031) over a darker silt with brick inclusions (457032), 457031 abutting and overlying the remnants of the brick wall and the backfilled robber trench. Rather than being the cut for the wall, it is perhaps likely that, on the south, 457018 was actually the foundation trench for an associated surface of some description, which was also robbed and then levelled with 457031.

Along the northern wall of the phase 3 outhouse (4), there was a parallel ditch 457024. It contained no finds but as it truncated robber trench (457022) so was demonstrably later. The ditch apparently terminated where the line of the former phase 1 boundary ditch was, presumably respecting an associated feature, such as a fence or some other boundary, with the building along this line. Construction cut 457018 also apparently respected the phase 1 boundary ditch. The phase 2 ditches defining funnels 1–3 in this area had probably silted and fallen into disuse by this time.

Features in the brook area

Just to the north of the brook that flowed along the southern edge of the field containing phase 3 farmhouse, was an area of boggy ground filling an ancient channel of the brook. The trackway passed over the brook and this boggy ground, presumably via a bridge or a ford in the same place as the present day bridge. Approximately 14 m west of this crossing, a large (4 m long, 3 m wide and 1.4 m deep) rectangular pit or tank (481042) had been dug through the alluvial silts (Fig. 10.33). The upper profile of the pit was quite gentle (approximately 45°), but lower down became vertical and more regularly rectangular in plan. Two timber stakes (464048 and 464049) were preserved against its northern edge and three more (448016–8) made of oak, ash and hazel, continued in an arc across the centre of the pit, dividing it on a diagonal from the north-west corner to the centre of the southern side. There was no evidence of any wattle or hurdle revetting associated with the posts but, as other organic material was well preserved, it is perhaps likely that they were once reinforced with timber boards, which were retrieved when the feature was abandoned. A single sawn oak board (448014), measuring 0.54 m long, 0.24 m wide and 0.024 m thick, was retrieved from deposit 464037, on the north-eastern side of the divide. Four nail holes and one *in situ* iron nail driven into the edge of the board indicate that it may have been joined to other similar boards, probably as part of a panel (see Allen, CD Chapter 26).

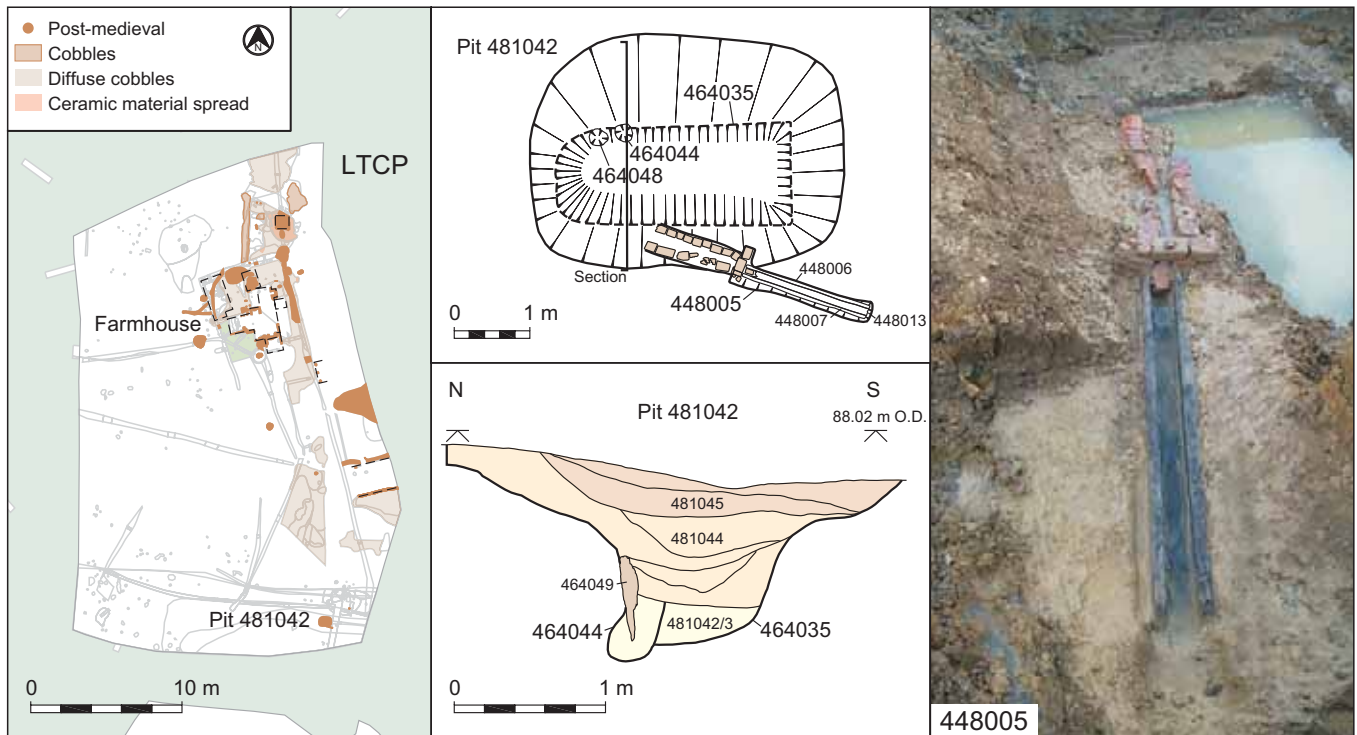


Figure 10.33: Pit 481042

The pit contained a number of waterlain fills (IG481043/4); little other than twigs and other organic debris was recovered, although deposit 464037 did contain a wooden dowl peg. Midway in the sequence, deposit 464039 contained several fragments of tile and brick relating to the final abandonment of the feature and was possibly contemporary with the demolition of the phase 3 farmhouse. The only datable find from the pit came from this latter deposit but being a sherd of undiagnostic redware pottery only confirms a post-medieval date. The deposit above this (464040) showed indications of having developed slowly over a very long period of time in fairly wet conditions. This was devoid of cultural material and probably dates to the centuries after the lodge was abandoned. In relatively recent times, a levelling deposit of gravel (464041) and above it silt (464042) (IG481045) containing some broken brick were deposited in a depression in the top of the largely backfilled feature.

Leading into the south-western part of the tank from the south-east was a drain 448005 (IG481042). This was formed by a rectangular box made from four radially split oak boards comprising a base (448012), two sides

(448006 and 448007) and a lid (448008 and 4480010–11) that had been nailed together at the edges. This measured 1.7 m long, 0.2 m wide and 0.1 m deep, sitting snugly in a thin channel cut through the alluvial silt. In the north-west the wooden drain connected with a brick-lined drain (448009), within the same channel, which discharged into tank 464035 after a further 1.4 m. The bricks were handmade and often broken and re-used, a complete brick measured 0.225 m long, 10.5 m wide and 0.6 m thick, similar to those retrieved from the features associated with the phase 3 farmhouse. They were laid end to end along the base of the channel three courses wide. The two outer courses were two bricks deep forming the sides of the channel and, where the brick drain joined the timber drain, one and a half bricks were placed crossways on top of the side courses – the remains of a capping course. The drain came to an abrupt end to the south-east and it is not known if it once continued in this direction at a higher level.

The materials used to construct the tank and drain suggests that it was contemporary with the phase 3 farmhouse. This part of the site would probably not have been used as a deer

drive by this time as the enclosure ditches (funnels 1–3) had silted and no longer operated as boundaries. What function the tank and drain might have served is unknown, although it is assumed that they were associated with an industrial or agricultural practice for which no evidence remains. The drain was used to deliver water to the south-western half of the tank, possibly from the brook via a system of elevated launders for which no evidence survives. The water may have been used to 'wash' something in one half of the tank that needed to be kept distinct from another material (or the same material at a different stage in the process) in the north-eastern part of the tank. The slope of the land in the relict channel would cause overflowing water to run off to the south-west, although no attempt was made to facilitate this. Waterlogged plant remains in samples from the pit shed little light on its function. A single hop fruit was recovered and this species can be used in brewing or dyeing but the location of the pit would seem unsuitable for these activities. Other plant remains indicate that the course of the brook was wooded at this time and the area surrounding the pit would have liable to periodic flooding.

Dating

Finds in the initial construction deposits in the brick-lined well and the renovation ditches were very similar to the finds assemblages in the disuse deposits of the phase 2 lodge (see above), indicating that the phase 3 renovation of the hunting lodge took place immediately after the demolition of the phase 2 buildings. Midden deposits do not seem to have accumulated during this later phase indicating that refuse was regularly removed from the site. It is thus harder to date the actual occupation of the phase 3 farmhouse, most of the finds either occurred as a thin scatter over the site or in disuse deposits associated with the abandonment of the site in deep features such as the improved well or pit 459005. The site was comprehensively cleared when it was abandoned and any finds from this phase of occupation would largely seem to have redeposited in secondary contexts. The finds assemblages from these abandonment deposits are discussed in detail below.

The earlier pottery forms and types (such as the black slip decorated wares and Cologne/Frechen) within the abandonment assemblages probably date the occupation of the lodge and the latest (such as the Staffordshire wares and English tinglazed wares) date its latest occupation and abandonment. On the basis of these finds, it would seem that phase 3 lasted for approximately a century, from the end of phase 2 in the early to mid-17th century to the abandonment of the lodge *c* 1750–1760. The clay pipe evidence broadly agrees with this and all the pipes probably date from phase 3. Overall the clay pipe has been dated to *c* 1610–1780 but this includes some broad dates for the 17th century style stems and the better evidence provided by the bowl fragments gives a more limited range of *c* 1640–1780, with an emphasis on material of late 17th–early 18th century date. A small farthing of Charles I (1625–1649) was recovered from the topsoil and two coins of William III (1689–1702), occurring on top of the cobble spreads 472004 in both the north and the east of the site, indicate that the building was occupied

at this time. The latest 18th century coin, also from the cobbles 472004, was minted in the reign of George II (1727–1760). Many other less diagnostic finds also occurred scattered over these cobbles and some also relate to activity during this period.

The glassware and metalwork finds are not particularly diagnostic but most of the wine bottles probably belong to phase 3. Given the poorly stratified or secondary nature of the contexts the metalwork finds occur in, it is hard to be sure which, if any, date to phase 3, although it is likely that some do and they do not contradict the date range suggested by the other finds. Similar problems affect the animal bone assemblage and it is therefore difficult to determine whether this is made up of a different range of species than phase 2 and specifically if deer were represented in similar numbers. However, one pit (459019) in the east of the site contained some goose bone and the bones of at least ten chickens and, as it cut through cobbled surface 472004, must consequently date to phase 3.

Demolition and abandonment

At around the middle of the 18th century the lodge was finally abandoned and the structure was comprehensively dismantled. The building timber would have been removed for re-use, as would the floor tiles, the roof tiles, building stone, bricks, fixtures, fittings and anything else of value. Consequently very little would have been left to show that this had once been the site of a substantial building. Indeed, there was no allusion to a building on this spot on the Chapman and André Map of 1777 and the archaeological evidence confirms the robbing and levelling of the site. The buildings had been flattened to ground level. All that remained to indicate they once stood here were gaps in the cobbled surfaces, discolourations in the soil, backfilled postholes, scatters of tiles and robber trenches where brick surfaces and chimneys had once stood (demolition and abandonment). The lead pipe leading from the kitchen to the well was removed leaving only a

trench full of debris (481016) and even the boards were removed from the tank (464035) by the brook. A spread of artefacts dating from the previous 250–300 years littered the site and debris from the demolition of the structures was piled into deep subsurface features (pond 458001 and pit 459005) to level them (IG481024/40).

Levelling deposits in pit 459005 and the improved well contained the majority of the artefacts relating to the demolition and abandonment of the phase 3 lodge. The latest of these date to around the time that it was abandoned but others relate to the occupation of the lodge during phase 3 and earlier phases. Pit 459005 contained a great deal of rubbish and detritus, comprising deposits (459008 and 459010), amongst which was a substantial pottery assemblage. This included a large quantity of redware including a 16th or 17th century chafing dish, some black slip decorated redware, several sherds of Cologne/Frechen and English tinglazed earthenware and a single sherd each of Staffordshire type ware and industrial ware. The industrial ware was in the uppermost fill and probably related to the recent agricultural use of the site. Much of this pottery is likely to be residual, except for the tinglazed earthenware and Staffordshire type wares which could relate to 18th century activity just prior to the demolition of the site. A silver half groat of Elizabeth I, minted in 1601–2, occurred as a residual find in deposit 459007, sealing the demolition deposits.

The improved well (IG481031/2) was robbed out (IG481034) and also backfilled with demolition debris (IG481033), deriving from the demolition of the phase 3 farmhouse. Amongst this was residual material relating to all phases of the occupation of the site and some late material dating the final period prior to its abandonment. The pottery from deposit 461001 backfilling a robber cut (461014), removing the upper bricks lining the well, included a large assemblage of both redware and black slip decorated redware and several sherds each of Cologne/Frechen,

English stoneware and English tinglazed earthenware. Pottery from amongst the detritus back filling the well shaft included a large assemblage of redware, metropolitan slipwares and black slip decorated redware, which would have included a residual element. It also contained Westerwald stoneware, English tinglazed earthenware, Staffordshire type ware and Staffordshire type mottled ware, which would relate to the occupation of the lodge immediately before it was abandoned. The Staffordshire type wares included a press-moulded dish of early 18th century date and the mottled wares do not date after 1750, so as elsewhere the evidence from the well implies the lodge to have been abandoned by the middle of the 18th century.

Amongst backfill 461028 in the well shaft were fragments of a cast iron cooking pot and fragments of a similar vessel were also found in the backfills of a robber trench (481016), excavated to retrieve a lead pipe leading from the well. It could not be conclusively demonstrated that these conjoined and were thus from a single vessel but they were the only finds of this type from the excavation and strengthen the suggestion that the well was backfilled with 461028 at the same time as the pipe was removed and the structure abandoned. Robber trench 481016 also contained English stoneware, Staffordshire type, white saltglaze and tinglazed earthenware as well as several sherds of redware and black slip decorated redware. There were also a number of fragments of clay pipe within the feature, including pieces from both bowl and stem, generally dating after *c* 1700. The pottery assemblage from this feature accorded with the 18th century date and a sherd of white saltglaze ware was the latest pottery to be recovered from the site being manufactured between *c* 1720–1770.

The latest 18th century coin from the cobbles 472004 in the east of the site was minted in the reign of George II (1727–1760) and agrees with the date implied by the pottery. A pipe bowl recovered from the top of the backfill of the latrine (447014) was thought to

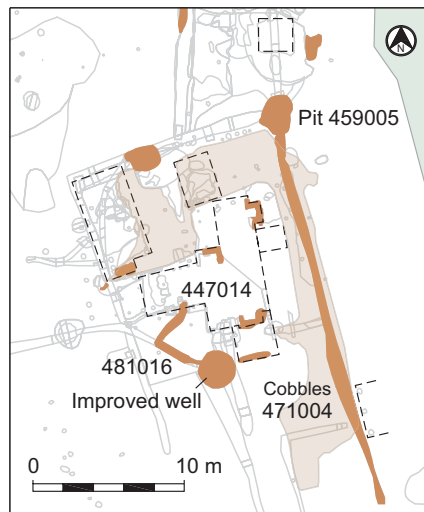


Figure 10.34: Features relating to the demolition and abandonment of the farmhouse

relate to the demolition of the lodge structure rather than the back filling of the latrine, being collected from the top of the upper deposit (447011) within the feature. It has the stamp 'WW', probably the initials of William Walker of Ware, a Hertfordshire pipe manufacturer working 1745–1758 (Oswald 1975, 174). This concurs with the other finds evidence from robber trench 468003 and from the phase 3 farmhouse generally, so a date of *c* 1750–1760 might be suggested for its demolition and final abandonment. No building is shown on the site on the Chapman and André map of 1777, although Bury Lodge and other nearby complexes of a similar size were (Fig. 10.34). The reasons why the building was demolished are mysterious but presumably relate to decisions relating to the management of the estate at large. What is clear is that after this time, the land seems to have reverted to pasture and remained so until recent times.

Life at the farmhouse

Much of the evidence for the day to day life of those at the farmhouse has been lost due to the demolition of the site and the removal of rubbish from the settlement during its lifetime. It is not certain that this building ever operated as a hunting lodge and it may have been built to take its place among the other tenanted farms of the estate. It was a fairly grand building, in keeping with the other country farmhouses of its day, and a track possibly

connected it to the nearby farmstead at Bury Lodge. Its construction would broadly coincide with the sale of the Stansted Mountfitchet estate to the Middleton family, who took up residence in Stansted Hall. The Middletons, living within the estate, may have chosen to manage it differently to their predecessors the earls of Oxford who were absentee landlords. Being 'new men' and belonging to the Elizabethan gentry rather than being of noble stock the Middletons may have espoused rather different attitudes. It can be speculated that in the second half of the 17th century they leased out much of the southern part of the deer park as farmland (including the farmhouse that replaced the hunting lodge), keeping only the northern part of it where it adjoined the manor house. The parker, if one was retained, may have been housed elsewhere. The Stansted deer park was entirely disparked by 1704, succeeded by a landscape park surrounding Stansted Hall.

The animal bones from the excavation do not shed much light on the potential change in status of the site. Deer bones occurred widely over the site and were found in late 17th and 18th century contexts. However, many of these could easily be residual finds deriving from the 16th century middens that were spread out during the demolition of the hunting lodge at the end of the previous phase. Likewise it is difficult to be certain which phase the animal bone from domestic species belongs to. It is almost certain that animals such as sheep, cattle and horses continued to be bred at the farm and grazed in the surrounding fields. Fowl were certainly kept and a large deposit of chicken bones representing at least 10 chickens was found in a small pit (459019) cut through the cobbles of one of the later courtyards. Peas and grain were found within contexts of this date, but can only indicate consumption at the site. However, if the surrounding parkland had been given over to agriculture, small areas of arable would be likely to have been maintained alongside the pasture which would have predominated. Gardens or orchards were possibly associated with the farm buildings and would

have produced some food and probably medicinal herbs. Waterlogged plant remains from the base of the improved well suggest nearby woodland and a box leaf was also recovered suggesting clipped box hedges may have been planted in the vicinity of the farm house; grape pips indicate the consumption of some luxury foods.

The architecture of the building perhaps provides the best insight into the farmstead's status. The ditches of the deer *hayes* were backfilled indicating that bow and stable hunting was no longer practised, perhaps reflecting the demise of the hunting lodge or a change in hunting fashions. The ditched enclosure around the lodge was also backfilled at this time but the courtyards were expanded, presumably in response to the changing requirements of the farm. The conversion of the kitchens, possibly to a barn, and the construction of a number of out buildings around the main farmhouse point to the functional nature of the settlement. At the same time the main building was large and fairly grand, with a number of heated rooms and an ostentatious frontage. This would appear to indicate that those living there were concerned with their social standing and made efforts to keep up appearances. In keeping with this, an attempt would seem to have been made to differentiate between the public, private and service quarters within the building. There were likely to have been a number of servants living at the farm, as well as the farmers, the building was certainly sufficiently large to lodge them. The pump within the kitchen and the brick-lined well indicate that money was available to instigate improvements throughout the life of the building.

The ceramic finds are fairly typical of what might be expected to be found at a middle class farmhouse. The assemblage continued to include large numbers of coarsewares similar to previously but also included a number of fine table wares. The Staffordshire ware was most commonly from plates or drinking vessels and a sherd of Chinese porcelain was also recovered,

perhaps indicating that the family were wealthy enough to indulge in the fashion for drinking imported tea. The English stonewares included cups or mugs, jugs or bottles, while the English tinglazed wares were more utilitarian comprising a drug jar and a chamber pot. Fragments of glass flasks also occurred as did the rim of a cylindrical beaker in pale greenish glass, with mould-blown wrythen decoration (Willmott 2002, type 1.3, fig. 7). This is a common form, distributed widely across England and primarily used for drinking beer. A number of wine bottles were retrieved from the site indicating that this too was consumed. Clay pipes occurred confirming that some of those living at the farm and possibly those who demolished it smoked tobacco although they were quite plain examples and as such would have been relatively inexpensive articles. Tobacco smoking was common amongst all classes at this time. The metalwork assemblage included dress items, structural fixtures, equestrian gear, tools and other functional items and there was little difference in its composition to phase 2. It is unlikely that any of the arrowheads date to this time, however, and it is worth noting that no musket balls or gunflints were recovered - these would have been expected at a hunting lodge but also at a farm of the period.

Conclusion

In the 17th century the hunting lodge was abandoned after about 200 years of occupation and the surrounding land given over to farming, when the 500 year old deer park was disparked. The new building built in its place was most probably a middle class farmhouse, belonging to a family who were of equivalent wealth and social status to the parker of former times but were tenants rather than employees of the estate. Servants were likely to have been employed at the farm and stayed with the family. The improvements to the lodge and the small number of high status goods are in keeping with the wider developments of the age but also indicate that the family could afford some imported consumer goods such as tea and wine.

It is possible to view the fate of Stansted Park as a metaphor for wider changes in society in the post-medieval period. It was sold due to the financial difficulties of the earls of Oxford, its long standing owners, to Sir Thomas Middleton, a man made wealthy by commerce. Presumably he saw the purchase of the manor as a means to enhance his position in society, and the deer park may have afforded him yet further status. We can only wonder at his reaction to the death of his daughter in the park shortly afterwards, although he clearly seems to have continued to view himself as Lord of the manor. Certainly his grand tomb, in the church at Stansted Mountfitchet, has all the appearance of a grand manorial tomb. Parks themselves, however, appear to have become less fashionable in the post-medieval period, and many were disparked in the 17th and 18th centuries. At Stansted Park, there is documentary evidence indicating that elements of the park were leased out as farmland prior to its disparkment, and it is little surprise that it was ultimately turned into farmland, with the lodge converted to a farmhouse.

After a period of around 100 years, in the mid-18th century, the new building was abandoned and materials systematically reclaimed prior to its demolition. The Stansted Mountfitchet estate was now owned by the Heath family and the farmhouse may have been demolished at the behest of either Bayley or William Heath. In light of this the relative absence of material evidence is unsurprising but means that it is only possible to sketch out a portrait of those who lived there.

Hunting lodges and deer parks would once have been such common features of the English landscape that they must have seemed almost ubiquitous. Indeed, many former hunting lodges remain occupied today, having first been converted into farms and then domestic residences. Yet, partly because they remain occupied or within estate parks, very few lodges have been excavated and, of these, fewer have proved to be of late medieval–early post-medieval date.

Comparatively few parks survive today and most of those that do have been masked by later changes in land use, particularly the naturalistic 'improvements' of the 18th century landscape movement. At Stansted the deer park may have been disparked and turned over to agriculture in the 18th century but this probably incurred only the felling of several trees and the removal of the deer. What has made this study so profitable has been the ability to place the lodge back into its context, to see how it might have operated within the medieval–post-medieval park, and at the same time retrieve assemblages of contemporary artefacts which help to fill in the fine grained detail of life at the lodge.

Deer parks and hunting lodges are very good examples of how social institutions – in this case the medieval appetite for venison and love of hunting – can have a profound effect on the physical character of the landscape. Once enshrined these institutions tend to perpetuate themselves, reinforcing the values

they embody and creating rich fields for discourse. In practise, although essentially exclusive landscapes, deer parks brought together people from a wide range of social backgrounds and the archaeological and historical evidence provides an insight into these past lives. The story that has emerged at Stansted is not always detailed, it may not exhaust every plot and indeed, other stories may be suggested in its place. It is populated with many characters, the names of some we know – as landowners or officials, they were deemed worthy of recording. Of others, because of their lowly rank, we know nothing, but we can hold what their hands once held and know them that way.

Hunting is currently unfashionable in Britain and is the subject of recent restrictive legislation, arguably of a kind different to that of the past. Today it is a largely urban society who legislates against what they perceive to be a cruel pastime of the privileged. Inevitably modern views cloud any approach to the subject of hunting in

the past. It is perhaps helpful to bear in mind that in the past the right to hunt was hotly contested but seldom was its fundamental morality questioned, even by the church, and the writers of the medieval hunting treatises seemed to take for granted that their upper class audience, at least, condoned it (cf Cummins 1988, 11).

It seems fitting to end the story with words from Edward Duke of York's version of *The Master of the Game* (Baillie-Grohman and Baillie-Grohman 1904, 6–9) for they seem an apt epitaph for noble, parker and poacher alike:

'And whan he hath wel ete and wel
dronke he shal be al glad and wel, and
wel at his eese, than he shal goo to take
the eyre in the evenyngis of the nyght
for the grete hete that he hath had,...
I say that hunters goon in to Paradis
whan thei dey, and lyven in this world
most joyful of eny other men.'



CHAPTER 11

From Hunter-gatherers
to Huntsmen

by Nicholas Cooke and Fraser Brown

Epilogue

Throughout this volume we have sought to explore the history of human habitation of the Stansted landscape, concentrating on the way in which people reacted to the physical and social landscapes they encountered and how they responded to the challenges and opportunities these presented. Thematic discussion of different phases of inhabitation has not just concentrated on the strategies people used to provide food and shelter but also how they maintained social cohesion, and negotiated their relationships with other groups in the area and also with the past through structured activities and rituals.

We have seen how the physical landscape of the area had a significant influence on the way in which people lived their daily lives, not least in the acquisition of the materials that they required. Whilst the topography is essentially unremarkable, with shallow river valleys cutting a low plateau, the heavy glacial boulder clays, which dominate the area, have had a major impact on the way in which people inhabited, farmed and otherwise managed the landscape.

The evidence recovered from these excavations highlights how important an understanding of the landscape was to the procurement strategies of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. Distributions of flint tools from the excavations concentrate in areas where hunters were most likely to be able spot their prey, as well as affording access to other resources such as fresh water, woodland and possibly local sources of suitable flint. Whilst we are able to recognise practical reasons for choosing these sites, they may also have had other attributes, intangible to us, that made them attractive. Knowledgeable geographies of acquisition, belief and experience are likely to have been interwoven in the selection of sites and by movement through the landscape. Particular sites may have been used repeatedly, not only because they were well-resourced, but because they were significant in other ways, perhaps having acquired histories of their own.

Later, in the Neolithic, there is evidence for activity on a number of sites, but it concentrated on the MTCP site. Here a number of deliberately dug features containing pottery, flint tools and the burnt remains of food. It seems likely that these were deliberate acts of deposition undertaken as part of a process of negotiation, whether undertaken as a propitiatory act, as an act of thanks to a deity or even as a celebratory act to mark the coming together of different groups for some reason at this place. It is tempting to link this activity to the presence here of a large glacial erratic stone, perhaps a small standing stone or marker (which was later buried in the centre of the Bronze Age settlement that developed on the same site).

Although there is no evidence at these sites for the monuments which characterise Neolithic activity elsewhere in lowland Britain, the spread of agriculture and increasing sedentism would have had an inevitable impact on both the social and physical landscape. The Neolithic way of life led to the emergence of new ways of expressing group or individual identities and new forms of communication and negotiation between different groups. The gradual adoption of agriculture initiated openings in the woodland canopy, small clearings at first, but over time larger and more systematic clearances. One such clearing seems to have formed in the area of the SG and western end of the MTCP sites.

Arable farming of the heavy boulder clays of the plateau is likely to have been restricted prior to the introduction of improved farming techniques and more suitable crops in the Romano-British period, and initial woodland clearance is likely to have focused on the better soils of the river valleys. Domestication of animals, in particular sheep and cattle, also afforded opportunities for grassland and woodland to play a part in a mixed agricultural regime.

This is reflected in the Bronze Age settlement pattern, with most of the domestic sites located on the upper slopes of river valleys or on the edge of the plateau, often close to sources of water and having access to all of the

different zones of opportunity within the landscape. Although this is our first evidence for sedentary settlement, it is clear that it was associated with a high degree of social and economic sophistication. Whilst the majority of the settlements excavated were small and unenclosed, often comprising a single or pair of roundhouses, a larger enclosed settlement was founded on the MTCP site. A powerful connection to the past is indicated in the location of this settlement in a place that seems to have also been significant in the Neolithic. This impression is strengthened still further by the apparent selection by Bronze Age farmers of Neolithic worked flints for acts of deposition.

The presence of sophisticated social networks is suggested by the apparent absence of any obvious form of landscape division. It would appear that the right to farm certain areas of land did not need to be enforced by enclosing it, although monuments may still have played a role in this and territorial boundaries may have been drawn using natural features such as water-courses and wooded areas. The size and complexity of the MTCP settlement, organised around the large central roundhouse, could be evidence for the developed social hierarchies apparent elsewhere in Bronze Age Britain. However, there is no strong evidence for great emphasis being placed on the display of individual status. The range of individuals selected for cremation on the barrow adjacent to Pincey Brook suggests that this was a communal rather than elite monument, and it was often disaggregated everyday materials that were deposited in special ways within the settlement, not high status artefacts. In both domestic and funerary contexts, it was the either the bones of the people or the objects they used that were mixed together in deposition, an act which marked the transition between life or use and death or disuse.

Both the choice of material and the manner of its deployment seem to have been important within these acts of deposition. They appeared to have played an axial role in peoples' lives,

marking portentous events and the passage of time. It might have been that they were perceived as having the capacity to facilitate communication with the dead and with deities. The most dramatic act of deposition was the decommissioning of the waterhole on the MTCP settlement when this was abandoned. Explicit practices such as this were likely to be concerned with social reproduction, helping maintain cohesion within the immediate community. At other times and places it may have been communication with others outside of the immediate social group that was the primary concern.

After an apparent hiatus or decline in the density of settlement in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, there is evidence for a resettlement of the area in the Middle Iron Age. Initially, these were small-scale settlements, often comprising a pair of roundhouses that were rarely enclosed. In this respect the settlement pattern fairly closely resembles that of the Middle Bronze Age, as does the nature of the agriculture they practiced. In the wider landscape, however, the use of ditches to enclose large tracts of land suggests that there was a need to define zones of control. An increase in the settlement and population density in the Late Iron Age had a significant effect on this enclosure of the landscape. Large boundary ditches were dug, often along the edges of the plateau, closely associated with substantial droveways, presumably for the movement of livestock. This coincided with a shift towards a fully mixed agricultural economy and was presumably designed to ensure that crops were not subject to the privations of straying animals. At the same time there was a shift towards the enclosure of settlements, and ditches were commonly the focus for acts of deposition, a means of controlling movement and activity within the landscape and also of tying these scattered settlements into a wider, politically controlled, landscape.

This association between placed deposits and linear boundaries is particularly marked in the ditches which enclosed settlements, and examination of the artefacts utilised in these rites

suggests that certain objects may have been selected to mark certain points in the lifetime of a feature. This suggests that not only did the Iron Age settlers have an appreciation of passing time, but also an awareness of the life-cycle of the features themselves. It may be that the deposits themselves were somehow linked to different points in time through the history of the settlement, possibly to negotiate future success with a deity or with the ancestors.

We know something of the nature of Iron Age society from the writings of Roman authors. Whilst there is inevitable bias in such sources, it is clear that Iron Age society in Britain was organised along tribal lines, with a hierarchical, possibly feudal system. This is borne out to some extent in the evident differences in status between the settlement on the ACS site and the remaining settlements excavated. It seems clear that those who formed part of the local elite not only had access to wider trading networks, they also chose to display their status through status artefacts, both in a settlement context and in the selection of vessels for burials. Despite this, it seems that, perhaps for the first time, the inhabitants of the Stansted landscape were subjects of a tribal ruler whose seat of power was distant, but who had the power to shape their lives.

The Stansted area saw a number of changes in the period following the Roman conquest of Britain. Foremost amongst these was a major dislocation of the settlement pattern, both locally and in the wider area. The few settlements which survive this dislocation tend to be small and agricultural. There is little evidence for hierarchy of settlement in the immediate area, although in the wider landscape, the development of major settlement centres at Bishops Stortford and Great Dunmow and the creation of villa estates are likely to have influenced this pattern. We can only guess at the networks of power and control which impinged on the daily lives of the farmers of the Stansted area.

This dislocation of settlement seems to have been associated with a more

intensive farming of the landscape, which included the clearance of more of the plateau. The main focus of this intensification seems to have been to increase the amount of land available for arable farming, and was facilitated by improvements in agricultural technology and the adoption of spelt as the main cereal crop. There is also some evidence that quantities of butchered meat were taken away from the settlements, presumably for sale at market.

There is little sign of any accompanying rise in the status of the settlements excavated despite this. The pottery recovered from the sites is indicative of fairly low status domestic occupation; whilst there is little in the other cultural material recovered which might indicate increased status. Even in death, the people could only afford to furnish their graves with slightly better pots than they used in daily life. One answer to this may lie in the small group of extremely well furnished burials in an apparently isolated dispersed cemetery, excavated by the Stansted Project in the 1980s. These clearly represent the burials of wealthy individuals, and it is tempting to see them as the beneficiaries of the profits of the agricultural improvements.

A similar pattern of agricultural intensification is evident in the late Romano-British period, when all three of the excavated settlements were all processing large quantities of cereal grain whilst, on at least one site, animals were apparently butchered for market. At the MTCP site, the landscape was re-orientated to focus on a settlement, which may have acted as an estate centre. Despite this, there are elements of this settlement which would not have been out of place in the Iron Age; the domestic dwelling of choice was still apparently the roundhouse (or slightly irregular variations on the same theme), and the acts of deposition recorded here belong to a tradition stretching back to the Middle Bronze Age. It seems most likely that these large agricultural hubs were owned by wealthy individuals, and run for profit. This may be reflected in their final abandonment in the second half of the 4th century AD.

When it came, the decline was severe. There seems to have been a substantial drop in the population in the 5th and 6th centuries AD, and it seems likely that the Early and Middle Saxon periods saw little settlement in the area, activity mainly being along the line of Stane Street. The old Romano-British landholdings rarely seem to survive in identifiable form into the Saxon period, and it seems clear that there was significant woodland regeneration. We know little of the history of human occupation in the Early Saxon period, but by the Middle Saxon period, large estates were being established, including one which incorporated both the parishes of Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley. Unfortunately, we have little evidence from this time, with only a single structure of this date excavated in the area.

By the Late Saxon period a clearer pattern of the settlement pattern emerges. The large Middle Saxon estate was gradually broken up into smaller manors, and the manorial landscape of the *Domesday* survey emerged, as these manors developed into parishes. The excavations have identified zones of settlement and associated assarting on the adjacent MTCP and SG sites. A single timber and daub hall was excavated, with areas of strip fields and the edge of an enclosure. These almost certainly represent low status agricultural farmsteads attached to Bassingbournes manor. Much of the activity in this period focused on the clearance of areas of woodland to create land for settlement and agriculture. The densely wooded nature of the landscape is borne out in the dispersed settlement pattern, many bearing names related to *tyes*, *ends* and *greens*, linked by a network of green lanes, and the importance of woodland as an economic resource should not be underestimated.

The splitting of the Middle Saxon estate into manors and parishes was often accompanied by the construction of parish churches. Some of these (notably those at Stansted, Takeley and Elsenham) now lie some distance from the villages they serve, suggesting that there was some settlement shift in the early medieval period. We have a good

idea of the nature of the landscape from the *Domesday* survey; woodland and wood pastures dominated the landscape, with some land farmed as arable, meadows predominantly concentrating on the river valleys and probably some pasture.

A number of small farmsteads excavated, predominantly dating to the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, probably represent outlying farmsteads farming land cleared of woodland through assarting. The introduction of windmills, such as the post-mill excavated on the MTCP site, allowed for the more efficient processing of grain by each manor and provided an additional source of income, as manorial tenants were probably obliged to grind their crops at the mill. Elsewhere, the medieval lords began to empark areas, creating hunting reserves comprising areas of woodland and pasture, well stocked with deer, bounded with pales and managed by parkers.

Stansted Park seems to have been emparked in the late 12th or 13th century. Parks such as this formed the ultimate expression of the mastery of the elite, ensuring access to highly prized venison for the fortunate few. They provided a rigidly controlled landscape in which 'wild' animals could be guaranteed for the hunters, as well as a potent symbol of a lord's ability to control the physical landscape, and the lives of both humans and animals within it.

The 14th and 15th centuries witnessed major upheaval within the agricultural economies of the parishes in the area. Changes in climatic conditions and an increasing population made the populace highly vulnerable to the periodic famines and epidemics of disease which characterised the early 14th century. This culminated in successive visitations of the Black Death from 1348 onwards, which may have led to a reduction of some 40% in the population. Ironically, those who survived the plague were able to negotiate commutations of their labour obligations to the manors, and landlords were forced to hire-in labour, all of

which is likely to have had a beneficial effect on tenants. The reduction in population, combined with a more powerful workforce, had implications for the landscape as a whole, with some manorial lands and houses being abandoned as manors struggled to find tenants for all their holdings. Ultimately this led to many landlords relinquishing direct control over manors, and these were often leased out from the second half of the 15th century onwards.

Stansted Park continued in use throughout the medieval period, with the hunting lodge probably moving from the periphery of the park into the centre in the late medieval period, during which time the de Vere family, the earls of Oxford, were the owners. They extended the park early in the 16th century, much to the irritation of at least one of their neighbours. Hunting parks gradually fell out of fashion, however, and successive owners of the park in the late 16th and 17th centuries leased out portions of the park for meadow and pasture, realising the economic potential of the land. Economic imperative had triumphed over the largely symbolic benefits accrued from keeping a deer park, at no small expense, and it was finally disparked in the late 17th century. It probably became a tenant farm thereafter, a farmhouse being built on the site of the hunting lodge.

The Stansted plateau was, at the start of this story, a wilderness; those humans that dwelt there lived opportunistically and were very much a part of it. In time, largely because of agriculture, the relationship between the landscape and its people changed, as did the character of both. Yet, this relationship was subtle and complex, and settlement would periodically shift or retreat from the plateau entirely, giving the woodland an opportunity to return until clearance began again. At a particular time in history, when the woods were being felled and the fields expanded, the elite in society sought to construct for themselves, amongst the tilled fields, a wilderness they could control and exploit for economic and social gain. By the end

of our account, these hunting parks, no longer deemed important, fell into decline. This was at a time when newly discovered wildernesses populated by *primitive* peoples had started to be conquered on the other side of the world, and resources at home were now expended on creating a polite wilderness of landscaped parks – idealised versions of an England that had a newly realised place in the world.

It is interesting to imagine what one of the hunters who roamed the plateau in the Mesolithic would make of the

Elizabethan gentry shooting at the tryst. Would he acknowledge any kinship with them? Would it only be their bows and hounds that were familiar or would he perceive potential companions who, like himself, respected their quarry and enjoyed a shoulder of venison shared over tales of the chase? Certainly, the buildings of the hunting lodge would be beyond his experience and many of the woodland trees and the strange deer that sheltered amongst them foreign. Yet, the landscape itself, in its relief, may well have remained recognisable.

And, what in their turn would the gentry make of this hunter, would he be a noble savage or a brute for them? On meeting him, would they then comprehend that it was an atavism that compelled them to invest their power and resources in reserving for themselves that which was once the unaffected state of all? Would they register a sense of loss at this or, instead, merely be affronted by this *heathen's* unsaved soul?

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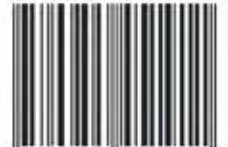
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The expansion of Stansted Airport provided an opportunity to investigate a large area of clay plateau, typical of the north-west Essex landscape. Sporadic activity from the Palaeolithic period was found but the first settlements date to the Middle Bronze Age. From the Middle Iron Age onwards, increasing settlement and population density led to the enclosure of the landscape. Farming and settlement concentrated on the more fertile river valleys and the slopes of the heavily wooded plateau.

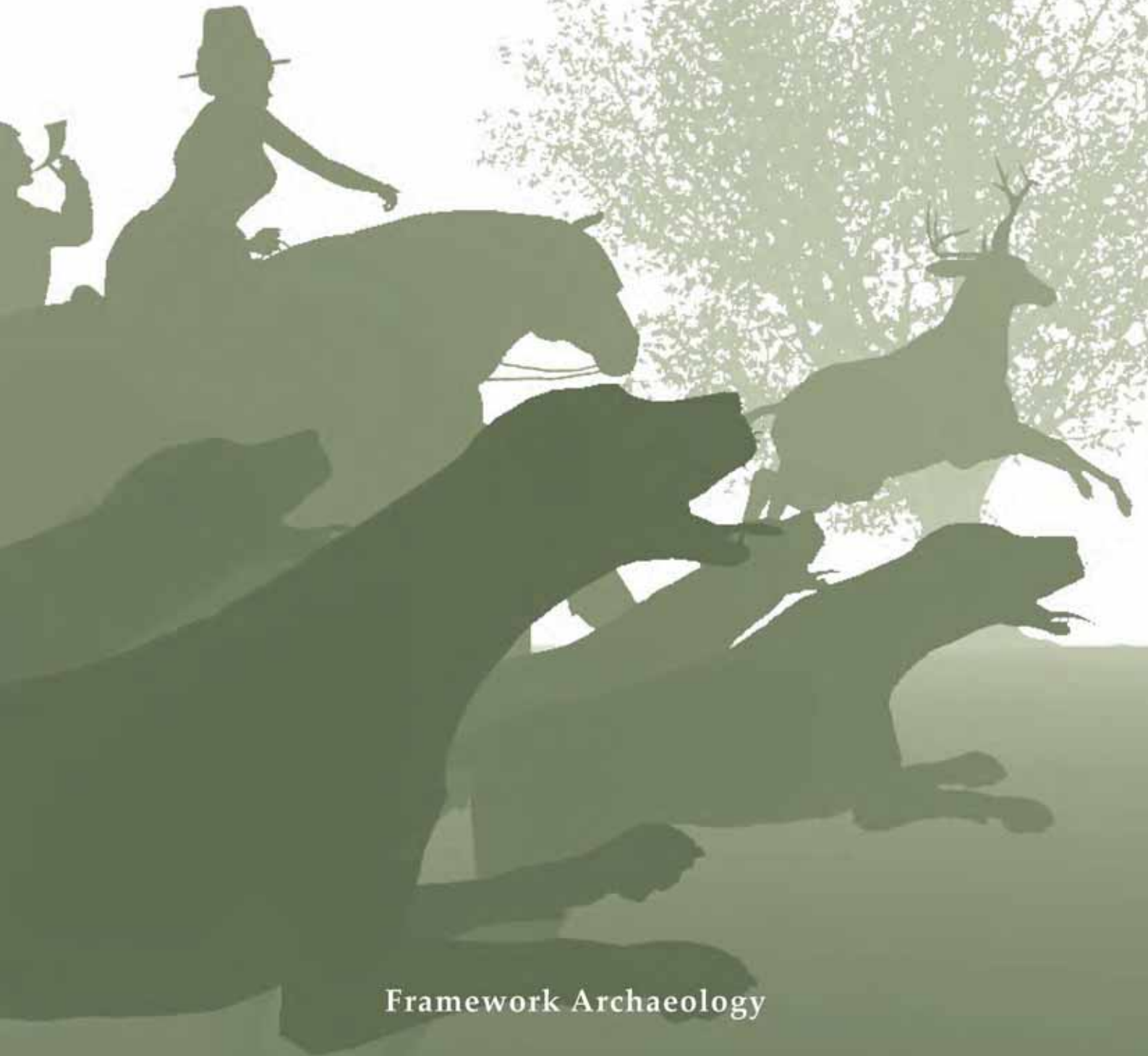
The Romano-British period saw a decline in the rural population, whilst increasing agricultural intensification led to the first systematic farming of the clay plateau. Documentary sources indicate woodland regeneration in the post-Romano-British period. Indeed, much of the history of the Saxon and medieval settlement of the area concerns the relationship between agricultural expansion and the surrounding woodland, whilst deer parks such as Stansted Park allowed landowners to demonstrate their mastery of the landscape and its wildlife.

This book, along with its accompanying CD-Rom, allows the reader to explore both broader historical themes and the minutiae of individual sites, features and finds. The results of earlier work in the area are integrated, providing a coherent historical narrative of human inhabitation.

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