

# Bridge Farm: 2011-21

## The excavation of a Romano-British riverside settlement

David H Millum

**CAP**

CULVER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT



**An interim summary of the excavation and interpretation  
of the Romano-British river-side settlement at  
Bridge Farm, Wellingham, Lewes, East Sussex  
From 2011 and 2021**

**by David H Millum, MCI(A), MA, BA Hons.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This Excavation Diary, updated at the end of 2021, is aimed more at the general reader, volunteer or student, than the archaeological specialist and researcher. Those wanting more detail of the excavations should refer to the reports page on our website, [www.culverproject.co.uk](http://www.culverproject.co.uk), where practical reports for the 2013 to 2017 excavations will be joined by the reports for subsequent years as they are completed. This diary gives a broad overview of the highlights of the events and results of the first decade of excavation and surveying works undertaken during CAP's investigations following the discovery of the Romano-British settlement at Bridge Farm, near Barcombe Mills in 2011.

It also includes a brief summary of the specialist reports from the 2013 and 2014 seasons, plus summaries of any completed reports from subsequent years, as well as a collection of unstructured deliberations about the wider context of the settlement. Being compiled dynamically on an annual basis as events unfolded, it may be prone to some inconsistencies and repetitions, despite subsequent revisions, but I trust this will not detract from the content or your appreciation of this remarkable site.

Any interpretation of the results or passages of speculation are entirely mine and may not necessarily reflect the views of my CAP colleagues. I am a firm believer in open discussion leading to a more balanced view and will therefore be quite happy when some of my ruminations are subsequently improved, or even disproved, by more considered argument generating amendments and additions to future editions.

David Millum

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## 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

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### 1.1: THE CULVER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

The Culver Archaeological Project (CAP) involves the local community, students and volunteers in the investigation of the historic environment under the supervision of the co-directors, Rob Wallace and David Millum. Whilst CAP is a volunteer organisation, it is not unprofessional with both directors being Masters Graduates in Field Archaeology from the University of Sussex and corporate members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CAP was founded in 2005 by Rob Wallace to investigate the historic landscape surrounding the Barcombe villa complex and has developed over the years to research the historical environment of the alluvial plain of the Upper Ouse Valley in the parishes of Barcombe and Ringmer.

In the initial year Rob discovered a substantial Roman road running down the western side of the River Ouse and work continued in the area of this road on Culver and Cowlease Farms until 2010, with David joining the project as a site supervisor in 2007. From its inception CAP has endeavoured to conform to a high standard of archaeological research whilst seeking to actively involve the local community in the discovery and interpretation of their local landscape heritage and archaeological remains. As well as open area archaeological excavation of targeted areas, the project includes magnetometer and resistivity surveys of the wider area as well as supervised metal detecting. The investigation of the Romano-British settlement at Bridge Farm forms part of this wider research project of the Ouse Valley.

In 2011 a geophysical survey of the London to 'Lewes' Roman Road with an experienced geophysicist, David Staveley, led to the discovery of the Roman-period settlement at Bridge Farm. This in turn initiated gaining a substantial grant from the National Lottery via the Heritage Lottery Fund enabling the appointment of a commercial contractor, AOC Archaeology to, assist CAP in excavating four open-area trenches, the post excavation works and an extensive programme of community engagement for the 2013 season.

In 2014 it was back to the more usual 'CAP-in-hand' state of affairs with the excavation funded by a modest charge made to volunteers, students and campers, plus donations from visiting groups, fees from the winter talks circuit and the occasional modest grant. Future funding was made more secure in 2015 by an agreement to provide a fieldwork training course for Canterbury Christ Church University undergraduates until 2019. This secure fund base facilitated the excavation of trenches 6 & 7 during the 2015 to 2021 seasons, the leasing of the finds/lecture hall unit, purchase of the site cabin and the commissioning of post-ex specialist reports for the 2014-17 artefact assemblages. The large volunteer base created in 2013 is still very active and provides an excellent backbone to the project with the support of the yearly cohort of novice and returning students. At this point it is unclear how long the project at Bridge Farm will last for there is still a great amount of archaeology to investigate with the 7 trenches excavated to date hardly touching the total site area suggested by the geophysics.

## **1.2: AN INTRODUCTION TO BRIDGE FARM**

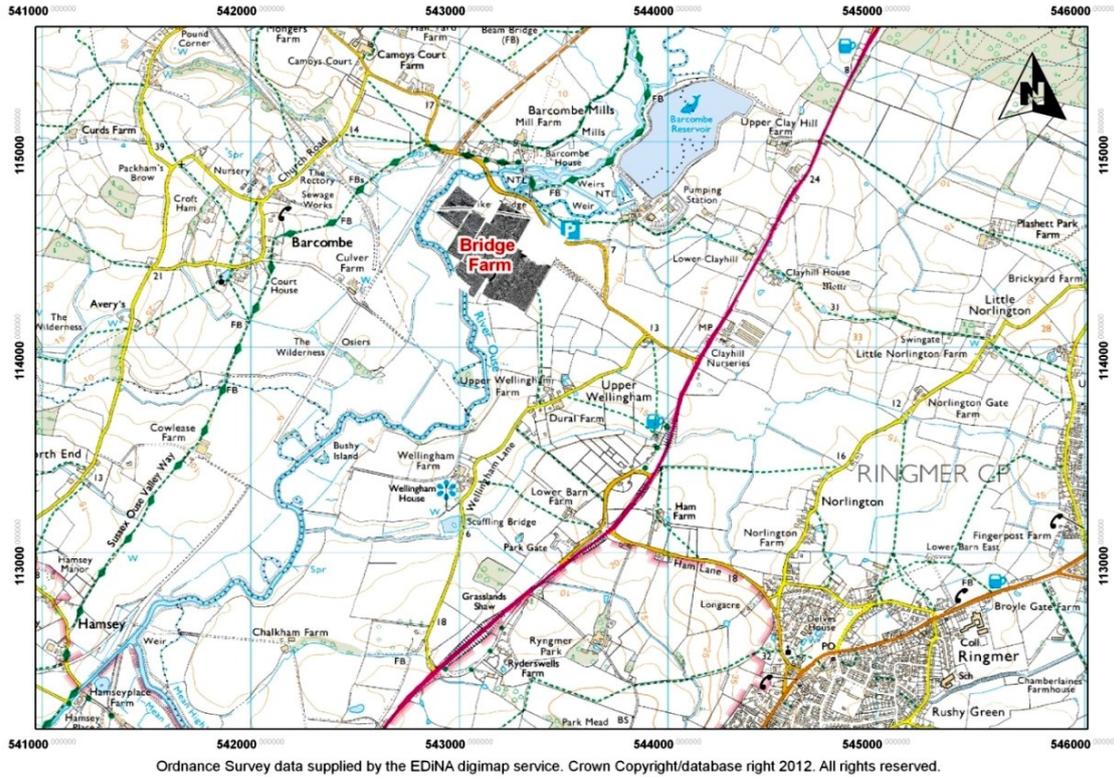
The preparatory magnetometer surveys undertaken in 2011 at Bridge Farm indicated a substantial amount of below ground archaeology, showing a large rectilinear feature, seemingly, overlaying a grid of road and boundary ditches. The initial interpretation as a potential Romano-British settlement with a double-ditched enclosure was supported by the results from the 2013 excavations. The settlement site was situated on the junction of three major Roman roads, which met at a point on the River Ouse where it was tidal and potentially navigable; making it an attractive site for a trading and administrative centre (1.2). The evidence from the site and surrounding landscape suggests that the archaeology within this previously unknown settlement dates from the early period of Roman occupation in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD through to the start of its collapse in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century.

This settlement forms an important part of a wider Romano-British landscape which has yet to be fully interpreted but includes a villa complex, detached bathhouse, industrial sites, road network and field system. The evidence from Bridge Farm will aid the understanding of the development of Roman activity in this area and has the potential for uncovering both the beginning and end of the period of Roman authority in rural East Sussex, whilst also offering indications on how this affected the native British community.

Much of the site comprises intensively farmed arable land which is subject to regular ploughing using soil compaction avoidance techniques. The site lies between 5m to 10m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) within the Ouse flood plain. Regular flooding and deep soil generation encouraged by intensive agriculture have the potential for damaging and/or altering the archaeology and this combined with a real danger of 'night-hawking' puts the archaeology on this site at risk. The potential risk to the site and the regional, if not national, importance of the archaeology, especially if evidencing how British people lived under Roman authority, supports the use of the intrusive techniques used in this investigation.

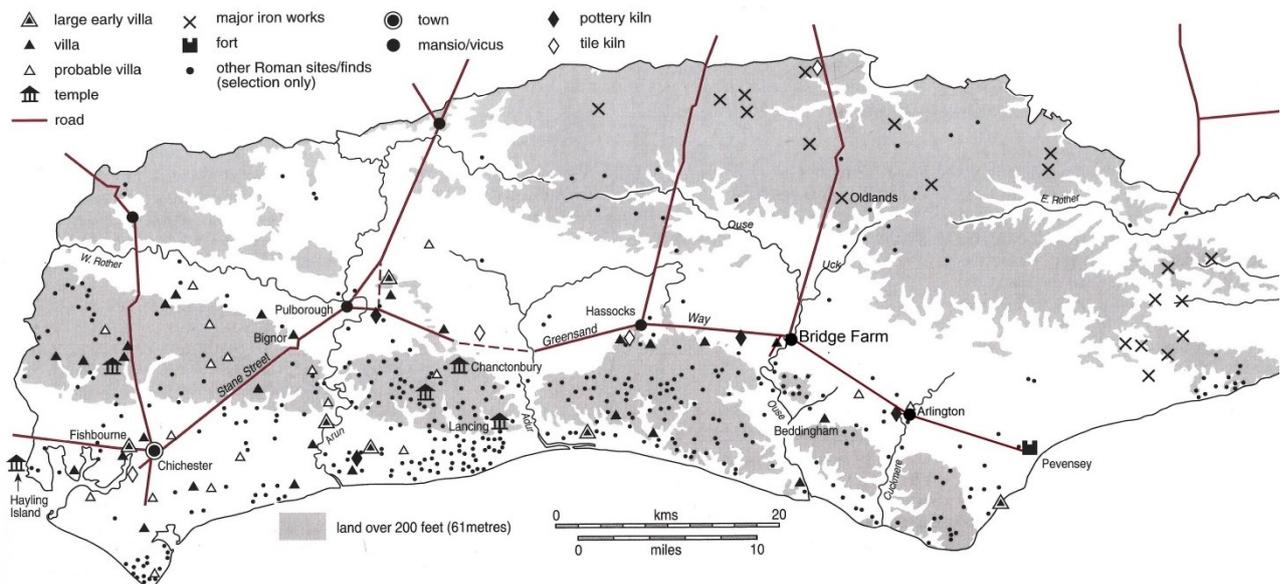
### 1.3: SITE LOCATION

The site comprises of intensively farmed agricultural land situated in the bend of the River Ouse in the fields forming Bridge Farm, Wellingham, Nr. Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 5BX; centred on National Grid Reference 543200 114400 (1.1), map reference TQ432144.



1.1: Location map of the Bridge Farm project site

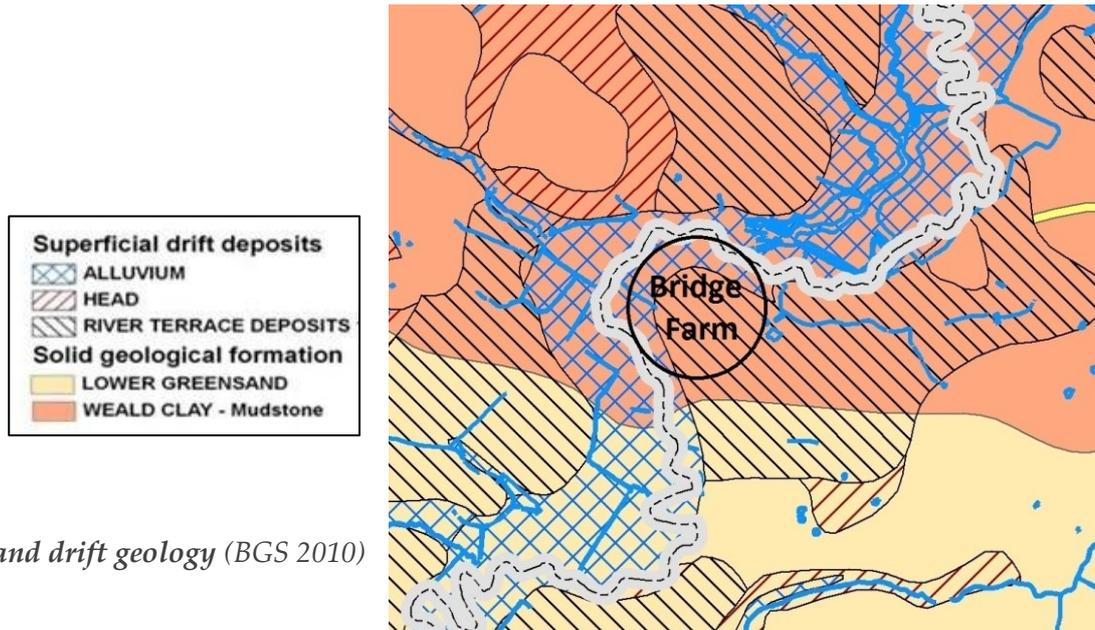
In the Roman period the settlement was at the junction of roads leading to London, Chichester and Pevensey, with the River Ouse giving access to the coast (1.2).



1.2: Bridge Farm located within Roman Sussex (after Rudling 1999, 25)

## 1.4: GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The underlying geological structure of the site is sedimentary with the Ouse valley cutting through east-west bands of Lower Greensand and Weald Clay which are heavily mantled with Head and River Terrace deposits (1.3). The site lies on the eastern bank of the Ouse floodplain, north of Lewes, with the soil comprising deep alluvium flanked by margins of first and second terrace valley gravels. The area supports gleyic argillic brown earths of the Waterstock Association soils on the floodplain, with pelo-alluvial gley Fladbury 3 Association soils adjacent to the river.



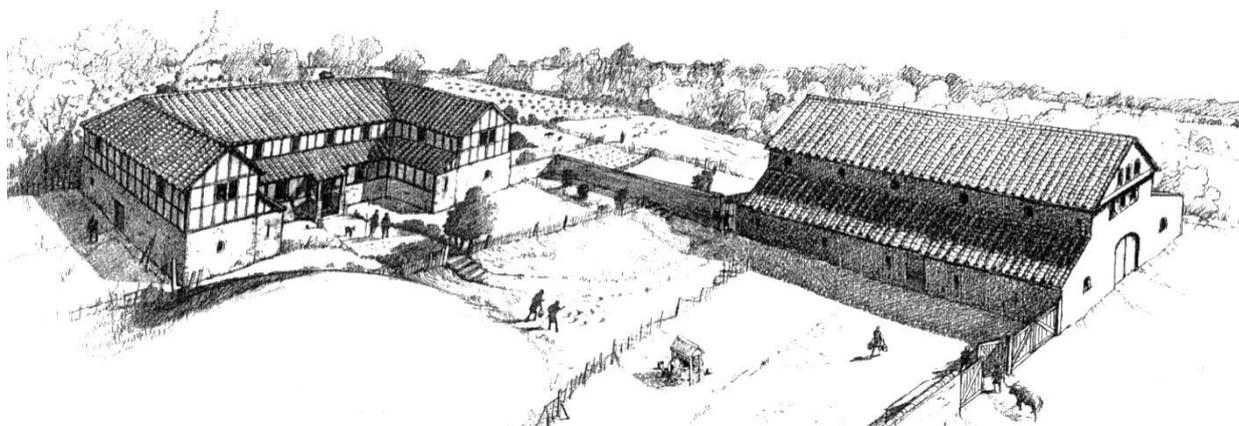
1.3: Solid and drift geology (BGS 2010)

Dr Mike Allen reporting on the soil structure (2013a, 11) highlighted the perpendency of the fine sands and coarse silts of the alluvial surface geology for deep and rapid pedogenesis (soil generation) with soils weathering and developing downwards into the parent material. This together with deep bioturbation encouraged by deep-rooted crops essentially obliterates the upper profiles of the archaeology. Some artefacts are in consequence left floating *in situ* in the lower part of the soil giving a detectable reading in the geophysical survey even though the surrounding feature can no longer be detected, at this level, during excavation. This explains why seemingly distinct features seen in the geophysics are often hard to trace in the ground and these conditions also hamper a COSMIC-type analysis of the historic agricultural practices. The situation can be further complicated by the underlying level of loose gravels that occur at a depth of 0.5-1m. The local high watertable results in the lower contexts of deeper features being potentially either permanently waterlogged or gleyed by fluctuating water levels giving very distinct post-depositional layers that can be mistaken for archaeological deposits and/or events (Allen 2013, 13). The permanent waterlogging, often below a hard iron-pan, does however hold the exciting potential for preserving organing remains and artefacts.

## 1.5: ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 1.5.1: Archaeology in the local area.

In the late 1990s a 3<sup>rd</sup> century, wing corridor villa was discovered in Dunstalls Field on Culver Farm, Barcombe with other casual finds indicating much wider Roman-period activity and possible settlement. This led to the discovery of an adjacent large aisled building and a further T-shaped building forming a moderately sized villa complex (1.4). Subsequently a detached bath house was discovered in the adjacent field. Excavation of these buildings was undertaken at first by the Mid Sussex Field Archaeology Team (MSFAT) with the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), and then continued in conjunction with the Centre for Community Engagement (CCE) of the University of Sussex, until 2012 under the joint directorship of Dr David Rudling and Chris Butler.



**1.4: A conjectural reconstruction of the villa complex (Andy Gammon)**

Concurrently from 2005 the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP), under director Robert Wallace, was investigating the wider historical landscape around the villa complex; discovering a substantial Roman road and instigating an extensive programme of geophysical surveys, systematic field walking, evaluation trenching and open area excavation along the road's corridor, to the west of the River Ouse at Culver and Cowlease Farms, Barcombe (Millum & Wallace 2012; Millum 2014). This work has identified several new sites of roadside activity, including industrial sites and potential ritual sites. Research by CAP has also revealed activity from the Prehistoric period within the surrounding area, including several instances of Middle Bronze Age (MBA) activity, one of which in an area known as The Wilderness produced an oak stake which has been radiocarbon dated to 3340+/-40 BP which calibrates to 1680-1530 cal BC representing one of the earliest waterlogged sites discovered in Sussex (Allen 2010).

### 1.5.2: Toponymic observations.

Bridge Farm was formerly part of Upper Wellingham Farm and one interpretation of the element *hamm*, of the Saxon place-name Wellingham, is '*the land in the river bend*' (Dodgson, 1978, p. 84) which in this case is evidently borne out on the ground (1.1). Historical research has suggested that there was a British settlement in this general area known as Walecote, which could derive from the Saxon word *wealh*, meaning Briton or serf, prefixing *cote*, a small settlement; although the location is thought to be further to the south (Bleach, 1986). It is also tempting to

see the first syllable 'Well' of Wellingham as another possible derivative of *wealh* and wonder whether one of these names could be a Saxon reference to the Romano-British settlement at Bridge Farm.

### 1.5.3: Historic road research

Documentary research revealed that a north-south Roman road in this location had been suggested by William Stukeley as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Horsfield, 1835, p. 38) and that Ivan Margary (1933, 26-28: 1948, 125) had undertaken a small excavation (Section 14) in the large, somewhat characterless, field to the south of the Bridge Farm buildings when investigating the location for the London to Lewes Road (Margary No.14). His records show that he exposed a very compact flint surface 6.4m wide and approaching 400mm thick at a depth of 300mm and metallised '*of flint, from large lumps to small chips, mixed with gravel, and a very small amount of iron slag*' (Margary 1948, 162). Roman pottery described as 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century was found in the silt which overlaid the edges of the road-metal which led Margary (1933, 41) to propose a construction date of around AD 100.

### 1.5.4: The landscape and climate of Romano-Britain

Bridge Farm remaining an agricultural area, whilst some land-usage may have altered, the basic topography of the settlement area in the first four centuries AD would most likely have been very similar to that seen today. Similarly, whilst farming has changed drastically in method over the last century due to mechanisation, particularly altering the size of fields and losing many ancient boundaries, there are still common factors that apply with Roman Britain as both eras are dependent on the formation of the soil, the climate and the seasons. The meadows currently used for cattle adjacent to the River Ouse are likely to have been used in a similar way in the Roman period and the alluvial sandy silt of the adjacent, slightly elevated fields, would have suited the production grain and other arable crops, then as now.

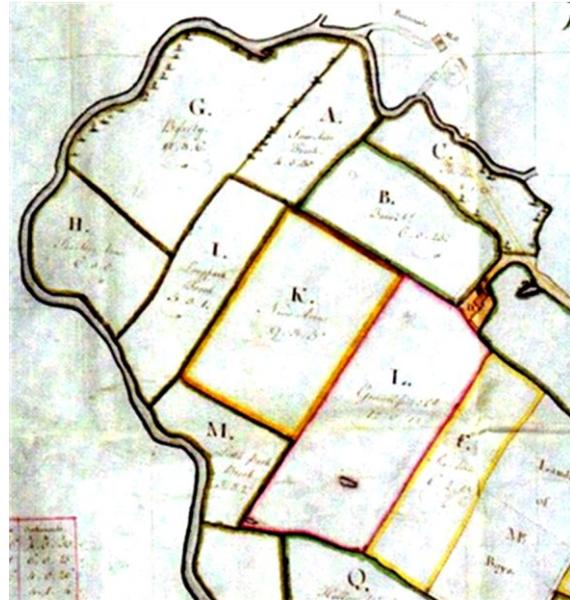
Studies of peat bogs in Northern Ireland and North Yorkshire (McCarthy 2013, 21) have indicated a fall in the water table in an extended dry phase from 320 BC to AD 150, followed by a relatively wetter period for the next hundred years. This was then followed by a further dryer phase from AD 250 through to AD 470. Using these observations for a site in southeast Britain is hazardous and such long phases also ignore the possibility of discrete periods of contrary weather that might have occurred in disparity of any particular phase. However, a sustained dry period and a lower water table could have rendered the low-lying Bridge Farm area less liable to flooding and more sustainable as a potential settlement area. It would also appear that environmental determinism was far less an issue in the Roman period than it may have been previously as nucleated settlements were likely to be located for their convenience for economic and strategic considerations despite their environmental shortcomings. As Richard Reece (1988, 2) most succinctly proposes; 'Drainage problems can be overcome with the injection of work and capital; these have no effect on the speed of oxen'.

Without incontrovertible proof to the contrary, we can but assume that the Ouse followed an approximately similar course then as now and was tidal to well beyond Bridge Farm and therefore potentially navigable in suitable vessels. This becomes credible when noting that the

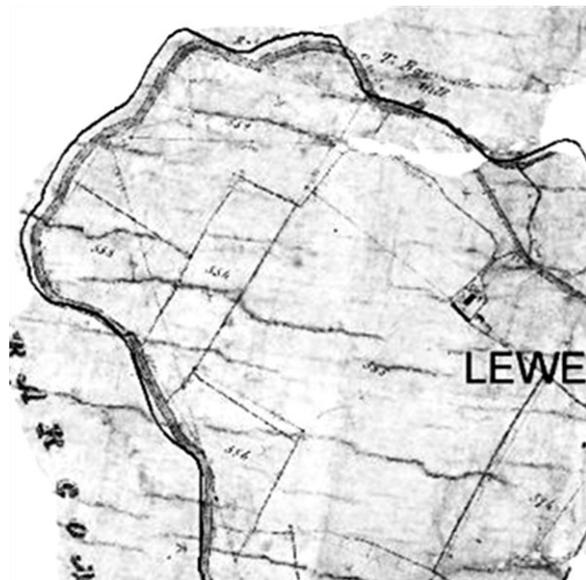
early 19th century Upper Ouse Navigation, a canalisation of the river by a private company, allowed 16-22-ton barges to ferry goods as far as Upper Ryelands Bridge (TQ324280), north of Haywards Heath in West Sussex (Hadfield 1969 pp.31-3; Gibbs & Farrant 1971 pp.23-9), many kilometres upstream from Bridge Farm.

**1.5.5: Boundary and land-use evidence from historic maps and documents**

Two accurately drafted historic maps were consulted to give an indication of the longevity of the current field boundaries and also gain information on the use of the fields during the 18th and 19th centuries. These were an estate map from 1767 (1.5) and the tithe apportionment map of 1841 (1.6). They were in turn compared to the geophysical survey results of 2011 overlaid onto Google Earth (1.7) as well as modern Ordnance Survey mapping. It was remarkable how similar the field boundaries appear in all three images. The tithe map being very true to current usage. It was also noted that the southern and western boundaries of House Field run along the line of the south and west settlement enclosure ditches and that this Roman period alignment remains the axis for many of the other current boundaries. This raises the question of how old these field boundary alignments are. Whilst the river follows a very similar course in both historic maps it does cut more deeply into Little Park Brook (marked M) on the 1767 map (1.5) and this seems to concur with an anomaly identifiable in the geophysics (1.7). Data from the estate map and the tithe apportionment record show a general continuity of use of the fields between the mid-18th century and today; suggesting that this use may be predetermined by soil structure and topography and it is therefore likely that the same conditions would have applied in the 1st to 5th centuries AD. This, subject to local practices, preferences and markets, would suggest that good farming practice in the Roman period may have used these fields in a similar manner.



*1.5: Map of 'The estate of William Newton in Wellingham' drawn in 1767 (green edged fields are meadows and those edged yellow/red are arable).*



*1.6: The tithe apportionment map drawn by William Figg in 1841.*



1.7: Geophysical survey image from 2011 on Google Earth satellite background



1.8: An extract from Speed's map of Sussex from 1610

The other historic maps consulted were all of the whole county of Sussex and therefore did not give any more detail to that gained from the estate and tithe maps. The earliest was Speed's map of 1610 (1.8) which whilst showing the local villages in broadly their correct locations is less exact on some of the local features such as the location and shape of the local deer parks. This is a good example of the limited value of the other maps consulted (Morden 1695, Bowen c. 1756 and Yeakell and Gardner c.1780) although the later maps do get progressively more accurate.

A search of historic documents included *Domesday Book* but Wellingham is not listed separately as it formed part of the manor of *Mellinges* (South Malling) held by Lefranc, Archbishop of Canterbury (Morris 1976, 16b-c).

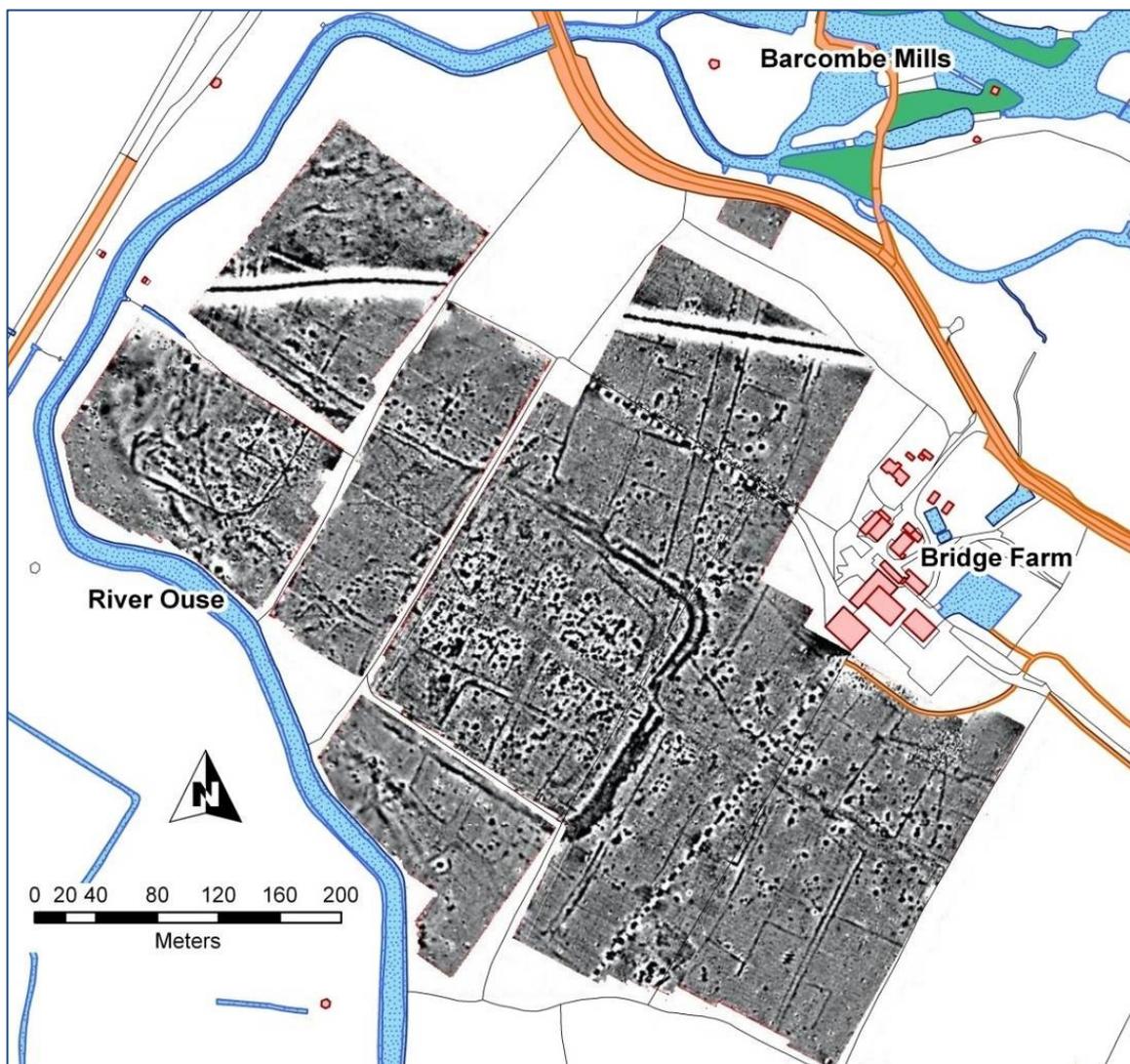
A custumal of 1285 and a rental record of 1305 have been translated and published by the Sussex Record Society supplying data for *Wellyngeham* as a discrete entry (Redwood and Wilson 1958, 85-95, 123-5). These give some information with regard farming practice and the existence of two

mills at around the end of the 13th century and offers some idea as to what might be anticipated, with due caution, during the Roman period.

## 2. 2011-2012: INITIAL SURVEY & ASSESSMENTS

### 2.1: SOME UNEXPECTED RESULTS

In early 2011 the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP) gained permission to investigate several fields at Bridge Farm at Upper Wellingham, near Lewes. The investigations commenced with a magnetometer survey of House Field by David Staveley, a well-known local geophysicist, to see if this modern technology could accurately trace the route and prominent features of the road discovered by Margary. The initial results were so outstanding and unexpected that the survey area was extended and a clear picture emerged not only of the road heading to the north but of the framework of a substantial settlement adjacent to the River Ouse (2.1)



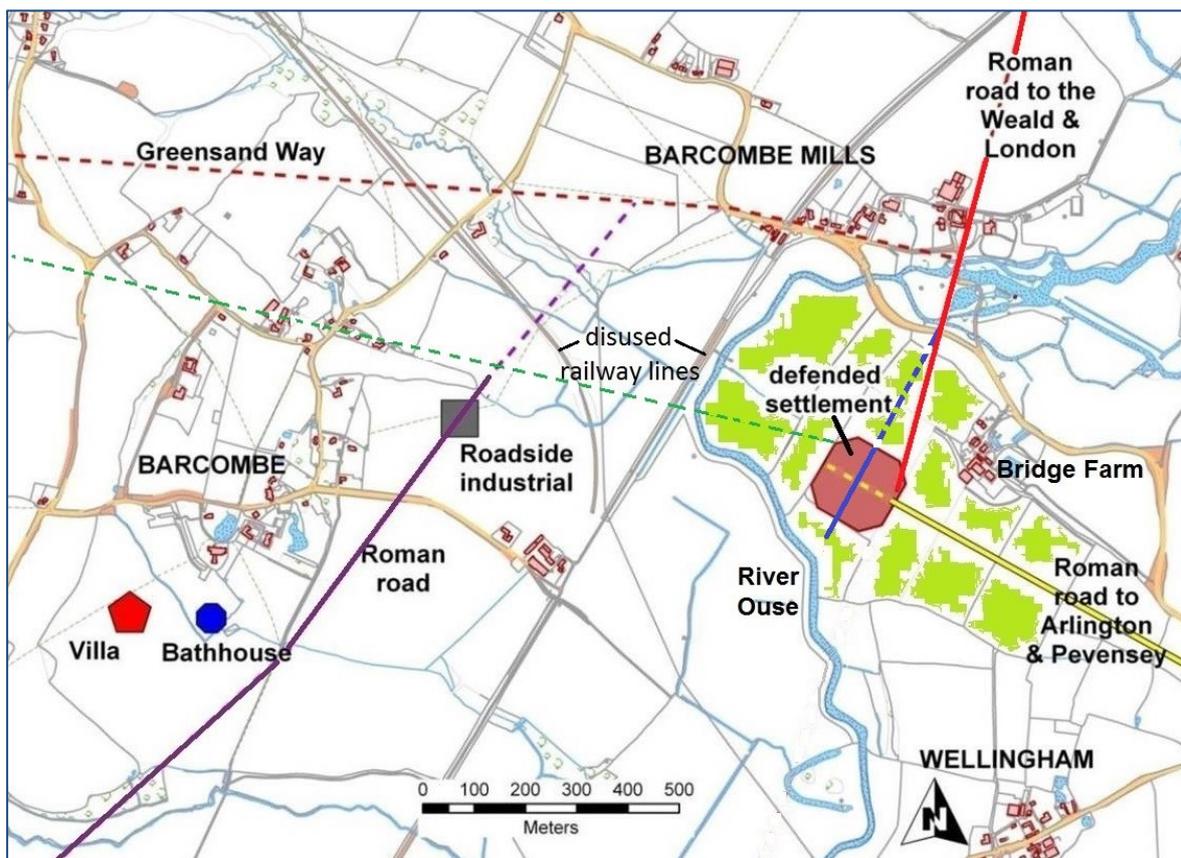
OS data from EDINA digimap service. Crown copyright/database 2010. All rights reserved

*2.1: Geophysical survey results (Survey image: D. Staveley 2012)*

In the geophysical survey image the settlement pattern is clearly interrupted by a double-ditched enclosure confirming that this was a site of more than one phase of activity. Whilst the enclosure ditches appear to overlay and truncate the roadside ditches the chronology could not be

determined from the magnetometer results and CAP's co-directors decided that this was a crucially important question that could only be resolved by targeted excavation. Progressive geophysical surveys revealed roads heading to the east and possibly west, with smaller trackways and boundary ditches in the areas surrounding the main settlement.

Further work undertaken by David Staveley with the Ringmer Roman Studies Group from 2012 onward has produced strong evidence, from just east of More Lane and south of the Laughton Road at Ringmer (TQ 472123), for the eastern road continuing on an alignment heading for the Roman settlement at Arlington (Chuter, 2008) and thence to Pevensey. With Barcombe Mills as the accepted eastern end of the Greensand Way this puts the Wellingham settlement in a pivotal location at the junction of the road from London, via the western Wealden iron production area, with roads to Pevensey (*Anderida*) and Chichester (*Noviamagus Reginorum*), and on a navigable stretch of the River Ouse giving access to the coast. The potential importance of the site is further enhanced by the proximity to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century, Barcombe villa complex and detached bathhouse (Rudling 2017, 100-1) just over a kilometre to the west (2.2). The site lays midway between the known Roman-period settlements at Hassocks and Arlington, approximately 13k west and east respectively, making it an ideal staging post for trade and travel across the district as well as from the Weald to the coast.



OS data from EDINA digimap service. Crown copyright/database 2010. All rights reserved

## 2.2 Relationship of the settlement to the villa, bathhouse and other Roman-period features

The interpretation of the buried features as originating from the Roman period was supported by the pottery and tile collected by a systematic, 40m transect, field-walking survey in March 2011, when CAP volunteers were joined by members of the Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society and Lewes Archaeological Group. It was noticeable that only a very small amount of Roman-period brick and tile (CBM) was collected despite the indications from the geophysics of a substantial settlement. A summary of the field-walking finds is shown in table 2.1 below.

*Table 2.1. Summary of items collected from the 2011 field-walk (Millum, 2012)*

Material	No.	Grams	Remarks
Pottery	800	5,426g	Mainly small abraded sherds of local Romano-British coarse wares with some fine wares including black colour-coated beaker sherds and amphora. Most date from AD180-350 although some East Sussex Ware body sherds could be earlier. There were a few later to modern sherds thought to be the result of marling.
CBM Tile/brick	612	13,282g	Mainly post-medieval with only 76 pieces recognised as Roman tile by fabric and/or shape, mainly tegula but some imbrex and box flue.
Burnt flint	589	13,994g	Distributed too evenly over the site to be diagnostic.
Worked flint Flakes Cores	121 11	728g 511g	More prevalent in the northern half of the field with the largest numbers of flakes generally found adjacent to cores. Assemblage appeared to be mainly of Mesolithic to Early Neolithic character
Iron slag	128	4,903g	Mainly collected to north of the main settlement but there were concerns over the possible uneven collection of this material.
Glass	5	505g	Mainly post-medieval to modern.
Animal bone	3	7g	Too small a sample to be diagnostic but thought to be modern.
Clay pipe	5	12g	Post-medieval stem pieces.

## 2.2: AN EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF COINS & METAL ARTEFACTS

In November 2012 Robin Hodgkinson, of the Independent Historical Research Group (IHRG), introduced a local metal detectorist who had collected metal objects from the site over several years. The collection, which he had kept intact, proved quite extensive and ratified the longevity of the settlement as it included a series of over 50 Roman coins with identifiable examples from the Republican era right through to the Emperor Gratian in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (2.3). Whilst it is likely that the republican coins, being well worn, were still in use in the 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Reece 1987, 15), the coin sequence still indicates a time span of around 300 years. The collection also potentially extended the evidence of activity in the more general area into the Saxon period with artefacts including circular and axe-shaped mounts and a Merovingian tremissis, a rare gold coin, possibly from Neustria (Northern France) and dating from the late 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (Dr John Naylor, National Finds Director for Medieval and Post-Medieval Coinage, pers. comm.)(2.4). The assemblage also included a number of biconical-shaped lead weights with the vestiges of the iron hooks by which they could have been suspended from a steelyard scales or *statera*, several bow brooch fragments, a bronze writing stylus and a Roman ring key (2.5).



### 2.3. A small selection of the detected coins (Fig. 3, Millum 2013):

a] Titia 1 (Q. Titius) denarius, c.90 BC; b] Aemilia 8 (M. Aemilius Scaurus and Pub. Plautius Hypsaeus) denarius, c.58 BC; c] Galba denarius AD 68-9; d] Trajan denarius c.AD 114-7; e] Julia Maesa (died AD 225) denarius; f] Gratian siliqua AD 375-8 (mint of Thessalonica).

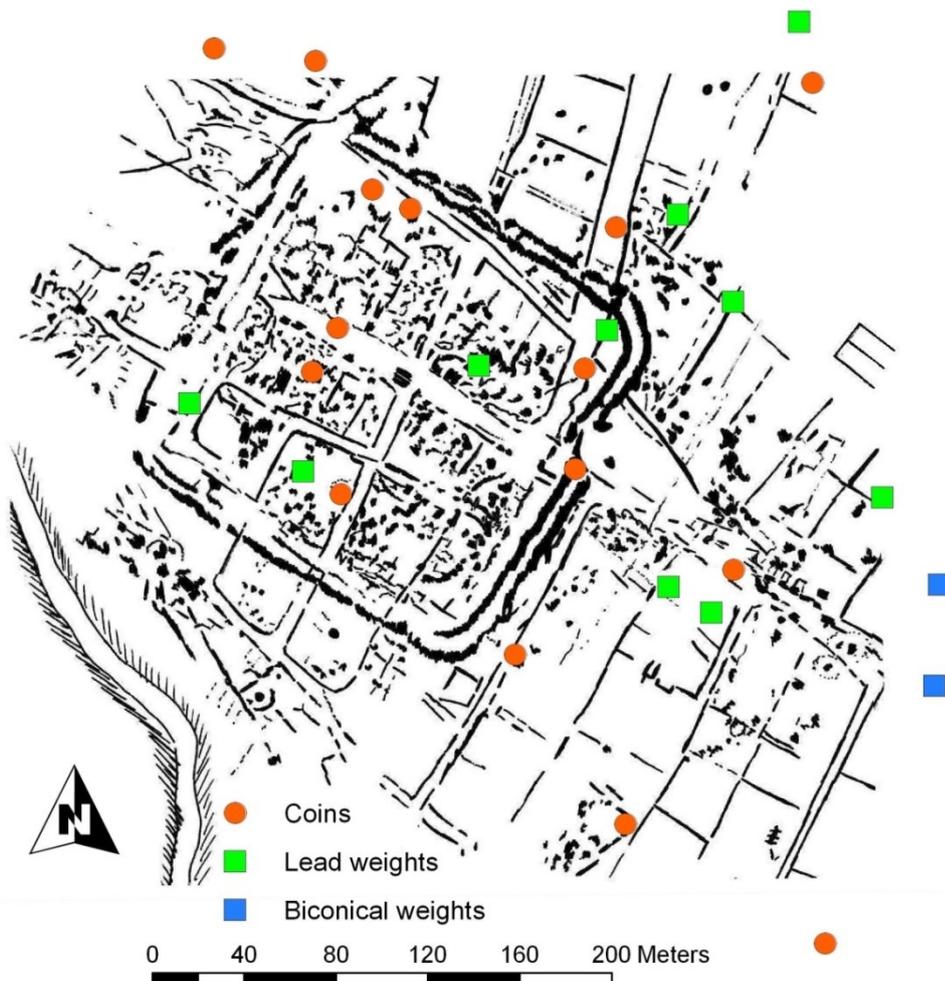


**2.4. The Merovingian tremissis;**

11.4mm diameter, 1.33mm thick, 1.23g weight.

**2.5. A Roman ring key**

In early December 2012 CAP organised a thorough and systematic metal detecting survey of the site by the Eastbourne, West Kent and Ringmer groups, when a further 18 Roman coins were found; the majority being over the main settlement area (2.6). This varied slightly in distribution from the finds detailed above which were far more dispersed with many coming from the area to the SE of the enclosure. The field walking assemblage, comprising 237 iron, 248 lead and 203 other metal objects also included two of the biconical lead weights as well as eleven others of various shapes (2.6).



**2.6. Location of the Roman coins and lead weights collected in December 2012**

### 3: 2013: A NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDED YEAR

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#### 3.1: SUMMARY OF THE 2013 PROJECT

During 2012 the Culver Archaeological Project gained a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which enabled a programme of surveys and excavations during July and August 2013 and allowed CAP to involve the local community including local primary and secondary schools in the project. The excavations, with the approval of the County Archaeologist, targeted the intersection of the double ditch enclosure with roadside ditches of the open settlement at the SE corner, to establish the phasing of these features and add to the general chronological and archaeological evidence for the site. Four trenches (3.1), totalling approximately 1200 sq.m, were located to minimise the effects on the busy working farm whilst also aiming to show any difference in archaeological preservation between the grassed meadows and those fields used for arable production since at least the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (3.2) (*see also 1.5*).



*3.1. Location of the trenches in the 2013 summer excavation*

This latter question, which at the request of the County Archaeologist's department was due to be the subject of a COSMIC (Conservation of Scheduled Monuments in Cultivation) style record, proved inconclusive due to the nature of the soil (*see section 1.4 above*). The soil makeup also led to some difficulty in defining feature edges in excavation despite their strong signal in the geophysical results, particularly in Trench 1 which was situated within the arable field.



*3.2: An aerial photograph of the site under excavation in July 2013 (S. McGregor)*

However, the first year of excavations at Bridge Farm proved to be truly memorable not only for the archaeology revealed but also for the terrific response from over 180 volunteers of all ages and experience who signed up for a total of over a thousand days' work (3.3). During the six weeks of excavation an estimated 400 visitors had tours of the site and the five organised local school fieldtrips attracted 150 pupils. A wide range of workshops gave 120 people the opportunity to share the knowledge of six specialists in subjects as diverse as handling human bones to recording pillboxes.



*3.3: A typical turnout during the 6 weeks of excavations*

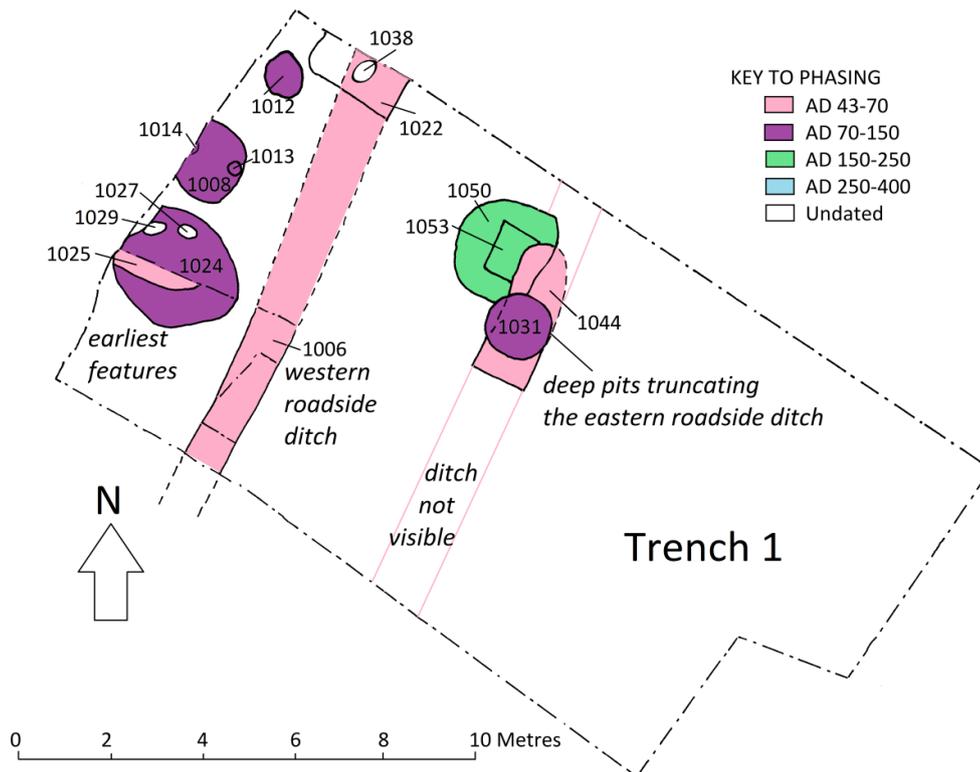
The partnership between the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP) and their appointed contractor, AOC Archaeology Group, proved very successful. This appointment was made possible by the generous grant received from the National Lottery via the Heritage Lottery Fund. This grant not only funded the dig, workshops and visits, all of which were free to participants, but also the crucial post-excavation work including conservation and specialist reporting. So it can be justifiably claimed that both as a community project and as an archaeological investigation Bridge Farm 2013 exceeded expectations.

### 3.2: EXCAVATION RESULTS: TRENCHES 1-4

This section is extensively based on two other documents; the practical excavation report (Wallace 2014) and a paper produced for the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 155 (Millum & Wallace 2017).

During the week prior to the start of community involvement, the topsoil was removed from all four trenches by mechanical digger under the supervision of CAP Deputy Director, David Millum, and AOC Site Manager, Catherine Edwards.

#### 3.2.1. Trench 1: TQ 43091437



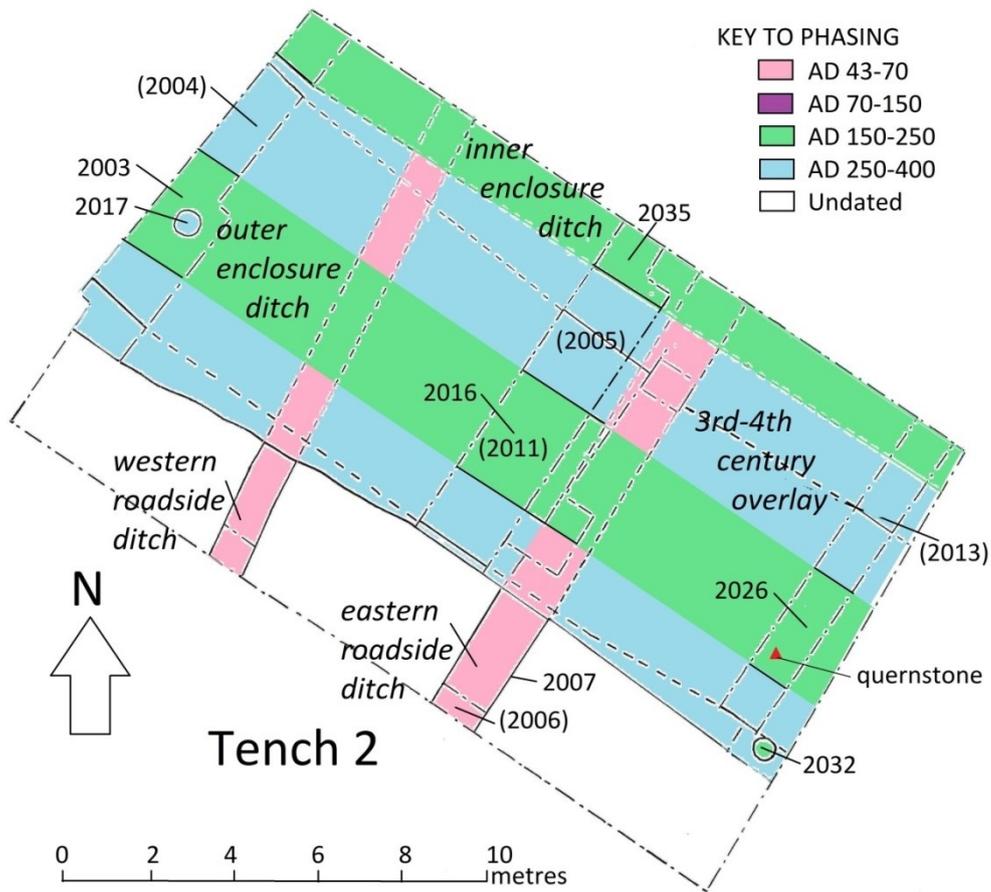
3.4: Plan of Trench 1 (after AOC Archaeology)

An open area trench of 20m by 10m (3.4) was dug just into the edge of the sweet corn crop inside the double ditched enclosure and over the central NE-SW roadway of the open settlement. This proved to be the most difficult trench to interpret with the roadside ditches proving hard to distinguish from the surrounding soil. The task was not helped by the series of deep pits that had been cut into the ditches during the Roman period. However, some distinctive sherds of

pottery from the basal deposits proved crucial for dating major features in this trench to the 1<sup>st</sup> century, as detailed in the summary of artefacts below (*see section 3.3.1*). The earliest datable feature of the entire 2013 excavation was an east-west ditch terminus (or linear pit) [1025] which contained a variety of pottery sherds dated to between AD 43 and AD 80 (Lyne 2014).

**Trench 1** established a 1st century AD origin to the roadside ditches of the open settlement.

### 3.2.2. Trench 2: TQ 43081436



3.5: Plan of Trench 2 (after AOC Archaeology)

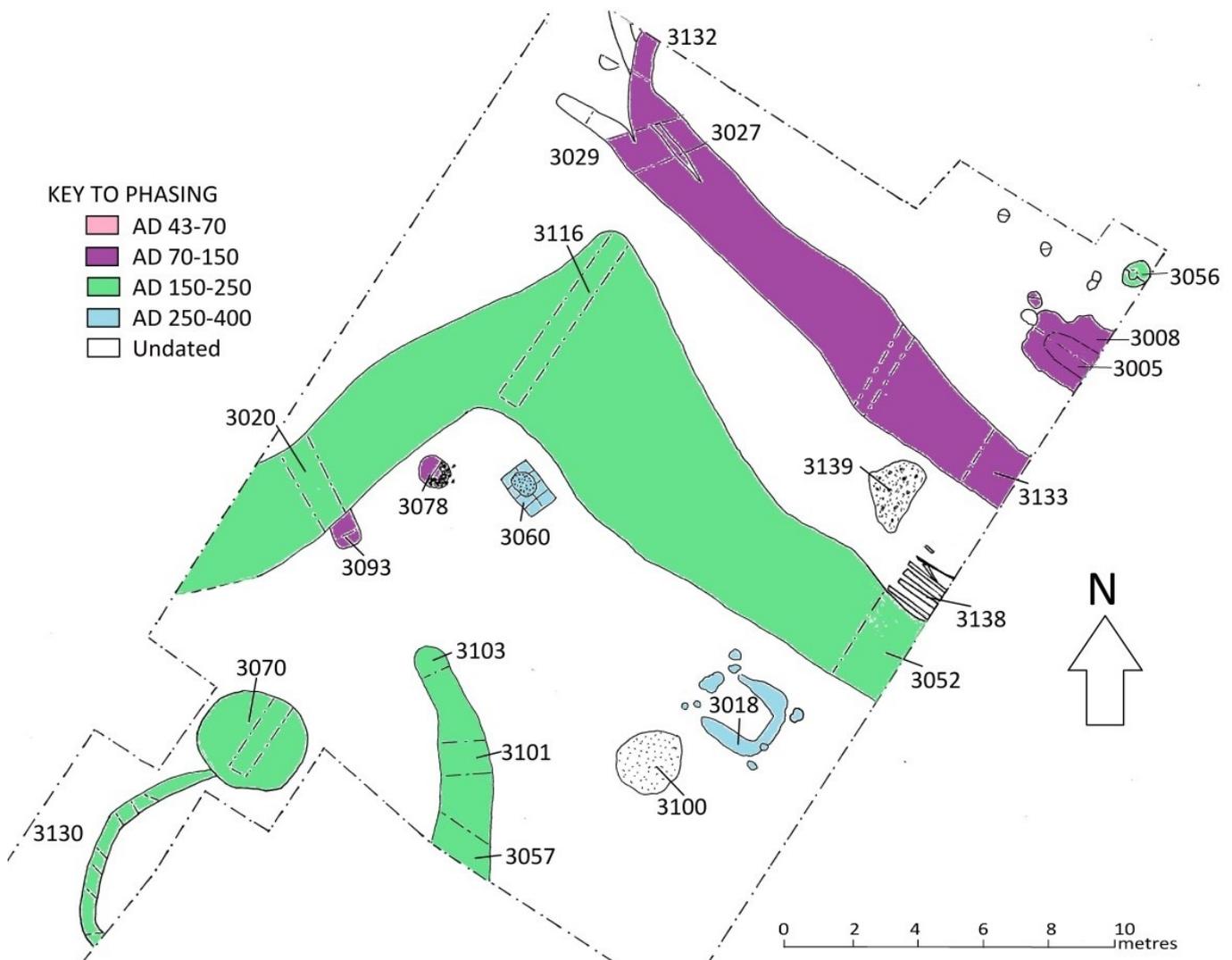
A trench 20m long by 12m wide (3.5) was positioned wholly in the meadow, *Little Park Brook*, over the intersection of the same road ditches as Trench 1 where they intersected with the outer enclosure ditch in order to resolve the phasing of these two crucial elements. It became clear, after both stratigraphic and box section excavation at the intersection of the ditches in the central slot that the enclosure ditch [2016] cut, and was therefore later than, the more ephemeral roadside ditch [2007].

Two further slots were dug across the enclosure ditch adjacent to the west and east baulks [2003 & 2026]. Two large postholes, each over 500mm in diameter, were discovered within these slots. One [2017] was in the base of the outer ditch [2003] in the western slot and contained pottery dated to around AD 300. The other [2032] was on the southern edge of the ditch [2026] in the east baulk slot and was packed with ceramic building material from the 1st-2nd century AD including a nearly complete T-shaped solid voussier (*see section 3.3.3 below*).

Amongst the other artefacts recovered from Trench 2 were a quern stone made from West Sussex greensand (*see section 3.3.4 below*) and a Samian platter base Dr 18/31 (Special Find 46) found in fill 2012 of the outer enclosure ditch [2003]. The base was indistinctly stamped and could be interpreted as either being Cinnamvs II, a maker from Lezoux in Central Gaul in the late 2nd century, or CIII--RAIM, being Martres de Veyre Samian of c.AD.90-130. This item was later laser scanned by the University of Brighton to try to get a clearer image but the name still remained unclear.

**Trench 2** established the phasing of two of the major events on the site establishing that the open settlement preceded the enclosing earthworks.

### 3.2.3. Trench 3: TQ43071431



3.7: Plan of Trench 3 (after AOC Archaeology)

Trench 3 was excavated as an open area 20m x 25m targeting a series of anomalies clustered around a crossroads to the southern edge of the settlement. Subsequently two small areas

were added at the southwest corner to investigate a bold circular anomaly on the geophysics (3.7) raising the total area of this excavation to 540 sq.m.

Excavation revealed the roadside ditches of two adjoining roads, with a small area of wheel-ruts [3138] and flint road metalling [3139] on the eastward-heading road. Two, flint-packed post-holes or pits [3078 and 3093] (3.8), one metre in diameter, adjacent to the southern-most roadside ditch [3020 and 3116] were dated to the late 1<sup>st</sup>-century phase as overlaid by a later layer. This ditch contained fragments of water-logged oak timbers and pottery dated to AD 200–400, suggesting that it was dug in the early 3rd century, however, it is likely that this represents a recut of a 1st century AD feature.

In the northeast corner of the trench, a series of six smaller post-holes (0.3m diameter average) were grouped adjacent to a pit [3008] which had three recorded fills containing flint, bone, tile and pottery, the latter being dated from the late 1st to mid-2nd century. In the southeast corner, seven small post-holes and an internal gully [3018] formed a possible rectangular structure of 3m by 2.3m, with pottery evidence dating from AD 200–400. Immediately to the southwest of this was a sub-circular shallow depression [3100] filled with a thin charcoal and ash spread (3083) and capped by a thin layer of clay (3082).

To the west was a small rectangular trench/pit [3060] (3.9), measuring 1.6m by 1m and 0.4m deep, completely lined with standard *tegula* roofing tiles. A removed sample was 467mm long by 330mm wide and 21mm thick, with a 5mm nail hole near its upper edge. The *tegulae* appeared un-mortared, with just dark-brown, loose soil used as backfilling against the vertical cut of the trench sides. Inside the tiled basin was a large deposit of *opus caementicium* (Roman cement). It is unclear whether this was just surplus material, dumped after the basin was redundant, or was intended to form an internal rendering which, for some unknown reason, was not completed. If used unlined, then the basin would have to have been either for dry material, or possibly for draining or wet rinsing, as the joints between the tiles made the structure



**3.8. Flint packed post-hole/pit [3078]**



**3.9. Tile-lined pit [3060]**

*1m and 500mm scales*

porous. While pottery sherds from within the fill of this feature were dated as post-AD 270, they were heavily abraded, suggesting that the basin was in use after this date.

To the southwestern edge of the trench an extension was dug by hand to reveal a large ovoid pit [3070] measuring 3.2m by 2.8m and 0.9m deep. The pit had gradually sloping sides and a concave base, and the edges of the cut showed the black and red colouring of intense heating (3.10). A 300mm wide, 500mm deep gulley [3130] curved off to the south and appeared from the geophysical image to join with a 1–2m wide ditch [3057, 3101 and 3103] that curves around the eastern side of the pit and may form part of an encircling ditch.

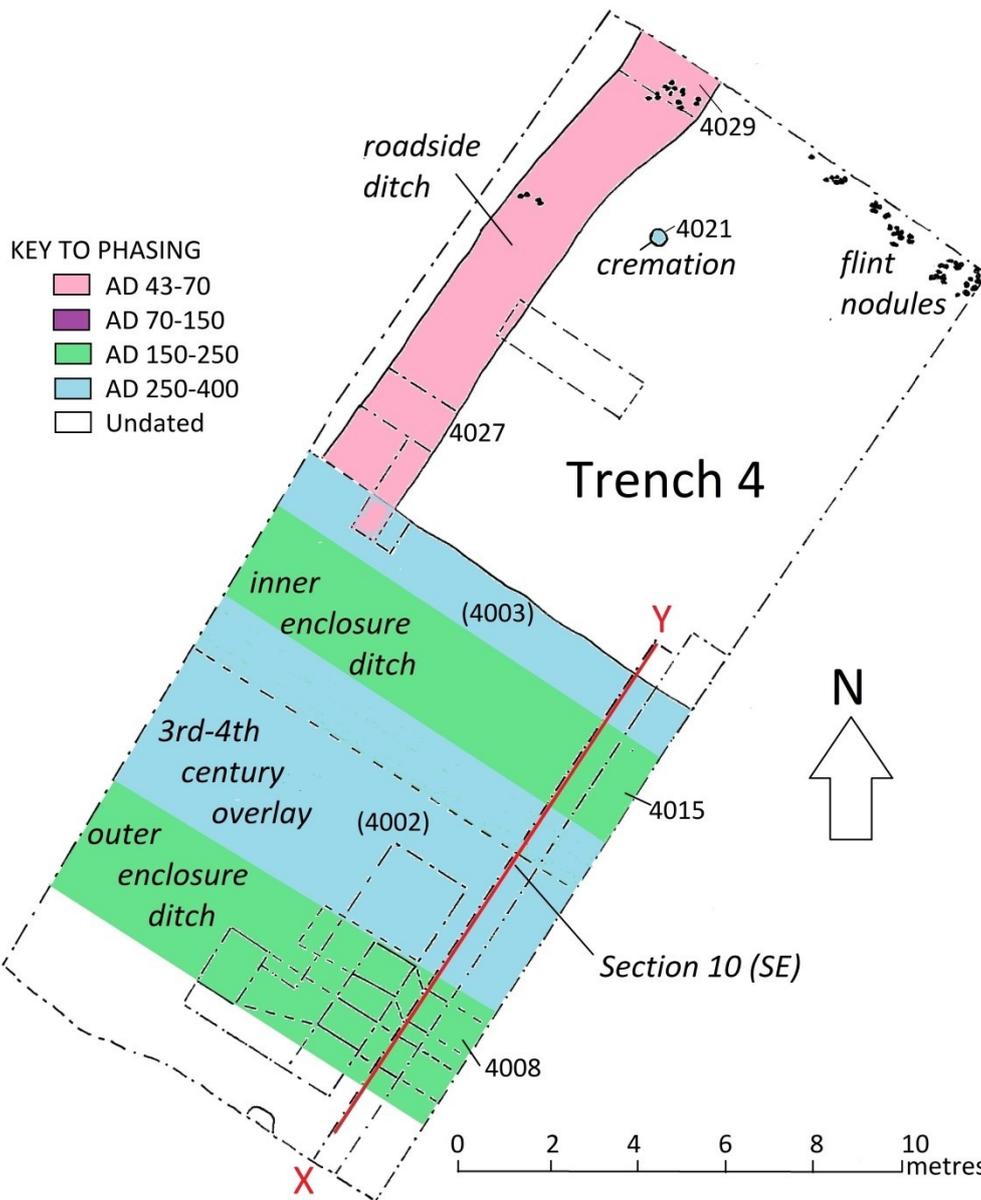


**3.10. Pit [3070] during excavation showing black and red colouring from intense heat (1m scale)**

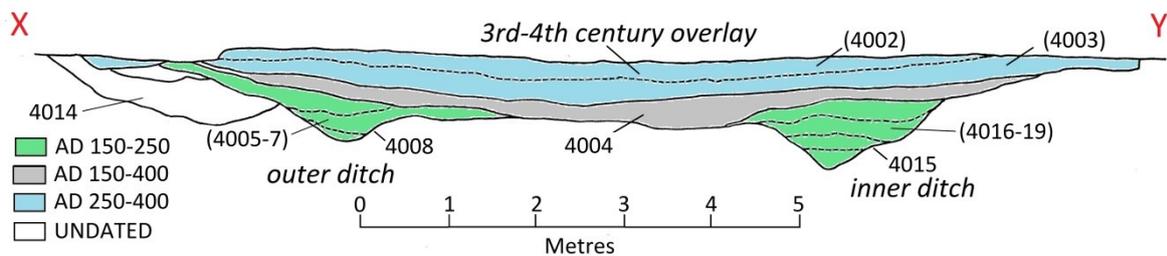
The large pit had no datable material in its fills, although the gulley and ditch both contained pottery dated to AD 70–200 and AD 200–400. These features also contained a high density of ceramic building materials including brick, *imbrex*, *tegula* and box-flue fragments, plus a notable quantity of burnt clay from hearth or kiln linings. Elements of the tile recovered show evidence of both under- and over-firing, with some surface vitrification suggesting that they could be from seconds or wasters. While it was not possible to firmly identify the process being undertaken in this area, the presence of these substandard ceramic items have been suggested as potentially arising from local small-scale tile production, with the adjacent pit as the base of a clamp-style kiln. In the centre of the pit [3070] was a strange greasy fill from which a sample was taken by the geoarchaeologist, Dr Mike Allen, for further analysis (see section 3.3.12 below).

**Trench 3** was arguably the most interesting trench of 2013 exposing an area of light industrial/commercial activity to the south of the main settlement and adjacent to the river.

3.2.4. Trench 4: TQ 43121434



3.11. Phase plan of main features of trench 4 showing line X–Y of Section 10 (after AOC Archaeology 2014).



3.12. Interpreted phases in Section 10 across the two enclosure ditches in trench 4 (after AOC Archaeology 2014).

An open-area excavation of 25m by 10m, located across the boundary between the arable field and the meadow, provided the only opportunity to excavate both enclosure ditches [4008 and

4015] within a single slot (*Section 10 in 3.11 and 3.12*). The positioning of this trench was predetermined by a large gap in the boundary hedge, rather than the geophysical survey results. Although the outer enclosure ditch was not as clear here as it was in trench 2, this trench provided the only possible slot across the inner ditch [4015].

The excavation also revealed another of the roadside ditches from the open settlement [4027/9] (**3.11**), which has also been assigned to the late 1<sup>st</sup>-century phase, and was cut by the inner enclosure ditch [4015], giving further evidence for sequencing these features. At the northern end of the trench was a small spread of cobble-size, downland flints which lay directly on the natural horizon. These could only have arrived by human intervention and could be the remnants of a structure.

The slot dug through the inner enclosure ditch [4015] gave measurements of 2.7m wide by 0.82m deep, with sloping sides and a tapering, V-shaped base (**3.12**). Four fills were recorded within the backfill (4016–19), with the lowest fill (4016) likely to be the natural silting of the ditch whilst in use. The remaining fills may include the remains of a defensive bank. No dateable finds were recovered, with the only inclusions noted being natural riverine flints. The outer ditch [4008], which also had sloping sides and a V-shaped base, comprising three fills (4005-7) containing artefacts including pottery datable to AD 200–300, a large fragment of a silver denarius of Severus Alexander from about AD 222–228 (Rudling 2014), iron slag, animal bone, a large iron nail, glass fragments and burnt flint, as well as residual prehistoric worked flint. A perceived cut [4014] underlying the southwestern edge of the ditch was subsequently deemed to be geological. Located within the northern half of trench 4 was a single vessel within an undistinguished cut [4021](*see 3.11*). The vessel, which was substantially intact (**3.13**), was removed whole for later internal investigation (**3.14**) and was subsequently identified as a jar dating to the 3rd century (Lyne 2014). The fill of the vessel (4010) contained 625g of compacted, burnt human bone fragments (*see section 3.3.8 below*). The cremation was positioned adjacent to the roadside ditch, but came from a higher layer, suggesting that this area may have become external to the main settlement after the enclosure ditches were backfilled. This evidence may possibly explain the location of this cremation within the formerly enclosed area.

**3.13: 3rd century cremation urn**  
(Scales: 10mm and 100mm divisions)





*3.14: Catherine Edwards (AOC) and Sarah Foster (CAP) wrapping the urn*

**Trench 4** supplied a section across the complete earthwork defences as well as the unexpected bonus of a human cremation, something not found so far elsewhere on the site.

During the 2013 dig everyone was kept up to date with the results by the Excavation Diary on CAP's website, [www.culverproject.co.uk](http://www.culverproject.co.uk), posted by supervisor Clara Gonzalez-Hernandez.

### 3.3: A SUMMARY OF THE ARTEFACT REPORTS

#### 3.3.1: POTTERY (Lyne 2014)

As always one of the reports most anticipated, especially for dating purposes, was that on the pottery, particularly as undertaken by Dr Malcolm Lyne. The first characteristic apparent from his report was the wide range of the dating evidence from mid-1<sup>st</sup> century right through to late 4<sup>th</sup>, as well as the variety of wares which included Samian, Gallo-Belgic Terra Nigra, Moselkeramik, and Cologne Whiteware, with New Forest and Oxford wares, as well as many from local sources. One very significant find was the seven fresh pieces from a reeded-rim bowl of Fishbourne type 89 (3.15) dating to c.AD 50-80 from fill (1020) in feature [1025], in the southwest corner of Trench 1, just north of the inner enclosure ditch. Together with other sherds this suggests a very early date for this feature and the 'Fishbourne-type' bowl raises the possibility of a connection between the early settlement and the client kingdom of Togidubnus.



*3.15 Reeded rim bowl of Fishbourne type 89*

Virtually all of the pottery sherds recovered from the features in Trench 1 were of possible 1<sup>st</sup> to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century date and the absence of early East Sussex Ware jars with 'eyebrow' motifs and of Gallo-Belgic imports supports a late 1<sup>st</sup> century date of between AD 70-100 for most of the features in this area (Lyne, 2013, p.2). This crucially includes the north-south 'roadside' ditches of the open settlement. As discovered in excavations in Trench 2 these were cut by, and therefore earlier than, the much larger double enclosure ditches which, from Malcolm's analysis from Trench 4, date from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century at the earliest. This is somewhat earlier than the hypothetical mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century date put forward in the precursor of this paper published in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 151 (Millum 2013a) which was somewhat impetuously suggested by the writer prior to any excavation; we all live and learn. Rubbish dumping over these ditches would appear to have taken place from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and well into the 4<sup>th</sup> century which initially had led to dating these features to a somewhat later period than now seems probable.

Some features from Trench 3 proved hard to tie down to specific periods. However, the ditch in the northwest corner that forms the southern end of the roadside ditch (3127 & 3129) from Trench 2 confirmed the 1<sup>st</sup> century origin of this feature. From the pottery from the southwest-northeast ditch [3140] that heads to the southwest corner of the trench, and possibly runs round the suggested 'kiln' feature [3057], Lyne suggests a date around the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. However, the upper fill of this ditch (3020) produced an assemblage of 193 sherds of 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century date which included a fragment of a horizontally-rilled jar of Overwey/Portchester D fabric which although appearing in AD330 tend to be most common in post AD 370 assemblages. The general occupation layer (3088) covering most of the excavated areas would appear to have started to accumulate from around AD 200 and continued to build up until the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. The tile-lined pit (3060) yielded only pottery of a post AD 270 date, most of which was abraded

indicating that the feature was in use after this date (Lyne, 2013, p.3). Regrettably the suggested kiln did not contain any datable pottery.

Evidence was found for half a dozen mortaria as follows. In the early pit [1024] in Trench 1 six cream sherds date to AD 43-80; an Oxford red colour-coated sherd (AD 240-400) was found in an upper layer (2013) in Trench 2; a sherd of Wickham Barn courseware (AD 300-370) came from the occupation layer (3088) of Trench 3; and sherds of white Rhenish fabric and Oxfordshire white-ware, both of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, came from fills of the inner enclosure ditch in Trench 4 [4008].

Only 36 sherds of amphora were found, 27 of which were from Dressel 20 types with 3 sherds from Gauloise 4 designs. The former are associated with olive oil and olives whilst the latter are regarded as wine carriers. The scarcity of both amphora and mortarium sherds in the assemblage may reflect the non-residential location of the 2013 excavations.

#### 3.3.2: COINS (Rudling 2014a & b)

The coin analysis undertaken by Dr David Rudling included the 77 coins collected by David Cunningham from earlier metal detecting, including 54 from the Roman and Late Iron Age period, a further 35, including 18 Roman, collected by the metal detecting groups in the systematic survey in December 2012 and the 21 Roman coins collected from the 2013 excavations (Rudling, 2013a; 2013b). The total assemblage includes 3 possible Late Iron Age coins including a silver issue of Verica and 4 Republican coins from a Titia 1 type of 90 BC to one issued in 42-40 BC bearing a posthumous image of Pompey the Great (Pompey died in 48 BC). Among the coins identified are a bronze *As* of Nero (AD 54-68), 2 *Denarii* of Galba (AD 68-9), a single coin of both Vespasian (AD 69-79) and Nerva (AD 96-8); all of which support the pottery evidence for a settlement being on this site by the second half of the first century. The remaining coins span the next three centuries with the last in series being a wreath-type silver *siliqua* of Gratian (AD 375-383), although there are some definite gaps in the coin series collected to date.

#### 3.3.3: CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL (Barber, 2014a)

Luke Barber analysed the 6847 pieces of ceramic building material (cbm) from the excavations of which he assigned all but 7 to the Romano-British period. The Roman material was found generally across the site and ranged from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The assemblage included tegula, imbrex, box flue, brick and hearth/kiln lining; this last type forming the majority of the over-fired material. It became evident that there was a significant amount of this sub-standard material in the southwest corner of Trench 3, suggesting the possibility of being wasters from a tile kiln particularly as Barber's analysis comments on the considerable variability of firing in the assemblage. However with such circumstantial evidence the final verdict on whether the burning pit was a tile kiln must remain



3.16: The solid 'armchair' tile

unresolved for the time being awaiting more definite evidence from comparable structures. In this regard the presence of box flue tiles in an area where no high status building is expected may be a further indication of tile production or at least transportation. The most unexpected of the tile finds was an ‘armchair’ voussior (3.16) which came from the pit/posthole [2032] on the edge of the outer enclosure ditch in Trench 2 that was packed with 1st to 2nd century cbm. This nearly whole, T-shaped, solid voussior, which was 265mm wide and 65-70mm thick but truncated in length, resembles a Brodribb type 1 (Brodribb 1987, Fig. 19) These specialist bricks are normally only used in fairly prestigious buildings to form arches or the ribs for arched ceilings. A complete tegula was removed from the tile-lined pit [3060] (*see section 3.2.3. above for details*). A spindle whorl also comes under this heading having been fashioned from reused tile.

**3.3.4: GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL (Barber, 2014b)**

Most of the stone collected came from the local Wealden district to the north and mainly comprised clay ironstone with some sandstone. Whilst little Downland material was in the assemblage analysed, this was due to the collection policy rather than its absence on site with a good quantity of flint nodules being observed and recorded. These flints could only have reached the site by man’s intervention as the site is upstream of the Downs. Whilst some of the Wealden stone could have arrived naturally via the river the amount, size, and in some cases evidence of working, suggest that it was mainly transported to the site intentionally.

Other items of note in this section were the 46 fragments of quernstone material, both of Wealden greensand and German lava-stone, which included a nearly whole lower stone in Lodsworth greensand (3.17). These fragments of probably discarded querns suggest cereal processing within the general settlement area. There was also a fragment of a Kimmeridge shale bracelet from Dorset suggesting a possible link via the river to the coastal trade.



*3.17: Lodsworth greensand quern stone*

**3.3.5: METALURGICAL MATTER (Barber, 2014c)**

The 264 pieces of slag recovered included fuel ash slag, furnace lining, smelting slag and smithing slag, suggesting small-scale industrial activity on site unless material was brought down from the iron working sites in the Weald for such uses as road surfacing. Future excavation within the main settlement area may resolve which of these possible sources was dominant, but whilst some local crafting is almost certain, a connection with the Wealden iron trade would also not be unlikely given the settlement’s location at the junction of the ‘Iron Way’ (Margary’s London-Lewes road) with the tidal reach of the Ouse.

**3.3.6: METAL (Barber, 2014d)**

The metalwork collected is dominated by iron being mostly nails ranging from small hobs to large carpentry nails with one joiner’s dog (a large staple for joining timbers). The finds came from all areas of the site and from throughout the Romano-British period with the majority being

from the general occupation layers. Other iron objects included part of a key and a 115mm long stylus, but other items may well be hidden in the collection of corroded miscellany.

Twenty four items of lead were collected from the later Roman deposits included a further biconical weight with residual iron hooks suggesting statera or possibly plum-bob use (3.18). The amount of amorphous lead lumps on site suggests that lead was being re-melted on site and possibly indicates the use as fishing weights.

Four copper-alloy Roman period bow brooch fragments were found, of which one was designated as early-Roman and the others later. A 2<sup>nd</sup> century disk brooch was also recovered.



*3.18: Biconical lead weight (19.5mm maximum diameter)*

#### **3.3.7: GLASS (Barber, 2014e)**

The 73 pieces of glass collected were all judged to be of Roman period date. Most were of uncertain form but there were 3 beads (3.19), 11 bottle shards, 4 bowl fragments, and 11 pieces of window glass. The range of forms and colours was varied which is not unusual for a Romano-British site. The beads may indicate the presence of women with the window glass either suggesting a higher class building nearby or possibly a collection and/or shipping point for cullet (waste glass) for recycling.



*3.19: Glass 'melon' bead (16mm diameter)*

#### **3.3.8: HUMAN CREMATION (Ives 2014)**

A vessel containing flecks of charcoal and 652g burnt bone was found in Trench 4. Sufficient fragments were identified as human and fully formed to suggest that this was the burial of a single adult. The identified skeletal elements included six tooth roots and fragments of skull, humeri, ulnae, radii, femora, tibiae, fibulae, ribs, sacrum and vertebrae. Six iron fragments suggest the remains of a buckle or other clothing fixtures worn by the deceased on the funeral pyre.

#### **3.3.9: ANIMAL BONE (Robertson, 2014a)**

The animal bone analysis was undertaken by AOC Archaeology in Edinburgh. It was a fairly small assemblage and adjudged to be domestic rubbish derived from activities such as food preparation and cooking, even though none of the fragments showed any obvious signs of butchery.

#### **3.3.10: WATERLOGGED & CHARRED WOOD (Robertson, 2014b)**

The waterlogged and charred wood was also analysed by Jackaline Robertson and comprised birch, hazel and alder round-wood with oak timber offcuts. A large quantity of charcoal from the kiln feature was found to be mostly fragments of oak with some small birch round-wood.

### 3.3.11: CHARRED PLANT & CHARCOAL REMAINS (Allen, 2014)

Dr Mike Allen carried out the analysis of the environmental samples taken from the excavation. He noted charred grain in only 2 samples being from pits [3003] (fill 3007) and [3008] (fill 3006) in Trench 3 which also had appreciable concentrations of charcoal. These samples also contained charred weed seeds as did 3 other contexts (1025, 3010 and 4004). However they were all in low quantities and '*some of them questionable*' (Allen 2014). Charcoal was noted in most samples, but in contrast to Robertson's report above, was significantly missing in the samples from the possible 'kiln' suggesting to Allen that this feature was thoroughly cleaned out after last use. Dr Allen highlights the lack of cereal caryopses in the samples as a whole suggesting that if domestic and crop processing activities were present, they did not occur within, or adjacent to, the areas excavated in 2013, which may indicate a non-domestic function to this area of the site (Allen, 2014, pp.2&7). This should be borne in mind when assessing the quernstone fragments described above. Further analysis undertaken on the charcoal, pollen and water-logged plant remains could provide information about the local lived-in environment.

### 3.3.12: GREASY DEPOSIT FROM THE 'BURNING' PIT [3070]

We still await a definitive answer on the 'greasy' deposit (3067) found in the pit in Trench 3 which we took to be a residue from later reuse of this feature. Whilst we initially thought this might be an extract of animal fat, such as tallow, Dr Allen kindly arranged for Dr Oliver Criag, of the University of York, to analyse the substance for us. It was dissolved in DCM/Methanol with sonication and analysed by gas chromatography (GC). The analysis revealed no peaks on the GC other than the internal standard and Dr Craig is therefore confident that the substance is not tallow or that it contained organic compounds that are verifiable by GC analysis. So, still no definitive answer for this substance that Dr Allen considered out of the ordinary when compared with the other deposits excavated.

### 3.3.13: PREHISTORIC FLINT (Butler, 2014)

An assemblage of 728 flints was examined by Chris Butler comprising mostly of hard and soft hammer-struck flakes of Downland flint, plus some blades, scrapers and 2 arrowheads (3.20). The majority of the assemblage was Mesolithic to Early Neolithic although the larger hard struck flakes were deemed Later Neolithic to Bronze Age. Implements were rare making up only 3% of the assemblage which is of a similar 'derived/residual' nature as that found by CAP in their nearby Culver Farm excavations.



*3.20: Late-Neolithic/Early Bronze Age tanged and barbed arrow head*

## 3.4: SOME DELIBERATIONS ON THE 2013 EVIDENCE

The pottery and coin reports have further confirmed the longevity of this Romano-British settlement with the pottery report providing a basis for dating some of the features, including crucially the intersecting ditches of the open settlement and bivallate enclosure. It has also allowed some chronological grouping of other less determinable materials.

It would appear from the small area of the main site excavated in Trench 1 that the open settlement was founded in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and developed its formal infrastructure during the late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. Late in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century the settlement was enclosed by a double ditch that could indicate a change in relationship with the wider environment, as potentially less traffic arrived from the Weald iron workings and communication increased to the east, using the road to Arlington and Anderida (Pevensey). The industrial area uncovered in Trench 3 which appears to date mainly from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century continuing in use through to the mid-4<sup>th</sup>. No further resolution has been possible on the use of the large circular burning pit with some basic form of tile kiln still being the currently favoured interpretation. It would certainly not be unreasonable to expect some form of tile production adjacent to a nucleated settlement with a nearby villa complex. Cunliffe (1973, 120) observes the close proximity of tile clamps to other settlements in Sussex and postulates the existence of clamps where local need arose. Whilst we have an indication that the tile-lined pit was in use after AD 270, what that use was still remains a mystery. Many theories abound and one can imagine that such a structure could have been utilised in a wide variety of procedures or for the storage of materials.

Some of the materials analysed have indicated potential activities in the settlement as well as possible trading and even administrative connections. This includes possible links to the iron industry with some on-site smelting and smithing, albeit possibly only on a local craft scale. Not unexpectedly processing of agricultural products has also been indicated by the fragments of quernstones although whether commercial or just domestic is not clear and the absence of cereal remains in the environmental samples suggests that processing was most likely not occurring in the specific areas excavated. The pivotal location of the site is strengthened by its possible connections with Fishbourne, the Weald and its access by the River Ouse to coastal trade.

The outer enclosure ditches are approximately 185m long enclosing an area of ground internally approaching 2.4ha; this compares to under 1ha for the *mansio* enclosures at Alfoldean and Iping and equates more closely to the double-ditched enclosed area of 2.5ha of the settlement at Neatham, Hampshire (Millett & Graham, 1986, p. 157). It appears to have its main access midway along the eastern side with the entrance off set, rather than in line as is more usual in early military forts and *mansiones*. This entrance is adjacent to a triangular 'open area' immediately to the east of the defended area at the junction of the northern and eastern roads. Ernest Black has suggested this as a likely location for a market place which could indicate an economic/trading shift and/or a possible change of priority for the settlement to other locations in the region. The geophysical images do not show clear access in the earthwork enclosure to the north implying that when these were installed the main focus may have become east-west. The late 2<sup>nd</sup> century date for the enclosure however, seems too early for a major decline in relevance to the settlement of the Wealden iron industry but could herald the rise in importance of the port and subsequent Saxon shore-fort of *Anderita* (Pevensey). The proposed late 2<sup>nd</sup> century date does correspond with the widespread provision of earthwork defences of both towns and settlements across the south east of the country at this time (Black, 1995, 61). Woodfield (1995) suggests this might be due to a '*contagion spreading from the south-east*' possibly linked to either '*an incursion by*

*the Chauci as a preliminary to their attack on north-east Gaul in the early 170s' or 'a purely internal revolt, perhaps by the peasantry, which threatened the security of the roads and the official traffic they carried'. Rudling & Russell (2015, 158) in researching reasons for the degrading of Bignor Villa during the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century look towards civil unrest or disease, in particular the Antonine Plague, as possible causes of rural disruption. They alert us to the devastating impact on the Empire caused by this long lasting plague, potentially affecting large numbers of the peasantry, draining the rural economy which could have culminated in desperate attacks on villas and market settlements. They give several examples of destruction at villa sites, including Bignor, during this period which may have led to a policy of providing defensive enclosures.*

But can ditches really be deemed defensive, particularly against armed raiders, if no evidence of military occupation is discovered? Should we alternatively see these enclosures as an extension of state control of those settlements with an official function and/or a potentially strategic location?

### **3.5: COMPARISONS WITH WESTHAWK & ALFOLDEAN**

The longevity of occupation suggested by the coin data encourages comparisons with settlements such as Westhawk Farm, near Ashford, established on an important road junction from the Weald to Canterbury and Lympne just after the conquest and showing coin evidence for activity to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century (Booth, et al., 2008). This complex, nucleated settlement, stretching over 15ha, has been categorized as a small town or market village, despite the rural character of some marginal areas. It comprised timber buildings in both round and rectilinear forms located side by side throughout the period, but with the latter becoming slightly more prevalent from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. A shrine set in a small rectangular enclosure in an open space was the only obvious public building discovered within the settlement with the cemetery being outside the north-west boundary. Evidence of iron working, in the form of both smelting and smithing, was found although seemingly indicating local craft production rather than a major industrial site. Another similarity between the sites is the presence of a quantity of lead, biconical, steelyard weights at both locations. The presence of such weights at Westhawk was taken as an urban characteristic (Booth, et al., 2008, p. 154 & 392) and, together with the styli found at Bridge Farm, indicates probable commercial and/or administrative activity. The economic emphasis of Westhawk was interpreted by Booth *et al* (2008, p. xix) as based on agriculture and local market services, with a possible administrative role in the iron trade, and given the parallels in location and artefacts it is tempting to predict a similar pattern for the Wellingham settlement. With some areas outside the enclosure still to be surveyed the open settlement at Bridge Farm may well stretch over an area approaching that found at Westhawk and a similar predominance of timber buildings might explain the modest amount of Roman tile collected in the field walking survey in 2011 (*see table 2.1*).

The coin assemblage noted by Winbolt at Alfoldean shows a period from Nero to Valentinian, AD 54-375 (Luke & Wells, 2000, p. 94), similar to that at Wellingham if we ignore the coins from the Republican era which were probably still in circulation in the late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

### 3.5: COMPARISONS WITH WESTHAWK & ALFOLDEAN

The Westhawk excavation had only 10 coins post-dating AD 235 out of the 237 collected, with only one Republican and a single 4<sup>th</sup> century coin, although a slightly wider range was collected by metal detecting over a larger area (Booth, et al., 2008, p. 135). The coin evidence so far gained from Wellingham would seem to indicate the settlement being in existence at least as early as Westhawk and Alfoldean with the possibility of a longer continuation of activity, either despite, or because of, the changes to its form and possibly its function with the building and subsequent infilling of the enclosure ditches.

Whilst Westhawk, being under imminent threat of a housing development, was the subject of a large, developer funded, open area excavation, the Wellingham site is in a rural location under mixed farmland, with the main settlement area being subjected to an arable rotation. Investigation of the site will therefore be on a much more targeted basis, likely to last over a number of years, as and when the acquisition of funding allows and specific objectives demand. The possibility that the settlement may be constructed of mainly timber buildings, as was the case at Westhawk, may mean that larger open area excavation may, however, need to be considered in future project designs.

An interesting result from Westhawk was the survey into how the various non-ferrous artefacts were collected which showed that a significant majority of the heavier solid pieces were found by metal detecting in the plough soil, whereas the lighter finer and flatter pieces were discovered during excavation. This is particularly relevant with regard the steelyard weights where 8 of the 9 Westhawk examples were found from unstratified collection and suggests that the assemblage of lead weights at Bridge Farm should not be taken as an indication that there will be a lot more awaiting discovery during excavation. Encouragingly the scarcity of light jewellery and cosmetic items in the unstratified finds does not signify a potential dearth of such items on the site, as these were mainly found in excavation at Westhawk (Booth, et al., 2008, pp. 158-9).

### 3.6: VICUS, MUTATIO OR MANSIO?

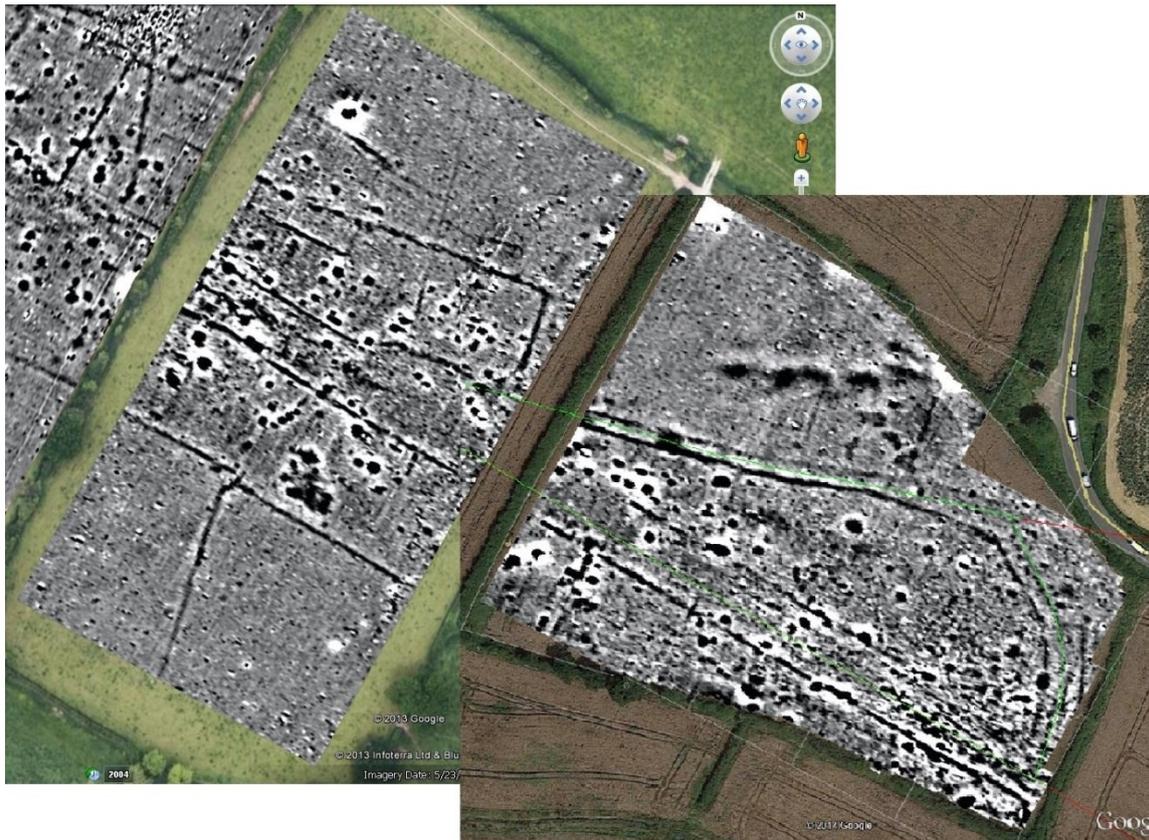
Ernest Black (1995 pp. 12-15) in his researches into the infrastructure of government in Roman Britain compares the intervals of facilities provided for official travellers. He identifies varying levels with *mansiones* supplying a full range of overnight accommodation, bathing and stabling offered in a range of qualities dependant on the status of the officials. In examining *Stane Street*, in comparison to routes that appear in the *Antonine Itinerary*, he concludes that a *mansio* was built at Alfoldean, being the midway stop at 52k (35.5 Roman miles) from London and 40k (27 Roman miles) from Chichester. The intermediate settlements at Dorking and Ewell, being 17k and then a further 14k to the north, and Hardham, being 17.5k to the south, he suggests were also *vici* but unlikely to have had purpose-built *mansio*-type accommodation. These intermediate staging posts would have been more regularly used as a *mutatio* for acquiring fresh transport and offering a safe overnight resting place for cargo vehicles such as ox carts. It may be no matter of chance that Bridge Farm is located approximately 13k from the settlement sites at Arlington in the east and Hassocks in the west, with similar distances to both the coast and the iron production works in the Weald. Its location is thus a day's journey with a loaded ox-cart to the next settlement in each direction.

It would seem likely that the Bridge Farm settlement would have been a *vicus* of this latter type, providing more basic *mutatio* assistance rather than being equipped with a *mansio*. This role would still have required some provision of facilities and staffing raising the possibility of state encouragement for the founding settlement. Less formal accommodation was often made available either within the general settlement or at other nearby establishments and Black (1995, p. 89) mentions that detached bathhouses provided for the use of official travellers were often in peripheral locations. Although he warns that such a use should not be assumed without other supporting evidence it is tempting to see this as a possible explanation for the size and location of the large detached bathhouse adjacent to the Barcombe villa complex.

The *Cursus Publicus* not only required facilities for fast travelling officials but also for the slower moving foot travellers and goods vehicles that would require more frequent overnight stops and a secure environment for their consignments. The need for such a facility at the junction of two major roads and a navigable river could well have encouraged the formation of the original settlement which at that time was possibly an undertaking in the remit of the client kingdom of Togidubnus. Could such an official function and the protection of animals, wagons and cargo against theft and pilfering be sufficient cause for the subsequent provision of earthwork defences? Such ditched defences were widely provided in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century to towns, *vici* and *mansiones* attesting to the importance given by the authorities to the security of a range of settlements (Black, 1995, pp.61 & 89).

### 3.7: MORE GEOPHYSICS AT BRIDGE FARM AND BEYOND

From the autumn of 2013 CAP with David Staveley continued with the geophysical investigations to the east of Bridge Farm (3.21) which extended the known route of the road and the adjacent roadside activity. The road seems to divide in the eastern field with a loop to the north before heading towards Ringmer. David with the Ringmer Roman Studies Group located this road up again just to east of Ringmer village and traced it past Laughton Place, further confirming the route of the road towards Arlington and therefore being the same road exposed by Greg Chuter at Wilbees Farm.

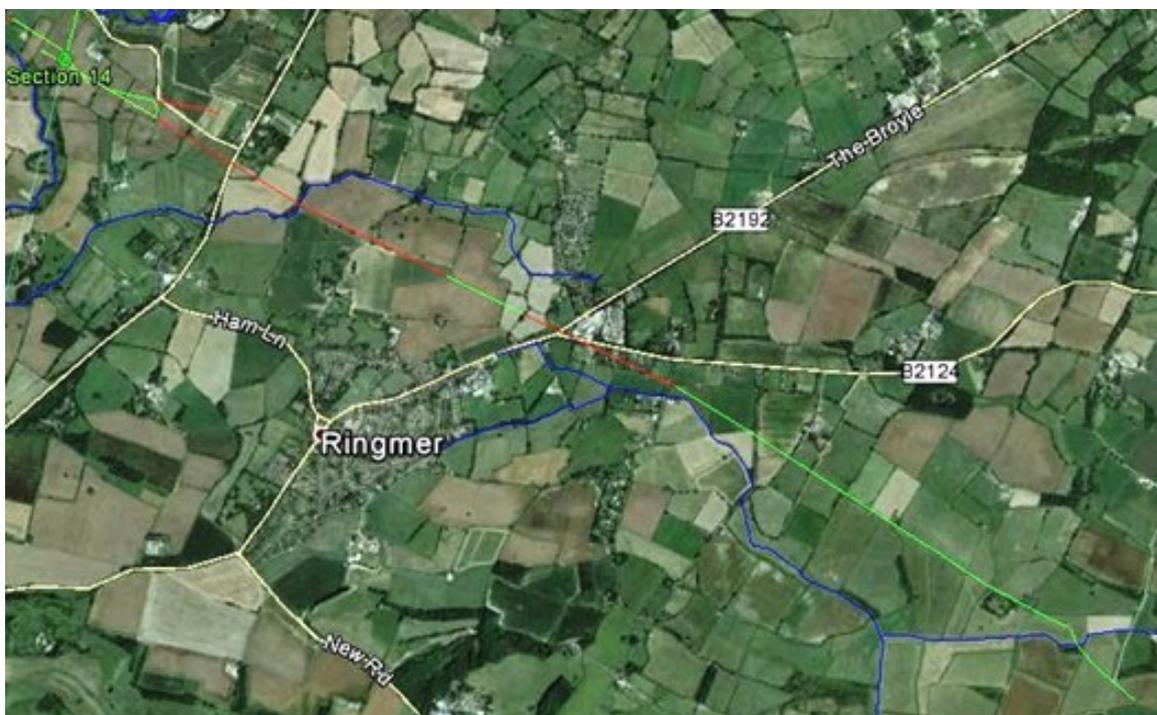


*3.21: Magnetometer results from the fields east of Bridge Farm showing the road seemingly dividing before heading towards Ringmer, Laughton & Arlington (D. Staveley, 2013 & 2014)*

CAP also carried out a magnetometer survey along the road that we designated ‘Stroude Street’, the northeast – southwest Roman road through Culver and Cowlease Farms, on the west bank of the river and to the south of the villa, as it heads towards either Offham bostal or Landport Bottom; either would provide a possible land route over the South Downs to the coast. Excavations at Pond Field and Courthouse Field on Culver Farm from 2006 to 2010 proved this road to be a substantial structure 5-6m wide, constructed mainly of a consolidated layer, up to 400mm deep in places (3.22), of large Downland flints, originally topped with gravel and sand as evidenced in the fills of the roadside ditches. The surveying of the general area around Bridge Farm and the Barcombe Villa complex, involving both volunteers and students, is an ongoing aim of the project (3.23).



3.22: *The substantial Roman road exposed in Court House Field, Culver Farm in 2009*



3.23: *Google Earth image with route of eastern road: proven in green and projected in red (D. Staveley, 2015)*

## 4. 2014: NO MAJOR GRANT BUT INCREDIBLE FINDS

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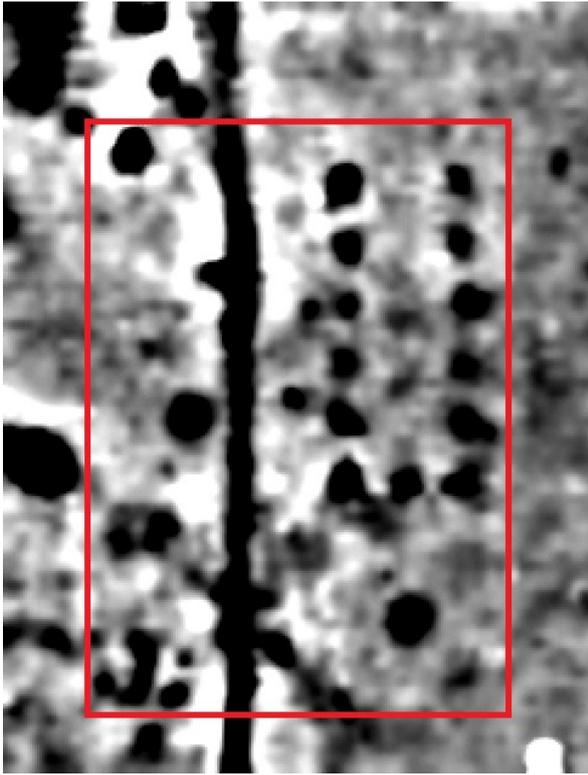
### 4.1: SUMMER EXCAVATION: TRENCH 5

In the summer of 2014 CAP excavated an area to the west of the enclosed settlement in a field of permanent grassland known as Five Acres (4.1). A recent magnetometer survey conducted by David Staveley had shown 13 round anomalies forming an 18 by 6 metre rectangle (4.2). The CAP directors believed these represented the pattern of postholes for a building and, if correct, this would be the first substantial building excavated at Bridge Farm.

The dig, which as usual was open to volunteers and students, ran through July and into early August with over 60 people turning out to help during the six week period, despite a modest charge to defray the basic excavation costs. The only other funding during the year was a small grant from the University of Sussex Archaeology Society (USAS) towards the project's insurance premium. The success of the 2014 dig once again validated CAP's aim of encouraging community interest in the discovery and appreciation of the local historic environment.



*4.1: Geophysical survey image with location of Trench 5 in relation to 2013 trenches and the enclosed settlement (geophysical survey image by D. Staveley)*

4.2: *Geophysics plot of excavation area*4.3: *Drone shot of the completed excavation*

From the removal of the overburden the site duly revealed a variety of ditches, pits, hearths, and post holes, including the 13, one metre wide, holes that formed the rectangular feature in the geophysics (4.2 & 4.3). In the first 3 weeks the team concentrated on the western half of the site, tracing three major ditches and numerous small posts and stake holes, as well as two hearths. Whilst the hearths still require further analysis, initial interpretation favours one (Feature 2), which contained pottery dating to AD 70-250, being a smelting hearth or possibly an oven. It abuts the ditch running down the centre of the site (Feature 1) which contained pottery mainly from c. AD 70 – 150. The other hearth (Feature 7), which contained several lumps of iron slag as well as pottery dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> or even early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, may be the remains of a secondary forging hearth. As discussed in Section 3, local small-scale ironworking would not be unexpected adjacent to a large settlement so accessible to the western production area of Wealden iron.

Two large pits (Features 9 & 10), fully excavated after half-sectioning, have been interpreted as shallow wells for gathering surface water from the highwater table. Both needed constant bailing and/or pumping out during excavation as apparently clear water rushed in from the sides (4.4). One of the pits (F9) was particularly interesting as towards its base was a layer of large stones (4.5), which although from the general district were mainly foreign to the site, comprising Downland chalk (42%), Paludina limestone (27%), various Wealden sandstones (14%) and Downland flint (12%). This layer had blackened animal bones beneath it (mostly from cattle) and waterlogged roundwood above; the latter possibly representing the remains of a wattle superstructure or lining. Just above this layer was found a large piece of waterlogged timber, SF536 (4.6). The fills surrounding this layer were 100% sampled by floatation with some success producing; a House of Constantine coin (AD 330-335) a plain, brass, wrap-around, finger ring

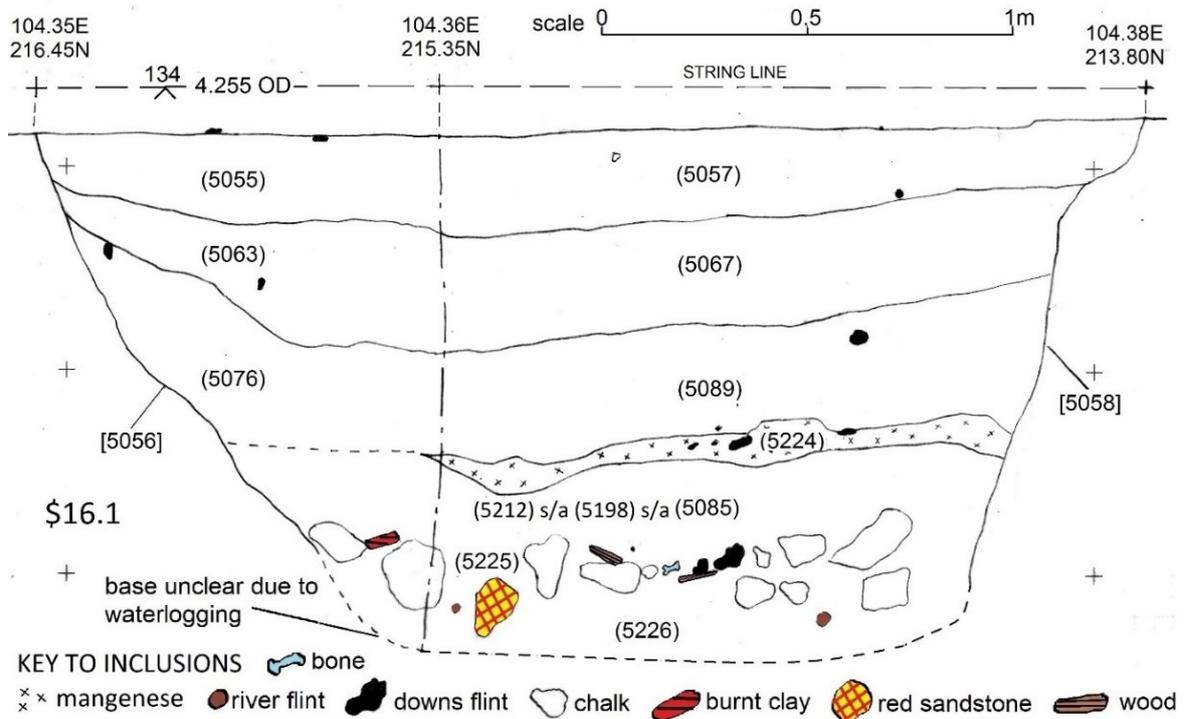
(4.7a) and a fine turned disk/spindle whorl (4.7b). A rather unpromising lump of earth turned out to be the back half of a leather shoe/sandal with *in situ* hobnails (4.7c). The unexpected wealth of artefacts in this pit together with the need for constant pumping of the fast-inflowing water meant that excavation took all 6 weeks of the dig. Pottery recovered from the lowest fill of this feature has been dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century.



a: the late David Lea with SF536

b: Rob Wallace (director) and John Kane

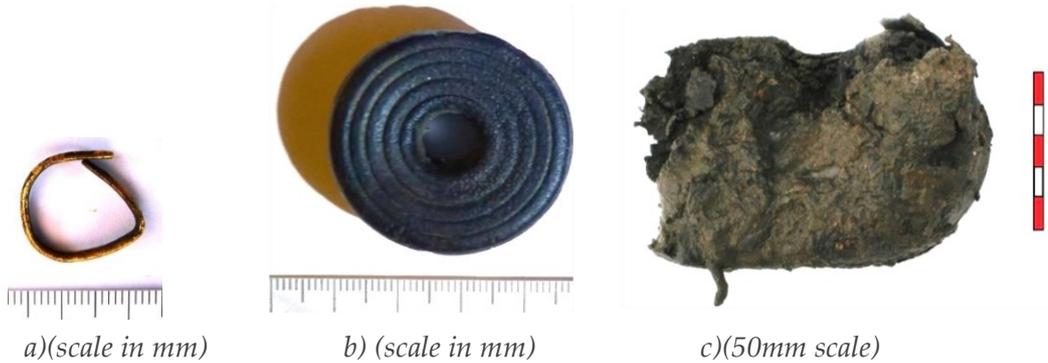
4.4 Excavating, pumping and metal detecting in Pit F9



4.5: Section drawing through Pit F9



4.6: Waterlogged timber SF536 removed from context (5212) in pit F (500mm scale)



4.7: Artefacts from the well: a) wrap-around ring; b) turned disk; c) heel of the 'Roman shoe'

## 4.2: THE THIRTEEN POSTHOLES REVEALED

The final three weeks were allocated to the excavation of the 13 large postholes (4.8) and a series of smaller adjacent postholes, later interpreted as being from a building of a different phase. At first it was thought that these 1-1.5m wide holes were disappointingly shallow but then it was remembered that in 2013 many features had a hardpan layer above their lowest fill and it was decided to test a couple of the holes to see if this also applied here. With the hardpan removed a series of 400-500mm diameter post-pipes were revealed.



4.8: Locating the 13 larger postholes with ranging poles



4.9: A bailed out post base

These were half sectioned with some difficulty as they were discovered to average over a metre in depth and were partially below the water-table. Then, at the bottom of one was discovered

the *in situ* remains of a waterlogged post. A busy period ensued during the last few days of the dig as all 13 post holes subsequently revealed *in-situ* post-bases (4.9). These, whilst exciting in themselves, being the rotted remains of the bases of probably every main post of a large timber-frame building, turned out to be just the entrée as when trying to feel under one of the posts (PH9) to record its depth another timber was felt to be lying flat beneath it and this one felt as if it was carved! A decision was made to remove the fragmented post base to inspect the timber below which was verified as being a sawn timber with some form of carving and appeared quite robust. Careful excavation of the surrounding soils and river gravels was undertaken, mainly by bare hands at full arm stretch (4.10), until the timber could be lifted out safely without risk to its integrity.



*4.10: Excavating the posts by hand; the head first technique!*

The revealed artefact, which came from a sealed Roman-British context, was a prepared timber with an ogee-shaped end and a possible lap joint for another timber (4.11). Later another ogival-carved piece and a short section from a heavy beam were also found whilst carrying out the total excavation of this posthole (PH9).



*4.11: The rare carved Roman timbers used as pads for the post in posthole number 9*

Whilst the team knew that any site with waterlogged timbers is of great importance and that carved timbers from Roman sites are rare, particularly in Sussex, they were not fully aware of how important these items were until being put in touch with Damian Goodburn, an archaeological woodwork specialist, by the Museum of London. He confirmed the scarcity of architectural moulded timbers of the Roman period and from a photograph observed that one face had an odd sloping housing cut into it and that the overall form and apparent scale of the timber suggested it came from a relatively high-status structure; but he was unable to define what type of element it was. What we do know is that it became a pad for a post at some time probably during the 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century, of a building that possibly survived until the later 4<sup>th</sup> century (Lyne 2016, 2). Was it just spolia, the reuse of recycled building material, or was there

some more significant meaning in its use in providing closure for a previous structure and/or continuity with the new build? Somethings are 'unknowable' but research into the previous use of these timbers was pursued.

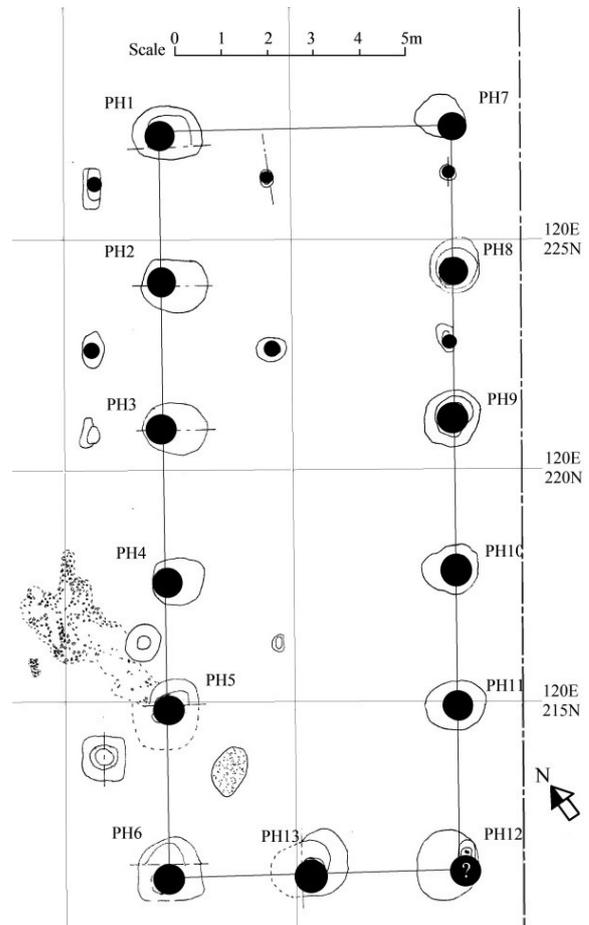
### 4.3: SOME STRUCTURAL SPECULATION

Providing that we keep in mind that the above ground structure can never be proven we can speculate on what the 13 post holes might represent by firstly imagining them set out with large upright timbers rather than thin red and white ranging poles used on site (4.12).



4.12: Site with 13 computer-generated 'posts' added

The footprint of the 13 postholes at around 16 by 6.4 metres and the size of the posts at c.450mm diameter suggest that we are looking at a substantial building (4.13). The building would have been of similar size and configuration (minus one end post) to the 0.80m deep range of foundation holes for the temple building at Springhead, Kent, (Andrews, 2008, p.52: Andrews et al, 2011, p.61). Whilst Springhead is interpreted as a religious centre, the Bridge Farm building, with its location on the outskirts of a settlement close to river, would more likely have been for storage and/or domestic use. Whilst evidence seems scarce in East Sussex, Kent can supply several closely comparable 14 post buildings e.g. Westhawk, (building D) 14 x 7m, Thurnham, 15 x 7m (Booth, 2008, p. 377), and Keston, (centre timber building) 14.9 x 6.5m (Philp et al 1991, 298). Most of these buildings have been dated loosely to mid/late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and were originally thought to be simple rectangular structures. Whilst these *comparanda* appear to be earlier than the Bridge Farm building, where a date of late 3<sup>rd</sup> century is suggested by the pottery assessment (Lyne 2016), such structures are likely to be



4.13: Plan of the 13 large & 6 smaller posts

ubiquitous for the entire Romano-British period.

We know the building was timber-framed and apparently without a central post in the north east elevation, suggesting that this was possibly the main access point. The site yielded virtually no Roman tile, suggesting that any structure probably had a thatch or possibly shingle roof; unless we choose to suggest that a tiled roof was carefully removed for reuse elsewhere when the building was decommissioned. The

probability of an area this close to the river to flood may suggest that any building would have likely been provided with a raised floor, although such construction usually involved a mass of closely packed posts which is not indicated in the archaeology. Putting all this speculation together you might arrive at a building that looked something like that in figure 4.14, or admittedly many other equally feasible interpretations. At Crookhorn Farm, Purbrook, Hampshire, an aisled building of similar plan, although possibly truncated, had surrounding foundations for outer walls (Soffe et al 1989, 49-56), as did a barn at Wakerley, Northamptonshire (Jackson and Ambrose 1978, 139). Jackson and Ambrose (1978, 140) suggest that aisled barns were quite common in the late Roman period in the Northampton and Peterborough area with examples occurring at sites such as Oakley, Orton Longueville and Castor. They also note that a common feature of these building is that the combined width of the 2 aisles equals the width of the nave and that the length of the building is often twice its width.

This weight of evidence raises the possibility that the Bridge Farm posts provided the main support for an aisled structure rather than the external walls (4.15), even though no trace of the flanking exterior walls was observed as several similar ground-plans in Surrey, including Flexford, Hengrove (Bird 2017, 124) and Building 6 at Beddington (Howell 2005, 33), have been



*4.14: An interpretation of the 13-post building if made of plank walls with a shingle roof  
(Millum after a warehouse at Lunt by Alan Sorrell)*



*4.15: The building if the posts were a supporting aisle of a timber-framed wattle and daub structure with a thatch roof  
(Millum 2017)*

#### 4.4: A GENEROUS GRANT AND A POTTERY REPORT

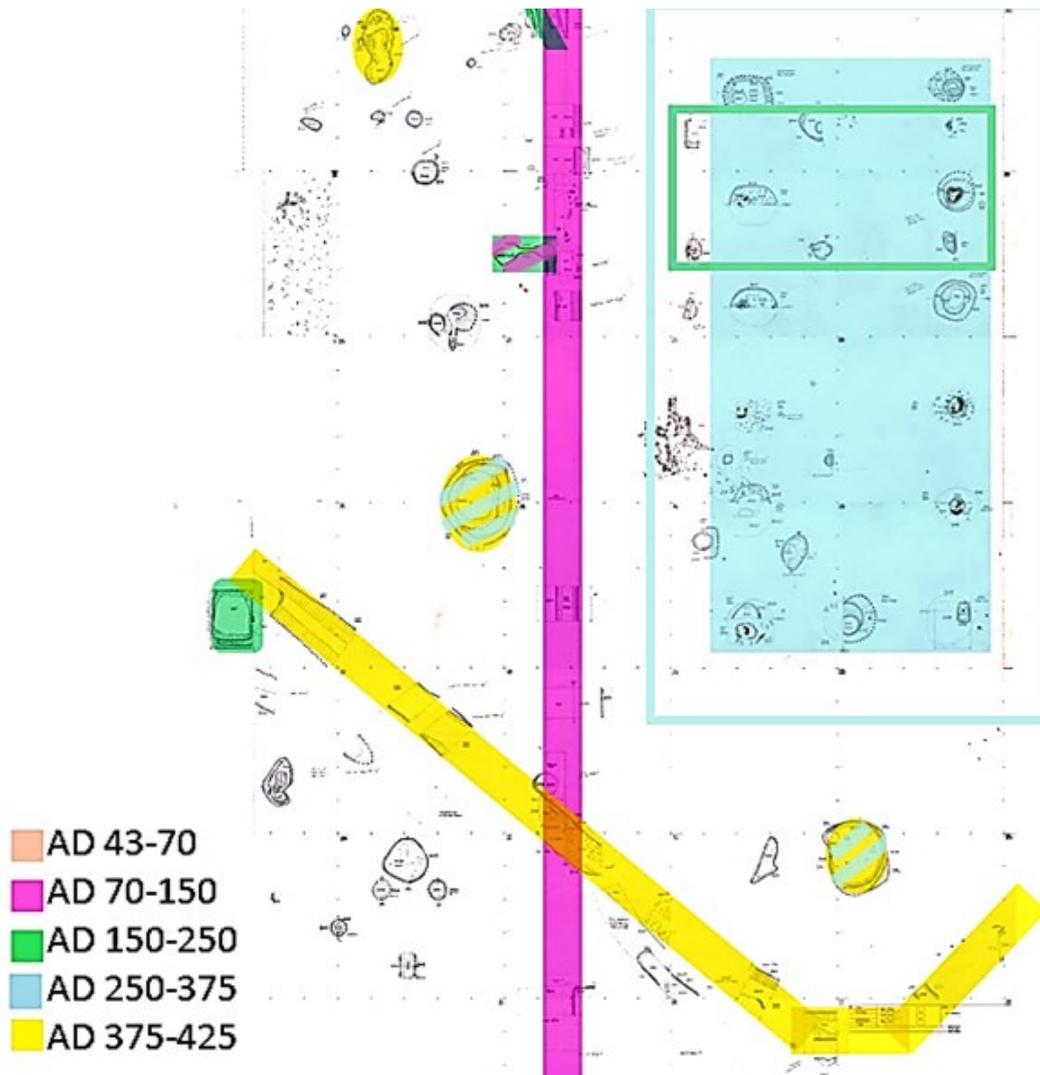
interpreted as being the central naves of aisled structures. If the Bridge Farm example followed the proportions found in the Northants area then its total width including aisles would be around 12.8m with a length of either 22.4m or 18.2m depending on whether it had an aisle at the north end where the missing post suggests the location of the main entrance.

Six smaller post holes, all devoid of timbers, seem to form a smaller rectangle crossing the northern end of the thirteen-posts which could possibly continue beyond the SE trench edge (4.13). These were interpreted as representing a building of a different phase and the absence of any remains of timbers suggested that this building possibly predated the erecting of the 13 large posts; the latter's construction necessitating the complete removal of any earlier timbers on the site. The pottery evidence from the fill of these postholes was not conclusive though a late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century date would not be implausible. This raises the intriguing possibility that this earlier building could be the source of the ogival-carved beams, although a nautical source as has also been proposed by some. Once more *comparanda* from the Surrey area show that this type of building was often replaced, sometimes, as here, at right angles to the previous structure (Bird 2017, 124)

As is invariably the case, 2014's excavation left a demand for post excavation analysis of the artefacts and features, as well as a providing a mountain of flotation residues awaiting attention. The information gained from this work will aid the initial interpretation and phasing of the possible activities on this part of the settlement and will be recorded in the practical report. However due to the unexpected discovery of the waterlogged timbers a large part of our post excavation budget had to go towards their immediate conservation with the specialist finds analysis awaiting the results of grant applications from various specialist societies and the restructuring of our finances in 2015 with the provision of an undergraduate level, training course and a five year contract with Canterbury Christ Church University. In the meantime the directors embarked on their now annual round of presentations to local societies whilst developing plans for next year's excavation on this large and potentially nationally important site.

#### 4.4: A GENEROUS GRANT AND A POTTERY REPORT

In 2016 we were awarded a £2000 grant by the Roman Research Trust to fund the post-excavation assessment on the pottery assemblage from the 2014 excavations. The pottery assessment was undertaken by Dr Malcolm Lyne who is an acknowledged expert in this field and has produced reports for our previous assemblages from the 2013 trenches and our Pond Field and Court House Field excavations at Culver Farm. He also undertook assessments on the nearby Barcombe villa and bathhouse sites and the Wickham Barn kiln site at Chiltonington. This was considered to be the specialist report of prime importance in assisting initial interpretation of this area of the site. The report, as well as detailing the various fabrics, type of vessel and manufacturer, also gave date ranges to various features where the evidence rendered this possible. This has allowed for the initial phasing of the archaeology as well as suggesting various periods of activity (4.16).



4.16: Excavation plan with suggested phases based on data from Lyne's pottery assessment

#### 4.4.1: The Pottery (Dr Malcolm Lyne, 2014)

The excavation yielded 7,361 sherds, weighing 73,026g, from the Roman period between AD 70/100 and the early 5th century with most belonging to the late Roman period with a coarse vessel of a flint tempered fabric possibly being sub-Roman. None of the pottery appears to be prehistoric or pre-Flavian.

The pottery collected from the central ditch F1, including 185 sherds from the eastern main ditch and 197 from the northern spur, came from the period 4, AD 70-150 but with a small amount from period 5, AD 150-250, included in the 284 sherds from southwestern half of the feature. Both areas included sherds of a greyware rusticated jar. The 16 sherds from the lower fill of the banjo hearth F2 were dated to AD 70-150 with the 52 sherds from the upper fill given AD 150-250, suggesting 2nd century activity. The largest assemblage of 710 sherds came from the ill-defined pit where ditch F3 hits the northwest baulk was 3rd century and included fabrics from the nearby kilns at Wickham Barn, Chiltington.

The pottery collected from the postholes of the structure F4 was limited and gave an ambiguous result: 10 sherds from the posthole of PH9 included a fragment of a coarse Wickham Barn jar from c. AD 270-350 whilst the 72-sherd assemblage from the upper fill of PH 13 (5003) dated to

the late 3rd century with the latest sherd being dated post AD 270. With no other constructional post assemblages to consult it would seem likely that structure F4 was erected during the last years of the 3rd century. The post pipes yielded very little pottery but what there was tended to be 3rd and 4th century with the pipes of PH8 & 10 having sherds from post AD 370 suggesting that the structure in some form probably survived until the late 4th century.

Pits F9 and F10 provided 568 and 218 sherds respectively including late 4th century sherds in the individual layers indicating that these features were not backfilled until the last years of Roman occupation. The lowest waterlogged fill of F9 (5226) contained a 46-herd assemblage dating to c. AD 300-370+.

The various sections across the ditches F3 and F8 yielded 633 sherds which suggested a date of AD 350/70-400+ for both features. This assemblage also included fresh sherds from one or more handmade pots with coarse crushed flint and ironstone filler along with some sherds with chaff impressions suggesting that material continued to be deposited into these features well into the 5th century. The rest of the pottery includes significant quantities of East Sussex Ware with siltstone grog, Alice Holt/Farnham greyware, Overwey/Porchester D, Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat and Pevensey ware.

The two fills (5004 & 5053) of the forging hearth F7 contained 159 sherds most of which were residual but included one sherd each of, a Thundersbury storage-jar c. AD 350-400+, and an Overwey horizontally-ribbed jar most likely dating to c. AD 370-420.

#### **4.4.2: Spot dating of the coins (Dr David Rudling)**

We have also obtained spot-dates for the identifiable coins from Dr David Rudling, which he very kindly undertook without charge, which assisted verification of some context phasing.

#### **4.4.3: Future funding for specialist reports**

Rationalisation of the project's annual income from 2015 will allow funds to be made available to cover the analysis of the other artefact assemblages including cbm, metal working debris and environmental samples as these are vital for the full interpretation of the excavation and the activities that occurred in this area. In the meantime, the grant received from the Trust allowed the project to proceed as the pottery assessment enabled preparation of an interim 'grey literature' report on the excavation even though other specialist reports were still outstanding.

## 4.5: A SUMMARY OF OTHER FINDS REPORTS

The involvement of Canterbury Christ Church University from 2015 allowed a build-up in funds sufficient to commission further specialist report on the artefacts from the 2014 excavations in 2017. The following are brief summaries of the main findings from these reports and a fuller account of the analysis of the rare waterlogged timbers.

### 4.5.1: Coins (Dr David Rudling, 2020)

Only 8 of the 22 Roman coins recovered in 2014 were discovered during actual excavation work, the others having been found with the use of a metal detector, mainly from the spoil heaps but also in four cases during metal detecting in the wider field beyond the excavations (these four coins included two Diva Faustina issues of c. AD 141-161). Overall, the Roman coin assemblage of 2014 is similar in composition to earlier discoveries in the same field. One difference is that there was no coin which need date to the 1st or early 2nd century. The 1st-early 3rd century generally however is represented by various possible but illegible Æ coins, and identifiable issues dating to the period c. AD 140 to AD 190 were three Æ coins of Faustina Senior (AD 139-161), one of Faustina Junior (AD 146-175), two coins of Lucius Verus (AD 161-9), and a base, once plated, denarius of Commodus (AD 177-192). Whilst some of these coins may have continued in circulation during the first half of the 3rd century, there is perhaps a surprising absence of coins which can definitely be attributed to this period. Even more surprising is the fact that there are only two radiate antoniniani coins (both barbarous issues of c. AD 270-85); normally both regular and irregular coins of this type are very common. There is then a gap in the coin sequence, as with the coins collected previously in this field by Cunningham, until the 330s/40s, another time of often prolific coin use/loss. Identifiable coin types include: Constantine II as Caesar (GLORIA EXERCITVS type, two soldiers and two standards: AD 333-4) and Constans as Augustus (VICTORIAE DD AVGG Q NN, two Victories: AD 347-8). The BF14 Roman coin assemblage ends with two barbarous issues of the House of Constantine (FEL TEMP REPARATIO, soldier spearing a fallen horseman: c. AD 350-60). It lacks any coins of the House of Valentinian which is represented by two coins in the Cunningham collection.

The stratified coins from the excavations include a commemorative Divus sestertius of Verus (c. AD 169) from the top of the large pit at the NW baulk. Given the worn condition of this coin it could have remained in circulation until the mid-3rd century, after which such coins ceased to be issued or used. Four coins were recovered



**4.17: Coin of Constantine II AD333-4 from the base of the well F9**

from the lower fills of the well (F009) including a Barbarous Radiate of c. AD 270-285 (context 5212), a coin of Constantine II as Caesar of AD 333-4 (context 5212) (4.17), a barbarous copy of a House of Constantine fallen horseman coin of c. AD 350-360 (context 5198), and another unidentified mid-4th century bronze coin (context 5198). The dating range of these four coins, c.

AD 270-360, compares favourably with the dating of the pottery assemblage from the waterlogged lowest fill of the well/pit which Malcolm Lyne gives as c. AD 300-370+.

#### 4.5.2: Other metal artefacts (Luke Barber, 2020)

Most metal objects found during excavation were treated as Special Finds and located to three dimensions with many being sent to University College London for conservation. This assemblage included 62 iron objects most of which were nails of various dimensions, but also included a very corroded item (SF.5.15) which when x-rayed was shaped convincingly like a stylus. The 16 lead items included a slightly domed spindle whorl (SF.5.22) and a conical shaped weight of 283gms with 3 holes, one at the summit and 2 at the base (SF.5.74).

The 10 copper-alloy artefacts included a brass finger ring from the well F9 (SF.5.43) possibly made of the misleadingly named copper alloy 'Abyssinian Gold' (4.7) and a zoomorphic enamelled brooch (SF.5.71) in the form of a leaping hound (4.18) which was found by surface metal detection in the surrounding field.

One of the most interesting finds was also the smallest, a squarish piece of silver (SF.5.82) only 9.4mm by 7.2mm and 1.4mm thick (Fig. 30). Though only 0.63gms it had to be declared under the Treasure procedures and was inspected by Richard Hobbs at the British Museum who recognised the minute scratches on its surface as being the familiar Roman good luck inscription of *VTER FELIX*. He suggested that the object was a bezel for a finger ring from the 4th century.



4.18: Zoomorphic enamelled brooch



4.19: The silver ring bezel inscribed *VTER FELIX*

#### 4.5.3: The Metallurgical Remains (Luke Barber, 2020)

The 2014 excavations recovered considerably more slag than the 2013 work – 2360 pieces, weighing 81,617g, from 110 individually numbered contexts. These totals include just over 10.5kg from 48 environmental residues. All hand-collected material was quantified by count and weight.

The assemblage contained a notable quantity of material that was not iron production slag (shown in faint italic script in the table), such as, the iron concretions natural to the flood plain and the magnetic fines and fuel ash slag that can be caused by any type of burning. However, a number of different types of true slag and hearth linings were present in the assemblage, most of which are associated with iron-working. Dense iron slag, almost certainly from smelting but without the characteristic 'flow' of tap slag, totalled 12 pieces (2606g) and, where dated, most came from Late Roman deposits, including three different post-holes in building F4. Unlike the 2013 excavations smithing slag appears to be far more common in the assemblage and it is most likely that smithing continued throughout the occupation period.

The assemblage is summarised in the following table:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Unstratified/ unphased</b>	<b>ERB: Phases 4-5</b>	<b>LRB: phases 6-7</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>No. contexts</b>	19	16	75	
<i>Iron concretion</i>	160/3320g	18/1034g	812/9122g	<b>990/13,476g</b>
<i>Magnetic Fines</i>	379g	413g	6665g	<b>7457g</b>
<i>Fuel ash slag</i>	9/150g	2/38g	34/429g	<b>45/617g</b>
<b>Hearth Lining</b>	18/398g	12/234g	52/788g	<b>82/1420g</b>
<b>Smelting slag (tap)</b>	2/32g	-	7/706g	<b>9/738g</b>
<b>Smelting slag</b>	4/802g	1/200g	7/1604g	<b>12/2606g</b>
<b>Smithing slag (forge bottom)</b>	2/628g	2/748g	-	<b>4/1376g</b>
<b>Hammerscale</b>	3g	1g	19g	<b>23g</b>
<b>Undiagnostic iron slag (dense)</b>	32/3582g	2/452g	18/7186g	<b>52/11,220g</b>
<b>Undiagnostic iron slag (aerated)</b>	361/10,836g	165/10,622g	639/21,210g	<b>1165/42,668g</b>
<i>Blast furnace</i>	-	1/16g	-	<b>1/16g</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>588/20,130g</b>	<b>203/13,758g</b>	<b>1569/47,729g</b>	

#### 4.5.4: Glass (Luke Barber, 2020)

An assemblage of 111 pieces of glass, weighing 192gms were recovered from 32 individually numbered contexts of which 72 pieces came from deposits dated to the Roman period. On the whole the material was in good condition exhibiting negligible surface corrosion consistent with being of good quality manufacture mainly of mid-late Roman date. Although glass is frequently found on Roman sites of all levels of society, the presence of window fragments clearly indicates a building of some standing. Both matt/gloss and gloss/gloss window glass is present indicating a wide chronological span. A piece of matt/gloss glass was recovered as part of the 21 pieces from the postholes of the building F4 suggesting that this was not the origin of the window glass. The assemblage contains far more late-Roman material than that recovered from the 2013 excavations but its interpretation remains similar. The fact that glass was recovered from virtually all features demonstrates the wide nature of its distribution and it is suspected that the settlement acted as a collection point for cullet, either to be re-melted on site or transported for recycling elsewhere.

#### 4.5.5: Ceramic Building Material and burnt clay): (Luke Barber, 2020)

The excavations recovered 1435 pieces of ceramic building material, weighing 42,815g, from 100 individually numbered contexts. Most deposits produced some ceramic building material in small to medium quantities, typically between 10 and 30 pieces, although the largest context group consisted of 294 pieces (12,430g) from the trench surface (5000). The condition of the assemblage is poor; the material is notably fragmented and most shows notable signs of abrasion. The pieces are often too small to be diagnostic of form. The abrasion on these suggests most have been re-used and/or reworked. The vast majority of the assemblage is of the Roman-period (1427 pieces weighing 42,343g) including fragments of brick (123) and tegula (120), with imbrex (25) and box flue (40), with virtually the entire assemblage recovered from unstratified or Late Roman (Period 6) deposits. The presence of 40 **box flue** tile fragments (weighing 3,206g) is quite notable,

particularly in the absence of a building with a heating system. Whether one or more heated buildings were situated within the settlement (most likely baths) remains to be seen. However, the box flue could also derive as wasters from on-site production as some are overfired and/or as material imported from other sources as general hardcore and building material.

There is a notable quantity of **burnt clay** pieces, some 543 weighing 3,545g. These are usually amorphous in form but a few have flattened faces and a piece from post-pipe (5201) in PH8 has a c.15mm diameter wattle impression. As such this material could be oven/hearth lining or daub. It was found in most contexts with 32 amorphous pieces (77g) coming from the F7 forging hearth. Other forms of note include the three small pieces of briquetage from pit fill (5111) and post-hole PH1 (5251). These hint at some contact with salt-production, probably in the lower Ouse valley.

#### **4.5.6: Geological Material: (Luke Barber, 2020)**

The excavations at the site recovered 1155 pieces of stone, weighing just over 47.5kg, from 80 individual contexts. These totals include 810 pieces (8815g) from 32 different environmental residues. A significant proportion of the assemblage is composed of unmodified pieces of stone that occur naturally on the site including samples of ferruginous conglomerate. Chalk and flint, that must have been brought up-river by man from the Downs, is also present and some 83 pieces of stone can be sourced to the Wealden Beds, mainly up-river of the site.

**Querns:** Fill (5225) of F9 sump/well produced a single fragment from a 32mm thick upper stone of an Upper Greensand rotary quern. As with the 2013 assemblage there are two different types of Lower Greensand (Hythe Beds Sandstone) present, both of which appear to have been used solely for rotary hand-querns. One is the typical Lodsworth type with grey stringers from the West Sussex quarries (Peacock 1987), the other is more common and consists of a slightly softer type with no stringers but denser glauconitic grains, probably from a West Sussex source although a closer one cannot be ruled out. The earliest quern was a 40mm thick Lower Greensand fragment recovered from Period 4 deposits in the F1 central ditch. The remainder of the lower greensand querns were from Period 6 or unstratified deposits. The fragments are notably small and although the presence of upper and lower stones is in evidence no pieces were large enough to establish stone diameter. Thicknesses range between 26 and 75mm and one piece from PH5 (5229) of the F4 building shows edge wear suggesting it was used for sharpening after breakage. Other quern types include a number of amorphous pieces from German lava querns and a 41mm thick fragment of Millstone Grit. All were from Period 6 or unstratified deposits though usually German lava is more common in the earlier part of the Roman period suggesting a high degree of residuality. There is no particular concentration of quern fragments although five came from the examples from the stone layer in F9 sump/well which could indicate a greater number amongst that not retained. Pieces of quern were also recovered from most ditches and the post-holes associated with the F4 building. As such, the material is considered to be a dense background scatter of material within the settlement.

The remaining stone consists of two Kimmeridge shale fragments from two separate post-holes of the F4 building, neither with any obvious form.

**4.5.7: Animal Bone: (Dr Ellie Williams, 2018)**

An assemblage of 204 animal bones and bone fragments were collected from waterlogged deposits, predominantly from the well F9 and therefore preservation was reasonably good although with a high degree of fragmentation. Previous investigation of the general area had shown the survival of bone to be extremely rare unless within a permanent waterlogged environment. Elements from cattle, *equid*, sheep/goat, pig and red deer were present plus a small number of bird, fish, amphibian, and rodent, bones; these smaller bones being largely retrieved by flotation. The assemblage was dominated by cattle and caprine elements at 16% and 10% respectively with 50% being from unidentified mammals. Eight bones exhibited evidence of butchery with some indication of specialist carcass processing. Evidence of burning was recorded on 10 bones and carnivore gnawing was seen on 7 cattle bones and on the *equid humerus*. One piece of red deer antler from the well F9 was recorded as chopped and worked. This small assemblage would appear to represent domestic refuse, the disposal of which permitted access of certain faunal remains by dogs and/or possibly foxes although no evidence of gnawing by rodents was evident.

**4.5.8: Waterlogged leather (Choi, 2015)**

The waterlogged fill of the well (5225) produced the heel of a small leather shoe complete with hobnails plus several small leather straps probably from the same item. The heel, which was held together by the mud it contained, fragmented during conservation.

**4.5.9: Plant material and charcoal: (Allen & Gray, 2018)**

An assessment was made of the 44 floated bulk samples and hand-recovered charcoal pieces comprising 45 flots, 24 sorted residues, 24 charcoal items and 2 leather fragments. Twenty-two of the bulk samples were selected for analysis of the charred and waterlogged plant material and charcoal.

Charred grains and seeds were found in samples from the hearth F2, the forge F7, the well F9 and the building F4, with most coming from the hearth and the well. Short-lived charcoal taxa were found in samples from the central ditch F1, the well F9 and posthole PH1 of building F4. A single germinated spelt grain came from the well and spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.) was the most frequently occurring grain. Charred seeds were scarce. The absence of chaff in the charred plant material could indicate that cereals arrived on the site fully processed.

Waterlogged material from six samples from the well F9 and seven from the building F4 consisted of wild native plant seeds, fruit stones and nut shell. Plants with edible leaves and berries were present suggesting that these were growing nearby or had been gathered for food. Most seeds were from plants common in waste and disturbed nutrient-rich ground, the most frequent being from elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* L) and of the goosegrass family (*Amaranthaceae*).

Of the charcoal samples analysed the most frequently occurring taxa was oak (*Quercus* sp.) being found in the hearth F2, ditch F1, well F9 and PH1 of building F004. Cherry/plum (*Prunus* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior* L.), birch (*Betula* sp.) were also quite widely spread with fragments of yew, hazel and alder less frequent.

There was no evidence for cess disposal or slow-burning aerated fires with most plant remains having been preserved by charring under oxygen reducing conditions, such as in charcoal clamps, bonfire centres, ovens, or raised buildings when smothered by roof material. It is possible that refuse disposal took place in another part of the site and that the well was kept clean for use. Charred grains from the postholes of building F4 are likely to be general background waste rather than from any specific activity. Charred grain and grass seeds present in the hearth F2 could be the waste used as tinder or possibly are residual plant remains. The only charcoal present in this feature was oak, a high-temperature burning species, suggesting specific selection to fuel an oven or a hearth. Hammerscale was present in a sample from the forge F7 and from the well F9 suggesting that iron working was being carried out in the vicinity. No exotic plant remains were found, these being more common in large urban settlements.

#### **4.6: ROMAN PERIOD WOODWORK (Dr Damien Goodburn, 2020)**

The 2014 excavation lies in low lying land close to the flood plain of the River Ouse, but waterlogged horizons preserving the ancient woodwork discussed in this report, were now only found in deep cut features c.0.8m or more down from the modern field surface. This modern field surface although currently pasture has been ploughed and lies at c. + 4.6m AOD. The nature of the decay of the timber elements found suggest that relatively recent drainage during agricultural improvement works may be the cause of some of the decay. However, several of the very lowest timbers found and also lifted for detailed recording and study were still fairly well preserved, though this level of survival is likely to be gradually deteriorating. The surviving timbers include some material that is very rare nationally and are from a county with little surviving woodwork of the Roman period. Given a larger sample of preserved timbers from associated deep cut features close dating using tree-ring study may be possible. Therefore, the reasons for further, closely targeted, excavation of timber bearing, deep features are strong, if resources for the work can be found at some point in the future.

#### ***Evidence of a large Roman period building supported by substantial earth-fast posts; the source of the unusual reused timbers and informative offcuts***

The excavations in Trench 5 revealed evidence of a moderately large rectangular building. This took the form of 13 large postholes or 'post pits', some over 1m across and around 1.0m deep. They were arranged in two parallel rows of 6 running c. NE-SW, spaced c. 6.4m apart, centre to centre, with one centrally placed in what appears to have been a southern, end wall. The decayed traces of post pipes up to c.0.45m across were partially exposed in these deep features and then reburied in most cases. A post pipe 0.45m across may be a relict of a timber once approaching 0.45m or c.1 'cubit' square, a common size for larger oak structural timbers found on waterlogged Roman sites in SE England (e.g. Goodburn 2008, 48-52; Stephenson 2008, 45). It is fairly clear that the recurrence of this cubit width dimension, also common in planking sawn from squared baulks, would fit well with lists of common standard dimensions for timber given in Diocletian's maximum price edict (Meiggs 1982, 366).

Just under 1.0m to the west of the western line of these post pits, a less regular series of 4 smaller post holes were found running parallel on a possible NE–SW line (4.13). It appears possible that the larger postholes housed the aisle posts of a large aisled building and it might just be the case that the smaller outlying, parallel post holes were relicts of the external side walls of the F4 building. The existence of any equivalent external wall posts on the east side is uncertain as the area was just outside the excavation trench. If the symmetrical narrow side aisles truly existed then they would imply a building in total of c. 8.4m wide externally. The length of the building implied from the post pit layout is c. 15.5 to 16.0m.

#### ***Other contexts yielding waterlogged Roman period timber***

Just to the west of the building F4, a little ancient waterlogged wood also survived in an oval well cut F9. The other cut features did not produce waterlogged woodwork.

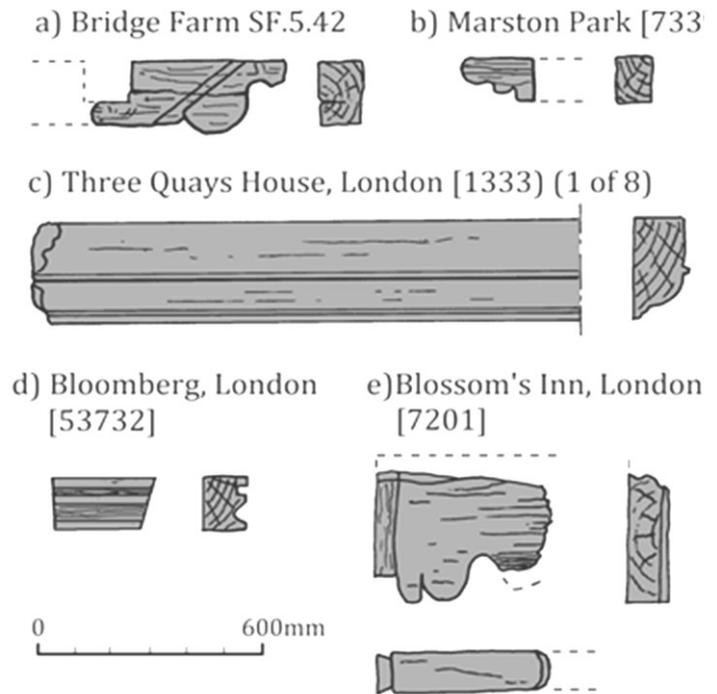
#### ***Roman structural woodworking in the NW section of the empire: and the range of the comparative archaeological material***

For the public and even many archaeologists, Roman buildings and other structures are assumed to have been generally of stone and, or tile, and only rarely of timber. As structures of timber, roundwood and earthy materials do not survive well from the period on most sites, the use of timber in Roman construction is still relatively little studied or presented in regions of Britain, so any finds that shed light on these themes are disproportionately important. However, excavation in the waterlogged zones of Roman towns such as London and Carlisle and the fort site of Vindolanda, indicate how dominant construction in perishable materials actually was, particularly in the earlier part of the occupation. From those large settlements and several smaller sites, we have quite a large sample of published Roman period structural woodwork recorded in detail, systematically analysed and closely dated, with which to compare the assemblage from Bridge Farm. It is also clear that even masonry buildings had many timber elements, in roofs, floors, partitions and other features. For London this corpus of comparative evidence includes many detailed published studies of large assemblages of structural woodwork and others at the grey literature stage or 'In Prep', covering several thousand structural timbers, not including woodwork directly involved in waterfront construction (e.g. Goodburn 1991; Brigham and Goodburn *et al* 1995; Goodburn and Goffin *et al* 2011). The range and volume of surviving structural woodwork from rural Roman sites is very much smaller, but some of this material also helps to set the Bridge Farm assemblage in context, both published and archived material (e.g. Biddulph and Stansbie *et al* 2012; Goodburn 2019a; 2019b; 2019c and In Prep).

In any attempt to sum up what is known in general about Roman period woodworking in Britain of relevance to this particular project from archaeological finds, it must be clearly noted that the decorative moulding of woodwork is atypical, though it is known in some smaller scale works of joinery and furniture making. Carved and planed mouldings are known in non-structural woodwork though it is rare even there, e.g. a moulded couch or bed end rail (Ridgeway, 2009, 33) and there are also well-known wall painting images of moulded furniture from Herculaneum and Pompeii. By contrast in structural scale woodwork, loosely 'carpentry', only three London-region sites have yielded a small sample of Roman period, moulded larger timbers, where all but

one example were moulded lengthwise on their edges. The nearest parallel to the two end-moulded structural timbers from Bridge Farm is a solitary example found by Albion Archaeology in a Roman well at the Marston Park site in Bedfordshire (H. Duncan, pers. comm. and Goodburn, In Prep.). *Figure 4.20* attempts a graphic outline summary of the key features of this comparative material, which was all wrought in oak.

Practical experimentation in aspects of Roman structural woodworking has also furthered our understanding in several areas, such as the recognition of typical tool marks of the period and an appreciation of the logistics and varied nature of woodland resources, i.e. treescapes, used (Goodburn 2000). The varied nature of the treescapes reconstructed from woodwork found, from tall, dark 'wildwood' to hedgerows and various types of managed woodland and orchards has also been helped by the work of archaeobotanists and tree-ring specialists. Finally, recent work in this field is beginning to show that there are indeed marked regional variations in both treescapes and working practices across Roman Britain, even over relatively short distances. For example, we can definitely see this in the marked contrasts in the woodwork excavated from Greater London and the Cambridge area (Goodburn 2019b & c). As yet Sussex has produced very little woodwork of the Roman period, highlighting the value of even small assemblages, such as the assemblage from this project.



**4.20: Outline diagrams of moulded Roman-period timber beam forms discovered in Britain**

### ***The general range of the woodwork found in trench 5 at bridge farm***

This report sets out to summarise and assess the woodworking aspects of the waterlogged woodwork excavated and lifted from three sample post pits Post Holes 1, 9 and 11 of Feature 4 (Fig.17). It also covers fragments from the well, Feature 9. The larger, more diagnostic, pieces of woodwork are the focus of this report as many of the smaller fragments lifted from the post holes are very decayed and thus provide relatively little information. Indeed, as some of the post bases clearly broke into many fragments along the natural planes of weakness, the medullary rays, a meaningful count of the lifted material is not possible.

The general range of woodwork found included the decayed bases of substantial earth-fast oak posts originally up to c. 0.45m across ('a cubit') and set at least 1m into the earth. These imply that the 13 post pits found were part of a substantially built moderately tall timber building over c.6.5m wide and c.15.5-16m long. The surviving timbers in PH1 and PH9 were carefully lifted and found to include the decayed post bases with often better-preserved remains of supporting

post pad and post chocking timbers. These included a surprising assortment of sizes and forms of oak timber including two jointed and moulded beam ends SF.5.42 and 5.78 (4.21). These timbers had decorative ogival shapes cut into their ends and the remains of a deep lap joint, or less likely a tenon, truncated by their reuse at the other. The presence of the major joint would have made it easier to cross-cut the timbers at that point.



4.21: Photographs of the 2 timbers with ogival carved ends

Currently these timbers are without exact parallels from other sites in Roman Britain, although a small number of moulded Roman structural timbers have been recorded from other sites (4.20). It currently seems possible that these rare reused elements were originally the decorative ends of rafters in a large building local to the site prior to the building of F4. The two moulded timbers are likely to have come from a building relatively close by as oak timber is heavy to transport even when dry and seasoned.

Other key timbers from PH9 included the obliquely sawn end of a large, rectangular hewn (axe-shaped) oak beam SF.5.79. This item was cut from the very knotty, crown end of a medium sized oak which was clearly barely tall enough for the job and thus this large offcut sheds light on local woodmanship and timber conversion practice at the time.

PH1 yielded the moderately well-preserved end of a thick plank of oak also cut obliquely, timber SF.5.65, the original purpose of which is not certain.

Although the assemblage of lifted Roman period timbers from the Bridge Farm project is, by national standards, very small it does shed important light on the form of otherwise unknown, timber architectural details, local treescapes and heavy woodworking practices. None of the timber examined was straight grained and narrow ringed with an origin in large ‘wildwood-type’ trees that are often evidenced in other assemblages of Roman structural woodwork from SE England. Therefore, the local treescapes implied are of various forms of more open managed woodland and they probably included many oaks growing in hedges, and possibly wood

pasture. This runs parallel to similar evidence from the London region where large wildwood timber is much less common from the mid second century as the landscape was more intensively managed (Goodburn 2000).

### ***The methodology of recording the lifted woodwork***

After the planning of the partially exposed timber remaining in situ, timbers from PH1, PH9, PH11 and well F9 were lifted for further recording and sampling in due course. Some of the detailed recording was delayed until after the washing and conservation of the lifted timbers. Before and during the conservation of the timbers a variety of photographs and sketches were made by CAP team members and the Durham Conservation team. These included 1:1 scale drawings made by Clara Gonzalez-Hernandez of post pad timbers SF.5.78, SF.5.42, and decayed post base SF.5.41 from PH9.

Following conservation, this writer was commissioned to examine the timbers first hand, to add any missing technological information and assess their value for possible tree ring dating in July 2019. Additional notes were appended to copies of the various records provided and one additional scale timber drawing was made of timber SF.5.79 also from PH9.

The examination showed that all the lifted timbers seen were of 'oak' (i.e. our two, closely similar native species, or their many very similar hybrids, not distinguishable as waterlogged ancient timber). Very little sapwood survived on the edges of the rot resistant heartwood and unfortunately none of the timbers were found suitable for tree ring study. This was due to the 'parent trees' being of moderate size and medium to fast grown, with less than the required 50 annual rings surviving, or greatly distorted grain from multiple knots. This situation is often the case with mid or later Roman structural woodwork as many of the accessible wildwood-type, high woodland had been converted into rather open managed woodland or even farmland with hedges and pasture trees. The more open growing conditions, with greater light and nutrients for many parent trees, typically produces comparatively fast-grown, wide ringed and 'branchy' (i.e. knotty) timber, compared to the wildwood-type woodland more commonly harvested for larger structural timber in the early Roman period as indicated in the large London and Carlisle assemblages.

The sample of lifted woodwork from the Bridge Farm Trench 5 excavation has been recorded to a standard broadly in keeping with that set out in Heritage England Guidelines on waterlogged wood (Brunning, 1996).

### ***The key woodwork found and lifted for further recording discussed in groups associated within cut features: a forensic approach***

Where the quality of survival warrants it, the timbers are discussed below in 'forensic' detail as their rarity demands. All surviving evidence is considered, but where the material was highly decayed it has been treated briefly.

### ***Woodwork found in Post Hole 1, Building F4***

#### **SF.5.56: a decayed post base**

This post pit in the NE corner of building F4 included the very decayed heartwood core of an oak post in several fragments, SF.5.56, with no original surfaces and a largest fragment dimension of 158mm. This was all that survived from what would have once been a very substantial upright timber.

#### **SF.5.65: a section of planking**

A fragment of thick, tangentially-faced, oak planking SF.5.65 was also found in this post pit. This item was very decayed and survives c.340mm long by 155mm wide and 55mm thick. It is clear that its original length, thickness and width would have been greater when it was placed in the post pit. Though one end was irregularly decayed the other was deliberately cut at an angle of c.70 degrees, but for what purpose is uncertain. No tool mark traces survived but it is likely that this timber was sawn out originally, as most better-preserved Roman planking has been found to be (e.g. Goodburn 1995, 42-45). It is also just possible that such a timber offcut might have been used to skid the base of a long heavy post into position as it was reared in the deep post hole.

### ***Woodwork found in Post Hole 9, Building F004***

#### **SF.5.41: a decayed post base**

This large post pit on the east side of the rectangular building contained the bulk of the most interesting sections of worked timber found and lifted. The very rot-eroded oak heartwood core of a post base SF.5.41 was found towards the bottom of the post pit with none of its original surfaces surviving. It was clearly very much smaller than when it was originally installed, with no dimension now exceeding 175mm.

*Beneath the post a series of post-pad or 'levelling-up' chocks of oak timber were found of considerable interest worth describing and discussing individually here.*

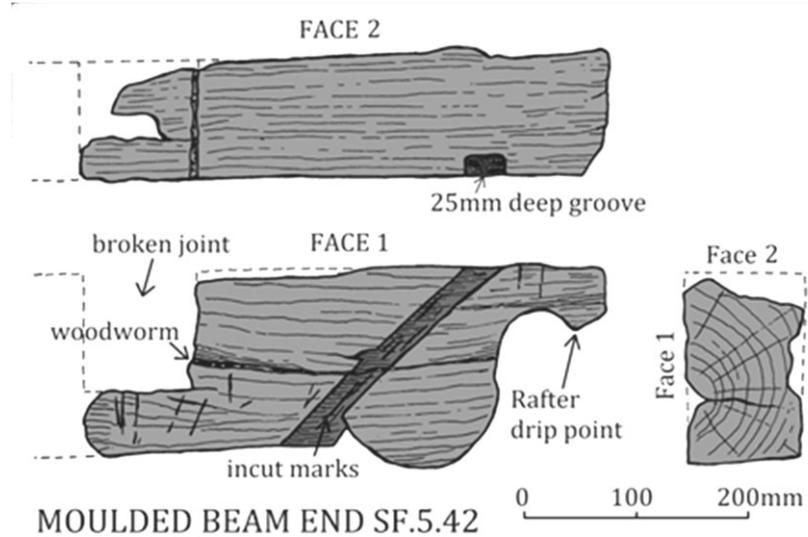
#### **SF.5.42: a very rare reused post pad timber with a decorative ogival end and relict joints**

Timber SF.5.42 was the reused end of a rectangular section oak beam. It had one original end carved to an ogival terminal whilst the other had been cross cut for reuse in antiquity and was very weathered. It measured 460mm long by 185mm width and 105mm maximum thickness after conservation. Opposite the carved ogival end the remains of a truncated, deep cross halving joint, or less likely a 'bare faced tenon', survived; the former being a well-known joint in Roman woodworking (4.22). The halving would have accommodated a beam running at 90 degrees to timber in its primary use (4.23). The original function of the beam end has been considered with repeated sketching of possible joining timbers for some time by this writer and others. Initially its use as a joist in some form of jetty was considered but is now thought unlikely due to its form and the oblique housing joint discussed below.

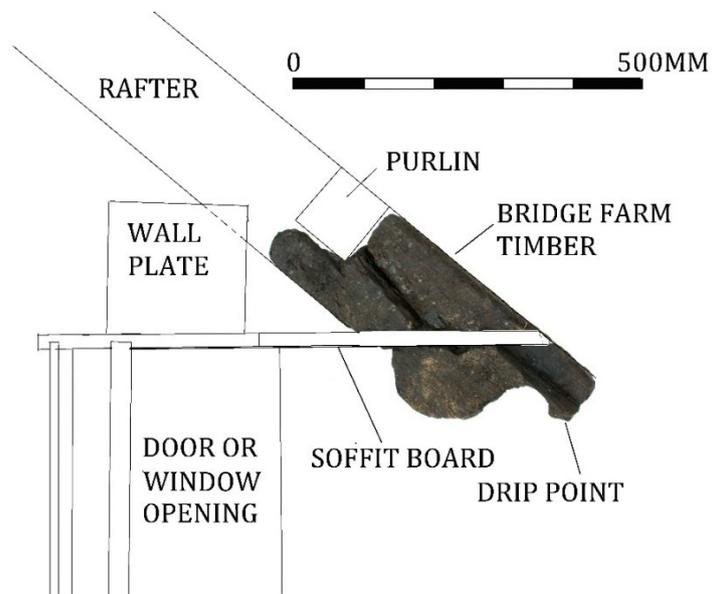
Whilst too little of the timber survives for an absolutely definite reconstruction of its original function, the strongest candidate may well be that it was a decorative principal rafter end from the roof of a large high-status building with walls of stone, earthy materials such as pise or mud brick (known from Roman London and elsewhere), and/or various forms of heavy timber frame.

Even in relatively recent timber roofs the bottom ends of the rafters visible externally under the eaves were often scalloped to a semi-decorative form (4.23). The key indicative feature suggesting probable rafter end use is a curious c.25mm deep diagonal slot or 'housing joint' that survives on one face (4.22). A plausible interpretation of this diagonal feature is that it may have been used to locate a lintel plank for a window or door opening just under the eaves of the parent building (Fig. 21). If the housing joint was the location of a horizontal opening, then the implied roof pitch for the principal rafter would have been c.40 degrees or just a little over; measuring the exact angle is difficult due to the ancient weathering of the timber.

This roof pitch would be suited to many forms of roof covering although getting on the steep side for tegulae and imbrex tiles and stone slates and therefore perhaps a less durable organic covering is slightly more likely. As overhanging thatch would have obscured the decorative beam ends to some degree this could support the use of a thinner, more rigid covering such as, weatherboarding, shingles or tile. The form of the moulding provides a sharp 'drip point' for any rain getting on to the rafter end towards what was probably the outside end. Clearly this interpretation is very speculative but such elaborate and laborious working of a structural beam end has to be explored and compared with other evidence for the use of decorative moulding of carpentry scale timbers in Roman Britain. Currently the only really close parallels known to this writer are the smaller beam end, timber SF 5.78 (4.24) from the same post hole and a smaller, slightly more crudely worked, ogival beam end from the fill of a Roman well at Marston Park Bedfordshire (Goodburn, In Prep) (4.20).



4.22: *Ogival moulded timber SF.5.42*



4.23: *Conjectural sketch of SF.5.42 as a rafter end*

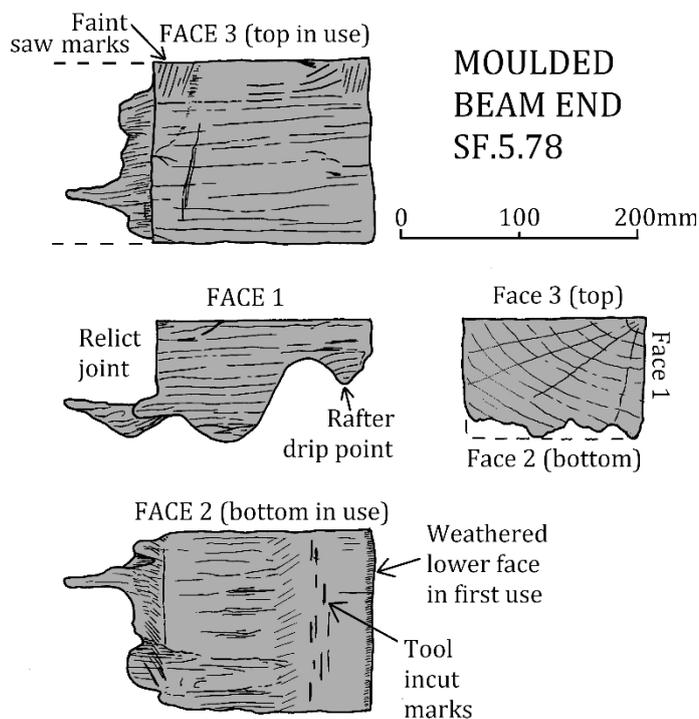
the steep side for tegulae and imbrex tiles and stone slates and therefore perhaps a less durable organic covering is slightly more likely. As overhanging thatch would have obscured the decorative beam ends to some degree this could support the use of a thinner, more rigid covering such as, weatherboarding, shingles or tile. The form of the moulding provides a sharp 'drip point' for any rain getting on to the rafter end towards what was probably the outside end. Clearly this interpretation is very speculative but such elaborate and laborious working of a structural beam end has to be explored and compared with other evidence for the use of decorative moulding of carpentry scale timbers in Roman Britain. Currently the only really close parallels known to this writer are the smaller beam end, timber SF 5.78 (4.24) from the same post hole and a smaller, slightly more crudely worked, ogival beam end from the fill of a Roman well at Marston Park Bedfordshire (Goodburn, In Prep) (4.20).

Although somewhat weathered and eroded it could be seen in 2019, that this beam end was cut to a 'boxed-half' section, probably by manual sawing from a rectangular section hewn (axe-shaped) baulk. This suggests that it had been made as part of a pair of similar beams, which might also support an origin in a principal roof truss of some kind. The cross-halving joint may have housed some form of longitudinal roof beam, or one of several purlin-type timbers, set close to the eaves. Even the more durable heart-face bore evidence of woodworm holes. For these to have developed in oak heartwood, the timber must have been exposed to some damp and in use for some time before reuse where it was totally waterlogged at the base of PH9. This may imply that it was part of a building which had lost part of its roof and/or been neglected. It also implies that its first use was somewhat earlier than the construction of the F4 building. In-cut marks from a large chisel, or possibly an adze, lay inside the diagonal housing joint. Other partial in-cut marks were also visible on the heart-face that may have been created by cutting another timber on it. The parent oak tree this beam was cut from was of medium growth rate with no more than 40 annual rings surviving, rendering the timber unsuitable for tree ring dating where 50 annual rings are the minimum needed.

**SF.5.78: a similar, rare reused post pad timber with an ogival decorative end and relict joint**

Timber SF.5.78 was rather similar to timber SF.5.42, with essentially the same decorative ogival cut end, and partially surviving truncated halving joint at the other end. However, it was of smaller over measuring 250mm long by 90mm wide by 150mm thick after conservation (4.24). It seems likely that this timber was once also a decorative lower end of a rafter from a fairly high-status building, quite possibly a 'common rafter' from a more lightly-built roof area of the same building as timber SF.5.42 or from the lighter roof of a smaller associated building in the same complex.

The beam from which the timber was shaped was weathered and slightly decayed but on one face faint manual saw marks could still be seen in 2019, post-conservation. The timber was box quartered, probably by sawing an axe-squared baulk in half and then each half being divided by re-sawing to make four small beams in total. This method of timber conversion by sawing and re-sawing, common in post-medieval times, is very rare in the large London corpus of Roman structural timber, though was used to make the Marston Park example of a parallel find. It has also recently been found in the area NW of Cambridge on two recent archaeological projects. That area seems to have been very 'timber hungry' in the mid Roman period compared with the

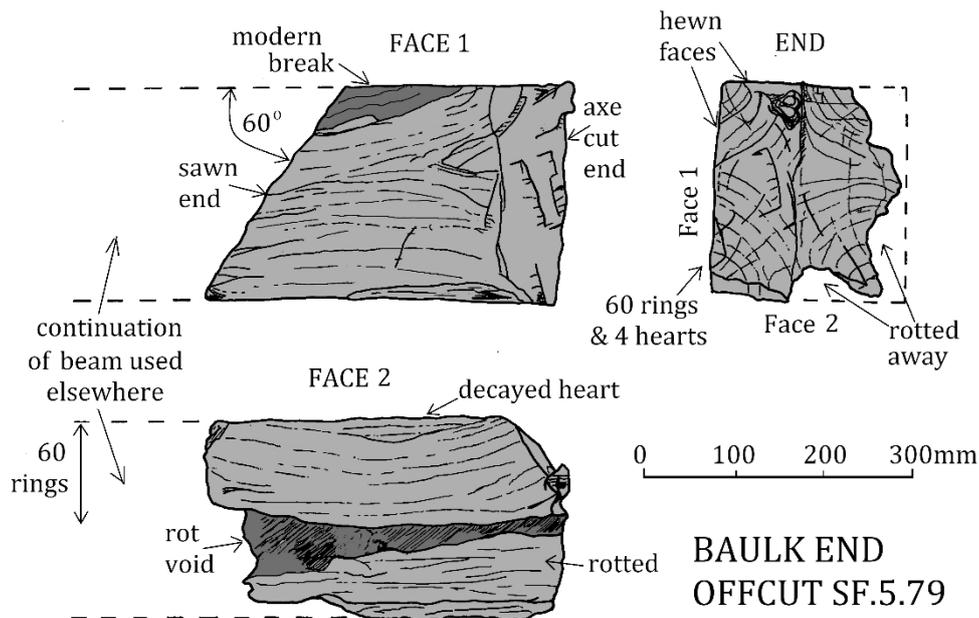


4.24. Ogival moulded timber SF.5.78

Greater London region (Goodburn 2019b & c). Very knotty, open-grown oak, often of modest size, was widely used there and much of it might have been of open farmland origin from hedgerows, riverside land and pasture. There may be some parallels here for the general nature of the oaks available in the area of the Bridge Farm site, though more evidence would be needed for clarity (*see below re off cut SF.5.79*). The parent oak used for this beam was medium sized, of moderate growth rate and again only had c.40 annual rings. Although this decorative beam end did not have the diagonal housing joint of timber SF 5.42 other general similarities make it likely to have been from the same building or complex.

**SF.5.79: an off cut from the end of a rectangular hewn baulk that sheds light on local woodmanship, treescapes and timber supply**

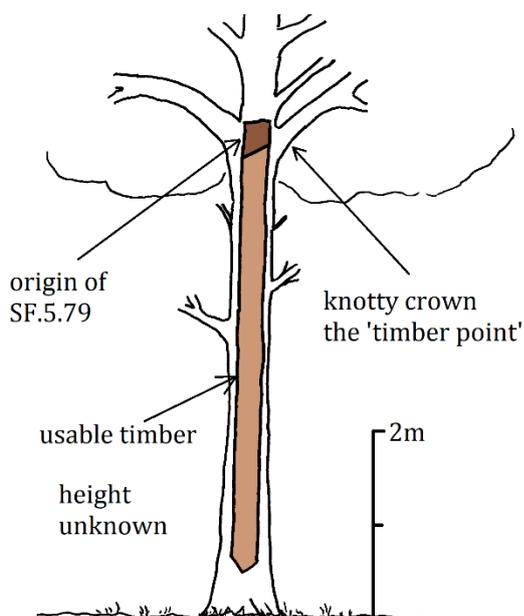
Another informative timber found in the stack of post pad timbers in PH 9 was timber SF.5.79, the obliquely sawn-off end of a hewn oak baulk (4.25). This oak baulk end survived 380mm long by 250mm wide and 225mm thick. The obliquely cut end was cut with a cross-cut saw or *serrata*, whilst the other end was rapidly axe cut as at the felling site. The axe cut end bore clear marks of a 75mm wide axe blade (4.26) used to cross-cut or ‘buck’, the felled tree at the highest possible point in the crown where four major branches met (i.e. a little above what we would consider



4.25: Baulk end offcut SF.5.79 found in Posthole 9

the ‘timber point’ today in good quality oak in SE England). The axe marks fit a common axe blade size for the Roman period recorded on many timbers excavated in Greater London and elsewhere. The evidence of four hearts (i.e. large knots) at one end means the woodworkers at the felling site were struggling to cut the longest timber possible out of the parent oak (Fig. 25), probably implying that it was a fairly open grown tree and that long timber was generally not very available locally. Similar apparent multiple hearts are quite often seen in later medieval timbers in the SE of England but are rare in the large Roman London corpus. Although this timber had 60 annual rings the grain was so distorted that a tree ring sample would be impossible to measure, so slice sampling was not suggested.

**4.26: Axe cut end of SF.5.79 showing axe marks and 75mm axe head**



**4.27: Conjectural sketch of beam SF.5.79 within the parent oak tree**

**SF5.80 plus one other:**

SF.5.80 included three decayed fragments of oak. Another item labelled to the same context (5215) was an eroded section of oak roughly 45mm square and 290mm long and roughly box quartered. This appears to have been another packing timber from this post hole.

**Woodwork found in Post Hole 11, building F4, timber SF.5.40'**

The woodwork found at the very base of this post pit was limited to amorphous fragments of oak which can tell us little except that the lowest timbers in the post pit were of oak, with a maximum dimension 200mm.

**Woodwork from well feature F9, timber SF 5.36**

The waterlogged basal fills of this well yielded up a very decayed amorphous piece of oak (4.28). The maximum length is now c.920mm by 200mm wide by 60mm thick. Curiously when the timber was examined one section was fast grown oak and the other very slow grown! This might indicate that it was in fact two separate pieces before being sculpted by decay?



**4.28: Timber SF 5.36 recovered from the well F9**

### **The significance of the small but rare Roman woodwork assemblage from Bridge Farm**

This small assemblage of Roman period woodwork from Bridge Farm in the Ouse Valley of East Sussex, is important as it is a rare example of the survival of Roman woodwork from Sussex. It also provides a snap shot of aspects of the local woodmanship practices, carpentry and treescapes to add to that derived from the charcoal and pollen studies.

Of wider, national importance are the decorative moulded timber beam ends, as material evidence of timber architectural features which have not survived elsewhere in Roman Britain, apart, perhaps for one small rough example from a Bedfordshire well. Various characteristics of the moulded timbers indicate a possible origin as rafter ends from a moderately high-status building. Timber elements of the upper parts of Roman buildings very rarely survive, in contrast to elements of walls, floors and foundations found *in situ* or reused in London, Carlisle, Vindolanda and more rarely, at a few other locations.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to the CAP team for help with examining the conserved timbers from the excavations and to David Millum for supplying background information on the project.

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## 5. 2015: ROADS, DITCHES & CCCU

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### 5.1: SECURING THE FUTURE

In 2015 Rob Wallace secured a five-year contract with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) to provide a four-week practical training course each summer for all their archaeology undergraduates at a set fee per student. This resulted in a vigorous period of building by the CAP committee members to provide a facilities unit supplying flushing toilets, hot showers and a fully equipped kitchen (5.1). This benefitted the farm by supplying much needed toilet facilities for the increasing number of light industrial units on the site.

*5.1: the facilities block under construction in May 2015*



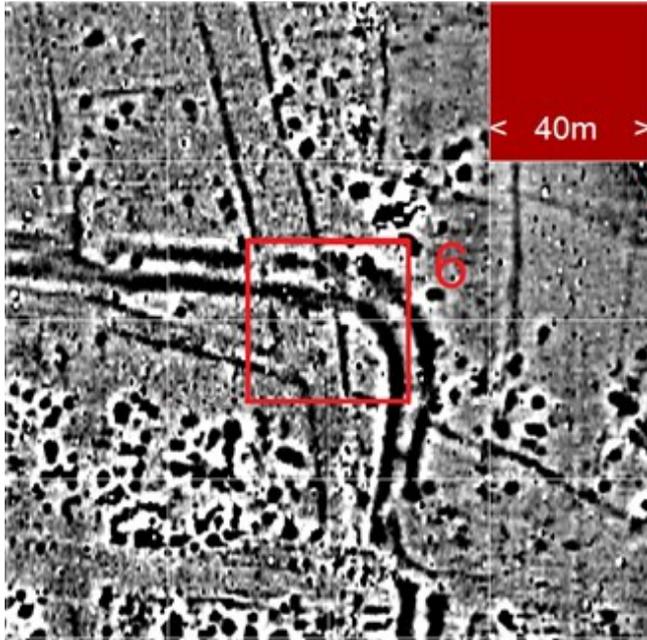
Work started on Good Friday to provide a refectory with kitchen facilities and separate male and female shower/toilet areas and went down to the wire with the hot water system and the showers being finished as the students arrived. There were still a few improvements to be implemented during 2016 but the building proved to be a brilliant success and coped well with the demands of two dozen students plus various other campers, volunteers, visitors and workers from the industrial units. Certainly, no regrets were heard from those returning about the demise of the 2014 structure and portaloos. What a difference a year makes (5.2)?



*5.2: The make-shift 'refectory' and portable facilities of 2014, housed in the open shed that was the basis of the new HQ building*

## 5.2: THE 2015 EXCAVATION, TRENCH 6

In 2015 it was decided to target the intersection of the double ditch enclosure with the north running roadside ditches in the NE corner of the settlement (5.3); a crucial area to the understanding of the site. We opened a 40m square area, Trench 6, at the end of June ready for



5.3: Trench 6 located on geophysics

the six week dig from 29<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> August. The area was targeted to answer questions on phasing between the London road and the enclosure ditches and confirm the provisional dates provided by the 2013 trenches.

The open area gave us plenty of room for both students and volunteers, some from as far afield as Australia and the USA. We appointed two returning students as supervisors, Max Zeronian-Dalley (Bangor University) on site and Molly Lockyear (Durham University) on finds, both of whom stayed and worked for seven continuous weeks. As in previous

years we found that the upper surface of the remaining archaeology was immediately below the plough soil. This upper layer represented a late phase of the settlement which will hopefully be dated from subsequent analysis of the pottery from the trench surface. Coins from a layer immediately below suggested a high level of coin loss in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

## 5.3: THE ROAD AND THE ENCLOSURE DITCHES

In the southern half of the trench the surface included a discrete area that had a high inclusion of slag and clinker above flint and river gravels lying on a thin compacted silt base. Being between the location of the two main roadside ditches on the geophysics, this was presumed to be the remains of the London road discovered and recorded by Ivan Margary (1933). As a slot across this area was being excavated a group of animal bones were discovered between the slag and flint layers, at 119.34E/211.74N and 6.38m AOD. These were carefully excavated by site supervisor, Max Zeronian-Dalley, as Special Find 89 (5.4). The bones will be sent to Dr Ellie Williams of Canterbury Christ Church University for analysis during 2018 as part of the Trench 6 bone assemblage and it is hoped that they may also provide a carbon<sup>14</sup> date for this context. The possible road surface was quite thin and the structure below was far less substantial than the solid 400mm of flint nodules seen on the road running south from Culver Farm in 2009 (3.23). This difference could reflect the type of traffic which each was built to carry, the road's importance, limited resources, or even just the difference in the stability of the ground. An adjacent section set between this area and the enclosure ditches surprisingly showed no sign of

any road structure at all despite being in direct line, suggesting that parts of the road surface have been robbed or ploughed out. It is therefore likely that most of the road in this trench has been truncated by ploughing and 'flint picking' over the centuries.

A layer of flint metalling that was uncovered at the centre of the northern end of the trench was interpreted as a further section of the road north (Margary 14) (5.5). It was found to overlie the fill of the enclosure ditches and was discovered beneath a dark activity/demolition layer (6050), which in the northeast of the trench has a layer of quite highly burnt/fired clay at its base.

With no evidence of a lower, i.e. earlier, road surface in this area it would appear that this section of road was constructed after the enclosure ditches were backfilled. Coins, including antoniniani of, Gallienus, Tetricus I, (*see 5.15*) and Claudius II, obtained from the overlying dark layer (6050) suggest that this upper layer may have formed in the later 3<sup>rd</sup>

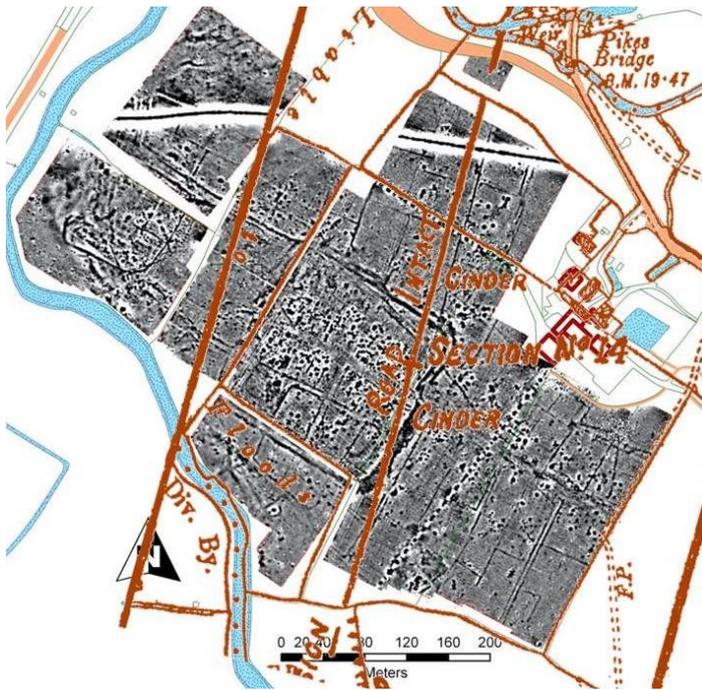
century. However, care must be exercised in relying on this particular range of coins for precise dating as it has been suggested that they may have been used for a long period and not discarded until as late as the end of the first quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Reece 2002, 47). In 2013 the enclosure ditches were dated as late 2<sup>nd</sup> century from Malcolm Lyne's pottery analysis. So this evidence for the layer above the road could suggest a relatively short life for the enclosure ditches, at least in this area, before being filled in and subsequently having the road laid over the top. Whilst the results from 2015 cast doubt on the accepted 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date (Margary, 1948, p. 150) on the section of the road heading north from the northeast corner of the settlement, the roadside ditches contained pottery dated to AD 70 - 200 opening the possibility that there was an earlier road in this location that was destroyed by the digging of the enclosure ditches and reinstated after they became redundant.



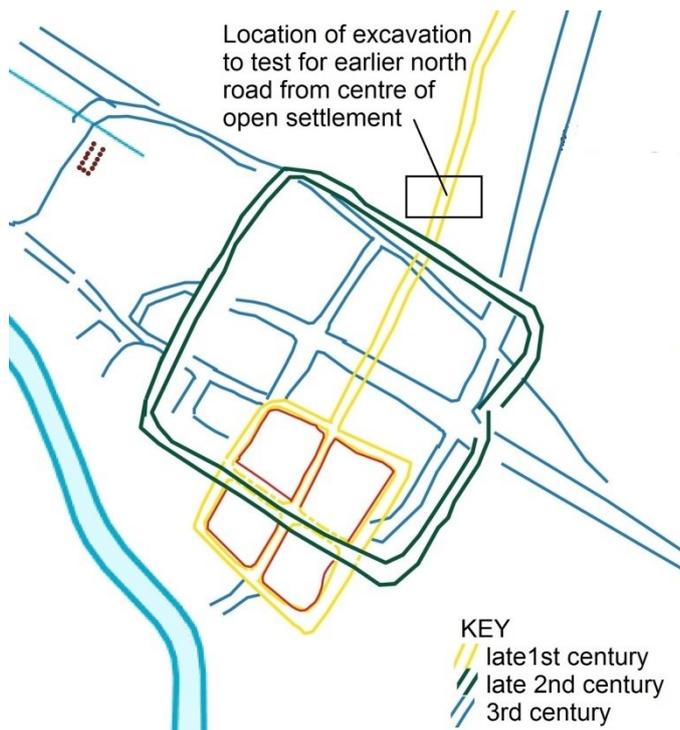
**5.4: Max excavating the animal bones (SF89)**



**5.5: The layer of flint metalling overlying the refilled outer enclosure ditch**



5.6: Margary's map overlaid on the 2011 geophysics



5.7: Speculative phasing plan with possible location of earlier north road (Clara Gonzalez-Hernandez)

require an excavation centrally to the north of the enclosure to prove or invalidate this hypothesis (5.7).

Another important aspect of this trench was to excavate across a better preserved section of both enclosure ditches than that available in Trench 4 in 2013. A long single slot confirmed the stratigraphy of both ditches to the London road and revealed the close similarity of the two

Overlaying Margary's strip map over the 2011 geophysics (5.6) shows that this is the road sectioned and recorded by Margary which he dated to c.AD 100 from the pottery discovered at its edge (Margary 1933, 41). He was, of course, unaware that he was digging in the centre of a large settlement that lasted over 300 years. Whilst, it was originally thought that this road may have been built to meet the requirements of the intense early period of iron production in the Weald, this now appears to be contrary to the roads stratigraphic position as it overlays the filled-in late 2nd century enclosure ditches. Indeed a 3<sup>rd</sup> century date for this section of road might explain why it enters the settlement at this corner and at an angle out of alignment with the main axis of the earlier road grid. It would also seem to favour direct access to the eastern road to Arlington and Pevensey, suggesting the increased importance in communications to the east at this later phase. It would, however, seem to fly in the face reason for there not to be a 1st century road to meet the demands of the iron industry with the logical alignment heading north from the central road of the open settlement. This alignment would merge with the route of the later road at the point where it currently crosses the river. The existence and precise alignment of an earlier road in this location is unclear on the geophysics and will therefore

ditches, suggesting some precision in their excavation which was replicated at other sections across the site (5.8). These sections also emphasised the massive undertaking that the provision of two substantial ditches around all four sides of the 180m square enclosure represented and once again raised the question of official or even military involvement. Evidence from the excavation suggests another peak of coin loss in the mid-late 2<sup>nd</sup> century which appears anomalous to Walton's British mean (*see 5.16*) suggesting some activity specific to the site. However the available evidence could not link this peak conclusively to the digging of the ditches.



5.8: *The outer enclosure ditch in the long slot*

#### 5.4: A SELECTION OF INTERESTING FINDS

Within the dark deposit over the NE corner of the outer enclosure ditch (6025) was found one our most exciting artefacts of the year; an oval red jasper intaglio from a ring (SF4). It shows a draped bust of either a female or a youthful male deity, crisply carved in reverse (5.9). Professor Martin Henig has suggested it could be of Apollo and 2<sup>nd</sup> century in origin from its form and material. However as a treasured item it would not be out of place in the much later deposit where it was found.



5.9: *Red Jasper intaglio*



5.10 *Bronze fibula brooch*

Two copper alloy intaglio were also found but not being in as fine condition their designs were not discernible. Other copper alloy items included a long fibula brooch (5.10) and a fragmented ring key.



*5.11 Siliqua of Honorius*

During the winter our metal detecting team, had found a Honorius siliqua (5.11) from the plough soil over the main settlement area, extending the period of possible activity on the site to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The 10,000 sherds of pottery collected, washed and marked from this area included a selection of Samian ware, of which two sherds had the maker's marks of *Cippiomo* and *Flavianus*, amongst the more usual black burnished and East Sussex wares. There were also a good number of larger 'rustic' indented beakers, some of quite coarse manufacture, rather than the finer colour coated beakers found in other areas of the site, suggesting fairly local manufacture e.g. Wickham Barn at Chiltington. There were also several sherds from a larger six-sided beaker in a sandy grey fabric (5.12).

Amongst the usual collection of nails and other iron objects were a possible blade, a delicately shaped stylus and a curved object that, whilst suspiciously the right size and shape for a strigil, proved under x-ray to consist of a length of chain and a bar.

Beneath a small area of chalk fragments in the SE corner of the trench was discovered a small complete pot set upright but with no obvious cut or other context (5.13). The chalk layer, which contained some animal bone, is now thought to have nothing to do with this object being inadvertently laid over the top at a much later period. The results of metal detecting being negative the pot was carefully removed having been wrapped in bandages and individually boxed ready for transportation off site, intact, for later controlled internal investigation.

This was undertaken by David Millum in early 2016, who removed the fill 10mm at a time using a plastic spatula and soft brush. The first layer caused a slight pause as a piece of bone was found but on inspection it was obviously not human and so the investigation could continue without contacting the coroner. As the layers were removed it became clear that the pot was full of the typical sandy silt with 1% grit. Within the fill were 4 sherds of a coarse handmade platter, including a rim to base sherd, an unrelated rim sherd, a solid pot handle and 3 small animal bone fragments (5.14). It became clear from the start of this investigation that this was not a cremation and therefore could be excavated without licence. The extracted silt was wet sieved through a



*5.12: Large grey-ware beaker*



*5.13: The pot being excavated by CCCU students prior to wrapping and removal.*

fine 300µm sieve and the residue bagged and kept although it appeared on initial inspection to be purely natural grits. The small blackened cooking pot is 90% complete but badly cracked on all surfaces and was held together by the soil so has been left wrapped in the bandages pending reconstruction. Like many of the more interesting finds on Bridge Farm the explanation behind the pots location and contents remains obscure.

### 5.5: A HUNDRED MORE COINS TO ADD TO THE DATA

Over 50 Roman coins were collected during the 2015 excavation ranging in date from a single denarius of Hadrian (early 1<sup>st</sup> century) to a bronze A3 of Valens (AD364-375). Whilst this assemblage still awaits a full analysis, Dr David Rudling has undertaken a quick spot dating to enable us to start some interpretation of this area. The two mentioned above together with a denarius of Elagabalus (AD220-2) are the exceptions as all the other dateable coins fit loosely into 3 main periods with 11 being attributed to the later 2<sup>nd</sup> century, 13 to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 18 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> (5.15).



5.14: *The pot and contents after the silt and gravels were carefully extracted*

*Late 2nd century*



*Antoninus Pius 138-161*

*Late 3rd century*



*Gallienus 265-7*

*Mid 4th century*



*Constantinopolis 330-5*



*Faustina Junior 173*



*Herennia Etruscilla 249-51*

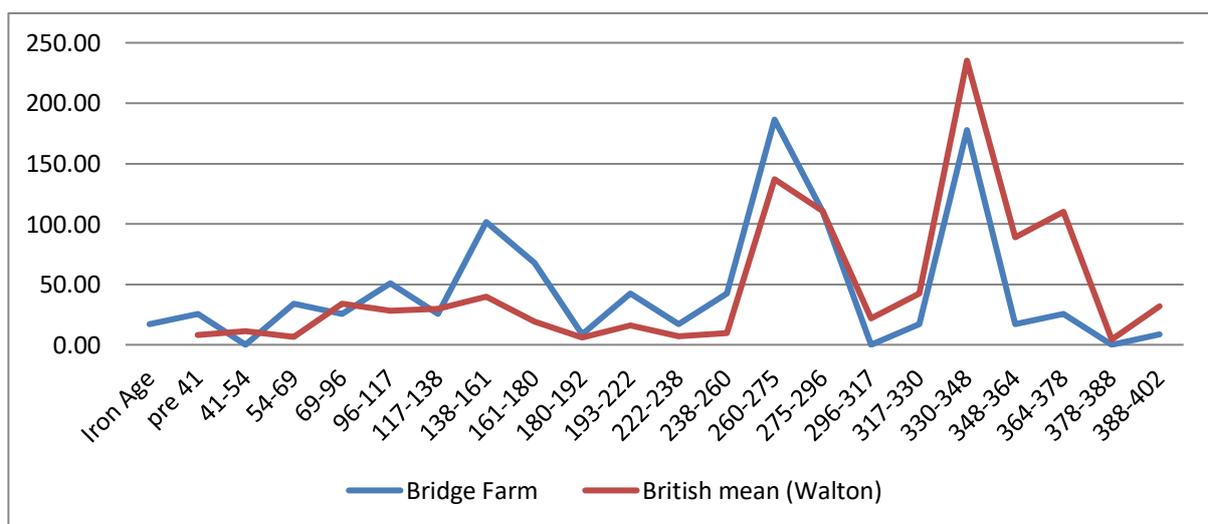


*Hse of Constantine 330-5*

5.15: *A selection of coins collected in 2015 showing the three distinct peaks*

This broadly concurs with the findings from coins metal-detected or excavated up to the end of 2013 although that assemblage had another peak during the late 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries whilst

the NE area shows a much higher proportion of 4<sup>th</sup> century coinage. Further to these figures are those coins found in recent free-range metal detecting which include 26 from the main settlement area alone, plus the 17 coins found in the 2014 excavations to the SW of the settlement. The former appears biased towards the turn of the first century and later 2<sup>nd</sup> century and it is noticeable that metal detecting the surface curiously seems to locate a higher proportion of early coins. The 2014 assemblage has yet to be fully assessed having been away for conservation but includes some easily identifiable Antonine coins i.e. sestertii of Faustina Diva and Lucius Verus as well as some 4<sup>th</sup> century House of Constantine issues. It has been agreed with David Rudling that he will undertake a deeper coin analysis at a point in the excavations when a fuller report becomes expedient. Albeit unproven it is tempting in the meantime to see these four main assemblages linked to significant phases of the settlement; i.e. founding in late 1<sup>st</sup> century; enclosure in the late 2<sup>nd</sup>; changes in orientation/trade/economy in the late 3<sup>rd</sup>; and a late flourish in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> before final decline. However, we must take into account that the volume of coins may say as much about their depreciation and supply as it does trade and activity on the site. For example, the high proportion of 3<sup>rd</sup> century coins may be due to their becoming increasingly debased until reforms undertaken at the beginning of the fourth quarter made the previous issues all but worthless and therefore potentially more subject to loss or even discard. When more thoroughly investigated and supported by pottery analysis it would then be expedient to contrast these periods of potential increased activity with the phases of the adjacent villa complex and settlements within the SE generally. However, if judged against a British mean, such as Walton's *sans* Richborough mean (2011, 72-3), most of the variations can be seen to follow the national trend although the peak in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the rapid fall off in the later 4<sup>th</sup> suggest changes that were more individual to this settlement and/or area (5.16). It may be that these two anomalies reflect respectively, a busy period around the installation of the earthworks (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century), and an earlier contraction and/or abandonment of the settlement in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century compared to sites located outside of the South East.



5.16: Graph of coin numbers per Reece period as a percentage of the 118 identifiable coins collected up to 2015; set against a recognised British mean prepared by Walton (2011, 73).

## 6. 2016: GETTING BENEATH & BEYOND THE ROAD

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### 6.1: RETURNING TO TRENCH 6

The north eastern area of the site proved very complicated with many phases of ditches, pits and postholes appearing and areas of flint surfacing which could be manmade roads or floors, or just the result of slumping from the road during heavy flooding. The unexpected complexity of this area and the quick onset of heavy rain at the end of the 2015 season led to the decision to return to Trench 6 in 2016 as many features had been left unresolved. In order to get this complicated area of the site fully investigated the digging season was extended from six to eight weeks. The start of the four week undergraduate training course was set back to Week 2 in order to allow everything to be fully functioning before the students arrived and mitigate the effects of the extra pressures, numbers and scheduling inherent in running this popular course.

Unlike 2015 we did not have to build an HQ, plumb loos and showers and equip a kitchen, so we had a bit more time to prepare. We enlisted the help of a CAP veteran, Ivo Fox-Cooper, and a returning trainee, Dave Ladds, to act as site supervisors, thus doubling the manpower on the previous year. We also had a PhD student from CCCU, Nick Hannon, who pitched in with both supervision and a couple of the training days. Having a group of returning CCCU students who could get straight on site having already completed the training course was another boon and one that should now be repeated in future years. We were also able to arrange with two of our most able and dedicated finds volunteers, Nancy Wiginton and Ann Best, to take over the coordination of the finds unit which was to be moved away from the trench into an old farm building adjacent to the HQ (6.1). This proved a great success with all finds being processed and recorded during the season and not requiring the extended sessions through autumn and winter that was inflicted on a few hardy stalwarts after the 2015 dig.



*6.1: The well-organized finds unit*



On site the first job of the year was to cut back and clear the weed infestation and reveal an area looking something like an archaeological excavation site (6.2 & 6.3)



*6.2: Rob in full weed destroying mode*

*6.3: One day's work and we have our site back*

The return to this area gave the opportunity to dig below the shallower features and expand some of the areas opened last year. This included some cleaning, re-sectioning and recording of the main slots across the enclosure ditches and opening further slots over the ditches of the smaller side road to the west. The uncovered area of road surface at the centre of the northern area of the trench was also extended together with cutting back the north baulk to give a better section across the eastern roadside ditch and the possible intersection of another road surface running obliquely off to the southeast (6.4).



*6.4: Cutting back the north baulk to try to resolve the eastern roadside ditch*

Further work was also undertaken on exposing a red layer of fired clay that lay at the base of the dark upper layer to the east of road at the northern end of the trench (6.5). At times it was tempting to see some structure in this context but it appears more likely that this was material spread over this area to form a hard surface. The burnt clay represented a material more highly fired than daub from a burnt building yet not as hard as fully fired brick or tile. The area covered

by this material suggested an industrial process rather than a domestic one, possibly the demolished superstructure of some form of kiln or enclosed hearth.



*6.5: Exposing part of the red fired-clay layer to the east of the flint road surface*

Revealing this area had an unexpected bonus in the form of a second hobnail shoe pattern; the first had been exposed on cleaning back part of the flint road surface (6.6). Both these features were carefully excavated with fine-tools and then encased in plaster-of-Paris so that they could be removed intact for subsequent fine cleaning and storage.



Returning to the long slot across both enclosure ditches provided an excellent opportunity for the first-year CCCU students to really come to grips with excavating a feature down to the natural following the edge of the ditch cuts, cleaning back the section face, recognising the various contexts and recording them by adding to the written records and completing new section drawings. This confirmed not only the layer of flints overlaying the ditch fill but revealed that these flints were themselves in a defined gritty and sandy layer suggestive of a road surface.



*6.6: Hobnail shoe patterns 1 & 2*

## 6.2: A YEAR OF DEEP PITTS

A slot believed to be across the outer enclosure ditch in the extreme NE corner of the trench, just as the ditch starts to turn to the south, was also revisited as this had been difficult to interpret in 2015 due to the original slot being cut by a deep pit to the north (now known to be the cut or robber trench of the well). Cutting the face back 500mm in a box section took it away from the well pit and produced a section of between 2.5 and 3m wide with better defined stratigraphic contexts for considered interpretation and revised recording (6.7).

**N.B.** Further work in this area in 2017 proved this feature to be a large sub-circular pit just outside the enclosure ditch which had turned sharply south by this point.



*6.7: Roger, CCCU first year and Ted, a CAP regular, contemplate the contexts of the section just north of the enclosure ditch before completing the sheaf of context forms*

It was a series of deep pits that became the focus of the latter part of the season and in particular the one in the NE corner that was cut into by the 2015 excavation slot in this area mentioned above. At first this feature was thought to be just another deep pit with sloping sides but nearly 2m below trench level a quadrant of large lumps of sandstone and flint conglomerate was revealed forming what was unmistakably the lining of a well. This feature has the red fired-clay layer overlying it, which slumps down towards its centre (6.8). This offers excellent stratigraphic phasing for this area of the site. The depth of this excavation and its exposure only during the last days of the season precluded any further excavation of the interior beyond the first 4 courses of lining (6.9) and the need to further investigate this area more thoroughly and safely was one of the main reasons for the decision to return to Trench 6 in 2017.

Another deep pit in the SE corner had also been excavated in half section to 2m deep by Lindsay Banfield of UCL; box stepping the sides of the excavation for safety (6.10). Whilst this did not have any lining or construction, it was very square in section. It also yielded an 'Oldbury type' glass bead (6.11), dating from either the Late Iron Age or the Early Roman period. As potentially a conserved item this interesting find could not be used to definitively date the feature as early without other evidence.



6.8: The 'sectioned' well (scales 1 & 2m)



6.9: The interior of wall forming the well



6.10: The pit in the SE corner of Trench 6



6.11: The Oldbury type glass bead

### 6.3: A CROSS-SECTION OF THE LONDON ROAD

Margary had given his London-Lewes road the identifying number of M14 and by a lucky coincidence the same road running through our trench 6 was given the feature number of F14. Further work in the long section (Slot 12) excavated in 2015 across a well metalled area of the road (context 6005), one metre north of the 210N grid line between grid points 115E and 125E, revealed a layer of iron slag and clinker mixed with flint gravels and pebbles across the road to form a good



*6.12: The eastern roadside ditch*

hard surface. The slot was recorded by CCCU students drawing the complete section, including the eastern roadside ditch (6.12), and by Stuart McGregor taking a series of photographs along its length. The revealed section of the road, approaching 400mm deep in the centre, comprises slag, clinker and flint of various sizes within a band of gritty/sandy fill of a reddish, iron-rich, colour on a compacted silty-clay base (6.13); echoing the findings of Margary over 80 years earlier (Margary 1933, 39). Some areas where the flint layers are deeper and made of larger cobbles up to 150mm could indicate repair of rutted/depressed sections, possibly created by multiple wheel ruts.

A similar sandy/gritty layer with flints has been seen in the sections across the enclosure ditches showing the road to overlay the backfilled ditches with a marked slumping down of up to a third of a metre over each ditch.



*6.13: Part of the cross section across the London road (M14)*

## 6.4: ANOTHER 10,000 SHERDS PLUS OTHER FINDS

Amongst the Special Finds was a bronze 'terret' ring (6.14), i.e. part of the harness of a draught animal, which came from the flint surface adjacent to the slot in the NE corner, just SE of the well . Amongst other copper-alloy finds were a small bronze fibular brooch complete with pin (6.15), 2 hair/clothes pins (6.16) and most of the 59 coins that were found. The latter have yet to be fully assessed having gone away for conservation. A further 10,000 sherds of pottery, to add to last year's 10,000, were recovered, cleaned, marked and recorded by the hard working finds team including a nearly complete, delightfully decorated, thin-necked jar (6.17) in a sandy grey fabric probably from the Alice Holt or Farnham group of kilns.



6.17: Grey-ware thin-necked jar



6.14: Bronze terret ring



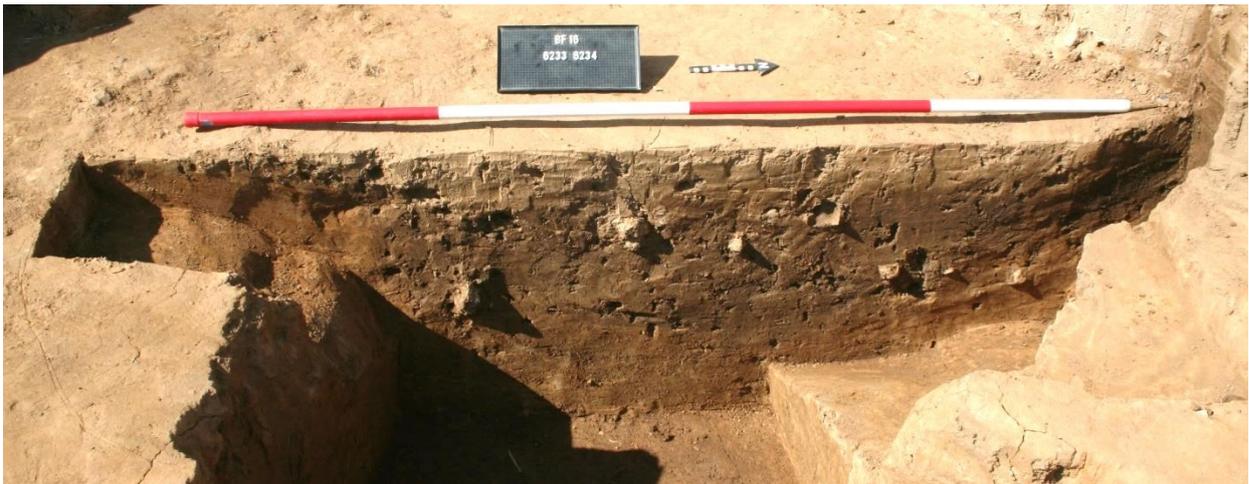
6.15: Fibular brooch



6.16: Two copper alloy pins

### 6.5: A 3<sup>RD</sup> SEASON IN TRENCH 6 BECOMES ESSENTIAL

Towards the end of the season we started to go through the disturbed flint surface in the central section of the exposed London road to the south of the inner enclosure ditch as this appeared much more disturbed than the northern area. A series of pits and gullies was revealed although due to the disturbed surface it was difficult to decide whether these features were under the road and therefore earlier or had been dug through the road and therefore later. With these features only appearing and being excavated and recorded in the final days of the season, despite the traditional over-run, this area still held much to excavate, record and hopefully interpret (6.18), once more heralding a return in 2017.



*6.18: One of the pits discovered below or possibly cutting through the disturbed road surface*

A further area of flint metalling to the east of the road was revealed but was also not fully investigated due to a lack of time. It became apparent that there was potentially a lot more archaeology at this lower level than previously anticipated and agreement was therefore reached with the landowner, Mark Stroude, to leave the majority of this trench open for one further year so this level could be investigated fully. A 10m strip to the south and west of the trench was backfilled with the rest of the trench being provided with a temporary cover, by a small but dedicated crew, hopefully allowing ease of access in 2017 (6.19).

As mentioned above, we already had a large assemblage of finds from Trench 6 needing analysis before we can start to understand the phasing and activities that took place in this part of the settlement, and these will undoubtedly be added to in 2017.

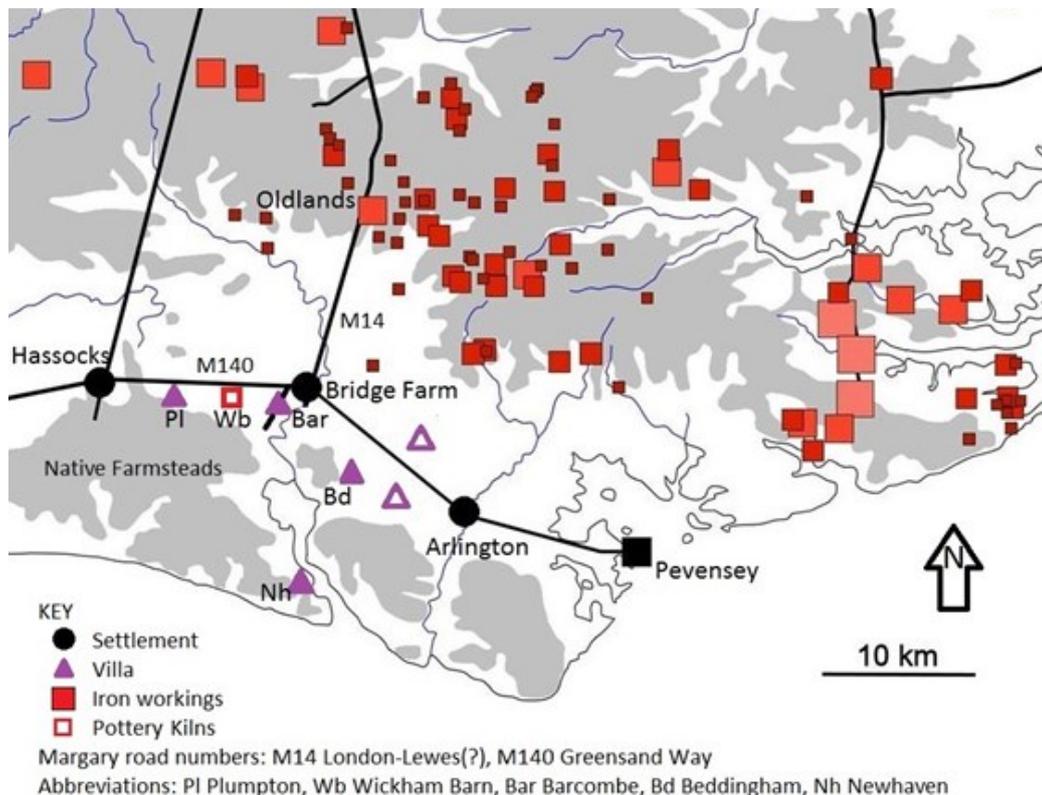


*6.19: The site 'put to bed' till 2017*

## 6.5: CONFERENCES & TRANSPORT LINKS

An exciting extramural event of 2016 was the participation of the CAP directors in two important conferences that marked the beginning and end of our year on site. The first was at the Sussex Archaeological Society conference in April on *'Roman roadside settlements in Britain and Beyond'* which was specifically arranged by Dr John Manley and Dr David Rudling to offer a wider context to the Bridge Farm settlement. It included speakers from across the country and from the Netherlands with the presentation on Bridge Farm given the concluding spot of the day. It was a tough ask to encapsulate the discoveries at Bridge Farm into just thirty minutes but we must have succeeded, despite the rash decision to take alternate slides, as our 'performance' led to our being invited to speak at the **Roman Roads Research Association's** conference in Portsmouth in September which commemorated the work of Ivan Margary. In putting together a specific presentation for this event it became increasingly obvious how much the discoveries made by CAP from 2005 to the present day owe to the pioneering work of Margary in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

These two conferences also highlighted the importance of transport links in the location of Bridge Farm. The Margary conference obviously concentrated on the Roman road network and the increasing finds of tap-slag on the site stressed the importance of the connection that the London road gave to the western iron production areas in the Weald (6.20).



6.20: Location map putting Bridge Farm in the wider Roman landscape

(after Hodkinson 2008, figure 6 & Rudling 2016, figure 8.1)

However, the importance of the riverside location should not be overlooked as bulky relatively cheap cargos, such as grain and iron, could be transported by boat or barge at a fifth or sixth of the cost of hauling the cargo along the roads in ox wagons (Greene 1986, 40). Jones (2012, 86)

suggests that it took ten wagon loads to fill a barge with a volume of 10 tons of cargo and that a coastal/river boat could take up to six barge loads. It therefore becomes clear that whilst the London road runs close to some major iron works, including Oldlands and Great Cansiron, it would still have been expedient to get heavy cargos onto flat bottomed barges as high up the river system as possible, even if that meant waiting for a high tide or even the correct season. This raises the question of whether the Bridge Farm settlement was the head of navigation on the Ouse or the point where a coastal boat could approach on the flow-tide to be loaded from both barges from upstream and carts from the surrounding area with bulky iron-based and agricultural cargos. This might suggest that one use of the 13-posted building excavated in 2014 to the west of the settlement was for storage of goods awaiting a change of transport (see Section 4). It also raises the question of whether any evidence of riverside wharf structures might have survived the canalisation works of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century and the more recent and extensive flood defence works by the Environment Agency.

One thing has become very clear from the research undertaken for these conference presentations; Bridge Farm was not a typical roadside settlement, i.e. a straggling unplanned ribbon development that grew haphazardly beside an existing road. The street grid seen in the geophysics, its location in the bend of the river, its access to roads in each direction and the provision of the earthwork defences, all strongly suggest an official hand in its planned foundation and careful siting.

The importance of Bridge Farm is reflected in the words of Shepherd Frere writing in the foreword to the report on the excavations at Neatham, Hampshire (Millet & Graham 1986):

*(The settlement) 'would seem to belong to a small but growing number of minor sites with short-lived earthwork defences erected in the late second century, ... It is legitimate to deduce that some special feature of an official character ... was being protected. ... This in turn implies government action ... the result of a central decision rather than as a series of spontaneous constructions by local people. ... These facts are sufficient to indicate the local importance of the settlement and to show that it belongs to a class of Romano-British site of which we know very little...'*

In the thirty year that have passed since Frere made these comments much work has been undertaken, but as highlighted by a recent comprehensive survey of Roman-period rural sites, nucleated settlements such as Bridge Farm, particularly when unspoilt by subsequent development, are still rare and by no means fully understood; this despite these sites being recognised as highly important to the understanding of the wider Romano-British rural economy (Allen and Smith 2016, 37). The excavations at Bridge Farm are producing further material which will assist the interpretation of these important and under-represented sites as well as providing data that can assist our general understanding of the wider economic and landscape contexts.

## 6. 2017: CONSOLIDATING DATA AND RECORDING

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### 7.1: MUD, GLORIOUS MUD

Those who braved the elements to visit Bridge Farm in 2017 will recall that we had a problem of recurrent downpours during July. This meant on average losing at least a couple of days each week either from the site being unsafe or from having to re-excavate and clean areas once more covered with silt. We have discovered over the years that Bridge Farm is not a site to dig in the rain but if left un-trampled

the surface dries out remarkably quickly. We became quite experienced at firing up generators and attaching submersible pumps, as well as the age-old techniques of baling and bucket chains (7.1). The 2017 excavation was due to run from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 6<sup>th</sup> August, but due to the rain excavation and recording continued through most of August. This was the final year in Trench 6, an area of 1400sq.m located at the intersection of Margary's London Road (M14) and the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century double ditch enclosure.



*7.1: Downpours flooded the deeper features at least once a week causing delays and damage to work done*

The 2017 investigations were specifically of features at the deeper level so of course got completely flooded each time it poured hard. Despite the weekly setbacks a large work force of students and the more determined of our volunteers battled on to reveal a complex palimpsest of roads, ditches and pits that will require a concentrated period of post-excavation analysis and possibly some fairly lateral interpretation to try to understand.

We were very pleased to have group of 8 second year CCCU students returning for another season and 2 graduates, Georgia Gunn and Wiki Krzoska (7.2), as well as the 20 students, mainly from CCCU, who came for the first time to undertake the 4-week training course; this with our faithful volunteers made the dry days on site quite hectic (7.3). We were also delighted to welcome back Lindsay Banfield and Nick Hannon (7.4) who shared the onerous task of site supervision whilst Nancy and Ann once more took control of the Finds Unit.



*7.2: Viki and Georgia, newly graduated, took on the role of assistant supervisors*

*7.3: A busy dry day, looking north from the south baulk*



**7.4. Nick and Lindsay; site supervisors and excavators 'par excellence'**

## 7.2: IN THE PITS - WITH SOME OLD 'FRIENDS' REVISITED

A benefit derived from the recurrent drenchings was that they made the stratigraphy of the various features show up as never before and many issues from the previous seasons were resolved as the internal baulks were taken down and clear edges could be seen in plan.

One of our first reappraisals was that of a 2.5-3m section that had been excavated for two seasons in the northeast corner of the trench as being across the outer enclosure ditch (see Section 6.2 & Fig.6.7). When the surface of the trench was cut back on the eastern side of the section it became clear that this was a large sub-circular pit (Feature 29) centred at 131.4E/232.2N on the site grid, just to the outside of the ditch location and, subject to confirmation, probably from a later phase. This made a great deal of sense as the profile of this feature was in considerable variance to that of the other V-shaped ditch sections. This profile was also seen in the quarter section excavated [6272] through the remaining half of the pit (7.5). As with most of the other large pits found in this trench there is no clear evidence for its original use.



7.5: Quarter section of the sub-circular pit to the northeast of the trench [6272]

Another deep pit which was revisited having been half sectioned in 2016 was Feature 25, centred at 131.1E/209.5N in the southeast corner of the trench. This pit was originally observed on the surface as a sub-circular blackish ring but proved to be much squarer in plan and section when excavated. Due to the greater clarity of contexts in 2017 we were able to see that the section dug and recorded in 2016 had not been excavated at right angles to the cut and therefore a new section was excavated on the correct orientation to get the true profile. Having recorded the new section (S59) the pit was fully excavated to a depth of 4.752 AOD which confirmed that the cut [6206] was originally dug with some precision, square in plan and with vertical sides. Due to the nature of the soil these had crumbled in at the top leaving the rounder profile seen on the surface (7.6).



7.6: Feature 25 fully excavated revealing its square profile (steps to the sides were cut for access and safety).

It was in this pit that the Oldbury type glass bead was found in 2016 (6.11) and in 2017 an amphora rim (7.22) and a whole small pot (7.23) were recovered together with a large Æ coin (7.7), probably a sestertius, which crucially came from the primary fill (6211). This, together with a 'silver' coin, also from this context, are both badly corroded and were not instantly identifiable but may provide more evidence during specialist assessment. The few artefacts collected from this pit suggest that it was not used for rubbish disposal when redundant, which seems another characteristic of most pits excavated in this trench.



*7.7: Large Æ coin from pit F25*

At the very end of the 2016 season a group of pits were discovered and partially excavated, in an area from 112E/220.6N to 118E/225.2N, once a layer of disturbed flints had been removed in Slot 24. This area lay mainly in the path of the London road just to the south of the inner enclosure ditch. Some of the smaller pits appear to only be discernible at a low level, but one pit in particular, centred on 113.6E/221.5N (Feature 28), was seen to have a cut [6213] in section and plan that continued up to at least the level of the road surface (7.8/7.9). The pit lies to the east of the alignment of the metallated surface of the road in an area curiously devoid of any sign of metalling or indeed structure despite being just to the north and roughly level with one of the best areas of compacted metalling and substructure in the trench. This pit was half- (S62) and then quarter-sectioned (S69) during the season with both sections being drawn, but was sadly lacking in artefacts, datable or otherwise and is likely to remain a mystery.



*7.8: Feature 28 appearing to break through the surface*



*7.9: The half section of Feature 28 revealed in the baulk of Slot 24*

It also became clear that a pit had been dug in the route of the eastern roadside ditch (Feature 17) centred at 123.4E/210.2N with another possible pit at 123.1E/214.2N, although the latter was less clear. The pits had previously been regarded as parts of the ditch itself leading to some speculation about potential recuts due to the varying size and profile. The realisation that these anomalies were caused by later pits cut into the area of the backfilled ditch not only clarified the alignment of the ditch but also raised questions of whether other such features may have been misunderstood in other locations and should therefore be reappraised in subsequent interpretation.

A hard clean-back of the area just to the east of the road at the northern baulk in the area from 122E/238N to 127E/240N revealed another large ovoid feature (Feature 33) truncated by the edge of the trench. This was excavated on a section line at 239.43N (S72) where the pit was 2.15m wide and 1.44m deep with the base at a level of 4.817m AOD (7.10). The cut [6277] revealed a steep sided, narrow bottomed pit very unlike the more concave profile



*7.10: the section of the conical pit, Feature 33*

of [6272] or the square profile of F25 [6206]. Just to the east side of the pit were 2 postholes, [6089] of 520mm dia. at 123E/238.5N and [6292] of 350mm dia. at 123.45E/240N. The adjacent location of these posts suggests some function related to the pit but without further excavation of the baulk area, which was not possible at the time due to the proximity of the spoil heap, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusion.

These were the larger pits investigated but many other smaller pits were also excavated and recorded at various locations across the trench. However, a very clear geophysical anomaly just to the west of the square pit (Feature 25) eluded discovery despite deep cleaning back and taking down a slot in the location. Whether it was deeper than we were prepared to go or was caused by a surface feature and therefore already dug away we shall never know.

## 7.3: A SECOND SIDE ROAD TO THE SOUTH EAST



7.11: A 2016 aerial drone shot with the main features added as CG shapes

A layer of flint (Feature 35) heading south from the London road and overlaying the internal enclosure ditch was uncovered on removing the baulk to the east of the London road in the northern half of the trench at 120-122.3E/224.2-228N. The consolidated area of flints (6285) suggested that this could be a side road (7.11) constructed at some time after the inner enclosure ditch was backfilled (7.12); possibly providing a link to the eastern road to Arlington. This new band of flint metallurgy ran roughly parallel to that excavated in 2015/16 at the north end of the trench adjacent to the well. These roads offered a plausible purpose for a ditch (Feature 31), also revealed on the baulk's removal, which ran along the area between the two enclosure ditches, cutting the eastern roadside ditch, and then turning northeast to run up the eastern side of the London road. The location of this feature suggests it may be the northern roadside ditch to the more southerly of the eastern side roads and has offered some clarification for the double ditches seen in the north baulk of the trench (7.12 & 7.13). Further excavation to the eastern side of the trench showed that the flints became sparser as its route left the sunken level above the enclosure ditch and came up to a level potentially affected by plough damage. However, the base of a

probable southern roadside ditch (Feature 34) was clearly indicated as a narrow band of flints. This ditch appeared to join with the eastern roadside ditch (Feature 17) of the London road at 122.5E/219N, just before this feature was in turn overlaid, or possibly truncated, by the side road.



*7.12: The flint metalled surface (6285) revealed where the baulk was removed in 2017. The double ditch can be seen in the trench edge to the top right of the photograph.*

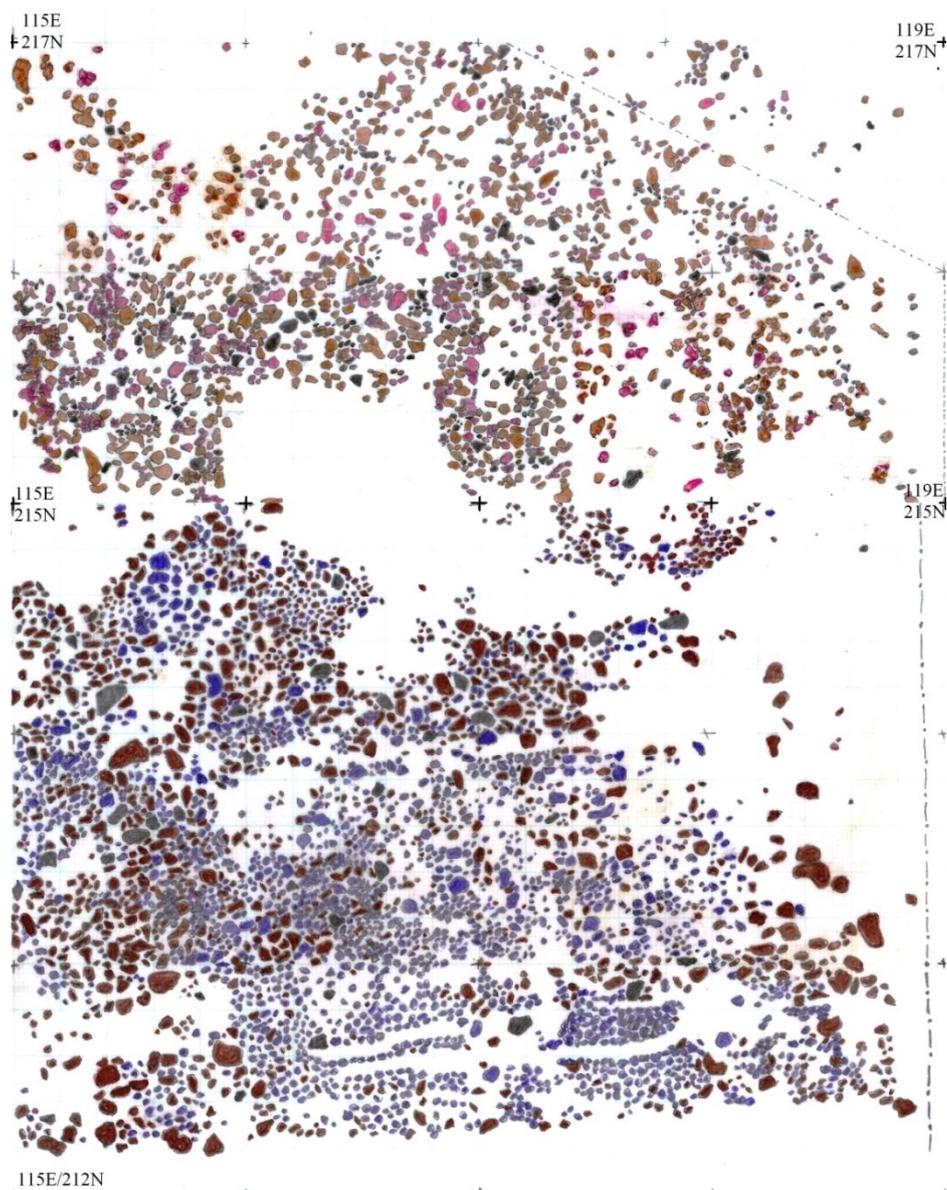


*F31 later turning ditch      F17 earlier straight ditch*  
**7.13: The two roadside ditches in the northern baulk of the trench**

## 7.4: CLEANING AND RECORDING THE LONDON ROAD

Having a large body of students on site allowed us to clean a substantial area of the main London road (Margary 14) each side of Slot 12 (the long section across the road and its eastern roadside ditch). The location for this slot was chosen because of the good preservation of the road surface but this precluded locating the western roadside ditch due to a junction with a westerly side road. N.B. Details of this section have already been given in Section 6.4 above.

The newly cleaned area offered an excellent opportunity for some detailed planning which was undertaken by two of the CCCU undergraduates, Beata Szabo and Angela Majnic-Lane, who produced a superb result (7.14). Due to the students hard work we were also able to take a series of site photographs of this important feature (7.15 & 7.16).



KEY: black = Downland flint: brown = riverine flint: purple/mauve = slag or clinker

*7.14: Scale plans drawn of the road metallurgy by two of the CCCU students*



*7.15: The cleaned area of the road metalling adjacent to Slot 12*



*7.16: The north facing section of Slot 12 showing the road structure*

## 7.5 THE EXCAVATION OF THE WELL

The stone-lined well was a prime target for 2017, but the surrounding area needed fully excavated down to 1.8m below trench level (4.8 AOD at 2.2m below ground level) before the top of the well lining could even be re-exposed and work progress safely. This could not be rushed as the contexts above the well were particularly finds-rich and therefore had to be removed with great care as coins, pot sherds, bronze pins and brooches continued to be revealed, designated as 'special finds' and 3D located before being removed, packaged and recorded.

The structural elements of the well (Feature 26) were originally discovered at the end of the 2016 excavation (*see Section 6.4*) at the base of a large pit centred at NGR 543226 114483, just to outside the northeast corner of the outer enclosure ditch at 128.8-129.7E: 234.6-235.6N on the site grid and 1.6m below the demolition/activity layer (6050) that may give some indication of the later Romano-British ground level in this area of the site. The pit has sloping sides from an irregular sub-circular cut on surface approximately 3.5 to 4m in diameter. It appeared to have had a series of small pits dug into its NE edge although these features could have resulted in historic collapse of the pit edge. We have learnt from experience during excavation that the sandy-silt through which the well pit was cut is prone to edge collapse in wet conditions despite being extremely hard and stable when dry. It is unclear whether this pit was dug for the construction of the well or much later in order to remove some upper courses of the well-lining after it had become redundant. In 2016 the 2m depth of the structure against the remaining section baulk (6.8) restricted excavation of the interior to four course comprising of large blocks of a flint conglomerate over slabs of hard ferruginous sandstone and chalk (6.9).

The upper area of the well pit was filled by the dark brown layer (6050) to a depth of 1m in the centre and 300mm at the edge. This deposit has a distinct layer of burnt clay fragments at its base and covers the entire northeast corner of the enclosure ditches. It was extremely rich in metal finds, including coins, particularly in the fill above the burnt clay. Below this layer was a grey-brown fill (6063) which also slumped down towards the centre of the well. Both these layers provided good pottery recovery which should facilitate dating and phasing.

The well-pit's relationship with the enclosure ditch is not clear due to the considerable disturbance of the ditch in this area. It would appear that the well itself is outside the ditch line and constructed after the ditch had been backfilled, as the above mentioned layer (6050 s/a 6095) overlays the flint surface of the London road which itself overlays the refilled ditches.

The recurrent rain storms of the 2017 season greatly hampered the uncovering of the well's stone-lined structure and the removal of the adjacent baulk until the last week of the season and forced an extension of the season well into August. Drier weather finally allowed the interior of the well to be excavated by members of the CAP committee, the site supervisors and a limited number of our regular volunteers, to a depth of 3.2m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and 1.6m below the top of the remaining lining at 4.8 AOD (7.17). This equates to a depth of approximately 2.8-3m below the probable Roman period ground level.



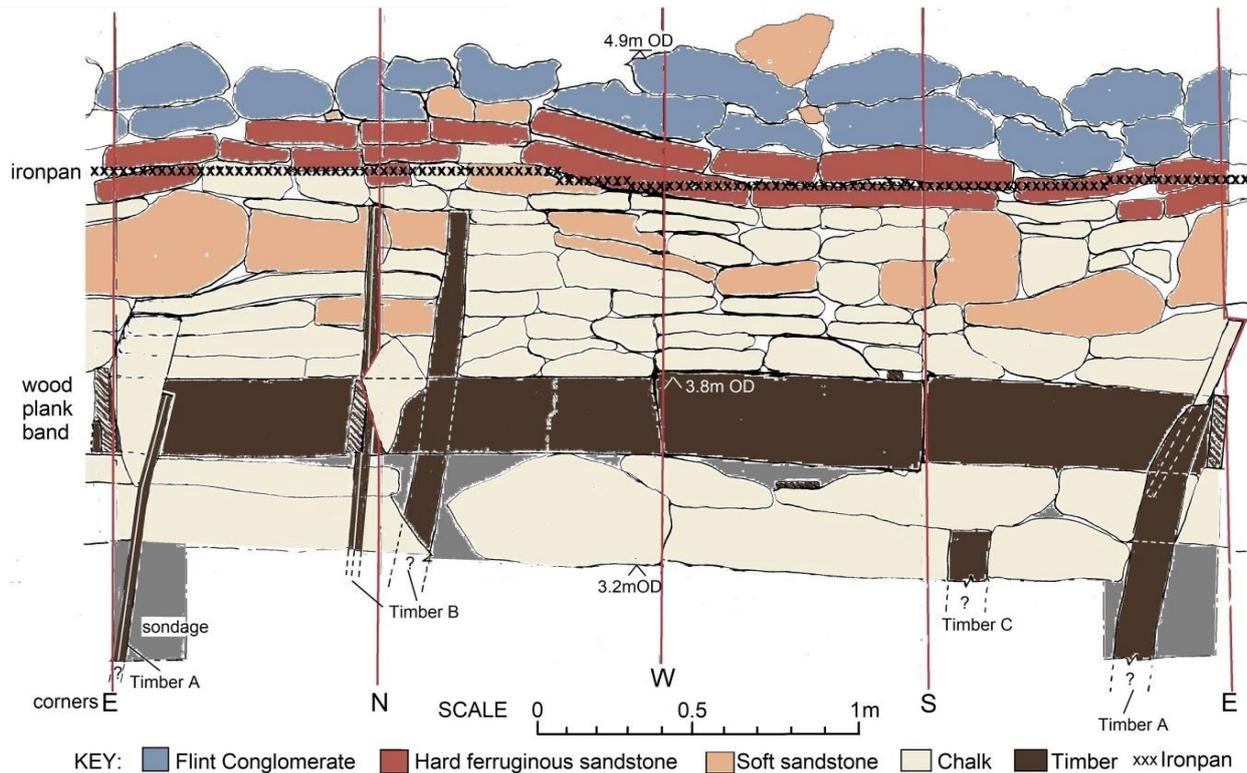
*7.17: The well finally revealed in August 2017*



*7.18: The complex internal structure*

This revealed quite a complex structure (7.18) comprising layers of various materials which in descending order were: irregular flint-rich conglomerate blocks, ferruginous sandstone slabs, smaller chalk blocks with some softer sandstone blocks, 4 substantial oak planks forming a rough square and larger chalk blocks at the base. The well was excavated down to a depth where the fill changed to a more glutinous blue-grey clay and a small sondage in the east corner taken down to just under 3m AOD, to follow a vertical timber, revealed that this fill continued down and was therefore interpreted as the natural sediment into which the well had been dug. During the last days of Trench 6 an auger survey adjacent to the well by John Kane showed that this clay horizon began level with the base of the excavated well and continued down as far as the set of hand augers could penetrate. We were therefore convinced that this clay formed the base of the well, especially as at least three vertical timbers had been driven into it as extra support for the stone lining. Some Downland flint nodules were found at the base, but whilst it was tempting to think of these forming part of a bottom liner it is more likely that they had fallen in from above as similar nodules were noticed within the fill of the well adjacent to the top of the lining in 2016. These flints may be a remnant of a robbed-out upper lining of the well and give an indication to a possible upper structure. If so, this may have resembled that of the nearby flint-lined well excavated at Barcombe villa in 2007 (Rudling and Butler 2008, 13).

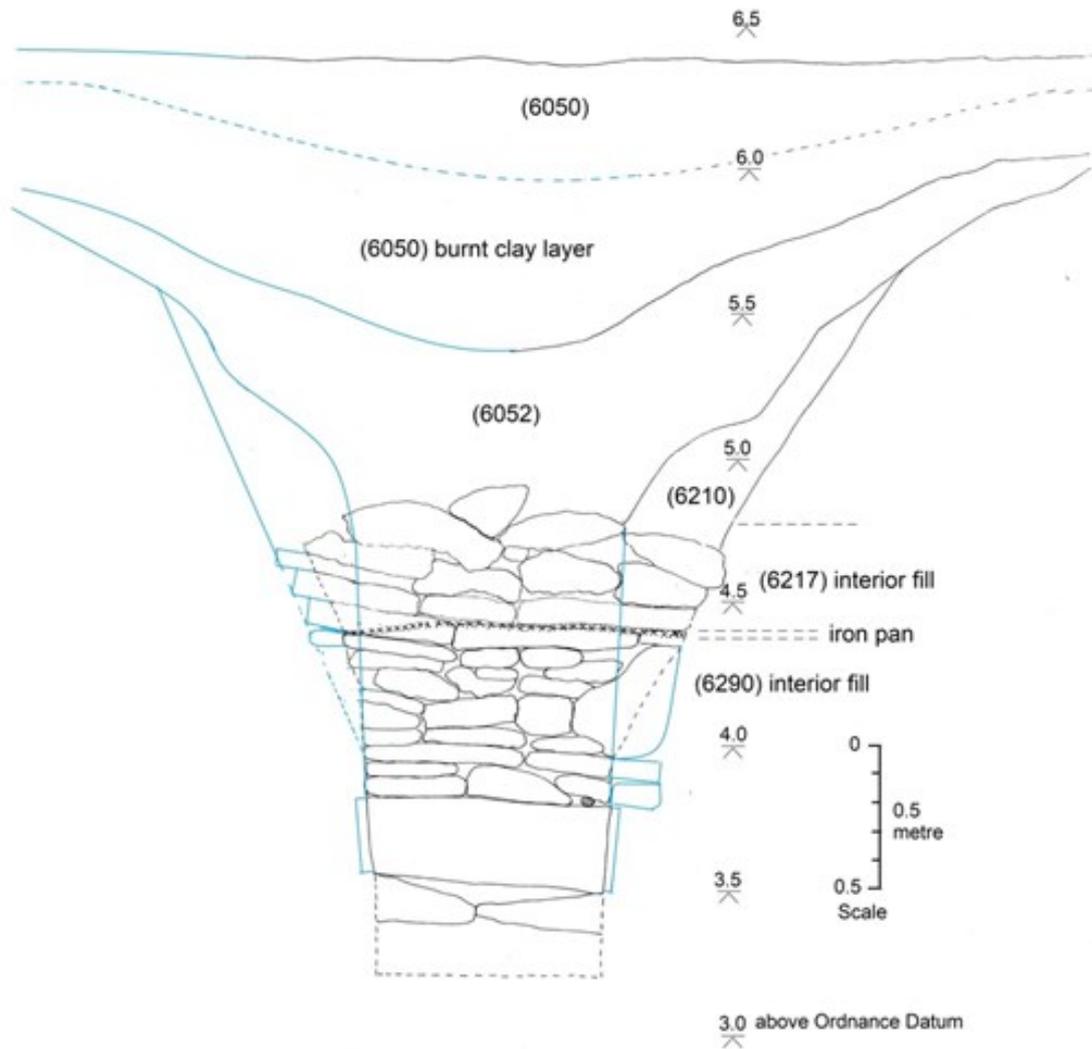
The well pit and the top of the well lining were added to the site plans. The interior of the well was extensively photographed and a series of measurements taken (see table below) with measured drawings being made of the four interior faces of the well, based on the orientation of the square made by the four interconnecting planks (7.19).



7.19: An amalgamation of the 4 measured drawings of the internal faces of the well

A section drawing of the pit to the four upper courses of the lining had been drawn in 2016 and enabled production of a joint section/elevation of the upper pit and well lining by amalgamating the results (7.20).

The construction of the well lining is intriguing, with the oak planks forming a level square frame on top of a substantial chalk base and with chalk and soft sandstone, laid in coursed layers above. The planks appear to be joined at the corners by a simple lap or halving joint which in some cases had caused the plank to split at about mid-height due to the pressure of the surrounding soil/stone. It was however not possible to define the joint used despite close examination with a thin blade without removing the timbers which we decided would be ill-advised for both conservation and health and safety reasons. It is therefore possible that these planks are arranged in an interlocking formation similar to that excavated from the well at Beddington, Surrey (Howell 2005, 100). The chalk layers are capped by 2 courses of hard ferruginous sandstone slabs and finally be the irregular lumps of conglomerate. A hard iron-pan was noticed at the interface of the upper chalk with the hard sandstone suggesting that this may have been a ground water level for a significant period. The occasional use of softer sandstone may have been either due to a shortage of chalk blocks or a later repair, as they are clearly not as resilient to the waterlogged conditions as the chalk. However whilst quite soft and crumbling now they have been in situ for a couple of millennia.



7.20: Section showing the upper well pit and well lining (blue lines are inferred)

The ironpan at the transition from chalk to hard sandstone may indicate the level of water within the well during its active life and might indicate why the change occurred at this height. Chalk, particularly the Lower Downland Chalk from deeper quarrying, is a robust material if used below ground level even when waterlogged, providing it is not exposed to frost. It was used for the foundations of flint walls during the Roman period at the nearby Barcombe villa and bathhouse and other buildings in the area. The surrounding sandy-silt alluvium and the chalk lining would have provided a basic cleaning filter for the water as it drained into the well.



7.21: A group of plank fragments

A group of thinner plank fragments (7.21) found at the hard sandstone level within the well could be the remains of either an inner surround. Alternatively they may be from a cover to restrict sunlight and prevent the growth of algae as well as preventing any unwanted rubbish falling into the water. The possibility of these planks being discarded rubbish seems unlikely given the lack, apart from a few cow bones, of other general rubbish in the grey fill at this level.

The following table gives the measurements taken on the four faces of the well as defined by the large oak planks surrounding the well which form a roughly 850mm sided square at between 3.8m and 3.55m AOD some 350mm above the final depth of excavation.

*Table of materials and approximate depth of the various construction layers*

SW face (site South)	NW face (site West)	NE face (site North)	SE face (site East)
<b>300mm</b> 1-2 courses, irregular flint-rich conglomerate	<b>300mm</b> 2 courses, irregular flint-rich conglomerate	<b>400mm</b> 2 courses, irregular flint-rich conglomerate	<b>300mm</b> 1-2 courses, irregular flint-rich conglomerate
<b>200mm</b> 3 courses, ferruginous hard sandstone slabs	<b>200mm</b> 2 courses, ferruginous hard sandstone slabs	<b>200mm</b> 1-2 courses, ferruginous hard sandstone slabs	<b>200mm</b> 2 courses, ferruginous hard sandstone slabs
<b>600mm</b> 6-7 courses chalk blocks (70-100mm) with a 75mm wide timber strut at the west end, supports the top chalk layer continuing behind the plank into the grey clay	<b>600mm</b> 4-5 courses Chalk blocks including soft sandstone block	<b>550mm</b> 3-4 courses Chalk blocks with blackened soft sandstone blocks	<b>300mm</b> 1 course of 2 large soft sandstone blocks
			<b>350mm</b> 4 courses (90mm avg) Thinner chalk blocks
<b>240mm</b> Horizontal Oak plank	<b>270mm</b> Horizontal Oak plank Angling into well at top by about 10°	<b>300mm</b> Horizontal Oak plank Sloping down to E end by 70mm	<b>260mm</b> Horizontal Oak plank
<b>350mm</b> Single large chalk block	<b>320mm</b> Larger chalk blocks	<b>400mm</b> 2 courses Smaller chalk blocks with vertical timbers holding blocks in place	<b>300mm</b> 2 courses: 200mm chalk block sloping into well at base under 100mm level chalk slab
<b>3.2m AOD - end of excavation at blue-grey sticky clay</b>			

## 7.6 BUSINESS AS USUAL IN THE FINDS UNIT

It was another busy year in the finds unit and one compensation of the those days rained off was the greater number of students who undertook spells of washing, marking and packing under the supervision of our ever more competent finds team. Their task was further complicated this year by having to combine the 3 years of each type of finds into numerical context order in readiness for their dispatch to the various specialists. The table below gives some idea of the magnitude of this task even though some of the totals for 2015 were not available. We have all three totals for pottery at over 26,000 sherds, weighing over 250 kilograms, the CBM at over 238k, fired/burnt clay at 117k and the total of iron production waste (listed as slag) 644k. The totals listed are of finds in the archive and not the addition of the annual figures which are likely to be less accurate. Of the 'other metal' finds 175 are coins. The difference in the data collected emphasises the efficiency introduced in recent years since Nancy Wiginton and Ann Best took control of this unit.

*Table showing the figures available for the general finds from Trench 6*

Year	Pottery		CBM	Burnt Clay	Bone		Flint	
	No. pieces	Weight grams	Weight grams	Weight grams	No. pieces	Weight grams	No. Pieces	Weight grams
2017	5,354	61,066	84,444	100,169	353	2,409	47	568
2016	10,411	100,602	72,593	12,783	639	1,822	70	657
2015	10,289	90,520	81790	4,425	553	809	64	540
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26,054</b>	<b>252,188</b>	<b>241,991</b>	<b>123,921</b>	<b>1,548</b>	<b>6,154</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>1,765</b>

FCF		Glass	Charcoal	Stone	Fe		Slag	Other metal
No. Pieces	Weight grams	No. pieces	Weight grams	Weight grams	No. Pieces	Weight grams	Weight grams	No. pieces
207	4,708	54	2,226	20,026	765	14,559	222,773	
317	5,449	71	1,114	23,444	599	7,846	211,661	
N/A	N/A	86	Not recd	27,795	926	5562	209,752	
<b>524</b>	<b>10,157</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>3,340</b>	<b>71,265</b>	<b>2,290</b>	<b>27,967</b>	<b>644,186</b>	<b>268</b>

The excavations of 2017 seem to have produced less pottery than previous years with the usual amounts of cbm and iron production waste, a.k.a. slag, probably reflecting the concentration on cleaning the various areas of road. The high concentration of burnt clay came from the careful removal of the remaining areas of the dark activity/demolition layer in the northeast third of the site. The pottery data will be fully explored once the specialist report has been undertaken, but it was interesting to see that a little more amphora was included. Some of these were made Special Finds including the rim SF309 from context (6171) pit F25 (7.22), a group of body sherds SF369 found in (6180), a context to the east of the London road and overlaying the area of the outer enclosure ditch, and a handle from the general oversite layer (6002). In all 120 special finds were recorded in 2017 compared to 162 in 2016 and 120 in 2015, giving a total of 420 for Trench 6 over the 3 years.

The small jar from context (6187) in pit F25, complete save minor damage to the rim, was given was listed as SF328 due to its completeness and its unusually small size for what appears to be a local handmade vessel (7.23).



**7.22: SF309 the amphora rim from F25**  
Rim diameter 80mm



**7.24: Complete bronze pin with setting in head**  
109mm long overall



**7.23: SF328 the small pot from pit F25**  
86mm tall, 87mm max diameter



**7.25: Disk brooch with setting**  
24 x 20mm

The more interesting special finds of the year, apart from the coins, tended to be bronze dress ornaments with a collection of pins and brooches. These included SF326, a whole pin with a glass setting to its head (7.24) and two oval disk brooches, one of which, SF313, still had its central setting despite having lost most of the surrounding decorative bands (7.25). Whilst most artefacts were collected during excavation some were recovered during floatation, particularly of the waterlogged fill from the well which allowed some organic preservation of both prepared timbers and some strips of leather (7.26) as well as preserving a group of iron joinery fittings comprising of nails, a fixing plate, a hook and an eye (7.27).

**7.26: Leather straps from well**



**7.27: a group of iron joinery artefacts from the well**



## 7.7 REFLECTIONS ON THREE SEASONS IN TRENCH 6

The large assemblage of finds from Trench 6, including over 26,000 sherds of pottery, vast amounts of iron production waste, cbm and burnt clay and 420 special finds, including over 230 coins amongst other metal artefacts, have been processed, collated and packaged by our finds team to await specialist assessment. The waterlogged timbers from the well have already been dispatched to the University of Durham for conservation and Trench 6 has now been backfilled, so there is no going back this time. The 2017 season gave us the opportunity of further investigating both features at a lower level and those deeper features which cut through the various levels of the site. Whilst the wet weather hampered our efforts it also gave us the benefit of good contrast between various contexts and in particular between the features and the surrounding soil; a luxury we had not been blessed with in previous seasons. The deeper features included the well and allowed detailed recording of this structure to be undertaken. Whilst the decision to excavate the interior of the well and leave the structure intact may have restricted access to some data about its construction it was decided that a more destructive form of excavation was not either appropriate or practical in this instance. Further detail on the construction of the London Road was also recorded. The third season in Trench 6 also allowed for a revision of interpretation of some features, and for the completion of the 60 plus site plans, each representing a 5m square of the site, the 78 section drawings, 293 context forms, plus the associated slot and feature forms. The task of digitising these records is already underway as both a precaution against long-term loss or damage of the paper record and to allow wider access, interpretation and publication of the data contained therein.

The main purpose of this trench was to investigate the intersection of the London road with the enclosure ditches and this has been accomplished with some surprising results. It became clear in the first season that the pre-excavation hypothesis, based on the published results from a previous restricted excavation of the road (Margary 1933, 26-28 & 39-41), that the late 2nd century earthworks would cut a late 1st - early 2nd century road was unsound. The remains of the road clearly overlaid the back-filled ditches and over the 3 years no evidence of an older road on this alignment has been found. The precise dating of this road, if that is possible, and its overlying layers must wait for the artefact reports, but the initial assessment by the excavators is that this section of the London road was built during the first half of the 3rd century and earthwork defences in this location were not long-lasting. A more precise dating of the earthworks, both in construction and closure, is a continuing aim of the project with further research into the wider provision of these short-term defences and the development of a plausible reason for their construction a longer term research objective.

Trench 6 not only achieved its principal aim but has taught us a vast amount about the technique of excavating this alluvial site and the nature of the archaeology available. This knowledge will be utilised in future seasons. The shallowness of much of the archaeology and the depth of intrusion from deep-rooted crops and alluvial penetration has confirmed concerns about the durability of the archaeological record and justifies continued excavation of specifically targeted locations at this site.

## 7.8 MAGNETOMETRY ON THE CRINK

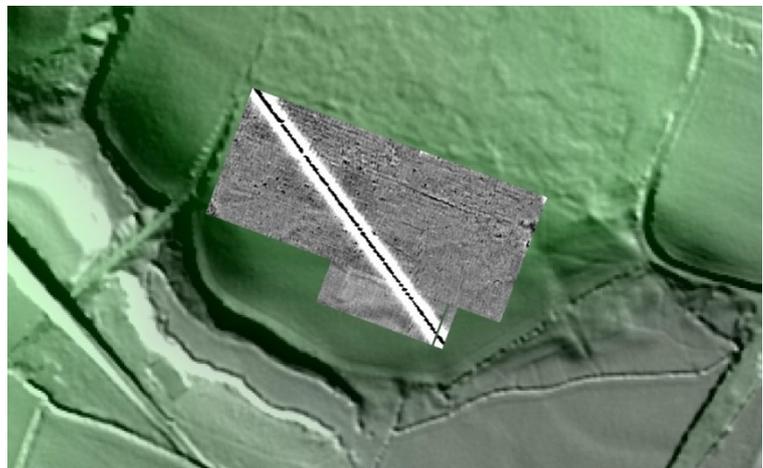
There are, however, areas where non-intrusive techniques are still by far the best policy and an area which has been a high priority for many years is a high level field called The Crink, to the north of the Roman road at Culver Farm and to the northeast of Bridge Farm (7.28). Margary's proposed route for the east-west Greensand Way bisects this field (Margary 1948, 166-168).



*7.28: Map showing location of The Crink (pink) in relation to other geophysied areas*

A resistivity survey and systematic surface pick up of a limited area to the east end of the field in 2008 suggested some unexplained anomalies in areas where Roman period tile and pottery sherds were also found. In September 2017 we finally had access to a magnetometer and the field at the same time and Stuart McGregor organised and undertook the survey with help from volunteers and students. Sadly results from geophysical surveys are not always as dramatic as those for House Field, Bridge Farm and very little could be seen on the image from this survey other than the oblique scar of the modern Barcombe water supply (7.29). On this evidence we cannot say that the Greensand Way does not cross this field, only that this survey shows no sign of it.

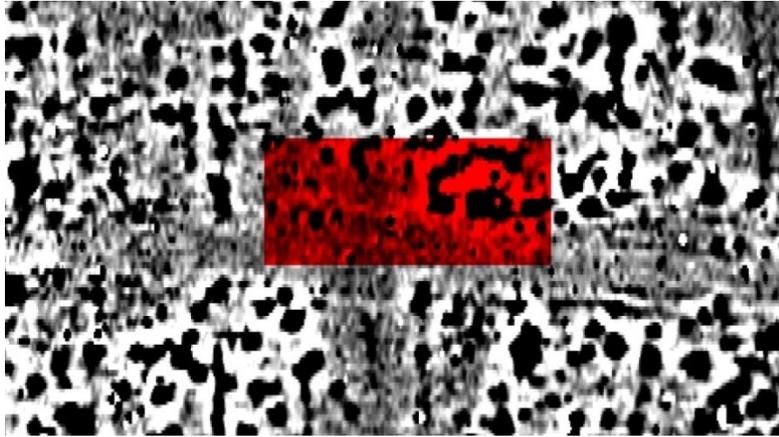
*7.29: A rather disappointing result from the 2017 survey of The Crink*



## 8: 2018-2022 Trench 7 over the Centre of the Settlement

### 8.1 2018: HEADING INTO THE CENTRE

Trench 7 (900 sq m) over the centre of the settlement has been readied for the 2018 season by having 300mm maximum of plough soil removed by mechanical digger. The new trench is



located over the northern half of the central crossroads of the area enclosed by the earthwork defences. The trench includes obvious anomalies as well as more neutral areas in the geophysical image and has been targeted due to its potential importance in the overall plan of the settlement (8.1).

*8.1: Image showing the size and location of Trench 7*

Whilst no immediately obvious features were revealed in the exposed surface during machining, casual collection of some of the artefacts left on the surface of the trench have suggested that an interesting and informative excavation awaits us. The casual finds comprised 47 sherds of general pottery (8.2), 14 sherds of samian ware (8.3), a large sherd of amphora, 4 pieces of cbm and a sandstone quern fragment, so it looks as if the finds unit may well be busy.



*8.2: General pottery and amphora sherds*



*8.3: The samian sherds collected*

### 8.2: BRIDGE FARM 2018-19

The 2018 summer season saw the opening of the seventh trench at the intriguing Romano-British settlement site at Bridge Farm, near Barcombe Mills. **Trench 7** is located in the very centre of the area enclosed by the 2nd century double-ditch defences and it was hoped that this 45 by 20 metre area over a central crossroads would reveal evidence of the formal hub of the settlement.

However, this site represents over 300 years of Roman-period activity and what remains in this area seems once again mainly to feature industrial and/or scavenging activity. This consisted of a collection of very large, deep pits, areas of fired clay, several series of postholes with large flint and chalk packing. Most pits had layers of dark brown sandy silt and burnt clay indicating procedures involving high temperatures. Some of the postholes appear to be in approximate rows but so far lack the parallel line that would signify a rectangular structure.

An area of the road from Pevensey was revealed at only 200mm below the current ground level in the south-eastern corner of the trench. The upper layer of this consisted of pebbles and small nodules of Downland flint which had been disturbed by ploughing. Beneath this was a compressed sandy layer of flint gravels forming the main base



*8.4: The slot through the remains of the road*

structure of the road (8.4). It is remarkable that this had survived at such a shallow depth and not surprising that no trace was found anywhere else along the trench having been presumably ploughed and/or robbed out.

An area of particular interest was an oval deposit of fired clay surrounded by lumps of chalk and fire-cracked flint nodules (8.5). The feature had the appearance of some kind of hearth with the presence of chalk leading us to think that it may be the remains of a simple clamp-type lime kiln. The only previous notable occurrence of chalk at Bridge Farm was in the walls of the well excavated in 2017 in Trench 6 but the structural use of chalk in a fired environment seemed less probable. Our initial thoughts were called into question on discovery of 2 very large postholes adjacent to the 'Pevensey' road which also had large



*8.5: A possible hearth surrounded by chalk*

blocks of chalk used in addition to flint nodules as post packing (8.6). The eastern of these (PH1) also had a large fragment of a German lava quern stone at the base, presumably used as a pad to support the post. Unlike the 13 post building excavated in 2014 these appeared to have had their posts removed rather than left to degrade in-situ.

A black circular area revealed what appeared to be fragments of a burnt clay wall around it as the very dark fill was removed. In 2018 we thought we may have discovered a kiln of some kind but further excavation in 2019 revealed yet another very deep pit below causing more debate. This feature is still at the half-sectioned phase so hopefully more will be gained as further excavation takes place in 2020. The extensive range of large pits is puzzling especially at the centre of the 2nd century enclosure where more formal remains were expected.

From the initial cleaning-back of the trench surface a large and varied assemblage of pottery was collected, totalling over 28,000 sherds in 2018-19, with a greater percentage of fine wares than seen from previous trenches. This included a good quantity of samian, some with embossed decoration (8.7), maker's marks and even graffiti.



8.7: A decorated samian bowl sherd



8.8: An almost complete mortarium

Close to the chalk-lined hearth was a pile of black colour-coated white fineware beaker sherds with a number of samian sherds looking like a definite deposit rather than a random scattering. There were also more mortaria sherds including one almost complete mortarium in a light buff/cream fabric (8.8) and more olive oil amphora sherds, some with maker's stamps.

We found a variety of bronze dress accessories including some fibula brooches (8.9), pins and jewellery fragments. The brooches are quite fine which suggests they come from the earlier phases of occupation. A few coins were recovered giving us some clues as to the phase of activity we are excavating and whereas in Trench 6 at the northeast corner of the settlement a much larger assemblage of coins was dominated by late 3rd century radiates and 4th century House of Constantine issues here the coins seem to date mostly to the 2nd century.

Could this imply a movement away and towards the northeast from this area during the later Roman period? This might suggest that the deep pits were a result of subsequent plundering of materials from this area.



8.9: 3 of several fibula brooches recovered in 2019

In 2020 we will dig further into the features we have revealed and excavate the north-eastern section of Trench 7 from where 850 plain tile tesserae have already been collected. We hope this will provide some clues to the enigma of this area and possibly reveal more large postholes to align with those excavated in 2019.

David Millum, MCIfA, ©CAP December 2019

### 8.3: 'DIGGING FOR BRITAIN' AT BRIDGE FARM

On the last day of the 2019 excavation season things got even more frenetic than usual at Bridge Farm with the arrival of a two-man team from the BBC4 programme 'Digging for Britain'. The project had been contacted prior to the excavation and supplied with a camera with a large fluffy microphone to record events as they happened on site throughout the season. This initial filming was undertaken by Project Director Rob Wallace and Site Supervisor Lindsay Banfield who filmed various volunteers and students extracting artefacts and digging features during the six-week dig (8.10).



8.10: Supervisor Lindsay turns film maker



8.11: The 2-man BBC team filming with Rob

Whilst we felt that our site might lack the wow factor such as human skeletons or gold hoards that usually seem the stuff of TV archaeology, we duly sent our efforts in and were pleasantly surprised when we heard back that a crew from the programme would come down and do some additional filming. We had obviously passed the first hurdle. The two-man crew duly arrived and spent most of the day filming the excavations and artefacts, as well as the general

surroundings, whilst interviewing Rob about various aspects of the dig and his conclusions (8.11). They seemed particularly taken with the very narrow path through the 2m high sweetcorn that led to the site. Over the weeks the excavation had become completely enclosed and invisible from the edge of the field allowing that surprise reveal moment that TV presenters seem to adore.

As with most TV archaeology they were particularly interested in the artefacts recovered and spent a good amount of time in our finds unit. To be fair the archaeology in our current trench is of a fairly ephemeral nature not easy to interpret or explain as I found when trying to give site tours on our open day. Large deep pits, areas of burning, series of postholes and the disrupted base of a road can appear more like just random orange-brown holes and lumps than the important archaeology that it is. Had they come in 2017 we had a deep stone-lined well to exhibit or in 2014 the 13 postholes in an obvious rectangle, each with the water-logged remains of oak post; but 2018 was mainly marked by a series of very big, deep pits for which, unlike some TV archaeological presenters, we had no satisfactory explanation.

Still the crew seemed positive and explained that if the site were chosen for the programme Rob would be contacted in September to go to a studio filming session. This duly took place with Rob, complete with selected artefacts, being interviewed by Alice Roberts. All seemed to go well and after final editing the site was featured in Episode 3, The South, going out on BBC4 on December 4th and then on to i-player.

David Millum MCIfA December 2019

**The excavation planned for 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.**

### **8.4: OPEN AREA EXCAVATION 2021 (BF21)**

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 CAP leased an industrial unit at Bridge Farm to be our lecture hall and finds processing base as well as finds and winter equipment store. This unit also provides an office and Special Finds store. Access also continued to the communal Bridge Farm facilities building for both students and volunteers.

Special Covid Risk Assessment and Safe Working Practice guidance were prepared with auto-hand sanitisers installed at all doors. Face masks were worn in lectures and a twice weekly self-testing regime imposed. Social distancing and ventilation measures were undertaken as practicable. No cases of Covid were reported from anyone attending the site.

The 2021 season started on May 31<sup>st</sup> with students from CCCU and CAP staff and training course facilitators only due to the restrictions in numbers imposed by the government during the planned easing from Covid lockdown. Due to 2020 being cancelled we had to run 2 separate 4-week training courses, the first from May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 25<sup>th</sup> June for the 24, including 5 returnees, for those who should have come last year and the second from June 28<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July for the 25 due to come in 2021. Three students in the second cohort had to arrive late due to self-isolation due to Covid. To keep the safe working environment during the ongoing pandemic general

volunteers were not allowed on site until after the CCCU students had left. The season was extended to give a 3-week period of the excavation which ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> August.

Project Director, Rob Wallace, directed the excavations with Jade Fennell being appointed as main site supervisor assisted by other CAP personnel as available, including Andy Bradshaw, Richard Best and David Millum; David having stepped down from the role of Deputy Director at the end of 2019. Nancy Wiginton, assisted by Mike Naylor, was in charge of the finds units, with Mike being responsible for Special Finds photography.

The summer proved typically British with periods of hot sunshine followed by heavy rain. One particularly period of heavy rain over the weekend of August 7-9<sup>th</sup> flooded the deeper features and some areas of the campsite, with some students pre-warned having relocated to alternative higher ground adjacent to the Finds Unit. It also flooded the road which was only passable in 4-wheel drive hi-axle vehicles.

During the 2021 season context numbers **7-223 to 7-304** were issued. Site work started with cleaning of the SE end of the trench and clearing slumped soil from the previously excavated features. The works are listed below in Feature order rather than chronologically.

**F36: west roadside ditch to N-S road [7-14, 7-94]** in P4/13/22/31 c.114.7-116E/ 200-220N.

The large evaluation trench 110-120E/212-214N was taken down to 500-600mm deep without any trace of the ditch in the NE and SW sections. A further 350mm deep eval was dug at 112.9-114.3E/214.7-216N to check if the pit [7-143] in F40 was part of the roadside ditch but this too proved negative. **Feature area closed August 2021.**

**F37: E-W road (7-7)** in P8/9 c.133-145E/200-206N. As the road structure had been planned in P8-9 and sectioned in 2019 a further harder clean was undertaken which revealed further areas of more consolidated flints surface in P7-P9 along the NE edge of the road in an approximate continuation of context (7-8) in P8. In P9 clear plough furrows

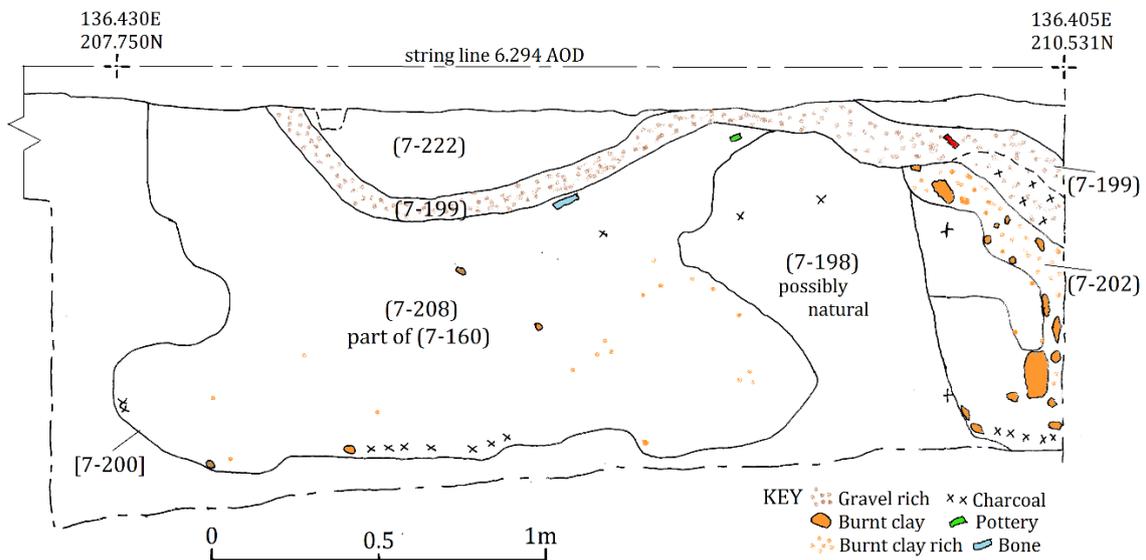


*8.12: Plough damage being exposed on the road F37*

were revealed running NW-SE adjacent to the southwest baulk in areas where the flints were more disturbed (8.12). New plans were drawn of P7-9 showing these discoveries. **Feature area closed August 2021.**

**F38: 2 (?) Large quartered pit/s** in P17/26 centred at 136.4E/210.6N. **New sections and plans were drawn but some contexts require checking and possibly amending in 2022.** Details of each quadrant are listed below.

**F38S:** The **South quadrant** the undercutting face of the pit was excavated to the SE edge but collapsed under wet conditions despite being covered. Work also continued on the NE section where 2 new contexts were issued (7-229/7-230) both of which could be s/a (7-218) with (7-230) being below the clay and sandy lenses (7-207 & 7-217) and resembling the description of (7-218). **Both these new contexts need reassessing in 2022 and the contexts forms filled in fully.**



\$40 (part) SE facing section of south quad of F38 (southern pit - F38S)

### 8.13: Photograph and drawing \$40 of the SE facing section of large pit F38S

**F38W:** Further cleaning of the surface of the West quadrant was undertaken which showed the darker fill (7-208) seen in the NW section in F38S continuing as a rough rectangle for approaching 3m with the paler outer fill (7-198) also continuing (8.13).

**A slot through this quadrant needs to be excavated in 2022 to establish profile and seek further information on the purpose/ use of the feature.**

**F38N:** Further excavation was undertaken in the **North quadrant** with 3 new contexts being issued (7-241, 7-286, 7-287) in descending layers, and (7-216) issued in 2019 was now excavated. Context (7-287) was a red highly burnt layer appearing to be *in situ* rather than deposited



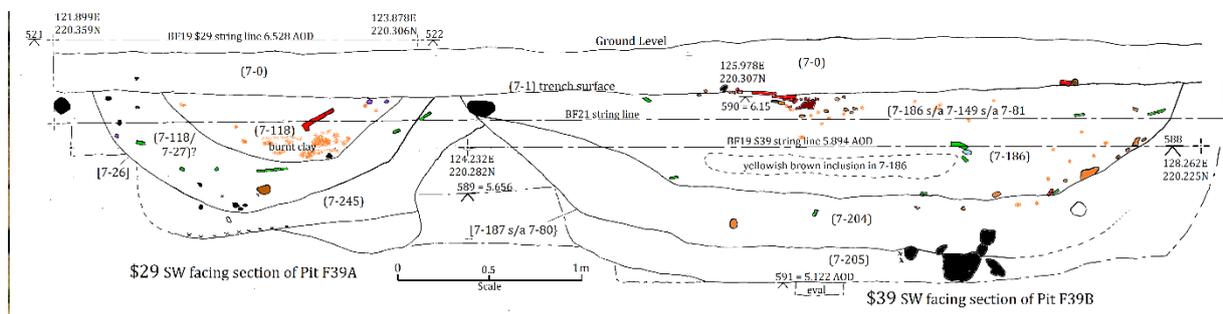
8.14: Red burnt fill (7-287) in F38N under (7-286)

suggesting that this pit had experienced high temperature burning (8.14). This quadrant needs to be fully excavated, context forms fully completed and the existing section drawings \$40 & \$42 completed prior to the E & W quarters being excavated possibly leaving a narrow baulk in place until the feature is fully understood.

**F38E:** No works were undertaken on the East quadrant which can only be excavated once the N & S quadrants have been fully excavated and fully recorded.

**F39:** 2 adjacent pits on NE baulk extending into new 2022 extension [F39A: 7-26 & 7-191 / F39B: [7-187] in P 32/33 c.122.1-128.2E/218.4-224+N. The area between the 2 pits was excavated to see how the pits interact with each other (8.15). It was shown that these were separate pits although at the current section it was unclear which cut which or if they just abutted. 2 new contexts were issued for pit F34A (7-245 & 7-251) which were below (7-118) in [7-191]. It was still unclear how the contexts of [7-191] related to those of [7-26] and whether these are excavations of the same pit, 2 phases of the same pit or 2 separate intercutting pits. Baulk section and P32 plan were updated.

Both pits extend into the new area where a hard clean should be undertaken to expose a complete plan of the feature prior to any further excavation.

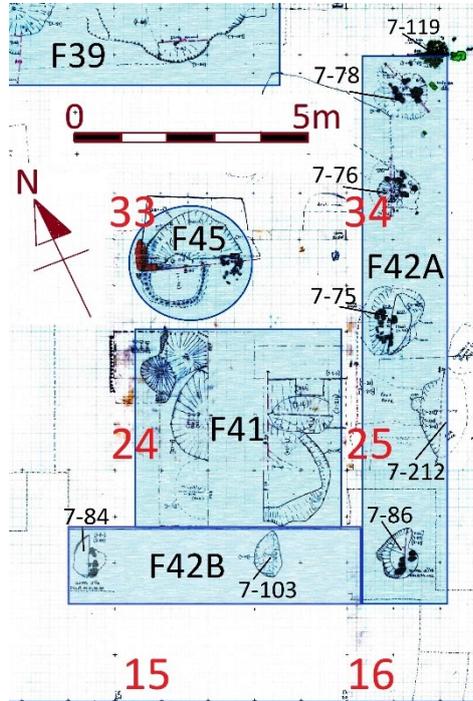


8.15a: Photograph of the baulk section of F39 series of pits (August 2021)

8.15b: \$29 and \$39 drawings of baulk section of F39 pits



was not clear. Shallow pit B appeared to cut into both Pit A and Gulley G. Definitive interpretation was once more hindered by the nature of the sandy-silt soil and damage to the exposed features by heavy rain and surface water flooding. **This feature should be inspected in 2022 to see if any more definitive information can be gained from further careful excavation of the remaining baulk.**



8.18: Plan showing location of features F39, F41, F42 and F45

**F42A & B: group of 6 postholes [A:7-75, 7-76, 7-78] [A&B:7-111] [B:7-84, 7-103] forming 2 abutting sides of a rectangle in P14/15/16/25/34 c.124-131E/207.6-218.8 (8.18). No additional postholes related to this group were discovered in 2021. **Be vigilant for any possible postholes in this area in 2022 that may relate to this feature.****

**Part of F43: multiple posthole group [7-30, 7-57, 7-101 & 7-112] in P11 centred at 108E/208N (8.19). No work undertaken other than on the group of 3-4 intercutting posthole pits, excavated in half sections in 2018 but not drawn, which was carefully re-excavated. However, the sections had deteriorated in the long delay and it was therefore only possible to re-excavated as a single group feature with 6 profile drawings (\$46, \$47, \$48, \$50, \$51, \$52) being made across the group by David Ladds. Pit [7-30] proved to be very uneven at its base. **Feature area closed August 2021.****



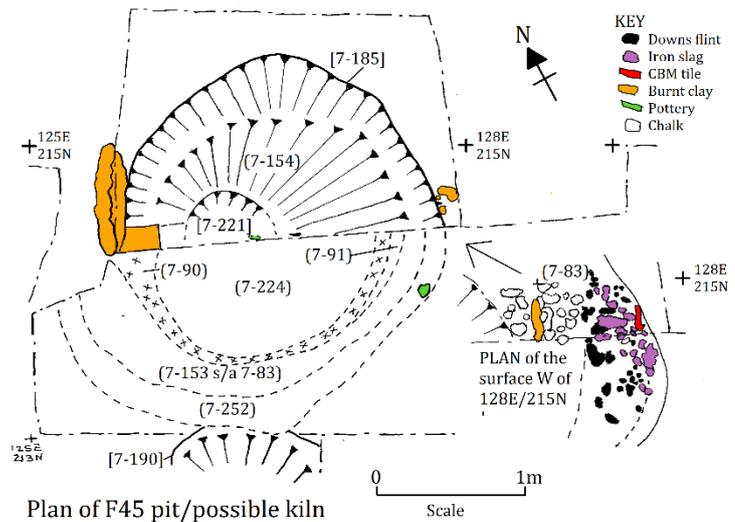
8.19: The multi posthole group in F43 (BF18)

**F44: 2 large [7-180 & 7-181] and 2 smaller [7-169 & 7-192] postholes in line on road edge in P17/18 c.135.5-144E/206-207.3N.** Further excavation revealed the large amount of sizable flint and chalk packing (8.20) which was recorded on continuation sheets to the respective context forms. Excavation and recording completed.



8.20: large chalk packing from F44

**F45: hearth/deep pit [7-104 & 7-185] in P24/33 c.125.4-128E/213.5-215.6N.** The baulk to the SE of the existing section was cleaned back to reveal 2 new outer rings (7-255 & 7-252) around existing rings (7-153 & 7-91) and the central fill (7-224) (8.21). These contexts were planned and then partially excavated from the inner to the outer. Excavation was hampered by flooding (8.22).



8.21: Plan of pit F45

Excavation of the NW end of the NE half needs completing with section \$41 updated before continuing with excavation of the SW half of this feature.

**F46: ovoid pit [7- 20] in P29/30 centred at 109.6E/218N.** Excavation and recording completed in 2019. No further work undertaken in 2021. **Feature area closed August 2021.**



8.22: Excavation of (7-221 & 7-91) in F45

**F47: deep pit [7-16] in N corner in P28 and P28 NW extension at 99.4-101.8E/218.85-221.65N** This multi-context pit extends beyond both the NE & NW baulks. It had to be abandoned in 2018 as it was extending deeper than the safe limit against the baulk. In 2021 the spoil heap and baulks to the NE & NW were taken down to trench surface level to expose the full plan of the pit. The 2018 section was cleaned back and surface slump removed from the pit which was then extended across its full width. Four new horizontal deposits were added (7-264/5/6 & 7-283) making 15 in

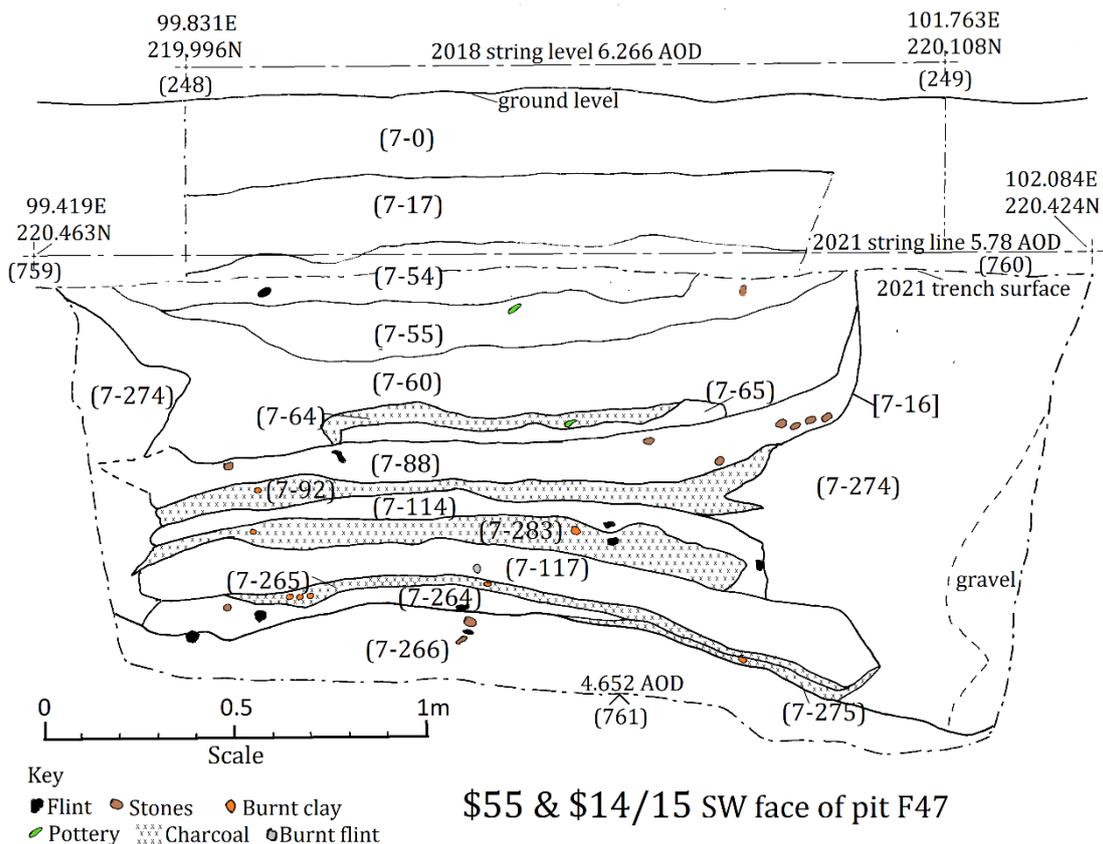
all plus a possible collapsed side fill (7-274). The lower half of the pit was filled with alternate layers of charcoal and gravels suggesting deliberate deposition possibly from a nearby industrial process. The base of the feature was unclear due to the constant ingress of surface water (8.23) and the gravel fill which could have been a natural layer of river terrace deposits. The exposed section was drawn (8.24 & 8.25) and the trench extension planned. **Feature area closed August 2021.**



8.23: F47 flooded at regular intervals



8.24: Section \$55 being drawn



8.25: \$55 drawn of the SW face of P47 by Alison Reep

**F48: deposit of burnt clay (7-11) with chalk surround (7-12) in P34/35 c.135E/ 218N.** Following half sectioning and recording of the burnt clay and chalk deposit (\$42A) (8.21) a further hard clean of the trench surface to the SE revealed a far more extensive feature than previously identified: being 2 abutting large pits designated F48A and F48B as listed below.

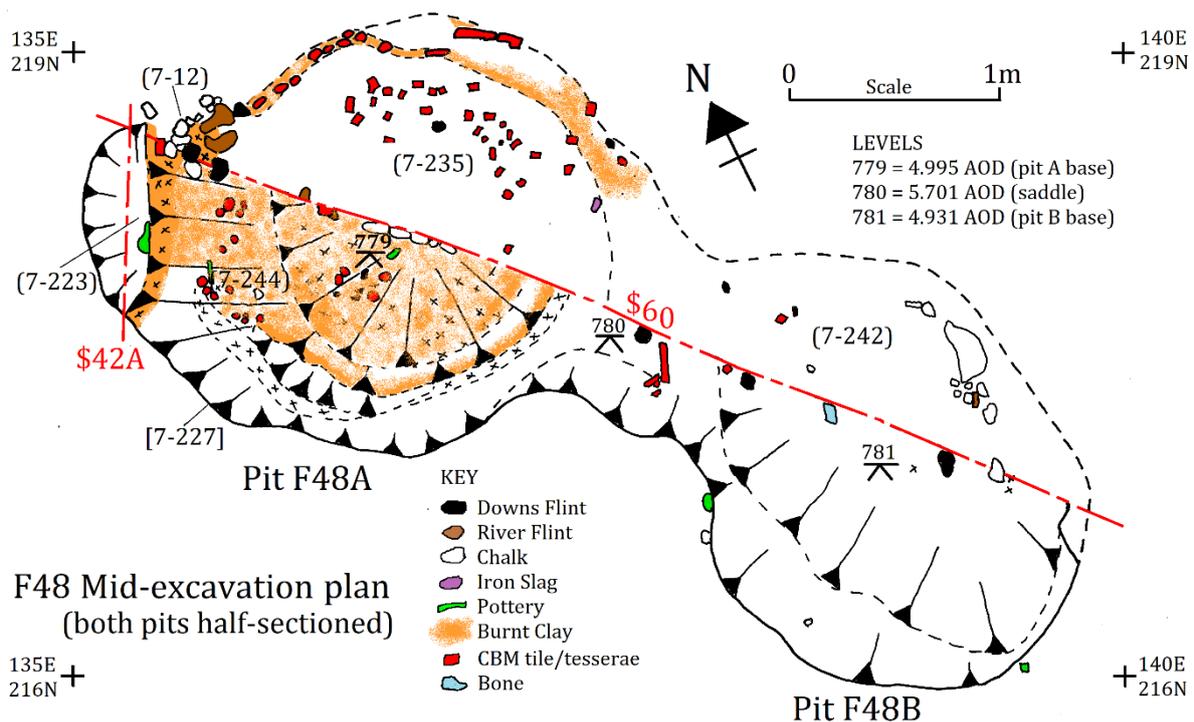
**F48A: a deep multi-fill pit [7-227] below (7-11/7-12) in P35 c. 135-137.6E/217.3-219.1N.**

Eleven new contexts were issued in 2021 in matrix order the fills comprise (7-235, 7-254, 7-273, 7-244, 7-267, 7-250, 7-261, 7-270, 7-292, 7-223) concluding with the main cut [7-227] (8.26 &



8.26: Excavation of one of the lower layers of F48A in progress

8.27). Upper fill (7-235) contained a large number of tesserae suggesting that this feature might be directly linked to their production. It appeared that the lower fills (7-223/7-292) were at the base of this feature with fill (7-250) appearing to continue into the NW edge of F48B. **Check that excavation and recording of half section is complete and complete context forms (7-250, 7-254, 7-267, 7-273, 7-292) BEFORE proceeding to excavate NE half.**



8.27: Plan of F48A & B as half-sectioned at end of BF21

**F48B: a deep multi-fill pit [tbc] abutting/adjoining F48A in P35 c. 137.6-139.9E/216-218N.** Eight new fill contexts were issued in 2021 which in matrix order are (7-279, 7-280, 7-242, 7-276, 7-277, 7-281, 7-259, 7-256). **No cut was issued as excavation incomplete (8.27).** Upper fill (7-242) had a layer of chalk (7-280) at the surface which was planned (P35D) before removal (8.28). A similar chalk deposit (7-279) was observed in fill (7-276) above river gravels at NW edge. There is some indication that this may be 2 features (8.29) with (7-259, 7-256) being from an earlier deep pit

truncated by contexts (7-281 and above) but this needs further careful investigation when the NE half is excavated.



8.28: Katie Greenstreet planning chalk in F48B



8.29: F48B showing indication of 2 features?

**Complete excavation of SW half section and complete recording including updating section drawing \$60 BEFORE excavating NE half. Pay particular attention to the relationship of (7-259) to the contexts above it to determine if this context is in the same feature.**

**F49: surface layer of small flint (7-152) and cbm tesserae (7-147) in P26/27/35/36 c.137-145E/212-220N (8.30).** P26/27/35/36 cleaned back hard to check for features. Tesserae collected as (7-147) and are processed separately from other CBM in the Finds Unit with 2759 being processed during 2018-21 including those from (7-235) in F48A. Cleaning this area revealed 4 small pits that appear unrelated to any feature. These are: (7-232 at 136E/214.6N and [7-240] at 138E/213.5N in P26, with [7-225] at 143.9E/212.2N and [7-247] at 144.2E/214.2N in P27. **This layer is almost certain to continue into the area now opened to the NE so further updates of context records will be needed.**

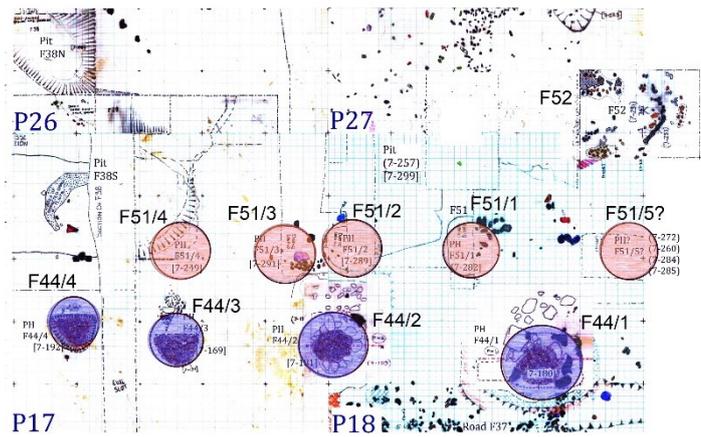


8.30: F49 tesserae (7-147) around 140E/220N

**F50: a dark layer observed on the surface of the trench overlaying various areas and features.** This echoes the layer F21 found over the enclosure ditches in Trench 6 which was interpreted as either a demolition or activity layer. Only one new context (7-228) added in 2021. **Further areas/contexts may well be added to F50 in future years.**

**F51: a row of 4(+) postholes [7-282, 7-289, 7-291, 7-249] running along the 208N grid line in P17/18 c.138.74-145.24E/208.15N just north of F44 posthole row (8.25).** Originally interpreted as a linear feature further excavation revealed a series of 4 large squarish pits/postholes which are in line with the pit at the eastern baulk with fills (7-272, 7-260, 7-284, 7-285) which could be a 5<sup>th</sup> posthole in this series. Group only recognised at end of 2021 season. **Check section drawings \$57/58/59 and plans P17/18 before proceeding. Context forms need completing and (7-272 etc) included or separated from feature group.**

**F52:** a pit with red (7-236) and black (7-237) fills around and below a gritty interior [7-231, 7-233] in P18/27 and extending into the eastern baulk c. 143.4-145.7E/209.6-211N. This feature needs further investigation in 2022 with context sheets needing completion. No section was drawn in 2021 so that it may now only be possible to draw a profile of the cut after complete excavation. No cut issued in 2021.



8.25: Plans P17&18 showing postholes F44 & F51



8.26: F53 cut by F51 posthole [7-289] with [7-291] behind and [7-282] in front

**F53:** a shallow rectangular pit [7-299] with 2 small pits/postholes [7-301, 7-303] in base in P18/27 c. 140.8E/208.75-211N. This feature abuts posthole [7-289] of F51 (8.26) and appears to truncate 2 small pits/postholes. Careful completion of this feature required in 2022 with check of section and context sheets. The pit and postholes also need to be planned on P18c/27.

An Open Day with guided tours of the site (8.27) and an exhibition of finds (8.28) was laid on for Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> August which attracted 120 visitors.

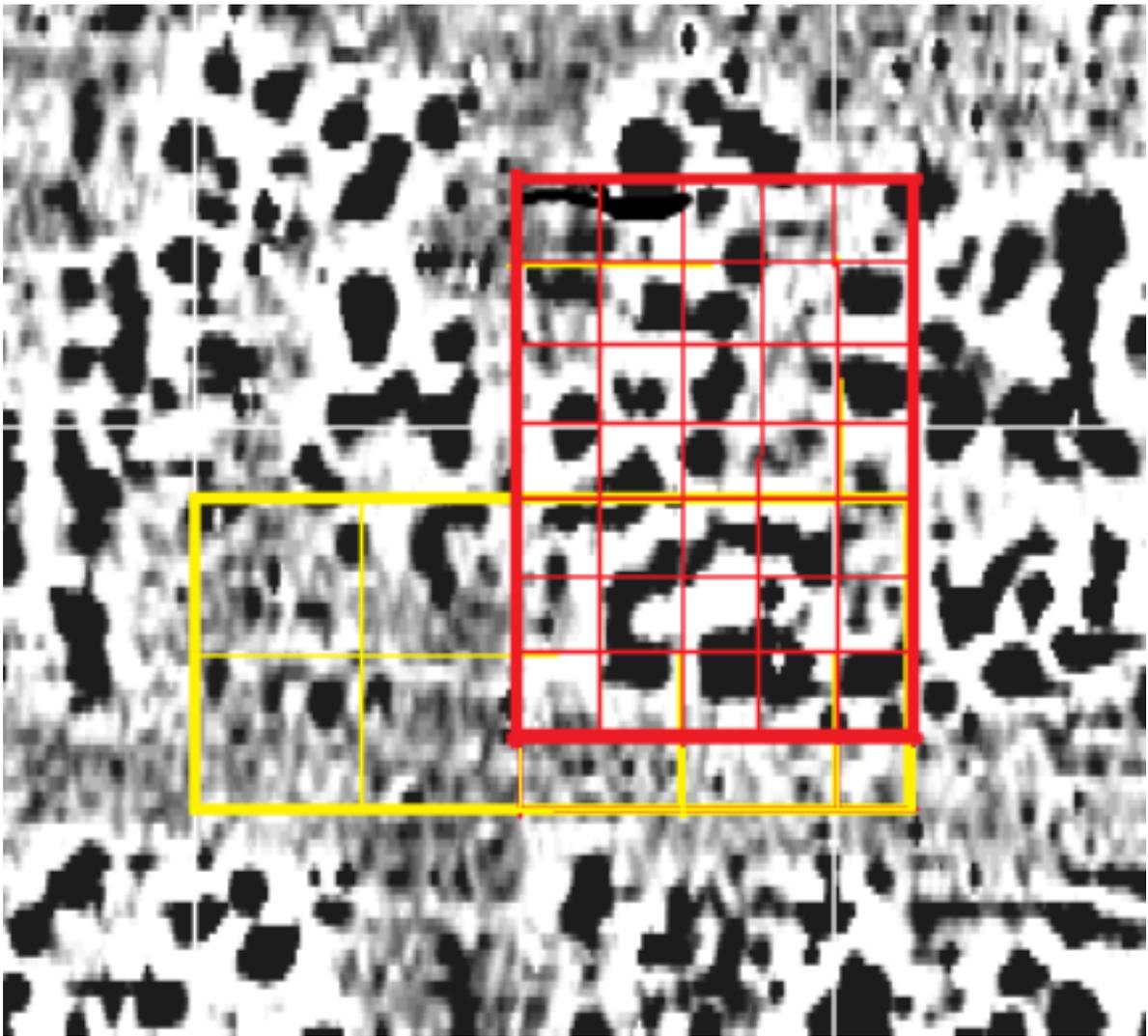


8.27: Director Rob Wallace guides a site tour



8.28: Artefact display laid out in Finds Unit

The western 20m and southern 5m of the trench (yellow 10m grid) were backfilled on 23<sup>rd</sup> August with an area of 20m to the north of the remaining 25m of the trench being opened on 24-25<sup>th</sup> August giving an 875sq.m open area (red 5m grid) ready for the 2022 season (8.29 & 8.30).



*8.29: Yellow grid showing area closed and red grid the 2022 trench on 2011 geophysics*

The entire trench both existing and new was then covered in plastic sheeting and the newly acquired portable site cabin installed to the east of the excavations (8.31).



*8.30: Removing overburden from the new area*



*8.31: Trench covered and site cabin installed*

## 9. IN CONCLUSION

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In this section I will try to summarise what I consider are the main achievements of the first decade of the Bridge Farm project; what we now know, what we can deduce and what we may speculatively venture from both knowledge and deductions.

This green-field site obviously offers tremendous scope for new discoveries, as well as an increase in the overall knowledge regarding nucleated Romano-British settlements, even though it comprises exclusively of negative features with rare remnants of otherwise vanished structures. These include the metalling of the London road and the lining of the well in Trench 6, and the 13 post bases in Trench 5 . Our investigations are particularly relevant to those settlements provided with earthwork defences at around the end of the second century AD.

The site has offered a marvellous opportunity for the local community and archaeological volunteers to learn a great deal more about their historic environment. It has also provided the ideal base for training archaeological students in the practical elements of their chosen discipline, hopefully inspiring some to continue and become the archaeologists of the future. The income generated by the undergraduate training course has provided a major contribution towards not only the cost of excavation but crucially the post-excavation works. Without this initiative it is extremely doubtful that this volunteer community project could have continued. The outstanding cooperation and support given by the landowners, the Stroude family, in allowing us to intrude for many years on their busy commercial farm, even loaning us a redundant building within their popular business park to convert into a headquarters and facilities building, is a major factor in any success that we have achieved.

The line between positive speculation based on facts and deductions and sending out erroneous indications of this crucially important site is a hazardous one and I do stress that both the interpretive and speculative suggestions that follow must be viewed with caution; with a healthy degree of *caveat emptor* being exercised before 'buying' into my tentative conclusions. Yet we have to start somewhere and it is my hope and purpose that in broadcasting my ideas at this early stage that someone may by refuting or substantially amending them arrive at a greater understanding for us all.

Whilst the Roman era is considered historic we have the situation in Britain that historical evidence is so rare that we have to depend on the archaeology as exclusively as any of the periods of prehistory. The Vindolanda and Bloomberg tablets do give us remarkable insights into everyday life of early Roman Britain and the writings of Roman historians and politicians give us details of the great events, albeit often very biased. We have coins which allow precise dating of when they were minted but their longevity of use often disguises the date when they were lost and/or deposited. The same problem exists with many jewellery and dress ornaments which without collaborative evidence could easily have been passed down for generations after their manufacture. We therefore have to depend heavily on pottery for dating and phasing our features and contexts and, like most Roman sites, we have no scarcity of pot sherds of various

types and origin from crude beakers from kilns only 4k along the Greensand Way to finer tablewares from Central Gaul. We are fortunate in having some wares that are both mundane enough to be unlikely candidates for conservation yet exclusive enough to provide a reasonably definitive date. I am particularly thinking here of the sherds of Fishbourne ware from one of the ditches forming the grid formation over the southern area of the site which with other contemporary sherds allowed this feature to be confidently interpreted as belonging to the first century AD.

I am also very aware that this project is ongoing and discoveries may well be made in future years that will substantially alter or refute ideas made at this interim stage. It is for that reason that we have delayed writing a fully published report on the site and it may be some years before such a report can be written with any authority. In the meantime this 'Excavator's Diary' together with numerous shorter articles, papers and presentations form the main source of information for both the archaeological and local communities. We are pleased to make our archives and 'grey literature', such as practical excavation reports, available to any serious research project upon application.

## 9.1 WHAT WAS FOUND

In 2011 we moved swiftly from the confirmation, by modern geophysical techniques, of a Roman road from London, first discovered by Margary in 1929, to the discovery of a Romano-British settlement at the junction of that known road with another heading to the east. The geophysical survey results showed not only, a settlement with a grid-like pattern of boundary and/or roadside ditches, but also the unmistakable outline of a square bivallate enclosure with rounded corners. Metal detecting of the surrounding fields provided a range of Roman period metal artefacts including biconical lead weights and coins ranging from a Republican *denarius* from the early part of the first century BC to a *siliqua* of the emperor Honorius, of AD 395-402.

The excavations of 2013 showed that the ditches of the grid-pattern roads dated from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD were cut by, and therefore predated, the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century enclosure ditches, with both features providing plausible pottery dating evidence. At least one of the roads was seen to extend well beyond the earthwork defences to an area in Trench 3 with a road junction, a large burning pit, a tiled basin, and a group of postholes and gullies suggestive of a small structure. Trench 4 unexpectedly provided a single cremation situated inside the enclosure ditches but in a stratigraphically higher, and therefore later, context.

Trench 5, excavated in 2014, targeted and revealed 13 large postholes, which were found to have a remnant post base in each. These were in a rectangular formation approximately 16m by 6.4m with each post centred approximately 3.2m from its neighbour. A group of 6 smaller post holes appeared to form a rectangle at right angles to the larger group. A ditch ran parallel to the long north western side of the larger post formation with a hearth on its northwest bank. Another hearth was discovered in the northern corner of the excavation trench. Two ditches meeting at right angles ran at axes oblique to the first ditch. Two deep pits were excavated which seem to align with the latter ditches and filled with water speedily if not continuously pumped out. These

together with the post holes provided some organic remains, mainly of waterlogged wood, including some prepared and/or carved timbers from beneath post base 9.

The next 3 years were spent investigating Trench 6 over an area at the northeast corner of the settlement where the road from London (Margary 14) intersects with the enclosure ditches. As discovered in the previous trenches the archaeology was quite shallow with the upper layers being damaged by centuries of ploughing and deep soil generation. However it soon became clear that a defined layer of compact flints and iron production waste lay along Margary's suggested route of the London road positioned between two flanking boundary ditches, some 18m apart. Where the road crossed the two enclosure ditches, despite slumping considerably, it still overlaid and was therefore later than the fills of these ditches. A slot dug across an area of defined road metalling revealed a structure very similar to that recorded by Margary in 1933 yet another slot just 8m north was devoid of any remains of the road or other archaeological feature. Evidence of side ditches to a smaller road heading northwest was revealed in the southwest corner of the trench. This road had showed little evidence of a metalled surface save some flint cobbles in the top fill of the ditches. Several slots were excavated across the enclosure ditches, some following the cut and others boxed, revealing a quite uniform V-shaped section. Of the several postholes excavated none could be grouped into a possible structure although some may have been connected to adjacent features such as large pits. Of the many pits discovered on site two stand out as being of particular significance; F25 for its very square proportions and F26 for its depth and the substantial stone lining with supporting timbers. A substantial layer of a very dark fill which contained an abundance of burnt clay was revealed to the northeast corner of the trench; the majority of the burnt clay whilst firm and yellowish-red did not appear hard enough to be considered as fragmented brick or tile. Two layers of consolidated flint were uncovered forming wide bands heading in a general southeast direction from the east side of the London road together with evidence of flanking ditches. A substantial artefact assemblage was collected over the 3 years including pottery, tile and burnt clay, iron production waste and other metal objects including coins, hobnail shoe patterns and dress ornaments. At the time of writing this assemblage is awaiting specialist analysis, however it was noted that a significant number of late third and early fourth century coins were collected from the dark layer mentioned above.

At the time of writing Trench 7 is still under excavation located in the centre of the enclosed settlement area and partially over the route of the eastern road that heads eventually towards Pevensey. This trench has once again proved how shallow the archaeology is with part of the flint road structure surviving at a mere 200mm below current ground level despite regular ploughing, even though the evidence of this is all too clear in the regularly spaced furrows through the feature. Once again, the archaeology has surprised us and made us reconsider our preconceptions. It appears likely from the number of large pits, evidence of intense heat and rows of postholes that this central area was predominantly industrial. Initial indications from coins and dress ornaments suggest that the main period of activity may have been 2<sup>nd</sup> century with a surprising lack of coins from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, very different to the nearby Trench 6. The pottery assemblage appears to have a greater percentage of finewares, including samian, than from previous trenches and the assemblage of basic tile tesserae is also distinctive to this

area, thought to suggest a manufacturing process rather than flooring. Further investigation of this area over future years will hopefully provide a clearer picture of the activity in this area and build towards a better understanding of the entire site.

## 9.2 WHAT HAS BEEN DEDUCED

It has become evident from the features and artefacts discovered that there was a significant settlement at Bridge Farm that lasted for the greater part of the Roman occupation of Britain. The settlement was situated at the southern end of a road from London that ran through the western cluster of the Wealden iron production sites and which appears to terminate within the settlement at its junction with a road heading east towards Arlington and Pevensey (*Anderida*). The settlement is also either adjacent or just south of a junction between the London Road and a road running west towards Hardham and eventually to Chichester (*Noviomagus Reginorum*), named by Margary as The Greensand Way. It is positioned inside an arcing meander of the River Ouse at a point where it is currently tidal and was navigable by commercial 16 tonne barges during the 18th-19th centuries (Gibbs & Farrant 1971 p.33). Recent research by Roger Cordiner and Anthony Brook into the construction of parish churches in the Ouse Valley has suggested that building stone was transported on the Ouse up as far as Barcombe during the early medieval period. It therefore seems reasonable to deduce that cargos could have been similarly transported between the coast to the Bridge Farm settlement during the Roman period.

Pottery analysis suggests that the settlement originated in the second half of the first century AD and the grid-pattern layout of that period suggests that the settlement was originally planned rather than formed by haphazard expansion. The lack of any Iron Age or Saxon artefacts found during excavation suggests that this was a new settlement founded in the Roman period and positioned at a strategic location rather than the redevelopment of an existing site that eventually fell out of use with the withdrawal of Roman authority. Pottery from the enclosure ditches has suggested that they date from the late second century AD and this date links the enclosure of this site with many others of varying size and type throughout the south east region. It is hoped that the analysis of pottery from the primary fills of the enclosure ditches in Trench 6 will add substance and possibly refine this initial interpretation. The London Road uncovered in the northeast corner of the settlement overlays the backfilled late second century ditches and can therefore be no earlier than the third century. The stone and timber structure at the base of the deep pit (F26) in Trench 6 is unquestionably the remains of a well and the 13 postholes in Trench 5 in the riverside meadow can, in my opinion, be nothing other than the remains of the structural supports for a rectangular building.

## 9.3 AND SO TO SPECULATION

Before proceeding I must reiterate my warning that the views expressed in this section are mine based on the data collected to date. My conclusions may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the project director Rob Wallace. However, we do appear to be in accordance on most of the fundamental conclusions so far reached about Bridge Farm but there are inevitably points on

which we agree to disagree and certain areas where I have gone further out on a limb deliberately to spark discussion.

### 9.3.1 Location and Origin

I believe that the location of the settlement at Bridge Farm was carefully planned and that it is not what I would term a 'roadside settlement', although listed as such in *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain* online resource, as to me that would imply random development occurring around a road junction. The grid plan design seen in the geophysical survey results, confirmed by the excavations of 2013, must indicate planning and the siting within the bend of the river at its tidal reach strongly implies a predetermined location. I am tempted to go further and suggest that instead of being located at an existing road junction the settlement was an integral part of the planning of the infrastructure. This is inferred by the conveniently similar distances that it lies from other settlements. I suggest we must also consider the strong possibility of the establishment being by official order, or at least officially sanctioned, to fulfil a specific function. This may explain why in the late second century it was one of those establishments to be enclosed by earthwork defences, although not why any such defences were considered necessary.

Whilst its location in a substantial bend of the river could have defensive attributes, I think its positioning has more to do with increasing the options for transporting goods, especially those of a bulky and heavy nature such as the products of iron production and agriculture. The settlement whilst able to offer a safe overnight destination, a *mutatio*, for road cargos principally carried by ox carts, pack-ponies or mules, also offered the opportunity to change the means of transportation from water to road and *visa versa*. The potential desirability of such locations can be seen in the number of settlements placed at the river crossing point of substantial Roman roads. I even wonder if the financial benefit from charging tolls for the use of a ford, bridge or ferry and thus providing the settlement with an extra source of income was a further consideration.

Initially I thought that the settlement may have been instigated as part of the client kingdom of Togidubnus but recently I have been musing over the longevity and use of natural boundaries and wondering if its location on the eastern bank of the River Ouse is significant. The river forms the current parish boundary between Barcombe and Ringmer and was the divider between the Rape of Lewes and that of Pevensey as well as the Norman Hundred boundary between Berecompe (Barcombe) and Mellinges (Malling); the latter also being the boundary between the archbishoprics of Chichester and Canterbury in the early medieval (Millum 2016, 105). The use of the Ouse as an important administrative boundary has a long pedigree traceable to a period not too distant from the Roman occupation. This makes me wonder if Bridge Farm, far from being an eastern outlier for Togidubnus, is a settlement placed strategically just outside the client kingdom. This highly speculative suggestion does gain some support from both Cunliffe (1973, 18-19) and Detsicas (1983, 7-8) who reason that the territory of the Cantiaci may have included the area to the east of the Ouse. It might also explain the distinct divergence in pottery fabrics between East and West Sussex in both Late Iron Age and during the Roman period (Gordon Hayden pers. comm.) Either way the location could have had significant strategic implications.

### 9.3.2 The earthwork defences

The reason for the provision of the earthwork defences on settlements of various sizes across the southeast in the late second century remains obscure and whilst many theories abound, I am not convinced that we have yet arrived at a wholly satisfactory answer. I am however convinced that these defensive structures would have needed official sanction and that they would have been constructed only at sites where an official function or strategic location merited such provision. The uniform nature of the ditches observed in several slots excavated at Bridge Farm when compared to similar sites suggest that the ditches were dug to a prescribed pattern, possibly under the direction of an official surveyor and perhaps even undertaken, in part, by an official and/or military working party.

On a site where the only positive archaeology so far discovered is the road structure we can only cogitate on whether there was a bank constructed inside the two ditches from the spoil created in their excavation. However, there may be an indication of this in Trench 6 where an area of the London Road just to the inside of the inner enclosure ditch was found to be completely barren of any structure or surface despite excavating a deep evaluation trench across it. Could this indicate the consolidated ground formerly below the bank where the subsequent road became proud of the areas to the south, as well as the slumped areas over the ditches to the north? The higher road structure would have been exposed to much greater plough damage resulting in total destruction and could provide a possible reason for this curiously blank area in the road's structure.

### 9.3.3 The road west and crossing the river

Our colleague David Staveley is strongly of the opinion that the road west (The Greensand Way) heads directly out of the settlement, crossing the river just west of the 2014 excavations. Rob Wallace however, has pointed out that Margary's original line, some distance north of the settlement, takes away the need for the road to cross the river before joining the London Road. The only river crossing then needed is for the London Road itself as it heads south towards the settlement. Both arguments have merit and sadly to date neither have very convincing geophysical evidence from the west bank of the river to back them up, despite surveys being undertaken in targeted areas. The northern route does not exclude there being more local river crossings by ford or ferry but does mean that a bridge provided for the London Road would be well upstream from the position of any landing stage and therefore not hinder vessels coming up the river to the settlement from the coast. With very little likelihood of being able to gain evidence close to the river it may be necessary to target more distant locations along the suggested routes west in order to test which hypothesis is most credible. That still leaves the distinct possibility that neither route may be capable of confirmation or rebuttal and of course that both routes could be true.

### 9.3.4 The Trench 5 building - aisled or not?

A similar problem to the defensive bank comes with the 13 postholes excavated in 2014 as it is another question where the lack of any positive evidence leaves us with the choice of either avoiding an answer or 'plumping' for what we individually feel to be the most satisfactory of

the possible scenarios. I am convinced that the configuration of these posts indicates the main structure of a substantial building and that it is likely that its entrance was in the north end where no evidence of an intermediate post was discovered. There is a good range of comparable earth-fast post structures across Kent and Surrey and much discussion as to whether these represent the wall-line posts of plain rectangular buildings or the main load-bearers of larger aisled structures; the latter still deemed apposite despite lack of evidence for any outer walls. There are examples of stone-built structures where both aisle and outer wall evidence remains including at the nearby Barcombe villa complex. I have become convinced over time with the argument of the aisle exponents, such as David Bird, that whilst, the aisle posts as the main structural element would have needed to be set deeply into the ground, the non-load bearing external walls could have been raised from sill-beams or on fairly lightweight posts/staves requiring only very shallow placements. These would leave no trace on a site such as Bridge Farm other than a possible lack of other archaeological features immediately surrounding the pattern of main posts.

### 9.3.5 Iron or Agriculture

Evidence of iron production waste from the site, the route and therefore possible original purpose of the London Road and the proximity of the eastern iron production sites make a strong claim for this settlement to have close connections to the iron industry during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD. This connection may well have continued throughout most of the Roman period but with much decreased importance and intensity during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries where it is probable that the products of agriculture became more important both to the regional authorities and therefore to the settlement and the local economy. This is supported by the apparent abandonment of some of the iron production sites in the Weald during the mid- to later 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Smith *et al*, 2017 p.183) and the improvements in agricultural production and processing through the Roman period resulting in tradable/requisitionable surpluses for transporting by both road and river/sea (Allen and Lodwick, 2017) with the late roman period even seeing demand from the continent, although that such demand was met from Bridge Farm would be too speculative even for me.

### 9.3.6 Nothing before and nothing after

One of the clearest results to come from the investigations of this site to date is the lack of any significant evidence for settlement or activity, other than agricultural, for any period other than the Roman occupation of Britain. The diverse artefactual assemblage suggests that the activity was both continual and fairly intensive for a rural site over the majority of the entire period. Its exclusively Roman-period but long-term existence in this somewhat isolated location supports that the settlement involved official sanction and strategic planning in its original purpose and location.

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