An Archaeological Assessment of an Excavation Undertaken at Mr Unwin's Field, Lufton, Brympton, Somerset 2012

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Introduction

This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological excavation carried out on a piece of land known as Mr Unwin's Field, on the northern edge of the village of Lufton in Brympton Parish, Yeovil, Somerset. The National Grid Reference for the site is ST 51631 17462 (Fig 1). The excavation was carried out by Newcastle University and the South Somerset Archaeological Research Group between 23rd July 2012 and 10th August 2012.

The site is bounded to the south by Thorne Lane and by arable land to the north, east and west. It is currently under long-term pasture and is grazed by sheep. However, it has been ploughed within living memory.

The site was subjected to a geophysical (magnetometry) survey as part of a research project investigating the landscape setting of the late Roman 'Lufton Villa', located approximately 350m to the north-north-west (Caldwell and Gerrard 2013) (Fig 2). This survey identified a large number of anomalies in Mr Unwin's Field. The most significant of these were a major east-west linear and a seemingly penannular anomaly (Fig 3). The east-west linear appears to be the southern boundary of a large settlement identified by geophysical survey in the field to the north. The size of the penannular anomaly indicated that it may be a prehistoric structure or 'roundhouse'. The excavation was designed to investigate the archaeological resource in this field by evaluating preservation, identifying the stratigraphic relationship between these features and recovering dateable material culture.

Weather conditions during the course of the excavation: the first week was extremely dry making the identification of contexts difficult. However, the second and third weeks were wetter, which also brought its own problems to the excavation.

The completed archive of finds, written, drawn and photographic records currently resides at Newcastle University. In due course it will be deposited with a suitable local repository under the Site Code UNW12.

Geological Background

The site is located on a slight slope that forms one side of the valley containing the Roman villa and small watercourse known as Balls Water. The solid geology is Dyrham Formation Sandstone (British Geological Survey 2012). The site is located at 72.13m AOD.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The site sits between Ham Hill (a major prehistoric centre and multivallate hillfort) (Leivers *et al*. 2007; Sharples *et al.* 2012), Ilchester (an important Roman urban centre) (Leach 1982 and 1994), Montacute (an important late Saxon and early Norman religious and secular centre) and the late

Saxon and medieval town of Yeovil. The village of Lufton was in existence by the time of the Domesday Book.

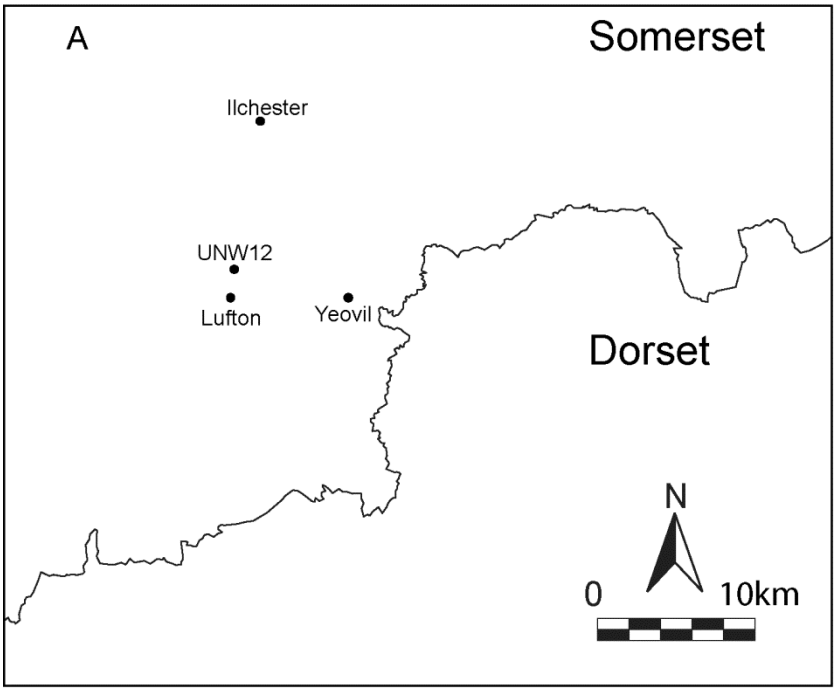

Fig 1 Site Location

Archaeological work in the area has been limited. Leonard Hayward FSA excavated the villa in the decades following World War II (SOM HER 53634). This work identified a late Roman corridor type structure with an unusual bath house, decorated with mosaics (Hayward 1952 and 1972). Evidence for 'squatter' occupation may hint that the site continued to be occupied in the post-Roman period (Gerrard 2013). Since Hayward's excavations relatively little research has been undertaken. A watching brief was carried out to the south-west following plough damage of a deserted medieval settlement known as 'Barrow' in Odcombe. This produced pottery of tenth- to fourteenth century date (Aston 1976; Pearson 1978; SOM HER54371). More recently an evaluation was carried out over a kilometre to the east of the current excavations which identified Roman field boundaries and some inhumation burials (Simmonds 2005; SOM HER 14454) in association with the Roman road running from Ilchester to Dorchester (SOM HER55102).

The current project to investigate the hinterland of the villa began with geophysical survey in 2009 and has continued, weather, crops and other factors permitting, ever since. This survey has identified a significant settlement of unknown, but probable late prehistoric / Romano-British date in the field to the north (Caldwell and Gerrard 2013; SOM HER29883).

Archaeological Methodology

Prior to the excavation taking place, the northern part of Mr Unwin's Field was resurveyed with a Bartington fluxgate gradiometer. This allowed a trench 10m x 10m to be laid out over the relevant geophysical anomalies (Fig 4). Later this trench was extended in the north-east by 4m x 5m.

The turf, topsoil and underlying deposits were excavated entirely by hand. Archaeological features were identified and recorded using the MoLAS (1994) single context recording system with individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed entered on pro-form recording sheets. All plans and sections of archaeological deposits were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans being drawn at a scale of 1:20 and the sections 1:10. The OD height of all strata were calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections. All features were given context numbers.

A level was traversed in from a bench mark located on the domestic building (previously barn) known as Lufton Byre with a value of 70.52m AOD. This enabled a TBM to be set up with a value of 71.54m AOD.

Photographs of principal features and excavation progress were taken digitally.

A total of four environmental samples were taken of the archaeological deposits in order to recover environmental information. These were processed by Nigel Harvey of GeoFlo.

In this report all contexts are shown in square brackets *ie* [12]. Small Finds are referred with 'SF' and sample numbers are enclosed thus {1}.

At the end of the excavation the trench was backfilled using a machine kindly provided by Mr James Pullen and returfed by hand.

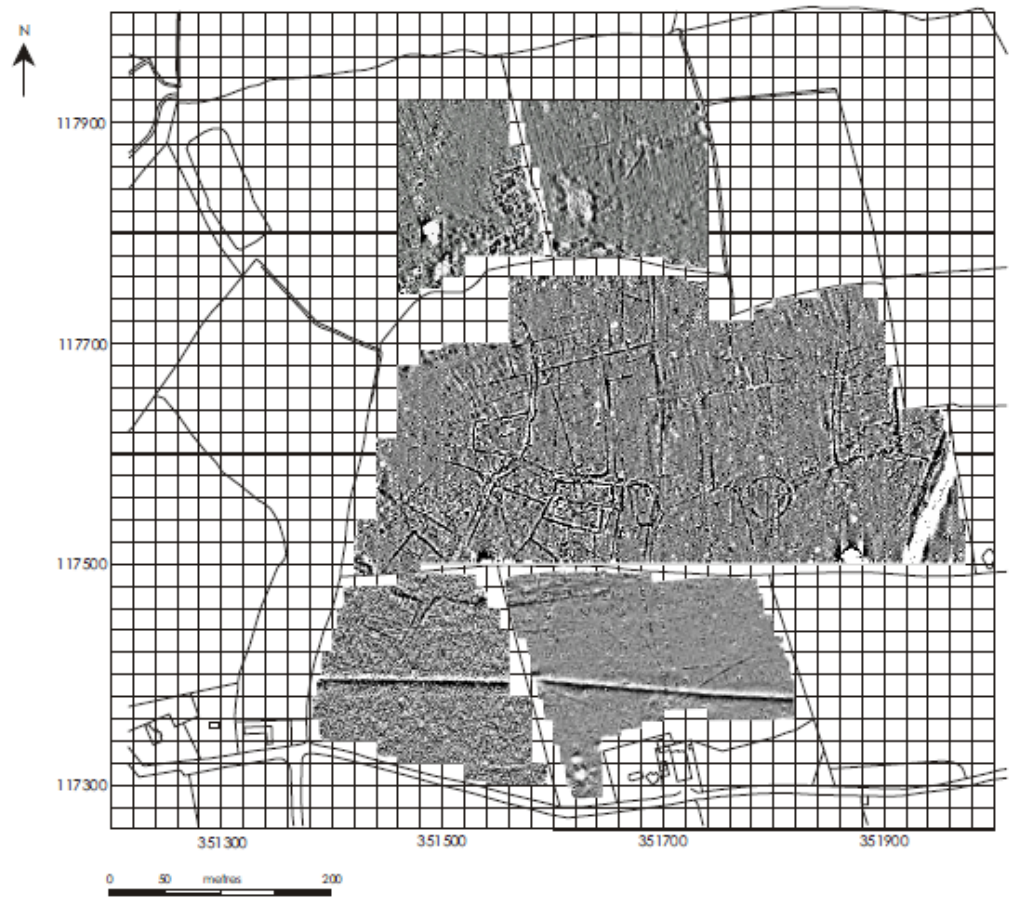

Fig 2 Magnetometry survey of Mr Unwin's Field and the surrounding landscape (from Caldwell and Gerrard 2013, Graphic 1)

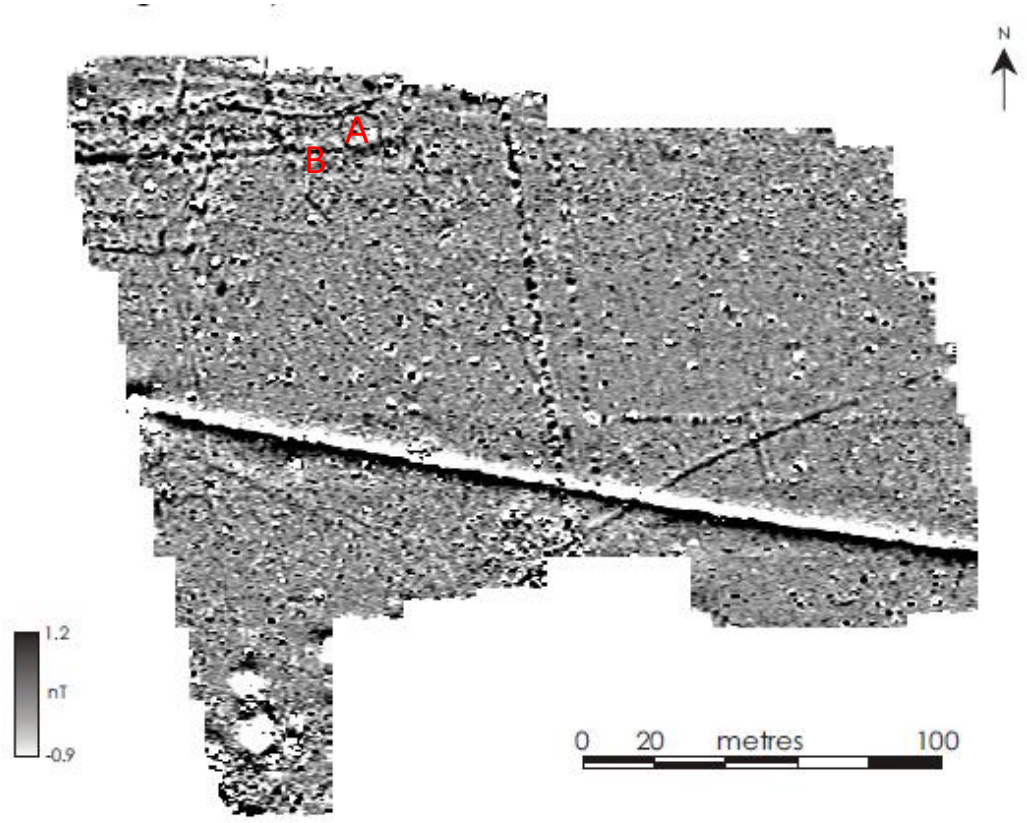

Fig 3. Magnetometry Survey of Mr Unwin's Field. The Bronze Age ring ditch is labelled A and the Iron Age Ditch (from Caldwell and Gerrard 2013, Fig 2).

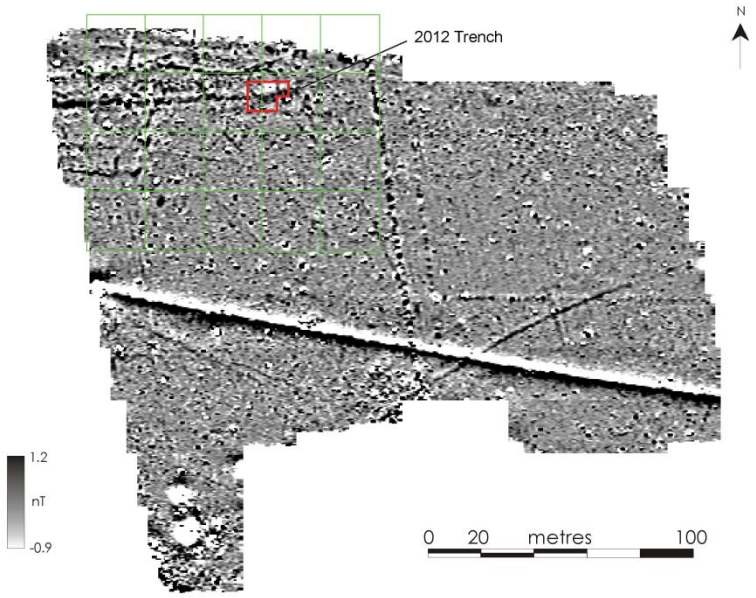

Fig 4 Geophysical Survey with excavated area (red) and grid overlaid.

Phased Archaeological Sequence

Phase 1 – Natural

The natural deposits consisted of a firm clay that varied across site from an orange colour to a bluish-grey [031] and [037]. It typically contained small pieces of iron pan and variable quantities of manganese flecks. In one particular part of the trench a small area of this natural [006] was a very dark reddish brown colour. In the hot and dry conditions of the first week it was felt that this might represent a burnt area but excavation and processing of the environmental sample {1} showed this to be a variation within the natural.

Phase 2 –Neolithic?

A small collection of flints includes some examples that might be of Neolithic date. The flint assemblage is discussed further below (Young this report). A number of Neolithic flints from a soil horizon sealed beneath the villa (SOM HER28771) also attest to activity in the area.

Phase 3 Bronze Age

The penannular anomaly identified during geophysical survey was identified as a curving gully in the western end of the trench (Figs 5, 6 and 7). This gully continued beyond the northern limit of excavation. Its return was identified in the 5m x 4m extension cut for this purpose. To the south the ring-ditch was truncated by later ditch [005/036].

The western side of the ring ditch [010] had a variable profile (Fig 8). There was no evidence for posts but a pronounced step meant that it was 0.15m deeper at its southern end. The function of this step is unknown. It may be evidence for a recut, although this was not seen in section, or it may simply be that the gully was dug deeper for some reason in this area.

The eastern element of the ring ditch [030] was had sides that varied from near vertical to concave and a flat base. No evidence for posts or recutting was identified and the gully ran from the northern edge of the trench to the line of truncation caused by ditch [036]. There was no evidence for the hypothesised 'entrance' apparently visible in the geophysics.

The fills of [010] and [030] were firm, dark greyish brown clayey silts with occasional charcoal flecks ([009] and [029]). [009] was sampled {2} for environmental finds recovery. Both [009] and [029] were sieved through a 5mm mesh for finds recovery. This produced some sherds of Early to Middle Bronze Age pottery and worked flints.

Within the groundplan of the ring ditch further features were identified (Figs 7 and 9). These include two postholes [023] and [032]. [023] was 0.6m in diameter and 0.3m deep. [032] was 0.4m diameter and 0.05m deep. Both had vertical sides and flat bases and were filled ([022] and [033]) by mid-brown clays with charcoal flecks. The fills were sieved but no finds were forthcoming. Two small, possible stakeholes were identified just east of these features [025] and [027] with grey silty clay fills [026] and [028].

Two 'spreads' of burnt material were also identified within the ring-ditch [028] and [034]. These were badly truncated by later intrusions. Samples {3} and {4} were taken for environmental analysis yielded considerable quantities of wood charcoal. Conditions were difficult (first very dry and then

very wet) but these deposits seem to have been dumps or spreads of burnt materials rather than the fills of cuts.

Beyond the ring ditch were two further features. A shallow possible posthole [015], filled by a mid brown clay [014] and an irregular cut [039] filled by a light greyish grey silty clay [038].

Discussion of Phase 3

Of the excavated features in this phase only the fills of ring-ditch [010] and [030] produced artefactual material. The remaining features may belong to this phase but this cannot be conclusively demonstrated. Stratigraphically they simply predate the Phase 5 deposit discussed below.

The ring ditch seems best explained as an eavesdrip gully, or possible wall trench for a timber roundhouse. The diameter is approximately 10.6m and thus appropriate for a structure. A barrow might be expected to be both bigger and situated in a more prominent position. It is also likely that if the feature was a barrow ring-ditch that any funerary features (such as a central grave) would have been identified within the excavated area. Here it is worth noting that careful examination of the burnt deposits [028] and [034] during excavation and the subsequent processing of their samples failed to identify any artefactual material or cremated bone.

Fig 5 The ring ditch [009]/[010] is partially exposed with ditch [005] visible in the background. Layer [003] remains in situ in the west.

Phase 4 Iron Age - ?Early Roman

The only major feature that can be assigned to Phase 4 was a large ditch running approximately east-west (Figs 6, 7 and 10) . This was ditch numbered [005] and was truncated by a series or modern intrusions. However, the line of this feature was detected in the extension to the trench where it was numbered [036]. The alignment of the ditch also shifted somewhat so that it was heading a little to the north-east [036]. Ditch [005] and its fill [004] were sectioned in three locations. The first of these was hard against the western limit of excavation. The fill of the ditch [004] was removed in very dry conditions. Given these conditions the section was extended as a box-sondage. This demonstrated that the cut had been fully excavated. In this section the ditch profile was a flattened 'U' shape with a lightly stepped profile on the southern side.

The second slot through [005] was located 1.4m east of the first. The excavation of this slot conclusively demonstrated that [005] cut the fill [009] of the earlier Bronze Age ring-ditch [010]. The profile of [005] was a flattened 'U' shape with concave sides and a pronounced step to the south. It was 0.5m deep.

The third slot across [005] was located approximately 2m east of the second. The profile of the ditch at this point was very similar to that in Slot 3: a flattened 'U' shape with concave sides and a pronounced step to the south. It was 0.55m deep.

At all three points the fill [004] appeared to be a homogenous light greyish grey silty clay. Inclusions were restricted to the occasional fleck of charcoal and occasional lumps of orange clay, which were almost certainly redeposited natural. The fill excavated from both Slots 2 and 3 was screened through a 5mm mesh. This aided in the recovery of finds which included some Early Bronze Age pottery and worked flints. However, the fill [004] also contained fresh body sherds in the distinctive quartz tempered Late Iron Age fabric. These seem to have mainly been derived from the upper fill of the ditch. It thus seems likely that the ditch was dug in the Iron Age and truncated the Bronze Age ring-ditch. The ditch may have stayed open until the Late Iron Age or even into the very early (first century) Roman period.

The line of the ditch [036] was picked up in the extension to the trench. Here the ditch was heading in a more north-easterly direction. It is possible that this deviation in alignment was caused by the Bronze Age features. Perhaps the digging conditions were a little easier or ring ditch was visible as a slight earthwork that encouraged the Iron Age ditch diggers to follow its course. The fill [035] was a similar light grey silty clay. In an attempt to increase the number of finds from this feature the entire length of [036] was excavated. This yielded further Bronze Age sherds and Late Iron Age pottery. It was also clear that [035] truncated the fill [029] of ring-ditch [030].

<u>Discussion of Phase 4</u>

The linear anomaly identified on the geophysical survey as a large east-west ditch was identified as a significant feature by the excavation. It is likely to have formed a property, or field boundary and may have defined the limits of the extensive settlement identified using geophysical survey in the field to the north.

There is no clear evidence for recutting and it would appear that the ditch had nearly silted up by the end of the Iron Age or the Early Roman period when a few sherds of pottery were deposited in it.

Fig 6 End of excavation photograph. The three slots across ditch [005] are visible in the southern part of the trench.

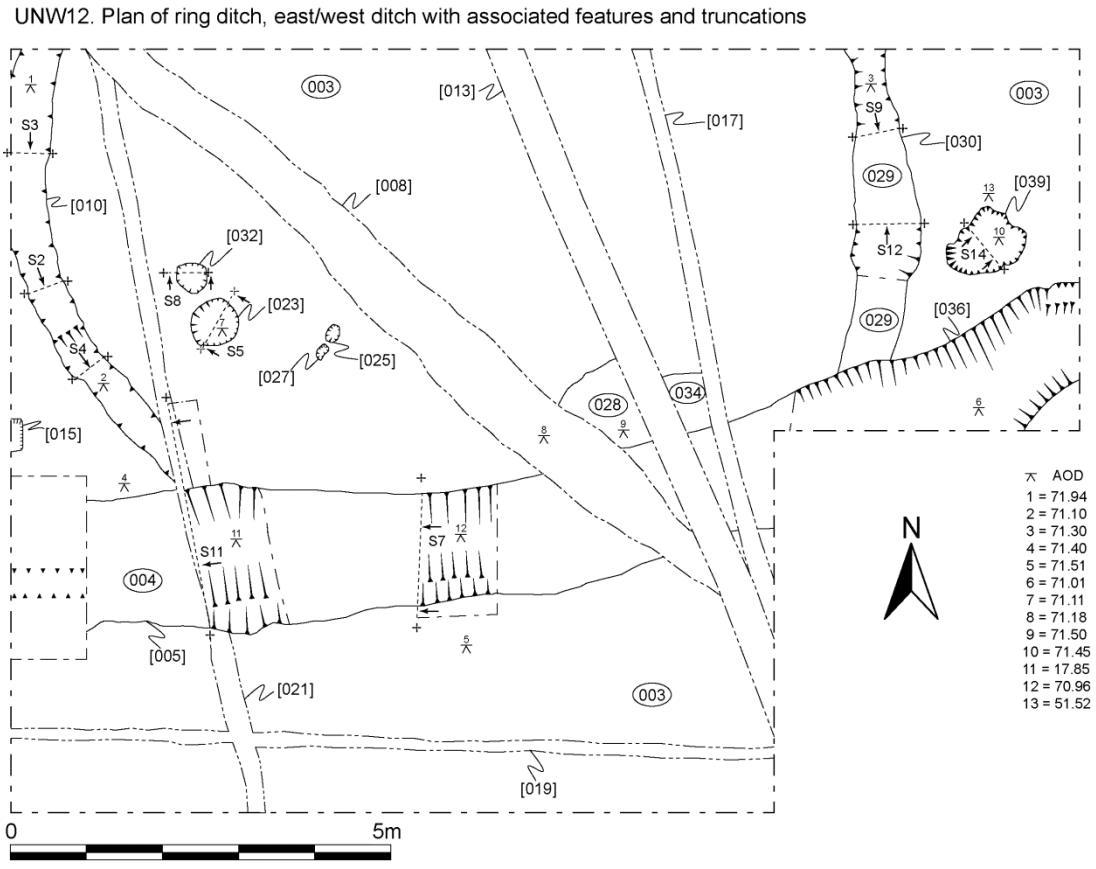

Fig 7 Plan of the excavated features.

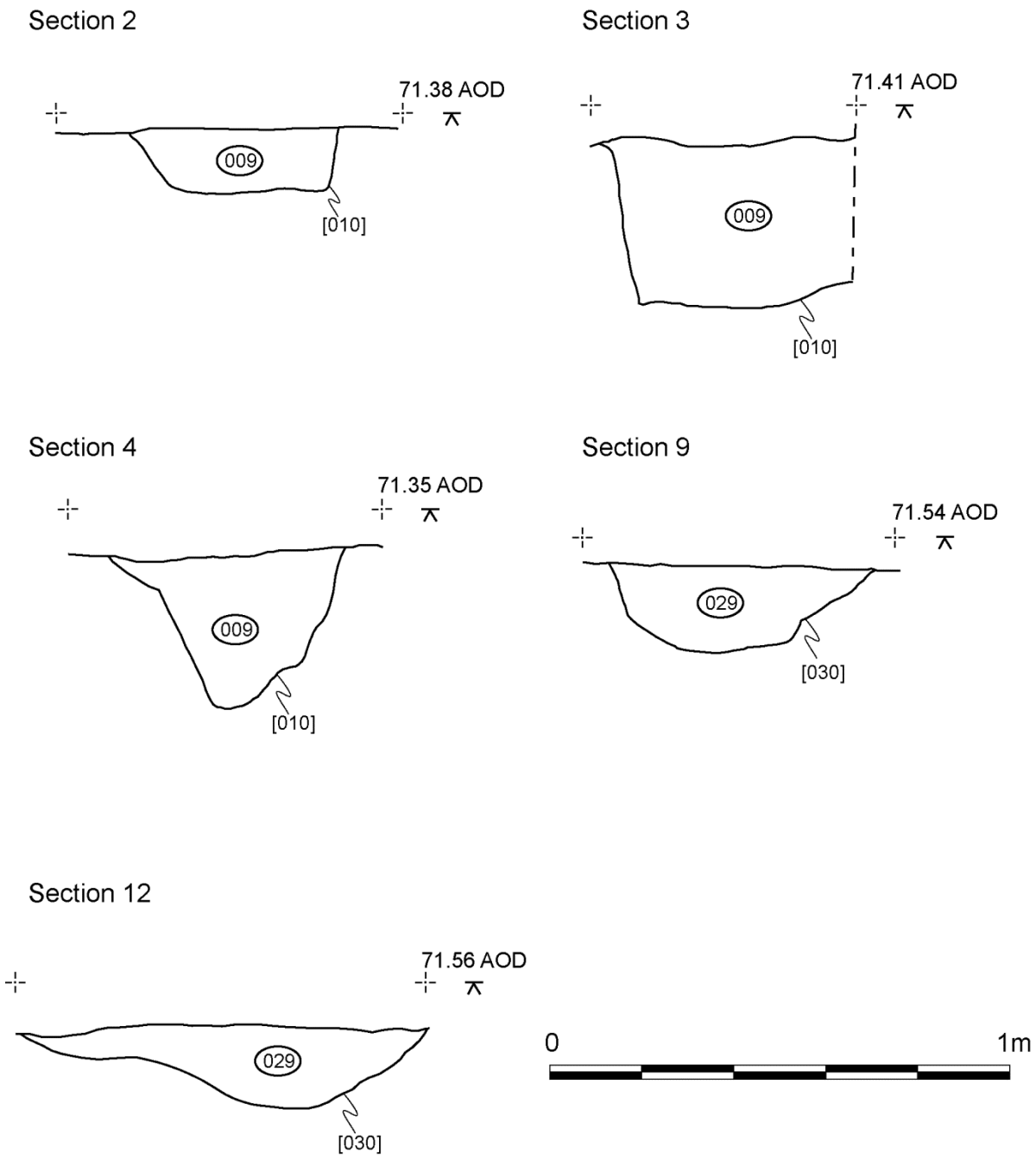

Fig 8 Sections across Bronze Age Ring Ditch [010] and [030].

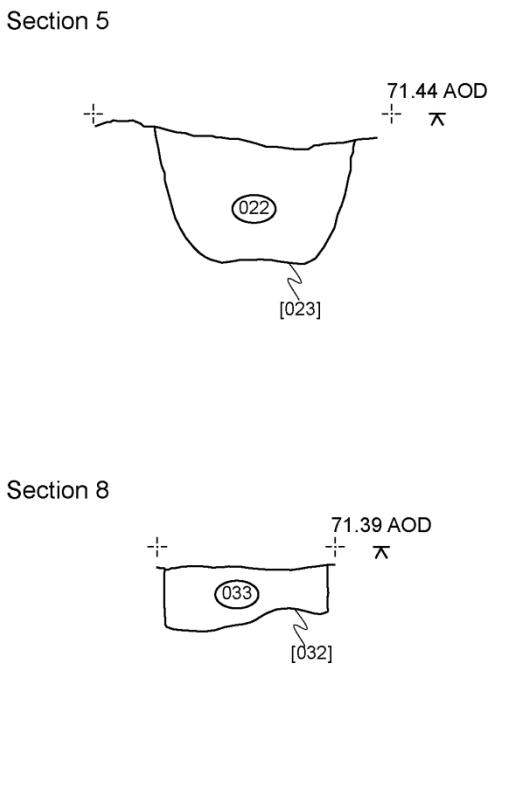

Fig 9 Sections across various cut features.

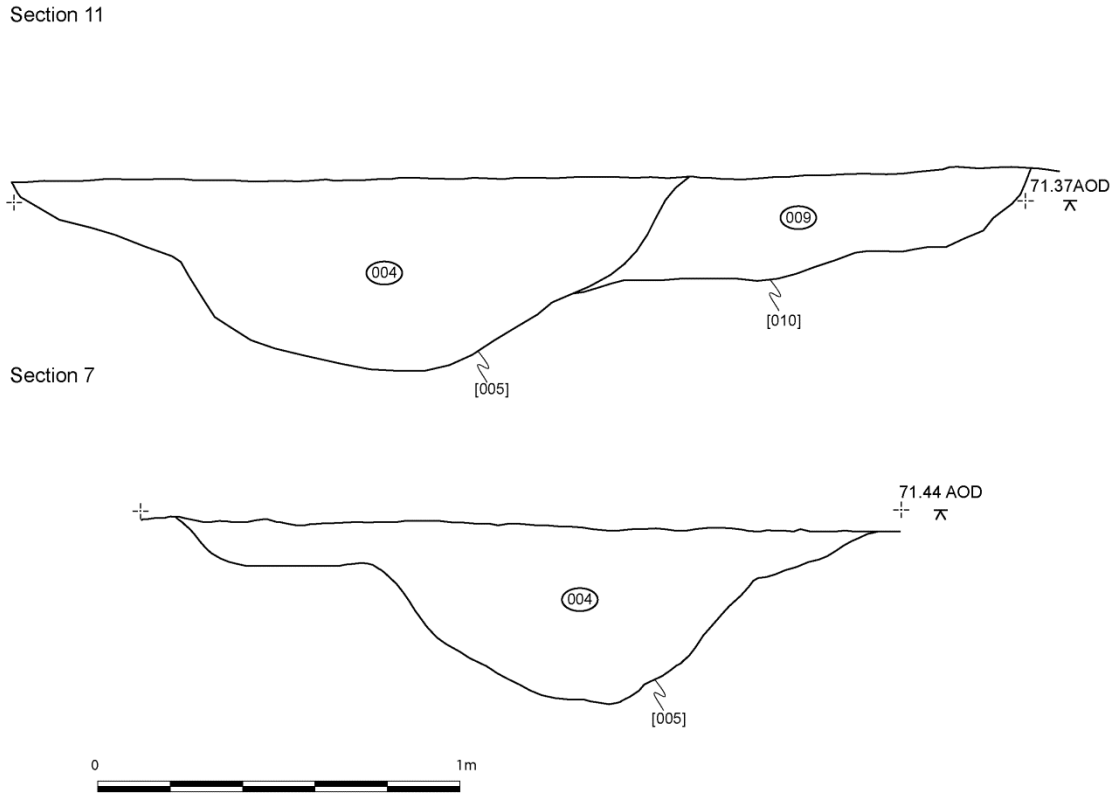

Fig 10 Sections across the Iron Age ditch

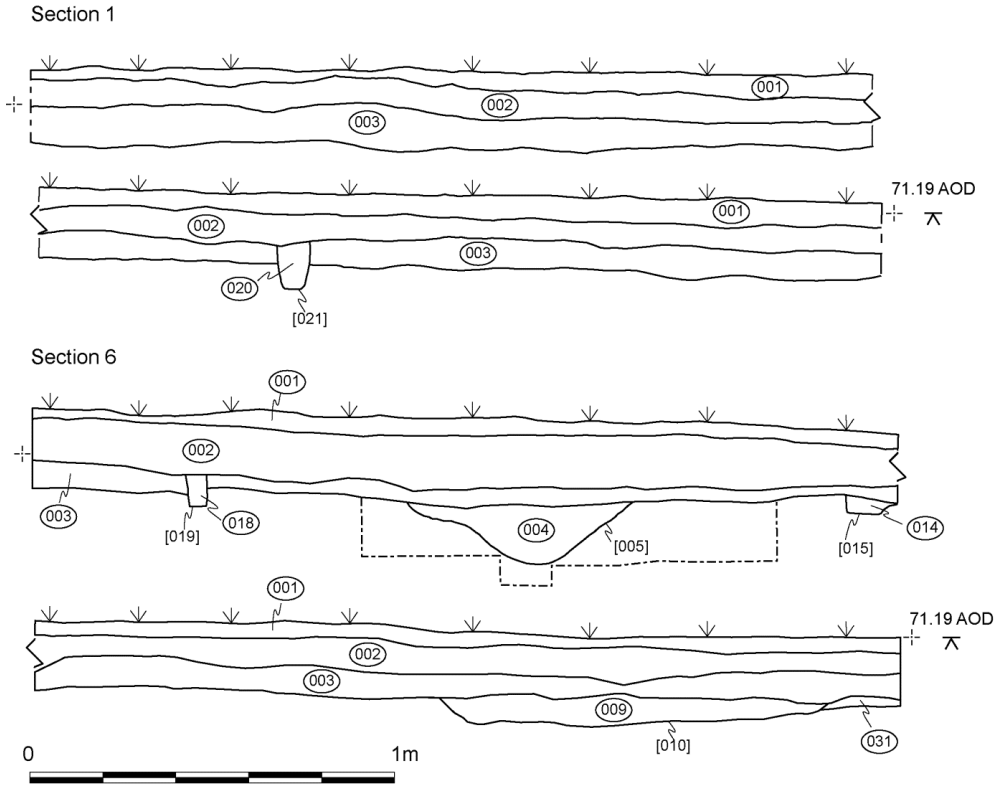

Fig 11 Section 1: Southern Limit of Excavation (N. Facing). Section 6 Western Limit of Excavation (E. Facing).

Phase 5 Roman – Post-Medieval

All of the Phase 3 and 4 features were sealed by a deposit of dark yellowish brown clayey silt [003] approximately 0.2m thick (Fig 11). This layer produced a mixed but small assemblage of Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval ceramics. However, the dry conditions during the first week of excavation meant that identifying features cut through this deposit was very difficult. On its removal and following rain it was apparent from the sections that a number of recent truncations (se Phase 6 below) had penetrated this layer to the subsoil below. It is thus likely that the recent ceramics were introduced by this process.

Layer [003] was noticeable for producing a small and reasonably fresh assemblage of late Roman pottery. This included a sherd of New Forest Colour Coated ware and a rim sherd from a SEDBB1 Type 25 beaded-and-flanged bowl. It is thus possible that this deposit is of Roman date. Its formation is a matter for debate. It may be the remnants of a Roman period ploughsoil, or an episode of sedimentation over a long period of time.

Phase 6 Post-Medieval to Modern

Phase 5 layer [003] cut by three linear features [017], [019], [021] and [008] that formed an 'H' shape. These were narrow cuts 0.2m wide and vertically sided with a flat base. They were filled with light brown silty clays and in places lumps of orange, redeposited natural clay [016], [018], [020]. The function of these features is a mystery. If they contained pipes then they would clearly be modern drainage features. However, the absence of pipes and their regularity suggests that they were machine cut in some way. It seems likely that they are the result of an agricultural process like subsoiling.

In the eastern part of the trench a large vertically sided linear, 0.6m wide x 0.4m deep, with a flat base ran diagonally across the excavated area on a south-east-north-west alignment [008]. The fill of this feature [007] produced industrially made modern ceramics and its form suggests that it was cut by a machine. It shares its approximate alignment with linear [013], which was found on excavation to contain [012] – a modern plastic pipe serving as a septic tank overflow for the occupied house (constructed in the 1980s: Mr Unwin *pers. comm.*). It may be that [008] was an abortive precursor to [013]

The fills of these linears were sealed by modern ploughsoil [002], which was 0.2m-0.3m thick and contained SF2 - a late medieval jetton. This was overlain by a modern turfline [001] approximately 0.1m thick (Fig 11).

General Discussion

The excavations had the following aims:

1. To confirm the veracity of the geophysical survey.
2. To establish the relationship between anomalies visible in the geophysics.
3. To recover dating evidence that would enable the geophysical anomalies in Mr Unwin's Field (and beyond) to be placed within a chronological framework.
4. To train Newcastle University Undergraduate Students.
5. To build links with our local community partners in Brympton and SSARG.

The excavations were completely successful in demonstrating that the geophysical survey accurately represented the subterranean archaeology. The major features were visible in the geophysics and their relationship and date was determined by excavation and associated finds. Other smaller features were also identified.

The identification of what appears to be an Early to Middle Bronze Age structure is a significant achievement. Relatively few such structures are known outside of hilltop contexts in southern Somerset (Webster 2007, 118) and this discovery adds to the scattered evidence for Bronze Age activity in the environs of Yeovil.

The later ditch (which contained a small quantity of Late Iron Age pottery) appears to be the southern boundary of a large settlement identified by geophysical surveys in the fields to the west and north. The pottery from the upper fills of this feature may suggest that it was dug in the Iron Age. If this conclusion is more widely applicable to other enclosures visible on the geophysical survey then the late Roman villa at Lufton may have been preceded by a significant late prehistoric settlement. The location of that settlement, juxtaposed between the hillfort at Ham Hill and the large Iron Age enclosure and Roman town at Ilchester, is of more than passing interest. Clearly it would be useful to explore more of this and related features in Mr Unwin's Field and the surrounding landscape.

There was relatively little of Roman period activity. However, it is noticeable that the small quantity of pottery recovered is late Roman in date. This suggests that there is late Roman activity in the vicinity and this is likely to be linked to the exploitation of the landscape and the development of the villa building.

The excavations succeeded in training six Newcastle University students and a number of local volunteers in single context recording and archaeological field techniques.

Finally, the project demonstrated the strength of support in the local community. At the open day approximately 150 visitors attended the excavation and another 30 listened to the public talk. Excellent links were made with SSARG, local landowners and the parish council.

Assessment of the Prehistoric Lithics Assemblage

Dr Rob Young

A small group (22 pieces) of prehistoric worked stone were submitted for analysis. These are catalogued below.

Of the waste flakes, one primary flake, 4 secondary flakes and 7 inner flakes were recorded. The lack of cores from the site might suggest that all of the flint material had arrived in its finished form or that it represents the end process of knapping at the site, with the cores having been removed elsewhere. The latter view might be supported by the presence of two core trimming flakes, removed to refresh core striking platforms, within the assemblage.

In terms of knapping technology, six pieces exhibit plain butts and two retain cortical butts, five exhibit pronounced bulbs of percussion and three retain diffuse bulbs. This would suggest that both hard and soft hammer technology had been applied in the manufacture of the assemblage.

General Discussion

In general the assemblage appears fresh and the soft chalky cortex present on some pieces suggests that some of the flint was obtained from a local chalk source. Three pieces retain hard 'pebble' like cortex which suggests some rolling/water movement and that these pieces may have come from either a river gravel or beach source.

As can be seen from the catalogue descriptions several pieces exhibit edge damage and some light 'notching' that is not normally associated with utilisation or intentional retouch. It is suggested here that these pieces may have been damaged by the action of modern/recent ploughing across the site.

In terms of diagnostic artefacts, only two pieces show any broad chrono-typological affiliations. The two scrapers Cat. Nos. 3 and 19, (Fig 12), would not be out of place in an assemblage of broadly Neolithic/Bronze age date.

Context	Number
001	3
002	9
003	6
004	2
009	1
029	1
TOTAL	22

Table 1 Distribution of flint by context

Raw Material Type	Number
Grey Translucent Flint	2
Red/grey quartz flint	1
Various shades of grey opaque flint	16
Fawn/brown flint	2
Grey/fawn cherty	1

flint	
TOTAL	22

Table 2 Lithics and raw material types

Cortex type	**Number**
Soft chalky cream/white cortex	8
Hard fawn/ cream chalk cortex	2
Hard creamy white, pitted and rolled 'pebble' cortex.	1
TOTAL	11

Table 3 Lithics: Pieces retaining cortex

Typology	**Number**
Scrapers	2
Blade segments	1
Bladelets	1
Core Trimming Flakes	2
Miscellaneous retouched pieces	1
Waste flakes	12
Chips	2
Chunks	1
TOTAL	22

Table 4 Lithics: Artefact typology

CATALOGUE

CONTEXT [001]

1) Grey translucent secondary flint flake, plain butt and pronounced bulb of percussion. Hinge fracture present at distal end. Retains a patch of soft cream/white chalky cortex on right edge dorsal face. Max dimensions 35mm x 29mm x 6 mm. Exhibits steep fine retouch on left edge and some retouch across the distal end hinge fracture (Fig 12)

2) Small, squat inner flake, broken irregularly and transversely to long axis at bulbar end. Broken obliquely at distal end. Max. dimensions: 19mm x 13mm x 5mm.

3) Heavy, thick, squat end scraper on distal end of a grey mottled secondary flake retaining hard red/grey pebble cortex on dorsal face. Steep but crude retouch around distal end and on left and right edges, dorsal face. Broken transversely at bulbar end. Also exhibits shallow flake removals on bulbar face – some light hinge fracturing and small flake removals visible on bulbar face, removed from snapped edge at broken bulbar face. Max. dimensions: 28mm x 33mm x 13mm. (Fig 12)

CONTEXT [002]

4) Fawn/brown secondary flake, diffuse bulb and cortical butt. Retains soft, chalky cream/white cortex on right edge, dorsal face. Slight hinge fracture visible at distal end. Left edge, bulbar face exhibits a shallow notch and left edge also shows slight edge damage ? plough damage. Max. dimensions: 30mm x 18mm x 8mm.

5) Grey fawn cherty inner flint flake/blade segment. Broken irregularly at both ends. Max dimensions: 18mm x 20mm x 5mm.

6) Dark grey inner flake from core trimming. Struck at right angles to striking platform to remove platform edge, which exhibits scars from previous flake removals. Broken transversely at bulbar end and exhibiting hinge fracture at distal end. Dorsal face of the original core has seen a flake removed after the platform itself had ceased to function and before the core trimming flake had been removed. Some ? plough damage also visible on edges. Max. dimensions: 32 x 13 x 10.

7) Irregular grey/white ? recorticated, flint chip retaining hard, rolled grey/brown pebble cortex. Angular notch at one end ? from plough damage. Max. dimensions 25mm x 15mm x 7mm.

8) Fawn brown inner flake. Plain butt, pronounced bulb. Max. dimensions: 18mm x 17mm x 6mm.

9) Dark grey secondary flake broken transversely at both ends. Retains creamy white chalky cortex on left edge, dorsal face. Max. dimensions: 14mm x 25mm x 6mm.

10) Dark grey inner flake, broken transversely at bulbar end, hinge fracture at distal end. Light notching ? from plough damage, on right edge. Max. dimensions: 18mm x 21mm 5mm.

11) Dark grey bladelet, broken transversely at distal end. Small, plain butt, pronounced bulb and bulbar scar. Both edges exhibit light notching ? from plough damage. Max. dimensions: 20mm x 12mm x 4mm.

12) Irregular light grey tabular flake with hard fawn ? pebble cortex inclusions in flint matrix. Max. dimensions: 32mm x 30mm x 10mm.

CONTEXT [003]

13) Fawn grey inner flake. Plain butt, pronounced bulb. Both edges exhibit light damage ? from ploughing. Max dimensions: 16mm x 9mm x 2mm.

14) Cherty grey mottled inner flake, plain butt, diffuse bulb. Sharp fine edges exhibit some damage from ploughing Max. dimensions: 32mm x 23mm x 8mm.

15) Translucent grey, secondary flake. Snapped transversely at distal end and also broken obliquely to long axis on right edge and across distal end. Retains creamy white chalky cortex on dorsal face, right edge and at distal end. Max. dimensions: 20mm x 19mm x 4mm.

16) Thick grey secondary flake, cortical butt and pronounced bulb. Exhibits creamy cortical inclusions in flint matrix on right edge and retains a patch of creamy white chalky cortex on dorsal face, across distal end Max. dimensions: 35mm x 41mm x 10mm.

17) ?Water rolled fawn grey flint chunk. Part of flint pebble with some crude flakes removed ? tested pebble. 'Unstruck' faces are all hard, rolled creamy white, pitted, pebble cortex. Max. dimensions: 38mm x 36mm x 24mm.

18) Translucent reddy/grey quartz flint. Inner flake with plain butt and pronounced bulb. Irregular plough damage across distal end. Max. dimensions: 31mm x 29mm x 9mm.

CONTEXT [004]

19) Thick, heavy side and end scraper, on a grey mottled inner flake. Broken transversely at bulbar end. Exhibits steep and heavy retouch at distal end and on both edges. Also retouched across distal end break. Max. dimensions: 49mm x 38mm x 17mm (Fig. 12).

20) Dark grey mottled primary flake. Irregularly shattered ? by plough action at bulbar end. Hinge fracture at distal end. Dorsal face completely covered by fawn creamy grey chalk cortex.

CONTEXT [009]

21) ? Core tablet from core rejuvenation. Struck in same plane as striking platform to remove platform surface and part of platform edge. Irregularly shattered at bulbar end. Max. dimensions: 36mm x 19mm x 12mm

CONTEXT [029]

22) Irregular dark grey chip with creamy/white soft chalky cortex inclusions. Max. dimensions: 18mm x 15mm x 5mm

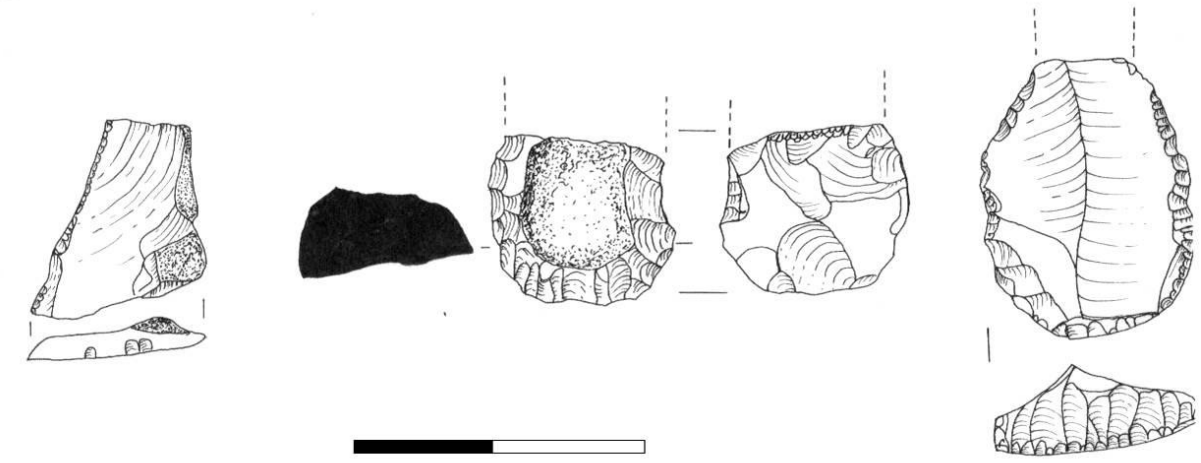

Fig 12 Illustrated worked flints (Rob Young). From Left to Right Catalogue Numbers 1, 3 and 19 (scale 10cm).

Assessment of the Pottery

Dr James Gerrard

The excavations produced 57 sherds of pottery (280g) that ranged in date from the Early / Middle Bronze Age up until the post-Medieval period.

The Early to Middle Bronze Age Pottery

Fifteen sherds (36g) of soft, black, orange pottery were recovered from [004], [009], [029] and [037]. This material displayed a variety of inclusions including quartz, grog and occasional organics. The assemblage was shown to Drs Richard Tabor and Clare Randall who confirmed (*pers. comm*.) that it was probably of Early to Middle Bronze Age date.

There are relatively few published pottery assemblages of this date from southern Somerset. The Lufton assemblage can be compared in broad terms with that excavated at Ilchester (Leech 1982) and Cadbury Castle (Barrett *et al*. 2000). The current work by Cambridge University at Ham Hill may remedy the lack of a local prehistoric ceramics sequence.

Context	Sherd Count	Weight (g)
[004]	1	4
[009]	1	4
[029]	12	19
[037]	1	9
Total	15	36

Table 5 Distribution of E-MBA Pottery

Late Iron Age Pottery

The excavations produced 18 sherds (58g) of black quartz tempered pottery. This material is typical of the Late Iron Age and very early Roman ceramics in the region and is a forerunner of Roman period BB1. Most of the pottery came from the fills [004] and [035] of the east-west ditch [005]/[036] and included fresh base sherds. Some of the fragments from layer [003] were also recovered from over ditch fill [004] and were probably derived from this fill.

Context	Sherd Count	Weight (g)
[002]	3	10
[003]	7	10
[004]	3	26
[035]	5	12
Total	18	58

Table 6 Distribution of LIA pottery

The Romano-British pottery

The excavations produced a mere five sherds of Romano-British pottery. Three of these were fragments of BB1 (including a Wessex Archaeology Type 25 bowl of late Roman date) and the remaining two sherds were fragments of late Roman New Forest Colour Coated ware.

All of the pottery came from layers [002] and [003]. These deposits were excavated in very dry conditions and were cut through by a number of recent features. It is thus possible that layer [3] may be of Roman date despite it also producing ?intrusive post-Roman pottery. All of the Romano-British pottery was of late Roman date and might be associated with the exploitation of the landscape by the villa and its community.

Context	Sherd Count	Weight (g)	Fabric
[002]	1	4	NFCC
[003]	1	2	NFCC
[003]	3	44	BB1
Total	5	50	

Table 7 Distribution of Romano-British Pottery

Post-Roman Pottery

Twelve sherds (99g) of post-Roman pottery were identified. This included two medieval sherds and four seventeenth- or eighteenth-century sherds that might be from the Donyatt kilns. The remaining material was all industrially manufactured ceramics of nineteenth- or twentieth-century date. This material was concentrated in layers [001], [002] and [003] and also in the fill [007] of modern cut [008]

Context	SC	Weight (g)	Fabric
[002]	2	7	MED
[001]	2	11	PMED
[003]	2	19	PMED
[001]	1	1	C19/C20
[002]	1	3	C19/C20
[002]	1	40	C19/C20
[007]	1	7	C19-C20
[007]	1	1	C19-C20
[+]	1	10	C19-C20
TOTAL	12	99	

Table 8 The distribution of post-Roman pottery by context.

Discussion

The pottery is of little value beyond its role as dating evidence. The Bronze Age material is the most important and worthy of further study should a publication be prepared.

Assessment of the Small Finds

Dr James Gerrard

The excavations produced a small number of small finds. The series SF1-6 are finds from the excavated area. The most noteworthy of these is a badly worn late medieval or early post-medieval jetton SF2. It bears a coat of arms (perhaps a lion rampant) within a quadrilobate design. The reverse contains four fleur-de-lis within a lozenge. A search of the PAS database has not yielded an exact parallel for this jetton.

The remaining finds (SF1000-1021) were all recovered by metal detecting the field. There is little of interest amongst the assemblage. The only exception is a late medieval buckle SF1020 (Whitehead 2003, No 91). All of the metal detector finds are typical of casual losses on agricultural land. A plan detailing the locations of the finds is available in the site archive.

It may also be noted that the landowner has allowed intensive metal-detecting of the field by the local metal-detecting club. They apparently reported finding 'nothing of note' (Mr N. Unwin pers. comm.).

SF	Context	Description	Date
1	[001]	Stone whetstone	PMED
2	[002]	Cu jetton	LMED
3	[002]	Lead obj	
4	[003]	Clay tobacco pipe fragment	PMED
5	[004]	Burnt clay	
6	[003]	Black Burnished bowl fragment	Late Roman
1000	MD +	Cu strip	
1001	MD +	Cu ring	PMED
1002	MD +	Cu Spectacle buckle	L-PMED
1003	MD +		
1004	MD +	Pb waste	
1005	MD +	Cu Penny Elizabeth II	C20
1006	MD +	Cu Button	C19-C20
1007	MD +	Cu buckle or link	C19-C20
1008	MD +	Pb amorphous lump	
1009	MD +	Pb strip	
1010	MD +	Pb strip	
1011	MD +	Cu large D shaped buckle	PMED
1012	MD +	Cu Thimble	PMED

1013	MD +	Pb waste	
1014	MD +	PB sheet with rivet hole	
1015	MD +	Pb sheet	
1016	MD +	Pb waste	
1017	MD +	Pb waste	
1018	MD +	Pb waste	
1019	MD +	PB conical weight	PMED
1020	MD +	Cu single looped buckle	LMED
1021	MD +	Cu, oval with an equestrian figure in relief on one side and a badly worn crowned monogram on the reverse	PMED

Table 9 Catalogue of the Small Finds

Environmental Samples

Liz Caldwell and James Gerrard

Four environmental samples were taken. These were processed by GeoFlo and await analysis as part of the wider programme of post-excavation work.

Standard flotation methodology:

Pre-soaked samples of known and recorded weight are processed by standard flotation methods. Samples are gently agitated by hand thus enabling a controlled and constantly monitored process, minimizing breakage of fragile material. No chemicals or mechanical agitation of the water is used. Flots are retained on a 0.25mm mesh and residues on a 1mm mesh. Flots and residues are dried in preparation for fractionation and sorting.

Sample Number	Context	Description
{1}	[006]	Geological
{2}	[009]	Fill of ring ditch [010]
{3}	[028]	Charcoal deposit
{4}	[034]	Charcoal deposit

Table 10 Environmental samples

Acknowledgments

All archaeological fieldwork depends on the kindness and support of many different individuals and institutions. The 2012 season was primarily funded by a grant from the HASS Faculty Research Fund at Newcastle University and we gratefully acknowledge this financial assistance. Mr and Mrs Unwin invited us on to their land and extended every kindness to us. Jamie and Carol Pullen kindly provided a machine to assist with backfilling, for which I and the rest of the team were very grateful! Paul provided a water bowser during the dry period. Thanks also go to Liz Glaisher at Brympton Parish Council and the local residents of Lufton, who were incredibly helpful and supportive.

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Andrew Agate produced the illustrations for this report.

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Appendix A: Context Register

Context	Type	Trench	Date	Name	Comments
001	DEPOSIT		23/07/2012	JFG	TURF LINE
002	DEPOSIT		23/07/2012	JFG	TOP/PLOUGH SOIL
003	DEPOSIT		26/07/2012	JFG	LAYER BELOW [002]
004	DEPOSIT		26/07/2012	JFG	FILL OF DITCH [005]
005	CUT		26/07/2012	JFG	E-W DITCH CUT
006	DEPOSIT		30/07/2012	JFG	BURNT ORANGE PATCH
007	FILL/DEP		30/07/2012	JFG	FILL OF MODERN TRUNCATION [008]
008	CUT		30/07/2012	JFG	CUT OF MODERN TRUNCATION
009	FILL/DEP		30/07/2012	JFG	FILL OF EAVES DRIP [010]
010	CUT		31/07/2012	JFG	DRIP GULLY FOR IA ROUNDHOUSE
011	FILL/DEP		31/07/2012	JFG	FILL OF PIPE TRENCH [013]
012	DEPOSIT		31/07/2012	JFG	CERAMIC PIPE
013	CUT		31/07/2012	JFG	CUT OF PIPE TRENCH
014	DEPOSIT		31/07/2012	AKA	FILL OF [015] UNDATED
015	CUT		31/07/2012	AKA	CUT UNDATED
016	DEPOSIT		31/07/2012	JFG	FILL OF E N-S FIELD DRAIN [07]
017	CUT		31/07/2012	JFG	CUT OF E N-S FIELD DRAIN
018	DEPOSIT		01/08/2012	ES	FILL OF [019] E-W LINEAR
019	CUT		01/08/2012	ES	CUT OF E-W LINEAR
020	DEPOSIT		01/08/2012	ES	FILL OF [021]
021	CUT		01/08/2012	ES	CUT OF N-S LINEAR
022	DEPOSIT		01/08/2012	AKA	FILL OF [023]
023	CUT		01/08/2012	AKA	CUT OF POST HOLE (?)
024	DEPOSIT		02/08/2012	JFG	FILL OF STAKE HOLE [025]
025	CUT		02/08/2012	JFG	CUT OF STAKEHOLE
026	DEPOSIT		02/08/2012	JFG	FILL OF STAKEHOLE [027]
027	CUT		02/08/2012	JFG	CUT OF STAKEHOLE
028	DEPOSIT		03/08/2012	JFG	ASHY SPREAD
029	DEPOSIT		03/08/2012	JFG	FILL OF RING DITCH (EXTENSION)
030	CUT		03/08/2012	JFG	CUT OF RING DITCH (EXTENSION)
031	DEPOSIT		03/08/2012	JFG	NATURAL
032	CUT		06/08/2012	AKA	CUT OF POST HOLE (?)
033	DEPOSIT		06/08/2012	AKA	FILL OF [32]
034	DEPOSIT		06/08/2012	EP	ASHY SPREAD (?=[28]
035	FILL/DEP		06/08/2012	EP	FILL OF LINEAR DITCH [036]
036	CUT		06/08/2012	EP	CUT OF LINEAR DITCH
037	DEPOSIT		07/08/2012	EP	LOWER DITCH FILL [036]
038	DEPOSIT		08/08/2012	JFG	FILL OF [39]
039	CUT		08/08/2012	JFG	CUT OF PIT IN EXTENSION

Appendix B: Section Register

Number	sheets	Datum	Scale	comments
S1	1-4	71.9	1:10	North facing section of L.O.E
S2		71.38	1:10	North facing section of [009]
S3		71.41	1:10	North facing section of [010]
S4		71.35	1:10	North West facing section of [010]
S5		71.44	1:10	South East facing section of [023]
S6	1-4	71.19	1:10	East facing section of L.O.E
S7		71.45	1:10	West facing section of [003] showing [004]
S8		71.39	1:10	South facing section of [042]
S9		71.28	1:10	North facing section of [030]
S10	1-6	71.29	1:10	South facing section of L.O.E
S11		71.37	1:10	East facing section of [005] and [010]
S12		71.56	1:10	South facing section of [030]
S13		71.88	1:10	West facing section of [L.O.E]
S14		71.51	1:10	South West facing section of [039]
S15		71.8	1:10	West facing section of L.O.E
S16		71.89	1:10	North facing section of L..E in extension

Appendix C: Photographic Register

Shot	Description	Facing
1	Trench being opened by hand	SW
2	[002] being removed by hand	W
3	[002] almost completely removed	SW
4	Sondage through [003] and slot across [004]/[005]	W
5	Sondage through [003], section across [005] and [009]/[010] pre-excavation	N
6	E Facing LOE, Section across [004]/[005]	W
7	[009]/[010] pre-excavation	S
8	Removal of [003] by hand	SE
9	Removing the remnants of [003] in dry conditions	W
10	[003] largely removed. Dry conditions make feature definition difficult	W
11	Orange natural [006]	N
12	Box Section across [005]	W
13	Heavy rain aids in feature definition. Remnants of [003] in situ	W
14	Phase 6 truncations partially excavated and [010] and [005] pre-excavation	E
15	Phase 6 truncations partially excavated and [010] and [005] pre-excavation	ESE
16	Phase 6 truncations partially excavated and [010] and [005] pre-	SE

	excavation	
17	The junction of [005] amd [010], pre-excavation	NW
18	Phase 6 'subsoiling' features excavated	S
19	Posthole	E
20	Posthole	N
21	Stakeholes	W
22	Section across junction of [005] and [010]	W
23	Posthole	N
24	Posthole	N
25	E Slot across [005]	W
26	E Slot across [005]	W
27	General shot, End of Ex	E
28	N facing LOE ext, Ditch [036]	S
29	Ring ditch [030] and ditch [036] end of excavation	N
30	[005] end of excavation	W
31	Phase 6 truncations end of excavation	NW
32	Backfilling	SE
33	Backfilled and returfed	SE

Appendix D: Stratigraphic Matrix